

## Adhyatma Ramayana

aum namah shivaya

Before starting Raamaayana, a humble offering of five slokas to our study of Raamaayana. There could be grammatical errors in the slokas - hence apologizing in advance for the same.

satchitsvaroopam raaghavaveeram  
sreeramachandram pranamaamyaham

That brave Raaghava who is of the nature of Existence and Conciousness  
That Sree Raamachandram I prostrate

yatkripayaa kalushaadeen  
nisshesham pravileeyathe  
tatsreeramam smaraamyaham  
satatam sarvabhaavena

By whose grace, all impurities  
get destroyed beyond doubt (completely)  
that Sree Raama, I remember  
always and in all ways

devebhyopi yatdurlabham  
tadaananda param gathim  
manasaa smritvaa karomi  
raamaayana adhyayanam

That which is tough even for Devas  
that blissful supreme goal  
keeping in mind, I do  
study of Raamaayana

ganesham natvaa natvaa svagurum  
vadaami bhakthyaa raama charitham

Prostrating Ganesha; prostrating one's guru  
with devotion, I talk about Raama's life

yahsrunothi srutvaa smarathi yah  
raamaanugrahena achiraat sah  
aapnothi nirguna brahma padam  
lokabhogam cha anaayaasena

He who listens and having listened, remembers  
he through Raama's blessing, very soon  
attains the state of Nirguna Brahman  
worldly pleasures as well with ease.

Let's start with what is Raamaayana and why is it important or necessary to learn puranic stories like Raamaayana (the above slokas give a brief answer to this question).

Ayana has a meaning of "way". Thus Raamaayana means the way to Raama. It can also be interpreted as way of Raama (or life of Raama). But the former meaning is more purposeful.

Today we are in a world filled with all sorts of problems. It is like telling "you name it and the world has got it". Some may argue or claim that it is only today that these problems have been created and due to lack of respect for nature etc. etc. But truth is that problems are always part of the world. The Lord qualifies the world as "anityam" and "asukham" or temporary and sorrowful (anityam asukham lokam). The world is constantly changing and hence there cannot be any true happiness or peace in the world. The moment a person runs behind the world or its pleasures, then happiness or peace evades him in the mind. On the other hand, a person who remembers the world to be a creation of Ishwara (or as filled in and out with Ishwara) will be able to remain blissful all the while experiencing the world like any other human being.

It is by learning of puranic stories like Raamaayana, Bhagavatham etc. that we find the way to live blissful amidst all the chaos in the world. If we think today the world is in chaos, we just have to look at Raama's life or Krishna's life and we will find that the world was in a chaos then as well. But these avataara purushas show us as to how to remain blissful amidst all these problems.

Raama lead a very blissful and contended life. All the problems in his life didn't touch him even little bit. Considering the problems in his life, our problems are nothing at all. But amidst all these problems, Raama was very blissful.

How could Raama live like that?

He is an avataara purusha hence -- this isn't exactly true. We find Yoga Vaasista mentioning that Vishnu got a curse and hence had to be born as a human being thereby forgetting his essential blissful nature; and it is only Vasista's teaching to Raama that made Raama realize his very nature again.

Raama could live blissfully thus by knowing the nature of the world and by remembering the essential principle behind the world.

Raama was able to go away from his father instantly though he loved his father. Raama was able to send Sita away to Valmiki's ashram though he loved her. All of these show that Raama was able to remember that all these relationships and worldly pleasures will vanish one day or the other. What remains always is the essential principle of Ishwara (he who pervades this entire world).

Raamaayana of Ezhutthacchan is adhyaatma raamaayana. Adhyaatma means related to the Self (that which is beyond the body, the pranas, the sense organs, the mind, the intellect, the Ego and even ignorance). Thus Adhyaatma Raamaayana is not a mere epic but it is a knowledge of the Self as found in Raama's life and that which should pave way for us to become Raama.

We all are entitled to becoming Raama because we all are Raama only (ishwarah sarvabhoothaanaam hriddeshe arjuna thistathi - O Arjuna! Ishwara resides in the heart of all beings). It is by learning this beautiful epic of Raamaayana that we will get rid of all our wrong notions and realize our inherent nature of blissful Self.

Remembering our very nature of Self, we will still be able to portray the role given to us in this world (the

role of a human being with a particular name, a gender, a family, a work etc.). And this is the goal of life itself.

May we keep this goal of realizing our very nature of bliss through the brief study of Raamaayana.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 1**

aum namah shivaya

The statements in between dotted lines (first appearing) are the summary of the actual text in Adhyaatma Raamaayana and the rest are explanations on the text (for our benefit).

Let's start with baala khaanda where Raama's childhood is described.

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Ezhutthacchan starts with prostration of Raama and Naaraayana. Another way of prostration is by mention of the ultimate truth. Ezhutthacchan thus says that this whoever reads or learns will attain moksha very easily.

In order to remove the burden from earth, all devas prayed to Naaraayana. As a result Naaraayana decided to take birth as the son of Dasharatha and get rid of Raavana (and others) who were burdens to earth.

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Raama's birth or descent to earth in order to relieve burdens from earth and as a result of the prayers of Devas is a symbolic representation of our lives. Our lives are filled with so much burdens of sorrows and sufferings as a result of having attachments and aversions to the people and objects of the world. This world is a creation of Ishwara and hence Ishwara pervades each and everything in this world. Even as various gold ornaments are mere names and forms of gold - gold is the essence; similarly this world is names and forms of Ishwara - Ishwara is the essence. When this non-dual all-pervasive Ishwara is forgotten and we think names-forms are real, then we enter into sorrows and sufferings. And these sorrows and sufferings have to end through remembrance of Ishwara or when Ishwara comes into our life. When sorrows are unbearable, then we turn to people who can remove the sorrow. Unfortunately, our faith in Ishwara isn't that strong that we seek Ishwara rather than anything else in the world. So we first turn to relatives, friends etc. until all these hopes vanish. And finally we seek Ishwara.

Devas denote our sense organs which causes some problems (sorrows and sufferings) in the world. When this happens, the Devas (effectively the sadhaka) seeks Ishwara. Ishwara out of compassion decides to come into our sorrows and sufferings (even as Ishwara takes birth in earth to remove burdens from earth). This is through remembrance of Ishwara or Ishwara's thought also coming into our sorrows and sufferings. Ishwara is so powerful that all other thoughts slowly lose their power. Thus more and more we think about Ishwara than the world, even our sorrows and sufferings. Thereby finally we end up with Ishwara pervading our mind - when Ishwara pervades our mind, sorrows and sufferings don't mean anything. Therefore we will be ever blissful at all times thereby serving the purpose of the advent of Ishwara into our minds.

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Paarvathi talks to Paramasiva and asks him to tell her about the glory of Sri Raama. To this Siva responds by saying that nobody has ever asked him this again and she is really blessed even to bring up this topic. The very desire to know about Raama is beneficial and good.

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All puranas are in the form of discussion between Siva and Paarvathi where Paarvathi questions and Siva answers with stories. Thus here we find Paarvathi asking about the story of Sri Raama. The desire to know about Ishwara itself is as a result of the greatest punya or merit that we have earned. There are millions of people in the world - millions who come to meet AMMA or are following AMMA. But out of these millions of people, rarely few want to know AMMA in essence. Majority want to know AMMA as a physical being but AMMA always proves that she is beyond physical. Others want to get attention from AMMA but again AMMA is not an attention-giving machine; she is much much more than that. AMMA is all-pervasive blissful Ishwara - when AMMA comes to live in our hearts, we will not feel the pain of separation from her; we don't have to talk externally with AMMA; we don't need to ask anything from AMMA; instead we will be ever blissful and content (this doesn't mean we will not interact at all with AMMA - there have been great realized masters who have met AMMA; the most prominent I can think of of Swami Mridaananda of Raamakrishna Mission who met AMMA before he had his samaadhi; swami was a realized master who wrote works on prasthaana traya with ease and clarity).

Thus the desire to really know or want Ishwara is the greatest desire for a seeker. But once this desire grows, we will find ourselves going more and more closer towards Ishwara. The Lord gives the rule of "liking" or "loving" as when a person thinks more and more about something in the mind, then liking or loving gets created. Thus the more and more we listen about Ishwara, the more and more we think about Ishwara. Thereby we get liking or loving towards Ishwara. Worldly objects/people will cause trouble by our liking or loving as they themselves are dependent on others for their "bliss" whereas Ishwara is always blissful and liking or loving Ishwara will only give us bliss.

Thus wanting to know about Ishwara sets the stage for a blissful life which is why Siva praises the desire that is in Paarvathi to know about Raama's glories.

We will continue in the next day.

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## **Adhyatma Ramayana - 2**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with baala khaanda.

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Bhoomidevi taking the shape of cow along with Devas approached Vishnu when the burden in earth grew as a result of asuras. They then praised Naaraayana. Brahma sang praises of Naaraayana and asked for the boon that he would remember Naaraayana at the time of death. The devas sang their woes to Vishnu saying the atrocities happening on earth and that he should get rid of these.

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Bhoomidevi is the most bearing person in the entire world. And the only equivalent that we can come to bhoomidevi is a cow. The cow provides everything of itself to others - such selflessness is very rare

indeed to find. Hence ancient people used to worship cow.

:)But just using this as a way to go against killing of cows etc. is wrong. The goal of life isn't to correct the entire world but correct oneself. As long as one is not correct or right, the world cannot be seen in the right perspective. Correcting oneself is only possible through realization of the Lord as pervading the entire world. Until then, we will be viewing the world in a different perspective which will lead us to like/dislike people/objects thus causing nothing but sorrow alone. As Ramana Maharshi always used to say "when we see the world from a worldly perspective, we will see the world as different objects, temporary and sorrowful. But once we have the vision of knowledge, then we will see the entire world as Ishwara alone". Thus an ajnaani sees sorrows in the world whereas a jnaani sees nothing but bliss and bliss alone.

Shastras say that birth continues to another birth and yet to another - thus the chain of birth-death continues until we realize our nature to be that of Ishwara who is unborn. But in order to put an end to this, we should remember the Lord at the end of our life. Whatever we think at the end of this life, we will become that in the next birth. The reason for this is because we have been thinking of that the whole of life (or thought about it the maximum). Whatever we think maximum in a day, we will remember at the end of the day - similar with end of life as well. One who thinks about Ishwara at the end of life will become Ishwara. This Ishwara if is a form then the person will take the form of that Ishwara or achieve proximity with that Ishwara. Thus it is also important to remember Ishwara as all-pervasive Consciousness in order to not take any birth. But if we have to remember Ishwara at the end of our life, we have start remembering Ishwara in our lives.

But the goal of life is to end our life with thought about Ishwara thus giving up our life very blissfully (bhagavatham says "anthe naaraayana smriti or remembrance of Naaraayana at the end of life"). And it is this boon that Brahma asks to Naaraayana.

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The king Dasharatha approached Vasistha and told him that he and all his people are suffering due to the lack of a son. And to tell him of a way out to get a son. Vasistha laughs at it and tells him that he will have four sons; that there is nothing to worry about. Vasistha then asks Dasharatha to call Rishyashringa and then perform putrakaamesti karmam (the action desiring a son). When this yajna was performed, agni devan appeared out of the homakunda with a vessel in his hand which had paayasam in it. Dasharatha received it with his hands. Dasharatha gave half to Kaikeyi who gave half to it to both Kausalya and Sumitra. In due course of time, they had their wombs filled and four children were born. The eldest was Naaraayana himself and named Raama.  
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If we analyze the world, we will be able laugh at whatever is happening. Parents without children will cry that they get children. Parents who have children on the other hand cry that their children aren't obeying them and going in their own direction. Thus both of these people aren't happy. The reason is happiness is not in external objects but it is in our mind - the mind which focusses on Ishwara as pervading the entire world will be happy always, whatever happens. On the other hand, a mind which focusses on worldly pleasures will be suffering as worldly pleasures are temporary and will vanish after a period of time. Thus Vasistha laughs when Dasharatha says he doesn't have a son and is sad as a result of it. The same Dasharatha would later be sad because of the very sons he requested of -- understanding or foreseeing this, Vasistha laughs (realized masters like Vasistha know the future very well). This also goes to show that irrespective of whether Ishwara comes to us as a child or a guru, it will not give us happiness unless we change our mind and let it be filled with Ishwara.

Ancient scriptures talk about yajnas as a means to attain anything in life. Generally worldly obstacles are as a result of devathas getting angry (the devathas that rule the particular thing). When human beings offer yajnas to devathas, devathas get pleased and they don't pose obstacle and fulfill whatever human beings ask for or desire. But today yajnas in their true form are tough to find - and mental yajnas or yajnas where the attitude of offering unto Ishwara is also rare to find. And hence we find many natural calamities happening today. This goes to show that the attitude of surrendering unto Ishwara is the way to perform actions and make actions yajna so that we reap the full fruit of the action - the action instead of binding us, will make us more blissful.

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Raama's childhood was atbutham (filled with wonder). Raama learned all the shastras very quickly and was a boy who attracted everyone. As days passed by, Vishwamithra approached Dasharatha when Raama had come of age to help him get rid of the troubles that he was facing while performing his yaaga. Raama and his brothers go and kill thaataka thereby protecting the yaaga that was performed by Vishwamithra.  
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What to speak about the childhood of Ishwara? but just because one has a wonderful or amazing childhood doesn't mean anything. We all are essentially Ishwara and there is no difference at all between an avathaara and an ajnaani with respect to their real nature. The difference lies in that the avathaara knows his nature whereas an ajnaani is ignorant of his nature. Once we gain knowledge and are able to abide in contemplation of our nature of all-pervasive Ishwara, then we become blissful like an avathaara (whatever happens, we will be able to ever remain blissful).

Even sages like Vishwamithra seek Ishwara in order to avoid problems. The yajna denotes action and Vishwamithra denotes each one of us. There will be obstacles like asuras affecting the action. If actions have to happen properly and should give us bliss rather than suffering, we have to seek Ishwara to protect these actions. Seeking Ishwara is as simple as remembering Ishwara and offering the entire action unto Ishwara (so that Ishwara protects it completely). When we do this, then any asuras will be destroyed by the Lord and the action will lead to more and more purification of the mind; remembrance of Ishwara will lead to progressing towards moksha or a blissful life.

We will continue in the next day with conclusion of baala khaanda.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 3**

aum namah shivaya

Let's conclude baala khaanda.

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There was once a beautiful woman created by Brahma who was named Ahalya. She was married to Gautama muni who lived a life of sanyaasa. Hence Ahalya also was living life of penance (rather than worldly pleasures). Indra appeared once in the guise of Gautama and thereby had sensual pleasure with Ahalya who was then cursed by Gautama muni that she would become a stone.

This stone when was touched by Raama relieved her of the curse. Thus ahalya sings praises of the Lord.  
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Beauty is something we all want. Real beauty is nothing but a blissful life. Bliss is the only beauty that is worth seeking in the world as it is eternal and ever-lasting. All other beauties will vanish after a period of time. Generally we all are endowed with something or the other in this world by Ishwara. We have to use whatever we have been given - some may be good in singing, others in art, yet others in intellect - in order to realize the non-dual reality of Lord. If the Lord is forgotten, that very moment we enter into an illusory world which can give us only sorrow.

Here we find Ahalya spending a blissful life with her husband Gautama in penance. But the moment she gets into sensual pleasures (worldly pleasures) then it will lead only to sorrow. The sorrow from enjoyment of worldly pleasures after craving from them isn't limited to just this birth but will continue in future births and will make us go down the chain of beings. Ahalya became a stone which is insentient - this is the gati that will befall us if we run behind worldly pleasures instead of seeking the Lord. This doesn't mean we shouldn't enjoy worldly pleasures but we should enjoy whatever is given to us while remembering Ishwara (yallabhase nija karmoppaattham vittham tena vinodhaya chittham - please your mind with whatever you attain through your normal actions).

Once we fall down from the spiritual path into worldly life, then it will require us to remain focussed on the Lord (deep contemplation on the Lord) in order to get back from worldly life into the spiritual path again. This contemplation of the Lord will instantly give us moksha like it did for Ahalya. Sometimes it is impossible for a person to seek the Lord when everything is happy or smooth in life - only when turmoils are there in life, will majority of people seek Ishwara.

:) It is also very important to keep in mind that before realization, we sing praises of the Lord in order to realize. And after realization as well we sing praises of the Lord for making us realize. Thus a blissful person is one who always remembers the Lord irrespective of where he is or what he is doing.

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Vishwamithra becoming very happy with Raama and lakshmana instructs Raama to go to Mithilapuri. Raama lakshmana go to Mithila and there Raama weds Sita in swayamvara.

After this Raama meets Parasuraama who was egoistic of his actions (of destroyed all kshatriyas as a result of a kshatriya killing his parents who were sages). Raama destroys parasuraama's ego thereby making him realize that his avataara was ending thereby setting the stage for the next avataara to continue.

Raama and Lakshmana return back to Ayodhya where celebrations happen. And everybody is very happy including Dasharatha and his wives.

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Ishavasya Upanishad, one of the oldest upanishad, gives two ways to lead life. One is the way of sanyaasa or renunciation and other is the way of karma or action. Generally we would have heard about both of these but we don't really know that there is something common in both of these (generally we think both to be entirely different and hence all the fight about which is greater or better). The common is what is mentioned first in the upanishad as "ishavasyam idam sarvam" or "ishwara pervades everything". This all-pervasive Ishwara as the ultimate goal of life is the common thing in both. Whether we choose the path of action or of renunciation, we have to remember the Lord as remembrance of the Lord and keeping in mind the goal of realizing the Lord is important. Without this, both path of action and that of renunciation will be futile. When we look at the world today, we find those who are performing actions in the best possible way (even in ashrams we can see this) but there is no contentment or satisfaction or bliss at all. At the same time, there are also sanyaasis who aren't content or satisfied though they are in the path of renunciation. Thus what is essential is remembrance of Ishwara and the goal of life as natural remembrance of Ishwara (as the all-pervasive non-dual reality behind the illusory world). As long as this is not kept in mind, irrespective of whether we are in the path of action or renunciation it will lead to only sorrow. Would it help if we have a sadguru like amma as our mother or guru - definitely no. :) These aren't my personal opinion but the Lord says in the 6th chapter of Gita that a person has to improve himself. We

go to a temple where free food is served. We get the food. The food is delicious but we decline to eat it - we have got the food but what use unless we eat it (a horse can be taken to the pond but made to drink water). Thus even having a great sadguru like amma will be futile unless we remember the goal of life as realization or constant remembrance of the underlying reality of all-pervasive Ishwara - there is no other alternative to eternal bliss. We cannot say that bhakthi will help, karma will help, japa will help etc. -- all these are paths and without the goal of Ishwara (remembrance of Ishwara as all-pervasive truth is what shastras call "jnaana") there will be no bliss whatsoever. Again, not my personal opinion but the words of shastras (na anyah panthaa vidhyate ayanaaya -- says Purusha Sooktha).

