

**REOCCURRING SAGA OF RAM'S DISUNION AND REUNION IN RAMAYANA****P. Sen<sup>1</sup> and D. Sarabhai<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1,2</sup>Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India<sup>1</sup>purobisen31@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>deepa.sarabhai@jaipur.manipal.edu**ABSTRACT**

*Lord Ram's - ayana means journey holds numerous instances of almost all emotions and relationships possible and known to the mortal. Ram being the prince, later the king and as an incarnation of Vishnu had been subjected to all kinds of emotions and was not exempted even from the strenuous passages of life, the lows of life as we call it. Ram and his companions at all stages have suffered their share of struggles in life. Lord Ram also succumbed to fate or destiny and was agonised by the anxiety of separation from his kin and others. A re-occurring pattern can be witnessed in Ramayana of characters major or minor, of separation and coming back together. Fate, force, orders, dharmareasons could be many which lead to severance or split. The epic Ramayana as a whole is all about separation and coming back together by majority of the leading characters, having certain exceptions in the form of the ultimate separation that is death. So, this paper seeks to examine the drifting apart and coming back together particularly in the life of the Protagonist, Ram.*

**Keywords:** Ramayana, Ram, Separation, Union, Separation agony, Fate, Disunion

**Introduction**

Ramayana no doubt has always stirred and stimulated the human minds since forever now. The reasons are innumerable and each entity would describe the purpose as per as his own individual comprehension and the most intriguing part is you can't deny or reject that perspective and identification. Ramayana for all such causes still claims to be one of the most read and translated scripture of all times. It explores and evaluates such segments of life which sometimes goes completely unnoticed. These relationships, elements of life, emotions presented in Ramayana are constantly there, circumference us but we are too naïve to consider and accept them as legit pieces of life. It's only because of scriptures and mythical texts like these that we are made to encounter, come face to face to the real questions of our life and take a peep into our sub-conscious soul. There can be no denial of the fact that Ramayana has changed the perceptions of millions and still continue to do so. It subtly has the superpower to turn someone's point of view to such extents that it can be called a 're-birth'.

Though a lot has been discussed about Ramayana prior to this, but still each reading and each dive into the sea of morals makes sure that the reader comes up with some hidden treasure of new possibilities in research. One such is the constant separation that all the major and minor characters face in the epic. All

most all the characters have undergone the pain of separation from their loved ones, not because of the standard norms made by the society or just because of the definitive truth [Death] but because of the turns and twists of fate, as popularly called in India. If we look at the pattern then one can notice how the narrative has the repetitive occurrence of separation and unification. They suffer the pangs of separation due to many reasons but the final cause is their fate. According to Hindu mythology one thing which is the answer to all the questions in life is 'Everything happens for a reason'. Everything is planned according to our destiny and for the good, we come to a point of realisation later. This philosophy is proved at all stages in Ramayana that how each step of life has some purpose in disguise and how struggles make you reach your ultimate objectives. Ram the titular character throughout his life has undergone the aches of separations at all stages in life sometimes because of others and sometimes because of himself. Ram has separated from someone or the other at every point of life and also got re united with some. Ramayana is an account wherein, all the characters-major and minor crosses path with one another and through their interaction some or the other kind of anecdote takes birth which teaches a moral lesson. Union and then separation goes hand in hand and comes in succession. Every entity on this pitiless placid

planet has to struggle his way out through the realms of universe. An individual grows out from his experience and mostly from his strenuous and thorny experiences in life. One such bitter truth of life is separation from ones loved ones. This separation is the ultimate truth which is inevitable. The anguish of separation never leaves anyone from usurping them into its coil.

Separation and anxiety and melancholy caused because of separation has always been a focal point of discussion in many disciplines and mainly in the studies of psychology all around the world. In-depth analysis of the studies by Bowlby (1975) has proved,

Many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption, and the renewal of attachment relationships; hence the term, affectional bonds. In the language of subjective experience, the formation of a bond is described as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone. Similarly, threat of loss arouses anxiety and actual loss gives rise to sorrow; whilst each of these situations is likely to arouse anger. (p.10) Separation is not necessarily always forced or many a times not even undesirable. While some separation may cause agony and suffering, which can also prove to be disrupting with the proper functioning of the emotions. Ramayana and every other spiritual book which acts as a handbook to mankind to comprehend the functioning of the life and its intricacies try to teach the acceptance of separation. It also aims at learning the ways to deal with it through making the characters in the narratives undergo excruciating emotional pains and agony of separation.

