

UNIT-IV

D) Ethics in Ramayana and Mahabharadha

5 great ethical lessons to learn from the Ramayana

Ramayana is a book of ideal behaviour. Even when there were painful twists in the story of Rama's life, there was a lesson to learn. Here are the 5 ethical lessons that we can take from Ramayana.

Ramayana as an epic is an eternal source of guidance to mankind about how to live life in a manner such that it benefits society and commits no acts that one lives to regret later.

Lord Rama is not the only one whose actions leave an indelible mark on our minds. Almost every person of the Ayodhya royals ie the family of Maharaj Dashrath is steeped in principles.

Reading stories from the great epic written by sage Valmiki about the principled prince (and later King) of Ayodhya to children at an impressionable age will give them the perspective and direction in life.

If one were to observe closely, the Ramayana gives us a number of lessons in ethics

1. Family is important

Prince Ram was all set to be anointed the King soon, being the eldest of the four sons of the King of Ayodhya. Yet an otherwise loving step-mother Kaikeyi was unnecessarily instigated into obstructing the path to Ram's ascendance. But Lord Ram did not behave bitterly towards anyone, including the step-mother. He kept his father's promise which he could have easily side-stepped. Father's honour became a question of his own honour. This kind of bonding and positive attachment between members of the family can finally make all things come full circle.

2. Be careful of temptations

In exile, Ram, Sita, and Laxman were living a peaceful existence, in harmony with nature. When Lankan king Ravana arrived with his uncle Marich whom he asked to pose as a golden deer, that changed everything. Sita was completely charmed by the golden deer and asked Lord Ram to catch it for her to befriend. Lord Ram went after it and disaster struck soon after. The lesson here is to not run after sudden allurements, to value what you have instead of leaping into the unknown.

3. Follow instructions, don't alter plans arbitrarily

When Rama went after Maricha the Golden deer, he clearly instructed Laxman to watch over the wellbeing of Sita. He warned him to not leave Sita alone even for a moment, come what may. But soon Marich and Ravana played another card. The Golden deer was actually the demon Marich - uncle of Ravana - who as per the plan, screamed in Rama's voice "Save me Laxmana". Sita and Laxman heard that but Laxman was not ready to move. Sita cried and asked him to go save her husband. Laxman left but drew a Laxman Rekha - an electrification kind of line beyond which no one can go to her. Sita was told to not overstep that line for whatever the cause. Laxman left to know Rama's fate. Here Ravana, dressed as an old sage arrived and beckoned Sita to step across and give him charity. Sita felt compassion for the old man seeking alms. She stepped across the line and was abducted by the able Ravana.

4. Ram Setu showed even the smallest animal matters

Shri Ram's bridge across the sea was built by monkeys and very little human effort. In fact, a squirrel is said to scurry to the construction with whatever amount of dust she could muster on her back. She added her two ounces of effort to the mammoth bridge. Ram is said to have been impressed and caressed her back - giving her the stripes.

5. Respect your enemy

With Ravana's death at his hands imminent, Ram had no animosity left for him. The war was for the rescue of Sita - the wife of Rama - whom Ravana had abducted. Despite diplomatic approaches, Ravana had not relented and hence the war. In death, Ram honoured his enemy as another human. He was given a proper funeral. Ram had even asked Laxmana to learn statecraft and spirituality from Ravana.

Lessons From Mahabharadha

- **Duty is sacrosanct** – perform your duty even if it means going against your beloved ones is the message of Krishna to Arjuna
- **Respect inherent dignity of every human being** – A kingdom/society which violates human dignity is bound to decimate. Kaurvas act of tampering with the dignity of Draupadi decimated the whole Kaurvas
- **Uphold Dharma & Truth** – life of Yudhistira is an epitome of truth & Dharma. it symbolises that Dharma needs to be upheld even if it means losing the war

- **War is bound to cause misery & destruction for millions of years to come**– Even fought for a just cause, war is full of destruction & thus, in a way Mahabharata teaches the importance of diplomacy
- **Teacher is equivalent to Good** – even standing on the opposite side of battle, Arjuna first paid respect to his teacher.
- **Immoral means like corruption, cheating only provides momentary gains**, in long-terms truth always becomes victorious as exemplified by victory of Pandavas over Kauravas

II) The virtues in Buddhism and Jainism:

Buddhism:

Introduction

Gautama Siddhartha known as Buddha, who was the most recent in a long series of Buddhas founded Buddhism 2500 years ago in India. There are over 300 million people through out China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Indochina, Korea, and Tibet follow Buddhism. Buddhism does not believe in God as a creator, destroyer, and survivor of the universe. However, it does believe in a Supreme, which is completely transcendent and can be described as Sunya, a void, emptiness, or state of non-being. Buddhism believes in the philosophy of karma and rebirth but rejects Soul as a immortal identity.

