

MORAL VALUES OF RAMAYANA AND ITS UTILITY IN THE PRESENT DAY CONTEXT

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Abstract

The most popular epic of India is the Ramayana which is also known as Adikavya. The whole Ramayana is divided into seven kandas and in every kandas there are so many moral values scattered which is very much useful in our day to day life. People says that old is gold, this very proverb is always applicable with the Ramayana, so in this paper a humble attempt to study that values of life in a concise manner.

Keyword : Valmiki, Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksa

Most popular epic and ornate poetry i.e. Sri Mad Valmiki Ramayana starts with the enquiry of Valmiki with Sage Narada.

tapah svadhyaya niratam tapasvi vagvidamvaram/
naradam paripapraccha valmikirmunipungavam//

Hear valmiki's first question to narada is "ko nvasmin sampratam loke gunavan kah..." (1.1.2.). Who in this present world is possessed of good qualities? In the Stotra Ratna of Acarya Alavandara. Sriman Narayana is describes as "vasi vadanyah gunavan rjuh suci samasta kalyana gunamrtodadhih." Hear also the word gunavan is used to denote special quality along with other qualities.

There is a verse in the valmiki's Ramayana mahatmya, which said that with the help of the reading of Ramayana. One can attain caturbarga i.e. Dharama, Artha, kama and moksa.¹

¹ dharmartha kama moksanam hetubhutam mahaphalam /
apurbam punyaphaladam srnuddham susamahitah //(valmiki ramayanamahatmya.1.21)

The very word dharma in the first instance is allied to that of rta and satya which as a cosmic Principal; sustains the universe and as a moral Principal, enjoins the right path that man ought to follow. According to Ramayana one can enjoy his karamaphala in heaven and hell. There is a believe of transmigration in our society; Like transmigration the concept of moksha as the end and knowledge as the means there of found no place in the Ramayana. The trivarga i.e. dharma artha and kama are the primary moral concept of human life. In the fifth cantos of the Valakanda this is clearly mentioned.² Dharma is not a simple term it is a generic term in which artha and kama participate. In the 6th cantos of the Valakanda it is mentioned that Dasaratha ruled over Ayodhya by performing trivarga just like Indra ruled over Amaravati.³ In the time of Dasaratha citizen of Ayodhya was full of wealth.⁴ All the citizens of Ayodhya were of a good moral character. Dasaratha is also compared with the good ruler Manu in the 6th canto of Valakanda. Such was the virtuous reign and such the greatness of king Dasaratha, but he had no son to continue his line, but after performing an Asvamedha, a horse sacrifice taking advice of sage Risyasringa he performed putriya or putra-kama-isti. As a result Dasaratha's three wives Kausalya, Kaikeya and Sumitra comparable to the Goddesses of Modesty, Prosperity and Fame; be born as four sons and kill Ravana. Among them Rama the elder son of Dasaratha was supreme in all respect. Rama marries Sita after break down the bow. When Rama said to Sita about His banishment and also coronation of Bharata She decided to go to forest with Rama. But when Rama said to her about the rigorous of forest life and not to go there then she said about the dharma of a wife like "That a woman cannot live without her husband is a dharma which Rama himself pointed out to her." In the 24th cantos of Ayodhya Kanda Rama says it to His mother to stay with His father Dasaratha and not to go with Him.⁵ Rama was a protector of truth, so when he listens from Kaikeyi about his banishment and it is also promise by His father then he decided to go forest without delay. Rama said to Dasaratha that He is not willing about kingdom, happiness or anything, His only aim that Dasaratha's truthfulness should be protected; a father is like a god, and it is as a divine command that father's word shall be

² dharmakamarthasahitam srotavya manusuyata // (valakanda-5.4(b))

³ tena satyabhisandhena trivargamanutisthata /
palita sa puri srestha indrenevamaravati // Ibid. 6.5

⁴ nalpasannicayah kascidasittasmin purottame /
kutumbo yo hyasiddhyartho'vagasca-dhana-dhanyavan // Ibid. 6.7

⁵ bhartaram nanubarteta sa ca papagatirbhabet /
bhartuh susrusaya nari labhate svargamuttamam // (ayodhyakanda 24.26)

obeyed by son. All this things shows the superior qualities, greatness and truthfulness of Rama. Rama was a model son, husband, brother, king, warrior and man.

Relation of Rama with his brother's form on interesting set of. At the time of exile Laksmana remained sleepless at night, acting faithfully as a servant and bodyguard. Considering that as the best path for his spiritual advancement. Bharata also expressed identical feelings when he condemned his mother. After hearing the whole theme from his mother Kaikeyi, Bharata said, "After my father's death and my brother Rama's exile what is the meaning of this kingdom." After that Bharata went to forest to convince Rama to return back to Ayodhya forever. At that time He said "Till he find Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, he will on peace, till he take Rama's feet on his head, he will have no peace, till he see his head wet with the coronation bath, he will have no peace." Bharata lived just like an ascetic, or ruled country in Rama's name, using Rama's Sandals to symbolize his presence in the city. Like Bharata Satrughna's attachment with Rama was equally strong. Satrughna the slayer of Lavana though raised up a beautiful city he was unable to leave separately from Rama and lastly he came to Ayodhya and prayed for permission to stay permanently in his company. The ideal brother and king Rama gave the reply and also said to him about the Ksatriya dharma and how to rule the kingdom. Rama faced several problems; He was reconciled to the loss of the Kingdom, his father, and also His wife Sita. Though He meeting enormous difficulties, he recovered his wife and became installed on the throne. But there arose a whisper of scandal. Rama then banish his wife again with two future heirs of Rama in her womb. Seeing all the qualities of Rama we may call that he was an embodiment of dharma. Through Rama who was an ideal Arya Valmiki presented the strange combination of a faithful and dutiful son, an affectionate brother, a loving husband and an ideal king. Laksmana and Bharata were so obedient that they represent ideal brothers while Sita is a dutiful wife. Hanuman and Bibhisana was the true devotee.

Ramayana reflects the greater simplicity of life among the eastern Aryas, and it shows absence of acquaintance with the Mlecchas, less reference to advanced States, absence of elaborate military tactic in the form of the Vyuhās, existence of small kingdoms, abundance of forests and forest life in the country. Along with this we also found some instance of generosity of Rama.

In Ayodhya kanda Rama reaches Shringaverapur ruled by Guha. Guha is a hunter and a boatman only. Guha welcomed Rama whole-heartedly and Sri Rama also well pleased with the reception, embraces Guha like a very intimate friend. In the Kamba Ramayana, Rama declares that though they have been only four brothers, after the meeting with Guha they have become five brothers. Rama also accepts the hospitality of very lowly status Sabari. Rama makes friendship with Vanara king Sugriva, which is also accepted by Rama as 6th brother. (Kamba Ramayana) He also makes friendship with Raksasa Vibhisana, brother of Ravana. Vibhisana is also recognized by Rama as 7th brother of them (Kamba Ramayana).

From the above discussion we may call that Sri Rama has taken the Avatara of a human being to exhibit exemplary qualities by practice.

Macdonell rightly Remarks, “Probably no work of world literature, secular in its origin has even produced so profound and influence on the life and thought of the people as the Ramayana”.⁶

With the assurance of Brahma to Valmiki about Ramayan's popularity, circulation and longevity I am going to conclude my paper.

yavat sthasyanti girayah saritasca mahitale /
tavat ramayana katha lokesu pracasisyati // adikanda 2, 36(b)-37(a)

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