

# RamQuest



**Who wants to be a Rambhakt?  
Life Story of Goswami Tulsidas  
Srī Rāmacaritamānasa Word Index  
Depiction of Women in Ramcharitmanas  
The Ram Story: Its Vastness and Greatness**

**July 2017**



# श्री रामचरितमानस

शब्द अनुक्रमणिका

## Śri Ramacaritamanasa

Word Index



शिवप्रकाश के. अग्रवाल • ओमप्रकाश के. गुप्ता  
Shivprakash K. Agrawal • Omprakash K. Gupta

This is hardbound book with 445 pages. Please write to [Om@ramacharit.org](mailto:Om@ramacharit.org) if you wish to purchase a copy. The suggested price is Rs. 825 (in India) and US \$30 (for outside India) inclusive of postage. All proceeds will be used for RamQuest.

## [ जय सिया राम ]

हरि अनंत हरि कथा अनंता ।  
कहहि सुनहि बहुबिधि सब संता ॥

1.140.C5

*Lord is infinite, so are his sacred tales,  
Saints hear and sing, in infinite ways.  
1.140.C5*

*The story of Lord Ram has been told for thousands of years, even before Sage Valmiki wrote the Ramayana. Hundreds of different versions of Ram's story have been written after Valmiki. Ramayana has been also retold through plays, movies, TV serials, songs, discussions, seminars, dance performances, etc. RamQuest is one similar attempt to retell the Ram story.*

*RamQuest is a dream that that is aimed to spread awareness of the Ramayana and the holy name of Lord Ram, particularly amongst our youth. We hope to publish short articles in simple language to realize this dream. With Lord Ram's infinite mercy, we shall realize this dream!*

*RamQuest would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of many divine souls, and I am so grateful to all of them. I thank distinguished Editorial Advisors who helped us immensely in developing RamQuest. We express our gratitude to authors who wrote for this issue and those who will be writing for future ones. Finally, many sincere thanks to our patrons and advertisers, who have been instrumental in the widespread distribution of this publication. Finally, I thank my parents and all gurus, without whom nothing in my life would have been possible.*

*30<sup>th</sup> July 2017 is the 520<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Goswami Tulsidas Ji. We are pleased to release publication of this issue on this auspicious day, and dedicate RamQuest to him.*

*We invite readers to send their comments and suggestions for improvement.*

भव सागर चह पार जो पावा । राम कथा ता कहँ दूढ़ नावा ॥ 7.53.C3

## In this issue

- Life Story of Goswami Tulsidas
- The Ram Story: Its Vastness and Greatness
- Depiction of Women in Ramcharitmanas
- Do We Really Understand and Follow Bhagwan Ram?
- Who is Ram?
- Towards RAM (Real Awakening of Mind)
- Ram: A Transformational Leader
- रामायण महाकाव्य
- Where Does Ram Reside?
- Ramayana: A Myth of Historical Fact?
- The Ramayana & the Play of Opposites
- Universal Appeal of Ramayana
- Srī Rāmacaritamānasa
- Word Index

जय सिया राम ।

ओम गुप्ता

Omprakash K. Gupta

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RamQuest is a quarterly publication that aims to spread awareness of the Ramayana and the holy name of Lord Ram, particularly amongst our youth. The sole criterion for publication of an article is its intrinsic value to quench readers' thirst to know about Lord Ram and the Ramayana and enkindle an appetite for further pursuit.

Contributors are requested to send their articles keeping the following factors in mind:

(a) Articles must address a topic that is directly related to the Ramayana and Lord Ram.

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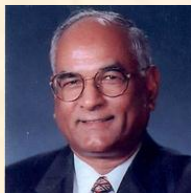
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# Life Story of Goswami Tulsidas

*Sen Pathak*



*Dr. Sen Pathak is a Distinguished Research Professor of Genetics, The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at Houston, Texas. He has an extensive record of publication. He helps cancer patients with treatment, advice, and other resources. Currently, he serves on the Advisory Board of the Foundation for India Studies program at the University of Houston. He is a philanthropist, scholar of scriptures, and true Hindu by practice of Sanatana Dharma.*

Ramayana, one of the great Hindu epics, was composed by Sage Valmiki in Sanskrit. Valmiki Ramayana, literally meaning journey of Ram, is the story of the life of Lord Ram. Since the Ramayana was composed in Sanskrit, a huge part of society was unable to understand the teachings of Lord Ram. To describe the holy story of Lord Ram in a most understandable way, another version in a commonly used language was needed. Therefore, Ramcharitmanas was composed in Awadhi (a different dialect of Hindi) by Goswami Tulsidas. The intent of this article is to briefly describe the life story of Goswami Tulsidas on his 520th birthday (30 July 2017). It is widely believed that Saint Valmiki had reincarnated as Tulsidas.

Goswami Tulsidas was born in Samvat 1554, on Shravan Shukla, Saptami in a village Rajapur, district Vanda in Uttar Pradesh. His mother Hulsī and father Atma Ram Dubey were Sarajupari Brahmins. Tulsidas, who was born after 12 months of pregnancy did not cry at birth and uttered the word “Ram” instead. He had all 32 teeth in his mouth and his head was fully covered with black hair. He looked like a fully grown five year old boy. Since his first spoken word was “Ram”, he was named “Ram Bola”. As he was an unusual child since birth, his parents suspected him to be a bad omen. The family priest had forecasted that this child would bring death to his parents. Ram Bola’s mother passed away just after giving away her newly born son to their maid, Chunia. His father also passed away after some time. Ram Bola, who could not enjoy the love and affection of his parents, was served and cared for by the maid. When Tulsidas was five, Chunia also left the world. The young child had become an orphan!

At that time Lord Shankar and Goddess Parvati took pity on the child and decided to help him. Goddess Parvati started feeding him every day. With the blessings of Lord Shankar, a saint named Nara Hari Nanda found the child, took him to his ashram in Ayodhya, and provided him Vedic education. This disciple of Nara Hari proved to be very bright and intelligent. After some time, they moved to Sukar Kshetra (modern day

town Soron) where Nara Hari told him the story of Lord Ram. Tulsidas later moved to Kashi (Varanasi) where he learned Vedas from Shaish Shanatan for almost 15 years. One day, he took permission from his Guru and returned to his birth place at Rajapur and started narrating the Ram Katha to his neighbors.



In Samvat 1583, on Jeshta Shukla 13, Sunday, Tulsidas married Ratnawali, and started his family life. He loved his wife immensely and became immersed in thinking only about her. He could not bear even a single minute of separation from her. One day when her brother came to visit in absence of Tulsidas, she went with him to her father's home. Upon his return, when Tulsidas did not see his wife, he immediately proceeded to his father-in-law's home to

meet her. When his wife saw him, she was very embarrassed. Surprised and shocked, she taunted, "It would be more rewarding if you would remember Lord Ram and show your love to the Almighty instead of loving my mortal body." Her words struck Tulsidas and he immediately decided to become a Sanyasi. He left for holy Prayag (Allahabad) where he became a Sadhu. After a few days he went to Kashi, where one day he met with a ghost who helped Tulsidas meet Hanuman, the greatest devotee of Lord Ram. With the help of Hanuman, he was able to have darshan of Lord Ram in Chitrakoot. He returned to Kashi and started writing poetry in Sanskrit. It is said that one day Lord Shankar and Parvati appeared in front of Tulsidas and told him to go to Ayodhya and write his poetry in Hindi. In Samvat 1631, on the day of Ram Navami, Tulsidas started composing the famous epic, Ramcharitmanas. Two years seven months and 26 days later, he finished his book, that later became a household holy book for Hindus. He returned to Kashi where his book was kept in the Vishwanath Temple. The next day when the temple opened – Satyam Shivam Sundaram (सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरं) was written on the book with the autograph of Lord Shankar himself.

