



## Sri Rama as an ideal husband

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**Ramayana and Mahabharata** are the two epics which have so mingled with the collective conscience of our people that to this day, the ideas and values in them continue to influence our lives. Ramayana is considered the *Adi Kavya*, the first ever epic poem written. Maharshi Valmiki is known as the *Adi Kavi*, the first ever poet in the history of Sanskrit literature, nay, the history of world literature.

In the very beginning of the Ramayana, Valmiki asked Narada, "O Naradaji, you are capable of knowing the entire world. You have a cosmic passport, you can travel whenever and wherever you want. Please tell us who is the ideal man." Narada replies, "You want all these qualities in one man. Impossible! To combine these qualities in one man, the Lord had to come down as the son of King Dasaratha. He came as Sri Ramachandra,

as the prince of Ayodhya, and proved to the world that he is nonpareil, incomparable, without equal, that he is a master and fund of virtue." This is how the Ramayana begins and this is the narration Narada gave to Valmiki.

Ramayana pictures the whole gamut of life of an individual. It throws light on his/her duties and responsibilities in various roles as father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister, friend, master, servant, teacher and so on. Valmiki presents Rama as the ideal man and Sita as the ideal woman. However, later versions of Ramayana like Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas, Kamba Ramayanam in Tamil by poet Kamban, Adhyatma Ramayana in Malayalam by poet Ezuthachan and Ranganatha Ramayana in Telugu present Rama as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Rama lifts the bow of Siva and marries Sita.

**रामः च सीतया सार्धम् विजहार बहून् ऋतून् || १-७७-२५**

**मनस्वी तद् गतमानस्य तस्या हृदि समर्पितः |**

Also, that hearty Rama who permeated into the heart of Seetha is ensconced in Seetha's heart alone, and he disported for many seasons along with Seetha. [1-77-25b, 26a] Rama is busy in welfare and other works of state, 'but' he

is also impassioned for Seetha so he alone is the enjoyer and insatiate is his enjoyment with Seetha an endless, mutual, conjugal, impassion and its enrichment - the self-content bliss of monogamy.

**प्रिया तु सीता रामस्य दाराः पितृ कृता इति || १-७७-२६**

**गुणात् रूप गुणात् च अपि प्रीतिः भूयो अभिवर्धते |**

Seetha has become the beloved of Rama as she is wedded with the assent of his father Dasharatha, further Rama's love

for Seetha burgeoned by virtue of Seetha's own virtues and loveliness. [1-77-26b, 27a]



तस्याः च भर्ता द्विगुणम् हृदये परिवर्तते || १-७७-२७

अन्तर् गतम् अपि व्यक्तम् आख्याति हृदयम् हृदा |

Even Rama as her husband made his mark in Seetha's heart twice as good, and they both used to clearly converse about their thoughts in their heart of hearts, just by their hearts. [1-77-27b, 28a] Rama tells Sitha about the hardships she has to face in the forest and advises her not to accompany him.

हित बुद्ध्या खलु वचो मया एतत् अभिधीयते |

सदा सुखम् न जानामि दुःखम् एव सदा वनम् || २-२८-६

This advice is given by me, keeping your welfare in view. I do not ever consider a forest as comfortable. It is always uncomfortable."

तत् अलम् ते वनम् गत्वा क्षमम् न हि वनम् तव |

विमृशन्न् इह पश्यामि बहु दोषतरम् वनम् || २-२८-२५

"Therefore, do away with the idea of your coming to the forest. Forest is not indeed bearable for you. Reflecting now, I perceive forest as having too many disadvantages." Sitha follows him irrespective of his advice as she thinks that as an ideal wife she has to be with her husband. The wicked Rakshasa abducts Sitha and takes her to Lanka. Hanuma, a vaanara warrior and disciple of Rama traces the whereabouts of Sitha and with the help of Sugreeva the vaanara king and his army Rama releases Sitha from Ravana's clutches. When Sitha was brought to his presence Rama informs Seetha that the dishonour meted out to him and the wrong done to her by Ravana have been wiped off, by his victory over the enemy with the assistance of Hanuma, Sugreeva and Vibhishana. However, regarding with suspicion the character of Seetha, Rama disowns her and asks her to seek shelter elsewhere.