The Lord therefore says that even a householder is a realized person or a true sanyaasi if there is remembrance of the Lord. Sanyaasa is not external but real sanyaasa is internal where the ego is renounced and there is nothing but Ishwara alone. When there is only Ishwara there is no attachment or aversion.

Jneyah sah nityasanyaasi yo na dvesti na shochathi  
nirdvandvo hi mahaabaaho sukham bandhaat pramuchyate (Gita 5.3)

Know him to be an eternal sanyaasi who doesn't get angry and sad; he is beyond duality or dual notions and very easily crosses over bondage

Thus we find Raama marrying here (again it is important to remember that what is essential is remembrance of Ishwara and not whether we are married or not) but still remaining ever blissful though he will face many troubles in life with marriage later.

Parasuraama had ego and this was destroyed by the Lord. We may argue that the Lord as a mother (like amma) will not destroy ego as she is mother -- but ego is not destroyed really by ishvara (Ishwara becomes just a nimitta or way to kill the ego). Ego destroys itself. Ego is like a balloon that is growing and growing just waiting to explode. Ego can only be fully contained if it becomes one with ishvara when it becomes infinite. Until that infinite ishvara is realized, there is some level or the other of ego. Even shishyas or bhakthas until they realize will have some or the other level of ego that will spring up once in a while. It requires sadhana in order to keep the ego in check and to ensure that it doesn't pose an obstacle in the spiritual path - if not kept in check, it will drain all our energy and lead to no-progress at all though we may be doing our part to progress.

Sadhana (as mentioned in another thread) is when we remember the Lord and work towards realizing the Lord. Such a sadhana will keep the ego in check and will slowly destroy it - there is no need of ego for a sadhaka as such a sadhaka merely revels in his sadhana of remembrance of Ishwara. when Ishwara is thought, there is immense bliss; so then why the need of ego (to get happiness)?

Lastly we find Raama, Sita and others remaining happy. Happiness from a worldly perspective will always vanish after a period of time as happiness and sorrow are mutual - one cannot live without the other. Thus at a later time we find they becoming sad.

True bliss is possible when we remember Ishwara as non-dual reality thereby going beyond happiness and sorrow (sama dukhasukha samalostaashma kaanchanah - one who sees equanimity in sorrow and happiness and in gold & mud).

Raama was able to remain blissful as he always remembered the ultimate truth (after receiving teachings from Vasistha) that Ishwara alone exists here beyond the illusory dual world. This will make us remain like a child - a child is always blissful and at present moment. But a child doesn't have knowledge - its bliss is its nature and not due to knowledge or being aware of it. There is a difference between somehow doing something and doing something with awareness. A jnaani is like child - a child with knowledge or awareness. Such a jnaani ever is blissful, ever is in present moment, ever is able to spread happiness and peace to the entire world; any person who comes in contact with such a jnaani will be able to experience the bliss.



Such a jnaani, Raama's childhood we have learned in this khaanda. May we all achieve this child-like knowledge state so that we are able to ever rejoice in bliss. Prayers to Raama who is of the nature of Brahman in order to achieve this.

With this, we have concluded the brief of baala khaanda (we have skipped many portions and details as all those cannot be covered in a matter of days:)). We will start with next khaanda in the next day.

Let's conclude with this offering of a sloka and a naama

yasya smaranaadanaayaasena  
(yasya paadaaravindam natvaa)  
moodopi bhavetbrahmajnaani  
tam raamam nityabaalam sadaa  
manasaa smaraami mokshaartham

By whose remembrance, very easily  
(by prostrating whose lotus feet)  
even an ignorant fool will become brahmajnaani  
that Raama who is an eternal child, always  
with the mind I remember for attaining moksha (liberation).

baalavatnityatriptha raamachandraaya namah

prostrations to that Ramachandra who is ever content like a child

aum namah shivaya

#### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 4**

aum namah shivaya

Since we conclude baala khaanda yesterday, let's start with ayodhyaa khaanda.

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When everyone was very happy in ayodhyaa, Naarada once came to see Raama. Raama immediately got up, on seeing Naarada, and prostrated Naarada along with his wife Sita. Raama then tells Naarada "for samsaaris like us, feet of jnaanis like yours are surely sacred". Naarada replies back saying that O Lord! You are the ruler of the entire world and don't delude me with your words.

Naarada after his dialogue with Raama returns back.  
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Generally majority of people in the world are egoistic even if they are too small compared to the entire world. But with knowledge comes humility - here knowledge isn't a mere quality of the intellect but it is intellectual conviction that Ishwara alone exists here. Any other knowledge than this supreme knowledge will not give eternal bliss and will only boost the ego in one or the other way. Ego shows itself as "I". The real "I" which doesn't identify itself with the body-mind-intellect or objects-people of the world is Ishwara. It is either of these two that exists. While a seeker is progressing in the spiritual path, it will often happen that one supersedes the other. Thereby it is a constant struggle as to which one wins over the other. Even Raamaayana war is about this only - both Raama and Raavana were great in their own rights. But one was pure and blissful whereas the other was impure and sorrowful (for himself and others as well). Similarly Ishwara is blissful whereas ego will only cause sorrow.

In Vedanta, ego isn't the same as how we see it in western philosophy. In Vedanta, ego is any individuality. Any individual notion or alienation of oneself from other things in the world is Ego. It is this

ego that creates a sense of duality. And duality causes sorrow (dviteeyaad vai bhayam bhavathi - bhayaat dukham). Thus any individuality will cause sorrow in the long run.

When a saadhaka sees everything as Ishwara or his istadevataa there is nothing but Ishwara alone. Thereby there is no sorrow at all but bliss emanating from vision of oneness. It is this oneness that is defined in Gita as yoga (samatvam yoga uchyathe). It is abiding in oneness that is the result of true knowledge. A person who knows that fire will burn will not put his hand on fire. Similarly a person has intellectual conviction that there is only Ishwara will not have any ego-sense as there is nothing other than Ishwara to be egoistic (ego can exist only when duality is perceived).

Even though this entire world is just an illusion in Ishwara, still it can be seen or considered as real. This is like a dream world where the world doesn't exist at all but we see it as real and we get deluded by it as well. Thus the shastras say that there is no duality whatsoever here but one who sees duality "as-if-exist" (there is no duality at all really) then such a person will go from death to death (or will be experiencing sorrow and sorrow alone). Once a person gains true knowledge then even though the world might be seen, it is known as non-existing and therefore one doesn't get affected by the world or its activities (Sankara gives this beautiful analogy in his gita bhashya to illustrate this - it is like a person who sees water and might even run after the water in desert but knows beyond doubt that there is no water at all - therefore while seeing or after running behind the water and not getting it, the person doesn't get sad).

sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavathi svayam  
tarathi shokam tarathi paapmaanam guhaagranthibhyo vimuktho amritho bhavathi

He who knows the supreme Brahman himself becomes Brahman (realizes himself to be Brahman). He thus crosses over sorrow and all sins; removing all the knots of the heart (brahma granthi of avidyaa, vishnu granthi of desire and rudra granthi of ignorance) he becomes immortal (realizes himself to be immortal).

Thus we find the Lord being very humble and showing his reverence to Naarada. A true saadhaka will also show humility towards everything as everything is filled in and out with Ishwara. This humility can be seen from the actions and interactions of the person. Of course one can fake humility;) but a person with some subtlety of mind will be able to identify a fake from real (even as a diamond merchant as well as a person having some basic knowledge on diamond can differentiate between a fake and a real diamond). This doesn't mean that we should attack people who fake humility - it is not our duty to change the world (at least not until let ourselves be removed of our bondages and sorrows - once we are beyond all bondages and are blissful then we can think about saving the world).

Even as the Lord is humble, Naarada also knows his state and thereby tells the Lord not to delude him. Thus here we find both great masters showing each other respect and humility all the while behaving like any worldly person would do. The Lord says in Gita that there is not much of a difference between the actions of an ignorant person and a jnaani - the difference lies in the attitude. The ajnaani expects and is attached to the action itself whereas the jnaani has no expectation and attachment to the action. The ajnaani often struggles with the action and is sad with the results whereas a jnaani performs the action to perfection and is ever content with whatever are the results of actions.

We will continue with ayodhayaa khaanda in the next posting.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 5**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with ayodhyaa khaanda.

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Thus when Dasharatha was living, one day the Guru of Vasistha approached him and said to make Raama prince. Raama's abhisheka was set to happen. At that time, instigated by Manthara, Kaikeyi asks for her two boons which had been granted by Dasharatha long time ago (when she asked that she may request for those boons whenever she wants or whenever time comes). The first boon was that bharatha should be made prince and second was that Raama should go for vanavasam (staying in the forest).

When Dasharatha splits this news to Raama, Raama is changeless (without any change in emotion). And Raama agrees to go to everything. Then Raama approaches Sita giving her knowledge about Vedanta. Sita also decides to go with Raama as where the husband is, there the wife as well should be.

At this time, Lakshmana goes to offer his prostrations to sumithra, his mother. Upon this sumithra asks Lakshmana to protect and be with Raama at all times. She asks Lakshmana to see Raama as none other than Dasharatha.

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This portion is a very small part of this chapter but it has a lot of deep concepts which are worth discussing. Puranic stories are not there for us to just listen, shed few tears and then forget. These stories have deeper significance and are meant to be implemented in our lives daily. These stories aren't just things happening in the external world at that particular time but it is happening even now in the world as well as in our mind also. We find brothers and sisters fighting with each other today; we find children killing parents and vice-versa; we find people doing bad deeds in the name of religion; we find people craving for name, money etc. and thereby not even hesitating to kill people. In such an age, we cannot change the world as the world is temporary and sorrowful. There have been great mahatmas who have walked earth but none of them have been able to change the world and any future mahatmas also will not be able to change the world. Jesus was an utter failure; Krishna was a total failure as the one person who he advised, Arjuna, forgot everything and after Krishna's samadhi Arjuna becomes meek and helpless; Raama's life as we know was a failure - he couldn't do any justice to his parents nor his brothers nor his wife nor his son nor his people as well. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a failure and so was Swami Vivekananda - they could only change few people in the world and we know how much change has happened. Ramana Maharshi was a failure in that many of his so-called followers just stick on to his words but don't implement anything at all. Our beloved AMMA is a failure -- AMMA has been giving love and compassion to millions of people and how many are changing? Very very few - we know how even people in missions fight with each other and often end up leaving the mission.

All these statements aren't meant to degrade these mahatmas, their missions or their roles. There is utmost respect for these mahatmas in this limited mind -- :)respect has to be there as have been a disciple of AMMA since AMMA did upanayana. But the truth is that the world cannot be changed. Expecting the world to change is like trying to change the nature of water seen in desert - there is no water and hence how can be change the nature of the water. AMMA clearly says in the book "From my heart" (I believe that's the title) that there is always the knowledge in AMMA that there is no world at all here. Trying to change the world is one thing but expecting it to change is another. We cannot but remain without doing actions but we can definitely remain without expecting any fruit for the action. When we perform an action and expect a result, there is a probability for the result to happen and hence there is a probability of us getting sad. But when we perform an action without expecting any result then any result that comes is bliss. This kind of unexpected action is possible only when surrender unto Ishwara all our actions - as AMMA says then if good results follow, it is Ishwara's grace or blessing. If bad results follow, it is Ishwara's will. Either way it is prasaada of Ishwara which will give us immense bliss and dispel any sorrow in our mind.

All this talk is to emphasize as to how we cannot change the world. This has to sink deep into our hearts - then alone will we be able to depend on none other than Ishwara alone. Dependence of Ishwara, without any other dependence, along will give us eternal bliss (story of when Draupadi held on to her saree and Krishna came only when she called him with both hands can be remembered here) - the Lord makes this clear in the final statement of Gita that "sarvadharmaan parityajya maam ekam sharanam vraja" - renounce all acitons and seek me "alone" (this seek me "alone" and beyond all limitations, rules, obstacles etc. is the key).

We find here that problems with Raama's life starts once he grows of age. We are very familiar with this :) - childhood is an age when everything goes smooth but once we grow up, problems start. Why is this so? The reason for this is that a child is innocent and doesn't crave for anything in particular. It is happy with what it gets. If it needs food, it cries and the mother feeds it. It has surrender unto the mother and whatever the mother gives, it is happy with what. It doesn't differentiate as to whether it needs specific type of food etc. But once the child grows into a youth, all desires start creeping into the mind. There is also knowledge about the world and its objects - this knowledge is purely worldly knowledge where objects are seen different from one another and serving just one purpose of "enjoyment". True knowledge about the world is that the world of duality is just an illusion of names and forms in Ishwara even as various gold ornaments are mere names and forms in gold. But this knowledge, as simple as it may seem, is very tough indeed to remember let alone implement. Thus a young person craves for things - cravings lead to actions. Sometimes actions are bad or adharma -- dharmic action is when we merely perform our action without craving for result. But such dharma is almost lost today - it can only be found in rarely few people. Therefore when cravings aren't fulfilled by normal means of life then any means to attain the fruit is taken. This has its own consequences and thereby a person starts experiencing sorrow. If cravings are met, then they grow and grow (there is no end to desires -- Manu says that trying to put an end to desire by enjoying it is like trying to extinguish fire by pouring ghee on it - it will not be extinguished but will burn more vigorously). The more the desires, the more the possessions and then more desires come in -- as Vidyaaranya beautifully puts it "kurvathe karma bhogaaya, karma karthum cha bhunjathe" - man does actions to enjoy and then he enjoys to do more actions, this chain continues without an end. There is no end to desires-action unless a person gains knowledge about temporary-sorrowful nature of the world and seeks eternal Ishwara. If cravings don't grow, still there are many obstacles. Worldly objects or in short the world itself is shared by many people. Hence if we get something, there will always be people running for that thing -- thus enmity is created and sorrows arising from that.

Here we find, manthara desiring riches spoils the mind of Kaikeyi. Kaikeyi is like any normal being in the world. Their minds pure and content with whatever is achieved. But then manthara starts coming in - manthara is desire for riches. These desires in turn spoils the mind thereby making it seek wrong things. Our minds generally aren't that strong to resist manthara and destroy her immediately. Instead passion through attachment causes the mind to do wrong things (even as dritharashtra though knew it was adharma his sons were doing couldn't stop it because of his passion -- the passion itself lead to destruction of his entire family). Thus Kaikeyi asks for "her" son to be prince and Raama be sent away to forest. See how much strong emotions become when strong desires are there. The only desire acceptable for a saadhaka is that of the desire of moksha - all other desires are to be avoided at all costs. Desires create strong emotions and thereby people will go to any length to fulfill these desires. Kaikeyi could have just asked for Bharatha to be prince but there is a chance that it might be turned around and hence she asks for Raama to be sent away. Being double careful :) - those who want to be in politics should take a note here :D.

Thus Raama who didn't want any pleasures was given pleasures which were taken away from him as quickly as it was offered. This goes on to show that even if we don't want any pleasures, if it is provided to us and we take it then we will have to face the consequence. Thereby Patanjali gives the quality of "aparigraha" or "non-acceptance of gifts" - we should never accept anything from anyone. Today a person does a favor for us, tomorrow the person will expect something in return. This goes on and if favor is returned then the chain continues - if favor isn't returned then enmity is caused which may spread to other people as well (A is angry with B then A goes around telling people about B -- this happens a lot in professional environment and software companies, like infosys and others, in particular but we can see it happening in families as well - can't give examples in my father's and mother's family else would have given :D).

But our saadhanas will give us strong mind which will not waver at all from Ishwara as pervading the entire world. Raama denotes such a strong mind (the Lord talks about such a mind like a lamp whose flame isn't affected by wind as there is no wind or turbulence there). Raama was happy when he was given the pleasure and he was equally happy when they were taken away. Raamaayana shows us as to how to live like Raama - this isn't impossible as we are Raama. Raama is the Self that is subdued inside

due to Ego arising as a result of identifications, relationships and desires. Once we seek that Raama, everything else will just be dispelled by Raama's strength. This means even though we will face troubles in life we will be able to ever remain blissful.

This short story demonstrates as to why we should remain unaffected whatever happens in the world. Once Buddha was visiting a village where he was offered very good food, accomodation and gifts. He remained unaffected and rejected all of those. The people were surprised and asked him as to why he rejected it. Buddha smilingly replied -- in the previous village i went, they abused and cursed me. If I accept what you now give me, I should accept what they gave me as well. I choose to not accept anything at all. This was the state of the great enlightened master. Thus a sanyaasi when offered anything should immediately offer it to Ishwara - this is so that nothing is taken for oneself lest one gets slowly affected by it. Taking ice cream a day may not seem but slowly it will cause craving for more. Hence one should either not accept any favor at all (to avoid dependency which causes so many problems) or should immediately offer it to Ishwara (in which case irrespective of whether favor is given or not - favor leads to anger or not, a person will be able to remain blissful).

We will continue with Ayodhyaa khaanda in the next day.

May the supreme being of Raama guide us to achieve a strong mind which doesn't depend on anything but Ishwara alone and thereby is able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 6**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with ayodhyaa khaanda.

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After it was set for Raama to go with Sita and Lakshmana, Raama went to his father's place and without any worries/sorrows he prostrated to Kaikeyi and said to her to renounce sorrow; along with Sita and Lakshmana, I have prepared to go now.

Thus consoling everyone but himself remaining blissful, Raama started with Sita and Lakshmana to the forest. On the way they pass through bharadwaaja ashram and Vaalmiki's ashram.  
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When we analyze Raama going to the forest, it might seem kind of adharma but this is a symbolic way for the shastras to tell as to how we should live our life. We have to live our life like we are living in a forest. We should be totally detached to everything and just things which are essential for survival. Instead of this, today we all are leading a life filled with all sorts of worldly pleasures (even all ashrams have become like this). It is fine to lead a life with worldly pleasures but we should remain unaffected by them and shouldn't have too much craving for them. A person who isn't affected by worldly pleasures will be able to live without any preferences - whatever comes to him by normal will and by normal activities, such a person will be content with it (today contentment is rarely found as people want more and more and more).

