

RamQuest



क्या हम बन सकते हैं राम?

Eight Kingdoms for Eight Princes

Homophones in Ramcharitmanas

Universal Philosophy of Ramayana

Communication Skills of Hanuman

Discourses of Bhagwan Ram in Ramcharitmanas

Love and Devotion between Lord Ram and Mighty Hanuman

Ram's Dharma & Shiva's Bow Skill in Action Portrayed in the Ramayana

April 2018

॥ जय सिया राम ॥

हरि अनंत हरि कथा अनंता ।
कहहि सुनहि बहुबिधि सब संता ॥
1.140.C5

*Lord is infinite, so are his sacred
tales,*

*Saints hear and sing, in infinite
ways. (Ramcharitmanas 1.140.C5)*

*The story of Lord Ram has been told
for thousands of years, even before
Sage Valmiki wrote the Ramayana.
Hundreds of different versions of
Ram's story have been written after
Valmiki. Ramayana has been also
retold through plays, movies, TV
serials, songs, discussions, seminars,
dance performances, etc. RamQuest is
one similar attempt to retell the Ram
story.*

*RamQuest is a dream that is aimed to
spread awareness of the Ramayana
and the holy name of Lord Ram,
particularly amongst our youth. We
publish short articles in simple
language to realize this dream. With
Lord Ram's infinite mercy, we shall
realize this dream!*

*RamQuest would not have been possible without the encouragement and
support of many divine souls, and I am so grateful to each of them. We express
our gratitude to the authors who wrote for this issue and those who will be
writing for future ones. Finally, many sincere thanks to our patrons and
advertisers, who have been instrumental in the widespread distribution of this
publication. Finally, I thank my parents and all gurus, without whom nothing in
my life would have been possible.*

*RamQuest is also available online. Please visit www.ramacharit.org/ramquest
to download the same. We invite enlightened readers to send their articles for
publication and comments and suggestions for improvement.*

भव सागर चह पार जो पावा । राम कथा ता कहँ दृढ़ नावा ॥ Ramcharitmanas 7.53.C3

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जय सिया राम ।

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RamQuest is a quarterly publication that aims to spread awareness of the Ramayana and the holy name of Lord Ram, particularly amongst our youth. The sole criterion for publication of an article is its intrinsic value to quench readers' thirst to know about Lord Ram and the Ramayana and enkindle an appetite for further pursuit.

Contributors are requested to send their articles keeping the following factors in mind:

(a) Articles must address a topic that is directly related to the Ramayana and Lord Ram.

(b) Articles must be written in lucid simple language without complex jargon.

(c) Original unpublished articles are preferred. Previously published articles can be considered if necessary permissions to republish have been received and no copyrights are violated.

(d) Articles should provide fresh perspectives and not reiterate well-known stories.

(e) Articles based on scientific, historic, or literary evidence are highly encouraged.

(f) The maximum length of an article is 1,000 words. Longer articles are unlikely to be published.

(g) The Editor-in-Chief has final discretion on publication decisions.

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<http://www.ramacharit.org/ramquest>

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Articles Invited!

The readers are invited to submit their articles for publication in *RamQuest*. Though primarily language of *RamQuest* is English as our goal is to reach out to the new generation, we also consider articles written in Hindi. Articles should focus on Lord Ram and Ramayana. For complete details, please see page 4 of this issue or write to ramquest@ramacharit.org. Please visit www.ramacharit.org to download previous issues of *RamQuest*.

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हम बन सकते हैं राम!

ओमप्रकाश गुप्ता



Dr. Omprakash Gupta is a professor of management at the University of Houston-Downtown, Texas, USA. Though his primary interest of teaching and research is management, lately he has been working in the area of Ramayana. He has recently published two books and a few articles on Ramayana related topics. In his own field of management, he has published 70+ research papers in professional academic journals. He is also a recipient of numerous teaching, research and service awards.

क्या हम बन सकते हैं राम?
हाँ, हम बन सकते हैं राम!

कर लो राम से काम तुम,
नहीं हो मर्यादा से वाम तुम,
पूरे सारे कर्तव्य करो,
बन जाओगे राम तुम!

दुष्टों का राम ने नाश किया,
जोकर मन में तब वास किया,
मन के दोषों का नाश करो,
यदि बनना चाहो राम तुम!

छोटों को मित्र बनाया था,
सबको प्रभु ने अपनाया था,

छोटों से जो तुम करो प्यार,
बन जाओगे राम तुम!

ऊँच-नीच का नहीं किया भेद,
शबरी को दीने भक्ति- वेद,
यदि केवट को अपनाओ,
बन जाओगे राम तुम!

राम भगवान नहीं जन्म से,
विश्व पूजता किये कर्म से,
उनके जैसे यदि कर्म करो,
स्वतः राम का रूप धरो!

क्या हम बन सकते हैं राम?
हाँ, हम बन सकते हैं राम!

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Discourses of Bhagwan Ram in Ramcharitmanas

Ram Mallik

Shri Ram Mohan Mallik has technology and management background and worked in the management positions in India, Middle East and U.S.A, including Director Process Technology in Fluor Corporation Houston. He has been a long time student of Sri Ramcharitmanas. He has published articles on topics related to Indian religion and Ramayana.



Bhagwan Ram's discourses intended for all living beings are spread throughout Manas. These are divine teachings of God with great love and affection the path of devotion and virtuous living. Bhagwan Ram declares "I repose in hearts of those who depend on me in thought, word and, deed and worship me in disinterested way." Some of these discourses are briefly described in this article.

1. Discourse to Lakshman (Aranyakand, D14C3 to D17C1)

Lakshman requested Bhagwan Ram to enlighten him about Jnana-spiritual wisdom, Vairagya-dispassion, Maya-illusion and Bhakti-devotion, as well as the difference between Ishwar-the Supreme Being and Jiva-the living being. Bhagwan explains that feeling of 'I' and 'mine' and 'you' and 'yours' is Maya which has enslaved all individual souls. Dispassion results from dharma, the practice of virtue and Jnana comes from Yoga, concentration of mind which bestows liberation. Devotion melts the heart of Lord and under this is Jnana (knowledge of formless God) and Vijnana (the knowledge of God both with and without form). He who does not understand Maya, Ishwar or self is Jiva and one who decides liberation and entanglement and inspires Maya is Ishwar. Lord further explains nine forms of devotion and declares "I repose in hearts of those who depend on me in thought, word and, deed and worship me in disinterested way."

