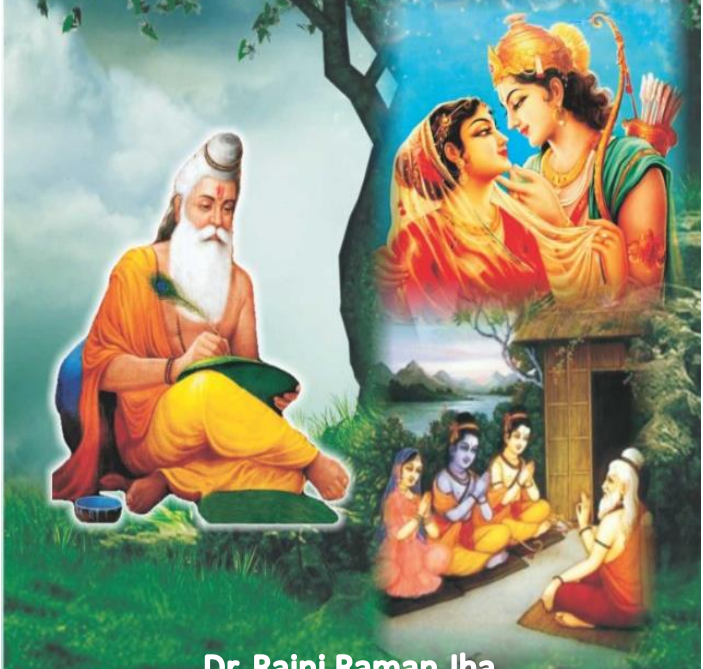
Sītā's Banishment and Shambhuka Killing by Rāma: Entirely False Stories

(These are not composed by Maharishi Vālmiki at all)



Dr. Rajni Raman Jha

Translated from Hindi by Rohit Baranwal

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Rāma Dwaara Sītā Ka Nirvaasan Evam Shambook Vadh: Sarvtha Jhoothi Kahaaniyan by Dr. Rajni Rāman Jha



Dedicated respectfully and tearfully to my respectable grandmother (Late Chhedo Devi)

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Translator's Biography

Rohit Baranwal was born in the town of Bakhira, district Sant Kabir Nagar in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. He earned his Bachelor's degree from IIT Roorkee in India and in pursuit of higher technical knowledge, went to United States where he earned his PhD in electrical engineering. He is an electrical engineer by profession, working in the industry and has authored multiple technical research papers in reputed conferences and journals. He is thankful for the many discussions he has had with his father who guided him about our Indian culture and these bore fruit as he started recently his journey in search of truth, where he came across the author's book on *Uttarakāṇḍa*. The translator feels that this is an important work and should reach the masses as widely as possible. This translation is a humble attempt in that direction.

Sītā's Banishment by Rāma:
A false story

The aspersion is popular in common folk that during his rule, Rāma had banished Sītā to the forest after being embarrassed by his subjects. However, a thorough study of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa makes it crystal clear that this tale of Sītā's banishment is patently false. This is not even a creation of sage Vālmīki. It is a creation of another author, that was added thousands of years after the creation of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. The truth is that Lord Rāma never abandoned Mother Sītā. She was always with Him and lived as the queen of Ayodhyā.

In this work of research, the aforementioned truth has been established not by referring to any other scripture but rather, points have been taken from the available text of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa itself which prove *a fortiori* that the banishment of Mother Sītā is a deceitful false tale written to demean Rāma, Sītā and Vālmīki.

Now, let us study this topic pointwise.

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa's creation

Let us first understand the creation of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. In this Rāmāyaṇa created by sage Vālmīki, currently a total of seven books or *kāṇḍas* are shown or studied – *Bālakāṇḍa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Araṇyakāṇḍa, Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, Sundarakāṇḍa, Yuddhakāṇḍa* and *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Every book has some segments or *sargas*. Every segment is a collection of some verses or *ślokas*. Thus, the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa contains seven *kāṇḍas*, five hundred *sargas* and twenty-four thousand *ślokas.*

It is said that initially, there were not twenty-four thousand *ślokas* in Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. Far fewer *ślokas* had been composed by sage Vālmīki. Later on, its extension happened. Nobody is able to tell that who did this extension. But it becomes clear upon reading Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa that its extension has been done. Sometimes, the narration goes astray, sometimes it seems to have superfluous portions, incidental tales come without context, discrepancy in literary style etc. clearly indicate extensions having been done to Rāmāyaṇa. There are multiple adulterated segments in Rāmāyaṇa. A significant portion of *Bālakāṇḍa* is adulterated. Multiple episodes from *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* to *Yuddhakāṇḍa* are interjected and the entire *Uttarakāṇḍa* is an adulteration.

It is the thesis of this research work that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is authored by a different poet than sage Vālmīki. Now, discussion will be done on this thesis.

Nārada and Vālmīki

In the beginning of Rāmāyaṇa, Nārada praises the form and virtues of Rāma in front of Vālmīki. Vālmīki while engaged in thoughts, goes to Tamasā River to bathe. There, a couple of cranes is roaming. A hunter kills the male bird. The female bird starts to wail. Then, the following *śloka* is uttered by Vālmīki, expressing his sorrow-

मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः ।
यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ।।

mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhāṁ tvamagamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
yatkrauñcamithunādēkamavadhīḥ kāmamohitam

Which means "Oh! violent Hunter, by which reason you have killed one bird of the couple, when it was infatuated by passion, for that reason you will never get a state of rest for everlasting years to come."

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 2, śloka* 15)

Vālmīki himself is surprised at this utterance from his mouth. Then Lord Brahma tells him that a *śloka* has been uttered from his mouth and now he should compose a great poem in this same manner.

Then Vālmīki perceives the entire story of Rāma as it happened. Then, he composes the Rāmāyaṇa. Other names for this work are Paulastyavadh and Dashānanvadh.

Then, Vālmīki teaches Rāmāyaṇa and how to sing it to two princes who are also bards, living in his āshrama.

These two bards go to Rāma's court and sing Rāmāyaṇa to him. The rest of Rāmāyaṇa is known to us.

Introduction

Rāma's conduct towards women

To understand the topic- Sītā's banishment by Rāma, a false tale – first we will have to understand Rāma's conduct towards women. In the entire Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma has displayed immense respect for all female characters. His mother Kausalyā, Sumitrā, Tārā the wife of Vāli, Mandodarī the wife of Rāvaṇa, Rāma has expressed wholehearted respect for all of them. Even towards Kaikeyī he has expressed respect, with the exception of one or two instances.

Three incidents are especially mentionable.

Tāṭakā episode

This tale is known to all that sage Vishvāmitra had borrowed Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa in their teenage from their father Daśaratha. The reason for this was a demoness Tāṭakā, along with her son Mārīch and with a demon Subāhu would disrupt the *yajñas* of sages in the districts of Malada and Karūsha. These demons would kill and eat the sages.

Their slaying had become of utmost importance. Only Rāma was capable of slaying them. Therefore, Vishvāmitra asked Daśaratha for Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa accompanied him.

When they reached Malada and Karūsha district, they encountered Tāṭakā. Rāma aimed his bow at Tāṭakā, but he started to hesitate in slaying her. He spoke-

विनिवृत्तां करोम्यद्य हृतकर्णाग्रनासिकाम् ।।

न ह्येनामुत्सहे हन्तुं स्त्रीस्वभावेन रक्षिताम् ।
वीर्यं चास्या गतिं चैव हन्यतामिति मे मतिः ।।

vinivṛttāṁ karomyadya hṛtakarṇāgranāsikām

na hyēnāmutsahē hantuṁ strīsvabhāvēna rakṣitām

vīryaṁ cāsyā gatiṁ caiva hanytāmīti me matiḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 26, ślokas 11*-12)

Which means," I will make her to readily retreat by lopping off her ears and the tip of nose. As she is protected by her femininess, I do not really want to attempt to kill her, but I intend to terminate her impudence and mobility.

This means that Rāma was not willing to kill a woman, he wanted to refrain from it. Then Vishvāmitra said to Rāma that it is futile to show mercy on this Tāṭakā, she always disrupts *yajnas*. Earlier, Vishvāmitra had also informed Rāma that Tāṭakā is a man-eater. Remembering this and

obeying to his teacher's words, Rāma shot an arrow in Tāṭakā's chest and she dropped dead.

This is how Rāma is. He does not want to kill even a sinner, depraved and man-eating Tāṭakā because she is a woman. For Rāma, a woman is not to be killed.

Later, Rāma also slayed Subāhu when battling him and shot an arrow at Mārīch with such force that he fell hundred *yojanas* away at the seashore of Lankā. This was the same Mārīch, who took the form of a golden deer to lure Sītā to move Rāma away from her and then Sītā was kidnapped.

Ahalyā episode

The Ahalyā episode deserved special attention. The tale is well known to all that Ahalyā was the wife of sage Gautama. Once during sage Gautama's absence, Indra the king of *devatās* or demigods came to her in the guise of sage Gautama. Even after recognizing Indra behind his sage Gautama disguise, Ahalyā felt enamored towards him and mated with him.

Later on, sage Gautama cursed her that she would be in ashes in the same *āshrama*, surviving merely on air or in a state of fasting for thousands of years. She would remain invisible to all living beings. In future, when Daśaratha's son Rāma would set his feet in that forest, then she would be liberated by honoring and giving her hospitality to him and would return to her old form.

When Rāma was going towards Mithilā with Vishvāmitra, after slaying Tāṭakā, he saw Ahalyā's *āshrama* and asked Vishvāmitra why it was deserted.

Vishvāmitra told Rāma the entire tale and asked him to liberate Ahalyā.

Rāma entered the āshrama with Lakṣamaṇa and Vishvāmitra. Ahalyā was effulgent from her penance. Still, even *devatās* and human beings were not able to see her because of her being invisible due to sage Gautama's curse.

Rāma was able to see her and Ahalyā also saw him. The moment Ahalyā saw Rāma, the curse on her ended and she became visible to all.

Then both brothers Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa touched Ahalyā's feet to show her respect. Ahalyā also honored and showed hospitality to the brothers, in remembrance of sage Gautama's curse. She washed their feet with water and offered them grains, fruits and milk. Rāma accepted the offerings as per the rituals. This is described in *ślokas* below.

राघवौ तु तदा तस्याः पादौ जगृहतुर्मुदा ।

स्मरन्ती गौतमवचः प्रतिजग्राह सा हि तौ ।।
पाद्यमर्घ्यं तथाऽऽतिथ्यं चकार सुसमाहिता ।
प्रतिजग्राह काकुत्स्थो विधिदृष्टेन कर्मणा ।।

rāghavau tu tadā tasyāḥ pādau jagṛhaturmudā

smarantī gautamavacaḥ pratijagrāha sā hi tau

pādyamarghyaṁ tathāātithyaṁ cakāra susamāhitā
pratijagrāha kākutstho vidhidṛṣṭēna karmaṇā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 49, ślokas 17*-18)

This story has been presented in a slightly different way, than the actual incident. A slight attentive analysis of this makes clear that, that the disappearance of Ahalyā after curse of Gautama is nothing but her being abandoned by Gautama. Another interpretation of invisible is also 'not worthy of being looked at' i.e., Ahalyā was not worthy of being looked at by anyone.

But Rāma saw her. She was radiant due to her penance.

Here, the poet describes beautifully, that because of her penance, Ahalyā was not only purified, but she was effulgent. Rāma understood this. And by showing her respect by touching her feet, he symbolically declared that Ahalyā is now free of sins. By accepting her hospitality, Rāma essentially opened the doors for her to be accepted back into the society. Now, Ahalyā was not invisible from the society or in other words, ostracized. She was visible to all or in other words, worthy of acceptance.

It can be observed that Rāma made a revolutionary step. Even the penance of a woman who willfully cheated on her husband was brought into acceptance by Rāma. If the other participant of this sin Indra remained the king of

heaven, why Ahalyā should stay ostracized from the society?

It is unjust in the eyes of Rāma that a man retains his kingdom after committing a wrongful activity while a woman serves punishment even after doing penance. Therefore, he touches Ahalyā's feet to show his respect and accepts her hospitality.

Rumā episode

Third episode is of the slaying of Vāli. Vāli had banished Sugrīva, but had kept his wife Rumā. He forced himself upon her. The biggest reason for Vāli's slaying is given by Rāma as Vāli holding his younger brother Sugrīva's wife Rumā, who was akin to his daughter-in-law and forcing himself on her.

अस्य त्वं धरमाणस्य सुग्रीवस्य महात्मनः ।
रुमायां वर्तसे कामात् स्नुषायां पापकर्मकृत् ।।

तद् व्यतीतस्य ते धर्मात् कामवृत्तस्य वानर ।
भ्रातृभार्याभिमर्शेऽस्मिन् दण्डोऽयं प्रतिपादितः ।।

asya tvaṁ dharamāṇasya sugrīvasya mahātmanaḥ
rumāyāṁ vartasē kāmāt snuṣāyāṁ pāpakarmakṛt

tad vyatītasya tē dharmāt kāmavṛttasya vānara
bhrātṛbhāryābhimarśeasmin daṇḍoayam pratipāditaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 18, ślokas 19-20*)

Rāma reunited Sugrīva with his wife after slaying Vāli.

These episodes will later be useful in refuting Sītā's banishment.

Rāma's love for Sītā

This is the point establishing Rāma as the ideal husband. Truth be told, the extent of love displayed by Rāma for Sītā is the ideal for husband's integral love towards wife in married life.

Most people aren't aware of this and thus engage in disrespectful gossip about Rāma and Sītā.

Kaikeyī episode- Let us begin from *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*. When Rāma is given exile, then he says to Sītā that his parents are elderly. He would have to go the forest to serve his exile. Therefore, she should stay in Ayodhyā and care for his parents.

At this, Sītā starts to weep. She tells Rāma that she would exit the palace even before Rāma does. She would remove the stones and thorns in the path for Rāma. Rāma realizes that Sītā is not going to budge and then he happily says –

आरभस्व शुभश्रोणि वनवासक्षमाः क्रियाः ।
नेदानीम् त्वदृते सीते स्वर्गोऽपि मम रोचते ।।

ārabhasva śubhaśrōṇi vanavāsakṣamāḥ kriyāḥ
nēdānīm tvadṛtē sītē svargō api mama rocatē

Which means ‘Oh, lady with charming hip and loins! Now itself, begin with duties appropriate for living in exile. Oh, Sītā! Even a heaven is not a liking to me without your presence.’

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 30, śloka 42*)

Earlier as well, he has said to Sītā-

न देवि तव दुःखेन स्वर्गमप्यभिरोचये ।

na dēvi tava duḥkhēna svargamapyabhirocayē

Which means ‘Oh, queen! I do not relish even heaven while you are in grief.’

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 30, śloka 27*)

Rāma wore clothes made from tree bark for his exile to forest. Kaikeyī brought two clothes made of tree bark for Sītā. *Guru* Vashishtha chastised Kaikeyī that exile has been given to Rāma, not to Sītā.

Then why tree bark for Sītā? But Kaikeyī did not oblige. Sītā then took the tree bark clothes. But she did not know how to wear them. She stood embarrassed. One can imagine the scenario – an occupied courtroom, with mothers, father, ministers, soldiers and servants present. In this occupied courtroom, Rāma comes forward and himself dresses Sītā in tree bark.

तस्यास्तत् क्षिप्रमागत्य रामो धर्मभृतां वरः ।
चीरं बबन्ध सीतायाः कौशेयस्योपरि स्वयम् ।।

tasyāstat kṣipramāgatya rāmo dharmabhṛtāṁ varaḥ
cīraṁ babandha sītāyāḥ kauśēyasyopari svayam

Which means 'Rāma, the foremost of those upholding virtue, quicky came and personally fastened that bark over the silk garment of Sītā.'

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 37, śloka 14*)

Rāma, who could not see his wife embarrassed and sad even for a moment, banishes his wife for the purported appeasement of public, how can this be believed?

