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Navarasa Rāma

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Abstract

Mythological stories and Traditions have molded the lifestyle of Hindu society. This has influenced the natural behavior of a human being whether it is a man or a woman. The Great Epics of Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata have given such heroes and heroines whose qualities are worth emulating. In this paper, I would like to present Lord Rāma the hero of Rāmāyaṇa as Navarasa Nāyaka.

Key words: Rāma, Sita, Vālmiki, rasa etc.

Introduction

" Kujantam Rāma Rāmeti madhura madhurākṣaram |
Āruhya kavita śākhām vande Vālmiki kōkilam ||

_ Salutations to Ādi kavi Vālmiki the rachaita (author) of Rāmāyaṇa who like a cuckoo sings the melodious tune of Rāma- Rāma sitting on the tree of poesy.

Rāmāyaṇa belonging to the genre of Itihāsa, explores the human morals and has been endemic of Indian life style. The great Epic work by Ādi kavi Śrī Vālmiki narrates the journey of virtue to annihilate evil with Rāma as the hero. The exploration of emotions expressed here fascinates every soul to adhere to the modest of the qualities of the unmatched hero.

Dance is all about relishing the emotions conveyed as flavors as one responds to diverse experiences. These flavors called Rasa which are actually elated galvanize all categories of people to define and direct their culture. Rāma of Rāmāyaṇa is one such hero whose character motivates the mind towards positive ambience and channelizes the human behavior to face multiple circumstances.

Rāma, the icon of Perfect Human Being

As rightly said in Bhagavadgeetha

" Yadā yadā hi Dharmasya glānir bhavati Bhāratha |
Abhyuttānam Adharmasya Tadātmānam Srujāmyaham |
Paritrāṇāya Sādhūnām Vināśayacha Duśkrutām |
Dharma Sanstāpanārthāya Sambhavāmi yugae yugae ||"

As the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu, Rāma descended down to Earth as a savior with the intension to Protect the good, to Destroy the Evil and to uphold the virtues i.e., Dharma. The characteristic features of the Perfect man Dāśharathi (The son Daśaratha) as Rāma is rightly called, has been described by sage Nārada himself all through Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa. The great paradigm of Dharma personified "Rāmo Vīgrahavān Dharmaha", shows himself in different flavors throughout The Epic Rāmāyaṇa. Rāma thus, stands evident as Navarasa Nāyaka for the nine Rasās viz romantic love, valour, compassion, amazement, wit, fear, disgust, anger and peace through the following śloka.

śṛṅgāraṃ kṣitinandinīvihaṛaṇe
 vīraṃ dhanurbhanjane
 kāruṇyaṃ balibhojane
 adbutarasam sindhau giristhāpane
 hāsyam śūrpanakāmukhe
 bhayavahe ājērmukhe
 bhībhatsam anyāmukhe
 raudram rāvaṇamardane
 munijane śāntam vapuḥ pātu naḥ

Śṛṅgāraṃ of Rāma

Śṛṅgāraṃ is known as the king of all the Rasas. According to Dhananjaya's Daśarūpakam this Rasa is described as "Love or Rati, essentially the delight (manifested) in fondness for lovely places, arts, occasions, garments, pleasures and the like. That (feeling) on the part of two young person mutually enamored, (which is) gladsome (and manifested) by tender gestures, (constitutes) the Erotic Sentiment (Śṛṅgāra).

Śṛṅgāra portrayed in a subtle and gentle way befits Śrī Rāma as he is known for his Gāmbhēryam. The synonym of Maryāda Puruṣhōttama can be personified as śṛṅgāra Puruṣa as described by Maharshi Nārada himself in Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, possessed an attractive personality. An Ajaanu bāhu, who had a neck like conch, plumpy cheeks, broad and bulged chest, a circular head like an umbrella and forehead like half moon had become the limelight in the city of Mithila.

