

7. Ramayana In Your Heart

The vehicle of human life is drawn on two wheels by the senses, which are driven by the intellect, with discrimination and detachment as the reins, the two wheels being time and action (*kala* and *karma*). The spokes of the wheel are the rules of righteousness (*dharma*), bound by the rim of love (*prema*). The Self is the rider, and it will not come to harm if the axle is truth (*sathya*) and the goal is (*santhi*).

Rama, whose birthday, Ramanavami, you are celebrating today was the exponent of the means of saving the Self in this perilous journey from birth to birthlessness. Rama is the embodiment of *dharma*; that is why he was able to re-establish *dharma*. Today is sacred because you get the chance to recapitulate the Glory of God and His relationship with Humanity. As a matter of fact, if you go deeper into the *Ramayana*, you will find that Rama is the universal *Atma*, the *Atma* in every being. He did not come down to kill the demon ruler Ravana; he is not the son of Dasaratha or of Kausalya; nor is He the husband of Sita, weeping for her loss and gladdened by reunion.

On the day when Rama was crowned Emperor at Ayodhya, every personage got some present or other before leaving the city. Hanuman alone refused any material gift. He asked Rama to explain to him the mystery of His Life, which he had failed to understand in spite of the length and loyalty of his service. Rama then asked Sita to slake the thirst of Hanuman and reveal to him the secret of their careers. Sita announced that she was primal nature (*mula prakriti*), the Energy that agitates in all matter (the *maya sakthi*), that transforms and transmutes it into all this variety that binds and blinds. The *Ramayana*, she said, was nothing but the play she designed.

Sweetness of Ramayana cannot be described

Rama is the eternal, unchanging Spirit (*Purusha*). The *Atma* in every being is Rama; hence the name *Atma-Rama*. Rama is eternal, so the Rama mantra is said to have been taken by Siva Himself. Rama means that which showers Bliss (*Ananda*), that is all. Now, what can give greater Bliss than the *Atma*? Rama is Bliss, and He is *AtmaRama*, the Bliss in your Inner Consciousness. You can understand the *Ramayana* only if you keep this aspect in view.

Orange has a form and a name; when you squeeze it and take the juice, the form is gone and the name, orange, is also gone. Only the taste remains. The sweetness, the flavour, the essence — only these are experienced. It cannot be exactly described. It is beyond any vocabulary. Hanuman understood from Sita the formless, nameless, sweetness of Rama.

Rama, the Spirit (*Purusha*), accepts nature (*prakriti*), Sita, and enacts the play, *Ramayana*. Sita is Consciousness, for nature or illusion (*maya*) activates the Pure Existence of Brahman. Now see what happens! Knowledge of Supreme Reality is lost, and Rama wanders about in the jungle, wailing for Her. Of course, Lakshmana or mind is always with Him, for the mind is the instrument with which liberation has to be achieved. Vali (a monkey king) is the spirit of despair, and he has to be overcome with the help of discriminatory wisdom, viz., Sugriva, who is Vali's brother.

Ramayana is gone through in everyone's life

You see, it is discrimination that sends emissaries to the various corners to discover where Knowledge of

Supreme Reality is available. Hanuman is Courage. Courage won through unflinching faith — that alone can penetrate the darkness and bring the good news of the dawn.

Then Rama crosses the sea of illusion; He destroys the demon of the emotional equality (*rajoguna*), namely Ravana, and the demon of inertia (*thamoguna*), namely Kumbhakarna (Ravana's brother), and installs goodness (*sathwaguna*), Vibhishana (Ravana's brother), on the throne. After this, Rama meets and receives Sita, who has now become Knowledge derived from experience (*Anubhavajnana*), not merely Knowledge of Supreme Reality (*Brahmajnana*). That is represented by the coronation.

The *Ramayana* is therefore not a story that had an end. In each person's life, a *Ramayana* is being gone through: in the three qualities (*gunas*), the senses, the search, and the spiritual practices.

Rama is the son of Dasaratha — he of the ten chariots. What do you think are these ten chariots? They are the senses: the five sense organs of action and the five organs of perception. Truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharm*a), peace (*santhi*), and love (*prema*) are the four sons — Rama is truth, Bharatha is righteousness, Lakshmana is love, and Satrugna is peace.

Take as your ideals these great characters depicted in the *Ramayana*. You will see how your life is filled with peace and joy if only you dwell with these ideals. The *Ramayana* in the heart is to be experienced, not investigated as a mental phenomenon. As you go on reading and ruminating, the inner meaning will flash on you when the mind is cleansed by the elevating ideas therein. Do not exaggerate the importance of things that have but material utility; they fade even while you grasp them by the hand.

Search for being (*sat*) — that which suffers no change. Search for the state of consciousness (*chit*), which is unaffected by gusts of passion, which is pure, which is free from egoism or the desire to possess. Only then can you experience the light and illumine the path for others. Search for bliss (*ananda*), the bliss that emanates from love with no blemish of attachment. Be like bees hovering on the flower of the glory of the Lord, sucking the sweet nectar of grace, silently and joyfully.

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You do not wait with folded hands for the cup of coffee to cool down to the required warmth; you ask for an extra cup and you start pouring the coffee from one cup to the other, is it not? The same anxiety, the same practice has to be shown in spiritual matters also, to take in the beverage of divine grace.

Sathya Sai Baba