



Ram as maryada purushottam in Valmiki's Ramayana

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Abstract

This paper presents Śrī Rāma as an embodiment of Dharma in the epic Ramayana, written by Sage Vālmīki. Rāma, who followed four great endeavours, namely, the Dharma, Prosperity, Enjoyment and Emancipation, which led him to get the legendary title of Maryādā Puruṣottam. Gosvāmī Tulasīdās also described the same qualities of Rāma in Rāma-Carita-Mānasa. The genesis of the Ramayana was the result of a conversation between Vālmīki and Nārada. This paper describes some of the Rāma's supreme qualities, such as respect for parents, sacrifice for righteousness, valour, gratitude and love for brothers and people. Owing to such qualities, Rāma is personified as a great person. He is referred to as 'Maryādā Puruṣottama' because he functioned within the wise domain as determined by the classical Vedic literature.

Keywords: Śrī Rāma, Ramayana, Vālmīki, dharma, maryādā puruṣottam

Introduction

Indian tradition regards Shri Ram (Śrī Rāma) as the defining character of Dharma, the righteousness, i.e. Rāma is embodiment of the Dharma (Rāmo vighrahvān dharmah). The Vedas and the later Vedic literature describe the set of human values and duties for the humankind, called Dharma. The life history of Shri Ram tells us that he never crossed the limits of Dharma. According to the Sage Vālmīki, he followed the four-fold great endeavors (puruṣārtha-chatuṣṭaya) diligently after their due understanding, namely, the Dharma, Prosperity, Enjoyment and Emancipation (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.14). This led him to be given the legendary title of Maryādā Puruṣottam the greatest among the great human beings.

Śrī Rāma's purest and loftiest character purified a number of other human beings who were downtrodden by way of their characterless life. Several poets became immortal by way of glorifying him. Sanskrit literature occupies a time frame later to the Vedas and the body of the Vedic literature, and its first epic is in the form of Valmiki's Ramayana. That made the writer Valmiki's name as an immortal name (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.15). So is true with Gosvāmī Tulasīdās who wrote the Hindi version of Śrī Rāma's life under the title of Rāma-Carita-Mānasa. His book has kept our traditions alive amongst several generations witnessing several centuries.

Maharṣi Vālmīki was eager to write an epic on a unique person who was righteous to the highest level, who preserved human values in most difficult moments, who was diplomat par excellence, and who was highly regarded by the population. It happened that Devarṣi Nārada appeared in his monastery at that time when he was contemplating on a character that fitted his canvas well. Nārada was himself an encyclopedia personified. Thus, Vālmīki found the right opportunity to present his riddle to Nārada, namely who would be the right character for the epic he had in mind to write about. The character must have highest virtues and also, he should be able to inspire the population at large towards an ideal. In reply, Nārada described Rāma's personality in great detail. This dialogue between Vālmīki and Nārada gave rise to the legendary great epic known as

Rāmāyaṇa. Vālmīki has skillfully brought out the Vedic teachings through the characteristics and life history of Rāma, such as, what are our duties to the family and society we live in; dos and don'ts in complex situations when demands are conflicting; and there are no clear boundary lines to distinguish Dharma and Adharma. Let us now have a glimpse of their dialogue.

Vālmīki: O Nārada! Who is the person that inhabits this earth; who has the multi-faceted personality that he preserves all the human values; he is a great warrior; he can sacrifice for the righteousness; he is truthful; he is grateful to others' kindness; and is bold enough not to forsake his given word (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.2). Who is pure in his acts, noble and kind to other beings, learned and courageous, and a combination of grace and beauty? (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.3). Who can control his swift mind; who can conquer anger; who is radiant and is void of ill-will about others? Furthermore, who is brave enough that nobody dares to invite his wrath (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.4).

Nārada replied to the above question: O Maharṣi Vālmīki! Rāma alone is the suitable character to fit in these demands who took birth in the Ikṣvāku ancestry. He has all these qualities in good measure. He has the magnificent control on the swift mind; his bravery knows no limits; his radiant face illuminates the darkest corner on the earth; his patience knows no depth of the earth; he has a great ability to control his body and mind organs (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.8); he has intelligence, diplomatic skills, great oratorical skills, graceful, vanquishing the enmity from the heart of the die hard ardent enemies, wide shoulders to act as pillars of foundation, great arms, straight neck, well defined chin, wide breast and carries a large bow (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.9). The bones below the throat are invisible owing to the layers of skin and under-skin. He can prosecute his enemies by his arms that can reach his knees. His head is well rounded as a crown befitting the radiant forehead. The way he walks attracts everybody far and near (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.10). His magnanimous body is simply perfect; it's neither small nor big. His complexion is sublime. He is bravery personified. His chest is wide. His

eyes are deep and penetrating. His body features are of highest order (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.11).

