

श्री-राम-स्तोत्रम् Śrī-Rāma-Stotram

I salute again and again to that Sri Rama, who is the remover of all obstacles, bestower of all wealth and who delights the whole world.

Reflections:

Lord Rama, the delight of all, is the embodiment of Dharma and for one who understands and abides by dharma, there can be no obstacles! However, when we see the life of Sri Rama, it seems to be riddled with obstacles!! The secret to Lord Rama being the Maryada Purushottama, an embodiment of Dharma, is the fact that nothing could move Him from His innate state of equipoise, His true nature of Absolute Bliss! When we go through the Ramayana repeatedly, each time our faith in dharma, in the possibility in ourselves, of being





such a Maryada Purushottama intensifies and drives us to face all situations of our life with the same inner smile as Lord Rama!

Once we are on the path of Dharma, our inner wealth of virtues too gets enhanced. Lord Rama was an embodiment and the abode of all virtues!! Being connected to Him through the surrender of our individuality to Him, naturally we also get the virtues and the courage to walk the path of righteousness!

Thus, the verse emphasizes that I bow down to that Lord Rama, who delights all - parents, Guru, brothers, wife, the sages, the ministers, the general citizens, the boatman, an old woman, the monkeys, bears and birds and the rakshasas too!!

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आर्तानामार्तिहन्तारं भीतानां भीति-नाशनम् ।
द्विषतां कालदण्डं तं रामचन्द्रं नमाम्यहम्
ಆರ್ತಾನಾಮಾರ್ತಿಹಂತಾರಂ ಭೀತಾನಾಂ ಭೀತಿ-ನಾಶನಮ್
ದ್ರಿಷತಾಂ ಕಾಲದಂಡಂ ತಂ ರಾಮಚಂದ್ರಂ ನಮಾಮ್ಯಹಮ್
Ārtānāmārtihantāram bhītānām bhīti-nāśanam
Dvişatām Kāladandam tam Rāmacandram namāmyaham | | 2 | |
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आर्तानाम् - of those who are in trouble
आर्तिहन्तारम् - one who removes the troubles
भीतानाम् - of those who are afraid
भीतिनाशनम् - destroyer of all fears
द्विषताम् – all evil minded
कालदण्डम् - like the weapon of death
तम् - to that
रामचन्द्रम् - Sri Ramachandra
नमाम्यहम् - I salute
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I salute that Sri Ramachandra, who is the remover of all troubles of people, who is the destroyer of all fears of those who are afraid and is like the weapon of death to all the evil minded enemies.

Reflections:

Lord Rama, ever reveling in His true Self, lived the life of a mortal human being and exhibited how one can be the ideal son, ideal brother, ideal husband, ideal friend, ideal mentor, ideal redeemer and ideal enemy! In being such an ideal human being, He removed the troubles of anyone who came in contact with Him. Starting from removing the troubles of Sage Vishwamitra; in keeping up His father's vows; in redeeming Mother Ahalya from her husband's curse, giving liberation to Shabari, various Sages, rakshasas, Jatayu and Sampaati; and not resting until He found Mother Sita and ended her trials in the land of the enemy!!

He readily destroyed the fears of Sugreeva when He befriended him. He removed the fears of Vibheeshana, who, being from the enemy camp, although unsure of Lord Rama's reaction, sought His refuge. He even handed over the kingdom of Lanka to Vibheeshana, after the death of Ravana.

Lord Rama, although equipoised and ever compassionate, was a terror to the evil-minded, the rakshasas! It is out of His unconditional compassion that He killed the evil minded rakshasas, the enemies and granted them liberation!!

So what if Lord Rama was like this? What does it mean to us sadhakas? The life story of Lord Rama, the Ramayana, is a sacred story that almost seems to weave magic in the life of people who have complete faith and devotion in it! The two syllables Ra and Ma, when uttered, can fill us with the required strength to move ahead in our sadhana, irrespective of the obstacles that we face. There have been many souls such as Sage Valmiki, Santa Tulsidas, Santa Kabir, Samartha Ramadasa, Thyagaraja and many others who have been liberated by this very name, Rama. To surrender to Lord Rama, is to lose our individuality in Him, be connected to Him, to be His instrument alone and to be driven on our sadhana marga by Him alone. This is best demonstrated in the character of our beloved Hanumanji! Thus, it is indeed His grace to be able to read about Lord Rama's glories and be purified in the process! My salutations unto this great Lord Sri Rama!

