

## Issue of Corruption in the Ramcharitmanas

Dr. MAMTA SINGHAL  
 Assoc. Prof. & Head  
 Dept. of English  
 J.V Jain College, Saharanpur

Literature is the mirror to society. Literature reflects the prevalent practices of the contemporary society. The problem of corruption is not a modern one, though it has reached its climax in the modern times. The corruption started with the first man created by God. When Adam disobeyed God, he corrupted himself by the desire for power (knowledge). To understand the paper well, we should, first of all have the clear concept of the word “corruption”.

Wikipedia, defines the word ‘corruption’ as “to be corrupt is to be spiritually or morally impure or acting illegal”<sup>1</sup>. In philosophical, theological or moral discussions, corruption is spiritual or moral impurity or deviation from an ideal. The word ‘corrupt’ when used as an adjective literally means “utterly broken”<sup>2</sup>. The word was first used by Aristotle and later by Cicero who added the terms bribe and abandonment of good habits.<sup>3</sup> According to Morris, corruption is “the illegitimate use of public power to benefit a private interest”<sup>4</sup>. In Colin Nye’s classical definition, corruption is “behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private gains”<sup>5</sup>. An updated version of the same element is by Mushtaq Khan “behaviour that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private motives such as wealth, power or status”<sup>6</sup>. Corruption thrives where there is no discipline and strong moral principles. It is aided by a society with majority of ignorant citizens and loose moral values. The terms immoral, depravity, dishonesty and impurity of thoughts are often associated with corruption. Corruption generally weakens the economy and creates an opportunity for mass poverty and disparity among citizens of a nation. Only few individuals enjoy effluence in a corrupt atmosphere, while others who are in majority suffer and are made dependants.

Corruption is inherent in human nature and cannot be legislated away. Religion has a role in educating people on ethical behaviour in that leads to a transformation of the human heart. Its Hindi equivalent is *bhrashtachaar* which means where behaviour is not up to the mark. What Goswami Tulsidas said four centuries back in the *Ramcharitmanas* is true to our times also. Here, lies the appeal of a work of literature. When we see corruption in terms of general decay and moral laxity, we find the *Ramcharitmanas* as replete with the example of spiritual and moral impurity and deviation from the ideas. All the corrupt practices were being observed by the demons headed by ‘Ravana’ e.g.

जप जोग विरागा तप मख भागा श्रवन सुनई दससीसा ।  
 आपुनु उठि धावइ रहै न पावई धरि सब घालइ खीसा ॥  
 अस भ्रष्ट अचारा भा संसारा धर्म सुनिइ नही काना ।  
 तेही बहुविधि त्रासइ देस निकासइ जो कह बेद पुराना ॥<sup>7</sup>

The moral disorder during the reign of Ravana had been such that the earth even trembled while Ravana walked over it. चलत दसानन डोलत अवनी । गर्जत गर्भ स्रवहि सुर रवनी ॥ When the deities even heard Ravana coming to heaven; they abandoned the paradise and hid themselves into the caves of the Mountain Sumeru. Ravana challenged all the deities with their names to find a peer to himself, but everybody surrendered himself to sovereignty of Ravana-

ब्रह्मसृष्टि जँह लागि तनुधारी। दसमुख बसबर्ती नी नारी।।  
आयुस करहिनँ सकल भय भीता। नवहिनँ आइ नित चरन बिनीता।।<sup>9</sup>

All of them have been sadist. Their whole time business had been to uproot religion. They performed all anti-religion deeds. The condition of the society was-

बाढे खल बहु चोर जुआरा। जे लंपट परधन परदारा।।  
मानहिनँ मातु-पिता नहीं देवा। साधुन्ह सन करवावहिनँ सेवा।।<sup>10</sup>

All of them had been terrible to look at. They howled and growled assuming different shapes. Where-ever they found cow-like calm and quite people or scholarly (Brahmins) people, the whole of the town or city was set on fire. Ravana's country was corruption incarnate.

