

Saint Surdas’
RAM CHARITAAWALI
 (Surdas Ramayan)

English Exposition by:--

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DEDICATION

To My Most Beloved Lord Ram

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be 'his very own' is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the Lord's holy feet, and finding no words to express my profound gratitude to him, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

Finally, I pay my greatest obeisance to Hanuman, the enlightened devotee of Lord Ram, whom I regard as my Guru (a spiritual guide), without whose blessings this effort would not have borne fruit.

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Author

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SAINT SURDAS'

RAM CHARITAAWALI

(Surdas Ramayan)

PREFACE

सुनि—सुनि कथा प्रसिद्ध पुरातन जस जान्यौ जुग जीर ।
बहुरि नयौ करि कियौ, 'सूर' प्रभु रामचंद्र रनधीर ॥

(सूर—रामचरितावली, पद संख्या १९९)

suni-suni kathā prasid'dha purātana jasa jān'yau juga jīra.
bahuri nayaurṁ kari kiyau, 'sūra' prabhu rāmacandra ranadhīra..
(sūra-rāmacaritāvalī, pada saṅkhyā 199)

'The famous and ancient story of the great and magnificent deeds done by Lord Sri Ram Chandra, who is most steadfast and exemplarily courageous in the battle-field, are well known, and have been heard by the whole world down ages and countless generations. Surdas has merely attempted to re-sing those glories of his Lord by writing these ballads in his honour.' (Sri Ram Charitawali, verse no. 199)

'सूर' समुद्र की बूँद भई यह, कवि बरनन कहा करिहै ॥
कहत चरित रघुनाथ, सरस्वती बौरी मति अनुसरिहै ॥

(सूर—सारावली, पद संख्या १३)

'sūra' samudra kī būmḍa bha'ī yaha, kabi baranana kahā karihai..
kahata carita raghunātha, sarasvatī baurī mati anusarihai..
(sūra-sārāvalī, pada saṅkhyā 13)

'Surdas says that his narration (of Sri Ram's glorious divine story) is like a mere drop in a vast and measureless ocean. Which poet is able or competent enough to sufficiently and aptly describe it in its entirety? It is Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, speech, intelligence and wisdom, who silently and faithfully follows the narrator from behind, subtly inspiring him and gladly telling him what to write, thereby helping even the most stupid, the most incompetent and the most inept of poets to sing the Lord's glories in what finally turns out to be a matchless piece of devotional literature.' (Sur Sarawali, verse no. 13)

Suradas was a great saint-poet of medieval Northern India. Though blind by his physical eyes, he nevertheless had the subtle, the sublime, the divine and the internal vision that enabled him to see his beloved Lord more vividly and closely than people with two perfect and wide open physical eyes. In fact, his blindness was a blessing in disguise for him as it removed all the distractions of the illusionary world that surrounded him, and instead let him focus his entire attention on his Lord.

Born in a small village near Delhi in Vikram Samvat 1535 (A.D. 1478), this uneducated village lad was blessed with an inborn spark of devotion for the Lord which remained dormant early in his life, but flickered to life when he was around 12 years of age. Earlier, he had used his inborn talent for poetic compositions to compose and sing folksongs which gave him a fan-following quite early on in life. But this talent bloomed and transformed into full blown devotion for Lord Krishna as he grew older. The ballads and sonnets that he composed in the honour of Krishna are said to have no match in the realm of Hindi devotional literature.

A life sketch of Suradas is given in Section no. 3 of this book.

Since he did not have the privilege of any formal school education or of a discipleship under any scholar worth the name for the purpose of being formally initiated and taught the intricacies of any language and its grammar—a privilege that was enjoyed by Saint Tulsidas, his contemporary and another great saint-poet who had authored many classical works on Lord Ram, including the famous and highly acclaimed Ramayana known as the Ram Charit Manas, for he had studied literature in Varanasi, which was, and is still, a centre for higher learning and Sanskrit education—we conclude that the hymns or ballads composed by Suradas came directly out of his heart, and were a result of some mystical, divine and transcendental revelation inside his bosom that bestowed him with an acumen and the requisite expertise that enabled a conventionally blind man, who could not even use his eyes to see anything, to speak the glories of the Lord in most vivid terms, to sing excellent melodic hymns in the honour of the Lord inspite of lack of any basic training in either the language or music, and to compose excellent ballads that are considered to be unparallel master-pieces of devotionally literature ever written in the Hindi language. These songs are matchless in their literary fineness and vivid in their imagery. They are devotionally most sublime, succulent, vibrant, inspiring and magnificent. They are as fathomless as a vast ocean consisting of the nectar symbolizing complete devotion, love, affection and submission for one's Lord. They are in effect like a vast ocean of beautiful devotional literature that never ceases to enchant the person who comes to take a dip in it and get soaked in this nectar.

Shaped in the form of the songs contained in this book, the devotion of Suradas, his love and affection for the Lord, his complete surrender to his Lord, and the attendant effulgence of vibrant spiritual energy, along with the feeling of blessedness, holiness and sublimity that these virtues generate, seem to be like the frothy and bubbling nectar that spills over and flows everywhere from the pitcher brimming with these great virtues.

The description of Sri Krishna, his beauty and attire as well as of certain events in Mathura etc., only prove that he had a 'mystical third eye' that enabled him to see what his physical eyes could not. So it will be an honest inference that whatever Suradas wrote were not merely poems but real 'revelations' of the Lord to him for the simple reason that a physically blind man cannot be so vivid and convincing in his descriptions, and so lucid

in his style of narrative composition, if it were not for some divine, mystical and unconventional power that not only showed him the hidden but also provided the inspiration that egged him on and helped in his devotional and spiritual pursuits. Surely then Surdas was not an imposter, he was no ordinary scribe or poet, but rather a genuine saint of the highest degree, a self-realised saint who has had a first-hand experience of having a communion with the divine Lord.

To match the literally prowess and excellence of his contemporary philosopher-saint-poet Tulsidas, Surdas composed verses in poetical style which are collected in a volume called 'Sur-Sagar', literally meaning 'the ocean of Surdas' hymns'. The story of Sri Ram is an integral part of this Sur-Sagar, and is nomenclatured as 'Sur-Ram Charitawali'. An alternative title could be 'Ram Charit or Ram Katha' by Surdas—literally meaning 'the story of Lord Ram and his deeds as envisioned by Surdas.' Surdas also composed what is called 'Sur-Sarawali', literally meaning 'essential Surdas', which is a compendium. The story of Sri Ram is described in brief outline and in an abridged version in it.

'Ram Charitawali' and its accompanying 'Sur-Sarawali' are rare classics based on the famous epic story of the 'Ramayana' which narrates the glorious deeds of Lord Ram who was a noble prince of the kingdom of Ayodhya and who is regarded as a manifestation of the Supreme Lord of the world who had come down to earth to rid it of evil entities that had been tormenting the inhabitants of this planet.

The amazing aspect of this book is that it was narrated by a 'blind saint', implying that it is an inspired book pouring out of the heart of a blessed person whose soul had the privilege of direct communion with the supreme Soul.

The main text of the present book 'Ram Charitawali'—literally meaning 'the story, in the form of devotional songs, of the great deeds done by Lord Ram'—has a narrative style very similar to 'Geetawali' of Saint Tulsidas. All the verses, hymns, ballads or sonnets etc. are set to the tunes of various 'Raagas' or musical modes and tunes of Indian classical music tradition which enable them to be sung melodiously to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Moreover, certain single episodes or the same topic in the epic story have been narrated in repetition in more than one verse, employing different 'Raagas' for different verses. For instance, Mandodari's attempt to persuade her husband Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, to stop his nonsensical behaviour that would lead to his ruin, give Sita back to Sri Ram and make peace with him as narrated in verse nos. 120-131 and 139-141 follow the same pattern as adopted by Tulsidas in his Geetawali also.

This entire story is divided in a number of Kands or chapters or cantos. Each Kand deals with a particular phase in the story of Lord Ram. The first Kand or chapter is called 'Baal Kand' and it marks the childhood phase of Lord Ram till the time he got married. The second Kand is known as 'Ayodhya Kand' and it relates to the second phase in the Lord's life when he was about to be anointed as the king but was forced into forest exile. The third chapter is called 'Aranya Kand' as it describes his life in the forest, and covers the period when Sita, his divine consort, was abducted by the demon king Ravana. The fourth phase of the story of Ramayana is known as 'Kishkindha Kand' as it describes the Lord's visit to this area in the forest in search of Sita. It is here that he meets his monkey friend Sugriv and one of his greatest admirers and devotee known as Hanuman. The search of Sita begins in right earnest when the messengers are sent in every direction

to search and locate her. The fifth Kanda is the 'Sundar Kand' in which Hauman crosses the fierce and formidable ocean to locate her in Lanka, the capital of Ravana. He burns the city, reassures Sita, and brings back her news to Lord Ram. The next phase, which is the sixth phase in the story of Ramayana, is the battle-royale in which the Lord, accompanied by the monkey army, launches his assault on Lanka, kills Ravana and retrieves Sita after the epic war of Lanka. And finally there is the last Kanda known as the 'Uttar Kand' which describes the Lord's return to Ayodhya and his coronation on the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya.

The instrument or medium of music and singing of the hymns to preach the eclectic virtues of devotion and spirituality as well as metaphysical and philosophical concepts was a standard method and practice in vogue those days as is evident from compositions of other Saints of that era—e.g. Kabirdas, Tulsidas, the Sikh Gurus, Tukaram etc. Probably this methodology of singing songs to preach, to awaken, to inform and spread knowledge was adopted by the preachers and exponents so as to make them more acceptable to the masses, to make them have a wider reach, a greater popularity, easy accessibility and a long-lasting effect because songs and melodies are easy to commit to the memory and recall even by a layman than complex abstract philosophies and dry textual matters as narrated in the scriptures, a factor that alienated the masses from the spiritual beauty of religion. Sans this method of mass appeal, the great spiritual texts and ancient devotional histories would have been relegated to the realm of scholarly discussion and debates by those who were learned and scholarly, a tribe of people who are very limited in their numbers as compared to the general public, not so wise, learned and scholarly inclined, which compose the mainstream of the society.

The average layman was wary of dry and complicated philosophical discourses, was not so mentally elevated and scholarly inclined to understand their import, and was so busy and tired of his humdrum life that he needed something to serve the dual purpose of both entertaining him and giving him relaxation on the one hand, and attending to his spiritual needs and giving him a chance to learn about his past heritage and the noble aim of life on the other hand simultaneously. This method of composing songs which could be easily remembered and captivantly sung was the most practical and prudent method devised by the ancient saints for this noble purpose.

It must also be remembered that the point of time in Indian history when such poet-saints lived, the country was being ruthlessly suppressed and smothered over by mindless religious bigots and fanatics. Invaders had had a free run over the country, and there was a constant fear of severe persecution from the fanatic rulers of those times. Then there was internal feud and dichotomy due to the proliferation of different sects, creeds, doctrines, interpretations and classes in society, each crying hoarse about the superiority of its own philosophy and deriding the other. Since a true saint transcends such narrow-minded, dogmatic, fanatic, bigoted, jealous and selfish versions of religion, spirituality and metaphysics, both the great Saints of the Hindi heartland, Surdas and Tulsidas, wrote about Sri Krishna as well as Sri Ram with equal beauty, charm, élan, dexterity and expertise, because for them there was no difference—or duality—between the two; for them both Ram and Krishna meant the same. There was no scope for any trace of schism or a sense of duality in their view of the Lord.

So though the chosen deity for Surdas was Lord Krishna, he was equally at ease, equally comfortable, and equally magnificent when describing the story of Ramayan,

even as Tulsidas wrote with great erudition, alacrity and scholarship about Sri Krishna. Tulsidas' Krishna Charitawali matches that of Surdas' Ram Charitawali.

'Sur Sarawali', as apposed to 'Ram Charitawali', has a crisp, cryptic, abridged, a stiff upper-lip, formal and staccato type of narration, having no pause or melody of the song which hallmarks the Ramcharitawali. More often than not, the reader is expected to decipher for himself the cryptic verses, and he is supposed to know the details of the story of Ramayan to understand the meaning of 'Sur Sarawali' fully. It is deemed that he is well-versed with the story of Sri Ram because Surdas has skipped details. It lacks the succulence and the melodious charm and flexibility of the main text of Ram Charitawali. I have included the entire Lord Ram's story from this 'Sur Sarawali' in section no. 2 of this book so as to make this volume a composite presentation of Surdas' work on Sri Ram.

Surdas has relied on two main authorities for his own version of Ramayan —viz (i) Srimad Bhagwat by sage Sukhdeo (as is clear from the last line of the very first verse no. 1, and last line of verse no. 12 of 'Ram Charitawali'), and (ii) Sage Valmiki's epic Ramayan (as is clear from verse no. 13/c of 'Sur-Sarawali', the full text of which is included in this book in Section 2).

Further, Surdas mentions the purpose of re-telling Sri Ram's story—that one should constantly, consistently and persistently remember Sri Hari, which is one of the names of Lord Vishnu whose incarnation Sri Ram was, and enshrine his divine lotus-like feet in one's heart (verse no. 1, line no. 1 of Ram Charitawali), and that he (Surdas) is doing it (re-telling the divine story) just to purify and sanctify his tongue and overcome the botherations and perplexities created by this artificial, mundane and harrowing world (verse no. 1, last two lines of Sur-Sarawali). The captioned quotations at the beginning of this preface show the humility of Surdas which is a hallmark of all true pious saints and sincere devotees of the Lord.

Sri Ram's legendary story known as 'Ramayan' has not only been written by Surdas and Tulsidas, for it is believed that there are more than 1,000 versions of the Ramayan. In every age, in almost every oriental language, the story has been told, retold and retold once again by someone or the other in its different versions adapted to local customs and cultures, but maintaining the basic structure intact. It is more than history, more than a narrative, more than an allegory or a parable; it is our individual struggle against the evil in this world retold in so many ways according to the customs of the country where it is reinvented, modified and retold.

So, what then is the essence or importance of Sri Ram? Is he a mere prince of a certain clan of kings ruling a particular part of geography, who was sucked in a vortex of circumstances in which his father threw him into exile in the forest where he roamed aimlessly until his wife was stolen by a pervert and lustful demon, and where he wailed for her, collected a ramshackle army of rowdy monkeys and raided here captors to liberate her from their clutches and come back triumphantly to reclaim his throne back in Ayodhya, and rule happily ever after? Certainly not. Certainly Sri Ram is more than that, and the story of his life has numerous subtle messages for the entire human race.

The sufferings which he was subjected to and the resilience with which he coped with them were just an excuse to bring the glitter and shine out of his character even as the sufferings and persecution of Jesus Christ brought out the inherent divinity in him in all its splendorous radiance and glory which lit the beacon of righteousness, goodness,

virtuousness and propriety, as well as their reward in the form of emancipation and salvation for the whole of mankind for all times to come. Lord Ram's story teaches us how to deal different and variant circumstances in a judicious manner with a watchful eye on the principles of ethics, morality and probity.

So, 'Sri Ram' is the dignified embodiment of the eclectic virtues of auspiciousness and righteousness that are preached by the scriptures. He is not an ordinary king but the Supreme Lord of the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and nether), the three dimensions of time (past, present and future) and the three Gunas (qualities — such as Satwic or noble, Rajic or worldly, and Tamsic or lowly) which define the world. These three dimensions of Ram's personality represent the entire creation, and the individual is a microcosm of this creation. Hence, Sri Ram represents the Jiva as well as the supreme Brahm, the Lord of creation, in their entirety. He is an amalgam or a homogenous combination of all the 'divine principles' that makes a perfect Human, and the 'human principle' in the Divine. He represents all the ethical codes of conduct relating to an individual in this world which distinguish a noble man, who is deemed to be god-like, from a pervert man who is no better than an animal.

He is a symbolic idol representing all the glorious virtues that makes a person perfect and god-like. He is an icon of the principles of Dharma, of divinity and nobility. He is an image, an embodiment and an ideal symbolizing and personifying at once such qualities as, inter alia, sacrifice, brotherhood, tolerance, forbearance, fortitude, equanimity, self-restraint, courage and patience, simplicity and humility, steadfastness and resilience, the highest traditions of un-paralleled perfection of character, excellence in every pursuit, the grand virtues of righteousness and nobility in thought, action and deed, of probity and propriety, of love, compassion, mercy, benevolence and magnanimity, of enlightenment, erudition and wisdom, of humanity and divinity—all of them rolled into one person known as 'Lord Sri Ram'.

Lord Ram is a quintessential living image of the eclectic philosophies taught by the scriptures. He epitomizes the grand characteristics preached by the scriptures—actions done with dispassion and without any expectation of a reward, doing deeds without seeking any fruit or result from such deeds, exemplary actions and deeds that pass the test of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety, faith in one's own 'self', highest mental evolvment and enlightened thought processes, ideal qualities as a human being and the noblest of virtues that a man should ideally possess, and a firm resolve to uphold the path of 'Dharma', i.e. the path of nobility, ethics, morality, truth, auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety.

Metaphysically speaking, he is a personified form of the immanent, supreme, transcendental Brahm; the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent Brahm; the ultimate and absolute Truth and Reality; the infinite, unborn, eternal Atma or the pure conscious soul. In essence, he is the microcosmic revelation of the macrocosmic, all-pervading, all-encompassing Viraat Purush, the Hiranyagarbha, from whom the rest of the creation has emerged. In short, he is the Supreme Being incarnate.

Spiritually speaking, his divine name 'Ram' is called the 'Tarak Mantra' by the Upanishads, which literally means the only divine medium which can liberate the soul of a living being and provide the latter with deliverance, emancipation and salvation. The Lord's name is so mystically empowered that it frees the creature from the fetters shackling it to this entrapping and entangling web represented by this illusionary

mundane world, and ensure its final and ultimate emancipation and salvation. There is no wonder in it because Sri Ram is none else than the Supreme Being himself personified as a human being. There are two eclectic Upanishads belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition dealing with this divine aspect of Lord Ram, and they are included in this author's compendium of the 108 Upanishads published separately. These two are (i) the Ram Rahasya Upanishad which is the 12th Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, and (ii) the Ram Tapini Upanishad which is the 13th Upanishad of the same Veda.

Further, the three letters of the word 'Ram' have been treated in the Upanishads as being equivalent to the three letters of the universal Mantra 'OM', which in turn is the divine Mantra for Brahm, the Supreme Being.

So we see that the 'story' of Sri Ram, the 'concept' of Sri Ram, cannot be butted and bounded by any given set of interpretations, connotations, imaginations, definitions and parameters. It transcends all dimensions of time and space; it goes beyond the perimeters that any given set of words automatically create, no matter how wide and broad that perimeter may be. The story of Ram, though an established ancient traditional history, outlives history itself.

Like the great souls Surdas and Tulsidas, and taking a cue from them, I too try to cleanse myself by singing the glories of my most beloved Sri Ram in the humblest possible way that I can. But since I am utterly incompetent and abjectly despaired in doing so independently, I rely upon both Tulsidas' and Surdas' versions of the Ramayan to serve this purpose. In my childish endeavour if I do commit omissions and commissions and transgressions, I beg forgiveness from 'my' Lord Ram, and am confident that he would simply smile and mercifully bless my efforts. After all, the seed of a great tree would produce the same tree notwithstanding how the seed is planted in the soil.

The book is divided into three sections—section 1, section 2 and Section 3. The main text of the book 'Sur Ramcharitawali' comes under Section 1. It is divided into six Kandas or Cantos in the traditional way the story of Ram is told in various versions of the Ramayan—viz. the Baal Kand, the Ayodhya Kand, the Aranya Kand, the Kishkindha Kand, the Sundar Kand, the Lanka Kand, the Uttar Kand. This effectively makes it a complete form of 'Ramayan' because of this structural characteristic. The book opens with an introductory verse which briefly outlines why Sri Hari (Vishnu) had to incarnate as Sri Ram, and it acts as sort of a 'prologue' for the rest of the narration.

The second part of the book is Section 2, and it has the full text of the 'Sur-saravali' which, as mentioned previously, is a crisp narration of the story of Ramayan.

Section 3 of this book has three sub-sections. Sub-section 3.1 presents Surdas' life-sketch, sub-section 3.2 gives a brief introduction of the main Characters of the story, and sub-section 3.3 outlines the story of Ramayana in a very concise manner.

Some of the landmark events of the story of Ramayan have been narrated in brief as a note to the relevant verse.

I am thankful to Somil Bharti for doing the Roman Transliteration of the original verses of the text for me.

Before winding up, I wish to say one last humble word. This version of the Ramayan is a revealed word by one of the greatest saints and devotees of all times, i.e. Surdas. No translation can ever match the spirit of the original. But I have tried my best, though at times I might have taken liberty to interpret the meanings as it occurred to me. I

pray for forgiveness for all the transgressions, all omissions and all commissions that I may have committed, or those that may have crept into the rendering inadvertently and unintentionally. But I still hope the divine glory of Lord Ram and the spiritual splendour of his holy name, the divine dazzle and the spiritual glitter, the divine splendour and the spiritual radiance, the brilliance and the stupendous magnificence associated with the Lord and his life-story are so potent enough that they will surely hide my inadequacies and in-competencies. It's my offering to my Lord, and the Lord is ever so graceful that he always accepts what is offered to him with love and affection, howsoever inadequate it is.

'From the rising of Sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised' (Bible, Psalms, 113/3). 'I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being' (Psalm, 104/33). 'I will praise the name of God with a song; and will magnify him with thanks giving' (Psalm, 69/30). 'The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in him and I am helped. Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise him (Psalm, 28/7). To the end that my glory may sing praise to you and not be silent. Oh Lord my God, I will give thanks to you for ever (Psalms 30/12). May my speech (read my books) be pleasing to him, and as for me, I will rejoice in the Lord' (Bible, psalm, 103). So, help me, oh Lord! And 'finally, my bretheren, rejoice in the Lord' (Bible, Philipians, 3/1).

Amen!

25th October, 2015

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SAINT SURDAS'
 RAM CHARITAAWALI
 (Surdas Ramayan)

Section-1

RAM CHARITAWALI: TEXT

Introductory/Prologue

॥श्रीहरिः॥

सूर-रामचरितावली

मङ्गलाचरण
 राग बिलावल

[1]

हरि—हरि , हरि—हरि सुमिरन करौ । हरि—चरनारबिंद उर धरौ ॥
 जय अरु बिजय पारषद दोइ । बिप्र—सराप असुर भए सोइ ॥
 एक बराह—रूप धरि माख्यौ। इक नरसिंह—रूप संहार्यो ॥
 रावन—कुंभकरन सोइ भए । राम जनम तिन कै हित लए ॥
 दसरथ नृपति अजोध्या—राव । ताके गृह कियौ आबिरभाव ॥
 नृप सौं ज्यौं सुकदेव सुनायौ । 'सूरदास' त्यों ही कहि गायौ ॥

..śrīhariḥ..

sūra-rāmacaritāvalī
 maṅgalācaraṇa
 rāga bilāvala

hari-hari, hari-hari sumirana karau. hari-caranārabinda ura dharau..
 jaya aru bijaya pāraṣada dō'i. bipra-sarāpa asura bha'ē sō'i..
 ēka barāha-rūpa dhari māryau. ika narasimha-rūpa saṁhāryō..
 rāvana-kumbhakarana sō'i bha'ē. rāma janama tina kaim hita la'ē..
 dasaratha nrpati ajōdhyā-rāva. tākē grha kiyau ābirabhāva..

nr̥pa saur̥m jyaur̥m sukadēva sunāyau. 'sūradāsa' tyaur̥m hī kahi gāyau..

1. One should constantly, consistently and persistently remember Sri Hari (Vishnu), and enshrine Sri Hari's divine and holy feet in one's heart.

The Lord had two gatekeepers named Jai and Vijai. They became demons due to the curse of Brahmins (sages Sankadi etc.). Out of them, one (Jai in the form of the demon Hiranyaksha) was killed by the Lord in his manifestations as the legendary Boar, and the second one (Vijai in the form of the demon Hiranyakashipu) was killed when the Lord assumed the form of the half-lion half-man called Narsingh. Both these demons once again took birth as Ravana and Kumbhakarna respectively. The Lord incarnated himself as Sri Ram in the household of king Dashrath of Ayodhya for their deliverance¹.

Surdas says he repeats the (divine, glorious, holy) story of Lord Sri Ram's incarnation (i.e. manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord of creation, as a human being in the form of Sri Ram) which sage Shukdeo had narrated to king Parikshit in Srimad Bhagwat² (1).

[Note—¹The story of Jai and Vijai—Once it so happened that the four mind-born sons of Brahma, the creator, i.e. Sanak, Sanaatan, Sanandan and Sanatkumar, had gone to Vaikuntha to have a divine viewing of Lord Vishnu. They had crossed six gates, but when they were about to cross the seventh and the last door their path was obstructed by the two gate-keepers of Lord Vishnu named Jai and Vijai who blocked the way by keeping their sticks across it. It was then these sages had cursed them that they would turn into demons for the next three births, and in each birth they would become enemies of the Lord, and each time get killed at his hands. Finally they will get deliverance from the curse upon being killed the third time. It is out of this curse that the two sentries Jai and Vijai became Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaaksha in the first birth, Ravana and Kumbhakaran in the second birth, and finally Shishupaal and Dantavakra in the third birth.

The story of Ravana and his brothers Kumbhakaran and Vibhishan have been described in (i) Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, Uttarkand, Cantos 1 and 2; (ii) Valmiki's Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga (Canto) nos. 9-34; (iii) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga 13, verse nos. 139; and (iv) Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha nos 176-183.

Refer verse no. 129 of this Sur-Ramcharitawali also.

²Sri Ram's story called the Ramayan is covered in only two Cantos of the 9th Chapter of Srimad Bhagwat. See also verse no. 3/4 of Sur Sarawali, Section no. 2 of this book. Surdas had elaborated on it, and his narration mirrors that of Tulsidas in his own classical narration of Lord Ram's story in the two books known as 'Kavitawali' and 'Geetawali'. These two have been published by this author separately in the series presenting the English versions of Tulsidas' books.]

* __* __* __*

Section-1

Baal Kand/Canto 1

बालकाण्ड

जन्मोत्सव—राग कान्हारौ

[2]

रघुकुल प्रगटे हैं रघुबीर ।
 देस—देस तें टीकौ आयौ, रतन—कनक—मनि—हीर ॥
 घर—घर मंगल होत बधाई, अति पुराबासिनि भीर ।
 आनँद—मगन भए सब डोलत, कछू न सोध सरीर ॥
 मागध—बंदी—सूत लुटाए, गो—गयंद हय—चीर ।
 देत असीस 'सूर', चिरजीवौ रामचंद्र रनधीर ॥

bālakāṇḍa

janmōtsava-rāga kānharau

(2)

raghukula pragaṭē haiṁ raghubīra.
 dēsa-dēsa tēm ṭīkau āyau, ratana-kanaka-mani-hīra..
 ghara-ghara maṅgala hōta badhā'ī, ati purābāsini bhīra.
 ānamḍa-magana bha'e saba ḍōlata, kachū na sōdha sarīra..
 māgadha-bandī-sūta luṭā'ē, gō-gayanda haya-cīra.
 dēta asīsa 'sūra', cirajīvau rāmacandra ranadhīra..

Sri Ram's Birth—Raag Kaanharo

2. Raghubir (literally, the brave one in king Raghu's clan; an epithet universally used for Sri Ram) has¹ revealed himself (i.e. has taken birth) in the clan of Raghu.

On this pleasant and auspicious occasion, king Dashrath has received gifts of gems, jewels, gold and diamonds from different countries. [These gifts were sent to him by various knights and subordinate kings of his domain to congratulate him on the birth of sons.]

Felicitous and celebratory songs are being sung in each and every household (of the city of Ayodhya). A huge crowd has gathered (in the precincts of the royal palace, on the streets and in public places).

Everyone is extremely happy, joyous and ecstatic; they are so exhilarated that they aren't conscious of their own bodies even as they roam about merrily, cheerfully and joyously everywhere in the city, imbibing the spirit of merriment and happiness that completely drenches the place.

The king has liberally given away huge amount of largess in the form of cows, elephants, horses, different varieties of garments etc. to the royal bards, minstrels and heralds called the Maagadhas, the Bandijans and the Suts to celebrate the auspicious occasion.

Surdas also blesses (his Lord) Sri Ram Chandra, who is most valiant, steady and courageous in the battle-field, with a long life (2).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that Surdas has used the present tense in the entire narration of Ramcharitawali. This indicates that he had felt that he was very close to the Lord so much so that his Atma, his soul, was present at the spot where the incidences mentioned in this Ramayan had taken place. Surdas implies that he is a first-hand witness of the events, and what he says is not something heard of, but something that he can vouch for its truthfulness as a witness, and therefore every bit of what is being said is the actual 'truth'. The remarkable conclusion of this assumption is that the entire story of Lord Ram was being played 'live' on the canvas of this saint's mind for the simple reason that he was physically blind. A blind man cannot be so vivid and specific in his narration as Surdas is unless he has a divine sight that transcends barriers of the physical body and its ability to see anything or any event being unfolded with the physical organ of the eye.

Let us briefly be acquainted with the four brothers and their immediate family.

The demon Ravana had unleashed a reign of terror in the world, eating and killing all the humble creatures at will without any compunctions and with impunity. The earth assumed the form of a cow and accompanied the Gods to pray to Lord Vishnu to save them and the rest of the creation. The Lord promised them they he will soon come down to earth personally as an incarnation to do what is needed. Earlier, Manu and his wife Satrupa—who later on became king Dasrath and his chief queen Kaushalya—had done severe penances (Tapa), and when the Lord revealed himself before them and asked them to seek whatever they wished, the couple requested the Lord to become their child. Thus, Vishnu became Sri Ram in the household of King Dasrath of Ayodhya.

King Dasrath had three queens, viz. Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. His marriage to them has been described in *Anand Ramayan* of Valmiki, Saar Kand (Chapter 1), Sarga (Canto) 1, verse nos. 30-86.

Dasrath was childless, so as old age approached, he performed a fire sacrifice to get sons on the advise of his Guru named sage Vasishtha. The fire sacrifice was performed by an expert sage named Atri. The Fire God revealed himself and gave the king a sweet porridge and asked him to give it to his queens to share it amongst themselves. It was thus Sri Ram was born to mother Kaushalya, Laxman and Shatrughan to mother Sumitra, and Bharat to mother Kaikeyi. Laxman was a manifestation of Seshnath, the celestial serpent on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu reclines in the celestial ocean and who supports the earth on his hoods, Shatrughan was a manifestation of Shankha, the conch of Vishnu, Bharat was a manifestation of Chakra, the circular discus of Vishnu, and Sri Ram was Lord Vishnu himself. Refer: *Adhyatma Ramayan*, Uttarkand, Canto 9, verse no. 57.]

[3]

अजोध्या बाजति आजु बधाई ।

गर्भ मुच्यौ कौसिल्या माता, रामचंद्र निधि आई ॥
 गावैं सखी परसपर मंगल, रिषि अभिषेक कराई ।
 भीर भई दसरथ कें आँगन, सामबेद—धुनि छाई ॥
 पूछत रिषिहिं अजोध्या कौ पति, कहियै जनम गुसाई ।
 भौम बार, नौमी तिथि नीकी, चौदह भुवन बड़ाई ॥
 चारि पुत्र दसरथ कें उपजे, तिहूँ लोक ठकुराई ।
 सदा—सर्वदा राज राम कौ, 'सूर' दादि तहँ पाई ॥

(3)

ajōdhyā bājati āju badhā'ī.
 garbha mucyau kausilyā mātā, rāmacandra nidhi ā'ī..
 gāvaim sakhī parasapara maṅgala, riṣi abhiṣēka karā'ī.
 bhīra bha'ī dasaratha kēm āṁgana, sāmabēda-dhuni chā'ī..
 pūchata riṣihim ajōdhyā kau pati, kahiya janama gusā'im.
 bhauma bāra, naumī tithi nīkī, caudaha bhuvana baṛā'ī..
 cāri putra dasaratha kēm upajē, tihūm' lōka ṭhakurā'ī.
 sadā-sarbadā rāja rāma kau, 'sūra' dādi taham' pā'ī..

3. A festive mood prevails and permeates everywhere in Ayodhya. Musical instruments of all denominations that are suitable for such a happy and celebratory occasion are being played everywhere.

The period of development of the foetus in the womb of mother Kaushalya is complete, and from it has emerged the great treasure of this world in the form of the infant Lord known as Sri Ram.

The lady friends (of the queen) are collectively singing laudatory, auspicious and celebratory songs. Sage Vashistha performed the birth rites of the child as ordained by the scriptures.

There is a huge and surging crowd in the palace courtyard of king Dashrath, while the melody of the hymns of the Sam Veda, which are being sung by wise Brahmins, has wafted in the air and spread in all the directions.

The king asks the sage (his Guru Vashistha), 'Oh Lord! Please forecast the future of the child based on the astrological calculations of his time and place of birth etc.'

The sage replied, 'The 9th day of the lunar calendar, especially if it is a Tuesday, is considered very auspicious. So, his (the child's) fame will spread in all the legendary 14 Bhuvans (i.e. in all the corners of the world)¹.'

Dashrath was blessed with four sons (i.e. Sri Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan) who established their name, fame and glory over all the three worlds (i.e. the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds).

The kingdom of king Sri Ram is eternal. Surdas says that his own fame and good name as a renowned poet and bard also has its origin from there (i.e. it is based on the glory of his Lord Sri Ram which he sings) (3).

[Note—¹The fourteen Bhuvans or Lokas or worlds, according to the Padma Puran, are the following—(A) The upper worlds called Urdhava Lokas are seven in number:—(i)

Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, and (vii) Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds called Adhaha Loka:—(i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Satal, (iv) Rasaatal, (v) Talaatal, (vi) Mahaatal, and (vii) Paataal. The total number of Lokas is, therefore, fourteen.

The *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto)1, section 1, verse no. 1 says that these fourteen Bhuvans are protected by Brahma the creator who created this world.

The seven upper Bhuvans or Lokas according to the Purans are the following—According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP) there are the following lokas—‘Bhu’ or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; ‘Bhuvaha’ or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; ‘Swaha’ or the heavens known as Brahma’s abode; the space beyond the earth’s atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; ‘Maha’ or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; ‘Janaha’, so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; ‘Tapaha’ or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and ‘Satyam’ or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

According to some legends, the distances of various mythological Lokas from the earth or Bhu Loka is as follows—the Bhuvha Loka is situated at a distance of 25 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Swaha Loka is situated at a distance of 50 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Maharloka is situated at a distance of 1 Crore Yojans from earth, the Jana Loka is situated at a distance of 2 Crore Yojans from earth, the Tapa Loka is situated at a distance of 4 Crore Yojans from earth, and the Satya Loka is situated at a distance of 8 Crore Yojans from earth.

1 Yojan = a distance of 4, 8 and 16 miles according to different calculations. It is usually taken to be equivalent to 8 miles.

1 Lakh = one hundred thousand (1,00,000). 1 Crore = ten Lakhs (10 x 1,00,000). The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the Vedantic view are the following:-- the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head —viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. Refer *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8.

These seven Lokas as being a part of the first Paad or leg or limb or aspect or facet of the cosmic form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm or the cosmic Atma has been affirmed in Atharva Veda tradition’s *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 4; *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 5.

According to *Subalo-panishad*, Canto 10, verse no. 1 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, there are *ten worlds*—Rasaatal, Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha, Mahar, Janaha, Tapaha, Satya, Prajapati, and Brahm Loka.]

[4]

आजु दसरथ केँ आँगन भीर ।

ये भू-भार उतारन कारन, प्रगटे स्याम-सरीर ॥

फूले फिरत अजोध्या-बासी, गनत न त्यागत चीर ।

परिरंभन हँसि देत परसपर, आनँद नैननि नीर ॥

त्रिदस—नृपति, रिषि ब्यौम—बिमाननि देखत रह्यौ न धीर ।
 त्रिभुवन—नाथ दयालु दरस दै, हरी सबनि की पीर ॥
 देत दान राख्यौ न भूप कछु, महा बड़े नग हीर ।
 भए निहाल 'सूर' सब जाचक, जे जाँचे रघुबीर ॥

(4)

āju dasaratha kēm āmṡgana bhīra.
 yē bhū-bhāra utāraṇa kāraṇa, pragaṭē syāma-sarīra..
 phūlē phirata ajōdhyā-bāsī, ganata na tyāgata cīra.
 parirambhana hamṡsi dēta parasapara, ānamṡda nainani nīra..
 tridasa-nrpati, riṡi byauma-bimānani dēkhata rahyau na dhīra.
 tribhuvana-nātha dayālu darasa dai, harī sabani kī pīra..
 dēta dāna rākhayau na bhūpa kachu, mahā baṛē naga hīra.
 bha'e nihāla 'sūra' saba jācaka, jē jāmṡcē raghubīra..

4. There is a huge and enthusiastic crowd in the royal courtyard of king Dashrath today because the dark-complexioned Sri Ram has revealed (in his household) to remove the burden of the earth. [The burden of the earth was in the form of demons and other evil and sinful ones who were tormenting the creatures of the world and making life hell on earth.]

The citizens of Ayodhya are merrily wandering here and there in bubbly cheerfulness, very proud and extremely happy at the auspicious happenings, and brimming over with exhilaration and ecstasy. They are so overjoyed and overcome with happiness that they don't think twice in discarding or tearing away their clothes. [That is, they give away their garments as charity to others who are poor, or they break out in extempore dance and pull off their clothes in ecstasy while dancing.]

They smilingly and joyously embrace each other most affectionately and jubilantly, while streams of tears of joy are flowing down from their cheerful eyes.

The king of Gods (Indra) and the celestial sages (Narad, Sankadi etc.) are watching the joyous merrymaking scene from the sky as they sit in their planes above the earth. They too can't hold back their emotions of exhilaration and ecstasy.

The Lord of the three worlds has eliminated the torments of the heart of all his devotees by giving them his divine Darshan (holy sight).

The king (Dashrath) gave away all priceless gems and diamonds as charity and alms; he withheld none.

Surdas says—'All those who sought anything from Raghubir were fully obliged and contented (i.e. they had nothing more to ask for). [The word 'Raghubir', literally meaning the brave member of king Raghu's clan, used here indicates both Sri Ram as well as his father Dashrath.] (4).

शर क्रीड़ा—राग बिलावल

[5]

करतल सोभित बान—धनुहियाँ ।
 खेलत फिरत कनकमय आँगन, पहिरेँ लाल पनहियाँ ॥
 दसरथ—कौसिल्या के आगेँ, लसत सुमनकी छहियाँ ।
 मानौ चारि हंस सरबर तें बैठे आइ सदेहियाँ ॥
 रघुकुल—कुमुद—चंद चिंतामनि, प्रगटे भूतल महियाँ ।
 आए ओप दैन रघुकुल कौँ, आनंद—निधि सब कहियाँ ॥
 यह सुख तीनि लोक मैं नाहीं, जो पाए प्रभु पहियाँ ।
 'सूरदास' हरि बोलि भक्त कौँ, निरबाहत गहि बहियाँ ॥

śara krīrā-rāga bilāvala

(5)

karatala sōbhita bāna-dhanuhiyām̐ .
 khēlata phirata kanakamaya āṁṁgana, pahirēm̐ lāla panahiyām̐ ..
 dasaratha-kausilyā kē āgēm̐, lasata sumanakī chahiyām̐ .
 mānau cāri hansa sarabara tēm̐ baiṭhē ā'i sadēhiyām̐ ..
 raghukula-kumuda-canda cintāmani, pragaṭē bhūtala mahiyām̐ .
 ā'ē ōpa daina raghukula kaum̐, ānam̐da-nidhi saba kahiyām̐ ..
 yaha sukha tīni lōka mair̐m̐ nāhīm̐, jō pā'ē prabhu pahiyām̐ .
 'sūradāsa' hari bōli bhakta kaum̐, nirabāhata gahi bahiyām̐ ..

Playing Martial Arts/Archery—Raag Bilaawal

5. Tiny bows and arrows look glorious and wonderful in their small pretty hands (i.e. in the hands of the four children, i.e. Sri Ram and his three brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan).

Wearing red ornate shoes, they are playing around in the golden (or gilded) inner yard of the royal palace.

In front of king Dashrath and queen Kaushalya, who are seated under the shade of a tree laden with flowers, the four children playing around resemble four divine Swans that have come out on the surface of the Mansarovar Lake¹.

Sri Ram is like a full moon in relation to the clan of king Raghu that is like the lily flower. [That is, just like the lily flower blooms in its pristine beauty when it is the night of the full moon, the entire clan of king Raghu, now headed by king Dashrath, is exhilarated and fortunate when Sri Ram has taken birth in it as one of its members. The sight of Sri Ram provides happiness and joy to this clan just like the sight of the full moon provides happiness to the lily flower.]

Sri Ram, who has revealed himself on this earth, is like a 'Chinta Mani'. [The 'Chinta Mani' is a mystically empowered gem that can eliminate all sorts of worries. Hence, Sri Ram has taken birth on earth to remove all the worries and miseries of creatures who live here.]

He is like a treasury and a fount of happiness, joy and bliss for the entire world and its inhabitants, and he has come here to enhance the glory of Raghu's clan.

The happiness, joy, bliss, solace, succour and comfort that people have derived from the Lord (Sri Ram) are not available anywhere else in this world.

Surdas says—‘He (Sri Ram) takes care of all those devotees who say (pronounce, chant or utter) the divine name of Hari (i.e. Lord Vishnu whose incarnation Sri Ram is).’ [That is, the Lord takes good care of all those who invoke his holy name and request the Lord to help them. The Lord never lets them down; he never neglects their pleadings; he never overlooks their well-being and welfare; he never lets them feel rejected and disowned. The Lord’s devotee is assured of instant attention and redressal of grievances and complaints as soon as the Lord is requested to do so.] (5).

[Note—¹The *Mansarovar* Lake is situated in the pristine environment of the higher reaches of the Himalayan mountain range in the north of India where Mt. Kailash, the worldly abode of Lord Shiva, is located. The water of this Lake is believed to be pristine pure and crystal clear, and the Gods come to take dip here.

The bird *Swan* or *Hansa* is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or *Pran* passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature’s inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his *Pran* because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

A wise man is expected to pick up the truth and leave aside the non-truths from the basket full of worldly charms of astounding proportions and myriad forms of temptations present in this creation.

Those wise men who have developed the level of wisdom, erudition and sagacity that they can discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring for their soul are also honoured by the epithet of being a ‘Hans’ (Swan) because they are just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it. Even amongst such wise and enlightened men, those who have realised the ‘truth’ about their own self in the real sense, i.e. have become ‘self-realised’ and hence ‘Brahm-realised’ truthfully, and have consequentially attained the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom are called ‘Param Hans’—literally meaning those who have accessed the ‘supreme type of enlightenment’. The grand and auspicious virtues and characteristics of such an exalted Sanyasi who is self and Brahm realised has been described in detail in the *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition.

The alphabet ‘Ha’ of the word ‘Hans’ is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet ‘Sa’ is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same

cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

Hans, the divine Swan, is also one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu had once appeared as a divine Swan to preach the four celestial sages Sankaadi who were the mental sons of the creator Brahma.

It so happened that Sankaadi approached Brahma and wanted to know how can someone, who wished to have Moksha (final liberation and deliverance from this material world; freedom from attachment to the sense objects of this world; emancipation and salvation), effectively control his mind and sub-conscious and divert them away from the material charms of the world and its sense objects, and towards the inner self where the Atma, the pure consciousness, resides?

Brahma was confused and did not have the answer. So they meditated upon Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, from whom Brahma was born. Thus Vishnu appeared as a divine Swan. The sages could not recognise the Lord in that form and asked who he was. Then Vishnu, in his form as a Swan, preached the great tenets of metaphysics and Vedanta to Sankaadi. Thus, this revelation of Vishnu as a Swan was an embodiment of the greatest and the most refined form of spiritual knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Henceforth, Swan came to be known as a synonym for these eclectic and divine virtues. This story appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 11/13.

The Swan is depicted as a vehicle of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. In other words, those who worship Swan ride on the crest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 17, 19-20 clearly say that 'Hans' is a term employed to refer both to the Atma as well as Brahm. While the Atma is the pure consciousness that is the 'true self' of the individual creature, Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness represented by the Mantra 'OM' or 'Pranav'. The Hans Mantra is the 'Sutra' or thread that links the Atma to Brahm.

The *Dhyān Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 24 and 61-65, of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which primarily deals with meditation and contemplation on Brahm in order to obtain emancipation and salvation of the soul of the creature says that the supreme transcendental Brahm, known also as Pranav, resides in the heart of all the living beings in the form of a Hansa or Swan.]

[6]

धनुर्ही—बान लए कर डोलत ।

चारों बीर संग इक सोभित, बचन मनोहर बोलत ॥

लछिमन, भरत, सत्रुहन सुंदर, राजिवलोचन राम ।

अति सुकुमार, परम पुरुषारथ, मुक्ति—धर्म—धन धाम ॥

कटि—तट पीत पिछौरी बाँधें, काकपच्छ धरें सीस ।
 सर—क्रीड़ा दिन देखन आवत, नारद, सुर तैतीस ॥
 सिव—मन—सकुच, इंद्र—मन आनंद, सुख—दुख बिधिहि समान ॥
 दिति दुर्बल अति, अतिति हृष्टचित, देखि 'सूर' संधान ॥

(6)

dhanuhīm-bāna la'e kara ḍōlata.
 cārōm bīra saṅga ika sōbhita, bacana manōhara bōlata..
 lachimana, bharata, satruhana sundara, rājivalōcana rāma.
 ati sukumāra, parama puruṣāratha, mukti-dharma-dhana dhāma..
 kaṭi-taṭa pīta picchaurī bām̐dhēm, kākapaccha dharēm sīsa.
 sara-kriṣṭa dina dēkhana āvata, nārada, sura taintīsa..
 siva-mana-sakuca, indra-mana ānam̐da, sukha-dukha bidhihi samāna..
 diti durbala ati, atiti hr̥ṣṭacita, dēkhi 'sūra' sandhāna..

6. Roaming around with small bows and arrows in their hands, all the four brothers look most admirable and adorable in each other's company. They speak sweetly and enchantingly in pleasant tones.

The four enchanting brothers, i.e. Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, along with the lotus-eyed Sri Ram, are all very tender of age. They are a personification of the glorious quality of manliness (inspite of their young age), as well as of the so-called three rewards known as 'Artha' (material prosperity and wealth), 'Dharma' (righteousness, probity, propriety and auspiciousness) and 'Moksha' (emancipation and salvation) that a man aspires for.

Sri Ram and other brothers have tied the Pitambar (a yellow coloured silk cloth) around their waists, and the lock of curly hairs on their head sway and wave majestically as they play the game of archery. The celestial sage Narad as well as the thirty-three chief Gods have come to watch them play.

Lord Shiva squirms when he watches their expertise at archery (thinking that they will now slay his devotee, the demon Ravana, and his kith and kin), Indra feels reassured and happy (that his arch enemy, the demons, will finally come to an end), Brahma feels both happy and dismayed at the same time (because he is the father of the entire creation, hence both the Gods and the demons are his children, and he distresses at the prospect of the demons being killed at the hands of Sri Ram), mother Diti, the mother of demons, gets emaciated at the sight (i.e. at the thought that Sri Ram will kill her sons, the demons) and mother Aditi, the mother of Gods, becomes exhilarated in her heart and cheerful in her mind (thinking that now her sons, the Gods, are safe and can live happily after the demons have been trounced by Sri Ram).

Well, this is what Surdas has concluded after closely observing the demeanours of all those who have assembled to watch the four brothers play archery and carefully aim their arrows (6).

विश्वामित्र की यज्ञ रक्षा—राग सारंग

[7]

दसरथ सौं रिषि आनि कह्यौ ।
 असुरनि सौं जग होन न पावत, राम—लषन तब संग दयौ ॥
 मारि ताड़का, यज्ञ करायौ, बिस्वामित्र अनंद भयौ ।
 सीय—स्वयंबर जानि 'सूर'—प्रभु कौं लै रिषि ता ठौर गयौ ॥

viśvāmitra kī yajña rakṣā-rāga sārāṅga

(7)

dasaratha saurṁ riṣi āni kahyau.
 asurani saurṁ jaga hōna na pāvata, rāma-laṣana taba saṅga dayau..
 māri tāṛakā, yajña karāyau, bisvāmitra ananda bhayau.
 sīya-svayambara jāni 'sūra'-prabhu kaurṁ lai riṣi tā ṭhaura gayau..

Protection of sage Vishwamitra's Fire Sacrifice—
 Raag Saarang

7. The sage (Vishwamitra) came and told king Dashrath that he is not able to do his fire sacrifices (due to the hindrances created by the rowdy demons).

Then the king gave Sri Ram and Laxman to him (i.e. the king allowed the brothers to accompany the sage and help protect his fire sacrifice).

He (Sri Ram) killed the demoness Tadaka and helped the sage to complete the sacrifice successfully. This made Vishwamitra extremely obliged, happy, contended and satisfied.

Surdas says—'After the successful completion of the fire sacrifice, the sage heard about the 'Swayambar'¹ (marriage) ceremony of Sita (at Janakpur). The sage took my brave Lord² (i.e. Sri Ram) there to witness it.' (7).

[Note—¹The 'Swayambar' was a special system of marriage in vogue in ancient times in which the father of the girl declared certain conditions or vows. Anyone who could fulfill them became eligible to marry his daughter. Another variation of it was when the would-be bride was required to select her future husband on her own from amongst the assembled candidates. She usually went around the venue inspecting the candidates, and when she decided whom to marry she would put a symbolic garland around his neck.

In the present case of Sita's Swayambar, her father king Janak had declared that anyone who could raise and string the formidable bow of Lord Shiva that was lying in his custody for safe-keeping would get the hands of his daughter in marriage. The wise father knew that with this condition he would be sure that the person is not an ordinary prince, for no ordinary mortal could ever dare to lift the bow of Shiva, let alone to string it. As it eventually happened, Lord Ram not only lifted and stringed the bow but bent it so hard that the bow snapped in the middle.

²Calling Sri Ram as 'my Lord' is remarkable for Surdas who was a devout devotee of Sri Krishna. This particular line shows that a true saint transcends narrow mindedness; they see their Lord everywhere, albeit in the form which is dear to their heart. They are not cult worshipers, nor are they fanatic bigots.]

अहल्योद्धार—राग सारंग

[8]

गंगा—तट आए श्रीराम ।
 तहाँ पषान—रूप पग परसे, गौतम रिषि की बाम ॥
 गई अकास देव—तन धरि कै, अति सुन्दर अभिराम ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु पतित—उधारन—बिरद, कितौ यह काम! ॥

ahalyōd'dhāra-rāga sārāṅga

(8)

gaṅgā-taṭa ā'ē śrīrāma.
 tahām̐ paṣāna-rūpa paga parasē, gautama riṣi kī bāma..
 ga'ī akāsa dēva-tana dhari kai, ati sundara abhirāma.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu patita-udhārana-birada, kitau yaha kāma! ..

Liberation of Ahilya—Raag Saarang

8. (On the way to Janakpur) Sri Ram came to the banks of river Ganges.

There he touched the wife of sage Gautam (named Ahilya)—who had been transformed into a rock or boulder due to a curse¹—by his legs.

(By the mystical and magical effect of the touch of Sri Ram's holy feet and its dust—) She (Ahilya) assumed a beautiful and divine form (as some holy goddess) and went to the heavens. [That is, upon the touch of the dust of the holy feet of Lord Ram, Ahilya found her liberation and was delivered from the horrible curse which had forced her to become a lifeless rock. She found her final salvation and emancipation.]

Surdas says—'Sri Ram's fame is established as 'the one who liberates and delivers sinners.' So, what importance does this almost inconsequential and minor deed has for him?'

[That is, Surdas says that the Lord's benevolence, munificence, grace, compassion and mercy are immensely bountiful, and he ensures complete liberation and deliverance of even the most horrible of sinners whose litany of sins knows no limits. Even the Lord's name is so powerful and potent that merely uttering it provides emancipation and salvation to sinners, and so it is almost insignificant an event that a woman, who is otherwise immaculate except for one misdemeanor on her part, is liberated and delivered by the touch of the Lord's holy feet. With this grand and benevolent background of Lord Ram for which he is so world-renowned, this single act of providing liberation and deliverance to a humble woman is as inconsequential for him as putting a drop of water in an ocean, so to speak.] (8).

[Note—¹Ahilya was the devout wife of sage Gautam. According to legend, once it so happened that Indra, the lustful king of Gods, fell prey to the beauty of Ahilya, and attempted to outrage her modesty by assuming the form of her husband while the sage had gone out to the river to attend to his daily chores. When the sage returned, Indra tried to escape from the hermitage, but the sage caught him red-handed. So outraged was the sage that he cursed both his chaste wife Ahilya as well as the culprit Indra. He cursed Ahilya that she would become a stone. But when he found out that Indra, the king of Gods, was the real culprit who had deceitfully cheated his wife of her loyalty towards her

husband, and that Ahilya was not to be blamed, the sage cursed Indra vehemently. Gautam realised that Indra had been so overcome with a rage of passion that he forgot all senses of ethics, propriety and probity and had assumed the form of the sage to cheat Ahilya. So the sage had then blessed her that when Lord Vishnu incarnated on the earth as Sri Ram, he would visit her place and would touch her with the holy dust of his feet, at which she will be absolved of her sins and her curse, and will resume her original form and come back to heaven. The sage promised her that after her penances and repentance, when she will be purified by Sri Ram's holy feet, he will accept her back as his wife.

Meanwhile, the sage vehemently cursed Indra that his body would be full of holes representing eyes, as he was so lascivious and promiscuous that he could see nothing but a woman's vagina, a virtual 'hole' in the body, with his lustful eyes, which were also equal to a 'hole'. So, let him see whatever he wishes with his whole body, and let the world know about his deformed mentality when it watches him with thousands of holes on his body. As a result, Indra's body became ugly by being perforated with thousands of tiny holes resembling the scars of Chicken Pocks.]

श्रीराम जनकपुर में—राग केदारौ

[9]

देखौ माई! राम—लखन दोउ आवत ।
 मधुर चालि, दृग भले मनोहर, खंजन लोल कुरंग लजावत ॥
 कनक लता विकट तरल मधि लोल पवन बिचलावत ।
 पिक सरोज कुंचित लोहित निमिष बुलावत ॥
 मृगमद तिलक कर पंकज ।
 लेन सकल नवनलिन सुर सिहरति जिय पराग अलि तो कुल पावत
 कबहुँक मिलत सहज ही अँकवति, निपट प्रीति बिलसावत ।
 किसलय—चारु बदन चितवत नगन बिथा ।
 यद्यपि हुते दूर 'सूरज' प्रभु, तिय अंतर लपटावत ॥

śrīrāma janakapura mēm-rāga kēdārau

(9)

dēkhau mā'ī! rāma-lakhana dō'u āvata.
 madhura cālī, dṛga bhalē manōhara, khanjāna lōla kuraṅga lajāvata..
 kanaka latā vikaṭa tarala madhi lōla pavana bicalāvata.
 pika sarōja kuñcita lōhita nimiṣa bulāvata..
 mrgamada tilaka kara paṅkaja.
 lēna sakala navanalina sura siharati jiya parāga ali tō kula pāvata
 kabahumka milata sahaja hī amkavati, nipaṭa prīti bilasāvata.
 kisalaya-cāru badana citavata nagana bithā.
 yadyapi hutē dūra 'sūraja' prabhu, tiya antara lapaṭāvata..

Sri Ram in Janakpur—Raag Kedaarau

9. [When Sri Ram and his brother Laxman reached the city of Janakpur, their charm and beauty completely enthralled the citizens. They were overjoyed at their sight. The ladies were simply bowled over, and the following verse describes how they reacted when the Lord roamed the streets of the city.]

[A young lady said to another lady who was older to her in age—] ‘Oh mother! Look, the two brothers Sri Ram and Laxman are coming to this side.

Their (the two brothers’) charming gait, the way they walk majestically, is most pleasing and attractive. Their beauteous eyes are so captivating and bewitching that they put to shame the beauty of the eyes of the bird called ‘Khanjan’ (a bird seen during the fall season) as well as that of the deer. [Both of them are said to have beautiful eyes.]

Their bodies are as enthralling and attractive as a magical creeper made of gold. Their waists (that resembles the delicate central part of the creeper) are so delicate and thin that a mere waft of breeze makes them sway from side to side.

Their voices are sweet as the cuckoo. Their eyes are slightly reddish or pink in hue, and they are shyly looking down. The frequent dropping of the eyelids which accompany this shy look makes it appear that they are hesitantly inviting the observer to come closer to them.

There is a ‘Tilak Mark’ (a sign put on the forehead by all upper class Hindus) made from a paste of powdered musk on their foreheads. In their lotus-like hands, they hold bows and arrows.

All the Gods keep their bee-like minds ever eager to imbibe the nectar that symbolizes the beauty and bewitching charm of their faces that resemble a newly blossomed lotus flower. The Gods wish so eagerly that they might be the first to drink this nectar-like beauty before others could do so, and consequentially render their entire clan holy and purified.’

The ladies of Janakpur were caught up in a whirlpool of emotions. On the one hand, some of the ladies could not resist themselves and they approached the two brothers most politely, exchanging pleasantries and made sweet talk with them, while on the other hand some of them simply watched the beautiful faces of the two brothers, faces that resembled freshly opened tender green leaves of a creeper, from a distance, because they hesitated in coming closer and talking with them. But this hesitation and reluctance on their part created a surge of immense agony in their hearts (because they thought that they had missed a once-in-a-lifetime golden opportunity to talk with such divine boys).

Surdas says—‘Though Sri Ram was far away from these ladies (because he was walking on the streets of the city like a guest or a stranger), they mentally embraced the Lord known as ‘Suraj’¹, and enshrined the Lord most affectionately in their hearts.’ (9).

[Note—¹Surdas’ earlier name during his childhood was Suraj. Please see section no. 3 — Life sketch of Surdas. So by referring to his earlier childhood name while talking about Sri Ram in Janakpur prior to his marriage, Surdas happens to remember his own adolescent days.

A second meaning of addressing Lord Ram as ‘Suraj’ is this—Surdas intends to establish a close relationship with Lord Ram by effectively saying that the Lord whose story he is narrating is ‘his’, i.e. Suraj’s, own Lord. This pattern of addressing the Lord as one’s very own has been adopted by another contemporary saint of Surdas, i.e. saint-poet Tulsidas who has always addressed Lord Ram as ‘‘Tulsidas’ Ram’.’ This is a unique characteristic feature and a typical proposition of the Bhakti cult, or the philosophy of

devotion, whereby the devotee establishes complete closeness and a personal equation with his chosen deity as if he (the devotee) was a close relative or associate of the deity so much so that he has a right of way and a direct approach or access to the deity concerned. He does not need some other via-media to approach his Lord, and he has no second thoughts while even getting annoyed at his Lord if the devotee feels hurt that the Lord is not paying sufficient attention to him, much like a child who feels angry at his mother if he feels she is neglecting him.

There is another interpretation of the use of the epithet 'Suraj' for Lord Ram. The word 'Suraj' means the Sun. Since the Lord was born in the Solar race, and he was as splendid, radiant, glorious and magnificent in his divine form, glorious virtues and stupendous powers as the Sun in the sky, it is apt to not only compare him with the Sun but even honour him with this title.]

धनुष भङ्ग—राग सारंग

[10]

चितै रघुनाथ—बदन की ओर ।
 रघुपति सों अब नेम हमारौ, बिधि सों करति निहोर ॥
 यह अति दुसह पिनाक, पिता—प्रन, राघव—बयस किसोर ।
 इन पै दीरघ धनुष चढ़ै क्यों, सखि! यह संसय मोर ॥
 सिय—अंदेसं जानि 'सूरज' प्रभु लियौ करज की कोर ।
 टूटत धनु नृप लुके जहाँ—तहाँ, ज्यौं तारागन भोर ॥

dhanuṣa bhaṅga -rāga sārāṅga

(10)

citai raghunātha-badana kī ōra.
 raghupati sōm aba nēma hamārau, bidhi sōm karati nihōra..
 yaha ati dusaha pināka, pitā-prana, rāghava-bayasa kisōra.
 ina pai dīragha dhanuṣa caḍhai kyaum, sakhi! yaha sansaya mōra..
 siya-andēsaṁ jāni 'sūraja' prabhu liyau karaja kī kōra.
 ṭūṭata dhanu nr̥pa lukē jahām-taham, jyauṁ tārāgana bhōra..

Breaking of the Bow—Raag Saarang

10. [This verse narrates the mental condition of Sita as she watched Sri Ram at the venue of the bow-lifting ceremony where her fate was to be decided. Mentally she had accepted Ram as her husband, but the formidable vow of her father stood in the way of her realizing her dreams. The toss and tumble and the accompanying dilemma and consternations through which she mentally suffered are reflected in this verse.]

Sita fixes her sight at the body of Raghunath. [That is, Sita intently watched Sri Ram as he stood at the venue of the marriage ceremony. The word 'Raghuhanth' literally means the Lord of king Raghu's dynasty who ruled over the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya. Obviously, here the word refers to Sri Ram).]

She prays to and pleads with the God known as the 'Vidhata' (literally the God who establishes destiny), saying, 'Oh Lord! My name must be associated with Raghupati from now onwards.' [That is, she begs the God of destiny to ensure that her marriage must be solemnized with Sri Ram, and nobody else. The word 'Raghupathi' literally means 'the Lord of Raghu's clan'. She seems to say, 'Oh God, please help me. I wish to marry no one else except Ram. This is my final resolve.']

She is extremely anxious as she broods and worries. She says to herself, 'These two—the Pinak (the sturdy bow of Lord Shiva upon which depended the outcome of the marriage ceremony) and my father's stern vows (that he would marry me to anyone who would lift and string this bow)—are both insurmountable and inviolable. [That is, on the one hand the bow is extremely strong and heavy, and on the other hand my father's vow just can't be compromised with.]

Raghav (Sri Ram), meanwhile, is very tender (or young) of age. These two are incompatible aspects of the marriage ceremony. So, what would happen?'

Then she turns to her friend and says in utter frustration and dismay, 'Oh friend! I have a grave doubt as to how he (Sri Ram) would ever be able to lift and string this great bow.'

Surdas says—'The Lord of Suraj (see note to verse no. 9) became aware of the mental perplexities and the agitations afflicting Sita, and the accompanying torments that were wrecking her mind and heart. So, the ever-so merciful and compassionate Lord simply lifted the bow on the tips of the nails of his hands (and broke it). [That is, the lifting of the bow was a fun for Ram, and inspite of it being so famously heavy, the Lord had not even had to bother to grasp or catch hold of it with his hands, for he simply scooped it up with the nails of his hands just like one scoops up dust particles from the ground, or sand from the beach near the ocean. By saying that Sri Ram lifted the bow on the tips of his nails, Surdas means that Sri Ram had to make no efforts while lifting it; it was very light for him, and he lifted and broke the bow as if it was some flower or any other light object of no consequence.]

As soon as the bow broke, all the gathered kings hid themselves (in shame) as the stars do at the time of dawn (when the sun rises).' [When the bow snapped in the middle, there was a thunderous roar as if the sky had collapsed. The assembled kings and princes had earlier tried their hands at lifting the bow, but had failed miserably. They were no ordinary kings or princes, but were mighty wrestlers, veterans of several competitions where physical prowess was tested at its extreme best, and were war-hardened warriors whose valour and strength of arms were world-renowned. Hence, when such tender looking and young Sri Ram broke the bow, not just lifted it but actually snapped it playfully while stringing it, they bit the dust and ran away from the venue, or hid their faces in shame.] (10).

दशरथ का जनकपुर आगमन—राग सारंग

[11]

महाराज दसरथ तहँ आए ।

बैठे जाइ जनक—मंदिर महँ, मोतिनि चौक पुराए ॥
 बिप्र लगे धुनि बेद उचारन, जुबतिनि मंगल गाए ।
 सुर—गँधर्व—गन कोटिक आए, गगन बिमाननि छाए ॥
 राम—लषन अरु भरत—सत्रुहन—ब्याह निरखि सुख पाए ।
 'सूर' भयौ आनंद नृपति—मन, दिबि दुंदुभी बजाए ॥

daśaratha kā janakapura āgamana-rāga sārāṅga

(11)

mahārāja dasaratha taham̐ ā'ē.
 baiṭhē jā'i janaka-mandira maham̐, mōtini cauka purā'ē..
 bipra lagē dhuni bēda ucārana, jubatini maṅgala gā'ē.
 sura-gaṁdharba-gana kōṭika ā'ē, gagana bimānani chā'ē..
 rāma-laṣana aru bharata-satruhana-byāha nirakhi sukha pā'ē.
 'sūra' bhayau ānanda nr̥pati-mana, dibi dundubhī bajā'ē..

Arrival of Dashrath with the Marriage Party—
 Raag Saarang

11. [When the marriage of Ram and Sita was finalized, Sri Ram's father, king Dashrath, was informed and invited to Janakpur. This verse narrates the arrival of the king with the marriage party at the venue of the marriage ceremony.]

King Dashrath came there (to Janakpur, along with the marriage party).

He went to the royal palace of king Janak (Sita's father) and was invited to sit at the site of the marriage ceremony where the ground had been studded and decorated with priceless glittering gems.

The Brahmins began chanting the hymns from the Vedas while the women-folk sang auspicious and celebratory songs suitable for the occasion.

Thousands (i.e. great multitudes) of Gods and Gandharvas (celestial musicians; semi-Gods) arrived there (to witness the marriage of Sri Ram with Sita). The sky was choked with their vehicles.

All of them felt extremely exhilarated and ecstatic with joy as they watched the marriage of Sri Ram and Laxman as well as of Bharat and Shatrughan. [All the four brothers were married simultaneously at Janakpur.]

Surdas say—'Dashrath's heart overflowed with joy and happiness. The Gods played their drums in the sky to celebrate the rare and happy occasion.' (11).

कङ्कण मोचन—राग आसावरी

[12]

कर कपै, कंकन नहिं छूटै ।

राम सिया—कर—परस मगन भए, कौतुक निरखि सखी सुख लूटै ॥
 गावत नारि गारि सब दै—दै, तात—भ्रात की कौन चलावै ।
 तब कर—डोरि छुटै रघुपति जू, जब कौसिल्या माता आवै ॥
 पूँगीफल—जुत जल निरमल धरि, आनी भरि कुंडी जो कनक की ।
 खेलत जूप सकल जुबतिनि मै हारे रघुपति, जिती जनक की ॥
 धरे निसान अजिर गृह मंगल, बिप्र बेद—अभिषेक करायौ ।
 'सूर' अमित आनंद जनकपुर, सोइ सुकदेव पुराननि गायौ ॥

kaṅkaṇa mōcana-rāga āsāvarī

(12)

kara kampai, kaṅkana nahim chūṭai.
 rāma siyā-kara-parasa magana bha'e, kautuka nirakhi sakhi sukha lūṭaim..
 gāvata nāri gāri saba dai-dai, tāta-bhrāta kī kauna calāvai.
 taba kara-ḍōri chuṭai raghupati jū, jaba kausilyā mātā āvai..
 pūṁgīphala-juta jala niramala dhari, ānī bhari kuṇḍī jō kanaka kī.
 khēlata jūpa sakala jubatini mairi hārē raghupati, jiti janaka kī..
 dharē nisāna ajira gr̥ha maṅgala, bipra bēda-abhiṣēka karāyau.
 'sūra' amita ānanda janakapura, sō'i sukadēva purānani gāyau..

Ritual of 'Kankan Mochan'

(Breaking by the groom of the auspicious String
 wrapped around the wrist of the bride')—

Raag Aasaawari

12. [There are a number of rituals associated with Hindu marriage ceremonies. One of them is known as 'Kankan Mochan'. It involves the breaking by the groom of the auspicious string that is wrapped around the wrist of the bride immediately before solemnizing of the marriage. Usually, leaves of the mango tree and some betel nuts are rolled and tied to this string, which is broken by the groom on the fourth day after marriage. This verse narrates this event.]

Sri Ram touched the hands of Sita in his attempt to break the Kankan (the auspicious string, so-called because it resembles a wrist band or bracelet). He was so overwhelmed with love and affection for her when his hands touched hers that he became emotional and his hands shook. As a result, he could not remove or untie the bracelet string in his excitement. [Removal of the string or the bracelet from the wrist of the newly-wed bride is a ritual which is primarily meant to remove hesitations and break the ice between the couple. This is the first skin contact between the husband and the wife.]

Seeing Sri Ram's inability in doing so and his feeling of shyness at it, the friends (of Sita) enjoyed the spectacle, poked fun at them, and made merry a lot.

All the assembled women-folk clapped their hands in merriment and sang teasing songs on the occasion. They sang—'Oh Raghupati (Sri Ram)! What strength, prowess, potentials and powers do your father and brothers have (that you are unable to remove the

bracelet from Sita's wrists)? [That is, it seems that your family has weak genes and lack manliness.]

Oh Raghupati (Sri Ram)! The 'Kankan' (i.e. the ceremonial thread tied like the bracelet on the wrist of Sita) will be removed (or untied) only when mother Kaushalya comes here. [That is, since you are incapable of doing it, your mother will do it for you! It is so funny that even though you are grown up, you need the support of your mother while dealing with your wife. You seem to become jelly when facing Sita.]

[After this initial teasing ritual—] They brought a golden water-pot filled with clean water along with betel nuts and fruits, and they kept these in front of the couple (as part of the ritual).

While going through the ritual of 'playing the game of dice' in the presence of the lady friends of Sita (another ritual also meant to remove all hesitations and formalities between the couple), Raghupati (Sri Ram) lost the game, and Sita won it. [Obviously, more teasing and taunts must have followed.]

Auspicious symbols and other religious paraphernalia were kept on the ground at the venue of the marriage ceremony, and the Brahmins made the couple bathe these amid the chanting of the hymns of the Vedas.

Surdas says—'Happiness and joy that had no limits, exhilaration and ecstasy that were fathomless, measureless and boundless, extreme merriment that seems infinite, had spread in all the directions of Janakpur on that occasion. It is the same happiness and joy that has been described by the parrot sage Shukdeo in his epic narration of the event in the Puran (known as the Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran).' (12).

[Note—This last stanza clearly shows that Surdas has based his story of Sri Ram on Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurāṇ.]

पाणिग्रहण—राग नट

[13]

ललित गति राजत अति रघुबीर ।
 नरपति—सभा—मध्य मनौ ठाढ़े, जुगल हंस मतिधीर ॥
 अलख अनंत अपरिमित महिमा, कटि—तट कसे तुनीर ।
 कर धनु, काकपच्छ सिर सोभित, अंग—अंग दोउ बीर ॥
 भूषण बिबिध बिसद अंबर जुत, सुंदर स्याम सरीर ।
 देखत मुदित चरित्र सबै सुर, ब्यौम बिमाननि भीर ॥
 प्रमुदित जनक निरखि मुख—अंबुज, प्रगट नैन मधि नीर ।
 तात कठिन प्रन जानि जानकी, आनति नहिं उर धीर ॥
 करुनामय जब चाप लियौ कर, बाँधि सुदृढ़ कटि—चीर ।
 भूभृत—सीस नमित जो गर्बगत, पावक सींच्यौ नीर ॥
 डोलत महि अधीर भयौ फनिपति, कूरम अति अकुलान ।
 दिग्गज चलित, खलित मुनि—आसन, इंद्रादिक भय मान ॥
 रबि मग तज्यौ, तरकि ताके हय, उत्पथ लागे जान ।

सिव—बिरंचि ब्याकुल भए धुनि सुनि, तब तोर्यो भगवान ॥
 भंजन—सब्द प्रगट अति अब्हुत, अष्ट दिसा नभ पूरि ।
 स्रवन—हीन सुनि भए अष्टकुल नाग गरब भय चूरि ॥
 इष्ट—सुरनि बोलत नर तिहि सुनि, दानव—सुर बड़ सूर ।
 मोहित बिकल जानि जिय सबही, महाप्रलय कौ मूर ॥
 पानि—ग्रहन रघुबर बर कीन्हौ, जनकसुता सुख दीन ।
 जय—जय धुनि सुनि करत अमरगन, नर—नारी लवललीन ॥
 दुष्टनि दुख, सुख संतनि दीन्हौ, नृप—ब्रत पूरन कीन ।
 राचंद्र—दसरथहि बिदा करि 'सूरदास' रस—भीन ॥

pāṇigrahaṇa-rāga naṭa

(13)

lalita gati rājata ati raghubīra.
 narapati-sabhā-madhyā manau ṭhārḥē, jugala hansa matidhīra..
 alakha ananta aparimita mahimā, kaṭi-taṭa kasē tunīra.
 kara dhanu, kākapaccha sira sōbhita, aṅga-aṅga dō'u bīra..
 bhūṣana bibidha bisada ambara juta, sundara syāma sarīra.
 dēkhata mudita caritra sabai sura, byauma bimānani bhīra..
 pramudita janaka nirakhi mukha-ambuja, pragaṭa naina madhi nīra.
 tāta kaṭhina prana jāni jānakī, ānati nahim ura dhīra..
 karunāmaya jaba cāpa liyau kara, bāmḍhi sudrṛha kaṭi-cīra.
 bhūbhṛṭa-sīsa namita jō garbagata, pāvaka sīnṇyau nīra..
 ḍōlata mahi adhīra bhayau phanipati, kūrama ati akulāna.
 diggaja calita, khalita muni-āsana, indrādika bhaya māna..
 rabi maga tajyau, taraki tākē haya, utpatha lāgē jāna.
 siva-birañci byākula bha'ē dhuni suni, taba tōryō bhagavāna..
 bhañjana-sabda pragaṭa ati adbhuta, aṣṭa disā nabha pūri.
 sravana-hīna suni bha'ē aṣṭakula nāga garaba bhaya cūri..
 iṣṭa -surani bōlata nara tihi suni, dānava-sura baṛa sūra.
 mōhita bikala jāni jiya sabahī, mahāpralaya kau mūra..
 pāni-grahana raghubara bara kīnhayau, janakasutā sukha dīna.
 jaya-jaya dhuni suni karata amaragana, nara-nārī lavalīna..
 duṣṭani dukha, sukha santani dīnhau, nrpa-brata pūrana kīna.
 rācandra-dasarathahi bidā kari 'sūradāsa' rasa-bhīna..

The Marriage—Raag Nut

13. [Surdas recapitulates the whole event of Sri Ram's marriage in one verse, and says that—] The Raghubirs (literally the brave warriors of king Raghu's clan, here meaning Sri Ram and Laxman) looked most admirable and adorable with their majestic and regal gait. They stood majestically in the midst of the assembly of great kings like two wise Swans.

He (i.e. Lord Ram who is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, the Supreme Being) who is primarily invisible, incomprehensible, eternal and without an end, whose glories and fames are measureless and fathomless, is today standing regally in the assembly with a quiver tied to his waist.

Both the brothers hold a bow each in their hands. Locks of curly hair sway majestically from their heads. All the parts of their bodies look adorable.

They wear various types of ornaments and well-fitting clothes that are not only clean but also very attractive to look at. Sri Ram's body has a beautiful dark complexion.

All the Gods who have assembled in the sky to attend the marriage ceremony feel extremely exhilarated and ecstatic watching the two brothers. There is a huge gathering of planes in the sky in which the Gods have arrived. [So many Gods have arrived to watch the spectacle of the marriage ceremony of Sri Ram that the sky is overcrowded and chock-a-block with their vehicles.]

Janak has been overcome with waves of surging love and affection upon seeing the lotus-like enchanting face of Sri Ram. Tears of joy roll down from his eyes.

But Janki (literally the daughter of Janak, a term used for Sita) becomes extremely anxious and uneasy when she thinks of the stern vows that her father has made. She is not able to feel comfortable and is highly worried. [She is not sure what would happen if Sri Ram is unable to lift the bow, as she has chosen him to be her future husband in her heart. Uncertainty is bearing heavily on her and extracting a heavy toll from her mind.]

[Realising her consternation and dilemma—] When the merciful and compassionate Lord (Sri Ram) tied the waist-cloth tightly around his waist (as a gesture of preparedness) and lifted the bow, then the heads of proud and haughty kings bowed down in shame just like leaping flames of the fire calm down when water is sprayed upon it.

At that instant there was a great upheaval in this world. The earth shook violently, which made 'Seshnath' (the legendary serpent who is said to hold the earth on its hoods) squirm and become restless, the legendary tortoise (who holds the earth on its back) become extremely agitated, the 'Diggajas' (the mythological eight elephants who hold the earth from its eight corners) shake and tremble in their places where they stood, the attention of sages who were meditating got disturbed, and Indra and other Gods became highly alarmed (wondering whether it was the arrival of the dooms-day).

The Sun God shifted from his path. This was because the horses of his chariot looked stunned and dazed, glancing uncertainly here and there, and were so terrified at the unusual happenings that they deviated from their designated path because they did not know in which direction to proceed. This resulted in the Sun God moving away from his well-established traditional path. Even Lords Shiva and Brahma were alarmed by the sound of the bow's resounding twang.

At that moment, Sri Ram broke the bow (in two). The strange and most terrifying sound that was never heard any time before, the sound that was produced by the breaking of the bow, spread everywhere in all the directions of the earth and the sky.

All the eight species of snakes¹ became deaf upon hearing that ear-splitting snap of the bow; their pride was crushed out of fear. [It is believed that the snakes lost their ears from this moment. The 'pride' of these snakes refers to their habit of raising the hood immediately upon being provoked or teased. When they heard this fierce sound,

then instead of raising the hood they simply scurried to take cover in some hole in the ground to escape death, as they thought that the end of the world is at hand.]

Men prayed to their personal Gods (asking them for protection, for the terrible sound of the bow breaking into two, and the fearful events that followed it immediately as narrated above, indicated the happening of some unprecedented calamitous event, some natural disaster like the one that would occur during the dooms-day when the earth would eventually disintegrate and breakup into many parts, thereby wiping out the entire creation that it harbours).

All the great fearless Demons as well as the immortal Gods started hallucinating, tottering and swooning, thinking that all the turmoil that was being created is due to the imminent end of the creation as would occur on the dooms-day.

Then, Raghubar (Sri Ram), now as a groom, accepted the hands of the daughter of Janak (i.e. Sita), and by doing so he bestowed upon her immense happiness and joy. The Gods broke out in a spontaneous applause, shouting in unison, 'Glory to the couple!' All the residents of the city (of Janakpur) were drowned in a surging and heaving wave of happiness, joy, exhilaration and ecstasy.

By marrying Sita and breaking the bow, Sri Ram gave immense joy and happiness to good people, and anguish and consternation to the wicked ones. He fulfilled the vows of Janak.

Surdas says that after the marriage, Janak, who was submerged in love and affection for the couple, finally bade good bye to Sri Ram Chandra and Dashrath (as the marriage party prepared to leave Janakpur for Ayodhya). (13).

[Note—¹The 8 Legendary serpents—The eight legendary serpents are the following—Anant, Vaasuki, Takshak, Karkotak, Padma, Mahaapadma, Shankha and Kulik. These eight serpents are shown to hold the entire creation on their hoods. This fact is depicted when they are shown to hold the worship instrument of Lord Ram who is regarded as the Supreme Being personified on earth. This worship instrument is known as the Yantra and its enclosure is called the Bhupur. The eight serpents are depicted as holding this Yantra from its four corners as follows—in the North is written the name of Anant, in the North-East is written the name of Vasuki, in the East is written the name of Takshak, in the South-East is written the name of Karkotak, in the South is written the name of Padma, in the South-West is written the name of Mahaapadma, in the West is written the name of Shankha, and in the North-West is written the name of Kulik. This depiction would make it appear that these eight legendary serpents are supporting the entire instrument from its eight corners. Refer *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse nos. 53-54.]

बरात बिदाई—राग सारंग

[14]

दसरथ चले अवध आनंदत ।

जनकराई बहु दाइज दै करि, बार—बार पद बंदत ॥

तनया जामातनि कौं समदत, नैन नीर भरि आए ।

‘सूरदास’ दसरथ आनंदित, चले निसान बजाए ॥

barāta bidā'ī-rāga sārāṅga

(14)

dasaratha calē avadha ānandata.
 janakarā'i bahu dā'ija dai kari, bāra-bāra pada bandata..
 tanayā jāmātani kaum samadata, naina nīra bhari ā'ē.
 'sūradāsa' dasaratha ānandita, calē nisāna bajā'ē..

Departure of Marriage Party from Janakpur—
 Raag Saarang

14. Dashrath, full of happiness and joyous, made his departure from Janakpur to back home to Ayodhya, his capital city.

King Janak gave a lot of dowry and repeatedly bowed at his feet in humility.

His (Janak's) eyes welled-up with tears when he finally met his daughters and their respective grooms (or his son-in-laws) for the last time.

Surdas says that Dashrath, who was overwhelmed with happiness and joy, started on his journey back to Ayodhya in a ceremonial way. Musical instruments such as the kettle-drums etc. were played on the happy and auspicious occasion (14).

[Note—As is well known, all the four brothers were married at Janakpur. Surdas has dealt very briefly with the marriage ceremony, and he hints at the marriage of all the four brothers only once in the 3rd line of this verse by using the plural word 'daughters' and 'son-in-laws'.]

परशुराम मिलाप—राग सारंग

[15]

परसुराम तेहिं औसर आए ।
 कठिन पिनाक कहौ किन तोख्यो, क्रोधित बचन सुनाए ॥
 बिप्र जानि रघुबीर धीर दोउ हाथ जोरि सिर नायौ ।
 बहुत दिननि कौ हुतौ पुरातन, हाथ छुअत उठि आयौ ॥
 तुम तौ द्विज, कुल—पूज्य हमारे, हम—तुम कौन लराई ।
 क्रोधवंत कछु सुन्यौ नहीं, लियौ सायक—धनुष चढ़ाई ॥
 तबहुँ रघुपति कोन न कीन्हौ, धनुष न बान सँभाख्यो ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु—रूप समुझि, बन परसुराम पग धाख्यो ॥

paraśurāma milāpa-rāga sārāṅga

(15)

parasurāma tēhim ausara ā'ē.
 kaṭhina pināka kahau kina tōryō, krōdhita bacana sunā'ē..
 bipra jāni raghubīra dhīra dō'u hātha jōri sira nāyau.
 bahuta dinani kau hutau purātana, hātha chu'ata uṭhi āyau..

tuma tau dvija, kula-pūjya hamārē, hama-tuma kauna larāī.
 krōdhavanta kachu sun'yau nahīm, liyau sāyaka-dhanuṣa caṛhāī..
 tabahūm' raghupati kōna na kīnhau, dhanuṣa na bāna sam'bhāryō.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu-rūpa samujhi, bana parasurāma paga dhāryō..

Meeting with Parashuram—
 Raag Saarang

15. At that time (while the marriage party was on its way back to Ayodhya), sage Parashuram arrived on the scene. [Sage Parashuram was a Brahmin and a great devotee of Lord Shiva. He had vanquished the haughtiness of the Kshatriya kings by conquering them repeatedly. When he heard that the bow of his Lord, Shiva, was broken by a Kshatriya prince, he took it as an umbrage and affront, thinking that his authority as the vanquisher of the Kshatriya race was being challenged, besides insulting Lord Shiva, something which was absolutely unpardonable. So he arrived on the scene, fretting and fuming vehemently, to punish the perpetrators of this imagined crime.]

He said angrily, 'Say, who has broken this strong bow?'

The courageous Sri Ram, considering the fact that the sage was a Brahmin and worthy of respect, replied patiently and politely, 'It was an old and decrepit bow. It lifted easily by the mere touch of my hand (and got broken in this process because it was very fragile). You are a Brahmin! You are adored and worshipped by me and my clan. Where is the question of my fighting with you or even thinking of insulting you that you are so agitated?'

But Parashuram was so angry and annoyed that he didn't listen to anything, and mounted the arrow on his bow (pointing it to Sri Ram).

Inspite of it, Raghupati (Sri Ram) did not show any sign of anger or spite, nor did he raise his own bow and arrow in retaliation (to counter Parashuram's threats).

Surdas says—'At last, sage Parashuram realised (his folly and) the divine nature of Sri Ram. Thereafter, he went back to the forest (to continue with his Tapa, i.e. to do austerities and penances)¹ (15).

[Note—¹It is not mentioned here how this came about, but this episode is elaborately described in Tulsidas' 'Ram Charit Manas' Ranayan, in its Baal Kand, Doha nos. 268-285. Briefly, the reason why Parashuram relented is that despite his reputation as the unrelenting and unpardoning vanquisher of Kshatriya kings, he just could not muster enough internal courage to harm Sri Ram. Wondering what was preventing him from punishing the prince, he wished to test the latter's special divine qualities and to ascertain whether Ram is indeed an incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself by ordering him (Ram) to take Lord Vishnu's bow, which Parashuram was carrying, and string it. Lord Ram easily took it and strung it to the amazement of the sage, who then realised that Ram was no ordinary prince but the divine Vishnu himself.]

अवधपुरी प्रवेश—राग सारंग

[16]

अवधपुर आए दसरथ राइ ।

राम, लषन अरु भरत, सत्रुहन, सोभित चारौ भाइ ॥

घुरत निसान, मृदंग—संख—धुनि, भेरि—बाँझ—सहनाइ ।
 उमँगे लोग नगर के निरखत, अति सुख सबहिनि पाइ ॥
 कौसिल्या आदिक महतारी, आरति करहिं बनाइ ।
 यह सुख निरखि मुदित सुर—नर—मुनि, 'सूरदास' बलि जाइ ॥

avadhapurī pravēśa-rāga sārāṅga

(16)

avadhapura ā'ē dasaratha rā'i.
 rāma, laṣana aru bharata, satruhana, sōbhita cārau bhā'i..
 ghurata nisāna, mṛdaṅga-saṅkha-dhuni, bhēri-bām̐jha-sahanā'i.
 umam̐gē lōga nagara kē nirakhata, ati sukha sabahini pā'i..
 kausilyā ādika mahatārī, ārati karahim̐ banā'i.
 yaha sukha nirakhi mudita sura-nara-muni, 'sūradāsa' bali jā'i..

Entry in Ayodhya—

Raag Saarang

16. King Dashrath has arrived at Ayodhya.

The four brothers—i.e. Sri Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan—look most adorable, charming and magnificent alongside him.

The musical drums are being beaten. Besides them, other musical instruments such as kettle-drums, tumbrels, trumpets, conch, cymbals and clarinets are also being played.

The citizens of Ayodhya watch cheerfully and joyously the marriage procession as it enters the city and winds its way to the royal palace. All of them feel extremely exhilarated and ecstatic.

Kaushalya and other mothers perform the ceremonial 'Arti'¹ (showing of lighted lamps as a warm gesture) to welcome them.

The Gods, the ordinary humans as well as the sages and seers—all are extremely happy and joyful; all of them are extremely exhilarated and ecstatic on observing the auspicious scene. Surdas says that he sacrifices himself at the altar of this surging ocean of happiness and good times (16).

[Note—¹'Arti' is a Hindu custom of welcoming someone with the showing of lighted lamps arranged on a platter and moved in a clockwise fashion before the guest. While doing so, hymns from the scriptures and celebratory or welcoming songs are sung in his honour.]

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Section-1

Ayodhya Kand/Canto 2

अयोध्याकाण्ड

राम वन गमन—राग सारंग

[17]

महाराज दसरथ मन धारी ।
 अवधपुरी कौ राज राम दै, लीजै ब्रत बनचारी ॥
 यह सुनि बोली नारि कैकई, अपनौ बचन सँभारौ ।
 चौदह वर्ष रहैं बन राघव, छत्र भरत—सिर धारौ ॥
 यह सुनि नृपति भयौ अति ब्याकुल, कहत कछू नहिं आई ।
 'सूर' रहे समुझाई बहुत, पै कैकई—हठ नहिं जाई ॥

ayōdhyākāṇḍa

rāma vana gamana-rāga sārāṅga

(17)

mahārāja dasaratha mana dhārī.
 avadhapurī kau rāja rāma dai, lijai brata banacārī..
 yaha suni bōlī nāri kaika'ī, apanau bacana sam̐bhārau.
 caudaha varṣa rahaiṁ bana rāghava, chatra bharata-sira dhārau..
 yaha suni nr̥pati bhayau ati byākula, kahata kachū nahim̐ ā'ī.
 'sūra' rahē samujhā'ī bahuta, pai kaika'i-haṭṭha nahim̐ jā'ī..

Ayodhya Kand/Canto 2

Sri Ram's Exile to Forest—

Raag Saarang

17. King Dashrath decided that he should now hand-over the reign of the kingdom to Sri Ram and go to the forest as a 'Vanprastha' (which is the 3rd stage in the life of a person when he is expected to renounce the world and go to the forest to do 'Tapa' or severe penance and austerity, and prepare for 'Sanyas' which is the last stage of life before death).

Hearing his decision, Kaikeyi (Bharat's mother) said, 'Recall the words you had given me earlier. [That is, Kaikeyi reminded the king about the two boons that he had granted to her on some earlier occasion, and which were pending for redemption. He had told her then that she could ask whatever she wishes at any time in future. Now that time has come.]¹

Let Sri Ram reside in the forest for 14 years and put the 'Chhatra' (the ceremonial umbrella signifying royalty and coronation as a king) on the head of (my son) Bharat.'

Hearing this, the king became extremely crestfallen, perplexed and dumbfounded. He was completely shaken and stunned at this unwarranted sudden turn of events. He couldn't even utter a word, so dumbstruck and shocked he was.

Surdas says—'The brave king tried his best to explain the things to her and persuade her to see reason. He tried his best to dissuade her from being stubborn, but she was adamant and unrelenting in her (evil) resolve.' (17).

[Note—¹The story of Kaikeyi's two pending boons that she got from her husband Dasrath have been narrated in detail in the Anand Ramayan, Saar-Kand (Chapter 1), first Sarg (Canto 1), verse nos. 77-85. Briefly the story goes that once king Dasrath had gone to help the Gods in their war against the demons. Kaikeyi had accompanied him to the battle-field. The axle of the chariot of Dasrath broke when it was hit by an arrow of a demon. Kaikeyi saw it and she immediately put her hands in its place to support the wheel and prevent the chariot from toppling over. The king was so engrossed in the battle that he did not know at the time what was happening. At the end of the day he saw her hands profusely bleeding. The king was overwhelmed by her courage and valour, and felt so obliged of her that he asked her for two boons. Kaikeyi accepted the offer but requested him to keep them pending for some future date when she would get them invoked. When Kaikeyi decided to send Sri Ram to forest exile and put her own son Bharat on the throne of Ayodhya, these were the two boons that she invoked and left Dasrath dumbfounded.]

राग कान्हरी

[18]

महाराज दसरथ यौ सोचत ।
 हा रघुनाथ, लछन, बैदेही! सुमिरि नीर दृग मोचत ॥
 त्रिया—चरित मतिमंत न समुझत, उठि प्रछालि मुख धोवत ।
 अति बिपरीत रीति कछु औरै, बार—बार मुख जोवत ॥
 परम कुबुद्धि कह्यौ नहिं समुझति, राम—लछन हँकराए ।
 कौसिल्या सुनि परम दीन है, नैन नीर ढरकाए ॥
 बिह्वल तन—मन, चकित भई सो, यह प्रतच्छ सुपनाए ।
 गदगद—कंठ, 'सूर' कोसलपुर सोर, सुनत दुख पाए ॥

rāga kānharau

(18)

mahārāja dasaratha yauṁ sōcata.
 hā raghunātha, lachana, baidēhī! sumiri nīra dṛga mōcata..

triyā-carita matimanta na samujhata, uṭhi prachāli mukha dhōvata.
 ati biparīta rīti kachu aurai, bāra-bāra mukha jōvata..
 parama kubud'dhi kahyau nahim samujhati, rāma-lachana hamkarā'ē.
 kausilyā suni parama dīna hvai, naina nira ḍharakā'ē..
 bihvala tana-mana, cakita bha'ī sō, yaha prataccha supanā'ē.
 gadagada-kaṇṭha, 'sūra' kōsalapura sōra, sunata dukha pā'ē..

Raag Kaanharau

18. King Dashrath lamented woefully, 'Ah Raghunath (Sri Ram), Ah Laxman, Ah Vaidehi (Sita)!' He remembered them with great sorrow in his heart, and tears of extreme anguish rolled down his eyes.

Despite of his being wise, erudite and adroit, he could not understand the wicked and scheming nature of that lady. He got up, washed his face with water and looked at her once again (to try to make her see reason). [Dashrath thought that he was day-dreaming, that he had heard her wrong, that he was perhaps hallucinating due to old age or weariness caused by overwork in connection with his royal duties. So he got up to splash some fresh water on his face and refresh himself.]

But she became sterner and more stubborn in her (evil) resolve. That most cunning and wicked woman wouldn't listen to any of his pleadings; she would just not pay any heed to his wretched condition and his earnest attempt to make her be reasonable.

At last, very much frustrated, dismayed and exasperated, he summoned Sri Ram and Laxman.

Hearing the news, mother Kaushalya began shedding tears of sorrows. Her mind and body were overwhelmed with perplexity and exasperation. She was so stunned at this sudden and unexpected development that she just couldn't find her bearing and understand whether it was for real or was merely a bad dream. Her throat was choked with emotions.

Surdas says—'The word spread like wild-fire in the city, creating a huge turmoil. Everyone was overcome with anguish and peeved beyond measure.' (18).

कैकेयी के वचन श्रीराम के प्रति—राग सारंग

[19]

सकुचनि कहत नहीं महाराज ।
 चौदह वर्ष तुम्हैं बन दीन्हौं, मम सुत कौं निज राज ॥
 पितु—आयसु सिर धरि रघुनायक, कौसिल्या ढिंंग आए ।
 सीस नाइ बन—आज्ञा माँगी, 'सूर' सुनत दुख पाए ॥

kaikēyī kē vacana śrīrāma kē prati-rāga sāraṅga

(19)

sakucani kahata nahim mahārāja.

caudaha varṣa tumhaiṁ bana dīnhaum̐, mama suta kauṁ nija rāja..
pitu-āyasu sira dhari raghunāyaka, kausilyā dhiṅga ā'ē.
sīsa nā'i bana-ājñā mām̐gī, 'sūra' sunata dukha pā'ē..

Kaikeyi Orders Sri Ram—
Raag Saarang

19. (When Sri Ram came there, Kaikeyi said to him—) 'The king is hesitating to say it, but he has decided to give you exile in the forest for the next 14 years, and the throne (of Ayodhya) to my son (Bharat).'

Accepting the (unspoken but implied) instructions of his father with due respect, Sri Ram came to Kaushalya (his own mother) and asked for her permission (to go to the forest) with a bowed head.

Surdas says that upon hearing it, the mother was overwhelmed with surging sorrows and overcome with immense anguish (19).

दशरथ विलाप—राग सारंग

[20]

रघुनाथ पियारे, आजु रहौ (हो) ।
चारि जाम बिस्राम हमारै, छिन—छिन मीठे बचन कहौ (हो) ॥
बृथा होहु बर बचन हमारौ, कैकड़ जीव कलेस सहौ (हो) ।
आतुर ह्वै अब छाँड़ि अवधपुर, प्रान—जिवन! कित चलन कहौ (हो) ॥
बिछुरत प्रान पयान करैगे, रहौ आजु, पुनि पंथ गहौ (हो) ।
अब सूरज दिन दरसन दुरलभ, कलित कमल—कर कंठ गहौ (हो) ॥

daśaratha vilāpa-rāga sārāṅga

(20)

raghunātha piyārē, āju rahau (hō).
cāri jāma bisrāma hamāraiṁ, china-china mīṭhē bacana kahau (hō)..
br̥ṭhā hōhu bara bacana hamārau, kaika'i jīva kalēsa sahau (hō).
ātura hvai aba chām̐ḍi avadhapura, prāna-jivana! kita calana kahau (hō)..
bichurata prāna payāna karaiṅgē, rahau āju, puni pantha gahau (hō).
aba sūraja dina darasana duralabha, kalita kamala-kara kaṇṭha gahau (hō)..

Dashrath's Lamentations—Raag Saarang

20. (After taking leave of his mother, Sri Ram came to his father, king Dasrath, to bid him a final farewell. The king wept bitterly and said—) 'Oh my beloved Raghunath (Sri Ram)! Stay for one more day (i.e. at least postpone your departure by one day). Stand near me for at least 4 'Prahars' (1 Prahara = 3 hours; 8th part of a day), and speak pleasant things to me repeatedly (i.e. don't talk about leaving me, and please be gracious enough

to reassure me and assuage my roughed-up feelings), even if my words given to Kaikeyi go in vain, and she gets immensely agitated and frustrated that her evil scheme has fallen flat on its face.

Oh ‘Pran-jivan’ (literally, the life and the soul; it is an endearing reference to Sri Ram)! Why do you talk of leaving (abandoning) Ayodhya in a hurry, and where do you want to go? As soon as you separate yourself from me, my ‘Pran’ (soul, spirit, life) will also abandon this body of mine (i.e. I shall die immediately). Hence, stay here for at least today, then you can go your way (if you so wish).

The sunny, cheerful and pleasant days of being able to see you at will shall now become a thing of the past. So at least embrace me with your lotus-like hands for once at last’ (20).

श्रीराम के वचन जानकी के प्रति—राग गूजरी

[21]

तुम जानकी! जनकपुर जाहु ।
 कहा आनि हम संग भरमिहौ, गहबर बन दुख—सिंधु अथाहु ॥
 तजि वह जनक—राज—भोजन—सुख, कत तृन—तलप, बिपिन—फल खाहु ।
 ग्रीषम कमल—बदन कुम्हिलैहै, तजि सर निकट दूरि कित न्हाहु ॥
 जनि कछु प्रिया! सोच मन करिहौ, मातु—पिता—परिजन—सुख—लाहु ।
 तुम घर रहौ सीख मेरी सुनि, नातरु बन बसि कै पछिताहु ॥
 हौ पुनि मानि कर्म—कृत रेखा, करिहौ तात—बचन—निरबाहु ।
 ‘सूर’ सत्य जो पतिव्रत राखौ, चलौ संग जनि, उतहीं जाहु ॥

śrīrāma kē vacana jānakī kē prati-rāga gūjarī

(21)

tuma jānakī! janakapura jāhu.
 kahā āni hama saṅga bharamihau, gahabara bana dukha-sindhu athāhu..
 taji vaha janaka-rāja-bhōjana-sukha, kata tr̥ṇa-talapa, bipina-phala khāhu.
 grīṣama kamala-badana kumhilaihai, taji sara nikaṭa dūri kita nhāhu..
 jani kachu priyā! sōca mana karihau, mātu-pitā-parijana-sukha-lāhu.
 tuma ghara rahau sīkha mērī suni, nātaru bana basi kai pachitāhu..
 hauṁ puni māni karma-kr̥ṭa rēkhā, karihauṁ tāta-bacana-nirabāhu.
 ‘sūra’ satya jō patibrata rākhau, calau saṅga jani, utahīm jāhu..

Sri Ram Talks with Sita—Raag Gujari

21. Sri Ram said to Sita, ‘Oh Janki! You should go to Janakpur (your parental home). Where will you wander about aimlessly with me in the dense forests full of unimaginable horrors? Leaving behind the comforts and delicious food of king Janak’s place (i.e. your father’s palace), what is the great idea or wisdom in sleeping on a bed of reeds on the ground, or eating forest-grown wild fruits? Your lotus-like (beautiful and tender) face will become dark (i.e. it will dry-up, become rough and sun-tanned) due to the heat of

summer. Why do you wish to leave the pond near-by (represented by your father's comfortable palace) and go far away (in the forest) instead to take a bath (in another pond full of immeasurable miseries)?

Oh dear! Don't have any kind of worry or anxiety (for me). If you pay heed to my advice, you would find great comfort at you father's place in the company of your loving father, mother, and your other kith and kin. So, pay attention to my advice and stay at home, for otherwise you shall have to regret at your decision to accompany me to stay in the forest.

Meanwhile, I would also obey what has been written for me in my destiny by staying in the forest (for the next 14 years) in order to keep my father's wishes.'

Surdas says—'(Sri Ram told Sita that) If you really wish to help your husband, then you should not accompany me (to the forest), but instead go there (to Janakpur).'

जानकी वचन श्रीराम के प्रति—राग केदारी

[22]

ऐसौ जिय न धरौ रघुराई ।
तुम—सौ प्रभु तजि मो—सी दासी, अनत न कहूँ समाइ ॥
तुम्हरौ रूप अनूप भानु ज्यौँ, जब नैननि भरि देखौँ ।
ता छिन हृदय—कमल प्रफुलित है, जनम सफल करि लेखौँ ॥
तुम्हरे चरन—कमल सुख—सागर, यह ब्रत हौँ प्रतिपलिहौँ ।
'सूर' सकल सुख छाँड़ि आपनौ, बन—बिपदा सँग चलिहौँ ॥

jānakī vacana śrīrāma kē prati-rāga kēdārī

(22)

aisau jiya na dharau raghurā'i.

tuma-sau prabhu taji mō-sī dāsī, anata na kahūṁ samā'i..

tumharau rūpa anūpa bhānu jyaum̐, jaba nainani bhari dēkhaur̐.

tā china hr̥daya-kamala praphulita hvai, janama saphala kari lēkhaur̐..

tumharē carana-kamala sukha-sāgara, yaha brata haur̐ pratipalihaum̐.

'sūra' sakala sukha chām̐ḍi āpanau, bana-bipadā sam̐ga calihaur̐..

Sita's Reply—Raag Kedaro

22. Hearing the words of Sri Ram, Sita reply, 'Oh Raghurai (literally, the Lord of the Raghu's clanZ)! Do not bring such a thought in your mind. Abandoning a Lord like you, a maid servant like me cannot find refuge or shelter anywhere else. Whenever I look at your matchless and beautiful form to my eye-full, my heart blooms like a lotus, and I consider my birth as being fruitful and worthwhile. For me, your lotus-like feet are an ocean of fathomless joys, happiness, cheer and comfort. Hence, I shall live up to my vows (that I took at the time of our marriage) of forsaking all worldly comforts for your sake, and, willingly and most cheerfully, accompany you to the forest in your days of

trouble.’ [So, please banish the thought that I would ever let you go alone, and prefer worldly comforts while you suffer hardship in the forest. No, it shall not be.] (22).

श्रीराम एवं माता का संवाद—राग सारंग

[23]

सुनि सुत स्याम राम कहाँ जैहौ ।
 रहि चरननि लपटाय जननि दोउ, निरखि बदन पाछैं पछितैहौ ॥
 कोमल कमल सुभग सुंदर पद तरनि—तेज ग्रीष्म दुख पैहौ ।
 जिन बिन छिन न बिहात बिलोकत, कैसैं चौदस बरस बितैहौ ॥
 चंपक कुसुम बिसेष बरन तन, बिपति मानि तून—सेज बिछैहौ ।
 अति अनूप आनन रसना धरि कैसैं जठर मूल—फल खैहौ ॥
 तजि मन मोह ईस—अभरन सजि, गिरि—कंदर जानकी बसैहौ ॥
 फाटत नहीं बज्र की छतिया, अब मोहि नाथ अनाथ कहैहौ ॥
 कहा अपराध किए कौसल्या, पुत्र—बिछोह दुसह दुख दैहौ ।
 सूर—स्याम भुज गहें समझावत, तुम जननी मम कृतहि बटैहौ ॥

śrīrāma ēvaṁ mātā kā saṁvāda-rāga sārāṅga

(23)

sunī suta syāma rāma kahāṁ jāihau.
 rahi caranani lapaṭāya janani dō'u, nirakhi badana pāchair̥ pachitaihaiu..
 kōmala kamala subhaga sundara pada tarani-tēja grīṣma dukha paihaiu..
 jina bina china na bihāta bilōkata, kaisair̥ caudasa barasa bitaihaiu..
 campaka kusuma bisēṣa barana tana, bipati māni ṛṇa-sēja bichaihaiu..
 ati anūpa ānana rasanā dhari kaisair̥ jāṭhara mūla-phala khaihaiu..
 taji mana mōha īsa-abharana saji, giri-kandara jānakī basaihaiu..
 phāṭata nahīṁ bajra kī chatiyā, aba mōhi nātha anātha kahaihaiu..
 kahā aparādha ki'ē kausalyā, putra-bichōha dusaha dukha daihaiu..
 sūra-syāma bhuja gahēr̥ samajhāvata, tuma janani mama kṛtahi baṭaihaiu..

Mothers Plead with Sri Ram—Raag Saarang

23. The two mothers (Kaushalya and Sumitra) break-down, and falling at the feet of Lord Ram, they clasped them firmly, pleading with him and beseeching earnestly, ‘Listen, our beloved son Sri Ram. Where will you go? [That is, we beseech you not to leave us and go anywhere. How dare you ever think of going away, leaving us weeping, lamenting, miserable and helpless? Say that all this is a dream; we do not wish to hear anything of this again!]

Look at our faces properly (for the last time, because we won’t survive without you). You shall regret it (your decision of abandoning us) later on (when we shall die without you). Your feet are as tender, soft and glistening as a (newly bloomed) lotus

flower; they will suffer a lot (while you walk on the forest path) during the scorching and unrelenting heat of summer.

You didn't allow even a moment to pass without seeing us. Say then, how will you spend fourteen (long) years without seeing us? [You were so close to us that every now and then you came to meet us on some pretext or another. Then, how is it possible that you would live without seeing us for such a long time as fourteen years?]

Alas! Your body is like the tender 'Champa' flower (Jasmine), and now you will have to spread a bed of grass/reeds in the forest to sleep upon, thinking that the times are bad for you!

Say, how will you eat and digest the wild fruits of the forest; how will you put them on your tongue inside your charming mouth?

Say, will you abandon/forsake your tender feelings of affection and love for Janki (Sita), and heartlessly adorn her with ash from the burnt-out fire, ash which is not an adornment for housewives and queens but that of ascetics like Lord Shiva?

Say, would you allow her to stay in a dark mountain cave (which has no traces of basic comforts)?

It seems our hearts are made up of 'Vajra' (the strong weapon of Indra; the hardest material in existence) that it still doesn't crack apart and break up into splinters (on being hammered so fiercely by such horrendous events).

Alas! In spite of being our constant protector and sustainer, you will now be forcibly stripped of this honour. Say, what sins have this Kaushalya done that she has to suffer the horrible agony of separation from her beloved son?

Surdas says that the dark-complexioned one (i.e. Sri Ram) lifted the two mothers by his hands and reassured them most lovingly, saying, 'Mothers! Share my misfortunes.' [That is, you must show courage and resilience. No one can change destiny; so let us jointly bear it with fortitude. You should lend me your shoulder and a helping hand by not lamenting woefully for me, and help me cheerfully pass through this rough patch of my life. Let us all, bravely and courageously, tide over this terrible misfortune that has befallen upon all of us. By equally sharing my misfortunes, you would reduce my burden and agony to that extent. Your lamentations and miserable condition would only add to my grief, not reduce it. So, it is well advised of you to pick up internal courage and wait for good tidings to come, for it is always not dark and gloomy and the lighter days would surely come for the courageous and brave. Do not lament and weep; do not feel miserable and wretched whatsoever. Let me obey the orders of destiny cheerfully, and the sun would shine once again!] (23).

श्रीराम के वचन लक्ष्मण के प्रति—राम गूजरी

[24]

तुम लछिमन! निज पुरहि सिधारौ ।

बिछुरन—भेंट देहु लघु बंधू, जियत न जैहै सूल तुम्हारौ ॥

यह भावी कछु और काज है, को जो याकौ मेटनहारौ ।

याकौ कहा परेखौ—निरखौ, मधु छीलर, सरितापति खारौ ॥

तुम मति करौ अवज्ञा नृप की, यह दुख तौ आगै कौ भारौ ।

‘सूर’ सुमित्रा अंक दीजियौ, कौसिल्याहिं प्रनाम हमारौ ॥

śrīrāma kē vacana lakṣmaṇa kē prati-rāma gūjarī

(24)

tuma lachimana! nija purahi sidhārau.
bichurana-bhēṇṭa dēhu laghu bandhū, jiyata na jaihai sūla tumhārau..
yaha bhāvī kachu aura kāja hai, kō jō yākau mēṭanahārau.
yākau kahā parēkhau-nirakhau, madhu chīlara, saritāpati khārau..
tuma mati karau avajñā nrpa kī, yaha dukha tau āgai kau bhārau.
‘sūra’ sumitrā anka dījiyau, kausilyāhim pranāma hamārau..

Sri Ram Requests Laxman—Raag Gujari

24. (Sri Ram advised Laxman—) ‘Oh Laxman! You should go back to your palace (i.e. stay back in Ayodhya). Oh my dear younger brother! Now at the time of our separation from each other, embrace me (affectionately for the last time). I shall never overcome the agony and memory of your separation from me as long as I live. This is our destiny, and there is some other secret work concealed in it (i.e. in my having to go to the forest)¹.

Who is able to erase what is written in one’s destiny? One should not be unduly perturbed and worried about the quirky ways of destiny and the unpredictable nature of this mysterious world and its equally mysterious life—look, small holes (bodies) of water are sweet (e.g. ponds, wells etc.), while the vast ocean full of measureless quantity of water is sour and salty!

Therefore, you must not disobey the king (father Dashrath) or insult him in any manner. If you do so, then it will create a greater trouble for both of us (because it is an unpardonable sin to disobey and go against the will of one’s father, and more so by insulting him in any manner).’

Surdas says that Sri Ram told Laxman to embrace mother Sumitra and bow before mother Kaushalya on his (Sri Ram’s) behalf once that he is gone. [That is, Lord Ram requests his younger brother Laxman to give a lot of love and affection to both the mothers on his behalf so that they do not miss his presence. The vacuum that is created by the Lord going away to the forest is expected to be filled-in by Laxman.] (24).

[Note—¹What is that ‘secret work’? Well, it is the elimination of the cruel demons, along with the slaying of their ruthless king Ravana who had been spreading terror among creatures and making life miserable for the meek and humble. The Lord had to find an excuse to go at his place in the far-away city of Lanka to finish off the job of the Gods by killing him, and this could not be achieved had he remained comfortably seated in Ayodhya, his capital city.]

लक्ष्मण का उत्तर—राग सारंग

[25]

लछिमन नैन नीर भरि आए ।

उत्तर कहत कछू नहिं आयौ, रहे चरन लपटाए ॥

अंतरजामी प्रीति जानि कै, लछिमन लीन्हे साथ ।
 'सूरदास' रघुनाथ चले बन, पिता—बचन धरि माथ ॥

lakṣmaṇa kā uttara-rāga sārāṅga

(25)

lachimana naina nīra bhari ā'ē.
 uttara kahata kachū nahirā āyau, rahē carana lapaṭā'ē..
 antarajāmī prīti jāni kai, lachimana līnhē sātha.
 'sūradāsa' raghunātha calē bana, pitā-bacana dhari mātha..

Laxman's Reply—Raag Saarang

25. Tears welled-up in the eyes of Laxman. He was so numbed that he couldn't give a reply; he stood dumbstruck. Overcome with surging emotions, he fell to the ground and simply clasped the feet of Sri Ram very firmly.

The all-knowing Sri Ram didn't need a reply either; he recognised Laxman's unrelenting and unflinching deep love and affection for him (as well as his firm determination to accompany the Lord to the forest). So he took him along. [The Lord was so overwhelmed with love for Laxman that he could not muster enough courage to insist on his staying back in Ayodhya. Laxman did not utter a word, but the Lord understood what he meant to say silently—that is, he would not leave the Lord under any circumstances or orders. He would rather die than stay back in Ayodhya. So the Lord did not insist; he could not tear himself away from his beloved brother's clasp of abiding love and affection. For Laxman, Lord Ram was the essence of life and its meaning, and to imagine living without the Lord's physical presence was an unimaginable thing for Laxman. This exactly was the case with Sita too, and that is why both of them went along with the Lord to the forest.]

Surdas says—'Literally keeping the words of his father on his head (i.e. showing a great respect for them and honouring them fully), Sri Ram finally made his exit for the forest' (25).

महाराज दशरथका पश्चात्ताप—राग कान्हरी

[26]

फिरि—फिरि नृपति चलावत बात ।
 कछु री! सुमति कहा तोहि पलटी, प्रान—जिवन कैसैं बन जात ॥
 हूँ बिरक्त, सिर जटा धरैं, द्रुम—चर्म, भस्म सब गात ।
 हा हा राम, लछन अरु सीता, फल—भोजन जु डसावैं पात ॥
 बिन रथ रूढ़, दुसह दुख मारग, बिन पद—त्रान चलैं दोउ भ्रात ।
 इहिं बिधि सोच करत अतिहीं नृप, जानकि ओर निरखि बिलखात ॥
 इतनी सुनत सिमिट सब आए, प्रेम सहित धारे अँसुपात ।
 ता दिन 'सूर' सहर सब चक्रित, सबर—सनेह तज्यौ पितु—मात ॥

mahārāja daśaratha kā paścāttāpa-rāga kānharau

(26)

phiri-phiri nrpati calāvata bāta.
 kachu rī! sumati kahā tōhi palaṭī, prāna-jivana kaisaiṁ bana jāta..
 hvai birakta, sira jaṭā dharaiṁ, druma-carma, bhasma saba gāta.
 hā hā rāma, lachana aru sītā, phala-bhōjana ju ḍasāvaiṁ pāta..
 bina ratha rūṭha, dusaha dukha māraga, bina pada-trāna calaiṁ dō'u bhrāta.
 ihiṁ bidhi sōca karata atihīṁ nrpa, jānaki ōra nirakhi bilakhāta..
 itanī sunata simiṭa saba ā'ē, prēma sahita dhārē aṁsupāta.
 tā dina 'sūra' sahara saba cakrita, sabara-sanēha tajyau pitu-māta..

Dashrath's Woeful Lamentations—Raag Kaanharau

26. The king (Dashrath) repeatedly asks Kaikeyi in utter disbelief and astonishment, 'Say, how come your normally good temperament and pleasant thoughts have suddenly become so extremely evil, wicked and pervert?'

He becomes highly delirious, hallucinating in shock and dismay as he watches the trio proceeding towards the forest. He lamented woefully, 'How are my beloved (Sri Ram, Laxman, Sita), who are like the lifeline of my existence, progressing (heading) towards the forest on foot like ordinary renunciate mendicants? They have renounced everything; they wear matted lock of hairs on their heads, clothes made of dried and patted birch, and ash smeared on their bodies.

Oh Ram, oh Laxman, oh Sita! How will you eat wild fruits growing in the forest and sleep on (a bed of dry) leaves? Alas! The two brothers are not even riding on a chariot but walking barefoot on the rough path which is unchartered and unknown, embarked on an endless journey of miseries and misfortunes.'

In this way, the king laments in various ways, and his agonies reach a crescendo as he watches Sita going away from him and gradually fading away in the distance along with Sri Ram and Laxman.

Surdas says—'Hearing the loud soul-wrenching wailings (of Dashrath), all the people (of the royal household) assembled there. Uncontrollable tears rolled down their eyes. The entire city was stunned into immobility. People were dumbstruck and unable to come to terms with what has happened. They wandered as to how was it ever possible that so loving parents (as those of Sri Ram) could become so merciless and heartless as to send their loving children to the forest? (26).

श्रीराम वन गमन—राग नट

[27]

आजु रघुनाथ पयानौ देत ।

बिह्वल भए सवन सुनि पुरजन, पुत्र—पिता कौ हेत ॥

ऊँचें चढ़ि दसरथ लोचन भरि सुत—मुख देखे लेत ।
 रामचंद्र—से पुत्र बिना मैं भूँजब क्यों यह खेत ॥
 देखत गमन नैन भरि आए, गात गह्वौ ज्यों केत ।
 तात—तात कहि बैन उचारत, ह्वै गए भूप अचेत ॥
 कटि—तट तून, हाथ सायक—धनु, सीता—बंधु समेत ।
 'सूर' गमन गह्वर कौ कीन्हौ जानत पिता अचेत ॥

śrīrāma vana gamana-rāga naṭa

(27)

āju raghunātha payānau dēta.
 bihvala bha'ē sravana suni purajana, putra-pitā kau hēta..
 ūm̐cēm caḍhi dasaratha lōcana bhari suta-mukha dēkhē lēta.
 rāmacandra-sē putra binā mair̐m bhūm̐jaba kyaur̐m yaha khēta..
 dēkhata gamana naina bhari ā'ē, gāta gahyau jyaur̐m kēta.
 tāta-tāta kahi baina ucārata, hvai ga'ē bhūpa acēta..
 kaṭi-taṭa tūna, hātha sāyaka-dhanu, sītā-bandhu samēta.
 'sūra' gamana gahvara kaur̐m kīnhau jānata pitā acēta..

Sri Ram's Exile—Raag Nat

27. 'Today, Raghunath (Sri Ram) is going (to the forest)'—hearing this bad news, and observing the level of mutual love and affection of the father (Dashrath) and the son (Sri Ram), all the citizens became paralysed (i.e. they were stunned and dumbfounded, unable to decide what to or what not to do or say).

Dashrath has gone up to the terrace (or he has gone to the highest point of the palace building) to have a last glimpse of his son's face. He is completely distraught and wonders in utter dismay, 'Why will I enjoy the kingdom without a son like Sri Ram Chandra? [In other words, what is the point in my living any longer to enjoy this vast and beautiful kingdom of Ayodhya? I would rather either die or renounce it myself.]'

Observing Sri Ram proceeding to the forest, his eyes welled-up with tears, and the body lost its radiance and vigour even as a moon looks gloomy and loses its prime luster and shine when caught hold by (the demon) 'Rahu' (as during the lunar eclipse). Yelling out 'oh son, oh son', the king fell down unconscious.

Surdas says—'With a quiver tied to his waist, a bow and an arrow in hand, Sri Ram, along with Sita and brother (Laxman), proceeded towards the forest when he realised, or when he came to know that his father is lying unconscious (i.e. that his father has fainted).'¹ (27).

[Note :- ¹Two interpretations can be made here—(i) as soon as Dashrath fainted, a messenger must have immediately cantered to Sri Ram with the bad news in the hope of dissuading him from going ahead to the forest and return home. But Sri Ram paid no heed and went on with his journey to keep his promise to his father. (ii) Sri Ram was till within the palace precincts—as is evident from the fact that Dashrath went to the attic to see Sri Ram's face. Obviously, one cannot see another person's face from a very great distance. So, while still within the palace gates or in the foreyard of the palace itself, and

on learning that his father has fainted, Sri Ram used this opportunity to sneak out in a hurry lest the father should regain his senses and obstruct his exit from Ayodhya by some other royal means such as sending a retinue of servants or ministers or even the two mothers to block the way for Ram.]

लक्ष्मण केवट संवाद— राग मारू

[28]

लै भैया केवट! उतराई ।
 महाराज रघुपति इत ठाढ़े, तैं कत नाव दुराई ॥
 अबहिं सिला तैं भई देव—गति, जब पग—रेनु छिवाई ।
 हौं कुटुंब काहैं प्रतिपारौं, वैसी मति है जाई ॥
 जाकी चरन रेनु की महि मै, सुनियत अधिक बड़ाई ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु अगनित महिमा, बेद—पुराननि गाई ॥

lakṣmaṇa kēvaṭa saṁvāda- rāga mārū

(28)

lai bhaiyā kēvaṭa! utarā'ī.
 mahārāja raghupati ita ṭhāṛhē, taim̐ kata nāva durā'ī..
 abahim̐ silā tēm̐ bha'ī dēva-gati, jaba paga-rēnu chivā'ī.
 haum̐ kuṭumba kāhaim̐ pratipāraum̐, vaisī mati hvai jā'ī..
 jākī carana rēnu kī mahi maim̐, suniyata adhika baṛā'ī..
 'sūradāsa' prabhu aganita mahimā, bēda-purānani gā'ī..

Laxman-Boatman Dialogue—Raag Maarū

28. [Proceeding from Ayodhya, the two brothers and Sita reached Srīngverpur on the banks of the river Ganges. There, they needed a boat to cross the river, and met the boatman known as Kevat. The following narration describes the meeting between the Lord and the boatman. This boatman is no ordinary man for he has realised that the passengers he is about to take across the river are no ordinary persons but Divinity personified, and so saw in this an opportunity for his own salvation. Here, he is playing a little prank with the Lord.]

(At Srīngverpur, Laxman says to the boatman on the banks of the river Ganges—)
 'Brother Kevat! Take your crossing charges (fees) beforehand for taking us across the river. King Raghupati (Sri Ram; the Lord of Raghu's clan; the ruler of Ayodhya) is waiting here. Why have you concealed or hidden the boat from our sights?'

[The boatman had hidden the boat, so Laxman thought that he had done so out of fear that they would not be able to pay his fees as they have no money with them. So he volunteered to pay the amount beforehand.]

The boatman replied nonchalantly, 'When he (Sri Ram) touched a stone with his feet very recently¹, it had turned into a divine lady and attained salvation (literally, went to the

abode of Gods). I wonder if my boat is not subjected to the same fate if it is touched by Sri Ram's feet. (If it so happens—) Then how will I take care of my family (because this boat is my only livelihood)?'

Surdas says that even the Vedas and Purans sing the glories of that Lord whose divine feet have such stupendous potentials (28).

[Note :- 'The boatman is referring to the episode of liberation of Ahilya as described in verse no. 8. So his fears are actually not totally unfounded. The boat is made of wood, and if the dust of the Lord's feet is so powerful that it can turn a piece of stone into a lady, known as Ahilya, there is little wonder that it can also turn wood into another lady who might have been turned into some tree, due to some earlier curse, from which the wood to construct the boat was derived. The boatman didn't wish to take the risk, so he hid the boat from sight.]

केवट विनय— राग कान्हारौ

[29]

नौका हैं नाहीं लै आऊँ ।
 प्रगत प्रताप चरन कौ देखौँ, ताहि कहाँ पुनि पाऊँ ॥
 कृपासिंधु पै केवट आयौ कँपत करत सो बात ।
 चरन परसि पाषाण उड़त है, कह बेरी उड़ि जात ॥
 जो यह बधू होइ काहू की, दारु—स्वरूप धरें ।
 छूटै देह, जाइ सरिता तजि, पग सौं परस करें ॥
 मेरी सकल जीविका यामैं, रघुपति मुक्त न कीजै ।
 'सूरदास' चढ़ौ प्रभु पाछैं, रेनु पखारन दीजै ॥

kēvaṭa vinaya- rāga kānhārau

(29)

naukā haum̐ nāhīm̐ lai ā'ūm̐ .
 pragaṭa pratāpa carana kau dēkhaum̐, tāhi kahām̐ puni pā'ūm̐ ..
 krpāsindhu pai kēvaṭa āyau kaṁpata karata sō bāta.
 carana parasi pāṣāna uṛata hai, kaha bēri uḍi jāta..
 jō yaha badhū hō'i kāhū kī, dāru-svarūpa dharēm̐.
 chūṭai dēha, jā'i saritā taji, paga saum̐ parasa karēm̐..
 mēri sakala jīvikā yāmaim̐, raghupati mukta na kijai.
 'sūradāsa' caṛhau prabhu pāchaim̐, rēnu pakhārana dijai..

The Boatman's Prayer—Raag Kaanharau

29. (The boatman came to Sri Ram and said politely—) 'I shall not bring the boat. I have seen the physical proof of the potentials of the dust of your feet. Even a stone flies-off (in the form of a lady, a reference to Ahilya's liberation as described in verse no. 8) by the mere touch of your feet, then how long will it take for a boat made of the wood of the plum tree to vanish and convert itself into something other than a boat? At the present,

that wood is shaped like a boat, but if it changes its form and leaves this river to assume the form of someone's wife (as happened to that stone which converted itself as Ahilya in a fraction of a second), then I shall lose my only livelihood.

Hence, oh Raghupati (Sri Ram), do not give it liberation (like you had done to that stone which had transformed itself into Ahilya).'

Surdas says that the boatman (Kevat) requested Sri Ram, 'Oh Lord! Step on the boat only after you have allowed me to wash your feet (so that the dust clinging to them is washed off)¹.' (29).

[Note—¹This is a clever ruse adopted by the boatman to allow him to wash the feet of the Lord of the world and drink that sanctified water. He has assured his own salvation by this simple method, for the water would definitely be powerful enough to give his soul the most desired liberation that defies access even to great sages and ascetics.]

राग रामकली

[30]

मेरी नौका जनि चढ़ौ त्रिभुवनपति राई ।
 मो देखत पाहन तरे, मेरी काठ की नाई ॥
 मैं खेई ही पार कौं, तुम उलटि मँगाई ।
 मेरौ जिय यौ ही डरै, मति होहि सिलाई ॥
 मैं निरबल, बित-बल नहीं, जो और गढ़ाऊँ ।
 मो कुटुंब याही लग्यौ, ऐसी कहँ पाऊँ ॥
 मैं निरधन, कछु धन नहीं, परिवार घनेरौ ।
 सेमर-ढाकहि काटि कै, बाँधौ तुम बेरौ ॥
 बार-बार श्रीपति कहैं, धीवर नहिं मानै ।
 मन प्रतीति नहिं आवई, उड़िबौ ही जानै ।
 नेरैं ही जलथाह है, चलौ, तुम्हें बताऊँ ।
 'सूरदास' की बीनती, नीकै पहुँचाऊँ ॥

rāga rāmakalī

(30)

mērī naukā jani caṛhau tribhuvanapati rā'ī.
 mō dēkhata pāhana tarē, mērī kāṭha kī nā'ī..
 mair̥m khē'ī hī pāra kaur̥m, tuma ulaṭi mam̐gā'ī.
 mērau jiya yaur̥m hī ḍarai, mati hōhi silā'ī..
 mair̥m nirabala, bita-bala nahim̐, jō aura gaṛhā'ūm̐ .
 mō kuṭumba yāhī lagyau, aisī kaham̐ pā'ūm̐ ..
 mair̥m niradhana, kachu dhana nahim̐, parivāra ghanērau.
 sēmara-ḍhākahi kāṭi kai, bām̐dhaur̥m tuma bērau..
 bāra-bāra śrīpati kahair̥m, dhīvara nahim̐ mānai.
 mana pratīti nahim̐ āva'ī, uḍibau hī jānai.
 nēraim̐ hī jalathāha hai, calau, tumhēm̐ batā'ūm̐ .

'sūradāsa' kī bīnatī, nīkaiṁ pahumcā'ūm' ..

Raag Ramkali

30. (The boatman says—) 'Oh Lord of the three worlds! Please do not step on my boat. I have witnessed that the stone has got liberation (a reference to liberation of Ahilya, verse no. 8); this boat is made of wood (which is softer than a stone, and can be easily converted into something else). I was taking it to the other side of the river, but you have called me back¹. My heart is full of fear that this boat of mine would get the same fate as that stone. I am weak (financially and physically, so I wouldn't be able to build a new boat); I do not have the strength of money that I can get it done by others. My kith and kin depend on it. Where will I get such a boat again? I am poor and have a large family to look after.

(If your main objective is to cross the river, then—) Let me tie a large float for you by cutting down branches of the silk-cotton tree and the 'Butea Frandosa' tree, and tying them together with creepers to form a raft. (You can cross the river on it).' [I am too terrified to let you step on my wooden boat. Take the raft instead. I do not want to take the risk.]

Sripati (an epithet for Vishnu; here meaning Sri Ram) requested him again and again, but he was adamant. The boatman was not able to gather enough courage (to allow Sri Ram to board the boat without first washing his feet because he did not want to take the risk of losing his boat by the touch of the Lord's divine feet which might provide liberation to some past Spirit that might have been converted into the wood used to construct that boat due to some curse of some earlier time). He only thought of the rock or stone flying off (an allusion to Ahilya going to the heavens in the sky after her liberation).

Surdas says that he told Sri Ram, 'Oh Lord! It is my humble submission that there is a nearby place where the water is shallow. Come with me, I shall show you that place and shall also accompany you to the other side if you so wish (but I will not allow you to board my boat).' (30).

[Note :- ¹When the boatman said that 'You have called me back', it shows that the boatman was not on the bank of the river where Sri Ram was standing, and neither was his boat anchored to this side of the river when Sri Ram had arrived there. He was somewhere midstream when Laxman had summoned him, or had gone far away to some other point along the bank to avoid the Lord. Probably, when he had heard that Sri Ram is coming to the river, he might have hurriedly boarded the boat and had tried to escape the fate of having to get Sri Ram aboard his boat because he feared that the boat would turn into a lady by the touch of Sri Ram's holy feet. This is because he had heard about the episode of Ahilya.]

रास्ते की स्त्रियाँ—राग रामकली

[31]

सखी री! कौन तिहारे जात ।

राजिवनैन धनुष कर लीन्हे, बदन मनोहर गात ॥

लज्जित होहिं पुरबधू पूछै, अंग—अंग मुसकात ।
 अति मृदु चरन पंथ बन—बिहरत, सुनियत अद्भुत बात ॥
 सुंदर तन, सुकुमार दोउ जन, सूर—किरिन कुम्हिलात ।
 देखि मनोहर तीनों मूरति, त्रिबिध—ताप तन जात ॥

rāstē kī striyām̐-rāga rāmakali

(31)

sakhī rī! kauna tihārē jāta.
 rājivanaina dhanuṣa kara līnhē, badana manōhara gāta..
 lajjita hōhiṁ purabadhū pūchaim̐, aṅga-aṅga musakāta.
 ati mṛdu carana pantha bana-biharata, suniyata adbhuta bāta..
 sundara tana, sukumāra dō'u jana, sūra-kirina kumhilāta.
 dēkhi manōhara tīnaum̐ mūrati, tribidha-tāpa tana jāta..

The Womenfolk en-route to the Forest—Raag Ramkali

31. (The womenfolk of the wayside villages are enamoured by the enchanting beauty of Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman. They hesitate to ask Sri Ram and Laxman who they are, but gather enough courage to enquire from Sita—) ‘Oh friend! What relation do these two gentlemen walking on the forest path have with you? Their eyes are like lotus, their faces and bodies are very charming and handsome, and they hold bows in their hands. It is very strange to hear (and to see) that they walk on the arduous forest path with feet which appear to be very soft and tender, and certainly not accustomed to or meant for such a journey. Their bodies are so unaccustomed to the rough and toil that they literally wither away or shrink due to the heat of the Sun.’

Surdas says that by looking at the three (Sri Ram, Sita, Laxman), all the three types of agitations of the body¹ subside (31).

[Note :- ¹The 3 types of agitation that torment the creature are the following— (i) Adhibhautik—those pertaining to terrestrial life, e.g. enemies; (ii) Adhidaivik—those pertaining to malignant and malevolent stars and Gods, e.g. bad luck; (iii) Adhyatmik—those pertaining to spiritual pursuits e.g. worldly diversions, lack of proper guidance, spiritual delusions.]

राग गौरी

[32]

अरी अरी सुंदरि नारि सुहागिनि, लागै तेरे पाउँ ।
 किहिं घाँ के तुम बीर बटाऊ, कौन तुम्हारौ गाउँ ॥
 उत्तर दिसि हम नगर अजोध्या, है सरजू के तीर ।
 बढ़ कुल, बड़े भूप दसरथ सखि, बड़ौ नगर गंभीर ॥
 कौनै गुन बन चली बधू तुम, कहि मोसों सति भाउ ।
 वह घर—द्वार छाँड़ि कै सुंदरि, चली पियादे पाउँ ॥

सासु की सौति सुहागिनि सो सखि, अतिहिं पीय की प्यारी ।
 अपने सुत कौं राज दिवायौ, हम कों देस निकारी ॥
 यह बिपरीत सुनि जब सबहिं, नैननि ढाख्यौ नीर ।
 आजु सखी चलु भवन हमारे, सहित दोउ रघुबीर ॥
 बरष चतुरदस भवन न बसिहैं, आज्ञा दीन्ही राइ ।
 उन के बचन सत्य करि सजनी, बहुरि मिलैंगे आइ ॥
 बिनती बिहँसि सरस मुख सुंदरि, सिय सौं पूछी गाथ ।
 कौन बरन तुम देवर सखि री, कौन तिहारौ नाथ ॥
 कटि—तट पट पीतांबर काछे, धारे धनु—तूनीर ।
 गौर—बरन मेरे देवर सखि, पिय मम स्याम—सरीर ॥
 तीनि जने सोभा त्रिलोक की, छाँड़ि सकल पुर—धाम ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु—रूप चकित भए, पंथ चलत नर—बाम ॥

rāga gaurī

(32)

arī arī sundari nāri suhāgini, lāgair̥ tērē pā'um̐ .
 kihim̐ ghām̐ kē tuma bīra baṭā'ū, kauna tumhārau gā'um̐ ..
 uttara disi hama nagara ajōdhyā, hai sarajū kē tīra.
 baṛha kula, baṛē bhūpa dasaratha sakhi, baṛau nagara gambhīra..
 kaunaim̐ guna bana calī badhū tuma, kahi mōsōm̐ sati bhā'u.
 vaha ghara-dvāra chām̐ḍi kai sundari, calī piyādē pā'um̐ ..
 sāsu kī sauti suhāgini sō sakhi, atihim̐ piya kī pyārī.
 apanē suta kaum̐ rāja divāyau, hama kōm̐ dēsa nikārī..
 yaha biparīta suni jaba sabahim̐, nainani ḍhāryau nīra.
 āju sakhi calu bhavana hamārē, sahita dō'u raghubīra..
 baraṣa caturadasa bhavana na basihaim̐, ājñā dīnhī rā'i.
 una kē bacana satya kari sajanī, bahuri milaiṅgē ā'i..
 binatī biham̐si sarasa mukha sundari, siya saum̐ pūchī gātha.
 kauna barana tuma dēvara sakhi rī, kauna tihārau nātha..
 kaṭi-taṭa paṭa pītāmbara kāchē, dhārē dhanu-tūnīra.
 gaura-barana mērē dēvara sakhi, piya mama syāma-sarīra..
 tīni janē sōbhā trilōka kī, chām̐ḍi sakala pura-dhāma.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu-rūpa cakita bha'ē, pantha calata nara-bāma..

