It is rightly said that the original research work unearths the significant universal values, hidden in literature and other branches of knowledge. Such research works become universal and affix their seal on the hearts of one and all. Research works present in depth wisdom of the research scholar and he submits his best efforts, with all sincerity and unstinted earnestness to produce the best of results of his probe into the subject thesis. I admit still his research work can never be said to be complete in all respects, because, as far as my conviction goes, something else, some more research may have to be carried on to unravel further Truth of the subject issue on hand, will always stand to be probed to the point of infinity, which the divine hand alone does perfect completion of any fraction of wisdom. They are the works of not of a particular type, but of all types. Many a time we find new branches of research work come to lime light only to give further filip to the next research work to produce still a better refined and re-vitalised study of philosophical findings, in the best manner possible, with adequate critical analysis of the subject thesis.
With this above motive in view, I have carried out this research work, under the title and caption, "A Study into the Secular Values of Ramayana and Their Relevance to the Modern Society." It is needless to say what our modern society stands for today and day unto day, modernity continues to be added on to the present trend of the Society and in fact the Society is the best Judge.

This study of the secular values of Valmiki Ramayana brings into light the universal appeal of the best and invaluable values in particular and the human values in general of our great Indian epic Ramayana, which intends to unify the hearts and heads of all people in the world, irrespective of differences primarily to project the quint essence and importance of secularism, best suited to the Modern Indian Society, at first and to the rest of the countries in the world, to inculcate universality of the concept of Truth and its practice, righteousness of universal applicability and virtues, unparalleled in any part of the work, becoming monumental for ages to come and unqualified, unbiased and untempered Justice, in its rightly balanced precision, ever-bright and lustrous in every direction.
Maharshi Valmiki is the first poet to write the story of Ramayana and Sita in the form of an epic with humanistic approach, giving every human value of life its due significance and model adaptations to the coming generations. Several poets have retold this great story of this great immortal epic with different views of life in various Indian Languages, suitably translated. It is interesting to note that these poets and writers, with different philosophical, religious and cultural background have interpreted the story of Rama and Sita, with the best and important message of secular values, required and to be implemented, for all round progress of our planet.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY OF THE VALUES TO THE MODERN SOCIETY

Great eminent scholars have brought into light the philosophy of life, Nature, artistic expression, Society and many other aspects described in Ramayana. Rev. Father Dr. Commille Bulcke has carried out extensive research in his "Rama Katha" and threw light upon the historical aspects of Ramayana. He has also shown the various stages of the origin and development of the story.
Shri S.C. De,\(^1\) wrote, with some authenticity ' The Historicity of Ramayana and the Indo-Aryan Society in India which gives us some evidence about the geographical placements, cultural aspects of the epic, besides, the race, religion, language, literature and script closely allied to each other from the ancient period, ever since the epic was written by the Aadikavi Valmiki Maharshi. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan dealt with the Philosophical peaks of this epic, adorning the majesty of the great Sanskrit Kavya literature. This Indian epic serves us as the vehicle, which conveys the new message of the heroic and the Godly human relations. The Philosophical synthesis of Ramayana is highly illustrious and conveys the standard moral values of human life and the relative synthesis of the biological planes, in close contact with human personalities. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says "Its Hero Rama, the model of Virtue, the pattern of perfection, is made the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who took form on earth for the repression of wrong and the inculcation of Virtue."\(^2\)

We find the Valmiki Ramayana with its Books II to VI is mainly with the rich teachings of Secularism and Valmiki made it highly secular in character.
To define Secularism, it is a universal term and highly comprehensive in its meaning. Secularism is the belief that life be free from and independent of religion. No doubt, it is non-religious in its temperament. It does not say it is no-religion or non-religious. One may entertain, his own view of life independently, but as he lives in a society around him, he is bound by the obligations of that society in particular and the society at large. Religion and secularism are no less concepts. Life is free to act, free to play, free to think, free to live, but you have an obligation at the same time to conduct yourself, as expected of you by the society, where you live and by the State, where you are both a qualified citizen of the State and the country of your nationality. So, your view of life is the outcome of an integral vision of life. You may have an attitude to life. Secularism is the belief that life be free from and independent of religion.

Secularism also means equality of opportunity in the society, in its wider perspective, leading to a welfare State. If it is class reservation to the communities on the basis of caste and creed and religion,
there is no place for secularism. It becomes sectarianism and there will always be status feeling amongst the people of sectarianism. Then the neighbourhood loses its sanctity and we have our own feeling that the neighbourhood may not be able to extend its brotherhood in the true sense of the term. Any religion, if it is rationale and amenable to reason can tolerate secularism of the Society, of which he is a unit member. Secularism should not become the arena for a class contest without social consciousness. It should be on the basis of equity of opportunity and not provincialism of religions, which instead of helping one another, might cause competition when the value and validity of religion deteriorate there is bound to be increasing secularisation of the world.

We understand the world with whatever knowledge we have and we have to admit, such knowledge is incomplet and we are yet to learn more and more of this world, the great cults of science. Under such state of insecure, if we do not secularise ourselves, we divide ourselves, which means the social security is lost and if we do not govern ourselves by the sciences, we fall into dogmatism,
superstitions and ignorances. Secularism greatly and widely covers our culture steadily.

As we make a critical analysis of our epic, Ramayana, we find the secular nature of worship, even-though the celestial Gods maintain pre-eminence, we find worship of snakes, trees, rivers, the birds, whom, all walks of life people worship, thus giving secular background of the Society. We find in Ramayana that it reflects more truely the customs and beliefs of Rama Rajya. There are high degree domestic virtues glorified and makes out that there is no need to give up home life for the sake of freedom. Mahatma Gandhi treated Ramayana as the greatest epic which contains the principles of the ideal society.

My present work is to bring into light the secular values professed in Ramayana. Besides, the general meaning of the terms secular. We come to know from political philosophy, that a secular State means which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion. A truly secular State is one which does not interfere with any religion; nor should it promote a particular religion to the detriment of others.
Before I take up the secular values of Ramayana, I deal with the different interpretations of secularism, to form a basic foundation of secularism. Kwajah A. Hay says, "Secularism is a doctrine that does not pertain to any tradition or faith. It is beyond any sentiments. It is not the means, but the end of man." We find secularism plays a dominant role in the Society. Man should get himself free from all mental afflictions to develop a secular state of mind. We can say world secularism is possible, when every nation takes to a socialist attitude and a democratic spirit among the people. Today we find the seven nation Non-Aligned Movement, an extreme break through towards the adoption of secularism - all the nations in the world have not come forward to unite under one banner of world secularism, which I feel may not be feasible in the near future. This can become possible when there is one world Government, where there would be no war at all but peace for ever and it will be "All Peace and No War" state of world.
We find in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, secularism is defined as, "the Attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge and purged of super-natural, fideistic presuppositions". In this definition we find a unity of purpose, some sort of family resemblance, so to say, family peace. We have a meaning given to secularism, by the New Schap-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," saying, "an atheistic and materialistic movement," and if we take this meaning in crude sense, rather in unsophisticated sense it may look unscientific in its temper. We quote Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's definition, saying, "Secularism does not mean irreligion, or atheism or even stress on material comforts. It proclaims and lays stress on the University of Spiritual Values which may be attained by a variety of ways."

As our country, India is a secular nation, the aim of secularism is that the people of India should be free to follow and practice any religion they like. Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to all citizens of India - India has been a secular State even prior to her Independence, from foreign British Rule and after getting independence also it continues to
be a secular State and India aims at the establishment of a Welfare State in the country with the help of secularism. Secularism, in a scientific temper, is needed to bring harmony among the followers of different religions. It can inspire the people to rise above social difference, caste, creed and community. Secularism will help us in high-lighting the essential unity of all religions and in reinforcing the spirit of national integration and can make us socially sensitive and morally upright and intellectually honest. Inspite of real secularism, it is only spiritual humanism that can transcend everything and bring about unity in diversity. We may say, real secularism has to project spiritual root and it can come only through a correct understanding of human religion. Any State, can do its best, provided a collective consciousness adopted in the true sense. As we look into the dictionary for the meaning of the word, secularism, as "the belief that the State, morals, education, etc. should be independent of religion." The secular spirit is the gift of scientific revolution which separated politics from the Church. We may note secularism and scientific attitude are closely associated with one another.
Our world has never faced in the past so many innumerable problems created by the clashes between various ideologies, Philosophies, differences arising in communities. The world is divided into various warring groups. Values of life have been forgotten and man has become a cruel animal, perhaps to put an end to his own community. We have been witnessing, quite for sometime, some of the nations, whether big or small, equipped themselves with nuclear weapons, just enough to reduce the nations of the world to ashes, in no time. These nations with deadly nuclear weapons wanted to destroy some of their neighbour countries in a bid to win superiority of their false power, in the world. Those countries with the violent war-weapons, perhaps have forgotten, that they are digging their own grave, while trying to harm the neighbour countries. It is high time they realise in terms of world secularism and the human concept of "Live and Let Live", being the pivotal slogan of world secularism. It is highly regrettable to see that few nations with deadly war weapons have been constantly threatening the other weaker nations of the world to annihilate their own brotherhood forgetting totally the value of human life and the universality of the maxim, "Live and Let Live" principle of
human relation, in the world. It is high time, these nations with notorious war weapons think in terms of humanism and respect the human values of life, under the present context of world tension trying to undermine the world peace and amity among the international human network.

