

The Essence of Ramayana

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*“ He who has ego is not loved by anyone;
He who has anger ceases to discriminate;
He who has excessive desires cannot control his mind;
He who has greed cannot taste happiness ”*

Embodiments of love!

As long as man has ego nobody will love him. Even his own wife and children will shun him. When anger erupts in man he ceases to be happy. Excessive desires make him lose control over his mind. The day man distances himself from greed he will enjoy happiness.

Today's discussion on Ramayana will be liked very much by the ladies. Rama and Lakshmana along with Vishwamithra reached Mithila. After Rama broke Lord Shiva's bow, Janaka sent an invitation to Dasaratha to come to Mithila. This meant that Rama and Lakshmana had four days at their disposal. When only one day was left for the arrival of their parents and brothers, Lakshmana approached Sage Vishwamithra and said, "Master, my parents and brothers will be arriving tomorrow. If you permit, on this last remaining day, we would like to see the city of Mithila". Sage Vishwamithra consented to the request.

Rama and Lakshmana soon walked along the streets of Mithila. Like a powerful magnet at work, the gaze of all citizens was attracted towards the two princes. Even the women working inside their houses came out to catch a glimpse of the two boys. Children at school too came rushing out. Everyone stared at the two brothers without batting an eyelid. They wondered, "Oh! What a heavenly beauty

these boys have. They are resplendent like the sun and the moon. Where have they come from? What have they come for? Who are they?" Thus they kept wondering among themselves, but none of them knew the answers.

Finally a young house wife appeared and explained to the women thus, "My birth place is the city of Ayodhya. Since I am married into a family in Mithila, I now reside here. These handsome boys are the sons of emperor Dasaratha. They are extremely handsome and bear the names Rama and Lakshmana. Even in Ayodhya wherever they appear they would instantly attract everybody's attention." In this way the lady gave the other women all the details of the attractive princes.

Meanwhile though they were the center of intense attraction, Rama and Lakshmana never raised their heads. They were enjoying their walk with their heads bowed down. Some women, in order to attract the attention of the princes, threw flowers on their path hoping that at least then the princes would look at them. They made every attempt possible to catch the eyes of Rama and Lakshmana. Some even waved the sacred *Aarathi*. However, the princes remained unperturbed and would not look at anybody. The youth of those days had such sacred vision. At that young age none of them ever looked at women.

Rama and Lakshmana finished their tour and returned to their palace. Meanwhile their parents and brothers had already arrived. When the four brothers assembled they shone like the moon amidst the stars. The citizens of Mithila were amazed by the beauty, gait and looks of the four brothers. The following day the bow of Lord Shiva was to be displayed. A big function was organized. Rama came to the assembly along with his brothers. There were several other powerful kings and emperors in the hall. On seeing such a gathering, the wife of King Janaka, Sunetra, while watching from behind the curtains started thinking thus: "There are so many handsome and valiant young princes in this assembly. Will it not be better to select one of them, marry my daughters to them and quickly discharge the responsibility? Why does the emperor need to complicate the issue by announcing that the one who bends the bow of Lord Shiva would be the eligible groom? Several heroic personalities have attempted in the past and have failed. Will these youngsters assembled here succeed? How will their tender bodies bear the burden of the heavy bow?" She was very much worried about the issue and was discussing it with her companions.

Her fears came true when no one in the assembly could even lift the bow. Finally, Sage Vishwamithra gave permission to Rama to lift the bow. Rama went up to the box in which the bow was kept and opened the lid. The moment he did that a severe turbulence struck and shook everybody. Lakshmana then got up and with one foot pressed down firmly on the earth. Even Vishwamithra didn't know what Lakshmana was up to. He asked, "Lakshmana, what is happening? What are you doing?" Lakshmana humbly bowed the head and said, "This is the help I must render to my elder brother". What Lakshmana meant was that, when Rama

raised the bow, there was a sudden tilt in earth's balance leading to the turbulence. By pressing down on the earth Lakshmana was balancing the shift.

What love the brothers had for each other! When they were once playing together Bharatha came weeping and fell into Kausalya's lap. Kausalya lovingly enquired, "Child, why are you crying? Did your elder brother scold you? Did your brothers fight with you? In this way she tried to find out the cause of Bharatha's grief. Bharatha replied, "Mother, none of my brothers would dream of scolding me and fighting with me. They all love me very much. But in order to make me win, despite my best efforts Rama always keeps losing the game. He always wants me to win". The younger brothers should win and for that Rama would deliberately lose. That was always Rama's aim. Every brother followed this path and strove to make the other brothers win. Rama knew that if his brothers won and were happy he would be happy too. In this way Rama put himself to many troubles just to make sure that his younger brothers prospered.