Raag Gauri

32. (The simple womenfolk of the wayside villages asked Sita—) 'Oh the most fortunate and beautiful woman! We humbly fall at your feet. Do tell us from which direction you and the two pedestrians (travelers; 'Bataau') accompanying you have come from (or to which place do you belong)? Which is your village?'

Sita replied, 'Oh dear friends! Our city Ayodhya is to the north of this place on the banks of river Saryu. It is (not a village but) a large city inhabited by lots of people. The king of that place is Dashrath who is the biggest king of the realm (i.e. he is an emperor). That city is well populated and rich.'

(Hearing this, the womenfolk asked again—) 'Oh daughter-in-law! Tell us truthfully what has attracted you to the forest or what charm do you expect to find there for which reason you have decided to go to the forest, or else what good do you expect to find or see or experience there? Oh the beautiful one! Why do you walk on foot, having abandoned the comforts and pleasures of your home and hearth? [Perhaps you do not know that the forest is a most inhospitable place to live, and you were motivated to go there out of a spirit of adventure, not being aware of the horrors you would have to face.] (Sita replied—) 'Oh friends! The co-wife of my father-in-law, i.e. my step mother-in-law, is very close and dear to him. She prevailed upon him to give the throne of the kingdom to her own son (Bharat), and give us exile (in the forest) instead.' [This has reference to Kaikeyi asking Dasrath for Ram's exile, and hints at family intrigue and extreme selfishness which overrides all sense of morality and ethics as being at the core of all the problems.]

When all of those village womenfolk heard of this unfortunate development, tears (of sorrows) rolled down their eyes, and they invited Sita along with Sri Ram and Laxman to their homes. They said pleadingly, 'Oh friend! Come to our homes with the two brave Raghus (Sri Ram and Laxman).'

(Sita regretfully and remorsefully replied—) 'The king has ordered us to live in the forest for the next 14 years. We cannot live in anyone's house during this period. Oh friends, after keeping the promise that we have made to him and honouring his words, I shall definitely meet you and oblige you when we return.'

The beautiful village womenfolk smiled and asked Sita most politely, 'Oh friend! What is the complexion of your brother-in-law, and out of the two gentlemen, who is your Lord (husband)?' [They asked this question because till now there was no hint as to who was who.]

(Sita told them—) 'Oh dear friends! Out of these two gentlemen each wearing a Pitambar (yellow silken body wrapping garment) and holding a bow and arrow, the one with a fair complexion is my brother-in-law (Laxman), and the one with a dark complexion is my beloved (husband).'

Surdas says—'These three wandering travelers are the adornment of, and the most charming, in the whole of the 'Triloki' (i.e. the three worlds created by Brahma, the creator—the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds). They have abandoned all the majesty and comforts of their city and palace, and are going on the forest path. All the wayside male and female residents are stunned and dumbfounded at the matchless and unique beauty of the Lord. [That is, the wayside residents of villages and hamlets that fall on the way to the forest have become speechless when they saw the divine beauty of Lord Ram accompanied by his divine consort Sita and younge brother Laxman. They had never seen such beauty walk before their eyes ever before.] (32).

राग धनाश्री

कहि धौं सखी! बटाऊ को हैं ।
 अब्हुत बधू लिए सँग डोलत, देखत त्रिभुवन मोहैं ॥
 परम सुसील सुलच्छन जोरी, बिधि की रची न होइ ।
 काकी तिन कौं उपमा दीजै, देह धरे धौं कोइ ॥
 इन मैं को पति आहि तिहारे, पुरजनि पूछैं धाइ ।
 राजिवनैन मैं की मूरति, सैननि दियौ बताई ॥
 गई सकल मिलि संग दूरि लौं, मन न फिरत पुर—वास ।
 'सूरदास' स्वामी के बिछुरत, भरि—भरि लेति उसास ॥

rāga dhanāśrī

(33)

kahi dhaurṁ sakhī! baṭā'ū kō hairṁ.
 adbhuta badhū li'ē saṁṅa ḍōlata, dēkhata tribhuvana mōhairṁ..
 parama susila sulacchana jōrī, bidhi kī racī na hō'i.
 kākī tina kauṁ upamā dījai, dēha dharē dhaurṁ kō'i..
 ina mairṁ kō pati āhi tihārē, purajani pūchairṁ dhā'i.
 rājivanaina maina kī mūrati, sainani diyau batā'ī..
 ga'īm sakala mili saṅga dūri laurṁ, mana na phirata pura-vāsa.
 'sūradāsa' svāmī kē bichurata, bhari-bhari lēti usāsa..

Raag Dhanasri

33. (The village folk arrive in multitudes and thronged around Sri Ram and his party. The ladies among them asked Sita—) 'Oh friend! Tell us who these travelers are who are roaming about with such a beautiful and majestic daughter-in-law like you in tow. They enchant and attract the eye of the three worlds by their unmatched charm and exceptional divine beauty. This pair (of Ram and Laxman), which is so courteous and endowed with all the charming qualities, cannot have been created by Brahma, the creator. With whom or with what shall we compare them; we are not wise or learned enough to understand whose manifestation they are. Out of them, who is your dear husband?'

Sita showed them Sri Ram, who was lotus-eyed and Kaamdeo cupid personified, by her gestures. [Sita indicated about Sri Ram to the womenfolk by the subtle movement of her eyes, or perhaps by a slight shake of the head, or a simple nod, or some other facial or bodily gesture.]

Surdas says—'All those assembled there followed the trio (Ram, Laxman and Sita) for quite a distance. They had no desire to return back to their village or homes, so enamoured were they by the Lord's company.

But when finally they had to take leave and separate themselves from Sri Ram, the Lord of Surdas, because it was impractical and impossible to continue following him indefinitely, they repeatedly took deep breaths before returning. [That is, they were so overcome with emotions that, upon being forced to detach themselves from the Lord and return back, they took deep breaths to contain their inner feelings from spilling out in a torrent of tears. They somehow managed to control surging emotions by suppressing

them forcefully with deep breaths. Left to themselves, none would have liked to return, but as is the wont of the world and limitations of practical life in it, it is never possible to do what one actually wishes to do. One has often to literally tear himself away from one's dearest and the most beloved when it times and circumstances so demand. The same situation and dilemma was faced by these loving villagefolk.] (33).

दशरथ मृत्यु— राग धनाश्री

[34]

तात—बचन रघुनाथ माथ धरि, जब बन गौन कियौ ।
 मंत्री गयौ फिरावन रथ लै, रघुबर फेरि दियौ ॥
 भुजा छुड़ाई, तोरि तन ज्यौं हित, कियौ प्रभु निठुर हियौ ।
 यह सुनि भूप तुरत तनु त्याग्यौ, बिछुरन—ताप—तयौ ॥
 सुरति—साल—ज्वाला उर अंतर, ज्यौं पावकहि पियौ ।
 इहिं बिधि बिकल सकल पुरबासी, नाहिन चहत जियौ ॥
 पसु—पंछी तन—कन त्याग्यौ, अरु बालक पियौ न पयौ ।
 'सूरदास' रघुपति के बिछुरै, मिथ्या जनम भयौ ॥

daśaratha mṛtyu- rāga dhanāśrī

(34)

tāta-bacana raghunātha mātha dhari, jaba bana gauna kiyau.
 mantrī gayau phirāvana ratha lai, raghubara phēri diyau..
 bhujā chuṛā'ī, tōri tṛṇa jyauṁ hita, kiyau prabhu niṭhura hiyau..
 yaha suni bhūpa turata tanu tyāgyau, bichurana-tāpa-tayau..
 surati-sāla-jvālā ura antara, jyauṁ pāvakahi piyau.
 ihiṁ bidhi bikala sakala purabāsī, nāhina cahata jiyau..
 pasu-panchī tṛṇa-kana tyāgyau, aru bālaka piyau na payau.
 'sūradāsa' raghupati kē bichuraim, mithyā janama bhayau..

Dashrath's Death—Raag Dhanasri

34. Honouring his father's words when Sri Ram had made his exit for the forest, Sumantra (the chief minister of the king) took a chariot and followed him to (some how try to) persuade him to come back. But Raghubir (the brave Raghu; Sri Ram) sent him back.

(Returning, Sumantra reported to Dashrath—) 'The Lord (Sri Ram) had made his heart so stern and uncompromising that he (didn't listen to me and) broke the bonds of love like it were a mere seed (i.e. he crushed the bond of love and affections without any compunctions like one crushes a seed). Although I had clasped his hands and tried my best not to let him go away, he had forcefully withdrew his hands to go away.' [That is, I tried my best to prevent Sri Ram from going ahead to the forest and even held his hands

firmly in my hands, but the Lord wouldn't listen to me, and he forced me to come back and let him go.]

As soon as the king—who was already burning in the fire of extreme agony and grief at the separation from his beloved son—heard it, he left his mortal coil (i.e. he died). All the citizens of Ayodhya became so highly agitated, perplexed, anguished, grieved, distressed and tormented that it appeared as if they had drunk boiling liquid or eaten fire. The agony of Sri Ram's separation burnt their hearts; none of them wished to live any longer. A pall of dark gloom had descended upon the city. Even the animals stopped grazing, the birds stopped picking grains, and infants and children stopped taking milk.

Surdas says—'At the separation from Sri Ram, their lives became in vain, fruitless, worthless, and absolutely of no consequence' (34).

भरत आगमन, कौशल्या दुख—राग धनाश्री

[35]

राजा तेल—द्रोनि में डारे ।
सात दिवस मारग में बीते, देखे भरत पिआरे ॥
जाइ निकट हिय लाइ दोउ सिसु, नैन उमंग जलधारे ।
कुसलछेम पूँछत कौसल्या राजा कुसल तिहारे ॥
कुसल राम लछमन बैदेही, ते हैं प्रान हमारे ।
कूसलछेम अवध के पुरजन दासि—दास प्रतिहारे ॥
कुसल राम लछमन बैदेही, तुम हित काज हँकारे ।
'सूर' सुमंत ज्ञानि ज्ञानाद्भुत महिमा समय बिचारे ॥

bharata āgamana, kauśalyā dukha-rāga dhanāśrī

(35)

rājā tēla-drōni mēm ḍārē.
sāta divasa mārāga mēm bītē, dēkhē bharata pi'ārē..
jā'i nikṭa hiya lā'i dō'u sisu, naina umamṅga jaladhārē.
kusalachēma pūm'chata kausilyā rājā kusala tihārē..
kusala rāma lachamana baidēhī, tē hair̃ prāna hamārē.
kūsalachēma avadha kē purajana dāsi-dāsa pratihārē..
kusala rāma lachamana baidēhī, tuma hita kāja ham'kārē.
'sūra' sumanta jñāni jñānādbhuta mahimā samaya bicārē..

Bharat's Arrival; Kaushalya's Lamentations
Raag Dhanasri

35. The king's dead body was kept in a boat filled with oil (to prevent decay). Bharat took 7 days to come back (to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's place where he had gone for vacationing along with his younger brother Shatrughan).

When the mother, Kaushalya, saw her dear son Bharat, she went forward to embrace both her sons (Bharat and Shatrughan). Streams of tears rolled down her eyes. Bharat enquired about her well-being, saying, 'Is your king (i.e. your husband and my father, king Dashrath) alright? Are Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita fine? They are like the soul of my life. Are the citizens of Ayodhya, the servants, both male and female, and the guards as well as other attendants alright?' [Bharat had observed that his mother Kaushalya was weeping, as described above. He had also observed, on his way to the palace, that the entire city was shrouded in a pall of dense gloom. So he was naturally apprehensive that all was not well in Ayodhya.]

Surdas says (that the mother told Bharat)—'Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita are alright. The minister Sumantra is very wise. Considering the prevailing circumstances, he was wise enough to call you here.' [That is, you must consult Sumantra for further news. The mother obviously did not have the necessary courage to tell Bharat about the exile of his dear brothers Ram and Laxman along with Sita, and the death of his father. So she deferred the matter and wished the bad news to be conveyed to him by the chief minister Sumantra who was well-versed in diplomacy and statecraft, and most adept at handling such sticky situations.] (35).

भरत का विलाप—राग गूजरी

[36]

रामहि राखौ कोऊ जाइ ।
जब लगि भरत अजोध्या आवै, कहति कौसिला माइ ॥
पठवौ दूत भरत कौ ल्यावन, बचन कह्यौ बिलखाइ ।
दसरथ—बचन राम बन गवने, यह कहियौ अरथाइ ॥
आए भरत, दीन हैं बोले, कहा कियौ कैकइ माई ।
हम सेवक, वे त्रिभुवनपति, कत स्वान सिंह—बलि खाइ ॥
आजु अजोध्या जल नहिं अँचवौ, मुख नहिं देखौ माइ ।
सूरदास राघव—बिछुरन तैं, मरन भलौ दव लाइ ॥

bharata kā vilāpa-rāga gūjarī

(36)

rāmahi rākhau kō'ū jā'i.
jaba lagi bharata ajōdhyā āvaim, kahati kausilā mā'i..
paṭhavau dūta bharata kauṁ lyāvana, bacana kahyau bilakhā'i.
dasaratha-bacana rāma bana gavanē, yaha kahiyau arathā'i..
ā'ē bharata, dīna hvaim bōlē, kahā kiyau kaika'i mā'ī.
hama sēvaka, vē tribhuvanapati, kata svāna simha-bali khā'i..
āju ajōdhyā jala nahim amcavauṁ, mukha nahim dēkhauṁ mā'i..
sūradāsa rāghava-bichurana taim, marana bhalau dava lā'i..

Bharat's Grief & Lamentation—Raag Gujari

36. (When Dashrath died—) Mother Kaushalya intervened as the chief queen in times of extreme emergencies. She was grief-stricken, but held her wisdom to order—‘Till the time Bharat arrives at Ayodhya, someone should go and stop Sri Ram (from proceeding ahead to the forest because this is an emergency, as there is no one to head the kingdom, and it has become very vulnerable to enemy attacks). Send someone immediately to bring Bharat urgently back to Ayodhya. When asked (by Bharat) of the urgency of the matter, let him be told that Sri Ram has gone to the forest on the instructions of Dashrath.’

(Hearing the news) Bharat came to Ayodhya (as soon as he could come), and realizing the gravity of the situation and the damage done by his own mother Kaikeyi, he was dumbfounded, and exclaimed in an extremely distraught voice, ‘What has mother Kaikeyi done? We (Bharat and Shatrughan) are merely servants while he (Sri Ram) is the Lord of the three worlds (i.e. he is an emperor). Say, how dare a dog partake of the offerings (or food gifts) assigned for the lion? [That is, how is it ever imaginable or possible for me to enjoy a kingdom that rightfully belongs to Sri Ram.]’

Surdas says that he made a firm vow and sternly resolved then and there that he will not sip even a drop of water in Ayodhya that day, and he will not see the face of Kaikeyi. Bharat decided that it is better to die by burning in the fire than to suffer the agony of separation from Sri Ram (36).

भरत के वचन कैकई के प्रति—राग केदारौ

[37]

तैं कैकई कुमंत्र कियौ ।
अपने कर करि काल हँकास्यौ, हठ करि नृप—अपराध लियौ ॥
श्रीपति चलन रह्यौ कहि कैसैं, तेरौ पाहन—कठिन हियौ ।
मो अपराधी के हित कारन, तैं रामहि बनबास दियौ ॥
कौन काज यह राज हमारैं, इहिं पावक परि कौन जियौ ।
लोटे ‘सूर’ धरनि दोउ बंधू, मनो तपत बिष बिषम पियौ ॥

bharata kē vacana kaika'ī kē prati-rāga kēdārau

(37)

taiṁ kaika'ī kumantra kiyau.
apanē kara kari kāla haṁkāsyau, haṭṭha kari nrpa-aparādha liyau..
śrīpati calana rahyau kahi kaisaiṁ, tērau pāhana-kāṭhina hiyau.
mō aparādhi kē hita kārana, taiṁ rāmahi banabāsa diyau..
kauna kāja yaha rāja hamāraiṁ, ihiṁ pāvaka pari kauna jiyau.
lōṭē 'sūra' dharani dō'u bandhū, manō tapata biṣa biṣama piyau..

Bharat Severely Rebukes & Reproaches Kaikeyi
Raag Kedaro

37. (Bharat vented his ire and severely took Kaikeyi to task, angrily admonishing and castigating her most indignantly and vehemently. He rebuked her in no uncertain terms, and minced no words to scold her as follows—) ‘Oh Kaikeyi¹! You had a very evil thought. You had the temerity to willingly invite a killing elephant disguised as your pervert thoughts that would kill the king, and had committed the horrendous sin of being instrumental in the death of your dear husband (and my father).

Tell me, you wretched one, how and why did not your hard-as-stone heart crack or crumble to pieces at the time of Sri Ram’s exist for the forest? You had given the forest exile to Sri Ram out of love for this sinner (i.e. for me, so that I could be anointed a king). What use is this kingdom for me? Who has ever survived by falling in the fire of greed (such as your greed of acquiring the kingdom)?’

Surdas says—‘The two brothers fell to the ground, writhed and squirmed agitatedly in anguish, grief, contrition and remorse as if they had drunk some poison, and were being scalded and scorched internally by its corrosive nature’ (37).

[Note—¹Bharat’s anger, disgust and indignation is clear in the way he has addressed his mother with her maiden name ‘Kaikeyi’ which is an uncivil and dishonourable way to address one’s mother. It is noteworthy that whenever Lord Ram has addressed her he has always used the word ‘mother’ for her. This clearly shows that the Lord had no ill-will against her. In fact the Lord was pleased that she had helped him to accomplish the main work why he, Lord Vishnu in his primary form, had taken the trouble to come to earth as a human being. This job was to eliminate the cruel and sinful demons led by their king of Lanka, Ravana, but for that purpose it was necessary to go all the way to Lanka, and this would necessitate going to the forest.]

राग सोरठ

[38]

राम जू कहाँ गए री माता ?
 सूनौ भवन, सिंहासन सूनौ, नाहीं दसरथ ताता ॥
 धृग तव जन्म, जियन धृग तेरै, कही कपट—मुख बाता ।
 सेवक राज, नाथ बन पठए, यह कब लिखी बिधाता ॥
 मुख—अरविंद देखि हम जीवत, ज्यौं चकोर ससि राता ।
 ‘सूरदास’ श्रीरामचंद्र बिनु कहा अजोध्या नाता ॥

rāga sōraṭha

(38)

rāma jū kahāṁ ga'e rī mātā?
 sūnau bhavana, sinhāsana sūnau, nāhīm dasaratha tātā..
 dhrga tava janma, jiyana dhrga tērau, kahī kapaṭa-mukha bātā.
 sēvaka rāja, nātha bana paṭha'e, yaha kaba likhī bidhātā..
 mukha-aravinda dēkhi hama jīvata, jyaurm cakōra sasi rātā..
 'sūradāsa' śrīrāmacandra binu kahā ajōdhyā nātā..

Raag Sorath

38. (Bharat poignantly said to Kaikeyi—) ‘Oh mother! Where has Sri Ram gone? This palace has become empty, the throne has become empty, father Dashrath is no more (i.e. what have you done for goodness’ sake?).

Shame upon you for taking birth! Shame to you for a life of ignominy! Oh you ill-witted lady! How dare you could utter such deceitful and abhorable words from your mouth (asking for Sri Ram’s forest exile so that your wretched son Bharat could be anointed a king)? Where has the creator written or which law prescribes that you could ask for the kingdom for a servant and send the (truthful and rightful heir and) master or Lord to the forest?’

Surdas says that Bharat told her that even as a ‘Chakor bird’ (the Indian red-legged partridge which is said to be enamoured of the moon) loves the moon, we too live by seeing his (Sri Ram’s) face. [That is, we cannot survive in the absence of Sri Ram amongst us.] What relation do we have with Ayodhya (or what work do we have here) without Sri Ram? (38).

महाराज दशरथ की अन्त्येष्टि—राग कान्हारौ

[39]

गुरु बसिष्ठ भरतहि समुझायौ ।
 राजा कौ परलोक सँवारौ, जुग—जुग चलि आयौ ॥
 चंदन अगर सुगंध और घृत, बिधि करि चिता बनायौ ।
 चले बिमान संग गुरु—पुरजन, तापर नृप पौढ़ायौ ॥
 भस्म अंत तिल—अंजलि दीन्हौ, देव बिमान चढ़ायौ ।
 दिन दस लौं जलकुंभ साजि सुचि, दीप—दान करवायौ ॥
 जानि एकादस बिप्र बुलाए, भोजन बहुत करायौ ।
 दीन्हौ दान बहुत नाना बिधि, इहिं बिधि कर्म पुजायौ ॥
 सब करतूति कैकई के सिर, जिन यह दुख उपजायौ ।
 इहिं बिधि ‘सूर’ अजोध्या—बासी, दिन—दिन काल गँवायौ ॥

mahārāja daśaratha kī antyēṣṭi-rāga kānharau

(39)

guru basiṣṭha bharatahi samujhāyau.
 rājā kau paralōka samvārau, juga-juga cali āyau..
 candana agara sugandha aura ghr̥ta, bidhi kari citā banāyau..
 calē bimāna saṅga guru-purajana, tāpara nr̥pa pauṛhāyau..
 bhasma anta tila-anjali dīnhīm, dēva bimāna caṛhāyau..
 dina dasa laum̐ jalakumbha sāji suci, dīpa-dāna karavāyau..
 jāni ēkādasā bipra bulā'ē, bhōjana bahuta karāyau..
 dīnhau dāna bahuta nānā bidhi, ihiṁ bidhi karma pujāyau..
 saba karatūti kaika'ī kē sira, jina yaha dukha upajāyau.

ihim bidhi 'sūra' ajōdhyā-bāsī, dina-dina kāla gamvāyau..

Dashrath's Cremation—Raag Kaanharau

40. Guru (royal preceptor) Vashistha condoled Bharat, saying, 'The death and migration to the heaven by the king is a tradition (law of Nature) coming down since ages. (Hence, stop regretting and lamenting for him. Perform his last rites instead).'

Bharat collected scented firewood such as sandalwood, aloe-wood etc. and got a funeral pyre duly made of them. Clarified butter (Ghee) was poured on it as fuel. The Guru (Vashistha) and all other citizens accompanied the cortege of the king to the cremation ground. The body was taken on a hearse with the bier designed like a throne (called a 'Vimaan').

At the cremation ground, the body of the king was laid on the funeral pyre. When the body was reduced to ashes, everyone offered oblations of water containing sesame seeds to the departed soul while it was made to board a divine chariot by the Gods (and taken to heaven).

For ten days, Bharat filled pitchers of water and offered lighted lamps at the site of the last rites. On the 11th day, he summoned the Brahmins and gave them a feast and offered them lot of alms as charity (in the memory of his father, the king of Ayodhya, Dashrath). In this way, the last rites were completed (as ordained by tradition).

Surdas says—'The bad effects (i.e. the sin, the ignominy, the shame, the social castigation etc.) of all this unwarranted, unfortunate and uncalled-for development was heaped on the head of Kaikeyi who was the progenitor of all these troubles. The citizens of Ayodhya somehow passed each day by counting every one of them (i.e. each passing day seemed like a burden for them).'

 (39).

भरत का चित्रकूट गमन एवं राम मिलन— राग सारंग

[40]

राम पै भरत चले अतुराइ ।
मनहीं मन सोचत मारग मैं, दर्ई! फिरैं क्यों राघवराइ ॥
देखि दरस चरननि लपटाये, गदगद कंठ न कछु कहि जाइ ।
लीनो हृदय लगाइ 'सूर' प्रभु, पूछत भद्र भए क्यों भाइ ? ॥

bharata kā citrakūṭa gamana ēvaṁ rāma milana- rāga sāraṅga

(40)

rāma pai bharata calē aturā'i.
manahīm mana sōcata mārāga maim, da'ī! phiraim kyōm rāghavarā'i..
dēkhi darasa caranani lapaṭāyē, gadagada kaṇṭha na kachu kahi jā'i.
līnō hr̥daya lagā'i 'sūra' prabhu, pūchata bhadra bha'ē kyaum bhā'i? ..

Bharat goes to Chitrakoot and Pleads with Sri Ram
Raag Saarang

41. [Bharat decided that he would go to the forest and bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya and anoint him the Emperor. At this particular point of time, the Lord had made Chitrakoot his temporary habitat in the forest.]

Then, Bharat started-off very eagerly (for Chitrakoot) to go to Sri Ram (and try to persuade him to come back). En-route, he was mentally worried and extremely doubtful. He wondered, ‘Oh creator! How will the king of Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram) come back?’ [What shall I do so that Sri Ram comes back. All my wits seem to have come to an end. I am very apprehensive that I would be able to persuade the Lord to return, for I think he would not be too kindly disposed towards me, thinking that I am merely staging a drama as a face-saving exercise but am not sincere about it. It seems impossible to convince him that I was not at all a party to the evil designs of my wicked mother. He wouldn’t believe it. Or, would he? Would he accept the kingdom that he has so willingly disowned; it is not in his nature to accept things already renounced. It would appear that he is not of a firm temperament and will if he so easily comes back to reclaim the throne. He would already be prejudiced against me, so all my pleadings would fall on deaf ears. Even if he is gracious enough to accept me and agree to return, would Sita and Laxman agree? And if they do not agree to return, can the Lord return alone? It’s such a sticky and tricky situation, an almost a log-jam from which I do not have any idea how to get out of.]

(At Chitrakoot—) When he saw Sri Ram, he clasped his feet tightly (literally, he wrapped and curled himself around them). His throat was choked with surging emotions and he could not speak a word. [When Bharat reached Chitrakoot, a forested area surrounded by green, undulating hills, he saw Sri Ram’s cottage, and made a mad dash for it. He was so overwhelmed that he could not observe formalities and ask for permission to enter. He rushed towards the Lord and fell at his feet, clasping them firmly with all his might lest the Lord pull himself away from him. He did not bother with embraces or other means of meeting someone dear, but fell to the ground in utter humility, desperation and submission.]

Surdas says that his (Surdas’) Lord (‘Sur-Prabhu’) clasped him (Bharat) tightly and affectionately to his bosom and asked, ‘Brother, why have you shaved your head?’ [Obviously, the Lord lifted the prostrated Bharat and embraced him most affectionately. It was then he saw that Bharat’s head was tonsured. This meant that there was some death in the family, for it is a tradition to shave the hair when someone’s parent or near and dear one dies.] (40).

राग केदारौ

[41]

भ्रात—मुख निरखि राम बिलखाने ।
मुंडित केस सीस, बिहबल दोउ, उमँगि कंठ लपटाने ॥
तात—मरन सुनि स्रवन कृपानिधि धरनि परे मुरझाई ।
मोह—मगन, लोचन जल—धारा, बिपति न हृदय समाई ॥
लोटति धरनि परी सुनि सीता, समुझति नहिं समुझाई ।

दारुन दुख दवारि ज्यौं तून—बन, नाहिंन बुझति बुझाई ॥
 दुरलभ भयौ दरस दसरथ कौ, सो अपराध हमारे ।
 'सूरदास' स्वामी करुनामय, नैन न जात उघारे ॥

rāga kēdārau

(41)

bhrāta-mukha nirakhi rāma bilakhānē.
 muṇḍita kēsa sīsa, bihabala dō'u, umamṅgi kaṇṭha lapaṭānē..
 tāta-marana suni sravana krpānidhi dharani parē murajhā'i.
 mōha-magana, lōcana jala-dhārā, bipati na hr̥daya samā'i..
 lōṭati dharani parī suni sītā, samujhati nahim̐ samujhā'ī.
 dārūna dukha davāri ज्याम̐ tr̥ṇa-bana, nāhin'na bujhati bujhā'ī..
 duralabha bhayau darasa dasaratha kau, sō aparādha hamārē.
 'sūradāsa' svāmī karunāmaya, naina na jāta ughārē..

Raag Kedaro

41. Seeing the face of his brother (Bharat), Sri Ram began weeping. The heads of both the brothers (Bharat and Shatrughan) were shaved (because of the death of their father). The two brothers wrapped themselves with their arms around Sri Ram (i.e. the three brothers embraced each other together); their throats were choked with emotions.

As soon as the merciful Sri Ram heard of the father's death, he fainted and fell on to the ground. He shed a stream of tears and became overwhelmed with grief; his heart could not accommodate the pain and agony (of this bad news). Sita too, on hearing the news, fell to the ground and grieved. She could not be assuaged and comforted. This horrible misfortune overwhelmed everyone even as a bush fire sweeps across a forest of dry stalks of reeds (and reduces them to ashes).

Surdas says that the merciful and compassionate Lord (Sri Ram) could not even open his eyes. His mind regretted that it has become impossible to see Dashrath again (in this life), and it is due to his own fault and stubbornness because he did not stay back in Ayodhya (when the king had earnestly pleaded with him to do so), but stubbornly decided instead to come to the forest (41).

श्रीराम—भरत संवाद एवं चरण पादुका का भरत का लेना

[42]

तुमहि बिमुख रघुनाथ, कौन बिधि जीवन कहा बनै ।
 चरन—सरोज बिना अवलोके, को सुख धरनि गनै ॥
 हठ करि रहे, चरन नहिं छाँड़े, नाथ तजौ निठुराई ।
 परम दुखी कौसल्या जननी, चलौ सदन रघुराई ॥
 चौदह बरष तात की आज्ञा, मोपै मेटि न जाई ।
 'सूर' स्वामि की पाँवर सिर धरि, भरत चले बिलखाई ॥

śrīrāma-bharata saṁvāda ēvaṁ caraṇa pādukā kā bharata kā lēnā

(42)

tumahi bimukha raghunātha, kauna bidhi jīvana kahā banai.
carana-sarōja binā avalōkē, kō sukha dharani ganai..
haṭṭha kari rahē, carana nahim chāmṛē, nātha tajau niṭhurāī.
parama dukhī kausalyā janani, calau sadana raghurāī..
caudaha baraṣa tāta kī ājñā, mōpai mēti na jāī.
'sūra' svāmi kī pāmvara sira dhari, bharata calē bilakhāī..

Sri Ram-Bharat Meeting; Bharat's Acceptance of
Sri Ram's Sandals—Raag Kedaro

42. (Bharat said most distressfully and remorsefully—) 'Oh Raghunath (Sri Ram)! How is it possible to live while being opposed to you? Who will be bothered about the comforts of this earth (world) without seeing (and serving) your (holy and divine) lotus feet?'

Bharat kept holding Sri Ram's feet and did not let them go. He prayed most earnestly, 'Oh Lord! Please forsake your stubbornness. Mother Kaushalya is very sorrowful and extremely grieved. Hence, oh Raghurai (Sri Ram; the king of Raghu's dynasty), come back home.'

Sri Ram replied, 'The father has ordered me to stay in the forest for 14 years, and I am unable to break (or violate) that order. [Now since he is dead, it is all the more imperative for me to live up to his words, for it would seem most unethical and improper to disobey one's father and go back on the words of honour given to him once he is dead.].'

Surdas says that Bharat was compelled to accept the Lord's sandals, which he did with the greatest of reverence, by putting them on his head, and started back on the journey home, full of regret and contrition, woefully weeping and lamenting all the way back.

[As Bharat had already imagined, it was impossible to persuade the Lord to return. Bharat did try his best; he did put all the aces he had up his sleeves on the table in order to prevail upon the Lord, but in the true spirit of a faithful servant and an obedient brother he had to surrender his wishes before those of his Lord. The wish and the order of the Lord were supreme and inviolable for Bharat. He felt reassured, after the Lord's affectionate welcome and love shown during his short stay at Chitrakoot, that the Lord had not misunderstood him and that his love for his younger brother was undiminished and untarnished. Bharat was now sure that the Lord loved him ever so much, and the unfortunate developments of the past had had no effects on heart and mind. The Lord, Bharat definitely concluded, loved Bharat now as he had loved him all through his life earlier. So he most reluctantly decided to accept the Lord's wishes to return with the Lord's footwear as a token of the Lord's presence at Ayodhya till his actual return at the end of the 14-year forest exile period as ordained by the father. Bharat accepted the sandals on behalf of all the citizens of Ayodhya, and decided that they would be given the same respect as the physical presence of the Lord himself.] (42).

रामोपदेश भरत के प्रति, भरत विदाई—राग मारू

[43]

बंधू, करियो राज सँभारें ।
 राजनीति अरु गुरु की सेवा, गाइ—बिप्र प्रतिपारें ॥
 कौसल्या—कैकई—सुमित्रा—दरसन साँझ—सवारे ।
 गुरु बसिष्ठ और मिलि सुमंत सौ, परजा—हेतु बिचारें ॥
 भरत—गात सीतल ह्वै आयौ, नैन उमँगि जल ढारे ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु दई पाँवरी, अवधपुरी पग धारे ॥

rāmōpadēśa bharata kē prati, bharata vidā'ī-rāga mārū

(43)

bandhū, kariyō rāja sam̐bhārēm.
 rājanīti aru guru kī sēvā, gā'i-bipra pratipārēm..
 kausalyā-kaika'ī-sumitrā-darasana sām̐jha-savārē.
 guru basiṣṭha aura mili sumanta saum̐, parajā-hētu bicārēm..
 bharata-gāta sītala hvai āyau, naina umam̐gi jala ḍhārē.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu da'ī pām̐varī, avadhapurī paga dhārē..

Sri Ram's Advice to Bharat; the Latter's Return to Ayodhya
 Raag Maaru

43. (Sri Ram advised Bharat—) 'Brother, take great care of the work of the kingdom. Follow meticulously the rules of political science in all your behaviour and interactions. Serve your Guru (Vashistha). Take care of the cows (livestock) and Brahmins (elderly and educated advisors). See the three mothers Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra twice a day, morning and evening (so that none of them feel neglected). Regularly consult Guru Vashistha and the ministers (Sumantra and others), and always think of the good of the subjects of the kingdom.'

Hearing this, Bharat felt extremely distressed (because it was the time of departure back to Ayodhya, and these words only went to stoke the smoldering fire of the agony of separation from his dear brother, and fresh flames of the agony accompanying separation leapt up). Tears silently rolled down his eyes, wetting his cheeks and dripping down his chin.

Surdas says, to sum up the entire episode, 'Sri Ram gave him his sandals (as a symbol or token of his presence), and he (Bharat) returned back to Ayodhya' (43).

राग सारंग

[44]

राम यौ भरत बहुत समझायौ ।

कौसिल्या, कैकई, सुमित्रहि पुनि—पुनि सीस नवायौ ॥
 गुरु बसिष्ठ अरु मिलि सुमंत सौं, अतिहीं प्रेम बढ़ायौ ।
 बालक प्रतिपालक तुम दोऊ, दसरथ—लाड़ लड़ायौ ॥
 भरत—शत्रुहन कियौ प्रनाम, रघुबर तिन्ह कंठ लगायौ ।
 गद्गद गिरा, सजल अति लोचन, हिय सनेह—जल छायौ ॥
 कीजै यहै बिचार परसपर, राजनीति समुझायौ ।
 सेवा मातु, प्रजा—प्रतिपालन, यह जुग—जुग चलि आयौ ॥
 चित्रकूट तें चले खीन—तन, मन बिस्वाम न पायौ ।
 'सूरदास' बलि गयौ राम कै, निगम नेति जिहिं गायौ ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(44)

rāma yaum̐ bharata bahuta samajhāyau.
 kausilyā, kaikaī, sumitrahi puni-puni sīsa navāyau..
 guru basiṣṭha aru mili sumanta saum̐, atihīm̐ prēma baṛhāyau.
 bālaka pratipālaka tuma dō'ū, dasaratha-lāṛa laṛāyau..
 bharata-śatruhana kiyau pranāma, raghubara tinha kaṇṭha lagāyau.
 gadgada girā, sajala ati lōcana, hiya sanēha-jala chāyau..
 kījai yahai bicāra parasapara, rājanīti samujhāyau.
 sēvā mātu, prajā-pratipālana, yaha juga-juga cali āyau..
 citrakūṭa tēm̐ calē khīna-tana, mana bisrāma na pāyau.
 'sūradāsa' bali gayau rāma kaim̐, nigama nēti jihim̐ gāyau..

Raag Saarang

44. Sri Ram explained the circumstances, the duties, the traditions, the rules of righteousness, propriety, probity, noble conduct and thought etc. to Bharat in various ways (to advise him on the intricacies of statecraft and diplomacy, as well as to assure him that he harbours no antagonism against him).

Then the Lord repeatedly bowed his head at the feet of mothers Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra and honoured them. He met Guru Vashistha and minister Sumantra and enhanced their love and affection manifold. He told them, 'Both of you had taken good care of us ever since our childhood. You had shown us the same love and affection that our father Dasrath had shown to us. Now in his absence, you two are there to take good care of us (i.e. us brothers as well as the kingdom, and I am most certain that with you at Ayodhya, I would not have anything to worry about during my period of exile).'

Bharat and Shatrughan bowed once again before him (Sri Ram) before departure, and Raghubir (Sri Ram) embraced them most affectionately and tearfully. His voice was overwhelmed and choked; tears welled-up and filled his eyes, and his heart heaved in a surging wave of deep love and affection for them. Advising his brother on statecraft, polity and policy, he said, 'Always discuss amongst yourselves about any given matter,

and remember that serving the mothers and taking good care of the subjects of the kingdom are the traditional and rightful duties of a king.'

The two brothers (Bharat and Shatrughan) started back from Chitrakoot with an utter sense of dismay; their mind and bodies appeared extremely distressed and a worn-out. They were not at all at peace with themselves, but were under the spell of circumstances and bound by the dictates of destiny.

Surdas says— 'I sacrifice and offer my self to Sri Ram whose glories are described by the words 'Neti-neti' (not this, not this) even by the Vedas. [That is, the glories of the Lord are infinite, beyond description and defy comprehension even by the greatest of scriptures.]' (44).

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Section-1

Aranya Kand/Canto 3

अरण्यकाण्ड

शूर्पणखा नासिकोच्छेदन—राग मारू

[45]

दंडक बन आए रघुराई ।
 काम बिबस ब्याकुल उर अंतर, राच्छसि एक तहाँ चलि आई ॥
 हँसि कहि कछू राम सीता सौँ, तिहि लछिमन के निकट पठाई ॥
 भृकुटी कुटिल, अरुन अति लोचन, अगिनि—सिखा मुख कह्यौ फिराई ॥
 री बौरी, सठ भई मदन—बस, मेरें ध्यान चरन रघुराई ।
 बिरह—बिथा तन गई लाज छुटि, बारंबार उठै अकुलाई ॥
 रघुपति कह्यौ, निलज्ज निपट तू, नारि राच्छसी ह्यौ तें जाई ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु इक—पतिनी—ब्रत, काटी नाक, गई खिसिआई ॥

aranyakāṇḍa

śūrpaṇakhā nāsikōcchēdana-rāga mārū

(45)

daṇḍaka bana ā'ē raghurā'ī.
 kāma bibasa byākula ura antara, rācchasi ēka tahām' cali ā'ī..
 haṁsi kahi kachū rāma sītā saum, tihi lachimana kē nikaṭa paṭhā'ī..
 bhr̥kuṭī kuṭila, aruna ati lōcana, agini-sikhā mukha kahyau phirā'ī..
 rī baurī, saṭha bha'ī madana-basa, mērēm dhyāna carana raghurā'ī.
 biraha-bithā tana ga'ī lāja chuṭi, bārambāra uṭhai akulā'ī..
 raghupati kahyau, nilajja nipata tū, nāri rācchasi hyām' tēm jā'ī.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu ika-patinī-brata, kāṭī nāka, ga'ī khisi'ā'ī..

Aranya Kand/Canto 3

Supernakha's Deformation—Raag Maaru

45. [The word 'Aranya' literally means a forest. This section describes the period of Lord Ram's exile in deep forest where he not only met fierce demons but great sages and seers

also, and fortunately for them, both categories of souls, the demons as well as the sages and seers, were provided salvation by the Lord.]

Raghurai, the great king of the Raghu-dynasty, Sri Ram, proceeded ahead (from Chitrakoot) and came to the Dandak forest.

There a demoness (named Supernakha), who was overcome with lust and passions, came to him (disguised as a beautiful lady, and proposed to marry him). Sri Ram smiled and said something secret to Sita¹. He sent that demoness to Laxman.

(After hearing what she had to say—) Laxman's brows twirled and curved due to anger at her temerity, repugnant behaviour and a most despicable proposal (to marry her). His eyes became dark red, and his face lit up like a flame. He turned his face away from her and snubbed her very sternly, saying, 'Oh you mad, wicked, vile and pervert woman! You have been overcome by Kaam (lust and passion), and hence have become reckless and mentally sick and wicked. My mind is focused in the (holy and divine) feet of Sri Ram. (So, don't talk rubbish with me. I just cannot imagine of anything other than serving the Lord to the best of my ability. I do not have the time and the inclination for such ill-begotten and rotten thoughts that have found a perch in your head.).'

The ferocity of lust and passions, coupled with the agony and frustration of not being able to get what she desired as well as the snub and insult that she got to which she was not accustomed or had not expected, impelled that wild and wicked demoness to lose all inhibitions. She repeatedly got up to face Laxman in agitation and frustration in vain attempts to draw his attention and convince him. She also went back and forth between Sri Ram and Laxman in an attempt to entice any one of them to her proposal of love and passion.

Raghupati (Sri Ram) said, 'You are an utterly shameless demoness; go away from here.'

Surdas says that the Lord had taken a vow of having a single wife. (He was so angry, peeved and embarrassed that) he got her nose cut-off (by instructing Laxman to do so)². This was unbearable for the demoness, and she became extremely angry, wrathful and vengeful, and went away from there (to seek retribution)³ (45).

[Note :-¹Perhaps the Lord used this opportunity to lighten-up the gloomy environments of the forest and told Sita that she should now watch for some fun which the Lord wishes to play. He told her, in a lighter vein, to watch the reaction of Laxman and see him turn pink when he would send this beautiful damsel, who was a demoness in disguise, to him with the proposal of marriage. 'Let's have some fun'—in essence, this is what the Lord told Sita!

²According to saint Tulsidas, a contemporary of Surdas and the author of the epic Ram Charitmanas, Sri Ram had instructed Laxman to cut off both the nose and the ears as well of Supernakha.

³This incident was the first spark that ignited the fire of war between the demons and the Lord. We learn from this event that an angered lady is the most dangerous soul in creation, and no one can predict what a rebuked woman, who is overcome with jealous love, would do and to what lengths she would go to square things up with her opponent, even if it means destruction of the entire clan and race, as it did happen in the present case with Supernakha. Being rebuked and snubbed by the Lord, and overcome with jealousy and passion, she went ahead to instigate her kith and kin, the demons Khar and Dushan, and when they were killed by the Lord she approached the demon King Ravana

to settle scores. This finally led to Ravana abducting Sita and the epic war at Lanka which resulted in the destruction of the city and the slaying of the entire demon race.]

खर दूषण वध— राग सारंग

[46]

खर—दूषण यह सुनि उठि धाए ।
 तिन के संग अनेक निसाचर, रघुपति—आस्रम आए ॥
 श्रीरघुनाथ—लक्ष्मण ते मारे, कोउ एक गए पराए ।
 सूर्पनखा ये समाचार सब, लंका जाइ सुनाए ॥
 दसकंधर—मारीच निसाचर, यह सुनि कै अकुलाए ।
 दंडक बन आए छल करि कै, 'सूर' राम लखि धाए ॥

khara dūṣaṇa vadha- rāga sārāṅga

(46)

khara-dūṣaṇa yaha suni uṭhi dhā'ē.
 tina kē saṅga anēka nisācara, raghupati-āsrāma ā'ē..
 śrīraghunātha-lakṣaṇa tē mārē, kō'u ēka ga'ē parā'ē.
 sūrpanakhā yē samācāra saba, laṅkā jā'i sunā'ē..
 dasakandhara-mārīca nisācara, yaha suni kai akulā'ē.
 daṇḍaka bana ā'ē chala kari kai, 'sūra' rāma lakhi dhā'ē..

Slaying of the demons Khar-Dhushan—Raag Saarang

46. Hearing this (that their sister Supernakha's nose has been chopped-off by Sri Ram and Laxman), the demons Khar and Dushan rushed to attack them and avenge her insult. They were accompanied by a huge crowd (army) of demons, and they attacked the hermitage of Sri Ram. Sri Ram and Laxman killed all of them; those few who survived, escaped from there.

Flabbergasted, exasperated and dismayed, Supernakha went to Lanka and conveyed all the news (to Ravana). Hearing this news, the two demons Ravana and Marich became peeved, agitated, annoyed and angry beyond measure. They came to the Dandak forest to lay a trap.

Surdas says that on seeing his deceitful form, Sri Ram ran behind him. [The text does not specify behind whom Sri Ram had run. But the story is so well known that the demon behind whom the Lord ran was Marich disguised as a golden deer, and not Ravana.] (46).

[47]

राम धनुष अरु सायक साँधे ।
 सिय हित मृग पाछै उठि धाए, बलकल बसन फेंट दृढ़ बाँधे ॥

नव—घन, नील—सरोज—बरन बपु, बिपुल बाहु, केहरि—फल—काँधे ।
 इंदु—बदन, राजीव—नैन बर, सीस जटा सिव—सम सिर बाँधे ॥
 पालत, सृजत, सँहारत, सैतत, अंड अनेक अवधि पल आधे ।
 'सूर' भजन—महिमा दिखरावत, इमि अति सुगम चरन आराधे ॥

(47)

rāma dhanuṣa aru sāyaka sām̐dhē.
 siya hita mrga pāchair̐m̐ uṭhi dhā'ē, balakala basana phēṇṭa dr̥ṣha bām̐dhē..
 nava-ghana, nīla-sarōja-barana bapu, bipula bāhu, kēhari-phala-kām̐dhē..
 indu-badana, rājīva-naina bara, sīsa jaṭā siva-sama sira bām̐dhē..
 pālata, sr̥jata, sam̐hārata, saintata, aṇḍa anēka avadhi pala ādhē..
 'sūra' bhajana-mahimā dikharāvata, imi ati sugama carana ārādhē..

47. Sri Ram ran (behind Marich who was disguised as a golden deer) with a bow and an arrow mounted on it. [This indicates that the Lord was ready to shoot the cunning demon at the first opportunity.] He ran behind the deer for the sake of Sita (because she had asked him to go and fetch it as a prize catch for her). [Verse no. 49 below gives the reason why Sita asked the Lord to get rid of the evil deer.]

He has tied the cloth made from birch tightly around his waist; his complexion resembles a rain-bearing newly formed dark cloud as well as a blue lotus; his arms are large (long and well built); his shoulders are well developed like those of a lion; his face is like a moon; his eyes are enchanting like an excellent red-hued lotus in full bloom; and there are matted hairs forming a crown on his head like those on Lord Shiva's. Sri Ram is the Lord who is the supreme Lord of creation, most majestic, all-mighty, all-powerful and omnipotent, the Lord who can create numerous Universes in half a moment, sustain and annihilate all of them simultaneously, and pull back everything in himself (i.e. bring to an end the entire existence) if he so wishes.

[It is a wonder of wonders that the same Lord is running behind a deceitful demon, seeking an opportunity to shoot an arrow at him. But the mystery is that this is how the Lord plays his worldly tricks and sports for the benefit of his devotees so that they can sing his glorious deeds to their immense satisfaction and fulfillment of their cherished desire to see the Lord play sport in this world. This is what Surdas reiterates below.]

Surdas says—'The Lord is showing the importance of his devotion (by running behind Marich). He wishes to convey the message that if one sincerely worships the Lord and has great devotion in his divine and holy feet (as Marich did have¹), the Lord becomes so easily accessible to him that instead of the devotee running around searching for the Lord it is the other way round, for now the Lord himself rushes behind his devotee to give him deliverance (though the latter might be an imposter, deceitful, cunning, evil and sinful demon, such as Marich in the present case).' (46).

[Note—¹Marich had been remembering Sri Ram, albeit out of awe and fear, ever since he was flung-off by the Lord with a headless arrow while the demon had been trying to defile sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice. He was forced by Ravana, under threat of death, to lure Sri Ram away from Sita so that he can manage to steal or kidnap her on the sly. Being certain of death either way, Marich had chosen to die at the hands of Sri Ram instead of being killed by Ravana if he defied his order to accompany him. So, since Marich had preferred to die at the hands of Sri Ram, and he had been constantly

remembering the Lord day in and day out, the Lord deemed him to be his devotee and decided to pursue him and kill him to provide him with liberation and deliverance from his evil body of a demon. Such is the merciful and compassionate way of the great Lord that he provides liberation and deliverance even to the demons who are otherwise most sinful and cruel. The Lord is not biased against anybody, because for him all the living beings are alike.]

सीता हरण— राग केदरौ

[48]

सीता पुहुप—बाटिका लाई ।
 बारंबार सराहत तरुबर, प्रेम—सहित सींचे रघुराई ॥
 अंकुर मूल भए सो पोषे, क्रम—क्रम लगे फूल—फल आई ।
 नाना भाँति पाँति सुंदर, मनो कंचन की हैं लता बनाई ॥
 मृग—स्वरूप मारीच धर्यो तब, फेरि चलयौ बारक जो दिखाई ।
 श्रीरघुनाथ धनुष कर लीन्हौ, लागत बान देव—गति पाई ॥
 हा लछिमन, सुनि टेर जानकी, बिकल भई, आतुर उठि धाई ॥
 रेखा खैचि, बारि बंधनमय, हा रघुबीर! कहाँ हौ, भाई ॥
 रावन तुरत बिभूति लगाएँ, कहत आइ, भिच्छा दै माई ।
 दीन जानि, सुधि आनि भजनकी, प्रेम सहित भिच्छा लै आई ॥
 हरि सीता लै चलयौ डरत जिय, मानो रंक महानिधि पाई ।
 'सूर' सीय पछिताति यहै कहि, करम—रेख मेटी नहिं जाई ॥

sītā haraṇa- rāga kēdarau

(48)

sītā puhupa-bāṭikā lā'ī.
 bārambāra sarāhata tarubara, prēma-sahita sīncē raghurā'ī..
 aṅkura mūla bha'e sō pōṣē, krama-krama lagē phūla-phala ā'ī.
 nānā bhāmṭī pāmṭī sundara, manō kaṇcana kī hairṁ latā banā'ī..
 mrga-svarūpa mārīca dharyō taba, phēri calyau bāraka jō dikhā'ī.
 śrīraghunātha dhanuṣa kara līnhau, lāgata bāna dēva-gati pā'ī..
 hā lachimana, suni ṭēra jānakī, bikala bha'ī, ātura uṭhi dhā'ī..
 rēkhā khainci, bāri bandhanamaya, hā raghubīra! kahām' hau, bhā'ī..
 rāvana turata bibhūti lagā'ēm', kahata ā'ī, bhicchā dai mā'ī.
 dīna jāni, sudhi āni bhajanakī, prēma sahita bhicchā lai ā'ī..
 hari sītā lai calyau ḍarata jiya, mānō raṅka mahānidhi pā'ī.
 'sūra' sīya pachitāti yahai kahi, karama-rēkha mēṭī nahirṁ jā'ī..

Sita's Abduction by Ravana—Raag Kedaro

48. Sita had created a small flower garden at her hermitage (in the Dandak forest). Raghurai (Sri Ram) used to praise the plants and water them lovingly (and regularly). When the sprouts appeared, he watered and nourished them with great care. When they grew up, flowers and fruits blossomed and bloomed on them. There were rows of various plants of different shapes and sizes as if golden creepers had been laid on the ground.

Marich appeared disguised as a (golden) deer in that garden; he appeared once and then cantered away. Raghunath (Sri Ram) lifted the bow (to shoot him). As soon as Marich was hit by the arrow (shot by the Lord), he went to heaven (i.e. he died and found liberation from his wicked body of a demon).

(At the instant when he died—) He cried aloud ‘Ah Laxman’ (mimicking the voice of Sri Ram)! When Sita heard it, she panicked, became extremely worried and agitated, and dashed out in that direction. [She went up to the outer periphery of the hermitage to peep deeply into the forest, hear attentively, and try to find out the reason for this distress-call apparently made by Sri Ram.]

[Laxman intervened and restricted Sita from proceeding any further in the unknown wilds as it was too dangerous for her to do so. He assured her that he would go and find out the cause of this distress call immediately, but before he went, he used sanctified water to draw a boundary line, a circle or a square, around the periphery of the hermitage, using Mantras (divine words), so that anyone who steps inside it shall not be able to escape. He restricted Sita from stepping outside of it.] Calling out ‘Oh brave brother, where are you’, he proceeded to the jungle (in the direction from which the sound came).

As soon as he had gone away, Ravana came there with ash smeared on his body (pretending to be an ascetic), and said to Sita, ‘Mother, give me alms.’ Thinking him to be a hungry and humble mendicant, Sita brought some food offerings and stepped out of the demarcation line (marked by Laxman) to offer the food to him. [Ravana was too clever to come close to the hermitage because he knew the powers of the line drawn by Laxman to protect Sita. So he stood outside the periphery, and Sita was left with no choice but to step outside in order to give him alms. It is the moral duty sanctified by laws of Dharma that a housewife should not let a mendicant return empty-handed from her residence, and should she do so it is considered a sinful act. So she had no choice. Ravana had exploited this loop-hole in laws of proper conduct for a housewife to abduct Sita.]

Ravana¹ abducted Sita and ran away from there, huffing and puffing in a hurry, very terrified in his heart (at the prospect of the Lord and Laxman coming back before he could run away from the site). He ran away hurriedly much like a pauper who has laid his hands on a priceless treasure trove and wishes to make haste with his escape from the site lest anyone should catch hold of him red-handed.

Surdas says—‘She (Sita) lamented most woefully and regretted that the line drawn by destiny cannot be erased, or the fate that one inherits cannot be wished away.’ [Here Surdas is playing with the word ‘line’ drawn by Laxman when he says that Sita called this ‘line’ as being drawn by destiny. What she means here is that it is impossible to change what is destined for a person in his fate. She remorsefully and helplessly had to submit herself to her fate, and decided that miseries and pain were her stock in life. It is the malevolent fate that was responsible for the exile of her husband in the first place, and

it is the same merciless fate that has now caused her separation from him and landed her in the clutches of the fierce demon.] (48).

[Note—¹Ravana was one of the chief guards at the gate of Lord Vishnu, and his name was 'Jai'. Jai became a demon for three births due to a curse by sages Sankaadi etc. Ravana was his second birth. This story is narrated in a note to verse no. 1 of this book.

The Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas describes the life and times of Ravana in great detail in its Uttarkand, Cantos 1 and 2, and in Valmiki Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Cantos 9-34.]

राग मारू

[49]

इहिं बिधि बन बसे रघुराइ ।
 डासि के तृन भूमि सोवत, द्रुमनि के फल खाइ ॥
 जगत—जननी करी बारी, मृगा चरि—चरि जाइ ॥
 कोपि कै प्रभु बान लीन्हौ, तबहिं धनुष चढ़ाइ ॥
 जनक—तनया धरि अग्नि मै, छाया—रूप बनाइ ।
 यह न कोऊ भेद जानै, बिना श्रीरघुराइ ॥
 कह्यौ अनुज सौं, रहौ ह्यौ तुम, छाँड़ि जनि कहूँ जाइ ।
 कनक—मृग मारीच माख्यो, गिर्यौ, 'लषन' सुनाइ ॥
 गयो सो दै रेख, सीता कह्यौ सु कहि नहिं जाइ ।
 तबहिं निसिचर गयो छल करि, लई सीय चुराइ ॥
 गीध ताकौ देखि धायौ, लख्यौ 'सूर' बनाइ ।
 पंख काटै गिर्यौ, असुर तब गयो लंका धाइ ॥

rāga mārū

(49)

ihim bidhi bana basē raghurā'i.
 ḍāsi kē tr̥ṇa bhūmi sōvata, drumani kē phala khā'i..
 jagata-jananī karī bārī, mrgā cari-cari jā'i..
 kōpi kai prabhu bāna līnhau, tabahim dhanuṣa caṛhā'i..
 janaka-tanayā dhari agini maim, chāyā-rūpa banā'i.
 yaha na kō'ū bhēda jānai, binā śrīraghurā'i..
 kahyau anuja saum, rahau hyām̐ tuma, chām̐ḍi jani kahum̐ jā'i.
 kanaka-mrga mārīca māryō, giryau, 'laṣana' sunā'i..
 gayō sō dai rēkha, sītā kahyau su kahi nahim̐ jā'i.
 tabahim̐ niscara gayau chala kari, la'ī sīya curā'i..
 gīdha tākauṁ dēkhi dhāyau, laryau 'sūra' banā'i.
 paṅkha kātāim̐ giryau, asura taba gayau laṅkā dhā'i..

Raag Maarū

49. Raghurai (Sri Ram, the king of the Raghu's dynasty) stayed in the Dandak forest in the following manner—he used to spread reed or grass on the ground and make a bed out of them to sleep upon. He used to eat fruits plucked from trees.

The divine mother of the world (i.e. Sita) had planted a small flower garden. The deer (Marich) used to graze in it, destroy the little garden, and run away. The Lord became angry and peeved (at his behaviour), and mounted his arrow on the bow to punish him.

Before pursuing the deceitful deer into the thick of the forest, the all-knowing Lord, who was aware of what was to happen next, had wisely entrusted the safety of the daughter of Janak (i.e. Sita) with the Fire God, and had artificially created her shadow (as an illusionary Sita). Except him, no one else knew about this secret¹.

(Before going behind or pursuing Marich, who was disguised as a deer, into the thick of the forest—) Sri Ram said to his younger brother (Laxman), 'You stay here. Do not go anywhere leaving behind her (Sita) alone.'

When he (Sri Ram) killed the golden deer, the latter mimicked his voice and called out aloud 'Ah Laxman' before dying.

Sita said some unmentionable derogatory things to Laxman which I (Surdas) am unable to repeat². Therefore, Laxman was forced to mark a protective ring on the ground around Sita (i.e. around the hermitage), and then he proceeded to the forest.

At that time, the demon (Ravana) went there in a disguise (as an ascetic) and he stealthily abducted (stole) Sita.

Surdas says—'Seeing this, the king of the vultures (named Jatau) rushed forward to intervene and help Sita. He fought very valiantly. But Ravana cut-off his wings, and the bird fell to the ground. [Refer verse no. 55 also.] After that, that demon (Ravana) rushed speedily to Lanka.' (49).

[Note—¹In other words, the Sita that was visible in the hermitage after the Lord had gone away to shoot the demon Marich disguised as a deer was not the original Sita, but an illusion of her true self. Hence, the 'Sita' that the demon Ravana subsequently kidnapped was only a shadow of the real Sita. The 'real Sita' was in the care of the Fire God, and as such no one dare touch her, as the Fire God would burn him in an instant. That is the reason why the 'Sita' that was imprisoned in Lanka escaped the fierce fire set ablaze by Hanuman when he burned the entire city to ashes prior to the epic war, as that 'Sita' was merely an illusion, and illusions don't burn with fire.

²It is written elsewhere that Sita had accused Laxman of having evil designs on her and wished that if Sri Ram is harmed he would get an opportunity to touch her. It would not happen, she warned and wailed, as she would prefer death to such a despicable deed. She might also have said that in her bad times, even the loyal brother has developed bad intentions and does not wish good of her husband, Sri Ram. Why is he not proactive, and why is he not immediately rushing to his brother's aid when he is calling out his name in distress if has no evil intentions? One must remember that this is not the 'original Sita' speaking; it is the illusionary Sita created by the Lord's 'Maya' that casts such objectionable aspirations on Laxman. After all, 'Maya Sita' or deceptive Sita has all the negative qualities one can expect from all things created by 'Maya'. This 'Maya' is the progenitor of all nuisance and mischief in this world. It is the delusion created by the ubiquitous Maya that separates the creature and the Truth.]

सीता का अशोकवन वास—रग सारंग

[50]

बन असोक मैं जनक—सुता कौं रावन राख्यौ जाइ ।
 भूखरु प्यास, नींद नहि आवै, गई बहुत मुरझाइ ॥
 रखवारी कौं बहुत निसाचरि, दीन्हीं तुरत पठाई ।
 ‘सूरदास’ सीता तिन्ह निरखत, मनहीं—मन पछिताइ ॥

Sītā kā aśōkavana vāsa-rāga sārāṅga

(50)

bana asōka mair̥ janaka-sutā kaur̥m rāvana rākhyau jā'i.
 bhūkharu pyāsa, nīnda nahim̐ āvai, gaī bahuta murajhā'i..
 rakhavārī kaur̥m bahuta nisācari, dīnhīm̐ turata paṭhā'i.
 'sūradāsa' sītā tinha nirakhata, manahīm̐-mana pachitā'i..

Sita Held Captive at Lanka in the 'Ashok Grove'
 Raag Saarang

50. [This verse sums-up the wretched condition in which Sita lived in captivity of Ravana at Lanka.]

Ravana took the daughter of Janak (i.e. Sita) and placed her (i.e. held her captive) in the 'Ashok Van'. [It was so-called because it was full of Ashok trees, or the trees called Saraca Indica or Jonesia Asoka.]

She lost all appetite, thirst and sleep. She had become extremely emaciated, miserable and wretched in the agony of separation from Sri Ram. He (Ravana) sent a number of demonesses to guard her.

Surdas says—'Seeing Sita (and her horrible condition) they (i.e. the demonesses) too felt mentally sorry and contrite (but couldn't dare to overtly say anything to console her for the fear of inviting Ravana's wrath) (50).

राम विलाप—राग केदारौ

[51]

रघुपति कहि प्रिय—नाम पुकारत ।
 हाथ धनुष लीन्हे, कटि भाथा, चकित भए दिसि—बिदिसि निहारत ॥
 निरखत सून भवन जड़ है रहे, खिन लोटत धर, बपु न सँभारत ।
 हा सीता, सीता कहि सियपति, उमड़ि नयनजल भरि—भरि ढारत ॥
 लगत सेष—उर बिलखि जगत गुरु, अद्भुत गति नहिं परति बिचारत ।
 चितत चित्त 'सूर' सीतापति, मोह मेरु—दुख टरत न टारत ॥

Rāma vilāpa-rāga kēdārau

(51)

raghupati kahi priya-nāma pukārata.
 hātha dhanuṣa līnhē, kaṭi bhāthā, cakita bha'ē disi-bidisi nihārata..
 nirakhata sūna bhavana jaṛa hvai rahē, khina lōṭata dhara, bapu na sambhārata.
 hā sītā, sītā kahi siyapati, umaḍi nayanajala bhari-bhari ḍhārata..
 lagata sēṣa-ura bilakhi jagata guru, adbhuta gati nahim parati bicārata.
 citata citta 'sūra' sītāpati, mōha mēru-dukha ṭarata na ṭārata..

Sri Ram Grieves and Lamentation for Sita
 Raag Kedaro

[The following verse nos. 51-54 describe Sri Ram's utter distraught condition as he searches for his beloved Sita in the forest, not knowing where she has disappeared or what misfortune has befallen upon her. In his distress, it is Laxman who is his sole companion and solace. It is worth noting that the present tense narrative is used by the erudite poet Surdas to indicate that he mentally accompanies the Lord during his sojourn in the forest, implying that whatever the wise saint has written is out of first hand witnessing of the events as they unfolded on the canvas of his mind. Herein lays the difference between an ordinary poet and the one who is an ardent devotee of the Lord. Surdas is narrating the events as they happened, as he has witnessed them progress on a day-to-day basis, thereby lending authenticity to them.]

51. Raghupati (the king of the Raghu's clan, Sri Ram) is very distraught, and he repeatedly calls out distressfully and in utter dismay for his beloved by her name (i.e. he says 'Sita', 'Sita' loudly as he wends his way through the thickets of the dense forest and frantically searches for Sita).

He has a bow in hand and a quiver tied to his waist. He looks in every direction as if in a daze. Finding the cottage (hermitage) empty, he seems to be stunned and dumbfounded beyond measure. He suddenly fell to the ground, lamenting woefully, and lost control over his body (i.e. he fainted).

The Lord of Sita (or husband of Sita; 'Siya-pati') wails for her, calling out distressfully, 'Oh Sita, oh Sita', as a torrent of tears roll down his eyes. He, who is the preceptor for the whole world, wails most woefully (as if he was an ordinary man lamenting for his lost wife), and tightly embraces Laxman (for support).

Surdas says that his condition is strange, pitiful and miserably awful; it is not possible to understand it. Sitapati (Sri Ram) is extremely worried and upset. His anguish, agonies and grief (due to Sita's separation) have grown to immense proportions like Mt. Sumeru. [That is, the Lord's grief reached a climax, became unsurmountable and as grave and huge as the formidable mountain known as Mt. Sumeru. This is the golden mountain of Gods which is considered as the largest mountain in existence.] They cannot be moved (or removed or wished away) inspite of the best of efforts made by the Lord. [That is, Sri Ram is unable to overcome his grief and sorrows no matter how hard he tries.] Due to their effects, he repeatedly faints¹ (51).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that the behaviour of Lord Ram, an incarnation of the Supreme Lord of creation, is like an ordinary man whose wife has been lost in the wild. Did Lord Ram not know what had happened, where Sita was and who has stolen her? Well, it is not that: The Lord had planned everything in advance, and Sita's abduction was merely a ploy so that he could travel to the fort of the demons at Lanka and eliminate them one by one in the battle to free Sita. In order to be successful in this planning it was of utmost importance that the Lord's real identity be kept secret lest the demons would know that their nemesis has arrived, and then they would run away and hide somewhere to escape the Lord's wrath. If that should happen, the entire project would come tumbling down.

There was another possibility: If the demons came to know who Lord Ram and Sita actually were, they would come and surrender before the Lord, and then the Lord who is renowned for his mercy and forgiving nature would be forced to excuse them and let them go off unpunished. Once the danger was over, the demons would revert to their old habits, and the very purpose of Lord Vishnu coming down to earth as Lord Ram would be nullified.

The king of demons, Ravana, must have appointed spies to see what happens after he takes Sita away. Lord Ram had to act his role as a human being to perfection so that no suspicion arises in the mind of the demons about his super-human abilities. That is why the Lord wailed, grieved and lamented like an ordinary man. The spies would surely report back to their king Ravana that Sita's husband is crestfallen and wailing gravely. This reassured Ravana that Ram was an ordinary prince, and no harm would come to him if he kept Sita forcibly. The demons were 'demons' because of this evil and sinful nature of theirs: cruel, tyrannical, murderous; kidnap, rape, plunder and ransack.

In another version of this epic story of Lord Ram written by one of the contemporary saints of Surdas, i.e. Goswami Tulsidas, it is clearly mentioned that Lord Ram took Sita into confidence, telling her about the job to be done, and asking her to cooperate with him by assuming her primary form as 'Shakti', the dynamic energy of creation, and merging herself with the fire element which is another of Shakti. She would then leave merely a 'shadow' of her true self, which would then be used by the Lord to enact the remaining part of the drama he had planned to stage. Then, when the purpose would be served, i.e. when the demons would be eliminated, Sita would emerge from this fire element to resume her visual form as the wife of Sri Ram. These facts are narrated in Tulsidas' 'Ram Charit Manas', (i) Aranya Knad/Canto 3, Doha (couplet) no. 23 along with Chaupai (verse) no. 8 that precedes it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that follow it, and (ii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 14 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chanda line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 109.]

राग केदारौ

[52]

हो लछिमन! सीता कौनें हरी ?
 यह जु मढ़ी बैरिन भई हम कौं, कंचन—मृग जो छरी ॥
 जो पै सीता होय मढ़ी मैं, झाँकत द्वार खरी ।
 सूनी मढ़ी देख रघुनंदन, आवत नयन भरी ॥
 एक दुख हतौ पिता दसरथ कौ, दूजौ सीय करी ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु कहत भ्रात सौं, बन मैं बिपति परी ॥

rāga kēdārau

(52)

hō lachimana! sītā kaunēm harī?
yaha ju maṛhī bairina bha'ī hama kauṁ, kañcana-mrga jō charī..
jō pai sītā hōya maṛhī maiṁ, jhāmṁkata dvāra khari.
sūnī maṛhī dēkha raghunandana, āvata nayana bhari..
ēka dukha hatau pitā dasaratha kau, dūjau siya kari.
'sūradāsa' prabhu kahata bhrāta saum, bana maiṁ bipati pari..

Raag Kedaro

52. Sri Ram said, 'Oh Laxman! Who has stolen (abducted) Sita? This hut has become our virtual enemy now (i.e. it seems to torment us without Sita; we cannot live here any longer). The golden deer has cheated us. If Sita had been inside the hut, she would have stood at the door, waiting for us. But she is no where to be seen.'

Seeing the cottage empty, Raghunandan's (Sri Ram's) eyes got filled with tears. He lamented woefully—'Already there was the grief of father Dashrath's death, added to it is this second grief of Sita's abduction.'

Surdas says that Sri Ram expresses his utter dismay by telling his brother (Laxman) that they have come to face this most unfortunate and unexpected new development in the forest (52).

[53]

सुनौ अनुज, इहिं बन इतननि मिलि जानकि प्रिया हरी ।
कछु इक अंगनि की सहिदानी, मेरी दृष्टि परी ॥
कटि केहरि, कोकिल कल बानी, ससि मुख—प्रभा धरी ।
मृग मूसी नैननि की सोभा, जाति न गुप्त करी ॥
चंपक बरन चरन—कर कमलनि, दाड़िम दसन—लरी ।
गति मराल अरु बिंब अधर—छबि, अहि अनूप कबरी ॥
अति करुना रघुनाथ गुसाई, जुग ज्यौं जाति घरी ।
'सूरदास' प्रभु प्रिया—प्रेम—बस, निज महिमा बिसरी ॥

(53)

sunau anuja, ihiṁ bana itanani mili jānaki priyā harī.
kachu ika aṅgani kī sahidānī, mērī dr̥ṣṭi parī..
kaṭi kēhari, kōkila kala bānī, sasi mukha-prabhā dharī.
mrga mūsī nainani kī sōbhā, jāti na gupta karī..
campaka barana carana-kara kamalani, dāḍima dasana-larī.
gati marāla aru bimba adhara-chabi, ahi anūpa kabari..
ati karunā raghunātha gusā'īm, juga jyaurṁ jāti gharī.

'sūradāsa' prabhu priyā-prēma-basa, nija mahimā bisarī..

53. [A lot of symbolism is used in this verse. The poet Surdas uses this to describe the condition of Sri Ram as he remembers his beloved Sita and her matchless beauty when he observes the beauty of the elements of Nature and the wild life that surrounds him in the wilds.]

(Overcome with agony and grief of separation from Sita, Sri Ram told Laxman—) 'Listen my younger brother! My beloved Janki (Sita) has been symbolically stolen from me by the following in this forest. In my view, the various parts of her (dismembered) body are visible among them. The lion has her waist, the cuckoo has stolen her sweet voice, and the moon has usurped the beauty of her face. The deer has stolen the charm of her eyes, which they are unable to conceal. The Champa flower (*Michelia Champacca*; a tree having fragrant yellow flowers) has stolen (the glowing colour of) her complexion, the lotus flower has stolen her elegant hands and legs, the seeds of the pomegranate has stolen her teeth, the swan has stolen her gait, the gooseberry has stolen (the colour of) her lips, and the serpents have stolen the matchless, majestic charm of the thick plait of her hairs.'

Surdas says that 'his' Lord ('Surdas Prabhu'; Sri Ram) was extremely contrite and sad. For him, 24 minutes (literally, one 'Ghari') appeared to be like an age (i.e. a very long period of time). He is so overcome with love for his beloved (wife) that he has forgotten about his majestic glory and stupendous powers (as the almighty Lord of the universe whose wink is sufficient to create and annihilate the creation)¹ (53).

[Note :- ¹Sri Ram has all but forgotten that he is the supreme Lord of the world, and that anything and everything is possible for him. It does not behoove his exalted stature and standard to woefully wail and lament for a woman like an ordinary person—for the one whose batting of an eyelid can annihilate the whole world in an instant (see verse no. 47 line no. 5), defeating Ravana and retrieving Sita from his clutches is like a mere playful sport. Further, verse no. 51 line no. 5 describes Sri Ram as 'the preceptor of the whole world', implying that he should know that all these worldly relationships are illusionary, and weeping and lamenting and grieving for a lady, whether his wife or not, is not expected of a self-realised, learned, wise, noble and exalted soul, which the Lord indeed is.

But Sri Ram did all this acting because he wished to play his role as a human being to perfection.

We must not forget that it was he who had entrusted Sita's safety to the Fire God before her apparent abduction, and Ravana could steal only her shadow, because the original Sita was in the custody of the Fire God—see verse no. 49, line no. 5. Also, Sri Ram did not wish to give any hint to Ravana of his own divinity because all the demons needed to be killed for the sake of the larger welfare of the world, and if they had got a wiff of the divinity of the Lord and the fact that he none but the Supreme Being in disguise of a human being, they would not have fought him like an ordinary prince but would have sought forgiveness, and the very purpose of the Lord's coming to this earth to free it of their burden would be lost. So, in short, Sri Ram was not an ignorant, lustful and foolish man crying for his stolen wife, as he appears to be. He was merely hiding his great powers to deceive the demons into believing that he was an ordinary king.]

फिरत प्रभु पूछत बन—द्रुम—बेली ।
 अहो बंधु, काहू अवलोकी, इहिं मग बधू अकेली ?
 अहो बिहंग, अहो पन्नग—नृप, या कंदर के राइ ।
 अब कें मेरी बिपति मिटाऔ, जानकि देहु बताइ ॥
 चंपक—पुहुपबरन तन सुंदर, मनो चित्र—अवरेखी ।
 हो रघुनाथ, निसाचर के सँग अबै जात हौं देखी ॥
 यह सुनि धावत धरनि, चरन की प्रतिमा पथ में पाई ।
 नैन—नीर रघुनाथ सानि सो, सिव ज्यौं गात चढ़ाई ॥
 कहूँ हिय—हार, कहूँ कर—कंकन, कहूँ नूपुर, कहूँ चीर ।
 'सूरदास' बन—बन अवलोकत, बिलख—बदन रघुबीर ॥

(54)

phirata prabhu pūchata bana-druma-bēlī.
 ahō bandhu, kāhū avalōkī, ihiṁ maga badhū akēlī?
 ahō bihaṅga, ahō pannaga-nrpa, yā kandara kē rā'i.
 aba kēm mērī bipati miṭā'au, jānaki dēhu batā'i..
 campaka-puhupabarana tana sundara, manō citra-avarēkhī.
 hō raghunātha, nisācara kē samṅa abai jāta hauṁ dēkhī..
 yaha suni dhāvata dharani, carana kī pratimā patha mēm pā'i.
 naina-nīra raghunātha sāni sō, siva jyauṁ gāta carhā'i..
 kahum̃ hiya-hāra, kahum̃ kara-kaṅkana, kahum̃ nūpura, kahum̃ cīra.
 'sūradāsa' bana-bana avalōkata, bilakha-badana raghubīra..

54. Sri Ram wanders around the forest searching for Sita. He enquires of her whereabouts with the creepers and trees, 'Oh friends! Have any one of you seen my beloved wife going alone in this direction? Oh birds, oh the king of serpents, oh the Lord of this cave! For once, do tell me the whereabouts of Janki (Sita) and remove my sorrows, agonies and torments. Her body is as beautiful as the flower of the Champa tree (*Michelia Champacca*; a tree having fragrant yellow flowers) and she looks adorable like a most beautiful and charming portrait of a women in a picture.'

(Hearing his woeful wailings, the patron deity of the forest said in an invisible voice—) 'Oh Raghunath (Sri Ram)! I have just now seen her going away with a demon.' Hearing this, Sri Ram dashed forward; he found a footprint on the ground. Sri Ram (looked at it and) wept profusely; he wetted the soil around it with his tears and smeared the wet soil on his body just like Lord Shiva smears ash on his own body.

Somewhere ahead, he found the necklace used to be worn by Sita on her chest; at other places he found her bangles or her anklets or other pieces of her clothes. [Sita had cleverly thrown them one by one to mark the trail she was taking so that Sri Ram will be helped in tracking her by joining these spots with an imaginary line and figuring it out for himself the rough direction in which she was proceeding.]

Surdas says that Raghubir (the brave Raghu; Sri Ram) searches for her from one forest to another, overwhelmed with overflowing grief and contrition, most bewildered, agitated and perplexed, wailing and lamenting all the time (54).

[Note :- Surdas says that Sri Ram saw Sita's footprints on the ground—line no. 7. But Tulsidas has written that Ravana took Sita by the air-route on his chariot. Both of these were great saints, and neither of them was giving any wrong information. They were poets and devotees par-excellence. They weren't historians writing history, so they needn't had to stick to the preciseness of the events and the correctness of facts. If the maverick and all-powerful Lord could assume a human form for the sake of the pleasure of his devotees, is it not possible for him that he should make Sita take the land route for Surdas and the air route for Tulidas, if that would make them happy!]

गृध्र उद्धार—राग केदारौ

[55]

तुम लछिमन या कुंज—कुटी में देखौ जाइ निहारि ।
 कोउ इक जीव नाम मम लै—लै उठत पुकारि—पुकारि ॥
 इतनी कहत कंध तें कर गहि लीन्हौ धनुष सँभारि ।
 कृपानिधान नाम हित धाए, अपनी बिपति बिसारि ॥
 अहो बिहंग, कहौ अपनौ दुख, पूछत ताहि खरारि ।
 किहिं मति—मूढ़, हत्यौ तनु तेरौ, किधौं बिछोही नारि ?
 श्रीरघुनाथ—रमनि, जग—जननी, जनक—नरेस—कुमारि ।
 ताकौ हरन कियौ दसकंधर, हौं तिहि लग्यौ गुहारि ॥
 इतनी सुनि कृपालु कोमल प्रभु, दियौ धनुष कर झारि ।
 मानौ 'सूर' प्रान लै रावन गयौ देह कौं डारि ॥

gr̥dhra ud'dhāra-rāga kēdārau

(55)

tuma lachimana yā kun̄ja-kuṭī mēm dēkhau jā'i nihāri.
 kō'u ika jīva nāma mama lai-lai uṭhata pukāri-pukāri..
 itanī kahata kandha tēm kara gahi līnhau dhanuṣa sam̐bhāri.
 krpānidhāna nāma hita dhā'ē, apanī bipati bisāri..
 ahō bihaṅga, kahau apanau dukha, pūchata tāhi kharāri.
 kihim̐ mati-mūṛha, hatyau tanu tērau, kidhauṁ bichōhī nāri?
 śrīraghunātha-ramani, jaga-jananī, janaka-narēsa-kumāri.
 tākau harana kiyau dasakandhara, hauṁ tihi lagyau guhāri..
 itanī suni krpālu kōmala prabhu, diyau dhanuṣa kara jhāri.
 mānau 'sūra' prāna lai rāvana gayau dēha kauṁ ḍāri..

Deliverance of Jatau (the vulture)—Raag Kedaro

55. (Proceeding ahead, the two brothers came near an alcove or bower covered by creepers. Sri Ram said to Laxman—) 'Laxman! Go inside this canopy of creepers very carefully and have a look. Some creature is calling out my name intermittently from within it. He appears to be in great pain.'

But Sri Ram could not wait, so he himself took the bow down from his shoulders and held it carefully (i.e. at the ready to face any eventuality). He forgot about his own problems and rushed to protect the glory of his name.

(Seeing the vulture Jatau—) The ‘Kharari’ (i.e. the one who had killed the demon Khar; i.e. Sri Ram) asked the bird, ‘Oh bird! Tell me about your troubles. Which ignorant and stupid fool has inflicted wounds on your body? Or is it that you too are suffering from the agony of separation from your own wife (that you are distressfully wailing and lamenting like me)?’

(Jatau replied—) ‘The wife of Sri Raghunath, the mother of the world and the daughter of king Janak, was being abducted by the 10-headed one (Ravana). Hearing her distressful cry (for help), I had rushed to help her (and Ravana had then chopped-off my wings so I fell to the ground, writhing in pain).’ [Refer verse no. 49.]

As soon as he (Sri Ram) heard it, the merciful and most soft-hearted Lord (Sri Ram) threw down the bow. Surdas says that the Lord felt as if Ravana has taken away the soul and has thrown away the body. [That is, Jatau’s body appeared as endearing to Sri Ram as if it was Sita’s. This shows that the Lord loves his devotees as much as he loves his own wife Sita.] (55).

[Note—The incident of the vulture Jatau finding salvation at the hands of Lord Ram when the former’s wound were tended by the Lord himself to the extent that he used his long lock of hairs to wipe-off blood and dirt from the vulture’s wounds and then performed the bird’s last rites as if he was the Lord’s father, is a most enduring episode marking love and affection that the Lord has for his devotees. The end of Jatau while he lay on the laps of the Lord, and the fact that his last rites were performed by the Lord himself, are matchless in the sense that no other character in the entire story of Ramayana, or for that matter in any of the other Purans, had this great privilege, fortune and glory. Even the Lord’s own father was not as fortunate enough as this humble vulture. Everyone living being has to die; no one is immortal; even the Gods have their life-spans. But what more glorious death can it be that one dies for the Lord’s cause, and then the Lord himself would tend to his wounds and perform his last rites? This further shows that the Lord knows no other relationships except that of love and devotion; the Lord is enamoured by nothing else besides deep, unadulterated, sincere and unstinted love and devotion. Read on for this in verse no. 56 and 57 below.

The only other character to have obtained such an exalted end is Shabari, the low-caste old woman who had volunterily left her mortal body when she had a divine sight of the Lord, and her last rites were performed by the Lord himself as if she was his mother. Read verse no. 57.

It ought to be noted that in the entire story of Ramayana, the factor that stands out head over shoulder is the element of Bhakti or unstinted, undiluted and sincere devotion, love and submission for the Lord. It is this element of Bhakti that takes the center-stage as a means of obtaining emancipation and salvation for the creature.

In fact, the great philosophy of the Vedanta or the eclectic Upanishads, known as Gyan, which is devoid of Bhakti, or devotion and love for the Supreme Being, would be sheer madness as it would entangle the creature in mindless philosophy without actually letting him benefit from it, and in the same vein Bhakti without Vedanta would be nothing else but mere blind faith because the aspirant would not be aware of the Truth and his ultimate goal in life, and would be rather blindly following this or that deity without realizing what that deity actually stands for or represents.

The full story of Jatau and his brother Sampati whom the monkey army met on the shores of the ocean while they were searching for Sita has been narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, in its Kishkindha Kand, Canto 8.]

राग केदारौ

[56]

रघुपति निरखि गीध सिर नायौ ।
कहि कै बात सकल सीता की, तन तजि चरन—कमल चित लायौ ॥
श्रीरघुनाथ जानि जन अपनौ, अपने कर करि ताहि जरायौ ।
'सूरदास' प्रभु—दरस—परस करि, ततछन हरि के लोक सिधायौ ॥

rāga kēdārau

(56)

raghupati nirakhi gīdha sira nāyau.
kahi kai bāta sakala sītā kī, tana taji carana-kamala cita lāyau..
śrīraghunātha jāni jana apanau, apanē kara kari tāhi jarāyau.
'sūradāsa' prabhu-darasa-parasa kari, tatachana hari kē lōka sidhāyau..

Raag Kedaro

56. Watching Raghupati (Sri Ram) closely, affectionately and intently, the vulture (Jatau) bowed his head (to pay his obeisance to the Lord for one last time). Telling him all the news about Sita and focusing his attention in the holy and divine feet of the Lord, he (Jatau) left his mortal body (i.e. died).

Considering him to be his ardent and great devotee, Raghunath (Sri Ram) did his last rites with his own hands. Surdas says that by the holy sight of the Lord and his divine touch, he (Jatau) went to the abode of Hari (Vishnu).

[That is, Jatau obtained his final emancipation and salvation. Jatau not only got liberation from his mortal body as a vulture, from this world and its horrors, but also found permanent deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death.] (56).

शबरी उद्धार—राग केदारौ

[57]

सबरी—आश्रम रघुबर आए । अरघासन दै प्रभु बैठाए ॥
खाटे फल तजि मीठे ल्याई । जूँटे भए सो सहज सुहाई ॥
अंतरजामी अति हित मानि । भाजन कीने, स्वाद बखानि ॥
जाति न काहू की प्रभु जानत । भक्ति—भाव हरि जुग—जुग मानत ॥
करि दंडवत भइ बलिहारी । पुनि तन तजि हरि—लोक सिधारी ॥
'सूरज' प्रभु अति करुना भई । निज कर करि तिल—अंजलि दई ॥

śabarī ud'dhāra-rāga kēdārau

(57)

sabarī-āsrama raghubara ā'ē. araghāsana dai prabhu baiṭhā'ē..
khāṭē phala taji mīṭhē lyā'ī. jūmṭhē bha'ē sō sahaja suhā'ī..
antarajāmī ati hita māni. bhājana kīnē, svāda bakhāni..
jāti na kāhū kī prabhu jānata. bhakti-bhāva hari juga-juga mānata..
kari daṇḍavata bha'ī balihārī. puni tana taji hari-lōka sidhārī..
'sūraja' prabhu ati karunā bha'ī. nija kara kari tila-anjali da'ī..

Deliverance of Shabari—Raag Kedaro

57. [Like Jatau, Shabari is another character who was of low birth and was fortunate enough to have her last rites done by the Lord himself. This fate of Shabari makes her stand out in as much as even the Lord's own mothers were not fortunate to obtain such a privileged end.]

Raghubar (Sri Ram) came to the hermitage of Shabari. She washed his feet by ceremoniously pouring water over them from a pot (held by both the hands in a gesture of warm welcome and reverence). Having washed the Lord's holy feet, she affectionately gave him a seat.

She brought sweet fruits for him, leaving aside the sour ones. To determine which of the fruit was sweet and which was sour, she obviously tasted each of the pieces before presenting them to the Lord and Laxman. Though the fruits were defiled or deemed to be polluted or un-sanctified because of them being tasted before-hand, the Lord most willingly and happily accepted them and relished their taste, praising their sweetness to please the old lady. The all knowing Lord read into her mind and emotions, and understanding her true intensions, he praised the taste of those fruits and ate them with relish instead of sqiriming and creating a fuss about their being defiled or polluted.

The Lord does not bother about formalities arising out of distinctions between various castes or creeds; Lord Hari (Vishnu) respects devotion and humility since ages, as a respected tradition and honoured convention.

[The Lord is least concerned about the birth and body of the creature in order to accept him as one of his own, but he looks for traces of devotion and love and sincerity in him. If the creature lacks them, he is not worthy to be accepted by the Lord.]

She (Shabri) fell down on his feet and sacrificed herself. She left her body and went to the abode of Hari (Vishnu, whose incarnation Sri Ram was).

Surdas says that the Lord felt very merciful towards her and offered water with sesame seeds in it to her with his own hands.

[That is, Lord Ram performed her last rites himself. This fact is also reiterated in Geetawali Ramayan by saint Tulsidas, in its Aranya Kand, verse no. 8.] (57).

[Note :- According to the story of Ramayana, *Shabari* was a woman belonging to a forest tribe called 'Shabari'. This tribe was classified as Shudras or lower caste, and sustained themselves by collecting and selling honey and fruits from the forest trees. Being of a low caste, she is said have been ostracized by others. She served a sage named Matanga very devotedly. The sage was a realised soul, and so pleased was he with her devotion and service that he blessed her at the time of leaving his body that she would find her

emancipation and salvation when Lord Ram visits her while searching for Sita. Like her Guru, Shabari too left her mortal body after having the privilege of meeting and worshipping the Lord in person by lighting the pyre herself with her mystical powers. According to Adhyatma Ramayana of sage Veda Vyas, it was Lord Ram who had performed her last rites himself, a rare privilege that was even denied to his own worldly father Dasrath.

Shabari used to live in the hermitage where earlier sage Matanga lived. This hermitage was near Mount Rishyamook where Sugriv, the exiled younger brother of the king of monkeys Vali, lived with his close confidantes Hanuman, Jamvant, Naal and Neel etc. This place was about ten Yojans or eighty miles from Kishkindha, the capital of the forest kingdom of which Vali was the king.

There is a story about Lake Pampa on the banks of which she lived. The great sage Matang had his hermitage here. Shabari used to get up very early and clean the path around this lake before her Guru went there for his daily bath and other chores. It so happened that one day, the sages and seers who lived in that area saw her cleaning the path leading to the lake very early in the morning. Since she was of a low caste, they cursed and scolded her because they regarded her appearance as defiling the place. This misplaced notion of superiority and high stature immensely displeased the Lord. So as soon as those haughty and proud sages went and took a dip in that lake, its water turned turbid, polluted and infested by warms and filth. When Sri Ram had gone there during his forest exile, the sages and seers requested him to purify that lake. Sri Ram, being all-knowing, knew the secret behind that pollution, and in order to teach those sages a lesson of their lives, he asked them to request Sabari to take a dip in it. As soon as she did it, the water regained its former pristine purity, and the lake its former exceptional scenic beauty. This made the haughty sages and seers feel ashamed at their ignorance and behaviour.

According to the story of Ramayana, Sri Ram had visited her hermitage and enjoyed the fruits offered by her just like he would have enjoyed them if they were given to him by his mother. In the 'Ram-Sarawali of Surdas', verse no. 11, it is said that 'Sabari was a long time ardent devotee and a humble follower of Raghupati (Sri Ram). He accepted and ate fruits offered by her, preached her on the concept of complete devotion, and then liberated her by giving her residence in his own abode.'

It was Shabari who had advised Sri Ram to go towards the Rishyamook mountain and make friends with Sugriv, the monkey king, who in turn would help the Lord in finding out Sita and freeing her from the clutches of her captors.]

*__*__*__*

Section-1

Kishkindha Kand/Canto 4

किष्किन्धाकाण्ड

सुग्रीव मिलन—राग सारंग

[58]

रिष्यमूक परबत बिख्याता ।
 इक दिन अनुज सहित तहँ आए, सीतापति रघुनाथा ॥
 कपि सुग्रीव बालि के भय तें, बसत हुतौ तहँ आइ ।
 त्रास मानि तिहिं पवन—पुत्र कौं दीनौ तुरत पठाइ ॥
 को ये बीर फिरैं बन बिचरत किहिं कारन ह्यौ आए ।
 'सूरज' प्रभुके निकट आइ कपि, हाथ जोरि सिर नाए ॥

kiṣkindhākāṇḍa

sugrīva milana-rāga sārāṅga

(58)

riṣyamūka parabata bikhyātā.
 ika dina anuja sahita taham̐ ā'ē, sītāpati raghunāthā..
 kapi sugrīva bālī kē bhaya tēm̐, basata hutau taham̐ ā'i.
 trāsa māni tihim̐ pavana-putra kaum̐ dīnau turata paṭhā'i..
 kō yē bīra phiraim̐ bana bicarata kihim̐ kārana hyām̐ ā'ē.
 'sūraja' prabhukē nikaṭa ā'i kapi, hātha jōri sira nā'ē..

Kishkindha Kand/Canto 4

Lord Ram Meeting Sugriv
 Raag Saarang

58. There is a famous mountain by the name of 'Rishyamook'. One day, the Lord (husband) of Sita, Raghunath (Sri Ram), arrived there along with his younger brother.

The monkey named Sugriv had come to this mountain, and had been living there out of fear of (his elder brother) Baali¹. (When he saw the two brothers roaming there—) He was very terrified (wondering whether they had been sent by Baali to reconnoiter and

eliminate him). So he sent Hanuman down to find out who those two brave wanderers were, and why were they roaming there.

Surdas says that Hanuman went to the Lord of Suraj ('Suraj-prabhu, literally the Lord of the Solar race; it also might mean 'the Lord of Surdas' because his earlier name was 'Suraj'), bowed his head before him (as a mark of respect), and wished him (58).

[Note—¹Sugriv and Baali were two brothers, Baali being the elder sibling. They were the royal rulers of the monkey race and had their capital at Kishkindha. Once, a demon named Dundhubhi came to challenge Baali for a duel. Baali killed him and flung his dead body on the mountain called Rishyamook. Blood of the demon sprayed in all the directions, and this blood defiled a hermitage of a sage who lived on this mountain. So he cursed that if Baali ever came in that place he would die. It was out of this fear that Baali never came near Mt. Rishyamook.

Earlier, the two brothers had very cordial relations. Once a demon named Maayaawi, the son of Maye, came to Kishkindha and challenged Baali. When Baali rushed towards him, the demon fled and hid inside a cave. Baali pursued him inside, but while entering the cave he told his younger brother Sugriv to guard the mouth of the cave and wait for him for at least a fortnight. Sugriv waited for one full month, but Baali did not come back. At the end of this period blood started seeping out of the mouth of the cave. Thinking that the demon has killed his brother and would come out to kill him also, Sugriv covered the mouth of the cave with a huge boulder and fled from there. When he returned to Kishkindha, the courtiers had no choice but to anoint him as the king in place of his brother whom they all thought was killed by the demon.

Meanwhile it so happened that the blood that had seeped out of the cave's mouth was that of the demon who was killed by Baali. When Baali came out, he did not find Sugriv, and to make matters worse he found the mouth of the cave closed by a heavy boulder. When he came back to Kishkindha he found Sugriv on the throne. Naturally of course he went mad with anger, and beat his brother mercilessly. Sugriv, though not at all at fault, tried his best to explain the situation to Baali, but the seed of misunderstanding and animosity was already sown, and seeing no way out, Sugriv fled with his life. Baali usurped the kingdom and the wife of Sugriv forcibly. Sugriv took refuge on Mt. Rishyamook because he knew that Baali would never come to harm here because of the sage's earlier curse.

The full story of Baali and Sugriv is narrated in detail in (i) sage Veda Vyas' *Adhyatma Ramayan*, Uttarkand, Canto 3, Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 140-152.]

हनुमत् राम संवाद—राग मारू

[59]

मिले हनु, पूछी प्रभु यह बात ।

महा मधुर प्रिय बानी बोलत, साखामृग! तुम किहि के तात ?

अंजनि कौ सुत, केसरि के कुल पवन—गवन उपजायौ गात ।

तुम को बीर, नीर भरि लोचन, मीन हीनजल ज्यौं मुरझात ?

दसरथ—सुत कोसलपुर—बासी, त्रिया हरी तातें अकुलात ।

इहि गिरि पर कपिपति सुनियत है, बालि—त्रास कैसैं दिन जात ॥

महादीन, बलहीन, विकल अति, पवन—पूत देखे बिलखात ।

‘सूर’ सुनत सुग्रीव चले उठि, चरन गहे, पूछी कुसलात ॥

hanumat rāma sarṁvāda-rāga mārū

(59)

milē hanu, pūchī prabhu yaha bāta.
mahā madhura priya bānī bōlata, sākhāmrga! tuma kihi kē tāta?
an̄jani kau suta, kēsari kē kula pavana-gavana upajāyau gāta.
tuma kō bīra, nīra bhari lōcana, mīna hīnajala jyaur̄ murajhāta?
dasaratha-suta kōsalapura-bāsī, triyā harī tātēm̄ akulāta.
ihi giri para kapipati suniyata hai, bālī-trāsa kaisēm̄ dina jāta..
mahādīna, balahīna, vikala ati, pavana-pūta dēkhē bilakhāta.
‘sūra’ sunata sugrīva calē uṭhi, carana gahē, pūchī kusalāta..

Hanuman-Sri Ram Conversation—Raag Maaru

59. When Hanuman met him (Sri Ram), the Lord asked him thus—‘You speak very sweet and pleasant words; whose son are you?’¹

(Hanuman replied most politely—) ‘I am the son of mother Anjana. This body had been born in the clan of Kesari by the grace of Pawan (the Wind God). Who are you? In spite of being brave, why do you seem so agitated, perplexed, grieved and contrite, shedding tears from your eyes and regretting like a fish taken out of water.’

(Sri Ram replied—) ‘We are residents of Ayodhya and sons of Dashrath. My wife has been abducted; that is why I am bewildered, agitated and aggrieved. We have heard that the king of monkeys (Sugriv) lives on this mountain. How is he spending his days in the fear of Baali?’ [It was the old lady Shabari who had enlightened the Lord about Sugriv, and had advised her to proceed to Kishkindha and the Rishyamook mountain where he would meet Sugriv who would help him further. Though this fact is not mentioned by Surdas but it is clearly mentioned by his contemporary poet-saint Tulsidas in his epic Ramcharit Manas.]

Surdas says that he (Hanuman) found him (Sri Ram) very miserable, weary, weak and grieving gravely.

(Getting a signal from Hanuman—) Sugriv got up and came there (from the mountain). He caught hold of Sri Ram’s feet (as a token of respect, humility and submission), and asked about his welfare. [After finding out that the two brothers posed no threat to his chief Sugriv, Hanuman signaled him that everything was alright and he had nothing to fear. Rather, the two guests were also facing the same dilemma as Sugriv himself—as Sugriv’s wife and kingdom were snatched by his elder brother Baali due to some grave misunderstanding between the two brothers, and he was exiled to this mountain. The two wondering guests were princes in distress, and it was humane and proper to welcome them, feed them, provide them relief and shelter in distress, and give them help as much as they could. So, Sugriv descended from the mountain and met Sri Ram and Laxman at the foothill.] (59).

[Note—¹A brief note on Hanuman: A life sketch of Hanuman is narrated in the following scriptures—(i) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 155-190; (ii) Valmiki’s Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Sarga (Canto) 66, verse nos. 1-17 (as narrated

by Jamvant, the Bear king); Uttar Kand, Sarga 35-36 (as described to Sri Ram by sage Agastya).

These describe Hanuman as the son of the Wind God.

But it is also universally believed that Hanuman is a manifestation of Lord Shiva, and represents the 'Tej' (glory and dynamism) of Lord Ram. This is clearly mentioned in Brihad Brahm Sanhita, Chapter (Pratham) 3, Canto (Adhyaya) 1, verse (Shloka) no. 102. This verse also says that it is Lord Shiva who manifested also as Sankarshan, one of the forms of Lord Vishnu. In the case of Hanuman, it is said here that "Hanuman is a manifestation of Lord Maha Shiva, and represents the Tej (glory and dynamic aspect) of Lord Ram".

Lord Hanuman was one of the greatest devotees of Lord Ram. His devotion for Lord Ram had no match. He is regarded as the wisest, the most enlightened and a highly self-realised soul. He is an incarnation of the eleventh form of Lord Shiva that is known as Rudra. When Lord Vishnu decided to manifest himself as Lord Ram in this world, all the different Gods has assumed various forms to serve the Lord. Shiva had taken the form of Hanuman to serve Lord Ram.

According to the Purans (mythological histories), the name of his mother was Anjana. She was the wife of the monkey king Kesari. He was born as a grace of the Wind God, also known as Marut. Hence, Hanuman was also known as 'Anjaneya' or 'Maruti'. However, his most common name 'Hanuman' is derived from the fact that once he had been hit by the 'Vajra', the hard weapon of Indra, the king of Gods. The story goes that once, a little time after his birth, the infant Hanuman had felt extremely hungry, and seeing the rising sun he thought it to be some ripe red fruit dangling from the sky. So he leapt to the sky to eat the rising sun. Incidentally, it was the time of the solar eclipse, when, according to mythology, the head of the demon known as Rahu was proceeding to devour the sun. When he saw Hanuman rushing towards the sun, Rahu ran away scared, thinking that Hanuman was some competitor who was out there to grab his food. Rahu complained to Indra, the king of Gods, that he is being denied his regular meal. At this, Indra intervened. When Hanuman saw Indra approaching astride his white majestic elephant known as Eraavat, he thought that it was some other white fruit. So he left sun alone and instead leapt at Eraavat. Indra was shocked, confounded and perplexed, and in order to stop Hanuman he threw his formidable weapon known as Vajra. The Vajra hit him on the chin, thereby causing a dent. The jaw swelled as result. This incident gave 'Hanuman' his famous name.

The word 'Hanu' means the lower jaw, the chin, while 'Maan' means to hit to subdue or defeat. Another interpretation is that 'Hanu' means to crush, to trounce, to take away, or to eliminate, and 'Maan' means one's pride, arrogance, haughtiness and ego. So the composite word 'Hanuman' refers to this incident when Indra had subdued the son of the Wind God by breaking his chin-bone as a token punishment for him being extremely arrogant and unnecessarily mischievous.

But when the Wind God saw that Hanuman was hurt, he became extremely angry as Hanuman was born as his grace, so he stopped the movement of air. This caused suffocation in this creation and all the Gods were on the verge of asphyxiation. So they appeased the Wind God by blessing Hanuman with invincibility and formidable powers. This made Hanuman immortal and immune to the dangers of fire, water and wind.

Once as a child he was even cursed by sages because of his mischievous nature as he used to play havoc with the trees and plants around the hermitages and forests where they lived, uprooting them, breaking their branches, eating their fruits and littering the place all around. So they cursed him that he would forget his powers till the time someone reminded him about them. As it happened, when the monkeys and bears set out in search of Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king of Lanka known as Ravana, and had

reached the shores of the vast ocean, they faced the formidable challenge of having to cross it, face this formidable enemy, and come back alive. It was then that Jamvant, the old patriarch of the bears, had reminded Hanuman about his lost strength. Hanuman regained his old stupendous powers and abilities, and he was the one who not only crossed the ocean but also burnt Lanka before coming back with the news of Sita. These events are narrated in the epic Ramayana in great detail.

Hanuman can be likened to a diamond amongst all the characters in the epic story of Ramayan which deals with Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Ram. In fact, the story of Lord Ram and his conquest of Lanka would not have been what it was without Hanuman. Even Lord Ram had openly accepted his indebtedness to Hanuman.

It is believed that when Lord Ram left this world for his heavenly abode during the final episodes of Ramayana, all those who were close to him as well as the rest of his subjects had also left this world with the Lord. But Hanuman remained behind with the express mandate from the Lord to ensure that the Lord's glory as well as the glory of his divine name can be perpetuated, and to ensure that the devotees of the Lord can be afforded protection. This has been narrated in (i) Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 9, verse nos. 34-36; (ii) Anand Ramayan, Purva Kand, Sarga (Canto) 5, verse nos. 9-13; (iii) Valmiki Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga 108, verse nos. 32-35.

Hanuman had immense mental and physical agility, strength, power and prowess. His character was immaculate and his intellect was of high refinement. He had complete, unchallenged and unparalleled knowledge of the scriptures. One of the reasons is that his teacher was the Sun God himself who had taught him all the Vedas and other scriptures. His speech was elegant and scholarly. He is regarded as a treasury of the eight Siddhis (mystical powers) and the nine Nidhis (spiritual assets). He was a renunciate and a celibate since birth.

The eight Siddhis which Hanuman possessed were the following—(i) 'Anima'—means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; to become small like an atom; (ii) 'Mahima'—is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; to become huge like a mountain, thereby standing out and being unique or special in a crowd; (iii) 'Garima'—is to be heavy-weight in any field, to have special qualities that give one's ideas and words a great amount of importance and weight; to have stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima'—is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti'—is to be able to attain, gain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya'—is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa'—is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; to be able to rule over others; (viii) 'Vashitwa'—is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient and subservient.

The nine Nidhis that Hanuman possessed were the following— Spiritual assets—according to saint Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha 35-36, they are—(i) communion with saints and pious people where the Lord's glories are being sung, (ii) serving one's teacher and elders, (ii) praising the Lord's glories and doing Kirtan and Bhajan which are community singing of the Lord's glories, (iv) repeating the divine Mantras or holy words of the Lord, i.e. doing Japa, (v) having such virtues as 'Dam' or tolerance, patience, fortitude and resilience, 'Sheel' or good and righteous demeanors, 'Virati' or being renunciate and detached from deeds and to be dispassionate towards the world, 'Sam' or equanimity, looking everything as Brahm, having a non-dual

approach of or view of the world, ‘Santosh’ or contentedness, and ‘SaraI’ or simplicity and humility, (vi) having no deceit, conceit and falsehoods, (vii) not finding faults with others and criticising them unnecessarily, (viii) to have firm reliance and faith in the Lord, and (ix) not to feel dejected, depressed, despaired, inferior, lowly and condemned under any adverse circumstances, because the great and merciful Lord is always with them.

According to another version, the nine Nidhis are the various special virtues or qualities or attributes that one possesses, and which make him special amongst others. They are the following—(i) Buddhi—intelligence and the power to discriminate, to think sharply, quickly, logically, rationally, deeply and analytically. (ii) Bal—strength, vigour and power of the body and of the mind as well as of the spirit. (iii) Yasha—fame, good reputation and name; majesty and renown. (iv) Dhairya—to have courage, fortitude, resilience, ability to hold on in the face of greatest adversity, misfortune and opposition. (v) Nirbhayataa—fearlessness, courage, bravery and an indomitable spirit. (vi) Aarogyataa—to be freed from diseases and illnesses, both mental as well as bodily. (vii) Ajaadyataa—the opposite of Jadataa; to be free from the negative trait of inertia, lethargy, depression, stagnation, lack of drive, initiative and will power. (viii) Vaakya-patutaa—to be an expert orator; speaking skills, eloquence, diplomacy, and wise and intelligent choice of the spoken word. (ix) Bhakti—to have steady and robust devotion, loyalty, dedication and conviction for one’s chosen deity and faith. This quality, of course, comes under the category of spiritual assets also.

Other variations include the following qualities in this list of Nidhis because they are like an asset for a man which stand him in good stead in his life— (i) Sham—having self restraint and control; having peace, tranquility, serenity and quietness; being able to suppress desires, yearnings and natural instincts and impulses. (ii) Dam—tolerance, forbearance, fortitude. (iii) Upriti—renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement. (iv) Titksha—endurance, patience, fortitude, sufferance, equanimity. (v) Samadhan—the ability to find a solution, an answer to even the most vexing problem; lack of confusion or doubts; clarity of thoughts and conception. (vi) Shraddha—having faith, belief, conviction, reverence and devotion. (vii) Sakhya—friendship and the ability to co-exist with even one’s adversary. (viii) Daya—kindness, compassion, graciousness. (ix) Atma Bodh—self-realisation and awareness about the true nature of one’s conscious ‘self’, to be enlightened about the Atma, the pure consciousness, that resides inside one’s inner self as his soul, as his Spirit.

Sometimes, the last Nidhi of ‘Atma Bodh’ is replaced with ‘Seva’ or the natural habit of serving others selflessly.

Faces of Hanuman—In iconography, Hanuman is depicted as having five, ten or eleven faces.

(a) The *five faces* of Hanuman are as follows—(i) in the eastern direction it is that of a monkey; (ii) in the southern direction it is that of Lord Nrisingh; (iii) in the western direction it is that of Lord Garud; (iv) in the northern direction it is that of Lord Varaaha; and (v) in the zenith it is that of Lord Hayagriva.

The genesis of the story is linked with the battle of Lanka when the son of the ten-headed Ravana, known as Mahi-Ravan, had kidnapped Ram and Laxman and hid them underground in the nether world. He prepared them to sacrifice to the goddess whom he worshipped in order to please the goddess so that his father Ravana could win the war. When Hanuman got the wind of it, he went to the nether world and hid behind the idol of the goddess. The demon Mahi-Ravana offered all sorts of inedible things to the goddess—such as wine, excreta, meat, urine etc. He had his eyes closed in meditation. So Hanuman assumed this heads and ate up all the offerings. Finally, when the wicked demon thought that the sacrifice is finished and the goddess is happy with him, he was

about to chop off the heads of the two brothers at the altar, Hanuman emerged from hiding in this ferocious form with five heads (or according to the previous narration with eleven unconventional heads) to kill the demon. It is believed that even Ram and Laxman could not recognize Hanuman in that form till the time they saw his monkey head with which he bowed before the Lord.

In essence we can say that Hanuman epitomised the glory of knowledge and the Shakti of the Supreme Brahm rolled into one. When he appeared to save Ram and Laxman from the clutches of Mahi-Ravana, he represented the supreme power of creation. This form of Hanuman—whether it is of five heads or nine heads or eleven heads—implies that all the fundamental forces of Nature had joined hands to get rid of or negate the negative forces that had become ascendant, and to restore the balance in favour of the positive forces and principles of creation.

The five faces of Hanuman stand for the following—(i) the five elements of creation, viz. sky, air, fire, water and earth. (ii) the five chief vital winds called Prans—viz. Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyaana and Udaana. This fits in perfectly with the fact that Hanuman is regarded as the son of the Wind God.

(b) The *ten or eleven faces* of Hanuman—According to another version, Hanuman is shown as having eleven or ten faces as follows—(i) in the eastern direction it is that of a monkey (Hanuman in his original form); (ii) in the south-east corner (called ‘Agneya Kona’) it is that of a Kshatriya (warrior class); (iii) in the southern direction it is that of Lord Nrisingh (half man and half lion incarnation of Vishnu); (iv) in the south-west corner (called ‘Nairitya Kona’) it is that of Lord Ganesh; (v) in the western direction it is that of Harishwar (Hari or Vishnu; or it can be interpreted as Hari’s Lord or Shiva in line with the term Rameshwar which is one of the forms of Shiva); (vi) in the north-west corner (called ‘Vaayavya Kona’) it is that of Lord Bhairav (one of the forms of Shiva); (vii) in the northern direction it is that of Varaaha; (viii) in the north-east corner (called ‘Ishan Kona’) it is that of Lord Rudra (one of the forms of Shiva); and (ix) in the zenith corner (above; towards the sky) it is that of Lord Hayagriva (Lord Sun; Vishnu with a horse’s head; one of the many incarnations of Vishnu).

In this above description only nine faces are given; two are missing. The other two faces are that of Lord Garud (mount of Vishnu) and Lord Shiva. In this version, the face on the west side is that of Garud (instead of Harishwar), and Lord Varaaha faces in the lower direction called nadir. The eleventh face is a combination of all the faces—i.e. it is the face of all-encompassing and all-incorporating Lord Isha.

The point to note here are that all these forms are manifestations or representations of the five or the eleven principal ‘Tattwas’ or the fundamental elements of creation. The eleven heads are symbols of the following Tattwas—the five elements (sky, air, fire, water and earth) + five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyaana and Udaana) + Chitta (mind and its sub-conscious). These eleven Tattwas form the basic units which combine together to form the physical body of any living being.

It will be noted that only nine specific heads are mentioned though the total number of heads are eleven. Well, the significance of the number ‘nine’ vis-à-vis the nine Tattwas is as follows—

‘The *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 14 says that there are nine Tattvas which are actually subtle revelations of the supreme Brahm. They are the following—The three fundamental Gunas, i.e. the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, the three basic characters of the Atma known as Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e. Sat (truth), Chitta (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and the three forms of divinity represented by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation, represent the nine Tattwas of creation.

The *Par Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 5 says that the sacred thread that is worn by Brahmins has three main strands, and each strand consists of three sub-strands. The total number of strands thus becomes nine ($3 \times 3 = 9$). These nine strands symbolically represent the nine Tattwas of creation which actually stand for the nine revelations of the same Brahm. The fact that the sacred thread has nine finer strands is endorsed in the *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 27.'

It must be remembered that Hanuman is not an ordinary soul, but he is the most enlightened One to have come on this earth. He is regarded as the leader in the community of the wise and enlightened ones. There is no wonder in it because of two reasons—one, he is Shiva personified, and Shiva is the most enlightened amongst the Trinity Gods, and second, his teacher was the Sun God who is personification of the Supreme Brahm, and his brilliant light is a metaphor of the immensity of knowledge and enlightenment he has as well as the light this knowledge provides to the world. Without knowledge this world would be engulfed in a thick shroud of darkness of ignorance symbolized by the night.

The importance of the figure five is of great metaphysical importance. It represents the Pancha Mahaabh. They were formed at the beginning of creation, and consist of earth, water or fluid, fire or energy, air or wind and sky or space elements in increasing degree of subtlety. They can be studied at two levels—one at the very core level, and the other at the more general level.

The study of the body at the core level of the five Bhuts consisting of the five primary elements consisting of the sky or space, air or wind, fire or energy, water or fluids, and earth. Refer verse nos. 1-2, and 5-6 of *Shaarirako-panishad*. Briefly, the earth element formed the solid part of the body, the water element formed the fluid part, the fire element formed the warmth and heat of the body, the movement of the body is revelation of the air element, and the subtle space between various organs and tissues of the body, both at the external as well as internal levels, is the sky element.

The next level would be the various Koshas or Sheaths that are made of a combination of these five elements. They are the following—Anna Maye Kosh (the food sheath), Pran Maye Kosh (the vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mind sheath), Vigyan Maye Kosh (the intellect sheath), and Anand Maye Kosh (the bliss sheath). These Koshas are also like the elements or units that decide the complexities of the creature's body and its position in the hierarchy of evolution.

All the living organisms can be classified into the following five types depending upon the number of Koshas they have—(i) Udbhij—these are those life forms that are born from seeds, such as members of the plant kingdom. These have only one Kosha, the Anna Maye Kalaa. In other words, they depend on food and become food for others higher up in the evolutionary ladder. (ii) Swedaj—they are those which are born from dampness and sweat, such as fungi, algae, bacteria, germs, mosquito, lice, flies etc. They have two Koshas, viz. Anna Maye and Pran Maye. That is, they are formed from food, they live for food and they die as food. Besides this, they also exhibit signs of life, e.g. the mosquito and lice have life like any other member of the animal kingdom. (iii) Andaj—they are placed higher up in the evolutionary ladder, and are born from eggs, whether inside the mother's womb or outside. Such birds as pigeon, sparrow, parrot, peacock etc. come under this category. They have three Koshas which are Anna Maye, Pran Maye and Mano-maye. The last Kosh refers to the fact that such creatures have a mind and heart which enables them to think, albeit in a primitive level. (iv) Jaruyuj—these are the creatures that are born as embryo that develops inside the mother's womb. Under this class come the animals such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants etc. They have four Koshas, such as Anna Maye, Pran Maye, Mano-maye and Vigyan Maye. The last Kosh refers to their ability to have a higher level of thinking ability called intelligence.

The human being comes under this last category with the added benefit of having five Koshas. Besides the four Koshas mentioned above in other creatures of this category, the man has the fifth one and it called the Anand Maye Kosh. It is only possessed by a man and not by other creatures in the sense that the man can realise the true meaning of the terms 'bliss and happiness that is eternal and substantial' by the virtue of his attaining higher level of intelligence and his ability to delve into the secrets of the concept of truth itself and then realising that kind of happiness and bliss that is not superficial and which is not limited to enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the body and the material comforts of the world, but which has a holistic and all-inclusive dimension that incorporates the spirit or the soul.]

बालि वध—राग मारू

[60]

बड़े भाग्य इहिं मारग आए ।
 गद्गद कंठ, सोक सौं रोवत, बारि बिलोचन छाए ॥
 महा धीर गंभीर बचन सुनि, जामवंत समुझाए ।
 बढ़ी परस्पर प्रीति—रीति तब, भूषन सिया दिखाए ॥
 सप्त ताल सर साँधि, बालि हति, मन अभिलाष पुजाए ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु—भुज के बलि—बलि, बिमल—बिमल जग गाए ॥

bāli vadha-rāga mārū

(60)

baṛē bhāgya ihiṁ māraga ā'ē.
 gadgada kaṇṭha, sōka saum rōvata, bāri bilōcana chā'ē..
 mahā dhīra gambhīra bacana suni, jāmavanta samujhā'ē.
 baṛhī paraspara prīti-rīti taba, bhūṣana siyā dikhā'ē..
 sapta tāla sara sām̐dhi, bāli hati, mana abhilāṣa pujā'ē.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu-bhuja kē bali-bali, bimala-bimala jaga gā'ē..

Slaying of Baali—Raag Maaru

60. His (Sri Ram's) throat is choked with emotions; he is weeping with sorrows and grief. Tears have filled his eyes. (He thanks his good fortune and says—) 'We are very lucky to have come this way' (because we have met friends here and they will help us in our attempt to retrieve Sita).

Hearing the reassured and patient words of the Lord, (the Bear king known as) Jamvant consoled him further and encouraged him not to lose hope. When there was mutual understanding and a cordial relationship was established between the two sides, he (Sugriv) showed Sri Ram the ornaments of Sita (which she had dropped while being abducted by Ravana)¹.

Sri Ram reassured him by felling the seven coconut trees with a single arrow and fulfilled his desires by killing Baali (who was a brother but an arch enemy of Sugriv)².

Surdas repeatedly sacrifices himself on the strength of the Lord's arm (which are potent enough to remove the torments and fears of his devotees), and sings devotedly his divine glories which are pristine pure and majestic (60).

[Note :- ¹While Ravana was taking Sita to Lanka on his chariot by the air route, she had strewn along the way her ornaments and other memorabilia in the hope that the Lord would be able to trace her route of abduction and finally come to the place of her captivity. When the chariot flew above the Rishyamook mountain and she saw some monkeys sitting there, she threw her treasured ornaments as a sign, should the Lord pass that way and is able to identify positively the direction that she was being taken by. These ornaments helped the Lord to authenticate Sugriv's story.

²Baali had some misunderstanding with his younger brother Sugriv, as a result of which the latter was exiled from the kingdom, and he eventually took up residence on the Rishyamook Mountain which was out of bounds for Baali because he was cursed by a sage that if he ever happened to come in the vicinity of the mountain, he would die. It was prophesised that anyone who could fell the 7 tall coconut trees by a single arrow would be Baali's nemesis. So Sugriv wished to make certain if Sri Ram would actually be of any help to him in eliminating his arch enemy Baali by asking him to fell those trees with a single arrow.

The story goes that on some previous occasion Baali had collected seven fruits of the coconut tree and kept them on the ground to take bath in the lake known as Pampaa. When he returned he found that a huge python was sitting on these seven fruits. This was tantamount to defiling the fruits and so Baali cursed the serpent that the seven fruits would pierce his body and grow into tall trees. When the mother of the serpent came to know of this curse, she also cursed Baali that anyone who would cut these seven coconut trees with a single arrow would be the one who would also kill him.

Sugriv knew this secret, so he wanted to find out whether it would be possible in real terms for Sri Ram to kill Baali.

With Sri Ram's patronage and support, Sugriv went and challenged his elder brother Baali for a duel. Baali was absolutely stunned, as he had never expected Sugriv to ever have enough courage and strength to challenge him like this. His wife Taaraa also tried to dissuade him by pointing out that Sugriv has the support of Sri Ram who is the Supreme Being incarnate, but Baali was wiser because he decided that either way he was the winner. If he managed to eliminate Sugriv then he would get rid of this constant nuisance of a brother, and if he gets killed at the hands of Sri Ram then also he will be lucky as his emancipation and salvation was absolutely sure. Where, he thought to himself, will he get such an opportunity again in life. In the first bout, Sugriv got bruised and beaten badly. He limped back to Sri Ram and complained bitterly. The Lord replied that he did not shoot Baali because the two brothers looked exactly alike and he could not distinguish between them. There was a hidden message in this statement—the Lord wished to convey to Sugriv that for him all the creatures are alike. But at the same time he had to keep the words he had given to Sugriv that he would eliminate his enemy Baali. So the Lord put a garland around his neck, purportedly to identify him but actually to finally warn Baali that the victory of Sugriv is decided, and if he wants to save himself then he must make a truce. This time around too, Baali beat Sugriv black and blue. The Lord was watching the proceedings from behind a tree. When the situation became worst and Sugriv was about to be knocked down, the Lord shot an arrow that hit Baali and he fell down.

It is said that Sri Ram had to shoot Baali from hiding because the latter had a boon which said that half of the enemy's strength would pass on to Baali if the enemy is within his sight. Nevertheless, Baali felt privileged that the Lord of the world has himself killed him and given his soul the chance of finding liberation and deliverance from the fetters of

the gross body of a monkey. At the time of death, Baali put his son Angad in the Lord's custody. This showed that Baali was extremely prudent and wise. By entrusting the conqueror Ram with the safety and security of his son Angad he ensured that Angad would be safe from any kind of evil design of his uncle Sugriv who would now never try to kill him overtly or covertly.

Besides this thing of the Lord giving Sugriv his word to kill his enemy and undo the grave injustice done to him and restore his dignity and right to the kingdom, there was another very important reason why Baali had to be eliminated. On some previous occasion a reciprocal military pact was made between Baali and Ravana that essentially said that they would not allow their respective territories to be used to launch an attack on the other, and also that they would come to each others aid should either of them is called to do so. Since Sri Ram needed to cross the territory of Kishkindha and also take the help of the army of this place to launch an assault on Lanka it was militarily wise and prudent to eliminate the foe in the backyard.

But the Lord knew the constraints under which he had to eliminate Baali though the latter had not offended the Lord in any manner whatsoever. The Lord was well aware of his responsibilities towards Angad and he wished to rectify this apparent biased action of his of killing Baali at the behest of Sugriv—so he ensured that the final right to the kingdom of Kishkindha went to the heir of Baali, instead of the heir of Sugriv, by appointing Angad as the heir-apparent or the prince regent, and declaring that though Sugriv was made the king of Kishkindha upon Baali's death it was Angad who would succeed to the throne after Sugriv instead of any direct descendent of Sugriv such as his own son.]

सुग्रीव को राज्य प्राप्ति—राग सारंग

[61]

राज दियौ सुग्रीव कौं, तिन हरि—जस गायौ ।
पुनि अंगद कौं बोल ढिंग, या बिधि समुझायौ ॥
होनहार सो होत है, नहिं जात मिटायौ ।
चतुर्मास 'सूरज' प्रभु, तिहिं ठौर बितायौ ॥

sugrīva kō rājya prāpti-rāga sārāṅga

(61)

rāja diyau sugrīva kauṁ, tina hari-jasa gāyau.
puni aṅgada kauṁ bōla ḍhiṅga, yā bidhi samujhāyau..
hōnahāra sō hōta hai, nahim jāta miṭāyau.
caturamāsa 'sūraja' prabhu, tihim ṭhaura bitāyau..

Sugriv's Coronation—Raag Saarang

61. [After his adversary Baali was killed, Sugriv was crowned the king of the forest kingdom of Kishkindha.]

Sri Ram installed Sugriv on the throne (of Kishkindha) and the latter sang the former's glories (i.e. Sugriv showed his gratitude and obligation to Sri Ram).

Then he (Sri Ram) summoned Angad (the son of Baali) and consoled him, saying that whatever is written in destiny must happen; no one can erase it (or change it). [That is, your father's death was pre-destined, hence you must stop grieving.]

Surdas says that the Lord of Suraj ('Suraj-prabhu'; or else it might mean 'the Lord of the Solar race) spent the next 4 months (of the rainy season) at that place (61).

सीता शोध—राग राजश्री

[62]

जामवंत रघुनाथ बचन भाष्यौ सोइ कीनौ ।
 रामचंद्र बलधीर बीर दोउ कृपा सहित बीरा लै दीनौ ॥
 पठए देस—बिदेसनि सबही तीन लोक के ईस ।
 जनकसुता के सोध कौ अवधि बदी दिन तीस ॥
 सुनि सँदेस संपाति कौ सबनि भयो मन चाय ।
 मानौ मृतकनि कै हदैँ प्रान परे ते आय ॥
 बीरा लै अंगद चलयौ जामवंत संजूत ।
 दछिन दिसा समुद्रतट 'सूर' सुआनि पऊँत ॥

sītā śōdha-rāga rājaśrī

(62)

jā mavanta raghunātha bacana bhāṣyau sō'i kī nau.
 rāmacandra baladhīra bīra dō'u krpā sahita bīrā lai dī nau..
 paṭha'ē dēsa-bidēsani sabahī tīna lōka kē īsa.
 janakasutā kē sōdha kauṁ avadhi badī dina tīsa..
 suni samdēsa sampāti kau sabani bhayō mana cāya.
 mānaum mṛtakani kairṁ hrḍairṁ prāna parē tē āya..
 bīrā lai aṅgada calyau jā mavanta saṁjūta.
 dachina disā samudrataṭa 'sūra' su'āni pa'ūmta..

Search for Sita Begins—Raag Rajasri

62. Jamvant (the Bear king) carried out the instructions of Raghunath (Sri Ram) in letter and spirit. Sri Ram Chandra and his brother were strong, brave, valiant, courageous and resilient. Both of them assigned the work (of searching Sita) to him (Jamvant).

The Lord of the three worlds (i.e. Sri Ram) dispatched all the monkeys in all the directions to find out about the whereabouts of Janak's daughter (Sita), and fixed a deadline of 30 days.

[The search party reached the northern shores of the ocean where they virtually came to a dead-end. On the hill overlooking the ocean lived the vulture Sampati¹, who was a brother of the vulture Jatayu. Vultures are gifted with naturally long-distance vision, so Sampati looked across the ocean and told the group of monkeys and bears that he can see Sita sitting under the tree in the garden of Lanka. Whosoever would cross the vast

ocean would locate her. Therefore—] When they (the search party) heard what Sampati had to say, their hearts were overjoyed with hope as if a dead man has got back his life.

Surdas says that picking up the gauntlet (responsibility), Angad accompanied Jamvant (and others) to the northern shore of the southern ocean (i.e. the Indian ocean) (62).

[Note :-¹Sampati was the elder brother of Jatau. Being a vulture empowered with a long vision, he could see across the width of the ocean and locate Sita sitting in the Ashok grove in Lanka. This news he conveyed to the monkeys, thereby infusing them with a new lease of life and hope which they had lost as they thought that they had come to the land's end with the ocean stretching endlessly in their front. They were contemplating death because of their inability to find Sita up till now and their reluctance of going back to Kishkindha empty-handed.

It was at the instructions of Sampati that the search party came to the point which was nearest to the island called Lanka where Ravana had his kingdom.

A detailed life-sketch of Sampati is narrated in Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 8. An English version of this Ramayan has been published by this author.]

राग सारंग

[63]

श्रीरघुपति सुग्रीव कौं, निज निकट बुलायौ ।
लीजै सुधि अब सीय की, यह कहि समुझायौ ॥
जामवंत—अंगद—हनू, उठि माथौ नायौ ।
हाथ मुद्रिका प्रभु दई, संदेश सुनायौ ॥
आए तीर समुद्र के, कछु सोध न पायौ ।
'सूर' सँपाती तहँ मिल्यौ, यह बचन सुनायौ ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(63)

śrīraghupati sugrīva kauṁ, nija nikaṭa bulāyau.
lījai sudhi aba sīya kī, yaha kahi samujhāyau..
jā mavanta-aṅgada-hanū, uṭhi māthau nāyau.
hātha mudrikā prabhu da'ī, sandēśa sunāyau..
ā'ē tīra samudra kē, kachu sōdha na pāyau.
'sūra' saṁpātī taham̐ milyau, yaha bacana sunāyau..

Raag Saarang

63. Raghupati (Sri Ram) summoned Sugriv near him and said that now attempt should be made to find out about Sita.

Hearing this, Jamvant (the Bear king), Angad (the son of Baali) and Hanuman immediately stood up and bowed their heads (i.e. they stepped forward to volunteer

themselves to begin the search). The Lord gave his finger ring (to Hanuman), and also gave him a message for Sita.

All of them arrived on the shore of the ocean; they hadn't found any hint of Sita's whereabouts up till now.

Surdas says that there they met Sampati who told them this. [What did Sampati told them? See next verse no. 64.] (63).

सम्पाती वानर संवाद—राग सारंग

[64]

बिछुरी मनो संग ते हिरनी ।
चितवत रहत चकित चारों दिसि, उपजि बिरह तन—जरनी ॥
तरुबर मूल अकेली ठाढ़ी, दुखित राम की घरनी ।
बसन कुचील, चिहुर लपिटाने, बिपति जाति नहिं बरनी ॥
लेति उसास नयन जल भरि—भरि, धुकि सो परै धरि धरनी ।
'सूर' सोच जिय पोच निसाचर, राम नाम की सरनी ॥

sampātī vānara saṁvāda-rāga sārāṅga

(64)

bichurī manō saṅga tēm hiranī.
citavata rahata cakita cārōm disi, upaji biraha tana-jaranī..
tarubara mūla akēlī ṭhāṛhī, dukhita rāma kī gharanī.
basana kucīla, cihura lapiṭānē, bipati jāti nahim baranī..
lēti usāsa nayana jala bhari-bhari, dhuki sō parai dhari dharanī.
'sūra' sōca jiya pōca nisācara, rāma nāma kī saranī..

Conversation between Sampati & Monkeys—Raag Saarang

64. (Sampati describes the wretched condition of Sita to the monkeys and the bears. He said—) 'Her (Sita's) condition is akin to a she-deer who has been separated from her herd. She constantly glances here and there in a terrified and astonished daze. She is being constantly tormented by the mental agony of being separated from her beloved husband, and it appears that this fire is burning her down completely.

She is standing alone under a tree; her clothes are dirty and unkempt; the long hairs are all entangled; no one can ever describe the pitiful and horrible condition of her troubled days. She repeatedly takes long breaths; her eyes get repeatedly filled with tears; and she repeatedly touches the earth (i.e. bends down again and again out of her inability to remain standing for a long time due to weakness).'

Surdas says that Sampati also told them that she is immensely worried about her fate at the hands of the lowly, sinful, pervert and wicked demon (Ravana), a thing that constantly haunts her mind. Her only refuge (or solace and succour) is in the name of Sri Ram (which she constantly, consistently and persistently repeats to derive peace and comfort) (64).

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Section-1

Sundar Kand/Canto 5

मुन्दरकाण्ड

हनुमान द्वारा समुद्र लाँघना—राग केदारौ

[65]

तब अंगद यह बचन कह्यौ ।
 को तरि सिंधु सिया—सुधि ल्यावौ, किहिं बल इतौ लह्यौ ?
 इतनौ बचन स्रवन सुनि हरष्यौ, हँसि बोल्यौ जमुवंत ।
 या दल मध्य प्रगट केसरि—सुत, जाहि नाम हनुमंत ॥
 वहै ल्याइहै सिय—सुधि छिन मैं, अरु आइहै तुरंत ।
 उन प्रताप त्रिभुवन कौ पायौ, वाके बलहि न अंत ॥
 जो मन करै एक बासर मैं, छिन आवै, छिन जाइ ।
 स्वर्ग—पताल माहिं गम ताकौ, कहियै कहा बनाइ !
 केतिक लंक, उपारि बाम कर, लै आवै उचकाइ ।
 पवन—पुत्र बलवंत बज्र—तनु, कापै हटक्यौ जाइ ॥
 लियौ बुलाइ मुदित चित है कै, कह्यौ, तँबोलहि लेहु ।
 ल्यावहु जाइ जनक—तनया—सुधि, रघुपति कौ सुख देहु ॥
 पौरि—पौरि प्रति फिरौ बिलोकत, गिरि—कंदर—बन—गेहु ।
 समय बिचारि मुद्रिका दीजौ, सुनौ मंत्र सुत एहु ॥
 लियौ तँबोल माथ धरि हनुमत, कियौ चतुरगुन गात ।
 चढ़ि गिरि—सिखर सब्द इक उचस्यौ, गगन उठ्यौ आघात ॥
 कंपत कमठ—सेष—बसुधा नभ, रवि—रथ भयौ उतपात ।
 मानौ पच्छ सुमेरहि लागे, उड़्यौ अकासहिं जात ॥
 चक्रित सकल परस्पर बानर, बीच परी किलकार ।
 तहँ इक अब्धुत देखि निसिचरी, सुरसा मुख—बिस्तार ॥
 पवन—पुत्र मुख पैठि पधारे, तहाँ लगी कुछ बार ।
 'सूरदास' स्वामी—प्रताप—बल, उतस्यौ जलनिधि पार ॥

sundarakāṇḍa

hanumāna dvārā samudra lāṁghana-rāga kēdārau

(65)

taba aṅgada yaha bacana kahyau.
 kō tari sindhu siyā-sudhi lyāvau, kihim bala itau lahyau?
 itanau bacana sravana suni haraṣyau, haṁṣi bōlyau jamuvanta..
 yā dala madhya pragaṭa kēsari-suta, jāhi nāma hanumanta..
 vahai lyā'ihai siya-sudhi china maim, aru ā'ihai turanta.
 una pratāpa tribhuvana kau pāyau, vākē balahi na anta..
 jō mana karai ēka bāsara maim, china āvai, china jā'i.
 svarga-patāla māhim gama tākau, kahiyai kahā banā'i!
 kētika laṅka, upāri bāma kara, lai āvai ucakā'i.
 pavana-putra balavanta bajra-tanu, kāpai haṭakyau jā'i..
 liyau bulā'i mudita cita hvai kai, kahyau, tam̃bōlahi lēhu.
 lyāvahu jā'i janaka-tanayā-sudhi, raghupati kaur̃ sukha dēhu..
 pauri-pauri prati phirau bilōkata, giri-kandara-bana-gēhu.
 samaya bicāri mudrikā dījau, sunau mantra suta ēhu..
 liyau tam̃bōla māt̃ha dhari hanumata, kiyau caturaguna gāta.
 caḍhi giri-sikhara sabda ika ucaryau, gagana uṭhyau āghāta..
 kampata kamaṭ̃ha-sēṣa-basudhā nabha, ravi-ratha bhayau utapāta.
 mānau paccha sumērahi lāgē, uṛyau akāsahim jāta..
 cakrita sakala paraspara bānara, bīca parī kilakāra.
 taham̃ ika adbhuta dēkhi nisicarī, surasā mukha-bistāra..
 pavana-putra mukha paiṭhi padhārē, tahām̃ laḡi kucha bāra.
 'sūradāsa' svāmī-pratāpa-bala, utaryau jalanidhi pāra..

