



Ramayana Story in Short

The epic Ramayana has been told in countless ways in several Indian and Southeast Asian languages and geographical locations. Nonetheless, the following are the two most well-known and significant versions:

The Valmiki Ramayana: Written by the sage Valmiki, this version is regarded as the oldest and original. It provides a thorough and objective narrative and is written in Sanskrit.

Tulsi Ramayana or Ramcharitmanas: Written in the sixteenth century by the poet-saint Tulsidas. Composed in the Hindi dialect of Awadhi, a shortened and more concise rendition that emphasizes Ram, Sita, and Lakshmana's emotional

journey. This narrative is poetic and aims for the reader to develop love for God.

For the purposes of this blog, we have referred mostly to the Tulsidas's Ramayana.

The seven chapters that make up the Tulsidas's Ramayana are known as Kands (chapters or episodes); they are **Bal Kand, Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindha Kand, Sunder Kand, Lanka Kand, and Uttar Kand**. The story of Lord Ram is gradually revealed in these chapters, emphasizing the divine qualities of selfless love, sacrifice, patience, forgiveness, righteousness, commitment, and so forth.

Our hope is that, after reading this concise synopsis, the reader will be persuaded to delve deeper into this profound and timeless scripture.

Chapter 1 - The Bal Kand of Ramayana

The epic Ramayana's Bal Kand establishes the divine beginnings of Rama, his extraordinary attributes, and the dharma that forms the basis of his life.

Ram's Birth

The chapter begins with salutations to Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, and Ganesha, the remover of obstacles, invoking their blessings. The author, Tulsidas, presents the idea of Brahman, the ultimate reality, from whom God Vishnu manifests.

Lord Vishnu chooses to become an incarnation in human form because he is alarmed by the abundance of evil in the world. Brahma is approached by sage Narada and others, who implore him to disclose the form that Vishnu will become.

The story of Lord Vishnu's descent as Rama, the eldest son of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya, is told by Brahma. He talks about Ram's divine attributes, such as

his courage, strength, compassion, and knowledge.

The story then moves to Ayodhya, a wealthy kingdom under the moral leadership of King Dasharatha. The king had four sons: Rama, Lakshmana (born to Sumitra), Bharata (born to Kaikeyi), and Shatrughna (born to Sumitra). He has three wives: Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra.

The celebrations of Ram's birth, which included lavish events and prophecies of his glory, are also covered in these set of dohas.

The story tells about Ram's and his brothers' extraordinary upbringing. Everyone in the kingdom adores Ram, and He is said to be gorgeous, clever, and kind.

Vishwamitra Yagya and Demon Encounters

When the sage Vishwamitra arrives in Ayodhya, he begs Ram for assistance in defending his yagya (fire sacrifice) from demons that interfere with the ceremonies. Ram is quite happy to go with Vishwamitra, even though he is still quite young. Lakshmana also accompanies them.

Along their path, they come face to face with the horrifying demon Tadaka, known for causing terror in the area. When Ram bravely vanquishes Tadaka, the people and sages are grateful.

When Ram and Lakshmana arrive at Vishwamitra's ashram, they encounter a number of obstacles from demons like Maricha and Subahu. Through his cleverness and prowess in battle, Ram defeats the demons and ensures a successful completion of the yagya.

Vishwamitra is impressed by Ram's courage and commitment, and he bestows upon him and Lakshman celestial weapons and divine knowledge, effectively preparing them for their forthcoming challenges.

Sita Swayamvara and Sita-Ram wedding

Ram and Lakshmana are brought to Janakpur, the kingdom of King Janaka, by Vishwamitra. Janaka is holding a swayamvara (self-choice of husband) for her beautiful and clever daughter Sita.

Indian kings and princes assemble to compete in a task that involves lifting and stringing an incredibly hefty bow. Many try, but Ram's great strength allows him to lift and string the bow with ease.

When Janaka realizes Ram as a divine personality, he is ecstatic and agrees to marry Sita. The chapter recounts the splendor of the marriage ritual that united Ram and Sita, a representation of the essence of devotion and love.