The solution of this problem of corruption has been given by Tulsidas. Panic-stricken and terrified mother earth assumed the shape of cow and asked deities and sages for her help.

they were also helpless so all of them prayed God "Vishnu". He assured them of his incarnation on earth in the form of human being and to protect them from the clutches of demons. That is the eternal assurance of God- when earth is surrounded with crimes, sins and corruption, He will incarnate to save his creation and establishment religion.

यदा यदा ही धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।  
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्।  
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे।।<sup>11</sup>

In every Yug God incarnates. But, he comes when the earth is replete with crimes and corruption. It has been predicted in our sacred books that God will incarnate in kalyug also. Still there is space for crime and corruption to spread for God to incarnate. Christianity also believes that the second coming is at hand.<sup>12</sup> (The first coming being God becoming a man in Jesus) When anarchy is loosed upon by the evil forces on the world, God will incarnate once again, as he has done it earlier also. W.B. Yeats is of the view that the christen civilization which started approximately 2000 years ago has now decayed and it's time for a new civilization to begin.

The picture of corruption of modern times was clicked by Tulsidas even 400 years back. He envisaged the true picture of Kalyug. This picture of corruption was there in his age 400 years ago also which has been strengthened by now all the more.

Kalyug has devoured all the religions and all the scriptures have disappeared. The hypocrites have presented a number of sects. All the people are in the grip of avarice. The only religious property of Kalyug is that there is "no religion". There is no traditional division of society into four sects. All the people challenge the preaching of Vedas. Teachers are selling their education and the rules are devouring the money of their subjects. The path of life to be followed is only of their liking. The scholar is the one who brags a hypocrite is a saint. Only that man is smart who snatches others money smartly. Long nails, long locks of hair are the symbols of a saint now-a-days

कलिमल ग्रसे धर्म सब लुप्त भए सदग्रन्थ।  
दभिन्ह निज मति कल्पि करि प्रगट किये बहु पंथ।।  
बरन धर्म नही आश्रम चारी। श्रुति विरोध रत सब नर नारी।।  
द्विज श्रुति बेचक भूप प्रजासन। कोउ नहीं मान निगम अनुसासन।।  
मारग सोइ ता कहँ जोइ भावा। पंडित सोइ जो गाल बजावा।।  
सोइ सयान जो परघन हारी। तो कर दंभ सो बड आचारी।।  
जाके नख अरू जटा विसाला। सोई तापस प्रसिद्ध कलिकाला।।<sup>13</sup>

Tulsidas presented a pen-portrait of corruption in kalyug in a few couplets. He paints men as henpecked and always dancing attendance upon their wives. All the men are greedy licentious and full of wrath. They criticise gods, religion and moral values. Women, abandoning their lawful husbands, elope with others. Students-teacher relationship is the relationship of deaf and blind. Student is deaf to the teaching of the teacher while teacher is blind to see whether student is following him or not. Parents don't care for the moral upliftment of their young-ones rather they provide them only the vocational education so that they are able to earn their livelihood. Though they talk to high moral values but they do not hesitate in killing even for a petty amount of money-

नारि बिबस नर सकल गोसाईं । नाचहिं नट मर्कट की नाई ॥

सब नर काम लोभ रत क्रोधी । देव विप्र श्रुति संत बिरोधी ॥  
गुन मंदिर सुंदर पति त्यागी । भजहिं नारि पर पुरुष अभागी ॥

गुरु सिष बधिर अंध का लेखा । एक न सुनइ एक नहिं देखा ॥  
हरइ सिष्यधन सोक न हरइ । सो गुर घोर नरक महुँ परई ॥  
मातु पिता बालकन्ह बोलावहिं । उदर भरै सोइ धरम सिखावहिं ॥

ब्रह्म ग्यान बिनु नारि नर कहहिं न दुसरी बात ।  
कौडी लागि लोभ बस करहिं बिप्र गुर घात ॥<sup>14</sup>

