

Jatayu's Ancestry

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I prostrate at the lotus feet of SitaRama and my Guru Dr. Ranganji, without whom not even a single word in this humble article is possible. I am humbly submitting this small article to that selfless devotee of Sri Rama- Jatayu.

सर्वत्र खलु दृश्यन्ते साधवो धर्मचारिणः
शूराश्शरण्यास्सौमित्रे तिर्यग्योनिगतेष्वपि। ॥3.68.24॥

மனிதரில் மட்டுமா மாண்புமிக்கோருளர்
பறவை பிறவியிலும் உள்ளனரே
சுயநலமற்றே சிறகை சிதறி
எனக்காக எய்தினார் உயருலகம்

- ஸ்ரீ ராமகானாம்ருதம் - Dr. Ranganji

Jatayu — A Symbol of Dharma and Sacrifice

- Jatayu is seen as a **symbol of unwavering dharma** — the duty to protect the innocent and uphold righteousness.
- His sacrifice shows **moral courage**, emphasizing that **standing up against wrong is more important than survival**.

Darwin's Evolution theory & Jatayu's ancestry:

Based on the book Ramayana Insights by Dr. Ranganji, the Evolution theory of Darwin and the Jatayu's ancestry explained in Valmiki Ramayana have a great commonality. Though the 14th chapter of Aranyakanda of Valmiki Ramayana, which explains Jatayu's ancestry, looks like a story, it subtly references how all beings are siblings. By narrating the family tree of Kashyapa, we can understand all the beings that belong to one family. By understanding that beings belong to the same family, we will tend to respect them. By respecting, we can be open enough to understand their wisdom. In this way of inclusiveness, humans become complete. Maintaining a relationship of give and take, a symbiotic relationship will be maintained. Their wisdom will make humans give up the prejudice that of world is built only for them. Taking beings for granted will not only be a loss for us, but it will also destroy the resources for us and others. The only solution for this is to respect and love others with an eye of equality. That's how Rama pays his tribute to that Jatayu who fell selflessly for a good cause. Rama recognises the importance of inclusiveness and shows love and respect.

As Dr. Ranganji says, Ramayana seldom has digression. If it is there, then it is for a purpose. When Rama, in Aranyakandam of Ramayana, tries to travel towards Panchavati, he meets a big bird, Jatayu, on a banyan tree. When Rama enquires about the bird about his lineage, he gives a detailed account of the entire creation. Creation of all beings opens our eyes to how Sama dharma - commonality for all in terms of resources and opportunities is important. Mithra bhava - looking at all with the eyes of affection will let us live and let others live. We can learn from others' wisdom.. Rama, the man who is not bound by these boundaries such as caste, creed, gender, species, time and place, teaches "All are one".

Wisdom of bird-brothers in Ramayana:

Sampati: - Brother of Jatayu:

अस्माकं विहिता वृत्तिर्निसर्गेण च दूरतः।

विहिता पादमूले तु वृत्तिश्चरणयोधिनाम्।।4.58.32।।

By our nature and birth and the food we take, we can see up to a long distance. Thus necessity leads to invention. This is the basis of the evolution too.

Jatayu:

स भारस्सौम्य भर्तव्यो यो नरं नावसादयेत्।।3.50.17।।

तदन्नमपि भोक्तव्यं जीर्यते यदनामयम्।

यत्कृत्वा न भवेद्धर्मो न कीर्तिर्न यशो भुवि।।3.50.18।।

शरीरस्य भवेत्खेदः कस्तत्कर्म समाचरेत्।

न शक्तस्त्वं बलाद्धर्तुं वैदेहीं मम पश्यतः।।3.50.21।।

हेतुभिर्न्यायसंसिद्धैद्धृवां वेदश्रुतीमिव।

One should not eat the food which will make one tired and which will not be easily digested. One cannot understand the Vedic wisdom by logic and reasoning. When Ravana was abducting Sita, Jatayu advised Ravana of the above things. Beautifully, he gives the above example. Jatayu can connect on how Vedic wisdom can't be forced upon Sita, can't come under Ravana's control. We can learn many things from these birds. So, instead of thinking others are of no use if we are open

enough, we can learn many things from the world of all beings and by that, a person can humble himself. It will lead to proper growth and expansion.

Jatayu's introduction in Ramayana:

Bird - Human friendship:

वत्स मां विद्धि वयस्यं पितुरात्मनः॥3.14.3॥

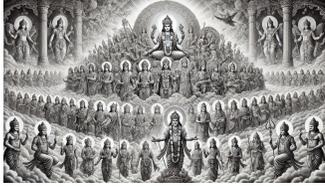
One of the unique virtues found in Ramayana is “inclusiveness”. The main virtuous characters in Ramayana, like Rama, Dasaratha, Bharatha, etc, treat all beings equally, whether they are from their species or other species. One such example of a relationship beyond the human species is the Dasaratha-Jatayu and Rama-Jatayu relationship. Though Jatayu belongs to an avian group, the father and son duo maintained a very good relationship with him. They honored and valued such friendship. This explains the ego-free, species-free and prejudice-free relationship that existed during the period of Ramayana.

