

# Ramayan – Part1



Lord Sri Rama was the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and hero of the epic “Ramayana”. The Ramayana was originally written in Sanskrit language by Maharshi (great sage) Valmiki, and is the most ancient and glorious epic in the world. It is known as Adikavyam – the first poem.

## **Story of Valmiki and the origin of Ramayana**

Maharishi Valmiki was born as Ratnakara to sage Prachetasa. At a very young age, Ratnakara went into the forest and got lost. A hunter, who was passing by, saw Ratnakara and took him under his own care. Under the love and care of his foster parents, Ratnakara forgot his original parents. Under his father's guidance, Ratnakara turned out to be an excellent hunter. As he approached marriageable age, Ratnakara was married to a beautiful girl from hunter's family.

As his family grew larger, Ratnakara found it impossible to feed them. As a result, he took to robbery and began looting people passing from one village to another. One day, the great sage Narada, while passing through the jungle, was attacked by Ratnakara. Ratnakara tied Narada up and demanded all his wealth. Narada said “All I have is my Veena (musical instrument) and this loincloth (his clothes). He asked Ratnakara “Why do you rob people? Don't you know it will bring about your downfall?” Ratnakara said “I do it to feed my family.” Narada cleverly asked: “All this thieving will come back on you and cause you lots of grief in the future. Will your family share in your bad karma, as they do in your wealth? Leave me here and ask them.” Ratnakara went and asked his family. “Will you share the karma (result) of my evil deeds?” he asked. “No no no!” they said. It is your duty to support us.”

He went back and reported to Narada. Narada had a heart as big as the ocean. Even though Ratnakara had stolen from him, he wanted to help him. Ratnakara saw that his family had no love for him. Narada said – you sit here and meditate on the word “Ram”. This will purify you and your problems will disappear.

Then a funny thing happened. Because his mind was so impure from thieving, Ratnakara could not say “Ram”. So Narada, who was ever clever, said “Ok. Try this. Say the word ‘Mar’ (which means kill/beat in Hindi) over and over again, really fast. Ratnakara did this. When he said ‘mar’ over and over again, it ran into each other, and become RAM RAM RAM.

Ratnakara followed the instructions and kept sitting in a meditative posture for years, during which his body got completely covered by an anthill. At last, Narada came to see him and removed all the anthills from his body. Then, he told Ratnakara that his penance paid off and the God was pleased with him. Ratnakara was bestowed with the

honor of a Brahmarshi and given the name of Valmiki, since he was reborn from the Valmika (the ant-hill). Sage Valmiki founded his ashram at the banks of River Ganga.

Narada visited Maharishi Valmiki in his ashram once and there, he narrated the story of Lord Rama. Thereafter Valmiki received a vision from Lord Brahma in which the Lord instructed him to write Ramayana, which the sage readily followed.

Ramayana is not only about Lord Rama story, but also about devotion, loyalty, family roles, duty, and respect to elders. The ideals of man are beautifully portrayed in it. One can emulate those ideals and grow into an ideal human being and citizen.

## **Rama's Birth**

There was a great kingdom Kosala by the river Sarayu to the north of the Ganga, and Ayodhya was its capital. Under the rule of King Dasharatha, Ayodhya flourished wonderfully. King Dasaratha was devoted to truth and greatly loved by all his subjects. He was capable of fighting with many thousands of opposing warriors. He had fought on the side of the Devas (gods) many times, and his fame spread in the three worlds. He was the equal of Indra and Kubera. The people of Kosala were very happy, contented, and virtuous under his rule.

Yet, despite possessing all the fame, King Dasharatha was unhappy because he had no son to perpetuate his dynasty. He consulted all his religious masters, and ministers, and on their advice decided to perform a maha yagna, called "Putrakameshti Yagna" in order to obtain children. All arrangements were made, and the ceremonies were set in motion strictly as described by Vedas.

Meanwhile, all Devas approached Lord Brahma, and said, "O Grandsire, because of your boons, the demon king, Ravana, also called as Ravana, has become so powerful that he is harassing everyone at will. It is beyond our capacity to subdue, conquer or kill Ravana. We beg you to devise some means for his destruction." Lord Brahma paused for a moment to think, and then he said, "At the time of receiving boons, Ravana asked invulnerable and invincible against Devas, Asuras, Gandharvas, and other such beings. In his arrogance, Ravana did not care to ask for security against mankind."

