

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

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बभूव भूयो भूतानां स्वयम्भूरिव सम्मतः । सर्वे वेदविदः शूराः सर्वे लोकहिते रताः ॥ १-१८-२५
सर्वे ज्ञानोपसम्पन्नाः सर्वे समुदिता गुणैः । तेषामपि महातेजा रामः सत्यपराक्रमः ॥ १-१८-२६
इष्टः सर्वस्य लोकस्य शशाङ्क इव निर्मलः । गजस्कन्धेऽश्वपृष्ठे च रथचर्यासु सम्मतः ॥ १-१८-२७
धनुर्वेदे च निरतः पितुः शुश्रूषणे रतः । बाल्यात् प्रभृति सुस्निग्धो लक्ष्मणो लक्स्मिर्वर्धनः ॥ १-१८-२८
रामस्य लोकरामस्य भ्रातुर्ज्येष्ठस्य नित्यशः । सर्वं प्रियं करस्तस्य रामस्यापि शरीरतः ॥ १-१८-२९
लक्ष्मणो लक्ष्मिसम्पन्नो बहिःप्राण इवापरः । न च तेन विना निद्रां लभते पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १-१८-३०
मृष्टमन्नमुपानीतमश्नाति नहि तं विना । यदा हि ह्यमारूढो मृगयां याति राघवः ॥ १-१८-३१
अथैनं पृष्ठतोऽभ्येति सधनुः परिपालयन् । भरतस्यापि शत्रुघ्नो लक्ष्मणावरजो हि सः ॥ १-१८-३२
प्राणैः प्रियतरो नित्यं तस्य चासीत् तथा प्रियः । स चतुर्भिर्महाभागैः पुत्रैर्दशरथः प्रियैः ॥ १-१८-३३

utsavaśca mahānāsīdayodhyāyām janākulaḥ |

rathyāśca janasambādhā naṭanartakasaṅkulāḥ || 1-18-18

gāyanaiśca virāviṅyo vādanaiśca tathāparaiḥ |

virejurvipulāstatra sarvaratnasamanvitāḥ || 1-18-19

pradeyāṁśca dadau rājā sūtamāgadhavandinām |

brāhmaṇebhyo dadau vittam godhanāni sahasraśaḥ || 1-18-20

atītyaikādaśāham tu nāmakarma tathākarot |

jyeṣṭham rāmaṁ mahātmānaṁ bharataṁ kaikayīsutam || 1-18-21

saumitriṁ lakṣmaṇamiti śatrughnamaparam tathā |

vasiṣṭhaḥ paramaprīto nāmāni kurute tadā || 1-18-22

brāhmaṇān bhojayāmāsa pauraṅjanapadānapi |

udadad brāhmaṇānām ca ratnaughamamalam bahu || 1-18-23
 teṣām janmakriyādīni sarvakarmāṇyakārayat |
 teṣām keturiva jyeṣṭho rāmo ratikarah pituḥ || 1-18-24
 babhūva bhūyo bhūtānām svayambhūriva sammataḥ |
 sarve vedavidah sūrāḥ sarve lokahite ratāḥ || 1-18-25
 sarve jñānopasampannāḥ sarve samuditā guṇaiḥ |
 teṣāmapi mahātejā rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ || 1-18-26
 iṣṭaḥ sarvasya lokasya śāsāṅka iva nirmalaḥ |
 gajaskandhe'śvaprṣṭhe ca rathacaryāsu sammataḥ || 1-18-27
 dhanurvede ca nirataḥ pituḥ śuśrūṣaṇe rataḥ |
 bālyāt prabhṛti susnigdho lakṣmaṇo laksmivardhanaḥ || 1-18-28
 rāmasya lokarāmasya bhrāturjyeṣṭhasya nityaśaḥ |
 sarvapriyakarastasya rāmasyāpi śarīrataḥ || 1-18-29
 lakṣmaṇo lakṣmisampanno bahiḥprāṇa ivāparaḥ |
 na ca tena vinā nidrām labhate puruṣottamaḥ || 1-18-30
 mṛṣṭamannamupānītamaśnāti nahi tam vinā |
 yadā hi hayamārūḍho mṛgayām yāti rāghavaḥ || 1-18-31
 athainam prṣṭhato'bhyeti sadhanuḥ paripālayan |
 bharatasyāpi śatruḡhno lakṣmaṇāvaraḡo hi saḥ || 1-18-32
 prāṇaiḥ priyataro nityam tasya cāsīt tathā priyaḥ |
 sa caturbirmahābhāḡaiḥ putrairdaśarathaḥ priyaiḥ || 1-18-33