Significance of the Bal Kand

The Bal Kand demonstrates Ram's goodness, extraordinary abilities, and divine mission. Sita is also introduced in this chapter, emphasizing the significance of their relationship. The emphasis on dharma, duty, and education foreshadows the difficulties Ram would encounter and his unyielding adherence to these values.

Chapter 2 - The Ayodhya Kand of Ramayana

The Ayodhya Kand of Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas sets the stage for Ram's epic journey. Ram, the personification of virtue and the presumed heir to the Ayodhya kingdom, encounters an unjust turn of events.

Preparations for the Coronation of Ram

Overcome with happiness, King Dasharatha chooses to appoint Ram as his heir. The city is decked out for the coronation event, and people are looking forward to a golden age under Ram's rule as preparations get underway. But there's a cloud of doom hanging over the celebrations.

Kaikeyi's Two Boons

Manthara, the maidservant of Kaikeyi, manipulates her and reminds her of the two boons granted by King Dashrath in the past. Driven by excessive love for her son Bharat, Kaikeyi goes to Dashrath and insists on her two wishes being granted. Her son Bharat's coronation as king is the first boon; Ram's fourteen-year exile into forests is the second. Hearing these requests, King Dasharath collapses, overcome by grief and bound by his oath. He begs Kaikeyi to change her mind but she is relentless. Dasharath becomes seriously ill because he is torn between his love for Ram and his obligation to his wife.

Ram's Unflinching Determination

When Ram finds out about the circumstances, he shows a great deal of acceptance and maturity. He puts the stability of the kingdom and his father's prestige ahead of his personal interests. Despite the catastrophe that is happening, he doesn't lose his composure.

Sita declares her steadfast support for Ram. Enraged by the injustice, Lakshman criticizes Ram's choice to go into exile without voicing any opposition.

Ram emphasizes the value of following their father's instructions and preserving dharma (righteousness). He emphasizes that keeping their father's pledge is worth the tiny price of being exiled.

Sita, unwilling to be separated from Ram, insists on accompanying him into exile. Lakshman, Ram's loyal brother, also chooses to join them.

Ram, Sita and Lakshman Head to the Forest

With great sadness, King Dasharath bids farewell to Ram, Sita, and Lakshman. He expresses his deep regret and helplessness against Kaikeyi's demand. Ram consoles his devastated father, assuring him of his everlasting love in the midst of overwhelming sorrow.

The people of Ayodhya are unwilling to accept the forthcoming exodus. In an effort to persuade Ram to stay, they assure him of his legitimate right to the throne. Despite their pleas, Ram remains resolute in his commitment to carry out his father's wishes. He encourages the residents of Ayodhya to maintain their loyalty to Bharat and acknowledges that his exile is a duty towards his father that he must fulfill.

Significance of The Ayodhya Kand of Ramayana

The Ayodhya Kand establishes the core conflict of the Ramayana – the violation of dharma (righteousness) by Kaikeyi and the subsequent consequences. It showcases Ram's righteousness, Sita's devotion, Lakshman's loyalty, Bharata's integrity and Dashrath's commitment to his words.

Chapter 3 - The Aranya Kand of Ramayana

The Aranya Kand in the Ramcharitmanas narrates the tale of the forest life of Ram, Lakshman and Sita including Sita's abduction by the demon King Ravana.

Finding Home in the Forest

After being banished, Ram travels far into the Dandaka forest with Sita and Lakshman. The tranquil lakes and verdant surroundings of the natural world provide a striking contrast to the chaos they left behind in Ayodhya. Ram constructs a modest ashram and begins a life of serenity, abiding by the precepts of dharma and coexisting with the natural world. They become friends with the sages and ascetics who live in the forest.

Dandakaranya forest is infested by demons who bother the saints and ascetics. Ram kills demon like Viradha and others so sages can live peacefully. Then he visits the ashrams of Sharabhanga and Suteekshna.

