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Manifestation Of The Vedas In Human Form

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama. Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore, contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly.

(Telugu poem)

THE *Vedas* are the quintessence of profound, immeasurable and infinite wisdom. In *Treta Yuga*, the four *Vedas* assumed physical form and incarnated as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. While *Rig Veda* assumed the form of Rama, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharvana Veda* manifested in the forms of Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna, respectively.

Divine Power of *Mantras*

Rama symbolized *Rig Veda*. He was *Mantraswarupa* (embodiment of *mantras*). Lakshmana was *Mantradrasta* (one who contemplated on the *mantras*) and he put the teachings of Rama into practice. He followed Rama faithfully. He considered *Rama Nama* as the *taraka* (liberating) *mantra*. He, in fact, considered Rama as everything - mother, father, *Guru* and God. Bharata was the embodiment of *Sama Veda* and chanted *Rama Nama* incessantly with *bhava*, *raga* and *tala* (feeling, melody and rhythm). While Bharata was engaged in *nirguna* worship (worship of formless God), Lakshmana rejoiced in *saguna* worship (worship of God with form). *Atharvana Veda* manifested itself as *satrughna* who followed his three elder brothers and conquered not only the secular world but achieved victory over the kingdom of senses also. The *vedas* thus incarnated in *Treta Yuga* to impart the most precious message to mankind. The two great sages *Vasishtha* and *Viswamitra* declared to the world that the four *Vedas* had taken birth in human form as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and *Satrughna*. As a consequence of great merit earned by *Dasaratha*, the four *Vedas* incarnated as his sons. If anyone asked Sage *Viswamitra* any questions about the *Vedas*, he replied, "All the four *Vedas* have incarnated as the four sons of *Dasaratha* to set an ideal to the world." Hence the *Vedas* are not formless; they have a form.

The *mantras* contained in the *Vedas* are of immense significance. When Sage *Viswamitra* realized that the

rakshasas (demons) wanted to stop the chanting of *Vedic mantras* and destroy righteousness and truth on earth, he sought the help of Rama and Lakshmana who symbolized the divine forces that descended on earth to destroy the demonic forces and establish peace in the world. With the power of *mantras* taught to them by Sage *Viswamitra*, Rama and Lakshmana annihilated the *rakshasas*. This incident signifies the fact that with the power of *Vedic mantras* man can destroy his demonic qualities. By engaging themselves in the chanting of the *mantras*, the people of *Treta Yuga* annihilated their demonic qualities. Symbolising the divine powers of the *Vedas*, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and *Satrughna* destroyed demonic forces and fostered divine forces in the world. The four brothers thus established the supremacy of the *Vedas* as manifestation of the aspect of God with form. Each *mantra* has a form. It has also its own inner significance. When chanting is done with contemplation on form, it leads one to the path of self-realisation. The *Vedic* seers declared: *Vedahametam Purusham mahantam Aditya varnam tamasah parastat*. (I have seen the Divine Being who shines with the splendour of a billion suns beyond the realm of darkness). The seers and sages transcended the darkness of ignorance and visualized the effulgence of the Divine. They chanted the *mantras*, contemplated on the form of the Divine, performed *Yajnas* and attained peace and bliss. They made use of *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* in the performance of *yajnas* which ensured peace and prosperity of the people in *Treta Yuga*. With the help of

the *mantras*, they quelled the *rakshasas* and established the reign of gods.

Namasmarana for Man's Liberation

But the people of *Kali Yuga* have forgotten these *mantras* with the result that *Kali Yuga* has verily become *Kalaha Yuga* (the Age of discord and conflict). Even brothers quarrel with each other. They live and eat together in the same family, yet there is hatred and conflict between them. Different means for man's liberation have been prescribed for each of the four *Yugas*. While meditation was prescribed as the primary means of liberation in *Krita Yuga*, performance of *Yajnas* and chanting of *mantras* forms the means of liberation in the *Treta Yuga*. Similarly, *archana* (worship of God) was the chief means of liberation in *Dwapara Yuga*. But it is *namasmarana* that is the main means of man's liberation in *Kali Yuga*. As the people of *Kali Yuga* do not have the strength and capability to carry out rigorous *sadhana*, they have been advised to do *namasmarana*.

*Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva
Kevalam; kalau nastyeva nastyeva
Nastyeva gatiranyatha.*

(In *Kali Yuga*, there is no other means more effective than the chanting of Divine Name for man's liberation).

