Hindi / English / Gujarati

गीतावली

महाकाव्य

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

ōṁ
śrī sītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

गीतावली

Gītāvalī

बालकाण्ड

Bālakāṇḍa

बधाई

राग आसावरी

(1/1)

आजु सुदिन सुभ घरी सुहाई।
रूप–सील–गुन–धाम राम नृप–भवन प्रगट भए आई।। 1।।
अति पुनीत मधुमास, लगन–ग्रह–बार–जोग–समुदाई।
हरषवन्त चर–अचर, भूमिसुर–तनरुह पुलक जनाई।। 2।।
वरषहिं बिबुध–निकर कुसुमावलि, नभ दुंदुभी बजाई।
कौसल्यादि मातु मन हरषित, यह सुख बरनि न जाई।। 3।।
सुनि दसरथ सुत–जनम लिये सब गुरुजन बिप्र बोलाई।
बेद–बिहित करि क्रिया परम सुचि, आनँद उर न समाई।। 4।।
सदन बेद–धुनि करत मधुर मुनि, बहु बिधि बाज बधाई।

पुरबासिन्ह प्रिय–नाथ–हेतु निज–निज संपदा लुटाई।। 5।।
मनि–तोरन, बहु केतुपताकनि, पुरी रुचिर करि छाई।
मागध–सूत द्वार बंदीजन जहँ तहँ करत बड़ाई।। 6।।
सहज सिंगार किये बनिता चलीं मंगल बिपुल बनाई।
गावहिं देहिं असीस मुदित, चिर जिवौ तनय सुखदाई।। 7।।
बीथिन्ह कुंकुम–कीच, अरगजा अगर अबीर उड़ाई।
नाचहिं पुर–नर–नारि प्रेम भरि देहदसा बिसराई।। 8।।
अमित धेनु–गज–तुरग–बसन–मनि, जातरूप अधिकाई।
देत भूप अनुरूप जाहि जोइ, सकल सिद्धि गृह आई।। 9।।
सुखी भए सुर–संत–भूमिसुर, खलगन–मन मलिनाई।
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जो सुखसिंधु–सकृत–सीकर तें सिव–बिरंचि–प्रभुताई।
सोइ सुख अवध उमँगि रह्यो दस दिसि, कौन जतन कहौं गाई।। 11।।
जे रघुबीर–चरन–चितंक, तिन्हकी गति प्रगट दिखाई।
अबिरल अमल अनूप भगति दृढ़ तुलसिदास तब पाई।। 12।।

Badhā'ī

rāga āsāvarī

(1/1)

āju sudina subha gharī suhā'ī.
rūpa-sīla-guna-dhāma rāma nr̥pa-bhavana pragaṭa bha'ē ā'ī.. 1..
ati punīta madhumāsa, lagana-graha-bāra-jōga-samudā'ī.
haraṣavanta cara-acara, bhūmisura-tanaruha pulaka janā'ī.. 2..
varaṣahiṁ bibudha-nikara kusumāvali, nabha dundubhī bajā'ī.
kausalyādi mātu mana haraṣita, yaha sukha barani na jā'ī.. 3..
suni dasaratha suta-janama liyē saba gurujana bipra bōlā'ī.
bēda-bihita kari kriyā parama suci, ānam̆da ura na samā'ī.. 4..
sadana bēda-dhuni karata madhura muni, bahu bidhi bāja badhā'ī.
purabāsinha priya-nātha-hētu nija-nija sampadā luṭā'ī.. 5..
mani-tōrana, bahu kētupatākani, purī rucira kari chā'ī.
māgadha-sūta dvāra bandījana jaham̆ taham̆ karata baṛā'ī.. 6..
sahaja siṁgāra kiyē banitā calīṁ maṁgala bipula banā'ī.
gāvahiṁ dēhiṁ asīsa mudita, cira jivau tanaya sukhadā'ī.. 7..
bīthinha kuṁkuma-kīca, aragajā agara abīra uṛā'ī.
nācahiṁ pura-nara-nāri prēma bhari dēhadasā bisarā'ī.. 8..
amita dhēnu-gaja-turaga-basana-mani, jātarūpa adhikā'ī.
dēta bhūpa anurūpa jāhi jō'i, sakala sid'dhi gr̥ha ā'ī.. 9..
sukhī bha'ē sura-santa-bhūmisura, khalagana-mana malinā'ī.

sabai sumana bikasata rabi nikasata, kumuda-bipina bilakhā'ī.. 10..
jō sukhasindhu-sakr̥ta-sīkara tēṁ siva-biran̄ci-prabhutā'ī.
sō'i sukha avadha umam̃gi rahyō dasa disi, kauna jatana kahauṁ gā'ī.. 11..
jē raghubīra-carana-citaṅka, tinhakī gati pragaṭa dikhā'ī.
abirala amala anūpa bhagati dr̥ṛha tulasidāsa taba pā'ī.. 12..

(This is verse of a congratulatory nature, describing joys at the birth of Lord Ram)

Verse no. 1/1—Today is a very holy, auspicious and happy day, and the time is also very auspicious and pleasant. Today Lord Ram, who is an embodiment of beauty, noble conduct and such other virtues of the highest dimension, has taken a divine birth in the palace of king Dasrath (1).

It is the pious and holy month of Chaitra, and all the stars, the day of the week and the astrological signs etc. are compatible. All living beings are full of joy and cheer, and the Brahmins are enthusiastic (2).

The Gods are blowing their trumpets and showering flowers from the sky to celebrate the happy occasion. Kaushalya and other mothers are also extremely happy. I (Tulsidas) cannot describe this happiness in limited words (3).

On hearing the birth of a son, King Dasrath called all the priests, elders and Brahmins, and performed all the rituals as prescribed by the Vedas (4).

Saints, bards and priests are chanting various Veda-mantra in the royal palace. Countless melodious songs of praises are being sung, and the citizens are donating liberally (5).

Many gates studded with gems, and countless flags, buntings and banners have been erected to decorate the city. At all the places, professional singers are singing the praises of the King and the Lord (6).

The women-folk are arriving in their best of attires, and blessing the child for a happy and prosperous future (7).

Coloured powder is being sprinkled liberally on the streets. The citizen are dancing and making merry; they have lost all awareness (inhibitions) of their bodies (8).

King Dasrath is giving away (as alms and charity) numerous garments, elephants, horses, cows, gems/jewels and gold etc. He is giving according to the needs of the recipient. (It appears that) All the ‘Siddhis’ (achievements, attainments and successes along with their patron Gods and Goddesses) have come to his residence in a personified form (9).

At this time, the Gods, the saints and Brahmins are extremely delighted, whereas the wicked ones are remorseful even as all the flowers bloom at the sight of the sun but the cluster of lotuses shrivel and wither at its sight (10).

A drop from the ocean of eternal supreme spiritual bliss has given Shiva and Brahma their exalted stature in the hierarchy of creation. The same ocean (a drop of which provides bliss and happiness to Shiva and Brahma) is itself heaving and swelling over enthusiastically in all the ten directions (i.e. everywhere) in Ayodhya on the day Lord Ram took birth there. How can I (Tulsidas) describe it by singing its glories in words that have their own limitations? (11).

The condition (of ecstasy, exultation, euphoria, exhilaration, rejoicing, extreme delight and merriment) of those who remember (i.e., have their attention transfixed in) the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram is evident here. Oh Lord! Tulsidas has been fortunate enough to have also received the divine nectar in the form of having an eternal, abiding and pure form of devotion for you. [And this is why he, i.e. Tulsidas, is also extremely joyful and full of delight at your birth in Ayodhya like the gods in the heaven, and the fortunate citizens of Ayodhya on earth.] (12).

[Note—We will see in the course of our reading that Tulsidas has fluently used the present tense in his narrative. It gives us the impression that he was actually witnessing the events as they happened. But it must be remembered that the events occurred during Treta Yug which was thousands of years before Tulisdas was even born. The point of the matter is this that the saint had reached such a higher state of transcendental existence that his Spirit could travel back in time and space to that era about which he is writing. Tulsidas was no ordinary poet; he was a blessed soul especially empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill some divine work. He also had had a Darshan (divine sight) of his beloved Lord Ram as well as of Hanuman, another great devotee of the Lord and an incarnate Lord Rudra (Shiva).

When the Lord employed Tulsidas to become a scribe for him it is natural that the Lord must have arranged for necessary instruments for his writings so as to make them sanctified and bear the stamp of authenticity. So, when Tulsidas picked up his pen to write, he was possessed of the Holy Spirit, and the writing was done not by an ordinary man but by the Holy Spirit itself through the body of this particular man named Tulsidas.

When he sat down to pen his writings on Lord Ram and his times, Tulsidas must have closed his eyes in deep meditation, and in this contemplative state of the consciousness he must have actually seen the events unfold before the eyes of his mind and sub-conscious in vivid detail. Naturally therefore, what he wrote was not a wild fascination and an imagination of a poetic mind but a faithful narration of events that happened long long time ago.

Remember, what we are dealing with in this story is not something related to visible matter and to the material world of things and substances, but to the divine transcendental world of the Holy Spirit, a world that transcends time and space and which is beyond our comprehension. The body is perishable like the world of matter and material things, but the Spirit is imperishable like the wind and the sky. Just as it is not possible for the gross body to go everywhere it likes, the grosser aspect of the mind is not able to fathom the reach of the Spirit. Again, just as it is very easy for the subtle wind to go wherever it wants and the subtler aspect of the same wind in the form of air to be present everywhere without being noticed, the Spirit too is present everywhere at all times. The only difference between an ordinary man and a realised man is that while the former believes only in things that his grosser mind that relates it's self to the gross body allows him believe, the latter type of man rises above the mundane and observes everything from the plain of the Spirit, a plain that relates to the transcendental consciousness, and an existence that is not moribund and shackled to this world.

So we must not be sceptic about something simply because we can't understand it or have not experienced it or can't even imagine of. For instance, could any one imagine about the internet and mobile phone say even fifty years back? Even today, if someone goes to some tribal area on the mountain or the hinterland that is still not reached by modern technology and development, and talk with people living there in the jargon of the internet and the mobile telephony, will they understand? But does their not being able to understand mean that the speaker is saying a lie? When the first human voice was transmitted across the wire, or when the first electric bulb created man-made light, or when the first picture was seen on a screen of the television set sitting on a desk—would anyone in some country where this idea had not reached would believe another if he told the former that this happens?

The idea is, Tulsidas actually saw on the events unfold on the canvas of his mind and sub-conscious because he was a realised and an empowered soul, a man who lived in a state of transcendental existence of consciousness. For such souls, nothing is impossible; nothing is too far-fetched.]

राग जैतश्री

(1/2)

सहेली सुनु सोहिलो रे!
सोहिलो, सोहिलो, सोहिलो, सोहिलो सब जग आज।
पूत सपूत कौसिला जायो, अचल भयो कुल–राज।। 1।।
चैत चारु नौमी तिथि सितपख, मध्य–गगन–गत भानु।
नखत जोग ग्रह लगन भले दिन मंगल–मोद–निधान।। 2।।
ब्योम, पवन, पावक, जल, थल, दिसि दसहु सुमंगल–मूल।
सुर दुंदुभी बजावहिं, गावहिं, हरषहिं, बरषहिं फूल।। 3।।
भूपति–सदन सोहिलो सुनि बाजैं गहगहे निसान।
जहँ–तहँ सजहिं कलस धुज चामर तोरन केतु बितान।। 4।।
सींचि सुगंध रचैं चौकें गृह–आँगन गली–बजार।
दल फल फूल दूब दधि रोचन, घर–घर मंगलचार।। 5।।
सुनि सानंद उठे दसस्यंदन सकल समाज समेत।
लिये बोलि गुर–सचिव–भूमिसुर, प्रमुदित चले निकेत।। 6।।
जातकरम करि, पूजि पितर–सुर, दिये महिदेवन दान।
तेहि औसर सुत तीनि प्रगट भए मंगल, मुद, कल्यान।। 7।।
आनँद महँ आनंद अवध, आनंद बधावन होइ।
उपमा कहौं चारि फलकी, मोहिं भलो न कहै कबि कोइ।। 8।।
सजि आरती बिचित्र थार कर जूथ–जूथ बरनारि।
गावत चलीं बधावन लै लै निज–निज कुल अनुहारि।। 9।।
असही दुसही मरहु मनहि मन, बैरिन बढ़हु बिषाद।
नृपसुत चारि चारु चिरजीवहु संकर–गौरि–प्रसाद।। 10।।
लै लै ढोव प्रजा प्रमुदित चले भाँति–भाँति भरि भार।
करहिं गान करि आन रायकी, नाचहिं राजदुवार।। 11।।
गज, रथ, बाजि, बाहिनी, बाहन सबनि सँवारे साज।
जनु रतिपति ऋतुपति कोसलपुर बिहरत सहित समाज।। 12।।
घंटा–घंटि, पखाउज–आउज, झाँझ, बेनु डफ–तार।
नूपुर धुनि, मंजीर मनोहर, कर कंकन–झनकार।। 13।।
नृत्य करहिं नट–नटी, नारि–नर अपने–अपने रंग।

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नभ प्रसून झरि, पुरी कोलाहल, भइ मन भावति भीर।। 16।।
बड़ी बयस बिधि भयो दाहिनो सुर–गुर–आसिरबाद।
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रानिन दिए बसन–मनि–भूषन, राजा सहन–भँडार।
मागध–सूत–भाट–नट–जाचक जहँ तहँ करहिं कबार।। 21।।
बिप्रबधू सनमानि सुआसिनि, जन–पुरजन पहिराइ।
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को कहि सकै अवधबासिनको प्रेम–प्रमोद–उछाह।
सादर सेस–गनेस–गिरीसहिं अगम निगम अवगाह।। 24।।
सिव–बिरंचि–मुनि–सिद्ध प्रसंसत, बड़े भूप के भाग।
तुलसिदास प्रभु सोहिलो गावत उमगि–उमगि अनुराग।। 25।।

rāga jaitaśrī

(1/2)

sahēlī sunu sōhilō rē!
sōhilō, sōhilō, sōhilō, sōhilō saba jaga āja.
pūta sapūta kausilā jāyō, acala bhayō kula-rāja.. 1..
caita cāru naumī tithi sitapakha, madhya-gagana-gata bhānu.
nakhata jōga graha lagana bhalē dina maṅgala-mōda-nidhāna.. 2..
byōma, pavana, pāvaka, jala, thala, disi dasahu sumaṅgala-mūla.
sura dundubhī bajāvahiṁ, gāvahiṁ, haraṣahiṁ, baraṣahiṁ phūla.. 3..
bhūpati-sadana sōhilō suni bājaiṁ gahagahē nisāna.
jahaṁ̐-tahaṁ̐ sajahiṁ kalasa dhuja cāmara tōrana kētu bitāna.. 4..
sīn̄ci sugandha racaiṁ caukēṁ gṛha-āṁ̐gana galī-bajāra.
dala phala phūla dūba dadhi rōcana, ghara-ghara maṅgalacāra.. 5..
suni sānanda uṭhē dasasyandana sakala samāja samēta.
liyē bōli gura-saciva-bhūmisura, pramudita calē nikēta.. 6..
jātakarama kari, pūji pitara-sura, diyē mahidēvana dāna.

tēhi ausara suta tīni pragaṭa bha'ē maṅgala, muda, kalyāna.. 7..
ānaṁda mahaṁ ānanda avadha, ānanda badhāvana hō'i.
upamā kahauṁ cāri phalakī, mōhiṁ bhalō na kahai kabi kō'i.. 8..
saji āratī bicitra thāra kara jūtha-jūtha baranāri.
gāvata calīṁ badhāvana lai lai nija-nija kula anuhāri.. 9..
asahī dusahī marahu manahi mana, bairina baṛhahu biṣāda.
nṛpasuta cāri cāru cirajīvahu saṅkara-gauri-prasāda.. 10..
lai lai ḍhōva prajā pramudita calē bhāṁti-bhāṁti bhari bhāra.
karahiṁ gāna kari āna rāyakī, nācahiṁ rājaduvāra.. 11..
gaja, ratha, bāji, bāhinī, bāhana sabani saṁvārē sāja.
janu ratipati ṛtupati kōsalapura biharata sahita samāja.. 12..
ghaṇṭā-ghaṇṭi, pakhā'uja-ā'uja, jhāṁjha, bēnu ḍapha-tāra.
nūpura dhuni, maṉjīra manōhara, kara kaṅkana-jhanakāra.. 13..
nṛtya karahiṁ naṭa-naṭī, nāri-nara apanē-apanē raṅga.
manahuṁ madana-rati bibidha bēṣa dhari naṭata sudēsa suḍhaṅga.. 14..
ughaṭahiṁ chanda-prabandha, gīta-pada, rāga-tāna-bandhāna.
suni kinnara gandharaba sarāhata, bithakē haiṁ, bibudha-bimāna.. 15..
kuṅkuma-agara-aragajā chirakahiṁ, bharahiṁ gulāla-abīra.
nabha prasūna jhari, purī kōlāhala, bha'i mana bhāvati bhīra.. 16..
baṛī bayasa bidhi bhayō dāhinō sura-gura-āsirabāda.
dasaratha-sukṛta-sudhāsāgara saba umagē haiṁ taji marajāda.. 17..
brāhmaṇa bēda, bandi biradāvali, jaya-dhuni, maṅgala-gāna.
nikasata paiṭhata lōga parasapara bōlata lagi lagi kāna.. 18..
bārahiṁ mukutā-ratana rājamahiṣī pura-sumukhi samāna.
bagarē nagara nichāvari manigana janu juvāri-java-dhāna.. 19..
kīnhi bēdabidhi lōkarīti nṛpa, mandira parama hulāsa.
kausalyā, kaikayī, sumitrā, rahasa-bibasa ranivāsa.. 20..
rānina di'ē basana-mani-bhūṣana, rājā sahana-bhaṁḍāra.
māgadha-sūta-bhāṭa-naṭa-jācaka jahaṁ tahaṁ karahiṁ kabāra.. 21..
biprabadhū sanamāni su'āsini, jana-purajana pahirā'i.
sanamānē avanīsa, asīsata īsa-ramēsa manā'i.. 22..
aṣṭasid'dhi, navanid'dhi, bhūti saba bhūpati bhavana kamāhiṁ.
sama'u-samāja rāja dasarathakō lōkapa sakala sihāhiṁ.. 23..
kō kahi sakai avadhabāsinakō prēma-pramōda-uchāha.
sādara sēsa-ganēsa-girīsahiṁ agama nigama avagāha.. 24..
siva-biraṁci-muni-sid'dha prasansata, baṛē bhūpa kē bhāga.
tulasidāsa prabhu sōhilō gāvata umagi-umagi anurāga.. 25..

Lord Ram's Birth and Celebrations

Verse no. 1/2—(One woman of the city addresses her companion and says—)

'Oh Dear friend! Listen to the sound of the congratulatory songs called 'Sohila' ("Sōhilā") that are being sung throughout the city (of Ayodhya) and in the world today. [That is, there is rejoicing, celebrations and merriment everywhere in all corners of the world. The reason is this—] Today, Kaushalya (the worldly mother of Lord Ram)[1] has given birth to a noble and worthy son who has bestowed upon her family (of the great king Raghu and his descendants) as well as the kingdom (of Ayodhya) rarest of rare fame and honour of stability and eternity (1).

[[1]Lord Ram was an incarnate Supreme Being who took the form of a human being out of his own free will to serve some divine mandate for the larger interest of creation. It was to eliminate the tyrannical demons, and for this purpose it became necessary for the Lord to assume a human form due to a variety of reasons. This being the case, the Lord took birth in the household of king Dasrath and his queen Kaushalya of Ayodhya. This entire episode, viz. the reason for the Supreme Lord becoming a human, and his taking birth in the household of Dasrath and Kaushalya have been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 122—to Doha no. 192.]

Today, the day is 'Chaitra Shukla Navmi' (the ninth day of the 1st fortnight of the waxing moon in the month of Chaitra, roughly March-April). The sun is waxing at its brightest best and shining brightly with all its splendour in the mid-day sky overhead. All the stars, constellations, planets, signs of the zodiac, et-all (i.e. the various combinations and permutations of the birth signs as marked in the horoscope) are very auspicious and favourable, and the day verily is an abode (i.e. treasury, full, having an abundance) of auspiciousness, joy and happiness (2).

The sky, air, fire, water and earth (i.e. all the basic 5 elements that constitute this creation) along with the ten corners of the world[2] have become a root of all auspiciousness and good tidings. The Gods are exceedingly exhilarated and euphoric, sounding their trumpets enthusiastically, dancing merrily in delight, and showering flowers in adoration and to celebrate this glorious occasion (of the birth of Lord Ram) (3).

[[2]The ten corners of the world are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.]

Hearing the celebratory songs of felicitations being sung vociferously in the palace of king Dasrath (the worldly father of Lord Ram), the sound of kettle-drums have erupted in all the directions as if on cue, while at all the places ceremonial pitchers, flags, banners, buntings, arch-ways, gate-ways, platforms, lanes etc. are being decorated and got ready for the mass celebrations (in the city of Ayodhya) (4).

The houses, court-yards, lanes and markets are being sprayed with water and other perfumes fragranted with the sweetest extracts of choicest of herbs. Colourful squares (which are made during ceremonial worships and happy occasions) are being magnificently decorated and readied for the purpose of the celabrations, while auspicious prayers (for invoking good omens, and for blessings of gods and stars) are being said in every household, complete with all the paraphernalia needed for such prayers, such as fresh leaves (of the mango tree or basil plant), flowers that are fragrant and colourful and of the best in quality of the season, ripe and succulent fruits of a wide variety, blades of green grass and reed used to sprinkle water for

purification during the offering of prayers, fresh curd and 'Roli' (which is a powdered mixture consisting of ground turmeric and used on all auspicious occasions) (5).'

Hearing the wonderful and pleasant-to-hear news of the birth of a son, king Dasrath stood up in joy unbound, merry like no measure, excitement spilling over the brim, and as a fulfilled man of immense cheer. He was joined in welcoming the great news by his courtiers, ministers and other high officials of the kingdom. Then, having summoned his Guru (preceptor and royal priest, sage Vasistha), other ministers and the prominent Brahmins (the learned and senior residents of the city), the king left for the palace[3]. (6)

[[3]The 'palace' where the queens lived was usually separate from that of the king and his court. So, when the news of the birth of a son arrived to the king, he was perhaps attending his court at that time as it is obvious because he was accompanied by an assortment of ministers and courtiers. If he would have been in his personal chambers, this wouldn't have been the case and he would have been alone.]

Once the king reached the palace of the queen where he saw his son (Lord Ram), he performed the necessary rituals that a father is expected to perform after the birth of a child in the family, worshipping his ancestors and Gods, and giving liberal alms to Brahmins. At almost the same time, three more sons were born, and they too (like the first son) represented fruition of auspiciousness, joy and welfare (for the entire creation)[4] (7).

[[4]The other three sons were Bharat, Shatrughan and Laxman. The first two were born to Kaikeyi, and the third to Sumitra who were the other two queens of king Dasrath besides his chief queen Kaushalya who gave birth to Lord Ram, the eldest of the four brothers. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 192 which tells about the birth of Lord Ram, (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 195 that tells about the birth of the other three sons, and (iii) Doha no. 197 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that tell us about their names and glorious virtues in brief.]

(Tulsidas says—) 'Today, at Ayodhya, there is immense happiness, exhilaration and euphoria even as congratulatory and ceremonial songs are being sung in all the four directions (i.e. everywhere in the city).

If I dare to compare the four noble sons of king Dasrath to the legendary four fruits that a man gets as a reward for all his noble deeds and a life spent living righteously, then no bard or expert poet would call me competent poet and narrator of events[5]. ' (8)

[[5]The four fruits are the following—(i) 'Artha', meaning acquisition of prosperity, wealth and well-being; (ii) 'Dharma', meaning fame that accompanies righteousness, probity and propriety in public life, having a noble conduct and wise thought; (iii) 'Kaam', which means fulfilment of desires; and (iv) 'Moksha', which means emancipation and salvation of the soul and the final liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death.

These are the rewards that an upright man of righteousness and truthfulness gets in his life. Each of these four rewards has its own meaning and importance, and as is obvious the best in the four is of course 'Moksha', and it is represented by Lord Ram. But if this is the allusion then it would be insulting to the virtues and glories of the other three brothers who were all equal in every respect. King Dasrath too loved

them equally. So therefore, to compare the four brothers to these four legendary fruits would be a mistake.

Tulsidas says that if he commits such an error, he would be held in low esteem by other poets and bards who would ridicule him for lack of proper sense and wisdom which made him make such a wrong comparison. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 198 wherein it is said that all the four sons of king Dasrath were like personified forms of the essence of the four Vedas, the primary ancient scriptures. Though the Vedas are four in number, they are all equally venerable, no one Veda being of less importance than the other. Likewise, all the four brothers are equally honourable and venerated in the world.]

Trains of women-folk, group after group of them, each holding magnificent platters (or vessels) of wondrous kinds and of multifarious varieties that were in accordance with the tradition for celebrating such occasion in the holder's family, the platters which were richly decorated and were full of materials needed to perform the 'Aarti'[6] of the four children (such as rice grains, red powder, small lamps of clarified butter, flowers, garlands and other items needed for the Aarti), started moving towards the palace joyously, all the while cheerfully singing laudatory and congratulatory songs as they wend their way to the palace (9).

[[6]The Aarti is a ritual where the light from lighted earthen lamps that are filled with butter from cow's milk are shown to an honoured guest as a token of respect and honour. During formal worship, this procedure is followed to show respect to the deity being worshipped. The lamps are arranged on a plate and waved in the front of the object of worship. Here, the womenfolk of Ayodhya welcome their four princes by doing their Aarti.]

(They blessed the children, saying—) 'Those who cannot bear to see the good of these four noble children, those who are jealous of their rise in life and of their acquisition of fame and glory, and instead harbour any kind of malice, ill-will, envy or animosity against them, let such evil ones die and perish as soon as such horrible thoughts come in their hearts and minds. Let those who are inimical and opposed to these children suffer the greatest of ill-fortunes themselves, and let their miseries and agonies go on increasing day by the day. By the grace and blessings of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, let these four beautiful princes have a long, glorious and happy life.' (10).

The citizens (of Ayodhya) started converging towards the palace carrying along with them loads of various types of gifts, and on arrival at the palace gates, they proclaimed the fame of the king (Dasrath) and began to dance and sing in merry abundance, brimming over in exhilaration and joy to celebrate the occasion (11).

The three wings of the army consisting of elephants, chariots and horses got their mounts and decorative paraphernalias ready to participate in the celebrations, and it appeared as if 'Ratipati' (a reference to Kamdeo/cupid, the patron God of charm and love, and the husband of Rati) and 'Ritupati' (the Spring season regarded as the king of seasons)[7] are having a joyful and jolly good merry time in Ayodhya along with their courtiers and companions (12).

[[7]Here, ratipati ṛitupati have been personified. It implies that there is an all pervading emotion of love and affection for the four children, and the atmosphere of the city is so cheerful as if the best of seasons have arrived leading to celebrations and festivities.]

Everywhere there is a reverberation of the sound of bells, big and small, of drums (timbrels and kettle-drums), of cymbals, flutes and tambourines are being heard, while the anklets are jingling, the large cymbals (Manjira) are crashing, and the bracelets with tiny bells (Kankan) attached to them make a tinkling (13).

Male and female acrobats and dancers of the country (kingdom), and men and women (of Ayodhya) are all dancing according to their moods and competence as if Kamdeo/cupid and his consort Rati have assumed various forms, and dancing in different modes and postures according to their wont, their mood and their emotions (14).

Myriad types of poetical compositions having varied lyrics, tunes, beats and rhythms (rāga-tāna-bandhāna), composed in a variety of ways, such as 'Chanda', 'Prabandha', 'Geet', 'Pada' (chanda-prabandha, gīta-pada) etc., are being composed and sung extempore (ughaṭahiṁ). They are so fabulously wonderful and fascinating to hear that even the Gandharvas and Kinnars (heavenly musicians, singers and dancers) as well as the Gods (who are supposed to be expert judges of such things) laud and applaud them. The chariots of the Gods have stood still as the latter hear and appreciate these compositions in amazement (15)

They (the citizens) are celebrating the occasion by either sprinkling 'Kuṅkuma' (saffron), 'Agar' (perfumed powder of aloe wood) and powdered 'Aragajā' (sandalwood), or applying and smearing 'Gulāla' and 'Abīra' (red and pink powder used on auspicious occasions) on each other. Flowers are showering from the sky (being done so by the Gods), and there is a lot of joyous commotion in the city even as an enthusiastic crowd of jolly citizens has assembled to celebrate and rejoice (16).

By the blessings of his Guru (Vasistha) and the grace of Gods, the Creator has become extremely favourable and kindly inclined towards king Dasrath in his old age[8]. At this time it seems that all the good deeds of Dasrath (sukṛta) have rewarded him and transformed themselves in an ocean of good fortunes, happiness, joy and bliss that has swelled into a symbolic 'ocean of nectar' (sudhāsāgara) that appears to heave with high waves and break all barriers and inhibitions (umagē haiṁ taji marajāda) (17).

[[8]Dasrath had become old and was worried about not having any son till the time Lord Ram and his three brothers were born. It so happened that one day he was seeing his face in a mirror when he noticed strands of grey hair. He realised that old age was creeping upon him but still he had no heir to the throne and the kingdom. So he took council of his Guru, sage Vasistha, who advised him to call sage Sringi and perform a fire sacrifice to beget sons and heirs to the throne. The king carried out the advise forthwith, and the Fire God emerged from the sacrificial pit with a cup of a sweet pudding. The Fire God told the king that this pudding has the mystical power that would impregnate the queens so they would conceive and bring forth sons. Hence, the king should distribute it to his queens as per his choice. The king did as ordered, and thus were born the four brothers, Lord Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. This episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 189—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 190.]

The Brahmins are singing the sacred hymns of the Vedas, while the royal bards are singing the fame and glories of the royal family of Dasrath, proclaiming its greatness and adulating it in flowery language behoving expert bards and minstrels even as they sing other auspicious songs alongside that are the need of the hour on such auspicious occasions. There is such a loud chorus of singing and adulation (besides of course the sound of musical instruments being played and cheers raised by large groups of citizens) that other people who are going about their official duties and daily chores of life have to bring their ears together to enable them to talk and be heard above the din, the cacophony and the joyous tumult of myriad of sounds that erupted everywhere in the city (18).

The women of the royal household as well as the ordinary women-folk of the city (are so excited and ecstatic that they) are liberally offering pearls and gems and other gifts to others, without distinction about the receiver's stature or standing in the society. The gems and pearls so offered are lying scattered on the ground and the streets of the city as if they were grains of maize, oat or rice! (19).

The Great King (Dasrath), brimming over with extreme happiness and delight, has performed all types of rituals sanctioned by the Vedas and ordained by social traditions (to mark and celebrate the birth of his four sons). At this time, Kaushalaya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra along with the entire household are very exhilarant, euphoric, delightful and thrilled (20).

The queens have donated clothes of all varieties and suitable to all (garments, raiments, robes, vestments) along with an assortment of jewels, ornaments etc., while the king has given treasures (such as silver, gold and other precious things of all sorts and varieties, in addition to whatso other things were asked for by the seekers) as largesse and gifts, liberally giving away alms and making charity to all and sundry. Having benefitted from this royal charity and largesse, the bards and minstrels, their disciples, the dancers, singers and other such performers, as well as the alms-seekers are getting involved in barter or trading their gifts among themselves (21).

The king has honoured (sanamāni) the women-folk of Brahmins (biprabadhū) and other honourable women of the city (su'āsini), as well as all other attendants of his royal household (jana—servants, assistants and all other subordinate staff of the court and the royal household) and the honourable citizens of the kingdom (purajana) by giving them robes of honour, vestments, garments and other clothes (pahirā'i) of all varieties and sorts in accordance to their position and standing in the society. Feeling blessed and fortunate themselves, all of them are invoking the grace of Lords Shiva and Vishnu, and are profusely blessing the king for all manners of good tidings and fortunes (22).

At this time, all the eight Siddhis and the nine Nidhis[9] as well as all other types of great achievements and successes that bestow rare honour, fame and glory to a person have personified themselves (i.e. have assumed a human form) and are strolling leisurely in the king's palace. Seeing this most enviable and rarest of rare honour that has been bestowed upon the honourable king Dasrath, and upon the fortunate crowd of exuberant, cheering and ecstatic citizens who have gathered within and without the

palace, all the Lokpals (the heavenly guardians of the world) are singing their praises and lauding them in glorious terms (23).

[[9]The 8 Siddhis and the 9 Nidhis are the various achievements and successes as well as assets, powers and authority that a person obtains in life making him outstanding.

The eight *Siddhis* are mystical powers which enables a person to accomplishment astounding feats. They are 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 dignified and have gravity 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) 'Paraakram': 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, ready to do the bidding of the person who has this mystical authority.

Sometimes, Paraakramya is replaced by 'Praakaamya' 'प्राकाम्य' which means irresistible will. But they imply the same thing because one obtains victory and glory only when one has an irresistible desire to attain it.

The 9 Nidhis—These are the special assets of rarity that a person possesses. These nine Nidhis may be spiritual or worldly; they may be tangible or intangible. They are obtained as a reward for living a honourable life based on the principles of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety and good conduct and thoughts). In brief they are the following:-

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

Worldly assets—such as gold, silver, diamond, gems such as ruby, sapphire and emerald etc.; kith and kin such as sons, wife, pets and livestock, homestead and farmland, name, fame and majesty etc. These worldly assets are at the micro level

what the Gods possess at the macro level and kept in the custody of Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods.

Celestial assets of the Gods—these are represented by the precious gems stored in the treasury of Kuber, the treasurer of Gods. They are known as Mahapadam, Padam, Sankha, Makar, Kaschap, Mukund, Kund, Neel, and Kharva. Actually these terms are used in ancient mathematics to measure quantity such as units, hundreds, thousands and millions in modern language.

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 being 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.]

Who is able to, or competent enough to, describe the magnitude of surging affection, happiness, pleasure, thrill and excitement that had overwhelmed the citizen of Ayodhya at this point of time? It is beyond the reach of description even of Saraswati (who is the patron goddess of wisdom, speech and knowledge, and therefore is supposed to the most competent in this field), the legendary Sheshnath (the celestial serpent with a thousand hoods, and therefore a thousand tongues with which he could have narrated the happiness of the citizens of Ayodhya)[10], and Lords Ganesh and Shiva (both of who are regarded as the wisest and knowledgable amongst the pantheon of gods). Even the great Vedas cannot fathom or measure them (though they are a repository of all knowledge and epitomes of skillful use of language and grammar, being the primary scriptures) (24).

[[10]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 195.]

Even Lords Shiva and Brahma (the third and the first of the Trinity Gods), great sages and seers as well as the Siddhas (mystics) are appreciating and praising the rarest of rare good fortune and excellent luck of king Dasrath.

Tulsidas says that at this time he too is so overwhelmed with joy and ecstasy, brimming over with exhilaration and excitement and thrill, as he sings auspicious songs (through the means of the verses of Geetawali) to welcome and celebrate the occasion of the advent of the Lord (Sri Ram), and to congratulate the king (Dasrath) for his blessed good fortune and excellent luck (that the Lord chose him to be his worldly parent at the time of his birth on earth) (25).

राग बिलावल

(1/3)

आजु महामंगल कोसलपुर सुनि नृपके सुत चारि भए।
सदन–सदन सोहिलो सोहावनो, नभ अरु नगर–निसान हए।। 1।।
सजि–सजि जान अमर–किंनर–मुनि जानि समय–सम गान ठए।
नाचहिं नभ अपसरा मुदित मन, पुनि–पुनि बरषहिं सुमन–चए।। 2।।
अति सुख बेगि बोलि गुरु भूसुर भूपति भीतर भवन गए।
जातकरम करि कनक, बसन, मनि भूषित सुरभि–समूह दए।। 3।।
दल–फल–फूल, दूब–दधि–रोचन, जुबतिन्ह भरि–भरि थार लए।
गावत चलीं भीर भइ बीथिन्ह, बंदिन्ह बाँकुरे बिरद बए।। 4।।
कनक–कलस, चामर–पताक–धुज, जहँ तहँ बंदनवार नए।
भरहिं अबीर, अरगजा छिरकहिं, सकल लोक एक रंग रए।। 5।।
उमगि चल्यौ आनंद लोक तिहुँ, देत सबनि मंदिर रितए।
तुलसिदास पुनि भरेइ देखियत, रामकृपा चितवनि चितए।। 6।।

rāga bilāvala

(1/3)

āju mahāmaṅgala kōsalapura suni nr̥pakē suta cāri bha'ē.
sadana-sadana sōhilō sōhāvanō, nabha aru nagara-nisāna ha'ē.. 1..
saji-saji jāna amara-kinnara-muni jāni samaya-sama gāna ṭha'ē.
nācahiṁ nabha apasarā mudita mana, puni-puni baraṣahiṁ sumana-ca'ē.. 2..
ati sukha bēgi bōli guru bhūsura bhūpati bhītara bhavana ga'ē.
jātakarama kari kanaka, basana, mani bhūṣita surabhi-samūha da'ē.. 3..
dala-phala-phūla, dūba-dadhi-rōcana, jubatinha bhari-bhari thāra la'ē.
gāvata calīṁ bhīra bha'i bīthinha, bandinha bām̐kurē birada ba'ē.. 4..
kanaka-kalasa, cāmara-patāka-dhuja, jahaṁ̐ tahaṁ̐ bandanavāra na'ē.
bharahiṁ abīra, aragajā chirakahiṁ, sakala lōka ēka raṅga ra'ē.. 5..
umagi calyau ānanda lōka tihuṁ̐, dēta sabani mandira rita'ē.

tulasidāsa puni bharē'i dēkhiyata, rāmakr̥pā citavani cita'ē.. 6..

Celebrations in Ayodhya

Verse no. 1/3—Hearing the news that king Dasrath has been blessed by four sons, there is great rejoicing and festivities in Ayodhya. Auspicious and felicitous songs are being sung in every household, while drums are being sounded in the sky (by the Gods) as well as in the city (by the citizens) (1).

Realising that the time has arrived (for Lord Vishnu to take a birth as Lord Ram in the city of Ayodhya, in the household of king Dasrath), the Gods, Kinnars (celestial singers and dancers; a special kind of demi God having the head of a horse) and great sages have come on their respective vehicles that have been cheerfully decorated for this special occasion. In the sky (the heavens), Apsaras (celestial female dancers in the court of Indra, the king of Gods) are dancing in jubilation, and they are repeatedly showering flowers (on the city below) (2).

The king called his Guru (royal court preceptor, sage Vasistha) and other Brahmins, and together with them he went inside the palace. There, he performed all the necessary religious rites that are associated with child-birth, and then donated lots of gold, clothes, gems and decorated cows to them (i.e. his Guru and other Brahmins) (3).

The women-folk held large plates full of auspicious paraphernalia such as beetle leaves, flowers, coconut and other fruits, fresh blades of grass, curd and Roli (a coloured powder), and started moving towards the palace, merrily singing all the while. This created a huge surge of jubilant crowd in the alleys and by-lanes of the city, while the royal bards and minstrels sung the matchless fame and glory of the king (4).

At random places in the city, here and there and everywhere in between, decorative pitchers and vessels made of gold, artistic whisks of the choisest manes, colourful flags and festive buntings, royal standards and celebratory arches and gateways have been put up. All the citizens have coloured themselves in a universal manner by sprinkling so much Abir (coloured pink powder) and Argaja (sandal-wood powder) at each other that there is a riot of colour on the streets[1] (5).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 195.]

Jubilation and ecstasy have swelled (like a heaving ocean during high tide, with billowing waves that crash into each other) in all the three Lokas (or worlds—terrestrial, subterranean, celestial). The people are so exceedingly exhilarated and happy that they have been liberally giving away anything they could lay their hands upon as gifts and alms to others so much so that their homes have virtually become empty. But Tulsidas says that by a mere graceful glance of Lord Sri Ram, all the households are filled once again (6).

[Note—There is a general atmosphere of a great carnival being held in the city of Ayodhya where Lord Ram took birth. The festive spirit has caught hold of all, the women as well as the men, the young and the old. There is dancing and singing and

merry-making on the streets as well as individual households. The subjects of the kingdom are rejoicing and celebrating the birth of their princes, not one but four of them. Their king was exceptionally just, righteous, good and noble, and he loved his subjects like his own family. It is therefore expected that the subjects of king Dasrath would cheer up when the king is blessed with sons. And remember: these four sons were not ordinary children—they were the blessed ones, 'special children', as they were born as a fruit of the fire sacrifice that the king had done. The Fire God had himself revealed to give the magical potion that fructified as these four princes. So naturally they would be jewel amongst the kings and emperors of their time when they grow up and take the reins of the kingdom in their hands. What more would people want? They were assured of prosperity, wealth, happiness and all-round well-being in the kingdom of such a blessed king and divinely empowered princes.]

राग जैतश्री

(1/4)

गावैं बिबुध बिमल बर बानी।
भुवन–कोटि–कल्यान–कंद जो, जायो पूत कौसिला रानी।। 1।।
मास, पाख, तिथि, बार, नखत, ग्रह, जोग, लगन सुभ ठानी।
जल–थल–गगन प्रसन्न साधु–मन, दस दिसि हिय हुलसानी।। 2।।
बरषत सुमन, बधाव नगर–नभ, हरष न जात बखानी।
ज्यों हुलास रनिवास नरेसहि, त्यों जनपद रजधानी।। 3।।
अमर, नाग, मुनि, मनुज सपरिजन बिगतबिषाद–गलानी।
मिलेहि माँझ रावन रजनीचर लंक संक अकुलानी।। 4।।
देव–पितर, गुरु–बिप्र पूजि नृप दिये दान रुचि जानी।
मुनि–बनिता, पुरनारि, सुआसिनि सहस भाँति सनमानी।। 5।।
पाइ अघाइ असीसत निकसत जाचक–जन भए दानी।
'यों प्रसन्न कैकयी सुमित्रहिं होउ महेस–भवानी'।। 6।।
दिन दूसरे भूप–भामिनी दोउ भईं सुमंगल–खानी।
भयो सोहिलो सोहिलो मो जनु सृष्टि सोहिलो–सानी।। 7।।
गावत–नाचत, मो मन भावत, सुख सों अवध अधिकानी।
देत–लेत, पहिरत–पहिरावत प्रजा प्रमोद–अघानी।। 8।।
गान–निसान–कुलाहल–कौतुक देखत दुनी सिहानी।
हरि बिरंचि–हर–पुर सोभा कुलि कोसलपुरी लोभानी।। 9।।
आनँद–अवनि, राजरानी सब माँगहु कोखि जुड़ानी।
आसिष दै दै सराहहिं सादर उमा–रमा–ब्रह्मानी।।10।।
बिभव–बिलास–बाढ़ि दसरथकी देखि न जिनहिं सोहानी।
कीरति, कुसल, भूति, जय, ऋषि–सिधि तिन्हपर सबै कोहानी।।11।।
छठी–बारहौं लोक–बेद–बिधि करि सुबिधान बिधानी।
राम–लषन–रपिुदवन–भरव धरे नाम ललित गुर ग्यानी।।12।।
सुकृत–सुमन तिल–मोद बासि बिधि जतन–जंत्र भरि घानी।
सुख–सनेह सब दिये दसरथहि खरि खलेल थिर–थानी।।13।।
अनुदिन उदय–उछाह, उमग जग, घर–घर अवध कहानी।
तुलसी राम–जनम–जस गावत सो समाज उर आनी।।14।।

rāga jaitaśrī

(1/4)

gāvaiṁ bibudha bimala bara bānī.
bhuvana-kōṭi-kalyāna-kanda jō, jāyō pūta kausilā rānī.. 1..
māsa, pākha, tithi, bāra, nakhata, graha, jōga, lagana subha ṭhānī.
jala-thala-gagana prasanna sādhu-mana, dasa disi hiya hulasānī.. 2..
baraṣata sumana, badhāva nagara-nabha, haraṣa na jāta bakhānī.
jyōṁ hulāsa ranivāsa narēsahi, tyōṁ janapada rajadhānī.. 3..
amara, nāga, muni, manuja saparijana bigatabiṣāda-galānī.
milēhi māṁjha rāvana rajanīcara laṅka saṅka akulānī.. 4..
dēva-pitara, guru-bipra pūji nṛpa diyē dāna ruci jānī.
muni-banitā, puranāri, su'āsini sahasa bhāṁti sanamānī.. 5..
pā'i aghā'i asīsata nikasata jācaka-jana bha'ē dānī.
'yōṁ prasanna kaikayī sumitrahiṁ hō'u mahēsa-bhavānī'.. 6..
dina dūsarē bhūpa-bhāminī dō'u bha'īṁ sumaṅgala-khānī.
bhayō sōhilō sōhilō mō janu sṛṣṭi sōhilō-sānī.. 7..
gāvata-nācata, mō mana bhāvata, sukha sōṁ avadha adhikānī.
dēta-lēta, pahirata-pahirāvata prajā pramōda-aghānī.. 8..
gāna-nisāna-kulāhala-kautuka dēkhata dunī sihānī.
hari biraṁci-hara-pura sōbhā kuli kōsalapurī lōbhānī.. 9..
ānaṁda-avani, rājarānī saba māṁgahu kōkhi juṛānī.
āsiṣa dai dai sarāhahiṁ sādara umā-ramā-brahmānī..10..
bibhava-bilāsa-bāḍhi dasarathakī dēkhi na jinahiṁ sōhānī.
kīrati, kusala, bhūti, jaya, ṛidhi-sidhi tinhapara sabai kōhānī..11..
chaṭhī-bārahauṁ lōka-bēda-bidhi kari subidhāna bidhānī.
rāma-laṣana-ripudavana-bharata dharē nāma lalita gura gyānī..12..
sukṛta-sumana tila-mōda bāsi bidhi jatana-jantra bhari ghānī.
sukha-sanēha saba diyē dasarathahi khari khalēla thira-thānī..13..
anudina udaya-uchāha, umaga jaga, ghara-ghara avadha kahānī.
tulasī rāma-janama-jasa gāvata sō samāja ura ānī..14..

Birth of Lord Ram and his Three Brothers (Laxman, Bharat, Shatrughan)

*Verse no. 1/4—The Gods sing in unison the glory of the divine birth of Lord Ram in a voice that is not only sweet, endearing and pleasant but also auspicious and full of respect for the Divine Revelation in the form of a child. They said—'The son, who has been born to Kaushalya, is the root (the very essence or the cause) of auspiciousness and welfare of millions of Bhuvans (i.e. of the entire universe)'[1] (1).

The month, quarter, date, day, stars, planets, their combinations and presence in the birth charts—all are very auspicious and most favourable. The waters (of the oceans, rivers, lakes etc.), land, sky and the hearts of sages, seers and hermits are all extremely happy and exhilarant, and jubilation and euphoria have filled all the ten directions of the world[1] (2).

[[1]The 10 directions are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.]

There is a rain of flowers (that are being showered by the Gods and others from the heaven, and those that are being thrown and strewn in plentiful by the jubilant citizens on the ground so much so that they have formed a blanket that covers the streets of the city). Melodious songs of felicitation are being sung in the sky as well as in the city. No one can describe the euphoric and jubilant mood of the people as well as of the Gods. The city (i.e. the capital, Ayodhya) and the realm of the kingdom (of Kaushal or Ayodhya) have the same degree of happiness and merriment as is being witnessed inside the palace of the king. [The carnival-like gala atmosphere of merriment, celebration, festivity, rejoicing and enjoyment was witnessed throughout the kingdom of Ayodhya.] (3).

The Gods, the serpents (subterranean creatures), the sages and hermits, ordinary citizens along with their kins and relatives—all have become free from sorrows and worries of all kinds, whereas the demons and their king, the ten-headed Ravana, along with the whole city of Lanka have become a worried and agitated lot (due to suspicious omens that forebode bad tidings for them, portending doom and destruction)[2]. (4).

[[2]Lord Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who had come down to earth on the prayers of Mother Earth, the Gods and the great sages to eliminate the terror of demons who were led by their cruel king Ravana. So, when Lord Ram was born it was the time for celebration and rejoicing for the former, and for gloom and scare for the demons.]

The king (Dasrath) has duly worshipped and paid his obeisance to the Gods, his ancestors, his Guru (sage Vasistha) and Brahmins (elderly learned people in the kingdom), and has liberally offered them gifts and other largesse by way of offering and charity[3]. He has also shown great respect and given honour in countless ways to the wives of sages and Brahmins as well as women of noble virtues and good repute (5).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 196.]

The alms-seekers are fully satisfied so much so that they have themselves become donors[4]. Emerging from the king's doorway (i.e. palace gates), they invoke the blessing of Lord Shiva and his divine consort goddess Parvati, requesting them to become as pleased, benignant and gracious on Kaikeyi and Sumitra as they had been on Kaushalya (so that they too beget sons like hers) (6).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 194.]

On the day following the birth of Lord Ram, the other two queens (i.e. Kaikeyi and Sumitra) too became a mine of auspiciousness and good fortune (because they were also blessed with sons named Bharat, Shatrughan and Laxman)[4]. In this way, there is one auspicious and cheerful event followed by another as if the whole creation is kneaded with the nectar of happiness and rejoicing, as if the whole world is soaked in, drowned in and engulfed in waves after heaving waves of happiness, joy, good tidings and rejoicings (7).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 195.]

Everyone is rejoicing, dancing in ecstasy and singing in merry abundance in unbound joyance.

I (Tulsidas) too rejoice and submerge myself in the ocean of happiness and merriment that heaves and surges all around me in the form of endless festivities and rejoicing. The intensity of joy and happiness has increased manifold (as Lord Ram's birth has been followed by the birth of his other three excellent brothers). All the subjects (citizens of Ayodhya) are so overwhelmed with happiness, ecstasy and jubilation that they give and accept gifts in abundance; they wear new clothes themselves and make others wear them to mark this happy occasion in their lives (8).

Hearing the cacophony and clamour of musical instruments being played and enchanting songs being sung, the whole world is amazed, awestruck and enthralled. The glamour, magnificence and charm of the celestial cities of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are themselves in awe and struck by the beauty, charm and magnificence of Ayodhya on that auspicious occasion (9).

All the queens of the palace (i.e. Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra) are exceedingly exhilarated because they have been blessed with a fruitful womb (i.e. by being able to beget such divine and exalted sons) and having a contented married life (by having a favourable husband). Even the Goddesses Umā (Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva), Ramā (Laxmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu) and Brahmānī (thew creator Brahma's consort) bless them and praise their good fortune and immense luck (10).

All those who did not like or were jealous of the enhancement of the good fortune, the fame, the glory, the majesty and the happiness of king Dasrath, as well as the grandeur, the magnificence, the celebrations, the pageantry and the jubilation of that time—the virtues of 'Kīrati,' (fame, renown), 'Kusala' (well-being, welfare, auspiciousness, good luck and happy foreboding), 'Bhūti' (power, pageantry, pomp, glories, majesty, grandeur, magnificence etc.), 'Jaya' (victory), and 'Ridhi-sidhi' all encompassing achievements, successes, prosperity, wealth, auspiciousness etc.) become wrathful, indignant and angry upon them[5] (11).

[[5]Here, the grand virtues of Kirti, Kushal, Bhuti, Jaya and Riddhi-Siddhi have been personified. They became extremely angry at anyone who became jealous of or was opposed to king Dasrath at that auspicious time. In other words, anyone who became annoyed at the good fortune of king Dasrath was cursed by the patron Gods and Goddesses of these virtues so much so that these virtues abandoned them, and they were made to regret for their sense of selfishness, for their uncalled for jealousy, for their mistrust and envy for Dasrath. While the whole world was rejoicing, there were some bad people who did not like these celebrations in Ayodhya. They were jealous of king Dasrath and his good fortunes. Obviously, they may have been his enemies and those kings who did not like the rise of another king. Besides them, the other obvious jealous creatures were the demons led by their king Ravana of Lanka.]

Guru Vasistha, who was an expert in the laws and requirements as mandated in the scriptures, observed all the traditions of the society and requirements of the Vedas, and performed the 'Chatthi-Barahi[6]' rites for the children. The learned sage gave the

following beautiful, elegant, divine, auspicious and sweet names to the four children—viz. Ram, Laxman, Shatrughan and Bharat[7]. (12)

[[6]The 'Chatthi-Barahi' is the religious sacrament that is observed on the 6th and 12th day of child birth.

[7]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 197 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8.]

(It appears that at this time) The creator has extracted the sweet fragrance and the aroma of happiness, rejoicing, ecstasy and exhilaration from the sesame seeds by crushing them in an instrument (mill) representing diligent, careful and deliberate efforts, and has imbued (soaked) it in the flowers representing righteousness, good deeds and all noble virtues and their accoutrements, and then had offered this extract (essence) to Dasrath, while the residue and husk (left over after extracting happiness and pleasure) representing lustre-less and useless things were given to the Digpals (custodians of the world) (13).[8]

[[8]Tulsidas means that all auspiciousness and good fortunes that existed in this world, all the happiness and good tidings that one could ever imagine of, belonged to Dasrath on that happy day of the Lord's birth in his household. The quality, intensity and depth of happiness and joy that pervaded in Ayodhya on the occasion of Lord Ram's birth were immesurable, of the best and the most refined kind.]

Everyday since that auspicious day of the Lord's birth in this world, there is excitement and jubilation all round. The auspicious news of the Lord's birth and his advent on the earth that emanated from the city of Ayodhya is being narrated, retold and heard in every household of the realm of the kingdom of Dasrath as well as in the rest of the world at large. Tulsidas says that he joins in the spirit of festivities and celebrations on this happy occasion of birth of Lord Ram, and lets this exhilaration and euphoria enter his heart and soak it in its nectar. (14)[9]

[[9]Tulsidas means that he is thoroughly enjoying the celebrations and festivities going around him. See note appended to this verse below. He allows his heart to indulge in and submerge it's self in the heaving ocean of exceptional happiness and jubilation that surrounds him on all the sides when Lord Ram took birth in this world. He had become so highly emotional and seized with ecstasy that perhaps he began to dance and sing himself as he penned these lines. Such is the wont and the ways of truly realized souls, the really blessed ones, the fortunate chosen ones that ordinary people fail to fathom the reality of the depth of their blissfulness, ecstasy and beatitude as well as their wondrous but eccentric and odd ways when they get lost in a meditative trance that comes with the realisation of their closeness with the Divine One. It is well-nigh difficult to understand and fathom except by the humble acceptance of its truth and existence.]

[Note—*It ought to be noted here that all these verses—and for that matter, almost the entire text of Geetawali—has been narrated by Goswami Tulsidas in 'present tense narrative'. It is because Tulsidas had transcended the barrier of time and space, and had transported himself to that point of time when Lord Ram was actually born.

He writes what he sees; nothing of his narrative is imaginary or flowery or hyperbolic exaggeration as is usually the wont of poets and bards because the entire story of Lord Ram which Tulsidas has narrated was being played live on the mental screen of this specially blessed soul so much so that it enabled him to 'see' what others would never ever.

Therefore, Tulsidas acted merely as a scribe who recorded for posterity the events as they took place in a different era and time gone by to which the people of the

current as well as the future eras can't ever have access to. The present tense in the narrative adds authenticity and a stamp of authority to it, specially when we realize that the person who is doing the narration is a specially blessed soul whom the Supreme One has commissioned for this purpose. And in order to carry out this divine mandate, the Supreme One would have naturally and obviously given his chosen scribe the necessary tools, powers and access to information to enable him to successfully accomplish his mission. So there is no wonder in Tulsidas having access to that period of time in the hoary past of ages gone by when the events of the story of the Ramayana were actually happening and unfolding on earth.

He imagines himself to be present in Ayodhya like a scribe reporting the events of Lord Ram's divine advent on earth. The fascinating aspect of Geetawali, its magical charm and enchantment lies herein in the selection of this style of narration. It's a 'first-hand account' of the events as they actually unfolded in Ayodhya. For that matter, the full text of Geetawali is beautiful just for this singular reason—the selection of the present tense in the narrative.

It helps the reader to relate to the events more closely like we read daily news in the newspapers; we get interested in the current events around the world because directly or indirectly they affect us and the country where we live. So likewise, the story of Geetawali Ramayan when narrated in the present tense and first-hand narrative helps us to live in that time and era and enjoy the celebrations and festivities that are taking place in Ayodhya in a participative manner.]

राग केदारा

(1/5)

घर–घर अवध बधावने मंगल–साज–समाज।
सगुन सोहावने मुदित–मन कर सब निज–निज काज।।
निज काज सजत सँवारि पुर–नर–नारि रचना अनगनी।
गृह, अजिर, अटनि, बजार, बीथिन्ह चारु चौकैं बिधि घनी।।
चामर, पताक, बितान, तोरन, कलस, दीपावलि बनी।
सुख–सुकृत–सोभामय पुरी बिधि सुमति जननी जनु जनी।। 1।।
चैत चतुरदसि चाँदनी, अमल उदित निसिराज।
उडुगन अवलि प्रकासहीं, उमगत आनँद आज।।
आनंद उमगत आजु, बिबुध बिमान बिपुल बनाइकै।
गावत, बजावत, नटत, हरषत, सुमन बरषत आइकै।।
नर निरखि नभ, सुर पेखि पुरछबि परसपर सचु पाइकै।
रघुराज–साज सराहि लोचन–लाहु लेत अघाइकै।। 2।।
जागिय राम छठी सजनि रजनी रुचिर निहारि।
मंगल–मोद–मढ़ी मुरति नृपके बालक चारि।।
मूरति मनोहर चारि बिरचि बिरंचि परमारथमई।
अनुरूप भूपति जानि पूजन–जोग बिधि संकर दई।।
तिन्हकी छठी मंजुलमठी, जग सरस जिन्हकी सरसई।
किए नींद–भामिनि जागरन, अभिरामिनी जामिनि भई।। 3।।
सेवक सजग भए समय–साधन सचिव सुजान।
मुनिबर सिखये लौकिकौ बैदिक बिबिध बिधान।।
बैदिक बिधान अनेक लौकिक आचरत सुनि जानिकै।
बलिदान–पूजा मूलिकामनि साधि राखी आनिकै।।
जे देव–देवी सेइयत हित लागि चित सनमानिकै।

ते जंत्र–मंत्र सिखाइ राखत सबनिसों पहिचानिकै।। 4।।
सकल सुआसिनि, गुरजन, पुरजन, पाहुन लोग।
बिबुध–बिलासिनि, सुर–मुनि, जाचक, जो जेहि जोग।।
जेहि जोग जे तेहि भाँति ते पहिराय परिपूरन किये।
जय कहत, देत असीस, तुलसीदास ज्यों हुलसत हिये।।
ज्यों आजु कालिहु परहुँ जागन होहिंगे, नेवते दिये।
ते धन्य पुन्य–पयोधि जे तेहि समै सुख–जीवन जिये।। 5।।
भूपति–भाग बली सुर–बर नाग सराहि सिहाहिं।
तिय–बरबेष अली रमा सिधि अनिमादि कमाहिं।।
अनिमादि, सारद, सैलनंदिनि बाल लालहि पालहीं।
भरि जनम जे पाए न, ते परितोष उमा–रमा लहीं।।
निज लोक बिसरे लोकपति, घरकी न चरचा चालहीं।
तुलसी तपत तिहु ताप जग, जनु प्रभुछठी–छाया लहीं।। 6।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/5)

ghara-ghara avadha badhāvanē maṅgala-sāja-samāja.
saguna sōhāvanē mudita-mana kara saba nija-nija kāja..
nija kāja sajata samm̐vāri pura-nara-nāri racanā anaganī.
gr̥ha, ajira, aṭani, bajāra, bīthinha cāru caukaiṁ bidhi ghanī..
cāmara, patāka, bitāna, tōrana, kalasa, dīpāvali banī.
sukha-sukr̥ta-sōbhāmaya purī bidhi sumati jananī janu janī.. 1..
caita caturadasi cām̐danī, amala udita nisirāja.
uḍugana avali prakāsahīṁ, umagata ānam̐da āja..
ānanda umagata āju, bibudha bimāna bipula banā'ikai.
gāvata, bajāvata, naṭata, haraṣata, sumana baraṣata ā'ikai..
nara nirakhi nabha, sura pēkhi purachabi parasapara sacu pā'ikai.
raghurāja-sāja sarāhi lōcana-lāhu lēta aghā'ikai.. 2..
jāgiya rāma chaṭhī sajani rajanī rucira nihāri.
maṅgala-mōda-maṛhī murati nr̥pakē bālaka cāri..
mūrati manōhara cāri biraci biraṁci paramārathama'ī.
anurūpa bhūpati jāni pūjana-jōga bidhi saṅkara da'ī..
tinhakī chaṭhī manjulamaṭhī, jaga sarasa jinhakī sarasa'ī.
ki'ē nīnda-bhāmini jāgarana, abhirāminī jāmini bha'ī.. 3..
sēvaka sajaga bha'ē samaya-sādhana saciva sujāna.
munibara sikhayē laukikau baidika bibidha bidhāna..
baidika bidhāna anēka laukika ācarata suni jānikai.
balidāna-pūjā mūlikāmani sādhi rākhī ānikai..
jē dēva-dēvī sē'iyata hita lāgi cita sanamānikai.
tē jantra-mantra sikhā'i rākhata sabanisōṁ pahicānikai.. 4..
sakala su'āsini, gurajana, purajana, pāhuna lōga.
bibudha-bilāsini, sura-muni, jācaka, jō jēhi jōga..
jēhi jōga jē tēhi bhām̐ti tē pahirāya paripūrana kiyē.
jaya kahata, dēta asīsa, tulasīdāsa jyōṁ hulasata hiyē..
jyōṁ āju kālihu parahum̐ jāgana hōhiṅgē, nēvatē diyē.

tē dhan'ya pun'ya-payōdhi jē tēhi samai sukha-jīvana jiyē.. 5..
bhūpati-bhāga balī sura-bara nāga sarāhi sihāhiṁ.
tiya-barabēṣa alī ramā sidhi animādi kamāhiṁ..
animādi, sārada, sailanandini bāla lālahi pālahīṁ.
bhari janama jē pā'ē na, tē paritōṣa umā-ramā lahīṁ..
nija lōka bisarē lōkapati, gharakī na caracā cālahīṁ.
tulasī tapata tihu tāpa jaga, janu prabhuchaṭhī-chāyā lahīṁ.. 6..

Lord Rām's Chatti Ceremony

Verse no. 1/5—Felicitous songs are being sung and auspicious decorations and paraphernalia put up in every household of Avadh (the kingdom of Ayodhya). There are pleasant and auspicious omens, and everyone is most happily engaged in his work and take delight in it. The citizens of Ayodhya—both men and women—take great interest in their work in which they engage themselves most enthusiastically even as they create numerous decorative designs and patterns usually done during festivities and auspicious occasions. Wonderful 'Chowks[1]' of different kinds, of varying patterns and sizes and geometrical designs, have been made in houses, courtyards, attics, balconies, market places and alleys.

[[1]The 'Chowk' literally means an open space on the ground. It may be of any geometrical pattern, but usually it is either a quadrangle, a hexagonal or an octagonal, or a circle. In ancient cities these chowks were usually a huge open space in the center of the sprawling city used for public gatherings. However, in religious ceremonies such as fire sacrifices or any other festivities where there is a celebration, an artistic geometrical pattern is made on the ground using flour of wheat, rice or gram, cowdung, and coloured powder of various pastels. These decorative Chowks are ceremonial in nature and are made in front of the main doorway of a home in which there are celebrations in individual cases, and in public squares and open spaces in the case of a public ceremony. In the context of the present verse, the birth of Lord Ram was an occasion that was celebrated by the entire kingdom. So, individual homes as well as public places were both decorated with magnificent Chowks, small and big.]

The entire city has been beautifully decorated and artistically spruced up with magnificent whisks, flags, standards, banners, buntings, festoons, pavilions, ceremonial pitchers and pots, gates as well as arches of all shapes and sizes. The city is illuminated with long chains of lamps that look like garlands spread all over. It appears that the city of Ayodhya—which is haply a repository of all auspiciousness, happiness, comfort, pleasure, riches and wealth, which is famed as a place that represents the fructification of all good deeds, and which is stunningly fabulous and majestic—has been created by 'Sumati[2]', the divine consort of the Creator known as Vidhata (Brahma).

[[2]The word 'Sumati' means a good and balanced mind that thinks intelligently in the right direction. It implies that all the best of virtues that one can think of had gathered together and took abode in Ayodhya. The result was that every citizen was of an excellent character, was good and nice, living an exemplary life and thinking nobly and righteously. The combined fruit of all this was that there was all-round prosperity, wealth, happiness, joy, contentment, comfort and pleasures of all kinds in Ayodhya so much so that its fame had reached to the farthest corners of the earth and it vied with heaven in its majesty, magnificence and glory.] (1).

[What is the reason for these festivities? Today is the day when the 'Chatti rite' of Lord Ram is to be done. This is a religious sacrament of a son that is done on the 6th day after he is born.]

Today is the auspicious day of 'caita caturadasi cāmँdanī' (which is the 14th night during the waxing phase of the moon in the month of Chaitra—roughly late March and early April). The 'king of the night' (i.e. the moon) is shining brightly with all its magnificence in the sky, and the stars are twinkling in all the 10 directions around it (like the ministers and subjects of a great king surround him from all the sides). There is a literal flood of happiness and euphoria everywhere, and joy and delightfulness have swelled up (like a dashing ocean during high tide, with clashing and billowing waves).

The exuberant Gods have come to Ayodhya in their decorated celestial vehicles, all the while singing, dancing and playing music, and repeatedly showering flowers from the sky upon the city below. The citizens look up towards the sky and watch the Gods in an exhilarant mood, and the Gods look down upon the city and laud its majesty, glamour and beauty as well as the sight of the rejoicing citizens so much so that the citizens and the Gods have developed a sense of bonhomie and friendliness towards each other as they rejoice and celebrate the auspicious and happy occasion together.

All of them, the Gods and the citizens, are in all praise for king Dasrath's great fortune and rarest of rare good luck (that he has been blessed with four magnificent sons). They feel that their eyes have been rewarded today when they see the grand celebrations (of Lord Ram's birth and its associated rites and rituals) and its accompanying grandeur, pomp and pageantry with their own eyes. [In other words, everyone feels privileged, honoured and lucky to be able to witness these celebrations first hand and participate in them—instead of just hearing about them by way of news. So they feel that they have been rewarded by the creator that they had eyes with a good sight, for otherwise this would not have been possible.] (2).

(The maids talk among themselves in the palace—) 'Oh friend! Today is Lord Ram's 'chaṭhī' (the 6th day of child birth). Today we must keep awake during the night. [It is said that evil spirits attack the infant during the nights immediately after birth, especially when the moon is in its waxing phase and nears its full size. So, people keep a strict vigil to protect the child by keeping awake in the night.]

Today's night, being the night of Ram's Chatthi, should be considered auspicious and lovely. These four princes (Lord Ram and his three brothers) are like the virtues of auspiciousness, happiness and pleasantness moulded into a physical body (in the form of the four brothers). The creator has created these four idols as if they are of 'paramāratha', the fruit of spiritual bliss that is obtained by a soul upon attaining emancipation and salvation.

The two great Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder, had thought that king Dasrath was the most worthy, eligible, able and competent worshipper of these idols, so they vouchsafed them into his hands so that he (Dasrath) can properly worship and take care of these idols.[3]

[[3]The third God of the Trinity is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of the world. Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and his three brothers are personified forms of Vishnu's close associates that never leave Vishnu alone—viz. the Lord's discus transformed it's self as Bharat, the conch as Shatrughan, and Seshnath as Laxman. Refer: Veda Vyas's 'Adhyatma Ramayan', Baal Kand, Canto 2, verse no. 27; Uttar Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 56-57. Now, the word 'idol' is

significant here—it implies that though the four princes had gross physical bodies like the rest of the human race, but their bodies weren't ordinary 'human bodies' but consecrated forms which had the divine Spirit in them. And just like the case that a priest is appointed in a temple to do worship and look after the shrine's consecrated idols, king Dasrath was appointed by Brahma and Shiva to take care of the physical form of Lord Vishnu. This being the case, one can surely appreciate the rare honour that was bestowed upon Dasrath.]

In the magnificent palace of the king, it is their 'chaṭhī' today. The whole world is full of joy and happiness at this thought (i.e. on this occasion). At this time, even the woman called 'sleep' is keeping awake, so the night appears to be very pleasant and enjoyable. [Even 'sleep' is so excited that it does not want to lay off even for a second for it might miss the enjoyment of the moment if it snoozed. Hence, when 'sleep' itself decided to keep awake, no one was disturbed by it; no one felt the influence of sleep over him or her.] (3).

The royal servants and attendants and chamberlains who were selected for the purpose, as well as ministers and advisors of the king who were wise and well-versed in such affairs, have become ready because they had been waiting for the opportune moment/time (so that magical charms and Mantras can be invoked and appropriately used) as instructed by sage Guru Vasistha who had ordered them to carry out all the established traditions of the society as well as the sanctioned rituals of the Vedas as soon as the auspicious moment arrived. They are faithfully, diligently and carefully carrying out their assigned duties and doing all the rituals while adhering to all the sanctioned traditions of which day have heard or or are aware of, without missing a single one. They have collected all the different items required for formal worship and sacrifices such as 'Mūlikāmani' (small roots and herbs used during religious sacrifices and rituals) etc.

All the Gods and Goddesses whom they sincerely pray to and invoke, calling them for their blessings and benevolence, personally make acquaintance with them and describe to them or instruct them on how to use the various magical charms and Mantras related to each of these deities (so that even if these servants and ministers made an inadvertent error while performing the different rites and chanting of the various Mantras etc., they can easily rectify the error and overcome all obstacles that are inherent to all elaborate rituals and religious practices so that no harm comes to the four children of king Dasrath because of an oversight or a mistake committed during performance of rites and sacrifices) (4).

King Dasrath liberally gives away appropriate vestments, robes of honour, ornaments etc. to all amongst the virtuous women, elders, citizens, guests, the Goddesses, Gods, celestials damsels, sages, monks and sundry other alms-seekers who have gathered together on this occasion, according to their needs, desires, worth, eligibility and standing in the social hierarchy so much so that all of them are fully satisfied and loudly thank and hail the glory of the king, liberally blessing him and praising him.

Tulsidas says that his own heart is swelling up and heaving with emotions similar to these recipients[4].

[[4]This particular line of the verse, i.e. line no. 4 of stanza no. 5, may be interpreted in a different way of course, and it this second interpretation is taken into view, the previous paragraphs is altered drastically. So, what would be it like? It woud be as follows:--

"Observing the festivities and celebrations associated with Lord Ram's Chatti ceremony, and the way the Gods and Goddesses are themselves acting as guides to ensure that the rituals are performed without an error and to perfection, and seeing how king Dasrath is honouring all those present on the occasion, Tulsidas' heart is brimming over with ecstasy and joy. He is of the view that all other assembled persons and deities feel the happiness and joy in the same way and to the same extent as he is feeling today."]

A general royal proclamation was made to invite everyone to participate, and it declared—'There shall be night-vigil tomorrow as well as the day following it, like it is being done today and tonight'. Those who lived at that time are considered to be the luckiest living beings alive because it was a reward for their meritorious deeds done in countless lives prior to the present which enabled them to soak themselves in the nectar-like lake symbolised by the life and times and glory of Lord Ram (5).

Even great Gods and serpents (who are Lord of the heaven and the subterranean worlds respectively) feel glad at praising the great luck and good fortune of the king (Dasrath).

The four children are being pampered and served most diligently, affectionately, caringly and lovingly by charming women, the leading one of them was Goddess Laxmi ("ramā": the goddess of good fortunes and prosperity) who had assumed the form of a beautiful woman to head the bevy of lady attendants of the children (so that she can get a wonderful chance to serve the Lord and get up close to him). All her celestial attendants known as 'Anima and other Siddhis' help her in her efforts, and in the process they simultaneously draw the same rewards as Laxmi by serving the children personally.

They were not alone in carrying out this divine service and reaping its spiritual bliss—for they were joined by Sharda (consort of Brahma) and Parvati (consort of Shiva) too[5].

[[5]These celestial goddesses, i.e. Laxmi, Sharda and Parvati, and their attendants known as the different Siddhis, such as Anima, Garima, Mahima, Laghima, Praapti etc. which are actually a manifested form of the various special dymamic powers of these goddesses that are super-human and mystical in nature, assumed the forms of lady attendants, maids and friends of the royal household so that they can get an unhindered access to Lord Ram and be able to serve him. There was another great benefit. With the great goddesses and their super-natural dynamic powers themselves taking care of Lord Ram and his three brothers, there was no danger of any evil spirit casting a curse on the children and harming them.]

The feeling of extreme joy and delight, the sense of exhilaration and ecstasy that Laxmi and Parvati had got on this occasion (by being able to personally serve the Lord like they were his own mother) was so intense and unfathomable that they did not experience such a good fortune anytime previously in their lives. [This is because it was for the first time they had been able to enjoy the comfort and pleasure that a mother gets by taking care of and loving her sons. Previously, all they knew was to worship Lord Vishnu in a formal way, but they had yearned to experience the delight and happiness that a mother gets when she picks up her child in her arms or puts it on her laps and plays with it.]