Life in forest is where we are very careful to eat proper food, go to proper places etc. We have to eat proper food as the forest is filled with herbal plants as well as poisonous ones too. Intake of a wrong plant will instantly kill the person. Therefore we will be very alert and careful as to what we eat. We will be careful as to where we go because there are wild animals, thieves etc. Going down the wrong road can kill us and hence we will be careful as to where we are going. Forest is a place with so much trees and routes therefore it is very easy to go down a wrong route. Thus we will be careful as to where we are going and how far we are away from our house. House itself is a simple hut with very basic needs of protection and shelter. This "forest" is our very life itself. We are living in the forest of the world. It is filled

with animals of anger, attachment etc. It is filled with thieves of people who pose as our friends but need only material and other benefits from us. True love is just a fictional term today where love is always based on dependency. If we stop giving something to another person, then the love ends that very moment - hence marriages don't last even for a few years today. Food denotes thoughts. We can have bad thoughts and good thoughts depending on our sanga or association. Hence it is said that we should always associate with good people. There is no good without spirituality. We often hear people telling "he is good, she is good, they are good etc". Real good is impossible without spirituality. Spirituality is where Ishwara is there -- talks about Ishwara, talks about Ishwara's glory, talks about Ishwara's stories, talks about how to realize Ishwara -- all these constitute spirituality. Today even so-called spiritual people mingle with each other and talk about worldly things including movies, science etc. Talks about science is as futile as talking about aliens or ghosts. The depth of science is very less - science has more unknowns than knowns. But Vedanta on the other hand is the science where everything is known or everything can be known. The reason for this is science analyzes everything except oneself whereas Vedanta analyzes oneself and from there analyzes everything. Thus Vedanta gives knowledge of everything whereas science gives knowledge of nothing (one who doesn't know himself, how can such a person know the world?). So even talks about science, technology etc. is also futile. Thus satsanga is essential to ensure that we don't nourish bad thoughts. Bad thoughts nourished leads to our death - death means sorrow and suffering not just in this birth but in future births to come as well. The more we think about something, the more we get attached and the more it stays in our mind; thereby even continuing from one birth to another. If the thought is about Ishwara, it will give bliss; but if the thought is about the world, it will only give sorrow. Thus we have to be careful to have good thoughts and avoid bad thoughts.

There needs to be shelter and protection in the forest of world. Shelter isn't a house or something four walls around it. But shelter is where we create a covering in our mind - this covering is one where nobody has entrance (and we live in our world) but this covering is to allow only good thoughts and ward off bad thoughts instantly. This covering is to not give access to our mind for anyone except when we give access (which is only for spiritual thoughts). Protection is to ensure that attacks on this covering doesn't damage the covering. This is to ensure that bad thoughts with strength doesn't damage the covering. Such bad thoughts could be when our close friends argue and attack us as a result of us avoiding contact with them (because of worldly thoughts). Irrespective of how close the people are, it is wise to not let any thoughts than spiritual ones into our mind lest they slowly occupy the space and thereby destroy even the good thoughts in the mind. Such protection is possible only through our sadhana. Our sadhana is the protection that protects us against attacks. The covering is when we have achieved a strong mind which is capable of preventing any unwanted thoughts into our mind.

Thus the forest denotes the world in which we live. We have to be careful in this forest to not get distracted from our goal of achieving moksha. This focus on the goal and working towards it is what is denoted by tapas in the forest. Here we find Raama's journey to the forest filled with meetings with great sages. This shows that our path, once we start the journey in the spiritual path, will be filled with mahatmas and great people who will be there ever to guide us. Such people will always be happy to guide us with full dedication, commitment and love. Such mahatmas don't want anything from us whereas they are there to give us to any and all the help we need to realize Ishwara.

Once when emperor Shantanu was ill and nobody could cure him, Vyaasa went to see him. At that time, Bhishma stops Vyaasa and says that the I will give u whatever you want as the emperor is ill. To this Vyaasa said "I haven't come to take but i have come to give". Vyaasa met the emperor and cured the emperor fully with treatment prescribed in the Atharva Veda.

Thus mahatmas don't want anything from us but they are there to give us more thoughts about Ishwara and take us closer to Ishwara. This is in contrast to worldly people who will take everything from us and give nothing at all (or at least that's the intention behind their love, attachment, affection, caring etc.).

Raamaayana thus tells us to lead a life filled with tapas and focus on Ishwara in this forest of world so that we are not deluded or distracted from the spiritual path but instead we are able to remain focussed and are able to attain the goal of moksha here itself.

We will continue with Ayodhyaa khaanda in the next day.

May the supreme being of Raama guide us to live in this world remembering it to a forest therefore making us remain alert and always focussed on Ishwara with mind getting strength from saadhana, learning and association with spiritual path so that we are able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 7**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with ayodhyaa khaanda.

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Finally in the forest, in chitrakoota Raama along with Sita and Lakshana established a hut for them to live. In a few days, Dasharatha passes away to swarga (heaven) while suffering in pain of separation from Raama and remembering Raama constantly in his mind.  
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We find that Dasharatha passes away. Death is something which troubles majority of people at all times. Death isn't exactly in the form of giving up this body but it is a fear of non-existence, fear of being alone, fear of not having people around etc. All these fears encompassed is called death. Thus a great western philosopher said "cowards die many times in their life but the valiant taste of death never but once". Each day and each moment we are dying thinking about the future, brooding about the past and worrying about things which we shouldn't be worrying. Swami Ashutoshananda of Raamakrishna Mission once said in his discourse - we generally cry when people die and become happy when a child is born; it should be really the opposite; when a person dies we should be happy that the person doesn't have to suffer in this sorrowful world; similarly when a child is born we should cry thinking as to how much pain the child is going to face and is going to give to others.

Thus we do everything opposite or wrong. A person who is so filled with spirituality or music is considered a mad person (people have personally called me the same many times :D). But worldly life or worldly way of living is considered great. This should be the opposite - those who are going after Ishwara should be considered great as they are seeking the eternal being. And those who are running after worldly life should be considered mad people running behind pleasures like that is everything when the world itself is just an illusion in the Lord. Even as when we run after water seen in desert we end up in suffering similarly when we run behind worldly pleasures we will end up in suffering itself.

Everything in this world including our Guru's form will vanish as Ishwara who pervades the entire world and is beyond all forms alone is blissful. Everything else will cause us sorrow alone. Forgetting this ultimate truth about the world being illusory and Ishwara alone being real, we die every moment of our life. Sorrow is also death. Majority of people in the world are sad for one or the other reason. Many hide this behind happy faces. If we go to various companies, we can see the executives smiling (like they are celebrities) and we know how much pitiful their state is (similar to celebrities). This is due to lack of knowledge of the shastras and the way of living prescribed in the shastras.

Ancient people used to be happy with little food that they get, little shelter they have etc. But today we have everything in full - everything in abundance still there is no happiness at all. The reason is lack of knowledge about Ishwara alone being blissful. Only when we seek Ishwara by remembering him to be pervading the entire world, will we be able to overcome death and remain blissful at all times.

In a way, Dasharatha's crying for Raama took him to higher place like svarga. What we have to learn from Dasharatha's crying out for Raama is that we have to cry in a similar way for Ishwara. We should have seriousness about realizing Ishwara as each moment we miss doing this, we will be suffering in this world and we also will be adding up to our karma therefore leading to more sorrow in the future as well.

Bhatrhari says in his vairaagya shatakam that how can a person enjoy his wife when there is a dagger stuck in his heart? Similarly once we gain knowledge about sorrowful nature of the world, then we can no longer enjoy sensual pleasures - sensual pleasures will not have real meaning but all the efforts will be to realize Ishwara. This doesn't mean we should stop eating, sleeping etc. We can do all of these but we have to keep in mind that everything is pervaded in and out by Ishwara. Such constant remembrance of Ishwara will make us rejoice in bliss at all times irrespective of whether we are experiencing happiness or sorrow in the external world.

When we forget Ishwara, we should pull the mind back and gain focus again on Ishwara - as AMMA says, we should cry out for forgetting Ishwara and hold on to Ishwara with more strength. When a child is in the park and it is with its mother, it enjoys and is happy. But suddenly it gets lost and doesn't find its mother. For a few minutes it is enjoying not realizing that it has lost sight of its mother. But once it realizes, then the child cries out loud and starts searching for its mother - like there is nothing else to do than seek its mother. And when it finds its mother, it hugs the mother and holds the mother tight never to let go again. Thereafter it remains careful to not let go of its mother. We should behave like the child to its mother - we should keep Ishwara in our thoughts at all times; and when we forget Ishwara, we should bring back Ishwara to our mind like there is nothing other than that to do. And once get back Ishwara in our mind, we should take a vow not to forget Ishwara again. Of course forgetting will happen - it is only due to constant practice and dispassion (the knowledge that once Ishwara vanishes from our mind, we will experience sorrow and that remembrance of Ishwara alone can give us bliss) that thought about Ishwara will become natural in our mind. This is the state to be achieved in life - called as moksha. Such a state can be achieved by remembering how much fear is there in our life, how much short is life, death is lurking around to pounce upon us and once this happens we don't know where we will be born, what we will born as etc.

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All the people in Ayodhya are sad with their king passing away. Vasistha then calls up Bharatha and Shatrughna and asks them to send news of passing away of Dasharatha to Raama, Sita & Lakshmana.  
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A kingdom without a king is like a room full of kids without an elderly person in the room. There will be total chaos. And thus we see the people of Ayodhya becoming sad when Dasharatha passes away. Also in ancient times there was no ruler and ruled - it was a close family. And thus when one person passes away, people used to feel for the person and be sad. But today this isn't the case - today we are in a family of people around us (friends, co-workers, real family, relatives etc.) but there is no real bond - there is no real understanding. All this is because everyone is going in their own direction and everyone is in their own world. In ancient times, people used to have one common goal - realization of Ishwara - everyone would do their duties to perfection while remembering Ishwara. Focus wasn't on relationships but on Ishwara. Anywhere we find focus on relationships, we will realize that it leads to sorrow for oneself and others as well. It is only when the common goal of Ishwara is there that we will be able to become like a good family where people understand each other and help each other out.

We can argue that even companies or projects have the same goal for all people - but here the goal is a worldly goal. All worldly goals will only lead to sorrow as the world itself is sorrowful (because it is temporary, always changing and unreal). It is only when a permanent entity of Ishwara is kept in mind that there will be love in a family. It is also essential to understand who that Ishwara is. There have been cases in many ashrams where there is conflict of opinion, conflict of interest and mutual fight between even sanyaasis. The reason for all this is there is no common goal of Ishwara. We may have a common goal of AMMA but as long as we don't realize AMMA to be all-pervasive Brahman, we will fight over the physical person of AMMA. Thus there will be conflict over who is closer to amma, who gets more attention etc.

And a person who thinks of a realized master as one who is with a mere form is in essence disrespecting such a master. The master may be compassionate but such disrespect will not give us bliss - it will only lead to trouble in one or the other form. Thus we should remember mahatmas like AMMA to be all-pervasive and not merely limited to a particular form.



Thus though we have families everywhere, there is no bond at all as common thing of Ishwara isn't there. In ancient times though people weren't realized, still they have the common goal of Ishwara in their minds. Hence they would feel for one another, help one another etc. Today we have families of people not trusting each other, not liking each other etc. whereas in ancient times people used to be a close-knit family who will help each other towards the goal of moksha. :) This is a matter of experience as have seen relatives and their family of people fighting with each other in the name of money, name, fame, control etc. -- though haven't had any issues at all with parents and sister as well.

There should be a person who is learnt in the scriptures and advanced in the spiritual path, if not realized, in a family in order for the family to be happy and blissful. It is as a result of not having such a person that many companies, many families etc. are in total suffering. The entire family of Raama will have consolation from Raama. The entire paandava kula had help from Krishna. Thus if we really want to help others (many think that we have to help others as it is our dharma) we have to first progress in the spiritual path. If we ourselves are sad, how can we give happiness to others? We can be happy at all times only when we remember Ishwara at all times. This can happen only when we do our sadhana, learn the shastras and put into practice remembrance of Ishwara as pervading the entire world - then slowly our likes-dislikes will vanish; we will be able to see Ishwara everywhere and in everything; thus irrespective of whether good happens or bad happens, we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

We will continue with Ayodhya khaanda in the next day.

May we all remember the supreme being of Raama as pervading the entire world so that we will be able to overcome all fears, all sorrows and all sufferings thereby rejoicing in bliss at all times and spreading this bliss to the entire world.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 8**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with ayodhya khaanda.

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Bharatha becomes very sad knowing that Raama is sent to the forest and that he is the one to become the next king. He cries out aloud and gets angry over his mother kaikeyi saying that they would go to hell, attain so many sins etc.  
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We generally look forward to avathara purushas to see as to how blissful life is. But we find that the lives (externally) is filled with so many problems that we cannot even imagine being in their state. One day if we lived as Raama or anywhere near Raama, we will end up giving our life or becoming sad. But we find Raama remaining blissful at all times irrespective of whether he is in the kingdom or the forest - whether he is the king or a hermit. This kind of blissful living is possible only through knowledge - knowledge that everything is pervaded in and out by Ishwara. The moment we forget this knowledge, we get into likes and dislikes that lead to attachments and aversions - the only result out of such attachments and aversions is sorrow and sorrow alone.

We see this exactly here. Any worldly pleasure, how much great it be, will only lead to sorrow. The Lord says that worldly pleasures are seeds of sorrow as they have a beginning and an end - or in other words, they are temporary, constantly changing which means they will cease to exist at some point of the time or the other. When we are attached to a car, we will be happy as long as the car is there. But the car has to vanish at some point of time (it will cease to exist -- that which is created, will be destroyed - that which is born, will die - this a rule that nobody, not even avataaras, can override) and when it vanishes, we will

become sad as we were attached to the car.

Attachment is created when we brood over something again and again (dhyayatho vishayaan pumsah, sangasteshu upajaayathe). Such attachment can either lead to aversion or to sorrow - aversion also in turn leads to total destruction (vinashyathi says the Lord). Total destruction doesn't mean externally ceasing to exist but just a sorrowful state. Nothing is worse than existing but being sad. How many times have seen people around AMMA being very sad though they are around AMMA? Such people have to just open their hearts a bit and they will experience nothing but bliss in the presence of AMMA. After living in the presence of a Guru for a while, a shishya/bhaktha is able to establish the Guru in the mind thus no longer directly needing physical proximity with the Guru. Thus any point of time, remembrance of the Guru will give bliss - even during times of distress.

But if we forget the all-pervasive Lord as the Guru's real nature, then we will experience only sorrow. Anything other than all-pervasive non-dual Lord will ultimately only cause sorrow. We find this in Bharatha's case. Kaikeyi thought it would be good for her son to become prince. Dasharatha thought that he has to give his boon to Kaikeyi. Bharatha wasn't able to accept this. All this lead to each one of these people becoming sad - thus if we run after worldly pleasures, we will only experience sorrow and sorrow alone. There will not even be an iota of happiness in/from worldly pleasures.

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After crying out loud and becoming very sad, Bharatha performs the last rites of Dasharatha. After which he decides that he doesn't need the kingdom (of what use is such a kingdom). Thereby he starts his journey to the forest (along with Shatrughna).  
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Though there is only sorrow from the world, there is a way out of this sorrow when we experience sorrow. Generally two types of people come to learn Vedanta (or meet a spiritual master like AMMA) - one is those who have sorrows and want to get rid of them; either sorrows or it could also be something lacking life and therefore they come to meet amma - these are people who don't have happiness but want it. Their want is not that strong as the want for happiness is overruled by removal of sorrow. Sorrows can be removed from worldly perspective in many ways - we can temporarily mitigate sorrow in one or the other way. Permanent solution is sometimes not needed for majority of people - they just will try to patch out things. One sorrow is removed by Ishwara - then they will be happy until next sorrow comes and this continues without any end.

If we look at people around a mahatma like AMMA, we will be easily able to understand this. People go to amma to remove their sorrow and only the sorrow is removed, then remain happy until next sorrow comes. Nobody really wants a permanent solution.

Rare are the second type of people who learn Vedanta knowing clearly that the world is temporary and sorrowful. This strong and clear knowledge makes such people find something which is eternal or changeless or blissful. Thus they come to a mahatma like amma. Such people are very rare as it requires strong knowledge about the sorrowful-illusory nature of the world. The one person who comes to mind with such strong knowledge is Swami Vivekananda - his level of dispassion or knowledge about temporary-sorrowful nature of the world was very strong when he met Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa - he had only the desire to realize and nothing else. Such dispassion is seldom found in today's world.

But the struggle in life is to become the second type of people - one or the other day we will have to become such a person who knows beyond doubt that this world is sorrowful and there is only one way out which is realization of ever-changeless, eternal and blissful Ishwara. Only then we will be able to completely put an end to sorrows.

Bharatha becoming sad doesn't find a temporary solution instead he seeks out Raama. This denotes the strong dispassion and knowledge that there is no way out of sorrow but to seek the Lord (not temporarily but permanently). Those are fools who seek material benefits from Ishwara - those are wise who seek nothing but Ishwara himself (like a person who asks for golden eggs from a hen is fool and wise is one

who asks for the hen itself so he can have golden eggs whenever he wants). But majority of people in the world are fools (the Lord uses the word of "mooda" many places in Gita to denote this).

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When Bharatha meets Raama - he cries out to Raama to listen to his words to take back the kingdom and become the king.

Raama after patiently listening to the words of Bharatha, replies to Bharatha that it is both of our duty to do what has been ordained to us by our father.

Bharatha takes Raama's paadukas and goes back to the kingdom keeping the paaduka on the simhaasana remembering that Raama is the one ruling. He lead a life of retirement from then.

Raama then starts from Chitrakoota into deeper forest.  
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Many times when we meet a spiritual master or Ishwara, we will not be able to listen to what the Lord has to say or accept what the Lord has to offer. But beware that if we have desires for worldly pleasures, we will only get that from the Lord - hence a saadhaka should ask for moksha from Ishwara or Guru but a saadhaka after asking should have faith in Ishwara and let Ishwara guide him - what is required by a saadhaka is mere remembrance of Ishwara as pervading the entire world, everything else will automatically fall in place.

