

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

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नास्मि विप्रकृता देव केनचिन्नावमानिता । अभिप्रायस्तु मे कश्चित् तमिच्छामि त्वया कृतम् ॥ २-११-२  
प्रतिज्ञां प्रतिजानीष्व यदि त्वं कर्तुमिच्छसि । अथ ते व्याहरिष्यामि यथाभिप्रार्थितं मया ॥ २-११-३  
तामुवाच महाराजः कैकेयीमीषदुत्समयः । कामी हस्तेन संगृह्य मूर्धजेषु भुवि स्थिताम् ॥ २-११-४

*nāsmi viprakṛtā deva kenacinnāvamānitā |*

*abhiprāyastu me kaścit tamicchāmi tvayā kṛtam || 2-11-2*

*pratijñāṁ pratijānīṣva yadi tvam kartumicchasi |*

*atha te vyāhariṣyāmi yathābhiprārthitaṁ mayā || 2-11-3*

*tāmuvāca mahārājaḥ kaikeyīmīṣadutsmayāḥ |*

*kāmī hastena saṅgrhya mūrdhajeṣu bhuvī sthitām || 2-11-4*

Through contrived tears Kaikeyi sobbed, “O my lord, no, nobody has hurt me yet or made me feel bad. But there is one thing on my mind. It is something I want very much, and I very much want you to do it. You must promise me you will do it, then I will tell you what it is. I will tell you exactly what I want.”

With both his love and his tender masculinity Dasharatha reached down and helped her up off the floor, “I will definitely do what you want. You know I will.” Infatuation was the weakness of Dasharatha.

“Say it again, won’t you? Say you will give me what I ask,” .

यथा क्रमेण शपसे वरं मम ददासि च । तच्छृण्वन्तु त्रयस्त्रींशद् देवाः सेन्द्रपुरोगमाः ॥ २-११-१३

चन्द्रादित्यौ नभशैव ग्रहा रात्र्यहनी दिशः । जगच्च पृथिवी चेयं सगन्धर्वाः सराक्षसाः ॥ २-११-१४

निशाचराणि भूतानि गृहेषु गृहदेवताः । यानि चान्यानि भूतानि जानीयुर्भाषितं तव ॥ २-११-१५

*yathā krameṇa śapase varaṁ mama dadāsi ca |*

*tacchṛṇvantu trayastrīṁśad devāḥ sendrapurogamāḥ || 2-11-13*

*candrādityau nabhaśaiva grahā rātryahanī diśaḥ |*

*jagacca pṛthivī ceyam sagandharvāḥ sarākṣasāḥ || 2-11-14*

*niśācarāṇi bhūtāni grheṣu grhadevatāḥ |*

*yāni cānyāni bhūtāni jānīyurbhāṣitaṁ tava || 2-11-15*

He did say it again, and she made him say it once more. He said it three

times. With that, it could never be taken back. Then, pulling back her hair from her neck, Kaikeyi said, “May all the gods, all the *asuras*, all the *gandharvas*, all the *rākṣasas*, all the spirits of the night, all the deities of the light and dark, all the *devatās*, the sun god and moon god, Brhaspati and Agni, and all the *devas* here on earth hear. Let them hear this, that you have made the *pratijñā*.”

Immediately Dasharatha’s heart was in his mouth. The whole thing made him uncomfortable. He did not know what was to come. He had made such a broad guarantee, and now he knew he was in for something. But he never thought that he could not easily fulfill her wish. Innocent as he was, he never thought that Kaikeyi would ask to have Rama banished to the forest. He never thought anyone would ever ask to have Rama sent from their presence. Everyone was endeared to Rama and loved to be close to him. The thought never occurred to him. He never thought Bharata would contend for the throne. It was inconceivable. He never thought Kaikeyi, who seemed dear to Rama, as did Rama to Kaikeyi, could ever ask this. Dasharatha just thought she wanted some big thing, a vacation in Hawaii or something. Anything else he could give in a second. He knew there was going to be something because she had made such a big deal of it.

स्मर राजन् पुरा वृत्तं तस्मिन् दैवासुरे रणे । तत्र त्वां च्यावयच्छत्रुस्तव जीवितमन्तरा ॥ २-११-१८

*smara rājan purā vṛttam tasmin daivāsura raṇe |*

*tatra tvām cyāvayacchatrustava jīvitamantarā || 2-11-18*

“You told me, O *rāja*, when I helped you and Indra during the battle in the Dandaka forest, that you would give me two boons. You said I had saved your life. Do you remember that?” Kaikeyi said pointedly.

