

Ramayana and the Voice of India

AK Ramanujan, a great scholar of Indian Literary tradition, had once said that there are only two languages in India-the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The entire country expresses itself in these two languages. The *Ramayana*, the language of India, is the philosophy and the essence of India. In a sense it is a history. But, in India history is defined differently. It is not defined as the chronology of events that have already happened, but in terms of their cyclical continuity. The events are eternally present by which self renewal and regeneration of life takes place. This is called history (*itihas*) in Indian sense. The *Ramayana* is the history of *suryavansh*, the solar dynasty

which is associated with light where as the *Mahabharata* is associated with *chandravansh*, the lunar dynasty. There is a light in darkness, a ray of hope in both the epics. There have been attempts to recognize them as myth. A myth is always constructed upon an archetype around which a story is depicted and created-this is what we know as myth.

Rama is the voice of India. The dis-compound of the word *Ramayana* is *Ramayah Ayanam* (The march of both *Rama* and *sita*) not only '*Ramasya Ayanam*' (The march of *Rama*). This is marching of *Rama* and *Sita* both. The country doesn't accept a singular person. It believes in plurality because we perceive unity there in. A person all alone is worthless because there is no unity. When this lonely man unites with nature, God and humanity, with others we witness the unity. The character of *Rama* is created with the unification of *Rama* and *Sita*. *Rama* is male and *Sita* is female. In this way India believes in the unification of heterogeneity or opposites. e.g., history and mythology, desire for life and emancipation, *dharma* and sacrifice, bravery and love. The *Ramayana* is thus, a mythological history, a history of eternity. This is why the *Ramayana* is recited so that renewal and regeneration of all could be possible. Here the desire for life or endeavour and emancipation or sacrifice are complementary to each other. This is why *TulsiDass* calls *Rama* '*tapasviraja*-or an ascetic King. Here the poet emphasized on performing duty with non-attachment which is dependent upon *dharma* or moral. Valour what is aimed at '*lokmanjal*' (public good) and '*lokranjan*' (joy for all people) is complementary. The combination is neither opposite to

each other nor paradoxical. Rather the balance between opposites is an important philosophical and ideological concept unique to Indian culture. The integrated form of truth, justice and *dharma* is expressed in the *Ramayana* whereas justice and *dharma* are depicted contradicting each other in the *Mahabharata*. Both of them are complementary combinations not contradictory.

In the beginning of ‘*aadikand*’ of the *Ramayana* while searching for an appropriate hero *Valmiki* asked *Narada* to suggest a hero for his proposed epic. He desired that the hero should possess the qualities of being virtuous, brave, righteous, grateful, truthful and committed to his words, noble in character among others. He should have a halo and should not get angry unnecessarily, should not be jealous of anyone. In fact he should be such a person of virtues that even the deities frightened by his qualities.

Replying to the question, *Narada* said that he had not seen such a meritorious person even amongst deities. But we are talking of a *Nar-chandra* (a person with the Virtues of Moon) not a deity. This *Nar-chandra* has all these virtues. The *Ramayana* talks of this *Narchandra* not

of a deity. In ‘The *Ramayana*’ a deity has not reduced himself to a human incarnation rather a common human being has been elevated to the level of a deity or god by his Virtues. This is why ‘*RamaCharit*’ (the character of *Rama*) is glorious. Having heard the ‘*Ramkatha*’ (the story of *Rama*) in brief *Valmiki* gets shocked and aggrieved when he heard the lamentation of a she-heron (*kraunch*) after her male counterpart was killed by a hunter while they were mating on the bank of river *Tamasa* where *Valmiki* had gone to take bath. That profound grief made him spontaneously speak out the *shloka* (couplet)-

‘*Ma nishad pratishthan tvmgamh shashvati samah.*’
 (*O hunter! You will remain unhappy for centuries*)

This line of the *Shloka* is highly symbolic. Here the *Tamasa* river symbolizes the inner world, the deep down the heart of the poet where from the grief flows over. The death of one of the couple (birds) separates them for ever. *Valmiki* places this in his narratives of *Ramkatha* therein the tragedy of *Sita* which transcended the time and space

and became an eternal tragedy. This is the prime sensibility of the *Ramayana* where there is no pleasure. The *Ramayana* is an epic of pathos not pleasure.

