

**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

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भगवन् दृष्टवीर्यो मे रामो दशरथात्मजः । अत्यद्भुतमचिन्त्यं च अतर्कितमिदं मया ॥ १-६७-२१  
जनकानां कुले कीर्तिमाहरिष्यति मे सुता । सीता भर्तारमासाद्य रामं दशरथात्मजम् ॥ १-६७-२२  
मम सत्या प्रतिज्ञा सा वीर्यशुल्केति कौशिक । सीता प्राणैर्बहुमता देया रामाय मे सुता ॥ १-६७-२३  
भवतोऽनुमते ब्रह्मन् शीघ्रं गच्छन्तु मन्त्रिणः । मम कौशिक भद्रं ते अयोध्यां त्वरिता रथैः ॥ १-६७-२४  
राजानं प्रश्रितैर्वाक्यैरानयन्तु पुरं मम । प्रदानं वीर्यशुक्लायाः कथयन्तु च सर्वशः ॥ १-६७-२५  
मुनिगुप्तौ च काकुत्स्थौ कथयन्तु नृपाय वै । प्रीतियुक्तं तु राजानमानयन्तु सु शीघ्रगाः ॥ १-६७-२६  
कौशिकस्च तथेत्याह राजा चाभाष्य मन्त्रिणः । अयोध्यां प्रेषयामास धर्मात्मा कृतशासनान् ।  
यथावृत्तं समाख्यातुमानेतुं च नृपं तथा ॥ १-६७-२७

*bhagavan dr̥ṣṭāvīryo me rāmo daśarathāatmajah |*  
*atyadbhutamacintyaṃ ca atarkitamidaṃ mayā || 1-67-21*  
*janakānāṃ kule kīrtimāhariṣyati me sutā |*  
*sītā bhartāramāsādyā rāmaṃ daśarathātmajam || 1-67-22*  
*mama satyā pratijñā sā vīryaśulketi kauśika |*  
*sītā prāṇairbahumatā deyā rāmāya me sutā || 1-67-23*  
*bhavato'numate brahman śīghraṃ gacchantu mantriṇaḥ |*  
*mama kauśika bhadraṃ te ayodhyāṃ tvaritā rathaiḥ || 1-67-24*  
*rājānaṃ praśritairvākyairānayanantu puraṃ mama |*  
*pradānaṃ vīryaśulkāyāḥ kathayantu ca sarvaśaḥ || 1-67-25*  
*muniguptau ca kākutsthau kathayantu nṛpāya vai |*  
*prītiyuktaṃ tu rājānamānayanantu su śīghragāḥ || 1-67-26*  
*kauśikasca tathetyāha rājā cābhāṣya mantriṇaḥ |*  
*ayodhyāṃ preṣayāmāsa dharmātmā kṛtaśāsanān |*  
*yathāvṛttaṃ samākhyātumānetuṃ ca nṛpaṃ tathā || 1-67-27*

The *vīrya* of Rama, his prowess and endowment, were now clearly evident. There was no further question about the prince who had won the prize. No one could grasp wholly what had happened. Look at the boy and look at the size of Dhanus. What a wonder. Look at the people lying there in shock. Who could imagine all that was in this young hero. Janaka announced, “This boy, son of Dasha-

ratha, scion of the Raghu line, is to be taken as a husband by my Sita. He will bring my family great fame. Hey, Vishvamitra, the *pratijñā* I gave about he who could lift this bow is fulfilled now. My daughter who is more dear to me than my breath will be given to this god-like young man. O Vishvamitra, with your auspicious words of acceptance, my most swift ministers will be off to Ayodhya to speak with Dasharatha about what will be.”

Vishvamitra said, “Let it be. Go and bring Dasharatha, and let all this come to pass.”

जनकेन समादिष्टा दूतास्ते क्लान्तवाहनाः । त्रिरात्रमुषिता मार्गे तेऽयोध्यां प्राविशन् पुरीम् ॥ १-६८-१

*janakena samādiṣṭā dūtāste klāntavāhanāḥ ।*

*trirātramūṣitā mārge te'yodhyāṁ prāviśan purīm ॥ 1-68-1*

Traveling for three nights, the emissaries of King Janaka rode in chariots to Ayodhya. On arrival they informed King Dasharatha of all that had happened. The king was overjoyed. He consulted Vasishtha and asked what was proper. Vasishtha said, “Let us all go together, queens and brothers, ministers, sages, and any people who may want,” It was a free ticket for everyone. Thousands of people assembled in the caravan and headed off for Mithila.