“Yes, of course I remember,” Dasharatha said a bit meekly.

तौ तावदहमद्यैव वक्ष्यामि शृणु मे वचः । अभिषेकसमारम्भो राघवस्योपकल्पितः ॥ २-११-२४

अनेनैवाभिषेकेण भरतो मेऽभिषिच्यताम् । यो द्वितीयो वरो देव दत्तः प्रीतेन मे त्वया ॥ २-११-२५

तदा देवासुरे युद्धे तस्य कालोऽयमागतः । नव पञ्च च वर्षाणि दण्डकारण्यमाश्रितः ॥ २-११-२६

चीराजिनधरो धीरो रामो भवतु तापसः । भरतो भजतामद्य यौवराज्यमकण्टकम् ॥ २-११-२७

एष मे परमः कामो दत्तमेव वरं वृणे । अद्य चैव हि पश्येयं प्रयान्तं राघवं वने ॥ २-११-२८

*tau tāvadahamadyaiva vakṣyāmi śṛṇu me vacaḥ |*  
*abhiṣekasamārambho rāghavaśyopakalpitaḥ || 2-11-24*  
*anenaiṅvābhiṣekeṇa bharato me'bhīṣicyatām |*  
*yo dvitīyo varo deva dattaḥ prītena me tvayā || 2-11-25*  
*tadā devāsura yuddhe tasya kālo'yamāgataḥ |*  
*nava pañca ca varṣāṇi daṇḍakāraṇyamāśritaḥ || 2-11-26*  
*cīrājinadharo dhīro rāmo bhavatu tāpasah |*  
*bharato bhajatāmadya yauvarājyamakanṭakam || 2-11-27*  
*eṣa me paramaḥ kāmo dattameva varaṁ vṛṇe |*  
*adya caiva hi paśyeyam prayāntam rāghavam vane || 2-11-28*

“Of course you do,” she said. “Now I ask the first one. You have arranged for Rama to be installed as Prince Regent and heir to the throne. I want Bharata installed instead. I will send word to Bharata to come home. When he arrives, you install him in Rama’s place. That is the first boon I ask. The time has also come for the second boon which you granted me. Remember, you promised. I want Rama sent to the forest for a period of fourteen years. This should not be a problem for this brave and valorous boy. But he should not wear the raiments of a king, and no one should be allowed to think in any way that he is the king. Let him wear bark and deerskin and live a life of *tapas* only. This is my supreme desire. I want to see Rama head for the forest today, not tomorrow, sir. By doing this, living up to your words, may you become a real king of the Ikshvakus. Honoring the very boons you gave me, show what you are made of.”

ततः श्रुत्वा महाराजः कैकेय्या दारुणं वचः । चिन्तामभिसमापेदे मुहूर्तं प्रतताप च ॥ २-१२-१

किं नु मेऽयं दिवास्वप्नश्चित्तमोहोऽपि वा मम । अनुभूतोपसर्गो वा मनसो वाप्युपद्रवः ॥ २-१२-२

*tataḥ śrutvā mahārājaḥ kaikeyyā dāruṇam vacaḥ |*  
*cintāmabhisamāpede muhūrtaṁ pratatāpa ca || 2-12-1*  
*kiṁ nu me'yaṁ divāsvapnaścittamoho'pi vā mama |*  
*anubhūtopasargo vā manaso vāpyupadravaḥ || 2-12-2*

Dasharatha could not believe these words came from Kaikeyi. Hearing them, these most painful words, something snapped in his mind. For one *mu-hūrtam*, forty-five minutes, he stood stunned and speechless. He nearly went mad. “What is happening to me? Is it waking or dream, day or night?” He clutched his