There is no pleasure or happiness in the *Ramayana*, be it the conspiracy of *Manthara* and *Kaikeyi*, death of *Dashratha*, exile of *Rama*, kidnapping of *Sita*, *agni-pariksha* (testimony of fire for her chastity), the pathos of *Urmila* caused by separation from her husband, the allegations of the people on *Rama*, abandonment of *Sita*, her stay in *ashram* and ultimately her departure to 'patal' (inside the earth), nowhere there is pleasure or happiness. In fact it is the grief which sustains the *Ramayana*. *Valmiki* has glorified *Rama*, *Sita*, *Lakshmana* and *Bharata* on the basis of their grief. The elements of grief and creation are synonymous because the incompleteness is grief, and the cosmos (creation) is also incomplete. The completeness comes out of the incompleteness. The nothingness or the vacuum is opposite to completeness, the incompleteness is not opposite to completeness. They are not opposites, Rather, it is the evolution of completeness. The profundity and meaningfulness of grief is not grief, it is *ananda* (the absolute pleasure or bliss).

As the large and extended world of lights and stars becomes visible and delightful spectacle to see in the deep dark night of ‘*amavasya*’ (the night of complete darkness), similarly the soul attains the enlightenment of an absolute pleasure or *ananda*’, when it passes through the deepest pathos. The *Ramayana* elucidates the *ananda* or bliss, welfare and truth of our life through pathos.

The *Ramayana* is *ayan*, (march) not a narration or fiction. *ayan* means *gati* (motion), way and home. As it has already been said that the word ‘*Ramayana*’) is dis-compounded in two different ways (1) *Ramasyaayanam*-the *ayan* of *Rama* but seemingly it is not the ‘*ayan*’ of *Rama* only. (2) it is *Ramayahayanam*, it is the *ayan* of *Rama* and *Sita* both. *Valmiki* was instructed by *LordBrahma* to elucidate the complete character of *Rama* (*Ramasyacharitamkritshankuru*).

But for *Valmiki* the most important aspect of the epic is the dignified and elevated character of *Sita*. The *Ramayana* is an expression of it.

Rama and *Sita* are the *dharma* of life, the way, motion and hope of life. The foundation of that *dharma* is misery or pathos. The profundity of sorrow culminates in *ananda* (bliss) The *Ramayana* is not merely a poetic composition but it is a history (*itihas*). It is the eternal history of India. It is the devotion and worship of India. India's subscription and commitment to ideals are depicted in the *Ramayana*. We have to understand how the people of the entire country have been receiving and perceiving the ideals of the *Ramayana* for thousands of years with reverence and astonishment. *vyas*, *Valmiki* are such a great poets who depict the feel and expression of the entire country and the the entire age in their works for the eternal use of the mankind.

The *Ramayana* is the *katha*-narration of man, not a god. Sometimes his divinity is reflected. While providing emancipation to *Jatayu*, *Rama* says

Maya tvm samanugyoto

Gachna lokannuttaman.

It is not merely a scripture. It is a *sakhisammita*, for friendly Scripture, a poetry which teaches and pleases both. It is a poetry of the people, is not creation or work of a particular poet rather it has been created and evolved by a number of poets passing through a long stretch of time. One gets acquainted with the entire country, age, philosophical and mythological truth while going through this epic.

The story of Ram was narrated and popularized in the forms of folk songs, *kathas* (renderings) and orature in ancient time. Later on it was known as creation of a poet otherwise name is merely an excuse like *Ganges* and *Himalaya*, this poetry is also an integral part of India. The mythological truth of the *Ramayana* is not the battle between *Rama* and *Ravana*, is also not the chivalrous war nor even the reflection of the bravery of *Rama*. It is a dilectics between light and dark at cosmic level. It is a paradox between attachment and detachment.

Through the *Ramayana* the concept of such a hero is established, for the first time, who is detached, a symbol of sacrifice and a saviour of the asylum seekers, one who

could desolve himself and even to discard *Sita* and *Laxmana* for the sake of sages (Rishis)

Apyahm jivitam jyyamh tvam

Va sitam s laksmanam

Tatu Pratigyam sm shrutya bhrahmenebhyo visheshak

This is an unprecedented detachment or selflessness. There is no attachment with anything what so ever. This is called the greatest austerity in *Vedas*-

Swam dadati iti tapah

One who devotes himself is the greatest devotion or austerity. This is why *Rama* is a '*tapaswiraja*' (A devoted king). To devote one self means dedication of one self for the sake of the people, for the society and for the humanity. *Rama* lived his life for the interest and welfare of the subjects.