Virādha episode- While staying in forest, a demon named Virādha is encountered who picks up Sītā and starts to taker with him. Then a distraught Rāma says to Lakṣamaṇa-

पर स्पर्शात् तु वैदेह्या न दुःखतरमस्ति मे ।
पितुर्विनाशात् सौमित्रे स्वराज्यहरणात् तथा ।।

Para sparśāt tu vaidēhyā na duḥkhataramasti mē
piturvināśāt saumitrē svarājyaharaṇāt tathā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 2, śloka 21*)

Which means, 'To me, oh, Soumitri, the grief of others touching Sītā is more, than father's demise or grabbing away my kingdom'.

Then, the two brothers attack the demon Virādha and kill him after toppling him into a ditch.

It is increasingly becoming apparent that in front of Sītā, Rāma considered the heaven and his kingdom both insignificant. Then, to banish Sītā for the same kingdom, what contradiction this is!

Shūrpaṇakhā episode

Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa are spending their time peacefully in Panchvatī. One day, Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa are conversing. Then, a demoness named Shūrpaṇakhā arrives there. She is the sister of the ten headed Rāvaṇa.

She becomes attracted to Rāma and expresses her desire to marry him. Rāma says that he is with his wife Sītā, so he cannot marry her. He says that his brother Lakṣamaṇa however, is living without a woman, so she can marry him.

Then Shūrpaṇakhā goes to Lakṣamaṇa. She expresses her desire to marry him. Lakṣamaṇa declines her advances.

Then, she goes to Rāma again and expresses her desire to marry him. Again, Rāma says that he cannot marry her, since he is with Sītā.

Then Shūrpaṇakhā gets enraged. She says- “Rāma! You are not accepting me because of this disfigured, dishonest, diabolical, hallow-stomached old Sītā. Therefore, right in front of you, I will devour this human female and then I can blithely make merry along with you, without the botheration of a co-wife.”

Having said this, the torch eyed Shūrpaṇakhā dashed towards the deer-eyed Sītā in high exasperation as a great meteor would dash towards Rohini, the brightest star in the sky.

इत्युक्त्वा मृगशावाक्षीमलातसदृशेक्षणा ।
अभ्यधावत् सुसंक्रुद्धा महोल्का रोहिणीमिव ।।

ityuktvā mṛgaśāvākṣīmalātasadṛśēkṣaṇā
abhyadhāvat susaṅkruddhā maholkā rohiṇīmiva

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 18, śloka 17*)

Then the great-energetic Rāma took umbrage and checking her who is like the noose of death swooping down on Sītā said to Lakṣamaṇa.

तां मृत्युपाशप्रतिमामापतन्तीं महाबलः ।
विगृह्य रामः कुपितस्ततो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत् ।।

tāṁ mṛtyupāśapratimāmāpatantīṁ mahābalaḥ
vigṛhya rāmaḥ kupitastato lakṣamaṇamabravīt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 18, śloka 18*)

Rāma said to Lakṣamaṇa, “O Lakṣamaṇa! Take note of Sītā’s life saved with such difficulty. It is apt to deface this paunchy demoness.” Then, Lakṣamaṇa cut off Shūrpaṇakhā’s nose and ears with his sword.

Those who criticize Rāma in the Shūrpaṇakhā episode, can they tell what wrong did Rāma do? Should he have allowed Sītā to be killed? That ugly demoness Shūrpaṇakhā had

come to Rāma disguising herself as a beautiful woman. Her lies had started from that moment itself.

It is also clearly described that from the moment of her arrival, she had started to badmouth Sītā, even though Sītā had not done or said anything foul to her. Goddess Sītā was not even acquainted with her.

What sort of love did Shūrpaṇakhā have, that at one moment she professes love for Rāma, then the next moment, upon being sent to Lakṣamaṇa by Rāma, she professes her love for Lakṣamaṇa and upon being rejected by Lakṣamaṇa, she again professes her love for Rāma!

And upon being rejected by Rāma, she is intent on killing Sītā. Is this not a crime? Attempt to murder is considered a crime of same category as murder itself. Therefore, should Rāma have punished Shūrpaṇakhā or not? It is Rāma's mercy that he let Shūrpaṇakhā go after only having her defaced. Had he wished, he could have slain her.

But recall the Tāṭakā episode. There too, he merely wanted to debilitate Tāṭakā at first. That is the same conduct he displays in his actions in case of Shūrpaṇakhā. And it is well known, how heavy of a price Rāma had to pay for his mercy shown to Shūrpaṇakhā. Sītā was kidnapped. How long he had to wander here and there in her search. He had to battle Rāvaṇa. Ultimately, he emerged victorious on the strength of his piety and moral conduct. Rāma, who stood with truth and *dharma* or righteousness ultimately won.

This Shūrpaṇakhā episode is a burning example of the limitless love of Rāma towards Sītā.

Golden deer episode- Rāma went to capture the golden deer at the insistence of Sītā only. Verily, that deer was not only golden but also embellished with many gemstones. First, Rāma says to Lakṣamaṇa, "O Lakṣamaṇa! Sītā is so excited to have this golden deer upon seeing it. She will certainly sit on that invaluable golden skin of that gem of a deer along with me."

Lakṣamaṇa cites doubt on the golden deer and tells Rāma that it is the deception of some demon. Then Lakṣamaṇa also says that if that deceptive demon is Mārīch, then it is even more important for the demon to die.

Sītā asks Rāma to bring the golden deer either dead or alive. Then Rāma tell Lakṣamaṇa-

अस्यामायत्तमस्माकं यत्कृत्यं रघुनंदन।

अहमेनं वधिष्यामि ग्रहीष्याम्यथवा मृगम्।।

asyāmāyattamasmākaṁ yatkṛtyaṁ raghunandana

ahamēnaṁ vadhiṣyāmi grahīṣyāmyathavā mṛgam

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 43, śloka 47*)

Which means 'Whatever enterprise of ours is there that is founded in Sītā only. Whatever Sītā says, that will happen. I will bring this deer either dead or alive.'

Then he goes off to capture the golden deer either dead or alive, for Sītā's joy.

Sītā's Kidnapping episode- When Sītā is kidnapped and Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa are returning to the ashrama, then Rāma suspects that something untoward has happened to Sītā. He starts to mutter, "The one without whom I cannot stay alive for even a moment, who is my life force, that goddess like Sītā would be in what condition?"

यां विना नोत्सहे वीर मुहूर्तमपि जीवितुम् ।
क्व सा प्राणसहाया मे सीता सुरसुतोपमा ।।

yāṁ vinā nōtsahē vīra muhūrtamapi jīvitum
kva sā prāṇasahāyā mē sītā surasutōpamā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 58, śloka 4*)

I wish to get at the hermitage again if only the princess of Videha Sītā of good-conduct is alive in āshrama, else, oh, Lakṣamaṇa, if death has already conducted her out of āshrama I too will give up my lives here itself. If Sītā, the princess from Videha, does not chat with me as before smiling gleefully on my arrival at the āshrama, oh, Lakṣamaṇa, I really breath my last.

यदि जीवति वैदेही गमिष्याश्रमं पुनः ।
संवृत्ता यदि वृत्ता सा प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्यामि लक्ष्मण ।।

यदि मामाश्रमगतं वैदेही नाभिभाषते ।
पुनः प्रहसिता सीता विनशिष्यामि लक्ष्मण ।।

yadi jīvati vaidēhī gamiṣyāśramaṁ punaḥ
saṅvṛttā yadi vṛttā sā prāṇāṁstyakṣyāmi lakṣamaṇa

yadi māmāśramagataṁ vaidēhī nābhibhāṣate
punaḥ prahasitā sītā vinaśiṣyāmi lakṣamaṇa

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 58, ślokas 9-10*)

Mourning for Sītā- In the 129 *ślokas* of five *sargas* viz. *sargas* 58, 60, 61, 62 and 63 of *Araṇyakāṇḍa,* the mourning and lamentation done by Rāma for Sītā's loss makes it sufficiently clear that in no circumstances can Rāma abandon Sītā. In the 60th *sarga*, Rāma starts to ask Sītā's whereabouts from trees and animals. He asks the kadamba, bilva, punnāga, bakula, sandalwood, ketaka, rose-apple, palm, Aśoka, arjuna, kutaj etc. trees and deer, elephant, tiger etc. animals about Sītā's whereabouts.

To the tiger, he even says that if he has seen Sītā, then he should tell him (Rāma) Sītā's whereabouts. Then, the tiger would have nothing to fear from him.

शार्दूल यदि सा दृष्टा प्रिया चंद्र निभानना ।
मैथिली मम विस्रब्धः कथयस्व न ते भयम् ।।

śārdūla yadi sā dṛṣṭā priyā candra nibhānanā
maithilī mama visrabdhaḥ kathayasva na tē bhayam

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 60, śloka 25*)

Ignoring Lakṣamaṇa's consolation, he is unable to bear not seeing his beloved wife and he calls Sītā out repeatedly and cries.

He considers that Sītā is hidden among the Aśoka or kanera trees says, “O Sītā! Please do not play the game of hide and seek anymore. I am deeply pained by this play of yours. Without you, this ashrama is forlorn.”

Then he starts to ask the Sun and the Wind gods about Sītā’s whereabouts. He says to the Sun god, “If you are the observer of truth and falsehood, then please tell me who has kidnapped Sītā.”

He says to the Wind god, “You know everything, where is my lady from noble heritage... is she stolen, or slain, or strayed her steps?”

शंसस्व वयोः कुलपालिनीं तां
मृता हृता पथि वर्तते वा ।।

śaṅsasva vāyō kulapālinīṅ tāṁ

mṛtā hṛtā pathi vartatē vā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 63, śloka 17*)

Fury over Sītā’s loss- Then comes the 64th *sarga* of *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, when Rāma becomes furious upon not finding Sītā. The Prasravana mountain is there, where flowers from Sītā’s hair have fallen as she was being abducted by Rāvaṇa. Rāma asks the mountain about Sītā’s whereabouts and upon not getting a response, he becomes intent on destroying the peaks of the mountain and on drying up the river originating from its springs. Seeing the broken chariot and bow that had fallen there in the fight

between Jatāyu and Rāvaṇa, Rāma suspects that Sītā has been killed. He becomes extremely enraged and says that he will now have to display his prowess.

He says that today itself, his radiance will end all the living beings. Neither *yakshas, gandharvas,* demons, *kinnaras* nor humans will be able to live in peace and in a few moments, he will fill the sky with his arrows and would stop the movement of the beings living in all dimensions and planets.

ममास्त्रबाणसम्पूर्णामाकाशं पश्य लक्ष्मण ।
असम्पातं करिष्यामि ह्यद्य त्रैलोक्यचारिणाम् ।।

mamāstrabāṇasampūrṇāmākāśaṁ paśya lakṣamaṇa

asampātaṁ kariṣyāmi hyadya trailōkyacāriṇām

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 64, śloka 59*)

Whatever worlds of gods, or monsters, or even those of demons are there, they will be splintered and falling down apiece by the fusillades of my arrows.

देवदानवयक्षाणां लोका ये रक्षसामपि ।
बहुधा निपतिष्यन्ति बाणौघैः शकलीकृताः ।।

dēvadānavayakṣāṇāṁ lōkā yē rakṣasāmapi
bahudhā nipatiṣyanti bāṇaughaiḥ śakalīkṛtāḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 64, śloka 68*)

With great difficulty, Lakṣamaṇa is able to pacify Rāma by persuading him.

Spring and Pampā lake episode- There is description of a Pampā lake in *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*. The lake is described as very beautiful. Rāma is getting reminded of Sītā constantly as he describes the beauty of the lake upon seeing it. Sage Vālmīki's literary poetic prowess shines here in the form of the lines said by Rāma. Rāma says- "The waterfowl singing happily near the beautiful spring in this forest is drowning me, Rāma, who is desiring to meet Sītā, into sorrow. The fire called spring season will burn me down with its fiery paraphernalia like the clusters of red flowers of hellebore that are akin to fireballs, the humming of honeybees that is alike the rustle of campfires, and the coppery red color of tender leaves just sprouted that is identical to burning fire."

अशोकस्तबकाङ्गारः षट्पदस्वननिःस्वनः ।
मां हि पल्लवताम्रार्चिर्वसन्ताग्निः प्रधक्ष्यति ||

aśōkastabakāṅgāraḥ ṣaṭpadasvananiḥsvanaḥ
māṁ hi pallavatāmrārcirvasantāgniḥ pradhakṣyati

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, ślokas 29*)

Rāma visualizes that wherever the kidnapped Sītā is currently, if spring season has begun there too, then she will give up her life in the pain of my separation. Rāma is pained by this visualization. Then he expresses the truth, that is till date remembered about Rāma and Sītā. He says-

“My thoughts of Sītā alone are well biding in me, and in Sītā also thoughts about me will always be abiding.”

मयि भावो हि वैदेह्यास्तत्त्वतो विनिवेशितः ।
ममापि भावः सीतायां सर्वथा विनिवेशितः ।।

mayi bhāvo hi vaidēhyāstattvatō vinivēśitaḥ
mamāpi bhāvaḥ sītāyāṁ sarvathā vinivēśitaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, śloka 52*)

Further on, he says, “That one with lotus-petal-like broad eyes, who always holds the lotuses dear, without finding that Sītā, to me my life is uninteresting.”

पद्मपत्रविशालाक्षीं सततं प्रियपन्कजाम् ।
अपश्यतो मे वैदेहीं जीवितं नाभिरोचते ।।

padmapatraviśālākṣīṁ satataṁ priyapaṅkajām
apaśyatō mē vaidēhīṁ jīvitaṁ nābhirocate

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, śloka 67*)

And regarding Pmapāsar, he says, “I can live only if that slender-waisted Sītā basks in this benignant breeze of Pampa along with me.”

जीवेयं खलु सौमित्रे मया सह सुमध्यमा ।
सेवेत यदि वैदेही पम्पायाः पवनम् शुभम् ।।

jīvēyaṅ khalu saumitrē mayā saha sumadhyamā
seveta yadi vaidēhī pampāyāḥ pavanaṁ śubham

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, śloka 103*)

Rain episode- In *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, Rāma says while describing the rainy season, “As for me, Lakṣamaṇa, I am the one who is toppled from a great kingdom, whose wife is stolen, such as I am, I am sinking like a riverbank that is overflowed.”

अहम् तु हृतदारश्च राज्याच्च महतश्च्युतः |
नदीकूलमिव क्लिन्नमवसीदामि लक्ष्मण ||

aham tu hṛtadāraśca rājyācca mahataścyutaḥ
nadīkūlamiva klinnamavasīdāmi lakṣamaṇa

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 28, śloka 58*)

Autumn episode- While describing the autumn season, Rāma mourns as he remembers Sītā. He says –“I wander around enjoyable lakes, rivers, tanks, forests and woodlands, but without the deer eyed Sītā, I cannot find happiness anywhere.

Perhaps the plethora of provocative autumnal features will be prolongedly agonizing her, because she is separated from me, and because her ladyship is a frailty."

So on and so forth that best one among men and the son of a king keened over, like a Rain-cuckoo which will be keen on Indra, the king of divinities, for rainy-water.

एवमादिं नरश्रेष्ठो विललाप नृपात्मजः |
विहंग इव सारंगः सलिलं त्रिदशेश्वरात् ||

evamādiṁ naraśrēṣṭhō vilalāpa nṛpātmajaḥ
vihaṅga iva sāraṅgaḥ salilaṁ tridaśēśvarāt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 30, śloka 13*)

Episode of grief- In *Sundarakāṇḍa*, when Lord Hanumān reaches Aśoka Garden in search of Sītā, then upon seeing Sītā for the first time, he thinks- This is the Goddess Sītā, for whom Rāma is grieving in four ways; from compassion, from pity, from grief, from love; (thinking that) a woman has disappeared from compassion, depending on him from pity, wife has been lost from grief, a dear one from love.

