

MANIFESTATION OF THE VEDAS IN HUMAN FORM

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama. Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore, contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly. (Telugu Poem)

The Vedas are the quintessence of profound, immeasurable and infinite wisdom. In Treta Yuga, the four Vedas assumed physical form and incarnated as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. While Rig Veda assumed the form of Rama, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda manifested in the forms of Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna, respectively.

Divine Power of Mantras

Rama symbolized Rig Veda. He was Mantraswarupa (embodiment of Mantras). Lakshmana was Mantradrastra (one who contemplated on the Mantras) and he put the teachings of Rama into practice. He followed Rama faithfully. He considered Rama Nama as the Taraka (liberating) Mantra. He, in fact, considered Rama everything - mother, father, Guru and God. Bharata was the embodiment of Sama Veda and chanted Rama Nama incessantly with Bhava, Raga and Tala (feeling, melody and rhythm). While Bharata was engaged in Nirguna worship (worship of formless God), Lakshmana rejoiced in Saguna worship (worship of God with form). Atharvana Veda manifested itself as Satrugna who followed his three elder brothers and conquered not only the secular world but achieved victory over the kingdom of senses also. The Vedas thus incarnated in Treta Yuga to impart most precious message to mankind. The two great sages Vasishtha and Viswamitra declared to the world that the four Vedas had taken birth in human form as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. As a consequence of great merit earned by Dasaratha, the four Vedas incarnated as his sons. If anyone asked Sage Viswamitra any questions about the Vedas, he replied, "All the four Vedas have incarnated as the four sons of Dasaratha to set an ideal to the world." Hence the Vedas are not formless; they have a form.

The Mantras contained in the Vedas are of immense significance. When Sage Viswamitra realized that the Rakshasas (demons) wanted to stop the chanting of Vedic Mantras and destroy righteousness and truth on earth, he sought the help of Rama and Lakshmana who symbolized the divine forces that descended on earth to destroy the demonic forces and establish peace in the world. With the power of Mantras taught to them by Sage Viswamitra, Rama and Lakshmana annihilated the Rakshasas. This incident signifies the fact that with the power of Vedic Mantras man can destroy his demonic qualities. By engaging themselves in the chanting of the Mantras, the people of Treta Yuga annihilated their demonic qualities. Symbolising the divine powers of the Vedas, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna destroyed demonic forces and fostered divine forces in the world. The four brothers thus established the supremacy of the Vedas as manifestation of the aspect of God with form. Each Mantra has a form. It has also its own inner significance. When chanting is done with contemplation on form, it leads one to the path of self-realisation. The Vedic seers declared: *Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Aditya Varnam Tamasah Parastat.* (I have seen the Divine Being who shines with the splendour of a billion suns beyond the realm of darkness). The seers and sages transcended the darkness of ignorance and visualized the effulgence of the Divine. They chanted the Mantras, contemplated on the form of the Divine, performed Yajnas and attained peace and bliss. They made use of Mantra, Tantra and Yantra in the performance of Yajnas which ensured peace and prosperity of the people in Treta Yuga. With the help of the Mantras, they quelled the Rakshasas and established the reign of gods.

Namasmarana for Man's Liberation

But the people of Kali Yuga have forgotten these Mantras with the result that Kali Yuga has verily become Kalaha Yuga (the Age of discord and conflict). Even brothers quarrel with each other. They live and eat together in the same family, yet there is hatred and conflict between them. Different means for man's liberation have been prescribed for each of the four Yugas. While meditation is prescribed as the primary means of liberation in Krita Yuga, performance of Yajnas and chanting of Mantras forms the means of liberation in the Treta Yuga. Similarly, Archana (worship of God) is the chief means of liberation in Dwapar Yuga. But it is Namasmarana that is the main means of man's liberation in Kali Yuga. As the people of Kali Yuga do not have the strength and capability to carry out rigorous Sadhana, they have been advised to do Namasmarana.

Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva Kevalam;

Kalau Nastyeva Nastyeva Nastyeva Gatiranyatha.

(In Kali Yuga, there is no other means more effective than the chanting of Divine Name for man's liberation).