2 Discourse to Jatayu (Aranyakand, D30-D31C1-5)

Bhagwan Ram visited the injured vulture Jatayu and lovingly stroked his head. With tearful eyes he told him that it was his own meritorious work that brought his salvation. There was nothing in the world beyond the reach of those who had others' well being in their heart. Bhagwan Ram advised him to discard his gross physical body and go to Lord's divine abode, and said he could not give anything more as his desires were already fulfilled.

3. Discourse to Sabari (Aranyakand, D35C1-D36C5)

Bhagwan Ram visited the hermitage of tribal princess Sabari, a devotee, and said, "I recognize no relationship except devotion. Despite caste, kinship, lineage, piety, reputation, wealth, power, connections, accomplishments and ability a man without faith is like a cloud without

water”. He explained the nine forms of devotion namely (1) fellowship with the saints, (2) fondness for the Lord’s pastimes, (3) humble service in the feet of the spiritual master, (4) singing glories of the Lord without any pretension, (5) Mantrajapa repetition of the holy mantra with strong faith, (6) practicing self-control and inculcate virtues befitting a noble person, (7) seeing the whole world full of God and regarding saints even greater than God, (8) remaining content with whatever one got and never seeing other’s defects and (9) being simple hearted without any deception and having unwavering faith and reliance upon the Lord without any exultation or depression. Whoever practiced any of these was very dear to God.

4. Discourse to Sage Narad (Aranyakand, D43C1 to Chhand in D46)

Sage Narad asked Bhagwan Ram why he did not allow him to marry. Bhagwan Ram explained that he protected him like a parent as marriage was inappropriate for “Muni Narad”. Bhagwan Ram enumerated various shortcomings of women particularly young ones who could distract him from the path of austerity. Bhagwan Ram then explained the distinguishing qualities of saints. They had conquered the six passions (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy), were sinless, disinterested, firm, possessing nothing, pure, full of bliss, of boundless wisdom, desireless, abstemious, truthful, inspired, scholarly and disciplined. Bhagwan Ram went on to describe their virtuous conduct, engaging in singing and hearing Lord’s glories and unselfishly doing good to others.

5. Discourse to Sugriv (Kishkindhakand, D7C1-5)

Bhagwan Ram met Sugriv and befriended him. Bhagwan Ram explained to him the qualities of a true friend who belittled his own big troubles and who overvalued even the minor troubles of his friend. A friend should divert his friend from the path of evil and take him to the righteous path. He should give and take things without any distrust and help him to the best of his ability. Bhagwan Ram went on to explain the characteristics of a bad friend and advised to forsake them. He advised Sugriv to rely on him and grieve no more as he would serve Sugriv’s cause in every way.

6. Discourse to Vanars (Sunderkand, D43C3 to D44)

Vibhishan came to surrender to Bhagwan Ram but vanars expressed suspicions and wanted to tie him up as he was a spy. Bhagwan Ram explained to them that “you are right but my vow is to make my refugee fearless. Those who forsake refugee fearing harm are vile and sinful. I will not reject any refugee even if he has committed the most heinous crimes. If he comes in front of me sins of ten million lives are destroyed. By nature the sinner dislikes to worship me. A wicked person will not come before me. Only a pure soul can find me. Even if he came to spy there is no concern, Lakshman can kill all demons. And if he seeks shelter I will protect him as my own life.”

7. Discourse to Vibhishan (Sunderkand, D48Ch1-8)

Bhagwan Ram explained to Vibhishan that “even a person who was an enemy of all creation and came trembling to me seeking refuge and giving up all vanity, infatuation, guile and hypocrisy, I would at once make him like a saint.” He tied up all worldly relationships and possessions to Lord’s feet and had no craving and his mind was free from joy, grief and fear. Such saints abided in Bhagwan Ram’s heart. Bhagwan Ram declared “they are dear to me and for them only I take a mortal form. Those who worship my personal form, engage in service to others and lead a righteous path are dear to me”.

8 Discourse to Vibhishan (Lankakand, D80C1-D80)

Ravan was on a chariot and Bhagwan Ram was without this and protection for body and feet making Vibhishan nervous. Bhagwan Ram described the chariot which would lead one to victory. This chariot had valour and fortitude as wheels, truthfulness and good conduct as banner, strength, discretion, self-control and benevolence as horses joined to the chariot with the chords of forgiveness, compassion and evenness of mind. Worship of God was expert charioteer, dispassion the shield, contentment the sword, charity the axe, reason the fierce lance, wisdom the bow, pure and steady mind quiver, spiritual practices the sheaf of arrows and homage to the preceptor was the armour. A warrior with such a chariot of righteousness could conquer the most invincible enemy.

9. Discourse to Bharat (Uttarkand, D36C4-D42C1)

Bhagwan Ram responding to Bharat’s question explained the characteristics of saints and non-saints. Bhagwan Ram compared the character of a saint with sandalwood and a non-saint with axe. Axe cut the sandalwood but sandalwood perfumed the axe and made its way onto the head of god. But axe was heated in fire and burnt. Saints were indifferent to sensual pleasures, virtuous, compassionate, free from vanity conquerors of greed, intolerance exultation and fear and other virtues. Non-saints were merciless, deceitful, crooked, foul, and selfish and had many other vices. There was no religious duty like benevolence, no sin like oppressing others. Sinners would suffer the pangs of rebirth and Bhagwan Ram was like death to sinners. Renouncing action that yields good or evil fruit gods, men and saints worshipped Bhagwan Ram and attained liberation. Merits and demerits were created by illusion and had no reality!