At this juncture, the message of secular values, envisaged in Ramayana is quite essential to be adopted by all the nations, communities, castes and creeds. At the same time, religious, ethical, philosophical and social values are required by our Society, but when many societies or groups stand face to face in war-ridden tension, secular values are inevitably required so as to understand each other to have sympathy for the differences and to co-exist. "The need of the hour is to respect the secular value, Live and Let Live."

Sri Rama, the Hero of this Epic did not try for the glory of his country or for the benefit of the human race. His philosophy is secular. He always tries to pacify the warring groups and unify the different communities. He pays the utmost significance for the benefaction of all communities, namely human beings, monkeys,
(Vanaras) Giants or Asuras, small creatures, like the squirrels, the Bears, etc. He protects the Kings, Sugreeva and Vibheeshana. Sri Rama does not think even for a second whether the man or the other creatures which has stretched his/her hand whether he/she pertains to his group or not, to render his best services and for the welfare of his fellow-men. With great Advaita Philosophy, he treats all creatures and human lives as the indivisible units of the Supreme Force, the Brahman, such secular, out look adorned with world secularism is required in the modern society. Hence the study of secular values is very much relevant to the modern society.

Life is naturally secular by itself. Nature is secular by itself, in its presentation, conduct, character and application. It is not any religion of Nature. Nature has only one unqualified religion and that is universal in character, unbiased, unrestricted and unreserved. You belong to nature, in secularism, in full measure. Nature is totally secular to you, but I feel whether we are secular to Nature, our neighbour, our brother and sister, Nay! The answer is, has been, and will continue to be negation only.
Eversince man and woman were born in this world, he and she started developing gradually, the self projection and conducting to themselves selfish, not being secular, primarily; no person tried to know, or to be secular, primarily; but the world has been growing and developing generations after generations, centuries after centuries; still Mother Nature is, has been and continue to be secular and you have not yet learnt in faith, in conduct, in exercise, in execution and in practice, secular in word, deed or action. We are still lagging behind because we are lost in the midst and we failed to be secular in full measure.

If we are not secular in life it is difficult to live our life. Even if you are not secular in the Society, you are bound to be secular to, atleast, to the animal Kingdom and the plant Kingdom, cognito or incognito. So, life is biologically secular, in the Universe and this is universal Truth, by virtue of its broad-based freedom of meaning we are under the mercy of Mother Nature in life. To say philosophically, secularism is an unending process of transcending human conduct in general. Life is profile and not for an inanimate purpose.
As we live our life, we are performing three factors, namely, thinking, acting and valuing, all meaningful secular ways only and our neighbour is already one step ahead of you, in this respect. Secular way of life is not merely neighbourhood living but it is a true brotherhood way of life living. Many a time it demands of us certain amount of sacrifice, in the interest of an individual, in particular and the Society in general, for the welfare of our brothers and sisters. Nature is always, ever agile, keeping itself secular, through all the seasons, irrespective of time and space. It must be understood that Nature gifts all that belongs to Her, only, to make you live happily, a comfortable life, provided you are secular to thy neighbour, to thy Society, to the nation and to the world. Man can never afford to forget that Nature is entirely secular, without any reservation not at all discriminating between persons, castes, creeds or communities, not at all discriminating between places and never stopping, keeping endless and neverending in presenting herself to be ever secular and ever compassionate and affectionate and ever kind to one and all, irrespective of status in life. To prove my statement phenomenally, I present unto mankind the Universal Truth of the five elements, namely, the Earth, the Air,
the Light, the Fire and the Water are the superlative boons, given to us, mankind by Mother Nature, incessantly, day in and day out, in season and out of season, in times of joy and distress, in and around, all places, at all times, ever green, and everlasting. Mankind is just the recipient only and not repaying the secularism of Mother Nature, to his brotherhood. He, the mankind simply becomes an ingratitude, having been blessed by the secular character of Nature, throughout his life, not repaying Nature the debt of gratitude, being secular, in any respect, at any time and at any place. It is high time, man realises his lapse of duty to Nature, in terms of expressing his devotional dedication to Mother Nature, even if it is the smallest degree of secular character and expression. Within the gifted span of one's life career, he has to express his sincere devoted simple gratitude to be secular, to his mankind.

CONTRIBUTION OF RAMAYANA TO THE WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE:

The novel aspects of secularism was not only professed by Valmiki but also by other poets; namely Rama-charithamanas. by Goswami Thulasidas in Hindi, Ramayanakalp Vrshamu by Viswanatha Sathyanarayana in Telugu language,
Kambar Ramayana in Tamil Language, Ramayana Darshanam by Kuvempu Kavi in Kannada language, and many other authors of respective language. These poets raised to the highest peak of humanity and conveyed the important message of secularism for the unique welfare of mankind, in the world. The Global dimensions in these works add a great treasure to the world of Knowledge. I have attempted here to present the salient features of secularism, the present day application of secular values to our modern society.

The present thesis is divided into 9 Chapters and a brief note on each Chapter is presented, here.

In the first Chapter, the subject has been introduced and the significance of the research is brought into light. Many authors say that Ramayana was written not as a religious work but as a Master-piece of all times, preaching the golden principles of humanism, secularism and universal brotherhood. I propose to discuss an account of the secular values of Ramayana and their relevance to the Modern Society. Our humanism is a product of Man and, not of matter and at the same time it has an image of the man which has been surpassed
by the development of Society. We find the most invaluable Humanism in our epic, the Valmiki Ramayana and every concept of the epic is highly exemplary and worth the following by all generations, year after year.

In the second Chapter, I propose to highlight upon socio-cultural background of the teachings of Ramayana. Some aspects are being dealt with. I am making an attempt to draw the main teachings of Ramayana. The reality of the Society is very much projected in this Chapter and the Principles of Truth, Righteousness and Justice in all the actions of the Hero, Sree Rama, only to promote the welfare of the people of the Kingdom.

In the third Chapter, the concepts of Truth, Dharma, Righteousness and Justice will be discussed. Some aspects of Truth will be described in greater length. Truth is Universal and it is eternal in its character. It requires no new introduction because it is "Anadi" no beginning. We can understand Truth, being a Phenomena, as facts in feeling. Truth can be understood by every human being and established.
In Chapter IV, I wish to discuss the problems of evil and its solution in general and particularly as expounded in Ramayana. The aspects are, the origin of evil will be attempted extensively, quoting the aspect of Evil, and also kinds of evils and nature of evils. The key note of our human life, is Truth and Virtues of human life.

In Chapter V, I want to deal with the place and significance of Vanashrama - Dharma in Ramayana.

This Chapter may look a special reference for my thesis work. I have taken this Chapter, in particular to project the existence of Vanashrama in our Epic, Ramayana. It may be felt that Varna and Ashrama are both familiar to us but, I take up this Chapter to mention how Varna was placed, in this Yuga, Threta Yuga, during the time of Rama Rajya and also to note how Maharshi Valmiki classified Varna and Ashrama in our Epic, Ramayana.

The Chapter VI deals with the importance of secular values and their relation to the higher values of life.
In the Seventh Chapter, the concept of secular values of life as expounded in Ramayana and their relevance, to the modern society will be dealt with and an attempt will be made to highlight the meaning and concept of values and values of human life. The values of life and the ultimate values of human life have special significance, as we find them in the epic, Ramayana. It is needless to say our Vedas have invaluable treasures of secular values.

In the Eighth Chapter, I am going to discuss, the application and the significance of secular values of Ramayana and their Socio-cultural-religious and Philosophical significance. To put it in a nut shell about the significance of the secular values of Ramayana, almost all the characters indicate the secular values, including the so-called had character of Ravana, the King of Sri Lanka.

