



## TALES FROM THE RAMAYANA AN INVESTIGATION INTO SOCIOLOGY

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### **Abstract**

The Ramayana tradition has always significantly emphasized travel and encounters throughout its history. It is possible to facilitate a journey on numerous levels by laying it out. An "imagined golden age" of Hinduism, as described in the Ramayana, is the basis for this theory, which argues that Hindu nationalism is built on the idealisation of this period. By evoking the image of a shared past, the Hindutva ideology has utilized Ramayana's pervasiveness as a narrative embedded in regional and widespread culture and language to establish and reinforce an 'imagined



community’ which was augmented considerably by the enormous reach and popularity of Ramanand Sagar’s 1987 television serial Ramayana.

There is not a single popular Rama tale that is free of polarisation, despite historians and poets engaging in heated debates. Even though Rama is an obvious fallacy, he is still considered either a hero or a ruler, but he is never considered an offender.

**Keywords:** Ramayana, Archetypes, Supernatural, Narrative.

## Introduction

For history, the Ramayana has been able to catch the curiosity of humans. His heroic deeds were shown in dramatic drawings that captivated people's attention for numerous generations. Several interpretations of the Ramayana have brought to light a great number of supernatural occurrences, archetypes, and instructions for behaviour. Narratives<sup>1</sup> are a fundamental part of communal unification and togetherness (Anderson: 1991:5-7). In this context, it is unavoidable to engage in a variety of introspections about the enigmatic and lovely fancies of Rama. These tales of beginnings, whether they are based on real events or invented ones, serve as the starting point for the formation of the group's identity. As a result of the Ramayana's ability to blur the lines between reality and myth, it was able to engage the imagination while simultaneously requiring a personal awareness of history and a common origin. However, in modern-day India, it is very difficult to investigate the contentious question of whether or not Rama is telling the truth. It is possible to get significant insights into the social, religious, and political aspects of present times by reading and comprehending tales in their entirety. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the method by which the tales of the Ramayana were contextualised within the cultural practices of Hinduism. The role of religion is unequivocally a daunting reality of India, governing social, cultural, and political spheres. (Hefner: 1998:84) Within the scope of this research, the socio-historical significance of Rama and his subsequent representation is investigated. The ancient Ramayana, written in Sanskrit and has been exposed to an unlimited number of interpretations in various languages, serves as a

marker for continuity and diversity. Since this is the case, Rama tales foster a wide variety of cultural and ethnic conceptions.

### The Antiquity of Ramayana

“His shoulders are broad and his arms are massive His neck is like a conch shell and his face is beautiful His collarbone is set deep in muscle his eyes pleasantly reddish everyone has heard of Rama” (The Ramayana, Sundarakaṇḍa, 33:15.) 1

When discussing any aspect of the Ramayana, attempting to gauge the extent of its spread, influence, dissemination, and evolution would be akin to measuring the vast waters of the ocean during high tide. The phenomenon of constant movement of changes is particularly evident in the spatial and temporal aspects of the Ramayana theme. The theme's kernel has captivated the minds and imaginations of people across a vast geographical area, ranging from West Asia to Southeast Asia and East Asia. The diverse range of themes found in the Ramayana can be translated, transplanted, and transposed into various forms of theatrical performances, literature, and cinema. To capture that and trace its transformations through time and space, it is necessary to bring within a unified scholarly view. (Krishnamoorthy, Nath:1993). The social significance of the Ramayana lies in its exploration of the sanctity of society and its emphasis on the importance of human values.

The subsequent narratives of Rama have played a crucial role in effectively conveying the principles of righteousness, loyalty, love, respect, wisdom, and polity. The domain of literature, theatre, and cinemas includes visual depictions of Rama legends in Calendar art and posters. The book titled 'Amar Chitra Katha' by Anand Pai is a renowned children's classic that depicts the triumphant journey of Rama. Subsequently, the Ramayana theme has been presented through audio-visual medium due to technological advancements. The television series 'Ramayana' by Ramanand Sagar, which aired from 1987 to 1988, is widely acclaimed and celebrated. The utilisation of pictographic narratives has played a significant role in the process of internalising the 'ideals' of Ramayana within the consciousness of individuals. In addition, it also caters to the renewed interest in religious faith among the audience.

The convergence of didactic and entertainment purposes is achieved through the recounting of Rama legends.

#### Kandas in Ramayana: A comprehensive detailing

The primary objective is to analyse and interpret the evolution of the religious significance attributed to Rama. The outline of the theme is of utmost importance and is a necessary requirement. Valmiki provided an explanation of the fundamental principles. The Hindu tradition showcases a comprehensive heritage by preserving the core elements of the grand narrative. Although the ancient author did not depend on the religious nature of Rama, he still attained the status of a 'lord'. Prior to continuing, it is crucial to acknowledge that it is not advisable to detach the narrative from the persona of Rama. In his statement, Harry Buck emphasises that it is the hero story, rather than the hero himself, that brings grace. He also suggests that by re-enacting the hero's story, individuals can actively participate in the hero's victory and reap the benefits it offers. The text "(Harry M. Buck: 1968:234)" represents a citation in the format of "Author:Year: Page". The symbol of Rama in Valmiki is characterised by its open-ended nature, allowing for potential future expansion and development. The development occurs within the existing framework.