With the increasing popularity of Tulsidas and Ramcharitmanas, local Brahmins became jealous of him. One day, they sent two robbers to steal his book. When the robbers approached to steal the book at night, they

saw two men with bows and arrows guarding the book. The robbers had a change of heart and became spiritual at that moment. When Tulsidas learned that his book was guarded by none other than Lord Ram and Lakshman, he gave away all his belongings, except the book, which he asked his friend Toadarmal to safeguard. Finally, the local Brahmins requested a scholar Madhusudan Saraswati to evaluate his work. After going through it, he immensely praised it by stating, “In the garden of Kashi, Tulsidas is like a Tulsi plant on which his poetry, like manjaris (flowers and seeds of the Tulsi plant) is highly admirable, where Lord Ram in the form of a bee that keeps flying.” In addition to Ramcharitmanas, Tulsidas wrote several other books such as Vinay Patrika, Hanuman Chalisa, etc. He also founded and established the famous Hanuman Temple known as Sankat Mochan Temple, just outside Banaras Hindu University (BHU) campus. Since Tulsidas had the darshan of Lord Ram, Lakshman, Hanuman and Shiv-Parvati, nothing else was left for him to achieve in this material world. In Samvat 1680, on Shravan Krishna Tritia, Saturday, Goswami Tulsidas left his mortal body. He left Ramcharitmanas and many other books for us that made him immortal.

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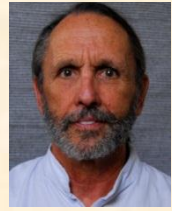
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# The Ram Story: Its Vastness and Greatness

*Ramdas Lamb*

*Dr. Ramdas Lamb is a Professor of Religion at the University of Hawai'i. From 1969 through 1978, he was a sadhu in the Ramananda Sampradaya in northern India, and he remains a householder member of the order. His research and courses are primarily focused on various aspects of the Dharma traditions, especially yoga, monasticism, and devotionism*



The Ramayana attributed to Valmiki has long been considered the oldest version of the Ram story, and for many centuries was considered the most legitimate. However, since it is a common understanding among scholars that most ancient Indian stories that eventually came to be written were first developed as oral traditions, it is likely that the Ram story, too, has oral, if not written, roots that pre-date Valmiki, possibly by centuries. Moreover, in his *Rama and Homer* (1912), Arthur Lillie suggests that the Greek Homer (ca. 8th-9th century BCE), was influenced by some version of the Ram story in crafting his own best known works, the *Odyssey* and the *Illiad*. Thus, while the scholar and others may well accept Valmiki's telling of the story as the earliest known written version, it is clearly rational to consider its actual origin as being much earlier. For Ram devotees, this latter view is widely held, since the story is about the incarnation of Lord Ram as a prince and king of Ayodhya, which is believed to have occurred during Treta Yuga, many millennia ago.

Another commonly accepted aspect of the story is an acknowledgment of its vast influence, not only on Hindus but on countless peoples throughout South and Southeast Asia. No other Indian tale has spread and found popularity among such diverse groups in the world as the Ram story has. It has been translated and retold orally and in written form, as well as in plays, song, and in dance countless times over the millennia, and its popularity continues unabated with its more recent spread to the western world in both written form and in movies.

One of the reasons the story has been and remains so popular is that its many versions reflect the values and understandings of the various cultures and people where it has spread. Especially in the more devotional tellings, such as the *Adhyatma Ramayana* and the *Ramcharitmanas*, it is about the joys and struggles of life, about divinity versus evil, and about righteousness versus immorality. Most of the story is about how to live dharmically in the world. In the devotional tellings, Lord Ram teaches us through his words and his actions, which is why he is often referred to as *Dharmaraja* (King of truth and righteousness). If read with devotion, the Ram story can inspire in us a search for that truth and righteousness. More than just a beautiful story, it can be a guide for us to live by.

# CrossQuest

Chinmay Agrawal



## Across

2. Ayodhya is located on which river's bank?
3. He could gain half the strength of opponent in a battle
4. The Yuga of Ramayana
6. Where was Sita held in captive?
7. Number of years Lakshman did not have sleep during exile
9. Who burned Lanka?
12. Who adopted Sita as his daughter?
13. Whom did King Dashrath want to become his successor?
15. Who helped Ravan kidnap Sita?
16. Sita's another name
17. Who is the king of wealth?

## Down

1. Second son of Dashrath
  3. He incarnated as
  5. Who kidnapped Sita?
  7. How many queens did Dashrath have?
  8. Who compelled Dashrath to make Bharat king?
  10. Bharat's wife
  11. A vulture who helped vanars who went in search of Sita.
  12. Who tried to prevent Ravan from carrying away Sita?
  14. Who moved the Shiv bow in childhood easily?
- (solution on page 20)*

# Depiction of Women in Ramcharitmanas

**Ram Mallik**

*Shri Ram Mohan Mallik has technology and management background and worked in the management positions in India, Middle East and U.S.A, including Director Process Technology in Fluor Corporation Houston. He has been a long time student of Sri Ramcharitmanas. He has published articles on topics related to Indian religion and Ramayana.*



Goswami Tulsidas has narrated stories of many women in Ramcharitmanas. This includes prayers and invocation of the goddess and glories of other women in different walks of life and from different strata of society. They are queens and queen mothers, wives of rishis and tribal women. The stories of Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram, Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharat, Sumitra, the mother of Lakshman and Shatrughna, Sunayana, the mother of Sita, Tara, the wife of Vali, and Mandodari, the wife of Ravan have been rightly portrayed as wise and virtuous. Kaikeyi, who has been much maligned for her role in Ram's exile to the forest, has been given a very fair narrative. Tulsidas has shown her as a victim of the conspiracy by gods who wanted Ram to go to the forest and kill Ravan. They sought help from Saraswati. The goddess perverted the mind of Manthra, Kaikeyi's maid, who then perverted Kaikeyi's mind. She forced King Dashrath to send Ram to the forest in exile instead of coronating him. Thus, Tulsidas has absolved her of any wrong doing. Some scholars contend that Kaikeyi was a great devotee of Ram and took this blame upon her so that Ram could go to the forest and fulfill his mission to kill Ravan and other demons. This is the highest form of devotion- suffering silently for her Lord.

Sita is rightly the most important woman character in Ramayana being the consort of Bhagwan Ram and incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. Tulsidas has nicely proclaimed her identity with Ram when he says:

*Gira arath jal beechi sam, kahiat bhinna na bhinna. 1.18.D1  
Bandau Sita Ram Pada, jahi param priya khinna. 1.18.D2*

I pray to the holy feet of Sita Ram to whom the helpless are extremely dear and who truly one are as are water and wave.

Tulsidas has portrayed Sita was brave and strong minded. As a child she lifted the mighty Shiva dhanush (bow) with one hand, which no one besides Ram could lift as an adult. She was not scared of Ravan even in her captivity. In Manas, Sita appears to be submissive, quiet, and soft spoken, while in Valmiki Ramayana she is aggressive, outspoken and equal to Ram.