Similar to this is the teachings in the epic of Ramayana wherein through the titular character of Ram the lesson of disunion and reunion has been taught again and again. The paper focuses to represent all the episodes of disunion and reunion in the life of Ram.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

Ram the protagonist has played all the roles possible in life beginning with being the apple of the eye to his parents, a father figure to his brothers, a disciplined and bright student to his gurus, a loving husband and an ideal king to

his kingdom. It is a known fact that he played all these roles in his life perfectly, though some might disagree but the struggles he has gone through goes overlooked and the counter part is shown as the one who was buried with agony. Ram being such an ideal character never made his agonies and anxiety of separation public. He didn't even let his feelings of sadness and depression become evident on his face and always looked calm and composed through all his struggles, not allowing these emotions overpower his intellect to work upon. But separational anxiety is a psychological condition which is defined by Bowlby (1975) as,

A common explanation is that anxiety over separation is a manifestation, in disguise, of anxiety that is elicited by some other situation, usually conceived as intrapsychic; and as such it is deemed neurotic (p.15)

Ram had taken birth in this world as a human and so he was filled with all the emotions and feelings known to the mortals and was not exempted from these. So, it means though he didn't make it evident but he also was wounded with the pangs of separation and suffered from separation anxiety as he was the one who was objected to the greatest number of episodes of disunion and union.

### **Ram and Dasharatha**

Ram and his brothers were born to Dasharatha and his wives after many years of austerity and patience. He was born after performing difficult yagnas and through continuous prayers. Dasharatha after the yagna was blessed with four sons and Ram was the eldest. Ram being the eldest and because of his charming divinity was the favourite of his parents. He had all the qualities of an ideal son and brother. Dasharatha and his actions always made it evident that Ram was his favourite though he loved his other sons dearly. Dasharatha could not bear the separation from Ram even for few moments and became uneasy and anxious. He was a king, a father, a man but he never shied away from showcasing the affectionate side for his sons. One can even say that he was more sentimental and emotional for his sons than the mothers and this might be the reason that he was not able to bear the separation from Ram. Ram along with

his brothers, during his childhood stage had to leave his parents and entire kingdom to go and study in ashram of sage Vasishtha for a very long time of period. There he had spent many years disunited from his parents, but one cannot count this as a fatal separation as this was a societal norm followed by everyone and followed for the good. This was a practice which had to be followed and everyone had accepted it as something pretty obvious. Though even this separation was not easy for anyone specially Ram and his brothers as they were still children and this was their first detachment from the family.

The separation that caused turmoil all over Ayodhya was the separation that even costed Dasharatha's life. Before the coronation of prince Ram fate or destiny played its ugly game on everyone and left the entire Ayodhya devastated. Before the physical separation it was the emotional separation that was evident amongst the members of the Raghuvanshi clan. Kaikeyi laid the foundation for the upcoming fleet of continuous disunion and reunion in the life of Ram and eventually many others. Kaikeyi though it is claimed that he admired Ram more than his own son Bharata, but she played foul and turned the tables for Ram, Dasharatha, Bharata and eventually for the whole Ayodhya. Kaikeyi made Ram suffer emotional separation before the physical one. She herself went through the similar pain because of her greed. But Ram was never at fault to suffer so miserably, but only fate could be blamed for such unfairness. Ram then surrendered himself to the situation and decided to leave Ayodhya which led to multiple separations. Lakshmana and Sita were his only two companions who came along with him to his exile. He was separated from his beloved father, mothers, brothers and people of the kingdom. Within a span of few moments, he fell into the void of separation. Dasharatha was the one who burned the most in the fire of separation and so much that he died not able to bear the distance from his Ram. The king lamented in the most pitiable manner; he knew without Ram he will not see many suns. He pleaded to Kaikeyi to change her resolution. He cried, "The world can exist without a sun and crops without water. However, without Rama, there cannot be life in my body."

(Debroy, 2017, p.178). His words turned out to be true. From here the reoccurring saga of Ram's disunion and reunion began. Ram's heart was shattering into many pieces but with a smile on his face he left everyone. He simply accepted his fate and separated without shedding a single tear or grief on his face. Ram faced a meltdown in the forest in front of Lakshman and shed tears in the yearning of his dear father and was apprehensive about his health. He was anxious about his father's misery and knew he would be in a terrible state. Later during his exile, he gets the unfortunate news from Bharata's visit that their father died grieving for Ram. Ram didn't get a chance to reunite with his father, he was so ill-fated that he couldn't see his father for the last time or do the final rituals as an elder son.

