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Relevance of the characteristics of Sri Ram, the ideal hero of Sri Valmiki Ramayana, to the present age

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Abstract

Mahasamadhi gives pleasure, the ideal characteristics of Lord Sri Ram appear to be silent proclamation of the sovereign path of Truth. Imbibing the characteristic qualities of such personification of Dignity (Maryaada Purushottam) in one's life, one can obtain the set target of this mortal world right now.

Keywords: Characteristics, Sri Ram, Valmiki Ramayana

Introduction

Every state person represents an ideal that complements in an inexpressive way in some form or the other. A state can be understood by understanding this inexpressive ideal person. "A life without an ideal is just an endless straying away. It neither has any destination nor has a path, even the traveler is unaware and ignorant of it. The state of such is life is like a ship whose navigator is missing or is deep asleep without any knowledge of the state of affairs. And the wise experience is the storm is always active in the ocean of life. Ideal does not leave with any other option except to sink the ship of life". [1] Selecting Lord Ram [2] as an ideal under such circumstances for showing the right path to the public and for the fulfillment of life sounds meaningful and this is the message described in Sri Valmiki Ramayana. [3] Traditionally, the *Ramayana* is attributed to Valmiki. [4] The Hindu tradition is unanimous in its agreement that the poem is the work of a single poet, the sage Valmiki, a contemporary of Rama and a peripheral actor in the drama. The story's original version in Sanskrit is known as *Valmiki Ramayana*. [5] Just as the very thought of the memory of Mahasamadhi gives pleasure, the ideal characteristics of Lord Sri Ram appear to be silent proclamation of the sovereign path of Truth. Imbibing the characteristic qualities of such personification of Dignity (Maryaada Purushottam) [6] in one's life, one can obtain the set target of this mortal world right now.

Ideal characteristic [7] of Sri Ram

अप्यहं जीवितं जह्यां त्वां वा सीते सलक्ष्मणाम् ।
न तु प्रतिज्ञां संश्रुत्य ब्राह्मणेभ्यो विषेष्टतः ॥ [8]

Here SriRam says – Sita, I can even renounce Lakshman and you, but I can never forsake the commitment, especially the commitment given to the Brahmins!

दद्यान् प्रतिगृहीयात् सत्यं ब्रूयान्न चानृतम् ।
अपि जीवितहेतोर्वा रातः सत्यपराक्रमः ॥ [9]

The honest and valiant Ram of course bestows, but can never accept. Utters the truth only and never speaks untruth.

नास्य क्रोधः प्रसाद च निरर्थोऽस्ति कदाचन ।
हन्त्येष नियमाद् वध्यानवध्येषु न कप्यति ॥ [10]

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Ram's wrath and grace do not go in vain, it means, His wrath and grace are unfailing. He kills or executes the one deserving to be killed and never shows His wrath on innocent and who do not deserve to be killed.

A comment on Sri Ram's characteristics in the words of Chanakya – Ram's eagerness to execute Dharm and the mellifluousness in his expression are praiseworthy. His even excitement in company and in charity and steadfastness towards friend are also par excellence. He was very obedient to His Master. His seriousness of mind, purity in practice, interest in qualities, awareness of the Shastras, beauty of form and devotion to the Lord Hari are extremely remarkable. That is why, for the sages, there could not be any other glorious personality other than Sri Ram as the subject of epics-

आनुषंश्यमनुकोषः श्रुतं शीलं दमः शमः ।
राघवंपोभयन्त्येते षड्गुणाः पुरुषर्षभम् । [11]

Gentleness, compassion, knowledge, aim] having control of the senses and control of mind are the six principles, which glorify Raghavendra Ram.

All distinctions in form such as grace, aura, image, colour, character, elegance, nobility, fortune, passion etc shine only in the context of Ram.

नहि वे स्त्रीवधकृते घृणा कार्यो नरोत्तम ।
चतुर्वर्ण्यहितार्थं हि कर्तव्यं राजसूनुना ।। [12]
नृषंसमनृषंसं वा प्रजारक्षणकारणात् ।
पातकं वा सदोषं वा कर्तव्यं रक्षता सदा । [13]

You should not abhor killing a woman, because a prince will have to kill such a tyrannous woman also for the sake of protecting the four communities. The king may have to be cruel, unkind, sinful, faulty everything for the sake of protecting the people.

