

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

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ननृतुश्चाप्सरस्संघा गन्धर्वाश्च जगुः कलम् । विवाहे रघुमुख्यानां तदद्भुतमदृश्यत ॥ १-७३-३८
ईदृशे वर्तमाने तु तूर्योऽष्टनिनादिते । त्रिरग्निं ते परिक्रम्य ऊर्ध्वार्या महौजसः ॥ १-७३-३९
अथोपकार्यं जग्मुस्ते सभार्या रघुनन्दनाः । राजाप्यनुययौ पश्यन् सर्षिसंघः सबान्धवः ॥ १-७३-४०

nanṛtuścāpsarassaṅghā gandharvāśca jaguḥ kalam |
vivāhe raghumukhyānān tadadbhutamadṛśyata || 1-73-38
īdrśe vartamāne tu tūryodghuṣṭaninādite |
triragniṁ te parikramya ūhurbhāryā mahaujaśaḥ || 1-73-39
athopakāryaṁ jagmuste sabhāryā raghunandanāḥ |
rājāpyanuyayau paśyan sarṣisaṅghaḥ sabāndhavaḥ || 1-73-40

As the water touched the ground, from the sky the voices of all the *devas* were heard, “*sādhu sādhu,*” well done, well done. A rain of glorious flower petals floated softly from the heavens. Then Janaka turned to Lakshmana, encouraging the shy boy, and united him with Urmila. Bharata and Mandavi were likewise married, as were Shatrughna and Shrutakirti. Each boy holding his bride’s hand, the four couples circled the fire in a splendid, solemn procession. Then they prostrated to their parents and to the venerable *ṛṣis* and received their blessings. Then there was all joy. Even the celestials were seen dancing in celebration for this marriage of one that had become the marriage of four.

अथ रात्र्यां व्यतीतायां विश्वामित्रो महामुनिः । आपृष्ट्वा तौ च राजानौ जगामोत्तरपर्वतम् ॥ १-७४-१

विश्वामित्रो गते राजा वैदेहं मिथिलाधिपम् । आपृष्ट्व जगामाशु राजा दशरथः पुरीम् ॥ १-७४-२

अथ राजा विदेहानां ददौ कन्याधनं बहु । गवां शतसहस्राणि बहूनि मिथिलेश्वरः ॥ १-७४-३

कम्बलानां च मुख्यानां क्षौमान् कोट्यम्बराणि च । हस्त्यश्वरथपादातं दिव्यरूपं स्वलंकृतम् ॥ १-७४-४

atha rātryām vyatitāyām viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ |
āpṛṣṭvā tau ca rājānau jagāmottaraparvatam || 1-74-1
viśvāmitro gate rājā vaidehaṁ mithilādhipam |

āprṣṭva jagāmāsu rājā daśarathaḥ purīm || 1-74-2

atha rājā videhānām dadau kanyādhanam bahu |

gavām śatasahasrāṇi bahūni mithileśvaraḥ || 1-74-3

kambalānām ca mukhyānām kṣaumān koṭyambarāṇi ca |

hastyaśvarathapādātām divyarūpam svalaṅkṛtam || 1-74-4

Dasharatha was happy that everything had turned out well, and his apprehensions about Rama's going off with Vishvamitra, as Vasishtha had told, were proved wrong. It had turned out well for both Rama and for his father. The next morning, after blessing the four princes and bidding farewell to the kings, having completed his duty of initiating Rama, Vishvamitra went his way to the Himalayas. Then Dashartha and his caravan prepared and left. He knew that the people still in Ayodhya would be very eager to meet Sita and the other new girls. King Janaka accompanied King Dasharatha along the trail home for a bit before turning back to his city. He had made sure that the newly married girls had been well endowed with jewels, ornaments, and kine. This was done because of the patriarchy and the tradition. Now it has changed. Before, the property went to the sons-in-law, in the form of dowry. The girl could always come home, therefore she required no property. She took with her the wealth that ensured the acceptance and comfort of her new home. The daughters would divide their father's wealth in this way. The father would eventually give away everything, and his sons got basically nothing. They would have to work. There is something good in this, and there is always something bad. The good is that the newly married couple had just the one account, operated by both of them. They did not start with separate accounts. That is marriage – no "his own" and "her own." The girl would always be welcome back at her parents' home and with her brothers, but all her property had already been given to her and hence to her husband.

ददौ कन्याशतं तासां दासीदासमनुत्तमम् । हिरण्यस्य सुवर्णस्य मुक्तानां विद्रुमस्य च ॥ १-७४-५

ददौ राजा सुसंहृष्टः कन्याधनमनुत्तमम् । दत्त्वा बहुविधं राजा समनुज्ञाप्य पार्थिवम् ॥ १-७४-६

प्रविवेश स्वनिलयं मिथिलां मिथिलेश्वरः । राजाप्ययोध्याधिपतिः सह पुत्रैर्महात्मभिः ॥ १-७४-७

dadau kanyāśataṁ tāsāṁ dāsīdāsamanuttamam |
hiranyasya suvarṇasya muktānām vidrumasya ca || 1-74-5
dadau rājā susamhr̥ṣṭaḥ kanyādhanamanuttamam |
dattvā bahuvīdham rājā samanujñāpya pārthivam || 1-74-6
praviveśa svanīlayam mithilām mithileśvaraḥ |
rājāpyayodhyādhipatiḥ saha putrairmahātmabhiḥ || 1-74-7

Because Sita was now part of a rich and prospering kingdom, she did not need property. Still, she was given the rare and special heirlooms of her family. She was given cows as the symbol of wealth and a hundred thousand Mithila shawls and saris that she could distribute to the women of Ayodhya. Her father gave elephants and chariots and horses and weapons to augment the armies. He gave servants who knew well how to serve the new queen and who were familiar with life in the palace. They wanted to stay with Sita. Janaka said, “Then, go, please, and go well.” He gave gold and silver and pearls and corals. Women, particularly in the South, always wear at least one piece of Indian coral in their chain. All he gave happily. Who has ever seen such wondrous gifts?

After covering some distance, the massive procession to Ayodhya, stirring up clouds of dust, stopped for a bit. There Dasharatha heard the strange noises of birds that portend something bad to come. Another bad sign was recognized - the animal movements were all clockwise. Dasharatha’s heart was beating fast, and in his mind was an unaccountable fear. He asked *mahārṣi* Vasishtha how he read these signs. Vasishtha said these were negative augurs, but he said that there were also omens that all would turn out well. There would be problems, there was imminent danger, but there was to be a satisfactory resolution. Even as they were talking, a storm-like disturbance composed of the dust they had stirred up blew in and blinded them.

To be continued...