Bharatha thus when he goes to meet Raama cries out to Raama and bursts out his sorrows. This is generally not good for a saadhaka but it is also bad to keep our sorrows subdued in our mind as one day it will burst out. We have to open out to Ishwara but like Bharatha we should also be ready to accept what Ishwara has to say or give to us. It is only to Ishwara that we can cry out - we generally cry out for a lot of things to worldly people so why not cry unto Ishwara to give us eternal bliss? But acceptance of what Ishwara has to say also should be there.

There are many parts of puranic stories which we shouldn't misunderstand - all these are perspective and we should have proper understand in order to not get deluded by them. For eg., here we find Raama telling Bharatha that it is our duty to do as instructed by our father. On one hand this is right but on the other hand, this is wrong. Today parents try to coerce their children into following what they want. Dasharatha didn't force Raama - Dasharatha followed Dharma and would have let Raama do whatever he wants but he was bound by the promise given to Kaikeyi. Today's parents are rarely like this - today's parents want benefits from children and want children to do as they say. Children also want their parents to behave like they want. Thus relationships or families today in total chaos because everyone wants the other to obey and none is ready to give up, in any way at all. Thus so many problems in relationships or families happens today.

A saadhaka should always remember that any rule that includes the world, its objects and people will be overruled by the Lord or remembrance of the Lord or moksha. Moksha stands first - the reason for this is because moksha is our very nature. Until we realize our very nature of Ishwara, of what use is anything else as we are like a madperson who doesn't know who he is or what he is doing?

Thus moksha supersedes everything even as the supreme court overrules any judgement given by a lower court. Any worldly rule that takes us away from moksha has to be renounced at all costs. Prahlada went against his father because his father stood in the way of moksha; Mahaabali went against his own guru shukracharya who advised him not to obey his promise to the Lord; Vibheeshana went against his own brother -- thus we find puranic stories which clearly tell us that moksha and Ishwara stand first and everything else comes first. It is with attitude that Bharatha takes Raama's paadukas as a remembrance instead of being content with Raama's words of "we should obey our father" - this attitude is essential if we want eternal bliss as forgetting Ishwara or letting Ishwara go for anything will only lead us to a sorrowful state.

We have now come to the end of Ayodhya khaanda where like most of the families today, we find chaos and chaos and chaos alone. It is upto an individual whether to become sad in this chaotic situation or to remain blissful. If one seeks worldly pleasures and forgets Ishwara, then there will only be sorrow. If one remembers the Lord and overrides everything else then there will be bliss.

May we all remember the supreme being of Raama at all times and renounce everything else that stands in the way of remembering Raama as all-pervasive Brahman so that we are able to remain blissful wherever we are and whatever we are doing in this very birth and now itself.

Let's conclude Ayodhya khaanda with this offering of a sloka and a naama (about Raama as in Ayodhya khaanda):

yasyaanugrahaenaiva manushyah  
tarathi mohamaayaasaagaram  
tam raajyaadibhogatyaagakritham  
sreeramachandram pranamaamyaham

By whose blessing alone, a person  
crosses over the ocean of delusive Maaya  
to that one who renounced all enjoyments like kingdom etc.  
to that Sree Raamachandra, I offer my prostrations

aum ayodhyaaprashobhithaananditha tyaagasrestha sree raamaaya namah

My prostrations to Raama who gives light and bliss to Ayodhya - and who is greatest (best) in renunciation

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana - 9**

aum namah shivaya

Since we ended Ayodhya khaanda, we enter into the next khaanda which is the aaranya khaanda.

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Raama leaves Chitrakoota to enter into Dandaaka forest and then comes to Sage atri's ashram. After paying due respects, they leave from the ashram into the forest after being guided by the Sage's disciples. But the disciples advise them that there are demons in that area of the forest and therefore to be very careful.

Raama then asks Lakshmana to be alert and walk in the front; Sita walked in between and Raama walked last. After walking for while, they came to rest under the shades of a tree.

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As we have seen previously that journey into the forest for Raama wasn't a punishment but it is like a pilgrimage trip where there are sages and their ashrams all over the place.

This symbolizes how the world itself is - we learnt earlier that the world is a forest where there is trouble awaiting to pounce upon us from all directions but at the same time there are also sages or mahatmas or good people.

It depends on what we choose in the world. The world is like a shop where good things are there and bad things are also there. Even as a grocery shop has rice, sugar etc. which help in survival of a person but it also has poisons necessary to kill pests, rodents etc, similarly the world is also filled with good people - good environment and bad people - environment. When we have pubs and bars on one hand, we also

have temples and ashrams on the other hand. Many seekers think that there is no refuge in the world and when they face problems, they say that the Lord isn't showering his grace upon them. Many even complain to their Guru that the Guru doesn't show any grace or attention towards them. AMMA gives a beautiful analogy to show that the Guru or Ishwara knows each and every shishya or bhaktha and whatever is happening to them - nobody is insignificant. We have many hairs in the body but even if one hair is pulled we will know the pain - similarly if something happens to a shishya or bhaktha, the Guru or Ishwara will always know it. There are mahatmas all around us - there is Ishwara present in various forms around us waiting to guide us. But, as AMMA says, we have closed the doors and windows of our heart and thereby complain that the ever-present sun light of grace isn't falling upon us. Who is to be blamed for this than ourselves.

Gone are the days when one had to travel a lot to get spiritual material or be in a spiritual environment. Today there are ashrams and temples everywhere around the world. Today is an era where Gurus approach shishyas through the various technological advancements that we have had - Kaivalya swami's discourses used to happen through skype; there are swamis in chinmaya mission whose discourses are live-telecasted across the world - amma's devi bhaavas in the world are telecasted to amritapuri most of the time. Thus today there is help available from all directions. We have internet itself where the vast majority of help can be found. We ourselves are interacting with spiritual discussion through a forum - we don't meet each other in person but still there is a bond created and a satsanga happening through the internet. Thus there is help available to us from all places but it depends to a seeker as to what he or she chooses.

One can choose to ignore the Lord who is present and shines through each and every object of this world - or one can choose to ignore the Lord. One can choose to remain blissful remembering the Lord as pervading the entire world - or one can choose to be sad thinking as to how much one has lost or how much one hasn't gained in life. One can choose to run behind eternal bliss in the Lord - or one can run behind worldly pleasures.

Each action has a result or consequence. If we run behind worldly pleasures, we will experience only sorrow in the long run. On the other hand if we seek the Lord we will not only get eternal bliss but all our needs will be taken care of by the Lord himself. This doesn't mean that we should expect the Lord to come in front in his four-arm form or blue-complexion with sita and lakshmana and hanumaan - the Lord appears in many forms as all forms are the Lord's alone -- there is nothing that is not the Lord. It is just that we don't realize this essential oneness of the entire world and thereby get deluded/distracted into differentiating between objects and people. This differentiation in turn leads to likes and dislikes which creates attachments and aversions. As the Lord points out in Gita, attachments and aversions causes only sorrow in the long run. Thus experiencing sorrow and suffering, one ends this precious human birth (which can be used to realize the Lord and remain blissful here itself) and thereby starts the next birth with all-over search for happiness in the world which again leads to sorrow and suffering and ending of yet another birth. Thus going from birth to death, one experiences sorrow alone until the Lord is sought out.

Since the Lord is readily available in various forms/ways etc. in the world, we should seek the Lord than anything else. Sita Devi denotes Maaya -- lakshmana denotes the jeevaatman and Raama denotes the Paramaatman. Here we find Sita devi walking in between Raama and Lakshmana --- this denotes a close relationship between all three. Vedanta generally addresses these three things - isha, jeeva and jagad -- isha is the Lord or paramaatman. Jeeva is individual self that appears to be suffering and jagad is formed out of Maaya. Jagad or Maaya is sorrowful and only causes suffering. Only when the jeeva uses maaya itself to focus on the Lord, will the jeeva experiences eternal bliss. Maaya or the world in itself is a bondage and a way to liberation as well - this depends on how we see it. If we see the world as different objects, one different from another, then we will experience sorrow alone and it will bind us more and more. If we see the world as filled with Ishwara, then we will find that there is only bliss - thereby we will be able to rejoice in bliss each and every moment of our life. Thus all these three have to be linked together to the eternal entity of Ishwara - when Ishwara pervades Maaya and the jeeva, then this duality vanishes and there exists only Ishwara in just three different forms. This is like one person enacting three different roles in a movie - or one character appearing in three different ways in the same movie (like a

same person becoming a father, son and husband in real life).

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While entering into dandaaka forest, Raama encounters the demon Viraadha and kills him. After this Raama comes to Suteeshnaashrama and later meets Sage Agastya in his ashrama and gets his blessings.  
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Demons cause sorrow and suffering. Demons are nothing but our sense organs that run behind worldly pleasures. When we depend on a car to give us eternal bliss, we will end up suffering as the car undergoes change and will vanish one day. This happens with relationships as well - we expect relationships to last for ever. This cannot happen and when they don't last, we become sad. This doesn't mean we shouldn't have any relationship - it just means that we have to be aware of the nature of relationships and worldly pleasures. As long as we know it to not support or give us bliss eternally, there is no problem in experiencing them. Salt is very good for the body as it keeps the pressure in check - but the same salt if taken in more quantity will cause health trouble. Exercising is good for health but over-exercising can even lead to death. That which is poisonous if taken in appropriate quantity can heal a person (like snake poison is cured by the snake's venom itself). Thus there is nothing wrong in sensual enjoyment but the moment we expect them to be eternal and to give us eternal bliss, we will be let down and when this let down happens, we will experience lot of sorrows.

The way to remember sensual pleasures to be temporary and not eternal is by remembering the eternal entity of Lord. Wherever we have Raama, demons will be destroyed. Thus that person who remembers the Lord in his mind will not fall for sensual pleasures and thereby will never experience sorrow.

Demons also denote obstacles in the spiritual path. Such obstacles can also be easily averted when the Lord is remembered in the mind. The mere thought of the Lord in our mind will make us see any big obstacle or problem as nothing at all. Of course if the entire world is filled in and out with the Lord, where is any obstacle or problem? Obstacles and problems themselves will become nothing but the Lord's blessings. Thus meerabhai took poison but still it didn't do any harm to her as she considered poison also as the Lord only.

In short wherever the Lord is remembered, there will only be bliss even if externally there are problems - external problems will get converted internally as the Lord's will only. As AMMA always says, if something good happens it is the Lord's grace; if something bad happens, then it is the Lord's will. All ways, it is only the Lord who appears as the entire world - therefore there cannot be anything but bliss and bliss alone for such a seeker who remembers the Lord as pervading the entire world in his mind.

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Agastya offers his prayers to Raama by telling that when he heard Naaraayana tell Devas (who approached him) that he would be born as Raama and kill Raavana, from that day he has been waiting doing tapas and other austerities with his shishyas to see the divine form of Raama.  
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Blessings of sages are essential in order to progress in the spiritual path. Even as a guide is needed to traverse through a jungle, similarly guides of realized masters are required (for majority of people) in order to progress in the spiritual path and to ensure that they aren't lost. Hence Raama shows that we should get blessings from such masters whoever they are. But today this isn't what we see in the world. Missions fight amongst each other - have heard people in AMMA's ashram complaining about chinmaya mission and vice versa. Chinmaya mission folks fight over Dayaananda Saraswathi's arsha vidya gurukulam. Not everyone fights but there are people who differentiate between masters. When meeting Swami Tejomayananda in Mumbai when sister was joining vedanta course of chinmaya mission, he was enquiring about AMMA (calling AMMA as amma-ji) and as to the incident where a person with a knife was going towards the stage to attack AMMA (this was around 7-8 years ago I believe). Thus we can see real masters respecting each other - and true followers also will be able to understand, appreciate and respect other mission people also. When met Swami Amritagitananda puri 10 years ago, swamiji was asking for

the lectures of Swami Paramarthananda of Chennai on Brahma sutras in order to refresh his memory on brahma sutras. Thus we can find mutual respect in real masters and real followers. But there are folks who get into differentiation of "my guru is better", "your guru isn't better" etc. Some go to the extent of saying "AMMA is the only sadguru present" - this is also completely wrong and against AMMA's own words. As AMMA herself says that she doesn't preach anything new - all that is to be said has been said in the past and the same views are resonated over and over again. AMMA herself respects people from other missions.

It is to show this mutual respect for one another that we find Raama getting blessings from Agastya. We all are a family of seekers who are moving towards the same goal of moksha or liberation. We all have our positives and negatives - keeping this in mind, we should respect each other, help each other while progressing towards the goal of moksha. Of course, the moment we forget the goal of moksha or if one person doesn't remember the goal of moksha, then there is no help possible at all. When we enter into the world, we only see competition in one or the other form. Starting with kids in school to offices to families, there is competition. Mother competes with father for affection to child; siblings compete for affection from parents; kids compete for affection from teacher or co-student; sub-ordinates compete for attention from their boss; this goes on and on.

Only when we remember Ishwara as the goal of life can we have harmony amongst each other. Only then can we move forward in the same direction holding hands and helping each other. Of course helping each other doesn't mean that we can get moksha together - as AMMA says, moksha is not for a group but for an individual. :) Thus Ishwara or Guru is only refuge at all points of time. We find Agastya telling that Lord that he waited for him come - Agastya is a great sage who has followers to take care of him. But will followers protect him always? Definitely no. The one person who is there always with us is Ishwara or Guru - everybody else will have to be renounced. This again doesn't mean we have to renounce now itself but we should keep this in mind so that when the time comes to renounce, we will be able to renounce happily. But for this to happen, we have to get the vision of the Lord - vision of the Lord is seeing the Lord as pervading the entire world. Such vision of the Lord will result in immense bliss that never fades away and is present at all times. Until that time comes, we should hold onto the Lord in our hearts while doing our duties/actions in the external world never forgetting that the entire world is filled in and out with the Lord. Slowly we will be able to progress and attain that eternal blissful state.

We will continue with Aaranya Khaanda in the next day.

May we all gain the vision of the supreme being of Raama as pervading the entire world so that we are able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 10**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with aaranya khaanda.

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Raama, lakshmana and Sita while walking into the forest glanced upon an old vulture. Looking at this Raama told Lakshmana to kill the beast. Upon this, the vulture said that he is an old friend of Dasharatha. The vulture was Jataayu and Raama hugged Jataayu after hearing this and decided to stay close by in order to be of any help to the old vulture.

Raama then enter into Chithrakoota and decides to start living there.

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Generally we see in the world that relationships go a long way in achieving things in the world. People are so used to doing things with their likes and dislikes in their mind that if we are angry with someone, then

chances of getting things done through them is very less. This is generally a problem that all of us face in the world while pursuing studies, profession, marriage and even in very trivial things like going to a store. :)How many times would we have seen at a coffee shop, we will be waiting in line for coffee and all of a sudden somebody cuts the line and goes behind the counter; the person is close with the person preparing coffee; thus this person gets a coffee ahead of the entire line of people waiting. Thus knowing the right person causes one to get coffee or tea in advance without waiting in line.

:)How many times would we have seen getting a free token or free pass to meet a spiritual master like AMMA. Yes, all these are vital or important from a worldly perspective. A person who wants worldly goals, worldly pleasures etc. should go by these rules lest they are unable to attain anything in life. I have an aunt who is a doctor in AIMS and whose son had upanayana from amma (almost the same time that I had as well) - they are long time devotees but still whenever they go to amritapuri, they try to find an easy way to meet amma.

We all ought to learn from real spiritual masters and real saadhakas as to how to behave in such situations. Just by knowing the right contact, we will not achieve anything at all in life except some worldly benefit. Even by knowing those are close to amma or who manage queue, we cannot buy a ticket into the land of moksha - this means we cannot buy peace of mind or happiness through any of these easy short-cuts. As AMMA always says, there is no short-cut to moksha. And, thankfully, there is no queue for moksha as well. Each one has a queue of his/her own. We all have to struggle independently and individually in order to attain the goal of moksha. There are no special considerations given - there aren't any elderly people queue, there is no vip queue, there is no i-know-them queue as well.

All these are core of spirituality which many people forget. Without these spiritual qualities of standing for oneself, not depending on anything unless it is essential and trying to spend as much time alone, one would struggle in the spiritual path. Thus people who forget to learn the basics, might be in the spiritual path for years but still they wouldn't have any peace of mind. And after so many years of struggle, life would be a waste - both spiritual and worldly as well. Those who cannot implement real spirituality would do better to stay from it as once a person steps into the spiritual path, worldly life will go for a toss unless we progress well in the spiritual path.

And progressing well in the spiritual path isn't as tough as we think. We just need to depend on one person - the one person who doesn't need anything else in return - the one person who will not let go of us at any point - in other words, this one person cannot let go of us at any point of time -- this one person is the sole refuge for a spiritual seeker. It is this ultimate truth that amma repeats again and again in her discourses.

Still majority of people fail to apprehend this (heard that during this week's class in amritapuri, Swami Amritasvaroopananda said that even amma's words are misinterpreted so what to speak about his) and misinterpret or misunderstand scriptural words or words of a mahatma like amma. And as the age old saying goes "we hear what we want to hear" -- thus from a simple spiritual story narrated by amma, we will talk what we want to rather than what is really conveyed through the story. As AMMA herself says, the only way to really understand the words of a mahatma is through scriptural knowledge or through complete knowledge - both of which many of us lack.

Just because we lack doesn't mean it is impossible or it isn't worth trying for. Married couples or people in normal deep relationships (can be friends, brothers, parents etc.) will understand easily as to how much each person might lack in order to maintain the relationship but each person tries harder and harder until it becomes easy and perfect.

Similarly we shouldn't let go of the spiritual path just because we lack something - instead we should strive to learn the shastras and develop surrender unto Ishwara. Ishwara is the "one person" who will stand by us at all times - no other relationship, even that of a mother to a child, will not survive the test of time. Ishwara, unfortunately:D, cannot but be with us at all times as he is captured inside our heart and he is our very nature of Self. But the Ishwara who is always in our heart is veiled by our dependencies on



other people and objects. Instead of seeking the eternal bliss and eternal refuge which is always with us inside, we seek it outside and thereby only get sorrow from our dependencies.

It is only when a person realizes the futility of worldly objects/people that one starts to progress in the spiritual path seeking Ishwara right inside us. And then saadhana plus knowledge plus surrender lets us ever remember that Ishwara is always there with us.

How blissful it is to just think that Ishwara is with us. If so how blissful it would be to always remember Ishwara always being with us. Majority of people seek external dependencies because they cannot be alone - this is also fine except that instead of seeking worldly people we should seek Ishwara as Ishwara will always remain with us.

