

## The Morality of Rama's Treatment of Sita after She Returned from Ravana

Reproducing the ancient Sanskrit tale *Ramayana*, Narayan uses his skills of a novelist for telling a story of abduction, struggle and betrayal. One of the key moments of the tale is Sita's return from Ravana and her reunion with her husband. Rama's treatment of Sita and the further development of the plot familiarize a reader with a valuable idea: regardless of his/her social status and obligations, one should remain a personality able to make independent decisions and appreciate his/her dearest people. Priority of Rama's obligations as a ruler over his personal views and feelings force him to meet Sita with indifference, hard-heartedness and distrust.

After Sita's liberation, she beams with happiness because she reunites with her beloved husband, but her expectations about their meeting are not reciprocal. Rama "welcomes" her with all his coldness arguing that she cannot be his wife after she has been kidnapped by the demon. This treatment can be interpreted as immoral, as Sita became a victim and also faced much suffering; therefore, putting the burden of responsibility upon her was rather dishonorably. To assure the husband of her innocence, Sita agrees to enter the fire and to pass through it. The moment when Sita enters the flames eloquently reveals Rama's attitude towards his wife, "The sympathy of all the bystanders was with Sita, but Rama saw her enter the flames without a tremor" (Rabb 11). Rama's indifference during this frightening ceremony is one of the main arguments of his immorality that demonstrates his cruelty and hard-heartedness. Sita completes the trial by fire, and Agni, the god of fire, bears her uninjured in his arms; however, she is welcomed by Rama only for a short period of time. Thus, a reader has an opportunity to understand the extent to which Rama's heart is restrained in feelings towards his wife.

Having forgotten about the trial by fire, Rama puts his reputation and the status of a ruler to the first place and repudiates his wife giving in to rumors. Undoubtedly, being a prince, Rama had certain obligations towards his people, but it does not justify his dishonorable behavior. After it is rumored that there is Sita's guilt in the prolonged famine in the country, ungrateful Rama gives in to this gossip instead of protecting his wife and defending her reputation. After spending a long time suffering in Ceylon, Sita comes back but is not welcomed in her native country; she finds herself despised by her dearest and nearest people. Even though she is ready to sacrifice her life and passes the trial by fire, her husband does not believe in her innocence. Not making any attempts to justify her, Rama repudiates Sita and orders to leave her in the forest where they once spent their happiest days; thus, Sita returns to their paradise without her husband.

It is possible to assume that deeply in his heart, Rama knows that Sita is innocent, but blinded with his anger and confused with meaningless rumors, he treats his wife with cruelty, which makes his behavior particularly immoral. Bearing their twin sons in the forest, Sita rears them with the hermit's assistance. Many years later, Rama is struck with remorse and comes to the forest to see whether the young men are his sons. However, even having recognized his guilt, the protagonist asks his wife to pass the trial by fire one more time to prove her innocence to all his court (Narayan and Kampar 176). This episode can be defined as the climax of Rama's immorality and prevalence of the other people's opinion over his own views and feelings. Being in despair, Sita asks the earth to hide her if she is innocent, and the earth opens to demonstrate her purity. A reader sees that at the moment when she vanishes under earth, Rama believes her, but to make her return is already impossible for him. Everything that now reminds Rama about his wife is her golden

statue, which becomes his deserved punishment for his immoral treatment of his wife.

The tale strictly condemns Rama's weak will, inability to listen to his heart, pride and heart-hardness. It demonstrates to a reader that one's love is a priceless treasure that should not be repudiated in favor of ambitions and vainglory. The final moment of the story makes one think about how easy it is to lose someone dearest whom he/she does not appreciate and how painful it is to live with the bitterness of loss.

## Works Cited

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