Sundar Kand/Canto 5

Hanuman Crosses the Ocean—Raag Kedaro

65. Angad then said [the word— 'then' links this verse and this Chapter with verse no. 64 of the previous Chapter], 'Who will cross the ocean and get the news of Sita? Who has the potential and strength to do so?'

Hearing these words, Jamvant (the Bear king) became glad and he said with a smile, 'In our group, the son of Kesari is sitting here personally; his name is Hanuman. He will locate Sita and come back here in a moment (i.e. very soon). His fame is spread in all the three worlds (referring to the mortal world, the heavenly world and the nether world). There is no limit to his potentials, powers and strength. If he decides, he can go to and come back from Lanka in a moment many times over during a single day. What more can be said, his reach is to the heaven and the nether world also.

(If Hanuman wants—) He can uproot umpteen numbers of cities like Lanka by his left hand and bring them here. That son of the Wind-God is very strong and powerful; his body is like Vajra (i.e. sturdy, tough, invincible, robust). Say, who can ever dare to stop him? [Therefore, he is the most correct choice for us to complete the task of finding Sita.]'

Then he (Jamvant) cheerfully summoned Hanuman near and instructed him, 'Oh dear, pick up this gauntlet (responsibility). Bring the news of the daughter of Janak (Sita)

and lend (give) immense pleasure to Raghupati (Sri Ram) with this (good and auspicious) news. (While at Lanka—) Search each door (i.e. look at every nook and corner, every house and yard of the city), the caves of the mountains, the forest and every household. Finding an opportune time, give the finger-ring (which Sri Ram has given to you for Sita). Oh Son! Pay attention to this advice of mine.'

Hanuman gladly picked up the gauntlet (responsibility) most respectfully and cheerfully, and he then expanded his body four times. He went atop the summit of a mountain and let out a shrill cry; the sky reverberated with its echo. The legendary tortoise called 'Kamath', and the legendary hooded serpent known as 'Seshnath' (both of whom support the earth from below), and the earth itself, trembled, while the chariot of the Sun in the sky also faltered (because its 7 horses were terrified and started pulling away haphazardly in every direction).

Hanuman flew in or sailed across the sky as if Mt. Sumeru had developed huge wings (to enable it to fly).

(Seeing him sailing or cruising through the sky—) All the monkeys were exhilarated and astonished. They glanced at each other with amazement, and awestruck with this marvelous spectacle, they chuckled and gave out a shrill cry of extreme astonishment and unbounded joy.

On the way, he (Hanuman) saw a strange demoness named Sursa¹ standing on his way with her mouth wide open (to block Hanuman's way and stop him from proceeding ahead to Lanka). Hanuman reduced his size, entered her mouth, (came out of it) and proceeded ahead. This delayed his progress a bit.

Surdas says that he crossed the ocean (and landed on the other side) relying upon the strength and potential of his Lord (Sri Ram) (65).

[Note—¹Sursa—She was the mother of the underground serpents. The Gods wished to judge the competence, the wit and the intelligence of Hanuman to ascertain whether he would be able to actually overcome the formidable obstacles that are certain to obstruct his mission in Lanka, and so they sent her to test his mettle.

She came and stood in the way of Hanuman and told him that she would devour him. First Hanuman tried to persuade her to let him go and promised to come back voluntarily after completing the mission, but when Sursa became adamant Hanuman challenged her to eat him. Sursa expanded her mouth, and Hanuman became twice as big. This one upmanship continued till the time Sursa's mouth stretched for 100 Yojans (roughly 800 miles). At that instant, Hanuman became as small as a mosquito, entered her opened mouth and came out again while she was unable to even see him because of his miniscule size as compared to her colossus form. This fulfilled Sursa's desire to eat him because he had entered her mouth, and this also proved to the Gods that Hanuman was intelligent and witty enough to handle tricky situations on his own. Even Sursa blessed him and went her way.]

हनुमान लंका में—राग धनाश्री

[66]

लखि लोचन, सोचै हनुमान ।

चहुँ दिसि लंक—दुर्ग दानवदल, कैसें पाऊँ जान ॥

सौ जोजन बिस्तार कनकपुरि, चकरी जोजन बीस ।
 मनौ बिस्वकर्मा कर अपुनें, रचि राखी गिरि—सीस ॥
 गरजत रहत मत्त गज चहुँ दिसि, छत्र—धुजा चहुँ दीस ।
 भरमित भयौ देखि मारुत—सुत, दियौ महाबल ईस !
 उड़ि हनुमंत गयौ आकासहिं, पहुच्यौ नगर मझारि ।
 बन—उपबन, गम—अगम अगोचर मंदिर, फिस्चौ निहार ॥
 भई पैज अब हीन हमारी, जिय मैं कहै बिचारि ।
 पटकि पूँछ, माथौ धुनि लोटै, लखी न राघव—नारि ॥
 नानारूप निसाचर अद्भुत, सदा करत मद—पान ।
 ठौर—ठौर अभ्यास महाबल करत कुंत—असि बान ॥
 जिय सिय—सोच करत मारुत—सुत, जियति न मेरैं जान ।
 कै वह भाजि सिंधु मैं डूबी, कै उहिं तज्यौ परान ॥
 कैसैं नाथहि मुख दिखराऊँ, जो बिनु देखे जाउँ ।
 बानर बीर हँसैंगे मोकौं, तैं बोख्यौ पितु—नाउँ ॥
 रिच्छप तर्क बोलिहै मोसौं, ताकौं बहुत डराउँ ।
 भलैं राम कौं सीय मिलाई, जीति कनकपुर गाउँ ॥
 जब मोहि अंगद कुसल पूछिहै, कहा कहौंगो वाहि ।
 या जीवन मैं मरन भलौ है, मैं देख्यौ अवगाहि ॥
 मारौं आजु लंक लंकापति, लै दिखराऊँ ताहि ।
 चौदह सहस जुबति अंतःपुर, लैहैं राघव चाहि ॥
 मंदिर की परछाया बैठ्यौ, कर मीजै पछिताइ ।
 पहिलै हूँ न लखी मैं सीता, क्यों पहिचानी जाइ ॥
 दुरबल दीन—छीन चिंतित अति, जपत नाइ रघुराइ ।
 ऐसी बिधि देखिहौं जानकी, रहिहौं सीस नवाई ॥
 बहुरि बीर जब गयौ अबासहिं, जहाँ बसै दसकंध ।
 नगनि जटित मनि—खंभ बनाए, पूरन बात सुगंध ॥
 स्वेत छत्र फहरात सीस पर, मनौ लच्छि कौ बंध ।
 चौदह सहस नाग—कन्या—रति, पस्यौ सो रत मतिअंध ॥
 बीना—झाँझ—पखाउज—आउज, और राजसी भोग ।
 पुहुप—प्रजंक परी नवजोवनि, सुख—परिमल—संजोग ॥
 जिय जिय गढ़ै, करै बिस्वासहि, जानै लंका लोग ।
 इहि सुख—हेत हरी है सीता, राघव बिपति—बियोग ॥
 पुनि आयौ सीता जहाँ बैठी, बन असोक के माहिं ।
 चारौ ओर निसिचरी घेरैं, नर जिहि देखि डराहिं ॥
 बैठ्यौ जाइ एक तरुवर पर, जाकी सीतल छाहिं ।

बहु निसाचरी मध्य जानकी, मलिन बसन तन माहिं ॥
 बारंबार बिसूरि 'सूर' दुख, जपत नाम रघुनाहु ।
 ऐसी भाँति जानकी देखी, चंद गह्वौ ज्यौं राहु ॥

hanumāna laṅkā mēm-rāga dhanāśrī

(66)

lakhi lōcana, sōcai hanumāna.
 cahum̐ disi laṅka-durga dānavadala, kaisēm pā'um̐ jāna..
 sau jōjana bistāra kanakapuri, cakari jōjana bīsa.
 manau bisvakarmā kara apunēm, raci rākhi giri-sīsa..
 garajata rahata matta gaja cahum̐ disi, chatra-dhujā cahum̐ dīsa.
 bharamita bhayau dēkhi māruta-suta, diyau mahābala īsa!
 uḍi hanumanta gayau ākāsahim, pahucyau nagara majhāri.
 bana-upabana, gama-agama agōcara mandira, phiryau nihāra..
 bha'i paija aba hīna hamārī, jiya mair̐ kahai bicāri.
 paṭaki pūm̐cha, māthau dhuni lōṭai, lakhī na rāghava-nāri..
 nānārūpa nisācara adbhuta, sadā karata mada-pāna.
 ṭhaura-ṭhaura abhyāsa mahābala karata kunta-asi bāna..
 jiya siya-sōca karata māruta-suta, jiyati na mēraim̐ jāna.
 kai vaha bhāji sindhu mair̐ ḍūbī, kai uhim̐ tajyau parāna..
 kaisair̐ nāthahi mukha dikharā'um̐, jō binu dēkhē jā'um̐..
 bānara bīra ham̐sair̐gē mōkauṁ, tair̐ bōryau pitu-nā'um̐..
 ricchapa tarka bōlihai mōsauṁ, tākauṁ bahuta ḍarā'um̐..
 bhalair̐ rāma kauṁ siya milā'i, jīti kanakapura gā'um̐..
 jaba mōhi āngada kusala pūchihai, kahā kahauṁgō vāhi.
 yā jīvana mair̐ marana bhalau hai, mair̐ dēkhyau avagāhi..
 māraur̐ āju laṅka laṅkāpati, lai dikharā'um̐ tāhi.
 caudaha sahasa jubati antaḥpura, laihair̐ rāghava cāhi..
 mandira kī parachāyā baiṭhyau, kara mījai pachitā'i.
 pahilai hūm̐ na lakhī mair̐ sītā, kyaur̐ pahicānī jā'i..
 durabala dīna-chīna cintita ati, japata nā'i raghurā'i.
 aisī bidhi dēkhihaur̐ jānakī, rahihaur̐ sīsa navā'i..
 bahuri bīra jaba gayau abāsahim, jahām̐ basai dasakandha.
 nagani jaṭita mani-khambha banā'ē, pūrana bāta sugandha..
 svēta chatra phaharāta sīsa para, manau lacchi kau bandha.
 caudaha sahasa nāga-kan'yā-rati, paryau sō rata mati'andha..
 bīnā-jhām̐jha-pakhā'uja-ā'uja, aura rājasī bhōga.
 puhupa-prajaṅka parī navajōvani, sukha-parimala-sanjōga..
 jiya jiya garhai, karai bisvāsahi, jānai laṅkā lōga.
 ihi sukha-hēta harī hai sītā, rāghava bipati-biyōga..
 puni āyau sītā jaham̐ baiṭhī, bana asōka kē māhim̐.
 cāraur̐ ōra niscari ghēraim̐, nara jihi dēkhi ḍarāhim̐..
 baiṭhyau jā'i ēka tarubara para, jākī sītala chāhim̐.

bahu nisācarī madhya jānakī, malina basana tana māhim..
 bārambāra bisūri 'sūra' dukha, japata nāma raghunāhu.
 aisī bhāmṭi jānakī dēkhī, canda gahyau jyauṁ rāhu..

Hanuman in Lanka—Raag Dhanasri

66. When Hanuman saw the city (Lanka), he wondered, 'The fort of Lanka is surrounded on all the sides by huge throngs of (vicious and ferocious) demons; how will I go inside it (or penetrate its defenses without arousing any suspicion)?'

The golden city was spread over an area of 100 Yojans (1 Yojan = 4,8,16 miles; generally the median figure 8 is considered as the correct or average measure of this distance) with a periphery (wall) of twenty Yojans. It appeared to have been built by Vishwakarma (the architect of the Gods) himself by his own hands and then placed on the summit of the mountain with three summits (called Trikoot). [This city was similar to ancient Rome which was also built on hills.]

Wild and intoxicated elephants trumpeted in all its four directions of the formidable city. Ceremonial umbrellas, parasols and canopies were spread in all those directions, and flags (and banners) fluttered everywhere.

Seeing such a fantastic and beautiful city, Hanuman became doubtful. [He doubted whether he has arrived at the correct place, for the place did not appear to be a habitat of cruel and merciless demons, but resembled one belonging to the gods.]

At that moment, the Lord (Sri Ram) subtly infused great courage in him (or filled him with divine inspiration and guts, as well as the wisdom to realise that he is right on the dot).

Hanuman flew in the sky and landed in the center of the city¹. There, he roamed around seeing the forests, gardens, groves, orchards etc. and such other places as were easily accessible (e.g. public buildings and gardens) as well as those that were difficult to enter (e.g. royal palaces, prisons etc.), or those that were restricted from sight (e.g. inner royal chambers, treasury etc.).

(Finding Sita nowhere—) He wondered 'my vow' (to find Sita) has been broken. I am feeling so depressed, confounded, distraught, hopeless and perplexed. I have not been able to trace (see) the wife of Raghav (i.e. Sita) anywhere yet.

Out of contrition, exasperation, dejection, dismay and frustration, he thrashed his tail on the ground, beat his head, and repeatedly fell to the ground in a trance-like dazed state².

Demons of strange forms and mysterious demeanours drank wine continually (in the city), and on being drunk, those most strong and valiant demons practiced various martial sports and activities such as throwing of the spear, wielding a sword, or shooting with an arrow, here and there, everywhere in the city.

Observing all this, Hanuman thought of Sita remorsefully, 'In my view, Sita is not alive. She had either drowned herself in the ocean or had shed her life (died) due to fear. How will I show my face to the Lord (Sri Ram) if I go back empty-handed without seeing (i.e. locating, meeting and finding out about) her. All the monkeys will taunt and tease me that I have put the glorious name of my father to shame.

The king of the bears (Jamvant) will severely question me (i.e. interrogate and reproach me) with disbelief. I am very afraid of him. He will taunt me, saying, 'You have

done a commendable job of conquering the golden city and arranging a meeting between Sita and Ram!’

When the crown prince Angad asks me about the welfare (of Sita), what answer will I give him?

I have thought it over —it is better for me to die than to live this ignominious life. Or should I kill the Lord of Lanka (Ravana), uproot (scoop up) the city and take it back to show them (that I have indeed landed here and am not telling a lie). There are 14 thousands ladies in Ravana’s royal harem; Raghav (Sri Ram) will make his choice from amongst them.’

In this way, full of bewilderment, regret, contrition, exasperation and frustration, he hid himself (in shame) under the shadow of a (secluded) building and regretfully wringed his hands. ‘I have never seen Sita before, how shall I recognise her (even if I do manage to see her)? I expect her to be very weak, humble and emaciated, wretched and miserable, very contrite, distraught, remorseful and worried, and repeating (doing the Japa of) Raghurai’s (Sri Ram’s) name. If I find Janki (Sita) in this state, I shall bow my head to her in reverence (because then I would recognise her).’

After that, when the brave and valiant one (Hanuman) went to the place where Ravana (the 10-headed demon king) lived, he found it had gem-studded pillars made up of precious stones, and the air was sweet and fragrant. The white ceremonial umbrella over the head of Ravana dazzled and simmered as Goddess Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth, prosperity and material welfare in this world) her-self has been tied there. That fool (Ravana) was enjoying the company of 14 thousand damsels or nymphs (of his harem). Various musical instruments, such as the Indian lute, symbols, tumbrels and kettle-drums were being played. There were other royal paraphernalia of enjoyment present there.

On a bed of flowers, a young lady cheerfully lay tightly embracing Ravana, enjoying his company. Pleasant fragrance permeated the atmosphere everywhere. Seeing this scene, Hanuman was utterly stunned and confounded. He debated to himself and wondered if it was not for this pleasure that he (Ravana) had abducted Sita, and there Raghav (Sri Ram) was suffering in the agony of separation! Is it possible that the people of Lanka had hidden her somewhere when they came to know that I have come here (and this is a ploy by Ravana to mislead me).

By and by, he came to the Ashok grove where Sita was sitting (held captive). She was surrounded by such (fierce and fearful) demonesses that a simple glance of them could terrify even a strong-willed man. He (Hanuman) went atop a tree with dense foliage, and sat there quietly.

Surdas says—‘Janki (Sita) was sitting amidst (surrounded by) numerous demonesses. Dirty clothes were lying on her emaciated and decrepit body. She sobbed and wept continually, and chanted (repeated) the name of Raghurai (Sri Ram). He (Hanuman) found Janki in a state resembling that of the moon which has been devoured by Rahu (a reference to the darkened moon which has lost its shine temporarily during the lunar eclipse) (66).

[Note :- ¹Surdas skips the confrontation between Hanuman and Lankini, the demoness entrusted with the security of the periphery wall of Lanka. According to Saint Tulsidas, there was a scuffle between the two when Hanuman punched her. She vomited blood, recollecting the prophesy made by the Gods that anyone who would be able to punch her would destroy Lanka, and therefore she knew that the intruder is not an ordinary thief but

some divine messenger of the Lord. Hence she blessed Hanuman with success. Thereafter, he entered the city in a miniscule form, probably like a mosquito or fly.

²Tulsidas does not record any such incident. Besides, meeting with Vibhishan before Hanuman's meeting with Sita has also been skipped by Surdas. He has come directly to the point where Hanuman hides himself in the dense foliage of the tree under which Sita lived, waiting for an opportunity to meet her.]

राग मारू

[67]

गयौ कूदि हनुमंत जब सिंधु—पारा ।
 सेश के सीस लागे कमठ—पीठि सौं, धँसे गिरिबर सबै तासु भारा ॥
 लंक—गढ माहिं आकास मारग गयौ, चहुँ दिसि बज्र लागे किंवारा ।
 पौरि सब देखि सो असोक—बन में गयौ, निरखि सीता छप्यौ बृच्छ—डारा ॥
 सोच लाग्यौ करन, यहै धौं जानकी, कै कौऊ और, मोहि नहिं चिन्हारा ।
 'सूर' आकासबानी भई तबै तहँ, यहै बैदेहि है, करु जुहारा ॥

rāga mārū

(67)

gayau kūdi hanumanta jaba sindhu-pārā.
 sēṣa kē sīsa lāgē kamaṭha-pīṭhi saur̥ṁ, dhamśē giribara sabai tāsū bhārā..
 laṅka-gaḍha māhiṁ ākāsa māraga gayau, caḥūṁṁ disi bajra lāgē kinvārā.
 pauri saba dēkhi sō asōka-bana mēm̐ gayau, nirakhi sītā chapayau br̥ccha-dārā..
 sōca lāgyau karana, yahai dhaum̐ jānakī, kai kau'ū aura, mōhi nahim̐ cinhārā.
 'sūra' ākāsabānī bhaī tabai taham̐, yahai baidēhi hai, karu juhārā..

Raag Maaru

67. When Hanuman jumped across the ocean, the hoods of the legendary Seshnath (the hooded python who is said to hold the earth on its hoods) bent so far back as to touch the back (shell) of the legendary tortoise called Kamath. Even huge mountains became flattened (i.e. the earth cracked and the mountains subsided into the bowels of the earth). All the entrance-doors of Lanka were protected by a covering made of Vajra (which is the hardest substance in existence; probably it is diamond or some other stone).

So, Hanuman went inside (the city) by the air route (instead of trying to break the gates of the city and reveal his identity). After having a look at the whole city, he finally went to the Ashok grove. Seeing Sita there, he hid himself in one of the branches of a tree. Sitting there (concealed amidst its foliage), he thought to himself, 'I don't know whether this lady is Janki (Sita) or someone else because I have never seen her before.'

Surdas says that at that time, a formless voice from the sky said, 'This is indeed Vaidehi (the daughter of king Videha; namely Sita). Pay your obeisance to her.' (67).

निशिचरी के वचन जानकी के प्रति—राग मारू

[68]

समुझि अब निरखि जानकी मोहि ।
 बड़ौ भाग गुनि अगम दसानन, सिव बर दीनौ मोहि ॥
 केतिक राम कृपन, ताकी पितु—मातु घटाई कानि ।
 तरौ पिता जो जनक जानकी, कीरति कहौ बखानि ॥
 बिधि—संजोग टरत नहिं टारैं, बन दुख देख्यौ आनि ।
 अब रावन घर बिलसि सहज सुख, कह्यौ हमारौ मानि ॥
 इतनौ बचन सुनत सिर धुनि कै, बोली सिया रिसाइ ।
 अहो ठीठ, मति—मुग्ध निशिचरी, बैठी सनमुख आइ ॥
 तब रावन कौ बदन देखिहौं, दस सिरस्त्रोनित न्हाइ ।
 कै तन देउँ मध्य पावक के, कै बिलसैं रघुराइ ॥
 जो पै पतिव्रताव्रत तेरैं, जीवति बिछुरी काइ ।
 तब किन मुई, कहौ तुम मौसौं, भुजा गही जब राइ ॥
 अब झूठौ अभिमान करति हौ, झुकति जो उन के नाउँ ।
 सुखहीं रहसि मिलौ रावन कौं, अपनें सहज सुभाउ ॥
 जो तू रामहि दोष लगावै, करौं प्रान कौ घात ।
 तुमरे कुल कौं बेर न लागै, होत भस्म—संघात ॥
 उन के क्रोध जरै लंकापति, तेरे हृदय समाइ ।
 तौ पै 'सूर' पतिव्रत साँचौ, जो देखौं रघुराइ ॥

niśicarī kē vacana jānakī kē prati-rāga mārū

(68)

samujhi aba nirakhi jānakī mōhi.
 barau bhāga guni agama dasānana, siva bara dīnau mōhi..
 kētika rāma krpana, tākī pitu-mātu ghaṭā'ī kāni.
 tarau pitā jō janaka jānakī, kīrati kahauṁ bakhāni..
 bidhi-sarjōga ṭarata nahiṁ ṭāraiṁ, bana dukha dēkhyau āni.
 aba rāvana ghara bilasi sahaja sukha, kahyau hamārau māni..
 itanau bacana sunata sira dhuni kai, bōlī siyā risā'i.
 ahō ḍhiṭha, mati-mugdha nisicarī, baiṭhī sanamukha ā'i..
 taba rāvana kau badana dēkhihauṁ, dasa sirasrōnita nhā'i.
 kai tana dē'um' madhya pāvaka kē, kai bilasaiṁ raghurā'i..
 jō pai patibratābrata tēraiṁ, jīvati bichurī kā'i.
 taba kina mu'ī, kahau tuma mausauṁ, bhujā gahī jaba rā'i..
 aba jhūṭhau abhimāna karati hau, jhukati jō una kē nā'um'..
 sukhahīṁ rahasi milau rāvana kauṁ, apanēm sahaja subhā'u..
 jō tū rāmahi dōṣa lagāvai, karauṁ prāna kau ghāta.

tumarē kula kauṁ bēra na lāgai, hōta bhasma-saṅghāta..
 una kēm krōdha jarai laṅkāpati, tērē hr̥daya samā'i.
 tau pai 'sūra' patibrata sām̐cau, jō dēkhaṁ raghurā'i..

Demoness-Sita Conversation—Raag Maaru

68. (One demoness who had been deputed by Ravana to cajole and persuade Sita to yield to his advances, told her—) 'Oh Janki (Sita), look at me and think it over. Consider yourself very lucky and fortunate as if Lord Shiva has himself blessed you, because of the fact that the 10-headed one (Ravana) is inaccessible to any women, and fortunately he is utterly enamoured by you. [Is this not a great privilege and honour for you?]
 What does the humble and helpless Sri Ram count (when compared to Ravana). Even his parents thought him unworthy and inept (by sending him to exile instead of crowning him on the throne of Ayodhya).

Oh Janki! I adore the great fame and glory that your father Janak possesses, but whatever destiny Brahma (the creator) has determined (fixed) for an individual creature cannot be changed inspite of the best efforts made to do so. [That is, your stature was much superior to that of Sri Ram, and it is humiliating for you to marry into a much junior family in the social hierarchy and have a groom that is unfit for you.] Then you had to suffer the ignominy, the horrors and the torments of forest exile. Now, pay attention to our advice and enjoy all the material comforts (that you deserve) in the palace of Ravana (by conceding to accept his overtures).'

Hearing her abhorable, sacrilegious and scandalous words, Sita beat her head (in exasperation), and said most angrily, 'Oh you evil, wicked, ignorant and stupid demoness! How dare have you come and sat in front of me. I will see Ravana's face only when all his 10-heads would be bathed in blood (i.e. only when his heads will be cut-off from his body). I shall either burn my body in fire, or it is only Raghurai (Sri Ram) who can live with me (and touch me).'

Hearing her stern retort and snub, the demoness said tauntingly, 'If you are so steadfast in your loyalty towards your husband, how come you were separated from your beloved? Tell me, when Ravana had caught hold of your hands (while bringing you here), why didn't you die (or burn yourself) then? Now this is your false pretence (of chastity and loyalty) that you get annoyed at his (Ravana's) name. Go and silently meet him and enjoy your life.'

Surdas says that hearing these reprehensible and scurrilous words of the demoness, Sita vehemently said, 'If you cast aspersions on Sri Ram, I shall kill myself, and (by my curse) your entire clan (or the demon race) will not take too long in getting reduced to ashes. The Lord of Lanka (Ravana) shall be burnt by his (Sri Ram's) wrath, and it is then that your heart shall find peace. My loyalty towards my husband will be truthfully proved only when I have his divine sight.' (68).

निशिचरी रावण संवाद—राग धनाश्री

[69]

सुनौ किन कनकपुरी के राइ ।

हौं बुधि—बल—छल करि पचि हारी, लख्यौ न सीस उचाइ ॥
 डोलै गगन सहित सुरपति अरु पुहुमि पलटि जग परई ।
 नसै धर्म, मन—बचन—काय करि, सिंधु अचंभौ करई ॥
 अचला चलै, चलत पुनि थाकै, चिरंजीवि सो मरई ।
 श्रीरघुनाथ—प्रताप पतिव्रत, सीता—सत नहिं टरई ॥
 ऐसी तिया हरत क्यों आई, ताकौ यह सतिभाउ ।
 मन—बच—कर्म और नहिं दूजी, बिन रघुनंदन राउ ॥
 उन कें क्रोध भस्म ह्वै जैहौ, करौ न सीता—चाउ ।
 तब तुम काकी सरन उबरिहौ, सो बलि मोहि बताउ ॥
 “जो सीता सत तैं बिचलै, तौ श्रीपति काहि सँभारै ।
 मोसे मुग्ध महापापी कौ, कौन क्रोध करि तारै ॥
 ये जननी वे प्रभु रघुनंदन, हौं सेवक प्रतिहार ।
 सीता—राम ‘सूर’ संगम बिनु, कौन उतारे पार?” ॥

niśicarī rāvaṇa saṁvāda-rāga dhanāśrī

(69)

sunau kina kanakapurī kē rā'i.
 hauṁ budhi-bala-chala kari paci hārī, lakhyau na sīsa ucā'i..
 ḍōlai gagana sahita surapati aru puhumi palaṭi jaga para'ī.
 nasai dharma, mana-bacana-kāya kari, sindhu acambhau kara'ī..
 acalā calai, calata puni thākai, ciranjīvi sō mara'ī.
 śrīraghunātha-pratāpa patibrata, sītā-sata nahim̐ ṭara'ī..
 aisī tiyā harata kyaur̐ ā'ī, tākau yaha satibhā'u.
 mana-baca-karma aura nahim̐ dūjī, bina raghunandana rā'u..
 una kēm̐ krōdha bhasma hvai jaihau, karau na sītā-cā'u.
 taba tuma kākī sarana ubarihau, sō bali mōhi batā'u..
 “jō sītā sata taim̐ bicalai, tau śrīpati kāhi saṁbhārai.
 mōsē mugdha mahāpāpī kaum̐, kauna krōdha kari tārai..
 yē janani vē prabhu raghunandana, hauṁ sēvaka pratihāra.
 sītā-rāma ‘sūra’ saṅgama binu, kauna utārē pāra?” ..

Demoness-Ravana Conversation; Ravana's Wisdom
 Raag Dhanasri

69. (That demoness returned to report back to Ravana—) ‘Oh king of the golden city (of Lanka)! Why don’t you listen to me (i.e. why don’t you pay heed to my sane advice)? I have tried my best to persuade Sita, but am tired at it (i.e. I have failed to persuade her). She did not even lift her head to see me.

Even the sky might shake along with Indra (the king of Gods), the earth might turn upside down with all its creatures, Dharma (righteousness) might be totally extinguished (eliminated) from the mind, speech and deeds of all the people, the ocean

might create a marvel (such as by submerging the land mass which is only one third of its total volume, even though it doesn't do so), the inanimate things might start moving while animate creatures become gross and immobile, or those who are immortal might die—but take it from me, by the majestic glory and stupendous powers of Raghunath (Sri Ram), Sita's immaculate and unshakable loyalty towards her husband, her purity, chastity and truthfulness, can never be swayed or violated (or questioned). How was it possible that such a woman could be ever stolen by you?

It is her truthfulness and honest conviction that except Lord Raghunandan (i.e. the great son in the Raghu's clan; Sri Ram), no other male exists. Do not yearn or lust for Sita anymore. Well, tell me oh king, where will you take refuge and shelter; you will be reduced to ashes by her wrath (curse).'

Surdas says that it was then Ravana spoke words of wisdom—'Whom will Sripati (Vishnu) take care of if even Sita (an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi herself) sways or falters from her steadfastness, vows and determinations (because it is by relying upon the strength of Goddess Laxmi that Vishnu sustains and nourishes the world)?

But who else will provide liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation to a great sinner and pervert one like me by becoming angry at me and consequentially killing me for my mischief and misdeeds (if it is not Sita and Ram)? [That is, I am willingly creating this nuisance for I know that my salvation lies in the hands of Lord Ram. If I do not make the Lord sufficiently angry by tormenting Sita, he is so merciful that he would let me off, and then this wicked body of mine would continue to live and commit more sins in this life. Well, I am fully aware of what I am doing, and am doing it for my own spiritual welfare. I am not acting on impulses of lust and passion, for I know that—] Sita is the universal Mother, and Raghunandan (Sri Ram) is the universal Lord. I am but his gatekeeper. [See verse no. 1.]

Who will take me across this ocean-like vast and fathomless world without the joint efforts of Sita and Ram?'

[That is, I have determined for myself that I would do everything possible to get killed at the hands of the Lord. And in this enterprise, I would be stubborn to the point of insanity. So you would do well to keep your well-intentioned advice to yourself! See verse no. 71 in this context.] (69).

[Note—It would be clear by this verse that, after all, Ravana was not at all as wicked and pervert in his dealings with Sita as it appears on the face of it. He was a cruel demon, and he knew too well that all the doors of the conventional methods of finding emancipation and salvation are closed for him. He knew only lust, cruelty and bloodshed, and therefore it is this method which is decided to choose as the easiest one for him to find liberation from this sinful body when he would die at the hands of the Supreme Lord himself by fighting with him over a lady!

The fact that Ravana knew who Ram and Sita actually were is clearly stated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Uddha kand, Canto 10, verse nos. 55-61.]

रवण के वचन सीता के प्रति—राग मारु

[70]

जनकसुता, तू समुझि चित्त मैं, हरषि मोहि तन हेरी ।

चौदह सहस किंनरी जेती, सब दासी हैं तेरी ॥
 कहै तौ जनक—गेह दै पठवौं, अरध लंक कौ राज ।
 तोहि देखि चतुरानन मोहै, तू सुंदरि—सिरताज ॥
 छाँड़ि राम तपसी के मोहै, उठि आभूषन साजु ।
 चौदह सहस तिया मैं तोकौं, पटा बधाऊँ आजु ॥
 कठिन बचन सुनि स्रवन जानकी, सकी न बचन सँभारि ।
 तून—अंतर दै दृष्टि तरौंधी, दियौ नयन—जल ढारि ॥
 पापी! जाउ जीभ गरि तेरी, अजुगुत बात बिचारी ।
 सिंह कौ भच्छ सृगाल न पावै, हौं समरथ की नारी ॥
 चौदह सहस सैन खरदूषन, हती राम इक बान ।
 लछिमन—राम—धनुष सन्मुख परि, काके रहिहैं प्रान ॥
 मेरौ हरन मरन है तेरौ, स्यौं कुटुंब—संतान ।
 जरिहै लंक कनकपुर तेरौ, उदवत रघुकुल—भान ॥
 तोकौं अवध कहत सब कोऊ, तातें सहियत बात ।
 बिना प्रयास मारिहौं तोकौं, आजु रैन, के प्रात ॥
 यह राकस की जाति हमारी, मोह न उपजै गात ।
 परतिय रमैं, धम्र कहा जानैं, डोलत मानुष खात ॥
 मन मैं डरी, कानि जिनि तोरै, मोहि अबला जिय जानि ।
 नख—सिख—बसन सँभारि, सकुच तनु, कुच—कपोल गहि पानि ॥
 रे दसकंध! अंधमति, तेरी आयु तुलानी आनि ।
 'सूर' राम की करत अवज्ञा, डारैं सब भुज भानि ॥

rāvaṇa kē vacana sītā kē prati-rāga mārū

(70)

janakasutā, tū samujhi citta mairi, haraṣi mōhi tana hērī.
 caudaha sahasa kinnarī jētī, saba dāsī hairi tērī..
 kahai tau janaka-gēha dai paṭhavaum, aradha laṅka kau rāja.
 tōhi dēkhi caturānana mōhai, tū sundari-siratāja..
 chāmṛi rāma tapasī kē mōhai, uṭhi ābhūṣana sāju.
 caudaha sahasa tiyā mairi tōkaum, paṭā badhā'ūm āju..
 kaṭhina bacana suni sravana jānakī, sakī na bacana sambhāri.
 trṇa-antara dai drṣṭi taraundhī, diyau nayana-jala dhāri..
 pāpī! jā'u jībha gari tērī, ajuguta bāta bicārī.
 simha kau bhaccha srgāla na pāvai, haum samaratha kī nārī..
 caudaha sahasa saina kharadūṣana, hatī rāma ika bāna.
 lachimana-rāma-dhanuṣa sanmukha pari, kākē rahihairi prāna..
 mērau harana marana hai tērau, syaum kuṭumba-santāna.
 jarihai laṅka kanakapura tērau, udavata raghukula-bhāna..
 tōkaum avadha kahata saba kō'ū, tātēm sahiyata bāta.

binā prayāsa mārihaum̐ tōkaur̐, āju raini, kē prāta..
 yaha rākasa kī jāti hamārī, mōha na upajai gāta..
 paratiya ramaim̐, dhamra kahā jānaim̐, ḍōlata mānuṣa khāta..
 mana mair̐ ḍarī, kāni jini tōrai, mōhi abalā jiya jāni..
 nakha-sikha-basana sambhārī, sakuca tanu, kuca-kapōla gahi pāni..
 rē dasakandha! andhamati, tērī āyu tulānī āni..
 'sūra' rāma kī karata avajñā, ḍāraim̐ saba bhuja bhāni..

Ravana Talks with Sita—Raag Maaru

70. (After that, Ravana came to the Ashok grove and cajoled Sita—) 'Oh daughter of Janak! Think deeply in your mind about me, and look at me cheerfully (benevolently). All the 14 thousands 'Kinnaris' (dancers and courtesans) in my palace are your maids. If you wish, I can give you half of the kingdom of Lanka and send you back to your father. Even Brahma would be lured by your beauty for you are like a crown-jewel amongst all the beautiful ones (i.e. you are the most beautiful amidst all the beautiful ladies that Brahma had created). Hence, forsake your stubbornness and discard your attachment to a mendicant like Sri Ram. Get up; decorate your body with ornaments. I shall give you the designation of the 'senior most Queen' amongst all my 14 thousand queens.'

Hearing such scandalous, scurrilous and reprehensible words, Janki (Sita) could not hold herself back. Tears rolled down her eyes. Placing a twig in between herself and Ravana, she cursed vehemently, 'Oh you pervert and wicked sinner! Let your tongue melt down if you dare speak such unethical words devoid of all etiquette and decorum. A jackal cannot partake of the lion's food! I am the wife of one who is all-able and almighty. Sri Ram had killed the entire array of 14 thousand demons belonging (to the army of) Khar and Dushan by a single arrow (see verse no. 46-47). Who can survive in front of the bows and arrows of Sri Ram and Laxman? My abduction is the harbinger of death of your entire clan including your sons and grandsons. As soon as the 'Sun' of the Raghu's clan rises on the horizon (i.e. as soon as Sri Ram makes his appearance on the shores of Lanka), your golden city will be deemed to have been reduced to ashes.'

(Ravana threatened—) 'Everyone says that you cannot be killed; that is why I tolerate whatever you say. Otherwise, I would have killed you tonight or tomorrow morning. We belong to the demon race and do not have mercy or compassion or attachment to anybody. We enjoy other people's women; this is our normal habit and natural temperament. What do we know about Dharma (righteousness, probity, noble thoughts and conducts)?'

Sita was terrified that Ravana might abandon his inhibitions and pretensions, and use force against her. She gathered her body (i.e. shrunk and withdrew it) and covered herself with cloth from head to toe. She hid her face and chest in her arms (i.e. she lowered her head and tucked it in her folded arms).

Surdas says that Sita snubbed him vehemently, 'Oh the 10-headed one! Your intellect has been eclipsed or blinded. Your life seems to have come to its end. You insult Sri Ram. He shall cut-off all your arms (as a punishment).' (70).

[71]

अरे सुनि सीता कत लायौ ।
 माकौ यह समुझि आई है, तेरौ मन अघ छाया ॥
 बार—बार त्रिजटी कहै, सुनि रावन मतिमंद ।
 जनक—सुता—तन गारिहै तोरन कौ दसकंध ॥
 गुपत मतौ रावन कहै, तूँ त्रिजटी सुनि आइ ।
 जौ पै सीता सत टरै, 'सूर' तीन भुवन जरि जाइ ॥

rāvaṇa trijaṭā saṁvāda-rāga mārū

(71)

arē suni sītā kata lāyau.
 mākauṁ yaha samujhi ā'ī hai, tērau mana agha chāyau..
 bāra-bāra trijaṭī kahai, suni rāvana matimanda.
 janaka-sutā-tana gārihai tōrana kauṁ dasakandha..
 gupata matau rāvana kahai, tūm' trijaṭī suni ā'ī.
 jauṁ pai sītā sata ṭarai, 'sūra' tina bhuvana jari jā'i..

Trijata Rebukes Ravana—Raag Maaru

71. (Trijata, the old, pious and wise demoness, sternly scolds Ravana, saying —) 'Oh listen, why did you bring Sita? I think that your mind has become pervert and sinful; it seems to have gone out of its senses.'

Trijata repeatedly cursed him, 'Oh you dull-witted Ravana! The daughter of Janak (Sita) shall cause her own body to decay (by extreme mental agony, observing severe fasting and austerities) and will thereby become the cause of literally breaking your ten shoulders (on which rest your ten necks and ten heads). [That is, Sita will eventually die because of her torments but will not accept you at any cost, and her death will result in your own death. She will become your nemesis.]'

Surdas says that at that point, Ravana called Trijata near him and confided to her in a low voice, 'Listen. If Sita ever wavers or falters from her steadfastness and loyalty towards her husband, then all the 3 'Bhuvans' (abodes; the celestial, terrestrial and the subterranean worlds) will be burnt down to ashes.

[That is, I fully know that I won't be able to sway her firm resolve, and make her abandon her path of righteousness and probity. But I am doing all this drama to ensure that my own killing would be at the hands of Sri Ram so that I can get deliverance from this evil and sinful body of a demon. See verse no. 69 in this context.] (71).

त्रिजटा सीता संवाद—राग मारू

[72]

रावन सोच करत मन माहीं ।
 सेन मोरि मंदिर कौ उलट्यौ, गयौ त्रिजटा के पाहीं ॥

दस सिर बदन सिधारियौ, बहु राक्षसि सुबिचारि ।
 कछु छल—बल करि देखिहौं जौ मानै सीता नारि ॥
 त्रिजटी कहै सुबानि सौं मोहि रजायस होइ ।
 जनक—सुता पतिवर्त तैं और न टारै कोइ ॥
 हरषवन्त त्रिजटी भई गई सिया कै पास ।
 पूरन सुखरू पाइहैं सो लाये छाँड़ि उसास ॥
 तिबई दुखित बई लहै देखौ मनहिं बिचारि ।
 जोबन चंचल थिर नहीं ज्यौं कर—अँजुरी—बारि ॥
 बलकल पहरन, फल भखन, त्रिन—संथर श्रीराम ।
 तिनहीं कहा सुख हेत सौं असुर—सुंदरि सौं काम ॥
 सिया—बचन त्रिजटी सुनै, अस नहिं भाष बहोरि ।
 'सूर' सिंघ ही सिर दियौ जंबुक—कोटि करोरि ॥

trijaṭā sītā saṁvāda-rāga mārū

(72)

rāvana sōca karata mana māhīm.
sēna mōri mandira kaum ulaṭyau, gayau trijaṭā kē pāhīm..
dasa sira badana sidhāriyau, bahu rākṣasi subicāri.
kachu chala-bala kari dēkhihaurm jau mānai sītā nāri..
trijaṭī kahai subāni saurm mōhi rajāyasa hō'i.
janaka-sutā patibarta tairm aura na ṭārai kō'i..
haraṣavanta trijaṭī bha'i ga'i siyā kairm pāsa.
pūrana sukharū pā'ihairm sō lāyē chāmḍi usāsa..
tiba'i dukhita ba'i lahai dēkhau manahim bicāri.
jōbana cañcala thira nahim jyaurm kara-amjuri-bāri..
balakala paharana, phala bhakhana, trina-santhara śrīrāma.
tinahim kahā sukha hēta saurm asura-sundari saurm kāma..
siyā-bacana trijaṭī sunai, asa nahim bhāṣa bahōri.
'sūra' siṅgha hī sira diyau jambuka-kōṭi karōri..

Trijata-Sita Conversation—Raag Maaru

72. Ravana brooded intensely (as he returned to his palace from the Ashok grove after being severely reproached and snubbed by Sita). He collected all his accompanying royal body guards and went to meet Trijata. He collected numerous clever demonesses and discussed the matter with them—'Let us try some clever trick and let me see if that women, Sita, agrees.'

Hearing what Ravana had to say (and hoping that she can hereby find an opportunity to go near Sita and live in here august company), Trijata volunteered, saying, 'I should be given the chance and the royal mandate. No one else can ever hope to move the daughter of Janak away from her loyalty towards her husband.'

(On obtaining Ravana's permission—) Trijata cheerfully went to Sita and said, 'Stop taking long and deep breaths (as a sign of immense mental agony, anguish, consternation, perplexity, confoundedness, torments, hopelessness and haplessness). You shall get the one who gives complete happiness and joys.' [The words of Trijata have a double meaning here. If Ravana had sent some spy to listen to what Trijata had to say to Sita, these words would be pleasing to him because they might also refer to Ravana. On the contrary, these words also referred to Sri Ram who indeed gives complete joy and happiness to not only Sita but everyone else in this world.]

(Sita replied—) 'Oh Trijata! I am suffering due to my own sowings. Think it over and see it for yourself.'

(Trijata politely tried to persuade her—) 'This youth is never stable (i.e. it is a temporary phase in life and will pass away some day). It is as unstable and gradually leaks away as the water held in the cupped palms of the hands. Sri Ram wears clothes made from birch (bark of a tree), eats fruits grown in the forest, and sleeps by spreading grass or reeds or twigs on the ground. What will you get by loving him? (By accepting Ravana instead—) You could enjoy the pleasures and comforts of the sensual objects of the world like so many other demoness beauties do.'

Surdas says that on hearing the words of Trijata, Sita indignantly replied, 'Do not repeat this thing to me again. There are millions of jackals (who represent Ravana). But I have offered my head to the lion (represented by Sri Ram). [That is, I have sacrificed myself to Sri Ram, so do not talk rubbish and tell me to sacrifice myself to that evil, pervert and wretched Ravana.] (72).

[73]

त्रिजटा सीता पै चलि आई ।
मन मैं सोच न करि तू माता, यह कहि कै समुझाई ॥
नलकूबर कौ साप रावनहि, तो पर बल न बसाई ।
'सूरदास' मनु जरी सजीवनि, श्रीरघुनाथ पठाई ॥

(73)

trijatā sītā pai cali āī.
mana mair̥ṇ sōca na kari tū mātā, yaha kahi kai samujhāī..
nalakūbara kau sāpa rāvanahi, tō para bala na basāī.
'sūradāsa' manu jarī sajīvani, śrīraghunātha paṭhāī..

73. Trijata snuggled up close to Sita and reassured her in a low voice, 'Oh mother! Don't worry at all. Ravana has been cursed by 'Nal Kuber'¹. Hence, he cannot use any force against you.'

Surdas says that (Sita was so pleased with this revelation by Trijata that she felt) it was like a 'Sanjivini herb' (a life-restoring herb) sent by Raghunath (Sri Ram; the Lord of Raghu's clan) (73).

[Note :- ¹Once, Ravana had raped a celestial courtesan named Rambhaa while she was on her way to meet Nal Kuber, the son of Kuber (the God's treasurer) who was the elder

step-brother of Ravana. At that time, Nal Kuber had cursed Ravana that if he ever tried to violate the modesty of any woman by force, or force himself upon an unwilling woman, he will die instantly.]

त्रिजटा का स्वप्न—राग कान्हरी

[74]

धनि जननी! तेरौ ब्रत आख्यौ ।
 तूँ हौँ जानत हौँ, यहै भरौसौ, तेरौ पन तेरै सत राख्यौ ॥
 फिरि त्रिजटा आई सीता पै, रावन सौँ सुख कोहि ।
 तूँ सीता ब्रत राखिये, राम मिलैगौ तोहि ॥
 सेत छत्र रघुनाथ सिर, बैठे अब्दुत पाट ।
 सेतैं चंदन जानकी! सोभित माथ लिलाट ॥
 यह सुपिनौ मोकौँ भयौ, अब साखी दीजै नाटि ।
 'सूरदास' रघुनाथ सौँ रावन जैहै न्हाटि ॥

trijaṭā kā svapna-rāga kānharau

(74)

dhani janani! tērau brata ākhyau.
 tūm̐ haum̐ jānata haum̐, yahai bharausau, tērau pana tēraiṁ sata rākhyau..
 phiri trijaṭā āī sītā pairiṁ, rāvana saum̐ sukha kōhi.
 tūm̐ sītā brata rākhiyē, rāma milaigau tōhi..
 sēta chatra raghunātha sira, baiṭhē adbhuta pāṭa.
 sētaiṁ candana jānakī! sōbhita mātha līlāṭa..
 yaha supinau mōkauriṁ bhayau, aba sākhī dījai nāṭi.
 'sūradāsa' raghunātha saum̐ rāvana jaihai nhāṭi..

Trijata's Dream—Raag Kaanharau

74. (Trijata expressed her appreciation of Sita in the following words—) 'Oh mother! You are laudable and praiseworthy. Your loyalty towards your husband and your chastity are most appreciable and highly adorable. You should believe me that I am certain that your vows have been protected by the armour of your strength of character, your steadfastness of loyalty, and your inviolable chastity.'

She went away and came back to Sita after showing her angry face to Ravana. [That is, she reported back to Ravana and made no pretensions to hide her anger, repugnance and hatred towards him.]

She then said to Sita, 'Oh Sita, be stern and steadfast in your vows and you shall find, i.e. reach or meet, Sri Ram because I have had a dream to this effect. In the dream I saw that Raghunath (Sri Ram) was sitting on a magnificent throne, there was a white ceremonial umbrella over his head and he had a Tilak Mark of white sandalwood (which is a sign marked on the head of a Hindu; here referring to the anointment of a king on the

throne of any kingdom).’ [That is, Trijata had a vision of the things to come. She saw the Lord crowned a king, and naturally this implies that he has defeated his adversary Ravana in the battlefield and has been triumphant. His anointment on the throne may be that of Ayodhya or of Lanka, but it is nevertheless an anointment, and this obviously means victory.]

Surdas says that Trijata repeatedly reassured Sita that she (Trijata) does not require any other proof (that Ravana’s doom is certain, and Sri Ram would be victorious). It is certain that Ravana will be destroyed at the hands of Raghunath (see verse no.77/1) (74).

सीताजी की मनोकामना

[75]

सो दिन त्रिजटा! कहु बक ऐहै ?
जा दिन चरन—कमल रघुपति के हरषि जानकी हृदय लगैहै ॥
कबहुँक लछिमन पाइ सुमित्रा, माइ—माइ कहि मोहि सुनैहै ।
कबहुँक कृपावंत कौसल्या, बधू—बधू कहि मोहि बुलैहै ॥
जा दिन कंचनपुर प्रभु ऐहैं, बिमल ध्वजा रथ पर फहरैहै ।
ता दिन जनम सफल करि मानौ, मेरी हृदय—कालिमा जैहै ॥
जा दिन राम रावनहि मारैं, ईसहि लै दस सीस चढ़ैहै ।
ता दिन ‘सूर’ राम पै सीता सरबस वारि बधाई दैहै ॥

sītājī kī manōkāmanā

(75)

sō dina trijaṭā! kahu baka aihai?
jā dina carana-kamala raghupati kē haraṣi jānakī hr̥daya lagaihai..
kabahum̐ka lachimana pā'i sumitrā, mā'i-mā'i kahi mōhi sunaihai.
kabahum̐ka krpāvanta kausilyā, badhū-badhū kahi mōhi bulaihai..
jā dina kañcanapura prabhu aihaiṁ, bimala dhvajā ratha para phaharaihai.
tā dina janama saphala kari mānaum̐, mērī hr̥daya-kālimā jaihai..
jā dina rāma rāvanahi mārāiṁ, īsahi lai dasa sīsa caḍhaihaiṁ.
tā dina 'sūra' rāma pai sītā sarabasa vāri badhā'i daihai..

Sita's Hopes

75. (Seen in a ray of hope in the otherwise gloomy and forboding surroundings, Sita said to her friend-in-times-of-distress, Trijata—) ‘Oh Trijata! Say, when will that august day come when Janki (i.e. myself) shall cheerfully put the holy feet of Raghupati (Sri Ram) on her bosom? Will Laxman ever address me with the words ‘mother’ as he does to his own mother Sumitra? Will the merciful and kind mother Kaushalya ever call me using the words ‘daughter-in-law’?

The day when my Lord shall enter this golden city on a chariot aflutter with the flag of victory atop it, only then shall the agonies of my heart be dispelled, and I shall consider my life worthwhile and fruitful. The day Sri Ram kills Ravana and offers his ten heads to Lord Rudra (Shiva), Sita shall offer (sacrifice) her entire being and all that she has to him (Sri Ram), applaud him, praise him, congratulate him, laud him, admire and honour him.' (75).

राग सारंग

[76]

मैं तो राम—चरन चित दीन्हौ ।
मनसा, बाचा और कर्मना, बहुरि मिलन कौं आगम कीन्हौ ॥
डुलै सुमेरु, सेष—सिर कपै, पच्छिम उदै करै बासर—पति ।
सुनि त्रिजटा, तौहूँ नहिं छाड़ौ, मधुर—मूर्ति रघुनाथ—गात—रति ॥
सीता करति बिचार मनहिं—मन, आजु—काल्हि कोसलपति आवैं ॥
'सूरदास' स्वामी करुनामय, सो कृपालु मोहि क्यों बिसरावैं! ॥

rāga sāraṅga

(76)

maiṁ tō rāma-carana cita dīnhau.
manasā, bācā aura karmanā, bahuri milana kauṁ āgama kīnhau..
ḍulai sumēru, sēṣa-sira kampai, pacchima udai karai bāsara-pati.
suni trijaṭā, tauhūṁ nahim chārau, madhura-mūrti raghunātha-gāta-rati..
sītā karati bicāra manahim-mana, āju-kāl'hi kōsalapati āvaiṁ..
'sūradāsa' svāmī karunāmaya, sō kṛpālu mōhi kyauṁ bisarāvaiṁ! ..

Raag Saarang

76. (Sita continued—) 'I have focused my mind and intellect on the (august, holy and divine) feet of Sri Ram. I do it most sincerely with all the faculties at my command—such as the mind, the thoughts, the speech and the actions. In doing so, I have a strong hope of meeting (seeing) him (Sri Ram).

Oh Trijata, listen! Even if such impossible things might happen as Mt. Sumeru moving from its place (or shaking from its foundation), the hood of the legendary Seshnath (who holds the earth on its hoods) trembling, and the sun rising in the west (instead of the east), I shall still not abandon my deep love, affection and devotion for the sweet, pleasant, enchanting and charming form of Raghunath (Sri Ram).'

Surdas say that Sita tells herself that the Lord of Kaushal (Sri Ram) will be coming (to her rescue) in a day or two. Surdas' Lord ('Surdas Swami') is full of compassion and mercy; how can that Lord ever forsake me (Sita)? [That is, Surdas wonders how the merciful Lord can ever be expected to abandon and forsake Sita. He also means that he (Surdas), like Sita, is certain that Sri Ram, who is his Lord, will never ever abandon and forsake him.] (76).

त्रिजटा का स्वप्न, हनुमान् सीता मिलन—राग धनाश्री

[77/1]

सुनि सीता! सपने की बात ।
 रामचंद्र—लछिमन मैं देखे, ऐसी बिधि परभात ॥
 कुसुम—बिमान बैठि बैदेही, देखी राघव पास ।
 स्वेत छत्र रघुनाथ—सीस पर, दिनकर—किरन—प्रकास ॥
 भयौ पलायमान दानवकुल, ब्याकुल सायक—त्रास ।
 पजरत धुजा, पताक, छत्र, रथ, मनिमय कनक—अबास ॥
 रावन—सीस पुहुमि पर लोटत, मंदोदरि बिलखाइ ।
 कुंभकरन—तन पंक लगाई, लंक बिभीषन पाइ ॥
 प्रगट्यौ आइ लंक दल कपि कौ, फिरि रघुबीर—दुहाइ ।
 या सपने कौ भाव सिया सुनि, कबहुँ बिफल नहिं जाइ ॥

trijatā kā svapna, hanumān sītā milana-rāga dhanāśrī

(77/1)

sunī sītā! sapanē kī bāta.
 rāmacandra-lachimana mair̥m dēkhē, aisī bidhi parabhāta..
 kusuma-bimāna baiṭhi baidēhī, dēkhī rāghava pāsa.
 svēta chatra raghunātha-sīsa para, dinakara-kirana-prakāsa..
 bhayau palāyamāna dānavakula, byākula sāyaka-trāsa.
 pajarata dhujā, patāka, chatra, ratha, manimaya kanaka-abāsa..
 rāvana-sīsa puhumi para lōṭata, mandōdari bilakhā'i.
 kumbhakarana-tana paṅka lagā'ī, laṅka bibhīṣana pā'i..
 pragatyaū ā'i laṅka dala kapi kau, phiri raghubīra-duhā'i.
 yā sapanē kau bhāva siyā suni, kabahum̐ biphala nahim̐ jā'i..

Trijata's Dream; Hanuman Meets Sita—Raag Dhanasri

[Verse no. 77 is a long one, so it has been divided into smaller sections for ease of narration and understanding.]

77/1. (Trijata said—) ‘Sita, listen to my dream which I had in the morning hours. I have seen Sri Ram and Laxman in it. I saw Vaidehi (i.e. you) sitting besides Raghav (Sri Ram) in a plane decorated with flowers. There was a white ceremonial umbrella over the head of Raghunath (Sri Ram); it was splendid like the rays of the sun.

The demon army ran away (i.e. was scattered) helter-skelter, peppered and terrified on being showered by arrows (shot by Sri Ram and Laxman). Ravana’s royal standard and flags bearing his court of arms, his royal umbrellas/parasols, his chariot and gem-studded golden palace—all were seen burning. The chopped-off heads of Ravana were rolling on the ground and (the chief queen) Mandodari was lamenting and grieving woefully.

Kumbhkaran (Ravana's younger brother) had slush and muck smeared all over his body. Vibhishan (another brother of Ravana) had got the kingdom of Lanka (because he had taken the refuge of Sri Ram and sided with him after being insulted publically by Ravana).

The party of monkeys had suddenly appeared in Lanka (as if from no where), spreading (or proclaiming) the glorious name of Raghubir (i.e. they had declared that Sri Ram was the victor and conqueror of the city).

Oh Sita, listen! The subtle and implied meaning of this dream cannot go in vain.' [See also verse no. 74.] (77/1).

सीताजी का पश्चाताप

[77/2]

त्रिजटा—बचन सुनत बैदेही, अति दुख लेति उसास ।
 हा हा रामचंद्र! हा लछिमन! हा कौसिल्या सास !
 त्रिभुवन—नाथ नाह जो पावै, सहै सो क्यों बनबास ?
 हा कैकई! सुमित्रा जननी! कठिन निसाचर—त्रास ॥
 कौन पाप मैं पापिनि कीन्हौ, प्रगट्यौ जो इहिं बार ।
 धिक—धिक जीवन है, अब यह तन, क्यों न होइ जरि छार ॥
 द्वै अपराध मोहि ये लागे, मृग हित दियौ हथियार ।
 जान्यौ नहीं निसाचर कौ छल, नाघ्यौ धनुष—प्रकार ॥
 पंछी एक सुहृद जानत हौं, कस्यौ निसाचर भंग ।
 तातें बिरमि रहे रघुनंदन, करि मनसा—गति पंग ॥
 इतनौ कहत नैन—उर फरके, सगुन जनायौ अंग ।
 आजु लहौं रघुनाथ—सँदेसौ, मिटै बिरह—दुख—संग ॥

sītājī kā paścātāpa

(77/2)

trijaṭā-bacana sunata baidēhī, ati dukha lēti usāsa.
 hā hā rāmacandra! hā lachimana! hā kausilyā sāsa!
 tribhuvana-nātha nāha jō pāvai, sahai sō kyōm banabāsa?
 hā kaika'ī! sumitrā janani! kaṭhina nisācara-trāsa..
 kauna pāpa mair̥m pāpini kīnhau, pragaṭyau jō ihm̥ bāra.
 dhika-dhika jīvana hai, aba yaha tana, kyaur̥m na hō'i jari chāra..
 dvai aparādha mōhi yē lāgē, mrga hita diyau hathiyāra.
 jān'yau nahim̥ nisācara kau chala, nāghyau dhanuṣa-prakāra..
 pañchī ēka suhr̥da jānata hauṁ, karyau nisācara bhaṅga.
 tātēm̥ birami rahē raghunandana, kari manasā-gati paṅga..
 itanau kahata naina-ura pharakē, saguna janāyau aṅga.
 āju lahaur̥m raghunātha-sam̥dēsau, miṭai biraha-dukha-saṅga..

Sita's Regrets

77/2. When Vaidehi (Sita) heard the words of Trijata, she took a deep breath in distress and anguish; she was full of sorrows, contrition and remorse.

She exclaimed, 'Oh Sri Ram Chandra! Oh Laxman! Oh mother-in-law Kaushalya! How come a woman who is fortunate enough to have the Lord of the three worlds as her husband ever suffer from (the horrors, troubles and torments of) forest exile?

Oh Kaikeyi! Oh mother Sumitra! I am terrified of the demon (Ravana). I don't know what great sin I had done which has manifested now to punish me for my misdeeds.

Shame to my life! Why does not my body burn to ashes now? I think I have made these two errors—first, I provoked Sri Ram to kill the golden deer, and second, I could not see through the deceit of the demon (Ravana, imposter as a humble mendicant/friar) who had crossed the protective ring that Laxman had made around me (i.e. around the hermitage) on the ground. I know that there is a bird (Jatau, the vulture) who is my well-wisher, but he has been decapitated by (i.e. his wings have been cut by) the demon too. (It appears that the innocent one, i.e. Jatau, also had to suffer due to the bad effects of my sins). Perhaps it is the reason why Raghunandan (Sri Ram) has demurred (i.e. is feeling reluctant) from coming here forthwith to rescue me and deliver me from my torments.'

As soon as Sita said all this, her (left) eyes and chest fluttered, which is an auspicious sign for a woman. This encouraged her, and she thought to herself, 'I hope to hear some good news of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) today. It will erase my grief and sorrows of separation from my Lord, and the accompanying torments and anguish which have become a part of life.' (77/2).

हनुमान का सीता के प्रति वचन

[77/3]

तिहिं छिन पवन—पूत तहँ प्रगट्यौ, सिया अकेली जानि ।
 “श्रीदसरथकुमार दोउ बंधू, धरें धनुष—सर पानि ॥
 प्रिया—बियोग फिरत मारें मन, परैं सिंधु—तट आनि ।
 ता सुंदरि हित मोहि पठायौ, सकौं न हौं पहिचानि ॥”
 बारंबार निरखि तरुबर तन, कर मीड़ति पछिताइ ।
 दनुज, देव, पसु, पच्छी को तू, नाम लेत रघुराइ ?
 बोल्यौ नहीं, रह्यौ दुरि बानर, द्रुम मैं देहि छपाइ ।
 कै अपराध ओड़ि तू मेरौ, कै तू देहि दिखाइ ॥

hanumāna kā sītā kē prati vacana

(77/3)

tihiṁ china pavana-pūta taham̐ pragaṭyau, siyā akēlī jāni.
 “śrīdasarathakumāra dō'u bandhū, dharēm̐ dhanuṣa-sara pāni..

priyā-biyōga phirata mārēm mana, paraim sindhu-taṭa āni.
 tā sundari hita mōhi paṭhāyau, sakaurm na haurm pahicāni.."
 bārambāra nirakhi tarubara tana, kara mīṛati pachitā'i.
 danuja, dēva, pasu, pacchī kō tū, nāma lēta raghurā'i?
 bōlyau nahīm, rahyau duri bānara, druma mairm dēhi chapā'i.
 kai aparādha ōḍi tū mērau, kai tū dēhi dikhā'i..

Hanuman Makes his Presence Felt to Sita
 by Speaking About the Lord

77/3. Finding Sita alone and lonely and in great distress, the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) revealed himself by speaking softly from his hiding position amongst the thick foliage of the tree.

He said softly—‘Dashrath’s two sons, the two brothers (Sri Ram and Laxman), have arrived and they have pitched camp on the shore of the ocean. They are aggrieved at the loss of their dear one (i.e. Sita) and hold a bow and arrow in their hands. [The special reference to the arms held by Sri Ram and Laxman was Hanuman’s attempt to reassure Sita that they are ready for the assault to rescue her, that they have not lost their manliness, valour and courage, and that they have not been captured or overcome by any enemy after Sita had last seen them.] He (Sri Ram) has sent me in the search of his beautiful wife (literally, his beautiful one), but unfortunately, I am unable to recognise her.’

When she (Sita) heard these words, she repeatedly glanced up the tree and wringed her hands in utter astonishment, but full of doubts and sorrows (because these words revived her agony and longings to see her Lord, but she also wondered if it was not a ploy by the demon Ravana to somehow cheat her or make her more sorrowful and anguished).

She said, ‘Who are you that say the name of Raghurai (Sri Ram)—are you a demon, a God, an animal or a bird?’

Hanuman did not reply and remained silently concealed in the tree. Then Sita challenged him, saying, ‘Either make yourself visible or accept my curse.’ (77/3).

हनुमान सीता मिलन

[77/4]

तरुबर त्यागि चपल साखामृग, सन्मुख बैठ्यौ आइ ।
 माता! पुत्र जानि दै उत्तर, कहु, किहिं बिधि बिलखाइ ?
 किंनर—नाग—देव—सुर—कन्या, कासों हुति उपाजइ ?
 कै तू जनक—कुमारि जानकी, राम—बियोगिनि आइ ?
 राम—नाम सुनि उत्तर दीन्हौ, पिता—बंधु मम होहि ।
 मैं सीता, रावन हरि ल्यायौ, त्रास दिखावत मोहि ॥
 अब मैं मरौं, सिंधु मैं बूझौं, चित मैं आवै कोह ।
 सुनो बच्छ! धिक जीवन मेरौ, लछिमन—राम—बिछोह ॥

hanumāna sītā milana

(77/4)

tarubara tyāgi capala sākḥāmr̥ga, sanmukha baiṭhyau ā'i.
 mātā! putra jāni dai uttara, kahu, kihim bidhi bilakhā'i?
 kinnara-nāga-dēva-sura-kan'yā, kāsōm huti upāja'i?
 kai tū janaka-kumāri jānakī, rāma-biyōgini ā'i?
 rāma-nāma suni uttara dīnhau, pitā-bandhu mama hōhi.
 mair̥m sītā, rāvana hari lyāyau, trāsa dikhāvata mōhi..
 aba mair̥m maraur̥m, sindhu mair̥m būṛaur̥m, cita mair̥m āvai kōha.
 sunō baccha! dhika jīvana mērau, lachimana-rāma-bichōha..

Hanuman Meets Sita

77/4. The tree-dwelling creature, who is by nature restless and mischievous (i.e. Hanuman), left the tree and came down to sit before her. He said politely, 'Oh mother! Regard me as your son and answer my questions. Tell me why are you lamenting and weeping so woefully like this? Amid the 'Kinnars' (celestial dancers), 'Naags' (subterranean creatures), 'Gandharvas' (celestial musicians), Gods and others, whose daughter are you? From whom have you been born? Or are you the daughter of Janak, called Sita, who has come to such sorrows due to the (agony of) separation from Sri Ram?'

Hearing the name of Lord Sri Ram, Sita said, 'You are equivalent to a father and a brother for me. My name is Sita. Ravana has stealthily stolen (i.e. slyly kidnapped) me and brought me here. He frightens me a lot here (by threatening me no end). I feel so exasperated and peeved, frustrated, hapless and helpless that I contemplate of drowning myself in the ocean. Oh my son, listen! Shame to me that I have to live an ignominious life of separation from Sri Ram.' (77/4).

[Note :- ¹The reader will note that Sita has addressed Hanuman as her 'father' and 'brother' in this verse. Saint Tulsidas has declined to give this honour to Hanuman, while Surdas has moved a step ahead by doing so, though both the saints have called Hanuman as the son of Sita. A similar obligation to Hanuman is expressed by Sri Ram in Lanka Kand, verse no. 177 when he too praises him by saying that he has forgotten the agony of the death of his father Dashrath because of Hanuman's presence with him.]

हनुमान का सीता को आश्वासन

[77/5]

कुसल जानकी! श्रीरघुनंदन, कुसल लच्छिमान भाइ ।
 तुम हित नाथ कठिन व्रत कीन्हौ, नहिं जल—भोजन खाइ ॥
 मुँरै न अंग कोज जो काटै, निसिबासर—सम जाइ ।
 तुम घट प्राण देखियत सीता, बिना प्राण रघुराइ ॥
 बानर बीर चहूँ दिसि धाएँ, ढूँढ़ै गिरि—बन—झार ।

सुभट अनेक सबल दल साजे, परे सिंधु के पार ॥
 उद्यम मेरौ सफल भयौ अब, तुम देख्यौ जो निहार ।
 अब रघुनाथ मिलाऊँ तुम कौ सुंदरि! सोक निवारि ॥

hanumāna kā sītā kō āśvāsana

(77/5)

kusala jānakī! śrīraghunandana, kusala lacchimana bhā'i.
 tuma hita nātha kaṭhina brata kīnhau, nahim̐ jala-bhōjana khā'i..
 murai na aṅga kōja jō kātai, nisibāsara-sama jā'i.
 tuma ghaṭa prāna dēkhiyata sītā, binā prāna raghurā'i..
 bānara bīra cahūm̐ disi dhā'ē, ḍhūm̐ḍhair̐ giri-bana-jhāra.
 subhaṭa anēka sabala dala sājē, parē sindhu kē pāra..
 udyama mērau saphala bhayau aba, tuma dēkhyau jō nihāra.
 aba raghunātha milā'ūm̐ tuma kaur̐ sundari! sōka nivāri..

Hanuman's Assurance to Sita

77/5. Hanuman reports to Sita about the condition of the Lord to reassure her that she is not alone in grief of separation from the Lord as he is equally contrite and sorrowful. He said—‘Oh Janki! Raghunandan (Sri Ram) and his brother are alright. The Lord has made a stern and inviolable vow not to drink water or eat food. His body appears to have become so weak, lifeless and rigid that if anyone cuts a part of it, it won’t move. His nights are spent like his days (i.e. he lies wide awake even during the night, he does not sleep).

Oh Sita! His life seems to have taken up a symbolic residence in your body; he has become lifeless (in his own body). [That is, for all practical purposes, Sri Ram’s being is focused and devolved in you. Though he has a separate body, but he considers it as good as dead without you.]

Numerous brave monkeys are searching for you in all the four directions, in the mountains, dense forests, alcoves, and shrubby areas. Countless excellent warriors have pitched camp on the other side of the ocean with their armies on the ready. My toil has been successfully rewarded that I could come here and have your divine sight. Oh beautiful mother! Abandon all grieving now onwards; I shall arrange for your meeting with Raghunath (Sri Ram) very soon.’ (77/5).

हनुमान सीता संवाद

[77/6]

यह सुनि सिय—मन संका उपजी, रावन—दूत बिचारि ।
 छल करि आयौ निसिचर कोऊ, बानर—रूपहि धारि ॥
 स्रवन मूँदि, मुख आँचर ढाँप्यौ, अरे निसाचर, चोर !
 काहे कौ छल करि—करि आवत, धर्म बिनासन मोर ?

पावक परौ सिंधु महँ बूझौ, नहिं मुख देखौ तोर ।
 पापी क्यों न पीठि दै मोकौ, पाहन—सरिस कठोर ॥
 जिय अति डर्यौ, मोहि मति सापै, ब्याकुल बचन कहंत ।
 मोहि बर दियौ सकल देवनि मिलि, नाम धर्यौ हनुमंत ॥
 अंजनि—कुँवर, राम कौ पायक, ताकै बल गर्जत ।
 जिहिं अंगद—सुग्रीव उबारै, बध्यौ बालि बलवंत ॥
 लेहु मातु! सहिदानि मुद्रिका, दर्ई प्रीति करि नाथ ।
 सावधान है सोक निवारहु, ओड़हु दच्छिन हाथ ॥

hanumāna sītā saṁvāda

(77/6)

yaha suni siya-mana saṅkā upajī, rāvana-dūta bicāri.
 chala kari āyau nīcara kō'ū, bānara-rūpahi dhāri..
 sravana mūṁḍi, mukha āṁcara ḍhāṁpyau, arē nīsācara, cōra!
 kāhē kauṁ chala kari-kari āvata, dharma bināsana mōra?
 pāvaka parauṁ sindhu maham̐ būṛauṁ, nahiṁ mukha dēkhauṁ tōra.
 pāpī kyaṁ na pīṭhi dai mōkauṁ, pāhana-sarisa kaṭhōra..
 jiya ati ḍaryau, mōhi mati sāpai, byākula bacana kahanta.
 mōhi bara diyau sakala dēvani mili, nāma dharyau hanumanta..
 aṅjani-kum̐vara, rāma kau pāyaka, tākaiṁ bala garjanta.
 jīhiṁ aṅgada-sugrīva ubārē, badhyau bāli balavanta..
 lēhu mātu! sahidāni mudrikā, daī prīti kari nātha.
 sāvadhāna hvai sōka nivārahu, ōṛahu dacchina hātha..

Hanuman-Sita Conversation continues

77/6. Sita was sceptic. She wondered if it was not some cunning messenger of Ravana, imposter as a monkey sent by Sri Ram, in order to cheat her. She closed her ears and covered her head with the end of her 'Sari' (the seamless long cloth worn by a Hindu woman that covers her entire body).

She admonished him, 'Oh you demon, oh you cheat! Why do you come hear deceitfully to make me fall from my chosen path of righteousness and virtuousness? I shall burn in fire, drown in the ocean, but shall never see your face. Oh you sinful one! Why don't you turn your back on me? Your heart is hard, stern and uncompromising as a stone.'

Hanuman felt very worried and he feared that she might curse him in utter panic (because she had mistaken him to be a demon instead of a messenger of Sri Ram). So he said eagerly in exasperation and urgency, 'All the Gods have collectively blessed me and named me Hanuman. I am the son of mother Anjana and a messenger of Sri Ram. I speak only on his (Sri Ram's) strength (for I have no courage of my own). Oh mother! The Lord who killed the strong Baali (the elder brother of Sugriv—see verse no. 60) and had given protection to Angad and Sugriv, has lovingly and affectionately given his finger-

ring to me for identification. Take this proof from me in your right hand, and chase away your sorrows (and doubts) from your confused mind.' (77/6).

सीता को श्रीराम की अंगूठी प्राप्त एवं हनुमान को आशीर्वाद

[77/7]

खिन मुँदरी, खिनहीं हनुमत सों, कहति बिसूरी—बिसूरी ।
 कहि मुद्रिके! कहाँ तैं छाँड़े, मेरे जीवन—मूरि ?
 प्रभु सौं पूछ! सँदेसौ इतनौ, जब हम वे इक थान ।
 सोवत काग छुयौ तन मेरौ, बरहहिं कीनौ बान ॥
 फोस्यौ नयन, काग नहिं छाँड़्यौ, सुरपति के बिदमान ।
 अब वह कोप कहाँ रघुनंदन, दससिर—बेर बिलान ?
 निकट बुलाइ, बिठाइ, निरखि मुख, अंचर लेत बलाइ ।
 चिरजीवौ सुकुमार पवन—सुत, गहति दीन है पाइ ॥
 बहुत भुजनि बल होइ तुम्हारै, ये अमृत फल खाहु ।
 अब की बेर 'सूर' प्रभु मिलवहु, बहुरि प्राण किन जाहु ॥

sītā kō śrīrāma kī aṅgūṭhī prāpta ēvaṁ hanumāna kō āśīrvāda

(77/7)

khina mum'darī, khinahīm hanumata sōm, kahati bisūrī-bisūrī.
 kahi mudrikē! kahām' taim chām'rē, mērē jīvana-mūri?
 prabhu saum pūcha! sam'dēsau itanau, jaba hama vē ika thāna.
 sōvata kāga chuyau tana mērau, barahahīm kīnau bāna..
 phōryau nayana, kāga nahīm chām'ryau, surapati kē bidamāna.
 aba vaha kōpa kahām' raghunandana, dasasira-bēra bilāna?
 nikaṭa bulā'i, biṭhā'i, nirakhi mukha, aṅcara lēta balā'i.
 cirajīvau sukumāra pavana-suta, gahati dīna hvai pā'i..
 bahuta bhujani bala hō'i tumhāraim, yē amṛta phala khāhu.
 aba kī bēra 'sūra' prabhu milavahu, bahuri prāna kina jāhu..

Sita Receives Sri Ram's Ring & Blesses Hanuman

77/7. She (Sita) looked at the ring for one moment and at Hanuman the other. She wept and said, 'Oh Ring! Tell me where have you left the herb that sustains my life (i.e. where have you left behind Sri Ram, and why have you come here alone). Ask the Lord one question on my behalf—once, when we two were resting together at some place, a crow had touched my body. At that time, the Lord had used a blade of grass as an arrow and did not let that crow (who was actually Jayant, the son of Indra, who was testing the strength of the Lord) escape unhurt and unpunished, inspite of the fact that Indra (his father) was present (to protect him), and had punctured (one of) his eyes as punishment. Where has the Lord's anger and wrath now gone with respect to Ravana? [Why is he not

showing the same urgency and vehemence to punish the demon for his temerity of touching the Lord's wife?]

Surdas says—‘She called Hanuman near her. Treating him like her son, she lovingly, affectionately and mercifully saw his face, and wiped it with the end of her Sari. She caught his feet urgently and most humbly (because she had already called him ‘father and brother’ in verse no. 77/4), blessing him—‘Oh the tender prince-son of the Wind-God. Be blessed with a long life. Let your arms have immense and stupendous strength. Go and eat the sweet-and-succulent fruits of this orchard. Arrange my meeting with my Lord at least once this time; it doesn't matter if I lose my life then.’ (77/7).

हनुमान् का सीता को आश्वासन—राग मारू

[78]

जननी! हौं अनुचर रघुपति कौ ।
 मति माता करि कोप सरापै, नहिं दानव ठग मति कौ ॥
 आज्ञा होइ, देउँ कर—मुँदरी, कहौं संदेसौ पति कौ ।
 मति हिय बिलख करौ सिय, रघुबर हतिहैं कुल दैयत कौ ॥
 कहौ तो लंक उखारि डारि देउँ, जहाँ पिता संपति कौ ।
 कहौ तौ मारि—संहारि निसाचर, रावन करौ अगति कौ ॥
 सागर—तीर भीर बनचर की, देखि कटक रघुपति कौ ।
 अबै मिलाऊँ तुम्हैं ‘सूर’ प्रभु, राम—रोष डर अति कौ ॥

hanumān kā sītā kō āśvāsana-rāga mārū

(78)

jananī! hauri anucara raghupati kau.
 mati mātā kari kōpa sarāpai, nahim dānava ṭhaga mati kau..
 ājñā hō'i, dē'um' kara-mumḍarī, kahauri sandēsau pati kau.
 mati hiya bilakha karau siya, raghubara hatihairi kula daiyata kau..
 kahau tō laṅka ukhāri ḍāri dē'um', jahām' pitā sampati kau.
 kahau tau māri-samhāri nisācara, rāvana karauri agati kau..
 sāgara-tira bhīra banacara kī, dēkhi kaṭaka raghupati kau.
 abai milā'um' tumhairi 'sūra' prabhu, rāma-rōṣa ḍara ati kau..

Hanuman Reassures Sita—Raag Maaru

78. Hanuman said, ‘Oh mother! I am a servant-messenger of Raghupati (Sri Ram). Mother, do not become angry and do not curse me; I am not a deceitful and wicked demon. If you permit me, may I give you the finger-ring (of Sri Ram that I have brought for you), and tell you about your husband's message. Sita, do not sadden your heart. Raghubar (Sri Ram) shall destroy the demon clan.

If you order me, I shall throw the city of Lanka into the ocean which is regarded as the 'father of wealth' (i.e. of LaxmiS)1. Or else, if you so say, I can kill all the demons by thrashing them to pulp and send (their king) Ravana to hell.

On the other shore of the ocean, there is a huge throng of monkeys; have a look at Raghupati's (Sri Ram's) army. I can take you to meet the Lord of Surdas (or the 'brave' Lord—'Sur-prabhu'; the word 'Sur' meaning brave and valiant as well as Surdasq) even now (immediately, without any delay). But I fear Sri Ram (because he has not given me any permission to take you from here by killing the demons, so he might get annoyed at my decision to violate his orders and exceed my brief, for he has only commanded me to search you out and report back to him. So I can't kill Ravana myself).' (78).

[Note :-According to mythology, Laxmi was produced during the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the demons in search of the elixir of eternity, called Amrit. She being the Goddess of wealth, and ocean being the entity from which she was produced, the latter has been symbolically called the 'father of wealth' or the 'father of Laxmi' here by Hanuman.]

[79]

अनुचर रघुनाथ कौ, तव दरस काज आयौ ।
 पवन—पूत कपिस्वरूप, भक्तनि मैं गायौ ॥
 आयसु जो होइ जननि, सकल असुर मारौ ।
 लंकेस्वर बाँधि राम—चरननि तर डारौ ॥
 तपसी तप करै जहाँ, सोई बन झाँखौ ।
 जाकी तुम बैठी छाहँ, सोइ द्रुम राखौ ॥
 चढ़ि चलौ जो पीठि मेरी, अबहिं लै मिलाऊँ ।
 'सूर' श्रीरघुनाथजू की, लीला नित्य गाऊँ ॥

(79)

anucara raghunātha kau, tava darasa kāja āyau.
 pavana-pūta kapisvarūpa, bhaktani maim gāyau..
 āyasu jō hō'i janani, sakala asura māraum̃.
 laṅkēsvara bām̃dhi rāma-caranani tara ḍāraum̃..
 tapasī tapa karaim̃ jahām̃, sō'i bana jhām̃khaum̃..
 jākī tuma baiṭhī chāham̃, sō'i druma rākhaum̃..
 caḍhi calau jō pīṭhi mēri, abahim̃ lai milā'ūm̃ .
 'sūra' śrīraghunāthajū kī, līlā nitya gā'ūm̃ ..

79. Hanuman said, 'I am a servant-messenger of Raghunath (Sri Ram), and I have come here with the purpose of having your divine vision or glimpse. His (Sri Ram's) devotees describe me as the son of the Wind-God who has assumed the form of a monkey.

Oh mother! If you give me your orders, I will kill all the demons, tie up Ravana, and throw (dump) him at the feet of Sri Ram. I can show you the forest (called Dandak) where hermits and ascetics do Tapa (i.e. I can take you back to the place from where you were abducted by this fellow).

In order to take you back to the Lord, I can either transplant this tree under which you are sitting, complete with its roots and soil, to that place (so that, if you wish, you can sit under it even at the Dandak forest), or else you can ride on my back. In both the cases, if you so wish, I shall take you to meet him (Sri Ram) without any delay.’
Surdas says that he (Surdas) sings the glories and playful sports of Raghunath (Sri Ram) daily (79).

सीताजी की शंका एवं हनुमान द्वारा समाधान—राग मलार

[80]

बनचर! कौन देस तें आयौ ?
कहाँ वे राम, कहाँ वे लछिमन, क्यों करि मुद्रा पायौ ?
हैं हनुमंत, राम कौ सेवक, तुम सुधि लैन पठायौ ॥
रावन मारि, तुम्हें लै जातौ, रामाज्ञा नहिं पायौ ।
तुम जनि डरपौ मेरी माता, राम जोरि दल ल्यायौ ।
‘सूरदास’ रावन कुल—खोवन सोवत सिंह जगायौ ॥

sītājī kī śaṅkā ēvaṁ hanumāna dvārā samādhāna-rāga malāra

(80)

banacara! kauna dēsa tēm āyau?
kahām̐ vē rāma, kahām̐ vē lachimana, kyōm̐ kari mudrā pāyau?
haum̐ hanumanta, rāma kau sēvaka, tuma sudhi laina paṭhāyau..
rāvana māri, tumhēm̐ lai jātau, rāmājñā nahim̐ pāyau.
tuma jani ḍarapau mērī mātā, rāma jōri dala lyāyau.
‘sūradāsa’ rāvana kula-khōvana sōvata simha jagāyau..

Sita's Doubts & Hanuman's Reassurance—Raag Malaar

80. Sita asked Hanuman, ‘Oh forest dweller (this epithet is used for Hanuman because he and the members of his race usually lived in forested areas in those day)! From which country have you come? Where is that Ram, where is that Laxman (about whom you talk), and how come and from where have you got the finger-ring?’

Hanuman replied, ‘I am Hanuman, a servant of Sri Ram. He has sent me to find out about you. I could have killed Ravana and taken you back, but I have no such permission or orders from Sri Ram. Oh my mother! Don’t be afraid now. Sri Ram has collected his forces and has arrived (on the other side of the ocean). Ravana has become the annihilator of his own clan; this evil fellow has literally woken up (i.e. teased, provoked and instigated) a sleeping lion.’ [Here, Sri Ram is compared to a sleeping lion.] (80).

राग मारू

[81]

तुम्हें पहिचानति नाही बीर!
 इन नैननि कबहुँ नहि देख्यौ, रामचंद्र के तीर ॥
 लंका बसत दैत्य अरु दानव, तिन के अगम सरीर ।
 तोहि देखि मेरौ जिय डरपत, नैननि आवत नीर ॥
 तब कर काढ़ि अँगूठी दीन्हौ, जिहिं जिय उपज्यौ धीर ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु लंका कारन, आए सागर तीर ॥

rāga mārū

(81)

tumhaim pahicānati nāhīm bīra!
 ina nainani kabahūṁ nahim dēkhyau, rāmacandra kē tīra..
 laṅkā basata daitya aru dānava, tina kē agama sarīra.
 tōhi dēkhi mērau jiya ḍarapata, nainani āvata nīra..
 taba kara kāḍhi aṅgūṭhī dīnhīm, jihim jiya upajyau dhīra.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu laṅkā kārana, ā'ē sāgara tīra..

Raag Maaru

81. Sita said to Hanuman, 'Oh the brave one! I do not recognise you. I have never seen you with Sri Ram Chandra before. 'Daityas and Danavs' (the demon off springs of Diti were called Daitya, while those of Danu were called Danva) live in Lanka. It is very difficult to understand their maverick tricks and the forms they assume (i.e. they can assume any deceitful form as they wish to mislead and cheat anyone). I am afraid of you (because I don't know if you are also some kind of an imposter deceitful demon in the form of a humble monkey, pretending to be a messenger of Sri Ram, and trying to trap me). At this thought, tears well up in my eyes (because, on the one hand, it revives my memory of the Lord, kindles in me a vigorous desire to see him again, and on the other hand it stokes fear of death in me at the hands of Ravana or one of his cunning and cruel messengers).'

Surdas says that then Hanuman took out the finger-ring (given to him by Sri Ram), and gave it to her. This gesture reassured and comforted her. Hanuman told her, 'The Lord has come to the shore of the ocean to conquer Lanka.' (81).

[82]

जानकी! हौं रघुपति कौ चेरौ ।
 बीरा दै रघुनाथ पठायौ, सोध करन कों तेरौ ॥
 दस और आठ पदम बनचर लै चाहत हैं गढ़ घेरौ ।
 तिहारे कारन स्याम मनोहर, निकट दियौ है डेरौ ॥
 अब जिन सोच करौ मेरी जननी! जनम—जनम हौं चेरौ ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु तुम्हरे मिलन कौ, सारद रंक कित फेरौ ॥

(82)

jānakī! hauṁ raghupati kau cērau.
 bīrā dai raghunātha paṭhāyau, sōdha karana kōm tērau..
 dasa aura āṭha padama banacara lai cāhata haiṁ gaṛha ghērau.
 tihārē kārana syāma manōhara, nikaṭa diyau hai ḍērau..
 aba jina sōca karau mēri janani! janama-janama hauṁ cērau.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu tumharē milana kauṁ, sārada raṅka kita phērauṁ..

82. Hanuman said reassuringly, 'Janki (Sita)! I am a servant of Raghupati (Sri Ram)! Raghunath (Sri Ram) had given me the responsibility of tracking you down and has sent me on this mission. An army of 18 Padma (18x1016) monkeys are eager to assault and besiege the fort of Lanka. He who is beautifully dark complexioned (i.e. Sri Ram) has pitched camp nearby for your sake.

Mother, now you should stop worrying; I have been your servant (i.e. devotee, follower, subordinate, obedient son) from generation to generation. Why do you hide (or try to turn away or conceal) your face from this humble one (i.e. from your son)?' (82).

[83]

जानकी! मन संदेह न कीजै ।
 आए राम—लषन प्रिय तेरे, काहै प्राननि दीजै ॥
 जामवंत सुग्रीव, बालिसुत, आए सकल नरेस ।
 मोहि कह्यौ तुम जाहु खबरि कौ, अब जिनि करहु अँदेस ॥
 रावन के दस सीस तोरि कै, कुटुँब समेत बहैहीं ।
 तैंतिस कोटि देवता बंधन, तिनहि समस्त छुड़ैहौं ॥
 आयसु दीजै मातु! मोहि अब, जाइ प्रभुहि लै आऊँ ।
 'सूरदास' हौं जाइ नाथ पहुँ, तेरी कुसल सुनाऊँ ॥

(83)

jānakī! mana sandēha na kijai.
 ā'ē rāma-laṣana priya tērē, kāhai prānani dijai..
 jāmavanta sugrīva, bālisuta, ā'ē sakala narēsa.
 mōhi kahyau tuma jāhu khabari kauṁ, aba jini karahu aṁḍēsa..
 rāvana kē dasa sīsa tōri kai, kuṭum̐ba samēta bahaihiṁ.
 taintisa kōṭi dēvatā bandhana, tinahi samasta churāihauṁ..
 āyasu dijai mātu! mōhi aba, jā'i prabhuhi lai ā'ūṁ̐.
 'sūradāsa' hauṁ jā'i nātha paham̐, tērī kusala sunā'ūṁ̐ ..

83. Hanuman said, 'Janki (Sita)! Do not doubt in your mind. Your dear Sri Ram and Laxman have come. So, why do you talk of shedding your life (i.e. killing your self)?

Jamvant (the Bear king), the son of Baali (Angad; the crown prince) and Sugriv, along with all other monkeys and Bear kings have asked me to proceed ahead (on a reconnaissance mission) and get the news. So, why do you worry? I shall break all the ten heads of Ravana and destroy (kill) him with his entire clan. Along with you, I shall also

set free the other 33 crore (1 crore = 10 million) Gods that are imprisoned by Ravana. Oh mother, give me your orders. I shall go and bring the Lord (Sri Ram) here.'

Surdas says that Hanuman further assured Sita by saying, 'I shall go and tell about your welfare (i.e. about your present condition, specially the fact that you are still alive) to the Lord.' (83).

राग सारंग

[84]

कहौ कपि! कैसें उतरे पार ?
 दुस्तर अति गंभीर बारिनिधि, सत जोजन बिस्तार ॥
 इत—उत दैत्य क्रुद्ध मारन कौं, आयुध धरें अपार ।
 हाटकपुरी कठिन पथ, बानर आए कौन अधार ?
 राम—प्रताप, सत्य सीता कौ, यहै नाव—कनधार ।
 तिहि अधार छिन मैं अवलंघ्यौ, आवत भई न बार ॥
 पृष्ठभाग चढ़ि जनक—नंदिनी, पौरुष देख हमार ।
 'सूरदास' लै जाउँ तहाँ, जहँ रघुपति कंत तुम्हार ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(84)

kahau kapi! kaisēm utarē pāra?
 dustara ati gambhīra bārinidhi, sata jōjana bistāra..
 ita-uta daitya krud'dha mārana kauṁ, āyudha dharēm apāra.
 hāṭakapurī kaṭhina patha, bānara ā'ē kauna adhāra?
 rāma-pratāpa, satya sītā kau, yahai nāva-kanadhāra.
 tihi adhāra china mairi avalaṅghyau, āvata bha'ī na bāra..
 prṣṭhabhāga caḍhi janaka-nandinī, pauruṣa dēkha hamāra.
 'sūradāsa' lai jā'um' tahām, jaham' raghupati kanta tumhāra..

Raag Saarang

84. Sita enquired, 'Oh Kapi (literally meaning a monkey)! The ocean is 100 Yojans (roughly 800 miles) wide, very indomitable and difficult to cross; how did you cross it? Here (in Lanka) and there (on the way), hordes of angry demons are always eager to kill any intruder. The path leading to this golden city of Lanka is most difficult, arduous and intractable; say, how did you manage to (or by what means could you) reach here (without being intercepted and stopped on the way)?'

Hanuman replied, 'The glory of Sri Ram as well as the strength of truthful righteousness and steadfast virtues of Sita acted like a strong boat and a powerful redeemer for me. I crossed the ocean in a moment relying on these two strengths; there was no delay or hindrance or drag of any kind that could interfere with my endeavour to reach here.'

Surdas says that Hanuman reassured her (Sita) further by saying, 'Oh daughter of Janak! If you wish to see my potential and ability, you can ride piggy-back on my shoulders and I shall take you to the place where your husband Raghupati (Sri Ram) is (without anyone being able to stop us).' (84).

सीताजी का हनुमान के प्रति विश्वास—राग मारू

[85]

हनुमत! भली करी, तुम आए ।
 बारंबार कहति बैदेही, दुख—संताप मिटाए ॥
 श्रीरघुनाथ और लछिमन के समाचार सब पाए ।
 अब परतीति भई मन मेरै, संग मुद्रिका लाए ॥
 क्यों करि सिंधु पार तुम उतरे, क्यों करि लंका आए ।
 'सूरदास' रघुनाथ जानि जिय, तव बल इहाँ पठाए ॥

sītājī kā hanumāna kē prati viśvāsa-rāga mārū

(85)

hanumata! bhalī karī, tuma ā'ē.
 bārambāra kahati baidēhī, dukha-santāpa miṭā'ē..
 śrīraghunātha aura lachimana kē samācāra saba pā'ē.
 aba paratīti bhaī mana mēraim, saṅga mudrikā lā'ē..
 kyaum kari sindhu pāra tuma utarē, kyaum kari laṅkā ā'ē.
 'sūradāsa' raghunātha jāni jiya, tava bala ihām' paṭhā'ē..

Sita Believes Hanuman; Feels Reassured
 Raag Maaru

85. Sita felt exceedingly glad and said, 'Oh Hanuman! It is good that you've come here. You have dispelled/removed all my sorrows and torments. I have finally got the news of Sri Raghunath (Ram) and Laxman. Now I have believed you in my heart because you have brought the Lord's ring with you (as a proof of your identity). Say, how did you cross the ocean, I wonder? How did you manage to enter Lanka?'

Surdas say that Sita told Hanuman that she has realised why Raghunath had selected him to come here, it was because he knew about Hanuman's strength, courage, potential, ability, valour, guts and prowess (85).

सीता का दुःख—राग कान्हरी

[86]

सुनु कपि, वे रघुनाथ नहीं ?
 जिन रघुनाथ पिनाक पिता—गृह तोख्यौ निमिष महीं ॥

जिन रघुनाथ फेरि भृगुपति—गति डारी काटि तहीं ।
 जिन रघुनाथ—हाथ खर—दूषन—प्राण हरे सरहीं ॥
 कै रघुनाथ तज्यौ प्रन अपनौ, जोगिनि दसा गही ?
 कै रघुनाथ दुखित कानन, कै नृप भए रघुकुलहीं ॥
 के रघुनाथ अतुल—बल राच्छस दसकंधर डरहीं ?
 छाँड़ी नारि बिचारि पवन—सुत, लंक—बाग बसहीं ॥
 कै हौं कुटिल, कुचील, कुलच्छनि, तजी कंत तबहीं ।
 'सूरदास' स्वामी सौं कहियौ, अब बिरमाहिं नहीं ॥

sītā kā duḥkha-rāga kānharau

(86)

sunu kapi, vē raghunātha nahīm?
 jina raghunātha pināka pitā-gr̥ha tōryau nimīṣa mahīm..
 jina raghunātha phēri bhr̥gupati-gati ḍārī kāṭi tahīm.
 jina raghunātha-hātha khara-dūṣana-prāna harē sarahīm..
 kai raghunātha tajyau prana apanau, jōgini dasā gahī?
 kai raghunātha dukhita kānana, kai nr̥pa bha'ē raghukulahīm..
 kē raghunātha atula-bala rācchasa dasakandhara ḍarahīm?
 chām̐rī nārī bicāri pavana-suta, laṅka-bāga basahīm..
 kai haum̐ kuṭila, kucīla, kulacchani, tajī kanta tabahīm.
 'sūradāsa' svāmī saur̐m kahiyau, aba biramāhīm nahīm..

Sita's Lamentations—Raag Kaanharau

86. Sita said remorsefully, regretting—'Listen Kapi (Hanuman)! Is it not the same Raghunath (Sri Ram) who had broken Shiva's bow called 'Pinak' at my father's place (during my marriage ceremony) in a fraction of a moment (to remove my sorrows, consternation and bewilderment), who had eclipsed the divine glory of sage Parashuram (when he had angrily intervened during our marriage ceremony because he became angry by the breaking of Lord Shiva's bow and Sri Ram had vanquished his haughtiness and arrogance, had overcome his wrath and anger, and had pacified him), and who had killed the demons Khar and Dushan by a single arrow? Then, what has happened to him now? [Sita lamented why Lord Ram has forgotten about his valour and potentials; why is he keeping quiet. Has he changed; is he not the same valiant prince who had done the above remarkable deeds as if playing sport? What has happened to his manliness now; why is he waiting and demurring in rescuing me from this horror?]

It is either that Raghunath has abandoned his vow to punish the wicked and evil ones and has accepted the vows of an ascetic/hermit (not to get angry at anyone, not to punish anyone, not to attack anyone, not to shed blood, not to be vengeful), or has he become utterly bewildered, dismayed and disheartened, feels helpless and hapless in the forest, losing courage and drive to retrieve me?

Or is it that he has (regained his crown and) become the king of Raghu's clan (i.e. the king of Ayodhya, and as a result he has all but forgotten me)?

Or, oh the son of the Wind-God, is it that my husband has abandoned my thoughts, thinking that I live in the garden of Lanka, am corrupt, un-virtuous, unchaste, disloyal and wicked?

Go and tell the Lord of Surdas ('Surdas-Swami') that he should not delay any further (to rescue me).' (86).

सीताजी का अंगूठी पाकर खुशी होना, हनुमान को आशीर्वाद—राग सारंग

[87]

जननी! हौं रघुनाथ पठायौ ।
 रामचंद्र आए की तुम हौं दैन बधाई आयौ ॥
 हौं हनुमंत, कपट जिनि समझौ, बात कहत सतभाई ।
 मुँदरी दूत धरी लै आगै, तब प्रतीति जिय आई ॥
 अति सुख पाइ उठाइ लई, तब बार—बार उर भेटै ।
 ज्यौं मलयागिरि पाइ आपनी जरनि हृदय की मेटै ॥
 लछिमन पालागन कहि पठायौ, हेत बहुत करि माता ।
 दई असीस तरनि सन्मुख है, चिरजीवौ दोउ भ्राता ॥
 बिलुरन कौ संताप हमारौ, तुम दरसन दै काट्यौ ।
 ज्यौं रबि—तेज पाइ दसहुँ दिसि, दोष कुहर कौ फाट्यौ ॥
 ठाढ़ौ बिनती करत पवन—सुत, अब जो आज्ञा पाऊँ ।
 अपने देखि चले कौ यह सुख, उनहुँ जाइ सुनाऊँ ॥
 कल्प समान एक छिन राघव, क्रम—क्रम करि हैं बितवत ।
 तातें हौं अकुलात, कृपानिधि हैहै पैड़ौ चितवत ॥
 रावन हति, लै चलौ साथ ही, लंका धरौ अपूठी ।
 यातें जिय सकुचात, नाथ की होइ प्रतिज्ञा झूठी ॥
 अब ह्यौ की सब दसा हमारी, 'सूर' सौ कहियौ जाइ ।
 बिनती बहुत कहा कहौ, जिहिं बिधि देखौ रघुपति—पाइ ॥

sītājī kā aṅgūṭhī pākara khuśī hōnā, hanumāna kō āśīrvāda
 rāga sārāṅga

(87)

jananī! haum raghunātha paṭhāyau.
 rāmacandra ā'ē kī tuma haum dain'na badhā'ī āyau..
 haum hanumanta, kapaṭa jini samajhau, bāta kahata satabhā'ī.
 mumḍarī dūta dharī lai āgai, taba pratīti jiya ā'ī..
 ati sukha pā'ī uṭhā'ī la'ī, taba bāra-bāra ura bhēṭai.
 jyaum malayāgiri pā'ī āpanī jarani hrḍai kī mēṭai..
 lachimana pālāgana kahi paṭhayau, hēta bahuta kari mātā.

da'i asīsa tarani sanmukha hvai, cirajīvau dō'u bhrātā..
 bichurana kau santāpa hamārau, tuma darasana dai kāṭyau.
 jyaum̐ rabi-tēja pā'i dasahūm̐ disi, dōṣa kuhara kau phāṭyau..
 ṭhār̥hau binatī karata pavana-suta, aba jō ājñā pā'ūm̐ .
 apanē dēkhi calē kau yaha sukha, unahūm̐ jā'i sunā'ūm̐ ..
 kalpa samāna ēka china rāghava, krama-krama kari haim̐ bitavata.
 tātēm̐ haur̐m̐ akulāta, krpānidhi hvaihair̐m̐ paiṇrau citavata..
 rāvana hati, lai calaur̐m̐ sātha hī, laṅkā dhaur̐m̐ apūṭhī.
 yātēm̐ jiya sakucāta, nātha kī hō'i pratijñā jhūṭhī..
 aba hyām̐ kī saba dasā hamārī, 'sūra' sau kahiyau jā'i.
 binatī bahuta kahā kahaur̐m̐, jihim̐ bidhi dēkhaur̐m̐ raghupati-pā'i..

Sita's Pleasure on Receiving the Ring & Blessing Hanuman
 Raag Saarang

87. Hanuman said, 'Oh mother! Raghunath (Sri Ram) has sent me. I have come to congratulate you with the news that Ram Chandra (Sri Ram) has come (near the ocean to finally rescue you from the clutches of this evil demon). I am Hanuman. There is no falsehood, trick or deceit in it. I am telling you this with a truthful heart.'

Saying this, the messenger (hanuman) put the finger-ring (of Sri Ram) before her (Sita). This convinced her. She was overwhelmed with joy and exhilaration, and cheerfully picked it up and placed it on her heart as if she was trying to calm down its burning with the soothing ointment of sandalwood called 'Malaygiri'. [Here, the 'finger-ring' of Sri Ram provided immense comfort to Sita and it soothened her ruffled nerves. She felt as if a cool ointment is being applied on her burning heart. She felt immensely reassured and happy on learning that finally the Lord has come to her aid, and more importantly, he has not abandoned her and all but forgotten about her.]

Hanuman said once again, 'Mother, Laxman has most affectionately conveyed his deep reverence at your feet.'

Sita turned towards the sun (to bear a witness to what is being said and happening), and blessed Hanuman—'Let the two brothers have a long life. By giving me the benefit of seeing you (Hanuman), you have removed/eliminated my miseries and torments just like the darkness caused by fog is removed when the light of the sun's rays cut through it in all the ten directions of the globe.'

The son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) stood up and prayed, 'Now if I get your permission, I shall go back and convey the good news of my successful arrival, and my seeing and meeting you here, to them (Sri Ram and his party). Raghav (Sri Ram) passes every single moment with great difficulty, drowned in anguish and misery. I wish to hurry back because that merciful Lord would be waiting very eagerly for me. I could have killed Ravana, upturned Lanka and taken you back along with me, but I hesitate to do so because my Lord's words (that he will kill Ravana himself) would go in vain (i.e. remain unfulfilled).'

Sita said, 'Go and tell my miserable and horrible condition to the brave and valorous Lord (i.e. Sri Ram). What more can I pray. Make it possible so that I can have the divine sight of Raghupati's (Sri Ram's) august feet soon.' (87).

[Note :- The 2nd last line of this verse can be read as follows also—‘Surdas says that Sita told Hanuman, ‘Go and tell him all about my condition here....’]

सीताजी की दुखित अवस्था—राग कान्हारौ

[88]

यह गति देखे जात, सँदेसौ कैसैं कै जु कहौ ?
 सुनु कपि! अपने प्रान कौ पहरौ, कब लागि देति रहौ ?
 ये अति चपल, चल्यौ चाहत हैं, करत न कछू बिचार ।
 कहि धौं प्रान कहाँ लौं राखौं, रोकि देह मुख द्वार ?
 इतनी बात जनावति तुम सों, सकुचति हौं हनुमंत !
 नाहीं ‘सूर’ सुन्यौ दुख कबहूँ, प्रभु करुनामय कंत ॥

sītājī kī dukhita avasthā-rāga kānharau

(88)

yaha gati dēkhē jāta, sam̐dēsau kaisair̐ kai ju kahaur̐?
 sunu kapi! apanē prāna kau paharau, kaba lagi dēti rahaur̐?
 yē ati capala, calyau cāhata haim̐, karata na kachū bicāra.
 kahi dhaur̐ prāna kahām̐ laur̐ rākhaur̐, rōki dēha mukha dvāra?
 itanī bāta janāvati tuma sōm̐, sakucati haur̐ hanumanta!
 nāhīm̐ ‘sūra’ sun'yau dukha kabahūm̐, prabhu karunāmaya kanta..

Sita's Miserable Condition—Raag Kaanharau

88. Sita said, ‘You are going back after having seen my present (miserable and wretched) condition. What more messages can I send with you? [Is my miserable condition that you have seen for yourself not sufficient enough to rouse the anger in Sri Ram and stoke his determination to rescue me?]

Listen Kapi (Hanuman); how long could I guard my life (from abandoning my body)? My vital wind (life) forces have become very restless to make their exit; they do not think otherwise (that by remaining inside this body, there are always chances that they will someday meet the Lord). Tell me how long can I stop it (my vital wind forces from abandoning my body) by guarding the many exit doors of the body (i.e. I am not certain how long I will be able to survive)?

Oh Hanuman! I hesitate in telling you about all my sorrows and miseries because the valorous, courageous and strong Lord (‘Sur-prabhu’; or it may also mean the ‘valiant Lord of Surdas’) has never heard of such profound miseries before. My dear husband is a very merciful and compassionate Lord’ (and I do not wish to narrate my wretched existence for that will only add fuel to the fire of his own great sorrows from which he is already suffering so much).’ (88).

[Note :- 'To have a slight glance at the face of the beloved is the best physician. All the pains of separation are removed all of a sudden that no medicine, however efficacious, can produce such a wonderful result.']

सीताजी का संदेश—राग मारू

[89]

कहियौ कपि! रघुनाथ राज सौँ, सादर यह इक बिनती मेरी ।
 नाहीं सही परति मापै अब, दारुन त्रास निसाचर केरी ॥
 यह तौ अंध बीसहूँ लोचन, छल—बल करत आनि मुख हेरी ।
 आइ सृगाल सिंह—बलि चाहत, यह मरजाद जाति प्रभु तेरी ॥
 जिहिं भुज परसुराम—बल करष्यौ, ते भुज क्यों न सँभारत फेरी ।
 'सूर' सनेह जानि करुनामय, लेहु छुड़ाइ जानकी चेरी ॥

sītājī kā sandēśa-rāga mārū

(89)

kahiyau kapi! raghunātha rāja saurṇ, sādara yaha ika binatī mērī.
 nāhīm sahī parati māpai aba, dārūna trāsa nisācara kērī..
 yaha tau andha bīsahūṁ lōcana, chala-bala karata āni mukha hērī.
 ā'i srgāla simha-bali cāhata, yaha marajāda jāti prabhu tērī..
 jihīm bhuja parasurāma-bala karaṣyau, tē bhuja kyaurn na sambhārata phērī.
 'sūra' sanēha jāni karunāmaya, lēhu churā'i jānakī cērī..

Sita's Message for Sri Ram—Raag Maarū

89. Sita said to Hanuman, 'Oh Kapi! Convey my humble prayer to king Raghunath (Sri Ram) that I am unable to bear the horrible torments inflicted upon me by the demon (Ravana). Though having twenty eyes (because he has ten heads), he is still blind (i.e. he has no wisdom). He comes, sees my face and does all type of tricks and uses all sorts of forces against me. This Jackal comes and forcefully wants to partake of your lion's share—i.e. he wishes to usurp the right of your Lord Sri Ram that he has over me; or, in other words, he wishes to forcefully acquire me against my wishes).

[Sita laments—] Oh Lord (i.e. Sri Ram)! Your reputation, honour and dignity are being put at stake. The strength of your arms, which you had used to trounce the strength of sage Parashuram (when he had tried to question your authority as to why you had broken the revered bow of Lord Shiva at Janakpur), where has it gone; why don't you recall that valour of yours?'

Surdas says that Sita earnestly pleaded—'Oh the merciful and compassionate Lord! Considering the fact that I love you so much, please be kind to liberate and deliver this Janki who is none other but your humble maid.' (89).

[90]

मैं परदेसिनि नारि अकेली ।

बिनु रघुनाथ और नहिं कोऊ, मातु—पिता न सहेली ॥
 रावन भेष धर्यौ तपसी कौ, कत मैं भिच्छा मेली ।
 अति अज्ञान मूढ़ मति मेरी, राम—रेख पग पेली ॥
 बिरह—ताप तन अधिक जरावत, जैसैं दव द्रुम—बेली ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु बेगि मिलाओ, प्राण जात हैं खेली ॥

(90)

maim paradēsini nāri akēlī.
 binu raghunātha aura nahim kō'ū, mātu-pitā na sahēlī..
 rāvana bhēṣa dharyau tapasī kau, kata maim bhicchā mēlī.
 ati ajñāna mūṛha mati mērī, rāma-rēkha paga pēlī..
 biraha-tāpa tana adhika jarāvata, jaisaim dava druma-bēlī.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu bēgi milā'au, prāna jāta hairi khēlī..

90. Sita said to Hanuman, 'I am a lonely woman in an alien land here. Except Lord Raghunath, I have no father, mother or friend (in this world), i.e. there is no one whom I can call my 'own' except him.

Ravana had assumed the form of an ascetic/hermit (at the Panchavati forest), so I regret that I ventured out to give him alms. I am so stupid that I had crossed (i.e. stepped out of) the boundary line marked (by Laxman by invoking the stupendous protective powers of Sri Ram's holy name)¹. The agony of separation (from the Lord) is burning my body to ashes even as the wild forest fire reduces the tress and creepers to ashes. Let me meet Surdas' Lord ('Surdas-prabhu'; Lord Ramq) very soon, otherwise my life does not seem to play ball with me any longer (i.e. my life does not wish to remain under my control, and it might abandon me any moment).², (90).

[Note :-¹Sita made this voluntary disclosure as a means to tell Hanuman and the Lord about the circumstances surrounding her abduction by Ravana. She wished to stress that she was merely fulfilling her duties as a housewife when Ravana approached her seeking alms. It is ordained in the laws of Dharma that a mendicant should not be refused food when he comes begging. Ravana had disguised himself as a hermit, so it was not Sita's fault that she talked with him and ventured too close to him, for it was necessary to do so in order to put the food in his begging bowl. It was then that he abducted her against her will, and she had done all that she could to resist him, but all her efforts proved futile against the strong demon.

²The last line of this verse can be interpreted as follows also—Surdas says that Sita requested Hanuman that he should arrange for a meeting between her and the Lord very soon, otherwise she will not be able to survive long as her 'Pran' or breath wishes to abandon or discard her.]

हनुमान का उत्तर—राग मारू

[91]

तू जननी! अब दुख जनि मानहि ।
 रामचंद्र नहिं दूरि कहूँ, पुनि भूलिहुँ चित चिंता नहिं आनहि ॥

अबहिं लिवाइ जाउँ सब रिपु हति, डरपत हौं आज्ञा—अपमानहिं ।
 राख्यौ सुफल सँवारि, सान दै, कैसे निफल करौं वा बानहिं ?
 हैं केतिक ये तिमिर—निसाचर, उदित एक रघुकुल के भानहिं ।
 काटन दै दस सीस बीस भुज, अपनौ कृत येऊ जो जानहिं ॥
 देहिं दरस सुभ नैननि कहँ प्रभु, रिपु कौं नासि सहित संतानहि ।
 'सूर' सपथ मोहि, इनहि दिननि मैं, लै जु आइहौं कृपानिधानहि ॥

hanumāna kā uttara-rāga mārū

(91)

tū janani! aba dukha jani mānahi.
 rāmacandra nahim dūri kahūṃ, puni bhūlihum'cita cintā nahim ānahi..
 abahim livā'i jā'um' saba ripu hati, ḍarapata hauṃ ājñā-apamānahim.
 rākhyau suphala samvāri, sāna dai, kaisē niphala karaurṃ vā bānahi?
 haim kētika yē timira-nisācara, udita ēka raghukula kē bhānahim.
 kāṭana dai dasa sīsa bīsa bhuja, apanau kṛta yē'ū jō jānahim..
 dēhim darasa subha nainani kaham'prabhu, ripu kaurṃ nāsi sahita santānahi.
 'sūra' sapatha mōhi, inahi dinani maim, lai ju ā'ihaurṃ kṛpānidhānahi..

Hanuman's Reply—Raag Maaru

91. Hanuman reassured Sita by asserting as follows—‘Oh mother! Do not be remorseful now or regret anymore. Ram Chandra is not far away. Do not bring any kind of worry to your mind at all. I can kill all the enemies and take you back immediately myself, but I fear that in doing so I will break (violate) the orders (of Sri Ram). [Refer verse nos. 82-83.]

He has sharpened his arrows and keeps them ready. How can I do anything that will render them useless? [That is, Sri Ram has kept his arrows at the ready to kill Ravana himself, so how can I kill him? This will be tantamount to disobedience and indiscipline on my part.]

With the rise of one sun of Raghu's clan (a reference to Sri Ram's imminent arrival at Lanka), where do these demons symbolising darkness stand (or what do they count in such an eventuality when the Lord will finally come here; they will be eliminated even as darkness of the night is dispelled when the sun rises in the horizon).

Let the ten heads and twenty arms (of Ravana) be chopped-off; let them (the demons) realise what (evil) they have done. The Lord shall kill the enemy along with its off spring and give his auspicious vision to you.'

Surdas says that Hanuman promised her, 'I make a firm vow that I shall bring the merciful Lord here one of these days (i.e. very soon).' (91).

हनुमान की याचना—राग राजैश्री

[92]

अगम पंथ अति दूरि जानकी, मोहि पंथ—श्रम व्याप्यौ ।
 कछू भयौ छुधा रत तबहीं सत जोजन जल माप्यौ ॥
 मात! रजायस देहु मोहि तौ देखौ बन जाइ ।
 किछु माँगत फल पाइये, फाँदत भुजबल होइ ॥
 मूल—मूल लंकेस के बैठे हनू असोच ।
 जाउ पुत्र मनसा फुरौ, भलो होउ कै पोच ॥
 तब मन मैं फूल्यौ हनू, प्रगट्यौ बन—उद्यान ।
 आपुन सूरज देखि हैं 'सूर' जु रामचंद्र की आन ॥

hanumāna kī yācanā-rāga rājaisrī

(92)

agama pantha ati dūri jānakī, mōhi pantha-śrama byāpyau.
 kachū bhayau chudhā rata tabahīm sata jōjana jala māpyau..
 māta! rajāyasa dēhu mōhi tau dēkhaum bana jā'i.
 kichu māmṡgata phala pā'iyē, phānṡdata bhujabala hō'i..
 mūla-mūla laṅkēsa kē baiṡhē hanū asōca.
 jā'u putra manasā phurau, bhalō hō'u kai pōca..
 taba mana mairṡ phūlyau hanū, pragatyaṡu bana-udyāna.
 āpuna sūraja dēkhi hairṡ 'sūra' ju rāmacandra kī āna..

Hanuman's Request for Refreshments—Raag Rajaisri

92. Hanuman said, 'Oh mother! The route was very long, arduous and difficult. I have become tired. Before I had crossed the 100 Yojan (appx. 800 miles) wide ocean, I had already been feeling very hungry, and my hunger has been stoked further by the journey.

Hence, mother, if you permit, I may go and have a look around the orchard. By asking them (the guards), I can get some fruits to eat, and jumping and leaping around (here and there on the trees) I will flex and stretch my tired, weary muscles a bit. [That is, I will eat something to quell the pangs of hunger that have been wrenching my gut, and by playing around the orchard a bit, hopping and jumping around the trees and their branches, I will exercise my tired muscles and feel a bit relaxed. So, respected mother, please grant me your permission.]'

Having said so, Hanuman sat before Sita, unworried and carefree in the very heart of the city of Ravana, in the very center of the royal garden¹.

Seeing him bold and fearless, Sita felt reassured.

She said to him, 'Go son, do according to your wish without bothering for the consequences, good or bad.'²

At this blanket and open-ended order (i.e. instructions from Sita which put no restrictions on him), Hanuman felt exhilarated, and then he revealed himself in the Ashok grove. [This is the first time that Hanuman had openly come out in the open and revealed his identity in the city of the enemy, the demons.]

Surdas says—‘Glory to Sri Ram. His (Hanuman’s) fame shall shine in this world like the (splendorous) sun in the heavens.’ [Surdas alludes to the wonderful deeds that Hanuman did during his trip to Lanka as will be revealed below. He had beaten the demons black and blue, and had burnt the city to ashes. This established his fame as an invincible and brave warrior for all times to come.] (92).

[Note—¹Hanuman was not only inside the capital city of the ferocious demons, but he was in the central part of this city, in the private garden of its king Ravana’s palace, at a place that was forbidden for everyone else, and to add to these risks was the fact that he was all alone. In spite of this situation, he was not the least bothered; he wasn’t concerned either about his own safety or that of Sita. He had so much self-confidence in his own abilities as well as the almighty power of Lord Ram’s blessings that were with him like an invisible shadow to protect him from any and all harms, that he was sure that no harm would ever come to him or Sita. He knew that he was fully capable to deal with these demons should they attack him or try to punish Sita in any way whatsoever.

In Tulsidas’ epic “Ram Charit Manas”, when Sita expressed her apprehensions about the safety of Hanuman because the orchard was teeming with demon guards, and said that she has reservations about Hanuman’s strength and abilities, he replied that she need not bother at all for he was fully able to deal with any situation. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 16—to Doha no. 17.

²She concluded that there must be some reason for Hanuman’s fearlessness and boldness. After all, it was not a joke to cross the formidable ocean, considered as non-crossable. That was the primary reason why the demons had chosen the island of Lanka to make it their capital—it was naturally protected from all sides by a colossus moat in the form of the ocean. Then there was the impregnable fort of Lanka whose gates were well guarded by ferocious demons. If Hanuman could penetrate and overcome these barriers, if he could roam around in the streets of the city fearlessly before coming to her, examining in detail how every nook and corner of the city of Lanka was protected and guarded by blood-thirsty demons armed to the teeth, and still has no fear in his mind and heart, then surely there must be some unknown super-power protecting him in an invisible form, and surely Hanuman must himself be very very powerful.

Sita knew how wise and careful her husband Lord Ram was. After all, he was the prince of a dynasty of rulers of Ayodhya who were famed for their great courage, wisdom, abilities, power and strength. So therefore, if Lord Ram had chosen Hanuman to come to Lanka there must be some reason for this choice. The Lord would have been exceedingly careful and diligent in making this selection—because this choice was the only straw between success and failure, between glory and fame on the one hand, absolute humiliation and ignominy on the other hand. It was not a matter of joking.

So therefore, Sita deduced, that it goes without saying that Hanuman was not an ordinary messenger of her husband. Further, when he told her he was hungry and tired, like any mother Sita could not deny Hanuman’s request that he be allowed to go and eat something.

She also wanted to test the abilities of the future army of Lord Ram, whether it would be able to confront and defeat the army of the demons when the actual war started, with Hanuman being a sample-member of the Lord’s army.

Besides this, Hanuman would also get a first-hand experience of what lay in store for the army of Lord Ram once the war started—because when he would eat and play around in the royal garden of the demon king Ravana, probably also rampaging and destroying the place in the process as he was almost sure to do given his suppressed anger and determination to punish the demons, then surely he would invite the wrath of the demons

who are guarding the place. And when these guards are beaten back by him, then it is certain that the demon army would be called in to deal with this intruder. Hanuman entering and romping around freely in Lanka would be absolutely unacceptable for Ravana. So he will put in maximum force to punish Hanuman. This experience would help Hanuman to get a hang of the strength and weaknesses of the enemy, and report back to Lord Ram so that the Lord can make preparations accordingly.

There was another tactical reason for Sita allowing Hanuman to go and do whatever he wishes to do. By this time, she had got an idea of his seething anger, and was confident of his power and strength. She was sure that he would wreak havoc on all those who oppose him in Lanka, and that he was fully capable to do it. Once Hanuman was done with his job, the demons would be mentally terrorized. Their trouncing by Hanuman single-handedly would surely demoralize the entire demon army, and all of them would live in perpetual fear of complete annihilation once the full might of the monkey army struck. This will be in effect a psychological warfare, and it would make the task so much the easier for the Lord when he actually launched the offensive to rescue her.

Considering all the facts, Sita decided that there surely it was advisable to let Hanuman have his way.]

अशोक वन भंग—राग मारू

[93/1]

हनुमत—बल प्रगट भयौ, आज्ञा जब पाई ।
जनक—सुता—चरन बंदि, फूल्यौ न समाई ॥
अगणित तरु—फल सुगंध—मृदुल—मिष्ट—खाटे ।
मनसा करि प्रभुहि अर्पि, भोजन करि डाटे ॥
द्रुम गहि उतपाटि लिए, दै—दै किलकारी ।
दानव बिन प्रान भए, देखि चरित भारी ।
बिहबल—मति कहन गए, जोरें सब हाथा ।
बानर—बन बिघन कियौ, निसिचर—कुल—नाथा ॥
वह निसंक, अतिहिं ढीठ, बिडरै नहिं भाजै ।
मानौ बन—कदलि मध्य, उनमत गज गाजै ॥
भानै मठ, कूप, बाइ, सरबर कौ पानी ।
गौरि—कंत पूजत जहँ, नूतन जल जानी ॥

aśōka vana bhaṅga-rāga mārū

(93/1)

hanumata-bala pragaṭa bhayau, ājñā jaba pāī.
janaka-sutā-carana bandi, phūlyau na samāī..
aganita taru-phala sugandha-mṛdula-miṣṭa-khāṭē.
manasā kari prabhuhi arpi, bhōjana kari ḍāṭē..
druma gahi utapāṭi li'ē, dai-dai kilakārī.
dānava bina prāna bha'ē, dēkhi carita bhārī.
bihabala-mati kahana ga'ē, jōrēm saba hāthā.

bānara-bana bighana kiyau, nisicara-kula-nāthā..
 vaha nisaṅka, atihim̐ dhīṭha, biḍarai nahim̐ bhājai.
 mānau bana-kadali madhya, unamata gaja gājai..
 bhānai maṭha, kūpa, bā'i, sarabara kau pānī.
 gauri-kanta pūjata jaham̐, nūtana jala jānī..

Destruction of the Ashok Grove—Raag Maaru

[This verse is a long one, so it has been divided into smaller parts for ease of narration and understanding.]

93/1. When Hanuman got her (Sita's) permission (orders), his valiance, potential, strength and stupendous prowess came to the fore. He bowed reverentially at the feet of the daughter of Janak (Sita) and felt extremely excited and exhilarated. [He felt so because now he had got the chance to settle scores with the tormentors of Sita and show-case his powers and potentials.]

He first ate his full of the different varieties of fragrant, soft, sour and sweet fruits from the numerous trees that abounded in the orchard by first mentally offering them to the Lord (Sri Ram). [This was his gesture of thanks-giving to his Lord.]

Then, he chuckled mischievously and repeatedly, gave a shrill cry and started uprooting the trees at random. Seeing this terrible deed of his, the demon-guards (who were posted there to protect the garden) became frightened. They were extremely terrified, and rushed, with the two hands touching each other as a sign of submission and humble prayer, to convey the serious message to Ravana.

They reported—'Oh Lord of the demon race! A monkey has ruined the whole of Ashok grove. He is relentless and fearless, adamant and stubborn, and does not seem to run away when we try to chase him. He resembles a wild intoxicated elephant who is madly trumpeting in the middle of a banana plantation after having trampled under foot all the standing tress. He has demolished and ruined all the buildings, wells, tanks and ponds. The lake, the water of which you use to worship Lord Shiva considering it to be holy and pure, has also been polluted by him.' (93/1).

[93/2]

पहुँची तब असुर—सैन, साखामृग जान्यौ ।
 मानो जल—जीव सिमिट जाल मैं समान्यौ ॥
 तरुबर तब इक उपाटि, हनुमत कर लीन्यौ ।
 किंकर कर पकरि बान तीनि खंड कीन्यौ ॥
 जोजन—बिस्तार सिला पवन—सुत उपाटी ।
 किंकर करि बान—लच्छ अंतरिच्छ काटी ॥
 आगर इक लोह—जटित लीन्ही बरिबंड ।
 दुहूँ करनि असुर हयौ, भयौ मांस—पिंड ॥

(93/2)

pahum̐cī taba asura-saina, sākhāmrga jān'yau.
 mānō jala-jīva simiṭa jāla mair̐ samān'yau..

tarubara taba ika upāṭi, hanumata kara līn'yau.
 kiṅkara kara pakari bāna tīni khaṇḍa kīn'yau..
 jōjana-bistāra silā pavana-suta upāṭi.
 kiṅkara kari bāna-laccha antariccha kāṭi..
 āgara ika lōha-jaṭita līnhī baribaṇḍa.
 duhūṃ karani asura hayau, bhayau mānsa-piṇḍa..

93/2. Then, on the instructions of Ravana, the demon army reached there (i.e. at the Ashok grove).

The legendary dweller on branches of trees (i.e. Hanuman) sneered at them and thought to himself that these were all like creatures of the water (such as fish etc.) who have voluntarily collected together to allow themselves to be caught (and killed) in the net (symbolically thrown by a fisherman in the water to catch fish).

Then Hanuman uprooted a huge tree and took it in his hands, but a demon called Kinkar took arrows and shot them to cut the tree into three pieces (i.e. the arrow sliced through the trunk of that tree, breaking it into three parts). Thereafter, the son of the Wind-God¹ took up a large rock measuring 1 Yojan (appx. 8 miles wide) and lobbed it at him. Kinkar shot an arrow and smashed the rock into tiny pebbles while it was still in the air.

At this, the most strong and valiant Hanuman lifted an iron rod (which was actually one of the strong pillars of the many demolished buildings) with both his hands, and slammed it down on the head of that demon (Kinkar), reducing him to a fleshy pulp (93/2).

[93/3]

दुर्धर परहस्त संग आइ, सैन भारी ।
 पवन—पूत दानव—दल, ताड़े दिसि चारी ॥
 रोम—रोम हनूमंत, लच्छ—लच्छ बान ।
 तहाँ—तहाँ दीसत, कपि करत राम—आन ॥
 मंत्री—सुत पाँच सहित अछयकुँवर सूर ।
 सैन सहित सबै हते, झपटि कै लंगूर ॥

(93/3)

durdhara parahasta saṅga ā'i, saina bhārī.
 pavana-pūta dānava-dala, tāṭē disī cārī..
 rōma-rōma hanūmanta, laccha-laccha bāna.
 tahām̐-tahām̐ dīsata, kapi karata rāma-āna..
 mantrī-suta pām̐ca sahita achayakumvara sūra.
 saina sahita sabai hatē, jhapaṭi kai laṅgūra..

93/3. After this came a huge army of demons under the command of Durdhar and Prahast. The son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) attacked that demon force from all sides with great dexterity and agility.

Thousands and thousands of arrows had peppered every pore of Hanuman's body, but he wasn't bothered at all. Wherever the demons glanced, they saw him raising the war-cry in the name of Sri Ram.

Accompanied by the five sons of ministers, Ravana's brave and valiant son called Akshay Kumar also came there for battle. But he (Hanuman) thrashed and pounded them and killed them all (i.e. the sons of the ministers as well as Akshay Kumar along with the army) with his long tail (93/3).

[93/4]

चतुरानन—बल सँभारि, मेघनाद आयौ ।
मानौ घन पावस मैं, नगपति है छाया ॥
देख्यौ जब, दिव्य बान निसिचर कर तान्यौ ।
छाँड़्यौ तब 'सूर' हनू ब्रह्म—तेज मान्यौ ॥

(93/4)

caturānana-bala sam̐bhāri, mēghanāda āyau.
mānau ghana pāvasa maim̐, nagapati hai chāyau..
dēkhyau jaba, dibya bāna niscara kara tāt'nyau.
chām̐ryau taba 'sūra' hanū brahma-tēja māt'nyau..

93/4. Finally, Meghnad (son of Ravana) invoked the powerful weapon given to him by Brahma, the 4-headed creator of the world, and came forward to face Hanuman. He resembled the great black cloud that swirls over a mountain during the rainy season.

Surdas says that Hanuman observed that the demon (Meghnad) is about to use that especially invoked and energised arrow called 'Divya' (literally meaning splendid and divine), so he voluntarily surrendered and feigned faintness in order to show respect to that glorious and invincible weapon of Brahma, the creator. [He did not want to defy and insult Brahma, because that would be an unrighteous thing to do and show haughtiness on the part of Hanuman who was a humble and obedient servant of the great Lord Sri Ram, the Lord who was a strict adherent to the laws of proper conduct and who upheld the laws of creation with full sincerity, and therefore Hanuman was also expected to follow the rules that ordain showing great respect to the great Gods such as Brahma, though of course Hanuman could have easily overcome that formidable arrow if he had so wished.] (93/4).

हनुमान् रावण संवाद—राग सारंग

[94/1]

राजमद सकल दृष्टि है छाई ।
महाराज रघुपति सौ तोरत, सीता है हरि लायौ काई ॥
रावन अजहुँ न जानही रामचंद्र कौ भेव ।
अपनी ही बुधि बल चलत, नहिं छाँडत कठिन कुटेव ॥
रामचंद्र आएँ बिनै कहाँ कहौ अब तोहि ।

अबहीं कहा कह्यौ आयौ जानै मोहि ॥
 बड़ौ धीठ अति पवनसुत, समझि कहत नहिं बात ।
 बिभीषन मोहि बरजई, नातरि मारौं लात ॥
 रे हनुमंत तुं कवन कैसें लंका आयौ ।
 धर—अंबर यह राक्षसी, कैसें जीवन पायौ ॥

hanumān rāvaṇa saṁvāda-rāga sārāṅga

(94/1)

rājamada sakala dr̥ṣṭi hai chā'ī.
 mahārāja raghupati saurṁ tōrata, sītā hai hari lāyau kā'ī..
 rāvana ajahum' na jānahī rāmacandra kau bhēva.
 apanīm hī budhi bala calata, nahim chāmḍata kaṭhina kuṭēva..
 rāmacandra ā'em' binai kahām' kahaurṁ aba tōhi.
 abahīm kahā kahyau āyau jānairṁ mōhi..
 barau dhīṭha ati pavanasuta, samajhi kahata nahim bāta.
 bibhīṣana mōhi baraja'ī, nātari māraurṁ lāta..
 rē hanumanta turṁ kavana kaisairṁ laṅkā āyau.
 dhara-ambara yaha rākṣisī, kaisairṁ jīvana pāyau..

Hanuman-Ravana Acrimonious Verbal Duel
 Raag Saarang

94/1. [Being tied by Meghnad, Hanuman was brought in captivity to Ravana's court. There, Hanuman warned him—] 'Your sight of wisdom has been clouded (or shrouded) by the negative virtues of haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy and pride of kingdom. Why do you create enmity with the great king Raghupati (Sri Ram) after having abducted Sita without any rhyme or reason?

Oh Ravana! Even today you have not realised or understood the mystery of Sri Ram Chandra. You are driven by your own pervert intellect and are relying on your misplaced notion of the strength in your arms. You do not desist from practicing what is evil and sinful. What shall I tell you before Sri Ram Chandra comes (arrives) here? You have not understood what I have said up-till now. You will know who I am (i.e. you will recognise my strength, potentials, powers, punch and valour) when the Lord finally arrives here.'

[Hanuman tells Ravana that what the latter has seen till now is only a prelude and a trailer of what is to come in the days ahead. Be warned, Hanuman seems to tell Ravana, for when the Lord actually lands on the shore of Lanka, there would be no time to relent and find a way out, for when the war breaks out it would be all hell let loose, and then Ravana's haughtiness and arrogant show of strength would be of no consequence whatsoever. It is still time for him to wake up to the realities.]

Hearing this, Ravana retorted, 'This son of the Wind-God is very stubborn and arrogant. He does not think before speaking. Vibhishan is restraining me; otherwise I would have kicked you (Hanuman). Oh Hanuman! Who are you? How did you come to

enter Lanka? Demons guard this place from everywhere—in the sky as well as on the earth. How could you sneak in and survive?’ (94/1)

[94/2]

अपनौ काल न जानही, कहै और की बात ।
 अबहीं रघुपति आइहैं लंका कौ उतपात ॥
 वुहै राम तून साँथरे, लछिमन ताके संग ।
 मो जीवत नहिं आवई, रे बंदर मतिमंद ॥
 बाय पित्त कफ कंठ तब ब्याकुल वचन कहंत ।
 एकहि बानहिं राम कै सब राषिस भसमंत ॥
 कटुक बचन हनुमत सुने, किल क्यों लेत उसास ।
 अधर कंपि कर सिर धुनै, असुर सेन दल पास ॥

(94/2)

apanau kāla na jānahī, kahai aura kī bāta.
 abahīm raghupati ā'ihaim laṅkā kau utapāta..
 vuhai rāma tṛṇa sām̐tharē, lachimana tākē saṅga.
 mō jīvata nahīm āva'ī, rē bandara matimanda..
 bāya pitta kapha kaṇṭha taba byākula vacana kahanta.
 ēkahi bānahīm rāma kai saba rāṣisa bhasamanta..
 kaṭuka bacana hanumata sunē, kila kyaur̐ lēta usāsa.
 adhara kampi kara sira dhunaim, asura sēna dala pāsa..

94/2. (Hearing these words of Ravana, Hanuman rebuked him sternly—) ‘You are not aware of your own impending death, but foolishly talk of (killing) others. Raghupati shall come here soon and demolish Lanka.’

(Ravana taunted sarcastically—) ‘Is Sri Ram not the one who spreads blades of grass and twigs (on the ground) to sleep upon them, and he has Laxman with him (who is as hapless, helpless and coward like him)! Oh you foolish and stupid monkey! He cannot come here as long as I am alive.’

