

Research Paper

A New Perspective on Adikavya

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This research paper studied the story of Ramayana through a different perspective; that is, based on Monistic doctrines. I tried to analyse the characters and events in the story of Ramayana, and attempted to discover the different implications and dimensions of the story and its characters, in a transcendental, monistic perspective. The characters in Ramayana signify the different elements of monistic philosophy.

Key words: Brahman, mind, body, liberation.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature, at its finest sense, is the articulation of human feelings, ideas and concepts in ornate language. Contemplating on various realms of life, man has compiled literary treatises on various subjects. Some of such texts influenced their contemporary and later readers since they either carried novelty in their expression of ideas or novelty in the idea presented. Sometimes the idea presented may be ordinary, and sometimes ethereal. Vedas, the most ancient texts of spiritual instruction, was written in ancient Sanskrit verses, later sages expressed the Vedic doctrines in simple way; which form a series of works known as *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Dharma Shastras* and *Jnana Shastras*. In every aeon, the sages composed *Itihasas*, of God's supervision of human affairs. The two prominent *Itihasas* in India's possession, The Ramayana and the *Mahabharatha* have been composed with *Vedantic* thoughts as its core. Valmiki Ramayana is said to be the first adorned poetry written by a single author. The work consists of twenty four thousand verses. The date of Ramayana is believed to be before 500 B.C. Valmiki Ramayana belongs to the greatest of all literature that has ever been written. Millions of people down the centuries have crossed the ocean of sorrowful life with the light spread out by Ramayana. We, Indians are really

fortunate that we uniquely have this treasure, from where we can find the solution for whatever problem we encounter. Valmiki Ramayana consists of the essence of the Vedic wisdom especially, the *Advaitic* thought. This paper is an interpretation of Valmiki Ramayana on the basis of its connection with Monism.

Valmiki Ramayana is the story of the wanderings of Sri Rama from *Ayodhya* to Lanka, during the *Threthayuga*, about two million years ago. Sri Rama is believed to be the embodiment of God, or an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, for the purpose of subduing *Ravana*, who through his penance got very high powers, and misused them for fulfilling his wicked and lustful desires, in connection with the *smrithi* that;

"God will himself assume human form and labour for the destruction of the wicked (*dushtanigraham*) and the protection of the good (*Sishtaparipalanam*)"[Bhagavad Gita4-7,8]

In the *Advaitic* point of view, in Ramayana, The absolute Brahman (God) is appearing as a human being, Sri Rama. It is clear that Rama is not presented just as a human hero in the story;

प्रोद्यमानेजगन्नाथंसर्वलोकनमस्कृतम्।कौसल्याजनयद्रामंदिव्यलक्षणसंयुतम्॥

[रा. बा. 18-10]

The story of Sri Rama, exemplifies the truest monistic concepts on the evolution of the universe, the momentary nature of life, the unity between the Ultimate Brahman and every human soul. The story of Ramayana is truly a telling of the secret of life.

Rama is one among the four sons of *Dasaradha*. Here we can see the concept of the “*Chaturvidhya of Paramatman*”, which is explained well with the example of “*Chitrapata*” in which *Paramatman* is seen in four ways that is; “*sudha*”, the one without any connection with *maya*, “*Isvara*”, one which is related with *maya*, The *Hiranyagarbha*, The ruler of subconscious mind, and the *Viratpurusha*, the ruler of conscious mind [Siddh. 118-119].

These can be connected with the four brothers. Rama, who is not connected with *maya* or ignorance symbolizes *Paramatman*, Lakshmana, who is related with ignorance (*maya*), *Satrughna* can be placed as *Hiranyagarbha*, and *Bharatha* (“*bharanadbharathonama*” [Adh.Ram1,3,40-41] who was the ruler of *Ayodhya*, can be called as the *Viratpurusha*. It is said in the story itself that they were four bodies and one soul, which underlines the concept that they are different forms of the same spirit, *Paramatman*.

विष्णोरर्धमहाभागंपुत्रमैक्ष्वाकुनन्दनम्।..कौसल्याशुशुभेतेनपुत्रेणामि ततेजसा।भरतोनामकैकेय्यांजजेसत्यपराक्र

मः।साक्षाद्विष्णोश्चतुर्भागःसर्वैःसमुदितोगुणैः॥

अथलक्ष्मणशत्रुघ्नौसुमित्राजनयत्सुतौ।वीरौसर्वास्त्रकुशलौविष्णोरर्धस मन्वितौ॥

[रा. बा.18:11-14]

Sita, the daughter of Earth, signifies “*Prakriti*” itself. The absolute Brahman when appears as a human being, it needs a body to reside. Here Rama, the Absolute Brahman is first seen in *Ayodhya* (The land were there is no *yuddha* or struggle) in the starting of the story. The time when Rama marries *Sita*, that is when Brahman appear to be in a body or *Prakriti*, he had to go to the forest which shows the major concept of monism;

“यत्रहिद्वैतमिवभवतितदितरइतरंपश्यति..” [बृ. 4-5-15]

“ यदाहयेवैषएतस्मिन्नुदरमन्तरंकुरुते।अथतस्यभयंभवति” [तै.2-7]

That is whenever one misconceives the Supreme spirit in the mortal human body, there arises the doubt of duality, which is the cause of fear, the root of all problems in the worldly life, which is depicted in Ramayana in the form of a forest.

