



Raamayana

A Picture Story Book

Srimad Raamayana is the story of Sri Raama. Mahatma Gandhiji and C. Rajagopalachari (author of the most popular English version of Raamayana) consider it as the greatest story of love ever told. This epic of a story shows the love between a parent and a son, a husband and a wife, between brothers, between the people and their King, a devotee and a lord, so on and so forth.

It also brings out the code of conduct followed by each person in their various roles as a son, a father, a mother, a brother, a husband, a wife, a friend, a teacher, a disciple and a devotee. You may wonder why they had to go through a lot of trouble to follow these values. Why did not some of them selfishly do what is best for themselves and ignore what is right (what we call as Dharma)? Why did they have to follow all these social rules ? For that matter, why do we have to follow the rules set by our elders? Why cannot we just do what is beneficial or convenient for us and our immediate family, and ignore the rest of the world ?

The reason is clear: without this code of conduct (set of moral values), there will be no order in the society. Without order, we human beings are just mere animals working selfishly for our own benefit , without regard for others in the society. If that happens, we as humans will end up fighting with one another and destroying ourselves. The values, social structure, law & order that we have set up is what differentiates us humans from animals.

Here, we present the great story written by Sage Valmiki ages ago for the benefit of mankind. This book is intended for youngsters who want to get the essence of Raamayana quickly. Others, however, are welcome to read.

God Bless.



We first bow & pray to Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles, who has large ears that makes Him a great listener, who has a large head indicating the ocean of knowledge that He has and that He can bestow upon us, who has with Him Siddhi to bestow grace to complete any task and Buddhi to bestow intelligence to complete any task. May He protect

Several thousands of years ago, Dasaratha was the mighty emperor of Ayodhya, a kingdom in India. He had great people, such as Sage Vashishta, in his court to advice him on matters of the State. He was a happy and powerful king. But, he had a worry. He did not have a son to rule the kingdom and take care of his beloved people after he died. He consulted Sage Vashishta and the sage told him to perform a sacrifice.



Generally, sacrifices are performed for Lord Agni by lighting a fire and pouring oblations into the fire. Also, the person doing the sacrifice gives a lot of gifts to the needy and to the spiritual people. Dasaratha performed the sacrifice in a grand scale. This pleased the Gods. The lord of fire, Agni, came out of the fire to give the King a bowl of sweet potion.

King Dasaratha was very pleased. He distributed the potions to the three queens, Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra and asked them to drink it. They loved the king dearly and did as was instructed. Kausalya ate half the potion, Sumitra ate half of the rest, Kaikeyi ate some and passed the pot back to Sumitra who consumed the potion for the second time.





In due course, 4 children were born to the 3 queens. Raama was born to Kausalya, Bharatha to Kaikeyi, Lakshmana and Shathrugana to Sumitra. They were all beautiful children. Raama the eldest was specially resplendent and had a glow which clearly showed that he will be a great king and a leader. All four were attached to each other and warmed the hearts of everyone in the kingdom.

Sage Vashishta was a great teacher. He taught all that is needed for a Prince to the four children. He taught them archery. Raama especially showed exceptional talent in archery at a very young age. Raama also showed signs of being a great leader. He was always calm and collected and loved everyone. The other 3 children loved their brother Raama so much that they followed him without a question, on whatever he did.



One day, to the court came the great Sage Vishwamithra. He was received by the king, with the respect that is due to a spiritual person. The king asked the sage what he wanted. The sage said that he is doing a sacrifice where he is expecting trouble from evil doers (Rakshasas). He wanted Raama and Lakshmana to come and protect him. The king loved Raama so much that he was very worried for his safety. He offered to come instead but the sage wanted Raama only. Sage Vashishta knew that there was a purpose in Sage Vishwamithra's request and convinced the King to send Raama and Lakshmana.

Raama and Lakshmana obediently followed Sage Vishwamithra. They were known for the respect that they showed towards teachers and elders. Though they were princes, they served the teacher with devotion and humility. This warmed the heart of the teacher and he taught them great many skills. In the forest, there was a demoness named Thataka, who attacked and killed, people and sages. Sage Vishwamithra ordered Raama to kill her. Armed with the new skills Raama slew the demoness with his arrows and made the forest safe.