ततः प्रभाते जनकः कृतकर्मा महर्षिभिः । उवाच वाक्यं वाक्यज्ञः शतानन्दम् पुरोहितम् ॥ १-७०-१

*tataḥ prabhāte janakaḥ kṛtakarmā maharṣibhiḥ ।*

*uvāca vākyaṁ vākyaññāḥ śatānandam purohitam ॥ 1-70-1*

Now, Janaka had a younger brother, and he had another daughter, Urmila. Janaka had decided to give that Urmila to Lakshmana in marriage. He thought there were two good matches in these boys from Ayodhya. The two families, equal or not, would now commingle. Uneven mixes bring about certain comparisons and complexes. One of the partners may not look upon someone coming from a family of lower status as his or her equal. Both families sought to maintain the *dharma* of their *kula*. This was the custom. Therefore the girls of Janaka’s family were to be married into the family of Dasharatha by Vasishtha himself.

*Ṛṣis* and *sādhus* came in great number to watch the ritual. They had their own world and would talk of *śāstra et cetera*. Happily they began talking among themselves. They greeted the *mahārṣi* Vasishtha when he arrived, and shared the questions they had saved up for the *muni - brahmasūtra* and things like that. Actu-

ally, Brahmasutras came later. But they talked of *brahman* and of their *āśramas* and of their disciples. Vasishtha traced the lineage of the Solar dynasty, Rama's heritage. He told of the days when they held the *svayamvara*, a process whereby a princess herself selects her husband. All her suitors would gather for the keen occasion. The princess, such as Indumati, would come into the hall where all the kings and princes waited. She carried the garland that she would give to the chosen one. As she walked around the group, her friend eloquently told her the story and attributes of each of those who was there to court her. Kalidasa has a chapter on this in his "Raghuvamsha."

"Here is a great king who is all the time in the battlefield," said the girl, introducing Indumati to one prospect. The princess knew this meant the fellow would never have time for her, always out jousting. She moved on. "Here is a fellow strong as an elephant." Indumati liked tall and thin. "Here is a king who has won many princesses."

"Ohhh." Said Indumati. She moved on.

The praise given is not entirely objective, and Indumati would get the message. You can see this in Kalidasa. Indumati is compared to a lighted lamp moving in a dark hallway. Each fellow the light nears has only his face and shoulders illuminated. All the other fellows are guarded, in darkness, because the garland may fall around the other's neck. The fellow in the beam of the attention poses and flirts and contorts his face to show his best side. None of that is missed by the choosy girl. The boys she has passed know their fate and slump in the darkness. Indumati had heard about this Aja, and when they came to him, she garlanded him for good. That Aja's son was Dasharatha.

कनीयानेष मे भ्राता अहं ज्येष्ठो महामुने । ददामि परमप्रीतो वध्वौ ते मुनिपुंगव ॥ १-७१-२०  
सीतां रामाय भद्रं ते ऊर्मिलां लक्ष्मणाय वै । वीर्यशुल्कां मम सुतां सीतां सुरसुतोपमाम् ॥ १-७१-२१  
द्वितीयामूर्मिलां चैव त्रिर्वदामि न संशयः । ददामि परमप्रीतो वध्वौ ते मुनिपुंगव ॥ १-७१-२२  
रामलक्ष्मणयो राजन् गोदानम् कारयस्व ह । पितृकार्यं च भद्रं ते ततो वैवाहिकं कुरु ॥ १-७१-२३  
मघा ह्यद्य महाबाहो तृतीयदिवसे प्रभो । फल्गुन्यामुत्तरे राजंस्तस्मिन् वैवाहिकं कुरु ।  
रामलक्ष्मणयोरर्थे दानं कार्यं सुखोदयम् ॥ १-७१-२४

*kanīyāneṣa me bhrātā ahaṁ jyeṣṭho mahāmune |*  
*dadāmi paramaprīto vadhvau te munipuṅgava || 1-71-20*  
*sītām rāmāya bhadrām te ūrmilām lakṣmanāya vai |*  
*vīryaśulkām mama sutām sītām surasutopamām || 1-71-21*  
*dvitīyāmūrmilām caiva trirvadāmi na saṁśayah |*  
*dadāmi paramaprīto vadhvau te munipuṅgava || 1-71-22*  
*rāmalakṣmaṇayo rājan godānam kārayasva ha |*  
*pitṛkāryam ca bhadrām te tato vaivāhikam kuru || 1-71-23*  
*maghā hyadya mahābāho tṛtīyadivase prabho |*  
*phalgunyāmuttare rājamstasmin vaivāhikam kuru |*  
*rāmalakṣmaṇayorathe dānam kāryam sukhodayam || 1-71-24*