The Lokpals (the various custodians of the world) forgot their own Lokas; they do not even talk about their own households (because they are lost in the joy that surges all around them, and for once they do not want any sort of distraction by remembering their own homes and their routine problems back there).

Tulsidas says that it appears the whole world, tormented and afflicted by the misery and horrors inflicted by the 'Traitaps'[6], has found the shade (relief, succour, shelter) in the shape of the Lord's (Sri Ram's) Chatthi ceremonies.

[[6] "tapata tihu tāpa jaga". The three Traitpas are: 'Adhyatmik'—related to spiritual aspects; Adibhautik—related to terrestrial creatures; Adidaivik—related to Gods, stars and semi demonic forces. Tulsidas means that everyone forgot about their own problems and daily grind of life. For once, the Chatti ceremony of Lord Ram was a grand carnival that revved up the sagging spirits of even the most downtrodden and broken-hearts in this world. Everyone was rejoicing and making merry as if there was all sweetness, joy, fun and fair in this life, and no one thought of the problems that had been dogging them till now in their lives.] (6).

नामकरण

राग जैतश्री

(1/6)

बाजत अवध गहागहे अनंद–बधाए।
नामकरण रघुबरनिके नृप सुदिन सोधाए।। 1।।
पाय रजायसु रायको ऋषिराज बोलाए।
सिष्य–सचिव–सेवक–सखा सादर सिर नाए।। 2।।
साधु सुमति समरथ सबै सानंद सिखाए।
जल, दल, फल, मनि–मूलिका, कुलि काज लिखाए।। 3।।
गनप–गौरि–हर पूजिकै गोवृन्द दुहाए।
घर–घर मुद मंगल महा गुन–गान सुहाए।। 4।।
तुरत मुदित जहँ तहँ चले मनके भए भाए।
सुरपति–सासनु घन मनो मारुत मिलि धाए।। 5।।
गृह, आँगन, चौहट, गली, बाजार बनाए।
कलस, चँवर, तोरन, धुजा, सुबितान तनाए।। 6।।
चित्र चारु चौकैं रचीं, लिखि नाम जनाए।
भरि–भरि सरवर–बापिका अरगजा सनाए।। 7।।
नर–नारिन्ह पल चारिमें सब साज सजाए।
दसरथ–पुर छबि आपनी सुरनगर लजाए।। 8।।
बिबुध बिमान बनाइकै आनंदित आए।
हरषि सुमन बरसन लगे, गए धन जनु पाए।। 9।
बरे बिप्र चहुँ बेदके, रबिकुल–गुर ग्यानी।
आपु बसिष्ठ अथरबणी, महिमा जग जानी।।10।।
लोक–रीति बिधि बेदकी करि कह्यो सुबानी–
'सिसु–समेत बेगि बोलिए कौसल्या रानी'।।11।।
सुनत सुआसिनि लै चलीं गावत बड़भागीं।
उमा–रमा, सारद–सची लखि सुनि अनुरागीं।।12।।
निज–निज रुचि बेष बिरचिकै हिलि–मिलि संग लागीं।
तेहि अवसर तिहु लोककी सुदसा जनु जागीं।।13।।
चारु चौक बैठत भईं भूप–भामिनी सोहैं।
गोद मोद–मूरति, लिए, सुकृति जन जोहैं।।14।।
सुख–सुखमा, कौतुक कला देखि–सुनि मुनि मोहैं।

सो समाज कहैं बरनिकै, ऐसे कबि को हैं? ।।15।।
लगे पढ़न रच्छा–ऋचा ऋषिराज बिराजे।
गगन सुमन–झरि, जय–जय, बहु बाजन बाजे।।16।।
भए अमंगल लंकमें, संक–संकट गाजे।
भुवन चारिदसके बड़े दुख–दारिद भाजे।।17।।
बाल बिलाकि अथरबणी हँसि हरहि जनायो।
सुभको सुभ, मोद मोदको, 'राम' नाम सुनायो।।18।।
आलबाल कल कौसिला, दल बरन सोहायो।
कंद सकल आनन्दको जनु अंकुर आयो।।19।।
जोहि, जानि, जपि जोरिकै करपुट सिर राखे।
'जय जय जय करुनानिधे!' सादर सुर भाषे।।20।।
'सत्यसंध ! साँचे सदा जे आखर आषे।
प्रनतपाल ! पाए सही, जे फल अभिलाषे'।।21।।
भूमिदेव देव देखिकै नरदेव सुखारी।
बोलि सचिव सेवक सखा पटधारि भँडारी।।22।।
देहु जाहि जोइ चाहिए सनमानि सँभारी।
लगे देन हिय हरषिकै हेरि–हेरि हँकारी।।23।।
राम–निछावरि लेनको हठि होत भिखारी।
बहुरि देत तेहि देखिए मानहुँ धनधारी।।24।।
भरत लषन रिपुदवनहूँ धरे नाम बिचारी।
फलदायक फल चारिके दसरथ–सुत चारी।।25।।
भए भूप बालकनिके नाम निरूपम नीके।
सबै सोच–संकट मिटे तबतें पुर–तीके।।26।।
सुफल मनोरथ बिधि किए सब बिधि सबहीके।
अब होइहै गाए सुने सबके तुलसीके।।27।।

nāmakaraṇa

rāga jaitaśrī

(1/6)

bājata avadha gahāgahē ananda-badhā'ē.
nāmakaraṇa raghubaranikē nr̥pa sudina sōdhā'ē.. 1..
pāya rajāyasu rāyakō r̥sirāja bōlā'ē.
siṣya-saciva-sēvaka-sakhā sādara sira nā'ē.. 2..
sādhu sumati samaratha sabai sānanda sikhā'ē.
jala, dala, phala, mani-mūlikā, kuli kāja likhā'ē.. 3..
ganapa-gauri-hara pūjikai gōvr̥nda duhā'ē.
ghara-ghara muda maṅgala mahā guna-gāna suhā'ē.. 4..
turata mudita jahaṁ tahaṁ calē manakē bha'ē bhā'ē.
surapati-sāsanu ghana manō māruta mili dhā'ē.. 5..

gṛha, āmm̐gana, cauhaṭa, galī, bājāra banā'ē.
kalasa, camm̐vara, tōrana, dhujā, subitāna tanā'ē.. 6..
citra cāru caukaiṁ racīṁ, likhi nāma janā'ē.
bhari-bhari saravara-bāpikā aragajā sanā'ē.. 7..
nara-nārinha pala cārimēṁ saba sāja sajā'ē.
dasaratha-pura chabi āpanī suranagara lajā'ē.. 8..
bibudha bimāna banā'ikai ānandita ā'ē.
haraṣi sumana barasana lagē, ga'ē dhana janu pā'ē.. 9.
barē bipra cahum̐ bēdakē, rabikula-gura gyānī.
āpu basiṣṭha atharabaṇī, mahimā jaga jānī..10..
lōka-rīti bidhi bēdakī kari kahyō subānī-
'sisu-samēta bēgi bōli'ē kausalyā rānī'..11..
sunata su'āsini lai calīṁ gāvata baṛabhāgīṁ.
umā-ramā, sārada-sacī lakhi suni anurāgīṁ..12..
nija-nija ruci bēṣa biracikai hili-mili saṅga lāgīṁ.
tēhi avasara tihu lōkakī sudasā janu jāgīṁ..13..
cāru cauka baiṭhata bha'īṁ bhūpa-bhāminī sōhaiṁ.
gōda mōda-mūrati, li'ē, sukṛti jana jōhaiṁ..14..
sukha-sukhamā, kautuka kalā dēkhi-suni muni mōhaiṁ.
sō samāja kahaiṁ baranikai, aisē kabi kō haiṁ?..15..
lagē paṛhana racchā-ṛcā ṛṣirāja birājē.
gagana sumana-jhari, jaya-jaya, bahu bājana bājē..16..
bha'ē amaṅgala laṅkamēṁ, saṅka-saṅkaṭa gājē.
bhuvana cāridasakē baṛē dukha-dārida bhājē..17..
bāla bilāki atharabaṇī hamm̐si harahi janāyō.
subhakō subha, mōda mōdakō, 'rāma' nāma sunāyō..18..
ālabāla kala kausilā, dala barana sōhāyō.
kanda sakala ānandakō janu aṅkura āyō..19..
jōhi, jāni, japi jōrikai karapuṭa sira rākhē.
'jaya jaya jaya karunānidhē!' sādara sura bhāṣē..20..
'satyasandha! sāmm̐cē sadā jē ākhara āṣē.
pranatapāla! pā'ē sahī, jē phala abhilāṣē'..21..
bhūmidēva dēva dēkhikai naradēva sukhārī.
bōli saciva sēvaka sakhā paṭadhāri bhamm̐ḍārī..22..
dēhu jāhi jō'i cāhi'ē sanamāni samm̐bhārī.
lagē dēna hiya haraṣikai hēri-hēri hamm̐kārī..23..
rāma-nichāvari lēnakō haṭhi hōta bhikhārī.
bahuri dēta tēhi dēkhi'ē mānahum̐ dhanadhārī..24..
bharata laṣana ripudavanahūm̐ dharē nāma bicārī.
phaladāyaka phala cārikē dasaratha-suta cārī..25..
bha'ē bhūpa bālakanikē nāma nirūpama nīkē.
sabai sōca-saṅkaṭa miṭē tabatēṁ pura-tīkē..26..

suphala manōratha bidhi ki'ē saba bidhi sabahīkē.
aba hō'ihai gā'ē sunē sabakē tulasīkē..27..

The Children's Naming Ceremony

Verse no. 1/6—[After some days, the time came to assign names to the four princes according to established tradition. For this purpose, the royal priest, sage Vasistha, was summoned, and he named the four children as Lord Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 197 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8.]

The celebrations are continuing at Ayodhya with the singing of endless melodious songs which were ceaselessly sung to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. The King found out the proper date (after consulting astrologers) on which the naming ceremony should be held (1).

On receiving instructions (rather, a royal request) from Dasrath, sage Vasistha called his disciples, ministers (of the court), servants and friends [2], and asked them to make preparations for the Naming Ceremony—and it included collecting holy waters from different sources (such as the holy rivers, lakes, pilgrim sites etc.), leaves of the sacred Tulsi (Basil) plants amongst others, fruits of different kinds (such as mangoes, coconut and other fruits), seeds of the radish plant to act as beads for Navgraha worship (i.e. worshipping of the nine planets), and other such paraphernalia required for the religious ceremony [3]. (2-3).

Lord Ganesh, Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva were worshipped and milk-giving cows were milked, while various felicitous songs were sung in each household of the city (4).

Finding out haply that their long-held cherished desire was about to be fulfilled that day, all the citizens rushed out from sundry directions in a cheerful mood, happy and full of joy, just like the rain-bearing clouds rush forward on the orders of Indra, the patron deity of rains, pushed and aided by the gust of wind[1].

[[1]The citizens had always wanted a heir to the throne of Ayodhya. Now their wishes have been fulfilled. Today was the date for naming of the four princes. So as the news spread in the city, everyone rushed to witness the 'naming ceremony' and looked eagerly forward to know what names were assigned to the four boys.] (5)

The houses, courtyards, city-centres, alleys, roads and the market places et al were artistically decorated in the best possible way. Ceremonial pots and pitchers, buntings, whisks, banners, arches and gateways, flags and standards etc. were put up everywhere in the city (6).

Very fascinating, most wondrous and marvellous 'Chowks' (which are colourful geometrical patterns made on the ground using cowdung paste, coloured powder and wheat or rice flour—refer verse no. 5, stanza no. 1 herein above) were made. The artists wrote their names on them (in one corner) to exhibit their skills and artistic

prowess. The public ponds and tanks were filled with fresh and perfumed water, and powdered sandalwood was mixed in it (7).

All decorative and adornment work was completed within a time of '4 Pals'[2]. At this time, even the city of Gods (Amravati) felt inferior and ashamed (at its boast) on seeing the splendour, magnificence and pageantry of Ayodhya.

[[2]pala cārimēṁ; it is a measurement of time. 1 Pal = approximately 24 seconds. It simply means 'a moment; a short period of time'. In other words, all work of decorating the city and the public squares was done fast and completed within a very short period of time. Obviously, no one can work a magic in 24 x 4 = 96 seconds!] (8).

The Gods decorated their aerial vehicles, came and showered flowers as if they had retrieved lost wealth[3].

[[3]The Gods were as cheerful and happy as a person who had lost all his wealth earlier but suddenly finds it back. Here it implies that the Gods, who had lost their peace with the ascendance of the demons who had wrecked their life and snatched all comfort from them, now felt happy that their peace would be restored to them with the advent of Lord Ram on earth.] (9).

To recite the scriptures, those Brahmins who were well-versed in the 4 Vedas were engaged. Among them was sage Vasistha, who was an expert in Atharva Veda, was the preceptor of king Raghu's lineage (to which Dasrath, and now his four sons belonged), was steeped in wisdom, and whose glory was famed in the whole world (10).

After finishing with the preliminary formalities according to established traditions of the society and the Vedas, he said in a sweet and pleasant voice—'Call queen Kaushalya along with her child as soon as possible.' (11).

Immediately on hearing this, the most fortunate and righteous women folk of the household escorted her (Kaushalya) to where sage Vasistha was, singing all the while.

Hearing this (i.e. the command of the sage that the queens and their children be brought for the naming ceremony, as well as the songs that were sung on this occasion) and witnessing the sight (of the queens proceeding majestically towards the venue with their sons cuddled most affectionately in their arms), Goddesses Parvati (consort of Shiva), Laxmi (consort of Vishnu), Sharda (consort of Brahma) and Shachi (consort of Indra) [who were present there in human forms] became overwhelmed with affection and love (for the child Sri Ram as well as for the other three brothers). (12)

These Goddesses assumed different forms according to their liking, and mingled with others who accompanied mother Kaushalya as she proceeded to the site where the naming ceremony was to be held. It appears that on this happy occasion all the three Lokas (worlds; heaven, earth and nether world) had been blessed with auspiciousness and joys of the highest kind (13).

The queens—who were sitting in the Chowks (which were especially earmarked pavilions for each one of them) with their beautiful sons, who were like images or embodiments of happiness and bliss, in their laps—looked most adorable and

glamorous. Those who were of a righteous, noble and virtuous nature were watching them closely (with their sons in their laps) (14)[4].

[[4]The queens and other ladies of the royal household do not go out in public. But today was a different and a special occasion. It was the 'naming ceremony' of the four children. Every single citizens wished to have a glimpse of the four princes, and so it was decided that an exception must be made today so that the subjects of the kingdom can feel belonged and respected and obliged to the king for letting them have a view of the ceremony without any restriction and discrimination. After all, the seniors were allowed access to the proximity of the royal family, and the kind-hearted king Dasrath wished to make each individual of his kingdom feel welcomed and important.]

The hermits, seers and sages became enchanted and their hearts were overwhelmed with emotions and affections as they witnessed the ongoing 'naming ceremony' of the four princes. This being the case, there isn't a worthy poet or bard who can do justice in describing the beauty and magnificence, the joy and exhilaration, the charm and euphoria that pervaded everywhere on that auspicious occasion (in the city of Ayodhya as well as the rest of the world). (15)[5].

[[5]The hermits, seers and sages are generally neutral and indifferent to worldly enjoyments and charms. they have renounced the world and therefore aren't much concerned with occasions such as child birth or naming ceremony which are matters pertaining to a householder. But this was no ordinary occasion; it was the naming ceremony of an incarnation of the 'Lord of the World' who had come down to earth in the form of Lord Ram to oblige his devotees and give them delight and bliss. After all, the hermits, sages and seers pursue the goal of attaining bliss of God-realisation, and now this is unfolding itself in a live form right before their eyes. So even such highly renunciate individuals had forgotten about renunciation and dispassion for once and were emotionally moved. If this occasion was so rare, wondrous, magnificent, grand, holy and divine that it had charmed the mind and hearts of sages and hermits, then surely it was of the highest order of refinement and more than merely a worldly affair because of its spiritual dimension, and therefore it was beyond the reach of words and ordinary minds like that of poets and bards who lack the spiritual acumen and reach of sages and hermits.]

Then Guru Vasistha, who was like a king among sages (i.e. most superior amongst the sages), began to recite the Vedic hymns accociated with the protection of infants from evil forces (called the 'racchā-rṣ̊ā'). On this occasion, there was a torrent of flowers raining down from the sky, and the heavens reverberated with a chorus of thundorous applause that was accompanied by music from numerous musical instruments (that were being played by the Gods in the heaven and the citizens in the city of Ayodhya) (16).

Meanwhile, there were inauspicious signs and bad omens in Lanka (the capital of the demons). These bad signs and omens created a sense of apprehension, a sense of grave insecurity that gave rise to numerous kinds of doubt, suspicions and confusions there—because these signs and omens portended something grave and dangerous in the times to come.

Now, even as troubles and misfortunes erupted there in Lanka, the opposite prevailed in the rest of the world. All the fourteen Bhuvans, (bhuvana cāridasakē—i.e. all the corners of this creation and their inhabitants) felt as all their seemingly un-

surmountable troubles, miseries, grief and horrors of existence were eliminated (or removed) (17).[6]

[[6]Lord Ram had taken birth to get rid of the cruel, blood-thirsty and unrightous demons who had unleashed a reign of terror throughout this creation. No corner of the creation was immune to their tyranny, and life had become impossible to be lived in a peaceful manner. So, when there was a thunder of sound made by the playing of musical instruments and the chanting of Vedic Mantras in the sky, their echo reached Lanka where the demons had their headquarters. They immediately became suspicious and apprehensive. They had so much tyrannised the world that no one dared to celebrate anything by chanting of the hymns of the scriptures and playing musical instruments. The demons considered these as sacrilege of their own doctrines that preferred everything that was opposed to Dharma (principles of righteousness, probity, propriety and good conduct). Therefore, when they got wind that there are celebrations by the Gods and humans, they immediately became alert that something is fishy.

Meanwhile, it is natural that the world rejoiced as its redeemer had arrived in the form of Lord Ram. Once the Lord set foot on earth, there was no fear from the demons, for their nemesis had come. So there were celebrations without fear in the creation.

The 'fourteen Bhuvans' are the 14 divisions of the celestial sphere just like we have divided the earth artificially into the northern and southern hemisphere, and then we have the lines girdling the earth, like the Equator, the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, and the Arctic and the Antartic circles. The 14 Bhuvans are listed in a note at the end of this verse.]

Sage Vasistha, who was an expert in Atharva Veda (refer: stanza no. 10 also), smiled at the child (i.e. Lord Ram) and told Lord Shiva, "This child is your Lord"[7]. Saying this, he named the child—who was a repository of all that was good, fortunate, auspicious, holy, divine and blissful—as 'Ram'[8] (18).

[[7]Vasistha reminded Lord Shiva that the child whom he was about to name as "Lord Ram" was the One whom Shiva worshipped as his chosen deity. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.

[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 197.]

Mother Kaushalya is like a beautiful 'ālabāla' (i.e. the ground just below a plant), and the two letters ('RA' and 'MA' of Lord Ram's name) are akin to the two leaves or sprouts that have emerged from this plant[9]. It appears that the root of all happiness, joy and delight has sprouted in the form of Sri Ram (19).

[[9]In this stanza, Kaushalya is compared to the fertile ground in which a new sapling is planted. After some time, this sapling gives out new leaves which are signs that the plant has taken roots and will soon grow into a tree. The sapling is very small and inconsequential, but when the plant grows into a huge flower and fruit bearing tree it becomes famous and sought after by the world which benefits not only from its fruits and flowers but also finds shelter under the tree's shade. Likewise, the beautiful tree that emerged from this sapling is represented by Lord Ram, and the two letters of the Lord's name, i.e. 'RA' and 'MA' are like the two leaf and flower and fruit bearing branches of this magnificent tree!]

Lord Shiva on being thus informed (by Vasistha) was now convinced that the child was the one whom he worships (jōhi, jāni). Therefore, he (Shiva) brought his hands near child Ram's head to bless him even as he continued to repeat the Lord's (Ram's) great, divine and holy name (japi jōrikai karapuṭa sira rākhē).

All the Gods who had gathered there showed their great respect for the child (Lord Ram) by chanting in unison—'Hail and glory to the benevolent Lord who is an abode of mercy, kindness and compassion' (jaya jaya jaya karunānidhē!) (20).

They (i.e. Lord Shiva and the assembled Gods) told sage Vasistha—'Oh Lord! Whatever you have said about the 'two divine and holy letters (of Lord Ram's name) are indeed absolutely true.'

Then they turned to Lord Ram and said—'Oh Lord who is the sustainer of refugees and the distressed ones who have surrendered themselves at your holy feet! All the fruits and rewards that anyone has ever desired or expected from you have been received by them.' (21).

King Dasrath felt very happy at the sight of Brahmins and Gods, and summoned his ministers, advisors, servants, subordinates, friends, kins, custodians of his treasury and wardrobe as well as the head cook (chef) and said, 'Go forthwith and give whatever anyone wants with due respect. Let everyone feel fulfilled.'

At the king's command, all were dlighted at heart. They searched out alms-seekers and those who needed or wanted anything at all, and began to disburse charities with a free hand. (22-23).

Everyone wants to become an alms-seeker in front of (or in the name of) Lord Sri Ram, and so they deliberately and forcefully took and accepted donations and largesse (as a token of divine blessing from the Lord of the World who has obliged them by being present amongst them in the form of Lord Ram).

Though everyone vied and jostled with one another to be the first to accept whatever came their way, but no one kept anything for himself. Instead, everyone in turn gave away whatever they had received to others as a gesture to rejoice and to share with others the happiness and joy of the time[10]. It appears that all those present there were none other than so many manifestations of 'Kuber', the god of interminable wealth and treasury. (24)

[[10]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 194. The idea is that people took these charities or largesse not as alms or donations because they lacked in anything or had shortage of any material comfort, but they accepted everything as blessings and gifts to celebrate the auspicious occasion of birth of the four princes. Everyone accepted whatso came their way so as to feel privileged and blessed. This is because there was a huge and jostling crowd, and not all were able to reach the point from where things were being disbursed. Therefore, many could not get anything directly, and felt left-out. So, those who managed to reach the counters and get anything directly felt themselves as the luck ones. These 'lucky citizens' wished to share their happiness and joy with others as all the people of Ayodhya were selfless and of an excellent character. No sooner had a person given away what he had to the next person standing nearby him than someone else saw that the giver had nothing in hand, and thinking that this person hadn't got anything he immediately gave him whatsoever he had with him.]

Sage Vasistha then named the other three brothers as 'Bharat', 'Laxman' and 'Shatrughan'[11]. All these four sons (of king Dasrath) were so exalted and divine that the four grand fruits (rewards)[12] that a man gets for upholding Dharma and living a life according to its principles (i.e. for being righteous, selfless, honest, truthful, ethical and dutiful in all he does in his life) seem to derive their value and importance due to being blessed by them (phaladāyaka phala cārikē) (25).

[[11]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 197 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8.

[12]These four rewards are the following: (i) Artha—meaning financial prosperity and well-being, (ii) Dharma—the acclaim and rewards that accrue for observing the laws of propriety, probity, righteousness and up-righteousness), (iii) Kaam—meaning fulfillment of all desires, and (iv) Moksha—meaning emancipation and salvation.]

In this way, the four princes got most lovely and attractive names. From that time onwards, all the sorrows, worries and troubles of the women-folk of the city were removed for ever. [The women were earlier sorry because the king had no son and were troubled because there were no apparent heirs to the throne to protect them and the city after the death of king Dasrath. They feared invasions from enemies and ruin of their families. Now, all such fears vanished.] (26).

Tulsidas says that the creator Brahma ('bidhi'; the God who decides destiny) fulfilled all the desires of everyone. Even now (i.e. even in the present time and day), all the desires of everyone are fulfilled by chanting and singing the glory of those four brothers (27).

[Note—The 14 Bhuvans mentioned in stanza no. 17 are the following—

(A) The upper worlds called Urdhva Lokas are seven in number:—(i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, and (vii) Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds or lower worlds called Adhaha Loka:—(i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Sutal, (iv) Rasaatal, (v) Talaatal, (vi) Mahaatal, and (vii) Paataal. The total number of Lokas is fourteen according to the Padma Puran.

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

The Atharva Veda's *Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, verse no. 35 says that Brahma-Loka is like the ceremonial umbrella on the head of Lord Vishnu, while the seven nether worlds known as the 'Patal-Lokas' represent the Lord's feet.]

दुलार

राग बिलावल

(1/7)

सुभग सेज सोभित कौसिल्या रुचिर राम–सिसु गोद लिये।
बार–बार बिधुबदन बिलोकति लोचन चारु चकोर किये।। 1।।
कबहुँ पौढ़ि पयपान करावति, कबहूँ राखति लाइ हिये।
बालकेलि गावति हलरावति, पुलकति प्रेम–पियूष पिये।। 2।।

बिधि–महेस, मुनि–सुर सिहात सब, देखत अंबुद ओट दिये।
तुलसिदास ऐसो सुख रघुपति पै काहू तो पायो न बिये।। 3।।

dulāra

rāga bilāvala

(1/7)

subhaga sēja sōbhita kausilyā rucira rāma-sisu gōda liyē.
bāra-bāra bidhubadana bilōkati lōcana cāru cakōra kiyē.. 1..
kabahuṁ pauḍhi payapāna karāvati, kabahūṁ rākhati lā'i hiyē.
bālakēli gāvati halarāvati, pulakati prēma-piyūṣa piyē.. 2..
bidhi-mahēsa, muni-sura sihāta saba, dēkhata ambuda ōṭa diyē.
tulasidāsa aisō sukha raghupati pai kāhū tō pāyō na biyē.. 3..

Show of affection and love for the Child

Verse no. 1/7—Queen Kaushalya looks charming as she sits on a lovely bedstead with the bewitchingly beautiful infant Ram in her laps. She converts her eyes into a beautiful bird known as 'Chakor' (the Indian red legged partridge which constantly gazes at the moon) and repeatedly glances at the moon-like face of the child with affection (swirling in her heart and making her mind ecstatic) (1).

Sometimes she lies on the bed and lets the infant suckle her milk, at other times she holds the child to her bosom, or swings him in her cradled arms while singing (remembering and humming pleasantly) about the child's playful activities and pranks. All this makes her drink the nectar of affection and love of the divine child, and become thrilled in the process (2).

Brahma (the creator), Mahesh (Shiva, the concluder), sages and Gods—all of them hide behind the curtain of clouds and happily watch the enchanting scene of the mother showering her affection on her beloved child Ram, and the wondrous sight of exceeding wonder that the 'Lord of the world' behaves like an ordinary human child to oblige the mother.

Tulsidas says that Kaushalya was exceptionally fortunate, privileged and lucky that she could get that refined and highest form of happiness, joy and ecstasy by being personally able to attend to, play with and shower her unflinching love on the divine child Ram which no one else could get even in the royal household, what to talk of anyone else in this world (3).

राग सोरठ

(1/8)

ह्वै हौ लाल कबहिं बड़े बलि मैया।
राम लखन भावते भरत–रिपुवदन चारु चार्‌यो भैया।। 1।।
बाल बिभूषन बसन मनोहर अंगनि बिरचि बनैहों।
सोभा निरखि, निछावरि करि, उर लाइ बारने जैहों।। 2।।
छगन–मगन अँगना खेलिहौ मिलि, ठुमुकु–ठुमुकु कब धैहौ।
कलबल बचन तोतरे मंजुल कहि 'माँ' मोहिं बुलैहौ।। 3।।
पुरजन–सचिव, राउ–रानी सब, सेवक–सखा–सहेली।
लैहैं लोचन लाहु सुफल लखि ललित मनोरथ–बेली।। 4।।
जा सुखकी लालसा लटू सिव, सुक–सनकादि उदासी।
तुलसी तेहि सुखसिंधु कौसिला मगन, पै प्रेम–पियासी।। 5।।

rāga sōraṭha

(1/8)

hvai hau lāla kabahiṁ baṛē bali maiyā.
rāma lakhana bhāvatē bharata-ripudavana cāru cāryō bhaiyā.. 1..
bāla bibhūṣana basana manōhara aṅgani biraci banaihōṁ.
sōbhā nirakhi, nichāvari kari, ura lā'i bāranē jaihōṁ.. 2..
chagana-magana am̆ganā khēlihau mili, ṭhumuku-ṭhumuku kaba dhaihau.
kalabala bacana tōtarē manjula kahi 'mām̆' mōhiṁ bulaihau.. 3..
purajana-saciva, rā'u-rānī saba, sēvaka-sakhā-sahēlī.
laihaiṁ lōcana lāhu suphala lakhi lalita manōratha-bēlī.. 4..
jā sukhakī lālasā laṭū siva, suka-sanakādi udāsī.
tulasī tēhi sukhasindhu kausilā magana, pai prēma-piyāsī.. 5..

The Yearnings of Kaushalya

Verse no. 1/8—'Oh my dear sons (lāla)! Your mother earnestly wishes to know when will you all grow up? Dear Ram, Laxman and Bharat-Shatrughan! When will you lovely brothers become older? (1).

[The remarkable point to note here is that Kaushalya treats all the four sons equally. For her, all of them were like her own sons. As we move on with the story we shall find that all the four brothers loved each other as if they were the siblings of the same mother, and not step-brothers.]

When will it be that I shall make ornaments and garments befitting your attractive and glamorous bodies as you grow up in age. When would I be able to adorn and decorate your bodies with it, and shall feel exuberant and ecstatic at that magnificent view, clasp you to my heart and make various types of charities and largesse for your sake? (2).

When will you children play collectively together in the courtyard; when will you run strutting, tottering and staggering, and when will you call me 'mother' with your

sweet and pleasant voice that would have a charming lisp and stutter so typical of children of your age? (3).

When will the citizens of Ayodhya, the ministers, the king, the queen, the servants and the subordinates, the friends and the maids et al enjoy the fruits of their eyes by seeing the creeper of their life-long desires bearing ripe fruits that would represent fruition of their dreams?[1]" (4)

[[1]The creeper symbolises all the desires and dreams that the people of Ayodhya harboured in their minds and hearts. They wished that their king had an heir, and now that there are four princes the citizens wish that they could enjoy the sight of them playing around in the royal palace as well as in the city where the children would mingle with ordinary citizens who would then have an opportunity to directly interact with the four brothers and show their own love, affection and respect to them. The citizens as well as the mother hope that one day, in due course of time, these brothers would grow up to assume charge of the affairs of the kingdom. Then they would get married and bring in lovely brides. As time passes, the brothers would acquire immense fame and glory that would establish them in the world as the greatest rulers of all times. They would share the burden of the kingdom equally and have love for each other throughout their lives which would be long and full of achievements. This is the dream of mother Kaushalya and others in Ayodhya.]

Tulsidas says that the joy, the happiness and the bliss for which Shiva, Shukdeo (the sage parrot) and dispassionate sages like Sankadi etc. yearn and look forward to, Kaushalya is so lucky that she is completely soaked in it, she is experiencing it first-hand, but she still thirsts for more! (5).

(1/9)

पगनि कब चलिहौ चारौ भैया?
प्रेम–पुलकि, उर लाइ सुवन सब, कहति सुमित्रा मैया।। 1।।
सुंदर तनु सिसु–बसन–बिभूषन नखसिख निरखि निकैया।
दलि तृन, प्रान निछावरि करि करि लैहैं मातु बलैया।। 2।।
किलकनि, नटनि, चलनि, चितवनि, भजि मिलनि मनोहर तैया।
मनि–खंभनि–प्रतिबिंब झलक, छबि छलकिहै भरि अँगनैया।। 3।
बालबिनोद, मोद मंजुल बिधु, लीला ललित जुन्हैया।
भूपति पुन्य–पयोधि उमँग, घर–घर आनंद–बधैया।। 4।।
है हैं सकल सुकृत–सुख–भाजन, लोचन–लाहु लुटैया।
अनायास पाइहैं जनमफल तोतरें बचन सुनैया।। 5।।
भरत, राम, रिपुदवन, लषनके चरित–सरित अन्हवैया।
तुलसी तबके–से अजहुँ जानिबे रघुबर–नगर–बसैया।। 6।।

(1/9)

pagani kaba calihau cārau bhaiyā?
prēma-pulaki, ura lā'i suvana saba, kahati sumitrā maiyā.. 1..
sundara tanu sisu-basana-bibhūṣana nakhasikha nirakhi nikaiyā.

dali tr̥na, prāna nichāvari kari kari laihaiṁ mātu balaiyā.. 2..
kilakani, naṭani, calani, citavani, bhaji milani manōhara taiyā.
mani-khambhani-pratibimba jhalaka, chabi chalakihai bhari am̐ganaiyā.. 3.
bālabinōda, mōda man̐jula bidhu, līlā lalita junhaiyā.
bhūpati pun'ya-payōdhi umam̐ga, ghara-ghara ānanda-badhaiyā.. 4..
hvai haiṁ sakala sukr̥ta-sukha-bhājana, lōcana-lāhu luṭaiyā.
anāyāsa pā'ihaiṁ janamaphala tōtarēṁ bacana sunaiyā.. 5..
bharata, rāma, ripudavana, laṣanakē carita-sarita anhavaiyā.
tulasī tabakē-sē ajahum̐ jānibē raghubara-nagara-basaiyā.. 6..

Affection Shown by Sumitra

Verse no. 1/9—Mother Sumitra embraces all the children, becomes thrilled, and says, 'When will you four brothers walk on your legs? (1).

The mothers will break a straw (to caste off evil omens) and sacrifice their lives (meaning, feel fully contented and ecstatic) when they would see various ornaments and clothes, that befit a child, adorning you, as well as at the sight of beauty that would be effusing from your bodies from the toe-nails to the head (2).

The courtyard would be spilled over by the magnificent and beautiful image of you children as it is reflected from the gem-studded pillars of the palace as you cheer, dance, totter, see and run here and there behind and in front of each other to play around the place merrily (3).

The ocean representing Dasrath's righteous and noble deeds would swell into a high tide with billowing and crashing waves in the symbolic moonlight of the sight you children playing merrily around with a delighted and cheerful face which would be like the brilliantly illuminated face of the full moon[1]. This will cause felicitous and ceremonial songs to be sung in every household of the city; there would be universal celebrations everywhere (4).

[[1]Here, the beautiful face of the four brothers is compared to the splendorous disc of the full moon, their playful activities and cheerful chatterings as grown-up children to the moonlight, and Dasrath's ecstasy and a sense of fulfilment at this sight to the heaving ocean during high tide which occurs during the full moon as the moonlight falls on the surface of the ocean. Even as the full moon causes high tide in the ocean, your charming childish playful activities would cause the happiness in Dasrath's heart to swell and heave like a tide of joy and exhilaration.]

(Not only king Dasrath, but all and—) Everyone would reap the benefits of their eye sights, and enjoy the rewards of meritorious deeds done by them that produce fruits by way of immense happiness and joy. Indeed, all those who hear you talking pleasantly with a childish babble would inadvertently (unconsciously, without effort) get the fruit of taking birth in this world (i.e. they would feel themselves most fortunate and privileged, and extremely happy and joyous) (5)'.

Tulsidas says that the present-day residents of Ayodhya are to be likened to (considered equal to) or treated as being contemporaneous to those citizens of the place who lived there at that period of time in the hoary past when Lord Ram had actually taken birth in Ayodhya, and who had bathed in the holy river represented by the playful activities and glorious stories of Lords Sri Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan (6).

राग केदारा

(1 / 10)

चुपरि उबटि अन्हवाइकै नयन आँजे,
चिर रुचि तिलक गोरोचनको कियो है।
भ्रूपर अनूप मसिबिंदु, बारे बारे बार
बिलसत सीसपर, हेरि हरै हियो है।।1।।
मोदभरी गोद लिये लालति सुमित्रा देखि
देव कहैं, सबको सुकृत उपवियो है।
मातु, पितु, प्रिय, परिजन, पुरजन धन्य,
पुन्यपुंज पेखि पेखि प्रेमरस पियो है।।2।।
लोहित ललित लघु चरन–कमल चारु,
चाल चाहि सो छबि सुकबि जिय जियो है।
बालकेलि बातबस झलकि झलमलत
सोभाकी दीयटि मानो रूप–दीप दियो है।।3।।
राम–सिसु सानुज चरित चारु गाइ–सुनि
सुजनन सादर जनम–लाहु लियो है।
तुलसी बिहाइ दसरथ दसचारिपुर
ऐसे सुख जोग बिधि बिरच्यो न बियो है।।4।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/10)

cupari ubaṭi anhavā'ikai nayana ām̐jē,
cira ruci tilaka gōrōcanakō kiyō hai.
bhrūpara anūpa masibindu, bārē bārē bāra
bilasata sīsapara, hēri harai hiyō hai..1..
mōdabharī gōda liyē lālati sumitrā dēkhi
dēva kahaiṁ, sabakō sukr̥ta upaviyō hai.
mātu, pitu, priya, parijana, purajana dhan'ya,
pun'yapun̄ja pēkhi pēkhi prēmarasa piyō hai..2..
lōhita lalita laghu carana-kamala cāru,
cāla cāhi sō chabi sukabi jiya jiyō hai.
bālakēli bātabasa jhalaki jhalamalata
sōbhākī dīyaṭi mānō rūpa-dīpa diyō hai..3..
rāma-sisu sānuja carita cāru gā'i-suni
sujanana sādara janama-lāhu liyō hai.

tulasī bihā'i dasaratha dasacāripura
aisē sukha jōga bidhi biracyō na biyō hai..4..

Verse no. 1/10—The Mothers rubbed oil and 'Ubtan' (a paste made of powdered gram flour etc.) on the skin of the children and bathed them, applied eye-ointment to their eye-lids, and then applied the Tilak-mark on their foreheads using 'Gorochan' ('gōrōcana'; a yellow scented liquid prepared from the bile of cow which is then mixed with cow-dung and used as a paste).

Thereafter, a dot like that of a mole was then made between their eye-brows (just above the nose). [To make this dot, the black soot from a lamp is mixed with oil to make a paste that is then used to mark the dot on the forehead. This is used as a charm to protect the infant from harm of evil eyes.]

There are tiny hairs on the head of the four children that make their faces very charming so much so that the sight enthrals the beholder (1).

Watching Sumitra lift the children most affectionately onto her laps and showing love to them, the Gods marvel and pronounce (proclaim) that the good deeds and righteousness of all have manifested themselves now. [The Gods are exhilarated at the sight of the children being showered with love and affection by their mothers.]

(The Gods exclaim that—) These mothers (Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi), the father (king Dasrath), the dear relatives and the citizens are all privileged and praiseworthy and fortunate that they are able to watch their beloved Lord Ram—who is a treasury and embodiment of righteousness, noble deeds and virtues—from so close quarters, and thus are able to drink (enjoy) the nectar symbolising love and affection for the Lord, and are even able to express their joy for this rare privilege (2).

The hearts of good poets are kept enthralled and motivated (to write beautiful poetry) by watching the most attractive and reddish (or pink) lotus-like little feet of Sri Ram, as well as by the image of Lord moving about with his charming gait.

Sri Ram—who is full of childish pranks, frolicks and mischiefs—appears as if an earthen lamp representing the combined stellar qualities of beauty, charm, majesty, glamour and glory of this world have assumed a personified form to shine brightly in this world atop a symbolic wall representing the qualities of magnificence and splendour, with the flame of this attractive lamp flickering and waving majestically in the pleasant breeze that symbolises the playful activities of the child[1] (3).

[[1]In this stanza, Lord Ram is compared to the 'earthen lamp' because he shows the world the light of the noble path of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct and thought), as well as of spiritual bliss and ecstasy. The Lord's childish activities are the compared to the 'pleasant breeze' that blows over this lamp to make its light flicker and its flame sway from side to side. And the world itself is likened to the 'wall' on which this lamp is placed to illuminate both sides of existence in this mortal world—the temporal life and the spiritual life.

In other words, though Lord Ram is absolutely steady and calm internally because he is dispassionate and neutral towards everything associated with this gross material existence, but his external behaviour as a child gives the impression that the Lord is like an ordinary human being who is buffeted by the events and moved by the prevailing circumstances of this world as well as of his personal life.]

People who are righteous, noble and virtuous have reaped the benefits of taking birth by reverentially and devotedly singing and hearing the childhood stories of Lord Sri Ram along with his younger brothers.

Tulsidas observes that except for king Dasrath, Brahma (the creator) has not created such a fortunate and favourable circumstance for anyone else anywhere in all the 14 Bhuvans of this creation[2]. (4).

[[2]That is, no one in this whole creation is as fortunate and privileged as king Dasrath is. There is no wonder in it—for the 'Lord of the World' has been gracious enough to oblige Dasrath by manifesting himself as his son and allowing Dasrath to shower all love and affection he can muster on the Lord like no one else has ever been able to do in this living creation. Hence, Dasrath is surely most fortunate and lucky amongst all the living beings in this creation.]

(1 / 11)

राम–सिसु गोद महामोद भरे दसरथ,
कौसिलाहु ललकि लषनलाल लये हैं।
भरत सुमित्रा लये, कैकयी सत्रुसमन,
तन प्रेम–पुलक मगन मन भये हैं।।1।।
मेढ़ी लटकन मनि–कनक–रचित, बाल–
भूषन बनाइ आछे अंग अंग ठये हैं।
चाहि चुचुकारि चूमि लालत लावत उर
तैसे फल पावत जैसे सुबीज बये हैं।।2।।
घन–ओट बिबुध बिलोकि बरषत फूल
अनुकूल बचन कहत नेह नये हैं।
ऐसे पितु, मातु, पूत, त्रिय, परिजन बिधि
जानियत आयु भरि येई निरमये हैं।।3।।
'अजर अमर होहु', 'करौ हरिहर छोहु'
जरठ जठेरिन्ह आसिरबाद दये हैं।
तुलसी सराहैं भाग तिन्हके, जिन्हके हिये
डिंभ–राम–रूप–अनुराग रंग रये हैं।।4।।

(1/11)

rāma-sisu gōda mahāmōda bharē dasaratha,
kausilāhu lalaki laṣanalāla layē haiṁ.
bharata sumitrā layē, kaikayī satrusamana,
tana prēma-pulaka magana mana bhayē haiṁ..1..
mēṛhī laṭakana mani-kanaka-racita, bāla-
bhūṣana banā'i āchē aṅga aṅga ṭhayē haiṁ.
cāhi cucukāri cūmi lālata lāvata ura
taisē phala pāvata jaisē subīja bayē haiṁ..2..
ghana-ōṭa bibudha bilōki baraṣata phūla
anukūla bacana kahata nēha nayē haiṁ.

aisē pitu, mātu, pūta, triya, parijana bidhi
jāniyata āyu bhari yē'ī niramayē haiṁ..3..
'ajara amara hōhu', 'karau harihara chōhu'
jaraṭha jaṭhērinha āsirabāda dayē haiṁ.
tulasī sarāhaiṁ bhāga tinhakē, jinhakē hiyē
ḍimbha-rāma-rūpa-anu
rāga raṅga rayē haiṁ..4..

Affection shown by the Parents

Verse no. 1/11—King Dasrath is brimming over with extreme delight and joy at having Sri Ram in his lap. Similarly, Kaushalya too has longingly (i.e. affectionately) taken Laxman in her arms, while Sumitra has taken Bharat and Kaikeyi has lifted Shatrughan in their arms respectively. At this moment, their bodies are thrilled and their hearts are full of joy and happiness (1).

The hairs of the children have been interwined into attractive plaits on their heads from which are dangling tiny pendants of gold that are studded with precious gems. Their bodies have been adorned by lovely clothes and ornaments befitting their age. The parents affectionately watch the children, caress them and kiss them to show their love and endearment, and clasp them to their hearts (bosoms). They (the parents) are getting the lovely fruits according to the good seeds they had sown. [They had done noble deeds, so the reward is also in consonant with those deeds—they have had the privilege to have the 'Lord of the World' himself become their son.] (2).

The Gods watch this marvel from behind the curtain of clouds and shower flowers. They bless the parents as well as the children with renewed affection, and proclaim that the Creator has created only these worthy mothers, father, sons, kin and relatives in all his creative life. [That is, the Gods applaud the great fortune of the parents that they have been blessed with such divine children as Lord Ram and his three brothers. They also declare that ever since the world came into existence this is the first time they have ever seen the marvelous creative skill of the world's creator in its best form and magnificently displayed.] (3).

Elders (in the family as well as in the city of Ayodhya) bless them (the parents and the children), saying, 'Be of long life and be disease free; let Brahma and Shiva be always kind and gracious upon you'.

Tulsidas praises the good fortune of those whose mind and heart are coloured (imbued, drenched, soaked, submerged) in love and affection for Lord Sri Ram who is in the form of a child (4).

राग आसावरी

(1/12)

'आजु अनरसे हैं भोरके, पय पियत न नीके।

रहत न बैठे, ठाढ़े, पालने झुलावत हू, रोवत राम मेरो
सो सोच सबहीके।।1।।
देव, पितर, ग्रह पूजिये तुला तौलिये घीके।
तदपि कबहुँ कबहुँक सखी ऐसेहि अरत जब
परत दृष्टि दुष्ट तीके।।2।।
बेगि बोलि कुलगुर, छुऔ माथे हाथ अमीके।
सुनत आइ ऋषि कुस हरे नरसिंह मंत्र पढ़े, जो
सुमिरत भय भीके।।3।।
जासु नाम सरबस सदासिव–पारबतीके।
ताहि झरावति कौसिला, यह रीति प्रीतिकी हिय
हुलसति तुलसीके।।4।।

rāga āsāvarī

(1/12)

'āju anarasē haiṁ bhōrakē, paya piyata na nīkē.
rahatana baiṭhē, ṭhāṛhē, pālanē jhulāvata hū, rōvata rāma mērō sō sōca sabahīkē..1..
dēva, pitara, graha pūjiyē tulā tauliyē ghīkē.
tadapi kabahuṁ kabahuṁka sakhī aisēhi arata jaba parata dr̥ṣṭi duṣṭa tīkē..2..
bēgi bōli kulagura, chu'au māthē hātha amīkē.
sunata ā'i r̥si kusa harē narasinha mantra paṛhē, jō sumirata bhaya bhīkē..3..
jāsu nāma sarabasa sadāsiva-pārabatīkē.
tāhi jharāvati kausilā, yaha rīti prītikī hiya hulasati tulasīkē..4..

Evil Spell on Child Ram

Verse no. 1/12—(Kaushalya is worried because her beloved son Ram seems to be sick. She doubts that someone has cast an evil spell on him. So she discusses the matter with her friend, one of the senior maids of the palace and her companion—) 'My Ram is a little uneasy and mentally disturbed today; he does not even drink his milk properly. He is constantly weeping and wailing whether he sits or stands, and even putting him in a cradle or a crib (so that he can go to sleep) seems to have no effect in calming him down. This has caused great worry and consternation to me as well as for everyone else (1).

The Gods, the ancestors and the planets are being worshipped daily; even Ghee (clarified butter) is donated by weight (tulā tauliyē ghīkē)[1]. Still, oh friend (sakhī), whenever a wicked woman casts her evil eyes on the child, he gets agitated and uncomfortable (2).

[[1]This refers to the practice whereby a person is weighed on a scale and an equivalent weight of clarified butter is given to him as alms or charity. Conversely, the person on whom it is supposed an evil eye has been cast is weighed and an equivalent amount of butter is given to beggars and other alms seekers as charity so that the evil eye is neutralised and exorcised.

Kaushalya laments that inspite of her best efforts to ward off the evil spell and take necessary precautions, if some wicked woman glances at the child Ram he becomes sick and restless. What should she do now?]

The family's moral preceptor (Vasistha) should be summoned immediately. He should touch the child's head with his holy hands so as to bless him and cast-off the evil spell. '

Hearing this (i.e. upon getting the news of Sri Ram's sickness), the great sage came, and using a broken reed or twig, he said the 'Narsingh Mantra'[2] that acts as protective shield because this Mantra (mystical formula) is so effective and potent that even 'fear' itself is afraid of it (3).

[[2]The 'Narsingh Mantra' pertains to Lord Narsingh who was a half-lion and half-man incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It is believed that the Mantra of Lord Narsingh is able to neutralize and exorcise any evil spell that has afflicted a child. The 'Mantra' consists of syllables, words and phrases having dynamic mystical powers specific to a particular deity. Once this Mantra is invoked, no evil spirit can dare affect a person who has got the protective shield of this Mantra. This Mantra has been described in Narsingh Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda.]

(Tulsidas marvels at the irony that) He—whose name is most dear to Lord Shiva and Parvati (Shiva's consort)—is being subjected to the protective charms by Kaushalya! Tulsidas feels highly euphoric at this tradition of showing love and affection for the Lord (which is one of the many ways of having devotion for the Lord and serving him as one's closest 'Dear One')[2] (4).

[[2]Lord Ram is the Supreme Lord of this world, and therefore it is incredulous to even think that such a lowly thing as an 'evil eye' would affect the Lord at all. But the Lord lets his devotee serve him the way he or she wants. In this case, the Lord allowed Kaushalya to enjoy the fruit of her devotion for the Lord by letting her treat him as his son who has become sick and needs special care. Kaushalya is worried about the welfare of her beloved 'son' Ram, and this keeps her mind perpetually riveted on the Lord which is a tool of 'Bhakti' or achieving complete devotion.

Therefore, though Lord Ram was eternally immune to getting affected by such foul things as evil spells or evil eyes—for the fact is that the mere mention of the Lord's name is sufficient to eliminate all evils in this world and free all the creatures from their spells—but still the Lord wished to let Kaushalya show her devotion for him by way of worrying for his welfare as if he has fallen sick due to some bad eye falling upon him.]

(1 / 13)

माथे हाथ ऋषि जब दियो राम किलकन लागे।
महिमा समुझि, लीला बिलोकि गुरु सजल नयन, तनु पुलक,
रोम रोम जागे।।1।।
लिये गोद, धाए गोदतें, मोद मुनि मन अनुरागे।
निरखि मातु हरषी हिये आली–ओट कहति मृदु बचन
प्रेमके–से पागे।।2।।
तुम्ह सुरतरु रघुबंसके, देत अभिमत माँगे।
मेरे बिसेषि गति रावरी, तुलसी प्रसाद जाके सकल

(1/13)

māthē hātha ṛ̥si jaba diyō rāma kilakana lāgē.
mahimā samujhi, līlā bilōki guru sajala nayana, tanu pulaka,
rōma rōma jāgē..1..
liyē gōda, dhā'ē gōdatēm̐, mōda muni mana anurāgē.
nirakhi mātu haraṣī hiyē ālī-ōṭa kahati mr̥du bacana
prēmakē-sē pāgē..2..
tumha surataru raghubansakē, dēta abhimata mām̐gē.
mērē bisēṣi gati rāvarī, tulasī prasāda jākē sakala
amaṅgala bhāgē..3..

Removal of the Evil Spell

Verse no. 1/13—As soon as the sage (Vasistha) placed his hand on the head of Sri Ram, he immediately began to smile and let out a shrill cry of joy. Realising the glory of the Lord, seeing his childish plays and pranks, the Guru's eyes welled-up with affectionate tears, his body became thrilled and his hairs stood on end due to excitement and exhilaration (1).

He lifted Lord Sri Ram onto his laps, but the child managed to escape, slipping from his grasp and running away (of course with a shrill cry of joy at having outwitted the sage, and with eyes twinkling with mischief) that gladdened the heart of the sage no end and caused his mind to feel emotionally ecstatic even as a wave of surging love and affection welled-up and billowed in his heart.

Seeing this, the mother (Kaushalya) became extremely euphoric and glad at heart, and she stood behind a maid. Soaked in love and delight, she said the following sweet words while addressing sage Vasistha—(2).

'Oh Guru! You are like the Kalpa Tree (the all wish fulfilling tree of the Gods) for the lineage of king Raghu for you bestow all the desired things and blessings when asked for.'[1]

[[1]Here, Kaushalya refers to the exorcising of the evil spirit or evil spell upon Lord Ram as soon as sage Vasistha had touched the child's head with his hands. The allusion to the 'Kalpa Tree' implies that whenever the family needed any kind of help, their priest and preceptor sage Vasistha was always ready with a solution.]

Tulsidas says addresses his Lord Ram and says—'I am specially dependent upon you (Oh Lord Sri Ram), by the grace of whom all inauspicious and evil tidings and portents have been removed and eliminated'[2] (3).

[[2]Here, Tulsidas seems to have interjected, cutting mother Kaushalya short in mid-sentence, and sort of completed her statement by pleading more forcefully on her behalf. He asks Vasistha to be ever graceful and kind on the child Ram so that he never cries or wails again, or any evil spirit could cast its spell on him any time again.]

(1 / 14)

अमिय–बिलोकनि करि कृपा मुनिबर जब जोए।
तबतें राम अरु भरत, लषन, रिपुदवन, सुमुख सखि, सकल
सुवन सुख सोए।।1।।
सुमित्रा लाय हिये फनि मनि ज्यों गोए।
तुलसी नेवछावरि करति मातु अतिप्रेम–मगन–मन,
सजल सुलोचन कोये।।2।।

(1/14)

amiya-bilōkani kari kr̥pā munibara jaba jō'ē.
tabatēṁ rāma aru bharata, laṣana, ripudavana, sumukha sakhi, sakala
suvana sukha sō'ē..1..
sumitrā lāya hiyē phani mani jyōṁ gō'ē.
tulasī nēvachāvari karati mātu atiprēma-magana-mana,
sajala sulōcana kōyē..2..

Lord Sri Ram Sleeps Peacefully

Verse no. 1/14—[Kaushalya addresses her friend, one of her companions in the palace. She tells her—] 'Oh friend! Ever since the sage has kindly looked (or has cast his benignant eyes) at the children, Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, are all sleeping peacefully.' (1).

Even as a serpent hides its 'Mani' (which is a luminescent sac on the hood of a special category of snakes), Sumitra has clasped the children to her bosom.

[As soon as the evil spell was removed and the children felt comfortable, mother Sumitra immediately lifted them and clasped them close to her bosom as if to hide them from any other evil eye.]

Tulsidas says that mother Kaushalya has become soaked in love and affection, and is giving away charities even as the corners of her eyes have become wet with tears (of joy and happiness at seeing the elimination of the evil spirit and the cheerful faces of the children once again) (2).

(1 / 15)

मातु सकल, कुल–गुर–बधू, प्रिय सखी सुहाई।
सादर सब मंगल किए महि–मनि–महेस पर
सबनि सुधेनु दुहाई।।1।।
बोलि भूपभूसुर लिये अति बिनय बड़ाई।
पूजि पायँ, सनमानि, दान दिये, लहि असीस, सुनि
बरषैं सुमन सुरसाईं।।2।।

घर–घर पुर बाजन लगीं आनंद–बधाई।
सुख–सनेह तेहि समयको तुलसी जानै जाको चोर्‌यो
है चित चहुँ भाई।।3।।

(1/15)

mātu sakala, kula-gura-badhū, priya sakhī suhā'ī.
sādara saba maṅgala ki'ē mahi-mani-mahēsa para
sabani sudhēnu duhā'ī..1..
bōli bhūpabhūsura liyē ati binaya baṛā'ī.
pūji pāyaṁ, sanamāni, dāna diyē, lahi asīsa, suni
baraṣaiṁ sumana surasā'īṁ..2..
ghara-ghara pura bājana lagīṁ ānanda-badhā'ī.
sukha-sanēha tēhi samayakō tulasī jānai jākō cōryō
hai cita cahuṁ bhā'ī..3..

Worship of Lord Shiva, Brahmins and Other Celebrations

(to celebrate the recovery of the four brothers from the evil eye)

Verse no. 1/15—[When sage Vasistha successfully cast-off the evil spell from the four brothers, Lord Ram and his younger brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, the entire household erupted in joy and celebrations. Immediately arrangements were made to offer worship to chief Gods such as Shiva and Brahma, and other religious rites and ceremonies were held.]

Kaushalya and other mothers (i.e. Sumitra and Kaikeyi), the wife of the Guru (i.e. Arundhati) and their friends and maids did all the auspicious rituals for such occasion in accordance to established tradition. They got cows milked so that this freshly taken milk could be offered to Lord Shiva who is like the ornament of this earth (i.e. is the best and most exalted of all the Gods) (1).

Thereafter, the king (Dasrath) called the Brahmins with the greatest of respect, offered prayer and worship to them, washed their feet to show his respect and obeisance, gave them various types of alms and largesse, and in turn received blessings from them—hearing which, the king of Gods (Indra) showered flowers (from the heaven) upon the king (2).

Melodious songs of joyous celebrations and felicitations galore began to be sung in every household of the city. Tulsidas says that the atmosphere of joy, delight, love and affection of that time can be known (or realised and experienced) only by those whose mind and heart are stolen (cōryō hai cita) by the four brothers (Ram, Laxman, Bharat, Shatrughan)[1] (3).

[[1]Stealing of the mind and heart of someone is a figure of speech which simply means that the person's mind and heart are lost in the thoughts of the object of his adoration and love. In this case the objects of such adoration and love are the four brothers, and it does not limit itself to the love as we understand in its temporal

context, but it is the devotee's love for his beloved Lord that has a spiritual and ethereal dimension. Therefore, only those in whose heart there is love for the Lord in the form of a child, in this case as Lord Ram and his equally divine brothers who were identical images of the Lord, only such blessed souls would understand and realise the happiness of the time when the evil spell was exorcised and the four children began to play and smile once again.]

राग धनाश्री

(1/16)

या सिसुके गुन नाम–बड़ाई।
को कहि सकै, सुनहु नरपति, श्रीपति समान प्रभुताई।। 1।।
जद्यपि बुधि, बय, रूप, सील, गुन समै चारु चार्‌यो भाई।
तदपि लोक–लोचन–चकोर–ससि राम भगत–सुखदाई।। 2।।
सुर, नर, मुनि करि अभय, दनुज हति, हरहि, धरनि गरुआई।
कीरति बिमल बिस्व–अघमोचनि रहिहि सकल जग छाई।। 3।।
याके चरन–सरोज कपट तजि जे भजिहैं मन लाई।
ते कुल जुगल सहित तरिहैं भव, यह न कछू अधिकाई।। 4।।
सुनि गुरबचन पुलक तन दंपति, हरष न हृदय समाई।
तुलसिदास अवलोकि मातु–मुख प्रभु मनमें मुसुकाई।। 5।।

rāga dhanāśrī

(1/16)

yā sisukē guna nāma-baṛā'ī.
kō kahi sakai, sunahu narapati, śrīpati samāna prabhutā'ī.. 1..
jadyapi budhi, baya, rūpa, sīla, guna samai cāru cāryō bhā'ī.
tadapi lōka-lōcana-cakōra-sasi rāma bhagata-sukhadā'ī.. 2..
sura, nara, muni kari abhaya, danuja hati, harahi, dharani garu'ā'ī.
kīrati bimala bisva-aghamōcani rahihi sakala jaga chā'ī.. 3..
yākē carana-sarōja kapaṭa taji jē bhajihaiṁ mana lā'ī.
tē kula jugala sahita tarihaiṁ bhava, yaha na kachū adhikā'ī.. 4..
suni gurabacana pulaka tana dampati, haraṣa na hr̥daya samā'ī.
tulasidāsa avalōki mātu-mukha prabhu manamēṁ musukā'ī.. 5..

Guru Vasistha's Prophesies

Verse no. 1/16—Sage Vashishtha[1] said to king Dasrath, 'Oh king, listen! Who can describe (or prophesize) about the grand virtues, the eclectic qualities, the various divine names and the glories or the specialties of this child (Ram)[2]? His majesty, fame

and greatness are no less than that of Laxmi-pati (i.e. Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation) himself[3] (1).

[[1]Sage Vasistha was the chief priest of king Dasrath. He was a wise man and a son of the creator Brahma. He knew who Lord Ram actually was. So one day he made the following prophesy as narrated herein below.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 197.

[3]Lord Ram was none else but Lord Vishnu himself in a human form. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 186 and its following Chaupai line nos. 1-7.]

Though all the four brothers are equal in their virtues of unmatched wisdom, intelligence, age, beauty, charm, character, noble qualities and other such grand qualities and attributes, yet Lord Ram, who gives happiness and delight to his devotees, is especial amongst them just like the full moon is for the eyes of the bird called Chakor (Indian red-legged partridge)[4] representing the creatures of the entire world (2).

[[4]This bird is believed to be so enamoured of the full moon that when this moon rises in the sky, the bird keeps its gaze fixed on it. The same bird pays no heed to the moon either one day before or after the full-moon night, though the difference between these three nights is almost negligible and imperceptible. In the present context of this stanza it means that just like this bird Chakor that devotes its attention exclusively to the moon on the full-moon night though the brilliance of the moon one day before and after this particular night is almost the same for all practical purposes, the creatures of this world look up to Lord Ram as their only saviour and protector though all the other three brothers too have the same qualities as much as Lord Ram. All the four brothers are equally charming and virtuous, but like the full moon Lord Ram stands out amongst them.]

Lord Ram will make the Gods, the humans, the sages, the seers and the hermits etc. fearless by slaying (i.e. completely eliminating) the demons (who have been endlessly tormenting these pious and humble souls without rhyme or reason). This deed of the Lord would help him to remove the burden of this world (for which he has incarnated himself in the first place)[5]. His magnificent fame and stupendous glory as the one who eliminates sins, evils, vices, perversions and other misdemeanours of the entire world will spread in all the directions (3).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Sortha/Doha no. 183—to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 197.]

Those who would worship him (Lord Ram) and concentrate their mind and heart on his holy feet, with honesty and sincerity (i.e. have complete devotion for and faith in the Lord), would not only be able to cross this mortal and gross world themselves but would also be empowered to do the same for their kith and kin, including all the members of the family of their father and mother up and down the line—there is no doubt and wonder in it.

[That is, they would become so pious and holy that anyone coming in contact with them would become equally blessed by their grace. All their past ancestors and all the members of their current generation would benefit from the Lord's grace.] (4). '

Hearing these words of profound importance said by the Guru (Vasistha), the parents (of Lord Ram and his brothers) were thrilled and excited. A sense of immense contentedness, joy and delight surged in their hearts and overwhelmed them.

Tulsidas says that when the Lord (Sri Ram) saw the happy face of his mother (Kaushalya) at that moment, he too smiled and felt happy in his heart[6] (5).

[[6]The Lord is very merciful and loving. Though his present physical form was that of a child, he in reality was the Father of the whole creation. So his smiling has two connotations here—he smiled because of the power of Maya or delusions that led his worldly mother Kaushalya to believe that Ram was her child instead of understanding the fact that he was no one's child but rather the Supreme Father of creation, and the second reason for the smile was that the Lord feels very happy when his devotees and subjects are happy.

Remember: Kaushalya may appear on the face to be Ram's worldly mother in the present dispensation, because this is what she had wanted as a boon from the Supreme Being when she had done severe Tapa (penance and austerity) on some earlier occasion, but from the cosmic perspective of this creation she is just another creature and as much a subject of the kingdom of the Supreme Lord as others. So the Lord smiled at her delusions and ignorance. He also marveled at the phenomenal power of his own 'Maya Shakti', the cosmic power of the Lord to create delusions in this world and keep all the creatures enchanted by it.

The Lord was amused because if this Maya did not spare such an exalted soul as Kaushalya who was very privileged and occupied a specially high position amongst the Lord's devotees because of the simple fact that the Lord had agreed to come down to her place as her son and allowed her to life him in her arms, what will come of others who are ordinary mortals and not so privileged?

Why does the Lord create Maya in the first place? Well, it is necessary for him to do so to keep the wheel of creation, the wheel of birth and death, the wheel of deeds and their consequences, turning eternally. After all, it is 'he' and no one else who had set the wheel of creation rotating, and so he is himself responsible for its going on rotating endlessly. If Maya and its effects are removed, the whole world would cease to matter for the self-realised and enlightened creature who would be able to see the Truth behind this smokescreen of Maya.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 141—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 152; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 187.]

राग बिलावल

(1/17)

अवध आजु आगमी एकु आयो।
करतल निरखि कहत सब गुनगन, बहुतन्ह परिचौ पायो।। 1।।
बूढ़ो बड़ो प्रमानिक ब्राह्मन संकर नाम सुहायो।
सँग सिसुसिष्य, सुनत कौसल्या भीतर भवन बुलायो।। 2।।
पायँ पखारि, पूजि दियो आसन असन बसन पहिरायो।
मेले चरन चारु चार्‌यो सुत माथे हाथ दिवायो।। 3।।
नखसिख बाल बिलोकि बिप्रतनु पुलक, नयन जल छायो।
लै लै गोद कमल–कर निरखत, उर प्रमोद न अमायो।। 4।।

जनम प्रसंग कह्यो कौसिक मिस सीय–स्वयंबर गायो।
राम, भरत, रिपुदवन, लखनको जय सुख सुजस सुनायो।। 5।।
तुलसिदास रनिवास रहसबस, भयो सबको मन भायो।
सनमान्यो महिदेव असीसत सानँद सदन सिधायो।। 6।।

rāga bilāvala

(1/17)

avadha āju āgamī ēku āyō.
karatala nirakhi kahata saba gunagana, bahutanha paricai pāyō.. 1..
būṛhō baṛō pramānika brāhmana saṅkara nāma suhāyō.
saṁga sisusiṣya, sunata kausalyā bhītara bhavana bulāyō.. 2..
pāyaṁ pakhāri, pūji diyō āsana asana basana pahirāyō.
mēlē carana cāru cāryō suta māthē hātha divāyō.. 3..
nakhasikha bāla bilōki bipratanu pulaka, nayana jala chāyō.
lai lai gōda kamala-kara nirakhata, ura pramōda na amāyō.. 4..
janama prasaṅga kahyō kausika misa sīya-svayambara gāyō.
rāma, bharata, ripudavana, lakhanakō jaya sukha sujasa sunāyō.. 5..
tulasidāsa ranivāsa rahasabasa, bhayō sabakō mana bhāyō.
sanamān'yō mahidēva asīsata sānaṁda sadana sidhāyō.. 6..

Lord Shiva as a Soothsayer

Verse no. 1/17—[Once, Lord Shiva assumed the form of an elderly Brahmin soothsayer, an oracle, and came to Ayodhya looking for an opportunity to meet Lord Ram who had taken birth there as a child. He hoped that he would be summoned by the child's mother to learn what the future holds for the little one as is usually the wont of mothers who wish to ascertain how her child would fare in the world. This chance would help Shiva to verify if the child born in Ayodhya and named as 'Ram' is indeed his revered Lord Ram and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who had on a previous occasion promised the Gods that he would come down to earth to get rid of the scourge of the demons. This would also help Lord Shiva to pay his personal homage to Lord Ram and silently assure the latter of his full personal support.]

The news reached mother Kaushalya that—'A soothsayer, who is also a renowned oracle, an astrologer, a palmist, an astrophysicist, a geomantist and a clairvoyant who knew of the past as well as the future (āgamī), has arrived in Ayodhya today. He can describe all the characters by seeing one's palm. Many people have found out (or witnessed) the truth of his words (1).

That old Brahmin (the soothsayer) is very truthful and trustworthy. His name is very sweet and pleasant to hear, and he is called 'Shankar'. He is accompanied with a young disciple who is like his child[1].'

Hearing this, mother Kaushalya summoned him inside the palace (2).

[[1]Though it is very difficult to ascertain who this child was as no where he is named, but its most probable that he was Hanuman, one of the forms of Lord Shiva and who had served Lord Ram later on when the Lord had gone to the forest and Sita, his wife, was stolen by the demons. Hanuman is considered as one of the greatest and dearest devotees of Lord Ram. Since Shiva's this particular form, which was his eleventh form known as Rudra, was to serve Lord Ram during his worldly sojourn, Shiva wished to introduce the duo, Lord Ram and Hanuman, to each other. No other character fits more properly into this episode than Hanuman because Shiva himself took the initiative to let the two, Hanuman and his Lord Ram, come into contact with each other and get acquainted.]

She washed his feet in reverence, worshipped him, offered him a epecial seat of respect, fed him and honoured him by offering raiments and robes of honour. Then she put the four children at his beautiful (charming, attractive, holy) feet and made him bless them by putting his palms on their heads (3).

Observing those children closely, from the toe nail to the tuft of hair on the crest of their heads, that Brahmin (i.e. Lord Shiva) knew no bounds for his happiness, joy and good luck so much so that his body was thrilled with excitement and exhilaration, and his eyes were filled with tears (of love, affection and joy). Then he lifted the children onto his laps and examined their open palms. At that time (by having a real-life Darshan or divine viewing of his dearest Lord Ram, and being able to place his beloved Lord on his lap), his heart was overwhelmed and was spilling over with joy and delight (like a heaving ocean with buffeting and billowing waves that crash into each other and rise even higher on the next turn) (4).

Thereafter, the soothsayer-Brahmin described (narrated) the incidents (the merriments, rejoicings and celebrations in Ayodhya and the exhilaration among the Gods) at the time when the children were born[1], about the 'Swayambar' (a marriage system in which the marriage is determined on the basis of certain pre-set conditions, generally by the parents of the bride) with Sita on the excuse of going to protect the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra[2], as well as the future fairest of fames, notables of names, the gloriest of glories, the greatest of victories, the highest of achievements, the best of successes, the excellence of pleasures, the heights of delights and unparallel renown Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Satrughan would get in times to come[3] (5).

[[1]Shiva narrated the events of the past to establish his credentials and to prove that he indeed can read the palm like an expert astrologer and clairvoyant—so that the audience would believe what he tells them about the future of the four children.

[2]This episode is described in the present book Geetawali, Baal Kand, from verse no. 47—to 108 which we shall read in due course.

[3]Shiva—the palmist, the geomantist, the astrophysicist, the astrologer, the soothsayer and the clairvoyant, who is also the wisest amongst the entire pantheon of Gods and was the one who had advised all the Gods and Mother Earth to pray to Lord Vishnu if they wanted succour from the tyranny of the demons (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 185)—had come to determine positively and verify with no doubts left if the child whom the Gods are assuming to be Lord Vishnu is indeed authentically the latter. Remember: the enemy—the demons—was formidable, and there was no scope for making errors of judgement.

So Shiva had come personally to ascertain facts and report back to the Gods in heaven. Having examined the child, Lord Ram, closely and convinced that the child was indeed Lord Vishnu in his form, Shiva predicted the future in veiled terms because he did not wish to disclose the Lord's true identity lest it would alert the demons and the latter would either devise a device to overcome their opponent while he was still in his infancy and before he would reach adulthood when he could cause any harm to them, or else they would fortify their own defences and make it all the more difficult for Lord Ram to eliminate them easily, or it may also happen that the demons would run away, abandon their capital Lanka and go hide somewhere from where it would be literally impossible for a human form of the Lord to dig them out.

In a nutshell, Shiva the soothsayer assured mother Kaushalya thus: "Know then thouest that this little one shall approve of himself to be strong, invincible, valiant, brave, wise, intelligent, most loved by all the creatures of the Creator's creation, and be unmatched in virtues and glories of the grandest kind amongst all the kings of his time when he grows up to a man's estate. But, and don't be afraid, his days shall happen upon sundry troubles and challenges, but they he would conquer all of them by his steadfastness and majesty, and these travails would only help him by bringing the shine and sheen out of him, for verily no one in the Creator's creation suffereth not and it is the blessed one who is polished and sheened by this toil and moil of life for these act as enhancers of his strength, valour, glory and fame. So, everything is perfect and alright."]

Tulsidas says—Hearing this, the whole palace household felt gladdened and submerged in extreme joy and happiness because all liked what he (the Brahmin-soothsayer; Lord Shiva) had said. They showed great honour and reverence to that old Brahmin, and he, in return, blessed them profusely, and then went his way (full of extreme delight, fully contented, and euphoric at having met his Lord and shown his affection on him at so close quarters without being known to others and succeeding in his secret mission to ascertain if this child was indeed the Lord God the Redeemer, the Almighty and the Holy One who had come to give succour to the Gods, Mother Earth and sages and saints who were being terrorised by the demons) (6).

राग केदार

(1/18)

पौढ़िये लालन, पालने हौं झुलावौं।
कर पद मुख चखकमल लसत लखि लोचन–भँवर भुलावौं।। 1।।
बाल–बिनोद–मोद–मंजुलमनि किलकनि–खानि खुलावौं।
तेइ अनुराग ताग गुहिबे कहँ मति मृगनयनि बुलावौं।। 2।।
तुलसी भनित भली भामिनि उर सो पहिराइ फुलावौं।
चारु चरित रघुबर तेरे तेहि मिलि गाइ चरन चितु लावौं।। 3।।

rāga kēdāra

(1/18)

pauḍhiyē lālana, pālanē hauṁ jhulāvauṁ.
kara pada mukha cakhakamala lasata lakhi lōcana-bhaṁvara bhulāvauṁ.. 1..
bāla-binōda-mōda-manjulamani kilakani-khāni khulāvauṁ.
tē'i anu
rāga tāga guhibē kahaṁ mati mrganayani bulāvauṁ.. 2..
tulasī bhanita bhalī bhāmini ura sō pahirā'i phulāvauṁ.
cāru carita raghubara tērē tēhi mili gā'i carana citu lāvauṁ.. 3..

The Cradle Song/Lullaby

Verse no. 1/18—[Verse nos. 1/18—1/24 are the 'Cradle Songs' or the Lullabies that mother Kaushalya sings as her beloved son Sri Ram sleeps in the cradle. The imagery is lovely as these verses describe the wonderful sight of the pretty child Sri Ram as well as his three brothers, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, as they sleep in their cradles.]

