

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirty fourth part of the serial article, continuation from May 2024 newsletter.

धर्मज्ञो गुणवान् दान्तः कृतज्ञः सत्यवाञ्छुचिः । रामो राजसुतो ज्येष्ठो यौवराज्यमतोऽर्हति ॥ २-८-१४
भ्रातृन् भृत्यांश्च दीर्घायुः पितृवत् पालयिष्यति । संतप्यसे कथं कुब्जे श्रुत्वा रामाभिषेचनम् ॥ २-८-१५
भरतश्चापि रामस्य ध्रुवं वर्षशतात् परम् । पितृपैतामहं राज्यमवाप्स्यति नरर्षभः ॥ २-८-१६
सा त्वमभ्युदये प्राप्ते दह्यमानेव मन्थरे । भविष्यति च कल्याणे किमिदं परितप्यसे ॥ २-८-१७

dharmajño guṇavān dāntaḥ kṛtajñaḥ satyavañchuciḥ |
rāmo rājñasuto jyeṣṭho yauvarājyamato'rhati || 2-8-14
bhrātṛn bhrtyāṁśca dīrghāyuh pitṛvat pālayiṣyati |
santapyase katham kubje śrutvā rāmābhiṣecanam || 2-8-15
bharataścāpi rāmasya dhruvaṁ varṣaśatāt param |
pitṛpaitāmahaṁ rājyamavāpsyati nararṣabhaḥ || 2-8-16
sā tvamabhyudaye prāpte dahyamāneva manthare |
bhaviṣyati ca kalyāṇe kimidaṁ paritapyase || 2-8-17

With these words of incitement and insult, Manthara pressed home her point. Still Kaikeyi said, “Rama is *dharmavān*; he will never do a wrong thing. He is a clean person, first-born son of the king, fit to be Prince Regent. Let this anger and spite go. Bharata in his turn will become king by his own right. This is how it should be. Tomorrow is a very special day, do not let all this bitterness spoil it for you. Enjoy the installation of Rama and the celebration.”

ध्रुवं तु भरतं रामः प्राप्य राज्यमकण्टकम् । देशान्तरं नाययिता लोकान्तरमथापि वा ॥ २-८-२७
तस्माद् राजगृहादेव वनं गच्छतु राघवः । एतद्धि रोचते मह्यं भृशं चापि हितं तव ॥ २-८-३३
dhruvaṁ tu bhārataṁ rāmaḥ prāpya rājyamakāṅṭakam |
deśāntaraṁ nāyayitā lokāntaramathāpi vā || 2-8-27
tasmād rājagrāhādeva vanaṁ gacchatu rāghavaḥ |
etaddhi rocate mahyaṁ bhṛśaṁ cāpi hitaṁ tava || 2-8-33

But Manthara was not convinced, “You do not see at all. I do not know if I should laugh at you or weep for you. Kausalya, the other woman, is going to rejoice and for that you want to give me a gift. I do not see the reasoning there. How can you fail to see what is in store for you? What will happen when Bharata wants

to return and Rama will not accept him? He won't, you know. Rama is against Bharata. You are going to lose your son. Somehow you must get Rama sent to the forest before Rama sends Bharata to the forest. That is what I think best."

एवमुक्ता तु कैकेयी क्रोधेन ज्वलितानना । दीर्घमुष्णं विनिःश्वस्य मन्थरामिदमब्रवीत् ॥ २-९-१

अद्य राममितः क्षिप्रं वनं प्रस्थापयाम्यहम् । यौवराज्ये च भरतं विश्रमेवाभिषेचये ॥ २-९-२

evamuktā tu kaikeyī krodhena jvalitānanā ।

dīrghamuṣṇaṁ viniḥśvasya mantharāmidamabravīt ॥ 2-9-1

adya rāmamitaḥ kṣipraṁ vanaṁ prasthāpayāmyaham ।

yauvarājye ca bharataṁ kśipramevābhiṣecaye ॥ 2-9-2

At the thought of Bharata being sent to the forest, at the thought of losing her son, Kaikeyi changed her mind. Once something like this is started it cannot be stopped. Manthara made Kaikeyi understand that if she was going to act she had to do it now. Kaikeyi's mind became fearful and spun around, "Today itself I will see that it is Rama who is sent to the forest. Before the installation of Rama I will see that it is done. Bharata will be the Prince Regent as soon as he comes back. Manthara, help me figure out how to do this."

नह्यतिक्रमितुं शक्तस्तव वाक्यं महीपतिः । मन्दस्वभावे बुध्यस्व सौभाग्यबलमात्मनः ॥ २-९-२६

nahyatikramitum śaktastava vākyaṁ mahīpatiḥ ।

mandasvabhāve budhyasva saubhāgyabalamātmanaḥ ॥ 2-9-26

Manthara had a plan, "Kaikeyi, remember when Dasharatha went to the Dandaka forest to fight with the demon Shambara, Timidhvaja, who caused such a ruckus and was destroying people? Dasharatha took his army with him. It was a major struggle, Lord Indra was there, and many people were lost. There was great magic involved. The cruel *rākṣasas* would steal away the injured warriors at night and do away with them. Even Dasharatha was attacked and injured, almost knocked unconscious, helpless, and it was you who lifted him away and put him in a safe place and healed him. Remember well. It was then that he gave you those two boons. For what you did he granted you two boons. He promised two boons to be encashed whenever you want. The time has come now. Encash these two boons. With Vasishtha and the others there, there is no way Dasharatha will be

able to swallow the word he has given. Oh, you sluggish thinking woman, take account of your welfare and the strength you do have. Your king cannot transgress those words, and you will make things right.”