एषासि निर्जिता भद्रे शत्रुं जित्वा रणाजिरे |

पौरुषाद्यदनुष्ठेयं मयैतदुपपादितम् || ६-११५-२

"You are won back by me, after conquering the enemy in the battle-field, my dear lady! That which is to be done through human effort, has been accomplished by me."

पश्यतस्तां तु रामस्य समीपे हृदयप्रियाम् |

जनवादभयाद्राजो बभूव हृदयं द्विधा || ६-११५-११

The heart of King Rama, as he saw Seetha, (the beloved of his heart) near him, was torn for fear of public scandal.



तद्गच्छ त्वानुजानेऽद्य यथेष्टं जनकात्मजे |

एता दश दिशो भद्रे कार्यमस्ति न मे त्वया || ६-११५-१८

"O Seetha! That is why, I am permitting you now. Go wherever you like. All these ten directions are open to you, my dear lady! There is no work to be done to me, by you."

Seetha gives a taunting reply to Rama, saying that why she was not abandoned

किं मामसदृशं वाक्यमीदृशं श्रोत्रदारुणम् |

रूक्षं श्रावयसे वीर प्राकृतः प्राकृताम् इव || ६-११६-५

"O valiant Rama! Why are you speaking such harsh words, which are violent to hear for me, like a common man speaking to a common woman?"

Gods reach Lanka in aerial cars and approach Rama. They ask Rama why he

by the latter, even at the time when Hanuma came to see her in Lanka. Then, Seetha requests Lakshmana to prepare a pile of fire for her to enter. When Lakshmana prepares a pyre, Seetha prays the fire-god and enters into it, in order to prove her conjugal fidelity.

ignores Seetha, when she is entering into the fire. Rama appeals them to describe in reality who he is. Brahma (the creator) proclaims his divinity and eulogizes him with hymns.

ततो हि दुर्मना रामः श्रुत्वैवम् वदतां गिरः |

दध्यौ मुहूर्तं धर्मात्मा बाष्पव्याकुललोचनः || ६-११७-१

Hearing the cries of these who were thus wailing, the virtuous minded Rama then became thoughtful for a while, afflicted

रुद्राणामष्टमो रुद्रः साध्यानामपि पञ्चमः || ६-११७-८

अश्विनौ चापि कर्णौ ते सूर्याचन्द्रामसौ दृशौ |

"You are the eighth Rudra among (eleven) Rudras and the fifth (Viryavan by name) among the Sadhyas (a particular class of celestials belonging to

अन्ते चादौ च लोकानां दृश्यसे च परंतप || ६-११७-९

उपेक्षसे च वैदेहीं मानुषः प्राकृतो यथा |

"O the destroyer of the adversaries. You are seen (to exist) at the beginning and at

as he was with melancholy, his eyes filled with tears.

Gana Devata). The twin Aswinis are your ears. The sun and the moon constitute your eyes."

the end of creation. Yet, you ignore Seetha, just like a common man."



आत्मानं मानुषं मन्ये रामं दशरथात्मजम् || ६-११७-११

सोऽहं यस्य यतश्चाहं भगवंस्तद्ब्रवीतु मे |

"I think of myself to be a human being, by name Rama, the son of Dasaratha. You, as a gracious Divinity, tell me that which I as such really am like this."

इति ब्रुवाणं काकुत्स्थं ब्रह्मा ब्रह्मविदां वरः || ६-११७-१२

अब्रवीच्छृणु मे वाक्यं सत्यं सत्यपराक्रम |

Hearing the words of Rama, Brahma (the creator), the foremost among the knowers of Brahma the Absolute, spoke as follows: "Listen to my true word, O the truly brave lord!"

भवान्नारायणो देवः श्रीमांश्चक्रायुधः प्रभुः || ६-११७-१३

एकशूङ्गो वराहस्त्वं भूतभव्यसपत्नजित् |

"You are the Lord Narayana himself the glorious god, who wields the discus. You are the Divine Boar with a single tusk, the conqueror of your past and future enemies."