A true picture of the contemporary society can be visualised in the Ramcharitmanas. Tulsidas describes that the ascetics spend a lot of money in furnishing their houses; they are least interested in renunciation. Pure wives are turn out of their houses and are replaced with the licentious and corrupt women. Sons, respect their parents till they are bachelors. Since the day they have their wife and in-laws, their own kinsmen appear to them as enemies. Rulers snatch money from their subject and punish them for no fault of their own-

बहु दाम सवारहिं धाम जती । विषया ही लीन्ही न रही बिरती ॥  
तपसी धनवंतदरिद्र गृही । कलि कौतुल तात न जात कही ॥  
कुलपति निकारहिं नारि सती । गृह आनहिं चेरि निवेरि गती ॥  
सुत मानहिं मातु पिता तब लौ । अबलानन दीख नही जब लौ ॥  
ससंरारि पिआरि लगीं जब ते । रिपुरुष कुटुंब भए तब ते ॥

कलि बारहिं बार दुकाल पड़े । बिनु अन्न दुखी सब लोग मरै ॥

कलिकाल बिहाल किए मनुजा । नही मानत कोउ अनुजा तनुजा ॥<sup>15</sup>

The solution to this problem has been provided in the following couplets of 'Manas'.

कृतजुग सब जोगी बिग्यानी । करि हरि ध्यान तरहिं भव प्राणी ॥  
त्रेता विविध जग्य नर करहिं । प्रभुहिं समर्पि कर्म भव तरहीं ॥  
द्वापर करि रघुपति पद पूजा । नर भव तरहिं उपाय न दूजा ॥  
कलिजुग केवल हरि गुन गाहौ । गावत नर पावहिं भव थाहा ॥  
कलिजुग जोग न जग्य न ज्ञाना । एक आधार राम गुन गाना ॥  
सब भरोस तजि जो भज रामहिं । प्रेम समेत गाव गुन ग्रामहिं ॥  
सोइ भव तर कछु संसय नाहीं । नाम प्रताप प्रगट कलि माहीं ॥  
कलि कर एक पुनीत प्रतापा । मानस पुन्य होहिं नहिं पापा ॥

कलिजुग समजुग आन नहिं जो नर कर बिस्वास ॥  
 गाइ राम गुन गन बिमल भव तर बिनहिं प्रयास ॥  
 प्रगट चारि पद धर्म के कलि महुँ एक प्रधान ॥  
 जेन केन विधि दीन्हें दान करइ कल्यान ॥<sup>16</sup>

In Satyug, Tretayug and Dwaparyug there used to be a lot of worship, oblation and asceticism. What people received as a reward from all of them is received in Kalyug just by uttering the name of God. In Satyug all people were ascetics, they used to meditate God and get salvation: performing different rites and rituals like oblation (yajna) was the way of life in Tretayug; in Dwaparyug people offered virtual devotion at the altar of God; but in Kalyug nothing else is required except chanting the name of God, having full faith in Him. There are four fundamental ways to observe any religion observe truth; have mercy for all; leading the life of renunciation, non-attachment; and charity. But, in Kalyug there is only one way to realise God to get salvation and that is through charity only.

One thing that I want to stress here is that Kalyug is criticized a lot for rampant corruption but the story and characters describe in the Ramcharitmanas are of Tretayug and the character of Ramcharitmanas also are not devoid of corruption.

We take a few characters and laxity in their characters which make it doubtful whether they had strong, intact characters-

1. **Dasarath** (i) He killed Shraavan Kumar mistaking him to be an elephant. He was a king and he could hunt a deer but not an elephant. Elephant hunting has always been prohibited.

(ii) Why he did not tell about the curse of Shraavan Kumar's parents to anybody though he remembered it at the time of his own death.