(The mother[1] says—) 'Dear! Lie down in the cradle, and I'll affectionately rock you in it. I shall make my eyes representing a bumble-bee be enchanted and enthralled by the sight of your lovely lotus-like hands (palms), feet (soles), face and eyes (1).

[[1]Who is the 'mother' here? Though it is not expressely mentioned, it is, in all probability mother Sumitra as the next verse no. 1/19, stanza no. 1 clearly mentions her by name. Sumitra's name again appears in verse no. 1/22, stanza no. 10.]

To get the beautiful gems in the form of your childish playful activities and pranks, I shall open the mine (treasury) of your lovely (enchanting) pranks (to take out those gems), then I shall call the beautiful woman with fawn-like eyes representing intellect and descrimination to string them (those gems) in a thread of love and affection (2).'

[The mother is expressing her undiluted love for Lord Ram. She has compared the many playful activities of the child to the many priceless gems stored in her treasury. When the child wakes up from sleep the next morning, the mother would allow him to play around in the palace and its courtyard. This is compared to the opening of the treasury so that the gems are taken out. Then the enthralled and fascinated mother would summon her friends and maids to tell them to watch the wonderful sight of Lord Ram, the 'Lord of the World', playing around like an ordinary child. For this, intelligence and spiritual wisom is needed, for otherwise everyone has a child in her home at some point of time and everyone has witnessed the playing of a child in her home, and so what was so special about Ram playing around? After all, all children play, and there is nothing in it to create so much fuss about.]

Tulsidas says (that he has a strong desire to)—'May I offer that pleasant and attractive garland (made from gems as described above) around the neck of a beautiful and pleasing damsel representing poetry, and feel exuberant, jubilant, delightful and ecstatic at my own creation that would be the result of stringing such playful divine activities of the Lord into a garland-like narrative.

And oh Lord Raghubar (i.e. Lord Ram who is the most exalted in the lineage of king Raghu to which Dasrath and others belonged), let me join hands with this metaphoric damsel (i.e. the poetry that would result when I thread together the

narration of your divine activites as a child) in order to be able to exclusively sing your glorious stories and concentrate my mind in your holy feet as I do so (3). '

(1 / 19)

सोइये लाल लाडिले रघुराई।
मगन मोद लिये गोद सुमित्रा बार बार बलि जाई।। 1।।
हँसे हँसत, अनरसे अनरसत प्रतिबिंबनि ज्यों झाँई।
तुम सबके जीवनके जीवन, सकल सुमंगलदाई।। 2।।
मूल मूल सुरबीथि–बेलि, तम–तोम सुदल अधिकाई।
नखत–सुमन, नभ–बिटप बौंडि मानो छपा छिटकि छबि छाई।। 3।।
हौ जँभात, अलसात, तात! तेरी बानि जानि मैं पाई।
गाइ गाइ हलराइ बोलिहौं सुख नींदरी सुहाई।। 4।।
बछरु, छबीलो छगनमगन मेरे, कहति मल्हाइ मल्हाई।
सानुज हिय हुलसति तुलसीके प्रभुकी ललित लरिकाई।। 5।।

(1/19)

sō'iyē lāla lāḍilē raghurā'ī.
magana mōda liyē gōda sumitrā bāra bāra bali jā'ī.. 1..
hamँsē hamँsata, anarasē anarasata pratibimbani jyōṁ jhāmँī.
tuma sabakē jīvanakē jīvana, sakala sumaṅgaladā'ī.. 2..
mūla mūla surabīthi-bēli, tama-tōma sudala adhikā'ī.
nakhata-sumana, nabha-biṭapa bauṇḍi mānō chapā chiṭaki chabi chā'ī.. 3..
hau jamँbhāta, alasāta, tāta! tērī bāni jāni maiṁ pā'ī.
gā'i gā'i halarā'i bōlihauṁ sukha nīndarī suhā'ī.. 4..
bacharu, chabīlō chaganamagana mērē, kahati mal'hā'i mal'hā'ī.
sānuja hiya hulasati tulasīkē prabhukī lalita larikā'ī.. 5..

Verse no. 1/19—Mother Sumitra becomes overwhelmed (with love and affection) and is imbued/infused with joy and delight by taking Sri Ram in her laps (or arms) again and again. She says, 'Oh Son! Oh Dearest Raghurai (i.e. the Lord of king Raghu's lineage, Sri Ram)! Go to sleep (1).

Even as the image of something mimics the original object, you too start smiling when we smile, and become sad, morose or sorrowful when we become so. You are the essence of the life of all (of us as well as the entire creation), and are the bestower of all types of auspiciousness and welfare (2).

[Ah, how wonderfully beautiful and enchanting is the night!] The planets are its roots, the milkyway is the creeper, the darkness represents the thick cover of foliage (leaves that completely cover the tree), the stars are the different flowers that shine against this dark background, and the sky is the 'Tree'. The 'night' appears to have spread over all this 'Tree' and scatter its beauty and charm all around it. [Obviously, it is a dark and moonless night. The imagery is excellent!] (3).

Oh dear son! Now you are yawning, and feeling weary and drowsy (because you may be tired and wish to go to sleep). I have now come to understand your habits well. All right, I shall rock you and sing a lullaby, and call the pleasant 'sleep' to take care of you.[1]' (4).

[[1]Here, sleep has been personified. Since Sri Ram is tired, the mother says she would now summon her maid known as 'sleep' and request her to take care of the child and give him rest. Refer to verse no. 1/21 herein below.]

Then, mother Sumitra fondly caressed the child (Sri Ram), and with an enchanted mind infused with love, she affectionately muttered the following words and phrases showing the intensity of her unbound love for Sri Ram: 'My calf (bacharu); my graceful and lovely child (chabīlō chaganamagana mērē), etc.'

Tulsidas says—'The most attractive and enchanting display of childish behaviour by Sri Ram (who is actually the Lord of the World) heaves and surges in my heart (making me ecstatic and full of affection for the Lord just like the mother felt that day).' (5).

(1 / 20)

लालन लोने लेरुआ, बलि मैया।
सुख सोइए नींद–बेरिया भई, चारु–चरित चार्‌यो भैया।। 1।।
कहति मल्हाइ लाइ उर छिन–छिन, 'छगन छबीले छोटे छैया।
मोद–कंद कुल कुमुद–चंद्र मेरे रामचंद्र रघुरैया'।। 2।।
रघुबर बालकेलि संतनकी सुभग सुभद सुरगैया।
तुलसी दुहि पीवत सुख जीवत पय सप्रेम घनी घैया।। 3।।

(1/20)

lalana lōnē lēru'ā, bali maiyā.
sukha sō'i'ē nīnda-bēriyā bha'ī, cāru-carita cāryō bhaiyā.. 1..
kahati mal'hā'i lā'i ura china-china, 'chagana chabīlē chōṭē chaiyā.
mōda-kanda kula kumuda-candra mērē rāmacandra raghuraiyā'.. 2..
raghubara bālakēli santanakī subhaga subhada suragaiyā.
tulasī duhi pīvata sukha jīvata paya saprēma ghanī ghaiyā.. 3..

Verse no. 1/20—'Oh dear son (lālana)! Oh beautiful and charming child (lōnē lēru'ā)! The mother sacrifices herself for you (bali maiyā).

Oh son! Now it is time to sleep. Hence, you four brothers, who show pleasant and charming activities as a child, should go to sleep peacefully.' (1).

Clasping the child (Lord Ram) to her bosom, the mother[1] affectionately says, 'Oh my young, graceful and lovely child, Oh the root of my happiness, Oh the moon-like One for the garden of lotuses representing this clan (of king Raghu), Oh my Ram who is the ornament (or like a jewel) of Raghu's clan.' (2).

[[1]The night that Tulsidas refers to in these verses, which describe how the mother affectionately put the children to sleep, is the one in which it was the turn of Sumitra to sing the cradle song and let the four sons go to sleep.]

Raghubar's (Sri Ram's) childhood playful activities and pranks are like the beautiful and auspicious Kamdhenu Cow (the celestial cow of the Gods which is all wish-fulfilling) for the saints and devotees of the Lord.

[That is, those who are devoted to the Lord and have a pious heart derive immense satisfaction and happiness by remembering the enchanting childhood days of Lord Ram who was none else but the 'Lord of the Universe' who had assumed the form of Sri Ram and behaved like an ordinary child in order to oblige and fulfil the wishes of his devotees and pious saints.]

Tulsidas says that he milks this cow (the all wish fulfilling Kamdhenu) whose milk symbolises the grand virtues of love and affection for the Lord, and he happily spends his life drinking it.

[That is, he derives immense spiritual bliss, joy and happiness throughout his life by remembering and narrating the countless activities of his beloved Lord Sri Ram. Just like the milk gives full nutrition to the body, these thoughts of the Lord has nourished Tulsidas' soul and spirit and given him beatitude and felicity like nothing else.] (3).

(1 / 21)

सुखनींद कहति आलि आइहौं।
राम, लखन, रिपुदवन, भरत सिसु करि सब सुमुख सोआइहौं।। 1।।
रोवनि, धोवनि, अनखानि, अनरसनि, डिठि–मुठि निठुर नसाइहौं।
हँसनि, खेलनि, किलकनि, आनंदनि भूपति–भवन बसाइहौं।। 2।।
गोद बिनोद–मोदमय मूरति हरषि हरषि हलराइहौं।
तनु तिल तिल करि, बारि रामपर, लेहौं रोग बलाइहौं।। 3।।
रानी–राउ सहित सुत परिजन निरखि नयन–फल पाइहौं।
चारु चरित रघुबंस–तिलकके तहँ तुलसी मिलि गाइहौं।। 4।।

(1/21)

sukhanīnda kahati āli ā'ihauṁ.
rāma, lakhana, ripudavana, bharata sisu kari saba sumukha sō'ā'ihauṁ.. 1..
rōvani, dhōvani, anakhāni, anarasani, ḍiṭhi-muṭhi niṭhura nasā'ihauṁ.
hamm̐sani, khēlani, kilakani, ānandani bhūpati-bhavana basā'ihauṁ.. 2..
gōda binōda-mōdamaya mūrati haraṣi haraṣi halarā'ihauṁ.
tanu tila tila kari, bāri rāmapara, lēhauṁ rōga balā'ihauṁ.. 3..
rānī-rā'u sahita suta parijana nirakhi nayana-phala pā'ihauṁ.
cāru carita raghubansa-tilakakē tahamm̐ tulasī mili gā'ihauṁ.. 4..

Sleep's Desire

Verse no. 1/21—[In verse no. 1/19, stanza no. 4 we have read that Sumitra says that she would summon her maid called 'Sleep' and request her to take care of the children who seem to be tired after playing the whole day. So in this verse, 'Sleep' comes and attends to the four children. 'Sleep' has been personified in this verse.]

The peace-giving 'Sleep' says, 'Friend! I will come and make the child Sri Ram, along with Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, sleep happily and peacefully (1).

I shall remove their cryings and wailings, their loss of appetite and aversion to feeding, their frettings and irritations as well as any sort of harsh or evil eyes cast on the children (by witches or evil spirits) that has made them so restless and unable to sleep. In its place, I shall spread (or establish) the spirit of joy and merriment, an atmosphere of rejoicing and laughter, the sound of shrill cries of joy and happiness in the palace of the king (Dasrath)[1] (2).

[[1]Lord Ram and his three brothers were tired and weary, so they were fidgety and weeping when the mother put them in their sleeping couch, and they couldn't go to sleep. This caused worry for the mother. So she invoked the patron goddess of sleep and prays to her to make the sons asleep by calming their nerves and soothing their restlessness. Hence, 'Sleep' assures the mother that she need not worry as she will take care of the children and make all of them sleep calmly and peacefully.

When the children were restless and showed signs of some evil spell upon them, the whole palace was sad and gloomy. So the 'Sleep' says that everything will be alright now. As soon as the children's wailing and crying stops and they go off to sound sleep, there would be joy in the royal household. When the children wake up the next day, they would be in a cheerful mood and play around jovially in the palace ground, which in turn would send cheers all around.]

I shall pick up Sri Ram—who is an embodiment of happiness and joy, and an image of bliss and peace—in my arms, and cradling him close to my bosom shall rock him gently even as I sacrifice every pore (or hair) of my body on him and accept all his diseases and sorrows myself[2]. (3)

[[2]'Sleep' says that it is her good fortune that she has got a rare opportunity to shower her love on Lord Ram and serve him on invitation. She will not contend to just make the Lord go to sleep in his cradle, but lift him in her arms on the pretext of making him go to sleep—as this is a golden opportunity she has found with the excuse of making the Lord go to sleep. She shall take all the sufferings of the Lord upon herself, and if sufferance is a must due to the compulsions of fate and destiny then she will herself suffer in the Lord's stead. Thus, she will ensure that the Lord is always happy and cheerful.]

I shall reap the rewards (or benefits) of my eyes by seeing the king and the queen along with their sons and relatives.'

Tulsidas says that she ('Sleep' personified) would mingle with them and join them (the parents of Lord Ram, the attendants of the royal household, as well as other citizens of Ayodhya) to further sing the glorious deeds and enchanting activities (cāru carita) of Sri Ram, who is the best in the lineage established by king Raghu (raghubansa-tilakak) (4).

राग आसावरी

(1 / 22)

कनक–रतनमय पालनो रच्यो मनहुँ मार–सुतहार।
बिबिध खेलौना, किंकिनी, लागे मंजुल मुकुताहार।।
रघुकुल–मंडन राम लला।।1।।
जननि उबटि, अन्हवाइकै, मनिभूषन सजि लिये गोद।
पौढ़ाए पटु पालने, सिसु निरखि मगन मन मोद।।
दसरथनंदन राम लला।।2।।
मदन, मोरकै चंदकी झलकनि, निदरति तनु जोति।
नील कमल, मनि, जलदकी उपमा कहे लघु मति होति।।
मातु–सुकृत–फल राम लला।।3।।
लघु, लघु लोहित ललित हैं पद, पानि अधर एक रंग।
को कबि जो छबि कहि सकै नससिख सुंदर सब अंग।।
परिजन–रंजन राम लला।।4।।
पग नूपुर कटि किंकिनी, कर–कंजनि पहुँची मंजु।
हिय हरि नख अदभुत बन्यो मानो मनसिज मनि–गन–गंजु।।
पुरजन–सिरमनि राम लला।।5।।
लोयन नील सरोजसे, भ्रूपर मसिबिंदु बिराज।
जनु बिधु–मुख–छबि–अमियको रच्छक राखै रसराज।।
सोभासागर राम लला।।6।।
गभुआरी अलकावली लसै, लटकन ललित ललाट।
जनु उडुगन बिधु मिलनको चले तम बिदारि करि बाट।।
सहज सोहावनो राम लला।।7।।
देखि खेलौना किलकहीं, पद पानि बिलोचन लोल।
बिचित्र बिहँग अलि–जलज ज्यों सुखमा–सर करत कलोल।।
भगत–कलपतरु राम लला।।8।।
बाल–बोल बिनु अरथके सुनि देत पदारथ चारि।
जनु इन्ह बचनन्हितें भए सुरतरु तापस त्रिपुरारि।।
नाम–कामधुक राम लला।।9।।
सखी सुमित्रा वारहीं मनि भूषन बसन बिभाग।
मधुर झुलाइ मल्हावहीं गावैं उमँगि उमँगि अनुराग।।
हैं जग–मंगल राम लला।।10।।
मोती जायो सीपमें अरु अदिति जन्यो जग–भानु।
रघुपति जायो कौसिला गुन–मंगल–रूप–निधान।।
भुवन–बिभूषन राम लला।।11।।
राम प्रगट जबतें भए गए सकल अमंगल–मूल।
मीत मुदित, हित उदित हैं, नित बैरिनके चित सूल।।
भव–भय–भंजन राम लला।।12।।
अनुज–सखा–सिसु संग लै खेलन जैहैं चौगान।
लंका खरभर परैगी, सुरपुर बाजिहैं निसान।।
रिपुगन–गंजन राम लला।।13।।
राम अहेरे चलहिंगे जब गज रथ बाजि सँवारि।
दसकंधर उर धुकधुकी अब जनि धावै धनु–धारि।।
अरि–करि–केहरि राम लला।।14।।

गीत सुमित्रा सखिन्हकै सुनि सुनि सुर मुनि अनुकूल।
दै असीस जय जय कहैं हरषैं बरषैं फूल।।
सुर–सुखदायक राम लला।।15।।
बालचरितमय चंद्रमा यह सोरह–कला–निधान।
चित–चकोर तुलसी कियो कर प्रेम–अमिय–रसपान।।
तुलसीको जीवन राम लला।।16।।

rāga āsāvarī

(1/22)

kanaka-ratanamaya pālanō racyō manahum̐ māra-sutahāra.
bibidha khēlaunā, kiṅkinī, lāgē man̐jula mukutāhāra..
raghukula-maṇḍana rāma lalā..1..
janani ubaṭi, anhavā'ikai, manibhūṣana saji liyē gōda.
pauṛhā'ē paṭu pālanē, sisu nirakhi magana mana mōda..
dasarathanandana rāma lalā..2..
madana, mōrakai candakī jhalakani, nidarati tanu jōti.
nīla kamala, mani, jaladakī upamā kahē laghu mati hōti..
mātu-sukr̥ta-phala rāma lalā..3..
laghu, laghu lōhita lalita haiṁ pada, pāni adhara ēka raṅga.
kō kabi jō chabi kahi sakai nasasikha sundara saba aṅga..
parijana-ran̐jana rāma lalā..4..
paga nūpura kaṭi kiṅkinī, kara-kan̐jani pahum̐cī man̐ju.
hiya hari nakha adabhuta ban'yō mānō manasija mani-gana-gan̐ju..
purajana-siramani rāma lalā..5..
lōyana nīla sarōjasē, bhūrapara masibindu birāja.
janu bidhu-mukha-chabi-amiyakō racchaka rākhai rasarāja..
sōbhāsāgara rāma lalā..6..
gabhu'ārī alakāvalī lasai, laṭakana lalita lalāṭa.
janu uḍugana bidhu milanakō calē tama bidāri kari bāṭa..
sahaja sōhāvanō rāma lalā..7..
dēkhi khēlaunā kilakahīṁ, pada pāni bilōcana lōla.
bicitra bihaṁga ali-jalaja jyōṁ sukhamā-sara karata kalōla..
bhagata-kalapataru rāma lalā..8..
bāla-bōla binu arathakē suni dēta padāratha cāri.
janu inha bacananhitēṁ bha'ē surataru tāpasa tripurāri..
nāma-kāmadhuka rāma lalā..9..
sakhī sumitrā vārahīṁ mani bhūṣana basana bibhāga.
madhura jhulā'i mal'hāvahīṁ gāvaiṁ umaṁgi umaṁgi anurāga..
haiṁ jaga-maṅgala rāma lalā..10..
mōtī jāyō sīpamēṁ aru aditi jan'yō jaga-bhānu.

raghupati jāyō kausilā guna-maṅgala-rūpa-nidhāna..
bhuvana-bibhūṣana rāma lalā..11..
rāma pragaṭa jabatēṁ bha'ē ga'ē sakala amaṅgala-mūla.
mīta mudita, hita udita haiṁ, nita bairinakē cita sūla..
bhava-bhaya-bhaṁjana rāma lalā..12..
anuja-sakhā-sisu saṅga lai khēlana jaihaiṁ caugāna.
laṅkā kharabhara paraigī, surapura bājihaiṁ nisāna..
ripugana-gaṁjana rāma lalā..13..
rāma ahērē calahiṅgē jaba gaja ratha bāji samv̐vāri.
dasakandhara ura dhukadhukī aba jani dhāvai dhanu-dhāri..
ari-kari-kēhari rāma lalā..14..
gīta sumitrā sakhinhakai suni suni sura muni anukūla.
dai asīsa jaya jaya kahaiṁ haraṣaiṁ baraṣaiṁ phūla..
sura-sukhadāyaka rāma lalā..15..
bālacaritamaya candramā yaha sōraha-kalā-nidhāna.
cita-cakōra tulasī kiyō kara prēma-amiya-rasapāna..
tulasīkō jīvana rāma lalā..16..

Verse no. 1/22—The cradle is made of gold and studded with gems and precious stones. It appears that a carpenter called Kamdeo/cupid (the God of beauty and love) has made it himself.

This cradle has been decorated with different varieties of toys and trinkets, as well as attractive garlands of pearls that hang from it. The child Sri Ram, who is the jewel of Raghu's lineage, is in the cradle (1).

The mother had rubbed Dasrath's dear son Ram (dasarathanandana rāma lalā) with 'Ubtan' (a mixture of gram flour, milk and honey etc., and rubbed on the skin to clean it; it also used for massage), bathed him, adorned him with ornaments studded with precious gems and jewels, lifted him in her arms, and placed him in the cradle to sleep. Watching Sri Ram as he slept (in the cradle), the mother's heart is brimming over with joy and exhilaration (2).

The radiance and beauty and prettiness of the form of Lord Sri Ram's dark complexion seems to put to shame (or make feel inferior) the glow and glamour of Kamdeo/cupid as well as the central motif in a peacock's feather. If one tries to compare it with the bluish tinge of a blue lotus flower, a blue gem (sapphire) or a dark (i.e. rain bearing) cloud, it would only show the persons low (or inferior, undeveloped, uncultured, incompetent) intellect[1]. The child Ram is like the fruit (reward) of the mother's good and noble deeds (3).

[[1]Tulsidas means that the complexion of Lord Ram was so magnificent and radiant inspite of being dark in hue that it shamed all other things that are usully cited by poets as examples of exemplary beauty of this category when making comparisons. For instance, the 'blue coloured lotus flower' is the best in the category of flowers; the 'sapphire' is the best gem in the category of coloured gems with a blue tinge; the 'rain-bearing dark cloud' is the best form of any cloud because it gives the nectar of rain to the world.]

The dainty little legs (i.e. the sole of the feet), tiny little hands (i.e. the palms of the hands) and delicate soft lips of the child Ram are all of a uniform red or dark pink colour that is most beautiful and enchanting to behold.

His entire body (i.e. all its parts), from the toe-nail to the head, are most beautiful, handsome and charming. Which poet can, or is competent to, describe this image? The child Ram bestows happiness and joy to all his relatives and kinsfolk (4).

Lord Sri Ram, as a child, wears a 'Nupur' (anklet) on his feet (paga nūpura), a 'Kinkini' (a waist-band with chiming small bells) around his waist (kaṭi kiṅkinī), and attractive 'Pahumchi' (a bracelet) on his wrists (kara-kañjani pahum̐cī), and a most enchanting and a marvellous pendant made of lion's toe-nail adorns his chest (mañju)—it appears that all of them are collection of gems belonging to Kamdeo/cupid. Lord Sri Ram appears to be the crown jewel for the, and of the, residents of the city (of Ayodhya) (5).

Child Sri Ram's eyes are akin to the blue-lotus, while a dot of 'Kaajal' (black soot of oil lamps mixed with clarified butter to form a paste that is then used to put a dot on the forehead of children as a magical charm to protect them against evil spirits) adorns the center of his eye-brows. It appears that the 'Sringar Rasa[2]' has appointed this Kaajal to guard the nectar-like captivating beauty of Sri Ram's moon-like face from evil glances of wicked spirits—for this child is like an ocean of bountiful beauty (6).

[[2]The 'Sringar Rasa' is the best of all the Rasaas or the basic charming qualities of Hindi literature. Hence it is called 'the king amongst Rasaas': 'rasarāja'. Here it alludes to the personification of the quality of exemplary 'beauty and charm'. Lord Ram's face is so exceptionally beautiful and bewitching that evil eyes easily affect the child and he falls sick very frequently. So, the patron god of the Rasaas, the 'Sringar Rasa', ordered this 'dot of black Kaajal' to protect the child from evil eyes. It is believed that this dot acts as a charm against all evil eyes that may afflict an infant. All mothers in India use this charm to protect their children from getting sick due to evil spirits as this black dot casts repels them.]

His (child Ram's) dense curly hairs look fabulous as the curls dangle on his forehead—it appears that the stars have pierced through the darkness of the night and cleared the way for their meeting (glancing) at the moon[3].

The child Ram is inherently of a magnificent beauty that is pristine and wondrous by nature (7).

[[3]The curls of hairs dangle on Lord Ram's pretty face, but as the Lord moves his head these curls swing right and left, leaving space for a quick glance by the beholder. Tulsidas compares this to the hide-and-seek played by the twinkling stars against the background of the night sky in an attempt to glance at the moon.]

He (the child Ram) gives out a shrill cry on seeing toys and other playthings, and his legs, hands and eyes become mischievously active, restive, agile and impulsive on seeing them. It appears that the lotus flower, different types of strange and beautiful birds, and bumble (black) bees are enjoying themselves in a pond of beauty and magnificence.

The child Ram is like a 'Kalpa Tree' (all wish-fulfilling tree) for his devotees (8).

The meaningless childish banter and playful chatter of the child Ram can bestow the four fruits upon the hearer[4]. It appears that when the celestial 'Tree of Gods' ('surataru'; known as the Kalpa Tree) saw this potential power of the simple words uttered by the child Ram, it felt shy and ashamed of its abilities and mystical powers[5]. So it decided to forgo its exalted position in the heaven, and instead become an ordinary tree on earth[6].

On the other hand, Lord Shiva, who is also known as 'Tripurari' (Lord of the three worlds), was so awed by the child-like chattering of Lord Ram that he decided to become an ordinary Tapasvi ('tāpasa tripurāri'; one who does severe penances and austerities)[7].

The name of the child Ram is like a Kamdhenu cow (the celestial cow of Gods which is all wish-fulfilling like the Kalpa Tree) (9).

[[4]These 'four fruits' are 'Artha'—prosperity; 'Dharma'—righteousness, noble conduct; 'Kaam'—fulfilled desires; and 'Moksha'—beatitude and felicity. It means here that the extreme pleasure and joy that one derives upon hearing child Ram speak is equivalent to the bliss and happiness obtained by accessing these four great rewards that a person gets for being exemplary in his life.

[5]The Kalpa Tree, the 'Tree of Gods', was proud that it has the mystical powers which can bestow these four legendary fruits to seekers. But this tree was inaccessible to ordinary people as it was in the custody of Gods in the heaven. Now the Tree finds that Lord Ram is liberally giving away the same fruits or benefits or privileges to all ordinary living beings without their making any effort to please any God or undertake rigourous religious services in order to access the Kalpa Tree. Therefore, this Tree felt like a punctured balloon with all its sense of pride and exaltedness crushed to dust.

[6]With all its ego and haughtiness crushed, it decided to become an ordinary tree on earth so that at least it would bear sweet and succulent physical fruits which would be much sought after by everyone. At least this way it would somehow manage to retain its importance and place in the hierarchy of creation. Otherwise it would be forgotten and lost.

[7]Lord Shiva is the most exalted amongst the Gods. When he watched Lord Ram as a child, he was so enchanted that he decided to forgo his exaltedness in the heaven as a 'God', and instead became an ordinary hermit or ascetic, like the one who came disguised as a soothsayer in verse no. 1/17 herein above. Shiva observed that a lot many hermits and sages and seers and mendicants etc. have collected at Ayodhya to enjoy the celebrations associated with the birth of the four princes, Lord Ram and his brothers. So he descended upon earth in the guise of a hermit or ascetic to mingle with others so that he too can drink this nectar of bliss from the place where it is being distributed rather than remaining in the heaven like other Gods and merely showering flowers to celebrate the occasion.

Lord Shiva wished to actually hear the divine utterances of Lord Ram as he spoke, and see the Lord play and moving around in the city of Ayodhya. So Shiva assumed the form of an ascetic and went there.]

Meanwhile, mother Sumitra, along with her companion maids, gave jewels, ornaments and garments as charity.

They lovingly rock the child in their arms and affectionately kiss him even as they enthusiastically sing sweet songs with full of love for the child.

Verily, the child Ram is an embodiment of welfare and auspiciousness in this world (10).

Even as a pearl is born of an oyster and the sun was born of mother Aditi, Kaushalya has given birth to Sri Ram who is an abode of good qualities, virtues, noble characters, all auspiciousness, extreme beauty and magnificence.

The child Ram adorns the Bhuvans, i.e. the entire world, as if he was its ornament. [That is, the creation would look lifeless and lustreless, devoid of beauty and magnificence, without the presence of Lord Ram.] (11).

Ever since Sri Ram has manifested himself in this world, the roots of all inauspiciousness and malignancies have been cut. [All ill omens have vanished, and there is all-round happiness and good tidings everywhere.]

The company of friends (good people) are extremely glad, well-wishers have begun to increase and make their presence felt, while enemies and opponents have develop heart-ache. The child Sri Ram is the destroyer of the fears of the world (12).

At the time when Sri Ram, accompanied by his brothers and friends, would go to play a game of ball, there would be turmoil and upheaval in Lanka, while musical instruments would be played in the heaven because the child Sri Ram is the crusher (eliminator) of the crowd (hordes of enemies) of the Gods, (i.e. the demons)[8] (13).

[[8]In this symbolic game with ball, such as football or handball, Lord Ram was on the side of the Gods, and the opposite side was represented by the demons. When the demons found that their nemesis in the form of Lord Ram is playing the game along with other Gods, they were terrified out of their wits. So, as soon as Lord Ram joined the Gods in this symbolic game of ball played between the Gods and Demons, the side of the Gods was sure of victory over their opponents, the Demons. Hence they celebrated by playing musical instruments. On the other hand, the Demons realized that finally the time has come when their 'game was up', and so they trembled and caused an uproar.]

At the time when Sri Ram would embark on (set out for) a hunting expedition with elephants, horses and chariots accompanying him, there would be increased palpitation in the demon king Ravana's heart, fearing and wondering if Sri Ram would not rush towards him with his bow—for the child Ram is akin to a lion for the enemy-like elephant[9] (14).

[9This is another example of symbolism used by Tulsidas. Here, Lord Ram is likened to the lion which is the king of the jungle, and the demon king Ravana to the elephant which is the largest and strongest amongst the wild animals of the forest. No other animal is able to face a wild elephant in a duel except the lion. The lion leaps on the back of the maddened elephant and tears its apart. Likewise, the demon king Ravana now feels terrified when he hears that Lord Ram has gone out on a hunting expedition—Ravana fears that the Lord is searching for him.]

Hearing the adulatory songs sung by Sumitra and her companions, the Gods, sages, hermits and seers become exhilarant, bestow blessings (on Sri Ram), and shower flowers on him with a loud applause proclaiming the glory of the Lord, saying in laudatory chorus: 'Glory; Glory be to the Lord of all Lords!'

Verily, the child Ram is the provider of happiness and joy to the Gods and all holy beings in creation (15).

Tulsidas has created this 15-stanza story of child Ram representing the 15 days of the waxing phase of the moon for the bird 'Chakor' (Indian red-legged partridge said to

be enamoured of the moon) representing his sub-conscious mind and intellect (known as the 'Chitta') after imbibing (drinking or enjoying) the nectar-like Amrit (elixir of life) of love, affection and devotion for Sri Ram[10]. The child Ram is the very life and soul of Tulsidas (16).

[[10]Tulsidas says that just as the moon goes on increasing in its brightness and beauty with each passing night till it reaches its full splendour on the 15th day of the full moon, his mind and intellect have been drinking the nectar of Lord Ram's divine story and feeling fulfilled just like the bird known as Chakor which feels contented and fulfilled when it is able to see the full disc of the moon on the 15th night of brightness when the moon's disc is complete.]

राग कान्हरा

(1 / 23)

पालने रघुपति झुलावै।
लै लै नाम सप्रेम सरस स्वर कौसल्या कल कीरति गावै।।1।।
केकिकंठ दुति स्यामबरन बपु, बाल–बिभूषन बिरचि बनाए।
अलकैं कुटिल, ललित लटकनभ्रू, नील नलिन दोउ नयन सुहाए।। 2।।
सिसु–सुभाय सोहत जब कर गहि बदन निकट पदपल्लव लाए।
मनहुँ सुभग जुग भुजग जलज भरि लेत सुधा ससि सों सचु पाए।। 3।
उपर अनूप बिलोकि खेलौना किलकत पुनि–पुनि पानि पसारत।
मनहुँ उभय अंभोज अरुन सों बिधु–भय बिनय करत अति आरत।। 4।।
तुलसिदास बहु बास बिबस अलि गुंजत, सुछबि न जाति बखानी।
मनहुँ सकल श्रुति ऋचा मधुप ह्वै बिसद सुजस बरनत बर बानी।। 5।।

rāga kānharā

(1/23)

pālanē raghupati jhulāvai.
lai lai nāma saprēma sarasa svara kausalyā kala kīrati gāvai..1..
kēkikaṇṭha duti syāmabarana bapu, bāla-bibhūṣana biraci banā'ē.
alakaiṁ kuṭila, lalita laṭakanabhrū, nīla nalina dō'u nayana suhā'ē.. 2..
sisu-subhāya sōhata jaba kara gahi badana nikaṭa padapallava lā'ē.
manahuṁ subhaga juga bhujaga jalaja bhari lēta sudhā sasi sōṁ sacu pā'ē.. 3.
upara anūpa bilōki khēlaunā kilakata puni-puni pāni pasārata.
manahuṁ ubhaya ambhōja aruna sōṁ bidhu-bhaya binaya karata ati ārata.. 4..
tulasidāsa bahu bāsa bibasa ali guñjata, suchabi na jāti bakhānī.
manahuṁ sakala śruti ṛcā madhupa hvai bisada sujasa baranata bara bānī.. 5..

Verse no. 1/23—[We have read about mother Sumitra showing her affection for the four children in verse nos. 1/18—1/22. Now in this verse it is mother Kaushalya who expresses her love for them.]

Mother Kaushalya is affectionately rocking the child Sri Ram in the cradle, and while she does so she sings, in sweet and pleasant voice, his glorious fame by repeatedly mentioning him by name. [That is, the mother wishes to be specific while lauding the glories of Lord Ram as he is the eldest of the four brothers.] (1).

Beautifully tailored clothes have been stitched for the child, clothes that are befitting of the child's radiant and luminous dark complexioned body which is as attractive and charming as the neck of a peacock. The hairs are curly, strands of it are dangling most attractively on his eye-brows, and both his eyes are as beauteous as a blue tinged lotus flower (2).

When he (the child Ram) holds his dainty little foot with its broad leaf-like sole with his lovely lotus-like palms and brings it towards his pretty mouth (to suck the toe), it appears as if two beautiful snakes have happily lifted themselves to perch on the broad petals of the lotus flower to suck the nectar dripping from the moon (i.e. to enjoy the pleasantness of the full moon's light and its coolness as they sit comfortably on the open petals of the lotus flower)[1]. (3)

[[1]Here, the two snakes represent the two hands of child Ram with which he has raised his leg, the leg of the child with its foot and the broad sole represents the lotus flower with its stem and open petals, and when the child sucks his toe as is the wont of children it appears that the snakes are sucking the nectar from the moon because the beautiful face of child Ram is like the magnificent disc of the full bright moon.

The prettiness of the whole face can be guauged by its comparison with the full moon, while its individual parts, which are very lovely independently also, such as the lips, the eyes, the eye-brows, the forehead with plaits of curly hair decorated with an assortment of gems and jewels dangling and swaying upon it, and more so made more mesmerizingly enchanting by the mark of the black 'Kaajal' placed on it as is narrated in this as well as in the previous and the following verses, present a sight of astounding beauty and charm.]

Seeing a most temptingly beautiful and attractive toy hanging from the cradle, he (child Ram) gives out a shrill cry of joyance and repeatedly spreads his leaf-like palms to catch hold of it (but each time fails to catch the toy). The sight reminds one of two lotuses that are frightened of the moon and earnestly pleads with the sun not to set[2]. (4)

[[2]When the sun sets, the lotus closes its petals—because the lotus shies away from the sight of the moon. In this stanza, child Ram is unable to reach the hanging toy and gives out a shrill cry which is compared to the loud urgent prayer of the lotus flower to the sun so that it defers its setting as the lotus seems to be scared of the prospect of having to see the moon after the sun sets.]

Tulsidas says—The black (bumble) bees are humming and buzzing around due to a sweet scent (emanating from the scented oils and other perfumes sprayed around the cradle and the child) (bahu bāsa bibasa ali guñjata).

No one can describe that enchanting scene—it appears that all the hymns of the Vedas (sakala śruti ṛcā) have assumed the form of honey bees (madhupa) and are describing the vast glories and fames of the Lord (bisada sujasa baranata) using excellent words and fine speech (bara bānī) (5).

राग बिलावल

(1 / 24)

झूलत राम पालने सौहैं। भूरि–भाग जननीजन जोहैं।।1।।
तन मृदु मंजुल मेचकताई। झलकति बाल बिभूषन झाँई।।2।।
अधर–पानि–पद लोहित लोने। सर–सिंगार–भव सारस सोने।।3।।
किलकत निरखि बिलोल खेलौना। मनहुँ बिनोद लरत छबि छौना।।4।।
रंजित–अंजन कंज–बिलोचन। भ्राजत भाल तिलक गोरोचन।।5।।
लस मसिबिंदु बदन–बिधु नीको। चितवत चितचकोर तुलसीको।।6।।

rāga bilāvala

(1/24)

jhūlata rāma pālanē sauhaiṁ. bhūri-bhāga jananījana jōhaiṁ..1..
tana mṛ̐du manjula mēcakatāī. jhalakati bāla bibhūṣana jhāmī̐..2..
adhara-pāni-pada lōhita lōnē. sara-siṅgāra-bhava sārasa sōnē..3..
kilakata nirakhi bilōla khēlaunā. manahum̐ binōda larata chabi chaunā..4..
ranjita-anjana kanja-bilōcana. bhrājata bhāla tilaka gōrōcana..5..
lasa masibindu badana-bidhu nīkō. citavata citacakōra tulasīkō..6..

Verse no. 1/24—[This verse tells us that all the three mothers, viz. Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi, were enjoying the wonderful sight of the four children sleeping in their cradles, but special mention is made only of child Ram because he was the eldest of them and the main hero of the story of the Ramayan.]

The child Sri Ram looks magnificent and most enchanting while swinging in his cradle even as the most lucky mothers are watching him affectionately (1).

The child's body is radiant and looks beautifully dark (i.e. a radiant glow adorns his dark body) on which there is a reflection of (or a shade of) the multi-coloured ornaments worn by him which are befitting a child of his stature[1]. (2)

[[1]The skin of child Ram is dark, but it is so smooth and radiant that the dazzle, the brilliance and the glitter of the gems and jewels worn by him are reflected from his body.]

The beautiful and magnificently charming dark red lips, hands (i.e. the palms) and soles (of the feet) of Sri Ram appear like golden lotuses in the pond of 'Sringar Rasa' (which is one of the various Rasaas or literary charms of Hindi literature)[2] (3).

[[2]Poets and saints like Tulsidas, and scriptures like the Vedas, use language to describe or sing the glories of the Lord God. Their compositions use many styles, metaphors, similes, synonyms, imagery etc. for their narration. All these have been compared to the 'pond of Sringar Rasa'. The object of their adoration is Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being. Hence he is likened to the golden lotus.]

Seeing the toys swaying from the cradle (as it is slowly rocked to and fro), he gives out a shrill cry of joyance because these swinging toys resemble little children personifying beauty and enchantment who are merrily playing and childlishly squabbling with each other[3] (4).

[[3]The toys sway and hit each other, some having tiny bells that jingle, tinkle and chime as they do so. This fascinates the child Ram and he enjoys this sight so much that he gives out a sharp cry as is the wont of children when they see others like them playing and quarrelling amongst themselves over trivial issues. The child who watches others fighting and shouting would clap his hands and laugh and pass comments, thoroughly enjoying the squabbling. Refer also to verse no. 1/22, stanza no. 8; verse no. 1/23, stanza no. 4 herein above.]

The eyelids and eyelashes have 'Anjan' (an ointment made from clarified butter of cow's milk mixed with soot of lamp) applied on them, and the forehead is adorned with a Tilak Mark of 'Gorochan' (which is a yellow scented liquid prepared from the bile of cow that is mixed with cow-dung and applied as a paste) (5).

The attractive and enchanting moon-like face (of Sri Ram) has a dot of 'Kaajal' (black soot of lamp mixed with oil to make a paste that is applied on the forehead of infants to ward-off evil eyes) on his forehead (mid-brow, just above the bridge of the nose).

Tulsidas' Chakor-like mind and intellect is constantly gazing, transfixedly, at the moon-like face of Sri Ram[4] (6).

[[4]The 'Chakor' is the Indian red-legged partridge. This bird is said to be so enamoured of the moon that during the full moon's night it transfixedly gazes at it, turning its head slowly as the moon traverses through the sky, from the east to the west. So, Tulsidas compares his mind and heart to this bird because he too fixes his attention on Lord Ram and thoroughly enjoys it, deriving immense solace and bliss in remaining lost in the remembrance of the Lord.]

राग कल्याण

(1/25)

राजत सिसुरूप राम सकल गुन–निकाय–धाम,
कौतुकी कृपालु ब्रह्म जानु–पानि–चारि।
नीलकंज–जलदपुंज–मरकतमनि–सरिस स्याम,
काम कोटि सोभा अंग अंग उपर बारी।। 1।।
हाटक–मनि–रत्न–खचित रचित इंद्र–मंदिराभ,
इंदिरानिवास सदन बिधि रच्यो सँवारी।
बिहरत नृप–अजिर अनुज सहित बालकेलि–कुसल,
नील–जलज–लोचन हरि मोचन भए भारी।। 2।।
अरुन चरन अंकुस–धुज–कंज–कुलिस–चिन्ह रुचिर,

भ्राजत अति नूपुर बर मधुर मुखरकारी।
किंकिनी बिचित्र जाल, कंबुकंठ ललित माल,
उर बिसाल केहरि–नख, कंकन करधारी।। 3।।
चारु चिबुक नासिका कपोल, भाल तिलक, भ्रुकुटि,
श्रवन अधर सुंदर, द्विज–छबि अनूप न्यारी।
मनहुँ अरुन कंज–कोस मंजुल जुगपाँति प्रसव,
कुंदकली जुगल जुगल परम सुभ्रवारी।। 4।।
चिक्कन चिकुरावली मनो षडंघ्रि–मंडली,
बनी, बिसेषि गुंजत जनु बालक किलकारी।
इकटक प्रतिबिंब निरखि पुलकत हरि हरषि हरषि,
लै उछंग जननी रसभंग जिय बिचारी।। 5।।
जाकहँ सनकादि संभु नारदादि सुक मुनींद्र,
करत बिबिध जोग काम क्रोध लोभ जारी।
दसरथ गृह सोइ उदार, भंजन संसार–भार,
लीला अवतार तुलसिदास–त्रासहारी।। 6।।

rāga kalyāṇa

(1/25)

rājata sisurūpa rāma sakala guna-nikāya-dhāma,
kautukī kr̥pālu brahma jānu-pāni-cāri.
nīlakaṁja-jaladapuṁja-marakatamani-sarisa syāma,
kāma kōṭi sōbhā aṁga aṁga upara bārī.. 1..
hāṭaka-mani-ratna-khacita racita indra-mandirābha,
indirānivāsa sadana bidhi racyō samm̆vārī.
biharata nr̥pa-ajira anuja sahita bālakēli-kusala,
nīla-jalaja-lōcana hari mōcana bha'ē bhārī.. 2..
aruna carana aṁkusa-dhuja-kaṁja-kulisa-cinha rucira,
bhrājata ati nūpura bara madhura mukharakārī.
kiṁkinī bicitra jāla, kambukaṇṭha lalita māla,
ura bisāla kēhari-nakha, kaṁkana karadhārī.. 3..
cāru cibuka nāsikā kapōla, bhāla tilaka, bhurakuṭi,
śravana adhara suṁdara, dvija-chabi anūpa n'yārī.
manahum̆ aruna kaṁja-kōsa maṁjula jugapāmm̆ti prasava,
kundakalī jugala jugala parama subhravārī.. 4..
cikkana cikurāvalī manō ṣaḍaṁghri-maṇḍalī,
banī, bisēṣi guṁjata janu bālaka kilakārī.
ikaṭaka pratibimba nirakhi pulakata hari haraṣi haraṣi,
lai uchaṁga jananī rasabhaṁga jiya bicārī.. 5..
jākaham̆ sanakādi sambhu nāradādi suka munīndra,
karata bibidha jōga kāma krōdha lōbha jārī.

dasaratha gṛha sō'i udāra, bhañjana sansāra-bhāra,
līlā avatāra tulasidāsa-trāsahārī.. 6..

The Glory and splendid Beauty of Child Ram

(as he crawls around on all fours)-1

Verse no. 1/25—[When the Supreme Being who is now in the form of a little child named 'Sri Ram' grew a little older, he began to crawl and move around slowly on all fours, i.e. on his knees and hands, on the ground of the palace like an ordinary human child. The fascinating and lovely scene is being described in verse nos. 1/25—1/27.]

The Supreme Lord of creation known as 'Brahm' has himself assumed the form of a child known as 'Sri Ram'. Verily therefore, this child is the shelter of all the glorious virtues and good characters in existence, is most spectacular to behold, is the doer of marvellous divine deeds, and is an abode of mercy, compassion, graciousness and kindness.

He (the Supreme Being in the form of a child known as 'Sri Ram') crawls and moves hither and thither on all fours (with the support of his hands and knees like ordinary child of his age). But (one should not be deluded by this sight because) at the same time, he is the Supreme Brahm, the Lord of creation and the Ultimate Truth revealed or manifested in this visible form[1].

[[1]Saint Tulsidas is very clever and adroit. He wished to remove all doubts and delusions in the mind of the readers about the object of his adoration lest they should think that he is undermining the exalted institution of sainthood by getting charmed by, attracted towards and remaining indulgent in the physical beauty of a human child. No, this is not the case, insists Tulsidas. He whom he is describing is the Supreme Lord of creation, and he is doing this not to show-off his poetic acumen or scholarship with words but as a means of deriving spiritual bliss and solace for his own soul.]

He (child Ram) is of a blue countenance (complexion)[2] like that of a blue lotus, dark-skinned like a thick bank of rain-bearing clouds, and is like a 'Markat Mani' (emerald). Each of his body parts is equivalent in beauty, splendour and magnificence to crores of Kamdeo/cupids (the patron God of love, beauty and passion) combined together (1).

[[2]From the metaphysical perspective, this colour—'blue' or 'dark'—of the Lord's complexion stands for the 'sky' which is also blue in its various hues during the day. The same sky changes to 'dark' when it is night. The 'sky' is synonymous to Brahm because it is not only vast but all-encompassing and all-pervading. Nothing in existence is beyond the reach of the sky which is not limited to the visible part we see from earth but includes the infinite bowl of creation that extends endlessly to encompass even the furthest stars and galaxies and universes, known and unknown yet. Brahm is like this 'sky' as this term applies to the Supreme Being as well as to the Supreme Consciousness without which nothing known as 'life and existence' would have any meaning. The ancient sages decided to reflect this philosophy and bring it closer home when they decided to give the complexion of an incarnation of this Supreme Being the colour 'blue' and 'dark as the rain-bearing cloud'. It is a

common observance that when the rain bearing clouds cover the sky and conceal the sun, the canopy of the sky appears 'dark' and not 'blue'.]

In the royal palace—which is studded (and decorated) with gold, gems and jewels, which is constructed on the pattern of Indra's palace (i.e. like the heavenly abode of the King of Gods), and which has been so magnificently endowed by the Creator himself with majesty and grandeur of the richest-of-the-rich kind so much that it is a befitting abode of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity, of worldly comforts, pleasure, majesty, pomp, pageantry and well-being)—Sri Ram, who has eyes resembling blue-lotus, is the remover of great fears (of the world as well as of his devotees), and is an expert in childish pranks and activites, is playfully moving around with his brothers (2).

He (Sri Ram) has marks of Lord Vishnu (the Supreme Being) on his divine body (signifying his true identity). These divine signs are marked on the deep red (or pink) coloured soles of his holy feet. They are the following—(i) the goad (representing the quality of being the controller and regulator of the universe and the one who punishes the sinners), (ii) the flag or standard (signifying that he is the upholder of 'Dharma'—righteousness, auspiciousness, probity and good conduct in life), (iii) the lotus (representing beauty and pristine purity among filth and muck of this delusory, gross, mundane and mortal world), and (iv) Vajra (meaning the hardest thing in existence, representing invincibility).

Anklets which chime and jingle with a pleasant sound emanating from tinkling of tiny bells adorns the feet of the Lord. Similarly, he wears a marvellous waist-band around his waist, attractive garlands around his conch-like neck, a lion's toe-nail on his broad chest (as a charm against evil eyes), and bracelets on his lotus-like hands (3).

[Describing the physical beauty and charm of child Ram, Tulsidas says—] His chin, nose, cheeks, the Tilak Mark on the forehead, the eyebrows and ears—all are most charming, magnificent and beautiful to behold, while the beauty of the rows of glistening, sparkling white teeth within his parted lips is also peerless in its charm, glamour and magnificence. It appears that these two rows of white glittering teeth (maṉjula jugapāṁti) are like two rows of pristine white buds of 'Kund' (jasmine) flowers (kundakalī) that have revealed themselves or have emerged (prasava) amidst another two rows of red lotuses (aruna kaṉja-kōsa)[3] (4).

[[3]Here, the 'Kund' clearly represents the row of white glistening teeth of Lord Sri Ram, and the row of 'red lotuses' represent the two lips of the child.]

The child Ram's smooth and lusterous curl of hairs appears to be a throng of bumble (black) bees (ṣaḍaṅghri-maṇḍalī), and his joyful cries are their humming and buzzing.

He stares at his own image in the mirror and feels thrilled and amazed with wonder and joy[4]. He gazes at the image and remains transfixed at this wondrous sight (of another child like him staring back at him from the mirror!). Hence, fearing that someone had cast an evil eye upon him, the mother picked him up in her laps (5).

[[4]When the child Ram sees his own magnificent and charming image in the mirror, he is amazed and dazed, thinking this reflection to be another child like his ownself. He is thrilled by the sight and thoroughly excited. He gazes at it and remains transfixed. The mother thinks that he is under some spell—because it is traditionally

believed that a child should not be allowed to gaze at his own image in the mirror as it invites black charm upon the unsuspecting child. The practical reason is that the child is too young to understand the phenomenon and his mind thinks that some ghost is staring back at him. This scares the immature child out of his wits and usually it is observed that he falls sick and mentally restless after watching himself intently in a mirror. Hence this allusion to invitation of some black charm upon the child by himself.]

He, for whom sage Sankadi, Lord Shiva, celestial sages such as Narad etc., hermits and sages like Shuk (the parrot sage) etc. burn (conquer; overcome) such worldly tendencies as 'Kaam' (lust, desire, passion), 'Krodha' (anger, wrath, malice, indignation, vengeance) and 'Lobha' (worldly greed, avarice, rapacity, yearning, longing for material gain and fame), and do various types of 'Yogas' (meditative practices, penances and austerities)—verily, the same Lord who is most magnanimous and gracious has taken birth in the household of Dasrath (in the form of Lord Sri Ram) for removing the burden of this world[5] almost playfully and without any effort or exertion on his part.

Verily, the Lord is the remover and eliminator of all the fears of Tulsidas (6).

[[5]Lord Ram is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being. The Lord had to come down to eliminate the demons who had been brutilising the world, unleashing terror and horrors aforetime unknown. Saints, sages, Gods and every other living being was terrified and the earth was in a miserable state. So the Lord promised them that he will remove their sorrows by personally coming down to earth and get rid of the demons who represented ascendance of sin, vices and all manners of unrighteousness and immorality. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 183 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 187.]

राग कान्हरा

(1 / 26)

आँगन फिरत घुटुरुवनि धाए।
नील–जलद तनु–स्याम राम–सिसु जननि निरखि मुख निकट बोलाए।। 1।।
बंधुक सुमन अरुन पद–पंकज अंकुस प्रमुख चिन्ह बनि आए।
नूपुर जनु मुनिबर–कलहंसनि रचे नीड़ दै बाँह बसाए।। 2।।
कटिमेखल, बर हार ग्रीव–दर, रुचिर बाँह भूषन पहिराए।
उर श्रीवत्स मनोहर हरिनख हेम मध्य मनिगन बहु लाए।। 3।।
सुभग चिबुक, द्विज, अधर, नासिका, श्रवन, कपोल मोहि अति भाए।
भ्रू सुंदर करुनारस–पूरन, लोचन मनहु जुगल जलजाए।। 4।।
भाल बिसाल ललित लटकन बर, बालदसाके चिकुर सोहाए।
मनु दोउ गुर सनि कुज आगे करि ससिहि मिलन तमके गन आए।। 5।।
उपमा एक अभूत भई तब जब जननी पट पीत ओढ़ाए।
नील जलदपर उडुगन निरखत तजि सुभाव मनो तड़ित छपाए।। 6।।
अंग–अंगपर मार–निकर मिलि छबि समूह लै–लै जनु छाए।
तुलसिदास रघुनाथ रूप–गुन तौ कहौं जो बिधि होहिं बनाए।। 7।।

rāga kānharā

(1/26)

āmm̐gana phirata ghuṭuruvani dhā'ē.
nīla-jalada tanu-syāma rāma-sisu janani nirakhi mukha nikaṭa bōlā'ē.. 1..
bandhuka sumana aruna pada-paṅkaja aṅkusa pramukha cinha bani ā'ē.
nūpura janu munibara-kalahansani racē nīṛa dai bāmm̐ha basā'ē.. 2..
kaṭimēkhala, bara hāra grīva-dara, rucira bāmm̐ha bhūṣana pahirā'ē.
ura śrīvatsa manōhara harinakha hēma madhya manigana bahu lā'ē.. 3..
subhaga cibuka, dvija, adhara, nāsikā, śravana, kapōla mōhi ati bhā'ē.
bhūra sum̐dara karunārasa-pūrana, lōcana manahu jugala jalajā'ē.. 4..
bhāla bisāla lalita laṭakana bara, bāladasākē cikura sōhā'ē.
manu dō'u gura sani kuja āgē kari sasihi milana tamakē gana ā'ē.. 5..
upamā ēka abhūta bha'ī taba jaba jananī paṭa pīta ōṛhā'ē.
nīla jaladapara uḍugana nirakhata taji subhāva manō taḍita chapā'ē.. 6..
aṅga-aṅgapara māra-nikara mili chabi samūha lai-lai janu chā'ē.
tulasidāsa raghunātha rūpa-guna tau kahauṁ jō bidhi hōhiṁ banā'ē.. 7..

The Glory and splendid Beauty of Child Ram

(as he crawls around on all fours)-2

Verse no. 1/26—Sri Ram is running around the palace courtyard on all fours. Seeing the face of the child Sri Ram, whose body is dark as a rain-bearing dark cloud, the mother called out to him (to come near her) (1).

Like the flower of noon, the deep red lotus-like feet (i.e. the sole) of the Lord is adorned by the marks of a goad etc., and the anklets worn on it appear to be nests created by him to give refuge/shelter to the Swans representing hermits and sages[1] (2).

[[1]Refer: Verse no. 1/25, stanza no. 3 herein above.]

He has a waist-band around his waist, a beautiful and charming necklace around his conch-like neck, ornaments on his beautiful (attractive, handsome) arms, and has the mark of sage Bhrigu's foot-prints on his chest (ura śrīvatsa)[2] which is also adorned by a lion's toe-nail and a gold medallion studded with different gems[3] (3).

[[2]See a detailed note at the end of this verse regarding this śrīvatsa.
[3]Refer: Verse no. 1/25, stanza no. 3 herein above.]

I (Tulsidas) have great affection for (and am very fond of the enchanting sight of) the Lord's beautiful chin, the row of teeth, his lips, nose, ears and cheeks. The Lord's eye-brows are full of mercy and compassion, while the eyes are like two beautiful lotuses (4).

Loops of curly hair are dangling over his broad forehead and the first crop of hair, which appear in childhood, looks magnificent. It appears as if 'darkness' of the night has put the two Gurus (i.e. 'Brihaspati' or Jupiter that is regarded as the Guru of the Gods, and 'Shukra' or Venus that is regarded as the Guru of the non-Gods) as well as Shani (the planet Saturn) and Mangal (the planet Mars) in the front to lead it as it ventures or attempts to meet or see the full moon[4] (5).

[[4]Refer: Verse no. 1/22, stanza no. 7. The imagery is excellent. When the full moon shines, the darkness of the night goes into hiding. But nevertheless, some of the bright stars and planets still manage to feebly shine and twinkle to make their presence felt and to represent the night sky when there was total darkness, i.e. the night sky sans the full moon. Their shy and hesitant appearance represented by a feeble light and twinkle is likened here to an attempt by the darkness of the night put these four planets, viz. Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and Mars, in the vanguard in its shyish attempt to have a sneak peek into the beautifully enchanting surroundings where the full moon is ruling like a sovereign.

The 'dark night of the moon-less sky' is ashamed of itself and needs to put these four great planets in front when it wishes to look at the wonderful sight of the full moon's splendorous form because its 'inherent darkness' is like a huge blemish and embarrassment for it as compared to the night sky which harbours the brilliant moon.

In this stanza, the beauty of child Ram's face is compared to the full moon, the dangling curls of hairs and the crop of hairs on his head to the darkness of the night, the gems and precious stones that are tucked in the plaits of his hair and shine and glitter when the child moves his head are like the planets Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and Mars alluded to in this stanza.]

At the time when the mother put the 'Pitambar' ('paṭa pīta'; this is a yellow silk cloth worn over the body to wrap it) over the child (Ram), it was a moment of sheer magnificence of matchless glamour—because it was like the lightening of which hides the darkness of the black rain-bearing cloud in its blinding dazzle and splendorous light[5] (6).

[[5]Here, Lord Ram's dark complexioned body is compared to the dark rain-bearing cloud, and the silken cloth which the mother put on his body is like the dazzling lightening that seems to illuminate the cloud and makes an attempt to reduce its darkness.]

It appears that hordes of Kamdeos/cupids (equivalent to young nymphs) have spread their beauty and glamour on each part of the child's body.

Tulsidas wonders if the Creator had created the beautiful, enthralling and bewitching image as well as the excellent virtues and immaculate qualities of Lord Sri Raghunath (Sri Ram, the Lord of king Raghu's exalted lineage)—for had it been so it would have been possible to describe them somehow, even if it was insufficient and not to the mark, but the fact is that the Lord Ram is not the Creator's creation, and hence is beyond comprehension of the mind and intellect, and therefore beyond any description[6] (7).

[[6]That is, Lord Ram is beyond the proficiency and ability of an ordinary human being like Tulsidas that the latter can even imagine that he would be able to describe a tiny bit of the Lord's glories, majesty, divinity, greatness and magnificence. Even the Vedas have thrown up their arms in abject surrender in trying to fathom the Lord!

So what Tulsidas means here is that when he narrates the story of Lord Ram and the Lord's immense and infinite glories and majesty, he is simply purifying his mind and intellect and pen and words by doing so. His attempt is like trying to measure the water in the ocean or the length and breadth of the sky. But since he loves his Lord dearly and wishes to ensure his spiritual well-being as well as attainment of bliss, beatitude and felicity, he could think of no other way except of using his time in narrating the glories of his Lord in whatso way he knows—because this tool helps him keep his mind, intellect and sub-conscious focused on the Lord and wean it away from the nuisance created by this delusory world. It's a sort of an easy way of doing meditation and contemplation for him.]

[Note—[2]śrīvatsa—The foot prints of sage Bhrighu that are marked on the chest of Lord Vishnu: This is the mark of the foot of sage Bhrigu which he had cast on the chest of Vishnu ones when he got annoyed upon the Lord. The Lord is so enamoured of his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanour, he had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by Lord Vishnu. However, Laxmi was so angry at the temerity of sage Brighu that she cursed that henceforth she, in the form of wealth and material abundance, would always shun a Brahmin; it is believed that this is the reason why Brahmins, who are otherwise of a high birth, are always serving others in the society who are junior to them by birth for their monetary needs.]

राग केदारा

(1/27)

रघुबर बाल छबि कहौं बरनि।
सकल सुखकी सींव, कोटि–मनोज–सोभाहरनि।। 1।।
बसी मानहु चरन–कमलनि अरुनता तजि तरनि।
रुचिर नूपुर किंकिनी मन हरति रुनझुनु करनि।। 2।।
मंजु मेचक मृदुल तनु अनुहरति भूषन भरनि।
जनु सुभग सिंगार सिसु तरु फर्‌यो है अदभुत फरनि।। 3।।
भुजनि भुजग, सरोज नयननि, बदन बिधु जित्यो लरनि।
रहे कुहरनि सलिल, नभ, उपमा अपर दुरि डरनि।। 4।।
लसत कर–प्रतिबिम्ब मनि–आँगन घुटुरुवनि चरनि।
जनु जलज–संपुट सुछबि भरि–भरि धरति उर धरनि।। 5।।
पुन्यफल अनुभवति सुतहि बिलोकि दसरथ–घरनि।
बसति तुलसी–हृदय प्रभु–किलकनि ललित लरखरनि।। 6।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/27)

raghubara bāla chabi kahauṁ barani.
sakala sukhakī sīnva, kōṭi-manōja-sōbhāharani.. 1..
basī mānahu carana-kamalani arunatā taji tarani.

rucira nūpura kiṅkinī mana harati runajhunu karani.. 2..
manju mēcaka mr̥dula tanu anuharati bhūṣana bharani.
janu subhaga siṅgāra sisu taru pharyō hai adabhuta pharani.. 3..
bhujani bhujaga, sarōja nayanani, badana bidhu jityō larani.
rahē kuharani salila, nabha, upamā apara duri ḍarani.. 4..
lasata kara-pratibimba mani-āmm̆gana ghuṭuruvani carani.
janu jalaja-sampuṭa suchabi bhari-bhari dharati ura dharani.. 5..
pun'yaphala anubhavati sutahi bilōki dasaratha-gharani.
basati tulasī-hr̥daya prabhu-kilakani lalita larakharani.. 6..

The Glory and splendid Beauty of Child Ram

(as he crawls around on all fours)-3

Verse no. 1/27—[Saint Tulsidas says that—] I shall try to describe (to the best of my ability, by the permission of the Lord Almighty) the most enchanting, the most wonderful, the heavenly sight of the lovely image of child Ram. Verily, this beautiful and lovely image is a benchmark of extreme charm and prettiness, and it is a provider of the ultimate goal of happiness, pleasure and a sense of fulfilment and well being for which a person makes all endevours. Not only this, this magnificent image (of child Ram) is potent enough to remove (or put to shame) the magnificence and splendour of millions of Kamdeos/cupids[1]. (1)

[[1]That is, even hundreds and thousands of Kamdeos would not match the enthralling sight of the bewitching beauty of child Ram's pretty image. This will trounce Kamdeo's sense of pride and ego that no one is as beautous and lovely in physical attraction in creation as he is.]

The 'Redness of the Setting Sun' has probably deserted the sun and took its abode in his (child Ram's dainty little) lotus-like feet (i.e. in the sole). The sweet and pleasant tinkling and jingling sound emanating from the attractive anklets and waist band tied around the child charms and enthralls the mind of all (2).

The adornment of the most beautiful and delicate (soft, tender) dark-coloured body of the child Ram with ornaments of all kinds resembles a most beautiful plant of the 'Sringar Rasa' bearing different varieties of marvellous and mysterious fruits[2] (3).

[[2]Here, Sri Ram's body is compared to the wonderful and attractively charming plant symbolising the 'Sringar Rasa', while the different types of gems and jewels adorning him are likened to various fruits of this magnificent plant.]

[In the competition over the qualities of beauty, splendour, glamour, magnificence etc.—] The Lord's long arms have defeated serpents, his eyes have put to shame lotuses (which are considered as epitomes of beauty by poets), while the Lord's pretty face has trounced the moon (in beauty, radiance and attractiveness).

This is why they (the serpents, lotuses and the moon) have gone and took up residence in a hole (i.e. have hidden in the ground, in the water and in the sky respectively). Seeing their fate, the rest of the 'similes' and 'comparisons' and

'metaphors' etc. were so terrified that they ran away, lest they would be humiliated and put to shame[3] (4).

[[3]Here the tools used by learned poets to describe anything and give an idea of its magnificence and greatness and grandeur by citing examples from common knowledge, such as the many similes, metaphors and comparisons they employ for this purpose, have been personified. In essence Tulsidas means that Sri Ram's beauty, lovliness, magnificence, splendour, radiance and glories are so great, so majestic and so peerless that there is nothing in this creation with which they can be compared. They are the benchmarks in themselves in their respective fields.]

The image (reflection) which is produced in the gem-studded floor of the court-yard of the palace when the child Ram crawls around and hauls himself forward on all fours (i.e. on his knees and hands) makes it appear that the Earth is gradually picking up this magnificent image in symbolic lotuses to enshrine it in its heart[4] (5).

[[4]What an excellent and fascinating imagery is made out here by Tulsidas! The child Ram moves or drags himself on all fours on the polished gem-studded floor of the palace. He lifts a hand and hauls himself forward with the help of his legs and knees, and then places the hand back on the ground. Then he lifts the other hand and repeats the process. Now, this continuous rhythmic motion of lifting and putting of the palms of the hand on the ground as the child Ram moves forward on all fours is compared here to the gradual and repeated attempts by Mother Earth to scoop or pick up the lovely image of the Lord as he gazes on his own reflection on the polished floor, but missing it each time as the hands are raised and the child moves ahead.

Another astounding aspect of this imagery is of the Earth attempting to pick up this wonderful image of child Ram in a 'lotus'. This is because the palms of the child's hand are like the 'petals of the lotus flower'. Since this reflection originates in the floor, it is said that Earth tries to pick up the magnificent image of child Ram using the lotus flower to scoop it up.

If one has closely observed how a child moves on the ground using his hands and knees it would be seen that when the palms rest on the ground they are flat, but when the hand is lifted for forward motion the fingers slightly curve or bend inwards. This is a natural and an involuntary rhythmic movement. Now, this phenomenon is used by Tulsidas to create an image of the Earth repeatedly opening and closing its lotus in continuous attempt to pick up the image of child Ram and station it in her heart.

And when will this image be enshrined in the symbolic heart of Earth? An image that is enshrined in a temple remains static; it does not move. In other words, when child Ram would stop moving forward, Earth would be glad that it has succeeded in finally capturing the lovely image of the Lord and fixed it in a place in its heart!]

At that time, while watching her son, king Dasrath's wife ('dasaratha-gharani'; Kaushalya) experienced the fruition of her auspicious, good and noble deeds and conducts.

Even in Tulsidas' heart, that image of Lord's cheerful cries and elegant staggering-stumbling gait has a permanent place (i.e. that image constantly resides or is permanently etched in his heart) (6).

नेकु बिलोकि धौं रघुबरनि।
चारु फल त्रिपुरारि तोको दिये कर नृप–घरनि।। 1।।
बाल भूषन बसन, तन सुन्दर रुचिर रजभरनि।
परसपर खेलनि अजिर, उठि चलनि, गिरि गिरि परनि।। 2।।
झुकनि, झाँकनि, छाँह सों किलकनि, नटनि हठि लरनि।
तोतरी बोलनि, बिलोकनि, मोहनी मनहरनि।। 3।।
सखि–बचन सुनि कौसिला लखि सुढर पासे डरनि।
लेति भरि भरि अंक सैंतति पैंत जनु दुहु करनि।। 4।।
चरित निरखत बिबुध तुलसी ओट दै जलधरनि।
चहत सुर सुरपति भयो सुरपति भये चहै तरनि।। 5।।

(1/28)

nēku bilōki dhauṁ raghubarani.
cāru phala tripurāri tōkō diyē kara nr̥pa-gharani.. 1..
bāla bhūṣana basana, tana sundara rucira rajabharani.
parasapara khēlani ajira, uṭhi calani, giri giri parani.. 2..
jhukani, jhāṁkani, chāṁha sōṁ kilakani, naṭani haṭhi larani.
tōtarī bōlani, bilōkani, mōhanī manaharani.. 3..
sakhi-bacana suni kausilā lakhi suḍhara pāsē ḍarani.
lēti bhari bhari aṅka saintati painta janu duhu karani.. 4..
carita nirakhata bibudha tulasī ōṭa dai jaladharani.
cahata sura surapati bhayō surapati bhayē cahai tarani.. 5..

Good fortune of mother Kaushalya

Verse no. 1/28—[Once, one of mother Kaushalya's companions drew her attention to the beautiful image of her son, Lord Sri Ram, and pointe out to her how exceedingly lucky she was. This companion said—]

'Oh the queen of the family of the great king (Dasrath) ('nr̥pa-gharani')! Just for a moment have a glance at these four brothers who are the best in the lineage of king Raghu (raghubarani).

Lord Shiva has blessed you by putting in your hands (tripurāri tōkō diyē kara) the four legendary fruits (cāru phala)[1] that one gets for all meritorious deeds done by him or her (1).

[[1]Here, the reference is to all the four brothers—Lord Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. They represent the four rewards that one gets for meritorious deeds and leading a righteous life. These four rewards are like the 'fruits' of the all wish-fulfilling tree. They are 'Artha' or financial well-being and prosperity; 'Dharma' or renown that one gets for being righteous and noble; 'Kaam' or fulfilment of all desires; and 'Moksha' or spiritual liberation which is the ultimate aim of life.]

Have a glance at their lovely, pretty and comely forms with attractive clothes and beautiful ornaments which are befitting of a child of their age, at the enchanting view of their bodies smeared with dust and mud, at their playful activites, at their charming gestures and childish pranks even as they play around in the palace ground without a care in the world. Watch their repeated attempts to stand up and walk, but staggering and stumbling down to a fall; their bending, glancing and peering sideways; their joyous shrill cries on seeing their own shadows or images (on the floor or pillars), their dancing, mutual quarrels, lisp and indistinct talk, and their attractive and captivating gaze that enthralls and charms the mind.' (2-3).

Hearing these words of the maid, Kaushalya realised that the dice of good fortunes and auspiciousness of fate has been cast in her favour (i.e. she felt that she was very lucky and blessed). This is why (or as a result of this feeling) she began to repeatedly embrace Lord Sri Ram like the person, having won a bet, longingly and covetously grabs and collects his reward with both his hands (as an emotional response to the sudden realisation of extreme good fortune that others envy, and which may not come again if missed even once) (4).

Tulsidas says that the sight is so enchanting and captivating that the Gods observe this scene from behind the curtain of the clouds in the heavens, and in order to constantly gaze at the scene without blinking, they wish they had been like Indra (the king of Gods), while the latter hoped that he were the Sun-God[2]. (5).

[[2]Indra had been cursed to have a thousand holes in his body. The story is narrated in a note appended to this verse*. So the Gods wished they too had a thousand eyes like Indra so that they too could watch the enchanting view from different angles continuously and uninterruptedly, without blinking for even a fleeting moment.

Similarly, the Sun shines and illuminates the realm—so Indra wished that his curse were replaced with splendorous light so that he could sufficiently illuminate the area of action where the child Ram and his brothers were playing and frolicking around. In modern terms, it can be likened to field lights or stadium overhead lights or high mast lights put up in large cities to illuminate large areas on the ground as if it were day time.]

[Note—*The story of Indra's curse and his body punctured by countless holes resembling eyes.

Indra is also called by the name 'Sahastraaksha', which literally means to have thousand eyes. He is called so because his whole body is covered by thousands of holes resembling the marks left on one's body after chicken-pox or some serious skin disease. He had got them as a result of a curse by sage Gautam to punish him for being sexually pervert as he had the vile temerity of having attempted sex with the sage's loyal wife in his absence by employing deceit. The lecherous Indra had assumed the physical body of the sage to satisfy his lust, but was caught by the sage. So the sage cursed him to have a thousand holes in his body. These 'holes' represented the female vagina, and the curse was in the form of sarcastic curse on Indra so that now onwards he would be able to see a woman's sexual organs spread all over his own body with thousands of eyes instead of only two to satisfy his lust and perversions. It was also intended to tell the world in a symbolic manner about the punishment that one gets by being excessively lustful in the sense that one instance of lecherousness would create thousands of horrible spots that would taint a man's character and personality forever, no matter how socially established or well-placed he may be. After all, Indra was a king of Gods, and one can imagine his discomfiture

that he would have to remain with a pot-holed and scarred body for the rest of his life.]

राग जैतश्री

(1/29)

भूमितल भूपके बड़े भाग।
राम लखन रिपुदमन भरत सिसु निरखत अति अनुराग।। 1।।
बालबिभूषन लसत पायैं मृदु मंजुल अंग–बिभाग।
दसरथ–सुकृत मनोहर बिरवनि रूप–करह जनु लाग।। 2।।
राजमराल बिराजत बिहरत जे हर–हृदय–तड़ाग।
ते नृप–अजिर जानु कर धावत धरन चटक चल काग।। 3।।
सिद्ध सिहात, सराहत मुनिगन, कहैं सुर किंनर नाग।
'है बरु बिहँग बिलोकिय बालक बसि पुर उपबन बाग'।। 4।।
परिजन सहित राय रानिन्ह कियो मज्जन प्रेम–प्रयाग।
तुलसी फल ताके चार्‌यो मनि मरकत पंकजराग।। 5।।

rāga jaitaśrī

(1/29)

bhūmitala bhūpakē baṛē bhāga.
rāma lakhana ripudamana bharata sisu nirakhata ati anurāga.. 1..
bālabibhūṣana lasata pāyaiṁ mr̥du man̐jula aṅga-bibhāga.
dasaratha-sukr̥ta manōhara biravani rūpa-karaha janu lāga.. 2..
rājamarāla birājata biharata jē hara-hr̥daya-taṛāga.
tē nr̥pa-ajira jānu kara dhāvata dharana caṭaka cala kāga.. 3..
sid'dha sihāta, sarāhata munigana, kahaiṁ sura kinnara nāga.
'hvai baru biham̆ga bilōkiya bālaka basi pura upabana bāga'.. 4..
parijana sahita rāya rāninha kiyō majjana prēma-prayāga.
tulasī phala tākē cāryō mani marakata pan̐kajarāga.. 5..

