

2. Glory Of Rama Thathwa

*The name Rama is sweeter than sugar and
the best of honey.*

It is more tasteful than curd too.

*As you go on repeating the name of Rama,
it tastes like nectar itself.*

*Hence, repeat the name of Rama with all
your heart, with utter sincerity.*

The *Ramayana* has been described as the story of Rama, the ideal man. In fact every human, in a way, is Rama Himself, when he embodies the ideals of Rama. Hence, it is imperative on the part of every individual to cultivate the ideals of Rama. The *Ramayana* enshrines in itself the very essence of the *dharma* (righteousness) of the individual, family, and society.

Though thousands of years have passed since the story of Rama was first written, the inner story of the *Ramayana* is being enacted every moment of our life. The *Ramayana* does not signify the story of Rama alone; for, the word 'Rama' signifies Sita as well. Rama means Sita, the daughter of the earth. Since the earth is a part of Nature (*Prakruthi*), every child born on this earth should try to cultivate the qualities of Sita. Valmiki, at the beginning of the *Ramayana* was swayed by the idea that Rama was the ideal man. But during the course of his writing, he was overpowered by the feeling that Rama was Divinity itself and concluded, at the end of the epic, that Rama was the Embodiment of Divinity. On the other hand, Tulsidas began his *Ramayana* with the firm faith that Rama was

verily Lord Narayana Himself and concluded emphasising the fact that Rama was the ideal man. Kamban, the author of *Kamba Ramayana*, wrote his *Ramayana* moved by the feeling that man is God and God is man (*nara* is Narayana and Narayana is *nara*). The three great writers of the *Ramayana* lent different dimensions to it, depending on their inner perceptions. Each writer, who brought forth his version of the *Ramayana*, added his own dimension in consonance with his own faith and temperament. By and large, it is a fact that the *Rama Thathwa* (Rama's Principle) has to be cultivated by one and all.

The Glory of Ayodhya

Ayodhya was a flourishing city in the prosperous Kingdom of Kosala. Emperor Manu founded this city and there was none more beautiful. It had spiraling mansions, sprawling markets, and spruce gardens. The citizens of Ayodhya took delight in adding fresh beauty to the already beautiful city. The mansions were studded with pearls and precious stones and shone with great splendour. Dasaratha, the Emperor, embodied in himself all noble ideals. The people too shared the noble virtues of Emperor Dasaratha. The Emperor was pure and egoless, and verily the embodiment of peace and love. He regarded the subjects of his kingdom as his own children and lavished great love and affection on them.

Dasaratha ruled over his kingdom counseled by eight Ministers. These Ministers were of extraordinary mettle. They were masters of the Scriptures and masters of their senses as well. They held the Emperor's

command in high esteem and were prepared to lay down their lives in the task of carrying out his commands. The Emperor had two eminent priests (*purohitas*), Vasishta and Vamana. These priests led profoundly moral and spiritual lives, and were always absorbed in Divine contemplation.

Though Emperor Dasaratha enjoyed every pleasure at his command, he was plagued by the want of children. In due course of time, Dasaratha's Queen Kausalya, gave birth to a daughter named Shanthi. There was another Emperor who pined for children. He was Emperor Romapada, of the Kingdom of Anga. Since Romapada happened to be a friend of Dasaratha, Dasaratha gave away his daughter to Romapada for adoption. Romapada took extreme care of Shanthi and reared her with love and affection. When Shanthi came of age, Romapada gave her in marriage to a young sage by name Rishyashruna.

One day, Minister Sumanthra approached Dasaratha and advised him to perform the *Putrakameshti Yajna* for begetting children. He further advised him to invite Rishyashruna to officiate at the performance of the *Yajna*. Dasaratha, accompanied by Sumanthra, went to the Kingdom of Anga and invited Romapada and Rishyashruna to Ayodhya on the occasion of the performance of the *Putrakameshti Yajna*.

While all this was happening on earth, the angels and other superhuman beings got together and went to Lord Narayana in the heavenly firmament and pleaded relief from the atrocities being committed by

Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka. They were worried by the fact that Brahma had granted to Ravana, the boon that he would not die at the hands of demons or heavenly beings. Brahma assuaged their feelings, saying that though he had granted the boon to Ravana that he would not die at the hands of the demons and heavenly beings, he did not exempt him from death at the hands of humans. Ravana, who did not hold humans in high esteem and considered them as worms, never had an inkling that he would die at the hands of a human. Brahma assured the divine beings that Lord Narayana would take birth as a man and bring about the death of Ravana. There was thus a happy coincidence of events on the earthly plane and the heavenly plane.