All the Devas went to Vaikuntha, Lord Vishnu's residence, and worshipped Him with great reverence and then said, "O master of the universe, please be born as a man on earth, and put an end to Ravana and his atrocities, and save us." Hari (Lord Vishnu's other name) agreed and assured the Devas that he would be born as four sons of King Dasaratha, who was then performing an Yagna for children.

At the conclusion of king Dasaratha's putrakamesthi yagna, suddenly a majestic figure appeared out of the flames of yagnakunda, holding a golden pot containing sweet payasam (kheer), made from rice and milk. That divine personality then announced to Maharaja Dasaratha, "I am messenger of Lord Vishnu. The Devatas are pleased with you and your yagna. Here is the payasam sent by the gods for your wives. Give portions to your three wives, and then through them you will be able to beget four sons who will forever perpetuate your fame." With a great joy, Dasaratha accepted the pot, and distributed the payasam to his three wives, Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi.

First-of-all, Dasaratha gave half of the payasam to his eldest wife, Kausalya. Then he gave Sumitra one-fourth, and one-eighth to his youngest wife, Kaikeyi. After some deliberation, the King gave the remaining one-eighth to Sumitra again. With great eagerness they ate their shares of payasam, and in due course all of them were expectant mothers.

On the ninth day of waxing fortnight in the month of Chaitra, Kausalya gave birth to a son, who is none other than Lord Rama. Soon thereafter a son was born to Kaikeyi, named Bharata. Then, two days after the birth of Kausalya's son, Sumitra gave birth to twins, Lakshmana and Satrugna. The people of Ayodhya celebrated this in a great festive mood.

### **Questions:**

- Why did Ratnakara steal?
- Who did he meet in the forest?
- When he asked, did Ratnakara's family say they would share the consequences of his sinful actions?
- If you or I do some wrong (like stealing to feed our family), does it make it right?
- What mantra (word) did Narada tell Ratnakara to repeat?
- After meditating so many years, why did they call Ratnakara Valmiki?
- What story did he write?
- What was the yagna called that King Dasaratha had performed?
- Who came out of the sacred fire?
- What were the names of the King's four sons?
- Who were they an incarnation of?

## Daily Slokas:

### Ganesh Sloka

*Vakra Tunda Mahaa Kaaya; Suryakoti Samaprabha  
Nirvighnam Kurume Deva; Sarvakaaryeshu Sarvadaa*

### Saraswati Stotra

*Saraswathi Namasthubyam; Varade Kamaroopini  
Vidyarambham Karishyami; Siddhir Bhavatume Sada*

### Guru Stotra

*Gurur Brahmaa Gurur Vishnu; Gurur Devo Maheshwarah  
Guruh Saakshaat Parabrahma; Tasmai Shree Gurave Namah*

### Vishun Stotra:

*Shuklambharadharam Vishnum Shashivarnam Chaturbhujam  
Prasanna Vadanm Dhyayet Sarva Vignopa Shantaye*

### Rama Mantra:

*Sri Rama Rama Rameti, Rame Rame Manorame  
Sahasranama tattulyam, Rama Nama Varanane*

### Durga Stotra:

*Om Sarva Mangala Maangalye Shive Sarvaartha Saadhike  
Sharanye Triyambake Gauri, Naaraayani Namostute*

### Hanuman Mantra:

*Manojavam Maarutatulyavegam; Jitendriyam Buddhimataam Varistham  
Vaataatmajam Vaanarayoothamukhyam; Sriramadootam Sirasa Namami*

