

# Glory of Sri Rama and His Name

(Divine Discourse on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami – April 21, 2002)

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*"Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama.  
Constant repetition of this nectarine sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself.  
Therefore, one should contemplate on this sweet Name incessantly."*

## *Embodiments of Love!*

Ayodhya was the capital of the kingdom of Kosala. The name Ayodhya signifies a place where no enemies could enter. It was built by the emperor Manu. The river Sarayu, which originated from the Manasarovar, was flowing nearby. The Manasarovar is the manifestation of the Will of Brahma. Such a sacred place was ruled over by Emperor Dasaratha. In spite of having all the wealth and comforts, his life was devoid of happiness as he had no children. Dasaratha had a minister by name Sumantha, who was noble-hearted and highly virtuous. One day, he approached Dasaratha and said, "Oh king! I have a plan that would solve your problems and give happiness to you and the people at large. The country will attain plenty and prosperity if you perform Aswamedha Yaga. There is another sacred ritual called Putrakamesti Yaga, by performing which you are sure to beget children." He told that Aswamedha Yaga can be performed after Putrakamesti Yaga. Dasaratha was happy with the advice and commanded him to make the necessary arrangements. Sumantha requested Dasaratha to invite Sage Rishyasringa as the chief priest to preside over the Putrakamesti Yaga. He felt that Rishyasringa was well-versed with this type of ritual.

At that time, Padmapada was ruling over the kingdom of Anga which was afflicted with famine. King Padmapada was also contemplating on seeking Rishyasringa's

help to get over this crisis. One day King Dasaratha, Sumantha and Padmapada together went to the hermitage of Rishyasringa. As per the request of Dasaratha, Rishyasringa came over to Ayodhya and performed Aswamedha Yaga and Putrakamesti Yaga. As the sacred ritual was in progress, there emerged an effulgent being from the flames with a vessel containing *Payasam* (sweet pudding). He handed over the vessel to Sage Vasishta, who in turn gave it to Dasaratha and told him to distribute it equally between his three wives. As there were many composers of Ramayana like Kamba, Valmiki, Tulasidas, etc., each of them gave different versions of the proportion in which the *Payasam* was distributed between them. But none of them gave the correct version. Dasaratha gave equal share of the *Payasam* to each of his three queens in three different cups. Whether it is then or now, the principle of equality is most essential for man. Dasaratha told his wives to have a sacred bath and seek Sage Rishyasringa's blessings before partaking of the *Payasam*. Kausalya was very happy and so too was Kaikeyi, but Sumitra was not elated. At the same time, she did not want to disobey the command of her husband Dasaratha and Sage Rishyasringa. After having a holy bath, she went on to the terrace and started drying her hair in the sun. She had kept the *Payasam*-cup by her side. As she was drying her hair, she started thinking thus, "As Kausalya is the eldest queen, the son born to her will be

the legal heir to the throne, or else as per the promise made by Dasaratha to the king of Kekaya; Kaikeyi's son will be crowned as the king. My son will not have the right to the throne. Such being the case, what is the point in my begetting a son?" She was dejected, depressed and lost in such thoughts as she was combing her hair. Meanwhile, a servant-maid came running to her and informed that King Dasaratha had asked her to come at once. She plaited her hair and was about to pick up the cup. Just then, an eagle swooped down and took away the cup in a trice. She was already feeling sad and this incident increased her agony thousand fold. She was afraid that her husband and Sage Vasishtha would certainly be annoyed with her. She shuddered at the thought of being cursed by Sage Rishyasringa. She ran to Kausalya and Kaikeyi and explained to them her predicament. "Sisters, an eagle took away the cup because of my negligence. No doubt, it was a mistake, but it was not done intentionally." In those days, even the stepsisters used to live in amity like children of the same mother. Kausalya consoled her. Immediately, she brought a similar cup from inside and poured half of her share of *Payasam* into it. Kaikeyi followed suit. Sumitra was happy that her stepsisters were accommodative and considerate towards her. All this happened in a natural way. But some authors have given a different version of this. They described the *Payasam* distribution based on their own mathematical calculations.