There are a few lines in Manas that have received adverse comments from critics. Some have branded Tulsidas anti-woman, indulging in their degradation. The controversy seems to exist due to wrong interpretation of the text and its context. Two examples are given below.

The following line is in the conversation of the Sea King with Bhagwan Ram while praying for apology for not honoring his request for a pathway to cross into Lanka. The Sea King was scared after Lord Ram expressed his anger and says:

*Dhol Ganwar Sudra Pashu Nari, Sakal Taadna Ke Adhikari.*5.59.C6



An earlier edition of Manas by Gita Press translates this line as “A drum, a rustic, a beast and a woman-all these deserve beating.” The later edition of Manas replaced “beating” with “instruction”. Still, this does not seem to be an adequate interpretation. The intention is “care and supervision”. In Adhyatma Ramayana, he says more harshly that punishment is the only means to get idiots on the right path “*Danda eva hi murkhanam sanmarga prapakah prabho.*”

Another stanza often quoted to show anti-woman bias of Manas is spoken by Ravan to his queen Mandodari. This reads as follows:

*Nari swabhau satya kabi kahahin. Avagun aath sada ur rahahin.*6.16.C2  
*Sahas anrit chapalata maya, bhaya abibek asauch adaya.*6.1.C3

Truly the poets have discussed the nature of woman. Eight evils ever abide in her heart. These evils are recklessness, deceit, timidity, indiscretion, impurity and cruelty.

As noted from the context in Manas, this statement is not an insult; Ravan is making fun of his wife and eventually ends up in praising her.

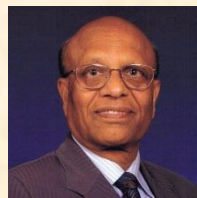
Tulsidas has beautifully described Ram’s visit and grace on Shabari and glorified his discourse on nine forms of devotion to this virtuous and pious tribal devotee.

In Ramcharitmanas only three women have been punished. Tadaka was killed by Ram, Manthra was kicked, and Surpanakha’s nose and ears were chopped off by Lakshman. All of them were punished for their evil deeds. No one will consider this unreasonable. In conclusion, Tulsidas has narrated the fascinating stories of women in a fair and balanced manner. He has presented a picture of society in which women are truly respected and adored for their virtues.

# Do We Really Understand and Follow Bhagwan RAM?

**Sulekh Jain**

*Dr. Sulekh C .Jain is Founder /Co-Founder of more than a dozen organizations and institutions in North America. He has taught at several Universities in USA, Canada, U.K and India, has several patents, authored more than 50 technical papers and several dozen papers on Jain related subjects. Recently he authored a page "An Ahimsa Crisis: You Decide".*



I want to start this essay with the following true story.

A few years ago, one prominent swami-ji was on a train from Ghaziabad to Old Delhi station. Seated next to him was a young man who was in his early thirties. This young man was reading "Ramcharitmanas", a holy and pious book about how Lord Ram treated his younger brothers Lakshman and Bharat and how they both in turn treated Lord Ram. Seeing the holy monk in saffron colored robes, this young man stood up, bowed and touched swami-ji's feet to pay his respects. Swami-ji noticed that this young man reading Ramcharitmanas, and asked him, "Are you going to Delhi just for fun or for some other business?"



The young man replied that he was going to Delhi to the District Courts as he and his elder brother had a legal dispute regarding some parental land and property which was going on for several years. Hearing this, Swami-ji told the young man that he was reading the wrong book. Instead of Ramcharitmanas, he should be reading "Mahabharata", the book of great wars and fights.

We see a big disconnect in talk and walk here. The young man had a legal fight going on and had lots of anger and animosity (feelings of violence or harm or himsa) towards his brother, but on the other hand, just to show off, he was reading Ramcharitmanas. The two don't go together. If he believed in Ramcharitmanas, then he should have taken steps to resolve issues and conflicts amicably with understanding and fairness. This is the ahimsatmak (nonviolent) way.

Is this not a powerful story with a real-life lesson? This teaches us that we should not just stay at the first step of just show off pooja of Bhagwan Ram (for that matter any other holy men and gods) but must climb the ladder of gnan (knowledge), reflection, true understanding and

imbibing their teachings and virtues in our daily lives 24x7, inside and outside places of worship. Unfortunately, I see daily that majority of us have not moved beyond the first step; we are stuck at the first step still. Bhagwan Ram and his life is not just a story for entertainment, where unfortunately majority of us spend our entire lives, but it is a message for a way of life. It is a story of leading journey of our life with the spirit of dharma (धर्म), guiding us in earning living (अर्थ), and fulfilling sensual need and pleasures (काम).

Recently one of my dear scholar friends from India wrote to me: “We all should analyze the messages carried in Ramayana. Notwithstanding the controversy when Ramayana was written: before Ram's birth or after Ram returned to Ayodhya, one should try to emulate the character of Ram, Sita and brothers. We should adopt the good things from Ramayana for making our personal and social life comfortable, meaningful and peaceful.”

Ramayana has been told and retold many times, in many different languages with significant variations in literature and performances. Starting with the first Ramayana by Valmiki, there are at least 300 different version of Ramayana. Each version of the Ramayana is beautiful and describes and enlightens us with many facets, virtues and characteristics of Bhagwan Ram. The life of such a great personality cannot be described and bound in one book only. It takes many books. If one wants to understand Bhagwan Ram more fully, then one should take time to study all these different versions. Then only will one discover how beautiful, broad, all encompassing, inspiring, virtuous and great the personality of Bhagwan Ram was.

This is what makes our Bharat a great nation: it gives space to everyone to think what they want, believe what they want and express what they want. Ours is a culture where Parshvanatha and Mahavira are as venerated as Ram and Krishna. Accepting multiple points of view has always been our strength. It has made us who we are. In Jain philosophy, we call it *anekantavaad* (not one sidedness or plurality of views) or democracy of views and viewpoints.

Let me share a few descriptions of Bhagwan Ram from Jain Ramayana; there are at least eight different versions of Jain Ramayana and all are much older than Tulsidas' Ramayana.

- Bhagwan Ram was an apostle of unconditional and complete nonviolence, compassion and love to all. He did not just preach, but lived by it.
- He was a pure vegetarian.
- No killing and hunting as a sport or a hobby.
- No weapon on his body and no use of weapon to harm anyone - humans and nonhumans (No bow and arrow associated with Ram).



What do we learn from Bhagwan Ram?

- Let us resolve to make Bhagwan Ram as a true friend, guide, guru, beacon of light to help us in the spiritual upliftment of our lives.
- Let us take a real and meaningful vow to adopt some teachings of Ramayana in our daily lives.
- Strict adherence to unconditional ahimsa 24x7 inside and outside the temple.
- Let us not concentrate anymore on war and killing of Ravan. Many of us have been doing this for a long time. Ravan is nothing but ego and lust and let us focus on killing and burning that Ravan of ego and lust within. Along with that, let us contemplate on killing the enemies of greed, anger, deceit, and hatred within.
- Respect and obedience to parents, family friends, brothers and sisters
- Love and affection between all brothers.
- No lust and hunger for power and position.
- Follow the right and moral means to get to the right end.
- All are equal and no caste system. Caste system is *himsa*.
- Work to promote emancipation of women
- Let us understand and contemplate on Ram Rajya beyond slogans.
- Let us graduate beyond *pooja* or worship of Ramayana, ritual, entertainment and social events.

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Wish you all the best ! RamQuest !!