10. Discourse to Citizens of Ayodhya (Uttarkand, D43C1-D47C1)

Bhagwan Ram addressed the citizens of Ayodhya, announcing at the outset that his teachings were without attachment asking to do anything wrong or based on authority and people can correct anything wrong without fear. Very fortunate was to attain human form after millions of lives which was the abode of resources for the door of liberation. One missing this would repent and blame time, fate and God. Sensuous

enjoyment was not the human life's objective but to attain salvation with God's grace and the help of a preceptor. Devotion to God was the simplest path for happiness in this life and after. The path of knowledge is difficult and beset with impediments. Path of devotion does not require Yoga, Japa, penance or fasting. Bhagwan Ram also humbly told the secret that without adoring Lord Shankar one could not attain devotion to Bhagwan Ram.

11. Discourse to Kakabhusundi (Uttarkand, D86C1-D87

Bhagwan Ram in his child form explained Crow Kakabhusundi his true, simple and intelligible doctrine. The world with all living beings was the creation of God's Maya. All are dear to the Lord but human beings are liked most and the foremost among them are devotees engaged in his service. All children are dear to a father but the dearest is the one devoted to him. Bhagwan Ram advised Kakabhushundi to worship him, abandoning all other hopes and reliance. Whenever we visualize Ram, an image of a valorous and handsome young man with a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other invariably emerges before our eyes. It is almost impossible to imagine Ram's existence without his bow. Ram and his bow are inseparable. When an artist draws a picture of Ram as a child, he places a picture of a small bow near him. As Krishna is known by his flute, Ram is known by his bow and arrow.

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Eight Kingdoms for Eight Princes

Saroj Bala

Dr. Saroj Bala had distinguished herself as an officer of the Indian Revenue Service. She holds degrees in Law and Political Science. Her first book under the title, “Historicity of Vedic and Ramayan Eras: Scientific Evidences from the Depths of Oceans to the Heights of Skies” was published in 2012. Saroj Bala is widely accepted as a genuine scientific researcher on the subject.



After Sita went to Rasatal, leaving the people of Ayodhya stunned and stupefied, Shri Ram brought his sons Luv and Kush to Ayodhya. Thereafter he ruled for many years and set an example of an ideal welfare state which remains unmatched. Each of his other three brothers were also blessed with two sons. During these years, he also set up eight kingdoms for the eight princes of the kingdom.

Brahmarshi Gargeya brought a message from Yudhajit, the king of Kekaya Pradesh, requesting help in winning over the territory of Gandharvas, located on both sides of river Sindhu. Yudhajit also desired that after winning the territory, it should be merged with Koshal kingdom. On being ordered by Shri Ram, Bharat, accompanied by his two sons Taksh and Pushkal, went with his army to support Yudhajit, his maternal uncle. A fierce battle ensued which continued for seven days, killing thousands of soldiers on both sides. Finally, Bharat discharged a weapon named Samvarta, which killed hundreds of mighty Gandharvas and thus Bharat and Yudhajit, supported by valiant Taksh and Pushkal, succeeded in defeating Gandharvas entirely. Thereafter two beautiful cities named Takshashila and Pushkalavat were developed (7/101). The Gandhar kingdom was divided in two. Bharat's son Taksh was coronated as the king with his capital in Takshashila (later known as Taxila) on the eastern side of Indus and his 2nd son Pushkal was enthroned as the king with his capital in Pushkalavat, on the western side of Indus. These cities were made prosperous, beautified by gardens and groves, well planned markets and streets and also adorned with beautiful houses and temples.

Limited excavations were carried out in Takshashila (Taxila) by John Marshall and Cunningham. The archaeological sites excavated include Sarai Khola, Bhir, Sirkalp and Sirsukh. The archaeological site of Sarai Khola has supported the references in Ramayana and later of Mahabharat, revealing dates of 3200 – 2200 BC for terracotta, pottery, beads etc. Because of the antiquity of culture revealing thousands of years of cultural continuity and location of world's oldest large university, Takshashila (Taxila) located in district Rawalpindi of Pakistan, was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Reference –

‘A Guide to Taxila’ by Sir John Marshall, Indological Book House, 1972)

Very limited excavations were also carried out in Pushkalavati, an ancient site situated at the confluence of Swat and Kabul rivers. It is located in Peshawar valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (formerly NWFP Province) of Pakistan. It was named Pushkalavati because it was founded by Pushkala, the son of Bharat, around 7000 years ago. 2000 years later, there were references to the city in the Mahabharat. Pushkalavati was again the capital of the ancient kingdom Achaemenid of Gandhara from the 6th century BC to 2nd century AD. The location was first excavated in 1902 by the archaeologist John Marshall; Sir Mortimer Wheeler conducted some excavations in 1962.



After some time, Shri Ram wanted to coronate Lakshman's two valiant and noble sons, Angad and Chandraketu, also as kings of areas where kings were not tormented by the ignoble and where hermitages were protected by the rulers and their ministers. High-souled Bharat suggested Karupatha region, which was beautiful as well as peaceful; currently it is a part of Bengal, Orissa and Bihar. This suggestion was accepted by Shri Ram; he took this area under his direct control. Two beautiful capital cities were developed. Angad, a great archer, was made King of Karupath with Angadia as the capital in the western region. Chandraketu, a great wrestler, was coronated as King of Mall Desh, located towards north, with Chandraketu as the capital (7/102).

Excavations, yielding evidence of connection of this ancient city with the Ramayana times, were carried out in Chandraketugarh, which is located in North 24-Parganas District of West Bengal. The most important antiquities pertaining to pre-Mauryan era excavated include red, grey and black pottery, copper and silver coins and exquisite terracotta figurines. A large number of these figurines are of Yakshis and Apsaras, who are repeatedly mentioned in Valmiki Ramayana. An extensive reporting has been done by Enamul Haque in his book titled “Chandraketugarh: A treasure House of Bengal Terracottas” published by The International Centre for study of Bengal Art, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Excavations carried out in Champa and Oriup in Anga, which has been referred to as Angadia in Ramayan, have also revealed similar kind of antiquity of cultural development. Archaeological evidences have led us to conclude that the political principality was well established during the second millennium BCE, though the settlements must have started much earlier (Ref: B.R. Mani - "No Dark Age in Indian History: Archaeological Evidence", Dialogue, A Journal of Astha Bharati , Vol.15, No.1, New Delhi, 2013).