The three queens went to the *Puja* room and partook of their share of *Payasam*. Nine months passed. On an auspicious day, Kausalya gave birth to a son. That was the time when the five elements were in harmony with each other. Kausalya's joy knew no bounds. Before this good news could be conveyed to Sumitra and Kaikeyi, they also developed labour pains.

Sumitra gave birth to Lakshmana first and after a few moments Satrugna. Then Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata. The four Vedas assumed the forms of the four sons of Dasaratha.

On the tenth day, the naming ceremony was performed. Kausalya's son was named as Rama as he attracted and delighted one and all. Just as one sees one's reflection in the mirror, Rama would visualize the *Atmic* effulgence in everyone. He saw the effulgence in the form of a moon in the heart of everybody. Hence, He was called Ramachandra. The two sons of Sumitra were restless and crying non-stop right from their birth. They neither would drink milk nor would go to sleep. Seeing the pathetic condition of her sons, Sumitra was grief-stricken. "As it is, I am crying thinking of my bad luck. Now, the children born to me are also crying. How unfortunate I am!" Thinking in this manner, she felt miserable. When there was no one around, she approached Sage Vasishtha and explained to him the sad plight of her sons. She said, "Guruji, I don't expect anything from my sons. It is enough for me if they lead a happy and healthy life. They don't seem to be having any physical ailments. I am unable to understand why they are restless and crying incessantly right from their birth." Vasishtha closed his eyes and went into meditation to find out the reason for the children's strange behavior. After some time, he opened his eyes and said, "Mother Sumitra, you are very fortunate. You are endowed with the noble virtue of *Samadrishti* (equality). As your name suggests, you are a good friend of all. You don't need to be worried at all. With the permission of Kausalya, put Lakshmana in the same cradle where Rama is. Likewise, seek Kaikeyi's permission and place Satrugna by the side of Bharata in the same cradle. Then, they will stop crying and behave normally."

Kausalya and Kaikeyi readily consented to Sumitra's request. They said, "Sister, bring Lakshmana and Satrughna at once. They are also like our children. Is it not a matter of joy for us to watch the four brothers develop unity and grow together?" Sumitra did as per the advice of Sage Vasishtha. No sooner did Lakshmana was placed by the side of Rama in the cradle, than he stopped crying. The same was the case with Satrughna too. He stopped crying as soon as he was placed by the side of Bharata. Lakshmana and Satrughna were extremely happy in the company of Rama and Bharata respectively. They were all smiles and started moving their hands and legs blissfully. Watching her sons enjoying themselves thus, Sumitra felt greatly relieved.

A few days had passed. One day Sumitra, finding sage Vasishtha all alone, requested him to explain the strange behavior of her sons. She wanted to know why Lakshmana and Satrughna were crying incessantly till they were placed by the side of Rama and Bharata respectively. Sage Vasishtha started explaining in this manner: "Oh Sumitra! You are a noble soul. Your heart is pure and unsullied. You are totally selfless. So, it is not difficult for you to understand the reason behind this. Do you remember, when your share of *Payasam* was taken away by an eagle, Kausalya and Kaikeyi came to your rescue by sharing their *Payasam* with you. As a result, you begot two sons. Lakshmana is born from Kausalya's share of *Payasam* and Satrughna is born from that of Kaikeyi's. It means Lakshmana is an *Amsa* (aspect) of Rama and Satrughna is an *Amsa* of Bharata. So, it is natural that Lakshmana is blissful in the company of Rama and so too is Satrughna in the company of Bharata." The *Bhagavadgita* says, *Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathanah* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Lakshmana, being

the spark of Rama, was in His Company always. Likewise, Satrughna and Bharata were always together.