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# Who is Ram?

## Usha Mehra



*Smt. Usha Mehra, an earth citizen and proud mother and grandmother living in Houston, USA, with a mission of experiencing "Ram" in total Creation. She has spent many years in Environmental Engineering Profession. She had organized International Ramayana and Hanuman Conferences in Houston under guidance of Late Honorable Lallan Prasad Vyas.*

Ever since I recall my childhood, I remember my grandmother (amma) teaching me to greet everyone I met by saying "Ram Ram". Be it a visiting relative, a neighbor, or a street vendor, I was reminded to greet everyone with "Ram Ram".

I remember my mother, during household chores and bathing, loudly singing "Ram nam ki loot hai, looti jaye so loot", which means that name of Ram is abundantly available, grab as much as you can. Slowly, my curiosity on Ram's identity grew and I dared to ask my amma, "Who is Ram?" With her grim mystical smile, she embraced me and said that Ram is God, the ultimate father and mother who provide for all our needs. I then asked, "Where is Ram now?" She answered that he was born as a prince in Ayodhya in India many thousands of years ago, but at present lives in heaven and from there takes care of everyone.



The seeds of imagination were sewn in me; Ram was a strong, powerful, affluent person living in an expansive, elaborate, majestic palatial home in a kingdom above the blue skies: heaven. I was content with my imagination and accepted the practice of taking Ram's name as a dutiful act for someone who provides for all our needs.

Over the years, I learned to read the Ramcharitmanas by Shri Tulsidas with my mother. My amma would listen as she had not learned reading and writing. I would get completely engrossed

in my experiencing of Ram's life through the verses of the Ramcharitmanas, specifically the part in which Ram leaves for exile

assigned by his stepmother Kaikeyi, and his father Dashrath dies from the loss of his son. So deep was my compassion for Dashrath that a strong desire arose to meet Ram to ask him why going to the forest was so important. Steadily that desire got deeper and hence the quest began to identify who Ram was and where I could find him.

As the world around me expanded beyond grade school, then college, I got introduced to Ram being attached to people: Rampher, a household servant; Ramdin, our washerman; Ram Sweets, a local confectionary; and Ram Laddoo, a snack. I began to wonder if Ram is just a figurehead; a prominent association that can be used to identify any person, any place, anything that is desired to be known as “good”. Would I ever be able to meet the Ram in heaven?

In life’s journey going forward, I have had the good fortune of meeting many devotees of Ram Nam, many scholars of texts about Ram and many philosophers of Hindu theology; my inner inklings on “Who is Ram” have evolved. Ram is a character to be aspired for and acquired, Ram is an experience to be realized and felt; Ram cannot be described.

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## Who wants to be a Rambhakt?

1. Who was husband of Sati?
  - a) Ram
  - b) Shiv
  - c) Brahma
  - d) Janak
2. Who was Sumantra?
  - a) Brother of Queen Sumitra
  - b) Brother of Dashrath
  - c) Minister of Dashrath
  - d) A sage in forest whom Ram met in exile
3. What did Parshuram do for his father?
  - a) Killed his own mother
  - b) Gave up his kingdom
  - c) Rivalry with Ram
  - d) Lifetime bachelorhood
4. On which mountain top did Sugriv reside?
  - a) Chitrakut
  - b) Himalaya
  - c) Rishyamook
  - d) Trikoot
5. During his exile of 14 years, where did Ram spend most of his time?
  - a) Chitrakoot
  - b) Panchvati
  - c) Pampapur
  - d) Lanka

*Please send your answers to RamQuest. The names of the first five persons to send correct answers will be published in the next issue. They will also receive RamQuest free for one year. The correct answers will be posted on our website by August 31, 2017.*



# Towards RAM (Real Awakening of Mind)

**Subhash Sharma**



*Dr. Subhash Sharma, is an eminent Indian management thinker and author, well known for his significant contributions to management and social thought and management education. He is author of the creative and thought provoking books such as Management in New Age: Western Windows Eastern Doors, Quantum Rope, and New Earth Sastra.*

‘Let thousand(s) kites fly’, is a metaphor for explosive and charismatic creativity. This happens when an individual reaches the ‘RAM’ (Real Awakening of Mind) level that has been variously described as the blooming of a thousand lotus flowers, the opening of the inner eye, the state of supra-consciousness, etc. At this level, an individual develops an immense capacity for Random Access Memory (RAM) of the universe. There are many real-life examples such as Ramanujan, the well-known mathematician, ‘who knew infinity’. It is coincidental that ‘RAM’ is in his name. There are other examples of individuals who have been naturally gifted with such a ‘beautiful mind’. The same can be developed through meditation. For instance, many Himalayan Rishis have developed their minds to levels where they could easily access the memory of the universe through random wandering of their mind via meditation. Thus, they could achieve the ‘RAM’ through personal effort, creating conditions for ‘self-mutation’ or changing their neural network.

This process can be compared to a robot repairing its own damaged random access memory. When such a capacity is endowed by nature, a person may be born in such a place and time, where, there is a maximum field effect of the energies emanating from the specific star constellations in the cosmos. Thus there could be a possibility of ‘astrological impact’ on an individual. Further biological factors or mutation may also favor an individual by endowing an efficient neural network to him/her. However, this capacity can also be developed through some sustained effort. People with high levels of creativity are more likely to be close to ‘RAM’ level. They may achieve this through ‘mutation’ (biological factor), through ‘meditation’ (self-effort), or through ‘music of stars’ (field effect of constellation of stars). If these three factors converge, then such a person displays ‘charismatic creativity’.

We can presume that Goswami Tulsidas experienced a ‘Real Awakening of Mind’ (RAM) and as a result wrote the immortal Ramcharitmanas; a book with novel insights transcending space, time and history. When we read Ramcharitmanas with devotion, we also experience, Real Awakening of Mind leading to new creativity and insights. Thus, it aids our quest for RAM: Real Awakening of Mind.

## **Ram: A Transformational Leader**

### **Balakrishnan Muniapan**

*Dr. Balakrishnan Muniapan is an Associate Professor in HRM at Wawasan Open University, Malaysia. He has presented research papers in many countries and published numerous research papers. He is also a student of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas.*



Transformational leadership occurs when a leader engages his or her people in such a way that both parties are raised to higher levels of motivation and morality with a common purpose. Sage Valmiki has described many situations in Ramayana that describe transformational leadership of Lord Ram.

1. Transformational leaders are change agents. Lord Ram changed the kingship of Kishkindha from Vali to Sugriv. He was a transformed person after meeting Lord Ram. Lord Ram also changed the kingship of Lanka when Vibhishan was crowned as the king of Lanka even before the war with Ravan took place.

2. Transformational leaders are courageous people. Once they take a stand, they are brave to take risks, ensuring that vision and goals are achieved. No one, including his guru Vashistha, brother Bharat and all other people of Ayodhya could persuade Lord Ram to return to rule Ayodhya. He was firm and brave to take all the risks to protect the promise his father (King Dashrath) gave to Kaikeyi. Lord Ram's decision made them unhappy, yet they could not help admiring Lord Ram's courage whom nothing could tempt.

3. Transformational leaders believe in people. They believe there is infinite potential in every person. Lord Ram had complete trust and confidence that Hanuman would be successful to find the whereabouts of Sita, so he gave his ring to Hanuman to be handed to Sita. He also had great confidence and trust in Sugriv and his army of vanaras (monkeys) and their ability to wage a war with Ravan to rescue Sita.

