

Volume 4

ŚRĪ RĀMA CARITA MĀNASA
Of
Gōswāmī Tulasīdās

Canto 4: Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa

Original Text, English Transliteration &
Exhaustive Exposition in English with Explanatory Notes

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Language: English.

NOTE:

This English rendering of the epic Book 'ŚRĪ RĀMA CARITA MĀNĀSA' of Goswami Tulsidas is in 7 Volumes.

The present volume no. 4 has the Fourth Canto of the Book: viz. Kishkindha Kand.

The rest of the volumes in this series are as follows:-

Volume 1: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 1: Baal Kand

Volume 2: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 2: Ayodhya Kand

Volume 3: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 3: Aranya Kand

Volume 5: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 5: Sundar Kand

Volume 6: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 6: Lanka Kand

Volume 7: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 7: Uttar Kand

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Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa

Original Text in Hindi + English Transliteration + Exhaustive Exposition in English with Explanatory Notes:—

(1) Invocation : Shloka line nos. 1-4 and Sortha that follows it.

(2) Lord Ram and Laxman arrive at Mt. Rishymook where they meet Hanuman; on Hanuman's advice, Lord Ram befriends Sugriv who assures the Lord that he would do his best to find and free Sita from the clutches of her captors; Sugriv tells the Lord how injustice was done to him by his elder brother Baali; the Lord helped Sugriv to vanquish his tormentor Baali and regain his honour; Baali attains emancipation and salvation; at the time of death, he puts his son Angad in the custody of Lord Ram, making the Lord his guardian : Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 10.

(3) Sugriv is made the next king of Kishkindha, and Angad the crown prince; Lord Ram retires to the nearby Mt. Prabarshan to spend the next few months in quietude; description of the intrinsic charm and beauty of Mother Nature : Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 11—to Doha no. 17.

(4) Lord Ram sends Laxman to summon Sugriv; the Lord reminds him of his promise to help in the search of Sita; countless monkeys and bears are dispatched in groups to different corners of the earth to find where Sita was; one such group consisted of chief advisors of Sugriv such as Hanuman, Angad, Jamvant, Nal and Neel etc., who are dispatched in the south direction; Lord Ram selects Hanuman as his personal messenger and gives him his finger ring to present it to Sita as a token of identification : Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 23.

(5) This group heads towards the south; they enter a cave in search of water and meet a hermitress who directs them towards the shore of the southern ocean : Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 25.

(6) Faced with the roaring ocean in the front which blocked their way, the monkeys and bears lost all hopes of ever finding Sita; a vulture named Sampati, the brother of Jatayu, came down from his cave atop a hill and met the distraught group; they inform him how Jatayu had sacrificed his life in the service of Lord Ram; Sampati did the last

rites of his brother, and briefed the group about his earlier life; then flew high in the sky to see across the ocean, and found that Sita was confined in a garden in the island of Lanka, the capital city of the demon king Ravana : Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 26—to Doha no. 28.

(7) The question that now arose was who amongst the monkeys and bears would be able to cross the vast expanse of the ocean to reach Lanka, meet Sita and come back with her news; all, including Angad, expressed their reservations and inability to accomplish this task successfully; finally Jamvant motivated Hanuman to be the hero of the occasion and accomplish this great feat as a service to Lord Ram, to which Hanuman cheerfully agreed; Jamvant advised Hanuman to meet Sita and bring back her news so that Lord Ram would himself lead a campaign to free her from the clutches of her captors : Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Doha no. 30.

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ŚRĪ RĀMA CARITA MĀNASA
of
Gōswāmī Tulasīdās

Canto 4: Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa

Preface

The present Volume no. 4 of the magnificent Story of Lord Ram describes the events as narrated in the Holy Book ‘Ram Charit Manas, Canto 4: Kishkindha Kand’.

After sage Narad went away, Lord Ram rested a while under the shade of a tree on the banks of lake Pampa before resuming his journey. Moving ahead, he soon arrived at Mt. Rishyamook on the far end of Lake Pampa. On this mountain lived Sugriv along with his companions. Sugriv was a prince of the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha, and when he was expelled from the kingdom by his elder brother Baali due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers, he came to live atop Mt. Rishyamook as it was safer for him here because his brother was barred from coming to this place due to some previous curse.

When Sugriv descried Lord Ram and Laxman walking past around the base of this high mountain, he thought that they were some brave warrior sent by his estranged brother to find and kill him. So he sent his trusted aide named Hanuman to find out who the two gentlemen were, and why they were wandering in the wilderness.

Hanuman, disguised as a young Brahmin student, went to Lord Ram to find out who he was. This was how Lord Ram and Laxman first came into contact with the brave warriors of the monkey race of the kingdom of Kishkindha. To his utmost astonishment, Hanuman discovered that the Lord was not an ordinary prince, and neither was he sent by Baali to take revenge on Sugriv, but the Lord was the Supreme Being in the form of a human being known as Ram, who was the focus of Hanuman’s reverence and devotion, for Lord Ram was the one whom Hanuman worshipped, adored and had devotion for. So therefore, having recognized his beloved Lord, Hanuman was thrilled beyond measure. The two, Lord Ram and Hanuman, embraced each other most affectionately, and this meeting culminated in a lifelong bond of mutual affection, trust, love and respect between the Lord and his devotee Hanuman for all times to come.

When Lord Ram told Hanuman the reason why he had come that way, i.e. to search for Sita, he advised the Lord to come with him to meet Sugriv, the prince of the monkey race, who will surely assist the Lord in finding Sita. *1

Lord Ram met Sugriv, and, upon Hanuman's advice who had introduced the two, they became fast friends. During polite conversation, when Sugriv wished to know the reason why Lord Ram and Laxman were wandering in this most inhospitable terrain of the wilderness, where no human being had ever dared to come before, the Lord told him about Sita's abduction, and how the two brothers were searching for her. Sugriv then promised the Lord all help, and told him that he had seen Sita being taken away by Ravana in a chariot via the path of the sky. Sita had also dropped some of her jewelry from the air, which Sugriv had stored carefully, and he gave them to Lord Ram to prove that he was speaking the truth. *2

When Lord Ram asked Sugriv the reason for his living on the summit of an abandoned mountain, with only a handful of companions with him, the latter told the Lord how his elder brother Baali had mercilessly beaten him due to some misunderstanding, snatched his wife, and had evicted him from the kingdom of Kishkindha, vowing to kill him if he ever dared to go back. Sugriv also told the Lord the incident that led to this bitterness, and the Lord realized that Sugriv was not at all at fault, and that a grave injustice had been done to him.

So, like a true friend, Lord Ram offered to help Sugriv to retrieve his lost honour as well as his rightful claim as the prince of Kishkindha. In more practical terms, this decision of Lord Ram to help Sugriv was a tactical move by the Lord because once Sugriv got his honour back and his arch rival Baali was duly punished, Sugriv would be morally bound to help the Lord in his search for Sita and provide him with all possible logistical support in return of the Lord's favour to him. This was very crucial for Lord Ram, as it would give him the support and help of a strong and powerful ally to stand by his side, someone who can lend an army of valiant warriors to the Lord to fight a ferocious enemy like the demons. *3

After Sugriv was crowned the next king of Kishkindha, and his brother Baali's son Angad as the kingdom's crown prince, Lord Ram took a break for a while to spend some time in peace during the rainy season and the following autumn on the summit of a mountain called Prabarshan. Here we shall read a beautiful imagery of the pristine beauty of Mother Nature in all its finery. *4

It was like the famed lull before the violent storm that was looming on the horizon, and would soon make a crashing landfall.

Lord Ram summoned Sugriv and asked him to fulfill his promise to help the Lord find and retrieve Sita. Then Sugriv summoned a large number of monkey and bear warriors from all the quarters of his realm, and forming them into groups he ordered them to go in all the directions of the earth to find about the whereabouts of Sita. *5

One such group consisted of some of the most faithful and able chiefs of the community, such as Hanuman, Angad, Nal, Neel and Jamvant etc. This group was dispatched in the south direction by Sugriv as he already knew that Ravana had fled in that direction with Sita. Further, since Lord Ram knew that it would finally be Hanuman who would actually succeed in finding Sita, for the simple reason that the Lord was all-knowing, he called Hanuman aside and gave him his finger-ring as a token for identification, a token that would convince Sita that he was indeed a messenger from Lord Ram. *6

This group headed south, but by-and-by it reached the dead end when it faced the vast southern ocean staring it on its face, like a huge barrier that blocked their further progress. With this formidable barrier before them, the monkey and bear warriors lost all hopes of achieving any success in their mission of finding Sita; they sat down in a distressed mood, full of gloom and helplessness. But the very thought that they were out to do a selfless service for Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being, and that the Lord would surely show some solution to them, gave them renewed vigour and lit a new light of hope in their distraught hearts. *7

Meanwhile, it so happened that an old vulture named Sampati lived in a cave somewhere high up in the surrounding hills. When Sampati saw the group of weary monkeys and bears huddled together in a gloomy mood, some even contemplating death to come sooner to them than their expectations, he came down to enquire. Upon learning of their mission, and especially told how his brother Jatau had sacrificed his own life in order to serve Lord Ram by trying to save Sita from the clutches of Ravana, Sampati decided to help the company as best as he could.

Since a vulture has a long sight, Sampati flew high up in the sky and could easily descry the garden where Sita sat under a tree as a captive of Ravana in Lanka. Sampati gave this information the messengers of Lord Ram. Now the big question was: who would be able cross the mighty ocean to reach the island of Lanka that was situated at a distance of about 800 miles from the shore. *8

Angad said that he could go, but doubted about his return. No one else was competent for this enterprise. Finally, Jamvant, the aged bear chief who was the wisest in the group, motivated Hanuman to take a giant leap of faith, as Jamvant was sure that Hanuman would definitely succeed in this mission.

As if a spark of fire was applied to a fuse of dynamite, lo and behold, Hanuman declared that he is accepting the challenge, boldly, fearlessly, and without a second thought, as it was his first step in offering his selfless service of Lord Ram to whom he was totally devoted, and in whose service he had decided to offer the rest of his life. Confident that he was a chosen soul who has been granted the rarest of rare privilege to serve Lord Ram single-handedly, which was indeed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and fully aware of the Lord's cosmic powers and his divinity, there was no looking back for Hanuman.

Hanuman solemnly declared that in the name of Lord Ram, and by invoking the Lord's grace and blessings, he would straightaway go across the ocean, meet Sita, trounce all obstacles, and then come back with a first-hand report about her.

This epochal moment brings us to the end of Canto no. 4 called Kishkindha Kand of Ram Charit Manas. What happened next would be narrated in the next Canto no. 5, called the 'Sundar Kand', that follows the present volume no. 4.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, *1 = Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 4.

*2 = Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 5.

- *3 = Doha no. 5—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 12.
- *4 = Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 17.
- *5 = Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 22.
- *6 = Doha no. 22—to Chaupai line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 23.
- *7 = Doha no. 23—to Doha no. 26.
- *8 = Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 29.
- *9 = Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Doha no. 30.}

A question arises here: Why is this Canto called ‘Kishkindha Kand’? The answer is simple and straightforward—It is because this part of the Story describes Lord Ram’s journey through that part of the land that was south of the Vindhya range of mountains; it was thickly forested and far from human reach. It was a stretch of wilderness inhabited by the monkey and the bear races. Their capital was called Kishkindha, and the realm too had that name, i.e. ‘Kishkindha’. The ruler or the king of this kingdom in the deep forest to the south of the Vindhya mountains was Baali, and after his death it was Sugriv, his brother, who assumed the crown as its next king, with Baali’s son Angad as the crown prince.

The kingdom of Kishkindha stood as a buffer zone between the uncivilized demon kingdom on the island of Lanka, which stood in the middle of the southern ocean beyond the south coast of the mainland to where the kingdom of Kishkindha extended in the south direction, and the many civilized kingdoms inhabited by humans lying on the north of the Vindhya mountain range till which the northern boundaries of Kishkindha extended. Rarely any human being of the civilized world lying to the north of the Vindhyas ever ventured into the most inhospitable terrain of Kishkindha, and hence its inhabitants led a life that was virtually cut off from the northern part of the mainland, as much as it was from Lanka because of the barrier of the vast ocean lying between the two kingdoms of Kishkindha and Lanka.

But as is the case even in today’s world, members of the elite and upper classes in Kishkindha sent their students for higher education to the northern kingdoms that lay beyond the mountains of Vindhya. This would be abundantly clear if we make a careful study and analysis of the Story, for then it would become self-evident for us when we realize that both Lord Ram and Laxman had conversed freely with senior members of the kingdom of Kishkindha, such as Baali, Sugriv, Hanuman, Angad, Jamvant, Nala, Neel etc. This was possible only because these members of the monkey and bear races had travelled to learning centers in the north for the purpose of education, which in turn made them fluent in the languages used by the people of these territories. Otherwise it is obvious that it would not have been possible for Lord Ram and Laxman to talk with anyone in Kishkindha.

In this context we will do good to refer to Veda Vyas’ “Adhyatma Ramayan”, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 17-18 where it is said that when Hanuman and Lord Ram met at the foot of Mt. Rishyamook, Hanuman had talked fluently with the Lord in the Sanskrit language, a language that was spoken by humans, and was the lingua franca of the educated and elite class in ancient times in India. Lord Ram was astonished to hear such perfect Sanskrit being spoken by someone living in a land that

otherwise seemed to be out-of-bounds for civilization, a god-forsaken wild territory inhabited by ancient and primitive creatures who were shielded from civilized society by high mountain ranges and wild forests infested by ferocious animals and demons. Lord Ram could not suppress his amazement at this development of Hanuman speaking such immaculate Sanskrit language articulately, using perfect grammar and accent, so much so that the Lord expressed his surprise to Laxman in this regard.

What happened next would be narrated in Volume no. 5 of Ram Charit Manas, Canto 5, Sundar Kand.

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चतुर्थ सोपान
(किष्किन्धाकाण्ड)

ŚrīRāmaCaritaMānasa

caturtha sōpāna

(kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa)

श्लोक

कुन्देन्दीवरसुन्दरावतिबलौ विज्ञानधामावुभौ
शोभाढ्यौ वरधन्विनौ श्रुतिनुतौ गोविप्रवृन्दप्रियौ ॥ १ ॥
मायामानुषरूपिणौ रघुवरौ सद्धर्मवर्मौ हितौ
सीतान्वेषणतत्परौ पथिगतौ भक्तिप्रदौ तौ हि नः ॥ २ ॥

ślōka

kundēndīvara-sundarāvatibalau vijñāna-dhāmāvubhau
śōbhāḍhyau varadhanvinau śrutinutau gōvipravṛnda-priyau. 1.
māyāmānuṣa-rūpiṇau raghuvarau sad'dharmavarmāu hitau
sītānvēṣaṇa-tatparau pathigatau bhaktipradau tau hi naḥ. 2.

Lord Ram—who is as lovely and charming as the jasmine flower as well as the lotus flower, who is exceptionally strong, valiant and powerful, who is a repository of the highest kind of wisdom and erudition (Vigyan), who is endowed with the virtues of magnificence and natural grace, who is the best archer and an excellent bowman, who is admired and lauded by the Vedas (ancient scriptures), who loves and is loved by Brahmins (the elderly, learned, and respected section of the society), --- (Shloka line no. 1)

--- who has assumed the form of a human being to create a smokescreen to conceal his true identity (of being the Supreme Lord of this creation; the cosmic Consciousness that has no visible form, but is at the root of existence in this creation), who is the best, the most illustrious and the most exalted member of the race of kings descending from the ancient king named Raghu (of Ayodhya), who is like an impenetrable shield for Dharma (i.e. the Lord protects the virtues represented by the single word 'Dharma', such as righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, good and noble conduct and thought, etc.), who is a well-wisher of all, who is travelling through the wilderness, diligently and earnestly searching for Sita¹—let that Lord grant us the boon of Bhakti (the virtue of devotion for Lord God). (Shloka line no. 2)

[Note—¹Some scholars are of the view that since both Lord Ram and Laxman were on the forest path searching for Sita, hence this Shloka applies to both of them. Also, the characters enumerated here apply to both the brothers.

But this humble author has preferred to focus the Shloka on Lord Ram alone because the word “raghuvarau”, meaning the senior-most, the most illustrious and the most exalted member of king Raghu’s family of Ayodhya applies obviously to a “single person”, and not to two. Wherever in the text of Ram Charit Manas this word or its different variations have been used, they all refer to Lord Ram alone, and not to anyone else, not even his own brothers, including Laxman.

Hence, the author deemed it fit and proper to address this verse to Lord Ram alone, instead of both the brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, though they were both searching for Sita, and both had the virtues listed herein above.]

ब्रह्माञ्जोधिसमुद्भवं कलिमलप्रध्वंसनं चाव्ययं
श्रीमच्छुमुखेन्दुसुन्दरवरे संशोभितं सर्वदा ॥ ३ ॥
संसारामयभेषजं सुखकरं श्रीजानकीजीवनं
धन्यास्ते कृतिनः पिबन्ति सततं श्रीरामनामामृतम् ॥ ४ ॥

brahmāmbhōdhi-samudbhavaṁ kalimala-pradhvansanaṁ cāvyayaṁ
śrīmacchambhu-mukhēndu-sundaravarē sanśōbhitaṁ sarvadā. 3.
sansārāmaya-bhēṣajaṁ sukhakaraṁ śrījānakījīvanaṁ
dhan'yāstē kṛtinaḥ pibanti satataṁ śrīrāmanāmāmṛtam. 4.

[This Shloka is dedicated to honouring and glorifying the virtues and the greatness of Lord Ram’s holy name, “RAAM”; “śrīrāmanām”].*

Lord Ram’s holy name has originated from the ocean represented by the spiritual philosophy and metaphysical principles as expounded in the Vedas (i.e. the name of Lord Ram is like refined spiritual nectar that is obtained by distilling the philosophy and principles as expounded by the Vedas)¹.

It has the mystical ability and the power to completely destroy or remove all kinds of evils, sins, faults and shortcomings that are associated with the present era known as Kali Yuga. [To wit, if a person uses the holy name of Lord Ram, then it acts as a single formula for all the spiritual troubles and problems that the person encounters in Kali Yuga.]²

The name of Lord Ram is eternal and imperishable—i.e. its spiritual benefits are never diminished, its positive effects never fade away, and its glories and fame always remain evergreen³.

This holy name of Lord Ram adorns the mouth of Lord Shiva⁴ just like the celestial pitcher symbolized by the full disc of the moon looks so glorious and adorable because it is filled with Amrit, the pure ambrosia of eternity. [Lord Shiva always chants Lord Ram's holy name, for rarely there is a moment when he does not do so. Since Lord Ram's holy name is the spiritual ambrosia, so therefore Lord Shiva's mouth is compared here with the moon which looks so beautiful and adorable in the sky precisely because it is believed to be a pitcher in which Amrit meant for the gods is kept stored.] (Shloka no. 3)

The Lord's holy name is an infallible remedy for the disease symbolized by all sorts of sufferings and torments associated with life in this mortal world⁵.

The holy name of Lord Ram grants auspiciousness and well-being; it gives all kinds of happiness and joy⁶.

The holy name of the Lord is the life of Sita (as she had relied exclusively upon it for survival during the days of her captivity at Lanka)⁷.

Therefore, those who are wise, erudite and sagacious, those who wish to attain eternal bliss and beatitude, those who wish to enjoy spiritual peace and happiness—they should always suck this nectar symbolized by Lord Ram's holy and divine name, for it is a panacea for all their spiritual problems, and it is a single formula that would grant them all their wishes in this world⁸. (Shloka no. 4)

[Note—*The glories and majesty of Lord Ram's holy name has been narrated extensively in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 28;

¹Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 10; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 19; (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 46.

²Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 5, 8 that precede Doha no. 22; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 25; (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28; (b) Uttar Kand, (iv) Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 103; (v) Doha no. 124-a.

³Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha nos. 20; (ii) Doha no. 21 along with Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes it.

⁴Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 10; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3, 6 that precede Doha no. 19; (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46; (iv) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.

⁵Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27.

⁶Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 25.

⁷Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 30.

⁸Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 22.]

सो०. मुक्ति जन्म महि जानि ग्यान खानि अघ हानि कर । १ ।
जहँ बस संभु भवानि सो कासी सेइअ कस न ॥ २ ॥
जरत सकल सुर बृंद बिषम गरल जेहिं पान किय । ३ ।
तेहि न भजसि मन मंद को कृपाल संकर सरिस ॥ ४ ॥

sōraṭhā.

mukti janma mahi jāni gyāna khāni agha hāni kara. 1.
jaham̐ basa sambhu bhavāni sō kāśī sē'i'a kasa na. 2.
jarata sakala sura bṛnda biṣama garala jēhiṁ pāna kiya. 3.
tēhi na bhajasi mana manda kō kṛpāla saṅkara sarisa. 4.

[These verses extol the glory of Lord Shiva and praise the importance of the Lord's abode in this world at a pilgrim place known as Kashi (which is also known as the city of Varanasi in modern-day India.)]

One should know that the holy pilgrim site known as 'Kashi' (kāśī) is a place on earth where Mukti sprouts (i.e. in Kashi a person can find Mukti, which refers to liberation and deliverance of a person from this mortal world of transmigration)¹.

Not only this, but it is also a place abounding in knowledge, wisdom and erudition (i.e. it is a center of learning where scholars and teachers of scriptures and other great bodies of knowledge reside).

This being the case, Kashi is able to eliminate the darkness of ignorance and its accompanying troubles and sufferings. [Since it is a great center learning, and since erudite and sagacious teachers and scholars are found in abundance here, it has become a draw for students and seekers of knowledge who flock here from all corners of the land. With knowledge and learning and thorough study of the scriptures, wisdom, erudition and sagacity comes, and consequently the darkness of ignorance is eliminated automatically.]

It is the honorable abode of Lord Shiva and goddess Bhavani, the Lord's consort.

Say, it being such a privileged, glorious and honourable place, who would not like to have the chance to live in Kashi and derive its spiritual and other benefits? [To wit, everyone would like to spend some time in their lives in Kashi so that one can feel blessed by its holy environment.] (Sortha line nos. 1-2)

Addressing his own Mana, i.e. his own mind and heart, Tulsidas says: 'Oh my Mana! Don't you know that Lord Shiva had drunk the scorching poison known as Halahal which was so hot that it was burning the gods by its heat?

Say then, why don't you (i.e. the Mana) then worship and have devotion for that great Lord Shiva who was so merciful that he drunk this horrible poison in order to save the gods from its scorching effects?^{2*}' (Sortha line nos. 3-4)

[Note—¹Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 46; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119. In all these verses we read that Lord Shiva grants Mukti by uttering the holy name of Lord Ram in the ears of a person who dies in Kashi.

The glories of Kashi have also been narrated by Tulsidas in his book ‘Vinai Patrika’, verse no. 22.

A question arises here about the reason why Kashi has been referred to here in the context of Kishkindha Kand, though there seems to be no apparent link between the two? Well, the answer is this: ‘Kashi’ is counted as one of the seven holy places that grant spiritual merit, such as granting of Mukti, to a person, and it occupies the ‘fourth place’ in this list. The first place is occupied by Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Ram.

Since Kishkindha Kand is the ‘fourth Canto’ of the Story of Lord Ram as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, hence it is placed on the same pedestal of spiritual significance as Kashi which is at the fourth place in terms of holiness and importance. It is to be noted in this context here that Ayodhya, which is at the first place in the list of seven holy places, has already been honoured in Baal Kand, which incidentally is the ‘first Canto’ of this Story of Lord Ram—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16.

Now let us see which those seven holy places are. They are as follows—Ayodhya, Mathura, Mayapuri, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika, and Puri.

(i) ‘Ayodhya’ is related to Lord Ram. (ii) ‘Mathura’ is related to Lord Krishna. (iii) ‘Mayapuri’ is a pilgrim place known as Haridwar in north India, at the foothills of the mighty Himalayas. The word ‘Haridwar’ literally means the door leading to the heavens where Lord Hari, the Supreme Being, lives. It is so-called because it is believed that the higher reaches of the Himalayas, by the virtue of its eternal serenity, placidity, and blissful environment, is the place where the gods live. It is also the name of a place in east India, in the state of west Bengal, where Lord Chaitanya was born. (iv) ‘Kashi’ is the ancient name of the pilgrim city of Varanasi which is located in central India; it is still regarded as a great center of learning and teaching, especially the scriptures and their language, i.e. Sanskrit. (v) ‘Kanchi’ is in south India; it is situated on the banks of river Paalaar, southwest of the southern city of Madras (now known as Chennai) in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is, like Kashi in central India, a great center of learning in the south of the country. (vi) ‘Avantika’ is an ancient city of the Mahabharata time, and was located in western India where presently the city of Ujjain is located; it was here that Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balaram were educated. And (vii) ‘Puri’ is located on the east coast of India in the state of Odissa; here Lord Jagganath, a form of Lord Krishna, is worshipped as wooden deities.

²In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 19.

The story of Lord Shiva drinking the Halahal poison in order to protect the gods and the world from its scorching effects is narrated in Srimad Bhagvat Mahapuran, Skandha 8, Canto 5-7. In brief it is this: The Gods and the Demons decided to churn the ocean to produce Amrit, the liquid that would grant them eternity. But this was not a joke, for the ocean was extremely sour and bitter. During the fierce churning of the ocean, for which the celestial serpent was made a rope, Mt. Mandrachal the churning rod, and the Tortoise as the base on which this mighty mountain was rested, one of the first things that was produced was ‘Halahal Poison’,

i.e. a poison that was so acidic, scalding, corroding and dangerous that if even one drop of it fell on the earth, all life on its surface would vanish. All were terrified, not knowing how to tackle it. All the Gods rushed to Lord Shiva as they knew he was the wisest amongst them all and would certainly know what to do with this poison. Besides this, Shiva is also the God of death, so he would find a way around this problem. So Shiva uttered the holy Name of Lord Ram and sipped the poison. The name of Lord Ram is so powerful that it neutralized the negative effects of the poison so much so that it didn't affect Shiva; only Shiva's neck turned blue due to this poison. Since that time Shiva came to be known as Neel-Kantha, the Lord with a blue-tinged throat.

This drinking of the poison by Shiva and his surviving due to the powerful antidote effects of Lord Ram's holy Name has also been mentioned in Tulsidas' books (i) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, stanza no. 1 of verse no. 158; and (ii) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 156, stanza no. 2.

*In addition to being in honour of Lord Shiva, Sortha line nos. 3-4 can also be interpreted as being in praise of Lord Ram's holy name in the backdrop of what we have read in Shloka line no. 2 herein above which is also in praise of Lord Ram's name.

This interpretation would be apt because the emphasis here is on a factor that enabled Lord Shiva to fearlessly drink this horrible poison and remain unscathed, for this poison would have otherwise scalded his entire alimentary canal. What was this factor? Well, it was the mystical powers of Lord Ram's divine name that cooled down the poison and neutralized its deadly effect to such an extent that Shiva felt he was drinking some cool liquid. How was it made possible? It was possible because before drinking this poison, Lord Shiva had uttered Lord Ram's holy name, and it was his natural habit to keep repeating the Lord's holy name silently, as if humming a tune in his throat, which obviously he was doing even while drinking the Halahal poison. The net effect was that the poison had no harmful effect on Lord Shiva.

So therefore, with these factors in view, these verses can be read as follows too:

“Oh my Mana! Why don't you worship and have devotion for that (i.e. Lord Ram's holy name) which had helped Lord Shiva to drink the horrifying poison (known as Halahal), which was so hot and scalding that it had scorched the gods by its heat.”

To wit, why should a creature not benefit from the benefits afforded by the holy name of Lord Ram which acts as an impenetrable protective shield against all sorts of sharp weapons symbolized by the negativities of Kaliyug and the countless sufferings and torments that are associated with life in this gross mortal world of transmigration?]

चौ०. आगें चले बहुरि रघुराया । रिष्यमूक पर्वत निअराया ॥ १ ॥
तहँ रह सचिव सहित सुग्रीवा । आवत देखि अतुल बल सींवा ॥ २ ॥
अति सभीत कह सुनु हनुमाना । पुरुष जुगल बल रूप निधाना ॥ ३ ॥
धरि बटु रूप देखु तैं जाई । कहेसु जानि जियँ सयन बुझाई ॥ ४ ॥
पठए बालि होहिं मन मैला । भागौं तुरत तजौं यह सैला ॥ ५ ॥

caupāī.

āgēm calē bahuri raghurāyā. riṣyamūka parbata ni'arāyā. 1.
 taḥam̐ raha saciva sahita sugrīvā. āvata dēkhi atula bala sīnvā. 2.
 ati sabhīta kaha sunu hanumānā. puruṣa jugala bala rūpa nidhānā. 3.
 dhari baṭu rūpa dēkhu taim̐ jāī. kahēsu jāni jiyam̐ sayana bujhāī. 4.
 paṭha'ē bāli hōhim̐ mana mailā. bhāgaum̐ turata tajaum̐ yaha sailā. 5.

The Lord of the Raghu's line of kings ("raghurāyā"; Lord Ram) then moved ahead and neared Mt. Rishyamook¹. (1)

On the summit of this mountain lived Sugriv (the prince of the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha²) with his ministers and courtiers. He saw the two brothers, who from their very appearance seemed to possess immeasurable strength and looked most valiant, approaching the place. (2)

This sight made him sore affright³; so he said to Hanuman (who was his close confidante and companion), 'Listen Hanuman⁴! These two gentlemen look as if they are repositories of immense strength and unparalleled valour. (3)

You go to them disguised as a young Brahmin student (dhari baṭu rūpa)⁵ and look into the matter; find out their intention, why have they come here in this direction, and then signal to me by a gesture of your eyes (to tell me if they are friendly or not). (4)

In case you discover that they have been sent by Baali and have some sort of ill-intentions that would create some danger for me, then indicate to me by your gesture so that I will make good my escape and run away from here immediately, abandoning this mountain forthwith.' (5)

[Note—¹Mt. Rishyamook was on the far end of Lake Pampa; it was a part of a chain of hills that lay on the outer fringes of the kingdom of Kishkindha. It is so called because sage Matang used to do Tapa (penances; austerity; stern religious practices) silently here. "Rishya = Rishi = a sage"; "Mook = silent".

Another interpretation is that a special class of deer called Rishya used to live in and around this mountain; these animals moved around silently like sages. The mountain got its name from them.

According to Valmiki's Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 73, verse nos. 32-34, it was first created by Brahma, the creator of this world. It had a thick cover of evergreen trees, and was steep and so thickly covered by creepers and undergrowth that it was difficult to climb it easily. It was further made inaccessible by abundance of snakes that were found everywhere on it.

This mountain was uninhabited and so inhospitable that no one would even think of coming here to hide. Besides its general foreboding atmosphere, it also bore sage Matang's curse which said that if Baali, the elder brother of Sugriv who turned to become his arch enemy, ever came there, his head would break to many pieces, i.e. he would die.

The reason for the sage cursing Baali is that the latter used to be very restless; he would come to that forest to eat fruits, shake trees violently and break their branches and leaves, littering the whole place near sage Matang's hermitage, make a lot of noise and create general nuisance. The sage got infuriated and cursed him that if he ever dared to come near that place then his head would break up into many pieces.

Another reason says that when Baali killed the demon Dundubhi, he flung his body for a distance of 1 Yojan (roughly 8 miles); this carcass fell near the sage's hermitage, and blood and flesh littered the place. So the angry sage cursed Baali that anyone who would one day reduce the heap of bones that formed a mountain at the spot where the dead body fell into rubble, and cut the seven tall trees that grew on this mountain, would kill Baali. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 7; and Valmiki Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11, verse no. 47 etc.

So Sugriv and his companions found Mt. Rishyamook a perfect place to live without fear of Baali.

²As we have read in the introduction of this sub-section, the inhabitants of Kishkindha were not actual 'monkeys and bears' as we may think, but they were so-called because of their lifestyle and habits, their external appearances and characteristic features, their special qualities and abilities which were more like those of monkeys and bears than ordinary human beings. For instance, they grew large body hair and nails; they could easily climb trees and leap across branches; they could climb mountains which were difficult for humans to access; they ate forest fruits and lived atop trees in tree-houses; they inhabited thick forested areas away from human population. This was all made necessary as expediencies of life and survival in the hills and forests where they lived. So in effect these inhabitants of Kishkindha were forest and hill dwelling tribes of ancient India.

But they surely weren't animals called "monkeys and bears" in the way we understand these words to mean today; they weren't "animals" like today's monkeys and bears. Come to think of it: even we humans, who pride ourselves as highly civilised and evolved in this creation, actually belong to the "animal kingdom" which science likes to call "zoology"; humans are not studied under the head 'botany' which deals with the members of the plant kingdom, but under the classification of 'zoology'.

For one, these monkeys and bears could walk erect and speak the human tongue in an intelligible way; they were surely bilingual and may be even knew more than one languages like we do today. When they conversed within their own community they used their own lingua franca, and when they interacted with other tribes or foreigners they used a universal language in vogue at the time; and this language was Sanskrit. This is evident from the fact that Lord Ram could talk freely with them in a human tongue, and then we will read later on in the story that Hanuman and Angad would converse with Ravana and Vibhishan etc. who were demons from a different culture. Their interaction was only possible if they could speak a common international language like we use standard English today.

It is said in Adhyatma Ramayan that Hanuman spoke to Lord Ram in perfect Sanskrit language when he met the Lord at the base of Mt. Rishyamook. This was the language of the educated class in those days, and no one can expect a 'monkey', the 'animal', to speak classical language as Hanuman did so much so that even Lord Ram was highly impressed with Hanuman's expertise with the Sanskrit language and its grammar, and the Lord expressed his astonishment on this count to Laxman. Refer: Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-18.

The second important reason is that these monkeys and bears were actually gods who had come down to earth in these forms to help Lord Ram eliminate the scourge of the demons headed by Ravana. This is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit

Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 187—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 188 as well as in Adhyatma Ramayan, Baal Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 29-30.

³What made Sugriv so terrified of strangers? The reason has been described in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-13 that precede Doha no. 6.

In brief however, this story is this: Sugriv had developed some misunderstanding with his elder brother Baali (also pronounced as Vaali) who first thrashed him severely and then ousted him from the capital of Kishkindha. Sugriv was pursued by Baali relentlessly; eventually he came to live on Mt. Rishyamook on the advice of Hanuman and others as it was safe from any attack from Baali because he would dare not come here.

But though Baali would not come personally, he still could send some powerful warrior in disguise to square up with his brother-turned-enemy Sugriv and kill him. This probability made Sugriv afraid of any stranger coming that way, more so because that area was almost barren of life and far away from any other inhabited area or civilisation; no one ventured that way and it was almost out of bounds for travellers.

⁴Another interesting question that arises here is this: Of all his companions, why did Sugriv select Hanuman for this mission? It was because by experience Sugriv knew very well that Hanuman was exceptionally intelligent, wise and practical; he could tackle matters himself and solve the issue on the spot without further instructions or consultations; he was trust-worthy, faithful and honest; and he was fearless, prudent, brave, courageous, strong and powerful to face any adverse situation should it arise unexpectedly; Sugriv knew that no one could compare with Hanuman in these qualities. This fact is reiterated in Valmiki's Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Canto 2, verse nos. 13-19; (ii) Canto 44, verse nos.1, 6-8.

Meanwhile, one would like to read a little more about Hanuman: who he was? A brief life-sketch of Hanuman is added at the end of the notes to these verses; it is marked by * sign.

⁵Why did Sugriv advise Hanuman to go as a 'Brahmin student' (a "baṭu rūpa") to meet Lord Ram? Well, the two brothers were armed with bows and arrows, had quivers tied to their waists, the way they walked with dignified steps fearlessly and with confidence, their general manners and bearing—all gave an impression that they were some noble men and great warriors. Sugriv, who was already apprehensive about them and their objective of coming that way, did not wish to take risk. He knew that everyone respects a Brahmin and trusts him; so if Hanuman goes there attired as a Brahmin, especially as a student, then the chances of these two strangers harming him or deceiving him as to their purpose of coming here were minimal.

Why as Hanuman advised to go as a 'student' instead of as an adult Brahmin? The reason is this: Had Hanuman gone to meet the Lord as an 'adult Brahmin', there were chances that the Lord would immediately become suspicious about him because the area of the forest where this interaction took place was deep in the forest, a remote area that was far from civilisation and virtually uninhabited as it lay beyond the famous Dandak forest which was itself literally intractable. Adult Brahmins lived in populated areas such as villages, towns and cities, but not in the far depth of a forest. A young Brahmin-student, however, would go to distant places to study under renowned sages and seers who usually had their hermitages in forests as they needed

quietude for their spiritual pursuits; some senior ones even lived on mountains and hill tops, and though they did not maintain hermitages per se, yet they would occasionally accept isolated students who they thought were eager for knowledge and worthy to be imparted the knowledge that only these sages possessed.

To wit, the chances of meeting an adult Brahmin in this part of the land were very remote; but in case of a 'student' it was quite possible that he was on the way to his Guru's (teacher's) hermitage to study, and he met the two brothers on the path by pure good chance. His Guru could well be an aged sage or seer living on one of the mountains or hills in that area. So this form of Hanuman as a 'student' would not arouse any suspicion in the mind of the two brothers as an adult Brahmin would surely do—so reasoned Sugriv.

There were some other reasons that too weighed in favour of sending Hanuman disguised as a 'student Brahmin'. If a young boy makes some mistake he is usually overlooked by an adult; so if by some misadventure Hanuman said something or any of his gestures or actions were such as to cause a bit of annoyance to the two strangers, there were fair chances that they would overlook it as a youngster's error committed in folly, and forgive him.

Further, this form of a 'student' would enable Hanuman to bow and pay his respects to the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, is expected to show respect to elders even if he is Brahmin, otherwise it would be bad manners for the boy. When the strangers see that the student who is interacting with them is good mannered, polite and cultured they would be willing to reciprocate and engage with him; this was vital to extract the information needed by Sugriv.

On the other hand, if Hanuman appeared as an adult Brahmin, there were chances that the two brothers would just pay their homage to him and move on. An adult Brahmin would have to maintain his dignity and decorum; he would not be expected to bow and show other forms of respect to the visitors with the same ease with which a young boy could do.

So now, since these so-called monkeys were virtually like humans as we have noted herein above, it wasn't difficult for Hanuman to disguise himself as a Brahmin student when he came down the summit of the mountain to meet Lord Ram. He had only to wear appropriate clothes and apply some holy marks on his forehead and body, such as make a Tilak mark on his forehead, sling a sacred thread across his shoulders, and tie his hairs in a tuft at the back of his head, to indicate that he was a Brahmin student.

And then he spoke with Lord Ram in the human tongue during the interview; in fact, to be precise, it was in perfect Sanskrit that Hanuman interacted with Lord Ram as noted in note no. 2 herein above. Hence, the Lord felt he was in the company of educated natives who could talk in the Lord's language, and it would be practical and prudent to become friendly with them, if no other reason than at least because he has to cross this country to reach the place where Sita was held captive by Ravana. If these natives could speak Sanskrit then, the Lord thought, communication would not be a barrier any more.

Lord Ram was in an alien country; it was wise to be friendly with the natives of the place. The Lord needed help to find Sita, and he reasoned that if he was good and friendly towards these natives then they would be cooperative and helpful; they will extend logistical help, and manpower too could be easily arranged.

*⁴A life sketch of Hanuman is narrated in the following scriptures—(i) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 155-190; (ii) Valmiki's Ramayan,

Kishkindha Kand, Sarga (Canto) 66, verse nos. 1-17 (as narrated by Jamvant, the Bear king); Uttar Kand, Sarga 35-36 (as described to Sri Ram by sage Agastya).

Wonderful hymns dedicated to Lord Hanuman are found in Tulsidas' "Vinai Patrika", verse nos. 25-36.

These describe Hanuman as the Son of the Wind God. The story of Hanuman being the son of the Wind God is briefly this: An Apsara (a heavenly damsel of great beauty) named Punjiksthal became the daughter of a monkey named Kunjar. Her name was Anjana, and she was married to Kesari. One day Anjana assumed a form of a human female, adorned her self with ornaments and garlands of choicest flowers, and went to the top of a mountain to enjoy the beauty of Nature that spread all around her. Her bewitching beauty attracted the attention of the Wind God who embraced her (in the form of a soft, pleasant and fragrant gust of wind that swirled all around her, enveloping her from all sides). As a result of this embrace, Anjana gave birth to a son who had all the excellent virtues of the Wind God: he possessed stupendous powers, had astounding strength, was matchless in valiance and courage, his intelligence and wisdom had no parallel, radiance effused from him like a divine glow, and he was a personified form of glory and excellence. That is why Hanuman is usually called the 'son of the Wind God'.

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

There are three Gods in the Trinity—viz. Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the sustainer and protector of creation, and Shiva is the concluder who brings about the end of creation when the time comes. In the story of the Ramayan, Lord Vishnu manifested himself as Lord Ram, the prince of the kingdom of Ayodhya, Brahma became the Jamvant who was an old and wise chief of the bear community who lived in the kingdom of Kishkindha, and Shiva took the form of Hanuman who was an ardent and faithful devotee of Lord Ram as well as one of the chief advisors of Sugriv, the king of Kishkindha, the kingdom of the monkey race.

Lord Shiva reveres Lord Ram, constantly chants his holy name "Ram", and worships the Lord as his chosen deity. So when the time came to serve Lord Ram during his manifestation on earth, Shiva did not wish to lose this opportunity; he therefore chose to become a monkey known as Hanuman so that he will not only have a chance to be helpful to his beloved Lord but also be able to serve him diligently, and in the case need arose, to extend full protection to Lord Ram. In fact it was Hanuman who had actually found Sita, Lord Ram's wife who was abducted by the demon king Ravana, imprisoned in Lanka. Further we read that in the epic war of Lanka, when the forces of Lord Ram consisting of the monkeys and the bears of Kishkindha had fought a no-holds barred bloody battle with the demon forces of Ravana, it was Hanuman who had played a pivotal role of singular importance; he was crucial to the winning of the war in general. Even Lord Ram had acknowledged Hanuman's valour and praised him lavishly during the heat of battle once when he told Laxman, his younger brother, that there was only one warrior he sees in the whole battle field of Lanka who has taken the demon-bull by its horns, and this warrior was none other than Hanuman. This is clearly stated in Kavita-wali Ramayan of Goswami Tulsidas, Lanka Kand, verse no. 40.

Not only this, Lord Ram had publicly shown his affection for Hanuman when he lovingly embraced him and declared that he would forever remain indebted to Hanuman: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 32. The occasion was Hanuman bringing the news of Sita and conveying it to Lord Ram.

The especial bond that existed between Lord Ram and Hanuman was unique, and it is no where more evident than the time when they first met at the base of Mt. Rishyamook. Lord Ram and Hanuman had both become overwhelmed with tidal waves of affectionate emotions so much that while Hanuman's voice trembled, his body was thrilled and he could barely stifle his sobs, Lord Ram wept and tears flowed down his eyes even as he clasped Hanuman to his bosom. There seemed no formality or artificiality in this spontaneous burst of loving emotions; Hanuman had become so joyous that he lost control over his senses so much that instead of showing respect to his Lord he went on to reprimand Lord Ram for forgetting him for so long. It was like a scene of two fast friends who had been separated long back due to misfortunes inflicted upon them by providence had one day met each other most unexpectedly at a place and time that they weren't aware of a minute ago. This episode is fully narrated in vivid details in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 2—Doha no. 3.

And as if to add a tiara to the crown, or a diamond that is placed centrally on the helm of this crown, it was only Hanuman who was allowed by Lord Ram to stay with him after he returned home to Ayodhya at the end of his 14-year forest sojourn; and Hanuman stayed with the Lord for the rest of his time on earth.

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

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

The word 'Hanu' means the lower jaw, the chin, while 'Maan' means to hit to subdue or defeat. Another interpretation is that 'Hanu' means to crush, to trounce, to

take away, or to eliminate, and 'Maan' means one's pride, arrogance, haughtiness and ego. So the composite word 'Hanuman' refers to this incident when Indra had subdued the son of the Wind God by breaking his chin-bone as a token punishment for him being extremely arrogant and unnecessarily mischievous.

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

As for the colour of Hanuman's face being 'of a red tinge', there are two tales in this regard. One says that his fair skin was tanned red due to the intense heat of the sun as once he had leapt into the sky to eat the sun, thinking it to be some big red fruit dangling from the sky. Another legend says that when he saw Sita applying the red vermillion powder on her head and when asked about it was told that it was a mark that showed that Sita was eternally a wife of Lord Ram, or was inseparable from the Lord, Hanuman applied this powder on his whole face to please the Lord and signal to him that if a single dot or a line of red on Sita's head could endear her to Lord Ram so much, how much more the Lord will love to see Hanuman with his whole countenance coloured in red of the vermillion.

Once as a child he was even cursed by sages because of his mischievous nature as he used to play havoc with the trees and plants around the hermitages and forests where they lived, uprooting them, breaking their branches, eating their fruits and littering the place all around. So they cursed him that he would forget his powers till the time someone reminded him about them. As it happened, when the monkeys and bears set out in search of Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king of Lanka known as Ravana, and had reached the shores of the vast ocean, they faced the formidable challenge of having to cross it, face this formidable enemy, and come back alive. It was then that Jamvant, the old patriarch of the bears, had reminded Hanuman about his lost strength. Hanuman regained his old stupendous powers and abilities, and he was the one who not only crossed the ocean but also burnt Lanka before coming back with the news of Sita. These events are narrated in the epic Ramayana in great detail.

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

Hanuman was very dear to Lord Ram. The Lord was exceptionally obliged to him, and on several occasions he had expressed this too. Hanuman was more close to Lord Ram than any other single character in the Ramayana. Whenever the Lord needed help, he looked at Hanuman. Hanuman had always repeated the holy Name of Lord Ram silently, and this gave him immense strength and peace. By the way of the Name, Hanuman was able to have the Lord stay with him always. The best proof of the Lord recognizing this divine quality and spiritual nature of Hanuman was when the Lord directed him to stay in this world at the time of the Lord's own departure for his heavenly abode at the end of his tenure on this earth, and keep the light of the Lord's glory alight by way of repeating his divine Name and ensuring protection for those who said the Lord's Name. In other words, the Lord had appointed Hanuman as the heir to his legacy, and passed on the baton of Dharma (virtues of righteousness,

probity, propriety, nobility and auspiciousness) and Satya (truth) to him to act as their custodian on the strength of Lord's holy Name.

We read in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 26 that Hanuman was able to keep Lord Ram under his loving sway by the virtue of repeating the Lord's holy Name constantly.

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

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

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

The nine Nidhis that Hanuman possessed were the following— Spiritual assets—according to saint Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha 35-36, they are—(i) communion with saints and pious people where the Lord's glories are being sung, (ii) serving one's teacher and elders, (iii) praising the Lord's glories and doing Kirtan and Bhajan which are community singing of the Lord's glories, (iv) repeating the divine Mantras or holy words of the Lord, i.e. doing Japa, (v) having such virtues as 'Dam' or tolerance, patience, fortitude and resilience, 'Sheel' or good and righteous demeanours, 'Virati' or being renunciate and detached from deeds and to be dispassionate towards the world, 'Sam' or equanimity, looking everything as Brahm, having a non-dual approach of or view of the world, 'Santosh' or contentedness, and 'Sara' or simplicity and humility, (vi) having no deceit, conceit and falsehoods, (vii) not finding faults with others and criticising them unnecessarily,

(viii) to have firm reliance and faith in the Lord, and (ix) not to feel dejected, depressed, despaired, inferior, lowly and condemned under any adverse circumstances, because the great and merciful Lord is always with them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The point to note here are that all these forms are manifestations or representations of the five or the eleven principal ‘Tattwas’ or the fundamental elements of creation. The eleven heads are symbols of the following Tattwas—the five elements (sky, air, fire, water and earth) + five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyaana and Udaana) + Chitta (mind and its sub-conscious). These eleven Tattwas form the basic units which combine together to form the physical body of any living being. It will be noted that only nine specific heads are mentioned though the total number of heads are eleven. Well, the significance of the number ‘nine’ vis-à-vis the nine Tattwas is as follows—

‘The *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 14 says that there are nine Tattvas which are actually subtle revelations of the supreme Brahm. They are the following—The three fundamental Gunas, i.e. the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, the three basic characters of the Atma known as Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e. Sat (truth), Chitta (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and the three

forms of divinity represented by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation, represent the nine Tattwas of creation.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

to think, albeit in a primitive level. (iv) Jaruyuj—these are the creatures that are born as embryo that develops inside the mother’s womb. Under this class come the animals such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants etc. They have four Koshas, such as Anna Maye, Pran Maye, Mano-maye and Vigyan Maye. The last Kosh refers to their ability to have a higher level of thinking ability called intelligence. The human being comes under this last category with the added benefit of having five Koshas. Besides the four Koshas mentioned above in other creatures of this category, the man has the fifth one and it called the Anand Maye Kosh. It is only possessed by a man and not by other creatures in the sense that the man can realise the true meaning of the terms ‘bliss and happiness that is eternal and substantial’ by the virtue of his attaining higher level of intelligence and his ability to delve into the secrets of the concept of truth itself and then realising that kind of happiness and bliss that is not superficial and which is not limited to enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the body and the material comforts of the world, but which has a holistic and all-inclusive dimension that incorporates the spirit or the soul.]

बिप्र रूप धरि कपि तहँ गयऊ । माथ नाइ पूछत अस भयऊ ॥ ६ ॥
 को तुम्ह स्यामल गौर सरीरा । छत्री रूप फिरहु बन बीरा ॥ ७ ॥
 कठिन भूमि कोमल पद गामी । कवन हेतु बिचरहु बन स्वामी ॥ ८ ॥
 मृदुल मनोहर सुंदर गाता । सहत दुसह बन आतप बाता ॥ ९ ॥
 की तुम्ह तीनि देव महँ कोऊ । नर नारायन की तुम्ह दोऊ ॥ १० ॥

bipra rūpa dhari kapi taham̐ gaya'ū. mātha nā'i pūchata asa bhaya'ū. 6.
 kō tumha syāmala gaura sarīrā. chatrī rūpa phirahu bana bīrā. 7.
 kaṭhina bhūmi kōmala pada gāmī. kavana hētu bicarahu bana svāmī. 8.
 mṛdula manōhara sundara gātā. sahata dusaha bana ātapa bātā. 9.
 kī tumha tīni dēva maham̐ kō'ū. nara nārāyana kī tumha dō'ū. 10.

Hanuman (“Kapi”; literally the monkey) assumed the form of a Brahmin and went there (down the mountain, to meet the two travellers, Lord Ram and Laxman). He bowed his head reverentially before the Lord¹ and enquired as follows—(6)

‘Who are you two, one with a dark and the other with a fair complexion? You look like Kshatriyas (the warrior class; a valiant, brave and courageous race) who are roaming in the forest; prithee, please say what is the reason for your wandering here in the wilds? (7)

The ground is hard and very harsh to walk on barefoot, while your feet are very soft and tender. Oh Lord (svāmī)! This being the case, what is the reason for you roaming around (barefoot) in this wilderness that the forest is²? (8)

Your bodies are tender, charming and handsome (like that of great princes), and here you are enduring such extreme hardships in the forest, facing adversities such as the heat of the sun and the blow of the wind! Say, what is the reason for this misfortune (that seems to have befallen you)? (9)

Or else, are you a manifestation of one of the Gods of the Trinity (i.e. are you either of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva); or is that you two are Nara (the Jiva; the living being) and Narayan (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Male) themselves who have assumed your forms³? Please be kind to tell me, which of these are you two. (10)

[Note—¹The meeting between Lord Ram and Hanuman has also been narrated in Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 11-25.

Hanuman was in the form of a Brahmin before whom others bow their heads, and it is not the other way round. So it seems out of place that Hanuman, who was in the attire of a Brahmin, should bow to a stranger. But in this case he was in the disguise of a young student, and not an adult Brahmin. Being a student and much younger in age to the visitors, it was his duty to show respect to the guests by bowing to them.

Further, Lord Ram and Laxman were attired as hermits and were senior in age, while Hanuman was in the guise of a young Brahmin student. Hence, Lord Ram and Laxman deserved respect from the young student.

Another reason is that as soon as Hanuman came near Lord Ram, his sixth sense, his intuitive feeling told him that this gentleman was no ordinary man as the Lord had some exceptional aura of divinity and holiness around him that deserved special attention and aroused spontaneous respect. This doubt in Hanuman's mind—whether Lord Ram was not actually the Supreme Being who had promised to come down one day, and for helping whom the Creator Brahma had advised the gods to assume the form of monkeys and bears and wait for the Lord's arrival—will soon be clear when he asks the Lord expressly if he was not one of the Trinity Gods; whether he was Nara (a human male) or Narayan (pronounced "Naaraayan", the cosmic Male; Lord Vishnu). {See Chaupai line no. 8 herein below.}

In addition to the above reasons, there are two more. One is this: Hanuman had come to enquire about these two strangers; it was he who needed the opportunity to talk. So he wished to give a first good impression upon the visitors by being polite, and bowing before one's guest is a welcoming gesture that immediately softens him up quite a bit. So the chances of a friendly conversation were brightened when Hanuman bowed before the travellers to show that he is a polite person, and a conversation with him will not be unpleasant for the two brothers. Rather, the two brothers would like to engage with their interlocutor more for some time, giving Hanuman the time and space to find more about them and their intention.

Otherwise there were chances that the two brothers would quietly walk on and neglect Hanuman; or would be very brief and circumvent in their reply which would not serve Hanuman's purpose.

The other is this: Hanuman was a monkey by his body, but had hidden it in over garments to disguise himself as a Brahmin student. It was done so quickly that he was very conscious of himself; he feared that these two intelligent gentlemen would immediately know that he was an impostor if he faced them directly and looked at them straight in their eyes. So he kept his head low and sight fixed on the ground before him out of shyness and the usual guilt that accompanies deception. He wondered: "what would happen if these strangers found out who I actually am?" So he avoided a direct and straightforward interaction with Lord Ram; and instead kept his head bowed and eyes low.

²We read elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas that a similar observation was made by the awe-struck villagers and travellers whom Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita had met on the

path earlier when they had left Ayodhya and were on their way to the forest. Refer: Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2 and 4 that precede Doha no. 121; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 119.

³In this analogy, since Lord Ram is dark complexioned he resembles Lord Vishnu very closely. Laxman, being of a fair complexion, resembles more closely either Brahma whose visage is yellowish as his other name is Hiranayagarbha, the ‘cosmic egg’, because he is the ‘creator’ of this world, or Shiva who has a ash-coloured complexion because he keep his body smeared with the ash of the fire sacrifice.