(Hanuman shot back—) ‘Your throat has been afflicted by rheumatism (i.e. you are suffering from paralysis of the vocal chord), bile (water brash; rising of bile in the throat causing choking) and cough (causing rattling). This affliction had made you extremely agitated and restless. It appears that you seem so desperate and alarmed that you have started talking so much nonsense and incoherent rubbish. All the demons would burn down to ashes by a single arrow shot by Sri Ram.’

Hanuman was so exasperated and annoyed by the harsh and scandalous words of Ravana that the latter uttered against the Lord that he took deep breaths and chuckled aloud, his lips quivered in anger, and he beat his head with his hands (in great disgust and annoyance at not being able to punish the demons at their insinuations against the Lord, and having to bear all the nuisance without being able to hit back). [As Hanuman had earlier said to Sita, he could not do anything because he would be violating the Lord’s brief. Perhaps he thought that his captivity itself was a sort of punishment inflicted upon

him for killing so many demons in the Ashok grove without the Lord's express orders or permission to do so.]

The demon army was standing near him, flabbergasted. Never in their wildest of dreams could they ever imagine that someone would be able to face upto Ravana with so much gusto and courage, and openly answer the demon without any trace of fear in him. [This statement indicates that Hanuman was very furious and he wished to squeeze the army of demons into squash with his hands, but had to somehow refrain himself from doing so because it would lead to a direct confrontation with Ravana when, sure enough, Hanuman would lose his restraint and finish him off for good. But doing so would violate Sri Ram's orders, the restraining factor which he had also mentioned to Sita. This apparent leash put Hanuman fretting and fuming in disgust and frustration.] (94/2).

मन्दोदरी का रावण को समझाना

[94/3]

मन्दोदरि बिनती करै, सुनि असुरनि के ईस ।
सीता प्रभु की दीजिये, ह्वै हौ बिना भुज बीस ॥
यह किन बोली कटक मै, बात कहत इहाँ आइ ।
पवनपूत कै बाँधि कै देखि—देखि पछिताइ ॥
हनुमत तबहीं बोलियौ, मोहि सकै को राखि ।
लै आऊँ रघुनाथ कौ, 'सूर' कहौ यह भाखि ॥

mandōdarī kā rāvaṇa kō samajhānā

(94/3)

mandōdari binatī karai, suni asurani kē īsa.
sītā prabhu kī dījiyē, hvai hau binā bhuja bīsa..
yaha kina bōlī kaṭaka mairi, bāta kahata ihām ā'i.
pavanapūta kai bām̐dhi kairi dēkhi-dēkhi pachitā'i..
hanumata tabahīr bōliyai, mōhi sakai kō rākhi.
lai ā'ūm̐ raghunātha kauri, 'sūra' kahau yaha bhākhi..

Mandodari's Entreaty to Ravana

94/3. Queen Mandodari sincerely prayed to Ravana, 'Oh the Lord of the Demons! Listen, give Sita back to the Lord (Sri Ram). Otherwise you will lose your twenty arms.'

(Ravana thundered back at her—) 'Why did you say it? Why did you come in the presence of the army and say such a (cowardly) thing (to demoralize them and insult me)?'

She regretted a lot when she saw the son of the Wind-God tied with fetters. [She wished her husband's good, and when she saw Hanuman in shackles she feared the worst. She feared that this would be too great an affront for Hanuman who was accustomed to be always free as he was the son of the Wind-God who could never be restrained. What havoc would he now create to avenge his insult no one could predict.]

Surdas says that at that instant, Hanuman declared, 'Who can keep me tied in shackles? I will bring Raghunath (Sri Ram) here, be fore-warned.' (94/3).

हनुमान रावण संवाद—राग मारू

[95/1]

सीतापति—सेवक तोहि देखन कौं आयौ ।
का कै बल बैर तैं जु राम तैं बढ़ायौ ॥
जे—जे तुव सूर सुभट, कीट सम न लेखौ ।
तो कौं दसकंध अंध, प्राननि बिनु देखौ ॥
नख—सिख ज्यौं मीन जाल, जड़्यौ अंग—अंगा ।
अजहुँ नाहिं संक धरत, बानर मति—भंगा ॥
जोड़—सोड़ मुखहिं कहत, मरन निज न जानै ।
जैसैं नर संनिपात भएँ बुध बखानै ॥

hanumāna rāvaṇa saṁvāda-rāga mārū

(95/1)

sītāpati-sēvaka tōhi dēkhana kaur̃ āyau.
kā kair̃ bala baira tair̃ ju rāma tair̃ baṛhāyau..
jē-jē tuva sūra subhaṭa, kīṭa sama na lēkhaur̃.
tō kaur̃ dasakandha andha, prānani binu dēkhaur̃..
nakha-sikha jyaur̃ mīna jāla, jaṛyau aṅga-aṅgā.
ajahum̃ nāhir̃ saṅka dharata, bānara mati-bhaṅgā..
jō'i-sō'i mukhahir̃ kahata, marana nija na jānai.
jaisair̃ nara sannipāta bha'air̃ budha bakhānair̃..

Hanuman-Ravana Verbal Duel—Raag Maarū

95/1. [The verbal duel between Hanuman and Ravana continued. Hanuman said—] 'I am a servant-messenger of the husband of Sita, and have come to see you. I wonder upon whose strength you have created enmity with Sri Ram, because I do not consider even one of your army commanders any more worthy (strong and effective) than an insect? Oh you blind and ill-witted Ravana! I see (visualize) even you as being good as dead. [I foresee that your death is a certainty because a king who has lost his own wisdom and relies upon foolish ministers who speak only things which the king wishes to hear is bound to perish.]'

(Ravana retorted—) 'Like a fish trapped in the net, you are also shackled and firmly bonded (because I have you tied and held in firm captivity, and like that trapped fish you also seem to be agitated and frustrated that you speak so much). Oh you monkey with a lowly and cracked intellect! Even then (i.e. even when you are tightly under my leash) you do not hesitate and feel frightened at all (though you are like a trapped fish)? You say whatever comes in your mouth (i.e. without thinking); aren't you afraid of death

at all? Wise men say that when one is afflicted with high brain-fever, he babbles incoherently like you are doing at present.’ (95/1).

[95/2]

तब तू गयौ सून भवन, भस्म अंग पोते ।
करते बिन प्राण तोहिं, लछिमन जौ होते ॥
पाछे तैं हरी सिया, न मरजाद राखी ।
जौ पै दसकंध बली, रेख क्यौ न नाखी ॥
अजहूँ सिय सौँपि, नतरु बीस भुजा भानै ।
रघुपति यह पैज करी, भूतल धरि पानै ॥
ब्रह्मबान कानि करी, बल करि नहिं बाँध्यौ ।
कैसेँ परताप घटै, रघुपति आराध्यौ ॥

(95/2)

taba tū gayau sūna bhavana, bhasma aṅga pōtē.
karatē bina prāna tōhim, lachimana jau hōtē..
pāchē taim harī siyā, na marajāda rākhī.
jau pai dasakandha balī, rēkha kyaurī na nākhī..
ajahūṁ siya saumpi, nataru bīsa bhujā bhānai.
raghupati yaha paija karī, bhūtala dhari pānairī..
brahmabāna kāni karī, bala kari nahim bāmḍhyau.
kaisairī paratāpa ghaṭai, raghupati ārādhya..

95/2. (Hanuman continued his tirade against Ravana—) ‘You had gone to a lonely hut after smearing ash on your body (pretending to be a harmless and pious hermit). If Laxman had been there then, he would have turned you life-less (i.e. would have killed you instantly). You did not even keep the dignity and decorum by stealing Sita stealthily.

[Why, if you had been brave enough as you claim to be then you would not have stolen some other person’s wife on the sly, but would have challenged him for war, and would have taken the lady after defeating her husband. That of course you did not do as you did not have the courage and the valour of which you so much boast about. And instead you preferred to use conceit and disguise to steal a harmless and helpless lady. Does this behoove of a strong and courageous person? Say, who is a coward really—is it not you who stealthily stole Sita and ran away from there like a jackal without having the guts to face either of the two brothers Ram and Laxman?]

Oh you brave 10-headed one! If you are indeed brave as you claim to be, then why did you not cross the line marked by Laxman (to protect Sita at the time of stealing her)?

Even as late as of now, surrender Sita (to Sri Ram). Otherwise he (Sri Ram) will dismember all your twenty arms. Raghupati (Sri Ram) has made this stern vow after touching mother earth (therefore, it is inviolable).

If you talk about my shackles and bondage, then listen—no one has ever bound or shackled me; I have got myself tied voluntarily just to show respect to Brahma’s weapon. I have worshipped Raghupati (Sri Ram) only; how can my potential and powers be ever

diminished by anyone or anything (that I could be forcefully tied by anyone or anything, even by Brahma's weapon)?' (95/2)

[95/3]

देखत कपि—बाहु—दंड तन प्रस्वेद छूटे ।
जै—जै रघुनाथ कहत, बंधन सब टूटे ॥
देखत बल दूरि कस्यौ, मेघनाद गारौ ।
आपुन भयौ सकुचि 'सूर' बंधन तैं न्यारौ ॥

(95/3)

dēkhata kapi-bāhu-daṇḍa tana prasvēda chūṭē.
jai-jai raghunātha kahata, bandhana saba ṭūṭē..
dēkhata bala dūri karyau, mēghanāda gārau.
āpuna bhayau sakuci 'sūra' bandhana taim n'yārau..

95/3. Looking at his (Hanuman's) muscular and robust arms, drops of sweat appeared on Ravana's body. [This is a clear indication that Ravana was uneasy and did take Hanuman seriously, though he had to hide his consternation in full court.]

As soon as Hanuman chanted aloud 'Jai Jai Raghunath' (i.e. Hail Sri Ram; Glory to Sri Ram), all his fetters broke and fell apart. Seeing his stupendous strength and observing this fantastic spectacle, Meghnad lost the pride and arrogance of his own strength.

Surdas says that Hanuman reduced his size, thereby loosening himself from the tight fetters that had been tying him, and freed himself from them instantly (95/3).

लङ्का दहन—राग मारू

[96]

मंत्रिनि नीकौ मंत्र बिचार्यो ।
राजन कहौ, दूत काहू कौ, कौन नृपति है माख्यौ ॥
इतनी सुनत बिभीषन बोले, बंधू पाइ परौ ।
यह अनरीति सुनी नहिं स्रवननि, अब नइ कहा करौ ॥
हरी बिधाता बुद्धि सबनि की, अति आतुर है धाए ।
सन अरु सूत, चीर—पाटंबर, लै लंगूर बँधाए ॥
तेल—तूल पावक—पुट धरि कै, देखन चहैं जरौ ।
कपि मन कह्यौ भली मति दीनी, रघुपति—काज करौ ॥
बंधन तोरि, मोरि मुख असुरनि, ज्वाला प्रगट करी ।
रघुपति—चरन—प्रताप 'सूर' तब, लंका सकल जरी ॥

laṅkā dahana-rāga mārū

(96)

mantrini nīkau mantra bicāryō.
 rājana kahau, dūta kāhū kau, kauna nrpati hai māryau..
 itanī sunata bibhīṣana bōlē, bandhū pā'i paraum.
 yaha anarīti sunī nahim sravanani, aba na'i kahā karau..
 harī bidhātā bud'dhi sabani kī, ati ātura hvai dhā'ē.
 sana aru sūta, cīra-pāṭambara, lai laṅgūra bamdhā'ē..
 tēla-tūla pāvaka-puta dhari kai, dēkhana cahaim jarau.
 kapi mana kahyau bhalī mati dīnī, raghupati-kāja karaum..
 bandhana tōri, mōri mukha asurani, jvālā pragaṭa karī.
 raghupati-carana-pratāpa 'sūra' taba, laṅkā sakala jarī..

The Burning of Lanka—Raag Maaru

96. [Ravana was so peeved that he ordered his soldiers to kill Hanuman. At this, the ministers of the court intervened and thought it wise to advise Ravana as follows—] ‘Oh king, say, has any king ever killed the messenger of another king? [That is, it is unwise, unethical and against established tradition that a messenger of another king be killed. Hence, you are wrong in ordering your soldiers to kill Hanuman.]’

Hearing this, Vibhishan (brother of Ravana) too intervened. He said, ‘Oh brother! I (humbly and prayerfully) fall at your feet (and make you this request). No where has such an injustice ever been meted out and heard of. Why do you create a new and horrible precedent (which is against all established norms by killing a messenger of another king)?’

In spite of the ministers’ sane advice, the soldiers of Ravana were too eager to carry out his orders and enjoy the spectacle of Hanuman being burnt alive, as this kind of sport was very enjoyable for the cruel demons. Surdas says that the creator had literally stolen away (or had made defunct, or had eclipsed) every demon’s wisdom, intellect and the powers to think for themselves. So they rushed very eagerly and brought in jute, cotton, silk, and shreds of all other forms of clothes and rags—everything which they could lay their hands upon in the city, and wrapped them around his (Hanuman’s) tail. They then soaked and drenched the cotton etc. with oil (and other inflammable materials), and prepared to set it to fire and see him (Hanuman) roast alive.

The Kapi (an epithet for Hanuman) said to himself, ‘Good! What a brilliant idea have they got? Now I shall do Raghunath’s (Sri Ram’s) work! Thanks God, they have dug their own graves voluntarily.’

The demons then unshackled him, lit the fire and turned their faces away from the leaping flames (to avoid being scorched).

Surdas says that by the virtue of the stupendous glory and the powerful potential effects of Raghupati’s holy and divine feet, the whole of Lanka was burnt (by Hanuman’s burning tail as he leapt from one place to another across the city, setting everything ablaze) (96).

राग सारंग

[97/1]

रावन मंत्र ये हमाही ।
 बंदर सुबस होइ कैसेऊँ मति सोचत सब याही ॥
 चल तैं पापी तिहिं कही, ररकत है मतिमंद ।
 अब काकौ मुख देखिहै, जौ पासि परैगी कंठ ॥
 बचन एक बुहमत कहै, सुनि रावन मतिमंद ।
 पास कंठ कहि क्यों परै, ताकै रघुपति कंध ॥
 तौ याकी बाँछ प्रजा पौरि—पौरि प्रति राखि ।
 एक बंधन सब मिलै सो, जनक—सुता—सौँ भाखि ॥
 जितौँ सौँ कछु जानकी, प्रात कह्यौ हौ आइ ।
 सो कपि लंकापति गह्यौ, मारत दुःख दिखाइ ॥
 बीच—बीच मैं नर रुई सीचत घृत अरु तेल ।
 पूँछहि अंत न पावहिं राखिस लाने खेलि ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(97/1)

rāvana mantra yē hamāhī.
 bandara subasa hō'i kaisē'ūm' mati sōcata saba yāhī..
 cala tairṁ pāpī tihirṁ kahī, rarakata hai matimanda.
 aba kākau mukha dēkhihai, jau pāsi paraigī kaṇṭha..
 bacana ēka buhamata kahi, suni rāvana matimanda.
 pāsa kaṇṭha kahi kyaurṁ parai, tākai raghupati kandha..
 tau yāki bām'cha prajā pauri-pauri prati rākhi.
 ēka bandhana saba milai sō, janaka-sutā-saurṁ bhākhi..
 jītaurṁ saurṁ kachu jānakī, prāta kahyau hau ā'i.
 sō kapi laṅkāpati gahyau, mārata duḥkha dikhā'i..
 bīca-bīca mairṁ nara ru'i sīcata ghr̥ta aru tēla.
 pūm'chahi anta na pāvahirṁ rākhisa lānē khēli..

Raag Saarang

97/1. Ravana asked his ministers for advice on how to control that reckless monkey. That sinful one (i.e. Ravana) became exasperated and frustrated with Hanuman and sternly admonished him, 'Oh you stupid fellow! Come on, why do you unnecessarily trouble us. When the knot will be tied around your neck, whose face would you see then (i.e. who shall help you)?'

At this, some wise senior demon chided Ravana, 'Oh foolish Ravana! Tell me how can a knot be tied around his neck? Raghupati (Sri Ram) is astride his shoulders (i.e. is symbolically at his back, constantly and persistently protecting him). If you wish you can consult each household of the city (and find out if what I am saying is correct or not, and if you still have any doubts, you can order all of them to capture him collectively if

they can). But there is only one way to tie him down, and that is by invoking the name of the daughter of Janak (i.e. there is only one way to bring Hanuman under control, and that is to respectfully pray to Sita and request her, or invoke her mercy for the demon clan).’

Meanwhile, someone came to Janki (Sita) in the morning and told her that he (Hanuman) has been subdued (literally, conquered and put in shackles), and caught (captured) by the king of Lanka (Ravana). The latter is torturing him. The people (demons) are wrapping his tail with cotton and other inflammable materials and dabbing it with oil, but to their utter astonishment, they aren’t able to find the end of the tail. For the demons, this has become a playful past-time or a sport (97/1).

[97/2]

जौ कबहूँ रघुनाथ हित मो मन भयौ न भंग ।
 तौ पावक जलरूप है जरौ न कपि कौ अंग ॥
 कछु यक डरप्यौ नाथ ते, कछू हनू कौ दाप ।
 पावक ज्वाल न छाँड़ई, डरप्यौ सीय—सराप ॥
 पूँछ न जर्यौ रोम नहिं डाढ्यौ, फिरि देख्यौ भरमाइ ।
 कछु रघुनाथ दया करी, सीता सत्त सहाइ ॥
 इहाँ गवन कपि तैं कियौ, तातैं कारन कौन ।
 काकै हित तामस भर्यौ, फिर्यौ निहारत भौन ॥
 जनक सुता के कारनै प्रभु आयस दीनौ मोहि ।
 कौतूहल लंका—धनी! हौं देखन आयौ तोहि ॥

(97/2)

jau kabahūṁ raghunātha hita mō mana bhayau na bhaṅga.
 tau pāvaka jalarūpa hvai jarau na kapi kau aṅga..
 kachu yaka ḍarapyau nātha tē, kachū hanū kau dāpa.
 pāvaka jvāla na chāmṛaṭī, ḍarapyau sīya-sarāpa..
 pūṁcha na jaryau rōma nahim dāḍhyau, phiri dēkhyau bharamā'i.
 kachu raghunātha dayā karī, sītā satta sahā'i..
 ihām gavana kapi taim kiyau, tātaim kārana kauna.
 kākai hita tāmasa bharyau, phiryau nihārata bhauna..
 janaka sutā kē kāranaim prabhu āyasa dīnau mōhi.
 kautūhala laṅkā-dhanī! haur dēkhana āyau tōhi..

97/2. (Hearing this, Sita took an oath—) ‘If my affection and love for Raghunath (Sri Ram) had never been disrupted or diminished even for a moment, if it has always been constant, consistent, persistent, steady and unwavering as well as honest and sincere, then let the fire become as cool as water and not burn Kapi’s (Hanuman’s) body.’

Paawak (the Fire-God) was frightened of the Lord (Sri Ram). He was under the obligation of Hanuman (for he had blessed him earlier in life of immunity from being burnt by fire), and now the oath (or the fear of curse) of Sita made him utterly terrified. Hence, he did not cast his heat on (i.e. allow his heat in anyway to effect) Hanuman.

Further, the mercy of Raghunath helped Hanuman. Sita's power of truthfulness, chastity, honesty and loyalty towards her husband further bolstered and consolidated the protective shield around Hanuman. As a result, his tail didn't get burnt by the fire at all. He roamed around the city fearlessly (with a burning tail in tow), but not a hair of his body was burnt or scorched in anyway.

(Ravana asked him—) 'Oh Kapi! Why have you come here? What is the reason that you wander around peeping at each household angrily?'

(Hanuman replied—) 'The Lord (Sri Ram) had ordered me to find out about the whereabouts of the daughter of Janak (Sita). Oh king of Lanka! Out of curiosity I have come to see you.' (97/2).

[Note :- Hanuman had used the word 'curious' while describing the reason of his coming to Lanka. This was to tease Ravana that he was curious to see first hand what a funny creature he was—one with ten heads and twenty arms! He also wanted to ascertain how Ravana could have been bold enough to have cast his evil eye on Sita. He also wished to probe the strength of his army and to see how such a brave one as Ravana, who has even captured the Gods, had to pretend as a hermit while stealing Sita. Why couldn't he be bold enough to kidnap her openly in Sri Ram's presence?]

[97/3]

श्रवन बचन सुनि परजस्यौ रिस करि कै भूपाल ।
 आपन ही मुदगर धरे, करि लोचन बिकराल ॥
 बिभीषन बिनती करै, अस न होइ अजगुत ।
 जुग—जुग गारी बैठिहैं सनमुख मारे दुत ॥
 अरे सुभट केतिक जुरे तोसे राघव पास ।
 पवन—पूत साँची कहै, छोरि कंठ दै सास ॥
 हलदल्यौ सब सेवकन मैं, अरु पौरुष बल हीन ।
 वो छौकार पुजानि कै, प्रभु मोहि रजायस दीन ॥
 पद्म अष्टदस सेन मैं तिनहिन बल—मरजाद ।
 ते तूँ रावन देखिहै 'सूर' सु कवन बिबाद ॥

(97/3)

śravana bacana suni parajaryau risa kari kai bhūpāla.
 āpana hī mudagara dharē, kari lōcana bikarāla..
 bibhīṣana binatī karai, asa na hō'i ajagutta.
 juga-juga gārī baiṭhihaiṁ sanamukha mārē dutta..
 arē subhaṭa kētika jurē tōsē rāghava pāsa.
 pavana-pūta sām̐cī kahai, chōri kaṇṭha dai sāsa..
 haladalyau saba sēvakana mair̐, aru pauruṣa bala hīna.
 vō chaukāra pujāni kair̐, prabhu mōhi rajāyasa dīna..
 padma aṣṭadasa sēna mair̐ tinahina bala-marajāda.
 tē tūṁ rāvana dēkhihai 'sūra' su kavana bibāda..

97/3. The king (Ravana) became furious with anger when he heard it. Turning his eyes wild and ferocious, he lifted the dumbbell with his hands (to hit Hanuman with it). At that

point, Vibhishan (intervened and) earnestly prayed to him, ‘You must not try to do such an improper thing. If you kill a messenger standing in your front, you will get ignominy for ages to come.’

(Then Ravana asked—) ‘Oh the son of the Wind-God! Tell me the truth. How many warriors like you have collected (assembled) around Raghav (Sri Ram)?’ (Then he ordered the demons—) ‘Oh demons, untie his neck (i.e. remove the knot from his neck) and let him breathe (so that he can reply to me).’ [This line shows that the knot tied by the demons around the neck of Hanuman was very tight, almost stifling his voice and breath.]

(Hanuman replied—) ‘Amongst the subordinates/servants/followers of the Lord (Sri Ram), I am the most humble one, the most junior fellow who is devoid of any mentionable strength and potential. The Lord permitted me to come here because I was the lowliest of them all in the hierarchy. The army of 18 ‘Padma’ (1 Padma = 1016) strength (i.e. having so many warriors) has the strength, majesty and dignity of a great Lord’s army. It is obedient and has firm allegiance to him.’

Surdas says that Hanuman teased Ravana by saying, ‘Where is the dispute or doubt in what I say. You will shortly see (witness) the army yourself!’ (97/3)

[98]

जारौं गढ़ आजु, जैसैं रावन भै मानै ।
सीतापति—सेवक मुहि आयौ को जानै ॥
एक—एक रोम हनु छल छल छवाना ।
त्यौं—त्यौं कपि करत हैं रामचंद्र—आना ॥
एक भेट उन की लै उनही कौं दीजै ।
ज्यौं—ज्यौं लंगूर जरै, त्यौं—त्यौं कपि छूजै ॥
रामचंद्र बिपति—दहन कबहूँ नहिं फूले ।
सीता—दुख परम कठिन ब्यापति अनसूले ॥
दूत सखन कनक—भवन इहि तजि निधि हारे ।
तिवमद्रि पवनपूत बिषम ज्वाल जारे ॥
बीच—बीच धूर धूम बीच—बीच झंका ।
बिच—बिच देखियत ‘सूर’ स्याम—बरन लंका ॥

(98)

jāraurṁ garha āju, jaisairṁ rāvana bhai mānai.
sītāpati-sēvaka muhi āyau kō jānai..
ēka-ēka rōma hanu chala chala chavānā.
tyaurṁ-tyaurṁ kapi karata hairṁ rāmacandra-ānā..
ēka bhēṭa una kī lai unahī kaurṁ dījai.
jyaurṁ-jyaurṁ laṅgūra jarai, tyaurṁ-tyaurṁ kapi chūjai..
rāmacanda bipati-dahana kabahūṁ nahirṁ phūlē..
sītā-dukha parama kaṭhina byāpati anasūlē..
dūta sakhana kanaka-bhavana ihi taji nidhi hārē.
tivamadri pavanapūta biṣama jvāla jārē..

bīca-bīca dhūra dhūma bīca-bīca jhaṅkā.
bica-bica dēkhiyata 'sūra' syāma-barana laṅkā..

98. (Hanuman thought—) 'Let me burn the fort of Lanka today. This shall frighten (and dishearten) Ravana a bit. Otherwise, how will anyone know that a servant of Sitapati (i.e. the Lord of Sita; Sri Ram) had come here?' [That is, I must do something unprecedented, spectacular and magnificent that people will remember my visit to Lanka. Also, my spectacular deed should be of the standard expected of a great warrior-messenger representing Sri Ram.]

Deciding thus, he expanded his body into a colossus covering the sky. Each pore and hair of his body fluttered and quivered with excitement. Every now and then, he invoked and hailed Sri Ram (with a thundering and resounding shrill voice). He thought, 'Let me take this gift of fire from them (the demons) and give it back to them.' As the burning of the tail progressed, Kapi (Hanuman) jumped more and more fiercely and excitedly. The troubles and miseries faced by Ram Chandra appeared to have manifested themselves into a raging fire. Even unaware, Sita's great miseries transformed themselves into the fire and spread across the city!

The son of the Wind-God burnt the whole city situated on Mt. Trikoot and surrounded (garlanded, girdled) on all the sides by the ocean, leaving aside un-burnt the golden building (residence) of the 'friend of the messenger' (i.e. the household of Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana who was a devout devotee of the Lord). [Surdas has called Vibhishan 'a friend of Hanuman' who was a messenger of Sri Ram because it was Vibhishan who had persuaded Ravana not to kill Hanuman.]

Surdas says that plumes of thick dark smoke rose from the city in thick clouds covering it in a blanket, interspersed and punctuated with tongues of licking flames and glimpses of burnt-out, darkened and charred buildings of the city (98).

राग धनाश्री

[99]

सोचि जिय पवन—पूत पछिताइ ।
अगम अपार सिंधु दुस्तर तरि, कहा कियौ मैं आइ ॥
सेवक कौ सेवा—पन एतौ, आज्ञाकारी होइ ।
बिन आज्ञा मैं भवन पजारे, अपजस करिहैं लोइ ॥
वे रघुनाथ चतुर कहियत हैं, अंतरजामी सोइ ।
या भय भीत देखि लंका मैं, सीय जरी मति होइ ॥
इतनी कहत गगन—बानी भइ, हनू! सोच कत करई ।
चिरंजीवि सीता तरुबर तर, अटल न कबहूँ टरई ॥
फिरि अवलोकि 'सूर' सुख लीजै, पुहुमी रोम न परई ।
जाके हिय अंतर रघुनंदन, सो क्यों पावक जरई ॥

rāga dhanāśrī

(99)

sōci jiya pavana-pūta pachitā'i.
 agama apāra sindhu dustara tari, kahā kiyau mair̥m ā'i..
 sēvaka kau sēvā-pana ētau, ājñākārī hō'i.
 bina ājñā mair̥m bhavana pajārē, apajasa karihair̥m lō'i..
 vē raghunātha catura kahiyaṭa hair̥m, antarajāmī sō'i.
 yā bhaya bhīta dēkhi laṅkā mair̥m, sīya jarī mati hō'i..
 itanī kahata gagana-bānī bha'i, hanū! sōca kata kara'ī.
 cirañjīvi sītā tarubara tara, aṭala na kabahūm'ṣṭara'ī..
 phiri avalōki 'sūra' sukha lījai, puhumī rōma na para'ī.
 jākē hiya antara raghunandana, sō kyaur̥m pāvaka jara'ī..

Raag Dhanasri

99. The son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) regretted at what he had done (i.e. burnt Lanka) after having crossed the fathomless and difficult-to-cross ocean. A servant's duty is to follow and to limit him-self to the orders given by his Lord (and not to exceed his brief).

'I have burnt the buildings without orders, so people will accuse me with disobedience. Raghunath (Sri Ram) is clever, he knows the inner thoughts of his subordinate (and therefore he can't get angry or annoyed at me, because I did what was deemed fit as the demon had insulted my Lord and his brother Laxman). But my main fear and concern is whether Sita has been in anyway burnt or scorched (or in any other way harmed) along with (the burning of) Lanka.'

As soon as he muttered these words, there was a formless divine voice from the sky which said—'Oh Hanuman! Why are you worrying and feeling contrite? Sita has eternal life (i.e. she is imperishable, and has remained unharmed). She is sitting peacefully and steadily under the tree as before. She hasn't moved from there (i.e. the heat and the turmoil of the city hasn't affected her at all). Oh the brave one! Go and see her, feel reassured and enjoy the divine sight. Not a single hair of hers can fall to the ground (i.e. she just cannot be harmed). Say, one who has Raghunandan (Sri Ram) enshrined in his or her heart, how can he or she ever be burnt or harmed in anyway whatsoever?' (99).

राग मारू

[100]

लंका हनुमान सब जारी ।
 राम—काज, सीता की सुधि लगी, अंगद—प्रीति बिचारी ॥
 जा रावन की सकति तिहूँ पुर, कोउ न आज्ञा टारी ।
 ता रावन के अछत, अछयसुत—सहित सैन संहारी ॥
 पूँछ बुझाइ गए सागर—तट, जहँ सीता की बारी ।
 कर दंडवत, प्रेम पुलकित हूँ, कह्यौ सुनि राघव—प्यारी ॥
 तुम्हरेहिं तेज—प्रताप रही बचि, तुम्हरी यहै अटारी ।

‘सूरदास’ स्वामी के आगैं, जाइ कहौं सुख भारी ॥

rāga mārū

(100)

lañkā hanumāna saba jāri.
rāma-kāja, sītā kī sudhi lagi, aṅgada-prīti bicārī..
jā rāvana kī sakati tihūṁ pura, kō'u na ājñā ṭārī.
tā rāvana kē achata, achayasuta-sahita saina sanhārī..
pūṁcha bujhā'i ga'ē sāgara-taṭa, jaham' sītā kī bārī.
kara daṇḍavata, prēma pulakita hvai, kahyau suni rāghava-pyārī..
tumharēhiṁ tēja-pratāpa rahī baci, tumharī yahai aṭārī.
'sūradāsa' svāmī kē āgaim, jā'i kahauṁ sukha bhārī..

Raag Maaru

100. When Hanuman came to Lanka and burnt down the city to ashes, he had two objectives in mind—one was to accomplish Sri Ram's task, which was to find out about the whereabouts of Sita, and the other was the sincere desire of Angad¹.

He had killed Akshay Kumar, the son of Ravana, while the latter (i.e. Ravana)—who had such tremendous powers and strengths that no one ever dared to disobey him in all the three worlds (i.e. the terrestrial, celestial and subterranean worlds)—was still around (present). [That is, he had killed the son while his most powerful father, Ravana, was alive and in command, but he could not give his own son any protection against Hanuman. This was an open challenge for Ravana and a prelude of things to come.]

After that, he doused his (burning) tail (by jumping into the ocean), and then went to the place near the shore of the ocean where Sita's garden (i.e. Ashok grove) was located. He prostrated before her with a thrilled body, and said, 'Oh the beloved of Raghav! Listen. It is due to your glory, powers and blessing that this building of yours (where you are confined in captivity)² was saved from being burnt down (along with the other buildings of the city). I shall now go to the Lord of Surdas ('Surdas-swami'—i.e. Sri Ram) and narrate all the good news to him.' (100).

[Note :- ¹Angad, son of Baali and the monkey-prince tasked by Sugriv to locate Sita at any cost. Angad had taken a vow that he would prefer committing suicide than going empty-handed back to Kishkindha because he feared that Sugriv, who was his uncle and at whose behest Baali was killed, would humiliate him and find an excuse to kill him also. Hanuman treated Angad both as a friend as well as a person who has been unjust against, besides his being an orphan. He had great sympathy and empathy for Angad. See verse no. 106 also in this context. So he decided that he would do all things possible to protect Angad at any cost, and the primary aim was to find Sita at Lanka. He had burnt the city, however, as a token of retribution and punishment.

²May be a poet's imagination, may be a fact, but Surdas has deviated here from the generally held view that Sita lived under a tree and not inside any building. The word 'Atari' in the text is a clear indication of a building specially meant for residence of. Probably it was a small room or cell attached to the temple of a Goddess whom Ravana worshipped, and it was near the tree under which she usually sat to pass her days.]

हनुमान की विदाई एवं सीताजी का सन्देश

[101/1]

कपि! तुम यह संदेसौ कहियौ ।
 रघुपति! तुम पत पतिव्रत हमरै करुनानाथ! सोध अब लहियौ ॥
 बिनती करियौ नाथ सौ, जहाँ सुलछिमन लाल ।
 वह सायक किन संभरौ, तीन लोक कौ काल ॥
 मोहि चिंता नहिं आपनी, तुमही हँसिहैं लोग ।
 मानौ राघव बल नहीं रावन मारन जोग ॥
 सकल सराहत देव—मुनि राघौ—लछिमन बान ।
 मानौ वे निःपाल भए, देखि हमारै जान ॥
 छत्री ह्वै आयुध गहै, गनै सुभट समकीय ।
 ताहि अछित कैसेँ बसै जाके घर की तीय ॥
 जौ पै राघौ सुठि सही आयसु देते मोहि ।
 तौऊ अर्ध निमेष मैं अब लै जातौ तोहि ॥

hanumāna kī vidā'ī ēvaṁ sītājī kā sandēśa

(101/1)

kapi! tuma yaha sandēsau kahiyau.
 raghupati! tuma pata patibrata hamaraim karunānātha! sōdha aba lahiyau..
 binatī kariyau nātha saurṁ, jahām̐ sulachimana lāla.
 vaha sāyaka kina sambharau, tīna lōka kau kāla..
 mōhi cintā nahim āpanī, tumahī hamśihaim lōga.
 mānau rāghava bala nahim rāvana mārana jōga..
 sakala sarāhata dēva-muni rāghau-lachimana bāna.
 mānau vē niḥpāla bha'ē, dēkhi hamāraim jāna..
 chatrī hvai āyudha gahaim, ganaim subhaṭa samakīya.
 tāhi achita kaisaim basai jākē ghara kī tīya..
 jau pairṁ rāghau suṭhi sahī āyasu dētē mōhi.
 tau'ū ardha nimēṣa maim aba lai jātaurṁ tōhi..

Hanuman Takes Leave from Sita;
 Her Message for Sri Ram

101/1. (Sita said earnestly and with urgency—) ‘Oh Kapi (Hanuman)! Go and give this message (to Sri Ram—) “Oh Raghupati! Your dignity and honour lies in protecting my vows of chastity, honesty, truthfulness and loyalty (known as ‘Pativrat’). Oh merciful Lord, take care of me soon.”

Pray to Sri Ram and convey my message to him when Laxman is within earshot so that he (Laxman) can hear the message too. Tell the Lord—“Why doesn’t he pay attention to that potential arrow of his which has stupendous and magnificent powers, and

is like a death-knell for all the three worlds. I am not worried about myself, but the people will sneer (laugh and ridicule) at you (i.e. at both Sri Ram and Laxman) that you don't have sufficient strength, valour and courage to kill Ravana. The world will say— 'every God and sage praise the (potential powers of the) arrows of Raghav and Laxman. But we think that they have failed to live up to that expectation. Being a 'Kshatriya' (the warrior and brave class) and having his weapon with him, if any person is afraid to face his enemy and thinks twice or demurs to attack in retaliation thinking that the opponent is more powerful than him, especially when one's dear wife, or any woman for that matter, has been abducted by the latter, say how can such a person live with dignity and honour in the society.'

[That is, it's very shameful and ignominious for the whole of the 'Kshatriya' class to live with such a shame and ignominy staring on its face. Say, is it not a matter of utter dishonour and defeat that the wife of a brave warrior is held captive by one's enemy and the former dithers in making an all-out attempt to rescue her? Sri Ram and Laxman are supposed to be exemplarily brave and courageous, and so it is incomprehensible why the Lord is delaying my rescue?]

(Hearing these remorseful words of Sita, Hanuman replied—) 'Had Raghav given me clear orders, I would have taken you from here in half a moment (i.e. without any delay).' [In other words, do not feel abandoned and neglected, oh mother, for I could have taken you back instantly. But this honour should go to the Lord, and I being his humble messenger-servant just should not overstep my brief. Just wait and watch, for the time of redemption is very near at hand.] (101/1).

[101/2]

हीन—गात कपि देखियै, बात कहत बलबीर ।
क्यौँ सरितापति लाँघिहै अब गवनै मैं भीर ॥
माता मरम न जानई, मोहि दिखावत सिंधु ।
सबहि लंक उतपाटतौ, जौ न होत साबंध ॥
अरुन नैन, बिकराल मुख, पर्वत तुलिय सरीर ।
'सूर' साधु सीता कहै, साँचौ हनुमत बीर ॥

(101/2)

hīna-gāta kapi dēkhiyai, bāta kahata balabīra.
kyaum saritāpati lām̐ghihai aba gavanai maim bhīra..
mātā marama na jāna'ī, mōhi dikhāvata sindhu.
sabahi laṅka utapāṭatau, jau na hōta sābandha..
aruna naina, bikarāla mukha, parbata tuliya sarīra.
'sūra' sādhu sītā kahai, sām̐cai hanumata bīra..

101/2. (Sita was sceptical—) 'This monkey's body is so diminutive and humble but he talks (pretends boastfully) as if he were a big warrior. I wonder how he will cross the ocean (back to Kishkindha to convey the news to the Lord). Now I fear (or doubt) about his return (because Ravana has clearly identified him and he shall try his best to trap him somewhere in the ocean en-route to the other side).'

Hanuman read into Sita's inner thoughts and consternations. He said to himself, 'The mother does not know the secret of the mystery, and she shows me the vast ocean wondering as to how I shall manage to cross it. Ah! Had I not been under the restraint of the Lord's orders, I would have plucked and thrown Lanka from its very moorings (foundation) into the sea.'

Surdas says that then Hanuman revealed his true form with angry, red and ferocious eyes, a very horrifying and terrible mouth, and a body as huge and colossus as a massive mountain. At this spectacular and magnificent sight, Sita exclaimed—'Oh brave and saintly one! Hanuman, you are indeed, really and truly very brave.' (101/2)

राग सारंग

[102/1]

अबहीं जननि चलौ, लै जाऊँ ।
 किंतौ यह सिंधु अगम गोपद—सौ तिरबे कहा डराऊँ ॥
 चढ़ि मम जठर पानि ग्रीवा गहि उपै अकासहि जाऊँ ।
 जैसें सोध न लहै निसाचर, बीच बिलंब न लाऊँ ॥
 तुमहि परसि रघुपति के पायनि सनमुख है सिर नाऊँ ।
 उद्यम सुफल होइ सब मेरौ, तीन लोक जस पाऊँ ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(102/1)

abahiṁ janani calau, lai jā'ūṁ .
 kitau yaha sindhu agama gōpada-sau tirabē kahā ḍarā'ūṁ ..
 caḍhi mama jaṭhara pāni grīvā gahi upai akāsahi jā'ūṁ .
 jaisairi sōdha na lahai nisācara, bīca bilamba na lā'ūṁ ..
 tumahi parasi raghupati kē pāyani sanamukha hvai sira nā'ūṁ .
 udyama suphala hō'i saba mērau, tīna lōka jasa pā'ūṁ ..

Raag Saarang

102/1. (Hanuman said—) 'Mother, come now, I will take you along. What difficult is the ocean to cross; it is no more than a shallow depression filled with water made by the pressure of a cow's hoofs in a soft soil. What and why should I fear in crossing it?

(If you are eager to escape from here immediately then--) You ride on my back and hold my neck; I shall leap into the sky and shall not delay. So there will be no chance that the demon (Ravana) would know what has happened. (We will move out of the city so swiftly that Ravana, who is at the moment preoccupied with the burnt city and its attendant turmoil, will not have time to realise how we have escaped from his city.)

By submitting you at the holy feet of Raghupati (or by enabling you to respectfully hold the feet of Sri Ram), I shall feel fulfilled and full of gratitude (as I would consider myself most privileged and honoured at having done the great task of the Lord without letting the Lord take any trouble himself). I shall stand in front (of both of

you) and bow my head in gratefulness and reverence. All my efforts will be successful, and I shall get renown and fame in all the three worlds (the celestial, terrestrial and the subterranean world).’ [That is, by rescuing you from the captivity of this wretched and evil Ravana, and taking you back to Sri Ram even without his coming here, I will add an unprecedented glory to my fame. At the same time, I shall feel highly obliged and privileged that I have been able to do the Lord’s work effortlessly.] (102/1).

[102/2]

श्रीरघुनाथ—पतिव्रत मेरै, सुनौ बच्छ सतिभाऊँ ।
हम अबला पर—पुरुष पीठ पर कैसेँ धरियै पाऊँ ॥
जौ तुम करौ पकरौ उतिरबे कौ होइ चतुर—गुन चाऊ ।
बूझौ सिंधु कौन मिति करिहौ, जौ पूछै रघुराऊ ॥
तुमहिं चलत निसहर सुधि पावै, देइ आपनौ दाऊ ।
रोकै जाइ सिंधु कौ मारग, जुरै मेघ ज्यूँ बाऊ ॥
एकै सुभट लच्छ क्यों जीतै, तुम सिर मेलै घाऊ ।
जाते तुम दुख होइ पवन—सुत, सो लालच बहि जाऊ ॥

(102/2)

śrīraghunātha-patibrata mērai, sunau baccha satibhā'ūṁ.
hama abalā para-puruṣa pīṭha para kaisaiṁ dhariyai pā'ūṁ..
jau tuma karaūṁ pakaraūṁ utirabē kau hō'i catura-guna cā'ū.
būṛaūṁ sindhu kauna miti karihau, jau pūchai raghurā'ū..
tumahiṁ calata nisahara sudhi pāvai, dē'i āpanau dā'ū.
rōkai jā'i sindhu kau mārāga, jurai mēgha jyūṁ bā'ū..
ēkai subhaṭa laccha kyaurṁ jītai, tuma sira mēlai ghā'ū.
jātē tuma dukha hō'i pavana-suta, sō lālaca bahi jā'ū..

102/2. (Hearing this proposal of Hanuman, Sita said—) ‘Listen son, I tell you truthfully. I am loyal towards my husband Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram). Being a married and honourable woman, how can I put my legs on the back of another person or even touch him. Even if I do catch hold of you (by your neck, as you have advised me), I am so nervous and excited that I might coax you to proceed four times faster than your normal speed across the ocean in order to reach the other side quicker. This might loosen my grip on you, and I may fall in the ocean. What will you answer Raghuraj (Sri Ram) then?’¹

Suppose the demon (Ravana) gets a hint; will he let the opportunity slip away from his hands? He will go and block the path in the ocean; his army will rush forward and collect there like clouds collected when pushed by the wind. How can a single warrior (i.e. Hanuman) stand against lakhs (hundreds of thousands) of opponents? He (Ravana) will hit you on the head.

Oh the son of the Wind-God! Any thought that might give you any trouble or put you to any discomfort, let that thought be driven away (i.e. let it perish).’ [And therefore, it is unadvisable for me to go back to the Lord riding on your back as you advice.] (102/2).

[Note :- ¹Sita has called Hanuman her ‘son’. So she should not have any problems in touching her ‘son’. So, though she first says that it would not be nice and in accordance

with tradition for a married woman to touch another male, but she nevertheless can still ride on his back because he is like her son. But she expresses fears that she might fall in the ocean due to excitement, and that is why she would not like to take that risk.]

[102/3]

निरमोलिक मनि छोरि गूँथि जो, दीनी हनुमत हाथ ।
जाऔ पुत्र! जहाँ रघुनंदन, कहौ बिपति कै गाथ ॥
काहै कौ प्रभु 'सूर' धनुष लियौ, अरु बाँध्यौ कटि भाथ ।
यह पापी, तुम पतित—उधारन, कहाँ बिलंबे नाथ ॥

(102/3)

niramōlika mani chōri gūm̐thi jō, dīnī hanumata hātha.
jā'au putra! jahām̐ raghunandana, kahau bipati kai gātha..
kāhai kauṁ prabhu 'sūra' dhanuṣa liyau, aru bām̐dhyau kaṭi bhātha.
yaha pāpī, tuma patita-udhārana, kahām̐ bilambē nātha..

102/3. After saying this, Sita removed the priceless gem that was stuck in her hair (i.e. a hair pin), and handed it over to Hanuman as a memento (to be given to the Lord as a proof of Hanuman having found Sita).

Then she said to him, 'Go son, go where Raghunandan (Sri Ram) is, and tell him all about my troubles and miseries. Why did the brave Lord ('Prabhu Sur') take up a bow and tied a quiver to his waist (if he did not want to use it to kill my tormenters and rescue me)?

(Plead with him on my behalf—) 'I am a humble sinner but you are a liberator of sinners.' Why are you delaying then, oh my Lord?' (102/3).

हनुमान का लंका से प्रस्थान—राग जैतश्री

[103/1]

लंक हनुमंत तोरि सुहनवंत सीता पै जाय ।
कछु बिलख्यौ, कछु हरषवंत है हरये बैठौ आय ॥
फिरि आयौ उद्यान में, कह्यौ जु सुचित सँदेस ।
अब हौं यहँ लै आयहाँ श्रीरघुनाथ नरेस ॥
धनि राघव बल परखिहँ, धनि अंजनी सुमाइ ।
ऐसे समरथ दूत बिनु कैसें काज सिराय ॥
पूँछ जरै जीवन नहीं, मगन भयौ श्री जोय ।
लै आऊँ रघुनाथ कौ, मात रजायस होय ॥

hanumāna kā laṅkā sē prasthāna-rāga jaitaśrī

(103/1)

laṅka hanumanta tōri suhanavanta sītā pair̐ jāya.

kachu bilakhyau, kachu haraṣavanta hvai harayē baiṭhau āya..
 phiri āyau udyāna maim, kahyau ju sucita samḍēsa..
 aba haum yahaṁ lai āyahauṁ śrīraghunātha narēsa..
 dhani rāghava bala parakhihairṁ, dhani anjani sumā'i..
 aisē samaratha dūta binu kaisēm kāja sirāya..
 pūmḥcha jaraiṁ jīvana nahīm, magana bhayau śrī jōya..
 lai ā'ūṁ raghunātha kauṁ, māta rajāyasa hōya..

Hanuman's Departure from Lanka—Raag Jaitsri

103/1. After having demolished Lanka, Hanuman went cheerfully to Sita (who was sitting forlon in the Ashok grove). He was simultaneously a little dismayed (seeing her miserable condition) as well as a little ecstatic (at having demolished the city successfully). He went silently and sat down near her.

(He said to her—) 'I have taken a walk in the garden and have come back to you. [Obviously, this is an under-statement, because Hanuman had already caused a lot of havoc and turmoil in the city.] Now tell me the message (which you wish to give for Sri Ram) with a calm mind. Now I shall bring king Raghunath (Sri Ram) here (very soon).'

(Sita was all praise for Hanuman, and she replied—) 'Raghav (Sri Ram) is fortunate and lucky to have recognised your strength and valour; mother Anjani is fortunate and honourable too (who has given birth to you). Say, how is it possible to complete the task (of the conquest of Lanka) without an able messenger like you?'

His (Hanuman's) tail was burnt, not his spirit. When he saw Sita ('Sri', an epithet used for goddess Laxmi who had taken birth as Sita; Laxmi is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu who had incarnated as Lord Ram), he was drowned in joys and felt extremely delighted.

He said most cheerfully, 'Mother, give me your royal permission or mandate so that I can bring Raghunath (Sri Ram) here¹.' (103/1).

[Note—¹This statement is of great significance. It shows that the Lord had hesitated in directly attacking Lanka and taking any unilateral decision because he waited for Sita's approval. The reason is that Sita is a personification of 'Maha-Maya', the cosmic Shakti principle of the Supreme Being. The Lord himself does nothing, and all that he wishes to do are actually done or carried out by his Maha-Maya, which in essence is the Lord's own dynamic cosmic power having stupendous potentials in action. Another way of looking at this statement is that the Lord needed Sita's permission to come to kill the demons and their king Ravana because the latter had been enjoying the protection of a great Goddess who was also one of the numerous manifestations of the same cosmic Shakti that was also represented by Sita. The Lord needed the green signal to ensure victory over the demon race. In this connection it is pertinent to note that the Lord had worshipped the great Goddess Durga in order to overcome Ravana—and this story is clearly narrated in Devi-Puran Mahabagwat written by the legendary sage Veda Vyas, in its Canto 36 to Canto 48. An English rendering of this particular Ramayana has also been published by this author separately.]

[103/2]

देखें ही गति जात है, कहा कहाँ कहि तोहि ।

कहियौ श्रीरघुनाथ सौ असुर सँतावत मोहि ॥
 पूँछ बुझाई लहर करि रावन कै बिदिमान ।
 तौऊँ जरत बुझाइहौँ रामचंद्र कै बान ॥
 सौ जोजन तहाँ सिखर अति, चढ़ौ हनू तहाँ धाय ।
 फाँदत जंघा—बल भयौ रह्यौ पतालहि जाय ॥
 उपै हनू आकास महँ मनहुँ धनुष कौ बान ।
 आगम अंगद कौ भयौ, पवनपूत पहिचान ॥

(103/2)

dēkhair̥ hī gati jāta hai, kahā kahaur̥m kahi tōhi.
 kahiyaū śrīraghunātha saur̥m asura samtāvata mōhi..
 pūm̐cha bujhā'ī lahara kari rāvana kair̥m bidimāna.
 tau'ūm̐ jarata bujhā'ihaur̥m rāmacandra kair̥m bāna..
 sau jōjana tahām̐ sikhara ati, car̐hau hanū tahām̐ dhāya.
 phām̐data jaṅghā-bala bhayau rahyau patālahi jāya..
 upai hanū ākāsa maham̐ manahum̐ dhanuṣa kau bāna.
 āgama aṅgada kaur̥m bhayau, pavanapūta pahicāna..

103/2. (Sita said to Hanuman—) ‘You are going back after having seen my condition first hand. What more can I say with my mouth (when you have already seen everything with your own eyes)? Tell Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram) that the demons are tormenting me no end.’

(Hanuman replied—) ‘I have doused my tail by dipping it in the waves of the ocean even while Ravana was present (in the city, but he did not dare to intervene and stop me). Your heart-burn and torments will also be calmed down by the arrows of Sri Ram Chandra (when he would kill the demons along with their king Ravana).’

[Then Hanuman prepared to leave Lanka and go back to the northern side of the ocean where his other companions had been eagerly waiting for his return. He left the city in the same way as he had arrived there—i.e. by the air route. For this, he had to launch himself just like a rocket is hurled into the sky. So—] Hanuman ran up to the summit of a mountain which was 100 Yojans (appx. 800 miles) high. When he exerted pressure on his thighs to launch himself (or when he got ready to jump or leap) in the sky, the mountain sank into the bowls of the earth (i.e. was flattened by the downward thrust of Hanuman’s launch).

Hanuman flew in the sky like an arrow shot from a bow.

(At the other shore of the ocean—) Angad recognised that it was the son of the Wind-God when he saw someone coming towards their direction in the sky by some signs or characteristic features that made it clear to him that he could be no one else but the great Hanuman himself (103/2).

[103/3]

आवत भई न बार कपि, जैसै कंठ उसास ।
 मानौ दिनकर की कला बिथुरत भयौ प्रकास ॥

देखन कौं कपि अलनले चढ़े सिखर पर धाय ।
 जामवंत अंगद तहाँ प्रथम पहुँचे आय ॥
 सिला एक चाकरि तहाँ, लै बैठे सब बीर ।
 सबै कथा कारन कह्यौ, क्यों लाँघ्यौ सागर—तीर ॥

(103/3)

āvata bhaṭī na bāra kapi, jaisaiṁ kaṇṭha usāsa.
 mānau dinakara kī kalā bithurata bhayau prakāsa..
 dēkhana kauṁ kapi alanalē carḥē sikhara para dhāya.
 jāmavanta aṅgada tahām̐ prathama pahūm̐cē āya..
 silā ēka cākari tahām̐, lai baiṭhē saba bīra.
 sabai kathā kārana kahyau, kyauṁ lām̐ghyau sāgara-tīra..

103/3. The Kapi (an epithet for Hanuman) took no more time to arrive on this side of the ocean than the time taken for the ‘yawn’ (or the wind that is exhaled) to escape the throat once it reaches there. [That is, Hanuman took very little time and very little effort to cross the vast ocean and reach this side of the shore where his other companions were waiting for him.]

He appeared like the sun’s rays in the sky that dispel all darkness around. To see him, all the monkeys rushed to the summits of nearby mountains and hill-tops here and there. Jamvant (the Bear king) and Angad (the crown prince) also joined them.

[When Hanuman arrived on this side of the ocean, all the monkeys surrounded him excitedly, asking for his welfare and the news about Sita.] All the brave warriors sat on a large rock. Then he (Hanuman) told them in detail how he had crossed the ocean (103/3).

[103/4]

पवन—पूत! साँची कहौ, तूँ आयौ सिय देखि ।
 कितौ कि रावन और दल, गज—बाजीन बिसेषि ॥
 गढ़ ऊँचौ, लंका घनी, तहाँ असुर कौ राज ।
 अतिबल रावन तहाँ बसै, सब भूपति सिरताज ॥
 बिभीषन मन मिलन कौ हौँ जानत उनमान ।
 ‘सूर’ सुहर रघुनाथ की रावन कैँ बिदिमान ॥

(103/4)

pavana-pūta! sām̐cī kahau, tūm̐ āyau siya dēkhi.
 kitau kī rāvana aura dala, gaja-bājīna bisēṣi..
 gaḍha ūm̐cai, laṅkā ghanī, tahām̐ asura kau rāja.
 atibala rāvana tahām̐ basai, saba bhūpati siratāja..
 bibhīṣana mana milana kau hauṁ jānata unamāna.
 ‘sūra’ suhara raghunātha kī rāvana kaim̐ bidimāna..

103/4. (The assembled monkeys enquired—) ‘Oh son of the Wind-God! Tell us the truth. Have you returned after having seen Sita? How strong is Ravana? Together with elephants and horses, how big (large) is his army?’

(Hanuman replied—) ‘The fort of Lanka is very high, the city is densely populated, and the demons have an unquestionable sway over it. The most strong and powerful Ravana lives there. He is the best amongst the kings (in his valour, powers, potentials and majesty). It is my guess that Vibhishan wants to meet (and seek refuge with) Sri Ram. Brave Raghunath’s good fame has spread there inspite of Ravana’s presence (and fear). [That is, the citizens of Lanka are in awe of Sri Ram, and they talk about us in hushed tones.]’ (103/4).

मन्दोदरी की रावण को सलाह

[104]

आजु रघुबीर कौ दूत आयौ ।
 जारि लंका सकल, मारि रच्छस बहुत,
 सीय—सुधि लै कुसल फिर सिधायौ ॥
 कहत मन्दोदरी, सुनहु दसंकध पिय!
 बड़ौ अपमान करि गयौ तेरौ ।
 अजहुँ मन समझिकै, मूढ़! मिलि राम सौँ,
 ‘सूर’ मतिमंद कह्यौ मान मेरौ ॥

mandōdarī kī rāvaṇa kō salāha

(104)

āju raghubīra kau dūta āyau.
 jāri laṅkā sakala, māri rācchasa bahuta,
 sīya-sudhi lai kusala phira sidhāyau..
 kahata mandōdarī, sunahu dasakandha piya!
 baṛau apamāna kari gayau tērau.
 ajahumṁ mana samajhikai, mūrha! mili rāma saurṁ,
 ‘sūra’ matimanda kahyau māna mērau..

Mandodari’s Advice to Ravana

104. (Surdas says—) ‘Today the messenger of Raghubir (Sri Ram) had come. [This refers to the burning of Lanka by Hanuman as narrated in the foregoing verses.] He burnt down the whole of Lanka, killed many demons, and went back unharmed with the news of Sita.’

(Annoyed, worried, peeved and alarmed at the most unfortunate developments and what they portend for the demon race—) Mandodari (the chief queen) said to her husband Ravana again, ‘Listen dear, the 10-shouldered one¹! He (Hanuman) has gone back after having inflicted great humiliation upon you. Oh you stupid and ill-witted

fellow; even now you must realise what you are up to. You should go and meet Sri Ram. Oh you brave but foolish one! Pay heed to what I say (or you will have to regret later on).² (104).

[Note--¹Ravana had ten heads resting on ten necks. The word 'Kandha' in the text literally means a 'shoulder', but in practical terms it actually refers to Ravana's ten heads.

²The last line can be interpreted as follows also—Surdas says that Mandodari sternly admonished her husband by calling him 'Matimand' (efrean) or an ill-witted one with a low intellect and wisdom. She earnestly prayed to him to pay heed to her advice even as late as now.]

सीता का राम के प्रति संदेश—राग सारंग

[105]

मेरी केती बिनती करनी ।

पहिलैं करि प्रनाम, पाइनि परि, मनि रघुनाथ—हाथ लै धरनी ॥

मंदाकिनि—तट फटिक—सिला पर, मुख—मुख जोरि तिलक की करनी ॥

कहा कहाँ, कछु कहत न आवै, सुमिरत प्रीति होइ उर अरनी ॥

तुम हनुमंत, पबित्र पवन—सुत, कहियौ जाइ जोइ मैं बरनी ।

'सूरदास' प्रभु आनि मिलावहु, मूरति दुसह दुःख—भय हरनी ॥

sītā kā rāma kē prati sandēśa-rāga sārāṅga

(105)

mēri kēti binatī karanī.

pahilaim kari pranāma, pā'ini pari, mani raghunātha-hātha lai dharanī..

mandākini-taṭa phaṭika-silā para, mukha-mukha jōri tilaka kī karanī..

kahā kahauṁ, kachu kahata na āvai, sumirata prīti hō'i ura aranī..

tuma hanumanta, pabitra pavana-suta, kahiyaū jā'i jō'i maiṁ baranī.

'sūradāsa' prabhu āni milāvahu, mūrati dusaha duḥkha-bhaya haranī..

Sita's Message for Sri Ram—Raag Saarang

105. (Sita told Hanuman when he was ready to leave Lanka—) 'Pray to the Lord on my behalf. First, fall down at his feet and pay my sincere obeisance to him, and then place the gem (my hair-pin) in his hands. Remind him how once, on the banks of river Mandakini, when we were seated together alone on the rock of crystal ('Phatik Shila'), the Lord had drawn his face near mine to put the 'Tilak Mark'¹ on my forehead. What can I say more; I am so dumbfounded and stunned at the developments that I am unable to say anything! When I remember those moments, I become overwhelmed with nostalgia laced with deepest of love and affection (for my Lord).

Oh Hanuman! You are the immaculate and holy son of the Wind-God. [Hence I did not hesitate to tell you about those intimate moments.] Go and tell him (Sri Ram) what I have just described to you². Bring the 'Lord of Surdas' ('Surdas-prabhu') to meet me. His

image (sight) is one which eliminates/dispels/removes all kinds of sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations.³ (105).

[Note :- ¹The 'Tilak Mark' is an auspicious sign marked on the forehead of all married woman in India. It is usually made by vermillion or by a paste made out of sandalwood. Upper class men in society, such as the Brahmins, as well as followers of Lord Vishnu and Shiva also mark this line on the forehead. It is referred to as the 'Tripund' as it consists of three lines.

²That incident is known to no one else except the couple, Sri Ram and Sita. Even Laxman did not know anything about it, because those were intimate moments between a husband and a wife. So, when Hanuman would narrate it to Sri Ram, the latter would be convinced that Hanuman has indeed met Sita and he is not telling a lie. Further, Sita's intention was to stoke Sri Ram's fondness for her by reminding him of this incident, and firming his resolve to get her back from the clutches of her tormentor at any cost.

³The last line of this verse can be interpreted as follows also— Surdas says that Sita requested Hanuman to bring Sri Ram to meet her. His divine, holy and august sight is such that it would eliminate all her sorrows and miseries]

हनुमान द्वारा रिपोर्ट—राग मारू

[106]

हनुमान अंगद के आगैं लंक—कथा सब भाषी ।
अंगद कही, भली तुम कीनी, हम सब की पति राखी ॥
हरषवन्त ह्वै चले तहाँ तें, मग मैं बिलम न लाई ।
पहुँचे आइ निकट रघुबर के, सुग्रिव आयौ धाई ॥
सबनि प्रनाम कियौ रघुपति कौ, अंगद बचन सुनायौ ॥
'सूरदास' प्रभु—पद—प्रताप करि, हनु सीय—सुधि ल्यायौ ॥

hanumāna dvārā ripōṛṭa-rāga mārū

(106)

hanūmāna aṅgada kē āgair̥ laṅka-kathā saba bhāṣī.
aṅgada kahī, bhalī tuma kīnī, hama saba kī pati rākhī..
haraṣavanta hvai calē tahām̐ tēm̐, maga mair̥m bilama na lā'ī.
pahum̐cē ā'i nikaṭa raghubara kē, sugrīva āyau dhā'ī..
sabani pranāma kiyau raghupati kaum̐, aṅgada bacana sunāyau..
'sūradāsa' prabhu-pada-pratāpa kari, hanū sīya-sudhi lyāyau..

Hanuman's Report to the Lord—Raag Maarū

106. [Back on the northern shores of the ocean where all the monkeys and bears had been eagerly waiting for Hanuman's return, the latter reported to Angad, the monkey prince deputed to search Sita.]

Hanuman conveyed all the news of Lanka to Angad. Hearing it, Angad said in praise, 'You have done an excellent and most commandable job, and you have saved our honour.'

Then they all started from there (on their way back to Kishkindha where Sri Ram waited for them) without wasting any time en-route.

When they arrived near the place where Raghubar (Sri Ram) was, Sugriv eagerly rushed forward to meet him (Angad). All of them (Angad and his party) bowed reverentially before Raghubar (Sri Ram).

Surdas says that then Angad submitted—'It is due to the stupendous glory and the potential powers and abilities (that come with the worship) of the Lord's holy and divine feet that Hanuman has brought back the auspicious good news about the whereabouts of Sita.' (106).

[107]

हनु! तैं सब कौ काज सँवास्चौ ।
 बार—बार अंगद यौ भाषै, मेरौ प्रान उबास्चौ ॥
 तुरतहिं गमन कियौ सागर तैं, बीचहिं बाग उजास्चौ ।
 कीन्हौ मधुबन चौर चहूँ दिसि, माली जाइ पुकास्चौ ॥
 धनि हनुमत, सुग्रीव कहत हैं, रावन कौ दल मास्चौ ।
 'सूर' सुनत रघुनाथ भयौ सुख, काज आपनौ सास्चौ ॥

(107)

hanu! tair̥ṁ saba kau kāja sam̐vāryau.
 bāra-bāra aṅgada yaur̥ṁ bhāṣai, mērau prāna ubāryau..
 turatahir̥ṁ gamana kiyau sāgara tair̥ṁ, bīcahir̥ṁ bāga ujāryau..
 kīnhau madhubana caura cahūṁ^ṁ disī, māli jā'i pukāryau..
 dhani hanumata, sugrīva kahata hair̥ṁ, rāvana kau dala māryau..
 'sūra' sunata raghunātha bhayau sukha, kāja āpanau sāryau..

107. (Angad lauded Hanuman—) 'Oh Hanu (an affectionate way of calling Hanuman)! You have done the great and most daunting work (of finding out about Sita) on our behalf.' Angad repeatedly told him that he (Hanuman) has been instrumental in sparing (saving) his life (see verse no. 100 also).

All of them (the advance monkey party led by Angad and Jamvant sent by Sri Ram to reconnoiter for Sita and who had been waiting on the shores of the ocean for Hanuman's return) immediately started back from the shores of the ocean. So overjoyed were they that they destroyed/ruined (Sugriv's) garden en-route (by eating fruits, drinking honey, breaking branches of trees and littering the place). They ruined the 'Madhuvan' (literally, the forest of honey-combs) from all the corners (sides).

[The monkeys and the bears weren't afraid of ruining the forest of their king Sugriv because they knew that all would be forgiven once the good news reaches him. This incident also shows the level of their extreme happiness and enthusiasm which matches that of a victorious army returning from the battle-front.]

The gardeners rushed to inform their Lord Sugriv that the garden has been destroyed by Angad and his companions.

Hearing everything, Sugriv exclaimed—‘Hail Hanuman! He is the most worthy and fortunate one that he has thrashed (trounced and beaten back) the formidable forces of Ravana.¹

Surdas says that on hearing that his work has been successfully accomplished, Raghunath (Sri Ram) too felt very happy (107).

[Note—¹When Sugriv heard that Hanuman and other monkeys are enjoying the fruits and honey of his private garden, he at once realised that they must have some good news about Sita, because it is impossible that without this they would have had the courage to destroy his garden. So he immediately deduced that their mission has been successful. As to him personally naming Hanuman as the hero it is because the guards must have certainly told him that the monkeys and bears are cheering Hanuman and have surrounded him from all the sides just like victorious armymen surround their valiant hero who had been singularly responsible for turning the tide of war against the enemy. The group must have richly garlanded Hanuman and could have even been carrying him on their shoulders as their hero and as a token of their gratitude to him.]

राग मारू

[108/1]

कहौ कपि! जनक—सुता—कुसलात ।
 आवागमन सुनावहु अपनौ, देहु हमैं सुख—गात ॥
 सुनौ पिता! जल अंतर द्वै कै, रोक्यौ मग इक नारि ।
 धर—अंबर लौं रूप निसाचरि, गरजी बदन पसारि ॥
 तब मैं डरपि कियौ छोटौ तनु, पैठ्यौ उदर मँझारि ।
 खरभर परी, दियौ उन पैड़ौ, जीती पहिली रारि ॥
 गिरि मैनाक उदधि मैं अब्धुत, आगैं रोक्यौ जात ।
 पवन पिता कौ मित्र न जान्यौ, धोखैं मारी लात ॥
 तबहूँ और रह्यौ सरितापति आगैं जोजन सात ।
 तुव प्रताप परली दिसि पहुँच्यौ, कौन बढ़ावै बात ॥

rāga mārū

(108/1)

kahau kapi! janaka-sutā-kusalāta.
 āvāgamana sunāvahu apanau, dēhu hamaim sukha-gāta..
 sunau pitā! jala antara hvai kai, rōkyau maga ika nāri.
 dhara-ambara laum rūpa nisācari, garajī badana pasāri..
 taba maim ḍarapi kiyau chōṭau tanu, paiṭhyau udara mamjhāri.
 kharabhara parī, diyau una paiṇrau, jīṭi pahilī rāri..
 giri maināka udadhi maim adbhuta, āgaim rōkyau jāta.
 pavana pitā kau mitra na jān'you, dhōkhaim mārī lāta..
 tabahūm' aura rahyau saritāpati āgaim jōjana sāta.

tuva pratāpa paralī disi pahum̐cyau, kauna barhāvai bāta..

Raag Maaru

108/1. [When Hunuman reported to the Lord, he asked the former as follows—] ‘Tell me Kapi about the well-being of the daughter of Janak (Sita). Tell me all about how you went there and came back. Let me touch and feel you (i.e. to caress you affectionately, bless you, feel if you have not got any wounds, and also to express my deep gratitude to you).’

(Hanuman replied—) ‘Oh my father!¹ Listen. A woman tried to stop my way from under the water (i.e. from underneath the ocean, as I was crossing it on my way to Lanka). That demonesses’ mouth was so colossus that it spread from the surface of the earth right up to the sky. She opened her mouth wide and roared. I was afraid and reduced my body to enter her belly. It (my jumping and squirming inside her stomach) caused great uneasiness to her, so she allowed me to escape (leave).

In this way, I won the first battle (or overcame the first hurdle on my way to Lanka). [This incident relates to demoness named Sursa who was sent by the Gods to test Hanuman’s presence of mind, his agility, his deftness, his manoeuvrability, and his ability to overcome the unpredictable and formidable obstacles that he would have to face once he lands in Lanka amidst enemies of the Gods.]

There is a strange mountain called Mainak in the ocean. It also tried to stop me from progressing ahead. I did not know that he is a friend of my father, the Wind-God. So, unaware, I kicked him by mistake (and I am sorry for it because he is my father’s friend).

Beyond it, there was still an ocean measuring seven Yojans (appx. 56 miles) left to be covered. By your blessings, glory and potential powers, I reached the other side (without any further obstacle).

What is the use to go into details? In short, I reached the other side of the ocean somehow.’ (108/1).

[Note—¹In earlier verses of this Sundar kand, Hanuman has been referred to as a ‘son’ of Sita repeatedly in verse nos. 77/4, 77/7, 78, 82, 83, 87, 91-92 and 102/1. This being so, it is no wonder that Hanuman addresses Lord Ram as his ‘father’.

Besides this point it ought to be noted here that the Lord is the universal Father of the entire creation as he is none other than the Supreme Being himself manifested. So the address of a ‘father’ is most appropriate.]

[108/2]

लंका पौरि—पौरि मैं ढूँढ़ी, अरु बन—उपबन जाइ ।
 तरु असोक तर देखि जानकी, तब हौं रह्यौ लुकाइ ॥
 रावन कह्यौ सो कह्यौ न जाई, रह्यौ क्रोध अति छाइ ।
 तबहीं अवधि जानि कै, राख्यौ मंदोदरि समुझाइ ॥
 पुनि हौं गयौ सुफल—बारी मैं, देखी दृष्टि पसारि ।
 असी सहस किंकर—दल तेहि के, दौरे मोहि निहारि ॥
 तुव प्रताप तिन कौं छिन भीतर जूझत लगी न बार ।
 उन कौं मारि तुरत मैं कीन्ही मेघनाद सौं रार ॥

ब्रह्म—फाँस उन लई हाथ करि, मैं चितयौ कर जोरि ।
 तज्यौ कोप, मरजादा राखी, बँध्यौ आपही भोरि ॥
 रावन पै लै गए सकल मिलि, ज्यौँ लुब्धक पसु जाल ।
 करवौ बचन सवन सुनि मेरौ, अति रिस गही भुवाल ॥
 आपुन ही मुगदर लै धायौ, करि लोचन बिकराल ।
 चहुँ दिसि 'सूर' सोर करि धावै, ज्यौँ करि हेरि सुगाल ॥

(108/2)

laṅkā pauri-pauri mair̥ṁ ḍhūm̐ṛhī, aru bana-upabana jā'i.
 taru asōka tara dēkhi jānakī, taba haur̥ṁ rahyau lukā'i..
 rāvana kahyau sō kahyau na jā'i, rahyau krōdha ati chā'i.
 tabahīṁ avadhi jāni kai, rākhyau mandōdari samujhā'i..
 puni haur̥ṁ gayau suphala-bārī mair̥ṁ, dēkhī dr̥ṣṭi pasāri.
 asī sahasa kiṅkara-dala tēhi kē, daurē mōhi nihāri..
 tuva pratāpa tina kaur̥ṁ china bhītara jūjhata lagī na bāra.
 una kaur̥ṁ māri turata mair̥ṁ kīnhī mēghanāda saur̥ṁ rāra..
 brahma-phām̐sa una la'i hātha kari, mair̥ṁ citayau kara jōri.
 tajyau kōpa, marajādā rākhi, bam̐dhyau āpahī bhōri..
 rāvana pai lai ga'e sakala mili, ज्याम̐ lubdhaka pasu jāla.
 karuvau bacana sravana suni mērau, ati risa gahī bhuvāla..
 āpuna hī mudagara lai dhāyau, kari lōcana bikarāla.
 cahum̐disi 'sūra' sōra kari dhāvair̥ṁ, ज्याम̐ kari hēri srgāla..

108/2. Once in Lanka, I searched each doorway (i.e. every household) as well as every forest and garden (for Sita). When I saw Janki (Sita) sitting under the Ashok tree, I hid myself in the foliage (waiting for an opportunity).

Whatever Ravana said at that time is not possible for me to repeat here (because his words were most disgusting, scurrilous and not worth repeating again), but those words made me very angry, peeved and extremely vehement. At that moment (before I could lose my control and thrash him then and there), Mandodari (Ravana's chief queen) intervened and stopped him (from committing any blunder) because the grace period (of 1 month given to Sita by Ravana) had not expired.

From there, I went to the excellent fruit-garden and saw it being guarded by 80 thousand of Ravana's forces. As soon as they saw me, they dashed forward (to attack), but by your grace, there was no delay in my retaliating and battling with them (and killing them on the spot).

After getting rid of them, I fought with Meghnad (the son of Ravana). When he took the 'Brahma's snare' (a weapon) in his hands, I respectfully bowed before it in deference to its honour and glory. I forsook anger, and showing respect for this weapon's honour, I voluntarily felt unconscious (i.e. I pretended to faint) and allowed myself to be captured.

Just like a hunter ties his pray, the demons shackled me and took me to Ravana. The king (i.e. Ravana) became annoyed at my stern and harsh words. His eyes turned red and ferocious (with anger), and he lifted a dumbbell in his hands and rushed to kill me.

From all sides, the demons were yelling tumultuously and dashing forward at me just like so many jackals do on seeing an elephant in their midst.' (108/2).

[109]

कैसेँ पुरी जरी कपिराइ!
 बड़े दैत्य कैसेँ कै मारे, अंतर आप बचाइ ?
 प्रगट कपाट बिकट दीन्हे हे, बहु जोधा रखवारे ।
 तैंतिस कोटि देव बस कीन्हे, ते तुम सौँ क्यों हारे ॥
 तीनि लोक डर जाके काँपैं, तुम हनुमान न पेखे ?
 तुम्हरे क्रोध स्राप सीता केँ, दूरि जरत हम देखे ॥
 हौ जगदीस, कहा कहाँ तुम सौँ, तुम बल—तेज मुरारी ।
 'सूरजदास' सुनो सब संतो! अबिगत की गति न्यारी ॥

(109)

kaisaiṁ purī jarī kapirā'i!
 baṛē daitya kaisaiṁ kai mārē, antara āpa bacā'i?
 pragaṭa kapāṭa bikaṭa dīnhē hē, bahu jōdhā rakhavārē.
 taintisa kōṭi dēva basa kīnhē, tē tuma saurī kyaurī hārē..
 tīni lōka ḍara jākē kāmṭaiṁ, tuma hanumāna na pēkhē?
 tumharē krōdha srāpa sītā kēm, dūri jarata hama dēkhē..
 hau jagadīsa, kahā kahaurī tuma saurī, tuma bala-tēja murārī.
 'sūradāsa' sunō saba santō! abigata kī gati n'yārī..

109. (Sri Ram asked Hanuman in wonderment—) 'Oh king of Monkeys ('Kapi-rai')! How did you burn the city? [Or how was it possible for you to burn such a big city all alone though it is inhabited by such strong and powerful demons?]

How did you kill the big (colossus, ferocious, fierce, powerful and cruel) demons, and how did you manage to protect yourself (from their onslaught)?

Obviously, there must have been huge gates blocking the entrance to the city, and it must have been guarded by countless warriors.

He (Ravana), who has 33 crore (1 crore = 10 million) Gods under his control, how was he subdued by you?

Oh Hanuman! He (Ravana) who terrifies the three worlds (i.e. the whole of the creation) by his mere presence, didn't he see you (enter the city and try to stop you from causing such unprecedented havoc)?

At these words of amazement and awe that were spoken by Sri Ram, Hanuman replied most politely and humbly, without any sign of even a trace of pride, self-praise, haughtiness or arrogance—'I had watched the city burn from a distance. It was burning due to your wrath and Sita's curse.

Oh Murari (literally, the Lord who had killed the demon called Mur)! Oh Lord of the world! What can I tell you (for I have not done anything myself). Everything happened because of your own stupendous glory, your own majesty, and your own powers and potentials. [That is, it would be absolutely wrong for me to claim any credit for what had happened at Lanka. Actually it was your own majesty and powers on

display. I was merely an instrument in carrying out your orders. I was only holding erect the flag of your astounding glory and fame as your curse rampaged across the city of Lanka and reduced it to ashes besides trouncing the haughtiness of the demons. All was achieved as the result of your blessings and majestic powers, and there was nothing that I did myself.]’

Surdas says in a general way—‘Listen all you saints! The maverick tricks played by the one who is beyond comprehension, are incomprehensible, strange and mysterious.’ [That is, it is indeed true that Lanka was burnt because of Sri Ram’s own wrath and Sita’s curse, but the credit of burning the city went to Hanuman. This is a great mystery and a secret known only to a privileged few. Hanuman indeed was wise and cleaver enough to realise this, instead of boasting of his achievements. This perhaps is the reason that he was so dear to the Lord of the world. The Lord realised that Hanuman did not have even a trace of ego and haughtiness in him, that he knew that the Lord is the ultimate doer and decider of one’s destiny. These are the virtues that distinguish the Lord’s sincere devotee from the rest, and hence such souls are very close and dear to the Lord.] (109).

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Section-1

Lanka Kand/Canto 6

लंकाकाण्ड

सिन्धु तटवास—राग मारू

[110]

सीय—सुधि सुनत रघुबीर धाए ।
 चले तब लखन, सुग्रीव, अंगद, हनू,
 जामवँत, नील, नल सबै आए ॥
 भूमि अति डगमगी, जोगिनी सुनि जगी,
 सहस—फन सेस कौ सीय काँप्यौ ।
 कटक अगिनित जुस्यौ, लंक खरभर पस्यौ,
 सूर कौ तेज धर—धूरि—ढाँप्यौ ॥
 जलधि—तट आए रघुराइ ठाढ़े भए,
 रिच्छ—कपि गरजि कै धुनि सुनायौ ।
 ‘सूर’ रघुराइ चितए हनूमान दिसि,
 आइ तिन तुरतहीं सीस नायौ ॥

laṅkākaṇḍa

sindhu taṭavāsa-rāga mārū

(110)

sīya-sudhi sunata raghubīra dhā'ē.
 calē taba lakhana, sugrīva, aṅgada, hanū,
 jāmavamṭa, nīla, nala sabai ā'ē..
 bhūmi ati ḍagamagī, jōginī suni jagī,
 sahasa-phana sēsa kau sīya kāmṭpyau.
 kaṭaka aginita juryau, laṅka kharabhara paryau,
 sūra kau tēja dhara-dhūri-ḍhāmṭpyau..
 jaladhi-taṭa ā'ē raghurā'i ṭhārḥē bha'ē,
 riccha-kapi garajī kai dhuni sunāyau.
 'sūra' raghurā'i cita'ē hanūmāna disi,
 ā'i tina turatahīm sīsa nāyau..

Lanka Kand/Canto 6

Ram's Army Camps on the Ocean's Shore—Raag Maaru

110. As soon as Raghubir (Sri Ram; literally, the brave warrior of king Raghu's clan) heard about the news of Sita, he immediately embarked on a mission to rescue her. Behind him followed Laxman, Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman, Jamvant, Neel, Nal, and the rest of the army.

The earth shook and trembled; the ascetics and hermits woke up from their meditative trance; the hoods of the 100-hooded Seshnath (the legendary dragon holding the earth aloft on its hoods) also swayed.

The monkey army collected in uncountable numbers. There was a massive turmoil in Lanka. So much dust was raised that the sun was covered with it. Raghuraj (Sri Ram) came with his army and stood on the shore of the ocean. The bears and monkeys roared violently and most enthusiastically.

Surdas says—'The brave Raghurai ('Sur-raghurai') glanced at Hanuman. The latter went immediately to him and bowed his head before the Lord.' (110).

हनुमान का राम को आश्वासन—राग केदारौ

[111]

राघौ जू! कितिक बात, तजि चिंत ।
 केतिक रावन—कुंभकरन—दल, सुनियै देव अनंत ॥
 कहौ तौ लंक लकुट ज्यौं फेरौं, फेरि कहूँ लै डारौं ।
 कहौ तौ परबत चाँपि चरन तर, नीर—खार मैं गारौं ॥
 कहौ तौ असुर लँगूर लपेटौं, कहौ तौ नखनि बिदारौं ।
 कहौ तौ सैल उपारि पेड़ि तैं, दै सुमेरु सौं मारौं ॥
 जेतिक सैल—सुमेरु धरनि मैं, भुज भरि आनि मिलाऊँ ।
 सप्त समुद्र देऊँ छाती तर, एतिक देह बढ़ाऊँ ॥
 चली जाउ सैना सब मोपर, धरौ चरन रघुबीर ।
 मोहि असीस जगत—जननी की, नवत न बज्र—सरीर ॥
 जितिक बोल बोल्यौ तुम आगैं, राम! प्रताप तुम्हारे ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु की सौं साँचे, जन करि पैज पुकारे ॥

hanumāna kā rāma kō āśvāsana-rāga kēdārau

(111)

rāghau jū! kitika bāta, taji cinta.
 kētika rāvana-kumbhakarana-dala, suniyai dēva ananta..
 kahau tau laṅka lakuṭa jyaum phēraum, phēri kahūm̐ lai ḍāraum̐.
 kahau tau parabata cām̐pi carana tara, nīra-khāra maim̐ gāraum̐..
 kahau tau asura lam̐gūra lapēṭaum̐, kahau tau nakhani bidāraum̐.

kahau tau saila upāri pēḍi taim̃, dai sumēru saum̃ māraum̃..
 jētika saila-sumēru dharani maim̃, bhuja bhari āni milā'um̃..
 sapta samudra dē'um̃ chātī tara, ētika dēha baṛhā'um̃..
 calī jā'u sainā saba mōpara, dharau carana raghubīra..
 mōhi asisa jagata-jananī kī, navata na bajra-sarīra..
 jitika bōla bōlyau tuma āgaim̃, rāma! pratāpa tumhārē..
 'sūradāsa' prabhu kī saum̃ sām̃cē, jana kari paija pukārē..

Hanuman's Assurance to Sri Ram—Raag Kedaro

111. (Hanuman reassured and encouraged Sri Ram—) 'Oh respected Raghav! What's the matter; stop worrying. Oh the eternal Lord! Listen; what does the army of Ravana and Kumbhakaran count (matter)?

If you give the orders, I can swing Lanka round and round like a stick and fling/throw it somewhere.

If you say, I can press the Trikoot Mountain (on which Lanka is situated) by my foot and push it down under the sour/salty water of the ocean.

If you say, I will tie the demons (Ravana etc.) with my tail, or tear them apart with my nails.

If you say, I will uproot the mountain (on which Lanka is located) and dump it violently on Mt. Sumeru (or Kailash, so as to break it into splinters). Or else, if you so wish, I will collect all the mountains on earth, including Sumeru (or Kailash), and dump them (on Lanka so that the city gets crushed).

I shall expand my body to such an extent that all the 7 oceans remain below my chest level. Oh Raghubir! (I will lie or stretch myself across the ocean like a hanging bridge with my colossus body and—) You put your feet on me (i.e. walk on me) and cross the ocean along with the entire army. I have the blessing of the mother of the world (i.e. Sita)—my body is as strong as Bajara (the hardest material in existence); it will not bend or buckle by the weight of your army.'

Surdas says that Hanuman further reassured and encouraged Sri Ram by promising—'Sri Ram! By your grace, whatever I have just said is the truth (and not a mere boast). I say on oath that I will show you or prove it to you that it is the truth.' (111).

राग मारू

[112]

रावन—से गहि कोटिक मारौ ।

जो तुम आज्ञा देहु कृपानिधि! तौ यह परिहस सारौ ॥

कहौ तौ जननि जानकी ल्याऊँ, कहौ तो लंक बिदारौ ।

कहौ तो अबहीं पैठि, सुभट हति, अनल सकल पुर जारौ ॥

कहौ तो सचिव—सबंधु सकल अरि, एकहिं—एक पछारौ ।

कहौ तौ तुव प्रताप श्रीगुबर, उदधि पखाननि तारौ ॥

कहौ तौ दसौ सीस, बीसौ भुज, काटि छिनक मैं डारौ ।

कहौ तौ ताकौ तृन गहाइ कै, जीवत पाइनि पारौ ॥
 कहौ तौ सैना चारु रचौ कपि, धरनी—ब्यौम—पतारौ ।
 सैल—सिला—द्रुम बरषि ब्यौम चढ़ि, सत्रु—समूह सँहारौ ॥
 बार—बार पद परसि कहत हौं, हौं कबहुँ नहिं हारौ ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु तुम्हरे बचन लगि, सिव—बचननि कौं टारौ ॥

rāga mārū

(112)

rāvana-sē gahi kōṭika māraum.
 jō tuma ājñā dēhu krpānidhi! tau yaha parihasa sāraum..
 kahau tau janani jānakī lyā'ūm, kahau tō laṅka bidāraum.
 kahau tō abahīm paṭhi, subhaṭa hati, anala sakala pura jāraum..
 kahau tō saciva-sabandhu sakala ari, ēkahīm-ēka pachāraum..
 kahau tau tuva pratāpa śrīraghubara, udadhi pakhānani tāraum..
 kahau tau dasau sīsa, bīsau bhuja, kāṭi chinaka mair̃ ḍāraum..
 kahau tau tākaum tr̃ṇa gahā'i kai, jīvata pā'ini pāraum..
 kahau tau sainā cāru racaum kapi, dharanī-byauma-patāraum..
 saila-silā-druma baraṣi byauma caḍhi, satru-samūha sam'hāraum..
 bāra-bāra pada parasi kahata haum, haum kabahūm' nahir̃ hāraum..
 'sūradāsa' prabhu tumharē bacana lagi, siva-bacanani kaur̃ ṭāraum..

Raag Maaru

112. (Hanuman continued to reassure and encourage Sri Ram—) 'I shall kill millions of demons resembling Ravana. Oh a treasury of mercy! If you give me your permission, I can do it with a smile (i.e. without the least effort or exertion).

If you say, I will bring mother Janki (Sita) here, or demolish (whatever still remains of) Lanka.

If you say, I shall go there now, kill all the warriors and burn the whole city with fire¹.

If you say I shall slam all the ministers and the kith and kin (of Ravana) one by one (i.e. dash them against each other one by one.

Oh Raghubir! If you say, I can make stones/rocks/boulders float on the ocean with your grace and mystical powers.

If you say, I will cut all the ten heads and twenty arms (of Ravana) in an instant. If you say, I will put a straw in his mouth and force him to come and fall down at your feet.

If you say, I can arrange the monkey army in such a way that they would cover the sky, the earth and the nether worlds.

Or I can go to the sky myself, and rain huge boulders/rocks and trees on the enemy forces and crush them underneath.

I repeatedly tell you by touching your feet (i.e. truthfully and honestly) that I will never be defeated (i.e. fail) in all this that I tell you I can do.

Oh Lord of Surdas ('Surdas-prabhu')! For the sake of the sanctity and honour of your words or orders, I can make the words of Shiva in vain. [This refers to the blessing of Lord Shiva to Ravana that he would be killed by a human being only, and not by a monkey. Hanuman is supposed to be of the monkey race. So here he means that by killing Ravana himself, he would be violating Lord Shiva's words to Ravana, but it does not bother him.]² (112).

[Note :- ¹Hanuman had already burnt Lanka in the previous Sundar Kand. So what he means here 'by burning the city with fire' is that he would go once again and burn whatever remains of the city, leading to its complete annihilation. This time, he will not leave even a single structure untouched.

²The last line of this verse can be interpreted as follows also—Surdas says that Hanuman promised Sri Ram that he can defy the words of Shiva if it is to accomplish the work of Sri Ram. Shiva had promised Ravana that he can be killed by a human being only, but I am not bothered about it. I am not concerned that if I kill Ravana myself I would be insulting Lord Shiva, because for me there is no other Lord except you.]

[113]

हौं प्रभु जू कौ आयसु, पाऊँ ।
 अबहीं जाइ, उपारि लंक गढ़, उदिध पार लै आऊँ ॥
 अबहीं जंबूद्वीप इहाँ तैं, लै लंका पहुँचाऊँ ।
 सोखि समुद्र उतारौं कपि—दल, छिनक बिलंब न लाऊँ ॥
 अब आवैं रघुबीर जीति दल, तौ हनुमंत कहाऊँ ।
 'सूरदास' सुभ पुरी अजोध्या, राघव सुबस बसाऊँ ॥

(113)

hauṁ prabhu jū kau āyasu, pā'ūṁ.
 abahīm jā'i, upāri laṅka gaṛha, udidha pāra lai ā'ūṁ..
 abahīm jambūdīvīpa ihām' taim, lai laṅkā pahum'cā'ūṁ.
 sōkhi samudrautārauṁ kapi-dala, chinaka bilamba na lā'ūṁ..
 aba āvaim raghubīra jīti dala, tau hanumanta kahā'ūṁ.
 'sūradāsa' subha purī ajōdhyā, rāghava subasa basā'ūṁ..

113. (Hanuman continued to assure the Lord by saying again—) 'Oh Lord! If I get your orders, I will go, uproot the whole fort of Lanka and bring it across the ocean here.

Or else, I will take 'Jambudwip' (the name of India in ancient texts) itself and put it at Lanka.

I will dry up the ocean and take the monkey army across (on its dry bed); there will be no delay or dithering in doing so.

When Raghubir (Sri Ram) shall come back after having conquered the enemy forces, I shall then only be called 'Hanuman'! [In other words, I am putting my own reputation at stake. Let no one ever call me 'Hanuman' if what I say cannot be done by me. I am not boasting my Lord, but what I need is your permission. Should I get it now, just wait and watch from here, and see what I'll do!]

Surdas says that Hanuman assured Sri Ram that he would take him back to the auspicious and divine city of Ayodhya, thereby establishing Raghav's glorious fame (as

being the one who has kept his father's vows, conquered the most unconquerable and ferocious demon Ravana, and come back triumphantly back to his city along with his brother and wife) (113).

[114]

जौ पै राम रजा हौं पाऊँ ।
 न करौं संक लंक गढ़ की कछु, सायर खोद बहाऊँ ॥
 बढूँ सरीर, पेट परिमित कर, सकल कटक पहुँचाऊँ ।
 कहौ तौ रावन कुल समेत सब बिधिहिं चरन तर लाऊँ ॥
 हौं सेवक हरि! ऐसौ तुम्हरौ, निज मुख कर का गाऊँ ।
 सुर और असुर सबै जुर आवैं, रन नहिं पीठ दिखाऊँ ॥
 रावन मारि, सिया घर लाऊँ, तुम्हरौ दास कहाऊँ ।
 'सूरदास' मुख ही सौं कहि हौं, तुमही आन दिखाऊँ ॥

(114)

jau pai rāma rajā hauṁ pā'ūṁ .
 na karaūṁ saṅka laṅka gaṛha kī kachu, sāyara khōda bahā'ūṁ ..
 baḍhūṁ sarīra, pēṭa parimita kara, sakala kaṭaka pahumcā'ūṁ .
 kahau tau rāvana kula samēta saba bidhihiṁ carana tara lā'ūṁ ..
 hauṁ sēvaka hari! aisau tumharau, nija mukha kara kā gā'ūṁ .
 sura aura asura sabai jura āvairiṁ, rana nahiriṁ pīṭha dikhā'ūṁ ..
 rāvana māri, siyā ghara lā'ūṁ, tumharau dāsa kahā'ūṁ .
 'sūradāsa' mukha hī saūṁ kahi hauṁ, tumahī āna dikhā'ūṁ ..

114. (Hanuman continued—) 'If I get the permission of Sri Ram, I will not bother about the fort of Lanka; I will dig it up and immerse it in the ocean.

I shall elongate my body (so as to touch the two ends of the oceans), keeping my abdomen retracted so that all the monkeys can cross over it (by walking over my stretched body which would serve as a temporary makeshift hanging bridge).
 If you say, I can bring the whole clan of Ravana, duly tied and humbled, and put them under (i.e. before) your feet.

I am but your humble servant, oh Hari (an epithet used for Lord Vishnu whose incarnation Sri Ram was). All this will be done by my by relying upon your magnificent grace and stupendous glory (i.e. these deeds would be accomplished not because of my own valour and strength, my own powers and potentials, but because of your own glory and majesty).

What more should I say with my mouth—even if all the Gods and demons join hands (against me), I shall not turn my back in the battle-field. By killing Ravana, I shall bring Sita home to you, and only then let me be called your truthful servant!

Surdas says that Hanuman assured Sri Ram—'I have said all this with my mouth till now; I will show it to you with my deeds that it would actually happen as I have said (i.e. I will implement what I have said to prove that I am not boasting) (114).

[115]

जौ हौं नैक रजायस पाऊँ ।
 तौ दस सीस बीस पैड़े करि काटि जानकी लाऊँ ॥
 बिना कहे अंकुस मेरे सिर, तातैं करत न आगी ।
 बात उठाय धरौं नहिं राखौं और दिनन कौं लागी ॥
 अजहू जौ तुम कहौ कृपानिधि, तौ छिन भीतर मारौं ।
 आप जिवत कत इतनि बात कौं तुमहि का करौं पारौं ॥
 तूँ बलबीर धीर अंतक सम, अरु सबहीं बिधि लायक ।
 राख्यौ न्यौति बहुत दिन ते यह छुधा—कंप अति सायक ॥
 जाकौ रस एकहि मन मो तन आदि मध्य अरु अंत ।
 इहाँहू की सब लाज हमारी तो लागी हनुमंत ॥
 संग्या समै त्रोन जुत कीन्ही छाड़ौ कछू नदीवैं ।
 'सूर' समुद्र इतनि मागैं पाउँ, यह कृत मोही कीवैं ॥

(115)

jau hauṁ naika rajāyasa pā'ūṁ .
 tau dasa sīsa bīsa painṛē kari kāṭi jānakī lā'ūṁ ..
 binā kahē aṅkusa mērē sira, tātaiṁ karata na āgī.
 bāta uṭhāya dharaum̐ nahim̐ rākhaum̐ aura dinana kaur̐ lāgī..
 ajahū jau tuma kahau krpānidhi, tau china bhītara māraum̐.
 āpa jivata kata itani bāta kaur̐ tumahi kā karaum̐ pāraum̐..
 tūṁ balabīra dhīra antaka sama, aru sabahīm̐ bidhi lāyaka.
 rākhyau n'yauti bahuta dina tē yaha chudhā-kampa ati sāyaka..
 jākau rasa ēkahi mana mō tana ādi madhya aru anta.
 ihām̐hū kī saba lāja hamārī tō lāgī hanumanta..
 saṅgyā samai trōna juta kīnhī chārau kachū nadīvaim̐.
 'sūra' samudraitani māgaim̐ pā'um̐, yaha kr̥ta mōhī kīvaim̐..

115. (Hanuman continued with his encouragement and assurance to Sri Ram—) 'If I get a little bit of your royal mandate or permission, I shall snap the ten heads of Ravana in twenty leaps (or twenty steps)¹, and bring Janki (Sita) here.

Without your permission, there is a restraint on me; there is literally a goad hanging on my head, and it is because of it (the absence of your express orders) that I am unable to do anything. Otherwise, having raised an issue or having said something, I wouldn't have kept it pending for another day (i.e. I would have implemented all I have said today itself, without waiting for tomorrow).

Oh the merciful one! If you tell me even now, I shall kill him (Ravana) within a moment (i.e. very soon). Why should I take the trouble of taking you across (the ocean) for such a trivial issue as this?

(Hearing all this, from verse nos. 111-115, Sri Ram calmed Hanuman down by saying—) 'You are indeed courageous, very strong, valiant and invincible like the Death-God ('Antak'; one who brings an end to the world) himself. You are able, competent, adept and potent in every manner. But I have invited my arrow which has been virtually shaking with hunger since a long time (to quench its hunger by killing the evil demons).

The dignity of the one whose mind is thinking of me, for whom I am the beginning, the middle and the end (a reference to Sita), and the honour of all of us at this end (i.e. of me as well as of the entire monkey and bear army), is in your hands, oh Hanuman²!

Surdas says that Sri Ram put the arrow (which was thirsty for blood) inside the quiver when he prayed to the 'Lord of Rivers' (i.e. ocean)—'Oh Ocean! May I beg of you to give me a path? Please do it for my sake; I am making an earnest request to you.' (115).

[Note :- ¹Why twenty leaps for ten heads of Ravana? Hanuman means that in the first leap, he would strike at the head with such force that the neck bone would snap, and the broken and twisted head would dangle to one side. In the second leap, Hanuman would tear it away from the body. Therefore, each head would require 2 leaps—one to break the bone and second one to shear it off from the body. Since Ravana had ten heads, twenty leaps were necessary to completely dismantle all of them.

²Sri Ram means to tell Hanuman that the entire outcome of battle, the fate of Sita, of Sri Ram and of the army is in the hands of Hanuman. With this, Sri Ram has given a high honour and responsibility to Hanuman. He subtly wishes to tell him that if Hanuman was gracious enough to accomplish such stupendous feats and still give the credit to Sri Ram for all his successes, the latter will reciprocate his gesture in full measure by saying that the victory, the triumph in the war are all due to one single person, and that single person is Hanuman. If there is one character in the whole of Ramayana that has obliged Sri Ram no end, it is Hanuman. The Lord is simply showing his sense of gratitude to Hanuman and assuring him that the Lord is ready to honour him as the main Hero of the epic war. But he must have patience as things must be done in the proper way. There are others in the army, and they all long to play their role in the battle and show their valour and strength. They must be given the chance, for otherwise if the Lord honours Hanuman without it the world would say that the Lord was biased in favour of one single individual. There would be unnecessary jealousy and bad blood between the monkeys and the bears. So, it would be wiser to let the drama unfold and let the army actually realise who is the real Hero.

As it eventually happened in due course of time when the battle raged in Lanka, it was evident to all that only Hanuman could be seen lashing out fearlessly and relentlessly, most viciously and ferociously, at the enemy, here, there and everywhere. At times during the no-holds-barred war, the rest of the army was utterly stunned and in complete disarray, but Hanuman was always at the ready to reverse the tide of war and he invariably came to their rescue.

At the height of the battle when Laxman was wounded and fell unconscious in the battlefield, it was Hanuman who went to the Himalayas far away in the north of the Indian sub-continent to uproot an entire hill and bring it to Lanka so that the proper herb could be selected and administered to Laxman to revive him. See verse nos. 164-177 of this Kand.

The Lord had not forgotten his obligation to Hanuman for had it not been for the latter, there was not a single warrior in the entire army who would have either brought the news of Sita or would have revived Laxman from his unconscious state.]

राग सारंग

[116]

रघुपति, बेगि जतन अब कीजै ।

बाँधै सिंधु सकल सैना मिलि, आपुन आयसु दीजै ॥
 तब लौं तुरत एक तौ बाँधौ, द्रुम—पाखाननि छाड़ ।
 द्वितिय सिंधु सिय—नैन—नीर ह्वै जब लौं मिलै न आइ ॥
 यह बिनती हौं करौं कृपानिधि, बार—बार अकुलाइ ।
 'सूरजदास' अकाल—प्रलय प्रभु, मेटौ दरस दिखाइ ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(116)

raghupati, bēgi jatana aba kijai.
 bām̐dhai sindhu sakala sainā mili, āpuna āyasu dījai..
 taba laur̐ turata ēka tau bām̐dhau, druma-pākhānani chā'i.
 dvitiya sindhu siya-naina-nīra hvai jaba laur̐ milai na ā'i..
 yaha binatī haur̐ karaur̐ krpānidhi, bāra-bāra akulā'i.
 'sūrajadāsa' akāla-pralaya prabhu, mēṭau darasa dikhā'i..

Raag Saarang

116. (Hanuman intervened and requested Sri Ram—) 'Oh Lord of the Raghu's clan! Make haste and give your orders so that the whole monkey army joins hands in tying the ocean (i.e. help in constructing the bridge). Let them do it quickly by laying down trees and rocks across the ocean so that the bridge is tied before another ocean consisting of tears of Sita is formed and poured into this present ocean, thereby submerging our bridge by raising the water level. That is why I repeatedly and eagerly exhort you to be quick at it.'

Surdas says that Hanuman asked Sri Ram to show himself to Sita (i.e. present himself to her) soon so that she stops crying and prevent the formation of a dooms-day like deluge by her flowing tears (which would raise the water level in the ocean and drown the whole world) (116).

रावण द्वारा विभीषण का अपमान; विभीषण का श्रीराम की शरणागति
 राग मारू

[117]

लंकपति कौं अनुज सीस नायौ ।
 परम गंभीर, रनधीर दसरथ—तनय, कोप करि सिंधुके तीर आयौ ॥
 सीय कौं लै मिली, यह मतौ भलौ, कृपा करि ममबचन मानि लीजै ।
 ईस कौं ईस, करतार संसार कौ, तासु पद—कमल पर सीस दीजै ॥
 कह्यौ लंकसे दै ठेस पग की तबै, जाहि मति—मूढ़, कायर, डरानौ ।
 जानि असरन—सरन, 'सूर' के प्रभु कौं, तुरतहीं आइ द्वारैं तुलानौ ॥

rāvaṇa dvārā vibhīṣaṇa kā apamāna;

vibhīṣaṇa kā śrīrāma kī śaraṇāgati
rāga mārū

(117)

laṅkapati kaurṇ anuja sīsa nāyau.
parama gambhīra, ranadhīra dasaratha-tanaya, kōpa kari sindhukē tīra āyau..
sīya kaurṇ lai milī, yaha matau bhalau, krpā kari mamabacana māni lījai.
īsa kau īsa, karatāra sansāra kau, tāsū pada-kamala para sīsa dījai..
kahyau laṅkēsa dai ṭhēsa paga kī tabai, jāhi mati-mūrha, kāyara, ḍarānau.
jāni asarana-sarana, 'sūra' kē prabhu kaurṇ, turatahīm ā'i dvāraim tulānau..

Ravana Insults Vibhishan & Latter's taking Refuge with Sri Ram
Raag Maaru

117. Meanwhile, the younger brother (Vibhishan) of the king of Lanka (Ravana) bowed his head before the latter. He said respectfully, 'The son of Dashrath (i.e. Sri Ram), who is most serious and grave but tolerant and patient at the same time, and who is valiant and steadfast in the battlefield, has come on the shores of the ocean. He is very angry and full of wrath.

Hence, the best advice in these circumstances (that I can think of giving you) is to take Sita along and go and meet him (i.e. make a truce). Please be kind to heed me. Sri Ram is (no ordinary king or human being, but is) the Lord of Gods; he is the creator of the world. So you should place your head on his lotus-like feet (without feeling ashamed at all in doing so).'

This advice annoyed the king of Lanka (Ravana) so much that he kicked him (Vibhishan), and replied vehemently in disgust—'Oh stupid and ill-witted fellow! Oh coward! You have become terrified. Get out of here. (I don't want anything to do with cowards and stupids like you; you are a disgrace for the demon race.)'

Then, considering the fact that the Lord of Surdas ('Sur Ke Prabhu'—Sri Ram) was the merciful and gracious Lord who gave refuge and shelter to all those souls who have no other succour and solace anywhere, Vibhishan immediately came and stood at his (Sri Ram's) door.

[That is, when Ravana insulted and humiliated Vibhishan by kicking him, he immediately decided to leave Lanka and he came to this side of the ocean where the Lord had pitched his camp. He made a firm resolution that he would rather die in the company of the Lord than at the hands of the demons and his own evil brother Ravana.] (117).

विभीषण का श्रीराम से मिलना—राग सारंग

[118]

आइ बिभीषन सीस नवायौ ।
देखतहीं रघुबीर धीर, कहि लंकापति, बुलायौ ॥

कह्यौ सो बहुरि कह्यौ नहिं रघुबर, यहै बिरद चलि आयौ ।
भक्त—बछल करुनामय प्रभु कौ, 'सूरदास' जस गायौ ॥

vibhīṣaṇa kā śrīrāma sē milanā-rāga sārāṅga

(118)

ā'i bibhīṣana sīsa navāyau.
dēkhatahīrṇ raghubīra dhīra, kahi laṅkāpati, bulāyau..
kahyau sō bahuri kahyau nahīrṇ radhubara, yahai birada cali āyau.
bhakta-bachala karunāmaya prabhu kau, 'sūradāsa' jasa gāyau..

Vibhishan Meets Sri Ram—Raag Saarang

118. Vibhishan¹ came and bowed his head reverentially (to Sri Ram). The courageous, steadfast, patient and tolerant Raghubir (Sri Ram) addressed him as 'the Lord of Lanka' ('Lanka-pati')², and affably called him near.

It has been an established tradition with Raghubir that once he said something, it was done; he needn't repeat it twice. [That is, once Sri Ram called Vibhishan as the 'king or Lord of Lanka', it was deemed that he was anointed as such from that very instant for all practical purposes.]

Surdas says that he sings the glories of such a Lord who is compassionate, merciful, benevolent, magnanimous, munificent and benign towards his devotees, and is their best and sincere benefactor (118).

[Note—¹Vibhishan was a great devotee of Lord Ram though he was a demon by birth and the younger brother of Ravana. His life-sketch is narrated along with his other two demon brothers, Ravana and Kumbhakaran, in Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Canto nos. 1-2, and Valmiki Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga (Canto) nos. 9-10.

He knew that the Lord was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord of creation.

In Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas' it is narrated that when the three demon brothers, viz. Ravana, Kumbhakaran and Vibhishan, had done severe Tapa (penance) to please the creator Brahma and the latter had appeared before them individually to ask them to fulfill their wishes, Vibhishan had requested that he should be blessed with the virtue of 'Bhakti' (affection and devotion) for Lord Hari (Vishnu) though he has got the body of a demon. Brahma had then granted him his wish. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 177.

²This was a clever political and strategic master-stroke by the Lord. By calling Vibhishan 'the Lord of Lanka' Sri Ram gave him a clear hint that if the war is won he would be anointed as the king of the place. This was to motivate Vibhishan to divulge all the intricate details of the city and the secrets of the army so that the victory of the Lord over his archenemy Ravana ensured and he could settle squares with the latter.

But as Surdas interprets and as all the devotees of the Lord would say, this move was not motivated with selfish ends, but the Lord wished to reward Vibhishan for coming to surrender before him inspite of the uncertainty ahead.

Though Surdas has not mentioned it in this version of Ramayana, his compatriot saint Tulsidas has explicitly narrated in great detail in his epic Ramcharit Manas that when Hanuman was searching for Sita at Lanka, he had found Vibhishan chanting the Lord's holy name. Vibhishan had also written the Lord's name on his doorway. It was Vibhishan

who had told Hanuman the whereabouts of Sita. Obviously, when Hanuman reported the events at Lanka to the Lord upon his return to Kishkindha, he must have surely mentioned these events. This information was already with the Lord when Vibhishan came to seek his refuge. So the Lord was too eager to welcome him and show his benevolence upon him. In other words, the Lord was rewarding Vibhishan for his devotion and loyalty.]

श्रीराम की प्रतिज्ञा—राग मारू

[119]

तब हौं नगर अजोध्या जैहौं ।
 एक बात सुनि निश्चय मेरी, राज्य बिभीषन दैहौं ॥
 कपि दल जोरि और सब सैना, सागर सेतु बँधैहौं ।
 काटि दसौ सिर, बीस भुजा, तब दसरथ—सुत जु कहैहौं ॥
 छिन इक माहिं लंक गढ़ तोरौं, कंचन—कोट ढहैहौं ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु कहत बिभीषन, रिपु हति सीता लैहौं ॥

śrīrāma kī pratijñā-rāga mārū

(119)

taba hauṁ nagara ajōdhyā jaihauṁ.
 ēka bāta suni niscaya mērī, rājya bibhīṣana daihauṁ..
 kapi dala jōri aura saba sainā, sāgara sētu bamḍhaihauṁ.
 kāṭi dasau sira, bīsa bhuajā, taba dasaratha-suta ju kahaihauṁ..
 china ika māhirṁ laṅka gaṛha tōrauṁ, kaṅcana-kōṭa ḍhahaihauṁ.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu kahata bibhīṣana, ripu hati sītā laihaum..

Sri Ram's Firm Resolve—Raag Maaru

119. (Sri Ram made a stern vow—) 'All of you listen to my firm resolve. I shall go back to the city of Ayodhya only after having given the kingdom (of Lanka) to Vibhishan. I will collect all the army of monkeys and others, and get a bridge constructed over the ocean. When I cut all the ten heads and twenty arms (of Ravana), then only shall I be called a worthy son of Dashrath. I shall destroy the fort of Lanka in a fleeting moment (i.e. in a short while). I shall demolish the golden parapets of the fort.'

Surdas says that the Lord told Vibhishan—'I shall kill the enemy and bring Sita back.' (119).

मन्दोदरी की रावण से प्रार्थना

[120]

वे लखि आए राम रजा ।
 जल के निकट आइ ठाढ़े भए, दीसति बिमल ध्वजा ॥

सोवत कहा चेत रे रावन! अब क्यों खात दगा ?
 कहति मँदोदरि, सुनु पिय रावन! मेरी बात अगा ॥
 तून दसननि लै मिलि दसकंधर, कंठनि मेलि पगा ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु रघुपति आए, दहपट होइ लँका ॥

mandōdarī kī rāvaṇa sē prārthanā

(120)

vē lakhi ā'ē rāma rajā.
 jala kē nikaṭa ā'i ṭhārḥē bha'ē, dīsati bimala dhvajā..
 sōvata kahā cēta rē rāvana! aba kyauri khāta dagā?
 kahati mamōdāri, sunu piya rāvana! mēri bāta agā..
 trṇa dasanani lai mili dasakandhara, kaṇṭhani mēli pagā.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu raghupati ā'ē, dahapaṭa hō'i lamkā..

Mandodari Pleads with Ravana again

120. (Mandodari, the chief queen of the demon race, pleads with her husband Ravana once again—) 'They (the spies) have come back after having seen 'Ram Raja' (i.e. the King known as Ram)! He is standing (i.e. camping) near the water (i.e. the shores of the great ocean). One can observe his standard/flag clearly from here. Oh Ravana, wake up, why do you sleep? Why do you pretend invincibility out of ignorance, and allow yourself to be cheated and being fooled. [Why, in other words, do you think that you are invincible, and that Sri Ram can never do any harm to you.]'

Mandodari says further, 'Listen to me my dear Ravana, listen to what I say. Put a straw in each of your ten mouths and tie a rope (a collar-belt) around your neck (as a token of your submission), and go and meet him (to make a truce and somehow avoid bloodshed and your complete ruin). If Surdas' Lord ('Surdas-prabhu') Raghupati comes here, the whole of Lanka would be in ruins.' (120).

[121]

देखि हो कंत! रघुनाथ आयौ ।
 छिप्यौ ससि, सूर अति चकृत भयौ,
 धूर सों पूर आकास छायाँ ॥
 तब न मानौ कह्यौ, आपने मद रह्यौ,
 देह के गर्ब अभिमान बाढ़्यौ ।
 सुन अहो कंत! अब कठिन भयौ छूटिबौ,
 गहे भुज बीस कर काल गाढ़्यौ ॥
 सिंधु गंभीर दल, छाँड़ि दै मुग्ध बल,
 तैं न कीनी कहूँ टेक गाढ़ी ।
 बचै क्यों डूबत माँझ लग्यौ धक्का जो,
 लंक—सी नाव द्वै टूक फाड़ी ॥

कहत सुन 'सूर' तू गिन्यौ पंछीन मैं,
 आन अजगरन पर आज खेलै ।
 भजै क्यौ उबरिहै बाज हनुमान पै,
 मूठ जब जानकीनाथ मेलै ॥

(121)

dēkhi hō kanta! raghunātha āyau.
 chipyau sasi, sūra ati cakṛta bhayau,
 dhūra sōm pūra ākāsa chāyau..
 taba na mānau kahyau, āpanē mada rahyau,
 dēha kē garba abhimana bārḥau.
 suna ahō kanta! aba kaṭhina bhayau chūṭibau,
 gahē bhuja bīsa kara kāla gārḥau..
 sindhu gambhīra dala, chāmṛi dai mugdha bala,
 taim na kinī kahūṁ tēka gārḥi.
 bacai kyaurṁ dūbata māmṛha lagyau dhakkā jō,
 laṅka-sī nāva dvai tūka phārī..
 kahata suna 'sūra' tū gin'yau pañchīna maim,
 āna ajagarana para āja khēlai.
 bhajaim kyaurṁ ubarihai bāja hanumāna pai,
 mūṭha jaba jānakīnātha mēlai..

121. (Mandodari, the chief queen, said to her husband, Ravana—) 'Oh dear husband! Look, Raghunath (Sri Ram) has come. The moon has been obscured, the sun has been stunned (because it is unable to shine), and the sky is covered by the dust (raised by his army).

At that time (when Hanuman had earlier come to search for Sita) you had not paid heed to what I had said. You had remained stubborn and unrelenting, arrogant and haughty, relying on your physical strength. Now listen dear husband, it is difficult to escape (the reality). Kaal (the Death-God) has apparently caught hold of your twenty arms. You had never before shown such stubbornness; you should not be unduly proud of your strength.

His (Sri Ram's) army is as measureless and vast as the ocean; how will you now get reprieve from getting drowned? How can this boat-like Lanka be saved when it couldn't be while it was being rammed and had split into two while still in the middle? [This alludes to Hanuman burning the city and reducing it to rubble even before the formal arrival of Sri Ram's full-fledged army.]

I am telling you, listen you brave one. You are like a bird of the sky, and you are apparently playing with (or teasing) the pythons (the monkey army) on the ground. When the Lord of Janki (Sri Ram) releases the falcon/hawk in the form of Hanuman to punish you, how will you then manage to save yourself?

[Mandodari is trying to remind Ravana about the deeds that Hanuman had done on an earlier occasion when he had burnt Lanka single handedly. She tells Ravana to be weary of the full strength and force of Sri Ram's army when his single messenger could cause such great havoc with such a devastating effect. When the birds see a python on the

ground they attempt to swoop down on it, thinking it to be an earthworm. To their horror they discover that it is a heavy python. So Mandodari cites this example to dissuade Ravana from being senseless and reckless in entering a war which is not only unjust but even all the odds are stacked heavily against him.] (121).

राग मारू

[122]

लंका लीजति है रे रावन ।
 तुम जिन की हरि ल्याये सीता ते कहत है आवन ॥
 जा सागर कौ गरब करत है, सो दूधनि मैं जावन ।
 आवन रामचंद्र सर साँधें, ज्यौं बरखा घन सावन ॥
 तूँ मेरौ समझायौ न समझत, बहुत सहैगो ताँवन ।
 'सूर' राम कौ लै मिलि सीता! हाथ जोरि परि पावन ॥

rāga mārū

(122)

laṅkā lījati hai rē rāvana.
 tuma jina kī hari lyāyē sītā tē kahata hai āvana..
 jā sāgara kau garaba karata hai, sō dūdhani mair̥m jāvana.
 āvana rāmacandra sara sām̐dhēm̐, ज्याम̐ barakhā ghana sāvana..
 tūm̐ mērau samajhāyau na samajhata, bahuta sahaigō tām̐vana.
 'sūra' rāma kaum̐ lai mili sītā! hātha jōri pari pāvana..

Raag Maarū

122. (Mandodari continued to persuade Ravana—) 'Oh Ravana! He (Sri Ram) is poised to take over Lanka. He, whose wife Sita you have abducted, is about to arrive.

The ocean about which you boast (that no one can cross it) is like a small addition of curd in a huge container of milk.

[That is, the ability of the ocean to prevent the Lord's army from crossing over to Lanka is most inconsequential and inept. The Lord's majestic powers, potentials and abilities are so immense that the ocean would stand no chance at all in offering any resistance to the advancement of the Lord's army just like a drop of sour curd does not affect the sweetness of a large tumbler of milk.]

Sri Ram Chandra is arriving with an arrow mounted at the ready on the bow even as the clouds of the rainy season rush forward, rumbling and thundering, over the sky.

[He will shower you with the rain of his arrows. Just like the rain-bearing clouds cover the entire sky and the rain covers the earth from one corner to another, the arrows of the Lord would pepper and pulverise your demon army to pulp. What would you do then?]

You do not understand when I try to explain things to you; you will have to suffer a lot (for your recklessness, stubbornness, haughtiness, arrogance, false pride, foolishness and stupidity).'

Surdas says that Mandodari exhorted him to take Sita along and meet Sri Ram with the palms of both the hands touching each other as a token of submission, and fall at the Lord's feet to surrender (122).

[123]

तैं कत सीता हरि आनी ।
जनक—सुता जगत—मात राम—नारि मैं जानी ॥
लंक—सौ गढ़ गर्ब करत, राकस कुल कानी ।
कोट वोट मोट मेटि राम लैहैं रजधानी ॥
दनुज—दल जर मरिहैं धौं कहि रमा ससाँनी ।
राम—मार दनुज 'सूर' रैनि सी बिहानी ॥

(123)

taiṁ kata sītā hari ānī.
janaka-sutā jagata-māta rāma-nāri maiṁ jānī..
laṅka-sau gaṛha garba karata, rākasa kula kānī.
kōṭa vōṭa mōṭa mēṭi rāma laiḥaiṁ rajadhānī..
danuja-dala jara mariḥaiṁ dhaurṁ kahi ramā sasāmṇī.
rāma-māra danuja 'sūra' rain'ni sī bihānī..

123. (Mandodari continued to reproach and reprimand Ravana—) 'Why did you abduct and bring Sita in the first place? I know that the daughter of Janak, who is the wife of Sri Ram, is the Mother of the world.

You feel proud of the (invincibility and impregnability of the) fort of Lanka and the race of demons (that they too are invincible, very brave and valiant, and they had subdued all the Gods by their strength). But (I predict that) Sri Ram would demolish your fort (and your pride etc.), and take over (conquer) Lanka.'

Surdas says Mandodari sternly warned Ravana—'The hordes of demons would be burnt by the scorching breath spouting from the nostrils of 'Ramaa' (just like the fire spewed by the fire dragon; Ramaa is the divine wife of Vishnu, known also by the name of Laxmi; here Sita is meant by this word). The fate of the demons, when Sri Ram attacks, will be the same as that of the night with the herald of dawn.

[When the sun rises at dawn, the night vanishes on its own. Similarly, when Sri Ram arrives in Lanka and launches his attack, the demons would be annihilated without any effort.] (123).

[124]

सरन परि मन—बच—कर्म बिचारि ।
ऐसौ और कौन त्रिभुवन मैं, जो अब लेइ उबारि ॥

सुनु सिख कंत! दंत तून धरि कै, स्यौं परिवार सिधारौ ।
 परम पुनीत जानकी सँग लै कुल—कलंक किन टारौ ॥
 ये दस सीस चरन पर राखौ, मेटो सब अपराध ।
 हैं प्रभु कृपा—करन रघुनंदन, रिस न गहैं पल आध ॥
 तोरि धनुष, मुख मोरि नृपनि कौ, सीय—स्वयंबर कीनौ ।
 छिन इक मैं भृगुपति—प्रताप—बल करषि, हृदय धरि लीनौ ॥
 लीला करत कनक—मृग मास्यौ, बध्यौ बालि अभिमानी ।
 सोइ दसरथ—कुल—चंद अमित—बल, आए सारंग—पानी ॥
 जाके दल सुग्रीव सुमन्त्री, प्रबल जूथपति भारी ।
 महा सुभट रनजीत पवन—सुत, निडर बज्र—बपु—धारी ॥
 करिहैं लंक पंक छिन भीतर, बज्र—सिला लै धावै ।
 कुल—कुटुंब—परिवार सहित तोहि, बाँधत बिलम न लावै ॥
 अजहूँ बल जनि करि संकर कौ, मानि बचन हित मेरौ ।
 जाइ मिलौ कोसल—नरेस कौ, भ्रात बिभीषन तेरौ ॥
 कटक—सोर अति घोर दसौं दिसि, दीसति बनचर—भीर ।
 'सूर' समुझि, रघुबंस—तिलक दोउ उतरे सागर तीर ॥

(124)

sarana pari mana-baca-karma bicāri.
 aisau aura kauna tribhuvana mairi, jō aba lē'i ubāri..
 sunu sikha kanta! danta tr̥ṇa dhari kai, syaur̥m parivāra sidhārau.
 parama punīta jānakī sam̐ga lai kula-kalaṅka kina ṭārau..
 yē dasa sīsa carana para rākhau, mēṭō saba aparādha.
 hair̥m prabhu krpā-karana raghunandana, risa na gahair̥m pala ādha..
 tōri dhanuṣa, mukha mōri nr̥pani kau, siya-svayambara kīnau.
 china ika mair̥m bhr̥gupati-pratāpa-bala karaṣi, hr̥daya dhari līnau..
 līlā karata kanaka-mrga māryau, badhyau bāli abhimānī.
 sō'i dasaratha-kula-canda amita-bala, ā'ē sāram̐ga-pānī..
 jākē dala sugrīva sumantrī, prabala jūthapati bhārī.
 mahā subhaṭa ranajīta pavana-suta, niḍara bajra-bapu-dhārī..
 karihai laṅka paṅka china bhītara, bajra-silā lai dhāvai.
 kula-kuṭumba-parivāra sahita tōhi, bām̐dhata bilama na lāvai..
 ajahūṁ bala jani kari saṅkara kau, māni bacana hita mērau.
 jā'i milau kōsala-narēsa kaur̥m, bhr̥rāta bibhīṣana tērau..
 kaṭaka-sōra ati ghōra dasaur̥m disi, dīsati banacara-bhīra.
 'sūra' samujhi, raghubansa-tilaka dō'u utarē sāgara tīra..

124. (Mandodari earnestly advised Ravana—) 'Think over it seriously using your intellect and mind ('Mana'), your speech ('Vacha'—i.e. discuss the pros and cons with your ministers), and your deeds ('Karma'—consider what wrong you have been doing in this life, and realise that evil has a bad ending, sooner or later).

Think, who is there in the whole of the three worlds (or, in the entire creation) that can salvage you or give you any reprieve (from the precarious and the stickiest position that you have landed yourself into)?

Oh my dear husband! Listen to my sincere advice even now before it is too late to make amends. Keep a straw clenched in your teeth and collect your whole family, take Sita along and go (to meet Sri Ram) to erase this ignominious scar from your family. [The ‘scar’ is kidnapping a loyal wife of another man against her wishes.]

Put these ten heads of yours on his (Sri Ram’s) feet, and wipe out all your sins and the evil effects of misdeeds (that you might have inadvertently or willingly committed).

Lord Raghunandan (Sri Ram) is the one who shows mercy, kindness and forgiveness to all. He will not show anger, wrath, retribution or vengeance against you for even half a moment.

He had broken the bow (of Lord Shiva at Janakpur), humiliated the aspiring kings (who had attempted to break that bow and marry Sita) by trouncing their ego and crushing their vanity of being strong, valiant and powerful, and had married Sita in the marriage ceremony called ‘Swayambar’ in accordance with the rules set down for this purpose.

At that time, he had nullified the legendary strength, valour, name and fame of Brighupati1 who used to terrify and instill awe and fear in the hearts of all those whom he faced. His anger and vehemence was renowned as was his invincibility and powers derived by doing severe Tapa (austerity and penances). The Lord had faced him bravely and fearlessly, and had subdued the sage who was also subjected to the same humiliation as that faced by the other princes at the ceremony. [Refer Baal Kand, verse no. 15.]

He had playfully, without much effort but after a little frolicking around, killed the golden deer (who was actually a demon called Marich in disguise), and had slayed the proud Baali (the elder brother of Sugriv). [Refer Aranya Kand, verse nos. 46-47 for the incident that concerns the golden deer, and Kishkindha Kand, verse no. 60 that briefly mentions the death of Baali.]

The same ‘moon of king Dashrath’s clan’ (i.e. Sri Ram who is treated as the ‘moon’ here)²—who is almighty and holds a bow called ‘Saarang’³ in his hands—has come calling. He has wise ministers with him, such as Sugriv, as well as great army commanders who are strong, valiant and powerful. He also has with him the powerful, strong, valiant and unconquerable son of the Wind-God (Hanuman)—who is a great warrior, invincible in the battlefield, fearless and with a body that is formidably strong and robust like the Bajra (which is the hardest material in creation).

They will rush forward with massive rocks and boulders as hard as Bajra, and reduce Lanka into rubble in a short while. [Bajra is the hardest material known. So the boulders and rocks thrown by the monkeys would be so heavy, sturdy and unbreakable that they would reduce anything they fall upon to rubble.] They will not take long to tie you up along with your whole clan and race.

It is yet not too late, my dear husband. Pay attention to what I say; pay heed to my advice. Do not rely on Shiva’s strength (i.e. on the boons given by him to you, or the fact that you worship him and he will come to your aid).

[In other words, don’t be under false pretensions or delusions that Lord Shiva would give you protection. Don’t you remember that this Shiva couldn’t harm Lord Ram

when the latter had broken the former's bow? Don't you know that sage Parashuram whom the entire world feared couldn't harm a hair of the Lord? So do not live in a fool's paradise and wake up while still there is time. Don't even be stupid of your own strength or that of your army, for don't you remember what Hanuman did a few days back when he had burnt the city and had killed your son Akshay Kumar; where were you and your army then? Why couldn't you and your army harm him? Hanuman was alone, but now he would be accompanied by thousands of his companions. Do I have to tell you what would happen once they enter the city together again? Say, have you lost all your sense of bearing and wisdom?]

Your brother Vibhishan has already gone and joined the Lord of Kaushal (Sri Ram). [He will surely tell all your secrets to Sri Ram.]

The cheering, roaring and yelling of their army is echoing and reverberating in all the ten directions (i.e. everywhere). You can observe the huge throng of monkeys and bears (literally, the forest dwellers—'Vanchar') even from (the ramparts of the fort) here. [So therefore, are you blind; can't you see the doomsday cloud gathering in the horizon?]

Surdas says that Mandodari tried her best to exhort Ravana to understand and come to terms with the ground realities. She told him that the two exalted members of king Raghu's clan (i.e. the two brothers Sri Ram and Laxman) have already landed on the shores of the ocean. The danger is knocking at the door; there is no time to procrastinate and dither. Ravana had to decide quickly; it was a 'now or never' situation for him. The attacking army was surging ahead with full speed like dark banks of clouds rushing across the sky during the rainy season. (See also verse no. 122) (124).

[Note--¹This refers to Sri Ram overcoming the anger and wrath of sage Parashuram when the latter had haughtily intervened during the bow-breaking ceremony and had tried to take Sri Ram to task for his breaking the bow of Lord Shiva, because the sage had treated this incident as an insult of Lord Shiva whom he revered as his Lord, as well as an affront of the Brahmin race to which he himself belonged. The sage had, on an earlier occasion, taken a vow to crush the arrogance and haughtiness of the Kshatriya or warrior race to which the Lord belonged. But as it happened, the fretting and fuming of the sage did not have any effect on the Lord, and the sage was astonished that inspite of being so powerful and strong in arms he was unable to punish Sri Ram as his hands did not obey his commands, and his internal self-confidence and courage failed him. Eventually he realised that Ram was no ordinary prince but the Supreme Being himself manifested. So finally the sage bowed before the Lord, said his prayers, pleaded forgiveness and then went his way to do penances and austerity in the mountains.

It so happened that the sage had forgotten that it was Vishnu, the primary form of Sri Ram, who had delegated these powers and potentials to him. Unfortunately the sage thought that it was 'he' who possesses them by the virtue of his doing severe Tapa (austerity and penance). This made the sage feel proud, haughty and arrogant. When the Lord discovered that the sage's false pride is going into his head, he used the opportunity of his verbal confrontation with the sage at that time to bring him down to the ground from the air in which he seemed to fly; he took back or rescinded all the divine powers delegated by Vishnu to the sage, and this resulted in the latter losing all 'steam' and 'air' like a deflated balloon. The sage lost all his haughtiness and arrogance, submitted meekly before the Lord, and went away.]

काहे कौं परतिय हरि आनी !
 यह सीता जो जनक की कन्या, रमा आपु रघुनंदन—रानी ॥
 रावन मुग्ध, करम के हीने, जनक—सुता तैं तिय करि मानी ।
 जिनके क्रोध पुहुमि—नभ पलटें, सूखै सकल सिंधु कर पानी ॥
 मूरख सुख—निद्रा नहिं आवै, लैहैं लंक बीस भुज भानी ।
 'सूर' न मिटै भाल की रेखा, अल्प—मृत्यु तुव आइ तुलानी ॥

(125)

kāhē kaur̥ṁ paratiya hari ānī!
 yaha sītā jō janaka kī kan'yā, ramā āpu raghunandana-rānī..
 rāvana mugdha, karama kē hīnē, janaka-sutā taim̐ tiya kari mānī..
 jīnakē krōdha puhumi-nabha palatēṁ, sūkhai sakala sindhu kara pānī..
 mūrakha sukha-nidrā nahim̐ āvai, laihaim̐ laṅka bīsa bhuja bhānī..
 'sūra' na miṭai bhāla kī rēkhā, alpa-mṛtyu tuva ā'i tulānī..

125. (Mandodari continued her attempt to persuade Ravana to abandon his arrogance and see the light of wisdom and prudence—) 'Why did you steal someone else's wife and bring her here? This Sita, who is the daughter of Janak and the queen of Raghunandan (Sri Ram), is actually 'Ramaa' (i.e. she is personified form of goddess Laxmi; the divine consort of Lord Vishnu).

Oh the intoxicated, haughty and deluded fool Ravana! You have thought that the daughter of Janak was an ordinary woman. The earth and the sky can turn upside down due to her wrath, and the water of the ocean can dry up.

Oh you stupid! You are unable to even sleep peacefully (out of fear)! He (Sri Ram) will take over the city after breaking (twisting) all your twenty arms.'

Surdas says that Mandodari felt resigned to the fate of her husband and the demon race. She was full of remorse. Exasperated and dismayed, she warned Ravana—'It is not possible to erase what has been written in one's destiny. Your premature (untimely) death is staring you in your face (and that is why you don't seem to realise your mistakes or pay heed to good advice given by me and other ministers of yours; your mind and wisdom seem to have abandoned you because your end seems to have come).'

(125).

[126]

तोहि कवन मति रावन आई ।
 जाकी नारि सदा नवजोबन, सो क्यों हरै पराई ॥
 लंक—सौ कोट देखि जनि गरबहि, अरु समुद्र—सी खाई ।
 आजु—काल्हि, दिन चारि—पाँच मैं, लंका होति पराई ॥
 जाके हित सैना सजि आए, राम—लछन दोउ भाई ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु लंका तोरै, फेर राम दुहाई ॥

(126)

tōhi kavana mati rāvana ā'i.

jākī nāri sadā navajōbana, sō kyōm harai parā'ī..
 laṅka-sau kōṭa dēkhi jani garabahi, aru samudra-sī khā'ī..
 āju-kāl'hi, dina cāri-pām̐ca maim, laṅkā hōti parā'ī..
 jākē hita sainā saji ā'ē, rāma-lachana dō'u bhā'ī..
 'sūradāsa' prabhu laṅkā tōraim, phēra rāma duhā'ī..

126. (Mandodari severely scolded Ravana—) 'What did you think? (How foolish could you become?)

Ah, one whose wife always remain young (never becomes subject to old age and its attendant decrepit condition of the body)—say, why would he steal another person's young wife?¹

Do not feel proud and over-confident by looking at the impregnable fort of Lanka or at the vast and fierce ocean surrounding the fort like a huge moat. Today, tomorrow or in the next 4-5 days, Lanka will belong to someone else, for it is sure that the purpose for which the Lords of Surdas ('Surdas-prabhu'), Sri Ram and Laxman, have arrived with their well-armed army, will be accomplished and the city would be destroyed by them. The Lord's victory would echo and reverberate around the city, and it would be announced by the heralds going round the city.'² (126).

[Note :- ¹Mandodari, the chief queen of Ravana, remained always young because she is one among the five so-called traditional virgins according to Hindu mythology. So, here she means that though Ravana has a beautiful woman as his wife, who always remains young, there was no need for him to abduct another person's wife.

²The last 3 lines of this verse can be read as follows also—'...in a day or two or at the most 4-5 days, Lanka will belong to Sri Ram as a conqueror. It is for the benefit of which (meaning Lanka) that the two brothers Sri Ram and Laxman have arrived with their army.' The 'benefit of the city' refers to it being freed from the clutches of evil mongering and cruel demons, and restoring it to the good natured demons headed by Vibhishan.]

[127/1]

आयौ रघुनाथ बली, सीख सुनो मेरी ।
 सीता लै जाइ मिलौ, बात रहै तेरी ॥
 तैं जु बुरौ कर्म कियौ, सीता हरि ल्यायौ ।
 घर बैठें बैर कियौ, कोपि राम आयौ ॥
 चेतत क्यौ नहिं मूढ़, सुनि सुबात मेरी ।
 अजहूँ नहिं सिंधु बँध्यौ, लंका है तेरी ॥
 सागर कौ पाज बाँधि, पार उतरि आवैं ।
 सैना कौ अंत नहिं, इतनौ दल ल्यावैं ॥

(127/1)

āyau raghunātha balī, sīkha sunō mērī..
 sītā lai jā'i milau, bāta rahai tērī..
 taim ju burau karma kiyau, sītā hari lyāyau..
 ghara baiṭhēm baira kiyau, kōpi rāma āyau..
 cētata kyaurm nāhim mūrha, suni subāta mērī..

ajahūm̐ nahim̐ sindhu bam̐dhyau, laṅkā hai tērī..
 sāgara kau pāja bām̐dhi, pāra utari āvair̐m̐.
 sainā kau anta nāhim̐, itanau dala lyāvair̐m̐..