The *Ramayana* is not an ordinary story. It contains the direct message of the *Vedas*. Rama symbolizes the wisdom of the *Vedas*. Rama married Sita who represents

Brahmajnana (knowledge of *Brahman*). When Sita is taken away by demonic forces, Rama and Lakshmana search for her desperately. The *Ramayana* contains thousands of *slokas*. As it was not possible to remember all the *slokas* of the *Ramayana*, the sages recommended the chanting of the name of Rama. When the disciples of Vasishtha asked him what divine name to chant, the sage said, "It is enough if you chant the name Rama. The name of Rama will make you free from *raga* (attachment) and *roga* (disease)". As I often tell the students, the name Rama has two syllables, 'Ra' and 'ma'. These two powerful syllables are derived from the names of Vishnu and Siva. The syllable 'Ra' comes from the *ashtakshari* (eight syllabled) *mantra* 'Om Namō Narayanaya'. It is the life-breath of the *ashtakshari mantra*. Similarly, 'ma' is the very soul of the *panchakshari* (five lettered) *mantra* 'Om Namah Sivaya'. The *astakshari mantra* 'Om Namō Narayanaya' and the *panchakshari mantra* 'Om Namah Sivaya' become meaningless when 'ra' and 'ma' are, respectively, removed from the words of these *mantras*. Without 'ra' the *ashtakshari mantra* becomes 'Om Namō Nayanaya' which is meaningless. In the same way, the *panchakshari mantra* without 'ma' becomes 'Om Nah Sivaya' which is inauspicious. The name Rama is the life-breath of both the Vaishnavites and Saivites (worshippers of Vishnu and Siva).

In *Treta Yuga* when the sages and seers were engaged in the chanting of the divine name of Rama, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons tried to put

hurdles in their way. They thought that if they abducted Sita, who symbolized Brahmajnana, Rama would lose His power. The name would lose its potency without *jnana* just like sugarcane loses its sweetness without *rasa*. Hanuman resolved to bring this *rasa* back to Rama and rejoiced in drinking *ramarasa* (ambrosia of Rama's name). The people of *Treta* and *Dwapara Yugas* considered the name Rama to be the essence of all sweetness and enjoyed its nectarous taste. Instead of tasting the delicious spiritual sweetness of the name of Rama, people today devour worldly sweets, and expose themselves to the risk of becoming diabetics. Worldly sweets cause diseases whereas the delicious sweet of *Ramanama* rids one of all diseases. In ancient India, even the cowherds and shepherds chanted the divine name while tending their cattle and sheep. There were not many diseases in ancient times. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna propagated the glorious power of *Vedic mantras* to free the world from diseases and suffering.

Never Neglect The Teachings Of The Vedas

Mandodari, the queen of Ravana, strived hard to save her husband. She gave wise counsel to him but Ravana paid no heed to her. When husband takes to evil ways, a virtuous wife acts as his wise minister to put him on the right path. Mandodari was one such wife. *Bharya* (wife) is not the one who provides worldly pleasures to her husband; she is the one who does good to him by

leading him to the path of wisdom and righteousness. Mandodari was a true *Sati* (wife) who tried to mend the ways of her *Pati* (husband). Sita also tendered wise counsel to Rama and advised Him not to destroy all the demons. She suggested that only those who committed the evil deeds should be punished. Justice does not lie in destroying the entire clan. Women are great because they show the right path to men. They are, in fact, the light of wisdom in the world. They, therefore, deserve protection and reverence. Sita symbolizes *Jnanatattwa* (principle of wisdom). Sita told Rama that goodness was universal, irrespective of caste, creed and community. It is because of women like Sita that men have made progress in life.

There are numerous species in this world. Every one of them has a definite purpose to fulfil in God's creation. Some of them may appear more beautiful than others. One cannot say whether a cow is more beautiful or a bull. But virtues are more important than physical beauty. Observing the good and bad in the world, the students should develop discrimination to choose the former. They should strive hard to cultivate virtues. Right from early age, they should inculcate good qualities and develop good character. Wherever you go, character is of utmost importance. When the students develop good character, the entire country will become good and great. It is virtues that lend greatness to any person. Rama shines in the *Ramayana* because of His sterling virtues. Virtues are more important than

bookish learning.

In spite of his education and intelligence man does not give up his mean-mindedness and evil qualities. He has no knowledge of the Self. Modern education leads to argumentation, not to total wisdom. (Telugu poem)

Students - Boys and Girls!

You should try to attain total wisdom. You should make right use of your eyes, ears and tongue which God has gifted to you. Whoever is able to control these three will achieve greatness. One should therefore cultivate right vision, right hearing and right speech. Always speak sweetly and softly. One who cultivates these three virtues will verily become divine. This is the primary objective and fundamental basis of all your education. Those bereft of these virtues are virtually demons. This is the essence and the message of the *Ramayana*. The four *Vedas* and other scriptures exhort man to follow these principles. Dear students! Never neglect the teachings of the *Vedas*. They are for the emancipation and redemption of mankind. Put them into practice in your life.

[Rama Navami, 30-3-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]