Akram Youth

December 2020 English

Dada Bhagwan Parivar

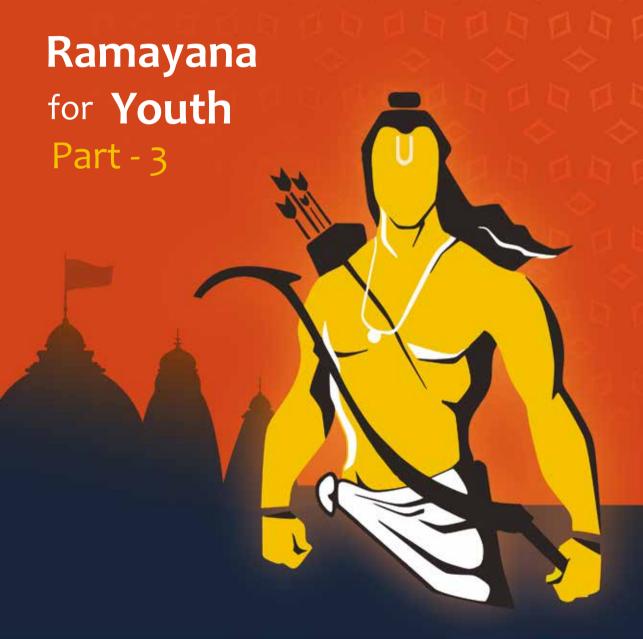


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Editorial

Friends, you may not know that the 'Epic Ramayana' is composed of 24,000 verses in the Sanskrit language and is considered as one of the largest ancient epic scriptures in the world.

The story of Ramayana is not limited to Hinduism or India alone, but it is also prevalent in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Vietnam etc. Sage Valmiki composed this historical text of Indian culture thousands of years ago with the aim of guiding the entire human race. Even today, Ramayana has a great influence on Indian lifestyle, society, and family life. Every ideal husband and wife is compared to Rama and Sita, ideal son to Rama, ideal brother to Lakshmana or Bharat, and ideal friend to Sugriva. Every character of Ramayana remains an idol for society.

As you all know, this is the third and last issue for our Akram Youth Ramayana series. Attempting to summarize such a large volume in just three issues is as difficult as containing the ocean in a jar. However, I firmly believe that this effort will provide a golden opportunity for our young brothers and sisters to receive guidance through our scriptures.

-Dimple Mehta

Note: This issue was edited based on information regarding the Ramayana that was collected from the available religious scriptures, literature, and other such mediums. The sole purpose of this is to provide appropriate guidance for today's youth.





We have heard the names of Ravana's family members, Vibhishana and Kumbhakarna, who resided in the town of Lanka. However, Vibhishana is also remembered by Rama's worshippers as one of the most devout worshippers of Rama. Let's go with Hanuman to the town of Lanka...

Terrible demons lived in the golden town of Lanka. They ate meat and consumed alcohol all the time and many were even cannibals. They would use magical powers and dark magic to terrorize saints and innocent civilians.

This is the same town of Lanka where Ravana had kept Mother Sita. Hanuman disguised himself and entered the town of Lanka to find Mother Sita. Hanuman was wondering where he could obtain the news and whereabouts of Mother Sita. He transformed into a miniature form of himself and began wandering in the town.

In this demon town, he spotted

a house with a small temple. On top of the temple was a beautiful symbol of Rama. There were Tulsi plants all around the temple. Hanuman was very pleased upon seeing this house and with much surprise he wondered, 'How was it possible to find a home of a worshiper of Lord Rama in a town full of demons?' He thought, 'Is this a lie or an illusion?' He was pondering over this when Vibhishana woke up from his slumber and started to offer morning salutations to Lord Rama. Hanuman was extremely pleased. He thought this person looked like a noble man. He went to meet Vibhishana. He introduced himself and told Vibhishana



Oh child of the wind god! Just as the tongue is unfortunately trapped in between the teeth, that's how I feel trapped amongst these demons.

why he had come to the town of Lanka. Upon hearing this Vibhishana felt truly fortunate. He welcomed Hanuman lovingly and said, "I was born into the demon community, but I have always been worshiping Lord Rama. With your arrival, I am reassured that Lord Rama will definitely grace an orphan like me with his blessings."