### **Ram and Mothers**

Ram's mother was Kousalya including Sumitra and Kaikeyi as his step mothers. Ram was respectful and considerate for each one of them. When Ram left for his exile, he met each of his mother and took their blessings. Mother being a mother were distraught because of the challenges their son was going to face and cried profusely. Ram being a man of divinity and utmost self-control didn't shed a single tear and never loosed his pure smile. But seeing his mothers grieve was a difficult sight for Ram. He was being tried and tested by his fate at every step. His separation anxiety was building up.

Kousalya was breaking down at the unfortunate news of son's exile for fourteen years, she was wailing and grieving like a baby along with her husband. She lost her senses and questioned his fate and her god for such an unfair behaviour. She said, "O son! On top of that, when you leave, it is certain that death is better for me" (Debroy, 2017, p.192). She desired to go on an exile with his son and daughter-in-law, Sita. She wasn't ready to live without Ram, but Ram made her mother Kausalya realise her duties towards her husband and consoled her. It was Ram's strong character and hold on his emotions were the reasons that the anxiety separation was bearable for Ram to some extent. Later Ram cried profusely in the woods confessing his real

feelings to Lakshman, that how he feels as if he has betrayed his mother Kousalya. He said, Kousalya has nourished me for a long time and reared me with difficulty. Shame on me! When it is time to reap the fruits, she has been separated from me. O Soumitri! Let no woman give birth to a son like me, who brings infinite sorrow to his mother. (Debroy, 2017, p.251)

Ram and Kousalya parted ways with a heavy heart. Sumitra was one of the step mothers who had a better emotional pain threshold than Kousalya. She was not only being separated from her step son Ram but also his real son Lakshmana. Ram the titular character of the paper was headstrong to leave everyone for the sake of his father's promise and reputation. He was ready to go through all the trials and tribulations of separation and struggles for the sake of his clan's reputation. He showed utmost respect to all his mothers and not even for once questioned or regretted the king's promise.

Kaikeyi though was the root cause of all the troubles also was agonised by separation from Ram after she came back to her real, pure senses. She also was emotionally separated from her own son Bharata who detested her for her evil doings. Ram loved her youngest step mother the most, he bore the ache of getting deceived by his most loved step mother. Though he never for once questioned Kaikeyi's intentions and respected her in all her forms. Ram kept aside his separational anxiety from his family for the sake of Dharma. He continuously preached that, "O brave one! If one is established in dharma, if one has given one's word to a father, a mother, or a brahmana, one must not violate it" (Debroy, 2017, p.195). Ram after completing his exile came back to Ayodhya to find his mothers healthy and delighted to have him back as the King. He got to reunite with all his three mothers unlike the case of his father, Dasharatha.

### **Ram and Brothers**

Ram is the incarnation of Vishnu and it is a popular belief that Vishnu had fragmented himself into four parts and placed them into the womb of the three queens. The four fragments were Ram, Lakshmana, Shatrughna and Bharata. So, one can say they were one entity

like a whole. Ram being the elder brother was looked upon by all his brothers and considered a father figure. Ram was destined to leave alone for his exile but Lakshmana being a loving and considerate brother stubbornly wished to accompany Ram and serve him as his servant in the forests. Lakshmana was determined to get along with Ram as his companion and servant and was not ready to be otherwise, for him struggling in the forest along with Ram was far better than agonising in separation from him. He found pleasure in being around Ram, wherever fate walked them instead of wailing in the comfort of the palace. But the other brothers were not as fortunate as Lakshmana, they were unaware of the upcoming challenges and thus separated from their dearest Ram.

Ram loved his younger brothers dearly like his sons. He had never distanced himself from his brothers ever before in his life. He disunited himself for the very first time from his own fragments and shattered further within. Ram further bore the constant sadness of being separated from his brothers. Though it can be held that Lakshmana was much closer to Ram but even Bharata and Shatrughna held a close position in Ram's heart. Ram somehow managed to bore the separation from his entire clan but not from his most beloved brother Lakshman. In one of the episodes of Yuddha Kanda in Ramayana, when Lakshmana was near the verge of dying and Hanuman was hunting for the sanjeevani booti, Ram for the first time lost his hold over his emotions and started wailing in grief and apprehension of losing his brother. This separation was not something he was ready for or could bear it. He believed that if Lakshmana would die, he himself would die because he would not be able to bear so much of agonising pain of ultimate separation from him. Debroy (2017), one cannot find a brother, adviser and companion like Lakshmana. If he, the extender of Sumitra's delight, returns to the five elements, while these apes look on, I will give up my life. (p.88)

He was uneasy and troubled a lot as a reason for this circumstance, of this situation and the trepidation. Ram was revived and found a new life only after Lakshmana opened his eyes, though this separation was for a small time of

period but the toughest for Ram. Ram separated from so many members including Sita but the way he reacted to Lakshmana's separation was the most throbbing. Ram eventually got reunited with all his brothers and for the rest of his life he never again faced any separation from them.

