

## RESEARCHING VARIOUS LITERATURES AVAILABLE ON RAMAYAN

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### KEYWORD

Poem, Literature Valmiki Ramayan, Translation, Version, Trans- creations, Tulsikrit Ramayan

Cognate, Cantos, Taadana, Mystic, Sati Pratha, Comparative Mythology, Myth, Epic, Oral Tradition, Legend, Ram, Faith

**Description-** Archaic means of availability of literature on Ramayan of antiquity, which has been imparting eternal lessons to mankind world over, woven around the urge of Sita for a golden deer.

### CRITICAL ANALYSIS

#### AVAILABILITY OF LITERATURE

**“World is not made out of atoms, it is made out of stories”.** “Ramayan” is one such story written in a **poetic** genre. Its first manuscript written in Sanskrit subsequently down the ages has been translated in diverse languages across the world, which has been imparting eternal lessons to mankind world over.

Being ancient, belonging to a period of history, that is thousands of years in the past is believed to be at least 7000 years old. The relic of the written text surviving from an earlier time, especially one of historical interest is unfathomable, incapable of being fully explored, understood or made available in original **literature** or authentic copy written by Valmiki in totality.

Through ages, Ramayan has survived in an antiquated oral tradition such as in Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines & Maldives amongst many such countries. Having diverse written forms in India, **Valmiki’s Ramayan**, has its manuscript in several forms. First **Translation** from Sanskrit to the earliest Dravidian Language in Tamil by Kambr to the second Sanskrit translation into modern regional language Assamee in the 14th-15th Century by poet Madhav Kandali has remained as a test of time. Moreover, Ramayan has diverse written **versions** in India. With certain differences amongst each other, there were manuscripts written in various centuries. 3rd Century- Tamil Literature Ramayan, 6th century West Bengal manuscript, 12th century- Ram Avataram in Tamil, 14th Century- Ranganatha Ramayana in Telgu. Again in 15th Century a Bangla version- Kirtivasi Ramayan and another Vilanka Ramayan by poet Sarladas, 16th Century- Jagmohan Ramayan in Odia, Torave Ramayan in Kannada, Adhyathmaramayanam in Malayalam in 18th Century. A Marathi version in 19th Century, Maithli version in 20th century.



Also written in other *dhaarmik* religions like Buddhist, Jain versions. Amongst contemporary versions in India, most recently an abridged English version by the last Governor General of India C. Rajagopalachari who was awarded the “Sahitya Academy Award” in 1958 for works in the Tamil language for his retelling of Ramayan- *Chakravarti Thirumagan*.

With the limitation of finding the original Valmiki poem or its authentic copies, which was written in Sanskrit, thereafter those translated from Sanskrit and several other versions depicting the character, instances, plot with subtle differences, the means of available literature is meagre, but for “**Tulsikrit Ramayan**” which has been published by Gita Press Gorakhpur since 1923, in more than 14 languages as mentioned in a Hindustan Times news, gives a hope.

Shri Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas popularly referred as "Tulsikrit Ramayan" was dated 1576 CE mentioned in (Doha 33 "Chaupai 2" Baalkand)

"सादर सिवहि नाइ अब माथा। बरनउँ बिसद राम गुन गाथा॥

संबत सोरह सै एकतीसा। करउँ कथा हरि पद धरि सीसा"॥ This Awadhi version is the most available Literature, is a masterpiece, prolifically abundant known as the "Tulsikrit Ramayan". In Doha 32 (kh "Chaupai 2,3" Baalkand) the writer says that, "There are several incarnations of Ram & 100 crore immense number of Ramayans", this infers that Valmiki's Ramayan may have been in existence since time immemorial amongst other several textual literature written in various languages. Those in modern day print, available in Sanskrit shlokhas, are to be read by *sandhi viched* by breaking the big shlokhas into small words and then deciphered to understand its correct perspective. This has been causing differential in essence of the literature on Valmiki Ramayan as these are **trans-creations** of the original. So this article is based on the easily sourcable Tulsikrit Ramayan in Awadhi is much understandable.

In the first serving of the poem in Baalkand the writer sings of gratitude, offers salutations, invokes offering prayers, expresses obligations, ask apology to gods, seeks wisdom and blessings for them to put up a composition (Rachna).

In Doha 36 Baalkand, he writes the four stations of dialogues between Kakkbushandi-Garud, Shiv-Parvati, Yagyavalkya- Bhardwaj and Tulsidas-Sants are the four most delightful and captivating stations.