In Valmiki Ramayan, he was defined as the worshipper of Brahmins – worshipped by the Brahmins, yet Ram had to side with justice when the question arose of imparting justice to the innocent Bhawan hurt by the Brahmins, because in His view, Justice is Supreme.

In the same manner, when the fierce form of Parasu Ram, the Brahmin who eliminated Kshatriyas from the Earth 21 times, towards protecting even Ram's Kshatriya dharma said, assuming me to be impotent and incompetent, you have insulted Kshatriya valour, therefore you see my valour. He stringed His bow and said – You are holy for me as you are a Brahmin and the grandson of Vishwamitra's sister Satyawati, that is why I cannot aim a fatal arrow at you, but I shall destroy your Supreme status (Divya-Gati) and the worlds you have achieved through your ascetic powers. [14] But, when Ram was faced with the question of violating Dharma, there Ram killed the unrighteous Shambuk Sudra and resurrected the Brahmin's son, and in the same manner killed unrighteous Brahmin Ravan and bestowed life to the entire mankind.

Honoring the command of his parents, He cheerfully embraced life in the jungles quitting the kingdom as if it were a trivial issue. Even when dear Lakshman deservingly criticized Kaikeyi, then Ram said –

“न तेऽम्बा मध्यमा तात गर्हितव्या कदाचन ।” [15]

You do not accuse my middle mother Kaikeyi, instead discuss about Bharat.

“धनुर्वेदविदां श्रेष्ठो लोकेऽतिरथसम्मतः ।
अभियाता प्रहर्ता चे सेनानयवि शारदः ।। [16]
अप्रधृष्य च संग्रामे कृद्वैरपि सुरासुरैः ।
अनुसूयो जितक्रोधो न दप्तो न च मत्सरी ।। [17]

Ram is the best among archers and He is even awesome among the atiradhaas. He is competent enough to attack the enemy-army and is an efficient army commander. Even the wrathful deities and demons could not damage Him in any manner in the battlefield. In spite of all this, He never envied others nor became irritated.

‘नैकस्य हेतो रक्षांसि पृथिव्यां हन्तुमर्हसि ।
अयुध्यमानं प्रच्छन्नं प्राञ्जलिं भारणगतम् ।।
पलायमानं मत्तं वा न हन्तुं त्वमिहार्हसि ।
तस्यैव सु वधे यत्नं करिष्यामि महाभुज ।। [18]

Sri Ram was bestowed with the best knowledge and weapons by the sages Vasishth, Vishwamitra and Agasthya. Had he willed, he could have brought them into use and could have killed everyone without any effort, but Ram never put them to use. Once Lakshman requested permission to use Brahmastra, but Sri Ram said, just for the sake of one it is not fair to kill all the demons, who are not waging a war, who are disguised, seeking refuge, under preparation, running away, intoxicated. Following these ideals even today is it not possible for humanity to live in peace?

“रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः साधुः सत्यपराक्रमः । [19]

Ram is the embodiment of Dharma. He is a saint and has truthful valour. After Ravana was killed, Vibhishana expresses grief initially and praises the attributes of Ravana, but when the topic of his last rites comes up at the end, he remembers the evils deeds such as Sita-abduction etc., and does not agree to perform last rites. Then Sri Ram tells him –

मरणान्तानि वैराणि निर्वृत्तं नः प्रयोजनम् ।
क्रियतामस्य संकारो ममाप्येष यथा तव ।। [20]

Enmity is only up to the point of death. Our mission is accomplished. Now as he is a brother to you, so is he even to me. You perform his cremation rites. Ram even praised him. In spite of being an unrighteous, untruthful person, Ravan had been valiant, strong and brave in the battlefield. Even Indra and other deities could not defeat him. He performed several acts of charity, yagna and noble deeds also. That is how he motivated him to perform the last rites and made him dutiful. Even after winning a prosperous empire like Lanka, Ram did not cast His eyes on its prosperity. He handed over Lanka to Ravan's brother Vibhishan only.

Swami Vivekananda says, “It is absolutely necessary for us to cherish lofty ideals. Most of the people stray here and there in this dark path of life without having any ideal. If the one who has set an ideal fails one thousand times; it is certain that the one without any ideal will fail fifty thousand times”. [21]

Conclusion

Accepting Sri Ram as the supreme ideal, by absorbing His natural disposition in every context of life, in every phase of life, performing duties just as Ram did, living in the family and society and fulfilling every duty a person can easily reach the goal of self-attainment gradually.



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