

**Om Sri Ramaya Namah! Om Sri Ramaya Namah! Om Sri Ramaya Namah!**

## **A comparative study of some of the most prominent Ramayanams**

**GRNERAL**

**Significance and relevance of Ramayanam Recital (Ramayana Parayanam)**

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Most of the Malayalee households used to read Ramayanam, more specifically, Adhyatma Ramayanam Kilippattu by Thunchathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, on a daily basis. Malayalees, of late, found it hard to read it daily in the course of busy day to day life and might have started reading and completing it during the Malayalam month of Karkidakam (mid-July through mid-August). There could be many reasons why we started reading it during Karkidakam but the most significant two reasons are: 1) Sri Rama incarnated at the zodiac of Cancer (Karkidakam) and we read Ramayanam during the month which is represented by that zodiac sign, Karkidakam, and 2) South Solstice (Dakshina Ayanam) starts during Karkidakam and normally negativities are linked to this solstice and in order to drive away these negative or evil forces we seek solace in Ramayanam by reading it during this month.

Before we start reading Ramayanam we should know the purport and or the need of the seventh incarnation of the ten incarnations [Dasaavatharas - and they are 1) Matsya = Fish, 2) Koorma = Tortoise, 3) Varaha = Boar, 4) Narasimha = Half Man – Half Lion or the Beast-Man, 5) Vamana = Dwarf, 6) Parasurama = Rama with the Axe, 7) Srirama = Rama the son of Dasaratha and Kausalya, 8) Srikrishna = Eighth son of Devaki and Vasudeva, 9) Balarama = Son of Vasudeva

and Rohini and 10) Kalki = The destroyer of Filth] of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu as Sri Rama or Sri Ramachandra Swamy. Also, we should have some brief background information of the most prominent Ramayanams and a more detailed background information about Adhyaathma Ramayanam Moolam (original in Sanskrit) and The Adhyatma Ramayanam Kilippattu (the Malayalam version, the one which the Malayalees normally read) and again about The Valmiki Ramayanam also known as Adi Kavyam (the first ever Epic).

First thing first, Brahmadeva found himself created in the middle of a lotus flower. But he was not sure who he was? Who created him? What was the purpose of his creation, etc.? Brahmadeva was confused. He looked around all four sides. So, he now has four heads. He could see nothing other than water. He was still trying to find answers to his questions. He heard a celestial voice “thapa (austerity) thapa (austerity).” With his inborn intelligence or intuition, he knew the meaning of the word and by repetition of the word he knew the emphasized severity given to the word. So, he went on fully concentrated meditative severe austerity for one thousand Divya/Brahma Varshas/Years (one hundred years of Brahma may be roughly equal to 311,040 trillion years). When Brahma came out of the austerity, he was an embodiment of energy worth infinite numbers of suns and stars because he was amassing/accumulating energy throughout these infinite number of years. Still, he could not get the answers to his questions. But now he thinks that he is more analytical and more critical. He thought as he was standing on the lotus flower that if he entered through the flower inside into the stem then he should naturally be able to find his origin. He traveled inside the stem for one hundred Brahma Varshas with the special splendorous power (Yoga Prabhava) he accumulated from the austerity. As he could not reach the bottom and as he was not sure how long more, he may have to travel to reach the bottom, and considering that it was a futile effort as he could never ever be able to reach the bottom of the lotus stem, he came back with his Yoga Prabhaavam.

Brahmadeva was still thinking but he was more depressed and dejected. Then he again heard the same celestial voice. He heard the voice telling him: “You are Brahmadeva. I, Sacred Lord Sri Mahaa Vishnu, created you. I created you to create the universes and species therein.” Brahmadeva did not ask Lord Sree

Mahaa Vishnu how he could create the universe, even though he had the question in his mind. But before he got the opportunity to ask that question, Vishnu Bhagawan asked him to look at his right hand. And Vishnu Bhagawan continued: "You are holding Vedas. It contains everything you need to know about how to create the universe. But you may never have the need to refer to this 'universal encyclopedic' or the 'global manual' as they have really been authored by you during your meditative austerity. It is always in your heart and brain. And your abode is Sathyaloka. So, you may now go to Sathyaloka and engage in your responsibility."

Brahmadheva went to Sathyaloka, the assigned abode for him. In order to create the universes, he thought, he definitely would need help. So, he created four sons purely out of his mind (Manasaputhras – because of no material involvement in mental creations they are the most perfect of all creations). They are Sanaka, Sanantha, Sanathana and Sanatkumara and are more popularly known as Sanatkumaras. Rather than helping Brahmadeva in his effort of creation of universes they preferred to serve as associates of Lord Sree Mahaa Vishnu and be his staunch devotees and with that thought they went to the Milky Ocean (Paalaazhi), the abode of Lord Sree Mahaa Vishnu.

They were stopped by Jaya and Vijaya, the two gatekeepers of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu at Vaikundam, the abode of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu, in Palazhi.

Sanatkumaras understood that Jaya and Vijaya had turned out to be arrogantly proud due to their closeness to none other than Lord Sri Maha Vishnu and hence decided to punish them appropriately. Sanatkumaras cursed Jaya and Vijaya to be born as demons. Lord Maha Vishnu with the consent of Sanatkumaras gave them release from the curse that they can be back as his parshadas/associates after three births as demons as the worst enemies of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu himself and then each time killed by Lord Sri Mahaa Vishnu in different incarnations.

Their first demon births were as Hiranyakasipu (killed by Narasimha - Avathara) and Hiranyaksha (Killed by Varaaha - Avathara) and second births were as Ravana and Kumbhakarna (both of them were killed by Sri Rama - Avathara) and the last

of their demon births were as Danthavakthra and Sisupala (both of them were killed by Sri Krishna - Avathara and both of them were also born as relatives of Lord Sri Krishna).

Thus, the purpose of the seventh incarnation of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu as Sri Ramachandra Swamy was to annihilate/destroy Ravana and Kumbhakarna and their dynasty of the entire demon family.

Now let us see the most prominent Ramayanams. 1) Adhyatma Ramayanam (Moolam – Original in Sanskrit the authorship can be assigned to Sage Vyasa Bhagawan if we accept that as it is extracted from the latter half of Brahmaanda Purana. Otherwise, we do not know who is the author of this highly devotional Ramayanam), 2) Adyatma Ramayanam Kilippattu (in Malayalam in Manipravalam style by Thunjathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan), 3) Valmiki Ramayanam (in Sanskrit by the saint Valmiki), 4) Shri Ramacharitamanasa or Tulasi Ramayanam (in Awadhi – ancient (Prakrit) Hindi - by Goswamy Tulasidas), 5) Kamba Ramayana (in Tamil by Kambar), 6) Adbhutha Ramayanam (in Sanskrit by saint Valmiki), 7) Aananda Ramayanam in Sanskrit supposed to be by Valmiki, 8) Kannasa Ramayanam, in Malayalam, by Niranath Ramappanicker, and so on. Definitely, there are many other prominent Raamaayanams but I am limiting my comparative studies to these Seven or eight of the Ramayanams as I am not proficient or familiar with other Ramayanams.

The study of Ramayanam is extremely vast as we have over one thousand sixty-seven different Ramayanams published in many different languages. We are going to cover only ten or eleven of these Ramayanams and those too only very superficially in this study without going very deep into any of them.

Of course, before we discuss about Raamaayanam we must have an idea about Vaasishtam or Njaana Vaasishtam or Yoga Vaasishtam

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