

THE HOLY RAMAYANA

Commentary by
Prabha Duneja

Illustrations by
Millie Barman

Geeta Society
2822 Camino Segura, Pleasanton, CA 94566, USA
Tel: 925-484-5411
Email: duneja@aol.com
Website: www.geetasociety.org

First Edition: April 2018
© All rights reserved with Author

Author

Prabha Duneja
2822 Camino Segura, Pleasanton, CA 94566, USA
Tel: 925-484-5411
Email: duneja@aol.com
Website: www.geetasociety.org

Editor

Vandana Makker
Literature and Language Teacher

Publisher

Acutrack, Inc.

ISBN: 1-945137-12-6



CONTENTS

Forward	v
Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	xv
The Holy Ramayana	1
The Glory of Hanuman Chaleesa	79
Hanuman Chaleesa	83
Glossary	101





FOREWORD

Prabha Duneja's narrative retelling of *Ramayana* is masterful. Once again she has taken a timeless classic of world literature and made it accessible to all persons—both first time readers and longtime students—without losing either its elegance or its depth. Long considered one of the great meditations on social, religious, and philosophical aspects of life, Duneja's account provides a welcome option to the many versions already available in verse form. Duneja forgoes yet another direct translation in favor of crafting a narrative account that carries all of the wit, wisdom, and insight of the original. She captures both central stories and subtle nuance in ways that serve to enlighten every reader. With fluid prose

and thoughtful precision, Duneja recounts the tales of Sri Rama, Seeta, Lakshmana, and other well-known and beloved personalities from this captivating Indian masterpiece. For many years, Prabha Duneja has been at the forefront of those interpreting Indian religion and culture for those beyond its orbit. In *The Holy Ramayana*, Duneja contributes yet another invaluable resource in this effort, one which is sure to find a cherished place in the libraries of scholars and families alike. A debt of gratitude is owed to Duneja for undertaking this work for we will all surely be better off having read its pages and learned from its timeless wisdom.

Prof. Norris W. Palmer, Ph.D.

Department of Theology & Religious Studies

Saint Mary's College of California



PREFACE

My fascination for the great epic Ramayana was launched at the early age of seven, when I had the opportunity to watch the *Ram Leelas* (dramas), in which the story of Ramayana was narrated to enlighten the people about the important life events of Sri Rama and the divine Mother Seeta, along with the glory of Sri Hanuman and other characters of the story. Later in life, as I started reading the melodious poem of Rishi Valmiki, I was often touched by the exhilarating divine symphony that runs through the entire narration. I began memorizing some of the devotional *Shlokas* (verses) and quoting them during my lectures on Hindu scriptures and philosophies.

The story of Ramayana has influenced deeply the spiritual, religious, philosophical

and cultural life of people. There is traditional chanting of *Shlokas* during the worship of Sri Rama and Seeta, and also there are scholarly discourses on this masterpiece of celestial poem at temples and religious conferences. Sincere love and adoration for The Holy Ramayana is quite deeply ingrained in the spiritual and psychological makeup of Hindu families. It is really amazing how everybody knows the story, yet they still are eager to listen again, with renewed interest and enthusiasm.

The divine manifestation of Sri Rama has touched almost every aspect of life, religion, poetry, philosophy, mysticism, music, dancing, art, drama, literature, sculpture, and painting. In The Holy Ramayana, Sri Rama's character has been presented as the personification of *Dharma*, which encompasses almost every facet of life; an ideal king, a valiant soldier,

a reliable friend, an adorable man, a devoted husband, the most sincere brother, and above all a lover of humanity and truth. Throughout the life story of Sri Rama, the great sage Valmiki has tried to illustrate the truth that the virtues and ideals of a perfect man upheld by Sri Rama are indeed quite possible to practice for every human being. Rishi Valmiki has presented Sri Rama as *Purushottama*, which means “the one most honorable among human beings,” a man of highest perfection. Throughout the long story of the Ramayana, one observes Sri Rama at ease within himself. He is always calm, peaceful, forgiving, pure-minded, self-disciplined, humble, polite, and very determined. His life sets an example of purity and nobility as great as human mind can imagine. In Ramayana, the other admirable personality who draws our attention is the divine Mother Seeta, an ideal woman imbued with subtle gleam of divinity.

There is beauty in her countenance, grace in her manners, and honesty in her words. The great sage presents Seeta as a unique embodiment of love, purity, chastity, virtuosity, fearlessness, steadfastness, self-sacrifice, renunciation, endurance and total honesty.

I was often touched by the sufferings of Mother Seeta and the tough ordeals she had to go through. Her single-minded dedication, holiest love and unswerving loyalty for Sri Rama have been awe-inspiring. Her husband Sri Rama always remained alive in her thoughts and there was a silent communication between them under all circumstances. The more intense Seeta's cry, the more quick was Sri Rama's response. In reference to this glorious, noble, and dignified personality says Swami Ranganathananda, "And what to speak of Seeta? You may exhaust the literature of the world that is past, and I

may assure you that you will have to exhaust the literature of the world of the future, before finding another Seeta. Seeta is unique; that character was depicted once and for all. There may have been several Ramas perhaps, but never more than one Seeta! She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Seeta. And there she stands, these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child, throughout the length and breadth of *Aryavarta* (India). There she will always be, this glorious Seeta, purer than purity itself, all patience, and all suffering.”

In the course of my writing this concise commentary on The Holy Ramayana, I was additionally struck by a sense of awe and wonder as I glanced through highly devotional verses of *Sunderkanda* that illustrate the divine powers, the brilliance, the notable accomplishments, the

meritorious services, ardent devotion, valorous achievements, and utter humility of the most praiseworthy devotee, Sri Hanuman. The great Rishi Valmiki writes exquisitely about this multifaceted, impressive personality who has touched the hearts of millions through the ages.

Upholding the laws of *Swadharma* is the thread that runs through the entire narration of Ramayana. Along with the resplendent duty-oriented attributes of Sri Rama, Mother Seeta and the great devotee Hanuman, the unflinching sincere devotion of Lakshmana and the spirit of dedication and renunciation of noble-minded Bharata inspire the human soul and ushers to an exalted level of inner awakening with a desire to be accepted in service for global welfare.

The essential message of this unique melodious epic is indeed phenomenal. A simple and straightforward approach to the

understanding of *Swadharma* of the multi-dimensional phases of human life makes it a highly valued scripture among the ancient classics of Hinduism.

In my efforts to present the solemn teachings of this holy manuscript to the needs of modern readers I tried to capture the originality and retain the style of the great sage Valmiki. This modest volume illustrating the various facets of Ramayana with exquisite artwork makes the salient features of the story quite vibrant and lively, and keeps the inspired spontaneity and personal involvement alive in the study of this monumental narrative. This elegant edition in simple format giving short and succinct summary of each *kanda* (chapter) has been designed especially for the young generation of Indian immigrants and the students of religion and philosophy at seminaries and colleges.

May the inspired teachings of The Holy Ramayana bless everyone with the joy of devotional love, the enlightened concept of *Swadharma*, inner anchorage with the divine symphony and spiritual intimacy – restoring global peace and happiness.

ॐॐॐ Jai Sri Ram ॐॐॐ

January 14th, 2018

Prabha Duneja



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes to the revered Rishi Valmiki and the other holy sages of the past and present whose teachings have inspired me to write this short and succinct summary The Holy Ramayana.

I would like to express appreciation to my family and especially to Raj and Manisha Barman for taking the genuine initiative in the completion of this noble work.

I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Norris W. Palmer the professor of Religious Studies at Saint Mary's College of California, who has been kind enough to give a Foreword to the Volume. I also want to thank Vandana Makker, a literature and language

teacher who carefully edited the book and gave some valuable suggestions.

Special acknowledgements with love and blessings to the young artist, dear Millie Barman, who worked very hard in providing the elegant, impressive sketches to make the entire narrative quite lively and vibrant. This has been a very rewarding and enlightening experience for her.

ॐॐॐ Jai Sri Ram ॐॐॐ



[illegible]

१. निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार करें :
 (क) प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को अपने अधिकारों का उपयोग करने का अधिकार है।
 (ख) प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को अपने अधिकारों का उपयोग करने का अधिकार है।
 (ग) प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को अपने अधिकारों का उपयोग करने का अधिकार है।
 (घ) प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को अपने अधिकारों का उपयोग करने का अधिकार है।
 (ङ) प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को अपने अधिकारों का उपयोग करने का अधिकार है।

याज्ञकीक रामायण ५६८
 आगमिष्यति वैदेही तं चापि येनैवो नमः ।
 नयेन कारणेनापि ह्यस्तं न देयमे ॥ २५ ॥
 हे भगवन् । यह नामकान्ता पुराणमिहो के आगम्य निजद
 पड़ना । मुझे यही सोना तो के देवमे के लिये सोना मही
 नामको के देय नयेन । यतः मुझे यही का यदना बनिष
 मही जान वकूना ॥ २५ ॥ ५६ ॥
 एकान्तं पदं भगवन्नाभ्यस्यानामपमम् ।
 रत्नैव यं वैदेही सुखार्हं नमकारयन्वा ॥ २६ ॥
 हे भगवन् । अतः-येर रत्न के लिये यो देखा एकान्त जो
 नम स्वान्ता भगवन् के लिये वदना सोखिये, अही आनको जो य
 यही वैदेही (यह) सुखपूर्वक देय के ॥ २६ ॥



THE HOLY RAMAYANA

The Holy Ramayana is one of the most famous epics in the religious classics of the world's literature. It comprises 24,000 verses divided into seven sections, known as *Kandas*; namely *Balakanda*, *Ayodhyakanda*, *Aranyakanda*, *Kishkindhakananda*, *Sundarakanda*, *Lankakanda*, and *Uttarakanda*. The Ramayana as the word explains itself is a combination of two words "Ram and Ayana" i.e. the life story of Sri Rama. Apart from its poetic excellence and literary grandeur, it is also considered to be a Holy scripture by Hindus around the world.

For centuries, millions of people have been reading the great epic with utmost respect and devotion, and will certainly continue the same for years to come. In words of Makhan Lal Sen, "The

appeal and freshness of the epic poems transcend all limitations imposed by time, space, age, caste, creed, society and language. All, irrespective of their age, succumb to the charms and fascinating personalities of its heroes, who have inspired countless men of different generations and spurred them on to perform almost superhuman task.”

Ever since the first composition of the Ramayana in Sanskrit by Maharishi Valmiki, it has been considered to be one of the most cherished religious texts as well as an important part of Indian culture and ethos. People read it, re-read it with profound respect for authentic spiritual growth and also for the attainment of peace and harmony in daily life. For generations it has been the most favorite bedtime story for little children. Every year in the month of October/ November during Navaratra worship, special dramas are organized at night that narrate the story of the great epic Ramayana. These dramas are

called *Ramleelas* in which the life story of God-incarnate Rama is shared in a spiritual setting and the general public is educated and enlightened about the religious history and also the important characters and events of the great epic.

