

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the seventh part of the serial article, continuation from December 2021 newsletter.

सर्वदाभिगतः सद्भिः समुद्र इव सिन्धुभिः । आर्यः सर्वसमश्चैव सदैव प्रियदर्शनः ॥ १-१-१६

स च सर्वगुणोपेतः कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनः । समुद्र इव गाम्भीर्ये धैर्येण हिमवानिव ॥ १-१-१७

विष्णुना सदृशो वीर्ये सोमवत्प्रियदर्शनः । कालाग्निसदृशः क्रोधे क्षमया पृथिवीसमः ॥ १-१-१८

धनदेन समस्त्यागे सत्ये धर्म इवापरः । तमेवंगुणसम्पन्नं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ॥ १-१-१९

sarvadābhigataḥ sadbhiḥ samudra iva sindhubhiḥ |

āryaḥ sarvasamaścaiva sadaiva priyadarśanaḥ || 1-1-16

sa ca sarvagunopetaḥ kausalyānandavardhanaḥ |

samudra iva gāmbhīrye dhairyaṇa himavāniva || 1-1-17

viṣṇunā sadṛśo vīrye somavatpriyadarśanaḥ |

kālāgnisadrśaḥ krodhe kṣamayā pṛthivīsamaḥ || 1-1-18

dhanadena samastyāge satye dharmā ivāparaḥ |

tamevaṅguṇasampannaṁ rāmaṁ satyaparākramam || 1-1-19

Rama is loved by all. He is *sādhu*, saintly, a good person. *Sādhu*, the word, is sometimes used in a derogative sense. But a simple man is different from a simpleton. A *sādhu* is one who is not capable of doing any mischief. Rama is one who is aware of his strength. He accommodates the mischief of others; he is a good person. But he is aware of himself and his position - you cannot just hobnob with him. He is one who is capable and unerringly dependable. In the same way the ocean is always sought out by rivers, the way they all run to the ocean, naturally and without exception, all good people always seek out Rama.

Āryaḥ, pūjyaḥ: He is the most worshipful person. Even as you see him, you feel like offering your salutations. He commands respect. In dealing with all people, rich or poor, there is no question of partiality on Rama's part. He is a man of equal vision in dealing with people, *sarvasamaḥ*. He is always pleasing and

cheerful, *sadaiva priyadarśanaḥ*. He is endowed with all the good qualities, *sarvagunopetaḥ*. If you want to know what are those good qualities, just watch Rama's life. He brings joy, , to his mother, Kausalya. Whenever she thinks of him, she is in *samādhi*. Just his walk, and she is in ecstasy. The thought of him makes his mother's heart well with joy, *ānandavardhanaḥ*. She is proud that he is her son.

His magnitude and his magnanimity, *gāmbhīrya*, are like the ocean's. He is commodious like the ocean - any amount of water can join it. In his fullness and his accommodation he is oceanic. In his courage and bravery he is like the Himalayas. See the peak; it stands all weathers. Rama is like Mount Everest, towering, snow-mantled, above all the other peaks. Whatever the winds that blow, it keeps itself bright and straight. None can shake him. In his *vīrya*, his capacity, strength, power, he is like even Lord Vishnu. Such is his power to sustain and protect people. He is the equal to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer. In the trinity of the Lord, God is divided into three. Vishnu is the sustainer; another dissolves; another creates. Those are the three functions that constitute *īśvara*, Lord Ishvara. Like Vishnu, Rama's storehouse of resources is always full. He is resourceful in his power to sustain people. Like even the moon, *somavatpriyadarśanaḥ*, his being is very pleasing, bright. He is not like the sun, in whose presence you must close your eyes. You can see him, but he does not frighten you. You can gaze upon him like you do upon the cool moon.

When he is angry, angry because some wrong has been committed, it is an anger, *krodha*, which is under his control. It is an anger which shows he knows there is something to be done. The fire of destruction, *kālāgni* - which brings about the dissolution of the world when one cycle of creation is over - is his anger. His anger is compensated by compassion, forgiveness, *kṣama*. His patience is like the earth, *pṛthivī*; you cannot make him angry easily. How is the earth patient? The earth goes on bearing the weight of all the mistakes and misdeeds that are committed, and she still yields. She is patient; she keeps giving to you. She gives you all resources, no matter your habits and customs. She never stops thinking that one day you will realize. Goddess Prthivi, Mother Earth, is always considered to be the most patient woman. It is she who gives you all resources, She lets you walk on her; you need not kick her. But she never rejects you. She is the embodi-

ment of patience.

In giving, Rama is like Kubera, the god of money, *dhanadaḥ*. Rama is the treasury of all the riches. He has all wealth, and he never loses by giving. In speaking truth, *satya*, in doing exactly what is to be done, he is like a second god of *dharma* - even though there is only the one god of *dharma*.

“Rama is this person. He is there, my dear Valmiki. He is more than what you asked for,” says Narada.

“There is this man known as Rama, a king in the line of the Ikshvaku. O Valmiki, I hope you are satisfied with this man I have introduced to you. More than a man, Rama is endowed with all these virtues.” Having told this much, Narada tells the story of Rama, from the time Rama was a child. But first we need to describe the setting.

Rama is the son of Dasharatha. King Dasharatha had three wives. He ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya for a long time. Ayodhya means “that which cannot be won over.” In that family of the Solar dynasty, in the Ikshvaku line, every king was renowned. Dasharatha lived up to the status of his family. He proved himself to be a wise, great king. Yet, to his disappointment, for a long time he had no children, no sons. Therefore he propitiated the various *devatās*, the gods, and performed a Vedic ritual called *putrakāmeṣṭi*. It was said that the ṛṣi Rshyashrnga, a wise man living in the nearby forest, should be the one to conduct the ritual. He should be the officiating priest; it should be conducted in his presence. This was done, and Rshyashrnga took from the very ritual fire itself some of the *pāyasaṃ*, the rice pudding. He gave that to Dasharatha, instructing him to give it to his wives. If they took this offering, they would be blessed with children.

Dasharatha gave the *pāyasaṃ* to his wives, to Kausalya, to Kaikeyi, and to Sumitra. Kausalya was the first queen. Dasharatha gave half to Kausalya. Of the other half he gave one third to Kaikeyi. The other two thirds he gave to Sumitra. Each one of them, in time, brought forth children. To Kausalya was born Rama. To Kaikeyi was born Bharata. Sumitra was blessed with two children, Lakshmana and Shatrughna. These were the four sons of Dasharatha, and he was pleased.

To be continued...