When Rama lifted the sacred bow of Lord Shiva out of its box, strung the thread and twanged the string, a peel of thunder set out. Everybody wondered as to how a boy of such a tender age could achieve such a stupendous task. The bow could not be lifted even if thousand men were to make an attempt to do so. Several elephants were required to pull the box into the hall. How could Rama lift such a heavy bow? How could he manage to string it? News of this wonderful feat spread throughout Mithila and created a sensation.

Janaka started making preparations for the wedding of his daughter to Rama. Kushadwaja was the brother Janaka. He had two daughters by the names Mandavi and Shrutakeerthi. King Janaka too had a

second daughter Urmila. As the marriage preparations were going on Sage Vashista approached Janaka and said " O! King! Here are four resplendent youth shining like the very sun. They are all valiant and heroic. Vashista then consulted Kushadwaja and proposed that his two daughters be given in marriage to Bharatha and Shatrugna. Kushadwaja promptly agreed. Janaka shed tears of joy at the turn of events and was prepared to give his second daughter Urmila to Lakshmana.

The brides and the grooms were then readied and brought to the stage. As they were all seated on the stage they appeared to light up the entire city of Mithila. The ladies experienced unlimited thrill. They praised their good fortune at being able to witness the wedding of not just Sita but all the four princesses.

This is divine will. If God so wills He can do anything. Who can do what God does? Who can possess what God has? God alone is the eternal witness. His will alone can accomplish anything.

The wedding was going on. But the four brothers would not raise their heads and look at anybody. In the modern age on the other hand conversations and frivolous behaviour begins much before marriage! But here the brides and grooms sat with their heads lowered in humility and modesty throughout the ceremony. They carried out the instructions of the priest without raising their heads. I am narrating these incidents to you to highlight the high order of discipline and idealism entertained in those days. Janaka stood beside Rama and prepared to give away the bride. He offered him Sita's hand and said, "Rama, here is my daughter, Sita" But Rama would not look at Sita despite Janaka's entreaties. This was because the custom of those said that, a

woman would become a wife only when the sacred *mangalashtra* was tied around her neck. Until then the bride and the groom were not expected to look at each other. This was a strict discipline exercised in those days. Such discipline will never appear either today or tomorrow. None can set or match the ideals that were established by the four brothers.

The wedding took place. It was now time for the garlanding ceremony. The brides waited with garlands in their hands, as did the grooms. The three brothers would begin their tasks only after Rama started it first. The parents too waited behind the children. They went up to Rama and bade him place the garland around the Sita's neck so that other remaining brothers could also do the same. Rama did so and all the brothers followed suit. It was now the turn of the brides. Sita waited with the garland in her hands. Moments passed but Rama would not bend his head! His was a valor and dignity that raised, strung and broke the mighty bow of Lord Shiva. He therefore refused to bend his head in order to protect His own honor. He kept standing.

Rama was tall, broad shouldered and valiant. Though young of age all the brothers were tall and physically strong. The long break set people to start murmuring among themselves. They wondered as to why Rama refused to bow His head. Rama too was not keen to remain thus. He looked at Lakshmana and made an almost imperceptible signal. The four brothers were always sharp and alert. This was depicted in Thyagaraja's song.

*" Would a monkey cross the ocean?
Is it possible to tie you with a rope?
Would the goddess Lakshmi worship you?
Would Lakshmana willingly serve you?
Would the highly intelligent Bharatha offer
his prostrations to you?"*

Oh! How great indeed is Lord Rama's strength "

Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha - the heavenly serpent that had the strength to bear the entire world on its coils. He caught Rama's signal and understood that Rama wanted him to raise the portion of earth where Sita was standing. With an equally slight shake of his head, he indicated that this plan would defy the laws of nature and was hence not suitable for execution. If Sita was raised, so would everyone else! Rama signaled back to Lakshmana to hit on some plan to break the deadlock. Lakshmana hit upon an idea. He abruptly ran and fell at Rama's feet and would not get up. Rama was forced to bend down and raise Lakshmana from his feet. Grabbing this chance, Sita at once placed her garland on Rama's neck. The moment Sita garlanded Rama, the other sisters too proceeded to garland their grooms. This incident amply demonstrates the lofty, disciplined and honorable style of functioning and behavior of the brothers.