After some time, while Shri Ram remained engaged in virtuous deeds, death in the form of an ascetic appeared at the royal gate. He spoke to glorious Lakshman, who was standing at the door. "I am the messenger of Sage Atibala and have come with the desire to see Shri Ram." Lakshman immediately reported the arrival of the ascetic to Shri Ram. Shri Ram asked Lakshman to usher the sage inside his chamber. After having approached the scion of Raghu, the ascetic was extended a warm welcome. The ascetic told Shri Ram, "the purpose of your birth has been achieved and the span of your stay on Earth as a human being is complete; therefore you should prepare to go to Saket Dham."

To fulfill the promise given to the messenger of Sage Atibala, Shri Ram deserted Lakshman, who immediately went to the banks of Saryu River. Performing ablutions, restraining his senses and holding his breath, Lakshman entered the Saryu and thus left for his heavenly abode. Having deserted Lakshman, feeling deeply anguished, Shri Ram wanted to tread the path that Lakshman had adopted. As suggested by Bharat, Kush was crowned as the king of South Koshal and was sent to its beautiful capital Kushavati, at the foot of Vindhya Mountain. Luv was made the King of North Koshal and sent to its capital Shravasti. Having placed them in his lap, embracing them with affection, Shri Ram gave them a lot of wealth and precious stones. He also divided the army between them and gave a large number of chariots, elephants, horses, soldiers and weapons. He then sent them with the army and other representatives to settle them in their respective new kingdoms.

The limited excavations carried out in Ayodhya, Shravasti, Lahuradewa and Siswania, which formed part of the ancient Koshal kingdom have revealed that these were well established colonies during the second millennium BCE, though the settlements at many of these sites had started much earlier. The antiquity of sites like Ayodhya, Shravasti, Jhussi and Lahuradewa goes back to fourth-fifth centuries BCE. The latest archaeological evidences have revealed that Vedic Janas had come into existence before the third millennium BCE; these were transformed into Janapadas and Mahajanapadas towards the end of the second millennium BCE.

Simultaneously, messengers were also sent to Shatrughan and they narrated to him the entire sequence of events. Shatrughan divided his kingdom into two parts; he coronated his son Subahu as the king of

Madhurapuri (Mathura) and 2nd son Shatrughati was made the king of Vidisha (7/108). It is clearly mentioned by Maharshi Valmiki that the beautiful city of Mathura was developed on the banks of Yamuna. The importance of Mathura has been maintained for thousands of years, through Mahabharat, Buddha, Maurya and Gupta eras. Archaeo-astronomical evidences read with genetic studies have left no doubt that Vedas are the compilation of knowledge of the early current Holocene period (7500 BCE – 2500 BCE), whereas Ramayan and Mahabharat have recorded the history of that period.

No less amazing have been the conclusions from excavations in and around Vidisha. There has been a rich collection of punch-marked coins, some of which have been preserved in the British Museum as well as in the Bhopal Museum. It is thus clear that these two cities of Mathura and Vidisha have gone through repeated cycles of development – decay – destruction – reconstruction – prosperity – destruction and reconstruction again; but these cannot be erased from public memory nor can they be erased from the map of India.



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Communication Skills of Hanuman

Balakrishnan Muniapan



Dr. Balakrishnan Muniapan is an Associate Professor in HRM at Wawasan Open University, Malaysia. He has presented research papers in many countries and published numerous research papers. He is also a student of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas.

Communication skills are considered an important managerial and leadership tool and the most important sought-after skills for a leader in today's competitive environment. There is a saying that "you can take back the slip of your leg and get healed, but you cannot reverse the slip of your tongue." Many conflicts such as interpersonal and even inter-group can be avoided or managed effectively with good communication skills.

Speaking, listening carefully, writing and reading are the four most important communication skills for people in both face-to-face and virtual environments. Today we find plenty of courses on communication skills offered around the world for people to improve their verbal language, body language, tone, clarity and confidence. We can also learn these communication skills from the Ramayana from Hanuman.

Hanuman is also a great communicator who was highly impressed by Shri Ram. Hanuman is one of the Chiranjeevi (the one who lives eternally). He is the great servant to Shri Ram and his devotion to Shri Ram is matchless. People tend to see Hanuman as someone who is always chanting the name of Shri Ram. But Hanuman is known for his expertise in communication plus he is also an expert in all branches of knowledge apart from being a great warrior, man of action, a noble minister, an efficient ambassador, a great leader, an obedient servant, and someone who is known to be victorious in all his undertakings. Shri Ram praised Hanuman as "Nava Vyaakarana Vedthaa" or master of all nine Vyakaranas. Kamban (the author of Ramaavtaram in Tamil) described Hanuman as Sollin Selvan - one possessed of wealth in oratory.

When Sri Ram and Lakshman were at Rishyamook Hill, Sugriva was fearful and mistook them as allies of Vali. It was Hanuman who approached Shri Ram and Lakshman disguised as a mendicant. Hanuman immediately introduced himself and divulged his identity and mission. The sequence in which he presented himself with the details of his mission is the most appropriate way of communicating ideas and intentions to others, given the background of circumstances of the meeting.

When Shri Ram heard Hanuman's speech, he simply smiled at Hanuman. Shri Ram understood that Hanuman was a great communicator and had extensive knowledge of the Vedas – scriptures –

and that essentially made his message complete, as he knew exactly what to say. His speech contained all the necessary information pertaining to the occasion and his needs.

As Shri Ram was charmed by Hanuman's communication skills, he told Lakshman that unless one is well read, has mastered the Vedas and has studied the required subject in-depth; one cannot communicate as beautifully as Hanuman. He underlined the importance of command of language used by Hanuman, the importance of being precise, simple and non-complex in communication; words that captivate the heart and relate to the mind, and body language used by Hanuman for his effective speech.