In conclusion, I am going to present my findings, regarding the secular values as expounded in Valmiki Ramayana and also their relevance to the modern society.
A very brief, I feel, it is most important and evidently necessary, narration of the story of Ramayana, for the formal approach to the Epic, needs, worth describing. Here I attempt to describe the story of Sri Rama and Sri Sita, which I feel, will serve as the nucleus for many valuable, utilitarian findings, on my account, of this universally acclaimed Epic of our times.

Bharath, the land of many legends is proud, superbly of the greatest epic, Ramayana. Valmiki Maharshi, the saint-poet wrote this immortal epic, depicting the story of Sri Rama and Sita, in the original Sanskrit, as a Kavya. When Valmiki asked the sage Narada, as to who was the most striking personality of the contemporary world — striking in the qualities of head and heart. Sage Narada tells Valmiki Maharshi, the poet, that the unequivocal choice is in favour of Sri Rama, the idealman, and King, then ruling over the Kingdom of Kosala, with its Capital City, Ayodhya in the Northern part of India. Valmiki takes to write, the Ramayana, depicting Rama's life and career, with Sita, the Heroine of the Epic.
THE STORY: THE RAMAYANA:

King Dasaratha, a noble and righteous Monarch, ruled the Kingdom of Kosala of the Iksvaku Dynasty, with the capital 'Ayodhya' on the banks of the river Sarayu, flourishing gaily and mighty. Dasaratha had no children and in his deep desire to possess children, he performed Aswamedha and then a Putresti Yaga, by virtue of which he was blessed with four sons, by his three queens - Rama by Kausalya, Lakshmana and Shatrugna by Sumitra and Bharatha by Kaikeyi. Rama being the eldest and the most virtuous was dearest to his father. All the four sons grew up in age and Dasaratha planned for their marriages.

At this juncture, sage Viswamitra desired King Dasaratha to spare the services of Rama, to vanquish the demons, who were spoiling his yagnas. On the advice of Dasaratha, the royal preceptor Vashista Maharshi, sent, both Rama and Lakshmana, with Maharshi Viswamithra. Rama killed the demoness Tataki, with the help of the art of weaponry, taught by Viswamithra Maharshi. Later, the sage took both Rama and Lakshmana to the Court of Janaka, the King of Mithila where Rama married beautiful Sita, the daughter of Janaka, by Swayamvara, by breaking the famous massive Bow of Shiva,
thus fulfilling the condition for winning beautiful Sita, in marriage. The three younger brothers of Rama, married the three sisters of Sita, in great pomp and gaiety.

Nearly twelve years passed and Rama and Sita lived in conjugal happiness. Rama was very much loved in great affection, by the King, his mother and also by the people very much, for his enobling virtues, such as humanity, sweet temper, courage, devotion and benevolence. His father, being old, proposed for the coronation of (Yuvaraja) of Sri Rama, as the prince heir to succeed him and it was announced accordingly. This news of royal coronation spread in the Kingdom and people rejoiced. As ill-luck would have it, the coronation of Rama did not happen. Manthara, the maid servant of the queen, Kaikeyi, hatched a plan to have her Madam's son, Bharatha to become the King of Ayodhya. She tutored Kaikeyi to demand from the King her ambition fulfilled, by granting her two boons, at this juncture. The King, when he visited his young queen Kaikeyi, the previous day of the proposed coronation, the next day, offered to do anything to please Kaikeyi, looking at her distressed dudgeon. At the crux of this moment, Kaikeyi came out with her sinister demands and the King, being helpless, by his solemn promise yielded to her two demands, namely, making her son,
Bharatha, the King of Ayodhya and banishing Rama to Woods for fourteen years. Rama, not at all perturbed at this sudden change of events, gave his unqualified consent to depart to the Woods. Rama met his mother and took leave of her to go to the forests, with his wife Sita, who insisted that she should serve him, wherever he was and Lakshmana too followed suit, in sheer implicit obedience to serve his eldest brother, Sri Rama. Ayodhya mourned when Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana left for the forests. Guha, the ardent devotee of Sri Rama helped the three to cross river Ganga. Wandering through forests, the three spent few days on the hill, Chitrakuta.

At Ayodhya, Dasaratha, grief stricken at the advent of Sri Rama, at last breathed his last, heart-broken in melancholy. Vashista, the royal preceptor sent messengers to bring Bharatha, from his maternal grand father's house, in Kekaya. Bharatha, great in virtue and noble in mind never dreamt at the wonderful happening of the unrighteous event, came to Chitrakuta, along with the queen Mothers, followed by the citizens, to bring back Sri Rama to Ayodhya, to handover the Kingdom of Khosala to Sri Rama. Bharatha pleaded most to Rama requesting him to return to Ayodhya
but all in vain. Bharatha returned to Ayodhya at long last, with the Padukas (Sandals) of Sri Rama, and placed them on the royal throne, himself becoming an ascetic and continued to govern the Kingdom, as a servant of Rama.

After staying for a day with the Sage, Atri and his wife, Anasuya, the three trekked their way to Dandaka forest, where he killed several wicked demons who were ransacking the hermitages there, spending nearly 10 years, giving protection to several sages around the area. Sri Rama arrived at the Ashrama of the highly famed sage Agastya Mahamuni, and having had his hospitality, he arrived at Panchavati, on the Bank's of river Godavari, with Sita and his brother Lakshmana. Here, the trouble started when Surpanaka, the sister of Ravana, the King of Sri Lanka, infatuated at the virile personality of Sri Rama, asked to marry her. Lakshmana punished her, by cutting off her nose and ears with his sword at the orders of Sri Rama. Incited at this, Surpanaka instigated her another brother Khara, who sent fourteen thousand Rakshasas to attack Sri Rama, who, in turn, destroyed all the fourteen thousand demons and finally Khara was also killed by Sri Rama.
Surpanaka lost no time to tell her brother, Ravana, the King of Sri Lanka and suggested to him to kidnap Sita, by way of revenge. Wicked and vicious Ravana kidnapped Sita in the absence of Rama and Lakshmana by hatching a clever plan, asking Maricha, another demon to assume the deceitful golden deer to attract Sita who asked Sri Rama to fetch her the illusory golden deer who Rama killed at a far off distance. Ravana forcibly carried away Sita in an aerial chariot. Sita, shaken by the Jataya, the Chief Garuda tribe eagle bird intercepted Ravana, to stop him from carrying away Sita, but he was seriously wounded by Ravana. Sita saw five Vanara Chiefs from the sky and tied some of her ornaments in her upper clothes and threw the same in their midst, with a fond hope that they might tell Sri Rama about her fate. Ravana reached his Kingdom, Sri Lanka and showed Sri Sita all the pomp and magnificence of his matchless Lanka and desired her love, which Sita, did not care to look at Ravana. Ravana placed her in the Ashokavana, under the vigil of Rakshasa women waiters.

Sri Rama, after killing deer disguised Maricha, returned to Panchavati, only to find Sri Sita, disappeared from the spot. Lakshmana and Rama searched for Sita, with
some diligence but in vain. They reached the dying gridha Jatayu and were informed by the bird that Sita was carried away towards South direction/. On their way to South, Rama and Lakshmana killed a headless demon Kabanda, who while dying, told both to meet Sugreeva a Vanara Chieftain on the banks of Pampa lake. On their way to meet Sugreeva, Rama and Lakshmana met a pious devotee of Rama, by name, Sabari, who had been waiting long to meet Sri Rama, who blessed her to reach the heaven. Both Rama and Lakshmana reached Rusyamuka mountain range and happened to meet Sugreeva, the Vanara Chieftain, who was living in exile, in terror, of Vali. Sugreeva, afraid of the onward march of Rama and Lakshmana suspecting them to have been sent by Vali, the King of Vanaras, sent one of his ministers, Sri Hanuman, to know about the intruders. Hanuman approached the two strangers and spoke to the two in a faultless and clear, distinct unassuming manner enquiring their whereabouts. Hanuman came to know, how Rama, whose wife Sita was kidnapped by Ravana; was now, in the same fate, as Sugreeva, whose wife, Ruma, was seized by Vali, after expelling Sugreeva from Kishkinda Kingdom. Hanuman foresaw that an alliance between the two would help Sugreeva restore his Kingdom, to their mutual benefit and took both of them to his master, Sugreeva. A life long friendship was established between Sri Rama and Sugreeva with sacred
fire, as witness, both solemnly promising to help each other in restoring their spouses, respectively. With the friendship/alliance with Sri Rama, Sugreeva challenged Vali, for a combat, and Vali plunged for a deadly combat, inspite of the same advice given by Tara, the wife of Vali, to compromise with Sugreeva. When Sugreeva was not able to win over Vali, Sri Rama, shot an arrow at Vali, from a vantage point and Vali died. Sugreeva was installed as the King of Vanaras and now Sugreeva in order to keep up his promise to trace Sita, sent Vanaras in search of Sita, in different directions and one batch, headed by Angada, son of late Vali, Jambavantha and Hanuman, the two ministers of Sugreeva, with other vanara leaders and retinue, started in South direction in search of Sita. Rama gave Hanuman the signet ring of Rama, to show Sita in proof of his bonafides. Hanuma's search party could not return with the whereabouts of Sita, within one month's time and hence they decided to die, by starvation as a self imposed penalty.