As for ‘Nara and Narayan’, they represent the male aspect of creation; they stand for the ‘Father’. At the macrocosmic level he is the universal Father known as Parmatma, and at the microcosmic level he is the creature’s father known as the Jiva. Here, Lord Ram stands for the Parmatma, and his shadow-like dear brother Laxman is like the Jiva.]

दो०. जग कारन तारन भव भंजन धरनी भार ।

की तुम्ह अखिल भुवन पति लीन्ह मनुज अवतार ॥ १ ॥

dōhā.

jaga kārana tārana bhava bhañjana dharanī bhāra.

kī tumha akhila bhuvana pati līnha manuja avatāra. 1.

Or is that for the express welfare of the world and liberate its creatures from the horrors of transmigration, and in the process eliminate the burden of the earth (created on it by those who are wicked, sinful and evil)—the Supreme Lord of the whole world, the Lord of the entire creation, has indeed manifested himself in the form of a human being?

[Prithee my Lord; I beseech thee to be kind enough to enlighten me on this matter of singular importance. Is it true that the Supreme Being has decided to come down personally to eliminate evil and negative forces from this world, to restore the balance in favour of the good, the noble and the righteous by eliminating those that are bad, evil and unrighteous, and to extend protection to his devotees and show them the right path to liberation and deliverance? Oh Lord, am I correct? I shall be highly grateful if you should be graceful enough to tell me something on this matter.]’ (Doha no. 1)

चौ०. कोसलेस दसरथ के जाए । हम पितु बचन मानि बन आए ॥ १ ॥

नाम राम लछिमन दोउ भाई । संग नारि सुकुमारि सुहाई ॥ २ ॥

इहाँ हरी निसिचर बैदेही । बिप्र फिरहिं हम खोजत तेही ॥ ३ ॥

आपन चरित कहा हम गाई । कहहु बिप्र निज कथा बुझाई ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

kōsalēsa dasaratha kē jā'ē. hama pitu bacana māni bana ā'ē. 1.

nāma rāma lachimana dō'u bhā'ī. saṅga nāri sukumāri suhā'ī. 2.

ihām' harī niscara baidēhī. bipra phirahim hama khōjata tēhī. 3.

āpana carita kahā hama gāī. kahahu bipra nija kathā bujhāī. 4.

Lord Ram answered Hanuman, ‘We (i.e. myself and my brother Laxman) are sons of king Dasrath of the kingdom of Kaushal (which is another name for the realm of Ayodhya). We have come to the forest to keep our father’s words¹. (1)

Our names are Ram and Laxman respectively; and we two are brothers. We had a charming and pretty young lady with us; she was tender and delicate (nāri sukhāri suhāī). (2)

Here in the forest some demon has stolen Vaidehi² (Sita, my wife). Oh Brahmin (bipra)! We are wondering in search of her. (3)

We have narrated to you about our story; prithee Brahmin, now please tell us about yourself.’ (4)

[Note—¹This story is narrated in detail in the first half of the second Canto of Ram Charit Manas that is known as Ayodhya Kand; refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 81.

Briefly it is this: King Dasrath, who had become old, had decided to anoint his eldest son, prince Ram, as the Regent of Ayodhya. The gods were alarmed as this would make it difficult for the Lord to carry out the main objective for which he had come down from heaven to earth, viz. to eliminate Ravana and his clan of cruel and sinful demons. Why so? Because to fulfill this mission certain conditions had to be complied with, and once Lord Ram ascended the throne of the great kingdom of Ayodhya it would be well-nigh impossible to do so.

Hence, it was necessary to prevent his anointment and manoeuvre things in such a way that the Lord goes to the forest, crosses the country and reach Ravana’s citadel at Lanka. So the gods devised a device by which Kaikeyi, the Lord’s step-mother, became suddenly overcome with delusions that created jealousy, selfishness and greed for power in her mind. She had a favourite maid called Manthra with whom she always shared her thoughts. The gods used her as a medium to implement their master-plan; this old maid prevailed upon her mistress Kaikeyi that she must get her own son Bharat appointed to the throne somehow. Since Kaikeyi’s wisdom and sense of propriety had already been clouded by delusions, she could not see the propriety or otherwise of this evil advice, and readily agreed.

By-and-by, Kaikeyi forced her husband king Dasrath to send Lord Ram to fourteen years of exile in the forest and put her own son Bharat on the throne. The Lord was very happy as this is what he exactly wished to happen. Laxman and Sita decided to accompany the Lord for they declared that they can’t live without him.

This is how the three—i.e. Lord Ram, his wife Sita, and his younger brother Laxman had come to the forest.

²Lord Ram has significantly used the word “Vaidehi” for Sita; it is a remarkable that he chose to employ this epithet for Sita. On the face of it the word means ‘the daughter of Videha, the king of Janakpur’, which Sita indeed was.

But there is a subtle hint in what the Lord wished to mean: he indicated that the lady who has been stolen by the demon ‘has no physical body’, i.e. it is merely a shadow or an image of the real Sita, for the word ‘Vaidehi’ literally means ‘one

without a body'. To wit, Sita who has been kidnapped is not the real Sita who is Lord Ram's wife, for the Lord had cast some magical spell by which a huge smokescreen of delusions has been created as is usually done in theatrical performances where a director arranges scenes of storms and rain and lightening, or of murder and bloodshed on the stage which are so life-like and surreal that the audience thinks that the scenes which it sees unfolding before its eyes are actual events; all those who watch the play flow with the narrative enacted by actors on stage and become emotionally involved in it as if they are participating in real events.

So was exactly the case here: no one could guess that the Sita whom Ravana had abducted was only a mirage, only an image, only a shadow or a ghost, and not the real lady known by this name.

As we have already read earlier, Sita had been made to take shelter with the sacred fire by Lord Ram who entrusted her in the safe custody of the Fire God, and she had also been taken into confidence by the Lord who had told her all that he planned and the reason why he wanted to hide her. But this was a closely guarded secret that not even Laxman was privy to. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 24.]

प्रभु पहिचानि परेउ गहि चरना । सो सुख उमा जाइ नहिं बरना ॥ ५ ॥
 पुलकित तन मुख आव न बचना । देखत रुचिर बेष कै रचना ॥ ६ ॥
 पुनि धीरजु धरि अस्तुति कीन्ही । हरष हृदयँ निज नाथहि चीन्ही ॥ ७ ॥

prabhu pahicāni parē'u gahi caranā. sō sukha umā jā'i nahim baranā. 5.
 pulakita tana mukha āva na bacanā. dēkhata rucira bēṣa kai racanā. 6.
 puni dhīrajū dhari astuti kīnhī. haraṣa hṛdayam' nija nāthahi cīnhī. 7.

Hanuman recognised his dear Lord¹, and consequentially he fell down at the Lord's feet.

[Lord Shiva, who has been narrating this story of Ram Charit Manas to his consort Parvati, said to her—] “Oh Uma! It is not possible to describe how joyous and exhilarated he (Hanuman) felt at that moment.” (5)

He (Hanuman) was exceedingly thrilled in his body so much that no words came to his mouth as he was emotionally overwhelmed. He kept his eyes fixed on the magnificent sight that Lord Ram (and Laxman) presented to him. [To wit, Hanuman was so transfixed with joy and emotion that neither could he speak nor could he move his eyes away from the Lord.] (6)

After some time, however, he recovered himself; then he patiently offered his obeisance to the Lord by praising him and offering prayers. He was overjoyed in his heart as he had recognised his dear Lord. (7)

[Note—¹How did Hanuman know that Lord Ram was the Lord for whom he had been waiting for so long to come? Hanuman had remembered the earlier events which had compelled the gods and mother earth to approach Lord Vishnu and pray to him to come down to save them by eliminating the scourge of the demons led by Ravana, as which the Lord had promised them that he will indeed come in the form of Ram and take a human birth in the household of king Dasrath of Ayodhya. And at that time, the

grandfather of this creation, Brahma, had advised the gods to take the form of monkeys and bears and descend to earth, and wait for the arrival of the Lord; then they must help the Lord to successfully accomplish an enterprise that actually was their own demand. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 187—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 188.

Now finally, that great moment has arrived. This realisation made Hanuman literally jump with joy and excitement.

Another reason is this: from the very first moment Hanuman came close to Lord Ram, he could feel that the visitor is no ordinary man, as extraordinary spiritual energy and a halo of divinity radiated from the Lord and spread in all the directions like the brilliant rays of the splendorous sun to embrace everyone who came in contact with him. It was an un-forgetful, hitherto an unknown emotional reaction, and an extremely sublime experience that had mesmerised and captivated the mind and the heart of Hanuman from the very first moment of his interaction with Lord Ram.

Some sixth sense within him, his instinct, his intuition, his sub-conscious, and what we may call his gut-feeling, told him that he has at last met the one for whom he had been waiting eagerly and emotionally for so long, the Lord who was very dear to him.]

मोर न्याउ मैं पूछा साईं । तुम्ह पूछहु कस नर की नाई ॥ ८ ॥

तब माया बस फिरउँ भुलाना । ता ते मैं नहिं प्रभु पहिचाना ॥ ९ ॥

mōra n'yā'u mair̥m pūchā sā'ir̥m. tumha pūchahu kasa nara kī nā'ir̥m. 8.
taba māyā basa phira'um̃ bhulānā. tā tē mair̥m nahim̃ prabhu pahicānā. 9.

Having recovered his emotional bearing and mental composure, Hanuman politely and affectionately reproached Lord Ram in a plaintive accent, 'Oh Lord! It is okay that I, being a humble creature, ask who you are, but how come even you (who are the all-knowing Supreme Being) are feigning ignorance and pretending that you do not know me as if you were an ordinary human being. (8)

I was under the influence of your Maya (powers to create delusions and ignorance) due to which I had become forgetful and ignorant, and it is for this reason I could not recognise you immediately, and had erred to ask you who you were¹. (9)

[Note—¹Had Hanuman been free from the Lord's overpowering Maya that leaves no one un-influenced by it, he would have instantly known who the Lord actually was, instead of asking him about it as done in Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precede Doha no. 1 herein above.

But by the grace of the Lord, this Maya soon withdrew and Hanuman's natural sense of wisdom and intelligence could see the truth; it just like the case of the moon and the sun during eclipse, for soon they emerge from the shadow of the eclipse that hides their shine for some time, and regain their original brilliance.]

दो०. एकु मैं मंद मोहबस कुटिल हृदय अग्यान ।

पुनि प्रभु मोहि बिसारेउ दीनबंधु भगवान ॥ २ ॥

dōhā.

ēku mair̥ manda mōhabasa kuṭila hṛdaya agyāna.
puni prabhu mōhi bisārē'u dīnabandhu bhagavāna. 2.

In the first place I am of a low intellect, am overcome with delusions, have a wicked heart, and am ignorant (as a Jiva usually is).

And oh Lord, you are a friend of those who are humble, lowly and fallen; you are their benefactor, and so I am astonished that even you had forgotten me. Why so my Lord; how come you could not recognise (me who is) your eternal servant and devotee?¹ (Doha no. 2)

[Note—¹This is a conversation between a devotee of the Lord and the dearest object of his devotion and worship—in this case Hanuman and Lord Ram respectively.

Let us take an example to understand this scene better. It is like a conversation between two fast friends who had separated a long time ago, only to meet once again almost unexpectedly some time later on in life. A lot of change had happened to both of them—they grew older, their physical appearances changed over time, and the rough and tumble of life had made them so different now from the time when they first separated that neither of them could recognise the other though they had played, eaten and lived together for countless years long ago. But some intuitive feeling, some inner-voice tells them that there exists some secret bond between them which has been so much covered with the dust of time that it needs a bit of dusting and cleaning to see the reality behind the external crust. So when they meet after a long passage of time, they would exchange pleasantries and wish to learn about each other. Some undercurrent of emotion, some tone of the voice and style of speaking and idioms, some well-known gestures and bodily movements with which they were so familiar with since their youth, suddenly come to their memories. They suddenly recognise each other—and what follows is a natural guess for everyone: They would clasp each other in a tight embrace, weep and shake each other in sheer joy of excitement. Nay, not only this, they would accuse each other affectionately and lovingly why the one had forgotten and neglected the other for so many years. Then they would sit down to reminisce about their past and revel in it for a long time, laughing and joking and patting each other, using choicest epithets and nicknames they used for each other long ago, before coming back to the harsh realities of the present and sobering up.

Something of this sort played out between Hanuman and Lord Ram! It took some time for Hanuman to recognise Lord Ram, and once he came to know who the Lord was, he spoke to him affectionately and lovingly like a devotee would speak to his Lord. There was no element of formality or fear; Hanuman politely and affectionately admonished or chided his beloved Lord Ram as to why he took so long to reveal his true identity before Hanuman; why did he try to play hide-and-seek with him.

Remember: this conversation is drenched in the emotion of affection and love that a devotee has for his beloved Lord, and this bond is so strong and informal that playful chiding and affectionate teasing of each other is not out of the normal.

Hanuman loved Lord Ram so much that he did not hesitate in the expression of his emotional outburst when he told the Lord that the fault of not recognising each other was of the Lord's as he is all-knowing, while Hanuman was simply a creature who is bound by Maya, and therefore it is okay if he could not know the truth about the Lord initially.

In the next set of verses Hanuman clarifies his position.]

चौ०. जदपि नाथ बहु अवगुन मोरें । सेवक प्रभुहि परै जनि भोरें ॥ १ ॥
 नाथ जीव तव मायाँ मोहा । सो निस्तरइ तुम्हारेहिं छोहा ॥ २ ॥
 ता पर मैं रघुबीर दोहाई । जानउँ नहिं कछु भजन उपाई ॥ ३ ॥
 सेवक सुत पति मातु भरोसें । रहइ असोच बनइ प्रभु पोसें ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

jadapi nātha bahu avaguna mōrēm. sēvaka prabhuhi parai jani bhōrēm. 1.
 nātha jīva tava māyām̐ mōhā. sō nistarai tumhārēhim chōhā. 2.
 tā para mair̐ raghubīra dōhāī. jāna'um̐ nahim̐ kachu bhajana upāī. 3.
 sēvaka suta pati mātu bharōsēm. raha'i asōca bana'i prabhu pōsēm. 4.

[Hanuman continued—] ‘Oh Lord, though it may be true that I have many faults and shortcomings, may be my mind is fickle and my memory weak, but let the Lord not cast me into neglect and forget about me due to my limitations (as a Jiva, a living being)¹.

[¹To wit, it may be that I am not sufficiently competent to be called your servant or devotee for so many faults of mine, but you are renowned for your mercy, compassion and grace, you are very benevolent, magnanimous and beneficent, and you are a benefactor of those who are lowly and unfortunate. So therefore it is expected of you that you do not turn your back to me, and accept me as I am. I am sure you have not forgotten me inspite of my stupidity that I could not recognise you instantly, as soon as I saw you; but that is acceptable because I am an ordinary creature with so many limitations and shortcomings, but oh Lord I am surprised that even you could not recognise me; or was it that you were playing some sort of friendly trick with me and trying to tease me so that I would cry out and jump with joy as soon as I discovered who you actually are, and the stunned expression of extreme happiness and exhilaration that would overcome my whole being on this discovery would give you intense pleasure. Come, come my dear Lord; you see—you couldn't trick me, could you?] (1)

Oh Lord! The Jiva (a living being) is invariably under the influence of your Maya (delusions that overcome all mortal creatures which make them forget their true identity, i.e. their ‘self’ which is pure consciousness). This Maya can only be got rid of by your grace and kindness upon that Jiva².

[²I am a Jiva, so it is natural that I was deluded and could not recognise you immediately. But you are not a Jiva; you are the Supreme Being who is free from Maya. So why did you not recognise me immediately; why did you ask me who I was? It would have been proper if you had smile at me and teased me by saying, “Hello Hanuman; why are disguising yourself as a Brahmin student; do you think I have not recognised you? You look funny in this attire; shed it aside and resume your original form.” Oh Lord, how happy and joyous would I have felt if you had said something to this effect, instead of asking me who I am.] (2)

Oh Lord Raghubir, I say truly on oath that I do not know how to either worship you or have devotion for you, and neither do I know of any means to achieve success in this

direction. Yet I am certain that the Lord would take care of me and hence I am free from worries and fear, because I am aware of the universal principle that a servant rests easy and is in peace by relying on the strength of his master, and so does a son who relies on his mother³.

[³A master is responsible for the welfare, happiness, safety and security of his servant who is totally dependent upon him, and so is a mother in respect to an infant son. The servant and the son both sleep in peace as they know that their master and mother respectively would take care of them in every way. So likewise Hanuman says that he is free from all worries and fears as he knows, and is certain too, that his Lord Ram is alert about his responsibilities towards him, and would care for the well-being and welfare of Hanuman who is totally dependent upon the Lord no matter what happens.] (3-4)

अस कहि परेउ चरन अकुलाई । निज तनु प्रगटि प्रीति उर छाई ॥ ५ ॥
तब रघुपति उठाइ उर लावा । निज लोचन जल सींचि जुड़ावा ॥ ६ ॥
सुनु कपि जियँ मानसि जनि ऊना । तैं मम प्रिय लछिमन ते दूना ॥ ७ ॥
समदरसी मोहि कह सब कोऊ । सेवक प्रिय अनन्यगति सोऊ ॥ ८ ॥

asa kahi parē'u carana akulā'ī. nija tanu pragaṭi prīti ura chā'ī. 5.
taba raghupati uṭhā'i ura lāvā. nija lōcana jala sīnci jurāvā. 6.
sunu kapi jiyam' mānasi jani ūnā. taim mama priya lachimana tē dūnā. 7.
samadarasī mōhi kaha saba kō'ū. sēvaka priya anan'yagati sō'ū. 8.

Saying so (as in Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3 herein above), he (i.e. Hanuman) was so stirred up with overwhelming emotions and so intensely overcome with affection for Lord Ram surging in his heart like a tidal wave that he fell down at the Lord's feet immediately, and then revealed his true form (as now there was no reason to hide his identity)¹. (5)

Then Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) lifted Hanuman and clasped the latter to his bosom; the Lord shed tears (of affection and joy at having found his dearest devotee and companion) so as to drench Hanuman with them and sooth his emotional agitation². (6)

Lord Ram told Hanuman, 'Listen Kapi (literally meaning a monkey; it was the original form of Hanuman)! Don't feel so lowly and distressed; don't feel depressed in your heart³. Verily indeed I tell you that you are twice as dear to me as is Laxman. (7)

Although everyone says that I treat all alike and with equanimity, for I don't distinguish between individuals, yet it is also universally true that I love my devotees dearly, such devotees who are eternally devoted to me and have unflinching faith and affection for me. This principle of equanimity and non-distinction applies to all others⁴. (8)

[Note—¹As soon as Hanuman realised that the two visiting travellers were no strangers to him, but were the ones for whom he had been waiting all these years, he

was excessively overjoyed. First he politely and lovingly admonished his dear and beloved Lord for playing hide-and-seek with him by pretending as if he did not know him or recognise who he was, and then when the truth dawned upon him then he was overwhelmed with surging emotions of affection and endearment like when it happens if two old friends who were close to each other since their childhood, and who had been out of touch for a long time due to circumstances but nevertheless longed that one day they will meet again and embrace each other, actually realise their dream all of a sudden when they stand face-to-face with each other.

One can well imagine how they will feel and react. The two would clasp each other affectionately, shed tears of joy, ask why one forgot the other, strike an instant bond, and make a promise never to separate again. This in essence is what transpired when Hanuman met Lord Ram. And surely enough, the two never ever separated from each other as long as Lord Ram lived in this world; out of all his companions and acquaintances and friends, no one was dearer to the Lord than Hanuman, and Hanuman served Lord Ram with unwavering devotion, faith and affection that had no parallel.

²When Lord Ram perceived that Hanuman's words and actions showed how much the latter loved his Lord and was moved by meeting him—the way Hanuman had fell at the Lord's feet in supplication, the way he had tried to stifle his sobs, the trembling of his voice as he spoke, the thrill that had spread over his body, and the apparent words of reproof which he had used for the Lord were actually a veiled attempt on his part to hide his affectionate emotions that had overwhelmed him—Lord Ram was intensely touched; he bent down to lift Hanuman and clasp the latter to his bosom. Tears of reciprocal joy filled Lord Ram's eyes and ran down his cheeks to flow over Hanuman, and the Lord was as overcome with emotions as Hanuman had been. It appeared that two long-lost fast friends have at last found each other by a stroke of good fortune. The Lord could not control his emotions as he lifted Hanuman, embraced him affectionately, and then wept with joy.

We see here that both Hanuman and Lord Ram have become emotional when they meet each other. So when Hanuman observed that Lord Ram was weeping so much that tears rolled down his eyes and over Hanuman's body, he was thrilled with joy because he understood that the Lord whom he loves so much has reciprocated his feelings in full measure. Spontaneous tears don't come easily; these tears of overwhelming happiness weren't artificial. So Hanuman calmed down and soon regained his composure.

A similar scene is witnessed later on when Hanuman brings the good news that Sita has been found. At that time also he falls at the feet of Lord Ram who lovingly embraces him, and even goes to the extent of saying that he would ever remain indebted to Hanuman. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 32—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.

³Lord Ram alludes to Hanuman's statements earlier that showed he was very depressed and felt lowly about himself so much so that he had supposed that because of his shortcomings the Lord may not have recognised him, and may not pay much attention to him even after knowing who Hanuman was. Refer: Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3 herein above.

So here Lord Ram clarifies that this is not the case at all, for he loves Hanuman more than he loves his own brother Laxman.

Remember: Laxman was standing by Lord Ram's side, and was it possible that this affirmation by the Lord that he loves someone else, in this case Hanuman who, by the way, was met for the first time in life and was virtually a stranger for the two brothers a few moments ago, more than Laxman would in any way offend the latter or make him sad? No; not at all. The brotherly relationship of love and affection between Laxman and Lord Ram was deep and unshakable, not so shallow and weak that such statements, which may have been made by the Lord because he thought it exigent due to circumstantial expediency, would in the slightest manner affect it.

Lord Ram had to show Hanuman that the latter was very dear to him and he should not feel depressed that the Lord had forgotten or neglected him. It was necessary for Lord Ram to do this even if it was merely from a political angle and a strategy that was needed by him to achieve success in his mission to retrieve Sita and eliminate Ravana and his cruel demons, for Hanuman's assistance and cooperation was very crucial for this objective.

Hanuman was the first acquaintance of Lord Ram in an alien land, and if he could be taken into confidence then other things would become easier. So the Lord did not wish to lose this golden opportunity, and hence he went out of his way to show Hanuman how dear was he to the Lord so as to strike an immediate rapport with him. And this strategy stood in good stead of the Lord, for now we shall read how Hanuman became instrumental in making Sugriv a friend of the Lord, a very important development as this would pave the way for the Lord in being able to trace Sita, and then get the help of an immense army of monkey and bear warriors to successfully complete his mission of not only retrieving her but also of eliminating the scourge of the demons. It is obvious that this monumental task would not have been possible without help.

⁴Lord Ram says that since he is the Supreme Lord of this world, he treats all individuals alike. To wit, the Lord says that he is an impartial and a neutral judge; he extends his mercy and grace equally upon all like the sun that gives its sunlight to all the creatures evenly. But there is an exception to this general rule—and it is that the Lord has a soft corner in his heart for his devotees for whom there is no one in this world except the Lord, who are totally and eternally dependent upon the Lord, and who love the Lord exclusively. The Lord says that he is duty bound to extend a special consideration for such individuals.]

दो०. सो अनन्य जाकेँ असि मति न टरइ हनुमंत ।

मैं सेवक सचराचर रूप स्वामि भगवंत ॥ ३ ॥

dōhā.

sō anan'ya jākēm asi mati na ṭara'i hanumanta.

mairṁ sēvaka sacarācara rūpa svāmi bhagavanta. 3.

Oh Hanuman! An individual is deemed to be my eternal devotee and loved by me if his mind is firm and steady in its conviction that he is an eternal servant and devotee of the Lord of the whole world, and this whole creation consisting of animate and inanimate things is nothing but the Lord's own image.¹⁷ (Doha no. 3)

[Note—¹If the individual is enlightened enough to understand the grand philosophy enshrined in this Doha, that this entire creation is an image of his beloved Lord, then he would serve and love all other creatures equally and with great sincerity, as love and service done to them would be loving and serving his own dear Lord.

This is the universal message of love and service to one and all that Lord Ram advises here.]

चौ०. देखि पवनसुत पति अनुकूला । हृदयँ हरष बीती सब सूला ॥ १ ॥
 नाथ सैल पर कपिपति रहई । सो सुग्रीव दास तव अहई ॥ २ ॥
 तेहि सन नाथ मयत्री कीजे । दीन जानि तेहि अभय करीजे ॥ ३ ॥
 सो सीता कर खोज कराइहि । जहँ तहँ मरकट कोटि पठाइहि ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

dēkhi pavanasuta pati anukūlā. hṛdayam̐ haraṣa bīṭī saba sūlā. 1.
 nātha saila para kapipati raha'ī. sō sugrīva dāsa tava aha'ī. 2.
 tēhi sana nātha mayatrī kijē. dīna jāni tēhi abhaya karījē. 3.
 sō sītā kara khōja karā'īhi. jaham̐ taham̐ marakaṭa kōṭi paṭhā'īhi. 4.

When the Son of the Wind-God (i.e. Hanuman; “pavanasuta”) observed that the Lord was favourable to him and understood him without reservations, he felt overjoyed in his heart; all the agonies and misgivings of his heart disappeared. (1)

He told Lord Ram, ‘Oh Lord; the lord of the monkeys (kapipati) lives on the summit of this mountain (Rishyamook). His name is Sugriv, and he is your servant (i.e. he will obey you and do as you wish)¹. (2)

Oh Lord! Make a friendship with him (Sugriv), and considering him to be humble, afflicted and disenfranchised please be gracious to grant him freedom from fear. [To wit, show your grace upon him by making him fearless from the things that are worrying him.]² (3)

He (Sugriv) will help you in the search for Sita by sending hundreds and thousands of monkeys (and bears) in all the directions for this purpose.³ (4)

[Note—¹Sugriv had been ousted from the kingdom by his elder brother Baali (also pronounced as Vaali). Presently Baali was the ‘king of the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha’. So why did Hanuman address Sugriv as ‘the lord of the monkeys’?

The answer is this: For those who were loyal to Sugriv and had decided to accompany him to exile on Mt. Rishyamook, he was their de-facto king and lord. Among this small group of faithful companions of Sugriv was Hanuman; others included Nal, Neel etc., as well as Jamvant, the lord of the bear community. For them Sugriv was the true King of Kishindha, or at least the next in line to the throne after Baali, his elder brother, and that he had been unjustly deprived of his rights and exiled by his elder brother. This unfair treatment meted out to Sugriv pained all the righteous ministers, some of whom decided to leave with him.

Besides this, Sugriv had already been appointed to the throne by all the ministers and courtiers of the kingdom before Baali threw him out. Sugriv however

was not willing to accept the crown in the absence of his elder brother, but the ministers thought that it would not be right and wise to keep the throne vacant for any length of time; so they appointed Sugriv as the regent against his will. When Baali returned home after slaying the demon Mayavi, the son of the demon Maya, and found Sugriv on the throne, he thought that his younger brother has usurped his crown, though this was not the case. This infuriated Baali, and he beat Sugriv severely and threw him out. This story is narrated by Sugriv himself to Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-13 that precede Doha no. 6.

Another question arises: Lord Ram has yet not met Sugriv, so how come Hanuman say that 'Sugriv is your servant and will follow your instructions'? The answer to this is: These monkeys and bears were actually different gods in their forms waiting for Lord Ram's arrival as prophesised by Brahma, the creator, earlier. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 187—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 188.

So as soon as Hanuman recognised that Lord Ram was indeed the Lord for whom they had been waiting for so long, there was no question that others would also surrender themselves before the Lord like he had done.

The full story of Baali and Sugriv is narrated in detail in (i) sage Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttarkand, Canto 3; (ii) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand (Chapter), Sarga (Canto) 13, verse no. 140-152; and (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 11.

It ought to be noted here that Sugriv was the son of the Sun-God like Hanuman who was the son of the Wind-God.

²First, Hanuman calls Sugriv 'the lord of the monkeys', and so it is proper to say now that Lord Ram make friends with him—because two great kings should strike a friendly note when they meet each other for the first time.

Then Hanuman says 'show your grace upon him by making him fearless from the things that are worrying him'. Hanuman guessed that Lord Ram would wonder why a king of the monkey race would live in seclusion on a remote mountain instead of in the capital; so surely there must be something amiss, for this situation would make it obvious to the Lord that Sugriv must be suffering from some misfortune. Hence, Hanuman pleads with the Lord to help Sugriv overcome his predicaments.

³There is another reason for Hanuman going outright to ask Lord Ram to help remove the fears of Sugriv. He wished to serve the Lord's case—i.e. searching Sita and freeing her from her captives—in the best possible way he could, but to make this happen it was important to take the support of his own king, Sugriv. So if Lord Ram helps Sugriv regain his honour and get rid of his fear first then it would be easy for Hanuman to prevail upon Sugriv to do the Lord's work as his own work has been done, and then Sugriv would never be in a position to refuse.

So in order to ensure that the Lord did not hesitate in coming with him to the summit of the mountain to befriend Sugriv and help him overcome the grave fear that his been dogging him for long, Hanuman played his wise card by saying that if the Lord agrees to his proposal then he would see to it that Sugriv helps in the search for Sita.

Come to think of it: Lord Ram was in great need of an ally in an alien land, so when this suggestion came from Hanuman the Lord saw a golden opportunity, and was therefore very willing to cooperate.

In this intelligent way Hanuman served both Sugriv and Lord Ram in equal measure, and as a result of his wise mediation of his he became a favourite with both of them for eternity. This is also a primary reason why Lord Ram chose to give his signet ring for the purpose of identification to Hanuman when the group to which he belonged was about to go in the search for Sita. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-11 that precedes Doha no. 23.]

एहि बिधि सकल कथा समुझाई । लिए दुऔ जन पीठि चढ़ाई ॥ ५ ॥
जब सुग्रीव राम कहूँ देखे । अतिसय जन्म धन्य करि लेखा ॥ ६ ॥
सादर मिलेउ नाइ पद माथा । भेंटै अनुज सहित रघुनाथा ॥ ७ ॥
कपि कर मन बिचार एहि रीती । करिहहि बिधि मो सन ए प्रीती ॥ ८ ॥

ēhi bidhi sakala kathā samujhā'ī. li'ē du'au jana pīṭhi caṛhā'ī. 5.
jaba sugrīvam' rāma kahum' dēkhā. atisaya janma dhan'ya kari lēkhā. 6.
sādara milē'u nā'i pada māthā. bhēṇṭē'u anuja sahita raghunāthā. 7.
kapi kara mana bicāra ēhi rīṭī. karihahim bidhi mō sana ē prīṭī. 8.

In this way, after explaining all the aspects of the story¹ to the Lord, he (Hanuman) lifted the two of them (Lord Ram and his brother Laxman) on his back (i.e. on his shoulders, one brother on the left and the other on the right, to take them over the steep mountain to the summit where Sugriv was waiting)². (5)

When Sugriv saw Lord Ram he considered that his life was very fortunate. (6)

He met and welcomed the two brothers by bowing his head respectfully at the feet of Lord Raghunath and his younger brother (Laxman)³. (7)

He wondered in his mind, 'Oh Creator (bidhi)! Will they be my friends; it is possible that we can become friends'?*

[*This verse can also be read as follows: "He wondered by which means it may become possible to be friends with these two gentlemen".]⁴ (8)

[Note—¹What story was explained by Hanuman to Lord Ram? It was the story of why and how Sugriv fell into the present miserable state, how he can be of help to the Lord, how the exiled monkeys had seen Sita crying loudly as she was being taken away by her abductor, and so on and so forth. This was done to remove any misgivings that the Lord may have had initially about his new acquaintances, and doubts that he might have had to agree to accompany Hanuman to the top of a steep mountain.

²Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 27-28 too describe the same way in which Hanuman took Lord Ram and Laxman to Sugriv who lived on the summit of Mt. Rishyamook.

³Sugriv had immense faith in Hanuman, and trusted his wisdom and intelligence. That is why he had sent Hanuman to find out about the strangers in the first place. So when he observed from the summit that Hanuman had fallen at the feet of Lord Ram, the

two embraced each other and had a cordial conversation for some time, and now Hanuman was bringing them to his hideout on the summit of the mountain, Sugriv was very sure that certainly it was for his good that Hanuman is doing it. He was sure that these two gentlemen who not only looked glorious, noble and royal but also had a divine halo and an unmistakable aura of charm about them, Sugriv concluded that these two guests were no ordinary men but some specially empowered honourable persons who deserve respect and welcome.

He had nothing to fear from them as was clear from the friendly expression on the faces of both Lord Ram and Laxman. Besides this, Hanuman had signalled to Sugriv in the manner decided between them before-hand (refer: Chauapi line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 1) that these two gentlemen would be of great help to the him (Sugriv), and there is nothing to fear from them at all.

Sugriv trusted Hanuman so much that when the latter told him that he has brought the two brothers up the mountain with a promise that Sugriv would welcome them as a friend, and that Sugriv must not hesitate to meet the two guests immediately and make friends with them, Sugriv did not think twice or in any way doubt the correctness of Hanuman's decision, because he knew that Hanuman was not only exceptionally wise and intelligent but also very faithful and loyal to him. Sugriv was confident that the Creator may turn against him, but Hanuman would never betray him ever, no matter what happens.

Hanuman explained to Sugriv the strategic importance to have the two warrior brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, as his allies as their friendship would deter his arch enemy, Baali, from tormenting him further. The race to which the two brothers belonged was far superior in intelligence, strength and abilities compared to the race to which Sugriv and his brother Baali belonged. Hence, as soon as Baali discovers that Sugriv has forged an alliance with superior warriors he would stop bothering him any further, and so the constant fear of attack and harm by Baali in which Sugriv passes his days would be a thing of the past.

This logic of Hanuman was sound enough to convince Sugriv who saw merit in it. So he readily agreed to make friendship with Lord Ram.

⁴The word “bidhi” has two meanings: viz. ‘the Creator’, and ‘a mean to achieve success in anything undertake’. So both these interpretations could apply to this verse.]

दो०. तब हनुमंत उभय दिसि की सब कथा सुनाइ ।

पावक साखी देइ करि जोरी प्रीति दृढ़ाइ ॥ ४ ॥

dōhā.

taba hanumanta ubhaya disi kī saba kathā sunā'i.

pāvaka sākhī dē'i kari jōrī prīti dṛṛhā'i. 4.

Then Hanuman narrated the whole story of the two sides to each other¹. [To wit, Hanuman told Sugriv why Lord Ram was wondering in the forest, and then he told Lord Ram, or rather repeated what he had already told the Lord at the foot of the mountain, about Sugriv and the reason of his living on that mountain.]

After that, he lit a fire and made it a witness of the bond of friendship between the two of them—i.e. between Lord Ram and Sugriv². (Doha no. 4)

[Note—¹Both Sugriv and Lord Ram were suffering in one way or the other. Sugriv's right to the throne had been snatched by his elder brother Baali who threw him into exile and also kept his wife; Lord Ram had been exiled and his wife had been stolen by some rascal. They were literally on the same boat, on the same page. So they could easily empathise with and understand the agony of each other. Hanuman was so wise that he played the soft corner eruditely so as to ensure that both would cooperate with each other as both would be the gainer.

²The 'fire' is the most sacred and an inviolable witness; other witnesses could betray but the fire would never. And besides this, there were no chances of any of the sides rescinding on his promise made to the other with the fire god as a witness for the fear of inviting this god's wrath, and 'fire' is not something to fool around with.

So when a treaty is made with the 'fire' as a witness then it becomes inviolable and sacrosanct.

Hanuman wished to play it safe; it may be that sometime in the unknown future there can be situations when either of the two signatories of the treaty would try to force him to become biased against the other, and there may be existential expediencies when he too might become doubtful as to what is the correct thing to do. But with the 'fire' as the witness there was no scope of going back; the bond was sealed and delivered in a final manner.

And remember: Hanuman was also a witness by default, for he had too witnessed the declaration of this friendship between Lord Ram and Sugriv just like the sacred fire. So in case Sugriv, being a Jiva, a living being, an ordinary creature, who often times forgets his side of the bargain once his selfish needs are met, tries to play truant and shows lack of interest in serving Lord Ram, Hanuman would immediately intervene and remind Sugriv of the oath taken by the side of the sacred fire. And this did happen later on—when, after regaining his honour and throne by the intervention of Lord Ram on his behalf, Sugriv became indulgent in the pleasures that come with kingship, and all but forgot about his promise to Lord Ram to send teams all around to find Sita. At that time it was Hanuman who reminded him of his vows, and persuaded him to do what is needed without delay. This incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 19.]

चौ०. कीन्हि प्रीति कछु बीच न राखा । लछिमन राम चरित सब भाषा ॥ १ ॥
 कह सुग्रीव नयन भरि बारी । मिलिहि नाथ मिथिलेसकुमारी ॥ २ ॥
 मंत्रिन्ह सहित इहाँ एक बारा । बैठ रहेउँ मैं करत बिचारा ॥ ३ ॥
 गगन पंथ देखी मैं जाता । परबस परी बहुत बिलपाता ॥ ४ ॥
 राम राम हा राम पुकारी । हमहि देखि दीन्हेउ पट डारी ॥ ५ ॥

caupāī.

kīnhi prīti kachu bīca na rākhā. lachimana rāma carita saba bhāṣā. 1.
 kaha sugrīva nayana bhari bārī. milihi nātha mithilēsakumārī. 2.
 mantrinḥa sahita ihām'ēka bārā. baiṭha rahē'um' mairi karata bicārā. 3.
 gagana pantha dēkhī mairi jātā. parabasa parī bahuta bilapātā. 4.

rāma rāma hā rāma pukārī. hamahi dēkhi dīnhē'u paṭa ḍārī. 5.

An unconditional bond of friendship was made between Lord Ram and Sugriv; both were treated as equal in this understanding¹.

Meanwhile, Laxman narrated the whole story of Lord Ram to all those present². (1)

When Sugriv heard the story (and the misery that the Lord was subjected to due to his wife Sita's abduction), he felt very sorry. With tears filling his eyes³ he said, 'Oh Lord (don't worry); the daughter of king of Mithila ("mithilēsakumārī"; i.e. Sita) would indeed be found. (2)

I was sitting here once with my ministers, discussing some matter. (3)

At that time I saw her being taken by the path of the sky; she was under the captivity of a kidnapper, and she was crying, lamenting and wailing very sorely. (4)

When she saw us, she cried aloud "Ram, Ram, Ram" in a very pitiful and distressed manner; then she dropped some pieces of her garments down from the sky⁴. [We have carefully preserved them as we realised that some lady was being abducted by a rascal, and may be her husband would come this way looking for her some day. Then we would give these pieces to him to convince him that we had indeed seen his wife being taken away by force. And if the need arises and it is within our abilities and the gentleman asks for our help, we would do our best.] (5)

[Note—¹The lesson which we learn here is that when a friendship is made there should be no strings attached to it, and all the friends should be treated equally; this makes the friendship last. Otherwise it would fall apart sooner or later.

²What was the need for Laxman to narrate the story of Lord Ram when Hanuman had already done so in Doha no. 4 herein above? Well, it is sure that Hanuman had limited his version to what Lord Ram had told him earlier when they met for the first time (Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 2 herein above); for Hanuman could not have known more than that from the mortal and worldly point of view though he had recognised the Lord at the subtler level of the Holy Spirit.

So Laxman deemed it necessary to add some more details besides the episode of Sita's abduction by some fiend. During this narration he must have told Sugriv how Lord Ram had slayed the different demons before coming here. It was to impress upon Sugriv and the rest of his companions that Lord Ram was not an ordinary person whose wife has been stolen and who helplessly wanders here and there searching for her; so they ought to beware, show due respect to the Lord, and not take the Lord lightly in spite of the bond of friendship that makes Lord Ram equal to Sugriv, and the Lord's nature of being obliging and polite, for god forbid that someone offends the Lord for then there would be no one to protect the offender.

³Tears welled up in Sugriv's eyes; this indicates that he was very moved by the sorrowful condition of Lord Ram. This is how a good friend should be—he treats his friend's sorrows and misfortunes as his own, and does whatever he can to help his friend even if it could mean harm to his own personal interests. This fact would be reiterated later on by Lord Ram when Sugriv narrates his own tale of woes concerning

how his elder brother Baali had thrown him out of the kingdom and taken his wife. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1-10 that precede Doha no. 7.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 25 that precedes Doha no. 29.

Sita called out Lord Ram's name so that the monkeys, who were sitting on the summit of the mountain, would know whose wife she was, so that when the Lord arrives and discloses his name they would immediately know that he is the husband of the lady who was forcibly taken away.]

मागा राम तुरत तेहिं दीन्हा । पट उर लाइ सोच अति कीन्हा ॥ ६ ॥
कह सुग्रीव सुनहु रघुबीरा । तजहु सोच मन आनहु धीरा ॥ ७ ॥
सब प्रकार करिहउँ सेवकाई । जेहि बिधि मिलिहि जानकी आई ॥ ८ ॥

māgā rāma turata tēhiṁ dīnhā. paṭa ura lā'i sōca ati kīnhā. 6.
kaha sugrīva sunahu raghubīrā. tajahu sōca mana ānahu dhīrā. 7.
saba prakāra kariha'um' sēvakā'ī. jēhi bidhi milihi jānakī ā'ī. 8.

Lord Ram asked for that piece of cloth, and Sugriv gave it to him immediately. The Lord held the cloth close to his heart even as he felt very sorrowful and sad¹. (6)

Observing the Lord's sadness and a sense of loss, Sugriv comforted the Lord and reassured him, saying, 'Listen oh Lord Raghubir. Set aside your worries, and have courage and fortitude. (7)

I will serve you in all possible ways, and employ all the means at my disposal² so that Janki ("jānakī"; the daughter of king Janak; Sita) can come and meet you (i.e. you are reunited with her)³. (8)

[Note—¹This episode is also narrated in a heart-touching way in Tulsidas' book 'Geetawali Ramayan', in its Kishkindha Kand, verse no. 1.

²A true friend is one who would employ all his resources and go out of his way to help his friend in times of need. Lord Ram has too affirmed this noble quality of a friend in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1-10 that precede Doha no. 7 as we have already noted.

³Sugriv told Lord Ram that he need not worry on any count; he would not need to go anywhere or wander in the forest searching for Sita. The Lord can sit comfortably right here in Kishkindha, and Sugriv will do the rest for him—he would send messengers in all the directions to find out where Sita was. That is what he means by saying that he would do everything possible by which Sita would come here.]

दो०. सखा बचन सुनि हरषे कृपासिंधु बलसींव ।
कारन कवन बसहु बन मोहि कहहु सुग्रीव ॥ ५ ॥

dōhā.

sakhā bacana suni haraṣē kṛpāsindhu balasīnva.
kāraṇa kavana basahu bana mōhi kahahu sugrīva. 5.

Hearing the reassuring words of his friend (Sugriv), Lord Ram, who was an ocean of compassion and mercy (kṛpāsindhu), as well as valiant and strong (balasīnva), felt very exhilarated (haraṣē)¹.

[Now since Sugriv had offered his unconditional help to Lord Ram to recover Sita, the Lord thought it fit to somehow reciprocate this gracious offer of his friend if there was any scope for it, so—] The Lord enquired from Sugriv: ‘Tell me Sugriv, why are you living in this dense and uninhabited part of the forest (when you should normally have been living comfortably in your capital city of Kishkindha, with other members of your family; surely there ought to be some reason for it, prithee tell me what that reason is)?’ (Doha no. 5)

[Note—¹It ought to be remarked at this juncture that two honorific epithets have been used for Lord Ram—viz. “kṛpāsindhu” and “balasīnva”. Now, let us see what their significance is.

The use of the word “balasīnva”, meaning one who is exceptionally strong and valorous, is purposefully done here in the backdrop of what is to come in the near future when Lord Ram would get the help of Sugriv and the army of Kishkindha to launch a campaign for liberation of Sita from the clutches of the demons of Lanka, to impress upon the reader that one should not be misled into thinking that Lord Ram was weak and he could not have liberated Sita on his own strength if the Lord hadn’t had the support of Sugriv to retrieve her from the clutches of the demons. He could have surely done it, but we must remember that Lord Ram, though being the Supreme Being himself, had to play the role of a human being to perfection in order to fulfill a horde of obligations on his shoulders, and so therefore he had to act like any other person would act, which is to seek the help of a powerful and strong ally in a situation that Lord Ram faced—viz. first to find out where his wife was, and then upon learning that she is held captive by a ferocious demon king, Ravana, in a remote island in the middle of the ocean, to go there, fight a blood-curdling war to liberate her, was not a joke, and the Lord would need an army to match the army of the enemy. This was part of the wider scheme of things, because the Lord had to keep his true identity a secret, and it would be possible only if he acted normally like any other ordinary human prince would.

As a proof that Lord Ram alone was powerful and strong enough to be able to deal with the whole demon army if the need arose, without any help from anyone else, we have already read how the Lord had vanquished the ferocious army of demons, led by two powerful demon commanders named Khar and Dushan, at Panchavati—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 21.

Earlier to that, we have read about the incident of Lord Ram’s childhood days when he and his brother Laxman had gone to protect the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra. Both the brothers had vanquished the army of Marich and Subahu at that time: refer to—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 210.

There is another important reason why Lord Ram would seek help from the monkeys and bears to fulfill his objective of freeing Sita from the clutches of Ravana.

These monkeys and bears weren't ordinary creatures as the word seems to suggest—they were in fact different gods in their physical forms, for the gods had decided to help the Supreme Being to eliminate the terror of the ferocious demons who were tyrannizing this creation and wreaking havoc on innocent creatures, killing and plundering with impunity and at will, running amok like an elephant devastating a china shop. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 186—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 188.}

So, though Lord Ram, who was a human form of the Supreme Being, was capable himself of eliminating all the demons single-handedly, yet the Lord decided to oblige these gods and let them share the limelight, the glory, the credit and the good fame that would come by getting rid of the tyranny of the demons, in equal measure as himself. A noble and gracious king or emperor will always give due credit for all his achievements and successes to his ministers, courtiers, governors and army commanders, for it is on their strength that he had actually achieved whatever success and fame that he has got for the simple reason that it is actually his deputies and subordinates who do the spade-and-field work for him which gives the king or the emperor his reputation and fame, for the king or the emperor does little himself to become eligible for the great laurels and praises that are heaped on him by the world for the effort made by others who normally go unrecognized and unacknowledged.

Indeed, the ways of this world are so peculiar, biased and lopsided in favour of a king, or for that matter the head of the government or the army, for he gets all the credit for the successes achieved by the ordinary soldiers who fight on the ground and are subjected to countless sufferings, even sacrificing their lives in the name of the king. A noble and honourable king recognizes this fact, and instead of usurping all the credit and praise for himself, he would openly acknowledge the role of his ordinary soldiers who are the ones who deserve full credit for the success that has been achieved, and stresses that he, the king, and his country would forever remain indebted to them.

To wit, this is principally why Lord Ram not only took the help of the army of Kishkindha to defeat Ravana and his demons, and free Sita from their clutches, but the Lord also, like a noble and honourable king cited herein above, had openly and publicly acknowledged their role in eliminating the demons; the Lord had also declared that the monkeys and the bears were his friends, thereby giving them a high stature that raised these otherwise humble creatures to a pedestal that was equivalent to the Lord himself. This attitude of Lord Ram endeared him to everyone forever, as all the monkeys and bears who had supported him at a time when he was in a dire strait felt exceedingly happy and grateful towards the Lord for giving them their due share of credit and honour when they heard what the Lord said to show his thanks and express his gratitude to them. This is amply clear in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-9 that precede Doha no. 8.

The other word used for Lord Ram is “*krpāsindhu*”, meaning that he was an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness. This word highlights the fact that when Lord Ram asked Sugriv the reason for his living a life of hardships and sufferings in the wilderness of the forest even though he was a prince of a kingdom known as Kishkindha, and upon knowing the reason the Lord had offered to help Sugriv to restore his lost honour and dignity as well as his right to his share of the kingdom as its prince, it was because the Lord was moved by Sugriv's plight and took pity on the latter as the Lord was full of mercy and compassion for Sugriv, and for no other reason, including the expectations of help from Sugriv, though of course Sugriv was

obliged to help the Lord as he had himself promised to do so—apropos: Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 5 herein above.]

चौ०. नाथ बालि अरु मैं द्वौ भाई । प्रीति रही कछु बरनि न जाई ॥ १ ॥

मय सुत मायावी तेहि नाऊँ । आवा सो प्रभु हमरें गाऊँ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nātha bālī aru mair̥ dvau bhāī. prīti rahī kachu barani na jāī. 1.
maya suta māyāvē tēhi nā'ūm̐. āvā sō prabhu hamarēn gā'ūm̐. 2.

Sugriv replied to Lord Ram: ‘Oh Lord! I and Baali are two brothers’¹. Our relations were exemplary, and they were so exceptionally cordial, amiable and brotherly that I can’t describe it. (1)

There was a demon named Mayavi (pronounced “Maayaavi”); he was the son of the demon Maye². One day he came to our place. (2)

[Note—¹The brief story of Baali and Sugriv is as follows: The legend goes that once upon a time when the creator Brahma was doing Tapa (penance) on the summit of Mt. Meru (the so-called golden mountain), tears fell down from his eyes. From these tear drops a powerful monkey was produced, and his name was ‘Riksharaaj’. Once when he saw his own reflection in water, he jumped in, and immediately got transmuted into a beautiful damsel. Indra and the Sun God were infatuated by her beauty so much so that both of them ejaculated. The semen of Indra fell on her head, and that of the Sun God on her neck. As a result of this, that lady conceived and gave birth to two sons: since the semen of Indra fell on her first, therefore her elder son called “Baali” was deemed to be the son of Indra; and since the semen of the Sun God fell next, the second son called Sugriv was deemed to be the son of the Sun God.

Since Indra is the king of gods and considered a very powerful and strong god, hence his son “Baali” got this name, as the word means one who is great strength. On the other hand, since the semen of the Sun God fell on the damsel’s neck, her younger son was called “Sugriv”, i.e. one with a well-formed neck.

After sometime, the damsel got back her original form of Riksharaaj. The two brothers began to rule over the kingdom of the monkey and bear races at Kishkindha.

There is another interpretation of the word “Riksharaaj”: the first part of the name is “Riksha” and it means a bear, and the other half is “Raaj” which means a king. According to this legend, when Riksharaaj assumed the form of a female, it was like that of a monkey. Hence, Baali and Sugriv became the rulers of the combined race of monkeys and bears living in Kishkindha.

Once upon a time, a demon named Dundubhi came to challenge Baali for a duel. Dundubhi had a colossus body, like that of a mammoth wild buffalo. Baali killed him and flung his dead body in the direction of a mountain called Rishyamook. While the colossus dead body of Dundubhi crushed a large number of trees around the place where it fell on the ground, the blood of the demon sprayed in all the directions, and some of it was carried by the wind and scattered on the hermitage of sage Matang nearby, defiling its sanctity. This unfortunate and unintended spray of blood on his hermitage infuriated the sage so much so that he severely cursed the person, whosoever he may be, who had caused it to happen. The sage cursed that if this

person who had caused blood of a demon to spray on his hermitage, as well as ruined the forest around it when the huge dead corpse of Dundubhi fell on the trees would ever dare to come within a radius of One Yojan (a distance of roughly eight miles) around his hermitage, then his head would split into thousands of pieces. Besides this, the sage further cursed that if anyone who was in the service of that person, such as his servants and ministers etc., would come within the same prohibited area then he or she would turn into a stone. It was out of this fear of sage Matang's curse that Baali never dared to come near Mt. Rishyamook. {Refer: Valmiki's Ramayana, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11, verse nos. 7-65.}

It ought to be noted here that Sabari, the old tribal woman whom Lord Ram had met prior to his coming to Mt. Rishyamook, was also a disciple of sage Matang and lived in his hermitage after the sage left it when it was defiled by the blood of Dundubhi. This is the reason why she knew that Sugriv lived on a mountain called Rishyamook nearby. It was Sabari who had advised Lord Ram to come in that direction, telling the Lord that Sugriv would provide him more information about Sita and help the Lord to the best of his ability—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10-12 that precede Doha no. 36.

Meanwhile, the two brothers, Baali and Sugriv, had very cordial relations; Baali was the king of the kingdom of Kishkindha by the virtue of his being the elder brother, and Sugriv was the crown prince of the kingdom. They lived a happy and amicable life like two dear brothers would normally would.

But fate had other scheme in store. It so happened once that a demon named Mayavi (also pronounced as 'Maayaawi'), the son of Maye, came to Kishkindha and challenged Baali for a duel in the middle of the night. Mayavi actually wanted to avenge the killing of his brother Dundubhi by Baali. When Baali rushed towards him to face the challenger, the demon fled and hid inside a cave. Baali pursued him inside, but while entering the cave he told his younger brother Sugriv to guard the mouth of the cave and wait for him for at least a fortnight. Sugriv waited for one full month, but Baali did not come back. At the end of this period blood started seeping out of the mouth of the cave. Thinking that the demon has killed his brother and would come out to kill him also, Sugriv covered the mouth of the cave with a huge boulder and fled from there. When he returned to Kishkindha, the courtiers had no choice but to anoint him as the king in place of his brother whom they all thought was killed by the demon.

Meanwhile it so happened that the blood that had seeped out of the cave's mouth was that of the demon who was killed by Baali. When Baali came out, he did not find Sugriv, and to make matters worse he found the mouth of the cave closed by a heavy boulder. When he came back to Kishkindha he found Sugriv on the throne. Naturally of course he went mad with anger, and beat his brother mercilessly. Sugriv, though not at all at fault, tried his best to explain the situation to Baali, but the seed of misunderstanding and animosity was already sown, and seeing no way out, Sugriv fled with his life. Baali usurped the kingdom and the wife of Sugriv forcibly. Sugriv was so terrified of Baali who was baying for his blood that he escaped to the summit of a mountain called Rishyamook along with his trusted aides, and lived a forlorn and sorrowful life in hiding, because he knew that Baali would never come to harm him here because of the sage's earlier curse. This story is narrated by Sugriv himself to Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-13 that precede Doha no. 6.