127/1. (Mandodari chided Ravana and exhorted him to come to his senses before it is too late—) ‘The strong and valiant Raghunath has arrived; listen to my advice. Take Sita along and go meet him; this will keep your honour. You have committed a grave error by stealing and bringing Sita here. Unnecessarily and without any provocation, you have created enmity and provoked Sri Ram who has come with a wrathful vengeance (to punish you for your misdeeds).

Oh you stupid fool! Why don’t you listen to me and wake up (before it is too late). The ocean has not been tied (bridged) yet, and Lanka is still with you. Act before he ties (tames, overcomes the resistance of) the ocean with a bridge and lands here at Lanka. He will bring along an army which has no end (i.e. an army that is very huge, has stupendous strength and has countless warriors).’ (127/1).

[127/2]

देखि तिया! कैसौ बल, करि तोहि दिखराऊँ ।
 रीछ—कीस बस्य करौं, रामहि गहि ल्याऊँ ॥
 जानति हौं, बली बालि सों न छूटि पाई ।
 तुम्हैं कहा दोष दीजै, काल—अवधि आई ॥
 बलि जब बहु जज्ञ किए, इंद्र सुनि सकायौ ।
 छल करि लइ छीनि मही, बामन है धायौ ॥
 हिरनकसिप अति प्रचंड, ब्रह्मा—बर पायौ ।
 तब नृसिंह—रूप धर्यौ, छिन न बिलंब लायौ ॥
 पाहन सौं बाँधि सिंधु, लंका—गढ़ घेरै ।
 ‘सूर’ मिलि बिभीषनै, दुहाइ राम फेरै ॥

(127/2)

dēkhi tiyā! kaisau bala, kari tōhi dikharā'ūm̐ .
 rīcha-kīsa basya karaum̐, rāmahi gahi lyā'ūm̐ ..
 jānati haum̐, balī bālī sōm̐ na chūṭi pā'ī.
 tumhair̐m̐ kahā dōṣa dījai, kāla-avadhi ā'ī..
 bali jaba bahu jajña ki'ē, indra suni sakāyau.
 chala kari la'i chīni mahī, bāmana hvai dhāyau..
 hiranakasipa ati pracaṇḍa, brahmā-bara pāyau.
 taba nr̥ṣim̐ha-rūpa dharyau, china na bilamb̐a lāyau..
 pāhana saum̐ bām̐dhi sindhu, laṅkā-gar̐ha ghēraim̐.
 'sūra' mili bibhīṣanair̐m̐, duhā'i rāma phēraim̐..

127/2. (To all the pleadings of Mandodari, Ravana replied arrogantly and boastfully, saying—) ‘Look, you woman. I will show you how strong I am or what potentials and

valour I have. I shall subdue the monkeys and bears, and catch Sri Ram and bring him here in captivity.’

(Mandodari retorted sarcastically—) ‘I know about your strength; you couldn’t free yourself from the clutches of the strong Baali (the king of Kishkindha and the elder brother of Sugriv)¹. But what is the use of blaming you; your time has run up (i.e. your death has arrived, and therefore there is no use in preaching you or trying to make you see your senses).

When Bali, the king of demons, had completed a number of fire sacrifices, Indra (the king of Gods) feared that he (Bali) would usurp his heavenly throne. To protect the Gods from being ruled by demons if Bali was successful, the Lord (Vishnu) had assumed the form of a dwarf mendicant named ‘Vaaman’ and had snatched (or retrieved) the earth from Bali by using a trick².

Hiranyakashipu was very ferocious and fierce, for he had been blessed by a boon from Brahma (the creator). But the Lord (Vishnu) did not demur even for a second to assume the form of ‘Nrisingh’ (which was the half-man, half-lion incarnation of Vishnu) to kill him³.

The same Lord shall tie (tame, bridge) the ocean and besiege the fort of Lanka. The brave One, i.e. Sri Ram, shall join hands with Vibhishan in proclaiming his victory around the city.’ (127/2).

[Note :- ¹*Baali* was the elder brother of Sugriv. Once he had put Ravana under his armpit for many days while the latter had gone to challenge the former when he was doing some worship. Peeved by Ravana’s arrogance and impertinence, Baali had tucked him under his arms to stop him from annoying him any further. When his worship was finished and he had returned back to his capital at Kishkindha, he realised that Ravana was still squeezed under his armpit. So he released the latter and made a pact of friendship with him. Mandodari refers to that incident when Ravana had tried his best to escape from Baali but could not do so, and remained clamped and squeezed under his armpit for a long time. This story is narrated in Valmiki Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga 34, and Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga 13, verse nos. 96-101.

²*Bali*, the king of demons, was performing a fire sacrifice which would make him rule over the world and become invincible. When Indra feared that he will conquer the heavens too, Lord Vishnu assumed the form of Vaaman, a mendicant dwarf, and came to the venue of the fire sacrifice of Bali and asked for alms or donation. When Bali had made a promise, Vaaman asked him for land which measures the size of his three steps. In his first step the Lord measured the earth, in his second step he measured the heavens, and when Bali found that the third step had no place to rest upon, he had offered his own head. In this way, Vaaman had prevented Bali from conquering the throne of heaven.

³*Hiranyakashipu* was a cruel demon who was the father of Prahalad, the child devotee of Lord Vishnu. He had tried his best to stop the child from worshiping Vishnu who was an arch enemy of the demon race. But when the child did not relent, his father Hiranyakashipu tortured him no end. The demon had a blessing that he cannot be killed either by a man or an animal. So, Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of Nrisingh who was neither a man nor an animal, because he was half man and half lion, to kill that demon.]

राग धनाश्री

रे पिय! लंका बनचर आयौ ।
 करि परिपंच हरी तैं सीता, कंचन—कोट ढहायौ ॥
 तब तैं मूढ़ मरम नहिं जान्यौ, जब मैं कहि समुझायौ ।
 बेगि न मिलौ जानकी लै कै, रामचंद्र चढ़ि आयौ ॥
 ऊँची धुजा देखि रथ ऊपर, लछिमन धनुष चढ़ायौ ।
 गहि पद 'सूरदास' कहै भामिनि, राज बिभीषन पायौ ॥

rāga dhanāśrī

(128)

rē piya! laṅkā banacara āyau.
 kari paripaṅca harī taim sītā, kaṅcana-kōṭa ḍhahāyau..
 taba taim mūrha marama nahim jān'you, jaba maim kahi samujhāyau.
 bēgi na milau jānakī lai kai, rāmacandra caḍhi āyau..
 ūm̐cī dhujā dēkhi ratha ūpara, lachimana dhanuṣa caḥhāyau.
 gahi pada 'sūradāsa' kahai bhāmini, rāja bibhiṣana pāyau..

Raag Dhanasri

128. (Mandodari pleads with Ravana—) 'Oh dear! You had cunningly and stealthily abducted Sita, resulting in the monkey ('Vanchar'—literally a forest dweller; here referring to Hanuman) coming to Lanka and demolishing the golden city within the fort.

Though I have tried my best to explain the secret (or the hidden mystery) to you, you are so stupid that you could not, or did not, understand it.

Why don't you quickly take Janki (Sita) along and go to meet him (Sri Ram). Remember, Sri Ram Chandra has arrived to launch his assault on the city. His high war standard mounted on the war chariot can be seen from here. Laxman can also be seen holding a bow (at the ready for the attack which is imminent).'

Surdas says that the wife caught hold of his (Ravana's) feet and revealed (divulged) to him the secret that Vibhishan has already got the reign of the kingdom (as he has been symbolically anointed by Sri Ram himself and addressed as 'the king of Lanka')¹ (128).

[Note—¹See verse no. 118 and 119. This clearly shows that spies of Lanka had brought back the news of Vibhishan's anointment by the Lord on the other side of the ocean, but were too scared to convey it directly to Ravana. So they passed the news to his chief queen Mandodari. Perhaps this is the reason she is so exasperated and alarmed as she knows that Vibhishan knows all the secrets of the army of Lanka as well as of the city itself. He knows its defences, its weaknesses, loopholes and faults, its geographical layout; he would surely help the Lord's army to devise a strategy accordingly. With such a traitor in their ranks, it would be most easy for the army of Sri Ram to invade the city, overcome all resistance, conquer the city and lay it to ruin very quickly. She realised that the gravest mistake her husband had made when the dark clouds of war were looming on the horizon was to make an enemy out of his own brother. Ravana should have been more prudent and wise, and even though he did not like Vibhishan's advice or knew that he is more inclined towards the Lord, her husband should have exercised caution and shown prudence by not openly insulting Vibhishan by kicking him in full public view, and

should have been more tolerant towards him, not out of any love for him but as a matter of war strategy.

Mandodari was certain that Vibhishan's betrayal at this juncture was the proverbial last straw that would be responsible for the final demise of the demon race headed by her husband Ravana. This was compounded by the fact that Sri Ram has anointed him and declared that if he wins the war he would appoint Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka. This was a war trophy that now Vibhishan looked forward to, and it would act as a strong motivation for him to betray Ravana and ensure his defeat so that he can be made the king of Lanka.]

रावन की ज्ञान भरी बातें—राग सारंग

[129]

सुनि प्रिय तोहि कथा सुनाऊँ ।
 यह परमोद बसत जिय मैं गति, कत बैकुण्ठ नसाऊँ ॥
 अधरम करतहिं गए जन्मसत, अब कैसेँ सिर नाऊँ ।
 वह परतीति पैज रघुपति की, सो कैसेँ बृथा गवाऊँ ॥
 जौ गुरजन सुनाम नहिं धरते, तौ किति सिंधु बहाऊँ ।
 मैं पायौ सिव कौ निरमायल, सो कैसेँ चरन छुवाऊँ ॥
 जौ सनकादिक श्राप न देते, तौ न कनकपुर आऊँ ।
 जौ 'सूरज' प्रभु—त्रिया न हरतौ, क्योंउब अभै पद पाऊँ ॥

rāvana kī jñāna bharī bātēṁ-rāga sārāṅga

(129)

sunī priya tōhi kathā sunā'ūṁ .
 yaha paramōda basata jiya mairiṁ gati, kata baikunṭha nasā'ūṁ ..
 adharama karatahirṁ ga'e janmasata, aba kaisairiṁ sira nā'ūṁ .
 vaha paratīti paija raghupati kī, sō kaisērṁ br̥thā gavā'ūṁ ..
 jau gurajana sunāma nahirṁ dharatē, tau kitī sindhu bahā'ūṁ .
 mairiṁ pāyau siva kau niramāyala, sō kaisairiṁ carana chuvā'ūṁ ..
 jau sanakādika śrāpa na dētē, tau na kanakapura ā'ūṁ .
 jau 'sūraja' prabhu-triyā na haratau, kyauṁ'ba abhai pada pā'ūṁ ..

Ravana's Enlightened Views—Raag Saarang

[Verse nos. 129 and 130 highlight the fact that Ravana had willingly done what he did, viz. brought Sita and created enmity with Lord Ram, because he knew that his emancipation and salvation lay only in dying at the hands of Lord Ram whom he knew was none else but Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, himself. He knew that for an evil demon like him, who has not a single good deed to his credit, there was no other chance for liberation of his soul except by getting killed at the hands of the Lord. So inspite of all the ignominy and ridicule he had invited from all those around him, as well as from the world at large for all times to come, he knew what he was doing was the correct thing.

Further, he also wished to use this golden opportunity to ensure the deliverance of the entire demon race that was as sinful as him by getting them all killed in the war at the hands of the Lord, or his ardent devotees disguised as the army of the Lord. Where else could he find such a golden chance for emancipation and salvation of the entire clan, especially by the easiest way known to the demons—which was strife and bloodshed. He knew fully well that it is impossible for them to do any good deed or religious duty, so there was no scope ever for their deliverance. He also knew that Lord Vishnu had taken this incarnation as Sri Ram precisely for killing him as he had been tormenting the world no end. So he was aware that his death was a certainty as he obviously could not overcome the Supreme Lord of creation.

But he did not wish to divulge this secret as it would jeopardise his plans of getting the whole of the demon race liberated from their sinful bodies and find emancipation and salvation at the hands of the Lord himself—an opportunity that they just could not ever imagine even in their dreams because of the formidable burden of the unpardonable and horrible sins and misdeeds committed by them all their lives.

So when he finds that his wife Mandodari is extremely nervous, terrified and agitated, and comforts her and tells her to calm down and become rested. She must understand that her husband is not being stupid or reckless, but is acting in great wisdom and with the greater welfare of the clan in mind.]

129. Ravana told Mandodari—‘Listen dear, I will tell you something secret. I have a sincere desire in my heart (to find out a way for my soul’s emancipation and salvation), and keep wondering when I shall go to ‘Vaikunth’ (abode of Lord Vishnu, or the heaven, by getting killed at the hands of Sri Ram, whom I know to be an incarnation of Vishnu).

I have spent hundreds of births doing evil deeds and committing sins, so how can I go and bow my head (before the Lord now)? I have a firm belief in the vows made by Raghupati (that he would free the earth of cruel and evil demons), so how can I make it in vain? [That is, why should I lose this golden opportunity of getting killed by Lord Sri Ram by surrendering to him and forcing him to break his vows of killing me, because when I surrender the Lord is so forgiving and merciful that he would forgive me and I would lose this once in a lifetime opportunity of finding liberation from this evil body. If I bow and fall at his feet in surrender, it is sure that he will pardon me, notwithstanding my horrible sins. But by doing so, he will not be able to kill me and my liberation will be forfeited. Why don’t you understand this? Therefore, it is not that I can’t go and surrender before the Lord as you advice or that I do not wish to do it, but I will willingly not do so. If I go and surrender before him, he will not get an opportunity to kill me. Instead, I will fight with him and get myself killed at his hands. By doing so, I will not only deliver myself from this evil and sinful body of a demon, but will also give liberation to all other demons that are evil and sinful in my clan. As their king it is my moral duty not to be selfish enough to reap the benefits of liberation and deliverance all by myself but should share it also with all others who are dependent upon me.]

Had my seniors (elders) not named me ‘Ravana’¹ (literally, the one who makes others weep), why then would I have made an ocean of tears to flow? [That is, why would I have tormented the people of this world so much that they wept and wept, and their tears formed the sour and salty ocean? It is not my fault. My elders wanted me to grow up as a cruel demon, and live up to my name as the one who makes the world weep.

So I did what was expected of me by my elders, especially my parents who named me 'Ravana'.]

Further, I have got these heads as a blessing and gift from Lord Shiva (because I had offered my original single head to him, and the present heads sprouted on my neck one by one as a boon from the Lord when he was pleased by my self-sacrifice). So, how can I, or what right do I have to make them touch his (Sri Ram's) feet? [That is, these ten heads of mine do not belong to me. The head which had belonged to me has already been offered to Lord Shiva. These present heads are a boon or gift or blessing from him. Lord Shiva is my patron God. So I cannot go and put these heads at the feet of some other Lord besides Lord Shiva, because that would be tantamount to insulting Lord Shiva or demeaning his gifts which are to be held in high esteem. Now do you, Mandadori, understand why I do not wish to surrender to Lord Ram? See also verse nos. 149/4]

Had the sages Sankadi not cursed me (when I was a guard named Jai at the doorway of Lord Vishnu at his abode in Vaikunth)², tell me why would I have to come here to this golden city (by abandoning my exalted stature and prestigious job as the guard of Lord Vishnu, and become a condemned demon)? [I was an honorable guard who had the privilege of guarding Lord Vishnu himself. Once sages Sankadi came and wished to visit Lord Vishnu immediately. When I objected, they cursed me. Had it not been for this curse, why would I have had to become a demon and come down on this earth, why would I be called a cruel and sinful demon, why would I have been subjected to a life of condemnation, a life of sins and misdeeds, and why would I have been heaped with all the ignominy and ridicule as well as the huge burden of sins that has been heaped upon my head as a demon? I am not to be blamed for what I have become. The blame for all my behaviour and misdeeds, for all the torments that the world suffered at my hands, are due to others. They are not my making. Rather, the 'demon' in me is the creation of others; I was made a demon for no fault of mine. My soul is as pure and holy as it can be. So do not blame me for the havoc you see around you; blame the sages who were so arrogant and proud of their powers that they went around giving curses at the throw of a hat, not realizing that the curse would turn itself upon them. What wrong did I do by relentlessly torturing sages and seers because it was one of their peers who was responsible for my downfall and a horrible life as a demon when I was simply doing my duty as a guard at the gates of the abode of Lord Vishnu and not allowing anyone to meet the Lord without his permission. Why did Sankadi then curse me? I was teaching them a lesson of their lives and repaying them in their own coin by tormenting the sages and seers whom I treated as being of the same ilk as Sankadi.]

Had I not stolen the wife of the Lord of the Sun-Race ('Suraj-prabhu')¹, how could I ever imagine that I'll get an opportunity to attain the supreme stature of being fearless (i.e. a state where there is no fear of taking birth again and again, and entering the cycle of birth and death in this horrifying and sinful world). [That is, if I had not kidnapped Sita willingly, I would not have got an opportunity to get myself killed by Vishnu, and thereby free myself from the curse of Sankadi and liberate myself from the endless cycle of birth and death. I know for certain that he is Lord Vishnu, my original Lord whom I guarded in Vaikunth when I was stationed as his guard named Jai, and this is the only chance for my soul's redemption, the only opportunity and means for me to find salvation and emancipation, and I do not wish to let it go in vain. So it is imperative

for me not to make any compromise with the Lord, and go ahead with my plan to get myself killed by him as a means of my spiritual well-being.] (129).

[Note—¹According to one story, once Ravana got on his chariot and flew above Kailash, the mountain abode of Lord Shiva. Nandi, the mount of Shiva, told him to stop, but the arrogant Ravana did not pay any heed. So Nandi blocked his path in the sky. Peeved and feeling insulted, Ravana scooped up the entire mountain and put it on his shoulder to throw it somewhere. Lord Shiva used his might and pressed the mountain with his big toe. This crushed Ravana under the weight and the pressure, and he began to yell. He remained for a thousand years crushed under the weight of the mountain and continued to pray to Lord Shiva to free him. At that time Shiva cursed him—‘you have been wailing for so long under the weight of the mountain and you are in the habit of making others wail by your cruelty, so your name will be Ravana, or ‘the one who wails himself and make others wail too’.’ This story is narrated in Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga 13, verse no. 83-88.

The Atharva Veda’s *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 18 describes the meaning of the word ‘Ravana’ as follows—“Since the demon had abducted Ram’s consort (Sita) from a ‘Van’ (pronounced as won or one; meaning a dense forest), he was called ‘Ravana’. [The first letter of the word Ram and the word Van are combined to form the name of the demon as ‘Ra+van = Ravana’.]

There is another interpretation. ‘Ravana’ also means—‘the one who makes others weep, cry, lament and wail due to the severe pain, misery, torments, terror and sorrows inflicted upon them’ (for Ravana’s actions had made Sita suffer, weep and wail). Further, he made a lot of noise or false claims, or he used to brag haughtily about his achievements, his strength and powers as well as of his invincibility and lordship over even the heavens. Wherever he went, he behaved most wildly and acted like a savage, making a lot of din and clamour to spread fear and terror.

So, the first part of his name Ravana comes from the word Rav for ‘fuss, noise, chatter, clamour, nuisance and din’. Thus, he became famous as ‘Ravana’ because he made a lot of noise and false claims.”

There is an interesting connotation of the word ‘Ravana’. Since his name includes the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram which incidentally is also the Beej Mantra for the eternal fire element, i.e. the letter ‘Ra’, it implies that Ravana was not an ordinary soul but a highly learned and scholarly one. Then, the word ‘Van’, meaning a forest, implies that he was a ‘treasury’ of scriptural knowledge and learning. The fact that he became a ‘demon’ instead of a living being behooving of his high standard of scriptural scholarship, knowledge, learning and erudition as well as his birth in the Brahmin race shows how merely literal knowledge and expertise in the scriptures would not necessarily mean that a person is exalted, worthy of honour and reverence, and spiritually liberated if he has not actually understood the hidden meaning of the doctrines and philosophy of the scriptures, and if he has not actually implemented them in practice in his life and deeds.

Ravana had become extremely haughty and arrogant because of his knowledge and acquisition of mystical powers that come naturally to them who do severe Tapa (penances, austerities, religious exercises), and Ravana had scored high on this count. He had done exemplary Tapa so much so that it had pleased Brahma the creator as well as Shiva the concluder. There are numerous instances in the story of the Ramayana when he has told those who had tried to persuade him to abandon his stubbornness and make peace with Lord Ram that he knows fully well that Ram is not an ordinary prince but the Supreme Being himself, and that Sita is not an ordinary woman but Shakti herself. He had stressed to them that he has purposely created this situation of animosity with the Lord by stealing Sita with full knowledge that this would lead to his getting slayed at the hands of the Lord, and that this was the only once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that he has

got for his spiritual liberation from the prison of the evil body of a demon that he had acquired for himself due to his own follies and misdeeds. He would not let go of this golden chance by any means. When we take this point of view of Ravana into account, the whole story of Ramayana assumes a divine hue as the story of a highly learned and realised soul who has committed some mistakes in the past due to arrogance and lack of wisdom as to what his deeds would amount to, but realises and acknowledges later on that he is a sinful man. All the deplorable actions of Ravana around which the story of the epic Ramayana is woven are actually the attempt of a soul to find redemption for its past sins, and find emancipation and salvation once and for all.

Besides this point of his scriptural knowledge, it is also well established that he was the greatest devotee of Lord Shiva at that time. Shiva is the Lord who is honoured by the title of being a 'Maha-Deva'—the great Lord God. Shiva is also the patron God of ascetics and hermits, and he is the wisest and most enlightened God in the pantheon of Gods. So, the point is—how can one expect an ardent and faithful devotee of such a great God as actually being as sinful and unholy internally as Ravana's external behaviour and life has made him appear to be?

The 'ten' heads of Ravana has a symbolic meaning. Usually the demons had only one head like all living beings. They were called 'demons' because of their evil and sinful deeds, corrupt and pervert mind and intellect, cruelty of behaviour, reckless and ruthlessness tendencies, and despicable general demeanours. The demons had a preponderance of the Tama Guna, and a negative nature marked by horribly violent and intolerably volatile temperament. They had contempt for ethics and morality; they paid no heed to the principles of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility and auspiciousness).

The numeral 'ten' simply means that their king Ravana was ten times more sinful and ten times more powerful than the rest of them. It also means that negativity and evil nature of Ravana was ten times more than other demons of his race. So the Lord decided to get rid of this great menace for creation first, and then treat the ten-headed Ravana's killing as a warning to the rest of the demon race to mend their selves or face the same punishment. The Lord wished to give the rest of the demons a chance to mend their ways out of fear for their lives, if for nothing else. In fact, this is what exactly happened. Not all the demons were killed and eliminated from the surface of earth during the epic war at Lanka—and the surviving ones were ruled by Vibhishan who was the younger brother of Ravana and who had taken sides with Lord Ram in the epic war at Lanka in which his elder brother Ravana was killed.

This proves one more very important and pertinent point—merely possessing a gross body like that of a demon does not mean that a Jiva is condemned if his Atma, his inner being is not demonic or sinful, and instead is holy and pious like other wise and realised souls in this creation. Further, merely Gyan or knowledge of the scriptures does not ensure that the creature would be provided with Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance—this is proved by the fact that though Ravana was an expert in the knowledge of the Vedas and other scriptures, and though he was a Brahmin by birth, he still was the most evil Jiva alive at that time. Therefore, it is how a Jiva (living being, a creature) puts his body and knowledge to practical use that is of paramount importance rather than merely possessin a certain type of gross body or being able to have an access to knowledge and scriptures.

Hence, while the Lord felt it necessary to eliminate the demon king Ravana, the same Lord made his brother Vibhishan as the king of the remaining demon race.

There is another interpretation of depicting Ravana with ten heads. He was not an ordinary demon or villain, for Ravana was an expert in the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva), the four Up-Vedas or sub-Vedas (Dhanur Veda pertaining to the science of

warfare, Aurveda pertaining to herbal medicines, Arthashastra pertaining to economics and public administration, and Gandharva-veda related to music, song and dance-drama), the Purans (mythological histories) and the Dharmashastras (other scriptures relating to the philosophy of Dharma or the laws of probity, propriety and righteousness). But inspite of having thoroughly studied all the Vedas and scriptures, inspite of being an expert in their tenets, and inspite of having this huge body of knowledge at his disposal, Ravana still became extremely pervert and sinful because of his vanity, passions, lust for power, ego, haughtiness and arrogance. He did not understand the spiritual message and meaning of the scriptures, and he did not utilise this knowledge for his spiritual welfare, most probably because he limited himself to their literal knowledge only, a knowledge that gave him immense temporal powers and fame but proved to be his unmaking.

This has the message for all spiritual aspirants and seekers of Mukti that mere knowledge of the scriptures is not sufficient for one's salvation; one must implement them in practice. By killing Ravana the Lord has sent a strong message to such people who are proud of their overpowering control over the literal versions of the scriptures that salvation is not theirs if they are not careful in how they utilise this knowledge and skill intelligently with proper wisdom. The Lord would not excuse them even if they are Brahmins (Ravana was a Brahmin by birth) and learned (Ravana was matchless in his knowledge of the scriptures) if they become sinful and fall from their path.

²The cursing of Jai and Vijai—Refer verse no. 1.]

राग कान्हारौ

[130]

जनि बोलहि मंदोदरि रानी ।
तेरी सौँ, कछु कहत न बनई, मोहि राम बिपरीति कहानी ॥
सुनि बावरी! मुगधि मति तेरी, जनकसुता तैं त्रिय करि जानी ।
यह सीता निरभै कौ बोहित, सिंधु सुरूप बिषै कौ पानी ॥
मोहि बवन सुरपुर कौ कीबे अपनै काज कौ मैं हरि आनी ॥
'सूरदास' स्वामी केवट बिन, क्यों उतरै रावन अभिमानी ॥

rāga kānharau

(130)

jani bōlahi mandōdari rānī.
tērī sauṁ, kachu kahata na bana'ī, mōhi rāma biparīti kahānī..
suni bāvarī! mugadhi mati tērī, janakasutā taim triya kari jānī.
yaha sītā nirabhai kau bōhita, sindhu surūpa biṣai kau pānī..
mōhi bavana surapura kauṁ kībē apanaim kāja kauṁ maim hari ānī..
'sūradāsa' svāmī kēvaṭa bina, kyaum utarai rāvana abhimānī..

Raag Kaanharau

130. (Ravana continued to reassure and comfort Mandodari—) ‘Oh queen Mandodari! Do not say such a thing again (as you have been saying in verse nos. 120-128). I cannot even fully describe the secret mystery behind my enmity with, or opposition to, Sri Ram.

Oh you timid and foolish one! Listen, you seem to be under some kind of delusion or misconception. You think that the daughter of Janak (Sita) is an ordinary woman. This Sita is akin to a boat or ship to take one across the ocean full of water symbolising attractions of this sensuous world, gratification of the sense organs, numerous desires, lust and passions etc. I wish to use her as a medium (or vehicle) to go to the abode of Gods (or the heavens).

So remember, I have stolen her with this express purpose in mind. How will the haughty, egoist and arrogant Ravana ever hope to (cross this world-like ocean and) get down on the other side (i.e. the heaven) without the help of the Lord of Surdas (‘Surdas-swami’; Sri Ram) acting as a boatman (or a veteran sailor) for him?’

[Ravana basically tell his wife Mandodari that he has not brought Sita with any evil intentions or lust, but with full respects and with the wisdom that she would act as a medium of his emancipation and salvation. Had he not brought her here to Lanka the Lord would not have come here, and now if he surrenders the Lord would not kill him. This would certainly rob him of this god-sent golden opportunity of finding liberation from the evil body as a demon as well as prevent his soul from being delivered. So he advises Mandodari not to regard him as a pervert or ill-witted and lustful man who is after the wife of someone else, but as a wise man who yearns for the good of his soul as well as that of the rest of his clan.] (130)

[Note :- Verse nos. 129-130, and 131 below are an eye-opener. Ravana was not being an evil, pervert or a lustful and passionate demon when he abducted Sita. It was a well-planned strategy on his part to get rid of his sinful body by getting killed at the hands of the Lord, Sri Ram. He was not being stupid or foolish, deluded by ignorance of the reality, and overcome by passion and lust. But he was very wise and enlightened indeed.

The ignominy that history has heaped on Ravana is turned on its head here by his own admission that he knows the truthful identity of Sri Ram (verse 129) and of Sita (verse no. 130), and that it is for the sake of his salvation that he prefers this ignominy rather than paying heed to his wife and advisors, and pretending to be righteous, wise and prudent by ending the war.

We learn another lesson here—what appears on the surface may be, and is usually, not the whole truth. To judge a person properly and comprehensively, we must learn the motive behind his actions and his inner thought processes. May be a person whom we regard for all practical purposes as a very sinful, pervert and worldly man may be actually a most wise, erudite, sagacious, adroit, enlightened and knowledgeable soul like Ravana in this story. See also verse no. 131 below.]

राग मारू

[131]

रावन! तेरी मृत्यु तुलानी ।
जानति हौं, तबही तैं सीता तैं अपनैं हरि आनी ॥
राघव—से प्रभु बरन सैं दुर्जन! कनक अवास ।
मोहि न देखत आवई, तौ लौं कंठ उसास ॥

लच्छि होइ तौ दीजिये, नाम लेत संसार ।
 लच्छि—बिहीनै पुरुष कौ मारत, मरत सिंगार ॥
 अब तोकौ याही बनै, बिना जीव की बात ।
 'सूरदास' तो पन रहै रामचंद्र के हाथ ॥

rāga mārū

(131)

rāvana! tērī mr̥tyu tulānī.
 jānati hauṁ, tabahī tair̥m sītā tair̥m apanair̥m hari ānī..
 rāghava-sē prabhu barana sair̥m durjana! kanaka avāsa.
 mōhi na dēkhata āva'ī, tau laur̥m kaṇṭha usāsa..
 lacchi hō'ī tau dījiyē, nāma lēta sansāra.
 lacchi-bihīnai puruṣa kaur̥m mārata, marata siṅgāra..
 aba tōkaur̥m yāhī banai, binā jīva kī bāta.
 'sūradāsa' tō pana rahai rāmacandra kē hātha..

Mandodari's Rejoinder & Ravana's Reply—Raag Maaru

131. (When Ravana coolly explained why he had stolen Sita and kindled animosity with Sri Ram, Mandodari wasn't satisfied. She rebuked him, saying—) 'Ravana! Your death has arrived. I know. It is for this reason that you had abducted Sita on your own (without any provocation whatsoever and without consulting your ministers), and brought her here.

Oh you evil one ('Durjan')! You wish to survive in this golden city by having enmity with a great Lord such as Raghav (Sri Ram)! I don't see that you would be able to breathe (live or survive) till that time (i.e. till the time you say that you expect to get killed by Sri Ram and attain your salvation).'

(Ravana was unmoved, and he replied—) 'When one has Laxmi (wealth and prosperity) with him, one is able to make charities, and the world remembers him and praises him (for his magnanimity, generosity and donations that he has been making). A person who has no wealth at his disposal is hounded and tormented (i.e. insulted and looked down upon) by the world. It is better for such a man to die.

[That is, Sita is like Laxmi for me. If I possess her, I will get an opportunity to fight Sri Ram and get fame as well as salvation. If I lose her, I wash my hands of these two God-sent opportunities—I will neither get the fame of fighting with the great Lord Sri Ram and establish my credentials as the greatest warrior ever born who could muster enough courage and valour to challenge and face the Supreme Lord of this world that I know Sri Ram to be, nor would get my chance of finding redemption for my soul when I die at the hands of the Lord. So don't think that I am so stupid and dull that I would let go this opportunity so easily. Don't detract me from my chosen path that I have selected after immense thoughts.].'

Surdas says that Mandodari finally gave up; she became dismayed and distraught at Ravana's stubbornness and headstrongness. She lost all hopes of making him see any reason and abandon his belligerence and recklessness. So she said—'Now it is only death

that you can think about. Let your vows be fulfilled at the hands of Sri Ram Chandra¹! (131).

[Note :- ¹Although Mandodari's last comment was an expression of her exasperation and frustration at her husband's stubborn determination not to give Sita back to Sri Ram, and instead fight with the Lord to get himself killed, but it nevertheless removed the last hurdle from Ravana's path. Had Mandodari been determined and uncompromising, then perhaps Ravana might have had to buckle under her pressure, because after all she was his senior wife.

Further, these words are a typical example of a statement that has a double meaning. On the face of it it appears to be an exasperated and frustrated statement of Mandodari telling Ravana to go to hell and do whatever he wishes. But, when viewed closely, the statement is a kind of hidden blessing instead of a curse—she had covertly blessed Ravana and given him her consent that he has her good wishes with him in his effort to find final liberation and deliverance of his soul from the evil body of a demon, and thus find his redemption for ever.]

रवण के दूत राम सेना में—राग सारंग

[132]

सुक—सारन द्वै दूत पठाए ।
 बानर—वेष फिरत सैना मैं, जानि बिभीषन तुरत बँधाए ॥
 बीचहिं मार परी अति भारी, राम—लछन तब दरसन पाए ।
 दीनदयालु बिहाल देखि कै, छोरी भुजा, कहाँ तें आए ॥
 हम लंकेस—दूत प्रतिहारी, समुद—तीर कौं जात अन्हाए ।
 'सूर' कृपाल भए करुनामय, अपने हाथ दूत पहिराए ॥

rāvaṇa kē dūta rāma sēnā mēm-rāga sārāṅga

(132)

suka-sārana dvai dūta paṭhā'ē.
 bānara-vēṣa phirata sainā maim, jāni bibhīṣana turata bam'dhā'ē..
 bīcahiṁ māra parī ati bhārī, rāma-lachana taba darasana pā'ē.
 dīnadayālu bihāla dēkhi kai, chōrī bhujā, kahām' tēm ā'ē..
 hama laṅkēsa-dūta pratihārī, samuda-tīra kaum jāta anhā'ē.
 'sūra' kṛpāla bha'ē karunāmaya, apanēm hātha dūta pahirā'ē..

Ravana's Spies in Sri Ram's Camp—Raag Saarang

132. Ravana had sent two messengers (spies) to reconnoiter. They had assumed the form of monkeys and were roaming freely in the army (of Sri Ram). But Vibhishan had recognized them and had got them arrested. They were severely beaten before they had an opportunity to have a divine sight of Sri Ram and Laxman. [That is, the spies were severely thrashed by the Lord's army before they were presented before him.]

When the merciful Lord (Sri Ram) saw their miserable and wretched condition, he untied their hands and asked them politely—'From where have you come?'

They replied, 'We are messengers and guards of the king of Lanka. We were going along the shores of the ocean (when your men got us arrested or caught us unawares, although we meant no harm and had inadvertently ventured in your camp).'

Surdas says that the merciful and compassionate Lord showed his mercy on them. He put a garland or a robe of honour on them with his own hands (and let them off)¹ (132).

[Note—¹This was another strategic action by the Lord. They were being watched by Vibhishan, and when the latter saw the treatment meted out to them by the Lord he must have felt happy internally, and whatever fear that might have lingered in his heart secretly as to his own fate once the war was won by the Lord were dispelled once and for all. He was now sure that he would not be killed or imprisoned once the job was done, for the Lord's nature is very merciful, kind, forgiving and gracious.

Another positive fall-out of this single act by the Lord was that when these spies went back to Lanka and reported the incident to the citizens of the city, surely they would have developed a constructive view of the Lord. They would now be assured that the invading army was not commanded by a merciless savage but by a Lord who was most forgiving and kind. This might motivate them to surrender instead of fighting to death till the last demon. This might also create a hidden desire in them to revolt against their own king Ravana whom they all knew in their hearts to be ruthless and cruel, and who was being the cause of ruining their lives just for the lust of a single woman. If nothing else than it would at least create a division in the enemy's army and lowering their morale, with some faction not willing to fight an unjust war with an opponent who is reported to be so kind.]

राम सागर संवाद—राग धनाश्री

[133/1]

रघुपति जबै सिंधु—तट आए ।
 कुस—साथरी बैठि इक आसन, बासर तीनि बिताए ॥
 सागर गरब धर्यौ उर भीतर, रघुपति नर करि जान्यौ ।
 तब रघुबीर धीर अपने कर, अग्नि—बान गहि तान्यौ ॥
 तब जलनिधि खरभर्यौ त्रास गहि, जंतु उठे अकुलाइ ।
 कह्यौ, न नाथ बान मोहि जारौ, सरन पार्यौ हौं आइ ॥
 आज्ञा होइ, एक छिन भीतर, जल इक दिसि करि डारौ ।
 अंतर मारग होइ, सबनि कौं, इहिं बिधि पार उतारौ ॥
 और मंत्र जो करौ देवमनि, बाँधौ सेतु बिचार ।
 दीन जानि, धरि चाप, बिहँसि कै, दियौ कंठ तें हार ॥

rāma sāgara saṁvāda-rāga dhanāśrī

(133/1)

raghupati jabai sindhu-taṭa ā'ē.
 kusa-sātharī baiṭhi ika āsana, bāsara tīni bitā'ē..
 sāgara garaba dharyau ura bhītara, raghupati nara kari jān'yau.
 taba raghubīra dhīra apanē kara, agini-bāna gahi tān'yau..

taba jalanidhi kharabharyau trāsa gahi, jantu uṭhē akulā'i.
 kahyau, na nātha bāna mōhi jārau, sarana pāryau hauṁ ā'i..
 ājñā hō'i, ēka china bhītara, jala ika disi kari ḍāraurṁ.
 antara māraga hō'i, sabani kaurṁ, ihiṁ bidhi pāra utāraurṁ..
 aura mantra jō karau dēvamani, bāmḍhau sētu bicāra.
 dīna jāni, dhari cāpa, bihamṣi kai, diyau kaṇṭha tēm hāra..

Sri Ram's Conversation with the Ocean—Raag Dhanasri

133/1. When Raghupati (Sri Ram) arrived on the shores of the ocean, he sat down on a mat of reeds without moving for three continuous days (requesting the ocean to give him a way across to Lanka).

But the ocean was stubborn, relentless and arrogant, for it thought that Raghupati was an ordinary human being. Then the otherwise patient and tolerant Raghubir (literally the brave Lord of the Raghu's clan, Sri Ram) lost his cool, and he picked up his bow and mounted the 'fire-arrow' on it (in order to boil and evaporate the water of the ocean).

No sooner had Sri Ram mounted the arrow than the ocean became alarmed and agitated to such an extent that the marine creatures present in it became very restless, fearing annihilation. He (the Ocean-God) pleaded with Sri Ram—'Oh Lord! Do not scorch me with your fire arrows for I have come to surrender to you and submit myself at your feet (literally, fall at your feetSa). If you order, I shall instantly pull the water to one side. This will create a path, and the entire army can cross me over to the other side. But, oh the jewel among the Gods, there is another option. If you so wish, you can get a bridge constructed over me.'

The Lord cooled down, thinking him (the ocean) to be humble and lowly¹, and he put aside his bow. He laughed and offered him a necklace (or put a garland around his neck as a token of friendship)² (131/1).

[Note—¹The Lord regarded the Ocean as lowly because only such a creature would be haughty and arrogant so as to create an unnecessary obstacle in the path of others. The Lord had shown due respect and courtesy to the Ocean by sitting on the shores and politely requesting him to give him the passage across its realm. But the haughty Ocean thundered and roared, it heaved and splashed across the shores as a sign of defiance. The same Ocean buckled-in as soon as the Lord picked up his bow and fire-arrow—the coward Ocean did not have the guts to face this weapon.

So, why was the Ocean being so stupid to pretend that it had the wherewithals to prevent the formidable army of the Lord from crossing its waters; why did he not give the passage in the beginning? The reason is that the Ocean had a pact with Ravana that it would act as a defensive moat around the fort of Lanka in return of the demon letting it rest in peace.

²This was the second instance of the Lord's gracious and forgiving nature after he had pardoned and garlanded the spies of Lanka as described in verse no. 132 above. This further established the Lord's reputation as being the most forgiving and compassionate Lord ever; not the one who was egocentric and preferred to instill fear in his opponents by the force of his arms. This virtue of the Lord is in the true tradition of real warriors who never raise their weapons even against their most avowed enemy if the latter surrenders.]

रावण के दूत का राम सेना के द्वारा पुल निर्माण की सूचना

[133/2]

यहै मंत्र सबहीं परधान्यौ, सेतु—बंध प्रभु कीजै ।
 सब दल उतरि होइ पारंगत, ज्यौं न कोउ इक छीजै ॥
 यह सुनि दूत गयौ लंका में, सुनत नगर अकुलानौ ।
 रामचंद्र—परताप दसौं दिसि, जल पर तरत पखानौ ॥
 दस सिर बोलि निकट बैठाया, कहि धावन! सति भाउ ।
 उद्यम कहा होत लंका कौं, कौनैं कियौ उपाउ!
 जामवंत—अंगद बंधू मिलि, कैसैं इहिं पुर ऐहैं ।
 मो देखत जानकी नयन भरि, कैसैं देखन पैहैं ॥
 हौं सति भाउ कहौं लंकापति, जो जिय—आयसु पाऊं ।
 सकल भेव—व्यवहार कटक कौ, परगट भाषि सुनाऊं ॥
 बार—बार यौं कहत सकात न, तोहि हति लैहैं प्रान ।
 मेरैं जान कनकपुरी फिरिहै, रामचंद्र की आन ॥

rāvaṇa kē dūta kā rāma sēnā kē dvārā pula nirmāṇa kī sūcanā

(133/2)

yahai mantra sabahīm paradhān'yau, sētu-bandha prabhu kījai.
 saba dala utari hō'i pāraṅgata, jyauṁ na kō'u ika chījai..
 yaha suni dūta gayau laṅkā maiṁ, sunata nagara akulānau.
 rāmacandra-paratāpa dasauṁ disi, jala para tarata pakhānau..
 dasa sira bōli nikaṭa baiṭhāyau, kahi dhāvana! sati bhā'u.
 udyama kahā hōta laṅkā kauṁ, kaunaiṁ kiyauṁ upā'u!
 jāmavanta-aṅgada bandhū mili, kaisaiṁ ihiṁ pura aihaiṁ.
 mō dēkhata jānakī nayana bhari, kaisaiṁ dēkhana paihaiṁ..
 hauṁ sati bhā'u kahauṁ laṅkāpati, jō jiya-āyasu pā'ūṁ..
 sakala bhēva-vyavahāra kaṭaka kau, paragaṭa bhāṣi sunā'ūṁ..
 bāra-bāra yauṁ kahata sakāta na, tōhi hati laihaiṁ prāna.
 mēraiṁ jāna kanakapurī phirihai, rāmacandra kī āna..

Ravana's Messenger Reports About the Construction of the Bridge by Sri
 Ram's Army

132/2. The second option (of constructing the bridge) was given prominence by all the advisors. They unanimously submitted—‘Oh Lord, get a bridge constructed so that the whole army can get across easily, and no one is harmed or injured.’

Ravana's spy (see verse no. 132) heard all this and went back to Lanka. The news created a terrible turmoil in the city (of Lanka). [This is because the news spread like wildfire in Lanka that the ocean has also surrendered, and the last barrier before the enemy's army actually invades has also fallen.]

The citizens became aware of the astonishing and miraculous event of huge rocks and boulders floating on the surface of the ocean. The way the bridge was constructed helped to spread and establish Lord Ram's glory and fame in all the ten directions of creation¹.

The 10-headed one (Ravana) summoned the messenger (spy) near him and asked, 'Say messenger! Tell me the truth. What efforts are being made by Sri Ram's group to come to Lanka? Tell me, what plans have they devised to invade Lanka, and who has thought of the way to do so? How do Jamvant and Angad hope to come to the city with their companions and expect to see Janki to their full satisfaction while I am still alive? [That is, how is it possible that I will allow them to invade the city and comfortably see Sita with ease while I am alive? How can they expect this to happen?]

The spy replied, 'Oh Lord of Lanka, if you give me your permission and promise not to harm or punish me, I will tell you the truth about everything. I will divulge all the secrets of Sri Ram's army and describe their behaviour and demeanours in front of you all (without holding back any news even though it might seem to be very bad or uncomfortable for you to hear it).

Listen. They (the monkeys) do not hesitate in repeatedly proclaiming their determination of killing you. It also appears true to me that the victory and glory of Sri Ram would be proclaimed (declared) in this golden city. That is, in all probabilities, it appears that Sri Ram would conquer the city and your army will be defeated. I am sorry to say so, but I beg your pardon that this appears to be the truth.' (133/2).

[Note—¹Lord Ram's army had managed to tame the ocean and successfully construct a bridge across it. The ocean is universally regarded as being inherently un-fettered and impossible to be tamed. This single achievement had helped the Lord's glory and fame to spread far and wide. All were surprised that even heavy rocks and boulders floated on water instead of sinking. During the process of construction, the army of monkeys and bears dumped huge rocks and boulders into the water. These rocks and boulders did not sink, but floated on the surface—a miracle of sorts which was never heard of in the past. Nal and Neel, the two great builders in Sri Ram's army, maneuvered them in place to form a long chain. This is how the bridge was finally constructed.

The miracle lay not only in the rocks floating on the heaving waters of the ocean but also in their remaining in place and bearing the immense weight of the huge army, without getting displaced, as it moved across the waters of the ocean!

The ten directions mentioned here are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.]

[133/3]

कुंभकरनहूँ कह्यौ सभा मैं, सुनौ आदि उतपात ।
 एक दिवस हम ब्रह्म—लोक मैं, चलत सुनी यब बात ॥
 काम—अंध हूँ सब कुटुंब—धन, जैहै एकै बार ।
 सो अब सत्य होत इहिं औसर, को है मेटनहार ॥
 और मंत्र अब उर नहिं आनौ, आजु बिकट रन माँड़ौ ।
 गहौ बान रघुपति के सन्मुख, हूँ करि यह तन छाँड़ौ ॥
 यह जस जीति परम पद पावौ, उर—संसै सब खोइ ।
 'सूर' सकुचि जो सरन सँभारौ, छत्री—धर्म न होइ ॥

(133/3)

kumbhakaranahūṃ kahyau sabhā maim, sunau ādi utapāta.
 ēka divasa hama brahma-lōka maim, calata sunī yaba bāta..
 kāma-andha hvai saba kuṭumba-dhana, jaihai ēkai bāra.
 sō aba satya hōta ihm̐ ausara, kō hai mēṭanahāra..
 aura mantra aba ura nahim̐ ānaum̐, āju bikaṭa rana mām̐rau.
 gahaur̐m̐ bāna raghupati kē sanmukha, hvai kari yaha tana chām̐rau..
 yaha jasa jīti parama pada pāvaur̐m̐, ura-sansai saba khō'i.
 'sūra' sakuci jō sarana sam̐bhāur̐m̐, chatrī-dharma na hō'i..

133/3. At that moment, Kumbhkaran (the younger brother of Ravana) also intervened, and told Ravana about what he had heard himself on some previous occasion.

He said—'Listen to the bad things that I had previously heard. One day, I had overheard a talk in Brahma's (the creator's) abode that due to your (Ravana's) foolish and lascivious nature, all the wealth and family members will be destroyed (i.e. eliminated and killed) in one go. That talk appears to be turning to be true now.

Ah! Who can change it (i.e. the destiny written by the creator Brahma cannot be changed). I shall not allow another thought to enter my heart and mind. I shall fight most viciously and ferociously today. I shall raise my arrow and hold it in front of Raghupati Sri Ram. [That is, with the full knowledge that the end of our clan has come, I will oppose Sir Ram tooth and nail, without showing any signs of fear or surrender.]

As a result of fighting with the Lord I would certainly leave my mortal body (i.e. I am certain of death) while he (Sri Ram) looks on. I will reap the great fame, the privilege and the honour (that I was killed by Sri Ram and died while the Supreme Lord of the universe was present before my eyes, a privilege even great sages are denied). In the bargain, I shall get the most exalted and holy stature of having found emancipation and salvation for myself. I have no doubt in my heart and mind about this matter.

Being a valiant, brave and courageous warrior, if I demure and feel hesitant or reluctant to fight, and seek surrender instead, then it will not be a conduct proper for, befitting of or expected from a brave member of the warrior class (133/3).

[Note :- Surdas says that Kumbhkaran made his decision to fight the war with Sri Ram clear along with the compulsion to do so by saying that he will fight, instead of debating at the outcome of the battle, because he was certain about the end of the clan headed by Ravana as he had heard about it in the court of the creator Brahma himself, and also because this end would actually be a boon in disguise as he would certainly find emancipation and salvation if he was fortunate of being killed by the Supreme Lord himself. Besides this, there is the added bonus of dying at the hands of the Lord while he is standing right in front, an opportunity that would not come again in a lifetime. The Lord being so reputed for his mercy and magnanimity, Kumbhakaran was most certain that even if he did make some mistake in the thick of battle and insulted the Lord, the latter would surely not pay any heed to his demeanours and impertinence but would gracefully bestow him with liberation and deliverance from the evil body of a demon and redeem his soul.

Since the battle and death are unavoidable, he would prefer to seek shelter at Sri Ram's feet and attain salvation by being killed at the hands of the Lord instead of dying somewhere else in the battle-ground or turning his back like a coward and inviting

ridicule and ignominy, because fighting an enemy and not running away from him is a righteous act and an expected form of conduct for any noble warrior who is brave, courageous and valiant.

So, in fact, there was no option left for Kumbhakaran. Faced with certain death he had decided to make the best out of it and seek Mukti or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for himself.]

सेतु बंधन— राग धनाश्री

[134]

रघुपति चित्त बिचार कस्यौ ।
 नातौ मानि सगर सागर सौं, कुस—साथरी पस्यौ ॥
 तीनि जाम अरु बासर बीते, सिंधु गुमान भस्यौ ।
 कीन्हौ कोप कुँवर कमलापति, तब कर धनुष धस्यौ ॥
 ब्रह्म—बेष आयौ अति ब्याकुल, देखत बान डस्यौ ।
 द्रुम—पषान प्रभु बेगि मँगायौ, रचना सेतु कस्यौ ॥
 नल अरु नील बिस्वकर्मा—सुत, छुवत पषान तस्यौ ।
 'सूरदास' स्वामी प्रताप तेँ सब संताप हस्यौ ॥

sētu bandhana- rāga dhanāśrī

(134)

raghupati citta bicāra karyau.
 nātau māni sagara sāgara saum̐, kusa-sātharī paryau..
 tīni jāma aru bāsara bitē, sindhu gumāna bharyau.
 kīnhau kōpa kumvara kamalāpati, taba kara dhanuṣa dharyau..
 brahma-bēṣa āyau ati byākula, dēkhata bāna ḍaryau.
 druma-paṣāna prabhu bēgi mamgāyau, racanā sētu karyau..
 nala aru nīla bisvakarmā-suta, chuvata paṣāna taryau.
 'sūradāsa' svāmī pratāpa tēm̐ saba santāpa haryau..

Constructing the Bridge—Raag Dhanasri

134. Raghupati (Sri Ram) thought to himself (or remembered) about the relationship that existed between his ancestor named king Sagar and the ocean, which was named after that great king as 'Saagar'.¹

In deference to that honorable tradition, he (Sri Ram) laid a mat of reeds on the shores of the ocean and sat down on it (to request the ocean to give him a passage, instead of using force against it). Three nights and three days passed by, but the ocean remained unrelenting, stubborn, and full of arrogance.

When the 'Lord of Kamla' (a reference to Lord Vishnu; Kamla is another name of Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu; here meaning Sri Ram) decided that the ocean is being unnecessarily haughty and stubborn, and he would not yield without a show of

strength, the Lord finally raised his bow mounted with an arrow. The ocean got extremely terrified, and came there disguised as a Brahmin.

(After mutual agreement and compromise—) The Lord immediately called for trees and rock, and had the bridge constructed². The rocks and boulders floated on the water by the mere touch of Nal and Neel (who were the sons of Vishwakarma, the celestial architect of the Gods).

Surdas says that the magnificent glory and the stupendous mystical powers of the Lord eliminated all hurdles and troubles (that came in the way of crossing the formidable ocean by the army of monkeys and bears) (134).

[Note : ¹The story goes that king Sagar, one of the ancestors of Sri Ram, had performed a horse sacrifice. Indra, the king of Gods, had stolen the sacrificial horse and hidden it in the hermitage of sage Kapil. Sagar sent his sixteen thousand sons to search the horse. When they could not find the horse on the surface of the earth, they began to dig up the earth in search of the horse. The dugged-up earth was filled with water, thus forming the ocean. This is why the ocean is called 'Saagar' in honour of king Sagar. Since 'Saagar', the ocean, was created by the sons of king Sagar, an ancestor of Lord Ram, the Lord thought it fit first to seek its permission and guidance to cross it and reach Lanka.

²The construction of the bridge is described in the story of the Ramayana as a part of the Devi-Puran Mahabagwat, in its Canto 40, verse nos. 5-7. Briefly it says that the bridge was constructed by Nal, the son of Maye, starting the construction in the full moon night of the Hindu month of Srawan (roughly July), and finished it in a short time of 2 Praharas, or roughly in 2 x 3 hours = 6 hours. That is, the bridge was started and finished under the cover of darkness of the night, giving no chance to Ravana to do any mischief.

The Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas also describes the construction of the bridge in its Yudha Kand or the chapter dealing with the epic war at Lanka, in its Canto 3, verse nos. 84-87. These verses tell us that the bridge was of the length of 100 Yojans, or approximately 800 miles.]

राग मारू

[135]

आपुन तरि—तरि औरनि तारत ।
 असम अचेत प्रगट पानी मैं, बनचर लै—लै डारत ॥
 इहिं बिधि उपले तरत पात ज्यौं, जदपि सैल अति भारत ।
 बुद्धि न सकति सेतु—रचना रचि, राम—प्रताप बिचारत ॥
 जिहिं जल तृन, पसु, दारु बूड़ि अपने संग औरनि पारत ।
 तिहिं जल गाजत महाबीर सब, तरत आँखि नहिं मारत ॥
 रघुपति—चरन—प्रताप प्रगट सुर, ब्यौम बिमाननि गावत ।
 'सूरदास' क्यौं बूड़त कलऊ, नाम न बूड़न पावत ॥

rāga mārū

(135)

āpuna tari-tari aurani tārata.
 asama acēta pragaṭa pānī maim, banacara lai-lai ḍārata..
 ihm bidhi upalē tarata pāta jyaum, jadapi saila ati bhārata.

bud'dhi na sakati sētu-racanā raci, rāma-pratāpa bicārata..
 jihim̐ jala tr̥ṇa, pasu, dāru būḍi apanē sam̐ga aurani pārata..
 tihim̐ jala gājata mahābīra saba, tarata ām̐khi nahim̐ mārata..
 raghupati-carana-pratāpa pragaṭa sura, byauma bimānani gāvata..
 'sūradāsa' kyaum̐ būṛata kala'ū, nāma na būṛana pāvata..

Raag Maaru

135. What an astounding wonder it is that the heavy boulders and rocks not only floated themselves but also helped others (i.e. the entire monkey-and-bear army) to cross over them!

Those rocks and boulders were heavy, lifeless and gross entities (and therefore unable to float or swim into place themselves); they were of all imaginable shapes and sizes (and not cut to fit into each other).

[They were all raw, they were not selected for their size or shape, just scooped up the monkeys and bears from wherever they could find them, and therefore were of uneven shapes and sizes. They were not cut systematically or chiseled to fit into each other; there was no time for such architectural formalities and no wherewithals to do so. Hence, the very fact that they stuck together and fitted into each other, instead of either sinking or drifting away by the ferocious buffeting by the ocean, was a great miracle of sorts.]

The rocks and boulders appeared on the surface of the water (i.e. floated) instead of drowning (or sinking) when each one of them was put on the surface of the water of the ocean by the monkeys (literally, the 'forest dwellers'—'Vanchar'). The mountain-like huge and heavy rocks floated on the surface of the water, appearing to be as light as leaves. [A leaf never sinks in the water but is so light that it floats on its surface. The huge rocks floated on the ocean as if they were merely leaves plucked from some tree.]

Even the mind and its faculty of logic could not ever envision that such a wondrous, spectacular and most marvelous feat unfolding before one's eyes is ever feasible, and decided that it has been made possible simply because of the glories and majestic potentials of Sri Ram. The intellect was awe struck that the water of the ocean—which submerged and drowned everything which fell into its surging and heaving waves, whether it was a twig or an animal or a tree—the same ocean was allowing the most brave monkeys (and bears), who were roaring and thundering, to go over its surface so quickly, without facing any hitch or hindrance.

[That is, the mind failed to come to terms with the most unusual visual sight that was unfolding before it—the miracle that, one, the heavy rocks and boulders floated together in a coordinated fashion to form a bridge across the surface of the ocean without either sinking or floating away, and second, the huge army of monkeys and bears was thundering across it very easily as if it was passing over some tract of solid land.]

This irrefutable visible proof of the stupendous potentials, the mystical powers and the magnificent glories of the holy and divine feet of Raghupati (Sri Ram) was being sung (hailed, applauded) by the Gods in the sky.

Surdas is so assured of his own salvation and emancipation when he visualizes this marvelous spectacle that he says—'Why would I be drowned in the ocean-like Kaliyug (the present era which is the 4th in the mythological 4-era cycle of creation and

annihilation of the world) because I have so steadfastly relied on the glorious name of the Lord (who has such stupendous glory, majesty, potentials and powers that even the gross and heavy rocks could float on the ocean when the Lord's holy name was invoked while they were being dumped into the ocean, and the army of monkeys and bears could cross the formidable ocean on foot, a feat hitherto never heard of or thought of being ever feasible, also while chanting the Lord's name)?

I am absolutely certain that I would not get drowned or trapped, under any circumstance, in this vicious and entrapping world that exists in the present era of Kaliyug.' (135).

राग धनाश्री

[136]

सिंधु—तट उतरे राम उदार ।
 रोष बिषम कीन्हौ रघुनंदन, सिय की बिपति बिचार ॥
 सागर पर गिरि, गिरि पर अंबर, कपि घन के आकार ।
 गरज—किलक—आघात उठत, मनु दामिनि पावस—झार ॥
 परत फिराई पयोनिधि भीतर, सरिता उलटि बहाई ।
 मनु रघुपति—भयभीत सिंधु, पत्नी प्यौसार पठाई ॥
 बाला—बिरह दुसह सबही कौं, जान्यौ राजकुमार ।
 बानबृष्टि, स्त्रोनिह करि सरिता, व्याहत लगी न बार ॥
 सुबरन लंक—कलस—आभूषन, मनि—मुक्ता—गन हार ।
 सेतु—बंध करि तिलक, 'सूर' प्रभु रघुपति उतरे पार ॥

rāga dhanāśrī

(136)

sindhu-taṭa utarē rāma udāra.
 rōṣa biṣama kīnhau raghunandana, siya kī bipati bicāra..
 sāgara para giri, giri para ambara, kapi ghana kē ākāra.
 garaja-kilaka-āghāta uṭhata, manu dāmini pāvasa-jhāra..
 parata phirā'i payōnidhi bhītara, saritā ulaṭi bahā'īm.
 manu raghupati-bhayabhīta sindhu, patnī pyausāra paṭhā'ī..
 bālā-biraha dusaha sabahī kauṁ, jān'yau rājakumāra.
 bānabrṣṭi, srōnita kari saritā, byāhata lagī na bāra..
 subarana laṅka-kalasa-ābhūṣana, mani-muktā-gana hāra.
 sētu-bandha kari tilaka, 'sūra' prabhu raghupati utarē pāra..

Raag Dhanasri

136. The munificent, benevolent, magnanimous and generous Lord Sri Ram came and got down (i.e. pitched camp) on the shores of the ocean.

Considering the great trouble faced by Sita, he showed extreme annoyance at the ocean (for stubbornly blocking his path, and obstructing the passage of the Lord's army from proceeding ahead to Lanka).

(After the bridge had been constructed—) Mountains lay across the surface of the ocean, the sky was above those mountains, and the great multitudes of monkeys ('Kapis') going over those mountains resembled huge banks of clouds swiftly floating across the sky. The thunderous roar and shrill cries of the monkeys resembled the thunder and lightening that occurs during the torrential rains (of the rainy season).

It appears that the rivers falling into the ocean have reversed their direction of flow, and were moving inland (upstream) as if the terrified ocean, afraid of (an assault by) Raghupati Sri Ram, is sending all his wives to their parental homes¹.

But the prince (Sri Ram) realised that the sorrow of separation from one's beloved wife is felt by everyone, so he rained his arrows in a torrent to create a river of blood which flowed into the ocean in order that the latter could re-marry these rivers (of blood) without delay and overcome his grief of separation from the rivers (of water) that have been sent away by him².

During this symbolic marriage ceremony, the golden city of Lanka symbolised the 'Kalash' (holy ceremonial pot used during marriage rituals), while the garlands and festoons made of gems and pearls which were dismantled and scattered all around the city after its ruin in the war, resembled the ornaments worn during the marriage.

Surdas says that the Lord constructed the bridge resembling the 'Tilak Mark' on the forehead (the surface, face) of the ocean (thereby honouring him for allowing Sri Ram and his army to cross over and sanctifying his symbolic marriage), and then he landed on the other side of the ocean (136).

[Note :- ¹Here the poet's imagination has run wild. The appearance of huge mountains over the surface of the ocean resembled a situation when the ocean receded back due to lack of water, or when the water level in it fell low because the rivers failed to pour fresh stock of water into the bowls of the ocean. Here, the water of the ocean is regarded as the latter's wife. So, when the ocean feared an imminent attack by Lord Ram and getting annihilated by the fierce anger of Lord Ram, he sent his wife back home for the sake of safety. The only way the ocean could do so was to send the water upstream by the same path as the rivers pour their waters into it. This description is very imaginative indeed.

²Obviously, Surdas was wondering what the situation would be like when the epic war raged in its full fury in Lanka, when it would result in rivers of blood flowing into the ocean and increasing the volume of water in it, which in turn will not only raise the level of the ocean but also submerge the city of Lanka. The flow of blood into the ocean would symbolically replenish the water that the ocean had voluntarily lost in order to maintain its level and help construct the bridge.

Further, the war in Lanka would create such a deluge of blood that it would probably drown all, including Sri Ram and his army, and then the question was 'where will Vibhishan rule thereafter?'

So the intelligent poet in saint Surdas got around this problem by reversing the flow of the rivers so that when the blood of the dead warriors flowed into the ocean, the water-mark would not be much affected. In other words, when the blood of the myrters of the war flowed in the ocean, there was a chance that the water level would rise to an alarming extent so much so that there was the danger of the island of Lanka being submerged and drowned in the bowls of the ocean. So the ocean prepared for this eventuality by not only stopping the rivers from pouring fresh water into it but even pushed back some of its old supply of water upstream back into the rivers.

Besides this, the bridge interfered with the natural flow of the current in the ocean even as a dyke or dam obstructs a river's natural flow. Naturally, the water started building up and accumulating on one side of the bridge— which would automatically prevent the rivers from disgorging their contents into the ocean as the water level rose. The water in the rivers backed up. The reverse happened on the other side of the bridge—the water level on this side went down as no new replenishment supply was available. In all probability, the rivers of blood flowing in during the war flowed into this second half of the ocean. And perhaps the resultant combined effect was that the bridge became submerged under the ocean, and is still lying there till date!]

श्रीराम सेना का समुद्र पार उतरना—राग सारंग

[137]

अनैसै ठाढ़े सागर तीर ।
 अग्रज—अनुज मनोहर—मूरति, सोभित दोऊ बीर ॥
 दछिन—बाम—भुज बान—चाप गहि, अतिबल मद रनधीर ।
 उत्तर दिसा त्रिकूट—सिखर पर वह कपिदल की भीर ॥
 इत रति—रत देखौ ये कारन—उगिलत नीर ।
 दस सिर हरन दास 'सूरज' प्रभु मिलि मेटन मन पीर ॥

śrīrāma sēnā kā samudrapāra utaranā-rāga sārāṅga

(137)

anaisai ṭhāṛhē sāgara tīra.
 agrja-anuja manōhara-mūrati, sōbhita dō'ū bīra..
 dachina-bāma-bhuja bāna-cāpa gahi, atibala mada ranadhīra.
 utara disā trikūṭa-sikhara para vaha kapidala kī bhīra..
 ita rati-rata dēkhau yē kārana-ugilata nīra.
 dasa sira harana dāsa 'sūraja' prabhu mili mēṭana mana pīra..

Sri Ram's Army on the Shores of Lanka—Raag Saarang

137. Standing angrily on the shores of the ocean, the elder one and his younger brother (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman respectively) nevertheless look like an image of beauty and charm (i.e. anger did not show on their faces; they retained their natural glory, appeal and charm inspite of the formidable challenges ahead, the uncertainties facing them, and the daunting task at hand).

The two brave warriors look most adorable, holding a bow in the right hand and an arrow in the left. The two brothers are most strong, powerful, brave, courageous and valiant, and are eager for battle, thinking of nothing else. They are steadfast, unrelenting and courageous during the battle itself.

Meanwhile, on the northern summit of the mountain called 'Trikoote' (on which the city of Lanka was built), a huge crowd of monkeys is gathering. In spite of that, he (Ravana) is engrossed in indulging in sensual pleasures!

[That is, it is so ridiculous, so incongruous, and a sign of Ravana's over-confidence and defiance, that inspite of the war looming over Lanka and the enemy virtually knocking on his doors he still has the time and the inclination to indulge in pleasures of the senses.]

Look, this is the reason (his wife Mandodari) is shedding tears.

Surdas says that his Lord ('Das Suraj'), who had severed the ten heads of Ravana (or who had killed the demon with ten heads), is so kind and gracious that he meets all his followers and subordinates to erase all the miseries, anguish, pains and torments that afflict their hearts (137).

[Note—This verse, as many others, is written in the present tense, a method often adopted by Surdas to stress the subtle point that he is visualizing the happenings in the eyes of his mind as if he is a first-hand witness to what all is happening there, and like any scribe who honestly narrates what he sees or observes, instead of relying on what he hears, his account is true and sincere.]

त्रिजटा सीता संवाद—राग मारू

[138]

अब न करौ जिय सोच जानकी ।
 रघुपति बीर तीर सरितापति रोकत है जलनिधान की ॥
 देखि भुजा—प्रताप कटि—मेखल छत्र—चमर दुतिमान की ।
 असुर कहे परतीति कथा न वह, कपि जु कहे रघुनाथ बान की ॥
 सुनि मम बचन निवारन इन जल कछुक धरौ चित खान—पान की ।
 इति दिन छिन कमाउ....लंगी आसा पूर ग्रही आन—आन की ॥
 उटज कहत जगजीतनि कहस तुझ मन अवधि विकट हरके बेरदानकी ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु रिपु के भुज मेंटिन....तमि कुल—संतान की ॥

trijatā sītā saṁvāda-rāga mārū

(138)

aba na karau jiya sōca jānakī.
 raghupati bīra tīra saritāpati rōkata hai jalanidhāna kī..
 dēkhi bhuajā-pratāpa kaṭi-mēkhala chatra-camara dutimāna kī.
 asura kahē paratīti kathā na vaha, kapi ju kahē raghunātha bāna kī..
 suni mama bacana nivārana ina jala kachuka dharau cita khāna-pāna kī.
 iti dina china kamā'u....laṅgī āsā pūra grhī āna-āna kī..
 uṭaja kahata jagajītani kahasa tujha mana avadhi vikaṭa harakē bēradānakī.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu ripu kē bhuja mēṇṭina....tami kula-santāna kī..

Trijata's Assurance to Sita—Raag Maaru

138. (Trijata, the old demoness who was on friendly terms with Sita, told her—) 'Oh Janki! Do not worry now. The brave and valiant Raghubir has finally arrived, and

currently he is in the process of stopping the flow of (i.e. taming) the 'lord of water' (i.e. the ocean). [That is, Sri Ram is building a bridge over the ocean.]

Look at the stupendous potential and the magical powers of his strong arms (or his exemplary expertise at archery) that he had cut-off the decorative waist-band or chastity belt (an ornament worn by Mandodari) as well as the radiant ceremonial royal umbrella and the whisk (of Ravana) by an arrow shot from there itself (i.e. from the other side of the ocean where Sri Ram had pitched camp and was constructing the bridge). If you do not trust me in what I say because I am a demoness, then at least recall what the Kapi (Hanuman) had said about the potentials of the arrow of Raghunath.

Listen to me. Stop shedding tears; stop weeping and crying; stop lamenting and grieving. Instead, think of something to eat and drink (and refresh yourself). These days (of troubles and pains of separation) will go by like they were merely a fleeting moment.

You shall meet him (Sri Ram), your hopes will be finally fulfilled, and your honour will be upheld by the one who had formally and respectfully accepted you (in marriage). It was you who had said that the Lord had talked about conquering the whole world while he stayed with you in the hut (at Chitrakoot in the forest), but it appears that Lord Shiva's boons to Ravana (which had made him invincible) have cast a shadow of doubt on your hopes.

[That is, it appears to me that you have doubts about the Lord actually being able to rescue you from the clutches of this demon because the latter is granted immunity by the virtue of the boons he had received by pleasing Lord Shiva. But you forget that the same Shiva has been honoured and duly invoked by Lord Ram on the other shore of the ocean before the latter steps his foot on the bridge. The Lord has already established and worshipped Shiva's symbol, the Shiva Lingam, on the shores of the ocean, and Shiva has already blessed him. Remember one thing—even Shiva dare not oppose the Lord as is proved by the fact that Shiva could not prevent Lord Ram from breaking his very own bow during the marriage ceremony at Janakpur when he had married you, the ceremony which was witnessed by the Gods and all the powerful kings and princes on earth, including Ravana. Even the fierce sage Parashuram, who had vanquished all the mighty kings on earth, had to leave in shame and defeat when he attempted to intervene and punish Lord Ram upon learning that the Lord had broken Shiva's bow.]

Listen to me. The Lord of Surdas ('Surdas-prabhu') will chop-off the arms of the enemy (Ravana), and destroy him along with his kith and kin.' (138).

मन्दोदरी की रावण से प्रार्थना—राग धनाश्री

[139]

देखि रे, वह सारंगधर आयौ ।

सागर—तीर भीर बानर की, सिर पर छत्र तनायौ ॥

संख—कुलाहल सुनियन लागे, लीला—सिंधु बँधायौ ।

सोवत कहा लंक गढ़ भीतर, अति कै काप दिखायौ ॥

पदुम कोटि जिहि सैना सुनियत, जंतु जु एक पठायौ ।

'सूरदास' हरि बिमुख भए जे, तिनि केतिक सुख पायौ! ॥

mandōdarī kī rāvaṇa sē prārthanā-rāga dhanāśrī

(139)

dēkhi rē, vaha sāramṡgadhara āyau.
 sāgara-tīra bhīra bānara kī, sira para chatra tanāyau..
 saṅkha-kulāhala suniyana lāgē, līlā-sindhu bamṡdhāyau.
 sōvata kahā laṅka gaṛha bhītara, ati kai kāpa dikhāyau..
 paduma kōṭi jihim sainā suniyata, jantu ju ēka paṭhāyau.
 'sūradāsa' hari bimukha bha'e jē, tini kētika sukha pāyau! ..

Mandodari Again Pleads with Ravana—Raag Dhanasri

139. (Mandodari once again prodded Ravana to become wiser and come to his senses—)
 'Oh look dear, that holder of the bow called Saarang (i.e. Sri Ram) has finally arrived.
 There is a huge milling and surging crowd of monkeys and bears on the shore of the
 ocean. He (Sri Ram) has a royal umbrella over his head. Reverberations of the cacophony
 of the blowing of the conch are being heard here (in Lanka). They have tied (tamed,
 bridged) the ocean almost sportfully (i.e. as if it was a mere play, requiring no strenuous
 effort because they enjoyed it). They appear to be very angry.

Why are you still sleeping inside your fort? Earlier he had sent here an ordinary
 messenger (Hanuman), but now it is heard that he has an army whose strength is said to
 be 1 crore Padma (i.e. warriors numbering roughly 1 x 10²¹) with him.'

Surdas makes an observation here, wondering if anyone who has ever opposed the
 Lord at any time can ever find peace and happiness? [That is, the great saint-poet Surdas
 is of the view that no one who is opposed to the Lord can ever hope, even in his wildest
 of dreams, to have peace and happiness in life.] (139)

राग मारू

[140]

मो मति अजहुँ जानकी दीजै ।
 लंकापति—तिय कहति पिया सौँ, यामैं कछू न छीजै ॥
 पाहन तारे, सागर बाँध्यौ, तापर चरन न भीजै ।
 बनचर एक लंक तिहिं जारी, ताकी सरि क्यों कीजै ? ॥
 चरन टेकि, दोउ हाथ जोरि कै, बिनती क्यों नहिं कीजै ? ।
 वे त्रिभुवन—पति, करहिं कृपा अति, कुटुंब—सहित सुख जीजै ॥
 आवत देखि बान रघुपति के, तेरौ मन न पसीजै ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु लंक जारि कै, राज बिभीजन दीजै ॥

rāga mārū

(140)

mō mati ajahum' jānakī dījai.

laṅkāpati-tiya kahati piyā saum̐, yāmaim̐ kachū na chījai..
 pāhana tāre, sāgara bām̐dhyau, tāpara carana na bhījai.
 banacara ēka laṅka tihim̐ jārī, tākī sari kyaum̐ kījai? ..
 carana ṭēki, dō'u hātha jōri kai, binatī kyaum̐ nahim̐ kījai? .
 vē tribhuvana-pati, karahim̐ krpā ati, kuṭumbā-sahita sukha jījai..
 āvata dēkhi bāna raghupati kē, tērau mana na pasījai.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu laṅka jārī kai, rāja bibhījana dījai..

Raag Maaru

140. Mandodari, the wife of the king of Lanka ('Lankapati-Tiya'), said to her beloved husband—'In my view, you must still give Janki (Sita) back (to Sri Ram). There is no harm or dishonour in doing so. How can one compare oneself with (or oppose) a person who has made rocks float in order to tame the ocean (i.e. has been successful in building a floating bridge across the heaving, tumultuous ocean), who has crossed the ocean without wetting even one of his feet, and a single Kapi (an epithet for Hanuman) dispatched by him had burnt down the city of Lanka?

Why don't you fall down on your knees (i.e. kneel down as a token of your submission and surrender), hold your hands together in a gesture of submission, and ask for his forgiveness? Well, he is the Lord of Triloki (the 3 worlds— celestial, terrestrial, subterranean). He will be very considerate with you, and you will be able to live peacefully and happily, without any fear, with your family.

Why doesn't your mind melt down (or mellow, soften and abandon its stubbornness, recklessness, haughtiness and arrogance) even as you see the approaching arrows shot by Raghupati (i.e. the approaching and imminent danger)?

The Lord of Surdas ('Surdas-prabhu) shall burn down Lanka and give the reign of the kingdom to Vibhishan.' (104).

[Note :- The last line/stanza of this verse can be read as follows—'Surdas says that he urges the Lord to give Lanka to Vibhishan after the city has been burnt down and conquered.']

रावण की गार्वोक्ति—राग मारू

[141]

कहा तू कहति तिय, बार—बारी ।
 कोटि तैतीस सुर सेव अहनिसि करै, राम अरु लच्छमन हैं कहारी ॥
 मृत्यु कौ बाँधि मैं राखियौ कूप मैं, देहि आवन, कहा डरति नारी ।
 कहति मंदोदरी, मेटि को सकै तिहि, जो रची 'सूर' प्रभु होनहारी ॥

rāvaṇa kī gārvōkti-rāga mārū

(141)

kahā tū kahati tiya, bāra-bārī.
 kōṭi taintīsa sura sēva ahanisi karaim̐, rāma aru lacchamana haim̐ kahārī..

mṛtya kauṁ bām̐dhi maim̐ rākhiyau kūpa maim̐, dēhi āvana, kahā ḍarati nārī.
kahati mandōdarī, mēṭi kō sakai tihi, jō racī 'sūra' prabhu hōnahārī..

Ravana's Haughty Reply—Raag Maaru

141. (Ravana said haughtily—) 'Oh Madam! Why do you keep repeating the same thing again and again (a reference to Mandodari's persistent pleadings with Ravana to surrender himself, give Sita back to Sri Ram, and prevent destruction of the city and his clan as detailed in verse nos. 120-128, 131 and 139-140). All the 33 crore (33 x 107) Gods serve me day and night. What are Ram and Laxman for me? I have kept Death tied in fetters and imprisoned in a well, and you being my wife are afraid? How ludicrous it is? Just let them (Sri Ram and his army) come (and I shall see them)!'

[Mandodari was flabbergasted and most distraught at Ravana's over-confidence and loss of senses in the face of imminent danger staring blankly on his face, and in spite of his witnessing the brutal killing of the brave demons as well as their son Akshay Kumar when Hanuman had burnt the city of Lanka only a few days earlier.] Mandodari was in utterly distraught and had lost all hopes of making Ravana see sense, so she replied in extreme dismay—'Whatever the Lord of Surdas ('Sur-prabhu'—Sri Ram) has determined (decided in the shape of destiny), who can change it (or defer it)? [That is, it appears that the brave, valorous and strong Sri Ram—who is, however, the Supreme Being himself in this form—has decided to finally get done with Ravana, so the Lord has clouded or eclipsed his reasoning and wisdom. It is futile to advise him any longer because destiny has determined his death at the hands of the Lord. I have tried by best, what more can I do?]' (141)

श्रीराम का अङ्गद को आदेश

[142]

लंक प्रति राम अंगद पठावै ।
जाऔ बली बीर सुत बालि के,
बिबिध बानी कहै मुखहि भावै ॥
बचन अंगद कहै, कहाँ कौ पठवत
मोहि इतनी कहौ नाथ मेरे ।
कहौ प्राकार और द्वार तोरन सहित
लंक कौ लै धरौ अग्र तेरे ॥
सकल बनचरन कौ लै धरौ लंक मैं,
कहौ गिरि—सिलन सों सिंधु पूरूँ ।
'सूर' सुन बोल अंगद कहत राम सौँ,
प्रबल बल कहौ अरि—बंस चूरूँ ॥

śrīrāma kā aṅgada kō ādēśa

(142)

lañka prati rāma aṅgada paṭhāvai.
 jā'au balī bīra suta bālī kē,
 bibidha bānī kahai mukhahi bhāvai..
 bacana aṅgada kahai, kahām̐ kauṁ paṭhavata
 mōhi itanī kahau nātha mērē.
 kahau prākāra aura dvāra tōrana sahita
 lañka kauṁ lai dharaum̐ agra tērē..
 sakala banacarana kauṁ lai dharaum̐ lañka maim̐,
 kahau giri-silana sōm̐ sindhu pūrūm̐ .
 'sūra' suna bōla aṅgada kahata rāma saum̐,
 prabala bala kahau ari-bansa cūrūm̐ ..

Sri Ram's Instructions to Angad

142. Sri Ram summoned Angad for sending him to Lanka (as his messenger)¹. The Lord instructed him—‘Go, oh the very strong, brave, courageous and valiant son of Baali. You have the talent, the competence and the intellect to speak logically and diplomatically according to the circumstances prevailing on the spot, and in a way that pleases and endears everyone around. Go.’

Angad replied, ‘Oh my Lord, at least tell me where you are sending me. [And, please tell me what my brief is; whom should I meet there and what do you expect me to do there?]

If you permit me, I can bring the whole of Lanka, along with its parapet walls and gateways, and place it in front of you (by scooping up the whole city from its foundation, and bringing it here so that you would not have to take the trouble of going to the city to conquer it).

Or else, I can lift the whole monkey army and install (put) it in Lanka.

Or, if you say, I can dump the ocean with mountains (i.e. I can fill up the ocean with huge mountains to pave the way for the army to get across if you suspect that the ocean would play some trick and attempts to drown our army while it is in the middle of its water).’

Surdas says that Angad told Sri Ram that if he permits him, he (Angad) can reduce the entire enemy clan to a powder and crush them all to smithereens all by himself, without any sort of help or companion, because he has that magnificent potential, the necessary stupendous power and strength to do so (142).

[Note—¹The Lord sent Angad as his messenger to Lanka to see if there was any remote chance of truce, and if any practical way can be found to avoid bloodshed and waging an unnecessary war. This shows and proves that the Lord was not blood-thirsty, but he fought the war because there was no alternative left for him but to do so. This is borne out by the Lord's reply in the next verse.]

[143]

बीर! सहज मैं होय तौ बल न कीजै ।
 रीति महापुरुष की आदि ते अंत लौं ,

जानि कै दुख काहू कौं न दीजै ॥
 जाय अंगद! कहौ आपनी साधुता,
 यह बचन कहत कछु दोष नाही ।
 लाभ अति होयगो सत्रु करि मित्रता,
 दीनता भाखियै जाहि ताहीं ॥
 साधु के पास जगदीस कोऊ कहै,
 बोलियै साधुता टेक छोरी ।
 बालि—नंदन प्रति राम ऐसै कहै,
 सबन की 'सूर' प्रभु हाथ डोरी ॥

(143)

bīra! sahaja mair̥m hōya tau bala na kijai.
 r̥iti mahāpuruṣa kī ādi tē anta laur̥m,
 jāni kai dukha kāhū kaum̥ na dījai..
 jāya aṅgada! kahau āpanī sād̥hutā,
 yaha bacana kahata kachu dōṣa nāhīm̥.
 lābha ati hōyagō satru kari mitratā,
 dīnatā bhākhiyai jāhi tāhīm̥..
 sād̥hu kē pāsa jagadīsa kō'ū kahai,
 bōliyai sād̥hutā ṭeka chōrī.
 bāli-nandana prati rāma aisair̥m kahair̥m,
 sabana kī 'sūra' prabhu hātha ḍōrī..

143. (When Angad asked Sri Ram about the task he was supposed to accomplish at Lanka, the Lord advised him as follows—) 'Oh the brave one! If any objective can be achieved using simple and straightforward methods (i.e. by negotiations, reasoning, arbitration, having discussions, mutual adjustments, compromise, striking a deal or truce, etc.) then it is not advisable to use undue force. From the very beginning, i.e. traditionally and from ancient times, it is the stand taken or the advice given by wise and erudite ones that one should not make others suffer willingly or without giving them a chance to make amends for their mistakes.

So, go Angad—go and talk in your own style, but be as pleasant and diplomatic as you can. There is no harm in being courteous, friendly, reasonable and compromising. It will be greatly appreciated and highly beneficial to all of us if the enemy becomes a friend. Besides, it is a proper code of behaviour and conduct that one should talk with civility and courteousness with all. No matter how much anyone boasts of being the Lord of the world in front of a gentleman, the latter should forsake all haughtiness and talk with the former with utmost humility.'¹

Surdas says that Sri Ram advised or briefed the son of Baali (i.e. Angad) as described above. The string (leash, rein or constraint) of all the creatures is in the hands of the brave Lord who is the Lord of Surdas too ('Sur-prabhu')². (143).

[Note—¹The Lord has given a subtle hint to Angad not to be discourteous and insulting to the enemy, or show any trace of arrogance and haughtiness. He must behave properly because he would be representing the Lord of the world himself. Whatever he says,

whatever he does, whatever his conduct is—they would all reflect upon the character and dignity of the Lord for what a messenger of a King says or does is deemed to be said or done by the principal, the King, himself. So Angad must be careful to observe the greatest of dignified behaviour, and maintain decorum and courtesy even under great provocation. He must remember that he is not a messenger of Sugriv, the monkey king, or of Vibhishan, the brother of Ravana, but of the Lord himself, and so must behave in the right and proper manner befitting a messenger of the great Lord.

Angad must also be careful not to be so courteous and humble that the arrogant demons mistakenly take his dignified behaviour as a sign of inferiority complex or of fear. He must take care that the demons never deduce that the Lord has sent him to make a truce because, out of weakness and low courage, the Lord is overwhelmed at the sight of the demon army and is afraid of defeat, so he is trying to find a face-saving formula so that the war is avoided and some kind of compromise solution is thrashed out.

As it eventually happened in the court of Ravana, Angad did his best to request the demon king to return Sita to her rightful Lord, and when all his pleadings failed he was so frustrated at not having been able to accomplish the Lord's mandate that he resolutely planted his foot on the ground and made a firm vow that if anyone in the assembly could lift that leg, Sri Ram would return without a fight. This episode is narrated below in verse nos. 154.

So bold and courageous of Angad indeed it was that he could wager Sita's future and the reputation of the Lord himself by making such a bet without batting an eyelid or thinking twice as to the immensity and the gravity of what he was about to do!

Notwithstanding the propriety, wisdom and prudence of Angad at having the temerity and the right of wagering the fate of Sita all by himself, especially without any sort of clearance from his Lord, it is a matter of fact that the Lord honoured his vows—and as it eventually happened, neither Ravana nor anyone else of the numerous robust and strong demons, who were so powerful that even the Gods ran helter-skelter when they were angry, could make Angad's leg move a bit in spite of their best of efforts. In effect, the war was won for all practical purposes by this single act of Angad, as it completely demoralized the demons and their king Ravana.

This single incident also proves that the Lord always keeps the words of his devotees and sincere followers even if they take certain decisions all by themselves, and even if they have the courage to put the Lord's reputation at stake. It ought to be noted in this context that even Hanuman had burnt Lanka without the express orders of the Lord, and the Lord never showed his displeasure at it. Similarly, the Lord never even hinted that Angad had no right whatsoever to bargain Sita so easily. What if, say, Ravana had managed to move Angad's leg? Well, Angad knew that it was just impossible to do so, and this goes to show the depth of faith and the immensity of conviction that Angad had in the greatness, divinity and supremacy of the Lord. Indeed, the Lord expects and looks for such immensity of faith in his devotees, and so he was more than pleased with Angad, instead of getting annoyed at him. Similar was the Lord's pleasure when he was informed about the burning of Lanka by Hanuman. Both Angad and Hanuman teach us the importance of the virtues of undiluted faith in the Lord, the value of having immense conviction in the divinity and supremacy of the Lord, and in having unstinted devotion for the Lord.

We must note that the epic story of the Ramayana has numerous subtle spiritual messages like this one hidden in its fabric, and they must be deciphered properly to actually help the reader to benefit from the text, for otherwise the story would remain one of the many mythological ones.

²All the creatures have to obey the Lord; they can't defy his orders. So, though Angad was eager and ready to repeat the feat of Hanuman at Lanka, and was almost

itching to do it, but he was bridled and reined in by Sri Ram, thus effectively preventing a second pre-war burning of the city, or of killing of the rest of the demon army even before the actual commencement of the battle.

This verse also shows that Sri Ram had made all efforts to avoid bloodshed, and gave Ravana all the chances he could need to make a compromise and give Sita back to him.]

अंगद का लंका गमन

[144]

श्रीराम—आदेस अंगद चलयौ लंक कौ,
 प्रभु जब दोउ करन पीठ थापी ।
 धरनि धसि सिंधु गई, सभा उलटी भई,
 इनहि मैं कौन रावन प्रतापी ॥
 (श्री) राम कौँ सत्रु कर, आप सिर छत्र धर,
 रहन न पावै कहूँ ऐसौ पापी ।
 ठौरहीं ठौर बहु रूप रावन भए,
 सबहि अंगद प्रति बचन बोले ॥
 'सूर' अंगद कहै, मा हुती सूकरी,
 बहुत रावन जने पेट खोले ॥

aṅgada kā laṅkā gamana

(144)

śrīrāma-ādēsa aṅgada calyau laṅka kau,
 prabhu jaba dō'u karana pīṭha thāpī.
 dharani dhasi sindhu ga'ī, sabhā ulaṭī bha'ī,
 inahi mairṁ kauna rāvana pratāpī..
 (śrī) rāma kaurṁ satru kara, āpa sira chatra dhara,
 rahana na pāvai kahūṁ'aisau pāpī.
 ṭhaurahīm ṭhaura bahu rūpa rāvana bha'e,
 sabahi aṅgada prati bacana bōlē..
 'sūra' aṅgada kahai, mā hutī sūkari,
 bahuta rāvana janē pēṭa khōlē..

Angad en-route to Lanka

141. [Angad demurred because he was being sent to the enemy with strict orders and constraints, with his hands literally tied by Sri Ram to be polite and courteous with the enemy and avoid violence. Angad must have fumed and fretted because he must have been itching for a single-handed show of bravado and a show-down with the enemy. He had wished to at least match Hanuman's performance of burning the city earlier.]

Angad started-off for Lanka only when Sri Ram prodded and encouraged him by patting him on his back by both his hands.

The earth (ground) seemed to crack by his heavy footsteps and sink into the ocean (as he walked towards the city), and the court of Ravana turned on its side and swayed violently (as the earth shook and trembled), toppling all present there. [This appeared to resemble the scenario of an earthquake. Angad obviously was stomping his feet angrily on the ground as he approached the court of Ravana, resulting in the earth shaking and trembling underfoot.]

In this ensuing tumult and confusion (created by the shaking ground, inclined buildings which were about to topple over, and everyone being tossed here and there like balls), no one could say who the most famous and majestic Ravana was.

[In other words, there was so much confusion and general upheaval that no one could differentiate between an ordinary demon and those belonging to the upper strata of the demon race, such as their king Ravana and the rest of his ministers and other family members, in the attendant melee. All ran helter skelter, tumbling over each other, and forgetting to maintain even a semblance of order and hierarchy. This toppling and tumbling of all the thrones, canopies, royal umbrellas and whisks indicated that—]

By making Sri Ram an enemy, and then expecting to hold a royal umbrella over his head (i.e. to remain in power and authority as a king), no sinful creature can ever hope to succeed in such a misadventure.

[In other words, Ravana was foolish to think that he can remain on the throne of Lanka even after creating animosity with Sri Ram who is the supreme Lord of creation. Say, how can a subordinate king remain in power after annoying the Emperor of the realm?]

In order to confuse Angad, Ravana tried his maverick trick by creating numerous illusionary Ravanaas, as if by magic, and all of them began talking with him (Angad) simultaneously.

Surdas says that the brave Angad saw through the trick and taunted sarcastically in a most insulting manner—‘It appears that Ravana’s mother was a female swine (‘Sukari’) who had unashamedly and unabashedly opened her abdomen and created (spilled out) numerous Ravanaas.’ (144).

[Note—This is the first sign of what sort of language would be used in the interaction between Angad and Ravana at Lanka. On the face of it it appears that he is violating Lord Ram’s instructions to be polite and courteous, but it must be remembered that the Lord had also told him to use his own judgement and prudence to decide how best to deal with the situation. After all, Angad was not visiting some holy place inhabited by sages and seers; he was in the midst of vicious and cruel demons who had never learnt in their lives what politeness and courtesy were, what civil behaviour was, and how one must talk decently with others. Angad used this foul language to give the message that he knows how to talk with demons, and that he is not at all afraid of them, that they better mind their tongues when they talk to him for he could use fouler language than what they can even imagine of, and was even spoiling for a fight, should they want it.

He was virtually challenging Ravana and his cohorts, instigating them and telling them that now they have found their match. Perhaps Angad wished to settle squares with the demons for their having set to fire his dear friend Hanuman’s tail earlier when the latter had come to search for Sita. Hanuman had never used such foul language as was done by Angad, so Angad wished to vent his anger at the demons on behalf of his friend.

Another reason for his bold and boisterous behaviour was to show the demons how bitter the pill was which they were accustomed to giving others. The demons had ruled the world with ruthless cruelty, and those who are vile and evil do not deserve a garland

of praises in the form of etiquette and civilized language. Foul and uncouth language was the only language that the demons understood, and any sign of decency would be treated as weakness by them.]

अंगद रावण के दरबार में—राग मारू

[145]

लंकपति पास अंगद पठायौ ।
 सुनि अरे अंध दसकंध, लै सीय मिलि,
 सेतु करि बंध रघुबीर आयौ ॥
 यह सुनत परजस्यौ, बचन नहिं मन धर्यौ,
 कहा तैं राम सौं मोहि डरायौ ।
 सुर—असुर जीति मैं सब किए आप बस,
 'सूर' मम सुजस तिहुँ लोक छायौ ॥

aṅgada rāvaṇa kē darabāra mēm-rāga mārū

(145)

laṅkapati pāsa aṅgada paṭhāyau.
 suni arē andha dasakandha, lai sīya mili,
 sētu kari bandha raghubīra āyau..
 yaha sunata parajaryau, bacana nahim mana dharyau,
 kahā taim rāma saum mōhi ḍarāyau.
 sura-asura jīti maim saba ki'ē āpa basa,
 'sūra' mama sujasa tihum' lōka chāyau..

Angad in the Court of Ravana—Raag Maaru

145. Angad was sent to the Lord of Lanka (Ravana) by Sri Ram. (There, in Lanka, Angad said to Ravana—) 'Oh the 10-headed one, listen. Take Sita along with you, and go and meet him (Sri Ram) because Raghubir has already constructed a bridge across the ocean and has arrived here.'

Hearing this, Ravana became furious; he couldn't digest or tolerate it. He said, 'You try to make me afraid of Sri Ram? I have conquered and brought under my control all the Gods and demons. I am a brave one, and the fame of my bravery is spread far and wide in all the three worlds. [That is, my fame as an invincible and brave person is known throughout the world. Have you not heard of me?].' (145).

[146/1]

बालि—नंदन बली, बिकट बनचर महा,
 द्वार रघुबीर कौ बीर आयौ ।
 पौरि तैं दौरि दरवान, दससीस सौं
 जाइ सिर नाइ, यौं कहि सुनायौ ॥

सुनि स्रवन, दस—बदन सदन अभिमान,
 कै नैन की सैन अंगद बुलायौ ।
 देखि लंकेस कपि—भेष हर—हर हँस्यौ,
 सुनौ भट, कटक कौ पार पायौ ॥
 बिबिध आयुध धरे, सुभट सेवत खरे,
 छत्र की छाहँ निरभय जनायौ ।
 देव—दानव—महाराज रावन—सभा,
 कहन कौ मंत्र इहँ कपि पठायौ ॥

(146/1)

bāli-nandana balī, bikaṭa banacara mahā,
 dvāra raghubīra kau bīra āyau.
 pauri taiṁ dauri daravāna, dasasīsa saurṁ
 jā'i sira nā'i, yaurṁ kahi sunāyau..
 suni sravana, dasa-badana sadana abhimāna,
 kai naina kī saina aṅgada bulāyau.
 dēkhi laṅkēsa kapi-bhēṣa hara-hara haṁśyau,
 sunau bhaṭa, kaṭaka kau pāra pāyau..
 bibidha āyudha dharē, subhaṭa sēvata kharē,
 chatra kī chāhamṁ nirabhaya janāyau.
 dēva-dānava-mahārāja rāvana-sabhā,
 kahana kaurṁ mantra ihamṁ kapi paṭhāyau..

146/1. 'The strong and valiant son of Baali, the great and fierce Kapi (i.e. Angad) has come as a messenger of Raghubir (Sri Ram)'—the gatekeeper rushed to the 10-headed one (Ravana) and, bowing his head, he gave this news of Angad's arrival to Ravana.

Hearing this, the 10-headed one, who was an abode (i.e. full) of pride and haughtiness, signaled by his eyes to allow Angad to come in.

Seeing Angad's form and countenance (as a monkey), Ravana roared derisively and laughed sarcastically in an insulting manner, saying—'You are a good soldier! Listen, I have measured (got to know the strength of) your army.'

Angad observed that numerous demon warriors, with different varieties of arms and armaments, were standing near Ravana, ready to serve him and obey his commands. Sitting under the shade of the parasol (on the royal throne), he appeared to Angad to be fearless and absolutely unbothered about the impending war.

Ravana said to him, 'Your master has sent a 'monkey'¹ to the court of Ravana who is the Lord of Gods and demons with a message of making peace and compromise!¹ (146/1).

[Note :- ¹This last stanza is heavily laced with sarcasm. The word 'monkey' here does not refer to the physical body of Angad, but used as a derogatory epithet meaning 'an idiot, a joker, a stupid fellow, a foolish creature, a clown.'

Ravana means to say that 'Sri Ram could not find a better alternative as a messenger and chose a clown or a creature with a low intellect such as a monkey to represent him in the court of a great king of the stature of Ravana who rules over the Gods as well as

demons alike. One wonders how wise is Sri Ram when he couldn't find a better alternative to send as a messenger than someone who is a monkey, a clown. If he is brave, then why does he send a messenger in an attempt to avoid facing me in the battle? Does he expect me to give the trophy represented by Sita without a fight? Is he afraid of me that he wishes to make a truce? How ludicrous and hilarious it is indeed!']

[146/2]

रंक रावन! कहाउतक तेरौ इतौ,
 दोउ कर जोरि बिनती उचारौ ।
 परम अभिराम रघुनाथ के नाम पर,
 बीस भुज सीस दस वारि डारौ ॥
 झटकि, हाटक—मुकुट पटक झट भूमि सौं
 झारि तरवारि तब सिर सँहारौ ।
 जानकीनाथ के हाथ तेरौ मरन,
 कहा मति—मंद तोहि मध्य मारौ ॥
 पाक पावक करै, बारि सुरपति भरै,
 पौन पावन कर द्वार मेरे ।
 गान नारद करै, बार सुरगुरु कहै,
 बेद ब्रह्मा पढ़ै पौरि टेरे ॥
 जच्छ, मृतु, बासुकी नाग, मुनि, गंधरब,
 सबल बसु, जीति मैं किए चेरे ।
 सुनि अरे संठ! दसकंठ कौ कौन डर,
 राम तपसी दए आनि डेरे ॥

(146/2)

raṅka rāvana! kahā'taka tērau itau,
 dō'u kara jōri binatī ucāraum̃.
 parama abhirāma raghunātha kē nāma para,
 bīsa bhuja sīsa dasa vāri ḍāraum̃..
 jhaṭaki, hāṭaka-mukuṭa paṭaki jhaṭa bhūmi saum̃
 jhāri taravāri taba sira sam̃hāraum̃.
 jānakīnātha kē hātha tērau marana,
 kahā mati-manda tōhi madhya māraum̃..
 pāka pāvaka karai, bāri surapati bharai,
 pauna pāvana kara dvāra mērē.
 gāna nārada karai, bāra suraguru kahai,
 bēda brahmā paṛhai pauri ṭērē..
 jaccha, mṛtu, bāsukī nāga, muni, gandharaba,
 sabala basu, jīti mair̃ ki'ē cērē.
 suni arē saṇṭha! dasakaṇṭha kaur̃ kauna ḍara,
 rāma tapasī da'ē āni ḍērē..

146/2. (Angad replied—) ‘Oh you pauper and bankrupt Ravana! [Angad means to say that Ravan's wisdom has abandoned him. He has become bankrupt in his mind and intelligence. He is a pauper because he has no asset in the form of intelligence and wisdom.]

How great is your terror that I should fold both of my hands in front of you as a token of my humble submission before you, and pray to you? [That is, why should I fear you and bow before you? What is your terror that can force me to pray before you humbly with folded arms?]

I can sacrifice, if I so wish, your twenty arms and ten heads in the name of the most beautiful and charming Raghunath (Sri Ram) (or, in the beautiful name of Sri Ram). [That is, I can chop-off all your arms and heads in the name of the Lord just like one cuts to pieces those things that are to be offered as oblation to the ritual of the fire sacrifice. I am able enough to cut-off your arms and heads and offer them to the symbolic fire sacrifice representing the glory of the Sri Ram's holy and divine name. I regard your arms and heads as disposable things and very inconsequential. I won't have any qualms in doing so; I do not bother about you and treat you as most contemptible.]

I could have snatched your golden crown, pulled you down (or pushed you) to the ground, and could have drawn your own sword (from its sheath) to chop-off your heads. But oh you pervert and evil-minded sinful fellow! Your death is destined at the hands of Jankinath (the Lord of Janki, Sri Ram), so why should I meddle with it and kill you myself beforehand? [That is, since your death is destined at the hands of Sri Ram, I have no right to interfere in it. Therefore, though I can kill you myself, but I desist from doing so.]

(Ravana boasted—) ‘The Fire-God cooks meals at my place (i.e. he is my cook in my royal kitchen), the king of Gods (Indra) fills (or carries) water for me, the Wind-God sweeps my doorways, the celestial sage Narad sings my glories like a servitor-bard, the preceptor of Gods (Brihaspati, Jupiter) decides auspicious days and times for me, Brahma (the creator) stands at my door and reads aloud the hymns of the Vedas.

Do you know—I have conquered Yaksha (a demi-God; attendant of Kuber to tend his gardens), Death, Vasuki Naag (the great dragon which was used as a rope to churn the ocean by the Gods and demons), the many sages and seers, Gandharvas (celestial musicians) and all the Vasus (8 prominent demi-Gods)—I have made all of them my servants.

Oh you stupid fellow! Listen. Even if the humble mendicant Sri Ram has come and pitched camp on the shores of the ocean, what fear has the 20-necked Ravana, with the above reputation, power, authority and strength, got from him?’ (146/2).

[146/3]

तप बली सत्य तापस बली, तप बिना,
 बारि पर कौन पाषाण तारै ।
 कौन ऐसौ बली सुभट जननी जन्यौ,
 एकहीं बान तकि बालि मारै ॥
 परम गंभीर, रनधीर दसरथ—तनय,
 सरन गएँ कोटि अवगुन बिसारै ।
 जाइ मिलि अंध दसकंध, गहि दंत तृन,

तौ भलैं मृत्यु—मुख तैं उबारैं ॥

(146/3)

tapa balī satya tāpasa balī, tapa binā,
bāri para kauna pāṣāna tārāi.
kauna aisau balī subhaṭa janānī jan'yau,
ēkahīm bāna taki bāli mārāi..
parama gambhīra, ranadhīra dasaratha-tanaya,
sarana ga'airm kōṭi avaguna bisāraim.
jā'i mili andha dasakandha, gahi danta ṭṛṇa,
tau bhalairm mṛtyu-mukha tairm ubāraim..

146/3. (Angad sternly rebuked Ravana by extolling the virtues of Lord Ram. Angad said—) ‘The truth is that Tapa (austerity, penance and rigors of righteousness and noble conduct, and its good effect) is great, it has stupendous powers and bestows astounding strength to those who observe it, and those who do Tapa are great indeed. Who can make the rocks and boulders float on water without the strength of Tapa? [This refers to the building of the bridge over the ocean by making the rocks float on the choppy waters on the strength of Lord Ram’s glories.]

Which mother has produced a warrior who could have killed Baali with a single arrow?¹

The son of Dashrath (i.e. Sri Ram) is very serious and grave, besides being exemplarily brave as well as steadfast and courageous in the battle-field. He forgets millions of (countless) faults, misdemeanours and crimes of a person when he goes to take shelter with him at his feet. So, oh you blind (foolish and ignorant) 10-headed Ravana, you must hold (clench) a twig between your teeth (as a token of surrender and submission), and go and meet him. It is the only chance that you have to escape the mouth (or jaws) of certain death (146/3).

[Note :-¹Both the saints Tulsidas and Surdas have, in their devotional enthusiasm, overlooked one vital fact when they say that Angad extolled and lauded the ability of Sri Ram to kill Baali with a single arrow, a task which was deemed to be impossible due to the fact of a boon which Baali held that when anyone attacks him from the front, half of the opponent’s strength would pass over to Baali before the act actually materialized. That is why Sri Ram had to conceal himself behind the trunk of a tree to shoot that fatal arrow that killed Baali.

The point is, frankly speaking, shooting an unaware person from the behind, from concealment so that the person attacked is not given a fair chance to defend himself, is literally nothing more than an ambush, and it cannot ever be defined as ‘bravery and courage’ which involves fighting from the front.

Angad was in the city of Kishkindha at that time when Baali was shot by a concealed Sri Ram. There was no witness to the duel between Baali and Sugriv and the subsequent manner in which his father Baali was killed. The residence of Kishkindha just came to know that a certain person by the name of Sri Ram has shot Baali with an arrow; no one knew how or from where, because the only two other witnesses to the killing, i.e. Sugriv and Laxman, would naturally never ever have divulge the fact that Baali was shot from the behind. So the very fact that any person could manage to kill Baali seemed a great and strange mystery for the entire monkey race—because for them Baali was invincible,

and he could not be killed by any opponent. Therefore, the fact that Sri Ram had killed Baali with one arrow was something most superhuman for the entire monkey race. This also was one reason why the army of monkeys and bears were so confident of victory over Ravana because they knew that their chief commander, Sri Ram, possessed some sort of super-natural powers and strength by which he would easily overcome the enemy. In the personal view of this author, without any prejudice to the greatness of Sri Ram and without any intention of showing even a trace of irreverence or disrespect to the greatness, divinity and glory of the Lord whom this author loves more dearly than anyone can ever imagine as his dear Lord and the essence of his being, this single act of Sri Ram was unpardonable and never a case of bravery, valour and courage as the words are meant to signify. It was neither a show of the strength that Tapa bestows upon anyone.

This ignominy of killing Baali from the behind never left Sri Ram, and according to legend, Baali was given an opportunity to avenge for his deceitful killing by the Lord when he had shot Sri Krishna from hiding as a hunter in the sole of the latter's feet during his last moments. Sri Krishna was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu just like Lord Ram was. See verse nos. 151/2 and 152 in this context.]

रावण की धमकी

[146/4]

कोपि, करबार गहि कह्यौ लंकाधिपति,
मूढ़! कहा राम कौ सीस नाऊँ ।
संभु की सपथ, सुनि कुकपि कायर कृपन,
स्वास आकास बनचर उड़ाऊँ ॥
होइ सनमुख भिरौं, संक नहिं मन धरौं,
मारि सब कटक सागर बहाऊँ ।
कोटि तैंतीस मम सेव निसिदिन करत,
कहा अब राम नर सौं डराऊँ ।
परै भहराइ भभकंत रिपु घाइ सौं,
करि कदन रुधिर भैरौं अघाऊँ ।
'सूर' साजौं सबै, देहुँ डौंड़ी अबै,
एक तें एक रन करि बताऊँ ॥

rāvaṇa kī dhamakī

(146/4)

kōpi, karabāra gahi kahyau laṅkādhīpati,
mūrha! kahā rāma kaurṁ sīsa nā'ūṁ.
sambhu kī sapatha, suni kukapi kāyara kṛpana,
svāsa ākāsa banacara urā'ūṁ..
hō'i sanamukha bhiraurṁ, saṅka nahirṁ mana dharaaurṁ,
māri saba kaṭaka sāgara bahā'ūṁ.
kōṭi taintīsa mama sēva nisidina karata,
kahā aba rāma nara saurṁ ḍarā'ūṁ.

parai bhaharā'i bhabhakanta ripu ghā'i saum,
 kari kadana rudhira bhairaurṃ aghā'ūṃ.
 'sūra' sājaum sabai, dēhum'ṣṭaunṛi abai,
 ēka tēm ēka rana kari batā'ūṃ..

Ravana's Threat

146/4. Holding a sword angrily in his hands, the peeved Lord of Lanka said vehemently, virtually spitting out the words disgustedly in great annoyance—'Oh you stupid fellow! Why should I bow my head before Sri Ram? Oh you coward, faint-hearted, meek, mean, evil and wicked monkey! Listen, I say on oath in the name of Lord Shiva that I shall blow the monkeys into the sky (like dust or shreds of paper or dry twigs) simply with my whiff or puff.

I will fight from the front; I will not be afraid at all; I shall kill the entire army of monkeys and throw it into the ocean.

Thirty-three crore (33 x 107) Gods serve me day and night. Should I be scared of an ordinary man named Ram? The enemy shall rapidly fall under my fierce strikes, and having destroyed (obliterated) them, I shall feed lord 'Bhairav' (a form of Lord Shiva that is very horrible, and is said to drink blood; a sort of celestial vampire amongst the pantheon of Gods) with the blood of my enemy till the Lord is contended.

I am getting all my warriors ready forthwith, sounding the battle-drums, and shall fight with each and every one of you and show you what it means to clash with Ravana!' (146/4)

अंगद द्वारा रावण का तिरस्कार

[147]

रावन! तब लौं ही रन गाजत ।
 जब लौं सारंगधर—कर नहीं सारंग—बान बिराजत ॥
 जमहु कुबेर इंद्र हैं जानत, रचि—रचि कै रथ साजत ।
 रघुपति रबि—प्रकास सौं देखौं, उडुगन ज्यौं तोहि भाजत ॥
 ज्यौं सहगमन सुंदरी के सँग, बहु बाजन हैं बाजत ।
 तैसें 'सूर' असुर आदिक सब, सँग तेरे हैं गाजत ॥

aṅgada dvārā rāvaṇa kā tiraskāra

(147)

rāvana! taba laurṃ hī rana gājata.
 jaba laurṃ saramṅgadhara-kara nāhīm saramṅga-bāna birājata..
 jamahu kubēra indra haiṃ jānata, raci-raci kai ratha sājata.
 raghupati rabi-prakāsa saurṃ dēkhaurṃ, uḍugana ज्याurṃ tōhi bhājata..
 ज्याurṃ saha gamana sundarī kē samṅga, bahu bājana haiṃ bājata.
 taisairṃ 'sūra' asura ādika saba, samṅga tērē haiṃ gājata..

Angad Snubs Ravana

147. (Angad snubbed Ravana sternly, saying—) ‘Ravana, you are shouting and boasting about the battle (and your imaginary victory) only till the time he (Sri Ram) does not take the ‘Saarang’ bow in his hands and mounts the Saarang arrow on it. (Once he does it, all your boastings and loud talking will come to an end).

Yam (the Death-God), Kuber (the God’s treasurer who was the elder step-brother of Ravana) and Indra (the king of Gods) also know about it, and that is why they are quietly and stealthily preparing their chariots (to make good their escape from your captivity at the first opportunity).

I shall watch as you run away from the battle-field (or fade into oblivion) like the stars do in the glare of the splendorous Sun representing (the majestic glory, stupendous valour and strength, and the brilliant display of the powers and prowess of) Raghupati (Sri Ram).’

Surdas says that Angad told Ravana—‘Even as musical band accompanies a loyal widow going with the dead body of her husband to perform a ‘Sati’ with him, these demons would also join you and cheer you to your death.’ (147).

[Note—¹The word ‘Sati’ refers to the obnoxious practice in ancient India whereby widows used to burn themselves on the funeral pyre along with the body of their husbands when the latter were cremated. This practice is however now banned in the modern Indian society.]

अंगद द्वारा श्रीराम का संदेश रावण को सुनाना
राग मारू

[148]

जानौं हौं बल तेरौ रावन ।
पठवौं कुटुंब—सहित जम—आलय, नैकु देहि धौं मोकौं आवन ॥
अग्नि—पुंज सित बान—धनुष—धरि, तोहि असुर—कुल सहित जरावन ।
दारुन कीस सुभट बर सन्मुख, लैहौं संग त्रिदस—बल पावन ॥
करिहौं नाम अचल पसुपति कौ, पूजा—बिधि—कौतुक दिखरावन ।
दस मुख छेदि सुपक नव फल ज्यौं, संकर—उर दससीस चढ़ावन ॥
देहौं राज बिभीषन जन कौं, लंकापुर रघु—आन चलावन ।
‘सूरदास’ निस्तरिहैं यह जस, करि—करि दीन—दुखित जन गावन ॥

aṅgada dvārā śrīrāma kā sandēśa rāvaṇa kō sunānā
rāga mārū

(148)

jānaum̐ haum̐ bala tērau rāvana.
paṭhavaum̐ kuṭum̐ba-sahita jama-ālaya, naiṅku dēhi dhaur̐ mōkauṁ āvana..
agini-puñja sita bāna-dhanuṣa-dhari, tōhi asura-kula sahita jarāvana.
dāruna kīsa subhaṭa bara sanmukha, laihaur̐ saṅga tridasa-bala pāvana..

karihaum̐ nāma acala pasupati kau, pūjā-bidhi-kautuka dikharāvana.
 dasa mukha chēdi supaka nava phala jyaur̐, saṅkara-ura dasasīsa caṛhāvana..
 dēhaum̐ rāja bibhīṣana jana kaur̐, laṅkāpura raghu-āna calāvana.
 'sūradāsa' nistarihair̐ yaha jasa, kari-kari dīna-dukhita jana gāvana..

Angad Conveys Sri Ram's Message to Ravana
 Raag Maaru

148. (Angad gave the following message of Sri Ram to Ravana—) 'I know your strength, Ravana. Just let me come, than I shall send you, along with your kith and kin, to the abode of Yam, the God of hell. Raising the fierce arrows in my bow, I shall reduce you, along with the rest of your demon clan, to ashes.

The divine Gods have assumed the form of fierce monkey warriors; I shall take those excellent warriors with me to the battle front. I will show a novel way of performing an animal sacrifice that would make the name of Lord Shiva as 'Pasupati-Nath' become immortal and truthful.

[Here, the demons are treated as the sacrificial animals, the war as the fire sacrifice, and Lord Shiva as the patron deity to whom this sacrifice is offered. Sri Ram means that he will sacrifice all the demons and offer them to Lord Shiva while symbolically performing the ritual of doing the fire sacrifice while fighting the war.]

I shall easily sever your ten heads as if they were ripe fruits, and offer them as a garland draped over the heart (chest) of Lord Shiva. I shall give the reign of the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhishan who will proclaim there the glory, honour and fame of king Raghu's race (to which Sri Ram belonged) for all times to come.'

Surdas says that the humble and miserable people of the world, who were helpless and had been immensely suffering under the tyrannical rule of Ravana (and the rest of his demons), would sing these glories (of Lord Sri Ram) forever (because the Lord would have freed them from such tyranny for all times to come), and they would consequentially be able to cross this ocean-like world without facing any more obstacles (by singing the divine glories of the Lord, as well as due to the fact that the demons—who had been till then creating numerous hurdles in their spiritual welfare by hindering their religious activities, defiling their fire sacrifices, and in general preventing them from pursuing any spiritual path—would have been eliminated.) (148).

अंगद की रावण को धमकी

[149/1]

मोकौँ राम—रजायसु नाही ।
 नातर सुनि दसकंध निसाचर, प्रलय करौ छिन माहीं ॥
 पलटि धरौ नव—खंड पुहुमि तल, जो बल भुजा सम्हारौ ।
 राखौ मेलि भंडार सूर—ससि, नभ कागद ज्यौ फारौ ॥
 जारौ लंक, छेदि दस मस्तक, सुर—संकोच निवारौ ।
 श्रीगुनाथ—प्रताप चरन करि उर तैं भुजा उपारौ ॥

aṅgada kī rāvaṇa kō dhamakī

(149/1)

mōkaurṁ rāma-rajāyasu nāhīm.
nātaru suni dasakandha nisācara, pralaya karaurṁ china māhīm..
palaṭi dharaurṁ nava-khaṇḍa puhumi tala, jō bala bhujā samhāraurṁ..
rākhaurṁ mēli bhamḍāra sūra-sasi, nabha kāgada ज्याurṁ phāraurṁ..
jāraurṁ laṅka, chēdi dasa mastaka, sura-saṅkōca nivāraurṁ..
śrīraghunātha-pratāpa carana kari ura taim bhujā upāraurṁ..

Angad Threatens Ravana

149/1. (Angad was very indignant and furious, and so he said vehemently—) ‘I do not have the mandate (or royal orders) from Sri Ram. Otherwise, listen oh you 10-headed demon, I would have created a dooms-day like scenario in a moment.

If I decide to fully utilise the strength and potentials of my arms, I can turn all the nine segments of the earth upside down, dump both the sun and the moon in my backyard godown, tear/shred the sky as if it were made up of paper, reduce Lanka to ashes, and remove the hurdle (fear) of the Gods by cutting-off all your ten heads. On the strength of Sri Raghunath’s (Sri Ram’s) divine glory and majestic potentials, I could press your abdomen under my foot, and shear-off your arms from it.’ (149/1).

रावण का उत्तर

[149/2]

रे रे चपल, बिरूप, ढीठ, तू बोलत बचन अनेरौ ।
चितवै कहा पानि—पल्लव—पुट, प्रान प्रहारौ तेरौ ॥
केतिक संख जुगै जुग बीते, मानव असुर—अहेरौ ।
तीनि लोक बिख्यात बिसद जस, प्रलय नाम है मेरौ ॥

rāvaṇa kā uttara

(149/2)

rē rē capala, birūpa, ḍhīṭha, tū bōlata bacana anērau.
citavai kahā pāni-pallava-puta, prāna prahāraurṁ tērau..
kētika saṅkha jugai juga bītē, mānava asura-ahērau.
tīni lōka bikhyāta bisada jasa, pralaya nāma hai mērau..

Ravana's Reply

149/2. (Hearing Angad’s tirades of dare devilry, Ravana retorted—) ‘Ah, you restless, haughty, ugly and stubborn fellow¹. You are talking a lot of unjustified and uncalled-for things.

What do you think you are seeing (i.e. whom do you think you see before you)? I can kill you by simply thrashing you to pulp with my hands. Don't you know, my name is 'Pralay' (dooms-day personified) signifying the one who can bring to an end or annihilate the world. This potential of mine is well known in all the three worlds (the celestial, terrestrial and the subterranean worlds).' (149/2).

[Note—¹Angad was extremely agitated and angry. And like any angry person, he was restless and fidgety, looking for an opportunity to find an excuse so that he could strike a blow at Ravana with his clenched fists or kick at him.]

अंगद का जवाब

[149/3]

रे रे अंध बीसहू लोचन, पर-तिय हरन बिकारी ।
 सूने भवन गवन तैं कीन्हौ, सेष-रेख नहिं टारी ॥
 अजहूँ कह्यौ सुनै जो मेरौ, आए निकट मुरारी ।
 जनक-सुता लै चलि, पाइनि परि, श्रीरघुनाथ-पियारी ॥

aṅgada kā javāba

(149/3)

rē rē andha bīśahū lōcana, para-tiya harana bikārī.
 sūnē bhavana gavana tair̥m kīnhau, sēṣa-rēkha nahim̐ ṭārī..
 ajahūṁ kahyau sunai jō mērau, ā'ē nikaṭa murārī.
 janaka-sutā lai cali, pā'ini pari, śrīraghunātha-piyārī..

Angad's Stern Rejoinder

149/3. (At this, Angad said—) 'Oh you, who are blind by all your twenty eyes! Oh you sinful one who has stealthily and deceitfully stolen another person's wife!

(Why do you forget that—) You went to a lonely hut (to steal Sita when Sri Ram and Laxman were not present there) and couldn't dare to cross the line drawn by Laxman on the ground (to protect Sita).

[That is, you are such a coward person that you stole a helpless woman stealthily from a lonely place like a thief, and you didn't have the courage to take her away while her husband (Sri Ram) and brother-in-law (Laxman) were present. You did not have the boldness even to cross the line marked around the hut by Laxman to protect Sita, and you could take her away only when the innocent lady stepped out to give you alms. You could not dare to approach her in your original form as the majestic demon king with ten heads and twenty arms to lure her away by your magnificent personality that even the celestial beauties would fall flat for. And now you boast so much! Where were your boast and dare-devilery then at that time? You could have forcefully taken Sita away in the presence of Sri Ram and Laxman if you are so valiant and courageous as you claim to be.]

If you pay heed to my advice, then even as late as now when 'Murari' (the slayer of demon Mur; an epithet for Lord Vishnu whose incarnation Sri Ram was) has already

arrived on the soil of Lanka, and you should take the daughter of Janak (Sita)—who is the beloved (wife) of Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram)—reverentially with you, showing all due respects to her, and go and fall (surrender, submit yourself) at the Lord's feet.' (149/3).

रावण का असमंजस

[149/4]

“संकट परैं जो सरन पुकारैं, तौ छत्री न कहाऊँ ।
जन्महि तैं तामस आराध्यौ, कैसैं हित उपजाऊँ ॥
अब तौ 'सूर' यहै बनि आई, हर कौ निज पद पाऊँ ।
ये दस सीस ईस—निरमायल, कैसैं चरन छुवाऊँ”? ॥

rāvaṇa kā asamanjasa

(149/4)

“saṅkaṭa paraiṁ jō sarana pukāraum, tau chatrī na kahā'um̐ .
janmahi taim tāmāsa ārādhyau, kaisaim hita upajā'um̐ ..
aba tau 'sūra' yahai bani ā'i, hara kau nija pada pā'um̐ .
yē dasa sīsa īsa-niramāyala, kaisaim carana chuvā'um̐? ..

Ravana's Dilemma

149/4. Surdas says that Ravana thought to himself—‘I will not be called a brave and a courageous warrior known as a Kshatriya (literally a brave king who has a ceremonial umbrella—called a ‘Kshatri’—over his head signifying his powers and majesty) if I go and fall at his (Sri Ram's) feet to say, ‘I have come to surrender at your feet’, when faced with adversity and impending war.

Besides this, I have been pursuing evil ever since my birth. Say, how can I now develop compassion and other good virtues so late in life? The only fortunate circumstance that has made itself present before me is sure death (at the hands of Sri Ram), and its resultant attainment of the abode of Lord Shiva if I die.

All my 10 heads have already been offered to my Lord (‘Isha’) Shiva (and the present ones are a boon or blessing or gifts from him). So, how can (or what right do I have to) make them touch his (Sri Ram's) feet (because this would be tantamount to insulting Lord Shiva who is not only my patron and revered deity but is also Maheshwar, the greatest amongst Gods)? (149/4)

[Note—Refer verse no. 129 in the context of this verse.]

अंगद का रावण को समझाना

[150]

मूरख! रघुपति—सत्रु कहावत ?
जाके नाम, ध्यान सुमिरन तैं, कोटि जज्ञ—फल पावत !

नारदादि, सनकादि महामुनि सुमिरत मन—बच ध्यावत ।
 असुर—तिलक प्रह्लाद, भक्त बलि, निगम नेति जस गावत ॥
 जाकी घरनि हरी छल—बल करि, लायौ बिलंब न आवत ।
 दस अरु आठ पदुम बनचर लै, लीला सिंधु बँधावत ॥
 जाइ मिलौ कौसल—रनेस कौ, मन अभिलाष बढ़ावत ।
 दै सीता अवधेस पाईं परि, रहु लंकेस कहावत ॥
 तू भूल्यौ दससीस बीसभुज, मोहि गुमान दिखावत ।
 कंध उपारि डारिहौं भूतल, 'सूर' सकल सुख पावत ॥

an̄gada kā rāvaṇa kō samajhānā

(150)

mūrakha! raghupati-satru kahāvata?
 jākē nāma, dhyāna sumirana tēm̄, kōṭi jajña-phala pāvata!
 nāradādi, sanakādi mahāmuni sumirata mana-baca dhyāvata.
 asura-tilaka prahalāda, bhakta bali, nigama nēti jasa gāvata..
 jākī gharani harī chala-bala kari, lāyau bilam̄ba na āvata.
 dasa aru āṭha paduma banacara lai, līlā sindhu bam̄dhāvata..
 jā'i milau kausala-ranēsa kauṁ, mana abhilāṣa baṛhāvata.
 dai sītā avadhēsa pā'im̄ pari, rahu laṅkēsa kahāvata..
 tū bhūlyau dasasīsa bīsabhujā, mōhi gumāna dikhāvata.
 kandha upāri ḍārihauṁ bhūtala, 'sūra' sakala sukha pāvata..

Angad Continues to Persuade Ravana to Abandon His Stubbornness

150. (Angad fumed at Ravana's stubbornness and said—) 'Oh you stupid fellow! You feel proud in calling yourself an enemy of Raghupati whose name, contemplation and remembrance gives the benefit equivalent to doing millions of fire sacrifices.

He (the Lord Sri Ram) is remembered constantly and meditated upon by the great sages such as Narad, Sankadi etc. using their faculties of speech as well as thought (i.e. who sing his glories and always contemplate upon his divine name and form); his divine glories are described by the Vedas using the words 'Neti-Neti' (i.e. not this not this; neither this nor that; nothing is sufficient to even briefly outline the majesty and glory of the Supreme Being that Sri Ram is). [In other words, don't you know that Sri Ram is no ordinary prince but the Supreme Being himself personified in this human form? You claim that you are very learned and wise, then how come you do not know this basic fact?]

It is the same Lord whose wife you have forcibly stolen with craft and cunning—well, the Lord has not delayed at all in coming here. He has brought along with him an army of 18 'Padma' (18 x 1016) monkeys and bears, and he has tied or tamed the ocean (by constructing a bridge over it) almost playfully (as if it was a sport for him, and the army enjoyed constructing it and taming the otherwise ferocious, un-relating and heaving ocean which could have dismantled the bridge if it was within its powers).

Go and meet the king of Kaushal (another name for the kingdom of Ayodhya) who enhances the hopes and expectations of his devotees (i.e. he fulfills all the desires of his devotees so that no new expectation arise in their hearts). Give Sita back to him; fall down at his feet and continue to be called the 'Lord of Lanka'.

[That is, go and surrender before the Lord. When you surrender yourself before Sri Ram, he will forgive you and all the mischief done by you, no matter how grave they are, and you shall remain on the throne of Lanka for ever. Otherwise, there is no hope for you.]

You have become haughty due to your twenty arms and ten heads (thinking that you are ten times more wise and twenty times stronger than others).

(To teach you a lesson that it is in vain that you feel proud of them—) I will shear-off your (ten) shoulders (from your bust) and throw them on the ground. This brave one (i.e. me; 'Sur') shall get immense pleasure and joy in doing so.' (150).

[Note :- The last line of this verse can be read as follows also:—" 'I (Angad) will tear-off your necks and throw them on the ground.' Surdas says that he (Surdas) feels immensely happy at the possibility of such a thing happening, or that all the brave ones in this world shall feel exceedingly glad if this happens."]

अंगद रावण की नोक—झोंक

[151/1]

आहु रघुबीर की सरन अंगद कहै,
 मानि रे मूढ़मति! बचन मेरौ ।
 जाऔ रै जाऔ सब, कोपि लंकेस कहै,
 भुजन मेरी बस्यौ काल तेरौ ॥
 सुर—असुर—नाग बली जेते हैं जगत में,
 इंद्र—ब्रह्मा सबहि मैं नवाए ।
 बात अद्भुत सब, और पाछै रहे,
 रीछ—कपि लैन गढ़ लंक आए ॥
 बाम कर की यह अल्प जो अंगुरी,
 लंक गढ़ बंक छिन मैं ढहाऊँ ।
 कहा करूँ, नैक मोहि संक रघुबीर की,
 रंक! तोहि मारि अब ही उड़ाऊँ ॥

aṅgada rāvaṇa kī nōka-jhōṅka

(151/1)

āhu raghubīra kī sarana aṅgada kahai,
 māni rē mūṛhamati! bacana mērau.
 jā'au rai jā'au saba, kōpi laṅkēsa kahai,
 bhujana mēri basyau kāla tērau..
 sura-asura-nāga balī jētē hairi jagata mēm,
 indra-brahmā sabahi maiṁ navā'ē.

bāta adbhuta saba, aura pāchai rahē,
 rīcha-kapi laina garha laṅka ā'ē..
 bāma kara kī yaha alpa jō aṅgurī,
 laṅka garha baṅka china maiṁ ḍhahā'ūṁ.
 kahā karuṁ, naika mōhi saṅka raghubīra kī,
 raṅka! tōhi māri aba hī uṛā'ūṁ..

Angad & Ravana—Acrimonious Verbal Duel

151/1. Angad (was exasperated at Ravana's stubbornness and) said to him, 'Oh you stupid fellow with an low intellect and an idiotic mind ('Mudhamati')! Pay head to my advice. Come and seek refuge in the holy feet of Sri Ram (i.e. surrender yourself to the Lord).'

Ravana obviously could not tolerate this insinuation and said indignantly, 'Ah, all of you (i.e. all the monkeys and bears)! Run away, run away from here! Your death seems to have come and taken up its residence in my arms (i.e. it appears that your death is hiding in the strength of my arms, ready to pounce upon you at the first opportunity). All the strong and seemingly invincible Gods, the powerful demons and the legendary terrestrial creatures represented by serpents that are in this world, not to mention Indra (the king of Gods) and Brahma (the creator)—well, I have subdued them all (i.e. have defeated and conquered them). What a strange phenomenon and a height of nonsense it is that while all other brave creatures have relegated themselves to the rear and have hidden themselves from my view), these inconsequential and diminutive bears and monkeys have come forward to take over (conquer) the fort of Lanka!'

(Angad rebuked and teased Ravana again, saying—) 'I can demolish this strong fort of Lanka with the small finger of my left hand. But what can I do, for I have my doubts regarding Sri Ram (whether he would approve of it or not). Otherwise, oh your morally bankrupt fellow, I can kill and finish you off right now.' (151/1).

रावण का अंगद को भड़काने का प्रयास

[151/2]

होहि ऐसौ बली, काहें नहिं मुग्ध बल,
 बालि—से बाप कौ बैर लीनौ ।
 तात के भ्रात तव मात पत्नी करी ,
 सत्रु की सरन जाय मूँड़ दीनौ ॥
 हुते मम तात के रावरे सरिस लच्छन,
 धर्म की मैँड़ जिन तोर डारी ।
 परिहैं अब धूर ततकाल तेरे बदन,
 राम—अवतार खल—दंड—धारी ॥

rāvaṇa kā aṅgada kō bharākānē kā prayāsa

(151/2)

hōhi aisau balī, kāhairiṃ nahiriṃ mugdha bala,
 bāli-sē bāpa kau baira līnau.
 tāta kē bhrāta tava mātā patnī karī,
 satru kī sarana jāya mūṃṛa dīnau..
 hutē mama tāta kē rāvarē sarisa lacchana,
 dharma kī maiṅṛa jina tōra dārī.
 parihairiṃ aba dhūra tatakāla tērē badana,
 rāma-avatāra khala-daṇḍa-dhārī..

Ravana's Attempt to Incite Angad to Revolt

151/2. (Ravana retorted sarcastically—) ‘Oh you fool! If you are as strong as you say you are, then why didn’t you avenge the enmity that your father Baali had (with your uncle Sugriv, which resulted in his untimely death at the hands of him whom you call your master, i.e. Sri Ram)?

Your uncle (Sugriv) has kept your mother (Tara) as his co-wife, and inspite of it you went and bowed your head before him (Sri Ram) who had killed your father at the behest of your uncle. To make matters worse, you were timid and coward enough to then go and seek shelter with him (Sri Ram)?

[That is, aren’t you ashamed at yourself that you chose to submit yourself and surrender your honour to an outsider Sri Ram who does not even belong to the race to which you should be owing your alligence, and, worse, who had killed your father from hiding, even though your father had not harmed him in the least! Shame to you! Wouldn’t it have been proper that you should have extracted your revenge at the first opportunity and payed your dues that you morally owe to your father by revolting against your uncle who teamed with an outsider for his selfish ends? Don’t you realise that both the gentleman whom you say is your dear Lord is the one who has deceitfully killed your own father and sided with your father’s enemy? Don’t you realise that your uncle has kept your own mother Tara, which is a most reprehensible deed, and still you call him your chief? It seems to me that you are a serf of these two gentlemen, and so you should be ashamed to be alive in the first place.]

Stung at this rebuke which hit Angad where it hurt most emotionally, he retorted—‘My father’s evil characteristics were similar to you, and they transgressed the boundaries of ‘Dharma’ (because what my father did went against the tenets and codes of righteousness, nobility, probity and propriety). Soon dust will also settle on your body (as it had settled on the dead body of my father when he lay on the ground) because Sri Ram’s incarnation has been to punish those who are evil, sinful, pervert and wicked.’ (151/2).

[Note:-Ravana was clearly and cleverly trying to instigate Angad to revolt against both his uncle Sugriv as well as against Lord Ram. Nevertheless, whatever he said was correct. Angad too was correct when he compared the ‘evil characteristics’ of Baali which were similar to those of Ravana’s, and which justified his death.

In my personal humble view, Angad found himself on a weak and uncertain ground here. His reply generalising those characteristics which he calls ‘evil, pervert and sinful’ shows he couldn’t specifically pin-point any character of his father that was not present in his uncle Sugriv, and which was so horrendous and unpardonable as to invite the death

penalty. This appears to be a case of 'circumstantial compulsion'—Angad hadn't any option really left to him when he had decided not to oppose Sugriv's coronation, and to surrender himself in the service of Sri Ram. The proof lies in the fact that earlier, when Sita hadn't been yet found and the monkeys were sitting on the shore of the ocean contemplating what to do, Angad had said that he would rather prefer death than going back to Kishkindha empty-handed and getting himself killed at the hands of Sugriv.

He knew that two powerful and able personalities—i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman—have sided with the killer of his father, i.e. Sugriv, and being a monkey by birth, there wasn't a place other than Kishkindha where he could escape from Sugriv and take refuge in exile. The monkey army was with Sugriv, and once they got the hint that he was antagonized with Angad, the latter would be in great trouble. The odds were stacked high against Angad. So he thought to be wise and prudent, and keep the past, no matter how unpleasant and unacceptable, behind him in order to survive.