In reference to the timeless appeal of the Holy Ramayana says Swami Tapasyananda, “Here Rama is not only a great personage, an exemplar of the highest ideals of *Dharma*, but the very God, the Divine incarnate, revealing and fully remembering his spiritual glory and bestowing salvation on all who came into intimate contact with him. Thrilling and evocative hymns, discourses on high spiritual themes, philosophical dissertations and directions for spiritual practice appear in every part of it. Besides the instructions they convey, these sections contribute immensely towards the devotional edification of those who adore Rama as their favorite Deity.” Mahatma Gandhi, a great devotee of Rama, always

upheld the Ramayana to be the glorious work on devotion. He often mentioned in his lectures about the loftiness of its ideals, the simplicity and elegance of its diction, the freshness of its enduring beauty, and unflinching devotion that exhilarates the human soul into the purity of love for God and live a life in perfect harmony with *Swadharma*. “Second only to the Bhagawad Geeta in its influence,” says Professor R.C. Prasad, “popularity of the Ramayana is by no means limited to India, nor are the Hindus its only readers; the unique universal message of the great epic has fascinated the learned devoted Indians as well as the Western erudite scholars.”

The glorious epic The Holy Ramayana begins with the story of King Dasharatha, the descendent of King Ikshwaku from Solar dynasty, who ruled the ancient kingdom, Kosala with its capital at Ayodhya; a beautiful city of magnificent palaces, gardens, and fabulous shopping squares. The kingdom was blessed with wise and learned Brahmins, devoted to the study of sacred text and

proper guidance to society. King Dasharatha, who ruled the empire with utmost care and courage was sincerely loved and respected by his people. The King was blessed in a number of ways; but sometimes he still felt lonely and unhappy because he was childless.

One day the King called upon his royal priest, sage Vasishtha, and confided in him saying, “Oh great sage, I feel the Solar dynasty is likely to fade away because I have no successor who will carry on after me.” The learned sage Vasishtha listened carefully to the king and suggested him to perform the “*Putra Kameshti yajna*” under the guidance of the wise sage Rishyashringa to be blessed with a child. Accordingly the austere sage Rishyashringa was invited to the palace to perform the *yajna* with celestial chanting of hymns from Atharvaveda. At the completion of the devoted offerings in the sacrificial fire, a resplendent *purusha* emerged from the *yajna*, holding a golden vessel of *Payasa* (milk and rice pudding). He handed over the bowl of *Payasa* to

the King Dasharatha and told him to distribute it among his three wives.



The Queens accepted the celestial *Payasa* and joyfully shared with each other. In due course of time they were all blessed with sons. First, the eldest Queen Kaushalya gave birth to Rama. Then Queen Kaikeyi was blessed with Bharata and later Sumitra, the third Queen, gave birth to twins named Lakshmana and Shatrughna. At the birth of the four princes great festivities were held at the palace and by the people of Ayodhya. The king enjoyed spending the blessed moments with his four glorious sons, and felt that his life had become fuller and more meaningful.

After the princes were given the sacred thread by the family preceptor Rishi Vasishtha, they went to his *Gurukul* (school) for formal education. The royal princes were educated to attain proficiency in arts and sciences, especially in archery and bowmanship. King Dasharatha felt extremely happy as he watched the princes excelling in the study of Vedas and the military sciences. The four brothers displayed quite unique

characteristics during their training at the *Gurukul* (school). Rama's respect to *Dharma* and truth became quite pronounced even as a young boy. Lakshmana showed strict discipline at every step and Bharata's devotion to Rama and nobility was apparent to everyone. Shatrughna's attitude was always kind, compassionate, and dutiful.

One day when the King was in consultation with his ministers about some important matters of the state, a royal guard entered the assembly hall and informed the majesty about the arrival of Muni Vishwamitra. King Dasharatha felt honored and received the Rishi with deep reverence. When the latter explained the purpose of his visit, the King agreed to send Rama and Lakshmana to the Ashram (monastery) of Muni Vishwamitra in order to guard his *yajna* from ferocious demons in the forest. After taking blessings from their parents and sage Vasishtha, the princes left Ayodhya in the company of Muni Vishwamitra. They

passed the gates of Ayodhya in few hours and reached at the banks of river Sarayu where they camped for the night. After the prayers at sunset Muni Vishwamitra blessed the princes with special mantras, “*Bala* and *Atibala*” which would protect them from fatigue and other afflictions such as hunger and thirst.

The next morning both the brothers woke up with renewed enthusiasm and after their prayers at sunrise proceeded on their journey with the revered Guru. They crossed the confluence of the Sarayu and the holy river Ganga. Towards the evening, when they reached Dandaka forest, the Rishi told them about the fearsome creature Thadaka, who lived in that dark forest and constantly harassed the hermits at their Ashrams, and also killed the travelers who crossed the jungle. He further added, since it is the duty of a Kshatriya King to protect his people from wicked Rakshas (demons), the prince Rama should move forward and kill the fearsome creature Thadaka so that there can be peace and prosperity around the forest.

After the death of the dreadful Thadaka, Muni Vishwamitra was deeply impressed by the valor of the princes and initiated them into the special use of divine weapons that he had received from Brahma and Devraja Indra through his tough penances over the years. The great sage shared with Rama all the esoteric techniques of the most sophisticated weaponry, along with the special mantras associated for the proper use.

They resumed their journey the next day and soon arrived at the sage's hermitage. The Rishis at Sidhashrama welcomed the princes and soon after the morning ablutions, they started the *yajna* with the guidance of Muni Vishwamitra. Both Rama and Lakshmana guarded the sacrificial site remaining vigilant throughout the day and night till Muni Vishwamitra completed the *yajna* with other hermits. During the performance of sacred *yajna* for six days, many ferocious demons attacked the Ashram and tried to interrupt the sacred *Agnihotra*, they were either vanquished

by Rama and Lakshmana or ran away in fear. After staying at the hermitage for another few days, the princes left for Mithila with their Guru Vishwamitra and other sages to visit King Janaka and attend the royal celebration for which the Kings and Princes were invited from all over the country.

In course of their journey to the capital Mithila, when they reached the outskirts of the magnificent city, Rama noticed a deserted Ashram. He inquired from his Guru about the details of the abandoned place. Sage Vishwamitra told the princes that the forsaken dwelling in the dense forest used to be the Ashram of sage Gautama, who lived there with his most beautiful wife Ahilya.

Once, when Rishi Gautama was quite far away from his cottage for the morning prayers, Indra approached Ahilya in the guise of the Rishi Gautama and persuaded her for sexual favors, and she yielded to his unholy desire. Although she

realized her mistake at some point, but could not do anything about it. After gratifying his passion, Indra was about to sneak out of the cottage, precisely at that moment the Rishi returned and saw him leaving disguised as the sage. Rishi Gautama was terribly angry and cursed both of them—Indra to lead the life of a eunuch for some time, and Ahilya to lead a hidden life of penance and regret. He also told her that after the practice of severe austerities for many decades, she would be released from the curse by the purifying touch of Sri Rama's feet. So when the young princes and sage Vishwamitra entered the cottage of sage Gautama and the moment Sri Rama's feet touched the rock on which Ahilya was meditating for years, she was instantly liberated from the evil effects of the curse and stood aside in her exquisite beauty with her palms joined in salutation. When Maharishi Gautama came to know about this through his yogic powers; he immediately returned to his

hermitage and began to live with his beautiful wife Ahilya with a cheerful heart.

On their way to the capital Mithila, sage Vishwamitra mentioned to the princes about the royal celebration, at the palace of King Janaka, in relation to the first-time display of Shiva's magnificent bow, which had been in his possession for the last several generations. After they reached the palace at Mithila, the revered sage introduced the princes to King Janaka and expressed their desire to join the celebration at the court the next day. When Rama and Lakshmana entered the royal assembly hall with their Guru, they looked at the valiant princes gathered there, each desirous to string the Shiva's mighty bow and win the hand of King Janaka's beautiful daughter Seeta. As Rama approached Shiva's bow and lifted it with utmost ease the other Kings and Princes watched quite anxiously.

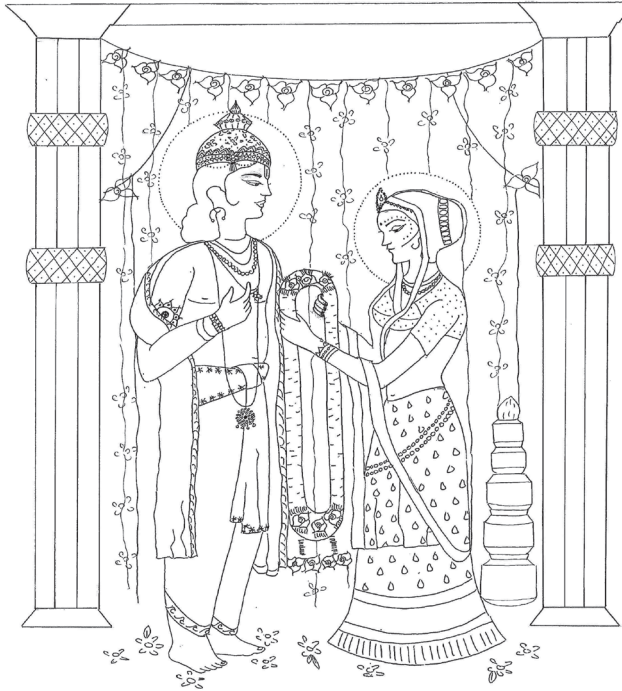


The moment he tried to string the enormous bow it cracked into two pieces and fell on the ground with a thundering sound that flashed across the cosmos. A wave of joy, wonder, and amazement went across the assembly hall.

Princess Seeta, who watched Rama with deep reverence and love, was escorted to the ceremonial stage. She offered the wedding garland to Sri Rama and they became betrothed. Later at the special request of King Janaka, Prince Lakshmana accepted the hand of Seeta's younger sister Urmila and her cousins Mandavi and Shrutakirti were given in marriage to Bharata and Shatrughna. The royal marriage ceremonies of all the four brothers were graciously solemnized at the palace of King Janaka. Several gods and goddesses joined the celestial wedding and showered their blessings with saffron colored rice mixed with pearls.

After the wedding celebrations were over, King Dasharatha with his four sons and their beautiful brides started his journey back to his

capital. The citizens of Ayodhya gave a warm welcome to the princes and their adorable brides. According to the advice of King Dasharatha, elaborate preparations were made to ensure all kinds of comforts for the newlyweds.



Everyone in Ayodhya was very happy and loved to watch their princes mature into young men of service and nobility. Rama and his brothers helped their father in the management of state. People loved Rama for his clarity of vision, steadfastness in truth, and the remarkable sense of justice. Rama and Seeta continued to serve their parents and constantly guided their younger brothers and their spouses into the cherished values of ideal family life.

Thus 12 wonderful years passed by. King Dasharatha noticed the noble qualities of his son Rama and his growing popularity. Rama was very patient with others and enjoyed the company of learned and wise men. People loved him because of his unswerving honesty, hard work, dexterity, fortitude, excellence in weaponry, kindness and generosity. Everybody in Ayodhya idolized him because he was intelligent, courageous, and made himself accessible to everybody's request.

King Dasharatha also felt very proud of the great accomplishments of his adorable son Rama and one day, in consultation with his royal priest sage Vasishtha and other ministers at the royal court, he decided to crown Rama as *Yuvraja* (heir apparent) and hand over the kingdom to him. The moment he made the announcement a joyous applause went across the assembly hall as if everybody had been waiting anxiously to hear the good news of Rama's coronation ceremony. The wise sage Vasishtha immediately suggested to the King that the following day when the *Pushya Nakshatra* happened to be in conjunction with Moon was the most auspicious time for Rama to be crowned as *Yuvraja*.

Later during the day Prince Rama was summoned to the court and the King told him about the proposal. Rama humbly accepted his father's decision with a natural ease and assured the King for peace and prosperity of the kingdom

while upholding the cherished traditions of Sun dynasty. He touched his father's feet for blessings and then instantly went to the inner chamber of his mother Kaushalya to share the good news.