Sage Vishwamithra along with the other sages in the forest started the sacrifice . He asked Raama & Lakshmana to keep a watch for the demons. Both of them kept vigil day & night. On the last day, when the sacrifice was about to be completed, the demon brothers Subahu and Mareecha showed up to stop the sacrifice. They started throwing unwanted things into the fire. Raama & Lakshmana fought with the demons and protected the sage's sacrifice. Finally Raama killed Subahu. Mareecha was knocked unconscious and thrown into the sea nearby.

Sage Vishwamithra was very pleased. He taught the brothers more archery skills . Meanwhile, Janaka the king of Mithila was looking for a bridegroom for his lovely daughter, Sita. The Sage thought it will be a good idea to take these handsome princes to Mithila. On the way, they came across a hut of a sage. The wife of that sage, Ahalya, had been cursed. The purity of Raama delivered the lady from the curse and she thanked and blessed him.



Raama , Lakshmana and Sage Vishwamithra reached the city of Mithila. It was a beautiful city. King Janaka, the father of Sita had a bow that was given to him by Lord Shiva. King Janaka had proclaimed that whoever lifted this bow can marry Sita. No one could even lift the bow. Many strong kings and princes tried, but failed. Sage Vishwamithra asked Raama to give it a try. Prince Raama took up the challenge while princess Sita, Janaka and others watched and waited expectantly. He not only lifted the bow but while stringing the bow broke it in two.

King Janaka proclaimed Princess Sita will marry Prince Raama. King Dasaratha was notified and he was filled with joy. He came to Mithila with his queen and the people of Ayodhya. The marriage of Sita and Raama was celebrated in a grand fashion.





After a few days, Sita and Raama left Mithila. On the way, Parasuraama challenged Raama to lift the bow that he had. The bow was given to Parasuraama by Lord Vishnu himself. Raama lifted the bow with ease, once again proving his might. They reached Ayodhya and they lived happily for a number of years. These were happy times in Ayodhya.

King Dasaratha was also looking at an opportune moment to make Raama the king and pass all the responsibilities to him. One day, he announced his intentions in the court. But he had an uneasy feeling, so he wanted to make Raama the King the very next day. Everyone was very happy except Kaikeyi's maid servant, Manthara. She wanted Kaikeyi's son, Bharatha to be the king. But Bharatha was away. Manthara poisoned the queen Kaikeyi's mind by saying that the king is planning this, because her son is away. Initially, the queen did not believe Manthara because she loved Raama as her son. But persisted and finally convinced Kaikeyi.



Long time ago, Kaikeyi had saved the King's life when he was wounded in a battle. In return he had asked her to ask for two wishes. Kaikeyi said that she will ask for those two wishes later. The maid advised the queen to ask for those two wishes, now. The two wishes were, one to make her son Bharatha, the King, and the other to send Raama to the forest for 14 years. Kaikeyi asked the wishes. King was shocked by these demonic wishes and asked her not to do this. Dasaratha being a righteous King, was bound by his promises to her.

With a lot of hesitation, Dasaratha called his son Raama and told him of the two wishes. **A miracle happened.** Without any hesitation, Raama declared his father's wish to be his wish and got ready to go to the forest. The king even tried to convince Raama that he need not follow it and can take the throne by force. But, Sri Raama, the epitome of righteousness (Dharma), said he will be more honoured to keep his father's promise than even being a king. Raama took off his King's cloth and wore a bark as cloth (worn by ascetic). Sita, his wife and Lakshmana, his brother, loved Raama so much that they said that they will accompany him to the forest. Raama, Sita and Lakshmana started off to the forest.





The people of Ayodhya loved Raama so much that they all decided to follow him to the forest, for Ayodhya was nothing to them without Sri Raama. They all stopped at a river where Guha the boatman was the chieftain. Raama did not want his people to come along and suffer with him. So, he told Guha to help him cross the river when the people were sleeping. Guha did so and then Raama, Sita and Lakshmana were on their own. With the help of sages in that area, they were able to find a nice place to construct their hut.

