

DASHAVATAR – RAMA AVATAR (Ramayan – Part4)



In the last lesson, we narrated Ramayana story till Rama wins Sita. In order to win her hand, Rama not only bent Lord Shiva's bow but also broke it into two pieces to the astonishment of all the people in Maharaja Janaka's place. Immediately Janaka sent his swift messengers to Ayodhya to give the news to king Dasaratha, and to invite him for royal wedding.

Sita Rama Kalyanam

It took the messengers three days to reach Ayodhya, and when they described Rama's heroic winning of Sita, Maharaja Dasaratha was overjoyed. The King departed early the next morning to Mithila, King Janaka's capital, with the court Guru Vasistha, and his ministers. King Janaka gave a royal welcome to king Dasaratha and his followers when they reached Mithila. As you may remember, Rama had three brothers, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrugna. It so happened that along with Sita, King Janaka had three other daughters. They were wed to Rama's three brothers.

Amid showers of flowers raining down from heaven and the beating of celestial drums, King Janaka placed the hand of the goddess of fortune, Sita, into the hand of the Supreme Lord, Rama. Next, King Janaka placed the hand of Urmila into Lakshmana's hand, then Mandavi's hand into Bharata's hand, and finally Srutakirti's hand into Satrugna's hand. Rama felt great satisfaction, having gotten Sita as His wife. Sitadevi also felt unprecedented happiness upon getting her beloved Rama.

Parasurama Avatar ends

After all the wedding celebrations, Viswamitra departed for the Himalayas. Later in the day, Maharaja Dasaratha left for Ayodhya, along with his four sons and daughter-in-laws. On their way to Ayodhya, suddenly Parasurama appeared there in a very fierce form (as you remember Parasurama is the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu). His hair was matted, on his right shoulder he carried an axe, a bow on his left, and in his hand was a powerful arrow.

Parasurama was feared by all the warrior class. He was very fierce. No one was able to fight with him, because he was so strong. When he appeared, strong dust storms appeared and the winds got very strong. Everyone was terrified, but not Rama and Lakshmana.

"I heard this boy Rama broke Shiva's bow" he said. I find it hard to believe that such a small person could do such a thing!" King Dasaratha tried to be very polite and pacify him, so he wouldn't hurt Rama. But only Lakshmana understood Rama's true power. "The bow was but a small thing for Sri Ram" he told Parasurama, without the slightest fear, almost making fun of him. "Do not trifle with me, boy, or I will cut your head off!" said Parasurama to Lakshmana. King Dasaratha tried to intervene. This dialogue went on for some time.

Parasurama had Vishnu's bow. "If you are so strong, go ahead and string it!" said Parasurama. Rama snatched the bow from Parasurama's hand. Being the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, he strung the bow with complete ease. Parasurama finally realized that Rama was none other than Vishnu incarnate. He recognized his own avatar of Vishnu was over. He gave all his tapas to Rama, and left to the Mahendra Mountains.

After Parasurama left, Dasaratha ordered his army to move quickly. When they reached Ayodhya, the citizens and the Brahmins came forward to greet them. All the queens, Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi welcomed the new brides, Sita and her sisters. Festive activities continued for many days in Ayodhya. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrughna began living happily with their wives.

Dasaratha announces to Crown Rama

Once, King Yudhajit came to Ayodhya on a visit. He was the maternal uncle of Bharata, and he invited his nephew, along with Satrughna, to come and stay with him for some time. Bharata and Satrughna remained with their maternal uncle, Yudhajit, for some time, being very warmly entertained by him. After the departure of Bharata and Satrughna, Rama began serving His father and three mothers more carefully. Rama carried out His duties of state administration so honestly and conscientiously that all the citizens came to love Him very dearly. Lord Rama exhibited Himself as the reservoir of all good qualities. Rama played the part of a most courageous and heroic kshatriya, and yet, at the same time, He was self-controlled, self-satisfied, without malice, and gentle in word and deed. Rama's graceful frame and beauty, his strength, his courage, the purity of his heart, his perfect life, his compassion, sweetness of speech, his serenity, his deep wisdom and his statesmanship were admired by the people and made them eagerly look forward to his becoming king.

Maharaja Dasaratha had ruled his kingdom for a very long time, but at last he grew old and fatigued. He desired to retire from administrative duties, and install Rama as his successor as quickly as possible. Maharaja Dasaratha called a meeting of his ministers, prominent citizens, and subordinate kings. When all had assembled, Maharaja Dasaratha expressed his desire to crown Sri Rama. Everyone applauded this suggestion and glorified Rama's incomparable virtues. Maharaja requested the family Guru Vasistha to immediately begin preparations.

Dasaratha sent his minister Sumantra to fetch Rama. Rama, ignorant of all these happenings, hurriedly came when he received the message from his father. Rama approached His father with folded hands and then fell flat at his feet to offer His respects. When Dasaratha mentioned the good news to Rama, He humbly bowed acceptance, saying, "I am duty bound to carry out your orders, whatever they be." Taking leave of his father, Rama went to his mother Kausalya's palace to give her the news and seek her blessings. The Queen had heard the news already, and blessed Him for everything.

The news spread so fast of whole Ayodhya. People started decorating streets and their houses with flowers and flags. The city was in a joyous commotion of expectancy.

Meanwhile, Maharaja Dasaratha went to his bedroom and lay down to rest. But, as he was drifting off to sleep, the King saw a recurring and ominous dream. Maharaja was constantly haunted by the remembrance of how he had promised Kaikeyi's father at the time of his marriage, that it would be Kaikeyi's son who would inherit the royal throne upon his retirement. Dasaratha knew that Bharata was Rama's faithful follower. But he thought that the minds of men are fickle and inconsistent, especially when it comes to the allurements of power and prestige. It is for this reason that Maharaja was so eager to install Rama upon throne before Bharata's return.