The construct of this poem is interlaced within the dialogue between Kakkbushandi-Garud, there is a dialogue between Shiv & Parvati, within the dialogue between Shiv and Parvati, there is a dialogue between Yagyavalkya- Bhardwaj and within the dialogue between Yagyavalkya- Bhardwaj is the dialogue between Tulsidas-Sants.

Most significantly, in (Doha 32 kh first "Chaupai" Baalkand) he mentions the manner in which Parvati had put up a question to Shiv , and the way Shiv answered in an elaborate way mentioning the unique story to Parvati, the same Tulsidas would sing in a poetic metre ,thereafter he begins writing the story in a poetic form.

This forms the ground of introducing Ram as an omnipresent almighty, portraying his virtues by depicting the journey of Ram that is Ramayana ("Ayan" means journey.)

In Doha 64 "Chaupai 3" Baalkand,  
"सतीं मरत हरि सन बरु मागा, जनम जनम शिव पद अनुरागा ॥

तेहि कारण हिमगिरि गृह जाई जनमीं पारबती तनु पाई"

This means Sati had died asking boon from the gods that in her rebirth, she wishes to be consort of Shiv in every life, that's why for this reason she went to the snow clad mountains and took rebirth in body of Sati as Parvati. Thus Parvati was portrayed as the reincarnation of Sati, as per the poem.

In Doha 110 "Chaupai 1" Baalkand

"पुनि प्रभु कहहु सो तत्त्व बखानी। जेहिं बिग्यान मगन मुनि ग्यानी॥  
भगति ग्यान बिग्यान बिरागा। पुनि सब बरनहु सहित बिभागा "॥

In this, the writer says that Sati who in her previous birth had doubted the realm of Ram, was reborn as Parvati and asks Shiv to again make her understand the scientific element with complete know how and explain with dispassion, the glory of Ram.

This glory of Ram is depicted by Tulsidas in "Tulsikrit Ramayan" which consists of seven "episodes" with different set of words in Awadhi, have been inherited in other different languages (in Tamil, Kannada, Maithili, Bangla,etc.) as though directly descended from the original text of Valmiki Ramayan as **cognate** which was written in ancient Sanskrit. These have been arranged in a manner of dividing a very long poetry which had been sung usually by the minstrel such as reciter to their own accompaniment and read as **cantos**.

This work is paraphrased in four-line quatrains called "Chaupai" which are separated by two-line couplets metre called "Doha".

The word used in Tulsikrit Ramayan, In Doha 58 "Chaupai 3" Sundarkaand, "**Taadana**" (ताड़ना) in Awadhi, because of the language change from Sanskrit is an example of cognate which has a very radical effect on both the sound and the meaning of the word. This is not so easily obvious & needs rigorous study from the historical source for arriving in a comparative method whether this lexemes is cognate or not. Ironically, the use of word "Taadana" has resulted in atrocities at least in the current generation. The intellectual, though understand that "Taadana" means "**Shishka**" (training) but the commoner are difficult to imbibe the correct connotation.

### URGE OF SITA FOR A GOLDEN DEER

In Tulsikrit Ramayan, the plot is woven around the urge of Sita for a golden deer, when Ram her husband, prince of Ayodhya, son of King Dashrath, was sent in exile to spend life in forest accompanied with Lakshman. Shurphnakha in a beautiful disguise, on one such day was hurt by

Lakshman and her brothers lost their lives fighting the young men. Agitated, she went to Ravan her elder brother the King of Lanka telling him the agony. Furious upon hearing Ravan, enraged went in his chariot to his **mystic** maternal uncle Marich who had a knack of disguise. At the same moment in Doha 22 (“Chaupai 4” Arnaykaand) Shiv says to Parvati, “*Ram ne aisi yukti rachi*” and narrates the beautiful story. In Doha 23 “ Arnaykaand)

**"सुनहु प्रिया ब्रत रुचिर सुसीला। मैं करहु करबि ललित नरलीला॥  
तुम्ह पावक महुँ करहु नियासा। जौ लगि करौं निसाचर नासा॥"**

Here the writer portrays when Lakshman goes to fetch for food such as edible roots and fruits etc, that's when Ram in Lakshman's absence, smilingly tells Sita that “Dear beloved, you the caring, obedient, the intelligent, such kind hearted, selfless pious, my sweetheart, now you see, what divine human play I shall do in this universe, (“*Manohar Manushya Leela karunga*”), so all this while, when I finish destroying all the evil Rakshashs, till then, you must stay under Agnidev's protection”. This is where Sita touches Ram's feet, humbly agrees, wholeheartedly submits herself to the flames and leaves behind her own mirror image.