स्त्री प्रणष्टेति कारुण्यादाश्रितेत्यानृशंस्यतः ।
पत्नी नष्टेति शोकेन प्रियेति मदनेन च ।।

strī praṇaṣṭēti kāruṇyādāśritetyānṛśaṁsyataḥ
patnī naṣṭeti śōkena priyeti madanena ca

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Sundakāṇḍa*, *sarga 15, śloka 50*)

Later on, in *Yuddhakāṇḍa,* as Rāma asks Sugrīva to prepare his armies to march towards Lankā to rescue Sītā, he expresses his pain saying, "It is so told, that sorrow gets vanished at the passing of time. But my agony of not seeing my beloved is getting increased every day."

शोकश्च किल कालेन गच्छता ह्यपि गच्छति ।
मम चापश्यतः कान्तामहन्यहनि वर्धते ।।

śokaśca kila kālena gacchatā hyapi gacchati

mama cāpaśyataḥ kāntāmhanyahani vardhate

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 5, śloka 4*)

It can thus be seen, that Rāma was in pain from separation from Sītā when he did not know about the kidnapped Sītā's location (in *Kishkindhākanda*) and he is still in pain after learning about her whereabouts, since he is unable to see her.

Rāvaṇa slaying episode- And now we come to the greatest act, slaying entire lineage of Rāvaṇa for rescuing Sītā. Only Vibhīṣaṇa stayed alive, because he came on the rightful side, with Rāma. None was left in Rāvaṇa's lineage to light a candle. Almost entire demonic army was slain.

Imagine what would have happened, if after completing the fourteen-year exile, Rāma would have returned to Ayodhyā without Sītā. He had the option of saying that Sītā was eaten by animals or demons. There were evidences present to support that claim. Upon seeing the broken chariot etc. on Prasravana mountain, Rāma himself had the suspicion of Sītā being eaten after being abducted and he had also looked quite extensively for Sītā.

What would have happened in the above scenario? Rāma would have gotten remarried with great pomp and show. But did this happen? After Sītā's abduction, Rāma left no stone unturned, looking for her day and night. Finally, he was able to find her location. And after finding her whereabouts, he gave such a punishment to her abductor Rāvaṇa, that it is still considered the benchmark for the

love between husband and wife. Then, how can it be accepted that in the name of appeasing the public, he banished Sītā?

Truth of *agniparīkshā*

It would surprise anyone upon hearing that the *agniparīkshā* given by Sītā is actually an indicator of the boundless love between Rāma and Sītā. It is important to understand the entire episode.

Rāvaṇa had been slain. Rāma said to Vibhīṣaṇa to bring Sītā after getting her bathed and dressed in clean clothes.

Vibhīṣaṇa went and request Sītā to come before Rāma after taking a bath and dressing up in clean clothes. Sītā said that she wants to see her husband right away, without taking bath or dressing herself up. Then Vibhīṣaṇa said to her that it was her husband who had commanded him for this. Then Sītā bathed and dressed in clean clothes and wore jewelry. Vibhīṣaṇa then ordered for her to be carried in a palanquin. She came in the palanquin in front of Rāma.

Now, it is important to understand what happens next. Sītā obeys her husband's command and comes in front of him after cleaning up and wearing clean clothes and jewelry and sitting in a palanquin. But from here on, Rāma starts to get irritated. He realizes that if Sītā was brought back in this way, then the world will misconstrue that she did not have any suffering in Lankā and that she was living very happily there and has come in a nice palanquin like a queen. The

society would certainly take this the wrong way. Therefore, it is important to remedy this.

These thoughts going on in Rāma mind get further clarified in the dialogue between Rāma and Agnideva after Sita's *agniparīkshā*.

The episode of *agniparīkshā* gives evidence of Rāma's excellence as a tactician. He says to Sītā that he fought the war with Rāvaṇa for the honor of his clan, not for her (he says this despite grieving due to separation from her and being eager to see her as we saw previously). He says that all the ten directions are open for her to go, she can go wherever she wants and she can live with either of Lakṣamaṇa, Bharata, Śatrughna. He says many other things to her.

Upon hearing such words, Sītā is very upset and bashes him, she even says of him as a man speaking foul language. She says, "I am not an ordinary woman. I am born from the ground or Mother Earth." She means that she is pure and honorable like the Mother Earth.

Then, she asks Lakṣamaṇa to prepare a pyre for *agniparīkshā*. At this, Lakṣamaṇa gets filled with anger and gazes Rāma angrily. But Rāma signals him to stay quiet for a few moments and to see what his (Rāma's) real intentions are. Lakṣamaṇa understands this and begins preparing the pyre.

एवमुक्तस्तु वैदेह्या लक्ष्मणः परवीरहा ।

अमर्षवशमापन्नो राघवं समुदैक्षत ।।

स विज्ञाय मनश्छन्दं रामस्याकारसूचितम् ।
चितां चकार सौमित्रिर्मते रामस्य वीर्यवान् ।।

eva muktastu vaidehyā lakṣamaṇa paravīrahā

amarṣavaśamāpanno rāghavaṁ samudaikṣat

sa vijñāya manaśchandaṁ rāmasyākarasūcitam

citaṁ cakāra saumitrirmate rāmasya vīryavān

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 116, ślokas 20-21*)

Then Sītā said, “As my heart never moves off from Rāma, so let the fire-god, the witness of the world, protect me from all sides.” Thus speaking, Sītā walking around the pyre, with her mind free from hesitation, entered the blazing fire. She did not get burnt. The Fire demigod or *Agnideva* himself appeared and brought her to Rāma. He said to Rāma, “Sītā is completely free of sins, please accept her. I command you to not say any harsh words to her.”

What was the hearty intention of Rāma, for which the word ‘*manaśchandaṁ*’ has been used by him in above *śloka*? That intention was signaled to Lakṣamaṇa before Sītā entered the pyre. Now, Rāma expresses that in following poignant words.

“The world would chatter against me, saying that Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, was really foolish and that his mind was dominated by lust, if I accept Sītā without examining

her with regard to her chastity. Rāvaṇa could not violate this wide-eyed woman, protected as she was by her own splendor, any more than an ocean would transgress its bounds."

इमामपि विशालाक्षीं रक्षितां स्वेन तेजसा ।
रावणो नातिवर्तेत वेलामिव महोदधिः ।।

imāmapi viśālākṣīṁ rakṣitāṁ svena tejasā

rāvaṇo nātivarteta velāmiva mahodhiḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 118, śloka 16*)

This auspicious woman could not give way to the sovereignty, existing in the gynoecium of Rāvaṇa, in as much as Sītā is not different from me, even as sunlight is not different from the sun. The evil-minded Rāvaṇa was not able to lay his violent hands, even in thought, o the unobtainable Sītā, who was blazing like a flaming tongue of fire. But if Sītā's purity was not demonstrated to the world, then she would be considered unchaste and I would be considered a fool. In order to convince the three worlds, I, whose refugee is truth, ignored Sītā while she was entering the fire. Sītā, the daughter of Janaka, is completely pure in her character, in all the three worlds and can no longer be renounced by me, as a good name cannot be cast aside by a prudent man.

विशुद्धा त्रिषु लोकेषु मैथिली जनकात्मजा ।
न विहातुं मया शक्या कीर्तिरात्मवता यथा ।।

viśuddhā triṣu lokeṣu maithilī janakātmajā

na vhātuṁ mayā śhakyā kīrtirātmavatā yathā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 118, śloka 20*)

We can thus see, that the decision to give the *agniparīkshā* was Sītā's own. Rāma showed with extreme wisdom, that Sītā is completely chaste and that he cannot abandon Sītā under any circumstance. If the *śloka* talking about Rāma's intention was not before the incident of *agniparīkshā*, then it could be said that Rāma is saying all these words to hide his embarrassment. But by signaling about his intention, he demonstrates that it was his plan to show Sītā's chastity. If this does not show Rāma's boundless love towards Sītā, then what does?

Sītā's banishment by Rāma is not proven in any way

So far, we have seen how much Rāma loves Sītā. Now, let us look at Sītā's banishment.

Ahalyā episode revisited

Let us recall an example from *Bālakāṇḍa* - Ahalyā's redemption. Ahalyā-the wife of sage Gutama. Indra disguised himself to mate with her. Due to her husband's curse, she became invisible to all, lying in the ashes. Rāma's arrival in her āshrama lifted the curse from her and she became visible to all. Rāma touched her feet out of respect.

This is a symbolically told tale. Really, Ahalyā was ostracized from the societal framework. This is what her becoming invisible means. Rāma brought her back into the society's fold. Ahalyā repented by doing great penance. Now she has become pure. She was given acceptance back into the society. This is what her becoming visible again means.

Indra, who was equally guilty in the Ahalyā episode got away with a relatively light punishment. He retained the rule of heavens. By liberating Ahalyā, Rāma demonstrated that if a man can become pure by serving punishment, so can a woman. And repentance makes her even more glorious. Ahalyā is a female icon of high regard till date.

Thus, Rāma became the person who redeemed Ahalyā.

Now, we see that Rāma redeemed Ahalyā on whom there was proven allegation of adulteration. But he gave his own wife Sītā banishment, who had proven her chastity in *agniparīkshā*. Is this not a big contradiction? On top of this is the fact that Rāma loved his wife so much as seen previously.

Rumā episode revisited- Sugrīva's wife Rumā had been held by Vāli by force who enjoyed her forcefully. Rāma killed Vāli for this reason. Sugrīva was reunited with his wife only because of Rāma. He accepted her back in Rāma's presence. It is clear that Rāma gave his approval to Sugrīva for this pious act.

Then how can it be accepted that Rāma banished his wife Sītā, who was the purest and chestiest in all three worlds?

False reasoning of public interest- The public interest that is given as the reason to justify Sītā's banishment, was keeping the public happy the supreme goal of Rāma? No. Rāma's goal or duty, was to uphold the truth and righteousness.

If pleasing the public had been Rāma's ultimate goal, then why did Rāma not return when at the time of him leaving for forest, entire public of Ayodhyā was pleading him to not go and Bharata also came with the public to request the same?

It is because he saw it important to uphold the two wishes given by his father to his step mother Kaikeyī. He saw that his father is stepping back from his word at the realization of having to send his son to the forest and this will tarnish the glory and tradition of his lineage. It is the duty of the son to fulfill the promise of his father. Therefore, Rāma saw the importance of him going to the forest. Hence, he did not budge even after the entire public of Ayodhyā pleaded to him to not go. He protected the truth and accepted exile.

स याच्यमानः काकुत्स्थस्ताभिः प्रकृतिभिस्तदा ।
कुर्वाणः पितरं सत्यं वनमेवान्वपद्यत।।

sa yācyamānaḥ kākutsthastābhiḥ prakṛtibhistadā
kurvāṇaḥ pitaraṁ satyaṁ vanaṁevānvapadyata

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 45, śloka 4*)

It should therefore be kept in mind that in the case of Sītā's banishment, Rāma would uphold the truth, not focus on pleasing the public. Sītā had given the proof of her chastity by giving *agniparīkshā*. Rāma would uphold this truth. Therefore, there is no question of banishing her due to public gossip.

Hence, how can it be accepted that Rāma banished Sītā?

What decorum- And what decorum would be established by banishing Sītā? If the king starts base his decisions on the gossip among his subjects, what would happen to the entire system? One could come and accuse that Lakṣamaṇa is a thief, Bharata is a drunkard and Sahtrughna is delinquent, then would Rāma also banish them? Such a trend would lead to complete breakdown of law and order. The entire nation would become empty, because every person could allege something about someone else and then, everyone would have to be banished.

Rāma doesn't talk two ways

The biggest virtue of Rāma has been called as him being always consistent, never behaving dubiously. So, the Rāma who liberated Ahalyā, who reunited Rumā with her husband Sugrīva, who did not return to Ayodhyā from exile despite pleas of the Ayodhyā public, who accepted Sītā's chastity with her *agniparīkshā*, who made the vow that as a good name cannot be cast aside by a prudent man, he

will not leave Sītā; how can he banish Sītā upon mere public gossip!

Still, some scholars argue that a human being can act differently in different scenarios. They reckon that perhaps, Rāma's frame of mind towards Sītā might have changed. Maybe, he had to abandon Sītā under some severe pressure.

So, the answer to this argument is now presented.

Uttarakāṇḍa analysis

The tale of Sītā's banishment by Rāma comes in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. *Uttarakāṇḍa*, compared to the previous *kāṇḍas*, has differing and contradictory description of incidents, thoughts and expressions, showing that there is no consonance between *Uttarakāṇḍa* and the previous *kāṇḍas*. This is a separate work with a different poet and it has been added at a later time with utter shrewdness. It has to be examined pointwise.

Language and Literary style

The language and literary style of *Uttarakāṇḍa* does not match those of the previous six *kāṇḍas*. Also, some portion of the *Bālakāṇḍa* doesn't match the language and literary style of the text from *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* to *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. On one hand is the beautifully knit, well arranged and fluent language of Vālmīki, with its rich vocabulary, its

structuring, dialogue and tight knit story and on the other is the lethargic, clumsy, scattered language and disorganized story telling of *Uttarakāṇḍa*. *Uttarakāṇḍa's* literary style is that used in *Purāṇas,* rather than that used in poetic epics like Rāmāyaṇa. A *Purāṇa* is the collection of hundreds of tales. In it, if one *sarga* contains the tale of king, then the next *sarga* can contain the tale of importance of *shrāddha* (offering made in the name of deceased relatives), the next *sarga* can contain the story of *pātāla loka* or the underworld dimension and the next to that *sarga* could contain the tale of annihilation of the world. Whereas an epic has a hero, a heroine and the tale advances with their journey.

Uttarakāṇḍa contains the tale of Rāvaṇa in twirty-two *sargas*. Then, it contains the tales of Vasishth, Hanumāna, Bhrigu, Vishnu, Nriga, Nimi, Urvashi-Pururvā,Yayāti, Shukrāchārya, Yadu, Puru, Shweta etc. without context. It also contains the description of Indra-Vrittāsura battle, Ila-Ilā, Budha etc. in addition to the lineage of the Ikshwāku clan. The characters of Rāma and Sītā are part of these tales, but not in a significant role as would be in an epic focused on them. It is apparent that the literary style of *Uttarakāṇḍa* is that of *Purāṇas.* It is possible that it was an *upa-Purāṇa* that was latter added to the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

Another clue for this to have happened, is that there is an *upa-Purāṇa* named Harivansha *Purāṇa* associated with the

epic Mahābhārata. Therefore, it is possible that *Uttarakāṇḍa* might have been such an *upa-Purāṇa*.

One thing is clear, that based on the language and literary style, this is not a creation of Vālmīki. Those who read the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa can clearly realize this. Merely stating or writing this claim is not enough to explain this.

For example, if one reads the hymns spoken by Rāma's mother Kausalyā for his safety, at the time of him leaving for forest, or the words spoken by Bharata expressing his innocence or description of Pampā lake and spring season or dialogue between Hanumān and Sītā, one can understand that sage Vālmīki is a poet of the highest caliber. In reality, it is difficult to find an excellent Sanskrit poet like Vālmīki. But upon reading *Uttarakāṇḍa*, this excellence is not visible, making it apparent that this is not a creation of Vālmīki.

Tale told by Nārada

In *Bālakāṇḍa*'s first *sarga*, Nārada narrates the entire tale of Rāma to Vālmīki. In this one hundred *śloka* narration, the tale of Sītā's banishment is not present anywhere.

But in the third *sarga* of *Bālakāṇḍa*, it is written that Vālmīki saw Rāma's future and wrote it in the form of *Uttarakāṇḍa*. This contained public pleasing and Sītā's abandonment by him.

