

## Potency of Rama's name

*Sweeter than sugar,  
Tastier than the cream from curds,  
Growing in sweetness like honey,  
As the name is chanted,  
Verily it is nectar itself.  
Meditate, all ye, on the sacred name of Rama!*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Rama is the friend of the universe. He is its protector. He is its patron saint. To comprehend the nature of such a unique ideal personality is not quite easy. It is easier to count the waves of the ocean than to describe the qualities of Rama.

Ramachandra is the Indweller in all beings. The cosmos is one vast mansion. Humanity is one family (or community). Only the person who recognizes this relationship between the cosmos and mankind can understand the Rama Principle.

The earth lies at the feet of every human being. It is the same firmament that is above every person. All breathe the same air. The water that people drink is the same for all. Only those who recognize this unifying principle will seek to understand the Rama Principle.

### **Two kinds of dharma: pravritti and nivritti**

The *Vedas* taught two kinds of *dharma* (codes of right conduct). One is termed *pravritti* and the other is termed *nivritti*. *Pravritti* (the outward path) is related to worldly activities. It prescribes the qualities needed for leading the life in the mundane world. *Nivritti* (the inward path) teaches knowledge of the Self (*Atma-jnana*). One who knows the difference between the two is dauntless.

*Pravritti* indicates how any particular task should be performed. *Nivritti* (the inward path) indicates in what state of mind the work should be done.

For example, when a person is hungry, *pravritti* tells him to eat food and appease his hunger. *Nivritti* teaches what kind of food he should eat, what is good for his health and what is injurious, and how it should be consumed. *Pravritti* and *nivritti* are thus related to what is external and what is internal.

All that you see, all that you hear, all that you think is related to the *pravritti* path. The *pravritti* path creates confusion in the mind, disturbs the intelligence, and prevents one from pursuing the right path. *Pravritti* tends to turn man away from God.

Life is a kind of struggle. You have to face conflict of opinions. But Ayodhya is a place free from strife and controversy. No enemy could enter it. The human heart is the symbol of Ayodhya. All conflicts and divisions arise in the mind. It is the mark of *pravritti* (the outward path) that it generates conflict and brings about alternatively union and separation. Be-

cause of this fact, man today is a prey of unrest and is bereft of peace. Ravana is an example of such a person who ruined his life in this way. He was perpetually following the *pravrithi* path. Unable to conquer his desires he sacrificed his sons. Unable to subdue his desires (*vanchalu*), he ultimately ruined his entire clan (*vamsa*). With no control over his passions, he forfeited his kingdom itself.

### **Ravana's lesson to the world**

In the final reckoning, this was the lesson Ravana gave to the world: "Oh people of the world! Failing to control your attachments like me, unable to limit your desires like me, do not ruin yourselves as I have done. Ultimately, I am also leaving the world. What remains in the world? Only infamy. All the renown goes to Rama. Therefore, strive to earn good reputation. Do not give room to ill-fame." That was the lesson Ravana taught. The Rama Principle destroys all sins and redeems life. Everyone should seek to realize the Rama Principle.

Rama moved about in the world as an ordinary human being. He exemplified the ideal life. Yet all considered him as an ordinary human being. But, do ordinary people live like Rama? Rama was one who, while appearing to lead the life of an ordinary man, led the life Divine. He demonstrated the ideal life of a spiritually realised person.

Today, the world needs the message of the Ramayana. Why? Because children do not heed the words of their parents. Parents do not set worthy examples to the children. Preceptors do not teach the right course of conduct to the disciples. The disciples do not offer the due respect to the teachers.

Today, businessmen, administrators, rulers, and citizens are all tarred by the same brush. The world is replete with discord. People have forgotten the great message of Rama. They have

poisoned life at its source. They have forgotten the Divine, with the result that they are immersed in misery.

How do people address their prayers to God today? They pray for bodily comforts and mental peace. These desires are natural. But there is something unnatural about the way it is done. Prayers are offered to the image of the Lord of Serpents in stone! They pray, "Oh Lord of Serpents! Remove my troubles." But when the serpent appears before them as a live cobra, they use the stone idol to kill it.

Today this is the plight of the Divine. Who can determine what is the nature of Divinity? None can do it. The nature of the Divine can be determined only by the Divine and not by anybody else.

