

## Ramayana – an Idealistic Composition

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"The name of Rama is like the casket of jewel.... He alone is happy who sings the glory of Rama – Nama. The whole world is deluded by Maya and it does not attain the fearless state. It is unfortunate of you if you don't recite the Name. My Lord Rama is the most beneficent donor who gives substance to the whole world."

(Guru Nanak)

To recite "Rama, Rama" day and night without knowing its essence, is like uttering "Water, Water" crores of times – Thirst still keeps its presence.

(Kabir)

Ramayana is an encyclopaedia of Sanatan Dharma, its principles,

philosophy and social norms second to Mahabharata. Ramayana is the only epic which embraces all aspects of Hinduism without any exception. It (Ramayana) teaches man how to uphold the law of morality. The Ramayana and Mahabharata are our treasure houses – nothing to do with mundane affairs. The lack of idealistic as well as realistic approaches arrest the onward march of a country. The Lord Rama Chandra has shown the way to conduct ourselves in crises. Sri Ram Chandra set the rules for proper conduct giving up throne and going to exile cheerfully. We know the Greece we all admire – is gone. But Homer's Illiad and Odessey remain and will remain for ever, not in Greece but in all the languages of the civilized world. So also Valmiki Ramayana will live in all tongues of civilized people whatever happen to India and its Politics.

Ramayana is not history or Biography. It is a part of Hindu Mythology. One cannot understand Hindu Dharma unless one knows Rama, Sita, Bharata, Satrughna, Hanuman and Ravana. All the languages of India have the Ramayana and Mahabharata retold by their poets with addition and variations of their own. Reading

Ramayana and Mahabharata, we go back to live with our ancient forbears and listen to their grand voices. Mythology and Vedic principles are necessary for any great culture to rest on its stable spiritual foundation and function as a life giving inspiration and guide. Let us keep ever in our mind the fact that it is the Ramayana and Mahabharata that bind our vast numbers together as one people despite caste, space and language that seemingly divide them. The traditional orthodox view is that Valmiki wrote the Ramayana during the life time of Sri Rama. Judging from normal experience, it would appear that the story of Rama had been in existence long before Valmiki wrote his epic. As revealed from Purana Lord was Rama was an Avatara by Vishnu, Rama and Krushna were synonyms for Vishnu and Vishnu, in turn meant Rama and Krishna. Temple had come to an existence with ritual worship of Rama as God.

In this Kaliyuga, the age of darkness and cruelty, the human mind ever in turmoil constantly disturbed by passion affluently and therefore unceasingly restless, cannot find some for devotion. Dhyana and meditation become well-nigh impossible. Puja, Aradhana and Archana all these are

authorized to one certain sections of people according to Sastras.

At this crucial stage, is there any remedial measure to get peace and tranquility? Yes, there is. The holy texts have shown the way of reciting God's names with faith. This Short of nama-Sankirtana roots out all evils, influences and remorse, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and prejudice. This is the safest, easiest and effective medium to be in communion with God and most direct means to attain God. At all times and under all circumstances, chanting can be resorted to. Spiritual wisdom alone can illumine our hearts dispelling nesciences as we are the time falling prey to sensory pleasures and also to the acquisition of profit.

The Ramayana is synoptic philosophy par-excellence as it co-relates the truths and ethics, religion, science and presents therein a clear and comprehensive manner. The epic points out that in this world has to be gone through and it acts as the training ground and preparing individual soul for its eternal pilgrimage.

The study of Ramayana contributes to an integrated development of a

human being—a vigorous body, a strong will, a powerful intellect and chastened and mellowed spirit. In the said epic, Lord Sri Rama has been portrayed as one possessing both the characteristic of human pursuits – idealism and realization. Here we may cite an example – how Lord Rama was idealistic and showering his blessings coupled with love and affection on semi-human animal Anjineya, Prahallada the son of demon and Guha-a hunter – Chieftain revering as example of pure devotion. They have prominent place in God's heart.

