

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

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गुणवत्यपि तु स्नेहात् पुत्र वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् । भूयो विनयमास्थाय भव नित्यं जितेन्द्रियः ॥ २-३-४२

कामक्रोधसमुत्थानि त्यजस्व व्यसनानि च । परोक्षया वर्तमानो वृत्त्या प्रत्यक्षया तथा ॥ २-३-४३

guṇavatyapi tu snehāt putra vakśyāmi te hitam ।

bhūyo vinayamāsthāya bhava nityaṁ jitendriyaḥ ॥ 2-3-42

kāmakrodhasamutthāni tyajasva vyasanāni ca ।

parokṣayā vartamāno vṛtṭyā pratyakṣayā tathā ॥ 2-3-43

Dasharatha said, “Your virtues are well-known to me; I do not think you need my advice. But, from my experience, let me share these two things with you. Number one, may you at all times remain vigilant and strong, because this office you will assume is an office of jealousy. The crown and the throne are large, and all the people will look up to you with envy. When you occupy the highest office in the kingdom, your humility should be that much more. Secondly, know that power corrupts, and one must be vigilant against it. Keep your passions, your personal pleasures, under control. The rigors of the canon that govern the behavior of a king are to be held. Your personal and your public life must conform to those rigors and rules. Never can misfortune or anger or lust, the things that twist other people, take hold of your heart and be a viable choice for you. Hunting is born of lust. Sleeping during the day is out. Playing dice should be only an occasional pastime. Slandering others is wrong. Womanizing will diminish you. Vanity and indulgence in popular music and dance is not for a king. Maintain your discipline. A king must sacrifice the small pleasure. Encourage music and the arts, but do not succumb to such distractions. Violence and cheating, vindictiveness and jealousy, censuring and cruel punishment, all the things born of anger, all the things warned of in the *smṛtis*, may you give them all up for good. I know you do not have all these things, but as a retiring king it is my duty to mention them.

“Rule the kingdom both directly and indirectly. Directly you must have your people everywhere, throughout the kingdom, a network of intelligence. You

must have everything at your fingertips through your many eyes and ears pervading the empire. You must know every jealousy and every deal and every clash. Without making it known, don civilian clothing and mingle with the people. Get to know first-hand whether you are getting the real news or it is conditioned by someone trying to get the better of you, someone who is trying to pit you against some other group. Do not be swayed by news that is unfounded or unproven. Always confide with your kings and ministers and keep them well informed, but do not play one against the other. The final decisions are yours, but listen to their advice and weigh well their wisdom. Make them feel that you are their friend, that you are there for their protection, and do not make them feel they are ruled. Keep a close eye on the treasury and do not make promises to people that cannot be kept. Do not fleece your supporters, allow them to part with their money as a way to positively contribute to the general prosperity. Make them willing to pay their taxes and to keep the royal treasury flush. Keeping yourself in this manner, may you rule long and well.” With his prostration, Rama marked his acceptance of his king’s advice and took leave, prepared to assume the role of Prince Regent on the following day.

After a big day, Dasharatha found he could not sleep. He could not get past the feeling that something bad was going to happen. He wanted to feel that Rama was secure. He knew there were obstructions ahead. That night he called for Rama. Rama came and Dasharatha told him to prepare and pray until the day of his installation came. They embraced and separated, and Dasharatha was able then to rest. The next day, Vasishtha, as family priest, advised Rama, gave him *mantras* to chant silently, and sent him to the temple of Vishnu, Narayana, Ranganatha, that was there. Ranganatha was the deity worshipped by the family of Ikshvaku. That is the idol there in Shrirangam, in Tamil Nadu, and many people even today come from northern India to Srirangam to worship. Ranganatha is Lord Vishnu in a reclining posture. Rama did as advised and readied himself for investiture.

ततः पौरजनः सर्वः श्रुत्वा रामाभिषेचनम् । प्रभातां रजनीं दृष्ट्वा चक्रे शोभयितुं पुरीम् ॥ २-६-१०