At this juncture, Sampathi, the Garuda bird, and brother of Jatayu, advised them to go South down to find Sita, in the Ravana Kingdom. All the Vanaras became happy
about this heart consoling news about the captive place, of Sita, in Sri Lanka and crossing the ocean, to Lanka was a formidable task. Jambavantha extolled Hanuman his feat, of leaping the Ocean, praising his strength, skill, valour, and fleetness to fly in air, to cross the ocean, and Sri Hanuman at this exhortation, made alive to his own prowess and taking off from Mahendra mountain he flew on his sea journey towards Sri Lanka. By sun set the Valiant, mighty powered Hanuman landed in Sri Lanka and he entered the city unobserved. When he was stopped by Lankini, a Rakshashi, guard of the island, whom Hanuman overpowered and reached Ashokavana, where he found Sri Sita, Kept captive, by Ravana, strictly guarded. On his way to Ashokavana, Hanuman came across, Ravana's own Palace, glittering with grandeur, unsurpassed in its precious build and artistic decoration, where at first, he mistook Mandodari, the beautiful senior queen of Ravana, the King of Sri Lanka, for Sita and immediately realised his mistake realising, a model of chastity of Sita, could not look so charming after her separation from Sri Rama, by kidnapping by Ravana. Hanuman made sure, that the lady under the tree was none other than Sita, by her dress and appearance, at which he was deeply grieved, seeing Sita's most miserable and pitiable
condition. At this juncture, Ravana arrived at Ashokavana, in his usual visit and coaxed Sita to yield to his wishes and become the first queen of Sri Lanka, but Sri Sita chided him, comparing him to a straw, which stirred the wrath of Ravana, who told her that if she did not change her mind within two months time, she would be brought to his kitchen and served for his breakfast.

Sri Hanuman, hiding near a tree top incognito, observing all the drama played by Ravana, and totally despaired and dejected, Sita preparing to end her life, started reciting Sri Rama's name and fame, glorifying his personality and his earlier story, which captured the attention of Sri Sita, who looking at Hanuman, standing before her as Sri Rama's messenger became extremely happy overcome with joy and pleasant feelings, receiving the signet ring as a mark of identity from her husband, Sri Rama. Sita flooded Hanuman with many questions about the welfare of her husband Sri Rama and Lakshmana. Sita also told them that if Sri Rama did not come and release her from captivity within one month, she would end her life. She declined Hanuman's offer, to take her, on his back, which would be improper and also risky, to cross the ocean, she advised Hanuman that Sri Rama and Lakshmana should fight to finish Ravana and release her in
great triumph and victory. Sita gave Hanuman, her crest-
jewel as a token of Hanuman's visit to her, in Lanka for
delivery to Sri Rama. Hanuman took leave of Sri Sita
and before leaving the island he wanted to show his valour
and struck terror all round, when Ravana was informed of
this great devastation, he ordered the guards to capture
him, but all got killed by Hanuman and even Ravana's son
Aksha got killed by Hanuman. To overcome Hanuman Ravana
sent Indrajit, his son, a renowned warrior of great valour.
Indrajit bound Hanuman with Brahmastra and brought him to
the Court of Ravana, whom Hanuman wondered at his majestic
figure and resplendence and rapproached him for his heinous
crime of kidnapping Sita and advised him to return Sita to
Rama, immediately. This enraged Ravana and he ordered that
Hanuman must be punished by killing him, at which Vibhishana
the younger brother of Ravana suggested to Ravana, not to
kill the messenger of Rama. Ravana, heeding to the suggestion, ordered Hanuma's tail to be set on fire. Hanuman's
tail was set on fire and he in turn set fire to the City of
Lanka, bringing devastating havoc, putting Lanka to all
flames. Finally, he visited Sri Sita and took leave of her
and in one leap crossed the ocean and landed on the Indian
shore, to the great thunderous ovation of all vanaras.
They all returned to Sugreeva and Sri Rama, ransacking and
revelling in Madhuvana orchard. On hearing from Hanuman Sri Rama's joy knew no bounds and he became over-whelmed with great emotion. He asked Hanuman to narrate his successful feat and what all he heard from Sita and her enquiries about him. Hanuman described in detail his victorious venture in finding Sita in Sri Lanka.

Sri Rama decided to go to Lanka to punish Ravana and release Sita, from captivity. He told Sugreeva to prepare Vanara army to attack Ravana and Sugreeva, with the Vanara army, building a bridge across the Ocean marched into Lanka. Ravana prepared his army to meet the threat by Sri Rama and did not listen to the advice of Vibhishana to restore Sri Sita, to Sri Rama, in the name of Dharma, and in the interest and welfare and safety of Lanka and its people and make peace with Rama, at which Ravana called Vibhishana, a traitor and banished him from Lanka. Thereupon, Vibhishana with his followers joined Sri Rama war camp and Sri Rama gave him unconditional protection.

Sri Rama, Lakshmana, Sugreeva and the Vanara Army finally attacked Lanka with a suitable military strategy, making a tremendous siege of the City. Indrajit, the son
of Ravana, with his army attacked first of all Lakshmana
and made him unconscious on the battle field with his
captive missile. Sri Anjaneya flew to Himalaya and brought
Sanjeevini Herbs and revived Lakshmana back to normalcy
and Lakshmana fought back. Indrajit, the son of Ravana,
again attacked Sri Rama and Lakshmana with snake missiles,
where upon both the brothers fell unconscious and Garuda
saved both, bringing back both Sri Rama and Lakshmana to
consciousness. In turn, many rakshas were killed by Sri
Rama, Lakshmana and Sugreeva and Sri Hanuman, putting to
death, Kumbakarna, the younger brother of Ravana, Indrajit,
the warrior son of Ravana and other raksha heros. Finally
Ravana appeared before Sri Rama to combat him and Sri Rama
succeeded in killing Ravana finally. Thus, the battle came
to an end.

After the death of Ravana, Sri Rama installed
Vibhishana as the King of Sri Lanka. Vibhishana with all
sincerity and devotion respectfully brought Sri Sita to
Sri Rama. To the great surprise of Sita, Sri Rama declined
to receive Sita, saying that she might have been defiled
during her long stay in the enemy's captivity. Disgusted
at the turn of events, Sri Sita decided to enter the fire
pit, to purify her conscience. Sita entered the fire and Agni, the Fire God emerged saying Sri Sita was pure and Chaste and asked Rama to accept her back, unconditionally, without any reservation. Rama accepted Sri Sita to the great joy of everybody.

The whole group of Sri Rama, Sri Sita, Sri Hanuman and Sugreeva and Vibhishana returned to Ayodhya in the Pushpak Viman, the aerial car, in all gaiety. Sri Rama sent Sri Hanuman in advance to Ayodhya to inform Bharatha of his return home, after fourteen years of exile.

Bharatha felt extremely happy at the return of Sri Rama and received Sri Rama, Sri Sita, Sri Anjaneya and the others, according them a splendid and tumultous reception and the people of Ayodhya rejoiced in pomp and gaiety. Vashista Maharshi the royal preceptor installed Sri Rama and Sri Sita, on the throne, as the King and Queen of Ayodhya at the triumphant victory of Sri Rama. Sri Rama ruled Kosala Kingdom with unparalleled joy, and happiness for a long period with just and benevolent reign, called as Rama Rajya. The later part of Ramayana is called as 'Uttara Ramayana'. The coronation of Sri Rama started the virtuous and righteous rule of the Kingdom.
At a later period, there was a feeling in the Public, about Sri Rama's re-acceptance of Sri Sita, as his wife, after her long defile, in captivity, by Ravana. Acting quickly to this critic public opinion Sri Rama decided to forsake Sita, as a stern action of the ideal King's response to public criticism. At this time, Sri Sita was in an advanced stage of pregnancy, and had earlier expressed her desire to re-visit the hermitages of the sages, in the forest. On the direction of Sri Rama, Lakshmana took Sri Sita in a chariot and left her in the forests. Consequently, Sita entered the Ashrama of Valmiki Maharshi and subsequently she gave birth to the twin sons, Kusa and Lava.