Goals:

The primary goal of Buddhism is Nirvana, defined as the end of change, and literally meaning, "to blow out" as one blows out a candle. The Theravada tradition describes the indescribable as peace and tranquility and the Mahayana tradition views it as emptiness and the unchanging essence of the Buddha, and ultimate reality. It is synonymous with release from the bonds of desire, ego, suffering, and rebirth.

Major Scriptures and Sects:

There are two main sects, Theravada (Hinayana) and Mahayana. The Theravada, or "Way of the Elders," is the more conservative of the two. It is dominant in Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand. The Mahayana, or "Great Vehicle," is more diverse and liberal. It is found mainly in Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, and among Tibetan peoples, where it is distinguished by its emphasis on the Buddhist Tantras. Zen Buddhism is a major sect of Mahayana. The major scripture for Theravada is Tripitaka (three baskets of wisdom), and for Mahayana is Sutras. The major Sutras are Anguttara-Nikaya, Dhammapada, Sutta-Nipatta, Samyutta-Nikaya.

Teachings:

The Buddha's essential teachings are contained in the four Noble Truths:

Suffering:

Life is suffering. Being born, growing old, sickness, and death all are suffering. Union with what we dislike is suffering, separation from what we desire is suffering. This is the essential nature of life.

Cause of Suffering:

Desire is the cause of suffering. It is the force of desire that leads to rebirth and further suffering, accompanied by delight and passion.

Cessation of Suffering:

The complete cessation of desires will end the suffering. Forsaking, relinquishing, and detaching of ourselves from desire and craving will automatically end the pain, pleasure, birth and rebirth.

The Path to end the Suffering:

By practicing the noble eight-fold path, one can end the suffering. The eight fold path consist of; right belief, right thought or aim, right speech, right action, right livelihood or occupation, right effort or endeavor, right mindfulness, and right meditation.

The Middle Path consists of living moderately and avoiding extremes of luxury and asceticism.

The greatness of self-giving love and compassion towards all creatures that life contains merit exceeding the giving of offering to the gods.

Man's true nature is divine and eternal, yet his individuality is subject to the change that affects all forms and is therefore transient, dissolving at liberation into Nirvana.

Dharma (the path), Karma (cause and effect), reincarnation, Sangh (unity of seekers), and the passage on earth as an opportunity to end the cycle of birth and death.

Religious Symbol:

The Dharma-chakra or the Wheel of the Law is the most important symbol of Buddhism. The wheel signifies the round of births and deaths due to karma, which a person himself keeps in motion through his thirst (tanha) for life. It also symbolizes a constantly changing universe, and the impermanence of everything in the world.

The hub of the wheel represents the three causes of pain: illwill, ignorance, and lust. The eight spokes of the wheel, represent the eightfold path. The wheel cannot survive without the spokes. Even so, dharma cannot be sustained without the practice of these eight virtues.

Jain ethical code prescribes two *dharmas* or rules of conduct. One for those who wish to become *ascetic* and another for the *śrāvaka* (householders). Five fundamental vows are prescribed for both votaries. These vows are observed by *śrāvakas* (householders) partially and are termed as *anuvratas* (small vows). Ascetics observe these five vows more strictly and therefore observe complete abstinence. These five vows are:

- *Ahimsā* (Non-violence)
- *Satya* (Truth)
- *Asteya* (Non-stealing)
- *Brahmacharya* (Chastity)
- *Aparigraha* (Non-possession)

Ahimsā[edit]

Main article: Ahimsa in Jainism

Ahimsa (non-injury) is formalised into Jain doctrine as the first and foremost vow. According to the Jain text, *Tattvarthsutra*: "The severance of vitalities out of passion is injury."