Good fortune of king Dasrath

Verse no. 1/29—[King Dasrath was indeed the most lucky and blessed soul of his time as the Supreme Lord of creation had himself blessed him by agreeing to become his son in the form of Lord Ram. Lord Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation and the Lord who is also known as 'Viraat Purush', the all-pervading and almighty Lord God of creation. The entire episode that describes why and how the Lord agreed to become Dasrath's son is narrated in detail in Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 141—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 152, and

followed up subsequently by Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 188—to Doha no. 192.

Besides this, the immensity of king Dasrath's good luck has been hightlighted in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 172—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 174.]

On the surface of this earth (bhūmitala), the king (Dasrath) is blessed with exceedingly great fortune and good luck for he is able to affectionately look at to his heart's content and from so close quarters the wonderful image (of the Lord of the World who has manifested in the form of his sons) Sri Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan (1).

The beautiful ornaments which adorn the children's feet and each of their tender and well contoured lovely body have been especially made for them and suit them perfectly. It appears that these wonderful ornaments are like small lovely sprouts of tender leaves and buds of colourful flowers that have emerged from a beautiful creeper[1] that personifies (manōhara biravani rūpa-karaha) all the auspicious, righteous, noble and meritorious deeds (sukr̥ta) done by Dasrath (2).

[[1]Here, the 'creeper' is represented by the four brothers, and the 'sprouts of leaves and buds of flowers are the ornaments that decorate the bodies of the four brothers.]

The royal Swan-like Lord's (Sri Ram's) image which moves around (dwells or floats) in the lake-like heart of Lord Shiva[2] now rushes ambitiously forward on his knees and hands (i.e. on all fours) in the court-yard of king Dasrath to catch hold of a clever crow who is hopping and jumping around to escape the grasp of the child at each attempt he makes to catch hold of it[3] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 11; and Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 341.

[3]The 'crow' referred to here is the famous saintly crow named 'Kaabhusund' who had gone to play with Lord Ram during his childhood days as narrated by this saint himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 88—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

Watching this, the Siddhas (mystics, attained ones, experts) feel glad at heart, sages appreciate and praise the good luck of king Dasrath, and the Gods, the Kinnars (demi gods, celestial singers and dancers) and the Naagas (serpents; those creatures who live on earth and below its surface; the inhabitants of the nether world; here meaning the patron Gods of such creatures) say thus—'It would have been so much better for us if we too had been birds (like this crow Kaagbhusund) and lived in the king's city, gardens and forests so that we too could have enjoyed the blessedness and good fortune that comes by watching these divine children to our heart's content as does this crow (Kagbhusund).' (4).

Verily, it indeed appears as if king Dasrath and the queens along with their relatives and kinsfolk have bathed themselves in the symbolic 'Prayag' (which is the confluence of the three holy rivers Ganges, Yamuna, Saraswati; a great pilgrim center for the Hindus) of love and affection (majjana prēma-prayāga).

Tulsidas says that these four children, whose radiance and splendour glows like emerald (mani marakata) and a gem formed by condensed nectar of the lotus

flower (mani paṅkajarāga), are the result of this good deed of bathing in the symbolic Prayag of unbound love and affection for the Lord[4] (5).

[[4]The importance of having unstinted and undiluted love and affection for the Lord God has been highlighted in this stanza. The Lord respects no other relationship except love and devotion. Even Lord Shiva has endorsed this view in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 185.

It has been reiterated by sage Valmiki later on in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 128—to Doha no. 131, and by Lord Ram himself in Uttar Kand, Doha no. 84 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 85.]

राग आसावरी

(1 / 30)

छँगन मँगन अँगना खेलत चारु चार्‌यो भाई।
सानुज भरत लाल लषन राम लोने लोने
लरिका लखि मुदित मातु समुदाई।।1।।
बाल बसन भूषन धरे, नख–सिख छबि छाई।
नील पीत मनसिज–सरसिज मंजुल
मालनि मानो है देहनितें दुति पाई।।2।।
ठुमुकु ठुमुकु पग धरनि, नटनि, लरखरनि सुहाई।
भजनि, मिलनि, रूठनि, तूठनि, किलकनि,
अवलोकनि, बोलनि बरनि न जाई।।3।।
जननि सकल चहुँ ओर आलबाल मनि–अँगनाई।
दसरथ–सुकृत बिबुध–बिरवा बिलसत
बिलोकि जनु बिधि बर बारि बनाई।।4।।
हरि बिरंचि हर हेरि राम प्रेम–परबसताई।
सुख–समाज रघुराजके बरनत
बिसुद्ध मन सुरनि सुमन झरि लाई।।5।।
सुमिरत श्रीरघुबरनिकी लीला लरिकाई।
तुलसिदास अनुराग अवध आनँद
अनुभवत तब को सो अजहुँ अघाई।।6।।

rāga āsāvarī

(1/30)

chaṁgana maṁgana aṁganā khēlata cāru cāryō bhā'ī.
sānuja bharata lāla laṣana rāma lōnē lōnē
larikā lakhi mudita mātu samudā'ī..1..
bāla basana bhūṣana dharē, nakha-sikha chabi chā'ī.
nīla pīta manasija-sarasija mañjula
mālani mānō hai dēhanitēṁ duti pā'ī..2..
ṭhumuku ṭhumuku paga dharani, naṭani, larakharani suhā'ī.
bhajani, milani, rūṭhani, tūṭhani, kilakani,

avalōkani, bōlani barani na jā'ī..3..
janani sakala cahuṁ ōra ālabāla mani-aṁganā'ī.
dasaratha-sukr̥ta bibudha-biravā bilasata
bilōki janu bidhi bara bāri banā'ī..4..
hari biran̄ci hara hēri rāma prēma-parabasatā'ī.
sukha-samāja raghurājakē baranata
bisud'dha mana surani sumana jhari lā'ī..5..
sumirata śrīraghubaranikī līlā larikā'ī.
tulasidāsa anurāga avadha ānaṁda
anubhavata taba kō sō ajahuṁ aghā'ī..6..

The Beauty and Graceful Form of the four children as they play in the royal courtyard-1

Verse no. 1/30—[Verse nos. 1/30—1/31 describe the wonderful sight of Lord Ram and his brothers playing merrily in the palace courtyard.]

The four brothers (Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) are most graceful, beautiful, handsome and adorable; they are exceptionally charming and very enchanting to behold as they play around cheerfully in the royal court-yard.

The mothers are overwhelmed with joy and filled with exhilaration when they see Shatrughan along with his brothers Bharat, Laxman and Ram[1] (1).

[[1]Remarkable indeed! Wonderful really! Shatrughan was the youngest of the four, and the youngest son is always most dear for any mother. The three elder brothers were also too eager to keep him happy, and so Shatrughan occupied the center-stage when the four played together. He was the cynosure of all eyes.]

All the four brothers are adorned with clothes and ornaments befitting children of their exalted, noble and royal stature as well as their tender age. They look absolutely fabulous, most radiant and very magnificent from head to toe.

The garlands that Kamdeo/cupid had made from blue and yellow lotus-like flowers appear to derive their glamour, charm, beauty and magnificence from their (children's) bodies[2] (2).

[[2]In other words, the four brothers looked so exceptionally beautiful that the beauty of the garland of flowers that Kamdeo held appeared to be only a fraction of their beauty. It looks as if the magnificence which the garland possessed is a mere reflection of the original magnificence effusing out of the bodies of these four brothers. The original always has the vibrancy, the colour, the energy, the eloquence and the dynamism that its reflection lacks.]

No one can describe the beauty and charm of the divine sight of the children strutting around playfully and gleefully with a staggering and uncertain gait, tottering, limping, stumbling, getting up and falling again[3], then dashing forward, sometimes dancing, sometimes swaggering and at other times moving around in circles, sometimes rushing forward to meet and embrace each other, and at other times quarreling among themselves and becoming angry and annoyed with each other, sometimes being exceptionally happy and joyous while at other times being in a somber and grave mood, and the sight of their giving out a shrill cry of joy, their gaze, and the

enchantment of the hearing of their lispful speech and their childish babble are so fascinating and enchanting that they cannot be described in words (3).

[[3]In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 203 it is said that when mother Kaushalya summoned the child Ram for meals, he ran away from her, strutting and limping as he did so.]

Watching the Kalpa-Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods) representing king Dasrath's good and virtuous deeds grow rapidly in the garden representing the palace court-yard, the creator has enclosed it (to protect it) from all the four sides by making a hedge representing the mothers (Kaushalya, Sumitra, Kaikeyi)[4] (4).

[[4]It's a find example of imagery. The good deeds of king Dasrath have been personified in the form of the four brothers who are compared to a Kalpa Tree. This tree is the all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods. The mothers are very protective of these four children and are always on the look out that no harm should come to them like a hedge is erected around a young tree to protect it against damage.]

Observing the nature of Lord Ram that he can be very easily pleased, obliged, gratified and made happy (captivated and overcome) by having devotion, love and affection for him, the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu and the concluder Shiva (i.e. all the three chief Gods who form the Trinity) are liberal in praising kind Dasrath because he has found a treasury of immense happiness and contentedness in the form of the Lord as his son[5]. The Gods are so appreciative of the king's good fortune and his quality of love and devotion which forced the Supreme Lord to become a human child that they do not tire of showering flowers on him in a continuous stream to honour him and celebrate this auspicious virtue of the Lord himself. As a result, the Gods are showering flowers on him constantly (to celebrate it) (5).

[[5]Tulsidas means that the Gods praise the purity and sincerity of love and devotion of Dasrath for he has been able to please the Supreme Lord so much that the Lord came down personally to his palace as a son in the form of Sri Ram.]

Remembering and recalling those childhood pranks and playful activites of those four children who are the best in the lineage of Raghu, Tulsidas feels enchanted and exhilarated, and experiences the ecstasy and joy of those days and moments even today in Ayodhya[6] (6).

[[6]Tulsidas had lived in the town of Ayodhya during his lifetime. What he means to say is that he remains so submerged in the pleasant thoughts of his dear Lord that he can imagine the same level of happiness and cheer all around even today in the city as it existed during the time of Lord Ram when he was a child playing around on its soil.]

राग बिलावल

(1/31)

आँगन खेलत आनँदकंद। रघुकुल–कुमुद–सुखद चारु चंद।। 1।।
सानुज भरत लषन सँग सोहैं। सिसु–भूषन भूषित मन मोहैं।
तन दुति मोरचंद जिमि झलकैं। मनहुँ उमगि अँग–अँग छबि छलकैं।। 2।।
कटि किंकिनि पग पैजनि बाजैं। पंकज पानि पहुँचिआँ राजैं।

कठुला कंठ बघनहा नीके। नयन–सरोज–मयन–सरसीके।। 3।।
लटकन लसत ललाट लटूरीं। दमकति द्वै द्वै दँतुरियाँ रूरीं।
मुनि–मन हरत मंजु मसि बुंदा। ललित बदन बलि बाल मुकुंदा।। 4।।
कुलही चित्र बिचित्र झँगूलीं। निरखत मातु मुदित मन फूलीं।
गहि मनिखंभ डिंभ डगि डोलत। कल बल बचन तोतरे बोलत ।। 5।।
किलकत, झुकि झाँकत प्रतिबिंबनि। देत परम सुख पितु अरु अंबनि।
सुमिरत सुखमा हिय हुलसी है। गावत प्रेम पुलकि तुलसी है।। 6।।

rāga bilāvala

(1/31)

āmॅgana khēlata ānamॅdakanda. raghukula-kumuda-sukhada cāru canda.. 1..
sānuja bharata laṣana samॅga sōhaiṁ. sisu-bhūṣana bhūṣita mana mōhaiṁ.
tana duti mōracanda jimi jhalakaiṁ. manahumॅ umagi amॅga-amॅga chabi chalakaiṁ.. 2..
kaṭi kiṅkini paga paijani bājaiṁ. paṅkaja pāni pahumॅci'āmॅ rājaiṁ.
kaṭhulā kaṇṭha baghanahā nīkē. nayana-sarōja-mayana-sarasīkē.. 3..
laṭakana lasata lalāṭa laṭūrīṁ. damakati dvai dvai damॅturiyāmॅ rūrīṁ.
muni-mana harata manjju masi bundā. lalita badana bali bāla mukundā.. 4..
kulahī citra bicitra jhamॅgūlīṁ. nirakhata mātu mudita mana phūlīṁ.
gahi manikhambha ḍimbha ḍagi ḍōlata. kala bala bacana tōtarē bōlata.. 5..
kilakata, jhuki jhāmॅkata pratibimbani. dēta parama sukha pitu aru ambani.
sumirata sukhamā hiya hulasī hai. gāvata prēma pulaki tulasī hai.. 6..

The Beauty and Graceful Form of the four children as they play in the royal courtyard-2

Verse no. 1/31—Child Sri Ram—who is the root of all happiness and cheer, and is like an attractive and enchanting moon for the purpose of providing cheerfulness and joy to the water lily representing king Raghu's lineage—is merrily playing around in the palace court-yard (1).

Lord Sri Ram is accompanied by Shatrughan, Bharat and Laxman who look lovely and glorious by the side of the Lord. All the four brothers are adorned with ornaments befitting them (and their age and stature), and this magnificent sight captivates and enthralls the mind of the beholder.

The radiance effusing from their bodies resembles the crescent moon-like pattern that adorns the peacock's plume, while the beauteous and glamorous image of the various parts of their bodies appear to spill over from them and spread their charm all over (2).

There is a pleasant jingling and chiming sound[1] emanating from the waistband around the waist and anklets on the feet; the (wrists of the) lotus-like hands of the children are adorned by bracelets. A thick girdle (made of precious metals) and a lion's toe (embedded in it to cast-off ill omens) around the neck looks lovely, while (his) lotus-like eyes appear to have emerged from the pond of Kamdeo/cupid himself[2] (3).

[[1]Tiny bells are attached to the waistband, the anklets and the bracelets. When the child moves, these bells chime softly and sweetly.

[2]The eyes are compared to the beauty of the lotus flower which has emerged from a pond beauty, charm, glamour, magnificence, attractiveness, enchantment etc. as it is the pond of the God of charm and lovliness, i.e. Kamdeo/cupid.]

Tiny curls of hairs on the head, with golden lockets and trinkets dangling from them, look exceptionally beauteous and charming, while two tiny teeth[3] glow and glisten (like diamonds or pearls) in the mouth. The small dot of Kaajal (on the forehead) appears to steal (enchant, enthrall, captivate) the mind of sages, hermits and seers.

One sacrifices oneself (bali) at the graceful, beautiful and the most enchanting view of the this pretty child[4] who resembles a very young and tender lotus flower (bāla mukundā) (4).

[[3]Two tiny teeth indicate that the child Ram was about 1 year old at that time. See also verse 1/32/3.

[4]The focus of attention in this verse, as is true with the entire book itself, is Lord Ram. The entire story of the Ramayan revolves around the Lord. Hence, after referring to the other brothers of Sri Ram so as to pay respect to them, the poet Tulsidas focuses his attention on describing the main hero of the epic story and the Lord whom he adores, i.e. Lord Sri Ram.]

Watching the child wearing a multicoloured cap and a frock of matchless beauty (which is much enhanced by being on the Lord's divine body), the mother (Kaushalya) is overwhelmed with joyance in abundance and her mind derives immense pleasure, solace and comfort from this sight.

The child Ram takes the support of gem-studded pillars as he attempts to walk with a stumbling, staggering, unsteady gait, and speaks indistinct words with a childish lisp (5).

He continually gives out a shrill cry of joy as he bends forward to look at his own image (reflection), both on the glazed pillar as well as on the polished floor (because he is fascinated at seeing his own image there, thinking it to be another child similar to him).

In this way, he provides immense joy and delight to his parents. The mere remembrance of that beautiful, charming and magnificent scene gives ecstasy and overwhelming joy in ones's heart, and even Tulsidas sings it with thrill spreading over his whole body (6).

राग कान्हरा

(1/32)

ललित सुतहि लालति सचु पाये।
कौसल्या कल कनक अजिर महँ सिखवति चलन अँगुरियाँ लाये।। 1।।
कटि किंकिनी, पैजनी पायनि बाजति रुनझुन मधुर रेंगाये।
पहुँची करनि, कंठ कठुला बन्यो केहरि नख मनि–जरित जराये।। 2।।
पीत पुनीत बिचित्र झँगुलिया सोहति स्याम सरीर सोहाये।
दँतियाँ द्वै–द्वै मनोहर मुख छबि, अरुन अधर चित लेत चोराये।। 3।।

चिबुक कपोल नासिका सुन्दर, भाल तिलक मसिबिंदु बनाये।
राजत नयन मंजु अंजनजुत खंजन कंज मीन मद नाये।। 4।।
लटकन चारु भ्रुकुटिया टेढ़ी, मेढ़ी सुभग सुदेस सुभाये।
किलकि किलकि नाचत चुटकी सुनि, डरपति जननि पानि छुटकाये।। 5।।
गिरि घुटुरुवनि टेकि उठि अनुजनि तोतरि बोलत पूप देखाये।
बाल–केलि अवलोकि मातु सब मुदित मगन आनँद न अमाये।। 6।।
देखत नभ घन–ओट चरित मुनि जोग समाधि बिरति बिसराये।
तुलसिदास जे रसिक न यहि रस ते नर जड जीवत जग जाये।। 7।।

rāga kānharā

(1/32)

lalita sutahi lālati sacu pāyē.
kausalyā kala kanaka ajira mahaṁ sikhavati calana aṁguriyāṁ lāyē.. 1..
kaṭi kiṅkinī, paijanī pāyani bājati runajhuna madhura rēṅgāyē.
pahuṁcī karani, kaṇṭha kaṭhulā ban'yō kēhari nakha mani-jarita jarāyē.. 2..
pīta punīta bicitra jhaṁguliyā sōhati syāma sarīra sōhāyē.
daṁtiyāṁ dvai-dvai manōhara mukha chabi, aruna adhara cita lēta cōrāyē.. 3..
cibuka kapōla nāsikā sundara, bhāla tilaka masibindu banāyē.
rājata nayana mañju añjanajuta khañjana kañja mīna mada nāyē.. 4..
laṭakana cāru bhurakuṭiyā ṭēṛhī, mēṛhī subhaga sudēsa subhāyē.
kilaki kilaki nācata cuṭakī suni, ḍarapati janani pāni chuṭakāyē.. 5..
giri ghuṭuruvani ṭēki uṭhi anujani tōtari bōlata pūpa dēkhāyē.
bāla-kēli avalōki mātu saba mudita magana ānaṁda na amāyē.. 6..
dēkhata nabha ghana-ōṭa carita muni jōga samādhi birati bisarāyē.
tulasidāsa jē rasika na yahi rasa tē nara jaḍa jīvata jaga jāyē.. 7..

Child Ram runs to walk

Verse no. 1/32—[This verse follows up on stanza no. 5 of the previous verse no. 1/31 in which we have read that the child Ram has learnt to walk slowly, albeit with a staggering, tottering and uncertain gait, by taking the support of the pillars.]

Mother Kaushalya affectionately rears her most endearing, wondrously attractive and pleasingly charming child (Sri Ram) with immensity of joyance and delightfulness. She teaches him how to walk by holding his fingers and helping him along to move forward in her gilded court-yard (1).

As he (child Ram) staggers, stumbles and totters along slowly, the waist-band on his waist and the anklet on his feet give out a sweet and pleasant sound created by tiny bells tied to them. The bracelets on his hands, the girdle and the lion’s toe studded with gems on his neck look magnificent and glamorous (2).

On his most handsome and attractive dark complexioned body, the yellow coloured, uniquely designed and most pure (clean) frock looks beauteous and glamorous. The

lively attraction of the face with two pairs of teeth (see verse no. 1/31/4 also) and pinkish (or deep red) lips appear to steal (i.e. enthral, captivate, enchant) one's mind and intellect (3).

His chin, cheeks and nose are very lovely, while a Tilak-Mark and a dot of Kaajal (black soot of lamp mixed with clarified butter) adorns his forehead. His eyes laced with Anjan (which is a home-made eye ointment, generally applied on edges of lids and on eyelashes) are so attractive that they appear to crush the pride and haughtiness of the Khanjan bird (the wagtail), a lotus and a fish (who are proud of their beautiful eyes; and as for the lotus, it is generally used as a metaphor for beauty, especially of the eye and face, by Tulsidas) (4).

There are attractive lockets (dangling from curly hairs) on the child's head, the eye-brows are bend (like a bow), and beautifully plaited locks of hair adorn his head.

Hearing the mother snap her fingers, the child begins to dance, and he frightens the mother by getting his hands freed from her clasp (grasp). [The mother fears that he would fall down and hurt himself.] (5).

When he stumbles and falls down, he picks himself up with the support of his knees, and when the mother shows him 'Pua' ('pūpa'; a sweet-meat of wheat flour, deeply fried and soaked in a syrup of sugar), he gleefully calls out to his mother with a pleasant lisp and stutter, gesturing to her that he wants to grab it eagerly.

All the mothers (i.e. Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi) feel themselves literally drowned (or overwhelmed) in love and affection on seeing his (Sri Ram's) childish plays, pranks and frolicks. Their hearts are unable to accomodate all the delight, joy and happiness of the time because of their immensity and profoundness (6).

Even sages, hermits and seers forget about their Yogas (meditation), Samadhis (trance-like state of pure consciousness) and Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion, detachments), and observe the going-ons from behind the curtain of clouds (in the heaven)[1].

[[1]The great sages and seers had immense mystical powers wherein they could transcend the grossness and limitations of their physical body and live in their primary subtle form as the ethereal Spirit which allowed them to go anywhere they wished without the hindrance caused by physical barriers.]

Tulsidas asserts that those who do not have taste (or interest) in this 'Rasa' (quality of being enchanted, enthralled, captivated, enamoured with child Sri Ram's playful activities and the divine aura of bliss, joy and happiness that surround it) have lived in this world in vain (7).

राग ललित

(1/33)

छोटी छोटी गोड़ियाँ अँगुरियाँ छबीलीं छोटी,
नख–जोति मोती मानो कमल–दलनिपर।
ललित आँगन खेलैं, ठुमुकु ठुमुकु चलैं,
झुँझुनु झुँझुनु पाँय पैजनी मृदु मुखर।।1।।

किंकिनी कलित कटि हाटक जटित मनि,
मंजु कर–कंजनि पहुँचियाँ रुचिरतर।
पियरी झीनी झँगुली साँवरे सरीर खुली,
बालक दामिनि ओढ़ी मानो बारे बारिधर।।2।।
उर बघनहा, कंठ कठुला, झँडूले केश,
मेढ़ी लटकन मसिबिंदु मुनि–मन–हर।
अंजन–रंजित नैन, चित चोरै चितवनि,
मुख–सोभापर वारौं अमित असमसर।।3।।
चुटकी बजावती नचावती कौसल्या माता,
बालकेलि गावती मल्हावती सुप्रेम–भर।
किलकि किलकि हँसैं, द्वै–द्वै दँतुरियाँ लसैं,
तुलसी मन बसैं तोतरे बचन बर।।4।।

rāga lalita

(1/33)

chōṭī chōṭī gōḍiyāṁ aṁguriyāṁ chabīlīṁ chōṭī,
nakha-jōti mōtī mānō kamala-dalanipara.
lalita āṁgana khēlaiṁ, ṭhumuku ṭhumuku calaiṁ,
jhumṁjhunu jhumṁjhunu pāṁya paijanī mṛdu mukhara..1..
kiṁkinī kalita kaṭi hāṭaka jaṭita mani,
manjju kara-kanjjani pahumcciyāṁ ruciratara.
piyarī jhīnī jhaṁgulī sāṁvarē sarīra khulī,
bālaka dāmini ōṛhī mānō bārē bāridhara..2..
ura baghanahā, kaṇṭha kaṭhulā, jhaṁḍūlē kēśa,
mēṛhī laṭakana masibindu muni-mana-hara.
anjjana-ranjjita naina, cita cōrai citavani,
mukha-sōbhāpara vāraum amita asamasara..3..
cuṭakī bajāvatī nacāvatī kausalyā mātā,
bālakēli gāvatī mal'hāvatī suprēma-bhara.
kilaki kilaki haṁsaiṁ, dvai-dvai damturiyāṁ lasaiṁ,
tulasī mana basaiṁ tōtarē bacana bara..4..

Child Ram's Beauty

Verse no. 1/33—His (child Sri Ram's) legs are dainty. They have lovely, tiny toes, and the row of nails on them resembles pearls on the petals of the lotus. When he walks with a totter and stagger[1] in the attractive court-yard while playing around it, the anklets on his feet give out a tinkling and jingling sound that is pleasant and sweet to hear[2] (1).

[[1]Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 203.

[2]This sound is produced by tiny bells that are attached to these ornaments of the feet.]

His waist is adorned by a golden, gem-studded waistband, and the hands have lovely bracelets on them. A thin, yellow coloured frock on his dark complexioned body looks magnificent as if a young cloud (i.e. the newly formed cloud that has yet not produced rain) is covered by a continuous dazzle and illumination caused by lightening that streaks over it[2] (2).

[[2]Here, the dark-complexioned body of child Ram is likened to a newly formed dark cloud, and the dazzle of lightening streaking through this cloud and illuminating it is like the shimmering of light that reflects from the cloth that covers the child's body.]

There is a lion's toe nail dangling on his chest. The neck has a necklace around it, and the head is adorned by reddish-hued hairs, plaited lock of hairs, lockets and a dot of Kaajal—all of which steal (enchant, enthral, captivate, enamour) the mind of sages, hermits and seers.

His eyes are laced with Anjan (eye ointment), his glances steal one's intellect and concentration, and I (Tulsidas) can sacrifice innumerable Kamdeo/cupids on the beauty and charm of his (child Ram's) lovely, pretty and bewitchingly beautiful face (3).

Mother Kaushalya snaps her fingers and dances in joy and ecstasy seeing the child's glorious childhood activities, plays and frolicks, and being overwhelmed with love and affection for the child, she lovingly and affectionately caresses him.

He (child Ram) laughs ecstatically. Two pairs of (sparkling white) teeth look glamorous in his mouth[3].

The child's (Lord Sri Ram's) most attractive and enchanting words spoken with a child-like lisp are permanently residing in Tulsidas' heart[4] (4).

[[3]Refer: Verse no. 1/32 herein above.

[4]Tulsidas constantly remembers and virtually hears them being spoken at all times in the sub-conscious mind of his, helping this great saint to remain lost in the thoughts of his beloved Lord Ram, and derive eternal spiritual bliss and joy by such remembrance.]

(1 / 34)

सादर सुमुखि बिलोकि राम–सिसुरूप, अनूप भूप लिये कनियाँ।
सुंदर स्याम सरोज बरन तनु, नखसिख सुभग सकल सुखदनियाँ।। 1।।
अरुन चरन नखजोति जगमगति, रुनझुनु करति पाँय पैजनियाँ।
कनक–रतन–मनि जटित रटति कटि किंकिनि
कलित पीतपट–तनियाँ।। 2।।
पहुँची करनि, पदिक हरिनख उर, कठुला कंठ, मंजु गजमनियाँ।
रुचिर चिबुक, रद, अधर मनोहर, ललित
नासिका लसति नथुनियाँ।। 3।।
बिकट भ्रुकुटि, सुखमानिधि आनन, कल
कपोल, काननि नगफनियाँ।
भाल तिलक मसिबिन्दु बिराजत, सोहति सीस लाल चौतनियाँ।। 4।।

मनमोहनी तोतरी बोलनि, मुनि–मन–हरनि हँसनि किलकनियाँ।
बाल सुभाय बिलोल बिलोचन, चोरति चितहि चारु चितवनियाँ।। 5।।
सुनि कुलबधू झरोखनि झाँकति रामचन्द्र–छबि चंदबदनियाँ।
तुलसिदास प्रभु देखि मगन भईं प्रेमबिबस कछु सुधि न अपनियाँ।। 6।।

(1/34)

sādara sumukhi bilōki rāma-sisurūpa, anūpa bhūpa liyē kaniyāṁ.
sundara syāma sarōja barana tanu, nakhasikha subhaga sakala sukhadaniyāṁ.. 1..
aruna carana nakhajōti jagamagati, runajhunu karati pāṁya paijaniyāṁ.
kanaka-ratana-mani jaṭita raṭati kaṭi kiṅkini kalita pītapaṭa-taniyāṁ.. 2..
pahuṁcī karani, padika harinakha ura, kaṭhulā kaṇṭha, maṁju gajamaniyāṁ.
rucira cibuka, rada, adhara manōhara, lalita nāsikā lasati nathuniyāṁ.. 3..
bikaṭa bhurakuṭi, sukhamānidhi ānana, kala kapōla, kānani nagaphaniyāṁ.
bhāla tilaka masibindu birājata, sōhati sīsa lāla cautaniyāṁ.. 4..
manamōhanī tōtarī bōlani, muni-mana-harani haṁsani kilakaniyāṁ.
bāla subhāya bilōla bilōcana, cōrati citahi cāru citavaniyāṁ.. 5..
suni kulabadhū jharōkhani jhāṁkati rāmacandra-chabi candabadaniyāṁ.
tulasidāsa prabhu dēkhi magana bha'īṁ prēmabibasa kachu sudhi na apaniyāṁ.. 6..

Child Ram in king Dasrath's Lap

Verse no. 1/34—[A palace maid tells another—] 'Oh friend with a pleasant face (sumukhi)! Look with due respect (sādara bilōki) at the magnificent sight of the beautiful form of child Ram as king Dasrath has made him sit affectionately on his lap.

Watch his (child Ram's) body which has a radiant glow resembling that of a blue lotus, is most handsome and lovely from toe to head, and is the bestower of happiness and delights of all kinds (i.e. there is no sorrow or trouble in his presence) (1).

The light emanating (reflecting) from the toe nails of his deep red feet are twinkling; the anklets on the legs give out a jingling and tinkling sound; the golden waist-band studded with gems and jewels around the waist is chiming with a pleasant sound (due to small bells hanging from it), and a 'Pitambar' (which is a yellow wrap-around silk cloth) adorns the child's body (2).

In the same manner, bracelets on the wrists, a medallion and a lion's toe on the chest, a girdle or a necklace (called a 'kaṭhulā') around his neck, and a pearl garland (that he wears around his neck and which adorns his chest) look magnificent and glamorous. His chin, teeth and lips are most attractive, while a nose-ring adorns his nostril (3).

His eye-brows are fierce and formidable (bikaṭa bhurakuṭi), the countenance and expression of his face is a treasury of beauty, charm and splendour (sukhamānidhi

ānana), while his cheeks are most lovely and charming to behold (kala kapōla). He wears an ear-ring that is shaped like the hood of a serpent (kānani nagaphaniyāṁ).

A Tilak-Mark and a dot of Kaajal adorns his forehead (bhāla tilaka masibindu birājata), while a red cap that crowns his head looks beauteous (sōhati sīsa lāla cautaniyāṁ.) (4).

His mind-captivating lispful and staggering talk (manamōhanī tōtarī bōlani), his carefree laughter, his shrill cry of joy and ecstasy (haṁsani kilakaniyāṁ)—they are capable of stealing (enchanting, enthralling, enamouring and captivating) the heart and mind of sages, hermits and seers (muni-mana-harani), while his childish fickle-eyes and lovely glance keep the mind and intellect in their thrall (cōrati citahi cāru citavaniyāṁ). (5).'

Hearing such words from their companions, the beautiful moon-faced ladies of the royal household gaze at the lovely view of child Sri Ram from the windows and balconies of the palace.

Tulsidas says that all of them were mesmerised, enchanted and enthralled by that beautiful and captivating sight of the lovely child whose surpassing beauty and perfection and symmetry of form defied all description[1]. Being so enamoured by and overwhelmed with love (for the child Ram), all of them lost consciousness (awareness) of the surrounding world (6).

[[1]And for this beauty, the ancient poets have said this saying:

"The lips write upon his cheeks, with ambergris of pearl, two lines, as it were with jet upon an apple, line for line.

Death harbours in his languid eye and slays with every glance, and in his cheek is drunkenness like nought in any wine.

Upsprings from the table of his pretty cheeks a growth like broidery my wonder is: as it were a lamp that burns through night hung up beneath the gloom in chains of ambergris."]

राग बिलावल

(1/35)

सोहत सहज सुहाये नैन।
खंजन मीन कमल सकुचत तब जब उपमा चाहत कबि दैन।। 1।।
सुंदर सब अंगनि सिसु–भूषन राजत जनु सोभा आये लैन।
बड़ो लाभ, लालची लोभवस रहि गयो लखि सुखमा बहु मैन।। 2।।
भोर भूप लिये गोद मोद भरे, निरखत बदन, सुनत कल बैन।
बालक–रूप अनूप राम–छबि निवसति तुलसिदास–उर–ऐन।। 3।।

rāga bilāvala

(1/35)

sōhata sahaja suhāyē naina.
khaṉjana mīna kamala sakucata taba jaba upamā cāhata kabi daina.. 1..
sundara saba aṅgani sisu-bhūṣana rājata janu sōbhā āyē laina.
baṛō lābha, lālacī lōbhavasa rahi gayō lakhi sukhamā bahu maina.. 2..
bhōra bhūpa liyē gōda mōda bharē, nirakhata badana, sunata kala baina.
bālaka-rūpa anūpa rāma-chabi nivasati tulasidāsa-ura-aina.. 3..

Child Ram's beauty as he wakes up in the morning

Verse no. 1/35—Child Sri Ram's eyes are by nature most lovely, enchanting and glamorous. When a learned poet tries to find a comparison for the beauty of the Lord's eyes, even the Khanjan bird (the wagtail), the fish and the lotus (khaṉjana mīna kamala) feel shy and abashed (sakucata)[1] (1).

[[1]The Khanjan bird and the fish are routinely employed by poets as stellar examples of entities that have beautiful eyes, while the lotus flower itself is used as a metaphor for all-round beauty and charm, even of the face. But Lord Ram's eyes are so exceptionally beautiful that even these three entities hide in shame lest the poet sees them and recalls them as examples of beauty of the eyes—because they are not at all fit for the comparison. They were till now proud of their being selected by poets whenever the latter needed examples to cite for the beauty of the eye, but now for once their pride had been crushed when they saw that their beauty was nothing when seen in the face of Lord Ram's charm, prettiness and magnificence. The bird, the fish and the lotus realised for once that their self confidence on this count was exaggerated and misplaced, and therefore they felt shy and ashamed at themselves.]

The entirely handsome body of child Sri Ram is decorated with numerous ornaments befitting a child of his age and noble upbringing. These ornaments look so magnificent, majestic and splendid on the Lord's divine body that the sight gives the impression that Kamdeo (the patron God of beauty and prettiness), who was passionate and greedy to be recognised as the most glamorous and beautiful one in form and appearance in this world, was so overwhelmed at this sight (of the Lord's body decorated with beautiful ornaments) that he decided to come and abide here[2] (2).

[[2]In other words, the child Sri Ram looked as if he was a personified form of Kamdeo/cupid.]

As soon as the day broke and dawn appeared, the king (Dasrath) lifted the child (Ram) onto his lap with surging emotions of love and affections for the latter that overwhelmed him. Having done so, the king gazed transfixed at the bewitching beauty of the child's face, hearing the child's charming voice as he chatters and banters lively.

Tulsidas avers that the matchless beauty of child Ram's image always resides in his heart (3).

राग बिभास

भारे भयो जागहु, रघुनंदन। गत–व्यलीक भगतनि उर–चंदन।।1।।
ससि करहिन, छीन दुति तारे। तमचुर मुखर, सुनहु मेरे प्यारे।।2।।
बिकसित कंज, कुमुद बिलखाने। लै पराग रस मधुप उड़ाने।।3।।
अनुज सखा सब बोलिन आये। बंदिन्ह अति पुनीत गुन गाये।।4।।
मनभावतो कलेऊ कीजै। तुलसिदास कहँ जूँठनि दीजै।।5।।

rāga bibhāsa

(1/36)

bhārē bhayō jāgahu, raghunandana. gata-vyalīka bhagatani ura-candana..1..
sasi karahina, chīna duti tārē. tamacura mukhara, sunahu mērē pyārē..2..
bikasita kaṁja, kumuda bilakhānē. lai parāga rasa madhupa uṛānē..3..
anuja sakhā saba bōlina āyē. bandinha ati punīta guna gāyē..4..
manabhāvatō kalē'ū kījai. tulasidāsa kahaṁ jūṁṭhani dījai..5..

The Morning Song-1
(Waking up the Child in the Early Morning)

Verse no. 1/36—[When the morning morrowed and the moon and the stars faded in the sky, the sun appeared on the far eastern horizon and inspired the birds who began chirping and warbling and hopping around, and the bees made their journey to seek nectar from flowers, mother Kaushalya lovingly woke up her son Sri Ram with a song sung in the most affectionate of tones. The following verse nos. 1/36—1/38 re-sing these songs.

Then, in verse no. 1/39 we shall read how Lord Ram's friends and companions, who had collected at the palace gates, call out to him to come out as they were all waiting for the Lord to go out to play.]

[The mother says—] 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram; the 'son of king Raghu's lineage')! It is morning, so get up now. You are like sandalwood for the hearts of your devotees (because you cool their ruffled and tormented hearts, you give them comfort and solace, and you soothe them by bestowing bliss and happiness) (1).

The rays of the moon has faded and the stars have lost their radiance[1]. Oh my dear! Listen, the cock is crowing (2).

[[1]That is, it is the time of dawn and the sun is just below the horizon. The splendour and radiance of the approaching sun have started illuminating the night sky so much so that the moon and the stars, even if they are nominally visible in the sky, have lost their light, lustre, twinkle and brilliance in its wake.]

The lotuses have opened their petals (i.e. have started blooming with the appearance of the sun), water lilies have withered (because the moon has set and they apprehend the rays of the sun), while the bees have flown away with nectar[2] (3).

[[2]The lotus flower closes its petal in the night and opens up during the day in the light of the sun. The water lilies on the other hand follow the reverse order—they

open up during the night when the moon is shining and close during the day under the scorching rays of the sun. Meanwhile, as soon as the lotuses open their petals, the honey bees swarm over them in search of nectar, and drawing their full their fly off away from the flower. The mother cites these scenes from Nature to stress that it is day time and Sri Ram should wake up from his sleep.]

Look, all your younger brothers and friends have come to make a call on you, while bards and minstrels are singing glories of the family at the palace gates[3] (4).

[[3]These people were called 'Bandis' (bandi), also collectively known as 'Bandijans', and they were usually in the pay roll of the king's court. It was a standard practice that they would collect at the palace gate in the morning and sing laudatory songs eulogizing the royal family, extolling the virtues of the king and his family, highlighting their glories, majesty, achievements and reputation. This practice stemmed from the belief that the king is like a god for his subjects and kingdom as he takes care of them just like a god would for his devotees and supplicants. When the temple doors were opened early in the morning, praises and prayers were sung for the presiding deity. This example was taken to establish the above tradition with respect to the king.

Besides the routine of singing laudatory songs in the morning, these Bandijans were summoned on special occasion to praise the king and his family. Such occasions may be some special occasion in the royal family such as child birth or marriage etc., or the occasion might be of a royal procession and other important ceremonial occasions such as festivals, feasts, religious functions, arrival of important guests, and etc.

Other names were also assigned to them—such as 'Suta', 'Maagadha', 'Gaayak', 'Bhaat'.

Refer: Goswami Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand: (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 194; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 250; (iii) Doha no. 262; and (b) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37.]

Now, take your breakfast according to your taste and give some left overs to Tulsidas. [This clearly indicates that Tulsidas imagines that he was physically present there at the time of these events, and hence is telling the tale in all sooth as he witnessed it himself.] (5).

(1 / 37)

प्रात भयो तात, बलि मातु बिधु–बदनपर
मदन वारौं कोटि, उठो प्रान–प्यारे!
सूत–मागध–बंदि बदत बिरुदावली,
द्वार सिसु अनुज प्रियतम तिहारे।।1।।
कोक गतसोक अवलोकि ससि छीनछबि,
अरुनमय गगन राजत रुचि तारे।
मनहुँ रबि बाल मृगराज तमनिकर–करि
दलित, अति ललित मनिगन बिथारे।।2।।
सुनहु तमचुर मुखर, कीर कलहंस पिक
केकि रव कलित, बोलत बिहँग बारे।

मनहुँ मुनिबृन्द रघुबंसमनि! रावरे
गुनत गुन आश्रमनि सपरिवारे।।3।।
सरनि बिकसित कंजपुंज मकरन्दवर,
मंजुतर मधुर मधुकर गुँजारे।
मनहुँ प्रभुजनम सुनि चैन अमरावती,
इन्दिरानन्द–मन्दिर सँवारे।।4।।
प्रेम–संमिलित बर बचन–रचना अकनि
राम राजीव–लोचन उघारे।
दास तुलसी मुदित, जननि करै आरती,
सहज सुन्दर अजिर पाँव धारे।।5।।

(1/37)

prāta bhayō tāta, bali mātu bidhu-badanapara
madana vārauṁ kōṭi, uṭhō prāna-pyārē!
sūta-māgadha-bandi badata birudāvalī,
dvāra sisu anuja priyatama tihārē..1..
kōka gatasōka avalōki sasi chīnachabi,
arunamaya gagana rājata ruci tārē.
manahuṁ rabi bāla mrgarāja tamanikara-kari
dalita, ati lalita manigana bithārē..2..
sunahu tamacura mukhara, kīra kalahansa pika
kēki rava kalita, bōlata bihaṁga bārē.
manahuṁ munibrnda raghubansamani! rāvarē
gunata guna āśramani saparivārē..3..
sarani bikasita kañjapuñja makarandavara,
mañjutara madhura madhukara guṁjārē.
manahuṁ prabhujanama suni caina amarāvatī,
indirānanda-mandira saṁvārē..4..
prēma-sammilita bara bacana-racanā akani
rāma rājīva-lōcana ughārē.
dāsa tulasī mudita, janani karai āratī,
sahaja sundara ajira pāṁva dhārē..5..

The Morning Song-2

Verse no. 1/37—'Oh my dear Son (tāta)! It is morning, and the mother adores you and loves you dearly (bali mātu). Oh my son, the dearest of my heart and dear to me like my own life (prāna-pyārē). Wake up now.

I sacrifice (offer) millions of Kamdeo/cupids (patron God of beauty and magnificence) on your moon-like face. Look, the bards, minstrels and servants are singing the litany of your fame and extolling your glory and excellence, while your younger brothers and playmates are standing (and waiting) at the gates[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Verse no. 1/39, stanza no. 1.]

The sorrows of the 'Chakva' couples ('kōka'; the ruddy goose; and ostrich) have been removed on watching the diminished glow of the moon[2], while the stars that are scattered all over the canopy of the reddish sky at dawn time as the sun rises resemble the sight of the most attractive gems ('ati lalita manigana'; known as 'Mukta Mani')[3] that have been spilled and scattered by a young lion's cub (bāla mṛgarāja) representing the early sun as it trounced the king of elephants (known as 'Gajraaj') representing the darkness of night and spills the gems accumulated on the head of the latter[3] (2).

[[2]The male and female 'Chakva' birds remain together during the whole day, but as soon as night arrives they separate. This separation is the cause of their sorrow and it is removed only upon the arrival of the new dawn the next morning when they re-unite. With the arrival of dawn the light of the moon fades away, and so does the sorrow of the Chakva couple.

[3]The nascent sun in the early morning is compared to a young lion's cub here, while the overpowering darkness of the night is likened to the wild elephant. It is believed that when a wild elephant is in heat or excited, a sap oozes from the animal's head. When it dries up it assumes a rounded form like pearl and is highly valued as a priceless gem because of its rarity. This condensed sap is known as 'Mukta Mani'—meaning 'pearl which is a priceless gem', or 'Gajamukta'—because it is produced from an elephant.

In this imagery, the early morning sun, which is still in its nascent stage, is likened to a 'young cub of the lion', and the dimmed stars that lie scattered all over the sky as it lightens up are likened to the so-called 'elephant's gems' that have been scattered after the lion's cub has trounced the animal which is likened to the 'darkness of the night'.]

Listen Son! The young ones of the cock, the parrot, the goose, the cuckoo, the peacock and other birds are cheerfully playing, hopping, warbling and chirping around the place. Oh Raghuvanshmani ('raghubansamani'; literally, the gem of king Raghu's lineage; i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! These entities resemble sages and hermits who, along with their families and friends, appear to be singing your glories and extolling your virtues and remembering your majesty and fame in their respective hermitages (3).

The lotuses have begun to open their petals in ponds and lakes, and attractive honey bees are humming and buzzing sweetly around them for their nectar—as if there are festivities and celebrations galore in 'Indraloka' upon hearing stories of the Lord's (Sri Ram's) birth, and Goddess Laxmi has decorated her 'palace of joy and happiness'[4] (4).

[[4]As soon as the sun rises, the lotus feels so cheerful and glad that it opens its petals. This sight makes the honey-bee feel very happy and all the bees rise up to celebrate the opening of the lotus flower as now they would have an opportunity to draw nectar from the flower. Likewise, as soon as the news of Lord Ram's birth reached the heavens, all the Gods cheered up and celebrations erupted in the heaven. There was a lot of thanksgiving and prayers offered by the Gods besides the playing of musical instruments by them, the sound of which resonated throughout the firmament. Many auspicious signs were visible in the sky and on the earth. The combined effect of all these heavenly celebrations is summed up here in this stanza.]

Hearing these pleasant words of the mother, words that were soaked in the nectar of love and affection, Lord Sri Ram opened his lotus-like eyes.

Tulsidas says—At the moment when Lord Sri Ram put his feet on the floor of the court-yard, the mother did his 'Aarti[5]' with a cheerful and delighted mind (5).

[[5]The 'Aarti' (āratī) is a formal way of showing respect to someone and cast off evil spirits. It is done by showing the light of earthen lamps filled with clarified butter known as 'Ghee' that are arranged ceremoniously in a platter along with other auspicious items such as grains, blades of green grass, coloured powder, turmeric, curd etc. This platter with its lighted lamps is moved in a slow circular fashion before the guest of honour or the person to be worshipped.

In the present case, mother Kaushalya does the Aarti to honour Lord Ram, to signal the start of his day on an auspicious note, as well as to cast-off any evil spirits that may harm her son.]

(1 / 38)

जागिये कृपानिधान जानराय रामचंद्र
जननी कहै बार–बार भोर भयो प्यारे।
राजिवलोचन बिसाल, प्रीति–बापिका मराल,
ललित कमल–बदन ऊपर मदन कोटि बारे।।1।।
अरुन उदित, बिगत सरबरी, ससांक किरनहीन,
दीन दीपजोति, मलिन, दुति समूह तारे।
मनहुँ ग्यानघन–प्रकास, बीते सब भव–बिलास
आस–त्रास तिमिर तोष तरनि–तेज जारे।।2।।
बोलत खगनिकर मुखर मधुर करि प्रतीति सुनहु
श्रवन, प्रानजीवन धन, मेरे तुम बारे।
मनहुँ बेद–बन्दी–मुनिबृन्द–सूत–मागधादि
बिरुद बदत 'जय जय जय जयति कैटभारे'।।3।।
बिकसित कमलावली, चले प्रपुंज चञ्चरीक,
गुंजत कल कोमल धुनि त्यागि कंज न्यारे।
जनु बिराग पाइ सकल सोक–कूप–गृह बिहाइ
भृत्य प्रेममत्त फिरत गुनत गुन तिहारे।।4।।
सुनत बचन प्रिय रसाल जागे अतिसय दयाल
भागे जंजाल बिपुल, दुख–कदंब दारे।
तुलसिदास अति अनन्द देखिकै मुखारबिन्द,
छूटे भ्रमफंद परम मंद द्वंद भारे।।5।।

(1/38)

jāgiyē kr̥pānidhāna jānarāya rāmacandra
jananī kahai bāra-bāra bhōra bhayō pyārē.
rājivalōcana bisāla, prīti-bāpikā marāla,
lalita kamala-badana ūpara madana kōṭi bārē..1..
aruna udita, bigata sarabarī, sasāṅka kiranahīna,

dīna dīpajōti, malina, duti samūha tārē.
manahuṁ gyānaghana-prakāsa, bītē saba bhava-bilāsa
āsa-trāsa timira tōṣa tarani-tēja jārē..2..
bōlata khaganikara mukhara madhura kari pratīti sunahu
śravana, prānajīvana dhana, mērē tuma bārē.
manahuṁ bēda-bandī-munibr̥nda-sūta-māgadhādi
biruda badata 'jaya jaya jaya jayati kaiṭabhārē'..3..
bikasita kamalāvalī, calē prapuñja ca´carīka,
guñjata kala kōmala dhuni tyāgi kañja n'yārē.
janu birāga pā'i sakala sōka-kūpa-gr̥ha bihā'i
bhr̥tya prēmamatta phirata gunata guna tihārē..4..
sunata bacana priya rasāla jāgē atisaya dayāla
bhāgē janjāla bipula, dukha-kadamba dārē.
tulasidāsa ati ananda dēkhikai mukhārabinda,
chūṭē bhramaphanda parama manda dvanda bhārē..5..

The Morning Song-3

Verse no. 1/38—The mother repeatedly says (jananī kahai bāra-bāra)—'Oh the merciful and compassionate Ramchandra who is like a king among nobles and those who are exalted and gentle-hearted (krpānidhāna jānarāya rāmacandra)! Wake up (jāgiyē).

Dear! Look, it is dawn (bhōra bhayō pyārē). You are the one who has eyes as large (and beautiful) as the lotus flower (rājivalōcana bisāla). You like a Swan in the pond or lake of love and affection (prīti-bāpikā marāla).

Crores (millions—'kōṭi') of Kamdeo/cupids (known as 'madana') have sacrificed themselves (bārē) on your body that resembles a beautiful lotus flower (lalita kamala-badana) (1).

Look, the young (nascent) sun has risen in the sky, the night has passed, the moon's rays have lost their brilliance, the light of lamps have dimmed, and the glow (and twinkle) of the stars have faded too—as if all the illusionary pleasures of this mundane gross world have lost their charm and attraction as soon as the light of true knowledge, wisdom, self-realisation and spiritual enlightenment dawns on the mental horizon of a living being. With this illumination, all the darkness (i.e. sorrows and grief) symbolised by false hopes, false expectations and imaginary fears have been destroyed by the light of the sun of contentedness[1] (2).

[[1]Spiritualism and metaphysical philosophy has been subtly incorporated and woven into this text. The 'light of the sun' is compared to the light of knowledge and wisdom that a person gets upon self-realisation and enlightenment. Once this light dawns upon him he realises the futility of this world and its material charms and pleasures of its sense objects which are all transient and mirage-like by their inherent nature. They can never give happiness and peace to a creature—because the more he wants them the greed for them increases exponentially while the object of this yearning recedes away from him. It is an endless pursuit like trying to find water in a

desert mirage. The frustration, agitation and sense of failure becomes perpetual when one does not find what one wants. This is likened to the 'darkness of the night'. And since the want is limitless and so are the objects of this want, restlessness too is perpetual. In this condition no one can ever hope to find peace and happiness in the true sense like the case of fear that surrounds.]

Oh my dear son who are like my life, my soul and my treasure (prānajīvana dhana, mērē tuma bārē)! Hear attentively. See, the sweet and pleasant sound that is made by the clamouring, chirping, warbling and chattering of the different groups of active birds[2] represent the chorus of your praises being sung by the Vedas (scriptures), the bards, the poets, the minstrels, the sages, hermits and seers (bēda-bandī-munibr̥nda-sūta-māgadhādi) who collectively proclaim your glory, majesty and excellence (biruda badata) by repeatedly hailing you as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who had slayed the demon named 'Kaitav'[3]. They proclaim—"Hail, Hail, Hail, Oh Lord! Glory be to you who had slayed the demon Kaitav!" ('jaya jaya jaya jayati kaiṭabhārē') (3).

[[2]These birds have been listed in stanza no. 3 of verse no. 1/37.

[3]The story of Lord Vishnu killing the demon named Kaitav is appended as a note to this verse herein below*.]

The lotuses have opened their petals, and the bumble/black bees (which were trapped inside the lotuses when they closed their petals the previous evening) have left them and have gone their separate ways, making a sweet and humming sound while doing so—as if your affectionate devotees, who have developed 'Vairagya' (renunciation and dispassion) towards the material charms of the gross world (when self-realisation and love for you dawns upon them), renounce the trap of their households which are like deep dark wells of cumbersome responsibilities and obligations that gives rise to endless sorrows, miseries and grief for them, and instead they merrily roam around in a state of spiritual ecstasy and bliss, singing your divine stories and praising your excellent virtues as they remain lost in joy and happiness unbound[4] (4).

[[4]In this stanza, the 'opening of the petals of the lotus' is like opening of the heart of the devotee towards love and devotion for the Lord which comes with realisation of spiritual truths and acquaintance with the falsehood of the material world and the illusionary charm of its sense objects. When this enlightenment comes in the heart of the devotee, he wishes to free himself from the burden of the world and his household responsibilities as they act as impediments in his spiritual happiness and peace. He finds that if he remains entangled in the web of this world, it it futile for him to even find time to enjoy the spiritual bliss that comes with having devotion and love for the Lord God, in spending time lost in the Lord's thoughts and singing his glories.

Its not possible to cross the ocean with one leg in one boat and the other leg in another boat—for this is a sure recipe for disaster. Its either the love for the world or love for the Lord; it's a choice between either perpetual unhappiness and worries associated with the mundane world, or eternal happiness and merriment and bliss that comes with being associated with the Lord. So, those who are wise and enlightened choose the second option. These people are likened in this stanza to the 'bee that has flown off in the sky after remaining trapped in the closed lotus for the whole night'. The meaning is clear. The bee had alighted on the lotus flower to drink the latter's nectar, but it became so deeply engrossed in it that it forgot to go out when the lotus closed for the night. The bee therefore remained trapped in darkness and a confined

space for the entire night. It cursed its own self and promised to fly off to freedom as soon as the lotus opens its petals.

Likewise, the creature entered the world in the hope of deriving pleasure and comfort from it, but was so lost in its charms that he became trapped in it. Now, when he discovered that he is surrounded by insurmountable sorrows and miseries he regretted his greed and swore to move out at the first available opportunity. He also realised that what he had thought or believed to be a treasure of happiness was actually a dark well of grief and torments. Then due to some good luck he came in contact with some wise person who acquainted him with the true source of happiness and peace which comes in having love and devotion for Lord God, here Lord Ram. So, when the time came, the wise creature broke free from the fetters of the world and his household, and roamed freely like a friar who has no worry under the sky, all the while singing merrily the stories and virtues of the Lord God. This gives him a treasure full of bliss and ecstasy that the world hadn't.]

As soon as the most merciful and compassionate Sri Ram heard these most sweet and pleasant words of the mother, he got up (i.e. woke up). At this, all the entangling webs (of this world) were removed and all types of collective sorrows were crused or trampled (eliminated; destroyed).[5]

[[5]Once again, the idea expressed in the previous stanza is reiterated and taken forward here. Lord Ram's 'waking up from sleep and getting up' is equivalent to a devotee realising the truth and waking up from his sleep of ignorance and delusions. And obviously when this happens, all types of sorrows are collectively eliminated.]

Tulsidas says that all the devotees became extremely cheerful and glad on seeing the face of Sri Ram. They were freed (chūṭē) from all the spiritual shackles (or fetters) originating in ignorance, delusions and attachments, as well as from entanglements that create great dilemmas, uncertainties, confusions, consternations and perplexities all of which have their genesis in worldly attachments, malices, discords, jealousies, envies, rancour of all types etc. (bhramaphanda parama manda dvanda bhārē) (5).

[Note—*[3]The story of Lord Vishnu slaying the demon Kaitav is as follows:--

According to the legendary story as narrated in Markandey Puran, the Vedas had been stolen by two demons named Madhu and Kaitav who had hidden them in the eastern ocean. Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of Hayagriva to kill them and restore the Vedas.

The legend about the birth of these two demons Madhu and Kaitav is that at the time Brahma the creator emerged atop a thousand-petal lotus that sprouted from the navel of Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, two drops of water symbolising the two Gunas (qualities) of Raja and Tama (the medium and the lowest type of qualities) were present on one of the petals on which Brahma sat. Madhu was born from the drop of Raja Guna, and Kaitav from the drop of water representing Tama Guna.

Once they went up to the heaven and saw the Vedas in all their glorious form placed alongside Brahma who was engaged in the process of creation. The duo immediately stole the Vedas and hid them under the water of the eastern ocean. Brahma was confounded and requested Lord Vishnu to retrieve them as the Vedas were the former's eyes as they contained all the knowledge needed for all the aspects of creation. So Vishnu appeared as a deity with a head of a horse—i.e. as Hayagriva. The heaven was his head, the rays of the Sun were his glistening hairs, the sky and the underworld were his ears, the earth was his forehead, the river Ganges and Saraswati were the two halves of his chest, the oceans were his thighs, the Sun and the Moon were his eyes, dusk was his nostril, OM was his ornament, electric was his

tongue, the Pittars (Spirits of dead ancestors) were his teeth, the Brahma Loka was his lip, and Kalratri (the night of the doomsday) was his neck.

The Lord entered the ocean and went to the ocean bed, the nether world called the 'Patal Loka'. There, he began to neigh melodiously, singing the hymns of the Sam Veda. The two demons were so enchanted by this singing that they came out to hear it. Lord Hayagriva got an opportunity and he immediately took the Vedas and gave them to Brahma. After their restoration, he went back to the ocean and lived there for some time.

When the demons reached the place from where they had heard the sweet singing emanating, they found no one. So they got suspicious and rushed back to where they had concealed the Vedas to find them missing. Then they began frantically to search for the Vedas as well as the miscreant who removed the scriptures from the hiding place. They reached the surface of the ocean and found Lord Vishnu peacefully reclined on the bedstead of the celestial serpent named Sheshnath. They assumed that certainly the Lord was the one who had taken away the Vedas. They shouted and caused so much raucous that Lord Vishnu woke up from his cosmic sleep, and then there ensued a battle between the Lord and the demons which lasted for five thousand years.

Pleased by their valour and ardour, Vishnu asked them to request for a grant of a boon. The haughty demons retorted and sneered at the Lord, asking the latter to ask for a boon instead. The Lord asked that they be killed at his hands. [Markandey Puran, 81/74.] Taken aback, the demons said that they were also entitled for a boon as promised by the Lord himself. The Lord granted them permission to ask, and they requested that they be killed at a place where the earth was not submerged in water. [Markandey Puran, 81/76.] Vishnu immediately spread his thighs on the surface of the ocean, and deluded by the Lord's Maya the demons thought that dry earth has emerged from the ocean. Aside of this, they also found in this happening a chance of their own salvation and so willingly put their heads on it. Vishnu invoked his Sudarshan Chakra (the sharp weapon of Vishnu which is like a circular saw) to chop off their heads. This episode is described in detail in the Markandey Puran, Chapter 81.

Perhaps this episode describes how the continents and islands came into being during the process of creation.

A slight variant of the above narration is available in the Mahabharat, Van Parva, Canto no. 203. According to it, the demons Madhu and Kaitav went to the Kshir Sagar, the celestial ocean of milk where Lord Vishnu was reclining on the coiled body of Seshnath, some time after Brahma, the creator of the physical world and the Vedas, was born atop a divine lotus that emerged from Lord Vishnu's navel. These two demons began to terrorize Brahma. The scared Brahma shook the stem of the lotus violently, and this stirred up Lord Vishnu from his sleep. The Lord saw the two great demons and was very impressed by them and their valour. Lord Vishnu asked the two demons to request for a boon which will be granted to them. The two demons were very haughty, and they sneered at Vishnu, saying that the latter should ask for a boon instead. They will grant Vishnu anything he wants.

Vishnu was extremely annoyed and taken aback at their temerity and arrogance. So he said that he wished to kill them—this is the boon he wants to be granted. The two demons replied that though they do not like giving this boon as this means their death, but they are true to their words, so Lord Vishnu could go ahead and kill them. But since Vishnu had asked them for a boon first, they also had a right to be granted what they wished. The first boon they wanted to be granted to them was that must die at a place where there is no water, and the second boon was that they wished to become sons of the Lord. So Lord Vishnu spread his thighs on which he placed the two demons and cut off their heads with his circular weapon known as the Sudarshan Chakra.

According to the version in Devi Bhagwat, 1/4/9, these two demons were killed at the intervention of goddess Mahakaali, the divine Mother and the cosmic force that brings an end to this creation. She was invoked by Brahma when the demons began terrorizing him. She woke Vishnu from his deep sleep of meditation, and when even Vishnu couldn't kill these demons after a vicious battle, the goddess Mahakali used her powers of delusions to help Vishnu slay them.

There is another demon by the name of Madhu. He was himself the son of demoness Lolaa, and the father of the demon Lavanaasur. This Madhu was a great devotee of Lord Shiva and had obtained a powerful Trident from the Lord with the condition that it would not be used to attack the gods or harm (injure and kill) anybody in this world. He built a city named Madhupura and ruled from there. His queen was called Khumbhinasi.

When his son Lavanaasur began transgressing the laws of Dharma (righteous conduct), he became extremely disgusted so much so that he went away to do Tapa (austerities and penances). After his going away, Lavanaasur became very cruel and tyrannical. Ultimately, he was killed Shatrughan, the younger brother of Lord Ram.]

(1 / 39)

बोलत अवनिप–कुमार ठाढ़े नृपभवन–द्वार,
रूप–सील–गुन उदार जागहु मेरे प्यारे।
बिलखित कुमुदनि, चकोर, चक्रवाक हरष भोर,
करत सोर तमचुर खग, गुंजत अलि न्यारे।।1।।
रूचिर मधुर भोजन करि, भूषन सजि सकल अंग,
संग अनुज बालक सब बिबिध बिधि सँवारे।
करतल गहि ललित चाप भंजन रिपु–निकर–दाप,
कटितट पटपीत, तून सायक अनियारे।।2।।
उपबन मृगया–बिहार–कारन गवने कृपाल,
जननी मुख निरखि पुन्यपुंज निज बिचारे।
तुलसिदास संग लीजै, जानि दीन अभय कीजै
दीजै मति बिमल गावै चरित बर तिहारे।।3।।

(1/39)

bōlata avanipa-kumāra ṭhāṛhē nr̥pabhavana-dvāra,
rūpa-sīla-guna udāra jāgahu mērē pyārē.
bilakhita kumudani, cakōra, cakravāka haraṣa bhōra,
karata sōra tamacura khaga, gum̐jata ali n'yārē..1..
rūcira madhura bhōjana kari, bhūṣana saji sakala aṅga,
saṅga anuja bālaka saba bibidha bidhi sam̐vārē.
karatala gahi lalita cāpa bhanj̃jana ripu-nikara-dāpa,
kaṭitaṭa paṭapīta, tūna sāyaka aniyārē..2..
upabana mr̥gayā-bihāra-kārana gavanē kr̥pāla,
jananī mukha nirakhi pun'yapuñja nija bicārē.
tulasidāsa saṅga lījai, jāni dīna abhaya kījai
dījai mati bimala gāvai carita bara tihārē..3..

Verse no. 1/39—[Lord Ram increased in years, grew up and flourished till he reached an age when he would go out of the palace and into the world, visiting the city of Ayodhya and other places of his realm. He had not ceased increasing in beauty, charm and lovliness and had grown up in age like a moon increasing in its shine and beauty from its crescent stage to when it is of a full heart-enthralling disc, or like a sun that emerged in the horizon in its nascent stage but goes on enhancing in its radiance and splendour by each passing hour till it reaches its zenith at noon with its dazzling shine and brilliance of the brightest kind.

The Lord was unique amongst all living beings for his glory, majesty, justness, magnanimity, benevolence, munificence, compassion and grace.

Meanwhile, over the years he had learnt horsemanship, spearplay, archery and what not of other skills that behoveth of the great sons of great Kings. So, by and by, in due course, he used to go a-hunting and a-chasing with his brothers and friends. He also was of the wont to go around the city of Ayodhya and visit other places of his realm, proclaiming security and peace and satisfaction to his people, and doing after the established traditions of Kings.

There was not one in the city, children and adults alike, who would not talk of the youthful Lord's charm and gracefulness and pleasing demeanours, for Lord Ram was exceptionally pleasant in his words and parleys, a very good friend, and an embodiment of goodness and kindness, saying naught that caused pain to his subjects nor anything but that wherein lay their welfare and happiness. So the Lord had endeared himself with exceeding endearment to his people. Refer: Verse no. 1/41 herein below.

Now, as we have seen above, since he belonged to the Kshatriya class and was a prince, he was taught to hunt and play blood-sport as a part of his training as a prince who will one day become a king and would have to protect his kingdom in a war if an enemy attacked. This sort of training was a routine and imperative affair for members of the Kshatriya class, especially those who belonged to the ruling elite. The basic reason for this training was that the Kshatriya and the King was assigned the social task of affording protection to the subjects of the kingdom from all invaders and enemies who may attack them.

Weak kings were regarded as those who shunned warfare and preferred abstinence from blood-sport. Piety and abstinence from killing definitely have their virtues, but not in the face of savages and tyrannical invaders who know nothing but bloodshed and mayhem. Hence, learning the skills of warfare and archery as well as not feeling uneasy by seeing blood was a part of the lives of Kshatriya princes and kings by the virtue of necessity of existence and the call of moral duty when the society they were supposed to protect from harm faced carnage by savages and cruel blood-thirsty invaders.

The above observations are endorsed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 204 which expressly states that Lord Ram played the role of a prince to perfection.]

At the gate of the king's palace, many princes (sons of nobles, knights and subordinate kings of the realm) are standing and calling out to Lord Ram to wake up as it is morning. They call out—'Oh my dear ('mērē pyārē'; referring obviously to Sri Ram) who is generously endowed with beauty, virtues and noble characters (rūpa-sīla-guna), wake up now (jāgahu)!

Look, the water lilies and the bird known as Chakor (Indian red-legged partridge) have become agitated because the moon has set, while the bird known as Chakva (ruddy goose; ostrich) is glad to see the dawn[1]. The cock's crowing and the other birds are chirping, warbling and chattering away sweetly, while the bumble/black (honey) bees are busy humming and buzzing merrily[2].' (1).

[[1]The water lily and Chakor find solace in the moonlight, while the Chakva feels happy during the daytime. The lily opens its petals in the moonlight, and the Chakor is so emamoured of the moon that it continuously gazes at the latter as it traverses across the sky from east to west. The reverse is true for the bird called Chakva. It is because the male and female birds remain together during the day but separate as soon as night falls. This creates the sorrow of separation in the couple. So as it is dawn the next day, they become cheerful because they would be reunited once again. Refer: Verse no. 1/37, stanza no. 2.

[2]When it is day, the birds that had retired to their nests during the night, start their clamour once again. Refer: Verse nos. 1/36, stanza no. 3; and 1/37, stanza no. 2.]

Thereafter, he (Sri Ram) partook of the most delicious and tastiest of viands for breakfast, adorned all his body parts (i.e. the entire body) with wonderful ornaments (as is the wont of princes), and accompanied by younger brothers and other children—who were all decked-up and decorated with various ornaments and colourful clothes—took hold of the beautiful bow capable of vanquishing the pride and ego of hordes of enemies, wrapped a length of yellow silk cloth (known as the 'Pitambar') around his waist, and tied a quiver full of sharp arrows around it. Having done so, the most merciful and compassionate (krpāla) Sri Ram set out towards the royal forest for the purpose of hunting (upabana mṛgayā-bihāra-kārana gavanē)[3]. At that moment, the mother considered herself most fortunate when she gazed at his face[4].

Tulsidas says—(Oh Lord) Keep me with you and make me fearless considering me to be meek, weak, lowly, humble, the underdogs and the downtrodden. Give me a pure and pristine intellect so that I can sing your holy and divine stories that describe the wonderful deeds you had done during your sojourn in this world. (2-3).

[[3]Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 204.

[4]Mother Kaushalya was exceedingly happy to see her beloved son Ram grow up and be of an age when he could go out hunting. Every mother would feel proud of her son when he achieves some skills and leads others in his team as done by Sri Ram here. When a mother sees her son in a school uniform for the first time, or going to college on the first day of the semester, it is she who can know what delight overwhelms her, and she fails to find words to express her joyance.]

राग नट

(1/40)

खेलन चलिये आनँदकंद।
सखा प्रिय नृपद्वार ठाढ़े बिपुल बालक–बृंद।। 1।।
तृषित तुम्हारे दरस कारन चतुर चातक–दास।

बपुष–बारिद बरषि छबि–जल हरहु लोचन–प्यास।। 2।।
बंधु–बचन बिनीत सुनि उठे मनहुँ केहरि–बाल।
ललित लघु सर–चाप कर, उर–नयन–बाहु बिसाल।। 3।।
चलत पद प्रतिबिंब राजत अजिर सुखमा–पुंज।
प्रेमबस प्रति चरन महि मानो देति आसन कंज।। 4।।
निरखि परम बिचित्र सोभा चकित चितवहिं मात।
हरष–बिबस न जात कहि, 'निज भवन बिहरहु, तात'।। 5।।
देखि तुलसीदास प्रभु–छबि रहे सब पल रोकि।
थकित निकर चकोर मानहुँ सरद इंदु बिलोकि।। 6।।

rāga naṭa

(1/40)

khēlana caliyē ānam̐dakanda.
sakhā priya nr̥padvāra ṭhāṛhē bipula bālaka-br̥ṁda.. 1..
tr̥ṣita tumhārē darasa kārana catura cātaka-dāsa.
bapuṣa-bārida baraṣi chabi-jala harahu lōcana-pyāsa.. 2..
bandhu-bacana binīta suni uṭhē manahum̐ kēhari-bāla.
lalita laghu sara-cāpa kara, ura-nayana-bāhu bisāla.. 3..
calata pada pratibimba rājata ajira sukhamā-puñja.
prēmabasa prati carana mahi mānō dēti āsana kañja.. 4..
nirakhi parama bicitra sōbhā cakita citavahiṁ māta.
haraṣa-bibasa na jāta kahi, 'nija bhavana biharahu, tāta'.. 5..
dēkhi tulasīdāsa prabhu-chabi rahē saba pala rōki.
thakita nikara cakōra mānahum̐ sarada indu bilōki.. 6..

Lord Ram's prepares to go to play

Verse no. 1/40—[The younger brothers of Lord Ram request him to accompany them to play outside the inner precincts of the palace. This is because their other friends, the sons of knights, nobles and subordinate kings of the realm, as well as ordinary children of the citizens of Ayodhya, had assembled in the outer court-yard of the palace grounds. The brothers[1] said—] 'Oh the One who is the root of joy, happiness and bliss (ānam̐dakanda)! Let us go to play now. Your numerous friends and many other children are standing at the palace gates (1).

[[1]See stanza no. 3 herein below.]

Clever Chataks (cuckoos) representing your devotees are very thirsty (i.e. eager) to have your 'Darshan' (a respectful way of seeing or meeting some senior, revered and honourable person). Quench the thirst of our eyes (which are eager to see you) by showering the rain of your beauty and splendour from the cloud represented by your body[2].' (2).

[[2]The 'Chatak' bird is said to quench its thirst by drinking the rain drops falling directly into its beak from the cloud overhead during the 'Swaati Nakshatra', a particular constellation in the sky. If it cannot take this rain drop during this particular time it would prefer to die of thirst than to drink water from any other source.

Likewise, the devotees of Lord Ram, here represented by his friends and children of the city, are eager to see their beloved Lord and quench their thirst for his sight with the same eagerness and sincerity that the Chatak shows for the cloud and its rain drops. Here, Lord Ram is likened to the rain-bearing cloud, especially due to his dark complexion, his sight to the rain drop that would quench the thirst of the Chatak, and the children and friends of the Lord to the devotees who are very eager to have a divine glimpse of their beloved Lord.]

Hearing this courteous and humble prayer of Bharat and other brothers, he (Sri Ram) got up as if he was a lion's cub. He held a small bow and an arrow in his hands, and his heart (chest) and eyes are very broad, while his arms are long[2] (3).

[[2]Broad chest and eyes are regarded as features that are considered handsome for a male. The 'broadness of the chest' signifies the Lord's large heartedness, magnanimity, munificence, charitable and affable nature. His 'broad eyes' imply that he can see more and deeper into things, and has the ability to have insight, hindsight, foresight and farsight. The 'long arms' show the Lord's long reach and ability to control even the farthest corner of creation.]

The most beautiful and enchanting reflection (image) of Sri Ram's foot on the (gem-studded) floor as he walks on it creates the impression that Mother Earth, overwhelmed with love and affection for the Lord, provides him with a seat (or cushion) of lotus flowers at each step he takes[3] (4).