Rama's Birth (The Divine Descent)

In response to the request of Dasaratha, Sage Rishyashrunga came to Ayodhya to officiate at the *Putrakameshti Yajna*. Lord Narayana, pleased by the prayers of Emperor Dasaratha, appeared to him and granted him the boon that he would be blessed with children. He handed over to him the vessel of pudding (*payasam*) and asked him to give it to his wives, to be taken by them. Emperor Dasaratha won the grace of the Lord by his virtuous conduct and by the moral and spiritual life that he led. God's Grace is in proportion to man's efforts.

Emperor Dasaratha distributed the pudding to the three Queens equally, for he had equal love for each of them. Pundits and scholars have distorted facts by saying that the pudding was distributed in different

proportions. The three Queens of Dasaratha, namely, Kausalya, Sumithra, and Kaikeyi lived in great harmony and adjustment. Kaikeyi, the youngest Queen, happily received the pudding. She first thought that her son would be crowned as the King of Ayodhya as per the promise that Dasaratha had given before marrying her. Kausalya also happily received her share of the pudding. She thought that since she was the eldest Queen, the son born to her would be crowned as the King of Ayodhya. But Sumithra, the middle Queen, did not entertain any such wish. She was friendly with everyone and highly merited her name, "Sumithra" (a good friend). She placed her share of pudding on the walled terrace and started drying her hair under the Sun, after her bath. While she was thus busy, an eagle swooped down and carried away the vessel that contained the pudding. Frightened at the prospect of incurring the wrath of Dasaratha, she approached Kausalya and Kaikeyi and told them about her plight. Since the Queens were of highly virtuous disposition, they gave part of their share to Sumithra.

Out of the part of the pudding given by Kausalya, Lakshmana was born to Sumithra, whereas Satrughna was born out of the share of the pudding given by Kaikeyi. Hence, it is no wonder that Lakshmana, born of Kousalya's share, was deeply attached to Rama and Satrughna was deeply attached to Bharatha since he was born of the share of Kaikeyi. Lakshmana served Rama sincerely and faithfully until the end, whereas Satrughna served Bharatha to the last. Bharatha would not live without Satrughna even for a moment, a feeling that was well reciprocated.

Similarly, Rama would not live without Lakshmana and vice versa. When Lakshmana fainted in the battle-field, Rama lamented, “Oh Lakshmana! In this wide world, I may be able to obtain a wife like Sita or a mother like Kausalya. But I will never be able to get a brother like you.” Such was the supreme love of Rama for Lakshmana.

The *Ramayana* and the four ends of life

The four brothers were the embodiments of the four *Vedas*. What are these *Vedas*? *Rig Veda* is the embodiment of speech (*vaak*); *Yajur Veda* is the embodiment of the mind (*manas*); *Sama Veda* is the embodiment of the life principle (*prana*); and *Atharvana Veda* is the embodiment of the intellect (*buddhi*). Thus the four *Vedas* played about in the house of Dasaratha as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna. We do not gain much if we allow ourselves to be dominated by the mistaken notion that Rama is the Embodiment of Divinity and that He is beyond our reach. We should realise the fact that the Lord descended on the earth to demonstrate an ideal to mankind. Hence, every human being should mould himself according to the great example set by Rama. In fact, Rama lives in every human heart as the enchanting principle. The enchanting principle in the heart is the Self. There is none in this world in whom the Self is absent. Hence, the Rama principle exists in everyone. Similarly, we should investigate the inner meaning of the word Dasaratha. Dasaratha was not just an Emperor of the Kingdom of Kosala. He stands for the body, which is verily the chariot of the ten senses. The body is made up of the five organs of action and the five organs of perception.

The four sons of Dasaratha also signify the four ends of Life: *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation).

These four ends of life give fulfilment to human life. No human can find fulfilment without these four. There is a close connection between *dharma* and *artha*. Wealth should be acquired in a righteous way. Similarly, every desire should be a sacred and righteous one. Sri Rama was the embodiment of this *dharma*. That is why it is said *Ramo Vighavan Dharma*.

We should enjoy life basing ourselves firmly on the principles of *dharma*. Unfortunately, the four ends have been sadly neglected with utter disregard. *dharma*, however, does not enjoy full freedom, it is subservient to God, its Master.

