

Maharshi Valmiki was Homer's Predecessor**Dr. Ganesh Shaligram Chavan**

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Mr. M. H. Fauche a French scholar writes, "The Ramayana is earlier to Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey not only that but he designed The Iliad also on the lines of Ramayana."¹

Mr. Arthur Lely writes, "The Iliad and 'The Ramayana have so much similarity that one is forced to conclude that The Iliad is composed after reading The Ramayana."²

However, this quotation does not give to undermine the genius of Homer as poet. He has depicted a beautiful picture of the war of Troy in 'The Iliad'. He has sketched the contemporary culture and civilization at large. But we also cannot forget that he was blind. He did not know reading and writing. In fact at that time there was oral and aural recitation tradition which passed from one generation to other. There were many chances for additions and at alternations; keeping central theme in fact. By all means he must have heard about The Ramayana in detail. As per history Greeks were from Aryan family, even now they proudly recognize. In the year 2007 our president, Dr. Adbul Kalam visited Athens Greece. The welcome speech given by the Greek Prime Minister was in Sanskrit. In his speech he praised India and gave the reference of parental bonds between India and Greece.³ The Prime Minister was happy to refer Greece as 'Yavan' name given by India. He said "राष्ट्रति महाभागा, सुस्वागतम यवन देशे"⁴

They were from Aryan family and they were influenced Indus Valley Civilization upon them and their education, philosophy and mythology were much similar to that of Aryans. They were familiar with The Bhagwad Gita, that is how their philosophy of soul being immortal, birth according to pervious Karma, deliverance, beautitude, ahinsa, truth and all that, coincide with Aryans. They were also familiar with Aryan way of life. So we can say that they knew

very well about The Gita, The Mahabharata and also The Ramayana. In reality they knew much more about important literature of India.

Even the popular 'Trojan Horse' shown in Greek literature is found in Indian History. In history it is written that there was a battle between the king of Kashmir and Pir-of Hal-Sind on a small issue. The king of Kashmir attacked the Pir- of -Hal. Pir of Hal went to Brahmins to take the advise about what should be done. They advised him that it was not easy to get victory over the Kashmiri Army. So they advised him to prepare a big elephant, of wood and place it before Kashmiri army. The Kashmiri army being afraid of the elephant would run here and there by elephant's sight. Pir of Hal prepared a big wooden elephant and left that elephant on the out skirts of the Kashmiri army. When the Kashmiri army came out of their tents the eyes of elephant started throwing fire because of this they fly in panic.⁵

Homer being the best poets of Greeks must necessarily have familiar about 'The Ramayana', 'The Mahabharata' and 'The Gita'. We also find soul and re-birth in 'The Iliad'. 'The Iliad' is not only a historical monument but Homer has used his poetic art and genius based upon his imagination and turned the historic event into an epic. But only imagination of a blind person cannot work automatically. For imagination poet has to see, understand, feel, touch, observe and think. Now God had not given Homer the faculty of sight, so he had many limitations. He must be needed a ready framework and he found that ready framework in The Ramayana and The Mahabharata. Homer kept the structure of The Ramayana in mind and he composed The Iliad on the lines of The Ramayana.

Another important point is that we all know the epic conventions- epic machinery, calling upon the gods and goddesses, their interference with the human fate, long journey, horrible and terrible war, retelling of the past, digressions, independent poems, divine heroes and heroines, their brave deeds, their

long separation, reconciliation, restoration. All this could not have been possible for Homer without a ready frame work before him and in the case when he was blind? Because Greeks were Aryans in origin they must know The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, P. N.Oak, the great exponent of history, writes, "Alexander (336 B. C.) was a Hindu". So we can say that Greeks were Aryans and they got ready framework of Indian epics. Keeping the structure of The Ramayana in mind Homer wrote the immortal epic. This is not wrong, but this is accepted in literature. Though the structure is of The Ramayana but the treatment is Homeric, Shakespeare also borrowed his plots, but due to his artistic touch and treatment he is considered to be the best dramatist in English literature. In the same manner Homer is also a great Greek epic poet.

This is not the case of Valmiki. He did not get ready framework of epic writing. He wrote the epic and it became the ready structure and model for the others. Valmiki was a Maharshi. He did a penance of remaining steady in a austere posture. The White ants made their burrow-mudline (Valmik) over his body. So he got the name of Valmiki. He was well versed, Acharya. The important thing is that at the same time he was contemporary to Rama. He had witnessed all the events of The Ramayana. He had not any limitations of vision or learning, but he was gifted and inspired Acharya. So he wrote the epic 'The Ramayana' which became ready structure for Homer and many other writers.

The characters of The Ramayana were humane and worth better. The character and nature of Rama, Laxman, Sita, Bharata, Hanuman, Sugreeva has been ideal for the people at large Even Ravana is shown virtuous because he does not touch Sita because she did not agree his proposals. The weaknesses shown in Ravana are just to highlight Rama's character. All main characters of The Ramayana were divine by birth, in the same way the main characters of 'The Iliad' – Menelaus, Agamemnon, Achilles, Ulysses, Ajax, Patroclus, Nestor, Helen, Paris were divine by birth.

In comparison to Valmiki, the age of Homer was deteriorating and barbaric as shown in The Iliad. The two examples would enough – quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles over Brisies, unfortunately the epic starts with it and the anger of Achilles to that

extend that he drags the body of Hector with the wheel of chariot for quite long distance.

In this way even in difference in age, Valmiki was Homer's predecessor.

References :-

- 1) Mr.M.H.Fauche, 'Preface to Ramayana'
- 2) Arther Lely, 'Rama and Homer'.
- 3) 'Sandesh' (Newspaper), 7/8 May 2007
- 4) 'Sarvadeshik Saptahiki,' Delhi of 08July 2007
- 5) 'Sindsouvir,' p. 189
- 6) Sandesh, Newspaper 09 Sept 2007