

Chapter 01

CHAPTER 01

Rāmāyaṇa in Sanskrit Literature - A Brief Survey

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The title: *Rāmāyaṇam*

वेदवेद्ये परे पुंसि जाते दशरथात्मजे ।

वेदः प्राचेतसादासीत् साक्षाद् रामायणात्मना ॥

(रामायणतिलक -मङ्गलश्लोकः ३)

The Supreme Person whom the Vedas invoke is Śrī Rāma Himself, depicted in the *Rāmāyaṇama*, when Śrī Rāma incarnates as the son of king Daśaratha, the Vedas themselves manifest in the form of *Rāmāyaṇama* from (the mouth of) sage Vālmīki.

The *Rāmāyaṇam* is a compounded word constituting 02 words *Rāma* and *ayanam*. Bhānuji Dikṣita derives the name *Rāma* as he who delights or is delighted, rejoices or makes (others) happy, pleases or is pleased, enjoys carnally and enjoys others. This meaning is derived according to Panini's rule ज्वलितिकसन्तेभ्यो णः (३/१/१४०)। After the verbs beginning with ज्वल (to shine) and ending with कस (to go), when used without a preposition, the affix णः (= अ - making *Vṛddhi*) is optionally employed. Therefore *Rāma* is he in whom the Yogins get delighted.¹ The affix घञ् (= अ making *Vṛddhi*) is enjoined the roots ending in a consonant according to Pāṇini's rule हलश्च ॥ (३/३/१२१) – And after a verbending in a consonant, comes the affix घञ् (= अ making *Vṛddhi*) (when the word to be formed is masculine, and related to the verb as an instrument or a location and thereby the palatal is changed into a guttural).²

¹ रमन्ते योगिनोऽनन्ते नित्यानन्दे चिदात्मनि ।

इति रामपदेनासौ परं ब्रह्माभिधीयते ॥ रामपूर्वतापिनी उपनिषद् १/६॥

² Cp. अमरः १/१/२३. रमते । 'ज्वलितिकसन्तेभ्यः' (३/१/१४०) इति णः । रमन्तेऽस्मिन् योगिनः, इति वा । हलश्च (३/३/१२१) इति घञ् । यत्तु - रमयति मोदयति प्रजा रूपमस्य - इति मुकुटेनोक्तम् । प्रत्ययान्तानां धात्वन्तरत्वात् । (रामा येषा हिङ्गुनद्योः क्लीबं वास्तुककुण्ठयोः । ना राघवे च वरुणे रैणुकेये हलायुधे । हये च पशुभेदे च त्रिषु चारौ सितेऽसिते' ॥)

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Amarakoṣa enumerates 11 synonyms of the word *ayanam* as follows:

अयनं वर्त्म मार्गाध्वपन्थानः पदवी सृतिः ।

सरणिः पद्धतिः पद्या वर्तन्येकपदीति च ॥२/१/१५॥

वर्त्म - going,³ moving, walking; मार्गः - walk, path, way, road; अध्वा-
passage; पन्थाः - a way of entrance, an entrance, road; पदवी - a place,
site, track; सृतिः - going, gilding, way, road, path; सरणिः - going,
gilding, way, road, path; पद्धति - a place, site, track; पद्या - a place, site,
track; वर्तनी - going, moving, walking; एकपदी - road.

Bhānuji Dīkṣita gives the etymological explanation of the word *ayanam* - अयते अनेन from अय् (अयते) 1A to go or to move, on the authority of करणे ल्युट् (पा. ३/३/११७). 'That on which (the people) tread. According to *Uṇādi* aphorism अतो युच् (उ. २/७८), the affix युच् (= अन) is applied to roots ending in 'अ' or according to Pāṇini's rule कर्मणि वा ल्युट् (पा. ३/३/११३), the affix ल्युट् (यु = अन) is applied to roots in the sense of an action.⁴

Apte V. S. gives 08 meanings of the word *ayanam*⁵ as follows:-
(1) going, moving, walking, (2) walk, path, way, road, (3) place, site, abode, (4) a way of entrance, an entrance, (5) The Sun's passage, (6) half year, (7) the equinoctical as well as solstitial point and (8) final emancipation

Out of these 5, 6 and 7 are not applicable in deriving the meaning of the word *Rāmāyaṇam*. Thus the अयनम् means going. The whole word means going of Śrī Rāma (i.e. रामस्य अयनम्). It can also be understood as *ŚrīRāmacarītam*, ŚrīRāma saga i.e. Śrī Rāma's history or life and exploits. The 2nd meaning is a path. The path on which if

³ Vide. Apte V.S.: The Students' Sanskrit-English Dictionary.

⁴ अयनमिति अयन्ते ईयते वाऽनेन । 'करण - इति मुकुटः । तन्न । घञो ल्युङ्पवादत्वात् । अतो युच् (उ. २/७८) कर्मणि वा ल्युट् (३/३/११३) । अयनं पथि गेहेऽर्कस्योद्गमिणतो गतौ' इति हैमः ॥

⁵ P 48, Col., 03.

one walks, Śrī Rāma becomes accessible through that path. The 3rd meaning is an abode. *Rāmāyaṇam* is the abode of Śrī Rāma in the sense that one finds Action, Knowledge, and Devotion pertaining to Śrī Rāma in the *Rāmāyaṇam*. Consequently it is the abode of wisdom of the Supreme Person.⁶

The 4th meaning is an entrance. It is the prime entrance to the realm of the devotional path leading to Śrī Rāma. This is the entrance of wisdom for all irrespective of caste and creed just next to the Vedas (which are exclusively for the twice-borns), foremost Classical Sanskrit Literature (आदिकाव्यम्) from the pen of the most revered sage Vālmīki, the foremost (आदिकवि) of the poets of the Classical Sanskrit Literature.⁷ The 5th meaning is the final emancipation or Absolution.⁸

The *Rāmāyaṇam* is read all over India as one of the holy books and as it contains the most authentic history of Lord Śrī Rāma, one of the two most popular incarnations (the other being Lord Śrīkṛṣṇa).

Numerous *Rāmāyaṇas* eulogize Śrī Rāma Saga, as the famous *Rāmarakṣāstotram* of sage Budhakaśika reads,

चरितं रघुनाथस्य शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम् ।
एकैकमक्षरं पुंसां महापातकनाशनम् ॥१॥

The life history of Śrī Rāma (the chief of the Raghu dynasty) extends to a hundred crore couplets. Every single letter of this (vast life history) destroys the major sins of the people (going through it).

⁶ श्रीमद्ब्रह्म तदेव बीजममलं यस्याऽङ्कुरश्चिन्मयः

काण्डैः सप्तभिरन्वितोऽतिविततो मुन्यालवालोदितः । रामायणतिलक -मङ्गलश्लोकः १अब ।

⁷ पठ रामायणं व्यास काव्यबीजं सनातनम् ।

यत्र रामचरित्रं स्यात् तदहं तत्र शक्तिमान् ॥ (बृहद्धर्मपुराण० प्रखण्ड० ३०/४७)

⁸ (अ) पत्रैस्तत्त्वसहस्रकैः सुविलसच्छाखाशतैः पञ्चभि

श्चात्मप्राप्तिफलप्रदो विजयते रामायणस्वस्तरुः । रामायणतिलक -मङ्गलश्लोकः १कड ।

(ब) आपो नारा इति प्रोक्ता आपो व नरसूनवः ।

ता यदस्यायनं पूर्वं तेन नारायणं स्मृतः ॥मनु० १/४०॥

Among these *Rāmāyaṇas* some are available, while the rest of them are obsolete.

Varied extensions of the *Rāmāyaṇam*

Here bellow an attempt is made to present a brief sketch of *Rāmāyaṇas*⁹ in alphabetical order.

(1) *Adbhutarāmāyaṇam* –The story is depicted in the form of a dialogue between sage Vālmīki and Bharadvāja. It contains 27 cantos.

The peculiarities of this *Rāmāyaṇam* are: (1) Lord Viṣṇu takes incarnation due to the curse of Nārada and sage Parvata. Ambarīṣa's daughter has been given the curse to be born as Jānaki & her abduction. (2) Nārada curses goddess Lakṣmi and she incarnates as Sītā from the womb of Mandodarī (3) Sītā kills Rāvaṇa who is having 1000 shoulders (स्कन्ध).

(2) *Agastyarāmāyaṇam*– It is composed by sage Agastya in the 2nd *Kṛta* Era of *Svārociṣamanvantara*,¹⁰ It contains 07 Kāṇḍas and 16,000 verses. The story refers to the episode of *Rāmacarita mānasa* in which Lord Śiva listens to Śrī Rāma Saga at sage Agastya's hermitage.¹¹

The major episodes are: King Kuntala and his queen Sindhumati take birth as king Daśaratha and his queen Kausalyā, Jānakī's

⁹ The information of the *Rāmāyaṇas* has been taken from the book, Chaturvedi Satyadev: Goswāmi Tulasidāsa aur Rāmakathā, Hindi Sāhitya Sṛjana Pariṣada; 1957; pp 55-138.

