



Ravana's fight with Jatayu. His physical lust and carnal desire have been depicted in Sita's abduction in the Ramāyāna

The character of Rāma is developed as a man of magnetic attraction—the epitome of heroic glory and transcendental idealism. In the Hindu way of life the concept of the hero is developed on the basis of a theory that those who renounce, enjoy. So the Indian mind is simultaneously attracted and intrigued by wild nature, the lush beauty of the evergreen forest, and the eternal snow of the Himalayas. Rāma goes to the forest at the moment of the glory of his coronation. It is not pre-deterministic fatalism, but an eternal quest for truth. Rāma as an incarnate of dharma is bent upon uprooting adharma, and all those who follow evil ways. It is said in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa: 21-41) - ‘*dharmo hi paramo loke, dharme satyam pratiṣṭhitam*’, i.e. dharma is the prime object in this world and in dharma is established Truth. Vālmiki in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa: 18-24) uses satya (truth) and dharma interchangeably. He does not distinguish between them as is seen in the

case of ṛita and satya. Vālmiki says that truth is the supreme Brahma. In truth is established dharma. Truth is in the undecaying *Vedas*, and through truth, mokṣa is attained. The *Rāmāyaṇa* (Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa: 14-7, 8) states that ‘If thy mind is firmly established in dharma, do thou then follow truth.’ Vālmiki further says in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa: 109-13) that the truth is the lord of everything in this world, and that there is no state superior to truth. All these references disclose that satya is the paramount reality and dharma has its basis in that Supreme Reality. It has its life in truth and is nothing without it.

It is said again and again that the main aim of both the epics is the achievement of Puruṣārtha catuṣṭayam, (the four-fold end of life) i.e. dharmāarthakāmamokṣa (dharma or righteousness, artha or wealth, kāma or fulfilment of desires and mokṣa or emancipation). The leading motif in both the epics, however, is the Indian idea of dharma which Vyāsa articulates thus:

*Na jātu Kāmānna bhayaānna na lobhād dharmam tyajejjīvitasyāpi hetoh,
Dharmo nityaḥ sukhaduḥkhe tvanitye,
jīvo nityo hiturasya tvanityah*

(One should not relinquish dharma for pleasure, fear, avarice, or love of life. Dharma is eternal, and pleasure and pain are transient. The soul is eternal but its embodiment is transient).