Ram, Sita and Lakshman reach the ashram of Saint Agasthya. Agasthya greets Ram and offers powerful weapons. He also suggests them to go to Panchavati, on the banks of river Godavari, and settle there. On the way to Panchavati, the mighty old eagle Jatayu greets Ram.

Encounter with Surpanakha, Sister of Ravan

A demoness woman, Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, was captivated by the matchless beauty of Ram. She attempted to seduce him. But when she failed to win either of the two princes, she turned to attack Sita. Lakshmana cut off her nose and ears as a punishment. Hearing of this, her demon brother, Khara, organized an attack against the princes. Ram destroyed Khara and his huge army.

In order to avenge her humiliation, Surpanakha approached Ravana. She well knew of his weakness for women, and the wily demoness described the bewitching beauty of Sita. Her intention to bring this beautiful woman to him was foiled and she was mutilated. Ravan was aroused more by lust than by anger and he resolved to punish Ram by capturing Sita.

The Deception of Maricha and the Abduction of Sita

With Marich's help, Ravan devises a plan and successfully kidnaps Sita. Jatayu, a giant vulture and friend of Ram, tries to rescue Sita, but instead gets severely wounded in the attempt. Sita is help captive under guard in the Ashoka Vatika in Lanka. Ravana used various means of persuasion to force her to accept him but remain unsuccessful.

Search for Sita and Meeting with Shabri

Ram and Lakshman learnt about Sita's abduction from Jatayu. Because of his devotion and service to Ram. Jatayu received liberation from Ram. The princes immediately set out in search of Sita. During their quest, Ram killed a demon

Kabandha, thus liberating him from a curse. They also met the ascetic Shabari, who directed them towards Rishyamukh mountain where they would meet Sugriv and Hanuman.

Kabandha also advised Ram to visit the hermitage of Matanga and meet Sabari, the old disciple of the Sage. Ram meets Sabari and was pleased with the pure devotion of the old sage. Sabari was waiting eagerly for Ram's holy vision. Sabari gave some clues about Sita. She left her body in the presence of Ram seeking blessing to ascend to the holy celestial regions of Sages. After this incident, Ram moves to Rishyamuka mountain to meet Sugriv.

Significance of the Aranya Kand of Ramayana

The story of Shabri in the Aranya Kand of Ramayana is highly acclaimed. It brings the point across that the key to attract God's grace is to embrace simplicity, like that of a child, and devote ourselves to God with absolute faith and surrender.

Chapter 4 - The Kishkindha Kand of Ramayana

The Kishkindha Kand of Ramcharitmanas describes Ram's entry into Kishkindha, His meeting with Hanuman and partnership with Sugriv.

Meeting with Hanuman and Sugriv

As Ram and Lakshman wondered in search for Sita, Along the way, they found Rishyamhook mountain where Sugriv lived with his minister Jambavan and associate Hanuman. When Sugriv spotted the two princes, suspected if they were sent by his brother Bali. Hanuman disguises himself as a brahmin and approaches Ram and Laksman. Hanuman recognizes Ram and surrenders himself to his holy feet. He informs Ram that Sugriv has seen Sita's abduction.

Sugriv shares his story of how his brother Bali deceived him. They both agree to help each other.

Sugriv Challenges Bali for Battle

Ram asks Sugriv to engage Bali in a duel and entice him out of Kishkindha. However, both Sugriv and Bali looked so alike that Ram could not differentiate and was unable to kill Bali. As a consequence Sugriv is severely injured and has to run away. Nevertheless, Ram asked Sugriv to wear a flower garland as a mark of identification between the two brothers. This time Ram is able to kill Bali.

Sugriv gets Ready With His Army to Search for Sita

Sugriv was crowned as the king of Kishkindha by Ram following Bali's demise. However, Sugriv got distracted and forgot his promise to help Ram in finding Sita. Laxman rebuked Sugriv and refreshed his memory regarding his pledge.