#### Bala Kanda

The initial book serves as the prologue to the primary narrative. Jacobi acknowledges that the first and last kandas are chronologically later than the main part. However, it is important to note that India's religious narrative tradition strongly opposes such assertions (Whaling: 1980: 15). The narrative begins with the description of the prosperous Kosala kingdom during the rule of Dasaratha. The ascetics and sages have been facing numerous challenges due to the simultaneous presence of the demon Ravana and his armies. Ravana acquired his immense strength from Lord Brahma through a process of rigorous penance. The deity later bestowed upon him the gift of invincibility in the context of the principle mythic. The Vedic sage is frequently mentioned in the epic texts of Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas. The individual in question is a peripatetic musician and storyteller who possesses the ability to



disseminate current events and impart profound insights (Pattanaik: 2000:80) across multiple realms.

As the individual expedited their request for a favour, they inadvertently omitted (or did not perceive it as a potential threat) the need for protection from other individuals. The sages, who were greatly angered by the tortures inflicted by Ravana, sought refuge in Vishnu, the deity responsible for preserving the universe. The individual chooses to incarnate as a mortal to liberate humanity from the aggression of demons. To perform the Putra Kameshi Yagna (a ceremony to beget a son), Vishnu suggested that Dasaratha should procure his descent as his son or sons. Dasaratha was married to three women, namely Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra. The successful completion of Rishyasringa's ritual of sacrifice (Yagya) resulted in the birth of Rama to Kausalya, Bharata to Kaikeyi, and the twins Lakshmana and Satrugna to Sumitra. Sage Vasistha provided guidance and supervision to the brothers throughout their childhood and adolescence. During his tutelage, Rama successfully defeats the demon Tataka and

Subakhu. The narrative concludes with Rama's redemption of Ahalya and his union with Sita through marriage.

#### Representations From Ramayana and Ramcaritmanasa

An essential aspect to consider while exploring the interconnectedness of Hindu religion is the significant role that story plays in shaping one's identity. A tale that directly explores the heroic actions of a protagonist has become a widely recognised emblem that connects religion and politics. Therefore, it is essential to have a thorough comprehension of his symbolism. The chapter offers detailed explanations of his endeavours, while also highlighting the establishment of gender stereotypes. “A man who always fulfilled his vows he taught them the whole of this great poem, The Ramayan which is the tale of Sita and the slaying of Paulastya...” (The Ramayana, Bālakāṇḍa, 4:6-7. 1)

While reading, it is perplexing to see the non-linear narrative style, characterised by intermittent and discontinuous incidents. Occasionally, when there is an anticipation for a detailed and extensive explanation, it is not provided. The narrative's action and



thrill are sometimes impeded by digressions into other stories or lengthy descriptions of nature. The excessive number of unrelated stories, digressions into philosophical discussions, and moral explanations detract from the enjoyment of reading. Moreover, since these novels depict the writers' imagination, they inherently contain tone.

In one of the lesser-known legends of Rama, Ravana is depicted as the biological father of Sita. The monarch and his spouse, Mandodari, are childless. By undergoing intense penance, Siva was granted a mango as a blessing, which he was to share with his queen. Nevertheless, Ravana ingests the meat and impregnates Mandodari by giving her the sperm. By the conclusion of the ninth month, he expels Sita from his nasal passage by sneezing. Meanwhile, he discovered the prophecy foretelling that she would be the cause of his demise. Therefore, consumed by anger, he hurls the infant into the river. Later, she enters into a marriage with Rama and is then kidnapped by Ravana, which ultimately results in a significant fight that leads to Ravana's demise. Within this distinct contrast to the absurdity, certain elements that are not present in the overarching story become evident.

Every storyteller has the authority and responsibility to narrate the story in their unique manner, emphasising the beloved parts, clarifying moral and ethical aspects, or introducing elements of humour. Typically, since the majority of readers of traditional literature are illiterate, writers are compelled to use tactics that improve memorability. These tactics include repetition, formulaic composition, and basic metrical forms that are best suited for musical or quasi- musical recitation. They also involve copiousness and the frequent use of epigrams and exaggeration.

### Conclusion

The analysis begins by examining the structure of the Ramayana. Additionally, it examines the process of canonization of Rama myths within a socio-historical context. This literature provides a concise overview of the Kandas (books) of the Ramayana, as well as a short description of the characters and a straightforward presentation of the stories. The writers and intellectuals who used the big narrative during historical injunctions were thereafter canonised. The unfolding of the AdiKavya involves the division between 'Aryans' and the indigenous population.



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