At Ayodhya, Sri Rama felt for his harsh act, in forsaking Sri Sita but he contained himself, mindful of a King's relentless vocation, which he applied himself to the discharge of his royal craft. One day, a Brahmana, with his dead child came to Sri Rama's court, lamenting for the death of his young child. This seemed to be strange in Rama Rajya, that a son should die before his father, which was unusual. Narada, the celestial sage, told Sri Rama the cause for this unusual event to happen which the sage attributed to some unrighteous action being committed by some one, among his subjects, which was flagrant departure.
from the established practice of the four castes. Sri Rama, thereupon, went in search of the defaulter and found Sambuka, a man belonging to lower caste, the Sudras, performing penance a practice that was barred and the prerogative of the first three castes, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. Sri Rama himself killed Sambuka, the Sudra, with his own hands, for his attempt to transgress the established moral order. This punishment to the Sudra, restored life to the dead child.

Thereafter, Sri Rama decided to perform Aswamedha Yaga to proclaim his unquestioned royal supremacy in the country. Meanwhile, Sita's twin sons, Kusa and Lava grew up into youths under the paternal care of Valmiki. By then, Valmiki composed the Epic Poem, called "RAMAYANA", narrating the story of Rama and the sage taught the Epic poem to the twins, who happened to recite the Epic poem, Ramayana, in the presence of Yaga Assembly with Sri Rama and his court personnel and the subjects of Ayodhya who heard the poem, sung by the twins, Kusa and Lava, spell bound and overjoyed.

Instantaneously, Sri Rama enquired about the two youths and learnt that they were his own children twin sons
of Sri Sita. Sri Rama expressed his desire to accept his sons, provided Sri Sita openly, in his court, declared her chastity, before the public. Sri Valmiki asked Sri Sita to declare openly in the royal court, her chastity, but grievously pained at heart at this unbearable humiliation Sita prayed to her Mother, Earth, to go back to her bosom. Mother, Earth broke open the floor of the royal court, where Sri Sita stood hurt and humiliated once again and took her to her lap and went down the Earth, to the thunder struck audience and to the surprise of Sri Rama who called her back, but in vain. The floor of the royal court rejoiced, thus concluding the great immortal Epic, the "Ramayana".

To say a few words about the author of this august Epic, I will present the author Valmiki the sage-poet of "The Ramayana". This is the first national Epic of our country. To know more and more of our ancient Indian culture, we have this monumental Epic, the symbol of invaluable treasures of Indian traditions, myths, customs and epics, besides tremendous development of our civilization, both spiritual and material, depicting social, economic, religious, Philosophical, political and aesthetic descriptions
and presentations. Indian history may present us more about the rulers of India and its geographical set up, but this great Indian Epic only tells us about post-Vedic Culture of India, to know all about our men, women personalities and about the exalted veneration of our land, Bharath, the image of millions and millions of people. This poetic form Epic of Valmiki, written in original Sanskrit Kavya, tells us our ancient, the then Society, the rulers, the political set up and the study of sages and hermitages. Maharshi Valmiki presents this most absorbing and fascinating, plenteous cultural connections of the Epic. We can from the study of world history simply vouchsafe that nowhere else in the world have the people felt such varied and abundant personality studies and character portrayal in this Epic. Valmiki gives us, the socio-economic religious and philosophical aspects and aspirations both for this and for the next life they cherished. He touches the very ideas around which the entire life of the people gathered and flourished, from which they drew inspirations and which they sought to realize in life. Valmiki says the mind and heart of India, have always been noble and courageous, expressed in word, deed and action, and in music and form and reconstruct Indian culture. Valmiki presents the close study of Rama Rajya, in its moral, cultural
social heritage in its glory, with unity, integrity and as a model of posterity and perfection. Valmiki treasures his Epic with a store house of wisdom and learning of ideologies. We can simply say, "What is not in Ramayana is no where."

Valmiki is a gifted saint and is a contemporary of Sage Bharadwaj with his ashram in the valley of Tamasa. He receives from Narada sage, the outline of the Rama-story, representing Rama as an ideal man, endowed with all the qualities of head and heart. After his bath in the river Tamasa, he chances to see a fond pair of crouncha birds at play with each other, when a hunter shoots at the male bird and the consequent grief of the female bird makes Valmiki involuntarily burst forth into a poetic utterance, a pronouncement of curse, on the wicked murderer. At this psychological moment poetic vision dawned on him and with the requisite inspiration from the Brahma, the creator of this universe; accordingly Valmiki wrote, in original sanskrit Kavya, the Ramayana, in a beautiful, narrative and instructive manner.

Valmiki wrote this Epic, during the close age of Sri Rama, as we find in the narrative, the popular tradition.
myths and legends. Valmiki's rendering of the Epic is most touching and heart rending that by singing the song of an ideal King, in the compass of an Epic poem of Stirring vitality, he not only immortalized a golden Epic in the annals of ancient India, but also secured for himself a place of lasting glory in the ambit of world poets. For Valmiki, Rama was a great human being, perhaps the greatest of all, a ' moon among men ' who never swelled from the path of virtue, in the most trying circumstances and who by rising above human infirmities raised man to the level of God, which outlook has invested Valmiki's work with an appeal all its own.

About the date of Ramayana, I find some estimate of the time is given ' Jacob ' holds that the original Ramayana, of Books II to VI might belong to the sixth Century or Eighth Century B.C.. Macdowell had pointed that the Ramayana was composed before 500 B.C. while the more recent portions were probably not added till the second century, B.D., and later. Among the writers, we find from Wintermitz, that the original Ramayana was composed by Valmiki in the third century, B.C. on the basis of ancient ballads, while its contents show, towards the close of the
second century. According to Keith, we believe, we need not go below 300 BC for the Kernal of the Epic, while with regard to the final date of the composition, the Ramayana, including the first and seventh books, it suggests that the second century BC saw most of the work completed. Still we feel no date can be given conclusively. We find, according to Pargiters on date based, upon genealogical collections, we arrive at, that there is a gap of time saying that Rama lived in the fifth century before the war of Mahabharatha, which took place in 1100 BC. So according to him Rama ruled about 1600 BC, which we feel this date is tentative and I feel greater and deeper research is necessary about fixation of the dates of Ramayana. Indeed in reading the Ramayana of Valmiki one cannot but feel the presence of an antique air pervading the whole. Hereby we can understand that the period of the Upanishads must have immediately preceded that of the Ramayana.
CHAPTER - 1

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CHAPTER - 2

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE TEACHINGS OF RAMAYANA

The "RAMAYANA" is the greatest Indian Epic and we have to study this epic as the greatest valuable treasure of Hindu religion and Philosophy. The Valmiki Ramayana, the original Sanskrit poetic work of the great sage, Valmiki Maharshi, will remain for ever in all the civilized world, in all the languages of the East and West. India is proud it has produced the original Epic, the " RAMAYANA " in Devanagari Sanskrit language, by the Aadikavi, Sri Valmiki Maharshi, the great sage-poet. The socio-cultural background of Ramayana tells us the happiest Rama Rajya when Sri Rama ruled his Kingdom. It is needless to say, everybody in Rama Rajya enjoyed their life to their hearts' content. The people of to-day emulate the many splendoured happiness of Rama Rajya. No member of the Society, of Rama Rajya felt unsecured. It was heaven on Earth, when Sri Rama ruled, our land, Bharat.

The Human life is the Supreme Birth, among, the living beings with liberty, equality and fraternity
They enjoyed the fullest freedom, even in criticising the King. The King, practically, was bound by the criticism of his own subjects. About the equality, they were respected most and even higher than the King. About the fraternity, they were cementing force between the King and the people. The living beings endowed with knowledge which is unique to only human beings, and every Individual is endowed with knowledge, love and affection. True to his human birth, he lives up in complete satisfaction. The Society in which he was born expects every individual to conduct himself to the tenets of the Holy Books of his faith. He has to fulfil his obligations to the Society, as it gives him all rights and benefits to lead a life blessed with Socio-conscious character. He has to discharge his obligations to the Society, in upkeeping the welfare of his fellowmen. He must always give his best to the Society, which in turn gives him the privileges and benefits according to the needs of every individual.
As we study the rule of Sri Rama, in Ayodhya, as Rama Rajya, we have the Reality of the Society, in which every subject of the kingdom is protected. We observe that Sri Rama upheld the principles of Truth, Righteousness and Justice, in all his actions, only to promote the welfare of his subjects.