(iii) When Dasarath performed yagna (an oblation) for the sake of having son and Agnidev presented him a bowl of Payas (kheer) to be distributed among his queens, he did not distribute it equally and impartially among all his queens. See the distribution of Payas as described in the Ramcharitmanas.

तबहिं राय प्रिय नारि बोलाई । कौसल्यादि तहाँ चलि आई ॥  
 अर्धभाग कौसल्यहि दीन्हा । उभय भाग आधे कर कीन्हा ॥  
 कैकेई कहँ नृप सो दयऊ । रह्यो सो उभय भाग पुनि भयऊ ।  
 कौसल्या कैकेई हाथ धरि । दीन्ह सुमित्रहिं मन प्रसन्न करि ॥<sup>17</sup>

Half of Payas was given to Kausalya and remaining half was divided between two portion. One portion (1/4) of the whole Payas was given to Kaikeyi, remaining one-fourth of the portion was again divided into two portions. One of these portions was first given to Kausalya and the other to kaikeyi. Hence, with their permission these two portions were given to Sumitra. Thus he was unjustified his dealing with his wives and specially Sumitra. Thus, he had planned that one of the sons of Sumitra should be the follower of the son of Kaushalya and the other should be the follower of son of Kaikeyi.

(iv) Dasarath had taken a great decision for his state Ayodhya- he was going to anoint Ram as Crown-prince (yuvraj). At such a crucial time why he had sent his second son Bharat to his maternal grand-father's house.

(v) There had been a lot of preparations for the anointment of Ram for a fortnight. Why did Dasarath not consult Kaikeyi about it, who used to accompany him even on wars? Dasarath owed his life to kaikeyi. But she came to know all about it only through her maid servant Manthara and that too on the eve of the anointment of Ram.

(vi) When Kaikeyi is annoyed with Dasarath for not taking her in confidence for the anointment of Ram and goes to the dark room (Kopabhawan) and Dasarath tries to pacify her wrath and says that if her enemy was even immortal Indra, he could kill him also for her sake, what to talk of poor, mean, insect-like human beings-

सकहुँ तोर अरि अमरहुँ मारि। काह बपुरे नर नारी।।

(vii) He had pronounced fourteen years of exile to Ram. At one hand he claims that he belongs to the great clan of king Raghu who could sacrifice his life but never back from his words.

रघुकुल रीति सदा चलि आई। प्रान जाहिं बरु बचन न जाई।।

(He proved that by sacrificing his life), on the other hand he is praying Brahmaji so that Ram doesn't go to the forest. Then he prays Lord Shiva that he should inspire and mentally mould Ram in such a way that Ram disobeys Dasarath and putting aside his curtsy and humbleness doesn't go to the forest and lives at home.

बिधिहि मनाव राउ मन माहीं। जेही रघुनाथ न कानन जाहीं।।

सुमिरि महेसहि कहइ निहोरी। बिनती सुनहु सदासिव मोरी।।

आसुतोष तुम्ह अपदर दानी। आरति हरहु दीन जन जानी।।

तुम्हप्रेरक सबके हृदय सो मति रामहिं देहु। बचन मोरि तजि रहहिं घर परिहरि सील सनेह।।<sup>20</sup>

(Strange! Dasarath being the descendant of king Raghu does not want to be made a culprit of not following the tradition of his clan but prays Brahma and Shiva to mould Ram in such a way that Ram will be accused of not keeping his father's words.)

Then, he asks his minister Manthara to take the chariot and go along with Ram to the forest and showing him the forest for four days bring him back to Ayodhya-

पुनि धरि धीर कहइ नरनाहू। लै रथ संग सखा तुम्ह जाहू।

सुठि सुकुमार कुमार दोउ जनकसुता सुकुमारि।

रथ चढाइ देखराइ बनु फिरहुँ गए दिन चारि।।<sup>21</sup>

Do all these examples show the integrity of Dasarath's character?

