

## **Re-Discovering the Supernatural Elements of Valmiki's *Ramayana***

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### **Abstract**

The paper elicits the Supernatural elements present in Indian Epic *Ramayana*. The great epic was inscribed by a sage named Valmiki. The term supernatural indicates the meaning, a force or power beyond humanness or normal. It is often associated with God, demigod, demon, devil and spirits. The epic, *Ramayana* is enriched with supernatural elements. For instance, the character Ravan who is the villain of this epic has ten heads and twenty hands. Having ten heads and twenty hands are quite unnatural and magical. The main purpose of this research paper is to bring out the characters with supernatural calibre and elements in the great epic *Ramayana*.

**Keywords:** Valmiki, *Ramayana*, Supernatural, Incarnation, Varna, Rakshas/Giants, Devotee and Disguise.

### **Introduction**

The epic *Ramayana*, inscribed by the Hindu sage Vamiki plays a role in the epic. The origin of the epic is located around 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC which is referred as Treta Yuga according to Hindus. It is believed that the epic's main body appeared around 750 and 500 BCE as an oral composition. The cultural evidences suggest that *Ramayana* ante cedes the Mahabharata. The story illustrates the commitments of the relationships. It also depicts the functions of a true devotee and ideal characteristics of brothers, servants, friends, wives and a King. Sinha and Ghosh document that "Hero-worship was and is a central aspect of Indian Culture, and thus readily lent itself to a literary tradition that abounded in epic poetry and literature." (2)

Hero worshipping is the main concept in this epic. The glorification of the Hero Rama is recorded continuously. The story ends up as the Hero kills the Evil Ravan. The term supernatural is related with anything that is beyond normal and magical. The epic *Ramayana* is overflowed with miraculous things like magical bears, man with monkey's face and etc. Mahabharata and *Ramayana* are the two vast poems composed by the Brahmans. It fulfils the purpose of denoting a doctrine which imputes sacrificial functions and rituals. It further serves the purpose of ascribing the tradition of the people.

## Discussion

In *Ramayana* almost all the characters has the super naturalistic qualities. Their calibre portrays them as super naturals. The epic contains all the dramatic and fictitious essentials in it. There are too many characters who are an incarnation of God or belongs to some unrealistic race. Some of the primary characters sketched in *Ramayana* with supernatural qualities are dealt in following sequences.

### 1. Rama

Rama plays the main role in the epic narrative. He is the hero, a owner of dark skin and a notable conquering warrior. He belongs to King Dasaratha's kingdom and a rightful heir to the throne. He poses an exceptional and exclusive calibre which fascinates the reader. Rama is the incarnation of God Vishnu. Vishnu is one of the Gods of Trinity. He fights with Rakshas Ravan who cannot be killed and wins the battle. His ability comes from two things, one is he is an incarnation of a God. The other is he got a boon from God Shiva which helped him to kill the mighty demon.

### 2. Sita

Sita is the wife of Rama and an incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. She proved her innocence by crossing a pyre of fire without even a reek of fire. Touching fire for more than two seconds will hurt a normal human. But she proved her calibre by crossing the fire without any hurt. This incident is magical and the supernatural element is explicit. Finally she was swallowed by the earth itself as a result of her meek order.

### 3. Hanuman

Hanuman is an incarnation of the God Shiva. He is a loyal devotee of Rama and belongs to the kingdom of Kishkindha. He has man's body and a monkey's face and tail. In the epic it is written that he crossed the ocean in one jump. All these things are beyond normal and unrealistic which makes it supernatural.

### 4. Lakshman

Lakshman is an incarnation of Shesha related to Lord Vishnu. He follows his brother everywhere literally. The quality incarnation makes him special. He even fought with Rakshas and killed them.

### 5. Maricha

Maricha is the minor role in *Ramayana* who serves Ravan. He disguises as a golden deer to distract Rama and Lakshman. In general disguising as a beggar or a sage is normal, but disguising as some other creature is quite unnatural. This makes it magical and can be noted down as supernatural.

### 6. Bali

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Sugriva who is a brother of Bali belongs to Vanaras which means they are monkey people. Rama helps him get his rightful kingdom back from Bali. Bali has a supernatural power that whoever duels with him loses half of his strength to him. The boon keeps him unbeatable. In reality, there is no way a man can suck others energy and transforms it as his. But he does it and that makes him supernatural.

## 7. Ravana

Ravana himself is a supernatural being with ten heads and two hands each. He is a Rakshas and a devotee of Lord Shiva. Once he offered his hands and head to Lord Shiva. He received the boon that he cannot be killed by any God or demigod or any celestial being. He dies in battle field by the arrow of Rama. But having ten heads itself makes him a supernatural being.

## 8. Kumbakarna

He is portrayed as a gigantic figure with a massive ability. The ability to wake up once in six months and eat a lot. He could sleep for six months without eating anything. There is no animal or creature which can withstand hunger that long in order to sleep. This is what makes him special.

## Conclusion

There are many minor characters like Jatayu and Sampati brothers who are powerful and mighty golden eagles. They can speak in human voice. Another character is Kabandha who belongs to a Rakshas clan. He doesn't have legs or head but has a gasping mouth and arm. Such beings can never be categorised under normal. There is a mention about magical bears and talking animals in this epic. Valmiki's characters are not lost in the reality of epic but uplifted them as ideals of romantics. Their supernatural values make them much more alive than ever in the history of Indian epics.

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