The boys grew quickly and rapidly assimilated all that young nobles needed to learn of *sāstra* and *veda*. Lakshmana was inseparable from Rama, as if another *prāṇa*, the very breath of Rama. The boys excelled in the *dhanurveda*, the secondary *veda* that deals with weaponry, archery mainly. Ayurveda, dealing with health and long life, is the other secondary *veda*. All four boys were highly proficient in every one of the *vedas*. Lakshmana, blessed with all that is good that a man can hope to have, with all Lakshmi's blessings, was always in service to Rama, his elder brother. His devotion was unmatched. Rama would neither eat food nor sleep if Lakshmana were not around. The three younger brothers were all devoted to the great Rama.

बभूव परमप्रीतो देवैरिव पितामहः । ते यदा ज्ञानसम्पन्नाः सर्वे समुदिता गुणैः ॥ १-१८-३४

हीमन्तः कीर्तिमन्तश्च सर्वज्ञा दीर्घदर्शिनः । तेषामेवंप्रभावाणां सर्वेषां दीप्ततेजसाम् ॥ १-१८-३५

पिता दशरथो हृष्टो ब्रह्मा लोकाधिपो यथा । ते चापि मनुजव्याघ्रा वैदिकाध्ययने रताः ॥ १-१८-३६

babhūva paramaprīto devairiva pitāmahaḥ ।

te yadā jñānasampannāḥ sarve samuditā guṇaiḥ ॥ 1-18-34

hrīmantāḥ kīrtimantaśca sarvajñā dīrghadarśinaḥ ।

teṣāmevamprabhāvāṅām sarveṣāṁ dīptatejasām ॥ 1-18-35

pitā daśaratho hr̥ṣṭo brahmā lokādhipo yathā ।

te cāpi manujavyāghrā vaidikādhyayane ratāḥ ॥ 1-18-36

Just as Lakshmana shadowed Rama, Shatrughna followed his brother Bharata. What Lakshmana was to Rama, Shatrughna was to Bharata. The boys grew up very well. Dasharatha was greatly pleased seeing the boys growing and studying, filled with knowledge, blessed with all virtues, humble though deserving of all fame. People came from all quarters to see the sanctified foursome. Sages, those with the power to foretell, left their forest huts to come and see this promised Rama. Brahmaji watched and was satisfied. He patted himself on his own back, "Oh, what a good job I have done." Such a creation, his handiwork, the sun and stars and moon and earth and wind and water and life and knowledge, he saw that there was nothing worthwhile left to be desired. There was no miscalculation, everything working in harmony, everything interconnected, no random correspondence anywhere, all disciplines of knowledge interrelated, all forces connected to all other forces, a network well-knit, colorful, mirthful, and useful. "Me, God, did I do that?" Just as Brahmaji's glory became spread over creation, Dasharatha's heart and head exulted at his four sons who grew up free of pain and disease and anxiety.

By the age of sixteen, Rama was an accomplished, even extraordinary, person. One day, Vishvamitra came to the city of Ayodhya. Vishvamitra was a great sage who was known for both his anger and his *tapas*. In anger he would curse and thereby lose power. Then he would work, perform austerities, and again grow powerful. Vishvamitra was a typical legendary Vedic character. He was also a king. Once he happened to go to a forest for hunting. He and his entire retinue grew hungry. He spotted sage Vasishtha's hut and approached him for food.

Vashistha, without a blink, said, “Okay I will fix up lunch for you. How many hundreds of you are there? No problem, it is ready, please have them come on over.” Now, Vasishtha had a cow, a special cow, this *kāmadhenu*. It seems that whatever is desired by it’s master is given by that cow. It is a divine cow. The only requirement was that the one who asked for something be, as was Vasistha, a *brahmaṛṣi*, a *ṛṣi* who had the knowledge of *brahman*, one who, among all the *ṛṣis*, was contemplative, *sāttvika*, a *brāhmaṇa*, one no longer *rājasika*. Vishvamitra got wind of this unique cow, and of course, as a king, he wanted to be given the cow. Vasishtha said that Vishvamitra could take the cow, but he warned him that the cow would not behave.