[[3]This is because his soles are like a lotus flower. Since the reflection is on the ground of the palace, it is imagined that Mother Earth is spreading a cushion of lotus flowers as the Lord moves forward.]

Enthralled at the most wondrous beauty of this sight (i.e. of the reflection on the floor of Lord Ram's feet as he walked), the mothers gaze at it transfixed with awe, and are wonderstruck. At that moment they were so overjoyed and thrilled that they weren't even able to tell him, 'Son, play in the house itself (instead of going outside to play).[4]' (5).

[[4]The mothers so thoroughly enjoyed the sight of Lord Ram walking that they would have liked the Lord playing inside the inner grounds of the palace so that they could watch his beautiful and charming form more. If he went outside to play with his assembled friends, the mothers would lose this chance. But they were so dazed that they could not think of proposing this to the Lord.]

Tulsidas says—watching the lovely sight, and the magnificence and stupendous beauty of the Lord Sri Ram, everyone stopped blinking as if the group of Chakors (Indian red-legged partridge) has become so enamoured at the sight of the full moon during its first appearance in winter that they have become over-awed, over-joyed and spellbound by its beauty so much so that all of them (the Chakors) gaze at the moon without blinking even for a moment[5] (6).

[[5]Though the Chakor is in the habit of gazing at the full moon every time the latter appears in the sky, but the moon's beauty is enhanced when winter sets in because the sky is crisp clear of clouds, there are minimal pollutants in the air which affords a clearer view of the moon's brilliant disc as compared to other nights, say for instance during the summers when the air is full of dust particles raised by hot winds, or during the rainy season when the sky is usually overcast with floating clouds which hinders unobstructed view of the moon.]

(1/41)

बिहरत अवध–बीथिन राम।
संग अनुज अनेक सिसु, नव–नील–नीरद स्याम।। 1।।
तरुन अरुन–सरोज–पद बनी कनकमय पदत्रान।
पीत–पट कटि तून बर, कर ललित लघु धनु–बान।। 2।।
लोचननिको लहत फल छबि निरखि पुर–नर–नारि।
बसत तुलसीदास उर अवधेसके सुत चारि।। 3।।

(1/41)

biharata avadha-bīthina rāma.
saṅga anuja anēka sisu, nava-nīla-nīrada syāma.. 1..
taruna aruna-sarōja-pada banī kanakamaya padatrāna.
pīta-paṭa kaṭi tūna bara, kara lalita laghu dhanu-bāna.. 2..
lōcananikō lahata phala chabi nirakhi pura-nara-nāri.
basata tulasīdāsa ura avadhēsakē suta cāri.. 3..

Lord Ram moves around in Ayodhya

Verse no. 1/41—[When Lord Ram came of age and was old enough to venture out of the palace, he used to visit the city of Ayodhya and acquint himself with it and its citizens. The purpose of such regular visits was not only to get acquainted with it and interact with the citizens but also to spread the message of cheer and friendliness amongst his subjects, to make them feel he is always accessible with fear or formalities, and that he would smilingly welcome his subjects at all times notwithstanding what their request was.

He was of the wont to go around the city of Ayodhya and visit other places of his realm, proclaiming security and peace and satisfaction to his people, and doing after the established traditions of great princes and kings who treated their dependants and subjects with great care and respect, and placed their well-being and happiness above their own.

The result was that there was not one in the city, children and adults alike, who would not talk of the youthful Lord's charm and gracefulness and pleasing demeanours, for Lord Ram was exceptionally pleasant in his expressions, words and parleys, a very good friend, and an embodiment of goodness and kindness, saying

naught that caused pain to his subjects nor anything but that wherein lay their welfare and happiness. So the Lord had endeared himself with exceeding endearment to his people who not only welcomed him and enjoyed his company but would willingly lay their lives for him should destiny so command.

The people loved Lord Ram so dearly, verily more than their own lives, that when he was sent to forest exile and the bad tidings reached the citizens of Ayodhya, the whole city and residents of its suburbs decided to forsake their homes and follow the Lord wheresoever he goes. This has been vividly narrated in the epic Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 85.

This enchanting scene has also been described by Tulsidas in his book Kavitawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/6—1/7.]

Accompanied by younger brothers and many other children (of the city), Lord Sri Ram—whose body resembles a newly formed deep-blue tinged clouds ('nava-nīla-nīrada syāma'; i.e. dark rain-laden clouds)—roams about in the lanes and by-lanes of Ayodhya (1).

Golden shoes adorn his feet which are reddish (or pink coloured) like a new red-tinged lotus flower. There is a Pitambar (a seamless yellow silk cloth wrapped round the body; worn by Lord Vishnu) and an excellent quiver tied around his waist, and he holds in his hand a small and most beautiful little bow (2).

Watching his beautiful and charming image which is most captivating and enthralling to view, the residents of the city get the fruit (reward) of their eyes[1].

[[1]The citizens consider themselves very fortunate that they have the organ of sight functioning properly so that they can see and enjoy such a beautiful scene.]

All the four sons[2] of king Dasrath reside in the heart of Tulsidas (3).

[[2]The four sons are Lord Ram and his three younger brothers, viz. Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. See Verse no. 1/42 below.]

(1 / 42)

जैसे राम ललित तैसे लोने लषन लालु।
तैसेई भरत सील–सुखमा–सनेह–निधि, तैसेई सुभग सँग सत्रुसालु।। 1।।
धरे धनु–सर कर, कसे कटि तरकसी, पीरे पट ओढ़े चले चारु चालु।
अंग–अंग भूषन जरायके जगमगत, हरत जनके जीको तिमिरजालु।। 2।।
खेलत चौहट घाट बीथी बाटिकनि प्रभु सिव सुप्रेम–मानस–मरालु।
सोभा–दान दै दै सनमानत जाचकजन करत लोक–लोचन निहालु।। 3।।
रावन–दुरित–दुख दलैं सुर कहैं आजु 'अवध सकल सुखको सुकालु।
तुलसी सराहैं सिद्ध सुकृत कौसल्याजूके, भूरि भाग–भाजन भुवालु।। 4।।

(1/42)

jaisē rāma lalita taisē lōnē laṣana lālu.
taisē'ī bharata sīla-sukhamā-sanēha-nidhi, taisē'ī subhaga saṁga satrusālu..

1..
dharē dhanu-sara kara, kasē kaṭi tarakasī, pīrē paṭa ōṛhē calē cāru cālu.
aṅga-aṅga bhūṣana jarāyakē jagamagata, harata janakē jīkō timirajālu.. 2..
khēlata cauhaṭa ghāṭa bīthī bāṭikani prabhu siva suprēma-mānasa-marālu.
sōbhā-dāna dai dai sanamānata jācakajana karata lōka-lōcana nihālu.. 3..
rāvana-durita-dukha dalaiṁ sura kahaiṁ āju 'avadha sakala sukhakō sukālu.
tulasī sarāhaiṁ sid'dha sukṛta kausalyājūkē, bhūri bhāga-bhājana bhuvālu..
4..

The Four Brothers move around in the city of Ayodhya

Verse no. 1/42—Like Sri Ram who is so handsome and lovely to behold, Laxman too is elegant and enchanting. Similarly, Bharat is also a treasury of civility, good manners, excellent characters, exceptional charm and affability. Shatrughan meanwhile is like him (Bharat) in all respects[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 198.]

The four brothers—holding bows and arrows in their hands, having quivers tied around their waists, and with a Pitambar draped over them—walk majestically and gracefully with an elegant gait. Ornaments studded with gems and jewels of all kinds twinkle and shine over all their organs (i.e. all over their bodies), and they remove the darkness of the devotees' hearts[2] (2).

[[2]The shine of the ornaments symbolically remove the darkness of sorrows in the heart of the Lord's devotees because they feel joyous and happy at the sight of the Lord.]

Lord Sri Ram, who is like a Swan in the 'Mansarovar' lake representing Lord Shiva's affection and devotion for the Lord[3], moves around cheerfully in a playfull mood in the market places, lanes and by-lanes and the gardens, and on the river side (banks of the river Saryu) of the city (of Ayodhya).

[[3]Refer: Verse no. 1/29, stanza no. 3.]

While walking in the city, the Lord blesses the citizens by way of enabling them to feel fortunate and privileged to behold and enjoy the magnificent sight of the Lord's charming and graceful presence amongst them. He moves amongst the citizens without any reservations, inhibitions or restraints, and mingles freely with them. It appears that in this way Lord Ram is virtually giving away charitably and with a free hand largesse of joy and happiness to the citizens (of Ayodhya) by showing respect to each one of them so much so that all the seekers (here meaning all the citizens who wished to see the Lord, come close to him and talk with him) were very pleased, felt fully satisfied to their heart's content, and derived the pleasure of their eyesights (3).

The Gods say that there are all types of auspiciousness, welfare and good times in Ayodhya, but now (the time has come that) the fierce sorrows and troubles represented by Ravana should also be crushed and vanquished[4].

Tulsidas says that even the Siddhas (mystics, the attained ones) praise and appreciate the good and virtuous deeds of king Dasrath and queen Kaushalya (that the Lord of the World decided to treat them as his parents) (4).

[[4]After all, Lord Vishnu had come down to earth in the form of Lord Ram with this express objective. So the Gods wondered that it is so far so good as concerned the privileges of the citizens of Ayodhya, but there are more serious issues to be handled by Lord Ram. And the primary concern for all of them was the horror created by the demons led by their king Ravana. The Gods hoped that Lord Ram would not forget his mission in his zeal to oblige the citizens of Ayodhya and keep them happy by not leaving their company and venturing out to the forest and sojourning to the land of the demons at Lanka to eliminate them. It's alright for a while for the Lord to roam around carefree when he is in his early days, but some day he has to pick up the cudgel and do what he had come to do even if that meant bringing sorrow to Ayodhya by his departure from there.]

राग ललित

(1/43)

ललित–ललित लघु–लघु धनु–सर कर,
तैसी तरकसी कटि कसे, पट पियरे।
ललित पनही पाँय पैंजनी–किंकिनि–धुनि,
सुनि सुख लहै मनु, रहै नित नियरे।।1।।
पहुँची अंगद चारु, हृदय पदिक हारु,
कुंडल–तिलक–छबि गड़ी कबि जियरे।
सिरसि टिपारो लाल, नीरज–नयन बिसाल,
सुंदर बदन, ठाढ़े सुरतरु सियरे।।2।।
सुभग सकल अंग, अनुज बालक संग,
देखि नर–नारि रहैं ज्यों कुरंग दियरे।
खेलत अवध–खोरि, गोली भौंरा चक डोरि,
मूरति मधुर बसै तुलसीके हियरे।।3।।

rāga lalita

(1/43)

lalita-lalita laghu-laghu dhanu-sara kara,
taisī tarakasī kaṭi kasē, paṭa piyarē.
lalita panahī pām̐ya painjanī-kiṅkini-dhuni,
suni sukha lahai manu, rahai nita niyarē..1..
pahum̐cī aṅgada cāru, hr̥daya padika hāru,
kuṁḍala-tilaka-chabi gaṛī kabi jiyarē.
sirasi ṭipārō lāla, nīraja-nayana bisāla,
sundara badana, ṭhāṛhē surataru siyarē..2..
subhaga sakala aṅga, anuja bālaka saṅga,
dēkhi nara-nāri rahaiṁ jyōṁ kuraṅga diyarē.
khēlata avadha-khōri, gōlī bhaunrā caka ḍōri,

mūrati madhura basai tulasīkē hiyarē..3..

Lord Ram's Magnificent Beauty & Bewitching Charm

Verse no. 1/43—Lord Sri Ram holds a small and beautiful bow and an arrow in his hands, has a quiver tied and a Pitambar wrapped around his waist, and wears lovely shoes on his feet.

Hearing the sweet and appealing sound of jingling and tinkling bells that emanates from the anklets and waist-band, the mind and heart of the hearer feels extremely pleased and enamoured with it so much so that the hearer wishes that he always stays near them (so that he could constantly hear this bliss-giving sound that has enthralled and captivated his mind and heart)[1] (1).

[[1]The idea is that when one has reached a state of spiritual exaltedness where he can close his physical eyes and shut off the meaningless sounds emanating from the gross external world by not hearing anything of it that would distract his mind and sub-conscious to rob them of their peace and bliss, he would be able to tune his mental faculties to hear the sound that is divine and in tune with the vibrations of his own spirit, the pure conscious soul which is a fraction of the Supreme Soul of creation. In the present context, it is concerning a devotee of Lord Ram who remains submerged in the thoughts of his revered Lord to the exclusion of anything else pertaining to this world. This is a metaphoric way of showing how an ascetic feels during his state of existence in super-consciousness that is known as 'Samadhi', a trance-like state that transcends the boundary of mundane existence and transports the meditator to the higher state of subtle ethereal existence.

It is said in the Upanishads that when the ascetic reaches the higher state of meditation and attains 'Samadhi', he would hear the sound of the cosmic 'Naad' which is the vibration produced in the ether of the cosmos by Super Consciousness. The word that had been devised by the Upanishads for being equivalent to this cosmic sound called the 'Naad' is 'OM'. The sound heard by the ascetic resembles the sounds that are referred to here—"tinkling and jingling of little chiming bells".

The basic idea is the same, only its usage and imagery differs in accordance with the text that one reads and his own understanding. Since every person cannot access and understand profound metaphysical philosophies as propounded in the Upanishads, our ancient saints and sages devised simpler methods to bring home the same ideas in simpler terms.

So, the great saint Tulsidas exhorts all devotees of Lord Ram to train themselves to hear this sweet and subtle sound emanating from little chiming bells hung on Lord Ram's anklets and waist-band as a means to achieve the same state of transcendental existence and derive the same state of blissfulness and blessedness that is attained by hard meditative practices and contemplation done by ascetics and hermits. Though the objective of both the paths is the same, the latter is a difficult path fraught with risk and uncertainties while the former is an easy one.]

Lord Ram wears a lovely bracelet and an arm-band on his arms, a necklace and medallion adorns his chest, while the attractive and enchanting view or sight of the large ear-ring and a Tilak-Mark (on the forehead) appear to be piercing the heart of the poet (gaṛī kabi jiyarē)[2]. There is a red cap on the Lord's head, his eyes are very large, and the face is lovely.

(It appears that) Lord Ram is standing in the shade of the Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods)[3] (2).

[[2]The 'Tilak Mark' is a religious mark made on the forehead. For worshippers of Lord Vishnu, it is usually in the form of single vertical line with a dot at the bottom, or two or three parallel lines with a dot at the bottom. The one-line mark resembles a spear, the two-line a tuning fork, and the three-line a trident. All these three have sharp pointed tips which can pierce the object at which they are targeted. This fact has been used to create this imagery of the ear-ring, which is round like the dot, and the pointed Tilak Mark, which has pointed tip, to say that the beautiful sight of Lord Ram sporting them seems to pierce the heart of the poet.

In other words, the poet's emotions and sensitivities are permanently affected by this sight so much so that he is never able to forget them nor forsake them from his heart and mind. This lovely image of the Lord seems to drill it's self and establish firmly in the heart of the learned poet; it seems to etch it's self permanently in his heart so much so that the poet is unable to forget about it. It constantly pricks at his heart and nudges his mind so much that like a smitten lover he continues to sing and praise the glories of his beloved Lord.

[3]When the devotees of Lord Ram seek shelter and refuge with the Lord, they would have to go and surrender themselves before him. To do so they would also come under the shade of the same tree where the Lord is standing. This obviously means that the devotee would also come under the shade of the Kalpa Tree which is all wish-fulfilling.

What a marvelous way of indirectly saying that once the devotee approaches Lord Ram to surrender himself and seek the Lord's blessing, all his wishes are instantly fulfilled by the simple virtue that he is under the shade of the Kalpa Tree! That is, the devotee is assured of the Lord's umbrella of protection from all heat and troubles from which the devotee has sought the Lord's protection just like the shade of the mighty Kalpa Tree.]

The men and women folk of the city of Ayodhya look transfixed and in amazement, wondering with exceeding wonderment and marveling with extreme marvel at the beautiful sight of Lord Sri Ram—whose whole body is extremely handsome and an embodiment of lovliness—alongside his brothers and other boys of the city who accompany him just like a spellbound and amazed deer watches a lighted lamp[4].

This enchanting, sweet and pleasant image of the Lord—playing with 'marbles' (gōlī) and 'wooden tops that use a string to spin' (bhaunrā caka ḍōri)[5]—should reside in the heart of Tulsidas. [This is Tulsidas' hopes and expectations; he wishes that it be so.] (3).

[[4]When a deer sees a lighted lamp it is full of wonder at this novel sight of a flame and its light because it has never seen such a wondrous thing earlier in the thick forest where it lives. The animal is wonderstruck and dazed at this sight so much that it would stand still to gaze at the lighted lamp. Likewise, the citizens of Ayodhya are mesmerized by the charming sight of their handsome prince walking alongside his equally handsome brothers and a large group of ordinary children of the city who enthusiastically swarm around the Lord and move along with him in a joyous and cheerful mood. Indeed it was a grand feast for the eyes of the ordinary people of the city of Ayodhya to see their own children feeling themselves as being friends of the prince of the kingdom, touching him and laughing with him and pulling him in this and that direction, harkening the Lord to come here and go there!

A similar but more elaborate description of the citizens being mesmerized by the wondrously beautiful image of Lord Ram and the children of the city having the most joyous moment of their lives is narrated in Ram Charit Manas when Lord Ram and his brother Laxman went to see the sights of the city of Janakpur where they had gone with sage Vishwamitra to attend the marriage ceremony of Sita, the princess of the kingdom of Janakpur. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 218—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 225.

Refer also to verse no. 1/84, stanza no. 6 of Geetawali herein below.

[5]It is such a wondrous and jaw-dropping sight which defies imagination that the 'Lord of Creation' to whom even the greatest and the mightiest in this creation pay their obeisance, who rules over the universes uncountable, whose form is as vast as the firmament that has no bottom or top, should play with 'marbles' and a 'wooden top' like an ordinary boy!

The 'marbles' referred to here may be like ordinary marbles used by children to play with, or they may have been rounded gems of assorted kinds given the fact that Lord Ram was a prince—and a much doted, pampered and loved one at that—of a prosperous and wealthy kingdom like that of Ayodhya.

The 'wooden Top' referred to here is of two kinds. The first sort is the ordinary wooden toy known as the 'Top' around which a string is coiled, and when this string is suddenly pulled the Top begins to spin on the ground.

A variation of the ordinary Top is a toy known as a 'bhaunrā'. It is a wooden toy made from hollowed out Bel fruit (the fruit of the wood-apple tree) which is pierced at one end through which a lean but sturdy short stick or even an iron pin is passed till its upper end touches the opposite side of the hollowed-out fruit in the inside, and its lower end remains projecting out from the hole at the bottom of the fruit for a length of approximately 1-2 inches. Now, a string is tightly coiled around this projecting part of the stick or iron pin. One end of this string is passed through a hole made in a small flat wooden stick (say of a shape and size like that of 6 inch long measuring scale used by school children for their geometry class) that is held tightly against this contraption at its lower end with the help of fingers and thumb.

The toy is placed on the ground and this string is pulled out rapidly through the hole in the flat stick even as the fruit is freed from the grasp of the hand. This makes this toy spin rapidly like ordinary wooden top, but with a difference. As the contraption spins with high velocity, air passes through the two holes that had been punctured on the fruit's wall earlier, creating a sound effect similar to the humming and buzzing of the black bee. This phenomenon has been used to name this rustic toy as a 'bhaunrā'—because the bhaunrā also refers to the black bee that makes a buzzing and humming sound as it moves around.]

(1 / 44)

छोटिऐ धनुहियाँ, पनहियाँ पगनि छोटी,
छोटिए कछौटी कटि, छोटिऐ तरकसी।
लसत झँगूली झीनी, दामिनिकी छबि छीनी,
सुंदर बदन, सिर पगिया जरकसी।।1।।
बय–अनुहरत बिभूषन बिचित्र अंग,
जोहे जिय आवति सनेह की सरक सी।
मूरतिकी सूरति कही न परै तुलसी पै,

(1/44)

chōṭi'ai dhanuhiyāmँ, panahiyāmँ pagani chōṭī,
chōṭi'ē kachauṭī kaṭi, chōṭi'ai tarakasī.
lasata jhamँgūlī jhīnī, dāminikī chabi chīnī,
sundara badana, sira pagiyā jarakasī..1..
baya-anuharata bibhūṣana bicitra aṅga,
jōhē jiya āvati sanēha kī saraka sī.
mūratikī sūrati kahī na parai tulasī pai,
jānai sō'ī jākē ura kasakai karaka sī..2..

Lord Ram's magnificent Beauty & Charm

Verse no. 1/44—There is a small bow in his (Lord Ram's) hand and small shoes on his feet. A knee-length short pant (known as a 'kachauṭī') and a small quiver adorns his waist.

A yellow coloured silk frock made from delicate fabric that adorns his upper body appears to have stolen the dazzle and brilliance of lightening with its shimmer and shine.

The Lord's face is pretty and lovely, and there is an embroidered cap of 'Zari work[1]' on his head (1).

[[1]Zari work consists of embroidery using golden threads which are used to make intricate patterns and motifs on delicate fabric.]

There are numerous ornaments suitable to his age that he is wearing. When one observes this charming sight of the Lord, a wave of natural love and affection rises in one's heart (like the wave of an ocean).

Tulsidas says that he is unable to describe the wonderful impression that this enchanting image of the Lord creates on one's heart and mind. Only those in whose heart it gnaws in the form of an ache can know about it[2] (2).

[[2]When there is pain in one's chest or heart, one forgets about everything else, and his entire being is consumed by the constant gnawing caused by that pain. Similarly, Tulsidas says that one in whose heart the most beautiful and enchanting image of Lord Ram resides, such a person becomes totally indifferent to the outside world and its false charms. It is like the case of a fortunate person coming to own a rare and priceless piece of gem the like of which has never been heard or seen anywhere. Once he becomes aware of this gem's qualities and value, he would protect it with his life. All other gems that he may have possessed become of lesser value for him because he knows that his new acquisition surpasses in value and magnificence all other pieces of gems and assorted jewellery taken together.

Likewise, the charms and attractions of the world become inconsequential and irrelevant when one begins to love Lord God in the form of Sri Ram.]

राम–लषन इक ओर, भरत–रिपुदवन लाल इक ओर भये।
सरजुतीर सम सुखद भूमि–थल, गनि–गनि गोइयाँ बाँटि लये।। 1।।
कंटुक–केलि–कुसल हय चढ़ि–चढ़ि, मन कसि–कसि ठोकि–ठोकि खये।
कर–कमलनि बिचित्र चौगानैं, खेलन लगे खेल रिझये।। 2।।
ब्योम बिमाननि बिबुध बिलोकत खेलक पेखक छाँह छये।
सहित समाज सराहि दसरथहि बरषत निज तरु–कुसुम–चये।। 3।।
एक लै बढ़त एक फेरत, सब प्रेम–प्रमोद–बिनोद–मये।
एक कहत भइ हार रामजूकी, एक कहत भइया भरत जये।। 4।।
प्रभु बकसत गज बाजि, बसन–मनि, जय धुनि गगन निसान हये।
पाइ सखा–सेवक जाचक भरि जनम न दुसरे द्वार गये।। 5।।
नभ–पुर परति निछावरि जहँ तहँ, सुर–सिद्धनि बरदान दये।
भूरि–भाग अनुराग उमगि जे गावत–सुनत चरित नित ये।। 6।।
हारे हरष होत हिय भरतहि, जिते सकुच सिर नयन नये।
तुलसी सुमिरि सुभाव–सील सुकृती तेइ जे एहि रंग रए।। 7।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/45)

rāma-laṣana ika ōra, bharata-ripudavana lāla ika ōra bhayē.
sarajutīra sama sukhada bhūmi-thala, gani-gani gō'iyām̐ bām̐ṭi layē.. 1..
kaṇṭuka-kēli-kusala haya caḍhi-caḍhi, mana kasi-kasi ṭhōki-ṭhōki khayē.
kara-kamalani bicitra caugānaim̐, khēlana lagē khēla rijhayē.. 2..
byōma bimānani bibudha bilōkata khēlaka pēkhaka chām̐ha chayē.
sahita samāja sarāhi dasarathahi baraṣata nija taru-kusuma-cayē.. 3..
ēka lai baṛhata ēka phērata, saba prēma-pramōda-binōda-mayē.
ēka kahata bha'i hāra rāmajūkī, ēka kahata bha'iyā bharata jayē.. 4..
prabhu bakasata gaja bāji, basana-mani, jaya dhuni gagana nisāna hayē.
pā'i sakhā-sēvaka jācaka bhari janama na dusarē dvāra gayē.. 5..
nabha-pura parati nichāvari jaham̐ taham̐, sura-sid'dhani baradāna dayē.
bhūri-bhāga anurāga umagi jē gāvata-sunata carita nita yē.. 6..
hārē haraṣa hōta hiya bharatahi, jitē sakuca sira nayana nayē.
tulasī sumiri subhāva-sīla sukr̥tī tē'i jē ēhi raṅga ra'ē.. 7..

Lord Ram plays a match of Polo

Verse no. 1/45—[This verse narrates one such occasion when the four brothers were playing the game of Polo.]

On the one side were Lord Ram and Laxman, and on the other side were Bharat and Shatrughan. They stood on a flat ground at a place on the banks of river Saryu that was very pleasant. Then they counted themselves and formed two groups among themselves (1).

Then, fully prepared to play, the four brothers mounted well trained Polo-horses, tied their turbans, tucked in their curls (of hairs) in it, and started to play the game of Polo (2).

The Gods are watching the game from the sky (heavens) astride their vehicles, and are providing shade to both the players as well as the spectators. The Gods praise king Dasrath along with his retinue (i.e. his kinsmen, relatives, ministers, subjects, servants etc.), and shower on them garlands made of flowers of the Kalpa-Tree[1] (3).

[[1]That is, the Gods honour them for their exceptional good luck that they are able to watch a match being played by the Supreme Lord himself in his human manifestation as Lord Ram and his brothers.]

All the children are engrossed in enjoying themselves. They are exuding happiness, cheer, ecstasy, bonhomie and love in their expressions and demeanours. When the boys of one group move forward with the ball, those in the opposite group repulse them (i.e. return the ball back to them). Some claim that Lord Ram has lost (the game), while others assert that brother Bharat has won[2]. (2).

[[2]It is actually Lord Ram voluntarily losing the game so that his dear brother Bharat wins it. He is so magnanimous, gracious, benevolent and kind that he prefers to lose and make Bharat win so that the latter can smile and feel happy. Lord Ram derives great satisfaction and pleasure when he sees others happy even if it means that he has to forego his own comfort and honour by letting his opponent have the upper hand and win the trophy and be successful in any endeavour. Happiness of Bharat and the smile on his face at wining the game gave the Lord more peace and contentedness than a momentary glory and applaud from the spectators if he had won the match himself. This remarkable character of the Lord made him very dear to his subjects later on in life—he would rather suffer himself than do anything that made others unhappy.

Even Bharat has himself acknowledges this—that Lord Ram voluntarily lost the game so that Bharat could win—in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 260.]

The Lord (Sri Ram) grants (prabhu bakasata) elephants, horses, clothes and gems of various kinds to be given to them (the winning group) as rewards.

Kettledrums are being played in the heavens by the Gods who celebrate the victory. They sit in their vehicles in the sky and applaud, saying 'Glory to the Lord; Hail, Hail the Lord![3]'

[[3]It is very interesting to note here that though it is not mentioned explicitly who the Gods were lauding, applauding and hailing, the obvious answer is that is Lord Ram. As has been stressed in this verse above, this unique character of the Lord of losing himself and let others win is a grand character that the Gods appreciate. Usually children fight each other for victory, and the losing party sulks and makes a bad face. But Lord Ram is cheerful and exuberant at Bharat and his companions' victory!]

After being rewarded by Lord Ram, the companions, friends, servants and alms-seekers did not (find it necessary to) go to anybody else's door ever again throughout their lives[4].

[[4]The Lord gave so much to them that they found no reason to want anything more in their lives any longer. The broad implication of this statement is that if one

seeks something from Lord Ram, the seeker is so amply rewarded and satisfied that he never needs to seek anything, any more and any longer in this life.] (5).

At various places in the city, abundant gifts in the form of countless charities and felicitous offerings are showering like a rain from the sky, while the Gods and mystics are giving away their blessings liberally. Those who affectionately sing or hear these divine childhood activities of Lord Ram (and his brothers) daily, the deeds enacted by the Lord that are always fresh and new, are indeed very fortunate and privileged (6).

Bharat feels glad when he loses the game while his head and eyes are lowered and he feels abashed by hesitation and modesty on winning it[5].

[[5]But Lord Ram always ensures that Bharat wins the game instead! It is so fascinating and heart-warming to read this particular stanza. There appears to be a competition between the two brothers, not to show who is more skilled in the game but to ensure defeat for himself so that the other brother wins! Bharat is glad when he loses the game because he then has had a chance to oblige his loving brother Lord Ram to hog the limelight at least for once, and to repay Ram's gesture of graciousness by making him win for once. Lord Ram allows this to happen once in a while because when he starts losing continuously and lets Bharat win, the Lord sees pain in Bharat's face instead of pleasure.

Why? Because Bharat realises that the Lord has lost a round of the game voluntarily just to let him win. Since the intention of Lord Ram is to see Bharat happy, this regret showing on Bharat's face makes Ram win an occasional round so that his victory can cheer Bharat. It also helps to make it appear that the game is being played honestly, and it also keeps the companions of Bharat happy that that had won at least some of the rounds. At the end of the day the things are so managed by the merciful Lord that no one wins or loses in the final reckoning and the game ends in a draw. How marvelous and fantastic a show of brotherly love and the ideal of compassion and the spirit of give-and-take that this verse presents to us.]

Tulsidas says that those who are submerged in the thoughts of such graceful virtues of the Lord, those who imbrued in this magnificent colour of brotherly love and affection (i.e. those who have inculcated these virtues in themselves) by remembering such generous, magnanimous and compassionate characters of the Lord which are natural to him and part of natural temperament and habit, such people are indeed very privileged, fortunate and lucky in all respects (7).

(1 / 46)

खेलि खेल सुखेलनिहारे।
उतरि उतरि, चुचुकारि तुरंगनि, सादर जाइ जोहारे।। 1।।
बंधु–सखा–सेवक सराहि, सनमानि सनेह सँभारे।
दिये बसन–गज–बाजि साजि सुभ साज सुभाँति सँवारे।। 2।।
मुदित नयन–फल पाइ, गाइ गुन सुर सानंद सिधारे।
सहित समाज राजमंदिर कहँ राम राउ पगु धारे।। 3।।
भूप–भवन घर–घर घमंड कल्यान कोलाहल भारे।
निरखि हरषि आरती–निछावरि करत सरीर बिसारे।। 4।।
नित नए मंगल–मोद अवध सब, सब बिधि लोग सुखारे।

(1/46)

khēli khēla sukhēlanihārē.
utari utari, cucukāri turaṅgani, sādara jā'i jōhārē.. 1..
bandhu-sakhā-sēvaka sarāhi, sanamāni sanēha samm̐bhārē.
diyē basana-gaja-bāji sāji subha sāja subhāmm̐ti samm̐vārē.. 2..
mudita nayana-phala pā'i, gā'i guna sura sānanda sidhārē.
sahita samāja rājamandira kahamm̐ rāma rā'u pagu dhārē.. 3..
bhūpa-bhavana ghara-ghara ghamaṇḍa kalyāna kōlāhala bhārē.
nirakhi haraṣi āratī-nichāvari karata sarīra bisārē.. 4..
nita na'ē maṅgala-mōda avadha saba, saba bidhi lōga sukhārē.
tulasī tinha sama tē'u jinhakē prabhutēṁ prabhu-carita piyārē.. 5..

Lord Ram returns home after playing

Verse no. 1/46—The players, having finished their games, dismounted from their horses, patted them (the horses) affectionately, and bowed before Lord Ram in his honour (1).

The Lord praised and showed his brothers, friends and servants due respect, expressed his affection for them, and gifted them many types of raiments and robes, as well as numerous horses and elephants decked up (decorated) with beautiful decorations (2).

Thereafter, the Gods, being extremely glad, happy and pleased, and having got the fruits (reward, benefit) of their eyes (i.e. having had the opportunity of witnessing such a marvelous and fascinating game-playing scene of the Lord), went to their respective abodes in the heavens, all the while singing his glories en-route. Lord Ram too departed for his royal palace from the playing field, along with his companions (3).

There is tumultuous rejoicing in the palace as well as in every household of the city. Seeing him (Lord Ram) affectionately, the mothers have literally lost awareness of their bodies (i.e. they have forgotten about their own self because they are hugely excited and happy). They perform the Aarti[1] of the Lord and his brothers with an exhilarated and cheerful mind. The mothers are liberally giving away alms and charities in abundance (4).

[[1]The Aarti is a form of ceremonial welcome home when lighted oil lamps are arranged on a plate and shown to the visitor as a mark of welcome and respect.]

In this way, there are fresh celebrations and rejoicings in Ayodhya on a daily basis. Tulsidas asserts that those who have greater affection for the Lord's divine stories and the equally divine activities and deeds that the Lord performed in this world than the Lord himself are very fortunate, and they are equally privileged to those ordinary citizens of Ayodhya who may not have had the opportunity to come too near or close

to the Lord himself personally but had exulted and remained drowned in the Lord's glory and affections for them[2] (5).

[[2]This observation must be read in the context of verse no. 45 wherein it is described how the Lord preferred to lose himself to make his brother Bharat win the game so that his victory could make him happy. The idea is that it is very important to remain submerged in the ocean of the Lord's mercy and grace which is available to all free of cost at all times of their lives, wherever they are in whatever situation they may be. The physical form of the Supreme Being as Lord Ram had to obey the established laws of creation—for the simple reason that these laws are established by none else but the Lord himself—and Lord Ram had to leave this world when the time came, but his divine name, his divine glory, his divine story and his divine Spirit lives eternally for us I our midst to let us bask in their sun-shine.]

विश्वामित्रजीका आगमन

राग सारंग

(1/47)

चहत महामुनि जाग जयो।
नीच निसाचर देत दुसह दुख, कृस तनु ताप तयो।। 1।।
सापे पाप, नये निदरत खल, तब यह मंत्र ठयो।
बिप्र–साधु–सुर–धेनु–धरनि–हित हरि अवतार लयो।। 2।।
सुमिरत श्रीसारंगपानि छनमें सब सोच गयो।
चले मुदित कौसिक कोसलपुर, सगुननि साथ दयो।। 3।।
करत मनोरथ जात पुलकि, प्रगटत आनंद नयो।
तुलसी प्रभु–अनुराग उमगि मग मंगल मूल भयो।। 4।।

viśvāmitrajī kā āgamana

rāga sāraṅga

(1/47)

cahata mahāmuni jāga jayō.
nīca nisācara dēta dusaha dukha, kr̥sa tanu tāpa tayō.. 1..
sāpē pāpa, nayē nidarata khala, taba yaha mantra ṭhayō.
bipra-sādhu-sura-dhēnu-dharani-hita hari avatāra layō.. 2..
sumirata śrīsāraṅgapāni chanamēṁ saba sōca gayō.
calē mudita kausika kōsalapura, sagunani sātha dayō.. 3..
karata manōratha jāta pulaki, pragaṭata ānanda nayō.
tulasī prabhu-anurāga umagi maga maṅgala mūla bhayō.. 4..

Verse no. 1/47—[From now onwards we shall be reading about the next phase in Lord Ram's divine story which marks the end of the narrative of his early childhood days and starts the narrative of his first encounter with the demons and his first experience of the life in a dense forest. It is a sort of a prelude that would prepare the Lord for what he could expect when the real front opens a little while later when he is destined to go to the forest to fulfill his promise made to the Gods, Mother Earth and Sages that he would eliminate the terror of the demons.

In this first sojourn into the wild forest, the Lord is under the protection of the mighty sage Vishwamitra who had immense mystical powers to ensure no harm could ever come to Lord Ram under any circumstance. It would be a training course for the Lord so that he would be fully prepared to face the full force of the might and wrath of the demons alone later on.

It so happened that sage Vishwamitra could not complete his fire sacrifice because it was being continuously defiled by the demons. Had he wished, the sage could have vanquished the demons himself, but he had taken a vow that he would not be angry and curse anyone during the process of the fire sacrifice. So he had to restrain himself. What was to be done then?

The all-knowing sage realized that Lord Vishnu had come down to earth as Lord Ram with the express mandate to eliminate the demons. So here was his chance. Hence, he decided to visit Ayodhya and bring Lord Ram to his hermitage so that the process of elimination of demons gets rolling.

Sage Vishwamitra used this excuse of protection of his fire sacrifice to bring about a union between two cosmic forces that was necessary to accomplish success in the fulfillment of the Great Mission which was the elimination of the demons—and this union was to be in the form of a 'marriage' of Lord Ram and Sita. The added bonus for this great sage was an opportunity to make himself eternal and an integral part of the Lord's divine story because he had become instrumental in Lord Ram's marriage with Sita, about which we shall read a little while later in this chapter, from verse nos. 1/61—to 1/108.

Besides this, there were some mystical weapons about which only Vishwamitra knew, and these had to be given to Lord Ram so that the demons were successfully defeated. Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 209 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8; and (ii) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/54, stanza no. 6 herein below.

Further, the sage thought that this would give him an opportunity to extend his own love and affection to the Lord, a privilege so far enjoyed only by his rival sage Vasistha who was the royal priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya. In fact in the entire story of the Ramayan, only two sages had had the privilege of caring for Lord Ram as he were their son—on was sage Vishwamitra, and the other was sage Valmiki.

Sage Vishwamitra showered his love on the two brothers as if he was their own father, and we shall be soon reading how ecstatic he was at having Lord Ram and Laxman entrusted to his care as if he was their own father—refer: verse no. 1/54, stanza no. 2; no. 1/55, stanza no. 7 of this chapter herein below. The fact is he is the only sage in the entire story of the Ramayan who was honoured with the privilege of treating the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, as his own sons. And this honour was officially bestowed upon him by king Dasrath himself—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 208; and Geetawali,

Baal Kand, verse no. 1/51, stanza no. 2. Hence, henceforth sage Vishwamitra would act as a foster father of Lord Ram and Laxman.

The second sage was Valmiki to whose hermitage Sita, the noble wife of Lord Ram, was sent to spend her time in forest exile. The great and loving sage welcomed her and treated her like his own daughter, not letting her feel that she was alone and in an alien place. It was here that Sita's two sons Lava and Kush were born. This story will be narrated in this book's (Geetawali's) Uttar Kand, from verse no. 7/34—to verse no. 7/36.

That said, now let us read on with the story as it unfolds below.]

Sage Vishwamitra wishes to complete his fire-sacrifice, but the demons interfere, molest and desecrate it continuously with great impunity, as a result of which the sage is getting emaciated due to worry (1).

He is in a great moral dilemma. If he curses the demons, that will be sinful (because getting angry and cursing is not becoming of a saint of Vishwamitra's stature, and especially when he has taken a vow of remaining calm and observing austerity and penance while engaged in the fire sacrifice). And if he tolerates them, there seem to be no end to the demon's torments. So he thought to himself—'Sri Hari has taken a form (as an incarnation of Lord Ram) for the benefit of the Brahmins, the sages and hermits, the pious ones, the Gods, the holy cows and the mother earth.' (I must therefore approach him to liberate me from this daily suffering at the hands of demons) (2).

Thinking thus, he was delighted, and proceeded towards Ayodhya eagerly. At this time, there were many good omens (to indicate to him that his visit would be fruitful) (3).

On the way, he mentally made many hopes and expectations. during such moments there was a thrill in his body which created renewed happiness and bliss (in the heart of the sage).

Tulsidas says that the thrill and surge of affection for the Lord made the path very auspicious and welfare-providing for the sage[1] (4).

[[1]Sage Vishwamitra knew who Lord Ram was and what the Lord's mission was. It was this knowledge that prevailed upon him and motivated him to visit Ayodhya and bring the Lord to his hermitage so that the process of the elimination of the demons could be set in motion.

So, well aware of the destiny from Eternity that fore-ordained his role in being the first one to introduce Lord Ram to the danger posed by the demons and how they were tyrannising sages and humble creatures of the world, as also the need to transfer certain mystical weapons that this sage exclusively possessed into the hands of Lord Ram so that the Lord is armed to fight and slay the demons, the sage could not but feel exceedingly honoured and privileged when he set out of his hermitage to make the journey to Ayodhya. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 206.

His excitement and ecstasy knew no bounds, and his steps were so light and quick and nimble as if he were kind of flying with wings.

So lost was the sage in his own thoughts and thanking his luck and destiny that has brought this day to him, and of the honour and privilege that would soon be his for the askin, and so submerged he was in buffeting waves of emotions and love for

Lord Ram that were billowing in his heart that he appeared like a ship speeding with a exceeding speed towards its destination, almost keeling on its side to keep pace with the demands of the waves and the wind that fills its sails to aid and abet and push it towards its destination as is its wont!]

[Note—The episode narrating arrival of sage Vishwamitra to take Lord Ram and Laxman with him, and the subsequent developments leading to the killing of demons who were tormenting him have been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 206—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 210.]

(1/48)

आजु सकल सुकृत फलु पाइहौं।
सुखकी सींव, अवधि आनँदकी अवध बिलोकि हौं पाइहौं।। 1।।
सुतनि सहित दसरथहि देखिहौं, प्रेम पुलकि उर लाइहौं।
रामचंद्र–मुखचंद्र–सुधा–छबि नयन–चकोरनि प्याइहौं।। 2।।
सादर समाचार नृप बुझिहैं, हौं सब कथा सुनाइहौं।
तुलसी ह्वै कृतकृत्य आश्रमहिं राम लषन लै आइहौं।। 3।।

(1/48)

āju sakala sukr̥ta phalu pā'ihauṁ.
sukhakī sīnva, avadhi ānam̆dakī avadha bilōki hauṁ pā'ihauṁ.. 1..
sutani sahita dasarathahi dēkhihauṁ, prēma pulaki ura lā'ihauṁ.
rāmacandra-mukhacandra-sudhā-chabi nayana-cakōrani pyā'ihauṁ.. 2..
sādara samācāra nr̥pa bujhihaiṁ, hauṁ saba kathā sunā'ihauṁ.
tulasī hvai kr̥takr̥tya āśramahiṁ rāma laṣana lai ā'ihauṁ.. 3..

Arrival of sage Vishwamitra at Ayodhya-2

Verse no. 1/48—[This verse continues the narrative of the previous verse no. 1/47 of sage Vishwamitra's ecstasy and exhilaration as he wended his way towards Ayodhya. The sage felt and knew that he was on a divine mission and a pilgrimage to a holy place that was praised in the scriptures and which was selected by Lord Ram to be his residence during the Lord's worldly sojourn.

The great sage thought in himself that when he brings Lord Ram to his hermitage and initiates the process of elimination of demons, he would symbolically be starting the 'Great Sacrifice' with the noble aim of eliminating the demons and freeing the world of their cruelty and tyranny. And he was so lucky that in this 'Great Sacrifice' he would preside over as the 'head priest'! Nay, not only this, it would be much more than that—for he would be doing what the Gods themselves couldn't accomplish for the fear of the wrath of demons!

There were many additional bonus-honours that awaited him—for he would be remembered as the 'foster father' of Lord Ram, which privilege no living being had except Dasrath who, by exceptional good luck of his and the merits he had

accumulated, was honoured to be the Lord's 'temporal father'; for he would be instrumental in bringing about a union between Lord Ram and Sita who were personified forms of Brahm, the Supreme Being, and his Shakti, the cosmic dynamic powers of Brahm that enables Brahm to do what he does; and to—and this was utmost important for Vishwamitra and dearest of the dear wont of his heart—shower his unobstructed and unhindered and undiluted and unstinted love and affection to his beloved Lord!

Hence, even as he was moving on the ground he appeared to be flying as if carried on wings on clouds moving without obstacles of the land. He was muttering to himself in ecstasy as if a man possessed—smiling now and tears welling up and rolling down his cheeks at another moment; walking as fast as his aged legs would carry him now, and slowing down a moment later to a snail's pace as his mind lost awareness of whither he was going and whether his legs were moving at all, almost paralysing them!

Indeed, such was the great sage Vishwamitra's ecstatic reverie!]

'Today I shall get the reward of all my good, meritorious and virtuous deeds because I shall have a look at Ayodhya which is a hall-mark (standard, limit) of happiness as well as passing through the times of rejoicing and exhilaration[1] (1).

[[1]This was the time when there were unstopped celebrations in Ayodhya. The wise and all-knowing sage knew that all this would be short-lived in the light of what was to come in the days ahead—when this same city would be plunged in gloom of the gravest kind once Lord Ram would leave it to go to the forest to fulfil his mission of slaying the demons. Hence, this was the right time to visit it.]

I shall see king Dasrath along with his sons, and shall embrace him with affection causing a thrill on my body[2].

Besides, I shall also make the Chakors representing my eyes drink the nectar in the form of captivating and beautiful image of Lord Sri Ram's moon-like face (2).

[[2]Sage Vishwamitra would be thrilled on embracing king Dasrath because the king was the most honoured and lucky man alive at the time—for the simple reason that he was blessed by the Lord to become his father on earth. And soon we shall read that this same thrill and ecstasy filled Vishwamitra when he learnt that this rare privilege—of being called 'father of Lord Ram'—would pass on to him. Refer: verse no. 1/51, stanza no. 2; no. 1/54, stanza no. 2; no. 1/55, stanza no. 7 herein below.]

The king shall ask me about my welfare and then I shall tell him the whole story (regarding the purpose of my visit).'

Tulsidas continues to describe the ecstatic state of Vishwamitra's thought when the sage talked to himself thus: 'Then I shall most obligingly bring Sri Ram and Laxman to my Ashram (hermitage).[3]' (3).

[[3]It is to be noted that this last thought—that Lord Ram and Laxman would come with Vishwamitra to his hermitage—has been separated from the rest of the narrative. It is to highlight that when this thought came to the sage, his ecstasy and joy knew no bounds.]

देखि मुनि! रावरे पद आज।
भयो प्रथम गनतीमें अबतें हौं जहँ लौं साधु समाज।। 1।।
चरन बंदि, कर जोरि निहोरत, 'कहिय कृपा करि काज।
मेरे कछु न अदेय राम बिनु, देह–गेह सब राज'।। 2।।
भली कही भूपति त्रिभुवनमें को सुकृती–सिरताज ?।
तुलसि राम–जनमहितें जनियत सकल सुकृत को साज।। 3।।

rāga naṭa

(1/49)

dēkhi muni! rāvarē pada āja.
bhayō prathama ganatīmēṁ abatēṁ hauṁ jahaṁ lauṁ sādhu samāja.. 1..
carana bandi, kara jōri nihōrata, 'kahiya kr̥pā kari kāja.
mērē kachu na adēya rāma binu, dēha-gēha saba rāja'.. 2..
bhalī kahī bhūpati tribhuvanamēṁ kō sukr̥tī-siratāja?.
tulasi rāma-janamahitēṁ janiyata sakala sukr̥ta kō sāja.. 3..

Sage Vishwamitra in king Dasrath's Court

Verse no. 1/49—[Finally, sage Vishwamitra reached Ayodhya. He took a bath in the holy river Saryu and went to the court of king Dasrath and sought his audience. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 206.

The court messengers and royal guards swiftly went in and reported to the king about the great sage's arrival. King Dasrath felt he was highly honoured by the sage's visit because Vishwamitra did not usually went to visit kings and seek anything from them. Dasrath thought that the sage had come to bless him and his sons now as he hadn't come earlier during the celebrations marking Lord Ram's birth. So the king immediately got up and hurriedly prepared to welcome the sage warmly with the greatest of honours and reverence.]

[King Dasrath said—] 'Oh great Sage! Seeing today your lotus-like revered feet I am feeling highly honoured, and have become most high, fortunate and exalted in the realm that extends to as far as where all those who are pious, pure-hearted and noble (sādhu samāja) abide[1] (1).

[[1]The king welcomed the great sage with the warmest of welcomes and the greatest of reverence, saying—"Oh Sage! A mighty blessing hath descended upon us by thy footsteps coming to mine place, which is now purified and madeth honourable by thine presence. There is verily naught better and goodness of fortune than this."]

Thereafter, he worshipped the sage's feet, bent his hands at the elbow so that the two palms touched each other (as a gesture of showing high respect, to worship, show reverence as a token of submission), and requested the sage, 'Oh sage! Please be kind

to tell me the purpose of your visit. Excepting Ram, there is nothing that I can't give you, whether it be my body, my household, my entire kingdom or any other thing which you desire.[2]' (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 207; and Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precedes Doha no. 208.

When the sage was ushered in the royal court, shown warm welcome, worshipped with due honours, and seated, the king said—"Oh great Sage! It is my honour and privilege to have you today with me. It's indeed a blessed coming. But tell me oh sage, besides thine wont to bless mine family and kingdom and bestow upon us the rare honour of thine august presence amongst us, what else is thine wont that bringeth thee here to me? Tell me thine errand that I may fufil it to thee and requite it for thine pleasure, with one exception for which I beg thine pardon and excuse. Ram is dearest to mine heart more than mine life, and other than that nothing is there that I cannot submit to thee for thy pleasure. Oh Sage! Thine good name, beneficence, magnanimity, benevolence, grace and compasion are of the legends, and they are well known in all the realms and climes and countries as far as where the sun rises and the moon sets. So sage—tell me thine requirement and acquint me with thine tale. And if its accomplishment be in mine power I wilt straightaway accomplish it to thee and spare thee the toil and trouble which hath bringeth thee hither. And Lord help me that there is nothing that can't be accomplished by thine blessings, with the exception of thy seeking the hands of Ram from me, for that would singe the life out mine soul.

So therefore oh Sage, as the saying says—'Thou wouldest be complied with if thou ask that which can be readily supplied'—be sooth, graceful, merciful, considerate, reasonable and compassionate in thy asking."]

Tulsidas says that sage Vishwamitra replied to the king as follows—'Oh King of the age and sovereign of the realm (bhūpati)! What you have just said (in stanza no. 1) is correct and true. Indeed, who is more exalted in virtues, accomplished in good deeds, high in auspiciousness and exalted in nobility (sukṛtī-siratāja) in the entire world and its three divisions (tribhuvanamēṁ)[2] than you are? The clear evidence of this is in the birth of Lord Sri Ram in your household, as your son. What more proof is needed? (rāma-janamahitēṁ janiyata sakala sukṛta kō sāja)'[3] (3).

[[2]The 'Tribhuvan' refers to the three divisions of the world—the heaven, the earth and the nether world.

[3]The sage reciprocated king Dasrath's graceful words by praising the latter for his good fortune and meritorious deeds that entitled him to become eligible to have the Lord of the entire world as his son.]

(1 / 50)

राजन! राम–लषन जो दीजै।
जस रावरो, लाभ ढोटनिहूँ, मुनि सनाथ सब कीजै।। 1।।
डरपत हौ साँचे सनेह–बस सुत–प्रभाव बिनु जाने।
बूझिय बामदेव अरु कुलगुरु, तुम पुनि परम सयाने।। 2।।
रिपु रन दलि, मख राखि, कुसल अति अलप दिननि घर ऐहैं।

(1/50)

rājana! rāma-laṣana jō dījai.
jasa rāvarō, lābha ḍhōṭanihūm̐, muni sanātha saba kījai.. 1..
ḍarapata hau sām̐cē sanēha-basa suta-prabhāva binu jānē.
būjhiya bāmadēva aru kulaguru, tuma puni parama sayānē.. 2..
ripu rana dali, makha rākhi, kusala ati alapa dinani ghara aihaiṁ.
tulasidāsa raghubansatilakakī kabikula kīrati gaihaiṁ.. 3..

Request of Vishwamitra for allowing Lord Ram & Laxman to be sent with him-1

Verse no. 1/50—Pleading with King Dasrath to give Lord Ram to him, the sage (Vishwamitra) exhorted him—'Oh King, if you vouchsafe Lord Ram and Sri Laxman to me then in all sooth I say (and assure you) that there is no gainsay in that not only will you acquire good fame and the honour of obliging a sage, but these two divine brothers would also greatly benefit from it[1] (1).'

[[1]Sage Vishwamitra knew about the reluctance of king Dasrath in sending Lord Ram and Laxman with him—refer: Verse no. 1/49, stanza no. 2. So he now points out the benefits and merits that would accrue to Dasrath if he gives his consent in order to politely persuade the king to abandon his stubbornness and realize that the princes have grown up to become adults and they must now be allowed to step in the open world and make a mark of their own instead of living under the liege and shadow of the great name of the family and their father.

The king must realize that his two sons would be absolutely secure under the protective umbrella of the mightily able sage of the stature of Vishwamitra. Nay, they would be safer with Vishwamitra than even when with their own father, Dasrath.

And did not the king realize that excessive of pampering and tenderness in dealings and softness of life and easiness of comforts would make the princes weak and fragile and susceptible to unsettling contingencies and inconsistencies of future life for which they wouldn't be emotionally and mentally prepared, and they would not be prepared to face the turmoil and hardships that would come their way once the king dies and they inherit the burden of the kingdom with all its thorny problems and troubling troubles and uncertainties of the most unpredictable kinds.

A wise father is one who would not dither in training his sons to face the world and step out of their cradles so that when death overcomes the sire and trounces him, his blood-relations and heirs are not found wanting, but would stand in the stead of their sire and be more worthy than the sire himself.]

[The sage continued—] 'It seemeth to me that you are afraid and hesitant and reluctant and apprehensive in vouchsafing them (Lord Ram and Laxman) to me because you do not know their true nature, their qualities or qualifications, and who they actually are[2].

Therefore, oh good King, you would do good and be well-advised if you would kindly consult sage Baamdeo as well as your own court priest and family preacher (Guru) sage Vasistha on this issue[3] (2).'

[[2]The sage meant—"Oh King! You think that these two brothers are your sons and that you are responsible for their security, and that they might come to harm if you send them with me. Its alright of you as any father would feel likewise. But on one point you err—You don't know that Lord Ram is not an ordinary human being that you think him to be because you have become so deluded and swept away in your love and affection for him. You have forgotten that you had done severe Tapa or penance in some ancient time when you were born as Manu, and you had been rewarded with a divine sight of Lord Vishnu who asked you to seek from him what your heart desired. Then you and your wife, Satrupa, had begged of the Lord the privilege of having the Lord born as your son. Why say, don't you remember it."

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 142—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 152.

"Oh king—don't act like an ill-advised and dumb-in-wit king who is so short of sight that he can't see the things with the correct and larger perspective in view, and of the greater objective that would be of larger and abiding benefit to him in the long run by being over-passionate, over-possessive, miserly and stingy about the diminutive pleasure and comfort of the present at the peril of the future.

You must understand that sons of great kings must be trained to face troubles and tribulations of life as there are in the field, and not rendered fragile and delicate by confining them the shadowed life of pleasures of the palace and comforts of the kingdom for it would make them susceptible to fear and cowardice and indecisiveness in the face of the harsh realties of life one day when they ascend the throne in stead of their sire and inherit the responsibility of the kingdom which is a mighty burden for which an able shoulder is needed. Remember oh king that the toil, the turmoil and the calamities of life only go to train and strengthen the sons of great kings in practice, and instill in them the resolution to face and overcome all oppositions boldly and with courage as only these virtues would strengthen and lent shine to their mettle and make him the greatest amongst the kings and emperors of his time whom no one dareth challenge or contradict."

[3]The sage continued—"Oh King! A king keeps good advisors with him just for an eventuality as this. For in the event when he is indecisive or faces a dilemma, his wise and learned advisors give him good council and ensure that the king is not brought to some peril. Look—don't take me lightly for I am not of the kind who plays matters light and without weight. I have not come hither to beg of alms or seek largesse from you. Remember: I am fully capable of superceding your objections and having my say reign supreme, but still I beg before you in all humility and submission so that the credit and the fame of assenting to a sage's request will all be yours.

And King, you must know why I am of the wont to take Lord Ram and Sri Laxman with me. This you haven't asked. So listen carefully—"]

[In order to overcome Dasrath's reservations and apprehensions that made him reluctant in sending Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman with him, sage Vishwamitra reassured the king as follows—] 'And verily I assure you oh King, and foresay I say in all sooth that they (Lord Ram and Sri Laxman) would slay the demons and protect my fire-sacrifice. [Don't doubt it.] Once done, then they would soon come back to thee at Ayodhya (and its my word of honour and promise to you, a stable trust and covenant of a sage that never goes void and is never violated).[4]'

[4]The sage sought to reassure king Dasrath and remove his apprehension that he is not taking the two princes to his hermitage to make them his disciples. No not at all. Once the job and stated objective is accomplished, it is the word-of-honour of sage Vishwamitra that he would send the two brothers home to Ayodhya. It is just like a short-term outing for the two princes.

"Let them come with me", said the sage, "and I promise you to send them back to you as soon as possible. And I needest not remind thou of this that thine two sons willest not come empty-handed to thee without being blessed and handsomely rewarded as doth thou not knowest that a sage likest of me wouldest naught allow anyone to helpest him and bearest his burden without grant of adequate compensation and requital? And remember: Since this compensation would be for the protection of a fire sacrifice and be awarded for helping a sage, the reward would be likewise compensate in its grandness and in manifold of its virtues."]

Tulsidas adds from his side, saying—"The sage added: 'Oh king! If you do so, the poets and bards will sing the glories and praises of Lord Ram and Sri Laxman for all times to come.' "[5] (3).

[5]The last stanza can be read as follows also—Tulsidas says that the sage told the king further—"Oh king! If you pay heed to my advice and send the two brothers with me then the noble and valiant deeds of the two brothers that I foresay in all sooth and assurance that they wouldest surely doest—like the valiant and gallant deed of the killing of the demons, and the noble and most honourable deed of successful completion of the fire sacrifice of sages that is yet incomplete—will make them famous and renowned and established for eternity that is to come so much so that their glories and achievements would be the subject of praises and laurels and paeans that would be remembered and retold and sung as poems and songs of lore by great poets and bards and minstrels for all times to come and in all the corners of the world."]

(1 / 51)

रहे ठगिसे नृपति सुनि मुनिबरके बयन।
कहि न सकत कछु राम–प्रेमबस, पुलक गात, भरे नीर नयन।। 1।।
गुरु बसिष्ठ समुझाय कह्यो तब हिय हरषाने, जाने सेष–सयन।
सौंपे सुत गहि पानि, पाँय परि, भूसुर उर चले उमँगि चयन।। 2।।
तुलसी प्रभु जोहत पोहत चित, सोहत मोहत कोटि मयन।
मधु–माधव–मूरति दोउ सँग मानो दिनमनि गवन कियो उतर अयन।। 3।।

(1/51)

rahē ṭhagisē nr̥pati suni munibarakē bayana.
kahi na sakata kachu rāma-prēmabasa, pulaka gāta, bharē nīra nayana.. 1..
guru basiṣṭha samujhāya kahyō taba hiya haraṣānē, jānē sēṣa-sayana.
saumpē suta gahi pāni, pām̐ya pari, bhūsura ura calē umam̐gi cayana.. 2..
tulasī prabhu jōhata pōhata cita, sōhata mōhata kōṭi mayana.
madhu-mādhava-mūrati dō'u sam̐ga mānō dinamani gavana kiyō utara

Request of Vishwamitra for allowing Lord Ram & Laxman to be sent with him-2

Verse no. 1/51—Hearing sage Vishwamitra's words, the king (Dasrath) was utterly speechless and flummoxed; he became dumbfounded and stunned as if a lightening had struck him. Overcome by love for Lord Sri Ram, he could not say a word and find a compense[1]. His body became numbed and tears welled-up in his eyes (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 208.

Though not mentioned here, the reason for Dasrath's shock and why this request was too difficult to be accepted has been laid out in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2, 5-6 that precede Doha no. 208. The king explained to sage Vishwamitra thus: "Sage, I have been blessed with four sons in my ripe old age, at a time when I had lost all hopes of ever being able to enjoy this fruit of my life that I, to the best of knowledge, have spent righteously and nobly. Oh Brahmin ("Vipra")! You have uttered words without thought and consideration and applying wisdom. You did not realise the import of your demand and whether or not it would be possible for the person from whom such demand is made to meet it. All my four sons are equally dear to me and it is not possible for me to vouchsafe Ram to you. (And I beseech you also therefore not to force upon me an alternative by asking me to send Bharat and Shatrughan in lieu of Ram and Laxman). Its incredulous to imagine that you would make such a request in view of the immensity of the hazards that would befall my sons, for you say that 'Sri Ram will slay the demons'. Nay, this is unimaginable for me to give assent to: for on the one hand are the most ferocious, formidable and spine-chilling demons of the sternest and toughest kind, and on the other hand are these beautiful princes who are extremely delicate and of a tender age. So therefore, oh gracious sage, please forgive and excuse me."]

When the royal priest, sage Guru Vasistha, observed the perplexities and dilemmas that Dasrath found himself in, the wise sage stepped-in to give wise council and reassure the king that everything would be alright and that he should not at all be worried by explaining the reality of the things to him[2].

As a result of this advice and wisdom imparted to him by his teacher and advisor sage Vasistha, the king came to his senses[3] and realised the true nature of Lord Ram as being an incarnation (manifestation) of the Lord God (Vishnu) who reclines on the legendry Sheshnath (the legendary celestial serpent) on the cosmic ocean of milk known as the Kshir Sagar. So he felt extremely glad and honoured in his heart (at being fortunate enough to become the Lord's temporal father).

Thereafter, the king, most willingly and cheerfully, held the hands of the two brothers and handed them over to sage Vishwamitra even as he fell on the feet of the sage[4].

At this (i.e. when the king politely handed over the two brothers to the sage), a sense of great and unbound happiness, of immense bliss, exhilaration and extreme ecstasy began to surge in the sage's heart (like an ocean rising and heaving with billowing waves during the time of its tide at the sight of the full moon)[5]. (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 208.

The wise sage Vasistha enlightened the king that his son Ram was no ordinary prince, but he is the Supreme Being himself incarnate, and that his main objective of coming to the earth is getting rid of the demons. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 186—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187.

The king himself was a very righteous and holy man, and he had always fought for upholding the laws of Dharma—the laws of righteousness and correct behaviour. He had often in the past fought on the side of the Gods against their enemies, the demons. Now therefore he should not be a hindrance in the work of the Gods by being sentimental and too obsessive and possessive with a physical form of the Lord as his child. Rather, he should willingly tell Ram and Laxman to accompany sage Vishwamitra so that the noble objective of the Lord's incarnation be fulfilled. He should not act childish and in a worldly manner, but as a noble king who would sacrifice everything in his possession and ability if Dharma needs protection.

Besides this, the king must realize that Vishwamitra was not an ordinary sage, as he has within his reach such mystical weapons that are envy of even the Gods. If Vishwamitra needs his fire sacrifice to be protected then there are very good chances that he would divulge the secret of these weapons to Lord Ram so that the mission can be successfully accomplished. And is it not obvious to the king that in this eventuality his son, Lord Ram, would then be the only one in this world who would be in possession of these great weapons that would stand him in good stead when he takes over the reigns of the kingdom from his father? It would make Ram invincible and the vanquisher of all his enemies! Which father and king would not like this to happen?

Further, sage Vasistha counciled Dasrath that he, Vasistha, was fully aware of the abilities and prowess of Vishwamitra and can vouch for him. The two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, are much safer with Vishwamitra than anywhere else in this world, even not so much while being protected by the full might of Dasrath's army.

And then there is a horrendous peril that faces Dasrath in the face in the eventuality of his stubborn refusal to oblige Vishwamitra. Has the king considered what would come to pass should the sage become wrathfull, and losing his self-control curse the king and his sons with only God knows whatso.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 208.

When sage Vasistha ceased speaking, king Dasrath much profited from it. He summoned up his reasoning powers and cleansed his heart of doubts and consternations and reluctance, causing his understanding to revert to his former self when he had prayed to the almighty Lord to bless him with the grant of the boon so that he may be honoured with the rarest of rare privilege of having the Lord as his child, and said to himself—"Indeed, 'tis in mine good that I rise above the petty and consider things from a higher perspective, for what my Guru has saith is in sooth the fact of the matter. Verily, I must give my consent forthwith, not as an obligation on sage Vishwamitra but as an honour on mine whole family."

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 208 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 9-10.

At the time of handing Lord Ram and Laxman to sage Vishwamitra, king Dasrath, their worldly father, told the sage: "Oh great and compassionate Sage! Verily, these two brothers art like life for me. And from this forwardtime thou art their 'father'. So wherefore oh sage, careth for them as if they wert thine sons."

The gesture of falling at the sage's feet has many connotations. It is a token of total submission and a sign of humility, as a gesture of showing great reverence, honour and respect to the sage, and also to silently tell the sage that he is giving away

to him what was more dear to heart than his own life just to honour the sanctity of the sage's words and in deference to his wishes. It also means that the king offered his beloved sons to the sage with a subtle request to take special care of Ram and Laxman who were merely boys of a tender age at that time. Henceforth, the safety and security, the welfare and well-being of these two princes would be in the kind hands of sage Vishwamitra.

Another reason for the king falling at the feet of sage Vishwamitra was to ask for forgiveness for his initial response of refusing to oblige the great sage. After all, he, the loving father, was overcome with shock and grief at the prospect of having to part with his dear sons at an advanced age, and at the unimaginable prospect of literally throwing his sons to face the wolves in the form of blood-thirsty demons. It was a emotional and sentimental response of a loving father, and so king Dasrath beseeched sage Vishwamitra to understand his mental state and hence forgive him for his temerity to refuse the sage's request intitially.

[5]It is natural to happen—for now the sage would have the unparalleled privilege and the good fortune to be very close to the Supreme Lord, and be the first sage with whom the Lord spent some of his time on earth. The sage was also happy that he would be playing a pivotal role in the divine objective for which Lord Vishnu manifested on the earth as a human being—which was being instrumental in getting the work of slaying the demons started in right earnest by getting the first group of demons who were disturbing his fire sacrifice killed. This was the first step in a long chain of such events that would ultimately culminate in the killing of the cruel demon king Ravana of Lanka. The sage surely felt privileged at being able to set the ball rolling and going down in history as the one who took the Lord by the hand to motivate him and prod him to do what he had come to do on this earth.]

Tulsidas says that Lord Sri Ram captivates and enthralls the mind and attention of all those who behold him due to the Lord's exceptional charm, attractiveness, radiance and beauty that outshines that of crores (millions) of Kamdeo/cupids taken together.

The sight of the image of the two sweet, attractive and lovely brothers (Ram and Laxman) alongside the sage (Vishwamitra) (madhu-mādhava-mūrati dō'u samm̆ga) as he took them with him to his hermitage reminds one of the splendorous Sun as it migrates north of the equator (during the summer solstice), accompanied by the two months of Chaitra [March-April] and Vaishaakh [May-June] in a personified form (dō'u samm̆ga mānō dinamani gavana kiyō utara)[6] (3).

[[6]In this imagery, sage Vishwamitra represents the Sun, while the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, the two months mentioned in this stanza in their personified forms. This period is mid-summer when the Sun is at its brightest and most brilliant form. It indicates how Vishwamitra felt and appeared. His face shone like the sun; he was in his finest mood and fettle; and his glorious presence with the two brothers portended affright to the demons who would hide themselves just as the night retracts it's self to the bare minimum of hours during summers when the days are exceptionally long.]

[Note—Though initially reluctant, Dasrath finally allowed Lord Ram and Laxman to accompany sage Vishwamitra to his hermitage in the forest. On the way the Lord met the demoness Tadka, who attacked them. The Lord killed this demoness with the least of effort. This was Lord Ram's first encounter with the demon race. At the sage's hermitage, the Lord protected the fire sacrifice by killing the demon army when it attacked, but he let off their chief Marich by hitting him with a headless arrow which flung the demon far away in the middle of the ocean. It was this demon who was later

to become a golden deer and be instrumental in Sita's abduction by the demon king Ravana.

Then news came that a king named Janak was holding a marriage ceremony for his daughter Sita in which the condition for the marriage was a huge and strong bow of Lord Shiva that was in possession of the king. He declared that anyone who would lift it, string it, and pull it would be able to marry Sita. He sent an invitation to sage Vishwamitra. So the sage took Ram and Laxman when he went to attend the ceremony. On the way the Lord liberated Ahilya who was a chaste wife of sage Gautam but was converted into a stone due to some curse. Lord Ram touched her with his holy feet, and as soon as the dust of his feet touched her she was freed from her curse.

These episodes will soon be narrated as the story unfolds. Refer: Verse nos. 1/52—1/60 herein below.

They are also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 209—Doha no. 211.]

राग सारंग

(1/52)

ऋषि सँग हरषि चले दोउ भाई।
पितु–पद बंदि सीस लियो आयसु, सुनि सिष आसिष पाई।। 1।।
नील पीत पाथोज बरन बपु, बय किसोर बनि आई।
सर धुन–पानि, पीत पट कटितट, कसे निखंग बनाई।। 2।।
कलित कंठ मनि–माल, कलेवर चंदन खौरि सुहाई।
सुंदर बदन, सरोरुह–लोचन, मुखछबि बरनि न जाई।। 3।।
पल्लव, पंख, सुमन सिर सोहत क्यों कहौं बेष–लुनाई ?
मनु मूरति धरि उभय भाग भइ त्रिभुवन सुंदरताई।। 4।।
पैठत सरनि, सिलनि चढ़ि चितवत, खग–मृग–बन रुचिराई।
सादर सभय सप्रेम पुलकि मुनि पुनि–पुनि लेत बुलाई।। 5।।
एक तीर तकि हती ताडका, बिद्या बिप्र पढ़ाई।
राख्यो जग्य जीति रजनीचर, भइ जग–बिदित बड़ाई।। 6।।
चरन–कमल–रज–परस अहल्या, निज पति–लोक पठाई।
तुलसिदास प्रभुके बूझे मुनि सुरसरि कथा सुनाई।। 7।।

rāga sāraṅga

(1/52)

ṛ̨si samm̆ga haraṣi calē dō'u bhā'ī.
pitu-pada bandi sīsa liyō āyasu, suni siṣa āsiṣa pā'ī.. 1..
nīla pīta pāthōja barana bapu, baya kisōra bani ā'ī.
sara dhuna-pāni, pīta paṭa kaṭitaṭa, kasē nikhaṅga banā'ī.. 2..
kalita kaṇṭha mani-māla, kalēvara candana khauri suhā'ī.
suṁdara badana, sarōruha-lōcana, mukhachabi barani na jā'ī.. 3..
pallava, paṅkha, sumana sira sōhata kyōṁ kahauṁ bēṣa-lunā'ī?

manu mūrati dhari ubhaya bhāga bha'i tribhuvana sundaratā'ī.. 4..
paiṭhata sarani, silani caḍhi citavata, khaga-mr̥ga-bana rucirā'ī.
sādara sabhaya saprēma pulaki muni puni-puni lēta bulā'ī.. 5..
ēka tīra taki hatī tāḍakā, bidyā bipra paṛhā'ī.
rākhyō jagya jīti rajanīcara, bha'i jaga-bidita baṛā'ī.. 6..
carana-kamala-raja-parasa ahalyā, nija pati-lōka paṭhā'ī.
tulasidāsa prabhukē būjhē muni surasari kathā sunā'ī.. 7..

[Vishwamitra departs for his Ashram; the Slaying of Tadka;
Liberation of Ahilya & Protection of Fire Sacrifice.]

The Charming & Splendid Portrait of Ram-Laxman
with Vishwamitra-1

Verse no.1/52—The two brothers (Ram and Laxman) happily started on their journey with the sage (for his hermitage). They worshipped their father's feet (i.e. they touched his feet as a gesture of showing great respect to him and to take leave of him), cheerfully accepted his orders (to accompany the sage), heard his advices and wise council, and accepted his blessings (1).

The bodies of the two brothers are as beauteous and charming as a blue and a yellow lotus respectively, and they are in their teens[1].

A bow and an arrow adorn the hands of the two brothers, while a Pitambar and a quiver adorn their waists[2]. (2).

[[1]Since Lord Sri Ram is dark complexioned, he is like the blue lotus, and since Laxman is of a fair complexion he is likened to a yellow coloured flower.

[2]The brothers are each holding a bow and an arrow in their hands, and the yellow silk cloth known as the Pitambar as well as the quiver are tied around their waists.]

There is a gem-studded garland (necklace) around their charming and elegant necks, a light paste of sandalwood is smeared on their bodies, and it is not possible to describe in words the charm and the bewitching beauty of their enthralling image, of their beauteous face, of their general charming demeanours, and of their bewitching lotus-like eyes (3).

There are new (freshly plucked) leaves, (peacock) feathers and (colourful) flowers adorning their heads[3].

Tulsidas says—'How can I describe their enthralling charm and fascinating beauty? It appears to me that the best of the virtue of 'beauty' that exists anywhere in the entire Tribhuvan (the three worlds—subterranean, terrestrial and celestial) has divided itself in to two halves and manifested in the form of these two (brothers, Ram and Laxman)[4]. (4).

[[3]They have been tucked in the thick lock of hairs on their heads. Or it might also mean that freshly plucked leaves, peacock feathers and flowers are stuck in the crown that they are wearing.

[4]That is, the two brothers look so exceptionally charming and lovely that all the 'beauty' that exist in this creation seem to have personified themselves in their forms.]

