

## Universal and Eternal Relevance of the Life of Sri Rama

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The number of literary works available to us in all languages from different societies is infinite. These infinite literary works obviously have dealt with infinite types of personalities and situations. So, it looks almost impossible to choose a literary work which can be relevant to all people at all times. Fortunately, there are few literary masterpieces which are always relevant and useful independent of the time period in which they were written. Among these few jewels, "Ramayana" is significant as not only historical literary masterpiece, but also as premier one (*Adikavya*). It is well known that the center of Ramayana is Sri Rama's an incarnation of Maha-Vishnu in human role. Now it is the intent of this brief article to share some thoughts on the contemporary relevance of the personality of Sri Rama.

### Ramo Vighrahan Dharmaha

In spite of technological advances, the most difficult task of a human being is to distinguish between *dharma* and *adharma* and then adhere to *dharma*. The reason for this difficulty is the complexity in defining *dharma* theoretically. It is in this fundamental and most important task of deciding what *dharma* is, that Sri Rama's life will become the guiding light. Sri Rama is nothing but personification of *dharma*. *Dharma* in the framework of *purusharthas* (four fold objectives) is the guiding principle of actions to achieve *artha* (wealth) and *kama* (desires) bounded by the goal of *moksha* (liberation and bliss). As we all know, in the story of Ramayana the various situations have illustrated the definition of and adherence to *dharma*. As a son, disciple, brother, husband, friend, warrior, king, father, Sri Rama's life has demonstrated for everyone's use and guidance, the way to decide what *dharma* is and how to adhere to it. The thundering resurgence of Sri Ramayana through publications such as *Bharatha Darshana*, lecture series in USA by distinguished speakers such as, Sri Morari Bapu, Sri A. Natrajan, Sri N., Gopal Sundaram, Sri. Venkat Kanumalla and others and also through television, is another assurance for the humanity of the eternal and universal relevance of Sri Rama's life. In several roles of Sri Rama, the role of king can be seen in present times as the model for community leaders and workers. A person who is active in community work by instinct or choice, many times has to balance between personal and community priorities. In such instances one can draw inspiration from the life of Sri Rama.

Another important reason for the relevance of Sri Rama's life is that the incarnation of the Lord as human. In fact, Sri Rama is also referred as *Adharsha Manava* (ideal human). A meaning for *Adarsha* in *sanskritam* is "mirror". Everyone in order to see himself or herself looks into a mirror. The mirror, if it has no dirt or marks in it, but pure and clean, gives the observers their true images. Based on the true image the observer can clean up. In a similar sense, Sri Rama's life in its various roles as described earlier is like a universal clean mirror (pure consciousness, *suddha chaitanya*) which can be used in reflecting our images in the background of the *Sanatana Dharma*.

Sri Rama's life has inspired, elevated and provided a mental support and peace for all levels of people from immemorial times. It is inspiring to remember Sri Ranga Sadguru's words on Sri Rama. "Sri Rama is Human from view point of gross (*stula*) level, is Divine being from subtle (*sukshma*) level and Supreme Light (*Param Jyothi*) from causal (*para dhruti*) level. Thus, Sri Rama's life provides a perennial reference to all levels of thoughts and activities. Also, Acharya Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada has described in *Atma Boda*, a *sadhaka* (yogi) in the light of Sri Rama's life. "Having crossed the worldly ocean of false attachments and killed the demons of desire and hatred, a yogi attains peace and bliss in the heart".

Thus, relevance of Sri Rama and Ramayana to human life has to be experienced. Sri Rama's life and personality are like ocean with which any seeker has to compare his or her container with that of the ocean in order to achieve fulfillment. It is in this sense that Rama's personality and its relevance are Eternal and Universal.