Following the footsteps of the Maharshi Viśwāmitra, Rāma along with his brother Lakshmana enter Mithila, the city ruled by the Great King Janaka to witness the Dhanush yagna. Attired in yellow outfit the Princes of Ayōdya looked like the lions with a broad chest decked with pearls and a beautiful headgear (kirēta) stealing every soul (chitta). They appeared to have won over crores of Manmatha's (the god of love) to the eyes of many adolescent women who peeped through the skylights of their dwellings just to quench the thirst of their eyes with their glimpses.

The perception of Śṛṅgāra rasa in Rāma could have originated at the first sight of Sita. Rāma hears the sound of her anklets in a beautiful garden where Vasantha the god of spring had proliferated his fragrance in air with colourful creepers, rainbow coloured flowers, fruits and fresh leaves which had even made the divine tree Kalpavriksha become shy. The melodious resonance of birds amidst the garden makes Rāma feel as though the god of love was trying to proclaim over the entire world. The very glimpse of Sita in the garden his eyes become still in her moon like face and he adores her in his heart. The feeling of love is uplifted aesthetically when Sita seeing Rāma embosses the image of Rāma in her heart through the path of her doe like eyes and closes her eyelids not to let go off the pleasant feeling.

" śṛṅgāraṃ kṣitinandinī vihaṛaṇe", - explains the abundant romantic love while Rāma roamed with his beloved consort Sita (the daughter of Earth) during his vana vāsa (exile).

As an ideal husband Rāma who respects Sita's decision, takes utmost care of her in the vanam and tries to fulfill all her wishes. He even goes up to the extent of chasing the Māyā Mriga (the golden deer) to make his dearly loved consort happy. The natural scenic beauty of the forest, the flowing river near to their kutēram (Panchavati), the fragrance of colourful flowers and the chirping of the birds etc all act as the udhēpana vibhāvās weaving delicately the Śṛṅgāra Rasa between the perfect couple, made for each other as they rejoice every moment spent with each other in the vanam.

Vīra Rāma

The Heroic sentiment (Vīra) as described by Dhananjaya's Daśarūpakam says that it is induced by power, good conduct determination, courage, infatuation, cheerfulness, polity, astonishment, might and the like (as Determinants), and is based on (the Permanent state) Enthusiasm (utsāha). It is of three kinds, having benevolence, fighting, or liberality (as consequent). In it (three of which occurs) assurance, arrogance, contentment and joy (as transitory states).

Vīra Rasa reveals itself where there is heroism, valour, mastery, pride, courage and persistence. Acts depicting boldness, bravery and self-confidence fused with humbleness jazzes up the rasa and it turns to fearless gallantry.

The man of prowess portrays himself as a personification of Valour during varied episodes of the epic Rāmāyaṇa. The Dhērōdhātta nāyaka's courage radiates at the tender age when Rāma protects the religious sacrifice (yagna) of Maharshi Viśwāmitra as a young lad. The incomparable dynamism is made known when he kills 14000 demons in the Janasthāna. As a mark of heroic deed "**vīraṃ dhanurbhanjane**"--- Rāma's bravery is publicized at the time of Jānaki's swayamvaram (wedding) when Rāma taking the blessings of Guru Viśwāmitra uplifts the Shiva Dhanas which was kept as a Vīrya śulka and triumphs Sita in marriage. His audacity outbursts when he breaks the Shiva dhanas while attempting to string it and also when he subdues ParashuRāma in his challenge to string the divine bow of Lord Vishnu thus standing as an embodiment of Vīra Rasa or Chivalry.

The execution of demons like Virada, Rāvana, Kumbhakarna, the determination with which he lifts up and throws the skeleton of the Dundubhi Rākṣasa by his toe and the guts when he cuts the shoulders of the Kabandha fiend demonstrates the fearlessness of Rāma.