4. Transformational leaders are value driven. This is seen in Lord Ram, who never deviated from the promises he made. He even mentioned to Sita in Aranya Kand, "I have promised to protect the rishis (sages) of Dandak forest, I can give up my life, even you O Sita, as well as Lakshman, but I cannot swerve from the my promise." In Yuddha Kanda, Lord Ram also demonstrated this value when he accepted Vibhishan, the brother of Ravan, who came for protection.

5. Transformational leaders are life-long learners. In the life of Lord Ram, we see a perfect example of the life of learner. In his childhood, he took lessons from sage Vashistha, later with sages Vishwamitra,

Bharadwaj, Jabali, Atri, Sarabhanga, Agastya, etc. Even when he took over the kingship of Ayodhya, several sages including Agastya visited him. He took these as learning opportunities as great wisdom was imparted by these sages.

6. Transformational leaders have the ability to deal with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. Lord Ram clearly exhibited this ability when he had to take the painful decision to banish Sita from Ayodhya. Lord Ram as an ideal king had to uphold the honor of his dynasty. He needed to set examples for all generations to follow. Although decision to banish Sita may seem harsh, the king sometimes needs to take such decisions, as the first duty of the king is to rule his people while other considerations are secondary, even if they affect personal happiness.

7. Transformational leaders are visionaries. They have broad and inspiring visions. Lord Ram created a future vision for Ayodhya and the vision was clearly communicated to the people before he left for the forest. This was also communicated to Bharat when he came to persuade Lord Ram to return to Ayodhya.

During Lord Ram's rule, all citizens were fully righteous and always looking towards him as their lord and master. Beyond that they saw Lord Ram as their life and soul. All discussion centered on Lord Ram. Thus Ayodhya appeared as if transformed into Vaikuntha (place without anxieties). This is a transformation that took place due to Lord Ram's leadership.

## CrossQuest Answers





## रामायण महाकाव्य मंगलेश मुजमेर 'मंगल'

श्री मंगलेश मुजमेर 'मंगल' जी ने करीब ७० साहित्यिक रचनाएँ प्रकाशित की हैं। आकाशवाणी और कई कवि सम्मेलनों में उन्होंने काव्य-पठन भी किया है। विभिन्न पत्र-पत्रिकाओं और संस्थाओं ने समय-समय पर कई पुरस्कार मिले हैं।



‘रामायण’ महा-काव्य लेख है;  
‘राम- चरित’ का, यह सुलेख है ।  
मानव-जीवन, कैसे जिएँ हम;  
‘रामायण’ में यही, उल्लेख है ।  
हर प्रश्न का, हल ‘रामायण’;  
चिंतन-ससार का, आलेख है ।  
‘रामायण’ में, कर्म-धर्म की;  
धारणा की ही, देख-रेख है ।  
राम के रूप अनेक, हैं भले;  
सब में इंसों,-नी ही देख है ।  
‘रामायण’ में, सब ही समाहित;  
लिखा तुलसी ने, ऐसा लेख है ।  
हो ‘कुरान’, ‘बाइबल’ ‘रामायण’;  
गुनने में नहीं, मीन-मेख है ।  
‘राम-कृपा’ सब, पर ही बरसती;  
मुल्ला वो पंडित, भले वो शेख है ।  
पुण्य-पाप, जानने को मंगल;  
‘रामायण’ में, लखन-रेख है ।

## Where does Ram Reside?

**Saraswati Mallik**



*Smt. Saraswati Mallik is a longtime student and lover of Ramcharitmanas. She has published articles on some episodes of Manas and Maithili Janakanadini. She was a speaker in Ram Charit Manthan, a seminar on Ramayana, in 2017 and several previous seminars.*

Lord Ram, during his forest exile, visits Sage Valmiki along with Sita and Lakshman. The sage welcomes them and treats them with delicious fruits and roots. Ram is enchanted with the beauty of the ashram and its surroundings. He requests the sage to suggest a place where he may build a hut and live with Sita and Lakshman for rest of the duration of his exile. Valmiki recognizes Ram's true status as Supreme God and starts praising him. He says:

*jag pekhan tumh dekhani hare, bidhi hari sambhu nachaban hare. 2.127.C1  
Soi janai jehi dehu janai, Janat tumhahi tumhai hoi jai. 2.127.C3*



“This world is a show and you are its spectator. You make even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva dance. Only he knows you whom you make yourself known and when he knows you he himself becomes you.”

He continues, "You are asking me where to reside. But before I respond, please tell me where you are not already present." The sage then describes fourteen places where he Lord resides from a spiritual and material stand point. These are actually 14 means of God Realization or in other words 14 kinds of devotion or 14 categories of devotees. They are briefly listed below.

1. Katha Shrabanrati: Devotee who is always interested in listening to more and more Hari Katha; who never says it is enough.
2. Rupasakti: Devotee whose eyes long to see the Lord as the Chatak bird longs to see the rain cloud.
3. Yash-gunachintan Rati: Devotee who is engaged in meditating upon the virtues and fame of the Lord.
4. Sundar Sugandhi evam Prasad: Devotee who smells flowers, Tulsi, perfumes offered to the Lord; who offers and honors prasad with proper procedures.
5. Mantra Jap and Guru Seva: Devotee who is always engaged in mantra jap, daily puja, feeding Brahmans, considers guru greater than himself and waits upon him with due honor and devotion.
6. Kamkrodhadi tyaga: Devotee who has given up desires, anger, greed and other bad habits.
7. Sharanagati: Devotee who has totally surrendered to the Lord.
8. Shuddha Acharan and Ram Prem: Devotee who considers another's wife as a mother, who considers others' wealth as the deadliest poison, who is happy at others' prosperity and unhappy at others' distress and to him Ram is as dear as his own life.
9. Total identification with Lord: Devotee to whom Lord Ram is the master and companion, father and mother, preceptor and everything else.
10. Viveka, Concern for cow and Brahmin, Nitigyana: Devotee who overlooks other's faults and picks out their virtues, endures hardships for cows and Brahmins and is well versed in the laws of propriety.
11. Gratitude and full dependence on Ram Love for Ram Devotees: Devotee who considers virtues as the Lord's gift and faults as own, who entirely depends on Ram and loves Ram's devotees.
12. Sanyas and Cherish Lord in heart, Sakhya Bhava: Devotee who renounces his or her caste, kinsmen, wealth, faith, glory, near and dear ones, pleasant homes and everything else and cherishes Lord in his or her heart.
13. Samdarshita and Service to Ram: Devotee for whom heaven, hell or salvation are all same, who sees Ram's bow and arrow everywhere and is Ram's servant in thought, word and deed.
14. Nishkam Prem and Bhakti: Devotee who wants nothing but natural affinity to Lord



## संक्षिप्त रामचरितमानस- १००८ पंक्तियों में

गोस्वामी तुलसीदास रचित गीता प्रेस प्रकाशित श्री रामचरितमानस में 12,587 पंक्तियाँ हैं। आज हमारा जीवन कितना अस्त-व्यस्त है, यह सोच कर मानस का एक संक्षिप्त रूप १००८ पंक्तियों में प्रकाशित होने जा रहा है। पुस्तक में मानस की १००८ पंक्तियों के साथ-साथ उनका सरल हिंदी में भावार्थ, अंग्रेजी में लिप्यन्तरण और सरल अंग्रेजी में अनुवाद भी है। पुस्तक की कुछ प्रारंभिक पंक्तियाँ यहाँ प्रस्तुत हैं। पुस्तक प्राप्त करने और अधिक जानकारी के लिए [RamQuest@ramacharit.org](mailto:RamQuest@ramacharit.org) को पत्र लिखें। - ओम गुप्ता