The King never drifted from the tenets of Truth, Righteousness and Justice. People rightly called the State of the King as "RAMA RAJYA", a reality of the Era of the people. As the two Eras passed, after the incarnation of Sri Rama, in the second Era, called the 'Tretayuga', people in the present are still so radiant of the glory of Rama Rajya. Often we hear from various corners of our country that we still hope for the establishment of Rama Rajya, in India, Bharatha Varsha. Our late, Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhiji had the greatest hopes to establish Rama Rajya, in our land, early in this century. He did hope India would emerge as Rama Rajya, at any time, during his life time. His dream did not bear fruit to some extent and we are all ever grateful to our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. He laid down his life, to make India, same as Rama Rajya of the
erstwhile era. He sacrificed his life for the sake of the people of India, for its Unity in diversity. He dedicated every hour of his life career to establish the three concrete principles of Truth, non-violence and peace. He worked for the unity and he fought for the Human Rights, with the alien Rulers. He shook the mighty empire of the foreign rulers. He did sacrifice his life for the Freedom of our land and his ardent ambition came true, when India got independence, a rule by the people, of the people and for the people. He dreamt for Ramrajya and determined to establish, in our land and to follow the principles of Ramrajya for the good and welfare of the people.

Now, I wish to analyse the most noble and commendable principles and ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi. Why did he subscribe to the very idea of Rama Rajya? The answer is simple and universal in character. He wanted our land to be a secular State; because India has been a Secular State, from the time immemorial and after Independence too Gandhiji determined and cherished India to continue to be a Secular Country. The analytical reason for the noblest idea of Mahatma Gandhi
is to respect all religions of the world and the multi-
faceted faiths of the people of India. The crux of
this most vital and highly critical issue is the social
background of India, ever since the Aryans and Dravi-
dians migrated to India from Central Asia. A historical
and geographical set-up of our land speaks volumes to
support the Secular character of our land. I also
advance a critical approach to this Secular character
of our land ever since the past Eras., viz., KRUTHA YUGA;
DWAPARA YUGA and TRETHA YUGA, the subject Era of our
thesis, now and the present Era, namely KALI YUGA, which
presents us, now, a gigantic colossal problematic con-
ditions, to the present generation.

In Rama Rajya, the Ruler, the King should be Dharmathma. The two distinguishing features of our
Indian Culture, as embodied in our Spiritual and Classi-
cal Secularism or Secular Classics and handed, down the
ages hence, in our tradition, are DHARMA AND SATHYA,
namely Righteousness and TRUTH. Dharma is the law of the
Universe, Sathya, or Truth is the law of people. These
two factors make the world sustain and make it move on
its ordained course. Dharma is Sathya and Sathya is
Dharma and it is said there is no greater Dharma than Truth. We must note that Truth always prevails and this shows the equivalence between Truth and Righteousness. We find these two qualities, most essential with the King. We find Sri Rama stands for both Dharma and Sathya in perfect measure. One who is always following the principles of Sathya and Dharma will always engage and take delight in promoting the welfare of the people. Dharma guards and protects one who always administers Justice and protects Dharma. It is said in our Scriptures, "PROTECTED DHARMA PROTECTS".

We find in Ramayana, that Rama is the very soul of Dharma and is ever constant to Sathya and unequalled in valour. Dharma and Sathya have precedence over, even martial valour in bringing about the defeat of an enemy and that however powerful a person may be, he will be defeated. The foundation of the strength of a king and his kingdom lies in Dharma and Sathya, rather than in mere physical strength. Valmiki describes the Rama Rajya as the ideal of a welfare state that was actualised when Sri Rama ruled the Kingdom. In Rama Rajya people lived happily, that there was no break of mortality; people
were not affected by sickness; there was no danger from thieves and no evil befell people, and women did not bewail the death of their husbands. The people lived long and the young did not die prematurely. People conducted themselves in accordance with Dharma as their King did so. Valmiki describes that the people of Rama Rajya were free from any kind of hardship or grief, when Sri Rama, was the King of the land. Great persons ever strove to maintain their good name and renown. Sri Rama was even prepared to renounce his life and his Brothers too, to save his honour, is the Kingdom. Sri Rama says, "I will always uphold 'Yasas' or good fame is of paramount importance, against any remark, from any quarter, in his kingdom.

Poet Kalidasa says, "Sri Rama set an example, by banishing his wife, Sita, when he heard a scorn against him, by a commener about his taking back Sita, after she was kept captive by Ravana, in Sri Lanka and that how Rulers should acquit themselves in the face of temptation to secure private benefit, in scorn of public good. No wonder, therefore that all of Rama's subjects
modelled their lives on the way in which he ruled his Kingdom. Looking at Rama, the people followed the path of Dharma, refrained from inflicting harm on one another and were extremely happy. We find in Rama Rajya, people praised Sri Rama as an embodiment of Dharma and everybody vouchsafed him as Dharmatma. The Socio-cultural background of the teachings of Ramayana, given a Voluminous study, towards the State of Rama Rajya and also the cultural status of the people of the land, with the characters of Ramayana. A critical study of Ramayana gives us how Rama Rajya has provided and ensured the Welfare and happiness of the people through all efficient and good administration. To-day, we find, in our Era, the world is riddled with strife, misery and tension followed by terror, with heinous crimes, perhaps unimagined in the Era of Rama Rajya. Despite the advance of Civilization and progress of science and technology and the international forums to promote peace and security of mankind, for the good and welfare of all concerned, under one umbrella, we are still in the pangs of misery and tension, on the rise.
Any Ruler of the land has to ensure the people of the land, peace, prosperity and welfare of all concerned, irrespective of cast or creed, if at all, it is a secular state. The king has to follow, the well-administered principles and practices, to run his government more efficiently, in the name of welfare of one and all, as a moral duty bound. Our epic, Ramayana offers us, to-day the standard administrative principles and the state craft of Ramayana provides adequately to emulate our present day, rule of the land, for the peace and prosperity and amity in unity, among all concerned, professing secularism in the State, only to uphold respect to every religion, only to secure the faith of people, promoting everlasting peace. We have to follow implicitly the many faceted lessons, worth emulating from Ramayana, of the past two Eras of the world. An indepth study of the Epic, Ramayana, presents the high level of civilization, practised by the people of Rama Rajya, keeping everybody safe and secured, ensuring everybody's happiness. Rama Rajya provides meaningful administrative, guidelines, by the different characters of the Epic. All the characters in the epic constitute as a body, representing the ruler of the landr
of the land only to highlight the unique character of the Ruler, who always stood steadfast for the welfare of his subjects. When the people suffered, under any circumstances the King also suffered for the sake of his subjects, because the King always stood for the well-being of his people, of the land and was ready to sacrifice for the happiness of his subjects. The King took to his heart personally to maintain the degree of the happiness of his people at all levels and never failed to restore peace and prosperity to his subjects at all times.

While we take to the study of the world Religions, they tell us all about the myths of respective countries and to understand them we have to study the great personalities of these Epics, with their character and conduct in particular and their Socio-political cultural background. So doing, we come to understand their teachings and to know how very important they are to the then Society; indepth all about the socio-cultural background of any country, to know more about the mythological treasures of any land and study the spiritual background of those myths and
then the religions and rituals have to be examined in relation to the people and personalities. As we study, our country's culture, rather, the Indian culture, from age long Eras of our land, which will take you to will take you to the beginning of four Eras hence, we will readily come to know the heritage of our land and the origin of Indian Culture, from the Rulers of respective Kingdoms, as India has been a land of wide range Kingdoms, in all the four directions of the Asian subcontinent world Religions tell us all about myths of respective countries and to understand them, we have to study the great personalities of these epics, with their character and conduct in particular and their Socio-political cultural background. So doing, we come to understand their teachings and try to know how very important they are to the Society, with special reference to the secular values of those teachings; we have to study and know the mythological treasures of those lands and study the spiritual background of those kingdoms, in relation to the people and personalities. Particular emphasis has to be made on such Indian literature as it would reveal the deeper impulses of India. To-day, we find from a graphic survey of Indian literature, the great scope for re-integration of the Indian Culture in the light of
modern knowledge and to suit our present day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine supreme importance and utility.