Kāruṇya Rāma

The Pathetic sentiment (karuṇa), as described by Dhananjaya's Daśarūpakam says that it is accompanied with (the permanent state) Sorrow (śoka) as its essence, (results) from loss of something cherished and from attaining of something undesired. In consequence of it (there occur) having sighs, drawing of sighs, weeping, paralysis, lamentation, and the like (as consequents): the transitory states (occurring in connection with it) are sleeping, Epilepsy, Depression, Sickness, Death, Indolence, Agitation, Despair, Stupor, Insanity, Anxiety and so forth.

Rāma can be visualized as the supreme epitome and incarnation of Karuṇa rasa. This pathetic sentiment is the prime cause for the very creation of the great Epic Rāmāyaṇa. The panorama of the separation of two birds (krouncha) in intimacy wobbled Maharshi Vālmiki's soul as he uttered in intense anguish

Māniśāda pratiśtām tvamāgamaha śaśvatēhi samaha |
yatcrouchamithunādekamavadhēhi kāmamōhitam ||

From then Krouncha symbolizes Karuṇa rasa. As rightly called Rāma, the Dayā Sindhu (ocean of mercy) showers his compassion equally on humans as we see in the case of Ahalya's liberation of curse but also on flora and fauna of nature as seen in the incident of Jatayu where Rāma snivels in sympathy with the death of the bird and performs its last sacraments.

Rāma a model of inborn and inherent humility proves his nature of forgiveness in the incident **kāruṇyaṃ balibhojane** - as he cascades his mercy on the son of Indra (the leader of the Demi gods), the Jayantha. The story goes as how Once Jayantha the son of Sahasrākṣa (Indra) disguising himself as a crow, dares to test the valour of Rāma, pecks Sita on her breast while they were in the forest. The enraged Rāma unable to see his beloved in pain, unleashes the Brahmāstra in a blade of grass on to the crow which chases him in all the three worlds. Rāma's merciful heart forgives Jayantha's mistake when at last he seeks Rāma's refuge punishing him minimally as a reason that Brahmāstra should never go emaciated.

The two variations of Karuṇa Rasa i.e., Uttama (feeling of compassion for others misfortune) and Adhama (feeling pity at one's own misfortune), casts as the hub of the epic right from Daśaratha lamenting for Rāma until the test of Sita's sanctity as she gives Agni Parīkṣha. As stated in Dayā śatakam the Dayā Devi (goddess of mercy) dwells in Rāma's heart softening him to consider even Guha (the king of lowly chief of hunters) and Sugreeva (the king of monkeys) as his comrades. The overflowing compassion made Rāma eat the wild fruits offered by Śabari and bequeath her with Mōkṣham (salvation). Rāma experiences the second variety of this rasa i.e., Adhama when his soul pulsates with sorrow at Sita's abduction as he laments deeply on his own misfortune.

The quality of mercy enriching Rāma's heart extracts out the Gunas (features) of Kṣma (forgiving the deeds of intolerance) and Dayā (quality which nullifies the behaviour of fanaticism) making him the manifestation of Karuṇa rasa. As rightly called Śaranāgatha Rakṣaka (the Protector of the one who seeks his refuge) The lord of clemency gives shelter to Vibhīṣhana the younger brother of Rāvana without any hesitation and states that even if Rāvana himself would surrender to him he would forgive him for all his awful deeds.

Adbhutha Rasa of Rāma.

The Marvelous sentiment (adbhuta), as described by Dhanañjaya's Daśarūpakam says that it is that, whose essence is (the Permanent State) Astonishment (vismaya), and is caused by supernatural things (as determinants); it has as its result (karma) (i.e., as consequents) exclamations of surprise, weeping, trembling, sweating and stammering; the Transitory States (occurring in connection with it) are generally Joy, Agitation and Contentment.

Adbhuta means something which evokes the feeling of curiosity. This bhāvam arises as one visualizes something which is uncommon, supernatural or divine. The feeling of wow! is expressed using many anubhāvas as one is surprised to have experienced the unseen or beyond the routine acts.