The story goes that on some previous occasion Baali had collected seven fruits of the coconut tree and kept them on the ground to take bath in the lake known as

Pampa. When he returned he found that a huge python was sitting on these seven fruits. This was tantamount to defiling the fruits, and so Baali cursed the serpent that the seven fruits would pierce his body and grow into tall trees. When the mother of the serpent came to know of this curse, she also cursed Baali that anyone who would cut these seven coconut trees with a single arrow would be the one who would also kill him.

When Lord Ram was wandering in the forest in search of Sita, his wife who was abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, he passed that way. By-and-by, the Lord and Sugriv struck a bond of friendship, and the Lord promised him to restore his lost dignity and right to the kingdom of Kishkindha, the monkey kingdom, from which he was disinherited. In return, Sugriv promised the Lord that he would do all he can to help the Lord find Sita and recover her, even if that meant a war with Sita's abductor.

Sugriv knew about the secret of the seven coconut trees. As he wished to be sure that Lord Ram was indeed capable to restore him to the throne of Kishkindha by eliminating Baali, and that the things wouldn't go out of hands and make life further tormenting for him, Sugriv asked the Lord to fell these seven tall coconut trees with a single arrow. So when Lord Sri Ram felled the seven trees with an arrow, Sugriv knew that the Lord would indeed be able to kill his arch enemy Baali. {Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-13 that precede Doha no. 7; (b) Valmiki's Ramayana, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11, verse nos. 66-93; (c) Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 72-75.}

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

It is said that Lord Sri Ram had to shoot Baali from hiding because the latter had a boon which said that half of the enemy's strength would pass on to Baali if the enemy is within his sight. This boon was provided by his father Indra, the king of gods, who had given him a gold necklace or garland with this magical protective powers embedded in it. {Refer to: (a) Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Uttar Kand, Canto 3, verse no. 12; (b) Valmiki's Ramayana, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 17, verse no. 5.}

Nevertheless, Baali felt privileged that the Lord of the world has himself killed him and given his soul the chance of finding liberation and deliverance from the fetters of the gross body of a monkey. At the time of death, Baali put his son Angad in the Lord's custody. {Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 10; (b) Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 65-70.}

This showed that Baali was extremely prudent and wise. By entrusting the conqueror Ram with the safety and security of his son Angad he ensured that Angad would be safe from any kind of evil design of his uncle Sugriv who would now never try to kill him overtly or covertly.

Besides this thing of the Lord giving Sugriv his word to kill his enemy and undo the grave injustice done to him and restore his dignity and right to the kingdom, there was another very important reason why Baali had to be eliminated. On some previous occasion a reciprocal military pact was made between Baali and Ravana that essentially said that they would not allow their respective territories to be used to launch an attack on the other, and also that they would come to each others aid should either of them be called to do so. The story is that once Baali had put Ravana under his armpit for many days while the latter had gone to challenge the former when he was doing some worship. Peeved by Ravana's arrogance and impertinence, Baali had tucked him under his arms to stop him from annoying him any further. When his worship was finished and he had returned back to his capital at Kishkindha, he realised that Ravana was still squeezed under his armpit. So he released the latter and made a pact of friendship with him. This story is narrated in (i) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kanda (Chapter 1), Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 96-101; and (ii) Valmiki's Ramayana, Uttarakand, Canto 34, verse nos. 1-45 in general, and more specifically in verse nos. 40-45 where a special mention is made of establishment of brotherly relationship between the two.

Since Lord Sri Ram needed to cross the territory of Kishkindha and also take the help of the army of this place to launch an assault on Lanka it was militarily wise and prudent to eliminate the foe in the backyard.

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

The full story of Baali and Sugriv is narrated in detail in (i) sage Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttarakand, Canto 3; (ii) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand (Chapter), Sarga (Canto) 13, verse no. 140-152.

²Refer also to: Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 46-56.

The demon Mayavi (Maayaavi): This demon's story in brief is as follows—There was a very strong demon named 'Maye' who was the son of Diti (the mother of the demon race). Maye was an expert in the art of sculpture. Once he did Tapa for one thousand years to please Brahma, the creator, and when asked for boons he sought and received the entire wealth, the skills of sculpting and all other merits of

Sukracharya, the guru of the demon race. Maye became infatuated with an Apsara (a beautiful damsel of heaven) called Hema. Indra, the king of gods, became infuriated, and he used his powerful weapon called Vajra to slay Maye as a punishment for being greedy as he had usurped the wealth of his guru Sukracharya, as well as for being lascivious because he had corrupted Hema.

Maye had two sons—Mayavi and Dundubhi. Once, Baali, the king of the monkey race, had killed Dundubhi. This story is narrated in Valmiki's Ramayana, in Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11.

It was to avenge the killing of his brother Dundubhi that Mayavi had come to Kishkindha to attack Baali. According to Valmiki's Ramayana, in Kishkindha Kand, Canto 9, a woman was also the reason for the enmity between Baali and Mayavi, and the latter had attacked Baali to settle scores.

We shall read about Dundubhi as a note appended to Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 7 of the present Canto called Kishkindha Kand herein below.]

अर्थ राति पुर द्वार पुकारा । बाली रिपु बल सहै न पारा ॥ ३ ॥
धावा बालि देखि सो भागा । मैं पुनि गयउँ बंधु सँग लागा ॥ ४ ॥

ardha rāti pura dvāra pukārā. bālī ripu bala sahai na pārā. 3.
dhāvā bālī dēkhi sō bhāgā. mairi puni gaya'um' bandhu saṁga lāgā. 4.

Mayavi came in the middle of the night and began shouting to insult Baali, and challenged my brother to have a duel with him if he dared. Baali could not tolerate this kind of insolent behaviour that came without any provocation, and he became angry at his enemies boast of valour and strength. (3)

So therefore, Baali dashed towards him (Mayavi), but when the demon saw him coming towards him, he ran away as fast as he could. Meanwhile, I too followed my brother in good faith (in order to help him in case any emergency arose). (4)

गिरिबर गुहाँ पैठ सो जाई । तब बालीं मोहि कहा बुझाई ॥ ५ ॥
परिखेसु मोहि एक पखवारा । नहिं आवौं तब जानेसु मारा ॥ ६ ॥

giribara guhām' paiṭha sō jā'ī. taba bālīm mōhi kahā bujhā'ī. 5.
parikhēsu mōhi ēka pakhavārā. nahim āvaum' taba jānēsu mārā. 6.

He (Mayavi) rushed inside a cave on the side of a hill (in order to hide himself).

Then, Baali took me aside and explained the situation to me, advising me what to do next. (5)

He told me: 'Wait and watch for me outside the mouth of the cave for a fortnight. If I don't return by then, you can assume that I have been killed by the enemy.' (6)

मास दिवस तहँ रहेउँ खरारी । निसरी रुधिर धार तहँ भारी ॥ ६ ॥

बालि हतेसि मोहि मारिहि आई । सिला देइ तहँ चलेउँ पराई ॥ ८ ॥

māsa divasa taham̐ rahē'um̐ kharārī. nisarī rudhira dhāra taham̐ bhārī. 7.
bāli hatēsi mōhi mārihi ā'ī. silā dē'i taham̐ calē'um̐ parā'ī. 8.

Oh Lord Ram who had slayed the demon Khar (kharārī)¹! I stood on the entrance of the cave waiting for the return of my brother Baali for one full month (though he had told me to wait for only a fortnight). [To wit, I hoped for the best, and decided to wait longer than advised by Baali because I thought that perhaps it was taking longer than a fortnight for my brother to subdue his enemy, and that it would be proper and safer for me to wait for a little more while rather than make a hurry to leave the place.]

But one day I saw a lot of blood flowing out of the mouth of the cave. (6)

Deducing that blood meant that the enemy had slayed Baali, and he would soon come out to slay me too, I felt terrified and was out of my wits.

So, in order to save myself from Mayavi's wrath, I quickly put a heavy stone on the mouth of the cave to shut it tight², and fled from the site. (8)

[Note—¹This episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 14 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 21.

²The question arises that if Mayavi was so strong that he could have killed Baali, would he not be able to push aside the stone to open the mouth of the cave to come out of it? Surely he would, but Sugriv was so terrified that he could think of no other better way to escape the demon's wrath than to close the mouth of the cave with a huge boulder as a means of at least creating some obstacle in the path of the enemy so that he (Sugriv) has sufficient time to run away to his capital and seek support of other warriors of the kingdom in order to defeat Mayavi in case the latter decided to chase him to the gates of the capital city.

Another reason for putting the boulder on the mouth of the cave was that since it fitted in perfectly and covered the entire mouth of the cave, no light from the outside world could enter the deep recesses of the cavern where Baali and Mayavi were fighting each other, as a result of which it would be plunged into complete darkness. This would blind Mayavi so effectively that he would find it difficult to locate the entrance to the cave due to pitch darkness, and this in turn would delay his coming out of the cave for a considerable time, thereby giving Sugriv ample leeway to make good his escape and collect his companions back in the city to face the demon if he came back to attack.]

मंत्रिन्ह पुर देखा बिनु साई । दीन्हेउ मोहि राज बरिआई ॥ ९ ॥

बाली ताहि मारि गृह आवा । देखि मोहि जियँ भेद बढ़ावा ॥ १० ॥

mantrin̐ha pura dēkhā binu sālīm̐. dīnhē'u mōhi rāja bari'ā'īm̐. 9.
bālī tāhi māri gr̥ha āvā. dēkhi mōhi jiyam̐ bhēda barhāvā. 10.

When I returned home and told the ministers about the developments, they concluded that the throne of the kingdom had fallen vacant because of Baali's death.

Then they compelled me to accept the crown much against my wish. (9)

Meanwhile, as was the fiat of fate, Baali returned home in due course of time after slaying the demon Mayavi. When he saw that I have been made the king during his absence, he became furious and lost all restraint on his senses so much so that he treated me as his enemy and an opponent. (10)

रिपु सम मोहि मारेसि अति भारी । हरि लीन्हेसि सर्वसु अरु नारी ॥ ११ ॥
ताकें भय रघुबीर कृपाला । सकल भुवन में फिरेउँ बिहाला ॥ १२ ॥

ripu sama mōhi mārēsi ati bhārī. hari līnhēsi sarbasu aru nārī. 11.
tākēm bhaya raghubīra kṛpālā. sakala bhuvana mairṁ phirē'um' bihālā. 12.

He beat me severely as if I was his arch enemy (without hearing me and allowing me to explain the reality). He snatched my wife as well as everything else that I possessed. (11)

Out of his fear, oh merciful and compassionate Lord Ram (raghubīra kṛpālā), I ran terrified helter-skelter, hither and thither, throughout the world to escape his wrath, as he angrily pursued me wherever I went. (12)

इहाँ साप बस आवत नाही । तदपि सभित रहउँ मन माहीं ॥ १३ ॥
सुनि सेवक दुख दीनदयाला । फरकि उठीं द्वै भुजा बिसाला ॥ १४ ॥

ihām' sāpa basa āvata nāhīm. tadapi sabhīta raha'um' mana māhīm. 13.
suni sēvaka dukha dīnadayālā. pharaki uṭhīm dvai bhuajā bisālā. 14.

He does not come here due to this place being cursed for him¹. In spite of it (i.e. in spite of the protection I get here because Baali dares not come here due to that curse), I still live a fearful life, because I am always skeptical of him employing some cunning mechanism to send someone in disguise to kill me². (13)

When Lord Ram, who is always merciful and compassionate towards those who are distressed and humble (dīnadayālā), heard the sad story of his servant (sēvaka), he became annoyed even as both his arms began fluttering as a sign that the Lord wanted to use them to help his friend in distress. (14)

[Note—¹The story why Baali was cursed and prohibited from coming near Mt. Rishyamook is related to his fight with the brother of Mayavi, whose name was Dundubhi. It is as follows:

His story is narrated in (a) Valmiki's Ramayana, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11; and (b) Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 61-67.

Dundhuvi was the elder son of a demon named 'Maye'; his younger brother was called Mayavi. Briefly, the story of Dundhuvi is as follows:

There was a very strong demon named 'Maye' who was the son of Diti (the mother of the demon race). Maye was an expert in the art of sculpture. Once he did Tapa for one thousand years to please Brahma, the creator, and when asked for boons he sought and received the entire wealth, the skills of sculpting and all other merits of Sukracharya, the guru of the demon race. Maye became infatuated with an Apsara (a beautiful damsel of heaven) called Hema. Indra, the king of gods, became infuriated, and he used his powerful weapon called Vajra to slay Maye as a punishment for being greedy as he had usurped the wealth of his guru Sukracharya, as well as for being lascivious because he had corrupted Hema.

Maye had two sons—Mayavi and Dundubhi. Once, Baali, the king of the monkey race, had killed Dundubhi. This story is narrated in Valmiki's Ramayana, in Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11.

Dundubhi had the strength equivalent to a thousand wild elephants; he had a colossal body that was like a mammoth wild buffalo, had horns like sharp lancets or spears, and it towered as high as the summit of Mt. Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. He was exceedingly haughty and arrogant. Proud of his invincibility and powers, he once went to the deity of the ocean to fight with the latter. Ocean told him that he was not competent to fight with the demon, so he must instead go and challenge the king of mountains, known as Himwan (or the Himalayas), who was the father-in-law of Lord Shiva and the father of goddess Parvati. Himwan also had the good honour of giving shelter to countless sages, hermits and ascetics who lived within his realm in the Himalayan mountain ranges. When Dundubhi approached Himwan, the latter too declined to fight with him, and instead directed the demon warrior to Baali, the son of Indra, as he was fit to have a duel with him. This is because a duel should always be between equal challengers, i.e. the challengers must be equal in strength and powers in order to derive any merit when either of them wins.

Upon reaching the gates of the city of Kishkindha, Dundubhi began thundering and bellowing as he thrust his horns violently against the doors in an attempt to break them. When Baali heard this commotion, he came to the gate and requested Dundubhi to go away peacefully if he wished to live. Becoming more furious because he thought Baali was afraid to face him, and also because he felt insulted by Baali when told to go back if he wanted to survive, Dundubhi became ferociously violent and challenged Baali's manliness and valour in different ways. Unable to bear such rudeness on the part of Dundubhi, Baali emerged from the city gates, caught hold of Dundubhi by his horns, and swinging him round and round he viciously dashed the latter repeatedly on the ground. This was followed with a hand-to-hand duel involving severe punches by fists and knees, vicious kicks and arm twisting, as well as violent thrashing of each other with large boulders, trees etc.

Finally, Baali killed Dundubhi, and lifting the buffalo's bleeding corpse Baali swung it around and then flung it away so violently that it shot into the air like a missile and went as far as one yojan (roughly eight miles) before landing near Mt. Rishyamook. But since Dundubhi's body was giant and heavy, it smashed a large number of trees in the forest that lay in vicinity of Rishyamook as it fell down on the ground. Not only this, since it was bleeding heavily, blood dripped from the corpse as it flew in the sky, and wind carried drops of blood in different directions. Some of it sprayed on the hermitage of sage Matang, thereby defiling its sanctity and infuriating the sage. The sage became so angry that he cursed the person who had caused this horrible thing to happen, casting an evil spell that if that person (in this case it was Baali) or any of his attendants ever happen to come within a radius of one yojans of the sage's hermitage, his head would split into a thousand pieces.

Baali became terrified of the sage's curse, and since that time he or any of his ministers or warriors never ever dared to come near Mt. Rishyamook.

This is the reason why Sugriv took shelter atop the summit of Mt. Rishyamook when he was beaten and chased away by Baali from the capital city of Kishkindha due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers. {Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-12 that precede Doha no. 7; (b) Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 60-68.}

²Sugriv told Lord Ram: "Oh Lord, this is the reason why I was first alarmed when I saw you two brothers roaming around the foothills of this mountain, because I thought Baali had sent someone disguised as human beings to get rid of me."

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 1.]

दो०. सुनु सुग्रीव मारिहउँ बालिहि एकहिं बान ।

ब्रह्म रुद्र सरनागत गाँ न उबरिहिं प्राण ॥ ६ ॥

dōhā.

sunu sugrīva māriha'um̐ bālihi ēkahim̐ bāna.

brahma rudra saranāgata ga'ēm̐ na ubarihim̐ prāna. 6.

[When Lord Ram heard the pitiful condition of Sugriv, who was now his friend, and learnt how grave injustice was done to him without any fault on his part, the Lord decided to help Sugriv get his honour and dignity back. So the Lord said to Sugriv—]

'Listen Sugriv. I shall kill Baali with a single arrow. And be assured that he would find no help in order to save himself even if he goes and surrenders himself before Brahma (the creator) and Rudra (Lord Shiva) in order to seek help from them¹. (Doha no. 6)

[Note—¹We have ample proof of it, for we have read earlier that Jayant, the son of Indra who had assumed the form of a crow to test Lord Ram's powers and strength, had run from one point of the heaven to another seeking help and protection from everyone he knew, including his own father Indra, as well as Brahma and Shiva, to save his life from the arrow-like reed which Lord Ram had shot at him to punish him for his mischief, and which was pursuing him relentlessly—but no one was ready to give shelter to Jayant against the wrath of Lord Ram. This episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2.

We have read till now that Lord Ram arrived at the Rishyamook mountain in the kingdom of Kishkindha that was ruled by the monkeys. Here at the mountain, the Lord met Hanuman who became his most faithful follower and the greatest devotee, and at his behest the Lord befriended Sugriv, the exiled younger brother of Baali, the monkey king. Sugriv was forced out of the kingdom due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers. When Lord Ram and Sugriv exchanged notes it transpired that they both needed help. The Lord needed a company to help him find and rescue Sita, and Sugriv needed help to get his dignity restored. It was then that the gracious

Lord Ram offered to help Sugriv and extolled the virtues of friendship and the grand principles that govern this relationship.

A very pertinent and natural question that arises in one's mind here is 'what motivated Lord Ram to decide to eliminate Baali without any apparent provocation, or the latter causing any harm to the Lord directly, for Baali might not even have known that the Lord was on his way to some place to get his wife Sita freed from the clutches of her captors?'

Well, the answer is this: Lord Ram was constrained to remove Baali from his path as the latter could prove very dangerous to the safety of the Lord once he stepped into the territorial area of the kingdom of Kishkindha of which Baali was the king. Why was Baali a threat to Lord Ram? There are two obvious reasons: One is that the Lord knew that Baali and Ravana were friends, and they had a treaty of friendship between*1 them that ensured safety of Ravana from anyone attacking him and his city of Lanka, an island in the middle of the ocean, from the side of Kishkindha to the north of it. How, why, and under what circumstances this friendship was made is narrated in detail in the following two versions of the Story of the Ramayana: viz. (a) Anand Ramayan, Sarkand, Canto 13, verse nos. 96-101; and (b) Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 58-60.

{*1 = Briefly, this story is as follows: Once, driven by arrogance and ego, Ravana went and tried to attack Baali who was meditating silently. Baali got annoyed and he grabbed Ravana and tucked him tightly under his armpit. Baali almost forgot that Ravana was squeezed tight in his armpit, but when he went home and stretched his arms, the poor fellow fell down hungry and terrified. Baali took pity on him and let him go, but after warning him not to disturb him in future. Realising that Ravana was no ordinary irritant but a powerful king of the demon race, Baali struck a friendship deal with him that ensured safety for both of them—Ravana was assured that no one would attack his kingdom on the island of Lanka from the north, and Baali was assured that no one would attack him from across the ocean in the south.}

Even in our present Book 'Ram Charit Manas', both Angad, Baali's son, and Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, refer to this friendship between Baali and Ravana—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 20, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-7 that precede Doha no. 21. Here Ravana has strongly chided Angad for being a traitor of his own family and betraying his father Baali by supporting Lord Ram, because it was the Lord who had killed Baali.

The second reason was that Baali treated his younger brother Sugriv as his arch rival and enemy. Since Lord Ram had befriended Sugriv and lent him his full support to retrieve his lost honour and share of the kingdom, it would obviously infuriate Baali, who would treat the Lord as siding with his enemy and being hands-in-glove with Sugriv.

Going by the age old adage that 'an enemy's friend is my enemy too', it would mean two things in the present scenario: One, since Baali was Ravana's friend, he would treat anyone hostile to Ravana as being his friend's enemy, and Baali would be duty-and-morally bound by the virtue of his friendship treaty with Ravana to stop someone hostile to the latter from passing through his own kingdom unchallenged and unopposed. The other side of the situation was equally alarming—since Baali was hostile to Sugriv, and since Lord Ram was not only Sugriv's friend but had also promised the latter his full support against Baali, it obviously meant that the Lord had put himself in the cross-hairs of Baali, the king of Kishkindha.

It is apparent that under these two aforesaid conditions, it would have been an extreme folly for the Lord to neglect the horrifying prospect of having an enemy's friend (i.e. Baali, the friend of Ravana), as well as his own friend's enemy (i.e. Sugriv's enemy Baali) right behind his back, literally in his backyard, once he moved some distance into the territory of Kishkindha.

The Lord did not want to take daring risks, and being wise and prudent as he was he also wished to take precautions against the so-called 'Murphy's Law' which states that "if anything can go wrong, it will". To wit, if there was a lurking risk and a danger of being ambushed by Baali, or of being caught by him and getting imprisoned, or having to confront him and his powerful army of monkey-and-bear warriors in an unnecessary battle that would lead to an equally unnecessary bloodshed, the chances are that it would actually materialize, and this would trap the Lord and hinder his progress.

Hence, it was a strategic military move by Lord Ram to decide to get rid of Baali before he actually crossed the latter's kingdom to go to its other side to cross the ocean to reach the island of Lanka. This decision was necessitated by circumstances because it would have been extremely dangerous and suicidal to cross the territory of Kishkindha whose king, Baali, may prove the greatest hurdle in the path of Lord Ram.

That said, another question crops up in our minds: The Lord could have extended his hand of friendship to Baali instead of getting rid of him outright by killing him straight away; so why did the Lord not opt for this option? Once again, the answer is very obvious and simple: Lord Ram's objective was to vanquish Ravana in order not only to free Sita but also to eliminate the scourge of the cruelty and terror unleashed by the ferocious demons on this planet. Supposing Baali asked Lord Ram the reason for his mission of going to Lanka, and learnt that the Lord was duty-and-morally bound to slay the demons as he had promised to do so to the gods, mother earth and sages a long time ago, it was certain that Baali wouldn't approve of it, because Ravana was Baali's long-time friend. Even if Baali may not have overtly expressed his opposition to the Lord's plans, it was sure that he would alert his friend Ravana of the impending danger to him from a very powerful enemy, i.e. Lord Ram, for the Lord had the backing and full support of the gods to help him eliminate the demons.

Even if Baali kept quiet and adopted a neutral stance, Lord Ram would still be handicapped for want of an army to fight the ferocious demon army—because he was sure Baali would never lend his army of monkey and bear warriors to fight alongside the Lord against his long-time friend Ravana, as that would obviously be a betrayal of a friend, and hence unpardonable and punishable even by the standards set by Lord Ram himself when he defined the virtues of true friendship to Sugriv. But since from a practical perspective the Lord needed a physical army to fight a bloody and extended war with the ferocious demon army, so it became obligatory, under the circumstances, for the Lord to install a favourable king, in this case Sugriv, on the throne of Kishkindha and remove a hostile and unfriendly king, in this case Baali, from it—so that the Lord would be sure of getting the support of a full-fledged army when he launched his military campaign on Lanka.

Should Baali create some nuisance on one or the other pretext mentioned herein above, Lord Ram's plans would come a cropper. Hence, it was necessary to get rid of him before the Lord progressed with the next phase of his mission.

These were the obvious reasons why the Lord decided to help Sugriv retrieve his lost honour and share of the kingdom of Kishkindha by eliminating his brother Baali, a move that on the face value looks wrong for the Lord to have intervened in

personal grudges and feuds between two brothers, and, instead of playing the role of a mediator and trying to make peace between them, taking the extreme step of siding with one brother and killing the other for no direct harm that the latter had ever caused to the Lord himself. Lord Ram's intent is clear here: first he wanted to remove Baali from the scene because the latter was a friend of Ravana, and two, by obliging Sugriv the Lord would be sure to get help and support from a powerful ally, that would include the forceful punch which the mighty army of monkey and bear warriors of Kishkindha would naturally give to the Lord once the kingdom's ruler becomes an ally of the Lord, as this help would prove pivotal for the Lord in facing and vanquishing a formidable foe, the demon king Ravana and his ferocious army of demons.

Lord Ram weighed the pros and the cons of the matter quickly in his mind, and made a spontaneous decision to support Sugriv against his brother Baali.

Now let us read what the Lord said himself to Sugriv in connection with the age old institution of 'friendship'.]

चौ०. जे न मित्र दुख होहिं दुखारी । तिन्हि बिलोकत पातक भारी ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

jē na mitra dukha hōhiṁ dukhārī. tinahi bilōkata pātaka bhārī. 1.

Extolling the virtues of a good friend and deploring those of an unworthy and unreliable friend, Lord Ram said (to Sugriv)—'It is tantamount to committing a great sin to even see (i.e. have any sort of relation with) a person who does not feel sad and distressed at the sorrows and distresses of his friend. [Such a friend who has no sympathy is selfish and not a good person by any count, and he should be avoided at all costs.] (1)

[Note—In these verses, Lord Ram outlines and extols the principles that govern the institution of 'friendship'. This is the first principle: a person should empathise as well as sympathise with his friend. To be helpful to others, and not only a friend, is a great virtue lauded by Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 31 wherein the Lord has praised Jatau for his attempt to save Sita from the clutches of her abductor, the demon king Ravana, and in the process getting mortally wounded. Since Jatau had offered his life to help others, in this case it was Sita, the Lord sent him to heaven for this noble deed; it is the reason which the Lord cited for the auspicious destiny that Jatau got.

This edict of the Lord is in consonant with what he says regarding the glorious virtues of saints and his devotees indirectly by describing the negative qualities of non-saints and non-devotees as follows—'non-saints feel most unhappy and distressed out of jealousy, as if they have developed high fever with chill, when they hear someone's praise; and on the contrary, if they see others in distress and trouble they feel so happy as if they have been anointed as the king of the world'. (Refer—Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 39.)

In other words, if one feels happy at the sorrows of his friend then he is to be treated as being a non-saint, and therefore condemnable and worthy of scorn. On the

other hand, if one feels sorrow when he sees his friend in misery then he is to be regarded as a saint, and therefore worthy of respect.]

निज दुख गिरि सम रज करि जाना । मित्रक दुख रज मेरु समाना ॥ २ ॥

nija dukha giri sama raja kari jānā. mitraka dukha raja mēru samānā. 2.

On the other hand, a person who treats his own sorrows, distresses and miseries that may be as huge as mountains to be as inconsequential and trifle as if they were only small specks of dust particles, but who regards the misfortunes and miseries of his friend to be as huge as Mt. Meru, though in fact such torments may be small like a dust particle, is indeed worthy to be called a true friend. (2)

[Note—This is the second principle. One should not think that his friend is making a fuss over small problems that one has himself not bothered much when one faced the same situation. A true friend must not find excuses and say that the other person is unnecessary worried at small things which hadn't bothered him when he witnessed them himself. Instead, he should make all sincere efforts to see that the distressed friend is given all possible help and advice to the best of one's ability.

The psychological impact of treating one's own huge miseries to be like a dust particle on the one hand, and his friend's miseries to be huge even if they are inconsequential on the other hand is that the person is motivated to help his friend with full strength at his command—because he can properly empathise with his friend, fully understand his distress and gauge the intensity of his suffering as he has personally experienced the same sort of suffering, albeit in a reduced scale.

Mt. Meru is the abode of Gods, and is considered as the biggest mountain.]

जिन्ह कें असि मति सहज न आई । ते सठ कत हठि करत मिताई ॥ ३ ॥

jinha kēm asi mati sahaja na ā'ī. tē saṭha kata haṭhi karata mitā'ī. 3.

Those persons for whom this attitude does not come naturally, those who do not have this praise-worthy temperament and an inborn desire to help their friends unconditionally and feel intense sympathy for their sufferings—such persons are wicked and selfish (and therefore unsuitable to make friends).

Why do they offer their friendship to others (to deceive them), as they have no moral right to make friends or offer their friendship to anyone? [Such persons as described here have no right to be called a 'friend' because this is a bond that requires sincerity, honesty and integrity which they lack. If anyone makes such a person a friend, then sooner or later the former would be betrayed by the latter, and surely he is to become a victim of betrayal that leads to frustration, disgust, a broken heart, emotional stress, agony and pain.] (3)

[Note—One must be alert when making friends; one must be careful while accepting the offer of friendship from others. One must judge for himself if the other person is not offering his friendship for some sort of selfish ends; or if he would be friend only till the time is good, and turn his back when the time gets tough. It is better not to

have such friends at all. This is the third principle of friendship—to be loyal and faithful towards one's friend once one has decided to befriend the other person. Selfish friends are best avoided.]

कुपथ निवारि सुपंथ चलावा । गुण प्रगटै अवगुनन्हि दुरावा ॥ ४ ॥

kupatha nivāri supantha calāvā. guṇa pragaṭai avagunānhi durāvā. 4.

It is ordained upon and expected of a true friend that he stops his companion (friend) from following any wrong path, from any wrong doings or making mistakes of which he might not be aware. Instead, the former should prevail upon the latter and advise him to follow the path that is correct and right.

A true friend must not only motivate his companion to follow the righteous path but also highlight his good virtues and hide his faults (so that the world comes to know of his good virtues on the one hand, and he is afforded protection from criticism by the world on the other hand). (4)

[Note—This is the fourth principle of friendship. A true friend is like a loyal companion and a sibling who would jump to the defense of his friend if others criticize him. Instead of joining the chorus against his friend, he must defend him like a loyal soldier defends his commander or king. This is because his friend and companion has reposed faith and trust in him, and if he also begins to criticize the friend it would be tantamount to betrayal of this faith and trust, which is a grave sin that is unpardonable.]

देत लेत मन संक न धरई । बल अनुमान सदा हित करई ॥ ५ ॥

dēta lēta mana saṅka na dhara'ī. bala anumāna sadā hita kara'ī. 5.

One should not harbour any kind of doubts about the friend's integrity and honesty in one's dealing with him (because true friendship is that which is based on integrity, trust, faith, sincerity, truthfulness and honesty).

One should help the friend in accordance to one's strength, ability and powers.

[To wit, one should not avoid helping a friend and find excuses if it is within his means. However, this does not mean that one should be boastful about his abilities, strengths and powers by giving false assurances to the friend as this would land the latter in a grave situation because he will over-estimate the help that he can expect from his friend and not make alternative arrangements to meet contingencies. This is misleading the friend, and is as bad as betrayal.] (5)

[Note—These are respectively the fifth and sixth principles of friendship.

The trust should be mutual and unequivocal. It is better to first examine thoroughly about the antecedents and worthiness of a person before accepting him as a friend, for the risk is grave. But once the selection is done, there should be no secret doubts because such things create friction and ill-will as some stage, and lead to souring of relations sooner or later. This is more dangerous later on than not making a

friend at all—as the opponent comes to know many a secrets that a person would have liked to keep with him in the first instance.

Similarly, the help is to be made in accordance to one's ability. One must be truthful in telling his friend to what extent he can help the latter, so that he is not left in the lurch in the eleventh hour. Besides this, there is other reason why one should not over-step one's abilities—this would compound the problem for the person to whom help is given as the giver himself will land in trouble. Since it is deemed that both are good friends, the person who has been helped will now be in a fix as he faces a moral dilemma and becomes ridden with guilt that his good friend has been made to suffer for his cause. Newer and fresher problems would be created.]

बिपति काल कर सतगुन नेहा । श्रुति कह संत मित्र गुन एहा ॥ ६ ॥

bipati kāla kara sataguna nēhā. śruti kaha santa mitra guna ēhā. 6.

When the friend is facing bad times, one should extend his affection and help hundred times more to him than under normal circumstances. Verily, these are the signs, the characters and virtues of saints and friends according to the Srutis (Vedas, the ancient primary scriptures). (6)

[Note—This is the seventh principle of friendship. It implies that even if one does not show much interest in the daily affairs of a friend during the routine run of life, but should the friend fall upon bad times and face ill-fortune, a true friend should then come to his rescue to the best of his ability, subject to the overall guidance given as principle number six in verse no. 5. The offer of help and succour should be voluntary and selfless, and not done to humiliate the sufferer or bind him in some sort of obligation.]

आगें कह मृदु बचन बनाई । पाछें अनहित मन कुटिलाई ॥ ७ ॥

जा कर चित अहि गति सम भाई । अस कुमित्र परिहरेहिं भलाई ॥ ८ ॥

āgēm kaha mṛdu bacana banā'ī. pāchēm anahita mana kuṭilā'ī. 7.

jā kara cita ahi gati sama bhā'ī. asa kumitra pariharēhiṁ bhalā'ī. 8.

A person who pretends to be a fast friend by speaking pleasantly in front of one's face, but is so wicked and jealous that he criticizes him and speaks ill-will of him behind his back, and harbours an evil design against him in his mind—verily, such a person is like a venomous snake. It is better and helpful to abandon such an evil and wicked friend altogether. (7-8)

[Note—These lines caution us against pretentious and fraudulent friends who are cunning, wicked and selfish. They praise us because they wish to derive some benefit from us, perhaps because we are powerful and influential. But behind our backs they do not hesitate in pouring venom against us. Such persons are no less than traitors living in a kingdom who will betray the king and the kingdom at the fall of a hat. It is

better to guard against them like one is alert from a venomous snake, for one does not know when the snake will bite!]

सेवक सठ नृप कृपन कुनारी । कपटी मित्र सूल सम चारी ॥ ९ ॥

sēvaka saṭha nr̥pa kṛpana kunārī. kapaṭī mitra sūla sama cārī. 9.

A foolish, block-head and dumb-witted servant, server or follower, a miserly and stingy king (who is not generous and compassionate), a wicked, evil and bad-tempered woman, and a pretentious, unscrupulous and deceitful friend—verily, all of them are akin to a spear that causes horrible torments as they are the cause of interminable suffering. (9)

[Note—These people behave like fast friends on the surface, but they create more problems and nuisance for a person by his contact with them, and he would have been better off had he been free from their company. They are of more harm than any good for him.

They are like the different kinds of pain inside the body of a man which makes him suffer and writhe continuously, though this pain cannot be seen in physical terms on the outside. The immense mental and emotional stress as well as physical distress and agony such people cause to a person make him tormented as if he is suffering from some severe and chronic disease.

If a servant is stupid or dumb-witted, he will cause his master more headache and troubles than he would have imagined. Such a servant will put the master in great trouble by his foolish deeds.

A miserly and stingy king will extract taxes from his subjects at an exorbitant rate, without bothering about their ability to pay it or if this is causing undue hardship to them. He will not spend a dime for the welfare of the citizens of his own kingdom, and greed for more. In such a kingdom, the people suffer due to lack of basic amenities and facilities. They cannot prosper as they fear that any activity towards gaining prosperity and affluence is useless as it would incite the king's jealousy and he who would snatch their wealth to enrich himself.

A wicked woman is a man's greatest horror. He shivers at the thought of returning home after a hard day's toil to face a woman grumbling at him and teasing him endlessly. An evil woman with loose character brings bad name to the whole family. A disloyal wife and a cruel woman is a bane for any man.

And of course, an unfaithful friend is like a venomous serpent as already pointed out in Chaupai line no. 8 above.]

सखा सोच त्यागहु बल मोरें । सब बिधि घटब काज मैं तोरें ॥ ५ ॥

sakhā sōca tyāgahu bala mōrēm. saba bidhi ghaṭaba kāja maim tōrēm. 5.

My dear friend (sakhā), rely on my strength and stop worrying, for I would help you in all possible ways so that whatever you wish is attained.¹ (5)

[Note—¹Lord Ram has extended an unequivocal support to Sugriv to help the latter retrieve his honour and self-respect, as well as his wife and share of the kingdom that had been forcibly snatched from him by Baali as a reciprocal gesture of goodwill to acknowledge Sugriv's own unconditional offer of help to Lord Ram, in all possible ways, to find and free his wife Sita from the clutches of the demon Ravana—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2, 7-8 that precede Doha no. 5.

The language used by Lord Ram, viz. “saba bidhi ghaṭaba kāja maiṁ tōrēm”, also mirrors the language used by Sugriv when he had promised Lord Ram that he would help the Lord in all possible ways to get Sita back, viz. “saba prakāra kariha'um' sēvakā'ī”. Both promises are the same—that they, Lord Ram and Sugriv, would help each other in all possible ways like true friends should.]

कह सुग्रीव सुनहु रघुबीरा । बालि महाबल अति रनधीरा ॥ ११ ॥
दुंदुभि अस्थि ताल देखराए । बिनु प्रयास रघुनाथ ढहाए ॥ १२ ॥

kaha sugrīva sunahu raghubīrā. bāli mahābala ati ranadhīrā. 11.
dundubhi asthi tāla dēkharā'ē. binu prayāsa raghunātha ḍhahā'ē. 12.

{When Lord Ram offered to help Sugriv get back his lost honour and rights, the latter told the Lord that Baali, his oppressor, is not an ordinary opponent, but one who is virtually invincible as he is an excellent warrior and exceptionally strong and powerful. Hence, it is not possible to subdue him so easily. Nevertheless, in order to let Lord Ram ascertain himself if he would be able to actually vanquish Baali and fulfill the promise he had made to Sugriv, the latter requested the Lord to take a test and judge for himself his abilities in this connection. What was this test? Now, we shall read about it in the verses that follow herein below.}

Sugriv said to Lord Ram: ‘Oh Lord Ram, the brave and valiant Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu (raghubīrā)! Baali has exceptional strength and is a great warrior who easily proves his mettle in the battle-field, for he is invincible in a duel and fearless when challenged.’ (11)

Saying this, Sugriv pointed out to Lord Ram a heap of bones belonging to the demon Dundubhi lying at a distance¹, and a cluster of tall coconut trees standing nearby².

Lord Ram, the Lord of the great family descending from an ancient king named Raghu (raghunātha), shot a single arrow that felled these coconut trees very easily, without any trouble. (12)

[Note—¹The demon Dundubhi: His story is narrated in (a) Valmiki's Ramayana, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11; and (b) Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 61-67.

Dundubhi was the elder son of a demon named ‘Maye’; his younger brother was called Mayavi. Briefly, the story of Dundubhi is as follows:

There was a very strong demon named ‘Maye’ who was the son of Diti (the mother of the demon race). Maye was an expert in the art of sculpture. Once he did Tapa for one thousand years to please Brahma, the creator, and when asked for boons he sought and received the entire wealth, the skills of sculpting and all other merits of

Sukracharya, the guru of the demon race. Maye became infatuated with an Apsara (a beautiful damsel of heaven) called Hema. Indra, the king of gods, became infuriated, and he used his powerful weapon called Vajra to slay Maye as a punishment for being greedy as he had usurped the wealth of his guru Sukracharya, as well as for being lascivious because he had corrupted Hema.

Maye had two sons—Mayavi and Dundubhi. Once, Baali, the king of the monkey race, had killed Dundubhi. This story is narrated in Valmiki's Ramayana, in Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11.

Dundubhi had the strength equivalent to a thousand wild elephants; he had a colossal body that was like a mammoth wild buffalo, had horns like sharp lancets or spears, and it towered as high as the summit of Mt. Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. He was exceedingly haughty and arrogant. Proud of his invincibility and powers, he once went to the deity of the ocean to fight with the latter. Ocean told him that he was not competent to fight with the demon, so he must instead go and challenge the king of mountains, known as Himwan (or the Himalayas), who was the father-in-law of Lord Shiva and the father of goddess Parvati. Himwan also had the good honour of giving shelter to countless sages, hermits and ascetics who lived within his realm in the Himalayan mountain ranges. When Dundubhi approached Himwan, the latter too declined to fight with him, and instead directed the demon warrior to Baali, the son of Indra, as he was fit to have a duel with him. This is because a duel should always be between equal challengers, i.e. the challengers must be equal in strength and powers in order to derive any merit when either of them wins.

Upon reaching the gates of the city of Kishkindha, Dundubhi began thundering and bellowing as he thrust his horns violently against the doors in an attempt to break them. When Baali heard this commotion, he came to the gate and requested Dundubhi to go away peacefully if he wished to live. Becoming more furious because he thought Baali was afraid to face him, and also because he felt insulted by Baali when told to go back if he wanted to survive, Dundubhi became ferociously violent and challenged Baali's manliness and valour in different ways. Unable to bear such rudeness on the part of Dundubhi, Baali emerged from the city gates, caught hold of Dundubhi by his horns, and swinging him round and round he viciously dashed the latter repeatedly on the ground. This was followed with a hand-to-hand duel involving severe punches by fists and knees, vicious kicks and arm twisting, as well as violent thrashing of each other with large boulders, trees etc.

Finally, Baali killed Dundubhi, and lifting the buffalo's bleeding corpse Baali swung it around and then flung it away so violently that it shot into the air like a missile and went as far as one yojan (roughly eight miles) before landing near Mt. Rishyamook. But since Dundubhi's body was giant and heavy, it smashed a large number of trees in the forest that lay in vicinity of Rishyamook as it fell down on the ground. Not only this, since it was bleeding heavily, blood dripped from the corpse as it flew in the sky, and wind carried drops of blood in different directions. Some of it sprayed on the hermitage of sage Matang, thereby defiling its sanctity and infuriating the sage. The sage became so angry that he cursed the person who had caused this horrible thing to happen, casting an evil spell that if that person (in this case it was Baali) or any of his attendants ever happen to come within a radius of one yojans of the sage's hermitage, his head would split into a thousand pieces.

Baali became terrified of the sage's curse, and since that time he or any of his ministers or warriors never ever dared to come near Mt. Rishyamook.

This is the reason why Sugriv took shelter atop the summit of Mt. Rishyamook when he was beaten and chased away by Baali from the capital city of

Kishkindha due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers. {Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-13 that precede Doha no. 6; (b) Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 60-68.}

²The story goes that on some previous occasion Baali had collected seven fruits of the coconut tree and kept them on the ground to take bath in the lake known as Pampa. When he returned he found that a huge python was sitting on these seven fruits. This was tantamount to defiling the fruits, and so Baali cursed the serpent that the seven fruits would pierce his body and grow into tall trees. When the mother of the serpent came to know of this curse, she also cursed Baali that anyone who would cut these seven coconut trees with a single arrow would be the one who would also kill him.

According to another legend, Baali used to shake these coconut trees and fell their fruits whenever he wished. These fruits fell down on the heap of bones of the dead demon Dundubhi, which annoyed his soul. So the deity of the forest cursed that anyone who would pierce these tall coconut trees in one arrow would also slay Baali—apropos: Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 72-73.

Sugriv asked Lord Ram to fell the seven coconut trees with one arrow, and if he successfully did it then it will convincingly be proved that he would be able to fell Baali too—refer: (a) Valmiki's Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 11, verse nos. 84-89; (b) Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 72-75.]

देखि अमित बल बाढ़ी प्रीती । बालि बधब इन्ह भइ परतीती ॥ १३ ॥
बार बार नावइ पद सीसा । प्रभुहि जानि मन हरष कपीसा ॥ १४ ॥

dēkhi amita bala bāṛhī prītī. bāli badhaba inha bha'i paratītī. 13.
bāra bāra nāva'i pada sīsā. prabhuhi jāni mana haraṣa kapīsā. 14.

When Sugriv observed the stupendous powers and majestic abilities of Lord Ram (as was self-evident when the Lord felled the seven coconut trees with a single arrow), he developed robust faith in the Lord and became convinced that the Lord would indeed be able to eliminate Baali (and thereby remove his arch enemy whom Sugriv feared like hell). (13)

Sugriv repeatedly bowed his head at the feet of the Lord, and realizing that Lord Ram was someone who was not an ordinary prince as he appeared to be from his physical appearances, the king of the monkeys (kapīsā)¹ felt very delighted and glad (that at last he has met someone who was not merely a friend but also a powerful and able ally, someone on whom he could depend to restore his honour and avenge the wrong done to him by his elder brother Baali). (14)

[Note—¹This choice of word is very interesting—for it shows that Sugriv already started imagining himself as the king of monkeys of the kingdom of Kishkindha. Although it was still a dream, for Baali was still alive and Lord Ram could decide not to interfere in a dispute between two siblings, yet Sugriv was so sure of getting rid of his arch enemy and ascending the throne of Kishkindha that he began treating himself as a 'king' right away.

This obviously is the reason why Sugriv ‘bowed his head repeatedly before Lord Ram’, for now Sugriv wanted to appease the Lord and keep him in good humour as much as he could, and as much as possible, so that the Lord might not change his decision to help Sugriv get back his share of the kingdom by interceding on his behalf to eliminate his enemy Baali. Sugriv was obviously pampering Lord Ram to ensure that the Lord would overcome all hesitations in this respect, if he did have any, and go ahead about keeping his word to slay Baali and restore Sugriv’s honour.

From the perspective of a neutral observer, these developments do not show Sugriv in a good light, for it is apparent that all his show of submission and supplication and humility before Lord Ram was driven more out of selfishness than any real devotion for the Lord. Did Lord Ram knew this fact about Sugriv, that the latter is pretentious, and that all his affirmation of devotion for the Lord, his talks of wisdom*1, and his promises to help the Lord to find and recover Sita*2 are hollow and tall talks, for everything would soon be forgotten once his own selfish ends are met? Yes, the Lord fully understood how lowly and selfish Sugriv was—and the Lord’s indignation in this respect is evident in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 18. We shall be reading about it by-and-by.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, *1 = Chaupai line nos. 15-21 that precede Doha no. 7 herein below.

*2 = Chaupai line nos. 2, 7-8 that precede Doha no. 5 herein above.}

In Chaupai line no. 22 that precedes Doha no. 7 herein below we read that after Sugriv gave a lecture on wisdom and wise thoughts before Lord Ram, the Lord ‘smiled’. This smile of the Lord was a sarcastic response to Sugriv’s discourse on wisdom and virtues, for the Lord knew well that everything would vanish in a couple of days.]

उपजा ग्यान बचन तब बोला । नाथ कृपाँ मन भयउ अलोला ॥ १५ ॥
 सुख संपति परिवार बड़ाई । सब परिहरि करिहउँ सेवकाई ॥ १६ ॥
 ए सब राम भगति के बाधक । कहहिं संत तव पद अवरधक ॥ १७ ॥
 सत्रु मित्र सुख दुख जग माहीं । माया कृत परमारथ नाही ॥ १८ ॥

upajā gyāna bacana taba bōlā. nātha kṛpām̐ mana bhaya'u alōlā. 15.
 sukha sampati parivāra barā'ī. saba parihari kariha'um̐ sēvakā'ī. 16.
 ē saba rāma bhagati kē bādhaka. kahahim̐ santa tava pada avarādhaka. 17.
 satru mitra sukha dukha jaga māhīm̐. māyā kṛta paramāratha nāhīm̐. 18.

Sugriv showed signs of wisdom when he said: ‘Oh Lord, by thy grace my mind has now become stable and calm as all uncertainties and consternations, that had hitherto kept my mind on tenterhooks and made it restless, have been dispelled. (15)

I shall keep my mind free from being engaged in physical comforts, charms of material wealth, attachments with the family, and getting inflated by praises and honours. I shall shun all these demeaning things, but would rather focus myself in serving you to the best of my abilities. (16)

Verily indeed, those who are pious, learned and wise, as well as are devoted to thee and worship thine holy feet (*santa --- tava pada avarādhaka*), unequivocally aver that all these and other such things (as listed herein above) are obstacles in the path of Bhakti (devotion for the Lord God). (17)

To treat someone as one's enemy or a friend, to have happiness and joy on the one hand, and sadness and grief on the other hand—all such contradictory situations are created due to 'Maya' (i.e. due to delusions and ignorance about the reality of existence in this gross, delusory world). They are all imaginary, and not the reality. (18)

बालि परम हित जासु प्रसादा । मिलेहु राम तुम्ह समन बिषादा ॥ १९ ॥
 सपनें जेहि सन होइ लराई । जागें समुझत मन सकुचाई ॥ २० ॥
 अब प्रभु कृपा करहु एहि भाँती । सब तजि भजनु करौं दिन राती ॥ २१ ॥

bāli parama hita jāsū prasādā. milēhu rāma tumha samana biṣādā. 19.
 sapanēm jēhi sana hō'i larā'ī. jāgēm samujhata mana sakucā'ī. 20.
 aba prabhu kṛpā karahu ēhi bhām'tī. saba taji bhajanu karaum dina rātī. 21.

Baali has proved to be my best well-wisher, for it is due to him that I have been fortunate enough to meet you, oh Lord Ram, who is the eliminator of all sorts of sorrows, grief and sadness.

[To wit, I sincerely thank Baali for having chased me out of the capital and creating so much fear in me that I would come and live here on Mt. Rishyamook to escape his wrath. Had he not done so, then say how would I have ever met you, oh Lord. Surely then, whom I had been treating all along as my worst enemy has turned out to be my best well-wisher, for the credit of my meeting you actually goes to Baali.] (19)

Ah, I had never imagined that he (Baali)— who had terrified me so much that if I ever dreamt of fighting with him even in my dreams, I would shiver at the very thought of this dream when I woke up— would actually be so graceful upon me and become my benefactor, albeit in a disguise (because it is due to him that I have had the golden opportunity to meet Lord Ram)! (20)

Oh Lord Ram, now be pleased with me and bless me so that I can forsake everything else, and focus my attention instead on worshipping you (and having devotion for you).’ (21)

सुनि बिराग संजुत कपि बानी । बोले बिहँसि रामु धनुपानी ॥ २२ ॥
 जो कछु कहेहु सत्य सब सोई । सखा बचन मम मृषा न होई ॥ २३ ॥
 नट मरकट इव सबहि नचावत । रामु खगेस बेद अस गावत ॥ २४ ॥

sunī birāga sanjūta kapi bānī. bōlē biham'si rāmu dhanupānī. 22.
 jō kachu kahēhu satya saba sō'ī. sakhā bacana mama mṛṣā na hō'ī. 23.

naṭa marakaṭa iva sabahi nacāvata. rāmu khagēsa bēda asa gāvata. 24.

When Lord Ram, who holds a bow in his hand (*dhanupānī*), heard the aforesaid words of wisdom spoken by Sugriv, words that seemed to be imbued with the virtues of renunciation and dispassion towards this material world and its charms, the Lord smiled wryly in sarcasm¹. (22)

The Lord told Sugriv: ‘My friend, whatever you have said just now is truly welcome, but I am always true to my word too, and my words won’t go in vain.

[To wit, though you have declared your intention to renounce all comforts and pleasures of the world as well as all its ties, such as that with your family, friends, kith and kin, and the attractions of kingdom too, as they are obstacles in the path of Bhakti (devotion for Lord God, for which one needs to practice renunciation, detachment and dispassion), yet since I have promised you to restore your right to the crown of the kingdom as well as your honour and prestige, I have to do it, and this means that you must accept the crown of Kishikindha and rule it as a king, though you would like to renounce it and pursue a life of dispassion and detachment like that of a religious person, a recluse, a saint, a hermit, or a friar.]’ (23)

The saintly crow Kaagbhusund said to Garud, the king of birds²: ‘Oh king of birds (*khagēsa*)! Vedas (ancient scriptures) say that Lord Ram makes the world and its creatures dance to his tunes just like a monkey charmer makes his pet do his bid.³’ (24)

[Note—¹Why did Lord Ram smile wryly in a contemptuous way? It is because the Lord knew that sooner rather than later Sugriv will forget all that he has professed and preached now, for once he gets the kingdom and its crown after his arch rival Baali is out of the way with the help of Lord Ram, he would revert to his good old ways of indulging in sensual pleasures and enjoyment of material comforts that come with kingship. Besides this, though Sugriv affirms now that he has resolved to have devotion for Lord Ram and avoid all things that come in the way of practicing Bhakti, but his vows and resolutions would be short-lived as he is fickle minded like a monkey inherently is by birth.

Lord’s indignation and contempt for Sugriv is understandable because though the latter pretends to be a wise fellow who is righteous, but has unfortunately become a victim of injustice at the hands of his brother Baali, yet he has no compunctions or regrets in betraying his own brother and seeking someone else’s help to get him killed to that he can grab the kingdom and its crown.

But Lord Ram chose to neglect it for a while under the compulsions of prevailing circumstances, as he needed a powerful ally and an army of strong warriors so that a war could be successfully fought and won in order to free his wife Sita from the clutches of his enemy, the demon king Ravana of Lanka.

We shall soon read that Lord Ram’s contempt for Sugriv and his resentment at having to help this selfish fellow comes out into the open when the Lord threatened to kill Sugriv with the same arrow with which Baali was killed. This happened when the Lord discovered that Sugriv had become indulgent in pleasures and comforts of the material world, had forgotten about all the loud talk of wisdom and renunciation and devotion that he had made a little time ago, as well as about his promise to the Lord that he would help him to find and free Sita from the clutches of her captor, even

though a lot of time had passed since that promise had been made. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 18.}

²As we have remarked on several previous occasions, Tulsidas has quoted three primary sources as being the principal narrators of this divine Story of Lord Ram that is known as ‘Ram Charit Manas’, and likewise there are three primary listeners—viz. Lord Shiva’s narration to Parvati, Kaagbhusund’s narration to Garud, and sage Yagyawalkya’s narration to sage Bharadwaj. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 30.}

So, sometimes Tulsidas cites Lord Shiva as the narrator and Parvati or Uma as the listener, sometimes Kaagbhusund as the narrator and Gurud as the listener, and sometimes sage Yagyawalkya as the narrator and sage Bharadwaj as the listener.

³The pet monkey of a monkey-charmer would do the bidding of his master. Likewise, all living beings in this creation act in accordance to the wish and orders of Lord Ram for the simple reason that he is the Lord of the entire creation and all that exists in it.

No one can violate the Lord’s command. In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 52; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 128; (b) Ayodhya Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 254; (c) Kishkindha Kand, (iv) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 7; (d) Uttar Kand, (v) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 78; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 113.

All these aforesaid verses have one common strand—that whatever happens is in accordance with the wish of Lord Ram, and nothing happens in this world without the Lord’s consent or approval.

The idea here is that no one must boast of his spiritual successes or any other kind of achievements in life, for all these successes and achievements have become possible for a person because Lord Ram had been gracious upon him.]

लै सुग्रीव संग रघुनाथा । चले चाप सायक गहि हाथा ॥ २५ ॥

तब रघुपति सुग्रीव पठावा । गर्जेसि जाइ निकट बल पावा ॥ २६ ॥

lai sugrīva saṅga raghunāthā. calē cāpa sāyaka gahi hāthā. 25.

taba raghupati sugrīva paṭhāvā. garjēsī jā’i nikaṭa bala pāvā. 26.