Shri Ram explains the seven important aspects of communication skills of Hanuman that impressed him the most. They are:

1. Hanuman spoke very briefly. Not too long or too short. He spoke only the required amount
2. He spoke with clarity and without ambiguity
3. He spoke without any grammatical errors
4. He used only appropriate words that cannot be replaced with any other words
5. He spoke in a medium voice that is audible to the other person. Not too loud or too soft
6. His pronunciation of words was correct. The way he pronounced the words was like music and was pleasant
7. All the words spoken by him went straight to the heart.

Sita also eulogizes Hanuman as a great communicator and the only one endowed with all the following eight qualities of a super-intelligent person.

1. Understanding what others say
2. Remembering what has been thus understood
3. Retrieving information as and when required
4. Explaining to others in an appropriate manner with relevant choice use of words
5. Inferring the viewpoints of others by intelligent guesses
6. Providing ready answers in reply to such viewpoints
7. Understanding the inner and subtle meanings implied in such expressions
8. Grasping the real interpretations of what is said

Communication skills are important for leaders to establish themselves and to influence their teams. Effective communication is necessary for all leaders to increase efficiency, quality, and responsiveness to stakeholders and to gain competitive advantage. Leaders who want to improve their communication skills can read the Ramayana and emulate the proactive nature and power of Hanuman's speech to succeed their chosen fields.

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Love and Devotion between Lord Ram and Mighty Hanuman

Omlata Akhouri

Smt. Omlata Akhouri is a resident of Ranchi in India. She has published many stories, poems and articles in different Hindi magazines. Her poetry has been awarded by NCERT and her stories for children have been broadcasted on Ranchi Akashvani (radio).



Whenever and wherever there is a mention of Lord Ram the mention of mighty Hanuman is invariably there. And whenever there is a discussion about Hanuman, his love for Ram is bound to be described. In Ramcharitmanas, Tulsidas, in his inimitable style, has very aptly emphasized this relationship. Whenever such episodes come in the great epic, the reader also swims and sinks in the ocean of love and devotion.

If the servant-like devotion of Hanuman, the incarnation of Rudra, was at its peak, the love of Lord Ram for him too was at its highest. Hanuman had several opportunities to serve his lord. His devotion to Ram could be seen in his valorous feat of locating Sita's whereabouts and in his bringing of the Sanjeevanee Booti (life giving herb) for Lakshman. A most emotional moment occurs when Hanuman informs Ram about Sita and conveys her message to him. Ram feels so indebted to him that he is almost speechless. Overwhelmed by the feeling of gratitude Ram says:

प्रति उपकार करों का तोरा | सन्मुख होइ न सकत मन मोरा |

“O Hanuman! What service can I do to you in return? When I think of it, I am unable to look at you in the face.”

सुनु सुत तोहि उरिन मैं नाहीं | देखऊँ करी बिचार मन माहीं |

“Listen my son, I have come to the conclusion that I cannot ever repay you.”

Ram does not stop here. In fact, he is unsatisfied with what he has said. Tulsidas has described Ram's emotional state in this moment with his matchless style of expression.

पुनि पुनि कपिहि चितब सुर त्राता | लोचन नीर पुलक अति गाता |

The protector of gods gazed on Hanuman, again and again, his eyes filled with tears and his whole body quivered with emotion.

सुनि प्रभु बचन बिलोकि मुख गात हरष हनुमंत |

चरन परे प्रेमाकुल त्राहि त्राहि भगबंत ||

Now what was the state of Hanuman after listening to Ram's emotion-packed words? He gazed at his face, experienced a thrill of delight through his body and fell to his feet crying out in devotional ecstasy "Save me, save me, O Blessed Lord."

Thus we see, as Tulsidas has written, the love between the two has reached its climax. But it does not end there.

बार बार प्रभु चहहि उठाबा | प्रेम मगन तेहि उठब न भाबा ||
प्रभु के पंकज कपि के सीसा | सुमिरि सो दसा मगन गौरीसा ||

Again and again the Lord sought to raise him but he was so absorbed in love that he would not rise. The lotus hands of the Lord rested on his head. Gauri's Lord (Shiva) was overcome with emotion when he recalled that scene.

कपि उठाइ प्रभु हृदय लगाबा | कर गहि परम निकट बैठाबा ||

At last the Lord raised Hanuman and clasped him to his heart. Then he took him by his hand and seated him close to his side. Their love, devotion, and attraction to each other appeared to have reached the peak. In fact, whenever Hanuman executed any task of Ram with his valor and intelligence he invited the Lord's love and indulgence. When he brings the Sanjeevane booti which saves Lakshman's life, Ram clasps him to his bosom and expresses his gratitude to him.

हरषि राम भेटेउ हनुमाना | अति कृतम्य प्रभु परम सुजाना ||

It is said that as a mark of love and regard Ram fixed his own birthday, Ramnavami for the worship of Hanuman. Hanuman on his part conclusively proved that he was his greatest 'das' (devotee). He tore his chest apart to show that Lord Ram and Sita were always present in it.

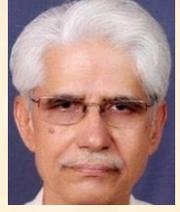
There runs a story that once Hanuman asked Sita as to why she applied vermilion on her head. Sita replied in a lighter vein that the application of vermilion pleased Ram. To know that his Lord felt pleased upon the application of vermilion, he applied it all over his body so that his Lord may always remain pleased. When Ram came to know of this he felt immensely pleased and declared that whosoever applies vermilion on Hanuman will be known as a devotee of Ram.

