

Rāmāyaṇam

Relevance for Today's Youth & Contemporary Society

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Why should we know about Rāmāyaṇam?

- No great role models to inspire the Youth
- Real confusions about how to react to various challenges in life
 - Feeling that only good things can happen in one's life
 - No capacity to handle adversities in life
- We do not have an idea of what it means to
 - Build enduring character
 - Live a *Dhārmic* & Courageous living
- It always pays to know more about **AVATĀRA
PURUṢAS**

We succumb to pressures, are confused, resort to short cuts, unethical means, feel depressed, end up with nothing in life



Avatāra Puruṣa

The Concept

- A strong purpose/cause
 - Dharma needs to be restored
 - Some great good has to be done to humanity
- How does it manifest?
 - Enormous energy (world transforming energy) flows

Avatāra Puruṣa

The Concept

- How does it manifest?
 - World moving force – they can touch 1000s of living beings directly & indirectly
 - Buddha spoke to 5 disciples in the 6th Century BC
 - Krishna spoke to Arjuna on the battlefield

*They defeat the logic of time – As time passes by they become known more
Unless we have spiritual development we can't understand the greatness of incarnation*

Rāmāyaṇam

Some key messages

- **Bāla Kāṇḍam** – Rāma goes thru' hardships in life – understands the need to know the realities of life, struggles etc. – *Elements of making of a great leader*
- **Ayodhyā Kāṇḍam** – Some of the guiding principles of life – need to balance the adversities & good things in life – *A must read for the youth of today*
- **Aranya Kāṇḍam** – A number of Rākṣasas killed by Rāma – Goodness alone not enough – *Ability to hold goodness & destroy evil* is required



Rāmāyaṇam

Some key messages

- Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍam – Pain is part of living – we inevitably go through it – *Good company can help us* wade thru these challenges in life
- Sundara Kāṇḍam – Wonderful description of the character of Sītā – How character of a person can provide enormous strength & confidence in facing adversities – *Must read for every woman*
- Yuddha Kāṇḍam – The world has goodness & greatness – *Greatness without goodness will not sustain*

Vālmīki's description of Laṅkā in Sundara Kāṇḍam Vs total annihilation of it in the Yuddha Kāṇḍam – Assertion of the concept satyameva jayate nānṛtam //



Rāma

Human character par excellence

Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍam: Rāma to Sugrīva

एक एव रणे वाली शरेण निहितो मया
त्वां तु सत्यादतिक्रान्तं हनिष्यामि सबान्धवम् ॥ 30.82

Yuddha Kāṇḍam: Lakṣmaṇa's Prayer before
killing Indrajit

धर्मात्मा सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि ।
पौरुषे चाप्रतिद्वन्द्वस्तदैनं जहि रावणिम् ॥ 90.69



Rāma

Human character par excellence

Sundara Kāṇḍam: Sītā to Hanumān about
Rāma's qualities

उत्साहः पौरुषं सत्त्वमानृशंस्यं कृतज्ञता ।

विक्रमश्च प्रभावश्च सन्ति वानर राघवे ॥ (37.13)



Denial of Kingdom to Rāma

Marvelous capacity to handle this event

Ayodhyā Kāṇḍam Ch. 16 – Nice things
about the upcoming event

हन्त शीघ्रमितो गत्वा द्रक्ष्यामि च महीपतिम् ।

सह त्वं परिवारेण सुखमास्व रमस्व च (16.20)

यादृशी परिषत्तत्र तादृशो दूत आगतः ।

ध्रुवमद्यैव मां राजा यौवराज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यति ॥ (16.19)



Denial of Kingdom to Rāma

Marvelous capacity to handle this event

Chapter 19 – Asked to go to the forest for
14 years

तदप्रियममित्रघ्नो वचनं मरणोपमम् ।

शुत्वा न विव्यथे रामः कैकेयीं चेदमब्रवीत् ॥ (19.1)

धारयन्मनसा दुःखमिन्द्रियाणि निगृह्य च । (19.35)

उचितं च महाबाहुर्न जहौ हर्षमात्मनः ।

शारदः समुदीर्णांशुश्चन्द्रस्तेज इवात्मजम् ॥ (19.37)



Denial of Kingdom to Rāma

Marvelous capacity to handle this event

Chapter 26 – Meeting the expectant
Sītā & sharing the grief

तां दृष्ट्वा स हि धर्मात्मा न शशाक मनोगतम् ।

तं शोकं राघवः सोढुं ततो विवृततां गतः ॥ (26.7)

विवर्णवदनं दृष्ट्वा तं प्रस्विन्नममर्षणम् ।

आह दुःखाभितप्ता किमिदानीमिदं प्रभो ॥ (26.8)



Denial of Kingdom to Rāma

Marvelous capacity to handle this event

- Chapter 31 – Pouring of his emotions with Sītā
- Chapter 53 – Emotions continue to pour
– अशुपूर्णमुखो दीनो निशि तूष्णीमुपाविशत् ॥ (53.27)
- Chapters 100 – 112 – Conversations with Bharata asking him to go back & rule the kingdom