Just mere contact with people who are remembering Ishwara or are devotees of Ishwara will give us protection from Ishwara. This is what we find happening here. Jataayu was a friend of Dasharatha and thereby he got help from Raama. This goes to show that if we cannot remember "unknown", "unseen" Ishwara in our mind we should seek friendship or seek to be near people who remember Ishwara. Even as a person who doesn't cooking should befriend a cook so that he learns cooking by contact or association, similarly we should seek association with good people (satsanga) or those who remember Ishwara and trying to realize Ishwara. Good people doesn't mean merely those who flock around mahatmas like AMMA or sing songs of AMMA with desires of accolades, fame etc. but those who truly want to attain the goal of Ishwara - those who want to be near AMMA but those who want to be one with AMMA (realize AMMA or make AMMA reside in their hearts at all times).

It is easy to find real good people - they will be happy most of the time; they will be blissful; they will be content and satisfied - if not at all times, mostly they will be happy. The more we come in contact with such people, we will also become more and more blissful. Thus we will be able to find ourselves unaffected by the world and its activities and ever remaining blissful.

As Tyaagaraaja apts explains about such people as "saraguna paadamulaku svaantamanu sarojamunu samarpanamu seyvu vaar" "those who surrender themselves unto the lotus-feet of the Lord" - what else can result out of such surrender but eternal bliss.

Hence we find that Jataayu gets hugged by the Lord and gets protection from the Lord. Hugging symbolizes blissful experience and protection means that the bliss of the Lord stays around irrespective of where we are or what we are doing.

We will continue with Aaranya Khaanda in the next posting.

May we all depend only on the Lord (or Guru) at all times so that we are able to get protection from the Lord at all times and thus able to rejoice at all times here and now itself..

aum namah shivaya

## **Adhyatma Ramayana – 11**

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with aaranya khaanda.

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Raama, lakshmana and Sita were living in chitrakoota when one day shoorpanakha's, the sister of Raavana, eyes fall upon Raama and she gets attracted to Raama. Raama rejects her and so does lakshmana and thereby shoorpanakha goes on to attack Sita. Seeing this lakshmana cuts off shoorpanakha's nose.

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Many times we get attached to things in the world which finally leads only to sorrow and sorrow alone in the long run. Therefore we find Krishna saying in the 18th chapter that "that which appears as happy in the beginning is poisonous in the long run and that which appears as poisonous in the beginning gives happiness at the end". Worldly pleasures are very easy to achieve but the more and more we experience or enjoy them, we will find that it leads to sorrow and sorrow alone. While enjoying pleasures more and more we find ourselves fully exhausted - sense organs deteriorate and the mind becomes tensed/stressed by wanting more and more; the thirst never ends; and we never experience any happiness at all. Thus wise people consider sensual pleasures as seeds of sorrow - before we experience worldly pleasure we have to struggle a lot in order to get experience of the sensual pleasure; while we have sensual pleasures still we worry about how to maintain them and not lose them and later when we lose them, we become sad thinking or brooding over the time when we had the pleasure. Thus at all times, sensual pleasures will and does lead to sorrow and sorrow alone. Therefore a wise person will not run behind them.

But we find shoorpanakha running behind the pleasure of physical appearance. This will definitely lead to sorrow alone - whether we go behind physical pleasure or mental pleasure, all pleasures that have to do with the world will only lead to sorrow and sorrow alone. It is only the supreme bliss that we can find in the Lord that will give us eternal bliss.

The reason as to why Lord alone can give us bliss is because the Lord alone is real. Everything other than the Lord is an illusion in the Lord even as in a dream world, the dreamer is real and everything else is just an illusion in the dreamer. Once we know the dream world to be unreal, we will not run behind it. But ignorance of the sorrowful nature of the dream world (which doesn't exist at all but appears to be real) will make us run behind it and the end result will be sorrow alone.

It doesn't really matter where we are - we may be living in a posh house; we may be in temple; we may be in a hut; we may be in an ashram; it doesn't really matter - as long as we are running behind worldly pleasures, we will experience sorrow and sorrow alone. Thus understanding this after thorough analysis, a seeker will not run behind worldly pleasure.

Shoorpanakha went after worldly pleasure and that in turn causes her to lose her nose. This denotes losing of one's peace of mind - once we run behind worldly pleasures, we will only become sad and restless instead of becoming content and happy.

But at times when we are in the world, we will face tough situations. Such situations generally might lead to us becoming agitated or losing our calm - if that happens, then it will lead to a lot of problem for us and others as well.

Maintaining calm isn't sitting in an air-conditioned room or living in a place/condition where there is no problem at all - maintaining calm is possible only when remember everything to be pervaded by Ishwara. It is this vision of oneness or remembering the Lord who alone exists at all times alone can make our mind calm. A calm mind is that which is beyond likes and dislikes - such a mind will not indulge in sensual pleasures. Such a mind will not run behind sensual pleasures - as such a mind has found way to eternal bliss and thereby will seek only eternal bliss.

But until a person realizes the Lord or constantly abides in the Lord, one has to be careful not to fall down from remembrance of the Lord which can happen easily. When such situations arise and one forgets the

Lord, one should immediately remember the Lord. If this is doesn't then the mind will run behind worldly pleasures. And once the mind runs behind worldly pleasures, there will be sorrow and sorrow alone.

Lakshmana forgot to remain calm and thereby in anger cuts shoorpanakha's nose. This simple and single action leads to the entire raamaayana war. This doesn't mean that wars can be avoided and we can have a blissful external world if we remain calm - this can never happen. The world is filled with duality and thereby problems will always be there in the world. We can remain blissful when we remember the entire world to be just an illusion - even as we don't get affected when a bomb explodes in a movie, similarly when we see this world as just an illusion in Ishwara, we will not get affected by the wars that happen in the world. We will try our best to avert or avoid them but if it still happens, we will remain blissful remembering that it is just an illusion in the Lord.

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Shoorpanakha goes back to her brother Khara who gets killed while fighting with Raama. Then shoorpanakha approaches Raavana for help. Raavana calls for maaricha's help. Maaricha turns himself to a golden deer thereby luring Sita to ask Raama to catch the deer.  
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Many times when we face trouble, we go to our near and dear. Instead of this, we should try to seek the Lord as the Lord alone can give a permanent solution to all our problems. Instead of this when we seek people who are in as much sorrow as ourselves, we will find that the end result is sorrow and sorrow alone. The reason as to why seeking the Lord our problems get solved is when we seek the Lord, we will not seek anything else and we will also abide by dharma. Otherwise, we will do things that appear to be best for us but may not really be the right or dharmic thing to do. Thus not seeking the Lord is the greatest mistake that we commit and that which leads to a lot of problems.

A person who seeks the Lord, as mentioned earlier, will not seek worldly pleasures whatever it be. But until one's mind abides in the Lord, it is possible that one may fall for worldly pleasures or run behind them. This is what we can see in the case of Sita asking raama to catch the golden deer. The deer signifies sensual pleasures which are attractive like gold, very tough to attain and will do us more bad than good.

It can be asked that many of us know that worldly pleasures will cause sorrow, then why do we keep seeking them?

This is due to vaasana or addiction. We are so addicted to worldly pleasures that we cannot live without them or imagine living without them. Even though we know it is wrong still we can't but run behind them. This is like a mother who knows her son has done something wrong but still cannot but protect him - it is passion that causes the mother to do this. Similarly our passion or attachment to worldly pleasures causes us to pursue them again and again. The knowledge that worldly pleasures will only cause sorrow in the long run and that Ishwara alone will give us bliss will make a person not run behind worldly pleasure and instead seek the Lord and the Lord alone at all times.

We will continue with Aaranya Khaanda in the next day.

May we all never forget to seek the Lord and at all times remember the world to be sorrowful so that we are able to ever rejoice in bliss in constant contemplation of the Lord as pervading the entire world.

aum namah shivaya

## Adhyatma Ramayana – 12

aum namah shivaya

Let's continue with aaranya khaanda.

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Raama asks lakshmana to guard Sita while going to catch the deer. But when raama is gone for a while, Sita gets worried and asks lakshmana to go and check for Raama. Lakshmana reluctantly goes to find Raama.  
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Many times in life, we don't realize the importance of what we already have; instead we seek that which is not there. This is the mentality of the human mind -- a tendency which is very tough to change unless a person has proper knowledge and has done enough saadhana to control and direct the mind.

Proper or scriptural knowledge will make us realize that anything that we attain in life will be short-lived and hence sorrowful - thereby we will not seek worldly pleasures or run behind worldly pleasures. Instead whatever we attain through our normal action, we will be content with it. Saadhana ensures that even though we have latent tendencies or vaasanaas that make us run behind sensual pleasures even though we have knowledge that they are sorrowful, we will not run behind sensual pleasures as much as they might tempt us. Instead we will always remain established in the Lord as pervading the entire world and be content at all times.

Even as smoker, in order to get rid of smoking, needs to have the knowledge that smoking is bad and saadhana or mental control to quit the addiction of smoking, similarly a seeker needs scriptural knowledge about temporary-sorrowful nature of the world as well as saadhana in order to control and direct the mind towards the Lord rather than towards sensual pleasures.

As simple as this sounds, it isn't that simple - it is very very tough to remain content with what we have and not want anything else at all. This state of ever-content is one where a person is content with his life and doesn't expect anything for himself or others. For such a person, whatever happens is the will of the Lord and of course the entire world is filled with Lord - therefore such a person never encounters situation where there is confusion or doubt as to what to do; there is no sorrow at all in thoughts or actions; and there is regret about something done in the past. Such a state is possible only through constant contemplation on the Lord as pervading the entire world. If this isn't done continuously and without any break we will find that we fall a prey to our likes and dislikes - thereby even though we know something to be wrong, we will be forced to act in the wrong way. Dritharaasthra is the perfect example of a person who knew right and wrong but still fell a prey to his passions. He learned initially from Vidura, the instruction which is known famously as Vidura Niti. After this he got brahma jnaana or knowledge about Brahman from Sanatsujaateeya, which is famous as sanatsujaateeya (beautiful four-chaptered work which is a part of Mahaabhaaratha and has been commented upon by Sankara). Thus he knew what was right, what was wrong and that ultimately it is Ishwara beyond all likes and dislikes that has to be sought. But still he was so attached to his sons that he stood silent over their wrong-doings. If we also similarly forget the supreme being of Ishwara and fall a prey to our passions, then the end result will be sorrow (destruction of entire clan as in the case of Dhritharaasthra).

Here we find Sita asking Raama to go behind the deer - she as well sends lakshmana too. This denotes forgetting the Lord or renouncing the Lord for sensual pleasures. As trivial as this may seem, it is what

generally happens with majority of people. It is only very rarely that one out of a million will not renounce the Lord for anything - keeping the Lord in mind and not letting the mind renounce the Lord for sensual pleasure is essential to attain the goal of moksha or eternal bliss. Sita forgot Raama for sensual pleasure and hence the end-result is sorrow - even if later she was able to gain focus and meditation on Raama, still she had to undergo suffering. There is no need to undergo such suffering if we remember the Lord at all times in our mind. The Lord is ever there with us as all-pervasive Brahman or Consciousness. We have to keep this in mind at all times to ensure that we don't fall a prey for sensual pleasures which will be very appealing but will lead to sorrow and sorrow alone.

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When Raama and lakshmana are gone, Raavana appears at that place and kidnaps Sita. While taking away Sita, Jataayu tries to rescue her but gets killed by Raavana.  
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Once Ishwara's thought vanishes from our mind, we will only find the ego of Raavana creeping in. Ego steals away Sita or Maaya or the mind - once our mind has fallen a prey to the ego, then not even any bhakthas or great people around us can save us. As the Lord mentions in Gita, each person helps himself. No mahatma can save us unless we decide to let ourselves be saved - and such surrender is very tough to achieve in life unless we have done intense saadhana and have true conviction that Ishwara alone is real. Thus Jataayu also isn't able to help out Sita or the mind.

When we forget Ishwara even for a moment, we will find that so many passions enter into our mind. And each of these will lead to tens of thousands of more passions. Thus the never-ending web of passions/desires continue. We go from one birth to another without getting our desires fulfilled as desires grow. Those who renounce the Lord for their parents or kith and kin should remember that there have been many kith and kin in the past and there will be in the future as well - all these relationships are born out of the body and its relationships. The body itself isn't real - we experience a body now but in dream world we experience an entirely different body - thus it goes without saying that "I" am not the body but body is just a superimposition upon me. Thus relationships born out of body is also not real - all these relationships will not stay for long - it will be there for few years only and best case until the body perishes. But then another body is achieved and entirely new relationships are created.

Thus those who renounce the Lord for relationships or likes-dislikes ought to think again as none of these are real and none of these can give us happiness. And those who think they can protect or save others are also fools - as we see children taken away from parents in a split second (when an earthquake strikes). Thus nothing is in our control as there is nothing real in this world except Ishwara.

Even as various gold ornaments are mere names and forms of gold, similarly this entire world is names and forms of Ishwara. A normal person gets deluded into names and forms of gold considering them to be real - hence when one gold ornament dies, then the person becomes sad. Whereas the goldsmith is never sad as he knows that gold is real and it always exists whereas the gold ornament is temporary and will vanish after a period of time. Similarly an ajnaani suffers as a result of considering names and forms to be real (while forgetting the essential reality of Lord) whereas a jnaani sees all names and forms as Ishwara and Ishwara alone.

Thus an ajnaani is constantly suffering in dual vision or vision of names and forms whereas a jnaani sees only Ishwara in all of those. This doesn't mean that one has to renounce all possessions. It just means to remember that they aren't eternal. We can use the fan that is their in the house - there is nothing wrong in this but thinking that the fan will be eternally there will cause sorrow. Similarly it is fine to have all

relationships in life but not remembering that they are temporary and all-pervasive Ishwara alone is real (thinking in our mind) will lead to sorrows again and again.

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Raama, on returning back after killing the deer and finding that the deer wasn't real, finds Sita gone. They search for Sita and find Jataayu, who is dying, the information about Raavana kidnapping Sita. On the way to searching Sita, Raama comes upon shabari's ashram which excites Shabari a lot and Shabari offers fruit that has been already tasted by her to Raama.  
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The greatness of mahatmas or Ishwara himself is that Ishwara will seek us out constantly - not "will" but Ishwara does seek us out every moment as Ishwara is our very nature of bliss. Though an ajnaani cannot find Ishwara's presence around him, a true seeker will be able to find Ishwara in one or the other form around us. The sadguru appears to an ardent seeker who wants to realize - the sadguru is none other than Ishwara. For those who don't have a guru, nothing to worry about as Ishwara is present in one or the other form. If our desire is strong, way will be shown by Ishwara himself in one form or the other.

But many times we tend to ignore Ishwara and our guru as well. We tend to look after other things first before taking care or giving attention to Ishwara. This will only lead to more problems. The person who says "tomorrow, I will start seeking Ishwara" is a fool as tomorrow never comes. As Kabir says that kaal kare so aaj kar, aaj kare so ab - pal mein parlai hoyegi bahoori karega kab - whatever you have to do tomorrow, do it today; whatever you have to do today, do it now as later something else will come up and you will never do it. Thus we should never say tomorrow or later for spirituality. Remembering Ishwara in our mind is very simple and if we have to surrender or seek a Guru, we don't lose anything by doing this - relationships need not be lost, possessions need not be lost, sensual pleasures need be lost - therefore a seeker should never say tomorrow but instead should remember Ishwara and try to realize here and now itself.

It is worth mentioning here that Ishwara and any association that reminds us about Ishwara, his glory, his nature, how to attain him (shastra jnaana as well) is worth having and a seeker should cherish should association at all times and at all costs. All other associations can come later or can be taken care of later - association with such great people should always be undertaken as that is an accelerant to the seeker realizing Ishwara here and now itself.

The story of Shabari is very famous - what this shows is that in true devotion there is no differentiation between devotee and Ishwara. A true devotee always remembers Ishwara and thus there are no rights and wrongs for such a devotee.

The Lord mentions in Gita:

patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhakthya prayacchathi  
tadaham bhakthi upahritham ashnaami prayataatmanah

Leave, flower, fruit, water - whatever is offered with devotion, such an offering of devotion I partake as that is offered with complete surrender.

The above sloka in a way encompasses shabari's actions - we don't have to exactly be like shabari or gopis or naarada. Each person is unique - what is essential is the attitude of surrender and filling our mind

with Ishwara at all times. External actions will differ from person to person and hence we don't have to judge ourselves by the actions of such great devotees. We can be a new devotee who stands out amongst all such devotees. For this it is essential to remember Ishwara in our mind at all times - rest and all are fine.

Even if we aren't able to offer anything unto the Lord externally or mentally, it is fine. What is required is just remembrance of the Lord - mere remembrance of the Lord is the same as offering to Ishwara or surrendering to Ishwara. A person who remembers or tries to remember Ishwara most of the time in day will find himself more and more blissful. And thus the goal of life which is peace, contentment, satisfaction and bliss will be achieved quick and soon and in this very birth itself.

We have thus come to the end of beautiful aaranya khaanda. We will start with sundara khaanda in the next posting.

yasyavismritivashaadaapnothi  
athighorasamsaaraagaram  
tam sreeraamachandram bhakthapujyam  
smaraami aanandapraapthartham

By forgetting whom, we attain  
the fierce ocean of samsaara  
that sree raamachandra who is worshipped by devotees  
i remember in order to attain bliss

aum prapanchaanyapraavishta aanandadaayakasreeraamachandraaya namah

My prostrations to sri raamachandra who entered the forest of world and provides happiness (to seekers).

May we unlike Sita never forget the supreme being of Raama and remember him at all times, even it means renouncing everything else that we have so that we are able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself in constant contemplation of Raama as non-dual reality of Blissful Consciousness.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 13**

aum namah shivaya

Since we finished aaranya khaanda in the previous day, let's start with the next khaanda which is kishkindaa khaanda. It is in this khaanda that Raama comes to meet with Hanumaan and Sugreeva and other vaanaras (who are instrumental in getting to lanka, fighting the war and thereby Raama's rescuing of Sita).

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Raama on the search for Sita comes to meet Hanumaan and befriends Sugreeva. Raama hears about Sugreeva's distress which is that he was cheated of his wife and kingdom by Baali, his brother.