2. **Sugreev** - He was the younger brother of Baali-the king of Kishkindha. With the blessing of Hanuman Ram befriended him. Both Baali and Sugreev loved each other intimately.

(i) One day a dozen viz. Mayavi came to their town and challenged Baali. Baali came out of the palace and chased Mayavi and reached the cave of a mountain. Sugreev had also followed them. Then, Baali went into the cave for a dual with Mayavi and asked Sugreev had also followed them. Then, Baali went into the cave for a dual with Mayavi and asked Sugreev to wait for a fortnight and warned him if he did not return in a fortnight's time, then he should consider him as killed-

परखेहु मोहि एक पखवारा। नहिं आवहुँ तब जानेसु मारा।।

मास दिवस तहँ रहेउँ खरारी। निसरी रूधिर धार तहँ भारी।।

बालि हतेसि मोह मारिहि आइ। सिला देइ तहँ चलेउँ पराई।।

सुन सुग्रीव मारिहउँ बालिहि एकहिं बान।

ब्रह्म रुद्र सरनागत गए न उबरही प्रान।।<sup>22</sup>

Here, Sugreev's fault is that he didn't wait for Baali for 15 days as asked by Baali rather he waited there for 12 days only. When after twelve days he saw a stream of blood oozing out of the cave, instead of taking revenge upon his brother's enemy, put a huge rock at the opening of the cave so that Mayavi might not kill him and returned to Kishkindha where he was crowned.

- (ii) Sugreev had promised Ram to search for Sita. But, when he received the kingdom of Kishkindha, he forgot about his promise. When Ram declares – जेहि सायक मारा में बाली। तेहि सर हतउँ मूढ कह कारी<sup>23</sup> (I shall kill Sugreev with the same arrow with which I killed Baali) then only he started his search for Sita. There is no sense of gratitude in him.
- (iii) When he sent his subject monkeys in search of Sita, he dictated them like a dictator that if anybody came beyond the time limit of one month without any information about Sita, he would be killed at his hands.
- (iv) After the death of Baali, Sugreev kept Tara (Baali's wife) as his wife. All these examples show that he is also socially corrupt.

### 3. Vibhishan –

- (i) Vibhishan is another man of Ram's party. Till date he is abused for divulging the secrets of his own family and bringing destruction to the whole Kingdom (Ghar Ka Bhedi, Lanka Dhaye).
- (ii) Ravana had kicked him for living with him but loving his enemy –मम पुर बसि तपसिन्ह पर प्रीति। सठ मिलु जाई तिन्हहि कहू नीति।। अस कहि कीन्हिसि चरन प्रहारा। अनुज गहे पद बारहिं बारा।।<sup>24</sup>

Apparently, he holds the feet of Ravana, but when he goes under the shelter of Ram, and there is the war between Ram and Ravana he divulges the secret of Ravana being unconquerable that there lies nectar in the navel of Ravana – नाभिकुंड पीयूष बस याके। नाथ जिअइ रावन बल ताके।।<sup>25</sup> Then only, ram absorbed nectar from his navel with an arrow and was able to kill Ravana.

- (iii) When Ravana is killed, he himself does not go to perform the last rites of funeral. It is only after the orders of Ram that he performs the last rites of Ravana's corpse.

After the death of Ravana, he also kept Mandodri as his wife. The reference to this evil deed of Vibhishan and Sugreev we find in the Baalkand, where it has been mentioned that the same sin was committed by Baali, Sugreev and Vibhishan. But, Baali was killed by Ram as a hunter (from behind a tree) but for the same sin Sugreev and Vibhishan were forgiven by Lord Ram. What was that sin? At the time of his death Baali asks Ram why he has been killed by Ram like a hunter standing behind a tree. Baali asks-

धर्म हेतु अवतरेउ गोसाईं। मारेहु मोहि ब्याध की नाई।।

मैं बैरी सुग्रीव पिआरा। अवगुन कवन नाथ मोहि मारा।।

You have incarnated for the safeguard of religion but killed me like me hunter. You're your enemy and Sugreev is dear to you. Shri Ram responds-