Perhaps Sri Ram too felt injustice has been done to the innocent Angad, for what could he do for the misdeanours of his father—that is why, while proclaiming Sugriv as the king of Kishkindha, he had appointed Angad as the prince regent who was declared the de-facto heir to the throne after the death of Sugriv. The throne of Kishkindha was therefore, with one master-stroke of the Lord, restored to the blood-line and legal heir of Baali, i.e. to Angad. Even if Sugriv died, none of his own off springs could now become a king in any time in future also because this mandate of who would succeed Sugriv to the throne has been decided in public by the conqueror and the king-maker Sri Ram himself.

When Angad becomes a king in due course of time after Sugriv's death, it is but natural that after Angad's death, the throne would pass on to his off springs. So, in effect, Sri Ram had nullified the wrong doings that he had to do because of circumstantial compulsions, military strategy, and as a matter of policy to win the impending battle in Lanka. See also verse nos. 146/3 and 152.

The Lord had to take the support of the monkeys because he was far away from his own kingdom of Ayodhya, and was in an alien land with no companion and wherewithals to wage and win a war. He chose Sugriv because this fellow had the same pain as the Lord—that is, his wife was snatched from him by his adversary, and he was in search for a means by which he could not only retrieve his wife but also settle scores with his arch enemy Baali. Once his selfish needs were taken care of, Sugriv was bound to obey the dictates of the Lord for the fear of his own life as he had watched the majestic potentials and the prowess of the Lord.]

[151/3]

सुनतहीं बचन मानौ फनग कौ फन चप्यौ,
 सिंघ कौ पूँछ सोवत मरोच्यौ ।
 ज्वलित आग बीसहूँ लोचनन भौ बिकल,
 पटक भुज उठत मंत्री निहोख्यौ ॥
 तौलौं आएँ ऐंड़ अभिमान मद की धरत,
 ग्रवी में बंक दै दृष्टि दीठी ।
 सुरसुरी बंकुरी भुजा रघुबीर की,
 जौलौं मतिमंद तैं नाहिं दीठी ॥
 चपल बनचरन की जात अति बोल, चर
 कहा राजान सौं बोल जानै ।

छत्र की छाँह इद्रादि थरथर करें,
बंक यह ढीठ नहीं संक मानै ॥

(151/3)

sunatahīm bacana mānau phanaga kau phana capyau,
siṅgha kau pūm̐cha sōvata marōyau.
jvalita āga bīśahūm̐ lōcanana bhau bikala,
paṭaka bhuja uṭhata mantrī nihōryau..
taulaum̐ ā'aiṁ aiṅra abhimāna mada kī dharata,
gravī mēm̐ baṅka dai dr̥ṣṭi dīṭhī.
surasurī baṅkurī bhujā raghubīra kī,
jaulaum̐ matimanda taim̐ nāhim̐ dīṭhī..
capala banacarana kī jāta ati bōla, cara
kahā rājāna saum̐ bōla jānai.
chatra kī chām̐ha indrādi tharathara karaim̐,
baṅka yaha ḍhīṭha nahim̐ saṅka mānai..

151/3. As soon as he heard this derogatory and insulting remark from Angad, Ravana became extremely angry, peeved, indignant and agitated like a serpent whose hoods have been trampled upon by someone, or like a sleeping lion whose tail has been twisted by someone to tease him.

All his twenty eyes glowed with anger as if they were fire-pits. Thumping his hands, he was about to get up (to thrash Angad) when his ministers requested him to calm down and excuse him (Angad) for his impertinence. (So Ravana sat down on his throne most reluctantly.)

(Then Angad said—) ‘Oh the one with a low intellect! It is only till the time you haven’t had the chance to glance at the robust and well-curved muscular arms of Raghubir (Sri Ram) that you twist and turn, squirm and toss in arrogance and haughtiness, and look askance at me with a bent neck to show contempt for me. [But once you have the chance to have a glimpse of the Lord’s well-built muscular arms, all sense of pride that you have about your strength, your well-built body, and your invincibility would simply vanish in thin air.]’

(Ravana was exasperated and peeved at the continued insubordination by Angad in full view of the demons who had assembled in the royal court to watch the spectacle, so he retorted—) ‘The monkeys, as a race, are always restless and talk nonsense. Then again, what do messengers know of etiquette and manners of how to talk with great kings?’

Even the Gods such as Indra tremble with fear when they as much as see the shadow of my royal umbrella (symbolising, majesty, potential, powers, might and sway), and here I have this wicked, stupid and stubborn fellow (Angad) who does not have any hesitation in showing disrespect while talking to me in this indignant manner!’

[That is, as soon as the Gods and their king Indra become aware that I am approaching them or am within their earshot, they begin to shake and tremble with fear, so much they are afraid of me. But this fellow Angad has no fear of me and my might; he

is not afraid of talking with me in the insulting way he does. He has no manners and a sense of courtesy whatsoever when talking with great kings.] (151/3).

[151/4]

करूँ जिय संक जो अधिक तोकौं गिनुँ,
जो कछु अपनपौ घट बिचारूँ ।
भुजनि सौं पलटि दिगपाल सब दलमलूँ,
धरनि नभ—छत्र जो फार गारूँ ॥
रहि रे सुभट समसेर अधिसेर तू,
अपन कौ बल जिय नहिं बिचारै ।
कहत परधान महाराज रावन बली,
अवनि रह आभ सौं बाथ मारै ॥
पस्यौ बलि—द्वार परिहार बामन गदा,
किंकरी कौर दै—दै जिवायौ ।
तात मम पालनें आनि बाँध्यौ जबै,
रैपटन मार कई बार खायौ ॥
मरम कौ बचन सुनि खेद जिय मैं भयौ,
चटपटी लाइ भृकुटी चढ़ावै ।
कोइ है सूर—सामंत मेरी सभा,
मार लेहौ, मंद नहिं जान पावै ॥

(151/4)

karūm' jiya saṅka jō adhika tōkaum' ginūm',
jō kachu apanapau ghaṭa bicārūm'.
bhujani saum' palaṭi digapāla saba dalamalūm',
dharani nabha-chatra jō phāra gārūm'..
rahi rē subhaṭa samasēra adhisēra tū,
apana kau bala jiya nahim' bicārai.
kahata paradhāna mahārāja rāvana balī,
avani raha ābha saum' bātha mārāi..
paryau bali-dvāra parihāra bāmana gadā,
kiṅkarī kaura dai-dai jivāyau.
tāta mama pālanērṁ āni bām'dhyau jabai,
raipaṭana māra ka'ī bāra khāyau..
marama kau bacana suni khēda jiya mairṁ bhayau,
caṭapaṭi lā'i bhr̥kuṭi caṛhāvai.
kō'i hai sūra-sāmanta mērī sabhā,
māra lēhau, manda nahim' jāna pāvairṁ..

151/4. (Angad replied defiantly—) 'I shall show hesitation if I consider you greater or superior in strength than myself, or regard myself inferior to you. If I want, I can overturn

all the Digpals (the brave and strong custodians who support the world) with my hands, smash them, crush them and knead them to pulp.

I can tear the canopy of the sky off from the earth and squeeze it (in a similar way as one wrings a wet cloth to squeeze the water out of it).

But wait, you are under the delusion that your strength and valour has no limits. Holding a sword, you pretend to be like a lion (i.e. you pretend to be a very brave, fearless, courageous and valiant king and warrior). You boast that ‘the great king Ravana is very brave and strong so much so that he wrestles with the Gods in the sky while staying here on earth.’

But don’t you remember that once, when you had been hit by the mace of Lord Vaaman who was standing to guard the gate of king Bali in the subterranean world, you had swooned and fainted, and at that time a maid servant had fed morsels of food to you and nursed you back to health?

Again, don’t you also not remember that it so happened once that my father (Baali) had caught hold of you and brought you home where he had tied you to my cradle (when I was merely a child). I used to enjoy myself by slapping you repeatedly at that time. [That is, don’t you remember that you had suffered the horrible ignominy of being tied to my cradle by my father, and I had been hitting you as if you were a pet monkey tied to my cradle for my enjoyment?]

Surdas says that upon hearing about these dark secrets of his past life in public, Ravana was highly embarrassed and extremely ashamed. He felt insulted (because these secrets were not known to anybody else, and when Angad disclosed them in public in full court, it was the most humiliating moment for Ravana).

Ravana fumed and fretted; he curved his eyebrows immediately (as a sign of great disgust, annoyance and exasperation), and yelled indignantly at Angad—‘Is there any valiant commander here in my court? Kill him; get rid of him. This idiot should not go back alive from here.’ (151/4).

रावण द्वारा अंगद का पुनः भड़काने का प्रयास

[152/1]

रे कपि! क्यों पितु—बैर बिसाख्यौ ?
 तौ समतुल कन्या किन उपजी, जो कुल—सत्रु न माख्यौ!
 ऐसौ सुभट नहीं महिमंडल, देख्यौ बालि—समान ।
 तासौं कियौ बैर मैं हाख्यौ, कीन्ही पैज प्रमान ॥
 ताकौ बध कीन्ही इहिं रघुपति, तुव देखत बिदमान ।
 ताकी सरन रह्यौ क्यों भावै, सब्द न सुनियै कान! ॥
 रे दसकंध, अंध—मति, मूरख, क्यों भूल्यौ इहिं रूप? ।
 सूझत नहीं बीसहूँ लोचन, पर्यौ तिमिर के कूप! ॥
 धन्य पिता, जापर परफुल्लित राघव—भुजा अनूप ।
 वा प्रताप की मधुर बिलोकनि पर वारौं सब भूप’ ॥

rāvaṇa dvārā aṅgada kā punaḥ bhaṛakānē kā prayāsa

(152/1)

rē kapi! kyaum̐ pitu-baira bisāryau?
 tau samatula kan'yā kina upajī, jō kula-satru na māryau!
 aisau subhaṭa nahīm̐ mahimaṇḍala, dēkhyau bāli-samāna.
 tāsaur̐ kiyau baira mair̐ hāryau, kīnhī paija pramāna..
 tākau badha kīnhau ihiṁ raghupati, tuva dēkhata bidamāna.
 tākī sarana rahyau kyaum̐ bhāvai, sabda na suniyai kāna! ..
 'rē dasakandha, andha-mati, mūrakha, kyaum̐ bhūlyau ihiṁ rūpa? .
 sūjhata nahīm̐ bisahūm̐ lōcana, paryau timira kē kūpa! ..
 dhan'ya pitā, jāpara paraphullita rāghava-bhujā anūpa.
 vā pratāpa kī madhura bilōkani para vāraur̐ saba bhūpa'..

Ravana's Second Attempt to Incite Angad to Revolt

152/1. (Ravana tried to instigate Angad once again by saying—) ‘Oh Kapi (literally, a monkey; here referring derogatorily to Angad)! Why have you forgotten about the hostility that your father had (with Sugriv)? If you do not avenge your father’s death and kill the enemy of your clan, then why was not a girl child born to your mother instead of you¹?

I had never seen anyone stronger and more valiant than Baali on the surface of the earth. Even I was defeated by him when I became hostile towards him, but even then he had lived up to his words, had kept his promises (and remained a true friend of mine throughout his life)².

He was killed in front of your eyes by this (treacherous) fellow Raghupati (Sri Ram). Then say, how do you like to stay under his tutelage as his subordinate? You should not hear a single word spoken by him with your ears! (How do you bear to work as a messenger of someone who had killed your father?)’ [See verse nos. 151/2 and 146/3 in this context.]

(Angad could not be incited into revolting against Sri Ram. He calmly replied—) ‘Oh you foolish 10-headed one with a eclipsed intellect! Why are you misled with his (Sri Ram’s) human form? You can’t see (the truth that Sri Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) even though you have twenty eyes. You are lying in a dark well (of ignorance).

My father was fortunate on whom Raghav’s (Sri Ram’s) matchless arms had shown their glory—i.e. my father Baali was very privileged that he was killed by Lord Vishnu himself in the form of Sri Ram, thereby providing him with liberation and deliverance from this artificial, entrapping and tormenting material world and its endless cycle of birth and death along with the equally endless chain of miseries and pains.

It was such a unique and great moment for Baali that I bet that countless kings would vouldanteer to sacrifice themselves in order to beget the same sort of death which would benefit their souls and provide them with the spiritual reward of attaining liberation and deliverance. It was a privilege to die in a situation when the Lord was standing right in front and casting his merciful, benevolent and spiritually blissful glance upon my father during the last moments of the latter’s life (thus ensuring his ultimate salvation and emancipation).’ (152/1).

[Note—¹Ravana's derogatory reference is as much to Sugriv as it is to Sri Ram and Laxman whom he calls the 'enemy of the clan of Angad' because Sri Ram had killed his father. This is an attempt by Ravana to incite hatred in the heart of Angad towards Sri Ram because a son is expected to avenge the insult or harm cast on his clan or family by an outsider, especially when his father has been killed by him. In this case, the outsider was Sri Ram, and the harm or insult was the killing of his father Baali. The hostility that Baali had with Sugriv, his brother and uncle of Angad, was a family matter, and this was no excuse for Sugriv to take the help of someone else to settle scores by killing his own brother. And to make matters worse, Sri Ram had no business to meddle in the affair of two brothers, especially when Baali had not done him any harm.]

So Ravana was in some sense correct and to a great extent justified in chiding and teasing Angad by accusing him to be a coward by not avenging the death of his father, and instead serving the very persons who had killed him.

²This statement of Ravana shows that he had the noble trait that makes one praise someone stronger than one's self, though of course such praise is meant here as a psychological lever to instigate Angad to revolt. Ravana subtly hinted to Angad that he and Baali were friends, and he is very astonished that Baali's son was taking sides with those who killed him. Angad had taunted Ravana that his father Baali had kept him tucked under his arms, but by praising the latter instead of showing any disgust or dishonour to him, Ravana attempted to tell Angad that he (Ravana) was a noble soul and he never harboured any ill-will or hatred for those who were superior to him in strength and valour, but rather he was ready to praise and honour them in public.]

[152/2]

‘जो तोहिं नाहिं बाहु—बल, पौरुष, अर्ध राज देउं लंक ।
मो समैत ये सकल निसाचर, लरत न मानैं संक ॥
जब रथ साजि चढ़ौ रन—सन्मुख, जीय न आनौं तंक ।
राघव सेन समैत संहारौ, करौं रुधिरमय पंक’ ॥
‘श्रीरघुनाथ—चरन—व्रत उर धरि, क्यौं नहिं लागत पाइ? ।
सब के ईस, परम करुनामय, सबही कौं सुखदाइ ॥
हौं जु कहत, लै चलौ जानकी, छाँड़ौ सबै ढिठान ।
सनमुख होइ ‘सूर’ के स्वामी, भक्तनि कृपा—निधान’ ॥

(152/2)

‘jō tōhiṁ nāhiṁ bāhu-bala, pauruṣa, ardha rāja dē'um' laṅka.
mō samaita yē sakala nisācara, larata na mānaim saṅka..
jaba ratha sāji caṛhau rana-sanmukha, jīya na ānauṁ taṅka.
rāghava sēna samaita samhārau, karaum rudhiramaya paṅka'..
‘śrīraghunātha-carana-brata ura dhari, kyaurṁ nahim lāgata pā'i? .
saba kē īsa, parama karunāmaya, sabahī kaum sukhadā'i..
hauṁ ju kahata, lai calau jānakī, chāmṛau sabai ḍhiṭhāna.
sanamukha hō'i 'sūra' kē svāmī, bhaktani kṛpā-nidhāna'..

152/2. (Ravana tried to win over Angad to his side with this enticing offer—) ‘If you do not have the strength of arms and manliness expected of you (to take revenge against the

killers of your father Baali who was my friend), then don't regret. Join me, and I shall give you half of the kingdom of Lanka. All these demons shall join me in war.

[In this way, you would be able to avenge the death of your father by joining hands with me. With me and my demon army with you, you would no longer need to have any fear from either Sugriv, the betrayer, or Ram, the selfish man. You not even need to come out openly in my favour in the battle-field, just stay right here in the city, safely. I'll take care of the rest. Just tell me the secrets of the enemy so that I can defeat him, and then we would share the spoils of the war. In this way, you will get an opportunity to get even with your enemy Sugriv and the killer of your father, that is, Sri Ram, by taking sides with me.]

When I will go for battle in a decorated (i.e. well armed) chariot, there will be no hesitations or fears or doubts of any kind in my heart—i.e. I will be very confident of victory once I have you on my side. On the contrary, I will be certain that I would kill Raghav (Sri Ram) along with his army, and create a slushy swamp of their blood on the ground.'

(Angad interjected, saying—) 'Taking a vow of always remembering the (holy, divine, august) feet of Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram) in your heart, why don't you go and fall at them personally (to surrender and end your dilemma and consternations, instead of unnecessarily boasting and wasting your breath)? He is the Lord of all, most kind and merciful, and a giver of happiness and joys to everyone. Pay heed to what I say. Leave aside this useless stubbornness, haughtiness and arrogance; stop boasting and playing dirty tricks upon me. Take Janki (Sita) along with you and stand before the Lord of Surdas (Sri Ram). For his devotees, the Lord is like a treasury of compassion, mercy and kindness (and therefore don't doubt that he would forgive you for all your mischief, and accept you as he has accepted me).' (152/2).

[153]

एक रैपट दियें मुकुट उड़ि जायँगे,
 सभा सब चरन सौं चाप डारूँ ।
 बालि कौ पूत हौं सोच जिय में करूँ,
 सिंघ ह्वै मेंडुकनि कहा मारूँ ॥
 करत अपराध उतपात छोटेन कूँ,
 बड़ैन कूँ छेमा भूषन कहावै ।
 जान देहु, दूत अब लौं न मार्यौ कहूँ,
 पसुन सौं लरत जिय लाज आवै ॥
 'सूर' नृप—किसोर जब बालि—नंदन कह्यौ,
 सीस अब कौन तोसौं पचावै ।
 नैक धरु धीर, रनधीर रघुबीर भट,
 देख तरवार कैसी चलावै ॥

(153)

ēka raipaṭa diyēṁ mukuṭa uḍi jāyam̐gē,
 sabhā saba carana saur̥m cāpa ḍārūṁ .

bāli kau pūta haum̐ sōca jiya mēm̐ karūm̐,
 siṅgha hvai mēṇḍukani kahā mārūm̐ ..
 karata aparādha utapāta chōṭēna kūm̐,
 baṛēna kūm̐ chēmā bhūṣana kahāvai.
 jāna dēhu, dūta aba laum̐ na māryau kahūm̐,
 pasuna saum̐ larata jiya lāja āvai..
 'sūra' nrpa-kisōra jaba bāli-nandana kahyau,
 sīsa aba kauna tōsaum̐ pacāvai.
 naika dharu dhīra, ranadhīra raghubīra bhaṭa,
 dēkha taravāra kaisī calāvai..

153. (Angad continued with his humiliating and disparaging tirade against Ravana—)
 'All your crowns will fly off (i.e. fall down or tumble) by a single slap from me, and I can grind your whole court (to pulp or dust) with my foot. But I am the son of Baali, and it does not behoove of me to be a lion and kill (or hunt down) a humble frog!

[That is, being the son of Baali and being like a 'lion', why should I hunt down and kill a 'frog' like you to show that I am brave and courageous? It would be insulting for me and my father.]

(Ravana kept his cool even in the face of such severe insults by Angad, and said calmly—) 'Lowly little people have the habit of committing nuisance and mischief, but elders should wear the ornament of forgiveness and tolerance. So let it be; I have not harmed any messenger till date. I feel ashamed fighting (or having a debate, a verbal duel, exchanging expletives) with animals!'

Surdas says that then the prince regent, the son of Baali (i.e. Angad) said, 'Now, who will unnecessarily argue with you; it makes no sense. Have a little patience and watch yourself how the most valiant and valourous, the most brave and courageous Raghubir (Lord Ram) wields his sword (in the battle-field)!' (153).

अंगद की शपथ—राग मारू

[154]

लंकपति इंद्रजित कौं बुलायौ ।
 कह्यौ तिहि, जाइ रनभूमि दल साजि कै,
 कहा भयौ राम कपि जोरि ल्यायौ ॥
 कोपि अंगद कह्यौ, धरौ धर चरन मैं,
 ताहि जो सकै कोऊ उठाई ।
 तौ बिना जुद्ध किय जाहिं रघुबीर फिरि,
 सुनत यह उठे जोधा रिसाई ॥
 रहे पचि हारि, नहिं टारि कोऊ सक्यौ,
 उठ्यौ तब आपु रावन खिस्याई ।
 कह्यौ अंगद, कहा मम चरन कौं गहत,
 चरन रघुबीर गहि क्यौ न जाई ॥

सुनत यह सकुचि कियौ गवन जिन भवन कौ,
 बालि—सुतहू तहाँ तैं सिधायौ ।
 ‘सूर’ के प्रभु कौ जाइ नाइ सिर यौ कह्यौ,
 अंध दसकंध कौ काल आयौ ॥

an̄gada kī śapatha-rāga mārū

(154)

laṅkapati indrajita kauṁ bulāyau.
 kahyau tihi, jā'i ranabhūmi dala sāji kai,
 kahā bhayau rāma kapi jōri lyāyau..
 kōpi an̄gada kahyau, dharaum̃ dhara carana maim̃,
 tāhi jō sakai kō'ū uṭhā'ī.
 tau binā jud'dha kiya jāhim̃ raghubīra phiri,
 sunata yaha uṭhē jōdhā risā'ī..
 rahē paci hāri, nahim̃ t̄ari kō'ū sakyau,
 uṭhyau taba āpu rāvana khisyā'ī.
 kahyau an̄gada, kahā mama carana kauṁ gahata,
 carana raghubīra gahi kyaur̃ na jā'ī..
 sunata yaha sakuci kiyau gavana jina bhavana kauṁ,
 bāli-sutahū tahām̃ taim̃ sidhāyau.
 'sūra' kē prabhu kauṁ jā'i nā'i sira yaur̃ kahyau,
 andha dasakandha kau kāla āyau..

Angad's Stern Vows—Raag Maaru

154. The Lord of Lanka (Ravana) called Indrajeet¹. [Literally, the word 'Indrajeet' means one who had conquered Indra, the king of Gods. Here, it refers to Meghanad, Ravana's son.]

He told him (Indrajeet), 'Get ready with your army and go to the battle-field. What happens (or what is there to fear about; or how does it matter at all) if Sri Ram has collected a motley ramshackle group of monkeys and come here?'

At this, Angad, who was present in the court, retorted angrily and disdainfully, making a formidable vow—'Look here. I am planting (placing) my foot on the ground. If anyone amongst you can move it or lift it, then Raghubir (Sri Ram) will go back without a fight!'

[Remarkable confidence has been shown by Angad. It was a decision with wide ramifications. A number of 'buts' and 'ifs' could be attached to it. It was a bet that staked the whole future, and if anything went wrong, Lord Ram would not only lose Sita but the stigma attached to this defeat without a fight would be a shameful humiliation him for the rest of his life. But so firm was Angad's conviction and faith on the potentials and powers of Sri Ram's name, his glory and honour, that he could muster enough courage to wager the entire outcome of the endeavours of Sri Ram, especially the fate of Sita, by his single

vow. This was a great risk with probable calamitous consequences, but Angad's faith in the divine powers, the majesty and the glory of Sri Ram was beyond doubt.]

Hearing this vow of Angad, many demon warriors became extremely irritated, and they got up in a huff (at Angad's temerity and dare devilry). But they all tried their utmost best (they sweated and swooned), but couldn't lift or move his leg even a fraction. Finally Ravana got up himself in extreme exasperation and frustration (on seeing that none of the demons present there could move Angad's foot, and it was a height of incredulity that none could lift a monkey's leg which should have been a child's play for them).

(When Ravana caught Angad's foot to try lifting it—) Angad said to him most sarcastically, 'Say, why do you catch hold of my feet? Why don't you go and hold Raghubir's (Sri Ram's) feet?'

[That is, since you have now finally decided to abandon your haughtiness and arrogance, and bow down even before me and touch my foot, something unthinkable for a king to do or even imagine, an action which is tantamount to surrender, then why don't you go and touch Sri Ram's foot, instead of bowing before me, so as to remove the cause of all problems and to avoid the impending destructive war with him? What benefit do you get by touching my feet? Where is your pretence of snobbery, hypocrisy, the boast of nobility of birth and the arrogance of not bending before anyone now that you have stepped down from your throne and come kneeling down to touch my foot?]

Ravana was so extremely peeved, distraught, irritated, ashamed and embarrassed that he immediately got up and went inside his palace, while the son of Baali also went back to his camp from there. He went to the Lord of Surdas (Sri Ram), bowed his head reverentially before him, and reported, 'The end (death) of the blinded (one whose intellect is covered with a veil of ignorance) 10-headed fellow has come (i.e. Ravana's death seems to be imminent. He wouldn't listen to any advice. I have failed to persuade him in my peace mission.' (154)

[Note—¹Meghanaad is called Indrajeet, literally one who has conquered Indra, the king of Gods, because once when Indra had captured Ravana, the demon king and the father of Meghanaad, the latter had gone and had not only defeated Indra but also brought him as a captive in Lanka. This story is narrated in Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga 13, verse nos. 78-82.]

अंगद का श्रीराम को रिपोर्ट देना

[155]

बालि—नंदन आइ सीस नायौ ।

अंध दसकंध कौ काल सूझत न प्रभु,

ताहि मैं बहुत बिधि कहि जनायौ ॥

इंद्रजित चढ़्यौ निज सैन सब साजि कै,

रावरी सैनहू साज कीजै ।

'सूर' प्रभु मारि दसकंध, थपि बंधु तिहि,

जानकी छोरि जस जगत लीजै ॥

aṅgada kā śrīrāma kō repōṛṭa dēnā

(155)

bāli-nandana ā'i sīsa nāyau.
andha dasakandha kauṁ kāla sūjhata na prabhu,
tāhi maim bahuta bidhi kahi janāyau..
indrajita caṛhyau nija saina saba sāji kai,
rāvarī sainahū sāja kījai.
'sūra' prabhu māri dasakandha, thapi bandhu tihi,
jānakī chōri jasa jagata lījai..

Angad's Report to Sri Ram

155. The son of Baali (i.e. Angad) came and bowed his head (before Sri Ram). He said, 'Oh Lord! The (intellectually) blind 10-headed one (Ravana) is unable to see his death staring at his face. I have tried in many ways to make him understand and see reason (and abandon his recklessness and belligerence). Indrajeet (Meghanad) has got his army ready and has launched the assault. Now you should also get your army ready, kill the 10-headed one, install his brother (Vibhishan) there (on the throne of Lanka), and get Janki (Sita) released from captivity. Proclaim your majestic fame, glory and honour in this world by doing this (i.e. by releasing Sita from the captivity of the evil demons, and by accomplishing victory over Ravana and the slaying of the demons)!' (155).

लङ्का पर आक्रमण—युद्ध का आरम्भ

[156]

चढ़े हरि कनकपुरी पर आज ।
कंपी धरनि, थरहयौ अंबर, देखि दलन कौ साज ॥
असुर सबै पंछी ज्यौं भाजे, लछिमन छूटें बाज ।
'सूरदास' प्रभु लंका आए, दैन बिभीषन राज ॥

laṅkā para ākramaṇa-yud'dha kā ārambha

(156)

caṛhē hari kanakapurī para āja.
kampī dharani, tharaharyau ambara, dēkhi dalana kau sāja..
asura sabai pañchī jyaum bhājē, lachimana chūṭēm bāja.
'sūradāsa' prabhu laṅkā ā'ē, daina bibhīṣana rāja..

Attack on Lanka and Start of the War

156. Today, Hari (Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Sri Ram) has launched his assault on Lanka. Seeing the huge preparations, the formidable war paraphernalia, the harness and the war fittings as well as other accoutrements of the army of the Lord, the earth shook

and the sky reverberated (with the sound of war-cry as the two armies marched against each other). As soon as Laxman, who was like a falcon or a hawk, was let loose (i.e. as soon as Laxman entered the battle-field to start the battle), all the demons ran helter and skelter (i.e. they dispersed) like so many terrified birds do (when they are attacked by a swooping hawk or falcon).

Surdas says that his Lord has finally arrived in Lanka to give the kingdom to Vibhishan (who has now taken his refuge as an ardent devotee of the Lord) (156).

लक्ष्मण की प्रतिज्ञा—राग मारू

[157]

रघुपति! जो न इंद्रजित मारौं ।
तौ न होऊँ चरननि कौ चेरौ, जौ न प्रतिज्ञा पारौं ॥
यह दृढ़ बात जानियै प्रभु जू! एकहिं बान निवारौं ।
सपथ राम परताप तिहारे, खंड—खंड करि डारौं ॥
कुंभकरन, दस सीस बीस भुज, दानव—दलहि बिदारौं ।
तबै 'सूर' संधान सफल हौं, रिपु कौ सीस उतारौं ॥

lakṣmaṇa kī pratijñā-rāga mārū

(157)

raghupati! jō na indrajita māraum.
tau na hō'um caranani kau cērau, jau na pratijñā pāraum..
yaha dr̥ḥa bāta jāniyai prabhu jū! ēkahim bāna nivāraum..
sapatha rāma paratāpa tihārē, khaṇḍa-khaṇḍa kari ḍāraum..
kumbhakarana, dasa sīsa bīsa bhuja, dānava-dalahi bidāraum..
tabai 'sūra' sandhāna saphala haum, ripu kau sīsa utāraum..

Laxman's Vow—Raag Maarū

157. (Laxman promised to Sri Ram—) 'Oh Raghupati! If I don't kill Indrajeet (Meghanad, son of Ravana), If I don't or can't keep my words, then I am not (i.e. shall not be entitled to be called) a servant of your feet! Lord, be certain that I shall finish him off by a single arrow. I say in the name of your honour, might, fame, glory, majesty, potential powers and prowess that I will slice him to pieces. I shall sever, scatter, pound and destroy Kumbhakaran as well as Ravana's ten heads and twenty arms along with their demon army. I shall be called a brave, strong and valiant warrior only when I cut off (or take down, dismantled) the head of the enemy by the arrows shot successfully by me (i.e. all my arrows will be effective; none will go in vain).' (157).

लक्ष्मण का लंका पर आक्रमण—राग मारू

[158]

लखन दल संग लै लंक घेरी ।
 पृथी भइ षष्ठ अरु अष्ट आकास भए,
 दिसि—बिदिस कोउ नहिं जात हेरी ॥
 रीछ—लंगूर किलकारि लागे करन,
 आन रघुनाथ की जाइ फेरी ।
 पाट गए टूटि, परी लूटि सब नगर मै,
 'सूर' दरवान कह्यौ जाइ टेरी ॥

lakṣmaṇa kā laṅkā para ākramaṇa-rāga mārū

(158)

lakhana dala saṅga lai laṅka ghērī.
 prthī bha'i ṣaṣṭa aru aṣṭa ākāsa bha'ē,
 disi-bidisa kō'u nahim jāta hērī..
 rīcha-laṅgūra kilakāri lāgē karana,
 āna raghunātha kī jā'i phērī.
 pāṭa ga'ē ṭūṭi, parī lūṭi saba nagara maim,
 'sūra' daravāna kahyau jā'i ṭērī..

Laxman launches his assault on Lanka
 Raag Maaru

158. Laxman took his army and besieged Lanka. The army was so huge that only a sixth of the earth and one eighth of the sky remained visible. [The rest of them was covered by monkeys and bears who constituted the Lord's army.] Nothing was visible in any of the directions due to the dust raised by the army. Bears and monkeys chuckled and giggled fiercely; they proclaimed the victory of Raghunath (Sri Ram) everywhere.

Surdas says that the sentries at the gate of the city of Lanka watched in awe and astonishment, and rushed in panic to inform all (the residents as well as the army of Lanka, and Ravana, their king—) 'All the gates at the entrances to the city have been broken, and the whole city is being vandalised and looted by the enemy (i.e. the army of Lord Ram).' (158).

मन्दोदरी का तीसरी बार रावण को समझाना
 राग मारू

[159]

रावन! उठि निरखि देखि, आजु लंक घेरी ।
 कोटि जतन करि रहि, सिख मानी नहिं मेरी ॥
 गहगहात किलकिलात, अंधकार आयौ ।
 रवि कौ रथ सूझत नहिं, धरनि—गगन छायाँ ॥
 पौरि—पाट टूटि परे, भागे दरवाना ।

लंका में सोर पर्यौ, अजहुँ तैं न जाना ॥
 फोरि—फारि, तोरि—तारि, गगन होत गाजैं ।
 'सूरदास' लंका पर चक्र—संख बाजैं ॥

mandōdarī kā tīsarī bāra rāvaṇa kō samajhānā
 rāga mārū

(159)

rāvana! uṭhi nirakhi dēkhi, āju laṅka ghērī.
 kōṭi jatana kari rahi, sikha mānī nahim mērī..
 gahagahāta kilakilāta, andhakāra āyau.
 rabi kau ratha sūjhata nahim, dharani-gagana chāyau..
 pauri-pāṭa ṭūṭi parē, bhāgē daravānā.
 laṅkā maiṁ sōra paryau, ajahum taim na jānā..
 phōri-phāri, tōri-tāri, gagana hōta gājaim.
 'sūradāsa' laṅkā para cakra-saṅkha bājaim..

Mandodari's 3rd Attempt to Persuade Ravana
 to Avoid the War—Raag Maaru

159. (Surdas says that Mandodari made a fresh attempt to somehow try to persuade Ravana to see reason and abandon his belligerence and haughtiness to avoid the impending war that would be devastating—) 'Oh Ravana! Get up and see, today Lanka is under siege. I tried literally millions of ways, but you didn't listen to me. Chuckling and roaring ferociously, the monkey hordes have finally arrived like a shroud of darkness engulfing the entire city of Lanka. It has covered the sky and the earth so much so that even the chariot of the Sun is not visible. The doors have fallen (i.e. the gates of the city have been broken), the guards have run away, there is an uproarious tumult in Lanka, and still you aren't aware of what is happening!

There is the resonating sound of knocking, hammering, battering and demolition coming from everywhere direction of the land, while there is a furious roar and reverberations like that of the clap and rumbling of thunder in the sky. All this clamour resembles the cacophony of conches sounded at the start of any war (and you pretend to be blissfully ignorant of everything and over-confident of yourself).' (159).

[160]

लंका—फिरि गइ राम—दुहाई ।
 कहति मँदोदरि सुनि पिय रावन, तैं कहा कुमति कमाई ॥
 दस मस्तक मेरे बीस भुजा हैं, सौ जोजन की खाई ।
 मेघनाद—से पुत्र महाबल, कुंभकरन—से भाई ।
 रहि—रहि अबला, बोल न बोलै, उन की करति बड़ाई ॥
 तीनि लोक तैं पकरि मँगाऊँ, वे तपसी दोउ भाई ।
 तुम्हैं मारि महिरावन मारैं, देहिं बिभीषन राई ।

पवन कौ पूत महाबल जोधा, पल मैं लंक जराई ॥
 जनकसुता—पति हैं रघुबर—से, सँग लछिमन—से भाई ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु कौ जस प्रगट्यौ, देवनि बंदि छुड़ाई ॥

(160)

laṅkā-phiri ga'i rāma-duhā'ī.
 kahati maṁdōdari suni piya rāvana, tairṁ kahā kumati kamā'ī..
 dasa mastaka mērē bīsa bhujā hairṁ, sau jōjana kī khā'ī.
 mēghanāda-sē putra mahābala, kumbhakarana-sē bhā'ī.
 rahi-rahi abalā, bōla na bōlai, una kī karati barā'ī..
 tīni lōka tairṁ pakari maṁgā'ūm', vē tapasī dō'u bhā'ī.
 tumhairṁ māri mahirāvana mārairṁ, dēhirṁ bibhīṣana rā'ī.
 pavana kau pūta mahābala jōdhā, pala mairṁ laṅka jarā'ī..
 janakasutā-pati hairṁ raghubara-sē, samṅa lachimana-sē bhā'ī.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu kau jasa pragaṭyau, dēvani bandi churā'ī..

160. Mandodari said to Ravana, 'Listen my dear Ravana! Sri Ram's victory has already been proclaimed throughout Lanka. What evil advice did you get, or what evil thoughts you had collected in your mind that you don't wake up while still there is time. [That is, what nonsense have you thought of, and what sin and its cumulative effects have you accumulated that your wisdom has been over-shadowed by belligerence, recklessness, ego, arrogance and haughtiness. Why don't you see the dark clouds of destruction and ruin gathering everywhere, and why do you pretend as if nothing is happening?]

(Ravana boasted to his wife—) 'Oh meek woman! Hold it. I have ten heads and twenty arms. There is a moat (i.e. the ocean) with a 100 Yojan (appx. 800 miles) width surrounding the city. I have a brave, invincible and valiant son Meghanad, and an equally potent Kumbhakaran as my brother with me. Wait, wait, oh you weak and meek-hearted women, don't talk too much (or, don't taunt me or tease me or don't try to provoke me or scare me with your gibberish talk) by lauding and praising his (Sri Ram's) glory and greatness in front of me. [Listen, it does not hear nice that you praise my enemy on my face and try to scare me. Instead of it, you should encourage me.]

Even if those two mendicant brothers (Ram and Laxman) manage to run away (flee) from here, I shall pursue them and get them caught from anywhere they go to in the three worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds where they might go to escape from me and hide themselves from my wrath).'

(Then Mandodari chided him indignantly—) 'After killing you, they will kill 'Mahiravana'¹ and give the kingdom to Vibhishan. Among his (Ram's) helpers and subordinates is the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) who is a very strong and powerful warrior who had burnt Lanka in a short while on an earlier occasion. The husband of the daughter of Janak (Sita) is none other than the one who is the most famous king called Raghubir (literally the brave warrior of the race of kings of the Raghu dynasty) who has a matchless reputation with no parallel in the entire creation. He has a brother who is named Laxman who is equally matchless, potent and famous for his strength, potentials, valour and glory. [So, why are you playing fools with fire, and why are you unnecessarily and naively inviting your own death.]'

Surdas says that in due course of time (when the war was finally won and Ravana with his clan of evil demons slayed), the stupendous glory of the Lord bloomed and blossomed (literally, came out in the open, emerged or manifested itself), and he got all the Gods (who had been held captive by Ravana) released from captivity (160).

[Note :- ¹The legend of *Mahiravana* is this—He is said to be a son of Ravana and ruled over the sub-terranean world. During the epic war of Lanka, he abducted Ram and Laxman from the battle-field and hid them in the nether-world. Hanuman had gone there and had killed this demon, releasing the two brothers from his captivity. This odd story is narrated in two little known versions of the Ramayana, one is known as ‘Radheshyam Ramayan’, and the other as ‘Jwala Prasad Ramayan’.

There is yet another version of this story as narrated in the Anand Ramayan (said to be written by sage Valmiki), Saar Kand (Chapter 1), Sarga (Canto) 11, verse nos. 75-122. In this story, there are two demons named ‘Airavana’ and ‘Mahiravana’. They were friends of the 10-headed Ravana and ruled in the nether world. When Laxman was revived by the herb brought by Hanuman and the tide of war was turning against Ravana, he sent a messenger to these two friends of his and asked them to help. They abducted Sri Ram and Laxman from the battle-field and wished to sacrifice them to the goddess known as Kaamakhyā. Hanuman searched for them and reached the under-world. There he hid behind the idol of the Goddess and mimicked her voice, trapping the demons to allow Sri Ram and Laxman to enter the sanctum of the Goddess armed with their bows and arrows. Then the trio—Hanuman, Ram and Laxman—opened the door and emerged to challenge the two demon brothers. A fierce duel ensued in which both Airavana and Mahiravana were ultimately killed by Sri Ram and Laxman, though initially the demons were revived each time they were killed. Hanuman found out that the secret of their revival lay in thousands of black-bees who dropped Amrit (nectar of life) on them as soon as they died. So Hanuman killed all the bees, and this led to the two demons being finally killed.

According to another legend, Mahiravana was a thousand-armed demon who lived in an island known as Pushkar which was far away from Lanka. On some occasion he had got a boon from Brahma the creator that no male would be able to kill him. Sri Ram launched an attack upon him after his return to Ayodhya after the victory over Lanka. Mahiravana had the upper hand and the entire army of Sri Ram was thrown away by him by the burst of an arrow which created such a vacuum that all the warriors were sucked out of the battle-field. Even Lord Ram lay unconscious because of the shock. It was then that Sita assumed the ferocious form of Goddess Kaali, the goddess of death and destruction, and killed him. This most fascinating story is narrated in ‘Adbhut Ramayan’ said to be written by Valmiki. Its English version has been published by this author.]

युद्ध की शुरूआत

[161]

मेघनाद ब्रह्मा—बर पायौ ।

आहुति अग्नि जिंवाइ सँतोषी, निकस्यौ रथ बहु रतन बनायौ ॥

आयुध धरै समस्त, कवच सजि, गरजि, चढ्यौ, रन—भूमिहिं आयौ ।

मनौ मेघनायक रितु पावस, बान—वृष्टि करि सैन कँपायौ ॥

कीन्हौ कोप कुँवर कौसलपति, पंथ अकास सायकनि छायौ ।

हँस—हँसि नाग—फाँस सर साँधत, बंधु—समैत बँधायौ ॥
 नारद स्वामी कह्यौ निकट है, गरुडासन काहँ बिसरायौ ?
 भयौ तोष दसरथ के सुत कौ, सुनि नारद कौ ज्ञान लखायौ ॥
 सुमिरन—ध्यान जानि कै अपनौ, नाग—फाँस तें सैन छुड़ायौ ।
 'सूर' बिमान चढ़े सुरपुर सौं, आनंद अभय—निसान बजायौ ॥

yud'dha kī śurū'āta

(161)

mēghanāda brahmā-bara pāyau.
 āhuti agini jinvā'i samtōṣī, nikasyau ratha bahu ratana banāyau..
 āyudha dharairm samasta, kavaca saji, garaji, caḍhyau, rana-bhūmihim āyau.
 manau mēghanāyaka ritu pāvasa, bāna-brṣṭi kari saina kamṣāyau..
 kīnhau kōpa kumvara kausalapati, pantha akāsa sāyakani chāyau.
 hamśa-hamśi nāga-phāmśa sara sāmḍhata, bandhu-samaita bamḍhāyau..
 nārada svāmī kahyau nikāṭa hvai, garuṛāsana kāhairm bisarāyau?
 bhayau tōṣa dasaratha kē suta kauṁ, suni nārada kau jñāna lakhāyau..
 sumirana-dhyāna jāni kai apanau, nāga-phāmśa tēm saina churāyau.
 'sūra' bimāna caḥhē surapura saurm, ānamḍa abhaya-nisāna bajāyau..

The Actual Battle Commences
 (Meghnad enters the fray)

161. Meghanad¹ had received boons from Brahma, the creator. He had satisfied the Fire-God by offerings (which he made during his numerous fire sacrifices that he did), and as a result, numerous chariots decorated with gems and jewels were produced from it. He got on one of those divine chariots (provided to him by the Fire God) which was well stocked with different varieties of arms and armaments. He wore a body armour and roared violently as he rode into the battle-field.

Showering/raining his arrows on the monkey army as if the best of rain-bearing clouds are pouring down their contents in a torrential downpour during the rainy season, he made the army of monkeys tremble and terrified under his onslaught.

The young king of Kaushal (i.e. Sri Ram) retaliated angrily—he covered the path of the arrows shot by Meghanad with his own hail of arrows (so that they formed a sort of a shield against the arrows shot by Meghanad). Then he (Meghanad) smirked, and repeatedly laughed derisively, striking anew with arrows which converted themselves into serpents as soon as they were shot at their targets. With this, he was successful in tying up Sri Ram and his brother (Laxman) in a snare with these serpents.

Right at that time, the celestial sage Narad went to the Lord (Sri Ram) and reminded him, 'Why have you forgotten about your mount Garud, the legendary Eagle or Falcon (who is the divine mount of Lord Vishnu)?' Getting this hint and being advised by Narad thus, the son of Dashrath (Sri Ram, who was Lord Vishnu's incarnation) felt reassured and glad. (He then remembered and invoked Garud.) The divine bird Garud came there instantly when it realised that his Lord is remembering him with urgency. [When Vishnu

had manifested himself as Sri Ram, he had instructed Garud to be on high alert, and should come to him as soon as he is remembered by the Lord.]

Garud liberated the whole army from the fetters created by those magical snakes² (by gobbling them all up).

Surdas says that the Gods felt relieved and very exhilarated. They boarded their planes in the sky, and felt so fearless and assured of victory that they became bold enough to play their kettle drums and blow their trumpets in celebration even though the war was still raging ferociously³ (161).

[Note :-¹Meghanaad or Indrajeet—He was the son of Ravana. He is known as ‘Meghanaad’ because he roared and thundered like the cloud. The word ‘Meghanaad’ has two parts—viz. ‘Megha’ meaning a cloud, and ‘Naad’ meaning a loud reverberating sound.

He is also called ‘Indrajeet’ or the one who had conquered Indra, the king of Gods. Indra is called ‘Sahastraaksha’ (literally meaning to have thousand eyes) because he is said to have thousands of eyes over his body as the result of a curse by sage Gautam to punish him for being sexually pervert as he had the vile temerity of having attempted sex with the sage’s loyal wife in his absence by employing deceit. The lecherous Indra had assumed the physical body of the sage to satisfy his lust, but was caught by the sage. So the sage cursed him to have a thousand holes in his body. These ‘holes’ represented the female vagina, and the curse was in the form of sarcastic curse on Indra so that now onwards he would be able to see a woman’s sexual organs spread all over his own body with thousands of eyes instead of only two to satisfy his lust and perversions. It was also intended to tell the world in a symbolic manner about the punishment that one gets by being excessively lustful in the sense that one instance of lecherousness would create thousands of horrible spots that would taint a man’s character and personality forever, no matter how socially established or well-placed he may be. After all, Indra was a king of Gods, and one can imagine his discomfiture that he would have to remain with a pot-holed and scarred body for the rest of his life.

²Garud needn’t have, and probably didn’t eat all the snakes as such. These snakes had formed a long rope or chain by tying themselves together with each other so as to tightly encircle and trap the entire army in their snare. They might have formed a thick net which fell over the army, pinning it down to the ground. In either of the events, what Garud might have done was to eat only those serpents which formed the knots of the rope that girdled the army. Not even eat, Garud must have simply sliced through them like a scissor or a knife is used to cut through a cord or a mesh or net. Once ruptured at one point, the monkeys could easily swarm out of it like steam escaping from an uncorked or un-lid bottle or the spout of a kettle.

³The Gods were terrified of Ravana’s wrath. When they observed that Sri Ram was freed from the snare of snakes that Meghanad had created to pin down and capture the army of Sri Ram, they felt reassured that Sri Ram was indeed Vishnu himself because Garud could be summoned by Vishnu only and by no one else. This helped to overcome any doubt and fear that Gods had in their minds about Ravana. They were enjoying the spectacle, and as soon as Sri Ram was freed, they got back their confidence of victory over the demons and celebrated the occasion merrily playing their musical instruments notwithstanding the fact that Ravana was still alive and he must surely have felt very annoyed and vehemently angry at the Gods at this show of joy and rejoicing by them. Ravana must have treated this act of the Gods as defiance and as their temerity to belittle his (Ravana’s) authority.]

रावण का कुम्भकर्ण को युद्ध के लिए जगाना
राग मारू

[162]

लंकपति अनुज सोवत जगायौ ।
लंकपुर आइ रघुराइ डेरा दियौ,
तिया जाकी सिया मैं लै आयौ ॥
त बुरी बहुत कीन्ही, कहा तोहि कहौ,
छाँड़ि जस, जगत अपजस बढ़ायौ ।
'सूर' अब डर न करि, जुद्ध कौ साज करि,
होइहै सोइ जो दई—भायौ ॥

rāvaṇa kā kumbhakarṇa kō yud'dha kē li'ē jagānā
rāga mārū

(162)

laṅkapati anuja sōvata jagāyau.
laṅkapura ā'i raghurā'i dērā diyau,
tiyā jākī siyā maiṁ lai āyau..
ta burī bahuta kīnhī, kahā tōhi kahaum,
chāmṛi jasa, jagata apajasa baṛhāyau.
'sūra' aba ḍara na kari, jud'dha kau sāja kari,
hō'ihai sō'i jō da'i-bhāyau..

Ravana wakes up Kumbhakaran for War
Raag Maaru

162. The king of Lanka (Ravana) woke up his sleeping brother (Kumbhakaran) and said, 'Raghuraj (The Lord of Raghu's clan; Sri Ram), whose wife Sita I have brought, has come to Lanka and pitched his camp.' [Kumbhakaran was so called because his ears were as large as a pitcher.]

(Kumbhakaran replied—) 'You have done a very wrong thing. What can I tell you now? You have enhanced your ill-fame in place of good. But a brave one should not demur and fear now (because yielding under the present circumstances would be tantamount to cowardice and show of impotence). Prepare for war. Ultimately, the result would be that what pleases destiny or is in accordance with the will of the creator.' (162).

लक्ष्मण की धमकी; रावण का युद्ध में प्रवेश

[163]

लषन कह्यौ, करबार सम्हारौ ।
कुंभकरन अरु इंद्रजीत कौ टूक—टूक करि डारौ ॥

महाबली रावन जिहि बोलत, पल मैं सीस सँहारौ ।
 सब राच्छस रघुबीर—कृपा तैं, एकहिं बान निवारौ ॥
 हँसि—हँसि कहत बिभीषन सौं प्रभु, महाबली रन भारौ ।
 'सूर' सुनत रावन उठि धायौ, क्रोध—अनल उर धारौ ॥

lakṣmaṇa kī dhamakī; rāvaṇa kā yud'dha mēm pravēśa

(163)

laṣana kahyau, karabāra samhāraum.
 kumbhakarana aru indrajīta kaum ṭūka-ṭūka kari ḍāraum..
 mahābalī rāvana jihi bōlata, pala mairi sīsa samhārau.
 saba rācchasa raghubīra-krpā tairi, ēkahiri bāna nivāraum..
 hamṣi-hamṣi kahata bibhīṣana sauri prabhu, mahābalī rana bhārau.
 'sūra' sunata rāvana uṭhi dhāyau, krōdha-anala ura dhārau..

Laxman's Threat; Ravana joins Battle

163. Laxman threatened, 'I raise my sword and shall cut off to pieces both Kumbhakaran and Indrajeet (Meghanad). The one who is called the most strong and brave Ravana, well, I shall cut off his heads instantaneously. By the grace of Raghubir (Sri Ram), I shall slay all the demons with a single arrow.'

Hearing these threatening words of Laxman which seemed boastful to Sri Ram, and also to calm him down, the Lord smilingly (literally 'laughingly', jokingly) said to Vibhishan (without paying any attention to Laxman's haughty outburst, and also to divert Vibhishan's attention from this imprudence and impractical utterings of Laxman as well as to indicate to him that Laxman is getting too hasty, childish and excited; see note of verse no. 164)—'Great warriors of the enemy army have arrived. Now there will be a no-holds barred war.'

Surdas says that when Ravana heard that the battle has commenced in earnest, that Meghanad has failed to subdue Sri Ram's army with his serpent-trick (see verse no. 161), and that Vibhishan, the traitor brother, is advising Sri Ram in the battle-field on strategy, he got up himself and dashed forward, furious and burning with anger (163).

लक्ष्मण की मूर्छा

[164]

रावन चल्यौ गुमान—भर्यौ ।
 श्रीरघुनाथ अनाथबन्धु सौं, सनमुख खेत खर्यौ ॥
 कोप कर्यौ रघुबीर धीर तब, लछिमन पाइ पर्यौ ।
 तुम्हरे तेज—प्रताप नाथ जू! मैं कर धनुष धर्यौ ॥
 सारथि सहित अस्व बहु मारे, रावन क्रोध जर्यौ ।
 इंद्रजीत लीन्ही तब सक्ति, देवहि हहा कर्यौ ॥

छूटी बिज्जु—रासि वह मानौ, लछमन बंधु पस्वौ ।
करुना करत 'सूर' कोसलपति, नैननि नीर झस्वौ ॥

lakṣmaṇa kī mūrchā

(164)

rāvana calyau gumāna-bharyau.
śrīraghunātha anāthabandhu saurṇ, sanamukha khēta kharyau..
kōpa karyau raghubīra dhīra taba, lachimana pā'i paryau.
tumharē tēja-pratāpa nātha jū! maiṁ kara dhanuṣa dharyau..
sārathi sahita asva bahu mārē, rāvana krōdha jaryau.
indrajīta līnhī taba sakti, dēvahi hahā karyau..
chūṭī bijju-rāsi vaha mānau, lachamana bandha 'u paryau.
karunā karata 'sūra' kōsalapati, nainani nīra jharyau..

Laxman's Fainting

164. Full of ego, haughtiness, arrogance and pride, Ravana made his way to the battle front. He stood in front of Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram) and started a head-on one-to-one battle.

When Raghubir (Sri Ram) also showed his anger, Laxman fell at this feet and pleaded humbly with the Lord to order him to step in—'Oh Lord! It is due to you and in your honour that I have held this bow in my hand. (So, do not take the trouble of battling this wretched demon yourself; leave it to me and give me a chance to serve you by getting rid of him.)'

He (Laxman) shot down many horses and the charioteer of Ravana's chariot which made him furious and burn with anger. At this, Indrajeet (Meghanad) lifted the 'Shakti' (literally the energised arrow or a spear or a lancet which was given to him by Brahma to be used in emergencies, and which was infallible). Seeing it, the Gods panicked and cried aloud in distress.

The 'Shakti', when shot, resembled a dart or a streak of thunderbolt as it hit brother Laxman. The latter fainted.

Surdas says that the brave Lord of Kaushal (Sri Ram) became utterly distressed, dismayed and anguished when he saw this Shakti strike at Laxman with all its force. Tears rolled down his eyes in streams or like a water-fall (164).

[Note :- All of Laxman's boast of verse no. 163 blew in thin air, as it were. This was the reason why Sri Ram laughed at his daring talk in line no. 5 of that verse. One empathises with Sri Ram at this juncture—he faces a formidable enemy, his army of monkeys is no match with the well trained and veteran demon army, he did not even have the benefit of a war chariot, and then this has happened. He has lost his dear brother and comrade-in-arm even at the beginning of the war when all his arch enemies were still alive. Sri Ram's weeping and distress is understandable notwithstanding the fact that he was the supreme, omniscient, omnipotent, Lord incarnate, and such behaviour does not behooove his stature. But all this was a part of the larger drama that he had to enact as part of his maverick but divine sport which he wished to play as a human being. See the following verses.

This Laxman's 'fainting episode' also teaches us a lesson—Laxman had boasted, but he fell to a single arrow shot by Meghanad. This teaches us never to boast of anything and instead be humble and submit oneself to the potent, powers, prowess, majesty and glory of the Lord, and rely only upon him in order to actually achieve real glory in this world.]

लक्ष्मण की मूर्छा पर राम का दुख

[165]

निरखि मुख राघव धरत न धीर ।
 भए अति अरुन, बिसाल कमल—दल—लोचन मोचत नीर ॥
 बारह बरष नींद है साधी, तातैं बिकल सरीर ।
 बोलत नहीं मौन कहा साध्यौ, बिपति—बँटावन बीर ॥
 दसरथ—मार, हरन सीता कौ, रन बैरिनि की भीर ।
 दुजौ 'सूर' सुमित्रा—सुत बिनु, कौन धरावै धीर ?

lakṣmaṇa kī mūrchā para rāma kā dukha

(165)

nirakhi mukha rāghava dharata na dhīra.
 bha'e ati aruna, bisāla kamala-dala-lōcana mōcata nīra..
 bāraha baraṣa nīnda hai sādhi, tātaiṁ bikala sarīra.
 bōlata nahīṁ mauna kahā sādhyau, bipati-bamṭāvana bīra..
 dasaratha-māra, harana sītā kau, rana bairini kī bhīra.
 dujau 'sūra' sumitrā-suta binu, kauna dharāvai dhīra?

Sri Ram Grieves when Laxman Fainted

165. Raghav (Sri Ram) was so extremely sad and grieved at Laxman's fainting that he could not be consoled. He could not gather sufficient courage, have sufficient patience, forbearance and fortitude when he saw the face of his unconscious brother (lying on the ground in the battle-field). His (Sri Ram's) large lotus-like eyes became red with crying, and tears rolled down in unbroken streams from them.

He lamented and grieved woefully, 'Oh brother, you haven't slept for the last 12 years, so are you overcome with sleep? (Has this lack of sleep made you unconscious due to fatigue of war and you are feeling unfit to fight anymore; have you become weary of the exertion of war?)

Oh my dear brave and valiant brother who has shared my pains, consternations, misfortunes, miseries, troubles and tribulations shoulder to shoulder. Why are you keeping quiet, why don't you speak? Alas! Dashrath (my father) has died, Sita has been stolen, there is a huge crowd of enemy facing me in the battle-field—in such horrible circumstances, who is brave and courageous enough other than the son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman) to give me courage and strength, to lend me encouragement and assurance? (I

am feeling completely crestfallen, utterly helpless and hapless with you knocked down in the battle-field. What will I do now?) (165).

[166]

अब हौं कौन मुख हेरौं ?
 रिपु—सैना—समूह—जल उमड़्यौ, काहि संग लै फेरौं ?
 दुख—समुद्र जिहि वार—पार नहिं, तामैं नाव चलाई ।
 केवट थक्यौ, रही अधबीचहिं, कौन आपदा आई ?
 नाहीं भरत, सत्रुघन सुन्दर, जिन सौं चित्त लगायौ ।
 बीचहिं भई और—की—औरै, भयौ सत्रु कौ भायौ ॥
 मैं निज प्रान तजौंगौ, सुनि कपि, तजिहि जानकी सुनि कै ।
 द्वै है कहा बिभीषन की गति, यहै सोच जिय गुनि के ॥
 बार—बार सिर लै लछिमन कौ, निरखि गोद पर राखैं ।
 ‘सूरदास’ प्रभु दीन बचन यौ, हनूमान सौं भाषैं ॥

(166)

aba haum̐ kauna mukha hēraum̐?
 ripu-sainā-samūha-jala umaryau, kāhi saṅga lai phēraum̐?
 dukha-samudrajihi vāra-pāra nahim̐, tāmair̐ nāva calā'ī.
 kēvaṭa thakyau, rahī adhabīcahim̐, kauna āpadā ā'ī?
 nāhīm̐ bharata, satrughana sundara, jina saum̐ citta lagāyau.
 bīcahim̐ bha'ī aura-kī-aurai, bhayau satru kau bhāyau..
 mair̐ nija prāna tajaungau, suni kapi, tajihi jānakī suni kai.
 hvai hai kahā bibhīṣana kī gati, yahai sōca jiya guni kē..
 bāra-bāra sira lai lachimana kau, nirakhi gōda para rākhaim̐.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu dīna bacana yaur̐, hanūmāna saum̐ bhāṣaim̐..

166. (Grieving and lamenting gravely for Laxman, Sri Ram woefully wails and expresses his anguish and regrets—) ‘To whom should I turn to for solace and succour now? The army of the enemy is arriving in droves like water of a rising flood (or a tidal wave or a dooms-day deluge); whom should I take along to reverse it (or turn it back before it sweeps me off)? I had put my boat in the endless ocean of miseries and misfortunes in order to try to take it across, but to my dismay, my boatman (called a ‘Kewat’, here referring to Laxman) has become weary and tired midstream; my boat remained where it was (i.e. midstream)! From where has this unwarranted and unforeseen and unimagined trouble come to torment me now?

Neither is Bharat nor the handsome Shatrughan (Ram’s other two brothers), on whom I had placed my confidence, here. I am all alone. All of a sudden, the tide has turned against me (when I am all alone and virtually marooned), and the circumstances seem to have become favourable for the enemy.

Listen Kapi (Hanuman), I shall also lay down my life, and when Janki (Sita) hears it, she will also die. But what will be the fate of Vibhishan (who has taken side with me, and whom I have anointed on the throne of Lanka)? This thought alone provokes intense

worry, distress and dismay in my mind.’ [I have anointed him as the king of Lanka, and if I die now, what will happen to Vibhishan? I would not be able to keep my words of honour given to him, and this alone is such an ignominious thing that it burns me like hell. This failure to honour my words given to Vibhishan who had staked his entire future with me is giving me greater pain than the actual dying.]

Surdas says that Lord repeatedly glances at the face of Laxman and lifts it on to his lap (as he sat down on the ground besides the body of the unconscious Laxman). He said the above words full of remorse and dejection to Hanuman (as he sat down with fainted Laxman, weeping and lamenting woefully) (166).

[Note:-This is a beautiful verse to show the greatness, generosity, benevolence and magnanimity of Sri Ram’s character. He wasn’t worried about anything else, not even his own life, as much as his failure to keep his words given to Vibhishan, which was the Lord’s failure to make Vibhishan the king of Lanka. Worse, by dying and losing the war the Lord would fail to restore the dignity of Vibhishan who had come to Sri Ram full of distress but without the least expectation of a reward, except being given an opportunity of being accepted as the Lord’s devotee, follower and subordinate.]

Sri Ram’s inability to amply reward someone who has come to seek refuge at his feet when in distress by removing the cause of his distress and restoring the happiness of the refuge seeker back to him was something that distressed Sri Ram’s heart no end and more than anything else. This one feature in the Lord’s character has made him so endeared in the hearts of his devotees that they offer themselves unconditionally at his divine, august and holy feet, fully convinced that by doing so, their redemption is guaranteed.]

श्रीराम का हनुमानजी से सहायता माँगना एवं आभार व्यक्त करना

[167]

कहाँ गयौ मारुत—पुत्र कुमार ।
 हूँ अनाथ रघुनाथ पुकारे, संकट—मित्र हमार ॥
 इतनी बिपति भरत सुनि पावैं, आवैं साजि बरूथ ।
 कर गहि धनुष जगत कौ जीत, कितक निसाचर जूथ ॥
 नाहिंन और बियौ कोउ समरथ, जाहि पठावौ दूत ।
 को अब है पौरुष दिखरावैं, बिना पौन के पूत ?
 इतनौ बचन स्रवन सुनि हरष्यौ, फूल्यौ अंग न मात ॥
 प्रभु—प्रताप रिपु के बल तोरत करत मुष्टिका—घात ।
 लै—लै चरन—रेनु निज प्रभु की, रिपु कें स्रोनि न्हात ॥
 अहो पुनीत मीत केसरि—सुत! तुम हितबंधु हमारे ।
 जिह्वा रोम—रोम—प्रति नाहीं, पौरुष गनौ तुम्हारे ॥
 जहाँ—जहाँ जिहिं काल सँभारे, तहँ—तहँ त्रास निवारे ।
 ‘सूर’ सहाइ कियौ बन बसि कै, बन—बिपदा—दुख टारे ॥

śrīrāma kā hanumānājī sē sahāyatā māmṅanā ēvaṁ ābhāra vyakta karanā

(167)

kahāṃ gayau māruta-putra kumāra.
 hvai anātha raghunātha pukārē, saṅkaṭa-mitra hamāra..
 itanī bipati bharata suni pāvaiṃ, āvaiṃ sāji barūtha.
 kara gahi dhanuṣa jagata kauṃ jīta, kitaka nisācara jūtha..
 nāhinna aura biyau kō'u samaratha, jāhi paṭhāvaum dūta.
 kō aba hai pauruṣa dikharāvai, binā pauna kē pūta?
 itanau bacana sravana suni haraṣyau, phūlyau aṅga na māta..
 prabhu-pratāpa ripu kē bala tōrata karata muṣṭikā-ghāta.
 lai-lai carana-rēnu nija prabhu kī, ripu kēm srōnita nhāta..
 ahō punīta mīta kēsari-suta! tuma hitabandhu hamārē.
 jihvā rōma-rōma-prati nāhīm, pauruṣa ganaum tumhārē..
 jahāṃ jahāṃ jihīm kāla sambhārē, tahāṃ tahāṃ trāsa nivārē.
 'sūra' sahā'i kiyaṃ bana basi kai, bana-bipadā-dukha ṭārē..

Sri Ram asks Hanuman for Help & Praises Him

167. Raghunath (Sri Ram) felt very helpless and hapless, consternated and dismayed when he called out in distress—‘Where has the son of the Wind-God (i.e. Hanuman) gone? He is my friend in distress. If Bharat gets a whiff of my present predicament, he will prepare an army and come here immediately. He has the ability to conquer the whole world single handedly with a bow in his hand; what does this demon horde count for him? There is no one else whom I can send as my messenger (to Ayodhya). Who can show his potential valour at this crucial time except the son of the Wind-God?’

Hearing these distressful words (of Sri Ram), he (Hanuman) felt extremely overjoyed and privileged. He couldn't contain his happiness.

[Though on the face it looks so bad that Hanuman should feel happy when the Lord is distressed, but this joy was at the thought that the Lord had chosen him over all other members of the army, including his chief minister Sugriv, and had remembered him when he needed someone urgently to help him when in trouble. It made Hanuman so happy that the Lord had such faith and conviction in his abilities and potent. The Lord could have chosen someone else also, but that he chose to remember Hanuman in times of distress showed how much Hanuman was close to the Lord's heart and the great degree of confidence the Lord had in him.]

Infused with renewed courage (at being chosen and remembered by the Lord), impelled by the desire to prove his worth and mettle as a faithful servant of the Lord, having a firm faith in the Lord's divine abilities, and emboldened by the glory of Sri Ram, he (Hanuman) started slamming the enemy army, viciously and mercilessly punching, pounding and thrashing the enemy forces with his clenched fists. Again and again, he put the dust of the feet of the Lord to his head and bathed (drenched, soaked) himself with the blood of the enemy.

[That is, he started crushing the enemy forces ruthlessly, fiercely, ferociously and uncompromisingly, showing no mercy to them and pounding them to pulp viciously and relentlessly. As a result, blood drenched his body; it dripped from it as if he has taken a bath in blood. He repeatedly came to Sri Ram, touched his feet, smeared the holy dust of his feet on his body and rushed back again to kill more demons. Hanuman's coming and

going repeatedly showed that he wished to re-assure the Lord that he should not feel distressed so much, and though Laxman has been knocked out, he, Hanuman, is still there. And as long as Hanuman is alive, the Lord has not lost the war! Another reason for his repeatedly coming and smearing his body by the dust of the Lord's feet is to get a fresh dose of divine intercession and blessing.]

Sri Ram watched all his (Hanuman's) feat which were stupendous, unparalleled, magnificent and fascinating to the extreme. The Lord exclaimed—'Ah son of Kesari! You are our true and real friend.

[The phrase signifies Sri Ram's close relationship with Hanuman. The word 'Puneet' means pure, uncorrupt, holy, auspicious. Here it means that Hanuman was a selfless devotee, a loyal subordinate and a true friend of Sri Ram, a friend during need who lives up to his expectations.]

You are our well-wishing brother¹. I do not have a tongue in each of my hairs that I can sufficiently count your manliness, glories, virtues and great deeds. I cannot describe your valour, and the feeling of gratitude and the obligation that I feel towards you. Wherever, whenever, we (Sri Ram and Laxman) remembered (or invoked, summoned, called) you, you removed our fears immediately.'

Surdas says that Sri Ram expressed his indebtedness and gratitude to Hanuman by saying, 'You stayed in the forest to help us to overcome our troubles and tribulations that had arisen for us due to destiny.' (167).

[Note:-¹The plural pronoun 'our' indicates the obligation that the family members of Sri Ram had towards Hanuman. Indeed, if the story of Sri Ram's life is read, a single individual who had obliged Sri Ram more than anyone else was Hanuman. See also the reference to the episode of Mahiravana in verse no. 160. Sri Ram has therefore expressed his deep sense of gratitude and obligation to Hanuman. The story of Ramayana would have been completely different had it not been for the son of the Wind-God coming to the aid of the Lord.]

हनुमान का श्रीराम को उत्तर—राग मारू

[168]

रघुपति! मन संदेह न कीजै ।
 मो देखत लछिमन क्यों मरिहैं, मोकों आज्ञा दीजै ॥
 कहौ तौ सूरज उगन देउँ नहिं, दिसि—दिसि बाढ़ै ताम ।
 कहौ तौ गन समेत ग्रसि खाऊँ, जमपुर जाइ न, राम!
 कहौ तौ कालहि खंड—खंड करि, टूक—टूक करि काटौ ।
 कहौ तौ मृत्युहि मारि डारि कै, खोदि पतालहि पाटौ ॥
 कहौ तौ चन्द्रहि लै अकास तैं, लछिमन मुखहिं निचोरौ ।
 कहौ तौ पैठि सुधा के सागर, जल समस्त मैं घोरौ ॥
 श्रीरघुबर! मोसौ जन जाके, ताहि कहा सँकराई ?
 'सूरदास मिथ्या नहिं भाषत, मोहि रघुनाथ—दुहाई ॥

hanumāna kā śrīrāma kō uttara-rāga mārū

(168)

raghupati! mana sandēha na kijai.
 mō dēkhata lachimana kyaum̐ marihaim̐, mōkaum̐ ājñā dijai..
 kahau tau sūraja ugana dē'um̐ nahim̐, disi-disi bārhai tāma.
 kahau tau gana samēta grsi khā'um̐, jamapura jā'i na, rāma!
 kahau tau kālahi khaṇḍa-khaṇḍa kari, ṭūka-ṭūka kari kāṭaum̐.
 kahau tau mṛtyuhi māri ḍāri kai, khōdi patālahi pāṭaum̐..
 kahau tau candrahim̐ lai akāsa taim̐, lachimana mukhahim̐ nicōraum̐..
 kahau tau paiṭhi sudhā kē sāgara, jala samasta maim̐ ghōraum̐..
 śrīraghubara! mōsau jana jākē, tāhi kahā sam̐karā'ī?
 'sūradāsa mithyā nahim̐ bhāṣata, mōhi raghunātha-duhā'ī..

Hanuman's Reply to Sri Ram—Raag Maaru

168. (Hanuman reassured Sri Ram and revived his self confidence by saying—) ‘Oh Raghupati! Don’t have any doubts in your mind. How can Laxman ever die while I am watching (or I am here)? Give me your orders. If you say, I will not allow the sun to rise so that darkness increases in all the directions day-by-day (i.e. there will be constant night). Or Sri Ram, if you say, why shouldn’t I go to the abode of Yam (the death-God) and put him in my mouth along with his attendants. If you say, I can cut ‘Kaal’ (time of death) itself into pieces, or kill the ‘death’ itself and burry it in the grave dug out in the ground. If you say, I will bring the moon down from the sky and squeeze the nectar (the elixir of eternity said to be stored in the moon by the Gods) out of it, and pour it in the mouth of Laxman. Or if you say, I can go to the nether world and bring the elixir of life (stored there) and mix it with the water of the ocean. Oh Sri Raghubir! One who has a servant or subordinate like me, where is there a chance for any kind of trouble to bother him? Why are you so distressed and dismayed?’

Surdas says that he (i.e. Hanuman) does not speak a lie, for he is speaking in the name of Raghunath.

[This line can also be read as follows—Surdas says that ‘I do not speak a lie; I speak on oath in the name of Raghupati Sri Ram that what Hanuman said is true and he can actually do it rather than being just boastful.’ Surdas had to insert this line because he thought that what Hanuman has said just now appears to be a little too far fetched and impractical. Any reader will become skeptical and regard Hanuman as being boastful and haughty. So he says that one should not doubt in the ability of Hanuman to actually do what he says, for Surdas is not in the habit of telling lies.] (168).

राम का हनुमान को आदेश

[169]

कह्यौ तब हनुमत सौं स्फुराई ।
 दौनागिरि पर आहि सँजीवनि, बैद सुषेन बताई ॥
 तुरत जाइ लै आउ उहाँ तैं, बिलौब न करि मो भाई !
 ‘सूरदास’ प्रभु—बचन सुनतहीं, हनुमत चलयौ अतुराई ॥

rāma kā hanumāna kō ādēśa

(169)

kahyau taba hanumata saurṁ raghurā'ī.
daunāgiri para āhi saṁjīvani, baida suṣēna batā'ī..
turata jā'i lai ā'u uhām' tairṁ, bilam̐ba na kari mō bhā'ī!
'sūradāsa' prabhu-bacana sunatahīṁ, hanumata calyau aturā'ī..

Sri Ram's Orders for Hanuman

169. Then Raghuraj (Sri Ram; the king in Raghu's race) said to Hanuman, 'Sushen, who is a doctor of herbal medicines, has told me that the root of the herb called 'Sanjivani' can revive an unconscious man, and it is to be found on a mountain called 'Dauna Giri' (also known as the Dronachal Mountain located in the north of the mainland of India, somewhere in the Himalyan range).

My brother, don't delay any longer. Go and bring it forthwith from there (i.e. from the Himalayas).'

Surdas says that as soon as Hanuman heard the Lord's words, he immediately went ahead most eagerly to accomplish the mission (169).

हनुमान का भरत एवं माताओं से मिलाप

[170]

दौनागिरि हनुमान सिधायौ ।
संजीवनि कौ भेद न पायौ, तब सब सैल उठायौ ॥
चितै रह्यौ तब भरत देखि कै, अवधपुरी जब आयौ ।
मन मैं जानि उपद्रव भारी, बान अकास चलायौ ॥
राम—राम यह कहत पवन—सुत, भरत निकट तब आयौ ।
पूछ्यौ 'सूर', कौन है, कहि तू, हनुमत नाम सुनायौ ॥

hanumāna kā bharata ēvaṁ mātā'ōṁ sē milāpa

(170)

daunāgiri hanumāna sidhāyau.
saṁjīvani kau bhēda na pāyau, taba saba saila uṭhāyau..
citai rahyau taba bharata dēkhi kai, avadhapurī jaba āyau.
mana mairṁ jāni upadrava bhārī, bāna akāsa calāyau..
rāma-rāma yaha kahata pavana-suta, bharata nikaṭa taba āyau.
pūchyau 'sūra', kauna hai, kahi tū, hanumata nāma sunāyau..

Hanuman Meets Bharat & the Mothers

170. Hanuman went to Mt. Dronachal. But when he could not identify the herb called Sanjivani, he lifted (scooped up) the entire mountain. While he was on his way back (to Lanka), he flew over Ayodhya. Bharat was amazed at the spectacle (of a huge mountain glowing in the light of glittering herbs being carried aloft by a huge creature flying without wings in the sky; for him it might have been an 'UFO' or an 'unidentified fling object' in modern parlance), and fearing that some great trouble was in the offing, he shot an arrow towards the sky (to shoot it down).

Exclaiming 'Ram, Ram', the son of the Wind-God arrived at Bharat's place. [Actually, when Bharat's arrow struck him, Hanuman fell down unconscious on the ground, and being always focused on remembering the Lord's divine and holy name, he uttered it as he fell.]

The brave one (i.e. Bharat) asked him, 'Who are you, tell me.' Then Hanuman told him his name (i.e. he introduced himself as a messenger of Sri Ram, and told Bharat the rest of the story) (170).

[171]

कहौ कपि! रघुपति कौ संदेस ।
 कुसल बंधु लछिमन, बैदेही, श्रीपति सकल—नरेस ॥
 जनि पूछौ तुम कुसल नाथ की, सुनौ भरत बलबीर ।
 बिलख—बदन, दुख भरे सिया कें, हैं जलनिधि के तीर ॥
 बन मैं बसत, निसाचर छल करि, हरी सिया मम मात ।
 ता कारन लछिमन सर लाग्यौ, भए राम बिनु भ्रात ॥
 यह सुनि कौसिल्या सिर ढोख्यौ, सबनि पुहुमि तन जोयौ ।
 त्राहि—त्राहि कहि, पुत्र—पुत्र कहि, मातु सुमित्रा रोयौ ॥
 धन्य सुपुत्र पिता—पन राख्यौ, धनि सुबधू कुल—लाज ।
 सेवक धन्य अंत अवसर जो आवै प्रभु के काज ॥
 पुनि धरि धीर कह्यौ, धनि लछिमन, राम—काज जो आवै ।
 'सूर' जियै तौ जग जस पावै, मरि सुरलोक सिधावै ॥

(171)

kahau kapi! raghupati kau sandēsa.
 kusala bandhu lachimana, baidēhī, śrīpati sakala-narēsa..
 jani pūchau tuma kusala nātha kī, sunau bharata balabīra.
 bilakha-badana, dukha bhare siyā kēm, haim jalanidhi kē tīra..
 bana maim basata, nisācara chala kari, harī siyā mama mātā.
 tā kārana lachimana sara lāgyau, bha'ē rāma binu bhrāta..
 yaha suni kausilyā sira ḍhōryau, sabani puhumi tana jōyau.
 trāhi-trāhi kahi, putra-putra kahi, mātu sumitrā rōyau..
 dhan'ya suputra pitā-pana rākhyau, dhani subadhū kula-lāja.
 sēvaka dhan'ya anta avasara jō āvai prabhu kē kāja..
 puni dhari dhīra kahyau, dhani lachimana, rāma-kāja jō āvai.

'sūra' jiyai tau jaga jasa pāvai, mari suralōka sidhāvai..

171. (Bharat asked Hanuman—) 'Say Kapi, what is the message of Raghupati (Sri Ram)? Are brother Laxman, Vaidehi (Sita) and Sripati (Sri Ram), who is the Lord of all, alright?'

(Hanuman replied—) 'Listen the most brave and strong Bharat! Do not ask me about the Lord's well-being. He is under great distress, full of sorrows of separation from Sita, and is presently camping on the shores of the ocean. Earlier, while he lived in the forest (at the Dandak-Van), the demon (Ravana) had deceitfully abducted my mother Sita. It is for that cause (in an attempt to retrieve her from that demon) that Laxman has been shot by an arrow, and Sri Ram has (apparently) lost his brother.'

Hearing this bad and sad news, mother Kaushalya's head limped to one side (i.e. she fainted). Everyone present was dazed, and they stared at the ground, shocked and stunned.

Mother Sumitra (Laxman's mother) wailed inconsolably and lamented—'Alas; Alas! Have mercy on me oh Gods! Oh son, oh my son!' After some moments, she recovered her composure and said, 'The worthy son (Sri Ram) is honourable, praiseworthy and laudable because he kept the words of his father. The daughter-in-law (Sita) is also praiseworthy that she has kept the honour of the clan (by not only accompanying the Lord to the forest like a loyal wife but has managed to maintain her purity and dignity by not succumbing the overtures of the cruel demon to escape harsh punishment). That servant (here referring to Laxman, her son) is also worthy of equal praise that he has served his Lord to the best of his ability even till the end (i.e. before dying in the battle-field for the Lord's cause).'

Then she (Sumitra, Laxman's mother) gathered courage and retrieved her composure and patience. She said in a general way—'Laxman is laudable and praiseworthy that he was of some use in Sri Ram's work. If that brave one survives the war (i.e. he lives), he shall get great fame in the world. And, on the contrary, if he dies, he shall go straight to the abode of Gods in heaven. [Hence, I do not have any regret for him; I do not lament or grieve for him; I do not feel contrite or heart-broken at my son dying or suffering because he had shared the misfortunes that had befallen Sri Ram. Instead, I think that he is the most privileged one, the most honourable one, and the most fortunate one because he had the opportunity to serve the great Lord Sri Ram selflessly, even laying down his own life in the service of the Lord. What more can a mother expect from her son—is it not excellent that instead of dying one day in the normal course of life when one becomes old and infirm, a son dies serving the Lord?] (171).

[172]

धनि जननी, जो सुभटहि जावै ।
 भीर परै रिपु कौ दल दलि—मलि, कौतुक करि दिखरावै ॥
 कौसिल्या सौ कहति सुमित्रा, जनि स्वामिनि दुख पावै ।
 लछिमन जनि हौं भई सपूती, राम—काज जो आवै ॥
 जीवै तौ सुख बिलसै जग मै, कीरति लोकनि गावै ।
 मरै तौ मंडल भेदि भानु कौ, सुरपुर जाइ बसावै ॥

लोह गहँ लालच करि जिय कौ, औरौ सुभट लजावै ।
‘सूरदास’ प्रभु जीति सत्रु कौ, कुसल—छेम घर आवै ॥

(172)

dhani janani, jō subhaṭahi jāvai.
bhīra paraiṁ ripu kau dala dali-mali, kautuka kari dikharāvai..
kausilyā saum kahati sumitrā, jani svāmini dukha pāvai.
lachimana jani haum bha'i sapūti, rāma-kāja jō āvai..
jīvai tau sukha bilasai jaga maiṁ, kīrati lōkani gāvai.
marai tau maṇḍala bhēdi bhānu kau, surapura jā'i basāvai..
lōha gahaiṁ lālaca kari jiya kau, aurau subhaṭa lajāvai.
'sūradāsa' prabhu jīti satru kaum, kusala-chēma ghara āvai..

172. 'A mother who gives birth to such a (valiant, brave, courageous, strong, righteous, noble and famous) son (as Sri Ram)—who can grind and crush the enemy hordes during adverse times almost playfully as this son of yours—is indeed noble, honorable and praise worthy', Sumitra consoled and comforted Kaushalya with these words. She further said, 'I feel fulfilled as a mother by giving birth to Laxman if he can be of some use and help to Sri Ram. If he lives, he will enjoy the comforts, joys and pleasures of this world, and all the three worlds will describe his glories and achievements. And should he die, he will pierce through the solar system to take abode beyond it in the divine abode of the heaven. Those he fear for their lives even while holding their arms, they put to shame even other warriors. I only wish now that the Lord of Surdas (i.e. Ram) wins his enemy and comes back home hale and hearty' (172).

[173]

सुनौ कपि, कौसिल्या की बात ।
इहिं पुर जनि आवहिं मम बत्सल, बिनु लछिमन लघु भ्रात ॥
छाँड़्यौ राज—काज, माता—हित, तव चरननि चित लाइ ।
ताहि बिमुख जीवन धिक रघुपति, कहियौ कपि समुझाइ ॥
लछिमन सहित कुसल बैदेही, आनि राज पुर कीजै ।
नातरु 'सूर' सुमित्रा—सुत पर, वारि अपुनपौ दीजै ॥

(173)

sunau kapi, kausilyā kī bāta.
ihim pura jani āvahiṁ mama batsala, binu lachimana laghu bhrāta..
chāmṛyau rāja-kāja, mātā-hita, tava caranani cita lā'i.
tāhi bimukha jīvana dhika raghupati, kahiyau kapi samujhā'i..
lachimana sahita kusala baidēhī, āni rāja pura kijai.
nātaru 'sūra' sumitrā-suta para, vāri apunapau dījai..

173. Surdas addresses Hanuman and says, 'Listen Kapi (Hanuman) to what Kaushalya has to say to you. She says—'My dear son (Sri Ram) should not come back to this city

(of Ayodhya) without being accompanied by his younger brother Laxman. Laxman had forsaken all the duties and comforts of the kingdom, even the interest and well-being of his own mother (Sumitra), and had instead focused his attention solely in your (Sri Ram's) feet (i.e. had decided to serve you, to follow you to the forest, and had single mindedly served you through all your days of miseries). Therefore, your (Ram's) living would be shameful and ignominious without him (Laxman). So oh Kapi (Hanuman), you should go back and explain this to Sri Ram! Convey my message to him that if it is possible he should come back happily with Laxman and Vaidehi (Sita) by his side and rule over this kingdom (Ayodhya). Otherwise, he should sacrifice himself on (the funeral pyre) of the brave and valiant son of Sumitra (Laxman), and must not return here without him.' (173).

[174]

बिनती कहियौ जाइ पवनसुत, तुम रघुपति के आगैं ।
या पुर जनि आवहु बिनु लछिमन, जननी—लाजनि—लागैं ॥
मारुतसुतहि सँदेस सुमित्रा ऐसैं कहि समुझावै ।
सेवक जूझि परै रन भीतर, ठाकुर तउ घर आवै ॥
जब तैं तुम गवने कानन कौ, भरत भोग सब छाँड़े ।
'सूरदास' प्रभु तुम्हरे दरस बिनु, दुख—समूह उर गाड़े ॥

(174)

binatī kahiyau jā'i pavanasuta, tuma raghupati kē āgaim.
yā pura jani āvahu binu lachimana, janani-lājani-lāgaim..
mārutasutahi samdēsa sumitrā aisaim kahi samujhāvai.
sēvaka jūjhi parai rana bhītara, ṭhākura ta'u ghara āvai..
jaba taim tuma gavanē kānana kaurṁ, bharata bhōga saba chāmṛē.
'sūradāsa' prabhu tumharē darasa binu, dukha-samūha ura gārē..

174. (Mother Kaushalya said—) 'Oh the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman)! Go and tell my prayers (request) to Raghupati (Sri Ram). Tell him not to come back to this city (Ayodhya) without Laxman for the sake of your mother's honour.'

Then Sumitra gave a message to the son of Maaruti (Hanuman) to be delivered to Lord Ram—'A servant, subordinate and a loyal warrior might fall in the battle-field while serving his Lord, but inspite of that the Lord comes home. [So there is no harm or impropriety in Sri Ram coming back even if Laxman dies in the war.] Ever since you (Sri Ram) have gone to exile in the forest, Bharat has also abandoned all comforts and pleasures¹. Oh the Lord of Surdas! Without your divine sight, the sorrows and miseries are becoming more and more dense and profound (i.e. intolerable for us to bear)².

[So you must come back even if Laxman dies! Say, what would have to Bharat if you do not come? Now only Laxman is lost, but if you do not come back even Bharat would die. Now we have lost only one son, but if you fail to return as mother Kaushalya advises, then the whole clan would be wiped out one by one. That is not at all good and advisable.] (174).

[Note :- ¹Sumitra intends to remind Sri Ram that if he does not come back to Ayodhya as instructed by Kaushalya in case Laxman cannot survive, then Bharat too will die and

Shatrughan will follow suit. This will be a most catastrophic disaster for king Raghu's dynasty. At present only Laxman has been lost but the other three brothers still survive to carry forward the lineage of the family, but should Sri Ram obey his mother and decide not to come in the eventuality of Laxman's death, the entire clan would be wiped out. So this is not at all advisable.

We find that Sumitra, the mother of Laxman has proved to be the wisest of the three chief queens of Dashrath. Kaushalya has proved that she loved Ram not more than she loved all the other brothers, while Sumitra also proves that she sees no distinction between Sri Ram and Laxman, for both are equal for her. The only queen who stands out as being selfish and greedy is Kaikeyi because she is the one who was instrumental in Ram's exile so that her son Bharat could ascend the throne. But one must not overlook the fact that Bharat had resolved not to accept the crown, and had even gone to the forest to try persuade the Lord to come back. In the eventuality that the Lord refused to oblige him because the main purpose of Vishnu's incarnation was to eliminate the evil demon race from the surface of the earth, Bharat had renounced all pleasures and comforts of a prince-regent and had instead decided to live a life of austerity and penance at a place away from the city. He brought back Lord Ram's footwear from the forest, and had enthroned them on the royal throne as a token of the Lord's presence. He worked as an obedient servant of the King in his absence. This act of Bharat had endeared him to the masses of Ayodhya and renowned as an upholder of Dharma or righteousness, propriety and probity.

²The last line of this verse can be read as follows—Surdas pleads with Sri Ram and says 'oh Lord, without your Darshan or divine view, the density and gravity of sorrows keep on increasing for the people of Ayodhya. So do not delay in coming back home as soon as the task at hand is finished.']

हनुमान की अयोध्या से बिदाई

[175]

पवन—पुत्र बोल्यौ सतिभाइ ।
जाति सिराति राति बातनि मैं, सुनौ भरत! चित लाइ ॥
श्रीरघुनाथ सँजीवनि कारन, मोकौं इहाँ पठायौ ।
भयौ अकाज, अर्धनिसि बीती, लछिमन—काज नसायौ ॥
स्यौ परबत सर बैठि पवनसुत! हौं प्रभु पै पहुँचाऊँ ।
'सूरदास' प्रभु—पाँवरि मम सिर, इहिं बल भरत कहाऊँ ॥

hanumāna kī ayōdhyā sē bidā'ī

(175)

pavana-putra bōlyau satibhā'i.
jāti sirāti rāti bātani maim, sunau bharata! cita lā'i..
śrīraghunātha saṁjīvani kārana, mōkauṁ ihām̐ paṭhāyau.
bhayau akāja, ardhanisi bīṭī, lachimana-kāja nasāyau..
syaum̐ parabata sara baiṭhi pavanasuta! haum̐ prabhu pai pahum̐cā'ūm̐.
'sūradāsa' prabhu-pāṁvari mama sira, ihiṁ bala bharata kahā'ūm̐..

Hanuman's Departure from Ayodhya

175. The son of the Wind-God, Hanuman, said with sincere urgency and truthfulness, 'Listen Bharat, listen carefully. Night is passing by in mere talk. Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram) has sent me here for bringing the 'Sanjivani' herb. It is already past midnight, and if I do not reach before the assigned time, the work of reviving Laxman can not be accomplished successfully.'

Bharat told him, 'Oh son of the Wind-God! Sit on my arrow with your mountain and I will instantly get you to the Lord. The sandals (footwear) of Surdas' Lord (i.e. Sri Ram) is on my head (i.e. it protects me, honours me and empowers me), and that is why (or relying on its strength), I am called 'Bharat' (literally, one who sustains the world, or one who can bear the burden of the world).' (175).

हनुमान वापस लङ्का में—राग सारंग

[176]

हनूमान संजीवनि ल्यायौ ।
महाराज रघुबीर धीर कौं हाथ जोरि सिर नायौ ॥
परबत आनि धर्यौ सागर—तट, भरत—सँदेस सुनायौ ।
'सूर' सँजीवनि दै लछिमन कौं मूर्छित फेरि जगायौ ॥

hanumāna vāpasa laṅkā mēm-rāga sārāṅga

(176)

hanūmāna sanjīvani lyāyau.
mahārāja raghubīra dhīra kauṁ hātha jōri sira nāyau..
parabata āni dharyau sāgara-taṭa, bharata-sam̐dēsa sunāyau.
'sūra' sanjīvani dai lachimana kauṁ mūrchita phēri jagāyau..

Hanuman back in Lanka—Raag Saarang

176. Hanuman brought the 'Sanjivani' herb and bowed his head with folded hands in front of the great king Raghubir who was patient, courageous, fortitudinous and steadfast. He brought and put the (Dronachal) mountain by the side of the ocean and conveyed the message which Bharat had given (for Sri Ram).

Surdas says that after that, the 'Sanjivani' was administered to Laxman and he was brought back to consciousness (literally, 'woken up again'S) from his unconscious state (176).

हनुमान की राम द्वारा प्रसंशा—राग मारू

[177]

श्रीमुख आपुन करत बड़ाई ।

तूँ कपि आज भरथ की ठाहर, जिहिं मिलि बिपति बटाई ॥
 लछिमन हेत मूरि लै आयौ, लाँघत अगनित घाटी ।
 दसहूँ दिसा भयौ हम कारन बौछाहर की टाटी ॥
 तूँ सेवक, स्वामी तोही बल, तो तजि और न मेरै ।
 निधरक भए, मिटी दुचिताई, सोवत पहरै तेरै ॥
 इतनौ सुनत दौरि पद टेके अरु मन—ही—मन फूल्यौ ।
 पिता मरन कौ दुःख हमारौ तोही ते सब भूल्यौ ॥
 जु कछु करीसु प्रताप तुम्हारै, हौं को करिबे लायक ।
 'सूर' सेवकहि इती बड़ाई, तुम त्रिभुवन के नायक ॥

hanumāna kī rāma dvārā prasanśā-rāga mārū

(177)

śrīmukha āpuna karata baṛā'ī.
 tūm' kapi āja bharatha kī ṭhāhara, jihim mili bipati baṭā'ī..
 lachimana hēta mūri lai āyau, lām'ghata aganita ghāṭī.
 dasahūm' disā bhayau hama kārana bauchāhara kī ṭāṭī..
 tūm' sēvaka, svāmī tōhī bala, tō taji aura na mērai.
 nidharaka bha'e, miṭī ducitā'ī, sōvata paharaim tērai..
 itanaum sunata dauri pada ṭēkē aru mana-hī-mana phūlyau.
 pitā marana kau duḥkha hamārau tōhī tē saba bhūlyau..
 ju kachu karīsu pratāpa tumhāraim, haum kō karibē lāyaka.
 'sūra' sēvakahi itī baṛā'ī, tuma tribhuvana kē nāyaka..

Sri Ram Lauds Hanuman—Raag Maarū

177. The Lord praised Hanuman liberally with his own mouth (i.e. personally) by saying—'Oh Kapi! For me you are similar to Bharat at this moment, for you have shared my miseries and troubles (like he would have done had he been with me). You have brought the root (herb) for the sake of Laxman, leaping across numerous valleys. For us, you have become a shade or a protective shield against the hail of troubles and misfortunes that has been showered upon us, or have rained upon us from all the ten direction (from all the sides). You are very dear to us, and it is because of you and your strength that I have become a 'Lord'. Besides you, I do not have anyone whom I can call 'mine' in these testing times. Under your protection (literally, your guard), we (myself and Laxman) sleep without any fears or worries of any kind.'

As soon as he heard it, he (Hanuman) rushed forward and put his head (in humility and gratitude) at the Lord's feet; he felt extremely exhilarated and fulfilled in his heart. But the Lord continued to heap praises on him, saying, 'It is because of you that we (myself and Laxman) have forgotten the agony of the death of our father.' (See also verse no. 77/4 of Sundar Kand where Sita similarly addresses Hanuman as her 'father' and 'brother').

Surdas says that Hanuman responded by saying, 'Whatever I've done is due to your own glory and strength. [That is, please do not praise me so lavishly, as whatever I could do was not on my own abilities but was due to your blessings and mystical powers. I simply relied on them whenever I did anything. So, the credit should go to your divine powers and not to me.]

Otherwise, what ability or potential do I have as an individual. You are the Lord of the three worlds (called the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds), but still you are so great and magnanimous, graceful and kind that you praise a humble being as like me so much. I am sincerely and tremendously obliged and grateful to you for it.' (177).

युद्ध के दूसरे चरण का आरम्भ
राग टोड़ी

[178]

दूसरें कर बान न लैहैं ।
सुनि सुग्रीव! प्रतिज्ञा मेरी, एकहिं बान असुर सब हैहैं ॥
सिव—पूजा जिहिं भाँति करी है, सोइ पद्धति परतच्छ दिखैहैं ।
दैत्य प्रहारि पाप—फल—प्रेरित, सिर—माला सिव—सीस चढ़ैहैं ॥
मनौ तूल—गन परत अग्नि—मुख, जारि जड़नि जम—पंथ पटैहैं ।
करिहैं नाहिं बिलंब कछू अब, उठि रावन सन्मुख है धैहैं ॥
इमि दमि दुष्ट देव—द्विज मोचन, लंक बिभीषन, तुम कौं दैहैं ।
लछिमन, सिया समैत 'सूर' कपि, सब सुख सहित अजोद्ध्या जैहैं ॥

yud'dha kē dūsarē caraṇa kā ārambha
rāga ṭōṛī

(178)

dūsarēṁ kara bāna na laihaum̃.
suni sugrīva! pratijñā mēṛī, ēkahim̃ bāna asura saba haihaum̃..
siva-pūjā jihim̃ bhām̃ti karī hai, sō'i pad'dhati parataccha dikhaihaum̃.
daitya prahāri pāpa-phala-prērita, sira-mālā siva-sīsa caṛhaihaum̃..
manau tūla-gana parata agini-mukha, jāri jaṛani jama-pantha paṭhaihaum̃.
karihaum̃ nāhim̃ bilamba kachū aba, uṭhi rāvana sanmukha hvai dhaihaum̃..
imi dami duṣṭa dēva-dvija mōcana, laṅka bibhīṣana, tuma kauṁ daihaum̃.
lachimana, siyā samaita 'sūra' kapi, saba sukha sahita ajōdhyā jaihaum̃..

The 2nd Phase of War Starts
Raag Todhi

178. (Sri Ram said to Sugriv—) 'I will not take a second arrow in my hand. Listen Sugriv. It is my vow that I shall destroy all the demons with a single arrow. The way he (Ravana) had worshipped Lord Shiva (by offering his heads to him one by one), I shall

witness it first hand today (when my arrow will sever his head one by one and they are symbolically offered to Lord Shiva as they fall to the ground). By killing all the blood thirsty demons, I will offer a garland of their heads to Lord Shiva. Even as bundles/bales of cotton are engulfed by fire (or literally fall into the mouth of fire to get themselves annihilated or reduced to ashes), I shall burn these hordes of wicked, evil, pervert, crass and vile fellows and send them to the abode of Yam (i.e. to hell). Now I shall not delay even for a moment and shall rush to face Ravana head-on. In this way, I shall crush the wicked fellow for the sake (benefit) of Gods and Brahmins (representing the pious, holy, righteous, learned and noble people of the world whom the demons had been tormenting for long).

And, Vibhishan, I shall give Lanka to you¹. After that, I shall happily go back to Ayodhya along with Laxman, Sita and the brave monkeys.' (178).

[Note:-¹This was a war-time strategic statement by Sri Ram to ensure Vibhishan's loyalty in the thick of battle. He removed any doubts from Vibhishan's mind as to whether or not he will get the throne of Lanka after Ravana has been killed. He might have feared and doubted that, for having once won the war as a conqueror, Sri Ram might install his brother Laxman or Hanuman or anyone else for that matter as his protégé on the throne of Lanka instead of Vibhishan. Given the might of the Lord's arms, Vibhishan would not be in a position to oppose or resist, for he feared that once his strong clan is eliminated the Lord could eliminate him if he so wished. The fear was not out of place, because Vibhishan knew in his heart that he is after all a betrayer, and any prudent conqueror would hold such a man in great contempt. Ram would be justified to believe that Vibhishan could also follow the path of his brothers and uncles and nephew once he is put on the throne of Lanka and has the support of the remaining demon army, and what if he had the temerity to renege on the promise of returning Sita to Ram. Surely then, Vibhishan feared rightly, he would be the next to be killed. Prudence dictated that the conqueror cannot have a selfish man who has even betrayed his own brothers and kin to be allowed to rule in the conquered kingdom.

Now, with this public declaration, Vibhishan had all the more vested interest in seeing Ravana eliminated and Sri Ram winning the war. Keeping aside the spiritual aspects of Vibhishan joining Sri Ram's camp out of devotion for the Lord, it was indeed this traitor which enabled Sri Ram to finally kill Ravana, because it was Vibhishan who had divulged to Sri Ram the secret code which had made Ravana invincible—it was the pot of nectar stored inside his navel. Another arrow shot at this spot by Lord Ram during the final moments of the war had dried up the nectar and Ravana fell down dead. Vibhishan had kept this secret to himself till the very end of the war—couldn't he prevent such a horrendous war and bloodshed by letting this secret out earlier in the war and prevent the horrific consequences? Well, he was cunning and had kept the secret of killing Ravana to himself till the time Sri Ram felt completely helpless and desperate, and needed some help from Vibhishan and looked at him inquisitively. Vibhishan then spilled the beans. Perhaps he did it out of fear—for he felt that if he didn't answer Sri Ram's query about the secret why Ravana is not dying, Sri Ram might have turned his arrow at him and force him to tell the secret, and then when the war ended it was certain that someone would kill him. Perhaps he did not divulge this secret till the last moment to have an upper hand and oblige Sri Ram. It appears that he was subtly telling Sri Ram, 'Look Lord, you have tried your best. All your boast that I will kill Ravana with a single arrow have come to a naught. Now the key to victory is in my hand, and therefore you are obliged enough not to renege on your promise to give me the throne after Ravana's death. If I hadn't told you, you would not have killed Ravana how hard you tried.']

राम रावण युद्ध—राग मारू

[179]

आजु अति कोपे हैं रन राम ।
 ब्रह्मादिक आरूढ़ बिमाननि, देखत हैं संग्राम ॥
 घन—तन दिव्य कवच सजि करि, अरु कर धाख्यौ सारंग ।
 सुचि कर सकल बान सूधे करि, कटि—तट कस्यौ निषंग ॥
 सुरपुर तैं आयौ रथ सजि कै, रघुपति भए सवार ।
 काँपी भूमि, कहा सब हैहै, सुमिरत नाम मुरारि ॥
 छोभित सिंधु, सेष—सिर कंषित, पवन भयौ गति पंग ।
 इंद्र हँस्यौ, हर हिय बिलखान्यौ, जानि बचन कौ भंग ॥
 धर—अंबर, दिसि—बिदिसि, बड़े अति सायक किरन समान ।
 मानौ महाप्रलय के कारन, उदित उभय षट भान ॥
 टूटत धुजा—पताक—छत्र—रथ चाप—चक्र—सिरत्रान ।
 जूझत सुभट, जरत ज्यौँ दव द्रुम, बिनु साखा बिनु पान ॥
 स्त्रोनि—छिंद उछरि आकसहिं, गज—बाजिनि—सिर लागि ।
 मानौ निकरि तरनि—रंघ्रनि तैं, उपजी है अति आगि ॥
 परि कबंध भहराइ रथनि तैं, उठत मनौ झर जागि ।
 फिरत सृगाल सज्यौ सव काटत, चलत सो सिर लै भागि ॥
 रघुपति—रिस पावक प्रचंड अति, सीता स्वास समीर ।
 रावन—कुल अरु कुंभकरन बन सकल सुभट रनधीर ॥
 भए भस्म, कछु बार न लागी, ज्यौँ ज्वाला पट—चीर ।
 'सूरदास' प्रभु आपु—बाहुबल कियौ निमिष मै कीर ॥

rāma rāvaṇa yud'dha-rāga mārū

(179)

āju ati kōpē haiṁ rana rāma.
 brahmādika ārūrha bimānani, dēkhata haiṁ saṅgrāma..
 ghana-tana dibya kavaca saji kari, aru kara dhāryau sārāṅga.
 suci kara sakala bāna sūdhē kari, kaṭi-taṭa kasyau niṣaṅga..
 surapura taiṁ āyau ratha saji kai, raghupati bha'ē savāra.
 kāmṇī bhūmi, kahā saba hvaihai, sumirata nāma murāri..
 chōbhita sindhu, sēṣa-sira kampita, pavana bhayau gati paṅga.
 indra haṁśyau, hara hiya bilakhān'yau, jāni bacana kau bhaṅga..
 dhara-ambara, disi-bidisi, baṛhē ati sāyaka kirana samāna.
 mānau mahāpralaya kē kārana, udita ubhaya ṣaṭa bhāna..
 tūṭata dhujā-patāka-chatra-ratha cāpa-cakra-siratrāna.
 jūjhata subhaṭa, jarata jyauṁ dava druma, binu sākhā binu pāna..

srōnita-chinda uchari ākasahim, gaja-bājini-sira lāgi.
 mānau nikari tarani-randhrani taim, upajī hai ati āgi..
 pari kabandha bhaharā'i rathani taim, uṭhata manau jhara jāgi.
 phirata srgāla saiyau sava kāṭata, calata sō sira lai bhāgi..
 raghupati-risa pāvaka pracaṇḍa ati, sītā svāsa samīra.
 rāvana-kula aru kumbhakarana bana sakala subhaṭa ranadhīra..
 bha'ē bhasma, kachu bāra na lāgī, ज्याurm̐ jvālā paṭa-cīra.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu āpu-bāhubala kiyau nimiṣa mair̐ kīra..

Ram-Ravan Duel—Raag Maaru

179. Today, Sri Ram has become very angry in the battle-field. Brahma and other Gods watch the proceedings of the battle from their vehicles in the sky. He (Sri Ram) adorned his body—which is of a dark complexion like the hue of a dark rain-bearing cloud—with a magnificent armour, took a bow in his (left) hand, and arranging the arrows with his (right) hand, he tied the quiver to his waist. A well-armed divine chariot came down from the abode of Gods (i.e. from the heaven), and Raghupati (Sri Ram) mounted it.

The earth trembled; it shivered and shook, wandering 'what will happen next'. [That is, the earth was apprehensive of its fate and thought for a moment that it was time for the dooms-day.]

But the earth felt reassured when it invoked and remembered the name of 'Murari'. [Murari is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu. It alludes to the incident when the Lord had killed a demon by the name of 'Mur'. Therefore, the earth was sure that Lord Vishnu has come to relieve its surface from the burden of the demons. And hence this turmoil is not meant to harm the earth in any way.]

The ocean was utterly distressed, and it heaved and roared. [The trembling of the earth might have caused huge tidal waves to be generated in the ocean like the ones which are generated during earthquakes to form tsumani. The latter is known to cause widespread havoc and leave a trail of destruction in its wake.]

The heads of the legendary Sheshnath (the mythological serpent who holds the earth on its hood) shook and trembled, and the wind stopped blowing (indicating a lull before an oncoming storm).

While Indra (the Lord of Gods) laughed and became happy (at the prospect of an imminent death of his arch enemy, the demon king Ravana and his son Meghnaad), 'Har' (Lord Shiva) grieved that his words given to Ravana will become null and void today¹.

Hail of uncountable arrows spread on and covered the earth as well as the sky in every direction like the many rays of sunlight (emanating from the sun and covering the whole of the earth and the sky). It appears that all the 12 mythological suns (called Adityas) have made their appearance simultaneously to create a dooms-day scenario to annihilate the world.

War standard and flags, royal umbrellas and parasols, chariots, bows, wheels and protective headgear (helmets) began shattering, splintering and falling apart everywhere. In the battle, large multitudes of warriors began falling by the side and dying in hordes. They resembled the trees of a forest that is engulfed in a wild forest-fire, with the leaves and branches burning off rapidly before the trees themselves are reduced to ashes.

Blood spouting out from the bodies of wounded warriors shoot upwards towards the sky like sprays of a water-fountain, and then rain down on the heads of war elephants and horses. It reminds one of the spewing of fire from the various holes appearing in the sun in the sky, and then spreading in all the directions from there.

Headless trunks (of warriors) stumble and roll down from the chariots and fall on to the ground only to rise once again—as if flames of fire are suddenly leaping up from the battle-field. Jackals are having a field day. They roam everywhere in the battle-field, nibbling, gnawing and chewing at the corpses from which the heads have been severed. These corpses, lying on the ground, are still well-armed. The jackals grab a head or two and run away with them.

In the fierce fire of Raghupati's wrath, anger and vengeance that was fuelled by the wind representing the agonised breath of tormented Sita, the entire forest symbolising Ravana, Kumbhakaran and the rest of the brave demon clan was burnt to ashes. Their burning or annihilation did not take a long time just like tattered clothes and rags get burnt instantly when confronted by a fiercely raging fire.

Surdas says that the Lord used the strength of his arms to shred into pieces the multitudes of enemy hordes (179).

[Note:-¹Shiva had given a boon that Ravana will be invincible and have eternal life. No one would be able to sever his heads, and as long as the heads remained on his shoulders, there was no question of Ravana dying. The fact that Shiva—who is the God in charge of death—had himself provided immunity to Ravana from death made the latter's killing all the more difficult and remarkable. The lesson that is to be drawn from it is—'Everything that has been born will come to an end one day notwithstanding any boon or powers that an individual might possess.' Anyone trying to become immortal—in the physical sense—is only cheating himself. Even the so-called Gods, including the trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, come to an end one day. According to the Upanishadic philosophy, everything falls back and dissolves in Brahm in the final analysis. But in the spiritual sense, the Atma is immortal, and it never perishes. Its liberation is when it sheds its gross body and merges with the cosmic Atma known as Brahm. It is from this Brahm that the new process of creation unfolds.]

राग कान्हरी

[180]

आजु अमर—मुनि—संतनि चाउ ।
 नृपति—मुकुट—मनि राम पलान्यौ हतन कनकपुर—राउ ॥
 दिसि—दिसि दल उड़ि रही रेन, घनघोर निसाननि घाउ ।
 टूटत धुजा—पताक—छत्र—रथ स्वर्ग उड़ि रह्यौ बाउ ॥
 अतिभट हैं कपि—भालु—निसाचर, भुवन चलत सु जुझाउ ।
 सूरदास संतत छबि बरनत, पटतर कौ नहिं ठाँउ ॥

rāga kānharau

(180)

āju amara-muni-santani cā'u.

nr̥pati-mukūṭa-maṇi rāma palān'yau hatana kanakapura-rā'u..
 disi-disi dala uḍi rahī rēna, ghanaghōra nisānani ghā'u.
 ṭūṭata dhuḷā-patāka-chatra-ratha svaraga uḍi rahyau bā'u..
 atibhaṭa haiṁ kapi-bhālu-nisācara, bhuvana calata su jujhā'u.
 sūradāsa santata chabi baranata, paṭatara kauṁ nahim ṭhāmū..

Raag Kaanharau

180. Today, the immortal Gods, the sages/seers/hermits/acetics as well as all the holy, noble, saintly, pious and virtuous people are exhilarated and happy. Sri Ram, who is like a crown jewel amongst the kings of the world, has launched his assault to do away with (i.e. kill, eliminate) the king of the golden city (of Lanka).

A thick cloud of dust is rising everywhere, and battle-drums are being struck noisily and enthusiastically in a vigorous cacophony of war-sound. War standards, fluttering flags, ceremonial umbrellas and parasols as well as war chariots are breaking down into splinters in quick succession. The dust is rising high into the heavens.

The monkeys, bears and (their opponents) the demons are all equally brave, courageous, potent and valiant. Hence, a grave and no-holds-barred battle is raging fiercely on the ground.

Surdas tries his best to describe the detail of the scene of the battle-field, but it is incomparable and indescribable in words.

[Surdas is unable to describe the scene of the battle because he has never imagined that such a horrific, horrendous, terrifying and grave battle can ever be fought on the surface of the earth. So he had nothing to compare it with, perhaps not even with the war of the Mahabharat fame, because in the latter war Sri Krishna had not fought himself, but here Sri Ram is fighting the war himself. The strength of all the Kurus who fought in the Mahabharat war pale into insignificance when compared with the Ramayana war in which Ravana had shown his excellent mettle and war-expertise by making Sri Ram—who was no one else but Lord Vishnu incarnate—sweat it out in order to overcome him. Winning Ravana was not a cake-walk for Sri Ram, for Ravana was a person who had even dominated and captivated all the Gods in the heavens, a feat that the Kurus couldn't, and didn't.] (180).

राग नट

[181]

देखियत जहाँ—तहाँ रघुबीर ।
 धावत धरनि बिचित्र बेग कर धनुष धरें धर धीर ॥
 मंडल करत अनेक भाँति भ्रम ज्यौँ सत चक्र समीर ।
 फटत बिउह चतुरंग बिहंग—बिधि, सहि न सकत भट भीर ॥
 सर सँग उड़त पताक—छत्र—धुज, मनौ पत्र बन जीर ।
 परत कंफि मनु मूल—भंग है द्रुम दमि असुर—सरीर ॥
 बिन रथ बाजि, महावत बिन गज, सकल सघन तन तीर ।
 डोलत डरत हरात बात बस, ज्यौँ रज—कंटक—चीर ॥

कहुँ कहुँ उठत कबंध, कहुँ ते चलत पलाय अधीर ।
 सोभित महा प्रचंड पवन बस, सारद घन बिनु नीर ॥
 सूने सदन किए सबहीं, जब हाकत हरये बीर ।
 मनहुँ अधिक अकुलाय लटे तप हारी साधत सीर ॥
 राजत रुचिर रुहिर कहुँ धसि, कहुँ सिर मुकता मनि—हीर ।
 मानौ बीज बिखेरि 'सूर' निसि चले करखि करि कीर ॥

rāga naṭa

(181)

dēkhiyata jahām̐-tahām̐ raghubīra.
 dhāvata dharani bicitra bēga kara dhanuṣa dharēm̐ dhara dhīra..
 maṇḍala karata anēka bhām̐ti bhrama jyaum̐ sata cakra samīra.
 phaṭata bi'uha caturaṅga bihaṅga-bidhi, sahi na sakata bhaṭa bhīra..
 sara sam̐ga uṛata patāka-chatra-dhuja, manau patra bana jīra.
 parata kampi manu mūla-bhaṅga hvai druma dami asura-sarīra..
 bina ratha bāji, mahāvata bina gaja, sakala saghana tana tīra.
 ḍōlata ḍarata harāta bāta basa, jyaum̐ raja-kaṇṭaka-cīra..
 kahum̐ kahum̐ uṭhata kabandha, kahum̐ tē calata palāya adhīra.
 sōbhita mahā pracaṇḍa pavana basa, sārada ghana binu nīra..
 sūnē sadana ki'ē sabahim̐, jaba hākata harayē bīra.
 manahum̐ adhika akulāya laṭē tapa hārī sādhatā sīra..
 rājata rucira ruhira kahum̐ dhasi, kahum̐ sira mukatā mani-hīra.
 mānau bīja bikhēri 'sūra' nisi calē karakhi kari kīra..

Raag Nat

181. Raghubir (Sri Ram) is so astoundingly swift and agile in the battle-field that wherever one glances, he is visible at that place. Holding a bow in hand, he rushes on the ground from one place to another place with fantastic speed (giving the impression that he is present everywhere when needed at the same time). He adopts numerous war tricks, clever war maneuvers and prudent war strategies simultaneously as if hundreds of whirlwinds, hurricanes, cyclones, tornadoes and wind spouts are fiercely churning and whirling around at the same time.

The various phalanxes into which the four wings of the demon army (consisting of foot soldiers, horses, elephants and chariots) were systematically arrayed in the beginning of the battle, got scattered, disrupted and broken into splinters just like a huge flock of birds flying in a formation breakup and each bird flies off independently (when the formation is attacked by a hawk or a falcon). Those brave and valiant warriors of the demon army are unable to bear the pounding given to them (by Sri Ram and his army).

Dismantled flags, war standards and banners, broken umbrellas and parasols—all fly off in the sky, hooked to the arrows (that Sri Ram and Laxman have shot) as if dry leaves of a forest are flying away in hordes during a fierce storm or a strong wind blowing across the forest.

The bodies of wounded demons stumble, totter and fall down as if trees, uprooted from their roots, sway and tumble over. The horses have lost their riders and the elephants their Mahauts (tamers); all their bodies are riddled with arrows. Terrified, the animals rush hither and thither in panic, trumpeting and neighing tumultuously in distress and pain just like dust particles, thorns and tattered pieces of clothes dance haphazardly in a storm, tossed and kicked here and there by the vicious force of the fierce and howling wind.

At places, headless torsos called 'Kabandh' get up from the ground, and at other places they lose their courage and runaway terrified and scared—they resemble barren (rainless) clouds gushing across the sky under the thrust of a strong wind arising during the winter season. [During the winter season, the clouds do not have any rain. So they are called barren.]

When the brave and valiant warrior (i.e. Sri Ram) began to defiantly challenge and chase away the demons, all of them vacated their houses, and the city wore a deserted look. It resembled ascetics who were very agitated in the beginning but have now become absolutely calm and serene. [That is, the city wore a deserted look when Sri Ram and his army had crashed through the walls of the city and had entered it. It also might mean that all the male demons of fighting age were killed, and the rest of the city fled before the army actually invaded and created havoc inside it, looting and plundering the households and killing even innocent inhabitants as is the usual habit of an invading army.]

Surdas says that the sight of gems and jewels, diamonds and pearls, stuck in the bloody slush on the ground or lying in heaps in the field reminds one of a farmer who has ploughed the field and has strewn the seeds before retiring for the night. [The countless furrows or grooves made in the ground by the wheels of the chariots resembled those made by the plough in a farmer's field. The gems and jewels, the diamonds and pearls which were broken from the ornaments worn by the demons lay scattered on the blood-soaked ground as if the farmer had spread seeds during the daytime and had then retired for the night, leaving the seeds scattered on the ground.] (181).

[Note :- In the scenario described above, a lot of metaphors and similes have been used by Surdas. Further, we notice that few monkeys seem to have died as compared to the demons. It's quite possible because monkeys, unlike the demons, could skip and jump from place to place very swiftly and with great agility. They could jump, say, from the head of one elephant to another, or from one horse to another, and naturally in the process they must have pushed down the rider of that elephant or the horse, and must have even gauged out the eye of the animal! The maddened animal would naturally go berserk, thereby trampling underfoot more and more of the demon soldiers of the army who could not leap high and jump up from the ground like the monkeys to escape being crushed. These demon soldiers got squashed and reduced to pulp, adding more slush and muck on the ground. The monkeys can escape the rampaging and maddened horses and elephants by skipping them, jumping to the side, even climbing atop their heads and backs, making them all the more furious because they must have clawed and bitten these animal on their backs, necks and heads, a feat which the demons could not replicate.

The hurdles created by the broken chariots, dead soldiers and animals, broken flag masts etc. the clamour of war drums and trumpets, the slushy and slippery ground—all added to the utter chaos in the battle-field. The wildly neighing horses, madly trumpeting elephants, terrifying and chilling yell of wounded soldiers writhing in pain, the shrill war cry of angry and wrathful monkeys, the howling of hungry jackals, coupled with the dust and slime, the blood and excreta makes the scene of the battle-field create a chilling

shiver down the spine of any observer. More than the actual words, it is the mental portrait of the war scene that is conjured up in the mind of the reader that will help to fill in the gaps left by the actual description of the war by Surdas, which is horrifying and blood-curdling to the extreme.]

रावण मृत्यु एवं युद्ध की समाप्ति—राग मारू

[182]

रघुपति अपनौ प्रन प्रतिपास्यौ ।
तोस्यौ कोपि प्रबल गढ़, रावन टूक—टूक करि डास्यौ ॥
कहुँ भुज, कहुँ धर, कहुँ सिर लोटत, मानौ मद मतवारौ ।
भभक्त, तरफत स्रोनि तन, नाही परत निहारौ ॥
छोरे और सकल सुख—सागर, बाँधि उदधि जल खारौ ।
सुर—नर—मुनि सब सुजस बखानत, दुष्ट दसानन मारौ ॥
डरपत बरुन—कुबेर—इंद्र—जम, महा सुभट पन धारौ ।
रह्यौ मांस कौ पिंड, प्राण लै गयौ बान अनियारौ!
नव ग्रह परे रहैं पाटी तर, कूपहिं काल उसारौ ।
सो रावन रघुनाथ छिनक मैं कियौ गोध कौ चारौ!
सिर सँभारि लै गयौ उमापति, रह्यौ रुधिर कौ गारौ ।
दियौ बिभीषन राज 'सूर' प्रभु कियौ सुरनि निस्तारौ ॥

rāvaṇa mṛtyu ēvaṁ yud'dha kī samāpti-rāga mārū

(182)

raghupati apanau prana pratipāryau.
tōryau kōpi prabala garha, rāvana ṭūka-ṭūka kari ḍāryau..
kahum̐ bhuja, kahum̐ dhara, kahum̐ sira lōṭata, mānau mada matavārau.
bhabhakata, taraphata srōnita mair̐ tana, nāhīr̐ parata nihārau..
chōrē aura sakala sukha-sāgara, bām̐dhi udadhi jala khārau.
sura-nara-muni saba sujasa bakhānata, duṣṭadasānana mārau..
ḍarapata baruna-kubēra-indra-jama, mahā subhaṭa pana dhārau.
rahyau mānsa kau piṇḍa, prāna lai gayau bāna aniyārau!
nava grha parē rahair̐ pāṭī tara, kūpahir̐ kāla usārau.
sō rāvana raghunātha chinaka mair̐ kiyau gīdha kau cārau!
sira sam̐bhāri lai gayau umāpati, rahyau rudhira kau gārau.
diyau bibhīṣana rāja 'sūra' prabhu kiyau surani nistārau..

Ravana's Death; End of War—Raag Maarū

182. Raghupati (Sri Ram) kept his vows and promises. Angrily, he broke through the formidable strong fort of Lanka and cut Ravana to pieces. His (Ravana's) arms, headless body and severed heads are rolling separately on the ground as if an intoxicated man,

under the influence of wine or some other intoxicant, lies on the ground and rolls on it. [An intoxicated man begins to hallucinate and feels that the parts of his body are scattered.]

His dead body, pasted or smeared in a thick coat of blood, flutters, shivers, trembles, shakes and jerks. One cannot gather enough courage to see it (because it is such a horrifying, terrifying and repulsive as well as a pitiful scene).

The Gods, the humans and the sages praise the glory of the Lord (Sri Ram) that on the one hand he has tied (bridged) the vast and formidable ocean which is sour and salty, and then kill the wicked Ravana, and on the other hand he has untied or released another immense ocean of endless joy, happiness, peace, tranquility and bliss to the world¹.

Ravana was dreaded alike by Varun (the God of water), Kuber (the God's treasurer; the elder step brother of Ravana), Indra (the king of Gods) and Yam (the God of death and hell). He was honoured with the title of 'a great, invincible and valiant warrior'. It is so mysterious and full of wonder that the same person (Ravana) was reduced to a lump of lifeless flesh. Sharp arrows (shot by Sri Ram) had snatched (sniffed) his life away.

He (Ravana) had kept the 'nine Grahas' (the nine planets and their patron Gods) stamped (pressed) under his bedstead, who had kept 'Kaal' (time, circumstance, even death) as a captive in a well—what a wonder that it is the same Ravana who is made to become a feed for hungry vultures in a short time by Raghunath (Sri Ram). [When Ravana lay dead on the ground in the battle-field, countless vultures descended upon his corpse to feed upon it.]

The husband of Uma (i.e. Lord Shiva) took away his heads to make a garland out of them. What was left in the battle-field was thick slush of blood resembling a reddish bog.

The brave Lord of Surdas gave the reign of Lanka to Vibhishan (as promised to him earlier), thereby liberating the Gods and providing them deliverance (from the terror that Ravana had unleashed on them). [That is, Sri Ram had freed the Gods from the demon's bondage and subservience.] (182).

[Note :- ¹Surdas is playing with words. The 'ocean that was bridged' by the army of Lord Ram in order to reach Lanka is described as being 'tied', and then the opposite of it, the word 'untied or released', has been used to describe another ocean of endless happiness and joys that was released when the cruel demons were killed and peace, tranquility and order were restored on earth. The Lord has a very gracious and magnanimous nature—so when he had to tie down one ocean he made sure that another was untied. Lord Ram did not wish that the ocean should ever think that it was being humiliated and subjugated by getting 'tied'. So he 'untied' it again, but now in form that gave joy and happiness to the world instead of acting as a hurdle to the world's peace and tranquility. This latter observation is based on the fact that the ocean had acted stubbornly in the beginning to prevent Ram from crossing over to Lanka. It appeared that he was trying to protect Ravana and the city of Lanka by creating a formidable hurdle in the path of the Lord. So the Lord punished it by 'tying' it down or bridging it. But later on the Lord 'untied' the same ocean but in its form as a provider of happiness and joy to the world.

Further, even if the Lord punishes anyone by 'tying' him up, it is for the larger interest of the society—the 'ocean' was tied for the express purpose of killing the demons because they had been tormenting peaceful creatures of the world, and by their killing, peace and tranquility was restored. The 'ocean' was restored once again to its honour of being 'eternally untied or being free'—but this time around, the ocean was honoured with

the title of an ocean that provides happiness and joy to the world instead of being a source of hurdles in the way of Sri Ram, representing goodness, in trying to overcome Ravana, who represented all that was bad and evil.]

[183]

रावन अपनौ कृत फल पायौ ।
 महाराज रघुपति सौं रूठौ, कीयौ जौ मन भायौ ॥
 कत लै जाइ जगत की जननी, हठ करि काल बुलायौ ।
 राजनीति दसरथ—सुत कीनी, अंगद दूत पठायौ ॥
 करी अनीति, हात सो लाग्यौ, बिधना जोग बनायौ ।
 भगत—प्रतग्या राखी यातैं चाहत जुग जगु गायौ ॥
 क्रोधे राम तबहिं आरिस करि, कर सारंग चढ़ायौ ।
 कुल समेत अब 'सूरदास' प्रभु रिपु कौ नास करायौ ॥

(183)

rāvana apanau kṛta phala pāyau.
 mahārāja raghupati saurṇ rūṭhau, kīyau jau mana bhāyau..
 kata lai jā'i jagata kī janani, haṭha kari kāla bulāyau.
 rājanīti dasaratha-suta kinī, aṅgada dūta paṭhāyau..
 karī anīti, hāta sō lāgyau, bidhanā jōga banāyau.
 bhagata-pratagyā rākhī yātaim cāhata juga jagu gāyau..
 krōdhē rāma tabahim ārisa kari, kara sārāṅga caṛhāyau.
 kula samēta aba 'sūradāsa' prabhu ripu kau nāsa karāyau..

183. Ravana harvested what he sowed—i.e. he got the fruits of his doings. He was inimical to the great king Raghupati (Sri Ram), and had been recklessly doing whatever he thought fit to do. He even went to the extent of kidnapping the Mother of the world (i.e. Sita), only to hasten his death (or to invite and welcome his own death).

The son of Dashrath (Sri Ram) followed the principles of political science by sending Angad as an emissary to him (to probe the possibility of a peaceful solution to the predicament, to see if Ravana would see reason and seek a truce so as to avoid the impending bloody destructive war). But as it eventually happened, Ravana got a befitting response to the unrighteous and unethical life that he had lived all along, and the evil deeds that he had done. (He had received in his hands a reward that was befitting his life and deeds). Destiny and the creator had joined hands to bring things to such a head or establish such a coincidence (that this should happen). That is why, he (Sri Ram) kept the vows of his devotee¹ (Angad) so that the latter's famous heroic deeds can be sung for all times to come.

It was only after the return of Angad (and a failed attempt to make peace and avoid the horrifying war) that an exasperated and peeved Sri Ram, who had no options left, became angry and lifted his bow called 'Saarang'². Surdas says that, as a result, his Lord (Sri Ram) found an excuse to destroy the evil clan of his enemy (i.e. the evil clan of the demon Ravana)³ (183).

[Note :- ¹The devotee here was Angad, the vow was that if the demons could lift his leg, Sri Ram will return without Sita and even without a fight—see verse no. 154. What Surdas means here is that the Lord created a circumstance leading to a momentous event that will make Angad famous and glorious forever. Without this leg-lifting vow, Angad's job as a messenger would have been relegated to a mere rightful attempt by Sri Ram in trying to make peace by sending an ambassador to the enemy. Unlike Hanuman, Angad would never have had a chance to show-case his strength, might, valour, determination and devotion for the Lord. Notwithstanding whatever Angad might have done in the field of the war itself, he would not have been remembered as a great devotee of the Lord but for this only incident which showed that he had a steady, unwavering and profound faith and conviction in his Lord and his glorious name so much so that any vow made in his (Lord's) name cannot, never ever, go in vain.

²Saarang—This is an invincible bow held by Lord Vishnu. Since Lord Ram is an incarnation of Vishnu, the bow held by him during the war at Lanka is also called by this name.

³The word 'clan or race' should not be taken too literally here, because Vibhishan had survived the war although he was also a member of the demon race and belonged to Ravana's clan. There were many demons who, along with him, had outlived the war by either escaping from the field and the city to live long enough to see the end of Ravana when the war finally stopped, or they might have been those demons who were wounded in the battle-field but had not died. They all belonged to the demon race. If the entire demon race had been wiped out or annihilated in the war, then over whom would have Vibhishan ruled after he was crowned the king of Lanka by Ram? This single fact shows that all the demons were not killed. Those who survived came back to join Vibhishan and re-populate the city.]

मन्दोदरी का पश्चाताप

[184]

करुना करति मँदोदरि रानी ।
 चौदह सहस सुंदरी उमहीं, उठै न कंत! महा अभिमानी ॥
 बार—बार बरज्यौ, नहिं मान्यौ, जनक—सुता तैं कत घर आनी ।
 ये जगदीस ईस कमलापति, सीता तिय करि तैं कत जानी ॥
 लीन्हे गोद बिभीषन रोवत, कुल—कलंक ऐसी मति ठानी ।
 चोरी करी, राजहूँ खोयौ, अल्प मृत्यु तब आय तुलानी ॥
 कुंभकरन समुझाइ रहे पचि, दै सीता, मिलि सारँगपानी ।
 'सूर' सबनि कौ कह्यौ न मान्यौ, त्यों खोई अपनी रजधानी ॥

mandōdarī kā paścātāpa

(184)

karunā karati mam'dōdari rānī.
 caudaha sahasa sundarī umahīm, uṭhai na kanta! mahā abhimānī..
 bāra-bāra barajyau, nahim mām'yau, janaka-sutā taim kata ghara ānī.
 yē jagadīsa īsa kamalāpati, sītā tiya kari taim kata jānī..
 līnhē gōda bibhīṣana rōvata, kula-kalaṅka aisī mati ṭhānī.

cōrī karī, rājahūm̐ khōyau, alpa mṛtyu taba āya tulānī..
 kumbhakarana samujhā'i rahē paci, dai sītā, mili sāram̐gapānī..
 'sūra' sabani kau kahyau na mān'yau, tyauṁ khō'ī apanī rajadhānī..

Mandodari Laments & Repents

184. (Upon the death of Ravana—) The queen Mandodari grieves grievously and fourteen thousand beauties (who had been enslaved by Ravana in his harem) have assembled (on the battle-field).

Mandodari laments—‘Oh my great husband who was haughty and arrogant! Why don’t you get up now? I tried to stop you again and again, but you didn’t pay any heed to my earnest pleadings. Why did you bring the daughter of Janak (Sita) home? He (Sri Ram) is ‘Laxmikant’ (i.e. the Lord of Laxmi, meaning Lord Vishnu), the Lord of the world, himself incarnated. How or why then did you think Sita to be an ordinary human being?’

Vibhishan picked up the dead body of Ravana onto his laps and he too wept, saying—‘(Oh brother Ravana) You had adopted such a wicked and pervert line of thought which turned devastating for the clan and the race. It seems that your death had cast its dark and long shadow upon you that you lost your wisdom by committing a theft (of abducting Sita) which resulted not only in you losing the kingdom but also inviting your pre-mature death. Had it not been so, even Kumbhakaran (besides Mandodari and myself) had failed in pursuing you to give Sita back, meet the holder of the ‘Saarang’ bow (i.e. Sri Ram), and make a truce with him while there was still time. But you didn’t listen.’

Surdas says that he (Ravana) listened to none, and this is why he lost his capital (of Lanka) (184).

[Note :- It is to be noted that Surdas says that Ravana had lost his capital though he has died. Any person who is dead not only loses his capital but even his life and everything that exists. So, the question arises, ‘What does Surdas intend to say?’ The answer is that the Atma, the soul, is immortal, while the body is gross and mortal. Ravana’s Atma was as holy and pure as the Atma can be. So when Ravana died, his gross physical body, which was recognised by the world as ‘Ravana’, the 10-headed one, had lost the kingdom as well as the capital of Lanka, but the ‘real Ravana’, which was his Atma, actually did not die. On the contrary, it was liberated from the bondage of his evil demonic body. Vibhishan lost this aspect of spiritual wisdom when he saw the dead body of his brother.

So, Surdas wishes to tell us that it is useless to grieve over someone after his death and say that he has lost this or that, because the soul—which in fact is the truthful identity of the so-called dead person—is immortal. The person loses nothing if his soul, his Atma, finds rest and is able to reach its spiritual destination of merging with the Supreme Soul of creation known as ‘Brahm’ or the ‘Parmatma’.]

श्रीराम सीता मिलन—राग मारू

[185]

लछिमन सीता देखी जाइ ।

अति कृस, दीन, छीन—तन प्रभु बिनु, नैननि नीर बहाइ ॥

जामवंत—सुग्रीव—बिभीषण करी दंडवत आइ ।
 आभूषण बहुमोल पटंबर, पहिरौ मातु बनाइ ॥
 बिनु रघुनाथ मोहि सब फीके, आज्ञा मेटि न जाइ ।
 पुहुप—बिमान बैठि बैदेही, त्रिजटा सब पहिराइ ॥
 देखत दरस राम मुख मोर्यौ, सिया परी मुरझाइ ।
 'सूरदास' स्वामी तिहु पुर के, जग—उपहास डराइ ॥

śrīrāma sītā milana-rāga mārū

(185)

lachimana sītā dēkhī jā'i.
 ati kṛṣa, dīna, chīna-tana prabhu binu, nainani nīra bahā'i..
 jāmavanta-sugrīva-bibhīṣana karī daṇḍavata ā'i.
 ābhūṣana bahumōla paṭambara, pahirau mātu banā'i..
 binu raghunātha mōhi saba phīkē, ājñā mēṭi na jā'i.
 puhupa-bimāna baiṭhi baidēhī, trijaṭā saba pahirā'i..
 dēkhata darasa rāma mukha mōryau, siyā parī murajhā'i.
 'sūradāsa' svāmī tihu pura kē, jaga-upahāsa ḍarā'i..

Sri Ram's re-union with Sita—Raag Maaru

185. Laxman went and saw (i.e. met) Sita. She was very emaciated and miserable, being in a wretched and pitiable condition. She had been shedding streams of tears in the absence (i.e. in remembrance) of the Lord.

Jamvant (the bear king), Sugriv (the monkey king) and Vibhishan (the demon king)—all the three came and prostrated themselves before her, saying—‘Mother, here are the most valuable ornaments and garments. Wear them properly on your body.’

(Sita replied—) ‘Without the company of Raghunath (Sri Ram), everything lacks luster and charm for me, but I cannot disobey his orders (to wear these ornaments and decorative robes and clothes) if he has ordered me to do so.’