head as a monsoon spun inside him. Dasharatha did not know where to turn. Then he came around and began to focus. He tried to plead with his youngest wife and to dissuade her. He begged her to ask for something more reasonable. But she held her stance. She insisted he keep his word, and she cited examples from the events of the kings in his dynasty, how they always lived up to their words, even at cost. She forced him to commit to his words. Having said what he had said, it was impossible for him to cross his words. At the same time, he could not banish Rama to the forest for no reason. He thought of Rama and of the people who were all waiting for Rama's installation. Kings and sages had all come to see this. How could he banish Rama and face all these people? No one would accept that Dasharatha sent Rama off because his third wife had asked for something. The people would all say that Rama was sent away for nothing. Dasharatha thought he would be ridiculed, and he knew he would lose face. Out of infatuation for his wife, the old king had neglected to do what was proper. But Dasharatha had granted the boon, and Kaikeyi, possessed by jealousy, was committed to her desire. She did not want to fall below Kausalya, and she did not want Bharata to never become king. She reasoned that Rama's sons, not Bharata would rule after Rama. She was not going to budge an inch.

The whole night was spent in turmoil, and Dasharatha spent much of it in a daze. As the dawn came the sun entered Cancer and the moon and sun met in the asterism Pushya. This is when the *rājābhiṣekha* of the prince is to take place. Vasishtha, along with all the other sages and priests, had prepared all the materials for the ritual. Water from all the sacred rivers, gold coins and all the rest had been gathered. The guests had all arrived and were standing outside the palace waiting for the king. Sumantra, Dasharatha's devoted minister and aid, born to a Brahman girl through a *kṣatriya*, a brilliant person, free to go to Dasharatha at any time, at the request of Vasishtha and others sought the king in the palace to make sure he was ready for the day. Sumantra went inside and, greeting the king with the proper words, saw his king's agitation and his red eyes. He thought perhaps Dasharatha was not well.

Kaikeyi spoke up, "Oh, no, no, the king is like that because he is jubilant about the whole thing. He could not sleep at all. What the king wants now is to see Rama." She knew that as soon as Rama came to know the boon his father had granted, the prince would execute his part of his father's order. She said, "Sumantra, bring Rama."

Dasharatha got himself up and echoed, "Bring Rama." Sumantra, cheered by his king's desire to see Rama, thought perhaps Dasharatha wanted to start the day by blessing his son.

Outside, as Sumantra passed, Vasishtha stopped him and reminded him of the time and told him to go and wake the king. The proceedings should begin. Sumantra went back into Kaikeyi's quarters. Dasharatha saw him coming back in and told him, "I told you to go and bring Rama."

Sumantra replied, "My lord, Vasishtha and the others instructed me to wake you up. They want to begin today's *rājābhiṣekha*."

प्रतिबुद्ध्य ततो राजा इदं वचनमब्रवीत् । राममानय सूतेति यदस्यभिहितो मया ॥ २-१५-२५

किमिदं कारणं येन ममाज्ञा प्रतिवाह्यते । न चैव सम्प्रसुप्तोऽहमानयेहाशु राघवम् ॥ २-१५-२६

*pratibuddhya tato rājā idam vacanamabravīt |*

*rāmamānaya sūteti yadasyabihito mayā || 2-15-25*

*kimidam kāraṇam yena mamājñā prativāhyate |*

*na caiva samprasupto'hamānayehāśu rāghavam || 2-15-26*

Dasharatha spoke crossly, "I am awake, why did you come back without Rama? You heard what I said." Sumantra was confused, but he went again and told Vasishtha that Dasharatha wanted to see Rama. Rama's marble palace was spectacular, hundreds of balconies, doors inlaid with gold, gardens with every variety of fruit trees, with many birds flying freely about. Sumantra went in, found Rama, and told him his father wanted to see him, now. Rama and Lakshmana jumped into the waiting chariot and headed for the king's palace. The people in the streets saw their favorite prince and waved and greeted him, proclaiming his virtues and their good fortune.

स ददर्शासने रामो निषण्णं पितरं शुभे । कैकेय्या सहितं दीनं मुखेन परिशुष्यता ॥ २-१८-१

स पितुश्चरणौ पूर्वमभिवाद्य विनीतवत् । ततो ववन्दे चरणौ कैकेय्याः सुसमाहितः ॥ २-१८-२  
रामेत्युक्तवा तु वचनं बाष्पपर्याकुलेक्षणः । शशाक नृपतिर्दीनो नेक्षितुं नाभिभाषितुम् ॥ २-१८-३  
तदपूर्वं नृपतेर्दृष्ट्वा रूपं भयावहम् । रामोऽपि भयमापन्नः पदा स्पृष्ट्वेव पन्नगम् ॥ २-१८-४  
कच्चिन्मया नापराद्धमज्ञानाद् येन मे पिता । कुपितस्तन्ममाचक्ष्व त्वमेवैनं प्रसादय ॥ २-१८-११  
अतोषयन् महाराजमकुर्वन् वा पितुर्वचः । मुहूर्तमपि नेच्छेयं जीवितुं कुपिते नृपे ॥ २-१८-१५

