CHAPTER - 3

THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH, DHARMA, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE
ACCORDING TO RAMAYANA

'TRUTH:

Man's quest for Truth has been immemorial and he is still trying to know with its full nature. We have already seen that Philosophy was universally acknowledged as the Mother of all sciences. All the sciences are significant of their individual presentation for the verification of Truth. As we examine this statement both science and philosophy take their birth from the same source. The true distinction between science as the application of intellect to the study of natural and philosophy as the application of intellect to the study of non-natural. This is the essence of the distinction the Gita makes between Philosophy and science, Gnana and Vignana.

One characteristic feature of any proposition we know, that it must be true. Truth is involved in knowing epistemologically and so what is truth. Truth is a general term of great value. The word, true is used in many ways and senses. We want to know here, only with the sense of 'truth' in which 'truth' is the property, characteristic of proposition. A true proposition describes a state of affairs that occurs. A proposition, as we know, becomes true, if it corresponds
with a 'fact'. Conclusively, we can define truth is, corresponds to with fact, which is used to mean the same as true proposition. Truth also consists in coherence is a relation among propositions. Truth also is defined as "what works", and a true proposition is one that works. Sometimes, we find Truth is not relative to the individual. It is also said that Analytical propositions are considered to be true.

Truth has to do with the assertions or the claims that we make about things. Yet we feel, among the philosophers of the past and the present there has been and is a great diversity of belief. This does not mean, we do not have beliefs. We do have beliefs and great beliefs too. It is also said, by Harold Titus, "that truth is fidelity to objective reality". We can say from this statement that Truth is the agreement between the statement of fact and the actual fact or between the judgment and the situation that the judgment claims to describe. Truth has to do with the assertions or the claims that we make about things.

We also note that the coherence or consistency theory is the test of truth, quite generally accepted by idealists. We note that the consistency or the coherence theory places its trust in the consistency or harmony of all
our judgments. It is also said that a judgment is true, if it is consistent with other judgments that are accepted as true. True judgments are those logically coherent with other relevant judgments.

"Truth is a reciprocally consistent system of propositions, each of which gets its truth", from the whole system. The idealists add, 'it is the consistency of human beliefs with that whole, which makes them true when they are true. Thus purely formal consistency is abandoned and coherence with reality is made the essence of Truth. It is this aspect which justifies calling this a metaphysical form of the consistency theory".5

We can also claim, that Truth grows and it would never be complete or final until it encompassed all of reality.

Now I will deal with the conception of Truth, in Ramayana.

We can say, Valmiki Maharshi did write this great epic in original Kavya, in the Sanskrit language. The Truth of Putrakamestiyaga is the result of the birth of Sri Rama, son of Queen Kausalya, Bharatha, the son of queen Kaikeyi and Lakshmana and Sathrugna, the two sons of queen Sumitra. The fact that sage Viswanittra took both Sri Rama and Lakshmana
to put an end to the menance of the demons, bears the truth that Sri Rama killed the lady demoness Tataki and also the two giant demons namely, Maricha and Subhahu.

The marriage of Sri Rama with Sita, the daughter of King Janaka of Mithila Kingdom, bears the happy event of facts, followed by the marriages of Lakshmana and Sathrugna and Bharatha also.

The coronation of Sri Rama, as the crown prince of Ayodhya Kingdom and the very announcement of the coronation function, made by King Dasaratha himself, did not come off as a fact of the event. Instead, queen Kaikeye the second consort of King Dasaratha, upset the whole event and made King Dasaratha to pronounce that Sri Rama would go to the forests for fourteen years and that Bharatha, the son of queen Kaikeye to be crowned as the King of Ayodhya. The very fact that Sri Rama most willingly and obediently obeyed his father's saying, by leaving for the forests to spend in exile for 14 years, and that his second son, Bharatha the son of queen Kaikeye, to be crowned as the crown prince and King of Ayodhya in the first place, at the same muhurth fixed for Sri Rama for his coronation, the former did happen and the latter did not happen. Sri Rama did leave for the forests, with his wife Sita and his younger brother Lakshmana to uphold the great
virtue of his 'Pitruvakya Paripalana'. The fact is, Bharatha's
coronation did not take place at all and instead Bharatha,
abandoning his coronation came to the forests to take back
Sri Rama and to instal him as the rightful crown prince of
Ayodhya.