For the coronation ceremony King Dasharatha invited all the other chiefs and Kings of the neighboring Kingdoms, but because of the shortage of time he could not invite King Kaikaya and Janaka thinking that the good news would be known to them later. He also missed the princes Bharata and Shatrughna as both of them were gone to spend some time with their maternal grandfather King Ashwapathi. Right after the announcement to the public the King gave consent for all preparations for the coronation ceremony. The citizens of Ayodhya began to decorate the city. People appreciated King Dasharatha for his noble decision of assigning Rama the throne of Ayodhya.



Queen Kaikeyi had a personal maid named Manthara. The day when the crowning of Rama was announced she happened to ascend the terrace of the palace and heard about the coronation the following day. She instantly rushed to Queen Kaikeyi's inner chamber and after a vicious,

elaborate persuasion she succeeded to convince her mistress to make a demand for the two boons from the King, which he had promised many years ago.

King Dasharatha, after checking into the details of all arrangements at the court, decided to spend the evening with Queen Kaikeyi and also personally share the good news with her, but the King was shocked when he entered the bedroom and saw her lying on the ground very sad and angry. He stooped down and inquired softly about the cause of her sadness. After the king comforted her for a few minutes, she got up and spoke in a firm and determined voice. She reminded the king about the two boons of her choice which the latter had conferred on her a few decades ago. The King listened to every single word and promised sincerely for the fulfillment of her wishes. The Queen took a deep breath and spoke in a precise manner, demanding Prince Bharata to be crowned

as *Yuvraja* (heir apparent) of the capital and Rama to be exiled to the forest as an ascetic for a period of 14 years. When the King heard the cruel words of the Queen he was overwhelmed with grief and sank down into the couch totally bewildered and confused.

In the morning when Sumantara, the chief minister entered the King's inner chamber to inform him about the arrival of sage Vasishtha and other distinguished guests in the assembly hall, he was shocked to see the king lying on the couch totally exhausted and moaning with a grief stricken heart. When the Queen Kaikeyi saw Sumantara at the door, she told him to leave and send Rama instantly. When Rama got the message he rushed to the palace of his parents and was naturally startled to see the distressed condition of his father. The King Dasharatha was in a state of deep mental agony; he opened his eyes and looked around in utter helplessness. The King

whispered the word ‘Rama’ and then became speechless. At that point the Queen Kaikeyi stood up and spoke on the King’s behalf. When Rama heard about the coronation plans for Bharata and 14 years in exile for himself, a serene smile flashed across his face. He saluted the mother Kaikeyi with complete calmness and assured to obey the commands of his father with profound respect. Rama also promised her that he would leave the palace as soon as possible without any delay.

When Rama was going towards his mother Kaushalya’s palace to seek her blessing and also inform Seeta about the sudden change in plans, Lakshmana followed him in quick steps and expressed his views with roused anger about the entire situation. Rama listened to the outburst of Lakshmana quite peacefully and told him about the nobility of his father and how important it was for the King to live by the pledge he had taken.

He emphasized the importance of following the path of *Dharma* for everybody.



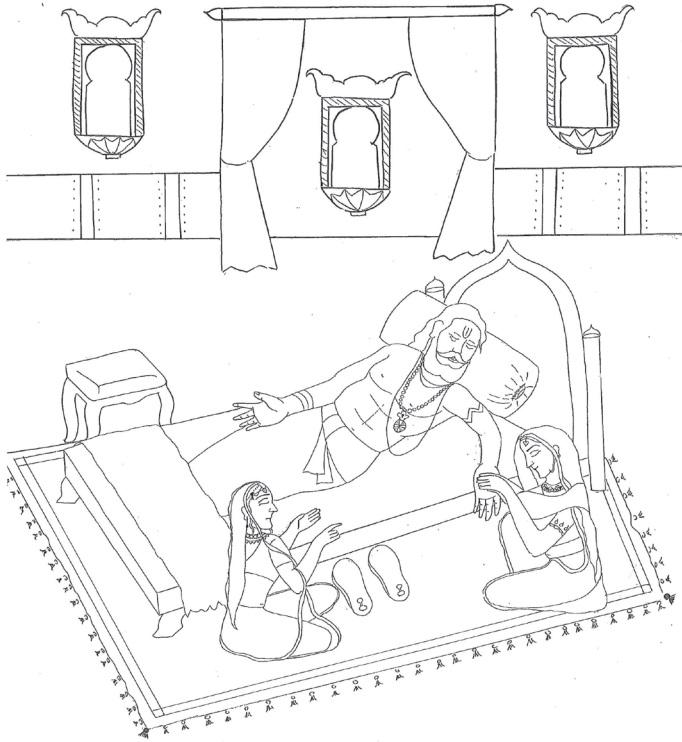
Later, at the sincere persuasion and request of Seeta and Lakshmana, Rama gave them the permission to accompany him in exile for

14 years. When Rama, Lakshmana, and Seeta dressed like ascetics came out of the palace and stepped into the chariot with Sumantra a large crowd of grief-stricken people followed them to the borders of the Kingdom.

Proceeding southwards, they crossed the rivers Tamasa, Gomati, and then Ganga with the help of Guha, the chief of the tribe in that area, who held deep respect for the kings of Solar dynasty. On their journey through the dense forest they met sage Bharadwaja and with his advice they found a secluded comfortable place on the hills of Chitrakuta where they built a cottage by the river Mandakini and started living in peace.

When Sumantra returned back to Ayodhya, he went straight to the King's palace and conveyed Rama's loving message in a sorrow-stricken voice and then lapsed into speechlessness. He watched the King lying with his eyes closed and faintly repeating "Rama, Rama." Thus

lamenting, the King breathed his last in the presence of Sumantra, the Queen Kaushalya, and Sumitra.



When King Dasharatha's death was reported to the public the entire kingdom was plunged into deep sorrow. The citizens of Ayodhya lamented at the death of their adorable King, as a personal loss. The kingdom was without a ruler for the time being.

The wise sage Vasishtha immediately dispatched two swift messengers to Ashwapathi's palace at Kekaya, in order to bring Bharata and Shatrughna, from the capital of their grandfather. On their return to Ayodhya, the princes performed the cremation ceremony under the guidance of the royal priest. After 13 days of mourning, the wise sage Vasishtha and other ministers at the court requested the Prince Bharata to accept the crown and take charge of governing the state. Bharata declined all the suggestions instantly. He requested the great sage and other ministers to be ready to accompany him to Chitrakuta to see Sri Rama and make a genuine appeal to accept the crown of Ayodhya.

A large number of citizens, the royal ladies and ministers, decided to join Bharata in his journey to the forest. They all stayed in Chitrakuta with Sri Rama, Seeta, and Lakshmana for a few days and Bharata continued persisting Sri Rama to return home to be the King of Ayodhya. He made many proposals from various points of views on the issue, for Sri Rama to return back to Ayodhya and accept the charge of the Kingdom, but each one of his suggestions was turned down instantly. Sri Rama explained the importance of his steadfastness in vows, inner integrity, reverence for truthfulness, obedience to the commands of his father, and above all living by the laws of *Dharma* set by the holy sages.

At some point the discussion between Sri Rama and Bharata became highly intellectual and philosophical; both of them kept convincing each other and emphasizing, “It is all yours,

not mine.” The Rishis, Munis, and other people from Ayodhya, who watched and heard the most exalted conversation between the brothers, were overwhelmed by their dedication and spirit of renunciation. The great sage Vasishtha was deeply touched by the devotional love of Bharata and suggested the latter to act as Sri Rama’s representative till the end of 14 years. Bharata agreed to the proposal and requested Sri Rama to give him his sandals to be reverently installed on the throne as a symbol of Sri Rama’s presence until the end of the stipulated period of his exile. Afterwards, holding Sri Rama’s holy sandals in his hands with deep veneration, Bharata returned back to Ayodhya with his ministers and family members. He, himself lived like an ascetic on the outskirts of the capital in Nandigrama and ruled the kingdom as a devoted representative of Sri Rama.

After, the noble-minded Bharata with Shatrughna and others left Chitrakuta, Sri Rama with Seeta and Lakshmana also decided to move to some other dwelling. So within a few days they proceeded towards Dandakaranya. On their way to the dense forest they stayed at the Ashram of Maharishi Atri where Seeta received the celestial jewelry and other special gifts from Rishi's wife Anusuya, who had been quite well-known for her tough austerities and divine blessings.

In course of their journey to Dandaka forest, they visited many Ashrams and met several Rishis absorbed in tough penances for their own spiritual growth and also for the welfare of humanity. They stayed at the Ashram of the great sage Agastya, who was a master in military tactics and strategies and also a well-known authority on the Holy scriptures and Vedas. He initiated Sri Rama and Lakshmana into the operation of celestial weapons.

The illustrious princes received the tremendously powerful bows and inexhaustible quivers of Indra with great enthusiasm. They also promised for the appropriate use of weapons as enjoined by the laws of Kshatriya *Dharma*.

At the advice of sage Agastya they proceeded towards Panchavati situated on the banks of river Godavari. On their way they saw a giant aged eagle perched on the branches of a huge tree who introduced himself to be the sincere friend of King Dasharatha at one time. Jatayu, the wise aged eagle, accompanied them to Panchavati and assured to stay around with them in case they needed any help. At Panchavati they found a comfortable, peaceful spot in beautiful surroundings to build a cottage and decided to spend the remaining period of their exile in that enchanted forest, which was quite safe and loaded with a variety of fruit trees.



One evening after their daily prayers when Sri Rama, Lakshmana, and Seeta were sitting in

a relaxed mood and talking about Ayodhya, at that time, a Rakshasi (demoness) named Shoorpnakha happened to pass by their cottage. The moment she looked closely towards the cottage, her eyes seemed to rest on Sri Rama. Shoorpnakha was overwhelmed by the passionate desire to marry the illustrious young man. She immediately assumed the form of a beautiful woman, went straight to Sri Rama and introduced herself with a mischievous smile and also spoke at length about the great powers of her elder brother Ravana. After a short conversation Shoorpnakha started making amorous advances and expressed her inner passion requesting Sri Rama to accept her in marriage. When Sri Rama repeatedly declined her proposal, she became very angry and pounced upon Seeta with a menacing gesture. Sri Rama rushed to protect his wife and Lakshmana instantly pulled out his sword from the scabbard and cut off her nose and ears. Shoorpnakha howled with pain and quickly resumed her real

form of a demoness and ran away. She went straight to her wicked brothers, Khar and Dushan, who lived on the edge of the forest and constantly harassed the travelers and the sages.

It was within a few hours Shoorpnakha returned to Panchavati with Khar and Dushan accompanied by 14,000 ferocious demons. When Sri Rama saw the army of Rakshas approaching near the cottage he told Lakshmana to hurry up and take away Seeta to a safe shelter in the mountain cave and guard her carefully. In the meantime Khar attacked Sri Rama and a fierce battle raged between them. Sri Rama shot his celestial arrows with great precision and smashed Khar, Dushan, and their 14,000 warriors in a few hours. Shoorpnakha watched everything in horror and instantly hurried to Lanka to inform her brother, Ravana, about the entire disaster.