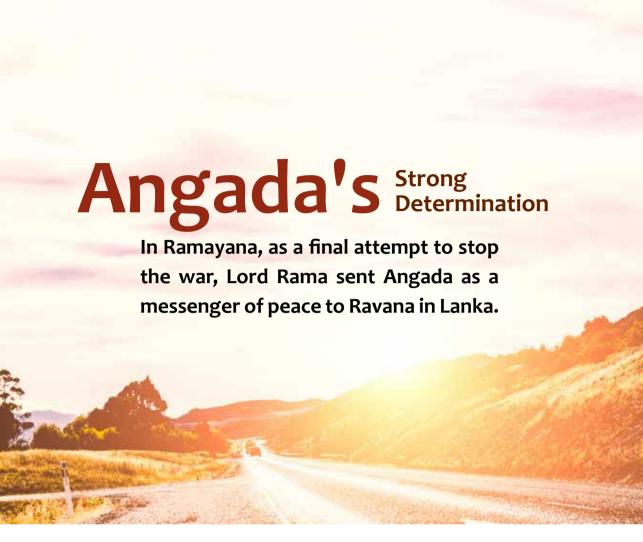
After investigating the town of Lanka, Hanuman returned to Lord Rama. He was really impressed by Vibhishana. Just as a beautiful lotus blooms in murky, dirty waters, in the same way, Vibhishana was a devout worshipper of Rama while living in the midst of many demons. Hanuman told Lord Rama about Vibhishana's mental state and his endless devotion. Upon hearing this, Lord Rama was extremely happy and he showered his grace upon Vibhishana.

Today, we should also decide that the bad company surrounding us, including sexuality, immorality, dishonesty, and other environmental peer pressures, should not taint our firm determination and efforts. Just like Vibhishana, we should remain like a lotus in murky waters and put in the efforts to maintain our good deeds, honesty, and purity.

Let us become worthy of the Gnani's blessings and achieve our goal of spiritual progress.

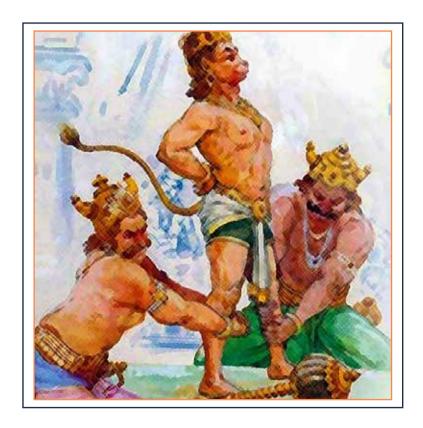
Even in this terrible, declining era Dadashri would say,

"If you are pure, then it is my guarantee that not the slightest of harm will befall you."