Understanding Rāma

Embodiment of unique character & values

- Rāvaṇa killed in war – Vibhīṣaṇa refuses to do the last rites (Yuddha Kāṇḍam)

मरणान्तानि वैराणि निर्वृत्तं नः प्रयोजनम् ।

क्रियतामस्य संस्कारो ममाप्येष यथा तव ॥ (111.100,101)

- Returning back after the war – Instructions to Hanumān

तस्य बुद्धिं च विज्ञाय व्यवसायं च वानर ॥ (125. 18)



Understanding Rāma

Embodiment of unique character & values

- Jaṭāyu Maraṇam – Rāma's approach to handle this

राजा दशरथः श्रीमान् यथा मम महायशाः ।

पूजनीयश्च मान्यश्च तथाऽयं पतगेश्वरः ॥ (68.26)

(Araṇya Kāṇḍam)



Understanding Rāma

Embodiment of unique character & values

- Araṇya Kāṇḍam – Responding to the requests of Rishis to save them from Rākṣasas

अप्यहं जीवितं जह्यां त्वां वा सीते सलक्ष्मणाम् ।
न तु प्रतिज्ञां संशुत्य ब्राह्मणेभ्यो विशेषतः ॥ (10.18,19)



Understanding Rāma

Embodiment of unique character & values

- Yuddha Kāṇḍam – Indrajit kills a counterfeit Sītā
– Lakṣmaṇa's reaction – Dharma was futile
यस्यार्थास्तस्य मित्राणि यस्यार्थास्तस्य बाम्धवाः ।
यस्यार्थाः स पुमान् लोके यस्यार्थाः स च पण्डितः ॥ (83.35)
यस्यार्थाः स च विक्राम्तो यस्यार्थाः स च बुद्धिमान् ।
यस्यार्थाः स महाभागो यस्यार्थाः स गुणाधिकः ॥ (83.36)
रक्षसापहृता भार्या प्राणैः प्रियतरा तव ॥ (83.41)



Building a strong character

Sītā in Ashoka vana

- Sundara Kāṇḍam

- Chapter 19: Rāvana's arrival & Sītā's state of mind

प्रावेपत वरारोहा प्रवाते कदली यथा (19.2)

छिन्नां प्रपतितां भूमौ शाखामिव वनस्पतेः (19.5)



Building a strong character

Sītā in Ashoka vana

- Sundara Kāṇḍam

- Sītā's reply in Sarga 21

तृणमन्तरतः कृत्वा प्रत्युवाच शुचिस्मिता ॥ (21.2)

अनन्या राघवेणाहं भास्करेण प्रभा यथा ॥(21.14)

एवं हि ते भवेत् स्वस्ति संप्रदाय रघूत्तमे ।

अन्यथा त्वं हि कुर्वाणो वधं प्राप्स्यसि रावण ॥ (21.22)



Rāmāyaṇa

Studded with several other values

- Ayodhyā Kāṇḍam
 - Chapter 111 (3,9,10): Parents are Ultimate (यन्मातापितरौ वृत्तं तनये कुरुतः सदा)
 - Chapter 104 (17, 21): Mother's word has as much authority as father's (धर्मभृतां श्रेष्ठ जनम्यामपि गौरवम्)
 - Chapter 18 (28 – 30): No double talk (रामो द्विर्नाभिभाषते)



Rāmāyaṇa

Studded with several other values

- Ayodhyā Kāṇḍam
 - Chapter 19 (32, 35): Sense of Equanimity
 - Chapter 97 (3 – 8): Rāma's high principles
- Araṇya Kāṇḍam
 - Chapter 9 (2 – 4): Wife is a good counselor and it is important to listen to them (विना वैरं च रौद्रता)

Building lasting character

Learn from a deep understanding of Rāmāyaṇam

- Played the role of a human being, went thru circumstances that confront human beings at every turn
- Every joy and grief they experienced throws light upon our own life and provides trustworthy guidance
- Instructions for how to prepare for our part of life, how to go through it



Building lasting character

Learn from a deep understanding of Rāmāyaṇam

- Rāma – as a husband, son, king, brother, a man, a leader, a warrior provides numerous lessons in Dharma & righteous living
- The four brothers – no competition, no rivalries, no effort to pass one another



Building lasting character

Learn from a deep understanding of Rāmāyaṇam

- Strength & Gentleness must co-exist
- Great Broadmindedness develops along with intensity of faith and conviction
- Intense fearlessness and intense compassion
 - अभयं वै जनक प्राप्तोऽसि (Brihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.2.4)
 - यस्मात् न उद्विजते लोकाः लोकात् न उद्विजते च यः (Gītā 12.15)



Building lasting character

Learn from a deep understanding of Rāmāyaṇam

- Capacity to withstand non-sense in life
(withstand changes and chances in life)
- Ability to go beyond the polls of physical/
nervous/ psychic systems