The fact that Sita was abducted by Ravana, the King
of Sri Lanka in the absence of Sri Rama, who was away from
the Ashrama of Sita, to fetch her the golden deer, which in
fact was not the real golden deer, but Mareecha the demon, in
disguise of a golden deer to attract Sita and to create a
situation for the absence of Sri Rama from the hermitage making
it convenient to Ravana, to abduct Sita, even in the absence
of Lakshmana, under whose care, Sri Rama left Sita, in the
hermitage passes coherence. The Golden deer, in disguise, by
Maricha, the demon, was killed by Sri Rama. Maricha while
dieing, assuming his real human form, shouted the name of
Lakshmana who was forced to leave the hermitage leaving Sita,
alone, in the hermitage. Maricha while breathing his last,
imitated the voice of Sri Rama and called the name of Lakshmana
for Sri Rama's help, which was all a concoction by Maricha,
the demon, in disguise. The real sacrifice by the sub-human
creature, the King bird, Jatayu gives us good many truths and
facts by themselves. Hanuman, the son of Wind God, as the Pri:
Minister of Sugreeva, the deposed, younger brother of Vali,
the King of Kishkinda, brought the real friendship of his master and Sri Rama, who accepted the offer of finding his wife, Sita abducted by Ravana, the King of Sri Lanka. Sri Rama, killed Vali, the King of Kishkinda and restored the wife of Sugreeva. Sri Hanuman, with his fellomen arrived at the seashore in search of Sita and he flew to Sri Lanka and met Sri Sita in the Ashokavana, in Sri Lanka and he brought the fruitful message to Sri Rama, about the location of Sri Sita, kept captive in Sri Lanka. With the help of Vanara Army, a bridge was constructed and the whole vanara army, headed by Sri Rama, Lakshmana, Sugreeva, Sri Hanuman along with other Vanara army killed Ravana and others and released Sri Sita from captivity. This fact of facts, adds glory to the episode of Sita, giving us factuals, ever since, Sri Rama lost her in the forest. It was a tumultous welcome to Sita after her release from captivity. The coronation of Sri Rama as the King of Ayodhya, and peace and prosperity prevailed. The truth triumphed in Ramayana in many a place and situations in the epic.

DHARMA:

In the depiction of the epic, the Ramayana, by Valmiki Maharshi, Dharma is glorified and greatly, richly personified. It is most stupendously superb that Valmiki renders this epic
the Himalayan heights. In this epic, Dharma relates to respective Yoga mudras suitable to the occasion through out the epic. What presents to us, in this epic, the Ramayana, is the excellence of the epic itself, embodying purity of thought and lofty moral ideals, expressed with the tremendous poetic presentation by Valmiki Maharshi. We come across moral ideals in the description of various notable personalities. Valmiki Maharshi did interpret the law of Dharma, as one of the great exponents. His great epic, the Ramayana is a great treasure of Dharma and laws of Dharma, which make universal appeal, with the noblest thoughts and ideologies. Our Epic, the Ramayana, may be described as the excellent orientation and adaptation to new needs of an older moral and spiritual code. We can say, after a deep study of our epic, that the Ramayana age started passing into a secular society. This epic has become a national moral code inspiring secularism and national integrity, with the tenents of Dharma, as expounded by Valmiki. Dharma is generally defined as, "That on which the existence and prosperity of this universe as well as fair dealing depends is Dharma."