स्वराष्ट्ररञ्जनं च वैदेह्याश्च विसर्जनम् ।।
अनागतं च यत्किञ्चिद् रामस्य वसुधातले ।
तच्चकारोत्तरे काव्ये वाल्मीकिर्भगवानृषिः ।।

svarāṣṭrarañjanaṁ ca vaidēhyāśca visarjanam

anāgataṁ ca yatkiñcid rāmasya vasudhātale
taccakārōttarē kāvye vālmīkirbhagavānṛṣiḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 3, śloka 38-39*)

Again, it is said in the fourth *sarga* that Vālmīki composed the Rāmāyaṇa in twenty-four thousand *ślokas*, five-hundred *sargas* and seven *kāṇḍas*, including *Uttarakāṇḍa.*

कृत्वापि तन्महाप्राज्ञः सभविष्यं सहोत्तरम् ।

kṛtvāpi tanmahāprājñaḥ sabhaviṣyaṁ sahottaram

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 4, śloka 3*)

How is it so, that neither Shambhuka killing nor Sītā banishment is not present in the tale told by Nārada in first *sarga*. Nārada finishes the tale with telling its importance after describing rule of Rāma. Lord Brahmā also instructs Vālmīki in *Bālakāṇḍa*'s second *sarga* to describe that tale of Rāma which was narrated by Nārada.

वृत्तं कथय धीरस्य यथा ते नारदाच्छ्रुतम् ।
रहस्यं च प्रकाशं च यद्वृत्तं तस्य धीमतः ।।

vṛttaṁ kathaya dhīrasya yathā tē nāradācchrutam

rahasyaṁ ca prakāśaṁ ca yadvṛttaṁ tasya dhīmataḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 2, śloka 33*)

Then how did the hereafter or future life of Rāma show up the third of *sarga* of *Bālakāṇḍa*? If this *Uttarakāṇḍa* containing Sītā banishment and Shambhuka killing was added due to Vālmīki's mercy, it is not understood why this was not known to sage Nārada and Lord Brahmā. Did the all-knowing Nārada and Brahmā hide these tales that Vālmīki brought forth? Or was it a conspiracy by Nārada and Brahmā against Rāma, to only tell the partial tale, then Vālmīki would find out the rest himself!

The wise may think themselves. It is apparent that the poet who wrote the *Uttarakāṇḍa* also wrote *Bālakāṇḍa's* third and fourth *sargas* to validate *Uttarakāṇḍa.*

But this poet made a grave mistake. *Bālakāṇḍa's* third *sarga* mentions that the entire Rāmāyaṇa was seen by Vālmīki by his yogic capability.

तत्सर्वं धर्मवीर्येण यथावत् सम्प्रपश्यति ।

tatsarvaṁ dharmavīryēṇa yathāvat samprapaśyati

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 3, śloka 4*)

But it was not needed. Sītā was living in Vālmīki's *āshrama after her alleged banishment*, so the entire tale could have been heard from Sītā herself. *Uttarakāṇḍa* describes Śatrughna and later Rāma also arriving to Vālmīki's *āshrama*. The tale could have been heard from them too.

And the events of *Uttarakāṇḍa* that happened in front of him did not need to be seen using yogic capabilities.

It has been said earlier that many portions of *Bālakāṇḍa* are adulterations. Among them, third and fourth *sargas* are proven adulterations. Since *Bālakāṇḍa's* first and second *sargas* do not describe Shambhuka killing and Sītā banishment, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* containing these tales is also an adulteration, this is certainly concluded.

Doubt and clarification

A possibility arises that till the point Nārada told Rāma's tale to Vālmīki, that is Rāma's present and the further part was seen by Vālmīki using his yogic capabilities. It even seems to fit the *Uttarakāṇḍa* that describes future events in Rāma's life. A large section of populace believes that Vālmīki composed the Rāmāyaṇa first and later it all actually transpired. It does not apply to other *kaṇḍas* because those are told by Nārada, but *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not narrated by Nārada. So, it can be taken that Vālmīki composed it after seeing with yogic capabilities. *Uttarakāṇḍa* occurred later.

But it has to be remembered that the narration by Nārada contains even the description of Rāma's departing for heavenly abode. There also, Nārada talks about the future only. He says- "After ruling for eleven thousand year, Rāma will depart for Brahmaloka."

दशवर्षसहस्राणि दशवर्षशतानि च ।
रामो राज्यमुपासित्वा ब्रह्मलोकं प्रयास्यति ।।

daśavarṣasahasrāṇi daśavarṣaśatāni ca
rāmo rājyamupāsitvā brahmalokaṁ prayāṣyati

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, śloka 97*)

It is surprising that Nārada, who could see that Rāma would rule for eleven thousand years could not see the alleged Sītā banishment happening in future!

Also, to be noted are the descriptions of enormous charity by Rāma and Sītā in *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, Rāma's request to Lakṣamaṇa to become crown prince, Bharata being made the crown prince upon Lakṣamaṇa's refusal and the eleven-thousand-year rule of Rāma with his brothers.

दशवर्षसहस्राणि दशवर्षशतानि च ।
भ्रातृभिः सहितः श्रीमान् रामो राज्यमकारयत् ।।
daśavarṣasahasrāṇi daśavarṣaśatāni ca

bhrātṛbhiḥ sahitaḥ śrīmān rāmo rājyamakārayat

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 128, śloka 106*)

After this, Vālmīki describes the glory of Rāma's tale and the fruits of listening it and concludes *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. He does not give any indication of Sītā banishment. Where did Sītā's banishment come from then!

Revisiting *Uttarakāṇḍa*

Once again, let us focus on *Uttarakāṇḍa* and understand the proofs that show that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not the creation of sage Vālmīki at all. It is the creation of some other poet, written thousands of years later and added shrewdly to Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

In the first *sarga* of *Uttarakāṇḍa*, sages Kaushika, Yavakrita, Gārya, Gālava, Kanva, Swasti, Namuchi, Pramuchi, Agastya, Atri, Sumukha, Vimukha, Nrishanga, Kawasha, Dhaumya, Kausheya, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Vishvamitra, Gautama and Jamdagni arrive in Rāma's courtroom. First, they praise the might of Rāma that he protected the three worlds by slaying demons like Prahasta, Vikatāksha, Virupāksha, Mahodara, Durdhasha, Akampana, Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvaṇa. But then, they suddenly say that it is not such a big feat, rather the slaying of Meghanāda by Lakṣamaṇa is a big feat.

संख्ये तस्य न किंचित्तु रावणस्य पराभवः ।
द्वन्द्वयुद्धमनुप्राप्तो दिष्ट्या ते रावणिर्हतः ।।

saṅkhye tasya na kiṅchittu rāvaṇasya parābhavaḥ

dvandvayuddhamanuprāpto diṣṭyā te rāvaṇirhataḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, śloka 28*)

Rāma is surprised that what was so extraordinary about Meghanāda, that slaying him was a bigger feat than slaying Rāvaṇa.

This also surprises the reader of Rāmāyaṇa. Vālmīki has termed the slaying of Rāvaṇa as the final conclusion of the war on Lankā. He has also indicated that Kumbhakarṇa was the mightiest warrior of Lankā. Then what is the reason for this sudden denoting of Meghanāda as the mightiest one?

There is no answer found to this query in *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Rather, the sages start to narrate the tale of Rāvaṇa, which goes on for thirty-two *sargas*. In this, there is a small episode of Meghanāda where he obtains divyāstras and conquers Indra. But Rāvaṇa also had become powerful and invincible through similar boons. So, what is special about the Meghanāda episode?

Actually, there is nothing special in this. Rather, it is a kind of conspiracy. In the versions of Rāmāyaṇa by many sects, the slaying of Rāvaṇa has been described at the hands of Lakṣamaṇa only. That means there has been a long-standing effort to establish Lakṣamaṇa as an equal or even greater warrior than Rāma. Due to not being able to digest Rāma's incomparable strength and jealousy towards the exemplary poetic prowess, some envious poet has made this creation where a laughable attempt at showing Lakṣamaṇa as a mightier warrior than Rāma is done. In the Rāmāyaṇa narrations of some other sects, Rāma is a leper in some and in some other, Sītā is describes as Rāma's sister! Then, the banishment of Sītā is not look such a big matter compared to such major distortions.

Contrary descriptions- In Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* comes before *Uttarakāṇḍa.* The last part of *Yuddhakāṇḍa* describes the coronation of Rāma after his return to Ayodhyā and him taking the reins of the kingdom, returning of the *vānaras,* Vibhīṣaṇa to their respective kingdoms in Kishkindhā and Lankā and finally, the description of Rāma's rule and the glory of the epic.

Thus, the returning of *vānaras* to their kingdom has been described in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* before *Uttarakāṇḍa*. But in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, many *vānaras* like Sugrīva, Angada, Hanumāna, Jāmbavana (*richha)*, Susheṇa, Tāra, Nīla, Nala, Mainda, Dwiwida, Kumuda, Sharabha, Shatabali, Gandhamādana, Gaja, Gavāksha, Gavaya, Dhoomra, Rambha and Jyotimukha are sitting in Rāma's courtroom. Here, again there returning is described.

It is clear, that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not the episode happening after *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. If it was, how come the *vānaras* would still be present in Rāma's courtroom? It is clearly mentioned in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* that Vibhīṣaṇa and the *vānaras* including Sugrīva were honored by Rāma and then left for their respective kingdoms, after participating in Rāma's coronation.

नत्वा सर्वे महात्मानस्ततस्ते वानरर्षभाः ।
विसृष्टाः पार्थिवेन्द्रेण किष्किन्धां समुपागमन् ।।

natvā sarve mahātmānastataste vānararṣbhāḥ

visṛṣṭāḥ pḥrthivendreṇa kiṣkindhāṁ samupāgaman

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 128, śloka 88*)

Then where does the episode of their return show up again in *Uttarakāṇḍa*? It can only occur if *Uttarakāṇḍa* has been composed by some other poet.

Phalashruti

In most religious scriptures of the Hindu culture, the glory of the scripture is described towards its conclusion. The *Rāmarājya* or Rāma's rule that is described as the ideal kingdom till date, has been described by Vālmīki in the 128th *sarga* of *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. Also, he describes the glory of the epic in the *ślokas* numbered 107th to 125th of the same *sarga.*

He says in *Yuddhakāṇḍa*-

This is the foremost lyric derived from the speech of a sage, which is endowed with righteousness, conferring fame and longevity, fetching victory to kings and as written at first by Vālmīki. In this world, whoever person reads and listens to it is delivered from all misfortune.

धर्म्यं यशस्यमायुष्यं राज्ञां च विजयावहम् ।
आदिकाव्यमिदं चार्षं पुरा वाल्मीकिना कृतम् ।
यः श्रृणोति सदा लोके नरः पापात् प्रमुच्यते ।।

dharmyaṁ yaśasyamāyuṣyaṁ rājñāṁ ca vijayāvaham

ādikāvyamidaṁ purā vālmīkinā kṛtam

yaḥ śṛṇoti sadā loke naraḥ pāpāt pramucyate

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 128, ślokas 107-108*)

The last *śloka* of this last 128th *sarga* of *Yuddhakāṇḍa* is as follows-

आयुष्यमारोग्यकरं यशस्यं ।
सौभ्रातृकं बुद्धिकरं शुभं च ।
श्रोतव्यमेतन्नियमेन सद्भि ।
राख्यानमोजस्करमृद्धिकामैः ।।

āyuṣyamārogyakaraṁ yaśasyaṁ

saubhrātṛkaṁ buddhikaraṁ śubhaṁ ca

śrotavyametanniyamena sadbhi

rākhyānamojaskaramṛddhikāmaiḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 128, śloka 125*)

This means 'By listening to this highly meaningful and auspicious poetical composition, a person gets family-prosperity, augmentation in money and grain, superior women, exquisite happiness and all the acquisition of wealth on this earth. This narrative is to be listened invariably by good people, seeking for wisdom, longevity, health, fame, fraternity, intelligence, welfare and brilliance.'.

It is apparent that the tradition to conclude the sacred texts in Hindu culture with describing the glories of the scripture likely started from Vālmīki, because he is the foremost poet. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* clearly indicates that the epic

has concluded. Then where does *Uttarakāṇḍa* come from? The answer to this is that *Uttarakāṇḍa* was added later on.

Major contradiction- Let us look at a major contradiction in *Uttarakāṇḍa*. After her alleged banishing, Sītā is residing in Vālmīki's *āshrama*. Śatrughna is going to Madhupur for slaying Lavaṇāsura. On the way, he stays in Vālmīki's *āshrama*. The same night, Sītā gives birth to two sons who are named Lava and Kuśa. Upon receiving this news, Śatrughna goes to Sītā's hut and says- "O mother, it is such a good fortune!"

अर्धरात्रे तु शत्रुघ्नः शुश्राव सुमहत् प्रियम् ।
पर्णशालां ततो गत्वा मातर्दिष्ट्येति चाब्रवीत् ।।

ardharātre tu śatrughnaḥ śuśrāva sumahat priyam

parṇaśālāṁ tato gatvā mātardiṣṭyeti cābravīt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 66, śloka 12*)

Then he simply leaves. It is not clear what is the purpose of the poet in describing this episode.

After slaying Lavaṇāsura, Śatrughna establishes his kingdom by founding the city of Mathurā. Twelve years later when he returning, he stays at sage Vālmīki's *āshrama*. Kuśa and Lava have grown older and now sing Rāmāyaṇa. Śatrughna is surprised at hearing them sing. Śatrughna's soldiers ask him that he should find out who is singing the Rāmāyaṇa. In response, Śatrughna says that

such strange extraordinary things often happen in the *āshrama* of sages, it is inappropriate to inquire about it.

सैनिकानक्षमोऽस्माकं परिप्रष्टुमिहेदृशः|
आश्चर्याणि बहूनीह भवन्त्यस्याश्रमे मुनेः।।

sainikānakṣamoasmākaṁ paripraṣṭumihedyaśaḥ

āścaryāṇi bahūnīha bhavantyasyāśrme muneḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 71, śloka 23*)

Then, Śatrughna goes to Ayodhyā. There, he neither mentions Lava's and Kuśa's births nor the singing of Rāmāyaṇa.

The question arises, what was the purpose of mentioning Śatrughna's arrival to Vālmīki's *āshrama*? Why is the composer of *Uttarakāṇḍa* wishing to hide the identity of Lava and Kuśa? As per *Uttarakāṇḍa*, these Lava and Kuśa sing Rāmāyaṇa in Rāma's courtroom. When no one recognizes them, they introduce themselves. If this was the composer's intention, he could have taken a more logical approach to do so, rather than mentioning the tale of Śatrughna visiting Vālmīki's *āshrama*. It cannot be a mere coincidence that Śatrughna, after visiting Vālmīki's *āshrama* and learning of births of Lava and Kuśa doesn't inform Rāma for twelve years and when revisiting the *āshrama*, he leaves without meeting the Rāmāyaṇa singers. The composer does it on purpose, so that the identities of Lava and Kuśa are not revealed to Rāma before

they meet him in person. All this just to make the tale awestriking!

Pushpaka *vimāna* episode- The Pushpaka *vimāna* came in Rāvaṇa's possession by him snatching it from its original owner Kubera. After slaying Rāvaṇa, Rāma returned with Sītā, Lakṣamaṇa and the *vānaras* riding on the same Pushpaka *vimāna*.

It is described in *Sundarakāṇḍa*, that when Hanumāna goes to Lankā in search of Sītā, he so amazed by the Pushpaka *vimāna* that he goes to carefully inspect it twice.

Now, when Rāma, Sītā and others get off the Pushpaka *vimāna* after reaching Ayodhyā, Rāma orders the Pushpaka *vimāna* to return to his original owner Kubera and it goes back. This entire description is in *Yuddhakāṇḍa*.

But in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the same Pushpaka *vimāna* returns to Rāma with the message that Kubera has sent it to Rāma, since he won it in the battle with Rāvaṇa, so he is its owner now. Rāma accepts its ownership and says to Pushpaka to stay invisible in the sky and appear before him when he commands.

This is a very big contradiction in *Uttarakāṇḍa*. It is practically impossible to find someone as renounced as Rāma. First, he left his own kingdom for Bharata. Then, he rejected the offer of Nishāda to rule over his kingdom. After slaying Vāli, Sugrīva offered the kingdom of Kishkindhā to Rāma, but he rejected that as well. After

slaying Rāvaṇa, he coronated his brother Vibhīṣaṇa as the ruler of Lankā. Then, he returned the Pushpaka *vimāna* to Kubera.