### बालकाण्ड

1. जो सुमिरत सिद्धि होइ गन नायक करिबर बदन । 1.0a.S1
2. करउ अनुग्रह सोइ बुद्धि रासि सुभ गुन सदन ॥ 1.0a.S2

जिनको स्मरण करने से सारे कार्य सफल होते हैं, जो गणों के नायक और सुन्दर हाथी के मुखवाले हैं, ऐसे बुद्धि के भण्डार और शुभ गुणों के धाम श्री गणेश जी महाराज मुझ पर कृपा करें।

3. मूक होइ बाचाल पंगु चढइ गिरिबर गहन । 1.0b.S1
4. जासु कृपाँ सो दयाल द्रवउ सकल कलि मल दहन ॥ 1.0b.S2

जिनकी कृपा से गूँगा बोलने लगता है, लँगड़ा दुर्गम पर्वत पर चढ़ जाता है, वे कलियुग के सब पापों को जला डालनेवाले दयालु भगवान मुझ पर दया करें।

5. नील सरोरुह स्याम तरुन अरुन बारिज नयन । 1.0c.S1
6. करउ सो मम उर धाम सदा क्षीरसागर सयन ॥ 1.0c.S2

जो नीले कमल के समान श्याम हैं, जिनके पूर्ण खिले हुए लाल कमल जैसे नेत्र हैं, जो सदा क्षीरसागर में शयन करते हैं, वे परमपिता श्री नारायण मेरे हृदय में निवास करें।

7. कुंद इंदु सम देह उमा रमन करुना अयन । 1.0d.S1
8. जाहि दीन पर नेह करउ कृपा मर्दन मयन ॥ 1.0d.S2

जिनका कुंद के पुष्प और चन्द्रमा के समान गोरा शरीर है, जो पार्वती जी के प्रियतम और दया के धाम हैं, जिनका दीनों पर स्नेह है, वे कामदेव का मर्दन करनेवाले श्री शंकर भगवान मुझ पर कृपा करें।

## Ramcharitmanas- An abridged version in 1008 Lines

Ramcharitmanas as published by Gita Press has 12,587 lines. Realizing how busy we are with our modern lives, I felt that a brief version of the Manas is needed for present society and our future generations. As a result, I most humbly present to readers “Ramcharitmanas- An abridged version in 1008 Lines”. In addition to carefully selected 1,008 lines from Manas, it has simple Hindi translation, English transliteration and easy to understand English translation. A few initial lines from the book are presented below. For more information on the book and how to receive your copy, please write to RamQuest@ramacharit.org. – Om Gupta

### Bālakaṇḍa

1. jo sumirata sidhi hoi, gana nāyaka karibara badana. 1.0a.S1
2. kara'u anugraha soi, buddhi rāsi subha guna sadana. 1.0a.S2

The meditation of whose name everything successful, who has the beautiful head of an elephant, and who is an abode of wisdom and divine qualities, O Lord Ganesh! I pray for your blessings.

3. mūka hoi bācāla, paṅgu caḍha'i giribara gahana. 1.0b.S1
4. jāsu kṛpām so dayāla, drava'u sakala kali mala dahana. 1.0b.S2

With whose blessings the mute begin to speak and the crippled ascend to heights. He who destroys the evils of the dark age, O merciful Lord! I pray for your mercy.

5. nīla sarorua syāma, taruna aruna bārija nayana. 1.0c.S1
6. kara'u so mama ura dhāma, sadā chīrasāgara sayana. 1.0c.S2

Whose appearance resembles a blue lotus, whose eyes resemble a pair of lotuses, and who sleeps in an ocean of milk – please take abode in my heart!

7. kunda indu sama deha, umā ramana karunā ayana. 1.0d.S1
8. jāhi dīna para neha, kara'u kṛpā mardana mayana. 1.0d.S2

Whose body is as graceful as a jasmine flower and the moon, who is the consort of goddess Parvati, who is an abode of mercy, who loves his devotees, and who is the destroyer of cupid, I pray that Lord Shiv bless me.

## How well do we know Manas Words?

The following words are taken from Shri Ramcharitmanas. Each word has four possible answer choices. Select the choice that most accurately means the word. Send your response to [ramquest@ramacharit.org](mailto:ramquest@ramacharit.org).

The names of the first five persons to send correct answers will be published in the next issue. They will also receive RamQuest free for one year. The correct answers will be posted on our website by August 31, 2017.

1. Bhagini (भगिनी)
  - a) the one who runs away
  - b) a small boat
  - c) a broken pot
  - d) sister
2. Hulsi (हुलसी)
  - a) Another name of Tulsidas
  - b) Mother of Tulsidas
  - c) A female demon of Lanka
  - d) Name of a river
3. Kobid (कोबिद)
  - a) unknown
  - b) a learned person
  - c) a variation of word Govind
  - d) old
4. Diwakar (दिवाकर)
  - a) lantern
  - b) Ravan's another name
  - c) Dashrath's father's name
  - d) Sun
5. Mukur (मुकुर)
  - a) crocodile
  - b) crown
  - c) mirror
  - d) opportunity

*Readers are encouraged to send similar questions to us for publication in one of the future issues. (email: [ramquest@ramachari.org](mailto:ramquest@ramachari.org))*



# Ramayana: A Myth or Historical Fact?

*Tanmoy Chakravarty*

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A traditional story is often considered a myth that is set in a timeless past before recorded time or the beginning of critical history. The purpose of this article is to show that Ramayana is a history of Vedic culture, recorded in pre-Vedic era, and is a part of the Vedas.

Is Ramayana a mythology? The answer can be both yes and no. Many of us will easily dismiss this as a myth. We will address the following questions in relation to the definition of mythology.

1. Is this account of Lord Ram's life real?
2. Is this life history set in past in which time was recorded and mentioned?
3. Are the developments in different fields of science mentioned in this epic imaginary?



The list above raises questions that can provide enough support to prove Ramayana as history, not mythology. Let us address these issues.

1. Is this story real? Our knowledge of this planet and our own existence is very limited. Vedic

scriptures give accounts of human past, many of which are supported now by the modern science. The reference to the places, rivers, mountains etc. in Ramayana are still found in the Indian subcontinent. For example, Ayodhya, Mithila, Lanka, Godavari, Sarayu, Vindhya, Himalaya, Mainak exist today. The same names mentioned in the epic for the same place cannot just be coincidental.

2. What is the time frame of this history? This time period itself is mentioned in the Vedas. This story is from Tretayuga, which started

1.296 million years before Dvaparayuga. The NASA pictures of the Ram setu built by Lord Ram's army of monkeys and others is proof of the latest technology of modern science supporting this ancient epic as real. The dating shows the age of the bridge [Ram Setu], termed Adam's bridge by NASA, is 1.75 million years. According to Vedic scripture the age of Kali-yuga is only 5,000 years. Dvaparayuga, the one preceding this millennium is 864,000 years. The Tretayuga, when Lord Ram appeared is of 1.296 million years. So, we can say this bridge was built sometime in the middle of Tretayuga [ $5000+864,000+881,000 = 1,750,000$  years]. Is there any stronger scientific proof needed to show that Lord Ram was on this earth about 1.8 million years ago?