सन्नद्धः कवची खङ्गी चापबाणधरो युवा गच्छन् ममायतो नित्यं रामःपातुसलक्ष्मणः ಸನ್ನದ್ದಃ ಕವಚೀ ಖಡ್ಗೀ ಚಾಪಬಾಣಧರೋ ಯುವಾ ಗಚ್ಚನ್ ಮಮಾಗ್ರತೋ ನಿತ್ಯಂರಾಮಃ ಪಾತು ಸಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಣಃ





Sannaddhaḥ kavacī khaḍgī cāpabāṇadharo yuvā

Gacchan mamāgrato nityam Rāmaḥ pātu salakṣmaṇaḥ | | 3 | |

सन्नद्धः कवची - Clad in protective armoour

खड्गी - sword

चापबाण-धरः - one who holds bow and arrow

युवा - young

गच्छन् - walking with

मम-अग्रतः - in front of me

नित्यम् - always

रामः - Sri Rama

पातु - may protect (me)

सलक्ष्मणः -along with Lakshmana

May the ever youthful Sri Rama, walking in front of me, with Lakshmana, well-armed, with sword and armor, holding bow and arrow, always protect me.

Reflections:

The Lord who is within us as the Antaryami, is the best guide, the only guide with unconditional and genuine compassion for us. Lord Rama is that Antaryami in each of us. When we allow Him to take us ahead on the path of sadhana, and we follow unconditionally and reverentially, He is sure to protect us, although sometimes in ways that we may not be able to comprehend! Lakshmana represents the untiring commitment, the conviction, the Shraddha and the will in us to follow Rama, the Antaryami, unconditionally!

Lord Rama carries with Him the bow and arrow, ever ready to destroy all the obstacles that we may face, especially when we place our helplessness in front of Him. This was symbolized by Sage Vishwamitra requesting Rama and Lakshmana to be sent to destroy the demons who were big hurdles in his sadhana!! It is said that Santa Goswami Tulasidasji once invited Rama to his house. Lord Rama kept away His bow and arrows and followed Tulasidasji. Then, Tulasidasji asked why He kept away the bow and arrows and the Lord replied that He carries it only to destroy demons. Tulasidasji said to the Lord that there are plenty of demons within himself that need to be destroyed and requested the Lord to bring the bow and arrows along! When





Tulasidasji himself confessed thus, then what to talk of us ordinary sadhakas?! Hence this verse is the heartfelt prayer of every sincere sadhaka!

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नमः कोदण्डहस्ताय सन्धी कृत-शराय च
खण्डिताखिलदैत्यायरामायापन्निवारिणे
ನಮಃ ಕೋದಂಡ-ಹಸ್ತಾಯ ಸಂಧೀಕೃತ-ಶರಾಯ ಚ
ಖಂಡಿತಾಖಿಲ–ದೈತ್ಯಾಯ ರಾಮಾಯಾಪನ್ನಿವಾರಿಣೇ
Namaḥ kodaṇḍahastāya Sandhīkṛta-śarāya ca
Khanditākhila-daityāya Rāmāyāpannivāriņe | | 4 | |
नमः - Salutations
कोदण्ड-हस्ताय - to the one who holds bow in his hands
सन्धीकृत-शराय च - who has set the arrow in the bow
खण्डित- confronts
अखिल - all
दैत्याय - evil forces
रामाय - to that Rama
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आपत् - निवारिणे -remover of all dangers

Salutations to that Rama, the remover of all dangers, who holding in His hand, the bow, Kodanda, has set the arrow in it and confronts all evil forces.

Reflections:

Lord Rama is the Maryada Purushottama who is also the Ultimate Dharmatma. He is Lord Vishnu's avatara, born as a mortal to show the world that even a mortal being can live life never compromising on Dharma! How was Lord Rama able to do this? His entire life story, the Ramayana is symbolic of what happens in a sincere sadhaka's journey of sadhana! All along the journey Rama encounters innumerable demons and at the same time many great devotees, saints and sages. While, as a mortal being, a prince in exile, he gathered blessings from





the saints and sages but also faced every demon with courage, always ready with bow and arrow in hand! Be it to help a sadhaka, a sage (such as Sage Vishwamitra) or to clear his own path in his journey, Lord Rama was the ever vigilant, ever courageous being. Thus, Lord Rama could confront all evil forces and remove all dangers in his path to his goal, be it spending the 14 years in exile, helping a friend (Sugreeva) or searching for his dear wife who was kidnapped by the evil Ravana!

We, as normal human beings, also have a goal and a path leading to that goal (including many goals in line with the main goal). In this journey, we too encounter many evil forces within and without and also find many blessings and meet plenty of helpful beings! By surrendering to this avatara of the Lord, we also imbibe his virtues and find the strength to face and overcome all the obstacles in our journey! Hence, may we all ever be in His thoughts and allow His Grace to guide and strengthen us in our spiritual journey.

