

(Part – 2)

SYNOPSIS OF RAMAYANA.

The Ramayana (The Journey of Rama) belongs among the world's oldest literature. Cherished throughout India and Asia for millennia, it has been faithfully preserved and passed on in varied forms of popular expression of epic poems, folk tales, music, dance, drama, puppet shows, sculpture, painting and even films and comic books. Its story and characters have captured the hearts and minds of countless generations. Despite its huge popularity in Eastern cultures and even though it is recognized by many Western scholars as a literary masterpiece, most people in the West have never heard of Ramayana.

The story of Lord Rama is both a spellbinding adventure and a work of profound philosophy, offering answers to life's deepest questions. It tells of another time when Gods and heroes walked among us, facing supernatural forces of evil and guided by powerful mystics and sages.

Revered throughout the ages for its moral and spiritual wisdom, it is a beautiful and uplifting tale of romance and high adventure, recounting the odyssey of Rama, a great king of ancient India. Rama, along with his beautiful wife, Seetha, and faithful brother Laksmana, is exiled to the forest for fourteen years, where Seetha is kidnapped by the powerful demon Ravana. Along with his brother Laksmana and a fantastic army of supernatural creatures, Rama embarks on a perilous quest to find his beloved Seetha. This contains seven kandas the brief of which is given below.

The details of seven kandas.

In **Bala-Kanda**, the Incarnation of Sri Rama and his childhood life are described. Rama helps Visvamitra by guarding his sacrifice. He slays ogress Tataka and her son Subahu. He frees Ahalya from her curse. He breaks the bow of Siva and marries Janaki and annihilates the pride of Parasurama.

In **Ayodhya-Kanda**, preparations are made for installing Rama as heir-apparent. His step-mother Kaikeyi stands in the way and sends

him in exile for fourteen years. Rama's brother Lakshmana and wife Seetha follow him. Raja Dasaratha (father) becomes very much afflicted at heart on account of his separation from Rama and dies due to grief. Rama, Lakshmana, and Seetha are entertained by Guha, a hunter-chief. They cross the Ganga and meet Rishi Bharadvaja. They go to Chitrakuta on the advice of the Rishi. They build a cottage made up of grass and leaves (Parna Kutir) there. Then Bharata (another devoted brother) goes to the forest and insists Rama to return to the country and finally takes Rama's sandals alone. He places the sandals on the throne and rules the kingdom in the name of Sri Rama. Bharata himself lives at Nandigram.

In **Aranya-Kanda**, Viradha, a giant, attacks Rama and Lakshmana in the Dandaka forest. Rama kills him. Thereafter, they pay a visit to the Rishis Sarabhanga, Sutikshna, and Atri. Anasuya, wife of Atri, gives an inspiring discourse on the duties of a wife to Seetha. Then they meet Rishi Agastya. Rama receives celestial weapons from him. They encounter the giantess Surpanakha in the Panchavati forest. She is disfigured by Lakshmana. Lakshmana cuts her nose and ears. Khara and Trisiras (along with fourteen thousand giants), brothers of Surpanakha, are very much enraged. They fight against Rama. They are slain in the battle.

Surpanakha goes to Lanka and complains to her brother Ravana. Under Ravana's plan, Maricha, uncle of Ravana, assumes the form of a golden deer and appears before Seetha, Rama, and Lakshmana. Seetha requests Rama to get the deer for her. Rama proceeds to catch the deer and kills it. In the mean time, Ravana carries away Seetha, in the absence of Rama and Lakshmana. Jatayu, the king of vultures, challenges Ravana, but he is mortally wounded. Rama obtains all information about Seetha from the dying Jatayu. He is very much afflicted at heart. Subsequently, Rama and Lakshmana kill Kabandha near the lake Pampa. Then they meet the pious Sabari. She offers them, roots and fruits with great devotion.

In **Kishkindha-Kanda**, Rama meets Anjaneya on the banks of Pampa. They proceed to Mount Rishyamuka and make an alliance with Sugriva. Sugriva kills Vali with the help of Rama. Sugriva is crowned as the king of Kishkindha. Rama consoles Tara, wife of Vali. Thereupon, Anjaneya with a party of Vanaras proceeds in search of Seetha. He takes with him the ring of Rama as token. He makes a vigorous search and is not able to find out Seetha.