We know to secure spiritual knowledge the Vedas provide the base and would enable an aspirant to know about the supreme beings traity. But since all do not have the capacity to understand them the Vedic thought has come down in the form of scriptural literature like the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagabatam. The Ramayana is the bed-rock of our culture all through the centuries. The Agasthe Samhita says that the supreme Lord whom the Vedas try to present before the devotees in human form came down on earth as Sri Rama to teach people and show the practical methods to be observed by him in all walks of life as an ideal house-holder.

The Ramayana is the hand book of Dharma in all its phases. To a believer, it is not only a marvellous poetical work but embodies the soul of India and of all its people.

The tradition is that the supreme one whom the Vedas try to reach, came down as Sri Rama – the son of Dasaratha, and the Vedas also came down as Valmiki's child the Ramayana. Sri Rama is one of the great forces of India's spiritual dynamism. Sri Rama offers asylum to Vibhishana, Ravan's brother in the teeth of general opposition and proclaims his vow of giving refuge to all that come to him.

The tale of the Lord and his consort born as mortals experiencing human sorrows and viles and establishing Dharma was sung by the Rishi in words of matchless beauty. And Brhma's words under whose guidance Valmiki composed the Ramayana categorically narrating Sri Rama's virtuous qualities coupled with lofty ideals and unblemished character and his dynamic role in establishing Ramarajya in the epic have come true. "As long as the mountains stand and the rivers flow, so long shall be the Ramayana be cherished among men and women and save them from sin".

Many meanings can be read in the Ramayana and its beauty appreciated in many ways as from a real diamond; many glorious colours emanate. We should look upon Rama, Laxman and Hanuman like our own fathers and elder brothers who come to our rescue at the time of need. We should grow to be like Bharata, Laxman and Hanuman good and brave souls full of love and strength.

The story of Seeta as retold by Valmiki can be fully appreciated only by women. Only they can fully appreciate the courage of Jatayu and the prowess of Hanuman. Seeta's sorrows have not ended with the Ramayana. They go on still in the lives of women. Sri Rama returned to Ayodhya with some of his important Vanaras and now he was crowned as his father had wished before his death. Every Hindu should take a note of it as Sri Rama the worthy son of Dasaratha was obedient and devotional to his father that nowhere in Ramayana has he ever disregarded or disobeyed his father. Really such divine quality in all aspects such as equal vision of joy and sorrow and to come to the rescue of a needy in adversity and so on and so forth of main hero-Sri Rama of the epic undoubtedly magnified significant of

Ramayana for its sanctity and guidance to men and women who are allured in the pangs of Maya – the devastator of human race.

The Vaishnava hymns exalt Bharata even above Rama for spotless mend and unblemished unselfishness. For fourteen years till the return of Rama, Bharata installed Rama's Paduka on the throne and administered the Kingdom as a devotional exercise in the service of his brother Rama. This spotless love and devotion of Bharat towards his eldest brother Rama should be introspected by the present human race and follow his idealistic theory in the day to day to day performance of duty towards elders which is our Vedic tradition.

Sorrow and joy are both alike the play of God as the Lord Rama himself took with him his divine spouse the embodiment of his own supreme compassion, into the world of men and women, enacted with her a great drama of joy and sorrow in the Ramayana which is noteworthy. The tenderness and purity and the untold sufferings of women took shape, as the Uttara Ramayana, like an unflickering lamp, it throws light on the quality of their heart.

Let no one look upon work as a burden, good work is the secret that keeps life going, one should not hanker after results; life without work would be unendurable.

It is said that Rama Charita Manasa is an encyclopaedia of Sanatan Dharma and its principles, philosophy and social norms second to only Mahabharata. Rama Charita Manas is only epic which embraces all aspects of Hinduism without any exception. Grierson rightly remarked "It is the Bible of hundred million people and is looked upon. No other spiritual book needs to be consulted after having gone through this book. Nobody can fully appreciate Sanatana Dharma without having a Birds eye view on this book".