Years rolled by and the four brothers had matured into young men. Dasaratha had decided to perform their marriages. One day when he was thinking on these lines, a messenger entered and informed him the arrival of Sage Viswamitra. Everything happens according to time, situation and circumstances. God creates the necessary circumstances to fulfill His Divine plan. Dasaratha personally went up to the entrance and welcomed the sage, saying, "Swami, it is our great good fortune that you have come today. I am contemplating on performing marriages of my sons. So, I am extremely happy and indeed blessed to have you amidst us today. Please tell me, what can I do for you. I will certainly fulfill your desire." Viswamitra said that he had come to take Rama with him to protect his *Yajna* from demons. Dasaratha felt as though an atom bomb had exploded in his heart. "I begot these children as a result of performing several rituals and sacrifices over a number of years. Moreover, Rama has never entered a forest or seen a demon. He has no hatred towards anybody. He is full of love and forbearance. How can I send such a tender-hearted Rama to the forest to fight the demons, who are very cruel?" Such were his feelings. He said to Viswamitra, "Oh venerable sage, my sons are very young. How can I send them to forest?" Viswamitra said, "Oh king! You promised that you would fulfill my desire. Now, you are going back on your word. Kings belonging to *Ikshvaku* clan never failed to keep up their promise so far. If you go against your word, you would have brought disrepute to your clan. So, decide as to whether you would put your clan to disrepute or send your sons with me." Dasaratha thought for a while, but was unable to decide. He called Sage Vasishtha

and sought his advice. Vasishta said, "Dasaratha, your sons are not ordinary mortals. They are born to you because of Divine Will. They are born out of fire, which means they are the embodiments of power and wisdom. So, no danger can ever befall on them. So, uphold your promise given to Sage Viswamitra."

Here there is an important point to be noted. Viswamitra had come to take only Rama with him. Rama was prepared to go with him. He did ask Lakshmana to accompany him. Neither Viswamitra nor Dasaratha had asked him to follow Rama. Lakshmana followed Rama of his own accord because he was an *Amsa* of Rama. Just as shadow follows an object, Lakshmana accompanied Rama. Seeing this, Viswamitra thought to himself, "Everything happens according to the Divine Will." Prior to his departure, he said to Dasaratha, "Oh king! There is no power in this world that is not in me. I am endowed with all mighty powers and all types of knowledge. But once I undertake *Yajna Deeksha* (vow of *Yajna*) and start performing the ritual, I am not supposed to involve myself in any act of violence. This is the discipline prescribed for the one performing a *Yajna*. Hence, I cannot kill the demons on my own. That is why I am taking Rama with me."

When they reached the banks of Sarayu river, Viswamitra said, "Rama come here." He called only Rama and not Lakshmana. Though he was not called, Lakshmana also went and sat by the side of Rama. Viswamitra said, "My dear ones, I am taking you to Siddhashrama where *Yajna* is going to take place. You have come here to protect the *Yajna* from demons. I don't know how many days you have to stay in the forest. You are used to royal comforts and delicious food. But there is no one to prepare food for you in the Ashram. You may have to stay awake day

and night forgoing food and water in order to protect the *Yajna*. So, I will teach you two Mantras: *Bala* and *Atibala*. With the power of these Mantras, you can remain without food, water and sleep for any number of days."

Knowing fully well that Rama was the Divine incarnation and had the power to protect the *Yajna*, why did Viswamitra teach him these Mantras? These are only external activities meant for the world. Rama and Lakshmana chanted these Mantras and consequently had no hunger, thirst or sleep during their stay in the Siddhashrama. When the *Yajna* was in progress, the demon Maricha tried to disrupt the proceedings. Rama killed him with a single arrow and his body was thrown to a great distance by the impact. Then came a thunderous noise. Rama asked Viswamitra, "Swami, what is this noise? It sounds as though mountains are falling apart." Viswamitra said, "It has nothing to do with the mountains. It is the voice of demoness Thataki. She makes everyone tremble with her voice. Be prepared to face her. She is coming." Rama had a doubt whether it was proper for a Kshatriya to kill a woman. Viswamitra said, "Rama, when it comes to protecting a *Yajna*, you don't need to be concerned whether it is a man or a woman who is disrupting it. Your main duty is to ward off all demons. As it was the command of the Guru, Rama implicitly obeyed him and killed the ogress. But she was not the one to be killed easily. A fierce battle ensued. But we don't need to go into its details. Once Thataki was killed, the surroundings of Siddhashrama became peaceful and everyone rejoiced. The demigods showered flower petals. The *Yajna* was completed successfully.