अक्षरं ब्रह्म सत्यं च मध्ये चान्ते च राघव || ६-११७-१४

लोकानां त्वं परो धर्मो विष्वक्सेनश्चतुर्भजः |

"You are Brahma, the imperishable, the Truth abiding in the middle as well as at the end of the universe. You are the supreme righteousness of people, whose powers go everywhere. You are the four-armed."

सीता लक्ष्मीर्भवान् विष्णुर्देवः कृष्णः प्रजापतिः || ६-११७-२८

वधार्थं रावणस्येह प्रविष्टो मानुषीं तनुम् |

"Seetha is no other than Goddess Lakshmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu), while you are Lord Vishnu. You are having a shining dark-blue hue. You are the Lord of created beings. For the destruction of Ravana, you entered a human body here, on this earth."

Rama accepted Sitha after the Agnipariksha. But again by giving heed to the words of a common man he sends Sitha to Forest again. At the time of their marriage, he had promised Sitha that he would take an ekapathni vrta, he would not accept any other wives and his fidelity to Sitha is seen through his

keeping that vrta and further if we see although when yajnas are to be performed, the husband and wife have to sit together. Now although there was no one who could substitute for Sita unless Lord Ram married and there was pressure on him that if he had to perform ashwamedha and other yagnas, he had to have a queen with him, so then he made a golden image of Sita and that image was what sat with him. The fact that he went to the extreme of doing that indicates that he was not irresponsible or immoral just concerned about worldly pleasure through reputation or



enjoyment. Lord Ram himself was very principled. So what he is exhibiting through sending Sita away from his palace are not irresponsibility or immorality but detachment and exemplary conduct. So detachment means that as far as setting up the dharma is concerned one is not ready to compromise at all. One is ready to sacrifice any pleasure that is required for the setting up of dharma. So this is from Lord Ram's perspective. So Lord Ram had a conflict in between his duty as a family member as a husband and duty as a king and he did his duty as a king by exemplifying detachment and he did his duty as a husband by ensuring that Sita cared for, although She was not cared for directly in his palace by him, but She cared in his kingdom through his representatives, sages who were there and elderly hermits that were there in the sage's hermitage.

From the administrative point of view as a king, Lord Ram had to set the example of complete detachment so that he could exemplify dharmic detachment for his citizens and he did that. Lord Ram as a husband was not irresponsible, he arranged for the care of his pregnant wife. The Ramayan exemplifies to us how even the Lord undergoes suffering with grace and inspires us to accept whatever suffering we undergo in our lives because of our past karma to also accept it gracefully.

#### References:

- Valmiki Ramayana [www.valmikiramayana.net/Translation of Valmiki Ramayana from Sanskrit to English](http://www.valmikiramayana.net/Translation%20of%20Valmiki%20Ramayana%20from%20Sanskrit%20to%20English).
- Ramayana - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramayana>

In Vedic culture king to be able to effectively rule the people, the king himself has to be exemplary and that exemplariness has to be a manifest expression in all walks of his life. King and queen used to be an exemplary couple for the citizen. They should be spotless, so spotless that even rumours are not possible about such a person. When Lord Rama heard the accusations being leveled against his consort, this situation constituted an ethical crisis. In an ethical crisis, one has two choices, both moral, unlike in a moral crisis, when one has two choices, one moral and the other, immoral. To resolve an ethical crisis, one needs profound wisdom to recognize the higher moral principle and adjust the lower moral principle accordingly. So, through this incident, Lord Rama, who was God incarnate playing the role of an ideal human being, taught us how to wisely resolve ethical crises. As an ideal husband, the Lord was duty-bound to protect his wife. But as the ideal king, he was also duty-bound to exemplify and teach his citizens, whom he loved like his own children. Rama lived his entire life in an exemplary manner - by the rules of dharma. When Rama was a young boy, he was the perfect son. Later he was an ideal husband to his faithful wife, Sita, and finally a responsible ruler of Ayodhya.