Meanwhile in Ayodhya, King Dasaratha due to his extreme love for his son Raama could not bear the loss and he passed away. Messengers were sent to get Bharatha. When he arrived in Ayodhya, he was told of all the happenings and what his mother did so that he can be the king. Bharatha, instead of rejoicing, because of his extreme brotherly love for Raama, became extremely angry and cursed his own mother for doing such a demonic thing. He immediately left for the forest to find Raama and to ask him to come back to be the king. After a search, he found Raama. Raama was shocked, and fainted on hearing the news that his beloved father passed away. Bharatha tried to convince Raama to come back to Ayodhya. But Raama said he will return only upon fulfilling his father's promise. Bharatha refused to be the king as well. He finally settled to be a deputy of Raama. He asked for Raama's sandals (Paadhuka) so that he can place it on the throne as symbol of Raama's authority on the kingdom. As a penance he also wore ascetic clothes and took care of the kingdom by staying outside Ayodhya, till Raama's return.



Raama, Sita and Lakshmana decided to go deeper into the forest since the people now knew where they were. So they moved to Panchavati. There they lived happily for the next 12 years, protecting Sages from Rakshasaas. One day a demoness named Soorpanaka came to disturb them. Lakshmana cut her nose when she tried to attack Sita.

Soorpanaka immediately ran to her demon brother Raavana to complain about this. She asked him to take revenge by killing Raama and Lakshmana, and kidnapping Sita.





Raavana took the help of Mareecha. He asked him to come in the form of a golden deer and lure away Raama and Lakshmana so that he can kidnap Sita. Demons can assume any form. Mareecha knew the power of Raama but was afraid of saying no to Raavana. So he decided to help Raavana in the evil act. Sita, as expected, saw the beautiful deer and asked Raama to get it for her. Raama, suspecting a ruse, asked Lakshmana to take care of Sita and went after the golden deer.

After a long chase, Raama was able to catch up to the deer and when he shot the arrow, the demon in disguise Mareecha assumed his real demon form and shouted "Help me Lakshmana" in Raama's voice before dying.



On hearing the shout, Sita panicked and thought Raama was really in trouble. So she asked Lakshmana to go and help Raama. Lakshmana knew the power of Raama and tried to convince Sita that Raama can never be in trouble and that this was a ruse by a demon. But, Sita was adamant and Lakshmana went, leaving Sita alone. Before leaving Lakshmana drew a few sacred lines around the hut and requested Sita to stay within the line for her own protection.

Taking this opportunity Raavana, the Demon King, came disguised as a Brahmin to beg for alms from Sita. Sita could not see the ruse of the demon. She came out of the hut and crossed the sacred lines drawn by Lakshmana.





The demon king Raavana took this opportunity and kidnapped Sita. He carried her back to his kingdom.

Jatayu, the eagle king, saw Sita being kidnapped. He immediately took off in the air and attacked Raavana. A big battle ensued. Jatayu fought and injured Raavana but could not win. Raavana cut the wings of the eagle and the bird fell to the ground.



Meanwhile, Raama and Lakshmana came back to their hut and could not find Sita. Raama was completely distraught and thought demons must have kidnapped and ate Sita. Lakshmana tried to console him. They searched for her here and there and could not find her. Then they saw the injured Jatayu lying on the ground. Jatayu was nearly dead but had enough energy to tell them how the demon king had kidnapped Sita and taken her south.

On the advice of Jatayu, Raama and Lakshmana proceeded south. On the way, they came across the ashram of Sabari. She was a sage and knew through her vision that Raama will visit her ashram. She hosted them, gave them fruits and blessed them. With her blessings, they were hopeful they will find Sita. She also told them there is a Vaanara clan nearby that may be able to help. So, they proceeded further south in search of the Vaanaras.