Then Janaka told the history of his family. Both Rama's and Sita's royal lines were renowned for their *dharma*. Janaka introduced his brother, ruler of the nearby kingdom, and the rest of his relatives. The brother proposed the marriage of his two princesses to the other two princes of Dasharatha, "With my heart and soul, free from any doubt, happily I give these girls to your boys. Cows in great number will be given away to deserving people, especially to the kings. The *vivāha*, the marriage, will be conducted according to the scriptures. Come, let us prepare. The auspicious day for marriage is three days from today. This is the good time. Phalguni is the constellation. Bhaga is the *adhiṣṭhāna*, presiding deity, excellent for marriage."

तमुक्तवन्तं वैदेहं विश्वामित्रो महामुनिः । उवाच वचनं वीरं वसिष्ठसहितो नृपम् ॥ १-७२-१  
 अचिन्त्यान्यप्रमेयाणि कुलानि नरपुंगव । इक्ष्वाकूणां विदेहानां नैषां तुल्योऽस्ति कश्चन ॥ १-७२-२  
 सदृशो धर्मसम्बन्धः सदृशो रूपसम्पदा । रामलक्ष्मणयो राजन् सीता चोर्मिलया सह ॥ १-७२-३  
 वक्तव्यं च नरश्रेष्ठ श्रूयतां वचनं मम । भ्राता यवीयान् धर्मज्ञ एष राजा कुशध्वजः ॥ १-७२-४  
 अस्य धर्मात्मनो राजन् रूपेणाप्रतिमं भुवि । सुताद्वयं नरश्रेष्ठ पत्न्यर्थं वरयामहे ॥ १-७२-५  
 भरतस्य कुमारस्य शत्रुघ्नस्य च धीमतः । वरये ते सुते राजंस्तयोरर्थे महात्मनोः ॥ १-७२-६  
 पुत्रा दशरथस्येमे रूपयौवनशालिनः । लोकपालसमाः सर्वे देवतुल्यपराक्रमाः ॥ १-७२-७  
 उभयोरपि राजेन्द्र सम्बन्धेनानुबध्यताम् । इक्ष्वाकुकुलमव्यग्रं भवतः पुण्यकर्मणः ॥ १-७२-८  
 विश्वामित्रवचः श्रुत्वा वसिष्ठस्य मते तदा । जनकः प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमुवाच मुनिपुंगवौ ॥ १-७२-९  
 कुलं धन्यमिदं मन्ये येषां तौ मुनिपुंगवौ । सदृशं कुलसम्बन्धं यदाज्ञापयथः स्वयम् ॥ १-७२-१०  
 एवं भवतु भद्रं वः कुशध्वजसुते इमे । पत्न्यौ भजेतां सहितौ शत्रुघ्नभरतावुभौ ॥ १-७२-११

tamuktavantam vaideham visvāmitro mahāmuniḥ |  
 uvāca vacanam vīram vasiṣṭhasahito nṛpam || 1-72-1  
 acintyānyaprameyāṇi kulāni narapuṅgava |  
 ikṣvākūṇām videhānām naiṣām tulyo'sti kaścana || 1-72-2  
 sadṛśo dharmasambandhaḥ sadṛśo rūpasampadā |  
 rāmalakṣmaṇayo rājan sītā cormilayā saha || 1-72-3  
 vaktavyam ca naraśreṣṭha śrūyatām vacanam mama |  
 bhrātā yavīyān dharmajña eṣa rājā kuśadhvajah || 1-72-4  
 asya dharmātmano rājan rūpeṇāpratimam bhuvī |  
 sutādvayam naraśreṣṭha patnyartham varayāmahe || 1-72-5  
 bharatasya kumārasya śatrughnasya ca dhīmataḥ |  
 varaye te sute rājamstayorathe mahātmanoḥ || 1-72-6  
 putrā daśarathasyeme rūpayauvanaśālinaḥ |  
 lokapālasamāḥ sarve devatulyaparākramāḥ || 1-72-7  
 ubhayorapi rājendra sambandhenānubadhyatām |  
 ikṣvākukulamavyagram bhavataḥ puṇyakarmaṇaḥ || 1-72-8  
 viśvāmitravacaḥ śrutvā vasiṣṭhasya mate tadā |  
 janakaḥ prāñjalirvākyamuvāca munipuṅgavau || 1-72-9  
 kulaṁ dhanyamidam manye yeṣām tau munipuṅgavau |  
 sadṛśam kulasambandham yadājñāpayathaḥ svayam || 1-72-10  
 evam bhavatu bhadrām vaḥ kuśadhvajasute ime |  
 patnyau bhajetām sahitaḥ śatrughnabharatāvubhau || 1-72-11