Satya[edit]

Main article: Satya

Satya is the vow to not lie, and to speak the truth.^[5] A monk or nun must not speak the false, and either be silent or speak the truth.^[6] According to Pravin Shah, the great vow of satya applies to "speech, mind, and deed", and it also means discouraging and disapproving others who perpetuate a falsehood.^[7]

The underlying cause of falsehood is passion and therefore, it is said to cause *himsā* (injury).^{[8][9]}

Asteya[edit]

Main article: Asteya

Asteya as a great vow means not take anything which is not freely given and without permission.^[10] It applies to anything even if unattended or unclaimed, whether it is of worth or worthless thing. This vow of non-stealing applies to action, speech and thought. Further a mendicant, states Shah, must neither encourage others to do so nor approve of such activities.

According to the Jain text, *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya*:

Driven by passions, taking anything that has not been given be termed as theft and since theft causes injury, it is *himsā*

— *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya*

According to *Tattvarthasutra*, five observances that strengthen this vow are:^[12]

- Residence in a solitary place
- Residence in a deserted habitation
- Causing no hindrance to others,
- Acceptance of clean food, and
- Not quarreling with brother monks.

Brahmacharya

Main article: Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya as a great vow of Jain mendicants means celibacy and avoiding any form of sexual activity with body, words or mind. A monk or nun should not enjoy sensual pleasures, which includes all the five senses, nor ask others to do the same, nor approve of another monk or nun engaging in sexual or sensual activity.^{[7][13]}

Aparigraha

Main article: Aparigraha

According to *Tattvarthasutra*, "Infatuation is attachment to possessions".^[14] Jain texts mentions that "attachment to possessions (*parigraha*) is of two kinds: attachment to internal possessions (*ābhyantara parigraha*), and attachment to external possessions (*bāhya parigraha*).^[15] The fourteen internal possessions are:^[16]

- Wrong belief
- The three sex-passions
 - Male sex-passion
 - Female sex-passion
 - Neuter sex-passion
- Six defects
 - Laughter
 - Liking
 - Disliking
 - Sorrow
 - Fear
 - Disgust
- Four passions
 - Anger
 - Pride
 - Deceitfulness
 - Greed

External possessions are divided into two subclasses, the non-living, and the living. According to Jain texts, both internal and external possessions are proved to be *himsā* (injury).^[16]

iii) Ethical values in Christianity:

The **values** Jesus Christ taught in the New Testament can be summed up in two thoughts—love God and love others. Here is a sampling of **values** that are presented in the Word of God: Generosity – This is the core **Christian value** of being kind and unselfish, especially with our money and time.

Ethical teachings of Christianity:

Christians acknowledge not only a duty to announce the gospel, profess the **faith**, and worship **God** but also to live their entire lives according to God's will.

Christian Values for Schools

- Service.
- Thankfulness.
- **Compassion.**
- Endurance.
- Creativity.
- Justice.
- **Peace.**
- Wisdom.

The values and beliefs of Christianity:

Christians believe in justification by faith - that through their **belief** in Jesus as the Son of God, and in his death and resurrection, they can have a right relationship with God whose forgiveness was made once and for all through the death of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Worldly values include wealth, power, pleasure, revenge, fame, vanity and status. These are the most important things to people who perceive no power or purpose beyond themselves. Worldly values promote jealousies, resentments and conflicts among people in accordance with the purposes of Satan

The values taught in the Bible are often the opposite of worldly values: kindness and respect for all people instead of power; humility instead of status; honesty and generosity instead of wealth; self-control instead of self-indulgence; forgiveness instead of revenge. Christian values promote peace and good will among people in accordance with the purposes of God. We will never achieve perfection in this life, but those people who strive to obey God often find a sense of joy and peace that no worldly rewards can match!

Here is a list of ten values or principles for living that are emphasized most strongly in the Bible:

1. Worship Only God

One day, a religious leader asked Jesus which of the commandments was most important:

The Hebrews of Old Testament times tended to lapse into worship of pagan deities and statues of animals or other objects, but anything that takes the place of our devotion to God becomes an idol or false god, and that is forbidden by the first of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-6). Jesus particularly singled out love of wealth as a false god (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13), and other Bible passages mention greed, covetousness, arrogance, gluttony and pride as being equivalent to idolatry.