His knowledge of Dharma is in-depth. He has love for truth and works tirelessly for people's welfare. He carries fame, knowledge, and purity, control of senses and concentration of mind (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.12).

Caring for the people as God would do, facilitator of prosperity, remover of enmity, and protector of all living beings and Dharma, are his characteristics. Furthermore, he knows the duties of a peoples' ruler and guardian and the wisdom contained in the Vedas and the allied Vedic literature. He is well skilled in military warfare. He has studied the scriptures; he possesses a terrific memory and has multi-faceted talents. Armed with noble thoughts and compassionate feelings, he talks in a balanced manner and is loved by the masses.

Noble people like to meet him as rivers endeavor to submerge in deep oceans. He is a true Āryan, i.e. a noble person and views everybody without any favour (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.16). It is always a visual delight to see him. He causes his mother's love leap. He has the ocean-like depth and Himalaya-like patience. His virtues have high benchmarks such as, his strength is as that of Viṣṇu, his sight is sweet as that of moon, his anger towards wicked shows them the death, his forgiveness compares well with the earth, his sacrifice is like the proverbial donor Kubera, and in following truthfulness he equals anybody as such (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa 1.18). The above description from Devarṣi Nārada covered Rāma's physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual faculties.

Rāmāyaṇa has discussed all these qualities in great detail, which we will not be able to reproduce. Therefore, only some inspiring events from his life will be mentioned. Rāma's qualities were of such a nature that everybody in the family loved him. When his coronation was announced then the entire palace was in jubilation. However, Kaikeyī's maid Mantharā was full of envy and the latter approached the former. Though Kaikeyī was asleep at that moment, yet she woke her up and said, "You are deep in slumber while the problems wait at your doors. Tomorrow Emperor Daśaratha will pass on his position to Rāma. The emperor has played a mischief by sending Bharata to the latter's maternal grandparents so that Rāma may occupy the seat without any obstacle. Once Rāma occupies the seat then his mother Kauśalyā will earn everybody's respect and nobody would care for you."

On hearing this, Kaikeyī was very happy within. Smilingly, she offered an ornament to the maid for bringing this good news, and said: "You have brought very auspicious news to me (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa 7.32). For this act of yours, what else should I do to you? I don't differentiate between Rāma and Bharata, and therefore, I feel very happy to learn that the emperor has decided for the coronation of Rāma (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa 7.35). You deserve to get the best thing. No other news could bring more happiness to me than the news of Rāma's imminent coronation as the next king of Ayodhyā. You may ask for a boon for bringing this good news and I will definitely deliver the same to you."

Mantharā became disturbed on hearing the above from Kaikeyī. She tried to cajole the latter by saying, "Rāma occupying the seat doesn't augur well for you and your son. This is inauspicious." And she removed the ornament that Kaikeyī had just gifted her and threw it away. She tried to

excite Kaikeyī on similar lines but to no avail. Kaikeyī was not moved by such divisive talks and she began to praise Rāma as such, "Hey! Śrī Rāma is knowledgeable about Dharma, possesses high virtues, has full control on his senses, is humble and grateful, is a repository of truthfulness and purity, and is the eldest son of the emperor, and therefore, he deserves to be the Crown Prince. May he have the long life to serve his brothers and servants as his father did. Why are you so envious from the news of his coronation? (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa 8.15). Indeed, I have more love for Rāma than I have for Bharata because he cares for me more than he does for his mother Kauśalyā. If Rāma is occupying the seat than it's as good as Bharata being on the seat because Rāma considers his brothers as his own self." (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa 8.19)

Kaikeyī was well-disposed towards Rāma and it was so for a good reason. Rāma had so many virtuous qualities that indeed everybody loved him. But Mantharā was not easy to give up. Finally, Kaikeyī yielded to her as it happens that one pays a heavy price for being in the company of the low-quality persons. Tulasidāsa has described this turn around in Kaikeyī by saying, bad company harms everybody and even the most intelligent people tend to deflect their intellectual balance under the influence of a wicked person (Rāma Carita Mānasa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, 24).