The plot begins with King of Ayodhya, Raja Dashrath, then childless, in extreme anguish wishes for a son. He goes to Guru Vashisht with his prayers and to hear answers from the sage. Vashisht calms him down and says, “Do not worry, you will have four sons, who, in all three “*Loks*” will become well known and will fight away all the difficulties, hassles, troubles, and worries of the devotees.” Soon, all the queens were granted the boon.

While doing dhyaan during *Yagy*, *Pooja*, Vishwamitra with many other saints, would always get disturbed by evil *Rakshaks*. He then remembers that they will only get peace by getting them destroyed by, none other than, the one who takes away all worries and hindrance, Ram. He goes to King Dashrath for permitting him to take them along. Dashrath at first, feels reluctant to send his dear sons, Ram & Lakshman, but later gets convinced and reassured by Vishwamitra, understanding the situation. Dashrath, then showering all his good wishes and blessings, graciously hands both of them to Vishwamitra.

Vishwamitra takes Ram & Lakshman to his Ashram and hands over all the required weapons. Both the brothers protect their *Yagy* and the saints engaging with valour and destroy *Rakshashs*.

Having spent so much of their energy to protect the *yagy* and the sages, Vishwamitra thought that its time for both the princes for rest and recuperation, so he took them to the city of Janakpur to see the ambiance of the city and also witness the Swayamvar organised by Janak for his daughter *Janki*, Sita. In that, who would lift the bow of Lord Shiv, would eventually marry Sita. He felt very sad, when nobody could do so. Janak remarked blatantly that no one amongst sitting in the gathering has enough valour and potential to lift the bow. Upon hearing this, Lakshman furiously reacted and said that nobody utters challenging words when *Raghuvanshis* are around. Vishwamitra says Ram to go and lift the bow. Ram easily lifts the bow and in the process breaks it too. As an eligible suitor for Sita, the marriage ceremony of Ram & Sita takes place.

Newly wed Ram and Sita arrive at Ayodhya. Manthra (the maid) learns that coronation of Ram would take place. Goddess Saraswati, transfixes her mind for adverse thinking. Then she goes to Kaikeyi, mother of Bharat, with plans to send Ram to exile by reminding her that she should ask her boon which Dashrath had granted her when once she saved his life fighting, and do coronation of Bharat instead. Dashrath was aghast and dumbstruck. He requested her to take back her words, but Kaikeyi was adamant and obstinate, did not budge from her stance, doing ruckus in the *Kop Bhavan*. Learning this Sumantra (Prime Minister of Ayodhya court) went to fetch Ram and send him to the palace. Ram goes to Kaikeyi. Unquestioning, he willingly says that it shall be of good use for him, where he'll meet learned saints in the forest which will benefit his learning of life, while Bharat will look after Ayodhya which will be in his favour. Thus it will be in his privilege to go to exile. Ram along with Sita and Lakshman accompanying, proceed to exile.

They denounced their princely attire, jewelleryes and done with commoners dress like sages, in their journey they are facilitated by Nishad Raj, Kevat. They also meet Muni Bhardwaj in Prayaag and go to the banks of Yamuna finally arriving at Panchvati, where they put up their stay as hermits.

Shurphnakha, sister of Ravan, fell for both the princes seeing them. She disguises herself into a beautiful nymph and tries to seduce them, upon which Lakshman enraged with the constant attempts of Shurphnakha to draw attention of both married brothers, in not keeping with the social norms, hurts her, disfiguring her nose, by a sharp weapon.

She runs to her safety to her various brothers, persuades them to avenge her insult with very common looking men venturing in the forest, who are no match to the well built powerful Rakshash clan. One by one, most of her brothers are defeated or killed. Eventually, she rushes to Ravan, and utters her plight. Learning that, Ravan the King of Lanka enraged, went in his chariot to his mystic maternal uncle Marich who had a knack of disguise, simultaneously Ram who has been described by the writer as omnipresent almighty, begins his *leela* as described in the earlier portion of this analysis (my sweetheart, now you see, what divine human play I shall do in this universe (“*Manohar Manushya Leela Karunga*”).