3. Are the developments in different fields of science mentioned in this epic imaginary? Some more scientific developments of that period are mentioned below to show that society at that time was quite advanced.

a) The journey of Bharat to Chitrakut: Valmiki writes that Bharat was then accompanied by 9,000 elephants, 100,000 cavalries, several chariots, besides men on feet. At the command of Nishad, 500 boatmen arrived at once and the whole armada crossed the river Ganga. This feat is simply not accomplishable without highly developed boats, navigation skills, not to speak of a body of scientific knowledge to support all these.

b) Reference to Airplane [Viman]: The reference to a flying machine is first made by Sita when Ram discloses his desire to go to forest to fulfill his father Dashrath's promise to wife Kaikeyi as a part of pre-nuptial agreement. Sita states that staying by the side of Ram in the forest will give her more pleasure than even flying with him in the plane. After Ravan was killed, Lord Ram returns to Ayodhya in Puspaka Viman. The double decker plane stopped at Kiskindha, Bharadwaj ashram, and finally Ayodhya. The description of this journey is so vivid that suggests a development still to be matched by today's aeronautical knowhow.

c) Medical Advancement: Both the knowledge of medicine and surgery were well developed during that time. When Ram's brother Lakshman was lying unconscious in the battlefield being hit by an arrow from Meghnad, Ravan's chivalrous son, Susena, the physician from Ravan's kingdom immediately was brought in. He could immediately diagnose [obviously not with the help of many modern-day equipments] that he was still alive. He prescribed four herbs, specifically visalya karani, savarnya karini, sanjivani karini, and sandhani.

Finally, the science of Yoga, which has become very popular through the world to observe as International Day of Yoga, was extremely well developed in the period of Ramayana.

# The Ramayana and the Play of Opposites

Michael Sternfeld

*Shri Michael Sternfeld is an independent scholar and a producer/director who has spent the last 25 years creating various productions of the Ramayana, including the first complete audio production of the Ramayana of Valmiki. For more information, visit [RamayanaAudio.com](http://RamayanaAudio.com).*



Sacred stories, like our lives, seem to be filled with a play of opposites. The patterns of life display a never-ending rhythmic dance of light and dark, peace and agitation, love and fear, coherence and chaos. This is the play of opposites.

How does this translate into everyday life? We may find, for example, that we are manifesting great enthusiasm in living our purpose, but we are pulled away from it by an equal commitment to our family. Our heart may be connected to our family, but our vision wants to stretch out to fulfill our destiny, which could require extensive travel and pull us away from our families.

When most people experience this kind of challenge in this play (or lila in Sanskrit), they try to minimize their internal conflict by decreasing the polarity. They soften their grip on one end of their desire, often relinquishing some deep longing, such as fulfilling their vision or purpose. Perhaps there is another way. There can be great power in holding the dynamic tension of this play of opposites. Hold onto it long enough, and it may resolve into a new, third field of life that somehow embraces both opposites.

Now let's see how the ancient epic, the Ramayana, can help clarify this process. The Ramayana can be described as “the history of total reality”, chronicling events that happened thousands of years ago. The Ramayana is not only the most well-known sacred story of India and Southeast Asia but is also a classic of world literature. Over 3,000 years old, the Ramayana is the oldest epic– the first “heroic quest” – and has provided source material for many Western legends and fairy tales. The Ramayana is the story of the supreme being, who comes to Earth one million years ago as a man – Rama – to purify the world of the dark forces of ignorance. Along the way, Rama encounters an extraordinary lila of opposing forces – apparently excruciatingly irreconcilable opposites – culminating in his ultimate victory.

Great epics such as the Ramayana take us into a sacred world of archetypal depth where all values are magnified in the extreme. As we read or listen, we are stretched between these forces. We become Rama's father, King Dashrath, who is torn between the love of his son and his



duty to uphold his word. He wishes to crown his beloved son as heir apparent, but he had previously given Rama's stepmother Kaikeyi two boons, and she now demands that her son be crowned and Rama be exiled to the forest for fourteen years.

We are Rama, who has just fought the greatest of battles to reunite with his beloved wife, Sita, who had been abducted by the King of Demons, Ravana. Even though he knows in his heart that Sita is pure, Rama must banish his precious wife from the kingdom to satisfy public doubts that he has reunited with a woman who may have been corrupted by living in a demon's household for almost one year. We feel the tremendous pull of emotion due to the tug between heart and mind.

Herein lies the secret of the Ramayana. This story is so vast, profound, and multi-layered that it contains virtually every level of relationship. As we follow its epic journey, we explore every swing of emotion from the depths of despair to supreme ecstasy and everything in between. Again and again, we encounter these apparently irreconcilable values, and we shake until we must transcend to a deeper level of synthesis which embraces opposites in a new way. Our consciousness expands exponentially in the process.

Here is the punch line: evolution proceeds through this play of opposites. The conflict of opposing forces is really not a problem that we need to avoid; it is the way that life naturally flows. One value emerges, then its opposite value appears, and finally there is transcendence to a new level of wholeness. This is the actual process by which we grow. That is why the Ramayana is such a profound teaching vehicle for life. By following this lila on the magnified level of the Ramayana, we train our consciousness to embrace, rather than resist, this exquisite play within our own lives.

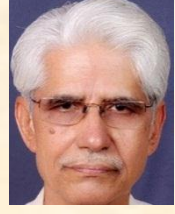
We are Rama, who, after banishing Sita, grieves deeply at his loss when she asks of the Divine Mother to return home and is swallowed by the earth. Rama is consoled only when the Grandsire himself (Brahma) reminds Rama of his divine origins. Brahma expands Rama's perception by reminding him that his separation from Sita is only a flicker in eternity. Rama transcends and realizes that he will be "momentarily" reunited with his consort Lakshmi (Sita) when he returns to heaven. Are we not all like Rama, forgetting our divine nature and grieving over our "momentary losses"?

Remember to be steady in your self the next time you are confronted by the challenging illusion of opposing forces. Surrender into the "fullness" of the opposition. By embracing these opposites, you will transcend into a deeper fullness that encompasses both polarities. Inside this, we may discover the truth of who we really are.

## Universal Appeal of Ramayana

### Prabhu Dayal Mishra

*Shri Prabhu Dayal Mishra is a renowned scholar in Vedas and other Indian scriptures. He has published more than two dozen books on Vedas, Gita, Yoga, etc. He has received numerous awards for his work. Currently, he is the president of Maharishi Agastya Vedic Sansthanam and associated with a number of universities, social and religious institutions.*



If the core essence of Indian wisdom is to be contained in one line, I will quote the following mantra from Yajurveda (40/1).

ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।  
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

This very same mantra also marks the beginning of Isavasyopanishad (Ishopanishad). This scripture culminates the entire Vedanta philosophy in one place. From the first stanza, we can conclude that it has been laid down with the principles of world fraternity, humanitarian way of life and the adoptable policy of a fitting world order. Goswami Tulsidas also rebuilds the theme of Ramayana to transform earth into a heaven for all.

