

# **FHO Shiva Mandir**

## **Baal Vikas Reading Assignment**

### **A Wise Boatman - Kewat**

One of the rivers that Lord Rama had to cross to get to the forest was the the mighty Ganga.

Together with Mother Sita, Lakshman and His friend Guha, Lord Rama requested a boatman whose name was Kewat to ferry them across in his boat. But Kewat was reluctant.

Kewat claimed that he heard that the dust of Lord Rama's feet had the magic power to change anything into human beings. He was referring to the time when with Viswamitra, the touch of Lord Rama's feet released Ahalya from a stone where she was held captive due to a curse. So he was afraid that his boat would turn into a woman.

Kewat requested that he be allowed to wash Lord Rama's feet before he can take them into his boat. Lord Rama agreed. Kewat also asked if he could bring his family to assist and if Lord Rama could bless his deceased ancestors also. Lord Rama agreed.

Kewat after washing the Lord's feet in a wooden basin and keeping the water as a blessing, took them across the river. On the other bank of the river, Lord Rama realized that he had nothing to pay Kewat for the trip, so Mother Sita offered her ring as payment. But Kewat would not accept anything.

Kewat's reasoning was that even though Lord Rama is a prince he does his duty by obeying His father's wishes, then he, Kewat,

can also do his own duty and take them across as a small contribution to uphold dharma.

Kewat also acknowledged Lord Rama to be a boatman also just as he is, but of a different kind. Lord Rama carries people across the ocean of the world, just as Kewat carries people across the river. Kewat's only request that at the time of his death, Lord Rama would be the boatman to take him across to the spiritual world.