Not only this, the fifth *sarga* of *Araṇyakāṇḍa* describes that when sage Sharbhanga offered to Rāma the eternal holy planets he had acquired through his penance, Rāma refused to accept it, saying that he would attain these planets himself.

Further in the seventh *sarga*, sage Sutīkshṇa also made the same proposal. He said to Rāma to stay with Sītā and Lakṣamaṇa in the heavenly planets acquired by him through his penance.

तेषु देवर्षिजुष्टेषु जितेशु तपसा मया ।
मत्प्रसादात् सभार्यस्त्वं विहरस्व सलक्ष्मणः ।।

tēṣu dēvarṣijuṣṭēṣu jitēśu tapasā mayā
matprasādāt sabhāryastvaṁ viharasva salakṣamaṇaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 7, śloka 12*)

Rāma again answers to this, “I alone can gain all those worlds, oh, great saint, I now seek a place to dwell here in this forest as indicated by you.”

अहमेवाहरिष्यामि स्वयं लोकान् महामुने ।
आवासं त्वहमिच्छामि प्रदिष्टमिह कानने ।।

ahamevāhariṣyāmi sarvān lōkān mahāmune
āvāsaṅ tvahamicchāmi pradiṣṭam iha kānane

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, *sarga 7, śloka 14*)

How come Rāma, who displays such character can accept the Pushpaka without any objections! Does this description in *Uttarakāṇḍa* not indicate a contradiction in his character? Can the same poet, sage Vālmīki, show two such differing characters of Rāma? Isn't Vālmīki himself established as a liar by doing so? The answer is, that this is not the case, since *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not his creation.

The biggest contradiction-*Uttarakāṇḍa* is riddled with contradictions compared to previous six *kāṇḍas*. Some have been described already. Let us come to the biggest one, which is the biggest evidence that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not a creation of Vālmīki. But before even saying or writing this, it is important to ask for forgiveness from Mother Sītā and Bhagawān Shri Rāma. Also is necessary to pronounce 'ShivaShambhu'.

In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, Mahāparshva who is one of the ministers of Rāvaṇa asks him, that why does he go to Sītā again and again to propose to her, he should just mate with her forcefully.

Rāvaṇa replies that he cannot do this. Once, he had raped a celestial nymph named Punjikasthalā, who then went weeping to Lord Brahmā. Then Lord Brahmā cursed him that in future if he mates forcibly with another woman, his head would break into a hundred pieces.

अद्यप्रभृति यामन्यां बलान्नारीं गमिष्यसि ।
तदा ते शतधा मूर्धा फलिष्यति न संशयः ।।

adyaprabhṛti yāmanyām balānnārīm gamiṣyasi

tadā te śatadhā mūrdhā faliṣyati na saṅśayaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 13, śloka 14*)

A similar tale is told in *Uttarakāṇḍa* but with different characters. There, the rape of Rambhā has been mentioned at the hands of Rāvaṇa. Rambhā was the would-be wife to Nalakubera, the son of Rāvaṇa's brother Kubera. Then, Nalakubera cursed Rāvaṇa that if he ever forcibly mates with a woman who does not wish him, his head would break into seven pieces.

यदा ह्यकामां कामार्तो धर्षयिष्यति योषितम् ।
मूर्धा तु सप्तधा तस्य शकलीभविता तदा ।।

yadā hyakāmāṁ kāmārto dharṣayiṣyati yoṣitam

mūrdhā tu saptadhā tasya śakalībhavitā tadā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 26, śloka 55*)

Note that the two curses are similar, with different characters. If Lord Brahmā cursed Rāvaṇa first for raping Punjikasthalā, then Rāvaṇa could not have raped Rambhā. If Nalakubera cursed Rāvaṇa first for raping Rambhā, he could not have raped Punjikasthalā.

Then how come the same poet, sage Vālmīki wrote about both curses. Did Vālmīki forget about Lord Brahmā's curse as he came to compose *Uttarakāṇḍa*? No, right?

Therefore, only one of the two curses can be true, which has been written by Vālmīki. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa,* Rāvaṇa himself says to have been cursed by Lord Brahmā. Whereas in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the composer narrates the curse of Nalakubera, not Rāvaṇa himself.

The curse of Lord Brahmā would be considered truthful, as it has been narrated by Rāvaṇa himself. This was written by Vālmīki in *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *Uttarakāṇḍa* comes in succession to *Yuddhakāṇḍa*.

Therefore, it is summarily proven that the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, that describes the curse given by Nalakubera cannot have been composed by Vālmīki.

For this entire episode, it essential to pronounce '*shātam pāpam*' i.e., clear the sins.

Another strange episode- There is another episode in *Uttarakāṇḍa* that seems very strange. When Lava and Kuśa sing Rāmāyaṇa in Rāma's courtroom, Rāma asks them about the creator of Rāmāyaṇa. They answer that sage Vālmīki is the creator of Rāmāyaṇa who has composed it in twenty-four thousand *ślokas* and one hundred minor tales. This sage has created five-hundred *sargas* from its beginning to end and six *kāṇḍas*. In addition, he has also composed *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

आदिप्रभृति वै राजन् पञ्चसर्गशतानि च ।
काण्डानि षट्कृतानीह सोत्तराणि महात्मना ।।

ādiprabhṛti vai rājan pañcasargaśatāni ca

kāṇḍāni ṣaṭkṛānīha sottarāṇi mahātmanā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 94, śloka 27*)

The same statement has been made in the third *sarga* of *Bālakāṇḍa*.

It is really odd, that in both places, first it has been said that this epic comprises of six *kāṇḍas* and then it is said that Vālmīki has also composed *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

In both these *ślokas*, why is not said straightway that this epic has been composed in seven *kāṇḍas* by sage Vālmīki, why mention the creation of *Uttarakāṇḍa* separately?

The straightforward answer to this is that the composer of *Uttarakāṇḍa* wants to use Vālmīki's name to give credibility to his creation. He is well aware of being far behind in poetic creativity than Vālmīki. On literary scale, *Uttarakāṇḍa* does not stand even at a fraction of that of the first six *kāṇḍas*. Therefore, he wants to say *Uttarakāṇḍa* to be created by Vālmīki to give it validity. Also, as the tale narrated by Nārada does not contain any episodes of *Uttarakāṇḍa*, therefore attempt is made to show it as Vālmīki's creation by separately mentioning it.

Difference of Indra and Agni in *agniparīkshā*- In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, when the accusation arises that how can Sītā be chaste despite staying under Rāvaṇa's captivity, then Rāma becomes extremely upset. He recalls the *agniparīkshā* given by Sītā in Lankā. But tale of *agniparīkshā* here is different. Here, Rāma says that Sītā was brought to him by Indra himself after *agniparīkshā*.

In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, Indra is nowhere mentioned in the *agniparīkshā*. There, *Agnideva* appears and glorifies Sītā's chastity. He talks to Rāma, then surrenders Sītā to him.

The question again arises that why were two different tales composed by the same poet sage Vālmīki for one episode? Did he have memory loss?

No. The simplest answer is that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not Vālmīki's creation at all.

Danḍakāraṇya- The description of Danḍakāraṇya is given in *Araṇyakāṇḍa,* where Rāma stayed with Sītā and Lakṣamaṇa for a major portion of his exile. There, he met sage Agastya and had cut off the nose and ears of the demoness Shūrpaṇakhā. There in Janasthāna, he slew an army of fourteen thousand demons including Khara, Dūshaṇa and Trishirā. There, Sītā was abducted by Rāvaṇa.

Now, a strange tale comes in *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Rāma visits Danḍakāraṇya again after slaying Shambhuka. There, he again meets sage Agastya. He asks sage Agastya about Danḍakāraṇya like a completely unfamiliar person. Sage

Agastya then narrates to him the history of Daṇḍakāraṇya and Janasthāna.

It is strange that despite spending a majority of his exile in Daṇḍakāraṇya, Rāma did not ask about its history from sage Agastya when he first met him then. Later on as well, he would have met him during the period of his stay. Daṇḍakāraṇya was not desolate to the extent that has been described in *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

Then how come Vālmīki has created such a difference? The answer is that Vālmīki did not create difference. *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not Vālmīki's creation.

Ahalyā's tale-Ahalyā's tale has different narrations in *Bālakāṇḍa* and *Uttarakāṇḍa*. It is told in *Bālakāṇḍa* that Indra had come to Ahalyā disguised as her husband sage Gautama. Ahalyā had recognized him. Still, thinking proudly that –"Oh! Indra the king of *devatās* desires me.", consented to mate with Indra.

In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, it is first said that Indra raped Ahalyā. Later it is clarified that Indra had disguised himself as sage Gautama and had then mated with Ahalyā. But here, there is no mention of Ahalyā's consent.

But the curse that was given by sage Gautama to Indra has major differences in its description in *Bālakāṇḍa* and *Uttarakāṇḍa*. In *Bālakāṇḍa*, Gautama curses Indra - "Oh, dirty-minded Indra, taking hold of my form you have effectuated this unacceptable deed, whereby you shall

become infecund." When that great-souled sage Gautama spoke that way with rancor, the testicles of the cursed Thousand-eyed Indra fell down onto ground at that very moment.

मम रूपं समास्थाय कृतवानसि दुर्मते ।
अकर्तव्यमिदं यस्मात् विफलस्त्वं भविष्यसि ।।

गौतमेनैवमुक्तस्य सुरोषेण महात्मना ।
पेततुर्वृषणौ भूमौ सहस्राक्षस्य तत्क्षणात् ।।

mama rūpaṁ samāsthāya kṛtavānasi durmate
akartavyamidaṁ tasmāt viphalastvaṁ bhaviṣyasi

gautamēnaivamuktasya surōṣēṇa mahātmanā
pētaturvṛṣaṇau bhūmau sahasrākṣasya tatkṣaṇāt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 48, ślokas 27-28*)

Later, the higher *devatās* equipped Indra with sheep testicles.

But in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the curse is different. Here, Gautama said as he cursed Indra," Vāshava! Shakra! You have fearlessly raped my wife; therefore, you would fall in the hands of your enemies in war. You with corrupted mind, because of this sin of a king like you, this lusty behavior will become common in the humankind as well, of which you are the cause without doubt. Whoever would commit sin out of lust, that man would bear half of that sin and the other half would be borne by you, for you are the originator of it. Doubtlessly, your position would not be

steady. Whoever attains the position of the king of the demigods would not be able to hold it. I have given this curse for all Indras." These words were uttered by the sage.

यस्मान्मे धर्षिता पत्नी त्वया वासव निर्भयात् ।
तस्मात् त्वं समरे शक्र शत्रुहस्तं गमिष्यसि ।।

अयं तु भावो दुर्बुद्धे यस्त्वयेह प्रवर्तितः|
मानुषेष्वपि लोकेषु भविष्यति न संशयः।।

तत्रार्धं तस्य यः कर्ता त्वय्यर्धं निपतिष्यति|
न च ते स्थावरं स्थानं भविष्यति न संशयः।।

यश्च यश्च सुरेन्द्रः स्याद् ध्रुवः स न भविष्यति|
एष शापो मया मुक्त इत्यसौ त्वां तदाब्रवीत्।।

yasmānme dharṣitā patnī tvayā vāsava nirbhayāt

tasmāt tvaṁ śakra śatruhastaṡṁ gamiṣyasi

ayaṁ tu bhāvo durbuddhe yastvayeha pravartitaḥ

mānuṣeṣvapi lokeṣu bhaviṣyati na sanśayaḥ

tatrārdhaṁ tasya yaḥ kartā tvayyardhaṁ nipatiṣyati

na ca te sthāvaraṁ sthānaṁ bhaviṣyati na sanśayaḥ

yaśca yaśca surendraḥ syād dhruvaḥ sa na bhaviṣyati

eṣa śāpo mayā mukta ityasau tvaṁ tadābravīt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa, sarga 30, ślokas 32-35*)

Our question that only, that how come one poet has composed two different versions of the same episode in one epic. The answer is again, that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not a creation of Vālmīki at all.

Hanumāna episode

In *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, the tale of Hanumāna's childhood is described. The narration is at the point where all the *vānaras* and *bhālūs* have reached the ocean coast. Sampāti, the brother of vulture king Jatāyu, informs them that past the ocean is the city of Lankā where Rāvaṇa has held Sītā captive in Aśoka Vātikā. The question then arose that who can cross the ocean to reach Lankā. All *vānaras* and *bhālūs* describe the extent of their respective strengths, but none of them is confident that they would be able to cross the hundred *yojana* wide ocean to reach Lankā and then return.

So far, Hanumāna is quiet. Jāmbavān, the leader of *rīchhas,* reminds Hanumāna of his strength. In that sequence, he describes first Hanumāna's birth and then his childhood. He says that one day, Hanumāna saw the rising sun in the forest and mistaking it for a fruit, he made a long jump towards the sky to eat it. After jumping three hundred *yojanas* high, he was unfazed by the sun's heat. When he reached closed to the sun, Indra struck Hanumāna angrily with his thunderbolt. Then, Hanumāna's left chin or *hanu* was fractured. Thus, his name became famous as Hanumāna. Seeing his son being struck by the thunderbolt,

his father Vāyudeva became angry and stopped the flow of air. This caused mayhem in the three worlds. Then all the deities including Lord Brahmā placated Vāyudeva. When Vāyudeva was pleased, then Lord Brahmā gave boon to Hanumāna that he would not be killed by any weapon in battleground. Indra, seeing Hanumāna unfazed after being struck from the thunderbolt was pleased with him and blessed him with death at the time of his choosing, i.e., Hanumāna will choose when he would want to die.

प्रसादिते च पवने ब्रह्मा तुभ्यम् वरम् ददौ ।
अशस्त्रवध्यतां तात समरे सत्यविक्रम ।।

वज्रस्य च निपातेन विरुजं त्वां समीक्ष्य च ।
सहस्रनेत्रः प्रीतात्मा ददौ ते वरमुत्तमम् ।।
स्वच्छंदश्च मरणं तव स्यादिति वै प्रभो ।

prasāditē ca pavanē brahmā tubhyam varam dadau
aśastravadhyatāṁ tāta samara satavikrama

vajrasya ca nipātēna virujaṁ tvāṁ samīkṣya ca
sahasranētraḥ prītātmā dadau tē varamuttamam

svacchandataśca maraṇaṁ tava syāditi vai prabho

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, *sarga 66, ślokas 27-29*)

The same tale is in *Uttarakāṇḍa* as well. Here, it has been detailed a bit more. There, a struggle ensues between Hanumāna and Rāhu over who would swallow the sun. Taking a beating from Hanumāna, Rāhu complains to Indra that the right to swallow the sun has been given to him,

then how come this *vānara* can do that. Then, Indra strikes Hanumāna with this thunderbolt. The thunderbolt struck Hanumāna on his chin, causing his chin to bend. Further ahead, it is described that Hanumāna died from this strike from Indra's thunderbolt. Then, Vāyudeva went in a cave with his dead son and stopped the flow of air. This caused a mayhem in the entire world. Then all the demigods with Lord Brahmā in front came to Vāyudeva. Lord Brahmā touched the dead Hanumāna. Just as dried crops become green upon being irrigated with water, the same way the dead Hanumāna came back to life after Brahmā touched his body.

स्पृष्टमात्रस्ततः सोऽथ सलीलं पद्मजन्मना ।
जलसिक्तं यथा सस्यं पुनर्जीवितमाप्तवान् ।।

spṛṣṭmātrastataḥ so atha salīlaṁ padmajanmanā

jalasiktaṁ yathā sasyaṁ punarjīvitamāptvān

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 36, śloka 4*)

Thereafter, Indra gave the boon to Hanumāna that he would not be killed by the thunderbolt.