सिताभ्रशिखराभेषु देवतायतनेषु च । चतुष्पथेषु रथ्यासु चैत्येष्वट्टालकेषु च ॥ २-६-११
नानापण्यसमृद्धेषु वणिजामापणेषु च । कुटुम्बिनां समृद्धेषु श्रीमत्सु भवनेषु च ॥ २-६-१२
सभासु चैव सर्वासु वृक्षेष्वालक्षितेशु च । ध्वजाः समुच्छ्रिताः साधु पताकाश्चाभवन्स्तथा ॥ २-६-१३
नटनर्तकसंघानां गायकानां च गायताम् । मनःकर्णसुखा वाचः शुश्राव जनता ततः ॥ २-६-१४
प्रकाशकरणार्थं च निशागमनशङ्कया । दीपवृक्षांस्तथा चक्रुरनुरथ्यासु सर्वशः ॥ २-६-१५
अहो महात्मा राजायमिक्ष्वाकुकुलनन्दनः । ज्ञात्वा वृद्धं स्वमात्मानं रामं राज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यति ॥ २-६-१६
सर्वे ह्यनुगृहीताः स्म यन्नो रामो महीपतिः । चिराय भविता गोप्ता दृष्टलोकपरावरः ॥ २-६-१७
अनुद्धतमना विद्वान् धर्मात्मा भ्रातृवत्सलः । यथा च भ्रातृषु स्निग्धस्तथास्मास्वपि राघवः ॥ २-६-१८
tataḥ paurajanaḥ sarvaḥ śrutvā rāmābhiṣecanam ।
prabhātām rajanīm dr̥ṣṭvā cakre śobhayitum purīm ॥ 2-6-10
sitābhraśikharaḥṣu devatāyataneṣu ca ।
catuṣpathēṣu rathyāsu caityeṣvatṭālakeṣu ca ॥ 2-6-11
nānāpaṇyasamr̥ddheṣu vaṇijāmāpaṇeṣu ca ।
kuṭumbinām samr̥ddheṣu śrīmatsu bhavaneṣu ca ॥ 2-6-12
sabhāsu caiva sarvāsu vṛkṣeṣvālakṣiteṣu ca ।
dhvajāḥ samucchritāḥ sādhu patākāścābhavaṁstathā ॥ 2-6-13
naṭanartakasaṅghānānīm gāyakānām ca gāyatām ।
manaḥkarnasukhā vācaḥ śuśrāva janatā tataḥ ॥ 2-6-14
prakāśakaraṇārthaṁ ca niśāgamanaśaṅkayā ।
dīpavṛkṣāṁstathā cakruranurathyāsu sarvaśaḥ ॥ 2-6-18
ahoo mahātmā rājāyamikṣvākukulanandanaḥ ।
jñātvā vṛddham svamātmānam rāmam rājye'bhīkṣyati ॥ 2-6-21
sarve hyanugṛhītāḥ sma yanno rāmo mahīpatiḥ ।
cirāya bhavitā goptā dr̥ṣṭalokaparāvaraḥ ॥ 2-6-22
anuddhatamanā vidvān dharmātmā bhrātr̥vatsalaḥ ।
yathā ca bhrātr̥ṣu snigdhasstathāsmāsvapi rāghavaḥ ॥ 2-6-23

The entire city of Ayodhya, in a spirit of rejoicing at their good fortune, prepared for the auspicious day. They could not wait for the night to end. When the dawn came, they finished the beautification of the city. Flags and banners and streamers flew from every building, at crossroads and in the temples there were decorations with flowers, the shops were filled with vegetables and fruit, and householders cleaned and ornamented their homes. The children came out into

the street and scurried about noisily. People chattered and visited, and got lamp-posts ready in case tomorrow's procession extended into the night, the better to see Rama, the joy of the family of Ikshvaku. What a joy that the Crown Prince, the surest wealth of the Raghavas, the noble son of their great King Dasharatha, the worthy heir of the line of mighty and just rulers, would pass right before them and bless them all.

ज्ञातिदासी यतो जाता कैकेय्या तु सहोषिता । प्रासादं चन्द्रसंकाशमारुरोह यदृच्छया ॥ २-७-१

उत्तमेनाभिसंयुक्ता हर्षेणार्थपरा सती । राममाता धनं किं नु जनेभ्यः सम्प्रयच्छति । २-७-८

jñātidāsī yato jātā kaikeyyā tu sahoṣitā ।

prāsādān candrasaṅkāśamāruroha yadṛcchayā ॥ 2-7-1

uttamenābhisanīyuktā harṣeṇārthaparā satī ।

rāmamātā dhanam kiṁ nu janebhyaḥ samprayacchati । 2-7-8

It seems that when Kaikeyi, second queen, mother of Bharata, was married to Dasharatha, many things came along with her as dowry. One of the things from the Kekayaraja kingdom was Manthara, a hunchback woman who had been serving Kaikeyi since the princess's childhood. Manthara would talk to Kaikeyi as a mother would talk to its child. Manthara, unfortunate and from an unknown birthplace, was by chance this day on the roof of the royal palace made of marble white as the moon. She had gone to the upper terrace. The Ramayana reaches a turning point here. From the rooftop, Manthara saw all the activity and heard the clamor and she wondered what was going on. Had Dasharatha won a new kingdom or what? Going back into the palace, she found that Rama's mother, Queen Kausalya, was giving away many fine things as gifts to people. Manthara thought, "This Kausalya loves wealth, how can she be happy giving away these things? How can this be right?" Manthara came to know that on the following day Rama was going to be installed as Prince Regent by his father, Dasharatha. This made Manthara furious.

