

**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

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नाहमर्थपरो देवि लोकमावस्तुमुत्सहे । विद्धि मामृषिभिस्तुल्यं विमलं धर्ममास्थितम् ॥ २-१९-२०  
यत् तत्रभवतः किञ्चिच्छक्यं कर्तुं प्रियं मया । प्राणानपि परित्यज्य सर्वथा कृतमेव तत् ॥ २-१९-२१  
सर्वोऽप्यभिजनः श्रीमाञ् श्रीमतः सत्यवादिनः । नालक्षयत् रामस्य किञ्चिदाकारमानने ॥ २-१९-३६

*nāhamarthaparo devi lokamāvastumutsahe |*

*viddhi māmṛṣibhistulyaṁ vimalaṁ dharmamāsthitam || 2-19-20*

*yat tatrabhavataḥ kiñcicchakyaṁ kartuṁ priyaṁ mayā |*

*prāṇānapi parityajya sarvathā kṛtameva tat || 2-19-21*

*sarvo'pyabhijanaḥ śrīmāñ śrīmataḥ satyavādinaḥ |*

*nālakṣayat rāmasya kiñcidākāramānane || 2-19-36*

Rama said, “Never forget, I seek neither wealth nor comfort. Neither do I seek to conquer worlds. Understand me, I am the equal of the *ṛṣis* and the forest is the right place for me. I am pure and committed to *dharma*. Nothing else is important to me. All you have asked of me is not a problem. I have not heard anything I object to. I ask to be given time to seek the permission of my mother and of Sita.” Without rancor or sense of mistreatment or abuse, without anger, he took leave of Kaikeyi. With that he walked out. No one who saw him then could see any change in his face. Still they thought Rama would that day be installed.

This kind of news will not rest. It began to spread and the ladies of the court all talked and soon the city was aflame with the news of what had come to pass. Rama was leaving Ayodhya. The joyous mood of the waiting city became quickly melancholy. The whole place changed. In her palace, Kausalya was given to her ritual life, spending time on her own in *pūjā*. She might have felt somewhat neglected by Dasharatha; Kaikeyi was certainly young and attractive. Kausalya was very glad that Rama had come to visit her on this auspicious morning. When Rama told her what his father wanted, what Kaikeyi had done, she was more than surprised. Rama asked for her blessings. He was prepared to head immediately for the forest. Hearing this, Kausalya was shaken, all her fears came out in words.

She mentioned being neglected by her husband, and she said that bearing and raising Rama was her greatest joy. She did not think it was correct that Rama would leave her. She could hear the voices of those who would mock her and deride her. She insisted she could not stay in Ayodhya for even one day if Rama did as he said he was going to. She implored Rama to find some way to get around this evil deed. She said it was not right that he should leave his aging father at this time.

Rama said to his mother, "There is no choice in this. I'll be back. You just stay here and enjoy your life of prayers. The time will go quickly. I will be fine in the forest; I love it there. No harm will come to me. You must stay here and pray to the gods that they may support me and all of us."

Lakshmana had come in. He had heard the whole story. He was all fired up and he butted in, "What are you talking about? This old man is getting senile. He can hardly think at all. How can he send Rama away? I will kill Dasharatha first. I will kill Kaikeyi. Let Bharata come and I will teach him a lesson. Whoever stands to fulfill this unworthy promise I will take down. What for do I have these weapons? I am no ordinary archer in the street. I am a *kṣatriya* and I will live by our code. Rama has done no harm to anyone; he bears ill will to none. He looks upon Kaikeyi as his own mother. What reason is there to stop what should be done? Do you think Lakshmana will stand here and take this nonsense?"

Calmly, Rama replied to his dear brother, "Lakshmana, what are you saying? That is not the way; that is not the way. There may be more here than meets the eye. You do not know what you are saying. Dasharatha is your father; if he says wrong things, that is not your concern? Nothing will happen to me in the forest. If he has chosen this, it is to be done. You will stay here and care for him. It is our duty to do as he says. Please settle down." Lakshmana flared up a few more times before Rama could cool him.

भर्तारं नानुवर्तेत सा च पापगतिर्भवेत् । भर्तुः शुश्रूषया नारी लभते स्वर्गमुत्तमम् ॥ २-२४-२६  
यम् पालयसि धर्मं त्वं प्रीत्या च नियमेन च । स वै राघवशार्दूल धर्मस्त्वामभिरक्षतु ॥ २-२५-३