Thyagaraja recognized this truth in his song, "Oh Lord! How can anyone decide what you are?" Thyagaraja went on to derive the name "Rama" from the two letters *Ra* and *Ma* in the two *mantras* associated with Vishnu and Siva (The two *mantras* are: *Namo Narayanaya* and *Namah Sivaya*). The two *mantras*, without the syllables *Ra* and *Me*, become meaningless. *Ra* and *Ma* are thus the life-giving letters in the two *mantras*.

### **Power of Rama's name**

Rama's name is thus the life-giving essence of the two great *mantras*. The term "Rama" has another esoteric significance. It consists of three syllables: *Ra* + *Aa* + *Ma*. *Ra* signifies *Agni* (the Fire-god). *Aa* represents *Surya* (the Sun-god). *Ma* represents *Chandra* (the Moon-god). The combination of the three letters constitutes the Rama name. *Ra*, representing the Fire-god, burns away all sins, *Aa*, representing the Sun-god, dispels the darkness of ignorance. *Ma*, representing the Moon-god, cools one's temper and produces tranquility. The name Rama has the triple power of washing away one's sins,

removing one's ignorance, and tranquilizing one's mind. How is the profound meaning of this sacred name to be imparted to mankind? This can be done only by the Divine coming in human form and demonstrating to mankind the power of the Divine. Rama's name signifies the harmony in thought, word and deed. Rama demonstrated this harmony by his thoughts, words, and deeds.

The Rama Principle embodies numerous powers and potencies. The *Ramayana* is not a sacred text to be used only for ritualistic reading (*parayanam*). The Rama Principle is all-pervading like the Cosmic Spirit. In olden times people used to say that their inner secrets are known only to the Indwelling Rama Spirit (*Atma-Rama*). The Self is called "Rama". Rama means "one who pleases". How can you give a specific form to one who pleases or delights?

### **The human destiny**

In the Divine epic of the *Ramayana*, there is a special profound message. That message is: man must lead the life of a human being; men must seek oneness with the Divine. Man should harmonize the three qualities in him (*satwa, rajas, tamas*). In every human being, all the three natures –human, divine, and demonic– are present. But most men today ignore their humanness and divinity and foster only their demonic nature.

Man, in fact, should strive to manifest his divinity, and not display his weakness or his demonic qualities.

Rama chose to go to the forest to fulfill the pledge of his father, and thereby subjected himself to many difficulties. It may be asked: Did he go to the forest under any compulsion or out of his own resolve, or with a sense of dissatisfaction, or merely to comply with his father's pledge? No. Rama set out for the forest with the same sense of serenity and joy with

which he looked forward to his coronation. Rama demonstrated the spirit of equanimity. He showed that pain or pleasure, profit or loss, victory or defeat, were the same to him. In human life, pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow alternate all the time. It is not a good quality to welcome pleasure and turn away pain. You must welcome sorrow in the same joyous spirit in which you greet happiness. Happiness has no value unless there is also sorrow. That is why it is said, "Pleasure is not secured by pleasant measure." Pain is needed to secure pleasure. Rama demonstrated to the world the truth of this concept.

In every act, Rama set the example. In individual conduct, in the discharge of duties to the family, and in fulfilling the obligations to society Rama demonstrated the ideals to be followed.

All should begin with fulfilling the obligations of the individual. The duty of the individual is to manifest the divinity within him. As an individual, Rama revealed the divinity in him by his ideal conduct.

### **Brahma's benediction**

When Valmiki completed his *Ramayana*, Brahma declared that his epic would last as long as the mountains stand and the rivers flow. The inner meaning of Brahma's benediction is that the *Ramayana* will be cherished as long as men (mountains) and women (rivers) exist on earth. The *Ramayana* will last as long as human society exists. People should acquire the capacity to comprehend the eternal truths embedded in the *Ramayana*. Ignoring the eternal truths of the *Ramayana*, *Bharathiyas* (Indians) are wasting their lives in the pursuit of worldly concerns.

We celebrate this day as the birthday of Rama. How are people celebrating the day? They perform some special *puja*

(worship). They adorn themselves with sacred marks. But, for doing these things should you wait for the birthday of Rama? No. Whatever your age, at all times and in all places, you must be engaged in thoughts of Rama.

Valmiki, after completing the composing of the *Ramayana*, summoned the sages in his ashram and asked them who was capable of propagating the immortal and sacred epic to every nook and corner of the world. The sages were nonplused. They declared, "*Guruji*, we are old men. We are at the end of our span of life. We are incapable of conveying the *Ramayana* to the length and breadth of the world." Valmiki was downcast. At that stage, the twins Lava and Kusa arrived on the scene. They told Valmiki, "*Guruji*, we have been listening to what all has been spoken here. We are prepared to convey the *Ramayana* to every place." The sage was immensely happy.