She entered Ravana's court screaming and crying at the pitch of her throat and explained everything

that had happened at Panchavati, without telling her amorous advances and demonic tricks. She described in detail the valor and unmatched strength of Sri Rama and his younger brother Lakshmana. Shoorpnakha emphasized the celestial grace and beauty of Seeta in order to infuse a passionate desire in Ravana's heart. After listening to the story of his sister, Ravana became obsessed with the thoughts of Seeta and came up with a heinous plan to abduct her secretly.

The next morning, he summoned his magic chariot and flew off alone towards the cottage of his Uncle Mareecha who was a magician and could assume the form of any human or beast. King Ravana told Mareecha about his vicious proposal and demanded help in abducting Seeta. At first, Mareecha did not approve Ravana's unholy plans, but after repeated threats from the latter he concluded woefully to move along the commands of the mighty Rakshasa.

Thereafter, Mareecha and Ravana stepped into the air chariot and flew towards the cottage of Sri Rama at Panchavati in Dandaka forest. They got down at a place that was half-hidden behind the cluster of trees. There, Mareecha quickly assumed the form of a golden deer and began to stroll at the front gate of Sri Rama's dwelling. Right at that moment, Seeta came out to pick some flowers for prayers and she noticed the golden deer strolling in their front yard. She was totally captivated by the beauty of the dazzling creature and instantly requested Sri Rama and Lakshmana to catch the deer. At that point, Lakshmana had some doubts about the true identity of the golden deer. He looked at the unique creature and remarked that the golden deer was too perfect to be real. He requested Sri Rama to approach the deceptive deer with caution. Sri Rama looked at Lakshmana with a smile and requested him to stay with Seeta in the cottage as he walked swiftly towards the deer.

Sri Rama chased the elusive deer for miles in the dense forest and finally when he shot his

arrow at the animal the golden deer resumed the true form and screamed in the piteous voice of Sri Rama, “Oh Lakshmana, help!” At the cottage in Panchavati, when Seeta heard the helpless screams, she was seized with panic and burst into a rage insisting Lakshmana to leave immediately to help Sri Rama.

The moment Lakshmana left the cottage, Ravana quickly came out of his hiding place. He assumed the form of a mendicant ascetic dressed in Saffron clothes and moved towards the front gate of the cottage with a begging bowl in his hands. The minute Seeta stepped out of the cottage to give alms, Ravana instantly grabbed her hand and pushed her into his air chariot and flew off. As the chariot rose in the air, Jatayu the old faithful bird heard the helpless, piteous cries of Seeta, he quickly flew up in the air and tried to save her from the cruel hands of the demon, but Ravana cut off the bird’s gigantic wings and talons and Jatayu fell on the ground helplessly.



In the meantime Sri Rama and Lakshmana returned to the vicinity of Panchavati and noticed Jatayu brutally wounded and gasping for breath. The gallant bird spoke haltingly with his dying breath and informed them about Seeta's abduction by a demon flying southward in an air chariot. After listening to the story of the brave bird Jatayu, Sri Rama was overwhelmed with anger, grief, and unbearable anxiety and wept bitterly. He immediately resolved to finish the evildoer and the brothers began their search for Seeta.

In their journey southward a horrible creature, Kabandha, attacked them. In a battle between the three of them, the princes chopped off the monster's tremendously long arms and he fell on the ground. Before dying, Kabandha advised them to go towards the banks of Lake Pampa and seek help of Sugreeva, who lived on the Rishyamuka hills. After performing the cremation rites of Kabandha as desired by the latter Sri Rama and Lakshmana proceeded towards Lake Pampa. On

their way they visited the Ashram of an aged, saintly woman named Shabri. She had been anxiously waiting for Sri Rama's arrival for many decades. The brothers rested in her lovely cottage and ate the fruits she had collected and saved for Sri Rama with utmost love and devotion. Soon after Shabri listened to the melodious sermon on nine-fold devotional love from Sri Rama, she abandoned her mortal body and ascended to the world of celestials.

The princes resumed their search for Seeta and within a few days they reached the foothill of the Rishyamuka Mountain, where they met Hanuman. He introduced himself in the guise of a young scholar and inquired about their purpose of coming into that forest. After listening to a short introduction from the princes of Ayodhya, Hanuman resumed his natural stature of a giant monkey and prostrated at the feet of Sri Rama in utter humility and requested them to visit his King Sugreeva's remote residence on the top of

Rishyamuka Mountain. He instantly lifted both the princes with profound reverence, placed them on either shoulder and carried them up the hill.

Sri Rama and Lakshmana met Sugreeva and after narrating their story, expressed a sincere desire for mutual friendship. Sugreeva felt honored at the proposal and quite comfortable in confiding his personal problems with Sri Rama. He told Sri Rama about the reason of his exile and how his brother Bali had seized his kingdom and his Queen. After a short conversation both Sri Rama and Sugreeva became united in sincere friendship and promised to help each other.

Later, Sugreeva told Sri Rama and Lakshmana about a woman being carried by a ruthless demon in an air chariot towards south. The lady was crying in a piteous voice, “O Rama! O Lakshmana!” and when she saw people near our cottage, she dropped a packet of personal jewelry that had been saved carefully. When Sri Rama looked at the jewelry he was overwhelmed with

grief and tears rolled down his eyes as he thought about the sufferings of Seeta.

Over the following few weeks, Sri Rama and Lakshmana helped Sugreeva to restore back his lost kingdom and also his Queen, who had been enslaved by his brother Bali. After the coronation ceremony of Sugreeva as the king of Kishkindha and his nephew, Angada, as *Yuvraja* (heir apparent), both Sri Rama and Lakshmana returned to their dwelling in the forest nearby and decided to begin their search for Seeta after the rainy season.

At the arrival of calm and peaceful autumn, when the blessed sunlight swept across the green meadows, Hanuman the chief minister at the court of Kishkindha, reminded his King Sugreeva about the promise, the latter had given to Sri Rama and the search for Seeta began. King Sugreeva in consultation with Sri Rama decided to send Vanara troops into four units, led by their commanders. Each division would go in search for one month. Hanuman, Angada, and Jambavan

were given the most difficult assignment of proceeding southward along the high mountain tracks through the dense forest.

Since Sri Rama had been deeply impressed by the unique physical strength and wisdom of Hanuman; he gave his signet ring to the latter and said, “Take this ring, this will assure Seeta that you are my messenger. May your mission be successful.” Hanuman accepted the ring with his head bowed in reverence and deep humility. He journeyed southward with his comrades and searched quite carefully but could not see any trace of Mother Seeta. It was almost the end of the stipulated period of time given for search, when the entire team reached the southernmost tip of the country by the seashore.

There, while sitting under a tree, they started discussing among themselves the sad story of Sri Rama’s exile and the subsequent incidents that followed, like Seeta’s abduction by Ravana in the forest, the gallant bird Jatayu’s death and so on

the search for Seeta. The vulture King Sampati, the elder brother of Jatayu happened to be sitting on a neighboring hill. When Sampati heard the name of his brother and the sad news of his death he slowly started moving towards the group of Vanaras. As he approached closer and introduced himself as Jatayu's brother, Hanuman came forward and comforted the grief-stricken bird. Sampati told Hanuman and his associates that one evening he saw Ravana carrying a beautiful young woman in his air chariot across the ocean to his island kingdom, Lanka. He also added that the pious lady was crying for help and loudly repeating the names of Sri Rama and Lakshmana. After listening to the story of Sampati they felt quite assured and confident that Mother Seeta was definitely imprisoned somewhere in Lanka, but when it came to the issue as who would cross the big ocean, they felt helpless and very depressed.

At that juncture Jambavan the wise, aged bear approached Hanuman and reminded the

latter about his inherent, divine powers and also emphasized that Hanuman being the son of the wind god was the only one who could cross the ocean and carry the message of hope and comfort to Mother Seeta. When Hanuman listened to the encouraging words of Jambavan, he immediately woke up from a reverie, as if he remembered something that was forgotten for some reason. He stood up instantly repeating out-loud, “Jai Sri Ram” (victory to Rama) and assuming a gigantic stature leaped into the open sky over the vast ocean. Hanuman flew at a miraculous speed and with his skill and resolution he survived all the trials on his way to the kingdom of Ravana. The moment he landed on the outskirts of Lanka he resumed back his normal size and leapt over the city gate to enter the kingdom.

He walked across the golden city and peeped into all private chambers of Ravana till at last he saw a woman of exquisite beauty lolling in her bed quite peacefully. For a moment he thought it

might be Seeta but the next minute he corrected himself, knowing that Seeta would not rest in a luxurious bed in separation from Sri Rama. He quickly left the palace and wandered sadly in the groves around the city until he reached Ashoka Vatika (garden) which was Ravana's favorite retreat. He spent the night sitting on a tree.

In the early hours of sunrise, when Hanuman looked around, he saw a woman of celestial beauty, who was deeply absorbed in her own thoughts and constantly repeated, "Sri Rama, Sri Rama" with utmost love and devotion. He also noticed that many Rakshasa women tormented Seeta with their teasing words. The moment when Hanuman was about to approach her, he saw Ravana coming towards Ashoka Vatika and he decided to hide himself more effectively behind the thick leaves of the tree. Ravana approached Seeta with endearing words, "Seeta, please come with me and live in my palace like a Queen. My wealth, my kingdom all shall be yours to enjoy." Seeta placed a blade of

grass between Ravana and herself and spurned all his proposals. She insisted to be restored back to her dear husband Lord Rama.

Ravana's frightening eyes rolled in anger and he turned back from the Vatika, hissing like a snake. Eventually when everybody left, Hanuman quickly gathered himself up and started singing the glories of Rama in the most melodious voice. Seeta looked around in total amazement and when she heard the name of Sri Rama a wave of joy went across her face.

Hanuman jumped down from the tree, knelt at her feet in sincere veneration and said, "I am Hanuman." The moment he noticed fear and suspicion in her eyes he immediately gave her Sri Rama's signet ring and assured her with humility that he was indeed Rama's messenger and devotee. He also added since Sri Rama did not know about her whereabouts he could not come to rescue her. After listening to the stories of Hanuman, Seeta felt very comforted and gave

him a personal piece of jewelry and requested to hand it over to Sri Rama as her memorabilia.



When Hanuman was about to leave he planned to destroy some parts of Lanka to make his visit noticeable to Ravana and also to explore the strength of the enemy. He destroyed many buildings and killed hundreds of Rakshasa warriors. Finally when Ravana's son Indrajeet attacked, he allowed himself to be captured because he wanted to meet Ravana personally at his court along with his associates.

Hanuman enlightened the King about the path of *Dharma* and also warned him of his upcoming destruction at the hands of Sri Rama. Ravana became furious and ordered his soldiers to kill Hanuman, but wise Vibhishana intervened, reminding his brother that it was not proper to kill a messenger. Then in great fury he suggested to set his tail on fire and let him return to his master Sri Rama. When the soldiers got hold of his tail and started wrapping it with some pieces of silk soaked in oil, it became longer and longer. Finally when the tail was set on fire, Hanuman resumed

his enormous stature, leapt into the sky and started setting fire to splendid palaces, mansions, military cantonments, and business centers.

After creating panic all over the capital, Hanuman took a quick dip in the ocean and flew back to the other side of the shore where the other Vanaras were waiting for his return. Later, they all hurried back to Sri Rama's dwelling in the forest to share the good news. Hanuman bowed in deep humility and gave a detailed account of all that had happened in Lanka and also handed over to Sri Rama the *Sikha-mani* (crest jewel) of Seeta. Sri Rama pressed the jewel close to his heart and became silent for a moment. He expressed his sincere gratitude to Hanuman and held him in his arms with tears of joy. Hanuman also informed about the safety of Seeta and emphasized upon the difficult circumstances at Ashoka Vatika in Lanka. After listening to the detailed information from Hanuman about Lanka, Sri Rama instantly turned towards King Sugreeva and requested him

to make the move for battle as soon as possible. King Sugreeva immediately ordered the Vanara forces to organize themselves for a quick move.