Ravana sought wealth and gratification of desire, utterly violating the principle of *dharma*. Ravana was a scholar par excellence. He had mastered the sixty-four disciplines of learning whereas Rama had mastered only thirty-two disciplines of knowledge. However, Rama put them into practice and thereby digested them, whereas Ravana failed to digest them. The indigestion on the part of Ravana arose in the form of *kama*, which ultimately destroyed him. While Rama was the Embodiment of *Dharma*, Ravana remained as the embodiment of *kama*. Thus, there arose a conflict between Righteousness and the unrighteousness. Rama transformed Himself into the embodiment of *sathya*, since He followed the principle of *dharma*. Since Ravana violated *dharma*, he became the em-

bodiment of *ssathya*. There is an eternal warfare between righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and untruth. It is the duty of everyone to follow and practice the twin principles of truth and righteousness. *Sathya* and *dharma* are verily the Embodiment of Divinity, and there is no God other than these two.

Live the Ramayana

The Rama principle is laden with many subtle secrets. The Rama story is of exemplary excellence ethically, spiritually and materially as well. The story of Rama teaches us how a man should live in the world and conduct himself in the family as well as in society. It also teaches us how one should retain one's individuality and shape one's personality.

Only when we shape ourselves into a strong personality can we conduct ourselves ideally in the family and in society. Rama enshrined in Himself all these ideal qualities and shone as an ideal being. He also enshrined in Himself the principle of equanimity, unity and Bliss. This principle of Bliss is latent in every human heart. Every human has a right to realise and enjoy this principle of Bliss, which is the *Rama Thathwa*. Rama was the Embodiment of four cardinal principles: truth, righteousness, love, and peace.

Rama was an Embodiment of *Dharma*, which is the basis for the entire Universe. A true human being is one who follows and practices the principle of *dharma*. Burning is the *dharma* of fire. Coolness is the *dharma* of ice. Fire is no fire without burning. Ice is no ice without coolness. Similarly, the *dharma* of man lies

in performing actions with the body and following the commands of the heart. Every act performed with thought, word, and deed in harmony is an act of *dharma*. Thus, a *dharmic* life is a divine life.

We say the word *dharma* without knowing its true nature and majesty. *Dharma* is of various kinds: *dharma* of a householder, a celibate, a recluse, and a renunciate. But the *dharma* of the heart is the supreme *dharma*. This *dharma* of the heart is verily the *dharma* of life as well. The unity of thought, word, and deed has to be achieved at any cost. The *Ramayana* stands as a supreme testimony to it. The synthesis of humanity in divinity, and divinity in humanity, leads to totality (*poornathva*). It is said *Poornamidham poornaath poorna-mudatchyate*. This totality is present fully in human beings.

Many people are ignorant of the inner significance of the Rama story. I shall explain to you in due course the subtleties contained in the *Ramayana* and the deep significance of words like Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Bharatha, Satrughna, etc. You will have the full assessment of the *Ramayana* only after knowing the subtle truths contained in it.

The principle of Rama is most sacred, sublime and glorious. There is nothing in the world that cannot be achieved by cultivating the *Rama Thathwa*. Though thousands of years have elapsed since the story of Rama took place, the Rama Principle is deeply imprinted in the hearts of the people. The Rama Principle is ever fresh, ever new and embraces infinitude itself.

The Rama Principle is contained in the smallest of the small and the largest of the large. The Principle of Rama is not confined to name and form. It is a transcendental principle, which transcends time itself. The Rama Principle lives as eternally blooming, blossoming and bursting forth. Students will understand the true nature of humanity by realising the Rama Principle.

When God descends in human form as an *Avatar*, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that the *Avatar* is a simple human form like ourselves. His form may be human; but His majesty and magnificence are Infinite.

*We should not mistake a white stone for
sugar candy and munch it,
We should not mistake a cotton fruit for a
mango and eat it.*

Why Does God Take Human Form?

We should not be deluded by the form and deceive ourselves thereby. God has to take the human form and change the lives of humans by His own example. The emancipation of humanity is possible only by taking the human form. It is only man who has descended to the depths of degradation by his utter disregard of his *dharma* and divinity. Man alone has disregarded his human *dharma*, whereas birds and beasts firmly adhere to their own respective *dharmas*. There is no need for the *Avatar* to arise amongst birds and beasts since *dharma* has not declined in them.

Lord Krishna declared, *Parithranaya saadhunam* (I come down for the protection of the good). The *Avatar* hence comes for the protection of the good. There is no use merely lispig Rama's name. You must realise the Rama Principle first and foremost. The *Rama Thathwa* is *Prema Thathwa* (Principle of Love). We have to emulate Rama and transform ourselves by following the path of Love. However deep and great our scholastic eminence may be, we cannot achieve anything without undergoing the transformation of the mind.