Rāma experiences this Marvelous sentiment as in "**adbhutarasam sindhau giristhāpane**". In the quest of Sita, Rāma along with vānara sēna reach the ocean across which lies the Kingdom of Lanka which is ruled by Rāvana. As per the instructions of the sea God Samudra, the vānara sēna under the able leadership of Nal (The architect of Gods Vishwakarma's son) an able warrior of Sugrīvā's army triumphs in constructing a bridge across the ocean using huge rocks, large trees and a lot of sand. All gods, demigods and Rāma were astonished to see the natural feature of rocks turning magical as it hovered over the sea instead of sinking. The magnanimity of the bridge done with drifting rocks with Rāma's name engraved on it thrilled every one and Nal's accomplished task was appreciated.

The sentiment of astound is sensed when Rāma marks the scenic beauty of Mithila luminating with trees bearing colourful flowers better than the kalpavriksha (the celestial tree), and glowing buildings equaling heavens.

Hāsyā Rasa felt by Rāma

As described by Dhanañjaya in his Daśarūpakam Mirth (hasa) (is caused) by one's own or another's strange actions, words or attire; the development of this is declared (to be) the Comic Sentiment (Hāsyā) which is of threefold origin.

Hāsyā rasa expresses in itself joy or mirth. Depiction of cheerfulness, simple laughter, teasing, being amused, feeling merry and mischievous are the different facets of Hāsyā. Both the kinds of Pure Hāsyā viz ātmastha (subjective) and Parastha (objective) are healthy signs of human behaviour differs in nature of their expression.

Rāma uncovers the element of Hāsyā in the instance "**hāsyam śūrpanakāmukhe**". The subtle Hasitha is exposed by the man of Gāmbhīryam during their stay at Panchavati. Rāma denies the proposal of marriage by demoness Śūrpanakha who adored him for his attractive physique. She then turns her vision towards Lakshmana with the same proposal and being disappointed, the furious barbarian in her true form endeavors to slay Sita. Lakshmana puts an end to such a cruel deed by cutting the nose and ears of the wicked and this act gives rise to the feeling of mirth.

Another episode where after marriage Sita hesitates to touch Rāma's feet fearing that the Navaratna stones embedded in her bangles might turn into maidens as in the case of Ahalya. Rāma smiles to her innocence and promises her that he would be Ekapatnivratastha (one woman man) throughout his life.

A similar Comic element is witnessed when Rāma asks Guha (the king of Nishada) to take them across the river Ganges and Guha yearning to worship Rāma's feet puts forth in front of the Lord that at the touch of Rāma's feet his boat would turn into a damsel and it would become difficult for him to get along without the boat, his only source of income. So he beseeches Rāma to permit him to swab his divine feet before ascending him to the boat.

Rāma mocks sarcastically at Sugrēva when he slanders Vibhēshana for having left his elder brother Rāvana and taking refuge under Rāma, so as to fulfill the wish of acquiring the throne of Lanka, wherein he too had desired the same from Rāma.

Bhayānaka Rasa exposed by Rāma

The Terrible Sentiment (bhayānaka), as described by Daśarūpakam is shown with Fear, (bhaya) as its Permanent State (bhāva), (results) from the change of voice, loss of courage, and the like (as determinants) ; it is characterized by trembling of limbs, sweating, being parched , and fainting (as consequents); its associated transitory states are Depression, Agitation, Distraction, Fright and the like.

Roudra rasa at its peak takes the form of Bhayānaka rasa and the prelude phase of fear gradually upgrades itself to the feeling of terror and is excited by seeing or hearing about the frightening incidents such as dense forests, mystic sounds, howling beasts etc.

As outlined in the phrase "**bhaya vahe ajērmukhe**" - Described as analogous to Kālāgni (the Fire of death) Rāma terrifies the Rakśasās (demons) like Khara and Dūśana (the brothers of Śūrpanakha) and slaughters them with their army of fourteen thousand demons. The brutal battle between Khara and Rāma trembled the hearts of all Gods, demigods, Yakshās and kinnarās.

