

## Sri Rama, Sita, Lakshmana & Hanuman

Indian mythology is a myriad of stories, which entertain and teach people of all ages Indian cultural values. These stories are very popular for parents and grandparents to teach the younger generation many important lessons. Some of these lessons include guidelines and rules for life and informational anecdotes.

In the Ramayana, one of the two great epics of India, the story of Rama Parivar is depicted through stories of Rama and his life. Rama is one of the most popular figures and deities in Hinduism. He is the eldest son of Kaushalya and Dasharath, king of Ayodhya. Rama is the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He is referred in Hinduism as Maryada Purushottam, literally the Perfect Man. He is known as such because he symbolizes piety, strength, courtesy and virtue. Rama is the husband of Sita, an avatar of Lakshmi, who is known as the Perfect Woman.

Rama's life is a perfect adherence to dharma, despite the harsh and difficult times he had to face. To keep the honor of his father and step-mother, Kaikeyi, Rama abandons his claim to the throne and goes through fourteen years of exile in the forest. He is joined in this ban-

ishment by his wife and brother, Lakshman. Like his brother, Lakshman resembles all that is good in a man. During the fourteen years, Ravana, the ten-headed king of Lanka, abducts Sita. After a long battle, and test of personal strength and virtues, Rama slays Ravana and liberates his wife. Here a powerful devotee, Hanuman, who helps in the rescue of Sita, joins him.



Lord Hanuman is an avatar of Lord Shiva. He is a symbol of devotion and dedication, which he shows through his loyalty to Rama. He is worshiped for his courage, hope, knowledge and devotion.

Rama returned to Ayodhya, where he was crowned, and ruled for eleven thousand years. This era is known as Rama Rajya for the everlasting peace, prosperity, harmony and justice.

Rama came to earth for the victory of dharma and truth over evil. He is the embodiment of morality and truth, the ideal son, the ideal husband and the ideal king.