

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the nineteenth part of the serial article, continuation from Feb 2023 newsletter.

After Ravana's death, Rama enthroned Vibhishana in Lanka in Ravana's place. All the terrible *rākṣasas* were gone, and all the *rākṣasīs* and lesser demons became normal under the rule of Vibhishana, king of *rākṣasas*. The coronation and the enthronement ritual were done. All Rama had to do in the forest was done. Half of Rama's life was over. Kaikeyi, Mandara, Shurpanakha, Marica, Hanuman: they were all *nimittas*, means for Rama to achieve this particular end. Now it is over, the negation is done, no longer is there anxiety over the course to be taken. Indeed, Rama became all happiness. Receiving all blessings and certain boons from the *devatās*, Rama gave back the lives to all the Vanaras who had died at the hands of Kumbhakarna and the other monsters. They were all revived and given life again. Surrounded by his friends Hanuman and Sugriva and the others, riding in a large *puṣpaka*, Rama started back to Ayodhya. As they rode to Ayodhya, Rama told Sita the story of all that had happened after she had been kidnapped by Ravana. He told her of the trickery of the golden deer and the whole journey. In Ayodhya, Rama, the one of strength and committed to truth, came to the *āśrama* of *muni* Bharadvaja. Those *āśramas* were all there in those days. You must know that this is also a kind of an *āśrama*, even though we call it a school. School is a Western term, but because of our subject matter we know we are in an *āśrama*.

Rama was not sure whether to go back to Ayodhya or not. Perhaps his brother Bharata had changed over these fourteen years. Suppose Bharata wanted to continue to rule the kingdom. Why should Rama disturb him? Let Bharata rule the kingdom. Hanuman, who is always the first to find out anything, was sent to find out. Hanuman is always the great ambassador and he was sent first to Bharata. When Hanuman returned, the great monkey reported that Bharata had been doing *tapas* for Rama to come back. Bharata was emaciated, living as a *sādhu*, waiting in Nandigram just outside Ayodhya, all the time saying Rama's name, keeping Rama's sandals before him and Rama's feet in his heart, ruling the kingdom very well. Hearing this, Rama rushed to meet Bharata.

प्रहृष्टमुदितो लोकस्तुष्टः पुष्टः सुधार्मिकः । निरामयो हरोगश्च दुर्भिक्षभयवर्जितः ॥ १-१-९०

न पुत्रमरणं केचिदœ द्रक्ष्यन्ति पुरुषाः क्वचित् । नार्यश्चाविधवा नित्यं भविष्यन्ति पतिव्रताः ॥ १-१-९१
न चाग्निजं भयं किन्चिन्नाप्सु मज्जन्ति जन्तवः । न वातजं भयं किन्चिन्नापि ज्वरकृतं तथा ॥ १-१-९२
न चापि क्शुद्ध्यं तत्र न तस्करभयं तथा । नगराणि च राष्ट्राणि धनधान्ययुतानि च ॥ १-१-९३
नित्यं प्रमुदिताः सर्वे यथा कृतयुगे तथा । अश्वमेघशतैरिष्टœवा तथा बहुसुवर्णकैः ॥ १-१-९४

prahr̥ṣṭamudito lokastuṣṭaḥ puṣṭaḥ sudhārmikaḥ ।

nirāmayo hyarogaśca durbhikṣabhayaavarjitaḥ ॥ 1-1-90

na putramaraṇaṁ kecid drakṣyanti puruṣāḥ kvacit ।

nāryaścāvidhavā nityaṁ bhaviṣyanti pativoratāḥ ॥ 1-1-91

na cāgniyaṁ bhayaṁ kincinnāpsu majjanti jantavaḥ ।

na vātajaṁ bhayaṁ kincinnāpi jvarakṛtaṁ tathā ॥ 1-1-92

na cāpi kśudbhayaṁ tatra na taskarabhayaṁ tathā ।

nagarāṇi ca rāṣṭrāṇi dhanadhānyayutāni ca ॥ 1-1-93

nityaṁ pramuditāḥ sarve yathā kṛtayuge tathā ।

aśvamedhaśatairiṣṭvā tathā bahusuvarṇakaiḥ ॥ 1-1-94

Rama met the overjoyed and greatly relieved Bharata in Nandigrama. Soon thereafter, Rama was entrusted with the throne. He untangled the matted hair gained by his life as an ascetic and reassumed the look of a royal member of the kingdom. With his brothers and Sita by his side he received the scepter and the kingdom from the hands of Bharata. As Rama and the others re-entered Ayodhya from Nandigrama, the people heard of the return of the great prince. Everyone lined the path and shed tears of joy at the end of the reign of the *rākṣasas* and the return of the king. The happiness of the people was beyond words. Inside they were full. This was no passing joy, no football team victory joy. The people felt stronger because Rama was around. They felt as though a new health had surged into them, as though one who had no backbone suddenly got one. In that very fullness and happiness the people became righteous. It is only when you miss something, when you feel you miss something, that you begin living a life of *adharma*. When you are full, when you feel that Rama is around, you are *sudharma* and free from any disease.

All mental illness, all fear of drought, all anxiety about famine was gone because a good rule was there. Everything was proper. Rama was around. In that kingdom there no longer was infantile mortality, no one lost their child. A perfect ruler brings that to a country: The people live in harmony; Mother Earth gives of

her bounty and you find the whole atmosphere is entirely different. No one was left a widow by the early death of her husband. All remained united with their partners. Such was the ideal kingdom of Rama. The living beings no longer feared disastrous fire or drowning in torrential storms. There were no earthquakes, no cholera or epidemic fever, and no thievery. All fear was gone from the hearts of the people. All were full and happy and lived a life of *dharma*. With Rama around, what was there to be afraid of? He eliminated all the *rākṣasas* and he was all mercy and compassion. With Rama as ruler, the people changed completely. As the king, so the subjects. The face of the society changed because Rama was sitting on the throne.

All the provinces and all the cities that made up Rama's kingdom increased their production and wealth. Commerce flourished and the granaries and treasuries swelled. We have heard that as the *yuga* comes down the *dharma* also comes down. That the previous *yuga* is better than the next *yuga* is the idea. Our Kaliyuga is said to be the most difficult, the dark one. But there, in *rāmarājya*, Rama being on the throne had converted it to *kr̥tayuga*. All were as happy as in the *satyayuga*. When the story was told by Narada to Valmiki, Rama was still ruling the kingdom. There were still great deeds and great sacrifices to be done as a king should do. Hundreds of *aśvamedhas*, *yāgas*, would be performed, and great distribution of *dakṣiṇā*, gold *et cetera*, would be accomplished. Countless cattle would be distributed to the *brāhmaṇas* who attended the sacrifices. That was one measure of the spirit. These cows were not offered into the fire but given to the people. The numbers involved indicate the greatness of the king involved, because to properly do a *yāga* there should be no challenge from other kings. Only then can such profound sacrifices such as *aśvamedha* be done. A very stable kingdom is required for that and the kingdom should enjoy vast prosperity. Only then, with wealth beyond count, can a king give away things in such a manner. King Rama, after living on a number of years, would leave this world for *brahmaloka*. Having done all to be done, Rama disappeared from this earth for the seventh *loka* up.

To be continued...