En-route to the hermitage of the sage (Vishwamitra), the two brothers frolic around (as is the wont of children), sometimes entering (splashing or taking a dip into) lakes and other water bodies, and at other times climbing on the top of boulders and rocks, and as they wended their way through the forest path and fared on cheerfully, they eagerly and excitedly watched the birds, the animals and the general beauty of the surrounding forest and countryside. The sage becomes worried and fearful (about their safety), and overwhelmed with affection for them he repeatedly summons them to come close to him and stop running away[5] (5).

[5]Like ordinary children going out for a picnic, the two brothers were very excited as they walked on either side of the great sage through the path of the wild forest. This was their first outing alone, without the customary retinue of servants and attendants and sons of nobles and notables and grandees of the realm accompanying them like a shadow. They felt easy and carefree and comfortable like a bird decaged for it was the first time in their lives that the two brothers could enjoy the freedom of being alone and doing what was their wont and desire without being under the constant vigil kept by the royal guards of the king's palace who would not allow them to do this and that for the fear of harm coming to them.

So they merrily sang and hummed and smiled and laughed and jumped and skipped as they ran after birds and butterflies, plucking leaves and flowers and tucking away at creepers and soft branches of plants on the way!

They would often wander away from the sage, running into the water of a pond or a lake and splashing in it, spraying each other with the cool water and giggling cheerfully, and at other times they would canter up a hillock to see who can climb first, and then ran down the slope cheering and yelling in excitement. Fascinated by the new sights and scenes they saw every other moment, they would gape with amazement at the countless birds and animals that they encountered on the way. The verdant greenery of the forest and its charm enthralled the children no end. Obviously, they were terribly amused, excited and amazed.

But this constant running away and creating mischief made the sage worried about their safety. It's an extremely beautiful and heart-touching imagery. The sage would enjoy this scene in his heart as he knew that no harm can ever come to them no matter what happens. But then he is overcome with love for them and begins to worry for their safety like an ordinary human being. He was like on an emotional see-saw. This verse shows us the great effect of Maya or the delusions that the Lord creates. Even an enlightened sage of the exalted stature of sage Vishwamitra, who had known who Ram and Laxman actually were—because this was the precise reason why he had gone to fetch them—got trapped by the snare of Maya, forgetting for the moment the true form of the two brothers as being human images of the Supreme Being. But the fact of the matter is that it is this very down-to-earth feeling of love, affection and a sense of belonging to the Lord which is what that captivates the Lord and keeps him compelled to reciprocate the devotee's emotions and sentiments. The tables are turned, and a time comes when the Lord begins to worry about his devotee more than the devotee's longing for the Lord! It's a very practical and hands-on approach to

realizing the soul's objective of attaining nearness to the Divine Being. It's definitely an easy way to reach one's goal as compared to the path of observing rigorous schedules and sacraments such as Japa, Yoga and Samadhi as prescribed in the scriptures for one's spiritual well-being.]

On the way (to the sage's hermitage) they saw the demoness named Tadka whom the Lord (Sri Ram) shot and slayed effortlessly with a single arrow[6].

After this (i.e. after witnessing the powers and prowess of Lord Ram and his bravery, fearlessness as well as valour), the learned Vipra (literally a 'Brahmin', but here meaning sage Vishwamitra) taught the Lord many skills pertaining to warfare and use of mystical powers that are needed in such times to succeed (bidyā bipra paṛhā'ī)[7].

Thereafter, at the sage's hermitage, the Lord vanquished the demons and protected the fire-sacrifice of the sage[8]. This marvelous and astounding deed of his led to the spread of his fame throughout the world (6).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 209.

[7]Refer: Baal Kand, verse no. 1/55, stanza no. 6 herein below which narrates that sage Vishwamitra imparted divine and mystical knowledge to Lord Ram inspite of knowing that the Lord is a treasure of knowledge.

This idea is also expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 209 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 209. Here it is clearly stated that the sage taught Lord Ram great and unique mystical abilities and skills, such as being able to overcome thirst and hunger, having unparallel strength and invincibility of the body, possessing incomparable radiance, splendour, glory and majesty of form and personality, besides surrendering to the Lord and acquainting him in the usage of all other mystical weapons that were in exclusive possession of the sage.

[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 210. The demons who were vanquished here were Marich and Subahu. While Marich was shot with an arrow without a tip which flung the demon to an island in the far away ocean, Subahu was burnt to death with a fire arrow and the rest of the demon army was slayed forthwith.]

In due course of time, the Lord sent Ahilya (wife of sage Gautam, who was converted into a stone due to a curse) back to her husband's household[9].

Tulsidas says that this was the moment when the sage told Lord Ram the story of river Ganges (and how it descended on the earth from the heavens)[10] (7).

[[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-12 and Chanda line nos. 1-16 that precede Doha no. 211. The story of Ahilya is narrated in a note appended to Baal Kand, verse no. 1/57.

[10]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 212. The story of river Ganges is narrated in a note appended at the end of Baal Kand, verse no. 1/55.]

दोउ राजसुवन राजत मुनिके संग।
नखसिख लोने, लोने बदन, लोने लोने लोयन,
दामिनि–बारिद–बरबरन अंग।। 1।।
सिरनि सिखा सुहाइ, उपबीत पीत पट, धनु–सर कर, कसे कटि निखंग।
मानो मख–रुज निसिचर हरिबेको सुत पावकके साथ पठये पतंग।। 2।।
करत छाँह घन, बरषैं सुमन सुर, छबि बरनत अतुलित अनंग।
तुलसी प्रभु बिलोकि मग, लोग, खग–मृग प्रेम मगन रँगे रूप–रंग।। 3।।

rāga naṭa

(1/53)

dō'u rājasuvana rājata munikē saṅga.
nakhasikha lōnē, lōnē badana, lōnē lōnē lōyana, dāmini-bārida-barabarana aṅga.. 1..
sirani sikhā suhā'i, upabīta pīta paṭa, dhanu-sara kara, kasē kaṭi nikhaṅga.
mānō makha-ruja nisicara haribēkō suta pāvakakē sātha paṭhayē pataṅga.. 2..
karata chām̐ha ghana, baraṣaiṁ sumana sura, chabi baranata atulita anaṅga.
tulasī prabhu bilōki maga, lōga, khaga-mr̥ga prēma magana ram̐gē rūpa-raṅga.. 3..

The Charming & Splendid Portrait of Ram-Laxman with Vishwamitra-2

Verse no. 1/53—The two princes (Lord Ram and his brother Laxman) look glorious and magnificent along with the sage (Vishwamitra). They are handsome, comely, pretty and charming with perfection of form and bearing and personage from toe to head. Their face and eyes too are most attractive, while the charming and radiant complexion of their bodies resemble the darkness of the rain-bearing clouds and the dazzle of electric respectively[1] (1).

[[1]Lord Ram is of a dark complexion like that of a rain-bearing cloud, and Laxman is of a shining fair complexion like the brilliance of electric.]

The tuft of coiled hair on the top of their heads (and probably made into a bun) look attractive to behold (sirani sikhā suhā'i), as do the sacred thread around their necks (upabīta) and the Pitambar (yellow body wrapping cloth of silk) that covers their bodies (pīta paṭa). They each hold a bow and an arrow in their hands (dhanu-sara kara), while a quiver is tied around their waists (kasē kaṭi nikhaṅga).

This marvelous sight appears to give the impression that the Sun God (pataṅga) has sent his two sons ('suta paṭhayē'; known by the name of Ashwini Kumars along with the Fire God (pāvakakē sātha) to destroy the demons (nisicara

haribēkō) who form the various diseases or obstacles of a fire sacrifice (makha-ruja)[2] (2).

[[2]Here, sage Vishwamitra symbolizes the Fire God by the virtue of the sage's radiant countenance and the seething anger that burns inside him against the tyranny of the demons who are constantly harassing him and preventing him from completing the fire sacrifice. The Sun God is the deity that is worshipped in a fire sacrifice, and therefore it is he who commanded his two sons known as Ashwini Kumars who are the medicine administrators for the Gods in heaven, here represented by Lord Ram and Laxman, to accompany the Fire God and go and treat the disease of the fire sacrifice that is preventing its completion, wherein the 'disease' stands for the demons who had been defiling sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice and preventing its completion. When a doctor examines a patient he decides the course of medicines in accordance to the disease and the problems faced by the patient. The 'fire' symbolizes the need to inject a fresh lease of life and energy into the patient who is almost dead and lifeless. What will the doctor do and how will he revive a patient by merely giving medicines if the vital energy in the patient has ebbed and cooled below a certain basic limit and can't be rekindled and revved up.

Hence, the two 'medicine doctors' known as Ashwini Kumars, the sons of the Sun God, were sent by the latter in the company of the Fire God who represented the Sun God himself, so that they can successfully treat the 'patient', the doused fire of the fire sacrifice, and revive it back to life by injecting 'energy of the fire' in it and remove all things and circumstances and climes that have made the 'patient' (fire sacrifice) sick in the first place, and to ensure that may not make him sick once again. The Fire God was to serve a double purpose—one was to provide the vital energy and dynamism to revive the patient and inject in him sufficient energy that it can come back to its former self, and the other purpose was to afford protection to the two sons of the Sun God so that no harm comes to them, but unfortunately should any danger come then the guardian Fire God would unleash his wrath and burn the attacking danger to ashes.

In other words, Lord Ram and Laxman were well qualified and competent to slay the demons who were defiling the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra, but should something go awry and needs an appropriate corrective action then there was the ubiquitous presence of the mighty sage Vishwamitra, who possesses secret mystical weapons that are most potent and invincible, to take care of all eventualities.]

As the trio (sage Vishwamitra, Lord Ram and his brother Laxman) move ahead on the path, the clouds provide them with shade (karata chāmha ghana), the Gods shower flowers ('baraṣaiṁ sumana sura'; to soften the ground below as well as to honour and rejoice their venturing to start the elimination process of the demons, one step at a time).

The Gods are mesmerized by the charming image of the two brothers so much so that they unanimously agree that this comely and peerless and fascinating beauty is far superior to that of Kamdeo/cupid's (chabi baranata atulita anaṅga).

Tulsidas says that humans, birds and animals (maga, lōga, khaga-mrga) on the way to the hermitage became so overwhelmed and enthralled in love and affection for the Lord that they virtually lost awareness of anything else (prēma magana), and were so enthralled and engrossed with the beauty and loveliness of the two brothers that they virtually drenched themselves in the abiding colour of love and affection for them (ramgē rūpa-raṅga) (3).

राग कल्याण

(1 / 54)

मुनिके संग बिराजत बीर!
काकपच्छ धर, कर कोदंड–सर, सुभग पीतपट कटि तूनीर।। 1।।
बदन इंदु, अंभोरुह लोचन, स्याम गौर सोभा–सदन सरीर।
पुलकत ऋषि अवलोकि अमित छबि, उर न समाति प्रेमकी भीर।। 2।।
खेलत, चलत, करत मग कौतुक, बिलँवत सरित–सरोबर–तीर।
तोरत लता, सुमन, सरसीरुह, पियत सुधासम सीतल नीर।। 3।।
बैठत बिमल सिलनि बिटपनि तर, पुनि पुनि बरनत छाँह समीर।
देखत नटत केकि, कल गावत मधुप, मराल, कोकिला, कीर।। 4।।
नयननिको फल लेत निरखि खग, मृग, सुरभी, ब्रजबधू, अहीर।
तुलसी प्रभुहि देत सब आसन निज निज मन मृदु कमल कुटीर।। 5।।

rāga kalyāṇa

(1/54)

munikē saṅga birājata bīra!
kākapaccha dhara, kara kōdaṇḍa-sara, subhaga pītapaṭa kaṭi tūnīra.. 1..
badana indu, ambhōruha lōcana, syāma gaura sōbhā-sadana sarīra.
pulakata ṛ̨si avalōki amita chabi, ura na samāti prēmakī bhīra.. 2..
khēlata, calata, karata maga kautuka, bilam̆vata sarita-sarōbara-tīra.
tōrata latā, sumana, sarasīruha, piyata sudhāsama sītala nīra.. 3..
baiṭhata bimala silani biṭapani tara, puni puni baranata chām̆ha samīra.
dēkhata naṭata kēki, kala gāvata madhupa, marāla, kōkilā, kīra.. 4..
nayananikō phala lēta nirakhi khaga, mr̨ga, surabhī, brajabadhū, ahīra.
tulasī prabhuhi dēta saba āsana nija nija mana mr̥du kamala kuṭīra.. 5..

The Charming & Splendid Portrait of Ram-Laxman
with Vishwamitra-3

Verse no. 1/54—The two brothers look magnificent and charming alongside sage Vishwamitra (as the trio wended their way to the sage's hermitage).

The two boys have curling locks of hair on their heads, a bow and an arrow each in their hands, and a Pitambar and a quiver tied around their waists (1).

Their faces resemble the full moon, the eyes are like the lotus flower, and their bodies, which are dark and fair complexioned respectively, are treasuries of splendour, magnificence, charm and glowing radiance.

Seeing their incomparable, peerless and stupendously charming image, Vishwamitra became thrilled with ecstasy, and the surge of love and affection waxed so much in his heart that it seemed it could not to be accomodated in it (2).

As the two brothers walked on the path, they behave like is the wont of children of their age: they are exceedingly jovial and merry, doing strange and mischievous things, playing countless tricks and pranks, performing marvels of that only merry-go-happy boys could think of. They break creepers, flowers and lotuses on the banks of rivers and lakes and ponds, drink their nectar-like cool water and tarry for a long time there (on the banks) (3).

They sit on clean boulders or rocks under the shade of trees, and repeatedly praise and appreciate the shade and the pleasant breeze and climes of that place. Seeing (or observing) them, the peacocks began to dance, and the black bee, the cuckoo, the parrot and other birds began to sing in a voice that was most exceedingly sweet (4).

Seeing the Lord (Sri Ram) again and again (in his form as a lovely prince of bewitching beauty and tender age, playing around in a most jovial and carefree mood like is the wont of mischievous children of his age), the animals, the birds, the cows, the cowherds and their maids by the wayside got the fruit of their eyes (i.e. they felt exceptionally lucky, happy and fulfilled as if they had been rewarded by the Creator for they were able to see this magnificently charming sight with their own eyes till the latter was full of it).

Tulsidas says that everyone who watched the Lord subtly brought this image inside their hearts and sub-conscious minds and enshrined it reverentially there with due care as if to invite the Lord to enter their thatched huts and be seated on a soft seat made by spreading the delicate petals of the lotus flower![1] (5).

[[1]All those who saw the most enchanting image of Lord Ram and Laxman walking cheerfully and playing jovially as they wended their path alongside sage Vishwamitra to the latter's hermitage were absolutely mesmerized by the sight and did not content with just glancing at them once and going about their lives, but remained riveted to them. They stood transfixed, and realizing that sooner rather than later this sight would vanish from their view as the two princes proceeded ahead on their journey, all of the beholders—men, women, birds, animals et al—decided to permanently etch this image in their hearts and minds so that they could sub-consciously remember it for long long times to come.]

राग कान्हरा

(1/55)

सोहत मग मुनि सँग दोउ भाई।
तरुन तमाल चारु चंपक–छबि कबि–सुभाय कहि जाई।। 1।।
भूषन बसन अनुहरत अंगनि, उमगति सुन्दरताई।
बदन मनोज सरोज लोचननि रही है लुभाइ लुनाई।। 2।।
अंसनि धनु, सर कर–कमलनि, कटि कसे हैं निखंग बनाई।
सकल भुवन सोभा सरबस लघु लागति निरखि निकाई।। 3।।
महि मृदु पथ, घन छाँह, सुमन सुर बरष, पवन सुखदाई।
जल–थल–रुह फल, फूल, सलिल सब करत प्रेम पहुनाई।। 4।।
सकुच सभीत बिनीत साथ गुरु बोलनि–चलनि सुहाई।

खग–मृग–चित्र बिलोकत बिच–बिच, लसति ललित लरिकाई।। 5।।
बिद्या दई जानि बिद्यानिधि, बिद्यहु लही बड़ाई।
ख्याल दली ताडुका, देखि ऋषि देत असीस अघाई।। 6।।
बूझत प्रभु सुरसरि–प्रसंग कहि निज कुल कथा सुनाई।
गाधिसुवन–सनेह–सुख–संपति उर–आश्रम न समाई।। 7।।
बनबासी बटु, जती, जोगि–जन साधु–सिद्ध–समुदाई।
पूजत पेखि प्रीति पुलकत तनु नयन लाभ लुटि पाई।। 8।।
मख राख्यो खलदल दलि भुजबल, बाजत बिबुध बधाई।
नित पथ–चरित–सहित तुलसी–चित बसत लखन रघुराई।। 9।।

rāga kānharā

(1/55)

sōhata maga muni saṁga dō'u bhā'ī.
taruna tamāla cāru campaka-chabi kabi-subhāya kahi jā'ī.. 1..
bhūṣana basana anuharata aṅgani, umagati sundaratā'ī.
badana manōja sarōja lōcanani rahī hai lubhā'i lunā'ī.. 2..
ansani dhanu, sara kara-kamalani, kaṭi kasē haiṁ nikhaṅga banā'ī.
sakala bhuvana sōbhā sarabasa laghu lāgati nirakhi nikā'ī.. 3..
mahi mṛdu patha, ghana chāṁha, sumana sura baraṣa, pavana sukhadā'ī.
jala-thala-ruha phala, phūla, salila saba karata prēma pahunā'ī.. 4..
sakuca sabhīta binīta sātha guru bōlani-calani suhā'ī.
khaga-mrga-citra bilōkata bica-bica, lasati lalita larikā'ī.. 5..
bidyā da'ī jāni bidyānidhi, bidyahu lahī baṛā'ī.
khyāla dalī tāḍukā, dēkhi ṛṣi dēta asīsa aghā'ī.. 6..
būjhata prabhu surasari-prasaṅga kahi nija kula kathā sunā'ī.
gādhisuvana-sanēha-sukha-sampati ura-āśrama na samā'ī.. 7..
banabāsī baṭu, jatī, jōgi-jana sādhu-sid'dha-samudā'ī.
pūjata pēkhi prīti pulakata tanu nayana lābha luṭi pā'ī.. 8..
makha rākhyō khaladala dali bhujabala, bājata bibudha badhā'ī.
nita patha-carita-sahita tulasī-cita basata lakhana raghurā'ī.. 9..

The Charming & Splendid Portrait of Ram-Laxman
with Vishwamitra-4

Verse no. 1/55—The sight of the two brothers walking alongside sage Vishwamitra looks magnificent and marvelous on the road. As a poet, one can compare the young bodies of the brothers to a young Tamaal tree (the black catechu plant; or an evergreen tree called *Xanthocynus Epictorious*) and the Champak (Magnolia) plant (1).

The Lord's garments and ornaments are befitting them (are in accordance or consonant with the beauty of their bodies). Glamour seems to effuse or spill over from them as if the combined beauty, charm and attractiveness of Kamdeo/cupid and the lotus flower have taken permanent residence in their faces and eyes respectively[1] (1).

[[1]That is, their bodies are as charming and attractive as that of Kamdeo/cupid, the patron deity of beauty and charm, and the bewitching beauty of their eyes is like that of the lotus flower which the poets cite as the most apt metaphor for this characteristic feature.] (2).

There is a bow slung on his (Sri Ram's) shoulder, an arrow is held in his hand, and a quiver has been tied properly around his waist. All the glamour, magnificence, pomp, pageantry and beauty of all the fourteen Bhuvans (realms of the universe)[2] appear negligible or most humble when compared with that of the Lord's (3).

[[2]The 14 Bhuvans: see verse no. 1/6.]

As the trio (Lord Ram, his brother Laxman, and sage Vishwamitra) walk on the forest-and-country path to the hermitage of the sage, the earth provides a soft path, the clouds give shade, the Gods shower flowers, and the breeze blows comfortably and pleasantly (so that their journey on foot is made very pleasant and enjoyable)[3].

The flowers and the fruits which grow either on the land or in the water are eagerly waiting for the Lord's passage and welcoming him with a warm welcome. All sorts of water bodies (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams etc.) too are as eager and welcoming for the Lord[4] (4).

[[3]Refer: Baal Kand, verse no. 1/53, stanza no. 3 herein above.

[4]The meaning is clear—Wherever the Lord goes he finds flowers of all imaginable varieties and sizes and colours in full bloom and spreading their sweet and pleasant fragrance throughout the path to be followed by the Lord as a humble gesture on their part to celebrate the occasion of the Lord's journey amidst them and to offer welcome and honour to him in the way they knew best. The flower which would be honoured by the Lord by his fleeting glance and attention for all its beauty and charm and fragrance and colour would shame even the Lotus flower which prides itself as the one always cited by poets to say how large and pleasant the eyes of the Lord are. Therefore, all the flowers bloom in all imaginable colours and emanating all the hues of sweetness of fragrance and pleasantness of aromas to show the Lord how happy and exhilarated they are to find him in their midst, and as a silent gesture declaring—"Well come thou our Lord with the warmest of welcome! Thine presence amongst are midst has given us the blessedness that would be the envy of all others."

The fruits of the choicest varieties had all ripened, making themselves temptingly sweet and succulent and most delectable in taste as if they were eager to offer themselves in the service of Lord Ram and afford refreshment to the Lord as he wended his path in the forest. The fruits become as sweet and ripe as they could ever become with the hope that they would be the fortunate ones to be chosen by the divine Lord to taste and refresh himself, and per chance even say a nice word about them which would be treasured by them for generations and would elevate them to an exalted pedestal amongst their peers.

The trees covered themselves with thick foliage and branches laden with flowers and fruits and made all the more pleasant and tempting with chirping birds

and delightful insects and buzzing bees making them their habitat, and these trees effused the sweetest of aroma like the kindest of sandalwood, ambergris, lign-aloe etc. to give joy to the Lord and invite him to rest under their shade for a while and bless them thus. The tree under which Lord Ram, Laxman and sage Vishwamtira would stand and rest for a while would be proud to shame even the all wish-fulfilling tree known as Kalpa Tree of the Gods in heaven, and acquire the respect and acclaim which even the latter lacketh.

The water of lakes and rivers etc. became clear as crystal, pristine pure, rejuvenating and cool, expecting that the Lord would dip himself in their waters. There was a virtual competition between them to be one better than the rest in the hope that the Lord would select it over the others to jump in and refresh himself. Should Lord Ram and Laxman touch these water bodies, the latter would feel exceedingly honoured and put to shame even the pride of river Ganges which prides itself as being a holy river by the virtue of having its origin in the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. These water bodies would stand up and proclaim that they are more fortunate and privileged than Ganges because, for one, the latter had never had the opportunity to touch the feet of the Lord once it emerged from the Lord's feet and moved down to earth, and second inasmuch as that the Lord seems to have decided to bestow holiness and divine powers to these humble water bodies also so as to remove the sense of pride of Ganges as being the 'only one to have the holiness granted to it by the virtue of touch of the Lord's holy feet'.

In other words, all the entities of the forest did their level best to show their respect and honour to Lord Ram and serve him cheerfully in the best way they individually and collectively could, in the most warmest and affectionate of manner.

And the magical part is that the Lord obliges them all—he plucks the flowers and kisses them; he climbs trees to take the fruits to eat them; he dashes off to the stream and plunges in its water. The normally turbid, algae infested water of ponds too became crystal clear and potable. If we read the earlier verse and conjoin it with this verse, the scene is most heart-touching and enthralling for the mind of even the sternest and the dispassionate kind.]

The Lord's hesitant, shy and abashed demeanours[5], his polite and sweet speech and words (the way he talks), his majestic gait and nimble steps (as he walks), his sense of fear that he ought not do anything that would annoy the sage, and his overall behaviour of respectful humility and submissiveness before the Guru[6] (sage Vishwamitra)—all of them combine to portray a picture of the Lord as being most careful and respectful and obedient and diligent in observing etiquette and good manners with respect to sage Vishwamitra.

When the Lord (Sri Ram) stops here and there to gaze at different varieties of birds and animals on the way, the endearing child-like innocent expression on his face, his demeanours and his amazement at the fascinating sights make him look very charming and pleasant to behold (5).

[[5]Lord Ram is shy and feels abashed because all eyes are fixed on him. A child would naturally feel self-conscious in this situation. Then again, the Lord felt very odd that he has to act out his role as a child even though he is the Father of Creation and the universal Supreme Lord of it. What a funny fate!

[6]Sage Vishwamitra is called a 'Guru', literally meaning a teacher, because he had taught Lord Ram many secret skills and the art of invoking mystical weapons—

refer verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 6 herein above, and stanza no. 6 of the present verse no. 1/55 herein below.]

Thereafter, inspite of knowing Lord Ram to be a treasury of all sorts of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity, skills and expertise, the Guru still preferred to impart knowledge to him (Sri Ram) in a formal way[7].

Meanwhile, the virtues of knowledge, wisdom, discretion and expertise of all kinds (known as 'Vidya') got honour and fame and acceptance by the virtue of their being accepted by (or being considered worthy of acceptance by) Lord Sri Ram.

Then, he (Lord Ram) playfully (i.e. without any effort) slayed the demoness Tadka, seeing which the sage liberally blessed him[8] (6).

[[7]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 6 herein above; and Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 209 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8.

[8]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 6 herein above; and Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precedes Doha no. 209.]

When the Lord enquired about the story behind river Gange's descent on the earth, the sage narrated that story along with the entire story of his (Raghu's) clan[9].

At this time, Vishwamitra's wealth of happiness, bliss, joy and delight as well as love and affection for the Lord could not accommodate itself in his hermitage represented by his heart[10]. (7).

[*[9]See note appended at the end of this verse.

[10]While narrating these stories about river Ganges and Raghu's clan, the sage was ecstatic and so overjoyed that happiness overflowed from his mind and heart. The sage was extremely thrilled and excited as if he has found the nectar for which the most enlightened of sages and seers had spent their entire lives doing Tapa (severe penances and austerities), Japa (constant repetition of a holy formula), Yoga (meditation) and Samadhi (state of trance obtained in higher stages of meditation).]

The Brahmacharis (celibates; here meaning students of the sage), Sanyasis (those who have renounced the world), Yogis (ascetics), Sadhus (saints, hermits, sages, seers—those who were pious and holy) and hordes of Siddhas (mystics; those who had attained or possessed mystical powers) who lived in the forest became bodily thrilled when they happened to see the Lord in their midst. They felt that their eyes have been amply rewarded when they saw the divine sight of the Lord amongst them. Verily, all were full of exceeding wonderment and marveled with extreme marvel at the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have the Lord of the World amongst their humble selves! (8).

That the Lord has used the strength of his arms to vanquish and crush the evil ones (i.e. the demons) and has protected the Yagya (fire sacrifice) was enough reason for the Gods to sing adulatory songs in honour of the Lord, songs that were meant to celebrate and honour the good tidings and auspicious events of the time.

Tulsidas avers that the image of Lord Sri Ram and Laxman on the road (to Vishwamitra's hermitage and thereafter to Janakpur), as well as their enchanting activities en-route, eternally resides in his (Tulsidas') mind and heart. [The saint-poet asserts that this imagery of the Lord is permanently etched in his memory and heart for all times to come.] (9).

[Note--*[9]The story of river Ganges and its relation with the race of king Raghu is as follows:

The glory of River Ganges, the 'River of Gods', has been sung by Goswami Tulsidas in (i) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 17-20; (ii) Kavitawli, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 145-147; and (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 212.

The story of the origin of the holy river Ganges is narrated in *Srimad Bhagwat Mahapuran,* Skandha 5, Canto 17, verse nos. 1-10.

It was contained in the Kamandalu (water pot) of Brahma, the creator. This is said in *Srimad Bhagwat Mahapuran*, Skandha 8, Canto 21, verse no. 4.

Then, its acceptance on the head of Lord Shiva where it was locked in the mat of thick hairs on the Lord's head is narrated in *Valmiki's Ramayan*, Baal Kand, Canto 42, verse nos. 23-25, and Canto 43, verse no. 1.

The story of why Bhagirath did Tapa to bring Ganges upon the earth is narrated in detail in *Valmiki's Ramayan*, Baal Kand, Sarga 38—44.

There is another version narrated in *Padma Puran, Sristhi Khand.* Here, sage Veda Vyas, who was narrating the Puran to Brahmin audience, told the story of the origin and descent upon the earth of the holy river Ganges in detail when they asked him about it.

Briefly, the story of river Ganges is this: When Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Lord Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, to crush the haughtiness of king Bali and prevent him from declaring himself the emperor of the entire universe, the Lord had expended his left foot so much that its toe nail had ruptured the outer shell of the galaxy, creating a hole. The inter-galactic river flowing outside the known galaxy gushed in through this hole to fill the whole space. When this celestial river touched the feet of Lord Vishnu, it turned reddish due to the colour of the Lord's feet which are like the red or pink lotus. Because it had its origin from the foot of Lord Vishnu, the primary name of river Ganges was 'Bhawatpadi'. ['Bhagwat' = Lord Vishnu; 'Padi' = from foot.]

After the passage of thousands of Yugas (eras), it established itself in the northern edge of the heaven where the Polar Star is situated. This area is known as 'Vishnu-pad'. It is here that the Lord's great devotee Dhruv accepts the water of this holy river as sanctified water, and the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-rishis hold it in the lock of hairs on their head. Meanwhile, when the celestial water poured in from the hole in the galaxy, the creator Brahma was alarmed because he realised that its fierce currents would sweep everything away, both in the heaven as well as on the earth where it descended to wash the feet of Lord Vaaman immediately after its entrance in the habitable galaxy. So Brahma used his Kamandalu, the water pot, to contain river Ganges within it.

From the summit of the heaven, i.e. from its northern fringes, Ganges cascaded down to the abode of the Moon God, went past it and fell on the summit of Mt. Meru (the golden mountain where the Gods live, including their king Indra) which is situated within the realm of Brahma, the creator.

From there it divides into four branches—named Sita, Alaknanda, Chakchu and Bhadra.

Out of these, Sita descends from Brahma-puri to the summit of Mt. Kesaraachal, then goes further down and falls upon the summit of Mt. Gandha-maadan, and from there flows through the area known as Bhadraa-shwa-varsha to finally fall into the salty ocean in the east.

The second branch Alkananda falls to the south of Brahma-puri, goes past countless summits of mountains to finally arrive at the summit of Mt. Hemkut. From there, it cascades down with tremendous speed and force down upon the plains of India (knon as Bharat-varsha). Then it traverses the length of the land to fall and merge with the ocean in the south.

Chakchu, the third branch, reaches the summit of Mt. Malyawaan, and from there it flows through the area known as Ketumal-varsha, heading in the western direction to finally fall in the sour ocean in the west.

The fourth branch, Bhadra, falls from the summit of Mt Meru and descends to its north. Falling from one mountain upon another, it reaches the summit of Mt. Sringa-waan. From there it flows through the area of the land known as Kuru-desh to finally fall in the northern ocean.

This river is known as the River of Gods or river Gangaa. This is the origin of the river in its celestial form. Refer: Smd. Bhagwat, 5/17/1-9.

When Lord Vaaman's feet were being washed as part of the ritual to honour the guest Brahmin by king Vaaman, Brahma the creator had collected this water in his Kamandalu (water pot) because it was very holy. Refer. Smd. Bhagwat, 8/21/4.

Later on, when king Bhagirath had done severe Tapa (penance) to bring this holy river on the earth so that his ancestors who lay dead due to the curse of sage Kapil could be revived, Brahma told him that he must first prepare Lord Shiva to accept river Ganges on his head because when the river descends from heaven upon earth, it will do so with such tremendous force that the earth would not be able to bear it and would split into two. So Bhagirath did Tapa to please Lord Shiva who agreed to accept the cascading river on the lock of hairs on his head. Then he will gradually allow to let it down upon the plains is a stream that lacks the force by which the river falls thousands of miles from heaven. Refer: Valmiki Ramayan, 1/42/23-25, and 1/43/1.

The story of why Bhagirath did Tapa to bring Ganges upon the earth is narrated in detail in Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, Sarga 38—44.

Briefly this part of the story is as follows: King Sagar had done a great horse sacrifice known as 'Ashwamedh Yagya'. This sacrificial horse was stolen by Indra, the king of Gods who was renowned for his mischief and jealous nature, in the guise of a demon. The reason was that king Sagar had already done 99 such sacrifices, and if he successfully completed this 100th sacrifice, he would have become eligible for the stature of Indra. This Indra could not tolerate.

Now, king Sagar ordered his sixty thousand sons to go and find the horse. They dug up the entire earth in search of the horse, pursuing Indra relentlessly. During the process all the creatures who lived on the earth suffered immensely because their homes were demolished and they were uprooted from their natural habitats. This was what Indra wanted—to instigate Sagar to commit some sort of blunder that would invite the wrath of the creatures and the Brahmins, thereby inviting his own ruin. The Gods rushed to their patriach Brahma, complaining about the developments. Brahma comforted them that they should not worry because Lord Vishnu who is responsible for the welfare of the creation would certainly do something to rectify the damage and punish the perpetrator.

Meanwhile, even after searching the earth the sons could not find the sacrificial horse. When they reported this to their father, king Sagar, he strongly rebuked them and ordered them to go back and search once again. This time around, they dug up the subterranean world. Ultimately, they reached the hermitage of sage Kapil on the shore of the eastern ocean. The mischievous Indra had hidden the horse there, but sage Kapil had no idea that it was a stolen sacrificial horse. So, when Sagar's sons saw the horse there, they concluded that it was stolen by the sage, and they haughtily challenged him. The sage was very angry, and he cursed them, reducing them to ashes.

When these sixty thousand sons did not return even after a long time, king Sagar ordered his grandson Anshumaan to go and find out what had happened. Anshumaan followed the path taken by his uncles, and finally reached the place where he saw their ashes in a huge mound. Lamenting and grieving, he wanted to perform their last rites. He also found the horse grazing nearby. For doing the last rites he needed water.

Just at that time, Lord Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu), who was the maternal uncle of his own uncles, came there and told Anshumaan that ordinary water won't liberate his uncles because they were reduced to ashes by the curse of a great sage named Kapil. For this, the water of the holy river Ganges is needed. So he must go and make an effort to bring Ganges to earth so that its water can flow over the ashes and provide your uncles deliverance. Meanwhile, he should take the sacficial horse and go home to his grandfather.

King Sagar completed his sacrifice and returned to his capital. He did not know how to bring the celestial river of Gods to earth, and he died without accomplishing the task. After his death, Anshumaan ascended the throne. His son was king Dilip. Anshumaan abdicated the throne in favour of his son and went to the Himalayas to do severe Tapa, and died there.

King Dilip had a son named Bhagirath. Dilip did many sacrifices in order to bring river Ganges to earth so that his ancestor's souls could find deliverance, but failed. Worried and frustrated he fell sick and died.

Meanwhile, Bhagirath had no sons, but he still was determined to bring Ganges to earth and fulfill the long cherished desire of his father, grandfather and great grandfather. So he handed over the reins of the kingdom to his wise ministers and went to do the severest form of Tapa one can imagine of. His determination and noble resolve pleased Brahma, the creator, who revealed himself before him and asked him to request for a boon. Bhagirath replied that if Brahma really wants to grant him something then he should bless him that he be able to bring Ganges to earth and wash his ancestors with its holy water so that they can find deliverance. Braham advised him that he must please Lord Shiva and request him to accept the river on his head prior to its reaching the surface of the earth—because if the river fell directly upon the earth it would split the latter into two with its tremendous force.

So, Bhagirath prayed to Shiva who was more than willing to accept Ganges on his head because the Lord knew that the river had its origin in the foot of Lord Vishnu. As soon as Shiva gave his consent to bear the river on his head, Brahma let his Kamandalu tilt and thus the mighty river Ganges came cascading down with a thunderous force to land upon the matted hairs of Lord Shiva. Ganges was very proud of its own origin and powers, so it thought that it will push Shiva to the under-world by its sheer force. Shiva wanted to teach Ganges a lesson not to be haughty, so the Lord contained the might of the swirling waters of the haughty Ganges in the lock of hairs on his head so much so that the river almost got lost amidst its huge crevices.

Bhagirath was confounded: after all the efforts made by him, the river still failed to reach the ground. So he did Tapa again to please Lord Shiva and ask him to allow Ganges to fall down to earth. Pleased with his sincerity and devotion, Lord Shiva allowed a thin stream of Ganges to escape from his head and fall in the 'Bindu-sarovar (lake)'. Immediately upon reaching this lake, Ganges branched off into seven streams. The seventh stream followed king Bhagirath who lead its path on a chariot to the spot where the ashes of his ancestors lay. As soon as the holy water of the Ganges touched the ashes, the souls of the sixty thousand sons of king Sagar found liberation and deliverance.

At that time, Brahma appeared and blessed Bhagirath that henceforth Ganges would be deemed to be his daughter and bear his name. It would be known by three names—viz. 'Tripatha-gaa', 'Dibyaa' and 'Bhagirathi'. Hence, the holy river Ganges also came to be known as 'Bhagirathi', the daughter of Bhagirath. Since it flows in the whole of the three worlds, the heaven, the earth and the subterranean world, it is known as 'Tripatha-gaa'—that which flows on three paths. And since it is a holy and divine river, it is known as 'Dibya'—the divine and holy one.

There is another version narrated in *Padma Puran, Sristhi Khand.* Here, sage Veda Vyas, who was narrating the Puran to Brahmin audience, told the story of the origin

and descent upon the earth of the holy river Ganges in detail when they asked him about it. Briefly this story is as follows:

Veda Vyas said—'In some ancient time, when sage Narad asked Brahma how creation came into being, Brahma told him that at the time of creation, he had requested the Paraa-Prakriti, the primary-primordial Mother Nature, to become the primary cause of creation. Brahma told her that he would use her to create everything.

Hearing this, the Paraa-Prakriti divided herself into seven forms. These seven forms are the following—(i) Gayatri (from which were produced all the Vedas, Swasti, Swaha, Swadha, and Diksha—i.e. all things related to the fire sacrifice), (ii) Vaag-devi or Saraswati, the goddess of speech and knowledge, through whom knowledge and scpriptures spread, (iii) Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity that was needed to sustain and take care of the needs of the creation), (iv) Uma (the consort of Lord Shiva and said to be Mother Goddess from whom all other Gods and Goddesses originated; she is also the one who became instrumental in spread of knowledge), (v) Shakti-beeja (cosmic dynamic energy that gives all the Mantras their inherent mystical powers and is responsible for injecting vitality, energy and force into this creation), (vi) Tapaswini (the patron goddess or the cosmic force overlooking Tapa—austerity and penances), (vii) and Dharma-dravaa (the inherent powers of Dharma—everything that is in accordance to the laws of auspiciousness, righteousnss, probity, propriety, ethics and morality).

Brahma thought that the last form, i.e. 'Dharma-dravaa', was the best of the seven forms, and since it was in a liquid form ('Dravaa' = liquid), he stored it into his Kamandalu (water pot).

Now, during the Lord's incarnation as Vaaman (the dwarf mendicant) when he had spread his left foot to measure the entire universe during the sacrifice of king Bali, this foot ruptured the sky and the heaven and appeared before Brahma. It was then that he washed the Lord's holy foot with the water that he had stored in his Kamandalu at the time of creation.

After the Lord's holy foot had been washed, this water fell on Mt. Hemkut. From there this water reached Lord Shiva who immediately placed it on his head because he realised it to be sanctified and holy as it had been used to wash the foot of Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Lord Vaaman. So, this water now was established on the thick lock of hairs on the head of Lord Shiva.

Later on when king Bhagirath had done severe Tapa with the intention of bringing this holy river on earth so that his dead ancestors could be revived and their souls could find peace, he had prayed to Lord Shiva to let the Ganges come down upon the earth. The Lord allowed its stream to descend upon the earth and follow Bhagirath across the land to the place where his ancestors lay dead. This is how the holy river descended upon earth and traversed eastwards following Bhagirath to finally merge into the ocean.

According to *Valmiki Ramayan*, Ganga was the elder daughter of Himwan, the king of the mountains, and his wife Maina. Maina was the daughter of Mt. Sumeru. The Gods took her to heaven because a number of divine deeds were destined to be dependent upon her. Refer: Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, Sarga, 35, verse nos. 13-18.

In Tulsidas' book *Kavitawali*, Uttar Kand, verse no. 146, line no. 3 it is said that the "Supreme Lord of the world had transformed himself in the form of the water of the holy River Ganges". Now, what does it signify? The answer is as follows—

The Supreme Lord thought that he must find out a way so that even the humblest and the lowliest of creatures, humans and non-humans, can have easy access to a means whereby they can wash off their sins and find peace and a way to reach heaven. To be able to worship the Lord God in any form described in the honourable scriptures—whether it is any of the countless manifested forms that are usually known as an incarnation or an image of the Lord, the 'Saguna form', or an un-

manifested form that is not visible because it is extremely subtle and sublime though it is omnipresent and all-pervading, known as the 'Nirguna form'—may not be possible for every single living being of this world. Say for instance, an animal can't be expected to read the scriptures, perform religious duties, or worship any form of the Lord in the way the word 'worship' is commonly understood to mean by even the remotest stretch of one's imagination. But the Atma, the soul of all the creatures yearn for peace and liberation and salvation. So should the 'Lord of All' not leave an option for such unfortunate off-springs of his as these humble animals, or for that matter, even humans who are not fortunate enough to obtain liberation and deliverance from their sins by the other conventional methods? Surely the answer is 'yes', the Lord must provide something for these unfortunate members of creation.
And the solution that the Lord decided upon was to transfer a portion of his grace upon the earth in the form of the 'Holy Waters of River Ganges'—so that even the dumb, the deaf and the handicapped could benefit from the Lord's benevolence and grace, and are not deprived of this privilege!]

(1 / 56)

मंजुल मंगलमय नृप–ढोटा।
मुनि, मुनितिय, मुनिसिसु बिलोकि कहैं मधुर मनोहर जोटा।। 1।।
नाम–रूप–अनुरूप बेष बय, राम लखन लाल लोने।
इन्हतें लही है मानो घन–दामिनि दुति मनसिज, मरकत, सोने।। 2।।
चरनसरोज, पीतपट, कटितट, तून–तीर–धनुधारी।
केहरिकंध काम–करि–करवर बिपुल बाहु, बल भारी।। 3।।
दूषन–रहित समय सम भूषन पाइ सुअंगनि सोहैं।
नव–राजीव–नयन, पूरन बिधुबदन मदन मन मोहैं।। 4।।
सिरनि सिखंड, सुमन–दल–मंडन बाल सुभाय बनाये।
केलि–अंक तनु–रेनुपंक जनु प्रगटत चरित चोराये।। 5।।
मख राखिबे लागि दसरथ सों माँगि आश्रमहि आने।
प्रेम पूजि पाहुने प्रानप्रिय गाधिसुवन सनमाने।। 6।।
साधन–फल साधक सिद्धनिके, लोचन–फल सबहीके।
सकल सुकृत–फल, मातु–पिताके, जीवन–धन तुलसीके।। 7।।

(1/56)

manjula maṅgalamaya nr̥pa-ḍhōṭā.
muni, munitiya, munisisu bilōki kahaiṁ madhura manōhara jōṭā.. 1..
nāma-rūpa-anurūpa bēṣa baya, rāma lakhana lāla lōnē.
inhatēṁ lahī hai mānō ghana-dāmini duti manasija, marakata, sōnē.. 2..
caranasarōja, pītapaṭa, kaṭitaṭa, tūna-tīra-dhanudhārī.
kēharikandha kāma-kari-karavara bipula bāhu, bala bhārī.. 3..
dūṣana-rahita samaya sama bhūṣana pā'i su'aṅgani sōhaiṁ.
nava-rājīva-nayana, pūrana bidhubadana madana mana mōhaiṁ.. 4..
sirani sikhaṇḍa, sumana-dala-maṇḍana bāla subhāya banāyē.
kēli-aṅka tanu-rēnupaṅka janu pragaṭata carita cōrāyē.. 5..
makha rākhibē lāgi dasaratha sōṁ mām̆gi āśramahi ānē.
prēma pūji pāhunē prānapriya gādhisuvana sanamānē.. 6..

sādhana-phala sādhaka sid'dhanikē, lōcana-phala sabahīkē.
sakala sukr̥ta-phala, mātu-pitākē, jīvana-dhana tulasīkē.. 7..

The Charming & Splendid Portrait of Ram-Laxman with Vishwamitra-5

Verse no. 1/56—Both the princes (Sri Ram and Laxman) are most handsome, charming and auspicious to behold. The sages, their wives and their children[1] say this on seeing them—'This pair is very pleasant, enchanting and charming.' (1).

[[1]This shows that in ancient times, sages and seers who lived in hermitages in forests had families. Their hermitages served three main functions: (i) they helped these pious souls to pursue their spiritual objectives without the distraction and diversion inherent in noisy populated places such as towns and cities and bigger villages, (ii) they served as schools and seminaries where students assembled from distance places to study like we have modern boarding schools, and (iii) they doubled up as monasteries or abbeys where monks and hermits and sages and seers gathered together and lived a religious way of life under the supervision of one senior monk who was like an Abbot or a Pontiff.

Usually, a very senior sage or seer would have a large group of disciples at his hermitage who would graduate and spread out into the world to establish their own places at different corners of the world, inheriting the name of the primary teacher and using it as sort of their parental name or surname, thereby establishing a lineage of sages and seers bearing the name of the original teacher as if he were their forefather and patriarch. This gave them a unique identity and respect because the name of the sage or seer whose name they adopted as their surname or parental name was well known, respected and established in the society and even amongst his peers.]

The sight of the two brothers, Lord Sri Ram and his younger sibling Laxman, is exceptionally attractive and charming in accordance with their age, personality and name[2].

It appears that (dark, rain-bearing) clouds and lightening, Kamdeo/cupid as well as the Markat-Mani (emerald), and the most precious of materials such as Gold—all have derived their value, magnificence, glamour, radiance, dazzle and splendour from them[3] (2).

[[2]By this time the fame of the two brothers had spread to the distant corners of the realm as they were 'princes of a great kingdom, and not ordinary sons born in some regular household', and everyone was aware of their exceptional charm and beauty. So, when the people of the wayside hamlets and the sages and their families and disciples beheld the two brothers for the first time they found them to be a perfect match to their expectations.

The people had heard of the slaying of Tadka, and they had also heard that the mighty and able sage Vishwamitra, who was confounded by the demons' tyranny, had zeroed down on Lord Ram and Laxman to provide him relief. So all who heard of these tidings concluded that there surely must be something special and mystical with the two princes. The spectular glory of the Lord had preceded him and everyone who heard of it had become curious to learn more about the brothers. So when the tidings came that they are arriving on their way to the sage's place, everyone rushed out to witness this unique sight first hand as no one liked it to let it slip by.

And indeed what they beheld even defied their imagination: the beauty and comliness of the two brothers surpassed all notions of beauty and charm that the beholders had ever imagined of. They were more enthralling than what the people had expected to behold. But nevertheless, the sight of the two brothers stood the test of beauty and charm.

[3]Here, since Lord Ram is of a dark complexion he is compared to the dark rain-bearing cloud, and Laxman being of a light complexion is likened to the brilliance of lightening. The three entities mentioned here, i.e. Kamdeo, Markat Mani and Gold, also seem to have derived their magnificence and grandeur by borrowing it from the two brothers.]

Their feet are like the lotus, there is Pitambar wrapped around their waists, and they are the bearers of a bow, an arrow and a quiver. Their shoulders resemble that of a lion (as it is wide, muscular and strong), while their arms are like the trunk of Kamdeo's elephant—i.e. elegant, majestic, muscular, long, robust, sturdy and strong (3).

The ornaments that are worn by them, ornaments which are suitable for their age and circumstances and are in accordance with the times ahead[4], look more glamorous and splendid by the virtue of them adorning the body of the two brothers[5].

Their lotus-like eyes and face as if it were the full moon appear to be stealing the mind of Kamdeo/cupid[6] (4).

[[4]The two brothers had by this time grown up. So the ornaments that they wore were chosen to suit princes of their age. Then, they were going on a journey on foot which would take them through forests and sparsely populated areas of the countryside where there was the danger of robbers and thugs. Finally, they would be surrounded by sages and young Brahmcharis or student-disciples of sage Vishwamitra who were accustomed to living a life of austerity and abstinence. It would therefore be very odd, ill-advised and unbehoving for noble princes to live in ostentatious decorative gear, wearing fine ornaments of priceless value, in this environment where simplicity, austerity and abstinence from pretentious behaviour is the norm. They were on a mission to serve a great sage, and not to show-off the wealth of their kingdom. It was not an occasion for royal pomp and pageantry, but of sobriety and restraint. When faced with the task they were going to accomplish, which was to slay the demons, the need of the hour and time was possession of such qualities as valour, strength, fearlessness, bravery and courage, and not to behave like a tender-skinned, delicate and pampered prince who would turn pale even at the thought of stepping on the ground without footwear.

[5]Now therefore the ornaments that Lord Ram and Laxman wore were of the minimal quantity and value, just enough to distinguish them amongst the folks as being princes of the realm, and also to blend well with the boys with whom they would have to pass their days at the hermitage of sage Vishwamitra. Refer stanza no. 5 herein below where it is expressly stated that "they had on their heads peacock feathers and flowers tucked in the hair by way of ornaments". These were the ordinary decorative things used by ordinary boys in the villages and the hamlets in the countryside, and by young boys who lived in the hermitages of sages, more as playthings and a means of diversion from the monotony of life than for any real worth in terms of value and price.

Verily, whatever they wore made no difference to their charm and splendid personality. In fact, the ornaments acquired their value and importance by the virtue

of them being worn by the two brothers. If the same ornaments were worn by others, or were locked up the king's treasury, they would have been worthless, but now these ornaments acquired an indentity of their own and they got recognition and fame because anyone who saw the two brothers also saw them wearing these ornaments, and not those ornaments that were left behind by the brothers in the royal palace or treasury.

For instance, if at that time Lord Ram was wearing a simple one-strand pearl necklace and nothing else then it would be the one and the only one ornament that would be permanently etched in the memory of all the bystanders who were watching the Lord, and not, say, the garland of diamonds or wristbands of the most precious of gems or the golden waistband and a tiara of the most precious crystal that the Lord left behind in Ayodhya at the time of departure with sage Vishwamitra.

[6]Even Kamdeo/cupid, who himself was exceedingly charming and lovely to behold, being the patron god of beauty, enchantment and passion, seems to be in thrall and captivated by the magnificent sight of the stupendous beauty and astounding charm and exceedingly splendid view of the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, as they wended their way to the hermitage of sage Vishwamitra. If this was the state of affairs with Kamdeo, one can well imagine the effect the most charming sight of the two brothers had had on others.]

Behaving like children, or in a way that is quite natural with children of their age, they have decorated their heads with peacock feathers and flower petals, while the dust and grime that cover their bodies reveal their frolicking around and playful activities that they engaged themselves in on the sly in an attempt to avoid the eyes of the sage (Vishwamitra)[7] (5).

[[7]The two boys wanted to thoroughly enjoy the sights and sounds of the countryside and the forest. As has been narrated in many of the foregoing verses, the playful activities of Lord Ram and Laxman as they wended their way through the forest is simply enchanting for the mind. They would plunge in water bodies, go after birds and butterflies, pluck leaves and flowers and run after animals, once standing standstill when they heard the unfamiliar sound of the forest and call of wild animal and then running behind deer and butterflies to catch them! On the one hand they were scared of annoying their guardian sage Vishwamitra, but on the other hand these childish temptations were too much for them to resist. The learned sage did realize this, and though he kept a vigilant eye so that no harm comes to the two brothers, he also silently allowed them a lot bit of freedom to enjoy themselves.

The sage was subtly enjoying this most enchanting sight himself. He was bored of being surrounded by young disciples in his hermitage who were trained to live a life of strict regime and discipline. After all, the sage was also a human being, and it was a natural urge in him to experience what pleasure there is in playing with children, something for which the great king Dasrath had yearned so much that he went to the extent of asking Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the world, for such an incredulous boon as having the Lord as his son instead of seeking emancipation and salvation for his soul. So sage Vishwamitra wondered what was so goodly, fascinating and charming in it, and yearned to experience the pleasure and bliss and solace for which Dasrath had sought this odd boon of asking the Lord to become his son!

And here was his opportunity to experience and fulfill his cherished dream. He knew that never again in life would he ever get this chance again—that the would watch mesmerized the Supreme Lord of creation playing right before his eyes with all his charming beauty at display, exhibiting so many artful gestures and heart-capturing

strategic moves that would hold even Kamdo/cupid enthralled as asserted in the foregoing stanza.

Therefore, the sage willingly turned a blind eye and allowed the two brothers freedom to do what they was their wont. After all, the sage also knew that no power in creation could and would ever cause any bit of harm Lord Ram and Laxman, and therefore it would be foolish on his part to act too wise and let go of this golden once-in-a-life time opportunity to watch the Supreme Being play like a child!

And what a great stage it was to watch this great maverick play of the Lord being staged! It was the pleasant background of a verdant forest rich in greenery, in trees, flowers, fruits, rivers, streams, rivulets, hillocks and mounds, small and big animals and birds who knew no fetters and were as free as these two children. The lucky sage had a virtual ring-side exclusive view of this play with nothing to distract and disturb and obstruct the view. He was like the ring-master of the circus who lorded over all that he beheld. Had he wanted, he could stop the two brothers from playing mischief like the ring-master who could stop his artistes midway from displaying their skills in the arena as soon as he wants. Verily, if king Dasrath was the lord of the royal palace and the city of Ayodhya where he had watched enthralled as Lord Ram and Laxman played merrily around a few days ago, here it was sage Vishwamitra who was the lord of the forest and enjoying the same bliss and happiness as was enjoyed by Dasrath, but with a better stage where pristine beauty of Mother Nature only added to the charm and grace as the Lord merrily played and joyously frolicked and jested with mirth unbound as he wended his way cheerfully to the sage's hermitage.

Indeed, what could sage Vishwamitra want more!]

By and by, sage Vishwamitra brought his dearer-than-life guests (pāhunē prānapriya)—whom he had asked as a boon or largesse from Dasrath in order to protect his fire sacrifice—to his hermitage.

Once there, the sage worshipped (i.e. formally welcomed and showed his greatest respect to) the two brothers with exceeding love and affection, and duly honoured them[8] (6).

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 209 also.

SageVishwamitra knew who Lord Sri Ram actually was—he was not an ordinary prince but the Lord of lords and the all-pervading, infinite, almighty Supreme Brahm. So the sage was overjoyed at having had this privilege of bringing Sri Ram to his hermitage as his guest-of-honour.

Another reason for showing special treatment to Lord Ram and Laxman once he reached his hermitage is that the sage realized that it was he who had desired of them and had gone to fetch the two brothers from their kingdom. They had not come to his place like his other ordinary students or disciples had, and even their father king Dasrath was reluctant to send them. So these two brothers had obliged him greatly by coming to his hermitage, and therefore they did deserve special treatment.]

He (Lord Sri Ram) represents the reward (fruit) of the different 'Saadhans' (i.e. means to attain emancipation and salvation such as various penances, austerities, vows, hardships etc. as prescribed in the scriptures) that are done by 'Saadhaks' (spiritual seekers) and 'Siddhas' (mystics). He is the One who makes everyone lucky that they have eyesight so that they can see the Lord personally and derive bliss and solace from this sight. He is an embodiment of all the good, noble and virtuous deeds of his parents, and verily he is the treasured wealth of Tulsdas' life (i.e. Tulsidas cannot

survive without this wealth as Lord Sri Ram is like the breath-of-life for him; the Lord is Tulsidas' life and soul) (7).

[Note—In Geetawali, Tulsidas has skipped the narration of Lord Ram and Laxman protecting sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice, and the consequential slaying of demon Subahu with his entire army and hitting another demon Marich with a tip-less arrow that did not kill the demon but flung him to a far off island in the middle of the ocean. Thereafter, the two brothers tarried in the sage's hermitage for some time at his request. Then news arrived from Janakpur that a great bow-breaking ceremony is being organized there by the kingdom's king, Janak, to select the most suitable suitor for his daughter to whom he would marry her. The sage asked the two brothers to come along with him so that they would enjoy the sights and sounds of this new kingdom and gain from this visit. This part of the story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precede Doha no. 210.]

अहल्योद्धार

राग सूहो

(1 / 57)

रामपद–पदुम–पराग परी।
ऋषितिय तुरत त्यागि पाहन–तनु छबिमय देह धरी।। 1।।
प्रबल पाप पति–साप दुसह दव दारुन जरनि जरी।
कृपासुधा सिंचि बिबुध–बेलि ज्यौं फिरि सुख–फरनि फरी।। 2।।
निगम–अगम मूरति महेस–मति–जुबति बराय बरी।
सोइ मूरति भइ जानि नयनपथ इकटकतें न टरी।। 3।।
बरनति हृदय सरूप, सील गुन प्रेम–प्रमोद–भरी।
तुलसिदास अस केहि आरतकी आरति प्रभु न हरी?।। 4।।

ahalyōd'dhāra

rāga sūhō

(1/57)

rāmapada-paduma-parāga parī.
ṛ̥sitiya turata tyāgi pāhana-tanu chabimaya dēha dharī.. 1..
prabala pāpa pati-sāpa dusaha dava dāruna jarani jarī.
kṛ̥pāsudhā siñci bibudha-bēli jyauṁ phiri sukha-pharani pharī.. 2..
nigama-agama mūrati mahēsa-mati-jubati barāya barī.
sō'i mūrati bha'i jāni nayanapatha ikaṭakatēṁ na ṭarī.. 3..
baranati hṛ̥daya sarūpa, sīla guna prēma-pramōda-bharī.
tulasidāsa asa kēhi āratakī ārati prabhu na harī?.. 4..

Verse no. 1/57—[The story of liberation of Ahilya, who was the wife of sage Gautam, has been narrated herein in Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/57—to 1/59. This story is also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-12 and Chanda line nos. 1-16 that precede Doha no. 211. She was liberated while the two brothers had accompanied sage Vishwamitra to Janakpur to attend the bow-breaking ceremony there.

It so happened that after Lord Ram and Laxman had jointly protected the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra, the sage politely requested them to tarry with him for some days. Meanwhile, news arrived from the kingdom of Janakpur that its king, named Janak, was organising a grand ceremony to marry his daughter named Sita to the most suitable suitor. Sage Vishwamitra wanted to visit it, and he took Lord Ram and Laxman for an excursion with him so that they would have some sort of diversion and more fun and entertainment. On the way to Janakpur they saw an abandoned hermitage with a large rock lying forlorn. Curious to know its history, Lord Ram enquired of the sage about it, whereby the sage told him the story of Ahilya and how she had been converted to stone with a caveat that one day she would be released of this curse when Lord Vishnu would touch her with his holy feet in his form as Lord Ram. Ahilya had suffered immensely and the time had come for her liberation. Hence, sage Vishwamitra asked Lord Ram to touch the stone with his foot. As soon as it was done, the stone metamorphosed into a divine lady who was none other but Ahilya in her pristine divine form. She offered her prayers of thanks to the Lord for her deliverance and went back to her husband sage Gautam.]

As soon as the dust of Lord Sri Ram's lotus-like feet touched (or fell) on the head of (stone-like) Ahilya[1], she immediately abandoned her form as a stone and assumed (or, reverted back to) her original beauteous form with a divine and purified body (1).

[[1]See note appended to this verse at its end which narrates a brief story of Ahilya.]

It appears that the Kalpa-creeper (celestial creeper) symbolizing Ahilya, which had been burning by the extreme heat (i.e. torment, anguish, sorrows faced by Ahilya) generated by the fierce curse of her husband due to her own sin (or errors, misdemeanour), has now been rejuvenated back to life and has regained its former glory after being watered by the elixir-like mercy and compassion of the Lord. Indeed, this creeper has once again bloomed and flourished with fruits of happiness, joy and bliss[2] (2).

[[2]Here, Ahilya is likened to the 'Kalpa-creeper' and the dust of Lord Ram's feet that fell on her to the 'sprinkling of the life giving water, the elixir of life, on her'—and the result was that the 'creeper' which had lay withered and dried up for ages suddenly found a new lease of life and thanked its benefactor Lord Ram with utmost thanks that could not be contained in words.]

Seeing the image of the Lord (Ram)—an image which is unimaginable and inaccessible even for the Vedas (the primary and the greatest of all the scriptures), and an image which was selected and accepted by the damsel representing Lord Shiva's discriminatory wisdom and intellect over all other divine forms of the Lord God[3]—coming her way, was within her sight and soon standing right in front of her, she

(Ahilya) became spellbound and benumbed, as if in a trance, and did not move her eyes from that sight of the Lord's image, so mesmerized was she (3).

[[3]Lord Shiva is called a 'Maha-deva', i.e. the Great God. He is deemed to be the wisest and most enlightened in the entire pantheon of Gods. He meditated and contemplated to find one single remedy for all spiritual needs, and concluded that it was the holy name of 'Ram'. So Shiva enshrined the Lord's form in his heart just as one enshrines a deity in a shrine. Then Shiva began to worship this deity (Lord Ram) by repeating his name—'Ram'. And he was amazed to discover that it gave him astounding bliss, beatitude and felicity; he found that not even Amrit, the heavenly elixir of eternity and blissful life could match this single word 'Ram'.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3, 7-8 that precede Doha no. 19; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108 etc.

Shiva had searched all the Vedas and weighed all the options and examined all the forms of Divinity and Holiness, and found no one matched 'Ram'. So, he adopted it as his magical charm for all his spiritual needs. Not only this, he henceforth used the divine name of Lord 'Ram' to liberate the soul of dying persons. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119.

Now therefore, when Ahilya saw the same Lord, i.e. Lord Ram, coming her way, she immediately realised that the time of her deliverance from the curse had come. What more could she want—the Lord whom the Vedas pursued but could not find, whom Lord Shiva selected as his revered deity after careful analysis—the same Lord was voluntarily coming to meet her!]

Thus, being overwhelmed with love, devotion and happiness, she mentally began to praise, adore and sing the Lord's beauty, magnificence, characters, virtues and qualities.

Tulsidas says that in the same way, which downtrodden, undergod, lowly, humble, meek and sinful one is there whose suffering, grief and misery have not been eliminated by the benevolent, magnanimous and beneficient Lord Ram. [In other words, there is no one who does not benefit from the mercy and compassion of Lord Ram no matter how lowly and down he is.] (4).

[Note—[1]The story of "Ahilya" in brief is as follows—She was the devout and chaste wife of sage Gautam. According to legend, once it so happened that Indra, the lustful king of Gods, fell prey to the beauty of Ahilya, and attempted to outrage her modesty by assuming the form of her husband while the sage had gone out to the river to attend to his daily chores. When the sage returned, Indra tried to escape from the hermitage, but the sage caught him red-handed. So outraged was the sage that he cursed both his chaste wife Ahilya as well as the culprit Indra. He cursed Ahilya that she would become a stone. But when he found out that Indra, the king of Gods, was the real culprit who had deceitfully cheated his wife of her loyalty towards her husband, and that Ahilya was not to be blamed, the sage cursed Indra vehemently. Gautam realised that Indra had been so overcome with a rage of passion that he forgot all senses of ethics, propriety and probity and had assumed the form of the sage to cheat Ahilya. So the sage had then blessed her that when Lord Vishnu incarnated on the earth as Sri Ram, he would visit her place and would touch her with the holy dust of his feet, at which she will be absolved of her sins and her curse, and will resume her original form and come back to heaven. The sage promised her that after her penances and repentance, when she will be purified by Sri Ram's holy feet, he will accept her back as his wife.

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

The story of Ahilya's liberation is narrated by Goswami Tulsidas in—(a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha 211; (b) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 57-60; (c) Janki Mangal, verse nos. 39-40; (d) Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Baal Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 19-61; and (e) Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, from Sarga/Canto 48, verse nos. 14-33—to Sarga/Canto 49, verse nos. 1-21.]

(1 / 58)

परत पद–पंकज ऋषि–रवनी।
भई है प्रगट अति दिब्य देह धरि मानो त्रिभुवन–छबि–छवनी।। 1।।
देखि बड़ो आचरज, पुलकि तनु कहति मुदित मुनि–भवनी।
जो चलिहैं रघुनाथ पयादेहि, सिला न रहिहि अवनी।। 2।।
परसि जो पाँय पुनीत सुरसरी सोहै तीनि–गवनी।
तुलसिदास तेहि चरन–रेनुकी महिमा कहै मति कवनी।। 3।।

(1/58)

parata pada-paṅkaja ṛ̥si-ravanī.
bha'ī hai pragaṭa ati dibya dēha dhari mānō tribhuvana-chabi-chavanī.. 1..
dēkhi baṛō ācaraja, pulaki tanu kahati mudita muni-bhavanī.
jō calihaiṁ raghunātha payādēhi, silā na rahihi avanī.. 2..
parasi jō pām̐ya punīta surasarī sōhai tīni-gavanī.
tulasidāsa tēhi carana-rēnukī mahimā kahai mati kavanī.. 3..

Liberation of Ahilya-2

Verse no. 1/58—As soon as the dust of Lord Ram's feet touched Ahilya, she turned (from a stone) into a divine lady, as if she was the daughter of the goddess of beauty in this universe (1).

Seeing this wonder of all wonders, all the consorts of various sages and hermitesses living in the forest began to speculate that it is possible that all the stones on the path walked on by Lord Ram would be converted into excellent ladies, and it would be therefore difficult to find stones anymore in this world[1] (2).

[[1]There were thousands and thousands of stones and pebbles lying scattered on the ground. If Lord Ram's feet could turn one stone into a divine lady, thought these ladies, then there are great probabilities that at least a majority of these countless stones and pebbles would also be metamorphosed into some kind of a female form. It

may be that these stones and pebbles and rocks lying scattered all around were some damsel or lady of worth in some ancient time of yore and days gone by, but due to any misfortune that may have befallen them they were transformed into their current state just like the case of Ahilya. Well then, should any numbers of them regain their original form and decide to abide in the forest unlike Ahilya who went back to her husband sage Gautam, then it would create a very piquant situation for all forest dwelling hermits, sages and ascetics.

Only a few of the aged and more senior amongst the sages had maintained hermitages where they lived with their wives, and one fine example is that of sage Atri and his wife Anusuiya whom Lord Ram visited later on during his sojourn in the forest for 14 years to liveout his exile period (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 7). The probable reason for it was that they wanted their chaste wives to join them and share the bliss of the spiritual journey and attainment of final liberation together as they had hitherto also shared the joys and pains of life as householders together. The wife had equal right to join her husband to cover the rest of the path of their journey of life together as they had done together till now, if she was willing and able.

But this was rather an exception than the norm, as the majority of sages and seers and hermits had renounced their households and had come to the forest to do Tapa and lead a life of stern austerity and penance that barred them from even thinking of the pleasures and comforts of home left behind, of their families, wives and children and kith and kin. Now in the eventuality these stones and pebbles and rocks would become women, the forest would be filled with countless ladies of beauty and charm, of varying ages and qualities—and the consequences of this happening vis-à-vis these hermits and sages are too obvious to narrate explicitly. The forest will become a huge household teeming with hermit-men and hermit-ladies, and God forbid, with their progenies and their own branches! And should this ever happen, it would be most unwelcome development as it would undercut the very foundation of Dharma which envisages that the last segment of a person's life should be spent peacefully in the lap of Mother Nature where the person can derive peace and solace for the soul. A few instances of wives accompanying their husbands to the forest was alright, but what if the whole forest became one big city teeming with chattering women and men eyeing them lustfully when the latter were supposed to remain submerged in the thought of the Lord God.

Now therefore we can make an interesting and logical conjecture here. In all probability Lord Ram, who was all-knowing and omniscient Supreme Lord of the world, knew what was going in the mind of these forest-dwelling hermitesses, and he realized the wider import of their reservations as outlined above. Hence, the Lord exerted special care and ensured that the liberation of Ahilya by the virtue of the touch of his divine feet was once-in-a-life time happening, the rarest of the rare, and not something that would become a precedent for others to be invoked and compel the Lord to replicate it. So the Lord withdrew this mystical powers from the dust of his feet, and walked on and fared ahead like an ordinary prince.]

Tulsidas says that no one is wise and skilled enough to describe the mystical fame and the divine glory of the Lord whose mere touch of river Ganges by his holy feet had turned this river into the holiest river in the world[2] (3).

[[2]River Ganges acquired its holiness and spiritual values by the virtue of it emerging from the toes of Lord Vishnu. See the "story of Ganges" narrated in a note

appended to verse no. 1/55 herein above. There are scores of rivers on this earth, but none has this honour.

The main objective of Tulsidas is to highlight the divinity and holiness of Lord Ram's feet and advising seekers to seek spiritual solace and succour by taking the recourse of having devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram which is so divine and powerful that it had 'liberated Ahilya from the curse of being a stone' and 'making river Ganges the holiest of all holy rivers'.]

(1 / 59)

भूरिभाग–भाजनु भई।
रूपरासि अवलोकि बंधु दोउ प्रेम–सुरंग रई।। 1।।
कहा कहैं, केहि भाँति सराहैं, नहि करतूति नई।
बिनु कारन करुनाकर रघुबर केहि–केहि गति न दई?।। 2।।
करि बहु बिनय, राखि उर मूरति मंगल–मोदमई।
तुलसी है बिसोक पति–लोकहि प्रभुगुन गनत गई।। 3।।

(1/59)

bhūribhāga-bhājanu bha'ī.
rūparāsi avalōki bandhu dō'u prēma-suraṅga ra'ī.. 1..
kahā kahaiṁ, kēhi bhāmti sarāhaiṁ, nahi karatūti na'ī.
binu kārana karunākara raghubara kēhi-kēhi gati na da'ī?.. 2..
kari bahu binaya, rākhi ura mūrati maṅgala-mōdama'ī.
tulasī hvai bisōka pati-lōkahi prabhuguna ganata ga'ī.. 3..

Liberation of Ahilya-3

Verse no. 1/59—Today, Ahilya has become extremely fortunate and an embodiment of auspiciousness and glories. She has been completely soaked (i.e. drenched and imbued) in the colour of love, affection and endearment for the Lord (Sri Ram) after seeing the two brothers (Lord Ram and Laxman) who are a treasury (or a fount) of beauty, charm, attractiveness and majesty (1).

Say, how can a poet describe this scene or sing the praises of the Lord (with his limited treasury of words that have their own limitations and restrictions, for the Lord is limitless, infinite, and beyond the grasp of mind and intellect)?

This marvel of all great marvels, this wonder of all exceeding wonders (of converting a stone into a divine lady known as Ahilya) is not new or alien for the Lord too, for say, whom has the most merciful, compassionate, benevolent and graceful Lord Raghubar (Sri Ram) not given an auspicious end (i.e. liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation), without any cause or vested interest in doing so (i.e. he does it selflessly), because it is in his nature? (2).

Tulsidas says that after saying a number of prayers with all humility, and keeping the Lord's auspicious and blissful image in her heart, she (Ahilya) became free of all sorrows and miseries.

Thereafter, singing affectionately and devotedly the Lord's glories, virtues and graceful nature, the Lord's great fame and renown (as a provider of spiritual bliss and deliverance to his devotees and those who are humble and seek his refuge), she went back to the abode of her husband (sage Gautam) (3).

राग कान्हरा

(1/60)

कौसिकके मखके रखवारे।
नाम राम अरु लखन ललित अति, दसरथ–राज–दुलारे।। 1।।
मेचक पीत कमल कोमल कल काकपच्छ–धर बारे।
सोभा सकल सकेलि मदन–बिधि सुकर सरोज सँवारे।। 2।।
सहस समूह सुबाहु सरिस खल समर सूर भट भारे।
केलि–तून–धनु–बान–पानि रन निदरि निसाचर मारे।। 3।।
ऋषितिय तारि स्वयंबर पेखन जनकनगर पगु धारे।
मग नर–नारि निहारत सादर, कहैं बड़ भाग हमारे।। 4।।
तुलसी सुनत एक–एकनि सो चलत बिलोकनिहारे।
मूकनि बचन–लाहु, मानो अंधनि लहे हैं बिलोचन–तारे।। 5।।

rāga kānharā

(1/60)

kausikakē makhakē rakhavārē.
nāma rāma aru lakhana lalita ati, dasaratha-rāja-dulārē.. 1..
mēcaka pīta kamala kōmala kala kākapaccha-dhara bārē.
sōbhā sakala sakēli madana-bidhi sukara sarōja samv̐vārē.. 2..
sahasa samūha subāhu sarisa khala samara sūra bhaṭa bhārē.
kēli-tūna-dhanu-bāna-pāni rana nidari nisācara mārē.. 3..
ṛ̨itiya tāri svayambara pēkhana janakanagara pagu dhārē.
maga nara-nāri nihārata sādara, kahaiṁ baṛa bhāga hamārē.. 4..
tulasī sunata ēka-ēkani sō calata bilōkanihārē.
mūkani bacana-lāhu, mānō andhani lahē haiṁ bilōcana-tārē.. 5..

Lord Ram's Glories Being Sung on the Way to Janakpur

Verse no. 1/60—[The news of Lord Ram's miraculous deeds which were wonderful and wondrous too—such as the turning of a stone into a woman by the name of Ahilya, the protection of sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice from being defiled by ferocious demons, and the subsequent vanquishing of these demons Subahu and Marich along with their terrible army—had spread far and wide like wildfire, and had

reached the path much ahead of the Lord. Therefore, when Lord Ram and Laxman reached the villages and hamlets lying on the side of the path to Janakpur, the people rushed out to see them. Their personality and bearing was so majestic and royal, and the fact that they were accompanied by sage Vishwamitra who was well-known and easily recognised, made the two brothers easily identifiable on the road. See stanza no. 5 of this verse.