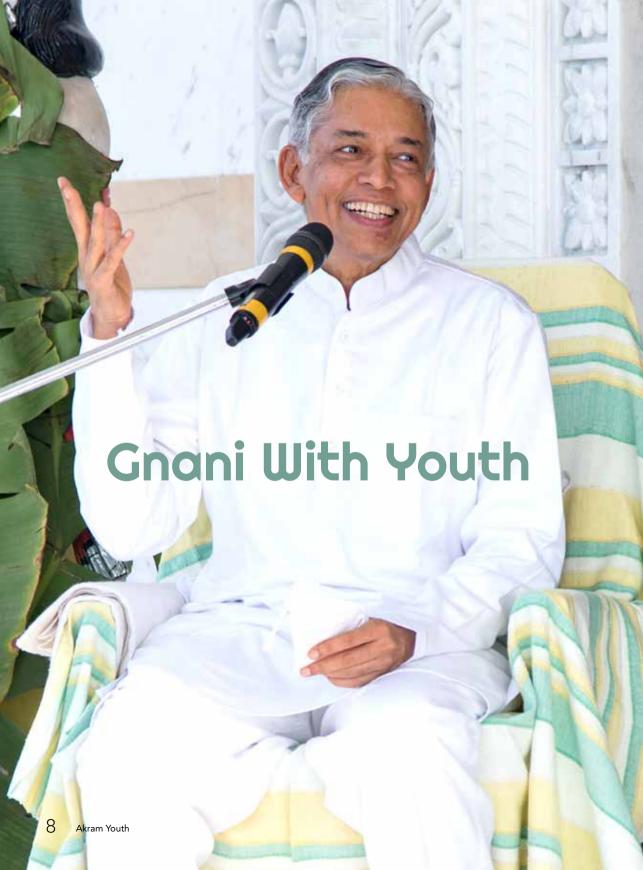


ngada skillfully shared Rama's message. However, due to his ego and illusionary attachment, Ravana did not take this message seriously and started bad mouthing Rama. Upon hearing this, Angada was filled with anger and he decided to show his powers.

He thought of Rama and channeled Rama's strength. With utmost self-confidence, he slammed his feet and challenged all the demons, "If any demon can lift my leg, Lord Rama will accept defeat and leave without taking Sita." Taking advantage of the opportunity, Ravana called his demons. "Grab this low life monkey by his legs and slam him on the ground." Upon hearing this, Indrajeet (Ravana's son) and other powerful demons from everywhere proudly rose to the occasion. While using all their strength and grand tactics, they all tried to lift Angada's leg. However, no one was able to move the leg that he had placed with such firm determination. With their heads held low in shame, they had to return back to their place.



Just as the powerful demons accepted defeat due to the influence of Angada's firm determination, our firm determination should not get influenced by circumstances or situations. That's how strong we should remain mentally. Let us make our resolve that strong.



Ramayana's Apparent Doers, Kaikeyi and Manthara?



Questioner: Pujyashree, during the lockdown I read a book on Ramayana. It said in the book that Kaikeyi and Manthara played a crucial role as apparent doers of the Ramayana. Can we learn something from their lives?

Pujyashree: Yes, that is correct. It is worth learning a lesson from it. Unfortunately, poor Kaikeyi and Manthara were apparent doers. Actually it was the effect of Lord Rama's, Sita's and Ravana's past karma. It was also the effect of Lakshmana's past karma. As a result of past karmic accounts, one becomes an apparent doer. No one is really at fault. Kaikeyi and Manthara should not be seen at fault. A lesson can be learnt from it, don't gossip about others. Don't see the negative in others. Do not harm others for your own benefit. We should keep such intents.

When two friends get together, do they gossip about a third friend? What do you say? Do you say nice things or say something negative?

Questioner: Nice [things].

Pujyashree: Nice things, is that true?

Questioner: Yes.

Pujyashree: Be careful of when two people get together, do not gossip about the third person. Yes, if you want to say something, then say something positive, we should not say anything negative. Otherwise, this intellect will always make comparisons. It says 'Ours is better, theirs is like this. We Indians are like this and the foreigners are like that.' Then it will say, 'We Gujarati speakers and those Hindi speaking people.' Then it will say, 'We are the ones from Mumbai, they are from Gujarat.' Then it will say, 'We are the ones from Surat, they are from Vadodara.' The intellect continues to create separation. 'We are the ones from Simandhar city, and they are from the villages.'

The intellect will always show all kinds of things. It always creates differences through comparisons and continues to do so. 'We are much better than those people. Our religion is better. We are better. Our family is better. Those people are beneath us.' By saying such things, they feel at peace. They feel happy by putting others down.



It is the Tradition of Raghukul Dynasty to

Keep Your promise, Even at the Cost of Your Life

Questioner: If a promise is made to someone and kept, what are the benefits of that? And if a promise is made but not kept, what are its consequences?

Aptaputra: The tradition of the Raghukul Dynasty says, "Keep your promise, even at the cost of your life". This saying is popular since Lord Rama's times. It says, if a person has given a promise, then he will die if he has to, but nonetheless, he will keep the promise. What happens by doing this? Trust is built amongst people.