Trijataa (the old demoness companion of Sita during her days in distressful captivity in Lanka) helped her to dress herself with them, and then Vaidehi (literally, the daughter of Videha, king Janak; here meaning Sita) strode on the air vehicle called ‘Pushpak’¹.

As soon as Sri Ram saw her face, he turned away. At this, Sita fainted out of shock (or literally wilted away), and fell down unconscious².

Surdas says that the Lord of the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean) was afraid of being (or becoming) a laughing stock (or an object of scorn, censor, gossip, ignominy, reproach, reproof, rebuke etc.) in this world (at having accepted Sita who was incarcerated for such a long time in somebody else’s place). [That is why he turned away from Sita instead of rushing forward to meet her after such a long time. This seems to be a very unusual event because it was for this moment that such a bloody war was fought.]³ (185).

[Note :- ¹The 'Pushpak' plane originally belonged to Kuber, the elder step-brother of Ravana and the treasurer of the Gods. It was taken away forcefully by Ravana as ransom when he had conquered Kuber. The vehicle was like a modern day helicopter—it could land and take-off vertically, remain stationary in the air, and move forward and backward at will. Besides, it had an automatic navigation system, and an on-board voice command and control mechanism, perhaps through a computer-like device on board which directed it to a place by verbal orders of the chief passenger. It didn't need any manual steering.

²Sri Ram had never instructed Vibhishan, Sugriv, Jamvant and Laxman to decorate Sita in fine ornaments and clothes before bringing her to him. This was a unilateral and on the spot emotional decision made enthusiastically by them just in order to celebrate the occasion. Sita, in fact, wasn't even aware that Sri Ram hadn't issued any such specific orders, and neither had Sri Ram expected to see her in all her finery when he first saw her after such long period of captivity. Seeing her so beautifully decked up, he was shocked beyond belief. He had expected Sita to be in tattered, dirty, unkempt clothes, hairs disheveled, shorn of any ornamentations, haggard and clumsy, emaciated, wretched and miserable—a condition of which he had a mental portrait of as described by Hanuman to him after he had come back from Lanka. Further, Sri Ram also expected Sita to be weeping and in a horrific pitiable condition after her separation from him for so many long days.

But instead, he saw her as if she was well looked after by her captor, and as if she had no regrets of her separation. He saw a woman in a queen-like decoration. The immediate impact of this unexpected sight must have been one of total disbelief, dismay and shock. The first thought that came to Sri Ram's mind was—'Well, she's been enjoying royal comfort in the palace of Ravana. Oh my God, this is the woman for whom I had been lamenting and suffering for so long. If I keep her, what will the world say—that Ram has re-taken or accepted as his wife a defiled, a corrupt, an unchaste and a disloyal woman, or at least a woman who had been enjoying the comforts of a palace and a royal life while her chaste husband has been sweating it out for her in the forest and the wild?'

Any person in place of Ram would have felt it that way. This is the logical conclusion one would draw when one looks at this single scene of a fully decorated wife, who had been held in an enemy's captivity for such a long period of time, coming cheerfully adorned to meet her separated husband, isolated from the rest of the previous events. The fact is that she was totally unaware that Lord Ram had not sent any instructions to her to decorate herself. As a matter of fact, even Ram did not have the opportunity to know that she had been made to decorate herself against her will on the presumption that the orders to decorate have come from her husband. Actually it was an idea of the three ministers of the Lord—viz. Vibhishan, Sugriv and Jamvant—to decorate her before presenting her to Sri Ram. But in their enthusiasm they created another horrible event.

We draw a lesson from this episode—sometimes what we hear, what we see, and what we deduce from what we hear and see, are totally different and divorced from the actual fact. A slight misinterpretation and misrepresentation of facts or events, a misjudgment, a misconception or a misperception can be ruinous for ever.

³Surdas also realises the uneasy and unsavory situation that has been created. He immediately jumps in the defense of Sri Ram and says that Sri Ram wished to protect his honour and dignity by looking to the other side. We also learn another lesson here—that often the orders by a person, say a king, are so mangled up by his subordinates in their enthusiasm to do a step better to please the master, that just the opposite to what is intended by them happens. Instead of pleasing the master or Lord, their enthusiasm proves to be disastrous. And more often than not, it creates newer problems than solving the older one.]

सीता की अग्नि परीक्षा—राग सोरठ

[186]

लछिमन! रचौ हुतासन भाई ।
 यह सुनि हनूमान दुख पायौ, मोपै लख्यौ न जाई ॥
 आसन एक हुतासन बैठी, ज्यौं कुंदन अरुनाई ।
 जैसे रबि इक पल घन भीतर बिनु मारुत दुरि जाई ॥
 लै उछंग उपसंग हुतासन, “निहकलंक रघुराई!”
 लई बिमान चढ़ाई जानकी, कोटि मदन छबि छाई ॥
 दसरथ कह्यौ, देवहू भाष्यौ, ब्यौम बिमान टिकाई ।
 सिया राम लै चले अवध कौं, ‘सूरदास’ बलि जाई ॥

sītā kī agni parīkṣā-rāga sōraṭha

(186)

lachimana! racai hutāsana bhāī.
 yaha suni hanūmāna dukha pāyau, mōpai lakhyau na jāī..
 āsana ēka hutāsana baiṭhī, jyaum kundana arunāī.
 jaisē rabi ika pala ghana bhītara binu māruta duri jāī..
 lai uchaṅga upasaṅga hutāsana, “nihakalaṅka raghurāī!”
 laī bimāna caṛhāī jānakī, kōṭi madana chabi chāī..
 dasaratha kahyau, dēvahū bhāṣyau, byauma bimāna ṭikāī.
 siyā rāma lai calē avadha kaurī, ‘sūradāsa’ bali jāī..

Sita's Fire Test—Raag Sorath

186. [It is not clear from the text actually who—Sri Ram or Sita—had ordered Laxman to light the fire in which Sita was required to prove her integrity, chastity and loyalty. But the word ‘Bhai’, meaning a brother, indicates it was Sri Ram. So, when Sri Ram wished to clarify to the world that Sita was innocent of corruption and was perfectly chaste, he ordered his brother Laxman—] ‘Oh brother Laxman! Light a fire.’

Hearing this, Hanuman felt very sorrowful and contrite, saying that it was too much for him to bear and that he cannot watch this happen¹.

But Laxman obeyed the orders issued to him and lit the fire. Then Sita sat in it, resembling a piece of gold that is kept (for purification) on a pile of red-hot burning charcoal. For a moment it appeared that the sun had been blacked-out by clouds in a windless day.

[There was complete darkness all around. The sun was obscured by the huge, thick, dark plume of smoke that suddenly rose from the center of the pile where Sita sat just like dark smoke billowing out in a puff from the exhaust of a steam locomotive or a factory chimney, going straight up into the sky, dispersing there, and obscuring the sun from sight.]

In the next moment, the Fire-God appeared with her (Sita) in his laps, and proclaimed—‘Oh Raghuraj (the king of Raghu’s race; Sri Ram)! She is without any blemish or taint; she is faultless and uncorrupt; she is indeed as immaculate as immaculacy can be.’

Even Dashrath (i.e. the Spirit of Ram’s father) and the Gods, sitting in their divine aerial vehicles in the sky, also endorsed the Fire-God’s declaration.

So, Janki (Sita) was (accepted by the Lord and) taken aboard the (Pusphak) plane by Sri Ram (when he started for his journey back home). Together, the magnificent and charming view of Sri Ram with Sita resembled the enthralling and captivating beauty and magnificence of millions of Kamdeo-cupids taken together.

Surdas says that Sri Ram took Sita back to Ayodhya, and he (Surdas) sacrifices himself at this momentous and glorious moment to celebrate it and remember it for all times to come (186).

[Note :- ¹Hanuman had himself witnessed the miserable condition of Sita in the Ashok grove at Lanka. He was not present in the group of four who had gone to invite Sita to come to Sri Ram after the war had been won. She verse no. 185. So, Hanuman was also stunned at this sudden unsavoury turn of events. He was, for once, taken aback and disenchanted as well as peeved and annoyed at Sri Ram’s sudden turning of his face away from Sita because he did not understand the dilemma and consternation that took over the mind of the Lord when he saw Sita bedecked in royal finery. He also felt very sorry and disillusioned that Sita had decided to abandon her most sorrowful and pitiful existence which had invited his sympathy and empathy when he saw her in captivity, and instead had decided to don cheerful clothes even before she met her husband Sri Ram. Like the Lord, perhaps it was not even expected by Hanuman. He was shocked himself seeing Sita dressed up like a queen.

But he could not bear to be a witness to the spectacle of Sita being put in the fire just in order to prove that she was innocent. He had always treated her as his mother and Sri Ram as his father. He had seen Sita’s condition first-hand, and did not need any proof to establish that she was innocent. So the very thought of any aspersion being cast upon his mother’s integrity even by his own father, and to add insult to injury, in full public view when she was asked to prove her innocence by the fire-test—this was something unbearable for Hanuman. And since he could not tell Sri Ram not to do so, he decided to turn away from there. Please see note to verse no. 185 in this context.]

युद्ध भूमि में अमृत वर्षा; वानर सेना का पुनर्जीवन पाना
राग मारू

[187]

सुरपतिहि बोलि रघुबीर बोले ।
अमृत की वृष्टि रन—खेत ऊपर करौ,
सुनत तिन अमिय—भंडार खोले ॥
उठे कपि—भालु ततकाल जै—जै करत,
असुर भए मुक्त, रघुबर निहारे ।
‘सूर’ प्रभु अगम महिमा न कछु कहि परति,
सिद्ध—गंधर्व जै—जै उचारे ॥

yud'dha bhūmi mēm amṛta varṣā;
vānara sēnā kā punarjīvana pānā
rāga mārū

(187)

surapatihi bōli raghubīra bōlē.
amṛta kī br̥ṣṭi rana-khēta ūpara karau,
sunata tina amiya-bhaṇḍāra khōlē..
uṭhē kapi-bhālu tatakāla jai-jai karata,
asura bha'ē mukta, raghubara nihārē.
'sūra' prabhu agama mahimā na kachu kahi parati,
sid'dha-gandharba jai-jai ucārē..

Rain of Amrit (ambrosia) on the Battle-Field;
Revival of the Monkey Army—Raag Maaru

187. Raghubir (Sri Ram) summoned the king of Gods (Indra) and instructed him— 'Pour the rain of Amrit (life giving elixir; ambrosia) on the battle-field.'

Hearing this instruction, he (Indra) opened the floodgates of the store house (the huge vats or containers) of Amrit (stored in the heaven). Even as Raghubir watched, all the monkeys and bears immediately stood or leapt up from the ground where they had been lying unconscious during the course of the war, crying 'hail, hail; glory, glory to Sri Ram', while the demons attained salvation¹.

Surdas says that the stupendous and majestic glory, the mystical powers, the virtues, the gallant deeds, the potent and the fame of the valiant and brave Lord of Surdas (i.e. Sri Ram) are immeasurable and incomprehensible. It is impossible to describe them. All the 'Siddhas' (mystics, experts, accomplished and attained ones) and 'Gandharvas' (celestial musicians) hailed the victory and applauded in unison² (187).

[Note :- ¹Both the monkeys and the bears of Lord Ram's army were wounded and made unconscious by the demons who represented the evil forces on earth, while the demons were hit and wounded by the monkeys and the bears, as well as by Sri Ram and Laxman, who represented the righteous forces on earth. So when Amrit fell on both of them, the monkeys and the bears could only be revived but they could not attain salvation because they were hit by evil and unrighteous demons, while the demons found salvation because they were either killed at the hands of the divine Lord himself or by his ardent followers or devotees represented by the monkeys and the bears.

Amrit pouring down from the sky would not have distinguished between a demon or a monkey, and whom to revive and whom not to. It poured uniformly on the ground below.

The Lord Sri Ram also wished it to happen it that way—he wished to show the rest of the monkeys and bears that he was very grateful to them and he did not like any of their families being bereaved. On the other hand he wished to tell the rest of the world that though he had to wage a fierce war against the demons because they had been tormenting the innocent world no end, yet he had nothing personal against the soldiers of the demon army as they were merely obeying their king Ravana, which is, in its self, a good and laudable trait. Let us remember that those demons who survived the war, such as those who had ran away or had fled the battle-field as well as the city as described in verse nos.

159 and 181, did not find salvation! So only those demons who proved that they were not cowards, who were faithful to their master Ravana, and would not go back on their oath of loyalty, preferring death to the ignominy of betrayal and turning the back to the enemy, were the only ones to get the reward of salvation, a reward which is even difficult for great sages to attain.

²Surdas' description of the war is very brief and sketchy. He does not go into the details of the war, even such important killings as those of Meghanad's and Kumbhakaran's, as well as the very important fact that the soul of Kumbhakaran and Ravana both had emerged from their bodies as shafts of brilliant effulgence of light which darted towards Sri Ram, who was the supreme, transcendental Lord incarnate, and entered the Lord's divine body. This particular happening is mentioned clearly in the chapter dealing with the war in the epic Ramcharit Manas written by saint Tulsidas who was a compatriot of Surdas. This is the Vedantic concept of the ultimate salvation of the soul of the individual—that it merges with supreme cosmic Soul of creation known as Parmatma.]

श्रीराम के महान कार्य—राग सारंग
(श्रीराम के युद्ध विजय की दावत)

[188/1]

रघुपति रन जीति आए ।
इहि बिधि बेद बिमल जस गाए ॥
प्रथम बान पौसान प्रगटि प्रभु तकि ताड़िका नसाई ।
प्राण सुध बुध सूपनखा की नाक निपात सिखाई ॥
खर दूषन त्रिसिरा मृग कपि हति पंच कवल करवाई ।
जलनिधि जलमिव सींचि सुचित ह्वै अग्रिम रुचि उपाजई ॥
जगु जानी रघुबीर धीर की असि ज्यौनार बनाई ।
आदि मधु रहित छत्र निद्धते सिर सिव लडू चखाए ॥
गज गुंझा रथ—चक्र कटक बर है घेवर समुदाए ।
फेनी फरी पूष पै दागन सुभा स्वाद सजि लाए ॥
चतुरंगनि चहुँ भाँति सुभोजन अति आदर सूपाए ।
मनहु प्रिये पकवान पहली सकल सिलीमुख पाए ॥
कटुक क्रोध मकराच्छ—अकंपन तिक्त प्रहस्त पठाए ।
कुंभकरन मिघनाद महोदर अमल धवल धसि धाए ॥
किल कषाय अतिकाय अतिरथनि बहु ब्यंजन मन भाए ।
बिसरिक तिच्छ अवलोकि अपूरब निपुन सेष पुरसाए ॥
खल षटरस निकर कौसल पति सायक सकल जिंवाए ।

śrīrāma kē mahāna kārya-rāga sārāṅga
(śrīrāma kē yud'dha vijaya kī dāvata)

(188/1)

raghupati rana jīti ā'ē.
 ihi bidhi bēda bimala jasa gā'ē..
 prathama bāna pausāna pragaṭi prabhu taki tāḍikā nasā'ī.
 prāna sudha budha sūpanakhā kī nāka nipāta sikhā'ī..
 khara dūṣana trisirā mrga kapi hati pañca kavala karavā'ī.
 jalanidhi jalamiva sīnci sucita hvai agrima ruci upāja'ī..
 jagu jānī raghubīra dhīra kī asi jyaunāra banā'ī.
 ādi madhu rahita chatra nid'dhatē sira siva laḍū cakhā'ē..
 gaja guṇjhā ratha-cakra kaṭaka bara hai ghēvara samudā'ē.
 phēnī pharī pūpa pai dāgana subhā svāda saji lā'ē..
 caturaṅgani cahum' bhāmṭi subhōjana ati ādara sūpā'ē.
 manahu priyē pakavāna pahalī sakala silīmukha pā'ē..
 kaṭuka krōdha makarāccha-akampana tikta prahasta paṭhā'ē.
 kumbhakarana mighanāda mahōdara amala dhavala dhasi dhā'ē..
 kila kaṣāya atikāya atirathani bahu byanjana mana bhā'ē.
 bisarika ticcha avalōki apūraba nipuna sēṣa purasā'ē..
 khala ṣaṭarasa nikara kausala pati sāyaka sakala jinvā'ē.

Chronicle of Sri Ram's Gallant Deeds—Raag Saarang
 (The Metaphor of the Grand Feast)

[Verse no. 188 is a long one, and it describes the gallant deeds of Lord Ram using the metaphor of a royal feast that was laid out to celebrate the Lord's safe return to his capital of Ayodhya as well as his famous victory over the demon king Ravana. For the purpose of our narration, we shall divide this verse into two smaller parts—verse no. 188/1 and 188/2 for ease of rendering.]

188/1. Raghupati (the Lord of Raghu's clan; Sri Ram) came back (to his capital city of Ayodhya) after having won the war.

[A grand royal feast was organized in Ayodhya to celebrate the Lord's victory over the demons and his safe return to the city along with Sita and Laxman. Surdas says that the Vedas describe the exploits of Sri Ram using different metaphors. This has been their unique poetic style of describing divine events. Before a feast, there is a short ritual of purification where a short fire sacrifice is done. This is followed by the grand feast. So, the following narration first describes in a symbolic way the doing of the fire sacrifice, which is followed by the description of the different foods laid out for the grand feast using different metaphors related to the eventful war at Lanka.]

Lord Ram's famous deeds, that are great, majestic, astounding and stupendous, are being sung (i.e. lauded, applauded, narrated) by the Vedas in the following words:-- 'To start with, the Lord ignited the 'fire' using the fire-arrow to kill the demoness known by the name of Tadaka.

[First the Lord lit the fire for the short fire sacrifice by invoking the divine fire-arrow, and then used it to make the first offering by killing this demoness. The fire sacrifice in this case was to rid the earth of the burden of evil forces which were

represented by the demons. Killing of Tadaka was the first spoon or spatula of clarified butter/ghee which was offered to the symbolic sacrificial fire initiated to restore righteousness, probity, propriety and nobility on this earth, and getting rid of pervert, evil and vile forces from its surface.]

Then he (Sri Ram) cut-off the nose of the demoness Supernakha to teach her to exercise self-restrain and abstain from lust and passions; this was similar to the control of 'Pran' (which are the vital wind force of life).

[This second offering signifies the necessity of practicing exemplary self control as is done during Yoga practice when the practitioner endeavours to control the flow of breath inside the body. During the fire sacrifice, the person is expected to exercise full control over his passions and lust.]

By killing the demons Khar, Dushan, Trishira, Marich and Baali, Sri Ram symbolically performed the ritual called 'Panch Graas'.

[This entails taking five small morsels of food in the mouth as offerings to each of the five vital wind forces which are collectively called the 'Pran' that regulate life forces inside the body of a man. After each morsel of food is put in the mouth—which is a symbol of the sacrificial pit because whatever is eaten by the man is meant to keep the fire burning inside the body active—the word 'Swaha' is pronounced just like it is done when the offering is actually made into the physical fire pit during the fire sacrifice. The five vital wind forces called 'Pran' are the following—main 'Pran' which is also known as breath, 'Apan' or the wind passing through the intestine, 'Samaan' or the wind which helps in circulation and equal distribution of nutrition in the body, 'Udan' or the wind which goes upwards and helps the body to rise up, and 'Vyan' which is the wind force which helps in maintaining equilibrium in the body. In the present case, each of these demons symbolically stood for one morsel of such food.]

Next, he (Sri Ram) tied the ocean in a symbolic process called 'Jal-sinchani' whereby a sip of water is taken inside the mouth to clean it and prepare the person for the next step.

[Here it means that now the main patron and the attendants are finished with doing the fire sacrifice and get ready to partake of the main meal served at a grand feast that is held after successful completion of the fire sacrifice.]

Then the world came to know the way in which the royal banquet of Raghubir was elaborately prepared.

[Sri Ram has arrived in Ayodhya. A feast was organized to welcome him and celebrate the occasion. Surdas uses it as a symbolic tool to glorify the stupendous and magnificent achievements of Sri Ram in the war at Lanka.]

The gem-studded parasol above the head (of Ravana) was the first non-sticky 'Laddu' (a rounded sweetmeat made from sweetened gram flour, clarified butter and sugar) that was offered to Lord Shiva.

[Sri Ram wished to please Lord Shiva by first offering Ravana's self-pride, ego, haughtiness, arrogance and royal dignity represented by the ceremonial umbrella at Shiva's feet. Ravana had, on one occasion, offended Shiva when he wished to bring the Lord to Lanka and the latter refused. So Ravana forcibly uprooted the Lord's divine abode called Mt. Kailash from the ground, and carried it on his back to Lanka. Somewhere en-route Ravana had to attend to nature's call, and when Shiva refused to move from there, the demon had used his toe to push the Lord into the earth as a token of

contempt. This incident had outraged Lord Shiva and he had been waiting for so long to avenge this ignominy. So, Lord Ram obliged Shiva by pulling down the parasol from the throne of Ravana.]

The dead war elephants symbolized the fried sweets called ‘Gunjhaa’, while the shattered war chariots represented the sweets called ‘Ghewar’ that were arranged in large heaps on the banquet table.

The shields used by the warriors made from (Rhino) hide symbolically resembled a special type of sweetmeat called ‘Feni’, while the striking (thrashing and reducing to pulp) of the warriors by weapons was the ‘Poop’. All these beautiful and deliciously tasty eatables had been decoratively arranged for the grand welcoming feast.

The four wings of the destroyed enemy army (such as the foot soldiers, chariots, elephants and horses) resembled the four major categories of food served on that occasion at the well arranged and multi-course royal banquet. [The four categories of food served were the following—that which can be chewed, that which is sucked, that which is licked, and that which is drunk.]

In this way it appears that all the arrows of Sri Ram had got their favourite foods for the first time, and all of them were fully contented, fully satisfied of their hunger. They had lived up to their reputation of being Sri Ram’s potent, powerful, invincible and glorious arrows.

Each of the various categories of food served at the grand feast could again be classified according to their taste as follows—the bitter food was represented by the wrathful, vengeful and angry demons such as Makaraaksha and Akampan; the demon Prahasht was represented at the banquet table by the food items that tasted pungent; the demons Kumbhakaran, Meghanad and Mahodari—who made the earth subside when they ran (because of their physical weight and colossus size)—were like the pleasant sweet tasting dishes; the demons Atikaai and other ‘Atirathis’ (those valorous chariot-riding warriors who could single handedly fight many times more stronger and more numerous opponents simultaneously) were symbolized by the food that had an astringent taste.

The very sharp arrows of Sri Ram were the guests who were invited to eat at the grand feast, and seeing them ready for the meal, the matchless and superb Lord (i.e. Sri Ram) asked Sheshnath (i.e. Laxman), who was an expert at serving guests, to start serving the meal to them. [That is, while the chief demons were killed by Lord Ram himself, Laxman was asked to wipe out the junior ones.]

In this manner, the Lord of Kaushal (Sri Ram) had satisfied his guests represented by the arrows by feeding them a multi-course, multi-taste meal symbolizing the wicked demon race (188/1).

[Note :- In this verse, the ‘arrows’ of Sri Ram have been likened to the guests who were hungry for the meal and had been invited by Sri Ram to partake in a grand feast that he has organised in order to celebrate his accomplished vow of freeing the earth of its burden represented by the evil, wicked, cruel, tormenting and sinful demon race. The various ‘dishes’ served at this banquet are used as metaphors for the various demons killed by the arrows of Sri Ram in the war. The ‘preparatory stages of the meal’ indicate the period after Sri Ram left Ayodhya to protect the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra and had killed the demoness Tadaka etc. en-route till the point he had landed on the soil of Lanka. Before landing there, he had killed the following demons—Khar, Dushan, Trishira and Marich, as well as the monkey king Baali because he had been unrighteous.

He had also deformed Supernakha, the sister of Ravana, because she too was unrighteous and pervert in her lustful passions.]

[188/2]

भ्राजित भात भूमि मुक्ताहल रिपु हति हार बिथारे ॥
 बरिल बरि संधान अनेक मानि भूषन भरि उर फारे ।
 मीन—बरन कर खंड षडौछा कटि करवाल कटारे ॥
 माँडे पापर पुरी पताका कवच करि डारे ।
 देखत उठत कबंध मनौ घृत बस सत फिरत उघारे ॥
 जोगिनि भूत बिताल भयानक करत कुलाहल भारी ।
 समिटे बृक गोमाय गिद्ध गन काक कंक ज्यौ नारी ॥
 रही न एकौ साध स्वाद की खाटी—मीठी खारी ।
 सीतानाथ सुजान—सिरोमनि अंतर—प्रीति बिचारी ॥
 रावन—रुहिर रसाल पछावरि परुसत सब सुखकारी ।
 आए अँचवन देन देवगन अमृत—कलस कर झारी ॥
 जाहि सीचि सोइ उठे सुद्ध त्यागीहिं सोई न्यारी ।
 रामचंद्र—जस हर्षवत है सादर करि कै बीरी ॥
 भाले भवि भरोसा रघुपति लंका कंचन थारी ।
 दई छाड़ि जिय जानि 'सूर' प्रभु बिभीषन बारी ॥

(188/2)

bhrājita bhāta bhūmi mukatāhala ripu hati hāra bithārē..
 barila bari sandhāna anēka māni bhūṣana bhari ura phārē..
 mīna-barana kara khaṇḍa ṣaḍauchā kaṭi karavāla kaṭārē..
 māmḍē pāpara purī patākā kavaca kari ḍārē..
 dēkhata uṭhata kabandha manau ghr̥ta basa sata phirata ughārē..
 jōgini bhūta bitāla bhayānaka karata kulāhala bhārī..
 samit̥e br̥ka gōmāya gid'dha gana kāka kaṅka jyaur̥m nārī..
 rahī na ēkau sādha svāda kī khāṭī-mīṭhī khārī..
 sītānātha sujāna-sirōmani antara-prīti bicārī..
 rāvana-ruhira rasāla pachāvari parusata saba sukhakārī..
 ā'ē am̐cavana dēna dēvagana amṛta-kalasa kara jhārī..
 jāhi sīci sō'i uṭhē sud'dha tyāgīhim sō'i n'yārī..
 rāmacandra-jasa harṣavanta hvai sādara kari kai bīrī..
 bhālē bhaghi bharōsā raghupati laṅkā kaṅcana thārī..
 da'ī chāḍi jiya jāni 'sūra' prabhu bibhīṣana bārī..

188/2. In this symbolic meal, the pearls of the broken garlands of the dead enemies which were scattered on the ground symbolised the rice dishes served at the banquet, while the numerous gem-studded ornaments of the enemy which lay spread after their wearer's hearts had been torn apart are like excellent 'Baris'.

[Rice is compared to the pearls because both have white colour, while the heart is compared to the Bari because the latter is a spongy eatable having a roughly triangular shape that is deep fried to a red colour.]

The arms cut-off by sharp edged swords symbolized a salty snack called ‘Sha-rou-chha’ having the colour of fish and is similarly elongated in shape.

[This dish resembled fried fish.]

Similarly, war standards, flags and banners were symbolically used to prepare and serve ‘Puri’ and ‘Papad’ at the grand feast.

[The ‘Puri’ is pancake made of wheat flour that is deep fried. The ‘Papad’ is a wafer thin, crisp pancake made from several types of pulse-flour, spices, dried potatoes etc. that is either fried or baked.]

Headless trunks called Kabandhas spouting blood got up and wandered in the field of the battle as if waiters are now moving around serving liquid clarified butter/ghee to the guests (who in this case are the numerous arrows shot by Sri Ram at the enemy forces).

[The blood coming out from the severed torso is the ghee or the clarified butter, while the torso moving in the battle-field is the symbolic waiter who is moving around amongst the guests eating at the banquet table to serve them fresh servings of food and liquid butter.]

Yoginis (female ogres; blood drinking female spirits; war vampires), ghosts, phantoms, hobgoblins etc. made a horrifying clamour. Hordes of wolves, jackals, vultures, crows and kites had assembled in huge droves to eat the leftover meal. [This refers to the horrifying scene of the battle-field.

The desire to taste sour, sweet, bitter and other types of food has been completely satisfied today.

[That is, all the possible varieties of tasteful, delectable delicacies were prepared and made available to the guests, leaving them so satiated that they never desire to have more of it again.]

‘Sita-naath’, i.e. the Lord of Sita (Sri Ram), who is the best host amongst them all and the most wise, showed his gratitude to the guests (the arrows) by offering them the final dessert of the event—a dish called ‘Rasaal’ made from (or symbolising) the blood of Ravana. This gesture made all the guests (i.e. the arrows of Sri Ram) feel very happy and joyous.

At the end of the meal, the Gods brought their pots of Amrit (symbolizing the giving of water at the end of a grand feast or the concluding drink to wash down the food eaten) to serve the guests the final round of drinks. Those who were served this drink (of Amrit) became alert and got up, while those who weren’t served (or missed out on the serving of this Amrit in the melee and confusion) missed this opportunity (i.e. they couldn’t get up).

[This last serving of Amrit which is the elixir of eternal life refers to the raining of Amrit in the battle-field by Indra on the request of Sri Ram at the end of the war. Only the monkeys were revived while the demons weren’t— see verse no. 187. In this verse, this event has been cited by saying that some of the guests could partake of this Amrit and some couldn’t in the confusion of the melee of the ferocious war. Those who could drink represented the monkeys and those who could not represented the demons.]

The guests respectfully accepted the offerings of betel leaves as mouth fresheners, felt exhilarated and ecstatic, and sang the glorious praises of Sri Ram Chandra in great abundance.

The lancets, spears, spikes, darts and arrows expressed their great confidence in Raghupati while taking leave of him (at the end of the symbolic feast; here meaning at the end of the war).

The brave and magnanimous Lord of Surdas (i.e. Ram) decided to leave the golden plate representing Lanka for his guest of honour Vibhishan when his turn came for meals.

[Since it was Vibhishan who had been made the king of Lanka, and had been the main factor in the conquest of the city and killing of Ravana, Sri Ram decided to leave the golden plate in which he himself had taken his meal along with his companions and brothers to Vibhishan as his parting gift and memorabilia, as well as a token of his thanks and gratitude to him. Of course, the plates and dishes were washed and scrubbed clean before there were given as gift to Vibhishan.] (188/2).

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Section-1

Uttar Kand/Canto 7

उत्तरकाण्ड

माता की व्याकुलता एवं सकुन विचार
राग सारंग

[189]

बैठी जननि करति सगुनौती ।
लछिमन—राम मिलैं अब मोकों, दोउ अमोलक मोती ॥
इतनी कहत, सुकाग उहाँ तें हरी डार उड़ि बैठ्यौ ।
अंचल गाँठि दई, दुख भाज्यौ, सुख जू आनि उर पैठ्यौ ॥
जब लौं हौं जीवौं जीवन भर, सदा नाम तव जपिहौं ।
दधि—ओदन दौना भरि दैहौं, अरु भाइनि मैं थपिहौं ॥
अब कै जो परचौ करि पावौं, अरु देखौं भरि आँखि ।
'सूरदास' सौने के पानी मढ़ौ चौच अरु पाँखि ॥

uttarakāṇḍa

mātā kī vyākulatā ēvaṁ sakuna vicāra
rāga sārāṅga

(189)

baiṭhī janani karati sagunautī.
lachimana-rāma milair̥m aba mōkaum̐, dō'u amōlaka mōtī..
itanī kahata, sukāga uhām̐ tēm̐ harī ḍāra uḍi baiṭhyau.
aṅcala gām̐ṭhi daī, dukha bhājyau, sukha jū āni ura paiṭhyau..
jaba laum̐ haur̐m jīvaur̐m jīvana bhara, sadā nāma tava japihaur̐m.
dadhi-ōdana daunā bhari daihaur̐m, aru bhā'ini mair̐m thapihaur̐m..
aba kai jō paracau kari pāvaur̐m, aru dēkhaur̐m bhari ām̐khi.
'sūradāsa' saunē kē pānī maṛhau caun̐ca aru pām̐khi..

Uttar Kand/Canto 7

Mother's Worry & Hoping for Some Good Omen
Raag Saarang

189. The mother (Kaushalya) sits pensively and in a remorse mood somewhere in her palace in Ayodhya and hopes for an auspicious omen to indicate the arrival of good news and for good times to come back. She wonders—‘When will Laxman and Ram, the two priceless gems of the clan, come back to meet me again?’

As soon as this thought occurred to her, a crow, which is regarded as a herald of good news when one is worried, flew from there and alighted on a green branch of a tree. Seeing it (perched on the tree), the mother tied a knot at the end of her garment (to virtually ‘tie the good omen’ so that it does not slip away). All her sorrows vanished from her heart (literally, they ran away or made a hasty retreat), and happiness and joy replaced them.

She expressed her gratitude to the crow by saying—‘Oh crow! I am so obliged of you, so grateful to you and so thankful that as long as I live, I’ll remember you with great honour. I’ll give you a cup (made of leaf) of sweet curd and rice to eat daily and affectionately regard you as one of my brothers. If this auspicious omen turns out to be true and I can see them (Sri Ram and Laxman) again with my eyes to their full (satisfaction), then I’ll get your beak and wings coated with a film of gold.’ (189).

श्रीराम का अयोध्या आगमन एवं खुशियाँ—राग बसंत

[190]

राघव आवत हैं अवध आज । रिपु जीते, साधे देव काज ॥
 प्रभु कुसल बंधु—सीता समेत । जस सकल देस आनंद देत ॥
 कपि सोभित सुभट अनेक संग । ज्यौं पूरन ससि सागर—तरंग ॥
 सुग्रीव—बिभीषन—जामवंत । अंगद—सुषेन—केदार संत ॥
 नल—नील—द्विबिद—केसरि—गवच्छ । कपि कहे कछुक, हैं बहुत लच्छ ॥
 जब कही पवन—सुत बंधु—बात । तब उठी सभा सब हरष गात ॥
 ज्यौं पावस रितु घन प्रथम घोर । जल—जीवक, दादर रटत मोर ॥
 जब सुन्यौ भरत पुर निकट भूप । तब रची नगर—रचना अनूप ॥
 प्रति—प्रति गृह तोरन ध्वजा—धूप । सजे सजल कलस अरु कदलि—यूप ॥
 दधि—दूब—हरद, फल—फूल—पान । कर कनक—थार तिय करति गान ॥
 सुनि भेरि—बेद—धुनि संख—नाद । सब निरखत पुलकित अति प्रसाद ॥
 देखत प्रभु की महिमा अपार । सब बिसरि गए मन—बुधि—विकार ॥
 जै—जै दसरथ—कुल—कमल—भान । जै कुमुद—जननि—ससि, प्रजा प्रान ॥
 जै दिवि भूतल सोभा समान । जै—जै—जै—‘सूर’ न सब आन ॥

śrīrāma kā ayōdhyā āgamana ēvaṁ khuśiyāṁ
rāga basanta

(190)

rāghava āvata hairiṁ avadha āja. ripu jītē, sādhe dēva kāja..
 prabhu kusala bandhu-sītā samēta. jasa sakala dēsa ānanda dēta..
 kapi sōbhita subhaṭa anēka saṅga. jyaumi pūrana sasi sāgara-taraṅga..
 sugrīva-bibhīṣana-jāmavanta . aṅgada-suṣēna-kēdāra santa..
 nala-nīla-dvibida-kēsari-gavaccha. kapi kahē kachuka, hairiṁ bahuta laccha..
 jaba kahī pavana-suta bandhu-bāta. taba uṭhī sabhā saba haraṣa gāta..
 jyaumi pāvāsa ritu ghana prathama ghōra. jala-jīvaka, dādara raṭata mōra..
 jaba sun'yau bharata pura nikaṭa bhūpa. taba racī nagara-racanā anūpa..
 prati-prati gr̥ha tōrana dhvajā-dhūpa. sajē sajala kalasa aru kadali-yūpa..
 dadhi-dūba-harada, phala-phūla-pāna. kara kanaka-thāra tiya karati gāna..
 suni bhēri-bēda-dhuni saṅkha-nāda. saba nirakhata pulakita ati prasāda..
 dēkhata prabhu kī mahimā apāra. saba bisari ga'ē mana-budhi-vikāra..
 jai-jai dasaratha-kula-kamala-bhāna. jai kumuda-janani-sasi, prajā prāna..
 jai divi bhūtala sōbhā samāna. jai-jai-jai- 'sūra' na sabda āna..

Sri Ram's Arrival in Ayodhya & Celebrations
Raag Basant

190. Raghav (Sri Ram) is coming back to Ayodhya today after having obtained victory over the enemy and successfully accomplishing the work of the Gods.

[The work of the Gods for which Vishnu had to take a birth as a human was to get rid of the evil forces on earth symbolized by the demons headed by their cruel king Ravana.]

The Lord is very cheerful along with his brother (Laxman) and Sita. The fame of his great glories, valiant deeds, great honours, gallant conquests and immaculate virtues have spread in all the direction of the world, and these good tidings fill the whole world (its inhabitants) with immense joy and happiness. Numerous brave and gallant monkeys look adorable alongside the Lord even as the ocean heaves and has tides when the moon becomes full.

[The full moon is the complete success of Sri Ram, the heaving of the ocean is the joyous celebration and excitement among the monkeys, the full moon and its beautiful light is the fame of the Lord spreading in all the directions of the world, and the lighting of the world with the light of the moon is symbolic of the conquest over the demons and the victory that righteous forces had over darkness in the form of evil forces on earth.]

Sugriv, Vibhishan and Jamvant, the saintly Angad, Sushen and Kedar, Nal, Neel, Dwivid, Kesari and Gawaksha—these are some of the names which are mentioned, but the monkeys and bears are uncountable. When the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) came to Ayodhya and conveyed the good news to the brother (Bharat), the whole court got up in a spontaneous reaction of joy and happiness. The bodies of the courtiers were as thrilled and exhilarated as the aquatic creatures are when they hear the first rumbling of the clouds during the rainy season, and the toad croaks and the peacocks dances in abundant merriment (upon hearing the rumbling of the clouds and the prospect of imminent rain).

When Bharat heard that the king (i.e. Sri Ram) was near the city, he got the city magnificently decorated like never done before in order to give a warm and rousing

welcome to Sri Ram. Festoons were tied at the doorway of each house, flags fluttered majestically everywhere, scented incense was burnt and ceremonial pitchers/pots (that were ornamentally decorated and filled with water and cereals as auspicious signs) were put up everywhere in the city. Banana tree stems were put up to auspiciously decorate the entire city.

Curd, grass blades, turmeric, fruits, flowers and beetle leaves were arranged on golden plates, and womenfolk held those plates in their hands and sang auspicious and felicitous songs to celebrate this happy occasion. The cacophonous sound of simultaneously beating of kettledrums, chanting of Vedic hymns and blowing of conch shells erupted everywhere. Everyone waited expectantly with thrill and joyous abandon for the arrival of the Lord.

Thinking of the measureless and fathomless glory and fame of the Lord, everyone forgot about all the worries, the consternations, the confusions and the perplexities that had been crowding their mind and dogging them for the last fourteen years of Sri Ram's absence from the city.

Surdas says that the whole city erupted in joy. There was tumultuous exultation everywhere in honour of Sri Ram. No other word was heard anywhere except the sound of praise and applause. The whole city reverberated with such exclamatory choir as 'Hale to the Sun that helps the lotus of the clan of Dashrath to bloom', 'Glory to the one who is like a Moon for the lily flower represented by the mother (Kaushalya)', 'Glory to the one who is as dear to his subjects as the Pran (life-forces represented by breath) is for any living being', 'Hail the Lord who is like an ornament of both the earth as well as the heaven', and 'Glory, glory, glory to the great Lord!' (190).

राग सारंग

[191]

कपिबर! देखि अजोध्या आई ।
 हंस—बंस कौ बास सदा यहाँ, भुजा उठाय दिखाई ॥
 सुंदर सर, चौहटे चहूँ दिसि आरसमनि छिति छाई ।
 मनि कंचन के हरमि मनोहर सरयु नदी सुखदाई ॥
 यह तजि मोहि अवर नहिं भावै, सप्त लोक ठकुराई ।
 परम बिचित्र रम्य तीरथ धन बेद—पुरानन गाई ॥
 यह पुर बसत प्रानहु ते प्यारे, तिन करि सुरति न जाई ।
 'सूरदास' रघुनाथ कृपानिधि श्रीमुख करत बड़ाई ॥

rāga sārāṅga

(191)

kapibara! dēkhi ajōdhyā ā'ī.
 hansa-bansa kau bāsa sadā yahām', bhujā uṭhāya dikhā'ī..
 sundara sara, caihaṭē cahūm' disī ārasamani chiti chā'ī.
 mani karīcana kē harami manōhara sarayu nadī sukhadā'ī..

yaha taji mōhi avara nahim bhāvai, sapta lōka ṭhakurā'ī.
 parama bicitra ramya tīratha dhana bēda-purānana gā'ī..
 yaha pura basata prānahu tē pyārē, tina kari surati na jā'ī.
 'sūradāsa' raghunātha krpānidhi śrīmukha karata baṛā'ī..

Raag Saarang

191. (Sitting in the 'Pushpak' plane over the sky of Ayodhya—) He (Sri Ram) lifted his hand and pointed to the city below. 'Oh the senior most amidst the monkeys (a reference to Sugriv)! Look, Ayodhya has come (i.e. we have finally reached the city). It is inhabited by people who are like Swan in matters of wisdom (i.e. the residents of Ayodhya are very wise like the bird Swan which is used in ancient literature to imply purity of wisdom).

There are beautiful ponds and lakes. There are broad street crossings and public squares in all the directions (i.e. everywhere), while the ground is clean and spotless like a mirror. The buildings are made of gold imbedded with gems and precious stones, while the pleasant river Saryu flows nearby (to its north). Except this city, I do not like any other city, or even the lordship of all the seven worlds taken together. [That is, Ayodhya is very dear to me.]. This pilgrim site, which is most enchanting, marvelous and magnificent, is also most honourable and praise worthy for it has been lauded even by the Vedas and Purans. Those who dwell in this city are more dear to me than my own life; I never forget them.'

Surdas says that the merciful Raghunath (Sri Ram) extolled the virtues of the city by his own divine mouth (191).

राग मारू

[192]

हमारी जन्मभूमि यह गाउँ ।
 सुनहु सखा सुग्रीव—बिभीषन! अवनि अजोध्या नाउँ ॥
 देखत बन—उपवन—सरिता—सर, परम मनोहर ठाउँ ।
 अपनी प्रकृति लिएँ बालत हौं, सुरपुर मैं न रहाउँ ॥
 ह्याँ के बासी अवलोकत हौं, आनंद उर न समाउँ ।
 'सूरदास' जो बिधि न सँकोचै, तो बैकुंठ न जाउँ ॥

rāga mārū

(192)

hamārī janmabhūmi yaha gā'um̐ .
 sunahu sakhā sugrīva-bibhīṣana! avani ajōdhyā nā'um̐ ..
 dēkhata bana-upavana-sarītā-sara, parama manōhara ṭhā'um̐ .
 apanī prakṛti li'aiim bālata hauṁ, surapura mair̐ na rahā'um̐ ..
 hyām̐ kē bāsī avalōkata hauṁ, ānam̐da ura na samā'um̐ .

'sūradāsa' jō bidhi na samkōcai, tō baikuṇṭha na jā'um' ..

Raag Maaru

192. (Sri Ram praises the city of Ayodhya in these words—) 'This is my birthplace. Listen, my friends Sugriv and Vibhishan. This city on the earth is known as Ayodhya. You can see forests, groves, gardens, orchards, rivers, lakes and ponds etc.—it is a most charming, enchanting and pleasant place. I'll tell you my internal thoughts and feelings vis-à-vis this city—I'd not like to stay in the heavens but would prefer to live in Ayodhya.

[That is, I would prefer to live like an ordinary human being in Ayodhya rather than as Vishnu in the divine comforts of heaven.] When I watch the inhabitants of this place, the joy that sight creates in me is so large that my heart cannot accommodate it¹.

Surdas says that Sri Ram (was so fascinated and emotionally attached to the city that he) even went to the extent of saying—'If the creator does not put me in a dilemma then I would not go back to Vaikunth (the original abode of Sri Ram in the heaven because he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu).' (192).

[Note :- ¹With all due respects to everone, without any prejudice whatsoever of any kind, with absolutely no intention to show disrespect or to hurt the sentiments of anyone, and pre-emptively begging sincere forgiveness and pardon if someone feels hurt, annoyed or offended, this author asks Sri Ram if he would say the same thing if he sees the people and the condition of the city of Ayodhya of today?

It is not that the Lord is not aware of the goings-on of the present day city of Ayodhya, and for that matter any other pilgrim site of nowadays, and his anger, his indignation, his frustration, his exasperation, his anguish and his remorse at the state of affairs prevailing in these pilgrim places which are supposed to be holy and pious would be too much for him to bear. But since he is a merciful, compassionate, loving, forgiving and a magnanimous Lord, he prefers to gulp down his bitterness at the sorry state of affairs like it were a salty lump of mucus down his throat, rather than desire to punish the inhabitants of these sites for the mis-demeanours and misdeeds that they recklessly indulge into with impunity. It is indeed certain that the Lord will never acquiesce with what all that is happening in the present day Ayodhya! But it is his merciful nature that prevents him from taking any drastic action.]

[193]

वे देखो रघुपति हैं आवत ।
 दूरहि तैं दुनिया के ससि ज्यौं, ब्यौम बिमान महा छबि छावत ॥
 सीय सहित बर—बीर बिराजत, अवलोकत आनंद बढ़ावत ।
 चारु चाप कर परस सरस सिर मुकुट धरे सोभा अति पावत ॥
 निकट नगर जिय जानि धँसे धर, जन्मभूमि की कथा चलावत ।
 ये मम अनुज परे दोउ पाइनि, ऐसी बिधि कहि—कहि समुझावत ॥
 ये बसिष्ठ कुल—इष्ट हमारे, पालागन कहि सखनि सिखावत ।
 ये स्वामी! सुग्रीव—बिभीषन, भरतहु तैं हमकौं जिय भावत ॥
 रिपु—जय, देव—काज, सुख—संपति सकल 'सूर' इनही तैं पावत ।
 ये अंगद—हनुमान कृपानिधि पुर पैठत जिन कौ जस गावत ॥

(193)

vē dēkhō raghupati haim āvata.
 dūrahi taim duniyā kē sasi jyaur̥, byauma bimāna mahā chabi chāvata..
 sīya sahita bara-bīra birājata, avalōkata ānanda barhāvata.
 cāru cāpa kara parasa sarasa sira mukuṭa dharē sōbhā ati pāvata..
 nikaṭa nagara jiya jāni dhamśē dhara, janmabhūmi kī kathā calāvata.
 yē mama anuja parē dō'u pā'ini, aisī bidhi kahi-kahi samujhāvata..
 yē basiṣṭa kula-iṣṭa hamārē, pālāgana kahi sakhani sikhāvata.
 yē svāmī! sugrīva-bibhīṣana, bharatahu taim hamakaur̥ jiya bhāvata..
 ripu-jaya, dēva-kāja, sukha-sampati sakala 'sūra' inahī taim pāvata.
 yē aṅgada-hanumāna krpānidhi pura paiṭhata jina kau jasa gāvata..

193. The extremely exhilarated and ecstatically excited citizen exclaimed—‘Look there, Raghupati (the Lord of Raghu’s clan; Sri Ram) is coming. From a distance, the plane in the sky looks as adorable as the moon in the night of ‘Dutiya’.

[This refers to the moon of the 2nd night after the new moon. This is because the plane looked like a shining concave bowl, the shape that the moon has on the second night after the dark night as viewed from the earth. It also refers to the practice of sighting this moon as a symbol of auspiciousness; people intently gaze at the evening sky to have a glimpse of this moon. The scene at Ayodhya resembled one such occasion.]

The great warriors (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman) are seated in it with Sita. This sight enhances our happiness and joys. He is holding a magnificent bow in his hands, and has a crown of matted hairs on his divine head—he presents a most enthralling, captivating, charming and adorable sight to behold.’

Seeing that the city has finally arrived, the plane descended to the ground while he (Sri Ram) was talking to his companions about the place of his birth. ‘These are my two younger brothers (Bharat and Shatrughan) who have come and fallen at my feet (i.e. have prostrated before me to welcome me)’—he explained the situation to his companions.

[That is, when Bharat and Shatrughan came to welcome Sri Ram, they immediately fell to the ground as a token of respect. The Lord introduced them to his companions, the chief monkeys and Vibhishan who had accompanied the Lord from Lanka.]

‘This is Guru Vashistha, the revered preceptor of our clan’—saying this, Sri Ram taught his friends (Sugriv, Vibhishan etc.) to show respect to the great sage by touching his feet. [The Lord first touched the holy feet of his moral preceptor and the elder Brahmin of the royal court. Then he urged his companions to do the same. He ‘taught’ them because the way they payed respects in their countries may have been different than the way it was done in Ayodhya.]

(Introducing the party from Lanka and Kishkindha which had accompanied him to Ayodhya to sage Vashistha, Sri Ram said—) ‘Oh Lord! They are Sugriv and Vibhishan. [Sugriv is the monkey king, and Vibhishan is the demon king.] They are more dear to my heart than Bharat¹. It is because of them that I have got success in obtaining victory over the enemy, accomplishing the formidable tasks of the Gods, and got back my joy, happiness, wealth and well-being. In fact, all the grand glories, the great credits for

the gallant deeds, and the great achievements that are assigned to me are actually due to them.

(Pointing to Angad and Hanuman, the Lord continued—) These are Angad and Hanuman whom I must praise first before I enter Ayodhya (because it is due to them that all the victory in the war was made actually possible on the ground).’

In this way, the merciful Lord praised his friends and companions while introducing them upon his arrival in his city (193).

[Note :- ¹It is not that Sri Ram loved Bharat any less than his friends from Lanka and Kishkindha. He wished to show honour and his indebtedness as well as profound gratitude to them that he made this observation. As a matter of fact also, had his friends from Lanka and Kishkindha—Vibhishan as well as the monkey army—not helped him at a place far away from Ayodhya in an alien land, Sri Ram would not have seen this happy day again.

Bharat was not a man of cheap feelings or egoistic in the least. He was wise and had realised this fact, so he never felt let down or short-shrifted or took umbrage in any manner whatsoever or in any way felt peeved and hurt at this comment by Sri Ram. He must have realised the significance of this statement, for he was sure that Ram’s love for him had no comparison with any love in this world. Sri Ram had made this comment only to show honour to the guests and express his gratitude and thanks to them, and not to demean the love and affection that he had for Bharat. If a small gesture could please the guest what harm was there in it. It also shows the confidence the Lord had in Bharat as he was sure that Bharat would not take this statement in the wrong light and harbour any sort of ill-will in life.]

राग बिलावल

[194]

देखन कौं मंदिर आनि चढ़ी ।
 रघुपति—पूरनचंद बिलोकत, मनु पुर—जलधि—तरंग बढ़ी ॥
 प्रिय—दरसन—प्यासी अति आतुर, निसि—बासर गुन—ग्राम रढ़ी ।
 रही ल लोक—लाज मुख निरखत, सीस नाइ आसीस पढ़ी ॥
 भई देह जो खेह करम—बस, जनु तट गंगा अनल दढ़ी ।
 ‘सूरदास’ प्रभु—दृष्टि सुधानिधि, मानौ फेरि बनाइ गढ़ी ॥

rāga bilāvala

(194)

dēkhana kauṁ mandira āni caṛhī.
 raghupati-pūranacanda bilōkata, manu pura-jaladhi-taraṅga baṛhī..
 priya-darasana-pyāsī ati ātura, nisi-bāsara guna-grāma raṛhī.
 rahī la lōka-lāja mukha nirakhata, sīsa nā'i āsīsa paṛhī..
 bha'i dēha jō khēha karama-basa, janu taṭa gaṅgā anala daṛhī.
 'sūradāsa' prabhu-drṣṭi sudhānidhi, mānau phēri banā'i gaṛhī..

Raag Bilawal

194. The womenfolk of the city climbed the terraces and attics of the buildings to have a glimpse (of Sri Ram). Seeing Raghupati, who resembled a full moon, there was so much exhilaration and ecstasy in the city that it resembled the soaring tidal waves sweeping across the ocean during the full moon night. They (the womenfolk) were thirsty to have a divine glimpse of their beloved Lord; they were extremely eager to have it, and they had been spending the long years (of fourteen years of the exile period), the days and the nights, narrating his virtues and glories to each other (to pass their time in his remembrance).

(Now when, at last, they had their wishes fulfilled and Sri Ram has come back to Ayodhya and they could see their beloved Lord once again—) They abandoned all inhibitions and hesitations (i.e. they could not suppress their surging emotional outburst of affection for the Lord) when they watched his face. They blushed, lowered their heads and blessed him.

[It is not considered decent that a chaste Hindu woman should look directly in the eyes of another male who is not her husband. That is why these ladies blushed when their eyes met those of Sri Ram.]

Their bodies had been so emaciated and withered from the agony of separation from their Lord due to the unfortunate circumstances or bad luck or evil design of destiny or the bad effects of any of their past deeds that their bodies resembled the charred and scorched bank of river Ganges after a ferocious fire has ravaged the riverside herbs, shrubs and trees.

[The womenfolk of Ayodhya had lived a life of total misery in the memory of their Lord that they hadn't eaten properly and took no interest in the routing household affairs. All of them behaved as if some very dear one has been lost, and this loss was too much to cope with. They resembled a burnt-down forest by the banks of the river Ganges which was earlier vibrant and pulsating with life but is now reduced to charred stretch of land which lacks any life and charm. Here river Ganges is used as a metaphor for the comfort that the city of Ayodhya provided them with, and though they lived in the opulence of the city they still became emaciated and withered.]

Surdas says that when the rejuvenating glance of the Lord fell upon them, they appeared to gain a fresh lease of life and their bodies became thrilled with excitement and happiness. No one could say that they were weak, emaciated and had been suffering agony of separation from their beloved Lord by looking at them now.

[As soon as they saw the Lord alongside Laxman and Sita, they cheered up immediately like plants, grass and flowers do after the first rainfall. All their agonies and its emotional consequences that reflected in their overall appearances of utter distress and wretchedness vanished instantly as if a thirsting man finds a fountain of fresh water in a hot desert.] (194).

राम भरत मिलाप—राग मारू

[195]

देखौ कपिराज! भरत वे आए ।

मम पाँवरी सीस पर जाके, कर—अँगुरी रघुनाथ बताए ॥

छीन सरीर बीर के बिछुर, राज—भोग चित तैं बिसराए ।
 तप, तरु लघु—दीर्घता, सेवस, स्वामि—धर्म, सब जगहिं सिखाए ॥
 पुहुप—बिमान दूरिहीं छाँड़े, चपल चरन आवत प्रभु धाए ।
 आनंद—मगन पगनि केकड़—सुत कनकदंड ज्यौं गिरत उठाए ॥
 भेंटत आँसू परे पीठि पर, बिरह—अग्नि मनु जरत बुझाए ।
 ऐसेहिं मिले सुमित्रा—सुत कौं, गदगद गिरा नैन जल छाए ॥
 जथाजोग भेटे पुरबासी, गए सूल, सुख—सिंधु नहाए ।
 सिया—राम—लछिमन मुख निरखत, 'सूरदास' के नैन सिराए ॥

rāma bharata milāpa-rāga mārū

(195)

dēkhau kapiṛāja! bharata vē ā'ē.
 mama pām̐varī sīsa para jākē, kara-am̐gurī raghunātha batā'ē..
 chīna sarīra bīra kē bichura, rāja-bhōga cita taiṛn bisarā'ē.
 tapa, taru laghu-dīraghatā, sēvasa, svāmi-dharma, saba jagahim̐ sikhā'ē..
 puhupa-bimāna dūrihim̐ chām̐rē, capala carana āvata prabhu dhā'ē.
 ānam̐da-magana pagani kēka'i-suta kanakadaṇḍa jyaum̐ girata uṭhā'ē..
 bhēṇṭata ām̐sū parē pīṭhi para, biraha-agini manu jarata bujhā'ē.
 aisēhim̐ milē sumitrā-suta kaur̐n, gadagada girā naina jala chā'ē..
 jathājōga bhēṇṭē purabāsī, ga'ē sūla, sukha-sindhu nahā'ē.
 siyā-rāma-lachimana mukha nirakhata, 'sūradāsa' kē naina sirā'ē..

Ram-Bharat Meeting—Raag Maaru

195. [When Sri Ram arrived at Ayodhya, his younger brother came eagerly to meet him. In this verse the Lord praises Bharat.]

(Sri Ram told Sugriv, the king of monkeys—) 'Look, oh king of monkeys! There comes Bharat on whose head you see my sandals placed very reverentially.

[Its remarkable devotion that Bharat shows here. When he came to meet the Lord at the spot where the plane landed, he brought the footwear of the Lord placed on his head as a token of total surrender and respect of the highest order. Usually this was not expected; one reason being that the sandal was placed on the throne. So the Lord pointed out this sight especially to his companion to indicate that though Bharat was seemingly at the center of the controversy regarding the Lord's exile because Bharat's mother Kaikeyi had wished to put her son on the throne instead of Sri Ram, but Bharat had nothing to do with this conspiracy. In fact, he was away when the evil scheme was hatched by his mother and was shocked beyond measure when informed. He had never accepted the throne even for a second, and has not only placed the Lord's sandals as a symbol of the Lord in his absentia but has now come to meet the Lord with this sandal on his head to show that his head is already bowed before the Lord's august feet. It shows Bharat's humility, devotion and love for the Lord.]

Raghunath (Sri Ram) pointed his finger towards Bharat as he approached from a distance, showing him to Sugriv. The Lord said—'The brave one's body has become

emaciated due to the anguish suffered by him during the separation of us two brothers. He had completely forsaken all the comforts, pleasures and enjoyments of kingdom and the kingdom so much so that he never even thought of them. By doing severe Tapa (i.e. by observing strictest austerities and severe vows as well as doing hard penances), by leading a life which exemplifies the affectionate behaviour of a younger brother towards his elder brother, the ideals of service and duty towards one's Lord or master or senior that he had practiced—well, he has taught the world all this by his own exemplary life, by practicing them himself instead of preaching theoretically.'

Saying this, the Lord dashed forward (to meet Bharat) with swift and nimble feet as soon as he saw Bharat coming towards him. Before the son of Kaikeyi (Bharat) could fall down at his feet like a golden staff (that is placed in front of the reigning sovereign by the care-taker when they meet), the Lord lifted him instantly, most cheerfully and overwhelmed with surging wave of affection and love. As they (Sri Ram and Bharat) met, Sri Ram's tears (rolled down his cheeks and) fell on the back of Bharat as if the Lord wished to douse the fire of separation from which he (Bharat) had been burning.

The Lord met the son of Sumitra (Shatrughan) in a similar fashion; his voice was choked with unbound emotions, and tears welled up in his eyes. The Lord met all the inhabitants of the city individually in an appropriate manner. All their agonies and pains, their distresses and miseries, their anguish and sorrows which had been tormenting their souls for the last fourteen years of separation from Sri Ram were dispelled as if they have bathed themselves in an ocean of happiness and joy (by meeting Sri Ram once again).

Surdas imagines that he is observing the goings on as a scribe, a witness, a participant, a devotee et al, and says that his eyes felt cool (i.e. comforted, contented, fulfilled, happy, grateful and joyous) by observing intently and closely the divine, holy and glorious faces of Sita, Sri Ram and Laxman at the site (195).

[Note :- The last line of this verse can be read as follows—'Surdas says that his eyes glorify and adore the divine and majestic view of Sri Ram and Laxman and Sita as they cheerfully come back to Ayodhya, the divine sight of Sri Ram meeting Bharat and Shatrughan as well as the citizen of Ayodhya. Surdas feels that the reward of possessing eyes has been received by him today when he watched the divine and glorious faces of Sita, Sri Ram and Laxman very closely and intently on this occasion.'

Now we must remember that Surdas was blind. So what he means is the divine sight that he possessed. He thanks his destiny that it had snatched his physical eyes which would have otherwise so much dazzled and overwhelmed his subtle sight of the mind by the enchanting sights of this physical material world that this subtle eye of the mind would have been blinded and unable to see what was happening during the time of Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya. Surdas would have lost this grand opportunity to see the events of Lord Ram's life on the canvas of his mind if he had not lost the physical eye of the body.

A careful look at the verses throughout the book shows that Surdas has used the present tense to describe whatever he narrates. This gives the positive impression that he was actually 'seeing' what he was narrating. His entire narration is in the first person.]

[196]

मनिमय आसन आनि धरे ।

दधि-मधु-नीर कनक के कोपर आपुन भरत भरे ॥

प्रथम भरत बैठाइ बंधु कौं, यह कहि पाइ परे ।
 हौं पावौं प्रभु—पाइ—पखारन, रुचि करि सो पकरे ॥
 निज कर चरन पखारि प्रेम—रस आनंद—आँसु ढरे ।
 जनु सीतल सौं तप्त सलिल द, सुखित समोइ करे ॥
 परसत पानि चरन पावन, दुख अँग—अँग सकल हरे ।
 'सूर' सहित आमोद चरन—जल लै कर सीस धरे ॥

(196)

manimaya āsana āni dharē.
 dadhi-madhu-nīra kanaka kē kōpara āpuna bharata bharē..
 prathama bharata baiṭhā'i bandhu kaum, yaha kahi pā'i parē.
 haum pāvauṁ prabhu-pā'i-pakhāraṇa, ruci kari sō pakarē..
 nija kara carana pakhāri prēma-rasa ānamda-āmśu dharē.
 janu sītala saum tapta salila da, sukhita samō'i karē..
 parasata pāni carana pāvana, dukha amṅga-amṅga sakala harē.
 'sūra' sahita āmōda carana-jala lai kara sīsa dharē..

The formal welcoming ceremony.

196. A gem studded (and embroidered) seating mat was brought and placed before Sri Ram. Bharat himself filled golden pots with milk, honey and water. Bharat made his brother (Sri Ram) sit on the mat and then fell down at his feet, pleading—'I must get the opportunity to wash the Lord's feet.' And saying this, he joyfully caught hold of them.

He washed the feet (of Sri Ram) by his own hands most reverentially, while tears of joys symbolising the nectar of affection and love (or the juice or essence of the emotion of affection and love) heaving in his heart rolled down his eyes as if he were trying to cool down and calm his scorched heart by irrigating it with that water. As he touched the august, divine and holy feet of the Lord, all the torments and agonies of his body and the anguish of his heart were eliminated. Then he cheerfully took that washed water as if it was sanctified and holy water offered to a deity, and placed it (i.e. sprinkled it) on his head and also on the head of Surdas (196).

[Note :- The last line is very significant and is reminiscent of Tulsidas' style of narration. The poet Surdas here imagines that he is virtually standing alongside Bharat to welcome Sri Ram on that memorable and momentous occasion. It is clear from the words 'lwj lfgr' meaning 'with Surdas' or 'along side Surdas' or 'accompanied by Surdas'. So this line can be interpreted in the following manner also—'Accompanied by Surdas, Bharat cheerfully took the water used for washing the feet of Sri Ram and sprinkled it on his head as well as that of Surdas as a mark of great reverence towards the Lord and to welcome him officially.'

Another interpretation can be as follows—'Surdas was standing by the side of Bharat as the latter welcomed Sri Ram, washed his feet and then sprinkled that holy water on the head of both himself and of Surdas as a token of showing respect to Sri Ram and giving him honour.'

This first two words of the last line, viz. 'lwj lfgr', clearly prove that the poet imagines that he was not an ordinary observer of the scene as a scribe, but was very close to Sri Ram and the family because he was a great devotee of the Lord and had shared the

agonies of Bharat and empathised with him. So being special for the Lord and Bharat, he was given the opportunity to stand with Bharat and share the momentous moment.

Its so remarkable and astonishing that except Surdas and Bharat no one else, including even Hanuman and other close associates of Sri Ram, got the golden opportunity of getting that holy water sprinkled on their heads on that once-in-a-life time auspicious occasion!]

राम का माताओं से मिलना एवं राज्याभिषेक

[197]

अति सुख कौसिल्या उठि धाई ।
 उदित बदन मन मुदित सदन तैं, आरति साजि सुमित्रा ल्याई ॥
 जनु सुरभी बन बसति बच्छ बिनु, परबस पसुपति की बहराई ।
 चली साँझ समुहाइ खवत थन, उमँगि मिलन जननी दोउ आई ॥
 दधि—फल—दूब कनक—कोपर भरि, साजत सौँज बिचित्र बनाई ।
 अमी—बचन सुनि होत कुलाहल, देवनि दिवि दुंदुभी बजाई ॥
 बरन—बरन पट परत पाँवड़े, बीथिनि सकल सुगंध सिंचाई ।
 पुलकित रोम, हरषै—गदगद स्वर, जुवतिनि मंगल—गाथा गाई ॥
 निज मंदिर मैं आनि तिलक दै, दुज—गन मुदित असीस सुनाई ।
 सिया—सहित सुख बसौ इहाँ तुम, 'सूरदास' नित उठि बलि जाई ॥

rāma kā mātā'ōm sē milanā ēvaṁ rājyābhiṣēka

(197)

ati sukha kausilyā uṭhi dhā'ī.
 uḍita badana mana mudita sadana tairi, ārati sāji sumitrā lyā'ī..
 janu surabhī bana basati baccha binu, parabasa pasupati kī baharā'ī.
 calī sām̐jha samuhā'ī sravata thana, umam̐gi milana janani dō'u ā'ī..
 dadhi-phala-dūba kanaka-kōpara bhari, sājata saun̐ja bicitra banā'ī.
 amī-bacana suni hōta kulāhala, dēvani divi dundubhī bajā'ī..
 barana-barana paṭa parata pām̐vaṛē, bīthini sakala sugandha sin̐cā'ī.
 pulakita rōma, haraṣai-gadagada svara, juvatini maṅgala-gāthā gā'ī..
 nija mandira maiṁ āni tilaka dai, duja-gana mudita asīsa sunā'ī.
 siyā-sahita sukha basau ihām̐ tuma, 'sūradāsa' nita uṭhi bali jā'ī..

Sri Ram Meets His Mothers & His Coronation

197. Kaushalya (the mother of Sri Ram) got up cheerfully and rushed forward to meet him. Sumitra also rose up with a cheerful mind and happy countenance, decorated the 'Arti' (a plate with auspicious paraphernalia to formally welcome someone) and came out of her palace. Even as cows who had been forcibly taken out for the day's grazing to the meadows by their herds, spend the entire day without seeing their calves, but as evening comes, they rush excitedly back to their sheds, with milk dripping from their udders, to

meet their little ones once again and feed them—the two mothers (Kaushalya and Sumitra) also ran excitedly to meet them (Sri Ram and Laxman) just as those cows returning to meet their calves at the end the day.

Curd, fruits, blades of green grass etc. were filled in golden pots and arranged decoratively alongside other auspicious paraphernalia. As soon as the pleasant and most welcome word (that the Lord has finally arrived)—word which was like Amrit (nectar; elixir) for the citizens—spread in the city, there was a joyous tumult everywhere (i.e. the city erupted in happiness and exultation). The Gods sounded their kettledrums and trumpets in the sky/heaven. All the lanes and by-lanes of the city were sprinkled with scented/perfumed water. Coloured carpets were spread along the roads and avenues. Exhilarated womenfolk with thrilled bodies and ecstatic voices which were filled with surging emotions started fervently singing in chorus auspicious songs of felicitation and welcome.

He (Sri Ram) was brought to the royal palace and anointed on the throne (of Ayodhya) by the elders and Brahmins who blessed him on the occasion.

Surdas also blesses the Lord, and feels extremely ecstatic, exhilarated, happy and glad. He says—‘Oh Lord! Reside here happily with Sita so that every morning I can get up and sacrifice myself upon you (—i.e. have your divine view and thank my good luck at having the opportunity of seeing you every morning as the majestic king who rules over the hearts of his devotees).’ (197).

राम की राजा के रूप में दिनचर्या

[198]

बिनती केहि बिधि प्रभुहि सुनाऊँ ।
 महाराज रघुबीर धीर कौ समय न कबहूँ पाऊँ ॥
 जाम रहत जामिनि के बीतें तिहि औसर उठि धाऊँ ।
 सकुच होत सुकुमार नींद ते कैसैं प्रभुहि जगाऊँ ॥
 दिनकर—किरन उदित ब्रह्मादिक रुद्रादिक इक ठाऊँ ।
 अगनित भीर अमर—मुनि—गन की, तिहि ते ठौर न पाऊँ ॥
 उठत सभा दिन मध्य सियापति, देखि भीर फिर आऊँ ।
 न्हात खात सुख करत साहिबी कैसैं करि अनखाऊँ ॥
 रजनी—मुख आवत गुन गावत नारद—तुम्बरु नाऊँ ।
 तुमही कहौ कृपन हौं रघुपति किहि बिधि दुख समझाऊँ ॥
 एक उपाय करौ कमलापति, कहौ तौ कहि समझाऊँ ।
 पतित—उधारन ‘सूर’ नाम प्रभु लिखि कागद पहुँचाऊँ ॥

rāma kī rājā kē rūpa mēm dinacaryā

(198)

binatī kēhi bidhi prabhuhi sunā'ūṁ.
 mahārāja raghubīra dhīra kau samaya na kabahūṁ pā'ūṁ ..

jāma rahata jāmini kē bītēṁ tihi ausara uṭhi dhā'ūṁ.
 sakuca hōta sukumāra nīnda tē kaisaiṁ prabhuhi jagā'ūṁ ..
 dinakara-kirana uḍita brahmādika rudrādika ika ṭhā'ūṁ.
 aḡanita bhīra amara-muni-gana kī, tihi tē ṭhaura na pā'ūṁ ..
 uṭhata sabhā dina madhya siyāpati, dēkhi bhīra phira ā'ūṁ.
 nhāta khāta sukha karata sāhibī kaisaiṁ kari anakhā'ūṁ ..
 rajanī-mukha āvata guna gāvata nārada-tumbaru nā'ūṁ.
 tumahī kahau krpana hauṁ raghupati kihi bidhi dukha samajhā'ūṁ ..
 ēka upāya karaūṁ kamalāpati, kahau tau kahi samajhā'ūṁ.
 patita-udhārana 'sūra' nāma prabhu likhi kāgada pahumčā'ūṁ ..

Sri Ram's Daily Routine as a King

198. (Surdas has used an allegory of his own imaginary inability to find time to talk with Sri Ram to describe the busy daily routine in the life of Sri Ram as the king of Ayodhya—) Surdas says, 'How can I submit my humble petition to the Lord; or, how can I make the Lord hear my prayers? I never get an opportunity for it (or a chance of an appointment) from Raghubir who is a great king, is very patient, fortitudinous, courageous and steadfast in his resolve. I do not get sufficient time for it.

During the last few hours of the night, just before dawn, I get up and rush to meet him, but at the last moment I hesitate, thinking that the Lord is very tender and delicate, and how can I, who is his servant, disturb him in his sleep?

[That is, first I think that the Lord would be free in the morning so he will have time to listen to me, because for the rest of the day he would be very busy attending to the affairs of the kingdom. But soon I have second thoughts—I begin to think that it is too early to wake him up, and being a devotee of the Lord it is my duty to see that the sleep of the Lord is not disturbed before the time for his waking up comes. I should not be selfish so as not to bother about the Lord's conveniences just for my sake.]

As soon as the first rays of the sun break through the horizon, Brahma (the creator), Rudra (Lord Shiva) and other Gods assemble at the spot (where the Lord receives audience), and there is such a huge crowd of the immortal Gods as well as the sages and seers that I do not get a chance to find even a foothold (or a place to stand). (I wait and wait endlessly, but—) In the afternoon, Sitapati (i.e. the husband of Sita, Sri Ram) gets up from the royal court (for the afternoon recess) and I have to return empty handed (silently and unsuccessful) because of the crowd which had stood in front of me, waiting for a chance to meet Sri Ram before I can.

[That is, in the forenoon I had waited patiently for my chance to get an opportunity to talk to Sri Ram, but with a jostling crowd of great people and those of higher stature in society assembled there, no one pays any heed to me because I am so humble, and therefore I am relegated and pushed constantly to the rear of the crowd. Then the noon recess arrives, the king gets up from his court for a small noon break, and I have to return disappointed once again.]

How can I blame the Lord for not giving me time; he seems so busy—sometimes having a bath, at other times he is busy with his meals or taking a rest or attending to the work of the kingdom.

During the evening hours when the night approaches, sage Narad comes with his lute to sing his glories and divine hymns.

So, oh Raghupati (the Lord of Raghu's clan, Sri Ram), I am very humble. Tell me when should I explain my miseries, troubles, tribulations, sorrows and agonies to you? (What time will you meet me?)

If you permit me (or, literally say 'yes' to me), then I have a way out (or a solution) of this predicament facing me. And, oh Kamalapati (literally, the divine husband of Kamla which is another name for Goddess Laxmi; hence, Lord Vishnu; here referring to Sri Ram who is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu), I shall explain it to you. Oh Lord! Your name is the most superior amongst those who help others in their deliverance and giving succour and solace to the wretched, the lowly, the meek and the humble ones. Hence, I could send my petition to you in writing (if you cannot give me a few moments to hear me personally in the melee of Gods and sages).

[That is, in the midst of so many great people present in exalted assembly, I won't ever get an opportunity to personally talk with you, to stand before you and personally narrate my woes to you, hoping to get solace and succour as well as relief and rehabilitation. So, if you wish and grant me permission, I will write my humble prayers in the form of a petition and send it to you. And I am sure, you being so gracious and benevolent towards even the most humble of creatures that exist, you'll surely pay attention to it instead of throwing it away in the dustbin. That way, at least you shall know that this humble Surdas wants to say something because if I wait for an opportunity to get a personal appointment with you for hearing, I think I might never get it.] (198).

राग मारू

[199]

अंतरजामी हौ रघुबीर ।
करुना—सिंधु अकाल—कलप—तरु, जानत जन की पीर ॥
बालि—त्रास बन—बास बिषम दुख ब्यापत सकल सरीर ।
सोइ सुग्रीव कपि—कुलपति कीनौ, मिटी महा रिपु—भीर ॥
दसमुख दुसह क्रोध दावानल निज उस्वास समीर ।
राख्यौ तिहिं जुर जरत बिभीषन सीचि सुरत सित नीर ॥
सुनि—सुनि कथा प्रसिद्ध पुरातन जस जान्यौ जुग जीर ।
बहुरि नयौ करि कियौ 'सूर' प्रभु रामचंद्र रनधीर ॥

(199)

antarajāmī hau raghubīra.
karunā-sindhu akāla-kalapa-taru, jānata jana kī pīra..
bāli-trāsa bana-bāsa biṣama dukha byāpata sakala sarīra.
sō'i sugrīva kapi-kulapati kīnau, miṭī mahā ripu-bhīra..
dasamukha dusaha krōdha dāvānala nija usvāsa samīra.
rākhyau tihīṁ jura jarata bibhīṣana sīci surata sita nīra..
suni-suni kathā prasid'dha purātana jasa jān'yau juga jīra.

bahuri nayaum kari kiyau 'sūra' prabhu rāmacandra ranadhīra..

Raag Maaru

199. 'Oh Raghubir (Sri Ram)! You know the internal thoughts of a person because you are omniscient and all-knowing. You are an ocean of mercy and compassion. You are the proverbial all wish full-filling 'Kalpa' tree (which is the celestial tree of Gods) that blossoms even without a proper season (i.e. it is evergreen and perennial). And you know the pains, sorrows, anguish, troubles, tribulations and torments of your devotees.

Tormented by Baali (the elder brother), Sugriv lived in the forest suffering from great difficulties, and where his body could not find any comfort. The same Sugriv was made the king of the monkey race, and his great fear from his arch enemy (Baali) was eliminated or erased forever.

The furious anger and wrath of the 10-headed one (Ravana) was like a ferocious wild fire of the forest, while his (Vibhishan's) own breath was like the wind that fanned that fire more. You have saved Vibhishan from being scorched and roasted alive in that fire (of Ravana's wrath and vengeance) by soothingly drenching him with the clean and cool water of your famed mercy and kindness.

[That is, Ravana became furious each time he saw Vibhishan. The allusion to the 'breath fuelling the fire' means that every time Ravana saw Vibhishan alive and breathing, he went into a fit of suppressed rage; he did not want to outrage the feelings of other members of the demon clan by killing one of his own brothers, but he probably ground his teeth and bit his lips angrily in disgust and hatred every time when he saw Vibhishan alive. The Lord had killed Ravana and freed Vibhishan from his torments for all times to come.]

This ancient world had known of your stupendous and glorious deeds as well as of your most ancient and famous story (known as Ramayana) by hearing of them through the ages. But oh Sri Ram Chandra, the Lord of Surdas, the brave Lord who is steadfast, courageous and valiant in the battle-field! You have renewed or retold or re-enacted them once again the magnificent deeds that you have done during the current incarnation of yours' (199).

[Note :- The last line can be interpreted as follows also—'Surdas says that his Lord Sri Ram Chandra, who is most courageous, steadfast, unrelenting and invincible in the battlefield ('Ran-Dhir'), had renewed those famous glories of his by the above two deeds—viz., making Sugriv the king of the monkey race and relieving Vibhishan from the constant fear of his brother's wrath. These are the two vital milestones around which the rest of the story of Sri Ram's conquest of Lanka and the trail of victory was weaved in the epic story of Ramayana.'

It might also mean this—'Surdas has revived or renewed those glories and stupendous stories/deeds of his Lord Sri Ram Chandra, who is steadfast, courageous, unrelenting and invincible in the battle-field, which had been known by the world for generations after generations, coming down through the ages in oral tradition, by narrating the age-old traditional and well known story of the Lord once again in writing.']

* __*__*__*

SAINT SURDAS'

RAM CHARITAAWALI

(Surdas Ramayan)

Section-2

SUR-SARAWALI

Introduction

Surdas has outlined the story of Sri Ram, called the Ramayana, by marking the major events in the entire story as milestones to narrate it, instead of going into the details. These milestones are the following—the preamble describing the background for Sri Ram's incarnation, his birth, childhood activities, protection of Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice, Sita's marriage ceremony, the marriage of all the four brothers, vanquishing Parashuram's pride, arrival of the marriage party in Ayodhya, Sri Ram's forest exile, Sita's abduction by Ravana, the search for Sita, the conquest of Lanka and Sri Ram's return to Ayodhya, his coronation and a brief description of Sri Ram's reign as a king of Ayodhya.

Instead of following the usual patten of Ramayana by dividing the story into 7 'Kandas' or Chapters (e.g. Baal Kand, Ayodhya Kand etc.), he has used these 13 major pegs, as it were, to outline the story in a continuous rhythmic flow using a uniform, unbroken and staccato style without any apparent pause or break. The above 13 major heads under which the continuous flow of the rather homogenous verses are hypothetically divided into is used by me to segregate the verses into 13 segments to make it convenient for the purpose of narration as well as for the sake of convenience of the reader. Otherwise, it's an un-breaking, continuous stream of verses, one flowing smoothly and seamlessly into the other, resembling a continuous flow of a river, or a necklace of equal sized pearls, where each pearl represents a particular major episode in Sri Ram's life. It's a break from the earlier narrative style when the verses were distinguished by being set to different Raagas or melodious tunes or notes of the Indian tradition of classical music. But brevity has often rendered the description of Ramayana in 'Sur-Sarawali' too codified or cryptic for an uninitiated reader who is not fully aware of the full story in detail. The 'hints' provided makes him wonder what the poet is talking about. For example, in verse no. 8, the last line talks about 'the king proving Kaikeyi's word to be true' and 'then carrying out this word' which is the literal translation of that line. But anyone who is unaware of Dashrath's promises to Kaikeyi, her asking for the throne of Ayodhya for her son Bharat and exile for Sri Ram as well as the 'work' meaning the work of the Gods which was to get the earth rid of its burden in the form of the demons by killing them, will not understand what the line refers to.

Nevertheless, let's symbolically turn this rosary of beautiful beads consisting of the magnificent, enthralling, majestic, fascinating and most divine story of Sri Ram called Ramayana. Like each stone used by the Lord to construct the bridge over the ocean to cross over to Lanka, these verses will also help us, devotionally speaking, cross over the vast ocean represented by the mundane, delusionary, artificial, mirage-like entrapping world. Each verse, each episode, is the stepping stone of the spiritual and devotional journey that would symbolically bring the devotee of the Lord closer to him. Amen!

सूर-मारावली की रामकथा

भूमिका

[1]

रावन, कुंभकरन असुराधिप, बड़े सकल जग माँहिं ।
 सबहिन लोकपाल उन जीते, कोऊ बाच्यौ नाँहिं ॥
 सकल देव मिलि जाय पुकारे, चतुरानन के पास ।
 लै सिव संग चले चतुरानन, छीर—सिंधु सुखबास ॥
 अस्तुति करि बहु भाँति जगाए, तब जागे निज नाथ ।
 आज्ञा दई, जाय कपि—कुल मैं, प्रगटौ सब सुर साथ ॥
 तब ब्रह्मा सबहिन सौं भाष्यौ, सोइ सब सुर कीन्हौ ।
 सातौं दीप जाय कपि—कुल मैं, आय जन्म सुर लीन्हौ ॥
 अपने अंस आप हरि प्रगटे, पुरुषोत्तम निज रूप ।
 नारायन भुव—भार हरौ है, अति अनंद स्वरूप ॥
 बासुदेव, यौ कहत बेद मैं, हैं पूरन अवतार ।
 सेश सहस मुख रटत निरंतर, तऊ न पावत पार ॥
 सहस—बर्ष लौं ध्यान कियौ सिव, रामचरित सुख—सार ।
 अवगाहन करि कै सब देख्यौ, तऊ न पायौ पार ॥
 बिती समाधि, सती तब पूछ्यौ, कहौ मरम गुरु ईस !
 काकी ध्यान करत उर अंतर, को पूरन जगदीस ?
 तब सिव कहेउ राम अरु गोबिंद, परम इष्ट इक मेरे ।
 सहस बर्ष लौं ध्यान करत हौं, राम—कृष्ण सुख केरे ॥
 तामैं राम समाधि करी अब, सहस बर्ष लौं बाम ।
 अति आनंद मगन मेरौ मन, अँग—अँग पूरन काम ॥
 दाया करि मोकौं यह कहियै, अमर होहुँ जेहिं भाँति ।
 मोहि नारदमुनि तत्व बतायौ, तातें जिय अकुलाति ॥
 तब महादेव कृपा करि कै, यह चरित कियौ बिस्तार ।
 सो ब्रह्माण्ड पुरान व्यास मुनि, कियौ बदन उच्चार ॥
 मुनि बाल्मीकि कृपा सातौं ऋषि, राम—मंत्र फल पयौ ।
 उलटौ नाम जपत अघ बीत्यौ, पुनि उपदेस करायौ ॥

रामचरित बरनन के कारन, बालमीकि—अवतार ।
 तीनों लोक भए परिपूरन, रामचरित सुखसार ॥
 सतकोटि रामायन कीनौ, तऊ न लीन्हौ पार ।
 कह्यौ बसिष्ठ मुनि रामचंद्र सौं रामायन—उच्चार ॥
 कागभुसुंड गरुड़ सौं भाष्यौ, राम चरित अवतार ।
 सकल बेद अरु सास्त्र कह्यौ है, रामचंद्र—जस सार ॥
 कछु संक्षेप 'सूर' अब बरनत, लघुमति दुरबल बाल ।
 यह रसना पावन के कारन, मेटन भव—जंजाल ॥

sūra-sārāvalī kī rāmakathā

bhūmikā

(1)

rāvana, kumbhakarana asurādhipa, baṛhē sakala jaga māṁhiṁ.
 sabahina lōkapāla una jītē, kō'ū bācyau nāmhiṁ..
 sakala dēva mili jāya pukārē, caturānana kē pāsa.
 lai siva saṅga calē caturānana, chīra-sindhu sukhabāsa..
 astuti kari bahu bhāmṭi jagā'ē, taba jāgē nija nātha.
 ājñā da'i, jāya kapi-kula maim, pragaṭau saba sura sātha..
 taba brahmā sabahina saurṁ bhāṣyau, sō'i saba sura kīnhaum.
 sātaurṁ dīpa jāya kapi-kula maim, āya janma sura līnhaum..
 apanē ansa āpa hari pragaṭē, puruṣōttama nija rūpa.
 nārāyana bhuva-bhāra harau hai, ati ananda svarūpa..
 bāsudēva, yaurṁ kahata bēda maim, hairṁ pūrana avatāra.
 sēṣa sahasa mukha raṭata nirantara, ta'ū na pāvata pāra..
 sahasa-barṣa laurṁ dhyāna kiyau siva, rāmacarita sukha-sāra.
 avagāhana kari kai saba dēkhyau, ta'ū na pāyau pāra..
 bitī samādhi, satī taba pūchyau, kahau marama guru īsa!
 kākī dhyāna karata ura antara, kō pūrana jagadīsa?
 taba siva kahē'u rāma aru gōbinda, parama iṣṭa ika mērē.
 sahasa barṣa laurṁ dhyāna karata haum, rāma-kṛṣṇa sukha kērē..
 tāmairṁ rāma samādhi karī aba, sahasa barṣa laurṁ bāma.
 ati ānanda magana mērau mana, amṅga-amṅga pūrana kāma..
 dāyā kari mōkaum yaha kahiyai, amara hōhum jēhim bhāmṭi.
 mōhi nāradamuni tatva batāyau, tātēm jiya akulāti..
 taba mahādēva kṛpā kari kai, yaha carita kiyau bistāra.
 sō brahmāṇḍa purāna byāsa muni, kiyau badana uccāra..
 muni bālmiki kṛpā sātaurṁ ṛṣi, rāma-mantra phala payau.
 ulaṭau nāma japata agha bityau, puni upadēsa karāyau..
 rāmacarita baranana kē kārana, bālamiki-avatāra.
 tīnaurṁ lōka bha'ē paripūrana, rāmacarita sukhasāra..

satakōṭi rāmāyana kīnau, ta'ū na līnhauṁ pāra.
 kahyau basiṣṭa muni rāmacandra saum rāmāyana-uccāra..
 kāgabhusuṇḍa garuṣa saum bhāṣyau, rāma carita avatāra.
 sakala bēda aru sāsra kahyau hai, rāmacandra-jasa sāra..
 kachu saṅkṣēpa 'sūra' aba baranata, laghumati durabala bāla.
 yaha rasanā pāvana kē kārana, mēṭana bhava-jaṅjāla..

Sur-Sarawali Ram Katha Preamble

1. The great demons Ravana and Kumbhakaran had become dominant, invincible and strong in the whole world. They had conquered all the 'Lokpals' (guardians of the world) without any exception. Then all the Gods collected and went to Brahma (the patriarch God and the creator) to complain and call for help. The 4-headed Brahma took Shiva with him and along with the other Gods went to the 'Kshir Sagar' (the legendary ocean of milk where Lord Vishnu reclined on a bed made of the coiled body of the legendary serpent called Sheshnath who floated on the celestial ocean).

They prayed to him most urgently in various ways, and then the supreme Lord (Vishnu) woke up himself (from his 'deep sleep state of consciousness' called the 'Sushupta' state). Become aware of the Gods' predicament, Vishnu ordered—'All the Gods should go and take birth in the race of monkeys.'

Brahma conveyed this message to the Gods, and all of them obeyed the instructions forthwith. The Gods manifested themselves in the various clans of the monkey race spread over all the seven continents on earth. Hari (Vishnu) revealed himself, together with all his divine parts, as a 'Purshottam'—literally 'as a man who was the best and most exalted in the human race.' [The word 'Purush' means a man, while 'Uttam' means the best, excellent, most superior and exalted.]

In that most pleasant and blissful form as Narayan (Vishnu), he eliminated, removed the burden of the earth. The Vedas call him 'Vasudeo'. He (Sri Ram) is a complete incarnation of the supreme Lord (Vishnu).

The legendary Sheshnath describes his (Lord Vishnu's or Sri Ram's) virtues and glories by its thousands of hoods, but does not find an end to them.

Lord Shiva submerged (dived) himself in the great ocean of bliss and happiness represented by the story of Sri Ram called 'Ram Charit' for a thousand years, searched it out, but still he could not find an end to it or could not measure it and fathom it. When he woke up from his meditative 'Samadhi' (a trance-like state), Sati (Parvati, his divine consort) asked him, 'Oh my Guru (moral preceptor and guide) and Ish (Lord)! Tell me the secret enshrined in your heart. On whom were you contemplating and concentrating your attention while meditating? Who is the complete, absolute, un-questioned and almighty supreme Lord of the creation?'

Lord Shiva replied, 'Sri Ram and Govind—'he' is the only supreme chosen deity (Ishta) for me. [Sri Ram and Govind refer to Sri Ram and Sri Krishna respectively. The use of the singular pronoun 'he' indicates the fact that both Sri Ram and Sri Krishna are unequivocally and irrefutably the same Lord Vishnu incarnated in two forms on two different occasions.] I concentrate, contemplate and meditate upon them (i.e. Sri Ram and Krishna) for one thousand years each, and they give me immense and unbound

happiness. [That is, Shiva meditates upon Sri Ram for one thousand years and then on Krishna for the next one thousand years, and the cycle goes on. We must remember that earlier, Lord Shiva had used the singular pronoun 'he' for both Sri Ram and Krishna, but now he says that he contemplates and mediates upon each of them for one thousand years. This statement is very significant—on the one hand it symbolises the non-dual nature of the Lord and on the other hand it indicates that the same non-dual Lord becomes dual entities in the form of Sri Ram and Krishna. But essentially they are one and the same.] Out of that, oh Goddess (Parvati), I was recently engrossed in concentrating, contemplating and meditating upon Sri Ram for the past one thousand years. This has drenched and soaked my mind and heart with an extreme sense of bliss, happiness, joy, contentedness and beatitude. All my desires and wishes—even the minutest of them—have been fulfilled.'

Sati (Parvati) requested him, 'Be gracious, and kindly tell this story (of Sri Ram) to me so that I too can become immortal (and enjoy the same ambrosia of bliss and beatitude, the same fount of happiness and joy that you have done yourself). The celestial sage Narad has told me the secret of this (that by hearing Sri Ram's divine story, one can become immortal). That is why my heart is very eager to hear about it.'

Then the great Lord (i.e. Lord Shiva) described the story in detail. Sage Veda Vyas has described the same story in the epic Brahmaand Puran written by him¹.

The great sage/seer Valmiki had obtained the divine Mantra 'Ram' as a reward/fruit/blessing from the seven celestial sages called 'Saptarishis'. He (Valmiki) was able to destroy all his accumulated sins by repeating this holy name (of Ram) in the reverse order (as MARA, which is the reverse pronunciation of the word RAMA). Thereafter, he became so wise, erudite, exalted, scholarly and enlightened that he himself narrated this divine story of Sri Ram (in the form of the well known and the popular version of the epic 'Ramayana'). Sage Valmiki had taken birth with the sole purpose of describing and narrating this epic story of Sri Ram (known as 'Ramayana') for the benefit of this world.

All the three worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial and the nether world) become contended by hearing the essential story of Sri Ram as described by him (Valmiki). He created the epic Ramayana having 100 Crore (1 Crore = 10 million) verses or hymns, but still he could not find an end to it (i.e. he was not satisfied that he had completely told the story; there was much left to be said).

After that, the great sage Vashistha also narrated the great story to Sri Ram himself. Again, the crow saint Kag Bhusund told this story of Sri Ram's incarnation to Garud (who is the mount of Lord Vishnu; the legendary eagle or heron).

All the Vedas and scriptures assert that the great, divine and most magnificent glories of Sri Ramchandra is the essence of all these narrations.

This humble Surdas is a child with a poor intellect (as compared to the great and exalted ancient sages and seers mentioned above). He narrates the life story of Sri Ram in brief just in order to purify his tongue, to remove or eliminate the net of botherations, perplexities and consternations created by the mundane, delusory artificial and entrapping world for him (1).

[Note :- ¹Veda Vyas' detailed story of Ramayana appears in this Brahmaand Puran and it is called 'Adhyatma Ramayana', an English version of the entire text has been published separately by this author.]

श्रीराम जन्म

[2]

पुष्य नछत्र, नौमी जु परम दिन, लगन सुद्ध, सुभ बार ।
 प्रगट भए दसरथ—गृह, पूरन चतुर्व्यूह अवतार ॥
 तीनों ब्यूह संग लै प्रगटे, पुरुषोत्तम श्रीराम ।
 संकर्षन—प्रद्युम्न, लच्छमन—भरत महासुख—धाम ॥
 शत्रुघ्नहि अनिरुध कहियतु हैं, चतुर्व्यूह निज रूप ।
 रामचंद्र प्रगटे जब गृह मै, हरषे कौसल—भूप ॥
 अति फूले दसरथ मनहिं मन, कौसल्या सुख पायौ ।
 सौमित्रा—केकई—मन आनंद, यह सबहिन सुत जायौ ॥
 गुरु बसिष्ठ, नारद मुनि ज्ञानी, जन्मपत्रिका कीनी ।
 रामचंद्र बिख्यात नाम यह, सुर—मुनि की सुधि लीनी ॥
 देत दान नृपराज दुजन कौ, सुरभी हेम अपार ।
 सब सुंदरि मिलि मंगल गावत, कंचन—कलस दुवार ॥
 आए देव और मुनिजन सब, दै असीस सुख भारी ।
 अपने—अपने धाम चले सब, परम मोद रुचिकारी ॥
 मन बांछित फल सबहिन पाए, भयौ सबन आनंद ।
 बालरूप है कै दसरथ—सुत, करत केलि स्वच्छंद ॥

śrīrāma janma

(2)

puṣya nachatra, naumī ju parama dina, lagana sud'dha, subha bāra.
 pragata bha'e dasaratha-gr̥ha, pūrana catubryūha avatāra..
 tīnaum byūha saṅga lai pragaṭē, puruṣōttama śrīrāma.
 saṅkarṣana-pradyumna, lacchamana-bharata mahāsukha-dhāma..
 śatrughnani anirudha kahiyatu haiṁ, catubryūha nija rūpa.
 rāmacandra pragaṭē jaba gr̥ha maim, haraṣē kausala-bhūpa..
 ati phūlē dasaratha manahiṁ mana, kausalyā sukha pāyau.
 saumitrā-kēka'i-mana ānamḍa, yaha sabahina suta jāyau..
 guru basiṣṭha, nārada muni jñānī, janmapatrikā kīnī.
 rāmacandra bikhyāta nāma yaha, sura-muni kī sudhi līnī..
 dēta dāna nṛparāja dujana kauṁ, surabhī hēma apāra.
 saba sundari mili maṅgala gāvata, kaṅcana-kalasa duvāra..
 ā'e dēva aura munijana saba, dai asīsa sukha bhārī.
 apanē-apanē dhāma calē saba, parama mōda rucikārī..
 mana bānchita phala sabahina pā'e, bhayau sabana ānanda.
 bālarupa hvai kai dasaratha-suta, karata kēli svacchanda..

Sri Ram's Birth

2. It was the 'Nakshatra' (asterism) called 'Pushya' (i.e. the moon was in the mansion known as Pushya during its movement), the date was the auspicious 9th day of the Hindu lunar month of 'Chaita' (which falls roughly in late March or early April), the 'Lagna' (the entrance of the sun in the sign of the zodiac as it rises above the horizon) was known as 'Abhijit' which too was favourable and auspicious, and so was the day (it was a Tuesday) when the complete incarnation of the Lord appeared along with his three other manifestations appearing simultaneously with him in the household of king Dashrath (of Ayodhya).

Sankarshan became Laxman; Pradumna became Bharat—they were said to be like an abode of great happiness and joy. Aniruddha came to be known as Shatrughan (while Vasudeo became Sri Ram himself). These four divine forms that the Lord had taken as four children are the images of the same supreme Lord (Vishnu) himself¹.

When Sri Ram Chandra (literally meaning Sri Ram who was as beautiful and charming as the full moon) revealed or manifested himself in the royal palace, the king of Kaushal (king Dashrath) felt extremely exhilarated and ecstatic. His mind was overwhelmed with happiness and joy, while Kaushalya (Sri Ram's mother) too felt extremely happy and blessed. Even Kaikeyi and Sumitra felt exhilarated in their hearts because all the three queens had been blessed with sons.

The clan's moral preceptor and the royal priest, sage Guru Vashistha, and the most erudite and enlightened celestial sage Narad, prepared the birth charts of all the sons. They declared unanimously that the eldest son had the famous name of Sri Ram Chandra; he will take care of the well-being of both the Gods as well as the sages, seers, hermits, ascetic etc. (on this earth)

The great king (Dashrath) gave away charities and largesse in great abundance to Brahmins—numerous cows and immeasurable amount of gold was given away as gifts and donations to them. All the beautiful ladies (of the royal household as well as of the city) assembled together and sang auspicious, felicitous and celebratory songs on the occasion. Decorated golden pots and pitchers were ceremoniously put-up at the doorways and gateways. All the Gods and sages/seers/hermits/ascetics came to Ayodhya; they blessed the children and felt extremely glad and fortunate (at having had this unique opportunity to bless the Lord himself). Then they went back to their respective places, feeling very ecstatic, exhilarated, fortunate and fulfilled.

Everyone had their desires fulfilled (or got the fruits or rewards they desired or expected). Everyone felt happy and ecstatic; all were exhilarated and joyous. In this way, the four divine brothers became children of king Dashrath and carried on with their childhood activities and plays for the amusement of all. [Like is the wont of children, the four divine brothers spent their childhood days playing around and giving immense pleasure and happiness to all those who watched them at their mischievous activities. They played pranks, made a lot of fun, jested and frolicked around, sometimes laughing and at other times crying, sometimes jumping around and at other times running, and so on and so forth.]² (2).

[Note :- ¹A group of four entities is known as 'Chaturvyuha'. Lord Vishnu has four celestial manifestations—Vasudeo, Sankarshan, Pradumna and Aniruddha. The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 describe how the various aspects of Lord Vishnu known by different names had accompanied the Lord in his incarnation as Lord Ram. These aspects are called the 'Chatur-vyuha' meaning 'four aspects or facets'. In

other words, they represent the same divine Lord existing in the celestial world as four divine Beings. These four forms are (i) Sankarshan, (ii) Praduman, (iii) Aniruddha, and (iv) Vishnu. They are the different forms in which the Viraat Purush, the all-encompassing macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being, exists in the celestial world. So, during the incarnation as of the Viraat Purush known as Vasudeo or Vishnu as Lord Ram, Sankarshan incarnated as Laxman, Pradumna as Shatrughan, and Aniruddha as Bharat. These three divine celestial forms of Vishnu became the three brothers of Lord Ram who himself was none other than the Viraat Purush in his complete form as Lord Vishnu or Vasudeo. The fact that Lord Ram was the great Lord Vishnu himself is again reiterated in this Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 3, 4/5, 4/10, 4/41, 4/45.

²Indeed, in a child resides God. The Bible asserts—‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the middle of them. And said, verily I say unto you. Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name shall receive me.’ (Gospel of St. Matthew, 18/1-5)]

श्रीराम का बाल चरित्र

[3/1]

घुटरुन चलत कनक—आँगन मैं, कौसल्या छबि देखत ।
नील नलिन तन पीत झँगुलिया, घन दामिनि—दुति पेखत ॥
कबहुँक माखन लैकै खावत, खेल करत पुनि माँगत ।
मुख चुंबत, जननी समझावत, आय कंठ पुनि लागत ॥
कागभुसुंड दरस कौं आए, पाँच वर्ष लौं देखे ।
अस्तुति करी, आपु बर पायौ, जनम सुफल करि लेखे ॥
किरपा करि निज धाम पठायौ, अपनौ रूप दिखाय ।
वाके आस्रम कोउ बसत है, माया लगत न ताय ॥

śrīrāma kā bāla caritra

(3/1)

ghuṭaruna calata kanaka-āṁṅana mair̥m, kausalyā chabi dēkhata.
nīla nalina tana pīta jhamṅguliya, ghana dāmini-duti pēkhata..
kabahum̐ka mākhana laikai khāvata, khēla karata puni mām̐gata.
mukha cumbata, janani samajhāvata, āya kaṇṭha puni lāgata..
kāgabhusuṇḍa darasa kaur̥m ā'ē, pām̐ca barṣa laur̥m dēkhē.
astuti karī, āpu bara pāyau, janama suphala kari lēkhē..
kirapā kari nija dhāma paṭhāyau, apanau rūpa dikhāya.
vākē āsrama kō'u basata hai, māyā lagata na tāya..

Sri Ram's Childhood

[This verse is long, and hence for the ease of narration and reading it has been split into five smaller units, numbered from 3/1 to 3/5.]

3/1. Sri Ram moved (crawled) on all fours (hands and knees) in the golden courtyard of the palace while mother Kaushalya watched his beautiful and enchanting image. The yellow coloured frock on his body—which had the complexion like that of a blue lotus flower—looked as adorable as the glow of lightening in dark clouds. [The dark cloud in the night becomes visible when it is illuminated by lightening. Similarly, the wafer-thin fabric of the cloth worn by child Ram enables one to have a translucent view of the child's charming body whenever he moved.]

He takes and licks a little amount of butter sometimes, and at other times he asks for more while playing around. The mother affectionately kisses him and advises him or teaches him (not to litter butter around). Sometimes he comes and wraps himself around her neck and clings to her affectionately.

The crow saint known as Kaagbhusund came to have a divine glimpse of the Lord as a child, but he was so enthralled, enamoured, captivated and enchanted that he stayed back to watch him for another five years¹. He (Kaagbhusund) prayed to him (Sri Ram) and got himself blessed, feeling most fortunate and lucky as a result. The Lord graciously sent him to his own divine abode after showing him his true, infinite, eternal, macrocosmic, vast, measureless, supreme and divine form (as the Viraat Purush). Anyone who resides at the place where Kaagbhusund dwells, is not affected by Maya. [That is, the place where Kaagbhusund lives is provided immunity from the evil effects of Maya. The word Maya briefly means delusions pertaining to the world. Maya creates a virtual whirlwind of delusions that traps the creature and prevents him from finding liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death.] 2 (3/1).

[Note :- ¹ jaba jaba rāma manuja tanu dharahīm. bhakta hētu līlā bahu karahīm..
taba taba avadhapurī maim jā'ūṁ. bāla carita bilōki haraṣā'ūṁ..
janma mahōtsava dēkha'um' jā'ī. baraṣa pāmca tahaṁ raha'um' lōbhā'ī..
(rāma carita mānasa, uttarakāṇḍa, 75/2-4).
²dēkhi parama pāvana tava āśrama. gaya'u mōha sansaya nānā bhrama..
(rāma carita mānasa, uttarakāṇḍa, 64/2).

Kaagbhusund said to Garud, 'Whenever Sri Ram assumes a human body (form) and does various worldly deeds for the benefit of his devotees, on all those occasions I go to Ayodhya, watch his childhood activities and derive immense pleasure and joy watching them. I go and watch his birth celebrations and enjoy myself remaining engrossed in the ecstatic environs and remain there for the next five years. (Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, 75/2-4)

²Garud said to sage Kaagbhusund, 'When I sighted your hermitage, all my delusions, doubts and the various illusions enveloping my wisdom and intellect were immediately dispelled.' (Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, 64/2)]

[3/2]

प्रातःकाल उठि जननि जगावत, उठौ मेरे बारे राम!
उठि बैठे, दतुवन लै आई, करी मुखारी स्याम ॥

चारौं भ्रात मिल करत कलेऊ, मधु—मेवा—पकवान ।
 जल—आचमन, आरती करि कै, फिर कीन्हौ अस्नान ॥
 करत सृंगार चार भइया मिलि, सोभा बरनि न जाई ।
 चित्र—बिचित सुभग चौतनियाँ, इंद्रधनुष—छबि छाई ॥
 अलकावलि मुक्तावलि गुँथी, डोर सुरंग बिराजै ।
 मनहुँ सुरसरी धार सरसुती, जमुना मध्य बिराजै ॥
 तिलक भाल पर परम मनोहर, गोरोचन कौ दीनौ ।
 मानौ तीन लोक की सोभा, अधिक उदय सो कीनौ ॥
 खंजन नैन बीच नासा—पुट, राजत यह अनुहार ।
 खंजन जुग मनौ लरत लराई, कीर बुझावत रार ॥
 नासा के बेसर मैं मोती, बरन बिराजत चार ।
 मनौ जीव सनि सुक्र एक है, बाढ़े रबि कें द्वार ॥
 कुंडल ललित कपोल बिराजत, झलकत आभा गंड ।
 इंदीबर पर मनौ देखियत, रबि की किरन प्रचंड ॥
 अरुन अधर दमकत दसनावलि, चारु चिबुक मुसक्यान ।
 अति अनुराग सुधाकर सींचत, दाड़िम—बीज समान ॥
 कंठसिरी बिच पदिक बिराजत, बहु मनि—मुक्ता—हार ।
 दहिनावर्त देत ध्रुव तारे, सकल नखत बहु बार ॥
 रतन—जड़ित कंकन बाजूबंद, नगन मुद्रिका सोहै ।
 डार—डार मनु मदन बिटप तरु, देखि—दखि मन मोहै ॥
 कटि किंकिन—रुनझुन सुनि तन की हंस करत किलकारी ।
 नूपुर—धुनि पग लाल पन्हैयाँ, उपमा कौन बिचारी ॥
 भूषन—बसन आदि सब रचि—रचि, माता लाड़ लड़ावै ।
 रामचंद्र की देख माधुरी, दरपन देख दिखावै ॥
 निज प्रतिबिंब बिलोकि मुकुर मैं, हँसत राम सुखरास ।

(3/2)

prātakāla uṭhi janani jagāvata, uṭhau mērē bārē rāma!
 uṭhi baiṭhē, datuvana lai ā'ī, karī mukhārī syāma..
 cāraurṁ bhrāta mila karata kalē'ū, madhu-mēvā-pakavāna.
 jala-ācamana, āratī kari kai, phira kīnhau asrāna..
 karata sṛṅgāra cāra bha'iyā mili, sōbhā barani na jā'ī.
 citra-bicita subhaga cautaniyām, indradhanuṣa-chabi chā'ī..
 alakāvali muktāvali gūmṭhī, dōra suraṅga birājai.
 manahum sursarī dhāra sarasutī, jamunā madhya birājai..
 tilaka bhāla para parama manōhara, gōrōcana kau dīnau.
 mānau tīna lōka kī sōbhā, adhika udaya sō kīnau..
 khanjana naina bīca nāsā-puta, rājata yaha anuhāra.
 khanjana juga manaurṁ larata larā'ī, kīra bujhāvata rāra..

nāsā kē bēsara mair̥m mōtī, barana birājata cāra.
 manau jīva sani sukra ēka hvai, bār̥hē rabi kēm dvāra..
 kuṇḍala lalita kapōla birājata, jhalakata ābhā gaṇḍa.
 indībara para manau dēkhiyata, rabi kī kirana pracaṇḍa..
 aruna adhara damakata dasanāvali, cāru cibuka musakyāna.
 ati anurāga sudhākara sīncata, dāḍima-bīja samāna..
 kaṇṭhasirī bica padika birājata, bahu mani-muktā-hāra.
 dahināvarta dēta dhruva tārē, sakala nakhata bahu bāra..
 ratana-jaḍita kaṅkana bājūbamḍa, nagana mudrikā sōhai.
 ḍāra-ḍāra manu madana biṭapa taru, dēkhi-dakhi mana mōhai..
 kaṭi kiṅkina-runajhuna suni tana kī hansa karata kilakārī.
 nūpura-dhuni paga lāla panhaiyām̐, upamā kauna bicārī..
 bhūṣana-basana ādi saba raci-raci, mātā lāra larāvai.
 rāmacandra kī dēkha mādhuri, darapana dēkha dikhāvai..
 nija pratibimba bilōki mukura mair̥m, hamṣata rāma sukharāsa.

3/2. [This verse uses a lot of similes and metaphors—] Getting up in the morning, the mother wakes him (Sri Ram) up—‘Oh my dear child Ram, get up.’

When he sits up, the mother brings the ‘Datuvan’, and the dark-complexioned Lord cleans his teeth with it.

[The ‘Datuvan’ or ‘a chewing stick’ is usually a green twig of the tree called ‘Neem’ (or Morgosa) or Babul tree (or Acacia). One end of the twig is chewed briefly so as to make a rough and coarse brush with which the teeth are vigorously rubbed like a modern toothbrush. Whereas ‘Neem’ has antibacterial properties, Babul is an astringent. The chewing stick has been used since around 3000 B.C.]

After that, the four brothers get together to have a breakfast of honey, dry fruits and different varieties of delicious dishes. Then they sip some water (to clean their mouths). Then their ‘Arti’ is done after which they have their daily bath.

[‘Arti’ is a ritual whereby auspicious things such as lighted lamps, rice grains, perfume etc. are arranged on a plate and it is moved clockwise in front of the person of whom the ‘Arti’ is being performed. This is a token of auspicious blessing, to cast out evil spirits and for honouring the person.]

[After the bath—] All the four brothers assemble at a common place to jointly dress themselves in all finery, and it is not possible (for Surdas) to describe the charm and beauty of that fascinating sight.

[That is, they do not go to their private chambers but collect at a common place such as the courtyard and help each other in dressing themselves up. This helps to maintain the spirit of friendship and brotherhood between them.]

Multi-coloured and beautifully embroidered square caps adorn their heads like so many beautiful rainbows appearing above the earth. Pearls strung together in beautifully coloured threads/cords have been tied to and intertwined with the locks of curly hairs to form small plaits on their heads, and this sight resembles that of river Ganges mingling with the waters of rivers Saraswati and Yamuna (at their confluence at Triveni at Allahabad which is known as Prayag or Sangam in the Purans).

The most magnificent Tilak-Mark of 'Gorochan' on the forehead of the children appears to enhance the enticing beauty and charm of all the three worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds; here meaning 'creation').

[The 'Tilak-Mark' is put on the forehead of all Hindus as a sign of their religion. 'Gorochan' is a yellow coloured pigment secreted in the bile of a cow and is collected when the cow vomits. It is mixed with cowdung and other herbs and made into a sticky paste that is applied on the forehead as a religious symbol.]

The two eyes of Sri Ram are akin to two 'Khanjan' birds, while his nose in between them looks very adorable and charming as if a parrot (i.e. the nose) has intervened between two fighting or quarreling 'Khanjan' birds and trying to make a truce between them, to reconcile them and stop them from fighting each other.

[The 'Khanjan' bird is usually observed between autumn and winter and it reputed to have very beautiful eyes. Here, the two eyes of the Lord are compared to the beautiful eyes of this bird, and the nose has been compared to a parrot because the bird's nose is said to be the most beautiful shape of a nose.]

The nose-ring is adorned (studded and decorated) with gems of four colours. They resemble Jupiter (yellow topaz), Saturn (blue sapphire) and Venus/the Evening Star (bright pearls) that have come together to stand at the doorway of the Sun (standing for the splendour of the diamond that glitters and dazzles).

[There is another way of interpreting this stanza. The celestial bodies—Jupiter, Saturn, Venus and Sun—have been used as metaphors to describe the beauty of the face of Sri Ram which is adorned by a nose ring. Here, the face of Sri Ram is compared to the Sun and it represents the beauty of Nature, while the nostrils are compared to the doorway or gate to the heaven which is decorated by the three planets, viz. Jupiter, Saturn and Venus or the Evening Star. The different colours imply the colourful and varied nature of this creation. In other words, the devotee attains access to the beautiful heaven if he fixes his mind and meditates upon the Lord.]

Beautiful large ear-rings look most adorable and charming when they move by the side of the cheeks and the upper parts of either sides of the neck, and their shimmering light and dazzle reflects upon or flashes upon the portion of the neck just below the ear lobes as if rays of the splendorous sun are falling on the lotus flower.

[The lotus flower is the cheek and neck of the child Ram, while the light that is reflected from the ear-ring is the light of the sun falling on the lotus to make it glisten. The ear-ring, being rounded in shape, is aptly and obviously compared to the sun.]

The lips are red or pink in colour. When Sri Ram smiles, the beautiful and enchanting chin and the row of his teeth flash in brilliance as if seeds of the Pomegranate sown together glow in the brilliance of the moonlight. It appears that the moon is irrigating them affectionately with the Amrit which is stored in it.

[The seeds of the Pomegranate are red in tinge, and their core is slightly whitish which is visible though the translucent outer layer of those seeds. Seen in a row in the moon light, they resemble the row of teeth present inside the mouth of Sri Ram and encircled by the red lips. The teeth glisten brightly when Sri Ram smiles as if the moon's light is washing the seeds with its light to make them glow with a subtle hue of white.]

The necklace of diamonds and other various priceless gems and pearls worn around the neck (literally, around the Adam's apple) look magnificent as if all the stars are going round and round (circumambulating) the polar star (called the Dhruv star).

[Here, the Adam's apple is compared to the polar star or the North Star, while the individual gems and pearls of the glittering and twinkling necklace is compared to the stars in the sky which revolve around this North Star.]

Jewel-studded bracelets, arm-bands and gem-studded finger-rings are arranged so fascinatingly and charmingly on his (Sri Ram's) arms that they resemble the large and small branches (or creepers) of the tree symbolising Kamdeo.

[Here, the arms of Sri Ram are compared to the branches of a tree, and his fingers to the smaller shoots of those branches. The tree to which these branches belong is compared to Kamdeo who is the patron God of beauty.]

One's mind and heart becomes completely captivated, enchanted, enthralled and enamoured at this exceptionally beautiful, most fascinating, extremely magnificent and absolutely divine and majestic sight of the beautiful image of Sri Ram as a child. Hearing the tinkling chime of the tiny bells attached to the waist-band, even majestic Swans begin to jump and skip.

[The swans are so fascinated by the jingling sound of these bells that they become exited with ecstasy, and are so exhilarated that they start jumping around with excitement.]

In the feet wearing red-coloured shoes, the anklets chime—who can ever think of a similar view to make a comparison with?

After decorating him (the child Sri Ram) with all these ornaments and matching clothes, the mother shows her affection and love towards him. She observes his beautiful, charming, captivating and enthralling image herself directly as well as in the form of an image of it as reflected in the mirror. She also shows the child the mirror (so that Sri Ram can marvel at the most magnificent and stupendously beautiful form of his that he sees for himself in the mirror).

Sri Ram, who is a treasury of happiness and joy, observes his own image or reflection in the mirror and gleefully laughs and chuckles at the sight.

[Sri Ram gets fascinated and excited at his own image in the mirror because he thinks that it is some other child. It is a matter of common observance that when a mirror is held in the front of a child he is extremely astonished and overwhelmed. The child even begins to talk and laugh at the image in the mirror, forgetting that the child seen in the mirror is no one else but him. Such is the joy and innocence of childhood!] (3/2).

[3/3]

तैसइ लछिमन, भरत, सत्रुहन, खेलत डोलत पास ॥
 दसरथ राय न्हाय भोजन कौ बैठे अपने धाम ।
 लाऔ बेगि राम—लछिमन कौ, सुनि आए सुखधाम ॥
 बैठे सँग बाबा के चारौ, भैया जैवन लागे ।
 दसरथ राय आपु जैवत हैं, अति आनंद अनुरागे ॥
 लघु—लघु ग्रास राम मुख मेलत, आपु पिता—मुख मेलत ।
 बाल—केलि कौ बिसद परम सुख, सुख—समुद्र नृप झेलत ॥
 दार, भात, घृत, कढ़ी सलौनी, अरु नाना पकवान ।
 आरोगत नृप चार पुत्र मिलि, अति आनंद—निधान ॥

अचवन करि, पुनि जल अचवायौ, जब नृप बीरा लीनौ ।
 राम—लखन अरु भरत—सत्रुहन, सबहिंन अचवन कीनौ ॥
 बीरा खाय चले खेलन कौं, मिलि कै चारौं बीर ।
 सखा संग सब मिले बराबर, आए सरजू तीर ॥

(3/3)

taisa'i lachimana, bharata, satruhana, khēlata ḍōlata pāsa..
 dasaratha rāya nhāya bhōjana kauṁ baiṭhē apanē dhāma..
 lā'au bēgi rāma-lachimana kauṁ, suni ā'ē sukhadhāma..
 baiṭhē samṡa bābā kē cārauṁ, bhaiyā jainvana lāgē..
 dasaratha rāya āpu jainvata hairṁ, ati ānamḍa anurāgē..
 laghu-laghu grāsa rāma mukha mēlata, āpu pitā-mukha mēlata..
 bāla-kēli kau bisada parama sukha, sukha-samudra nrpa jhēlata..
 dāra, bhāta, ghrṭa, karḥi salaunī, aru nānā pakavāna..
 ārōgata nrpa cāra putra mili, ati ānanda-nidhāna..
 acavana kari, puni jala acavāyau, jaba nrpa bīrā līnau..
 rāma-lakhana aru bharata-satruhana, sabahinna acavana kīnau..
 bīrā khāya calē khēlana kauṁ, mili kaim cārauṁ bīra..
 sakhā saṅga saba milē barābara, ā'ē sarajū tīra..

3/3. Adorned and dressed similarly (like Sri Ram), Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan play around with him (Sri Ram). [That is, all the four brothers look alike from their appearance, and they stay together.]

When king Dashrath had finished taking his bath, he sat down for meals in his palace, and called for Sri Ram and Laxman. The four brothers— who were like abodes or treasuries or embodiments of bliss and happiness— came and sat down with their father for their meal.

King Dashrath, overwhelmed with joy, began to eat cheerfully. He put small morsels of food in the mouth of Sri Ram, and the child also reciprocated by putting small morsels of food (with his tiny hands) in the mouth of his father. The king enjoyed and reveled in the immense ocean of exhilaration and happiness that comes by observing the childhood activities of the four children.

The meal consisted of pulses, rice, clarified butter (Ghee), delicious 'Kadhi' (a curry-like dish prepared from curd, gram flour etc., and is a little sour to taste) as well as many types of other delectable eatables besides the above. The king enjoyed the meal with his four sons and felt very happy, contented, satisfied and fulfilled. At the end of the meal, he sipped some water (to clean his mouth) and made his sons to do the same. Then the king took some beetle leaves (as mouth-freshener after meals), while the four brothers rinsed their mouth once again and then they too took the betel leaves themselves and went away to play again. They were joined by friends of their age, and together they came to the banks of river Saryu in a group (3/3).

[3/4]

तीर चलावत, सिष्य सिखावत, धर निसान दिखरावत ।

कबहुँक सधे अस्व चढ़ि आपुन, नाना भाँति नचावत ॥
 कबहुँक चार भ्रात मिलि अगिया जात परम सुख पावत ।
 हरिन आदि बहु जंतु किए बध, निज सुरलोक पठावत ॥
 यहि बिधि बन—उपबन बहु क्रीड़ा करी राम सुखदाई ।
 बालमीकि मुनि कही कृपा कर, कछु इक 'सूर' जो गाई ॥

(3/4)

tīra calāvata, siṣya sikhāvata, dhara nisāna dikharāvata.
 kabahumka sadhē asva caḍhi āpuna, nānā bhāmṭi nacāvata..
 kabahumka cāra bhrāta mili agiyā jāta parama sukha pāvata..
 harina ādi bahu jantu ki'ē badha, nija suralōka paṭhāvata..
 yahi bidhi bana-upabana bahu krīrā karī rāma sukhadāī.
 bālamiki muni kahī krpā kara, kachu ika 'sūra' jō gāī..

3/4. There (on the banks of river Saryu) he (Sri Ram) shoots arrows, and teaches his friend-disciple companions how to shoot and aim at the target. [Sri Ram's companions have been called 'friend-disciples' here because besides being friends they were also his disciples as he taught them how to aim and shoot at the target.]

Sometimes he rides a trained horse and makes it dance and prance around in different ways.

Sometimes the four brothers go out hunting, and greatly enjoy themselves. There they kill many deer and other forest animals and send them to their own abode in the heavens. [Since Sri Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, all the animals who were hunted by Sri Ram got their salvation by finding a place in the heaven. The pronoun 'own' here refers to the Vaikunth or the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.]

In this manner, Sri Ram performed numerous childhood deeds which were very fascinating and exceedingly charming while he played around in the forests, big and small, as well as in the royal gardens, groves and orchards. The activities of Sri Ram give joy and happiness to all.

[The above narration can be described in a different way as follows—"It can be said that Sri Ram, who bestows joy and happiness to all, did many joyful childhood deeds while playing around with his friends and brothers in and around the big and small royal forests, gardens, groves and orchards etc. The word 'Sukhdai' meaning 'something that provides joy and happiness' can be used as an adjective to describe Sri Ram as well as to describe his playful activities. The meaning, technically speaking, will be slightly altered, but the essence remains the same. This is not only true here but also at number of other places where the poet puts a single word so strategically at a point that it can be prefixed or suffixed to different phrases to give completely different interpretations of the sentence or stanza of the same verse.]

These glorious, enchanting, enthralling, captivating, joyful, fascinating and magnificently majestic deeds of the Lord as a child have been described by sage Valmiki (in his epic 'the Ramayana'). This humble Surdas tries to do a little bit of his own description (narration) based on his (Valmiki's) version¹ (3/4).

[Note :- ¹The last line of this verse shows that Surdas has relied upon Valmiki's 'Ramayana' to describe the story of Sri Ram and his beauty as a child, whereas saint

Tulsidas has based his story more on Veda Vyas' version of the Ramayana, called 'Adhyatma Ramayana', though he had also relied on the Valmiki's version of the Ramayana. It must be noted here that Surdas has drawn from two sources for his 'Ram Charitawali'—one is the Valmiki Ramayana and the other is Veda Vyas' Bhagwat Maha Puran in which the story of Ram is mentioned only very briefly in 2 Cantos of the 9th Chapter. These three (Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan and Bhagwat Maha Puran, Valmiki's Ramayana, are the only ancient Sanskrit texts considered reliable in so far as the story of Sri Ram as the incarnation of the Supreme Lord is concerned. These versions have spiritualism, devotion and metaphysics as their basic theme. Since Surdas and Tulsidas were devotees and poets besides being saints par-excellence, they relied on Valmiki and Veda Vyas instead of other ancient texts on the subject.

However, it must be mentioned here that there are two Upanishads of the Atharva Veda totally dedicated to the theme of the divinity of Lord Ram, and they are Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad and Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad. They have been published along with the other Upanishads of the Atharva Veda in detail in a separate volume as part of the series on the English rendering of all the 108 Upanishads by this humble author.]

[3/5]

भई साँझ जननी टेरत है, कहाँ गए चारौ भाई ।
 भूख लगी हैलै लालन कौ, लाऔ बेगि बुलाई ॥
 इतने माँझि चार भैया मिलि, आए अपने धाम ।
 मुख चुंबत, आरती उतारत, कौसल्या अभिराम ॥
 सौमित्रा केकड़ सुख पावत, बहुबिधि लाड़ लड़ावत ।
 मधु—मेवा—पकवान—मिठाई, अपने हाथ जेवावत ॥
 चारौ भ्रातनि स्मिति जानि कै, जननी तब पौढ़ाए ।
 चापत चरन जननि अप—अपनी, कछुक मधुर स्वर गाए ॥
 आई नींद, राम सुख पायौ, दिन कौ स्रम बिसरायौ ।
 जागे भोर, दौरि जननी ने अपने कंठ लगायौ ॥

(3/5)

bha'ī sām̐jha janani tērata hai, kahām̐ ga'ē cāraur̐ bhā'ī.
 bhūkha lagī hvaihai lālana kaur̐, lā'au bēgi bulā'ī..
 itanē mām̐jhi cāra bhaiyā mili, ā'ē apanē dhāma.
 mukha cumbata, āratī utārata, kausalyā abhirāma..
 saumitrā kēka'i sukha pāvata, bahubidhi lāra laṛāvata..
 madhu-mēvā-pakavāna-miṭhā'ī, apanē hātha jēnvāvata..
 cāraur̐ bhrātani sramita jāni kai, janani taba pauṛhā'ē.
 cāpata carana janani apa-apanī, kachuka madhura svara gā'ē..
 ā'ī nīnda, rāma sukha pāyau, dina kau srama bisarāyau.
 jāgē bhōra, dauri janani nē apanē kaṇṭha lagāyau..

3/5. When the evening approaches, the mothers call out (to the royal attendants)—'Where have the four brothers gone? Our children must be hungry by now. Call them soon (or get them back home quick).'

In the meantime, the four brothers come back together. Mother Kaushalya lovingly and affectionately hugs and kisses the most beautiful and charming Sri Ram and takes his 'Arti'. Mother Sumitra and Kaikeyi too love him affectionately and feel very happy. They use their own hands to feed him honey, dry fruits, delicacies and sweets.

Then the mothers make all the four brothers retire to bed thinking that they must be tired and weary by now (after the whole day of playful activities). The mothers sing sweet lullabies and become lost in pleasant thoughts as they gently massage, caress and press their little feet as they sleep. Sri Ram falls asleep soon, his weariness of the day has vanished, and he feels peaceful, rested and relaxed.

As the day brakes the next morning and he (Sri Ram) wakes up crying, the mother rushes forward and clasps him to her bosom, wrapping his arms around her neck. [The last two words of the last line of the text imply clearly that she 'clasps Ram in such a way that his arms are wrapped around her neck'.] (3/5).

विश्वामित्र की यज्ञ रक्षा

[4]

बिस्वामित्र बड़े मुनि कहियत, यज्ञ करत निज धाम ।
 मारिच और सुबाहु महासुर, बिघन करत दिन—जाम ॥
 परब्रह्म—अवतार जानि कै, आए नृप के पास ।
 दसरथ राय बहुत पूजा—बिधि, किए प्रसन्न हुलास ॥
 भोजन कर जबहीं जु बिराजे, तब भाष्यौ मुनिराय ।
 यज्ञ सफल कीजै मेरौ, अब दीजै राम पठाय ॥
 तब नृप कह्यौ राम हैं बालक, मोकौ आज्ञा कीजै ।
 तब दुज कह्यौ राम परमेस्वर, बचन मान यह लीजै ॥
 गुरु बसिष्ठ सब बिधि समुझाए, राम—लखन सँग दीन्हे ।
 मारग मैं अहल्या उद्धारि, नावक निज पद छीने ॥
 बिस्वामित्र सिखाई बहु बिधि, बिद्या धनुष प्रकार ।
 मारग मैं ताड़का जु आई, धाई बदन पसार ॥
 छिन मैं राम तुरत सो मारी, नैक न लागी बार ।
 दीनी मुक्ति जानि निज महिमा, आए ऋषि के द्वार ॥
 कीन्हे बिप्र—जज्ञ परिपूरन, असुर बिघन कों आए ।
 अगनि—बान कर दहन कियौ है, एक समुद्र पठाए ॥

viśvāmitra kī yajña rakṣā

(4)

bisvāmitra barē muni kahiyata, yajña karata nija dhāma.
 mārica aura subāhu mahāsura, bighana karata dina-jāma..
 parabrahma-avatāra jāni kai, ā'ē nrpa kē pāsa.

dasaratha rāya bahuta pūjā-bidhi, ki'ē prasanna hulāsa..
 bhōjana kara jabahīm ju birājē, taba bhāṣyau munirāya.
 yajña saphala kijai mērau, aba dijai rāma paṭhāya..
 taba nrpa kahyau rāma hairm bālaka, mōkauṁ ājñā kijai.
 taba duja kahyau rāma paramēsvara, bacana māna yaha lījai..
 guru basiṣṭha saba bidhi samujhā'ē, rāma-lakhana samṅa dīnhē.
 mārāga mairm ahalyā ud'dhārī, nāvaka nija pada chīnē..
 bisvāmitra sikhā'ī bahu bidhi, bidyā dhanuṣa prakāra.
 mārāga mairm tāṛakā ju ā'ī, dhā'ī badana pasāra..
 china mairm rāma turata sō mārī, naiṅka na lāgī bāra.
 dīnī mukti jāni nija mahimā, ā'ē ṛṣi kē dvāra..
 kīnhē bipra-jajña paripūrana, asura bighana kōm ā'ē.
 agani-bāna kara dahana kiyau hai, ēka samudra paṭhā'ē..

Protection of sage Vishwamitra's Fire Sacrifice

4. Vishwamitra was said to be a great sage; he used to do fire sacrifices at his hermitage. The great demons Marich and Subahu used to defile his fire sacrifices, day and night. Coming to know that the supreme Lord has manifested himself in the form of Sri Ram, he came to the king (Dashrath). [The sage came to the king to request him to send Sri Ram to his hermitage to get rid of the demons who were tormenting him.]

King Dashrath welcomed and worshipped him most cheerfully. After having his meals, when the sage, who was like a king amongst his peers, was comfortably seated, he requested the king, 'Send Sri Ram with me and help me successfully complete my fire sacrifice.'

Then the king replied, 'Ram is still a child now. Oh sage, order me (and I will accompany you myself with my army and do your job).'

At this reluctance of the king, the sage replied, 'Believe me that Sri Ram is the supreme Lord.'

[The sage told the king that he should know that Ram whom he treats as his child is not an ordinary human child. He is the Supreme Lord incarnate. He has come on earth with some purpose, and it is to get the earth rid of the havoc caused by the evil and cruel demons. The king is reluctant to part with Sri Ram because he fears for the safety of his child as any father would naturally feel, but he is unaware of the fact that no one needs to protect the Lord as he is the protector of others, and it is not the other way round. His reluctance is completely unfounded and unwarranted. He must now worry and cheerfully send the Lord to kick-start the divine job for which he took the trouble to leave the heaven and descend to this world full of miseries. The king should not act as an obstacles in the divine mandate.]

The clan's royal preceptor, Guru Vashistha, explained everything to him (Dashrath) and advised him to give Sri Ram (to Vishwamitra). So, the king allowed Sri Ram and Laxman to accompany the sage.

En-route, he (Sri Ram) liberated Ahilya (from her curse of being a lifeless rock) by touching her with his divine feet. This touch proved to be the proverbial ship/boat to take her across (the ocean/river representing her curse).

[This touch of Sri Ram's divine, holy, august feet gave her liberation from her curse, and she became a divine woman and went back to the abode of her husband, sage Gautam.]

Sage Vishwamitra taught them (Sri Ram and Laxman) the art of using the bow deftly, skillfully, expertly, adroitly and perfectly in different ways (as a result of which, Sri Ram became an expert archer).

While they were still on the way to the hermitage, the demoness named Tadaka came running there (to attack them), spreading her body to assume a form that was colossus, huge and fearsome. Sri Ram killed her in an instant; he did not take long to do it. Considering his own fame (that he provides emancipation and salvation to even the most evil, vile and sinful ones), he gave her deliverance (from her evil body) and salvation (to her soul).

Thereafter, Sri Ram (and Laxman) came to the sage's place (literally, at the door of the sage's hut or hermitage). There, he helped all the sages to complete their fire sacrifice without the interference of the demons who came to defile it. Sri Ram killed all of them with the fire-arrow (or an arrow tipped with fire) except one demon whom he sent (i.e. flipped, threw, tossed, flung or pushed) away to the ocean¹ (4).

[Note—¹This exception of allowing one of the demons to escape being killed was the demon named Marich. He was flung away to an island somewhere in the middle of the ocean. This was the fellow who later on became the golden deer and was instrumental in Sita's abduction by Ravana. Had he been killed by Sri Ram at that moment, the story would have been slightly different and Ravana would have had to invent some other ruse to kidnap Sita.]

There are two points to note here—(i) When one has taken up the cudgel to fight and wipe out evil then the job should be done thoroughly. Any lineancy or carelessness becomes a huge thorn later on. The remanant of the evil would strike back with a vengeance at the most unexpected time, place and moment. Had Sri Ram eliminated Marich along with others, the kidnapping of Sita by Ravana using Marich as a decoy golden deer would not have happened. (ii) The Lord could have done that, but he purposely didn't because his main aim was to eliminate the greater evil in the form of the hordes of demons who lived in Lanka and led by Ravana. So he willingly let Marich survive and flung him to an area of the ocean close to Lanka so that Ravana would fall in the trap laid out for him by the Lord.]

