



## Human Values and Relevance of Ramcharitmanas in the Present Times

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### Abstract

*Ramcharitmanas*, composed by Goswami Tulsidas, is most revered and cherished epic of India. It embodies fundamental human values central to ethical living and societal harmony. The paper explores the relevance of the *Ramcharitmanas* and portrayal of human values in the present times of familial crises. The narrative of the epic highlights virtues like righteousness (*dharma*), truth (*sathya*), devotion (*bhakti*), compassion (*karuna*), selflessness (*seva*), and forgiveness through the exemplary lives of Lord Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, and Hanuman making it a classic guide for moral and ethical conduct. Rama's commitment to moral duty, justice, and sacrifice, even in adversity, serves as a timeless model of ideal leadership and personal integrity. The epic also stresses the importance of familial bonds, loyalty, humility, and ethical governance. It encourages cultivation of virtues that foster social cohesion and spiritual growth. Through its poetic narrative and moral teachings, *Ramcharitmanas* continues to inspire positive values across generations and has been a source of personal solace to generations of Indians in times of loss and crisis. It has acted as a beacon light for the whole community.

**Keywords:** Human values, duty, truth, righteousness, family values.

### Introduction

*Ramcharitmanas* has a special place in the hearts of Indians. Since yore, the whole Indian culture and community have been taking valuable lessons in human values, societal obligations, and leadership from the holy text of *Ramcharitmanas*. Being written in Awadhi, the text was and is accessible to masses who made it a spiritual guide in their day-to-day living. Its significance is not limited to India but in some form or the other, it is revered and adapted worldwide, in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Mauritius, Fiji, and several others. Its characters are regarded with appreciation and the story is dramatized in various forms. The family values we find in the peasants, the working class and other strata of society in India are consequence of in-depth readings of *Ramcharitmanas*. The onslaught of western culture, increasing materialism and influx of information in the form of social media, Netflix and other platforms has corroded the societal fabric. At such a time, turning to *Ramcharitmanas* offers much-needed solace and guidance. This timeless scripture provides meaningful lessons in human values across every sphere of life, reminding us of the ideals that can restore balance and harmony. Today, more than ever, it is essential to return to its teachings and absorb its enduring wisdom.

The paper attempts to investigate the relevance of *Ramcharitmanas* in the present times by examining its portrayal of human values, ideal relationships, moral principles, and social responsibilities. Goswami Tulsidas, through the *Ramcharitmanas*, has attempted to present both the ideal society and the highest standards of conduct for

humanity. This is especially relevant in the context of householders who have to bear the burden of the family. The epic emphasizes the importance of adherence to moral codes of conduct in all walks of life. *Ramcharitmanas* teaches us to cultivate truth, patience, humility, compassion, forgiveness, and dedication. Earthly existence is presented as a training ground for inculcating values and ethical values. In present time, the teachings of *Ramcharitmanas* serve as a guiding light for developing ideal conduct, spiritual vision, and harmonious living.

### Delineation of Human Values in Ramcharitmanas

Fundamental human values such as truth, justice, patience, tolerance, and duty are demonstrated through exemplary characters like Lord Ram, whose obedience to his parents and commitment to *dharma* establish a moral framework for living. The teaching of patience as a supreme virtue and the importance of self-control are repeatedly emphasized. Lord Ram's calm endurance even in exile and adversity serves as a model for practicing restraint and equanimity. The text underscores that fulfilling familial and societal duties with sincerity leads to true happiness and success.

*Ramcharitmanas* presents its protagonists as paragons of virtue. Lord Rama is portrayed not only as the ideal son, but also as the ideal friend, brother, and husband. In fact, he embodies all the finest qualities one could aspire to. Rama was devoted to truth, always sincere in his speech, and spoke with kindness and restraint, earning recognition as a gentle and thoughtful communicator. In order to fulfil his father's

promise to Kaikeyi, Rama sacrificed his rightful claim to the throne. True to the principle “*Pran Jaye, Par Vachan Na Jaaye*,”<sup>1</sup>(Tulsidas 308) he chose exile.

Rama’s noble character is also reflected in his equanimity; whether faced with times of joy or adversity, he remained steady and cheerful. Rama wore humble ochre robes and entered the forest for exile with the same calm spirit that he possessed at his coronation. As a ruler, he was equally attentive to the needs and concerns of his subjects, always willing to listen and respond to their grievances. This unwavering commitment to truth, duty, and compassion set Rama apart as an ideal son, leader, and human being.

Central to the *Ramcharitmanas* is the depiction of ideal familial and social relationships. The devotion between Ram and Sita, brotherly love among Ram, Lakshmana, Bharat, and Shatrughna, and respect for elders depict the importance of mutual respect, duty, and sacrifice. These relationships symbolize a harmonious societal fabric that survives even during adversity. *Ramcharitmanas* highlights mutual affection and responsibility among family members as essential for social stability. It sets forth ideals for parent-child, sibling, and spousal interactions that promote unity and cooperation, which are still relevant in modern family dynamics. The bond that Rama shared with his brothers, and the deep affection they held for him in return, has stood as an enduring example of brotherly love since ancient times. In a similar way, Rama’s friendship with Sugriva demonstrates the true qualities of an ideal friend. He not only helped Sugriva reclaim his rightful position as the king of Kishkindha but also fulfilled every duty that friendship demands. Even towards his enemies, Rama displayed righteousness and fairness, upholding his principles in every situation. *Ramcharitmanas* gives advice on how to discern true friends. It says:

धीरज धरम मित्र अरु नारी।आपद काल परखिए चारी॥ 2  
(Tulsidas 536)

Translated as—Patience, righteousness, a friend, and one’s wife—these four are tested only in times of adversity. The *Ramcharitmanas* functions as a moral compass, encouraging readers to transcend negative emotions and embrace righteous actions. It fosters social awareness, teaching the importance of living in accordance with *dharma* and sustaining family and community bonds through love and duty. The epic inspires patience, self-discipline, and respect for elders, qualities necessary for individual growth and social harmony. It also nurtures a respectful attitude towards nature and encourages harmony between humans and their environment.