अनुज वधू भगिनी सुत नारी। सुन सठ कन्या सम ए चारी।

इन्हहिं कुदृष्टि बिलोकिं जोई। ताहि बधे कछु पाप न कोई।।<sup>27</sup>

Ram responds that the wife of your brother, your sister, daughter, and daughter – in – law; all are alike. Whosoever has an evil eye on any one of them, there is no crime committed in

killing them. (Baali had kept Sugreev's wife Ruma with him when Mayavi, had been killed in a dual with Baali and Baali returned to Kishkindha and saw Sugreev crowned he hit him hard as told by Sugreev- रिपु सम मोहि मारेसि अति भारी । हरि लीन्हेउ सर्वस और नारी ।।<sup>26</sup>

But, Baali was killed for that sin, while Sugreev and Vibhishan were forgiven for the same sin –

जेहिं अध बधेउ ब्याध जिमि बाली । फिरि सुकंठ सोई कीन्हि कुचाली ।।

सोइ करतूति विभीषण केरी । सपनेहुं सो न राम हिय हेरी ।।<sup>28</sup>

Why was this dual behaviour with different people for the same sin. This was because Baali was anti-Ram, while Sugreev and Vibhishan both belonged to the party of Ram. Sri Ram forgets even the blunders committed by his own partymen and remembers only their good deeds. Hence, here is a moral lesson that we should join the party of Ram to get absolution from our sins.

- 4- **Jayant** - Jayant is the son of Indra – God of Gods. he represents the characterless and spoilt child of affluent people. He assumes the shape of a crow and packs the breast of Sita in exile wherefrom the blood oozed out (Valmiki Ramayan). Though, Tulsidas says it modestly that it pecked the foot of Sita. The solution to mend the behaviour of such spoilt children is that they should be frightened with the punishment and nobody, not even their parents should come forward for their help unless they realize their mistake and plead for the forgiveness from the aggrieved person, as in the case of Jayant. Sri Ram shot an arrow chasing Jayant throughout the universe, but nobody not even its father helped it, till it realized its mistake and asked for its forgiveness from Sri Ram. Though it was forgiven but mildly punished also – he was made one-eyed. Since then, mythological, crows are said to be one-eyed –

सीता चरन चोंच हति भागा । मूढ़ मंदमति कारन कागा ।

चला रूधिर रघुनायक जाना । सीक धनुष सायक संधाना ।।

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काहूँ बैठन कहा न ओही । राखि को सकई राम कर द्रोही ।।

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आतुर सभय गहेसि पद जाई । त्राहि—त्राहि दयाल रघुराई ।

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सुनि कृपाल अति आरत बानी । एक नयन करि तजा भवानी ।।<sup>29</sup>

This way multiple examples of corruption can be quoted from the Ramcharitmanas, but that will turn this research paper into a dissertation. I want to conclude this paper with the instructions of Ram to Bharat regarding law and order, financial management and corruption –

“I hope the laws are administered justly and impartially. I hope the innocent do not suffer and the guilty are not let off without punishment due to greed (corruption). I hope disputes between the rich and the poor dealt with and judged impartially by the ministers. For, the tears from the eyes of those falsely convicted, destroy the sons and cattle of the King who rules the people for the sake of pleasures and not caring for equality and justice”.

While reading Sri Ramcharitmanas we note what Ram selects and what He discards. We can enrich our lives by discarding and absorbing what He has done. With a reading of

this scripture we learn how to be a good son/ brother/ wife/ friend/ mother-in-law. This great book serves as a moral compass to live an ethical life. If we go through this sacred book even once, there will be no such corruption, killing, cheating in all walks of life as we find it today. Such is the influence of this great book. If we accept the philosophy of Shri Ramcharitmanas, then, not only India but the whole world can be changed into a virtual paradise.

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