Without delay, Sugriv commanded the assembly of the bear and vanara (monkey) communities. In order to find Sita, contingents of bears and monkeys were sent out to search in all directions. Hanuman was accompanied by Angad, Nala, Kesari, Jambavan, and others as they set off towards the southern direction. Closer to the sea coast, they noticed a cave that was occupied by Jatayu's brother Sampati. Angad informed Sampati about the demise of his brother Jatayu while trying to protect Sita. Sampati suggests that they will find Sita in the island of Lanka, which is four hundred miles away. He warned that only someone who could cross the vast ocean in one leap would be able to reach Lanka.

Hanuman is Reminded of His Extraordinary Powers by Jambavan

Angad shared that he could leap across the ocean, but he couldn't make it back. Jambavan knew that Hanuman was the only one capable of the task. Hanuman was reminded by Jambavan about his amazing powers that had become

dormant as result of misuse. He also told Hanuman that he was born to accomplish the work of his master, Ram. Additionally, he revealed to Hanuman that he had been born to carry out his master, Ram's, assignment.

Significance of Kishkindha Kand

The Kishkindha Kand emphasizes how crucial it is to build coalitions around similar ideals. It also examines the difficult relationship between justice and war, and when action becomes necessary.

Chapter 5 - The Sundar Kand of Ramayana

The Sundara Kand (Beautiful Chapter) of the Ramcharitmanas deals primarily with Hanuman's journey to Lanka and exemplifies Hanuman's selflessness, strength, and devotion to Ram.

Obstacles in Hanuman's Journey to Lanka

Hanuman encountered numerous obstacles while crossing the ocean to reach Lanka, including the Mainak mountain, Demoness Sinhika, and later Sursa. Even after successfully crossing the ocean, he faced the daunting task of finding a way through Lankini and other formidable forces that were guarding the golden city of Lanka. Hanuman uses his intelligence, strength, and agility to overcome all the challenges.

Hanuman Meets with Vibhishan

Upon reaching Lanka, Hanuman assumed the form of an insect and commenced his flight across the city in search of Sita. He came across a temple of Ram in Lanka and was pleasantly surprised. Subsequently he spotted Vibhishan coming towards Ram's temple and decided to approach him for a conversation. Hanuman imparts spiritual wisdom to Vibhishan and encourages him to

surrender at the lotus feet of Ram. Vibhishan guides Hanuman about the whereabouts of Sita in Lanka.

Hanuman Finds Sita and Assures Her

Hanuman sees Sita in the Ashoka Vatika, with numerous demons surrounding her. Soon after, Ravan appears and tries to intimidate Sita into marrying him, but his efforts are in vain. Hanuman spots Sita in the Ashoka Vatika, surrounded by many demons. In a short while, Ravan shows up there and tries to intimidate Sita into marrying him but is unsuccessful.

Hanuman, still in a tiny form, appears before Sita now and introduces himself as servant and messenger of Ram while presenting Ram's ring to Sita as a proof. He assures her that Ram, Lakshman and their army will soon rescue her from Ravan's captivity.

Hanuman Sets Lanka on Fire

Hanuman gets permission from Sita to eat the fruits from the trees in Ashok Vatika. He deliberately creates a scene by uprooting trees and even killing a few of Ravan's soldiers. Hanuman is uncontrollable, but finally, Meghnath captures Hanuman and is brought to Ravan's court. In spite of Hanuman's pleas, Ravan adamantly refuses to consider releasing Sita or take any of his advice into account.

Ravan then instructed his men to put Hanuman's tail on fire and let him go. With his tail ablaze, Hanuman started jumping from one palace on to the other, setting Lanka ablaze.

Hanuman Heads Back to Kishkindha

Before leaving Lanka, Hanuman meets with Sita again and asks for her bangles to take back to Ram as a proof of their meeting. Hanuman shares with Ram about his journey to Lanka. Ram then told Sugreev that they should make preparations to march towards Lanka. He encouraged and energized the Vanar army.

Vibhishan Surrenders to Ram

Vibhishan attempts to persuade Ravan to free Sita and avoid engaging in a battle with Ram. Realizing that it is futile to try and persuade Ravan, he chooses to depart Lanka and join Ram and Lakshman in their quest to rescue Sita from Ravan's clutches. Ram welcomes Vibhishan with open arms and crowns him as the King of Lanka.