Idam sharivam kritsnasya

Lokasya charta hitam (02.02.07)

(What is this body meant for
the welfare of the people)

In order to obey the instruction of his father when *Rama* witnessed the change from perspective coronation ceremony into an exile on the advice of *Kaikeyi*. '*Rama* has to leave for exile today itself.' *Rama*, without getting shaken, immediately says:

Avamastu gamishyam

(Okay I will go)

And immediately he gets ready for departure to forest. It is not only reflection of indifference rather it denotes the supreme detachment. *Rama's* view focuses on the composite feature of truth and '*dharma*' (not religion) which are interchangeable-

Dharmansatyampratishthitam

This is why when *Dashratha* pleads to *Rama* to stay back in the palace for rest of the night, *Rama* replies-

‘*Maharaj!* Protect your truth.’

(*Satyastvam bhav parthiv*)

The great poet composed this epic and the *Rama-charita-* for proposing of an ideal for mankind and glorification of the concept of ‘The hero’ in the Sanskrit sense of the term history. In the history of India such attempts have been made to establish the concept of a hero like *Pandavas*, Lord *Buddha*, Lord *Mahavira* and the emperor *Ashoka*. All these great men pass-through as stages of life when they renounce everything and move set other the quest of their own self’ (*swa*). The society acknowledges the heroes. *MahatmaGandhi* was such a great man also in our modern times who sacrificed everything for the sake of society and humanity. When others were celebrating India’s independence in the night of 14th of August 1947,

Gandhi was serving and helping the victims of communal riots in the streets of Kolkata. Moving from one to the other streets, he had virtually nothing with him, a *dhoti* put on over knees, the clothless body, putting on spectacle with a light frame on his eyes and a watch attached with *dhoti*. He was our modern hero who may be called him an eternal hero.

In the *Ramayana* a family affair has been narrated in a great detail. The relationships between father and son, between brothers and between husband and wife are bound to *dharma*. Love and devotion, among others are glorified attributes in the *Ramayana*. It is naturally appropriate for the epic, eg. a sons obedience to father, self sacrifice of a brother, faithfulness and love between husband and wife towards each other, the duty of king to great extent towards his subjects. The *Ramayana* deals with human and filial values, as the should be and as they are practiced.

No epic has ever depicted a particular person, specially the family relations in a manner, as in the *Ramayana* The house-holder's position (*grihastaashram*-according to

Hindu culture the second phase of life which pertains to house holder's responsibilities) was very high, the *Ramayana* is a testimony to it. The act of house holder was not meant for our hedonistic pleasure, nor for the luxuries, not for mere consumption. Rather it cared for whole of the society and used to give the human face to the people in real terms. The house holder's responsibilities included five duties or '*mahayagyas*' that were required to be performed: the duties towards great men, the ancestors, gods and goddesses, living beings and the poor. They are associated with *grihasthalife*-the house holding. The *Ramayana* is depiction of such a-*grihasthadharma* where there is no desire for power, no desire to win over, not even an expression of national-Pride. It is the householder's duty 'The *grih dharma*' collaborated with *shantrasa* (state of being in tranquility) which is expressed and given an overriding effect over chivalry in the *Ramayana*. This is compassion. Another objective of the *Ramayana* along with allocution of chivalary is to portrait the marital love between *Rama* and *Sita* in a dignified way. Though some of the critics opine that it could not be possible but whatever and to what extent it was possible in the *Ramayana*, it may be termed as a great-love epic on the earth. This love epic is a love-

poetry which is governed by the rules of *Grihasthashram*, it is not an outrageous and indisciplined love-story.

Rama is omnipresent but at the same time he is far away from us. He tries to establish such an ideal society which is based on decency. In this ideal society, the expectation is that the following things do not happen again-

- 1) A son not required to go to forest having been deprived of his parents and his house hold.
- 2) The long sepration of a wife from her huaband could be done away.
- 3) The wickedness of malignants like Ravana could not be repeated again.