The wedding was soon performed. The party returned to Ayodhya. They were received with much love and gaiety. What we need to look at is not merely the virtues of the four brothers. The characters of Sita, Urmila, Mandavi and Shrutakeerthi too need to be discussed and elaborated. They too were highly virtuous. They came from a highly reputed family. King Janaka was known to have mastered his senses. He was adept at Karma yoga. He was an acknowledged expert in Jnana yoga. Daughters from such a family cannot be ordinary mortals. Rama alone was given the order to go into exile. But Sita would not agree to this idea. Rama meanwhile went to his mother. She was shattered when she got the sad news of her son's exile in place of the joyous news of his coronation. "Son you are merely obeying your father's command

and going away to the forests. What about your mother's wishes? I am your father's "ardhangi"-his better half. What importance are you giving to the words of this half? I shall too come with you to the forest", she said. Rama then preached to her, "Mother! Husband is verily your God. There is no other deity beyond him. He is now aged. Added to that, this sad state of affairs has further crushed him. It is not proper for you to abandon him now, at this stage. You must serve and support him. Comfort him. Give him strength and courage to bear his pain". In this way, Rama dissuaded his mother from following him to the forests.

Sita heard all these. When Rama returned to the palace to wear ochre robes, she too started to wear them, indicating her desire to follow Rama to the forests. Rama strongly prohibited her. In soft tones, she reminded him, "Lord! Why is there one set of moral codes for your mother and another for me? Is the code of conduct not common to all the married women? Is it not the responsibility of a good wife to make her husband happy? She is supposed to look after his welfare. Does it not become my responsibility as well to do the same? I shall hence defy your prohibition and accompany you to the forest."

Urmila was a great painter. She was in her room, painting the scene of Rama and Sita's wedding, which she wanted to send to her father. At that moment, Lakshmana entered. He was in a very angry mood. Rama was not agreeing to his pleas and was going ahead with obeying Kaikeyi's orders. He called out to Urmila and informed her that he was proceeding to the forests. Startled at the dramatic turn of events, Urmila got up in a hurry and in the process, accidentally toppled the canvas and spilled colors on it. She lamented, " Alas! This beautiful picture of Sri Rama's wedding scene is totally spoilt now".

Lakshmana said, " Urmila! I am responsible for spoiling your painting. Kaikeyi is responsible for ruining Rama's coronation as the emperor. Today, both of us have caused only damage to others. I am leaving now." Urmila's courage and strength of character now came to the fore. Lakshmana had already informed her that Sita too was accompanying Rama to the forest. Urmila was thrilled that her sister would accompany Rama and serve him. But she did not insist on following Lakshmana. On the contrary she told Lakshmana, "Lord! I know that you are proceeding to the forest with the sole objective of serving Sita and Rama. May you succeed without any obstacles. You must spend your days and nights in steadfast service to Rama and Sita. You need not worry about my welfare or even think about me. Never be concerned that you are not present by my side at Ayodhya to look after me. Forget Ayodhya itself because henceforth, the forest is your Ayodhya. This Ayodhya without you is the forest. Hence, do not give any scope for concerns about me. On my part I shall happily contemplate on you and spend my time here." Urmila thus gave tremendous courage to her husband. She also foresaw the possibility of Lakshmana's service to Rama and Sita being disturbed whenever he thought of her. Hence she extracted a promise from her husband that he would not even think about her during the course of exile for fourteen years. She supposed, " In the forest, Rama will be your father and Sita, your mother. Your primary concern should be to serve them faithfully. Hence, forget all of us here." This was the promise she took from Lakshmana and cheerfully sent Lakshmana to the forest. Kausalya might have grieved a little, but not Urmila. This is the attribute of an ideal daughter-in-law. She must always encourage her husband by giving him strength and courage appropriately. A housewife is also called

'*Grihalakshmi*' and '*Dharmapatni*'. Urmila discharged her duty as a *Dharmapathni* by encouraging Lakshmana to tread the path of righteousness.