Sri Rama, Lakshmana, Sugreeva, and Hanuman with a big army of Vanaras started marching southward under the blessings of auspicious star *Uttara Phalguni*—the star of victory. They jumped and shouted—“Victory to Rama!” and at last they reached the southern seashore. They camped by the ocean beach and started looking into the serious problem of crossing the vast expanse of sea, stretching hundreds of miles.

After the departure of Hanuman from Lanka, the city was rebuilt very quickly, but Ravana was somewhat ashamed and really disturbed at the thought of panic created by Hanuman. He summoned his ministers, in order to consult and seek their opinion. His commander-in-chief, his son Indrajeet and others got up one by one in

the royal court and spoke brave words to please Ravana and encourage him to go forth and finish those people who instigated the monkey warrior. Although, there were some ministers in his assembly who condemned his act of abducting an innocent woman and suggested him to restore her back to Sri Rama and seek peace with the latter for his own welfare and of the country. His younger brother Vibhishana insisted upon the right code of ethics and begged him to liberate Seeta and restore her honorably to Sri Rama. He warned Ravana of the danger and the upcoming calamities. Ravana shouted in anger and contemptuously asked Vibhishana to leave the court.

Later when it became difficult for Vibhishana to tolerate Ravana's repeated insults, he gathered himself up quietly, renounced all his possessions in Lanka and flew straight towards Sri Rama's encampment with four other faithful associates. After reaching at the Vanara's camp, he declared,

“O Rama, I am Vibhishana the younger brother of Ravana. I tried to convince my brother to return your wife back to you with respect but he declined all my proposals. I could not tolerate his abusive behavior anymore and so I have renounced everything and left Lanka. Now I seek your asylum, grace, and protection.” Sri Rama replied, “O Vibhishana, you have relinquished the evil and decided to support the righteousness, you are welcomed here” he also added, “if a man comes as a friend and takes refuge in me how can I reject him?” He comforted Vibhishana and appreciated his honesty and also instantly requested Sugreeva and Hanuman to make arrangement for his coronation and honor him as the King of Lanka. Thereafter, Sri Rama and his comrades consulted Vibhishana at every step, while drawing their plans of attack on Lanka.

After camping on the seashore for a couple of days, Sri Rama and his associates seriously started thinking about the immediate hurdle

of crossing the vast ocean. Sri Rama stood on the shoreline of the ocean and prayed to the sea god saying, “O’ Sagara, please make a path for my army to cross over to Lanka.” The sea god emerged from the great ocean and suggested a course of action saying, “O’ Rama, you have in your army the mighty Nala, son of Vishwakarma. He is an excellent engineer. Let him construct a bridge across the waters and I shall support to hold it up.” Sri Rama graciously accepted the proposal and called upon Nala to take charge of the project. Soon at the command of Sri Rama and Nala, thousands of Vanaras started working with sincere enthusiasm. They brought huge boulders, uprooted massive trees, uplifted big hills, dragged everything to the shore and used it in the construction of the bridge over the vast ocean. At every step they cheered, “Jai Sri Rama”(victory to Sri Rama). It was the magic of Sri Rama’s name, which cemented the construction material together.

The bridge was built within five days and Sri Rama's army marched across the bridge with renewed enthusiasm. After they landed on the outskirts of Lanka, Sri Rama's army surrounded the city. At the advice of Vibhishana the forces were carefully stationed at each gate of the capital.

When Ravana found out about the upcoming attack on Lanka, he became a bit frustrated and started playing some devious games in desperation. First, he sent a few spies disguised as Vanaras into the camp of Sri Rama to explore their strength, and also to corrupt Sugreeva's mind but the demons failed in their mission. He then ordered the skilled sorcerer Vidyutjihva to create a replica of Sri Rama's head and secretly leave it in front of Seeta's cottage as an evidence of Rama's defeat and death. The moment Seeta saw the replica, she collapsed, but within a few seconds she quickly recomposed herself and smiled at Ravana's treacherous mentality.

After the distribution of army at the assigned stations, when Sri Rama looked at the beauty and wealth of golden Lanka, he was moved with pity for the innocent citizens of the kingdom. He instantly consulted his commanders and ordered Angada, the son of gallant King Bali, to go as a peace messenger to the court of Ravana and convince the latter for peaceful negotiation; but Angada's mission failed. Immediately after Angada's return from Lanka, Sri Rama ordered his troops to march forward onto the city gates and a fierce battle raged between the two armies.

There were many duals between the individual warriors like Hanuman with Jaambumaali and Angada encountered Indrajeet. The battle raged throughout the day and at some point—Indrajeet shot serpent darts at Sri Rama and Lakshmana and both the brothers fell on the ground unconscious. When Hanuman noticed the Vanaras standing in total bewilderment, he immediately leaped to the sky in order to seek Garuda's help. The divine

eagle, Garuda, the perennial enemy of Serpents, arrived in the battlefield instantly and neutralized the effect of the venomous darts. The princes woke up with renewed strength and the Vanaras' army resumed the fight with shouts of triumph, "Victory to Rama." The Vanara forces suffered greatly in the beginning, but Hanuman always kept up their spirits with the encouraging words of assured victory.

Sri Rama's forces felt quite weak and bewildered the day when a grim battle ensued between Indrajeet and Lakshmana. The brave and dashing son of Ravana, Indrajeet swooped down with his powerful weapons and killed and wounded thousands of Vanaras. Thereafter, he hurled his magic arrow towards Lakshmana that pierced through his chest and the latter fell down on the ground and became unconscious. It was late in the evening and Sri Rama became extremely concerned and worried about Lakshmana and the other wounded soldiers.



At that juncture, the valiant Hanuman had to fly towards the Himalayas and bring the healing herbs to the battlefield overnight, which gave a new life to Lakshmana and also helped many other wounded soldiers.

The battle went on for nine days and Rakshas' forces also suffered greatly, wailing and lamenting rose from all corners of the city. Ravana lost his commanders one by one, and also his brother Kumbhakarna, other relatives and his very dear son Indrajeet.



On the last day of the war Ravana entered the battlefield with thunder and lightning. He pushed his way through the Vanaras, and made his first attack on Sri Rama with blazing arrows. His magnificent chariot was fully equipped with powerful, mysterious weapons. Sri Rama instantly countered Ravana's attack with a shower of celestial arrows that pierced through the giant Raksha's armor and made him frustrated and confused momentarily. Ravana quickly recomposed himself and invoked his Supernatural powers and a grim battle began again.

Later at the suggestion of Vibhishana, Sri Rama invoked the *Brahmastra* (weapon) given by sage Agastya and aimed it straight into Ravana's belly, at the mysterious point of his invincibility. It shattered Ravana's body and he fell head long from his chariot and died instantly. Vibhishana performed the death rites for his brother with royal grandeur and then entered the kingdom with Lakshmana and Hanuman.

After the coronation ceremony of Vibhishana, Hanuman went to Ashoka Vatika to convey the good news of Sri Rama's victory to Seeta, and bring her over to the Vanaras camp. He also informed Mother Seeta that Sri Rama wanted her to be dressed with clean clothes and jewelry before coming to his presence. Later when Seeta reached the camp and came closer to Sri Rama, she sobbed in joy and happiness but also sensed Sri Rama's coldness and felt a strange barrier between her husband and herself. Sri Rama looked at Seeta and said "I waged this war not just to liberate you from the cruelty of Ravana, but also to vindicate my honor and restore respect for entire womanhood. This is the victory of goodness over evil." He further added, "I cannot take you back in my life now, because you have lived in a stranger's house for a year." Seeta was shocked to hear Sri Rama's words, and she immediately signaled Lakshmana to prepare a pyre, and declared to seek refuge in *Agni* (fire).

Lakshmana was totally bewildered and burned with indignation; he turned around to look at Sri Rama's reaction. But Sri Rama seemed passive and remained quiet. He gathered a bundle of twigs and kindled a big fire. Thereafter, Seeta circumambulated Sri Rama with profound respect and then jumped into the fire with her hands folded in prayer for protection saying, "Let this be the test of my purity and virtuosity." She was calm and very sure of her chastity.

Instantly a celestial figure emerged from the fire who protected Seeta, extinguished the flames and requested her husband to come forward saying, "O Rama accept Seeta with respect and dignity, she is pure and virtuous." Sri Rama moved towards Seeta, held her hand with a smile and apologized sincerely. They understood each other and felt united again in the purity of love. The people who were present there and the celestials from heaven witnessed the tough ordeal Seeta had to go through.

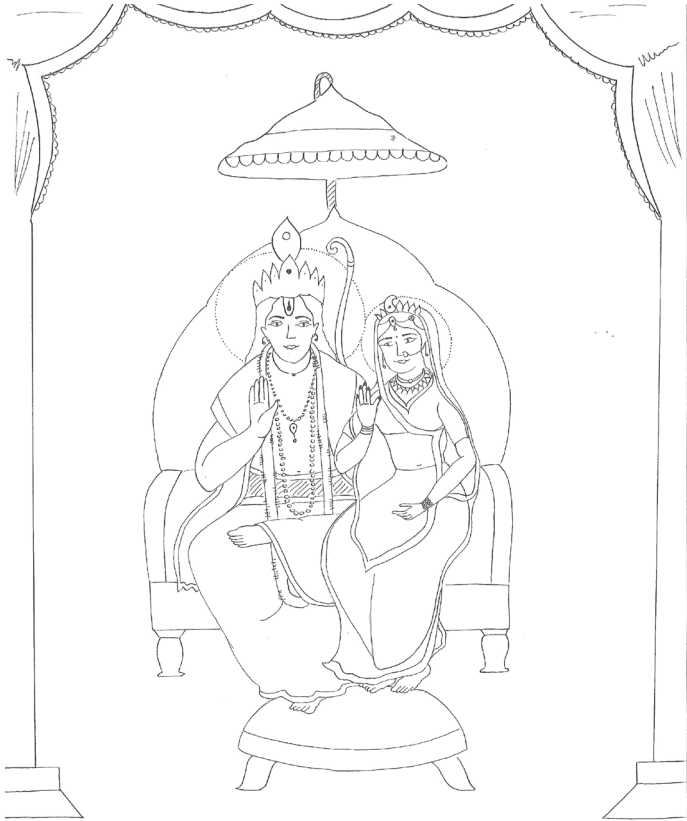
Since the stipulated time of 14 years of their exile was going to be over the next day, Sri Rama immediately realized the urgency of keeping his promise to Bharata and requested King Vibhishana to make arrangement for their quick departure. The king summoned for the *Pushpaka Viman* and placed it at their service. Sri Rama, Seeta, Lakshmana, Hanuman, and Vibhishana all ascended the air chariot and started their journey back home to Ayodhya. At the special request of Seeta they made a brief descent at the Capital of Sugreeva to pick up the royal ladies to accompany Seeta to Ayodhya; and also at that time Sri Rama requested resplendent Hanuman to fly separately to Ayodhya in order to inform Bharata in advance about the good news of their safe arrival.