Rama is a savior of people's decency. *Tulsidass* narrates that having encountered with *sita* in *pushpvatika* (garden of flowers) with that there was a feeling in *Rama's* heart:

Chhavi grihe deepshikha, janu baru (It appears that perhaps a lamp was enlightened). But Ram thinks that *Jasu biloki alaukik sobha, sahaj punit more manu chhobha* (As if I have seen a divine beauty but it was so pious therefore I had regret in my heart). Having said this *Rama* gets conscious-rather *Tulsi* gets Concious while glorifying the *RamaVansh* (The Dynesty of Rama) *Tulsi* clarified that the *Raghuvanshies* (Successors of *Raghu Vansh*) are never tempted to strange women neither by heart nor by eyes.-

Nahi pavahi partiya manu dithi

(doesn't get attracted towards others wife either by heart or by sight.)

The bhakti (devotion) depicted by *Tulsi* is not *prema bhakti*, is not associated with love. It is the *aishvarya bhakti*' (supreme bhakti) of *Rama* which is in congrance with *Shastra*, i.e. the scriptures. Unlike *Valmiki*, *Tulsi Dass* doesn't portrait sita as a disparate, passionate and loving woman in the forest of *chitrakuta*.

In the depiction of *Valmiki*, *Sita* is presented in a state of ecstasy in the forest of *chitrakuta* which is full of flowers the long hairs of *Sita* are tied, and the tie is ‘aping over her back’. A visibly cheerful *Sita* is moving around in the shades of forest catching hold of *Rama*’s long knee touching hands tightly which seem to be like a flag of a (*Mahandra dhvaj*).

Rama stares with passion and love at the moon like face of *Sita*. The river *Ganges* is flowing in *chitrakuta* as if it were the clean and bright garland put around the neck of *chitrakuta*. *Rama* takes bath along with *Sita* in the *Ganges* water and offers bloomed lotus to *Sita*. The budding vine is tied with a long tree. Viewing this *Rama* says to *Sita*-

The way you embrace me after being tired in the same way this budding Vine embraces the tree.

Rama and *Sita* are passing through the way of forest. On both the sides of the path a rich crop of flora and fauna is

discernable. *Rama* picks flowers of his choice, the red and blue flowers with branches and offers them to *Sita*. The voice of culkoo is heard while the traversing their path in to forest surrounded by a number of rocks. *Sita* listens the singing of cuckoo, while she is holding the hands of *Rama* in a happy and blissful mood.

Rama is now making a mark of *premtilak* (a love sign) on the fore head of *Sita* by rubbing his wet finger on the rock and inserting the yellow *kesar* flowers in the hairs of *Sita*. During this process he says passionately.

‘Noyayodhyayain rajyaysprihye cha tvya sah

(Living with you I have no more desire for the kingdom of *Ayodhya*).

This is not a portrait of *Rama* who is an accomplisher of good deeds for the people, nor a savior of the people. It is a portrait of *Rama* who is in love with his wife. *Rama* is a man and god for us, at the same time. We love him and we pray to him simultaneously. It would have never been

possible, had it not been a poetry close to our hearts. *Rama* accepted the exile for upholding *dharma* and preservation of truth. *Rama* and *Sita* had accepted the life of forest. There was no misery in the forests other than atrocities committed by the *Rakshasas* or demons.

Exile is pain perpetuated on human beings more so in case of princes and princesses who are used to life of palaces. The misery of exile is depicted poignantly by the western authors in order to bring out physical and psychological toughness of character. But *Valmiki* didn't do so. He, on the contrary, has glorified the pleasure of forest life on many occasions.

The *Ramkatha* begins with the performance of *yajna*:

- 1) Performing *yajna* desiring for son.
- 2) *Rama* is sent to '*siddhashram*' in the '*balkaand*' itself for the safty and security of the *yajna*.
- 3) *Rama* participates in '*dhanuryajna*' in *Mithila*.

By performing the *yajna* *Rama* is incarnated, by the other *yajna* *Rama* resolves the problem of evils and by the third *yajna* he becomes the Army Commander. This is an union of the earth and the sky, a synthesis of fragrance and sweetness. It is a confluence of beauty and truth. The word ‘*yajna*’ denotes that it is a creative function. It is a symbol of sacrifice and realization of the desired objective. An action, if it is right, truthful and in accordance with *dharma* and good, in the opinion of *Rama*. This has to be performed with the sense of sacrifice. Only then the wish or desire is realized. This is what good and welfare mean for *Rama*. This is why *Rama* always focuses on the composite feature of truth and *dharma*.

