**Dharma : Perspectives from Ramayana**

All UG Programs

2017-18

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| **Course Category: Foundation Schedule of Offering: 2nd Semester**  **Course Credit Structure: 3 Credits**   * **Lecture: 3 Hours per week** * **Tutorial: None** * **Practical: None**   **Contact Hours per week: 3 Hours per week**  **Course code: EG123**  **Course Instructor : K.E. Gopala Desikan and Nagendra Pavana** |

1. **Introduction**

“धर्ममूलमिदं जगत्, धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः” is the slogan used by many Indian philosophers, which states that Dharma is the substratum of the Universe. Those who follow Dharma will reap its benefits. Here, the word Dharma does not refer to the codes of conduct of any particular religion, but is used in a broader sense as acknowledged in the Honourable Supreme Court statement that says “Dharma is that which upholds, nourishes or supports the stability of the society, maintains the social order and secures the general well-being and progress of mankind”. It is the binding factor which enhances sustainability and the welfare of society. It also helps in the overall personality development of an individual.

When it comes to educating one about Dharma, there are various dedicated texts with different approaches in Sanskrit literature. Among the available literature Ramayana stands unique as it demonstrates the highest values of Dharma through its portrayal of characters. Hence it is considered equal to Vedas in Indian tradition.

This course aims at teaching the concepts of Dharma, its components, its intricacies and its relevance through the lens of Ramayana so that the student can understand its complex features with ease and can apply these values for the betterment of their personality. The course has been designed in such a way that it can inspire students by educating them about the Dharmic principles which have been followed through the ages and their relevance to contemporary society.

1. **Course Objectives**

* To understand the basic concepts of Dharma, how it works, its implications in our life and its impact on society.
* To see the above mentioned properties of Dharma through the prism of Ramayana and its relevance to contemporary society.
* To get a clear cut view on the Dharmas of an individual, to be followed in given circumstances and at various stages in his life, so that the students can develop a personal understanding of Dharma.
* To perceive the types of Dharma and their implementation with examples.

1. **Pre-requisites**

As it is a foundational course, there are no prerequisites. However, a good knowledge of the story of Valmiki Ramayana is appreciated. As the course involves some text portions of Ramayana, a moderate-to-high level of comfort in Devanāgari script would help.

1. **Readings**

There are no primary texts recommended for this course. Students can rely on the study material provided in the classroom by the teachers during the time of lectures. However, secondary readings on specific texts are recommended for preparing assignments, debates, etc.

* ***Gita Press’ Srimad Valmiki Ramayana*** is recommended for original text reading.
* **George V.C.** (2010) ***Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha: their relevance and currency today and for tomorrow*,** a Ph.d. thesis.
* **Jois Rama**, ***Dharma*** - ***The global ethic***, a monograph on the concept of Dharma. http://www.vhp-america.org/dynamic\_includes/ebooks/DHARMA\_Ram\_Jois.pdf
* **Khan, Benjamin** (1983), **The concept of Dharma in Valmiki Ramayana**, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, ISBN 8121501342 / 9788121501347.
* **Sharma Ramashraya**, (1986) ***A Socio-political study of the Valmiki Ramayana***, Motilal Banarasidass Publication, New Delhi
* **Sastri Srinivasa V.S.** (1952) ***Lectures on the Ramayana***, Madras sanskrit Academy.
* Selected portions from Hindu Dharma, The Universal way of life (2015) Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, ISBN: 9788172765231, 8172765231.
* **Dr. Nayak Nirmala**, (1985) ***Nature of values in Ramayana***, a Ph.D thesis, is prescribed for reference reading for **Module 4.**

1. **Module-wise topics**

The following are the topics that will be covered.

**Module 1 : Introduction (5 sessions)**

In this module we discuss the definitions of Dharma and its concepts through Ramayana. Valmiki’s idea on Dharma and his conclusions will be briefly discussed in this module.

**Topics**

* + The Word and Concept of Dharma
  + Why practice Dharma?
  + Importance of Dharma in Trivarga
  + Valmiki’s teachings on welfare and sustainability

References/Readings:

* George V.C. (2010) Chapter III part II “Dharma - The Regulating Principle” in Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha: their relevance and currency today and for tomorrow. pp 56 - 68<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/127> last accessed on 12th May 2017.
* Khan, Benjamin (1983), The concept of Dharma in Valmiki Ramayana, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi **ISBN** 8121501342 / 9788121501347, pp 35-67, 128 - 131.
* Jois, Rama, Chapter 1.1 - 1.4.2.1 Dharma: A Global Ethic, a monograph <http://www.vhp-america.org/dynamic_includes/ebooks/DHARMA_Ram_Jois.pdf> last accessed on 12th May 2017.

**Module 2 : Types of Dharma (8 sessions)**

After understanding the concepts of Dharma it is imperative to know the types of Dharma. It can be classified in different ways considering the position of the people, their profession, their intellectual capacity, place, time, circumstances and so on. In this module we will discuss briefly about some of the important types of Dharma which are illustrated in excerpts of the Ramayana. The application of these Dharmas in modern times will be examined.

