



Parasurama's Episode and Sanctity of of Thirthams at Rameshwaram



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Parasurama is understood to be the sixth Avatara of Vishnu and placed as second incarnation in Tretayuga just before Rama. In accordance with some of the Samhitas, he is the sixteenth incarnation of Vishnu among his 24 forms. It is the only Avatara in which Vishnu prolonged his physical presence on earth for more than one Yuga. His Personality and his association with Rama, Krishna and Balarama is a unique characterisation ever described in the Itihasa and Puranas.

Unlike the earlier avataras, this was a full Avatara extending to atleast two yugas and considered as the Chiranjivi (immortal) blessing the human race. Having born to Jamadagni Rishi one of the Sapta Rishies and Renuka, he inherited the quality of steadfastness and valour to the full level and became the disciple of Siva and said to have learned the art of warfare from him. Siva even parted with his unique weapon Parasu.

In the civilization of mankind, Parasurama incarnation signifies many facets of changes and have archaeological, ethnical, cultural, social and spiritual recorded evidences. Being placed as in between the earlier rulers of Asura dynasty (Mahabali) and the perfect man of righteousness (Rama) he bridges many gaps. It is not very clear from scriptures whether in the earlier Avataras Vishnu ever became mortal in all respects with positive energy like steadfastness and obeying the commands in Vedas as strictly as Parasurama did it. In fact his actions provide sufficient conjectural materials to trace the evolution of the Pan Indian culture and find him as the Saviour of weakest of the period. He bridges the gap between the elites and common man, brahminical and native worship, teacher and taught sophisticated warfare and tribal attack, Siva and Vishnu and witnesses the events in the history of mankind.

Legacy from Puranas

From the earlier avataras the genealogy of Parasurama is well traced in the Puranas. The grandfather of Bhargava Parasurama was a great Rishi named Ruchika, who was a son of a famous sage Bhrigu. Once Ruchika happens to see Satyavati the beautiful daughter of ruling king Gadi of lunar dynasty and asked the king to have her as his bride. The king placed some ordeals to be executed for this and after executing it he married Satyavati.

On the request of Satyavati Ruchika was graceful to prepare two mystical potions, for begetting a child of Kshatriya for her mother and for brahmana child for Satyavati. Unwittingly, the mother and daughter exchanged the potions and the Rishi explained them the consequences of the change. Again on Satyavati's plea Ruchika made their son to be with brahmana virtuous and Jamadagni the great Rishi was born to them.

Jamadagni got married with Renuka and his fifth son Bhargava was the sixth incarnation of Vishnu with a combination of brahmana tejas and valour of kshatriya. He was equal in steadfastness and skilful to use all weapons. By the grace of Siva he got an Axe symbolising the great transformation of power and he is the one among two in the entire world who got three great weapons; Brahmastra, Vaishnavastra and Pasupatastra, the other being Indrajith the son of Ravana.

Contemporary to him there was King Kartyavira Arjuna ruling the kingdom Mahishamati and equally valorous like Parasurama. He subdued all other Kings and was unequal in all respects and visited Parasurama place to see the personality on par with him.

Unfortunately, Parasurama was away and his father paid all honour to a deserving Guest. All his retinue were offered sufficient luxurious food and the King Kartavirya Arjuna surprised to see this. He requested the sage to reveal him that how it was possible for him to feed so many in the remote forest.

The sage pointed out the kamadhenu the divine cow gifted by Indra in the Ashram and extolled it could yield all the desires of the Master. Then the king retarded telling him that such Graceful device should remain with the kings only and ordered that it should be handed over to him. Jamadagni pointed out that it was the gift of Lord Indra and could not be transferred, but Kartyavira Arjuna eloped it forcefully.

When Parasurama returned home he learnt this cruel event and rushed to the King and asked him to return it or face dire consequences. As the king disobeyed there was a fierce battle between them and Parasurama individually withstood all attacks and killed thousands. At last he killed the Powerful Kartyavira Arjuna and retrieved the Holy cow, Kamadhenu.

Parasurama returned to his Ashram with sacred cow Kamadhenu, but his father was unhappy. He cautioned his son not to be controlled by anger and said he would lose all his penance by this action.

Thereupon, Parasurama offered to go again for penance, but Jamadagni said that mere penance could not solve or enough to get rid of sins acquired by killing others including kings. He emphatically heralded that sins could be warded off only by Thirtha Yatra.

“Only the holy Thirthas in Bharatavarsham could yield desired results and relieve one from all sins”

Now Parasurama learnt that the Holy Thirthas can get rid of ones from Sins. Among such Thirthas Varanasi in north and Ramesvaram in the south are prime and they sanctified all the pilgrims.



To be continued...

