The Ramayana and its Seven Kanda



The **Ramayana**, composed by **Maharishi Valmiki**, is one of the greatest epics of India. It narrates the life and ideals of Lord Rama and is divided into **seven Kandas (Books)**.

1. Bala Kanda (Book of Childhood)

This Kanda describes the birth and early life of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. Sage Vishwamitra takes Rama and Lakshmana to protect his yajna from demons. Rama liberates Ahalya from her curse and later participates in **Sita Swayamvara**, where he breaks Lord Shiva's bow and marries Sita.

2. Ayodhya Kanda (Book of Ayodhya)

This Kanda focuses on the events leading to Rama's exile. King Dasharatha decides to crown Rama as the heir to the throne. However, Queen Kaikeyi claims two boons previously promised by Dasharatha and

demands Bharata's coronation and Rama's fourteen-year exile. Rama willingly accepts exile, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana. Dasharatha dies in grief, and Bharata refuses to accept the throne, ruling Ayodhya as Rama's representative.

3. Aranya Kanda (Book of the Forest)

This Kanda narrates the life of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana in the forests of Dandakaranya. They encounter several sages and demons. The episode of **Surpanakha** occurs here, leading to Ravana's desire for revenge. With the help of Maricha disguised as a golden deer, Ravana abducts Sita and takes her to Lanka. The dying Jatayu informs Rama about the abduction.

4. Kishkindha Kanda (Book of Kishkindha)

While searching for Sita, Rama and Lakshmana reach Kishkindha and befriend Hanuman and Sugriva. Rama helps Sugriva regain his kingdom by defeating Vali. In return, Sugriva sends his Vanara army in all directions to search for Sita. Hanuman emerges as Rama's most devoted servant and leader.

5. Sundara Kanda (Beautiful Book)

This Kanda is dedicated mainly to Hanuman's heroic journey. Hanuman leaps across the ocean to Lanka, discovers Sita in Ashoka Vatika, and reassures her by giving Rama's ring. Sita gives him her **Choodamani** as a token for Rama. Hanuman destroys parts of Lanka, defeats many demons, and returns with news of Sita's whereabouts.

6. Yuddha Kanda (Book of War)

This Kanda describes the great war between Rama and Ravana. Rama's army builds the **Rama Setu** bridge across the ocean and marches to Lanka. Fierce battles take place involving Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, Hanuman, Lakshmana, and other warriors. Ultimately, Rama defeats Ravana and rescues Sita. After proving her purity through the Agni Pariksha, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana return to Ayodhya.

7. Uttara Kanda (Final Book)

This Kanda narrates the events after Rama's coronation. Due to public criticism, Sita leaves Ayodhya and takes refuge in Sage Valmiki's hermitage, where she gives birth to Lava and Kusha. The twins later recite the Ramayana before Rama. Eventually, Sita returns to Mother Earth, and Rama concludes his earthly incarnation and returns to his divine abode.

The seven Kandas of the Ramayana collectively portray the ideals of **dharma (righteousness), devotion, duty, sacrifice, courage, and truth**, making the epic a timeless guide for moral and spiritual living.