We know Dharma is formulated by the great moralists making it quite comprehensive by its social, economical, moral and biological duties of man living in the Society. The
aim of Dharma is to create mental and spiritual fellowship. We also find the concept of Dharma has had special significance and ethics of Hindus from the earliest times. We find in Hinduism, the Vedas are regarded as revelation, the sacred and the ultimate source of all Dharma. Dharma or Righteousness is activity confirming to the norm of the universe which is good and should not be altered. Dharma upholds the order, the standards and the norm of human action. Dharma is eight fold, as, "Sacrifice, Vedic Study, Charity, Penance, Truth, Fortitude, Forgiveness, non-desire."

According to the Vaisesika system "Dharma is knowledge prominently directed to the achievements of desired happiness, here, in this life, and hereafter also. Dharma is created for the welfare of all the creation. All that is free from doing harm to any created being is certainly, Dharma. Indeed, we find, Dharma is created to keep all creation free from any harm. We call Dharma, by its very sound, because it protects all, preserves all that is created. Dharma is that principle which is capable of preserving the world. We do observe, Dharma seems to be the arbiter, the individual and social conscious keeper, the dictator, the Director, the Principle of interpretation of the properties, that govern the right of functioning of the inner and outerman between the individual and the group. Dharma is the holder that holds,
and the law of its being. We can straight away say, Dharma is the world order. "Dharma is characteristic property scientifically, duty, morally and legally." Dharma, literally means, "the fixed position of duty, at the sametime, right. Dharma is moral law operating in human society than merely a physical law of nature. It holds the whole world from the universal term, the physical, the biological as well as the spiritual, "the characters of Dharma are " fortitude, forgiveness, restraint, non-stealing, purity control over sense organs, intelligence, knowledge, truth, absence of anger. Dr. Radha-krishnan writes, "under the concept of Dharma the Hindu brings the forms and activities which shape and sustain human life", in relation to purushartha, Dharma is the whole duty of man, to the forefold purpose of life. We can say Dharma is the guardian angel - the only friend who follows men, even after death, when everything is left behind and the body perishes. According to Valmiki Ramayana, the concept of life was happy and immortal existence, and the concept of God was glorified in respect of power, intelligence and capacity.

The application of Dharma, as expounded in the Ramayana, is manifold. Sri Rama, who was the very incarnation of the Supreme self, is rightly described as the"Embodiment of Dharma." At the same time, Sri Rama is the personification of Sathya or truth, as a speaker of truth is said to speak Dharma, or a person speaking Dharma is said to speak 'Truth'.

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Both are said to be righteousness. As Dharma has different shades of meaning and signifies righteousness, which is the very principle, which is the support ground of every thing else in this universe. In this supreme sense, Dharma means the Supreme being, who is the "Akar" of every other thing.

Sri Rama is Dharma itself, for gaining any object, in life. Sri Rama, the hero of Valmiki Ramayana practised all the virtues of life, in perfect manner and set an example to the world. He preached and practised supreme truths and translated them in action in his state craft, the functions of a King. We call Sri Rama a perfect man, because he is an embodiment of Dharma in the real sense as he is divested of all is defiling. Sri Rama was very kind, good and truthful to the people and devoted to the welfare of his subjects. He was the protector of one's own Dharma and also the protector of his people; Always approached by the good like the ocean by the rivers, and noble to one and all.