Then, Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghus (raghunāthā), picked up his bow and arrow in his hands, and taking Sugriv with him, he departed from there (to go and meet Baali). (25)

When they reached near the capital city of Kishkindha, Lord Ram sent Sugriv to go and challenge Baali for a duel. Encouraged and motivated by Lord Ram, and sure of the Lord’s support, Sugriv went forth with a flourish to meet Baali, shouting and thundering as he neared the gates of the city¹. (26)

[Note—¹Lord Ram and Sugriv had met at Mt. Rishyamook which was situated on the outer fringes of the kingdom of Kishkindha, towards the other side of lake Pampa that faced the hermitage of Sabari. So now, Lord Ram, Laxman and Sugriv, along with the companions of the latter who lived with him during the days of his exile, such as

Hanuman and others, departed from Mt. Rishyamook and reached the outskirts of the capital city of Kishkindha. Then, Lord Ram sent Sugriv to go and challenge Baali for a duel. Though Sugriv would have ordinarily shuddered at the very thought of facing Baali alone, but this time he was quite bold and confident as he had the support of Lord Ram.]

सुनत बालि क्रोधातुर धावा । गहि कर चरन नारि समुझावा ॥ २७ ॥
 सुनु पति जिन्हहि मिलेउ सुग्रीवा । ते द्वौ बंधु तेज बल सींवा ॥ २८ ॥
 कोसलेस सुत लछिमन रामा । कालहु जीति सकहि संग्रामा ॥ २९ ॥

sunata bāli krōdhātura dhāvā. gahi kara carana nāri samujhāvā. 27.
 sunu pati jinhahi milē'u sugrīvā. tē dvau bandhu tēja bala sīnvā. 28.
 kōsalēsa suta lachimana rāmā. kālahu jīti sakahim saṅgrāmā. 29.

When Baali heard the thunderous roar of Sugriv, challenging his might and reputation, it was too much for the former to tolerate. So, Baali became infuriated and got up immediately to dash towards Sugriv to teach him a lesson for having dared to challenge his elder brother and defying his orders to keep out of his way.

In the meanwhile, Baali's wife (named Tara)¹ stepped forward and caught hold of her husband's feet in her desperate attempt to explain the situation to him and try to dissuade him from leaping madly to his own death. (27)

She said to Baali: 'Listen my dear husband (sunu pati)! The two brothers who have met Sugriv and have struck a bond of friendship with him are embodiments of energy and dynamism, as well as extremely powerful and valiant (tēja bala sīnvā). (28)

They are the sons of the king of Kaushal (another name for Ayodhya); their names are Lord Ram and Laxman respectively. Even Kaal, the indomitable god of death and destruction that devours everything and everyone in this world, would not be able to defeat these two brothers in a battle (for they are invincible)². (29)

[Note—¹Tara, the wife of Baali, the king of Kishkindha and the elder brother of Sugriv, was the daughter of the monkey chieftain named 'Sushen'. She had the mystical power to see into the future and foretell upcoming events, and had the sixth sense to perceive danger before it actually occurred. Her words were never futile, and her wisdom and analytical abilities were second to none. As it would be soon proved, her premonition of danger to her husband Baali, if he did not pay heed to her advice to avoid a confrontation with Sugriv at this particular point of time when the latter has obtained patronage of Lord Ram, turned into a reality when Baali was killed just as she had feared and predicted.

²As we progress in our reading of this fascinating Story of Ram Charit Manas, we would come to point when Mandodari, the wife of the demon king Ravana, also makes a similar plea and tries to dissuade her husband on four occasions from confronting Lord Ram as it would be to his own peril, and he must understand that no matter how powerful and strong he, Ravana, might be, he stood no chance of victory against Lord Ram. And as would be the case with Baali at present, who refused to

listen to his wife's sane advice, Ravana too turned a deaf ear to Mandodari's entreaties. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 36—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37; (b) Lanka Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 8; (iii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 16; and (iv) Doha no. 365 b—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38.}

As a consequence, both died—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Kishkindha Kand, Doha nos. 8 and 10 (Baali); (b) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-9 that precede Doha no. 103 (Ravana).

Upon Ravana's death, Mandodari had wailed and lamented inconsolably, regretting that her husband did not pay heed to her as he was under the influence of bad times that deludes a person's wisdom and rational thinking which is usually the case as a precursor to death —apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos 1-13 that precede Doha no. 104.

Tara too has regretted her husband's death and wailed inconsolably—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 11.

As to the question how Tara came to know that Sugriv had befriended Lord Ram and Laxman, it is quite possible that she had kept some private spies on watch over the activities of Sugriv, and it were these spies who had informed her of the developments.]

दो०. कह बाली सुनु भीरु प्रिय समदरसी रघुनाथ ।

जौं कदाचि मोहि मारहिं तौ पुनि होउँ सनाथ ॥ ७ ॥

dōhā.

kaha bālī sunu bhīru priya samadarasī raghunātha.

jaum kadāci mōhi mārāhim tau puni hō'um sanātha. 7.

Baali said to his wife: 'Listen my dear (priya)! You are very meek and terrified, but don't be so. Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghus (raghunātha), is an advocate of the virtues of equanimity; he treats everyone alike¹.

But still, in case he decides to kill me (due to some reason he deems fit), then it would also be for my own good and I would regard myself as being honoured and privileged to have met my end at the hands of the Lord.² (Doha no. 7)

[Note—¹We will get a clear hint of this in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 8 herein below where Lord Ram himself tells Sugriv that he could not distinguish between him and Baali as he found them appearing to be the same.

²This clearly indicates that Baali quietly knew who Lord Ram actually was—viz. that the Lord was no ordinary prince but a manifested form of the Supreme Being himself. This observation of Baali resonates with the thinking of Jatau, the vulture*1, as well as of Ravana, the king of demons*2. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, *1 = Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 31; *2 = Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 23.}

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 10—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11 herein below.]

चौ०. अस कहि चला महा अभिमानी । तून समान सुग्रीवहि जानी ॥ १ ॥
 भिरे उभौ बाली अति तर्जा । मुठिका मारि महाधुनि गर्जा ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

asa kahi calā mahā abhimānī. tṛṇa samāna sugrīvahi jānī. 1.
 bhirē ubhau bālī ati tarjā. muṭhikā māri mahādhuni garjā. 2.

Assuring his wife thus, Baali, who was extremely haughty and proud, went to confront Sugriv head-on, for he regarded the latter as being inconsequential as a humble twig, and therefore nothing to fear from¹. (1)

The two opponents clashed with each other furiously, with Baali thundering and posturing aggressively against Sugriv whom he punched fiercely while roaring in anger². (2)

[Note—¹Since Baali was very haughty and arrogant, he did not pay heed to his wife's sane advise, and being overconfident of himself and his powers, strength and abilities, he became a tad careless while dealing with Sugriv this time, for he thought that he would easily beat the latter back as he had done to him on previous occasions—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 6.

²The very sight of Sugriv whom Baali hated— especially when Baali saw how boldly Sugriv challenged his might and behaved impertinently before him— added fuel to the fire of indignation and anger that burnt in Baali's heart against Sugriv. Baali raged and thundered vehemently at his opponent for daring to show his face to him.]

तब सुग्रीव बिकल होइ भागा । मुष्टि प्रहार बज्र सम लागा ॥ ३ ॥
 मैं जो कहा रघुबीर कृपाला । बंधु न होइ मोर यह काला ॥ ४ ॥

taba sugrīva bikala hō'i bhāgā. muṣṭi prahāra bajra sama lāgā. 3.
 mairṁ jō kahā raghubīra kṛpālā. bandhu na hō'i mōra yaha kālā. 4.

One vicious stroke of Baali's fist was enough to make Sugriv extremely terrified; he ran from the field sore affright because Baali's punch was felt by him as he was struck by a thunderbolt¹. (3)

When Sugriv came to Lord Ram, he pleaded: 'See oh merciful Lord Ram (raghubīra kṛpālā), as I have told you earlier, he (Baali) is not at all my brother, but he is an embodiment of Death for me.²' (4)

[Note—¹The word used in the text is “Bajra”, also pronounced as “Vajra”, which is a weapon used by Indra, the king of gods. This Vajra is made of a material that is hard as rock. In practical terms, the word Vajra is used to symbolize the strike of a thunderbolt—because Indra is the patron deity of clouds, and the strike of Vajra is as hard, stunning and effective as a stroke of thunderbolt.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10-12 that precede Doha no. 6.

Sugriv’s statement is so ridiculous on the face of it—he forgets that it was he who had gone to challenge and fight his brother Baali, and it was not the other way round. Did Sugriv treat Baali as his ‘brother’? No, he treated Baali as his ‘enemy’, so how could he expect Baali to treat him as his brother? Baali would have been at fault if he had rejected any peace initiative of Sugriv, but the latter never offered any such hint of a compromise or had asked to be pardoned. On the contrary, Sugriv wanted to have his ‘brother’ Baali killed, and he had no regrets in this regard. And now that he has been beaten black and blue, he calls Baali as a personified form of his ‘death’.

Honestly, what did Sugriv expect from Baali: a warm and brotherly hug, in the situation when he had acted impertinently to go and insult his ‘elder brother’ by challenging him for a duel unto death, and that too relying on the strength of someone else, in this case Lord Ram, who, frankly speaking, was an outsider as far as the family feud between two princes of a kingdom was concerned?

Baali proved to be far superior in strength to Sugriv, but that was not Baali’s fault. During a fight, no one can, or should, expect mercy from his opponent. Say, if Baali had been a little soft towards Sugriv, would the latter have shown any leniency on the former? No, obviously not; Sugriv would have thrashed Baali mercilessly if given a chance to settle old scores with his arch enemy. So, how can he expect Baali to show mercy to him?]

एकरूप तुम्ह भ्राता दोऊ । तेहि भ्रम तें नहिं मारेउँ सोऊ ॥ ५ ॥

कर परसा सुग्रीव सरीरा । तनु भा कुलिस गई सब पीरा ॥ ६ ॥

ēkarūpa tumha bhrātā dō’ū. tēhi bhrama tēm nahim mārē’um’ sō’ū. 5.

kara parasā sugrīva sarīrā. tanu bhā kulisa ga’ī saba pīrā. 6.

Lord Ram replied: ‘You two brothers look so much alike that I could not distinguish between the two of you’¹. This is why I could not slay Baali for the fear of hitting you instead.’² (5)

The Lord touched Sugriv’s body with his healing touch, which had a miraculous effect on Sugriv as his body not only became hard as Vajra (kulisa), but all his pains and wounds were magically healed too. (6)

[Note—¹This statement of Lord Ram fits in perfectly well with Baali’s observation made to his wife Tara in Doha no. 7 herein above that Lord Ram ‘treats everyone equally’.

²Why did Lord Ram let Sugriv be beaten mercilessly by Baali so much so that Sugriv had to run away from the sight of Baali in order to save himself? Well, the Lord

refrained from interfering during this first bout of duel to clearly leave a message for Sugriv that left to his own account he would never ever be able to defeat Baali, so that in the eventuality of Sugriv going around boasting later on about his feat of having overcome his brother Baali and killing him in a duel in order to claim his right to the throne of Kishkindha, the Lord could call off his bluff by reminding him of this event when he had turned pale by a single punch of Baali, and had to run away from the battle-field terrified as a hounded rat.]

मेली कंठ सुमन कै माला । पठवा पुनि बल देइ बिसाला ॥ ७ ॥
पुनि नाना बिधि भई लराई । बिटप ओट देखहिं रघुराई ॥ ८ ॥

mēlī kaṇṭha sumana kai mālā. paṭhavā puni bala dē'i bisālā. 7.
puni nānā bidhi bha'ī larā'ī. biṭapa ōṭa dēkhaḥiṁ raghurā'ī. 8.

Then the Lord put a garland of flowers around his neck¹ as a mark to distinguish him from Baali (because the two brothers looked so much alike) as well as to assure Sugriv of victory over his adversary.

Having done that, the Lord motivated Sugriv and encouraged him to go once again and challenge Baali with renewed vigour and strength. (7)

Once again, the two opponents fought vigourously and adopted various postures to have an upper hand on the other. All the while Lord Ram concealed himself behind the trunk of a tree at a distance as he watched them fight it out². (8)

[Note—¹By putting the garland around Sugriv's neck, Lord Ram clearly hinted to Baali who would be the winner of this duel. Had Baali been a wee whit alert, he would have got this hint. But as his bad luck would have it, he missed this signal.

But why did Baali not take notice of this obvious sign? It was because he was mad with anger and lost all sense of judgment during the heat of battle.

²Why did Lord Ram hide himself behind the tree? There are two reasons for it: One is that if Baali saw Lord Ram, he would leave Sugriv and make a dash for the Lord, to either surrender himself before him, or to fight with him. The Lord did not want to create a scene at this juncture; he did not want the citizens of Kishkindha to know that it was he who had killed their king Baali. The Lord had many things to think about as already outlined in a note appended to Doha no. 6 herein above.

Presently, if the citizens thought that it was Sugriv who had killed Baali in a duel, then it would be easy for them to install him on the throne of Kishkindha because he was Baali's brother and had the right to the throne as next of kin of the slayed king. The Lord did not want to come out in the open in order not to antagonize the people of Kishkindha as he needed their army for his campaign at Lanka.

Another reason was that Baali had a boon that he would automatically get half of the strength of anyone who stands before him in a battle-field. This also necessitated the Lord to keep away from Baali's sight in order to prevent his strength from vesting automatically in Baali.]

दो०. बहु छल बल सुग्रीव कर हियँ हारा भय मानि ।

मारा बालि राम तब हृदय माझ सर तानि ॥ ८ ॥

dōhā.

bahu chala bala sugrīva kara hiyaṁ^१ hārā bhaya māni.
mārā bālī rāma taba hr̥daya mājha sara tāni. 8.

Meanwhile, Sugriv tried his best to defeat Baali by adopting all maneuverings he knew, putting his entire strength at stake, and posturing as well as he could in his all-out attempt to vanquish his adversary. But ultimately he failed against Baali, and losing all hopes of victory he was filled with fright in his heart.

Just at that moment, Lord Ram pulled the string of his bow and shot an arrow directly at Baali's heart¹. (Doha no. 8)

[Note—¹In the verses that follow herein below, we shall read the reason which Lord Ram gives to Baali when the latter questioned the Lord's wisdom, and the justification for unilaterally killing him without any provocation.

Meanwhile, the question arises: Why did Lord Ram shoot the arrow at Baali's heart instead of cutting off his head straight away? Well, the Lord wanted to make sure that the evil forces of hatred, pride and arrogance that lived in Baali's heart would bleed out so that he could be purified and become eligible for granting of deliverance, emancipation and salvation by the Lord when he would meet Baali shortly, for if Baali's head was chopped off with the hit of an arrow, he would die instantly, and the golden opportunity for Lord Ram to grant Baali's soul eternal peace would be lost for good. That would mean that Baali would have to take a re-birth, which would go contrary to the Lord's commitment that anyone, whosoever he is, who surrenders himself before the Lord is sure to have a place in the abode where the Lord lives himself, i.e. in the heaven, and his soul would be granted deliverance, emancipation, salvation, and eternal peace forever. And indeed, this is what happened when Lord Ram blessed Baali and sent him to his own abode in the heavens, as we shall soon read in the verses that follow—viz. Chaupai line no. 1 that follows Doha no. 9—to Chaupai line no. 1 that follows Doha no. 10.

Further, Lord Ram wished to keep the option open for allowing Baali to live a long life in case the latter wished to do, so as will be evident in Chaupai line no. 2 that follows Doha no. 9 herein below.

This option would closed if the Lord had cut Baali's head.]

चौ०. परा बिकल महि सर के लागें । पुनि उठि बैठ देखि प्रभु आगें ॥ १ ॥
स्याम गात सिर जटा बनाएँ । अरुन नयन सर चाप चढ़ाएँ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

parā bikala mahi sara kē lāgēm̐. puni uṭhi baiṭha dēkhi prabhu āgēm̐. 1.
syāma gāta sira jaṭā banā'ēm̐. aruna nayana sara cāpa caṛhā'ēm̐. 2.

Struck by the arrow, Baali fell to the ground in pain¹. Meanwhile, Lord Ram went near him, and when Baali saw the Lord standing close to him, he sat up. (1)

He saw the Lord who had a dark complexion, with his long hairs bundled into a coil over his head. He had red-hued eyes, and held an arrow and a stringed bow in his hands². (2)

[Note—¹We have read earlier that Lord Ram had promised Sugriv, his friend, that he would slay Sugriv's enemy Baali with a single arrow—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 6.

So, the Lord has kept his promise here. Killing Baali was not a joke, for he had a colossal body that was extremely strong and powerful. How do we know it? Well, on some previous occasion Baali had picked up the demon king Ravana when the latter went to challenge him, and then he tucked the mighty Ravana, who himself had a colossus body, in the hollow of his armpit where the demon king remained confined like a humble fly for many days before being released by Baali. Obviously, it is only possible when Baali would have had a body that was much larger than that of Ravana. This incident is cited by Angad when he was sent by Lord Ram to the court of Ravana in a last-ditch attempt to avoid a bloody war—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 24.

Slaying Baali with a single arrow was a remarkable feat indeed, and it was cited by Mandodari, Ravana's wife, as well as by Angad, Lord Ram's emissary, to warn Ravana the impossibility of him defeating Lord Ram in a war—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Sortha no. 33-a (Angad); (ii) Doha no. 36 (Mandodari).

The astounding mystical powers and the stupendous force of punch that Lord Ram's arrow had is also proved when the Lord had slayed the ferocious demoness named Tadka who attacked him while he and Laxman were accompanying sage Vishwamitra to the latter's hermitage—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 209.

A little while later, the Lord had flung the demon Marich across to the middle of the ocean, over hundreds of miles away, with the mere shaft of his arrow, and had simultaneously burnt to death his companion Subahu with another single arrow when these two demon warriors had gone to defile sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 210.

²Lord Ram holding an arrow and a stringed bow in his hands when he approached Baali was a signal to the latter not to try dirty tricks with the Lord, for the Lord was ready to deal with any situation that arose.]

पुनि पुनि चितइ चरन चित दीन्हा । सुफल जन्म माना प्रभु चीन्हा ॥ ३ ॥
हृदयँ प्रीति मुख बचन कठोरा । बोला चितइ राम की ओरा ॥ ४ ॥

puni puni cita'i carana cita dīnhā. suphala janma mānā prabhu cīnhā. 3.
hrdayam'prīti mukha bacana kaṭhōrā. bōlā cita'i rāma kī ōrā. 4.

Baali repeatedly glanced (puni puni cita'i) at Lord Ram (to make sure that it is the Supreme Being in the Lord's form who is standing before him). When he was sure that he had recognized the Lord (of whom he had heard in his life and about whom he had read in the scriptures—"prabhu cīnhā"), Baali regarded his life fulfilled

(suphala janma)¹. He then set aside all other thoughts and focused his attention on the holy feet of the Lord (carana cita dīnhā). (3)

Baali developed affection for the Lord in his heart (because he realized who the Lord actually was), but outwardly he showed anger when he looked up at the Lord and used harsh words to admonish the latter for killing him. (4)

[Note—¹From a spiritual perspective, what better and more blessed end of one's life's journey in this mortal world would be than to have the Lord standing before him and ready to grant his soul eternal peace. What more would a dying person want than to have deliverance, emancipation and emancipation for himself. Great sages, hermits and ascetics spend their entire lives doing Tapa and Yoga (austerities, penances and meditation), but rarely do they have the opportunity to meet the Lord himself at the end of their lives. It's a rarest of rare honour to have a vision of the Lord at the time of one's death, for it marks a successful end to all spiritual endeavours that a person had been doing throughout his life. This fact is reiterated by Baali himself in verses that follow herein below: refer to Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 10.

Earlier we have read a similar observation being made by Jatau, the vulture, who too died while Lord Ram was before him—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 31.

That is why Baali considered himself blessed, and his life fulfilled, when he saw Lord Ram standing before him.]

धर्म हेतु अवतरेहु गोसाईं । मारेहु मोहि व्याध की नाई ॥ ५ ॥

मैं बैरी सुग्रीव पिआरा । अवगुन कवन नाथ मोहि मारा ॥ ६ ॥

dharma hētu avatarēhu gōsā'īm. mārēhu mōhi byādha kī nā'īm. 5.
mairi bairi sugrīva pi'ārā. avaguna kavana nātha mōhi mārā. 6.

Baali chided Lord Ram thus: 'Oh revered and honourable Lord (gōsā'īm)! Thou hast manifested in order to uphold the laws and principles of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, correctness in action and thought). Then sayest thee, why did thou slay me (while hiding) like a hunter? (5)

I accept that I was hostile to my dear brother Sugriv, but that was no such great a crime or a sin or a vice which would be so severe and unpardonable that thou wouldst choose to kill me?

[Prithee, can thou give me a rational reason and a justification for which I have been killed. Do it for thine own sake and thine honourable reputation, for otherwise the world wouldst never forgive thee.]' (6)

अनुज बधू भगिनी सुत नारी । सुनु सठ कन्या सम ए चारी ॥ ७ ॥

इन्हि कुदृष्टि बिलोकइ जोई । ताहि बधें कछु पाप न होई ॥ ८ ॥

anuja badhū bhaginī suta nārī. sunu saṭha kan'yā sama ē cārī. 7.
inhahi kudrṣṭi bilōka'i jō'ī. tāhi badhēm kachu pāpa na hō'ī. 8.

Lord Ram replied to Baali: 'Listen you fool (sunu saṭha)! One must treat the wife of a younger brother, a sister and a daughter-in-law equally and in the same way as he would treat his own daughter. He must treat all these four ladies equally, without distinction. (7)

Anyone who views them with a malefic intention, or casts an evil eye on any one of them—then there is no wrongdoing in killing such an evil and sinful person¹. (8)

[Note—¹Baali had snatched Sugriv's wife at the time of kicking the latter out of the kingdom of Kishkindha—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 6.

Baali had questioned Lord Ram's wisdom and the propriety of the Lord's action of killing him. So, this was the Lord's justification—that anyone who casts an evil eye on his younger brother's wife deserves to be punished by death because it is a horrible sin in terms of 'Dharma' which Baali had invoked to admonish the Lord. Thus, Baali was caught in his own trap.

As to the question raised by Baali 'why did Lord Ram kill him from hiding like a hunter kills his prey', the answer to it, i.e. as to why Lord Ram did not wish to confront Baali face-to-face, is this: one, Baali had a boon that if anyone faces him in a battle-field, then Baali would immediately get a half of his opponent's strength; and two, the Lord wished to tell Baali that at a personal level he had no ill-will against the latter, and therefore the Lord did not want to fight Baali face-to-face like an enemy would.]

मूढ़ तोहि अतिसय अभिमाना । नारि सिखावन करसि न काना ॥ ९ ॥
मम भुज बल आश्रित तेहि जानी । मारा चहसि अधम अभिमानी ॥ १० ॥

mūrha tōhi atisaya abhimānā. nārī sikhāvana karasi na kānā. 9.
mama bhuja bala āśrita tēhi jānī. mārā cahasi adhama abhimānī. 10.

Oh you stupid fellow (mūrha)! You have an excess of haughtiness and arrogance in you (atisaya abhimānā)¹. That is why you would not listen to the sane advice given to you by your own wife (Tara)². (9)

In spite of being aware that Sugriv is relying on me and has been granted my patronage², you still tried to beat him fiercely and kill him. This shows how arrogant, haughty and egoist you are, as you directly challenged my authority by trying to kill someone whom I have promised protection.

[To wit, this dare-devilry on your part to hit at someone, whom I have given my word of protection, obviously brought you in direct conflict with me. Since you chose to insult me and undermine my authority indirectly by venting your ire on the poor Sugriv, who unfortunately had to bear the brunt of your viciousness by becoming a scapegoat for your anger that was actually directed at me, I too chose to hit back on you indirectly by shooting you down without confronting you directly face-to-face,

and instead, choosing Sugriv as a smokescreen to punish you for your misdeeds.]’
(10)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 8.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 27-29 that precede Doha no. 7.]

दो०. सुनुहु राम स्वामी सन चल न चातुरी मोरि ।
प्रभु अजहूँ मैं पापी अंतकाल गति तोरि ॥ ९ ॥
dōhā.

sunahu rāma svāmī sana cala na cāturī mōri.
prabhu ajahum̐ mair̐ pāpī antakāla gati tōri. 9.

To this answer of Lord Ram, Baali replied: ‘Oh Lord Ram, listen. My cunningness and smartness would not stand before you¹. But my dear Lord, I am still a sinner, and inspite of it I surrender myself before thee during these last moments of my life².

[Now therefore, it is upon thee to live upto thine reputation of forgiving sinners who admit their sins and submit themselves unconditionally before thee in the hope that thy wouldst grant them forgiveness, and at the same time bless them with the boon of deliverance, emancipation, salvation, eternal peace and beatitude.]’ (Doha no. 9)

[Note—¹In Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede this Doha no. 9 we have read that “Baali had developed affection for Lord Ram in his heart as he recognized that the Lord was a manifested form of the Supreme Lord of the world who had come to this world to restore the law of Dharma that was on the decline, but he concealed it and pretended to be angry at the Lord for killing him without reason”. This is why Baali now says that he must stop being smart with the Lord, and admit that he is feeling himself most blessed to meet his end in front of the Supreme Being who stood right in front of him—which in itself was a rare achievement.

²Baali had chided Lord Ram and tried to paint the Lord as being guilty of killing an innocent person. That is why Baali says that he is ‘still a sinner’, because even on his death bed he is trying to find fault in the Lord instead of praying for peace for his soul.]

चौ०. सुनत राम अति कोमल बानी । बालि सीस परसेउ निज पानी ॥ १ ॥
अचल करौं तनु राखहु प्राणा । बालि कहा सुनु कृपानिधाना ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

sunata rāma ati kōmala bānī. bāli sīsa parasē'u nija pānī. 1.
acala karauṁ tanu rākhahu prānā. bāli kahā sunu kṛpānidhānā. 2.

When Lord Ram heard Baali speaking politely, without any trace of arrogance or anger in his words, the Lord immediately mellowed down to become benevolent and merciful towards him. The Lord put his hands on Baali's head as a gesture of blessing and protection. (1)

Lord Ram said to Baali: 'I can grant your body an eternal life in this world (if you so wish).¹

Baali replied: 'Oh Lord, thou art a treasury of kindness, grace, mercy and benevolence (krpānidhānā)! Now listen to what I have to say. (2)

[Note—¹This is one of the reasons why Lord Ram had not chopped off Baali's head with his arrow, but had hit him in the heart as mentioned in Doha no. 6 herein above. It was to retain the option of being able to restore Baali's life and heal his wounds to give him the chance to live a long life in case Baali wished to have it that way.

Lord Ram had made a similar offer to Jatau, the vulture, in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31.]

जन्म जन्म मुनि जतनु कराहीं । अंत राम कहि आवत नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥

जासु नाम बल संकर कासी । देत सबहि सम गति अबिनासी ॥ ४ ॥

मम लोचन गोचर सोइ आवा । बहुरि कि प्रभु अस बनिहि बनावा ॥ ५ ॥

janma janma muni jatanu karāhīm. anta rāma kahi āvata nāhīm. 3.

jāsu nāma bala saṅkara kāsī. dēta sabahi sama gati abināsī. 4.

mama lōcana gōcara sō'i āvā. bahuri ki prabhu asa banihi banāvā. 5.

Great sages, hermits and ascetics strive hard and pursue different methods very diligently for many generations to attain the privilege of being able to meet the Supreme Being personally at the end of their life-span in this mortal world, but inspite of their best of efforts, Lord Ram, the manifested form of the Supreme Lord, does not come to oblige them at the time of their death. (3)

Lord Ram, whose name (jāsu nāma) is so potent and spiritually powerful that Lord Shiva relies on its strength (jāsu---bala), and invokes, it to grant liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death to every person who dies at Kashi (which is a pilgrim place considered to be the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva) by uttering the word "Ram" in the ears of the dying person, thereby granting his soul eternity and beatitude,¹ --- (4)

--- Say, that same Lord Ram has come within my eyesight (and is standing right before me). Oh Lord—tell me, can this rarest of rare golden opportunity (to attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, to attain eternal bliss and peace for my soul, to achieve beatitude and felicity for all times to come) ever come to me if I foolishly miss it now?²

[To wit, oh Lord, I may be a sinner, but I am not a stupid person. I realize that the golden chance of attaining beatitude, peace, bliss, deliverance, emancipation and salvation very easily is available to me right now, at this very moment, because the Lord who can grant it has come down personally to bless me. Truly, how

incomparably privileged and exceptionally fortunate I am! Tell me, would any wise and intelligent person in his right senses throw away a priceless piece of diamond to bargain for a worthless piece of glass? No Lord, no; I am not that stupid and dumb-witted to let go of this privilege of dying while you are with me to take care of the well-being of my soul. Where will I get this chance again? Life in this mortal world is as mortal and transient as the world itself. So one day or the other I will have to die; but will I get a death that I have the opportunity to embrace now—with the Supreme Being himself standing before me to grant my soul eternal beatitude and peace? I can't allow myself to be cheated out of this reward, so I don't want to live a mortal life, but would prefer to attain an eternal life of bliss and beatitude.] (5)

[Note--¹Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 46; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108; (iv) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119.

²Even Jatau, the vulture, had said almost the same thing when Lord Ram offered to restore his life and make his body healthy once again by the touch of the Lord's hands—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 31.]

छं०. सो नयन गोचर जासु गुन नित नेति कहि श्रुति गावहीं । १ ।
जिति पवन मन गो निरस करि मुनि ध्यान कबहुँक पावहीं ॥ २ ॥
मोहि जानि अति अभिमान बस प्रभु कहेउ राखु सरीरही । ३ ।
अस कवन सठ हठि काटि सुरतरु बारि करिहि बबूरही ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

sō nayana gōcara jāsū guṇa nita nēti kahi śruti gāvahīm̐. 1.
jiti pavana mana gō nirasa kari muni dhyāna kabahum̐ka pāvahīm̐. 2.
mōhi jāni ati abhimāna basa prabhu kahē'u rākhū sarīrahī. 3.
asa kavana saṭha haṭhi kāṭi surataru bāri karihi babūrahī. 4.

Verily indeed, I have within my sight that divine Lord Ram whose Gunas (virtues) are so immense and countless that the Vedas (scriptures) aren't able to enumerate them and finally surrender by saying 'Neti-Neti' (i.e. 'neither this nor that', implying that whatever the Vedas have said about the Lord is not enough to describe the greatness and holiness of the Lord, but it is merely like scratching the surface of something that has no end, for much remains to be said about him)¹. (Chanda line no. 1)

Great sages, hermits and ascetics exert themselves and diligently exercise restraint on their mind and sense organs, as well as distance themselves from all charms of the material world by practicing renunciation, dispassion and detachment in order to meditate and focus on the Lord and attain him². (Chanda line no. 2)

Oh Lord, in spite of saying yourself that I am proud, arrogant and haughty³, you ask me if I want to retain this gross physical body of mine⁴. (Chanda line no. 3)

Tell me oh Lord, who is so stupid and dumb-witted as to cut off a Kalpa Tree (which is a heavenly Tree having a reputation that it gives fruits in the form of granting all desires of a person) and use its branches to make a fence to protect worthless acacia trees?

[To wit, why would I prove myself a fool by letting go of this opportunity of attaining eternal peace, bliss and beatitude for my soul by discarding my mortal body, with you, Lord Ram, standing right before me to take care of the well-being of my soul? Why should I want to retain my gross body which would be tainted by one or the other kind of spiritual faults that are common features in this mortal gross world, and in all those who live in it? Sorry oh Lord, I don't want to fall in this trap; I don't want to fall prey to the temptation of retaining my life and my gross body just for the sake of enjoying few more days of worldly comforts and pleasures, because one day or the other it is going to end. This being a certainty, why should I not grab the opportunity to attain eternal comfort, bliss and peace for myself by leaving my gross mortal body and finding emancipation and salvation for all times to come, when such an opportunity knocks on my door? Won't I be called stupid if I miss this chance?]
(Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹“Neti-Neti”: Refer to Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 12; (ii) Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 51; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 203; (iv) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 216; (v) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 341; (b) Ayodhya Kand, (v) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 93; (vi) Sortha no. 126; (c) Aranya Kand, (vii) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 27; (d) Lanka Kand, (viii) Doha no. 117-a; (e) Uttar Kand, (ix) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 124; and (x) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 216.

²In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 107 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it (sage Bharadwaj); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Doha no. 6 (sage Atri); (iii) Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 8 (sage Sarbhanga); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 17-26 that precede Doha no. 11 (sage Sutikshan); (v) Chaupai line nos. 10-13 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya).

³Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 herein above that precedes these Chandas.

⁴Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 herein above that precede these Chandas.]

अब नाथ करि करुना बिलोकहु देहु जो बर मागऊँ । ५ ।
जेहिं जोनि जन्मों कर्म बस तहँ राम पद अनुरागऊँ ॥ ६ ॥
यह तनय मम सम बिनय बल कल्याणप्रद प्रभु लीजिए । ७ ।
गहि बाँह सुर नर नाह आपन दास अंगद कीजिए ॥ ८ ॥

aba nātha kari karunā bilōkahu dēhu jō bara māga'ūṁ. 5.
jēhiṁ jōni janmaurṁ karma basa tahamṁ rāma pada anurāga'ūṁ. 6.
yaha tanaya mama sama binaya bala kalyānaprada prabhu līji'ai. 7.

gahi bām̐ha sura nara nāha āpana dāsa aṅgada kījī'ai. 8.

Enough of all that. Now oh Lord, have mercy and compassion on me by looking at me with your benevolent eyes and granting me a boon that I wish to have. (Chanda line no. 5)

And this is what I wish to have as a boon from thee—that in whatever form I have to take a birth again due to the effects of the deeds that I have done in my life, let me have abiding affection for thee and steady devotion in thine holy feet in all the births of mine that I have to take henceforth¹. (Chanda line no. 6)

[Then, pointing towards his son Angad, Baali said—] This son of mine is like me in valour and courtesy. Oh Lord, I earnestly pray to thee to please have mercy on him and graciously look after his well-being and take care of his welfare in my absence. (Chanda line no. 7)

Oh Lord of the gods as well as the human race (**sura nara nāha**), hold Angad's arms and take him under your wings by making him your servant and dependant.

[Oh Lord! I am putting Angad in your care, and appointing you as his guardian. You have to accept it as it is my last wish, and a noble person like you is obliged to honour the last wish of a dying person. Now, with this done, I shall die in peace.] ² (Chanda line no. 8)

[Note—¹In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 150 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it (Satrupa); (b) Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 107 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it (sage Bharadwaj); (iii) Doha nos. 129, 130 and 131 (sage Valmiki); (c) Aranya Kand, (iv) Chaupai line nos. 19-20 that precede Doha no. 11 (sage Sutikshan); (v) Chaupai line nos. 10-13 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya); (vi) Doha no. 32 (Jatau).

²Like any other father under these circumstances, Baali was very concerned about his son Angad, about his future, his safety, security and well-being. Angad would be orphaned after his father Baali's death, and he would be exposed to the wrath of Sugriv who was not only his father's enemy but was also the cause of his death. How can anyone expect Sugriv to treat Angad with compassion or at least with humanity? Baali feared that Sugriv would lose no time to get rid of Angad by either killing him on one or the other pretext, or at best imprisoning Angad for life and subjecting him to torture so as to get rid of a probable challenger to Sugriv's authority and claim to the throne of Kishkindha.

So, on his death bed Baali decided to entrust his son Angad's safety, security and future in the hands of Lord Ram, for he knew that the Lord would be duty-and-morally bound to act as a guardian for Angad since the latter's father had made this last wish at the time of his death, because any conscientious person would deem it obligatory on him to fulfill the wishes of a dying person.

Once Angad was granted patronage and guardianship by Lord Ram, Baali would die in peace. He knew that Lord Ram was most honourable and true to his words, and therefore Baali would now be able to die peacefully and without any worry in this world.

Danger from his uncle Sugriv was known to Angad, and he had expressed this fear at the time the group of monkeys and bears that he led had reached a dead-end on

the shore of the ocean, without being able to find Sita. Angad expressed his apprehension that using the failure to locate Sita as an excuse, Sugriv would kill him—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 26. We shall come to read about it very soon as we proceed with our reading of this fascinating Story and arrive at that episode.

Another reason why Baali put his son Angad in the safe custody of Lord Ram was to ensure that Angad would be assured of his inheritance and right to the throne of Kishkindha. And true to Baali's wish, Lord Ram appointed Angad as the crown prince—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 11 herein below.]

दो०. राम चरन दृढ़ प्रीति करि बालि कीन्ह तनु त्याग ।
सुमन माल जिमि कंठ ते गिरत न जानइ नाग ॥ १० ॥

dōhā.

rāma carana dṛṛha prīti kari bāli kīnha tanu tyāga.
sumana māla jimi kaṇṭha tē girata na jāna'i nāga. 10.

Having established firm devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram, Baali left his gross body as his soul exited effortlessly and painlessly from it just as easily as a serpent which does not even feel if a garland slips off its body¹. (Doha no. 10)

[Note—¹A serpent has a tubular, slender body. So, it can comfortably and easily pass through a garland without even noticing it. Likewise, the soul of Baali exited his gross body painlessly and effortlessly, and he died peacefully and contentedly.

The death of Baali here in Kishkindha Kand, and that of Jatau, the vulture, earlier in Aranya Kand, are two events that evoke simultaneous emotions of deep compassion and sadness, as well as a sense of renunciation and detachment from this mortal world where death is inevitable, but a person would be blessed if this death brings him or her closer to God. All living beings die in this mortal world, but only a few have the privilege of attaining emancipation and salvation, only a few attain eternal peace and bliss for their souls, only a few find beatitude and felicity, only a few attain nearness with the Lord God himself, thereby breaking the cycle of transmigration, from one birth to another, that others are trapped in.

The entire episode of Baali, and how he attained deliverance and emancipation has also been narrated in Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 46-93, and Canto 2, verse nos. 1-71.]

चौ०. राम बालि निज धाम पठावा । नगर लोग सब ब्याकुल धावा ॥ १ ॥
नाना बिधि बिलाप कर तारा । छूटे केस न देह सँभारा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

rāma bāli nija dhāma paṭhāvā. nagara lōga saba byākula dhāvā. 1.
nānā bidhi bilāpa kara tārā. chūṭē kēsa na dēha sam̐bhārā. 2.

After Baali left his mortal coil, Lord Ram sent him (i.e. his soul; his ethereal body) to his 'own abode', i.e. to the upper heaven known as 'Vaikuntha' where Lord Vishnu resides¹.

As soon as the news of Baali's death spread, the citizens felt very confounded and dismayed as they rushed out to pay their last respects to their late king. (1)

Tara, Baali's wife, was completely devastated; she wept woefully and lamented in a variety of ways. Her hairs were disheveled, and she was so agitated with grief and distress that she lost control over her body (which began to tremble as if she would faint)². (2)

[Note—¹We have read earlier that Lord Ram had shown similar grace upon Jatau by sending him too to his own abode—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 31.

Later on in the story we shall read that the Lord had shown mercy and grace even upon the sinful demons who were killed in the war by sending them all to heaven, because the reward of seeing Lord Ram face-to-face, and thinking of the Lord in any manner whatsoever, in the case of the demons as an enemy though, had its own intrinsic positive effects that could not go in vain —apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 114.

²When Ravana died, his wife too had lamented and wept woefully like Tara here, regretting that had Ravana paid heed to her advice not to create hostility with Lord Ram, he would have been alive at that moment—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-13 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 104.]

तारा बिकल देखि रघुराया । दीन्ह ग्यान हरि लीन्ही माया ॥ ३ ॥

छिति जल पावक गगन समीरा । पंच रचित अति अधम सरीरा ॥ ४ ॥

प्रगट सो तनु तव आगें सोवा । जीव नित्य केहि लगि तुम्ह रोवा ॥ ५ ॥

tārā bikala dēkhi raghurāyā. dīnha gyāna hari līnhī māyā. 3.

chiti jala pāvaka gagana samīrā. pañca racita ati adhama sarīrā. 4.

pragaṭa sō tanu tava āgēm sōvā. jīva nitya kēhi lagi tumha rōvā. 5.

When Lord Ram, the Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu of Ayodhya (raghurāyā), observed that Tara was in great distress and extremely distraught, he consoled her by imparting spiritual and metaphysical wisdom to her, which dispelled her delusions and enlightened her about the futility of her grief and lamentations for worldly relationships. (3)

Lord Ram said to Tara: 'The body of all living beings is nothing but a combination of five basic elements of creation, viz. earth, water, fire, sky and air, with the earth being the grossest. The physical body is very lowly; since it is made up of these five primarily lifeless elements, so therefore it has nothing worthwhile and valuable in it that would make a wise, erudite, sagacious and enlightened person feel sorry in any way at its loss, for it is not worth the while doing so. (4)

That physical gross body constituting the aforesaid five elements is there lying before you to see. If you think that your husband Baali is actually the ‘physical gross body that you have known all along to be your husband’, then it is there right before you. Hence, you need not lament and grieve at his loss at all (for you can go and hug him and talk with him as you used to do).

But you must realize that you are mistaken. This body is not the ‘truthful identity of your husband’, for his true identity is his ‘Atma’, his soul, which is pure consciousness, and it is distinct and separate from the gross physical body that is lying before you. The Atma never dies; it is immortal and imperishable; it is subtle, sublime and pure ethereal entity. Hence, your ‘truthful husband’ hasn’t died, but he has simply attained his original nature of being an eternal entity known as the Atma; he has freed himself from the cage of the gross body in which he had been trapped till now. It is a matter not to grieve and lament for, but to rejoice that your husband Baali has found liberation, deliverance, emancipation, salvation and eternal beatitude.

Moreover, the Atma has no relationships with anyone; it is an independent entity. The Atma has no wife or husband. This being the case, why do you grieve for someone who has not died, or who would not even recognize you as his wife if he sees you again. Remember: All relationships in the gross physical world are confined to the gross physical body of individual creatures, and beyond that there exists no relationship between any two individuals.

Since the truthful identity of an individual is not his gross body but his Atma, which is pure consciousness, subtle and sublime, and the gross body which you have been thinking erroneously as being the identity of your husband known by the name of Baali is there before you to see and touch if you so like, there is no reason why you should think you have lost your husband. As I have just told you, you are mistaken in thinking so, as Baali is not the physical body constituting of five basic elements of creation that is lying before you, but the pure conscious Atma which is distinct and separate from the body. So, why do you lament and grieve unnecessarily? You need not.’ (5)

उपजा ग्यान चरन तब लागी । लीन्हेसि परम भगति बर मागी ॥ ६ ॥

उमा दारु जोषित की नाई । सबहि नचावत रामु गोसाई ॥ ७ ॥

तब सुग्रीवहि आयसु दीन्हा । मृतक कर्म बिधिवत सब कीन्हा ॥ ८ ॥

upajā gyāna carana taba lāgī. līnhēsi parama bhagati bara māgī. 6.

umā dāru jōṣita kī nā’īm. sabahi nacāvata rāmu gōsā’īm. 7.

taba sugrīvahi āyasu dīnhā. mṛtaka karma bidhivata saba kīnhā. 8.

When spiritual wisdom dawned on Tara and her delusions were removed, she felt consoled. Then she fell at the holy feet of Lord Ram to seek the Lord’s blessings in the form of Bhakti (the virtue of devotion for the Lord God)¹. (6)

Lord Shiva said to goddess Uma, his consort²: ‘Oh Uma, the Supreme Lord Ram (rāmu gōsā’īm) makes everyone dance to his wishes like a puppeteer does with his wooden puppets (dāru jōṣita kī nā’īm)³.’ (7)

Then Lord Ram ordered Sugriv to perform the last rites of his dead brother (Baali), which he did in accordance to established procedure and traditions of the family⁴. (8)

[Note—¹Tara had all along been aware of the truth about Lord Ram, i.e. that he was not an ordinary human prince but a manifestation of the Supreme Being. This is evident in her pleading with her husband Baali not to do anything that would put him at odds with the Lord—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 28-29 that precede Doha no. 7.

After Baali died, she had been overcome with distress so much that grief and sorrow had momentarily clouded her mind, which in turn allowed delusions to interfere with her wisdom and thinking. But when Lord Ram calmly reminded her of the truth of life and the essential principles of metaphysics, it made her realize her mistake; she felt at peace with herself and chose to make good of the opportunity to pay her respects to Lord Ram who was standing before her, for she may not get this chance again in her life. Therefore, she fell at the feet of Lord Ram to seek his blessings and grace.

A wise person is one who does not ask for anything else but Bhakti (devotion) from the Lord if he gets a chance to ask for anything as a boon from the Supreme Lord of this creation. If he or she is wise and intelligent enough to do so, it pleases the Lord mightily, and the Lord goes out of his way to grant not only what the devotee seeks but much more than what he even expects. This is evident in the case of Kaagbhusund, the saintly crow, who insisted in asking for Bhakti from Lord Ram, and got more than he had expected, with the Lord himself praising Kaagbhusund's wisdom and wise choice in asking for Bhakti. This incident has been narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 89.

Even Lord Shiva has lauded the virtue of Bhakti and affirms that it is the best of all rewards—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 126.

²As we have noticed repeatedly during our narrative, the Story of Ram Charit Manas is not confined to one particular narrator and one listener. It has primarily three narrators and listeners as follows: Lord Shiva and Uma or Parvati; sages Yagyawalkya and Bharadwaj; and sage Kaagbhusund and Garud. Goswami Tulsidas is simply quoting them in his own narration, which he has titled “Ram Charit Manas”.

³Lord Ram has already stressed that the body of an individual consists of five elements of Nature that are all lifeless in themselves. This body of all living beings is like a doll carved out of a log of wood, just like a wooden ‘puppet’ is. The puppet has no life of its own, but when the puppeteer pulls the strings, the same lifeless puppet acts so charmingly and dynamically that all spectators are mightily amused; they clap their hands and cheer at its antics.

In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 105; (b) Kishkindha Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 24 that precedes Doha no. 7; (c) Uttar Kand, (iii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 78.

⁴When Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, died, Lord Ram would similarly ask Vibhishan, Ravana's brother, to perform the last rites of his dead brother in

accordance to the tradition in his family—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 105.]

राम कहा अनुजहि समुझाई । राज देहु सुग्रीवहि जाई ॥ ९ ॥
रघुपति चरन नाइ करि माथा । चले सकल प्रेरित रघुनाथा ॥ १० ॥

rāma kahā anujahi samujhā'ī. rāja dēhu sugrīvahi jā'ī. 9.
raghupati carana nā'i kari māthā. calē sakala prērita raghunāthā. 10.

Lord Ram then explained the situation to his younger brother Laxman, instructing as follows: 'Laxman, go and appoint Sugriv on the throne of Kishkindha as its King.'¹
(9)

Bowing their heads at the feet of Lord Ram, the Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu (raghupati), everyone departed from there to carry out the Lord's instructions². (10)

[Note—¹After Ravana's death, Lord Ram has also asked Laxman to go on his behalf to appoint Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka as its next King—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 106.

²We have read a while ago that when the news of Baali's death spread in the city, its citizens were very distressed and agitated. They had rushed out to the field where Sugriv and Baali had fought. Tara was amongst the mourners. But eventually when emotions calmed down and the heat of the moment passed away, the citizens realized that it is futile to raise disputes and create a ruckus at this late stage when their king Baali is already dead, as it will serve no purpose. They decided that it would be wiser for them and in their own interests to accept Sugriv as their next king, and not to do anything that would annoy him, as it would have serious consequences for their own welfare under the new dispensation under a new king, i.e. Sugriv. So, even if some of the citizens who were very favourite of Baali may have not liked the developments, still they thought it wiser to keep mum and adapt to the changed circumstances and equations, for otherwise they would put their own safety and security in grave peril.

This obviously is why everyone obeyed Lord Ram's instructions to go and anoint Sugriv to the throne of Kishkindha as its next King, without raising an eyebrow or asking questions, for no one would like to antagonize the next ruler under whose domain they have to live and survive. Any objection at this stage would definitely make that individual a target of wrath of the new king, i.e. Sugriv.]

दो०. लछिमन तुरत बोलाए पुरजन बिप्र समाज ।
राजु दीन्ह सुग्रीव कहँ अंगद कहँ जुबराज ॥ ११ ॥
dōhā.

lachimana turata bōlā'ē purajana bipra samāja.
rāju dīnha sugrīva kaham' aṅgada kaham' jubarāja. 11.

Laxman immediately summoned the citizens, including the seniors, of Kishkindha, and in their presence he anointed Sugriv as the next King, and at the same time made Angad as the crown prince of the kingdom¹. (Doha no. 11)

[Note—¹This is what Lord Ram had explained to Laxman in Chaupai line no. 9 herein above—i.e. that Sugriv must be made a king, and Angad as the crown prince to ensure that after Sugriv, the next king would be Angad.

By doing this, Lord Ram fulfilled the last wish of Baali where he had asked the Lord to take care of Angad, his son, and look after his welfare—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chanda line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 10.

Lord Ram ensured that Baali's son Angad inherits the crown after an interim period just like he would have done had Baali been alive. The Lord also ensured that by anointing Angad as the crown prince, all chances of political intrigue to grab the crown would end, and that Sugriv would be careful in his treatment of Angad inspite of hating his father Baali. This was particularly true as all the citizens had developed sympathy for Angad because he had been orphaned, and any attempt by Sugriv to trouble Angad in any way will surely be against his own interests, as the citizens would rise in revolt against Sugriv.

Further, by appointing Angad as the crown prince, Lord Ram endeared himself to the citizens of Kishkindha; everyone liked this decision of the Lord. Whatever misgivings they might have harboured against the Lord, would now disappear.]

चौ०. उमा राम सम हित जग माहीं । गुरु पितु मातु बंधु प्रभु नाहीं ॥ १ ॥

सुर नर मुनि सब कै यह रीती । स्वार्थ लागि करहिं सब प्रीती ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

umā rāma sama hita jaga māhīm. guru pitu mātu bandhu prabhu nāhīm. 1.
sura nara muni saba kai yaha rītī. svāratha lāgi karahīm saba prītī. 2.

Lord Shiva made the following observation to his consort Uma regarding the selfish nature of this world, telling her: 'Listen Uma! In this self-centered and selfish world, there is no one who is dearer and one's best well-wisher than Lord Ram. No, it is not the guru (moral preceptor or teacher), nor the father, mother, friend or any master or lord who a creature can rely upon, for it is an incontrovertible truth that it is the natural habit of all (except Lord Ram), be it the god, a human being, a sage or anybody else, that they love someone and favour him or her only as long as their self interests are served. Once that objective is achieved, no one cares for anyone else¹. (1-2)

[Note—¹Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 47; (ii) Doha no. 130-a along with Chanda line nos. 1-12 that precede it.

This idea has also been repeatedly reiterated in countless verses of Tulsidas' Book of Prayers known as 'Vinai Patrika'. Refer to the following randomly selected verses for this purpose, with a clear understanding that they are only indicative in nature: 78; 79-80; 98-99; 103-104; 113; 134; 137; 152-154; 157; 161; 166; 174-175;

179; 190; 193; 209; 212-217; 220; 222; 225; 230-232; 236; 241; 249; 253-254; 260; 264; 274-276.]

बालि त्रास व्याकुल दिन राती । तन बहु ब्रन चिंताँ जर छाती ॥ ३ ॥
 सोइ सुग्रीव कीन्ह कपिराऊ । अति कृपाल रघुबीर सुभाऊ ॥ ४ ॥
 जानतहूँ अस प्रभु परिहरहीं । काहे न बिपति जाल नर परहीं ॥ ५ ॥

bāli trāsa byākula dina rātī. tana bahu brana cintām̐jara chātī. 3.
 sō'i sugrīva kīnha kapiṛā'ū. ati kṛpāla raghubīra subhā'ū. 4.
 jānatahūm̐asa prabhu pariharahīm̐. kāhē na bipati jāla nara parahīm̐. 5.

Due to the mortal fear of Baali, Sugriv used to be scared for his safety and security, and he lived a tormented, distressed and miserable life. His body had many scars caused by deep wounds (made when Baali had mercilessly beaten him before throwing him out of the kingdom), and his heart burnt with a constant fire of worries and miseries.¹ (3)

That same Sugriv, who was feeling absolutely dejected, helpless and hapless, and left without any security and certainty for his future—was made the king of the monkey race and his lost honour and esteem restored to him by the most merciful, compassionate and gracious Lord Ram, the brave Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu of Ayodhya (ati kṛpāla raghubīra), because it is in the nature of the Lord, it is his habit (subhā'ū) to be benevolent and kind towards them who have no other means of finding redemption, solace and succour, and who have no one to listen to their woes except the Lord.

[To wit, Lord Ram is a friend of the friendless, the benevolent patron of the disenfranchised and the disinherited, the friendly advocate of those who suffer from injustice, the compassionate Lord of those who have no one over their heads to support and protect them, and one who would go out of his way to take care of all those who have surrendered themselves before the Lord, and plead for his mercy and grace.]². (4)

Inspite of being aware of Lord Ram's exemplarily helpful, friendly, kind, gracious, merciful, compassionate and benevolent nature, if a creature still shuns him, then say who should he blame if he lands in a web of troubles, worries and miseries in this world? [To wit, the poor creature has himself to blame for the mess he has created for himself; he can't, and he shouldn't, blame anyone else.]³ (5)

[Note—¹Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-13 that precede Doha no. 6.

Refer also to verse no. 158 of Tulsidas' book 'Dohawali'.

²Lord Ram is not influenced by worldly considerations; for him everyone is equal, but he has a soft corner in his heart for his devotees. This is evident in the following verses of Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 43; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 46; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-6

that precede Doha no. 47; (iv) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 74; (v) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 86—to Doha and Sortha nos. 87.

³In this context, refer to Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 74; 81; 83; 87-91; 97; 100; 115-116; 120-121; 124-125; 133; 140; 143; 151; 158-159; 162-164; 166; 171; 187; 192-194; 196-199; 224; 236; 243-245.

Refer also to how the citizens of Ayodhya felt exhilarated and free from all worries when they realized how loving and gracious their Lord Ram is—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 47 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.]

पुनि सुग्रीवहि लीन्ह बोलाई । बहु प्रकार नृपनीति सिखाई ॥ ६ ॥

puni sugrīvahi līnha bōlā'ī. bahu prakāra nṛpanīti sikhā'ī. 6.

