



LORD RAMA

Who is Lord Rama?

- Rama is one of the most widely worshipped Hindu deities, the embodiment of chivalry and virtue.
- The name is specifically associated with Ramachandra, the seventh incarnation (avatar) of Vishnu.
- His story is told in the epic poems the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

Lord Rama, a central figure in Hindu mythology, is often depicted with specific attributes that symbolize his divine and kingly nature:

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

- **Blue or Dark Complexion:** Rama is usually shown with a serene, dark blue or greenish-blue complexion, symbolizing his divine nature and calm demeanour.
- **Crown:** He wears a regal crown (mukut), representing his status as a prince and later, as a king.
- **Bow and Arrow:** Rama is typically seen holding a bow (Kodanda) and arrows, symbolizing his role as a warrior and protector of dharma (righteousness).
- **Yellow or Saffron Garments:** His attire is often saffron, yellow, or ochre-coloured, which indicates his ascetic and righteous nature.
- **Ornaments and Jewellery:** Ornate Jewellery: He is adorned with jewellery, including necklaces, armlets, and anklets, reflecting his royal lineage.



- **Tilak:** The Urdhva Pundra (Sanskrit: ऊर्ध्वपुण्ड्र, romanized: Ūrdhvapuṇḍra, lit. 'elevated mark') is a tilaka worn by Vaishnavas as an indication of their affiliation with Vishnu.
- **Facial Expressions:** Calm and Compassionate: His expression is always depicted as calm, compassionate, and composed, symbolizing his inner strength and adherence to righteousness, even in challenging situations.

Associated Figures:

- **Hanuman:** Lord Rama is often depicted with Hanuman, his devoted servant, symbolizing loyalty and devotion.
- **Sita and Lakshman:** In many depictions, he is accompanied by his wife, Sita, and his loyal brother, Lakshman, symbolizing family bonds and duty.

The story of Rama



The core of Rama's story, as detailed in the *Ramayana*, begins in the city of Ayodhya, where Rama is the firstborn son of the king Dasharatha and queen Kaushalya. As a member of the royal and martial Kshatriya varna (social class), he displays his mettle as a great archer early on by defeating demons threatening to disrupt the performance of a sacrifice and by stringing a giant bow belonging to Shiva. By that feat, he wins his wife, Sita. Regarded as the most wise and virtuous of the king's sons, he is chosen as heir. However, the queen Kaikeyi, owed a boon by Dasharatha, requests that her son, Bharata, be crowned and Rama banished to the forest for 14 years. Rama, the obedient son, complies and journeys off to the forest accompanied by Sita and his brother Lakshmana, to fulfill the promise of his father.

In the forest the trio is approached by the female demon (*rakshasa*) Shurpanakha, who offers herself in marriage to Rama. Rama refuses, and she is mutilated by Lakshmana. She retreats to the island city of Lanka and tells her story to her brother, the 10-headed demon king Ravana. Ravana, hearing of Sita's beauty,

decides to steal her away from Rama. He tricks the wandering trio through disguises and abducts Sita.

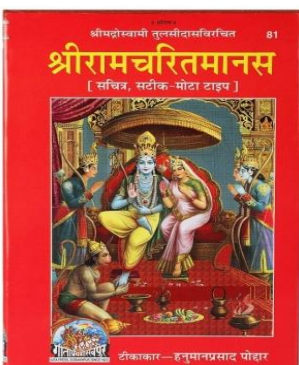
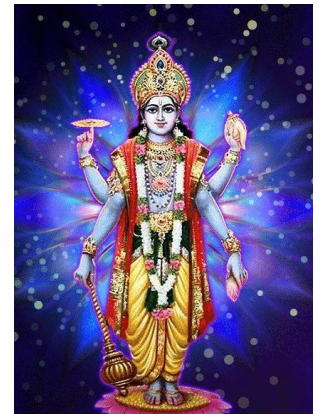
As a forlorn Rama seeks his wife, he encounters a kingdom of monkeys and enlists the aid of Hanuman, their commander. Together with Hanuman and his monkey army, Rama builds a bridge to Lanka. In a great battle, Rama kills the demon Ravana. Rama is initially hesitant to take Sita back, because he suspects her of infidelity, but she proves her chastity in a trial by fire.

Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, and Hanuman return to Ayodhya, where, the years of exile having elapsed, Rama is crowned king and rules over a prosperous kingdom. However, doubts of Sita's fidelity during her imprisonment in Lanka persist, and Rama banishes her. Pregnant with Rama's twin sons, Luv and Kusha, Sita finds refuge in the hermitage of the sage Valmiki. The reputed author of the Ramayana itself, Valmiki teaches the poetic tale of Rama to Luv and Kusha, which they later recite to their father at a sacrifice. Sita joins the crowd, and Rama again requests that she prove her fidelity. In front of the people assembled and various deities in attendance, she makes a vow that if she never thought of any man but Rama, may her mother, the Earth, create a chasm for her. The ground opens up, a throne arises, and she is immediately swallowed into the Earth, much to Rama's dismay. At the end of his life, according to the last book of the *Ramayana*, Rama meets with a sage who informs Rama of his divinity as an incarnation of Vishnu and requests that Rama ascend back to heaven to be with the gods.