¹⁰ M. Monier Williams: A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Motilal Banarsidass, New delhi, 2002, P 786, Col. 3: The 14 Manvantars in their sequence are : (1) *Svāyambhuva*, (2) *Svārociṣa*, (3) *Uttam*, (4) *Tāmasa*, (5) *Raivata*, (6) *Cākṣuṣa*, (7) *Vaivasvata* (current), (8) *Sāvarni*, (9) *Dakṣasāvarni*, (10) *Brahmasāvarni*, (11) *Dharmasāvarni*, (12) *Rudrasāvarni*, (13) *Ruci*, (14) *Bhauma*.

¹¹ 'एक बार त्रेता युग माहीं संभु गए कुंभज रिषि पाहीं ॥ रामकथा मुनिबर्ज बखानी । सुनी महेस परम सुख मानी ॥ (मानस. प्र.सोपान - दु (४७)के पश्चात्) '.

manifestation from the altar place of *Vārṣṇeya*, origin of the sea, the cause of giving the ring as well as the installation of *Rāmeśvara-liṅga*, the location of mt. *Rṣyamuka*, birth of demons *Maya* and *Dundubhi*, etc.

(3) *Ānandarāmāyaṇam* –It is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Śiva and Pārvatī. It consists of 09 Kāṇḍas and 12,252 verses. The 3rd canto onward it is the dialogue between Rāmadāsa and Viṣṇudāsa.

The major episodes are: After the marriage of Daśaratha and Kauśalyā, Rāvaṇa abducts Kauśalyā; After Sītā's abduction goddess Umā takes Śrī Rāma's test; Rāvaṇa taking Śiva's *Ātmaliṅga* and Pārvatī, etc.

(4) *Bhuṣuṇḍirāmāyaṇam* –It is in the form of a dialogue between Brahmā and Bhuṣuṇḍi. It comprises of 04 books and 36,000 verses.

It is also known as *ĀdiRāmāyaṇam*. It is called an original (मूल), because sage Bhuṣuṇḍi had witnessed it when he was in the form of a crow (काक) and Śrī Rāma was yet a child.¹²

(5) *Cāndrarāmāyaṇam* –It is in the form of a dialogue between the Moon-god (चन्द्र) and Hunumān. It comprises of 07 Kāṇḍas and 75,000 verses.

The major episodes are: Nārada's penance, Indra sending Kāma-deva, Nārada's delusion, Bharata's journey to Citrakūṭa, meeting sage Bharadwāja and the accounts of Svayamprabhā, Sampātī, etc.

¹² The 2nd Rāmāyaṇam in the chronological order should be the *Yogavāsīṣṭha-rāmāyaṇam*, as it is narrated to Śrī Rāma in His student life and that too, before His marriage with Sītā. The 3rd naturally is VR, as it is composed and narrated after the exile of Sītā begetting Kuśa and Lava at Vālmīki's hermitage.

(6) **Devarāmāyaṇam** –It is in the form of a dialogue between Indra and his son Jayanta. It is composed in the 6th *Tretā* Era of *Tāmasa Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 1, 00,000 verses.

The major episodes are: Jayanta assuming the form of a crow tests Śrī Rāma for His being the Supreme Reality (परं ब्रह्म), Śrī Rāma's wrath, meeting Nārada, Nārada's instruction, the victories of Śrī Rāma, Bharata, Śatrughna and Hanumān, Monkeys' departure, appointment of Vibhīṣaṇa's son as a chief commander at Ayodhyā, Fourfold devotion, Hanumān's coronation, the method of worship, glorifications of sacred places, description of cities, towns etc., rules of linguistic changes (भाषापरिवर्तन) and its description as a supplement to the Vedic literature (शब्दपरिशिष्ट) are peculiarities of this *Rāmāyaṇam*.

(7) **Durantarāmāyaṇam** –It is in the form of a dialogue between sage Vasiṣṭha and king Janaka. It comprises of 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 61,000 verses. It is composed in 25th *Tretā* Era of *Vaivasvata Manvantara*.

The major episodes are: Greatness of Bharata, Bharata's oath and his lamentation, Kaikeyī's shock, Lakṣmaṇa's wrath, the dialogue between Niṣāda and Bharata, the crest-jewel as the token of recognition, Sītā's message, the description of Kiṣkindhā, burning of Laṅkā, etc.

(8) **Lomaśarāmāyaṇam** – Sage Lomaśa composed it in 1062nd *Tretā* Era of the *Svāyambhuva Manvantara*. It comprises of 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 32,000 verses.

The major episodes are: The cause of Śrī Rāma's incarnation is to kill Jalandhara (*Daśakandhara*?), king Kumuda and his queen Vīramati take birth as Daśaratha and his queen Kauśalyā. As a reward of king Janaka visualising the Yogamāya in the forest, Sītā is born. The marriage of Lord Śiva and Pārvatī is also described.

(9) **Māhārāmāyaṇam** –Lord Śiva has narrated it to mother-goddess Pārvatī in the *Kṛta* Era of *Svāyambhva Manvantara*. It comprises of 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 2,25,000 verses dealing with the history of Śrī Rāma in general and Vedāntic as well as Yogic description in particular along with 09 sentiments implemented beautifully.

The long description of palaces, inner apartments, mansions, towns, cities, moonrise, seasons etc. are found distinctly.

(10) **Maindarāmāyaṇam** –It is in the form of a dialogue between Mainda, the monkey chief¹³ and Kairava. It is composed in 21st *Tretā* Era of *Raivata Manvantara*.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma's staying in R̥sivāta in Mithilā, serving sage Viśvāmitra, upliftment of Rāmeśvara. Hanumān entering into *Aśokavātikā*, etc.

(11) **Manjularāmāyaṇam** –Sage Sutikṣṇa has composed it in the 14th *Tretā* Era of *Svārociṣa Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 10,3000 verses.

The major episodes are: Accounts of Bhānupratāpa and Arimardana, the dialogue between Jānakī and Hanumān, etc. It deals with ŚrīRāma Saga in general and Śrī Rāma in particular.

(12) **Mantrarāmāyaṇam** –The story of *Rāmāyaṇam* is popular among the masses of India from the time immemorial. Nīla-kaṇṭha, the great Sanskrit scholar of Vedic literature has selected about 157 *rcās* imbibing the fragments of ŚrīRāma Saga composed by sage Vālmīki.¹⁴

(13) **Rāmāyaṇamahāmālā** –It is composed in the *Tretā* Era of *Tāmasa Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 56,000 verses.

¹³ His name occurs in AdhR 4/6/21, 4/6/24, 6/4/35, etc.

¹⁴ *Mantrarāmāyaṇa* Nīlkaṇṭha, Trans. in Gujarati by Shantilala Nagar, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Dlh, 2001.

The major episodes are: Lord Śiva in the form of a swan stays on Mt. Nilagiri listening to the Rāma story from the crow (काक) Instructing the deluded Garuda, Lord Śiva revealing Himself, removal of delusion at Kākabhuṣuṇḍi's place, etc.

(14) *Rāmāyaṇamañiratnam* –It is in the form of a dialogue between sage Vasiṣṭha and his wife Arundhatī. It is composed in the 14th *Tretā* Era of *Tāmasa Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 36,000 verses. It presents nicely why Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted mostly in 07 *Kāṇḍas* only.¹⁵

The major episodes are: The origin of Pañcavaṭī, Śrī Rāma going to sage Vālmīki's hermitage, the description of Citrakūta, Anasuyā instructing the duties of women, the description of Ayodhā, reunion of Śrī Rāma and Sītā, various eulogies and Gītas, etc.

(15) *Śravaṇarāmāyaṇam* – It is in the form of a dialogue between god Indra and king Janaka. It is composed in the 40th *Kṛta* Era of the *Svāyambhuva Manvantara*. It comprises of 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 1, 25,000 verses.

The major episodes are: Daśarath on hunting, the devotion of Śravaṇa to his parents, Śravaṇa's marriage and his death, his father cursing the king, Mantharā's birth, etc. It deals with the Rāma story in general and administrative strategy in particular.

(16) *Sanivṛtarāmāyaṇam* –Divine sage Nārada had narrated ŚrīRāma saga in the 5th *Kṛta* Era of the *Raivata Manvantara*. It is perhaps the same *Rāmāyaṇam* known as *Nāradoktarāmāyaṇa*, as it had been narrated by sage Nārada. It comprises of 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 24,000 verses.

The major episodes are: All the beings are created by Manu and Śatarūpā who are in turn during *Raivata Kalpa* are born as Daśaratha and Kausalyā and beget Śrī Rāma as their son.

¹⁵ Such a justification is not found anywhere in the VR as well as Adh.R (the problem of research of the present thesis).

(17) *Sauhārdarāmāyaṇam* – It is ascribed to sage Śara-bhaṅga. It is composed in the 9th *Tretā* Era of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 40,000 verses.

The major episodes are: Origin of Daṇḍaka forest, Nārada's delusion and his wrath, Śūrpaṇakhā's arrival and cutting of her nose and ears, Lakṣmaṇa's drawing the line (लक्ष्मणरेखा),¹⁶ etc.

(18) *Saupadyarāmāyaṇam* – It is composed by sage Atri in the 16th *Tretā* Era of the *Raivata Manvantara*. It comprises of 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 62,000 verses. It is perhaps also known as *Atrirāmāyaṇam*.

The episode of entrusting Sītā to the Fire-god and taking the छायासीता back are depicted in details.

(19) *Saurarāmāyaṇam* – It is also known as *Sūrya-rāmāyaṇam*. It is in the form of a dialogue between the Sun god and Hanumān. It is composed in the 20th *Tretā* Era of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 62,000 verses.