When Bharata made the public announcement of Sri Rama's homecoming, a wave of ecstatic joy went across the Capital; people started making festive preparations and decorated the entire city with festal lamps in golden vases. When *Pushpak*

Viman landed at Nandigram, where Bharata had been waiting anxiously with other members of royal families and sages; there were thousands of citizens assembled from all over to greet Sri Rama with Seeta and Lakshmana and also other celebrities. In the meanwhile Sumantra brought the royal chariot yoked with white horses. Sri Rama and Seeta joyfully ascended the chariot with other honorable guests and they all proceeded towards the palace with thousands of other people who walked with them through the streets of Ayodhya.

Soon after they reached the palace, the great sage Vasishtha fixed the auspicious day and time for Sri Rama's coronation. The enthronement ceremony took place in a very traditional style. Sri Rama sat on the jeweled throne with Seeta beside him under the royal white umbrella held by Bharata. The great devotee Hanuman sat at his feet in modesty with hands joined in humility and selfless service. The great sage Vasishtha placed the magnificent crown of the Sun dynasty on Sri

Rama's head while other priests chanted the Vedic hymns in ecstasy of celestial blessings.



The great emperor Sri Rama ruled his kingdom with care and compassion while strictly following the path of *Dharma*. Sri Rama and Seeta the most adorable, divine couple were sincerely devoted to each other and also enjoyed serving the elders in family and the sages who visited the palace from time to time.

It was shortly after their arrival at Ayodhya that Seeta became pregnant. During her pregnancy, several Munis, Maharishis, the learned scholars in Vedas and Vedangas came to visit and congratulate Sri Rama for his victory over the ferocious demons in the forest and also in Lanka. One day when it was late in the evening and Sri Rama was about to leave the assembly hall, a spy from the secret services walked in and wanted to share a little bit of the current topics of gossip among the citizens of Ayodhya. He stood with his palms joined in deep veneration and spoke quite hesitantly. He told Sri Rama that in general, the people of Ayodhya were content,

happy, and prosperous, but some people still disapproved of Queen Seeta's acceptance by him since she had been forcibly abducted by Ravana and lived in Lanka for a year. Sri Rama was extremely hurt by the false accusation and quietly left the court. He proceeded towards the inner chamber of the palace. Although he did not tell anything to Seeta, she could sense his agony and repeatedly requested to share the silent pain. Sri Rama turned his face down, sighed deeply, and shared with Seeta the ugly rumors and lies about her chastity. Seeta was shocked to hear the false accusations and felt very sorry and concerned for Sri Rama; but she quickly recomposed herself and declared modestly that she must leave Ayodhya and spend the rest of her life in a hermitage in the forest. She further added, "O Lord of my heart, both you and I know deep in ourselves that I am chaste, pure, and virtuous but it is important that a King's wife should be above all suspicions and respected by

the citizens. It is my duty to purge you from all stains of ignominy. You should still rule your people with care and justice, that's why I must leave."

Sri Rama, although deeply grieved at heart, called his brothers and explained the entire situation to them. They were stunned and bewildered because it was beyond their comprehension to understand the complexity of *Raj Dharma*—the tough, sacred duties of a king. Sri Rama told Lakshmana that tomorrow early morning take Seeta in a chariot to the forest and leave her at a safe secluded place near the hermitage of sage Valmiki. Accordingly, early in the morning before the daybreak, Lakshmana took out a chariot and escorted Seeta to the forest. After dropping her off near the hermitage of sage Valmiki, Lakshmana broke down and sobbed bitterly. His grief was unabated. He went on lamenting as he got upon the chariot and drove back to Ayodhya.

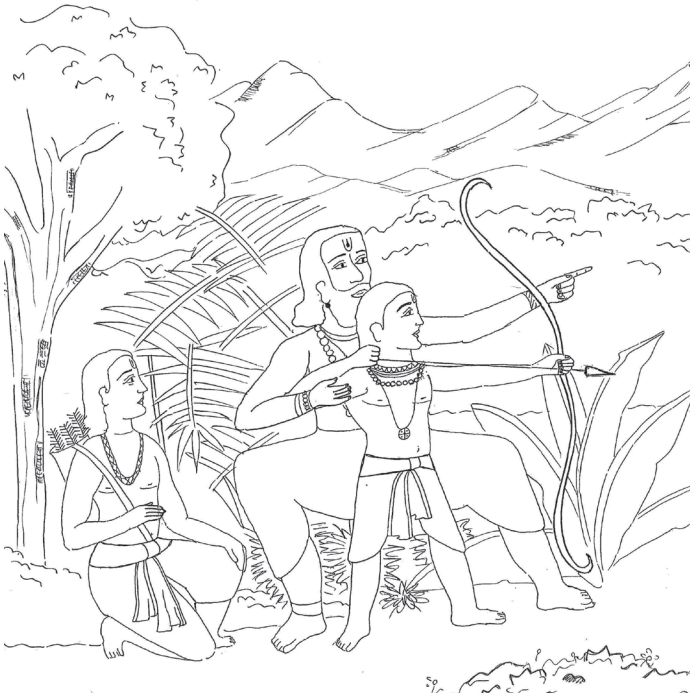
Seeta was also plunged into deep pain and cried aloud while she watched Lakshmana's chariot leaving the forest. She panted heavily with a sorrow-stricken heart for a while, and then suddenly, she heard a soft voice from behind the bushes and saw an old sage coming towards her. As he came closer he said, "My daughter, I am Valmiki a poet and a hermit. Please accept my hospitality and live in our hermitage with other hermit-women. I will make sure that they take good care of you." He further added, "I know, you are the daughter of King Janaka and the dear consort of Sri Rama and also you are pure and chaste. Don't be sorry, be patient and keep your faith alive in yourself and Sri Rama." Seeta bowed at Valmiki's feet and requested him not to disclose her identity at the hermitage and both proceeded to the Ashram.

After Seeta left the palace at Ayodhya, Sri Rama suffered the agony of separation from his

most devoted wife and also abandoned all the royal comforts. He adopted the ascetic way of life, while living at the palace and performing all the duties of a king. He became more devoted to the work of administration and welfare of the citizens. Sri Rama as an ideal King, ruled his empire by the laws of *Dharma*. He sacrificed his personal comforts as well as happiness in order to honor the voice of his citizens. In Ramayana Sri Rama's character has been presented as the embodiment of *Dharma* that encompasses almost every aspect of life. An ideal King, an ideal man, an ideal son, an ideal brother, an ideal friend, a devoted husband, a valiant soldier, and above all the lover of humanity and truth.

At Valmiki's hermitage Seeta accommodated herself gladly to the circumstances and gave birth to Sri Rama's twin sons, Lava and Kush. Time passed by and the boys were well trained and educated by Maharishi Valmiki and their mother

Seeta; so much so, that by the age of 12 they excelled in the studies of Vedas, music, sciences, art, archery, bowmanship, and the use of celestial weapons.



During that time Muni Valmiki had completed the work of comprising his great epic The Ramayana and he taught the poem to Lava and Kush line by line. The illustrious boys memorized the entire story of Ramayana and could sing melodiously with flute and other musical instruments.

In the meanwhile at Ayodhya the great King Sri Rama decided to perform the *Ashwamedha yajna*—the destroyer of all sins. It was a public festival and everyone in Ayodhya and from the neighboring kingdoms was invited to participate and enjoy the performance of *yajna*, music, storytelling, and singing. Since after the exile of Seeta, Sri Rama had strongly refused to get married again, so, for the auspicious completion of *yajna*, a golden statue of Queen Seeta was installed next to the seat of the King Sri Rama, at the sacred site of *yajna*. Public announcements were made for the beginning of the festivity and Sri Rama's *Ashwamedha yajna* began with great pomp and splendor.

Also according to the royal traditions of the Sun dynasty, at some point during the performance of the ceremony, a white horse with special gold insignia of the Ikshvaku dynasty was escorted to the site of the royal celebrations. The great royal priest Vasishtha chanted a few hymns from scriptures and the royal horse started moving out of the palace followed by a large army under the leadership of Shatrughna. When the horse reached the premises of Maharishi Valmiki's Ashram, Lava and Kush stopped the horse and as they read the proclamation placed on its forehead; they decided to tie the horse to a tree. A little after that, a few of Sri Rama's soldiers quickly entered the Ashram and ordered the boys to release the ceremonial horse. When Lava and Kush refused to do that, a terrible battle ensued between the twin princes and Sri Rama's army. The two valorous sons of Seeta used the arrows blessed with potent spells by their Guru Valmiki and defeated all the mighty warriors including Shatrughna, Lakshmana, Bharata, Sugreeva, and Hanuman.

When Sri Rama heard about the terrible defeat of his army at the hands of two illustrious young warriors, he decided to visit the site of the battlefield. In the meantime sage Valmiki who was with Seeta at the banks of Tamasa river performing some rituals, visualized the entire situation with his yogic power and immediately rushed to the Ashram leaving Seeta behind. When Sri Rama approached closer to Lava and Kush the wise sage moved forward and stood between them. He introduced his disciples to the king and asked them to apologize for holding the royal horse at the Ashram. He also added that he would bring Lava and Kush to the palace tomorrow to attend *yajna* and the singing program.

The next day the twin boys went to Ayodhya with the sage and at the request of Sri Rama, they began singing the Ramayana in presence of the Kings, Rishis, and other citizens assembled at the palace. Sri Rama was deeply touched by the story and the art of presentation by the sage's most

intelligent pupils. In the course of listening to Ramayana, Sri Rama came to know that Lava and Kush were his own sons born of Seeta. His heart ached with emotions of love. The following day, he sent a messenger to sage Valmiki to convey that if Seeta was pure and virtuous she might come back to Ayodhya and absolve him from all guilt and shame. The sage agreed to Sri Rama's proposal and the next morning the Muni Valmiki entered the assembly hall with Seeta, Lava, and Kush. Everyone was moved with sorrow by that sight. Rishi Valmiki looked at Sri Rama and said, "O King, here comes your devoted wife Seeta whom you had abandoned in fear of public criticism. Allow her to prove herself pure. These twin boys, Lava and Kush, are your own sons born of your most virtuous wife Queen Seeta. Seeta approached Sri Rama in utter humility and said, "Let me prove my innocence before you and your people once and for all." Sri Rama got up from his throne, moved forward with modesty and said, "I give you my permission."

Seeta immediately took a step back and with her hands joined in sincere prayer said, “If I am pure and virtuous and have been always faithful to my husband, let mother Earth open now, and allow me to enter in its womb.” Right at that moment when Seeta was taking this solemn vow, the ground rumbled with fearsome noise and from the bowels of earth emerged the goddess Earth, sitting on a magnificent throne. The goddess stretched out her arms, quickly took Seeta in her embrace with respect and then disappeared below. Flowers were showered from above and the fragrant breeze whispered blessings for the divine Queen Seeta. The earth shook again and then closed. For a moment, holy calmness swept across the universe. Sri Rama sobbed heavily with a grief-stricken heart, and cried aloud saying, “Seeta, Seeta.” His Queen Seeta always remained alive in his thoughts and he never got married again.

Sri Rama ruled Ayodhya with his brothers for a long time and later assigned the different

territories of the Kosala empire to Lava and Kush and the sons of Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. He crowned his son Kush as the King of Ayodhya and Lava was assigned a prosperous kingdom in farthest north of Kosala. After some time, at the silent call of divinities from *Vaikuntha* (Heaven), Sri Rama wished to depart from the world of mortals. Sri Rama had performed and achieved what he had to as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Among the brothers, Lakshmana was the first one to discard his mortal body and ascend the realm of celestials. Upon the news that Sri Rama was going to depart from the world soon, King Sugreeva, Vibhishana, Jambavan, and many other celebrities came to Ayodhya to witness the last moments of the manifestation of God-incarnate on earth. Lord Rama blessed his great devotee Hanuman and said that he would continue to live in the hearts of people as long as mankind would live.