Rama is really embodied as Brahman, which is evident in the words:

बभूवभूयोभूतानांस्वयंभूरिवसंमतः। [रा. बा. 18-25]

The following verses in Valmiki Ramayana, which expresses the fear arose in the mind of *Sita* when she was in Lanka, is note worthy:

उद्विग्नाशङ्किताचास्मिन्स्वस्थंचमनोमम।

तद्भयाच्चाहमुद्विग्नाअशोकवनिकांगता॥ [रा. यु.34-10]

The ogre king *Ravana* stands as a symbol of mind or senses.

सहिमायाबलःक्रूरावणःशत्रुावणः।

मांमोहयतिदुष्टात्मापीतमात्रेववारुणी॥ [रा. यु. 34- 8]

When the body is caught in the hands of mind or senses, Rama, the absolute spirit interferes, and with the help of Hanuman, the embodiment of true intellect, vanquishes the *Dasanana*.

The ten heads of *Ravan* are minds us the ten levels of mind, which is referred to in *Brihadaranyakopanishad*;

कामःसङ्कल्पोविचिकित्साश्रद्धाअश्रद्धाधृतिरधृतिर्हीर्षार्भीरित्येतत्सर्व मनएव [बृ. 1/5/3]

Rama's army of monkeys crosses the sea through the long bridge named *Sethu*, this bridge represents the path of true knowledge (*Jnanamarga*), the only way through which one can cross the sea of this life of struggle (*samsara sagara*). There arises a question how would have Hanuman crossed the big ocean?, Yes, there must have another way, it is nothing but the path of *Bhakti* (*bhakti marga*), Hanuman opens his heart and shows Rama and *Sita* dwelling over there. *Smriti* says that;

ईश्वरःसर्वभूतानांहृद्देशेर्जुनतिष्ठति” [Bhagavad Gita 18-61]

At last defeating *Ravana*, Rama returns to *Ayodhya*, the land of peace.

According to *Advaita* philosophy, in the quest of truth, for

attaining liberation (moksha), first one should make his mind or senses under control, second at a peaceful mind one should hear, see and contemplate on the absolute Brahman

आत्मावाअरेद्रष्टव्यःश्रोतव्योमन्तव्योनिदिध्यासितव्यः- [बृ.4/5/6]

One must know the difference between the eternal and the temporal (नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः).

For in the story, afterwards Rama loses Sita, here the question of purity arises. The ignorant intellect of men doubts that, body or prakriti being material, how can be an abode of the supreme spirit, which is pure, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Then the answer is that the Brahman, is not at all affected by the material body which appears to be impure (असङ्गोह्ययंपुरुषः [बृ.4/3/15]), thus, for showing the ignorant people the difference between the material world and the absolute Brahman, Rama loses Sita.

But really Sita is always there in the mind of Rama even when he loses her and Sita also respects Rama, this exemplifies the sruti;

एकोदेवःसर्वभूतेषुगूढःसर्वव्यापीसर्वभूतान्तरात्मा
कर्माध्यक्षःसर्वभूताधिवासःसाक्षीचेताकेवलोनिर्गुणश्च [श्वेता. 6/11]

Sita goes to the netherworld (rasatala), which symbolises death, the end of life, after which the body is becoming decayed into the earth, from where it came. This also shows the momentary nature of life in the world. Dr. Radhakrishnan has already pointed out that, in Ramayana, Valmiki is correlating the common worldly affairs with the eternal truth [Ra. Sa.p43].

The following verses of Ramayana seen in significant instances like 'vibheeshanasaranagati' and 'Jatayumoksha' eloquently indicate or underline the concept of 'Moksha' of Advaita.

सकृदेवप्रपन्नायतवास्मीतिचयाचते।

अभयंसर्वभूतेभ्योदास्यामीतिव्रतंमम। [रा. यु. 18-33]

यागतिर्यज्ञशीलानांआहिताग्नेश्चयागतिः।अपरावर्तिनांयाचयाचभूमि
प्रदायिनाम्॥

मयात्वंसमनुजातोगच्छलोकाननुत्तमान्।गृधराजमहासत्वसंस्कृत
श्चमयाव्रज॥

[रा. अर. 68-29-30]

Philosophy has always been the guiding force of literature. Ramayana, the first literary composition on earth, itself proves the statement, which is eminently depicting the essence of Advaita Vedanta simply through the story of Rama. The characters in Ramayana signify the different elements of monistic philosophy. It illustrates the cycle of birth and death. Sita symbolises earth or body, since she originates and dissipates to earth. Rama stands for the Supreme Soul, the independent and unaffected.

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