Rāma scares the Samudra Raja when his prayers go unanswered at the time of Sitānvēśanam (searching of Sita). Rāma freed the petrifying Tātakā vanam after killing the wicked Tātaki and scares the demon Mārēcha who was thrown to a distance of a hundred yojanās into the sea.

The Vānara sēna's panic vanishes when valorous Rāma kills Kumbhakarna the prodigious demon (younger brother of Rāvana) in the battle.

The prolonged battle of seven days between Rāma and Rāvana shook all the three worlds and frightened the Earth, the mountains , rivers and the grooves. Rāma's fearless attitude enrages Rāvana to counter attack using weapons like Gadha (maces) Hathoda (iron bludgeons), chakras (discs) , sword (kathi), axes, mountains and uprooted trees trembling the life on Earth. The intense duel between the two Maharathis distracted their respective armies as they stood motionless to watch the same. The re-appearance of Rāvana's head every time it is cut by Rāma's arrow infuriates Rāma and he finally nails Rāvana's heart with the Brahmāstra, (the divine arrow which never fails to reach its target) there by killing him. The surge of Divyāstras (divine missiles) covering the sky dimmed Sun's shine on the Earth.

Rāma showing his leela in human form also experiences this rasa when he finds his beloved abducted by the demon king Rāvana. He laments in fear as to what harm might have happened to her and loses control over himself for some time.

Bhībhatsa Rasa

As explained in Daśarūpakam " The Odious Sentiment (bhībhatsam) has (the Permanent state) Disgust (jugupsa) as its sole basis ; it causes distress (udvega) chiefly by means of worms, stinking matter, and nausea ; it causes horror by means of blood, entrails, bones, marrow, flesh, and the like ; it causes unmixed aversion in the case of hips, breasts , and so forth (of women) because of renunciation . It is accompanied by contraction of the nose , mouth, and so on as consequents. In it there occur Agitation, sickness, Apprehension, and the like as transitory states.

The feeling of disgust which is evoked in a person when he/she visualizes or hears about things which are sickening is the cause of Bhībhatsam . Graceless , unpleasant sights also become the reasons for this rasa.

Śūrpanakha in her true form possessing dark complexion, winnowing fans like finger nails, over sized bosoms, who is diversely eyed, pot bellied, and copper gold long-haired old lady , awkwardly dressed, ghastly toothed, with a harsh

metallic voice and a bratty woman who possessed magical powers to assume any form or shape can be metaphoric to bhībhatsam. In the combat between Rāma and Dūśana, the rasa of abhorrence becomes visible in one's mind when the entire tapō bhūmi turns to a battle field as the wicked demon Dūśana throws flesh, blood, cut shoulders, eyes, necks, ears and limbs in the sacred āshram.

As the phrase explains "**bhībhatsam anyāmukhe**"- the feeling of disgust is visualized after the war between Rāma and Rāvana. The spectacle of Medhini (earth) wrapped in the blanket of blood, headless corpses, cut arms and limbs scattered around the field of war, the wild cries of the widowed ladies caused aversion.

Raudra Rasa of Rāma

The Explanation as per Daśarūpakam goes that the Permanent State Anger (krōdha) is caused by feelings such as indignation and aversion to an enemy (as determinants); the resulting development of it is the Furious Sentiment (raudra), a state of agitation accompanied by biting one's lip, trembling, frowning, sweating, redness of the face, (and also) by drawing of weapons, (holding) the shoulders boastfully, striking the Earth, vowing and imprisonment (as consequents). In it (there occur the Transitory States) Indignation, Intoxication, Recollection, Inconstancy, Envy, Cruelty, Agitation and the like.

Rāma an epitome of Dayā or compassion shows himself in a contrasting quality when he exhibits his fury near the ocean bed on Samudra Raja. In aggression, as a epithet of fire God, Rama aims an arrow in the direction of the ocean, seeming to dry up the entire ocean as his prayers were not answered by Samudra Raja. It appears as though the enraged Rāma would gulp the entire world within a fraction of a second.