In the meantime, a messenger from the city of Mithila arrived and handed over a letter to Viswamitra from King Janaka. It

was an invitation to Viswamitra to take part in a Yajna that Janaka was going to perform. Viswamitra at once set out on a journey to Mithila. Being a Sanyasi, he had no luggage to carry with him. He asked Rama and Lakshmana to follow him. But Rama was reluctant to do so. He said, "Guruji, my father has sent Me to protect your *Yajna*. I am not interested in the *Yajna* that King Janaka is going to perform." In order to arouse interest and enthusiasm in them, Viswamitra said, "The *Yajna* is not an ordinary one. In the palace of the king Janaka, there is *Siva Dhanus* (bow of Siva), which ordinary mortals cannot lift. It is very difficult to even move it an inch. One day it so happened that Sita, the daughter of Janaka, lifted the bow. That day Janaka decided that he would give his daughter Sita in marriage to someone who can lift the bow. This *Yajna* is arranged in this connection."

Viswamitra persuaded Rama and Lakshmana to accompany him to Mithila. The entire city of Mithila had assembled. Kings belonging to various countries had arrived. Ravana was one among them. Ravana was very powerful and had a fearsome personality. He was the first one to come forward to lift the bow. As he was proceeding towards the bow, kings were surprised at his gait and personality. They thought, "If he is able to lift the bow, King Janaka has to give his daughter in marriage to him. The very sight of him is terrifying. How can Janaka give his daughter to him? Anyway, let us see what is going to happen." Ravana in the first instance tried to lift the bow with his left hand. But it did not move. He used all his strength and tried with both his hands. Yet it did not move. In the process, he lost his balance and fell down. He could not bear the insult. One with ego is bound to face humiliation. He cannot receive respect and honor in society. Ego leads to

ruin. Seeing the mighty Ravana falling down in such a manner, all the kings were surprised. They said to themselves, "If Ravana cannot lift it, nobody else can do it." They were afraid even to come forward to try lifting the bow. At that moment, Viswamitra gave a meaningful look to Rama. Rama understood its implication and got up. He was only fifteen years at that time. As he was walking majestically towards the bow, people were attracted by His divine splendor. It looked as though all powers were following Him like a shadow. People were mesmerized by His divine form and were unmindful of what was going to happen. Smilingly, Rama went near the bow, adjusted his upper garment and put his left hand on the bow. And lo! It just stood up. It had to be bent to tie the string. As He was bending it, the bow broke with a deafening sound. The onlookers were stunned at the mighty power of Rama. Immediately, Sita was brought by her maids with a garland in her hand. Viswamitra enquired, "Rama, are you ready for the marriage?" Rama said, "Swami, my father sent me to Siddhashram to safeguard your *Yajna*. I don't have his permission to come here. I will not accept this proposal without his consent." Viswamitra whispered this into the ear of Janaka. He also supported Rama's view as he was well versed with *Rajaneeti* (code of conduct prescribed for a king). Immediately, he sent his messengers to King Dasaratha to bring him and his family with royal honors. Three days passed by the time King Dasaratha and his family arrived in Mithila during which Rama and Lakshmana did not move out of their room.

Dasaratha with his family members, friends and relatives arrived in Mithila accompanied by thousands of soldiers and citizens of Ayodhya. The four brothers were extremely happy seeing each other.

The holy wedding took place on the fourth day, about which I described in detail many a time. Sita was born of mother earth and Urmila was Janaka's own daughter. Sita was to wed Rama and Urmila was to marry Lakshmana. Janaka's brother had two daughters Mandavi and Sruthakirti. Their wedding was fixed with Bharata and Satrughna respectively. It looked as though each one was made for the other.