Kaikeyī was finally in the grip of Mantharā and the former decided to ask for the two boons that her husband had once promised in a battleground when she had saved his life. Her boons were: 1. Bharata should be coronated, and 2. Rāma should spend 14 years in forests. If he doesn't accept the two boons then she would commit suicide, this is how she utilized the two boons.

On hearing these two boons, Daśratha uttered several things to dissuade her but Kaikeyī remained adamant. Now Rāma was summoned and he greeted his father and step-mother Kaikeyī, too. On seeing that his father is in a disturbed state of mind, he inquired from her if he is upset from him on any account: "Have I committed any wrong doing?" Kaikeyī said that your father would like to say something to you but he is unable to do so due to some reasons. If you promise to carry out his words whatever they are, then I might as well tell you what the matter is. Rāma was unhappy to hear this and he said to Kaikeyī, "Your assessment was not correct because I am so much obedient to my father that I would even jump into a fire, or dive into a deep ocean, or drink poison should he order so. Emperor is my father, teacher and well-wisher. There is nothing that I will not obey for his sake."

"Therefore, please tell me what he desires. I promise that I will obey them accordingly. I am not in the habit of speaking two languages." On hearing Rāma's promise, Kaikeyī said, "Once I had saved your father's life in a battlefield then he had offered two boons to me. Today I have asked for those two boons. The first boon asks for the kingdom for Bharata. The second boon seeks your exile of 14 years in forests. You should act accordingly and set forth for the forests." Rāma heard this and remained unfazed. Unmoved, he said to Kaikeyī, "O Mother! For this matter I would have obeyed you direct and there was no need to disturb the father. It seems that you didn't trust me that you didn't say this to me direct and got them said by the father." Would anybody be able to show any such example in world history when somebody obeyed the step mother's invalid

words and gave up the kingdom to live in forests? This is the glory of the Raghukula (Raghu ancestry) which prevailed due to the sacrifice of Rāma. When Kaushalyā tried to stop Rāma from going to forests the Rāma said, “O Mother! I don’t have the courage to disobey my father.” When Lakṣmaṇa expressed his anger and enthusiasm by dissuading Rāma from proceeding to forests by saying that, “I don’t like Rāma going to the forests. The father has temporarily lost his mental balance due to the charm of the lady despite his old age. O’ Brother! You take the reins of the kingdom and I will kill anybody opposing you who might be taking Bharata’s side.”

“If the father is taking such steps due to the undue attachment to Kaikeyī then we should forego such attachment and imprison him or even kill him. Because even if a teacher loses his wisdom to distinguish between duties and harmful functions and moves towards wrong directions then it becomes our duty to punish him. One who is unduly attached to Kaikeyī and is quite old, such a father deserves to be killed because of his unwise and cowardice acts.” Lakṣmaṇa continued. To this, Rāma replied as, “I know your valour, and patience, and your affection towards me. The highest is the Dharma. The truth lies within Dharma. The father’s words are within Dharma and hence, they are the loftiest ones. O’ Brave! Those who follow Dharma, they don’t retreat to their words. I am unable to disobey my father. Therefore, you should follow the Dharma of the warriors and dislodge the thoughts that are contrary to our Arya traditions.”

“The karma that does not lead to the four-fold objectives, namely Dharma, Prosperity, Enjoyment and Emancipation, need not be followed. Only those karmas give rise to happiness that are in accordance with Dharma. One who desires money only becomes the focus of everybody’s envy. Pleasures void of Dharma deserves to be discarded. Hey Lakṣmaṇa! Emperor Daśaratha is our father and king, too. Even if he orders us out of anger, joy or passion yet we should obey him as Dharma.” Rāma continued. Such were positive intentions Rāma harbored about his father. There were more such examples of his servitude towards his father.

When Rāma was to take leave from his father then the latter said, “Hey, Son of the Raghu Dynasty! I have lost the wisdom because of the word given to Kaikeyī. You can imprison me and declare yourself the king of Ayodhyā.” Hearing this, Rāma said to him with folded hands, “May you rule the earth forever. I have no greed for the kingdom.” “I have no desire for happiness, nor for the earth, nor for the means of enjoyments, and nor for the life as such. My only desire is that the word should prevail. May you remain truthful. I say this solemnly with my truthfulness and the legacy of my noble deeds. A father is said to be a Devatā (a person of the loftiest character) among the Devatās. For this reason, I want to assure you that I will live happily in forests as your obedient son. And, after 14 years in woods, I will return as my promise and seek your blessings again.” Rāma continued.