**Topics**

* + Types of Dharma
  + Samanya Dharma
  + Visesha Dharma
  + Nimitta Dharma
  + Apat Dharma

References/Readings:

* Khan, Benjamin (1983), The concept of Dharma in Valmiki Ramayana, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, ISBN 8121501342 / 9788121501347, pp 185 - 207.
* Ramashraya Sharma, (1971), Chapter VIII Morality and Religion in A Socio-political study of the Valmiki Ramayana, Motilal Banarasi Dass, New Delhi, pp 146 -156.
* Jois, Rama, Chapter 1.4.2.2, 1.5, 1.6 in Dharma: A Global Ethic, a monograph <http://www.vhp-america.org/dynamic_includes/ebooks/DHARMA_Ram_Jois.pdf> last accessed on 12th May 2017.
* Selected slokas from Valmiki Ramayana and Dharma Sastra texts.

**Module - 3 : Components of Dharma (9 sessions)**

In this module we discuss the important components of Dharma briefly put forth by Valmiki in Ramayana. The Dharmic virtues embodied in the characters of the Ramayana will be analysed through these parameters. We will analyse how these components help in achieving the ultimate goal of Dharma i.e. providing sustainability to mankind.

**Topics**

* + क्षमा (Tolerance)
  + त्यागः (Sacrifice)
  + समदर्शित्वम् (Nonpartisanship)
  + निर्मलता (Purity)
  + वैराग्यम् (Chastity)
  + पराक्रमः (Courage)
  + रक्षणम् (Magnanimity)
  + दानं (Charity)
  + सत्यम् (Truth)

Readings:

* Khan, Benjamin (1983), The concept of Dharma in Valmiki Ramayana, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, ISBN 8121501342 / 9788121501347 pp 190 - 218
* Jois, Rama, Chapter 1.4.2.4 - 1.4.2.10, Chapter 1.7.3, 1.7.4 in Dharma: A Global Ethic, a monograph <http://www.vhp-america.org/dynamic_includes/ebooks/DHARMA_Ram_Jois.pdf> last accessed on 12th May 2017.
* Selected shlokas from Valmiki Ramayana

**Module 4 : Dharma of an Individual (15 sessions)**

In this module we will concentrate on the specific dharmas of an individual based on relation or affiliation to another individual or institution. These dharmas will be identified through the lens of Ramayanic characters and the scope of practising these dharmas in the modern age will be examined.

**Topics**

* + Svadharma (Duties of an Individual)
  + Rajadharma (Duties of a King)
  + Putradharma (Duties of a Son)
  + Stridharma (Duties of a Woman )
  + Bhratrdharma (Duties of a Brother)
  + Mitradharma (Duties of a Friend)
  + Sevakadharma (Duties of a Servant)

Readings:

* Khan, Benjamin (1983), The concept of Dharma in Valmiki Ramayana, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, ISBN 8121501342 / 9788121501347, pp 177 - 190.
* Jois, Rama, Chapter 1.4.2.3, and 1.8 in Dharma: A Global Ethic, a monograph<http://www.vhp-america.org/dynamic_includes/ebooks/DHARMA_Ram_Jois.pdf>
* Selected portions from Hindu Dharma, The Universal way of life (2015) Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, ISBN: 9788172765231, 8172765231.
* **Sastri Srinivasa V.S.** (2006) ***Lectures on the Ramayana***, Madras Sanskrit Academy, ISBN 8187156082

**Module 5: Merits of following the Dharmic Path (5 sessions)**

The topic of the module itself suggests the content that will be discussed. In this module, the merits of Dharma and its impact in the Ramayana as well as in present day circumstances will be analysed. We will discuss the following topics:

**Topics**

* + Dharma for Sustainability
  + Dharma for Lokasamgraha (Welfare of the society)
  + Dharma for Abhyudaya (Self improvement)

Readings:

* George V.C. (2010)Chapter III part II.7 “Why Practice Dharma?” and Chapter VII.11 “The Ideal of Lokasamgraha” in Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha: their relevance and currency today and for tomorrow. pp 56 - 68<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/127> last accessed on 12th May 2017.
* Jois, Rama, Chapter 1.2.2 - 1.3 in Dharma: A Global Ethic, a monograph <http://www.vhp-america.org/dynamic_includes/ebooks/DHARMA_Ram_Jois.pdf> last accessed on 12th May 2017.
* Selected Slokas from Valmiki Ramayana.
* Selected portions from V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, Lectures on the Ramayana.

**Module 6: Conclusion (3 sessions)**

These will be the concluding sessions wherein the previously covered topics will be revised.

* Khan, Benjamin (1983), The concept of Dharma in Valmiki Ramayana, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, ISBN 8121501342 / 9788121501347,, pp 82 - 88, 155 - 162.

1. **Pedagogy**

This course will mostly consist of lectures based on the reading material. Some multimedia components are also included. The student is expected to participate actively in class.

1. **Evaluation Pattern**

Given below is the evaluation pattern.

* End-Sem exam: 40%
* Mid-Sem exam: 25%
* Module Assignment: 25%
* Class Participation: 10%

Appendix

Almost all the classes will be online. Students are advised to have a good internet connectivity. There may be both synchronous and asynchronous classes based on the situation. The details of the classes will be intimated at regular intervals.

Evaluation:

Mid semester and End semester examinations will be online. Students who does not get 40% in the mid semester is not eligible to take the end semester exam.

The module assignment component comprises of Weekly quiz, Module test and Group Submission. There will be 7 weekly quizzes, 5 module test and 2 group submissions (pre midterm and post midterm).

The class participation consists of 2 group presentations (pre midterm and post midterm).