अहमस्य प्रदास्यामि परमं वरमद्भुतम् ।
इतः प्रभृति वज्रस्य ममावध्यो भविष्यति ।।

ahamasya pradāsyāmi paramaṁ varamadbhutam

itaḥ prabhṛti vajrasya mamāvadhyo bhaviṣyati

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 36, śloka 12*)

Lord Brahmā blessed Hanumāna to be a long living, great soul and unkillable by the *Brahmadaṇḍa*.

दीर्घायुश्च महात्मा च ब्रह्मा तं प्राब्रवीद् वचः ।
सर्वेषां ब्रह्मदण्डानामवध्योऽयं भविष्यति ।।

dīrghāyuśca mahatma ca brahma taṁ p*rābravīd vacaḥ*

sarveṣāṁ brahmadaṇḍānāmavadhyo ayaṁ bhaviṣyati

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 36, śloka 21*)

There is a big difference here. It is important to note that in *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, Hanumāna suffers from a bent chin from the strike from Indra's thunderbolt, but no other ill effect. In fact, Indra is pleased upon seeing Hanumāna being unfazed even after being struck by his thunderbolt. But in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, Hanumāna dies from the strike of Indra's thunderbolt.

Also, there is a difference in the boons given to Hanumāna. In *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, Indra gives the boon of choice death, but in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, he only says that in future, Hanumāna would not be slain by the thunderbolt.

Can one poet can write such different things about the same episode? No, right! These differences are there because *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not a creation of Vālmīki.

The shallowness of *Uttarakāṇḍa*

It seems as if the entire *Uttarakāṇḍa* has been composed to negate the exemplary qualities displayed Rāma. It is in

this *kāṇḍa*, that he slays Shambhuka, whereas earlier in *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, he embraces Guha, king of the śūdra Nishādas.

In this *kāṇḍa* only, Rāma banishes Sītā for pleasing the public, whereas earlier, he does not heed to the requests made by the same public and goes to the forest in exile.

Again, we see that Rāma liberates that Ahalyā and brings her back into society, who had knowingly cheated on her husband with a man disguised as her husband. Then we see, that he honors Rumā, who was forcibly violated by a man not her husband, by reuniting her with her husband. But here in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, he abandons his wife Sītā, who has proven her chastity.

Uttarakāṇḍa demeans the high and blotless character of Rāma. Vālmīki has shown Rāma's character as *purushottama* or the most superior among men. But again, he himself is demeaning that same character. This contradiction itself is clear evidence that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not Vālmīki's creation. It has been proven with other proofs previously in this work. This contradiction should also be considered a concrete proof.

Someone could object- Yes, Rāma's character fell low and Vālmīki wrote it objectively, staying neutral. But Vālmīki has already described Rāma's departure to the heavenly abode after his rule in Ayodhyā in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* itself. Then who is the Rāma and who is the Vālmīki in *Uttarakāṇḍa*?

Therefore, *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not a creation of Vālmīki at all.

Contemporariness of Vālmīki and Rāma

Vālmīki and Rāma are contemporaries, there is absolutely no doubt about it. And there is no need to accept *Uttarakāṇḍa* as evidence for proving that. It is written in *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* itself, that when Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣamaṇa travel out of Ayodhyā towards the forest for exile, then they go to meet sage Vālmīki in his *āshrama* in Chitrakoota with folded hands out of respect for him.

इति सीता च रामश्च लक्ष्मणश्च कृताञ्जलिः ।
अभिगम्याश्रमम् सर्वे वाल्मीकिमभिवादयन् ।।

iti sītā ca rāmaśca lakṣamaṇaśca kṛtāñjaliḥ
abhigamyāśramam sarve vālmīkimabhivādayan

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 56, śloka 16*)

They stay there as they prepare their hut in Chitrakoota. Therefore, this is entirely proven that Vālmīki is contemporary of Rāma.

So, it appears completely true that no incident of Sītā's banishment occurred in knowledge of Vālmīki. Had it occurred, he would have written about it. A merciful, fearless, and capable poet like him would not have stayed quiet in the face of such a major event happening. Vālmīki has very clearly described the moments of mental weakness shown by Rāma. For example, he describes Rāma's display of sadness upon losing the kingdom of

Ayodhyā, Rāma blaming Kaikeyī at times for his misfortunes and execrate her, Rāma being rendered unconscious by Rāvaṇa in the battlefield, Rāma getting disturbed out of grief for Lakṣamaṇa and Sītā, Rāma expressing doubts whether victory would be achieved in war with Rāvaṇa, expressing extreme anger- all such events have been described innately by Vālmīki without any scruples.

Another point is, Vālmīki is a great sage, not a poet in the courtroom of Rāma. Third, he has lived long after Rāma goes back to *Brahmāloka*, that is how he is able to describe the eleven-thousand-year rule of Rāma. Therefore, it was not any issue for him to write about Sītā's banishment and Shambhuka slaying.

But he did not write these, so the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the incidents of Sītā's banishment and Shambhuka slaying did not occur.

***Uttarakāṇḍa* is a mixture of many scriptures**- Now we come to a different aspect. It is proven that *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not a creation of foremost poet sage Vālmīki. But then, is it the creation of a single poet?

To answer this, let us look at a specific incident. In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, when Sītā goes inside the earth, Rāma grieves as he remembers Sītā. Then Lord Brahmā comes to him and reminds him of his Nārāyana form and says that please now hear out about your future, Vālmīki has already

composed it. But then, Lord Brahmā says a strange thing, that the epic that remains to happen is *Uttarakāṇḍa,* you please hear it from the sages.

उत्तरं नाम काव्यस्य शेषमत्र महायशः ।
तच्छृणुष्व महातेज ऋषिभिः सार्धमुत्तमम् ।।

uttaraṁ nāma kāvyasya śeṣamatra mahāyaśaḥ

tacchṛṇuṣva mahāteja riṣibhiḥ sārdhamuttamam

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 98, śloka 21*)

The question arises, that if *Uttarakāṇḍa* starts from here onwards, then the *ślokas* from *sarga* 1 to 97 and the first twenty *ślokas* of *sarga* 98 belong to what *kāṇḍa*?

The reality is, that the tale from here onwards belongs to some other scripture, that has been added to *Uttarakāṇḍa*. This is similar to how the tale of Rāvaṇa raping the celestial nymph Rambhā and then being cursed by Nalakubera of Rāvaṇa's head breaking into seven pieces if he forcibly mates with an unwilling woman in future; is present in Rāvaṇasamhitā as well and has been copied from there and added to *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Otherwise, that Vālmīki who has described in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* itself of the curse on Rāvaṇa by Lord Brahmā for raping Punjikasthalā, that should he rape another woman in future, his head would break into hundred pieces; how could the same Vālmīki narrate Nalakubera's curse on Rāvaṇa upon raping Rambhā, when as per Brahmā's curse, Rāvaṇa could not have raped the

unwilling Rambhā! Had he done that, his head would have broken into hundred pieces as per Brahmā's curse.

The detailed descriptions of Rāvaṇa, Vasishtha, Hanumāna etc. in *Uttarakāṇḍa* also further show that these were different works, which were then combined and added into Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

If the meaning of the phrase '*sabhavishyam sahottaram'* in the fourth *sarga* of *Bālakāṇḍa* is taken as '*Uttarakāṇḍa* including the future', then how come only the future has been named *Uttarakāṇḍa* in *sarga* 98, *śloka* 21 of *Uttarakāṇḍa*? This is a big contradiction between the phrases '*sabhavishyam sahottaram'* and '*uutaram kāvyasya sheshamatra mahāyashah'*.

Really, the decline of the poetic prowess of Vālmīki has also been attempted to show in *Uttarakāṇḍa* in addition to an attempt to show decline in Rāma's character. This can only be understood by careful examination.

Conclusion

Concluding, it can only be said that Rāma's boundless love for Sītā, Rāma's natural mercy towards women, contemporariness of Vālmīki and Rāma and the factuality of the first six *kāṇḍas* of Rāmāyaṇa being composed by him and *Uttarakāṇḍa* not being composed by him, all these proofs show that the tale of Sītā's banishment by Rāma is entirely false.

Saying that Rāma banished Sītā is unjust to Rāma, unjust to Sītā, unjust to Vālmīki and unjust to all those Rāma's subjects in whose mouths the aspersions towards Sītā were put. The remedy of all these injustices is to show that the tale of Rāma banishing Sītā is false and that has been done in this investigation.

We should accept that just like Rāma ruled Ayodhyā as king and served the public after returning from exile in forest and from Lankā, Sītā also ruled Ayodhyā as queen and served the public. And we should assert it proudly.

When was *Uttarakāṇḍa* added?

A question arises that when was *Uttarakāṇḍa* added to the Rāmāyaṇa? Vālmīki is the foremost poet and a contemporary of Rāma. Rāma's period is told to be towards the end of *tretāyuga*, which is around twelve lakh years ago as per *shāstras*. The year of creation of the *Rāmasetu* estimated by NASA is around same time. Since then, it has been passed on through generations as *shruti* or tradition of hearing.

The literary style of *Uttarakāṇḍa* is that used in *purāṇas*. The creator of *purāṇas* is sage Vedavyāsa. His period is considered to be towards the end of *dwāparayuga* which is around six thousand years ago as per *shāstras*. If *Uttarakāṇḍa* can be considered a creation of the times when the *purāṇas* were starting to get composed, it can still not be considered older than ten thousand years ago.

Thus, there is a time gap of at least eleven and a half lakh years between the first six *kāṇḍas* of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. In such a large time frame, multitudes of variations in the tale of Rāma would have been popularized among the common folk. Taking advantage of this, the composer of *Uttarakāṇḍa* might have composed it in the name of Vālmīki and added it to Rāmāyaṇa.

Why did the tale of Sītā's banishment even came up?

A question can also arise that why did the tale of Sītā's banishment arise at all. This can be understood by acknowledging that the nature of tales changes with times, this is especially true of folktales. People give new facets to such tales based on their situation, environment and time.

For example, we have faith that Rāma worshipped the Goddess Kātyāyani or Durgā, received the boon of attaining victory and then slew Rāvaṇa on the *Dashami* or tenth day of the *shuklapaksha* or waxing moon fortnight of the Āshwin month and that is why, we celebrate the festival Dashaharā.

In reality, there is no description of this in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, where it is described that upo the advice of sage Agastya, Rāma chants the hymn of the Sun God one hundred eight times and then he slays Rāvaṇa. These hymns are given in the 105th *sarga* of *Yuddhakāṇḍa* with the name 'Ādityahridaya'. These hymns are in the worship of the Sun. A few are given below.

नम उग्राय वीराय सारङ्गाय नमो नमः ।
नमः पद्मप्रबोधाय प्रचण्डाय नमोऽस्तु ते ।।

ब्रह्मेशानाच्युतेशाय सूर्यायादित्यवर्चसे ।
भास्वते सर्वभक्षाय रौद्राय वपुषे नमः ।।

तमोघ्नाय हिमघ्नाय शत्रुघ्नायामितात्मने ।
कृतघ्नघ्नाय देवाय ज्योतिषां पतये नमः ।।

nama ugrāya vīrāya sāraṅgā namo namaḥ

namaḥ padmaprabodhāya pracandāya namo astu te

brahmeśānācyuteśāya sūryāyādityavarchase

bhāsvate sarvabhakṣāya raudrāya vapuṣe namaḥ

tamoghnāya himaghnāya śatrughnāyāmitātmane

kṛtaghnaghnāya devāya jyotiṣāṁ pataye namaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 105, śloka 18-20*)

Which means, “Hail to you, the fierce one, hail to you the Vāliant one! Hail to you, the one with variegated colours! Hail to you, the awakener of the louts, hail to you, the furious one! Hail to you, the ruler of Brahma, Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu the infallible, the sun-god, the light indwelling the solar orb, the resplendent one, the devourer of all, appearing in form of Rudra. Hail to you, the dispeller of darkness, the destroyer of cold, the exterminator of foes, the one whose extent in immeasurable, the destroyer of the ungrateful, the god, who is the ruler of all lights..”

Rāma gets filled with joy after reciting 19 such hymns three times and then he slays Rāvaṇa in battle.

The narration of Rāma worshipping the Goddess Bhagavati comes in *ShrimadBhagvata Mahāpurāṇa* and in *ShrimadDeviBhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. This is a tale composed by the Shākta sect to glorify their foremost worshipped deity, Goddess Bhagavati, that Rāma worshipped the Goddess to gain the power to kill Rāvaṇa. It is said in *DeviBhāgavada* that the Goddess should be worshipped as the causeless cause within the Sun.

If this is accepted, then by logical deduction, it is implied that by worshipping the Sun, Rāma worshipped the Goddess.

This is how tales change with time. There are various tales of Sītā banishment in different regions. In some tales, Kausalyā, in some tales the other wives of Rāma, in some tales Shāntā, in some tales Shuka-Shuki are held responsible for Sītā's banishment and so on.

Investigation of the origins of Sītā's banishment tale

Now, let us investigate into the origins of this false tale of Sītā's banishment. While travelling in train, the author was once told by a female doctor that in ancient times, the women of royal families went to their *gurukulas* for delivering their babies because the soothing environment of a *gurukula* is very suitable for the childbirth. Factors such as day and night, the chanting of the Vedic hymns,

discourses on *dharma* and valor, beautiful natural surroundings, services to the pregnant lady etc. lead to very positive impact on both the mother and the newborn baby. The female doctor said that based on her professional experience and knowledge, she found the practice of staying in *gurukula* close to the time of childbirth a very suitable practice, i.e. her medical profession accepts this.

The author was startled upon hearing this. He realized that Sītā would have gone to Vālmīki's *āshrama* for delivery, Lakṣamaṇa likely would have taken her. In the midst of this happening, someone might have cast some aspersion about Sītā. Even today, the public keeps gossiping about people of excellent character.

In *Uttarakāṇḍa* itself, there is a tale of a pregnant Sītā expressing the desire to go and see Vālmīki's *āshrama*. The desire of a pregnant woman is called '*dohada*' in Sanskrit. It is considered the duty of her husband and her husband's family to fulfill any such desire. Upon Sītā expressing her desire, Rāma laughs happily and says that she would be sent to the *āshrama* the next day. Till this point, Rāma is unaware of any gossips regarding Sītā. But right in the next *sarga*, it has been said that there was gossip happening about Sītā.

So, connecting all the dots, the tale that forms is that Sītā would have gone to the *āshrama* to see the forest and for her delivery. While she is away, some gossip would have

arisen about her. The poet of *Uttarakāṇḍa* made a hodgepodge out of these two things to stitch the tale that Rāma banished Sītā due to being upset with the public gossip.

But what do we care about this! We have shown that the tale of Sītā's banishment by Rāma is not composed by Vālmīki at all and that it is categorically false based on evidences present.

Praise to glories of Vālmīki!

Praise to the glories of Sītā and Rāma!

Praise to the glories of Rāmāyaṇa!

Shambhuka Killing by Rāma:

Another False Tale

There are two major objections to the ideal character of *Bhagawān* Rāma- Banishment of Mother Sītā and the killing of Shambhuka.

Attempts have been made by distinguished scholars of the *shāstras* to hold the above two as justifiable acts. They believe that what *Bhagawān* Rāma did was his *lilā* and there is no room for any doubt or anything incorrect.

One segment is that which is always busy fault-finding with Rāma, declaring him to be anti-woman and anti-*śūdra*.

In reality, it is required to look at these episodes from an objective viewpoint in a logical manner. So, let us examine the veracity of the killing of Shambhuka by Rāma.

This tale comes in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. It goes as follows-

A *Brāhmaṇa's* son died in the kingdom of Rāma. The *Brāhmaṇa* came with the dead body of his son to the royal doorsteps of Rāma's palace and started to speak as he cried-

"My son has died, then the cause for it must be some great sin committed by the king Rāma. When the subjects are not served as per the customs by the king due to his fault, then

they have to face such misfortune. Subjects die before their time only because of the sinful behavior of the king. The children living in other kingdoms have no fear of death. Therefore, you bring this dead child back to life, otherwise I and my wife will give our lives at your doorsteps itself."