### **Ram and Sita**

Next was Sita who was abducted by the evil and this added to the separation agony of Ram, he was able to manage separation from everyone for the reason that of his constant companions i.e., Lakshmana and Sita. He was able to bear everything since there were two more people who shared his grief and fate as fate had not distanced them i.e. Sita and Lakshmana from him. But fate again tested him and separated him from Sita his beloved through force. This was one such separation which was not deliberate like others. This was forced upon by some evil forces. Sita was abducted by Ravana and was captivated in Lanka and was compelled to marry him. Ram never left Sita alone for even a single moment and when he did, he knew some problems might befall them. Sita's grief and anxiety in an unknown place amongst the rakshasa and rakshasis was terrifying but the condition of Ram not able to find Sita and unsure whether she is alive or dead was pitiable. According to Bose (2004), "Rama suffers for Sita in her absence, as much as Sita suffers the separation" (p.228). Ram along with Lakshmana was searching impatiently for Sita at every nook and corner possible and was burning again in the fire of separation. Sita was suffering differently and Ram was tormenting differently. Often Ram's suffering is overlooked as he was an epitome of an ideal man and was not known for showcasing his emotions openly.

Ram history of separation keeps repeating itself again and again at every stage of life and almost with each and every family member. Ram kept wandering from one place to another in search of Sita and dwelling in separational anxiety. Though he didn't lose hope but finding Sita was a hard-hitting task. Ram every so often used to be grief stricken and envision the state of poor Sita, Debroy (2017) states the following:

I find no pleasure in roaming around the lakes, rivers, wells, groves and forests. Because of separation from me, Kama will severely and incessantly afflict the delicate and beautiful one, (p.224)

Though this quote likewise mirrors the compassion and emotional state of Ram as well. In other cases, he had the hope of uniting with his separated members some day after many years but here that was a slim chance. This separation had ignited Ram's soul for revenge, though he gave numerous chances to Ravana to mend his mistake but he didn't pay any heed. This was the first time Ram didn't accept his separation simply as fate and destiny. He decided to change his destiny and reunite with Sita at all costs, he was ready for the bloodshed but not ready for separation from Sita. After destroying Lanka and the Ravana's entire clan, finally Ram reunited with Sita after a long period of time. Again, the similar pattern of disunion and reunion could be observed in this scenario as well. But this was not the end of disunion from his wife Sita, instead this was a forceful but separation for a shorter period. This disunion was continued by Ram, this time deliberately. Ram and Sita were united after a lot of tussle and seemed no one could ever separate them, not even their fates. But Ram proved this wrong, he decided to part ways with his wife on his own will this time. He never doubted Sita's chastity but as a responsible and righteous king he wanted to please his kingdom and so sent Sita away from himself forever. He separated from Sita on his own will, but not happily. He did this for his kingdom and thus suffered the separational anxiety again. Ram was never pleased with this action of his, and this time suffered silently for rest of his life. Bose (2004) stated, "Rama has suffered quietly in agony because of Sita's absence" (p.228). Ram parted ways with Sita when she was pregnant with his sons. So, this had further led to another separation. This separation was one such separation which didn't lead to further reunion this time. Though Ram and Sita met after many years for a short duration but that didn't lead to a reunion. In fact, it was there last meeting ever as Sita left the world after that episode. So, this time Ram got separated but didn't reunite like most of the times.

### Ram and Luv Kush

Ram was again destined to be separated from a loved one in his life, this time because of his actions. Ram had parted ways with Sita knowing Sita was pregnant with his kid but still chose duties over his family which led to more separation. Sita gave birth to twin sons and named them Luv and Kush. They never knew about their father and even Ram never knew he had two sons. He after sending Sita off to forest near Valmiki's ashram never tried to look for her or tried to get any news regarding her. This was separation which he himself invited. He unknowingly was separated from his sons for so many years and met them under such surprising turn of events. This time he realised the pain of separation from his sons later after uniting with them. Ram might have had a slight idea of his child as he knew about Sita's pregnancy, so one can assume he was ready for the separation from his future child. He might have grieved for his future child along with the grief of Sita's separation. Ram was separated from his sons during the most crucial period as a father. The time when a child requires his father the most. They grew up without the guidance of a father but under the guidance of gurus and their mother. Ram again suffered the pangs of separation, this time one can't say whether because of fate or own actions.