Vishvamisra, who was sitting next to Vasishtha, said to Vaideha, King Janaka, "We have heard of the two families, those of unmeasured goodness and fame, families for whom there is no equal. This will be a wonderful match from the standpoints of *dharma* and physical beauty. Hey *rāja*, your younger brother has two lovely daughters. I want them to be married as well. Marry them to Bharata and Shatrughna, the valorous brothers of Rama and Lakshmana. These four sons of Dasharatha are the guardian angels of this world; they have the virtues of the *devas*. Know there is no greater gift, no greater *puṇya*, than to give your daughters."

To raise a girl is not easy for the parents. There is the cost and the responsibility, the years and the difficulties. She must be protected; it is a big problem. One day she is gifted to somebody and goes away and that is the end of it. Once I

was talking to somebody who was having some trouble with her daughter. I suggested she could admit the girl to the hostel at the college where the girl could stay for some time. But the mother said no, no. She insisted her daughter stay at home, because, as parents, she and her husband had only these few years with the girl, and as mother, she could not bear this sacrifice. Afterwards the girl would be gone, maybe to Europe or America, perhaps only to be seen at Thanksgiving. To give a girl properly in marriage is a considerable investment. You can see the toll that the process takes, and you can see the wealth that is given in this gift of a daughter.

“Let these two families be bound together,” said Vishvamitra.

एकाहा राजपुत्रीणां चतसृणां महामुने । पाणीन् गृह्णन्तु चत्वारो राजपुत्रा महाबलाः ॥ १-७२-१२  
उत्तरे दिवसे ब्रह्मन् फल्गुनीभ्यां मनीषिणः । वैवाहिकं प्रशंसन्ति भगो यत्र प्रजापतिः ॥ १-७२-१३  
स्वस्ति प्राप्नुहि भद्रं ते गमिष्यामः स्वमालयम् । श्राद्धकर्माणि विधिवद्विधास्य इति चाब्रवीत् ॥ १-७२-१९  
स सुतैः कृतगोदानैर्वृतः सन् नृपतिस्तदा । लोकपालैरिवाभाति वृतः सौम्यः प्रजापतिः ॥ १-७२-२५

*ekāhnā rājaputrīṇāṃ catasṛṇāṃ mahāmune |*  
*pāṇīn gr̥hṇantu catvāro rājaputrā mahābalāḥ || 1-72-12*  
*uttare divase brahman phalgunībhyāṃ manīṣiṇaḥ |*  
*vaivāhikaṃ praśamsanti bhago yatra prajāpatiḥ || 1-72-13*  
*svasti prāpnuhi bhadraṃ te gamiṣyāmaḥ svamālayam |*  
*śrāddhakarmāṇi vidhivadvidhāsya iti cābravīt || 1-72-19*  
*sa sutaiḥ kṛtagodānairvṛtaḥ san nṛpatistadā |*  
*lokapālairivābhāti vṛtaḥ saumyaḥ prajāpatiḥ || 1-72-25*

For the family of the girl it is *kanyikāyaḥ dānam*, giving of the young daughter. For the boy’s family it is *pānigrahaṇam*, receiving the hand, acceptance of the gift. In one day these four boys received the hands of these four girls. Dasharatha agreed, “*tathāstu.*” Sitting there with his four boys, Dasharatha looked like Brahmaji with his four heads. The initial rituals began. Following the *ṛṣis*, everyone went to the *yajñasālā* where the fire ritual ceremony took place in the presence of all who were there. There is no document, no camera; it is the *sākṣī* of the fire that is the witness of the marriage. With that, there is no question of breaking the marriage bond.

*To be continued...*