श्वः पुष्येण जितक्रोधं यौवराज्येन चानधम् । राजा दशरथो राममभिषेक्ता हि राघवम् ॥ २-७-११

उत्तिष्ठ मूढे किं शेषे भयं त्वामभिवर्तते । उपप्लुतमघौघेन नात्मानमवबुध्यसे ॥ २-७-१४

अनिष्टे सुभगाकारे सौभाग्येन विकल्थसे । चलं हि तव सौभाग्यं नद्याः स्रोत इवोष्णगे ॥ २-७-१५

एवमुक्ता तु कैकेयी रुष्टया परुषं वचः । कुब्जया पापदर्शिन्या विषादमग्मत् परम् ॥ २-७-१६
 अक्षयं सुमहद् देवि प्रवृत्तं त्वद्विनाशनम् । रामं दशरथो राजा यौवराज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यति ॥ २-७-२०
 तव दुःखेन कैकेयि मम दुःखं महद् भवेत् । त्वद्वृद्धौ मम वृद्धिश्च भवेदिह न संशयः ॥ २-७-२२
 नराधिपकुले जाता महिषी त्वं महीपतेः । उग्रत्वं राजधर्माणां कथं देवि न बुध्यसे ॥ २-७-२३
 धर्मवादी शठो भर्ता श्लक्ष्णवादी च दारुणः । शुद्धभावे न जानीषे तेनैवमतिसंधिता ॥ २-७-२४
 उपस्थितः प्रयुञ्जानस्त्वयि सान्त्वमनर्थकम् । अर्थेनैवाद्य ते भर्ता कौसल्यां योजयिष्यति ॥ २-७-२५

śvaḥ puṣyena jitakrodham yauvarājyena cānadam |
rājā daśaratho rāmamabhiṣektā hi rāghavam || 2-7-11
uttiṣṭha mūdhe kiṁ śeṣe bhayaṁ tvāmabhivartate |
upaplutamaghaughena nātmānamavabudhyase || 2-7-14
aniṣṭe subhagākāre saubhāgyena vikatthase |
calaṁ hi tava saubhāgyaṁ nadyāḥ srota ivoṣṇage || 2-7-15
evamuktā tu kaikeyī ruṣṭayā paruṣaṁ vacaḥ |
kubjayā pāpadarśinyā viśādamagmat param || 2-7-16
akṣayaṁ sumahad devi pravṛttam tvadvināśanam |
rāmaṁ daśaratho rājā yauvarājye'bhīṣekṣyati || 2-7-20
tava duḥkhena kaikeyi mama duḥkhaṁ mahad bhavet |
tvadvṛddhau mama vṛddhiśca bhavediha na saṁśayaḥ || 2-7-22
narādhipakule jātā mahiṣī tvam mahīpateḥ |
ugratvaṁ rājadharmāṇāṁ katham devi na budhyase || 2-7-23
dharmavādī śaṭho bhartā ślakṣṇavādī ca dāruṇaḥ |
śuddhabhāve na jāniṣe tenaivamatisandhitā || 2-7-24
upasthitaḥ prayuñjānastvayi sāntvamanarthakam |
arthenaivādya te bhartā kausalyāṁ yojayiṣyati || 2-7-25

Manthara immediately went to Kaikeyi's wing of the palace and found her mistress in her usual cheerful mood. Manthara, selfish and insecure, told Kaikeyi, "Hey, deluded one, get up. Don't you recognize the misfortune headed your way? Do you not know the sorrows in store for you? Like a river in a searing desert, all your *sukhas* are going to evaporate. All your riches and your status are going to disappear." Then Manthara drew Kaikeyi into her twisted scheme. "O queen, your destruction is afoot. Tomorrow Rama will become Prince Regent, and as a result, you will be sorry. That means I will be unhappy. I am already unhappy be-

cause you are happy. Your welfare is my welfare. By birth you are a princess, and it is not by chance you are a queen. You were not just plucked, wandering in some forest, by a lonesome king. You married an emperor, not a commoner. I thought you had the wiles of a queen. How can you forget the disciplines and diplomacy of the *dharmarājas*? You must know the politics of a royal palace. Your husband talks of *dharma*, but in truth he is deceitful. Do you see what he has done? He sends our Bharata away and immediately installs Rama as successor to his throne. It is very clear to me what he is up to. He wants to humiliate you. Now it is Kausalya, the other woman, who is going to be happy.” Manthara kept picking at the weakness that is there in every person. She was very clever and kept on touching the sensitivity.

रामे वा भरते वाहं विशेषं नोपलक्षये । तस्मात् तुष्टास्मि यद् राजा रामं राज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यति ॥ २-७-३५

rāme vā bharate vāhaṁ viśeṣaṁ nopalakṣaye ।

tasmāt tuṣṭāsmi yad rājā rāmaṁ rājye'bhīṣekṣyati ॥ 2-7-35

Kaikeyi responded, “Manthara, what are you upset about? I am actually very happy. What has happened to you? Where is your usual wisdom? Rama is as dear to me as he is to Dasharatha and Kausalya. Rama will take care of all of us equally. Rama’s installation is a great glad news for me.” Obviously overjoyed at hearing the good news of Rama’s acceptance of the regency, Kaikeyi took a necklace from her own neck and said, “Here, take this as a gift, and I thank you for sharing the great news with me. Do not think like this and cast a shadow over such a special day. In Rama and Bharata I see no difference at all. Let Rama be the next king.”

To be continued...