Bharatha, Shathrugna, Mandavi and Shruthakirthis were absent when all this action was taking place. They were away on a holiday to the Kaikeya kingdom. Mother Kausalya was highly distressed at the turn of events. At this juncture, Sumithra's noble qualities had a close inspection. As was her name, so was her character. She was verily the good friend. She had a pure heart. She did not weep at the turn of the events. Instead, with joy, she consoled Kausalya thus, "Sister, why are you so sad? Rama, who has incarnated for the emancipation of mankind, can never come to any harm. If you are concerned about his physical welfare, my son Lakshmana is anyway always going to be there with Rama. He will be Rama's attendant and aide. You must not give any scope for fear or anxiety." Yet Kausalya was the womb that bore Rama. Her pain at his exile was, therefore, immense. In this context, the noble and courageous counsel of Sumithra to Kausalya was much more laudable. However when dealing with the epic Ramayana, hardly anyone discusses these noble attributes of Sumithra. She further told Kausalya, " this entire drama is the master plan of God. You and me cannot add or change anything in this. For the welfare of the world and the establishment of Dharma, God has enacted this mission. Hence, sister! Do not cry. Your tears at the time of departure of your sons will only prove inauspicious to them. With cheer and joy, bless them and send them." Thus did Sumithra stand by Kausalya and give her a great deal of courage. The princes and Sita soon left.

Meanwhile, Dasaratha regained his consciousness and recalled everything.

Utterly agitated, he rushed onto the street, shouting, " Rama, are you going? No, no! Please wait!" Sumantha was the charioteer. Dasaratha implored, " O Sumantha! Stop! Stay a moment! Let me glimpse my Rama just once." Rama neither asked Sumantha to stop, nor did he tell him to move on. He merely told him to discharge his duty. Several scholars have depicted at this point that Rama had asked Sunantha to utter a lie and tell that he had not heard the king's plea to stop. On the contrary, he maintained silence. In such matters of principle and discipline, both Rama and Lakshmana were very strict. They are the ideals to be emulated when it comes to attaining victory and obeying one's parents' commands.

Lakshmana resided in the forests with Sita and Rama for fourteen years. Yet, not even once did he raise his head and observe the face of Sita. On the Rishyamukha mountain, when Sugriva and Rama met and talked, a bundle that contained all of Sita's jewellery was brought. She had hurled the bundle to the ground when Ravana was whisking her away by the aerial route to Lanka. Sugriva had preserved the bundle since he did not know whom the jewellery belonged to. When Sugriva was now engaged in a conversation with Rama and Lakshmana, he had the parcel opened and showed Rama the jewellery. He enquired if they belonged to mother Sita or if some demons had dropped them accidentally. Rama examined everything, but was at a loss to identify any of them. Nowadays, the entire list of the wife's jewellery, along with their appearance and shape is already available! Rama passed the jewellery to Lakshmana and asked him to identify them. Of all of them Lakshmana positively identified only the anklets as having belonged to Sita. Rama asked, "How could you say so?" Lakshmana replied, "Every day after my bath, I would

offer salutations at my mother Sita's feet. I hence know these by sight." What noble ideals! For fourteen years they were together in the same hut yet Lakshmana never looked at Sita's face.

Since they had such noble character, they were blessed with what has been described as '*Lavanya*'. '*Lavanya*' in Sanskrit means a great reputation. It is used as a mere name today. It actually means purity derived from strict discipline and character.

This was the lofty standard of ideals established by Rama and Lakshmana. Meanwhile, Dasaratha, unable to bear the agony of separation from Rama, shed his mortal coils. There was now a dilemma as to who would perform his last rites. Rama and Lakshmana were away in exile. Bharatha and Shatrugna were in their maternal uncle's house at Kaikeya kingdom. It would take at least ten days for their arrival. Hence, Vashista, Vishwamithra and other sages decided that the body be embalmed and preserved in oil. There was nothing like ice or morgue facilities in those days. And there remained Dasaratha's body for fourteen days.

Bharatha and Shatrugna arrived. Shatrugna is another role model that the Ramayana has to present. He matched Lakshmana in every way. While Shatrugna would always serve Bharatha, Lakshmana engaged himself in service to Lord Rama. The twins hence spent their life in serving their elder brothers. Bharatha always relied on Shatrugna's wisdom and sane counsel. True to his name, Shatrugna was one of tremendous strength and valour-one who destroyed his enemies. There was none to surpass him when it came to routing the enemies. It was his presence that enabled Rama, Lakshmana and Bharatha to remain safe and secure.

Shatrugna was one who never talked. Even Lakshmana would talk and sometimes argue, but not Shatrugna.

