



॥ श्रीमद्वाल्मीकि रामायणम् ॥

Introduction

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For all details of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam sessions including live webcast and archives, please visit:

<http://www.practicalvedantaiimb.com/>

ध्यानम्

गणेश - वन्दनम्

शुक्लांबरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्बुजम् ।
प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत् सर्वविघ्नोपशान्तये ॥ 1

I pray to the ever smiling, all pervading, glowing with the colour of moon, and dressed in white cloth and with four arms to remove all obstacles on my way.

ध्यानम् सरस्वती - वन्दनम्

दोर्भिर्युक्ता चतुर्भिः स्फटिकमणिमयीमक्षमालां दधाना
हस्तेनैकेन पद्मं सितमपि च शुकं पुस्तकं चापरेण ।
भासाकुन्देन्दु शङ्खः स्फटिकमणिनिभा भासमानाऽसमाना
सा मे वाग्देवतेयं निवसतु वदने सर्वदा सुप्रसन्ना ॥ 2

Let that goddess of speech (knowledge) with four hands, who holds the garland of crystal beads in one hand, the parrot, white lotus and book in other hands, and who is as lustrous as kunda flowers, moon, conch and crystal beads, and is without parallel live always in my organ of speech & bless me.

ध्यानम्

वाल्मीकेः तथा रामायणस्य माहात्म्यम्

कूजन्तं रामरामेति मधुरं मधुराक्षरम् ।

आरूढ्य कविताशाखां वन्दे वाल्मीकिकोकिलम् ॥ 3

Salutations to the nightingale Vālmīki, who sits on the poem like branch, and goes on singing sweetly, “Rāma”, “Rāma”.

वाल्मीकेर्मुनिसिंहस्य कवितावनचारिणः ।

शृण्वन् रामकथानादं को न याति परां गतिम् ॥ 4

Who in this world will not attain salvation by hearing the story of Rāma composed by the lion among poets Vālmīki, whose abode was the forest.

ध्यानम्

हनुमत् - वन्दनम्

गोष्पदीकृत वाराशिं* मशकीकृतराक्षसम् ।
रामायणमहामालारत्नं वन्देऽनिलात्मजम् ॥ 5

I pray to him who is born to the God of wind. who made the king of lakes look like the hoof of a cow, who made the great Rākṣasas look like simple mosquitoes, born to the God of wind, and is the greatest jewel in the garland called Rāmāyaṇam.

* - वारीशं (another version)

ध्यानम्

हनुमत् - वन्दनम्

यत्र यत्र रघुनाथकीर्तनं तत्र तत्र कृतमस्तकाञ्जलिम् ।
बाष्पवारिपरिपूर्णलोचनं मारुतिं नमत राक्षसान्तकम् ॥ 6

I pray and salute the son of wind god, who brought to end the rākṣasas, who is always present with eye full of tears, with head bowed in veneration, wherever the praise of Lord Rāma is sung

ध्यानम्

सपरिवार- राम - वन्दनम्

वैदेहीसहितं सुरद्रुमतले हैमे महामण्टपे
मध्येपुष्पकमासने मणिमये वीरासने सुस्थितम् ।
अग्रे वाचयति प्रभञ्जनसुते तत्त्वं मुनिभ्यः परं
व्याख्यान्तं भरतादिभिः परिवृतं रामं भजे श्यामलम् ॥ 7

I salute that dark coloured Rāma, seated along with Vaidehī, and in the company of Bharata & others, inside the golden shed beneath the holy tree of Karpaga, on the seat of flowers bedecked with jewels, built in its centre, explaining the essence of knowledge, to the assembled sages, and to the son of Anjanā.

ध्यानम्

रामादि - देवता - वन्दनम्

नमोऽस्तु रामाय सलक्ष्मणाय देव्यै च तस्यै जनकात्मजायै ।
नमोऽस्तु रुद्रेन्द्रयमानिलेभ्यो नमोऽस्तु चन्द्रार्कमरुद्गणेभ्यः ॥ 8

My salutations to Lord Rāma who is with Lakṣmaṇa, my salutations to that daughter of Janaka, who is Rāma's wife, my salutations to Rudra, Indra, Yama and Vāyu, and my salutations to the Moon, the Sun and the Marut Gaṇas.

Human Beings Journey...

अभ्युदयः

- Material Richness, Security, Health etc.
- Happiness arising out of these

निश्रेयस्

- Self Evolution, Questions about one's own self
- Search for meaning, lasting happiness etc.

Aids for Human Journey

Methods
to Achieve

- How do we pursue these goals?
- What are the governing principles?