Continuing with his narration, Lord Shiva says: ‘Then, Lord Ram summoned Sugriv and briefed him on the different aspects of politics and rules of conduct and statecraft that a wise and judicious ruler ought to follow diligently. (6)

कह प्रभु सुनु सुग्रीव हरीसा । पुर न जाउँ दस चारि बरीसा ॥ ७ ॥
गत ग्रीषम बरषा रितु आई । रहिहउँ निकट सैल पर छाई ॥ ८ ॥
अंगद सहित करहु तुम्ह राजू । संतत हृदयँ धरेहु मम काजू ॥ ९ ॥
जब सुग्रीव भवन फिरि आए । रामु प्रवरषन गिरि पर छाए ॥ १० ॥

kaha prabhu sunu sugrīva harīsā. pura na jā'um̐ dasa cāri barīsā. 7.
gata grīṣama baraṣā ritu ā'ī. rahiha'um̐ nikaṭa saila para chā'ī. 8.
aṅgada sahita karahu tumha rājū. santata hṛdayam̐ dharēhu mama kājū. 9.
jaba sugrīva bhavana phiri ā'ē. rāmu prabaraṣana giri para chā'ē. 10.

The Lord (Sri Ram) said, ‘Listen Sugriv, the lord of the monkeys (sugrīva harīsā). I will not enter a city (or town) for ten and four years (dasa cāri barīsā)¹. (7)

The summer months had passed, and the rainy season has arrived. So for the time being, I will stay on the nearby hill (named Pravarshan)². (8)

You and Angad (Sugriv’s nephew and son of his elder brother Baali) jointly rule over the kingdom³, but during the period you must always remember my work (of searching Sita).’ (9)

When Sugriv returned home, Lord Ram took his abode on Mt. Pravarshan nearby⁴. (10)

[Note—¹This is because Lord Ram was exceptionally diligent in keeping his words. He was sent to the forest by his step-mother Kaikeyi who had prevailed upon the Lord’s father king Dasrath to send the Lord for fourteen years in the forest attired as a

hermit, and live there a secluded life of renunciation that is suitable for a hermit. As such it would not be proper for the Lord to enter a city or a town. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 29.

It is to be noted that Lord Ram addresses Sugriv with the words “lord of monkeys”, which means a king of monkeys. It was to show him due honour like one great king would show another. Lord Ram was attired as a hermit and not as a king, and so it would not seem good and proper to address Sugriv as a ‘friend’ when all his ministers and chiefs were in attendance; it would undermine his royal position and dignity in the eyes of his subjects.

Besides this political prudence there was another subtle reason of Lord Ram calling Sugriv ‘a lord or king of the monkeys’. He wanted to tell Sugriv to remember the promise he had made to the Lord that he would go all out to search for Sita—because a right honourable king is known by his words, for a king’s word is his honour. He is a ‘lord’ of the monkeys, so if he gives orders no one would refuse. Then again, Sugriv can’t take the excuse that he has no manpower—for he had the resources of the monkey kingdom at his command. Refer verse no. 9 herein below.

The Lord’s apprehension that Sugriv would forget his work once he gets the throne and his wife back is clearly articulated by him in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 18 which we shall read shortly below.

²It would be very difficult to launch a search for Sita during the rainy season; so the Lord decided to give a break. It was also intended to help Sugriv get some time to get his bearings in order and to consolidate his position in the kingdom in the aftermath of the duel in which his elder brother Baali was killed. Some period of time was needed to stabilise things and restore order; since the rainy season lasts for roughly three to four months there was ample time for Sugriv.

³Lord Ram had virtually limited Sugriv’s powers by telling him to rule the kingdom alongside his nephew Angad. The Lord had feared that there were high chances that Sugriv would get rid of Angad as he would think the latter posed a danger to him because he was the son of his arch-enemy Baali who had been killed so that Sugriv could ascend the throne. The Lord did not want this to happen; Angad was a boy, and he can never be held responsible for the ill deeds of his father Baali.

The Lord wished to ensure that Angad got his due respect in the kingdom, and is not barred from his rights and privileges. Sugriv had no choice but to obey the Lord’s orders to rule the kingdom jointly with Angad, because it was the Lord who had been instrumental in Sugriv getting the crown, and Sugriv had already tested the powers and strengths of Lord Ram prior to challenging Baali so he dared not oppose him or disobey him. This is clearly narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-12 that precede Doha no. 7.

By this singular advice the Lord also made Angad highly favourable towards himself, as now Angad would also feel obliged to the Lord for ensuring that his uncle Sugriv did not torment him or quietly usurp all powers and disenfranchise him as he was the son of his arch-enemy Baali. Any feeling of injustice or bias that Angad may have harboured inside his heart was immediately done away with. In due course of time Angad became an ardent follower and devotee of Lord Ram no less than was Hanuman, and the Lord too showed Angad the respect and confidence he deserved.

Lord Ram had judged by this time that he could not rely too much on Sugriv; he appeared to be a selfish creature. There were ample hints for this—(a) Sugriv had

not hesitated in getting his brother Baali killed just to get the crown of the kingdom; he could also have proposed a power-sharing mechanism instead of outright killing his brother; (b) Sugriv did not propose to Lord Ram that if the Lord did not wish to enter the capital of the kingdom then he could stay in a cottage or hut that Sugriv would get constructed on the outskirts, instead of living on a hill during the rainy season as it would be very uncomfortable; he did not think of it once his desire to get the throne was fulfilled!

This is why the Lord reminded Sugriv to remember the promise he had made to him with respect to searching for Sita.

⁴The words “prabaraṣana giri” mean a hill where there is an abundance of rain. This hill was part of the mountain range known as ‘Malyawan’—refer to: Valmiki’s Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 28, verse no. 1.

Lord Ram and Laxman retiring for some time to Mt. Prabarshan has also been narrated in brief Veda Vyas’ “Adhyatma Ramayan”, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 53-55.]

दो०. प्रथमहिं देवन्ह गिरि गुहा राखेउ रुचिर बनाइ ।
राम कृपानिधि कछु दिन बास करहिंगे आइ ॥ १२ ॥

dōhā.

prathamahim dēvanha giri guhā rākhē'u rucira banā'i.
rāma kṛpānidhi kachu dina bāsa karahiṅgē ā'i. 12.

In the meantime, the gods had prepared a nice cave on this hill, making it as comfortable and pleasant as possible, in anticipation that Lord Ram, who is an abode of grace, mercy and kindness, would come here and stay for a while¹. (Doha no. 12)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram had gone to live in Chitrakoot earlier, the gods had made it sure that the surrounding hills and the countryside would turn extremely pleasant for as long as the Lord chose to abide there—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 133—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 134; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 139.

Later on, a similar pleasant environment was created by the gods when Lord Ram came to live in Panchavati—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 14.]

चौ०. सुंदर बन कुसुमित अति सोभा । गुंजत मधुप निकर मधु लोभा ॥ १ ॥
कंद मूल फल पत्र सुहाए । भए बहुत जब ते प्रभु आए ॥ २ ॥

caupā'i.

sundara bana kusumita ati sōbhā. guṅjata madhupa nikara madhu lōbhā. 1.
kanda mūla phala patra suhā'ē. bha'ē bahuta jaba tē prabhu ā'ē. 2.

The forests of Mt. Prabarshan looked splendid and exceptionally charming with an abundance of different varieties of trees blooming with beautiful flowers¹. Swarms of bees were humming around ever where in greed of nectar². (1)

Ever since Lord Ram came to abide there, the place abounded in edible roots and stems that were pleasant to eat, as well as fruits that were sweet and succulent. (2)

[Note—¹A similar description is found with respect to Chitrakoot when Lord Ram went to live there—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 132; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 137.

When Lord Ram lived in Panchavati, the surrounding forests were similarly transformed into a virtual paradise on earth—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 14.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 137.]

देखि मनोहर सैल अनूपा । रहे तहँ अनुज सहित सुरभूपा ॥ ३ ॥
मधुकर खग मृग तनु धरि देवा । करहिं सिद्ध मुनि प्रभु कै सेवा ॥ ४ ॥

dēkhi manōhara saila anūpā. rahē taham' anuja sahita surabhūpā. 3.
madhukara khaga mṛga tanu dhari dēvā. karahim' sid'dha muni prabhu kai
sēvā. 4.

When Lord Ram, the Lord of the Gods (surabhūpā), beheld the magnificent charm of Mt. Prabarshan and its surroundings, he was pleased at the sight and decided to abide there for some time with his younger brother Laxman¹. (3)

The gods assumed the forms of bees, birds and animals to serve the Lord and make his stay as much comfortable and pleasant as was possible². In this noble endeavour of theirs, great mystics, sages, hermits and ascetics joined hands to serve the Lord in whatever way they could³. (4)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram and Laxman arrived at Chitrakoot, we read a similar happening there too: refer— Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 132 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follows it.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 133—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 134.

³Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 134 along with Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede it.]

मंगलरूप भयउ बन तब ते । कीन्ह निवास रमापति जब ते ॥ ५ ॥
फटिक सिला अति सुभ्र सुहाई । सुख आसीन तहाँ द्वौ भाई ॥ ६ ॥

maṅgalarūpa bhaya'u bana taba tē. kīṇha nivāsa ramāpati jaba tē. 5.
phaṭika silā ati subhra suhāī. sukha āsīna tahām̐ dvau bhāī. 6.

Ever since the husband of goddess Rama (which is another name for goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of wealth, prosperity and abundance; here the word “ramāpati” refers to Lord Ram as he was a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the husband of Rama) made Mt. Prabarshan his dwelling, the entire forest and its surroundings became auspicious, divine and holy, developing a positive aura around it, and abounding in the virtues of peace, tranquility and bliss.

[The place transmuted into a virtual paradise on earth in a similar way as Chitrakoot and Panchavati had been earlier.]¹ (5)

There was a fine white rock of crystal, and the two brothers (Lord Ram and Laxman) would often sit on it. (6)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137 (Chitrakoot); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 14 (Panchavati).]

{In the verses that follow herein below, we read in detail about the pristine beauty and magnificent charm of Mother Nature, which decked herself splendidly and in best of finery to welcome Lord Ram who chose her realm to be his habitat for some time. Mother Nature felt honoured and blessed to have the Lord in her place, and thus put her best face to please the Lord. The brief period Lord Ram and his brother Laxman spent on Mt. Prabarshan (also pronounced as Pravarshan) was the last rest that the Lord would have during his sojourn in the wilds, for soon the campaign to find and free Sita from the clutches of the demon king Ravana would be launched, and it would lead to the huge army of Kishindha accompanying the Lord on the long march to the shore of the southern ocean, then crossing the ocean to land on the soil of the island of Lanka, and then waging a relentlessly bloody war with the ferocious and merciless demon army which would culminate in their decimation and the slaying of Ravana. Soon thereafter, Lord Ram would return home to the kingdom of Ayodhya, and get involved in the humdrum of routine life as its King-Emperor, with little time to relax and enjoy the serenity and peace of a forest life that he had enjoyed prior to the launching of the military campaign to Lanka.

We shall observe that in describing the magnificence of Mt. Prabarshan and its environment, poet-saint Tulsidas, who composed this marvelous Book “Ram Charit Manas”, has shown his keen sense of observation of the different aspects and the many facets of Mother Nature. Further, to this keen sense of observation is added his skill with the pen and his erudition as a poet which become very evident when we read how he has drawn parallels betwixt each instance of Mother Nature that he has cited in the verses with some or the other apt example from our day-to-day life that we too can observe if we look around carefully, but these examples are not idle parallels, for they are themselves pithy aphorisms for different principles pertaining to metaphysics and spiritualism that make them all the more remarkable, especially in the context of the over all philosophical messages that are contained in the Book.}

कहत अनुज सन कथा अनेका । भगति बिरति नृपनीति बिबेका ॥ ७ ॥
बरषा काल मेघ नभ छाए । गरजत लागत परम सुहाए ॥ ८ ॥

kahata anuja sana kathā anēkā. bhagati birati nrpanīti bibēkā. 7.
baraṣā kāla mēgha nabha chā'ē. garajata lāgata parama suhā'ē. 8.

While thus seated on the rock of crystal, Lord Ram would narrate to Laxman different stories from the scriptures and ancient histories, which were not merely entertaining tales but incorporated profound wisdom related to the virtues of Bhakti (devotion), Virati (renunciation, dispassion and detachment from this gross transient material world), laws governing statecraft and polity that a great and noble king ought to know and follow, as well as knowledge pertaining to metaphysics, theology and spiritualism¹. (7)

It was the rainy season. So, the sight of the rain-bearing clouds that were spread across the sky, rumbling and thundering in the heavens, appeared fascinating to behold and pleasant to hear. (8)

[Note—¹While dwelling at Chitrakoot and Panchavati, Lord Ram had done the same thing—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 141 (at Chitrakoot); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 17.]

दो०. लछिमन देखु मोर गन नाचत बारिद पेखि ।
गृही बिरति रत हरष जस बिष्नु भगत कहूँ देखि ॥ १३ ॥
dōhā.

lachimana dēkhu mōra gana nācata bārida pēkhi.
grhī birati rata haraṣa jasa biṣnu bhagata kahum' dēkhi. 13.

[Pointing out to Laxman the many charming elements of Mother Nature that amused the Lord a lot—] Lord Ram said to Laxman: 'Look there Laxman. The peacocks are dancing merrily at the sight of the rain-bearing clouds in the sky above.

It is like the case of a householder, who practices renunciation, detachment and dispassion at the spiritual level, feeling exhilarated when he sees a devotee of Lord Vishnu (i.e. when he sees another person who is also like him at the spiritual level)¹. (Doha no. 13)

[Note—¹There are two distinct types of persons—viz. one who is engrossed in worldly affairs and is neck deep involved in matters related to the material world, and another person who though does his duties assigned to him in this life at the physical plane of existence, yet remains aloof from them at the subtle plane of existence, for he does not allow his Atma, his true inner self, to get involved in any matter related to the outside world of sense objects, for he realizes that true peace and happiness is never to be found in the external world. This latter kind of person is called enlightened and wise, and in spite of seeming to be involved in the affairs of this mundane world at the physical plane and level of his gross physical body, he actually

remains detached from everything of the outside world at the subtle plane of his Atma, which incidentally is his 'true self', thereby enabling him to maintain internal peace, calmness and stability. Whatever he does, he offers it as his service to his beloved Lord God. So therefore, when he meets another such person with the same attitude to life, an immediate bond is formed betwixt the two of them as their minds and hearts resonate with each other.

It's like two like-minded persons belonging to the same country and culture meeting each other in an alien land—they would immediately bond with each other and develop friendship to such an extent that for others they appear to be childhood friends.

In the present instance, a natural bond and sense of attraction exists between the rain-bearing cloud and the peacock, for no sooner the bird sees its dear cloud approaching it from the distant horizon, it feels excited, and when it hears the rumbling and thundering of the cloud, this sound thrills the exhilarated bird so much that it begins to dance in merriment in the believe that its dearest cloud is announcing its arrival to bless the peacock and fulfill its wish to say a 'hello' to its dear friend after almost a year that elapsed since the last rainy season of the previous year.]

चौ०. घन घमंड नभ गरजत घोरा । प्रिया हीन डरपत मन मोरा ॥ १ ॥

दामिनि दमक रह न घन माहीं । खल कै प्रीति जथा थिर नाहीं ॥ २ ॥

caupāṭi.

ghana ghamanḍa nabha garajata ghōrā. priyā hīna ḍarapata mana mōrā. 1.
dāmini damaka raha na ghana māhīm. khala kai prīti jathā thira nāhīm. 2.

The bank of deep dark clouds rumble and thunder relentlessly in the sky as if they are trying to scare me when they find me alone, in the absence of my beloved (wife Sita).
(1)

Lightening streaks and shines through these clouds momentarily, for it does not remain steady and permanent, just like affection and friendship shown by a wicked and selfish person too are temporary and transient, never enduring, here now, and gone the next moment. (2)

बरषहिं जलद भूमि निअराएँ । जथा नवहिं बुध बिद्या पाएँ ॥ ३ ॥

बूँद अघात सहहिं गिरि कैसें । खल के बचन संत सह जैसें ॥ ४ ॥

baraṣahim jalada bhūmi ni'arā'ēm. jathā navahim budha bidyā pā'ēm. 3.
būmḍa aghāta sahaḥim giri kaisēm. khala kē bacana santa saha jaisēm. 4.

The rain drops falling from the clouds unhesitatingly touch the ground below, just like a truly wise, enlightened, learned and illustrious person would bow down and become humbler the more knowledge he acquires or acclaim he gains, instead of becoming haughty, proud and arrogant of his achievements. (3)

The hills and rocks tolerate the beating of rain drops on their backs, just like saintly persons patiently tolerate taunts and harsh words spoken by those who are wicked, evil and jealous of them. (4)

छुद्र नदीं भरि चलीं तोराई । जस थोरेहुँ धन खल इतराई ॥ ५ ॥
भूमि परत भा ढाबर पानी । जनु जीवहि माया लपटानी ॥ ६ ॥

chudra nadīm bhari calīm tōrāī. jasa thōrēhum' dhana khala itarāī. 5.
bhūmi parata bhā ḍhābara pānī. janu jīvahi māyā lapaṭānī. 6.

Shallow rivers would easily overflow with water, and show-off their wealth by rapid currents that would often sweep everything away and quickly inundate the surrounding areas, just like lowly people would boast of the little wealth they have, showing it off and getting filled with pride even at their meagre possessions, going around announcing that they are wealthy. (5)

No sooner water (either as rain falling from the clouds or water of the rivers and streams) touches the soil on the ground, but it would become dirty, just like the case of a creature becoming polluted as soon as it comes in contact with Maya (worldly delusions) and gets influenced by the latter¹. (6)

[Note—¹In this context, refer to Tulsidas' Book of Prayers known as "Vinai Patrika", verse no. 136.

The various forms that Maya takes and its profound effect on a creature have been elaborately explained in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 41; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 44; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.]

समिति समिति जल भरहिं तलावा । जिमि सदगुन सज्जन पहिं आवा ॥ ७ ॥
सरिता जल जलनिधि महुँ जाई । होइ अचल जिमि जिव हरि पाई ॥ ८ ॥

samiṭi samiṭi jala bharahim talāvā. jimi sadaguna sajjana pahim āvā. 7.
saritā jala jalanidhi mahum' jāī. hō'i acala jimi jiva hari pāī. 8.

Water flows in and gets collected in ponds, just like good virtues and noble characters come automatically to a noble and honourable person. (7)

The water of the turbulent rivers flow into the ocean to become one with the latter and attain their destination, just like the case of a creature (the living being; the Jiva) finding its destination when its soul attains Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being).

[To wit, the journey of the river ends when it merges with the ocean, its primary source. Likewise, the Jiva finds its destination when its Atma, which is the Jiva's true self and identity, attains oneness with the Supreme Atma known as the Parmatma represented by Lord Hari, the Supreme Being. It's the end of the Jiva's

journey through different lives just like the case of the river finding the end of its long journey through different lands when it reaches the ocean.] (8)

दो०. हरित भूमि तृन संकुल समुझि परहिं नहिं पंथ ।
जिमि पाखंड बाद तें गुप्त होहिं सदग्रंथ ॥ १४ ॥

dōhā.

harita bhūmi tṛṇa saṅkula samujhi parahim nahim pantha.
jimi pākhaṇḍa bāda tēm gupta hōhim sadagrantha. 14.

The earth is covered with a thick blanket of green grass, which in turn hides the path that a person would like to follow to his destination, just like the case of good books that would enlighten a wise person about life and its truths getting concealed and gradually forgotten behind a thick façade of deceits, falsehoods, pretensions and hearsay (as usually happens during corrupt times when there is moral degradation and loss of the sense of righteousness, probity, propriety and ethics in the society)¹. (Doha no. 14)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chanda line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 183; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Doha no. 97-a; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 2-4, 6 that precede Doha no. 98; (iv) Doha no. 100-b; (v) Chanda line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

चौ०. दादुर धुनि चहु दिसा सुहाई । बेद पढ़हिं जनु बटु समुदाई ॥ १ ॥
नव पल्लव भए बिटप अनेका । साधक मन जस मिलें बिबेका ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dādura dhuni cahu disā suhāī. bēda paṛhahim janu baṭu samudāī. 1.
nava pallava bha'e biṭapa anēkā. sādhaḥaka mana jasa milēm bibēkā. 2.

There was sound of frogs croaking in all the directions, just as one would hear batches of religious students chanting hymns from the Vedas¹. (1)

New leaves have sprouted on different varieties of trees, making them look green and lively with a thick cover of foliage, even as spiritual aspirants attain wisdom, enlightenment and success in their respective fields, and derive immense satisfaction thereby, by pursuing different means and following different paths to attain their spiritual objectives². (2)

[Note—¹What the frogs say when they croak is not understood by anyone, except their own species. Similarly, what the students are saying and what the verses they recite mean while they are chanting hymns from the Vedas is not understood by everyone, except those who are well-versed in the scriptures.

During the rainy season it is a common observation that frogs begin croaking loudly and incessantly around water bodies, and it reminds the poet of students of the Vedas who gather together around their teachers to recite the verses of the scriptures

loudly. And just like the sound of frogs croaking merrily and rhythmically during the rainy season is very pleasant to hear, so is the sound of students chanting verses of the Vedas with enthusiasm, set to a particular beat and rhythm that are peculiar to such chanting, is very charming to hear.

Frogs collect near water bodies and croak; similarly, students collect near their teachers and chant verses from the Vedas.

With these considerations, the parallel is very apt.

²The different paths pursued by different spiritual aspirants to attain wisdom, enlightenment and fulfillment of their spiritual objectives are like the different types of trees bearing different types of leaves. The result of this multitude of colours and varieties of trees and leaves is that the forest looks very charming and lovely, just like the feeling of satisfaction and happiness that is experienced by different spiritual aspirants who pursue different paths to attain their objectives, which is wisdom, enlightenment, and spiritual fulfillment.]

अर्क जवास पात बिनु भयऊ । जस सुराज खल उद्यम गयऊ ॥ ३ ॥

खोजत कतहुँ मिलइ नहिं धूरी । करइ क्रोध जिमि धरमहि दूरी ॥ ४ ॥

arka javāsa pāta binu bhaya'ū. jasa surāja khala udyama gaya'ū. 3.

khōjata katahum' mila'i nahim dhūrī. kara'i krōdha jimi dharamahi dūrī. 4.

The trees of 'Arka' (the swallow wart; Latin name: Calotropis Gigantica or Procera; used in ancient system of medicine) and 'Javaas' (the Arabian Manna plant; Latin name: Alahgi Comelorum; a prickly plant used as a medicinal herb) lose their leaves and attraction during the rainy season, just like the case of wicked and unscrupulous people losing their power to influence and means of tricking others during the reign of a wise and noble ruler (in whose reign such people can't survive, and they therefore go into hiding)¹. (3)

Dust is not found anywhere (because the rains have settled the dust down and swept it away, preventing it from rising again), just like the case of anger pushing far away the virtues of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, goodness of thought and conduct).

[This is because when one becomes angry, one loses control over himself and undermines the voice of his conscience, which in turn makes the angry man become reckless and senseless. He forgets how to behave and think in the right manner. To wit, he suppresses the principles of Dharma and pushes it away under the influence of anger. It is just like the case of dust that is put down and swept away when rain falls from the clouds upon the ground below.] (4)

[Note—¹In this example, the Arka and the Javaas trees are likened to the wicked and unscrupulous people who lose their power and influence during the rule of a wise and judicious ruler, because just like the latter losing their influence upon others during the reign of a wise and noble king, these two types of trees also shed their leaves and look naked and barren during the rainy season which makes them look dull, lifeless and forlorn on the one hand, while on the other hand countless other trees bear new leaves and thrive happily during the same season. These trees look vibrant and lively

with multitude of colours and fragrances that attract the beholder towards them, while the Arka and the Javaas trees look as if they are useless.]

ससि संपन्न सोह महि कैसी । उपकारी कै संपति जैसी ॥ ५ ॥

निसि तम घन खद्योत बिराजा । जनु दंभिन्ह कर मिला समाजा ॥ ६ ॥

sasi sampanna sōha mahi kaisī. upakārī kai sampati jaisī. 5.

nisi tama ghana khadyōta birājā. janu dambhinha kara milā samājā. 6.

The earth produces an abundance of crops (as a result of the rainy season that provide the much needed rain to irrigate the earth, and make it fertile and productive in a natural way), just like the case of a charitable person whose wealth becomes a source of abundant joy for others as he uses it to give support to the needy and the downtrodden¹. (5)

During the night there is complete darkness that is aggravated due to the thick blanket of dark clouds that cover the sky (as it prevents even the feeble light of the stars and the moon from providing some light the ground below), and during this pitch darkness the fire-flies become prominent (as they are the only sources of light against the canvas of darkness), just like the case of a large number of crooks and wicked people, who are evil, wild, pretentious, deceitful and unscrupulous, getting together under the cover of darkness to carry out their nefarious designs². (6)

[Note—¹The charitable disposition of the rainy season becomes evident when it opens the door of its treasury and instructs the clouds to go out and spread its wealth for the good of others in the form of rain. This rain helps the earth to produce crops, which in turn brings cheer to all the living beings. It is like the case of a charitable person with a noble and magnanimous attitude who would use his wealth to provide help and succour to those who are in the need, instead of hoarding his wealth that may rot in his treasury without being of any use to anyone.

²Thieves, crooks and other kinds of wicked people would collect in dark and lonely places to plan their evil strategies. The nature of unscrupulous people has been used here to draw a parallel with the countless fire-flies who fly around in the pitch darkness of the night of a rainy season. Their light is not steady, it is flickering, for it is seen as an on-and-off random source of light: one moment the fly is seen here when it shines, then there is a small period of darkness, and then it is suddenly seen somewhere else at a distance when it gives out light once again. These fire-flies are like the crooks and thieves who are seen here one moment in some dark alley, and hide in some dark corner or nook in the alley for some time when they feel they are being observed, only to emerge at another spot after some time, in order to dodge the observer. The first sight of the fire-fly can't help one to fix its location for it can't be relied upon, for they frequently change it, just like crooked people who change their stance, their words and their principles with the drop of a hat, and therefore can't be trusted.]

महाबृष्टि चलि फूटि किआरीं । जिमि सुतंत्र भाँ बिगरहिं नारीं ॥ ७ ॥

कृषी निरावहिं चतुर किसाना । जिमि बुध तजहिं मोह मद माना ॥ ८ ॥

mahābr̥ṣṭi cali phūṭi ki'ārīm. jimi sutantra bha'ēm̐ bigarahīm nārīm. 7.
kr̥ṣī nirāvahīm catura kisānā. jimi budha tajahīm mōha mada mānā. 8.

With torrential rains, the embankments are breached and the rain water flows all over the fields; it is just like the case of a woman becoming wild and spoiling the reputation of a family if she is not properly restrained and kept under check by the seniors in her family.

[To wit, if the embankment is strong, the rain water won't be able to breach it and flood the surrounding field, thereby ruining it. Similarly, by keeping a strict vigil on the activity of women members of a family by its elders, the reputation of the family can be maintained.]¹ (7)

Wise farmers are seen uprooting and throwing away weeds to protect their crops, just like wise and intelligent persons weed out all vices and corruptions and other negative traits that may affect their mind and heart in order to remain free from vices and evil tendencies, and at the same time maintain purity of their mind, intellect and wisdom. (8)

[Note—¹A similar idea has been expressed elsewhere when the character of Kali-Yug is being described in Ram Charit Manas, viz. Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 99; (ii) Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

देखिअत चक्रबाक खग नाहीं । कलिहि पाइ जिमि धर्म पराहीं ॥ ९ ॥

ऊषर बरषइ तृन नहिं जामा । जिमि हरिजन हियँ उपज न कामा ॥ १० ॥

dēkhi'ata cakrabāka khaga nāhīm. kalihi pā'i jimi dharma parāhīm. 9.
ūṣara baraṣa'i tṛna nahīm jāmā. jimi harijana hiyaṁ̐ upaja na kāmā. 10.

The birds known as Chakravaks (the ruddy goose; a type of ostrich) are not to be seen anywhere, just like virtues and noble characters vanish during the corrupted age known as Kali-Yug¹. (9)

Kaam, or worldly desires, passions and lust, do not sprout in the mind and heart of followers and devotees of Lord Hari, just like it is impossible for grass to grow in a patch of infertile land (such as a desert, or a rocky and barren stretch of land) even if it rains plentifully there.

[To wit, if a person has devotion for Lord God, he is automatically protected from the evil effects of Kali-Yug, including the influence of Kaam. No amount of worldly temptations would move him away from his spiritual path; no amount of provocation would deter him from following the noble path of Dharma. Since he is a devotee of the Lord God, he is assured of help from the Lord in his pursuit of purity and freedom from corruption.]² (10)

[Note—¹In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 100 along with Chaupai line no. 10 that precede it; (ii) Doha no. 101.

²Once again, the fact that a devotee is assured of protection from Lord Ram even during the age of Kali-Yug which is famous for its corrupting influence on all living beings, is reiterated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 87 along with Chaupai line no. 1 that follow it; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 103.]

बिबिध जंतु संकुल महि भ्राजा । प्रजा बाढ़ जिमि पाइ सुराजा ॥ ११ ॥
जहँ तहँ रहे पथिक थकि नाना । जिमि इंद्रिय गन उपजें ग्याना ॥ १२ ॥

bibidha jantu saṅkula mahi bhrājā. prajā bāṛha jimi pā'i surājā. 11.
jaham̐ taham̐ rahē pathika thaki nānā. jimi indriya gana upajēm̐ gyānā. 12.

Large numbers of insects and worms and other creatures of various denominations of the animal (zoological) kingdom, as well as a variety of members of the plant (botanical) kingdom, are born and thrive on the earth (during the rainy season), just like the case of life under a good government when the population of the realm increases and everyone lives a contented, happy and prosperous life¹. (11)

During the rainy season, one would see travellers staying here and there as they are weary of travelling during the rains, just like the case of the sense organs of a wise person becoming calm when wisdom dawns on him². (12)

[Note—¹During the rainy season, life thrives on earth as the environment is conducive to a happy and vibrant life of all forms. New insects and plants are born, and the earth looks vibrant and verdant with a cheerful life in all its different colourful hues. Similarly, during good governance, the population of a realm rises as people from other regions migrate to this place to make it their dwelling. Good government brings cheer and all round happiness to its population, just like the rainy season brings abundance of cheer and colour to all forms of life on earth.

²The sense organs have a tendency to run after their respective objects of pleasure and comfort in the material world. For instance, eyes want to see pleasant sights; the ears want to hear pleasant things; the skin wants to derive comfort by touching pleasant things; the tongue would like to taste delectable things; the hands would like to grab things it likes; the legs would move towards those things that give it comfort; the mind would think of pleasant things; the heart too would like to seek comfort in remembering pleasant things; and so on and so forth. But a wise man realizes that all such things do not give abiding comfort or happiness, as they pertain to the material world that itself is impermanent and perishable. So therefore, instead of pursuing this world seeking joy and comfort, a wise man would rather teach his sense organs to be contented with whatever is available to them, for it would let them rest in peace and lead a happy and enjoyable life, instead of constantly running after this and that pleasure that leaves the sense organs tired and frustrated.

The traveller may have some urgent work, and normally he would never think of taking a break in his journey towards his destination for fear of wasting time, even though he is tired and wants to take some rest. But the rains compel him to break the journey and stay quiet for some time till the rain ceases falling. This gives the weary

traveller a god-sent opportunity to take some rest and ease his limbs. He becomes restful and feels rejuvenated.

Similarly, with his sense organs under leash, a wise man too becomes restful and rejuvenated.]

दो०. कबहुँ प्रबल बह मारुत जहँ तहँ मेघ बिलाहिं ।
जिमि कपूत के उपजें कुल सद्धर्म नसाहिं ॥ १५ (क) ॥
dōhā.

kabahuṁṁ prabala baha māruta jaham̐ taham̐ mēgha bilāhim̐.
jimi kapūta kē upajēm̐ kula sad'dharma nasāhim̐. 15 (a).

Sometimes, a strong wind blows away the rain-bearing clouds, just like the case of an occasional birth of a wicked child in the family would ruin the family and destroy all the goodness and virtues it had been practicing down the ages, thereby undermining its good name and reputation. (Doha no. 15-a)

कबहुँ दिवस महँ निबिड़ तम कबहुँक प्रगट पतंग ।
बिनसइ उपजइ ग्यान जिमि पाइ कुसंग सुसंग ॥ १५ (ख) ॥

kabahuṁṁ divasa maham̐ nibiṛa tama kabahuṁṁka pragaṭa pataṅga.
binasa'i upaja'i gyāna jimi pā'i kusaṅga susaṅga. 15 (b).

During the day, sometimes it becomes dark (when thick bank of clouds cover the sky), and other times the sun shines brilliantly. It is like the case when Gyan (wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, and truthful knowledge) is decimated when one has bad company, while it shines through and gives glory to a person when one has good company.

[This resonates with the age-old adage: “One is known by the company one keeps”. If one keeps bad company, all his virtues and goodness are gradually eclipsed; he gets infamy and is abhorred by the society. On the other hand, if he keeps good company, his goodness and virtues shine through, and the person gets acclaim and praise for his character.] (Doha no. 15-b)

चौ०. बरषा बिगत सरद रितु आई । लछिमन देखहु परम सुहाई ॥ १ ॥
फूलें कास सकल महि छाई । जनु बरषाँ कृत प्रगट बुढ़ाई ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

baraṣā bigata sarada ritu āī. lachimana dēkhahu parama suhāī. 1.
phūlēṁ kāsa sakala mahi chāī. janu baraṣām̐ kṛta pragaṭa buḍhāī. 2.

{The rainy season ended and autumn arrived. The following verses describe the scene during the latter period as witnessed by Lord Ram.}

Lord Ram continued: ‘Look here Laxman; the rainy season has ended and the autumn season has arrived. (1)

The whole earth is covered with the growth of a kind of grass known as ‘Kaasa’ which bears white flowers. This gives the impression that the previous rainy season has revealed its old age, just like an old man bears grey hairs and beards to show that he has become old in age. (2)

उदित अगस्ति पंथ जल सोषा । जिमि लोभहि सोषइ संतोषा ॥ ३ ॥
सरिता सर निर्मल जल सोहा । संत हृदय जस गत मद मोहा ॥ ४ ॥

udita agasti pantha jala sōṣā. jimi lōbhahi sōṣa'i santōṣā. 3.
saritā sara nirmala jala sōhā. santa hr̥daya jasa gata mada mōhā. 4.

The constellation known as ‘Agastya’ (named after a sage of the same name; the constellation known as “Canopus”)¹ has appeared in the sky, and its appearance led to the drying up of water on the roads, just like the case when the virtues of contentment and satisfaction dry up a person’s yearning, greed and rapacity for more and more of anything. (3)

In the lakes and rivers one can see clean water, which reminds one of the heart of saintly people, as it is marked by its purity, holiness, and freedom from all sorts of corruption and vices². (4)

[Note—¹Sage Agastya had once gulped the ocean in three mouthfuls. This constellation bears the sage’s name to commemorate that event, because when it shows in the sky, the water that had collected on the earth, such as in puddles, seasonal streams, and other small water bodies all over the ground, begin to dry up at the end of the rainy season and the beginning of autumn.

This constellation is helical in nature, and it rises on the seventh day after the new moon in the Hindu month of Bhādrapada, the sixth month according to the Hindu calendar that corresponds to twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth lunar asterisms.

²The virtues of saintly persons have been praised by Lord Ram himself, and they are enumerated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 38 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 130; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 131.]

रस रस सूख सरित सर पानी । ममता त्याग करहिं जिमि ग्यानी ॥ ५ ॥
जानि सरद रितु खंजन आए । पाइ समय जिमि सुकृत सुहाए ॥ ६ ॥

rasa rasa sūkha sarita sara pānī. mamatā tyāga karahim̐ jimi gyānī. 5.
jāni sarada ritu khañjana ā'ē. pā'i samaya jimi sukṛta suhā'ē. 6.

The water in the rivers (as well as in lakes) is gradually drying up, drop by drop. It is like the case of wise, enlightened and self-realised people who get rid of 'Mamta' (worldly attachments and attractions) one by one in a gradual manner. (5)

When the birds known as 'Khanjan' (the wagtail) come to learn about the arrival of autumn, they arrive in large numbers. It is like the case of good virtues and fruits of one's meritorious deeds revealing themselves for the benefit of a person when the time becomes favourable for them to manifest themselves.

[To wit, one must continue to strive to do good deeds patiently, for when the time comes he would be duly rewarded for his meritorious deeds. It may take time, but he would surely be rewarded. It is like the case of the Khanjan bird who stays away for a whole year, waiting for the right moment of autumn to arrive when it decides to come and make its presence felt.] (6)

पंक न रेनु सोह असि धरनी । नीति निपुन नृप कै जसि करनी ॥ ७ ॥

जल संकोच बिकल भइँ मीना । अबुध कुटुंबी जिमि धनहीना ॥ ८ ॥

paṅka na rēnu sōha asi dharanī. nīti nipuna nṛpa kai jasi karanī. 7.
jala saṅkōca bikala bha'imī minā. abudha kuṭumbī jimi dhanahīnā. 8.

The earth appears to be clean and washed free of mud and filth because there are no puddles or slush to be seen anywhere, and neither is dust observed at any place. [It is because during autumn, water evaporates from such shallow depressions on the ground, and the dust had already settled down during the previous rainy season, thereby leaving the earth literally dry and clean.]

It is like the case of the rule of a king who is wise, judicious, and well-versed in politics and administration.

[Under such a ruler, the administration is free from corruption, and principles of righteousness, probity and propriety are diligently followed in all fields of life by everyone. The subjects are happy and live a contented life. In a well administered city, the streets and lanes are kept clean of garbage, litter is nowhere to be found, and there is no pollution anywhere. Traffic is well-regulated, the city is well planned, and there is no sign of chaos and agitation anywhere.] (7)

With a gradual diminishing level of water in different water bodies, the fish become distressed and worried. It is like the case when incompetent persons who lack wisdom, patience and resilience (abudha) become agitated and worried about their own future as well as that of their relatives (kuṭumbī) when their wealth begins to decline.

[Such people do not understand that wealth is not something eternal and steady; it increases and decreases due to a variety of factors. If wealth is lost now, it can be generated again in the future by effort and hard work. One needs to have patience and resilience to tide over downward trends of fortune, not lose hope and courage, and keep on doing one's duties faithfully and diligently, because the tide would turn in their favour one day or the other. They must remember the old adage that 'all times are not the same; there is always a day after a night'. Getting agitated and developing a negative attitude towards the future like the stupid fish which has a short-sighted view of life, would serve no purpose. These people are unnecessarily

worried about their relatives and family members, because they fear that the latter would treat them roughly when they come to learn that such-and-such person has lost a substantial amount of his wealth and has become poor, or when he is unable to meet their demands for money on one pretext or the other. This ought to be rather a warning to a wise person that if any relative of his begins to treat him roughly because due to bad time he has lost some money, it means that their relationship is money-centered, and such relationship and such relatives are surely not the worth paying attention to; they should be kept at bay.] (8)

बिनु घन निर्मल सोह अकासा । हरिजन इव परिहरि सब आसा ॥ ९ ॥
कहुँ कहुँ बृष्टि सारदी थोरी । कोउ एक पाव भगति जिमि मोरी ॥ १० ॥

binu ghana nirmala sōha akāsā. harijana iva parihari saba āsā. 9.
kahum̐ kahum̐ br̥ṣṭi sārādī thōrī. kō'u ēka pāva bhagati jimi mōrī. 10.

The sky looks crystal clean because there are no dark clouds to be seen anywhere. It is just like the case of devotees of Lord God who abandon all hopes of getting help from others, but rely exclusively on their Lord for their needs, leaving their minds free of the clutter arising out of the need to select from different options to meet their needs, and then fending off greedy helpers who prey upon their helplessness. [This gives them calmness and peace.]¹ (9)

While generally there is no heavy rainfall during the autumn season, but however there are instances that sporadic rainfall of a limited amount is witnessed here and there. It is just like the case that only a few fortunate people are able to develop the virtue of Bhakti (devotion) for me (i.e. Lord Ram, who is conversing with Laxman and describing to him the various elements of Mother Nature)². (10)

[Note—¹This principle is reiterated by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46.

It has also been reiterated by goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva, in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 54.

²In this verse, Lord Ram emphasizes that the virtue of Bhakti, or devotion for Lord God, is a rare virtue, and only a few persons are able to develop it, just like the case of some fortunate places on earth where rain still falls inspite of the end of the rainy season. As rain is a harbinger of life and a symbol of freshness and rejuvenation, its falling is like a blessing for the creatures on the earth, because whatever water had dried up with the arrival of autumn is soon replenished with this new round of rainfall, which would keep the soil fertile and irrigated, and foster birth of a new generation of plant and animal life which depend on damp environment and moisture for their growth and sustenance.]

दो०. चले हरषि तजि नगर नृप तापस बनिक भिखारि ।
जिमि हरि भगति पाइ श्रम तजहिं आश्रमी चारि ॥ १६ ॥

dōhā.

calē haraṣi taji nagara nṛpa tāpasa banika bhikhāri.
jimi hari bhagati pā'i śrama tajahim āśramī cāri. 16.

During the autumn season (when the rains stop and there is no hindrance to movement due to them), kings move out (to visit their realm or go on expeditions); mendicants and spiritual aspirants move out (to fulfill their aspirations, such as going to distant places to spread wisdom and knowledge, or to do Tapa, i.e. austerities and penances, in isolated and serene places outside populated areas where they can pursue their objectives peacefully, without disturbance); traders move out too (to near and far places for their trade); and beggars also move out (to beg and seek alms).

This scenario is like the case when one develops Bhakti for Lord Hari (i.e. devotion for Lord God), for then one would move away from making different kinds of efforts to attain peace and happiness for oneself in life, because Bhakti would grant his desires automatically, no matter to which of the four stages of life a person belongs to¹. (Doha no. 16)

[Note—¹A person's life is roughly divided into four quarters—viz. Brahmacharya, Grishastha, Vaanprastha, and Sanyas. In the first quarter he studies and prepares himself for life by acquiring skills and knowledge. In the second quarter he marries and lives the life of a householder, pursuing his chosen career and field of work, and raising and looking after his family. In the third quarter, he hands over the reins of his household and all business affairs to his heirs, and decides to lead a quiet life. In the last quarter, he completely detaches himself from all worldly affairs and tensions, and spends his life in quietude and peace, mentally preparing for the final moment of exit from this mortal world.

In this verse, the number 'four' is used as a base to draw a parallel between the four types of persons mentioned therein, viz. a king, a mendicant or a spiritual aspirant, a trader, and a beggar, and the four divisions in a person's life, viz. Brahmacharya, Grishastha, Vaanprastha and Sanyas.

While the former four types of people move out to fulfill their objectives, a devotee of Lord Hari, no matter to which division of life he belongs to, would move away from the world and turn inwards to fulfill his objectives. All are moving in this direction or that in order to fulfill their aspirations and objectives of life; the former persons are moving out, while the latter persons are moving inwards.]

चौ०. सुखी मीन जे नीर अगाधा । जिमि हरि सरन न एकउ बाधा ॥ १ ॥
फूलें कमल सोह सर कैसा । निर्गुन ब्रह्म सगुन भएँ जैसा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sukhī mīna jē nīra agādhā. jimi hari sarana na ēka'u bādhā. 1.
phūlēṁ kamala sōha sara kaisā. nirguna brahma saguna bha'ēm̐ jaisā. 2.

Referring to the example of the 'fish' cited a little while earlier, Lord Ram says: 'Those fish who live in deep water are happy and not at all worried about their future (like their compatriots who live in shallow water bodies, because the latter fear death when the water dries up, while this fear is absent for the fish that live in water bodies

that have abundant water in them, such as ocean, great rivers, large lakes and big ponds with an underground source of water).

It is like the case when one takes shelter with Lord Hari, the Supreme Being, for then the person has no fear of any kind, nor is there any obstacles in his path to attainment of peace, happiness and fulfillment in life. [Such a person is free from all kinds of worries, for he has got the blessings of the Lord God himself who ensures that his devotee's welfare and well-being are well cared for.]¹ (1)

The lakes and ponds where lotus flowers bloom look marvelous and most charming to behold. It is like the case when the Nirguna Brahm (i.e. the formless and invisible aspect of the Supreme Being) assumes a beautiful form when he reveals himself as Saguna Brahm (i.e. a manifestation of Brahm that has a visible form, as well as physical attributes and characters that are absent in Brahm's cosmic form that is invisible and without attributes)².

[An example of 'Saguna Brahm' is Lord Ram himself. His 'Nirguna form' is Lord Vishnu, the form of the Supreme Being that spoke from the sky, but was not visible to the gods, mother earth and the sages, when the Lord promised them that he would come down to earth to become a 'Saguna Brahm' as Lord Ram to fulfill their prayers to free them from the tyranny of the demons led by Ravana³.] (2)

[Note—¹Lord Ram has promised that he would take care of his devotees who take shelter with him and seek his protection—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 86—to Sortha no. 87-b.

It has also been reiterated by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 79.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 110; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 116 (which clearly states that basically there is no difference between Nirguna and Suguna aspects of Brahm, for the Nirguna Brahm had revealed himself as Suguna Brahm for the benefit of his devotees).

Lord Shiva explains how there is no difference betwixt the two forms of Brahm in: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 117—to Doha no. 118.

Lord Shiva had told goddess Uma, his consort, that the Nirguna Brahm had revealed himself as Saguna Brahm in the form of Lord Ram. Uma accepts this fact when she asks Lord Shiva to tell her why the Nirguna Brahm had transmewed himself as Saguna Brahm—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 120.

³Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 186—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187.]

गुंजत मधुकर मुखर अनूपा । सुंदर खग रव नाना रूपा ॥ ३ ॥
चक्रबाक मन दुख निसि पेखी । जिमि दुर्जन पर संपति देखी ॥ ४ ॥

gunjāta madhukara mukhara anūpā. sundara khaga rava nānā rūpā. 3.
cakrabāka mana dukha nisi pēkhī. jimi durjana para sampati dēkhī. 4.

The sound of the honey-bees humming melodiously is very charming to hear, and so is the sound of countless other birds of different feathers and species who are chirping away merrily in a symphony of a variety of tunes¹. (3)

The bird known as ‘Chakravak’ (ruddy goose; also known as the Chakva bird)² feels despondent and sad at the sight of the night, just like a villain becoming aggrieved and sad (out of jealous) when he sees the fortunes and wealth of others. (4)

[Note—¹We must remember that Lord Ram is residing on Mt. Prabarshan at present, and this place is surrounded by dense forested area on all the sides. Hence, bees, birds and animals of different species and families of zoological kingdom are the natural inhabitants of the place.

²The Chakva or the Chakravak bird: Evil, sinful, pervert and wicked people have a natural tendency to see the wrong side of everything. They are compared to the bird Chakravak which is angry when the full moon rises on the horizon in the night because it seems to torment this bird. While this moon is welcomed by the rest of the creatures, this is the only bird which abhors it, hates it, and treats the full moon with utter disdain and contempt as if it was its enemy. Since the moon rises only during the night, and not during the day, the Chakravak bird feels sad and despondent and aggrieved at night because it is then that its enemy, the full moon, rises. Its hatred and antagonism with the night, because of this factor, is compared to how evil people behave when they see the rise of wealth and good fortunes of others; such people have a natural tendency of becoming jealous and envious when they see the wealth of others increasing, just like the case of the bird feeling jealous and envious of the night because it is during the night that the full moon is able to showcase its beauty and charm.]

चातक रटत तृषा अति ओही । जिमि सुख लहइ न संकरद्रोही ॥ ५ ॥
सरदातप निसि ससि अपहरई । संत दरस जिमि पातक टरई ॥ ६ ॥

cātaka raṭata tṛṣā ati ōhī. jimi sukha laha'i na saṅkaradrōhī. 5.
saradātapa nisi sasi apahara'ī. santa darasa jimi pātaka ṭara'ī. 6.

The bird known as ‘Chatak’ (sparrow hawk) seems to become sick and extremely agitated with excess of thirst as it continues to plead for water to quench it. [It is because the bird refuses to drink any other kind of water except the one that falls as rain drops directly in its mouth, and with the rainy season being over, there are no rains, and thus the bird thirsts for water.]

It is like the case when those inimical to Lord Shiva cannot ever hope to find happiness, joy and peace in their lives¹.

[To wit, if one is stubborn enough not to worship Lord Shiva because he worships some other deity, then peace, happiness and joy would always elude him. He would always find himself restless and uneasy at the spiritual plane, just like the case of the Chatak bird that is so senselessly stubborn that inspite of realizing that the rainy

season is gone, and there is no scope of rain drops falling from the clouds directly in its mouth, it does not understand the reality and become practical by drinking water from some other source that are available in abundance all around it in order to quench its thirst and avoid death. Instead, it feels frustrated, agitated and agonized simply because of its stupid stubbornness that it would drink water of the rain drops only, even if that means death without its availability.] (5)

The torment caused by the heat of the sun during the day of the autumn months (when the sky is clean and there are no clouds to block this heat from reaching the earth below) is alleviated by the soothing light of the moon during the night.

It is just like the case of the torments caused by sins and other negative factors of life getting decimated when one sees a saintly person, whose company provides spiritual solace and succour². (6)

[Note—¹Devotion for Lord Shiva is necessary if one wants to attain peace and happiness in life; such devotion is an inalienable character of a devotee of Lord Ram. Lord Shiva is worshipped by Lord Ram himself, and Shiva too worships Lord Ram in turn—i.e. both Lord Shiva and Lord Ram are equal in divinity and holiness, and a person who seeks the blessing of one of the two Lords should pay his obeisance to the other Lord as well.

The importance of worshipping Lord Shiva and having devotion for him has been emphasized by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, (a) Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Doha no. 45.

In fact, Lord Shiva is most dear to Lord Ram himself—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 138.

²The fine and exemplary characters of saints and holy men have been enumerated by Lord Ram in this Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 46; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Doha no. 38 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

Further, the characteristics of saintly people have also been enumerated by Kaagbhusund in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 13-16, 21 that precede Doha no. 121.]

देखि इंदु चकोर समुदाई । चितवहिं जिमि हरिजन हरि पाई ॥ ७ ॥

मसक दंस बीते हिम त्रासा । जिमि द्विज द्रोह किऐँ कुल नासा ॥ ८ ॥

dēkhi indu cakōra samudā'ī. citavahim jimi harijana hari pā'ī. 7.

masaka dansa bītē hima trāsā. jimi dvija drōha ki'ēm'kula nāsā. 8.

All the Chakor birds (the Indian red-legged partridge) gaze constantly at the moon (as they are enamoured of the moon and its beauty) just like devotees of Lord Hari (Lord God; here meaning Lord Vishnu and his manifestation as Lord Ram) keep their sights fixed on the Lord (without allowing their mind to get distracted by false charms of this mortal and illusionary world with its false charms), because by focusing their mind on the Lord they derive immense peace, happiness, joy and bliss.

[To wit, the Chakor bird gazes at the moon as it derives immense peace and happiness at the sight of the moon. No one forces the bird to look at the moon, but it does so voluntarily as this practice gives the bird natural pleasure and happiness that nothing else would give it. Similarly, devotees of Lord Hari fix their attention on the Lord, not out of any compulsion but because it grants them immense amount of joy, peace, happiness and bliss.] (7)

Mosquitoes and gadflies have perished due to the fear of cold (as winter is round the corner), just like the case that entire families can be ruined if they are inimical to the Brahmins (because they are subjected to the wrath of Brahmins which no power can remit)¹. (8)

[Note—¹In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3, 5 that precede Doha no. 165; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5, 8 that precede Doha no. 166; (iii) Doha no. 174; (iv) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 175; (b) Ayodhya Kand, (v) Chaupai line nos 3-4 that precede Doha no. 126; (c) Uttar Kand, (vi) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 112.]

दो०. भूमि जीव संकुल रहे गए सरद रितु पाइ ।
सदगुर मिलें जाहिं जिमि संसय भ्रम समुदाइ ॥ १७ ॥

dōhā.

bhūmi jīva saṅkula rahē ga'e sarada ritu pā'i.
sadagura milēm jāhiṁ jimi sansaya bhrama samudā'i. 17.

The creatures who were born and thrived on earth in hordes during the rainy season, such as the various kinds of insects and worms (bhūmi jīva saṅkula), begin to vanish (because they either die or go into hiding in holes in the ground or hill-sides) during the autumn season, just like the case of all the doubts, confusions and delusions that a person possesses beginning to go away when he is fortunate to meet a true Guru (who is a wise, enlightened, learned, self-realised teacher and moral preceptor; one's guide, advisor and well-wisher in life on whom a person can rely for selfless help and advice)¹. (Doha no. 17)

[Note—¹The glory and importance of a guru have been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2.

All kinds of insects and worms that thrived on earth (bhūmi jīva saṅkula) during the rainy season begin to vanish during the autumn season. This natural phenomenon is employed in this verse to emphasise the fact that when a person meets a learned and wise teacher, all his delusions, confusions and doubts are removed.]

चौ०. बरषा गत निर्मल रितु आई । सुधि न तात सीता कै पाई ॥ १ ॥
एक बार कैसेहुँ सुधि जानौं । कालहु जीति निमिष महुँ आनौं ॥ २ ॥
कतहुँ रहउ जाँ जीवति होई । तात जतन करि आनउँ सोई ॥ ३ ॥

सुग्रीवहुँ सुधि मोरि बिसारी । पावा राज कोस पुर नारी ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

baraṣā gata nirmala ritu āī. sudhi na tāta sītā kai pāī. 1.
 ēka bāra kaisēhum' sudhi jānaum. kālahu jīti nimiṣa mahum' ānaum. 2.
 katahum' raha'u jaurm jīvati hōī. tāta jatana kari āna'um' sōī. 3.
 sugrīvahum' sudhi mōri bisārī. pāvā rāja kōsa pura nārī. 4.

[Four months of the rainy season passed and even autumn was on its way out. But unfortunately, it appeared that Sugriv had forgotten about his promise made to Lord Ram regarding the search for Sita, as Sugriv had done nothing in this direction. This enraged the Lord, and he told Laxman to go and bring Sugriv to him by a 'show' of fear and anger—i.e. by pretending to be angry and casting fear in his mind, which was just intended to shake Sugriv out from his slumber.]