### **Be prepared for any sacrifice for the sake of the Divine**

Lava and Kusa were princes of royal blood. They carried in their hands tambourines. They set out on the great task of propagating the *Ramayana*, chanting the *slokas* (verses) all the way. Are there any today who will undertake such a task? Many will fear being mocked by the public. Even persons who may wish to do *bhajans* in public are afraid of being jeered at. Devotees should be able to transcend such considerations. Why should anyone who is doing something holy be afraid of public ridicule?

People should be prepared for any sacrifice for the sake of the Divine. The joy to be derived from chanting the Lord's name is ineffable. Without the constant remembrance of God, there can be no experience of the Divine.

Whatever the name that may be chanted, when it is done wholeheartedly the fruits of it will be certain. Everything should be done with a pure heart.

### Three mothers and Rama

The *Ramayana* story is replete with ideals. During my recent visit to Madras, I spoke about the story of three mothers –Kausalya, Rama's mother; Anjanadevi, the mother of Anjaneya (Hanuman); and the mother of the sage Agasthya. When the three met, Kausalya asked Anjaneya's mother, "Mother! Who are you?"

She replied: "What! Don't you know? My son Hanuman is well known to the whole world. Hanuman is present wherever Rama's name is uttered. Rama and Hanuman have inseparable attachment to each other. They are one soul in two bodies. I am the mother of that Hanuman. He leapt over the mighty ocean to Lanka."

On hearing these words, Agasthya's mother observed, "Whatever your son did is not anything so great. Your son leapt over the ocean. My son drank the ocean in a gulp. I am the mother of Agasthya."

Both then told Kausalya, "You are the mother of Rama, whose name enabled Hanuman to leap over the ocean and Agasthya to drink the waters of the ocean."

As they were engaged in this conversation, Rama came there and remarked innocently, "How is it you mothers are waxing eloquent about me?" Though he was the incarnation of the Lord Narayana Himself, he moved about as if he was simple son. He told them: "Hanuman could cross the ocean because of his intense devotion. Agasthya could drink the ocean because of his intense penance. I was in no way responsible for their accomplishments. I am not so great as all that. I am an ordinary human being. The name given to me is the source of all power. I am only an instrument. It is my name that helps to accomplish everything. This name is filled with all potencies. This body of mine moves because of the power of the name. Therefore, regard me as only an instrument."



After Rama left, Kausalya observed: “Mothers! My son speaks as if he is an ordinary being. But he is the reservoir of all knowledge and there is nothing he cannot accomplish.”

Kausalya, who had this opinion of Rama, felt differently when Rama came to tell her that he was about to leave for the forest to fulfill the pledge given by his father to Kaikeyi. The mother was full of joy at the prospect of the coronation of Rama. Rama told her, “Mother! I have come to give you some happy news. I am not only the Lord of Ayodhya; I am now the Lord of the whole jungle in the country. I am getting ready to reign over the forest.”

Kausalya could not understand the implications of Rama's statement. While she was wondering what it was all about, Lakshmana came there. Lakshmana always followed Rama like a shadow. Likewise Satrughna always accompanied Bharata. Lakshmana and Satrughna were the children of mother Sumitra. But they were full of humility and attached themselves respectively to Rama and Bharata.

### **Rama's advice to Lakshmana**

Lakshmana was greatly agitated as he entered. Addressing Rama, he said, “Brother! Your calmness is no doubt a great virtue. But not in affairs like this. The whole world is looking up to you. For the sake of one individual you are embarking on this undertaking. I cannot accept this. I shall destroy Dasaratha and Kaikeyi and crown you king this very moment.”

On hearing this, Rama said, “Lakshmana! Don't get agitated. Calm yourself. This calmness (*santham*) will protect you. It is your glory and greatness. Forbearance is the supreme virtue. It is the crowning quality of the sages. Therefore, calm yourself.”

### **Kausalya and Sita**

Lakshmana then related to Kausalya what had happened. Hearing the whole story, Kausalya collapsed on the spot. When she recovered consciousness, she declared, “Rama! I cannot live for a single moment without you. You are prepared to carry out your father's words. I cannot stand in your way. But I appeal to you to take me with you.”

