

The Legend of Diwali



Once upon a time in ancient India, there lived a gracious King called Dashratha in the city of Ayodhya. King Dasharatha had three wives, named Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. He was the father of four princes, who were named Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Prince Rama, the eldest Son of Dashratha, was a brave and skilled warrior. He married a compassionate and beautiful princess called Sita.

They lived happily in the kingdom of Ayodhya, and all was well until one day trouble stirred. Queen Kaikeyi's wicked maid named Manthara had convinced her to ask the King to send Rama away to exile in order for Queen Kaikeyi's own son, Bharata, to be the king instead.



King Dashratha was heartbroken to hear these piercing words being spoken by Queen Kaikeyi. He had no choice but to fulfil the promise that he made to her. Rama was a very noble and honourable son; he obeyed his father's orders without any hesitation. Rama willingly decided to go to the forest for 14 years. Having heard this devastating news, gentle Sita and loyal Lakshmana decided to join Rama's long exile to care and support him during this time.



Rama, Lakshmana and Sita said their goodbyes to their distraught family members and saddened citizens of Ayodhya.

With the help of a boatsman, the exiled trio crossed the river Saryu and continued their journey by foot.

They arrived at a beautiful forest where Rama, Lakshmana and Sita settled down and built a cottage. Their days were spent in prayer and meditation.

A few years passed and they lived peacefully. Rama's younger brother, Bharata, came to visit them. Bharata requested Rama, "Please return to the kingdom of Ayodhya and be our King, as dear father, Dashratha, has sadly passed away!" Rama was distraught to hear the news, he replied to Bharata in a soft voice, "I must fulfil the promise that I made to our father and complete the full fourteen years of exile. O Bharata, you must look after our Kingdom of Ayodhya." Bharata answered tearfully, "Alright dear brother, I shall do as you command. I will eagerly await your return and give back the whole kingdom to you". The distraught brothers said their farewells.



Many more years passed, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, were used to forest life and living with nature peacefully. They met many sages who shared numerous insightful spiritual teachings.

One day, the most beautiful golden deer was spotted by Sita in the distant bush. She requested, "Oh Rama, please can you capture that charming deer for me! I've never



seen a mesmerising animal as that!". Rama went out into the woods with his bow and arrow, chasing after the swift deer. After a while, a faint voice echoed in the distance, "Help!". Sita assumed that Rama was in trouble, and she requested Lakshmana to go and help. Lakshmana grabbed his weapons and pointed an enchanted arrow towards the floor. "I am drawing this magical circle of protection around the cottage, I humbly request you to stay within this boundary in order to keep you safe." He rushed in search for Rama.

A powerful demon named Ravana had been secretly watching. He was captivated by Sita's beauty and wanted to kidnap and marry her. Ravana disguised himself as a wise man and cunningly approached Sita. He tricked Sita into crossing over the magical circle of protection surrounding the cottage that Lakshmana had created. The wily Ravana snatched the innocent Sita, pushed her into his grand chariot and sped away.

Meanwhile, the skilled warrior Rama had captured the deer, but it turned out to be a trick! Ravana had sent a demon disguised as a deer to lure Rama and Lakshmana away from Sita. Rama exclaimed, "We must hurry back to the cottage, Sita could be in danger!"

It was too late, Sita had disappeared. The troubled brothers had no clue where she could be!

After a long journey, flying high above the clouds, Ravana finally arrived at his palace on the island of Lanka. He imprisoned the innocent Sita in a garden which was surrounded by many demoness guards.



Rama and Lakshmana came upon a vulture named Jatayu, who informed them that Sita had been kidnapped by Ravana. During their pursuit for Sita, the princes came across Hanuman, who had special powers.

Hanuman wished to assist them in their search for Sita. The army which consisted of brave and skilled humans, monkeys and bears had gathered. Birds were soaring through the sky, seeking high and low for Rama's wife, Sita.

Having grown to a gigantic size with his powers, Hanuman leapt across the ocean and arrived on Lanka, he saw where Sita was being kept as a prisoner! Hanuman quickly returned to Rama and informed him of what he had seen. They carefully planned how to rescue Sita and gathered a loyal army. The mission objective was clear to rescue Seeta and set her free from the clutches of the cunning Ravana.



When Rama's army finally reached the southern part of the country, they constructed a bridge made of unique stones in order to cross the vast ocean and reach the island.

Having successfully journeyed to Lanka, the armies were assembled for battle. Rama ordered his general to pass on a message to Ravana. "Request Ravana to release and return Sita and there will be no need for anyone to get hurt. This whole battle can be avoided if you simply free my dear wife".

Ravana received the message and exclaimed with an evil laugh, "I will rather have a full war with you Rama! I have no intention to release my beautiful prisoner, Sita, for she is now mine!"

The war was imminent.

The ultimate fight between good and evil has begun. A long and fierce battle took place. Rama's brave soldiers were successful in eliminating nearly all of the demons, except for mighty Ravana.



Ravana was a demon with incredible strength. Lord Brahma had given Rama a unique arrow that he used to aim at his worthy enemy. Rama shot this special arrow which pierced precisely into Ravana's chest, killing him instantly.

The forces of evil were defeated. Rama's army defeated Ravana's army and Sita was rescued and set free at once.

After fourteen years away, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana returned home to Ayodhya. The whole kingdom had lit lamps to welcome their beloved royal family. The streets were filled with light, warmth, and happiness! The homecoming celebrations were spectacular. Rama and Sita were elevated to the positions of king and queen of Ayodhya. The citizens were joyous and hailed the arrival of peace once again.



The legend teaches Hindus about Dharma (righteousness), devotion, hope and bravery. The ancient legend was written thousands of years ago by a Sage called Valmiki. This is one of the oldest scriptures of Hinduism known as "Ramayana".