When Rāma was leaving for forests in his youth then there was not any visible sign of pain on his face (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa 19.33). He was willing to go to forests while leaving aside the kingdom of the entire earth. There was not any sign that could affect the serenity maintained by the great soul. Great people maintain their serenity despite the dualities of respect and disrespect, joy

and pain, and profit and loss as is seen with the sun that maintains the same colorful state at both the occasions of sunrise and sunset. It is not an exaggeration to state that a great soul like Rāma wouldn’t be found in the entire human history.

Śrī Rāma’s Valour

If a man doesn’t possess valour then he gains no respect even if bestowed with all virtuous qualities. Rāma is so well respected because he exhibited highest level of valour in his life equaled by none. Once upon a time, Maharṣi Viśvāmitra approached Daśratha and made a request to him. The former was suffering on the account of two powerful wicked persons named Mārīcha and Subāhu who were quite talented in use of sophisticated war machines. They used to disturb Viśvāmitra’s Yajñās (noble deeds and experiments) for the benefit of humankind. Then Viśvāmitra requested Daśratha to depute his eldest son Rāma who could vanish these two wicked persons. At that occasion, Rāma was not even 16. This caused Daśratha to worry lest Rāma may be harmed by the two wicked men. However, Vaśiṣṭha persuaded Daśratha and he finally ordered Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to go with Viśvāmitra.

On the way, Viśvāmitra, briefed them that the forest is void of any humans and has become the abode of a wicked woman named Tāṭakā who was the wife of Sunda. She caused fear in the minds of the people living there and everybody had left that particular forest for good. Now the two princes should kill her to make the forest a peaceful place and thus cause welfare of the people. This is the Dharma of Kshatriya. After hearing Viśvāmitra Rāma said with folded hands, “Hey Maharṣe! I am ready to obey your command of killing Tāṭakā for the welfare of the citizens, noble souls and our cattle.” Then he lifted his bow and made a flutter of deafening sound by vibrating its cord. Immediately, Tāṭakā ran towards Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. She had the skill to adopt different figures at her will. She had a huge and frightening body. She demonstrated illusions in different manner but Rāma prevailed and killed her with his solitary fatal arrow. Seeing his valour, Viśvāmitra taught many new warfare techniques to Rāma and even gave him new gadgets with skills to utilize them because he found Rāma as the suitable candidate for this stream of knowledge. Thereafter, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa followed Viśvāmitra to his monastery where they vanished all the wicked people who used to interfere in Viśvāmitra’s activities. This was the first event when Rāma demonstrated his extraordinary valour. The second occasion appeared when he went to Sītā during the latter’s public promise to marry that man who could lift and control a particularly great bow.

That bow was immovable for many great warriors but that was almost effortlessly broken into two pieces by Rāma. Paraśurāma was known to be a great warrior who had defeated many others in 21 battles and who was too proud of his successes in battles. He was humbled by none other than Rāma. It is said that Rāma alone killed fourteen thousand adversaries and two wicked men known as Kharadūṣaṇa and Triśirā in Pañchavati. Death of Bālī, Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarāṇa took place in the hands of Rāma, too. Rāma’s valour has been described through a metaphor. It is said that once an ocean came on the way of Rāma. Rāma talked sweetly in his usual manner but to no avail. Then he said to Lakṣmaṇa that there were wicked

people who treated the sweet words of gentlemen as the latter's weakness and did not yield (Rāma Carita Mānasa, Sundara Kāṇḍa, 57). There are occasions when peace does not work and nor does it bring victory. In such instances, the force must be used. Saying this, he raised his bow and the ocean immediately relented. Such was the result of his valour.