The major episodes are: Hanumān's birth, life-story of Śuka, the dialogue between Añjanī and Hanumān, the account of Jāmbavān, etc.

(20) *Subrahmarāmāyaṇam* – It is composed in the 13th *Tretā* Era of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 32,000 verses.

The major episodes are: The glorification of Prayāga, meeting sage Bharadvāja, the formulas of different gods, Śrī Rāma staying at Chitrakūṭa, the secret of Anasūyā, etc.

(21) *Suvarcasarāmāyaṇam* – It is in the form of a dialogue between Sugrīva and Tārā. It is composed in the 18th *Tretā* Era of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 15,000 verses.

¹⁶ This episode is not found anywhere in the VR as well as in the AdhR (the problem of research of the present thesis).

The major episodes are: Meeting Sugrīva, the dialogue between Vālī and Śrī Rāma, Mandodari persuading Rāvaṇa, Sulocana's lamentation, the ocean creating hindrance, Hanumān bringing the life-restoring herb, the dialogue between Hanumān and Bharata, Sītā cursing Śāntā, Sītā's abandonment, birth of Lava and Kuśa, tying the horse of the Horse-sacrifice, killing of Mahirāvaṇa, division of the kingdom and Śrī Rāma's ascent to the heaven.

(22) Svāyambhuvarāmāyaṇam – It is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Brahmā and divine sage Nārada. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas* and 18,000 verses. It is perhaps also known as *Nāradyarāmāyaṇam*. It is composed in 32nd *Tretā* Era of the *Svāyambhuva Manvantara*.

The major episodes are: Sītā worshipping goddess Satī, marriage, exile, Sumantra's lamentation, Sītā's abduction, the reign of Dīrghabāhu, Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha, etc.

(23) Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam¹⁷ – Sage Vālmīki is undoubtedly the father of poetic imagination, as poets can see the past as well as the future through their wisdom and they can imagine the harmonic combination of philosophy as well as worldly parlance.

When sage Vālmīki heard the lamentation of one of the pair of curlews (क्रौञ्च), his grief came out enwrapped in the form of a stanza (शोकः श्लोकत्वमागतः)¹⁸.

He composed the *Rāmāyaṇam* in 07 *Kāṇḍas* containing 500 cantos and 24,000 verses.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Śrīmad Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam*, Tr. Pt. Pandey Rāmanārāyaṇadatta Śāstrī Gitapress, Gorakhpur 1974.

¹⁸ मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः ।

यत् क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥ वा. रा १/२/१५ ॥

¹⁹ cf. चतुर्विंशसहस्राणि श्लोकानामुक्तवानृषिः ।

तथा सर्गशतान्पञ्चषट्काण्डानि तथोत्तरम् ॥ वा. रा १/४/२ ॥

Chapter 01

The entire Śrī Rāma Saga²⁰ is known to every one and hence it can be summarised in the following verse:

आदौ रामतपोवनादिगमनं हत्वा मृगं काञ्चनं
वैदेहीहरणं जटायुमरणं सुग्रीवसंभाषणम् ।
वालीनिग्रहणं समुद्रतरणं लङ्कापुरीदाहनं
पञ्चाद्रावणकुम्भकर्णहननमेतद्वि रामायणम् ॥

The *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam* is as fresh today as it was during the time of Vālmīki, the contemporary of Śrī Rāma.²¹ It is one of the world's most remarkable classics and excels all in its appeal.²² It is full of lessons for all, deserves to be read with interest and is the oldest specimen of epic poetry. (The detailed summary is given below in this chapter.)

(24) *Vedāntarāmāyaṇam*²³ – Sage Vasiṣṭha narrates the life story of Lord Parśurāma to Śrī Rāma.²⁴

(25) *Yogavāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇam*²⁵ – It is in the form of a dialogue between sage Vasiṣṭha and Śrī Rāma. It contains 06 *Kāṇḍas* and 32,000 verses. It is also known as the *Ārṣarāmāyaṇam* and also as *Vāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇma*

The major episodes are: Sage Vasiṣṭha instructs the path of self-realisation (योग) Śrī Rāma. It was narrated earlier by Vālmīki to Ariṣṭnemi and by Agastya to Sutikṣṇa. The last chapter deals with the birth story of Kākabhuṣuṇḍi.

²⁰ cf. वाल्मीकिगिरिसंभूता रामाम्भोनिधिसङ्गता ।

श्रीमद्रामायणी गङ्गा पुनाति भुवनत्रयम् ॥ (रामायणतिलकं - मङ्गलश्लोक-३)

²¹ प्रचेतसोऽहं दशमः पुत्रो राघवनन्दनः ।

न स्मराम्यनृतं वाक्यमिमौ तु तव पुत्रकौ ॥ वा. रा ७/१६/१९॥

²² नास्ति गङ्गासमं तीर्थं नास्ति मातृसमो गुरुः ।

नास्तिविष्णुसमो देवो नास्ति रामायणात् परम् ॥स्कन्द० उत्तर० रामायणमाहा० ५/२१॥

²³ *Vedāntarāmāyaṇam*, Lahri press, Banaras 1964.

²⁴ Only this much information is available.

²⁵ *Vasiṣṭharāmāyaṇa* - A Study, Meharchanda Lachhmandas.

Śrī Rāma Saga in the Mahābhārata²⁶

The Rāma-story is found in different chapters of the Mahābhārata. The *Rāmopākhyānam* occurs in chs. 273-292 of *Vanaparva* in total 739 verses. The story occurs also in Ch 59 of *Droṇaparva* in total 25 verses.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma's manifestation, Rāvaṇa securing the boons, origin of monkeys, etc., Śrī Rāma's exile, abduction of Śītā, meeting Sugrīva, the dialogue between Rāvaṇa and Śītā, construction of bridge, killing Rāvaṇa, Śītā's purification & Śrī Rāma's coronation.

Śrī Rāma Saga in the Purāṇas

(1) *Agnipurāṇam*²⁷ - The story is depicted briefly in chs. 05-11 in 179 verses. It is the summary of VR.

(2) *Ādipurāṇam*²⁸ - The Rām Saga is depicted in Ch 12.²⁹

(3) *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇam* - The Rāma Saga is depicted in chapters 18-22, 25-30 (i.e. 11 chapters in total) of the पूर्वखण्ड. The story depicted is similar to the story of *Mahābhāgvata* (*Devī-purāṇam* and *Nṛsimhapurāṇam*

The major episodes are: Hanumān entering into Lalīkā in the form of a he-cat, the origin of *Rāmāyaṇa*, etc.

²⁶ ShriMahābhārata, Sastusāhityavardhaka kāryālaya; 1958.

²⁷ *Agnipurāṇa* – Garga Saṁhitā añka, Kalyāṇa; Hanumānprasada poddar & Chimanlal Goswami; Motilāl Gītā press Gorakhpura.

²⁸ The information regarding the Purāṇas Nos. 2, 3 & 19 is taken from the book - Chaturvedi Satyadev: Goswāmi Tulasidāsa aur Rāmakathā, Hindi Sahitya Srjana Parisada; 1957; pp 55-138. Hence no further information is available.

²⁹ Only this much information is available.

(4) *Bṛhannārādīyapurāṇam*³⁰ - The story occurs in chs. 75 and 79 of the पूर्वभाग.³¹

(5) *Brahmapurāṇam*³² - The story is depicted in chs 53-84 & 87 in 282 verses as well as in Ch 1.67 in 25 verses.

The major episodes are: The glorification of *Rāmatīrtha*, Rāvaṇa's life story, Rāvaṇa's penance, Rāvaṇa stealing Vāsudeva's image from Amarāvātī etc.

(6) *Brahmavaivartapurāṇam*³³ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in Ch 14 of *Prakṛtikhaṇḍa* in 65 verses as well as in Ch 62 of *Kṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa* in 99 verses.

The major episodes are: Vedavātī takes birth as Sītā, Sītā's abduction, the Fire-god creating *MāyāSītā* etc.

(7) *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam*³⁴ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in the Uttarakhaṇḍa as *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇam*. It contains 07 *Kāṇḍas*, 64 cantos and 4,200 verses.³⁵

It is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Śiva and Mother-goddess Pārvatī. Devotion to Śrī Rāma is explained in the light of Advaita Vedānta.

³⁰ Nārada-purāṇa, Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology, Vol.15, Tr. A Board of Scholars and Prof. J. L. Shastri, Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989.

³¹ No further information is available.

³² The *Brahmapurāṇam*; Ed. Nagasharan sing; Nagpublisher, Delhi; 1985.

³³ *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, Vinayak-Ganesh Apte; Ānandāśram.

³⁴ *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam*, Ed. Sharma K. V. Krishnadas academy, Varanasi, 2000.