It was at a very early hour of the morning when Lord Rama left the palace to discard his

mortal body by yogic transcendence on the banks of River Sarayu. When he stepped into the river a voice was heard from heaven above, “O Vishnu! Come to *Vaikuntha* (celestial abode).” The moment Lord Rama shuffled off his mortal being: Bharata, Shatrughna, and many other followers also entered the holy river in yogic alignment with Lord Rama and ascended upward filling the horizon with their radiance.

Lava and Kush ruled the empire for a long time. They traveled to far-off lands and shared the message of sage Valmiki’s glorious poem, ‘The Holy Ramayana’ with thousands of people.

For centuries the Divine couple Lord Rama and Seeta have been worshipped as embodiments of *Dharma*, always inspiring people into the nobler values of life and their worship will continue for many more generations to come.



THE GLORY OF HANUMAN CHALEESA



Hanuman Chaleesa is a unique collection of 40 devotional verses that describe the greatness, glory and sincere undivided devotion of Sri Hanuman for Lord Rama, the God-incarnate.

Across the country, almost in every village and town of India, there are shrines and temples with the image of Sri Hanuman standing in modesty with hands joined in humility, or sitting with his

head slightly bent forward in a devotional posture at the holy feet of Sri Rama and Seeta. At some other shrines, he is portrayed as Veer Hanuman (noble hero) holding a mace in his right hand with a promise to uphold *Dharma* with courage, bravery and humility.

The devotional chanting of Hanuman Chaleesa has touched the hearts of millions and inspired people into purity of sincere love for God over generations. In the mesmerizing words of this melodious composition, the devotee seeks blessings for increased awareness, good health, physical and emotional strength, courage, determination, clarity of vision, steadfast in vow, yogic unity in meditation and self-less service to humanity.

The learned sages believe that the spiritual momentum created by constant repetition of the Hanuman Chaleesa, in ecstasy of divine love, purifies the heart and liberates the individual from all kinds of fears. Reciting Hanuman Chaleesa with love and devotion forms an important part of daily

prayers and especially the worship conducted on every Tuesday and Saturday.

For centuries, millions of people have been reading this great composition of 40 verses with deep respect, faith and devotion, and will certainly continue the same for years to come.

-- Jai Sri Ram --



HANUMAN CHALEESA



श्री गुरु चरन सरोज रज, निज मनु मुकुरु सुधारि।

बरनजँ रघुबर बिमल जसु, जो दायकु फल चारि।।

Sri Guru charan saroj raj, nij man mukur sudhaar;

Barnau Raghuvar vimal jas, jo daayak phal chaar

Having cleansed the mirror of my heart with the holy dust from the touch of my Guru's lotus feet, I describe the glory of Sri Rama, the bestower of life's four-fold fruits, *Dharma* (Virtue),

Artha (Wealth), *Kama* (Pleasure) and *Moksha* (Liberation).

बुद्धिहीन तनु जानिके सुमिरौ पवनकुमार ।

बल बुद्धि विद्या देहु मोहिं हरहु कलेस बिकार ॥

Buddhiheen tanu jaanike, sumirau Pavan-Kumaar;

Bal budhi vidya dehu mohi, harahu kales bikaar

Realizing my lack of true knowledge, I meditate upon thee, O' Hanuman, the son of wind god, please bless me with strength, integral wisdom and inner enlightenment which can eliminate all the miseries of life.

जय हनुमान ज्ञान गुनसागर ।

जय कपीस तिहु लोक उजागर ॥

Jai Hanuman gyan guna saagar

Jai Kapees tihun lok ujaagar

Glory to thee, O' Hanuman, the ocean of wisdom and virtue; victory to Hanuman the lord of monkeys who enlightens all three worlds.

राम दूत अतुलित बल धामा ।

अंजनिपुत्र पवनसुत नामा ॥

Ram doot atulit bal dhaamaa,

Anjaniputra Pavansut naamaa

You are the messenger of Sri Rama and repository of incomparable strength. You are also addressed as the son of Anjani and Pavan (wind god).

महावीर बिक्रम बजरंगी ।

कुमति निवार सुमति के संगी

Mahabeer bikram bajarangi,

Kumati nivaar sumati ke sangi

You are powerful, valiant and radiant as thunderbolt. You are the bestower of good thoughts and the dispeller of wickedness.

कंचन बरन बिराज सुबेसा ।

कानन कुंडल कुंचित केसा ॥

Kanchan baran biraaj subesaa,

Kaanan kundal kunchit kesaa

O' Golden hued Hanuman ji, you look brilliant and splendid with your ear-studs and curly golden hair.

हाथ बज्र अरु ध्वजा बिराजै ।

काँधे मूँज जनेऊ साजै ।

Haath bajra aru dhvajaa biraaje,

Kaandhe moonj janeoo saaje

You hold the lightning mace and banner in your hands and the sacred thread of *Moonja* adorns your shoulder.

संकर सुवन केसरीनंदन ।

तेज प्रताप महा जग बंदन ।।

Sankar suvan Kesareenandan,

Tej Prataap mahaa jag bandan

You are the incarnation of Lord Shankar and son of Kesari. The splendour of your glory is praised by the whole world.

विद्यावान गुनी अति चातुर ।

राम काज करिबे को आतुर ।

Vidyavaan gunee ati chaatur,

Ram kaaj karibe ko aatur

Learned, dexterous, meticulous and exceedingly wise, you are always eager to serve Sri Rama.

प्रभु चरित्र सुनिबे को रसिया ।

राम लखन सीता मन बसिया ।।

Prabhu charitra sunibe ko rasiyaa,

Ram Lakhan Seeta man basiyaa

You take delight in listening to the glories of the Lord and enjoy the presence of Sri Rama, Lakshman and Mother Seeta perennially dwelling in your heart.

सूक्ष्म रूप धरि सियहि दिखावा ।

बिकट रूप धरि लंक जरावा ।।

Sookshma roop dhari siyahi dikhaavaa

Bikat roop dhari Lank jaraavaa

You appeared before Mother Seeta in a miniature form to seek her blessings, while you assumed an awesome form and created terror by setting the capital city Lanka on fire.

भीम रूप धरि असुर सँहारे ।

रामचंद्र के काज सँवारे ।।

Bheem roop dhari asur sanhaare,

Ramchanra ke kaaj savaare

With overwhelming strength you destroyed the demons and thus accomplished the most difficult task assigned to you by Sri Rama.

लाय सजीवन लखन जियाये ।

श्रीरघुवीर हरशि उर लाये ।।

Laaye Sajivan Lakhan jiyaaye,

Sri Raghubeer harashi ur laaye

You brought the life-giving herb (*sanjivani*) which gave a new life to Lakshman and Sri Rama embraced you joyously.

रघुपति कीन्ही बहुत बड़ाई ।
 तुम मम प्रिय भरतहि सम भाई ।।
Raghupati keenhi bahut baraaee,
Tum mam priya Bharatahi sam bhaaee

Sri Rama praised you very sincerely and said,
 “you are as dear to me as my own brother, Bharat”.

सहस बदन तुम्हरो जस गावैं ।
 अस कहि श्रीपति कंठ लगावैं ।
Sahas badan tumharo jas gaavain,
Asa kahi Shreepati kanth lagaavain

Thousands of living beings are singing your
 glory, saying thus, Sri Rama embraced you fondly.

सनकादिक ब्रह्मादि मुनीसा ।
 नारद सारद सहित अहीसा ।।
Sanakaadik Brahmaadi muneesa,
Naarad Saarad sahit Aheesa

Shanaka, Brahma and the other sages like
 Narada, Sharada (Mother Saraswati) and Serpent-
 King are always singing your glories.

जम कुबेर दिगपाल जहाँ ते ।

कबि कोबिद कहि सके कहाँ ते ॥

Jam Kuber digpaal jahaan te,

Kabi Kobid kahi sake kahaan te

Yama, Kuber and the guardians of the four directions, poets and scholars take delight in chanting the hymns of your magnificence.

तुम उपकार सुग्रीवहिं कीन्हा ।

राम मिलाय राज पद दीन्हा ॥

Tum upkaar Sugreevahi keenha,

Ram milaye raaj pad deenha

You rendered a great service to Sugreeva by bringing him in close friendship with Sri Rama who helped him in winning back his sovereignty over Kishkindha (Kingdom).

तुम्हरो मंत्र बिभीशन माना ।

लंकेश्वर भए सब जग जाना ।

Tumharo mantra Bibheeshan maana,

Lankeshvar bhaye sab jag jaana

Vibhishana accepted your sincere counsel and became the King of Lanka. This is known to the whole world.

जुग सहस्र जोजन पर भानू।
 लील्यो ताहि मधुर फल जानू।।
Jug sahasra jojan par bhaanoo,
Leelyo taahi madhur phal jaanoo

You flew towards the Sun which is thousands of miles away and tried to touch it like a sweet fruit.

प्रभु मुद्रिका मेलि मुख माहीं।
 जलधि लाँघि गये अचरज नाहीं।।
Prabhu mudrika meli mukh maheen,
Jaladhi laangh gaye achraj naheen

Holding Sri Rama's signet ring in your mouth, you leapt across the ocean.

दुर्गम काज जगत के जेते ।
 सुगम अनुग्रह तुम्हरे तेते ।।
Durgam kaaj jagat ke jete,
Sugam anugraha tumhare tete

All the difficult tasks of the world are accomplished very easily by your benign grace.

राम दुआरे तुम रखवारे ।
 होत न आज्ञा बिनु पैसारे ।
Ram duaare tum rakhvaare,
Hote na aagyaa binu paisaare

You are the guardian of Sri Rama's abode. No one can enter the celestial gate without your grace and special blessings.

सब सुख लहै तुम्हारी सरना ।
 तुम रच्छक काहू को डरना ।।
Sab sukh lahai tumaahari saranaa,
Tum rakshak kaahoo ko dar naa

He who seeks refuge in you enjoys all the pleasures of life and becomes fearless in all respects.

आपन तेज सम्हारो आपै ।

तीनों लोक हाँक तें काँपै ।

Aapan tej samhaaro aapai,

Teenon lok haank te kaampai

When you resort to your divine radiance and
roar aloud, your thunderous voice creates tremor
in all the three worlds.

भूत पिचास निकट नहिं आवै ।

महाबीर जब नाम सुनावै ।।

Bhoot pisaach nikat nahin aavai,

Mahabeer jab naam sunaavai

The ghosts and evil spirits don't dare to come
near those who recite your name incessantly

नासै रोग हरै सब पीरा ।

जपत निरंतर हनुमत बीरा ।

Naasai rog harai sab peeraa,

Japat nirantar hanumat beeraa

O' Hanuman ji, the constant repetition of your name eliminates all the sufferings of life.

संकट तैं हनुमान छुड़ावै ।

मन क्रम बचन ध्यान जो लावै ।।

Sankat te Hanuman chhuraavai,

Man kram bachan dhyaan jo laavai

One who meditates upon you in thoughts, words and deeds shall surely be liberated from all kinds of sufferings.