Significance of the Sundar Kand

The Sundar Kand is the heart of Ramayana and is also the most popular chapter. It showcases the power of faith, devotion, and surrender.

Chapter 6 - The Lanka Kand of Ramayana

The dramatic events leading up to Ram and Ravana's confrontation are described in detail in the Ramcharitmanas' Lanka Kand. It highlights themes of bravery, devotion, the strength of faith and love, and the eventual victory of good over evil.

Construction of the Bridge and War Games

Ram and Sugriv make arrangements to build a bridge across the vast sea, separating them from Lanka. Nala and Neel, blessed with extraordinary engineering skills, led the Vanara army to build the Ram Setu (bridge). Before beginning their march towards Lanka, Ram established a Shivlinga at Rameshvaram and offered his worship.

Angada's Mission and Ravana's Arrogance

Ram sends Angada as a peace messenger to Ravana's court before the war, offering one last chance for Ravana to release Sita and prevent the conflict. Angada urges Ravana to release Sita and avoid a catastrophic battle.

Disregarding Angada's counsel, Ravana, driven by desire and pride, insults Ram and his army. The battle is inevitable now.

The Battle of Lanka

The army of Ram arrives in Lanka and conflicts break out between the Ram's army and the Ravana's sons and generals. Ravana's son Indrajit aims his Shakti baan at Lakshman knocking him unconscious. Hanuman saves Lakshman's life by bringing the magical herb Sanjivani from the Himalayas Ram ultimately defeats the ten-headed demon king Ravana by overpowering him and piercing him with his arrows thanks to the gods' aid.

Sita's Reunification with Ram and Coronation of Vibhishan

At the end of battle, the Vanara army celebrate their victory, signifying triumph of good over evil. Ram coronates Vibhishan as the King of Lanka. Sita goes through Agni Pariksha before they all head to Ayodhya on the Pushpak Viman where Bharat is eagerly waiting for their return, the fourteen years of exile in forests are coming to an end soon.

Significance of the Lanka Kand of Ramayana

The Lanka Kand highlights the power of unflinching faith in God that makes Angad fearless as he visits Ravan as Ram's peace messenger. The triumph of good over evil is a prevailing theme of this chapter.

Chapter 7 - The Uttara Kand of Ramayana

The Uttara Kand is the last Chapter of the Book, and can be broadly divided into two parts. The first half celebrates return of Ram to Ayodhya and

establishment of Ram Rajya. The second half touches on spiritual knowledge in the form of dialects between Shiv-Parvati and Kag Bhushundi-Garud.

Ayodhya Celebrates Return of Ram - Start of Diwali Tradition

Lord Ram and his companions reached Ayodhya on the Pushpak airplane. The entire kingdom is lighted with Ghee Candles and joy of the people of Ayodhya knows no bounds. The returning of Ram back to Ayodhya has since been celebrated as the most revered festival amongst the Hindus. Amidst a spectacular ceremony, Ram is crowned as the King of Ayodhya. Sugreev, Vibhishan and other companions depart from Ayodhya shortly thereafter. Hanuman stays in Ayodhya as he could not bear separation from Ram even for a moment. **(Read heart touching story of Hunuman and Sindoor)**

Establishment of Ram Rajya

Lord Ram established his famed 'Ram Rajya', the Rule of Dharma, throughout his realm. It is marked by righteous leadership, justice, fairness, and empathy, immense prosperity and universal happiness. In Ram's kingdom, there were no widows to lament, nor there was any danger from wild animals, nor any fear born of diseases. The kingdom was bereft of thieves and robberies.

Lord Shiv Narrates Ram Katha Mahatmya (Glories of Ram) to Mother Parvati

Shiva narrates to goddess Uma, his consort, the enlightening conversation between Kaagbhusundi and Garud. Many important spiritual principles and philosophies are explained for the benefit of spiritual aspirants and seekers of divine knowledge.

Offering Prayers to Lord Ram