We know man wants to live with certain amount of self-reliance and with a degree of dignity, with in his society. This demands the prevalence of social conditions, suited to allow him Freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities. We also want to create the harmony of individuals to a possible extent and to establish. Mere writing voluminous history of the land, Bharatha Varsha, gives us only the historic narration, from one dynasty to the descendents of the same generation. We can study the said history of each dynastic rule, as mere historic presentation of the said Ruler of the land and the expansion of his Kingdom, either by waging wars against the neighbour kingdoms, or by winning the royal relationship, by matrimony and economic exchanges between the two kingdoms. This is the case in the early history of the Rulers of respective Kingdoms, by virtue of their hereditary rule by royal dynasties;
The social set up of the Kingdoms of Sri Rama was the professed objective of providing and also ensuring the welfare and happiness of the people through an efficient and good administration. As we find the present day world situation riddled with strife, misery and tension, war-torn and threatened at every stage with Nuclear war-weapons, destabilising the peace of the world, at every place, everytime, not guaranteed for normal living of an individual in peace and happiness, despite the country of our Nation's continued efforts to restore normalcy at all cost, for normal world peace, we are yet to achieve the desired goal. The present day world, hungry to grab super powers, is threatened with fears of war and destruction of mankind with nuclear war-weapons. Now let us go back to the Era of Rama Rajya where everybody was in peace and happiness. Peace prevailed at every stage, not because it was attempted to keep peace and welfare of people but because the Ruler never failed to run his government, for the sake of his people, for the people. It was not a question of democracy, which would be the Government of the elected representatives of the Government. In Rama Rajya, it was totally, the Ruler's prime concern to have his subjects kept jubilant, content and happy
of their worthy living, in the State. The Ruler of the land has to preserve and safeguard peace, prosperity and welfare of his subjects, at all times at any cost, because it was a rule by the King and not rule by the people. As we study the character of Sri Rama, before we go into greater detail of the socio-cultural background of the teachings of Ramayana, we deeply note Truth prevailed in Rama Rajya,12 which goes to show us that Truth and Righteousness were in equivalence, as these two qualities must be the essentials of a King. Sri Rama possessed them in a perfect measure. With these two essential qualities, Sri Rama took delight in promoting the welfare of his subjects, Sri Rama became the embodiment of Dharma, and always true to the Truth, social relations; This means to form a social order, which is expected to be within the frame work of the Moral order. This leads one to the arena of creative art of life, through which he can progressively transmute, so that he lives in peace, in the society and promotes peace with others; thereby he is directly serving the man-kind and in turn keeps served by the Society. This translates the teaching of God into practicality where we find God in our midst in anything and everything a God personification.
India is a secular country, by the passage of history and it understands and appreciates currents of world thought. Indian spirit though confined to flow through different religions and linguistic channels, has a common urge and aspiration. We can emphatically say, one who misses to know and understand the socio-cultural background of India, he misses the beauty and grandeur of life. We tell the rest of the world, India is proud of two greatest epics, "The Ramayana" and "The Mahabharatha". The quintessence of the "Ramayana" is the pure culture of the land, the purity of men and women as well, the divinity of some rare personalities and the Sumum Bonum of "Dharma" and the key note of "Truth", followed by the indomitable Justice unto the deserving; whereas Mahabharatha is "human life", personified in all dimensions, depicting the socio-cultural and political background of India in the greatest perspective and hence we call, Mahabharatha, "What is not in it, is no where." It is a whole literature in itself depicting a code of life, a philosophy of socio-Ethical relations. As we know, Mahabharatha teaches us everything and it presents the greatest contribution to our land, the presentation of "BHAGAVAD GITA", which is the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas,
for the spiritual development of every Indian in Particu-
lar, and every human-being guided by true culture.
To-day, we are depending upon these two greatest epics
for the uplift of our social, ethical and political
development, only to reconcile the disorders of present
day society. These two immortal epics of India will
guide India forever and forever, with the spirit of holy
divinity, and immeasurable nobility and men and women
projecting the socio-cultural back-ground of our beloved
land, as a lead-star, in the county of Nations.

Ramayana, the great epic of India, is an
integral part of our religion. It is as necessary for
religion and National Culture as it is to a country's
history of religion and culture. Our Indian culture,
dating back to the Epics rests on its stable spiritual
foundation and functions as a Life-giving inspiration
and teaches the society the essence and essentials for
the conduct of the individual in accordance with the
dictations of holy scriptures. Our socio-cultural bon-
dage is cemented inspite of the vast numbers of races
and religions together as one people despite cast,
creed, space and language. Indian heritage centuries
past conveys to the present generation how India kept
the vast links undivided and unbroken despite unity in diversity, from North to South and the East to West, as one Nation.

The socio-cultural background of the teachings of Ramayana centres around the concept of Dharma. We may question here why the teachings centre around and how the teachings centre around the concept of Dharma. The teachings of Ramayana are mainly to save Dharma for the people; when it is of the people, it is necessarily of the people and when it is of the people, the conclusion is by the people, for the well-being of all the people of the society. Even the Gods above blessed the adharsha Purusha, Sri Rama, for the steadfast determination of his mind to accept Sri Seetha, after her release from the captive, only when she proved the purity of her chastity. We have, when examined deeply, the two important concepts, in Love and Dharma, Rama upheld Dharma, for the sake of his people, lest they did not forget or abandon Dharma. Sri Seetha, the female counterpart of the supreme being is the embodiment of compassion and grace. Compassion is the Supreme Mother and she is enthroned in the heart of Sri Rama. The quality of the Lord's compassion can be understood from the experience of human love. The nobility
of Sri Rama is well-projected in his deep-concern for the welfare and well-being of his subjects, despite, at the risk of abandoning his consort and children. This reveals from the teachings of Ramayana, full of love and strength for the people to emulate, only to improve their socio-cultural temperament and for the uplift of the individual conduct in the Society. To-day, we are finding the experiences and feelings of the Hero, and the Heroine of Ramayana and to follow their teachings besides the other characters of the Epic.

As we examine the teachings of Ramayana, in conformity with the socio-cultural background, we can make a study of the duties of the society, when Sri Rama ruled his Kingdom. The Law of Karma, or in the larger context we can say the duties of the society, during the Epic days of Ramayana, are of utmost importance to every individual; because those teachings educate us to correct ourselves and to perform our bound and duty to the society in general and to the individual himself to uphold Dharma in particular. The Law of Karma, namely the Doctrine founded on the Laws of continuity and causation prevailing in the world
around us - has all along been, and continues to be the lodestar, the beacon Light of the Horizon, the guiding force that has moulded generations after generations in our country, in particular and the world at large, after the Development of the world Nature. Perhaps, we may have to feel and console ourselves, we are still in the cradle of Mother Nature, to know the great secrets of Nature, as they are, from the dawn of creation.

To highlight the Socio-cultural background of Ramayana, the first Poet Valmiki Maharshi, indicates the first condition of Rama Rajya is that the King should be a strict follower of Dharma, the two most distinguishing factors of our culture, embodied in our spiritual and secular classics and handed down, in our tradition, are Dharma and Truth. Dharma is the Law of the Universe, and Truth is the Law of Men. It is these two universal Elements of Dharma and Truth that sustain the world and more on the ordained path. As we examine these two universal elements, Dharma is Truth and Truth is Dharma, to raise to the occasion, to present these elements of divine declarations. We find there is no greater Dharma than Truth and it is also said that
"Truth Prevails." This shows the equivalence between Truth and Dharma. It can be said whoever possesses these two universal divine qualities, namely, Truth and Dharma, can be said, he is a King, who guards and protects his subjects, with love in perfect measure. As Sri Rama is a Dharmagna, and Sathyasandha, he will always be engaged and take delight in promoting the welfare of his people. As the divine saying goes, when Dharma is protected, Dharma protects, those who protect Dharma. The foundation of the strength of the King and his Kingdom lies in Dharma and Truth, rather than in mere physical strength. Sri Rama exemplified this in all his encounters with his enemies as narrated in the original Kavya of Sri Valmiki.

When Sri Rama ruled his Kingdom the state enjoyed complete Welfare of the State that was actualised. People enjoyed good health, there was no danger from thieves and no evil befell the people. Women did not bewail the death of their husbands, people lived long and the elders did not have to perform the obsequies of the younger members of the families. As the Ruler of the Kingdom lived and conducted himself following
Dharma and Truth the people too lived following Dharma and Truth. Valmiki wrote in his Kavya, saying "they were free from any kind of hardship or grief, when Rama was the King of land."