One of the main objectives of *Rama*’s life is ‘*lok mangal*’ (welfare of the people or public good). This is why the *Ramkatha* is eternally present in the people’s memory.

Idam hichritam loke

pratishthasyati shashvatam

- (1) It is this character of *Rama* which is imprinted on in the public psyche eternally.
- 2) What combines truth and *dharma* is the desire to live which is manifested in the dynamism of life.
- 3) This is what meant by the march i.e. '*ayan*'.

The *Ramayana* deals with all three of them. But all these features i.e. truth, *dharma* and desire to life and basic foundation of pace are for the welfare of the people. The truth is based on public good. This is why *Valmiki* believes that *dharma* is the aim of life. Truth is based on *dharma* and, he accepts the people's conduct along with *dharma*, arth (Finance) kam (gratification of physical desire) and *samaya* (time) accepting the four fold devision-

Dharma arth cha kamam cha
samayam chapi laukikam

Dharma is not a static thing. To *Valmiki*, it can not be changed from one age to the other. When *Rama* agreed to leave for exile in the name of *dharma* and truth, *Valmiki* didn't hesitate to express his deep anguish and revolt of hot tempered and agitated *Lakshmana* against his revered elder brother *Rama*. "You are wise but because of which *dharma*, you are today deviated from the wisdom? I hate that *dharma*."

Rama also knew that it was not judicious for him to do so. It was all happening because of the jealous of *Kaikeyi* and blind love of *Dashratha* for her. Even then, his concept of *dharma* is based on rising above the feelings of affection, enoy, justice and injustice. For preservation of such *Dharma* even if injustice is to be patronized it has to be done so. Towards this end even if the beloved ones are hurt, lest it be so. But there should be no going back from the path of *dharma*. *Dashratha* went on to say "Even abdicate me. Depose me and take over the kingdom immediately". But *Rama* avoided the path suggested by his father.

Whatever he thinks as duty, *Rama* discharges immediately with sincerity in its entirety. In a battle between justice and injustice he didn't hesitate even for a moment in killing *Bali*. He was not shaken even for a while in killing *Shambooka* when he was offering prayer. It is said that the crimes undertaken by both of them were obvious in accordance with *shastra*, the scripture. One can argue which '*shastra*' approves it? Because it is the *shastras* which suggest that the caste is determined on the basis of one's work. *Shambooka* had risen above his social position of '*shudra*'. He had attained the status of a sage by his worship and devotion. Even then there are a few questions which are difficult to be answered. Even then, on the testimony of '*Poetics*' by *Aristotle* one can say that if a hero despite having all virtues, he suffers from '*harmartia*' (human weakness). This shows that he is a human being and a person with good and bad attributes. With his merits and demerits he becomes more fascinating because of his uniqueness as a being.

Shambooka could not get an opportunity to defend himself. He could only say., "I am *Shudra* by caste," and within a moment *Rama* cut his head with a stroke of

sword. But *Bali* had the opportunity to speak and express his views. He said

“*Rama*, born in a prestigious dynasty, handsome, famous prince, I did no harm to you. I was engaged in battle with somebody else. My flash is also not eatable, Even then why did you kill me without any fault of mine.” The strongest argument *Rama* had to offer to support his action, “you have committed a sin which is against the public conduct.” *Rama* further speaks in calm and frozen voice-

“Remember, I didn’t wage this war against you. All the endeavour was made to remove the stigma of my famous clan.”

*(Viditshchastu bhadram te yoiem rana parishramah.
Sutirnah suhdam viryanntudarth mayakrita)*

Let us think over that his (*Rama*’s) laments had been described in five Chapters (sargas of ‘*AranyaParva*’

(Forest Context). Firstly on the loss of the cheerful smiling lady, coloured like ‘*champak*’ (magnolia) flower, having eyes like she deer, a tendered woman, *Sita*. Secondly, when Hanuman came back with a message that *deviMaithili* (*Sita*) wanted to meet him (*Rama*), suddenly the eyes of *Rama* become wide open with tears.

