

Our cultural value and their present application
as per Ramayana

Indian culture is a rich tapestry woven from diverse traditions, languages, religions and customs often described by the motto "Unity in diversity". It is one of the world's oldest civilizations, with a profound global influence on art, music, dance and philosophy. This unique heritage is expressed through regional variations in food, clothing and social norms, while deeply held moral values and spiritual beliefs are passed down through generations.

Indian culture's influence extends worldwide through its cuisine, yoga, spiritual teachings and popular culture. Indian culture is characterized by a strong emphasis on family, respect for elders and a concept of "collectivism" where the community's needs are prioritized. The culture is a unique blend of tradition and modernity, with regional variations in language, food, festivals, clothing and dance.

The "Ramayana" is a significant Hindu epic that provides a moral and spiritual framework for life, illustrating the triumph of good over evil and showcasing ideal human virtues. It serves as a guide for righteous living through

its portrayal of Rama, an ideal king and devoted son and Sita, an ideal wife, promoting principles like duty, honour, loyalty and selflessness. Its enduring cultural impact is seen in festivals like Dussehra and Ram Navami, and its themes have shaped art, societal norms and the cultural consciousness of South Asia.

Ravana's devotion towards Shiva serves as a dual lesson for today's generation: the power of sincere worship, even from an antagonist, as exemplified by the revered Shiva Tandava Stotram and a cautionary tale about how arrogance and unchecked desires can lead to one's downfall despite immense power. While his intense bhakti offers a path to spiritual energy, his negative traits, such as greed and pride highlight the importance of controlling one's emotions to avoid a self-destructive path. His story illustrates that even a figure who is ultimately condemned can still have a powerful spiritual connection. The Shiva Tandava Stotram is still widely recited today demonstrating the lasting impact of his devotion. Ravana's story prompts reflection on the balance between immense knowledge and power with moral conduct and humility, as even the most learned can fall if their desires are not controlled.

The profound friendship between Rama and Sugriva as detailed in the Ramayana offers timeless lessons for modern life, primarily emphasizing the values of mutual support, loyalty and fulfilling one's promises in times of adversity. Their bond was a covenant of mutual assistance: Rama needed help to rescue his wife, Sita, while Sugriva sought to reclaim his kingdom and wife from his brother, Vali. This reciprocity teaches us that strong relationships are built on shared goals and the willingness to help one another achieve them. In today's fast paced world, this translates to having a reliable support system. True friends stand by us during our darkest hours, offering practical help and emotional support without expectation of immediate return. Just as Rama first helped Sugriva defeat Vali before Sugriva mobilized his army to search for Sita, they demonstrated the principle of honouring commitments and prioritizing a friend's needs. The friendship highlights the importance of trust and integrity. By honouring their pact, even when the tasks seemed insurmountable, they showed us that loyalty is the cornerstone of enduring relationships. In a modern context, this encourages us to be dependable friends, to listen actively and to be present for one another through life's inevitable challenges.

The Guru - shishya relationship is a foundational element throughout the Ramayana, highlighting the importance of respect, obedience and spiritual guidance in ancient Indian culture. The epic demonstrates this tradition through several key interactions. The royal princes of Ayodhya - Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna received their initial formal education and training in dharma, statecraft, and warfare from their primary preceptor Maharishi Vashista. This established the traditional foundation of their learning. A pivotal example is when Sage Vishwanatra arrived at Dasharatha's court and requested the presence of the young Rama and Lakshmana to protect his yagna from demons. Later in the epic, during his exile, Rama received crucial guidance and powerful weapons from Sage Agastya. In essence, the Ramayana portrays the guru - shishya dynamic as a vital spiritual and educational lineage where the guru guides the disciple towards righteousness and self realization and disciple shows unwavering devotion and commitment to their mentor's teachings. This sacred tradition, deeply intertwined with the fabric of Indian culture, represents a timeless journey of learning, discipline and spiritual growth.

Through their unwavering devotion to one another, Lord Rama and Devi Sita exemplify a bond that is pure and unshakable.

The love of Rama and Sita provides a powerful blueprint for modern relationships, emphasizing unwavering trust, mutual respect, sacrifice and commitment. Their story in the Ramayana transcends time, offering practical lessons for couples navigating life's challenges today.

The deep trust between Rama and Sita, which remained steadfast even during long periods

of separation and adversity highlights the importance of transparency and reliability in a relationship. Modern couples can learn to build

a resilient bond by being honest and

dependable. Sita chose to accompany Rama during his 14 years exile leaving a life of comfort to share his hardships. This

demonstrates the essence of a true partnership:

offering unwavering support and facing challenges together as a united front. In today's

life, the love of Rama and Sita serves as a guiding light, reminding couples that a

relationship built on respect, duty, sacrifice

and unwavering devotion can stand the test of time and all challenges. In this materialistic

world Sita's life offers profound wisdom on love, sacrifice and devotion.