In *Ramcharitmanas*, Rama is portrayed as a figure of immense compassion, extending his grace even to those considered marginalised in the society. Characters such as Shabari, Jatayu, tribal chiefs like Guha, the boatman Kevat, and even Ahilya—who was turned into stone by her husband’s curse—were all recipients of his boundless love and acceptance. Rama transcended social divisions and embraced them with kindness and dignity. His respect for Shabari, who humbly offered him fruits that she had tasted first to ensure their sweetness, reflects his large-heartedness and humility. By accepting her devotion without hesitation, Rama set an example of true compassion that continues to inspire humanity.

परहित सरिस धरम नहिं भाई।पर पीड़ा सम नहिं अधमाई॥ 3  
(Tulsidas 822)

Translated as—there is no religion as noble as doing good to others and there is no sin as vile as causing pain to others. The episode teaches us to look beyond social barriers and value the purity of love and faith.

*Ramcharitmanas* beautifully expresses a deep affection for nature by seamlessly weaving the natural environment into its sacred narrative. The text highlights a mutually beneficial relationship between humanity and the natural world, where nature is portrayed as both a teacher and sanctuary, indispensable to existence and sometimes personified in its encounters with deities. Forests, rivers, plants, and animals are depicted with reverence—forests, in particular, are shown as holy retreats where Lord Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana engage deeply with their surroundings. Sages tap into nature for spiritual enlightenment. Rivers possess mystical energies that symbolize purification and the soul’s journey beyond ordinary life.

Throughout the epic, characters such as Hanuman and the *Vanaras* (monkeys) exemplify their respect for nature through harmonious collaboration, especially during events like the building of the Ram Setu. The natural elements—flora, fauna, and changing seasons—are intricately linked to the emotional and spiritual experiences of the narrative’s characters. Animals like monkeys and bears actively participate in the divine mission, demonstrating coexistence and shared purpose. Overall, *Ramcharitmanas* illustrates nature as a vital extension of the divine plan and the cosmic cycle, essential for preserving harmony and balance within the world.

The character of Sita has been a role model for Indian women since ages. Her concept of righteousness, her steadfast devotion to her husband and her resilience in times of crisis have made her the epitome of womanhood. The current generation, especially feminists, have often commented upon her submissiveness and her trial of fire (*Agni Pariksha*) as a negative trait. They call it her weakness and unjust, but Sita’s character shines through this ordeal. She comes out stronger and more strengthened out of this test. Her strength can be seen in Ashok Vatika, where she is kept captive by Ravana. Surrounded by demons, she doesn’t give up; rather, she faces Ravana boldly. For modern generations, Sita embodies human values of courage, loyalty, devotion, and not compromising on one’s principles when life provides an easy exit.

Not only Rama and Sita, but other characters in *Ramcharitmanas* such as Lakshman, Bharat, Hanuman and a host of other figures have become part and parcel of the Indian psyche. Their stories have taught lessons in *dharma* (righteousness) and familial bonding to millions of Indians. Whereas, Hanuman embodies selfless service without expectation and steadfast devotion, Lakshman and Bharat embody brotherly love and a firm adherence to truth. Lakshman follows his elder brother Rama as a shadow, whereas Bharat rules Ayodhya as a caretaker, living life of an ascetic. Sugriva teaches duties of a friend and Vibhishana embodies taking a righteous path in the wake of family pressure, in spite of being surrounded by powerful relatives. *Vanaras* (monkeys), Bear, Birds and even a squirrel contributes to a bigger cause of victory over evil.

### Relevance to Contemporary Society

In an era of capitalism, materialism, and loss of family values, we find that *Ramcharitmanas* is a perpetual source of succour and consolation. Increasing incidents of violence in the present times—within family and even between husband and wife and other members of family due to selfishness and greed—can be reduced by instilling values from the

*Ramcharitmanas*. The concept of 'Ram Rajya', where the king works for collective welfare of the masses and sees to it that every person has a say in it, can be an aspirational goal for the modern society. The lessons from *Ramcharitmanas* can be a guiding light for the governments as it exhorts us to follow path of righteousness without fear:

सचिव वैद गुरु तीनि जौं प्रिय बोलहिं भय आस।  
राज धर्म तनु तीनि कर होइ बेगिहि नाश॥ 4 (Tulsidas 646)

Translated as- If the minister, the physician, and the teacher — all three — speak only what is pleasing out of fear or selfish motive, then the king, the right conduct and the body— all three — quickly perish. The epic inspires patience, self-discipline, and respect for elders. These qualities are necessary for individual growth and social harmony. It also nurtures a respectful attitude towards nature and encourages harmony between humans and their environment.

### Conclusion

*Ramcharitmanas*, through its universal values and narratives, remains a pathbreaking text that is profoundly relevant today. It provides a blueprint for individual and social conduct. Teachings from it can address contemporary ethical dilemmas and strengthen societal harmony. Embracing its teachings can help restore human values essential for peaceful and meaningful living. Thus, *Ramcharitmanas* remains a perpetual spiritual and practical guide, inspiring individuals and communities toward moral excellence and social cohesion.

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