Rama in religious beliefs and practices

➤ Rama as an Avatar of Vishnu:

- **Divine Incarnation:** Rama is considered the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, the preserver in the Hindu Trinity. His incarnation is said to restore cosmic balance by defeating evil, specifically the demon king Ravana.
- **Embodiment of Dharma:** Rama's life is often interpreted as a model of moral and ethical behavior. His strict adherence to dharma, even in the face of personal loss, inspires devotees to follow the path of righteousness.



➤ The Ramayana: Sacred Text and Moral Guide:

- **Scriptural Influence:** The *Ramayana*, written by the sage Valmiki, tells the story of Rama's life, including his exile, the abduction of his wife Sita by Ravana, and the battle to rescue her. The text is considered sacred in Hinduism and is recited and enacted in religious rituals.

- **Moral and Ethical Lessons:** The *Ramayana* teaches lessons about duty, loyalty, sacrifice, and the triumph of good over evil. Devotees see Rama as the ideal son, husband, king, and friend, and his life provides moral instruction.

➤ Festivals:

❖ Rama navami:

Occasion This festival marks the birth of Lord Rama, who is believed to have been born on the ninth day of *Chaitra* month (March-April) according to the Hindu lunar calendar.

Celebrations: Devotees worship Rama in temples, read from the *Ramayana*, and perform *pujas* (worship) at home. Special prayers are offered, and processions with images of Rama, Sita, Lakshman, and Hanuman are carried out.

Significance: It commemorates the arrival of Lord Rama on earth as the embodiment of virtue and righteousness.

❖ Dussehra (Vijayadashami)

Occasion: This festival celebrates the victory of Lord Rama over the demon king Ravana, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil. It is observed on the tenth day of the *Ashwin* month (September-October) after nine days of *Navaratri*.



Celebrations: Dussehra is marked by the burning of effigies of Ravana, his brother Kumbhakarna, and son Meghnada, representing the defeat of evil forces. It is also celebrated with processions and enactments of the *Ramayana* story.

Ramlila Performances: One of the most prominent aspects of Dussehra is *Ramlila*, a dramatic reenactment of the *Ramayana*, culminating Rama's victory.

Significance: Dussehra signifies the victory of good (Rama) over evil (Ravana) and encourages people to follow a righteous path.

❖ Diwali (Deepavali)

Occasion: Diwali, the festival of lights, commemorates Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya with Sita and Lakshman after his 14-year exile and the defeat of Ravana. It falls on the new moon day of *Kartika* month (October-November).



Celebrations: Houses and temples are decorated with lamps (*diyas*), candles, and electric lights to symbolize the dispelling of darkness and ignorance. Devotees offer prayers to Lakshmi and Ganesh as well as Lord Rama. Fireworks and sharing sweets are integral part of the celebrations.

Significance: Diwali marks the joyous homecoming of Lord Rama and is symbolic of victory, prosperity, and the triumph of light over darkness.

❖ Sita Navami

Occasion: This festival celebrates the birth of Sita, Lord Rama's consort, and is observed on the ninth day of the *Vaishakh* month (April-May), about a month after Rama Navami.

Celebrations: Devotees offer prayers to Sita and Rama, especially focusing on the ideals of womanhood and devotion that Sita represents. Temples dedicated to Rama and Sita see special rituals during this time.

Significance: It highlights the devotion, purity, and sacrifice of Sita, the ideal companion of Rama in both joy and hardship.

Rama in the arts

In sculpture, Rama is typically represented as a standing figure holding an arrow in his right hand and a bow in his left. His image in a shrine or temple is almost invariably attended by figures of his wife, Sita, his favorite half brother, Lakshmana, and Hanuman. In painting, he is depicted dark blue in color (indicating his affinity with Vishnu), with princely adornments and the *kirita-makuta* (tall conical cap) on his head indicating his royal status. Rama's exploits



were depicted with great sympathy by the Rajasthani and Pahari schools of painting in the 17th and 18th centuries.



In the performing arts, Rama's tale is told in many regions, forms, and languages across India and beyond.

From the famous *Ramlila* (*Ramleela*) productions in North India that coincide with Dussehra, to unique *kathakali* and *kutiyattam* performances in the southwestern state of Kerala, Rama's story is told over and over again. In 1987–88 the story of Rama was serialized on Indian television in *Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan* and was a major national cultural phenomenon. The story of Rama has even spread as far as wayang shadow puppet performances in Java and Bali.

Ayodhya

Ayodhya, town in northern India that is known as a sacred city and the birthplace of Rama in Hinduism and as a historical center of Buddhism. On a site significant to both Hindus and Muslims was a Mughal-era mosque, the Babri Masjid, which was destroyed in 1992 amid interreligious tensions. After a 2019 Supreme Court verdict granting the site to Hindus, a new Ram temple was built, opening on January 22, 2024. Ayodhya lies on the Ghaghara River, also known as Sarayu or Sarju in the lower course, just east of Faizabad in south-central Uttar Pradesh state.