This results in Sita entering in the fire and the mirror image of Sita coming out in the world replacing the original. Having seen a golden deer, the mirror image of Sita urges Ram to get her the skin of that deer. Ram dissuades her, well knowing that it is a mystic deer, Sita does not relent. He goes in looking out for the game and gets stuck. Hearing the call “*ha Lakshman!*” restless Sita, in an angry tone sends Lakshman to fetch his brother to safety (the Tulsikrit Ramayan does not mention that Lakshman before proceeding away from Panchvati, makes a furrow around the hut- the “*Lakshman Rekha*” is a notion) but secures the surroundings of the hut in blessing of the gods. Ravan in disguise, finds an opportunity and somehow makes lone Sita to cross the hut and forcefully abducts her.

Ram, distraught with Sita’s unexplained unforeseen absence, begins searching for her and learns from Jatayu that she has been abducted by Ravan. Ram seeks help from Sughrreev, Hanuman and the Vaanar Sena to locate her. Hanuman succeeds in finding her in captivity of Ravan in Lanka. Having learned so, Ram heads in pursuits of bringing back Sita. He sends various envoys to earnestly request Ravan to return her back. Ravan doesn’t agree and thus war ensues. Many of Ravan’s all powerful near and dear ones lost their lives. Ravan, engages in war himself, directly with Ram, gets killed, eventually defeated and Sita is rescued.

It is analysed that with non availability of copies in totality/complete of the original Valmiki’s Ramayan written in Sanskrit, it is a popular notion that Ram and Sita were portrayed in human form, whereas Tulsidas depicts Ram to be a god with supernatural power such that he makes Sita to vanish in holy flames and replace her with a copy. This Sita who gets abducted, after her rescue, gives *Agni Pariksha*” and comes out of the flames

as a result proves her purity and unfailing devotion towards her husband.

Similarly, in Tulsikrit Ramayan the writer says that, Sati who in her previous birth had doubted the realm of Ram, perhaps draws Shiv’s ire, also goes to her father Daksh Yagya against the wishes of Shiv. Feeling insulted at the Yagya, she self immolates herself. After several years of penance , reborn as Parvati, proves her pious unfailing devotion towards her husband. Hence, we draw analogy of Sita and Sati, probably ingraining the cult practice of **Sati Pratha** amongst the unassuming of that period.

In her new birth as Parvati, she asks Shiv to again make her understand the scientific element with complete know how and explain with dispassion, the glory of Ram. Thus, Ramayan is retold by Shiv himself and in turn the same complete excerpts are retold, written in Awadhi by Goswami Tulsidas. These so many composition(s) by various authors of Ramayan has magically enlightened the mankind world over for social righteousness since the ancient times.

Contrarily in the Book “World Mythology”, first published in Great Britain in 1993. The foreword has been written by American mythologist Robert Walter. He had been director of Joseph Campbell Foundation which is dedicated to protect, preserve his works. His works fosters academic and popular discussion in the fields of **comparative mythology**. In the foreword he writes-

quote “*In the popular nightmare of history, where local mythic images are interpreted, not as metaphors, but as facts, there have been ferocious wars waged between the parties of such contrary manners of metaphoric representation*”. unquote

In the same book Dr. Roy Wills, the general editor, research fellow in social anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. About India he writes-

quote “*popular myths have achieved wider currency by being adopted into the supra-regional language Sanskrit*”. unquote

Further he writes-

Quote “*Most notable of all is the way in which the storytellers are often consciously manipulating their materials, developing and modifying them in what amounts to a deliberate critique of other form of the same myth*”. Unquote

Notwithstanding assertions of westerners, in the Indian context, Ramayan is an **epic** where, Ram is personified as a **legend** & passed through oral tradition as well as written manuscript, translated and having volumes of various versions, drama, screenplay, etc. In the process, with an aim to foster in building the ultimate moral character of the civilisation and righteousness in social conduct to bring order to society as a whole. This story has also influenced the other part of the world to look at Ramayan's magical storyline.

In any story writing and narrating, portrayal, explanation, elaboration, intensification of the characters in the text depends on the writers frame of mind, which is reflective on the period during the prevailing religious, political, economical, territorial integrity ideologies, affecting socio, cultural circumstances existed influencing the writing style of the author, thus made a paradigm shift required in the lifestyle at that time.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Ram**, the main character of this poem, which is four times in volume as that of *Iliad* (epic greek poem), if was in human form in Ramayan, say written during pre Bronze Stage around 7000 years ago, which is the Stone age as per those who do chronology of historical events, yet for the large followers in this modern India or in the expanse of the *Akhand Bharat* and several other countries, know that it was a flourishing Indian civilisation one that the world's scientists who study the ancient and recent human past through material remains. are yet to uncover. So long as they do so, it remains a matter of **faith**.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The author of this critical analysis holds no conflict of interest as this is a project during study.

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