In today's world, many things compete against God for our devotion. These are some of the things that are not necessarily bad in moderation, but can become modern-day idolatry if we let them become too important to us:

- Excessive attention to material things such as houses, cars, clothes, jewelry, physical appearance, entertainment, etc.
- Pursuit of wealth, power, fame, pleasure or status
- Excessive devotion to self, job, hobbies, country, ideologies, heroes, leaders, even family

2. Be Kind to All People

After saying "Love the Lord your God" is the most important of the commandments, Jesus continued,

The English word "love" has many different meanings, but the Greek word, *agape*, used in the New Testament, is commonly known as "Christian love." It means respect, affection, benevolence, good-will and concern for the welfare of the one loved.

In His *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, Jesus made the point that we should extend our Christian love to *all* people of the world, regardless of race, religion, nationality or any other artificial distinction. We must practice that Christian love even toward our enemies! (Matthew 5:43-48)

Jesus' Golden Rule is, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We should not say or do anything unless we can answer "Yes" to the question, "Would I want that said or done to me?" Neither should we fail to do the good things we would

3. Be Humble

Humility or being humble is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. Acting with humility does not in any way deny our own self worth. Rather, it affirms the inherent worth of all persons. Humility is exactly what is needed to live in peace and harmony with all persons. It dissipates anger and heals old wounds. It allows us to see the dignity and worth of all God's people. Humility distinguishes the wise leader from the arrogant power-seeker (Proverbs 17:7, Matthew 20:20-28).

4. Be Honest

Honesty and integrity are held as very important values throughout the Bible, and any deception to gain an advantage or harm someone else is prohibited by the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:16) and other Bible passages. Deception may be by lies, cheating, innuendo, or failing to tell the whole truth. It is all too common in advertising, business, politics and everyday life. We must strongly resist the temptation to engage in any form of theft, cheating, deception, innuendo, slander or gossip.

Rationalization is a form of self-deception by which we convince ourselves that sinful actions are justified in order to achieve a good result, but this is really just another form of dishonesty (Galatians 6:7-8, James 1:26, 1 John 1:8). Holiness is in *living* by the commandments, not in achieving an end result (Matthew 4:8-10, 16:26). In Biblical teaching, the ends *do not* justify the means!

5. Live a Moral Life

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (NIV, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Jesus gave a list of actions that constitute immoral uses of the body: evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, arrogance and foolishness. The apostle Paul gave similar lists.

We often think of morality in terms of sexual sins, but according to Jesus, sins such as slander, greed, covetousness, deceit, and arrogance are equally immoral.

6. Be Generous with Time and Money

The Bible tells us to share generously with those in need, and good things will come to us in turn. Each of us has something to offer to someone in need. We can give our money and our time to charity, be a friend to someone who is sick or lonely, do volunteer work or choose a service-oriented occupation. We may give unselfishly of our time to our spouse, children or parents.

7. Practice what you Preach; Don't be a Hypocrite

If there was any one group of people that Jesus couldn't stand, it was hypocrites! The Pharisees of Jesus' time were a religious and political party that insisted on very strict observance of Biblical laws on tithing, ritual

purity and other matters. At the same time, many of the Pharisees forgot the true spirit and intent of the law and became self-indulgent, self-righteous, snobbish, and greedy. That led Jesus to remarks such as,

8. Don't Be Self-righteous

No one is perfect; we are all sinners in one way or another ([Romans 3:23](#), [1 John 1:8](#)). Living a moral life means taking responsibility for controlling *our own* behavior. If we say or even think we are better than people we consider to be "sinners," we are guilty of the sin of self-righteousness. It is not our right to look down on, criticize, judge, condemn, or try to control other people. Judgment is to be left to God. Jesus said,

This does not deny the right of governments to maintain law and order and collect taxes. Jesus and other New Testament leaders supported the authority of civil governments ([Matthew 22:15-22](#), [Romans 13:1-7](#)).

9. Don't Retaliate

Jesus said there is no place for hatred, holding a grudge, revenge, retaliation or getting even in the life of a Christian:

10. Forgive Others

God is merciful and forgives our sins and failings. In the same way, we must be merciful and forgive other people who sin against us or do us harm.