The people of Ayodhya told King Dasaratha that, "Rama is a virtuous man in this universe, devoted to Sathya and Dha. He is a knower of Dharma, man of good conduct, forgiving, papa: fier of his people, pure minded always pleasing and agreeable speech. He was engaging in working out the good of all. When he found out that his father was deceived by Kaikeye, he did
protest but readily he went to the forest, in obedience to his father's words to his step mother, Kaikaye. As Sri Rama was ever devoted to Dharma, no one had the courage to raise his voice against Sri Rama, either in his actions or decisions. The brothers of Sri Rama were so very devoted to him for his supreme qualities of Dharma. The significance of Dharma is expounded in the words of Sita. Sita asks Sri Rama to practise Dharma of the Tapovana so long as he dwells in the forest and to take to the bow and the arrow, after returning to Ayodhya. Sita wanted Sri Rama to follow the path of the hermits and not to engage himself in vanquishing the demons. This statement of Sita tells us, how she is dedicated to Dharma. The great sacrifice made by Sita, in accompanying Sri Rama to the forests, instead of staying away at the royal palace, tells us, the spirit of Dharma of a Saha-dharmini, infollowing the foot prints of her husband at all times. Sita, true to her supreme chastity, conducted herself with all restraint, in the Ashokavana in Sri Lanka, where she was kept captive by Ravana, who abducted her, in the absence of both Sri Rama and Lakshmana. Sita proved her Chastity by not even looking at Ravana, for the heinous crime he committed. When Sita was sent to the forest, in Uttara Ramayana, by Sri Rama, in exile, only to uphold the fame of Ishavaku dynasty, she never expressed or entertained an iota of doubt, of her
exile to the forest. This shows the supreme purity of her mind and soul, true to the character of Dharma. We also find, Valmiki considers Truth as Dharma, seeing no difference at all between these two concepts as Truth is said to be the "Supreme Dharma". Sathya is supreme, and Dharma has its basis in Truth it has its life in Truth. Valmiki Observes that for those who are devoted to true Dharma there is no fear of even death.

Let us study, few illustrations of Dharma, as expounded in the Ramayana. The very first question Valmiki asked sage Narada illustrates his concern about Dharma. "To obey the father - this is the eternal Dharma", as told by Sri Rama himself. Sri Rama tells, "obedience to one's parents is Dharma". Sri Rama always followed the path of Truth by himself and helped others to be truthful. Sri Rama appealed to Bharatha to uphold their father's path of Truth and to be the King of Ayodhya, to keep up their father's boons given to queen Kaikeya. Keeping a promise is a supreme Dharma, and an eternal virtue. Valmiki says Sri Rama is very powerful yet abiding in Dharma. Sri Rama was not only a noble brother to his brothers, but he was an exemplary husband with the vow of Ekapatnivrata. Sri Rama's clear perception of the principles of universal brotherhood is very much evident in many instances, like, protection, service during both adversity and prosperity, wealth for the
happiness of the brothers and a deep affection for others. Sri Rama says there is no greater virtue than serving the father and carrying out his command. We come across in many instances the greatness of Sri Rama as Dharma ideal. Sri Rama stood for Sanathana Dharma because of which this country was great not only in wealth but also in respect of many great achievements. Valmiki tells us many Supreme duties, namely, Parama Dharmas, in Ramayana, with ennobling influence, by cultivating (a) forgiveness (Ksama), Renunciation (Thyaaga) Gratitude (Krutajnataa), Equanimity (Samadarsitva), the purity of mind (Suddhamanah) Chastity (Pavitrataa), courage (Shourya) Protection of the individual (rakshana), Non-violence (Ahimsaa) Truthfullness (Sathyam) Charity (Deanam) Worship of the guest (Atithipoojanam) and love (Prema). Valmiki says "A man by remaining true to his words can shine over the ocean of life.

In the words of Sri Rama himself, to Sita, he says, "Truth is very dear to me."

In Bharatha, Dharma is personified with the character of sacrifice. He sacrificed the Ayodhya Kingdom in favour of Sri Rama because he was the rightful owner and the eldest brother of the four. Not convinced by Sri Rama's consoling words to him, Bharatha took the Padukas of Sri Rama to worship.
the same, until Sri Rama returned to the Kingdom to take
the Kingship as the rightful successor, to the throne. We
find Lakshmana, the younger brother of Sri Rama, as the most
trusted and dedicated servant of his elder brother, Sri Rama.
His service to Sri Rama is unparalleled in the relationship
of brotherhood and the most devoted to Sri Rama. His most
conscious duty was very much appreciated both by Sri Rama and
Sita. Lakshmana's many lovable qualities and the dedicated
service with devotion to Sri Rama, personify the character of
Dharma.