If we look at our routine lives, the people who do what they say, are the ones that gain our trust. For example, if someone in the office says, they will come to the office every day at 9 am and if they routinely come at 9 am, we begin to trust them. However, if they say they will come at 9 am and actually come at 9:30 or 10 am, will you trust them? This happens with friends, teachers, parents, or whoever else. If they say something and stay true to it, those are the people we trust. Is that correct?

That's why this "Raghukul tradition" is talked about highly and if we follow that, only then, can we build trust.





Till give you another example. If your dad tells you that this Junday, will he will get you a bike, but he does not get it and two months pass by, will not in the came way if you the will get you a bike, but he does not get in the came way if you he ahle to truct him? No you will not in the came way. ne will get you a bike, but ne does not get it and two months pass by, will not! In the same way, if you tell your you be able to trust him? No, you will not! and then you don't nut in the full and then you have and then you have and then you have a limit of the parents I will obtain any recults in evams. you be able to trust nim: No, you will not! In the same way, if you tell your he full parents, I will obtain 90% results in exams, and then you don't put in the while parents, I will obtain only Reg. Will your narents he able to trust your parents he able to trust your parent parents, I will obtain 90% results in exams, and then you don't put in the rull work and obtain only 85%, will your parents be able to trust you? That's why work and obtain only 85%, will your parents be able to trust always been the promise work and obtain only 85%, will your parents be able to trust always been the promise work and obtain only 85%, will your parents be able to trust you? Work and optain only 55%, will your parents be able to trust you! Inat's Why if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep the promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep the promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you are unable to keep your promise than name if you want to gain some one's trust, always keep the promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep the promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep the promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep the promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep your promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep your promise than name if you want to gain someone's trust, always keep your promise than name if you want to gain some if you w IT you want to gain someone's trust, always keep the promise, then people to keep your promise, then people to keep your promise. This is a societal norm. If you are unable to he able to trust you and if you are unable to he able to trust you and if you are unable to he able to trust you. Inis is a societal norm. If you are unable to keep your promise, unen people in the societal norm. And if you are unable to keep your promises. I and will not be able to trust you. And if you are unable to he able to trust other people who also do not keep an aromice. Will not be able to trust you. And if you are unable to keep your promises. Lord will not be able to trust other people who also do not keep promises. Will not be able to trust "Parabului tradition" to its extreme Rama was following this "Raghukul tradition" to its extreme.



You should maintain two things...

One is to keep the promise that you make. Second, if you feel you may not be able to keep your promise, even then, keep 100% intent that you want to do what you have promised. If you have the intent, then others will be accepting of you and they will surely trust you.





There are many ideal and loving relationships covered in Ramayana and after seeing them, we think, how is it possible to have such loving relationships? What kind of karmic accounts did they have for their relationships to be so tight?

Such is the example of the ideal friendship between Lord Rama and King Sugriva...

Sugriva was the king of monkeys. He was scared of his older brother and lived in hiding in a cave in the Rushimukha Mountain. At that time, Ravana had kidnapped Sita. Lord Rama came near this mountain in search of Sita. He met Hanuman and at that time Hanuman introduced him to Sugriva. They became great friends from the very first time that they met.

Sugriva's brother Vali had taken away his kingdom. Lord Rama helped Sugriva

get his kingdom back. Sugriva also sent his army of monkeys in all directions to find out the whereabouts of Sita. He also used his army of monkeys to help build the sea bridge to Lanka. When Sugriva's army reached Lanka, Ravana tried to tempt Sugriva by offering him anything he wanted from the golden Lanka. Ravana then tried to scare Sugriva by saying things like, "Why are you supporting the person that killed your brother?" King Sugriva who was faithful to his friend, remained unperturbed. A massive war ensued against Ravana. Sugriva played an important role in helping Rama win the war and until his last moments, he supported his friend Lord Rama.

The friendship between Lord Rama and King Sugriva was so pure that they were able to help each other in an excellent manner! What was the reason behind this?