Rama meets Jatayu:

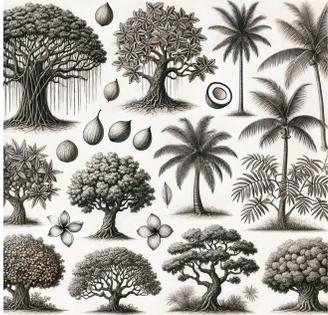
When Rama meets with Jatayu for the first time in the forest, he asks about the latter's name and the lineage - स तस्य कुलमव्यग्रमथ पप्रच्छ नाम च॥3.14.4॥

There Jatayu gives an account of all the lords of creation starting from Kardama prajapati- the lord of all lords. When the 8 daughters of Daksha Prajapati(one another lord) got married to sage Kashyapa, the detailed creation of all beings sprang into existence.

Kashyapa's Family:

#	Wife of Kashyapa	Offsprings
1.	Adithi 	33 Devas- (12 Adithyas, 8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, Ashwins-2)
2.	Dithi 	Daityas
3.	Dhanu 	Danavas like Ashwagriva
4.	Kaalika 	NarakaH, KalakaH
5.	Taamra	Krounchi, Bhasi, Shyeni, Dhruatarashtrii, Shukii <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Krounchi – UlookaaH (Owls) 2. Bhasi - BhasaaH (Vultures) 3. Shyeni - ShyenaH(Hawks) & GrudhraH(Eagles)

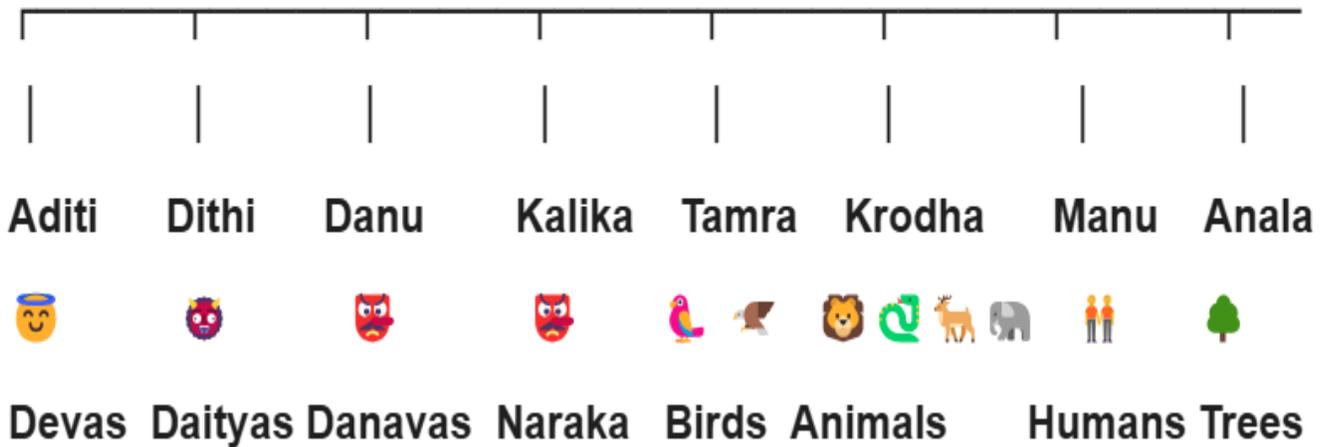
		<p>4. Dhrutharashtrii - HamsaaH (swans) & ChakravaakaaH (Ruddy Ducks, waterfowls)</p> <p>5. Shukii - Nata ->Vinata -> ArunaH ->JatayuH</p>
6.	<p>Krodhavasha</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrugii - all animals 2. Mrugamandha - RkshaH(Bears), SrumaraH(Deer), ChamaraH (kind of deer) 3. Harii - HarayaH(Lions) & VanaraH (Monkeys) 4. Bhadramadha - Iravati - Airavata(elephant) 5. Matangi - MatangaH (elephants) 6. Shardooli - Golangulas(type of monkeys) 7. Shweta - DishagajaH (Guardian of 8 quarters) 8. SurabhiH - Rohini and Gandharvi 9. Surasaa - Nagas (Cobras) 10.Kadruka - PannagaH - Adhishesha,serpents
7.	<p>Manu</p> 	<p>Manushyas (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras)</p>

8.	<p>Anala</p> 	Trees
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The pictorial representation of the same is as below:

Jatayu's family tree - Pictorial representation:

Kashyapa 🧙



KASHYAPA + TAAMRA

└─ Shuki

└─ Nata

└─ Vinata

|─ Aruna

| |─ Sampati

| |─ **Jatayu**

└─ Garuda



Aruna with Sampati & Jatayu

The careful observation of the above chart explains about the birth of various species such as Devas(the celestial beings), Danavas, Asuras, Rakshasas, Birds, all animals like deer, lion, tiger, elephant, monkeys, humans and Trees. This family tree explains the evolution of many beings, covering major groups. This shows how the entire creation is one family. All are equally created. Different species are like siblings. So the entire world of resources is common for all. Here, this account of family tree emphasises the need for all beings should be treated with respect, love and honour as one another's family members.