³⁵ पार्वत्यै परमेश्वरेण गदिते ह्यध्यात्मरामायणे

काण्डैः सप्तभिरन्वितेऽतिशुभदे सर्गाश्चतुःषष्टिकाः ।

श्लोकानां तु शतद्वयेन सहितान्युक्तानि चत्वारि वै

सहस्राणि समाप्तितः श्रुतिशतान्युक्तानि तत्त्वार्थतः ॥पृ. ३९९,

अध्यात्मरामायण (हिन्दी), गीताप्रेस, गोरखपुर, सं. २०३१॥

The peculiarities of the story are: (1) Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa are identified with the Supreme Self, Primordial Matter and the individual Self.³⁶ Sage Viśvāmitra, sage Vasiṣṭha, king Janaka, Kauśalyā, Kumbhakarna and Rāvaṇa etc. are aware of the secret of Śrī Rāma's incarnation. (2) The description of sage Vālmīki's previous life. (3) Lakṣmaṇa observing fast for 12 years. (4) Installation of *Rāmeśvaralinga* before the construction of Setu.³⁷ (5) Aṅgada destroying the sacrifice performed by Rāvaṇa.

[The detailed critical study with evaluation of the text with a Vedantic approach is presented in the following pages of the present thesis.]

(8) *Bhaviṣyapurāṇam*³⁸ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in only 11 verses (06 verses of *Pratisargaparva* & 05 verses of *Uttara Parva*.)

(9) *Śrīmad Bhāgavatapurāṇam*³⁹ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in Ch 19 of the 5th Book in 04 verses and in chs 10-12 of the 9th Book in 107 verses.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma and Sītā are presented as the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu and goddess Lakṣmī, the *Sītāsvayamvara*, Śrī Rāma abandoning Sītā, etc.

(10) *Śrīmad Devibhāgavatapurāṇam*⁴⁰ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in chapters 28-30 under *Navarātra Māhātmya* of the 3rd Book in 187 verses, 01 verse in 4th Book and in 63 verses of the Ch 16 of the 9th Book.

³⁶ अग्रे यास्याम्यहं पश्चात्त्वमन्वेहि धनुर्धर ।

आवयोर्मध्यगा सीता मायेवात्मपरात्मनोः ॥३/१/१३॥

³⁷ सेतुमारभमाणस्तु तत्र रामेश्वरं शिवम् ।

संस्थाप्य पूजयित्वाह रामो लोकहिताय च ॥६/४/१॥

³⁸

³⁹ Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology, the Bhāgavatapurāṇa; A board of scholars; Motilal Banarsidass; Delhi, 1981.

⁴⁰ The *Devibhāgavatapurāṇa*; Ed. Nagasharan sinh; Nagpublisher, Delhi, 1986.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma making Śūrpaṇakhā deformed, Śrī Rāma observing fast in *Navarātra* to defeat Rāvaṇa, the goddess appeasing Śrī Rāma for defeating Rāvaṇa.

(11) *Mahābhāgavata(Devī)purāṇam*⁴¹ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in chapters 37-64.

The major episodes are: Gods approaching Lord Viṣṇu and requesting to kill Rāvaṇa, the gods approaching Lord Śiva and Pārvatī, Lord Śiva assumes Hanumān's form, Lord Brahmā worships the goddess for Śrī Rāma's victory, Sītā's birth from Mandodarī etc.

(12) *Garuḍamahāpurāṇam*⁴² - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in chs 142 and 143 in 72 verses. It depicts few events of Śrī Rāma's life like Śrī Rāma cutting Śūrpaṇakhā's nose and ears, Śrī Rāma going to Gayā for performing the ancestral rites.

(13) *Harivamśpurāṇam*⁴³ - Śrī Rāma Saga is briefly depicted in 35 verses of Ch 41.

(14) *Kalkipurāṇam*⁴⁴ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 58 verses of Ch 03 of Book III.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma's manifestation, Rāvaṇa's killing, Rāma abandoning Sītā, Sītā entering into the Earth, Śrī Rāma's ascent to the heaven, etc.

(15) *Kālikāpurāṇam*⁴⁵ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in total 10 verses of chs 38 & 62.

⁴¹ The Devībhāgavatapurāṇa, Ed. Nag Sharan Sinh, Pub. Naga Publisher, Delhi, 1986.

⁴² Garuḍamahāpurāṇa; Sastu Sāhitya Mudraṇālay Trust, Ahmedabad; 1977.

⁴³ Mahābhārata-Khilabhaga Hari Vamsa, trans. Pt. Rama Narayana Datta Shastri Pandey 'Rama', Gita Press Gorakhpura, 1860.

⁴⁴ Shri Kalkipurāṇam; Pt. Baldevprasad Mishra; Nag Publisher; Delhi, 1986.

⁴⁵ Kālikāpurāṇa, Ed. Śrī Bīśwanārāyaṇa Śāstrī; Chawkamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varansi; 1972.

Chapter 01

The major episodes are: God Brahmā worships goddess Kālī for Śrī Rāma's victory, Janaka gets 02 more sons while ploughing the land, etc.

(16) *Kūrmapurāṇam*⁴⁶ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 61 verses of Ch 21 of the पूर्वभाग.

The major episodes are: The description of demon's race, Solar race, Śrī Rāma installing *Śivaliṅga* after the war, abduction of Māyāsītā under *pativratopākhyāna*, etc.

(17) *Liṅgapurāṇam*⁴⁷ - Śrī Rāma Saga occurs in 02 verses of Ch 66 of the 1st Book.

(18) *Matsyapurāṇam*⁴⁸ - Śrī Rāma Saga occurs in 02 verses of chs 11 and 12.

(20) *Nārāḍapurāṇam*⁴⁹ - Śrī Rāma Saga occurs in 895 verses of chs 3/73-75, 78, 79. The story of VR is briefly depicted here.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma making Vibhīṣaṇa free in Dravidian country, Śrī Rāma as well as other brothers are incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, Saṁkarsaṇa etc..

(19) *Nṛsiṃhapurāṇam* - The story of VR is briefly present-ed in 741 verses of chs 47-52.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are the incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa and serpent Śeṣa, account of Ahalyā and her transformation to stone due to the curse, etc.

⁴⁶ Kalyāṇa-Purāṇāṅka-Kūrmapurāṇa; Gītā Press, Gorakhpur; 1971.

⁴⁷ Liṅgapurāṇam, Jain Shantilal, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1980.

⁴⁸ Matsyapurāṇamahāpurāṇam, Trans. Tripathi Ramapratap; Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, 1947.

⁴⁹ Nārāḍamahāpurāṇam; Śrī Vāsudeva M Joshi; Sastu sāhitya vardhak karyalay, Ahmedabad.

(21) **Padmapurāṇam**⁵⁰ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 733 verses of chs 8, 33, 35, 198 of the *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, in 4,297 verses of chs 1-68 of the *Patālakhaṇḍa* and in 5,600 verses of chs 73,, 242, 254 of the *Krīyāyoga sārakhaṇḍa*.

The major episodes are: Daśaratha's four queens are Kausalyā, Sumitrā, Surūpā and Suveśā,⁵¹ The Rāmarakṣāstotra is a part and parcel of this Purāṇa (*Uttarakhaṇḍ* 73/1-12), Śrī Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna are the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, goddess Lakṣmī, Serpent Śeṣa, Discus Sudarśana and Conch Pāñcajanya respectively.

(22) **Śivapurāṇam**⁵² - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 141 verses of chs 20, 24 & 25 of *Satīsamhitā*.

The major episodes are: Nārada's delusion, Sati testing Śrī Rāma's divinity, origin of Hanumān as Lord Śiva's portion, etc.

(23) **Skandapurāṇam**⁵³ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 128 verses of Ch 8 of *Māheśvarakhaṇḍa*, in 53 verses of chs 2 & 7 of *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa*, in 2,194 verses of chs 11, 13, 15, 18, 19 & 43-52 in *Avanti* Section as well as 30-38 in *Dharmāranya* Section of *Brāhma-khaṇḍa*, in 144 verses of chs 20, 96-104 of *Nāgarakhaṇḍa* and in 80 verses of chs 111-113, 123 & 171 in *Prabhāsakṣetramāhātmya* of *Prabhāsakhaṇḍa*.

The major episodes are: Śrī Rāma's manifestation, Rāvaṇa's killing, reason of Śrī Rāma's incarnation, king Dharmadatta and Kahalā take birth as king Daśaratha and Kausalyā, construction of

⁵⁰ The Padmapurāṇa, Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology (part I-X); Dr. N. A. Deshpade, Dr. G. P. Bhatt; Motilal Banarsidass; Delhi, 1989.

⁵¹ This Purāṇa mentions 04 queens of king Daśaratha and they are Kausalyā, Sumitrā, Surūpā and Suveśā (here Kaikayī is missing).

⁵² Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology The Shivapurāṇa (I-IV); by a board of Scholars; Dr. Arnold Kunst Prof. J.L. Shastri, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi,

⁵³ Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology, the Skandapurāṇa; A board of scholars; G.P. Bhatt; Motilal Banarsidass; Delhi, 1992.

the bridge, Śrī Rāma's ascent to heaven, Śrī Rāma installing *Śivaliṅga*, Sītā's fire-ordeal, Fire-god eulogizing Sītā, etc.

Śrī Rāma Saga depicted here is important to prove the historicity of Śrī Rāma's life and exploits as it gives the data of the events.

(24) *Varāhapurāṇam*⁵⁴ - Śrī Rāma Saga occurs in 09 verses of Ch 45. The *Rāghavadvādaśī* vow is described.

(25) *Vāyupurāṇam*⁵⁵ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 214 verses of Ch 26.

(26) *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇam*⁵⁶ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 2,289 verses of chs 200-269. Śrī Rāma and other brothers are identified with Nārāyaṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Paṇḍya and Aniruddha respectively.