The skill of maintaining Dharma in difficult and conflicting occasions brought him the title as if he balanced his life amongst the four endeavours of Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa – Dharma, Prosperity, Enjoyment and Emancipation. When Rāma killed Bālī then Bālī had characterized Rāma doing an act of injustice by killing the latter, and hence, it was against Dharma. Then Rāma argued successfully and proved that Bālī's understanding of Dharma was erroneous. He further said, "For the reason that you forcibly cohabited with your younger brother's wife to satisfy your lust who otherwise deserved to be your daughter-in-law. This is the reason you deserve to be killed because one who approaches his daughter, sister or younger brother's wife with a lustful intention must be killed as a lawful punishment." (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa 18.18,22)

The second example is that protecting the one who has sought asylum. When Vibhīṣaṇa sought Rāma's asylum then Sugrīva and some others thought as if it was a mastermind of Rāvaṇa. Then they advised Rām to kill Vibhīṣaṇa. But Rām quotes from the Raj-Dharma (principles related to the political prisoners) and states – "even if an enemy seeks protection by folded hands as a prayer then he shouldn't be killed. An enemy may be in misery or out of his pride. If he presents himself to his adversary's camp then noble people should protect him even at the cost of their own life."

Śrī Rāma's Gratefulness

Vālmīki describes Rāma's gratefulness thus: with great control on his mental functions, he was able to overlook even hundreds of crimes committed by others. He was not in the habit of harping on anybody's wrongdoing. However, if someone helped him even once then Rāma would remember the helping act forever with a sense of gratitude.

After his coronation when he bids bye to Hanumāna then he recalls every helpful act of Hanumāna. He hugs him and says, "Hey Hanumāna! You have loaded me with several acts that I can sacrifice my life for every single act of those. I will be ever grateful to you for your help. I would like all your helpful acts to remain within me lest there is an opportunity for me to return them to you because such a possibility would occur only when you are in distress and I do not want you to be in distress. So, let your acts remain with me as unreturned gratitude from you." (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Uttara Kāṇḍa 40.23,24).

Śrī Rāma's Righteousness

Rāma was a man of character like nobody. His loyalty to his wife is well known. When he went to Janakpurī with Viśvāmitra then he saw Sītā for the first time in Puṣpa-Vāṭikā and then he was instantly moved by her pristine beauty. He was astonished. This was first such event for him. Void of any lustful feeling, he said to Lakṣmaṇa that he had felt something different though he had hitherto maintained purity in his heart. Only God knew what had transpired within him after seeing this out-of-the-world beauty. He was confident that he was not on a wrong path

and he had never seen any woman lustfully. However, this turned out to be the precursor that Sītā became his wife. It was the victory of his self-confidence. Rāma maintained this confidence throughout life (Rāma Carita Mānasa, Bālakāṇḍa, 2.31).

There was an occasion when Rāvaṇa's sister Śūrpaṇakhā approached Rāma for marital alliance between them. She argued that there was none as beautiful as she was and there was none as Rāma was. She claimed to have seen it worldwide and failed to find a suitable match for herself and remained unmarried for this reason. Now, having seen Rāma, she felt that she can marry someone (Rāma Carita Mānasa, Bālakāṇḍa, 2.31). Rāma did not reciprocate and nor did he look at her. However, he grasped her bad intentions because he could feel that she was a married woman though she claimed to be unmarried. Then, in a lighter vein, he looked at Sītā and said to the other woman, "Just the way you are unmarried, so is my younger brother Lakṣmaṇa." (Rāma Carita Mānasa, Araṇya Kāṇḍa, 16). This event exhibits the sterling character of Rāma. Will his followers follow his character, too? One poet has beautifully captured the greatness of Rāma's character and expressed it thus. When Rāvaṇa abducted Sītā then he showed a number of fearsome and attractive proposals but Sītā rebuked him every time because she was so loyal to Rāma. Then somebody suggested Rāvaṇa to pretend to become Rāma and approach her and then Sītā may be willing to accept him. Rāvaṇa said that he had already tried this and remained unsuccessful. When he tended to look like Rāma then others' women appeared to him as his mother! (Rāma Carita Mānasa, Araṇya Kāṇḍa, 16).

In the same context, let us discuss the character of Lakṣmaṇa, too. After Sītā was abducted in the forests then Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa approached Sugrīva in Kiṣkindhā. At that time, Lakṣmaṇa collected some ornaments and brought them to Rāma. These ornaments were thrown by Sītā while she was being abducted by Rāvaṇa probably to work as clues to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa about the directions she was being taken away in. Rāma asked Lakṣmaṇa to examine if those ornaments could be of his Bhābhī (i.e. sister-in-law, brother's wife). To this Lakṣmaṇa said that he could not be sure about the ornaments worn on the ears and arms because he always looked at her feet only!⁴¹ The Raghu-dynasty was known for its lofty character.