अल्पमृत्यु नहि कवनियु पीरा । सब सुन्दर सब निरुज शरीरा ॥ 7.20.C5  
नहिं दरिद्र कोउ दुखी न दीना । नहिं कोउ अबुध न लच्छन हीना ॥ 7.20.C6

Let us first understand how Tulsidas builds this great edifice by employing the subtle techniques available in Vedic lore. Vedas, as we must understand, are the record of absolute reality as was revealed to ancient seers. Vedas are the representative life-manual of human beings for living life in its fullness: material as well as spiritual. There are six basic philosophies of life: Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Karm, Sankhya, Yoga and Vedant. Emanating from the Vedas, they suggest various aspects of life, but the last one indicates the culmination of all. This Vedant philosophy, also termed Adwait (non-duality of God), is the central note of Indian philosophy and is rightly the quantum essence of the Ramcharitmanas of Goswami Tulsidas. He had great fitting models in the forms of the Ramayana of Valmiki and the Shrimad Bhagavad of Ved Vyas.

Tulsidas was traversing on a very subtle but important path. It was necessary for him to not only unite the Saguna and Nirguna followers but to also bring humanity as a whole together. He was equipped with all scholarly pursuits and explanations for proving that God makes no differentiations and he is available to everyone from all angles. The one qualification which human beings should be well endowed with is faith; the sole attribute which can take a human so close to the creator that he/she can become one with him.

Tulsidas therefore, folding his two hands bows before all, say:

सीय राम मय सब जग जानी । करों प्रनाम जोर जुग पानी ॥ 1.7.C1

What greater universal appeal of one world than this can ever be made? It is not just the case of one humanity, one planet, or one solar system or cosmos. It is not just the vastness of the visible universe, but the unimagined expanse of all unaccountable worlds that is covered in one sight.

The second part of this mantra lays stress on the maintenance of balance of enjoyment and renunciation. It is important to remember that when the world is taken to be just God, the experiences of the world may appear to be illusory. This may instil an attitude of indifference towards action. Vedic philosophy however is never one sided; it visualises life in its fullness. After propounding the world as an abode of God, the Vedic seer also proposes the world to be taken seriously. There are chances of delusion in it. Attachment and greed are very important feelings; they find their manifestation in the tendency of enjoyment. The Vedic seer therefore takes us to the field of human behaviour immediately.

Renunciation is possible only after the incidence of possession. Are there indeed no objects possessed even when we believe to possess them? This part of the verse indicates this aspect only. God has created all objects along with their subjects. It is only an illusion when one believes them to have been possessed. The possession in this manner is only a feeling and not any virtual ownership as such.

It may again be questioned, if things have their origin in the Lord, why do we need to renounce them? The answer is quite simple. After accepting the truth that neither we have created nor do we have any natural control over things, the renunciation has to be a natural thing. A thing, which cannot be possessed, can neither come nor go anywhere. It is only attachment or greed, which makes a person believe that he/she is in possession of it. Renunciation therefore is only the feeling of detachment at the level of the mind. It does not in any case involve a union or separation from an object.

Ram indeed demonstrates through his character what Vedas have been teaching humanity for long. Though he won the kingdom of Lanka, he did not take its possession. According to him, the kingdom was nothing compared to the devotion and surrender of Vibhishan.

As a matter of fact, all other mantras of Ishopanishad can be well-illustrated by the life of Ram as depicted in Ramayana at length, but only a limited part based the first stanza has been discussed in this brief article.



# Srī Rāmacaritamānasa Word Index

Shivprakash K. Agrawal

Omprakash K. Gupta

*Rāmacaritamānasa* is undoubtedly one of the most widely read books in Indian Literature. It has been extensively studied, worshipped, revered, and even criticized. *Mānas* has been a topic of research for many scholars, the subject of hundreds of masters and doctoral theses, and the theme for numerous books and research articles.

When serious readers study *Mānas*, they often face questions on the composition of the epic itself. For example, in *Mānas*, there is great emphasis on the virtue of the name of Lord *Rāma*. As indicated above in *Dohā* 23 of *Bālkaṇḍa*, Gosvāmī Ji states, “The name of Lord *Rāma* is even greater than the Lord Himself !” As a result, readers often question how many times he has used the word *Rāma* in *Mānas*. Furthermore, many may wonder where exactly he has used the word *Rāma* in the book. The purpose of this index is to precisely answer such questions. In this book, we have listed all words of *Mānas* along with the locations where they appear.

For instance, let us examine how the word *Rāma* has been used. This word appears in 1,138 lines of *Mānas*. It first appears in line number 1.1.C8: *sūjhaḥim Rāma carita mani mānika* (सूझहिं राम चरित मनि मानिक). The last citation of the word *Rāma* is in line number 7.130b.D2: *timi raghunātha nirantara priya lāgahu mohi Rāma* (तिमि रघुनाथ निरंतर प्रिय लागहु मोहि राम), which also happens to be the last line of *Mānas* (except that there are two closing *ślokās* after this line). Therefore, for anybody interested in researching the word *Rāma* itself, this index provides a readymade reference. While 1,138 is the number of lines of citations of *Rāma* itself, the number does not include *Rāma*’s variants such as *Rāmaḥ* (रामः), *Rāmā* (रामा), *Rāmu* (रामु), *Rāmū* (रामू), etc.

We believe this book has three unique features: (1) It is bilingual, making it easily accessible to both, English and Hindi users, (2) Each citation refers to a unique line number of *Mānas* making it easy for one to find words in any edition of *Mānas*, and (3) It contains a word count for citations that are greater than or equal to 5. Finally, the index has been verified by several *Rāmacaritamānasa* scholars, thereby limiting the chance of errors.

This index has 14,486 unique words. The total citations are 114,836, indicating a word appears about eight times on average. As mentioned earlier, 114,836 is an underestimate as a word is counted only once even it may appear multiple times in a single line. Of 14,486 words, about half of them (6,996) appear only once.

We sincerely hope that scholars, students, lovers of *Rāmāyaṇa*, and *Rāma* devotees will find this work useful in quenching their thirst of learning about *Mānas*, a supreme message by Lord *Rāma* Himself. We would be most blessed to receive your suggestions for further improvement.

PS: This is hardbound book with 445 pages. Please write to Om@ramacharit.org if you wish to purchase a copy. The suggested price is Rs. 825 (in India) and US \$30 (for outside India) inclusive of postage. All proceeds will be used for RamQuest.

Now Omprakash Gupta and Shivprakash Agrawal have lovingly created a new concordance for that work, building and improving on the *Mānas śabda anukramaṇ ikā* that was generated by the Belgian Hindi scholar Winand Callewaert in 1997—a publication to which I also contributed.

I commend them for their work and welcome their addition to the tools available to *Mānas*-premīs and scholars alike, as they seek to better understand the literary art and spiritual inspiration of this masterpiece of pre-modern Hindi, which Gandhi-ji once called “the greatest book of all devotional literature.”

**Philip Lutgendorf**

**Professor of Hindi and Modern Indian Studies, University of Iowa, USA**

A few months ago, when a professor from Japan asked me what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he quoted Tulsidas in English translation: “the powerful get no blame”, I looked for but could not find the source of Gandhi’s words. Dr. Gupta’s *Shabda Anukramanika* is a great and welcoming resource for promoting Manas scholarship.

**Shyam Sunder**

**Yale School of Management, Yale University, USA**

Manas Shabda Anukramanika is indeed a wonderful contribution towards India’s spiritual and intellectual heritage. This unique effort by Professors Omprakash Gupta and Shivprakash Agarwal will be extremely useful to many generations of scholars and intellectuals interested in a deeper understanding of words that have their origins in Manas.

**Dr. Subhash Sharma**

**Dean, Indus Business Academy, Bangalore, India**

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