Lord Ram confided to Laxman (his constant companion and younger brother), 'My dear; the rainy season has ended and the clear weather of autumn has arrived, but yet we have not got any hints about the whereabouts of Sita. (1)

If I get any bit of information, whether good or not so good, about her, by any means whatsoever and from any quarter, I will vanquish even the god of death and recover her literally in a flash of a moment (i.e. very soon). (2)

Wherever she may be, if she is alive, then oh my dear, I will bring her by deploying whatever means are needed for the purpose. (3)

Unfortunately, even Sugriv has all but forgotten about me and my work once he has got his kingdom and wife back. (4)

[Note—These verses show Lord Ram's anguish and dismay at Sugriv's attitude. Sugriv became indulgent in his affairs of the kingdom, all but forgetting the word he had given to the Lord about sending messengers in all directions to search for Sita.

The forest-dwelling tribes are accustomed to inclement and harsh weather such as rainy season or the summer months unlike humans living in towns and cities. So had Sugriv been diligent and conscientious he would have sent messengers to find out Sita, and by the end of three or four months the required information should have been got. But nothing was done.

The Lord had given him a long time of four or so months to find the whereabouts of Sita, but there was no news; Sugriv had not even bothered to pay a courtesy call on the two brothers since they came to live on Mt. Prabarshan. This attitude of negligence was annoying, and it irritated Lord Ram.]

जेहिं सायक मारा मैं बाली । तेहिं सर हतौं मूढ़ कहँ काली ॥ ५ ॥

जासु कृपाँ छूटहिं मद मोहा । ता कहुँ उमा कि सपनेहुँ कोहा ॥ ६ ॥

jēhiṁ sāyaka mārā mairiṁ bālī. tēhiṁ sara hataurṁ mūrha kaham̐ kālī. 5.
jāsu kṛpām̐ chūṭahiṁ mada mōhā. tā kahum̐ umā ki sapanēhum̐ kōhā. 6.

The same arrow that I had used to slay Baali (Sugriv's brother), I shall use the same arrow to slay this stupid fellow tomorrow¹ (if he does not mend himself, get up from his slumber, remember the promises he had made to me, and immediately begin the search for Sita). (5)

Lord Shiva said to goddess Uma to whom he was narrating this wonderful Story: 'It is such an ironical situation, and a matter of wonder too, that while it is a well established fact that Lord Ram's grace and blessings are able to eliminate all kinds of delusions and arrogance (along with the agitation and anger that accompany them) that a creature might possess, the same Lord would show anger and annoyance now. Uma, think over it: can such a graceful and compassionate Lord ever become angry and annoyed at trifling matters of the world²? (6)

[Note—¹What does Lord Ram imply here when he says that he would use the 'same arrow' which he had used to slay Baali to slay Sugriv now? Lord Ram wanted to tell Sugriv that he (Lord Ram) had no personal grudge against Baali, but he punished the latter because Baali had acted selfishly against Sugriv by kicking him out of the kingdom for fear that Sugriv was trying to usurp the crown, and now Sugriv too has shown his true colour once he has got the kingdom's crown by forgetting or neglecting Lord Ram's work. It is all the more annoying because it was due to the grace of the Lord that Sugriv could get his honour back, and now he has the temerity to neglect even his own benefactor and friend; it is like betraying Lord Ram's trust in him, which must be punished.

²Lord Shiva means to say here that this show of anger and annoyance by Lord Ram was simply superficial in nature, for the Lord always remained calm, peaceful and poised internally. One must not be carried away by this worldly behaviour of Lord Ram, which he often adopted to conceal his true identity of being the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Lord of the world. It was a part of the game that the Lord was playing in his form as a human being, for like an expert artist and a skilled actor, he had to play out his role as a human to perfection, and this included an occasional deflection from his primary nature of being tranquil and practicing equanimity even during adversity, just to conceal the truth of his real identity.

This fact that Lord Ram was simply acting like an expert actor would act his part on stage, without being actually affected at a personal level by his superficial actions on stage, has been clearly reiterated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 73.

Presently, the Lord showed anger and annoyance at Sugriv to convey a message to us that since we are also human beings, it is perfectly normal to become upset and annoyed briefly, but not letting it disturb our inner calmness and pollute our character or nature in the least, for we must immediately revert back to our former calm and cheerful self.

Though we may show anger or annoyance towards someone under a particular situation, but we must also be ready to make amends and forgive that person if he realizes his mistakes. We must not be stubborn in our attitudes, nor harbour permanent ill-will against anyone, for we must understand that the other person too can make mistakes like any other human being.

We shall note soon that Lord Ram would warmly receive Sugriv, forgive him immediately, and treat him with the same affection as a friend as he had done previously.

In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Kishkindha Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 11; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Doha no. 58.]

जानहिं यह चरित्र मुनि ग्यानी । जिन्ह रघुबीर चरन रति मानी ॥ ७ ॥

लछिमन क्रोधवन्त प्रभु जाना । धनुष चढ़ाइ गहे कर बाना ॥ ८ ॥

jānahim yaha caritra muni gyānī. jinha raghubīra carana rati mānī. 7.

lachimana krōdhavanta prabhu jānā. dhanuṣa carhā'i gahē kara bānā. 8.

This and other such mysteries in Lord Ram's story is understood by those who are saintly, wise and enlightened, and have devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram.

[Such persons know that the Lord is simply playing his role as a human being to perfection, and that is all there is to it. One must not be misled by this outwardly behaviour of Lord Ram, for it is very misleading and makes a person confused and deluded if he begins to treat such instances as the reality about the Lord.]¹ (7)

Meanwhile, when Laxman saw that Lord Ram has become angry at Sugriv, he (Laxman) picked up his bow, strung it, and also took arrows in his hand². (8)

[Note—¹One such outstanding example of a behaviour of Lord Ram that looks worldly in nature and seems to contradict or conceal the fact that he was the almighty Lord of the world is when he got ensnared in a rope consisting of serpents during the war in Lanka. At that time, Garud, Lord Vishnu's heavenly mount, was sent by the gods to cut off this fetter by devouring the serpents, so that Lord Ram becomes free. This event had such a deluding effect on Garud that he was taken aback by the Lord's behaviour, wondering how it was ever possible that the almighty Supreme Being who had manifested himself as Lord Ram would get trapped by a snare during a war. This event raised doubts in Garud's mind about the authenticity of Lord Ram as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the world. {Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 73; (ii) Doha no. 74 along with Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes it; (b) Uttar Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 59.}

The answer is that Lord Ram was acting like a maverick player who would easily adapt to his changed role that he is obliged to play on stage, and act accordingly, without being personally affected by anything. This is endorsed in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 73.

Lord Ram ensures that his acts are perfect in all respects and conform to the role he plays on the world's stage; the Lord takes care that he portrays the character of a drama that he is playing on the world's stage with an eye on details just like an expert actor would do while he is acting out the role on the stage for the spectators. An expert actor is one who acts so perfectly that those who are watching him would never think that he is a different person from the role he is enacting on the stage. But at the personal level, everyone knows that the person is merely an 'actor', but not the real character he plays.

This fact that Lord Ram's true nature is very different from what he looks like while acting on the world's stage, where he had taken the form of a prince of Ayodhya, and that being a perfect actor his actions and behaviour often times lead to confusions and doubts about his true identity, which in turn causes delusions in the mind of the beholder, has been reiterated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 72—to Doha no. 73.

What to talk of others, even Lord Shiva's consort, Sati, had fallen in this trap. She got confused when she observed that her husband, Lord Shiva, was bowing before Lord Ram while the latter was wondering in the forest in search of his lost wife Sita. Sati wondered how this was ever possible that Lord Ram, whom her husband had declared to be a manifestation of the Supreme Being himself, does not know where his wife Sita was, and who had abducted her. Being all-knowing, Lord Ram ought to be aware of these basic facts; if yes, then why was he so distraught and searching for her so frantically. Though Lord Shiva tried his best to enlighten Sati of the truth and dissuade her from doubting Lord Ram's authenticity, she wouldn't listen, and this led to developments that culminated in her committing an unpardonable sin of assuming the form of Sita to test Lord Ram's divinity, and then being suffering for her misdemeanour when Lord Shiva abandoned her. This episode is narrated in detail in: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57.

Uma, another name of Sati, clearly expresses his wonder to her husband, Lord Shiva, and requests him to enlighten her about the reality and truth of Lord Ram. It is as an answer to her query that Lord Shiva would tell her this story of 'Ram Charit Manas' which we are reading at present. In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Doha no. 111.

²On an earlier occasion too we have read that when Laxman found that Lord Ram had become perturbed at the time when news of Bharat arriving at Chitrakoot with a huge army in tow reached the Lord, he (Laxman) immediately got up with his bow and arrow in the ready to confront Bharat if he dared to try dirty tricks with Lord Ram—a propos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 230.

To wit, Laxman was always at the service of Lord Ram, waiting for the Lord to give him an instruction which he would carry out forthwith.]

दो०. तब अनुजहि समुझावा रघुपति करुना सींव ।

भय देखाइ लै आवहु तात सखा सुग्रीव ॥ १८ ॥

dōhā.

taba anujahi samujhāvā raghupati karunā sīnva.

bhaya dēkhā'i lai āvahu tāta sakhā sugrīva. 18.

Then Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram), who was an embodiment of limitless compassion and grace (karunā sīnva)¹, advised Laxman, 'My dear (tāta); go to my friend Sugriv (sakhā sugrīva) and pretend to be angry at him, just to instill fear in him², and then bring him here to me.' (Doha no. 18)

[Note—¹The epithet “*karunā sīnva*” has been added for Lord Ram here to clarify that when the Lord instructed Laxman to show anger and make Sugriv fearful, it was just for show and not actually intended to harm him, for the Lord immediately calls Sugriv his “friend”; it would be highly wrong to harm one’s friend.

But Sugriv had become indulgent and neglected even his benefactor Lord Ram, so he deserved some scolding. Even a father scolds his son over wrongdoing; a good friend too would admonish his buddy if he thinks the latter is erring or failing to do what is rightly expected of him.

To wit, this anger and threatening were merely to bring Sugriv to his senses—for Lord Ram is so merciful and compassionate that he can never ever think of harming anyone, least of all his friend whom he himself had put on the throne.

²It is clear that Lord Ram had no intention to actually harm Sugriv; he was just showing anger and threat in order to bring Sugriv to his senses and make him fulfill the promise the latter had made to the Lord that he would help the Lord to find and recover Sita. It sometimes becomes necessary to pretend to be tough on a person who is stubborn, selfish, ungrateful, and has no sense of responsibility.

Later on in the story we shall read that Lord Ram has shown a similar anger and threat of using his arrow on the deity of the ocean when the latter remained stubborn and did not allow Lord Ram and his army to cross over to its other side so that they could reach the island of Lanka. The threat worked, and the deity appeared before the Lord to ask for forgiveness, assuring all help to the Lord to cross over to Lanka—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 57—to Chanda line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 60.

We will find shortly that this trick worked with Sugriv presently, as he came to the Lord to beg for forgiveness and assure the Lord that he will fulfill his promise to find Sita and help recover her—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 20—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 22.]

चौ०. इहाँ पवनसुत हृदयँ बिचारा । राम काजु सुग्रीवँ बिसारा ॥ १ ॥

निकट जाइ चरनन्हि सिरु नावा । चारिहु बिधि तेहि कहि समुझावा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ihāmṁ pavanasuta hr̥dayamṁ bicārā. rāma kāju sugrīvamṁ bisārā. 1.

nikaṭa jāi carananhi siru nāvā. cārihu bidhi tēhi kahi samujhāvā. 2.

Here in the capital, meanwhile, Hanuman too was restless and became alarmed because a long time had passed and Sugriv did not seem inclined to pursue Lord Ram’s work; it looked as he (Sugriv) had all but forgotten about it. (1)

So Hanuman went near him and bowed at his feet. Then he explained the situation squarely to Sugriv from all its four angles. [To wit, Hanuman warned Sugriv of the dire consequences of his negligent attitude.]¹ (2)

[Note—¹The phrase used in the text is “*cārihu bidhi*” to indicate the way Hanuman explained the gravity of the situation to Sugriv. The word “*cārihu*” means ‘all the four’, and “*bidhi*” means ways or means. To wit, Hanuman told Sugriv the pros and cons of neglecting Lord Ram’s work and going back on his own words of helping the

Lord find Sita by sending messengers in all the directions to search for her. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 5.}

He warned Sugriv that if the Lord becomes angry and decides to dethrone him, then god forbid, there would be no succour for Sugriv. Sugriv had ascended the throne only by taking the help of the Lord, for he alone was unable to overcome his arch enemy Baali in order to claim the crown, and he was well aware of the Lord's strength as he had himself tested it when he made Lord Ram fling the huge bones of the demon Dundhuvī as well as fell the seven tall trees that grew on them by a single arrow. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 7.}

Besides this, Angad, the son of Baali, would be too willing to settle scores with his uncle Sugriv who had killed his father; the danger loomed from within his own palace as Angad would revolt if he sees that Lord Ram too is angry with Sugriv, and surely there were many ways open to Angad to take revenge, for obviously there would be a number of courtiers who would like to see Angad on the throne and take sides with him. Sugriv faced the prospects of mutiny, poisoning, civil war, assassination and blood shed etc.

Then there was the burden of shame and ignominy of a king rescinding on his words of honour, of being ungrateful to his friend Lord Ram who had risked his reputation for the sake of putting Sugriv on the throne. What face would he have to show to his countrymen; he would be ridiculed, censored, looked down upon and be a butt of joke. No one in the future would rely on him or his words; it will create anarchy and spark disobedience in his subjects. No one would fear or respect him, as all will know that Sugriv was a selfish creature who has no scruples.

Hanuman also reminded Sugriv of how Lord Ram had displayed his strength by slaying formidable demons, episodes that were briefly outlined by Laxman. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 5.}

So Hanuman advised Sugriv that he would be wise to become alert and immediately take remedial steps—which were first to start the search for Sita without delay, and then meet Lord Ram and apologise to him. Should the Lord enquire what he was doing all this time, Sugriv would have a ready excuse that a large number of messengers have already been dispatched for the purpose; otherwise he would have no answer in his defense.]

सुनि सुग्रीवँ परम भय माना । बिषयँ मोर हरि लीन्हेउ ग्याना ॥ ३ ॥

अब मारुतसुत दूत समूहा । पठवहु जहँ तहँ बानर जूहा ॥ ४ ॥

कहहु पाख महँ आव न जोई । मोरें कर ता कर बध होई ॥ ५ ॥

sunī sugrīvaṁ parama bhaya mānā. biṣayaṁ mōra hari līnhē'u gyānā. 3.
aba mārutasuta dūta samūhā. paṭhavahu jaham̐ taham̐ bānara jūhā. 4.
kahahu pākha mahum̐ āva na jō'ī. mōrēm kara tā kara badha hō'ī.5.

When Sugriv heard of the gravity of the possibilities that he faced, he was sore alarmed and affright. He regretted and said, 'Indulgences in material world had eclipsed my wisdom and sense of propriety. (3)

Now oh the Son of the Wind God (Hanuman)¹, send heralds on errands in all the directions where great communities of monkeys and bears live. (4)

Tell them to convey to all the communities an urgent message from me, that if any of them do not come here within a time frame of ‘half a month’ (“pākha mahum²”; fifteen days) then he would be killed by my hands.² (5)

[Note—¹The use of the phrase ‘son of the wind god’ for Hanuman is significant. Speed and agility was needed at this time; natural barriers such as hills, mountains, rivers and forests had also to be confronted. The ‘wind’ has the ability to go anywhere it likes, and there is no barrier that can hinder its passage. That is why Sugriv invokes this uniqueness in Hanuman to remind him of his abilities and motivate him to act fast like his father the Wind God.

²Some sort of threatening and coercive methods were usually employed by kings and emperors to make those reluctant to follow their commands fall in line. Otherwise, half of those who were summoned would cook up some excuse for not coming.

Once Sugriv realised the seriousness of the situation, he lost no time to act; the ‘fifteen day’ time proves his sense of urgency. Why was it not said: ‘tell them to come here “immediately” ’? Well, the kingdom of Kishkindha was a wild territory consisting of forests, mountains, hills, valleys, rivers and the un-chartered wilderness in general. It will take time for the messengers to reach each corner of this unmapped but extensive territory; then some time must be given to the summoned monkeys and bears to prepare and make arrangements at home for their personal affairs before departure, and then some time would be taken to cover the distance from their homes to reach the capitol.]

तब हनुमंत बोलाए दूता । सब कर करि सनमान बहूता ॥ ६ ॥
भय अरु प्रीति नीति देखराई । चले सकल चरनन्हि सिर नाई ॥ ७ ॥
एहि अवसर लछिमन पुर आए । क्रोध देखि जहँ तहँ कपि धाए ॥ ८ ॥

taba hanumanta bōlā'ē dūtā. saba kara kari sanamāna bahūtā. 6.
bhaya aru prīti nīti dēkharā'ī. calē sakala carananhi sira nā'ī. 7.
ēhi avasara lachimana pura ā'ē. krōdha dēkhi jaham'taham' kapi dhā'ē. 8.

Then Hanuman called the messengers; he extended great cordiality towards them, praising them and their qualities, and in general showing them a special treatment by way of honouring them and giving them due respect¹. (6)

After this initial gestures of cordiality, Hanuman became solemn as he calmly explained the gravity of the situation and the seriousness of the issue for which these heralds were summoned. He used the usual tricks of politics and statecraft to drive the point home by using a mixture of fear, threat, affection and rewards, as well as the propriety and probity of the work they were expected to do. [To wit, it was a ‘carrot and stick’ approach.]

After this briefing, all of the heralds bowed before him (Hanuman) and set off on their mission². (7)

Just at that time, Laxman entered the city angrily (as advised by Lord Ram). All the monkeys ran hither and thither seeing him angry. (8)

[Note—¹Hanuman was very wise, erudite and clever. He wished to ensure loyalty and total commitment of the heralds for the project in hand, so he played on their sense of self-respect, ego and emotions by showing special treatment to them; this ensured that they would be enthusiastic towards doing the task which was to be assigned to them. His cordial welcome to the messengers immediately struck an emotional cord of friendship and loyalty with them, and created a spontaneous bond that endeared him to all of them as they felt very privileged and honoured to have been chosen for this grand assignment.

²We have read earlier that Lord Ram too had adopted this tact to make Sugriv relent and make arrangements for sending troops of messengers in search of Sita. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 18.

It was indeed a ‘carrot and stick’ approach: Hanuman told those who were assembled that if they did not obey then it would be tantamount to disobedience and disloyalty towards their king, in case of which they would be severely punished; if on the other hand they did their duty diligently then the king would reward them in material terms, give them titles of honour, and grant them largesse.

As regards the propriety of them being sent to search for Sita, it was in perfect order as a rascal had kidnapped the lawful wife of a gentleman, and it is an honourable duty of all, and a noble deed indeed, to help such a person in distress; its reward would be immense in both material terms, in addition to having good fame and emotional contentment of a task well done for a good cause.

All the messengers were convinced, and they cheerfully volunteered to do their best.]

दो०. धनुष चढ़ाइ कहा तब जारि करउँ पुर छार ।

ब्याकुल नगर देखि तब आयउ बालिकुमार ॥ १९ ॥

dōhā.

dhanuṣa caṛhā'i kahā taba jāri kara'um̐ pura chāra.

byākula nagara dēkhi taba āya'u bālikumāra. 19.

He (Laxman) raised his stringed bow and mounted an arrow on it. Then he said angrily, ‘I will burn the city to ashes.’

When the son of Baali (“bālikumāra”; Angad) observed that the whole city was terrified and in turmoil, he came to meet Laxman (to calm him down)¹. (Doha no. 19)

[Note—¹It is very significant that Angad decided voluntarily, or he was asked by Sugriv or Hanuman, to go and meet Laxman. Angad was very certain that Laxman would not harm him. Why was it so? It was because his father Baali had held his hand and gave it to Lord Ram just at the time when he was dying, with a prayerful request that the Lord must take care of his son Angad and forever treat him as his servant, or

as his follower and dependant. This is expressly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chanda line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 10.

Lord Ram and Laxman were morally bound by this last wish of Baali made just before he died; it was sacrosanct and could not be bargained or set aside in any condition. So after this moment Lord Ram took great care to ensure Angad was given due respect and honour; that he was shown given full dignity as a prince of the kingdom, and the Lord treated Angad with a kind heart for all times to come. This is the reason why Angad was sure that no harm would come to him from Laxman.

Earlier Lord Ram had made Angad the crown prince of the kingdom of Kishkindha while anointing Sugriv as its king; then the Lord had ordered Sugriv to share the responsibility of ruling the kingdom equally with Angad. By these two gestures the Lord ensured that Angad is not treated unfairly and like a second class citizen; and that after the death of Sugriv the throne would pass on to Angad. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Doha no. 11; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 12.}

Another important reason for selecting Angad to go out and meet Laxman is this: Sugriv was the king, and Angad was the crown prince. When a guest arrives in the kingdom it is usual practice that the prince is sent out to welcome him near the gates of the city, and the king receives the guest in the palace. So this custom was followed here, and since this was in order, therefore Laxman did not mind it.]

चौ०. चरन नाइ सिरु बिनती कीन्ही । लछिमन अभय बाँह तेहि दीन्ही ॥ १ ॥

क्रोधवंत लछिमन सुनि काना । कह कपीस अति भयँ अकुलाना ॥ २ ॥

सुनु हनुमंत संग लै तारा । करि बिनती समुझाउ कुमारा ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

carana nā'i siru binatī kīnhī. lachimana abhaya bām̐ha tēhi dīnhī. 1.
krōdhavanta lachimana suni kānā. kaha kapīsa ati bhayam̐ akulānā. 2.
sunu hanumanta saṅga lai tārā. kari binatī samujhā'u kumārā. 3.

Angad came to Laxman, bowed his head at the latter's feet, and offered his prayers. At this humble and polite approach of Angad, Laxman was pleased; he extended his hands to hold of Angad's arms affectionately, and told Angad that he has nothing to fear from him. (1)

Meanwhile, inside the palace when the king of the monkeys (i.e. Sugriv) heard that Laxman is vehemently angry, he was terrified to his wits end.

He called Hanuman and instructed him urgently, 'Listen Hanumam; take Tara (the widow of Baali and the mother of Angad) with you, and go out to pray politely to the prince ("kumārā"; Laxman) and explain to him the situation¹. (2-3)

[Note—¹Sugriv decided to send Tara and Hanuman as he was sure that they, along with Angad who was already out to meet Laxman and given assurance of no harm from the latter, would be able to persuade Laxman to calm down and excuse the family for any misconduct done or error committed by them. The three—Angad, his mother Tara, and Hanuman—would together apologise on behalf of their king Sugriv.

One more reason was there for sending Tara. A noble man would never insult or harm a woman, especially when she was not at fault at all, nor would he use any

abusive or uncouth language in her presence. So this was a sure-shot method to rein-in Laxman's anger.]

तारा सहित जाइ हनुमाना । चरन बंदि प्रभु सुजस बखाना ॥ ४ ॥
करि बिनती मंदिर लै आए । चरन पखारि पलंग बैठाए ॥ ५ ॥
तब कपीस चरनन्हि सिरु नावा । गहि भुज लछिमन कंठ लगावा ॥ ६ ॥

tārā sahita jā'i hanumānā. carana bandi prabhu sujasa bakhānā. 4.
kari binatī mandira lai ā'ē. carana pakhāri palamṅga baiṭhā'ē. 5.
taba kapīsa carananhi siru nāvā. gahi bhuja lachimana kaṇṭha lagāvā. 6.

Hanuman went along with Tara to pay their obeisance at the feet of Laxman; then they praised the glories of the Lord (i.e. of Lord Ram)¹. (4)

Then they prayed to him (Laxman) and requested him to come to the palace. Once there, they washed his feet reverentially and offered a cot as a seat for him sit down upon². (5)

At that moment Sugriv came and bowed his head at Laxman's feet. Laxman immediately took him by his arms and affectionately hugged him³. (6)

[Note—¹It was a clever strategy devised by Hanuman: Laxman cannot harm a person who has politely submitted himself before him, as well as praises Lord Ram at the same time.

²In a king's palace the guest of honour is given a high seat, whereas in an ordinary home he is seated on a sitting mat spread on the ground. So that's why a 'cot' was offered to Laxman.

³Sugriv was watching the proceedings from a hiding place; so when he observed that Laxman has calmed down and was in a friendly mood, he ventured out and came to meet him.

Laxman was instructed by Lord Ram to make a 'show' of anger and create fear as clearly stated in Doha no. 18 herein above; Laxman did not intend actual harm to anyone. So as soon as he saw Sugriv bow his head before him as a token of submission, Laxman grabbed this opportunity without a second thought, and reciprocated warmly by embracing Sugriv so as to put to rest any trace of apprehension that the latter might have had.

All bitterness was forgotten and forgiven; it was bonhomie and goodwill once again. This sudden change was crucial and essential—for, after all, the two brothers knew that they would need the full support of the monkeys and bears to successfully recover Sita. Hence there was no point to unnecessarily prolong the stand-off.]

नाथ बिषय सम मद कछु नाहीं । मुनि मन मोह करइ छन माहीं ॥ ७ ॥
सुनत बिनीत बचन सुख पावा । लछिमन तेहि बहु बिधि समुझावा ॥ ८ ॥

पवन तनय सब कथा सुनाई । जेहि बिधि गए दूत समुदाई ॥ १ ॥

nātha biṣaya sama mada kachu nāhīm. muni mana mōha kara'i chana māhīm.
7.

sunata binīta bacana sukha pāvā. lachimana tēhi bahu bidhi samujhāvā. 8.
pavana tanaya saba kathā sunāī. jēhi bidhi ga'ē dūta samudāī. 9.

Sugriv said (by way of an apology and defence of his position), 'Oh Lord. There is no stronger intoxicating force that deludes a living being than the attractions of the sense objects of the material world which create delusions and attachments in the Mana (heart and mind) of even great sages.

[So, I request you to please excuse for my error and forgive me for the negligence caused due to this natural shortcoming of all living beings. Yes indeed it is true that I had become indulgent in the affairs of the world and had all but forgotten the promise I had made to Lord Ram. But I prithe to be kind on me, and forgive me for my irresponsible behaviour. I am at your service now.]' (7)

Hearing these polite words of humility, Laxman felt very pleased. Then he reassured Sugriv in many ways and explained the different aspects of the situation to him¹. (8)

At this juncture, Hanuman told Laxman everything about the large numbers of messengers being already dispatched in all the four direction with instructions to search for Sita and bring the news as quick as possible within a fixed time frame. (9)

[Note—¹To wit, Laxman assured Sugriv that neither he nor Lord Ram have any ill-will against him in the least; they had utmost trust and faith in him. The reason given by Sugriv was understandable; and he need not worry any longer.

Laxman may have also impressed upon him the urgency of the matter, for the longer it takes to locate Sita and recover her, the lesser would be the chance to find her in sustainable health, or even alive—because Sita may die due to grief and hopelessness if not found in time.

Besides this, the Lord had to return to Ayodhya as soon as the fourteen year period of forest exile ended, because if he did not return in the stipulated time his dear brother Bharat had vowed to end his life after that period. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 116 where Lord Ram himself makes this declaration.}

Hence, no more time is to be spent in searching for and recovering Sita.]

दो०. हरषि चले सुग्रीव तब अंगदादि कपि साथ ।

रामानुज आगें करि आए जहँ रघुनाथ ॥ २० ॥

dōhā.

haraṣi calē sugrīva taba aṅgadādi kapi sātha.
rāmānuja āgēm kari ā'ē jaham' raghunātha. 20.

Then Sugriv, Angad and the Kapi (i.e. Hanuman) together set off cheerfully to meet Lord Ram. Keeping Laxman in front to lead them¹, they arrived at the dwelling of Lord Raghunath (Sri Ram) (on Mt. Pravarshan)². (Doha no. 20)

[Note—¹Why was Laxman made to lead the group? There are two obvious reasons:

(a) None of them knew the exact place where Lord Ram lived on Mt. Pravarshan, because when Lord Ram took his leave of Sugriv after anointing him as the king of Kishkindha, it was Laxman alone who accompanied the Lord to the cave where they took up dwelling during the rainy season. No one amongst the monkeys knew this location. So it was necessary to have Laxman lead them to the correct cave.

(b) The group consisting of Sugriv, Angad and Hanuman were afraid because Lord Ram was angry with them. So if they kept Laxman in the front when they came face-to-face with Lord Ram, he would signal to the Lord that all was peaceful and in line with his wishes; so the chances of the Lord bursting out in anger as soon as he saw these ungrateful monkeys would be taken care of.

²In Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3 we read about the time when Sugriv comes to meet Lord Ram on Mt. Pravarshan; the moment has been beautifully described as follows:- “They (i.e. Sugriv, Hanuman, and Laxman who was sent by Lord Ram to bring Sugriv to him) saw Lord Ram sitting on a stone slab on the mouth of the cave. He was attired in a deer skin, was dark complexioned, had a crown of matted hairs on his head (1), had large eyes, was calm, tranquil and serene, and his charming face had a smile of a man lost in some pleasant thoughts so much so that he is unaware of his surroundings. The Lord was so overwhelmed by the emotional torment created due to the agony of separation from his beloved wife Sita that he appeared to be weary and haggard even as he gazed absent-mindedly at the deer and birds that moved around him* (2).

Sugriv and Laxman got down from the chariot a little away, and came and fell down at his feet with devotion and reverence (3).

{*When Sugriv arrived at the cave where Lord Ram dwelt on Mt. Pravarshan, he found him sitting motionless, lost in deep thoughts. The Lord had a melancholic expression spread over his countenance that betrayed his emotional state of extreme sadness and profound gloom which was made all the more striking by the presence of a frozen smile on his dark-complexioned face and lotus-like eyes that were transfixed at a distant point where some deer and birds were moving around carelessly, for the smile and the gaze indicated that a huge emotional storm was blowing inside him as he was deeply lost in reminiscences and thoughts of Sita.}]

चौ०. नाइ चरन सिरु कह कर जोरी । नाथ मोहि कछु नाहिन खोरी ॥ १ ॥

अतिसय प्रबल देव तव माया । छूटइ राम करहु जौं दाया ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nā'i carana siru kaha kara jōrī. nātha mōhi kachu nāhina khōrī. 1.

atisaya prabala dēva tava māyā. chūṭa'i rāma karahu jaurm dāyā. 2.

[When Sugriv met Lord Ram he apologised for the delay in carrying out the Lord's wish, which was to send messengers in all the directions to search for Sita. In the very beginning itself he defended himself by saying that it was not his mistake that he had

forgotten the Lord's work and got involved in worldly affairs as it was due to the overpowering influence of the Lord's delusion-creating powers called 'Maya' that he got distracted from his path.]

Sugriv bowed his head reverentially at the feet of Lord Ram and politely made his submission, 'Oh Lord! I am not at fault (that I had become indulgent and all but forgot to carry out your orders). (1)

Oh Lord; your delusion-creating powers called Maya are extremely formidable and insurmountable; they are difficult to cope with. Oh Lord Ram! The firm grip of Maya can be broken or overcome only if you show mercy, grace and benevolence (upon the creature who has come under its influence). (2)

बिषय बस्य सुर नर मुनि स्वामी । मैं पावँर पसु कपि अति कामी ॥ ३ ॥
 नारि नयन सर जाहि न लागा । घोर क्रोध तम निसि जो जागा ॥ ४ ॥
 लोभ पाँस जेहिं गर न बँधाया । सो नर तुम्ह समान रघुराया ॥ ५ ॥
 यह गुन साधन तेँ नहिं होई । तुम्हरी कृपाँ पाव कोइ कोइ ॥ ६ ॥

biṣaya basya sura nara muni svāmī. mair̥m pāvam̐ra pasu kapi ati kāmī. 3.
 nāri nayana sara jāhi na lāgā. ghōra krōdha tama nisi jō jāgā. 4.
 lōbha pām̐sa jēhir̥m gara na bam̐dhāyā. sō nara tumha samāna raghurāyā. 5.
 yaha guna sādhanā tēm̐ nahim̐ hōī. tumharī kṛpām̐ pāva kō'i kōī. 6.

Even the gods, the humans and the sages, who are higher up in the hierarchy of creation, are not free from the tentacles of attachment to, and attraction for, the comforts and pleasures originating from the sense objects of this material world that Maya creates, so where do I, a lowly and humble creature of limited intellect whose form is like that of a monkey, stand against the formidable force of Maya?¹ (3)

He who has not been pierced by the symbolic arrow shot at him in the form of passionate, longing glances of a woman (i.e. he who succeeds in controlling himself and is not moved by gestures of lust and passion shown by a lovelorn lady), he who manages to remain awake in the horribly dark night symbolised by anger (i.e. he who is not provoked but remains calm and exercises self-control over his emotions when faced with an angry tirade, insinuations or ridicule by his adversaries) [4], ---

--- he who is not tied by the snare of greed and rapacity (i.e. he who overcomes all tendencies of greed and yearning, and practices exemplary renunciation and dispassion)—well, oh Lord, such a man as he is regarded as being similar to you (i.e. he is worthy of honour, respect, adoration, admiration, praise and glories that are similar to yours) [5] (4-5)

These qualities or virtues are not attainable by effort and by employing any other means, but it is only by your grace and mercy that some rare individuals are able to acquire them.² (6)

[Note—¹“To wit, when such exalted beings as gods and sages, as well as humans who are considered as being the first amongst all the members of the animal kingdom, are

not spared from the influence of delusions that bind them to this artificial world of sensual charms, then say who am I in their comparison, for I am a lowly monkey (literally a “lowly animal; *pāvamra pasu*”) by birth, and as such I have a fickle mind that is inherently attracted to sensual pleasures and is naturally inclined to be indulgent in the affairs of the world. So I may be forgiven and excused for my errors and negligence.”

Sugriv had made the same excuse before Laxman in Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20 herein above.

²To wit, the excellent characters noted above are rare in a living being. The few who are privileged to have them are those who are blessed by Lord Ram, for it is only by his grace and benevolence that one can have them.

Sugriv means that it is actually the fault of the Lord’s Maya that he had become so deluded as to forget about the urgency of the Lord’s work. But when the Lord decided to clear the influence of Maya, Sugriv was alerted about his mistake and made aware of his duties and responsibilities.

We will read in the next verse no. 7 that Lord Ram ‘smiled’, of course in amusement, at this logic of Sugriv and the excuse made by him!]

तब रघुपति बोले मुसुकाई । तुम्ह प्रिय मोहि भरत जिमि भाई ॥ ७ ॥

अब सोइ जतनु करहु मन लाई । जेहि बिधि सीता कै सुधि पाई ॥ ८ ॥

taba raghupati bōlē musukāī. tumha priya mōhi bharata jimi bhāī. 7.
aba sō'i jatanu karahu mana lāī. jēhi bidhi sītā kai sudhi pāī. 8.

Then Lord of the Raghus (“raghupati”; Lord Ram) smiled¹ and said, ‘You are dear to me like my brother Bharat is. (7)

However, please now make necessary arrangements, with all diligence and sincerity in your mind and heart (*jatanu karahu mana lāī*), so that the whereabouts of Sita can be known.² (8)

[Note—¹Lord Ram was quite amused by what Sugriv had said, so he smiled. Sugriv had found a ready-made excuse for his own follies by blaming the Maya of the Lord, which is universally blamed for the common tendency of all creatures to be indulgent in the material world, become selfish, pervert and sinful, get distracted from the correct path of righteousness and probity, and suffer from their horrible consequences.

The Lord smiled also because if he had not sent Laxman to give Sugriv a threat then the latter would have continued with his earlier ways, but now he seems to have become a philosopher, and it is more out of fear for his life than actually because he is a righteous man of scruples who regrets that he had erred. Why so? Because if Sugriv indeed had some sense of probity and propriety in him, even a rudimentary one, then he would not have thought of getting his own elder brother Baali killed for the sake of the throne of Kishkindha, and then so quickly forgetting the promise he made to someone, in this case Lord Ram, whose support he had taken to get rid of his brother. If he had been a creature of principles and scruples then he would have preferred to ask Lord Ram to help him get his rights back from Baali instead of getting him killed outright. And now he is preaching!

²Anyway, Lord Ram needed Sugriv's help to accomplish the mammoth task that was at hand—first to find out where Sita was, and then launch a campaign to retrieve her. The Lord needed manpower and logistics for this purpose, and so it was wise not to stretch the matter too far to the point that Sugriv is so embarrassed in public and ashamed of himself that he decides to square up his insult and humiliation by quietly revolting against the Lord and pulling the rug from under the Lord's feet at a crucial moment during the campaign to liberate Sita; there were chances that he may even share the secrets of the military strategy with Ravana, or order his troops to turn around when the war is just about to be won.

To wit, if Sugriv felt offended and humiliated in public in any way, and consequentially decides to turn hostile towards Lord Ram and Laxman to avenge his insult, then it would be a very bad thing for the two brothers as they were all alone in an alien land surrounded by unknown persons about whom nothing can be predicted. So it would be literally suicidal to push Sugriv to the corner, and shame him so much that he is too upset and loses his restraint to become emotionally aggressive towards the Lord; should it actually happen it would be fatal, especially because Laxman had threatened Sugriv in his own city while all his subjects were watching, and though Sugriv got scared initially but it is quite possible that he has taken offence in his heart for this public rebuke, and is looking for an excuse to rescind on his promise made to Lord Ram, and even take the two brothers hostage for insulting the king of Kishkindha. In this eventuality, the subjects of the kingdom would obviously and naturally side with their king instead of with total strangers like Lord Ram and Laxman.

So the risks were too great to make Sugriv feel uneasy beyond a limit. Hence, as soon as a window of opportunity came by way of Sugriv himself coming to submit and make excuses, the Lord was too willing to let the matter rest there and then. And so he extended an olive branch to Sugriv by calling him his “dear brother, like Bharat”.

Now Sugriv was bound by two relations with Lord Ram: one as a ‘friend’, and the other as a ‘brother’. By this single polite gesture Lord Ram instantly ensured Sugriv's loyalty and devotion towards himself.

We read in *Adhyatma Ramayan*, *Kishkindha Kand*, Canto 6, verse nos. 20-24 that when Sugriv presented the whole army of monkeys and bears at the service of Lord Ram and requested him to give them orders as he deemed fit, the Lord acted wisely and prudently by leaving the entire responsibility of selecting messengers and sending them to search for Sita, and then launching a campaign to free her from her captors, in on the shoulders of Sugriv. The Lord told Sugriv to appoint suitable messengers and heralds according to his own choice, depending upon the individual's ability and aptitude to succeed in the mission of finding Sita, because Sugriv knew his army better than anyone else, so he was the best judge to decide who amongst these commanders and warriors is the best suited for the job that is to be done. After all, Lord Ram was a stranger and a foreigner who had no experience of the skills, abilities and qualities of the warriors of the army of Kishkindha.

Sugriv was very pleased and felt delighted by this request of Lord Ram as it not only showed that the Lord trusted him and had no hard feelings for him because he had neglected the Lord's work earlier, but also because the Lord gave him due respect and the right to order his troops as a King of the kingdom of Kishkindha. Sugriv was happy that his dignity and self-respect was duly honoured by Lord Ram, and so it now devolves squarely upon his shoulders to ensure that the honour and

dignity and respect and reputation of a great king of a great kingdom are properly taken care of.

To wit, Lord Ram was very wise and prudent in putting the responsibility on Sugriv's shoulders as now he was totally accountable for the success of the mission, and he cannot shrug it off by any sort of lame excuse.]

दो०. एहि बिधि होत बतकही आए बानर जूथ ।

नाना बरन सकल दिसि देखिअ कीस बरूथ ॥ २१ ॥

dōhā.

ēhi bidhi hōta batakahī ā'ē bānara jūtha.

nānā barana sakala disī dēkhi'a kīsa barūtha. 21.

While they were conversing in this manner, large groups of monkeys came there one after another in an unending line of troops. In all the four directions (as far as the eyes could see, and extending to the horizon), one could see monkey warriors of all sorts, having a wide variety of complexions, and belonging to as many classes, with varying visages, forms and demeanours¹. (Doha no. 21)

[Note—¹Of what sort were these monkey troops? These monkey warriors have been described elsewhere in (i) Valmiki's Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Sarga/Canto 37-40; and (ii) in Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 6, verse no. 9-10. We shall be reading the latter narration in due course in section 6.2 herein below where Adhyatma Ramayan is cited as part of this narrative.

Earlier we have read that Sugriv had given the heralds a time frame of fifteen-days by which the monkeys should come here. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 19.}

Some of these monkey warriors lived in nearby areas, and some in far-off lands. As soon as they received their king Sugriv's orders, they started departing from their dwelling places and arriving at Kishkindha, from where they were directed to Mt. Pravarshan where Lord Ram lived, and now Sugriv too had joined him.

Of course the arrival of troops must have taken some time, but it is certain that the entire army was assembled within fifteen days from the day Lord Ram had sent Laxman to coerce Sugriv to mend his ways, and Hanuman too had alerted him about his duties and responsibilities which Sugriv seemed to have neglected.]

चौ०. बानर कटक उमा में देखा । सो मूरुख जो करन चह लेखा ॥ १ ॥

आइ राम पद नावहिं माथा । निरखि बदनु सब होहिं सनाथा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bānara kaṭaka umā maim dēkhā. sō mūrukha jō karana caha lēkhā. 1.

ā'i rāma pada nāvahiṁ māthā. nirakhi badanu saba hōhiṁ sanāthā. 2.

[Lord Shiva, who is the primary narrator of the story of Ram Charit Manas and who was also the first to conceive it in his mind, told his consort Parvati—] 'Oh Uma; I had seen the army of monkeys. Anyone who tries to describe this formidable army

(i.e. about its warriors and their numbers, its astonishing strength, its bubbling enthusiasm, its astounding energy, its incomparable valour, its matchless courage, its powerful force and irresistible punch) would be a foolish person¹. (1)

All the warriors came and bowed their heads at the feet of Lord Ram to pledge their unquestioned support and vow for their allegiance to the Lord and to his cause; all these warriors were in thrall when they observed the form of the Lord (from which effused a halo of divinity and holiness that automatically attracted them, and inspired loyalty and devotion in their hearts and minds) so much so that they unequivocally felt that they were highly honoured and exceptionally privileged to get an opportunity to serve the Lord². (2)

[Note—¹This is because this army of monkeys and bears that assembled to help Lord Ram was so great and unique that defied all descriptions. It was wondrous beyond imagination; it was a stupendous army of exceptional magnificence; it was an army the like of which was not hitherto seen anywhere.

²To wit, the huge army of monkeys and bears was so astonishingly impressed by the very first sight of Lord Ram that all its warriors were in awe and stood enthralled. The Lord's halo of holiness and divinity, his majesty and magnificence was so overpowering that no sooner did the warriors come in contact with the Lord then they decided voluntarily to serve him with all their might and to the best of their abilities.

It was a spontaneous emotional reaction that sprouted in the hearts and the minds of the warriors like the one that is generated inside the bosom of a creature when he feels what he is about to do is a good and noble deed that is done for an equally good and noble cause.

Thus, the participation of the monkeys and bears in the campaign for freeing Sita and elimination of the cruel demons was not done under coercion or any duress at all, but it was a voluntary involvement by each individual who took it as a privilege and an honour to be able to participate. In this scenario, if any one of them would have been told to stay back, he would have taken it as a punishment instead of seeing it as a chance to escape the risks of the impending campaign the result of which was unpredictable.

Every single warrior of the army was raring to go with enthusiasm that spilled over like milk that brims over when the pot is too full!]

अस कपि एक न सेना माहीं । राम कुसल जेहि पूछी नाही ॥ ३ ॥

यह कछु नहिं प्रभु कइ अधिकाई । बिस्वरूप व्यापक रघुराई ॥ ४ ॥

asa kapi ēka na sēnā māhīm. rāma kusala jēhi pūchī nāhīm. 3.

yaha kachu nahīm prabhu ka'i adhikā'ī. bisvarūpa byāpaka raghurā'ī. 4.

There was not a single monkey (and bear) warrior in the whole army whom Lord Ram had not met individually and personally enquired about his welfare¹. (3)

There is no wonder in it, and nothing to be astonished about in this astounding feat of Lord of the Raghus ("raghurā'ī"; Lord Ram) because the Lord is a personified form,

or an embodiment, of the cosmic form of the Supreme Being that is all-encompassing, all-pervading and omnipresent in this creation². (4)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram returned to Ayodhya after the Lanka campaign, the whole city poured out to meet him and emotionally welcome him. The gracious Lord wished to reciprocate this exuberant emotion of love and affection that the citizens exhibited universally, and also to show them he remembers each of them as much as they remembered him. So the Lord performed a miracle of sorts; he assumed countless forms and met each citizen individually. Everyone thought that the Lord has gone out of his way to meet him first and ask for his welfare before he met others; but it was such a miracle that the Lord met thousands of his subjects simultaneously. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 6.}

Another such occasion where Lord Ram had assumed countless forms at the same instant is found when Bharat lead a party from Ayodhya and went to meet Lord Ram in the forest at Chitrakoot in an attempt to persuade the Lord to return home. When this party arrived at the Lord's hermitage, he met everyone simultaneously by assuming as many forms as there were individuals in the party. This pleased each person and all of them felt that the Lord had shown them special treatment. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 244.}

The same mystical feat is achieved here. By this single amiable act of personal affection and graciousness, Lord Ram endeared himself to every single warrior of the army, as it was the first time in their lives that they had been personally shown so much respect and given such attention by anyone. Kings and commanders take a salute from the army regiments en-masse during a parade, but never do they go out of their way and against the rules of protocol to meet and hug each single member of the parade and ask 'how are you'.

Hence, this personal and affable approach of the Lord changed the law of the game instantly; each individual warrior became emotionally overwhelmed and felt that he is obliged to be loyal and obedient to such a nice and friendly Lord who made them all feel very comfortable by treating them all as one of his own.

So what otherwise would simply have been a formal army that was obliged to obey the commands given to it by its king and commanders now instantaneously transmuted itself into an army that was totally devoted and fully committed to Lord Ram, and vowed never to fail him.

²It is difficult for a human mind to understand how it happened if he does not realise that Lord Ram was not a human being, nor a magician. He was a personified form of the 'Supreme Being' who is almighty and omnipresent everywhere; in fact there is no place or spot in this creation where the Lord is not present.

To wit, the Lord is a personified form of Cosmic Consciousness that pervades throughout this creation in a uniform manner; it is only that under some circumstances this Consciousness is revealed and under other circumstances it remains invisible, or imperceptible for the senses. That makes the Lord visible at a given point of time, and remain invisible for the rest of the time. One such condition for making the Lord reveal himself is love and devotion. These facts have been affirmed by Lord Shiva himself to the gods and mother earth in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 185. The occasion was the assembly where they gathered together to seek Lord Vishnu and pray to him to help them against the terror unleashed by the demons lead by Ravana.

So therefore we conclude that since the Lord had revealed himself in as many numbers as there were monkeys and bears in the army so as to meet them individually and ask for their welfare, it proves unequivocally and in all sooth that the whole army was totally devoted and completely committed to serve Lord Ram; there is no doubt about it.

We can imagine and explain this phenomenon by a simple example. We know that water molecules exist in the air all around us; there would be no life if there was no moisture on earth. But do we see these water molecules as such? If the temperature drops below a certain point, these same molecules condense to form ‘water vapour’ which we see as a ‘cloud’ or ‘mist’ or ‘fog’, or even ‘steam’ that emerges from the spout of the kettle.

The same thing would apply to a more subtle element such as the ‘fire’. Its presence is felt in the form of ‘warmth’ all around us; even our body is warm due to the presence of this life-giving element inside the body, for a dead body is cold and not warm. But we don’t visibly ‘see’ fire as such, for it is so subtle an element that the gross organs of the eyes are not empowered to perceive it. But however, as soon as circumstances are favourable or conducive, this same fire element makes its visible form clear when we see flames leaping from burning wood or see the lighted wick of a candle.]

ठाढ़े जहँ तहँ आयसु पाई । कह सुग्रीव सबहि समुझाई ॥ ५ ॥
 राम काजु अरु मोर निहोरा । बनर जूथ जाहु चहुँ ओरा ॥ ६ ॥
 जनकसुता कहँ खोजहु जाई । मास दिवस महँ आएहु भाई ॥ ७ ॥
 अवधि मेटि जो बिनु सुधि पाएँ । आवइ बनिहि सो मोहि मराएँ ॥ ८ ॥

ṭhārḥē jaham̐ taham̐ āyasu pā'ī. kaha sugrīva sabahi samujhā'ī. 5.
 rāma kāju aru mōra nihōrā. bānara jūtha jāhu cahum̐ ōrā. 6.
 janakasutā kahum̐ khōjahu jā'ī. māsa divasa maham̐ ā'ēhu bhā'ī. 7.
 avadhi mēṭi jō binu sudhi pā'ēm̐. āva'i banihi sō mōhi marā'ēm̐. 8.

After this initial introduction was over, all the warriors were ordered to stand in line wherever they were, in formations according to their ranks and stature in the hierarchy.

Then Sugriv addressed them, and explained everything to all of them. [To wit, Sugriv told them why they were summoned and what is to be done now; he also explained to them the propriety of his decision, and the rewards that await them at the successful conclusion of the campaign.] (5)

He said, ‘It is Lord Ram’s work (rāma kāju), and I also request you all to oblige me (aru mōra nihōrā). Oh monkey troops! Form groups and go in all the directions. (6)

Go and search for the daughter of Janak (“janakasutā”; Sita) everywhere (in all the directions)¹. Return here by the end of one month (i.e. within a month’s time). (7)

If anyone of you returns after this stipulated period, and without acquiring any information about the whereabouts of Sita, then as soon as you return to this forest you shall die at my hands².

[To wit, if you don't search Sita diligently, if you waste your time fooling around, if you take this mission lightly and think you are going to a picnic only to come back and offer excuses that you couldn't find Sita, or if you try to play tricks with me by not going out in the search at all but remain hidden in the forest during this period—then be warned that I will give you severe punishment, and it would be capital punishment; you will have to pay with your life. So don't force my hands, and try your best to find her.]' (8)

[Note—¹Sugriv had “explained everything” to the troops: this obviously means that he had told them what he had already told Lord Ram about his seeing Sita being taken away by the path of the sky in the general direction of the south. Besides this, Laxman also had briefed Sugriv about the events that occurred before they came here. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 5 herein above.} That means, Sugriv was told about Lord Ram's meeting with Jatau and Sabari, and that by the time the two brothers arrived at Lake Pampa and onwards at Mt. Rishyamook, they were well aware that Ravana had taken away Sita. It was also well known that Ravana lived in Lanka which lay roughly in the south direction from Kishkindha. So therefore, why did Sugriv order his troops to go in “all the directions”?

Well, though it is true that Ravana lived in the south direction and ordinarily if anyone wished to go after him he would head straight to south. But the case here is different—Ravana is a thief and a kidnapper for he has abducted the wife (Sita) of a noble and brave warrior-prince (Lord Ram) of whom he was so scared that he dared not wait a moment but hurtled away with the lady as fast as he could to escape her husband's wrath if he discovered his evil deed. And no sensible thief or kidnapper would keep his victim in a well-known place, such as his own home.

So therefore it was logical to suppose that Sita was kept captive in a place that no one would guess. This is the reason why Sugriv instructed his troops to “go in every direction”—which means even the northern direction. But the chances of Sita being taken to the north were remote as the general geographical area was populated by human beings and had villages, towns, cities as well as hermitages of sages, seers, ascetics and hermits as compared to the south part of the land, south of the Vindaya Mountains, especially the area that fell beyond the Dandakaranya forest, as it was too desolate, barren, thickly wooded, formidably wild and generally uninhabitable for any civilisation to flourish.

Hence, it is reasonable to guess that that while instructing his troops Sugriv must have told them to proceed in the ‘general direction of the south’, but spread themselves so as to cover all the angles in this direction, viz. from the extreme south-east end to the south-west corner, a rough half-circle of land.

Sugriv told the troops: “Spread yourselves everywhere; look into every nook and corner of the land; in every bower, under every canopy, in each alcove and recess, over glade and under arcade of creepers, in each cave, inside each hole, under each crevice, within all tunnels and vestibule, behind hedges, bushes and palisades of thickets, left and right and top of every ridge, mound and peak, over and beyond all mountains, hills and dales, cover all the gardens, orchards and groves, search under water as well as over land, letting not an inch of ground unexplored or remain unexamined by your vigilant eyes, not one nook or corner must escape your scrutiny. Remember not to miss any sign of life that you may find which might indicate that someone had been forcibly brought there or is being kept there, and then look out for

and follow the tell-tale signs that you may suddenly descry. Keep your eyes open and your ears erect, be on your toes, seeing and hearing attentively and assiduously.

The search-party duly followed this instruction as we shall read shortly in Doha no. 23 herein below.

Besides this, take due precautions: don't go alone; form groups so that you have support and help in case of emergency, and don't get lost or feel scared. Have confidence in yourselves; never give space to hopelessness or dejection, for god will bless you as this is a noble enterprise and a deed done for a noble cause."

We shall read in verses that follow herein below that after the general mass of the troops had dispersed, Sugriv called his chosen companions, i.e. Angad, Nal and Hanuman, the chief monkey warriors, and Jamvant, the chief of the bears, and confidentially told them to go directly and exactly in the south direction. {Doha no. 22 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.}

A pertinent question here is this: how will the warriors know who Sita was, how will they recognise her, even when they managed to locate her, for they had never seen her before? The answer is this: Sita would be in grave distress and sorely grieving at her separation from Lord Ram; she would be in a sad and terrified state, physically weak, a shrunken countenance, weeping, lamenting, with tears on her face, unkempt clothes, dishevelled hairs, forlorn and weary appearance, and huddled up in some corner out of fear. So it would not be difficult to recognise her.

Besides this, Sugriv must have given them a general description of how she looked, first from his own observation when he saw her being taken as a hostage by her abductor, and second by a brief about her that Lord Ram was sure to have given him to share with the search teams.

²Another question is this: suppose even after trying their best the monkeys couldn't find Sita; will Sugriv then kill them? It is obvious that Sita would be found by any one of the countless groups, and not by all the groups, for the simple reason that the searchers would go out in different directions, and only one such group will be fortunate enough to go towards a direction that would take them to that spot where Sita was held captive. So does Sugriv mean that he would kill all other groups except the one which locates Sita?

No, not at all; there was nothing of this sort in what he had said. He simply meant that if these monkeys did not return within a month's time, and then came afterwards to say they could not find Sita, it is only then that he would punish them.

In case they failed despite their best efforts, they had nothing to fear if they returned before the stipulated time of one month and explained their position.

The threat of being killed applied only to those monkeys who neither returned within one month, nor brought any news of Sita even after this period. This restraint was necessary to drive home the urgency of the matter, for otherwise they would not take the mission seriously; they would do it leisurely and in their own time, coming back whenever it pleased them. This would derail the whole plan. So, stringent conditions were necessary to enforce discipline.]

