



EXEMPLARY CHARACTERS WITH EXTREME EXTIRPATION IN 'THE RAMAYANA'

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ABSTRACT

The great epic 'The Ramayana' says an intensive, sensitive and deep moral that a soul's prime aim is to mingle with 'Paramathma' (Kingdom of Almighty) in spite of all other 'Karmas' (Duty or Routine). The utmost difficult and challenging duty of an individual is to control his / her own thoughts or mind. Mere souls satisfy themselves with worldly pleasures where as rich souls always trying, struggling to attain the 'Holy Feet of God' (Non-Birth stage). Rich souls want to get rid of this painful birth. In order to explain these morals through stories; saints and sages have written Epics and 'Puranas' (Lengthy stories). Among them 'The Ramayana' possesses an important role to play. The mighty characters in 'The Ramayana' express that Seetha (Mind or soul) united with Rama (Almighty) over coming many trials and troubles. Ravana symbolizes great sins like lust, treachery, conspiracy etc. This particular article deals with the exceptional characters like Ravana, Indirajith, Mandodhari, Soorpanaga, Oormila and Laxman with excellent qualities but with extreme extirpation, which lead to their last breath or pathetic end. 'The Ramayana', 'The Mahabarata' etc. are lively characters for ever as long as the universe exists.

INTRODUCTION

This particular article deals with the epic characters with exceptional sentiments that laid a path to their last breath. Individually, personally they were very powerful with exceptional qualities that kept them in such supreme level of their kind but their gratitude, attitude pulled them down to the earth. In spite of knowing their uniqueness; knowingly or unknowingly; willingly or unwillingly; fortunately or unfortunately they died pathetically for the mercy or gratitude which they possessed on their dependents. Unable to express their own feelings, they met their end pathetically. The researcher would like to list out 'Ravana and Ravanaeswara, Indirajith and Meganatha, Mandodhari, Laxman and Oormila' from the great epic 'The Ramayana'.

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The above mentioned characters were exceptionally talented as individuals. Somehow or other, they had to derail themselves for their dependents. Because of gratitude, they totally lost either their happiness or their bright future irrecoverably. Let us have a look in detail:

Ravana

Ravana was the omnipotent power in the three worlds (Earth, upper world and under world; according to Hindu religion fourteen galaxies are there) in those days until he met Rama in Ceylon (Now Sri Lanka). Only three powers are glorified by succeeding the title 'Easwara' ; one is Lord Siva – He is known as Easwara, second one is Deity of 'Saturn' (Saneeswara); third one is 'Ravaneswara'. These three are known for their supremacy, genuineness, sincerity in their duty or governance. Through his yogic abilities and mighty power, Ravana obtained extraordinary powers from Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. No one was capable of opposing Ravana. His father Vajrvasu, an extraordinary Yogi (Sage), excellent practitioner of rituals and religious ceremonies; his mother, Kekasi was an exceptional character who tuned her son to become a terror figure of 'Puzhasthiya' hereditary. As he belonged to giant race, he wanted to rule all the Saints and Sages of the three worlds. He insisted everyone to chant his name and fame or else the disobedient souls were either brutally killed or mercilessly punished. He misused all his unique powers for his individual whims and fancies. No one was respected in his kingdom including his family members. He was the only emperor and enlightening authority of his kingdom. Basically he had had all the appealing qualities of the 'God's kingdom' but he wanted to exploit all his powers for his self appraisal. Everyone was afraid of Ravana; he married Mandodhari, daughter of Mayan, the divine sculptor by kidnapping her with his magical powers. No one was daring enough to raise voice against Ravana as they wished to live.