Baali who ruling the kingdom of kishkindaa when a asura entered the area. While chasing the asura along with Sugreeva, Baali was caught up inside a cave while Sugreeva was waiting outside. Baali successfully

slayed the asura but in the process, blood came out of the cave. When Sugreeva saw the blood coming and didn't see Baali come out (as the cave was shut by boulder) therefore he assumed that Baali was dead. He went back and started ruling the kingdom. But Baali was able to find a way out of the cave - when he reaches his kingdom he is angered on seeing Sugreeva becoming the king. Instead of asking Sugreeva as to what happened, Baali gets enraged and chases Sugreeva out of the kingdom and covets Sugreeva's wife, Ruma, as well.

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Many people just look at the story of these puranaas without understanding the deeper significance. This in turn leads to a wrong understanding and thereby our actions will result these wrong understandings. Thus after learning Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, some people learn that it is ok to have two wives - why? because Yajnavalkya had two wives. Similarly people decide that adharma is fine as the Lord himself did in Krishna avataara.

We have to understand the attitude or state of mind behind activities before trying to imitate or emulate from these realized masters. AMMA gives a beautiful story to illustrate this. Once there was a guru who used to take bath in hot oil daily in the morning - seeing this, a shishya tried to imitate it or follow what the guru does -- the next day he poured one mug of hot oil on his body and immediately started crying out aloud. Thus not everything that we see can be imitated. A wise seeker would do good to not imitate any actions but only attitude behind actions.

When following spiritual masters, we should always follow their instructions or teachings rather than trying to imitate their activities. Teachings or instructions again are tricky - we shouldn't follow instructions given to somebody else - when spiritual masters interact with different people, they will or may give different instructions and hence blindly following them will also be foolish. If it is scriptural teachings, then there is no worry as scriptural teachings aren't different for any person - this is because scriptural teachings don't talk about the actions that we have to perform but only about the right attitude behind our actions.

This posting may go long but cannot but mention this another incident:). Once Brahmaananda, Raamakrishna Paramahansa's disciple came home crying - (at that time didn't have sanyaasa) Raamakrishna asked why they are crying; to this he replied that when he was coming back after going across the river (to do daily activities, a person used to take turns to go across the river and return back in the evening) people in the boat were mocking about Sri Raamakrishna and thereby he felt very bad and cried. To this Sri Raamakrishna scolds him saying that next time if they say anything like that, don't think at all but just give them blows (hit them). Hearing this, brahmaananda was very happy. Next day, it was narendra's turn; he came back with his shoulders and chests high, head raised very high as if he has done something great; seeing this Sri Raamakrishna asks him "you have stupid smile on your face, what did you do" -- to this narendra said that people in the boat mocked at Sri Raamakrishna and thereby he hit them all (as instructed earlier to brahmaananda). To this Sri Raamakrishna scolds him saying that such an advise or instruction was only for brahmaananda and not for him as he was already very strong and wouldn't mind the words of others (once when such a similar topic comes up and Sri Raamakrishna asks Narendra what does he think about such mocking people, he replies "i will think dogs are barking at the sun").

Such incidents like above are so vivid (though haven't seen them) in one's mind that we just have to close our eyes to mentally see such beautiful incidents :).

Thus instructions are different for different people from spiritual masters and we would do good not to overhear instructions to others and try to implement them.



Coming to Raamaayana :), Raama searches for Sita running here and there and as if very sad. We shouldn't go by the actions performed by mahatmas. There used to be a jnaani called naaraanatthu bhraanthan who used to daily with all his energy take a big boulder to the top of a mountain - by that time, it would be evening; he would then clap his hands, call out to people and laughing push the boulder down the mountain. If we try imitating his actions, we would be nothing but fools - the purpose of his action was to show how tough it is to achieve things in life and how easy it is to lose. Spiritual progress is worth following and once we start in the spiritual path, we should never let go of the path as letting go is very easy but catching up is very tough.

Raama's actions are just like a normal person's actions but internally Raama was very blissful always. Ramana Maharshi gives this beautiful story to illustrate this -- when Raama was running here and there in the forest calling out Site Site and searching for her, Siva and Paarvathi were passing by; Siva looks at Raama and offers his prostrations and goes on his way; Paarvathi doesn't like this and she says to Siva that look at Raama, he is an avataara and he is running behind his life like a worldly person. To this Siva laughs and says that Raama is ever blissful - Paarvathi doesn't believe this and thereby decides to test Raama. She takes the form of Sita and appears in front of Raama. Raama smiles at her and asks "Where is your consort Siva, O Paarvathi? And why are you in Sita's form" -- thus realizing her mistake, she apologizes to Raama, offers her prostrations and returns back to Siva.

Thus we cannot go by the actions performed by realized masters who are ever abiding in contemplation of the supreme truth that pervades this entire world.

Only a person with surrender or scriptural knowledge will be able to understand the importance of mahatmas and be able to see through their normal-human-like activities. One such bhaktha is hanumaan who is able to understand the greatness of Raama and thereby becomes one of his greatest bhakthas.

But Raama isn't one who helps only bhakthas - Ishwara or mahatmas will help those who seek help from them (seeking is inevitable and essential - unless complete surrender is there, we have to seek Ishwara -- if complete surrender is there, then help will automatically come and we don't have to seek it). Since Sugreeva wasn't a true bhaktha with complete surrender therefore he has to seek help from Raama. He seeks help from Raama and thereby gets help.

A person who seeks Ishwara will get all the help needed and Ishwara will fulfill all the desires of such a person who seeks Ishwara. But as we know, worldly pleasures even if they are sought from Ishwara or given by Ishwara are seeds of sorrow; a wise person thus will ask nothing but moksha and moksha along from Ishwara or a mahaatma.

We find in the lives of Baali and Sugreeva how brothers can be lead to fighting each other with a little misunderstanding. Hence we have to ensure that there is no misunderstanding - misunderstanding happens when there is lack of communication. Until the relationship is fully based on true love or surrender, communication through words and actions has to happen. If this doesn't happen then we will find brothers fighting each other - one of the brother is very powerful whereas the other seeks Ishwara. Obviously the one with Ishwara wins - this is because Ishwara provides eternal support whereas power will vanish after a period of time. Thus this story tells us that we should seek Ishwara and nothing else - it doesn't matter who goes against Ishwara but such a person will experience failure and failure alone.

It also goes without saying that if a person goes against a true bhaktha or a jnaani, such a person also will experience failure or blows - this is something we can directly experience in our lives if we gain some

amount of surrender or knowledge.

When misunderstanding starts, it doesn't end there but leads to adharma which will in turn cause only sorrow in the long run. Even adharma will vanish when Ishwara is sought out. We can say that Sugreeva didn't try hard to find if Baali is dead and that it is adharma when he took over as king but he had Ishwara with him. Wherever Ishwara is, all dharma-adharma will vanish and we will experience nothing but bliss and bliss alone.

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Raama decides to help Sugreeva and thereby decides to kill Baali. Killing Baali isn't that simple as Baali had the power that his enemies would not be able to kill him when fighting with him in front as anybody in front would give away half of their power to Baali. Thus once when egoistic Raavana comes to kishkinda and angers Baali, Baali comes out, ties Raavana on his tail and takes him around the entire world before Raavana apologizes and pleads to give up.

Raama decides to hide behind a tree and thereby kill Baali. But this has another problem that Baali and Sugreeva both look alike from far. Thus differentiating between each of them through a garland that was worn by Sugreeva, Raama shoots an arrow and kills Baali.

Thereby Sugreeva gets back his kingdom and Raama instructs Taara, Baali's wife on the ultimate truth thereby making her happy.

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Ishwara is often termed bhaktha priya or one who is dear to his devotees or one who likes his devotees (sanskrit is a beautiful language that a compound word of two words can be interpreted in many ways based on rules of compounding or samaasa). Thus Ishwara can never let go of his devotees and also of anyone who seeks Ishwara. One may seek Ishwara for a bad reason - still Ishwara will not disappoint them. The gopis went to Krishna with lust and other emotions but Ishwara converted them to pure love. Thus even with bad emotions or feelings, it is good to seek the Lord as Lord is the fire that burns everything to ashes.

Sugreeva seeks Raama and thereby Raama helps him. Raama gets Baali killed - this portion shows as to how if a person goes against Ishwara, one will definitely lose. Losing doesn't necessarily mean physically losing anything but losing our peace of mind, happiness and thereby remaining sorrowful at all times. This is what is denoted through Baali's death.

Baali and Sugreeva were alike in many aspects - both were brave, monkeys who had controlled their mind thereby attaining focus and heights in life. These both denote the two different types of mind that we can have. Mind is like a monkey hopping from one object or thing to another. But once we gain focus through saadhanas like meditation and through proper vairagya or knowledge then we will be able to do wonders with such a mind - both from worldly perspective and spiritual perspective as well. Such minds are denoted by Baali and Sugreeva - but one fell a prey to passions (the passion of anger which completely destroys a person) whereas the other seeks refuge in Ishwara when facing troubles. Many times when we face trouble in life, we don't seek Ishwara but think we can handle those situations - this is completely wrong. Only a person with surrender or true scriptural knowledge can handle situations - others will just be thinking they are handling situations when it will a disaster after their handling it.

It is also not wrong to fall a prey for passions or worldly objects/people when we have attained focus of mind - such fall down can happen at any time till we realize the goal and Ishwara never vanishes from our

mind (thus we have to be alert at all times). But a person who falls down and still doesn't acknowledge the importance of Ishwara will face sorrows alone. Baali even after falling down couldn't acknowledge Ishwara and thereby was killed (showing the sorrowful and suffering state of the mind).

Thus we all have a choice of whether to become Baali or Sugreeva -- if we remember the Lord, we are sugreevas and thereby will be able to get both bhoga (worldly pleasures) and moksha (liberation); but if we are Baali then we will lose everything and will have a face a sad ending with desires still in our mind and thereby continuing the chain of birth-death over and over again.

Ishwara is so compassionate that he even instructs enemies. Here we find Raama consoling Taara, the wife of Baali and instructing here. There is no point shedding tears of joy reading these portions which talk about the compassion of Ishwara. What is essential or required is to remember this compassion and work towards surrender to such an Ishwara - this is really respecting or understanding the compassion of the Lord. Only with such an action will we really benefit out of the compassion - wherein we realize that everything is the Lord alone and are able to ever rejoice in bliss.

We will continue with kishkindaa khaanda in the next posting.

May we all use our mind/intellect and everything that we have got to remember Ishwara as pervading the entire world so that we are able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

#### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 14**

aum namah shivaya

Sorry for multiple postings per day now - since we are closing the end of Raamaayana month, we will be having two posts a day to finish the brief of Adhyaatma Raamaayana.

Let's continue with kishkindaa khaanda.

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Raama becomes sad as he hasn't got any news from Sita at all. Raama is also worried as to whether Sita is alive or not. Seeing his sad state, Lakshmana visits Sugreeva's kingdom seeking his help.  
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As we learned in the previous posting, we shouldn't judge a mahatma by his or her actions. It is futile and will only lead to confusions/sorrows in the long run. Talking about action itself, it is essential to understand this chain of action-reaction. An improper understanding of karma or action will lead a person to be deluded into births-deaths forever with no peace and happiness at any point of time. On the other hand, proper understanding of karma will make a person not only perform actions in the best possible way but also make the person attain the supreme goal of all-pervasive blissful Ishwara here and now itself.

Karma irrespective of whether it is good or bad will lead to fruits. Good actions lead to good fruits; bad actions lead to bad fruits; there is a third kind of action which is neither good nor bad. There are 14 worlds accepted in the shastras -- these are part of one anda or one egg of Brahman; there are many brahmaandas (aneka koti brahmaanda janani - one who is the mother of many brahmaandas). Thus while coming up with lalitha sahasranaama, we find a gathering of so many brahmas, so many vishnus, so

many sivas and so many other devaas. There are many brahmaandas but one brahmaanda consists of fourteen worlds. Six are higher worlds, seven are lower worlds and one is the middle world. The six higher worlds lead to pleasures whereas seven lower worlds lead to sorrow - the middle world is a mixture of happiness and sorrow. The six higher worlds are bhuvā, suvā, mahā, jana, tapa, satyam (in the order of increasing). The lower worlds are (in the order of increasing, sorrow in this case) atala, vitala, sutala, mahaatala, rasaatala, talaatala and paatala. The middle world is bhoo loka which is what we generally call as Earth (though science's meaning of this word is different from what shaastras mean).

People in higher worlds enjoy whereas people in lower worlds suffer - there is no choice at all for a person in these worlds (it cannot be argued that Mahaabali rejoices in a lower world - wherever Ishwara is remembered, there will only be bliss and bliss alone - all these worlds and other concepts/theories are only for those who don't remember Ishwara, one who remembers Ishwara knows that there is only Ishwara so what worlds?). A person who does punya attains higher world and a person who does paapa attains lower world. But punya-paapa are fruits which are similar to a bank balance which is credit or debit (negative or positive). Once these get exhausted then there is a neutral state achieved. This neutral state isn't a state of bliss - bliss is only possible when a person realizes Ishwara thereby transcending this illusion of karma. A neutral state means the person has to come to bhooloka. Bhooloka is thus a place where a person can create his future - if he does good actions, he goes up and if does bad actions he goes below - if it is normal action, then he stays in bhooloka itself.

Those who go to higher worlds as a result of good actions will have to return back to bhooloka after those good fruits are exhausted or enjoyed. Thus any action irrespective of whether good or bad cannot give us eternal bliss as we have to keep on doing good fruits to get good results - this is thus impossible. Therefore the ancient seers say unanimously that actions in no way can lead to eternal bliss irrespective of whether it is good action or bad action or spiritual action.

So how do we overcome actions?

Actions are of two types with result of attitude towards fruits - one is kaamyā karma or desirous action which is action performed desiring the fruit; second is nishkaama karma or action where there is no desire for any fruit.

Any social service which isn't nishkaama will lead to trouble or problems and hence will not help in spiritual progress. But any worldly action that has nishkaama in it will become a spiritual action and thereby lead to progress in the spiritual path.

Nishkaama has two aspects to it - one is that there is no desire for the fruits of actions and second is that there is no attachment or association with the action. Thus nishkaama karma is when we perform actions by not worrying about the action (the way the action is done, the means to it etc.) and the fruit (is it going to be good fruit or bad etc.). Such nishkaama karma purifies the mind by taking the mind away from this bondage of illusion of karma.

Ramana Maharshi puts these two beautifully as  
ishwara arptham na icchayaa kritham  
chitta shodhakam mukthi saadhakam

Actions performed as an offering to Ishwara (no attachment to action) and with no desires of fruit purifies the mind and thereby helps in liberation.

Any illusion exists only when we see it -- when we take our eyes off the water seen in desert, mirage

ceases to exist. Similarly by nishkaama karma, we take our eyes away from the illusion of karma thus slowly moving towards going beyond karma. This result that we attain through nishkaama karma is purification of the mind - a mind which doesn't fall a prey to the illusory world and is able to focus more on the higher goal. Mere nishkaama karma isn't realization. Those who think just by offering actions unto Ishwara one can attain moksha are fools as actions irrespective of whether they are kaamya or sakaama or nishkaama will not lead to liberation or realization.

Actions can be completely ended only by knowledge. Though we may take our eyes off the illusion of water in desert, it isn't realization until we apprehend and assert it to be nothing desert. Thus nishkaama karma sets the stage or helps in moksha whereas true moksha happens only through knowledge - knowledge that there is nothing but Ishwara and Ishwara alone.

If everything is only Ishwara, there is no duality - if there is no duality where is action and fruit? There is no action and no fruit.

A little analysis will clearly prove this - action leads to fruit, fruit leads to action (action-reaction chain) -- which came first? There will and can be no answer at all. This shows beyond doubt that action is just an illusion in Ishwara.

Therefore knowing Ishwara alone is the way to overcome actions. Nishkaama karma leads to purification of the mind. A purified mind is able to easily focus on Ishwara as pervading the entire world - this is thus moksha.

To sum it up  
sakaama karma - bandha of janma-mrityu

nishkaama karma -> chittha shuddhi -> naishkarmya -> moksha

action with no desires for fruit -> purification of mind -> no action state or knowledge -> liberation or eternal bliss.

A seeker would do good to keep the above in mind and never let it pass from the mind. Once this knowledge passes from the mind, we will get into the illusion of karma thereby be deluded by it. This will not only cause us to think actions will lead to liberation but also will lead us to judge the actions of mahatmas thereby leading to a state of complete sorrow and suffering.

Many times avataara purushas behave like normal human beings. Why do they do this?

It is very simple - they are human beings as they come to live with us and guide us towards their blissful state. Ishwara cannot make us Ishwara and realize. Ishwara has to come down to our state and teach us how to live our lives. This is possible only if Ishwara becomes one of us -- without this, we will not believe Ishwara, we will not follow Ishwara and we will not understand Ishwara.

Thus avataara purushas come to live amongst us like any of us but showing us to how to live life blissfully. Raama was sad about Sita like any other human being. This means that worldly relationships aren't a problem and we don't have to give up anything in the world. We just to remember them not to be eternal - we don't have to think them as unreal but just as temporary and that which will not be always be there with us. If Raama wasn't internally blissful he wouldn't be able to guide hanumaan among many other people while searching for Sita and being sad. We know that even a learned person when sad would forget all his knowledge and be able to do nothing at all but here we find Raama guiding people

and this is possible only when internally he is ever blissful while externally performing actions like any worldly person.

This is summarized by the Lord in this beautiful sloka of 3rd chapter

sakthaakarmani avidvaanso yathaa kurvanthi bhaaratha  
kuryaat vidvaansastathaasakthah chikeershurloka sangraham

Even as an ignorant person performs actions craving for fruit and being associated with the action, a jnaani should do action without association with the action or the fruit and for the welfare of the world.

In order to make people understand that mahatmas perform actions, it is said that they perform for the welfare of the world. A real jnaani will know that such mahatmas are ever blissful and as Ishwara therefore not performing any action at all. But externally when we look, they are performing actions and therefore it is said as for the welfare of the world. Externally as well we can experience that the actions of a mahatma will always be for the welfare of the entire world.

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Thereby all of the vaanaras along with Raama and lakshmana convene and form a group to search for Sita. But this requires the tedious and almost impossible task of crossing over the ocean before getting to lanka.

This task is thus given to hanumaan. And he is instructed to just meet Sita and enquire about her and he was told that fighting with Raavana can happen later.