The Ramayana is not an ordinary story. It contains the direct message of the Vedas. Rama symbolizes the wisdom of the Vedas. Rama married Sita who represents Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman). When Sita is taken away by demonic forces, Rama and Lakshmana search for her desperately. The Ramayana contains thousands of Slokas. As it was not possible to remember all the Slokas of the Ramayana, the sages recommended the chanting of the Name of Rama. When the disciples of Vasishtha asked him what Divine Name to chant, the sage said, "It is enough if you chant the name 'Rama'. The Name of Rama will make you free from Raga (attachment) and Roga (disease)". As I often tell the students, the name Rama has two syllables, 'Ra' and 'ma'. These two powerful syllables are derived from the names of Vishnu and Siva. The syllable 'Ra' comes from the Ashtakshari (eight syllabled) Mantra 'Om Namō Narayanaya'. It is the life-breath of the Ashtakshari Mantra. Similarly, 'ma' is the very soul of the Panchakshari (five lettered) Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya'. The Astakshari Mantra 'Om Namō Narayanaya' and the Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' become meaningless when 'ra' and 'ma' are respectively removed from the words of these Mantras. Without 'ra' the Ashtakshari Mantra becomes 'Om Namō Nayanaya' which is meaningless. In the same way, the Panchakshari Mantra without 'ma' becomes 'Om Nah Sivaya' which is inauspicious. The Name Rama is the life-breath of both the Vaisnavites and Saivites (worshippers of Vishnu and Siva).

In Treta Yuga when the sages and seers were engaged in the chanting of the Divine Name of Rama, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons tried to put hurdles in their way. They thought that if they abducted Sita, who symbolized Brahma Jnana, Rama would lose His power. The Name would lose its potency without Jnana just like sugarcane loses its sweetness without Rasa. Hanuman resolved to bring this Rasa back to Rama and rejoiced in drinking Ramarasa (ambrosia of Rama's Name). The people of Treta and Dwapar Yugas considered the Name Rama to be the essence of all sweetness and enjoyed its nectarine taste. Instead of tasting the delicious spiritual sweetness of the Name of Rama, people today devour worldly sweets, and expose themselves to the risk of becoming diabetic patients. Worldly sweets cause diseases whereas the delicious sweet of Rama Nama rids one of all diseases. In ancient India, even the cowherds and shepherds chanted the Divine Name while tending their cattle and sheep. There were not many diseases in ancient times. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna propagated the glorious power of Vedic Mantras to free the world from diseases and suffering.

Never Neglect the Teachings of the Vedas

Mandodari, the queen of Ravana, strived hard to save her husband Ravana. She gave wise counsel to him but Ravana paid no heed to her. When husband takes to evil ways, a virtuous wife acts as his wise minister to put him on the right path. Mandodari was one such wife. Bharya (wife) is not the one who provides worldly pleasures to her husband; she is the one who does good to him by leading him to the path of wisdom and righteousness. Mandodari was a true Sati (wife) who tried to mend the ways of her Pati (husband). Sita also tendered wise counsel to Rama and advised Him not to destroy all the demons. She suggested that only those who committed the evil deeds should be punished. Justice does not lie in destroying the entire clan. Women are great because they show the right path to man. They are, in fact, the light of wisdom in the world. They, therefore, deserve protection and reverence. Sita symbolizes Jnana Tattwa (principle of wisdom). Sita told Rama that goodness was universal, irrespective of caste, creed and community. It is because of women like Sita that men have made progress in life.

There are numerous species in this world. Every one of them has a definite purpose to fulfill in God's creation. Some of them may appear more beautiful than others. One cannot say whether a cow is more beautiful or a bull. But virtues are more important than physical beauty. Observing the good and bad in the world, the students should develop discrimination to choose the former. They should strive hard to cultivate virtues. Right from early age, they should inculcate good qualities and develop good character. Wherever you go, character is of utmost importance. When the students develop good character, the entire country will become good and great. It is virtues that lend greatness to any person. Rama shines in the Ramayana because of His sterling virtues. Virtues are more important than bookish learning.

In spite of his education and intelligence man does not give up his mean-mindedness and evil qualities. He has no knowledge of the Self. Modern education leads to argumentation, not to total wisdom. (Telugu Poem)

Students - Boys and Girls!

You should try to attain total wisdom. You should make right use of eyes, ears and tongue which God has gifted to you. Whoever is able to control these three will achieve greatness. One should therefore cultivate right vision, right hearing and right speech. Always speak sweetly and softly. One who cultivates these three virtues will verily become divine. This is the primary objective and fundamental basis of all your education. Those bereft of these virtues are virtually demons. This is the essence and the message of the Ramayana. The four Vedas and other scriptures exhort man to follow these principles. Dear students! Never neglect the teachings of the Vedas. They are for the emancipation and redemption of mankind. Put them into practice in your life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the Bhajan “*Rama Rama Rama Sita...*”)