

# Ramayana: The Psychological Analysis of the Hindu Epic

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**Abstract**— The Ramayana is one of the oldest Hindu Epic which was first told in Sanskrit by Sage Valmiki. Ramayana has been compromised with 24,000 verses in seven cantos. The story of Ramayana highly influences Nepalese and Indian culture. The Ramayana express the emotion and perception of general population. Ramayana exhibit various psychological factors like emotion, perception, thinking, feeling, intelligence, personality, problem solving skills, attitude, interest, motivation, stress, depression, etc. In today's world people are suffering from various conflicts and problems. The Ramayana can be used in many situations where patients or clients have conflicts that require psychological interventions. The Ramayana address that people who are unable to live with their true-self will lack well-being and they suffer mentally and physically. According to Ramayana, negative minded people's company completely change the way we think and look at any situation. Ramayana also explains that life can be overcome by fate and believe. Similarly, the bad actions can only result in worse result. Ramayana deals with various aspects of human life like: love, brotherhood, loyalty, obedience to parents, self-sacrifice, ideal womanhood, etc. Ramayana teaches us one valuable lesson that not only human but even God is not free from suffering when he incarnates upon earth.

**Keywords**— The Ramayana, Psychology, Psychological Factors, Human Life.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ramayana- "Ram's Journey"- is one of the Indian's oldest stories. It was first told in the Sanskrit epic poem of Valmiki some two and a half thousand years ago. Since then it has been retold over and over in different forms in many languages of India and beyond. One of the great personalities of India was Tulsi Das who translated Ramayana into Indian language whereas Bhanu Bhakta Acharya (Aadikavi of Nepal) translated Ramayana into Nepali language.

The Ramayana is an ancient Sanskrit epic which follows Prince Rama's quest to rescue his beloved wife Sita from the clutches of Ravana with the help of an army of monkeys. It is traditionally attributed to the authorship of the sage Valmiki, which date-around 5th century (100 BCE to 500 BCE). In Ramayana, Rama became an avatar of God Visnu in "Treta Yough", who was Prince of Ayudhya, and won the hand of beautiful princess Sita. Sita, daughter of Raja Janak was king of Janakpur Dham which is a part of Nepal. This seems that Sita, princess of Janakpur, belonged to Nepal and Rama belonged to India.

The story of Ramayana is based on Indian and Nepalese culture, and it is one of the ancient Sanskrit epic which greatly influence the art and culture of Nepal and India. Ramayana has been compromised with 24,000 verses in seven cantos. The story of Rama has constantly been retold in poetic and dramatic versions by some of the Indians and Nepalese writers and also in narrative sculptures on temple walls. It is one of the staples of later

dramatic traditions, re-enchanted in dance-dramas, village theatre and the annual Ram Lila (Rama play).

Rama, Prince of Ayodhya, was exiled with his beautiful wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana for 14 years because of the plotting done by his stepmother. In the forest Sita was abducted by Ravana, and Rama gathered an army of monkeys and bears with the help of Hanuman and Sugriva to search her. The allies attacked Lanka, killed Ravana and rescued Sita. After rescuing Sita they returned to their kingdom Ayodhya. But due to Rama righteous, Sita was exiled in jungle to prove her chastity. Sita is the epitome of womanly purity and virtue gave birth to two babies and named them "Lava and Kusha" in Valmiki Ashram. Again after some years, Sita had to prove her chastity. She entered fire, but was vindicated by the Gods and restored to her husband. After the couples' triumphant return to Ayodhya, Rama's righteous rule (Ram-raj) inaugurated a golden age for all mankind (From: Valmiki Ramayana).

## ANALYSIS

Ramayana is one of the Hindu epic which clarifies about the spirituality, harmony, morality and relations which does not know any separation. Some of the characteristics of the Ramayana are such a poetic, philosophical, incarnation as human, historical, geographical description, politics, psychological, astrology, ayurveda, tantra, dharma shastra, code of conduct, morality and devotions (Valmiki, Ramayana, P.3). Sage Valmiki has narrated every character with different kind of psychology. Most of the character

wanted to think about happiness of others even for that they sacrifice own wishes. Each character established new idealism for the next generation. Ramayana holds the concept of Hindu psychology. Hindu psychology believes that ultimately mental acts and the mind are realities by themselves (Essay on Hindu psychology, 2020). Hindu psychologists are primarily interested in the study and development of the total mind rather than in the different functions considered separately (SwamyAkhilananda, 2013).

According to Freud, the unconscious mind is the store house of biological and instinctual impulses and that associates mental processes (Essay on Hindu psychology, 2020), whereas Freud claim three levels of mind. Hindu psychology on the other hand recognizes four stages or levels of consciousness, “the sleep stage (Susupthi)”, “the dream stage (Swapna)”, “the waking stage (Jagruthi)” and “an expanding super conscious stage (Turiya)”. On the other hand, many other western psychologists had held that emotions and feelings are nothing but a set of physiological reactions and sensations resulting from these. But according to Hindu psychology, emotions have their roots in desire (Essay on Hindu psychology, 2020). If desire is achieved then sense of joy and happiness is felt, if not then sense of sadness and unhappiness is felt.

According to Swami Abhedananda (1960), our brain does not feel any emotions. He suggests that we feel (individual), the personality feels. Every individual feels certain conditions such as joy, grief, love, hatred, anger, fear and pride. According to Hindu psychology, emotion is an activity of mind that results in the bodily changes. If we study about personality and their relevant theories then we can know there are various types of personality, but according to Hindu psychology there are two types of personality i.e. “Me” and “I”. Me represents super-ego whereas I represent Id.