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Many times we form groups of one kind or the other - every place we can find groups. Groups in work, groups in families, groups even in ashrams :D. But groups can only work and survive if it is for realization or moksha. The only groups that will sustain time is where spirituality or the Lord is the focus. All other groups will vanish after a period of time. The reason for spiritual groups to survive is because there is the unique single goal of realization or Ishwara and love for this goal - love for this goal will also evoke love in others - true love in others which isn't for one's own benefit but for the other person.

Today groups are based on external-love which is nothing but a display of affection in order to get something in return. Only true spiritual people with either knowledge or surrender can show real love where there is no gain but bliss in giving to the other person. Giving is possible only for one who already has something to give. Only spiritual people have bliss to give to the world as they are seeking Ishwara - even if not attained Ishwara they will be able get some bliss out of remembrance and seeking of Ishwara. Thus they can give to others. This is unlike other groups where people try to protect and help others when they themselves need protection and help - people who try to give bliss to others themselves are sad. Thus such groups fail after a period of time.

Here a group is formed with Raama alongside and searching for Sita. Here Sita denotes the devotion towards Ishwara. Many times we will not have this devotion or true knowledge inside us and therefore we have seek it. When we seek it, we seek it with Ishwara. We try doing activities for Ishwara and by doing these activities, we try to get devotion for Ishwara. Finally after lot of tries we succeed.

Hanumaan denotes one who is remembering Ishwara - hanumaan or remembrance of Ishwara is needed in order to attain Sita (devotion to Ishwara). The greatness or speciality of this devotion is that it will

merge unto Ishwara when we achieve it. Once Sita is found and returned back, there will be no Raama and Sita but only Raama. Thus Raamaayana symbolically tells us that we have to start remembering Ishwara initially (initially we will not have devotion - it has to be cultivated by remembering Ishwara) and then slowly as time passes by we will gain devotion and when this devotion matures, it will culminating in merging on with Ishwara (or ever abiding in Ishwara).

We have thus come to the end of kishkindaa khaanda. We will start with the next khaanda in the next day (we will be having two posts the next two days as well thereby finishing Adhyaatma Raamaayana in four or five postings).

May we all strive to attain devotion by remembering Ishwara at all times, surrendering unto Ishwara and doing activities which involve Ishwara (this is true service to Ishwara) so that we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 15**

aum namah shivaya

Since we finished with kishkindaa khaanda in the previous posting, let's start with the next khaanda which is sundara khaanda. This is the khaanda where hanumaan goes across the ocean to lanka.

We will try to finish adhyaatma raamaayana today (if possible, else tomorrow :) as today is the last day of raamaayana maasam.

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Hanumaan takes a big form and jumps across the ocean taking the name of Sri Raama. On the way to lanka, hanumaan encounters many asuras who are all killed/liberated by hanumaan.  
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A devotee who has surrendered unto Ishwara will be able to take any form - big or small. Hanumaan taking up a big form in order to cross the ocean of samsaara symbolizes a devotee's mind becoming big - this bigness means broadening of the mind. A mind which contemplates on Ishwara not as a particular form but Ishwara or his form pervading this entire world will broaden and pervade the entire world. Such a mind alone will be able to overcome the ocean of samsaara.

The ocean of samsaara is characterized by sorrows and sufferings. And is based on duality or dual notions based out of ignorance. Ignorance of the real nature of this world causes one to have likes and dislikes. Reality is that this entire world that we currently perceive is nothing but Ishwara and Ishwara alone. Even as a dream world is nothing but the dreamer alone, similarly this waking world is nothing but Ishwara and Ishwara alone. That which comes from mud (a pot), resides in mud (pot is nothing but name and form of mud) and merges unto mud after destruction is nothing but mud alone - only an ignorant person will consider mud and pot as different - pot is just an illusion of name and form in mud; names and forms don't create any real object but deludes a person into thinking new object is created. Always there is mud alone. Similarly this world which came from Ishwara, resides in Ishwara and merges unto Ishwara at the time of death is nothing but Ishwara alone.

ghatakudhyaadikam sarvam mrittikaa maatrameva hi

tadvad brahma jagad sarvam ithi vedanta dindimaa

Even as pot, wall etc. are all mud alone; similarly this world is Brahman alone; thus roars the lion of Vedanta.

It is this simple truth that the shastras preach through many texts, stories etc. As long as we don't remember this truth, we will think duality to be real. Thus is created notions of likes and dislikes. Any object that is real we will either like it or dislike it. This liking and disliking itself changes from time to time. Today we like something, tomorrow we will dislike the same thing; today we dislike something, tomorrow we will like the same thing. These likes and dislikes leads to happiness and sorrow depending on what happens to them. A liked object when undergoes change, we become sad; a disliked object undergoing good change, we become sad. If it is a person - if something good happens to a person whom we like, we will become happy. If something good happens to the person we dislike, we become sad. The opposite also works true. Thus we are whirled between happiness and sorrow - the happiness that is achieved through these likes-dislikes is so short-lived that it is more painful or sorrowful than sorrow itself.

Thus duality or notion of duality causes sorrow in the long run. This sorrow extends from one birth to another until we are able to get rid of it completely and rejoice in bliss. This is possible only through knowledge that everything is Ishwara and Ishwara alone exists at all times. The way to this is by seeing everything as Ishwara. When our mind broadens and we are able to see everything as Ishwara, then there will be no likes and dislikes - whatever happens in the world, we will happily accept it - there will be no sorrow whatsoever irrespective of whether we lose our job, we get body pain or our dear one dies.

As simple as it seems, it isn't that simple. There will always be obstacles of one form or the other in the progress towards moksha. Even worldly goals themselves have so many obstacles that we will have to overcome, what to speak about the ultimate goal of moksha? Thus when the mind or devotee of hanumaan progresses in the spiritual path there will be obstacles all along the way. All these obstacles have just one solution which is surrender unto Raama and remember Raama in our mind. The external solution to each of this problem might be different always but it isn't the external solution that matters.

We can put a bandage to our body cut but this is temporary and will not get rid of all problems from body. The permanent solution is to remember that the body and everything that we perceive is nothing but Ishwara alone. This knowledge will make us rejoice in bliss irrespective of whether we get cut in the body or the body is hale and hearty. If there is cut in the body, we will try to apply bandage or go to the doctor - if it does work, we are happy; if it doesn't work, still we are happy as we are contemplating on the Lord who alone is the reality behind the entire world.

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Finally hanumaan reaches lanka where he finds some lady in the ashoka vana. He doubts as to whether this is Sita or not. But after logically analyzing, hanumaan concludes this is Sita. Thereby he appears in front of Sita comforting her that Sri Raama is coming to help her (as Sita was thinking about giving up her life in despair). Hanumaan offers Raama's ring as a way for identification. Sita also provides a ring to hanumaan as counter identification to raama to prove that hanumaan did meet Sita.  
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Thus with focus on Raama, hanumaan is able to overcome all obstacles and reach his goal of lanka. Often when we are in the spiritual path, we may get doubts as to whether we are progressing or not. We should never have such thoughts - it only matters if we remember Ishwara, rest all will work out properly in due course of time. Depending on our vaasaanas, it may take years to see some progress. But what is



important is to remain focused on Ishwara in our mind. If this there, then all doubts will be dispelled in one or the other way.

Hanumaan doubts whether this is sita or not -- such doubts about whether we are spiritual or not, whether we are progressing or not, whether we are blissful or not, whether we are doing right or not -- all these doubts will always be there. These cannot be removed by focusing on them. There are only two ways to remove them - one is the long way of clearing all doubts by approaching a spiritual master but doubts will come again and again (new ones) thus this may not be a permanent solution unless through clearing of these doubts, one is able to gain surrender to the master and follows the spiritual path with ardent saadhana (which will thus reduce doubts as they get cleared and not create new doubts); the second is the direct path of remembering Ishwara as pervading the entire world in our mind. The second way is permanent as it will not allow doubts to exist and new doubts to be created as well. When everything is seen as Ishwara, where can there be any doubts or confusions? Doubts and confusions arise out of duality - when there is only Ishwara, how can there be any doubts?

If implementation of this is not possible, we should develop surrender unto a spiritual master and let ourselves be guided. Then all doubts will be cleared beyond doubt and when each doubt is cleared, we will find more clarity in our mind and thereby more focus will be achieved.

Once doubts are dispelled, then alone we will be able to easily remember Ishwara in our mind and only then will we progress towards Ishwara or be able to remain more and more blissful.

Identification of the state of bliss similar to identification of Raama to Sita and Sita to Raama is essential in order to understand that such a state is possible as well as to develop longing or love for that state. The only way to define the blissful state of moksha is bliss and bliss alone. Such a person will be blissful, peaceful, calm, content and satisfied - there will be no desires.

As Sankara puts it beautifully  
yogaratho vaa bhogaratho vaa  
sanganaratho vaa sangaviheenah  
yasya brahmani ramate chittham  
nandathi nandathi nandathi eva

Whether yoga or bhoga  
whether attached or detached  
one whose mind resides in Brahman  
such a person will rejoice, rejoice and verily rejoice.

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After meeting Sita, hanumaan is caught and brought to Raavana. Raavana on seeing hanumaan, instantly rises from his chair showing his respect but covers it up so that others aren't able to find this. Hanumaan is a dootha or messenger and killing messenger isn't dharma therefore hanumaan's tale is set on fire. Hanumaan is able to escape and sets entire lanka on fire except the place where Sita was kept.

Hanumaan then returns back and tells Raama about everything that happened.  
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What a saadhaka should remember always is to never fight with a true master or a true bhaktha. It will always backfire as they have Ishwara with them and thereby entire world will be supporting them in one

or the other way. Thus when yama's followers go to take ajaamila when he died (as he did lot of wrong doings but called out naaraayana, his son, at the end of his death), they are stopped by sepoys of naaraayana who take ajaamila with them. Defeated and sad they go to yama who advises them to stay away from devotees of Ishwara.

Thus if we come to a fight with devotees or jnaanis, we should immediately back off lest we will be destroyed completely. This is what happens with Raavana who though respects hanumaan isn't able to just stay out of the way of the devotee. Thus lanka is fully set on fire - the same fire that is set to hanumaan.

Lanka burnt by fire also means that ego and all its desires/possessions/likes-dislikes etc. will be burnt when devotion arises in our mind. Once devotion grows, we will find that our ego is constantly subdued. But this isn't permanent until Ishwara permanently resides in our mind. Until that time, ego will rise and drop - rise and drop. This means we have to always remain focused and alert so that we aren't distracted and are able to remain focused on Ishwara. This alone would ensure that our life becomes very blissful at all times.

We have thus come to the end of sundara khaanda as well. We will see the next khaanda of yuddha khaanda (we will try to finish adhyaatma raamaayana today itself as today is the last day of raamaayana maasam).

May we always remember Ishwara in our mind so that our life becomes blissful irrespective of whether obstacles are there or not as all those will be completely removed/destroyed by thought of blissful Ishwara as pervading the entire world.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 16**

aum namah shivaya

Since we finished with sundara khaanda in the previous posting, let's start with the next khaanda which is yuddha khaanda.

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Raama along with vaanaras decide to fight Raavana. They go to the sea and Raama waits for the sea devataa to come in order to ask permission to build a bridge in order to reach lanka. After waiting and when the sea devataa doesn't appear, Raama gets angry and takes out his bow and arrow to attack; at this time, sea devataa appears, apologizes and gives permission to build the bridge.

After reaching lanka, fight ensues where many asuras are killed and slowly Raavana fears that he might lose. Finally Indrajith comes to fight and he ties up Raama & lakshmaana with rope of snakes. Hanumaan gets help from Garuda and thereby rescues Raama and lakshmana. Then Indrajith makes Lakshmana unconscious. Hanumaan goes and gets sanjeevani herb (by bringing entire mountain) thus bringing back lakshmana to life.

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We thus come to the big yuddha or the war. This yuddha is found in all epics and puraanas. And even in various upanishads we find mention of devas and asuras. These both set of people will always be there. They aren't merely external though external war will also be there at all times. But the real war is the internal war that happens in our mind.

Mind is a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts can be good or bad. Good thoughts are devas and bad thoughts are asuras. Thus there is always a fight about who wins. Depending on who wins, we will either be happy or sad. Many people have the wrong notion that good thoughts is liberation - this isn't the case. Both good and bad thoughts will lead to sorrows even as golden chain and iron chain both are binding in their own way (beautiful analogy used by Sri Raamakrishna Paramahansa). Thus a wise person is one transcends all thoughts rather than just having good thoughts.

why to get rid of thoughts?

Thoughts lead to attachment when we brood over them again and again. Attachment leads to aversion which in turn causes sorrow in the long run. And thoughts repeated over a period of time will become vaasanaas or latent tendencies. These latent tendencies are tough to overcome like any other worldly addictions. Thus thoughts have to be rid of if we want to remain blissful and beyond any bondage or addiction or sorrow.

But the way to get rid of thoughts is through good thoughts. When we are traveling through a forest, we find a guide who is good and we also find thieves who will steal everything away from us. We have to use the guide in order to ward off thieves and once we reach our destination (come out of the forest), then we have to get rid of the guide as well. Sticking with the guide is pointless and as bad as thieves attacking us. Thus even good thoughts are as bad as bad thoughts as they will also bind us and give us the feeling that we can remain blissful with them always (thoughts can never be good alone but will fluctuate between good and bad until we go beyond all thoughts thereby being able to control what thoughts should be there and what shouldn't be). Even as we use the guide to get out of the forest, we should cultivate good thoughts and thereby come out of the forest of suffering while warding off bad thoughts (attachment, aversion etc.). And once we come out of the forest, we should let go of good thoughts and thereby be beyond all thoughts.

Good thoughts are thoughts which are based on dharma. Dharma is always relative - what is one's dharma may be another's adharma. Taking care of saints is dharma of devas whereas it is adharma of asuras. The dharma of a brahmin is to not kill people whereas it is adharma for a kshatriya to not kill people. Thus we can never define dharma from a worldly perspective.

But from a Vedantic or spiritual perspective, dharma is when we remember the supreme being of Ishwara. Forgetting Ishwara is adharma as it will cause sorrow. Thus good thoughts are those which are related to Ishwara or leads to more and more remembrance of Ishwara. Whereas bad thoughts are those where we aren't able to remember Ishwara. Thus even certain spiritual activities like japa and bhajans can be bad thoughts if they don't lead to remembrance of Ishwara - this is seen quite often today that people do japa or bhajans in order to get name and fame; such activities will only bind us more and more rather than liberating us or leading to liberation.

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Finally Raama kills Raavana and Vibheeshana is made king of lanka. Then Raama returns back to Ayodhyaa victorious. He thereby blesses vaanaraas. Raama is then made king of ayodhyaa and thus everything ends blissfully.  
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All wars and stories end up well or by a person achieving blissful state. This is the same with seekers too. The blissful state of the mind where one remains happy at all times irrespective of external world and situations is something that each one of us will have attain. And there is no use telling "I dont want moksha" as this is our very natural state - until we realize this state, we will be under delusion that we are the body, the mind etc. and be suffering. The quicker or sooner we attain this blissful, the better for us. But majority of people don't have seriousness about moksha and always say "moksha can come later" - such an attitude will only make us suffer more and more.

A wise person who understands this will be seeking the Lord at all times rather than running behind worldly pleasures and totally forgetting the Lord. The moment we forget the ultimate reality of Lord we will be entering into the illusory world of names and forms which can give only sorrow. Even as the illusory

water of desert can only cause us sorrow when we run behind it, similarly the illusory world can give us sorrow and sorrow alone unless we remember it to be nothing but the non-dual reality of Lord. As Sankara beautifully points out in his Gita bhashya that a jnaani also will run behind worldly pleasures but he doesn't become sad when those pleasures perish as he knew them to be unreal - this is similar to a person running behind water in desert knowing it to be unreal - therefore after running for a while, when the person doesn't find any water he will not be sad as he already knew that there is no water at all.

Though this seems quite simple, it isn't that simple as we have accumulated vaasanaas since many births about the world being real - thus all of a sudden considering the world as an illusion isn't that easy; it will take lot of practice/effort and strong conviction or knowledge. Therefore the necessity to do saadhana as much as possible and get clear conviction about the shastras. Until this happens we will not be able to remember the Lord as the substratum of the illusory world even if we want to do so.

This means that we have to start now itself towards remembrance of the Lord at all times - only this will ensure us liberation in one or two more births. This human birth is precious to be wasted in seeking temporary worldly pleasures. We have been seeking worldly pleasures since ages and it has given us nothing but sorrow alone. Thus it is time to start seeking and remembering the non-dual reality of Lord so that we progress towards realization and try to attain it in this very birth itself.

A person who has surrendered unto the Lord will be able to attain moksha very easily. This is because such a person already knows the greatness/importance of the Lord and hence is surrendering unto the Lord. Such surrender means that our mind will be pervaded by Ishwara at all points of time - this is the direct way to liberation as when implemented completely, this itself will give moksha in due course of time.

mokshasaadhanasaamagryaam bhakthireva gareeyasi

Among all the means to liberation, devotion is the easiest (says Sankara in Vivekachoodamani).

But many people misunderstand bhakthi to be merely running after temples or mahatmas - this isn't devotion. We should be careful about what we consider as devotion because if our definition is wrong then it means we will consider ourselves as well as devotees when we aren't really a devotee. A devotee is one who has surrendered completely unto the Lord - devotion isn't part-time thinking about the Lord or part-time activities about the Lord.

True devotion is when we think about the Lord at all times - wherever we are, whatever we are doing we think about the Lord. This is possible when we offer all activities as an offering unto the Lord - such offering ensures that we remember the lord always (as we cannot remain without doing any activities at any point of time). Such true devotees who remember the Lord at all times will be able to easily attain the Lord.

Again mere remembrance of the Lord isn't enough - the Lord as sitting in Vaikunta will only take us to Vaikunta; the Lord as sitting in amritapuri in the form of AMMA will only give us entry to amritapuri. Vaikunta or amritapuri isn't the goal of life - goal of life is mokshapuri or the land of liberation where there is bliss and bliss alone. For this to happen, we have to remember the Lord to pervade the entire world - this is knowledge or knowing the nature of the Lord. Without this knowledge, we will attain a particular place or proximity with a form of the Lord - these aren't moksha and will not give us eternal bliss (if we think it can, we just have to look at people around mahatmas and find out how many are blissful at all times irrespective of whether they are near the mahatma or away from the mahatma). Thus remembering the Lord who pervades the entire world is essential for liberation.

This is true devotion where one remembers the Lord as pervading the entire world - such devotion itself will lead to liberation quickly and in this birth itself.