‘Agachchat sahasa ahyanmishad vashp pariplutah’

Then who is this *Rama*? A *Rama* who is meant to remove the stigma of his famous clan or a great religion-*dharmmritam varah* or a person who is deeply involved in the love with his wife.

On the one hand, there was a grand narrative of war between good and evil, and on the other the strife of love between two individuals. *Rama* is deeply imotional and his eyes are wet even then he is caught in a dilemma as he apprehends the public perception (defamation)

Pashyatastantu ramasya samipe hriday priyam

Jamvad bhavad ragyo vabhuva hridayam dwedha

The dilemma which Ram goes through may be seen in these features.

Rama's eyes get teared and he asks *Sita* to put on a devine dress after having taken bath, on the one hand. On the other, he doesn't go him self to receive *Sita* instead he sends *Vibhishana*. He asks *Sita* to come without 'Palki' or chariot. Moreover, he keeps on staring at his beloved and at the same time does not meet her in privacy. Rather he meets her in front of all the people. The dilemma of *Rama* is reflected in the dispassionate and ruthless statement against *Sita*:

“*JanakaNandini* (daughter of *Janaka*), I have no more desire for you. You can leave in any of the ten directions you wish, go to *LakshamanaBharata* or *Shatrughnawhomsoever* your like or even to *Sugriva* or *Vibhishana* with whom you can live happily.”

In response to it, *Sita* said.

'ki mam sadrisham vakymidrisham shrot darsvam

Ruksham shravayse virprakritah prakrita bhiv'

To summaries this, *Sita* says “you are talking like a very low person.” she further adds, “The touching of my body with *Ravana* didn't happen with my willingness, my heart was under my control and that is all with you.”

(maddhinantu yat tanme bridayam tvayi vartate)

Rama is a king and an administrator. An administrator is a lonely person. He is always afraid of public-perception. From the point of view of an administrator it was better to meet (*sita*) in public instead of meeting her privately. Further the *agnipariksha*, test of chastity was also required. *Valmiki* writes. “*Rama* accepted *vaidehi* who was beloved to him more than his own self, in accordance with conduct approved by the people and conventions.”

What was *Rama*'s fault? Can one tell even after such an '*agnipariksha*' the people of *ayodhya* could avoid saying this:

“If *Rama* is enjoying the ecstasy of intercourse with *sita* who was touched by *Ravana* then what options are left with us but to bear with when our wives commit usually wrong deeds.”

(*kidrishamhridayastasyaSitasambhog. jamsukham
ankmaropyatupuraRavanenbaladdhrita*)

Immediately after having heard this, *Rama* said to *Lakshmana*. “The *slandering* is unbearable for me. Leave *Sita* early in the morning tomorrow in the hermitage of *Valmiki* across *Ganges* No, do not oppose. I will not listen any other advice from you.”

Here, we are reminded of the garden of flowers where *Rama* gave *Sita* to drink *maireyamadhu*, the pious honey a few days before his exile (*UttarParv*: 42). Both of them enjoyed the beauty of nature. But *Rama* leaves behind all those loving memories. He could only remember that recently pregnant *Sita* ultimately wanted to spend for a night in the hermitage and *Rama* fulfills that desire of *Sita* beyond expectations of *Sita*. We know he had no doubt about *Sita's purity*:

“*Maithili*, you are pure in all the three *lokas* (worlds). your purity is inseparable like my fame.” (*yudhi8:20*)

He further added:

“I know by my conscience that *Sita* is pure in her conduct and she is famous (*Uttar 45:10*).” This declaration we learn once again before she descends into the ‘*patal*’ caved in the earth.

‘*Sita is sinless*’ (*Uttar 97:5*)

But *Rama* preferred truth over his emotions. He gave importance to the public-perception rejecting the feelings of the heart. He didn't make any distinction between *dharma* and public-conduct or public-perception. In Indian tradition *lok* (folk) and '*shastra*' (scripture) are supposed to be complementary to each other. These are not binary opposites as it is distinguished in little and great traditions in the west.

Patanjali, the author of *Mahabhasya* says, '*Prayukto Lokartha*' and clarifies that the rules based on scriptures are not ones which determine the folk world and their meaning as well as relationship between them. *Lok* (folk wisdom) which may be called as people's wisdom. It is the driving force of human behaviour and its importance is defined according to polity, essence of the *Vedas* and the views of wise people.