*sa dadarśāsane rāmo niṣaṅṅaṁ pitarāṁ śubhe ।  
kaikeyyā sahitaṁ dīnaṁ mukhena pariśuṣyatā ॥ 2-18-1  
sa pituścaraṇau pūrvamabhivādya vinītavaat ।  
tato vavande caraṇau kaikeyyāḥ susamāhitaḥ ॥ 2-18-2  
rāmetyuktvā tu vacanaṁ bāṣpaparyākulekṣaṇaḥ ।  
śaśāka nṛpatirdīno nekṣitum nābhibhāṣitum ॥ 2-18-3  
tadapūrvam nṛpaterdṛṣṭvā rūpaṁ bhayāvaham ।  
rāmo 'pi bhayamāpannaḥ padā sprṣṭveva pannagam ॥ 2-18-4  
kaccinmayā nāparāddhamajñānād yena me pitā ।  
kupitastanmamācakṣva tvamevainaṁ prasādaya ॥ 2-18-11  
atoṣayan mahārājamakurvan vā pituroacaḥ ।  
muhūrtamapi neccheyam jīvitum kupite nṛpe ॥ 2-18-15*

Rama entered the king's palace and saw there both his father and Kaikeyi looking disturbed and stressed. Neither looked his or her usual self. Rama did not understand what had happened. He offered his usual calm salutations to both. Dasharatha opened his eyes and broke into tears at the sight of his dear son. He could neither speak nor look into Rama's eyes. Dasharatha's demeanor had never been seen before, the tears, the anguish. Seeing his father, Rama felt a fear like a fear you have when you step on a snake. Rama wondered if he himself had committed some mistake. Kaikeyi, though not dressed for a coronation, was in better shape. Rama turned toward her and asked, "Why can my father not talk to me? What did I do? What mistake have I committed? I have never seen him like this. Please, Mother, tell me. I cannot live for even a minute without doing all I can to make my father and mother happy. He brought me to this world; I would do anything for him. I cannot stand to see him like this. Mother, tell me what I should do."

एवमुक्ता तु कैकेयी राघवेण महात्मना । उवाचेदं सुनिर्लज्जा धृष्टमात्महितं वचः ॥ २-१८-१९  
 न राजा कुपितो राम व्यसनं नास्य किञ्चन । किञ्चिन्मनोगतं त्वस्य त्वद्भयान्नानुभाषते ॥ २-१८-२०  
 प्रियं त्वामप्रियं वक्तुं वाणी नास्य प्रवर्तते । तदवश्यं त्वया कार्यं यदनेनाश्रुतं मम ॥ २-१८-२१  
 एष मह्यं वरं दत्त्वा पुरा मामभिपूज्य च । स पश्चात् तप्यते राजा यथान्यः प्राकृतस्तथा ॥ २-१८-२२  
 अतिसृज्य ददानीति वरं मम विशाम्पतिः । स निरर्थं गतजले सेतुं बन्धितुमिच्छति ॥ २-१८-२३  
 धर्ममूलमिदं राम विदितं च सतामपि । तत् सत्यं न त्यजेद् राजा कुपितस्त्वत्कृते यथा ॥ २-१८-२४  
 यदि तदवश्यं वक्ष्यते राजा शुभं वा यदि वाशुभम् । करिष्यसि ततः सर्वमाख्यास्यामि पुनस्त्वहम् ॥ २-१८-२५  
 यदि त्वभिहितं राज्ञा त्वयि तन्न विपत्स्यते । ततोऽहमभिधास्यामि नह्येष त्वयि वक्ष्यति ॥ २-१८-२६

