



Code	GR4 Scriptural Anecdote
Concept/value	<b>Gratitude</b> , humility, devotion and learning how to receive the Lord's love.
Title	<b>Lord Rama and the Boatman</b> Written by Sacinandana Swami and Vandna Synghal
Reference	<b>Contributed by Sacinandana Swami</b>

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Lord Rama, Sita Devi and Lakshman left the kingdom of Ayodhya for exile in the forests. They walked deep into the wilderness and reached the banks of River Ganga. They were just wondering how to cross over the waters when an old boatman approached them and bowed reverentially.

'What is your price to take us across, dear boatman?' asked Lord Rama.

'Please just come aboard my boat and we will deal with payment later,' said the honest boatman.

With his guests seated comfortably, the old man steered the boat across the glistening river. He gazed at Lord Rama with tears streaming down his cheeks. He couldn't believe his incredible fortunate to be serving the Lord. A lifetime of worship had culminated in such perfect circumstances. He rowed with all his love and sincerity.

Once they reached the other side, Lord Rama looked at Sita Devi and glanced at the beautiful pearl necklace around her neck. She understood his mind immediately.

'I don't need to wear pearls in the forest. Please give our kind boatman my necklace as payment,' she said.

The jewelry was exquisite. The glossy beads shone in the light. Lord Rama offered it to the boatman, 'We are so grateful for your help. This is our payment, please accept it.'

'Oh no, no, no, I couldn't possibly accept it Lord Rama. I cannot, I cannot,' insisted the boatman. 'Do you not know, in these parts, we boatmen have an agreement that one boatman does not accept payment from another boatman.'

'Since when did I become a boatman?' asked Lord Rama, smiling.

'You are a boatman! See, I am a tiny boatman - I take passengers on my old rickety boat from one side of the river to the other. You are a big boatman! You take souls on your boat and help them to cross the ocean of samsara - birth and death. Please remember me when I meet my death and come to your banks. Please don't ask for any payment from me - for I have nothing, no qualifications or great deeds. I am very lowly and undeserving, but please take pity on me. Your grace is my only hope.'

Lord Rama's smile widened. 'Let it be so. When you come to the ocean shores of birth and death, I will take you on my boat. No payment will be required my dear devotee.'



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QUESTIONS:

- 1) What were the reasons the Boatman decided not to take any payment from Lord Ram and Sita for using his boat? Was he trying to be rude?
- 2) What is the boatman referring to when he called Lord Ram a boatman? Explain what he meant.
- 3) What is the method for living beings to get out of this cycle of birth and death? Can any species of life get out of this cycle of birth and death? Explain with examples. (use concepts learned such as karma, Akarma, Types of sufferings in this world, atma, paramatma).
- 4) Can you remember a time when someone didn't want to accept any payment from you but just wanted to do something for you out of the kindness and love in their hearts? Did you ever do something selfless for someone else without expecting anything in return?