(27) *Viṣṇupurāṇam*⁵⁷ - Śrī Rāma Saga is depicted in 26 verses of Ch 04 of Book IV.

The major episodes are: Manifestation of Śrī Rāma and other brothers from the portion of Lord Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma's exile, Śrī Rāma's reign, killing of Lavaṇa, enthronement of Lava, Kuśa, etc.

Besides, many *Rāmāyaṇas* in regional languages are available viz. Kamban's *Kambanarāmāyaṇa* (9th-10th Cent. A.D.) in Tamil, Buddhuraja's *Dvipādarāmāyaṇa* (12th Cent. AD) known as *Raṅganatharāmāyaṇa* and Molla's *Mollārāmāyaṇa* in Telugu,

⁵⁴ The *Varāhapurāṇa*; Śrī Ahibhushan Bhattacharya; Śrī Ānand Swaroop Gupta; All India Kashiraj Trust; Varanasi, 1981.

⁵⁵ The *Vāyumahāpurāṇam*, Ed. Nag Sharan Singh, Pub. Nag Publisher, Delhi, 1983.

⁵⁶ *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇam*, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1933.

⁵⁷ *ŚrīŚrīViṣṇupurāṇa*, Śrī Munilal Gupt; Gitapress Gorakhpur, 1934.

Irāmacarita, *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇa* (14th Cent. AD),⁵⁸ *Kannasarāmāyaṇa* and *Keralavarmā-rāmāyaṇa* in Malayalam, Saint Kṛttivāsa's *Kṛttivsarāmāyaṇa* (15th Cent. AD) in Bengali, *Rāmacaritamānasas* of Tulsīdāsa (15th Cent. AD) in Avadhi (Hindi), Balarāmadāsa's *Jagannamohanarāmāyaṇa* (15th Cent.) in Oriya is also known as *Dāṇḍirāmāyaṇa*; In Marāṭhi saint Ekanātha's '*Bhāvārtharāmāyaṇa*' (16th Cent. AD)⁵⁹ and Moropanta's *Rāmavijaya*, Narahari's *Toravērāmāyaṇa* (16th Cent. AD) in Kannada, Divakarabhaṭṭa's *Kāśmīrī-rāmāyaṇa* (18th Cent. AD), Girdharadāsa's *Giradhararāmāyaṇa* (19th Cent. AD) in Gujarati, Mādhava Kandali's translation of VR in Assami, Durgakavi's *Gītīrāmāyaṇa*, Raghunātha's *Kathārāmāyaṇa* and Ananta Atta's *Ramakirtana* and many more.

Exhaustive summary of *Śrīmad Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam*

Any student working on Śrī Rāma Saga is not supposed to constrain himself/herself from presenting the contents (in brief) of the original rather the foremost Śrī Rāma Saga narrated by sage Vālmīki. Here below the content or summary is given of the *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam*.

Bālakāṇḍa

जातः श्रीरघुनायको दशरथान्मुन्याश्रयात्ताटकां
हत्वा रक्षितकौशिकक्रतुवरः कृत्वाऽप्यहल्यां शुभाम् ।
भङ्क्त्वा रुद्रशराशनं जनकजां पाणौ गृहीत्वा ततो
जित्वार्धाध्वनि भार्गवं पुनरगात् सीतासमेतः पुरीम् ॥१॥⁶⁰
(बालकाण्डम् - कश्यपः)

⁵⁸ The Malayalam Rāmāyaṇa composed by Śrī Eduttchan in 1375 A.D. is mere the translation of Adhyātmārāmāyaṇa written in Sanskrit occurring in the Uttarkhaṇḍa of Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam.

⁵⁹ The influence of AdhR is seen on this Rāmāyaṇa.

⁶⁰ The verses given in the beginning of the summary of contents of 07 Books are taken from the *Ślokabaddhasaptarṣīrāmāyaṇam*, Introduction pp.33-34, *Sankṣiptarāmāyaṇam*

It begins with celestial sage Nārada narrating Śrī Rāma Saga to sage Vālmīki, when a hunter kills one of the pair of curlew (क्रौञ्च).⁶¹ Lord Brahmā visits and asks sage Vālmīki to compose Śrī Rāma Sage. The poet gives an outline of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (01-03).⁶²

Śrī Rāma ascends to the throne. Kuśa and Lava sing Śrī Rāma Saga. Ayodhyā, its inhabitants and prosperity during the reign of king Daśaratha are described (04-07).

King Daśaratha performs the Horse-sacrifice (08-09). Episode of R̥ṣyaśṛṅga, the son-in-law of the king is narrated (10-11). King Daśaratha performs the sacrifice for four blessed sons under the supervision of R̥ṣyaśṛṅga (12-14).

The gods approach lord Brahmā for the destruction of Rāvaṇa. Lord Brahmā implores lord Viṣṇu to descend in the house of king Daśaratha for the said purpose (15). Lord Viṣṇu accepts the proposal and appears from the alter with a basin sacrificial milk-rice (पायसम्) (16). Other gods take birth as monkey chiefs (17) Birth of Śrī Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna follow by the description of festivity. After their religious ceremonies, sage Viśwāmitra arrives and asks Daśaratha to send Śrī Rāma for the protection of the sacrifice (18-19).

Daśaratha denies. Sage Viśwāmitra gets enraged. Sage Vasiṣṭha persuades the king to send Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Sage Viśwāmitra instructs 02 mystic spells *Balā* and *Atibalā* (20-22).

They stay night long in a holy hermitage at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Saryū. The sage narrates the life account of ogress Tāṭakā whom Śrī Rāma kills (23-26). The sage being pleased imparts the knowledge of various missiles as well as the method of calling them back and narrates the story of the *Siddhāśrama* (27-29).

⁶¹ Vide. P 12, FN 19.

⁶² Here onwards the numericals in the brackets indicate the canto number.

Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa protect the sacrifice by defeating the demons (30). Sage Viśwāmitra along with Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa proceeds to Mithilā to witness the bow-sacrifice of king Janaka (31). An account of Kuśanābha is narrated (32-34). Sage Viśwāmitra and the party reach the bank of Gaṅgā where the sage narrates the story of Gaṅgā's descent on the earth (35-44). The milky-ocean is churned by gods and demons from which come out one by one the deadly poison, god Dhanvantarī, a bevy of *Apsarās*, the beverage known as *Vāruṇī*, the horse Uccaiṣravā, the Kaustubha gem and nectar. A son of Ikṣvāku, built the city of Viśālā where Diti the wife of Kaśyapa practised austerities. Sumati, the ruler of Viśālā receives sage Viśwāmitra and his party (45-47).

On the way from Viśālā to Mithilā, they come across a deserted hermitage of sage Gautama. The sage narrates the account of Ahalyā (sage Gautama's wife). Ahalyā gets released from the curse of sage Gautama by the very sight of Śrī Rāma (48-49).⁶³

Śrī Rāma and others reach Mithilā, king Janaka headed by his family priest Sadānanda welcomes them and the sage introduces two princes as well as tells the episode of Ahalyā's release. Śatānanda narrates the life history of sage Viśwāmitra (50-51). The war for cow Śabalā and sage Vasiṣṭha along with his Brahminical staff renders ineffectual all the mystic missiles discharged by sage Viśwāmitra.

Sage Viśwāmitra practises severe austerities to attain Brahmanhood (52-56). The episode of Triśaṅku is described. Sage Viśwāmitra proceeds to create a new heaven for Triśaṅku (57-60). Sage Viśwāmitra rescues Śunaḥśepa from Ambarīṣa's bondage and the king gets the reward of the sacrifice without sacrificing him (61-62). Lord Brahmā rewards him at Puṣkara with the status of a seer. The sage enjoys life with celestial nymph Menakā for ten years and hence retires to Mt. Himālayas, when he is rewarded with the status of *Maharṣi* (63). Sage Viśwāmitra resolves upon a further course of

⁶³ Some of the versions of the Rāmāyaṇam mention Ahalyā's release after the touch of Śrī Rāma's holy feet.

austerities (64). Ultimately he is conferred the title of a *Brahmarṣi* by lord Brahmā (65). They come to the court and Janaka reveals his pledge regarding the bow. Śrī Rāma breaks the bow and the king sends his counselors to Ayodhyā to invite Daśaratha for wedding (66-67).

Daśaratha along with sage Vasiṣṭha and his retinue reach Mithilā. Janaka offers the hand of the two daughters Sītā and Urmilā to Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa as well as Kuśadhvaja offers the hand of his two daughters to Bharata and Śatrughna. The wedding ceremony is described (68-73).

On the way of their returning to Ayodhyā, Paraśurāma appears before them. He challenges Śrī Rāma to string the bow of lord Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma does so and puts an end to the worlds earned by Paraśurāma through austerity. Recognizing Śrī Rāma as the Lord he departs for Mt. Mahendra (74-76).

They return to Ayodhyā, Yuddhājita (Bharata's maternal uncle) takes away Bharata and Śatrughna to his father's capital (77).