During the wedding, Sita had to garland Rama. Sita being short in stature could not do so as Rama was Ajanubahu (tall personality). Rama was expected to bend His head before Sita so that she could garland Him. However, He would not do so, lest people should say that Rama, one of valor, bowed His head before a woman. Woman in those days would not look into the face of men. Hence, Sita was looking down holding the garland in her hand.

Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha, who carries the mother earth on his hood. Rama looked at Lakshmana as if to say, "Look, why don't you raise that part of earth where Sita is standing to enable her to garland Me." Then Lakshmana indicated to Rama that it was not possible to raise any particular area. If he tried to raise that part of earth where Sita was standing, simultaneously Rama would be raised and so also others. The onlookers became anxious and were wondering as to why Rama was not bending his head to enable Sita garland him. Lakshmana, being one of intelligence, thought of a plan to solve the problem. All of a sudden, he fell at the feet of Rama and would not get up for a long time. Rama bent down to pick up Lakshmana and seizing the opportunity, Sita garlanded Rama.

Once Saint Thyagaraja sang a song extolling the mighty power of Rama: "But for the power of Rama, could a mere monkey cross the mighty ocean? Would Lakshmi Devi, the goddess of wealth, become his consort? Would Lakshmana worship him? Would the intelligent Bharata offer his salutations to him? But for the mighty power of Rama, would all this happen? Indeed, Rama's power is beyond all description."

The wedding took place in a glorious manner and all of them returned to Ayodhya. As the saying goes, "The pleasure is an interval between two pains". On the way to Ayodhya, there was a minor conflict with Parasurama. Rama conquered him and reached Ayodhya.

A few days had passed. One day at three in the morning, Dasaratha had a dream. It was his belief that whatever one dreams in the early hours of the day would come true. He had dreamt that he had become very old and that his hands and legs were trembling. He woke up with a disturbed state of mind having dreamt many bad things. He felt that he might not live long. Hence, he decided to coronate Rama immediately. When the king decides to do something who can stop him? He thought that there was no time to make elaborate arrangements for the coronation. He sent word for Sage Vasishta and obtained his consent. He called Rama and informed him about his decision. Rama treated everybody with equal-mindedness. This was the social Dharma He practiced. He was of the view that all are equal and there should not be any differences whatsoever. All are one. God is one. Rama's aim was to bring about such unity in diversity.

When Dasaratha informed Rama that he was to be made the crown prince the following day, Rama remained silent for some time. Being an obedient son, He did

not want to say anything against His father's wish. He thought for awhile and said, "Father, Bharata and Satrughna are not here. Should we not wait for their arrival?" But Dasaratha was firm in his resolve. He said, "You don't need to be concerned about it. You have to obey my command." Rama said that He was prepared to follow his command, but only sought a clarification in this regard. He said, "Four of us were born on the same day, under the same star. We were born from the same *Yajna Payasam*. Our *Namakaranam* (naming ceremony), *Aksharabhyasam* (initiation into learning), *Upanayanam* (sacred thread ceremony) and marriages were performed simultaneously. Then why only I am chosen to become the crown prince? Let all the four of us be coroneted simultaneously." Dasaratha was indeed surprised at Rama's observations. He quickly added that there cannot be four kings ruling over one kingdom. Then Rama said, "Divide the kingdom into four parts and each of us will rule each part. Let our coronations take place at the same time. Let there not be any differences." Dasaratha was stunned at Rama's argument. He had no answer to give. He sent him away and consulted Sage Vasishtha who later tried to convince Rama and said, "For the past many generations, our kingdom remained undivided. If it has to be divided now, it may lead to problems in future." But Rama was not convinced. He said, "I am not asking you to divide the kingdom, but let each of us rule a part of the kingdom." At the same time, Rama felt that Dasaratha was getting old. As the age advances, one's mental faculties will not be sound. As Dasaratha was not in a position to understand the reality, Rama said "Let Bharata and Satrughna also come." It would take at least fifteen days for them to arrive in Ayodhya. In the meantime, one could think leisurely and arrive at a proper conclusion. This was Rama's plan. The

mighty power of Rama and His master plan were highly mysterious and most wonderful. There should be equality in society. This is the main teaching of Bharatiya culture. *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!) Rama upheld the principles of ancient culture. The coronation did not take place at that time.