The ordinary folks had heard of their glories and marvellous deeds, but had yet to see their stupendous beauty and charm. So when they saw the two brothers for the first time they were virtually struck with amazement and great wonder, wondering if what they beheld was something real or a fanciful dream! So let's read on:--]

The residents of wayside villages and hamlets as well as travelers on the road talked with each other, saying—'These two (Sri Ram and Laxman) are the ones who have protected (or guarded) the fire sacrifice of Kaushik (sage Vishwamitra). They have lovely names, Sri Ram and Laxman, and they are the beloved sons of king Dasrath (1).

They have a tuft of curly hairs on the crest of their heads, and resemble very tender and beautiful lotus flowers of dark and yellow colours respectively[1]—as if Kamdeo/cupid, in the role of a 'creator', had assembled all qualities of magnificence, glamour, beauty, elegance, charm and attractiveness, and had used them to mould (caste, create) them (Sri Ram and Laxman) with his own hands[2] (2).

[[1]Here, Lord Ram with a dark complexion is like the dark-blue lotus flower, and Laxman with a fair complexion is like a yellow-coloured flower.

[2]The Creator of the world is Brahma, but the two brothers are so magnificently beautiful to behold, their lovliness and enchantment so great and intense that it is unlikely that Brahma has created them. Brahma's creation is seen everywhere in this world, but no where would one find anything or anyone with which or whom even a fleeting comparison can be made with respect to the virtues of beauty, majesty, charm, attractiveness and enchantment that are so integral to these two noble princes, Lord Ram and Laxman.]

They have very easily and playfully rebuffed and slayed thousands of veteran hard-core demons like Subahu and his companions who were wicked, war-hardened, ferocious and blood-thirsty in the battle (while protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra). And this stupendous and marvellous feat was accomplished by the two brothers by little bows and arrows they are nothing but like toys in their hands (or, "with such little bows and arrows that are nothing else but toys with which boys of their age play)[3]! (3).

[[3]On the one hand were the ferocious demons of colossal sizes and ferocity of manners who held all sorts of sharp and dangerous weapons, and on the other hand were these two young boys who faced the wrath of the demons with only little bows and arrows in their hands. And this fact makes their achievement of slaying the huge demon army all the more astounding and remarkable and unbelievable, and wondrous of all the exceeding wonders in this world.]

Now they are going to Janakpur after liberating the sage's wife (Ahilya)'.

Saying, 'We are very fortunate indeed', all the men and women living in the villages and hamlets enroute who had a chance to view the two brothers, or those who

met the two brothers as fellow travelers, saw them with utmost respect and reverence in their hearts, and were in awe of them (4).

Tulsidas says that this news spread rapidly by word of mouth (from one person to another, from one village to another) as the people passed by and fared on their way. This inspired others to follow them to have a glimpse of the two brothers as if dumb have got back their voice and the blind have received the iris of their eyes (i.e. have got back their vision)[4] (5).

[[4]Tulsidas means the people who heard the news were full of wonder and were awestruck. They marvelled at what they had heard; it was almost like a miracle for them. So, they rushed forward to see the maverick Sri Ram and Laxman who could perform such stupendous deeds which were beyond imagination. Some who were present at the time were struck by the beauty and charm of the two brothers and they craned their necks and eyes to see them as closely and as much as they can. Some of these smitten folks followed the brothers to some distance, and others rushed back home and told others who weren't present at the place from where the two brothers had just passed. When these people heard of the wondrous tidings, they rushed and ran the distance to catch up with the two brothers so that they can see them before it was too late and the brothers had moved far away on the road. Such was the magical charm of the two brothers that they attracted people like a magnet attracts iron.]

जनकपुर–प्रवेश

राग टोड़ी

(1/61)

आये सुनि कौसिक जनक हरषाने हैं।
बोलि गुर भूसुर, समाज सों मिलन चले,
जानि बड़े भाग अनुराग अकुलाने हैं।। 1।।
नाइ सीस पगनि, असीस पाइ प्रमुदित,
पाँवड़े अरघ देत आदर सों आने हैं।
असन, बसन, बासकै सुपास सब बिधि,
पूजि प्रिय पाहुने, सुभाय सनमाने हैं।। 2।।
बिनय बड़ाई ऋषि–राजऊ परसपर
करत पुलकि प्रेम आनँद अघाने हैं।
देखे राम–लखन निमेषै बिथकित भई
प्रानहु ते प्यारे लागे बिनु पहिचाने हैं।। 3।।
ब्रह्मानंद हृदय, दरस–सुख लोयननि
अनभये उभय, सरस राम जाने हैं।
तुलसी बिदेहकी सनेहकी दसा सुमिरि,
मेरे मन माने राउ निपट सयाने हैं।। 4।।

janakapura-pravēśa

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/61)

āyē suni kausika janaka haraṣānē haiṁ.
bōli gura bhūsura, samāja sōṁ milana calē,
jāni baṛē bhāga anurāga akulānē haiṁ.. 1..
nā'i sīsa pagani, asīsa pā'i pramudita,
pāmv̐aṛē aragha dēta ādara sōṁ ānē haiṁ.
asana, basana, bāsakai supāsa saba bidhi,
pūji priya pāhunē, subhāya sanamānē haiṁ.. 2..
binaya baṛā'ī ṛ̥si-rāja'ū parasapara
karata pulaki prēma ānam̐da aghānē haiṁ.
dēkhē rāma-lakhana nimēṣai bithakita bha'ī
prānahu tē pyārē lāgē binu pahicānē haiṁ.. 3..
brahmānanda hṛ̥daya, darasa-sukha lōyanani
anabhayē ubhaya, sarasa rāma jānē haiṁ.
tulasī bidēhakī sanēhakī dasā sumiri,
mērē mana mānē rā'u nipaṭa sayānē haiṁ.. 4..

Arrival of sage Vishwamitra with Lord Ram & Laxman at Janakpur

Verse no. 1/61—[The story goes that king Janak of Janakpur had a daughter named Sita. He had organized a 'Swayambar' to get her married. It is a marriage ceremony wherein the groom is selected on the basis of some preset conditions. In this case, Janak had set the condition that anyone whosoever would break an old and worn out bow of Lord Shiva that was lying in his family from many past generations would marry Sita. The would-be bride was extremely pretty and had all the wonderful virtues and goodness that one would expect from a girl one would bring in as his wife and who outshone every eligible princess of her time in every parameter. So, as soon as the declaration was made by king Janak, all the great princes and kings of all the seven continents and corners of the world had arrived to try their luck, and they numbered in hundreds and thousands. Even the demon kings such as Ravana and Banasur had assumed human forms and come. So there was a huge assembly of competitors. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 251; Doha no. 251 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8.

It was to attend this ceremony that sage Vishwamitra had come, and had brought Lord Ram and his brother Laxman with him.]

When king Janak heard of the arrival of Vishwamitra, he was full of joy. He called the Brahmins and all his kin, and proceeded to meet him, bubbling over with enthusiasm and happiness[1](1).

[[1]It was well known that sage Vishwamitra rarely goes visiting kings and attending their ceremonies. He was a senior sage of his time. Usually such great and senior sages would send some emissary to represent them, but if they come personally then it is great honour on the host. Besides this, he was the only senior sage who had come to visit Janakpur to attend the bow-breaking ceremony organized by king Janak.

This is evident when one reads the entire episode because the king had seated sage Vishwamitra and the two princes accompanying him, i.e. Lord Ram and Laxman, on a special seat at the head of the assembly, a privilege reserved for the senior-most person. Hence, when the king heard that the sage has come, he regarded it a great boon and blessing, and this filled him with joy.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 214 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.]

When he met the sage, he bowed his head at his feet and got due blessings in return. Then he washed the sage's feet as a mark of great respect, and welcomed him with gifts of food, clothes etc. Then the king gave him a comfortable place to stay in the city[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 215; Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 217.]

The sage (Vishwamitra) and the king (Janak) mutually praise and show courtesy to each other. In this way, being thrilled with love and affection, both of them are overwhelmed and overcome with joy, delight and bliss[3].

Seeing Sri Ram and Laxman, he (Janak) even forgot to bat an eyelid. Even without formal introduction, the two brothers appeared dearer to him more than his own life, delighting his heart and belighting his sight[4]. (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 215.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 215—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 217.

There was a natural, instinctive affinity and attraction between Janak and Lord Sri Ram as if a magnet pulls a piece of iron due to its inherent quality. This was because Janak, though outwardly an ordinary-looking monarch, was in fact a great renouncer and greatly steeped in spiritual and metaphysical wisdom. Lord Sri Ram, being the infinite, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent and Lord God of creation himself personified, was the natural magnet that would pull the soul of an enlightened man towards himself in a natural fashion, even unwittingly, just like the case of a piece of iron being pulled towards a strong magnet even if they are separated by a curtain and invisible to each other. It was, so to say, a 'chemistry' that was instantaneously established between king Janak and Lord Ram, and it clicked!]

Experiencing in his heart supreme bliss and contentedness equivalent to Brahm-realisation (brahmānanda hr̥daya) by having his (Lord Sri Ram's) Darshan (divine, holy and auspicious viewing) with his eyes (darasa-sukha lōyanani) convinced king Janak that the beauty of Lord Sri Ram's image was more sweet, succulent, satisfying, gratifying, fulfilling, meaningful, rewarding and superior to the mere experiencing of bliss that comes with Brahm-realsation (anabhayē ubhaya, sarasa rāma jānē haiṁ)[5].

Tulsidas says that when he remembers the condition of Janak he comes to the conclusion that the king was very wise and clever (and that his conclusion was flawless and correct as he was quick to realise the presence of Brahm right in his front as if he was being rewarded for a life-time spent in practicing spiritual and metaphysical philosophy). [It was literally like the Supreme Being called 'Brahm'

coming down personally to oblige Janak for all his meritorious deeds and spiritual practices.] (4).

[[5]King Janak was a highly enlightened soul and an expert in metaphysics. He used to organise great conclaves regularly where great sages and seers came to preach, discuss and debate on spiritual and metaphysical philosophy. This fact is borne out by a Upanishad called "Brihad Aranayak Upanishad" of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition where one such conclave is described and where it was unanimously declared that sage Yagyawalkya is the greatest of his time. Even the parrot saint Suk, the son of the legendary sage Veda Vyas, had been sent by his father to king Janak to gain knowledge.

The point is that king Janak was steeped in spiritual and metaphysical philosophy and practiced them in his life. He remained submerged in the thoughts of Brahm, the supreme Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, and also in meditation and contemplation which made him turn inwards and exclude the external world of sense organs even while going about his duties of looking after the kingdom. This enabled him to remain calm and detached and neutral. This state of his mind and heart bestowed upon him bliss and contentedness that is called the 'bliss that comes with Brahm-realisation and self-realisation'. But this also means dryness of the heart and mind because a person develops great detachment from all physical attractions of the gross world as he finds them illusionary and unsustainable.

In the present case, however, a miraculous development has occurred. By seeing Lord Ram the king experienced the same bliss that the scriptures call the 'bliss of Brahm-realisation'. Even king Janak had to concede this miracle when he told sage Vishwamitra that he wonders why by seeing Lord Ram a surge of affection and bliss has heaved in his heart, and he is experiencing the same ecstasy and thrill that comes to an ascetic on Brahm-realisation though he is renowned as a renunciate soul who is not supposed to be affected by the sight of beauty. So there must be some secret to it. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 216.

Now therefore king Janak realised that this magnificent and enchanting view of Lord Ram was superior to viewing Brahm while in meditation because of the simple reason that the former added the benefit of giving joy and happiness and bliss and contentedness and pleasure and comfort to the gross sense organs such as the eye and all pores of the body by making the body thrilled, to the subtle organs such as the mind and heart in an easy way which would not have been possible by pursuing the very tedious and difficult path of meditation and contemplation.]

राग मलार

(1/62)

कोसलरायके कुअँरोटा।
राजत रुचिर जनक–पुर पैठत स्याम गौर नीके जोटा।। 1।।
चौतनि सिरनि, कनककली काननि, कटि पट पीत सोहाये।
उर मनि–माल, बिसाल बिलोचन, सीय–स्वयंबर आये।। 2।।
बरनि न जात, मनहिं मन भावत, सुभग अबहिं बय थोरी।

भई हैं मगन बिधुबदन बिलोकत बनिता चतुर चकोरी।। 3।।
कहँ सिवचाप, लरिकवनि बूझत, बिहँसि चितै तिरछौंहैं।
तुलसी गलिन भीर, दरसन लगि लोग अटनि आरोहैं।। 4।।

rāga malāra

(1/62)

kōsalarāyakē ku'am̐rōṭā.
rājata rucira janaka-pura paiṭhata syāma gaura nīkē jōṭā.. 1..
cautani sirani, kanakakalī kānani, kaṭi paṭa pīta sōhāyē.
ura mani-māla, bisāla bilōcana, sīya-svayambara āyē.. 2..
barani na jāta, manahiṁ mana bhāvata, subhaga abahiṁ baya thōrī.
bha'ī haiṁ magana bidhubadana bilōkata banitā catura cakōrī.. 3..
kaham̐ sivacāpa, larikavani būjhata, biham̐si citai tirachaunhaiṁ.
tulasī galina bhīra, darasana lagi lōga aṭani ārōhaiṁ.. 4..

Lord Ram & Laxman in Janakpur-1

Verse no. 1/62—At the time of entry in Janakpur, the most beautiful pair of the princes of Kaushal (i.e. Lord Sri Ram and Laxman) look very magnificent and enchanting (1).

Both the boys have a cap on their heads, golden ear-rings in their ears, Pitambar around their waists, and a gem-studded necklace adorns their chest. Their eyes are very large (like a lotus flower).

In this manner, they have arrived to attend the marriage ceremony of Sita (sīya-svayambara āyē) (2).

It is not possible to describe that magnificent and charming pair. It appears enchanting and pleasing to the mind and heart. They are of a tender (young) age too.

*The clever women-folk represented by the bird Chakor (Indian red-legged partridge) gaze transfixedly at his (Sri Ram's) moon-like face and feel exhilarated[1] (3).

[*Now it so happened that Lord Ram took permission from sage Vishwamitra, and the two brothers then went out for sight-seeing in the city of Janakpur. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 218—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 219.

[1]The tidings of their stupendous charm and marvelous deeds had already reached the citizens of Janakpur. So as soon as the word spread that the two brothers have come to see the sights of the city, every able men and child rushed from their homes, and women jam-packed the balconies and attics and terraces of their homes to have a glimpse of the two wonderful princes. The women were simply swept off their feet and were enamoured by the bewitching charm of Lord Ram even as the bird Chakor is with the moon. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 220—to Doha no. 223.]

He (Lord Ram) glances sideways at the boys of the city (who have swarmed around the two brothers as they go around to see the sights of the city, and especially the place where the bow-breaking event was to be organized) in a friendly manner, and enquires of them with a smile on his face—'Where is Lord Shiva's bow?'[2]

Tulsidas says that there is a huge surging crowd on the streets and lanes of the city with people jostling each other and craning their necks with eagerness to have a clear sight of the two brothers. Some of the city-folk climb on the terraces and balconies of homes and public buildings in order to avoid the jostling and milling crowd on the ground and have a better unobstructed view of the two princes as they wound their way down the streets and avenues of the city[3] (4).

[[2]The children of all ages in the city had a time of their lives. While the adult population had to maintain some degree of self-restraint and behave in a dignified manner because they knew that these two princes were state guests of their king Janak, no such reservations was applicable to children who flocked and swarmed around Lord Ram and Laxman, tugging, pulling, pushing and shoving each other so as to be as close to the two brothers and be able to touch them and even hold their hands. And the marvellous thing is that the Lord obliged all of them, behaving as if he was their playmate. Then slowly the two brothers neared the venue of the bow ceremony and Lord Ram asked the children to show him around, which of course they most enthusiastically did. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 219; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 224— to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 225.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 220.]

(1 / 63)

ये अवधेसके सुत दोऊ।
चढ़ि मंदिरनि बिलोकत सादर जनकनगर सब कोऊ।। 1।।
स्याम गौर सुंदर किसोर तनु, तून–बान–धनुधारी।
कटि पट पीत, कंठ मुकुतामनि, भुज बिसाल, बल भारी।। 2।।
मुख मयंक, सरसीरुह लोचन, तिलक भाल, टेढ़ी भौंहैं।
कल कुंडल, चौतनी चारु अति, चलत मत्त–गज–गौंहैं।। 3।।
बिस्वामित्र हेतु पठये नृप, इनहि ताडुका मारी।
मख राख्यो रिपु जीति, जान जग, मग मुनिबधू उधारी।। 4।।
प्रिय पाहुने जानि नर–नारिन नयननि अयन दये।
तुलसिदास प्रभु देखि लोग सब जनक समान भये।। 5।।

(1/63)

yē avadhēsakē suta dō'ū.
caḍhi mandirani bilōkata sādara janakanagara saba kō'ū.. 1..
syāma gaura sundara kisōra tanu, tūna-bāna-dhanudhārī.
kaṭi paṭa pīta, kaṇṭha mukutāmani, bhuja bisāla, bala bhārī.. 2..
mukha mayaṅka, sarasīruha lōcana, tilaka bhāla, ṭēṛhī bhaunhaiṁ.
kala kuṇḍala, cautanī cāru ati, calata matta-gaja-gaunhaiṁ.. 3..

bisvāmitra hētu paṭhayē nr̥pa, inahi tāḍukā mārī.
makha rākhyō ripu jīti, jāna jaga, maga munibadhū udhārī.. 4..
priya pāhunē jāni nara-nārina nayanani ayana dayē.
tulasidāsa prabhu dēkhi lōga saba janaka samāna bhayē.. 5..

Lord Ram in Janakpur

Verse no. 1/63—All the citizens of Janakpur have climbed atop their houses (balconies, roofs, attics, lofts etc.), watch them (Lord Sri Ram and Laxman) most respectfully, and say among themselves that these are the sons of king Dasrath of Avadh[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 221.]

Their bodies are most handsome, and dark and fair in complexion respectively[2]. They are in their teens, and sport a bow and an arrow each (that they hold in their hands) as well as a quiver (that is tied to their waists). Pitambar (yellow coloured silk cloth) is wrapped around their waists. There is a necklace of gems and pearls around their necks, and their large arms are very strong, muscular and valorous (2).

[[2]Lord Ram is of a dark complexion, and Laxman is fair.]

Their faces resemble the full moon, the eyes are like a lotus, a Tilak Mark (religious mark) adorns the forehead, while the eyebrows are curved (like the bow). The ears have attractive ear-rings, and the head has a most lovely cap on it. They walk like a carefree elephant (i.e. they walk majestically, in a dignified manner)[3] (3).

[[3]The enchanting image of the two brothers as they roamed on the streets of Janakpur, captivating the imagination and enthralling the heart and mind of all and every single citizen has been also described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 219 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8.]

The king (Dasrath) had sent them to protect the fire sacrifice of Vishwamitra. They are the ones who have slained Tadka and have saved the fire sacrifice from being defiled by conquering the enemies (i.e. demons). The world also knows that they have liberated the sage's wife (Ahilya) on the way (to Janakpur)[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 221.]

Regarding the two brothers as their most honourable and dearest guest, all the citizens welcomed them and gave them a place in their eyes[5].

Tulsidas asserts that on seeing the Lord, everyone became 'Videh' like king Janak (literally meaning they lost awareness or consciousness of their bodies and the surrounding world) (5).

[[5]That is, the citizens were so enthralled and spellbound by their enchanting beauty that their image seemed to be permanently etched in their mind's eyes. Since the eye is the only organ by which one sees the external world and which enabled these citizens to enjoy the wonderful sight of the two brothers. This sight was so captivating and rare in its beauty and charm that the citizens never forgot it in their lives. The image of the two brothers was permanently etched in their subconscious

mind, and enshrined in the temple of their hearts—but the 'eye' was the door through which this image was brought in and established there.]

राग टोड़ी

(1 / 64)

बूझत जनक 'नाथ, ढोटा दोउ काके हैं' ?
तरुन तमाल चारु चंपक–बरन तनु
कौन बड़े भागीके सुकृत परिपाके हैं।। 1।।
सुखके निधान पाये, हियके पिधान लाये,
ठगके–से लाडू खाये, प्रेम–मधु छाके हैं।
स्वारथ–रहित परमारथी कहावत हैं,
भे सनेह–बिबस बिदेहता बिबाके हैं।। 2।।
सील–सुधाके अगार, सुखमाके पारावार,
पावत न पैरि पार पैरि पैरि थाके हैं।
लोचन ललकि लागे, मन अति अनुरागे,
एक रसरूप चित सकल सभाके हैं।। 3।।
जिय जिय जोरत सगाई राम लखनसों
आपने आपने भाय जैसे भाय जाके हैं।
प्रीतिको, प्रतीतिको, सुमिरिबेको, सेइबेको,
सरनको समरथ तुलसिहु ताके हैं।। 4।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/64)

būjhata janaka 'nātha, ḍhōṭā dō'u kākē haiṁ'?
taruna tamāla cāru campaka-barana tanu
kauna baṛē bhāgīkē sukṛta paripākē haiṁ.. 1..
sukhakē nidhāna pāyē, hiyakē pidhāna lāyē,
ṭhagakē-sē lāḍū khāyē, prēma-madhu chākē haiṁ.
svāratha-rahita paramārathī kahāvata haiṁ,
bhē sanēha-bibasa bidēhatā bibākē haiṁ.. 2..
sīla-sudhākē agāra, sukhamākē pārāvāra,
pāvata na pairi pāra pairi pairi thākē haiṁ.
lōcana lalaki lāgē, mana ati anurāgē,
ēka rasarūpa cita sakala sabhākē haiṁ.. 3..
jiya jiya jōrata sagā'ī rāma lakhanasōṁ
āpanē āpanē bhāya jaisē bhāya jākē haiṁ.
prītikō, pratītikō, sumiribēkō, sē'ibēkō,
saranakō samaratha tulasihu tākē haiṁ.. 4..

Verse no. 1/64—[When king Janak first saw the two brothers at the time of meeting and welcoming sage Vishwamitra upon his arrival in the city, he was struck by the bewitching charm of the two brothers, Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman. So he enquired from the sage who they were. This dialogue is narrated herein below in verse nos. 1/62—to 1/68.

It is also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 215—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 216.]

King Janak asked sage Vishwamitra—'Oh Lord! Whose sons are these two princes? Their bodies are young, and they are like the catechu plant and the attractive magnolia flower inasmuch as being of a dark and fair complexion respectively.

Ah! Who is that fortunate one whose good, noble, meritorious and virtuous deeds have revealed in the form of these fruits? (1).'

Having found the treasury of bliss that Lord Ram indeed was, Janak symbolically took the Lord and respectfully enshrined him inside his heart and closed the door (so that the image remains in the treasury of his heart and in his safe custody).

He was so overwhelmed with the wine of love and affection for the Lord even as he thoroughly enjoyed watching in complete enthrallment the mesmerizing sight of Lord Ram that he was like a man who had eaten a wondrous sweet known as a 'Laddu' of the most delectable taste, and the like of which he has never aforetime seen, tasted or heard of, and then once tasted he becomes virtually so intoxicated by its sweet and pleasant taste that he thinks of nothing else but of the heavenly taste of this sweetmeat that lingers on in his mouth and feels that he did not have sufficient of it, and would rather be glad to have more and more of this sweetful experience.

Verily, king Janak was known to be selfless, one who was not tempted to please himself and gratify his senses, nor praise anyone with an eye on some favour and benefit (svāratha-rahita), but he was rather a dispassionate seeker of Truth and one who followed the path of spiritual pursuits (known as 'paramārathī').

But at this moment (as he watched Lord Ram) he forgot about his vows of renunciation and dispassion, remaining immune to the attractions of the world and temptations to gratify one's senses, a fact that has entitled him to be honoured in the world by the epithet of 'Vidēha'[1] (2).

[[1]Janak was so highly spiritually enlightened that no attractions of the world, no matter how astoundingly charming, ever distracted his attention and captivated his mind or enchanted his heart. He was always detached from all attractions of the physical world and had overcome the natural habit of the sense organs to seek pleasures from their respective objects in the world, like for instance the eye seeking to enjoy a pleasant sight, or the mind remembering something that pleases it and is appealing to its senses. Janak had never appeased the sense organs of his body.

But the tables seemed to turn today—for at least once in his life now he wishes to watch the beauty of Lord Ram and Laxman with his eye-full and heart-full, and mind completely overwhelmed with its thoughts. This was indeed quite at odd with the character of Janak. So he himself was puzzled and amazed, and he says this clearly to sage Vishwamitra in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 216. The king told the sage—"Oh sage, it's a wonder of all wonders that my mind that is inherently dispassionate seems to have lost its character when I saw the two brothers. So I wonder what the reason is; who are these two brothers? Surely and certainly, they aren't ordinary princes of humans, but Divinity

itself personified—for otherwise 'tis not easy for my mind to be so swayed as it is at present at the very sight of these two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman. So, tell me oh sage, what is the truth?"]

The Lord (Sri Ram) is a treasury of nectar-like excellent virtues, noble characters, civility and virtuousness (sīla-sudhākē agāra), and is an endless and infinite source of great happiness and joy and comfort for all (sukhamākē pārāvāra).

Janak tried his best and became tired but could not find the other end of it, or fathom it. [For all his wisdom and enlightenment had come to a naught, and Janak for once was swept off his feet with he unable to explain the reason himself.]

Not only was it Janak, but the eyes of the whole court (i.e. all those present in the royal assembly) was, as expected, transfixed on the divine form of the Lord (lōcana lalaki lāgē). Their minds and hearts becoming extremely enthralled and captivated with waves of surging love and affection for the Lord (mana ati anurāgē), while their intellect and subconscious were concentrated in only one form (i.e. the intellect and subconscious could think of nothing else except the form of Sri Ram and his stupendous beauty and charm) (ēka rasarūpa cita sakala sabhākē)! (3).

Every one established their own mental relationship with the Lord (Sri Ram) in accordance to their inclinations, tastes, temperaments and wishes[2].

Even Tulsidas has sought the refuge of the Lord who is worthy of the deepest of affections, one who is worthy for establishing relationships with, of remembrance, of service, and for taking refuge with (4).

[[2]When the actual bow-breaking ceremony was underway a little while later and the entire city had poured into the arena just to get a glimpse of these two wonderful boys with sage Vishwamitra, the same situation prevailed with the men and the women who assembled as spectators. Not only them, but even the invited guests, the countless kings and regents and princes and knights and nobles and grandees of the earth too viewed Lord Ram differently according to the way their mind, heart and intellect perceived the Lord.

This is explicitly described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 241—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 242.

It says that those who were warriors saw the Lord as valour and bravery personified; those who were wicked in heart saw a frightening form of the Lord that chased their wits away and left them scampering for cover; those who were demons but disguised as humans saw Kaal, 'the god of death' right in front; the citizens saw the Lord as a personified and charming form of a perfect human being of the most excellent of virtues and personality; those who were wise and well-versed in the knowledge of the scriptures and understood their metaphysical and spiritual philosophy saw the Lord as a personified form of the almighty and all-pervading Supreme Brahm, the Lord God of creation; those who were devotees at heart saw in the Lord their revered and dearest deity whom they worship and adore and pay homage; king Janak and his close family saw in the Lord an image of someone who was one of them, dear to them as a member of their family (because later on Lord Ram would become their son-in-law by marrying Sita, the daughter of Janak); the ascetics and self-realised ones in the crowd found the Lord as an image of the supreme Consciousness and the Absolute Truth that gives bliss and ecstasy upon

realisation; and Sita saw the Lord in an affectionate way that was the dearest form of all (as he would be her dear husband and life-partner shortly).]

(1 / 65)

ए कौन कहाँतें आए?
नील–पीत पाथोज–बरन, मन–हरन, सुहाय सुहाए।। 1।।
मुनि सुत किधौं भूप–बालक, किधौं ब्रह्म–जीव जग जाए।
रूप जलधिके रतन, सुछबि–तिय–लोचन ललित ललाए।। 2।।
किधौं रबि–सुवन, मदन–ऋतुपति, किधौं हरि–हर बेष बनाए।
किधौं आपने सुकृत–सुरतरुके सुफल रावरेहि पाए ।। 3।।
भए बिदेह बिदेह नेहबस देहदसा बिसराए।
पुलक गात, न समात हरष हिय, सलिल सुलोचन छाए ।। 4।।
जनक–बचन मृदु मंजु मधु–भरे भगति कौसिकहि भाए।
तुलसी अति आनंद उमगि उर राम लषन गुन गाए ।। 5।।

(1/65)

ē kauna kahāṁtēṁ ā'ē?
nīla-pīta pāthōja-barana, mana-harana, suhāya suhā'ē.. 1..
muni suta kidhauṁ bhūpa-bālaka, kidhauṁ brahma-jīva jaga jā'ē.
rūpa jaladhikē ratana, suchabi-tiya-lōcana lalita lalā'ē.. 2..
kidhauṁ rabi-suvana, madana-ṛtupati, kidhauṁ hari-hara bēṣa banā'ē.
kidhauṁ āpanē sukṛta-surataruкē suphala rāvarēhi pā'ē.. 3..
bha'ē bidēha bidēha nēhabasa dēhadasā bisarā'ē.
pulaka gāta, na samāta haraṣa hiya, salila sulōcana chā'ē.. 4..
janaka-bacana mṛdu mañju madhu-bharē bhagati kausikahi bhā'ē.
tulasī ati ānanda umagi ura rāma laṣana guna gā'ē.. 5..

King Janak's Enquiry-2

Verse no. 1/65—[King Janak continues with his enquiry with sage Vishwamitra—] 'Who art they and whence have they come hither? They are dark and fair complexioned like a blue and yellow lotus flower respectively (nīla-pīta pāthōja-barana), are extremely enchanting and captivating for the mind and heart (mana-harana), and are naturally lovely and comely and a provider of comfort and happiness to the beholder (suhāya suhā'ē)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 215 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 217.]

Are these boys the sons of a sage or are they some great princes[2]?

Or are they a manifestation of the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, who has revealed himself in a human form as a living being known as a 'Jiva' who is a microcosmic form of the macrocosmic supreme Soul[3]?

Are these two children not the jewel of the ocean representing beauty, charm and attractiveness, or are they the eyes of a beautiful damsel named 'Chhabi' (literally, a personified form of a painting or portrait so stupendously beautiful and enchanting that there is no match for it)?

Or else, is it that the two Ashwini Kumars (the twin sons of the Sun God), Kamdeo/cupid (the patron god of beauty, charm and glamour), and Basant (the Spring season which is deemed to be the king amongst seasons and one that brings cheer and greenery all around), or is it that Lords Vishnu and Shiva have assumed the body of humans and have come here (to bless me)?

Or is it that you (Vishwamitra) have found the fruits of the Kalpa Tree (the heavenly Tree of wish fulfillment) representing your noble, virtuous, meritorious and good deeds?

(In any case, there is no help but that thou tell me oh great sage, what amongst these possibilities are these two boys? I am confounded and struck with wonder of exceeding wonderment!)' (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 216.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 216; and Chaupai line nos 4 that precedes Doha no. 217.]

Saying this, king Janak, who was known as 'Videha', lost awareness (consciousness) of his body and the surrounding world as his entire being was overwhelmed by the surging waves of love and affection for the two brothers. He lost consciousness of himself and his surroundings so much so that he forgot where he was, who he was, who was present there, and how he ought to behave and act[4].

His body was thrilled and ecstatic; emotions of extreme happiness and joy overwhelmed his heart (and overflowed form it), and tears (of affection and exhilaration) welled up in his eyes. His heart delighted and his sight belighted at the marvelous and extremely enchanting view of the two brothers (4).

[[4]King Janak forgot for once that he is famed as 'Videha', one who was so highly self-realised and spiritually enlightened, having practiced complete restraint over his sense organs such as the eye that no charm of the external world was so strong as it would enchant him and captivate his mind to the extent that he would be numbed and dumbfounded for words. He had never felt bodily thrill by seeing anything in the physical world as he was witnessing today at the sight of Lord Ram and Laxman.

Never in his life had he been so mesmerized by any sight or view that he would look more than once at it or cast more than a fleeting glance at it just enough to sense its presence, but he never had allowed his mind and heart and subconscious to be overpowered by the charm and attractiveness of any image or scene so much that he would want to gaze at it transfixed. But everything has gone haywire and topsy-turvy today. So, what't the matter, he wondered.

For all his fame and pride of wisdom and enlightenment and dispassion and detachment from this world for which he was so renowned, Janak was for once astonished at his own behaviour as he lost his mental bearing and poise, and was literally swept off his feet at the sight of the amazing beauty of the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, like a dazed person who knows not what befell him when the surging waves of the ocean, which is under the influence of the full moon and is in high tide, just scoops him up and sweeps him off his feet as it takes him away with its receding waves!]

Vishwamitra very much appreciated Janak's sweet and pleasant words drenched with devotion[5].

Tulsidas says that then Vishwamitra began to narrate and sing the glories, the eulogies, the famed virtues and the excellent characters and qualities of Lord Sri Ram and Laxman[6] with his heart overflowing with intense joy and delight as he did so. [This narration is given in verse nos. 1/66—1/67 herein below.] (5).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 216.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 216 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.]

(1 / 66)

कौसिक कृपालहूको पुलकित तनु भौ।
उमगत अनुराग, सभाके सराहे भाग,
देखि दसा जनककी कहिबेको मनु भौ।। 1।।
प्रीतिके न पातकी, दियेहू साप पाप बड़ो,
मख–मिस मेरो तब अवध–गवनु भौ।
प्रानहूते प्यारे सुत माँगे दिये दसरथ,
सत्यसिंधु सोच सहे, सूनो सो भवनु भौ।। 2।।
काकसिखा सिर, कर केलि–तून–धनु–सर,
बालक–बिनोद जातुधाननिसों रनु भौ।
बूझत बिदेह अनुराग–आचरज–बस,
ऋषिराज जाग भयो, महाराज अनु भौ।। 3।।
भूमिदेव, नरदेव, सचिव परसपर
कहत, हमहिं सुरतरु सिवधनु भौ।
सुनत राजाकी रीति उपजी प्रतीति–प्रीति,
भाग तुलसीके, भले साहेबको जनु भौ।। 4।।

(1/66)

kausika kr̥pālahūkō pulakita tanu bhau.
umagata anurāga, sabhākē sarāhē bhāga,
dēkhi dasā janakakī kahibēkō manu bhau.. 1..
prītikē na pātakī, diyēhū sāpa pāpa baṛō,
makha-misa mērō taba avadha-gavanu bhau.
prānahūtē pyārē suta mām̆gē diyē dasaratha,
satyasindhu sōca sahē, sūnō sō bhavanu bhau.. 2..
kākasikhā sira, kara kēli-tūna-dhanu-sara,
bālaka-binōda jātudhānanisōṁ ranu bhau.
būjhata bidēha anurāga-ācaraja-basa,
r̥̆sirāja jāga bhayō, mahārāja anu bhau.. 3..
bhūmidēva, naradēva, saciva parasapara
kahata, hamahiṁ surataru sivadhanu bhau.
sunata rājākī rīti upajī pratīti-prīti,

Sage Vishwamitra's Reply-1

Verse no. 1/66—(Hearing the pleasant words of Janak as in verses no. 1/64—1/65) The most merciful and kind sage Vishwamitra (who was also known as 'Kaushik' by the virtue of the name of the family in which he was born) was thrilled too.

Affection began to swell-up in his heart. He praised the good luck of the assembly. Seeing the (spellbound and enthralled) condition of king Janak, the sage's mind was inspired to speak (and enlighten the assembly about who Lord Ram and Laxman were) (1).

So, the sage began the narration thus—'The demons used to defile my fire sacrifice. So I thought over the matter and came to the conclusion that these demons were very sinful and vile. Therefore, it was not wise to show a pretence of friendliness towards them or appease them in any other way (in the hope that they would stop tormenting me and let me complete my fire sacrifice), and to curse them will also be sinful on my part (because showing anger, vengeance, revenge and wrath is uncharacteristic and unbehoving for a saint of my stature, as well as the fact that it was prohibited to do so while the fire sacrifice was underway).

Hence, I went to Ayodhya with this as an excuse (to do something to protect my fire sacrifice). I asked king Dasrath to lend me his two sons who are dearer to him than his own life[1]. King Dasrath, who is the upholder of righteousness and truth, gave them (Sri Ram and Laxman) to me immediately though he had to suffer terribly at this parting (because he loves them very much), and his household became apparently deserted and lifeless as a consequence (of my bringing the two brothers with me)[2] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 208.

[2]Inspite of facing the certainty of sufferance from pain and grief at parting with the two princes, and the loliness and deserted look of the entire place that was natural to follow in the absence of the two brothers who were the very life and soul of the king as well as of the entire royal family and the dearest of all the citizens of Ayodhya as well, the righteous king dutifully consented to my request and sent the two brothers with me. He truly thought that this sufferance was of no consequence as weighed against the rewards that accrue by being instrumental in protection of a fire sacrifice, for the latter offsets the former.]

At that time they (Sri Ram and Laxman) had a tuft of curly hairs on the crest of their heads, and a toy-like bow and an arrow in their hands[2]. Thereafter, in due course, they fought with the demons as if it was another of their playful activity (or was like a game for them)[3].'

Hearing this, Janak was overwhelmed with astonishment and affection, and he asked with amusement, 'Lord! Then were you able to complete your fire sacrifice?'

(Vishwamitra replied—) 'Oh yes, you can witness it yourself (for it is very evident that I wouldn't be here, and look happy and cheerful enough if it hadn't been so!)' (3).

[[2]Refer for instance Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/54, stanza no. 1 also.

[3]Refer for instance Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/55, stanza no. 6, and verse no. 1/60, stanza no. 3 also.]

When the Brahmins (who were wise elders in the society), king Janak and his ministers heard these words of sage Vishwamitra, they were all amused and amazed, and said to each other—'Indeed, the bow of Lord Shiva has become a boon like that of a Kalpa Tree for us (because Lord Sri Ram and his brother Laxman would not have come hither had it not been for the bow-breaking ceremony that is underway to decide who would Sita marry)'.

Hearing (sunata)[4] what Janak (and his companions) concluded and the way he had interpreted his good fortune (rājākī rīti), Tulsidas says that a surge of love, affection, devotion, belief and faith has also emerged (or took birth or root) in his heart and mind (upajī pratīti-prīti).

He (Tulsidas) is very fortunate and extremely lucky (bhāga tulasīkē) that he had become a devotee, a faithful follower, or literally a servant of such a Lord (bhalē sāhēbakō janu bhau)[4]. (4).

[[4]Why does Tulsidas cite king Janak to say that he considers himself very lucky that he has been a devotee and a servant of Lord Ram? Well, the answer is that when king Janak, who was a great renouncer and famed as one of the wisest men of his time, had became overwhelmed with love and affection for Lord Ram so much so that he minced no words and felt no shyness to acknowledge it, then surely Tulsidas needs no other proof or look anywhere else to convince himself that he was and is right in surrendering himself to Lord Ram and being his devotee and servant. Who is greater and more mightier and holy and divine and supreme than Lord Ram who is being adored by king Janak and also by Lord Shiva, both of whom have reached the acme of self-realisation, and have attained the highest form of truthful knowledge and enlightenment in their respective forms—Janak amongst all humans, and Shiva amongst all Gods.]

(1/67)

चार्‌यो भले बेटा देव दसरथ रायके।
जैसे राम–लषन, भरत–रिपुहन तैसे,
सील–सोभा–सागर, प्रभाकर प्रभायके।। 1।।
ताड़का सँहारि मख राखे, नीके पाले ब्रत,
कोटि–कोटि भट किये एक एक घायके।
एक बान बेगही उड़ाने जातुधन–जात,
सूखि गये गात हैं, पतौआ भये बायके।। 2।।
सिलाछोर छुवत अहल्या भई दिब्यदेह,
गुन पेखे पारसके पंकरुह पायके।
रामके प्रसाद गुर गौतम खसम भये,
रावरेहु सतानंद पूत भये मायके।। 3।।
प्रेम–परिहास–पोख बचन परसपर
कहत सुनत सुख सब ही सुभायके।
तुलसी सराहैं भाग कौसिक जनकजूके,
बिधिके सुढर होत सुढर सुदायके।। 4।।

cāryō bhalē bēṭā dēva dasaratha rāyakē.
jaisē rāma-laṣana, bharata-ripuhana taisē,
sīla-sōbhā-sāgara, prabhākara prabhāyakē.. 1..
tāṛakā samha̐hāri makha rākhē, nīkē pālē brata,
kōṭi-kōṭi bhaṭa kiyē ēka ēka ghāyakē.
ēka bāna bēgahī uṛānē jātudhana-jāta,
sūkhi gayē gāta haiṁ, patau'ā bhayē bāyakē.. 2..
silāchōra chuvata ahalyā bha'ī dibyadēha,
guna pēkhē pārasakē paṅkaruha pāyakē.
rāmakē prasāda gura gautama khasama bhayē,
rāvarēhu satānanda pūta bhayē māyakē.. 3..
prēma-parihāsa-pōkha bacana parasapara
kahata sunata sukha saba hī subhāyakē.
tulasī sarāhaiṁ bhāga kausika janakajūkē,
bidhikē suḍhara hōta suḍhara sudāyakē.. 4..

Sage Vishwamitra's Reply-2

Verse no. 1/67—[Sage Vishwamitra informed king Janak, when the latter wished to know who the two princes accompanying the sage were, as follows:--]

'All the four sons of king Dasrath are very handosme and lovely. Like Lord Sri Ram and Laxman (whom you are seeing here), Bharat and Shatrughan (their brothers and the other two sons of Dasrath) are also an ocean of virtuous characters and of magnificent beauty as well as are like a sun representing fame and glory[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 198; and Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 309.]

They (Sri Ram and Laxman) slayed (the demoness) Tadka and protected my fire sacrifice perfectly, thereby upholding their vows[1]. They fell millions of brave demon warriors by a single arrow each (i.e. they didn't have to use more than one arrow to slay thousands of demons by a single shot). Many groups of demons simply flew away (or were pushed or thrown back) by their single arrow as if these demons with huge and heavy bodies were nothing but dried-up leaves flying around in a strong wind[3] (2).

[[2]And what was this 'vow' that the two brothers kept? When the Gods, Mother Earth and sages had prayed to Lord Vishnu to protect them against the tyranny of the cruel demons who were killing and spreading mayhem with impunity, the Lord had promised them succour and had told them he would personally come down to earth accompanied by all his fractions, or all his powers, in the form of human princes, and then devise a method to take care of things. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 187.

But this was said before Gods and others who were in an invisible form. So the Lord wished to go public with his vows and determination by declaring his intentions before ordinary people of the earth—and this exactly he did in the forest when he saw a heap of bones and upon enquiry was told that these were the remains of sages killed by the demons, whereby the Lord raised his hands and solemnly

declared that he says on oath that he will free the earth from the scourge of demons. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 9 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8.

[3]During the process of protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra, the two brothers were attacked by a huge demon army led by Marich and Subahu. While Subahu was burnt to ashes by a single fire-arrow, Marich was hit with a tip-less arrow which flung him off to a far away island in the middle of the ocean. The rest of the army was either annihilated or flung away like dried leaves are when whirled and taken away to god-only-knows-where during a severe storm. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 210.]

Simply by the touch of Lord Ram's toe at the corner of a stone, it transformed itself into the divine form of Ahilya (who had been suffering in this gross form due to some ancient curse upon her, and now being delivered from it she went back to heaven to reunite with her husband sage Gautam)[4].

By the virtue of this single mystical feat it was shown and proved to the world at large that Lord Ram's holy feet do possess great divine powers as if they were the gem known as 'Pārasa' (the philosopher's stone believed to convert lesser metals into precious gold)[5].

In this way, due to Lord Sri Ram's benevolence, mercy and grace, Ahilya resumed her original divine form and was not only reunited with her husband Guru Gautam who got back his wife, but sage Shatanand (who was Janak's court priest) too got back his mother. [Shatanand was the son of sage Gautam and his wife Ahilya] (3).'

[[4]Ahilya's liberation has been described in verse nos. 1/57—to 1/59 herein above in this chapter Baal Kand of Geetawali.

[5]The Lord's holy feet are likened to the 'Pārasa Mani' because they can fulfill all the wishes of the seeker, convert their grossness into sublimity, grant them honours which they hadn't ever imagined even in their wildest of dreams, and ensure their deliverance and liberation. Ahilya had not even prayed to Lord Ram as stones can't do that, but the all-knowing Lord knew the pains and the sufferings she was going though. She did not ask the Lord to touch her, but the merciful Lord blessed her without asking. What more can any sinner expect? Who in this creation is more kind, merciful, gracious, benevolent and caring than Lord Ram?

With the exchange of such pleasing words (between king Janak and sage Vishwamitra), words that were soaked in affection and said reverentially, words that bespoke of good tidings and auspicious events, words that were naturally sweet and gave natural joy, delight and happiness—all those present on the occasion who heard them felt exhilarated and delightful.

Tulsidas says that Vishwamitra praised the good fortunes of Janak and said that when the Creator, who determines destiny, is favourable and happy with someone, all the dices fall in the person's favour (and everything and all circumstances become nice and convenient to suit his likings and needs) (4).

(1 / 68)

ये दोऊ दसरथके बारे।
नाम राम घनस्याम, लखन लघु, नखसिख अँग उजियारे।। 1।।

निज हित लागि माँगि आने मैं धरमसेतु–रखवारे।
धीर, बीर बिरुदैत, बाँकुरे, महाबाहु, बल भारे।। 2।।
एक तीर तकि हती ताडका, किये सुर–साधु सुखारे।
जग्य राखि, जग साखि, तोषि ऋषि, निदरि निसाचर मारे।। 3।।
मुनितिय तारि स्वयंबर पेखन आये सुनि बचन तिहारे।
एउ देखिहैं पिनाकु नेकु, जेहि नृपति लाज–ज्वर जारे।। 4।।
सुनि, सानंद सराहि सपरिजन, बारहि बार निहारे।
पूजि सप्रेम, प्रसंसि कौसिकहि भूपति सदन सिधारे।। 5।।
सोचत सत्य–सनेह–बिबस निसि, नृपति गनत गये तारे।
पठये बोलि भोर, गुरके सँग रंगभूमि पगु धारे।। 6।।
नगर–लोग सुधि पाइ मुदित, सबही सब काज बिसारे।
मनहु मघा–जल उमगि उदधि–रुख चले नदी–नद–नारे।। 7।।
ए किसोर, धनु घोर बहुत, बिलखात बिलोकनिहारे।
टर्‌यो न चाप तिन्हते, जिन्ह सुभटनि कौतुक कुधर उखारे।। 8।।
ए जाने बिनु जनक जानियत करि पन भूप हँकारे।
नतरु सुधासागर परिहरि कत कूप खनावत खारे।। 9।।
सुखमा सील–सनेह सानि मनो रूप बिरंचि सँवारे।
रोम–रोमपर सोम–काम सत कोटि बारि फेरि डारे।।10।।
कोउ कहै, तेज–प्रताप–पुंज चितये नहिं जात, भिया रे!
छुअत सरासन–सलभ जरैगो ए दिनकर–बंस–दिया रे।।11।।
एक कहै, कछु होउ, सुफल भये जीवन–जनम हमारे।
अवलोके भरि नयन आजु तुलसीके प्रानपियारे।।12।।

(1/68)

yē dō'ū dasarathakē bārē.
nāma rāma ghanasyāma, lakhana laghu, nakhasikha am̐ga ujiyārē.. 1..
nija hita lāgi mām̐gi ānē maiṁ dharamasētu-rakhavārē.
dhīra, bīra birudaita, bām̐kurē, mahābāhu, bala bhārē.. 2..
ēka tīra taki hatī tāḍakā, kiyē sura-sādhu sukhārē.
jagya rākhi, jaga sākhi, tōṣi ṛ̥si, nidari nisācara mārē.. 3..
munitiya tāri svayambara pēkhana āyē suni bacana tihārē.
ē'u dēkhihaiṁ pināku nēku, jēhi nr̥pati lāja-jvara jārē.. 4..
suni, sānanda sarāhi saparijana, bārahi bāra nihārē.
pūji saprēma, prasansi kausikahi bhūpati sadana sidhārē.. 5..
sōcata satya-sanēha-bibasa nisi, nr̥pati ganata gayē tārē.
paṭhayē bōli bhōra, gurakē sam̐ga raṅgabhūmi pagu dhārē.. 6..
nagara-lōga sudhi pā'i mudita, sabahī saba kāja bisārē.
manahu maghā-jala umagi udadhi-rukha calē nadī-nada-nārē.. 7..
ē kisōra, dhanu ghōra bahuta, bilakhāta bilōkanihārē.
ṭaryō na cāpa tinhatē, jinha subhaṭani kautuka kudhara ukhārē.. 8..
ē jānē binu janaka jāniyata kari pana bhūpa ham̐kārē.
nataru sudhāsāgara parihari kata kūpa khanāvata khārē.. 9..
sukhamā sīla-sanēha sāni manō rūpa biran̄ci sam̐vārē.
rōma-rōmapara sōma-kāma sata kōṭi bāri phēri ḍārē..10..
kō'u kahai, tēja-pratāpa-puñja citayē nahiṁ jāta, bhiyā rē!

chu'ata sarāsana-salabha jaraigō ē dinakara-bansa-diyā rē..11..
ēka kahai, kachu hō'u, suphala bhayē jīvana-janama hamārē.
avalōkē bhari nayana āju tulasīkē prānapiyārē..12..

Lord Ram's Glories, Janak's Dilemma & Invitation to the Bow-Breaking Ceremony-1

Verse no. 1/68—[Sage Vishwamitra told king Janak—] 'These two boys are the sons of Dasrath. Out of these two, the one whose complexion as dark as a cloud is named 'Ram', while the other who is fair complexioned from toe-nail to tuft (or a bun of hairs) on the head (i.e. toe to head) is his younger brother called 'Laxman' (1).

I had brought these protectors of the law of Dharma (righteousness, probity, noble conduct, ethics and morality) for my own benefit and interest (which was to protect my fire sacrifice that was being constantly defiled by the demons)[1].

They are extremely courageous and have the virtue of fortitude, are valorous and brave, have great famed, possess unmatched strength of arms so much so that they are invincible in the battlefield, and are indeed very and incomparably strong, valiant, brave, courageous and virtuous (2).

[[1]Refer: Verse nos. 1/66, stanza no. 2, and 1/67, stanza no. 2 herein above.]

He (Lord Ram) had slayed the demoness called Tadka by shooting a single arrow at her, thereby giving delight to all the saints, sages, seers and gods[2].

In a similar fashion they had protected the fire sacrifice, and have given satisfaction and joy to hermits and sages by killing the demons most scornfully (i.e. without showing any mercy and reluctance while slaying them)—the whole world is a witness to this[3] (3).

[[2]It is because the sages and saints and gods were now sure that their saviour has come. No one could dare to even face Tadka, the ferocious demoness with a hellish look and an ogress to boot.

[3]Refer: Verse no. 1/67, stanza no. 2 herein above.]

Thereafter, having liberated the wife of the sage (i.e. Ahilya, wife of Gautam)[4], they have arrived here to watch the Swayambar (i.e. the marriage ceremony of your daughter Sita) after having heard of your vows[5].

Your good bow (of Lord Shiva), which has burned and tormented all the kings with the fire of shame, will be seen by him (Sri Ram) also (4).'

[[4]Refer: Verse no. 1/67, stanza no. 3 herein above.

[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 210.

Now, this is interesting. In Ram Charit Manas as cited above it is only said that the two brothers cheerfully joined the sage when they heard of the bow-breaking ceremony, but it is not explicitly said there what was the preset condition for being successful in this competition. This gives the impression that they agreed to go just for enjoyment and to watch this spectacular event. But here in Geetawali, it is clearly mentioned that Lord Ram and Laxman had known about the condition set for the winner of this bow-breaking ceremony which was actually a stiff competition rather than a pure religious ceremony organized to marry a girl.]

Hearing those words of the great sage, Janak joined his family members, his kith and kin, to praise the sage and honour him, but all the while his (Janak's) attention was on Lord Ram as he watched the latter from the corners of his eyes.

After having showed his due respect to sage Vishwamitra and worshipping him in a formal way, the king went back to his palace along with his retinue (5).

The king was torn between the pure, honest and truthful affection and a natural sense of endearment that had developed in his heart towards Lord Sri Ram and the sternness of his vows (that he would marry his daughter Sita to anyone who would lift and break Lord Shiva's hard and unyielding bow), he became thoughtful and pensive[6].

The whole night was spent by the king counting stars (i.e. he could not sleep even a wink because of his bewilderments, worries, dilemma and deep apprehension).

At daybreak, he sent an invitation to them (Ram, Laxman, Vishwamitra). Then, accompanied by his Guru (Vishwamitra), the Lord (Sri Ram) entered the theatre (or the stadium or the venue where the bow-breaking ceremony was to be held)[7] (6).

[[6]The king now regretted why he had made the condition of breaking of this bow a requisite for marrying Sita, his daughter. Had he known about Lord Ram, he would not have done so, but would have married his daughter straightaway to the Lord. But now he was on the horns of dilemma and in a deep pit of quandary—for if he broke his own vow at this late stage then it will not only give him a very bad name and ruin his immaculate reputation as a man of truthful words, but would also create a great scandal. Refer: Verse no. 1/69, stanza no. 2 herein below.

Refer also toRam Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 252.

[7]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 239—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 240.]

Hearing the news of the Lord's arrival, the citizens were jubilant, and they just forgot about whatso work they had been doing (or were about to do) even as all of them rushed towards the stadium/theatre of action (i.e. the venue of the bow-breaking ceremony)[8] as if the rivers, swollen during the heavy and torrential downpour of the 'Magha Nakshatra', overflow their banks, and joined by their tributaries, streams and rivulets, they rush towards the ocean (7).

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 240.

The 'Magha Nakshatra' is a special configuration of stars wherein heavy rains occur.]

All the spectators, thinking that they (Sri Ram and Laxman) were of tender age (i.e. are in their teens) while the bow was strong, sturdy and heavy, became worried and sullen. They contemplated over the matter gloomly and thought that about the formidable bow that could not be moved even by those warriors who were able to playfully uproot huge mountains (i.e. without much effort)[9] (8).

[[8]The citizens were a worried lot because they had all wanted Lord Ram to marry Sita, their princess. But the problem was that the bow which needed to be lifted and broken was a major hurdle as it was of very stern and unyielding sort, being the bow of Lord Shiva. So they wondered how can it be lifted by these delicate and young children who were not even past their teens. It's literally too much to hope or expect it from them. This made them sulk with gloomy thoughts.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 222—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 223; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 255—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precede Doha no. 257.]

The citizens talked amongst themselves—'It looks that Janak had not known them earlier, due to which he has made such a (stern and almost impossible to keep) vow and has invited other kings. Had it not been so, who would have been so foolish as to abandon and forsake an ocean of nectar and dig a well of unpotable water[9]? (9).

[[9]Had Janak known that there was such an eligible mate for Sita, would he ever have been so foolish to unnecessarily put Sita's fate on the dock and declare a Swayambar to be held? On the contrary, he would have directly approached Dasrath and offered Sita's hand to Sri Ram.

Here, Sri Ram's marriage to Sita is likened to an ocean of nectar, while the uncertainties, confoundedness and embarrassment of tieing her future with a ridiculous vow of bow-breaking is likened to a well of bitter or unpotable water. Janak was now in a fix, not knowing what to do.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 222.]

The creator Brahma has created their (Lord Ram's and Laxman's) enchanting image by kneading dough with a combination of such qualities as magnificence and beauty, virtuous and noble characters, and love and affection (sukhamā sīla-sanēha sāni).

He (the creator Brahma) has squeezed trillions of Moons and Kamdeo/cupids and poured their essence (i.e. beauty, glamour, magnificence, radiance and charm) on each of the pores of their bodies, and had then discarded the residual part[10] (10).

[[10]Brahma has created everything in this creation. So when he decided to create these two princes in the most beautiful form he could, he picked up the Moon and the Kamdeo and extracted the best qualities from them. Then he poured out this essence on these two brothers before throwing away the useless pith. The imagery is so wonderful: it means that whatever good the Moon and Kamdeo are famous for had been extracted from them and vested with Lord Ram and Laxman. So, what we see of the Moon and Kamdeo now, being so beautiful and epitomes of lovliness and examples of attractiveness, is only a pith from which the actual essence had already been removed by squeezing them. In other words, one can very well imagine how wonderful and wondrous of all the wonders may have been the enchantment of the two princes, and how bewitchingly beautiful and exceptionally comely and handsome were their form and appearance!]

Someone says—'Oh brother! He (Lord Ram) is a centre (a focus; a fount) of dazzling splendour and glory high. This is why it is not possible to look at him (because of the dazzle and glare of his glories and splendorous qualities—just as it is not possible to look directly as the blazing sun in the sky).

He is like a brilliant lighted lamp of the Solar race (i.e. he is the most remarkable member of this race, and being of the "Sun's race" he has inherited the Sun's glorious qualities).

Verily I say that the moth-like bow would be reduced to ash as soon as he (Lord Ram) touches it[11].' (11).

[[11]Here, Lord Ram is like a lighted lamp, and the bow like a moth. The moth gets burnt as soon as the flame of the lamp touches it. Likewise, as soon as Lord Ram touches the bow, the latter would yield to him and get broken.

The analogy with the 'Sun' is indeed interesting. Lord Ram and the entire family of king Raghu are called descendants of the Sun or the Solar race. In other words, Lord Ram has inherited the qualities of the Sun—its brilliance, splendour, energy, dynamism and its ability to sustain life in the world, besides its quality to remove darkness of the night symbolizing the darkness of ignorance and delusions that cover the world.

Once the Sun makes its appearance in the horizon and th darkness is gone, all phantoms and ghosts too vanish, implying that all the demons are doomed once Lord Ram has taken birth in this world.]

Others said—'Oh Brother! No matter what, our life and birth has been successful and fruitful today because we have had an eye-full view of the Lord (Sri Ram) who is dearer to Tulsidas than his own life[12] (12).'

[[12]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 246.]

[Note—Stanzas 1-10 refer to both the brothers, Ram and Laxman. Hence the plural pronoun 'them', 'they' has been used, while stanza 11-12 refer to Sri Ram only.]

(1 / 69)

जनक बिलोकि बार–बार रघुबरको।
मुनिपद सीस नाय, आयसु–असीस पाय,
एई बातैं कहत गवन कियो घरको।। 1।।
नींद न परति राति, प्रेम–पन एक भाँति,
सोचत, सकोचत बिरंचि–हरि–हरको।
तुम्हते सुगम सब देव! देखिबेको अब
जस हंस किए जोगवत जुग परको।। 2।।
ल्याए संग कौसिक, सुनाए कहि गुनगन,
आए देखि दिनकर कुल–दिनकरको।
तुलसी तेऊ सनेहको सुभाउ बाउ मानो
चलदलको सो पात करै चित चरको।। 3।।

(1/69)

janaka bilōki bāra-bāra raghubarakō.
munipada sīsa nāya, āyasu-asīsa pāya,
ē'ī bātaiṁ kahata gavana kiyō gharakō.. 1..
nīnda na parati rāti, prēma-pana ēka bhāmt̐i,
sōcata, sakōcata biranc̄i-hari-harakō.
tumhatē sugama saba dēva! dēkhibēkō aba
jasa hansa ki'ē jōgavata juga parakō.. 2..
lyā'ē saṅga kausika, sunā'ē kahi gunagana,
ā'ē dēkhi dinakara kula-dinakarakō.
tulasī tē'ū sanēhakō subhā'u bā'u mānō

caladalakō sō pāta karai cita carakō.. 3..

Lord Ram's Glories, Janak's Dilemma and Invitation to the Bow-Breaking Ceremony-2

Verse no. 1/69—Repeatedly watching (or glancing at) Raghubar (Lord Sri Ram), bowing his head at the feet of the sage (Vishwamitra), getting his permission and blessings, Janak then went home to his palace all the while talking (with his companions) about this subject (as detailed in the previous verses) (1).

His affection (for Lord Sri Ram) and vows (to marry Sita to the person who breaks the bow) are equally strong and inviolable. Hence, he is greatly worried, tormented and perplexed, and is unable to sleep during the night[1].

(Praying that his wishes be fulfilled, which was that Sita should be betrothed to Sri Ram—) He (Janak) puts the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the concluder), in a quandary when he says, 'Oh Lords! It is possible to see everything get done and one's wishes fulfilled by your grace and kindness.[2]'

(Clever as he is—) He has made his good fame into a swan-like bird and takes care of both its wings[3]. (2).

[[1]Refer: Verse no. 1/68, stanza no. 6 herein above.

[2]Janak is on the horns of a great dilemma. On the one hand he does not want to break his vows of marrying his daughter Sita to anyone who lifts and breaks an old and worn-out bow of Shiva that had been lying with his family for ages, a condition he had set to determine the strength and valour of the future husband of Sita. And on the other hand when he saw Lord Ram and heard his glories from someone as exalted and renowned as a truthful sage as Vishwamitra, he determined that Lord Ram was the most appropriate prince to be Sita's husband.

Now the reason for the perplexity was that at this late stage when the bow-ceremony was to be held the very next day and when hundreds of other kings and princes have already assembled for the purpose, to go back on his words and canceling the ceremony and marrying Sita directly to Lord Ram would cause an uproar and revolt as well as a huge scandal of unprecedented proportions, besides giving him and his entire family and race a bad name that would be impossible to erase. And Janak was correct in his apprehensions as would be clear a little while later when none of the invited competitors could move the bow even a bit, and Lord Ram effortlessly lifted and broke it into two. As soon as Sita put the victory garland on Lord Ram, all the failed kings and princes rose up in revolt, threatening to capture Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman and fighting Janak and his army should they intervene and take their side. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 266.

So, Janak prays to the three chief Gods, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with the hope that they would find some way and contrive some device to fulfil his wishes as it is only possible for these three great Gods to change the course of destiny should they decide to help someone.

Now therefore, since 'Brahma' is the writer and determiner of destiny, if he be pleased he can create some last-minute situation, at the very end of the eleventh hour so to say, to ensure that Lord Ram is betrothed to Sita.

Lord Shiva to whom the bow actually belongs was the most competent Authority to turn the tide of events the way he wants—for he can ensure that the bow becomes very heavy and stubborn when all the assembled competitors try to lift it so that no one can break it, and when Lord Ram goes to try his hand at it the bow should become light as a feather and allow itself to be broken without offering any resistance.

And of course Lord Vishnu would help him if Brahma and Shiva agree because Vishnu always fulfils the wishes of his devotees, and would surely not go against the actions taken by Brahma and Shiva.

Janak for once, however, did not realise 'Vishnu' was the object of his adoration in his form as 'Lord Ram', and there the Lord was directly in his front and in his own city. Lord Vishnu is all-knowing and omniscient, and once the thought came in the mind of Janak it wasn't a secret from the Lord. And Janak was also unaware of the fact that Brahma and Shiva were privy to this development because it was on their prayer that Vishnu had consented to come down upon earth as Lord Ram.

[3]A swan is considered as the wisest bird with mystical powers as it is believed that it can separate water from milk, and picks up only pearls, which are symbolic of pristine pure wisdom, from an assortment of gems. Since Janak was regarded as a wise and enlightened and upright king, he is likened to a 'swan' here. His two wishes—one to keep his vow of marrying Sita to anyone who breaks Shiva's bow, and the other to have Lord Ram as Sita's husband—are like the two wings of this swan as they are diametrically opposite to each other and it is impossible to imagine that they would converge.

A bird flies only when its wings are open, and during flght it is not as stable as it was when sitting pretty on solid ground. Likewise, with the two opposite wishes unfolded in his mind, Janak was very restless and confounded. His mind was agitated because he could not settle on one option which would be like closing the wings of the bird and its coming down to rest.

Janak was therefore in a fix—not knowing what to do. So he has left the decision on the Trinity Gods to do what was best for him in the present circumstance. The two wings of the swan respectively represent his affection for Sri Ram and his desire to have him as his son-in-law, and his vows regarding the marriage of Sita which was tied to the breaking of the bow.]

Sage Kaushik (Vishwamitra) had brought the two brothers (Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman) and had narrated their great virtues and immense glories to king Janak (which had fascinated Janak no end inasmuch as that he had mentally chosen Lord Ram to be his future son-in-law).

Tulsidas says—Seeing the 'sun' of the Sun-race (dinakara kula-dinakarakō) (i.e. the most exalted Lord Sri Ram who was the best in the Solar race, and was as outstanding and remarkable in his glories and virtues as the brilliant sun is in the sky), king Janak's mind and intellect were filled with extreme affection for the Lord, and Janak was so overwhelmed with emotions that he lost his otherwise calm and composed bearing just like the leaves of a fig tree that sways under the influence of a breeze[4] (3).

[[4]This was very uncharacteristic of Janak as he was known to be of a stable and calm mind and demeanours, rarely becoming emotional under any given circumstance. But when he was introduced to Lord Ram and the latter's glorious virtues enumerated by sage Vishwamitra, and when he noted Lord Ram's divine charm and beauty which were inherently heavenly by their nature, Janak was numbed and dumbfounded. His mind and intellect that were never affected by such physical

things as beauty or influenced by anyone's glories and fame had, for once, lost their bearing and composure, making Janak emotional and sentimental like an ordinary person who is swept off his feet when he meets someone exceptionally charming and dignified.]

राग केदारा

(1/70)

रंग–भूमि भोरे ही जाइकै।
राम–लषन लखि लोग लूटिहैं लोचन–लाभ अघाइकै।। 1।।
भूप–भवन, घर घर, पुर बाहर, इहै चरचा रही छाइकै।
मगन मनोरथ–मोद नारि–नर, प्रेम–बिबस उठैं गाइकै।। 2।।
सोचत बिधि–गति समुझि, परसपर कहत बचन बिलखाइकै।
कुँवर किसोर, कठोर सरासन, असमंजस भयो आइकै।। 3।।
सुकृत सँभारि, मनाइ पितर–सुर, सीस ईसपद नाइकै।
रघुबर–करधनु–भंग चहत सब अपनो सो हितु चितु लाइकै।। 4।।
लेत फिरत कनसुई सगुन सुभ, बूझत गनक बोलाइकै।
सुनि अनुकूल, मुदित मन मानहु धरत धीरजहि धाइकै।। 5।।
कौसिक–कथा एक एकनिसों कहत प्रभाउ जनाइकै।
सीय–राम संजोग जानियत, रच्यो बिरंचि बनाइकै।। 6।।
एक सराहि सुबाहु–मथन बर बाहू, उछाह बढ़ाइकै।
सानुज राज–समाज बिराजिहैं राम पिनाक चढ़ाइकै।। 7।।
बड़ी सभा बड़ो लाभ, बड़ो जस, बड़ी बड़ाई पाइकै।
को सोहिहै, और को लायक रघुनायकहि बिहाइकै ?।। 8।।
गवनिहैं गँवहिं गवाँइ गरब गृह नृपकुल बलहि लजाइकै।
भलीभाँति साहब तुलसीके चलिहैं ब्याहि बजाइकै।। 9।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/70)

raṅga-bhūmi bhōrē hī jā'ikai.
rāma-laṣana lakhi lōga lūṭihaiṁ lōcana-lābha aghā'ikai.. 1..
bhūpa-bhavana, ghara ghara, pura bāhara, ihai caracā rahī chā'ikai.
magana manōratha-mōda nāri-nara, prēma-bibasa uṭhaiṁ gā'ikai.. 2..
sōcata bidhi-gati samujhi, parasapara kahata bacana bilakhā'ikai.
kum̐vara kisōra, kaṭhōra sarāsana, asamaṅjasa bhayō ā'ikai.. 3..
sukr̥ta sam̐bhāri, manā'i pitara-sura, sīsa īsapada nā'ikai.
raghubara-karadhanu-bhaṅga cahata saba apanō sō hitu citu lā'ikai.. 4..
lēta phirata kanasu'ī saguna subha, būjhata ganaka bōlā'ikai.
suni anukūla, mudita mana mānahu dharata dhīrajahi dhā'ikai.. 5..
kausika-kathā ēka ēkanisōṁ kahata prabhā'u janā'ikai.
sīya-rāma saṁjōga jāniyata, racyō biran̄ci banā'ikai.. 6..
ēka sarāhi subāhu-mathana bara bāhū, uchāha baṛhā'ikai.

sānuja rāja-samāja birājihaiṁ rāma pināka caṛhā'ikai.. 7..
baṛī sabhā baṛō lābha, baṛō jasa, baṛī baṛā'ī pā'ikai.
kō sōhihai, aura kō lāyaka raghunāyakahi bihā'ikai?.. 8..
gavanihaiṁ gaṁvahiṁ gavāṁī garaba gṛha nṛpakula balahi lajā'ikai.
bhalībhāṁti sāhaba tulasīkē calihaiṁ byāhi bajā'ikai.. 9..

The citizens' hope, a day prior to the bow-ceremony, that Lord Ram would surely break the bow & marry Sita

Verse no. 1/70—[On the day before the actual bow-breaking ceremony was to be held, there was great excitement and anticipation in the air in Janakpur, and the only hot topic of discussion amongst the citizens of Janakpur was the possibility of Lord Ram breaking the bow and becoming eligible to marry Sita, and how this objective may be attained. All the people hoped that it would be so, and they prayed earnestly to the Gods that it was their collective wish and they are invoking all their collective good and meritorious deeds done in their lives that their this single prayer should be heard and requited—for they wanted that a permanent relationship be established between the kingdom of Janakpur and its royal family with the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, as that would certainly enhance the possiblility of the brothers visiting the city again to meet their in-laws in some point in the future, thereby enabling the lucky citizens to see and meet and interact with them often in the times to come in the future.

Hence, there was anxiety and excitement and a lot of anticipation that day. Wherever one's eyes went one would find groups of citizens, men and women, huddled together debating this subject animatedly. Some sounded very optimistic and certain that it is sure that their wishes would be fulfilled, others were doubtful because of Janak's rigid vows.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 222—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 223; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 255—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 258.

Even the assembled kings and princes who had come to participate in the bow-ceremony intuitively realized that in would be Lord Ram who will marry Sita by breaking the bow: Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 245 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede it.

Hence, every single person was animatedly engaged in the discussion about what would happen the next day; who would be successful in breaking the bow and marrying Sita, and whether or not Janak would abandon his stubborness. Everyone hoped that the lucky competitor turns out to be Lord Ram, but as of now things were still in the lap of an uncertain future.

So the citizens anxiously and animatedly discussed the matter thus:--]

'As soon as the day breaks tomorrow, the citizens shall converge in the stadium, and seeing Lord Sri Ram and Laxman, they shall enjoy the benefit of their eyes to their hearts' content.'[1] (1).

[[1]We find in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 240 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that as soon as the word spread that Lord Ram and Laxman have gone to the venue of the bow-ceremony, there was a literal flood of

citizens who left whatso work they were engaged in and rushed to take their seats early so that they would take the front rows to have a better view of the brothers. The tide was so huge and unexpected that king Janak had to depute special ushers to seat the whole crowd in an orderly manner.]

Everywhere—whether it is in the palace of the king, or within and without the city (i.e. within the walls of the city or in the surrounding suburbs, villages and the countryside), in every household, market palce and nook and corner—it is the main theme of discussion. All the men and women folk, being ecstatic and jubilant at their immense good fortune, speak only about this one topic (concerning the bow-ceremony and who would emerge the victor) (2).

Wondering what the Creator is inclined to do and apprehensive of what he has stored for them as tidings for the next day, everyone was very worried, pensive and sullen, saying to each other, 'Brother, it is a great dilemma and a perplexing situation—the boys (Lord Sri Ram and Laxman) are very young in age and tender in form, while the bow that is to be broken is very hard, strong and formidable. [So, how will any one of them will be able to break the bow?[2]' (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 223 where this dilemma is expressed by the womenfolk of Janakpur, and one wise amongst them answers it also by saying that "one should not be misled by their tender age and delicate form for these two brothers possess stupendous mystical and mysterious powers as they have not only crushed mighty demons who had sent chill down the spine of the greatest warriors and were deemed to be invincible, but have also provided liberation to Ahilya by the mere touch of the toe"; (ii) from Doha no. 255—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precede Doha no. 257 where a similar doubt was raised by Sita's mother queen Sunayana, and was similarly answered by her close companions; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 258 where Sita herself has this doubt in her mind.

A similar idea is expressed herein below in verse no. 1/78, stanza no. 3 of this book 'Geetawali'.]

On this wise, everyone invoked all the good and meritorious deeds done in their lives (sukr̥ta sam̐bhāri), and sincerely prayed to their ancestors, Gods, Shiva, Vishnu and other deities by bowing their heads before them (manā'i pitara-sura, sīsa īsapada nā'ikai), pleading with them to requite them now for all their good and meritorious deeds and treating this single event of the breaking-of-the-bow as something that directly related to them personally and affected their happiness and well-being (saba apanō sō hitu citu lā'ikai) so that Raghubar (Lord Ram) should be able to break the bow with his own hands (raghubara-karadhanu-bhaṅga) (4).