दो०. बचन सुनत सब बानर जहँ तहँ चले तुरंत ।

तब सुग्रीवँ बोलाए अंगद नल हनुमंत ॥ २२ ॥

dōhā.

bacana sunata saba bānara jaham̃ taham̃ calē turanta.
taba sugrīvam̃ bōlā'ē aṅgada nala hanumanta. 22.

After hearing these words (i.e. instructions of Sugriv), all the monkeys immediately departed in all the directions whithersoever they decided to proceed.

Then Sugriv summoned Angad, Nal and Hanuman (the chief amongst the monkeys)¹. (Doha no. 22)

[Note—¹Angad was the crown prince; Nal was the chief architect of the kingdom; Hanuman was a trusted aide of both Sugriv and Lord Ram.]

चौ०. सुनहु नील अंगद हनुमाना । जामवंत मतिधीर सुजाना ॥ १ ॥
सकल सुभट मिलि दच्छिन जाहू । सीता सुधि पूछेहु सब काहू ॥ २ ॥
मन क्रम बचन सो जतन बिचारेहु । रामचंद्र कर काजु सँवारेहु ॥ ३ ॥

caupāṭi.

sunahu nīla aṅgada hanumānā. jāmavanta matidhīra sujānā. 1.
sakala subhaṭa mili dacchina jāhū. sītā sudhi pum̃chēhu saba kāhū. 2.
mana krama bacana sō jatana bicārēhu. rāmacandra kara kāju sam̃vārēhu. 3.

Summoning his chiefs, Sugriv advised them as follows: ‘Listen Neel, Angad, Hanuman and Jamvant¹. All of you are intelligent, have a resolute mind, and are wise. (1)

All of you excellent warriors must forthwith proceed in the south direction, and ask whosoever you meet about Sita and her whereabouts (because you may not know who will be helpful in your mission; so enquire from everyone). (2)

Use the faculties of your mind, wisdom and words in an intelligent manner, and adroitly adopt all such means and devise a device that may help you to successfully accomplish Lord Ramchandra’s work.

[To wit, all of you are wise and intelligent; it is not possible to tell you exactly what, when and how to do a thing or what action is to be taken. You have to take your own decisions on the spot; I can’t predict everything, and can only give you a general advice. Take everything and all factors into consideration, weigh all the pros and cons, and then act judiciously and with prudence according to the demands of the prevalent circumstance and the requirements of the current situation.] (3)

[Note—¹Nal and Neel were brothers; they were the architects and engineers for the kingdom of Kishkindha. Angad was Sugriv’s nephew; Hanuman was his chief advisor and a faithful devotee of Lord Ram. Jamvant was the chief of the bears.

They were close confidantes of Sugriv. So he called them and told them to go straight to the south—because the chances of Sita being discovered in this direction were far greater than anywhere else. Sugriv guessed that given the haughty and arrogant nature of Ravana, he would think that no one would ever dare to challenge him no matter where he kept Sita. So it is logical to deduce that he would keep her

close by in order to exercise a tight vigil on her, which would be easier closer home than in a distant place.]

भानु पीठि सेइअ उर आगी । स्वामिहि सर्ब भाव छल त्यागी ॥ ४ ॥
 तजि माया सेइअ परलोका । मिटहिं सकल भवसंभव सोका ॥ ५ ॥
 देह धरे कर यह फलु भाई । भजिअ राम सब काम बिहाई ॥ ६ ॥
 सोइ गुनग्य सोई बड़भागी । जो रघुबीर चरन अनुरागी ॥ ७ ॥

bhānu pīṭhi sē'i'a ura āgī. svāmihi sarba bhāva chala tyāgī. 4.
 taji māyā sē'i'a paralōkā. miṭahim sakala bhavasambhava sōkā. 5.
 dēha dharē kara yaha phalu bhā'i. bhaji'a rāma saba kāma bihā'i. 6.
 sō'i gunagya sō'i barābhāgī. jō raghubīra carana anurāgī. 7.

Remember this axiom: 'If someone wishes to warm himself by the sun's heat than he should sit with his back towards the sun, while if he wants to warm himself before a fire then he must sit facing the latter.' [To wit, it is advisable to take the heat of the sun on one's back instead of facing the sun directly from the front as it would be harmful, especially if its rays fall on one's eyes per chance and cause blindness. On the contrary, if one wishes to keep warm near a raging fire, it is advisable to sit or stand facing the fire instead of having one's back to it, because the fire is a dangerous thing and must always be watched directly as a safety precaution.]

But when it comes to serving one's lord, one must do it sincerely and without pretensions, and in whatsoever manner it can be done, without reservations or worrying unduly about the means that are adopted to be successful in this service. [Sugriv tells his companions that they should feel free to adopt any method they think fit and proper in order to successfully accomplish the work of Lord Ram, which was to find Sita. They ought naught unduly worry about the risks involved in the effort, but before they take any action they must discuss its pros and cons thoroughly, for he has already told them that they were wise and intelligent enough to see the matter through. So go ahead cheerfully.]¹ (4)

If one gets rid of Maya (worldly delusions and its attendant problems), and instead, strives to ensure a better fate for himself (by devoting himself to spiritual pursuit, and follow the path shown by the scriptures that lead to deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the soul)—then, in all sooth and without gainsay, he would find lasting peace and happiness. (5)

Oh my brothers (bhā'i)! The best reward that one can expect to have after having taken birth as a creature, an entity that has a gross physical body, is to worship and serve Lord Ram diligently by abstaining from all involvement in worldly matters. (6)

He who has sincere devotion and undiluted affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram is indeed a virtuous person who has all the excellent qualities one is expected to possess, and is also a most fortunate and privileged soul.² (7)

[Note—¹In this verse no. 4, Sugriv basically tells the group not to worry too much about the propriety or the danger of adopting a path or means to discover Sita if they

conclude at a specific moment that a particular action is necessary to achieve success. They should not be like a man of vanity who takes pride in following certain dictums in totum without understanding their underlying principles.

For instance, when it is said that one should not face the sun while warming oneself, it is to safeguard against harming one's eyesight or tanning the complexion of the face too much. So if one takes adequate precautions then there is no need whatsoever not to sit facing the sun.

Similarly, if one is in a group sitting around a camp-fire for instance, and there is someone to alert him if anything goes wrong, such as a spark flying from the fire, then there is no risk of getting burnt by fire even if one sits with his back to it.

²The idea behind Sugriv's discourse is to inspire devotion and commitment in the heart of those who were selected by him to go on a mission to search for Sita. If these monkeys and bears were convinced that what they were about to do is not merely carrying out the orders of their king but a deed that would grant them everlasting joy and spiritual contentment. It's not only a noble cause they are serving but it is also a holy service done to the Supreme Lord who is in the form of Lord Ram.

So therefore, they must put their heart and soul in this mission.]

आयसु मागि चरन सिरु नाई । चले हरषि सुमिरत रघुराई ॥ ८ ॥
 पाछें पवन तनय सिरु नावा । जानि काज प्रभु निकट बोलावा ॥ ९ ॥
 परसा सीस सरोरुह पानी । करमुद्रिका दीन्हि जन जानी ॥ १० ॥
 बहु प्रकार सीतहि समुझाएहु । कहि बल बिरह बेगि तुम्ह आएहु ॥ ११ ॥
 हनुमत जन्म सुफल करि माना । चलेउ हृदयँ धरि कृपानिधाना ॥ १२ ॥
 जद्यपि प्रभु जानत सब बाता । राजनीति राखत सुरत्राता ॥ १३ ॥

āyasu māgi carana siru nā'ī. calē haraṣi sumirata raghurā'ī. 8.
 pāchēm pavana tanaya siru nāvā. jāni kāja prabhu nikaṭa bōlāvā. 9.
 parasā sīsa sarōruha pānī. karamudrikā dīnhi jana jānī. 10.
 bahu prakāra sītahi samujhā'ēhu. kahi bala biraha bēgi tumha ā'ēhu. 11.
 hanumata janma suphala kari mārā. calē'u hṛdayam' dhari kṛpānidhānā. 12.
 jadyapi prabhu jānata saba bātā. rājanīti rākhata suratrātā. 13.

After this briefing, they (i.e. Nal, Neel, Angad, Hanuman, Jamvant etc.) bowed their heads reverentially (before their king Sugriv as well as Lord Ram) to seek permission to depart on their mission. Then they took their leave, and started off cheerfully with gladdened hearts. (8)

The Son of the Wind-God¹ had bowed last; and as he was moving away Lord Ram called him near as the Lord knew that he was the one who would successfully do his work (of finding Sita)². (9)

The Lord caressed Hanuman's head with his lotus-like hands (to bless him and signal that success will be his).

Then Lord Ram took off his finger-ring (karamudrikā; 'kar' = hand; 'mudrika' = ring; literally it means the "ring worn on the hand", which in practical

terms means the ‘finger-ring’)³ and gave it to him as the Lord considered him as his devoted servant who would be the one to accomplish his task. (10)

Then he told Hanuman the message that he should convey to Sita when he met her, ‘Reassure Sita in all possible ways. Tell her that I suffer immensely from the grief of separation from her, and assure of my strength and abilities (so that she feels confident that I will certainly come to free her inspite of all the odds). Then you must come back with all the speed you can muster.’ (11)

Hanuman realised that he indeed was the privileged one, the chosen one personally selected by the Lord. He felt fulfilled and considered his birth as being fully rewarded.

Then he started off on his mission after enshrining the holy feet of the merciful and compassionate Lord in his heart⁴. (12)

[This above incidence proves that—] Though the Lord (Sri Ram), who dispels the torments of the gods, knew everything⁵, yet he maintained an exterior of ignorance (about Sita) and generally behaved like a human being just in order to conform to the norms and laws of the world. (13)

[Note—¹The use of the epithet ‘the Son of the Wind God’ for Hanuman is very significant here. In a short while these messengers would come to the shore of the southern ocean, and they will have to overcome this formidable barrier in order to reach Lanka where Sita is held captive by Ravana. The ‘wind’ has the ability to ‘fly’ over the surface of the ocean without the latter obstructing its path in any way; on the contrary the wind lifts the water from the surface of the ocean to form huge waves that are then forced to follow the path taken by the wind.

Hence, amongst all the warriors dispatched to bring news of Sita, it would only be possible for Hanuman to achieve success in this enterprise because he is the ‘son of the wind god’, and hence has the unique quality possessed only by the ‘wind’, which is agility and speed, as well as the ability to fly unobstructed over the surface of the ocean; none of the others in the whole army of monkeys and bears had this rare ability.

Use of this title was intended to remind Hanuman about his exalted inheritance; to tell him that he is the only one who has this singular and distinctive ‘ability to fly or cruise like the wind’ that no one else has. So he is advised in a subtle manner to invoke this rare ability of his at the crucial time when the need would arise for someone to cross the ocean to find Sita; at that time he must remember that he is the ‘son of the wind god’, and thus has the genes of the wind god that gives him the special skill which empowers him to cruise or fly over the surface of the ocean like the wind does.

This will instill confidence and fearlessness in Hanuman’s mind and heart as he would be sure that his celestial father, the ‘Wind God’ who is the Lord of the wind element, would come to his aid most willingly and with full might of his—as the mission of Hanuman was in line with the wishes of all the Gods who had prayed to Lord Vishnu eliminate the scourge of Ravana and his race of cruel demons, a prayer which the Lord answered by coming down in the form of Lord Ram and devising a device by way of Sita’s abduction by Ravana as a means towards fulfilling this objective.

Not only crossing the ocean, this unique inheritance of Hanuman that he was the ‘son of the wind god’, and thus possessed the certain unique qualities of the ‘wind

element', would come in handy also when he lands on the soil of Lanka. He has to enter the strong fort of Lanka surreptitiously, roam around the city freely and undetected till he meets Sita, and then give a token of punishment to Ravana and the demons by burning their city to cinders. All this needed the agility and fearlessness from captivity, the ability to surmount the greatest of obstacles with stealth and speed, have access to all corners and nooks, and a formidable punching power to fell the enemy—eclectic qualities that the 'wind' possesses. Everyone knows that the wind or the air can easily pass through the smallest fissure or minutest of cracks; it can go unhindered anywhere it likes with speed; it can be so strong as to bend and topple huge trees or raise waves in the ocean to great heights as is seen during powerful storms; it remains hidden from view even while making its presence felt by its mere touch, or by the sound it creates when moving rapidly, or when it creates havoc all around as during severe storms.

And to top it all, when the time would come to spread the fire that would burn Lanka, 'wind' would be needed to fan the flames.

To wit, the lineage of Hanuman as being the 'son of the wind god' was purposely invoked here.

²Lord Ram had already judged the intelligence, prudence, wisdom and wit of Hanuman who had endeared himself to the Lord from the time they met first. Whenever a commander or an officer or a king needs some special work to be done that can't be done by a single person, he would appoint a group of persons to do it. While reviewing the skills of the individuals in this group, the commanding officer would zero in on a particular individual whom he thinks, by his personal experience and long time observation, to be the most qualified and best equipped to achieve success. So while a general order is given to the group and the assignment explained to them, this favourite individual is briefed separately and in detail—because the commanding officer feels that this individual is more likely to succeed.

In the same manner, Lord Ram decided that it was Hanuman who would succeed in actually meeting Sita and bringing back news of her. So the Lord called him near and took him into confidence.

³Now about this "finger-ring" (*karamudrikā*). When Lord Ram had departed from his palace at Ayodhya he was completely attired as a hermit; he had discarded all paraphernalia that would indicate that he was a prince of a great kingdom, and had a grand royal heritage. He had doffed all his royal garments and shed all decorative ornaments normally worn by princes; he attired himself as a hermit who covers himself with plain ochre cloth, and kept only his bow and arrows along with the quiver as these had nothing with royalty but were as inseparable from a warrior as were the arms of his body. Though Sita also had worn simple clothes befitting the wife of a forest-dwelling sage, yet she retained some basic ornaments that are essential for a married lady to wear, and one such was her finger ring, the other was the sacred thread known as the 'Mangal Sutra', and the third was the 'Chudamani', a jewel worn on the crest of a diadem by queens but this term is also used for an ornament that is tucked in the thick plait of hair on the head of all married women.

At the time when Lord Ram, Laxman (his younger brother) and Sita were taken across river Ganges by the boatman known as the Kewat, the Lord wanted to pay his charges, but he had nothing to give to Kewat. So Sita took off her finger ring and offered it to the Lord to give it to Kewat as his fee; the overwhelmed Kewat refused to accept this ring as he knew that the Lord was on his way to the forest and it

would be absolutely wrong and exceptionally greedy to take his wife's finger ring in these circumstances; so he refused and the ring was returned. Sita did not take this ring back, as taking anything back once it is given as a gift to someone would be wrong for her. So Lord Ram had no option but to keep the ring himself, for obviously he could not do anything else as there was no option left for him. This episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 102 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

It is this very finger-ring that Lord Ram gave Hanuman to prove to Sita that he was indeed Lord Ram's messenger by giving her this personal ring of hers which no one can return to her but Lord Ram, as the Lord was the only one who could have possessed it. Sita would immediately recognise the ring as being hers, it would dispel all doubts in her mind, and in turn it would instil confidence in her towards Hanuman. This is exactly what had happened when Hanuman met Sita—she had grave misgivings in the beginning but this finger-ring, aided by Hanuman narrating the details of Lord Ram's story—from the time she left Ayodhya with Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman, till the time she was separated from the Lord—made her fully convinced of his authenticity and integrity. We shall be reading these events in due course when we come to this point in our narrative. {However, for the sake of quick referral, the relevant verses from Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, are Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 13.}

In Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 6, verse no. 29 it is said that the finger ring which Lord Ram gave to Hanuman to be carried with him as an identification tool which would convince Sita that he was indeed Lord Ram's messenger “had the initials of the Lord, i.e. the letters of the Lord's name RAM, engraved in it”. This means that it was the ring which Lord Ram had given to Sita at the time of their marriage, because rings are exchanged during formalisation of a marriage. Since that time Sita had worn it, and it must have been the same ring that she gave to her husband Lord Ram to give to the boatman in lieu of his charges for taking them and Laxman across river Ganges.

⁴To wit, when Lord Ram selected Hanuman for giving the ring as a token that would help him establish his identity before Sita, and also gave him the message that he needed to convey to her, Hanuman was exuberant with joy and felt exceptionally happy; his enthusiasm knew no bound, and he decided that he will do everything needed to live up to the trust that the Lord had reposed in him. Surely and certainly, Hanuman vowed in silence, he will never let the Lord down. Hanuman enshrined the Lord inside his heart like one consecrates a deity in a shrine.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 24 where we have already read that everything was pre-planned by Lord Ram as it was necessary so that the cause of torments of the gods can be eliminated—i.e. Ravana and his evil demons can be slayed.

Once again in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precede Doha no. 27 it is explicitly mentioned that “Lord Ram knew everything that was happening” at the time when Sita asked him to go behind the decoy golden deer and bring it to her.

The use of the word “*suratrātā*” for Lord Ram is also of significance. The Lord is on a mission to end the torments of the gods that Ravana had inflicted upon them. So therefore, inspite of knowing everything, Lord Ram had to maintain secrecy for success in killing Ravana and his clan of cruel demons. The reason is that if

Ravana got the hint who the Lord actually was, or that some powerful spy-warrior (i.e. Hanuman) was about to penetrate his fort and enter Lanka, and that he would burn it to ashes, then it was sure that he would immediately take preventive measures, such reinforce his defenses and barricade the entrance points more carefully, hide Sita somewhere else, and take all precautionary measures to prevent the burning of the city by the invader.

Hence, it was of utmost importance to keep everything under wraps and go about the mission as silently as possible.]

दो०. चले सकल बन खोजत सरिता सर गिरि खोह ।

राम काज लयलीन मन बिसरा तन कर छोह ॥ २३ ॥

dōhā.

calē sakala bana khōjata saritā sara giri khōha.

rāma kāja layalīna mana bisarā tana kara chōha. 23.

All the monkeys and bears departed on their mission to search Sita. They searched for her everywhere, in the forests and the wilderness, rivers and streams, ponds and lakes, mountains and hills along with their caves and ravines. [Not a single place was left where the monkeys and bears did not look for Sita.]

Their mind and heart were so involved in Lord Ram's mission that they were not even conscious of their own bodies and its comforts. [To wit, they did not bother to rest, eat or sleep; they relentlessly continued with their search day and night. Neither the heat of the sun or the darkness of the night could stop them, nor the wild animals could distract them in their path or the vagaries of Nature could slow their progress.] (Doha no. 23)

{This privileged group of the reconnoitering team headed to the south. They were full of enthusiasm and brimming with zeal and confidence. On the way they felt extremely thirsty and hungry, and searching for some refreshment they met a hermitress inside a splendid cave. She used her mystical powers that can transfer an individual from one point to another by transcendental means to transport this group directly to the shore of the southern ocean. A most fearful sight met them: they faced a formidable barrier in the form of an endless ocean, mighty and un-crossable as it was, that stopped their further progress.

The group was utterly frustrated and dismayed; they were in low spirits and at the end of their wits as they were certain that they had no chance of success any longer; for fate seemed to have stone-walled their progress and dashed all their hopes. Just at this despairing moment they met Sampati, an old vulture and an elder brother of Jatau who had died while trying to protect Sita as she was being taken away by Ravana.

When Sampati learned of the developments he, after paying his last respects to his younger brother Jatau, flew high in the sky, and by the virtue of the ability of seeing long distances that all vultures are endowed with, he could descry Sita sitting forlorn and distressed under a tree in a garden in Lanka. So anyone who could cross the mighty barrier in the form of the ocean and reach Lanka would be able to meet Sita.

The group huddled together to determine who among them was skilled and qualified enough to achieve this daunting task. The unanimous choice was Hanuman; so he was assigned this job. He confidently launched himself across the water of the ocean, flying over its surface like a plane or a cruise missile, and landed on the soil of Lanka. En-route however he faced some obstacles which he easily overcame.

These developments are narrated in the following verses.}

चौ०. कतहुँ होइ निसिचर सैं भेटा । प्रान लेहिं एक एक चपेटा ॥ १ ॥
 बहु प्रकार गिरि कानन हेरहिं । कोउ मुनि मिलइ ताहि सब घेरहिं ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

katahum' hō'i nisicara saim' bhētā. prāna lēhim ēka ēka capētā. 1.
 bahu prakāra giri kānana hērahim. kō'u muni mila'i tāhi saba ghērahim. 2.

As they moved ahead on their mission, they talked loudly and animatedly amongst themselves, declaring that 'If we meet the demon (who has stolen Sita) anywhere and under any circumstance, we will kill him by each of us fiercely slapping and viciously cuffing him, one by one of us in turn.' (1)

They searched the mountains and hills as well as the forests thoroughly and in all possible ways. Wherever they met some sage or hermit¹, they surrounded him (to ask him if he knew anything of Sita, as exalted sages and hermits are known to have insight into everything). (2)

[Note—¹There were not many sages and hermits living in these parts out of fear of demons. But still here and there, in isolated and secluded pockets on the hills and in the forests, the monkeys and bears did find a few sages and hermits. So they surrounded them and asked for any help or guidance they could give.

But it appears that none of them were of any help; either no one knew where Sita had been taken away, or even if they knew they preferred to keep silent out of fear of the demons' wrath.]

लागि तृषा अतिसय अकुलाने । मिलइ न जल घन गहन भुलाने ॥ ३ ॥
 मन हनुमान कीन्ह अनुमाना । मरन चहत सब बिनु जल पाना ॥ ४ ॥

lāgi tṛṣā atisaya akulānē. mila'i na jala ghana gahana bhulānē. 3.
 mana hanumāna kīnha anumānā. marana cahata saba binu jala pānā. 4.

The reconnoitering team was exhausted by thirst (and hunger); its members were very agitated and dying for water. They searched in vain for water, and in this desperation and agitated state of mind they got lost in the middle of the wild forest. (3)

Hanuman thought to himself that all of them would die for want of water to drink. (4)

चढ़ि गिरि सिखर चहुँ दिसि देखा । भूमि बिबर एक कौतुक पेखा ॥ ५ ॥
चक्रबाक बक हंस उड़ाहीं । बहुतक खग प्रबिसहिं तेहि माहीं ॥ ६ ॥

caḍhi giri sikhara cahūṁṁ disi dēkhā. bhūmi bibara ēka kautuka pēkhā. 5.
cakrabāka baka hansa urāhīm. bahutaka khaga prabisahim tēhi māhīm. 6.

So he (Hanuman) climbed atop a hill and looked carefully in all the directions. On one side he descried a strange and mysterious view around a cave-like opening (a hole or a cavity) in the ground that marvelled him with excessive marvel. (5)

[What did he see?] He could descry many types of water-birds such as Chakravaks (birds that go round and round over water bodies such as ponds and lakes; the ruddy-goose, the hummingbird or the hawk-moth), Baks (herons), and Hans (swans) hovering over the mouth of the hole, and he could also observe that some of these birds as well as other birds were entering and leaving this cave-like opening¹. [He observed other birds also that usually flock to water bodies where flowers bloom and ripe fruits are to be found in abundance.] (6)

[Note—¹Hanuman was intelligent and wise; he concluded that this was a clear sign of the presence of water inside this hole. He gazed at this marvelous sight to confirm it was not a mirage, and when he was sure it was for real, he was exhilarated and exulted with excess of joy as this sight indicated availability of water, and consequently of life.

‘Eureka’, he exclaimed to his waiting companions, ‘Water has been found’!]

गिरि ते उतरि पवनसुत आवा । सब कहूँ लै सोइ बिबर देखावा ॥ ७ ॥
आगें कै हनुमंतहि लीन्हा । पैठे बिबर बिलंबु न कीन्हा ॥ ८ ॥

giri tē utari pavanasuta āvā. saba kahūṁṁ lai sō'i bibara dēkhāvā. 7.
āgēm kai hanumantahi līnhā. paiṭhē bibara bilambu na kīnhā. 8.

The son of the wind god descended hastily from the summit of the hill and summoned all his companions to come with him to the top and see the sight for themselves. (7)

The group put Hanuman in the lead and immediately started for that cave-like hole, and as soon as they reached it, all of them entered it without delaying even for a moment¹. (8)

[Note—¹From the start itself, Hanuman's courage and valour, as well as his patient handling of adversities, has started showing. It was he who did not just lament for water but ran up the hill to look for it; it was he who was chosen to lead the group to the cave and enter it first.

The cave was dark and damp inside; an exceptional courage and an ability to sense danger was needed to move ahead inside it in pitch darkness and explore it. So all the monkeys and bears held each other's hands to form a line, and Hanuman led them from the front. He moved on inside the labyrinthine cave very cautiously, feeling his way along and keeping all his senses on the alert to catch any tell-tale signs

of either danger, so that precautionary measures can be taken, or of water so that they can move in that direction through the tunnels.]

दो०. दीख जाइ उपवन बर सर बिगसित बहु कंज ।
मंदिर एक रुचिर तहँ बैठि नारि तप पुंज ॥ २४ ॥

dōhā.

dīkha jā'i upabana bara sara bigasita bahu kanja.
mandira ēka rucira taham̐ baiṭhi nāri tapa punja. 24.

Ultimately they saw a wide open space deep inside the splendid cavern (or perhaps this cave ended here) where they found a magnificent garden and a wonderful pond in which many lotus flowers bloomed.

Nearby they perceived a temple-like structure in which sat an exalted hermitress who appeared to be an embodiment of spiritual energy and dynamism inherent in Tapa (austerity and penances) that she was engaged in doing¹. (Doha no. 24)

[Note—¹This story of the reconnoitering party discovering a fairy-tale like wondrous garden of a splendid view deep inside a mysterious cave in a desolate forest, complete with a wonderful pond and an astoundingly magnificent surrounding unexpected in an underground labyrinth of dark-and-gloomy tunnels and vestibules, mirrors the fascinating adventure narrated in the 652nd and the 653rd night of the legendary classic “Tale of One Thousand One Arabian Nights” where Prince Ahmed meets the fairy Princess Peri-Banu of the Jinns inside one such magical ‘fairy-cave’.]

चौ०. दूरि ते ताहि सबन्हि सिरु नावा । पूछें निज बृत्तांत सुनावा ॥ १ ॥
तेहिं तब कहा करहु जल पाना । खाहु सुरस सुंदर फल नाना ॥ २ ॥
मज्जनु कीन्ह मधुर फल खाए । तासु निकट पुनि सब चलि आए ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

dūri tē tāhi sabanhi siru nāvā. pūchēm nija br̥ttānta sunāvā. 1.
tēhim̐ taba kahā karahu jala pānā. khāhu surasa sundara phala nānā. 2.
majjanu kīnha madhura phala khā'ē. tāsū nikaṭa puni saba cali ā'ē. 3.

The team (of monkeys and bears) bowed their head to her from a distance¹. The hermitress then enquired of them who they were and why they had come here, thereat he (i.e. Hanuman as he was leading the group) briefed her about everything related to the reason why they had come in this direction, why they had entered the cave, and what their future objective was. (1)

When she heard everything, she advised them to refresh themselves by drinking the water (of the lake), and then eat to their content fruits, ripe, succulent and sweet, that were available in abundance at the place (inside the garden). (2)

The group took a bath and ate sweets fruits; after refreshing themselves all of them went near the hermitress². (3)

[Note—¹The monkeys and bears “bowed to the hermitress from a distance” because they were strangers to her, and neither were they sure how they would be received by her, whether she would welcome them or become annoyed at this intrusion into her privacy unannounced. The distance was also maintained for showing respect to a hermitress who was sitting in a meditative posture as described in Doha no. 24 herein above.

²By the affable manner in which the hermitress received the group, listened to their story with concern, and then affectionately showed them water and fruit trees had by now convinced all of the monkeys and bears that they were in a friendly company, that there is nothing to fear from this mystical woman. So though in the beginning they had stood at some distance to bow their heads to her, but now, after being refreshed with a bath, drinking water and eating fruits, they came near to her.]

तेहिं सब आपनि कथा सुनाई । मैं अब जाब जहाँ रघुराई ॥ ४ ॥
मूदहु नयन बिबर तजि जाहू । पैहहु सीतहि जनि पछिताहू ॥ ५ ॥
नयन मूदि पुनि देखहि बीरा । ठाढ़े सकल सिंधु कें तीरा ॥ ६ ॥

tēhim saba āpani kathā sunāī. maim aba jāba jahām raghurāī. 4.
mūdahu nayana bibara taji jāhū. paihahu sītahi jani pachitāhū. 5.
nayana mūdi puni dēkhahim bīrā. thārḥē sakala sindhu kēm tīrā. 6.

Now it was the turn of the hermitress to narrate her own story¹ to the team of visitors, the monkeys and bears, which she did.

Then she said to them, ‘Now I shall go where Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghus (raghurāī), is. (4)

All of you must close your eyes in order to get out of this cavern; don’t worry, for by-and-by you will indeed find Sita². (5)

The brave warriors closed their eyes as instructed, and when they opened it they found themselves standing on the shore of the (southern) ocean³. (6)

[Note—¹A brief introduction about this “hermitress”: Her name was ‘Swayam Prabha’, literally meaning ‘a lady who shines from the radiance of her own glory’.

Her story is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 51-57. In short it is this: Some long time in the past Vishwakarma, the architect of gods, had a wife named Hema. She was beautiful, and an expert in the art of music and dance. She had pleased Lord Shiva with this skill of hers, and the Lord gifted her a magnificent but secret place where no one had access. The hermitress whom the troop of monkeys and bears searching for Sita had come to meet deep inside the cavern was a friend of Hema, and her name was ‘Swayam Prabha’.

Swayam Prabha was the daughter of a Gandharva (celestial musician) named Dibya, and she had tarried at this place with her friend Hema for a very long time,

roughly ten million years. At the time of departing for heaven (i.e. at the time of her death and going to heaven, in the Brahma-Loka), Hema advised Swayam Prabha to remain behind alone and do Tapa (penances and austerities), with the intention of one day finding deliverance and salvation by having a divine view of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, who would come down as Lord Ram. At that future date, the Lord would come to the forest in order to fulfil some promise he would have made to the gods earlier, and here in the wild his consort would be stolen by the demons, monkey messengers would be dispatched to find her and they would come and meet her. She should then help them by showing the path, and go to meet Lord Ram herself. Then she should pray to the Lord and seek his blessings that would entitle her to go to the heavenly abode of Lord Vishnu.

However, the story of this hermitress as narrated in Valmiki's Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 51, verse nos. 10-18 differs from above. According to it the story is as follows: There was a demon named Mayavi. This stupendously beautiful garden was created by him using his magical powers, and it was embellished in gold. The shrine in which the hermitress was sitting when the team of monkeys and bears arrived was constructed in gold by another demon of great architectural skills; his name was Vishwakarma. He had done Tapa for one thousand years in a dense forest and pleased the creator Brahma, from whom he acquired all the construction skills of Sukracharya, the Guru of the demons. The demon Maya lived in this wonderful place for quite some time, but ultimately he was slayed when he got passionately involved with an Apsara (nymph of the heaven; the damsels in the court of the gods) named Hema and kept her as his mistress. After Maya's death, the creator Brahma gifted this garden to Hema in memory of her former lover Maya.

The hermitress the reconnoitering team found inside this cave was named 'Swayam Prabha'. She was a friend of Hema, and she had promised the latter to look after her home when she was gone. It was on one such occasion that the group of Lord Ram's messengers found her inside this cave as narrated in the story of the Ramayan.

²To wit, this is literally a one-way cave, and once one gets inside it one cannot find one's way out of it. I know its mystical secret, and the only way out is via a transcendental mean which I only possess and you probably don't. Hence, it will be futile for you to try to find an exit or retrace your steps in order to get out. So listen to me: just close your eyes and I shall employ my magical powers to transport you in an instant to a place where you wish to go—which would be the place from where you can find Sita. In the meantime, I will also quit this place and go meet Lord Ram, for I had been waiting here patiently for the Lord to come so I can be of some help in aiding him to successfully accomplish his mission. Now since this is done—as I shall instantaneously place you near your destination from where Sita can be easily found—my objective in life is done, and after paying my obeisance to the Lord I shall proceed wherever the Lord instructs me to tarry. So rejoice and be ready. Now you will not have to wander aimlessly in the wild, as the distance to your destination is quite a distance, and then you aren't even aware where it is; but now you shall be saved of all the time and the trouble endured to travel through the unknown landscape before you can reach the land which will serve your purpose.

And take heart, have courage. You will succeed in your mission of finding Sita.

³Like the magical way individuals were transported by Jinns in the many tales of the "One Thousand One Arabian Nights", the group of monkeys and bears suddenly

found themselves standing on the shore of the southern ocean. The roaring and heaving ocean stretched before them like an insurmountable barrier, a monster facing them with its arms spreading to the left and the right in a formidable challenge to their might, strength and courage, teasing them to their wits end, and horrifying them of the certain failure that stares them on this frontier.

The overwhelmed group gazed at the ocean in awe as they stood in stunned silence, dumbfounded into numbness of the senses, for they knew aught naught what to and what not to.]

सो पुनि गई जहाँ रघुनाथा । जाइ कमल पद नाएसि माथा ॥ ७ ॥

नाना भाँति बिनय तेहिं कीन्ही । अनपायनी भगति प्रभु दीन्ही ॥ ८ ॥

sō puni ga'ī jahām' raghunāthā. jā'i kamala pada nā'ēsi māthā. 7.
nānā bhām'ti binaya tēhim kīnhī. anapāyanī bhagati prabhu dīnhī. 8.

The hermitress, in the meantime, went to where Lord Raghunath (“raghunāthā”; Sri Ram) was¹, and bowed her head at the lotus-like feet of the Lord. (7)

She offered her prayers to the Lord in various ways, and the Lord, seeing her devotion and accepting her submission, granted her the boon of having an eternal, true and unwavering form of Bhakti (devotion for the Lord). (8)

[Note—¹Where was Lord Ram? He was on Mt. Pravarshan, waiting for the news of Sita that the messengers sent by him would finally bring.]

दो०. बदरीबन कहूँ सो गई प्रभु अग्या धरि सीस ।

उर धरि राम चरन जुग जे बंदत अज ईस ॥ २५ ॥

dōhā.

badarībana kahum' sō ga'ī prabhu agyā dhari sīsa.
ura dhari rāma carana juga jē bandata aja īsa. 25.

The hermitress (Swayam Prabha) bowed her head as a token of obedience to the Lord's commands (prabhu agyā dhari sīsa), and then, having enshrined Lord Ram's holy feet in her heart, the holy feet that are revered and worshipped (bandata) even by the creator Brahma (aja) and Lord Shiva (īsa), she went to the holy cite known as 'Badrivan' (in the higher reaches of the Himalaya mountain ranges)¹. (Doha no. 25)

[Note—¹Lord Ram first blessed her with steady Bhakti, and then instructed her to proceed to Badri-van, a forested area in the upper reaches of the northern Himalayas, to dwell there and devote her time practicing Bhakti and Tapa. The hermitress obeyed the Lord's instructions and proceeded forthwith to the place directed by the Lord.

As we have already learnt, she had the magical, supernatural power by which she could transport anyone by the transcendental method, as she had herself assured the messengers of Lord Ram inside the cave when she told them that though it is not possible for them to go out once they had entered it, nevertheless if they close their

eyes and repose faith in her then she would herself work some magic charm and transport them instantaneously to the place they desire.

So obviously she used this supernatural powers herself first to go to Lord Ram, and then to proceed to Badrivan. This place is a revered pilgrim place in northern India, and is commonly known as Badrinath. It is said to be the gateway to heaven, for it is believed that if Tapa is done here then one is sure to attain a heavenly abode.]

चौ०. इहाँ बिचारहिं कपि मन माहीं । बीती अवधि काजु कछु नाहीं ॥ १ ॥

सब मिलि कहहिं परस्पर बाता । बिनु सुधि लाँ करब का भ्राता ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ihām̐ bicārahim̐ kapi mana māhīm̐. bītī avadhi kāju kachu nāhīm̐. 1.

saba mili kahahim̐ paraspara bātā. binu sudhi la'ēm̐ karaba kā bhrātā. 2.

Here meanwhile (i.e. on the shore of the ocean where the search party of Lord Ram had been miraculously transported by the hermitress using her mystical powers of transcendental transfer), the Kapis (monkeys along with their bear companions) became pensive and began to worry that the time frame (of one month fixed by Sugriv) had passed away and yet they haven't been able to do any worthwhile work. (1)

They got together in a huddle and murmured in a sombre mood, 'Brother, what shall we now do if we are not able to acquire any information (of Sita).' (2)

[Note--The group lamented that one whole month has elapsed and still they have no information of Sita. So worried as they were, they got together into a consultation—what was the best course open to them now. Their worst fear was not the expiration of the one-month period, but not finding the whereabouts of Sita, for they knew that though it was too late for them now to return empty handed, as it is quite certain that their king Sugriv will then keep his threat and give them capital punishment should they do so, but if Sita is yet discovered, and then they are late in returning, there would be nothing to fear as Sugriv will spare them for being late because of the success in the mission, understanding that such unusually difficult enterprises may entail transgression of arbitrarily fixed time frame for accomplishment.]

कह अंगद लोचन भरि बारी । दुहुँ प्रकार भइ मृत्यु हमारी ॥ ३ ॥

इहाँ न सुधि सीता कै पाई । उहाँ गएँ मारिहि कपिराई ॥ ४ ॥

पिता बधे पर मारत मोही । राखा राम निहोर न ओही ॥ ५ ॥

पुनि पुनि अंगद कह सब पाहीं । मरन भयउ कछु संसय नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

kaha aṅgada lōcana bhari bārī. duhum̐ prakāra bha'i mṛtyu hamārī. 3.

ihām̐ na sudhi sītā kai pā'ī. uhām̐ ga'ēm̐ mārihi kapiṛā'ī. 4.

pitā badhē para mārata mōhī. rākhā rāma nihōra na ōhī. 5.

puni puni aṅgada kaha saba pāhīm. marana bhaya'u kachu sansaya nāhīm. 6.

Angad (the nephew of Sugriv and the son of his elder brother Baali) said with tears filled in his eyes (and with a grieving and remorseful tone), 'Our death seems certain either way, in both the situations. (3)

Here we have not been able to get any information of Sita (which would have assured us indemnity from punishment or even death at Sugriv's hand), and if we go back, the king of the monkeys (Sugriv) would kill us all¹. (4)

He (Sugriv) would have killed me soon after having slayed my father (Baali), but it was Lord Ram who had saved me at that time. So Sugriv has done no obligation on me and has no merit on my account, and I owe nothing to him in return.² (5)

[Angad grieved and lamented sorely with excess of grief; he was extremely depressed and dejected. He could not suppress his own sorrows as well as his worry about the gloomy fate of his companions so much so that he repeatedly lamented aloud.]

Angad repeatedly said to all of them who had huddled together around them, that death is a certainty, and there seems to be no doubt about it. (6)

[Note—¹The reader would recall Sugriv's warning in this regard: that if anyone returns without any news of Sita after the stipulated time of one month, then he would be given capital punishment. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 22 earlier.}]

Though it is certainly true that this threat may have been meant to instil a sense of urgency and importance in the messengers who were sent out with the mission of searching Sita, and to keep them on their toes so that the matter is expedited as soon as possible without undue and inordinate delay, but in practical terms Sugriv did not intend to actually implement it. He was a King, and this being the case he would have to take many factors into consideration before carrying out such a cruel action, virtually a genocide, as to kill thousands of his warriors for simply not being able to find the location of a foreigner's wife, because for all practical purposes Lord Ram was a foreigner as far as Kishkindha and its inhabitants were concerned. There were chances therefore of mutiny, and Sugriv being taken a hostage by the angry soldiers many of whom may not have been too favourably inclined towards him, specially those who were favourable to his elder brother Baali whom Sugriv killed with the aid of Lord Ram to ascend on the throne of Kishkindha.

It is also possible that this severe stricture of Sugriv that all the messengers must find Sita by the month's end or come back, or else he would kill them if they returned without her news after the expiry of this period, was only meant to please Lord Ram and Laxman who had by now become suspicious of Sugriv's intentions and also angry at him for the delay and not keeping his promise of sending heralds everywhere till now. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 18 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it.}

But the monkeys and bears were not too sure as they doubted Sugriv's mind and nature. He was very selfish as is evident from the very fact that he had neglected Lord Ram's work once he got the throne, as well as the fact that he had no regrets at taking a stranger's help to kill his own brother Baali just to get this throne. So no one could be sure if he would kill this group of messengers if he fancied it.

What would weigh in favour of Sugriv's such a horrible decision, if he decides to actually take it? For one, he would find a ready excuse to kill Angad, his slain brother's son, as Sugriv had the greatest fear of revenge from him. This is a fact as reiterated by Angad himself when he asserts that Sugriv was on the brink of killing him when he was saved by Lord Ram.

The other possibility was that some other group would have found Sita and return triumphant to the kingdom, in which case too Sugriv will not spare them.

But here, overcome with sorrow and depression as he was, Angad had erred, for he did not ponder on the point that Sugriv would never contemplate of killing his trusted aid Hanuman, as well as Jamvant, the old bear king and Sugriv's trusted advisor; that would be beyond imagination.

²We see in this verse (no. 5) that the greatest fear of death is in the heart of Angad. He feels certain that their failure to find Sita would give his uncle Sugriv a ready-made excuse to get rid of him (Angad), even in case he (Sugriv) finds some subterfuge to excuse or pardon the others. Why so? It is because Sugriv feared that some day Angad would surreptitiously provoke internal rebellion or even assassinate his uncle Sugriv to grab the throne in order to exact retribution for the killing of his father Baali by Sugriv.

Angad therefore presented a perennial danger for Sugriv, so he thought he would be the primary target of his threat to kill.

Another question is this: How would Sugriv explain and justify that he had killed Angad and spared others if he indeed singled out Angad for the killing? Well, Angad was a prince, and as such, in deference to his position in the hierarchy, was put in charge of the group we are dealing with. So in case the mission fails and the group had to be punished, it would seem quite normal to punish the commander and the responsible person instead of all the other members of the group. Even in today's world it is the senior-most officer who bears the brunt of censorship and condemnation for the failure of a mission or any project gone awry, on the behalf of all those who are under his command.

So either way, Angad felt that he is the most unfortunate being—for one, he lost his father, and two, he would be publicly killed this time with Lord Ram refraining from protecting him as he had failed to do the Lord's personal work. This scenario, however, was the product of fear, for nothing of this sort would have been allowed by Lord Ram who is an embodiment of mercy, compassion, munificence, benevolence, beneficence, love and grace. But the ghost of fear is overwhelming, and it robs all reasoning.

But Angad's fears were unfounded and misplaced; Sugriv had no such intention of eliminating Angad as he is believed to have had by the latter as can be judged from the following:

(a) Sugriv had sent Hanuman and Jamvant, as well as Nal and Neel along with Angad, and these warriors were his close confidantes and trusted companions. Had Sugriv any sort of evil design on his nephew Angad, he would have sent him with some other group consisting of junior messengers, but not with his senior and trusted commanders, as there were countless other groups sent on the errand of finding Sita besides the group Angad accompanied. If success in the mission of finding Sita was to be attained then this particular company was most qualified for it. So therefore no insult was shown to Angad or his stature as the prince of the kingdom was undermined; in fact he was made the head of this reconnoitring team that had almost all the senior nobles and knights, as it were, of the kingdom of Kishkindha.

(b) Sugriv was well aware of Hanuman's and Jamvant's scrupulous nature, bravery and strength; they would never allow any harm to come to Angad, who was their prince, especially more so as he had lost his father which made them all very sympathetic and extremely considerate towards him. They would lay down their own lives to protect Angad.

(c) Angad had already received Lord Ram's protection, as he himself acknowledges in verse no. 5. So therefore, Sugriv would never ever dare to even think of touching Angad's single hair if nothing else then at least for this one single reason—that he has Lord Ram's protective shield covering him.]

अंगद बचन सुनत कपि बीरा । बोलि न सकहिं नयन बह नीरा ॥ ७ ॥
 छन एक सोच मगन होइ रहे । पुनि अस बचन कहत सब भए ॥ ८ ॥
 हम सीता कै सुधि लीन्हें बिना । नहिं जैहें जुबराज प्रबीना ॥ ९ ॥
 अस कहि लवन सिंधु तट जाई । बैठे कपि सब दर्भ डसाई ॥ १० ॥

aṅgada bacana sunata kapi bīrā. bōli na sakahim̐ nayana baha nīrā. 7.
 chana ēka sōca magana hō'i rahē. puni asa bacana kahata saba bha'ē. 8.
 hama sītā kai sudhi līnhēm̐ binā. nahim̐ jaihair̐ jubarāja prabīnā. 9.
 asa kahi lavana sindhu taṭa jā'ī. baiṭhē kapi saba darbha ḍasā'ī. 10.

Hearing the words of lamentations and grief spoken by Angad, all the Kapi warriors were so overcome with sorrow and remorse that none could speak a word even as tears welled up in their eyes. (7)

They were stunned and stupefied into dumbness for a moment, contemplating on the gravity of the situation and the fate that stares them in the face¹. Soon they recovered themselves and got their wits together; then all of them spoke simultaneously in a unanimous voice². (8)

'Oh Prince who is wise and intelligent; listen to our firm resolve: we will not go back without acquiring information about the whereabouts of Sita³!' (9)

Saying this, all the Kapis went near the shore of the salty ocean, spread sitting mats made of kush grass on the ground, and sat on it (with a firm determination not to turn back)⁴. (10)

[Note—¹The way Angad spoke with a heavy heart and choked throat, all the members of the group were emotionally affected; they empathised with his sorrow and grief, and mirrored his emotions and fears. The prospect of certain death upon return home on the one end, and an equal certainty of failure in the mission on the other hand, struck all of them with a doubling force of dismay and gloom, compounded with no hope in sight.

²But though initially they had felt lost and forlorn, they soon recovered as brave and courageous warriors are expected to in the face of adversities. And by this time round they had made a firm and unanimous resolution. What was it? They declare it in the following verse.

³The Kapis promised Angad, “We are determined to find Sita and return safely with the good news, or else we would prefer to live in exile with you. Don’t lament and grieve oh noble Prince; we are not going to die, and neither are we to be separated from each other. Take heart and gather your courage. But there is no point in sitting and weeping like a child. Let’s get up and get cracking, for we have nothing to lose either way.”

⁴The warriors sat down to make a stern vow, a sort of fasting unto death, a hunger-strike, that either they would overcome the barrier of the ocean that obstructs their path and prevents them from proceeding further, or they would end their lives here, putting an ignominious scar and a blackish taint on the face of the patron god of the ocean that he had been instrumental in taking the life of so many innocent creatures who were out doing a noble duty for their Lord. It was a sort of non-violent agitation done peacefully like we observe even in today’s modern society when people think that the government of the day won’t listen to their pleas and justified demands, and they don’t have the power to confront the might of those in authority and power; so the only option left to the citizens is to sit on a hunger strike or fast till death in an attempt to bring some sense to the stone-hearted stubborn rulers.]

जामवंत अंगद दुख देखी । कहीं कथा उपदेस बिसेषी ॥ ११ ॥
तात राम कहूँ नर जनि मानहु । निर्गुन ब्रह्म अजित अज जानहु ॥ १२ ॥
हम सब सेवक अति बड़भागी । संतत सगुन ब्रह्म अनुरागी ॥ १३ ॥

jāmavanta aṅgada dukha dēkhī. kahīm kathā upadēsa bisēṣī. 11.
tāta rāma kahum̐ nara jani mānahu. nirguna brahma ajita aja jānahu. 12.
hama saba sēvaka ati baṛabhāgī. santata saguna brahma anurāgī. 13.

Observing Angad’s state of mind of abject desperation, despair and hopelessness, Jamvant (the old chief of the bears) spoke to him wise words of wisdom especially meant to rejuvenate his sinking spirits and to reassure him. (11)

Jamvant said, ‘My dear (tāta)! Don’t treat Lord Ram a human being; know him to be the supreme Brahm, the formless supreme Lord of creation who is without attributes (nirguna brahma), the almighty Lord who is invincible (ajita) as well as eternal and unborn (aja).

[To wit, Lord Ram is a human manifestation of the Supreme Being; he is not any ordinary prince of any kingdom though he looks like one. The Lord has cast a veil of Maya, the cloud of delusions over the whole world so that his true identity remains secret. This illusion is necessary to accomplish the mammoth task for which the Lord had to assume a human form; the cruel Ravana and his demon horde will not be eliminated otherwise.] (12)

We those who serve the Lord are extremely and singularly fortunate to have got this stellar service; we are the lucky ones indeed to be able to regularly serve and be devoted to the visible form of the Supreme Being, the Brahm, whose primary form is invisible and cosmic in nature¹. (13)

[Note—¹Jamvant, the bear chief, was moved by Angad's lamentations; he felt extremely sad when he observed the utterly forlorn and dejected condition of his, for he empathised with Angad. So therefore Jamvant went close and put his arms around Angad, affectionately speaking to him in order to raise his spirits and inspire hope and encouragement inside his bosom.

Jamvant said to Angad, "Son; you must not lose hope. I would have kept quiet, but I couldn't restrain myself seeing your abject condition that seems to have reached alarming proportions. Remember dear: you are our captain and leader; if you go down the dumps so easily and sit down to weep and lament like a stricken person, what will happen to the rest of the group that depends upon your guidance and moral support. It ought to be you who must shore up others' sinking spirits and encourage them if they lose hope and feel dejected, and here on the contrary I see that you yourself seem to be sinking.

So come on Angad; cheer up and get up. Understand that you are on the mission of the Lord who is the Supreme Commander and the Ruler of the whole world; this being the case is it not an irony, something to laugh at and a matter of shame on our pride that you, being a brave and courageous prince yourself, should behave so meekly and hopelessly as if you were a servant of a weakling or a coward yourself? Hence, get your acts together and hold your chin up high; remember all other monkeys and bears are looking up to you for support and courage; their lives and hopes rest with you. I am sure you will live up to your reputation, duties and responsibilities. Be bold and courageous; be an excellent example to the rest of our group.

And why are you so affright that Sugriv would kill you; haven't you yourself acknowledged just now that Lord Ram had saved your life the first time, and don't you have trust in the Lord that he would do it again and again, that the all-merciful and compassionate Lord would never allow any harm to come to you? Perish any other contradictory thought if by some delusion or wrong understanding any such evil thing had even fleetingly touched your mind; banish it immediately. Remember: the Lord would take upon himself any evil eye that may be dared cast upon you; rest assured of it. I am old and experienced, and I love you to an extent that at least I won't either betray or mislead you.

Why are you so despondent, desolate and gloomy; why are you on a tailspin of depression and hopelessness? You are amongst friends and brothers; you are not abandoned and forgotten. We will never ever leave you alone and escape to save our own skins; we will live and die with you—it's my word of honour, and so it is the resolve of all our companions here.

Can't you see that all members of our group have tears in their eyes when they see you sad and hear you talk of dying at the hands of Sugriv? Don't you see that they have cast their lot with you, that they have spread sitting mats on the ground around you, keeping you in the center, so that no one can touch you without first fighting with all of us? In god's name, why do you feel scared and abandoned?

Angad; what has happened to you? Listen: we are brave, bold and honourable warriors, not contemptible cowards and spine-less sycophant courtiers who would bend over backwards to please their lord and king; we have our scruples and principles. We take the enemy in his face, and we face all adversities with a high chin; we don't show either of them our backs.

So say my dear, how come you even allowed such demeaning and degrading thoughts to enter your mind, that Sugriv would kill you, that we will not find Sita, that we will all die, that all hope is lost?

Cheer up; look up. Let us strive to devise a device to get around the unexpected obstacle in the form of this ocean, instead of lamenting and cursing our fates; the way you are behaving does not behove us on any count whatsoever; it will bring shame to all of us. We are all with you, and together we can surmount the greatest of obstacles that dares to challenge us.

You must act with dignity and fortitude, you must show exemplary courage and patience, you must present a stellar example of resilience and equanimity when faced with adversities and seemingly insurmountable difficulties, as these are the virtues that distinguishes a noble soul, and wherein lie an individual's glory for which he is remembered for all times to come. A person's manliness and strength of character lie in facing circumstances with his chin high up, and not timidly buckling his knees in defeat and surrender even before the final results are out.

My dear Angad; remember that fortune smiles on them who are courageous and brave, and not on cowards and runaways. A person is remembered and honoured for the smile he bears on his face when he emerges from the gravest of situations that are most daunting, and a fate that is malevolent and intractable, and not for the smile he bears for emerging from the comfort zone of favourable situations or a fate that is benevolent on him."

It must be remembered by the reader at this juncture that Jamvant was actually Brahma, the creator of this world. His external appearance such as his old age, his wisdom and experience, his calm and thoughtful manners etc.—all mirrored this fact. So when Jamvant himself assured Angad, the latter felt relieved. He sighed and took a deep breath; fresh tears of hope and expectation of life moistened his eyes.]

दो०. निज इच्छाँ प्रभु अवतरइ सुर महि गो द्विज लागि ।

सगुन उपासक संग तहँ रहहिं मोच्छ सब त्यागि ॥ २६ ॥

dōhā.

nija icchām̐ prabhu avatara'i sura mahi gō dvija lāgi.

saguna upāsaka saṅga taham̐ rahahim̐ mōccha saba tyāgi. 26.

The Lord has manifested himself in a human form for the good and happiness of the gods, mother earth and the cows (representing defenceless and humble creatures)¹.

Those devotees who prefer to worship the Supreme Being in his visible form that has attributes and can be easily related with in practical terms in this gross world, so that these devotees can enjoy company of the Lord they adore (as compared to those who prefer to worship the Lord in his invisible cosmic form that is all-pervading, sublime and subtle, a form known as 'pure Consciousness', but which is inaccessible, too abstract and intractable for a common creature)—such devotees would gladly bargain even the fruit of Moksha (deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the soul) if they are given the choice of serving the Lord². (Doha no. 26)

[Note—¹The demons led by Ravana had unleashed a reign of terror and mayhem. When their horrors transgressed limits of tolerance, the gods and the earth approached Lord Vishnu to intercede on their behalf and give them protection. The Lord had then

promised them that he would come down personally and eliminate Ravana and his demon hordes. To fulfil his promise, Lord Vishnu manifested himself as Lord Ram. This episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 184—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 187.

²But primarily there is no difference between the two forms of the Supreme Lord—i.e. his visible form here in this mortal world as Lord Ram, and his cosmic invisible form as Lord Vishnu. This fact is reiterated by Lord Shiva in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 116; and (ii) Doha no. 118 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it.

