

MAHABHARATA TATPARYANIRNAYA - 6

(Continued)

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Chapters 4th to 9th give a brief account of Sri Rama's story. All major events of Sri Rama's story are narrated. While narrating some of the crucial events like Ahalya's episode, Manthara's episode, surpanakha's episode the subtle issues of dharma and adharma are clarified. The relevance of these episodes with the main purpose of the theme is explained. The background of the personalities concerned and the events are explained. Thus the objective of the narration of the different events of the story is not merely of story interest but is of the interest of the moral and the spiritual aspects. Since the main events of Sri Rama's story are well known we will highlight only the moral and the spiritual aspects that are brought out in this portion of Tatparyanirnaya.

The first improtant event in Sri Rama's story is Visvamitra's invitation to Sri Rama to protect the sacrifice undertaken by him from the demons. This indicates the main purpose of Sri Rama's incarnation viz., protecting the sages and other innocent persons from the onslaught of the demons. Sri Rama kills Tataka and Subahu, and throws Maricha into the sea. This very Tataka will be born as Putana later in Krsnavatara. After the distruction of these and the completion of the sacrifice Visvamitra takes Sri Rama and Lakshmana to the capital of Videha country. On the way Ahalya is released from her curse by the touch of Sri Rama. Here are the instances of two women : one who was cruel and therefore destroyed, and the other who had suffered at the hands of Indra and Gautama, and was released from her suffering. Gautama had indulged in excessive penance. This imbalance had to be cut down by provoking him. Therefore, Indra encroached upon Gautama's wife Ahalya. She was innocent but had become a victim of the circumstances. Hence, Sri Rama relieved her from her suffering.

अतिरिक्तं तपो हर्तुं गौतमस्याश्रमे रहः ।

सुरकार्यं सुरपतिः कुर्वन् भार्या समस्पृशत् ॥

(सं. १६-१८)

On arrival at Mithila Sri Rama was informed of the condition for the marriage of Sita. He broke the bow of Siva and married her. The marriage was celebrated in a befitting way. On his way to Ayodhya Parasurama confronts him. Both Parasurama and Sri Rama were the incarnations of Lord Visnu. Therefore, there was no question of one defeating the other. However, a demon called Atula had found a place in Parasurama's navel. He was to be destroyed. His penance was also to be taken away. Therefore, Parasurama gave sarng bow to Sri Rama and asked him to kill Atula. Accordingly Sri Rama killed him. Thus it was not a war between Parasurama and Sri Rama but it was only to kill Atula that Sri Rama employed his bow. The fourth chapter narrates these Balakanda episodes.

The Ayodhya kanda events are described in the first 16 verses of V chapter. Dasaratha decides to coronate Sri Rama. But under the advice of Manthara Kaikeyi prevents it. This Manthara was not an ordinary woman. It is wellknown that as a result of samudramathana goddess Lakshmi was born from the sea. Out of the same samudramathana Alakshmi called Jyestha was also born. She has been the wife of Kali. It is this Alakshmi alias Jyestha who was born as Manthara. Instigated by this Manthara Kaikeyi asked the two boons viz., (i) Sri Rama be banished to forest for 14 years (ii) Bharata be installed on the throne. Kaikeyi asked such cruel boons because a demoness called Nikrti was present in her.

According to these boons Sri Rama proceeds to the forest. He first meets the Nisada King Guha. Being honoured by him he proceeds to citrakuta. In the meanwhile Dasaratha dies. Bharata arrives, completing Pitrkarya he proceeds to citrakuta to persuade Sri Rama to return. Sri Rama does not oblige him. Bharata returns to Ayodhya with

the Padukas to Sri Rama and lives outside the city of Ayodhya in Nandigrama.

While in Citrakuta Sri Rama and Sita lived for some time, Indra's son Jayanta appears in the form of a crow and injures Sita in the breast. He indulges in this cruel act, because, a demon called Kuranga was present in him. Sri Rama throws a grass blade at the eye of this crow and destroys one eye of all crows. Since then, the crows have only one eye. Then, Sri Rama enters Dandaka forest.