From a worldly perspective, the greatest achievement is when we become king of a land. Vibheeshana is able to become a king of lanka after surrendering to the Lord. This denotes surrender to the Lord leading to glory not just from spiritual perspective but from worldly perspective. Such a person will have eternal

bliss as well as worldly pleasures, whatever is required. As Mundaka upanishad says, whatever such a devotee thinks it will happen. At least remembering this state, one should strive to achieve it here and now itself.

The ending of the story of birth-death is when we go back to our home - the abode of Ishwara, blissful existence. Until then there will be problems. This is seen in Raama's life - going away from home causes problems one after the other. But if we are able to have perseverance then we will be able to get back home after being victorious in destroying our enemies of sorrow and suffering. Once reach back home, we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

Each and every seeker will have to achieve moksha as it is our very nature - until then tension, sorrows and sufferings will be there. So it is better we attain this as soon as possible and in this very birth itself.

We have thus come to the end of yuddha khaanda. We see in brief utara khaanda in the next posting and a final posting with summary of adhyaatma raamaayana thereby ending this month of Raamayaana.

May we seek the goal of moksha by remembering Ishwara as pervading the entire world at all times so that we will be able to rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 17**

aum namah shivaya

Since we have finished all the khaandaas of adhyaatma raamaayana we will see the phala shruthi that is provided in Adhyaatma Raamaayana today.

Though there is utara khaanda which is utara raamaayana, this isn't given in Adhyaatma Raamaayana (this was wrongly mentioned in the previous posting that we will see utara khaanda in the next posting - apologies for the error).

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This adhyaatma raamaayana is very pure indeed and there is no doubt that one who chants/learns this will attain moksha.

Adhyaatma raamaayana will also lead to attaining friends; will lead increase of wealth and possessions; will lead to destruction of enemies; will lead to very long life; will lead to fulfillment of all desires.

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There are certain saints who believe that all phalashruthis aren't to be believed exactly. This is because of many of the phalashruthis of great works mention impossible feats achieved easily with not much effort. But we don't have to have this attitude when learning any work of Vedanta. We can always understand as to what the phalashruthi talks about and if it isn't logical enough then we can rule it out - this works better than ruling out each and other statement mentioned as phalashruthi in various works.

Phalashruthi generally forms the last part of any text/work and which mentions about the fruit(s) achieved by people who read, learn, implement the concepts of the text/work in their lives. This part becomes very important as the effects or fruits mentioned will be able to attract (at least) a set of people who read this part - thus in a way, we can say phalashruthi becomes an advertising or publicity campaign for the particular work.

In the case of the phalashruthi of adhyaatma raamaayana we don't have to have any doubts that whatever is mentioned will happen or not - it will definitely happen. This is similar to a label in a cooking item which says as to how it should be used and the end result what will ensue if all the steps are implemented properly. It is possible that one doesn't implement all the steps properly in which case such a person cannot complain that the end result isn't achieved as the fault lies in non-implementation or improper implementation of the steps. Similarly the phalashruthis mentioned in adhyaatma raamaayana by ezhutthacchan will definitely work provided a person does exactly what is mentioned.

Any Vedantic work gives knowledge about the ultimate reality of Lord as pervading the entire illusory world of names and forms. This is something which is common for all works as the subject of all vedantic work is the ultimate reality of Lord. Knowledge has three steps that has to be followed in order for it to become intuitive and direct experience (vijnaana or wisdom) - the three steps are

1. shravanam or listening to the scriptural texts with focus on the Lord
2. manananam or reflecting on the truth that has been heard using our mind and proper logic
3. nidhidhyaasanam or contemplation on the truth that has been reflected upon

These three steps are essential and inevitable in order for knowledge to get converted into intuitive experience of eternal bliss. Until these three are followed, one may have intellectual knowledge but the knowledge will not become conviction and eternal bliss.

The first step is shravanam where one listens again and again to either the same vedantic text or other vedantic texts with emphasis on the Lord - this means that with each listening, our knowledge about Ishwara grows and we become clearer about the Lord with each listening. Listening is different from mere hearing that hearing may not have any emphasis as well as assimilation/retention whereas listening has both assimilation and retention.

But many times things might appear crystal clear when we listen but later it might seem improbable. When a mahatma like AMMA tells us that "you are the self and remain blissful" we will just nod our head and accept it. This is because of the power of the Self or the effect of the direct experience that such mahatmas have of the Self that it hits us straight and we immediately believe it. But later it doesn't seem that probably as our intellect hasn't grasped all the various logicalities/feasibilities/possibilities about the truth. Thus one has to reflect in the mind/intellect about whatever has been learnt. This is to ensure that all doubts that can arise in the mind will clearly be answered and one gains conviction about the truth. Such reflection should be using proper logic as if not we will end up with a conclusion contrary to what we have listened. Proper logic is again mentioned in the shaastras as anvaya-vyatireka or co-existence&co-absense. Anvaya means when A exists, B exist - vyatireka means when A doesn't exist, B doesn't exist. This logic is used to assert what the world is and what the Lord is. If Lord exists, the world exists and if the Lord doesn't exist, the world doesn't exist. Therefore it goes without saying that the world is dependent on the Lord - such dependency means the world is a mere illusion in the Lord; or in other words, the world is nothing but the Lord and the Lord alone.

But even after reflecting clearly in our intellect and our intellect being convinced about the truth, we will not experience it and thereby our experience of the dual world is contrary to our knowledge (that we have reflected upon). This can only be removed by constant contemplation - only through more and more contemplation can we remove the wrong notion that has developed in our mind. Even as when we see rope in a snake, though we may be convinced there is no snake at all, still we may see snake in the rope. The way to remove this "still-seeing-snake" is by asserting it to be rope again and again. This assertion with the world is that the world is nothing but the Lord alone. Such constant remembrance or contemplation is termed in vedanta as nidhidhyaasanam and the Lord terms it as dhyaana or ananya

bhajanam. When we implement this, in due course of time we will experience that there is nothing but the Lord alone (all our contrary knowledge or experience will vanish) -- though externally we may still see the dual world we will be able to, through the mind, see it as nothing but Ishwara and Ishwara alone (even as with close association with a person, we will be able to change our perspective of the person as a "bad" person to a "nice" person).

Until nidhidhyaasanam happens, we will not get the fruit of eternal bliss in our lives. But a person who completely learns or reads a vedantic text will be undergoing shravanam, mananam and nidhidhyaasanam thereby attaining eternal bliss -- or in other words, a person who reads a vedantic text, in such a way, will attain moksha. And this is what the phalashruthi says first itself.

But is it only moksha that will be attained?

Definitely no, anything that the person desires will be achieved. But moksha is definitely the greatest of all fruits - it is the fruit that fulfills us completely so that we will not have any other desires left to be fulfilled. But just because one attains moksha doesn't mean that worldly essentials will not be fulfilled.

A realized master's all thoughts will instantly fructify - therefore Vishwaamithra was able to create an entire new svarga for trishanku.

Thus if moksha doesn't seem appealing to us, we should at least remember the fruit of "all desires being fulfilled" in order to learn this vedantic work.

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If one reads with devotion, one will attain moksha instantly.

Thus this adhyaatma raamaayana as given by Parameshwara to Paarvathi is very pure and will fulfill desires all desires of those who read/learn it.  
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What is the point of attaining moksha after many years?

There is point or reason to attain moksha as it is the ultimate goal and therefore doesn't matter when we achieve it but we have to achieve it as soon as possible (the sooner, the lesser sorrowful experiences). But if a person reads/learns this work with devotion, then moksha will be attained instantly.

Devotion here means complete surrender and full dedication to the subject-matter of the world - this means constant remembrance of the ultimate reality of Lord as pervading the entire world. Remembrance of Raama who pervades the entire world at all times irrespective of where we are, what we are doing etc. is true devotion. This true devotion in due course of time will become natural and thereby give us eternal bliss. If true devotion is there while reading such a big work, by the time we finish the work our devotion for such a sustained period of time will grant us eternal bliss instantly - we will not have to wait for long in order to attain moksha or eternal bliss.

Such type of liberation is, though rare, not impossible if there is complete surrender unto the Lord. Such liberation is termed sadhyo mukthi or instant liberation (and some places called jeevan mukthi or liberation while living in the world). This is something worth achieving as instantly all our sorrows and sufferings will end - this is the ultimate goal of life that we have to get rid of all sorrows and sufferings and ever rejoice in bliss.

As Sankara points out that if we have attain moksha after this birth (krama mukthi or gradual liberation by

going to higher planes and finally to brahma loka) then we have to do a lot of yajnas - this is very tough and almost impossible in today's case. Thus we have to strive to attain moksha here and now itself.

Kena upanishad thus emphasizes by saying "iha chetvedidatah satyam asthi, chedihaavedin mahathee nashti" or "if a person attains it here, it will be fruitful; but if a person doesn't attain it here, it will be a big loss". After having attained this precious human birth (that is attained after many different births as various species), having come to hear about Vedanta and learning it (even if not whole-heartedly) we shouldn't miss the opportunity to realize the ultimate reality of Lord. And this doesn't mean we are changing the external world - the world remains exactly the same, worldly activities remain the same - everything exactly remains the same just our mind abides or focuses or remembers the non-dual reality of Lord as pervading the world. Thus it is very simple (susukham karthum - very easy to implement, says the Lord) to implement in our lives with no real change required externally. At least remembering how simple it is and how great the end result is, we should strive to remember the Lord at all times and realize the Lord here and now itself.

This realization can be instantly achieved if we pervade our mind with Raama and stick on with Raama at all times (never ever forgetting Raama in our mind).

With this phalashruthi our learning of adhyaatma raamaayana is complete and we will finish this with the last posting which will be a summary of adhyaatma raamaayana.

May we always remember the story of Raama and Raama as pervading the entire world so that we will be able to get rid of sorrows and sufferings and will be able to rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

aum namah shivaya

### **Adhyatma Ramayana – 18**

aum namah shivaya

We have thus come to the end of Raamaayana maasam (ending in US today, 16th August) and we have seen a brief of Adhyaatma Raamaayana of Ezhutthacchan in the past eighteen postings.

Eighteen as we all know is a number with huge significance - there are eighteen steps in sabarimala, there are eighteen chapters of Gita, mahaabhaaratha yuddha happened for eighteen days, there are eighteen puraanas & eighteen upapuraanas, we can in a way say that antah karana or inner equipments are eighteen (though some say it to be 16,17 and 19) etc. Thus there is so much significance for the number eighteen in our scriptures.

It is almost impossible to cover the entire adhyaatma raamaayana or any raamaayana in such a short span. It is also tough for others to follow such short summarization of adhyaatma raamaayana. Ezhutthacchan's adhyaatma raamaayana is a treasure for all seekers and for those who know malayalam, it is definitely a huge treasure of knowledge. If time permits and if possible, we will see few important parts of adhyaatma raamaayana in depth at a later time.

Since we have finished the brief summary of adhyaatma raamaayana, it is now required to look back a bit to see as to what we learnt and how we can utilize it in our lives.

A seeker should always see as to how we can implement things in our life and thereby make our life more



blissful. Not a moment can be wasted as human birth is precious and each moment we are progressing towards death. Since we have no idea when we will die and we have no idea as to where we would be born or how or what in the next birth, therefore a wise seeker will try to utilize this human birth to attain the goal. If it be argued that there is no birth or death, then in that case there is no liberation also as one is already liberated - if so, such a person will not argue at all but be content with whatever he is doing or having in life.

The sooner we start seeking Ishwara, the quicker we will progress towards the goal. Until the goal is achieved our life will be filled with sorrows and sufferings. Moreover all activities will create a fruit enjoyment of which will lead to more actions - activities when performed over and over again will leave a taint in our mind (vaasana) that will lead to future births. Thus it is essential to end this chain of birth-death here and now itself.

It is not all who are able to even hear the stories/glories of Ishwara. We may think it isn't so but how many people are there in the world and how many come to hear the glories of Ishwara? And out of those coming how many are serious about seeking Ishwara? And out of those serious seekers, how many do realize Ishwara? Very few indeed.

The Lord thus says:

manushyaanaam sahasreshu kaschit yatati siddhaye  
yatataamapi siddhaanaam kaschit maam vetthi tattvatah

Out of thousands of people, only few strive for perfection  
out of those striving few, only few know me in essence.

Many times we forget what we have and seek what we don't have -- story of Raamaayana revolves around this subtle concept only. Kaikeyi didn't realize what she had (a good son in Bharatha, a great son in Raama and peace in life) - without realizing this, she sent Raama to the forest thereby losing her other son Bharatha also (and her own husband Dasharatha too). Sita didn't realize that she had Ishwara with her and thereby got attracted to the golden deer. Thereby she lost Raama for a long period of time and had to undergo a lot of pain and suffering. Thus the entire story of Raamaayana revolves around a seeker not understanding the greatness of Ishwara who is always readily available to us and thereby running behind worldly pleasures of the world. This leads to experience of sorrow (and loss of bliss which is within us itself).

But suffering also can lead us towards Ishwara - this is what is shown through Sita's state in Ashoka vana. Sita was suffering as she had been separated from Raama, blissful Self. But instead of seeking worldly pleasures in the form of Raavana and his experiences, she choose to stick on with Raama. This state of mind when it is in suffering leads to vyaakulathaa or yearning for Ishwara. Deep yearning can lead to devotion or complete surrender unto Ishwara. When this happens, we will be able to remain calm and to an extent blissful wherever we are - one isn't realized yet but still one can feel the bliss slowly pervading one's existence. But even when one progresses in the spiritual path, obstacles will come and we have stick on to Ishwara - if faith is there, then help will come in the form of hanumaan, other vaanaraas and Raama himself coming to save Sita.

If we are able to have patience and perseverance or sticking on without any fail to Ishwara, we will find that it may cause pain in the beginning but it will lead to more and more bliss in the long run. All obstacles will be shattered to pieces and completely destroyed by the mere thought of the Lord in our mind. Thus all asuras were killed by Raama before he unites with Sita.

Once all obstacles are completely removed, then what remains behind is bliss and bliss alone. This blissful state is the ultimate goal of life and Raamaayana portrays as to how we can achieve this in very birth itself - even if we may fall down to a very low level, still if we are able to start remembering Ishwara then we will have gati or progress.

What if I have done most adharmic activities, will I still have gati?

Definitely as Ishwara is our very nature - thus nobody can deny "I" realizing myself. What is required is the desire to be liberated from the bondage of world.

Api chetsuduraachaaro bhajate maam ananyabhaak  
saadhureva sa mantavyah samyak vyavasitho hi sah

Even one who does the worse possible action, if he worships me or remembers me while doing those then he is to be considered a saadhu or saint as he is focused on me.

Then how will he progress - will he still keep doing bad actions?

kshipram bhavathi dharmaatma shashvat shaantim nigacchati  
kaunteya prathijaaneehi na me bhakthah pranashyathi

Soon such a person (who remembers me and still does bad action due to vaasana which cannot be removed instantly or immediately) will become a dharmaatma and attain eternal peaceful state.

O Arjuna! know beyond doubt that my devotee never perishes.

The second line of the above beautiful sloka from the 9th chapter (as well as the Lord's final statements of "maa shuchah") are worth by-hearting and keeping in mind - a true devotee or one who remembers Ishwara as pervading the entire world at all times will never ever perish.

But then why is that people don't realize?

Because there is no strong desire to be liberated. Majority of people don't want moksha - they want only bhoga (this is a personal experience that I have seen even in old and long-time devotees of AMMA).

AMMA gives this beautiful story to illustrate this.

Once Uddhava got angry on Krishna saying that he doesn't give moksha to people - if only he gave moksha to all, they would be blissful. The Lord told him that nobody wants moksha - rarely any person wants moksha. Uddhava wouldn't believe this and hence the Lord asked Uddhava to go out and ask the first ten beings he meets if they want moksha; if either one of them says yes, then they will be given moksha instantly and the Lord agreed that he will accept that he is wrong. Thus Uddhava starts from the place. The first person he sees is a pig. Uddhava, like many people around mahatmas, had a siddhi that he could converse with all beings. Thus Uddhava asked the pig how it was doing to which the pig answered he was doing good. Uddhava then told the pig that the Lord was ready to give moksha and whether it is ready to accept it. The pig asked what is moksha - Uddhava replied that it is a state beyond even svarga; it is a state where one is ever blissful and there are no desires at all. To this the pig answered that it doesn't want such a state - if moksha was a state where there is lot of filth in which the pig and its families of children, grand-children etc. could play then it would accept; else it doesn't want such a state. Hearing this answer, Uddhava realized his mistake and ran back to the Lord prostrating at his feet and asking to be forgiven. The Lord smiled and blessed Uddhava.

Majority of people in the world are like the pig - they don't want moksha or the blissful state. A state with families, a state with power, a state with name, fame etc. - in short a state with sensual pleasures and people/objects around is what majority of people seek. And thus rarely people realize.

If only a person develops the strong desire to get liberated (mumukshutva) then one would get liberated in this birth itself (or at least in the next few births) as the Lord will then show the way - the way is very simple, constant contemplation of the Lord at all times.

The Lord puts this beautifully and in simple words as:

yat karoshi yadashnaasi yadjuhoshi dadaasi yat  
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva madarpanam

Whatever you do; whatever you eat; whatever you offer to homa kunda; whatever you give  
whatever tapas or austerity you do, O Arjuna! Do it as an offering unto me.

Shubhaashubhaphalairavam mokshyase karmabandhanaih  
sanyaasayogayukthaatma vimuktho maamupaishyasi

Thus a person will get rid of good and bad fruits and will be liberated from the bondage of actions  
therefore remaining detached to everything (by remaining focused on me), such a person will get  
liberated and attain me (or ever abide in me).

May this beautiful month of Raamaayana in which we learned in brief adhyaatma raamaayana serve as a  
reminder for us to seek Ishwara so that we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

May the supreme being of Raama bless us in order to achieve this goal.

humble salutations to all who have been patient in reading these rather-long series on adhyaatma  
raamaayana.

aum namah shivaya

aum sree raamachandra murthaye namah  
aum hanumat sevitha raghukulottamaaya namah  
aum bhukthimukthipraadaayakabrahmasvaroopine namah  
aum satchidaanandasvaroopaparabrahmaavataarasrestaaya namah

prostrations to the form of Sree Raamachandra  
prostrations to one who is the great in Raghu kula and served by Hanumaan  
prostrations to one of the nature of Brahman who provides sensual pleasures and liberation  
prostrations to the great avataara of para brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.