People go through Ramayana. They have books on Ramayana as big as pillows. They learn the Slokas by rote, but what is the use? They don't understand the essence.

Mother Kausalya was highly virtuous. Being the eldest queen, everyone would respect her and obey her command. Kaikeyi was the youngest queen. Nobody could go against her wish. Dasaratha was a puppet in her hands and he would dance to her tune. But Sumitra was not given much importance. The noble qualities of Sumitra and Satrughna cannot be described in words.

Later it happened that the coronation of Rama did not take place and Rama had to spend fourteen years in exile. Before going to the forest, Rama went to mother Kausalya to seek her blessings. She wept inconsolably. Not only she, everyone in the Antahpura (inner chamber) was in tears. When Lakshmana went to mother Sumitra and sought her blessings, she said, "My dear one, do not think that you are going to the forest. In fact, this Ayodhya is like an Aranya (forest) for us without Sita and Rama. The forest where Sita and Rama live is verily Ayodhya for you. Rama is your father and Sita, your mother. Let nothing come in your way of serving them." Will any mother speak in such a manner? "As per the boon granted to Kaikeyi, only Rama is supposed to go to the forest. You don't need to go with him." Any mother would have argued in

such a manner and stopped him from going. But Sumitra, being a noble mother, did not think on those lines. She had all the virtues that are expected of an ideal mother. Then Lakshmana went to his wife Urmila to inform her about his decision to go with Rama. Urmila was the daughter of King Janaka. She was highly virtuous. Her spirit of sacrifice and generosity is unparalleled. Being unaware of the happenings, she was painting a picture of Rama's coronation. She wanted to send it to her father Janaka. As she was deeply engrossed in her work and all of a sudden Lakshmana entered and called her in a raised voice, she was startled and at once stood up. As she got up in a hurry, she accidentally spilled over the paint on the picture she was painting. She felt sad for having spoiled the picture. Then Lakshmana said, "Rama's coronation is stalled because of Kaikeyi, and the picture of coronation that you are painting is spoiled because of your husband Lakshmana. So, don't worry about it." He informed her that he was accompanying Rama and Sita to the forest to serve them. She was happy with his decision. She did not ask him to allow her to accompany him. She said, "Dear husband, my mother-in-law Sumitra gave birth to you and your brother Satrugna to tread the path of service. You are meant to serve Rama and Satrugna to serve Bharata. So, discharge your duties. But at no point of time should you think of me during your stay for fourteen years in the forest. If you think of me even for a moment, you will not be able to serve Sita and Rama wholeheartedly. Think of their well-being always and serve them diligently. Forget me altogether for the next fourteen years." Will any wife speak in such a firm and selfless manner? No. Her broad-mindedness and utter selflessness moved Lakshmana to tears. He praised her saying, "Urmila, I never knew that you are so broad-minded. I will always treasure

your noble intentions in my heart." Urmila said, "Don't think of my noble intentions. Think of the nobility of Sita and Rama and obey their command. See to it that they are never put to any inconvenience." You may search in all the worlds, but you cannot find a noble mother like Sumitra and a virtuous wife like Urmila.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Lakshmana fell unconscious one day. Seeing his dear brother in such condition, Rama was highly depressed. He shed tears, saying, "If I search in this world, I may be able to find a wife like Sita but not a brother like Lakshmana. How can I live without him?" The doctors present there said, "Lakshmana could be revived with the help of a herb called Sanjivini which is available on a particular mountain." Hanuman at once flew to the mountain. As he could not identify the herb, he uprooted the entire mountain and started his return journey. As he was flying over Nandigrama with the mountain, Bharata mistook him for a demon and shot an arrow at him. Hanuman fell down along with the mountain. People of Nandigrama and Ayodhya came running and surrounded him. Hanuman offered his obeisance to everyone. He turned to Bharata and said, "Your brother Lakshmana has fallen unconscious in the battlefield. The doctors there wanted Sanjivini herb to be brought in order to revive Lakshmana. As I could not locate the exact herb, I am carrying the entire mountain with me." On coming to know that Lakshmana had fainted and Rama was grief-stricken, everyone assembled there started shedding tears; the ladies in particular were inconsolable. When Hanuman looked around, he found everyone in tears except one lady. She was none other than Sumitra, the mother of Lakshmana. "Rama can never be put to any harm. My son, Lakshmana constantly chants His