Let's see what the reason was behind this...

Lord Rama in his past life, was named Padamaruchi, and he was the son of the head of the town of Mahapur. Padamaruchi was riding his horse towards the town of Gokul. There on the way, he happened to see an old ox breathing his last.

Padamaruchi felt compassionate towards it. He got off from his horse and whispered prayers into the ox's ears. Upon hearing the prayers, the ox's soul departed from its body. At the time of hearing the prayer in the last moments of it's life, the ox took a higher form and was reborn in the town of Mahapur as prince Vrushabhadhvaj in the king's home.

Vrushabhadhvaj remembered his previous life and how a man had

graced him by whispering prayers in his last moments. He also remembered the face of Padamaruchi. He built a grand temple in his kingdom and on one wall of the temple he got a painting made depicting the ox's final breath and the man getting off the horse whispering a prayer.

In that era, the lifespan of people was thousands of years. Therefore, Padamaruchi was also present. Once, Padamaruchi visited this new temple to offer prayers. Upon seeing the painting, he recalled it to be an event from his own

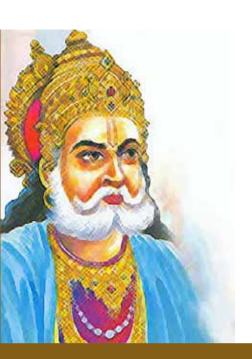


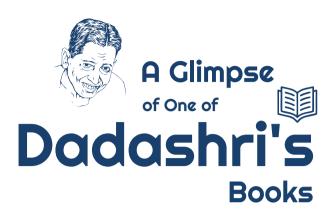
life. He remembered that he had helped in the same way. He asked the keepers of the temple about the painting and they introduced him Vrushabhadhvaj. Remembering the previous life events, they both felt a lot of affection for one another. Both of them took initiation into monkhood together and be-

came celestial beings in their next lives.

From the celestial form, Padamaruchiwas born as Lord Rama and Vrushabhadhvaj became King Sugriva. They were just as great of friends even in this lifetime, maintaining each other's support and friendship till the end.

ike this, even in today's relationships, there are deep connections. The karmically connected accounts of the past life determine the relationships and the people we come across in this life. That's why our close friends, or people in our satsang group, or other relationships are all a result of karmic connections of the past life. Do you all understand?





Chit Absent in Worldly Life but Present in the Self!

What lesson will I learn from this man who is indulged in worldly pleasures?

adashri: The son of Ja Self-Realized person who gave the knowledge of Self-Realization to King Janak, had ego and thought, 'I am something.' In order to decrease this ego, the guru told his son, "Go get a sermon from King Janak." His son went to visit the King. The guru had already instructed King Janak beforehand. When the boy arrived at the palace, he saw the extravagance of

the King's splendor. He saw King Janak playfully sitting on a golden swing with his hand placed on shoulders. the queen's Upon seeing this, the boy thought 'What lesson will I learn from this man who is indulged in worldly pleasures?' However, since it was his father's instruction, he did not say anything. Quietly, he kept doing as the King ordered. The King offered him food in a golden plate, with

thirty-two varieties of entrees. The boy sat down. When he looked up he was shocked, 'Oh! What is this? There is a bell hanging over my head and it looks like it is about to fall any minute!' The King had played this trick. He had placed a large bell hanging with a very thin, barely visible string right above the boy's head. The boy got really frightened. He ate hurriedly. While eating, the King insisted that he should eat more, however the boy could not keep his chit in his food.

His chit was engrossed in the bell, wondering what would happen to him if it were to fall?

After eating, King Janak gave him some mouth freshener and asked, "Saint, how did you like the meal? Which dish did you like the most?" The boy was honest. Ascetics do not have deceit, but they have ego. He said it as is, "Oh King, can I tell you the truth? My fear-ridden chit was focused on the large hanging bell, and that is why I do not know what I ate."

That's when King Janak said, "Saint, just like your chit was absent when you ate, that's how my chit is. It is constantly absent in all these worldly things! My chit is never in these luxuries. I constantly dwell in my form as the Self! This is how King Janak was!