Ayodhyākāṇḍa

दास्या मन्थरया दयारहितया दुर्भेदिता केकयी
श्रीरामप्रथमाभिषेकसमये माताऽप्ययाचद्वरौ ।
भर्तारं भरतः प्रशास्तु धरणीं रामो वनं गच्छता-
दित्याकर्ण्य स चोत्तरं नहि ददौ दुःखेन मूच्छं गतः ॥२॥
(अयोध्याकाण्डम् - अत्रिः)

It begins with⁶⁴ the aging king of Ayodhyā, Daśaratha, his wives Kausalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā, and the four princes: Rāma, son of Kausalyā, Bharata, son of Kaikeyī, and Lakṣmaṇa as well as Śatrughna, sons of Sumitrā. Daśaratha determines, amid general approval, install Rāma as *Yuvarāja*, the crown prince or heir-

⁶⁴ Taken *verbatim* from Brockington J. L.: Righteous Rāma The Evolution of an Epic, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984.

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apparent (1-6), but Kaikeyī urged on by her servant Mantharā (7-9), contrives to have him supplemented by Bharata and banished to the forest for 14 years (10-12). Daśaratha feels forced to give in to her petulance in fulfillment of 02 boons he has previously granted her, but his agony of mind doing so is touchingly portrayed; so profound is his grief that he dies shortly after Rāma's departure from Ayodhyā, attributing his death, separated from his son, to retribution for having accidentally killed an ascetic (13-15).

His distress is shared by almost all the inhabitants of the town, but not by Rāma himself, who accepts the decree with absolute submission and with the calm self-control that regularly characterizes him (16). The more completely to fulfill his father's commands, he suggests sending messengers to recall Bharata, who, with Śatrughna, is away from Ayodhyā on a visit, and so innocent and ignorant of his mother's machinations; Rāma then makes preparations for his departure with no protest whatsoever, accompanied at their insistence by his wife Sītā and his brother Lakṣmaṇa (17-35). Daśaratha feels intense pain of separation, scolds Kaikeyī. Kauśalyā persuades him and begins to lament, Sumitrā consoling her. Śrī Rāma and party take halt on the river Tamasā (36-39). The trio sons evade the huge crowd of mourning citizens who flock after them (40-41), the citizens helplessly return to Ayodhyā. In the mean time Śrī Rāma having crossed the rivers Vedaśruti, Gomatī and Syandikā, reacher the bank of river Gaṅgā (42-43) and make their way, first by chariot, then on foot, to Mt. Citrakūṭa, visiting *en route* the Niṣāda chief Guha (44-45) and the ascetic Bharadwāja (46-48). On Citrakūṭa they erect a hermitage where they live happily for a while, enjoying the beauties of nature (50, 58-60), Minister Sumantra returns to Ayodhyā. Kauśalyā and Daśaratha lament for Śrī Rāma, Daśaratha narrates the episode of Śravaṇa and the curse given by his parents. The king dies (51-57).

Meanwhile, to avert the graphically predicted evils of a kinless state, Bharata has been recalled to Ayodhyā (61-65), where he confounds his mother's schemes by angrily rejecting the proffered kingdom (66-73) and setting off (74-75), accompanied by the 03

queens and huge retinue, to fetch Rāma back (76). They too meet Guha (77-81), start for Prayāga (82-83) and are entertained to a miraculous banquet by Bharadvāja (84-85). Crossing the river Yamunā Bharata and party reach Rāmāśrama (86-89). Rāma greets Bharata with none of the rancour displayed by the excitable Lakṣmaṇa (90-93), Rāma along with His brothers performs but enquires calmly about his conduct of public affairs (94); but he insists on carrying out to the letter of his father's express wish, undeterred alike by Bharata's impassioned pleas and offers to change places with him (97-99), by the cynical materialism expressed by the courtier Jābāli (100), and by the defence of orthodox traditional values put forward by the court chaplain, Vasiṣṭha (101-102), followed by the glory of Solar dynasty (103). Eventually Bharata and his train return to Ayodhyā (106), taking with them Rāma's sandals as a symbol of his authority (104-105); Bharata retires to nearby *Nandigrāma*, from where he administers the country as Rāma's regent (107). Meanwhile Rāma and his companions decide to leave Citrakūṭa for a remote part of the forest, by way of the hermitage of Atri and Anasūyā (108), who listen to their story and present them with handsome gifts of clothing and ornaments (109-111).

Aranyakāṇḍa

श्रीरामः पितृशासनाद्वनमागतः सौमित्रिसीतान्वितो
 गङ्गां प्राप्य जटां निबध्य सगुहः सच्चित्रकूटे वसन् ।
 कृत्वा तत्र पितृक्रियां सभरतो दत्त्वाऽभयं दण्डके
 प्राप्याऽगस्त्यमुनीश्वरं तदुदितं धृत्वा धनुश्चाक्षयम् ॥३॥
 (अरण्यकाण्डम् - भरद्वाजः)

Book three, *Aranyakāṇḍa*, narrates the exiles life amongst the hospitable, respectful sages (1) and the hostile Rākṣasas of the Daṇḍaka forest. Despite Rāma's resolve to live like an ascetic, it is his role as the perfect *Kṣatriya*, or warrior, which now comes to the fore. The brothers have to rescue Sītā from the clutches of a Rākṣasa, Virādha (2-3), meet sage Śarabhaṅga who then ascends to heaven (4) and the sages extract a pledge from Rāma to protect them against the

depredation of the Rākṣasas (5). Sītā (or, more realistically, a relatively late redactor of poem) feels that such conduct may lead to a charge of aggression, but Rāma counters this argument with an appeal to his duty to protect the ascetics (8-9). For ten years Rāma and his party wander among the sages; we have specific accounts of their visits to Śarabhaṅga (4), Sutikṣṇa (6-7), and Agastya, who gives him divine weapons and advises him to build a hermitage in nearby Pañcavaṭī (10-12); on the way there, they meet the vulture Jaṭāyus, who narrates his lineage and offers them his protection (13).

While they are living in the hut they have built in Pañcavaṭī (14) where they enjoy the autumn season (15), the hideous but none the less amorous Rākṣasī Śūrpaṅkhā makes advances to the brothers; infuriated by their disdain, she attacks Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa multilates her as a punishment (16-17). Her brother Khara attempts to avenge her, first by sending a posse of fourteen Rākṣasas to kill the brothers (18-19), and then, after they have all been killed (21-22), by leading an army of fourteen thousand to attack them (20); Rāma alone defeats them all (23-24), killing the generals Dūṣaṇa (25) and Triśirā (26), and finally Khara himself (27-28), to the delight of the Daṇḍaka sages (29). Śūrpaṅkhā then seeks a different kind of vengeance from another brother, Rāvaṇa, king of Laṅkā, whom she incites to abduct Sītā (30-32). He compels the aid of the unwilling and timorous Mārīca (33-39), whose disguise as a golden deer and feigned call for help induce Sītā to send both brothers after it (40-43); Rāvaṇa, disguised as a mendicant, thus has not difficulty in seizing her (44-47). Jaṭāyus is fatally wounded when he attempts to intervene (48-49), and Sītā is taken to Laṅkā (50), where, having vehemently rejected all Rāvaṇa's blandishments, she is confined in a grove of *Aśoka* trees (51-54).

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa meanwhile are in great distress (55-62); the dying Jaṭāyus tells them what has happened (63-64), and the monster Kabhandha advises them to ally themselves with the Vānara leader Sugrīva, who will help them to recover Sītā (65-69). On their way to find him they meet a Śabarī ascetic-woman (70).

Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa

गत्वा पञ्चवटीमगस्त्यवचनाद् दत्त्वाऽभयं मौनिनां
छित्वा शूर्पणखास्यकर्णयुगलं त्रातुं समस्तान् मुनीन् ।
हत्वा तं च खरं सुवर्णहरिणं भित्वा तथा वालिनं
तारारत्नमवैरिराज्यमकरोत् सर्वं च सुग्रीवसात् ॥४॥
(किष्किन्धाकाण्डम् - विश्वामित्रः)

Book four is the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, for it concentrates on events in or relating to the Vānara capital Kiṣkindhā. The beautiful lake *Pampā* revives Rāma's longing for His wife (1); there the two princes are accosted by the exiled Sugrīva's minister, Hanumān, who takes them to his master (2-4). Rāma and Sugrīva make a solemn pledge of alliance (5-6), and Rāma is encouraged by the sight of some of Sītā's clothes and ornaments which, seeing a group of Vānaras, she had thrown down as Rāvaṇa abducted her (7). Sugrīva next enlists Rāma's help in ousting his usurping brother Vālī (8), and recounts the history of their quarrel (9-11). Encouraged by Rāma, Sugrīva challenges Vālī to single combat, while going to Kiṣkindhā sees hermitage known as *Saptajanas* (13) and finally, with Rāma's covert assistance, Vālī is mortally wounded (12, 14-16). He dies reproaching Rāma (17), who justifies his action (18), mourned by his wife Tārā (19) and his son Aṅgada (20-23), and is cremated with elaborate ceremonial (24). Sugrīva is now installed as king, taking over Vālī's harem, including Tārā and his own former wife Rumā, with Aṅgada as his heir (25).