There are countless other episodes which show that their love and devotion for each other is unparalleled. Whenever we visualize Ram, an image of a valorous and handsome young man with a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other invariably emerges before our eyes. It is almost impossible to imagine Ram's existence without his bow. Ram and his bow are inseparable. When an artist draws a picture of Ram as a child, he places a picture of a small bow near him. As Krishna is known by his flute, Ram is known by his bow and arrow. *(We thank Shri Ramlakshman Gupta Ji for translating this article from Hindi. -Editor)*

Universal Philosophy of Ramayana

Prabhu Dayal Mishra

Shri Prabhu Dayal Mishra is a renowned scholar in Vedas and other Indian scriptures. He has published more than two dozen books on Vedas, Gita, Yoga, etc. He has received numerous awards for his work. Currently, he is the president of Maharishi Agastya Vedic Sansthanam and associated with a number of universities, social and religious institutions.



We are taking up the following third mantra of Ishopnishad in this issue-

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः
तांस्तु प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्मनो जनाः

This means – enveloped in blinding gloom are as such those worlds where they all after death go who are the slayers of their souls.

A few important questions arise while interpreting this stanza (mantra) properly. What is the sequential significance of this stanza? How is it related with the first two stanzas of Ishopnishad? What do the terms 'Asurya' (sunless) and 'Atmhanta' (the slayers of the souls) exactly stand for?

There is a world called 'Asurya'. Is it just the name or also the nature of this world? It naturally appears to be the hell of Indian mythology. Shripad Damodar Satwalekar in his famous Vedic commentary considers 'Sur' & 'Asur' to be synonymous at times. In other stanzas where 'Vidya-Avidya' & 'Sambhooti- Asambhooti' have been mentioned, this world of dark gloom finds a mention further. It therefore appears to be appropriate to suppose that this world is more a subjective projection than objective reality.

In the 16th Chapter of the Bhagwad Gita Lord Krishna mentions two types of the worlds, Daivee (divine) and Asuree (demonic):

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च । १६-६

In the context of divine or demonic attributes, the Lord here has described the two worlds. Whereas the next three verses (from seven to eighteen), describe demonic attributes, he finally declares that it takes living beings to this world of darkness where there an instant chain of birth and death is created.

It may be asked whether heaven or hell actually have any physical existence. And whether virtuous or sinful are rewarded or punished there?

Virtually, every religious faith in the world has certain notion about this. Although some sects do not believe in rebirth, virtue or sin and morality or immorality form an integral part of their practices. It appears to be universally acknowledged that no matter whether these attributes have any bearing in past or the future life, our world, society and the present time have a close relationship with them. A man is always very cautious about his doings once he understands that he is under a scanner. Naturally, his actions in a situation where they are being watched from are bound to be fairer.

This stanza deals with just one consequence of an attribute. One who is the slayer of his soul goes to the world of blinding gloom. Committing suicide is a heinous crime in a civilized society observing the normal rule of law. But the slayer of the soul is not a criminal of the penal code. According to Shankaracharya, the 'Asur' may well stand for those who are guided by their senses only. And hence the slayer of soul stands for one who is under the thrall of his senses and who, while smothering higher aspirations of the soul, remains engrossed in mundane pursuits only.

While the seer of the Veda advises us to live a full hundred years, it means that the only option available to us is to increase our longevity and not to reduce it. It seems however, quite strange that a man may think of killing himself instead of increasing his longevity as advocated by the Vedic seer, which is apparently an impossible alternative. The logic is very clear that when a man attempts a suicide he is only destroying his body, which has never done anything wrong by itself. Strangely enough the instinct or impulse, which was at the basis of this act, surely shall continue to live even after the physical death of the body. This gruesome act of desperation is never an end in this manner. How can a person be his own killer if he is still alive? Regarding slaying the soul, it is an impossibility altogether and the very term, 'Atmhatya' used for it is just meaningless. Destroying one's body can never stand for slaying the soul. Even if the meaning of this slayer is confined to the loss of the body, it is still not out of context. The Vedic seer need not be reminded that the soul is indestructible.

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ २-१७॥

Therefore, the slayer stands for the one who goes against his true self. It is virtually such a torture of the self that it is bound to bring a greater doom. The Gita also declares that a man himself is his foe or friend:

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६-६॥

Our normal understanding of friendship presupposes circumstances where equal rights are accepted. But according to Lord Krishna one who has control over himself, his self becomes his friend.

Vinobaji in his 'Ishyashya –Vriti' interprets the 'Asuri' region as the world of ignorance. According to him, the persons to whom like other animals only the body is all-important, they are in fact wallowing in the world of lust and greed.

Tulsidas in the Ramcharit Manasa declares such persons to be slayers of themselves and condemns those who do not make use of their valuable human life in the following words:

जो न तरै भवसागर, नर समाज अस पाइ
सो कृत निंदक मंदमति आत्माहन गति जाइ | (मानस ७/४४)

The Ramcharitmanas deals with this topic at that point when Ram, after establishing Ramrajya, invites all of his subjects and addresses them in a fitting note on this subject. He tells that the human life on Earth is a great boon and if it is not properly utilized, a man suffers in many ways. At that time he uselessly starts blaming time, fate or God. Therefore, if a person fails to make use of his life in the right manner, he is virtually opting poison when nectar is available for him. The human body, according to him, is just like a passage boat in the great ocean of the world. And he is surely under God's grace in the form of favorable wind. Therefore, if he does not opt for the correct choice of making use of it for a higher purpose, he is only leading himself to the dark world of self

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Tulsi Manas Pratishthan

Prabhu Dayal Mishra

Tulsi Manas Pratishthan took birth in Bhopal during the course of country wide 'Manas Chatusshati (four hundred years of completion of Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas) Celebrations in India during 1971 and since have continued ceaselessly as a registered body in pursuance of the great mission of studies and research on the Ramayana. As the Governor and Chief Minister of the State as its Chief Patrons, the institution is managed by an elected Board of Directors represented by spiritual seekers, social reformers and academicians of high status.

The premises of this prestigious organization have Uttaraayan, an open-air platform, which can accommodate three thousand people, The Ramkikar Sabhagar with a capacity of seven hundred, and a public hall with a five hundred audience capacity. Apart from a rich library covering maximum Ramayana works, the institution is planning to hold a rare archive and museum of great cultural heritage on the subject. The spiritually awakened premises has a beautiful temple 'Shri Siddh Raghunath Mandir', where regular worship and holy 'anushtan' takes place for the welfare of society and people, as well as an open courtyard with a statue of Goswami Tulsidas. The organization has been publishing "Tulsi Manas Bharti", a monthly magazine in which thinkers, academicians, scholars and researchers have been closely involved for 46 years.