The ideologies beliefs, motives, actions and reactions symbolized in the epic are applicable for all times and for all ages. They have taught to man for several centuries how life should be led and what should be the ultimate goal of life. Socio-moral values also elevate a man to spiritual level by purifying him both internally and externally, through the observance of social and moral discipline after studying this book. It was the considered opinion of the author of

Ramayana that the revival of faith in the traditional Hindu values could revoke most of the elements of society and establish the Rama Rajya on the earth.

From the study of Ramayana we can find the social and ideal relationships between different characters. Sri Rama is the repository of all that is noble and virtues, truth, charity, penance, detachment, friendliness, purity, straightforwardness, service to his preceptors and help to the needy in adversity are the real ideal characters of Sri Rama as expounded in Ramayana. The traditional ideals of heroism, dignity and sublimity of Rama and purity of Sita as expressed by the poet in Ramayana are beyond comparison with any other ethical works.

The Yudha Kanda shows us a warrior possessing all the qualities of any ideal Yudhaveera next only to Rama namely His skill, valour unexcelled super-natural heroism. Rama's highest ideal in life is an unflinching and enthusiastic commitment to Satya Dharma- a Dharma that aspires for righteousness for the sake of truth and goodness only; a Dharma uncompromising, though it may be, has its resonance, not in a temporal emotional attachment, but in the

everlasting supplement good of all beings in supreme altruism that transounds all temporal attachment and seeks the eternal, spiritual welfare of beings.

Dasaratha and Kausalya stand for the ideals of parental affection and self sacrifice. Lakshmana and Bharata epitomize fraternal love. Sita exposes the value of chastity wifely fidelity. Sugriva represents true friendship; Hanuman is unique in devotion and service to his master. Sri Rama is the transcendental being incarnates for the sake of the virtual and ideal. Rama possesses mainly righteousness than physical power for which he comes out victorious. In the Rama Rajya, Dharma with four pillars (via truth, purity, compassion and charity) reigns everywhere throughout the world.

The chariot of piety depicted in the Lanka Kanda constitutes such values as valour, fortitude, truthfulness, good conduct, strength, discretion, self control, benevolence, forgiveness, compassion, evenness of mind, adoration of God, contentment, charity, dispassion, wisdom, pure and steady mind and various form of Yama and Niyama, homage to Brahmins and to one's preceptors. It is

suggested that Varnasram Dharma should be strictly adhered to and any infringement of laxity might lead to chaotic results.

Love should become the bedrock of social forces. Evil should not be returned for evil. One should be generous, sincere, broadminded and liberal in one's conduct. There should be equilibrium between Artha, Kama and Dharma.

Acquisition of wealth, though essential for satisfaction of one's material needs should be based on honest toil, it should be equitably distributed. It is further mentioned therein that the State should work on democratic principles and follow the instruction laid down in the Vedas, and Sastras. The sovereign Head of the State should be magnanimous, affectionate, sympathetic and Virtuous. Wars should be fought strictly according to rules. A refugee who seeks shelter should not be killed but protected. Patriotism acts as a cementing value which brings men and women into one fold.

Rama Rajya could be established on this earth if the rules adhered to, a righteous administration, wise legislation and dispassionate judgement. The message of the epic is important. It is for all times and

all situations. Even in the present age and scientific and technological advancement, it can do a lot in removing the distraction. It can infuse modern brain in the innocent frustrated man and make his life really happy and peaceful.

The progress to be maintained in building nation and the manner in which it can be administered most efficiently are contained in Ramayana and Mahabharata. Lord Rama who was to be crowned the next day realized that His father had committed himself to a promise. Though it was a sacrifice that defies discipline, he left the country happily without even a trace of remorse. The purpose of stay in the world was to establish the rule of Law and he carried this out and thereby protected the victorious from being persecuted by demons.

Vibhishana shows himself in this first exposition of him by Valmiki as a righteous and conscientious, faithful and well wishing counsellor and his loyalty coupled with deep responsibility and desire for the welfare made this idealistic. Vibhishana's hospitality manifests itself in various ways to the concluding Sargas of Yudha Kanda.