Raama and Lakshmana were wandering in search of the Vaanaras that sage Sabari had mentioned. The Vaanaras were observing this. Suddenly, in front of Raama & Lakshmana, a Brahmin appeared and started questioning them. Raama was able to see that this was a Vaanara in disguise. Once the Vaanara knew who they were, he revealed himself.

It was **HANUMAN** the greatest hero known to most. He took Raama and Lakshmana to the Vaanara king, Sugreeva.

Sugreeva received both of them. Hanuman, meanwhile, went away and brought some bangles and necklaces wrapped in a sari piece which was thrown by a lady in distress from the sky. This was to see if that may be Sita's. It was indeed hers and this told them Raavana had taken her further south.

Sugreeva had a problem. His brother Vaali had forcibly chased him out of his kingdom and that's why Sugreeva was in exile. Vaali was so powerful that Sugreeva could not defeat him on his own. Sugreeva promised Raama that he will help find Sita if Raama helps him regain the kingdom. Raama and Sugreeva then sealed their vow of friendship in front of Agni (fire God).



Raama asked Sugreeva to invite his brother Vaali to a duel. Vaali fought with Sugreeva and, as promised, Raama killed Vaali and made Sugreeva the King.

Sugreeva, after regaining the kingdom, forgot his promise for a while. But, Lakshmana reminded him of his promise to help them find Sita. Sugreeva came to his senses and sent the army in all four directions to find Sita.

The great Hanuman, Vaali's son Angada and Jambhavan went South. Raama had an instinct that Hanuman will be the one to find Sita. So he gave his Signet ring to him so that when he found Sita he can show it to her as a proof that he is Raama Dhooth (messenger).





Hanuman and his team searched for a long time and were about to give up. Sampati the vulture, a relative of Jatayu, heard the story and decided to help. Vultures have very good eye sight. From a long distance, he could see that Sita was imprisoned in a garden across the ocean in an island called Lanka.

Now, how to cross the ocean? Jambhavan declared that only Hanuman can do it. Hanuman thought of Raama, prayed to him and assumed a huge form. Then, uttering the word "Raama" continuously, he leapt and crossed the ocean. He faced three obstacles which he overcame and landed on the other side successfully.

As soon as he landed on the other side, he was met by a demoness guarding the island city. He fought and subdued her. He assumed the form of a small Vaanara and entered the city. He searched door to door looking for Sita. He could not find her till he reached the Ashoka Garden. There, he saw a lady sitting under the tree crying. He thought that must be Sita.



He climbed the tree to observe more before jumping to conclusion. At that time, Raavana the demon king showed up. He harassed Sita and asked her to marry him. He lied saying that Raama was dead. He threatened her. Sita was trembling but her love and devotion to Raama was so much that she did not even look at him. He gave her an ultimatum that if she does not change her mind and marry him in one month, he will kill her and eat her. She started crying and thought there is no use living any more.

Hanuman waited for some more time till the demoness guarding her went to sleep. From the tree, he started reciting the story of Raama first, to get her confidence. Sita looked up and saw a small Vaanara. She could not believe her eyes. He then slowly climbed down from the tree and appeared as a small cute Vaanara in front of mother Sita. She was confused. She thought it may be a magic by a demon. Hanuman then showed the Signet ring that Raama had given him to identify himself as a messenger. She became more convinced and a ray of hope arose in her heart.





Before leaving the island, Hanuman wanted to put some fear in the heart of the demons. So, he started destroying the beautiful gardens adjacent to the palace. He then killed the demons who came to fight with him including the youngest son of Raavana. He finally let himself be captured so that he can meet the demon king, Raavana, and put some sense in him. In the court, when the Raavana did not give him a seat he made a seat with his tail. He then advised the Demon King to let go off Sita right now or face the wrath of Raama.

The Demon King, Raavana, was enraged and ordered Hanuman's tail to be set on fire. That's probably the worst mistake Raavana could have done. Hanuman, with his tail on fire, grew in size, and, started running here and there, setting fire to the buildings. Soon, the whole city except for Ashoka garden where Sita was, burnt. Hanuman extinguished the fire in his tail, checked to see if Sita was not hurt by the fire and jumped back from the island.