Questions:

- Who was the family guru for Rama's family?
- What were the names of Rama's brothers?
- Who did Rama marry?
- Who did Rama's brother's marry?
- Who asked Rama to string his bow on the way home to Ayodhya?
- Why did King Dasaratha want Rama to be crowned Emperor?
- Why did he want to crown him when Bharata was away?

Om Jai Jagdish Hare Strotram: This is one of the very popular prayers sung by all Hindus in each and every temple. It is written in a colloquial dialect of Hindi and touches the heart instantly. Here is the first verse. Learn it carefully.

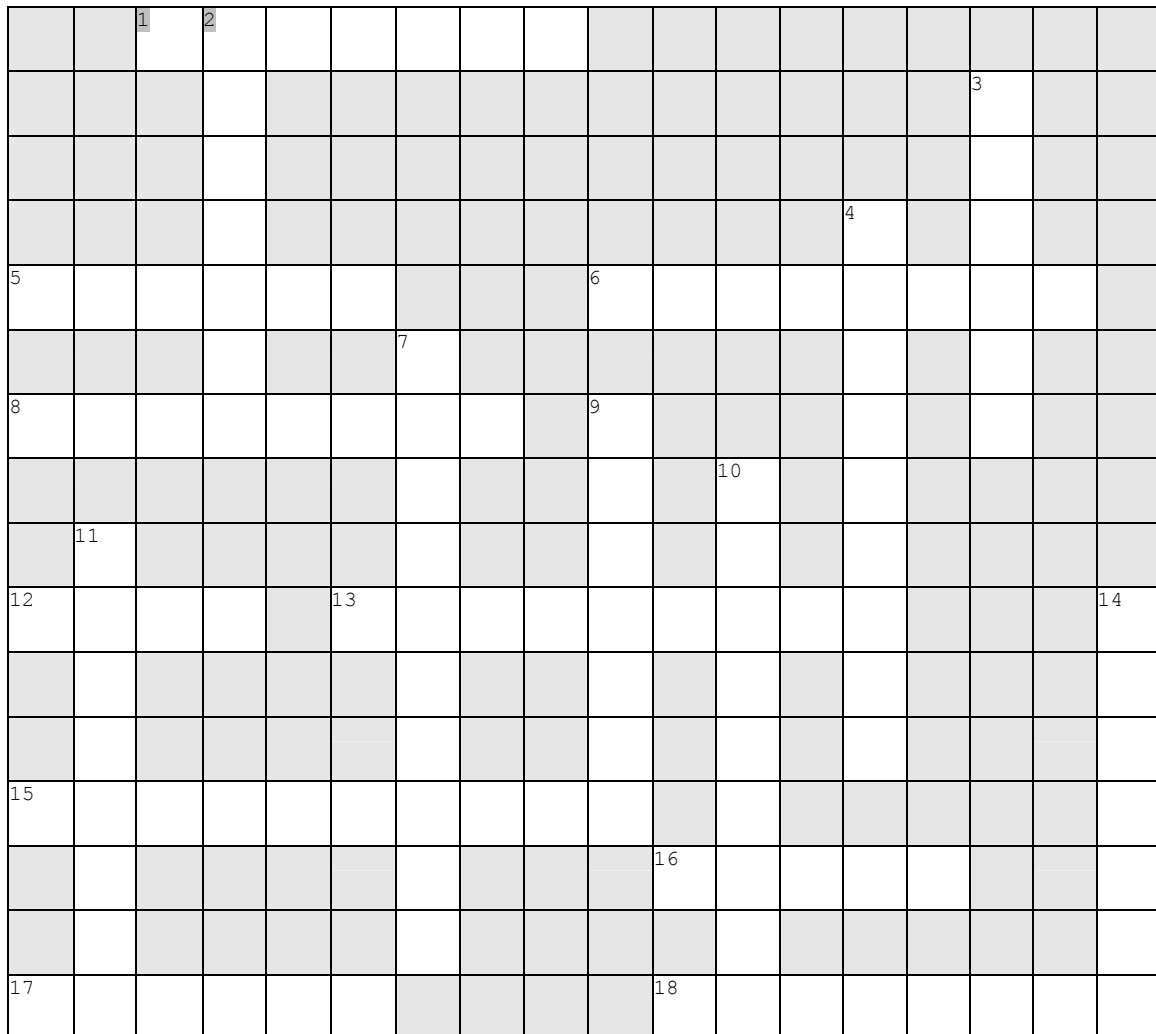
**Om Jai Jagdish Hare
Swami Jai Jagdish Hare
Bhakt jano ke sankat
Das jano ke sankat
Kshan men door kare
Om Jai Jagdish Hare**

Meaning:

*Oh Lord of the whole Universe
Mighty Lord of the whole Universe
The agonies of devotees
The sorrows of devotees
In an instant, you make these go away
Oh Lord of the whole Universe*

Visit the Temple website, <http://www.saiaustin.org/downloads.htm> and go the section called Sai Aaratis and Bhajans, sixth one down, to hear the pronunciation of Aum Jai Jagdish Hare...

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Bharata's wife
- 5 Whose bow Parasurama holding?
- 6 Bharata's maternal uncle
- 8 Dasaratha's minister
- 12 Sita married
- 13 Rama's father
- 15 Sixth incarnation of Vishnu
- 16 Rama broke this bow to win Sita
- 17 Sita's father
- 18 Rama's court Guru

DOWN

- 2 Rama's kingdom
- 3 Sita's sister
- 4 Rama's dearest brother
- 7 Satrugna's wife
- 9 Kaikeyi's son
- 10 Rama's youngest brother
- 11 Rama's mother
- 14 Janaka's kingdom

Coloring Exercise