The onset of the rains prevents any further search for Sītā (26-27); afterwards Hanumān (28, 31) and then Lakṣmaṇa approaching Sugrīva (29-30, 32) remind him (33) of his promise to help (34-35). A vast army of Vānaras is mustered (36-38), divided into four, and sent off with instructions to search for Sītā in every direction (39-42). Rāma places most faith in the party led by Hanumān and Aṅgada, and entrusts his ring to Hanumān as a token for Sītā (43). The monkey chiefs set forth towards the quarters assigned to them by Sugrīva (44-45). The other three parties return without success

(46), it sure now that Hanumān alone will be able to discover Sītā (47), but after much searching and several bouts of suicidal despair (48-54), Aṅgada and Hanumān's troop meet Sampāti, Jaṭāyus' brother (55); Aṅgada narrates him the whole story from the entry of Śrī Rāma into the Daṇḍaka forest to his own fasting and from him they learn that Sītā is on the island Laṅkā (56-57), Sampāti narrates his past life and the incident how he lost his wings (58-64) and Hanumān resolves to leap over the sea to find her (65-66).

Sundarakāṇḍa

दूतो दाशरथेः सलीलमुदधिं तीर्त्वा हनूमान् महान्
दृष्ट्वाऽशोकवने स्थितां जनकजां दत्वाङ्गुलेर्मुद्रिकाम् ।
अक्षादीनसुरान्निहत्य महतीं लङ्कां च दग्ध्वा पुनः
श्रीरामं च समेत्य देव ! जननी दृष्ट्वा मयेत्यब्रवीत् ॥५॥

(सुन्दरकाण्डम् - गौतमः)

Book five, called the *Sundarakāṇḍa* after its account of the beauties of Laṅkā, opens with a long account of Hanumān's fantastic leap (1), after which he alights unnoticed in Laṅkā and wanders about the city, dazzled by its splendours (2-5). Entering Rāvaṇa's magnificent palace, he searches in vain for Sītā (6-9), having fail to find Sītā even on searching for her all round Hanumān enters to the grove (10-12) and eventually discovers her in the *Aśoka* grove (13), his eyes filled with joy on beholding Sītā. On seeing Rāvaṇa surrounded by hundreds of young women approaches Sītā, he hides himself under the boughs in order to avoid observation (14-17) and overhears her rebuff Rāvaṇa's entreaties and threats (18-20). Her guards also try to persuade her to accept Rāvaṇa, though one, Trijaṭā, cheers her by recounting an auspicious dream (21-25). Sītā experiences good omens (26-27). Hanumān gently reveals himself to the incredulous Sītā (28-33) and proves his identity by producing Rāma's ring (34). Sītā refuses to escape with Hanumān, preferring to be liberated by Rāma in person, but gives the Vānara a jewel as a token for Rāma (35-36). Hanumān consoles Sītā and hands over Śrī Rāma's ring (37-38). Instead of hurrying back in secret, Hanumān

then embarks upon a course of ostentatious and wanton destruction (39-41), kills a number of Rākṣasa champions (42-45) and finally, curious to see Rāvaṇa, allows himself to be captured by Indrajit, Rāvaṇa's son (46). Commended by Rāvaṇa Prahasta inquires of Hanumān why he has ruined the grove and killed the demons he warns Rāvaṇa if he longed to survive, he should restore Sītā to Śrī Rāma (47-49). The angry Rāvaṇa is dissuaded from killing Hanumān outright by his virtuous brother Vibhīṣaṇa's reminder of the inviolability of envoys (50), so he merely sets fire to the Vānara's tail (51). This does not have the desired effect; Hanumān uses it as a brand to complete the destruction of Laṅkā (52). Reassuring himself of Sītā's safety (53-54), he recrosses the sea (55) and reports to his eager companions (56-58). Overjoyed, the rampage through Sugrīva's private orchard, the Madhuvana, to the discomfiture of its guards (59-61) before returning to Kiṣkindhā with the news of the success of their mission (62-66).

Yuddhakāṇḍa

रामो बद्धपयोनिधिः कपिवरैर्वीरैर्नलाद्यैर्वृतो

लङ्कां प्राप्य सकुम्भकर्णतनुजं हत्वा रणे रावणम् ।

तस्यां न्यस्य विभीषणं पुनरसौ सीतापतिः पुष्पकाऽऽ-

रूढः सन् पुरमागतः सभरतः सिंहासनस्थो बभौ ॥६॥

(लङ्काकाण्डम् - जमदग्निः)

Book six, the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, concerns with the final battle between the armies of Rāma and Rāvaṇa, hearing the report from Hanumān as well as the description of Laṅkā, Rāma and the Vānaras march southwards (1-4), Śrī Rāma reminds Sītā and laments (5). The Rākṣasas prepare for war (6-8), Vibhīṣaṇa defeats when his conciliatory advice is refused (9-10). After some debate, he is welcomed into Rāma's camp, and consecrated as king of Laṅkā (11-13). When the sea did not allow a passage Śrī Rāma looses fierce arrows (14). The problem of how to cross the sea is solved by Nala's construction of a causeway (15). Rāvaṇa receives information from his spies about the size of the besieging army (16-21) and after

trying in vain to frighten Sītā into submission by showing her the illusion of Rāma's severed head (22-24) Mālyavān persuades Rāvaṇa. On reaching Laṅkā Vibhīṣaṇa apprises them of arrangement made by Rāvaṇa at 04 gates for the defence of Laṅkā (25-30) and Rāvaṇa rejecting Rāma's ultimatum delivered by Aṅgada (31), joins the battle (32-34).

Disaster soon strikes, Indrajit and puts Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa out of action (35), to the despair of Vānaras (36) and the watching Sītā (37-38), but eventually the brothers are resorted by the divine intervention of the bird Garuḍa (39-40). Then follows a long series of duels, resulting in the eventual deaths of all the most fearsome Rākṣasa champions at the hands of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and the monkey-chiefs (41-46). During this time, Rāma overcomes Rāvaṇa but spares his life (47). One of the most terrible of the Rākṣasas is another brother Kumbhakaṇa who is under a curse of deed sleep (49); the elaborate efforts of his desperate comrades to wake him provide some much needed comic relief from the tension of the battle scenes, (48) Kumbhakaṇa twists Rāvaṇa for all his misdeeds and rushes to battlefield (50-54), but after causing initial havoc among the Vānaras even he is slain by Rāma (55). Hanumān slays Devāntaka and Trīśirā. Aṅgada, Nīla, Rṣbha and Lakṣmaṇa kill Narāntaka, Mahodara, Mahāpārśwa and Atikāya respectively. Indrajit presides over Brahma missile make Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa as well as the monkey army unconscious. Hanumān fetchs the herbs, Aṅgada, Dwivida, Mainda, Sugrīva, Hanumān kill Śonitākṣa, Yupākṣa, Kumbha and Nikumbha respectively (56-67). Indrajit repeatedly resorts to magic to strike terror into the Vānaras: one of his stratagems is to show Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the illusion of Sītā being executed (68); he also embarks upon a sacrifice to ensure victory (69), Vibhīṣaṇa asks Rāma to send Lakṣmaṇa with army to march against Indrajit who is prevented from completing it by Lakṣmaṇa (70-73), who eventually kills him (74-78). Rāvaṇa being enraged due to his son's death proceeds to kill Sītā but is stopped Supārśwa (79-82). Only Rāvaṇa is left, and at least he takes the field again amid bad omens (83). Rāvaṇa along with the demon army marches to the field. Sugrīva destroys the army and ogress chief

Virupākṣa. Aṅgada kills Mahāpārśwa. The war is between Śrī Rāma and Rāvaṇa (84-96). His duel with Rāma is protracted, but finally, after Rāma receives divines help in the form of Indra's chariot and driver, Rāvaṇa too is killed (97), Vibhīṣaṇa performs funeral rites (98-99) and then he installed as the king (100).⁶⁵

However, later qualms about Sītā's virtue cause Rāma to be made coldly to spurn her, saying (for the first time) that he undertook the quest and combat simply to vindicate his own and his family's honour, and not for her sake and asks her to seek shelter elsewhere (101-103). In desperation, Sītā undergoes a fire ordeal (104). The gods appear to Rāma and reveal that he is in fact an incarnation of Viṣṇu (105) and Agni hands Sītā back to her delighted husband, unhurt and exonerated (106). Daśaratha now appears, blesses his sons, and tells Rāma to return to Ayodhyā and resume his reign (the fourteen years of exile have, it seems, just expired) (107). At Rāma's request, the dead Vānaras are restored to life by Indra (108); then Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, and all the Vānaras, and Vibhīṣaṇa and his counselors, all climb into Rāvaṇa's chariot *Puṣpaka*, and – surveying as they go the scenes of their earlier advantages – they fly back to Ayodhyā (109-111).

After greeting Bharadvāja (112), Rāma sends Hanumān to find Bharata, who is living the life of an ascetic (113). Bharata is delighted by the news of Rāma's triumph and return (114), and restores to him the kingdom (115). This is followed by an elaborate ceremony of installation, and the epic is rounded off with a eulogy of Rāma and his righteous ten-thousand-year reign (116).⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Brockington J. L. in his *Righteous Rāma The Evolution of an Epic*, comments here, "Little trace remains of what was no doubt the original simple happy ending of the story: there is no reason to suppose that Rāma and Sītā were not joyfully reunited and lived happily ever after. In the version now extant."

⁶⁶ Brockington J. L. ends his summary here, because he believes that the First and the Seventh Books are not the parts of the original epic.