The devotees are given an easy opportunity to attain liberation and deliverance from the miseries and sorrows associated with life in this mortal world by remembering and singing the stories related to the visible manifestation of the Supreme Being, as this form of the Lord can easily be understood and recalled even by an ordinary creature—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 122.

To wit, all devotees worship the same Lord, albeit in different forms in accordance to their liking and preferences. It is like the case of viewing the sky with glasses of different shades of colour: if we see through a blue glass we say the sky is blue, and if through a green-shaded glass, we see the same sky coloured green.

The “saguna upāsaka” is a devotee who worships and adores the form of the Lord God that is visible, has attributes and familiar to him, while the “nirguna upāsaka” is the devotee who worships and adores the invisible cosmic form of the Lord that has no attributes, is all-pervading and subtle, a form that is so abstract that no one can claim that he is fully familiar with it.

It is always easier and better to reach the unknown from what is well known, understand what is unfamiliar after first coming to grasp fully with what is familiar, rather than the other way round. So therefore, a wise devotee is one who first develops devotion, faith and love for the Lord God through the medium of the Lord’s ‘saguna form’, and then gradually evolves to a higher plane where he can have natural devotion, faith and love for the ‘nirguna form’ of the same Lord God. If the foundation of any building is firm and based on solid ground, its superstructure will also be firm, no matter how high this building may rise into the air.]

चौ०. एहि बिधि कथा कहहिं बहु भाँती । गिरि कंदराँ सुनी संपाती ॥ १ ॥

बाहेर होइ देखि बहु कीसा । मोहि अहार दीन्ह जगदीसा ॥ २ ॥

आजु सबहि कहँ भच्छन करऊँ । दिन बहु चले अहार बिनु मरऊँ ॥ ३ ॥

कबहुँ न मिल भरि उदर अहारा । आजु दीन्ह बिधि एकहिं बारा ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

ēhi bidhi kathā kahahim̐ bahu bhām̐tī. giri kandarām̐ sunī sampātī. 1.

bāhēra hō'i dēkhi bahu kīsā. mōhi ahāra dīnha jagadīsā. 2.

āju sabahi kham̐ bhacchana kara'ūm̐. dina bahu calē ahāra binu mara'ūm̐. 3.

kabahum̐ na mila bhari udara ahārā. āju dīnha bidhi ēkahim̐ bārā. 4.

In this way, the group of monkeys and bears were talking aloud amongst themselves on different aspects of the situation and their fate.

Their chatter was heard by a vulture named Sampati¹ (Jatau's elder brother) who lived inside a cave on the side of the mountain (facing the ocean). (1)

He (Sampati) came out to investigate from whence the noise came. When he saw a large number of monkeys (and bears)² animatedly talking on the shore of the ocean, down the slope of the mountain, he felt glad and said to himself, 'It's good that the Creator has granted me something to feed upon. (2)

I would devour all of them today itself, for I have been starving for many days during which I have had nothing to eat. (3)

I had never had enough food to fill my stomach on any day, but the Creator has been so generous with me today that he had recompensed me by granting enough food to fill my empty tummy all at once.' (4)

[Note—¹Sampati would tell his own story to the team of monkeys and bears soon when he meets them—see Chaupai line nos. 1-10 that precedes Doha no. 28 herein below. His story is narrated in greater detail in Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 8.

According to the legend narrated in the Srimad Bhagvata Mahapuran, 4.1, there was an ancient sage by the name of Kashyap. He married the thirteen daughters of Daksha Prajapati, and his off-springs populated the entire creation. As such, Kashyapa is called the progenitor of all living beings, right from the gods and the demons to the creatures, including all the sub-human species belonging to the zoological kingdom, that inhabit the rest of the mortal world.

One of his wives was called Vinataa; she was the mother of the feathered creatures. From her Kashyap begot two sons—Aruna and Garuda. Aruna became the charioteer of the Sun-God, and Garuda served as the mount of Lord Vishnu. Out of these two brothers, Aruna became the father of the two vulture-brothers Sampati and Jatau.

These two brothers had enormous size and strength, could fly high up in the sky, had astounding long life, and miraculously could speak many tongues. This is evident from the fact that Jatau could converse with Lord Ram in the human tongue, and Sampati with the monkeys and bears in their own lingua-franca. Remember: we are talking about an era long past, about which we just have no idea or can imagine about. So what was a normal occurrence in the time it relates to may seem incredulous and wondrous to us today.

²The word used in the text is “*kīsā*”, which literally translates to a monkey, or more generally to a monkey-like individual. As we have read in a note appended earlier when we read about Lord Ram coming to Mt. Rishyamook and meeting Hanuman, these individuals appeared to be like monkeys because of their physical appearances, habits, nature, living style, manners, languages, culture etc. which were in variance with those of the members of the human race, prompting the latter to call the former ‘monkeys’. But this variance and oddity was caused over a long period of time due to the habitat and circumstances in which these so-called ‘monkeys’ had to live and survive—such as the harsh realities of their dwelling places, the forest, the mountains, the hills and the valleys, as well as the vagaries of Nature, of weather and climate, and many other factors that played a combined role to shape their behaviour and attitude to life. But nonetheless they were more human-like than being complete animals like

monkeys actually are; the metamorphosis had been caused by the process of adaptation and adjustment and reconciliation for which the human race is well known and appreciated.

Besides this factor, the army of Lord Ram consisted of ‘both the monkeys and bears’, and not only the monkeys, as we shall discover in due course during the reading of the enchanting narration of the fierce war of Lanka. One instance will suffice for the time being to illustrate our point: in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 39 we read specifically that when the battle first commenced, “large numbers of bears and monkeys roared thunderously and jumped excitedly as they cheered Lord Ram and raised a cry honouring his glory as they launched their attack on the enemy forces (i.e. on the demon army of Ravana)”.

Moreover, we have just read that Jamvant had comforted Angad, and Jamvant was the chief of the bear community. So therefore it is natural to conclude that both the monkeys and bears constituted the team that was sitting near the ocean, and it was this team which Sampati saw.]

डरपे गीध बचन सुनि काना । अब भा मरन सत्य हम जाना ॥ ५ ॥
कपि सब उठे गीध कहँ देखी । जामवंत मन सोच बिसेषी ॥ ६ ॥

ḍarapē gīdha bacana suni kānā. aba bhā marana satya hama jānā. 5.
kapi saba uṭhē gīdha kaham̐ dēkhī. jāmavanta mana sōca bisēṣī. 6.

The group of monkeys and bears got terrified when they heard the words of the vulture, and they grieved at their fate, saying, ‘Now it is true that we will die; our fate seemed doomed’¹. (5)

The Kapis (monkeys, bears) got up when they saw the (huge) vulture. Meanwhile, Jamvant became pensive; he contemplated for a moment (about how to tackle this new, unforeseen development)². (6)

[Note—¹Sampati had a huge size. When these monkeys and bears heard him roaring loudly and saw his colossal frame hovering over them in the sky, ready to swoop down on them and kill them by fierce attacks of his claws and beak, they were all petrified with fear and were sure that now there is no escape from death.

²Jamvant was alarmed and aghast; he was consternated and flabbergasted. Just a few moments back he had somehow restored calm and confidence in the team by encouraging Angad, assuaging his feelings and building courage in the team as a whole, and now all of a sudden this piquant situation arose—for this hungry vulture would inflict severe injury to the monkeys and bears by striking them ferociously and viciously from the sky, biting and lacerating them with its beak and claws. The vulture had such a gigantic size when it spread its wings to full span that the sun was covered and a huge shadow fell on the ground as if a dark cloud had completely obscured the sun’s light!

This sight itself was terrifying in its own right, and it only went to compound the fear of death that had already been bearing heavily over the mind of the stressed group of monkeys and bears. Jamvant had to think fast; so he became contemplative, as there was no time to lose.]

कह अंगद बिचारि मन माहीं । धन्य जटायू सम कोउ नाही ॥ ७ ॥
 राम काज कारन तनु त्यागी । हरि पुर गयउ परम बड़ भागी ॥ ८ ॥

kaha aṅgada bicāri mana māhīm. dhan'ya jaṭāyū sama kō'u nāhīm. 7.
 rāma kāja kārana tanu tyāgī. hari pura gaya'u parama baṛa bhāgī. 8.

Angad contemplated in his mind and exclaimed, 'In all sooth and without gainsay, there is no one more fortunate and worthy than Jatau. (7)

He had left his mortal body serving the cause of Lord Ram, and in doing so the most fortunate one had got a right of passage to the heavenly abode of Lord Hari (Vishnu)¹. (8)

[Note—¹Jatau died for the cause of Lord Ram, as he died trying to secure Sita's release from Ravana's clutches. And this noble deed of his paved the way for his unhindered passage to heaven where ordinarily a flesh-eating vulture would never have hoped to go ever.

When Angad saw that the new danger is in the form of a vulture, he immediately remembered Jatau about whom we have already read earlier. Jatau was severely wounded when the demon king Ravana cut-off his wings as he tried to save Sita from being kidnapped by the demon. Later on, when Lord Ram reached the spot, Jatau narrated the developments to the Lord, and then died in the Lord's arms. The Lord then performed his last rites as he would have done for his own father. Being graced with this rare privilege, Jatau attained an exalted stature by going straight to heaven inspite of his life being spent in eating cadavers as vultures are accustomed to. {The episode related to Jatau is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Doha no. 32.}

Angad wondered aloud about the ironies of this world: there was one vulture named Jatau who died serving the cause of Lord Ram, and here is another vulture (Sampati) who wants to create an obstacle in the Lord's work by killing his messengers.

Angad thought quickly and decided that if he mentioned the name of Jatau there were more than even chances that this new enemy would recognise the name, and would, in all likelihood, wish to investigate what the matter referred to was. And his guess paid—for Sampati stopped in his path as he indeed recognised this name as being that of his own younger brother.

So Sampati wondered what this monkey was saying, and he descended politely to make quarries. We shall see in the following verses that this is what exactly happened, and this speculation of Angad paid off.]

सुनि खग हरष सोक जुत बानी । आवा निकट कपिन्ह भय मानी ॥ ९ ॥
 तिन्हहि अभय करि पूछेसि जाई । कथा सकल तिन्ह ताहि सुनाई ॥ १० ॥
 सुनि संपाति बंधु कै करनी । रघुपति महिमा बहुबिधि बरनी ॥ ११ ॥

sunī khaga haraṣa sōka juta bānī. āvā nikaṭa kapinha bhaya mānī. 9.
 tinhaḥi abhaya kari pūchēsī jāī. kathā sakala tinha tāhi sunāī. 10.
 sunī sampātī bandhu kai karanī. raghupati mahimā bahubidhi baranī. 11.

When the bird (“khaga”; the vulture Sampati) heard these sombre words (of Angad) spoken in a sorrowful voice (sunī -- sōka juta bānī), he felt joyous (haraṣa)¹.

But as he approached them, the Kapis felt terrified (as they thought that Sampati would attack them). (9)

Sampati managed to calm them down and remove their fear by his friendly gestures and amiable demeanours. When he was close enough, he asked them the story related to Jatau, which they (here mainly Angad and Jamvant) cheerfully narrated to him. (10)

After hearing the noble deeds of his brother (Jatau), Sampati praised the glory of Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) in various ways². (11)

[Note—¹Sampati had heard the name of his brother Jatau after a long time, so it was natural that he was glad to hear it. But then he also heard that Jatau had died serving Lord Ram’s cause, this made him sad and sorrowful. So we see in Sampati’s case that the two opposing emotions of happiness and sorrows simultaneously revealed themselves.

Sampati thought to himself that he could get more information about his dear brother Jatau from these monkeys and bears as they seem to be well acquainted with him, and the circumstances surrounding him and his death. So he abandoned his bellicose attitude and assumed an amiable countenance. He descended in a friendly manner, and politely approached the group slowly so as not to alarm them.

²After hearing the details of Jatau’s deeds, Sampati was emotionally overwhelmed. The one thing that struck him the most was Lord Ram’s merciful and gracious nature when he heard how the Lord had treated his dear brother affectionately; how he caressed the wounded vulture, wiped his blood and tended to his wounds himself, and finally performed Jatau’s last rites like he would have done for his own father. Sampati choked and somehow managed to hold back his tears. He was all praises for Lord Ram.

No other person would have done what the Lord did—no other person would lift a wounded vulture on his lap, wipe the blood off the vulture’s body with his long hairs as no other means were available, hold the wailing bird close to his bosom, and then taking care to perform his last rites properly—instead of just letting him die.

Verily, Sampati could not find enough words to thank Lord Ram on his dead brother’s behalf; he repeatedly praised the Lord and sang his glories by spreading his wings and lifting his beak to the heaven.

Samapti thanked God he did not act rashly in haste; he felt ashamed at himself that he was contemplating harming the messengers of the Lord for whom his younger brother Jatau had laid down his life. To overcome this guilt, he praised the Lord profusely.]

दो०. मोहि लै जाहु सिंधुतट देउँ तिलांजलि ताहि ।

बचन सहाइ करबि में पैहहु खोजहु जाहि ॥ २७ ॥

dōhā.

mōhi lai jāhu sindhutata dē'um¹ tilānjali tāhi.
bacana sahā'i karabi mairiṁ paihahu khōjahu jāhi. 27.

He (Sampati) requested the monkeys and bears, 'Please take me to the shore of the ocean so that I can offer oblations of water to the soul¹ of my departed dear brother.

After this, I shall help you with my words by telling you where to find her whom you seek. (Doha no. 27)

[Note—¹Offerings are made to the soul of the dead by those related to the departed by using a little water to which sesame seeds are added. The dead individual is remembered, the offerings are made, and a prayer is said for the peace of the soul of the departed.

Why did Sampati ask the monkeys and bears to take him to the shore of the ocean to make oblations to his dead brother, instead of doing it himself? The answer is this:

First—Water is needed to offer oblations, and a vulture cannot collect sufficient water for this purpose. So Sampati needed help.

Second—Vultures don't perform oblations and other post-death rites of dear ones like humans do, but when Sampati heard how Lord Ram had shown due respect to his brother by offering oblations in the course of doing his last rites, he concluded that he should also follow this example. But since he was not accustomed to this rite he thought that the monkeys and bears who closely followed human behaviour and were evolutionary nearer to them would be able to guide him through the process.

Third—He wished to make the messengers feel easy and comfortable with him, especially after his threat of killing and devouring them all, and this purpose would be aided if he takes their help in completing performing the rites of his dead brother.

Four—The rite of the dead after cremation, where water is offered to the soul of the departed by his kin, is usually done near a water body, such as a pond, lake or river. Here the ocean was available, so Sampati asked the messengers to take him there.]

चौ०. अनुज क्रिया करि सागर तीरा । कहि निज कथा सुनहु कपि बीरा ॥ १ ॥

हम द्वौ बंधु प्रथम तरुनाई । गगन गए रबि निकट उड़ाई ॥ २ ॥

तेज न सहि सक सो फिरि आवा । मैं अभिमानी रबि निअरावा ॥ ३ ॥

जरे पंख अति तेज अपारा । परेउँ भूमि करि घोर चिकारा ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

anuja kriyā kari sāgara tīrā. kahi nija kathā sunahu kapi bīrā. 1.

hama dvau bandhu prathama tarunā'ī. gagana ga'e rabi nikaṭa uṛā'ī. 2.

tēja na sahi saka sō phiri āvā. mairiṁ abhimānī rabi ni'arāvā. 3.

jarē paṅkha ati tēja apārā. parē'um¹ bhūmi kari ghōra cikārā. 4.

After having performed the post-death rites of his younger brother (Jatau) on the shore of the ocean, Sampati narrated his own story to the monkeys and bears.

He said, ‘Listen oh brave and valiant Kapis. (1)

We two (myself and Jatau) were brothers. One day when we were in prime of our youth, we took to the sky and flew towards the sun, getting closer and closer to it. (2)

He (Jatau) could not tolerate the sun’s heat and so he turned back. But I continued on my path as I was haughty, egoistic, and full of pride. (3)

Ultimately my wings got burnt by the scorching heat of the sun, and making a fierce cry I fell down to the earth. (4)

मुनि एक नाम चंद्रमा ओही । लागी दया देखि करि मोही ॥ ५ ॥
 बहु प्रकार तेहिं ग्यान सुनावा । देह जनित अभिमान छड़ावा ॥ ६ ॥
 त्रेतां ब्रह्म मनुज तनु धरिही । तासु नारि निसिचर पति हरिही ॥ ७ ॥
 तासु खोज पठइहि प्रभु दूता । तिन्हहि मिलें तैं होब पुनीता ॥ ८ ॥
 जमिहहि पंख करसि जनि चिंता । तिन्हहि देखाइ देहेसु तैं सीता ॥ ९ ॥

muni ēka nāma candramā ōhī. lāgī dayā dēkhi kari mōhī. 5.
 bahu prakāra tēhim gyāna sunāvā. dēha janita abhimāna charāvā. 6.
 trētām̐ brahma manuja tanu dharihī. tāsū nāri nisicara pati harihī. 7.
 tāsū khōja paṭha’ihi prabhu dūtā. tinhahi milēm̐ taim̐ hōba punītā. 8.
 jamihahim̐ paṅkha karasi jani cintā. tinhahi dēkhā’i dēhēsu taim̐ sītā. 9.

When I tumbled down with a yell and landed with a thud on the ground, wounded and weeping, a merciful sage named Chandrama took pity on me. (5)

The wise sage enlightened me about the futility of being proud of this gross mortal body. This teaching of the erudite sage made me regret and realise the impermanent nature of my youth and its false charms vis-à-vis the physical body¹. (6)

He told me, “During the Treta Yuga (which is the third era of the four-era one cycle of birth and death according to the scriptures), Brahm, the Supreme Being, would manifest as a human being (in the form of Lord Ram). At that time, his wife (Sita) would be stolen by a king of the demon race (Ravana). (7)

The Lord would send messengers to search for her. When you meet them you shall be restored and purified. [To wit, the scar of burn on your body would be healed, and you will be freed from the taint of being haughty and proud. Your sins would be washed at that time, and you will find your true peace.] (8)

Your wings would grow back; don’t worry. At that time which I mention, show those messengers where Sita was to be found.” (9)

[Note—¹The erudite sage asked me the cause of my misery. When I narrated the whole episode to him and said that I went on nearing the sun as I was very proud of my strong and able body as well as my skill in flying high up in the sky and going up as high as I wished, he realised that I had met this horrible fate because of the pride that I had regarding my body. So he first applied emergency care to me and then advised me that one should not be proud of one's youthful body because one day this body will become old and feeble, that this body is subject to diseases and old age, and that no living being is immortal and so his body will die one day.

Hence, there is no sense of being proud of an entity that has no steady value, that is subject to decline and fall, and that will be lost permanently one day.]

मुनि कइ गिरा सत्य भइ आजू । सुनि मम बचन करहु प्रभु काजू ॥ १० ॥
गिरि त्रिकूट ऊपर बस लंका । तहँ रह रावन सहज असंका ॥ ११ ॥
तहँ असोक उपवन जहँ रहई । सीता बैठि सोच रत अहई ॥ १२ ॥

muni ka'i girā satya bha'i ājū. suni mama bacana karahu prabhu kājū. 10.
giri trikūṭa ūpara basa laṅkā. taḥam̐ raha rāvana sahaja asaṅkā. 11.
taḥam̐ asōka upabana jaham̐ raha'ī. sītā baiṭhi sōca rata aha'ī. 12.

Verily indeed, the great sage's words have become true today (i.e. the sage's words have borne fruit today)¹. Now, listen to my words (and pay attention to what I have to tell you), and then do accordingly so that the Lord's work can be successfully done. (10)

There is great mountain called Trikut (literally a mountain with three peaks). On it is established the city of Lanka. Ravana lives there fearlessly². (11)

In that place there is a garden (or a grove) called 'Ashok'³; Sita is sitting there lost in worries and thoughtful grief. (12)

[Note—¹The “sage's words have borne fruit today and have become true”—how? The wings of Sampati grew back fully, the scar of burn left by the sun vanished, and he got back some of his youthful stamina and energy that he had lost, and his body was restored to some extent with the same abilities that it possessed when he was young.

The proof of this miraculous feat is to be found just now. We will read below in an instant that Sampati flew high up in the sky from where he could see Sita sitting under a tree in the royal garden of Lanka. Now, this clearly means that (i) his youthful energy was quite back if not fully restored because now he was old; (ii) his wings were restored because without them he would not be able to fly in the sky and see the island of Lanka from high up; (iii) his eyesight was as clear and penetrating as it had been in his younger days—because he could see vividly and sharply enough over a long distance, as far away as Lanka which was roughly one hundred yojan (or approximately eight hundred miles) from the shore of the ocean, and could distinctly see Sita sitting there from this side of the ocean, which is not a small feat.

²To wit, he is the king of the place and hence has nothing to fear from anything or anybody in the city. It also means that Ravana is so confident of his own invincibility

as well as the impenetrable nature of his fort that he has no fear from any quarter; he does not fear any rebellion or invasion respectively.

³The word “Ashok” used for the garden or the grove where Sita lived has the following connotations:

(i) It was so pleasant and comfortable that anyone who entered it felt relieved of all sufferings; it was rejuvenating and refreshing for the senses. Ravana wished to keep Sita comfortable, so he selected this particular garden to keep her so that she could get the maximum amount of comfort under the condition of captivity as could be managed without raising suspicion that a favourable treatment was being shown to an enemy’s wife who is held captive in order to punish her husband for insulting the king’s sister—i.e. Supernakha, the sister of Ravana, the king of the demons.

(ii) It had huge Ashoka Trees (“jonesia asoka” or “sarica indica” plant) with shades that had a wide circumference. This afforded a cool place for Sita to pass her days.]

दो०. मैं देखउँ तुम्ह नहीं गीधहि दृष्टि अपार ।

बूढ़ भयउँ न त करतेउँ कछुक सहाय तुम्हार ॥ २८ ॥

dōhā.

mair̥m dēkha'um̃ tumha nāhīm gīdhahi dr̥ṣṭi apāra.

būṛha bhaya'um̃ na ta karatē'um̃ kachuka sahāya tumhāra. 28.

I am clearly able to see her while you can't; it is because a vulture is naturally gifted with an eye-sight that is long and penetrating.

Alas I am old (and feeble) and can't help you; for otherwise I would have certainly helped you a bit more¹. (Doha no. 28)

[Note—¹Sampati told the messengers: “Look brothers, I am so sorry that I could not do much to help you and serve Lord Ram like my brother Jatau had done, for he laid down his life for the sake of the Lord and I can't even take you across the ocean on my back. I am full of remorse and very regretful, but I can't help, because old age has made me so feeble that I can't endure the effort of flying a hundred yojans (see Chaupai line no. 1 that follows this Doha herein below) to land on the soil of Lanka, and then cover the same distance back here. Verily, my brother Jatau was more fortunate; he was exceptionally lucky.

Anyhow, I have done the best I could do—for by telling you exactly where to find Sita I have served the noble cause for which you have undertaken this mission; at least now onwards your futile search will end and you know your destination.”

In Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 7, verse no. 54 however, Sampati gives the reason of his ‘not having wings’ (as they were burnt earlier) for his inability to help the reconnoitering team to go and meet Sita in Lanka situated 100 Yojans across the ocean.

The full story of Sampati has been by him narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 8.]

चौ०. जो नाघइ सत जोजन सागर । करइ सो राम काज मति आगर ॥ १ ॥

मोहि बिलोकि धरहु मन धीरा । राम कृपाँ कस भयउ सरीरा ॥ २ ॥
 पापिउ जा कर नाम सुमिरहीं । अति अपार भवसागर तरहीं ॥ ३ ॥
 तासु दूत तुम्ह तजि कदराई । राम हृदयँ धरि करहु उपाई ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

jō nāgha'i sata jōjana sāgara. kara'i sō rāma kāja mati āgara. 1.
 mōhi bilōki dharahu mana dhīrā. rāma kṛpām̐ kasa bhaya'u sarīrā. 2.
 pāpi'u jā kara nāma sumirahīm̐. ati apāra bhavasāgara tarahīm̐. 3.
 tāsu dūta tumha taji kadarāī. rāma hṛdayam̐ dhari karahu upāī. 4.

[Sampati continued—] ‘He who is able to jump across the span of the ocean measuring approximately One-hundred Yojans (roughly 800 miles) from here will be able to accomplish Lord Ram’s work (i.e. he will be successful in meeting Sita and bringing back her news)¹. (1)

Look at me and see how miraculously my body has recovered by the grace of Lord Ram. You must draw inspiration and courage from my example². (2)

The Lord whose name is so divine, holy and mystically empowered that even the greatest of sinners are able to cross over this huge, fathomless, endless and intractable ocean-like world of transmigration by merely remembering the Lord’s holy name “RAM (pronounced as Raam or Rāma)”, --- (3)

--- You are the messengers of the same (almighty and all-able) Lord; so stop being disheartened, don’t have gloomy thoughts and lose your nerves. Get up and go cracking; enshrine the holy image of Lord Ram in your hearts and make plans how to accomplish this task (of crossing the ocean for eight hundred miles).³ (4)

[Note—¹One Yojan is equivalent to four, eight or sixteen miles according to different methods of calculation. So the median figure of “eight miles for one yojan” is taken here for our calculation. Hence, 100 Yojans = 800 miles.

Sampati told the monkeys and bears who had anxiously huddled around him as follows:

“Listen. Lanka is situated roughly eight hundred miles from this shore. So any one of you who is able to cross the ocean by any method to cover this distance, by jumping or leaping across it, by spreading your body so huge that you can cover this span with one gigantic stride, or by cruising in the sky non-stop for this distance, he will land at Lanka and be successful in accomplishing Lord Ram’s work by meeting Sita and bringing back her news. But remember one crucial thing: It is a two-way journey; one side is eight hundred miles, so you need to have the skill and the ability to cover double this distance in order to be successful in the to-and-fro journey.

²My body was seriously wounded and had deep gashes because I fell thousands of feet from the sky when my wings were burnt by the scorching heat of the sun as I have already told you (Chaupai line nos. 4 that precedes Doha no. 28 herein above). I was physically disabled, and my injuries did not allow me to search for food as I could not fly. That is why I contemplated eating you all because it appeared to me that you were sitting near the shore to fast unto death, and then I would hobble down and have a hearty meal of your dead bodies. But look what miraculous transformation has

happened to my decrepit body when I heard the glories of Lord Ram and the service my brother Jatau had rendered to him; merely hearing the Lord's holy name and hearing his glories had healed my body instantly so much that I could fly high once again, high enough to see Lanka across a distance of eight hundred miles. My eyesight too was restored to its level that I had in my prime time as a youth enabling me to peer clearly over this large distance and see small things distinctly; for otherwise how could I have seen Sita, who but looks like a small speck over this immense distance, so clearly, clear enough to be able to distinguish her from other females, the lady demons, in the same garden! Tell me: is it not a miracle and a vivid proof of Lord Ram's mystical powers?

So have courage and draw inspiration from my example. Since you are on the Lord's mission, failure can't come to touch you; what you experience now is a test of your faith and devotion for the Lord. Don't buckle; don't be foolish to surrender, thinking yourselves to be doomed.

Look, I have waited for so long a time for the day when my body would be healed when I meet Lord Ram's messengers and help them find the Lord's wife as advised by sage Chandrama (refer: Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 28 herein above). And you can see for yourselves that I have indeed been healed; there is no pretension in my words. So why do you despair; why do you think that you will have to die because Sita can't be found? Cheer up and get your acts together; banish gloomy thoughts and divert your energy and mind to find a way to cross the ocean for the distance I have told you. Have faith in Lord Ram, and things will be alright."

³Like Jamvant who had encouraged Angad earlier, here it is Sampati who raised the sagging spirit of the messengers, and ignited a fresh fire of hope and success in their hearts. What a moment early was a dark tunnel with no end in sight suddenly became virtually a veritable periscope that showed the light of the day and a green island in the yonder to the sailors who had lost all hopes of survival!]

अस कहि गरुड़ गीध जब गयऊ । तिन्ह कें मन अति बिसमय भयऊ ॥ ५ ॥
 निज निज बल सब काहूँ भाषा । पार जाइ कर संसय राखा ॥ ६ ॥
 जरठ भयउँ अब कहइ रिछेसा । नहिं तन रहा प्रथम बल लेसा ॥ ७ ॥
 जबहिं त्रिबिक्रम भए खरारी । तब मैं तरुन रहेउँ बल भारी ॥ ८ ॥

asa kahi garuṛa gīdha jaba gaya'ū. tinha kēm mana ati bisamaya bhaya'ū. 5.
 nija nija bala saba kāhūṁ bhāṣā. pāra jā'i kara sansaya rākhā. 6.
 jaraṭha bhaya'um'aba kaha'i richēsā. nahiṁ tana rahā prathama bala lēsā. 7.
 jabahiṁ tribikrama bha'ē kharārī. taba mair̥ taruna rahē'um' bala bhārī. 8.

[It must be noted here that the divine story of the 'Ramayana', the story that narrates the life and deeds of Lord Ram, and in its course narrates the story of Ravana and the war of Lanka too as these two stories are inseparable from one another, have been narrated by Lord Shiva to his consort goddess Parvati, also known as Uma, as well as by the saintly crow named Kaagbusund to Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu, who had come to him to listen to it. Both these narratives are said to be the most ancient renderings of the Ramayana, and both are equally authentic and un-tampered.

That is why in Ram Charit Manas, from which we are reading at present, both these authorities, i.e. Lord Shiva and Kaagbhusund, have been cited, giving equal importance to both. It is to emphasise that the narration of Ram Charit Manas conforms both to the way Lord Shiva had told it to Parvati, as well as the way Kaagbhusund had told it to Garud.

Presently however, the narration quotes Kaagbhusund who said to Garud—]

‘Oh Garud! When the vulture (Sampati) had gone away after giving this advice (as narrated herein above), the messengers were amazed and confounded in their minds and hearts¹. (5)

Each one of them talked about his own strengths, abilities and skills, but they expressed doubts about their being able to go across the ocean². (6)

[The first among the commanders to speak was Jamvant, the bear chief.]

The chief of the bears said, ‘I have become old, and my body doesn’t have the energy and strength that I had in my youthful days. (7)

When the Lord, who is the slayer of demon Khar (“kharārī”; i.e. Lord Ram)³, had won over (or measured) all the three divisions of the world (“tribikrama”; a reference to Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Vaaman, the dwarf manifestation)⁴—at that time I was in my youth and had immense strength. [In the following Doha no. 29 Jamvant tells about what happened at that time.] (8)

[Note—¹They were amazed at the story narrated by Sampati, the way he was miraculously healed, and the sudden knowledge that Sita was to be found across the ocean in an island situated eight hundred miles from the shore. More than anything else, the prospect of crossing the mighty ocean confounded them; they felt more dismayed than earlier because one after another formidable obstacles are coming their way. First it was the prospect of dying due to thirst and hunger, than getting trapped in a cave from which there was no exit, which was followed by the horrifying prospect of being attacked by a hungry vulture. And to cap it all, now was the greatest of all hurdles—to be able to cross the heaving and roaring ocean that stood like an endless wall in front.

But inspite of the hopelessness of the situation, they still gathered courage as a glimmer of hope began to shine in their despairing hearts when they observed and discussed how magically Sampati’s body was healed by hearing the story of Lord Ram and the chance he had got of playing a helpful role in the successful accomplishment of the Lord’s mission.

²These monkey and bear warriors said that the problem now was to cross the eight hundred miles of ocean that was roaring menacingly at them. The sight of the heaving and splashing ocean itself was frightening even for a stern heart. Had it been any other obstacle or place over land, they would have easily overcome it and finished the task at hand quickly; but crossing the ocean is something extraordinary and beyond their means. It was a daunting prospect; a discouraging thought.

³Khar was a demon who was slayed by Lord Ram when he and his brother Dushan had attacked the Lord at Panchavti. In the battle that followed, they and their army of demons were killed by the Lord. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no.

20 along with the verses that precede it.} This episode has already been narrated in our narrative when we read about the episode of Supernakha.

⁴The word “Tribikram” means one who has conquered the three worlds. “Tri” = three; “Vikram” = one who is invincible, strong and valiant; one who conquers or defeats. This story relates to Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as the dwarf mendicant known as Vaaman. Since Lord Vishnu has also revealed himself as Lord Ram, so therefore the two forms of Vishnu, one as Vaaman and the other as Lord Ram, basically have no difference.

In the chronological order, Vaaman appeared before Lord Ram. Jamvant had a long life, and he spanned many generations and eras. He was young during the period Lord Vaaman appeared on earth, and now during the era of Lord Ram he has become aged.

The Lord is called ‘Tribikram’ because in his incarnation as Vaaman he had measured the whole creation in his steps, a way of saying that he had ‘conquered the entire creation consisting of the heaven, the earth and the nether world’.

The story is outlined in brief as a note appended to Doha no. 29 herein below as it would help to explain the things better in the right perspective and context.]

दो०. बलि बाँधत प्रभु बाढ़ेउ सो तनु बरनि न जाइ ।
उभय घरी महँ दीन्हिं सात प्रदच्छिन धाइ ॥ २९ ॥

dōhā.

bali bām̐dhata prabhu bār̐hē'u sō tanu barani na jā'i.
ubhaya gharī maham̐ dīnhīm̐ sāta pradacchina dhā'i. 29.

In order to measure the land granted to him as alms by king Bali, the Lord (Vaaman) had expanded his body to assume such a colossus form that even after covering the entire creation there still was some more space needed so as to complete the measurement. So Vaaman tied Bali and made him a prisoner as the latter could not fulfil his vows. Oh, it is impossible to describe that astounding form of the Lord (that exceeded the circumference of the entire universe and then went beyond it)¹.

Nevertheless, I wished to pay my respects to the Lord by going around him clockwise (i.e. by doing a clockwise circumambulation of his colossal form). I had performed seven rounds of this colossus form quickly in two Gharis by running fast, so much was my strength, stamina and energy at that time². (Doha no. 29)

[Note—¹King Bali had wanted to rule over the whole world. The Gods were alarmed as this would violate the law of creation, because no living being can claim to replace the authority of Lord Vishnu as the Lord of the world. So the Lord assumed the form of a Brahmin dwarf and approached Bali at the time he was doing the fire sacrifice to fulfil his objective, and asked for alms. Bali could not refuse the alms-seeker, and promised Lord Vaaman land equivalent to the area covered by his ‘three steps’ as desired.

Instantly, Vaaman expanded his body and measured the whole of the nether world and earth in one step; in the second step he measured the entire heaven and the sky. One step was still pending; there was no space left that could be measured by the third step. So in order to fulfil his vow Bali allowed the Lord to measure him by the

third step—i.e. the great king voluntarily submitted to Lord Vaaman and allowed himself to be tied and enslaved in lieu of the land for the third step.

One can imagine the size of Lord Vaaman when he measured or girdled or straddled across or walked over the whole creation with just two steps—with one step yet pending!

Lord Vaaman is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu and an ancient one, for it took place in Sata Yuga, the 1st era of the 4-era cycle of creation and destruction according to Hindu scriptures. The Sata Yuga is also called the age of the Vedas as it was during this epoch the ancient scriptures known as the Vedas came into being and their hymns were primarily used to perform sacred fire sacrifices.

Hence, being an ancient incarnation of Lord Vishnu, Vaaman finds mention in the Vedas too—e.g. in Shatpath Brahman, 1/1/5; Taittiriya Brahman, 1/6/1; and Taittiriya Sanhita, 2/1/3.

²Such was the wondrous feat of Jamvant of which he refers to here that he quickly circled seven times, in a matter of about two gharis or roughly two hours, Lord Vaaman who had a colossal size that exceeded the span of the entire universe, because after measuring the cosmos by his two steps he still needed space for the third step, at which time Vaaman made Bali offer himself as a compensation. Truly it was an absolutely astounding feat.

What Jamvant intends to say here is that the distance of eight hundred miles to Lanka across the ocean is not even a speck in a canvas of space when compared to the dimension of the universe he had covered seven times in two hours, so quick and agile was his body during his youthful days. So striding across a distance of mere eight hundred miles would have been a child's play for him if he had been younger. But alas he was old now, and so his vigour and agility have ebbed considerably due to old age.]

चौ०. अंगद कहइ जाउँ मैं पारा । जियँ संसय कछु फिरती बारा ॥ १ ॥

जामवंत कह तुम्ह सब लायक । पठइअ किमि सब ही कर नायक ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

aṅgada kaha'i jā'um̐ mair̐ pārā. jiyam̐ sansaya kachu phiratī bārā. 1.

jāmvanta kaha tumha saba lāyaka. paṭha'i'a kimi saba hī kara nāyaka. 2.

Angad in his turn said, 'I can go (leap across the ocean), but I have doubts about my chances of coming back (for I may not be able to return)¹.' (1)

Jamvant interposed, saying, 'Even though you are able and competent in every way, but how can we send you because you are our leader?²' (2)

[Note—¹Angad said that he had sufficient strength to leap across the eight hundred miles of ocean and reach the island of Lanka, but this will require effort and he fears that by the time he lands there all his energy would be spent. Then it would not be a picnic: he would have to brave all sorts of odds to meet Sita, such as having to fight the demons who may obstruct him or try to capture him as a prisoner. That would further sap his energy. Perhaps he may also be gravely wounded in the course of the

mission, becoming so handicapped that he wouldn't be able to come back. So he says that he has serious doubts and grave misgivings about his chances of returning.

Angad was reluctant to go for another reason too. He had seen Lord Ram calling Hanuman close at the time of their departure, and quietly giving him (Hanuman) his finger-ring with a message for Sita. Angad, being the commander and a leader of the group, was standing close by, and he was intelligent enough to conclude that Lord Ram has chosen Hanuman to be his message-bearer over all others, including Angad and Jamvant. So Angad did not wish to interfere; he had to find a polite excuse to recuse himself in deference to the Lord's wishes.

What will happen when they return and the Lord asks Hanuman about the mission and the news of Sita, about what he did with the finger-ring, how was it received by Sita, and what if anything did she give him in return as a token of hers; what answer would they give to the Lord—that instead of Hanuman it was Angad who had gone. Would it not displease the Lord that his orders were violated? Would it not put poor Hanuman in a seriously piquant situation for no fault of his?

No, no it should not be that way. As a leader it was his moral responsibility to take everything into consideration before taking a decision. It is not the time and circumstance for dare-devilry and showmanship.

²Jamvant did not at all like the idea of Angad going alone to Lanka. The apparent reason he gives is that it is not advisable to send away the leader and commander of the group as this would make them leaderless; there would be no one to take decisions if Angad goes.

Another practical objection to allowing Angad to go was that he was a prince, and it does not behove of a prince to go himself on errands while his attendants and soldiers sit around lazing, gossiping and idling away time.

However, besides these obvious reasons there were other subtle reasons also. One was that Angad was also the prince and the heir-apparent of the kingdom of Kishkindha; it is never wise to send an individual of such a singular importance to an alien land on a mission the outcome of which was completely unknown, and especially if he goes alone and unarmed to a hostile land where he would be surrounded on all sides by vicious enemies in the form of blood-thirsty, vicious and ferocious demons.

The other reason that weighed heavily on the mind of Jamvant, who was farsighted and prudent, was that Angad was already under great mental stress as he himself had expressed his grave fears concerning death at the hands of his uncle Sugriv if Sita was not found. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 26.} So Jamvant had a serious apprehension that if Angad is allowed to go abroad then perhaps he may decide never to return as long as he lived—and Angad's own statement expressing his doubts concerning his coming back reinforced Jamvant's suspicion.

What compounded this Jamvant's apprehension was the fact that Ravana was a friend of Baali, the father of Angad. {This story is narrated in Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Canto 13, verse nos. 96-101. In Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 21, Ravana too refers to this acquaintance when Angad meets him as an emissary of Lord Ram in a last attempt to avoid the war.} So there was this risk of Angad deciding to exploit this friendship and defect to Ravana's camp to avoid being killed or imprisoned by his uncle Sugriv.

Jamvant wondered what, after all, Angad meant when he said that "he can go but there is uncertainty about his return".]

कहइ रीक्षपति सुनु हनुमाना । का चुप साधि रहेउ बलवाना ॥ ३ ॥
 पवन तनय बल पवन समाना । बुधि बिबेक बिग्यान निधाना ॥ ४ ॥
 कवन सो काज कठिन जग माहीं । जो नहिं होइ तात तुम्ह पाहीं ॥ ५ ॥
 राम काज लागि तव अवतारा । सुनतहिं भयउ पर्वताकारा ॥ ६ ॥

kaha'i rīkṣapati sunu hanumānā. kā cupa sādhi rahē'u balavānā. 3.
 pavana tanaya bala pavana samānā. budhi bibēka bigyāna nidhānā. 4.
 kavana sō kāja kaṭhina jaga māhīm. jō nahīm hō'i tāta tumha pāhīm. 5.
 rāma kāja lagi tava avatārā. sunatahīm bhaya'u parbatākārā. 6.

The king of the bears (i.e. Jamvant) turned to Hanuman (who during this time was sitting quietly and waiting for his turn to be asked to act), and exhorted him by saying, 'Listen Hanuman! Oh you brave one, say why are you sitting quietly; how come you are mum? (3)

You are a great Son of the exalted Wind-God, and verily you have the same characteristic strength, power and energy that the latter possesses. You are indeed a treasury of intelligence, wisdom and prudence. (4)

What work is there in this world that is so difficult that you can't do it; which work is there that you are not sufficiently equipped or competent enough to successfully do? (5)

You have manifested in this world exclusively to do Lord Ram's work and fulfil the Lord's mission! [So Hanuman, realise your true potentials and understand that the time for you to act has finally arrived. Wake up from your dream as it is the clarion call to rise has been sounded; the bugle is asking you to girdle yourself and become active instantly, for there is no time for further procrastination and brooding.]

The moment Hanuman heard these inspiring words (spoken by Jamvant), he expanded his body to assume a form as gigantic as a colossus mountain¹. (6)

[Note—¹These motivating words of Jamvant reminded Hanuman about the mission of his life for which he had taken birth, which was to serve Lord Ram and help him in the mission of eliminating the cruel demons headed by Ravana. He is called "the Son of the Wind-God" because when the Gods were advised by the creator to go down to earth and prepare themselves to serve Lord Vishnu when he manifests himself as Lord Ram in order to eliminate the demons and their villainous king Ravana, the Wind-God decided to become Hanuman. Jamvant was alluding to this fact.

So as soon as he was reminded of his birth and responsibilities, Hanuman recollected everything which he appeared to have forgotten under the influence of Maya, the Lord's delusion creating powers. Things are to be done at the proper time, and so the Supreme Being cast his Maya upon Hanuman so that he lies dormant till the correct time arrives and he is needed. Till such time Hanuman was made to appear to be dreaming; he appeared to be docile, dumb and humble.

But once the veil of delusion was removed, he woke up from his day-dreaming and realised his true potentials. His growing to a colossus size is a metaphor for his stupendous abilities and astounding potentials that no one else could match.

Let us apply some imaginative skill intelligently, and then we can easily visualise what may have actually happened on that occasion. Remember: Hanuman was the 'son of the wind-god', and like a balloon filled with air his body could easily expand to a huge size. It was a necessary device devised to accomplish the task at hand—there was the need to cross the surface of the ocean, which means, in the absence of any other means of transport such as a ship or a bridge, one would have to 'fly or glide or cruise across the surface of the water' like a bird or an airplane. A hot-air balloon would also do the same thing!

So Hanuman did a bit of Yoga exercise: he held his breath within his body so that it expanded; the trapped air got heated as well, allowing him to rise from the ground and become afloat. Then with a little help from a favourable wind, he literally would glide across the surface of the water of the ocean! And since he was the 'son of the wind-god', things would easily be manoeuvred by the latter in his son's favour so that he can comfortably sail in the air to reach Lanka.

After all, it was in the interest of the Wind-God to do his might, and the best as much as he can at this crucial point of time, when the mission of eliminating the demons had reached a critical juncture. For, failure of being able to reach Lanka and trace Sita would mean that the whole master-plan of Lord Ram devised to help the gods themselves would come tumbling down like a house of cards, and then the gods themselves would be held responsible for the disaster.

In Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 16-21 we read the interesting way how Jamvant inspired Hanuman to act. Here it is:

Verse nos. 16-17: Saying this, Jamvant said to Hanuman who was sitting nearby, 'Oh Hanuman! When this great work of honour and fame has presented itself before you, why are you sitting silently and demurring (16) as if you are unaware of anything or reluctant to act? Come forward, oh the brave and immensely valorous and valiant One! You are the son of the wind-god himself, and as famed and renowned in valour and strength as him. Hence, show your prowess, ability, agility, might, power, skill and proficiency today (for this is the moment for which you and the rest of us had been waiting for so long, to serve Lord Ram, and make ourselves fortunate and our lives fulfilled). Rise to the occasion and step forward! (17).

18-19: The great Wind-God has produced you (i.e. given birth to you) to do the work of Lord Sri Ram. At the time of your birth, seeing the early morning rising sun and thinking it to be a ripe fruit, you had leapt 500 Yojans ($8 \times 500 = 4000$ miles) in the sky to grab it as part of your childhood playful activity, and had fallen back on the earth after that mighty leap (18-19).

20-21: Therefore, who is there who can ever describe your strength, valour and bravery? Oh the righteous and noble One. Stand up and come to the front. Do this job of Lord Ram, and be the protector of our lives'¹ (20).

Hearing these encouraging and inspiring words of Jamavant, Hanuman was delighted and felt very pleased and motivated. He roared like a lion, and his shrill cry shook the universe (21).

{¹Jamvant motivated Hanuman by these inspiring words of encouragement: "If you could leap 500 Yojans when still a child, why can't you now leap merely 100 Yojans when you are grown up and abler? Come, come; step forward and show your true mettle. Why do you feel shy when the time has come to be brave and showcase

your powers, prowess and abilities? Come, come; you are a great and illustrious son of the equally great and illustrious wind-god; so you must remember to behave in a way that would make your father extremely proud of you, and not ashamed! You would not only make your father feel happy and proud of you but you will also get the eternal credit of saving the lives of all of us as well as serving Lord Ram who is a manifested form of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being himself. Your name and fame would become eternal like no one else's has ever been; you will endear yourself not only to Lord Ram but to all other devotees of the Lord as well as to the entire community of monkeys and bears who now look up to you as their saviour. So get up cheerfully and get cracking!"}}

कनक बरन तन तेज बिराजा । मानहुँ अपर गिरिन्ह कर राजा ॥ ७ ॥
 सिंहनाद करि बारहिं बारा । लीलहिं नाघउँ जलनिधि खारा ॥ ८ ॥
 सहित सहाय रावनहि मारी । आनउँ इहाँ त्रिकूट उपारी ॥ ९ ॥
 जामवंत मैं पूँछउँ तोही । उचित सिखावनु दीजहु मोही ॥ १० ॥

kanaka barana tana tēja birājā. mānahum̐ apara girinha kara rājā. 7.
 simhanāda kari bārahim̐ bārā. līlahim̐ nāgha'um̐ jalanidhi khārā. 8.
 sahita sahāya rāvanahi mārī. āna'um̐ ihām̐ trikūṭa upārī. 9.
 jāmavanta mair̐ pūṁcha'um̐ tōhī. ucita sikhāvanu dījahu mōhī. 10.

[Now we read how wonderful and wondrous Hanuman looked in his gigantic form.]
 The body of Hanuman was of a golden hue; it glowed radiantly. He appeared to be a 'king amongst the mountains'. [To wit, he reminded the beholder of Mt. Sumeru, the holy golden mountain where the gods live.] (7)

He repeatedly roared like a lion, saying that he would devour the salty ocean or cross it as instructed to do.

[He could also have meant: "I will drink this ocean if it does not allow me to cross it!"] (8)

And I can and I would kill Ravana together with all his kith and kin and those who help him, and then uproot the mountain named Trikoot (over which Lanka was established) and bring it here. (9)

Jamvant—I am asking you what to do; please give me an appropriate advice.' (10)

एतना करहु तात तुम्ह जाई । सीतहि देखि कहहु सुधि आई ॥ ११ ॥
 तब निज भुज बल राजिवनैना । कौतुक लागि संग कपि सेना ॥ १२ ॥

ētanā karahu tāta tumha jā'ī. sītahi dēkhi kahahu sudhi ā'ī. 11.
 taba nija bhuja bala rājivanainā. kautuka lāgi saṅga kapi sēnā. 12.

Jamvant replied, ‘My dear (tāta). Do only this much—go and see (meet) Sita, give her the message (vouchsafed by Lord Ram to you), tell her about the developments here, and then come back. (11)

Then the lotus-eyed Lord (“rājivanainā”; i.e. Lord Ram) would finish the task successfully by employing the strength of his own arms, yet for the sake of sport he would take along with him the army of Kapis (monkeys chiefly, but also including the bears) for the job.

[To wit, as soon as the whereabouts of Sita are known, Lord Ram would go himself and use the strength of his own arms to free her. However, just to give us honour as well as an opportunity to enjoy the game of hunting, as it were, he would take our army of monkeys and bears along.] (12)

छं०. कपि सेन संग सँघारि निसिचर रामु सीतहि आनिहैं । १ ।
 त्रैलोक पावन सुजसु सुर मुनि नारदादि बखानिहैं ॥ २ ॥
 जो सुनत गावत कहत समुझत परम पद नर पावई । ३ ।
 रघुबीर पद पाथोज मधुकर दास तुलसी गावई ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

kapi sēna saṅga saṁghāri nisicara rāmu sītahi ānihaiṁ. 1.
 trailōka pāvana sujasu sura muni nāradādi bakhānihaiṁ. 2.
 jō sunata gāvata kahata samujhata parama pada nara pāva'ī. 3.
 raghubīra pada pāthōja madhukara dāsa tulasī gāva'ī. 4.

Taking along the army of Kapis, Lord Ram would slay the demons, and bring back Sita. (Chanda line no. 1)

Verily indeed, the Gods and sage Narad would sing the marvels of this marvelous and glorious story for all times to come, hearing of which would purify all the three divisions of the world (i.e. the heaven, the earth, and the nether world).

[To wit, all those who listen to this glorious and magnificent story that describes the adventures of Lord Ram by which he freed Sita from the clutches of the demons, and in the process eliminated them as they had become a thorn for the gods and a painful scourge for mother earth, would feel exhilarated and spiritually fulfilled.] (Chanda line no. 2)

Hearing, singing and reciting, preaching and narrating, as well as understanding the true meaning and spiritual import of this glorious story, humans would be able to attain the final destination of the soul, which is to attain beatitude, felicity and eternal bliss.

[To wit, by carefully listening to, soulfully singing, studies and explains to others the subtle meaning and spiritual significance of this wonderful story of Lord Ram so that it is fully understood and all doubts regarding it are removed—if this happens then the attentive listener, the singer, the student, the preacher, the narrator or the teacher—all those desirous of attaining liberation and deliverance from the miseries of life in this mortal world, would certainly and surely attain the supreme state of blessedness.] (Chanda line no. 3)

It is the same nectar-like story that takes a creature to an exalted state of existence that Tuslidas is singing, and he enjoys it like a bee would enjoy drinking nectar of the lotus flower. (Chanda line no. 4)

दो०. भव भेषज रघुनाथ जसु सुनहिं जे नर अरु नारि ।

तिन्ह कर सकल मनोरथ सिद्ध करहिं त्रिसिरारि ॥ ३० (क) ॥

dōhā.

bhava bhēṣaja raghunātha jasu sunahim jē nara aru nāri.

tinha kara sakala manōratha sid'dha karahim trisirāri. 30 (a).

The story that narrates the glories, the divinity and the holiness of Lord Ram is like a remedy for the disease symbolized by the endless cycle of transmigration that is so typical of this mortal, gross and material world¹.

Those men and women who listen to it with faith, devotion and attention, all their desires and wishes are fulfilled by Lord Ram who is also known by the name of Trishirari (“trisirāri”—meaning the Lord who had slayed the demon Trishira)². (Doha no. 30-a)

[Note—¹In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 113—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 114; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 122; (b) Sundar Kand, (iv) Doha no. 60; (c) Uttar Kand, (v) Doha no. 126 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 129; (vii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 130.

²Lord Ram had slayed the demon Trishira along with his other two brothers Khar and Dushan when they attacked the Lord at Panchavati. Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, 1st Chanda line no. 4, and 2nd Chanda line no. 8 that precede Doha no. 20.]

सो०. नीलोत्पल तन स्याम काम कोटि सोभा अधिक ।

सुनिअ तासु गुन ग्राम जासु नाम अघ खग बधिक ॥ ३० (ख) ॥

sōraṭhā.

nīlōṭpala tana syāma kāma kōṭi sōbhā adhika.

sunī'a tāsu guna grāma jāsū nāma agha khaga badhika. 30 (b).

The Lord (i.e. Lord Ram) whose body has the colour of a blue lotus flower, and who is more beauteous and bewitchingly charming than even a thousand Kamdeos (who is the patron deity of beauty and charm) taken together¹—let us listen to the divine glories and stories related to that Lord Ram's holiness whose name² is so powerful

that it can eliminate all sins and their frightening evil consequences as easily as a hunter would hunt and kill a wild animal. (Sorth no. 30-b)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 146; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 243—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 244; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 316; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 1-10 that precede Doha no. 327.

²The stupendous powers and the profound mystical abilities of Lord Ram's holy name have been enumerated in Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 28; and referred to in its (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 130.]

[PAUSE 23 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

इति श्रीमद्रामचरितमानसे सकलकलिकलुषविध्वंसने
चतुर्थः सोपानः समाप्तः ।
(किष्किन्धाकाण्ड समाप्त)

iti śrīmadrāmacaritamānasē sakalakalikaluṣavidhvansanē
caturthaḥ sōpānaḥ samāptaḥ.
(end of kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa)

---To be continued in Volume no. 5, Ram Charit Manas, Canto 5, Sundar Kand ---

About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

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The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

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(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) 'Dohawali'; (2) 'Parvati Mangal'; (3) 'Kavitawali'; (4) 'Janki Mangal'; (5) 'Ram Lala Nahachu'; (6) 'Geetawali Ramayan'; (7) 'Vairagya Sandipani'; (8) 'Vinai Patrika'; (9) 'Barvai Ramayan'.

(A-3) A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', otherwise also known as the "Ramayana" according to Goswami Tulsidas. My English version of this Book is comprehensive and an elaborate one, as it runs into many thousands of pages that endeavour to explain each single verse of the Book 'Ram Charit Manas' in fine detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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(A-5) (i) English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
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