सब पर राम तपस्वी राजा ।

तिन के काज सकल तुम साजा ।।

Sab par Ram tapasvi raajaa,

Tin ke kaaj sakal tum saajaa

Though the great ascetic king Sri Rama himself is the ruler of all, you accomplished all his missions successfully.

और मनोरथ जो कोई लावै ।
सोई अमित जीवन फल पावै ॥
Aur manorath jo koi laavai,
Soi amit jeevan phal paavai

Whoever takes refuge in you with honest faith
and sincerity is rewarded with all kinds of boons
and bounties.

चारों जुग परताप तुम्हारा ।
है परसिद्ध जगत उजियारा ॥
Chaaron jug prataap tumhaaraa,
Hai parsiddh jagat ujiyaaraa

Your glory has been acclaimed through all the
four *yugas* (eras) and radiance fills the cosmos.

साधु संत के तुम रखवारे ।
असुर निकंदन राम दुलारे ॥
Saadhu sant ke tum rakhvaare,
asur nikandan ram dulaare

You are the protector of saints and sages and destroyer of the demons. Sri Rama definitely holds a special love and reverence for you.

अष्ट सिद्धि नौ निधि के दाता ।

अस बर दीन जानकी माता ॥

Ashta siddhi nau nidhi ke daataa,

Asa bar deen jaanakee maataa

You have been blessed by the divine Mother Seeta to grant your devotees with any of your eight *siddhies* (yogic powers) and nine *niddhies* (divine treasures).

राम रसायन तुम्हरे पासा ।

सदा रहो रघुपति के दासा ॥

Ram rasaayan tumhare paasaa,

Sadaa raho Raghupati ke daasaa

You are the recipient of celestial grace of Sri Rama and blessed to remain perennially engaged in the service of the lord.

तुम्हरे भजन राम को पावै ।

जनम जनम के दुख बिसरावै ।।

Tumhare bhajan Ram ko paavai,

Janam janam ke dukh bisraavai

With the constant recitation of your name, the person is blessed with the vision of Sri Rama and becomes free from the sufferings of transmigratory births.

अंत काल रघुबर पुर जाई ।

जहाँ जन्म हरिभक्त कहाई ।।

Ante kaal Raghubar pur jaaee,

Jahaan janma Hari bhakt kahaee

After death, your ardent devotee enters the eternal abode of Sri Rama and he is always known as Sri Hari's devotee, whenever he takes a new birth on earth.

और देवता चित्त न धरई ।

हनुमत सेई सर्ब सुख करई ॥

Aur devataa chitta na dharaee,

Hanumat sei sarba sukh karaee

Anyone who is devoted and learns to live in the consciousness of Sri Hanuman ji, enjoys all the comforts of life.

संकट कटै मिटै सब पीरा ।

जो सुमिरै हनुमत बलबीरा ॥

Sankat katai mitai sab peera,

Jo sumirai Hanumat Bbalbeeraa

Hanuman ji removes all the obstacles and dispels all the sufferings of those who seek his blessings.

जै जै जै हनुमान गोसांई ।

कृपा करहु गुरु देव की नांई ॥

Jai Jai Jai Hanuman gosaaeen,

Kripa karahu gurudev ki naaen

Glory, Glory and all the glory to Sri Hanuman ji. Please bless me and always be with me. You are my Guru.

जो शत बार पाठ कर कोई ।

छूटहि बन्दि महा सुख होई ॥

Jo shat baar paath kar koe,

Chhootahi bandi mahaasukh hoee

He who recites these devotional verses a hundred times is liberated from the bondage and enjoys the highest bliss.

जो यह पढ़ै हनुमान चलीसा ।

होय सिद्धि साखी गौरीसा ॥

Jo yah padhe Hanuman Chaleesa,

Hoye siddhi saakhee Gauresaa

Anyone who recites Hanuman Chaleesa regularly shall definitely attain yogic unity with the Higher-Self -- to which Lord Shankar himself is the witness.

तुलसीदास सदा हरि चेरा ।

कीजै नाथ हृदय मैं डेरा ॥

Tulsidas sadaa Hari cheara,

Keejai naath hridaya mahan dera

Tulsidas, who is an ardent devotee of Sri Hari,
says “O’ Hanuman ji, please dwell in my heart!”

पवनतनय संकट हरन मंगल मूरति रूप ।

राम लखन सीता सहित हृदय बसहु सुर भूप ॥

Pavanatanaya sankat-haran, mangal moorati roop

Ram Lakhana Seetaa sahit, hridaya basahu sur bhoop

O’ Hanuman ji, the son of Pavan (wind god),
dispeller of all calamities, the embodiment of all
blessings, please dwell in my heart along with Sri
Rama, Mother Seeta and Lakshman.

ॐॐॐ Jai Sri Ram ॐॐॐ

GLOSSARY

Agastya

A revered sage living in Dandaka forest who advises Sri Rama and Seeta throughout their journey.

Ahilya

Wife of Sage Gautama who is cursed and abandoned by her husband and later liberated from the curse by Sri Rama.

Angada

Son of Bali; the Monkey King of Kishkindha; general in Sugriva's army.

Anusuya

Wife of Sage Atri famous for her devotion and chastity.

Ashwapathi

The king of Kekaya and maternal grandfather of Prince Bharata.

Atri

A great sage who is recognized as one of the *sapatarishis* (seven celestial sages)

Bali

The Vanara King of Kishkindha, husband of Tara, father of Angada, who kicks out his younger brother Sugreeva from the kingdom and later is killed by Sri Rama.

Bharadwaja

A sage who has his hermitage in the forest and guides Sri Rama for his stay at the foothill of Chitrakuta by the river Mandakini.

Bharata

Dasharath's second son by Queen Kaikeyi and the younger brother of Sri Rama.

Brahma

The Lord of creation in the triad of great Hindu trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva)

Dasharatha

The king of Ayodhya and father of Sri Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Devraja Indra

King of Amravati, son of Aditi and sage Kashyapa.

Guha

Chief of the tribe Shrunga Haripura; assists Sri Rama to cross the river Ganges.

Hanuman

Son of the wind god; devotee of Sri Rama and a leading warrior in battle against Ravana.

Indrajeet

Ravana's son and prince of Lanka.

Jaambumaali

Son of Prahasta; sent by Ravana to capture Hanuman.

Janaka

The king of Mithila and father of Seeta.

Jambavan

King of bears and son of Brahma; helps Sri Rama in search of his wife Seeta and battle against Ravana.

Jatayu

The wise aged eagle, who was killed by Ravana while attempting to rescue Seeta.

Kabandha

Rakshasa (demon) who is killed and liberated from a curse by Sri Rama.

Kaikeyi

One of the three wives of King Dasharatha and mother of Prince Bharata who asks for Sri Rama's exile.

Kaushalya

The eldest Queen of King Dasharatha and mother of Sri Rama.

Khar and Dushan

Cousins of Ravana and Shurpanakha.

Kumbhakarna

Younger brother of Ravana.

Kush

One of the twin sons of Sri Rama and Seeta.

Lakshmana

Son of King Dasharatha and Queen Sumitra, younger brother of Sri Rama, and twin brother of Shatrughna.

Lava

One of the twin sons of Sri Rama and Seeta

Mandavi

Cousin of Seeta and wife of Prince Bharata

Manthara

Personal maid of Queen Kaikeyi who convinces her to demand for Bharata to be the yuvaraja (heir-apparent) and Sri Rama to be exiled to the forest as an ascetic for 14 years. Mareecha

The rakshasa (demon) who takes the form of a golden deer and helps Ravana kidnap Seeta.

Nala

Son of the celestial architect Vishwakarma; who designs and constructs the bridge across the ocean to Lanka, for Sri Rama and his army.

Rishyashringa

The divine sage who performs *putrakameshti Yajna* (a vedic ritual which is performed to be blessed with a child) for King Dasharatha.

Rama

The incarnation of Lord Vishnu and the son of King Dasharatha and Queen Kaushalya.

Ravana

The rakshasa (demon) king of Lanka who kidnapped Seeta and was later killed by Sri Rama

Sampaati

Brother of Jatayu who informs vanaras of a beautiful lady being carried by a rakshasa in an air-chariot towards Lanka.

Seeta

Daughter of King Janaka, wife of Sri Rama, and mother of Lava and Kush.

Shabri

A hermit woman and an ardent devotee of Sri Rama who gives information about King Sugreeva.

Shatrughna

The son of King Dasharatha and Queen Sumitra and twin brother of Lakshmana.

Shoorpnakha

Sister of Ravana (the rakshasa king of Lanka).

Shrutakirti

Cousin of Seeta and wife of prince Shatrughna.

Sugreeva

King of Kishkindha, friend and ally of Sri Rama.

Sumantra

The royal family Charioteer and personal advisor to King Dasharatha.

Sumitra

Youngest Queen of King Dasharatha and mother of Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Thadaka

Rakshasi (demoness) living in Dandaka forest who is killed by Sri Rama at the command of sage Vishwamitra.

Urmila

Wife of prince Lakshmana and the younger sister of Seeta.

Valmiki

The divine sage who composed the great epic Ramayana and helps Seeta and her twins Lava and Kush during their stay at his Ashram.

Vanaras

A primitive tribe of Kishkindha ruled by King Sugreeva; helps Sri Rama in battle against Ravana.

Vasishtha

The royal family priest of Sun Dynasty at the palace of King Dasharatha in Ayodhya.

Vibhishana

Younger brother of Ravana who advises him to return Seeta to

her husband Sri Rama; later becomes an ally of Sri Rama in his battle against Ravana, king of Lanka.

Vidyutjihva

A well-known sorcerer who worked at the command of Ravana to create panic for Seeta before the arrival of Sri Rama's army to Lanka.

Vishnu

One of the principal deities of the Hindu 'Trinity' along with Brahma and Shiva.

Vishwamitra

The venerable sage highly skilled in royal weaponry who shares the secret of using his celestial weapons with Sri Rama and Lakshmana.

ॐॐॐ *Jai Sri Ram* ॐॐॐ

Other books and Audio CDs by Prabha Duneja

Books:

The Legacy of Yoga in Bhagawad Geeta
Hinduism Scriptures & Practices
Mantra and the Modern Man
Bhagawad Geeta: The Gospel of Timeless Wisdom
The Holy Syllable Aum
An Introduction to Bhagawad Geeta
Shiva
The Holy Geeta
Bhagawad Geeta: The Gateway to Freedom

Audio: CDs

Shiva
Hinduism
Hindu Festivals
Geeta Chaleesa
Chakra Meditation
Primordial Sound Meditation
Poems of Rabindranath Tagore
Patanjali Ashtang Yoga & Guided Meditation

Mantra Meditation
Meditation at the Seashore
Concept of God in Hinduism
Mantras for Yogic Unity in Meditation & Everyday Bliss
Our Journey Through Panch Koshas (Guided Meditation)
Opening the Heart Chakra (Guided Meditation)
Hindu gods and goddesses (2 volume CD set)
Lectures on Bhagawad Geeta (10 volume CD set)
Talks on the Power of Mantra (7 volume CD set)

Audio work available in Hindi

Mangal Dhvani
Shiv Mahima
The Great Gayatri Mantra
Bhaja Govindam
Nadayoga and Mindfulness Meditation
Hanuman Chaleesa
Celestial Chants for Relaxation (Sahakeertana)
Bhajans and Geeta Recital (2 volume CD set)
Talks on Bhagawad Geeta (8 volume CD set)
Bhagawad Geeta Recital (5 volume CD set)

For more information visit the website:
www.geetasociety.org