Uttarakāṇḍa

श्रीरामो हयमेधमुख्यमखकृत् सम्यक् प्रजाः पालयन्
कृत्वा राज्यमथानुजैश्च सुचिरं भूरि स्वधर्मान्वितौ ।
पुत्रौ भ्रातृसुतान्वितौ कुशलवौ संस्थाप्य भूमण्डले
सोऽयोध्यापुरवासिभिश्च सरयूस्नातः प्रपेदे दिवम् ॥७॥
(उत्तरकाण्डम् - वसिष्ठः)

Book seven, the the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, begins with the arrival of the great seers arriving to meet Śrī Rāma and Agastya discloses the origin of Viśravā, the race of demons and the origin of Rāvaṇa etc. (1-9).

Rāvaṇa and younger brothers perform penance and obtain boons. The demons occupy Laṅkā and Rāvaṇa is installed as the ruler (10-11). The marriages of Śūrpaṇakhā, Rāvaṇa and his brothers as well as the birth of Meghanāda take place (12-13). Rāvaṇa's exploits are described. Rāvaṇa attacks on the Yakṣas, defeating Manibhadra and Kubera holds *Puṣpaka* (14-15). Lord Śiva curses Rāvaṇa and curbs his pride (16). Vedavatī being insulted by Rāvaṇa, curses him and enters into fire. Rāvaṇa kills Anaraṇya and receives curse from him (17-19). Rāvaṇa invades the domain of Yama, destroys the forces, fights with Yama and being triumphant leaves the place (20-22). He forcibly carries off the celestial damsels and other ladies who curse him. He accompanied by Madhu invades the realm of gods (23-25).

Rāvaṇa violates celestial nymph Rambhā and receives a curse from Nalakūbara. He invades the realm of Indra, the fight takes place between demons and gods. Vasu kills Sumālī. A combat takes place between Meghanāda and Indra's son Jayanta as well as god Indra and Rāvaṇa (26-28). Meghanāda captures Indra and returns to Laṅkā. Brahmā grants him boons against the release of Indra from captivity (29-30). There is the encounter of Rāvaṇa and other demons with Sahasrārjuna who captures Rāvaṇa and bears him away to his city Māhiṣmatī. Pulastya secures the deliverance of Rāvaṇa from the bondage. After Rāvaṇa's humiliation at the hands of Vālī he makes

friendship with him (31-34). There is a description of Hanumān's descent, past life and his heroic super human deeds. Due to a curse of some sages, he remains unconscious of his might. Śrī Rāma requests Agastya and other sages, he remains present in the sacrifice performed by Śrī Rāma and they depart. King Janaka, Yudhājita, Prataardana and others proceed to their respective dominions (35-38).

Śrī Rāma accepts the presents, distributes them to His friends, the monkeys, the bears as well as the demons and sends them back to their respective abodes (39-40). Bharata describes the glory of Śrī Rāma's reign Sītā wishes to visit penance groves and Śrī Rāma accords His consent. Bhadra reports ugly remarks made by citizens about Sītā, Śrī Rāma orders Lakṣmaṇa to take Sītā away in the forest and to leave her in the vicinity of sage Vālmīki's hermitage (41-45). Lakṣmaṇa does so. He laments and talks with a heavy heart. Sītā utters plaintive words and her message to Śrī Rāma. Lakṣmaṇa departs. On hearing Sītā's wailing, sage Vālmīki approaches her and takes her to his hermitage. There is a dialogue between Lakṣmaṇa and Sumantra (46-50). Sumantra consoles Lakṣmaṇa by narrating the account of Bhṛgu. Lakṣmaṇa meets and comforts Śrī Rāma. Śrī Rāma persuades Lakṣmaṇa with the narrative of king Nṛga and instructs him to perform the duty towards the subjects (51-54).

There is the story of king Nimi as well as sage Vasiṣṭha's re-incarnation. King Nimi resides in the eyelids of living beings (55-57). Sukrācārya curses king Yayāti who has borrowed youth from his son Purū in exchange for his own old age. Yayati consecrates Purū and curses Yadu (58-59). The sages terrorised by demon Lavaṇa approach Śrī Rāma and appeal to dispel the fear by destroying the demon. Śrī Rāma coronates Śatrughna and dispatches him with a view to killing Lavaṇa (60-63). Śatrughna dispatches his army in advance.

Sage Vālmīki narrates to Śatrughna the story of Kalamāṣpāda, the son of Sudās. Sage Cyavana appraises him with the power of Lavaṇa's lance. Śatrughna kills Lavaṇa. He establishes the city Madhupurī, proceeds to Ayodhyā in the twelfth year to meet Śrī

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Rāma. On the way he listens to Śrī Rāma's song being sung and gets surprised, meets sage Vālmīki as well as Śrī Rāma, stays there for a week and returns to Madhupurī (64-72). A Brahmin with his son's dead body comes to Śrī Rāma and laments blaming Him for the death. Nārada shows the reason as an unauthorized practice of penance of a Śūdra called Śambūka. Śrī Rāma goes there in the plane *Puṣpaka* and kills him for which gods applaud Him. Sage Agastya welcomes Him, presents celestial ornaments and narrates the story of king Śveta (73-78). There is an episode of king Daṇḍa. Śrī Rāma leaves the hermitage and returns to Ayodhyā. Śrī Rāma denies performing the Rājasūya sacrifice and performs the Horse-sacrifice as per Lakṣmaṇa's advice. Śrī Rāma narrates to Lakṣmaṇa the story of king Ilā (79-90).

Then come the descriptions of the preparation of the sacrifice, arrival of sage Vālmīki with Lava, Kuśa and he orders and asking them to sing the Rāmāyaṇam. Śrī Rāma hears the sweet song. He dispatches an envoy to sage Vālmīki. Sītā takes an oath for purification to which the sage supports. Sītā enters into the hole of the ground offered by Earth and Śrī Rāma laments (91-99). Bharata proceeds towards the territory of the Gandharvas and defeats them. He installs his son Takṣa on Takṣaśilā and Puṣkara on Puṣkarāvati. Aṅgada and Candraketu are coronated by Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa in the territory of kārupataha (100-102).

Durvāsa in the form of an ascetic approaches Śrī Rāma to convey Lord Brahmā's message and wishes to meet Śrī Rāma and warns him not to enter the chamber. Lakṣmaṇa on breaking the condition is abandoned by Śrī Rāma. He departs to heaven along with his body. Śrī Rāma ascends to heaven with the citizens (103-110).

Relevance

As the literature is the mirror of the society, the mind of a poet is equally reflected in the poetry. Sage Vālmīki has illustrated the nature of a poet along with the form of the best poetry. Even the importance of an epic, its nature, form and the quality came to be

known in their fullness. In spite of numerous poetic compositions existing in the world literature, the qualities of lucidity, beauty and sweatness found in *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam* are rare elsewhere.

The *Rāmāyaṇam* is an excellent source-text as well as a fantastic work of inspiration and hence it has become a model for the poetic genius like Bhāsa, Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti and many others of the regional languages. It is such a powerful composition that it grows true love in the human heart through the charming literary art. Its incessant chanting and repetition create the human excellence in the society adorned with the humanity and chastity. For this reason Śrī Rāma saga based on *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇam* (1/2/37-38)⁶⁷ is read, recited and listened to by the masses in all over India.

The *Rāmāyaṇam* is a perfect text of ethical and moral values in all aspects like household duty, family concord, social life, political segment, righteous progress and spiritual development. It is a historical saga dealing with numerous ideals and it puts an example before the society how one can live a gorgeous life. As e.g. When Kaikeyī decides for Śrī Rāma's exile, she calls and asks Him to follow father's command. At that time Śrī Rāma enumerates 03 categories of a son. (1) The best (उत्तमः) who follows father's command without telling any thing. (2) The middle one (मध्यमः) follows the command after telling. (3) The inferior one (मलः) disregards father's command.

In this way, the *Rāmāyaṇam*, a marvelous piece of the poetic excellence occupies a unique place in the human heart since ages. Moreover it is portrayed in the light of spiritualism and hence it shines more with the title *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇam*(=AdhR) which dealing with the spiritualism imbibed in Śrī Rāma Saga is an important treatise for the devotees of Śrī Rāma as well as the students of Vedānta esp. the followers of *Kevalādvaita*. It has its great influence on the later *Rāmāyaṇas* like *Ānandarāmāyaṇam*, *Kambarāmāyaṇa*, *Kṛttivasarāmāyaṇa*, *Ramacaritamānasa* and so on.

⁶⁷ यावत् स्थास्यन्ति गिरयः सरितश्च महीतले । तावद् रामायणकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति ॥
यावद् रामस्य च कथा त्वत्कृता प्रचरिष्यति । तावदूर्ध्वमधश्च त्वं मल्लोकेषु निवत्स्यसि ॥

Conclusion

Thus the study of the *Rāmāyaṇam* gives rise to the divine thoughts leading one to the supreme human goal of Absolution.⁶⁸

The calculation of the couplets of all the available texts on the *Rāmāyaṇam*, life history of Lord Śrī Rāma, it undoubtedly extends to a hundred crore couplets in total. The reading, reciting and listening to of these numerous *Rāmāyaṇa* texts eulogizing Śrī Rāma destroy the major sins of the people, naturally by pointing out to them the righteous path.

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⁶⁸ वरं वरेष्यं वरदं तु काव्यं संतारयत्याशु च सर्वलोकम् ।
सङ्कल्पितार्थप्रदमादिकाव्यं श्रुत्वा च रामस्य पदं प्रयाति ॥
श्रीमद्वाल्मीकीरामायणमहा० १/२८॥