

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirty ninth part of the serial article, continuation from Oct 2024 newsletter.

यं यान्तमनुयाति स्म चतुरङ्गबलं महत् । तमेकं सीतया सार्धमनुयाति स्म लक्ष्मणः ॥ २-३३-६
ऐश्वर्यस्य रसज्ञः सन् कामानां चाकरो महान् । नेच्छत्येवानृतं कर्तुं वचनं धर्मगौरवात् ॥ २-३३-७
या न शक्या पुरा द्रष्टुं भूतैराकाशगैरपि । तामद्य सीतां पश्यन्ति राजमार्गगता जनाः ॥ २-३३-८
अङ्गरागोचितां सीतां रक्तचन्दनसेविनीम् । वर्षमुष्णं च शीतं च नेष्यत्याशु विवर्णताम् ॥ २-३३-९
अद्य नूनं दशरथः सत्त्वमाविश्य भाषते । नहि राजा प्रियं पुत्रं विवासयितुमर्हति ॥ २-३३-१०
निर्गुणस्यापि पुत्रस्य कथं स्याद् विनिवासनम् । किं पुनर्यस्य लोकोऽयं जितो वृत्तेन केवलम् ॥ २-३३-११
आनृशंस्यमनुक्रोशः श्रुतं शीलं दमः शमः । राघवं शोभयन्त्येते षड् गुणाः पुरुषर्षभम् ॥ २-३३-१२

yaṁ yāntamanuyāti sma caturaṅgabalāṁ mahat |
tamekaṁ sītayā sārddhamanuyāti sma lakṣmaṇaḥ || 2-33-6
aiśvaryaśya rasajñāḥ san kāmānāṁ cākaro mahān |
necchatyevānṛtaṁ kartuṁ vacanaṁ dharmagauravāt || 2-33-7
yā na śakyā purā draṣṭuṁ bhūtairākāśagairapi |
tāmadya sītāṁ paśyanti rājamārgagatā janāḥ || 2-33-8
aṅgarāgocitāṁ sītāṁ raktacandanasevinīm |
varṣamuṣṇaṁ ca sītāṁ ca neṣyatyāśu vīvarṇatām || 2-33-9
adya nūnaṁ daśarathaḥ sattvamāviśya bhāṣate |
nahi rājā priyaṁ putraṁ vivāsayitumarhati || 2-33-10
nirguṇasyāpi putrasya kathaṁ syād vinivāsanam |
kiṁ punaryasya loko'yaṁ jito vṛttena kevalam || 2-33-11
ānṛśaṁsyamanukrośaḥ śrutaṁ śīlāṁ damaḥ śamaḥ |
rāghavaṁ śobhayantyyete ṣaḍ guṇāḥ puruṣarṣabham || 2-33-12

Turning to Sumantra, the king's man, Rama said, "We must go. Please tell Dasharatha that we will come to him and take his blessings now as we go." To reach Dasharatha's palace, Rama and Sita walked through the streets of Ayodhya, streets crowded with the populace straining to get a glimpse of their hero. Sita had stayed in Rama's palace for most of the time since her arrival. Even the birds above has not seen her. This was the first time the citizens could see the prince and princess alone together. They loved seeing the beautiful Sita walking the streets next to their beloved Rama.

अस्मत्त्यक्तं प्रपद्यन्तु सेव्यमानं त्यजन्तु च । तृणमांसफलादानां देशं व्यालमृगद्विजम् ॥ २-३३-२४

asmattyaktam prapadyantu sevyamānam tyajantu ca ।

tṛṇamāṁsaphalādānām deśam vyālamṛgadvijam ॥ 2-33-24

Rama was always accompanied wherever he went by representatives of the four-fold armed forces. The procession of royalty, military, sages and attendants led by the blessed couple stirred the hearts of the populace as they passed. Waves of questions surged through the crowds that lined the streets, “How could Dasha-ratha send Rama away? Even a bad son would not be banished to the forest. What reason could there be for this? It seems rash.” “Rama has endeared himself to all of us and shown his capacity and willingness to be our next king, what could have happened? Possessed of the six-fold *guṇas* - harmless, compassion, learning, righteous conduct, self-control, mindfulness – all that qualifies a king, how can our Rama be sent away? What stroke of destiny is this?” “Rama is going, Lakshmana is going, Sita is going, we should go. We cannot be ourselves without our Rama. Kaikeyi and Bharata can stay here, and it will all be desolate. No one will cultivate the fields. Those who stay can eat roots and meat and whatever is here. They will have to be satisfied with snakes and deer as their servants. We will go to the forest and make that a worthy home. We have no reason to stay here.” Rama heard all this but did not react.

King Dasharatha gathered the royal family. He wanted all to hear what he had to say to his son, mighty Rama. Dasharatha knew that not even the gods could stop what had now started. Rama had given his word and it was over. That value is highlighted here and highlighted by Rama’s attitude. Holding forth with the spirit of *dharma*, and without concern for the immediate consequences, is the way this value is brought to focus. In much the same way, negative values are highlighted to reveal the costs of *adharma*. Here, listening to someone who has been swayed by selfish interests has brought tumult to the kingdom. Kaikeyi, a good person, had been convinced by the words of selfish Manthara, and there were severe results. Everyone has both virtue and weakness, and those can be played upon by others with cunning and wile. Kaikeyi had been turned into a vicious serpent who preyed upon the king’s weakness.

To be continued...