Śrī Rāma's Love for His Brothers

Śrī Rāma's love for his brothers is legendary in nature. He was always concerned about his brothers' general well being. Lest their feelings were hurt or they fell in despair, he would intentionally lose a game so that they won. When Bharata came down to Citrakūṭa to meet Rāma then Lakṣmaṇa suspected a foul game on part of Bharata and proposed to Rāma that Bharata should be killed. Then Rāma persuaded, "Hey Lakṣmaṇa! having pledged to honor the father's word, now if I kill Bharata and snatch his kingdom then the history will not speak well of me and what will I gain by such a tarnished kingdom?"

"What we gain by destruction of our loved ones and close ones is almost like food contaminated with poison that ought to be discarded, and I will never accept it. Hey, Lakṣmaṇa! I say to you in the form of my solemn pledge that all my attempts towards Dharma, Prosperity, Enjoyment and the kingdom of the entire earth is for the overall benefit of my brothers only." Rāma continued.

Rāma further said, “Hey, Son of Sumitrā! I desire the kingdom as the property and happiness of my brothers only and this I say solemnly as I touch my bow. The lands surrounded and encircled by the oceans are not out of my reach but I have no intention to acquire even the Supreme Lord’s position by complying Adharma, what is contrary to Dharma.”

“Hey, Lakṣmaṇa! If I obtain any happiness by disassociating from Bharata, yourself and Śatrughna then may such ill-gotten joys vanish by the fire immortal. Hey, Brave! Bharata has genuine and true love for his brothers. I love him as much as I do my own life. I suspect that when he returned to Ayodhyā and learned that Sītā and I have put on the monks’ robes and left for forests then he must have been struck by grief. Therefore, bound by the family traditions based on love, he must have decided to meet us with a heart filled with affection. There cannot be any other purpose for his visit. He must have expressed his displeasure to his mother Kaikeyī and even rebuked her and taken necessary action to revive the father into normalcy, and now he intended to offer the kingdom to me. It is quite in order for him to come and meet us at this time. It is quite appropriate for us to meet him. He simply cannot harbor any intention to cause any harm to us.” Rāma continued.

Rāma further said, “When was it that Bharata ever misbehaved with you to the extent that you are terrified by him and you are suspecting a foul game on his behalf? On his arrival, do not speak any unmeasured word. If you say so then it would be treated as if it was said to me. Hey Son of Sumitrā! How is it ever possible for a son to kill his own father? Or, a brother can take the life of his own dear brother? If you say such strong words for the sake of kingdom then I will ask Bharata to offer the kingdom to you. And, if I propose this to Bharata then I am very certain that he would obey me immediately.” Rāma trusted his brothers to such an extent. If brother-to-brother relationships in today’s world reach such heights then the world can truly become a heaven.

Śrī Rāma’s Spiritual Knowledge

Śrī Rāma had acquired the enlightening knowledge about the true nature of our soul. This enabled him to maintain calm even during the extremes of pleasures and pains. Also, his enlightening knowledge made him conquer over anger. Of course, when firmness was required for public welfare then he displayed the same but not for utter selfish purposes. For this reason, he didn’t get angry even with Mantharā who was instrumental in Rāma being deprived of coronation and sent to forests. He didn’t even mention Mantharā’s crime. There was an occasion during their forest sojourn when Lakṣmaṇa recalled Kaikeyī’s ill-feelings then Rāma intervened by saying that she is the former’s middle mother and she should not be the subject of his rebuke (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa 6.22).

Śrī Rāma’s Love for People

Rāma always remained engaged in the welfare of the people. The people loved him greatly, too. When he was proceeding to the forests then the people of Ayodhyā wanted to accompany him to the forests. For sake of the people, he agreed to be accompanied by his darling wife Sītā to honor people’s insistence. Thus, we see that Rāma has always maintained highest traditions and standards in public and private life. Not only that he protected the true

āryan culture but he embodied himself by the same so as to present an ideal example to the world.

Rāma performed so well in his life that he became an ideal for everyone of us. He is often referred to as ‘Maryādā Puruṣottama’ because he functioned within the wise domain as determined by the classical Vedic literature.

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