Rāma heard the wailing of the *Brāhmaṇa*. He asked the sages Mārkandeya, Maudgalya, Vāmadeva, Kāshyapa, Kātyāyana, Jābāli, Gautama, Nārada, Vasishth etc. about the reason for the death of the *Brāhmaṇa's* child. Then Nārada told him that śūdras should not do penance, that is the *dharma* of the times (*tretāyuga*). But it seems that some ill-minded śūdra is doing penance at the boundary of the kingdom, which has resulted in the death of the child of this *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore, please look for that śūdra and stop his penance which is against the duty of the times. That will give new life to this dead child.

Hearing thus from Nārada, Rāma boarded the Pushpaka *vimāna* in search of that śūdra. In the south direction, he saw the śūdra Shambhuka doing penance as he hung upside down. He asked Shambhuka the reason for his penance. That ascetic Shambhuka said-

"I am born in a family of śūdras and want to go to the heavens in my body."

Hearing this, Rāma, using his sowrd, decapitated Shambhuka. The demigods like Indra, Agni etc. in the skies started to praise this act of Rāma.

Any alert reader of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa would naturally find this tale looking suspect and concocted with the intention to tarnish the glory of Rāma.

Contradiction

If it was *Rāmarājya* or the rule of Rāma, then the child of the *brāhmaṇa* should not have died in the first place. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, it is clearly described-

The elderly did not have to do the last rites of children.

न च स्म वृद्धा बालानां प्रेतकार्याणि कुर्वते ।।

na ca sma vṛddhā bālānāṁ pretak*āryāṇi kurvate*

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 128, śloka 100*)

Then how come, the *brāhmaṇa's* child died?

It is clear that this tale has been concocted with the sole intention of showing fault in the rulership of Rāma.

Again, it is written in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* itself that the people of all four *varnas brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriyas, vaishyas* and *śūdras* were free of greed. They were all satisfied doing the duties within their *varna*. All were engaged in doing the fulfillment of their duty.

ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्याः शूद्रा लोभविवर्जिताः ।
स्वकर्मसु प्रवर्तन्ते तुष्टाः स्वैरेव कर्मभिः ।।

brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriya vaishyaḥ śūdrā lobhavivarjitāḥ

svakarmasu pravartante tuṣṭhāḥ svaireva karmabhiḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, *sarga 128, śloka 105*)

Then how come, Shambhuka developed the greed of wanting to go the heavens in his body?

Prohibition from entering the heavens with physical body

It was a common rule that no one can go to the heavens with his material body. Rāma's ancestor Trishanku himself wanted to go to the heavens with his body, but *guru* Vasishtha declined to perform *yajña* for this purpose, saying that nobody can go to the heavens with their body. Then Trishanku had the *yajna* done by Vishvāmitra who harbored jealousy towards Vasishtha, instead. Trishanku had even started to rise towards the heavens, but started to fall back down upon being stuck by Indra's thunderbolt. Then Vishvāmitra had built a world in the skies specially for Trishanku. This tale is in *Bālakāṇḍa* of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

This is what goes against the validity of Shambhuka's desire. His desire to go to the heavens in his body was as wrong as was the desire of Rāma's ancestor Trishanku.

Shambhuka says in *Uttarakāṇḍa*-

शूद्रयोन्यां प्रजातोऽस्मि तप उग्रं समास्थितः ।
देवत्वं प्रार्थये राम सशरीरो महायशः ।।

न मिथ्याहं वदे राम देवलोकजिगीषया ।
शूद्रं मां विद्धि काकुत्स्थ शम्बूकं नाम नामतः ।।

śūdronyāṁ prajāto asmi tapa ugraṁ samāsthitaḥ

dvatvaṁ prāthaye rāma saśarīro mahāśayaḥ

na mitthyāhaṁ vade rāma devlokjigīṣayā

śūdraṁ māṁ viddhi kākustha shambūkaṁ nāma nāmataḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Uttarakāṇḍa*, *sarga 76, ślokas 2-3*)

Which means "I, who is born in the family of a *śūdra* is doing severe penance. Rāma! I desire to enter achieve the powers of a *devatā* with my physical body. I do not lie; I want to conquer the heavens."

The moment this desire takes birth in Shambhuka's heart, *Rāmarājya* or Rāma's rulership is tarnished, because it has been clearly described about it that people were free of greed. The people belonging to all four *varnas* were satisfied doing the duties within their *varna*. This also points to the deduction that this tale has been coined to blemish Rāma's rulership.

In this tale, the conspiracy of demeaning sage Vālmīki has also been done. As per this tale, he contradicts his own words about Rāma's rulership, when he is the foremost poet of Sanskrit, second to none. The theme of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa is about being steadfast in following the true *dharma*.

Tale narrated by Nārada

In the first *sarga* of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, divine sage Nārada narrates the entire tale of Rāma in a summary to the foremost poet sage Vālmīki. This tale narrated in one hundred *ślokas*, Nārada mentions every major event in Rāma's life- From his birth to the establishment of his rulership, its efficacy and Rāma departing to his heavenly abode with all his subjects. Again, Nārada also explains the glories of listening to this tale.

But nowhere does Nārada narrates Sītā's banishment or Shambhuka killing. It is amply clear that these incidents did not happen.

Now observe this contradiction that the same Nārada incites Rāma to kill the *śūdra* Shambhuka.

If Rāma killed Shambhuka, then this event should be well known to Nārada. So, he should have narrated this incident to sage Vālmīki at the time of narrating Rāma's tale to him. But he did not do so.

It simply means that Shambhuka's killing is an imaginary tale added much later to Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

It is relevant to state here that Nārada did not say anything about Rāma being an incarnation, but very devotionally he has predicted the excellence of Rāma's rulership. He says-

न पुत्रमरणं किंचिद्द्रक्ष्यन्ति पुरुषाः क्वचित् ।

na putramaraṇaṅ kiñciddrakṣyanti puruṣāḥ kvacit

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 1, śloka 91*)

Which means, 'In Rāma's rule, parents would not ever witness their children's death'.

Then how did the *brāhmaṇa*'s son die?

Noteworthy question

Why did only a *brāhmaṇa's* son die from Shambhuka's penance and not of some *kṣatriya*, *vaishya* or *śūdra*? There would have been sons of other *brāhmaṇas,* why did not they also die? If the penance of *śūdra* Shambhuka was wrongful, then it was wrongful for all and should have affected all. Then why did only one *brāhmaṇa*'s son die? It is also not described that this *brāhmaṇa* had any acquaintance with Shambhuka in the past.

It is clear that a conspiracy has been woven with this tale of Shambhuka killing to demean Rāma, Vālmīki and *brāhmaṇas* and the conspirator poet succeeded too.

A big section of the society began to hate Rāma, the supreme ideal among men.

Vālmīki, a foremost poet respected by the whole society got restricted to one or two segments.

And *brāhmaṇas* started to get blamed by every section for its own shortcomings.

The sublimity of Rāmāyaṇa, the incomparable tale of truth's triumph, was cast aside.

It is time to break this vicious cycle.

Rāma's love for *śūdras*

Now we will look at the behavior of Rāma towards *śūdras*.

When Rāma is exiled and starts to leave for forest, all the servants become sorrowful with teary eyes. Rāma mindful of his exile duration, gives each of them enough money for their livelihood for fourteen years. He says to them that till he returns; they should guard his and Lakṣamaṇa's houses in their respective turns.

अथाब्रवीद् बाष्पगलांस्तिष्ठतश्चपोजीविनः ।
स प्रदाय बहु द्रव्यमेकैकस्योपजीवनम् ।।

लक्ष्मणस्य च यद्वेश्म गृहम् च यदिदं मम ।
अशून्यम् कार्यमेकैकं यावदागमनं मम ।।

atha bravīd bāṣpagalāṅstiṣṭhataścapojīvinaḥ
sa pradaya bahu dravyamekaikasyopajīvanam

lakṣamaṇasya ca yadvēśma gṛham ca yadidam mama
aśūnyam kāryamekaikam yāvadāgamanam mama

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 32, ślokas 24-25*)

Who were these servants?

Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas or *vaishyas*?

No, they were *śūdras* as service was their responsibility. Servants are *śūdras* only. In the above incident, was Rāma being affectionate or insulting to them?

Rāma and Lakṣamaṇa's houses could have been guarded by some other servants or by the royal servants of king Daśaratha, but Rāma gave preference to his servants. He gave them the compensation for fourteen years at once and gave them employment by having them guard his home.

It is wrong to say that *śūdras* were downtrodden in the society. Let us see an example.

The chariot drivers of those times were called *sūta.* They made chariots as well as drove them. They were *śūdra* by *varna*. But chariot drivers shared essentially a friendly relationship with the chariot riders. It is revealed upon reading Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa that Sumantra, a chariot driver, was also minister to king Daśaratha. It is written

तच्छ्रुत्वा मन्त्रिणो वाक्यं राजा मन्त्रिणमब्रवीत्॥

tachrutvā mantriṇo vākyaṁ rājā mantriṇambravīt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 14, śloka 64*)

Which means, '…upon listening to the minister's (Sumantra) words, the king (Daśaratha) said to the minister (Sumantra)'.

Another *sūta* named Chitraratha, who was also a minister. It is written-

सूतश्चित्ररथश्चार्यः सचिवः सुचिरोषितः।

sūtaścitrarathaścāryaḥ sacivaḥ sucirōṣitaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 32, śloka 17*)

Which means, 'The charioteer called Chitraratha is also the excellent minister who has been serving the royal family since long.'

If *śūdras* were untouchables, then how come they became ministers.

Sumantra was respected by Daśaratha and the four brothers including Rāma. Sumantra heavily chastised Kaikeyī over getting Rāma exiled. He even said to her that she was pitiless like her mother.

Could a low-class person chastise the royal queen?

Facts clearly state that *śūdras* were treated as equals and were made ministers too. That fraudulent author killed the essence of that harmonious society by coining the tale of Shambhuka's killing by Rāma. And used Vālmīki as excuse!

How pained would foremost poet sage Vālmīki's soul be!

Clearly, Rāma has shown deep respect for *śūdra* Sumantra. When Rāma went to forest with Sītā and Lakṣamaṇa, it was Sumantra who served as their charioteer and took them to the bank of river Ganga. There, Rāma requested him to return. Sumantra began crying upon hearing this and asked Rāma's permission to stay with him. Then Rāma says-

“I do not see any one who is as great a friend of the Ikshvakus as you are. (Pray) act in such a way that king Daśaratha may not lament about me”

इक्ष्वाकूनां त्वया तुल्यं सुहृदं नोपलक्षये ।
यथा दशरथो राजा मां न शोचेत्तथा कुरु ।।

ikṣvākūṇāṅ tvayā tulyaṁ suhṛdam nopalakṣaye
yathā daśaratho rājā mām na śōcēttathā kuru

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 52, śloka 22*)

This is Rāma’s respect for Sumantra.

Again, the episode of Nishāda king Guha. Nishāda means boat rower, who gets people across a river i.e., a *śūdra*.

He was friend to king Daśaratha. Vālmīki has described him being friendly to Rāma as well. He came to meet Rāma in Shringverapur upon learning of his exile.

He said to Rāma, “My kingdom is yours only, please rule it.” Then Rāma said to him that ‘You arriving to meet us with love is a big honor itself for us”. Then Rāma embraced Guha.

गुहमेवं ब्रुवाणं तु राघवो प्रत्युवाच ह ।
अर्चिताश्चैव दृष्टाश्च भवता सर्वदा वयम् ।।

पद्भ्यामभिगमाच्चैव स्नेहसंदर्शनेन च ।
भुजाभ्यां साधुवृत्ताभ्यां पीडयन् वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।।

guhamevam bruvāṇaṁ tu rāghavo pratyuvāca ha
arcitāścaiva dṛṣṭāśca bhavatā sarvadā vayam
padbhyāmabhigamāccaiva snēhasandarśanēna ca

bhujābhyām sādhuvṛttābhyām pīḍayan vākyamabravīt

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 50, ślokas 40-41*)

Rāma who embraced the *śūdra* Guha would kill Shambhuka merely for being a *śūdra*, is this believable?

There is not one improper verse about *śūdras* in Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa's *Bālakāṇḍa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Araṇyakāṇḍa, Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, Sundarakāṇḍa, Yuddhakāṇḍa.* Rather, remarkable societal harmony is observed. Only Rāma's boundless love and respect for *śūdras* is described in them.

Some other episodes

As Rāma started towards forest, great chaos ensued in entire Ayodhyā, all residents became very anxious. All of the children and elderly ran in great pain after Rāma to stop him from leaving, as those afflicted with heat of the sun run to water.

ततः सबालवृद्धा सा पुरी परमपीडिता ।
राममेवाभिदुद्राव घर्मार्तः सलिलं यथा ।।

tataḥ sabāla vṛddhā sā purī parama pīḍitā
rāmamevābhidudrāva gharmārtaḥ salilaṁ yathā

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 40, śloka 20*)

The public is pleading to Rāma to not go to forest, he is asking them to not come with him. The public go till banks of Tamasā river. Rāma thinking that the public should not bear any more pain due to him, gets up and leaves at night, leaving them behind. In the morning, the public weep upon not finding Rāma and return to Ayodhyā.

Note-

Entire public is enamored of Rāma, he also loves them as his children. Are the *śūdras* not included in the entire public?

Vālmīki did not write anywhere- All public except *śūdras*.

All i.e., *śūdras* included love Rāma immensely and he also has great affection towards them.

Still, to remove any remaining doubt that how much *śūdras* love Rāma, we will see the next *sarga*.

Śūdras* are *āryas

Bharata was to be the king upon Rāma's exile, but he declined. He prepared to bring Rāma back from forest.

Hearing this, the entire public of Ayodhyā came along with Bharata. They were conversing in different ways of how they will get to meet Rāma with Lakṣamaṇa.

The point to note here is that Vālmīki has used the word *ārya* for all these people of Ayodhyā.

प्रयाताश्चार्यसंघाता रामं द्रष्टुं सलक्ष्मणम् |

prayātāścāryasaṅghātā rāmaṁ draṣṭuṁ salakṣamaṇam

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 83, śloka 7*)

Which means, 'The entire group of *ārya*s travelled to see Rāma with Lakṣamaṇa'.

This means Vālmīki considers *śūdras* as *āryas*.

That is because *ārya* means one who does good deeds. We are *āryas.* None is *anārya* i.e., one not of exalted character.

Today, when the people of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are told that they are *anārya* and *śūdras*, this is refuted by Vālmik. If one is *śūdra*, he is not *anārya*. If one is *anārya*, he is not *śūdra*.

Rareness of word *śūdra*

One more thing is unusual. Other than Shambhuka episode, Vālmīki has used the word *śūdra* only two or three times, not often. He says *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaishyas*, but for the rest of the sections he addresses them by their profession. This seems to indicate that the word *śūdra* was not very commonplace at that time. Those considered to belong to *śūdra varna* by their profession would often be known by their professional names i.e., tailor, perfumer etc. and were counted among the first three *varnas.*

There was no untouchability at the time of Vālmīki.

This also indicates that the tale of Shambhuka was not written by Vālmīki. It has been added much later.

When Bharata goes to ask Rāma to come back from forest, with the entire residents of Ayodhyā is coming with him.