Ehical values in Islam:

Worship only God: Do not make with Allah another god; lest you will sit disgraced and forsaken. ([Quran 17:22](#))

1. **Be kind, honourable and humble to one's parents:** And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him alone, and to be good to the parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], a word of disrespect, and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. ([Quran 17:23](#)) And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small." ([Quran 17:24](#))
2. **Be neither miserly nor wasteful in one's expenditure:** And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully. ([Quran 17:26](#)) Indeed, the spendthrifts are brothers of the devil, and the devil is, to his lord, ungrateful. ([Quran 17:27](#)) And if you [must] turn away from the needy awaiting mercy from your Lord which you expect, then speak to them a gentle word. ([Quran 17:28](#)) And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it to its utmost reach, so that you [thereby] become blamed and insolvent. ([Quran 17:29](#))
3. **Do not engage in 'mercy killings' for fear of starvation:** And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin. ([Quran 17:31](#))
4. **Do not commit adultery:** And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is an immorality and an evil way. ([Quran 17:32](#))
5. **Do not kill unjustly:** And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]. ([Quran 17:33](#))
6. **Care for orphaned children:** And do not approach the property of an orphan, except in the way that is best, until he reaches maturity...([Quran 17:34](#))
7. **Keep one's promises:** ...fulfill (every) engagement [i.e. promise/covenant], for (every) engagement will be questioned (on the Day of Reckoning). ([Quran 17:34](#))
8. **Be honest and fair in one's interactions:** And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best [way] and best in result. ([Quran 17:35](#))
9. **Do not be arrogant in one's claims or beliefs:** And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - all those will be questioned. ([Quran 17:36](#)) And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height. ([Quran 17:37](#))

Values of Thirukkural:

INTRODUCTION

- Ø Like the great Vedic literature, the Rarnayana and the Mahabharata, Thirukkural by Thiruvalluvar is also an epic.
- Ø The word Thirukkural is a combination of two Tamil words “*thiru*” and “*kural*”. The word ‘*Thiru*’ means beautiful or auspicious. The word “*kural*” means short poem consisting of two lines, a couplet.
- Ø Thirukkural consists of 1,330 couplets (*kural*) and divided into three parts. The first part deals with the ethical code of conduct (virtues: *aroma*) and the second part deals with political governance, wealth and other topics of social and material interest(*pond*).
- Ø The third part deals with romance and love(*inbam*). Thirukkural expounds various aspects of life also known as *rarniimarai* (Tamil Veda); *poyyarnozhi* (speech that does not become false) and *dheiva two!* (divine text).

THIRUKKURAL/Tiruvalluvar

Thirukkural written by Thiruvalluvar is one of the most notable literary and ethical treatises in the Indian languages.

There is a general consensus among the historians and literary authorities that Thirukkural was written around 2000 years ago. Thirukkural is one of the few literary works that have survived over the past two thousand years and is regarded as relevant even today.

Thirukkural aims at guiding human beings to lead a moral, ethical and useful life in this world. Its focus, unlike religious works, is “life on earth” and “life-affirmation”. According to him, “One who lives an ideal life in this world will be ranked amongst the Gods in heaven”.

In an ever-changing world, Thirukkural deals with certain basic, but permanent, aspects of life such as morality, ethics, politics, and romance. Thirukkural has been translated in more than 30 languages, and is the most translated book on ethics in the world next only to the Bible and the Koran.

The most important features of Thirukkural are:

1) it is secular in nature,

2) it is universal and applicable to people living everywhere,

3) it is everlasting and its messages transcend time.

This secular, universal and immortal nature of Thirukkural combined with its conciseness and literary charm has been the pride of Tamil people for the past many centuries.

- The great sage Tiruvalluvar has presented his thoughts in verses of extreme beauty and delicacy. The combination of ideas, language and metre is unique. The verses presented in this article are all translations from the original Tamil.
- Every translator, without exception, has admitted that it is not possible to capture the elegance of Tiruvalluvar’s beautiful style and rhythm in a translation.
- It can, at best, be a pale reflection of the original work. His teachings have had a warm place in the hearts of the Tamil people for many generations, and have become part of their culture and life.
- They might not have always followed the saint, but they have loved, cherished and revered him. The following are few of the *tributes in honour of Thirukkural*