The Ramayana expresses the emotion and perception of general population. If we see Ramayana through psychological lens, then we can identify various psychological facts related with Ramayana. According to Prashant Sunil Chaudhari (2017), Id, ego and super-ego are the three parts of personality in Sigmund Freud structural model where Ravana represents Id personality, Rama represents super-ego personality and Sita represents ego personality. Similarly, Chaudhari highlights Sita and Hanuman as an ego part of mind. According to Harikirat Singh (2018), Ramayana is more than just a story because it has a philosophical, spiritual

significance and a deep truth. According to Singh, there are various psychological phenomenons in Ramayana. He highlights Sita as a mind, Rama as a pure consciousness, Ravana as an ego and Lakshmana as awareness.

Similarly, InduJangra (2019) colors Ramayana as a universal source of wisdom. InduJangra focuses her study on the need and human motivation and its relation to Ramayana. According to Indu, Shree Rama was fulfilled by physiological need, safety and security need, love and belongingness need, and Ego/Esteem need, but Rama wanted to achieve self-actualization need. He wants to become everything one is capable of becoming but due to his ethics and principles the self-actualization need was not met.

According to Ganesh (2017), “Ra” means “light” and “Ma” means “within me”, so “Rama” means “light within me”. Ganesh highlights the Ramayana psychology as Rama as a soul, Sita as a mind, Hanuman as a breath, Lakshmana as a conscious awareness and Ravana as an ego. According to Sehla Patel (n.d.), Ramayana are familiar to people all over the world. The major characters display the emotions of love, jealousy and anger. According to writer, these emotions are those that we deal on daily basis as humans. The writer highlights emotion of love to Sita, jealousy to Surpanakha and anger to Ravana. According to U AtreyaSarma (2014), the characters in Valmiki’s Ramayana are thinking individuals and all characters have a psychological foundation and they are naturally and psychologically justifiable. According to writer, Bharat was our great indigenous psychologist and psychoanalyst who classified emotions systematically. Hanuman was a good counselor who counseled Ravana for his negative behavior. Similarly, Sharma claims that when Vishwamitra taught Rama and Lakshmana to fight with demons and wild animals in jungle, it was nothing but a mental health insurance to tackle with frustration, fear tolerance against the life problem.

According to Ashley Kannan (2020), Ravana’s attitude towards Rama was of arrogance and ego whereas Rama represents righteousness, dharma and sense of control. Similarly, according to Dr. SudhaSeshayyan (2017), Sita showed a sign of severe depression when she was surrounded by rakshashi in Ashok Vatika. She stopped eating and at one point she contemplated suicide, but Hanuman motivated her to tackle with her problems. According to K.S. Jacob and Gopala Krishna (2003), there is a deep relationship between Ramayana and

psychotherapy. Ramayana has therapeutic wisdom and can be successfully employed in psychotherapy. Ramayana can be helpful to those patients who are religiously inclined and less educated patients. It can be used in patients with dysthymia, neurotic, stress related problems, personality disorder, relationship difficulties, academic problems, occupational problems and phase of life problems. According to Indian parenting (2020), Ramayana is an educational medium which teaches our children about moral values, ethics and principles, love and respect, protecting the weak, being aware of bad counsel, etc.

According to Vishal (2019), Ravana is an important character in Ramayana. Ravana is described as having 10 heads with 10 psychological factors. The 10 heads are lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride, envy, mind, intellect, will and the ego. S. Jaya Prakash (2009) also portrayed Ramayana's character with psychological influence. According to the video published by Tranzend (2020), Ramayana is loaded with psychological and spiritual framework in the narrative and roles. The video is based on Vali, Sugriva and Hanuman. According the video, Vali state of mind work for his own self-interest, Sugriva state of mind was weak, powerless and victimized. Whereas, hanuman state of mind was meditative and appropriate. The video also highlights that "Mind cannot be controlled directly". If you try to control mind directly you will lose the game.

Similarly, Panguluri Pallavi (2018), Ramayana is a gift which is gifted by our Rishis to maintain hindu tradition for the sake of wellness. Ramayana promotes psychological well-being. The literature highlights that different psychologists are working in the theoretical concept of well-being and comparing those theories with Ramayana. According to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Gurudev (2016), our soul is Rama, our mind is Sita, our breath is Hanuman, our awareness is Lakshmana and our ego is Ravana. According to Gurudev, when mind was stolen by ego, soul got restless. When soul took help of breath to find mind, then mind got reunited with the soul and the ego vanished.

### CONCLUSION

Ramayana deals with various aspects of human life like: love, obedience to parents, self-sacrifice, duty to superior, treachery, selflessness, ideal womanhood, unholy ambitions, etc. The Ramayana teaches many other valuable lessons. It brings to the fore the vulnerability of human life and the message that even

god is not free from suffering when he incarnates upon earth. We learn from Rama that in the midst of difficulties, human being should not lose their moral imperative. We also learn from Ravana that knowledge and power can be destructive if it is tainted by the impurities of ignorance, desire, egoism and delusion.

The world today is experiencing a hard and unstable period where the world moves further toward globalization, this is likely to worsen as youngsters are influenced by the ease of the modern way of life and culture. Because of the up going pressure for success, deteriorating family, life and loss of spirituality, the deeply stressed individuals today began to lose themselves. Ramayana upholds principles and righteousness and has the foundation of a family structure. Ramayana is the best solution for dilemma, conflicts, confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty around what needs to be done continuously in our minds. These solutions are applicable to most people and most situations, including family life, individual life, social problems and national issues.

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