This reminds me of an incident which depicts Niruma's state which was absolutely free from illusory attachment.



"If a question-answer session is going on with thousands of mahatmas and if someone from Mahavideh comes for me, without wasting a moment I will always be ready to go with them without hesitation."

The Traits of Ramayana's Main Characters



Lord Rama

An ideal son, a loyal husband, an ideal ruler, the best hero, respect, honor, and protection for all sages and saints. He attained Self-realization and went to moksha. He was a fully enlightened being.

Lakshmana

The ultimate brother. He had utmost reverence towards Lord Rama and Mother Sita. He had absolute humility and lived a life of selfless service.





Bharat

He had unending devotion for Lord Rama. He was full of love and compassion.



Mother Sita

Loyal to her husband, an icon of purity. She made her husband and family proud.

Hanuman

Pure and unbroken celibacy, unique devotion and service to Lord Rama. He attained moksha.





Sugriva

Lord Rama's dear friend. A brave king of monkeys. One who always kept his promises.

He was one of a kind, a Angada combination of reverence, obedience and bravery.





Unparalleled devotion towards

Lord Rama. Night and day she yearned to meet Rama and finally achieved the ultimate state after meeting Rama.



Vibhishana

Even though he was born amongst the demons, he accepted religion. He did not even support his own brother in doing wrong deeds.

Jatayu

He fought with Ravana and bravely tried to rescue Mother Sita.



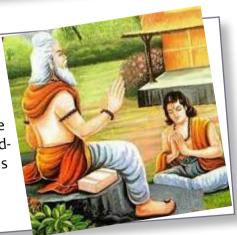


Ravana

A brave and valorous king. He had the knowledge of many great scriptures. A great Self-realized soul who will be a future Tirthankara in the upcoming era.

Guru Vashishta

He was one of the seven saints of the ancient times. He was an important contributor to the Rigveda scriptures. He was one of the main advisors to Lord Rama. In the absence of Rama's father, Rama would take his advice. He gave Rama spiritual and worldly knowledge.





King Janak

He was an extremely wise man. He was modest and possessed the right intellect. He played an important role in helping Rama, Lakshmana, and Bharat make the right decisions at various times of their lives.

Luv-Kush

Under the guidance of the great sage Valmiki, both of them received training and learnt the spiritual scriptures. They were always obedient to their mother and guru. They were proficient and skilled warriors.





She is regarded as a warrior who helped King Dasharath Kaikeyi win the war by using her own finger as a peg to stabilize the chariot's wheel. She had the highest kind of remorse.

Sage Valmiki

He wrote the Ramayana poems. He was the first poet, a capable guru, a visionary of the past, present, and future. He gave shelter to Mother Sita. He trained Luv-Kush in the knowledge of the scriptures and war tactics.





Urmila

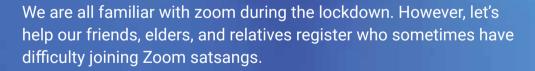
Lakshmana's wife. She made a great sacrifice by supporting Lakshmana's decision to serve Rama and Sita.

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#Poem

Sadaguno jo tarvo, Ramayana sagarma na samaya; Harek patra ek granth che, koine baki na rakhe sakaya.

Shree Ram-Sugriv tani, chokhi meetrata janay darpana che; Meetrata kae nathi magati, toye sarvasva samarpana che.

Dehbal to sahu juaa, sarvoch Angadanu manobada che; Lalach koi lalachivi na sake, AngaLuv-Kush d yodha prabada che.

Manavama na ave ke, satrudalma ek bhakta rahe che; Jayaa kadavma kamal samaan, koi Vibhishana pan che.

Sajanta dakavi sake jo, sansarakshanu varadaan che; Prabhune haiye rakho, to darek sthala mandhir samaan che.

Ramayana sekhavati raheshe, jaya shudhi tamari taiyari che; Jayare vaacho tayre, Ramayana ek navi ja savari che.



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Rama is considered the greatest of all men;

Because he went to moksha,

He became the absolute Self.

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