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रामाय रामभद्राय रामचन्द्राय वेधसे
रघनाथाय नाथाय सीतायाः पतये नमः
ರಾಮಾಯ ರಾಮಭದ್ರಾಯ ರಾಮಚಂದ್ರಾಯ ವೇಧಸೇ
ರಘುನಾಥಾಯ ನಾಥಾಯ ಸೀತಾಯಾಃ ಪತಯೇ ನಮಃ
Rāmāya Rāmabhadrāya Rāmacandrāya Vedhase
Raghunāthāya Nāthāya Sītāyāḥ Pataye namaḥ | | 5 | |
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रामाय - to that Rama
रामभद्राय - to that Auspicious Rama
रामचन्द्राय - the one whose face is like a moon
वेधसे - who is an embodiment of knowledge
रघुनाथाय - to the scion of the Raghu Dynasty
नाथाय - to the Lord
सीतायाः पतये - to the Lord of Seeta
नमः - Salutations
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Salutations to that Lord Rama, the Auspicious One, whose face is like the beautiful moon, who is the embodiment of Knowledge, the scion of Raghu Dynasty and the consort (Lord) of Seeta.

Reflections:

The entire Rama Stotram has so far been describing the various characteristics of the great character Sri Rama...however, one might wonder who this Rama is, what family does he belong to etc. This sloka is introducing Lord Rama, just as one would introduce any human being!

Lord Rama was born in the Ikshvaku lineage, which was made famous by King Raghu. Lord Rama was the descendant of this great dynasty, the Raghu Dynasty. He was extremely handsome with a bright face as pleasing as the moon in the night sky is! He was the Lord of Seeta, daughter of King Janaka. He was not just endowed with these embellishments, but He was indeed an embodiment of Knowledge. He is knowledge Itself, auspiciousness Itself, the One that the Vedas speak about - the Sacchidananda Parabrahman!!

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अग्रतः पृष्ठतश्चेव पार्श्वतश्च महाबलो
आकर्णपूर्ण-धन्वानो रक्षेतां रामलक्ष्म्णो
ಅಗ್ರತಃ ಪೃಷ್ಣತಶ್ವೈವ ಪಾರ್ಶ್ವತಶ್ವ ಮಹಾಬಲೌ
ಆಕರ್ಣಪೂರ್ಣ-ಧನ್ನಾನೌ ರಕ್ಷೇತಾಂ ರಾಮಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಣೌ
Agrataḥ pṛṣṭhataścaiva pārśvataśca Mahābalau
Ākarṇapūrṇa-dhanvānau rakṣetām Rāmalakṣmṇau | | 6 | |
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अग्रतः - in the front
पृष्ठतः - behind
च एव - also
पार्श्वतः च - close
महाबलौ - very powerful
आकर्ण-पूर्ण-धन्वानौ - equipped fully with bow and arrow
रक्षेताम् – may both protect me
राम-लक्ष्मणौ - Sri Rama and Lakshmana
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May Sri Rama and Lakshmana, who are very powerful, fully equipped with bow and arrow, protect me from the front, behind and also close to me.

Reflections:

As jeevas, we are always in the grip of Maya! However, existence of maya is also dependent on the Supreme! Hence, when our focus is on the Supreme, maya too aids us in our spiritual journey! The final verse of the Rama Stotram reiterates the prayer or rather gives an autosuggestion to oneself to allow the all-powerful Supreme, Sri Rama along with His beloved brother and ever a partner in all duels against the evil, i.e. Lakshmana be all around oneself as a protection from the unknown, from Maya! Sri Rama and Lakshmana are always ready with bow and arrow in hand to protect the devotees who have surrendered! Also, the Lord is always present in and all around us and is the closest to us!! It is only the ego, the separateness, the individuality that creates the distance between us and the Lord!! Thus, as a sadhaka, the most important duty is to keep the ego in check and ensure that the mind is ever dwelling on the Lord in its core, even while being involved in vyavahaara! The Lord never abandons His devotees - 'Na me bhaktah pranashyati' says Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Geeta (9.31)!

The main essence in the Rama Stotram is the understanding that the Lord incarnated as Sri Rama in order to protect the good and punish the evil. However, the good and the evil exist within us and not just outside!! We need to put that effort in being with the Lord and allow Him to guide and protect us from our own inner dark forces! May we all ever remain surrendered at His feet just as Hanumanji has demonstrated, accepting all our duties as His work and the outcome as His prasadam! It is in doing so that we will find redemption from samsara! Jai Sri Rama!