Shri Ramakant Dubey, its working President, has fully devoted himself to the cause of Rama, which, according to him, is a broader form of social service. Spearheading Tulsi Manas Pratishthan, Shyamla Hills Bhopal as its Working President



since 1992 and preceding as the Honorary Secretary from 1987, he is solely responsible for the construction and completion of a two-acre complex worth rupees twenty five million, in a prime location with three big public halls/platforms, a rich library and a research museum. Ninety plus now, Shri Dubey is determined not to take rest till 'Ram Rajya' of high order and peace is established in the society.

Homophones in Ramcharitmanas

Omprakash Gupta

When two (or more) words are spelt differently but sound the same, they are called homophones. For example, alter-altar, made-maid, stationary, stationery, to-too-two, etc. So, when we speak one of them, it can easily be confused with the other. In Hindi (a phonetic language) when two words are spelt differently, their pronunciation, though technically different, may sound similar when words are spelt very similar. For example, words अनल (anala) and अनिल (anila). When pronounced, they may sound very similar but their meanings are very different. The word अनल (anala) means fire whereas अनिल (anila) means air. In this column we will provide examples of commonly used homophones in Ramcharitmanas with the hope that readers will find them useful when reading Manas and similar other literature.

Readers are invited to send homophones from Manas to ramquest@ramacharit.org for publication in this column.

3. अजर (ajara) - अजिर (ajira)

The word अजर (ajara) means something that is not subject to change or decay; someone who is always young. This word appears three times in Manas (1.82.C7, 5.17.C3, 6.89.C4).

For example, mother Sita blesses Hanuman to be अजर in Sunderkand.

अजर अमर गुननिधि सुत होहू । करहुँ बहुत रघुनायक छोहू ॥ 5.17.C3

The word अजिर (ajira) has been used eight times (1.105.C6, 1.112.C4, 1.203.C5, 1.221.C4, 7.27.X11, 7.75a.D2, 7.76.C4, 7.77.C8). This word is used in one of the most popular chaupayees of Manas:

मंगल भवन अमंगल हारी । द्रवउ सो दसरथ अजिर बिहारी ॥ 1.112.C4

This line has been read by millions, yet it is one of most misunderstood one because of similarity between the words अजर (ajara) and अजिर (ajira). The word अजिर (ajira) means courtyard of a house/palace. In this chaupayee, it refers to the courtyard of palace of King Dasharath.

We will review more homophones from Ramcharitmanas in the future issues of RamQuest. For previously published homophones, please download previous issues. Learned readers are invited to send homophones from Manas to ramquest@ramacharit.org for publication.

Ram's Dharma & Shiva's Bow Skill in Action Portrayed in the Ramayana

Michael Sternfeld



Shri Michael Sternfeld is an independent scholar and a producer/director who has spent the last 25 years creating various productions of the Ramayana, including the first complete audio production of the Ramayana of Valmiki. For more information, visit RamayanAudio.com.

This article is adapted from the audiobook-- Ram's Dharma: Leadership Secrets of the Ultimate Warrior~Sage~Prince-- published by Vedic Audio Knowledge (VAK).

The Ram's Dharma audiobook explores 25 core principles of Dharma and ideal leadership expressed in the Ramayana. Each of these core principles have been distilled from the key exploits of Ram and Sita in the Ramayana and are designed to guide the unfolding of Dharma in our lives. The principle explored in this article is "Skill in Action", which is brought out in Ram's lifting and stringing of Shiva's bow.

The excerpts from the Ramayana quoted here are from the Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam by N. Raghunathan, published by Vigneshwara Publishing House.

Ram Strings Shiva's Bow

Ram's quest with Vishwamitra found its deeper fulfillment when the great sage took Ram and Lakshman to the kingdom of Mithala, ruled by the sage king Janaka. The wise Janaka had a daughter, Sita—considered to be the most beautiful woman on Earth. But Janaka had made a vow that only that man of great valor who could string the mighty bow held in his family's possession—the magnificent bow of Shiva—would win his daughter's hand in marriage.

'The kings sought the hand of my daughter, who had risen from the earth, and who was now grown to womanhood, O best of sages. Though all the kings of the earth asked for my daughter, I would not give her to any of them; telling them that she could be had only for the bride-price of valour. Then they all came to Mithila in a body to test the strength of the bow.' [1.66]

Many kings tried their hand, but no one could even lift the massive iron bow. Janaka began to regret his vow, lamenting that he may have cursed his own daughter, since it now appeared that no mortal man could ever achieve this seemingly impossible feat. Janaka was delighted when Vishwamitra brought the two illustrious youths—Ram and Lakshman—to his kingdom.

When Ram and Lakshman entered Janaka's court, the great-souled King addressed Vishwamitra with folded hands, saying for the special benefit of Ram and Lakshman, 'This is that best of bows, O Brahman, which has been worshipped by the Janakas, and praised by kings of great prowess who in the past were unable to string it. Neither the hosts of the gods, nor the Asuras, neither the Rakshasas, nor again the foremost of the Gandharvas and Yakshas, Kinnaras and Mahoragas have been able to do that. How then could men hope to bend or string it, fit the arrow in it, draw it, or weigh it in the hand? Please show the bow, now brought here, to these princes, mighty and magnanimous sage'.

The righteous Viswamitra told Ram, 'Ram, my child, have a look at the bow.' At the great sage's instance, Ram opened the box in which lay the bow; and looking at it, he asked, 'May I touch this best of bows, try to lift it up and even string it?'



'You are welcome,' said the King, and the sage, too approved. And with the permission of the sage, he lightly grasped the bow in the middle, and with many thousands of men looking on, the virtuous one strung it, and drew it to the full; and doing that the best of men, of immense renown, broke the bow in the middle. Great was the din it made, like a thunderclap in the cloudless sky, and the earth rocked violently, as when a mountain is riven.