येभ्यः प्रणमसे पुत्र चैत्येष्वायतनेषु च । ते च त्वामभिरक्षन्तु वने सह महर्षिभिः ॥ २-२५-४  
 यानि दत्तानि तेऽस्त्राणि विश्वामित्रेण धीमता । तानि त्वामभिरक्षन्तु गुणैः समुदितं सदा ॥ २-२५-५  
 पितृशुश्रूषया पुत्र मातृशुश्रूषया तथा । सत्येन च महाबाहो चिरं जीवाभिरक्षितः ॥ २-२५-६  
 समित्कुशपवित्राणि वेद्यश्चायतनानि च । स्थण्डिलानि च विप्राणां शैला वृक्षाः क्षुपा हृदाः  
 पतङ्गाः पन्नगाः सिंहास्त्वां रक्षन्तु नरोत्तम ॥ २-२५-७  
 स्वस्ति साध्याश्च विश्वे च मरुतश्च महर्षिभिः । स्वस्ति धाता विधाता च स्वस्ति पूषा भगोऽर्यमा २-२५-८  
 लोकपालाश्च ते सर्वे वासवप्रमुखास्वास्तथा । ऋतवः षट् च ते सर्वे मासाः संवत्सराः क्षपाः ॥ २-२५-९  
 दिनानि च मुहूर्ताश्च स्वस्ति कुर्वन्तु ते सदा । श्रुतिः स्मृतिश्च धर्मश्च पातु त्वां पुत्र सर्वतः ॥ २-२५-१०  
 सर्वलोकप्रभुर्ब्रह्मा भूतकर्तृ तथा र्षयः । ये च शेषाः सुरास्ते तु रक्षन्तु वनवासिनम् ॥ २-२५-२५  
 अरोगं सर्वसिद्धार्थमयोध्यां पुनरागतम् । पश्यामि त्वाम् सुखं वत्स संधितं राजवत्सु ॥ २-२५-४१  
 प्रणष्टदुःखसंकल्पा हर्षविद्योतितानना । द्रक्ष्यामि त्वां वनात् प्राप्तं पूर्णचन्द्रमिवोदितम् ॥ २-२५-४२

*bhartāraṁ nānuvarteta sā ca pāpagatirbhavet |*  
*bhartuḥ śuśrūṣayā nārī labhate svargamuttamam || 2-24-26*  
*yam pālayasi dharmāṁ tvāṁ prītyā ca niyameṇa ca |*  
*sa vai rāghavaśārdūla dharmastvāmabhirakṣatu || 2-25-3*  
*yebhyaḥ praṇamase putra caityeṣvāyataneṣu ca |*  
*te ca tvāmabhirakṣantu vane saha maharṣibhiḥ || 2-25-4*  
*yāni dattāni te'strāṇi viśvāmitreṇa dhīmatā |*  
*tāni tvāmabhirakṣantu guṇaiḥ samuditaṁ sadā || 2-25-5*  
*pitṛśuśrūṣayā putra mātṛśuśrūṣayā tathā |*  
*satyena ca mahābāho ciraṁ jīvābhirakṣitaḥ || 2-25-6*  
*samitkuśapavitrāṇi vedyāścāyatanāni ca |*  
*sthaṅḍilāni ca viprāṇāṁ śailā vṛkṣāḥ kṣupā hradāḥ*  
*pataṅgāḥ pannaḡāḥ siṁhāstvām rakṣantu narottama || 2-25-7*  
*svasti sādhyāśca viśve ca marutaśca maharṣibhiḥ |*  
*svasti dhātā vidhātā ca svasti pūṣā bhago'ryamā 2-25-8*  
*lokapālāśca te sarve vāsavapramukhāsvāstathā |*  
*ṛtavaḥ ṣaṭ ca te sarve māsāḥ saṁvatsarāḥ kṣapāḥ || 2-25-9*  
*dināni ca muhūrtāśca svasti kurvantu te sadā |*  
*śrutiḥ smṛtiśca dharmāśca pātu tvāṁ putra sarvataḥ || 2-25-10*  
*sarvalokaprabhurbrahmā bhūtakarṭṛ tathārṣayaḥ |*  
*ye ca śeṣāḥ surāste tu rakṣantu vanavāsinam || 2-25-25*  
*arogaṁ sarvasiddhārthamayodhyāṁ punarāgatam |*  
*paśyāmi tvāṁ sukhāṁ vatsa sandhitaṁ rājavartmasu || 2-25-41*  
*praṇaṣṭaduḥkhasaṅkalpā harṣavidyotitānanā |*  
*drakṣyāmi tvāṁ vanāt prāptaṁ pūrṇacandramivooditam || 2-25-42*

Kausalya too gradually resigned herself to Rama's reassuring words. She

knew Rama as only a mother could, and she knew she could not sway him in this. At last she somehow managed to tell him, “Go, now go, but come back safely. That will bring joy to my heart. Come back and be with me then.” She offered her blessings, “May that very *dharma* which firmly guides you now protect you. May the gods you have propitiated and venerated, the deities of your rituals, protect you. May the *ṛṣis* of the forest protect you. May the *āstras*, all the weapons that were given to you, protect and not fail to reach their mark. May your gentle and consistent service to your father and mother and your unyielding commitment to truth protect you. Let all your good will and good deeds not go unrewarded. May mountains and trees, ponds and streams, protect you. May lions and the other beasts of the jungle protect you. Dear son, just as the full moon returns to the night sky, I will see you again on the royal road.” She covered all that is in creation and all that is beyond. Offering *pūjā* and flowers to her *devatā*, she became silent. Rama encircled her with his steps and prostrated to her and took leave of her.

Now Rama had to convince Sita. He went to her and spoke to her, “Now, Sita, this is the thing.” She had no idea what was going on other than the installation of her husband as Prince Regent. Instead of taking her to the assembly hall as she expected, Rama told her she was to stay in Ayodhya while he lived in the forest for fourteen years, all due to Kaikeyi’s boon and his father’s word. He asked her to respect Bharata and his kingship and Kaikeyi. He asked her to serve his mother and father, and never to extol or praise him, never to talk in any way that demeaned Bharata or the family. He asked her to win their cooperation and love by her kindness.

*To be continued...*