Sri Hanuman's supreme devotion to Sri Rama is par
excellence and elevates him to the highest degree of Bhakti,
which is the best character of Dharma. Hanuman rendered the
Supreme self-sacrifice to render magnificent services to Sri
Rama, which go to show the best and the immortal character of
his Bhakti, which places Hanuman, in the highest pedigree of
worship. All character in the Epic, occupy respective degrees
of merit but Hanuman excels everybody in respect of the best
follower of Dharma.

Justice is the most valuable segment of Dharma and is
comprehensive. Justice is the end product of truth, plus
righteousness and we find Valmiki Maharshi spared no efforts
to project justice to the utmost degree of presentation. Justic
was administered indiscriminately, in accordance with the laid down laws of Justice.

As a Kshatriya Sri Rama had a duty of rendering justice to those who have been wronged and to console those, who in tears narrate the story of their sufferings. Sri Rama justified his actions on the basis of the sole principle of Dharma.

Justice was so very righteously administered in the Ramayana age, to provide maximum happiness for the maximum number of people, based on the principles of Dharma, righteousness, and moral values. The King who was Dharmic solely concerned with the welfare of his subjects, administering justice, with pure and unblemished administration. In all the matters of administration, the moral code of the Lord of the Universe reigned Supreme. King Dasaratha advised his son, Sri Rama with wholesome and mature advice, on administration, based on unbiased justice and Dharmic principles. A direct method of administering Justice was followed by Sri Rama, by ascertaining things persons by inviting direct petitions, from his subjects, by hearing their grievances and deciding their cases on their own merits, with unbiased justice. When Bharatha ruled Ayodhya for fourteen years, he administered Justice, on the advice given by Sri Rama, who was in exile in the forests. Bharatha administered Justice on the same lines, with the experienced ministers, well versed
in the laws of justice, truth, Dharma and virtues. Sri Rama advised Bharatha to take special attention in administering justice to women folk and also their protection in the Society. Sri Rama advised Bharatha to implement the laws of justice, justly and impartially, taking care to see the innocent do not suffer and the guilty are not left off without punishment, due to greed. He even tells Bharatha that the disputes between the rich and the poor are dealt with and judged impartially, because the tears from the eyes of those falsely convicted, destroy the sons and cattle of the King, who rules the people for the sake of pleasures and not caring for equality and justice. Sri Rama tells Bharatha, "a wise King holds sway over the earth and administering justice to the people quite in consonance with righteousness, surely ascends to heavyn when detached from his body.

A justification of the status and the position of women of our land is a moral, ethical, socio-economic, presentation to our Indian Society. Women in Ramayana age hold great respect and socio-economically very much forwarded, in Tretayuga itself. It is our moral duty to protect our women folk in the right perspective. In the Ramayana period also we find the much respected social status of women with true Indian culture, outstanding nobility, a high stature of character and an excellent symbol of world renowned chastity to the
core as a model and archetype of Indian womanhood. I trust and hope our present Indian womanhood would be respected, in all directions for their welfare, peace and perfection coupled with happiness.

A pure analysis of the relation between Truth, Dharma or Righteousness and justice in this epic, the Ramayana, Valmiki Maharshi, presents to the readers a unique coherence of these concepts, in an excellent, glorified magnificent manner, that we get a profound picture of Truth, as Truth in thought, word and deed, Dharma, or, Righteousness, truely, personified at every stage, by every person true to their character, unmatching and unparalleled in many respects, and Justice rightly justified according to the tenets of laws laid down with Righteousness and equanimity, keeping in view that the guilty should be punished and the innocent are protected. The truth, Dharma, Righteousness and Justice in the Ramayana, right from Tretayuga of the Ramayana age are real boons to the generations, Yuga after Yuga to follow and practice these virtues, which ensure peace, perfection and the sure way to salvation of human life. These virtues, preached and practised by the earlier generations enjoyed peace, prosperity and were blessed with liberation.
All these virtues are gospels from the holy scriptures, eversince the world came into existence and have been priceless gems, for the well-being of humanity, for its prosperity, blessed with peace and perfection, ever green ever bright and eternal for promoting, universal brotherhood, great compassion to fellowmen and kindness to animals and finally liberation from life bondage.

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