Rāma exhibits the Raudra rasa as "**raudram rāvaṇamardane**". Rāma opposite to his nature evokes anger in himself as he faces Rāvana in the battle field. Enraged with temper at the recollection of all the adharmā (misdeeds) caused by Rāvana in case of Sita, Vibhēshana and others, he battles with all his fury against Rāvana just like a hungry Lion. Rāma annoyed at the sight of Lakshmana being harmed by the illusion, furnished with eight bells, having mighty irresistible sound shot by Rāvana, proclaims out violently

"arāvanamrāmaṃ vā jagatrakśyatha vānarāha" _ the entire world would, further have either Rāma or Rāvana.

Finally Rāma, fuming in rage splits the body of the brutal Demon king Rāvana with the dreadful shaft, the Brahmāstra.

Śānta Rasa of Rāma

Śānta rasa being excepted by the scholars beyond all its controversies marks its importance as the one represented with complete harmony between mind, body and universe.

Rāma is known as a person who is calm in all situations. A quality difficult to be attained by common souls, Rāma stands composed at all adverse situations. The self-controlled man of ideals shows his unmoved nature in both the situations, one at the announcement of him becoming YuvaRaja of Ayōdhya and second, at the command for exile. Rāma's stopover at different Muni's āśrams accelerates the process of their meditation so as to attain their goal, the fourth Purushārtha i.e., mōkśam quickly. This is what the phrase "**śāntam munijane**" mean.

"Ramante yōgino yasmin nityānandae chidātmani |

Iti Rāma padenāsou ParaBrahmābhīdhēyate ||"

- Rāma is said to be the form of Para Brahma swarūpa in whom the yogin's 'chit' i.e., soul would always find bliss.

Rāma's interaction with the sages on different aspects of Dharma enhances their penance and as Vālmiki elites in Rāmāyaṇa, the entire Vanam (forest) glittered due to the virtues of Rāma during his stay over there. Rāma being steady bestows on them the key to eternity.

conclusion

Each incarnation of the Lord is to teach the path of Dharma (righteousness) to the human race. Rāma being the embodiment of Dharma educates the world with lessons of Patience and perseverance. Nurturing different flavors of life in human form Rāma preaches the human race about values, ideals and principles to be safe guarded at any episode of experiences. Rāma thus taking different roles as a hero symbolizes an obedient son, a responsible brother, a caring husband, a perfect student, a true friend, an unmatched warrior and an able administrator.

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By
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punaha pravēśabhētyā cha makārastu kapātavat || "

_ The utterance of the letter 'Ra' removes all our sins out of us and when 'ma' is uttered the lips close just like a window and the sins won't enter back again.

विशुद्धं परं सच्चिदानन्दरूपम्

गुणाधारमाधारहीनं वरेण्यम् ।

महान्तं विभान्तं गुहान्तं गुणान्तं

सुखान्तं स्वयं धाम रामं प्रपद्ये ॥ १ ॥

I take refuge in Sri Rāma, who is the purest, the greatest, of the form of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; who is the repository of the innumerable good qualities, while Himself not needing any support, who is the most worshipful, who is all pervading, the most resplendent one, who is enthroned in the hearts of all beings, who is above all the three guNas of sattva, rajas and tamas, who is free of all materialistic pleasures and who is Self-supporting.

शिवं नित्यमेकं विभुं तारकाख्यं

सुखाकारमाकारशून्यं सुमान्यम् ।

महेशं कलेशं सुरेशं परेशं

नरेशं निरीशं महीशं प्रपद्ये ॥ २ ॥

I take refuge in (shrI Rāma), (who is) the most auspicious, the eternal one, all-pervading, the deliverer of all the worlds, the embodiment of bliss itself, who is formless, yet the most respected, who is the great Lord, master of all arts, Lord of the gods, parameshvara, the lord of the world and who has no other Lord but Himself.