An ancient town, Ayodhya is regarded as one of the seven sacred cities of the Hindus, revered because of its association in the great Indian epic poem *Ramayana* with the birth of Rama and with the rule of his father, Dasharatha. According to this source, the town was prosperous and well-fortified and had a large population.

New Ram temple



Ayodhya was in the headlines again in October 2023, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the inauguration of a new, grand Ram temple (Ram Mandir) was just a few months away. Modi presided over the consecration (*prana pratishtha*) ceremony on January 22, 2024

The Ram Yatra



The Ram Yatra held in 2024 was a grand religious procession, celebrating the Pran Pratishtha (consecration) of Lord Ram at the newly constructed Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Yatra included a Rath (chariot) carrying deities like Lord Ram, Sita, Lakshman, and Hanuman. This procession aimed to foster devotion and a deeper connection to Sanatan Dharma, preparing for the temple's Maha Diwali celebrations in January 2024.

The Yatra passed through various towns and villages, spreading the message of devotion and unity within the Hindu community. It was

accompanied by religious discourses from prominent saints and scholars, who emphasized the cultural and spiritual significance of the Ram Mandir.

Additionally, a similar Ram Rath Yatra was organized in the U.S. in 2023, covering 851 temples across 48 states. This event aimed to empower the Hindu diaspora and spread awareness of the Ram Mandir's importance worldwide.



RAM MANTRA

राम से बड़ा राम का नाम,

Ram Mantra: राम से बड़ा राम का नाम ये तो आपने सुना ही होगा परंतु क्या आप जानते हैं कि प्रभु श्रीराम के नाम की महिमा का गोस्वामी जी ने कितना वर्णन किया है। इस नाम का अर्थ और औचित्य क्या है। ज्योतिषाचार्या साक्षी शर्मा की माने तो 'श्रीराम' -का अर्थ है प्रभु श्रीराम को पुकारना। यह भगवान राम के प्रति पुकार है । 'जय राम'- यह उनकी स्तुति है जय जय राम'-यह उनके प्रति पूर्ण समर्पण है। प्रतिदिन भगवान श्रीराम के मंत्रों का जाप करने से मनचाही कामना पूरी होती है। अतः आइये जानते हैं इन चमत्कारी 'राम मंत्रों' के बारे में।

सर्वार्थसिद्धि श्री राम ध्यान मंत्र-

ॐ आपदामप हर्तारम दातारं सर्व सम्पदाम, लोकाभिरामं श्री रामं भूयो भूयो नामाम्यहम् ! श्री रामाय रामभद्राय रामचन्द्राय वेधसे रघुनाथाय नाथाय सीताया पतये नमः !

किसी संकट में सहायता हेतु-

लोकाभिरामं रणरंगधीरं राजीवनेत्रं रघुवंशनाथम्। कारुण्यरूपं करुणाकरं तं श्रीरामचन्द्रं शरणं प्रपद्ये॥
-- आपदामपहर्तारं दातारं सर्वसम्पदाम्। लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम्॥

ग्रह क्लेश निवारण और सुख संपत्ति दायक-

हे रामा पुरुषोत्तमा नरहरे नारायणा केशवा। गोविन्दा गरुडध्वजा गुणनिधे दामोदरा माधवा॥ हे कृष्ण कमलापते यदुपते सीतापते श्रीपते। बैकुण्ठाधिपते चराचरपते लक्ष्मीपते पाहिमाम्॥

चहुओर सफलता के लिए-

" ॐ राम ॐ राम ॐ राम ह्रीं राम ह्रीं राम श्रीं राम श्रीं राम - क्लीं राम क्लीं राम। फट् राम फट् रामाय नमः ।

प्रतिदिन प्रभु के स्मरण हेतु-

॥ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम ॥

मनोकामना पूर्ति हेतु-

॥ श्री रामचन्द्राय नमः ॥

विपत्ति में रक्षा हेतु-

॥ राम रामेति रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे । सहस्रत्र नाम तत्तुन्यं राम नाम वरानने ॥

मुक्ति और प्रभु प्रेम हेतु-

॥ नाम पाहरु दिवस निसि ध्यान तुम्हार कपाट ॥

॥ लोचन निजपद जंत्रित जाहि प्राण केहि बाट ॥



भगवान राम का नाम स्वयं में एक महामंत्र है। राम नाम की महिमा अपरंपार है। इस अतिरिक्त राम नाम का मंत्र सर्व रूप में ग्रहण किया जाता है। इस के जप से ब्रह्मज्ञान की प्राप्ति सहज हो जाती है। अन्य नामों की अपेक्षा राम नाम हजार नामों के समान है। राम मंत्र को तारक मंत्र भी कहा जाता है। इस मंत्र के जपने से सभी दुःखों का अंत होता है।

Jai Shri Ram !