Rama then told her, “To a wife, her husband is verily God himself. You cannot leave your husband in any circumstance. Your husband is everything for you. As long as he is alive, you cannot leave him. He is now plunged in sorrow over my impending departure. You cannot leave him. You must serve him and offer him solace.”

Sita came there soon after. She was no ordinary woman. Daughter of Emperor Janaka, she was known as “Vaidehi”, a person with no attachment to the body. Listening to Rama's advice to his mother, Sita burst into laughter and remarked: “You teach one thing to your mother and the opposite to me. When I said I wanted to follow you, you tried to dissuade me. You advised me to devote myself to the service of your aged parents. But, when you met your mother, you asked her to treat the husband as God. Are you not then a God for me? Is there one rule for one woman and another for another woman? Moreover, you are called Ramachandra. *Chandra* means moon. I am the moonlight for you. How can the moon be in the forest and the moonlight be in Ayodhya? The moonlight must be with the moon. Therefore, you must take me with you.”

### **Rama's dilemma in destroying Rakshasas**

Rama had to pacify the demand of the mother and the wife in the softest manner. After pacifying them, Rama set out for the forest. In his wanderings in the forest, seeing the demonic atrocities of the *Rakshasas* (Demons). Rama felt that he had

been ostensibly sent in exile really to deal with these evil forces. “The *Rakshasas* are hindering the sacred activities of the ascetics. I must destroy the *Rakshasas* so that these sages will be left in peace to practice their austerities,” thought Rama.

One problem arose in his mind in this context. In destroying the *Rakshasas*, is it proper to kill women? Rama had received the answer to this question from Viswamitra when, as a young lad, he had been taken by the sage to guard his *yajna* and he wanted to know whether it was right on his part to kill Thataki, a demoness. Viswamitra assured him that there was nothing wrong in killing a wicked person even if she happened to be a woman. To protect the pious, the righteous and the holy persons engaged in sacred activities there was nothing wrong in destroying even women.

When Rama asked the sage whether there had been any precedent in this respect, Viswamitra related the case of Prahlada's son Virochana, who killed the demoness Mantra who was committing many wicked deeds against the *rishis* (sages) and their families.

There is nothing wrong in repudiating one's mother, father, husband, or preceptor if they come between the devotee and God. When Kaikeyi came between him and his devotion to Rama, Bharata utterly denounced her. One must be prepared to sacrifice everything for God.

The Rama Principle is infinitely potent. The powers of the Divine are immeasurable. God comes down in human form to redeem mankind. Birds and beasts act according to their natural instincts. Man alone tends to violate the laws of nature and act against the laws of *dharma* (right conduct). It is to teach and punish man who goes astray that the Divine comes in human form. He teaches the highest ideals and leads an ideal life to set an example.

**Role of the Avatar***Embodiments of love!*

God incarnates for the sake of redemption mankind and not for His own sake. He needs nothing. He has everything. He comes down to tell humanity its divine origin and to exhort men to return to God by following the Love Principle. Through love you can achieve anything. It is this message that has to be understood today: the role of the *Avatar* in leading mankind through love to a Godly life.

There is no use in observing Sri Rama's birthday once a year and being satisfied with a good feast. Every moment marks the Lord's advent, because human beings are being born continually. Every human being is an incarnation of the Divine. The Divine dwells in every being. Therefore, dedicate every moment to the thoughts of God. When you do this, in due course you experience the Divine. You will be free from delusions and you will be divinised. Man is born to merge in the grace of the Divine and not to immerse himself in mundane pleasures.

Let each one carry on his or her duties. *Dharma* protects its protector and destroys its destroyer. Strive to proceed from the human to the Divine.

**Embodiment of love!**

It is not possible to describe the boundless attributes of the Rama Principle. The name of Rama has been adored for aeons. Humanity has been in existence for many lakhs of years. Unfortunately, humanity is yet to realize its true nature. What is this nature? It is the Principle of Love. Human life should be suffused with love and rounded off with love. Life should be given up with tears of joy and not tears of sorrow.

This is a sacred day. Remembering its sacredness, you must all make your lives sublime.

5 April 1998  
Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan

*No one can shake truth; no one can install untruth. No one can understand My mystery. The best you can do is get immersed in it. The mysterious, indescribable power has come within the reach of all. No one is born and allowed to live for the sake of others. Each has their own burden to carry and lay down.*

—Baba