Ravana's sister, Soorpanaga's nose was cut off by Rama and Laxman when she tried to have an illicit relationship with Rama. As everyone praised Rama for his charm, vigor, velour, kindness and manly qualities; Soorpanaga wished to marry Rama . But Rama had taken a strong oath not to touch any feminine even with his thoughts because his father had married thousands of wives. In those days, kings were allowed to marry as many as wives as possible because everything in a country was for the king, of the king, by the king; he was free to do anything; even illegal activities; he was free to marry even a married lady without her willingness. If anyone/anything went against the willingness of the king, he/she would be punished brutally; worse than a beast. In order to live or to avoid burning alive in fire; no one was daring enough to oppose the king.

When Seetha married Rama, she was afraid of multi marriages (polygamy); in order to wipe out the fear/ tears of Seetha, Rama promised her that he never touch any lady even with his thoughts; highly sensitive words. Impossible to follow hence many of the family lives still bonded with the dreams and all human weaknesses and affairs are fulfilled only in dreams/

imaginary/ thoughts. Without knowing this truth, Soorpanaga constantly disturbed Rama to marry her. She did not love her giant husband, Vidyujith, that much when he was alive. When Rama explained her about his oath; she tried to kill Seetha. As she belonged to giant hereditary, her understanding and approach to life was entirely different. She tried her level best to attract Rama was defeated constantly either by Laxman or by Seetha: the irritated Soorpanaga tried to kill Seetha to attain Rama. When all her attempts ended in vain, she was frustrated. Unable to tolerate her atrocity, Laxman cut off her nose and Rama injured her in anger. When Soorpanaga informed this matter to Ravana; he wished to kill both Rama and Laxman in the battle field: but it was Soorpanaga who induced Ravana to take revenge on Seetha; tit for tat. It was the great mistake of Ravana which welcomed death of his own. Even after having a loyal wife, obedient children and excellent ministry; it was the fate of Ravana that led to his pathetic destruction. Finally an exceptional lion like character was enslaved by mere human being because of his over confidence and lust. Finally Rama was able to kill Ravana because his yogic heart was filled with the thoughts of Seetha instead of Lord Shiva. When Lord is overlooked by lust, automatically death welcomes anyone with Red carpet. Ravana's life shows this deep truth in history.

Indirajith and Meganatha

The Divine Tamil poet 'Iyan Thiruvalluvan' says, "The real duty of a son is to yield pride to his parents with his exemplary activities and attitude". Obedience, reverence, affection and attachment of a son/daughter to his/her family, is a blessing to the parents. Meganatha was such a type and he blindly followed, obeyed the words of his father though it was injustice. He knew very well that he was doing wrong but he was not courageous enough to disobey his father's words. He was ignited, initiated and motivated by Ravana to fulfill his selfish attitude. Even after lost his two sons and brothers except Vipeesana; Ravana did misuse Indirajith to the core. Indirajith was a man of full power and vigor with all his extra qualities and blessings of various deities. He lost everything and everyone including his wife and family life for the welfare of his father. His father was giant by qualities and giant by birth; so his inner enthusiasm to fulfill his wrong notions, he took Meganatha as the main tool because it was sharp, loyal, powerful and faithful to the core. Meganatha lost his life and sacrificed all his good and bad for the welfare of his father; even after he was reverent and obedient to his father. Thus his power was darkened under the shadow of selfish Ravana, his maker.

Mandodhari

The abundant secrets of this Universe are purely surprising and exciting, cannot be explained but can be experienced. Same incident or happening would yield different kinds of consequences and experiences to different individuals. Yet it is either a pain or pleasure to all. Love Nature and live with Nature because no one pollutes the lap of his/ her own mother knowingly or willingly. This formula is exactly applicable to Mandodhari. She is a divine like

lady by birth, most beautiful, pious and righteous. Her father Mayan was known for his Vedic qualities. He taught everything to Mandodhari for the welfare of her future dependents. Actually Mayan wanted to marry her for a Divine Prince but unfortunately a demon King, Ravana, threatened him and kidnapped Mandodhari to marry her. She knew very well that no one could oppose Ravana as he was the mighty King of the three worlds. Her education and acceptance of the facts of life, made her calm and obedient. Though it was an unwanted and unpleasant marriage, as the wife of Ravana, she was so faithful and loyal to all his deeds weather it was good or bad. She gave birth to three sons; Meganatha and Indirajith, Atikaya and Akshayakumara. Except Indirajith other two sons were too attached to her expectations. She showered all her love on the three but Ravana took away Meganatha as his tool; other two were also not able to show their deep love to their mother as the rules of the kingdom did not permit them to do so. They lived more as princes than as lovable sons.