evamuktā tu kaikeyī rāghaveṇa mahātmanā ।  
 uvācedaṁ sunirlajjā dhṛṣṭamātmahitaṁ vacaḥ ॥ 2-18-19  
 na rājā kupito rāma vyasanaṁ nāsya kiñcana ।  
 kiñcinmanogataṁ tvasya tvadbhayānnānubhāṣate ॥ 2-18-20  
 priyaṁ tvāmapriyaṁ vaktuṁ vāṇī nāsya pravartate ।  
 tadavaśyaṁ tvayā kāryaṁ yadanenāśrutaṁ mama ॥ 2-18-21  
 eṣa mahyaṁ varaṁ dattvā purā māmabhipūjya ca ।  
 sa paścāt tapyate rājā yathānyaḥ prākṛtastathā ॥ 2-18-22  
 atisrjya dadānīti varāṁ mama viśāmpatiḥ ।  
 sa nirarthaṁ gatajale setuṁ bandhitumicchati ॥ 2-18-23  
 dharmamūlamidaṁ rāma viditaṁ ca satāmapi ।  
 tat satyaṁ na tyajed rājā kupitastvatkṛte yathā ॥ 2-18-24  
 yadi tad vakṣyate rājā śubhaṁ vā yadi vāśubham ।  
 kariṣyasi tataḥ sarvamaḥkhyāsyāmi punastvahaṁ ॥ 2-18-25  
 yadi tvabhihitaṁ rājñā tvayi tanna vipatsyate ।  
 tato'hamabhidhāsyāmi nahyeṣa tvayi vakṣyati ॥ 2-18-26

This shameless woman, completely possessed by her emotions, measuring her words calculated to her own interests, said to Raghava, “Do not be afraid, Rama, your father is not really angry with you. Nor is he sad. There is something on his mind which he needs to tell you, but which he is afraid to tell you. He fears that he may hurt you. In fact I can tell you what is on his mind, because it is not easy for him to say to his dear son these words that are not exactly pleasing to you. Your father’s voice is caught by the weight of these words. On his behalf I will tell you what is up. You see, our *rājā*, your father, the king, granted me two

boons. Now, like an ordinary man, he does not want to fulfill the boons and tell you what they are. Having promised he would fulfill my request, now he wants to renege. This king wants to dam the water that has already flown downstream. You know this *dharma* - what is told must be maintained. No person, especially a king, should go back on his word. Now if you will say that you can do what it is your father wants you to do, I will tell you exactly what that is.”

एतात् तु वचनं श्रुत्वा कैकेय्या समुदाहृतम् । उवाच व्यथितो रामस्तां देवीं नृपसंनिधौ ॥ २-१८-२७

अहो धिङ् नार्हसे देवि वक्तुं मामीदृशं वचः । अहं हि वचनाद् राज्ञः पतेयमपि पावके ॥ २-१८-२८

भक्षयेयं विषं तीक्ष्णं पतेयमपि चाण्वि । नियुक्तो गुरुणा पित्रा नृपेण च हितेन च ॥ २-१८-२९

तद् ब्रूहि वचनं देवि राज्ञो यदभिकाङ्क्षितम् । करिष्ये प्रतिजाने च रामो द्विर्नाभिभाषते ॥ २-१८-३०

*etāt tu vacanaṁ śrutvā kaikeyyā samudāhṛtam ।*

*uvāca vyathito rāmastāṁ devīm nṛpasannidhau ॥ 2-18-27*

*aho dhiṅ nārhasē devi vaktuṁ māmīdṛśaṁ vacaḥ ।*

*ahaṁ hi vacanād rājñāḥ pateyamapi pāvake ॥ 2-18-28*

*bhakṣayeyam viṣaṁ tīkṣṇaṁ pateyamapi cārṇave ।*

*niryukto gurunā pitrā nṛpeṇa ca hitena ca ॥ 2-18-29*

*tad brūhi vacanaṁ devī rājño yadabhikāṅkṣitam ।*

*karīṣye pratijāne ca rāmo dvirnābhibhāṣate ॥ 2-18-30*

Rama said, “I do not see how you can speak to me about *dharma* this way, how you can say these things about my father. I do not deserve such words from you. What doubt do you have about this. Do you doubt whether Rama would ever transgress a line drawn or cross a promise by his father? I would step into fire should he ask. I would fall into the ocean or drink lethal poison to fulfill the words of him who is my father, lord, *guru*, and king. There is nothing I would not do to fulfill his word. Tell me now, O queen, whatever it is that he wants of me. I promise that definitely I will do it.” Rama does not speak twice; once it is said it is said.

*To be continued...*