From the time Rama entered Aranya ie the forest, he encountered superhuman beings ie Rakshasas like Viradha. During wars among superhuman beings like Devas and Asuras, many human kings like Dasaratha used to participate. Even Rama has conquered the son of Danava, Sambara and got celestial weapons as gifts from Brahmadeva for the same.

ददौ चास्त्राणि दिव्यानि यस्मै ब्रह्मा महौजसे।

दानवेन्द्रं हतं दृष्ट्वा तिमिध्वजसुतं रणे॥2.44.11॥

There was correspondence and confrontation among the super beings. Humans were also involved in those matters. But from Aranyakanda we will be seeing an extensive correspondence with all kinds of beings with our hero Rama. Especially after Rama reaches Panchavati, his connection with other species like birds, monkeys, and bears will also enhance. Our Guru Dr. Rangan ji speculates that “probably due to this reason in this place in Ramayana, we are getting an account of world history about the evolution of species, providing a bridge course to whom we meet ahead in this story”.

Jatayu's bravery and selfless -sacrifice:

When Rama was away for bringing back the golden deer that Sita was interested in, Ravana, the king of Rakshasas, forcefully abducted the lady Sita, who was alone in the forest. When she was carried off brutally, Jatayu came to her help. Though he was old and tired when compared to Ravana, who had a lot of weapons and strength, Jatayu fought bravely, giving his all to save her.

This shows the moral fibre he was made up of. He explains Dharma to Ravana not to indulge in robbing others' wives. When Ravana turned his deaf ear, Jatayu fought vigorously with him to prevent him from seizing away the tearful, helpless lady Sita.

Jatayu challenged Ravana mid-air, attacking him with sharp claws and beak, destroying parts of Ravana's chariot and scaring his mules.

Ravana, enraged, fought back and severed Jatayu's wings with his sword, leaving him to die.

Gravely injured, Jatayu fell to the earth but held onto life to convey Sita's abduction to Rama and Lakshmana.

Rama's Tribute:

Upon finding the dying Jatayu, Rama was deeply moved, calling him a father figure and performing final rites himself, granting him moksha (liberation).

राजा दशरथश्श्रीमान्यथा मम महायशाः ।

पूजनीयश्च मान्यश्च तथाऽयं पतगेश्वरः ॥3.68.26॥

This lord of the birds for me is as worthy of reverence and honour as the famous and prosperous king Dasaratha.

या गतिर्यज्ञशीलानामाहिताग्नेश्च या गतिः।

अपरावर्तिनां या च या च भूमिप्रदायिनाम्।।3.68.29।।

मया त्वं समनुज्ञातो गच्छ लोकाननुत्तमान्।

गृध्रराज महासत्त्व संस्कृतश्च मया व्रज।।3.68.30।।

Oh Mighty lord of Eagles, go to the world of those who perform sacrifices and ardent fire rituals, the world of soldiers who never run away from the battle, the world of land donors for righteous deeds. Being cremated by me, may you go to those great worlds, taking leave of me.

Righteous beings in all species- सर्वत्र खलु दृश्यन्ते :

Jatayu's Bravery signifies him as a symbol of Duty (Dharma)- he fulfilled his duty to protect Sita, defending righteousness at the cost of his life. His selfless sacrifice indicates that standing up for good doesn't require youth or strength—a courageous heart is enough. He is a messenger of Truth-by informing Rama of Sita's abduction, Jatayu played a pivotal role in the Ramayana's course. The essence of Jatayu's Bravery is - "It is better to die protecting Dharma than to live in fear and inaction."

Upon seeing such Jatayu, Rama remarks we can see valiant souls who are courageous, righteous, honest and who protects the refugees at any cost can be found everywhere. We are now seeing one such great soul in avian beings. These words of Rama, ie “souls of high morality can be found everywhere” stamps importance to all species and all beings.

Summation:

Family tree explained by Jatayu reflects **interconnected lineages of divine and natural beings** in Hindu cosmology.

The character Jatayu in Ramayana represent **virtues like sacrifice, Dharma, and wisdom**, possibly reflecting **evolution of consciousness** beyond species barriers.

All beings need to be understood as one huge family related to each other with their honour and pride. With this eye of perception, everyone is to be respected and loved equally. That's what we see in Rama when he finally hugged and cried upon Jatayu's death and cremated him with all the rituals.

This shows the important virtue in Rama that he doesn't disdain or disrespect anyone. He treats everyone equally. That is the samadharma we find in Ramayana.

न चावमन्ता भूतानां न च कालवशानुगः॥२.१.३०॥

He doesn't disrespect any beings, and he doesn't subjugate to the pressure and limits of time. He is beyond time and beings.

At the same time, he corresponds to them well, not being controlled by time or any being. He honours but won't be cornered. Though he flows through time and beings, he won't be restrained by the same. Since Rama is unbiased, he is common to all.

From the ancestry description of Jatayu we find the worth of all as equal and from Rama's relationship with Jatayu we understand how to be empathetically courteous and equal to all .

Jai Sitaram.