They fate of Mandodhari tortured many a time to protect her younger sons but in vain. They were brutally killed by Hanuman and Rama. Even after that Ravana did not take any serious step to protect his only (lonely) son, Indirajith. Instead he motivated his son badly to meet his destiny. This was so cruel on the part of Ravana but Mandodhari did not prevent either Indirajith or Ravana, as it was the custom of the kingdom and strong will of the king, Ravana. As a wife she was pitiable and as a mother she was helpless. She lost all her dependents in her married life and stood alone in the soil of then Sri Lanka. As though she was capable of running the wheels of the Lankan Kingdom; as per the rules of Lanka, she should be the queen of the ruler. Hence Rama advised Vibeeshana to marry Mandodhari as it was the existing custom of those days. When Ravana was alive, Vibeeshana was Mandodhari's most respectable younger cousin and a reverent follower; but destiny made her to marry that younger cousin unwillingly for the welfare of the nation. Yet they were couple for rules' sake but individuals in fact. Thus a gifted soul was devastated because of her husband's illegal atrocity and lust.

Lakshman and Oormila

If a King is conspired by his dear and near ones, it may have either a strong reason or treachery; he should either face it or should meet the consequences. But if a shadow suffers, it is nothing but destiny. Here the essayist uses the word 'Shadow' to express, explain the loyalty of Lakshman and Oormila towards Rama and Seetha. The young ones were attached to their elders because of pure love and unconditional dedication and attachment on them. Both, Lakshman and Oormila were completely innocent and harmless till the end; they enjoyed their dedicated services as a gift and chance to reveal their real love. After their marriage, they lived together for a short span of time but departed and separated as long as possible. Made for each other is applicable only for this couple. Rama and Seetha underwent so many hardships because Rama wanted to lead a model and harmless life; Seetha was so soft by nature; more over they were Celestial Souls in disguise. But Lakshman and Oormila

served them to the core assuming that they had born to serve them. Lakshman never left Rama and never failed to protect him. Each and everything was taken care by Lakshman in their jungle life. Seetha considered Lakshman as her best friend and brother because her expectations were fulfilled by Lakshman instantly. He did not sleep for fourteen years and protected them day and night as his children. On the other hand, Oormila accepted the sleeping nature of her husband and slept for complete fourteen years with occasional intake in unconscious stage. These things were blessed and instructed by the Deity of sleep.

Without enjoying anything in their family life, they sacrificed everything for the welfare of Rama and Seetha. In the war against Ravana, Lakshman was brutally attacked by Indirajith and Hanuman saved Lakshman's life with rare and precious herbals from Himalaya. In the battle field also Lakshman always roared like a lion to take revenge on entire Sri Lankan giants. Finally after the victory, even today the dedication of Lakshman is celebrated by Rama's devotees; he stands nearby Rama: Rama, Seetha, Lakshman and Hanuman are worshipped together whereas Oormila is ignored completely and she has not been given proper recognition. But her dedication towards Rama is little bigger than Lakshman because he lived consciously with his brother whereas Oormila was completely in bed unconsciously for fourteen years: impossible to imagine in these days; especially in our ultra modern culture. Thus the dedication of these two was exemplary and unimaginable as long as 'Ramayana' survives in this world.

Conclusion

The above said characters meet their pathetic end or utmost trials and troubles because of their too much of sensations and attachment on their dependents. They chose their aim either willingly or unwillingly but they had played a vital role which is unforgettable and unshakable till the epic 'The Ramayana' survives.

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NB: This article has been written on the basis of Ramayana: heard and read so far.