

# Compare the heroes gilgamesh and rama



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Similarities between Gilgamesh and Rama: Text and Context The stories of Gilgamesh and Rama have certain sameness. These similarities can be observed in the narratives embedded in the epics of Gilgamesh and Rama. Further, their sameness transcends beyond the text itself. The narratives of Gilgamesh and Rama are entrenched in the very society and history in which they are made. Gilgamesh and Rama have three general similarities: (1) both are divine kings, (2) they travel to different and alien places; and (3) shared tragedy. First, Gilgamesh is a sacred king in the ancient Babylonian kingdom who greatly possesses the trait of “ two-thirds divine” (Mitchell 10). By virtue of his god-like character, the Babylonian people fear and follow the absolute monarchy practiced by Gilgamesh, the demigod of the bygone civilization. Like Gilgamesh, Rama is a divine king in the age-old India who greatly ruled his devoted subjects with “ universal or social conscience” (qtd. in Leeming, Madden, and Marlan 803). Second, Gilgamesh and Rama have sameness with respect to their journeys in finding their missions in life and/or love. On the one hand, Gilgamesh travels to varied and tortuous places in order to find the person who “ can tell him how to escape death” (Mitchell 1). After his friend’s death, Gilgamesh journeys into the terra incognita which he, consequently, “ suffered all and accomplished all” (qtd. in Mitchell 9). On the other hand, Rama travels to the land of his mortal enemy in order to rescue his beloved Sita. On this way, Rama constantly remembers in the need to avoid the “ sense enemies’ lust, ire and greed” (Das 69). And third, both epic heroes greatly share tragedy (Gupta 23). The tragedy of Gilgamesh lies in his failure to attain immortality while Rama’s tragedy lies in the unfaithfulness of his beloved. Both stories of Gilgamesh and Rama are, by and large, shaped by their cultures and societies. In the <https://assignbuster.com/compare-the-heroes-gilgamesh-and-rama/>

context of the Babylonian civilization characterized in Gilgamesh narrative, sexuality is widely celebrated by the ancient Babylonians wherein love-making signifies “ the intimate understanding of what a woman is” (Mitchell 15-16). The social custom prominent in the antiquated Babylonia takes great pride in sex in which women “ serve men’s pleasure.” It is noteworthy that Babylonia in the time of Gilgamesh was very prosperous and highly civilized; in fact, civilization is defined by sexual promiscuity and celebration. In the context of caste system marked in ancient India, moreover, the king has to cast away his wife if found unfaithful. Rumors had spread out that Sita had committed infidelity to her husband-king perhaps during the time when she was abducted by Ravana, Rama’s mortal enemy. Following the social norm, Rama has banished his wife into the forest and away from his kingdom (Gupta 23). Here, it is fascinating to learn that the protagonist has forsaken his beloved in exchange for the social custom. Indeed, it is admirable to see Rama endures his personal sacrifice for the maintenance of the social order marked in the hierarchical India. Conversely, it is strange for the lover to abandon his beloved to utter danger and isolation. Works Cited Das, G. N. Shri Rama: The Man, and His Mission. New Delhi: Abhinav, 1998. Print. Gupta, Dipak K. Path to Collective Madness: A Study in Social Order and Political Pathology. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001. Print. Leeming, David, Kathryn Madden, and Stanton Marlan, eds. Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion. New York: Springer, n. d. Print. Mitchell, Stephen. Gilgamesh: A New English Version. New York: Free Press, 2004. Print.