Hanuman now victorious in finding Sita, came and told the good news to Raama. Hanuman also showed the crest jewel that she had given him to tell Raama that he had really seen Sita. Raama was overjoyed with the news and he gave a BIG hug to Hanuman .

The Vaanara army with Raama, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Sugreeva leading it, started marching towards the island for a battle with Raavana and to recover Sita. Meanwhile, Vibeeshana the youngest brother of Raavana did not like his eldest brother's action . He was a follower of righteousness (Dharma) and asked Raavana to return Sita to Raama. Raavana did not like this and kicked him out of the kingdom. Vibeeshana came and asked for Raama's refuge. Most Vaanaras did not like it because they thought the demon (Raakhasa) was trying to play a trick. Raama told them that he will not refuse when someone asks for refuge, whoever it may be, human or demon. So, Raama accepted Vibeeshana into his army.





To cross the ocean to get to the island, they had to build a bridge. The Vaanara army was so powerful they used tree logs, stones and sand to build a causeway in a very short time, to reach the island. The army then started marching on the causeway towards the island. The noise of the army marching in was so loud that it caused the demons in the island of Lanka to tremble.

Once they reached the island, they surrounded the city. Raama being a symbol of righteousness (Dharma) followed the etiquette of war. He sent a messenger to tell the demon King that they have arrived and even now, if he releases Sita, his life will be spared. The messenger was Vaali's son, Angada. Raavana try to throw him out, but Angada was so powerful that when he planted his feet, the powerful Raavana could not even move it.



After exhausting all options for a peaceful outcome, the war started. It was a fierce battle. Raama and Lakshmana sent showers of arrows killing thousands of demons. The Vaanaras used mace, trees, stones and whatever they could get to attack and destroy the demons. Kumbhakarna was the other brother of Raavana. Unlike Vibeeshana he decided to support

Raavana. He came out to fight. He was such a huge demon that he started attacking Raama's army mercilessly. But he was no match for Raama and finally Raama killed him as well.

But in the battle, Lakshmana got injured by a poison arrow and fell to the ground unconscious. Everyone thought he was dead and Raama was so distraught that he nearly gave up. But, the doctor Susheshana checked Lakshmana and said he will regain consciousness if he is treated with a magical plant which is on the Sanjeevani hill. Hanuman immediately flew to find this hill and the plant. Hanuman, the wise one, knew he did not have time. So, he lifted the whole hill and brought it. This saved Lakshmana. Raama was so happy that he hugged our hero Hanuman one more time and blessed him that he will be Chiranjeevi (a person who will live forever).





The poison arrow was shot by none other than Raavana's son, Indrajit. He used illusion to fight and it was said that he even defeated Indra.

Lakshmana went after Indrajit. Indrajit was doing penance to get more power. Lakshmana challenged him for a fight and finally killed him before he could get more evil powers.

The only one left was Raavana! He came out to fight . Raama took him on and destroyed his chariot and all his weapon. Raavana was completely beaten and stood there without any weapons . Raama could have killed him, but being a follower of Righteousness (Dharma), he did not want to kill an unarmed man. So, Raama asked Raavana to go back and come back armed to fight the next day. Raavana went away and came back the next day, well armed. This time, after a fierce battle, Raama killed Raavana. Vibeeshana was made the king of Lanka. Raama, Lakshmana, Hanuman, and all the Vaanaras celebrated the victory of good over the evil.



It was now time to reunite Sita with Raama. Sita's love for Raama was so pure that even fire could not burn her.

Pushpaka Vimana was a chariot that could fly, like an airplane.

Raama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman boarded the chariot and flew back to Ayodhya. By the time they reached Ayodhya, the 12 years of exile was over for Raama. Bharatha was eagerly waiting with Shathrugana for Raama , Sita and Lakshmana to return and for Raama to take over the throne.



Raama became the king of Ayodhya and the kingdom regained its happiness.

Shri Raamachandra Bhagavan ki Jai.

For answers, questions and feedback

email

arudhra8@gmail.com