पृथिव्यामसि कुब्जानामुत्तमा बुद्धिनिश्चये ॥ त्वमेव तु ममार्थेषु नित्ययुक्ता हितैषिणी ॥ २-९-३९
नाहं समवबुध्येयं कुब्जे राज्ञश्चिकीर्षितम् । सन्ति दुःसंस्थिताः कुब्जे वक्राः परमपापिकाः ॥ २-९-४०

*prthivyāmasi kubjānāmuttamā buddhiniścaye ॥
tvameva tu mamārtheṣu nityayuktā hitaiṣiṇī ॥ 2-9-39
nāhaṁ samavabudhyeyaṁ kubje rājñaścikīrṣitam ।
santi duḥsaṁsthitāḥ kubje vakrāḥ paramapāpikāḥ ॥ 2-9-40*

“Ahh,” said Kaikeyi, “this is a good plan. I will do it. I will do it all.” She set her mind. “There may be other sharp hunchbacks in the world, Manthara, but you are the sharpest among them. You are the only one who is always interested in my welfare. There is no one else like this. Usually the thinking of a hunchback is as crooked as its body, but you are the exception. You are exactly right in this. In your silken sari with your long gnarly flat feet and gangly legs you are really wonderful. Under your delightful massive hunch there must be nothing but tricks and schemes for our well-being.” Kaikeyi gave her a pat on her hunchback.

Manthara spoke up, “Hey, do not just sit there. Dasharatha will come tonight to tell you what is going to happen and that is your chance. You must take off this fine dress and put on something disheveled, muss up your hair a bit and throw aside all your jewelry. Look as though some great calamity has occurred. Wait in a different room in your wing; make him find you; you should be elsewhere. Lie on the ground, and when you hear him coming start weeping and wailing. Let him hear you before he sees you. Remember, when you ask him to encash your boons, he will offer kingdoms and riches instead. He will proffer everything else. But never budge an inch. Remember my words: You will be Kausalya’s servant and be made to toe her line. Bharata will be in the forest where you will never see him again.”

Swelling with indignation, Kaikeyi said, “Today you will see what Kaikeyi is capable of. Dasharatha, this old man, will be held to his words. He cannot get

away with this. If I fail, I will not dress up or eat, I will not wear make-up or jewelry, I will not touch flowers or food. I will just die.” You know how a delightful deep blue-black night sky that glitters with bright stars becomes dark and shadowed and lifeless when covered by a large cloud? This beautiful woman, the wife of the king, with this clouding of her mind, became dark and dense and threatening.

प्रियार्हा प्रियमाख्यातुं विवेशान्तःपुरं वशी । स कैकेय्या गृहं श्रेष्ठं प्रविवेश महायशाः ॥ २-१०-११

न तेऽहमभिजानामि क्रोधमात्मनि संश्रितम् । देवि केनाभियुक्तसि केन वासि विमानिता ॥ २-१०-२८

यदिदं मम दुःखाय शेषे कल्याणि पांसुषु । भूमौ शेषे किमर्थं त्वं मयि कल्याणचेतसि ॥ २-१०-२९

priyārḥāṁ priyamākhyātum viveśāntaḥpuram vaśī ।

sa kaikeyyā gr̥ham śreṣṭham praviveśa mahāyāśāḥ ॥ 2-10-11

na te'hamabhijānāmi krodhamātmani saṁśritam ।

devi kenābhīyuktāsi kena vāsi vimānitā ॥ 2-10-28

yadidaṁ mama duḥkhāya śeṣe klyāṇi pāṁsuṣu ।

bhūmau śeṣe kimarthaṁ tvaṁ mayi kalyāṇacetasi ॥ 2-10-29

Dasharatha had Sumantra, his minister and aide, confirm that all the arrangements for the next day's ceremony and celebration had been made. Then, later, he came to Kaikeyi's well-appointed apartments. He could not find her at first, and he searched around until he was told where she was in the complex. He came upon her in a room where he had never before seen her. He had never seen her in such a condition. “What has upset you? What happened to you? Did someone do or say something to you? Are you angry with me? Did I do something wrong? To see you like this is very hard on me. Tell me what I can do to help. You know that I would do anything for you. I can make a rich man poor and I can make a poor man rich. I can pardon any wrong-doer and I can punish anyone. Tell me what to do for you. I would give you the kingdoms of Tamil Nad, the Panjab, the Deccan, the Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Kashi, Kosala, all the realm. Oh, sweetheart, what's wrong? Tell me what you want, just stop crying, please.”

To be continued...