Jambavan (chief of bears) finds out Sampati, brother of Jatayu, in a cave, who gives out facts. Anjaneya climbs up the top of a hill by his direction and from there he leaps across the ocean to Lanka.

In **Sundara-Kanda**, Anjaneya's exploits are described. During his aerial journey, Mainaka, an island peak, invites Anjaneya to rest on its top at the request of the ocean. Afterwards, Simhika, a monstress living in the ocean, drags him down by catching his shadow. Anjaneya kills her. Then he gets a distant view of Lanka and enters the city at night. He finds out Seetha in the Asoka grove. He gives her Rama's token and message. Anjaneya destroys the part of Lanka. The Rakshasas imprison Anjaneya. Anjaneya frees himself and sets fire to Lanka. He returns back to the place where Rama is staying and gives Seetha's gem (chudamani) to Rama. Rama is highly delighted when he receives Seetha's token and her message.

In **Yuddha-Kanda**, Nala (one of the monkey-chiefs) builds a bridge across the ocean by the advice of Sagara (the God of sea). Rama and Lakshmana with the large army of vanaras crossing the ocean reach Lanka. Vibhishana (brother of Ravana) joins them and tells them how to destroy Ravana and his army. Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, and Ravana are killed in battle. During the battle, both side of Rama and Ravana exchange Astras (weapons) charged with Mantras. Rama sends an Astra on Ravana's party. All Rakshasas appear as Rama. They kill one another. Ravana discharges on Rama, Nagasthra (arrow that becomes serpents full of poison). The arrows have their mouths like serpents and vomit forth fire all around and the entire army including Rama and Lakshmana fall unconscious. Since Rama is the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, Vishnu's vahana Garuda came and all the serpents disappeared. Garuda is the enemies of serpents. Rama uses Brahmasthra to kill Ravana. Seetha is rescued. Seetha's pureness is tested in the fire. She comes out more glorious and effulgent than ever. Vibhishana is then crowned as king in Lanka. Sri Rama with his party returns to Ayodhya in the flying car called Pushpaka. Rama is crowned as Emperor. The people of his kingdom feel extremely happy.

In **Uttara-Kanda**, Sri Rama's reign is described as Rama-Rajya. There is righteousness everywhere. Everywhere there are plenty and prosperity. There is neither disease nor sorrow. There are neither dacoits nor thieves. Life and prosperity are quite safe. The four Varnas duly observe their Dharmas. Sri Rama goes back to

His Supreme Abode (Saketa-Puri or Dhama) after a long and prosperous rule.

Divine in Daily Life

Ramayana is the epic of life. It holds within it, the keys, not only to transcending this worldly existence, but also to living in the world. It teaches us how to bring the divine into our daily lives. Yet, the epic also shows that it is not easy to live the path of perfection; the way of dharma is sometimes full of obstacles and challenges. The message of the Ramayana is: Sacrifice for dharma.

If Sri Rama had been hungry for power, fame or fortune, he would have held on to the crown. He would have refused to go into exile. Yet, he chose piety over power, purity over prosperity. If Bharata, his righteous brother, were attached to the title of King, if he craved glory or glamour, he would have held tenaciously to the Kingdom. Yet, he refused to sit in the throne, placing his divine brother's paduka there instead.

Thus, Ramayana teaches us that power and prosperity come and go, but purity and piety come and grow. Money, mansions and Mercedes come and go, but morality comes and grows. Also, the Ramayana teaches us the difference between demon and divine, between rich and righteous, between greed and generosity, between lust and love.

The Lord Himself says in Ramayana, " If one surrenders unto Me sincerely, saying, ' My Lord, from this day I am fully surrendered unto You, ' I always give him protection. That is My vow. " Since the ultimate benefit of hearing the Ramayana is increased faith in Lord Rama, everyone wants to read this significant book.

[Srunvan raamakathaanaadam kOnayaati paraam gatim.](#)

No one fails in the progress of transcendence by hearing the sound of

RAMAKATHA