

Dharma in Ramayana

Dharma is one's sacred duty. Everybody's dharma is different as it varies upon certain aspects of people's life including gender, caste, and family position. Dharma also rules out one's karma, or a person's actions in their next birth, as it is the divine law. In the epic story of Ramayana, an abundance of remarkable cases of dharma are shown through the majority of the main characters. The first example of dharma is shown through Rama's father, King Dasaratha. When the king is about to crown Rama, his wife, Kaikeyi, objects as she wishes for her own son, Bharatha, to be crowned. King Dasaratha keeps his promise, even though it was from many years ago, and ostracizes Rama into the forest for 14 years. Rama, being the ideal child, recognizes and approves of his father's promise and obeys him: this shows an example of Rama's adherence to his own dharma. Sita, Rama's wife, also observes her share of dharma because she asks for permission from King Dasaratha and then accompanies Rama into his exile in the forest. Sita fits the definition of the ideal, loyal wife at the time. In addition, Rama's brother, Lakshmana, also takes permission and joins Rama and Sita in the forest even though he could have lived a secure and privileged life in the city. Later on in the story, when Ravana kidnaps Sita, it is in Rama's dharma to rescue her as soon as he can, and that is what he does. After they are reunited, Sita must prove her purity to Rama, so she jumps into the fire only to be carried out safely by Agni, showing another example of her dharma. Rama spent his whole life adhering to his sacred duties, or dharma, and influenced the people around him to also do so.