Once, before the wedding episode, Rama, Lakshmana and Sage Vishwamithra was proceeding to the sage's hermitage. They crossed the river Sarayu in a boat and reached the other bank. There, they saw a beautiful ashram or hermitage. Lakshmana was astounded and asked Rama, "Brother, what is this place? It appears like a beautiful township." Vishwamithra replied, "Don't be in a hurry. I shall explain. This hermitage is not an ordinary one. It belongs to Manmatha. He was supremely handsome. He could attract everyone to him. He developed his inner and external strengths and powers. He however tried to influence Lord Shiva and was cursed by him to remain formless - '*Angaheena*'. That is why this domain is called '*Anga Desha*' - the kingdom of Anga. It is a sacred spot because Lord Shiva traveled here. It is hence the gift of Lord Shiva and His very own place."

They then rested for the night in the ashram. At dawn, the residents of the ashram made them board a boat and gave them a very warm send-off. They realized that the princes were the sons of emperor Dasaratha. Hence they were honored accordingly and put on a well-decorated boat to proceed with their journey.

Shortly a terrific roar could be heard in the distance. A fearful forest, with full of wild beasts, came into view. Lakshmana asked Sage Vishwamithra, "Master! Where is this loud sound coming from? What is the name of this eerie place?" The sage replied, "Son! The booming sound is of the river Sarayu merging into the mighty Ganges. The sacred Ganges is like a huge ocean into which this river Sarayu is merging. This is causing this huge roar.

This forest is infested with wild beasts and terrible demons."

They soon stepped into the forest. In all directions were seen wild beasts and eerie sounds were emanating from all directions. This was the domain of Ravana's sister - the demoness Soorpanaka and a sense of fear was stuck in anyone who dared enter the forest, as every step was fraught with danger. Hence Vishwamithra repeatedly blessed Rama, "O Rama! May all auspiciousness be added on to you."

Shortly, Lakshmana fell behind while Rama and Vishwamithra walked on. Lakshmana who wanted to attend to his ablutions moved a certain distance away. When he caught with them again, his mind has totally changed. He suddenly burst out, "Brother! What is all this trouble? Why are you, one who is supposed to enjoy every luxury, suffering here? Why am I supposed to suffer with you? I shall make remedies once we return. Let us go back to Ayodhya now. Why should we proceed further in this terrible forest? How are we expected to eat and foster ourselves?" This was the sudden burst of anger from Lakshmana.

Rama merely smiled and expressed no reaction. Instead, he took Lakshmana's hand and led him away from the forest and out of the forest. The anger that erupted in Lakshmana stayed till they reached the borders of the forest. The instant Rama led Lakshmana out of the forest, Lakshmana at once calmed down to his usual self. As Rama let Lakshmana relax and calm down under a tree, he explained to the perplexed Lakshmana, "This is the kingdom of Ravana's sister, Soorpanaka. She roams freely in this area. You two had stepped into that area. Hence, the vibrations of that place - '*Sthalabalam*', affected you. Soorpanaka's evil qualities diffused into you and forced

you to behave thus. We shall leave this place and go away" Lakshmana felt thoroughly ashamed of his earlier behavior "Alas! What a shame! How could I utter such rough and uncultured words? It is not in me to talk thus. This is definitely the vibration of demonic surroundings. They are not my true feelings." So, consoling himself, he asked Rama's pardon and proceeded on their journey.

Shortly, they could experience the pleasant vibrations of Siddhashrama. The cool breeze and the vedic chants, charged the place with holiness. Vishwamithra then explained, "Sons! This is our Siddhashrama. Lord Vamana was born here. Lord Shiva resided here for a few days."

At Siddhashrama, Vishwamithra entrusted Rama and Lakshmana with a job. He said, "Sons! You have come here to protect a *Yajna*. You should undertake that responsibility. This was also the command of your father. From this moment onwards you are expected to desist from eating and resting. This itself is a big *Yajna* that you two shall perform. You should sanctify it and emerge successful." Rama and Lakshmana were equal to the task. They never displayed any tiredness, difficulty or weakness.

As the dawn broke, the great *Yajna* was started. The instant the mantras were uttered, Rama and Lakshmana went into high alert and patrolled the place. A huge roar could be heard. One of the sages told the brothers, "There come the demonic hordes. They will be lead by Chanda and Amarka. Be ready." They were without food or water or sleep. Yet they successfully discharged their duty and killed the demons and saw to it that the *Yajna* was performed successfully.