Dasaratha, Rama's father is briefly but vividly introduced by Valmiki as an ideal king embodying all the ideals of a true Ksatriya; a heroic and powerful Atiratha of the Ikshvaku and vanquisher of enemies, royal riches, yet bent on sacrifice and Dharma and in face of Maharshi in self-restraint, armedly protecting and ruling the kingdom to the satisfaction of all and being desired by town men and country men, he is a radiant personality, whose greatness of character permeates the hearts and minds of citizens of Ayodhya and transforms them into an ideal people.

Visvamitra is portrayed as a powerful and eminent Brahmachari, a sage who has attained his status through the practice of extraordinary Tapas, who is endowed with highest fame and virtues.

Sumantra – the king's ever loyal charioteer and counsellor, distinguishes himself by his intimate attachment and devotion to Rama as well as his deep sympathy with his relatives and the citizens of Ayodhya in their grief at his banishment. Moreover he has heart to understand, the deep psychic feelings of Rama and heart to appreciate in his lofty virtues and idealistic regard for Dharma and truthfulness.

Valmiki described Bharata to be a man of high benevolence with deep love and an intimate attachment to his father, mother, brother, full of anxiety and concern about their welfare. Bharata is portrayed as an ideal brother. Satrugna is his most intimate personal friend, his 2<sup>nd</sup> self with whom he is always together wherever he goes.

In the original version, Valmiki introduces Sita's personality straight away in her role as living testimony of wifely fidelity and devotion to her husband. Valmiki has also portrayed Sita as the perfect embodiment of spiritual sublimity of femininity of character which makes her an ideal womanhood, is complemented by radiating beauty and charm of personality so that Sita is the veritable embodiment of all excellences physical and spiritual of an ideal wife.

Rama was the prime ideal in Valmiki's mind that inspired him to retell the Ramayana story in the spirit of his poetical vision; Rama must have been much of Ideal character in the tradition before him. So we can say then more truly that Valmiki's poetical vocation was awakened, at the vision of the ideal character of Rama and this vision itself filled

him with a poetical mission to make his story an ideal saga of life with an ideal message of life embodying in itself a whole cosmos of life in its richness.

Dr. Wurm has defined the Ramayana as a story that expands the lofty ideals of life embodied in the portrayal of the life – experience of ideal characters and is woven into a human saga which unfolds the rich pulsation of the soul of life.

He said “It preaches a Universe of characters which rifted by polar forces the forces of light and darkness of sublime ideals and diabolic anti ideals embodying the gladdening message of the victory of light over darkness and of ideals over anti-ideals and mirroring the wealth of emotions and sentiments and ordeals of life of the common man of all walks, sets a stage towards his living identification with lofty ideals incarnated by the ideal characters who unattained in their perfection, as it were, are flesh and blood of his own in

their humanity. In its deepest spiritual purport, the Ramayana is a hymn on the glory of altruism. Its highest ideal is the ideal of an unflinching enthusiastic commitments to a supreme spirit of benevolence, which foregoing every concerns about personal welfares to the extent of total self sacrifice and transcending all bonds of natural attachment, seeks the deepest welfare of all beings, an ideal which has its resonance in the unspoken intuition that which validifies the truth of man’s self commitment as the highest aspiration of his heart, is an eternal bond of love with his fellow beings which endures beyond and against mere natural attachment”.

Lord Rama’s life reveals that the search light of virtue should be focused inwards, unmindful of tragedies of stormy situations.

“Suffer in silence, stand up after a fall and march forward to the goal”.

Last but not the least, we mention here that the people of Ayodhya as such are explicitly characterized several times especially in the context of the discipline of the ideal city of Ayodhya. As the poet introduces the ideal city of Ayodhya, he also introduces her citizens – idealized through the king’s spirit radiating on them. In this atmosphere they are an ideal people in all respects, a people living in happiness and prosperity of unfailing efficiency, a people endured with lofty virtues, religiously devoted to righteous and truth stepped to an unblemished moral life, all sections of society living up to the expectation of their distinctive qualities.

‘Isavasya medam Servam.’

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