Name. Every cell of his body is filled with the Divine Name of Rama. So, nothing untoward can happen to him also." With such conviction, she was composed.

Bharata took Hanuman to Urmila and introduced him. She never stepped out of her room. She remained in the same room where she was at the time of Lakshmana's departure to the forest, for fourteen long years, until his return. Such was her determination. She asked Hanuman as to where he was coming from. Hanuman narrated to her in detail whatever happened right from the time Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield. On listening to Hanuman's narration, Urmila laughed and said, "Hanuman, don't you know even this? The very breath of Lakshmana is filled with the Divine Name of Rama. How can any danger befall on such a person?"

The sense of devotion and surrender of Urmila and Sumitra is not mentioned with prominence anywhere in Ramayana. In fact, they were the embodiments of righteousness and love. Their ideals are shining like beacons in this world. Everyone should become a Su-mitra (good friend) and a Su-putra (ideal son). The country today needs ideal men and women. Though thousands of years have passed, the glory of Ramayana has not diminished a bit. It has remained ever new and ever fresh in the hearts of people. One who chants Rama's Name and has the vision of His Divine Form will not be born again. That is why Sage Valmiki has extolled the greatness of Rama's power and His Name.

Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, *Rama Kodanda Rama ...* Then He continued the Discourse.

### *Embodiments of love!*

There is no *Amruta* (Divine ambrosia) greater than Rama's Name. Today people have forgotten *Nama Chinthana* (contemplating on the Divine Name). They repeat the names of cinemas, but do not repeat God's Name. That is why the country is facing hardships. The educated, intellectuals and scientists do not think of God at all. Some people deem it below their dignity to apply Vibhuti on their foreheads. They have it on their foreheads when they are at home and rub it off the moment they step outside. This has become a fashion! Why should one be afraid of chanting God's Name? Let people talk as they like. You don't need to be afraid. Spread the glory of Rama's Name in every nook and corner of the world. You can chant any Name of your choice - Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Siva, etc. As people have forgotten the Divine Name, every home is in turmoil. There are conflicts even among brothers. As there is no purity within, unsacred feelings have crept in. People are running after money and power. Can money and power give you protection? You find so many in this world who have plenty of money and are occupying positions of authority. Are they able to enjoy peace and happiness? No, no. Only the Divine Name can grant you peace and happiness. One who neglects God's Name is bound to be ruined.

The letter 'Ma' is the life force of the *Siva Panchakshari Mantra Om Namah Sivaya*. If 'Ma' is removed from this, it reads as *Na Sivaya*, meaning inauspicious. Likewise, the letter 'Ra' is the life-force of the *Ashtakshari Mantra Om Namo Narayanaya*. The life-force of the *Panchakshari Mantra 'Ma'*, and that of the *Ashtakshari Mantra 'Ra'* together have formed the Divine Name RAMA.

*Students! Devotees!*

Chanting of the Divine Name alone can protect you. Money and power are like passing clouds. You should not clamor for them. One may join politics and attain some position of authority but how long can one remain in power? Any moment one may be dislodged from power. One should not get carried away by politics; instead one should take refuge in the Divine Name. He alone is truly blessed and meritorious whose heart is filled with the Divine Name. People who do not

relish the Divine Name may make fun of you. Somebody may tell you there is no God. What should be your reply? "He may not exist for you but He exists for me. Who are you to deny the existence of my God?" No one has any right to deny God. Never forget the Divine Name wherever you are and under any circumstances. *Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam* (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God).