The total dedication of Rama and Lakshmana to the task entrusted by Viswamithra can be understood from the following episode. As the *Yajna* concluded, a troop of soldiers came to the ashram. They handed an invitation to Sage Vishwamithra. This was a personal invitation from King Janaka of Mithila. He had sent similar invitations to all kings and princes to try and lift the bow of Lord Shiva and win the hand of his daughter Sita. In such an assembly, he prayed that the great sage too be present and shower his blessings. Sage Vishwamithra was happy and with great excitement, narrated to Rama and Lakshmana the qualities of the great bow of Lord Shiva. He said, "Sons! You must come and see the bow. There cannot be another of its kind in this world. It is a gift from the heavens. This bow is not an ordinary one. It is worth going and seeing." Rama and Lakshmana naturally developed a curiosity to take a look at the bow. However, Rama gently reminded the sage, "Master! Our father had only asked us to come with you and protect the *Yajna*. We have no instructions to go to Mithila and see the bow. We cannot transgress our father's orders." For this Vishwamithra replied, " Was it also not your father's command that you should obey my instructions? Hence, you must obey my orders!" The princes could only keep quite and make preparations to accompany the sage on the new journey.

For the welfare of this country, you all need to minutely scrutinize how delicately, correctly and righteously Rama handled each situation. He killed all the demons and safeguarded the righteous. All these are actually small parts of a Divine master plan. It was willed that Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrugna take births that they should cause the annihilation of the demons.

Lankini, the guardian deity of Lanka, also made the prophecy of the doom of the demons. When Brahma asked Ravana to pray for a boon, the demon said, "My death should not be caused by the Gods, Yakshas, demons, Kinchas or Kimpurushas. Grant me this boon." Rama had expertly detected the fatal flaw in this boon. The name of man was missing from the list! Since Ravana had made this omission, his death was certain at the hands of a man. Lord Vishnu hence decided to incarnate in human form. Rama hence prayed to Vishwamithra, "Ravana's death at my hands is certain. You must therefore propagate to one and all that Rama is coming. He shall definitely kill Ravana.

In the entire creation, Divinity assumes the role of being the vital substance. Rama belonged to the solar dynasty. The Sun God was their guardian deity. Without the sun's nourishing rays, life cannot thrive on earth. When creation first began, it took a few crores of years for light to dawn. It was all darkness till then. Similarly, after the birth of Rama, the sun could not shine for fifteen days! Consequently, the moon too remained invisible. Both the sun and the moon lamented that they could not catch the glimpse of the Divine incarnation of Lord Rama. The Moon God performed a penance, praying to catch a glimpse of Lord Rama. At that time, Lord Rama appeared before the Moon God and said; "I know that you could not see me for the first fifteen days after my birth. I hereby grant you a boon. In my next incarnation, you shall have my first darshan - even before anybody else can see me." And it so proved to be. When the next incarnation of Krishna took place, at the midnight hours, as Vasudeva carried the baby to the safety of

Nanda's house, it was the moon that had the first darshan of the Divine child.

In this way, there are several intricate, secret and profound teachings in the Ramayana. There are no contradictions or confusions in this epic. The story of Rama is eternal and eminently readable. How many ever times it is heard, it still does not satiate the desire to hear again and again. This sacred story can never be forgotten. Rama's divine actions can never be ignored. Everything that he did was steeped in righteousness. All that he spoke was only the truth. In such a sacred epic, several scholars have introduced distorted explanations and have painted an unholy hue about it. There can be no scope of perversions in Ramayana. There can be no place in it for even an iota of untruth and falsehood. The entire story, from start to end, is nothing but the truth - eternal, pure and serene.

Today, we shall stop with the events of Siddhashrama. The nature of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrugna is quite unique and wonderful. Sage Vashista has described it as follows:

*" They are wonderful; they are worshipped
in all the three worlds;
They are so close to one's heart,
they are one's true friends;
They are revered by the sages,
men, animals and plants too;
Such is the beauty of Lord Vishnu's deeds! "*

It is only the ignoramuses that are blind to the inner significance of the Lord's deeds and misinterpret them. This causes confusion and deviates the mind of the true seeker from the sacred truth. The history of Lord Rama is highly sacred. It is only when you hear the story fully that can you understand the holiness associated with it.