Making
Attempts

- Obstacles and Pitfalls
- Ethical & Moral dilemmas

Past
Experiences

- How others handled, where did it lead?
- Yayāti Model Vs Śukha Model

Role
Models

- Something I can closely relate to

Etymology of पुराणम् and इतिहासः

- पुराणम् –

- पुरा भवम् = पुराणम्
- पुरा नीयते = पुराणम्

- इतिहासः –

- पूर्वचरितप्रतिपादकग्रन्थः ।
- धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणामुपदेशसमन्वितम् ।
- पूर्ववृत्तं कथायुक्तम् इतिहासं प्रचक्षते ॥
- इतिह आस्तेऽस्मिन् = इतिह + आस् + घञ्
- (इतिह = परम्परोपदेशः ।
- इति एवं ह किल इति विग्रहः)

Purāṇas and Itihāsas

Important differences

- Narrator Vs Narration – time differences
- Pre-historic Vs Historic dimension
- Sub-set of the other – possibility
- Primary intent – explain Vedic texts Vs expound Dharmas
- Focus on a series of stories Vs A single story
- The notion of Lakṣaṇas (sarga, pratisarga, vamśa, mañvantara, vamśānucaritam)

Why should we read Rāmāyaṇam?

- We see great role models to inspire us
- Real confusions about how to react to various challenges in life
 - Feeling that only good things can happen in one's life
 - No capacity to handle adversities in life
- We do not have an idea of what it means to
 - Build enduring character
 - Live a *Dhārmic* & Courageous living
- It always pays to know more about **Avatāra Puruṣas**

We succumb to pressures, are confused, resort to short cuts, unethical means, feel depressed, end up with nothing in life

Avatāra Puruṣa

The Concept

- A strong purpose/cause
 - Dharma needs to be restored
 - Some great good has to be done to humanity
- How does it manifest?
 - Enormous energy (world transforming energy) flows

Avatāra Puruṣa

The Concept

- How does it manifest?
 - World moving force – they can touch 1000s of living beings directly & indirectly
 - Buddha spoke to 5 disciples in the 6th Century BC
 - Krishna spoke to Arjuna on the battlefield

- *They defeat the logic of time – As time passes by they become known more*
- *Unless we have spiritual development we can't understand the greatness of incarnation*

Rāmāyaṇam

An epic with global footprint

- An epic with a huge influence not just in India, but also in the entire south Asia, south east Asia
 - Kamba Rāmāyaṇam (Tamil)
 - Ranganatha Rāmāyaṇam (telugu)
 - Saptakanda Rāmāyaṇam (assamese)
 - Torave Rāmāyaṇam (kannada)
 - Vilanka Rāmāyaṇam, Dandi Rāmāyaṇam (odia)
 - Adhyatma Rāmāyaṇam (Malayalam)
 - Krittivasi Rāmāyaṇ (Bengali)
 - Ramcharitmanas (awedhi)
 - Bhavrath Rāmāyaṇam (Marthi)
 - Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa (Java)
 - Reamker (Cambodia)
 - Ramakavaca (Indonesia)
 - Maharadia Lawana (Philippines)
 - Yama Zatdaw (Myamnar)

श्रीमद्वाल्मीकि रामायणम्

- रामस्य अयणम् = रामायणम्
- आदि काव्यम्
- 7 kāṇḍas, 645 sargas, 24,000 ślokas
 - Bālakāṇḍa : 77 sargas
 - Ayodhyākāṇḍa : 119 sargas
 - Araṇyakāṇḍa : 75 sargas
 - Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa : 67 sargas
 - Sundarakāṇḍa : 68 sargas
 - Yuddhakāṇḍa : 128 sargas
 - Uttarakāṇḍa : 111 sargas

Rāmāyaṇam

Some key messages

- **Bāla Kāṇḍam** – Rāma goes thru' hardships in life – understands the need to know the realities of life, struggles etc. – *Elements of making of a great leader*
- **Ayodhyā Kāṇḍam** – Some of the guiding principles of life – need to balance the adversities & good things in life – *A must read for the youth of today*
- **Aranya Kāṇḍam** – A number of Rākṣasas killed by Rāma – Goodness alone not enough – *Ability to hold goodness & destroy evil* is required

Rāmāyaṇam

Some key messages

- **Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍam** – Pain is part of living – we inevitably go through it – *Good company can help us* wade thru these challenges in life
- **Sundara Kāṇḍam** – Wonderful description of the character of Sītā – How character of a person can provide enormous strength & confidence in facing adversities – *Must read for every woman*
 - **Yuddha Kāṇḍam** – The world has goodness & greatness – *Greatness without goodness will not sustain*

Vālmīki's description of Laṅkā in Sundara Kāṇḍam Vs total annihilation of it in the Yuddha Kāṇḍam – Assertion of the concept satyameva jayate nāṅṛtam //