In today's life, the character of Garuda from the Ramayana offers a rich tapestry of symbolism and moral lessons, primarily centered on themes of devotion, courage, humility and the triumph of good over evil. Garuda's role in the Ramayana was to miraculously free Lord Rama and Lakshmana from the Naga-Pasha used by Indrajit. This act represents the power of divine intervention and problem solving suggesting that the wisdom and righteous action can instantly dissolve even the most complex problems. Garuda is also considered the personification of the Vedas and a symbol of knowledge. He represents the pursuit of wisdom and ability to distinguish between right and wrong. The story of Jatayu from the Ramayana offers several powerful lessons and symbols applicable to modern life, primarily centered on courage, selfless action, devotion to duty and the protection of the vulnerable, especially women. The Vanaras unwavering loyalty to Lord Rama, most prominently embodied by Hanuman, serves as a powerful symbol of commitment to a righteous cause or higher purpose. In today's life, this translates to the importance of integrity, reliability and faithfulness in personal relationships and one's value.

The actions of the four brothers offer guidance on how to foster strong, supportive bonds in a world often marked by competition and individualism. Lakshmana chose a self-imposed exile to accompany and protect Rama for 14 years serving him selflessly. This teaches the importance of standing by family during adversity, offering unwavering emotional or practical support and respecting boundaries and partners within the family dynamic. Bharatha is a model of sacrifice and righteousness. He prioritized family unity and justice over personal gain or ambition. It highlights the virtue of servant-leadership and fulfilling responsibilities without seeking personal glory, especially in matters of inheritance or family business. Shatrughna was the silent supporter. He demonstrated all roles within a family or support system are valuable. It teaches the importance of being a reliable team player who contributes to the family's well being without needing the limelight. Rama was a person with love and humility. He emphasized the importance of celebrating each other's achievements and fostering a supportive environment free of jealousy.

King Dasharatha's role as a husband offers insights into balancing marital promises, managing family dynamics and the consequences of one's action and attachments. His story provides enduring lessons applicable to modern life regarding duty, communication and emotional resilience. Upholding commitments is a cornerstone of a strong relationship and personal integrity. The tragedy stemmed partly from a lack of clear communication and foresight. In modern relationships, open dialogue and addressing potential conflicts proactively can prevent major crises. While Dasharatha had a favourite son Rama and favourite wife Kaikeyi, his duty as a husband and father required fairness and equality towards all. This highlights the need for impartiality within a family structure. The extreme grief that led to his death underscores the importance of emotional well being and a support system in marriage. Spouses should be pillars of support for each other during times of crisis. His death emphasized the depth of his paternal and marital bonds. His defining characteristic was his unwavering commitment to his word and dharma. This serves as a reminder that actions have consequences in all aspects of life, including marriage.

Vibishan's role in Ramayan offers several positive lessons applicable to modern life, primarily centered on prioritizing righteousness over family loyalty, courage in standing for truth and seeking refuge in virtuous company. Vibishan's most significant action was his decision to abandon his brother Ravana and join Lord Rama. This act symbolizes that one's moral compass and adherence to righteous principles should take precedence over blind family loyalty or personal relationships are on a destructive path. He spoke truth to power despite the personal danger and rejection he faced. He teaches the importance of integrity and the courage to voice moral objections even when it is unpopular or goes against authority. By aligning himself with Rama, who embodied virtue and righteousness, he highlights the importance of surrounding oneself with positive and virtuous influences, as the company one keeps profoundly impacts one's own choices and character. Vibishan serves as a symbol of the inner conscience within every individual that recognizes the difference between right and wrong. His story encourages people to listen to that inner voice and act accordingly, regardless of external pressures.

In Kamba Ramayanam, the ancient city of Ayodhya is depicted as a perfect, wealthy and highly virtuous kingdom. Kosala kingdom and its capital city emphasizing its prosperity, strategic strength and the moral character of its people under the rule of King Dasharatha. The concept of a city without thieves mirrors modern society's goal of achieving zero crime rate through strong community bond, effective law enforcement and addressing root cause of crime. Ayodhya has no uneducated people, a reflection of the modern universal goal of providing quality, accessible education for all, fostering a knowledgeable and skilled citizenry. The city thrived under a king with competent, honest and learned counselors who prioritized the welfare of the people. This parallels the modern demand for transparent, ethical and effective governance that serves the public good. The unity and collective virtue of Ayodhya's people, which Kambar describes as their true strength, highlights the enduring value of social harmony, civic responsibility and community spirit in any era. Ayodhya's beautiful architecture aligns perfectly with today's "smart city" initiatives that focus on urban planning, efficient infrastructure and high quality of life.

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