

Let us discuss about an interesting episode of a grand dispensation by Sri Rama to an innocuous request made by a resident of Ayodhya.

In deference to the wishes of his father, Sri Rama was determined to go on exile for fourteen years. With great difficulty, he got permission from his mother Kaushalya. He then instructed his brother to distribute his personal wealth, personal belongings as well as elephants, horses, cows amongst Rishis, Vedic scholars, his friends, people from all the walks of life without any distinction. He also requested Seetha Devi to donate all her belongings in the same manner.

News of donation of wealth by Sri Rama spread quickly throughout the city. Though the citizens are very much sad on the decision of Sri Rama. But, the normal feeling of receiving gifts from the hands of their beloved master ran high. So, they came out and collected things donated through Lakshmana to their satisfaction. Sage Valmiki remarked that there was nobody who had not received the donations. There was none who was unsatisfied with what he got. A remarkable aspect of Sri Rama to delight his subjects even at the time of his gravest deprivation of position and companionship of dear and near. A great example of demonstration of detachment.

The news of ongoing unprecedented distribution of wealth reached the ears of a woman, wife of a poor brahmana by name Trijata, who was born in the family of Garga lineage. He used to make his living in the forest through digging the soil. Hence, he used to carry an axe, a spade and a plough. His family had literally eked out a destitute living.<sup>1</sup>

The wife requested her impoverished husband to seek some form of wealth from Sri Rama for maintenance of the family. The lean and skinny brahmana with a staff in his hand too willingly embarked on that mission and reached the palace. Sri Rama wanted to reward him very much as he immediately noticed in him the greatest inner strength of spiritual splendour like sages of Bhrigu and Angriasa<sup>2</sup>.

So, when Trijata requested for donation. Sri Rama jokingly told him that so far, he could not give not even one thousand cows. Hence, he can throw his staff to a distance as much as possible and can get as many cows and cattle which could be held in the space traversed by the

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<sup>1</sup> तत्र आसीत् पिनालो गार्ग्यः त्रिजटः नाम वै द्विजः | क्षतवृत्तिर्वने नित्यम् फालकुदाललाङ्गली || ( Ayodhya Kanda Sarga 32)

<sup>2</sup> भृग्वङ्गिरसमम् दीप्या त्रिजटम् जनसंसदि || ( Ayodhya Kanda Sarga 32)

staff.<sup>3</sup> Summoning all his energy, he threw the staff which had fallen on the other side of Saryu River.

Sri Rama was highly rejoiced with the effort of Trijata. He embraced him fondly. He also ensured delivery of many thousands of cows with calf with the horns duly covered with gold plates and provisions to maintain them to the hermitage of Trijata. Sri Rama informed him that only to highlight his greatness, this trial of test was conducted. He told him that the words were uttered earlier are spoken in a jovial manner. He was very much satisfied as Trijata had proved him right. Sri Rama asked for forgiveness from him. Brahmana was very much pleased with the gift and recited benedictory verses, profusely blessed Sri Rama and left with the gift.<sup>4</sup>

There are many other anecdotes in which Sri Rama had conversed with others in humorous manner betraying royal lineage. For example, in conversations with the other inmate of ashram of sage Vishwamitra, after successfully protected the yagna, he politely informed them that their attendants (referring to himself and Lakshmana) were in attendance to carry out any of their errands.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, when Shuurparnakha in the disguise of a beautiful woman arrived at Panchavati hermitage and requested Sri Rama to marry her, he told her that he could see that she was from the race of demons, He, then enquired about her purpose of visit<sup>6</sup>. She expressed her desire to marry him. She, further, made disparaging remarks about Seetha as a disfigured, dishonest, hallow stomached lady. Notwithstanding her remarks, he replied that as a beautiful woman, she should better approach Lakshmana who was handsome and living alone. She went to Lakshmana with the same request. Not lacking in humour, Lakshmana too made subtle fun of her disguised beauty and sent her back to his elder brother. She was tossed between the two for some time. Ultimately, she understood that they were making fun of her. She became angry and about to attack Seetha. But that had resulted in her own self disfiguration at the hands of Lakshmana. At that time, Sri Rama importantly advised Lakshmana that he should not have made fun of anyone who was inimical and nursing negative attitude like Shuurparnakha.

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<sup>3</sup> तमुवाच ततो रामः परिहाससमन्वितम् | गवाम् सहस्रमप्येकम् न च विश्राणितम् मया | परिक्षिपसि दण्डेन यावत्तावदवाप्ससि || (Ayodhya Kanda Sarga 32)

<sup>4</sup> उवाच च ततो रामस्तम् गार्ग्यमभिसान्वयन् | मन्युर्न खलु कर्तव्यः परिहासो ह्ययम् मम || (Ayodhya Kanda Sarga 32)

<sup>5</sup> इमौ स्म मुनि शार्दूल किंकरो समुपस्थितौ | आज्ञापय मुनिश्रेष्ठ शासनम् करवाव किम् || (Bala Kanda Sarga 31)

<sup>6</sup> त्वम् हि तावन्मनोज्ञां गी राक्षसी प्रतिभासि मे || (Aranya Kanda Sarga 17)

Valuable lesson for a person to take guard against as when and to whom one can afford to be humorous in words and conduct.

From the foregoing incident with Trijata, we may not fail to understand that the Sri Rama, who is depository of unimaginable treasures of all kinds can only decide what we should get and accordingly dispenses it in His own way. Here, the poor Trijata came and asked for a pair of cow or so to make the both the ends meet and to maintain the family free from starvation. But, Sri Rama, in a magnificent way, gifted him with thousands of cows and provisions. Sri Rama's action befits His kindness to the fellow human beings. The same thing applies to one's prayer to the Almighty inadvertently seeking every mundane thing on the earth. The God, too, would bestow at right time a gift conducive to one's good.

Similarly, in the case of the anecdote concerning Shuurparnakha, there is a subtle point that when a person was in his/her world of imaginary or optimistic thinking, any amount of advice to him/her to understand reality would be of no use. It behoves one to keep a distance from such person and not indulge into any provocation with him/her.