

କିଠି କାହିଁ ରାମ?

Ram, also known as Ramachandra was the reincarnation of Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Born as the eldest son of Kousalya and Dasaratha, King of Ayodhya. Rama is 'the perfect man', the hero of the Ramayana and the husband of Sita Devi, 'the perfect woman'.

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The Ramayana is one of the great epics of India and it has been recited & passed on by the word of mouth. It was originally written in Sanskrit by Valmiki Rishi. It contains verses called 'Sholkas', which make chapters called 'Sargas' and a group of 'Sargas' form a book called 'Kandas'. There are 7 Kandas that form the Ramayana:

Bal Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kishkindha Kanda, Sundara Kanda, Yuddha Kanda & Uttara Kanda.

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Ram Navmi falls on the ninth day of the Hindu calendar. It is seen as the marriage day of Rama & Sita as well as the birthday of Rama. People perform wedding scenes with Small murtis of Rama & Sita on this day. A sweet drink called Panakam is prepared on this day. A procession held in the evening involves a play with colours & water. Hindus are supposed to fast. The temple is decorated & the Ramayana passages are read throughout the day. People also pray to Sita, Lakshman & Hanuman. Where there is Rama, there is always Lakshman, Sita & Hanuman. This is called Ram Darbar.

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King Dasaratha (King of Ayodhya) had three wives & four sons. The eldest queen, Kaushalya had a son, named Rama. Keikei had a son, named Bharata & the youngest queen, Sumitra, had two sons, Lakshman & Shatrughna. King Dasaratha wanted his son Rama, to be the next king. Keikei demanded that Bharata be the next king and banish Rama to the forest for fourteen years. The King agrees and Rama, his wife Sita and his brother Lakshman are sent on their way. Bharata was away from Ayodhya when this decision was taken. His mother tells him what she has done. Bharata loves & respects his brother Rama & sets out on a search for Rama. He finds Rama at the entrance of the forest. No amount of persuasion can convince Rama to return. He believes he has to fulfill his duties towards his mother & father. He refuses to return to Ayodhya until his exile has ended.

In the forest, the three meet the demoness Shurpanakha who falls in love with Rama. Rama ignores her & Lakshman hurts her. She went to her brother Ravana, the 10-headed demon & ruler of Lanka. Ravana changed himself into a holy man & started to look out for Sita in the forest. Ravana tricked Sita & kidnapped her. Hanuman, a monkey king & a devotee of Rama, with the power to make himself big or small offered to search for Sita. Hanuman soon found Sita & told Sita he was Rama's messenger, by presenting Ram's ring. However, Hanuman got caught & Ravana set his tail on fire. He managed to escape but accidentally set Lanka on fire.

Rama, Lakshman, Hanuman & his monkey troop declare war with Lanka. They built a bridge and Rama kills Ravana. Sita had lived in Ravana's house for almost a year, so Rama questioned her faithfulness. Sita proved her innocence by an Agni Pariksha (walking on fire). She then got together with Rama.

As Sitaji was with Ram after the kidnap, there were people in the kingdom who were still unhappy. Ram decided to banish Sitaji from living in Ayodhya. She then went to live in an Ashram and gave birth to twins called Luv & Kush. As they grew older, they reunited with their father Rama. Once again Sita was asked to prove her innocence. She prayed to Mother Earth and asked 'if I am innocent & have done nothing wrong, then bury me in yourself.' In a split second, the earth opened and Sitaji was buried within the earth. Ram felt awful about the drastic action Sitaji had decided to take, so he decided to sacrifice himself by doing 'Jal Samadhi' – so he was meditating while being buried alive in the Sarayu River. The earth opened and Sitaji was buried within the earth.