Later when Ram due to such turn of events gets to meet his sons, the disunion and reunion pattern repeats itself and though Ram loses Sita from his life but reunites with his son for a lifetime. He gets to play his role as a father.

### Ram and Spatial Separation

Other than distancing and separation from family and friends there is another kind of separational anxiety which exists which is prominent but less discussed- spatial separation anxiety. An entity tends to get adjusted and closely connected to a space where he/she has spent a long duration at. The surrounding and atmosphere of a location shapes and builds an understanding with the human mind and also an emotional connect over-time. Separation from one's roots can cause an immense amount of anguish till a large extent as such a separation from a close individual. This can also be observed in the life of Ram and his

separation from his kingdom and habitat which is an crucial part of the epic.

Ram's life and trials made him suffer in the agony of separational anxiety time and again and in all ways possible. When he decided to follow his father's promise and began his exile, he got separated from his family which was an evident episode, but his separation from his native land of Ayodhya which must have been extremely difficult as well. Ram parted his ways from his palace and entire kingdom of Ayodhya, which was also one of the many reasons of grief for Ram. First being the reason as Ram being the heir apparent looked onto his natives as his extended family and sheer responsibility. The natives of Ayodhya were crestfallen and wanted to leave with Ram. They were not mentally ready to admit the misfortune that had fallen upon them. They accompanied the trio-mainly Ram, Sita and Lakshman to a great distance and until Ram had to trick them to send them back to their homes and spend his exile in the memory of their separation. Second as being discussed about spatial separation anxiety, detachment from luxuries and comfort of a palace and princely life and adopting the lifestyle of an ascetic in the habitat of a forest can cause mental turmoil. Ram though never let reason like these make him any weaker in his oath, but one cannot deny the distress it must have caused to Ram. Ram said, "This is our first night, away from a habitation" and also "O Soumitri! Let us spend the night, in whatever way we can. Let us cover the ground with whatever we collect ourselves and lie down there." (Debroy, 2017, p.251). However, Ram's saga of disunion and reunion can again be witnessed here, as the pattern of separation and then coming back together is repeated. He after confronting the spatial separation, again after his fourteen year of exile got reunited with his palace, kingdom and people of Ayodhya. He like most of his disunions came back together with his space and then never got separated again. He not only grieved the separation of his family and loved ones but also the separation of his space and habitat. He faced a separation from his lifestyle and standard of living. He left his countrymen and all the comforts and luxuries of a palace which

is also equivalent to the any other sort of anxiety of separation from a close one.

### Conclusion

This reoccurring pattern of Disunion and Reunion in the life of the titular character i.e., Ram is what was to be deeply analysed. The pattern is similar in most of the cases, some disunions are permanent while some are repeated with the same individual. But the underlying fact being Ram underwent a lot of partings and good byes. He got reunited with most of them but lost some of them due to the separation. Ram's destiny made him walk through the pattern of disunion and reunion again and again as a part of the God's plan. He was emotionally and mentally strong and thus bore all the separations which life threw at him one after the other. Whomsoever he loved dearly was separated from him at least for a short time of period. Ram perpetually was agonised by the multiple disunion he faced in life; some were temporary some were permanent. Some of the separations were purely for the reason that of destiny and turn of events while some were deliberate. Some caused him external discomfort while most of

them caused him internal misery. Though majority of the characters in the epic have undergone parting ways with someone or the other, but Ram has surpassed all the other characters.

Thus, to sum up everything stated so far, Ram throughout his life had suffered in separational anxiety and burned in the fire of agony. Separational grief and anxiety is a common phenomenon which is experienced by anyone and everyone in life. It teaches us the sad and bitter truth of life that nothing is constant in life, the other name of life could be inconsistency. Even gods, demi gods, incarnations, apsaras, gandharvas etc no one could save themselves from burning in the hell of separation and agony. It frames and supports the fragile human mind during the point of breakdown due to separation as this is the ultimate truth and is evitable. Even the invincible legends such as Ram-incarnation of Lord Vishnu could not evade such mis-happenings. As according to the scriptures anyone born on the earth has to undergo the trials and tribulations of *Karma* and so even Ram had to live through it.

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