We know the ancient dictum, saying, "As is the King, so are the subjects. Sri Rama did not hesitate to act quickly and promptly reacted to the direct remark. When Sri Rama heard, a rustic saying despairingly about the stay of Sri Sita, as a captive under Ravana's Control, for an year, in Sri Lanka, Sri Rama decided to banish Sri Sita to forests; He had justified his action, saying, that he would never take advantage of this royal portion and brush aside any public criticism, however warranted it might be. Rama took the decision unequivocally and acted promptly to ward off public criticism. Sri Rama knew the rustic's statement was not true and not well founded. Sri Rama himself says, "This evil report about Sita tends my heart and causes me immense grief, though I know, it is false. This infamy consigns whoever is subject to it to destruction as long as it is uttered by the tongues of men. Great persons ever strive to maintain their good name and renew. To save my honour, I am prepared to renounce my
life and even you, my Brothers. What then needs to be about putting away Sita? For, when once even the least wisper is spoken against me, it is bound to spread among the people, like a drop of oil on a watery surface. I will not let this happen. For, I belong to the race of Yashodaras to whom Yasas or good fame is of paramount importance to the subordination of every mask of material wealth " - Mahakavi Kalidasa puts it in the following Sloka:

Nischitya cānanyavyittivācyam,
tyāgēna pankhāha parimāstrumāichat;
apiswadeḥāk kimuhāndvyārmak
vasōdhanānam hi vasō garīyaha.

This is how, as Rama himself set an example of Rulers, saying, how Rulers (Kings) should acquit themselves in the face of temptation to secure private, or personal benefit in scorn of public good. No wonder, therefore, that all of Rama's subjects modelled their lives on the way in which he ruled his kingdom. Observing the virtuous Path of Rama people too followed the Path of Dharma
refraining from inflicting harm on one another and were extremely happy. In Rama Rajya, the name of Sri Rama lived forever in the memory of men and all the people resounded it, we find, when Sri Rama ruled his land, Ayodhya, the people rightly called the Kingdom, "Rama Rajya", because it was a perfect government, so designated by the people. It was a reality of the time. The principles of Rama were upheld and followed by the successors of the Hindu Kings, great writers of "Rama Rajya" extolled, in their books, in Sanskrit and other languages also.

To say, how Rama ruled his Kingdom, is to equate the maxim, "As is the eye to the Body, so is the King to the State." He is the source and example of Truth and Righteousness and the sustainer of the people. He is the Father and Mother in one, to them all, the cause of the happiness of his people. In Rama Rajya, the first characters of the ruler of the land was an embodiment of Righteousness, with the firm mind to establish Righteousness, the administrative set up in Ayodhya was designed to provide the maximum happiness for the maximum number of people for the maximum period,
based as it was on the principles of Dharma, Righteousness and Moral values. We have to say, that the King was assisted by a cabinet of ministers, who were known for their character and obedience, towards the ruler of the land. The social set up was such that the democratic values were honoured by the King, though, he had the sole authority of the rule of the land. In Rama Rajya, the Ruler was assisted by the sane advice of the sages, who were above board, practically no interest in wealth and known for non-attachment. The welfare of the society was utmost in their mind and they never tried to take power into their hands. They functioned without fear or favour. The welfare of the people was the sole aim of these sages and the ministers and they had none other object in mind - The Chief Adviser to the King always used to uphold Dharma and his teachings became law, toward the path of Righteousness, and Dharma, leading to the welfare of one and all. No doubt the cabinet of sages advised the King on all matters and the Ruler supervised the administration in every respect. The Ethics of the rule of the King of Rama Rajya was solely the moral code of the Lord of the Universe, reigning Supremacy, in all respects. This most creditable social set up of the
administration in Rama Rajya led to the appreciable culture of people of Rama Rajya. The people showed no fear and thereby they were always courageous to share the culture of their society. The people were conscious of their duties and did not fail to perform their duties in the right direction.

To say the important teachings of the socio-cultural background of Rama Rajya, King Dasaratha tells Sri Rama, about the running of the Government, in knowing the conditions and loyalty of his subjects and the relative strength and intentions of the neighbouring states through a net-work of special emissaries; to invite direct petitions from people; to hear their grievances and to decide the cases of the people, on their own merits, to please his appointees, in the civil army, and civic guards and to maintain people, amity with unity among people. Human relationship, in the Society was very well maintained. It is very much noteworthy to mention that the learned section and elders were very much revived to ensure domestic harmony. We can also follow the clear administrative set up of the ruling of the people by the King, embracing every section of administration, like, home, defence, finance, Labour
relations. Agriculture, including Foreign affairs, which we are now actually adopting in our present set-up of democratic system of government elected, by the people, of the people, and for the people. The Socio-cultural background of the teachings of Rama Rajya include, holding in high esteem Gods of daily worship, Kinmen in honour, due respect to the aged people, besides, the learned Teachers, Physicians moving the society in high pedigree giving due expression to their image and culture. To project the fame of the King, the laws of Truth and virtue are well founded, for the prosperity of the nation and welfare of the society in particular. Individuals are honoured for their service to the Society and the galaxy of bravemen were always recognised and honoured by the King, to give them greater enthusiasm - This good gesture by the King brings harmony in the Community and peace to the nation.

In Ramarajya, the socio-cultural background also throws on the men, who were the builders of society and the Kingdom, whoever is wise, brave, clever and discreet will bring fame and prosperity to the King and to the Kingdom. Even the head of the army of the King, if he is of resolute nature, gallant, talented, of spotless character, well devoted and clever, the King will flourish
in all leaps and bounds. The social relations between the people, the ruled and the Ruler will become harmonious, provided the ruled are kept jubilant. Ambassadors used to play a major role in the socio-cultural setup of the Kingdom, as they used to be learned, clever, ready-witted, bestowed with the power of distinguishing, in the Kingdom, The King in Rama Rajya, never failed to defend and protect the security and welfare of the Society and the prosperity of the people at large, especially the women folk, were treated impartially. A wise King holds sway over the larch and administers Justice to the people, quite in consonance with righteousness. The King is said to be far-sighted to know more and more of the people and the pulse of his Kingdom. Evidently, the King, who is discreet, erudite, self-controlled, grateful and who obeys the divine laws, can rule his land in great name and fame and Sri Rama is such a model King in Rama Rajya; This King is verily worshipped by his subjects, who is always alert and conscious of the welfare of his people. The great heritage of Rama Rajya, enshrined in Ramayana, shines through every fact of the epic, which has eternal relevance to humanity. Ramayana has, by its name a glory, personifying the human incarnation. This Epic is full of socio-cultural aspects, full of gems like an ocean and the prime
The role of human incarnation is to educate humans on all aspects of the art of living. We have to express our real feeling, evaluating this great epic, to reveal its infinite wisdom to the people of our Motherland and we wish and pray to present to every body, wisdom and, bless us all as envisaging in the universal prayers.

The glory of creation was not complete without the starting point of Dharma, here what I mean by Dharma is, the truth of the Universe, as we find in our Holy scriptures and the beginning of Dharma, as the years rolled by, has been acquiring different shades of meaning and signifying different issues followed by the events, according to the context. This Dharma concept, gradually developed by Sadhana or consistent practice has been leading the way to Righteousness, here we have to mean the very principle of Dharma is the Support or ground of everything in this Universe. We should take this principle of Dharma in the Supreme sense, means the "Supreme being", who is the direct sense perception in the Supreme perfection. I have preambled the above paragraph to bring home to the readers that this universe is the direct representation of the Supreme being and we perceive the Supreme Being in everything, in this Universe.
The study of Ramayana gives us the golden treasure to understand the soul and heart of India, evidently the people of India, of all walks of life. This is possible through its literature, both secular and sacred. Through ages, India has been teaching and continues to teach its generation the rich heritage of the land and the richest culture of the people. The unparalleled culture of India has its own message to its people and to the people of the other parts of the world. It has a religion of its own, not to speak of less of other faiths and never to say less of other religions. It carries in its bosom, all the burden of the land, low or high, poor or rich, and the millions of innocent people, not knowing what is bad to them is bad to others and to restrain from harm to other fellowmen. This is a lesson given to us by our rich cultural heritage and we believe, even to-day, what is good to us will be necessarily good to our fellowmen. The spirit of tolerance taught us, to live and let live, through generations hence and now, to-day, it continues to preach the same message of compassion unto thy fellowmen for a peaceful co-existence. The present generation also
believes, to a greater extent, the social democratic, economic equality amongst ourselves, for a common goal of peace for all. Our Educational ideology is pervaded with an ideal of morality, both individual and social. Our Educational system, a well-preserved method, is an uninterrupted ideal succession of pupils and teachers, by which knowledge is concerned and transmitted. Our Indian education is a system of realisation of the Truth which is the fulfilment of life and education. Our Veda scripts teach us, the reaching of the absolute Truth. The concept of Dharma, the religion, virtue or duty have been the foundation of our life. Our religion provides us with a moral frame, for secular and sacred duties depending upon, one's status in life. Our Educational teachings have been practical and pragmatic import. The teachings of Ramayana, had the responsibility of preparing the individual for Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, by doing and understanding everything, evolving the personality from the lowest value to the highest value through four stages of life, viz., Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprasta and Sanyasa.