All the men there fell down rendered senseless by that din, excepting only the great sage, the King and those two sons of the Raghus.

When the people revived, the King spoke to the best of sages with folded hands, a great load off his mind; he knew how to use words to good effect. 'I have now seen the strength of Ram, the son of Dasaratha, demonstrated. This is something that I had never dreamt of or regarded as possible. My daughter Sita, by wedding Ram, the son of Dasaratha, will bring renown to the House of Janaka. And my vow, that she shall be won with the bride-price of valour, will also be fulfilled. I must give Sita, my daughter, who is dearer to me than life, to Ram.' [1.67]



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संक्षिप्त रामचरितमानस- १००८ पंक्तियों में

गोस्वामी तुलसीदास रचित गीता प्रेस प्रकाशित श्री रामचरितमानस में 12,587 पंक्तियाँ हैं। आज हमारा जीवन कितना अस्त-व्यस्त है, यह सोच कर मानस का एक संक्षिप्त रूप 1008 पंक्तियों में प्रकाशित होने जा रहा है। पुस्तक में मानस की 1008 पंक्तियों के साथ-साथ उनका सरल हिंदी में भावार्थ, अंग्रेजी में लिप्यन्तरण और सरल अंग्रेजी में अनुवाद भी है। पंक्ति 25 से 31 नीचे प्रस्तुत हैं। इससे पहले प्रकाशित पंक्तियों के लिए कृपया <http://www.ramacharit.org/Ramquest> देखें। पुस्तक प्राप्त करने और अधिक जानकारी के लिए Om@ramacharit.org को पत्र लिखें। - ओम गुप्ता

बालकाण्ड

25 मंगल भवन अमंगल हारी। द्रवउ सो दसरथ अजिर बिहारी ॥ 1.112.C4

26 अवधपुरीं रघुकुलमनि राऊ। बेद बिदित तेहि दसरथ नाऊँ ॥ 1.188.C7

मंगल के भवन, अमंगल को हरनेवाले और श्री दशरथ जी महाराज के आँगन में खेलनेवाले श्री रामचन्द्र जी मुझ पर कृपा करें। एक बार अवधपुरी में रघुकुल शिरोमणि दशरथ नाम के राजा हुए जिनका नाम वेदों में भी प्रसिद्ध है।

27 कौसल्यादि नारि प्रिय सब आचरन पुनीत। 1.188.D1

28 पति अनुकूल प्रेम दृढ़ हरि पद कमल बिनीत ॥ 1.188.D2

कौसल्या आदि उनकी सभी प्रिय रानियाँ पवित्र आचरण करनेवाली थीं। वे बड़ी विनीत और पति के अनुकूल व्यवहार करती थीं और उन्हें श्री हरि के चरणों में दृढ़ प्रेम था।

29 एक बार भूपति मन माहीं। भै गलानि मोरें सुत नाहीं ॥ 1.189.C1

एक बार राजा के मन में बड़ी ग्लानि हुई कि मेरे पुत्र नहीं है।

30 निज दुख सुख सब गुरहि सुनायउ। कहि बसिष्ठ बहुबिधि समुझायउ ॥ 1.189.C3

31 धरहु धीर होइहहिं सुत चारी। त्रिभुवन बिदित भगत भय हारी ॥ 1.189.C4

उन्होंने जाकर अपना दुःखसुख- गुरु वसिष्ठ जी को सुनाया। गुरु ने उन्हें कई तरह से समझाकर कहा- हे राजन! धैर्य रखिए जो तीनों लोकों में प्रसिद्ध और भक्तों के, आपके चार पुत्र होंगे, भय को दूर करनेवाले होंगे।

Ramcharitmanas- An abridged version in 1008 Lines

Ramcharitmanas as published by Gita Press has 12,587 lines. Realizing how busy we are with our modern lives, I felt that a brief version of the Manas is needed for present society and our future generations. As a result, I most humbly present to readers “Ramcharitmanas- An abridged version in 1008 Lines.” In addition to carefully selected 1,008 lines from Manas, it has simple Hindi translation, English transliteration and easy to understand English translation. We present from Line 25 to 31 below. For previously published lines, please visit previous issues of RamQuest by visiting <http://www.ramacharit.org/Ramquest>. For more information on the book and how to receive your copy, please write to Om@ramacharit.org – Om Gupta

Bālakaṇḍa

25. maṅgala bhavana amaṅgala hārī, drava'u so dasaratha ajira bihārī.
1.112.C4
26. avadhapurīm raghukulamani rāū, beda bidita tehi dasaratha nāūṁ.
1.188.C7

May Shri Ram, the giver of bliss and the remover of sorrow, who plays in the courtyard of King Dashrath, bless me. Once upon a time, the kingdom of Ayodhya was ruled by King Dashrath, whose name is well regarded in the scriptures.

27. kausalyādi nāri priya, saba ācarana punīta. 1.188.D1
28. pati anukūla prema dṛṣha, hari pada kamala binīta. 1.188.D2

His senior queen Kausalya as well as his other queens were pure and pious. They were respectful to their husband and found love and blessings in the feet of the Lord.

29. eka bāra bhūpati mana māhīm, bhai galāni morem suta nāhīm. 1.189.C1

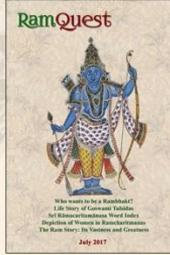
One day the king felt very sad as he did not have a son.

30. nija dukha sukha saba gurahi sunāya'u, kahi basiṣṭha bahubidhi samujhāya'u. 1.189.C3
31. dharahu dhīra hoihahīm suta cārī, tribhuvana bidita bhagata bhaya hārī.
1.189.C4

He narrated his woes to Sage Vasishth. The sage pacified him in many different ways. He said to king- Have patience. You will have four sons. They will be known in three worlds. They will remove fears of devotees.



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