सीता का स्वयंवर

[5/1]

जनक बिदेह कियौ जु स्वयंवर, बहु नृप—बिप्र बुलाए ।
 तोरन धनुष देव त्र्यंबक कौ, काहू जतन न पाए ॥
 बिस्वामित्र मुनि बेगि बुलाए, सकल सिष्य लै संग ।
 राम—लखन सँग लिए आपने, चले प्रेम—रस रंग ॥
 जहँ—जहँ उझकि झरोखा झाँकत, जनक—नगर की नार ।
 चितवनि कृपा राम अवलोकत, दीन्हौ सुख जो अपार ॥
 कियौ सनमान बिदेह नृपति ने उपवन बासी कीन्हौ ।
 देखन राम चले तिहि पुर कौ, सुख सबहिन कौ दीन्हौ ॥

सक पुर देखि, धनुष—पुर देख्यौ, देखे महल सुरंग ।
 अदभुत नगर बिदेह बिलोकत, सुख पायौ सब अंग ॥
 कहत नारि सब जनक—नगर की, बिधि सौं गोद पसार ।
 सीतजू कौं बर यह चाहियै, है जोरी सुकुमार ॥
 अपने धाम फिर तब दोउ आए, जान भई कछु साँझ ।
 कर दंडवत, परसि पद ऋषि के, बैठे उपवन माँझ ॥
 संध्या भई कृत्य नित करिकै कीन्ही ऋषि परनाम ।
 पौढ़े जाय चरन—सेवा दुज, कर कै अति बिसराम ॥

sītā kā svayamvara

(5/1)

janaka bidēha kiyau ju svayambara, bahu nrpa-bipra bulā'ē.
 tōrana dhanuṣa dēva trayambaka kau, kāhū jatana na pā'ē..
 bisvāmitra muni bēgi bulā'ē, sakala siṣya lai saṅga.
 rāma-lakhana samṅa li'ē āpanē, calē prēma-rasa raṅga..
 jaham-jaham ujhaki jharōkhā jhām̐kata, janaka-nagara kī nāra.
 citavani krpā rāma avalōkata, dīnhau sukha jō apāra..
 kiyau sanamāna bidēha nrpati nē upabana bāsī kīnhau.
 dēkhana rāma calē tihi pura kaur̐, sukha sabahina kaur̐ dīnhau..
 saka pura dēkhi, dhanuṣa-pura dēkhyau, dēkhē mahala suraṅga.
 adabhuta nagara bidēha bilōkata, sukha pāyau saba aṅga..
 kahata nāri saba janaka-nagara kī, bidhi saur̐ gōda pasāra.
 sītajū kaur̐ bara yaha cahiyai, hai jōrī sukumāra..
 apanē dhāma phira taba dō'u ā'ē, jāna bha'ī kachu sām̐jha.
 kara daṇḍavata, parasi pada r̥ṣi kē, baiṭhē upabana mām̐jha..
 sandhyā bha'ī kr̥tya nita karikai kīnhī r̥ṣi paranāma.
 pauṛhē jāya carana-sēvā duja, kara kai ati bisarāma..

Sita's Swayambar (Marriage Ceremony)

[Verse no. 5 describes the marriage ceremony of Sita. It is being split into three parts, viz. 5/1 to 5/3, for the ease of narration. The first verse no. 5/1 describes that an invitation was sent by the king of Janak inviting sage Vishwamitra to attend the marriage ceremony of Sita, his daughter. Lord Ram and Laxman accompanied the sage to the city. The women of the city were completely enamoured by the Lord's charm and prayed to the creator to select him as the groom. Then the verse concludes by saying that the Lord retired for the night after serving his Guru.]

5/1. King Videha Janak¹ (the wise king of Janakpur and father of Sita) had arranged for the marriage ceremony for his daughter. It was called 'Swayambar' (literally meaning a ceremony wherein the bride selects the groom voluntarily or when the marriage is solemnised after fulfilling certain pre-set conditions).

For this purpose, he had invited a large number of princes and kings along with Brahmins (from all parts of the world). It so happened that none of the invited royals could break the bow of Lord Trayambak (Shiva)². The king also invited sage Vishwamitra along with all his disciples to attend the ceremony. Overwhelmed with love and affection for Sri Ram and Laxman, the sage took them along as he proceeded to attend the ceremony.

[When the sage, along with the Lord, reached the city of Janakpur, this is the scene there—] At Janakpur, the womenfolk of the city peered down (from their balconies, attics, terraces and other vantage points of their houses) to have a glimpse of Sri Ram from every household and every other window of the city. Reciprocating their affectionate and inquisitive glances by looking back at them, Sri Ram too gave them immense amount of pleasure.

King Videh (Janka) welcomed all of them and put them up in a pleasant and charming garden. From there, Sri Ram went to see the sights of the city and gave abundant happiness and profound joy to all its inhabitants. After seeing the city, he saw the pavilion where the bow-ceremony was scheduled to be held. He also saw beautifully coloured royal palaces. Looking at the magnificent city of Videha, Sri Ram felt extremely happy and glad. All the womenfolk of the city spread their arms and begged Brahma (the creator), praying to him—‘Sita should be blessed with the boon in the form of this groom; he is the only gracious prince worthy for her. (So, oh the gracious Brahma, please make things happen in such a way that Sita is married to Sri Ram against all odds. This is our sincere and most urgent plea to you. It is sure you can do it because you are the God who decides destiny, and therefore the one who can tweak it if you so will.)’

Observing that it was getting dark in the evening, the two brothers returned to their camp. They touched the feet of sage (Vishwamitra), prostrated before him and sat down amid the other sages. During the twilight hours, they finished their routine evening chores and bowed before the sage. Then they pressed and massaged his legs (literally, ‘served’ the feet of the sage by pressing and massaging it), and when the sage had fallen asleep, they too went to sleep themselves and take rest (5/1).

[Note—¹King Janak is called ‘Videha’, literally meaning ‘one without a body’, because he was extremely wise and well-versed in the philosophy of the Upanishads and had realised that the ‘true self’ of any individual is his Atma, the pure conscious soul, and not the gross physical body. He was so highly enlightened and self-realised as well as submerged in the thoughts of the Atma and the Parmatma (the Supreme Being) that he was unaware or unconscious of even the existence of the gross physical body at all. He had realised that the ‘true self’ is the Atma and not the body.

²Lord Shiva has three eyes, two conventional eyes and one hidden eye located in the center of the forehead between the two eyebrows and the top of the root of the nose. Hence, Lord Shiva is also known as Lord Trayambak or Lord Trinetrum. The significance of the three eyes of Shiva have been explained in a number of Upanishads, for example: (i) Atharva Veda’s Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 21; Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 10, 14; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93.

This third eye is not some physical eye but a subtle eye symbolising the Lord’s high level of enlightenment and wisdom. This burning of the evil world by opening of the third eye of Shiva is a metaphoric way of saying that a creature can use his eyes of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment to overcome all delusions and misconceptions about the truth and reality, along with all mischief as well as negativity

and evil tendencies in this world. The 'burning' is elimination of such negativity and perversions.

According to Yoga philosophy, an ascetic focuses his Pran or vital winds at this spot in the forehead where he experiences enlightenment and the nectar of bliss dripping from it. By the way, Shiva is regarded as the patron God of all ascetics precisely for this reason.

There is a legendary story associated with this third eye. Once, Parvati, his divine consort, had closed his two eyes, and as a result the world was plunged in darkness. To save the world from this all-encompassing darkness, Shiva willed a third eye between the two eyebrows. This eye spouted fire with its accompanying heat and light. So, the celestial sun can be regarded as a symbol of this third eye.

Once when Shiva was in deep meditative trance and was teased by Kamdeo, the God of passions, at the behest of Gods who had wanted Shiva to marry and produce a male child who would kill the demons, he felt so annoyed by Kamdeo's temerity and impertinence that he opened this third eye to burn him down.

According to the Atharva Veda's Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 21, the three eyes of Shiva or Rudra stand for the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. These three entities are regarded as the eternal sources of light in this creation. The Sun and the Fire provide the heat and energy so essential for sustenance of life besides being an eternal source of light, while the Moon is regarded as the pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of bliss and the soothing nectar that neutralises the scorching effects of the Sun and the Fire.

The third eye, as has been noted above, stands for the excellent level of wisdom, erudition, knowledge, enlightenment and omniscience that the Lord possesses.

The Lord with three eyes has an unconventional form and an equally odd behaviour, because once he is an incarnation of the eclectic virtues of peace and blissful, and at another moment he becomes personified anger and wrath. Hence, he is called Tryambak.]

[5/2]

ब्रह्म—मुहूरत भयौ सबेरौ, जागे दोऊ भाई ।
 कर परनाम देव—गुरु—दुज कौं, जल सौं स्नान कराई ॥
 आए भूप देस—देसन के, जुरी सभा अति भारी ।
 तहाँ बुलाए सकल दुजन कौं, जनक—सभा मंझारी ॥
 कौंसिक मुनि तहँ छबि सौं पधारे, लिए सिष्य संग सात ।
 चले नित्य आह्निक सब कर दुज, उर आनंद न समात ।
 दोनों भ्रात संग मैं लीन्हे, आए राज—दुवार ।
 जहँ बैठे सब भूप ओप सों, बाढ्यौ गरब अपार ॥
 अपने—अपने भुज—बल तोलत, तोरन धनुष पुरार ।
 कछु नहिं चलत खिसाय गए सब, रहे बहुत पचि हार ॥
 सीता कहत सहेलिन सौं पुनि, यही कहत रघुनंद ।
 तब उन कह्यौ सकल सुखसागर, सो ये परमानंद ॥
 बार—बार जिय सोच करत है, बिधि सौं बचन उचारी ।
 मन—क्रम—बचन यहै बर दीजै, माँगत गोद पसारी ॥
 एक बार सुर देवी पूजत, भयौ दरस सखि! मोहि ।
 ता दिन तैं छिन कल न परत है, सत्य कहत हौं तोहिं ॥

(5/2)

brahma-muhūrata bhayau sabērau, jāgē dō'ū bhā'ī.
 kara paranāma dēva-guru-duja kauṁ, jala saurṁ srāna karā'ī..
 ā'ē bhūpa dēsa-dēsana kē, jurī sabhā ati bhārī.
 tahām' bulā'ē sakala dujana kauṁ, janaka-sabhā manjhārī..
 kausika muni taham' chabi saurṁ padhārē, li'ē siṣya samṅa sāta.
 calē nitya āhnika saba kara duja, ura ānamḍa na samāta.
 dōnauṁ bhrāta saṅga mairṁ līnhē, ā'ē rāja-duvāra.
 jaham' baiṭhē saba bhūpa ōpa sōm, bādhyau garaba apāra..
 apanē-apanē bhuja-bala tōlata, tōrana dhanuṣa purāra.
 kachu nahimṁ calata khisāya ga'ē saba, rahē bahuta paci hāra..
 sītā kahata sahēlina saurṁ puni, yahī kahata raghunanda.
 taba una kahyau sakala sukhasāgara, sō yē paramānanda..
 bāra-bāra jiya sōca karata hai, bidhi saurṁ bacana ucārī.
 mana-krama-bacana yahai bara dījai, māṁgata gōda pasārī..
 ēka bāra sura dēbī pūjata, bhayau darasa sakhi! mōhi.
 tā dina tairṁ china kala na parata hai, satya kahata haurṁ tōhim..

[This verse no. 5/2 describes the day of the bow-breaking ceremony. The sage and the two brothers got ready and arrived at the venue of the ceremony, were given respect and honourably seated. All the invited kings and princes were trying their hands in attempting to lift the bow, but were failing one after another. Sita saw Lord Ram, and when she enquired from her friends if he was the same prince who is the talk of the town, they described the Lord's magnificent charms to her. At this Sita revealed her affection for the Lord.]

5/2. The next morning, the two brothers woke up during the 'Brahma-Muhurt' (the time in early morning before the sun rises). They bowed their heads to pay respects to the Gods, Guru Vishwamitra and other Brahmins (or sages) accompanying him. Then they bathed in clean water.

On the other hand, at the site of the bow-breaking challenge, kings from different countries had assembled, creating a huge crowd at the venue. Janak invited all the Brahmins (elders, sages etc.) to the venue also.

Sage Kaushik (i.e. Vishwamitra) also came there, walking majestically and accompanied by seven of his disciples. All the Brahmins had assembled there after having finished their daily chores; their hearts could not accommodate the surge of exhilaration and happiness that was overwhelming them.

The sage (Vishwamitra), accompanied by the two brothers (Ram and Laxman), finally arrived at the royal assembly where all the kings sat with their royal pomp and pageantry at display. All of them were trying the strength of their arms in attempting to break the bow of Lord Purari (i.e. Lord Shiva). But, to their utter dismay and frustration, they became tired of trying and trying without any success, and had to return to their seats from the dais or the altar where the bow was kept, exhausted, defeated, exasperated, disgusted, peeved, ashamed and humiliated at their failure.

(As soon as Sri Ram entered the venue and took his seat along with sage Vishwamitra—) Sita asked her friends, 'Is this the one who is called Raghunandan?' The friends replied, 'He is an ocean of all happiness and joy as well as an embodiment and an image of supreme bliss and beatitude.'

She (Sita) kept worrying in her heart which was full of consternation and uncertainty as she prayed to Brahma, the creator, most urgently beseeching him—'I spread my arms before you to beg of you most sincerely and humbly with my mind and heart as well as with my speech and deeds to grant me or bless me with the boon that I get only him (Sri Ram) as my groom and husband. [I don't want to marry anyone else.]'

Then she turned to her friends and confided, 'Oh friends, I tell you the truth. Once, while worshipping the God and the Goddess (i.e. Lord Shiva and Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva), I had a glimpse of him (Sri Ram). Ever since then, I have not found peace even for a moment. [That is, I am so enamoured of him that I just cannot forget him and find peace in my heart.]' (5/2).

[5/3]

सब नृप पचे, धनुष नहिं टूट्यौ, तब बिदेह दुख पायौ ।
 क्रोध बचन करि सब सैं बोले, छत्री कोउ न रहायौ ॥
 यह सुनि लछिमन भए क्रोध—जुत, विषम बचन यौं बोले ।
 सूरजबंस नृपति भूतल पर, जाके बल बिन तोले ॥
 कितिक बात यह धनुष रुद्र कौ, सकल बिस्व कर लैहौ ।
 आज्ञा पाय देव रघुपति की, छिनक माँझ हठ गैहौ ॥
 सब के मन कौ देख अँदेसौ, सीता आरत जानी ।
 रामचंद्र तबहीं अकुलाने, लीन्हौ सारंग पानी ॥
 छिन मैं कर लै कै जु चढ़ायौ, देखत ही सब भूप ।
 डार्यौ तोर अघात शब्द भयौ, जैसैं काल कौ रूप ॥
 सब ही दिसा भई अति आतुर, परसुराम सुनि पायौ ।
 परसु सम्हार सिष्य संग लैकै, छिन ही मैं तहँ आयौ ॥
 जैजैकार भयौ जगती पर, जनकराज अति हरषे ।
 सुर बिमान सब कौतुक भूले, जै—धुनि सुमनन बरषे ॥

(5/3)

saba nrpa pacē, dhanuṣa nahim̐ tūṭyau, taba bidēha dukha pāyau.
 krōdha bacana kari saba saim̐ bōlē, chatrī kō'u na rahāyau..
 yaha suni lachimana bha'e krōdha-juta, viṣama bacana yaum̐ bōlē.
 sūrajabansa nrpati bhūtala para, jākē bala bina tōlē..
 kitika bāta yaha dhanuṣa rudrakau, sakala bisva kara laihaum̐.
 ājñā pāya dēva raghupati kī, chinaka mām̐jha haṭha gaihaum̐..
 saba kē mana kau dēkha am̐dēsau, sitā ārata jānī.
 rāmacandra tabahim̐ akulānē, līnhau sārāṅga pānī..
 china maim̐ kara lai kai ju caṛhāyau, dēkhata hī saba bhūpa.
 ḍāryau tōra aghāta śabda bhayau, jaisaim̐ kāla kau rūpa..

saba hī disā bhaī ati ātura, parasurāma suni pāyau.
 parasu samhāra siṣya samṅa laikai, china hī mair̥m taham̥ āyau..
 jaijaikāra bhayau jagatī para, janakarāja ati haraṣē.
 sura bimāna saba kautuka bhūlē, jai-dhuni sumanana baraṣē..

[This third verse no. 5/3 narrates the final moments of the bow-breaking ceremony and how Sri Ram married Sita by breaking the bow. This was followed by all-round rejoicing.]

5/3. All the kings were defeated, tired, frustrated and weary; their egos were crushed. They could not break the bow (inspite of their best efforts).

Then Videha (Janak, father of Sita) felt very sad and disheartened, and in his exasperation, he rebuked all the kings angrily and sarcastically—‘No Kshatriya (brave, strong and courageous warrior) appears to be alive now (or there appears to be no Kshatriya amongst you)!’

[That is, none of you should call yourself a strong warrior any more; none of you could prove your mettle. All of you seem to be impotent and inept, coward, weak and meek. Where has the valour and strength for which the Kshatriya class is renowned worldwide gone? Have they all lost their manliness and strength of arm for which they are so famous on earth? Shame to all of you!']

As soon as Laxman heard it, he became extremely annoyed and said these stern words, as if to reprimand and rebuke king Janak—‘Oh king! There is a race called the ‘Sun-race’ on this earth. The valour and strength, the potent and powers, the courage and prowess of which is incomparable. What to talk of this (fragile, old and humble) bow of Rudra (Lord Shiva), if I get the permission of Raghupati (Sri Ram), I can forcibly lift the whole world in my hands.

[So, how dare you make such a sweeping insinuation against the Kshatriya class? I and my elder brother are here, and we have not been given a chance though we too are Kshatriyas. So what you say is wrong.]’

Seeing that all the people were dazed, perplexed and dumbfounded, and that Sita was eager with anticipation and most confounded with uncertainty, Sri Ram became uneasy (because he could not let someone, here Sita and the citizens of Janakpur, suffer so much mental agony and sorrows while he was standing in their midst). So he got up immediately, took up the bow in his hands and strung it, then pulled the string so hard as to bend and break the bow.

The snapping sound of the bow as it broke into two was so terrifying that it resembled the roar of ‘Mahakaal’ (the great God of death; the fearsome rumbling and thunderous roar emanating and reverberating in all the directions at the time of doomsday). All the directions of the compass reverberated and resonated with its thunderous echo.

This ear-splitting thunderous sound was heard by sage Parashuram. He took his disciples with him, and holding his (deadly) axe, he came there in a fraction of a moment (i.e. very soon). [See verse no. 7.]

Everywhere in the world, there was a chorus of applause and felicitations. King Janka was extremely pleased and exhilarated (at the sudden and unexpected good and auspicious turn of events). The Gods in their vehicles in the sky forgot all about their

marvelous tricks; they rejoiced on the occasion by breaking out in a chant of 'hail, hail; glory, glory', and showered flowers on the venue (5/3).

चारों भाइयों का विवाह

[6]

जनकराज तब बिप्र पठाए, बेग बरात बुलाई ।
 दसरथ राज बाजि—गज लैकै, सबही सौँज—तुराई ॥
 चली बरात बिपुल धन लैकै, जुरे मनुज नहिं पार ।
 सोभा सिंधु कहत नहिं आवै, बरनन करत उचार ॥
 गुरु बसिष्ठ मुनि लगन दियौ सुभ, सुभ नछत्र, सुभ बार ।
 आए जान नृपति सनमाने, कीन्हिं अति मनुहार ॥
 ब्याह—केलि सुख बरनन कीन्हौ, मुनि बाल्मीकि अपार ।
 सो सुख 'सूर' कह्यौ वो कीरति, जगत करी बिस्तार ॥
 बेद—सास्त्र मथ करी ब्याह—बिधि, सोइ कीन्हिं नृपराय ।
 राम—लखन अरु भरत—सत्रुहन, चारौं दिए बिबाह ॥
 होम, हवन, दुज—पूजा, गनपति, सूरज, सक्र, महेस ।
 दीन्हौ दान बहुत बिप्रन कौं, राजा मिथिल—नरेश ॥
 उतसव भयौ परम आनंद कौ, बहुत दायजौ दीन्हौ ।
 भाए बिदा दसरथ नृप नृप सौ, गमन अवधपुर कीन्हौ ॥

cārōm bhā'iyōm kā vivāha

(6)

janakarāja taba bipra paṭhā'ē, bēga barāta bulā'ī.
 dasaratha rāja bāji-gaja laikai, sabahī saunja-turā'ī..
 calī barāta bipula dhana laikai, jurē manuja nahim pāra.
 sōbhā sindhu kahata nahim āvai, baranana karata ucāra..
 guru basiṣṭha muni lagana diyau subha, subha nachatra, subha bāra.
 ā'ē jāna nrpati sanamānē, kīnhim ati manuhāra..
 byāha-kēli sukha baranana kīnhau, muni bālmīki apāra.
 sō sukha 'sūra' kahyau vō kīrati, jagata karī bistāra..
 bēda-sāstra matha karī byāha-bidhi, sō'i kīnhim nrparāya.
 rāma-lakhana aru bharata-satruhana, cāraur di'ē bibāha..
 hōma, havana, duja-pūjā, ganapati, sūraja, sakra, mahēsa.
 dīnhau dāna bahuta biprana kauṁ, rājā mithila-narēśa..
 utasava bhayau parama ānamda kau, bahuta dāyajau dīnhau.
 bha'ē bidā dasaratha nrpa nrpa sau, gamana avadhapura kīnhau..

The Marriage of all the Four Brothers

6. King Janak then sent Brahmins as messengers to Ayodhya to bring the marriage party at the earliest. King Dashrath, upon hearing the news, assembled horses, elephants and all other royal paraphernalia suited for such occasions, including a lot of wealth, and the marriage party started off for Janakpur. A huge party it was; no one knew how many people accompanied it. It resembled a huge ocean of stupendous pomp and pageantry, of exceptional majesty and glamour, of magnificent beauty and charm that were of such huge proportions that it is beyond the powers of speech to describe them. [That is, the marriage party that started for Janakpur was so glamorous and majestic that it is beyond the ability of the faculty of speech to describe it in words. It's beauty and magnificence was of epic proportions.]

Guru Vashistha had decided on an auspicious day and time for departure.

When the king (Janak) came to know of the arrival of the marriage party, he made an elaborate arrangement to ceremoniously welcome it. Sage Valmiki has described in detail the great joys and cheerful celebrations of this marriage (in his epic Ramayana); Surdas is describing the same moments of happiness and joys (in his own humble ways). The majesty, the profundity of joys and the glory of those happy moments have spread and made famous throughout the whole world.

The process of performing the various rituals associated with the marriage ceremony, as determined and laid down by the Vedas and the scriptures, was followed by the great king (Janak).

Sri Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan—all the four brothers were married simultaneously. The king of Mithila (i.e. King Janak) did various sacrifices including the fire-sacrifice, worshipped Brahmins, Lord Ganesh, the Sun, Indra, Shiva and other Gods, and then he gave a lot of wealth as charity to Brahmins. The occasion was joyously celebrated, and a lot of dowry was given.

Finally, king Dashrath took his leave from the other king (i.e. Janak) and made his departure for Ayodhya (from Janakpur) (6).

परशुराम का हस्तक्षेप

[7]

भृगुपति आए जानि जब रघुपति, मिले धाय सिर नाय ।
दसरथ राय बिनय बहु कीनी, जिय मैं अति डरपाय ॥
तब मुनि कह्यौ धनुष क्यों तोरेउ, रुद्र परम गुरु मेरे ।
रामचंद्र पूरन पुरुषोत्तम, नैक नयन जब हेरे ॥
लीन्हौ अंस खैंचि भृगुपति कौ, अपने रूप समायौ ।
करौ जाय तप सैल महेंद्र प, सु मुनिबर सिर नायौ ॥

paraśurāma kā hastakṣēpa

(7)

bhrgupati ā'ē jāni jaba raghupati, milē dhāya sira nāya.
dasaratha rāya binaya bahu kīnī, jiya mairi ati ḍarapāya..
taba muni kahyau dhanuṣa kyaum tōrē'u, rudraparama guru mērē.

rāmacandra pūrana puruṣōttama, naika nayana jaba hērē..
 līnhau ansa khain̄ci bhr̄gupati kau, apanē rūpa samāyau.
 karau jāya tapa saila mahēndra pa, su munibara sira nāyau..

Parashuram's Intervention

7. When Raghupati (i.e. the Lord of the Raghu's race; Sri Ram) came to know that Bhr̄gupati (i.e. the great son in sage Bhr̄gu's race; sage Parashuram) has arrived, he rushed forward to meet him and bowed his head before him (as a mark of respect for the sage).

King Dashrath was very scared (when he saw Parashuram arrive suddenly in a angry mood because the king was aware of his unenviable reputation of being furious at the slightest of provocations, and especially if the provocation came from a Kshatriya, i.e. a warrior clan, he would not think twice before killing his opponent notwithstanding the merit of the case.) So he (Dashrath) prayed to him (Parashuram) most humbly and earnestly (in order to beg him for forgiveness as well as to be gracious and merciful and cool down his temper).

Then the sage (Parashuram) asked Sri Ram, 'Why did you break the bow? Rudra (Shiva) is my supreme Lord (and aren't you aware of it? So how dare you could break it when I am around)?'

When Sri Ram Chandra—who is the complete and supreme Lord incarnate, who is the most exalted amongst men, and who represents the primordial primary male aspect of Nature known as Pushottam (also known as the Viraat Purush or Hiranyagarbh or Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being) —looked at him a little askance and pulled back into himself (i.e. rescinded, retracted or took back) the fraction of the supreme divinity, energy, powers, potent, strength and vitality that the sage possessed by the grace of the Supreme Being, and which fraction of these virtues had made him so powerful, invincible, respected, revered and exalted amongst the sages, Parashuram became calm.

[Parashuram thought that he could brow-beat Sri Ram and subdue him like he had been doing with all the kings and princes of the Kshatriya race for a long time. He exemplified the sense of pride and ego of being superior to others that typified the Brahmin class. But as time passed the sage had crossed the limit of tolerance, and the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram wished to teach him a lesson—that enough is enough. So when Parashuram showed his anger and arrogance to Sri Ram, the Lord took back the divine and mystical powers that the sage possessed which made him invincible and powerful. He now felt like a deflated balloon. All his puff and huff were gone. This incident shows that one must not misuse his powers that are given to him for some specific purpose and according to some conditions prevailing at the time, but this does not mean that he has a birth right over them. Arrogance and haughtiness are crushed one day or the other like the case of Parashuram. In the present instance, Sri Ram took back those supreme powers that had been delegated to sage Parashuram as well as the authority of the sage to use his axe at will, to defeat his opponents, to ride roughshod, as it were, over everyone else. Sri Ram had taken back the supreme powers that the sage possessed because the Lord was the ultimate Authority, and he had bestowed these powers of invincibility and matchless strength and valour to Parashuram out of his own free will. Successive victories over the Kshatriya class and being able to slay them with

impunity had made Parashuram very haughty and reckless, a negative and condemnable trait that the Lord could not tolerate anymore because the behaviour of the sage smacked that of demons and was totally unbecoming of a true Brahmin. So the Lord decided that it was high time to clip the sage's wings. It was Parashuram's own folly, delusions of invincibility and superior birth as a Brahmin, and his ignorance of the laws of Nature set by the Lord that proved to be his undoing.]

(Having taken back the powers delegated to the sage—) Sri Ram told him, 'Now you should go and do Tapa (penances and austerities) on the summit of Mt. Mahendra.'

Hearing this instruction or good advice from the Lord, the great sage bowed his head before him (in submission and obedience, and went his way). [It is clear that the same sage—who was a personified form of anger, arrogance and intolerance, who had made the world bow to his commands and had made the Kshatriyas kneel down before him, and who had never imagined that a day would come when a young prince would stubbornly look him in the face and burst his balloon of pride and haughtiness—has now submitted meekly and humbly.] (7).

[Note :- Parashuram was very haughty and arrogant. He had taken a vow that he would kill all the Kshatriya clans on the surface of this earth. In the process, the sage had forgotten that the powers he possessed are not one of his own but have been given to him by the supreme Lord. Sri Ram was an incarnation of that supreme Lord. So when Parashuram showed his haughtiness and arrogance in front of his own master and Lord, who is the supreme Lord of the universe and on whose strength the sage could boast so much, Sri Ram wished to teach him a lesson on propriety and probity. So the Lord retracted or rescinded all the powers which he had delegated to Parashuram just to show him that arrogance and haughtiness are not good characters. Parashuram was brought to the ground and he had to go back to do Tapa to regain his holiness and divinity which are the hallmarks of a good saint, a sage and an exalted Brahmin. The behaviour of Parashuram was giving a bad name to these respected classes of people in general.]

श्रीराम की बरात का अयोध्या आगमन

[8]

अति आनंद अयोध्या आए, कियौ नगर—शृंगार ।
कदली खंभ, चौक मोतिन के, बाँधी बंदनवार ॥
कियौ प्रबेस राजभवन मैं, रामचंद्र सुखरास ।
अदभुत भवन बिराजत रतनन, सूरज कोटि प्रकास ॥
द्वादस बरष बिराजे वा थल, फिर भू—भार हरौ ।
कैकड़—बचन प्रमान किये नृप, तब यह काज करौ ॥

śrīrāma kī barāta kā ayōdhyā āgamana

(8)

ati ānanda ayōdhyā ā'ē, kiyau nagara-śrīṅgāra.
kadalī khambha, cauka mōtina kē, bām̐dhī bandanavāra..
kiyau prabēsa rājabhavana mair̐, rāmacandra sukhārāsa.
adabhuta bhavana birājata ratanana, sūraja kōṭi prakāsa..

dvāḍasa baraṣa birājē vā thala, phira bhū-bhāra harau.
kaika'i-bacana pramāna kiyē nrpa, taba yaha kāja karau..

Arrival of Sri Ram's Marriage Party in Ayodhya

8. The marriage party came back to Ayodhya amidst great rejoicing, fanfare, fervour and joyous celebrations.

The city was beautifully and colourfully decked up for the occasion—plantain trees were planted, designer squares were modeled with pearls, and festoons were hung around them.

Sri Ram Chandra, who is a treasury of happiness and bliss, entered the magnificent royal place which was illuminated like a million suns with glittering and sparkling array of jewels and gems.

He (Sri Ram) lived at that place for the next twelve years (after marriage). Then, when the king carried out the words that he had given to Kaikeyi¹, he (Sri Ram) did this work of removing the burden of the earth (in the form of the cruel demons)² (8).

[Note :- ¹We see that the description here is very sketchy. If one is not aware of the story of Sri Ram's exile to the forest in detail, one would not know what words Dashrath had given to Kaikeyi, and what work Sri Ram had to do. The words were actually two boons which Dashrath had promised Kaikeyi during some previous time, and were pending with him for redemption. The story goes that the king, during a war, had been obliged by Kaikeyi who had thrust her hands in a broken axle of a chariot's wheel during a war which Dashrath was fighting. A major catastrophe was averted when the axle broke, because had the chariot toppled to one side, Dashrath would have been mortally wounded. So Dashrath was very pleased and overwhelmed with awe and filled with gratitude towards Kaikeyi. He had promised her any two things she wanted as a reward for saving his life. So, Kaikeyi had kept them pending then and requested the king that she would demand her pending boons whenever she would like to have them in future. This was the time Kaikeyi invoked those two boons—one was asking for the throne of Ayodhya for her son Bharat, and the other was for Sri Ram going to exile for the next 14 years.

²The work that Sri Ram had to do, and which he did, was to kill the evil demons and free the earth from their tormenting burden.]

श्रीराम की वनवास लीला

[9/1]

बचन समझ नृप आज्ञा कीन्ही, देव उपाय करौ ।
रामचंद्र पितु—आज्ञा मानी, जिय मैं बचन धरौ ॥
यह भू—भार उतारन रघुपति, बहुत ऋषिन सुख दैन ।
बनोबास कौं चले सिया सँग, सुख—निधि राजिव—नैन ॥
मारग मैं हरि कृपा करी है, परम भक्त इक जान ।
तहँ तैं गए जु चित्रकूट कौं, जहाँ मुनिन की खान ॥
बालमीकि मुनि बसत निरंतर, राम—मंत्र उच्चार ।
ताकौ फल यह आज भयौ मोहि, दरसन दियौ कुमार ॥

पूजा करि पधराय भवन मैं, रामचंद्र परनाम ।
 कियौ बिबिध बिधि पूजा करि कै, ऋषि—चरनन सिर नाम ॥
 बहुत दिवस लौं बसे जगत—गुरु, चित्रकूट निज धाम ।
 किए सनाथ बहुत मुनि—कुल कौं, बहु बिधि पूरे काम ॥

śrīrāma kī vanavāsa līlā

(9/1)

bacana samajha nr̥pa ājñā kīnhī, dēva upāya karau.
 rāmacandra pitu-ājñā mānī, jiya maim̐ bacana dharau..
 yaha bhū-bhāra utārana raghupati, bahuta ṛṣina sukha daina.
 banōbāsa kauṁ calē siyā sam̐ga, sukha-nidhi rājiva-naina..
 mārāga maim̐ hari krpā karī hai, parama bhakta ika jāna.
 taham̐ taim̐ ga'ē ju citrakūṭa kauṁ, jahām̐ munina kī khāna..
 bālamīki muni basata nirantara, rāma-mantra uccāra.
 tākau phala yaha āja bhayau mōhi, darasana diyau kumāra..
 pūjā kari padharāya bhavana maim̐, rāmacandra paranāma.
 kiyau bibidha bidhi pūjā kari kai, ṛṣi-caranana sira nāma..
 bahuta divasa laum̐ basē jagata-guru, citrakūṭa nija dhāma.
 ki'ē sanātha bahuta muni-kula kauṁ, bahu bidhi pūrē kāma..

Sri Ram's Glorious Deeds During His Forest Exile

9/1. The Gods found out a way (to get the work referred to in the last line of the previous verse no. 8 done. They inspired Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of speech and intellect, to instigate Manthara, Kaikeyi's maid, who corrupted the wisdom of Kaikeyi, making her over jealous, selfish, skeptic, suspicious and rapacious. She invoked her pending promises that king Dashrath had made to her on some past occasion, and asked for Sri Ram's exile.)

The king realised that he had given a word of honour to her, and so ordered accordingly (Sri Ram to proceed to the forest). Sri Ram Chandra obeyed his father sincerely. To remove the burden of the earth (created by the evil and sinful demons), and to give happiness and joy to numerous (forest dwelling) sages, seers, hermits and ascetics, Raghupati—who was a treasury of joy and happiness, and was lotus-eyed—started on his journey for the forest accompanied by Sita.

On the way, he graced a person whom he recognised (or realised) as his great devotee. [This devotee was Kewat, the boatman who had taken Sri Ram across the river, but only after he had washed the Lord's feet and drunk the sanctified water himself and gave it to all other members of his family, thereby ensuring their liberation and deliverance from this mundane world].

From there, the Lord went to Chitrakoot where a large number of sages, seers, hermits and ascetics lived (literally, which was a 'mine' of such great people because they were there in abundance). There, sage Valmiki too lived; he repeated the Lord's 'Ram Mantra' constantly.

[That is, Valmiki persistently, consistently and constantly chanted the divine name of Sri Ram as the glorious and sublime panacea for emancipation and salvation.]

When the sage saw Sri Ram and Laxman arrive, he realised that it is the reward of his constant repetition of the holy and divine 'Ram Mantra' that he has got the privilege and the rarest of rare opportunity that the prince (Sri Ram) has come himself to his hermitage to grant him his divine vision personally.

[The sage realised that this is the reward and the auspicious effect of his repeating the holy name of the Lord that he has taken the trouble of coming personally to meet him. This led the sage to become extremely ecstatic and exhilarated.]

He bowed most reverentially before Sri Ram Chandra, took him inside his hermitage, respectfully gave him a seat, and then worshipped him in various ways. Then Sri Ram also bowed his head at the feet of the sage as a reciprocation of respects shown to him by the sage.

Sri Ram who is the most exalted teacher, preceptor and preacher for the whole world lived in Chitrakoot which was akin to his own abode (in the heavens).

[This simply means that Chitrakoot had an aura of divinity and holiness around it, and it gave the Lord immense peace and comfort. It was inhabited by numerous sages, seers, hermits and ascetics; it had pristine, pure and prime Nature at its best; it was serene, peaceful, calm and tranquil. It was the only habitat which gave Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman some peaceful years to live during their otherwise tempestuous sojourn in the forest.]

While staying there, he (Sri Ram) made many sages and their line of disciples feel extremely blessed and fortunate (by meeting them, talking with them, spending time with them, and generally spreading his divine aura, his divine ambience and his divine glory amongst them). The sages and seers, the hermits and ascetics felt fulfilled, contended and amply rewarded by their unhindered and free interaction with the Lord at Chitrakoot (9/1).

[9/2]

भरत जान जिय मैं रघुपति कौ दुःसह परम बियोग ।
 आए धाम संग सब लैकै, पुरबासी, गृह लोग ॥
 बिन दसरथ सब चले तुरत ही कोसलपुर के बासी ।
 आए, रामचंद्र—मुख देख्यौ, सब की मिटी उदासी ॥
 रामचंद्र पुनि सब जन देखे, पिता न देखन पाए ।
 पूछी बात, कह्यौ तब काहू, मन बहु बिधि बिलखाए ॥
 बेद—रीति करि रघुपति सब बिधि, मरजादा अनुसार ।
 बहुत भाँति सब बिधि समुझाए, भरत करी मनुहार ॥
 गुरु बसिष्ठ मुनि कह्यौ भरत सौं राम ब्रह्म—अवतार ।
 बन मैं जाय बहुत मुनि तारैं, दूर करैं भुव—भार ॥
 पुनि निज बिस्वरूप जो अपुनौ, सो हरि जाय दिखायौ ।
 आज्ञा पाय चले निज पुर कौं, प्रभुहि गीत समुझायौ ॥

(9/2)

bharata jāna jiya mair̥ṁ raghupati kau duḥsaha parama biyōga.
 ā'ē dhāma saṅga saba laikai, purabāsī, gr̥ha lōga..
 bina dasaratha saba calē turata hī kōsalapura kē bāsī.
 ā'ē, rāmacandra-mukha dēkhyau, saba kī miṭī udāsī..
 rāmacandra puni saba jana dēkhē, pitā na dēkhana pā'ē.
 pūchī bāta, kahyau taba kāhū, mana bahu bidhi bilakhā'ē..
 bēda-rīti kari raghupati saba bidhi, marajādā anusāra.
 bahuta bhām̐ti saba bidhi samujhā'ē, bharata karī manuhāra..
 guru basiṣṭha muni kahyau bharata saur̥ṁ rāma brahma-avatāra.
 bana mair̥ṁ jāya bahuta muni tāraiṁ, dūra karaiṁ bhuva-bhāra..
 puni nija bisvarūpa jō apunau, sō hari jāya dikhāyau.
 ājñā pāya calē nija pura kaur̥ṁ, prabhuhi gīta samujhāyau..

9/2. Meanwhile, Bharat (the younger brother of Ram) decided in his heart that the agony of separation from Raghupati (Sri Ram) was too much for him to bear. So, accompanied by all the residents of the city of Ayodhya as well as the members of the royal household, he came to the place where he (Sri Ram) lived (at Chitrakoot).

[This refers to the developments at Ayodhya. When Bharat came back to the city after his father's death and Sri Ram's forest exile, he decided that a great wrong has been done and it would be most ignominious and shameful for him to accept the throne. So he decided that it would be most wise and prudent to refuse the crown and instead go to the forest, ask for forgiveness, and attempt to bring Sri Ram back to Ayodhya.]

The people of Kaushalpur (i.e. the citizen of Ayodhya which was also known by this name) were not accompanied by Dashrath when they started on their journey for Chitrakoot (simply because the king had already died).

When they finally arrived at Chitrakoot and saw the face of Sri Ram, all their agonies and sorrows were dispelled. When Sri Ram Chandra could not see his father among them, he enquired (the reason for his absence), and then someone told him (that Dashrath had died). At this, Sri Ram grieved and lamented a lot and felt heart-broken.

[That is, Sri Ram was inconsolable for quite some time, shocked and dismayed beyond belief, and regretted the great loss of his loving and doting father. This grieving also shows that Sri Ram had no internal ill-will and a sense of anger, animosity or misunderstanding towards his father for sending him into exile.]

Raghupati observed all the rituals as prescribed by the Vedas and ordained by tradition (for the peace of the soul of his dead father).

After that, Bharat sincerely explained his position and clearly expressed his innocence to Sri Ram, requesting the latter most sincerely and prayerfully to forgive him, and begged him to come back to Ayodhya. Bharat tried his level best to persuade the Lord to return and explained his position to him as best as he could.

[That is, Bharat pleaded with Sri Ram and did his best to explain to him that he had no part to play in the entire conspiracy which his mother Kaikeyi had hatched on her own. But Sri Ram did not relent, and he declined to come back to Ayodhya.]

Guru Vashistha intervened and enlightened Bharat about the broader reasons for Sri Ram's forest exile. He said, 'Sri Ram is an incarnation of the Supreme Brahman. He

will provide emancipation and salvation to many a sages, seers, hermits and ascetics in the forest and will remove the burden of the earth (by killing the evil and sinful demons).’ Meanwhile, Hari (Sri Ram) also showed all of them his cosmic form which incorporated the entire creation in its ambit. The Lord also taught them the essentials of metaphysics in the form Gita. [The word Gita means spiritual and metaphysical teachings.]

Then all those who had come from Ayodhya took the Lord’s permission and started on their return journey back to the city, reassuring and consoling each other, and narrating the glorious and magnificent story of the Lord on the way back to keep alive his memory and draw consolation and emotional support from it (9/2).

[9/3]

कछु दिन बसे जु चित्रकूट मैं, रामचंद्र सह भ्रात ।
 तहाँ तैं चले दंडकावन कौं, सुखनिधि साँवलगात ॥
 मारग मैं बहु मुनि—जन तारे, अरु बिराध रिपु मारे ।
 बंदन कर सरभंग महामुनि, अपने दोष निवारे ॥
 दरसन दियौ सुतीच्छन गौतम, पंचबटी पग धार ।
 तहाँ दुष्ट सूर्पनखा नारी, करि बिन नाक उधार ॥
 यह सुनि असुर प्रबल दल आए, छिन मैं राम संहारे ।
 कीन्हे काज सकल सुर—मुनि के, भुब के भारत उतारे ॥
 मुनि अगस्त्य आस्रम जु गए हरि, बहु बिधि पूजा कीन्ही ।
 दिव्य बसन दीने जब मुनि नैं, फिर यह आज्ञा दीन्ही ॥
 दसकंधर कौं बेगि सँहारौ, दूरी करौ भुब—भार ।
 लोपामुद्रा दिव्य बस्त्र लै, दीने जनक—कुमारि ॥
 सूर्पनखा जब जाय पुकारी, नाक—कान लै हात ।
 रावन क्रोध कियौ अति भारी, अधर फरक अति गात ॥
 गयौ मारीच आस्रमहिं, तबहीं, वानैं बहु समझायौ ।
 तब मारीच कह्यौ दसकंधर, बिनती बहुत करायौ ॥
 रामचंद्र अवतार कहत हैं, सुनि नारद मुनि पास ।
 प्रगट भए निसिचर मारन कौं, सुनि वो भयौ उदास ॥
 कर गहि खडग, तोर बध करिहौं, सुनि मारिच डर मान्यौ ।
 रामचंद्र के हाथ मरूँगौं, परम पुरुष—फल जान्यौ ॥

(9/3)

kachu dina basē ju citrakūṭa maim, rāmacandra saha bhrāta.
 tahām̐ taim calē daṇḍakābana kaur̐, sukhānidhi sām̐valagāta..
 mārāga maim bahu muni-jana tārē, aru birādha ripu mārē.
 bandana kara sarabhaṅga mahāmuni, apanē dōṣa nivārē..
 darasana diyau suticchana gautama, pañcabaṭi paga dhāra.
 tahām̐ duṣṭa sūrpanakhā nārī, kari bina nāka udhāra..
 yaha suni asura prabala dala ā’ē, china maim rāma sanhārē.
 kīnhē kāja sakala sura-muni kē, bhuba kē bhārata utārē..

muni agastya āsrama ju ga'ē hari, bahu bidhi pūjā kīnhī.
 dibya basana dīnē jaba muni naim, phira yaha ājñā dīnhī..
 dasakandhara kaur̥m bēgi sam̥hārau, dūrī karau bhuba-bhāra.
 lōpāmudrā dibya bastra lai, dīnē janaka-kumāri..
 sūrpanakhā jaba jāya pukārī, nāka-kāna lai hāta.
 rāvana krōdha kiyau ati bhārī, adhara pharaka ati gāta..
 gayau mārīca āsramahim, tabahim, vānaim bahu samajhāyau.
 taba mārīca kahyau dasakandhara, binatī bahuta karāyau..
 rāmacandra avatāra kahata haim, suni nārada muni pāsa.
 pragaṭa bha'ē nīsicara mārana kaur̥m, suni vō bhayau udāsa..
 kara gahi khaḍaga, tōra badha karihaur̥m, suni mārīca ḍara mām'yau.
 rāmacandra kē hātha marūm̥gaum, parama puruṣa-phala jān'yau..

9/3. Sri Ram Chandra lived for some more time in Chitrakoot with his brother. From there, the dark complexioned Lord who is treasury of happiness and bliss, went to the forest called 'Dandak Van'. En-route, he provided emancipation and salvation to numerous sages, seers, hermits and ascetics, and also killed the demon Viradh who harboured animosity against the Lord.

The great sage Sarbhanga worshipped and prayed to him, thereby washing away all the worldly blemishes, faults and sins that tainted him. After that, the Lord gave his divine vision to sage Sutikshan of the Gautam clan, and then he came to 'Panchvati'. There he cut-off the nose of a wicked, pervert and evil woman, the demoness named Supernakha, and gave her deliverance (from her sins). Hearing this news (of Supernakha's deformation), a great demon force (led by Khar and Dushan) came there (to avenge the insult of Supernakha), but Sri Ram slayed them all in a very short time. In this way, he accomplished successfully all the works of the Gods (for which he had come to the forest) as well as of the sages, seers etc. (by freeing them from the fear of demons as well as by providing them with emancipation and salvation). In the process of doing these great deeds, the Lord removed the burden of the earth too (by killing the great and evil demons).

From there, Hari (Sri Ram) went to the hermitage of sage Agastya. The sage worshipped him in different ways, gave him divine clothes to wear, and then gave him the following instructions—'Kill the 10-shouldered or headed ('Das-kandhar') Ravana soon and remove the burden of the earth.' The sage's wife named Lopamudra gave divine clothes to the daughter of Janak (i.e. to Sita).

Meanwhile, when Supernakha went to Lanka with her severed nose and ears in her hands and called out in distress for help, Ravana became very annoyed, peeved, angry and vengeful. His lips quivered and his body shook in anger. He went to the residence of Marich and somehow persuaded him (to help in the abduction of Sita). [Marich is the demon who was flung by Sri Ram with the shot of an arrow when the demon had gone to defile the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra. Marich landed in the middle of the ocean on some island. It was here that Ravana approached him to help him seek revenge upon the Lord.]

Then Marich prayed to Ravana and pleaded with him, trying to dissuade him from his restlessness and belligerence by saying, 'It is said that Sri Ram Chandra is an incarnation (of the supreme God, and he is not an ordinary man as you think him to be). I

have heard this from the celestial sage Narad. The Lord has revealed himself with the main purpose of eliminating (or killing) the demons. [Therefore, you must be careful of what you are planning to do. Don't invite your own death.]'

Hearing this, he (Ravana) became sad, remorseful, despondent and dismayed. He took out his sword indignantly and threatened Marich of dire consequences if he did not help him—'I will kill you' said Ravana.

Marich was terrified and decided that (instead of dying at the hands of a sinful demon) it will be a great privilege, a fortunate event and a spiritual reward to go and get himself killed at the hands of Sri Ram who is the supreme Purush (i.e. Lord Vishnu) himself personified. [That is, if death is certain, Marich told himself, then it is better for him to get killed by Sri Ram and attain salvation than being killed by this sinful demon Ravana and going to hell.] (9/3)

[Note :- This verse covers the meeting of Sri Ram with the various sages in the forest as detailed in Aranya Kand of the epic story of Sri Ram as detailed in Ramayana.]

सीताजी का रावण के द्वारा अपहरण

[10]

कपट कुरंग—रूप धरि आयौ, सीता बिनती कीन्ही ।
 रामचंद्र कर सायक लैकै, मारन की बिधि कीन्ही ॥
 मास्यौ धनुष—बान लै ताकौं, लछिमन नाम पुकास्यौ ।
 लछिमन नाम सुनत तहँ आयौ, अवसर दुष्ट बिचास्यौ ॥
 धरि कै कपट बेस भिक्षुक कौ, दसकंधर तहँ आय ।
 हरि लीन्ही छिन मैं माया करि, अपने रथ बैठाय ॥
 चलयौ भाजि गोमायु—जंतु ज्यौं, लै केहरि कौ भाग ।
 इतनें रामचंद्र तहँ आये, परम पुरुष बड़ भाग ॥
 जब माया—सीता नहिं देखी, जिय मैं भए उदास ।
 पूछन लगे राम द्रुमगन सौं, बहुत बड़ी दुख—रास ॥
 मारग मैं जटायु खग देख्यौ, बिकल भयौ तन—हीन ।
 बिनती करी राम! मैं तासौं, बहुत लड़ाई कीन ॥
 जब तन तज्यौ गृद्ध रघुपति तब, बहुत करम—बिधि कीनी ।
 जान्यौ सखा राय दसरथ कौ, अपनी निज गति दीनी ॥
 मारग मैं कबंध रिपु मास्यौ, सुरपति—काज सँवास्यौ ।
 पंपापुर हरि तुरत पधारे, जल कौ दोष निवास्यौ ॥

sītājī kā rāvaṇa kē dvārā aparahaṇa

(10)

kaṇṭha kuraṅga-rūpa dhari āyau, sītā binatī kīnhī.
 rāmacandra kara sāyaka laikai, mārana kī bidhi kīnhī..
 māryau dhanuṣa-bāna lai tākaum, lachimana nāma pukāryau.
 lachimana nāma sunata taham āyau, avasara duṣṭa bicāryau..

dhari kai kapaṭa bēsa bhikṣuka kau, dasakandhara taham̐ āya.
hari līnhī china mair̐m māyā kari, apanēm̐ ratha baiṭhāya..
calyau bhāji gōmāyu-jantu jyauṁ, lai kēhari kau bhāga.
itanēm̐ rāmacandra taham̐ āyē, parama puruṣa baṛa bhāga..
jaba māyā-sītā nahim̐ dēkhī, jiya mair̐m bha'e udāsa.
pūchana lagē rāma drumagana saum̐, bahuta baṛhī dukha-rāsa..
mārāga mair̐m jaṭāyu khaga dēkhyau, bikala bhayau tana-hīna.
binatī karī rāma! mair̐m tāsaum̐, bahuta laṛā'ī kīna..
jaba tana tajyau gr̥d'dha raghupati taba, bahuta karama-bidhi kīnī.
jān'yau sakhā rāya dasaratha kau, apanī nija gati dīnī..
mārāga mair̐m kabandha ripu māryau, surapati-kāja sam̐vāryau.
pampāpura hari turata padhārē, jala kau dōṣa nivāryau..

Sita's Abduction by Ravana

10. He (Marich) came disguised in an unconventional form (of a golden deer whose skin was studded with priceless gems and jewels). [Unconventional because a real deer does never have a gold-plated skin studded with precious stones and bejeweled horns and eyes etc. It's impossible!]

Sita prayed (to Sri Ram to bring that mysterious and strange looking deer for her; she wanted to tame it and play with it.)

[According to some versions, she was fascinated by its charming hide and wished it to be skinned and use it as seat or mat, a practice followed by hermits in the forest.]

Sri Ram took an arrow and prepared to kill the deer (who was actually the demon Marich in disguise). When he finally used his bow and arrow to shoot it down, he (Marich in the form of the deer) cried out aloud, mimicking the voice of Laxman. Hearing his name being called out, Laxman came there (because Sita had feared that Ram was in trouble and needed help).

Meanwhile, the wicked and pervert fellow (i.e. Ravana) got an opportunity. [When Laxman went towards the direction of the sound to help Sri Ram, Sita was left alone in the hermitage, with no one to guard and protect her.]

The 10-shouldered/headed Ravana assumed a deceitful form of a mendicant and came there (at the hermitage of Sita). He abducted her without wasting any time (i.e. literally in a moment) by putting her in his chariot. Then, fearing severe reprisal (from both Ram and Laxman should they return before his escape from the site), he ran away with her as swiftly and speedily as possible from there as if a jackal is running away after stealing a prey hunted down by a lion (fearing vengeance from the king of the jungle as soon as he learns that the jackal has snatched his prey).

[The lion, who is the king of the jungle, cannot tolerate the temerity and the impertinence of the humble jackal who steals something which belongs to the king. Its an insult of the lion who ruthlessly seeks revenge and retribution upon the jackal by killing the latter instantly. In this case Ravana is likened to this jackal as he felt extremely terrified that once Lord Ram and Laxman come to know of his misdeeds, they would certainly kill him on the spot without showing any mercy. The irony of the situation is that this is the same demon who had instilled terror in the hearts of Gods and the rest of

the creation so much so that all living beings trembled even when his name was mentioned, but who now did not have sufficient courage to come and take away Sita boldly after a fight, instead choosing to steal her deceitfully like a thief, stealthily and silently with the help of a decoy.]

Meanwhile, Sri Ram Chandra, who is the supreme Purush (the cosmic male, the Lord, the Viraat Purush, Lord Vishnu) and most honourable, came back at the hermitage, and when he did not see the 'Maya Sita', he became very sad, distressed and dismayed.

[Earlier, Sri Ram had put the original Sita in the custody of the Fire-God so that when Ravana eventually came to steal her, he would not be able to lay his hands on the original Sita. Therefore, it was an illusionary image or a shadow of the original form of Sita which Sri Ram had created in preparation of her abduction by Ravana as a background for his ultimate killing that is called the 'Maya Sita' here. The word 'Maya' means delusions and falsehoods.]

His anguish and sorrow, his agony and torment knew no bounds (when Sri Ram found the hermitage empty and Sita gone from there). Feeling lonely, most contrite, helpless and hapless, Sri Ram was so overwhelmed with the anguish and the sorrow of losing his dear Sita, so extremely perplexed, vexed and confounded was he that he asked even the inanimate trees and plants of the forest about her whereabouts.

[It must be noted that it was an un-inhabited part of a dense forest. There was not a single soul who could tell the Lord anything about Sita, except the trees, big and small. The pitiful condition and the sense of frustration of the Sri Ram is striking when he seemingly lost the balance of his mind in asking the trees about Sita, expecting them to hear and reply, something that is incredulous. Though he was the all-knowing Lord yet he behaved in a normal way like a utterly dismayed and very distraught man who has lost his wife in the wilds to ensure that any spy of the demon who might be watching his behaviour may not get a hint that the Lord knows who has stolen Sita and where she has gone. The Lord wished to act like an ordinary human being because not only was he an expert artist of sorts who wanted to play his role of a human being to absolute perfection but also because there were a whole lot of things at stake, a whole lot of things yet to be done, and if his true identity was disclosed now there were good chances that Ravana would pre-empt his death by surrendering Sita out of the fear for his own life, and if that would happen then the entire purpose of the Lord's coming to the forest would be defeated as he would not get a chance to fight and kill the demons. The very mission of the Lord would fail even before it started. So it was imperative that the Lord concealed his truthful divine nature and behave like an ordinary man to perfection by lamenting and wailing for Sita like any other man would normally do.]

(While searching for Sita—) He came to the place where he found the bird known as Jatayu (who was a vulture) lying on the way. Jatayu was in great pain (and bleeding profusely) because his body had been dismembered (his wings had been cut-off by Ravana when Jatayu had tried to intervene on behalf of Sita). When Jatayu saw Sri Ram, he submitted to the Lord—'I had put up a great fight for your sake (but I am so sorry that I could not save Sita).' Saying this, the vulture (Jatayu) left his mortal body (i.e. died). Then Raghupati (Sri Ram) performed all his last rites himself keeping in mind the fact that he (Jatayu) was a friend of (his father) king Dashrath, and by doing so, Sri Ram gave him the final rest in his own abode in the heaven. [That is, the Lord provided him liberation and deliverance from his evil body of a vulture who fed on cadavers, and gave his soul final

peace in the form of emancipation and salvation. It ought to be noted here that the Lord did not think twice before doing the last rites of a vulture—so merciful, kind and gracious is he. Jatau had the rarest of rare privilege of having his last death rites being performed by the Lord of the world himself, a privilege that even the greatest of sages and saints yearn for but are not fortunate enough to get.]

Further ahead on the way, by killing the enemy called Kabandh (who was a headless demon with only a trunk having a hole for a mouth and protuberances for limbs), Sri Ram fulfilled the work of the king of Gods, Indra. [That is, the Lord removed one more evil demon from the path of the Gods. The 'work of the Gods' is the elimination of the cruel and sinful demons from the surface of the earth so that goodness and righteousness can once again prevail on the land.]

Then Hari (Sri Ram) immediately went to a lake called 'Pampa' and purified its water of its curse (9).

[Note :- An outcast old woman named Sabari used to serve the great sage Matang by living near his hermitage. Nearby was the lake called 'Pampa'. One day, the sages and seers who lived in that area saw her cleaning the path leading to the lake very early in the morning. Since she was of a low caste, they cursed and scolded her because they regarded her appearance as defiling the place. This misplaced notion of superiority and high stature immensely displeased the Lord. So as soon as those haughty and proud sages went and took a dip in that lake, its water turned turbid, polluted and infested by worms and filth. When Sri Ram had gone there during his forest exile, the sages and seers requested him to purify that lake. Sri Ram, being all-knowing, knew the secret behind that pollution, and in order to teach those sages a lesson of their lives, he asked them to request Sabari to take a dip in it. As soon as she did it, the water regained its former pristine purity, and the lake its former exceptional scenic beauty. This made the haughty sages and seers feel ashamed at their ignorance and behaviour.]

सीता की खोज

[11/1]

सबरी परम भक्त रघुपति की, बहुत दिन की दासी ।
 ताके फल आरोगे रघुपति, पूरन भक्ति प्रकासी ॥
 दीन मुक्ति निज पुर की ताकौ, तब रघुपति चले आगे ।
 सीता—सीता बिलपत डोलत, परम बिरह सौ पागे ॥
 रबिनंदन जब मिले राम कौ, अरु भेंटे हनुमान ।
 अपनी बात कही उन हरि सौ, बालि बड़ौ बलवान ॥
 सप्तताल—बेधन हरि कीन्हौ, बालि छिनक मैं तारौ ।
 दीन्हौ राज राम रबिनंदन, सब बिधि काम सँवारौ ॥
 सप्तदीप के कपि—दल आए, जुरी सैन अति भारी ।
 सीता की सुधि लैन चले कपि दूँदुत बिपिन मँझारी ॥
 जलनिधि तीर गए सब कपि मिलि, सुनि संपति की बानी ।
 लंक बसत सीता रिपुबन मैं, सब बानर यह जानी ॥

sītā kī khōja

(11/1)

sabarī parama bhakta raghupati kī, bahuta dinana kī dāsī.
 tākē phala ārōgē raghupati, pūrana bhakti prakāśī..
 dīna mukti nija pura kī tākauṁ, taba raghupati calē āgē.
 sītā-sītā bilapata dōlata, parama biraha saurṁ pāgē..
 rabinandana jaba milē rāma kauṁ, aru bhēṇṭē hanumāna.
 apanī bāta kahī una hari saurṁ, bāli barau balavāna..
 saptatāla-bēdhana hari kīnhau, bāli chinaka mairṁ tārau.
 dīnhau rāja rāma rabinandana, saba bidhi kāma samvārau..
 saptadīpa kē kapi-dala ā'ē, jurī saina ati bhārī.
 sītā kī sudhi laina calē kapi dhūmṛhata bipina mamjhārī..
 jalanidhi tīra ga'ē saba kapi mili, suni sampati kī bānī.
 laṅka basata sītā ripubana mairṁ, saba bānara yaha jānī..

Search for Sita

11/1. Sabari (the low caste tribal woman) was a long time ardent devotee and a humble follower of Raghupati (Sri Ram). He accepted and ate fruits offered by her, preached her on the concept of complete devotion, and then liberated her by giving her residence in his own abode.

After that, Raghupati proceeded ahead, wailing and lamenting for Sita, calling out 'Oh Sita' every now and then. In due course, when the son of the Sun-God (i.e. Sugriv) and Hanuman (the son of the Wind-God) met Sri Ram, the former told Hari (Sri Ram) that Baali (Sugriv's elder brother) was very strong.

[When Sri Ram met Sugriv and exchanged notes with him, Sugriv told the Lord the reason for his staying in exile on the mountain and its surrounding forest. He explained how his elder brother Baali, who was very strong, had cruelly thrown him out of the kingdom of Kishkindha, and it is out of his fear that he lives in hiding here. Baali cannot harm him here because of some early curse which prevents him from entering this area. When Sri Ram heard of his predicaments, he empathized with Sugriv and wished to help him by eliminating his arch-enemy Baali. Sugriv told the Lord that it is prophesised that Baali can be killed only by someone who could pierce the seven tall coconut trees by a single arrow. So Sri Ram fell the trees as described below.]

Hari (Sri Ram) pierced the seven tall coconut trees (with a single arrow), and shortly thereafter he gave emancipation and deliverance to Baali (by killing him and liberating his soul from his sinful mortal body).

After that, the son of the Sun-God (Sugriv) was given the kingdom (of Kishkindha). In this way, all his difficulties were overcome and his desires were fulfilled.

[Baali had thrown his younger brother Sugriv out of the kingdom due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers, and had not only usurped his right to the share of the kingdom but had even sinfully kept the wife of his younger brother as his mistress, an act that is unpardonable. When the Lord found that Sugriv was cheated and great injustice was done to him, the Lord decided to punish Baali for his misdeeds by killing him and then restoring the kingdom as well his wife to Sugriv. From the

perspective of military strategy it was a clever move by Sri Ram to make a friend in an alien land by helping him get back his lost right to the kingdom so that he feels sufficiently obliged to help his benefactor Sri Ram. By killing Baali Sri Ram also intended to signal and warn Sugriv that he must never attempt to betray the Lord, for should he do so the same fate awaits him.]

After that, (Sugriv summoned all the monkeys from all the corners of the earth in order to help Sri Ram launch his search for Sita, so) hordes of monkeys came from all the seven continents, and a huge, grand army was assembled.

The monkeys embarked in every direction on a great mission to search for Sita. They searched for her in all the forests, and finally came to the boarder (coast) of the ocean. From the words of Sampati (the elder brother of vulture Jatayu), they came to know that Sita was held captive in Lanka, and that she is confined to a forest (or a large garden) owned by the enemy (i.e. by the demon Ravana).

[Sampati was an old vulture. He could see across the vast expanse of the ocean. When he learnt that the monkeys were on a mission to search for Sita on behalf of Sri Ram, he felt he must help because he was the elder brother of Jatayu who had laid down his life in an attempt to save her while she was being abducted by Ravana. Sri Ram had shown the greatest of respects to Jatayu by performing his last rites himself as he would have done for his own father. So Sampati felt morally obliged to help the monkeys. He told them about the city of Lanka and Sita being held captive there in a grove.] (11/1).

हनुमान का लङ्का पहुँचना एवं लङ्का दहन

[11/2]

राम—चरन करि सुमिरन मन मैं, चले पवन—सुत धाय ।
 राम—प्रताप बिघन सब मेंटे, पैठि नगर सुख पाय ॥
 धरि लघु रूप प्रवेस कियौ कपि, लंका—नगर मँझार ।
 राम—भक्त जिन जान बिभीषन, भेटे हरि अँकवार ॥
 तब वानैं सब भेद बतायौ, देखी कपि सब लंका ।
 राम—चरन धरि हृदय मुदित मन, बिचरत फिरत निसंका ॥
 जाय असोक—बाटिका देखी, दरसन सीता कीन्ह ।
 कर दंडवत बहुत बिनती कर, राम—मुद्रिका दीन्ह ॥
 सब संदेस कह्यौ कपि सिय प्रति, सुनि हिय मैं धरि राख्यौ ।
 राम—सँदेस कहेउ तब सीता, जो बूझौ सो भाख्यौ ॥
 लागी भूख, चले उपवन मैं, नाना बिधि फल खायौ ।
 बिटप उखारि, उजार बिपिन कौ सबहिन कौ दरसायौ ॥
 सुनि पुकार निसिचर बहु आए, कूदि सबन सँहारे ।
 इंद्रजीत बलनिधि जब आयौ, ब्रह्म—अस्त्र उन डारे ॥
 तासों बँधे दसानन देखन चले पवन—सुत धीर ।
 रावन बहुत ज्ञान समझायौ, कथ—कथ कथा गँभीर ॥
 चले छुड़ाय छिनक मैं तबहीं, जार दई सब लंक ।

कूदि चले गज—बन कौं जै करि, ज्यौं मृगराज निसंक ॥
 आए तीर समुद्र, मिले कपि, मिले आय जहँ राम ।
 सुनि—सुनि कथा स्रवन सीता की पुलकित अति अभिराम ॥

hanumāna kā laṅkā pahum̐cānā ēvaṁ laṅkā dahana

(11/2)

rāma-carana kari sumirana mana mair̐, calē pavana-suta dhāya.
 rāma-pratāpa bighana saba mēṇṭē, paṭṭhi nagara sukha pāya..
 dhari laghu rūpa prabēsa kiyau kapi, laṅkā-nagara mam̐jhāra.
 rāma-bhakta jina jāna bibhīṣana, bhēṭē hari am̐kavāra..
 taba vānair̐ saba bhēda batāyau, dēkhī kapi saba laṅkā.
 rāma-carana dhari hr̥daya mudita mana, bicarata phirata nisaṅkā..
 jāya asōka-bāṭikā dēkhī, darasana sītā kīnha.
 kara daṇḍavata bahuta binatī kara, rāma-mudrikā dīnha..
 saba sandēsa kahyau kapi siya prati, suni hiya mair̐ dhari rākhyau.
 rāma-sam̐dēsa kahē'u taba sītā, jō būjhau sō bhākhyau..
 lāgī bhūkha, calē upabana mair̐, nānā bidhi phala khāyau.
 biṭapa ukhāri, ujāra bipina kauṁ sabahina kauṁ darasāyau..
 suni pukāra niscara bahu ā'ē, kūdi sabana sam̐hārē.
 indrajīta balanidhi jaba āyau, brahma-astra una ḍārē..
 tāsōṁ bam̐dhē dasānana dēkhana calē pavana-suta dhīra.
 rāvana bahuta jīāna samajhāyau, katha-katha kathā gam̐bhīra..
 calē churāya chinaka mair̐ tabahīṁ, jāra da'ī saba laṅka.
 kūdi calē gaja-bana kauṁ jai kari, jyauṁ mrgarāja nisaṅka..
 ā'ē tīra samudra, milē kapi, milē āya jaham̐ rāma.
 suni-suni kathā sravana sītā kī pulakita ati abhirāma..

Hanuman Reaches Lanka & Its Burning

11/2. [The monkeys conferred amongst themselves as to who was competent enough to cross the vast ocean, enter the enemy's place, search Sita, and then come back safely to finish the mission successfully. It was decided that Hanuman fits the bill perfectly, and so he was given the green signal to proceed to Lanka.]

The son of the Wind-God (i.e. Hanuman) remembered and invoked the powers and potentials of the divine feet of Sri Ram in his mind and heart, and started off most urgently on the grand and the holy mission. By the glory, grace and potent of Sri Ram, all his hurdles were removed, and he reached the city (Lanka) very cheerfully.

The Kapi (literally a monkey; an epithet generally used for Hanuman in the text) assumed a very miniscule form (like that of a tiny mosquito) and entered the centre of the city unnoticed. There, Vibhishan (the devotee of Sri Ram and a brother of Ravana) embraced (welcomed) him with open arms considering him (Hanuman) to be a sincere devotee of Sri Ram. Then he (Vibhishan) told him all the secrets of the place.

After that, with Sri Ram's divine feet enshrined in his heart and with an exhilarated and cheerful mind, the Kapi fearlessly roamed about in the city, seeing its

sights. By and by, he went to the Ashok grove and had a divine glimpse of Sita. He bowed reverentially before her, prayed to her a lot, and gave her Sri Ram's finger ring (as an identification symbol as well as a memento of Sri Ram).

The Kapi conveyed the message (of Sri Ram) to Sita and she heard it silently and attentively, embracing it and keeping it close to her heart.

[That is, she heard the message in rapt attention and became emotional, keeping the message enshrined in her heart.]

After hearing Sri Ram's message, Sita asked him certain questions and he replied to them.

[Sita wished to be certain if Hanuman was indeed a messenger of the Lord and not some decoy demon attempting to cheat on her. So she asked him certain questions which only one who knows Sri Ram closely can answer. So when Hanuman answered them correctly, Sita felt reassured and happy. She was now certain that Hanuman was a genuine messenger of Sri Ram and was not an imposter; he was not some cunning demon trying to trap her.]

Hanuman was hungry, so he went to the mini forest and ate different types of fruits. While doing so, he bravely and defiantly uprooted all the trees and ruined that forest while the guards watched helplessly. On hearing their cry for help, other demons arrived. He (Hanuman) jumped here and there and killed them all (single handedly). When the strong Indrajeet (Meghanad—the son of Ravana) arrived and shot the weapon known as 'Brahmastra' given to him by Brahma, he (Hanuman) let himself fall down voluntarily. [Hanuman feigned faintness and voluntarily allowed himself to be captured so as to show respect to the dignity and authority of Brahma's weapon.] The courageous, strong, patient and steadfast son of the Wind-God went along (with Indrajeet) to see the 10-headed one (Ravana).

He tried to reason with Ravana in different ways, telling him seriously the grave repercussions and the horrible consequences of his misdeeds. (But when Ravana didn't pay any heed to Hanuman's entreaties and remained stubborn as ever—) He (Hanuman) freed himself in an instant from the fetters that had been shackling him, and burnt the city of Lanka.

[That is, first Hanuman tried to make Ravana see reason and relent on his misdemeanours. But when he found that the demon would not listen, Hanuman just expanded his body and broke the ropes that had tied him. Freed, he burnt the city in vengeance. He wished to challenge Ravana to stop him if he could, and that this was just the trailer of the things to come.]

Having done it (i.e. having burnt the city and trashed the pride of Ravana), he jumped across the ocean even as a lion, the king of animals, fearlessly goes away after conquering a herd of wild elephants.

On this side of the ocean, he met all the other Kapis (monkeys) who were waiting eagerly for him, and together they came to meet Sri Ram. The most charming and endearing Lord Sri Ram became thrilled and excited as he heard the news of Sita (11/2).

लङ्का विजय

[12]

करि कपि—कटक चले लंका कौं, छिन मैं बाँध्यौ सेत ।

उतर गए, पहुँचे लंका पै, बिजय—धुजा संकेत ॥
 पठए बालि—कुमार बिनय करि, समुझाए बहु बार ।
 चित नहिं धरौ, काल—बस जान्यौ, फिर आयौ सुकुमार ॥
 असरन—सरन उदार कल्पतरु, रामचंद्र रनधीर ।
 रिपु भ्राता जान्यौ जु बिभीषन, निस्चर कुटिल सरीर ॥
 राखि सरन लंकेस कियौ पुनि, जब निस्चर सब मारे ।
 माया करी बहुत नाना बिधि, सब कौं राम निवारे ॥
 कुंभकरन पुनि इंद्रजीत यह, महाबली बल—सार ।
 छिन मैं लिए सोख मुनिबरज्यौं छत्री बली अपार ॥
 कियौ प्रसाद सांतना करि कै, राज बिभीषन दीन ।
 पुनि मंदोदरि अचल आयु दै, अभय—दान सब कीन ॥
 सामाधन सुरगन कौ करि कै, अमृत मेघ बरषायौ ।
 कृपा—दृष्टि अवलोकन करि कै, हत कपि—कटक जियायौ ॥
 निस्चर किए मुक्त सब माधव, तातें जिए न कोय ।
 निरभय किय लंकेस बिभीषन, राम—लखन नृप दोय ॥
 सीता मिली, बहुत सुख पायौ, धर्यौ रूप निज मायौ ।
 पुष्पक—यान बैठि के नीक, चले भवन, सुख छाया ॥
 चले पवन—सुत बिप्र—रूप धरि, भरतहि दैन बधाई ।
 जानि देत रघुपति कौ प्रमुदित, भरत मिले तब धाई ॥

laṅkā vijaya

(12)

kari kapi-kaṭaka calē laṅkā kauṁ, china mairi bām̐dhyau sēta.
 utara ga'e, pahum̐cē laṅkā pai, bijaya-dhujā saṅkēta..
 paṭha'e bālī-kumāra binaya kari, samujhā'e bahu bāra.
 cita nahim̐ dharau, kāla-basa jān'yau, phira āyau sukumāra..
 asarana-sarana udāra kalpataru, rāmacandra ranadhīra.
 ripu bhrātā jān'yau ju bibhīṣana, niscara kuṭila sarīra..
 rākhi sarana laṅkēsa kiyau puni, jaba niscara saba mārē.
 māyā karī bahuta nānā bidhi, saba kauṁ rāma nivārē..
 kumbhakarana puni indrajīta yaha, mahābalī bala-sāra.
 china mairi li'e sōkha munibarajyauri chatrī balī apāra..
 kiyau prasāda sāntanā kari kai, rāja bibhīṣana dīna.
 puni mandōdari acala āyu dai, abhaya-dāna saba kīna..
 sāmādhana suragana kau kari kai, amṛta mēgha baraṣāyau.
 krpā-drṣṭi avalōkana kari kai, hata kapi-kaṭaka jiyāyau..
 niscara ki'e mukta saba mād̐hava, tātēm̐ ji'e na kōya.
 nirabhaya kiya laṅkēsa bibhīṣana, rāma-lakhana nr̐pa dōya..
 sītā milī, bahuta sukha pāyau, dharyau rūpa nija māyau.

puṣpaka-yāna baiṭhi kē nīka, calē bhavana, sukha chāyau..
calē pavana-suta bipra-rūpa dhari, bharatahi daina badhāī.
jāni dēta raghupati kau pramudita, bharata milē taba dhāī..

Conquest of Lanka

12. Assembling a huge army of Kapis (literally, an army of monkeys), he (Sri Ram) embarked on his campaign to conquer Lanka, built the bridge (over the ocean) in a short time, put his foot on the other side of the ocean, entered Lanka, and his flag fluttered on its soil as a mark of conquest.

Sri Ram sent the son of Baali (i.e. Angad) as a messenger to Ravana (in an attempt to avoid bloodshed and give him a chance to make a truce). He (Angad) tried repeatedly and politely to persuade and somehow convince him (Ravana) to see reason, but the latter didn't pay any attention to his pleadings. Realising that Ravana was under the spell of death (and therefore no amount of explaining, cajoling and requesting would have any effect on him), the prince (Angad) came back (to Sri Ram's camp).

Sri Ram Chandra—who gives refuge and shelter to those who have no succour anywhere, who is magnanimous, generous, kind, gracious and large-hearted like a (wish fulfilling celestial tree of Gods called the) 'Kalpa Tree', and who is most steadfast, courageous, brave, bold, invincible and unrelenting in the battle-field—knew that Vibhishan was a brother of his enemy and had a body of a demon that is universally considered wicked, evil, deceitful and pervert. In spite of this, he (Sri Ram) accepted (i.e. kept) him in his refuge, gave him shelter and fearlessness, and also made him the king of Lanka when all the other (wicked, evil) demons had been killed in the ensuing battle.

[This stanza stresses that had Ravana been reasonable and had he relented and given Sita back to the Lord, there is no doubt that the Lord would have forgiven him and let him continue as the king of Lanka in spite of the fact that he was a cruel demon and his misdeeds were unpardonable. But as it turned out, destiny had something other in store. The supreme Lord arranged things in such a way that Ravana did not agree to Angad's requests, and this gave the Lord an excuse to get rid of him. This step by the Lord of sending a messenger to find out a way of making peace helped the Lord avoid criticism that he did not give Ravana a chance.]

The cunning demons tried all tricks of the trade, they adopted all sorts of deceit and clever maneuverings in all possible ways they could think of, but Sri Ram proved to be too much for them and he got rid of all of them in the battle.

Kumbhakaran (the brother of Ravana) and Indrajeet (Meghanad, the son of Ravana) were very strong, brave, courageous and invincible as if they personified the very essence of these qualities/virtues, but the most valiant Kshatriya (i.e. the warrior Sri Ram) vanquished them in an instant (i.e. in a very short time) just like the legendary sage (Agastya) who had drunk (literally, dried up or soaked) the ocean quickly (in three gulps).¹

(At the end of the war—) He consoled Vibhishan and blessed him by giving him the kingdom of Lanka (as a reward for being righteous and helping him win over evil forces). The Lord also blessed Mandodari (wife of Ravana) with an infinitely long life, gave the boon of fearlessness to all the remaining demons (who had survived the war and had sided with Vibhishan), and solved the problems of the Gods.

[The killing of the cruel and sinful demons, and restoring peace and order in the world, was the ‘problem of the Gods’ that the Lord solved.]

After that, the Lord asked the Gods to shower Amrit (the elixir of life) on the battle-field (so that the monkeys were revived and the demons lying dead on the battle-field were provided salvation). He glanced graciously on the monkey army, and gave a fresh life to those who were killed or mortally wounded. All the demons were given the benefit of liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation by Madhav (Sri Ram), and that is why they could not be revived (or brought back to life like the monkeys at the end of the war when Amrit rained on the battle-field).

[The Lord is most merciful and gracious. He had no personal animosity or harboured ill-will against anyone. For him, all were alike. He knew that the sins the demons committed were not the fault of their souls but was the fault of their bodies, because when the soul had entered the body of a demon it is but natural that it would be inclined to be sinful and pervert. The Lord does not send anyone to hell, for his desire is always to provide liberation and deliverance to the creature. So, though the demons died, they did not go to hell, but were provided the rare opportunity of getting emancipation and salvation.]

The two Lords, Sri Ram and Laxman, made Vibhishan, the king of Lanka, fearless (by eliminating his tormentor elder brother Ravana). Then Sita came and met them, got immense happiness and joy, and she resumed her original form after abandoning her shadowy image.

[Earlier, Sita had assumed the form of an image or a shadow when her real form was kept in the custody of the Fire God prior to her abduction by Ravana. So now, she reverted to her original form.]

He (Sri Ram) boarded the ‘Pushpak’ plane and headed home. Immense amount of joy and happiness, exhilaration and ecstasy, spread everywhere. The son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) went ahead of the plane disguised as a Brahmin to congratulate Bharat (and inform him about the good news of Sri Ram’s happy arrival). When Bharat recognised that he was a messenger of Raghupati (Sri Ram), he rushed forward to meet him (Hanuman) (12).

[Note—¹Sage Agastya drinking the ocean—Once, when Indra had killed the demon Vrittaasur, other demons named ‘Kaaleya’ managed to escape and they hid themselves under the water of the ocean. From there they began terrorizing the sages and seers. They stayed under water during daytime and came out at night to torment and devour these sages, and generally cause nuisance and havoc all around. These demons had not spared even such renowned sages of the time as Vashistha, Chyavan and Bharadwaj, because the demons attacked their hermitages and killed the sages and seers who lived there. It was then that the Gods, led by their king Indra, requested sage Agastya to somehow expose the demons. At this, the sage had scooped up the water of the ocean in a cup made by joining the two palms of his hands and had drunk the water of the ocean in one gulp so as to expose the demons. The Gods were then able to destroy them. Some of the demons however managed to escape and hid themselves in the nether world. This is how the demon race survived then. However, when the ocean was completely dried up it created another problem for the world because countless marine creatures begin to suffer and die. Besides this, the ocean was the largest natural reservoir of water on earth. So the Gods requested sage Agastya to refill it. The sage replied that the water has been digested in his stomach, but he can oblige the Gods by reproducing the ocean in the form of urine. That

is the reason, according to this legendary story of the Purans, why the ocean is salty and sour—because it is the urine of sage Agastya.

This fact, that the ocean is sour and salty because it is the urine of sage Agastya, is explicitly narrated in the Anand Ramayan (purported to have been written by sage Valmiki), in its Vilaas Kand (Chapter), ninth Sarga (Canto), verse nos. 18-24 where Sita explains to Lopaamudraa, the wife of sage Agastya, why Sri Ram had constructed the bridge in order to cross the ocean to reach Lanka. She explained that the Lord did not ask the sage to dry up the ocean once again by drinking its water because it would be unthinkable to ask the sage to drink his own urine. Even if the sage had actually drunk the water, the Lord would be heaped with the ignominy of being so selfish that he made a Brahmin drink his own urine so that his purpose is served. The Lord did not swim across the ocean because it would be insulting and extremely demeaning for the Lord to swim in urine, and it would also be improper for him to step across a Brahmin's urine because it is to be regarded as holy as the urine of a cow.]

श्रीराम का राज्याभिषेक एवं राम राज्य

[13/1]

सुनत नगर सबहिन सुख मान्यौ, तहँ—जहँ तैं चल धाई ।
 रामचंद्र पुनि मिले भरत सों, आनंद उर न समाई ॥
 कियौ प्रबेस अयोध्या मैं तब, घर—घर बजत बधाई ।
 मंगल—कलस धराए द्वारैं, बंदनवार बँधाई ॥
 राजभवन मैं राम पधारे, गुरु बसिष्ठ दरसायौ ।
 सीस नवाय बहुत पूजा करि, सूरज—बंस बढ़ायौ ॥
 समाधन सबहिन कौ कीनौ, जो दरसन कौ आयौ ।
 कौसल्या, केकई, सुमित्रा, मिलि मन मैं सुख पायौ ॥
 बैठै राम राज—सिंहासन, जग मैं फिरी दुहाई ।

śrīrāma kā rājyābhiṣēka ēvaṁ rāma rājya

(13/1)

sunata nagara sabahina sukha mān'yaū, taham̐-jaham̐ tair̐ cala dhā'ī.
 rāmacandra puni milē bharata sōm̐, ānam̐da ura na samā'ī..
 kiyau prabēsa ayōdhyā mair̐ taba, ghara-ghara bajata badhā'ī.
 maṅgala-kalasa dharā'ē dvāraim̐, bandanavāra bam̐dhā'ī..
 rājabhavana mair̐ rāma padhārē, guru basiṣṭha darasāyau.
 sīsa navāya bahuta pūjā kari, sūraja-bansa baṛhāyau..
 samādhana sabahina kau kīnau, jō darasana kaur̐ āyau.
 kausalyā, kēka'ī, sumitrā, mili mana mair̐ sukha pāyau..
 baiṭhai rāma rāja-sinhāsana, jaga mair̐ phirī duhā'ī.

Sri Ram's Coronation & His Reign as King of Ayodhya

13/1. As soon as the citizens got wind of the news of Sri Ram's arrival, everyone felt exceedingly glad and ecstatic, and the people began to run hither and thither in excitement.

Upon arrival, Sri Ram Chandra cheerfully met Bharat, and the surge of happiness and joy, the heaving waves of exhilaration and ecstasy, could just not be contained in their hearts. Then they entered the city of Ayodhya. Felicitous songs and music to welcome the Lord was being played in each household of the city; auspicious pitchers and pots were put up at each doorway, and decorative festoons, hangings and buntings were strung up all across the city (giving it a festive appearance).

Thereafter, Sri Ram ceremoniously went to (or arrived at) the royal palace, met Guru Vashistha, bowed his head in reverence before him, worshipped him, and honoured him by saying—'You have blessed this Solar-race; your blessings have enhanced its glory and fame.'

[Sri Ram belonged to the Sun-race. So the Lord wishes to thank the sage for his blessings which had ensured that everything remained fine at Ayodhya during his absence, and that he could kill the demons and come back happily to Ayodhya along with Sita and Laxman.]

All those who came to have his (Sri Ram's) august, holy and divine sight (i.e. who came to see and meet him) had their desires fulfilled (because Sri Ram met all of them and listened to all their grievances and woes personally).

Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra (the three mother queens) met him (Sri Ram) and felt very cheerful and exhilarated in their hearts.

Subsequently, Sri Ram sat on the throne of the kingdom (of Ayodhya), and his glorious fame and deeds was proclaimed (i.e. they spread) in the whole world (in all the directions) (13/1).

[13/2]

निरभय राज राम कौ कहियत, सुर—नर—मुनि सुख पाई ॥
 चार मूर्ति धरि दरसन आए, चार बेद निज रूप ।
 अस्तुति करी बहुत, नाना बिधि, रीझे कौसल—भूप ॥
 सिव, बिरंचि, नारद, सनकादिक, सब दरसन कौ आए ।
 राम राज बैठे जब जाने, सबहिन मन सुख पाए ॥
 लोकपाल अति ही मन हरषे, सब सुमनन बरसायौ ।
 पुष्प बिमान बैठि हरि आए, लै कुबेर पहुँचायौ ॥

(13/2)

nirabhaya rāja rāma kau kahiyata, sura-nara-muni sukha pā'ī..
 cāra mūr̥ti dhari darasana ā'ē, cāra bēda nija rūpa.
 astuti karī bahuta, nānā bidhi, rījhē kausala-bhūpa..
 siva, biran̄ci, nārada, sanakādika, saba darasana kaur̄m ā'ē.
 rāma rāja baiṭhē jaba jānē, sabahina mana sukha pā'ē..
 lōkapāla ati hī mana haraṣē, saba sumanana barasāyau.
 puṣpa bimāna baiṭhi hari ā'ē, lai kubēra pahum̄cāyau..

13/2. It is said that the reign of Sri Ram gave fearlessness to all. The Gods, the humans and the saints (i.e. sages, seers, ascetics, hermits, mendicants, monks, friars and other pious ones) got comfort, peace, happiness and joy.

All the four Vedas assumed a gross form (or an image of a human body) and came to have a divine sight of the Lord, and they sang various hymns in his praise and honour. [All the Vedas revealed themselves as wise people and lauded the glories of Sri Ram by singing hymns from the scriptures.] This extremely pleased the king of Kaushal (Sri Ram).

Lords Shiva and Brahma, sages Sankadi and Narad etc.—all came to have a divine view of the Lord, and having come to know that Sri Ram has been crowned on the throne of Ayodhya, all of them felt exceedingly cheerful in their hearts.

All the 'Lokpals' (guardians of the world) felt extremely exhilarated in their hearts and rained flowers (from the sky upon the city, in joy and celebration).

The 'Puspak' plane on which Hari (Sri Ram) had come (back from Lanka) was sent back to (its rightful owner) Kuber (who was the treasurer of the Gods, and from whom Ravana had snatched this plane on some previous occasion) (132).

[13/3]

अति आनन्द भयौ अवनी पर, राम—राज सुख—रास ।
 कृतजुग—धर्म भए त्रेता मैं, पूरन रमा—प्रकास ॥
 अस्वमेध बहु जज्ञ किए पुनि, पूजे दुजन अपार ।
 हय, गज, हेम, धेनु, पाटंबर, दीन्हे दान उदार ॥
 चरित अनेक किए रघुनायक, अवधपुरी सुख दीन्हौ ।
 जनक—सुता बहु लाइ लड़ावत, निपट निकट सुख कीन्हौ ॥
 राम बिहार करेउ नाना बिधि, बालमीकि मुनि गायौ ।
 बरनत चरित बिस्तार कोटि सत, तऊ पार नहिं पायौ ॥
 'सूर' समुद्र की बूँद भई यह, कबि बरनन कहा करिहै ।
 कहत चरित रघुनाथ, सरस्वति बौरी मति अनुसरिहै ॥
 अपने धाम पठाय दिए तब, पुरबासी सब लोग ।
 जै—जै—जै श्रीराम कल्पतरु, प्रगट अजोध्या भोग ॥

(13/3)

ati ānanda bhayau avanī para, rāma-rāja sukha-rāsa.
 kṛtajuga-dharma bha'e trētā maiṁ, pūrana ramā-prakāsa..
 asvamēdha bahu jajña ki'ē puni, pūjē dujana apāra.
 haya, gaja, hēma, dhēnu, pāṭambara, dīnhē dāna udāra..
 carita anēka ki'ē raghunāyaka, avadhapurī sukha dīnhau.
 janaka-sutā bahu lāra laṛāvata, nipāṭa nikāṭa sukha kīnhau..
 rāma bihāra karē'u nānā bidhi, bālamīki muni gāyau.
 baranata carita bistāra kōṭi sata, ta'ū pāra nahim pāyau..
 'sūra' samudrakī būmḍa bha'ī yaha, kabi baranana kahā karihai.
 kahata carita raghunātha, sarasvati baurī mati anusarihai..

apanē dhāma paṭhāya di'ē taba, purabāsī saba lōga.
jai-jai-jai śrīrāma kalpataru, pragaṭa ajōdhyā bhōga..

13/3. Happiness, joys, jubilation and good tidings spread over the earth. Sri Ram's reign was like a treasury of comfort, well-being, peace, happiness and tranquility. The righteousness and virtuous conduct which characterised the earlier age called 'Krityug' became a dominant way of life even during the current age called 'Treta' (in which Sri Ram's incarnation took placea)¹.

The radiance and splendour of 'Ramaa' (i.e. goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu; the patron Goddess of wealth, prosperity and worldly well-being) was at its peak.

[That is, there was prosperity, plentiness, wealth and abundance everywhere. There was no dearth of any material comfort or pleasure in this world. There was happiness and contentedness everywhere.]

The Lord performed many horse sacrifices called the 'Ashwamegh Yagya', and he worshipped Brahmins a lot.

[The Brahmins were the elders in the society. They were generally regarded as being wise, erudite, scholarly and enlightened.]

He liberally gave charities in the form of horses, elephants, gold, cows and silk robes (or clothes of honour to wise and honourable people).

Raghu-Nayak (i.e. the leader of the Raghu's clan; Sri Ram) did various deeds worth remembering and adoring, and which deeds gave happiness, joy, comfort and cheer to the city of Ayodhya (i.e. to its citizens). Even the daughter of Janak (i.e. Sita) showed immense love and affection for them (citizens), and she gave them the privilege of enjoying her royal patronage.

[That is, the people of Ayodhya could access both Sri Ram and Sita with their complaints, if any, without any hindrance or fear. The Lord and Sita ensured, on their part, that the complaints were redressed. As a result, the citizens were very happy with their king and their queen, Sri Ram and Sita respectively.]

Sage Valmiki has described or sung the various worldly sports or deeds that Sri Ram playfully did or indulged in during his worldly sojourn on this earth. His story is so vast and great that inspite of trying to describe it in 100 Crore (1 Crore = 10 million) hymns or verses, he could not fathom it, measure it, or find the end of it. [100 Crore is simply used as a figure of speech to highlight the vastness of the story of Ramayan.]

Surdas says that his own narration is just like a drop in this vast and fathomless ocean. In fact, which poet can ever be able to describe it (Sri Ram's divine and glorious story) fully (when even the most exalted amongst them, the great sage Valmiki himself couldn't do it). Nevertheless, any poet who tries to attempt to describe the divine and glorious story of Raghunath should be rest assured that Saraswati (the Goddess of speech, wisdom, intelligence and learning) will follow his stupid, mad, inept and incompetent mind/intellect in this pursuit.

[That is, even though the narrator or the poet himself might be totally incompetent at being able to describe Sri Ram's magnificent, stupendous, fascinating, majestic and glorious stories, but he should not be afraid or disheartened or deterred by his incompetence because the Goddess of knowledge and erudition will help him, covertly and overtly, in his endeavour. Surdas here means that though he is not at all competent to

describe the glorious story of Sri Ram, and he does not at all boast of any poetic acumen, he has still done it, and it is goddess Saraswati who has enabled him to do so.]

At the end (of his worldly sojourn), Sri Ram sent all the residents of the city as well as all other people of the realm of his kingdom to his own abode (in the heaven). Glory to Sri Ram—the Lord who is like the ‘Kalpa Taru’ (the all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods) for his devotees (as he fulfills all their desires), and the Lord who had revealed (manifested) himself in Ayodhya to suffer as well as to enjoy his sportly activities on earth.

[The Lord had to ‘Suffer’ for the larger interest of the human kind, and he ‘enjoyed’ the sight of the world being restored to its peace and prosperity. Even Lord Jesus Christ had revealed himself for the redemption of human kind, and for it he had to suffer so much, even get crucified, so that the rest of us can enjoy freedom from our sins and salvation for our souls.] (13/3)

[Note :- ¹There are 4 eras or ‘Yugs’ in the celestial cycle of creation and annihilation. These are no formal boundaries segregating any two individual eras as such, to distinguish one from the other. They coalesce and seamlessly merge one into the other. The transition from one era to another is smooth, it’s almost like going up a hill station from the heated plains below—as we gradually ascend the slope of the mountain, the air gradually becomes cooler and purer. The moral conduct of the people, their standard of mind and intellect, their thought processes and ideals, their norms of behaviours and criterion to decide what is good and what is bad, their definition of righteousness, virtuousness, nobility, propriety, probity, ethics, morality, justice as well as emancipation, salvation, liberation, deliverance, devotion, worship and spiritualism etc.—all these and relevant other aspects determined the characteristics and general demeanours of a particular era or age. In this context, the first era called the ‘Krityug’ was considered the best and the ideal era. With the fall in standards and the gradual creeping in of evil, vices, perversions and other degrading and denigrating qualities which seeped into the moral fiber of the people, the first phase transformed into the second era called the ‘Treta Yug’. It was in this era that Lord Ram took birth. The third era was ‘Dwapar Yug’—the age of Lord Krishna, in which the legendary Mahabharata clan war between two clans was fought for most worldly of things. The present, the fourth and the last era, is called ‘Kaliyug’, and in this we live. As we can observe, a whole book can be written on the characteristic features of ‘Kaliyug’ and its people, the moral fabric and their way of thinking which is marked by selfishness, perversion and all the vices and evils which one can think of.

This short commentary is to highlight the fact that Sri Ram’s reign in ‘Tretayug’ was different from the rest of the ‘Yugs’ which came after him. Surdas has clearly hinted at the gradual fall in moral standards when he says that ‘the righteousness and virtuous conduct that characterised the earlier era called Krityug became a dominant and salient feature in people’s life even in Treta Yug’. It was not a general law or norm of behaviour during Treta, but since the Lord Sri Ram himself had ascended the throne, such virtues did become a reality even when not expected.

Each 4-era cycle consists of the following Yugs—

(1) The Satayug is the first era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It is also called Krityug because elaborate rituals of fire sacrifices based on the Vedas were done during this phase, and hence it is often called the era of great Vedic fire sacrifices. It is equivalent to 4800 divine years of Gods, and 17,28,000 human years.

(2) The Tretayug is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years. It is second era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It was during

this Yug that Lord Ram manifested on earth as an incarnation of Vishnu, and it concluded when the Lord left the earth for his heavenly abode.

(3) The Dwaparyug is equivalent to 2400 divine years of Gods, and 8,64,000 human years. It is third era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It was during this Yug that Lord Krishna manifested on earth as an incarnation of Vishnu, and it concluded when the Lord left the earth for his heavenly abode.

(4) The Kaliyug is equivalent to 1200 divine years of Gods, and 4,32,000 human years. It is the current fourth era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. Out of it, roughly 5000-5500 years have elapsed. It would ultimately end with the great deluge or Doomsday when the entire world would be drowned/submerged in water of the rising ocean.]

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SAINT SURDAS'

RAM CHARITAAWALI

(Surdas Ramayan)

Section-3

Life Sketch of Saint Surdas

3.1 Surdas was the greatest poet saint who lived in Lord Krishna's birth place called the 'Brij Bhumi', corresponding to the present day 'Vrindavan' in the northern part of India. Like Goswami saint Tulsidas who lived and produced his vast repository of stupendous devotional literature centered on the theme of Sri Ram who was most dear to his heart and inseparable from his being, saint Surdas focuses his attention on Sri Krishna. Both the poets wrote in Hindi using the local dialect and setting their compositions to the tunes of various melodies or musical notes called 'Raagas'. The lyrics by both are soul-stirring and have the potential to mellow the sternest of hearts and wet the driest of eyes. Both Tulsidas and Surdas saw no difference between Sri Ram and Sri Krishna, because though the Lord of their hearts were Sri Ram and Sri Krishna respectively, they wrote about the other with equal aplomb, devotion and reverence. Both were prolific writers and poets par excellence in the realm of Hindi devotional literature.

Birth—Saint Surdas was born in Vikram Samvat 1535 (A.D. 1478), Vaisakh Shukla 5, Tuesday, roughly the end of April or the beginning of May, at a village called Sihi near Delhi, in the household of a Brahmin. The name of his parents and three elder brothers isn't available authoritatively. It is said that he was born blind which created great dismay and worry to his parents. His name was given 'Suraj' (literally meaning 'Sun'). There is a legendary story that when he was merely 6 years of age, his parents had lost two gold Mohars (coins) given to them by the village landlord which they had misplaced. The child had a divine sight though physically he was blind by his eyes. So, on the condition that his parents will not come in his way when he finally renounced the household, the child told them the location of the gold coins which had been hidden in some hole by a mouse.

True to his words, Suraj (the earlier name of Surdas) left his house at the age of 12 years in V.S. 1547 and took shelter under a banyan tree in another village about 4 Kosa (apprx. 12 K.M.) away by putting up a thatched hut near a pond. As providence would have it, the village Brahmin chief's ten cows went missing and Suraj told him about their whereabouts. Because of this mystical and magical power, people started calling him 'Surswami'. The Brahmin landlord was pleased with him and provided for his food and care.

By V.S. 1553 when he was around 18 years old, his fame had spread far and wide. Material benefits started pouring in—he enjoyed worldly pleasures till V.S. 1553, when self-realisation dawned upon him and he renounced the world.

During the period when his fame had spread as a clairvoyant, he came in contact of a young lady named 'Maya' belonging to the dancing tribe called 'Nut'. The story goes that once she tried to test his powers of divine sight by adorning herself in all finery except putting the 'dot' on her forehead. Surswami, as Surdas was then called, composed a verse describing her beauty but clearly stated that the only shortcoming in her charming and enthralling image was the missing 'dot' on the forehead.

His fame was mired by this single trait in his character—that he was a lustful, passionate man of carnal inclinations, a worldly man rather than a spiritual man. This filled Surswami with indignation and extreme regret. So one day, abandoning every material thing that he had till then around himself to be surrounded with, he went to Mathura, the city of Sri Krishna. He arrived there in V.S. 1553 (at the age of 18 years) and stayed near Vishram Ghat in a decrepit and abandoned hut on the banks of Manikarnika Ghat.

Surswami lived in Mathura for 12 years. It was here that devotion took firm roots in his bosom. He was transformed from a village lad singing pop culture folksongs into a devotee soaked and submerged in the love for the Lord—as is evident from his compositions which he sang in Mathura. It is said that though physically blind, he had a mystical and divine sight which enabled him to see, inter alia, a swollen river Yamuna at Mathura, have a divine vision of Deoki and Vasudeo (the parents of Lord Krishna), the slaying of Kansha (by Krishna), the festivals held at Nandgaon at the time of Krishna's birth, the 'Raas Lilas' of Krishna at Vrindavan, the 'Holi' revelry of Varsana, the birth place of Radha, amongst other such divine visions associated with the life of Lord Krishna.

His Guru (teacher) is said to be Uddhavaacharya Ujaagir Deo (श्री उद्धवाचार्य उजागिर देव) whose daily discourses on Srimad Bhagvat moulded the mental inclinations of Surswami and turned him more devotional towards Lord Krishna. But his formal initiation took place in V.S. 1567 (A.D. 1510) when he took his vows from Swami Vallabhaacharya (स्वामी वल्लभाचार्य) who changed his name to 'Surdas'. The Guru opened a vast vista of Krishna's devotion for Surdas. Sri Vallabhacharya was a renowned preacher of his time from South India, and had established a strong following and a separate sect amongst Hindus called the 'Pusthi Sampradaaya' (पुष्टि सम्प्रदाय) in Mathura.

Surdas, in his new transformed existence, roamed around in various places associated with Sri Krishna in an around Mathura between V.S. 1567 till 1573. It was in V.S. 1572 that the great Krishna devotee Mahaprabhu had visited Mathura during the time Surdas was there.

Surdas joined his Guru Vallabhacharya during his tour of 'Brijbhumi' in the year V.S. 1573, which is remembered in history as the year in which Sikandar Lodhi of Delhi had demolished Lord Krishna's temple called 'Keshav Rai' in Mathura. Meanwhile, Surdas finally settled in a place called 'Paaraasauli' (पारासौली) in V.S. 1576 and used to sing to Lord 'Sri Nath' most emotionally and reverentially, soaked and infused with devotion for the Lord. The great lady saint Mirabai had visited 'Braj' during V.S. 1595 while Surdas was living there.

For 35 years, from V.S. 1565 to V.S. 1602, Surdas had composed thousands of devotional hymns. He had taken a vow to create 1 Lakh (100 thousands) hymns in the honour and praise of Lord Srinath Ji (Sri Krishna). By this time, Surdas had surpassed all other singers of devotional music and hymns of his time, and at the age of 67 years (in

V.S. 1602), he was honoured with the title of ‘The first amongst the 8 Kirtan singers.’ [The others were—Parmaanand Das (परमानन्द दास), Kumban Das (कुम्बन दास), Krishna Das (कृष्ण दास), Chitta-swami (चित्तस्वामी), Govind Swami (गोविन्द स्वामी), Chaturbhuj Das (चतुर्भुज दास) and Nand Das (नन्द दास). The Kirtan singers were those who led a chorus of devotional singers who sang in unison in a group and used musical instruments for singing.]

Emperor Akbar the Great first heard about Surdas in V.S. 1607 when one of his devotional hymns (‘Jasudhaa Baar Baar Yaha Bhakhe’—जसुधा बार बार यह भाखै) was sung to him by his court singer named Tansen. Akbar was spellbound, and he came to meet Surdas around V.S. 1623 when the saint sung the immortal hymns (e.g. ‘Manaa Re Kar Maadhau Sau Priti’—मना रे कर माधौ सौ प्रीति) for the benefit of the emperor. Akbar was extremely impressed and started the process of collecting and getting written all the hymns composed by Surdas, and paid for each original verse. [This led to lot of deceit because people posed themselves as Surdas and presented the emperor with verses composed in the saint’s name just in order to get money in return. This is one of the reasons why a number of hymns exist in the name of Surdas but they do not belong to him. The emperor was so charitable in his demeanours that he did not wish to hurt the name of the Lord as well as the good name of Surdas, so he nevertheless rewarded even the imposters, although he segregated the original ones from the fakes.]

The most famous episode relating to Surdas is this—in V.S. 1626, a great saint named Sri Narain Bhatt came to meet him. Surdas asked him the whereabouts of Lord Krishna, when Bhatt told him, ‘He is herding his cows near a hillock called Sakhigiri’, Surdas went there and heard the loud chattering of cowherd boys in the distance. He asked someone to put him on the track (path) that will lead him to where Sri Krishna was, when suddenly a young boy came running to him, held his hand and put him on the path leading to the direction from where the voices came, and then the boy vanished. This experience electrified Surdas, and he sang 3 most haunting devotional hymns on the spot which are considered as his most beautiful and soul stirring ones. [These 3 hymns are the following— (i) ‘Baahubal Kiteku Jaunau Jaduraai’ बाहुबल कितेकु जानौ जदुराई, (ii) ‘Vraj Mai Dhitta Bhaye Tum Dolat’ ब्रज में ढीठ भये तुम डोलत, (iii) ‘Mai Tumare Guna Jaane Shyam’ मैं तुमरे गुन जाने श्याम.]

In another incident in V.S. 1628, young boys tested Surdas’ powers of divine sight by asking him to describe the decoration of the deity. Surdas composed his famous hymn ‘Dekho Ri Hari Nangam Nangaa’—‘देखौ री हरि नंगम नंगा’ (which means ‘look, the Lord is naked’—because the foolish detractors had kept the deity naked but had told Surdas that it had been fully dressed up to test him because he was deemed to be blind by the stupid people of the world).

In V.S. 1639, Akbar the Great summoned Goswami Tulsidas to Delhi to display his supernatural powers. According to legends, Surdas also accompanied him. Akbar was made to beat a hasty retreat when Delhi was swamped by ferocious monkeys.

It was the year V.S. 1640 (A.D. 1853) when Akbar laid the foundation of his fort at ‘Prayag (on the banks of river Ganges and Yamuna) and re-christened the city as Allahabad (after ‘Allah’; this name still stands, and the city is also called ‘Triveni’ in the state of Uttar Pradesh of North India). He wished to meet Surdas on that auspicious occasion and sent an emissary with an invitation letter lauding the saint profusely. But when his minister-emissary named Abul Fazal came to the village Parasauli where Surdas lived, the saint was very ill, old and unable to oblige.

Death—It was in this year, in V.S. 1640, Magh Shukla 2 (appx., the end of February and the beginning of March in the year A.D. 1583), that Surdas left his mortal coil by lying cheerfully on the ground facing the temple of his Lord Sri Nath Ji (Lord Krishna). He was laid to rest at a place near there called 'Jatipuraa' (जतीपुरा) under the shadow of the holy hillock called 'Giriraj'.

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आराधितं पदयुगं तव नो यदापि नाम स्मृतं न खलु यद्यपि चेतसा ते ।
उद्धर्तुमर्हसि तथापि दयानिधे मां दीनात्मनामुपकृतिर्महतां हि धर्मः ॥

(गुमानी भक्तविज्ञप्तिसार, ३३)

Araadhitam Padayugam Tava No Yadaapi Naam Smritam Na Khalu Ydyapi Chetasaa Te.
Urdhartumaharsi Tthaapi Dayaanidhe Mam Dinaatmanaamu-pakritirmataam Hi
Dharmaha (gumānī bhaktavijñaptisāra, 33)

‘Though I have not worshipped your holy feet with the needed level of devotion nor have I taken (i.e. done Japa or remembered) your holy name sincerely, but still it is known that you liberate and deliver everyone. That is why, oh the merciful and compassionate Lord, you would surely emancipate me, because it is a natural habit of great and exalted ones—to do good to those who are lowly, humble and helpless. If you do not do it then your glorious fame will become futile and false.’ (Gumani, Bhakta Vigyaptisar—33)

देहं विदेहतनयाधिपते मदीयं सा संश्रयिष्यति तदा तु जरा वराकी ।
हा हन्त हन्त राम मम जर्जरितेन्द्रियस्य त्वत्तोऽपरः शरणदो भविता तदा कः ॥

(गुमानी भक्तविज्ञप्तिसार, १८)

dēhaṁ vidēhatanayādhīpatē madīyaṁ sā sanśrayiṣyati tadā tu jarā varākī.
hā hanta hanta rāma mama jarjaritēndriyasya tvattō' paraḥ śaraṇadō bhavitā tadā kaḥ..
(gumānī bhaktavijñaptisāra, 18)

‘Oh Lord of the daughter of Videh (i.e. Sri Ram, the husband of Sita)! When my body and its organs will become decrepit and crippled due to the onslaught of old age, say, who else will give refuge and succour to it except you?’ (Gumani, Bhakta Vigyaptisar—18)

त्वन्नामकीर्तन सुधामपहाय जन्तुः स्यात् कोसलाधिप कथं कुशली जगत्सु ।
नूनं स एव सुकृती सुमति स एव मान्यः स एव हृदि तद्विधृतं हि येन ॥

(गुमानी भक्तविज्ञप्तिसार, ४३)

tvannāmakīrtana sudhāmapahāya jantuḥ syāt kōsalādhīpa kathaṁ kuśalī jagatsu.
nūnaṁ sa ēva sukṛtī sumati sa ēva mān'yaḥ sa ēva hr̥di tadvidhṛtaṁ hi yēna..
(gumānī bhaktavijñaptisāra, 43)

‘Oh Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya; here referring to Sri Ram)! Where is it possible for a creature to find welfare except by, or without, doing ‘Kirtan’ (devotional singing) of the Lord’s holy name? He who drink the ambrosia of the Lord’s auspicious and welfare providing name and enshrines it in his heart—only such a person is deemed to be righteous, pious, holy, pure, wise and honourable.’ (Gumani, Bhakta Vigyaptisar—43)

सत्यं वदामि पुरुषोत्तम ते पुरस्तान्नान्यद्भवच्चरणतः शरणं मदीयम् ।

त्वं तु स्वभृत्यगणनावसरे क्वचिन्मां स्मृत्वा कृतार्थयसि वा नहि तन्न जाने ॥

(गुमानी भक्तविज्ञप्तिसार, ३०)

satyaṁ vadāmi puruṣōttama tē purastānnān'yadbhavaccaraṇataḥ śaraṇaṁ madīyam.
tvaṁ tu svabhṛtyagaṇanāvasarē kvacinmām smṛtvā kṛtārthayasi vā nahi tanna jānē..
(gumānī bhaktavijñaptisāra, 30)

‘Oh Purushottam (an epithet for Vishnu, literally the best male or the most exalted one in creation)! I tell the truth that except seeking and taking refuge in your (holy, divine and august) feet, I have no succour anywhere else. You are my only Lord. I don’t claim to be either your only or the most important or prominent devotee, but nevertheless when you make a roll call of your devotees, will you count me in the list or not? I don’t know this, but I just say that if you do happen to count me, then I’ll consider myself most fortunate, privileged and fulfilled.’ (Gumani, Bhakt Vigyaptisar—30)

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Section-3

Main Characters of the Story of Ram Charitawali

3.2 A brief Introduction of the main Characters of the story of 'Ram Charitawali', popularly known as "Saint Surdas' Ramayana".

Baal Kand:--

Dasrath (Daśaratha): He was the king of the kingdom of Ayodhya (Ayōdhyā), which was also known as 'Avadh'. He headed an empire that covered a major part of north India of those days. Hence, he was also called a 'Chakravarti King'—i.e. one whose rule extended over a wide swathe of land that had a huge parameter or circumference ("Charka" = a circle).

Kaushalya (Kauśalyā), Kaikeyi (Kaikeyī) and Sumitra (Sumitrā) were his three chief queens. Kaushalya was the eldest, but the king was more enamoured with Kaikeyi.

Sri Ram (Rāma), Bharat (Bharatha), Laxman (Lakṣmaṇa) and Shatrughan (Śatrughna) were his four sons. Ram was the eldest of the four brothers and the son of Kaushalya; Bharat was the son of Kaikeyi, and Laxman and Shatrughan were the twin sons of Sumitra.

Sage Vishwamitra (Viśvāmitra): The sage who lived in the forest. His fire sacrifice was continuously defiled by the demons. He had gone to Ayodhya to bring Lord Ram to get rid of these demons.

Ahilya: She was the cursed wife of sage Gautam, who had been converted into a stone. She was freed from this curse when Lord Ram touched her by his foot.

Janak: He was the king of Janakpur at the foothills of the Himalyan mountain range. His daughter Sita was married to Lord Ram. His another daughter Urmila was married to Laxman. The two daughters of his younger brother Kushketu, i.e. Maandavi and Srutkirti were married to Bharat and Shatrughan respectively.

Sita (Sītā): The eldest daughter of Janak, and the wife of Lord Ram. It was her abduction by the demon king Ravana that led to the famous war of Lanka around which the story of the Ramayana is built.

Sage Vashistha (Vasiṣṭha): The royal priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya and the teacher of the four princes.

Sage Parashuram: He was the son of king Gaadhi and a great devotee of Lord Shiva. When he heard that Lord Ram had broken Shiva's bow to fulfil a condition of his marriage with Sita, the sage was extremely angered because he took it as an insult of Shiva. He came to take revenge, but was pacified by the grace of Lord Ram.

Ayodhya Kand:--

Manthara (Mantharā): The favoured maid of Kaikeyi who became jealous when she heard that Lord Ram was to be anointed the prince regent of Ayodhya. She instigated her mistress Kaikeyi to compel king Dasrath under some pending promises that were due to her that Ram be sent to a 14 year forest exile, and her own son be installed on the throne of the kingdom.

Kevat (Kēvaṭu): The boatman who took Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita across the river Ganges as they headed for the forest.

Aranya Kand:--

Supernakha (Śūrpaṇakhā):-- She was a half-sister of Ravana, the king of the demon race. She was so enamoured by the charm of Lord Ram that she proposed to marry him. At this the Lord got her nose and ears chopped-off at the hands of Laxman.

Khar and Dushan (Khara Dūṣana):-- They were the cousin brothers of Supernakha and commanders of the demon army deputed to take care of the forest around Chitrakoot in central India.

Maarich (Mārīca):--The demon who was forced by Ravana to become a deer with a golden skin so that Sita could be distracted. Seeing this unique deer, Sita asked her husband Lord Ram to go and bring the deer for her. When the Lord went away, Ravana abducted Sita. Maarich was eventually shot down by Ram.

Jatau (Jaṭāyu): The great and courageous vulture who had intercepted the chariot in which Ravana was taking Sita to Lanka. Jatau tried his best to free Sita, but his wings were cut by the abductor, Ravana. Jatau fell to the ground and was spotted by Lord Ram and Laxman. Before dying, Jatau had told the Lord who had taken Sita away. Lord Ram did his last rites himself.

Sabari (Śabarī):-- She was an old woman who had served sage Matanga. She was blessed by the sage that she will have a divine communion with Lord Ram, an incarnation of the Supreme Being, which would give her final deliverance. Sri Ram had visited her hermitage while searching for Sita. It was she who directed him to Kishkindha where the Lord befriended the monkeys who helped him to conquer Lanka and rescue Sita.

Kishkindha Kand:--

Baali/Vaali (Vālī):-- The king of Kishkindha and the monkey race. He was also the elder brother of Sugriv, the friend of Lord Ram.

Sugriv (Sugrīva):-- The younger brother of Baali who was thrown out of the kingdom due to certain misunderstanding between the two brothers. He lived in exile on top of the Rishyamook mountain where Lord Ram and he became friends. He was reinstated on the throne of Kishkindha, and in return he had helped Lord Ram in finding out about the whereabouts of Sita and rescuing her by lending his huge army of monkeys and bears to the Lord.

Hanuman (Hanumāna):-- A companion of Sugriv and said to be the son of the Wind God. He became an ardent follower of Lord Ram. It was he who went to Lanka to discover Sita, and burn the city down. Later on in the war, he had brought the herb to revive Laxman when he was wounded in the battle field. Hanuman played a pivotal role in the epic war and the conquest of Lanka.

Sampaati (Sampāti): He was the brother of Jatau. He lived on the shore of the ocean. When the monkey search team reached there in search of Sita, it was he who had told them she was present in Lanka, an island in the middle of the ocean. Anyone who could go there will find her.

Sundar Kand:--

Vibhishan (Vibhīṣaṇa): The younger brother of the king of demons, Ravana. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, and by extension of Lord Ram. When Hanuman was searching for Sita in the city of Lanka, it was he who told him about the garden where Sita was held captive. Later on, he was insulted and kicked by his elder brother Ravana when he tried to persuade his brother to become reasonable and give Sita back to her husband. It was due to this humiliation that he joined sides with Lord Ram.

Ravana (Rāvaṇa): The great king of the demon race and seemingly an invincible ruler of Lanka, the capital city of the demons. He had kidnapped Sita, and was finally killed in the epic war.

Trijataa (Trijaṭā): The demoness deputed by Ravana to keep a close watch on Sita. She became sympathetic towards her ward Sita and had always encouraged the latter to keep hope.

Mandadori: She was the wise wife of Ravana who had tried on several occasions to persuade her husband to return Sita and prevent the ruinous war.

Lanka Kand:--

Angad (Aṅgada): The son of Baali who later on became a faithful follower of Lord Ram. His devotion for the Lord was no less than that of Hanuman. Lord Ram had sent him as his messenger to Ravana in a last attempt to avoid the war.

Kumbhakaran (Kumbhakarana): He was the brother of Ravana. He had also tried to persuade Ravana to avoid the war. He was later killed in the war.

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Section-3

Brief outline of the Story of Ram Charitawali

3.3 Now, finally, let us read a brief outline of this magnificent epic known as Ramayana.

The story is as follows: The earth and its living beings as well as the gods were being terrorized by the demons led by their king Ravana of Lanka. They appealed to the creator, Brahma, to find out a solution. Together they prayed to Lord Vishnu, the protector of this creation and a manifested form of the Supreme Being. Vishnu assured them that he himself will come down to earth in a human form as Lord Ram and take care of things.

So, Lord Vishnu along with his close associates manifested himself as Lord Ram, the scion of the ruling family of a huge empire of which Ayodhya was the capital. The ruling monarch was king Dasrath, and he had three queens. Kaushalya was the eldest, and the other two were Sumitra and Kaikeyi.

In their previous life, Dasrath and Kaushalya were Manu and Satrupa (the first male and female) respectively. They had done severe Tapa (penance) with a wish to have Lord Vishnu as their son. Their wish was fulfilled in their present life when Vishnu became their son in the form of Lord Ram.

The story goes that Dasrath had become old of age but he had no heirs. He took advice from his royal priest sage Vashistha and performed a son-begetting fire sacrifice with an expert sage named Sringi to preside over the rituals. The Fire God was pleased and he revealed himself during the course of the sacrifice. He gave a divinely blessed and empowered sweet pudding made of milk and rice to king Dasrath with a request that it be given to his queens so that they could share and eat it. As a result of this divine intercession, the four brothers were born. Lord Ram became a son of Kaushalya, Bharat of Kaikeyi, and the twin brothers Laxman and Shatrughan manifested themselves as sons of Sumitra. When the four brothers grew up, they were taught by sage Vashistha in all the skills that were necessary for them.

Meanwhile, sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice was being defiled by the demons. He decided to visit Ayodhya and bring Lord Ram to protect it. The Lord was accompanied by his younger brother Laxman. On the way from Ayodhya to the sage's hermitage, Lord Ram slayed a demoness named Tadka. Then the two brothers eliminated all the demons who had been troubling Vishwamitra.

Having accomplished this great feat, Lord Ram and Laxman accompanied the sage to Janakpur to attend the marriage ceremony of Sita, the daughter of king Janak of that kingdom. On the way Lord Ram liberated Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, who had become a stone due to an unfortunate curse on her.

Janak had made a vow that anyone who would lift, string and bend or break an old bow of Lord Shiva that was lying with him from some past time, would marry Sita. All the great and mighty kings and princes of the time had assembled to try their luck, but

all failed. Finally, Lord Ram broke the bow easily, and as a reward was married to Sita. She was not an ordinary princess, but was a manifestation of Laxmi, Lord Vishnu's divine consort.

All the four brothers were married at the same venue and in the same family. Sita's younger sister Urmila was married to Laxman; her two cousins Maandavi and Srutkirti, daughters of her uncle Kushketu or Kushdwaj, were married to Bharat and Shatrughan respectively.

Everything went well except for a brief and angry intervention of sage Parashuram. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva and was exceedingly peeved that Shiva's bow should be broken in such a manner. So he came fretting and fuming to take revenge, but was finally pacified.

After the marriage party returned home to Ayodhya, many days passed peacefully. But destiny has its own way of steering things in one's life, making events happen in a way over which one has no control. Destiny is so powerful a force to reckon with that no matter what one plans, and how meticulous and flawless that planning is, everything turns turtle and upside down if they do not conform to what destiny wants.

Lord Vishnu had come to earth in the form of Lord Ram to eliminate the demons and not to sit comfortably on the throne of a mighty empire, enjoying its pleasures and privileges, and rolling in its luxury and pomp. To fulfill this mission, it was necessary that the Lord should go to the forest, travel all the way to the fort of the demons at Lanka, and maneuver things in such a way that an excuse could be found to kill the demons and free the earth of its tormentors. So, the events had to be manipulated and tweaked accordingly.

Dasrath wanted to appoint his eldest son Ram on the throne, and full preparations were made to do so. Meanwhile, for the reasons set out in the previous paragraphs, the gods sent Saraswati, the goddess who controls mind and thought, to corrupt the wisdom of Manthara, the closest maid of Kaikeyi. Manthra poisoned Kaikeyi's mind, and told her that if Ram became a king then Bharat would have to serve him as a courtier or a serf. Stunned at this prospect, Kaikeyi prevailed upon king Dasrath to honour the two promises that had been made to her in the past and which were still pending.

She asked that Lord Ram be sent to forest exile for fourteen long years, and her son Bharat be crowned as prince regent instead.

The honourable king had no choice because he could not muster courage to rescind on his promised word, and Lord Ram too did not want his father to suffer ignominy as the one who went back on his words. Being true to one's words was a time honoured quality of the family, and it would be virtually a sacrilege to the royal honour and reputation even to think of breaking one's promise. So, like an obedient son and a noble prince upholding glorious virtues of Dharma (righteousness, propriety, probity, morality, ethics, and nobility of thought and conduct), Lord Ram willingly and cheerfully offered to go to the forest. After all, merely fourteen years is not a big period in a person's long life if these fourteen years help to establish one's glories as well as uphold the noble traditions and reputation of his family.

Laxman and Sita could not bear separation from the Lord, and they unanimously decided to accompany Lord Ram to the forest. But as has been noted herein above, 'fate and destiny' are great forces of Nature; they are the Master Puppeteers and Ring Masters in the circus of life. 'Destiny' knew that if Ram had to go to the forest and if Bharat's

mother is to be the cause, then sure enough Bharat has to be out of the picture—for it was sure that if Bharat remained in Ayodhya he will certainly not let this happen. And if Ram does not go to the forest, how will the demons be eliminated?

Therefore this Master Puppeteer manoeuvred things in such a way that at the time the great drama unfolded on the stage of Ayodhya, Bharat and Shatrughan had gone to Bharat's maternal uncle's place.

Dasrath tried all ways and means possible to dissuade Lord Ram from going to the forest, but the Lord had greater obligations to fulfil. The three—Ram, Laxman and Sita—left the city, crossed river Ganges, blessed the boatman, and finally reached a densely forested area in the central part of India, a place known as 'Chitrakoot', where they stayed for quite some time. On the way, they passed through many villages and hamlets, providing their humble residents the privilege of their divine Darshan (holy viewing). They also met and received blessings of many a sages and seers on the way. The notable among them were Bharadwaj and Valmiki.

Meanwhile, when Sumantra, the charioteer sent behind Ram by Dasrath to persuade the Lord to come back, failed in his mission and had to return empty-handed, the king was shocked and shaken to the core. He soon died out of the intensity of the grief. Ayodhya, that was already reeling under the pain and grief of Lord Ram going to the forest, sunk further in the void of pain and darkness.

Bharat was informed through a messenger, and the two brothers rushed back home. Crestfallen, flabbergasted and taken aback at the nasty developments for which all blames fell on his shoulders though he was not at all a party in them, Bharat erupted in anger. He kicked, punched and dragged Manthara by her hair all over the courtyard; he cursed and used most uncouth words for his mother Kaikeyi, disowning her as his mother and vowing not to see her face till the end of his life.

The last rites of Dasrath were done, and then the royal court assembled to appoint Bharat to the throne—because the throne could not be allowed to remain unoccupied for practical reasons and governance of the kingdom. 'Nothing doing', Bharat said. The throne belonged to Lord Ram, and so it will be; he cannot ascend it even in his dreams!

This brotherly love and noble gesture immediately made Bharat the dear of the masses. He declared his intention to go and bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya from the forest, and for this a procession would start the next day. So, Bharat, Shatrughan and the rest of the court of Ayodhya, including the royal priest sage Vashishta, the mothers, servants, ministers, courtiers, and a great chunk of the royal army went on a long journey to Chitrakoot.

Janak also arrived there. After a tearful, emotional and long discussion, Lord Ram was eventually able to convince Bharat about the wisdom of his remaining in the forest for the designated period. The Lord must have told Bharat that he has certain duties, responsibilities and obligations to fulfil and expectations to live up to as he was not merely the king of Ayodhya but of the whole world in his primary form as Lord Vishnu. Hence, his obligations and responsibilities were much bigger and more important than what meets the eye. Lord Ram must have requested Bharat to extend a helping hand so that the larger good of the society and the inhabitants of the world can be taken care of. Of course Lord Ram was alluding to his main job of eliminating the demons with their capital at Lanka, and for that he cannot return back. Emotions and sentiments should not act as spoil-sports in this implementation of the divine mission.

Bharat loved Ram so much that the latter's wish was of top priority for him, and sure enough he would happily help Lord Ram to fulfil his obligations as the Lord of the world. So Bharat accepted the Lord's advice and returned back to Ayodhya. But Bharat had brought back the Lord's sandals, and he put them on the throne of Ayodhya as a token anointment of the Lord. He himself decided to live a life similar to what Lord Ram was leading in the forest—a life of a hermit. So he spent the next fourteen years at a place known as 'Nandigram' on the outskirts of the city, in a hut and like a true hermit. The routine affairs of the kingdom were taken care of by Shatrughan.

Meanwhile, after spending some time at Chitrakoot, Lord Ram and his brother Laxman and wife Sita moved ahead towards south. They met a number of sages and saints on the way, notable being sage Atri and his wife Anusuiya, sage Sarbhanga and sage Agastya. On Agastya's advice, the trio took up temporary residence at a charming place called 'Panchavati'. On their way, however, the Lord eliminated some of the most fearful demons such as Viraadh.

Now, the second phase of the story unfolds. This phase deals with the fulfilment of the Lord's promise made to mother earth, the gods and the sages to whom Lord Vishnu had promised that he will personally eliminate the demons. It so happened that a half-sister of the demon king Ravana was so enamoured by the charm of Lord Ram that she disguised herself as a beautiful lady and approached the Lord with a marriage proposal. Seizing this opportunity, Lord Ram got Laxman to cut-off her ears and nose. This sowed the seed for the rest of the drama that the Lord had planned to stage.

Supernakha went and asked her brothers Khar, Dushan and Trishira to take revenge. The demon army attacked, and was eliminated. Then she went and cried in the court of her half-brother, the mighty king of demons, Ravana, and teased him that she has come with chopped-off ears and nose to show how strong he was if he could not protect the honour of his own sister!

That was the spark that ignited the ego of Ravana. He forced Marich, a demon who escaped being killed when Lord Ram had protected the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra and had been living in fear on an island in the middle of the ocean, to accompany him so that he can kidnap Sita as a revenge for Supernakha. Marich was forced to become a deer with a golden hide, and the two went to the hermitage at Panchavati.

Lord Ram took Sita into confidence and told her everything that he had planned. So, Sita entered the fire element and left her shadow behind. This 'false Sita' persuaded Lord Ram to bring the deer to her, and when the Lord went behind Marich to catch him, Ravana came disguised as a mendicant, caught hold of Sita and rushed back to Lanka.

When Lord Ram returned after killing Marich, the hermitage was empty. Acting his role of a human being to utmost perfection, the Lord wailed and grieved like any man whose wife is stolen. Then began the long-haul odyssey that culminated in the sack of Lanka and elimination of the sinful demons.

Ram gathered himself after the initial shock, and the two brothers moved around the forest in search of Sita. They came across Jatayu, the vulture king who had fought Ravana in his bid to save Sita, but was mortally wounded. Jatayu lay writhing in pain and remembering the holy name of Lord Ram. The Lord saw him and showed exceptional affection for him, wiping his wounds and caressing him. Jatayu told the Lord about Ravana and the direction in which Sita was taken. Thereafter Jatayu died, and Lord Ram

performed his last rites as if Jatau was his own father. So noble was the Lord that he did not think twice for elevating a vulture to the status of his own father. Come to think of it: Even Dasrath, Lord Ram's father, was denied this privilege and honour that Jatau got—that the Lord of the world would perform his last rites with his own hands.

Moving ahead, the two brothers came to the hermitage of Sabari, the old woman who was waiting for this golden moment because she was a great devotee of the Lord and was advised by her own Guru, sage Matang, that one day she will get her final chance of salvation and emancipation when Ram visits her. Like a mother, she fed the two brothers with her own hands, and advised them to go to the lake Pampa and then onwards to the Rishyamook mountain where they will find the monkeys who would help them. She then died, and Lord Ram performed her last rites himself. This is the second and the last character (the other being Jatau) in the entire story of Ramayana whose last rites were performed by Lord Ram himself! How fortunate and privileged they were indeed!!

Lord Ram and Laxman made their way to the banks of the lake Pampa where they stayed for some time to relax and take stock of the situation. It was here that Narad visited them.

Moving ahead, the Lord and Laxman reached the Rishyamook mountain where the exiled prince of the monkey race, Sugriv, lived with his chosen companions, and Hanuman being one of them. Sugriv had been expelled from the kingdom of Kishkindha by his elder brother Baali due to some unfortunate misunderstanding. When he saw the two brothers roaming in the forest down below, he sent Hanuman to investigate. When Lord Ram introduced himself to Hanuman, the latter immediately recognized his eternal Lord, and fell at the Lord's holy feet. Then, Hanuman took the two brothers to the summit of the mountains and a friendship was struck between them and Sugriv. Ram heard the pitiful story of Sugriv and volunteered to help him in getting his rightful share of the kingdom from which he was unjustly ejected by Baali. In the ensuing events, Baali was killed and Sugriv crowned on the throne of Kishkindha.

Lord Ram spent some time on a nearby mountain. Sugriv was obliged towards the Lord so he volunteered to help the Lord to find and rescue his wife Sita. So, uncountable numbers of monkeys and bears were sent in all the directions to search for her. The all-knowing Lord knew who will actually locate her, so he called Hanuman and gave his signet ring to him as an identification sign for Sita.

Out of all the groups, one led by Angad, the son of Baali who had turned Lord Ram's great follower no less important than Hanuman, reached the shore of the southern ocean. This group included Hanuman and Jamvant, the old bear king. There they were met by Sampati, the brother of Jatau, who told them that Sita was held captive in Lanka, and therefore anyone of them who could go and come from there against the formidable barrier of the ocean would meet Sita. Everyone expressed their limitations, and finally Hanuman was motivated by Jamvant to accomplish this gigantic task.

So finally Hanuman leapt across the ocean. He met with some initial resistance from some demons living in the middle of the ocean but he overcame all of them, and finally landed on the soil of Lanka. There, he trounced Lankini, the ferocious demoness who guarded the gates of the fort, and entered the city. Inside the city of Lanka, he met Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana who happened to be a great devotee of Lord Ram as he knew him to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and later on Sita herself.

Hanuman presented Lord Ram's ring to her and comforted her, saying that the Lord would come soon to her rescue.

Hanuman was seething with anger, and on the pretext of eating some fruits to quell his hunger he laid the fruit orchard of Ravana to waste, killing the guards and beating back the initial brigade of demon soldiers who came to their aid. The full force of the demon army headed by Ravana's son Indrajeet came, and Hanuman allowed himself to be captured so that he can get an opportunity to meet Ravana face to face though he could have easily killed all the demons single-handedly as he had already done by this time.

In the demon court, a heated and acrimonious argument ensued between Hanuman and Ravana which culminated in Ravana ordering that the tail of Hanuman be set ablaze so that he goes back deformed as a token insult and rebuke to his Lord, Sri Ram. This led to the famous episode of the 'burning of Lanka'.

Hanuman took leave of Sita and came back to Lord Ram. He briefed the Lord of the developments. Meanwhile, Vibhishan also abandoned Ravana and joined the camp of Lord Ram after he was publicly insulted by his brother when he tried to reason with him in order to avoid a ruinous war.

A huge army was assembled and the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, aided by the monkey king Sugriv and all his warriors, and accompanied by Vibhishan too, finally made their departure to launch an offensive on Lanka.

A bridge was constructed across the ocean, and the Lord's army finally landed on the shores of Lanka. A last-ditch attempt was made by Lord Ram to avoid the war when he sent Angad as his peace emissary. A fierce and acrimonious verbal duel followed between Angad and Ravana in the full court of the demon king, and finally Angad humiliated the demon king by planting his leg on the ground and challenging him to move it, which of course none of the mighty demons as well as Ravana managed to do. This event marked a token defeat of the demons and broke the morale of the demon army which was already demoralized after the burning of Lanka by Hanuman earlier.

A fierce and no-holds-barred war ensued in which all the cruel demons were killed one by one. Finally Lord Ram was victorious, Vibhishan was made the king of Lanka and the remnants of the demon race, and Sita was restored to Lord Ram.

Lord Ram, accompanied by his brother Laxman and wife Sita, the chief of the monkeys such as Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman and others, the bear king Jamvant, and his demon friend Vibhishan and his close companions etc. rode the Pushpak plane to come back to Ayodhya. By now, the exile period of fourteen years had also ended.

Cheer broke out in Ayodhya and there were mass celebrations. Lord Ram met overjoyed Bharat and other members of the royal family. Not only that, the Lord ensured that he met each individual citizen of Ayodhya independently with equal affection, a miracle of sorts because there were hundreds of thousands of people eager to embrace and welcome their beloved Lord.

A day was set and Lord Ram was anointed king-emperor. All the gods and sages attended that ceremony, and so did all the friends of Lord Ram who had accompanied him aboard the plane from Lanka.

By and by, the monkeys, bears and demon friends were requested to go back to their respective homes with a promise of a life-time bond of mutual friendship,

brotherhood and affection. Only Hanuman was the fortunate one amongst them who remained in the service of Lord Ram for all times to come.

Lord Ram ruled over his subjects as if they were his own children, with a lot of forgiveness, brotherhood, tolerance, fortitude, magnanimity, benevolence, love, mercy and compassion as the guiding principles of state policy. His rule was marked by 'Dharma'—i.e. laws of righteousness, probity, propriety, morality, ethics, nobility of thought and conduct, and all other auspicious virtues that were practiced in their best forms.

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Appendix

About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
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- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) 24 Symbols, (iv) Kobo, (v) Page Foundry, (vi) Scribd, (vii) Tolino etc.--
- (d) <https://archive.org> at the following URL:
https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with



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Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi Ramayan" based on Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) "Narad Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) "Shandilya Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) "Bhakti Sutra Mala"—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) "Sundar Kand" of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitaawali Ramayan).

(B) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- 'Dohawali'; (2) Book 2- 'Parvati Mangal'; (3) Book 3- 'Kavitawali'; (4) Book 4- 'Janki Mangal'; (5) Book 5- 'Ram Lala Nahachu'; (6) Book 6- 'Geetawali Ramayan'; (7) Book 7- 'Vairagya Sandipani'; (8) Book 8- 'Vinai Patrika'; (9) 'Barvai Ramayan'.

Book under preparation:

(C) A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas' is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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