### Matru Devo Bhava Sloka:

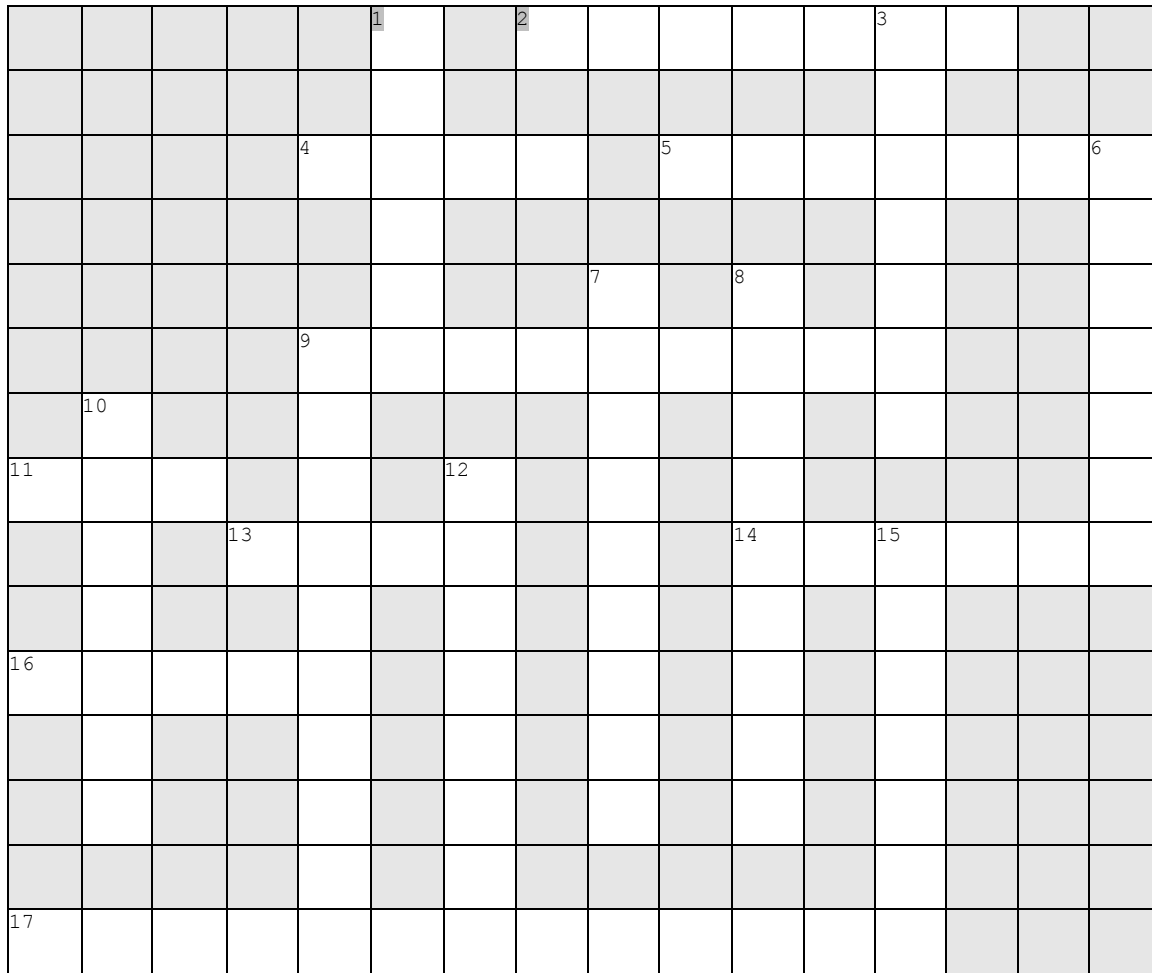
*Maathru Devo Bhava; Pitru Devo Bhava  
Acharya Devo Bhava; Athidhi Devo Bhava*

### Morning Prayers:

*Karaagre Vasate Lakshmi; Kara Madhye Saraswathi  
Kara Moole Tu Govinda; Prabahate Kara Darshanam*

*Gange cha Yamune chaiva Godavari Saraswati,  
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri jalesmin sannidhim kuru*

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 2 Lakshmana's mother
- 4 Lord Vishnu's other name
- 5 The anthill
- 9 Valmiki's original name
- 11 What mantra Narada gave Ratnakar to chant?
- 13 Vishnu's seventh incarnation
- 14 Ravana'sura also called
- 16 Narada's musical instrument
- 17 The Yagna performed by Dasaratha

### DOWN

- 1 Who instructed Valmiki to write Ramayan?
- 3 Adikavyam
- 6 Capital of Kosala
- 7 Lakshmana's twin brother
- 8 Rama's father
- 9 The king of demons
- 10 Bharata's mother
- 12 Rama's mother
- 15 Author of Ramayana

Coloring Exercise

