

### 3.2 Indian Philosophy

Hello everyone,

Today in this session, we will discuss on the great Epics of our country, Ramayana and Mahabharatha

- Our two great epics are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Ramayana of Valmiki is the original Ramayana. It is called Adikavya and Maharishi Valmiki is known as Adi Kavi. The Ramayana presents a picture of an ideal society.
- The other epic, the Mahabharata, was written by Ved Vyas. Originally, it was written in Sanskrit and contained 8800 verses and was called “Jaya” or the collection dealing with victory.
- These were raised to 24,000 and came to be known as Bharata, named after one of the earliest Vedic tribes. The final compilation brought the verses to 100,000, which came to be known as the Mahabharata or the Satasahasri Samhita. It contains narrative, descriptive and didactic material, relating to conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas.
- The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have several renderings in different Indian languages. The Mahabharata contains the famous Bhagavad Gita which contains the essence of divine wisdom and is truly a universal gospel.
- Though it is a very ancient scripture, its fundamental teachings are in use even today.
- These were raised to 24,000 and came to be known as Bharata, named after one of the earliest Vedic tribes. The final compilation brought the verses to 100,000, which came to be known as the Mahabharata or the Satasahasri Samhita. It contains narrative, descriptive and didactic material, relating to conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas.
- The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have several renderings in different Indian languages. The Mahabharata contains the famous Bhagavad Gita which contains the essence of divine wisdom and is truly a universal gospel.
- Though it is a very ancient scripture, its fundamental teachings are in use even today.

**Let's see the significance of these epics one after other**

- The characteristics of Hinduism, as just set forth, are best reflected in the Bhagavad-Gita which may, indeed, be regarded as the principal scripture of this new religious ideology.
- They are also reflected in the character of Krsna, its enunciator, as portrayed in the great epic, **the Mahabharata**
- Mahabaratha and its Reference with 4 purusharthas.  
The four purusharthas are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.
- Mahabaratha, as an epic, Its vastness is aptly matched by the encyclopaedic nature of its contents and the universality of its appeal.

- The claim is traditionally made, and fully justified, that in matters pertaining to dharma (religion and ethics), artha (material progress and prosperity), kama (enjoyment of the pleasures of personal and social life), and moksa (spiritual emancipation), whatever is found in this epic may be found elsewhere; but what is not found in it will be impossible to find anywhere else.
- The Mahabharata, which must have assumed its present form in the first centuries before and after Christ, is traditionally believed to consist of 100,000 stanzas divided into eighteen parvans.
- The kernel of the Mahabharata story is briefly this:
- The Pandavas, headed by Yudhisthira, and the Kauravas, headed by Duryodhana, descended from common ancestors.
- Duryodhana becomes jealous and, coveting the crown invites Yudhisthira to a game of dice.
- As the result of a rash wager, Yudhisthira loses his kingdom to Duryodhana and is then forced to go into exile, together with his brothers and DraupadJ, the common consort of the Pandavas, for twelve years, followed by one year during which they must live incognito.
- But even when the stipulated period is over, Duryodhana refuses to give even a fraction of his territory to Yudhisthira, the rightful owner.
- A grim battle ensues. The Kauravas are routed and ruined, and the Pandavas regain their lost kingdom.
- The kernel of the Mahabharata story is briefly this:
- The Pandavas, headed by Yudhisthira, and the Kauravas, headed by Duryodhana, descended from common ancestors.
- Duryodhana becomes jealous and, coveting the crown invites Yudhisthira to a game of dice.
- As the result of a rash wager, Yudhisthira loses his kingdom to Duryodhana and is then forced to go into exile, together with his brothers and DraupadJ, the common consort of the Pandavas, for twelve years, followed by one year during which they must live incognito.
- But even when the stipulated period is over, Duryodhana refuses to give even a fraction of his territory to Yudhisthira, the rightful owner.
- A grim battle ensues. The Kauravas are routed and ruined, and the Pandavas regain their lost kingdom.
- The kernel of the Mahabharata story is briefly this:
- The Pandavas, headed by Yudhisthira, and the Kauravas, headed by Duryodhana, descended from common ancestors.

- Duryodhana becomes jealous and, coveting the crown invites Yudhisthira to a game of dice.
- As the result of a rash wager, Yudhisthira loses his kingdom to Duryodhana and is then forced to go into exile, together with his brothers and Draupadi, the common consort of the Pandavas, for twelve years, followed by one year during which they must live incognito.
- But even when the stipulated period is over, Duryodhana refuses to give even a fraction of his territory to Yudhisthira, the rightful owner.
- A grim battle ensues. The Kauravas are routed and ruined, and the Pandavas regain their lost kingdom.
- In the Bhagvad Gita, Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a warrior and prince and elaborates on different Yogic and Vedantic philosophies with examples and analogies.
- This makes Gita a concise guide to Hindu philosophy and a parochial, self-contained guide to life.
- In modern times Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and many others used the text to help inspire the Indian independence movement.
- This was mainly because the Bhagvad Gita spoke of positiveness in human actions. It also spoke of duty towards God and human beings alike forgetting about the results.
- You will appreciate the fact that the Gita has been translated nearly in all the main languages of the world

## **Ramayana**

- If the Mahabharata (with the Harivamsa) glorifies the Krishna incarnation, the other epic, the Ramayana, gives an account of the Rama incarnation.
- This incarnation is traditionally believed to have been earlier than the Krishna incarnation; composition of the Ramayana, however, which is largely the work of a single poet named Valmiki, seems to have begun after that of the Mahabharata, but ended before the Mahabharata assumed its final form
- It has seven kandas-the entire seventh kanda evidently is a later interpolation. It contains several sections of religious significance, such as the Surya-stava (which is also called Aditya-hridaya- stotra) by Agastya and the Rama-stuti by Brahma (both in the Yuddha-kanda).
- Its principal religious appeal, however, springs from the idealized domestic and social virtues which its characters embody. Indeed, this appeal has, through the centuries, proved to be direct and sustained
- Dasaratha, king of Ayodhya, is about to install his eldest son, Rama, on the throne.
- Kaikeyi, Rama's step-mother, wants her own son Bharata to be crowned king, and Rama to be sent into exile for fourteen years.

- The old and infirm king, though reluctant, has to agree.
- Rama goes to live in the forest, accompanied by his consort, Sita, and his brother, Laksmana.
- The demon-king of Lanka, Ravana, abducts Sita.
- Rama, determined to rescue Sita, wages a dour war against Ravana who is ultimately vanquished and killed.
- Rama comes back to Ayodhya and assumes his position as king, with Sita as queen. The story of the genuine portion of the epic ends here.
- In the last Book, which is suspected by many modern scholars to be spurious, it is narrated that the people of Ayodhya speak ill of Rama for taking back Sita from Ravana's custody and Rama banishes her in deference to public opinion.
- The Ramayana and the Mahabharata represent the ethos of our nation.
- Tradition places the Ramayana earlier than the Mahabharata.
- The Puranas are a very important branch, of the Hindu sacred literature. They enable us to know the true import of the ethos, philosophy, and religion of the Vedas.

Dear Learners, in this session we learnt about the great epics of our country, in the next session we will discuss on the literatures of south india