Vālmīki has mentioned *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaishyas* in only two *ślokas,* but described other clans in detail. He writes-

मणिकाराश्च ये केचित्कुम्भकाराश्च शोभनाः ।
सूत्रकर्मविशेषज्ञा ये च शस्त्रोपजीविनः ।।
मायूरकाः क्राकचिका वेधका रोचकास्तथा ।
दन्तकारा सुधाकारा ये च गन्धोपजीविनः ।।
सुवर्णकाराः प्रख्यातास्तथा कम्बलकारकाः ।
स्नापकोष्णोदका वैद्या धूपकाः शौण्डिकास्तथा ।।
रजकास्तुन्नवायाश्च ग्रामघोषमहत्तराः ।
शैलूषाश्च सह स्त्रीभिर्यान्ति कैवर्तकास्तथा ।।

समाहिता वेदविदो ब्राह्मणा वृत्तसम्मताः ।
गोरथैर्भरतम् यान्तमनुजग्मुः सहस्रशः ।।

maṇikārāśca yē kēcitkumbhakārāśca śōbhanāḥ
sūtrakarmaviśeṣajñā yē ca śastropajīvinaḥ
mayūrakāḥ krākacikā vēdhakā rōcakāstathā
dantakārā sudhākārā ye ca gandhopajīvinaḥ
suvarṇakārāḥ prakhyātāstathā kambalakārakāḥ
snāpakakoṣṇodakā vaidyā dhūpakāḥ śauṇḍikāstathā
rajakāstunnavāyāśca grāmaghoṣamahattarāḥ
śailūṣāśca saha strībhiryānti kaivartakāstathā

samāhitā vēdavidō brāhmaṇā vṛtta sammatāḥ
gorathairbharatam yāntamanujagmuḥ sahasraśaḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 83, ślokas 12-16*)

Which means, 'Some lapidaries, skilled potters, those who lived by manufacture of arms, carpenters, those who made various articles from peacock-feather, sawyers, workers in artificial ornaments, those who pierced gems, pearls etc., those who made articles of ivory, those who lived by perfumery, highly reputed goldsmiths, weavers of blankets and other woolen goods, those who provided hot-water baths for other, physicians, distillers and vendors of spirituous liquors, fumigators, washer-men, tailors, chiefs of villages and hamlets, dancers with their women-folk and fishermen started on the journey. Thousands of *brāhmaṇas*, well-composed, renowned for their virtuous conduct, versed in sacred *Vedic* scriptures and riding on bullock-carts, accompanied Bharata.'

Vālmīki writes further- 'All had beautiful attires. Everyone had worn clean clothes. Everyone had pure red sandal-paste applied on their body parts.'

Note-

Vālmīki has not used the word *śūdra* above, but addressed the people by their professions. However, as per the traditional understanding, these people are not *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas* or *vaishyas*. So, they are *śūdras.*

They are as anxious to get Rāma as Bharata himself. They are elated at the thought of having Rāma, they embrace among themselves. The *brāhmaṇas* are going with them. There is no discrimination. Also, their attire indicates their good financial condition.

Three things are clear-

1) *Śūdra* word is not commonplace. Else, Vālmīki would not have to narrate all these names, he could simply use the word *śūdra*.
2) Untouchability is not present. *Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaishyas* and alleged *śūdras* are going together, all are sitting in bullock carts, all are embracing each other.
   Vālmīki writes nowhere that everyone is only embracing among people of their *varna*.
3) Rāma has intense affection for people of all *varnas*. Of course, they all were loved by Rāma intensely, hence they all are very anxious, excited and elated to bring him back. Why would one come for someone they do not love?

So, *śūdra* word is not commonplace, there is no untouchability, all are equal and love each other, then doesn't the tale of *śūdra* Shambhuka doing wrong by doing penance get discredited and be full of conspiracy? Indeed, it does.

The word *śūdra* was not commonplace at Vālmīki's time, another beautiful example of this is seen later.

Despite lot of requests by Bharata, Rāma does not agree to come back to Ayodhyā from forest. He says to Bharata-

"O valorous Bharata! You go back with Śatrughna and all *dwijātiyas* to Ayodhyā. Give happiness to the public."

अयोध्यां गच्छ भरत प्रकृतीरुपरञ्जय ।
शत्रुघ्नसहितो वीर सह सर्वैर्द्विजातिभिः ।।

ayōdhyāṁ gaccha bharata prakṛtīranurañjaya
śatrughnasahitō vīra saha sarvairdvijātibhiḥ

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, *sarga 107, śloka 15*)

We see that lapidary, tailors, perfumers, potters, weavers, dancers etc. classes went to bring Rāma back. Rāma has use the word *dwijātiya* for all of them. *Dwijāti* is used for *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaishyas*. They are considered to have two births, once at biological birth and second at the time of *yajñopavita* ceremony of accepting sacred thread. Rāma is telling all to be *dwijātis.*

This means he considers lapidary, tailors, perfumers, potters, etc. to be among *dwijātis* only.

So, they are not *śūdras*.

Thereafter, Rāma honors everyone appropriately, without any discrimination. Then, he sends them off for Ayodhyā.

So, it seems that at Rāma's time, the word *śūdra* is not commonplace and the classes categorized later as *śūdras*, are all in good status at Rāma's time, they are *dwijātis.*

Then where did this *śūdra* Shambhuka come from? And Rāma also killed him?

Does this alleged killing of *śūdra* Shambhuka not appear to be written to debase Rāma's and Vālmīki's glories? Indeed, it does appear to be.

Contradictions in *Uttarakāṇḍa*

So far, we saw that foremost poet sage Vālmīki's epic Rāmāyaṇa's hero the ideal and excellent man Rāma loves all equally. There is no high or low in his eyes. The word *śūdra* is not in usage.

Then where does the word *śūdra* Shambhuka come in *Uttarakāṇḍa* and Rāma kills him as well?

Let us look at contradictions in *Uttarakāṇḍa*

1. In *Bālakāṇḍa*, the tale of Rāma narrated by Nārada to Vālmīki does not contain either Sītā's banishment or Shambhuka killing.
   Yet, in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, it is Nārada himself bringing Rāma's attention to the *śūdra* Shambhuka's penance, that leads to his killing.
2. In *Bālakāṇḍa*, Ahalyā and Indra mate with mutual consent.

In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, it is said that Indra raped Ahalyā.

3. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, the Fire God or *Agnideva* is witness to Sītā's *agniparīkshā*.
   In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, Indra is told be the witness for that.
4. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, all the *vānaras, bhālūs* have been sent off to their respective places.
   In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, they are all present in Ayodhyā. Their sending off is retold.
5. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, the Pushkpaka *vimāna* has been returned to its original master Kubera.
   In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, Pushpaka returns and says that it has been sent by its owner Kubera. Rāma accepts it, against his very nature, when earlier he has rejected the offerings of Guha, Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa to rule their respective kingdoms and also rejected the offering of fruit of penance from sages Sharabhanga and Sutīkshṇa. To keep something given by someone is against Rāma's character.
6. In the *Bālakāṇḍa*, the bards or *kushīlavas* singing the Rāmāyaṇa say it nowhere that they are sons of Sītā.
   In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the Lava and Kuśa singing Rāmāyaṇa are sons of Sītā.
7. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, it is told by Rāvaṇa that after he raped the celestial nymph Punjikasthalā he was cursed by Bramhā. As per the curse, his head

would break into one hundred pieces if he rapes any other woman.

That is the reason he could not force himself on Sītā.

In *Uttarakāṇḍa*, Rāvaṇa rapes another celestial nymph Rambhā. Then Nalakubera (Rambhā's would be husband) puts a similar curse on Rāvaṇa. Both these curses cannot go together.

In the Punjikasthalā episode, having cursed by Brahmā, Rāvaṇa cannot rape Rambhā.

In the Rambhā episode, having been cursed by Nalakubera, Rāvaṇa cannot rape Punjikasthalā.

8. In *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, Vālmīki has told the fruit of listening to the epic, along with its importance. After this, the epic of Rāmāyaṇa completes.
   Uttarakāṇḍa is written and added after this. There also, the fruit of listening to the epic, along with its importance is described.

There are many other contradictions in *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

If *Uttarakāṇḍa* is considered authentic and thus, the banishment of Sītā and killing of Shambhuka by Rāma are considered to be correct, then not only it debases Rāma's character but Vālmīki ends looking a liar too, that he is contradicting his own writing in *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

Then did he write the first six *kāṇḍas* wrongfully? No, *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not written by him.

Uttarakāṇḍa's literary style is different from that of the first six *kāṇḍas*. On one hand is the tightly knit poetic language of the first six *kāṇḍas* with the exception of a few *sargas* and on the other is the relatively banal language of *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Nowhere in *Uttarakāṇḍa* is the amazing style of Vālmīki is sentence formation, dialogue and description of situations ever seen. *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not the creation of Vālmīki by any stretch.

Vālmīki is contemporary of Rāma. Therefore, any incident like killing of Shambhuka did not happen in his knowledge. Had it happened, he would certainly have narrated it. Therefore, it is not proven that Rāma killed Shambhuka.

A remaining possibility

A possibility remains that some other poet saw Shambhuka's killing and wrote it. Then our question is why did he write in the name of Vālmīki?

If that poet is contemporary of Vālmīki, then would Vālmīki let his name be used by the other poet? Because whatever the other poet has written, Vālmīki is only proven a liar by that.

If it is said that such incident happened after Vālmīki's departure to the heavenly abode, then that is also not correct, because in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* he has even described the departure of Rāma's departure to the heavenly abode. Vālmīki writing that Rāma ruled for eleven thousand years gives the indication that Vālmīki had witnessed the end

times of Rāma's life too. Had Vālmīki himself passed away earlier, how could he have written all the aforementioned?

Conclusion

Only one explanation remains. The tale of 'Shambhuka killing by Rāma' was written thousands of years after Vālmīki and was cleverly added to the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. The purpose was to demean both Rāma as well as Vālmīki.

Uttarakāṇḍa is not created by Vālmīki, this has been explored and explained in detail in the previous discussion on 'Sītā's banishment: A false tale'.

Therefore, it is proven

Vālmīki did not write *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

Rāma neither killed Shambhuka,

Nor did he banish Sītā.

All Glories to Vālmīki!

All Glories to Sītā Rāma!

All Glories to Rāmāyaṇa!

What is the need for such research works?

Many of the author's acquaintances say that there is no use to writing such works anymore. It has been hundreds of thousands of years since the pastimes of Shri Rāma and Sītā happened. Now, what is to be achieved by saying these things? What is their context in today's society?

The question seemingly looks correct at first glance. Its answer can be understood such that once the author was conversing with a learned lady. All of a sudden, she said that the banishment of Sītā by Rāma has put great impact on the women of the India society, that is visible to this day. It is still said that no matter how much a woman is dedicated, her end is like Sītā only. That means the man can take any decision for her and she cannot go against it.

When a woman is mistreated in the society, the people try to console her by saying, "When Rāma sent Sītā to the forest, then if you were wronged, why is that surprising?"

A few years back, a famous lawyer had declared Rāma a terrible husband. In the Sītāmadhi district of Bihār, a lawyer had lodged a case of domestic violence against *Bhagavāna* Rāma, that he did injustice to Goddess Sītā. In the Jaipur Literature festival, a writer said that if Sītā was in today's time, she would have divorced Rāma.

Many supporters of Rāvaṇa keep raising the issue of Sītā's banishment by Rāma.

It is in these conversations, that the answers to the questions asked in the beginning of this chapter lie. It is because of such things it becomes important to tell that Sītā was not banished by Rāma. She remained as a queen with Rāma for eleven thousand years. In that long period of time, she ruled and served the public as a queen.

Then we have the point of Shambhuka killing, which is raised with a lot of hullabaloos. Whenever there is any incident where injustice happens with any fellow belonging to the scheduled castes or scheduled tribes, then the point of Shambhuka killing is brought up when describing the incident.

When accepting other religions, the point stressed most is that the person converting to a different religion will not consider Rāma and Krishna as *Bhagavāna*. The reason given is that both are upper caste supremacists who attempted to suppress the lower classes, Rāma killed Shambhuka and Krishna incited Arjuna to kill Karṇa.

Therefore, it is important to bring the falsity of the tale of Shambhuka killing.

These questions keep raised in the society over and over. They are posed to the singers of Rāmāyaṇa. An influential politician in Bihar had posed the question to a sage narrating Rāmāyaṇa. The sage ignored the question. In the

Indian Parliament, a senior Member of Parliament had put some questions, alleging the control of alleged superior castes over alleged inferior castes:

1) Why did Sītā's banishment happen by Rāma?
2) Why was Shabmhuka killing done by Rāma?
3) Why did Droṇācharya get Ekalavya's thumb cut off?
4) Why was the disrobing of Draupadi attempted in a full courtroom?

These questions are still churning inside people's minds. Therefore, without proper answers to them, such talks will keep ongoing in society.

The author has made a humble attempt to find the answers to the first two questions. Attempt will be made to find the answers to the next questions as well.

In the Indian culture, Rāma and Krishna are biggest and most worshipped ideals, accepted not only by the alleged 'upper castes' but also by alleged 'lower castes'.The number of people in the scheduled castes and tribes with the name Rāma will be far greater than that in the 'upper castes'. Strange names such as Kurdā, Pemā, Māngi, Feku, Failu, Mast etc. are made sensible by simply adding Rāma to them. A large section of the people of the scheduled castes have been using Rāma instead of their clan surnames. Such is the universal acceptance of Rāma. Rāma is not only the *Bhagavāna* of this nation, but its soul.

That is why, the detractors of the Indian culture think that till Rāma's character is tarnished, this culture will stand proud to the world. Hence, attempts are made to demean Rāma's character to ultimately embarrass this culture.

Therefore, it is even more important to bring out the blotless nature of Rāma's character and to hold the glory of Sītā's character. This will also instill a feeling of dignity in the members of the schedule castes and scheduled tribes and the women that how greatly Rāma has been their benefactor. If something incorrect has been written in the golden age of Sanskrit literature, then it is our duty to attempt to improve it.

Brahmā says to Vālmīki about the Rāmāyaṇa-

यावत् स्थास्यन्ति गिरयः सरितश्च महीतले ।
तावद् रामायणीकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति ।।

यावद् रामायणीकथा त्वत्कृता प्रचरिष्यति ।
तावदूर्ध्वमधश्च त्वं मल्लोकेषु निवत्स्यसि ।

yāvat sthāsyanti girayaḥ saritaśca mahītale
tāvad rāmāyaṇīkathā lōkēṣu pracariṣyati

yāvad rāmāyaṇīkathā tvatkṛtā pracariṣyati
tāvadūrdhvamadhaśca tvaṁ mallōkēṣu nivatsyasi

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sarga 2, ślokas 36-37*)

Which means, "As long as the mountains and even rivers flourish on the surface of the earth, so long the legend of

Rāmāyaṇa will flourish in this world and as long as Rāma's legend authored by you flourishes, till then you will flourish in heavenly, in netherworlds, and even in my abode, namely Abode of Brahmā".

The foremost poet sage Vālmīki has gifted to us this great heritage in the form of Rāmāyaṇa. An entire culture that is known as the Indian culture, is resting on the foundations of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

And *Bhagavāna* Rāma and Goddess Sītā are its visible ideals. Therefore, it is our duty that we weed out these corrupt passages from this great epic, so it comes in its true form and makes our culture even more vibrant. Also, we should retire such corrupt portions from our minds for good. Our new generation should stand with this belief that Mother Sītā, *Bhagavāna* Rāma and foremost poet sage Vālmīki are ideals of humanity and literary prowess. That, *Bhagavāna* Rāma neither banished Mother Sītā nor did he kill Shambhuka for doing penance.

It requires great courage to do so. It is a difficult task to bring a society walking with one thought for thousands of years, to bring to another thought.

An example can help in understanding this. A beautiful publication of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa has been done by a press. IOt has a heartfully devoted presentation of the popular version of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa along with its translation in Hindi language. But, there are many *sarga* in this

publication, which are considered to be adulterations by the translator himself, such as the *sarga* describing Indra coming to Aśoka Garden to give divine pudding to Sītā, a dog coming to Rāma for service etc. But he could not show the courage to remove these adulterations from the publication. These adulterations are brazenly sticking in this epic i.e., Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

The author is a humble studier of Rāmāyaṇa. In his eyes, a many *sargas* of *Bālakāṇḍa,* some *sargas* from *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* to *Yuddhakāṇḍa* are interjected and the entire *Uttarakāṇḍa* is an adulteration. If these are removed, then although it would lead to a reduction in the length of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, but from the perspective of literary style and *dharma*, this great epic would shine even brighter.

All Glories to Vālmīki!

All Glories to Sītā Rāma!

All Glories to Rāmāyaṇa!



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