From the beginning of his journey as a human being to the end of his life, *Rama*, who was unshaken (firm) and spotless, continued to discharge his functions and duties pertaining to his clan or dynasty kingdom and his own self (*kula-dharma*, *Raj-dharma* and *Swadharna*). This is

an evidence of his great human being, and on this foundation his image is created.

But as *Sita* enters the earth netherworld, *Rama* says:

‘mansa vachakarmanyavachayathaRamamSamarpaye,
tatha me madhviDeviVivaramDatumarhati (Uttar 97, 15)

I have brought sita back from Lanka, I will get her back also from the bottom of the earth (vasudha-tal). There is no doubt at all. O, Vasudha! (the earth) get sita back before me otherwise I will express such an anger that you could see the effect.

But what is surprising here is that the poet who was overwhelmed by and bereaved of the grief of ‘herons couple’, why did not *Valmiki* utter anything in favor of pregnant *Sita*? Representing her views. He could only say ‘*Sita* is innocent (sinless) (*Sita* is *Apapa*) (uttar49’14). Moreover he accepted the conduct of Ram without critiquing it. *Lakshmana* also opposed only once and *Rama* became emotional with tears in his eyes for a while. (uttar52.6). Infact, *Valmiki* left the intensity of the event unexpressed having been carried over by a dispassionate indifference.

Perhaps because of this, the grief of *Sita* remained untransformed into an internal grief transcending beyond ages.

Rama is depicted as a lover, on the one hand, on the other dutiful. He has his dilemmas on the one hand, and on the other, his love beyond doubt. He had impulsive eagerness as well as ability to absorb profundity of sorrow breathlessly without expressing it at all. He is a human being on the one hand and on the other displays super human attributes of god.

This is the reason why people are attached towards *Rama*. He is a popular hero as well as a lover, a great and commendable. On the one hand he is a dutiful person and on the other he is deeply moved by the separation from his beloved wife. The path of *dharma* is difficult to be followed by the common people but the experience of love is universal and that can be experienced by all.

The *Ramayana* taught us to follow the paths of *dharma* and truth. We have experienced the poetic pleasure also from the *Ramayana*. It is not only a scripture for us, but also a poem for us. The story of the *Ramayana* deals with

our family life. This is why we have a feeling of devotion as well as love towards the *Ramayana*.

Whatever events take place in the *Ramayana* they are incidental or by chance. This is what poet tells us. On the eve of the coronation of *Rama*, *Manthara* happens to go to the upstairs to the palace and observes the preparations of coronation. It was also an incident that *Shurpnakha*, the sister of *Ravana*, came to *Rama* in the cottage of *panchwati* where *Rama* was living peacefully and happily. Also it incidentally happened when *Hunumana* happens to see *Rama* and *Lakshmana* coming towards *Kishkindha* and he thought that they were deities sent from the divine world. This incident is infact the will of the God.

The march of *Rama* and *Lakshmana* is the reflection of searching the self which is lost and one can get back that 'self' if god wishes so. *Rama* is a man and god as well. For the welfare of his devotees *Rama* has incarnated himself in form of a human being (*nartanudhari*)

The great epic deals with the values like *satya* (truth) and *dharma*, devotion and renunciation, pleasure *bhoga*(enjoyment) and *tyaga* (renunciation), love and

hate, myth and history. The voice of India has never been a singular voice. It always believes in diversity and plurality. This is why India is a multi religious country having multiple castes, multilinguality based on composite culture. *RabindraNathTagore* said that, ‘Lonely person is very meaningless. Meaning is attached to him his life with the association of others. This is unity of of god and devotee (*bhakta*) in the process of ‘*bhakti*’ (Devotion). This country has always believed in diversity and combination or pairs. The *Ramayana* is a poetry of devotion (*bhakti*) and love, spirituality and morality for the house holders (*grihastha*’s). We can see here *Rama* who is dutiful (duteous and dignified and is a seviour of *dharma*. However, *Rama* the best in men (*putushottam*). On the other occasion, he is one who expresses grief and weeps on separation from his beloved. *Rama*, overall is an incarnation of the supreme power, the absolute god. The voices of all these *Rama* is one though it may appear to be different from the other. And the echo of the voice of *Rama* is the echo of the heart of India, the sentiment of India.