“Oh, I will make him behave,” said King Vishvamitra. But it was no use. Though he repeatedly tried, the cow would neither move nor yield to Vishvamitra. The king grew angry, and out of his anger he decided to become a *brahmaṛṣi* and make the cow behave. He renounced his kingdom and went to the forest and began doing *tapas* to become a *brahmaṛṣi*. He became powerful all right, but over and over he would lose his temper and then lose the powers he had gained. We will see stories of these extraordinary powers. Eventually, Vishvamitra was accepted as a *rājaṛṣi*, a royal *ṛṣi*, a *rājasika ṛṣi*, but not a *brahmaṛṣi*. Some people would have called him anything though just to avoid an encounter with him. But Vishvamitra insisted, “Only Vasishtha should say that I am a *brahmaṛṣi*.” Vasishtha would never tell a lie, and he was not afraid of anybody. Over time, as Vasishtha became more and more subdued, he indicated that Vishvamitra was a *brahmaṛṣi*. After that, Vishvamitra relaxed somewhat, but he continued his pursuit of the various *siddhis* and powers.

यथा सदृशदारेषु पुत्रजन्माप्रजस्य वै । प्रणष्टस्य यथा लाभो यथा हर्षो महोदयः ॥ १-१८-५१

तथैवागमनं मन्ये स्वागतं ते महामुने । कं च ते परमं कामं करोमि किमु हर्षितः ॥ १-१८-५२

पात्रभूतोऽसि मे ब्रह्मन् दिष्ट्या प्राप्तोऽसि मानद । अद्य मे सफलं जन्म जीवितं च सुजीवितम् ॥ १-१८-५३

यस्मादऽ विप्रेन्द्रमद्राक्षं सुप्रभाता निशा मम । पूर्वं राजर्षिशब्देन तपसा द्योतितप्रभः ॥ १-१८-५४

ब्रह्मर्षित्वमनुप्राप्तः पूज्योऽसि बहुधा मया । तद्द्भुतमभूदऽ विप्र पवित्रं परमं मम ॥ १-१८-५५

शुभक्षेत्रगतश्चाहं तव संदर्शनात् प्रभो । ब्रूहि यत् प्रार्थितं तुभ्यं कार्यमागमनं प्रति ॥ १-१८-५६
इच्छाम्यनुगृहीतोऽहं त्वदर्थपरिवृद्धये । कार्यस्य न विमर्शं च गन्तुमर्हसि सुव्रत ॥ १-१८-५७
कर्ता चाहमशेषेण दैवतं हि भवान् मम । मम चायमनुप्राप्तो महानभ्युदयो द्विज ।

तवागमनजः कृत्स्नो धर्मश्चानुत्तमो द्विज ॥ १-१८-५८

इति हृदयसुखं निशम्य वाक्यं श्रुतिसुखमात्मवता विनीतमुक्तम् ।

प्रथितगुणयशा गुणैर्विशिष्टः परमऋषिः परमं जगाम हर्षम् ॥ १-१८-५९

yathā sadṛśadāreṣu putrajanmāprajasya vai ।

pranaṣṭasya yathā lābho yathā harṣo mahodayaḥ ॥ 1-18-51

tathaiivāgamanam manye svāgataṁ te mahāmune ।

kaṁ ca te paramam kāmam karomi kimu harṣitaḥ ॥ 1-18-52

pātrabhūto'si me brahman diṣṭyā prāpto'si mānada ।

adya me saphalam janma jīvitam ca sujīvitam ॥ 1-18-53

yasmād viprendramadrākṣam suprabhātā niśā mama ।

pūrvam rājarṣiśabdena tapasā dyotitaprabhaḥ ॥ 1-18-54

brahmarṣitoamanuprāptaḥ pūjyo'si bahudhā mayā ।

tadadbhutamabhūd vipra pavitraṁ paramam mama ॥ 1-18-55

śubhakṣetragataścāham tava sandarśanāt prabho ।

brūhi yat prārthitam tubhyam kāryamāgamanam prati ॥ 1-18-56

icchāmyanugṛhīto'ham tvadarthaparivṛddhaye ।

kāryasya na vimarśam ca gantumarhasi suvrata ॥ 1-18-57

kartā cāhamaśeṣeṇa daivatam hi bhavān mama ।

mama cāyamanuprāpto mahānabhyudayo dvija ।

tavāgamanajaḥ kṛtsno dharmāścānuttamo dvija ॥ 1-18-58

iti hrdayasukham niśamya vākyam śrutisukhamātmavatā vinītamuktam ।

prathitaguṇayaśā guṇairviśiṣṭaḥ paramarṣiḥ paramam jagāma harṣam ॥ 1-18-59

Vishvamitra came to the gates of Ayodhya and told the gatekeepers to inform the king that Vishvamitra had come. Everybody knew Vishvamitra's name, and the keepers ran to Dasharatha. Dasharatha hurried to the gate with all the ministers and received the great ṛṣi.

To be continued...