The women-folk carry the 'kanasu'ī'[3] here and there, while the men summon the soothsayers and astrologers and ask them for good signs and omens[4].

Upon getting favourable answers from them (both the Kansui and the soothsayers), the excited citizens run hither and thither with happy and contented minds, gathering courage to tide over their perplexities, consternations and dilemmas (because they are well nigh sure that their wishes would be fulfilled and Lord Ram would definitely marry Sita by breaking the formidable bow) (5).

[[3]Village women make small idols of 'Gauri', the divine goddess who bestows good fortunes, using cowdung. They put it in a sieve and fling it to the ground. If the

tiny idols fall face-up, it is considered a good omen and portend success, but if the idols falls face-down or on its side then it is considered as a bad sign and indicative of failure of the enterprise. This traditional practice of determining if the desired objective would be attained or not is called 'kanasu'ī'.

[4]The men-folk adopt other ways to guess the outcome in the future—they consult astrologers and oracles. They ask them to observe the signs of Nature and deduce if there are positive signals that their wishes would be fulfilled, or if these natural signs foretell something to the contrary.]

Everyone now talked of sage Kaushik (Vishwamitra), and about his immense glories, stellar virtues and good name, even as they enthusiastically narrated to each other all about the remarkable tidings that the great sage had brought here and revealed concerning the two brothers to king Janak and his companions[5].

All the citizens were now convinced that it appeared in all sooth and in all probability that the Creator had indeed destined the union of Lord Sri Ram and Sita (6).

[[5]Whatever transpired between sage Vishwamitra and king Janak had now spread to all the parts of the city. Janak had himself been so excited that he divulged all the good news to the members of the royal family, and his courtiers and attendants and elders of the city who had accompanied him when he went to meet sage Vishwamitra spread the happy tidings amongst the citizens and the common folk of the city.

By this time everyone was aware of the greatness of the sage as he was a highly reputed and revered sage of his time. Everyone was now privy to whatever the sage had to tell about the great deeds and achievements of Lord Ram and Laxman—such as about these two boys belonging to a great and reputed noble royal family of the Solar race, of their valiant deeds and strength of arms and courage and fearlessness as they effortlessly faced and slayed the demons and perfectly protected his fire sacrifice, and how Ahilya was mysteriously liberated by the mere touch of the toe of Lord Ram, a deed in itself most mystical and amazing. Then there was the news of how king Janak had been smitten by love and affection at the sight of Lord Ram.

The citizens deduced that it surely was not without reason that Vishwamitra had brought the two brothers with him to Janakpur, especially during the course of holding of a stiff competition like a bow-breaking event. It was surely done because the great sage knew of some great honour that would come to these two princes towards whom he was so much highly obliged. Surely, the sage would not have otherwise brought them hither to face the prospect of being faceless just like any one of the countless princes and kings in the milling crowd of competitors to face anonymity and neglect—because that would be highly inappropriate for the sage to treat someone who has done him so great favour in this way intead of rewarding him with the best of rewards available. And what better reward was there than to gift Lord Ram with the hand of Sita in marriage; what better way would the sage find to thank Lord Ram's father king Dasrath than to send his son back to him with a bride who was like the jewel of the world!

So, all the citizens logically concluded that putting everything together it was abundantly clear that the pointer is towards Lord Ram breaking the bow and marrying Sita.]

Someone tried to bolster the morale (of the citizens and the household of Janak) by describing the way Lord Ram had slayed the demon Subahu by raising his arms and

using the bow. This gentleman said—'Lood Brothers! It is for certain that Sri Ram would string the bow and raise it in his arms to make his presence felt in the assembly of kings and princes in the royal court just as he had raised his arms that held the bow when he had slayed the demon Subahu' (7).

'Because', he continued, 'who else is there in this large gathering, except Raghunāyaka (Sri Ram), who is more exalted and great enough to be eligible to acquire the fairest of fame, the greatest of name, the glorious of glories, the highest of honour and rarest of acclaim that would be bestowed to someone who can establish himself in this great assembly? Say, who else other than Lord Ram can stand the test that would bring the mightiest of mighty glory and fame that has no parallel upon him by the virtue of having the hand of Sita in marriage? (8).

Therefore now, oh brothers, be assured that whereas on the one hand all other kings and princes shall lose their pride and vanity by sacrificing them on the altar symbolized by this bow (as no matter how hard they all try none of them would be able to move the bow an inch), and having suffered a crushing defeat they would all lower their heads in shame and ignominy and go back home with a sullen face, and on the other hand the Lord of Tulsidas, ('sāhaba tulasīkē'; i.e. Lord Ram) would emerge triumphant and go home victorious (after marrying Sita and completing the marriage rites) to the accompaniment of music and songs and pomp and pageantry and ceremony befitting the happy occasion.' (9).

पुष्पवाटिकामें

राग टोड़ी

(1/71)

भोर फूल बीनबेको गये फुलवाई हैं।
सीसनि टिपारे, उपबीत, पीत पट कटि,
दोना बाम करनि सलोने भे सवाई हैं।। 1।।
रूपके अगार, भूपके कुमार, सुकुमार,
गुरके प्रानअधार संग सेवकाई हैं।
नीच ज्यों टहल करैं, राखैं रुख अनुसरैं,
कौसिक–से कोही बस किये दुहुँ भाई हैं।। 2।।
सखिनसहित तेहि औसर बिधिके सँजोग
गिरिजाजू पूजिबेको जानकीजू आई हैं।
निरखि लषन–राम जाने ऋतुपति–काम,
मोहि मानो मदन मोहनी मूड़ नाई हैं।। 3।।
राघौजू–श्रीजानकी–लोचन मिलिबेको मोद
कहिबेको जोगु न, मैं बातैं–सी बनाई हैं।
स्वामी, सीब, सखिन्ह, लषन तुलसीको तैसो
तैसो मन भयो जाकी जैसिये सगाई हैं।। 4।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/71)

bhōra phūla bīnabēkō gayē phulavā'ī haiṁ.
sīsani ṭipārē, upabīta, pīta paṭa kaṭi,
dōnā bāma karani salōnē bhē savā'ī haiṁ.. 1..
rūpakē agāra, bhūpakē kumāra, sukumāra,
gurakē prāna'adhāra saṅga sēvakā'ī haiṁ.
nīca jyōṁ ṭahala karaiṁ, rākhaiṁ rukha anusaraiṁ,
kausika-sē kōhī basa kiyē duhuṁ bhā'ī haiṁ.. 2..
sakhinasahita tēhi ausara bidhikē saṁjōga
girijājū pūjibēkō jānakījū ā'ī haiṁ.
nirakhi laṣana-rāma jānē ṛtupati-kāma,
mōhi mānō madana mōhanī mūṛa nā'ī haiṁ.. 3..
rāghaujū-śrījānakī-lōcana milibēkō mōda
kahibēkō jōgu na, maiṁ bātaiṁ-sī banā'ī haiṁ.
svāmī, sība, sakhinha, laṣana tulasīkō taisō
taisō mana bhayō jākī jaisiyē sagā'ī haiṁ.. 4..

Lord Ram's visit to the Royal Garden to pluck flowers for sage Vishwamitra's worship rituals & His meeting Sita there-I

Verse no. 1/71—[As it happened, on the first day of their arrival at Janakpur, Lord Ram and Laxman had gone sight-seeing in the city, and it was then that the citizens had an opportunity to meet and become enchanted by the two brothers as has been narrated in verse nos. 1/67—to 1/70 herein above.

The next morning, sage Vishwamitra needed flowers for his worship rituals. So he asked Lord Ram and his brother to go and fetch some. In their search for flowers, the brothers went to the royal garden, and after getting permission from the keepers who immediately recognized them, they went in and roamed around plucking suitable flowers as needed.

Meanwhile, since this was the day when the bow-ceremony was to be held later on, Sita was sent by her mother to offer special prayers to the family deity in the garden palace, seeking the deity's blessings so that an appropriate groom is found for Sita.

Now, as destiny had destined, one of Sita's maids had gone alone to explore the garden independently, and somewhere she saw the two brothers. She immediately rushed back and conveyed the news to the rest of their friends, and implored upon them to come in haste and not miss on this most wonderful opportunity to see two lovely princes wandering freely in the garden, and as is the wont of maidens of their age, it was too strong a temptation to resist. So, the group with Sita in its center headed to that part of the garden where Lord Ram and Laxman were plucking flowers. Thus arrived an opportunity when both Lord Ram and Sita came face to face with each other, and it was like 'love at first sight' for both of them. Sita determined in her heart that this prince was the true desire of her inner being and if Lord God ever wished to fulfill her desires then let she be betrothed to this prince. Her silent resolve

was reciprocated by Lord Ram too who also decided that he would do things that fulfill Sita's inner quest.

With this firm resolve in her mind and heart, Sita then went to the family temple and prayed most earnestly to the deity she had come to worship, which happened to be Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva and the universal patron deity of women, specially unmarried girls seeking a good and appropriate husbands for themselves, that she be betrothed to Lord Ram and none else. Goddess Parvati blessed Sita that her wishes would be fulfilled in full.

All these happenings have been narrated in fine detail in Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 227—to Doha no. 236 as well.

Now, let's resume our reading of "Geetawali". As is the pattern adopted in this book by Tulsidas, we shall observe that the narrative is in the 'present tense' to indicate that the author is mentally transported, in a subtle and etheral form, to that point of time and era when the events were actually taking place, and hence his narrative is like a true scribe's description of events in the way he witnesses them first hand unfold before his eyes, albeit 'mental eyes' if not physical, and therefore are authentic narratives. This fact is abundantly clear in stanza no. 4 of this verse. Let's read on:]

As soon as it was dawn, Lord Sri Ram and Laxman arrived at the royal garden to pluck flowers (for Vishwamitra's daily morning worship rituals). They have a cap on their heads, a sacred thread around their necks, Pitambar around their waists, and a bowl of flowers in their left hands, as a result of which their beauty and charm has increased by a full quarter. [That is, the 'flowers in their hands' have enhanced their natural prettiness, their inherent charm, their usual attractiveness and magnificence by almost a quarter of what it normally was. For this was the first and rare view of the two brothers with flowers in their hands in addition to their usual attire and things they carried on them, such as the cap, the sacred thread, the Pirambar etc.] (1).

Verily, both the brothers are inherently a treasury of beauty, charm and magnificence (rūpakē agāra). They are royal princes (bhūpakē kumāra), tender and delicate in form (sukumāra), and so dear to their Guru (Vishwamitra) that they are like the latter's very life and soul (gurakē prāna'adhāra). They have come with the Guru to serve him diligently like true and dedicated disciples (saṅga sēvakā'ī haiṁ).

While serving their Guru, they (do not behave like princes but) act like a faithful, loyal, meek and lowly servant serving his master (nīca jyōṁ ṭahala karaiṁ), always eager and ready to obey orders obediently and do the Guru's bidding, and personally ensuring that all their actions conform to the Guru's wishes (rākhaiṁ rukha anusaraiṁ).

The result of this service and dedication was that they (the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman) have managed to successfully bring sage Kaushik (Vishwamitra)—who was renowned for his anger and short temper (kausika-sē kōhī)—under their sway (i.e. made him calm and self-restraint and loving and caring when it came to dealing with the two princes: basa kiyē duhuṁ bhā'ī haiṁ) (2).

As it was destined by the Gods, Sita arrived there (in the royal garden) to offer worship to Goddess Parvati. There she saw Lord Sri Ram and Laxman and thought to

herself that they were ‘Basant’, the king of seasons, and ‘Kamdeo/cupid’, the patron deity of beauty, present there in person.

She was so amazed, spellbound and enthralled on seeing them as if Kamdeo/cupid had cast a magical spell of enchantment upon her mind (3).

The feeling of exhilaration, and of joy and affection which emerged mutually in the hearts of Lord Ram and Sita when their eyes met each other is beyond description. I (Tulsidas) have just hinted at it[1].

At that moment, amongst all those present at the time there—such as Lord Sri Ram, Sita, her maids (companions), Laxman and Tulsidas[2]—a mental relationship was mutually established between them which was in consonance with and in accordance to their inherent inclinations, temperaments, emotions, sentiments and thoughts towards each other[3] (4).

[[1]Tulsidas is wise enough to leave details to one’s imagination. He does not specify what transpired when Sri Ram and Sita saw each other. Tulsidas wishes to maintain the highest standards of decorum, dignity and modesty in his writings, and does not wish to violate basic norms of good writing when describing such intimate moments. After all, Lord Ram and Sita were not two humans, a prince and a princess, meeting each other and falling heads over heels in love, but human forms of the supreme Divinity, of ‘Brahm’ and his ‘Shakti’ respectively, and one ought to be very careful and guarded and conscientious and dignified when dealing with such subjects that have a spiritual and sublime dimension.

[2]As for Tulsidas, Sri Ram was his Holy Father, Sita was his Holy Mother, while the maids and Laxman were standing as witnesses to this unfolding of the divine story of their union. Tulsidas considers himself as being extremely lucky to be a witness too. After all, no other human being was privy to this moment when Lord Ram had first met Sita, so this was really a great privilege that was granted to Tulsidas.

Further, he has sort of silently stood in attendance in what was supposed to be a very private moment to show that he is a very close confidante of Lord Sri Ram as much as Laxman is. And therefore, he too has as much a right of way over his Lord Sri Ram as Laxman has.

Sita was accompanied by her handmaidens who would vouch for her integrity and safe conduct and solemnly declare that no untoward incident occurred in the garden that may taint the immaculate reputation of Sita in way should any evil scandal or nasty gossip erupt. So, Lord Ram too wanted someone to bear witness for him in case any such nasty enventuality cropped up unexpected because there are many jealous souls full of malice and ill-will in their heart and mind who are always on the look-out to kick up a storm if they get the slightest hint of any wrong-doing.

Hence, the Lord allowed Tulsidas, albeit secretly, to become his witness and see first hand whatever transpired in the garden between the Lord and Sita. Laxman was his brother, and if the former tried to defend his brother in case of some accusation of wrong-doing or misdemeanour or of any kind of disgraceful act, the people would say he is taking sides with his sibling inspite his knowing that all was not clean. But if an outsider such as Tulsidas swore on oath and stood witness that nothing amiss or unethical or disgraceful or uncivilized happened in the garden during the brief encounter between Lord Ram and Sita, except their seeing each other from a very respectable distance without a single word being exchanged or gesture made in any way whatsoever, his words would bear weight as it would be the testimony of an outsider and an independent witness.

[3]Lord Ram and Sita thought of each other as eternal partners which they actually were in the primary form as Lord Vishnu and his divine consort goddess Laxmi, the handmaidens of Sita thought of themselves as the damsels of heaven, and Laxman and Tulsidas played the role of witnesses and close friends of the Lord.]

(1 / 72)

पूजि पारबती भले भाय पाँय परिकै।
सजल सुलोचन, सिथिल तनु पुलकित,
आवै न बचन, मन रह्यो प्रेम भरिकै।। 1।।
अंतरजामिनि भवभामिनि स्वामिनिसों हौं,
कही चाहौं बात, मातु अंत तौ हौं लरिकै।
मूरति कृपालु मंजु माल दै बोलत भई,
पूजो मन कामना भावतो बरु बरिकै।। 2।।
राम कामतरु पाइ, बेलि ज्यों बौंड़ी बनाइ,
माँग–कोषि तोषि–पोषि, फैलि–फूलि–फरिकै।
रहौगी, कहौगी तब, साँची कही अंबा सिय,
गहे पाँय द्वै, उठाय, माथे हाथ धरिकै।। 3।।
मुदित असीस सुनि, सीस नाइ पुनि पुनि,
बिदा भई देवीसों जननि डर डरिकै।
हरषीं सहेली, भयो भावतो, गावतीं गीत,
गवनी भवन तुलसीस–हियो हरिकै।। 4।।

(1/72)

pūji pārabatī bhalē bhāya pām̐ya parikai.
sajala sulōcana, sithila tanu pulakita,
āvai na bacana, mana rahyō prēma bharikai.. 1..
antarajāmini bhavabhāmini svāminisōṁ hauṁ,
kahī cāhauṁ bāta, mātu anta tau hauṁ larikai.
mūrati kr̥pālu manj̃ju māla dai bōlata bha'ī,
pūjō mana kāmanā bhāvatō baru barikai.. 2..
rāma kāmataru pā'i, bēli jyōṁ bauṇṛī banā'i,
mām̐ga-kōṣi tōṣi-pōṣi, phaili-phūli-pharikai.
rahaugī, kahaugī taba, sām̐cī kahī ambā siya,
gahē pām̐ya dvai, uṭhāya, māthē hātha dharikai.. 3..
mudita asīsa suni, sīsa nā'i puni puni,
bidā bha'ī dēvīsōṁ janani ḍara ḍarikai.
haraṣīṁ sahēlī, bhayō bhāvatō, gāvatīṁ gīta,
gavanī bhavana tulasīsa-hiyō harikai.. 4..

Lord Ram in the Royal Garden-2

Verse no. 1/72—[After seeing Lord Ram and deciding in her inner-self that if there is anyone whom she would like to marry then it is the Lord, she went to the temple of goddess Parvati and prayed to the deity, silently expressing her heart-felt desire to the goddess and beseeching her, pleading with her to fulfill it, but it was done silently and only at the mental level, without explicitly saying anything in words, to avoid embarrassment for herself as well as for the fear of giving her parents a very bad name for violating the norms and traditions of the time that required that the girl should not pre-determine and hook her heart on someone whom she would like to marry, especially when her parents haven't been taken into confidence by her earlier and they have organized a 'Swayambar' to decide who would be her future husband.

When a 'Swayambar' is held, the parents set certain conditions, and whoso meets these conditions marries their daughter. Though this may seem not in good taste and even cruel on the girl as she has no say in the entire matter though it is she who is directly affected and her entire future happiness depends upon this marriage, but in the tradition-bound society of ancient times it was deemed fit to leave the decision on the parents of a girl to determine in good faith how and who would marry their daughter. Any overt sign on the part of the girl that would hint at her falling for some stranger and losing her heart to him without the knowledge of her parents was deemed to be unethical and scandalous, and it would cast an indelible stain on her and raise questions about her purity and virginity.

This incidence of Sita praying to goddess Parvati and seeking the latter's blessings so that her hidden wishes be fulfilled has also been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 235—to Doha no. 236.]

Sita fell at the feet of Goddess Parvati and most reverentially worshipped her. Her eyes became wet, and she could not utter a word as her body had become so thrilled with emotions that it was virtually numbed into speechlessness. Her mind was overwhelmed with emotions of affection and love, and she could not therefore think and speak coherently (1).

[She prayed to goddess Parvati and somehow managed to collect her wits to request the deity—] 'Oh Mother (Goddess) (mātu)! You are all-knowing and well aware of the inner thoughts of all creatures (antarajāmini). You are the dear divine consort of Lord Shiva (bhavabhāmini), and since the Lord is the Lord God of this creation, it follows that you are its supreme Mistress (svāminisōṁ hauṁ).

I am like a child to you (tau hauṁ larikai), and therefore (excuse me for my audacity) as I want to divulge the secret of my heart to you without hesitation (kahī cāhauṁ bāta tau).

Then the idol of Bhavani (Parvati), who is an embodiment of kindness, compassion, mercy and grace (mūrati kr̥pālu), offered her (Sita) an attractive garland (man̐ju māla dai)[1] and said, 'Sita! Be blessed. I have accepted and I respect what is in your heart (pūjō mana kāmanā). You are free to accept your groom as per your internal wishes, and thus feel contended and fulfilled (bhāvatō baru barikai) (2).

[[1]It is believed that when one is offering a prayer to any consecrated image of a deity with some desire in one's mind, and one of the garlands on the idol shifts and falls down on its own, then the prayer is deemed to have been accepted by the worshipped deity and the person's wishes would be fulfilled. It is considered a good sign.]

Having acquired the all wish-fulfilling heavenly 'Kalpa Tree' in the form of (or in the person of) Lord Sri Ram (rāma kāmataru pā'i), you would make it your eternal abode and support like a creeper finds its own abode and support around an evergreen tree (bēli jyōṁ bauṇṛī banā'i)[2].

Verily, you shall be blessed with the auspicious reward of having eternal company of your Lord from whom you will never be separated (māmm̆ga tōṣi), and also endowed with a blessing of fertility that would bear auspicious fruits (children) for you (kōṣi pōṣi). Indeed, you will prosper, be happy and contented (literally, 'grow and develop, bearing fruits and flowers like a creeper'— phaili-phūli-pharikai).

Oh Sita! In due course of time ahead, when the tidings of events to come would prove to you the soothness of mine words, verily then you will be convinced of the soothfastness of what I say now and concede that 'Amba' ('mother') was truthful in what she said (rahaugī, kahaugī taba, sāmm̆cī kahī ambā)[3'].

[When Parvati had said her saying and prophesying what Sita's future held for her, she (Sita) was overjoyed. So—] Sita then fell at the feet of the Goddess and clasped it in both her hands with the greatest of reverence (as a gesture of sincere thanksgiving and to express her exceeding joy and delight; gahē pāmm̆ya dvai), while the Goddess on her part put her boon-granting benign hands on her head and (affectionately) lifted her (uṭhāya, māthē hātha dharikai)[4] (3).

[[2]Here, Lord Ram is likened to a 'Kalpa Tree', the all wish-fulfilling Tree of the Gods, and Sita to a creeper that finds its support and succour as it wounds itself around a tree. Without the tree the creeper has no other means of support and habitat; for a creeper the tree is all that matters for it. If the tree is cut, the creeper dies too. If the tree grows, becomes huge, and bears branches, fruits and flowers, the creeper feels exceedingly glad as it can also grow and spread around the trunk and the branches of the tree, finding shade from its foliage and a good environment for growth and development because it gets its nourishment from the tree. The healthier and greener the tree, it is so much better for the creeper.

Likewise, Sita would be happy and contented for life as her husband, Lord Ram, has an eternal life. The Lord fulfills the desire of the whole world, so it is only natural that Sita won't lack anything at all.

[3]Goddess Parvati wished to emphasise upon Sita that she must trust what the Goddess has said and have faith in her. Only time would tell her that whatso the Goddess had said was right and truthful. So Sita should not doubt her prophesies.

[4]A very significant hint is given in this single event. Everyone knows that the idol installed in any shrine is made of a gross material, whether it is stone, wood, mud or metal. On the face of it it looks absolutely impossible and incredulous even to imagine that such a gross thing as an idol made of stone or wood or metal would show signs of life—giving a garland, speaking, bending to pick up the devotee who is lying prostrated in front. But herein lies the 'magic and importance of faith', for verily if the devotee does have the depth and sincerity and intensity of faith in the deity he worships, that seemingly lifeless idol gets injected with a 'spark of divinity' and begins to move and speak just like a creature's gross body that is inherently lifeless and gross like the stone idol in question, but begins to shows signs of life once the 'spark of super consciousness' enters it and makes it alive.]

Hearing the blessings uttered by the Goddess, Sita was extremely happy, contented and delighted (mudita asīsa suni).

Sita bowed her head repeatedly at the Goddess' feet (sīsa nā'i puni puni), took leave of her (bidā bha'ī dēvīsōṁ) fearing that it was getting too late and her mother would question her as to why was she so late and what kept her loitering for so long in the garden (janani ḍara ḍarikai).

The accompanying friends and maids of Sita were cheerful now (haraṣīṁ sahēlī) when they observed her delighted countenance, as they came to the conclusion that a favourable outcome is a certainty and that Sita's wishes have been fulfilled (bhayō bhāvatō).

So the party consisting of Sita and her friends happily wended their way back to the palace, merrily singing and rejoicing all the while (gāvatīṁ gīta, gavanī bhavana).

Meanwhile, even as they left the place (garden) and went towards the palace it appeared that they had stolen the mind and intellect of Tulsidas' Lord, Sri Ram ('tulasīsa-hiyō harikai')[5] (4).

[[5]In other words, Lord Ram, who was silently watching Sita and her friends from a distance, felt sad when he saw them go away. He would have preferred if Sita had tarried for some more time in the garden. It was literally like Sita had stolen his heart and now was going away with it. This is a poetic way of saying a simple thing that Lord Ram was so smitten by Sita's love and affection, he was so enthralled and captivated by her sight, that when she left for home the Lord felt forlorn and lost.

Now, when we consider this single event against the backdrop of the fact that Lord Ram was not an ordinary 'human being' but an incarnate 'Supreme Being', it seems the picture does not fit well inasmuch as it is not expected from and behoves of such a highly exalted Soul who is supposed to be the 'Lord of the World' to behave in a petty way like an ordinary creature called the 'Jiva' who gets attracted to physical beauty and enchanted by the opposite gender. But there are some apparent reasons for the Lord behaving in such a worldly fashion: (i) For one thing, Lord Ram was currently in a 'human form', and he wished to show the world the normal failings of a human being, the latter's natural inclinations, emotions and sentiments, how a person is taken for a ride by his own sense organs which overwrite what the mind and intellect advise, and about his inability to resist so many worldly temptations; (ii) Secondly, he was an 'expert actor', and wished to show the world that once a person assumes a particular role he must play it to perfection; and (iii) He wished to keep his 'true identity hidden and secret' so that the main enemy, the demons to eliminate whom the Lord had come to this physical world and had assumed a gross form of a human, are not hinted about who he actually is, for then there were chances that they would go and hide somewhere inaccessible, making the mission all the more tough for the Lord.

It is not bad to have normal emotions if they are not tinged with evil intentions, it such emotions do not make a person feel guilty of conscience. In any case, should his conscience prick, what should he or she do then? The answer is provided in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 237 where it is said that "—While praising the charm and beauty of Sita in his (Lord Ram's) heart, the two brothers went back to their Guru (sage Vishwamitra). When they reached there, Lord Ram told Kaushik (Vishwamitra) everything that transpired (without concealing anything) because his heart was pure and simple, and no conceit or deceit ever touched it."

So, what's the message? It's clear—'to confess, come clear, and hide nothing from one's Guru and parent if the heart is to be kept clean and pure'. A person would conceal things only when he has some bad intention in his heart.]

रंगभूमिमें

(1 / 73)

रंगभूमि आए, दसरथके किसोर हैं।
पेखनो सो पेखन चले हैं पुर–नर–नारि,
बारे–बूढ़े, अंध–पंगु करत निहोर हैं।। 1।।
नील पीत नीरज कनक मरकत घन
दामिनी–बरन तनु रूपके निचोर हैं।
सहज सलोने, राम–लषन ललित नाम,
जैसे सुने तैसेई कुँवर सिरमौर हैं।। 2।।
चरन–सरोज, चारु जंघा जानु ऊरु कटि,
कंधर बिसाल, बाहु बड़े बरजोर हैं।
नीकेकै निषंग कसे, करकमलनि लसै
बान–बिसिषासन मनोहर कठोर हैं।। 3।।
काननि कनकफूल, उपबीत अनुकूल,
पियरे दुकूल बिलसत आछे छोर हैं।
राजिव नयन, बिधुबदन टिपारे सिर,
नख–सिख अंगनि ठगौरी ठौर ठौर हैं।। 4।।
सभा–सरवर लोक–कोक–नद–कोकगन
प्रमुदित मन देखि दिनमनि भोर हैं।
अबुध असैले मन–मैले महिपाल भये,
कछुक उलूक कछु कुमुद चकोर हैं।। 5।।
भाईसों कहत बात, कौसिकहि सकुचात,
बोल घन घोर–से बोलत थोर–थोर हैं।
सनमुख सबहि, बिलोकत सबहि नीके,
कृपासों हेरत हँसि तुलसीकी ओर हैं।। 6।।

raṅgabhūmimēṁ

(1/73)

raṅgabhūmi ā'ē, dasarathakē kisōra haiṁ.
pēkhanō sō pēkhana calē haiṁ pura-nara-nāri,
bārē-būṛhē, andha-paṅgu karata nihōra haiṁ.. 1..
nīla pīta nīraja kanaka marakata ghana
dāminī-barana tanu rūpakē nicōra haiṁ.
sahaja salōnē, rāma-laṣana lalita nāma,
jaisē sunē taisē'ī kum̐vara siramaura haiṁ.. 2..
carana-sarōja, cāru jaṅghā jānu ūru kaṭi,
kandhara bisāla, bāhu baṛē barajōra haiṁ.
nīkēkai niṣaṅga kasē, karakamalani lasai

bāna-bisiṣāsana manōhara kaṭhōra haiṁ.. 3..
kānani kanakaphūla, upabīta anukūla,
piyarē dukūla bilasata āchē chōra haiṁ.
rājiva nayana, bidhubadana ṭipārē sira,
nakha-sikha aṅgani ṭhagaurī ṭhaura ṭhaura haiṁ.. 4..
sabhā-saravara lōka-kōka-nada-kōkagana
pramudita mana dēkhi dinamani bhōra haiṁ.
abudha asailē mana-mailē mahipāla bhayē,
kachuka ulūka kachu kumuda cakōra haiṁ.. 5..
bhā'īsōṁ kahata bāta, kausikahi sakucāta,
bōla ghana ghōra-sē bōlata thōra-thōra haiṁ.
sanamukha sabahi, bilōkata sabahi nīkē,
kṛpāsōṁ hērata haṁsi tulasīkī ōra haiṁ.. 6..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-1

Verse no. 1/73—[When the time arrived for the commencement of the 'bow-breaking ceremony', king Janak sent out his chief priest, Shatanand, and other chief courtiers and ministers of his royal court to go and invite sage Vishwamitra to come and attend the spectacular event. As soon as the sage learnt that the ceremony was about to start, he immediately headed there with Lord Ram and Laxman. Everyone in the city was eagerly waiting to know whether or not the two brothers would attend the function. So as soon as the word went round that they have accompanied the sage to the venue, the whole city virtually poured in the arena, jamming it chock-a-block.

The following verse nos. 1/73—to 1/80 herein below describe the scene inside and outside the venue, emphasizing the way the people were excited and electrified, expecting that the outcome of this competition would be according to their hearts' wishes—which of course was that Lord Ram would be the one who would break the bow.

This part of the story has also been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 239—right upto Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 249.]

'Dasrath's sons have arived at the Arena ('raṅgabhūmi'; i.e. the venue of the bow-breaking ceremony)'—hearing this news, all the citizens, the women and the men, dashed towards the site to watch the spectacle; even the children and the old, the blind and the physically handicapped are requesting them to take them along (1).

Both the brothers (Sri Ram and Laxman) resemble a blue and yellow lotus, gold and emerald, or dark cloud and lightening respectively in their countenance and general complexion, and are literally the essence (or a personified form) of beauty, glamour and magnificence. They are naturally handsome and lovely (with nothing artificial with them). Their attractive names are 'Sri Ram' and 'Laxman' respectively, and as was previously heard, they are the best among all the princes of this world and also in the midst of the assembled princes (who have come to participate in the bow ceremony) (2).

Their feet resemble the lotus flower; their thighs, knees and waists are attractive as well, while their shoulders are broad and their arms are very strong and muscular.

They have tied very beautiful quivers around their waists, whilst each of them hold in his lotus-like hands an attractive and hard (strong, sturdy) bow and an arrow (3).

They have golden ear-rings in their ears, a lovely sacred thread around their necks, while a Pitambar (a seamless body wrapping cloth of yellow silk) with lovely designed boarders adorns their bodies.

Their eyes resemble a lotus, while the face is like the full moon. There is a cap on the head. Verily, each part of their bodies, from the toe-nail to the tuft of hair on the head, appears to be dotted by 'Thagaurī'[1] (4).

[[1]The word 'ṭhagaurī' means 'to stand still for a while'; 'to be so amazed by a beautiful sight that one is stunned as if in a state of numbness'. The sight and the form of the two brothers was so exceptionally enchanting and comely that all those who saw them were mesmerized, and their eyes were riveted on them. There were hundreds of princes and kings attending the bow-ceremony, but the two brothers were the cynosure of all eyes.]

The grand assembly (of invited princes and kings) is like some excellent pond or lake, while the people who were assembled there (i.e. the citizens and the good-intentioned invitees) were like lotus and the bird couples known as Chakva and Chakvi (the ruddy goose; ostrich).

Seeing Lord Sri Ram rise like the Sun God, they are very pleased and contented at heart, while the mind of ignorant and malicious kings—some of whom are like owls, while others resemble lilies and the Chakor birds (the Indian red-legged partridge)—are becoming gloomy, dejected and darkened in spirit.[2] (5).

[[2]Tulsidas has used this metaphor because the lotus flower and the bird couple of 'Chakva and Chakvi' feel glad when the sun rises. The lotus opens its petals, while the birds, which had separated from each other the previous night after the sun had set at dusk, come together once again.

The opposite prevails with the lilies and the bird known as 'Chakor'. Both feel glad under the moonlight, and as soon as the sun rises they become gloomy—i.e. the lily closes its petals and the bird droops its head and hides somewhere for the day.

The idea expressed here is that when Lord Ram, who is compared to the 'Sun', made his presence felt in the venue, the citizens and the good-natured kings and princes felt very glad and happy, while those who were evil-minded, malicious and jealous by nature were not only annoyed but even loathed the Lord's sight. These latter sort of people felt an inferior complex rearing its depressive head inside their hearts, and apprehended that Lord Ram would break the bow and marry Sita, thereby robbing them of this trophy. Watching the general mood of the citizens and observing the way the host, king Janak, was giving the two brothers special treatment, these mean-minded invitees feared that the king would devise some device to break his own condition by a royal decree and marry Sita to Lord Ram, thereby subjecting them to insult and humiliation.

Hence, as soon as Lord Sri Ram appeared on the scene, the citizens felt jubilant and hopeful, while the gathered kings and princes who had come to break the bow and be rewarded with the trophy of having Sita in marriage felt sullen and crestfallen at the prospect of their insult and humiliation should the host king either

allow Lord Ram to try his hands at the bow or suddenly rescind on his own words and marry Sita to the coveted prince, Sri Ram, by royal decree.]

[The citizens are closely watching and taking note of the dignified and civil ways of Lord Ram and his excellent manners. They observe that:--] When he (Lord Sri Ram) talks with his brother (Laxman), he speaks softly and in a low polite tone, almost as if hesitant to do so, due to the presence of Vishwamitra. He speaks only a few words at a time (and is not a chatter box), and even then his voice is authoritative and serious like the grave rumblings of a cloud in the distance (and not shrill and sharp like an excited boy attending a circus for the first time).

The Lord is in front of everyone (i.e. he greets everyone who happens to come in front of him), looks at everyone with a benevolent and kind glance (i.e. his glance seems to welcome all and he makes eye-contact with everyone present), and he is even looking towards Tulsidas with a kind, merciful and benignant smile[3] (6).

[[3]Here once again we note the use of the present tense in the narrative instead of the past tense. So once again it reminds of the fact that what Tulsidas is saying is like a live narration of the events as they are unfolding at Janakpur, and not some description based on notes or some other version of this epic story.

Tulsidas was not writing or re-telling some ancient history to establish himself as a poet or a historian or or a scribe or anything else. It must be remembered that he was a devotee of Lord Ram, not an ordinary devotee but someone spiritually elevated and attained. He had reached such heights of spiritual attainment that he could be in direct communion with his beloved Lord, Sri Ram. He would close his eyes and transport his soul to that plane of ethereal existence where things are eternal and permanently etched on the canvas of time. Since we can't imagine it and know about it, since we have not reached that state of transcendental existence as reached by few great hallowed souls of yore nor have the ability or the wherewithal to do while surrounded by the grossness of worldly life as it is, it does not mean that others had not attained this high level of spiritual living, and that whatever the latter say is merely a fairy tale, an imaginary story, all cooked-up hogwash and hearsay.

Therefore, we must have faith when Tulsidas says that he was present at the venue amongst the ordinary citizens to watch his beloved Lord Ram attend the bow-breaking ceremony. Indeed it may be beyond the comprehension and logic of the common mind that it could have really been so, but there are certain things in life that have an ethereal dimension, and go beyond comprehension and logic from the physical perspective of the gross world.

Hence, Tulsidas' narrative of the events is like a live commentary by a modern-day journalist who covers such events, and therefore is most authoritative, original and first hand.]

(1 / 74)

एई राम–लषन जे मुनि–सँग आये हैं।
चौतनी–चोलना काछे, सखि! सोहैं आगे–पाछे,
आछेहुते आछे, आछे आछे भाय भाये हैं।। 1।।
साँवरे गोरे सरीर, महाबाहु महाबीर,
कटि तून तीर धरे, धनुष सुहाये हैं।
देखत कोमल, कल, अतुल बिपुल बल,

कौसिक कोदंड–कला कलित सिखाये हैं।। 2।।
इन्हहीं ताडका मारी, गौतमकी तिय तारी,
भारी भारी भूरि भट रन बिचलाये हैं।
ऋषि मख रखवारे, दसरथके दुलारे,
रंगभूमि पगु धारे, जनक बुलाये हैं।। 3।।
इन्हके बिमल गुन गनत पुलकि तनु
सतानंद–कौसिक नरेसहि सुनाये हैं।
प्रभु पद मन दिये, सो समाज चित किये
हुलसि हुलसि हिये तुलसिहुँ गाये हैं।। 4।।

(1/74)

ē'ī rāma-laṣana jē muni-samm̐ga āyē haiṁ.
cautanī-cōlanā kāchē, sakhi! sōhaiṁ āgē-pāchē,
āchēhutē āchē, āchē āchē bhāya bhāyē haiṁ.. 1..
sāmm̐varē gōrē sarīra, mahābāhu mahābīra,
kaṭi tūna tīra dharē, dhanuṣa suhāyē haiṁ.
dēkhata kōmala, kala, atula bipula bala,
kausika kōdaṇḍa-kalā kalita sikhāyē haiṁ.. 2..
inhahīṁ tāḍakā mārī, gautamakī tiya tārī,
bhārī bhārī bhūri bhaṭa rana bicalāyē haiṁ.
ṛ̤si makha rakhavārē, dasarathakē dulārē,
raṅgabhūmi pagu dhārē, janaka bulāyē haiṁ.. 3..
inhakē bimala guna ganata pulaki tanu
satānanda-kausika narēsahi sunāyē haiṁ.
prabhu pada mana diyē, sō samāja cita kiyē
hulasi hulasi hiyē tulasihum̐ gāyē haiṁ.. 4..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-2

Verse no. 1/74—[The ladies of the city say—] 'These two princes are the ones who are named ‘Ram’ and ‘Laxman’, and they have come with sage Vishwamitra.

Oh Friend, look! Wearing a cap and a vestment (Pitambar) draped over their bodies, they look most magnificent and majestic as they walk one behind the other. They are the most exalted among the best, and are adorned with (or possess) the best of qualities, virtues and characters (1).

Their bodies have dark and fair complexion respectively. Their arms are very strong, muscular and long—for verily, they are great warriors.

A quiver adorns their waists, and a bow their hands. They are very tender, pleasing and beautiful to look at, and are peerless in valour and strength.

Sage Vishwamitra has expertly taught them the ‘art of using the bow’ (‘kōdaṇḍa-kalā’)[1] (2).

[[1]This statement is very significant in the context of the ‘bow-breaking’ ceremony. Sage Vishwamitra was an expert teacher and a learned sage of great repute who was famous for his knowledge of the marital arts. He had prepared Lord Ram for

this event by teaching the two brothers the intricacies of the knowledge pertaining to the bow: every fine detail of it, such as about its construction, what are its strong and weak points, how to hold it so that it does not snap while shooting an arrow or how it would break if not held properly, and so on. Therefore, Lord Ram was taught about the science that went into the making of a bow as well as its use under different conditions of the battle-field. This knowledge had prepared the Lord to skillfully tackle any bow of any make and size.

The citizens therefore hinted to each other by way of mutual encouragement and to keep the spirit of hope alive that though this particular bow is very rare and formidable, being the bow of Lord Shiva, but there is no fear from that quarter as Lord Ram has already been trained by sage Vishwamitra to tackle such bows. The other competing princes would only rely on the strength of their arms in an attempt to break the bow, but they would not know how to tackle this unique bow with special in-built qualities not known to everyone except to an expert. So it does not matter if Lord Ram's body is tender and he is young in age; what matters here is specialized knowledge to deal with a technical problem that needs more power of the brain than of the brawn.

It's like the case of modern-day weapons. They are so complicated and technically advanced that only a person well-trained in them would be able to use them, let alone dissemble them and take their individual parts apart in an orderly manner which is different from smashing the weapon to the ground to break it.]

They have slayed Tadka and have liberated Ahilya even as they have caused agitations and instilled fear among the great, valiant and brave warriors in the battle[2].

Presently, these two princes of Dasrath—who are the protectors of sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice—have come to the Arena at the invitation of Janak (3).

[[2]This refers to the vanquishing of the demon warriors in the battle that took place while Lord Ram and Laxman protected the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra.]

Both sages Shatanand and Vishwamitra were thrilled as they described and recounted their (Sri Ram and Laxman's) immaculate character and glorious virtues to king Janak[3].'

Tulsidas says that he too has concentrated his mind and intellect in the lotus-like feet of the Lord (Sri Ram). He remembers those magnificent moments of hope and expectation, and the memory of that scene fills his heart with gladness and exhilaration as he sings the glories of his Lord with joy and delight exceedingly swelling and spilling over from his heart (4).

[[3]Sage Vishwamitra had tolk Janak about the glories of the two brothers when the two met in the very beginning as the sage arrived at Janakpur.

Sage Shatanand was the court priest of king Janak. He must have talked about the two brothers sometime after the meeting with Vishwamitra as it is sure that king Janak must have consulted his priest on the subject of options left open to him if he desires to marry this wonderful prince to his daughter.]

राग कान्हरा

(1/75)

सीय स्वयंबरु, माई दोउ भाई आए देखन।

सुनत चलीं प्रमदा प्रमुदित मन,
प्रेम पुलकि तनु मनहुँ मदन मंजुल पेखन।। 1।।
निरखि मनोहरताई सुख पाई कहैं एक–एक सों,
'भूरिभाग हम धन्य, आलि! ए दिन, एखन'।
तुलसी सहज सनेह सुरँग सब
सो समाज चित–चित्रसार लागी लेखन।। 2।।

rāga kānharā

(1/75)

sīya svayambaru, mā'ī dō'u bhā'ī ā'ē dēkhana.
sunata calīṁ pramadā pramudita mana,
prēma pulaki tanu manahuṁ madana manjula pēkhana.. 1..
nirakhi manōharatā'ī sukha pā'ī kahaiṁ ēka-ēka sōṁ,
'bhūribhāga hama dhan'ya, āli! ē dina, ēkhana'.
tulasī sahaja sanēha suraṁga saba
sō samāja cita-citrasāra lāgī lēkhana.. 2..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-3

Verse no. 1/75—'Oh Mother[1]! Look, the two brothers have come to watch Sita's Swayambar (the marriage ceremony)'—as soon as the women-folk heard it, they were extremely exited as if they were going to have a look at Kamdeo/cupid with a delighted and joyful mind (1).

[[1]This address indicates that the children are speaking to their mothers. The men rushed out of their homes first to go and take their seats in the stadium where the bow-breaking was to be held. The women were hesitant as they usually did not venture out of their homes, though of course they too were equally eager to go and see the ceremony like their male counterparts. The males had been reluctant to take the children along for fear of them creating noise and nuisance at the venue as is the wont of young children who are terribly excited at the opportunity of witnessing a spectacular event. So, these excited children rushed inside their homes and poked their mothers to come out and head to the ceremony, because should they agree then haply this would give the children a chance to go as well.]

Seeing their (Sri Ram's and Laxman's) beauty, charm, comeliness and magnificence, they felt pleased and satisfied in their minds and hearts, and said cheerfully to each other, 'Oh friend! Today we are very fortunate and our lucks are praise worthy (bhūribhāga hama dhan'ya, āli) that we are able to witness such a good day with so much nice things happening before us (ē dina, ēkhana).'

Tulsidas says that using the paint and colour symbolizing the emotions of natural affection and endearment towards the Lord (sahaja sanēha suraṁga), they (the women-folk) started to paint the picture of that spectacular and rare scene (of the assembly of kings and princes with Lord Sri Ram and Laxman occupying the centre-stage, or may be the exclusive portrait of Lord Ram and Laxman by neglecting

everything else) on the canvas of their mind and intellect (sō samāja cita-citrasāra lāgī lēkhana) (2).

राग गौरी

(1 / 76)

राम–लषन जब दृष्टि परे, री।
अवलोकत सब लोग जनकपुर मानो बिधि बिबिध बिदेह करे, री।। 1।।
धनुषजग्य कमनीय अवनि–तल कौतुकही भए आय खरे, री।
छबि–सुरसभा मनहु मनसिजके कलित कलपतरु रूप फरे, री।। 2।।
सकल काम बरषत मुख निरखत, करषत, चित, हित हरष भरे, री।
तुलसी सबै सराहत भूपहि भलै पैत पासे सुढर ढरे, री।। 3।।

rāga gaurī

(1/76)

rāma-laṣana jaba dr̥ṣṭi parē, rī.
avalōkata saba lōga janakapura mānō bidhi bibidha bidēha karē, rī.. 1..
dhanuṣajagya kamanīya avani-tala kautukahī bha'ē āya kharē, rī.
chabi-surasabhā manahu manasijakē kalita kalapataru rūpa pharē, rī.. 2..
sakala kāma baraṣata mukha nirakhata, karaṣata, cita, hita haraṣa bharē, rī.
tulasī sabai sarāhata bhūpahi bhalai paita pāsē suḍhara ḍharē, rī.. 3..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-4

Verse no. 1/76—'Oh Friend! Ever since Sri Ram and Laxman have been seen by the people of Janakpur, those who saw them are behaving as if the Creator has created numerous 'Videhas'[1] (1).

[[1]The word 'Videha' literally means a person who is unconscious, unaware or unconcerned about his body and surroundings. Here it means that the citizens have become so charmed and enthralled by the captivating sight of the two princes that they have become unconcerned about their routine day to day household chores and affairs of daily life. They all forgot about their age and their status in the hierarchy of society, as everyone talked animatedly and cheerfully about Lord Ram and Laxman and shared bits of information and news that came their way with others irrespective of age and gender. Those who were old and sick forgot for a moment about their physical limitations and behaved like excited children, wishing to go to the arena. Everyone became so occupied with this development that personal matters related to their bodies and household affairs were relegated to the background and completely neglected as if they were non-existent.]

Just at that time (i.e. when many of the citizens were still winding up their affairs and preparing to go the arena, or were on their way, and the crowd was still jostling and

pushing to enter the venue), the two brothers appeared at the main venue, that was excellently laid out, in a spectacular and dramatic manner[2].

Their appearance there gave the impression that in the beautiful assembly of the heaven attended by gods, two identical images of Kamdeo (the patron god of beauty and charm) has appeared in the guise of two Kalpa Trees laden with ripe and succulent fruits symbolising beauty, charm and loveliness[3] (2).

[[2]Until the time the two brothers entered the arena, the place, especially the central stage where the king and special guests would be seated, looked empty though the rest of the invited kings and princes had already arrived and taken their seats. But as soon as the brothers arrived, all eyes turned towards them. It's like the case when the chief guest arrives at a function. Till he comes there is noise and bustle all around as everyone is restless, sitting and talking amongst themselves waiting for the arrival of the chief dignitary, but as soon as he enters the venue all fall silent and take their seats in deference to his honourable presence which marks the start of the function.

[3]Here, Lord Ram and Laxman are likened to the two images of Kamdeo, while the assembly of great kings and princes of the world as well as the fine way the venue has been decorated and prepared to celebrate the occasion is like the heavenly court of the gods.]

Oh dear (rī)! By merely watching their (Lord Ram's and Laxman's) lovely faces, all the desires of a person are abundantly fulfilled as if the desired things are raining down upon him aplenty (sakala kāma barasata mukha nirakhata).

Therefore the sweet faces of the two brothers not only cause the mind and subconscious to get attracted towards them (because of their stupendous beauty and charm: karaṣata, cita) but they also bestow immense gladness and joy to one's heart (as one's desires are fulfilled--hita haraṣa bharē).

Tulsidas says that everyone praises and lauds king Janak and his immensely good luck as all the dices have been cast in his favour, and he has got an excellent opportunity to fulfill his desires to his heart's content (3).

(1 / 77)

नेकु, सुमुखि, चित लाइ चितौ, री।
राजकुँवर–मूरति रचिबेकी रुचि सुबिरंचि श्रम कियो है कितौ, री।। 1।।
नख–सिख–सुदंरता अवलोकत कह्यो न परत सुख होत जितौ, री।
साँवर रूप–सुधा भरिबे कहँ नयन–कमल कल कलस रितौ, री।। 2।।
मेरे जान इन्हैं बोलिबे कारन चतुर जनक ठयो ठाट इतौ, री।
तुलसी प्रभु भंजिहैं संभु–धनु, भूरिभाग सिय मातु–पितौ, री।। 3।।

(1/77)

nēku, sumukhi, cita lā'i citau, rī.
rājakumŏvara-mūrati racibēkī ruci subirañci śrama kiyō hai kitau, rī.. 1..
nakha-sikha-sudanratā avalōkata kahyō na parata sukha hōta jitau, rī.
sāmŏvara rūpa-sudhā bharibē kahaṁ nayana-kamala kala kalasa ritau, rī.. 2..
mērē jāna inhaiṁ bōlibē kārana catura janaka ṭhayō ṭhāṭa itau, rī.

tulasī prabhu bhaṅjihaiṁ sambhu-dhanu, bhūribhāga siya mātu-pitau, rī.. 3..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-5

Verse no. 1/77—[One of the enchanted ladies of the city shares her feeling of joy and excitement at the charming sight of the two brothers with her close friend when she asks the latter to focus her attention on the marvelously wonderful image of Lord Ram and Laxman.]

'Oh my sweet-faced dear friend (sumukhi, rī)! Examine carefully and imagine what great and special efforts the Creator must have made (subiraṅci śrama kiyō hai) when he wished to give effect to his desire to create an image or form as captivating, charming and attractive as these two princes (Lord Ram and Laxman) (rājakuṁvara-mūrati racibēkī ruci)! (1).

Oh dear friend (rī)*! One cannot describe sufficiently the amount of happiness and delight, as well as the ecstatic feeling of joy and exhilaration that one gets on seeing their beauty and magnificence (avalōkata kahyō na parata sukha hōta jitau) that extends from their toe-nails right upto the tuft of hair on the crest of their heads (nakha-sikha-sudanratā) (because this image makes the heart delighted and the sight belighted).

Oh dear friend (rī)! Empty your pitchers represented by your lotus-like eyes (nayana-kamala kala kalasa ritau) in order to fill them with the symbolic nectar (sudhā bharibē kahaṁ) consisting of this image in the form of the two princes who are of a dark and fair complexion respectively (sāṁvara rūpa) (and who are equally beautiful, lovely, pretty and comely)[1] (2).

[[1]Here, the enchanted lady is unable to conceal her emotions of joy and excitement. She exhorts her close friend to focus her attention on the two princes and closely examine their exceptional charm. This lady had her eyes riveted on the two brothers even as she bent her head and brought her mouth close to the friend's ears to speak these pleasing words, or it may be that she was speaking aloud to a group of her friends standing close to her.

By telling her friends to 'empty the symbolic pitcher of their eyes so that the nectar in the form of the sight of the two princes can be filled in them', the lady wished to exhort them to stop wasting their time and energy of the eye in looking here and there at the wonderful spectacle of the bow-ceremony, but instead use this opportunity to put their eyes to good use by focusing them on Lord Ram and Laxman and having their eye-fill of this marvelous sight, an opportunity they would miss for life if they do not bring this image inside their inner being right now through the medium of the eye.]

Oh dear (rī), it seemeth to me (mērē jāna) that the clever king Janak (catura janaka) has organized this grand spectacle of pomp and pageantry (ṭhayō ṭhāṭa itau) just as an excuse so that these two princes could be invited (inhaiṁ bōlibē kārana).

Oh dear friend (rī)! It seemeth sure to me that Tulsidas' Lord (tulasī prabhu; i.e. Lord Ram) would certainly break the bow of Lord Shiva (bhaṅjihaiṁ sambhu-dhanu). Indeed, the parents of Sita are very lucky and fortunate ('bhūribhāga siya mātu-pitau'; that they will have the Lord as their son-in-law).' (3).

[Note--*In the text, each line ends with 'rī'. From the perspective of a poem it is a style to create the effect of rhyming of verses. From the view point of narration it implies that the lady uses the phrase 'oh my dear' every now and then after a brief pause.

This pattern is observed in verse nos. 1/77—to 1/79.]

राग सारंग

(1/78)

जबतें राम–लषन चितए, री।
रहे इकटक नर–नारि जनकपुर, लागत पलक कलप बितए, री।। 1।।
प्रेम–बिबस माँगत महेस सों, देखत ही रहिये नित ए, री।
कै ए सदा बसहु इन्ह नयनन्हि, कै ए नयन जाहु जित ए, री।। 2।।
कोउ समुझाइ कहै किन भूपहि, बड़े भाग आए इत ए, री।
कुलिस–कठोर कहाँ संकर–धनु, मृदुमूरति किसोर कित ए, री।। 3।।
बिरचत इन्हहिं बिरंचि भुवन सब सुंदरता खोजत रित ए, री।
तुलसिदास ते धन्य जनम जन, मन–क्रम–बच जिन्हके हित ए, री।। 4।।

rāga sāraṅga

(1/78)

jabatēṁ rāma-laṣana cita'ē, rī.
rahē ikaṭaka nara-nāri janakapura, lāgata palaka kalapa bita'ē, rī.. 1..
prēma-bibasa mām̐gata mahēsa sōṁ, dēkhata hī rahiyē nita ē, rī.
kai ē sadā basahu inha nayananhi, kai ē nayana jāhu jita ē, rī.. 2..
kō'u samujhā'i kahai kina bhūpahi, baṛē bhāga ā'ē ita ē, rī.
kulisa-kaṭhōra kahām̐ saṅkara-dhanu, mr̥dumūrati kisōra kita ē, rī.. 3..
biracata inhahiṁ biran̄ci bhuvana saba sundaratā khōjata rita ē, rī.
tulasidāsa tē dhan'ya janama jana, mana-krama-baca jinhakē hita ē, rī.. 4..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-6

Verse no. 1/78—[The lady continues to say—] 'Oh dear friend (rī)! Ever since they have seen Lord Sri Ram and Laxman, the men and women folk of Janakpur have become so dazed, mesmerized, spellbound and enchanted by their view that it seems that many 'Kalpas' (literally, a very long period of time) passed before they could even bat an eyelid[1] (1).

[[1]This is a poetic way of saying that the citizens of Janakpur were extremely enchanted by the magnificently beautiful sight of Lord Ram and Laxman so much so that they appeared to be completely dazed and absolutely stunned to the extent that their eyelids stopped their natural habit of blinking every now and then. Never had they in their lives seen such a wonderful sight of beauty and lovliness and comeliness.]

Oh dear friend (rī)! All the citizens, being overwhelmed with emotions of love and affection for the two princes, ask and plead with Lord Mahesh (Shiva) for the boon that they should be able to see them daily (dēkhata hī rahiyē nita ē), or else they should permanently reside in their (citizen's) eyes (kai ē sadā basahu inha nayananhi), or the eyes themselves should follow the direction in which they go (kai ē nayana jāhu jita ē)[2] (2).

[[2]The citizens began to sincerely love and have deep affection for Lord Sri Ram and Laxman so much that they wished to have them close by so that they, the citizens, would be able to see the two brothers, have access to them and be able to interact with them whenever they wished so. Hence, they pray to Lord Shiva, the patron God of the kingdom of Janakpur, that their wishes be fulfilled.]

Oh dear friend (rī)! Why doesn't someone (gather courage to) advise the king that it is a matter of great pride, a rare fortune and remarkably good luck that these two (Ram and Laxman) have come this way. [Hence, he should stop further procrastination and abandon his stubbornness. He should call-off his vows and immediately marry Sita to Sri Ram.]

[The problem is that—] Oh dear friend (rī)! On the one hand is the bow of Shiva which is harder, stronger and heavier than the 'Kulis' ('kulisa-kaṭhōra kahāmँ saṅkara-dhanu'; 'Vajra', the weapon of Indra, the king of gods; it is made of the hardest material in existence), and on the other hand is this most delicate, sweet and tender form (of Lord Ram; 'mr̥dumūrati kisōra kita ē')[3] (3).

[[3]A similar view is expressed in verse no. 1/70, stanza no. 3 herein above by the citizens of Janakpur.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 222, and Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 223 where the women-folk of Janakpur talk on this issue in the same way.

Sita's mother Sunayana, the queen-mother, also has the same thoughts: refer Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 255—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 256;

Sita herself thinks in the same way: refer Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 257—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 258.

Every single soul wished that Lord Ram should marry Sita by breaking the bow of Shiva, but the problem was that this bow was exceptionally strong, sturdy and heavy. Lord Ram was of a delicate frame, and so the odds were apparently stacked highly against him. So would someone gather courage to advise king Janak to be reasonable as the stake of his daughter's future is on the block. He need not worry too much as he has the full and unquestioned support of his subjects should he decide to change his stance and cancel the bow-breaking ceremony, and instead pass a royal decree that he wishes to marry Sita to Lord Ram. No one in the kindom would accuse him of any wrong doing.

On the other hand, allowing such a delicate frame as that of Lord Ram to go and pit himself against the hardness of the bow would be an utterly shameful act on the part of the king.

Doesn't the king realize that this opportunity won't come to him again. Does he not understand that leaving the fate of his daughter to uncertainty as is natural in cases where the marriage is dependent upon some competition where the winner gets to wed the girl, even if this winner is otherwise not at all suitable for her—is not only

highly demeaning, irrational and unethical, but also exceptionally cruel for the girl to force her into a perilous situation that would rob of her peace and happiness for life. But, as the saying goes, it would be too late to save the crop once locust destroys it.]

Oh dear friend (rī)! At the time of creating the excellent form of the two brothers (biracata inhahiṁ), the Creator had ferreted out the entire creation in his search for the quality of beauty, prettiness, comeliness, lovliness, magnificence, glamour and charm in order to find and gather something most suitable to create this image (biranĉi bhuvana saba sundaratā khōjata rita ē)[4].

Oh dear friend (rī)! Tulsidas says that the birth and life of those persons are deemed to be lucky, fruitful and good-omened (tulasidāsa tē dhan'ya janama jana) who have sincere affection for Lord Ram and have determined that their good, welfare and well-being is in having devotion for and surrendering before the Lord sincerely with their mind and heart, in their actions and deeds, and in their speech and words (mana-krama-baca jinhakē hita ē) (4).

[[4]Refer also to verse no. 1/77, stanza no. 1 herein above.

The result was that the Creator took or extracted the best of these stellar qualities out from his own creation and moulded the two forms of Lord Ram and Laxman, but in the process the world was shorn of all its beauty, it was laid bare from charm and attractiveness. In other words, the two brothers are unparallel in their charm and comeliness, being so bewitchingly beautiful and pretty to behold that everything else called 'beautiful and charming' fade when compared to them.

The excellent qualities of beauty, lovliness, prettiness, charm, magnificence, glamour etc. were concentrated in one place in the image of Lord Ram and Laxman.]

(1 / 79)

सुनु, सखि! भूपति भलोई कियो, री।
जेहि प्रसाद अवधेस–कुँवर दोउ नगर–लोग अवलोकि जियो, री।। 1।।
मानि प्रतीति कहे मेरे तैं कत सँदेह–बस करति हियो, री।
तौलौं है यह संभु सरासन, श्रीरघुबर जौलौं न लियो, री।। 2।।
जेहि बिरंचि रचि सीय सँवारी, औ रामहि ऐसो रूप दियो, री।
तुलसिदास तेहि चतुर बिधाता निजकर यह संजोग सियो, री।। 3।।

(1/79)

sunu, sakhi! bhūpati bhalō'ī kiyō, rī.
jēhi prasāda avadhēsa-kuṁvara dō'u nagara-lōga avalōki jiyō, rī.. 1..
māni pratīti kahē mērē taiṁ kata saṁdēha-basa karati hiyō, rī.
taulauṁ hai yaha sambhu sarāsana, śrīraghubara jaulauṁ na liyō, rī.. 2..
jēhi biranĉi raci sīya saṁvārī, au rāmahi aisō rūpa diyō, rī.
tulasidāsa tēhi catura bidhātā nijakara yaha saṁjōga siyō, rī.. 3..

Verse no. 1/79—[The companion to whom the lady, who was enchanted by the magnificent beauty of Lord Ram and Laxman, had been talking to in verse nos. 1/76—1/78, now replies to her mate as follows:--]

'Oh dear friend (rī)! Listen, king Janak has done a very good thing (as he has created a favourable circumstance for all of us).

See, it is due to him that the citizens have been able to see to their heart's content ('nagara-lōga avalōki jiyō') these two wonderful princess of the king of Avadh (i.e. king Dasrath)[1] (1).

[[1]The credit of enabling the citizens of Janakpur to get a chance of seeing and interacting with Lord Ram and Laxman goes to king Janak because it was he who had organised the bow ceremony and had invited sage Vishwamitra to attend it, which gave the sage an opportunity to bring the two princes here.

Otherwise, the residents of Janakpur had no or little chance of ever seeing the two brothers, Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman, in their lives. So they are profusely thanking Janak for making it possible for them, for enabling them to get the reward of having eyes and feeling fulfilled.]

Oh dear friend (rī)! Believe in what I say; why do you unnecessarily put yourself in a dilemma and let your mind be torn in doubts that rob you of your peace and happiness?

Verily I say, oh dear friend (rī), that this bow of Lord Shiva looks what it seemeth to look (tough, hard, strong, heavy, unyielding and unbreakable), only till the time Lord Ram does not take it (i.e. decide to go to the bow and pick it up)[2] (2).'

[[2]The bow looks so tough and difficult to tackle due to its formidable reputation as being the 'invincible bow of Lord Shiva'. But believe me when I say in all sooth that as soon as Lord Ram walks upto it and touches it in preparation to pick it up and hold it in his hands, the bow would yield and surrender itself to the Lord. After all, it is the bow of Shiva, and Shiva is a gracious and compassionate Lord God to whom all of us as have been earnestly praying to make things happen in such a way that Lord Ram marries Sita, and this prayer obviously presumes that the bow would be broken by the Lord.

Lord Shiva is sure to hear and answer our prayers because it is the combined desire of all the citizens of Janakpur who have all along in their lives been praying and serving Shiva most sincerely, and now they have asked the Lord to reward them for all the good and meritorious deeds done by them throughout their lives. {Refer: verse nos. 1/70, stanza nos. 4-5; 1/78, stanza no. 2 herein above; and verse no. 1/80 herein below which clearly reiterates this viewpoint.}

This wise friend assures the one who had doubts about whether Lord Ram would be able to break the bow or not by citing the fact that though the Lord looks so delicate in frame and young in age but he has a lot of stupendous powers of mystical nature, exceptional valour and grit that are not so apparent but are nevertheless a matter of fact as proved by his slaying of demoness Tadka as well as the full army of fierce demons led by Subahu and Marich while the Lord was protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra. Not only this, he had also liberated Ahilya from her ancient curse which had turned her into a stone by touching her with the tip of his toe that transformed Ahilya into her original form as the chaste wife of sage Gautam, after which she went back to heaven to be reunited with her husband. Besides this, sage Vishwamitra had taught the Lord all about the science and skills of handling a bow, and so the Lord knows all the tricks needed to tackle any kind of bow.

{Refer: verse no. 1/74, stanza nos. 2-3 herein above.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 223.}

These acts of Lord Ram and facts related to him are known to all—so where is the doubt left that Lord Ram would not be able tackle this old and worn-out bow?]

Tulsidas says that this friend was very confident that Lord Ram would break the bow and marry Sita.

He quotes her: 'Oh dear friend (rī)! The Creator, who has so carefully created Sita (and bequeathed her with beauty and charm of matchless proportions) and who has endowed Lord Sri Ram with such a stupendous beauty and exceptional charm (that matches that of Sita)—verily it is the same Creator who has devised this device of bringing them together by creating a favourable combination of circumstances to bring them face to face here (on the pretext of the bow ceremony). So, why do you worry?'[3] (3).

[[3]Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precede Doha no. 223 which says exactly the same thing.

The friend emphasised that the Creator had planned everything in advance, and there are certain hints in life that are too obvious to be missed and noticed. The Creator has created a perfect 'couple' in the form of the prince and the princess (i.e. Lord Ram and Sita respectively). Now, the Creator has to follow the rules and norms of creation that he himself has decreed—and 'tis to give the partners separate births and then bring them together by the bond known as marriage. It is pre-destined and 'tis bound to happen.

Taking an example from Nature we can see that a rose tree will always bear a rose flower and not anything else. It is never that a tree destined to bear a beautiful flower such as the rose would suddenly bear a dry cactus on one of its branches, and neither will a cactus bear a rose.]

(1 / 80)

अनुकूल नृपहि सूलपानि हैं।
नीलकंठ कारुन्यसिंधु हर दीनबन्धु दिनदानि हैं।। 1।।
जो पहिले ही पिनाक जनक कहँ गये सौंपि जिय जानि हैं।
बहुरि त्रिलोचन लोचनके फल सबहि सुलभ किये आनि हैं।। 2।।
सुनियत भव–भाव ते राम हैं, सिय भावती–भवानि हैं।
परखत प्रीति–प्रतीति, पयज–पनु रहे काज ठटु ठानि हैं।। 3।।
भये बिलोकि बिदेह नेहबस बालक बिनु पहिचानि हैं।
होत हरे होने बिरवनि दल सुमति कहति अनुमानि हैं।। 4।।
देखियत भूप भोर–के–से उडुगन, गरत गरीब गलानि हैं।
तेज–प्रताप बढ़त कुँवरनको, जदपि सँकोची बानि हैं।। 5।।
बय किसोर, बरजोर, बाहुबल–मेरु मेलि गुन तानिहैं।
अवसि राम राजीव–बिलोचन संभु–सरासन भानिहैं।। 6।।
देखिहैं ब्याह–उछाह नारि–नर, सकल सुमंगल–खानि हैं।
भूरिभाग तुलसी तेऊ, जे सुनिहैं, गाइहैं, बखानिहैं।। 7।।

anukūla nr̥pahi sūlapāni haiṁ.
nīlakaṇṭha kārun'yasindhu hara dīnabandhu dinadāni haiṁ.. 1..
jō pahilē hī pināka janaka kahaṁ gayē saumpi jiya jāni haiṁ.
bahuri trilōcana lōcanakē phala sabahi sulabha kiyē āni haiṁ.. 2..
suniyata bhava-bhāva tē rāma haiṁ, siya bhāvatī-bhavāni haiṁ.
parakhata prīti-pratīti, payaja-panu rahē kāja ṭhaṭu ṭhāni haiṁ.. 3..
bhayē bilōki bidēha nēhabasa bālaka binu pahicāni haiṁ.
hōta harē hōnē biravani dala sumati kahati anumāni haiṁ.. 4..
dēkhiyata bhūpa bhōra-kē-sē uḍugana, garata garība galāni haiṁ.
tēja-pratāpa baṛhata kuṁvaranakō, jadapi saṁkōcī bāni haiṁ.. 5..
baya kisōra, barajōra, bāhubala-mēru mēli guna tānihaiṁ.
avasi rāma rājīva-bilōcana sambhu-sarāsana bhānihaiṁ.. 6..
dēkhihaiṁ byāha-uchāha nāri-nara, sakala sumaṅgala-khāni haiṁ.
bhūribhāga tulasī tē'ū, jē sunihaiṁ, gā'ihaiṁ, bakhānihaiṁ.. 7..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-8

Verse no. 1/80—'Sūlapāni[1] (Lord Shiva) is favourable towards Janak. That blue-throated Lord Har[2] (nīlakaṇṭha hara), who is an ocean of mercy and compassion (kārun'yasindhu), is a friend of the distressed, the lowly, the humble, the resourceless and the meek (dīnabandhu), and is a most generous, liberal and magnanimous donor who never ties of giving all the time of the day (dinadāni) (1).

[[1]Lord Shiva holds a 'trident', which is called a 'Trishul', in his hands. Hence, this name. "Sul" = the sharp-pointed trident; "Paani" = held in the hand.

[2]'Har' is one of the many names of Lord Shiva. Literally this word means to steal or remove or eliminate. It alludes to the ability of Lord Shiva to remove all the spiritual sufferings of his devotees, and provide their souls with liberation and deliverance, thereby eliminating their fears of the cycle of birth and death and its incumbent miseries and pains.

Lord Shiva is called 'Neelkantha' because of the blue tinge of his throat. The throat became 'blue' when the Lord had drunk the poison known as 'Halaahal' that was produced in some by-gone era when the ocean was churned by the gods and the demons in search of 'Amrit', the elixir of eternity. If this poison fell on the ground, the entire creation would have been scorched. So in order to prevent this from happening, the 'merciful and compassionate Lord Shiva' had gulped it. But even as he did it, he knew that if this poison entered his stomach it would burn everything inside, and being the Supreme God of creation it would mean that the whole creation that has its habitat in the Lord's abdomen would be scorched to death too. So, Shiva kept this poison in his throat, rendering its skin blue or pink coloured.]

Verily, he (Shiva) had known everything in his heart beforehand (being a 'Mahadeva', the Greatest of Gods, and all-knowing). It is because of this knowledge that he had given the bow to Janak[3].

The same Lord known as 'trilōcana' (i.e. the Lord with 'three-eyes')[4], has now brought these two princes here among our midst to make it possible for us to have the fruits (rewards, benefits) of our eyes[5] (2).

[[3]Lord Shiva knew in advance that one day Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, would be united with Sita who was a personified form of the Lord's divine consort known as goddess Laxmi. It was to be a symbolic physical union between, or bringing together of, two supreme powers of creation—one known as 'Brahm' and the other known as 'Shakti', which are neutral when independent but assume stupendous powers of phenomenal dimensions and magnitude when brought together—so that the work of the Gods can be done. This 'work' was the elimination of the cruel demons who have been tyrannizing the world and tormenting all its creatures. Demons were a formidable force, and to neutralize them a force superior to them was the need of the hour. And this force can be summoned only when 'Brahm' and his 'Shakti' unite.

A simple example from the daily life would illustrate this phenomenon. Everyone knows that a power-battery can produce powerful 'electricity', but to make the battery's hidden power to produce electricity become practically usable it is necessary to bring the negative and the positive poles of the battery together through a wire that completes the circuit.

After all, it was Shiva who had advised the Gods to pray to Vishnu to do something to eliminate the horrors of the demons, and therefore it was now incumbent upon Shiva to aid the process and do everything in his might to bring it to fruition. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 185.

[4]Lord Shiva has 'three eyes': two conventional eyes, and the third eye is located in the center of his forehead and stands for wisdom. This eye is like the 'sun' and harbours the fire element just like the sun. It is called the 'eye of wisdom' because the darkness of delusions and ignorance is removed, or rather 'burnt', when Lord Shiva looks at the delusion-ridden world with this eye. In Upanishads it is said that the ascetic should concentrate his attention here during meditation as it helps him to fully realize his spiritual potentials and literally separate the grain ('Absolute Truth') from the chaff ('the falsehoods').

[5]Now, if the objective was merely to bring about a union between Brahm represented by Lord Ram and Shakti represented by Sita, then Shiva had thousands of options open for him. He could have done it in any other way. Even if it is supposed that the 'bow' was to play the central role in this union, Shiva could have placed it with some other great king instead of Janak, as he has actually done. Hence, the hint is clear: Lord Shiva was so pleased with the citizens of Janakpur that the Lord decided to reward them for their good life and righteous living by putting the bow in the custody of Janak's family so that in due course of time when Lord Ram comes here to get united with Sita, the citizens would be duly rewarded and given the joy of their lives.

So in other words, this lady friend assures her companion that if the all-knowing and compassionate Great God Lord Shiva himself is playing a pivotal role as a match-maker between Lord Sri Ram and Sita, and since he has been instrumental in granting the citizens of Janakpur the privilege of having a divine sight of Lord Ram by devising things in such a way that the latter visits Janakpur, it is sure and soothfast that Lord Ram would certainly break the bow and marry Sita, and there is no iota of doubt about it.]

It is heard that Lord Sri Ram is dear to Lord Shiva (suniyata bhava-bhāva tē rāma haiṁ), while Sita is liked by Bhavani, or goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva (siya bhāvatī-bhavāni haiṁ)[6].

At this moment they (Shiva-Parvati) are merely examining the sincerity, depth, intensity, soothfastness and persevearance of the love and affection between Sri Ram and Sita (parakhata prīti-pratīti), as well as the determination and ability of Janak to stand fast in keeping his vows (payaja-panu rahē). This is the only and the most logical reason why he (Shiva) is so delaying the final outcome inspite of making all arrangements (kāja ṭhaṭu ṭhāni haiṁ)[7] (3).

[[6]Lord Shiva's devotion, faith and affection for Lord Ram is elaborately detailed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand. There are a number of instances, for example: (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 51.

Goddess Parvati's liking for Sita is clear when the former blesses the latter when she had gone to the royal garden to pray. Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/72; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 236.

[7]And what is that 'outcome' and what is the 'delay'? The 'outcome' is the actual breaking of the bow and the declaration that Lord Ram and Sita are united.

And the 'delay' is the long time taken while all the competing kings and princes were allowed to try their hands at breaking the bow, individually and collectively, and when all of them failed miserably king Janak had regretted about his vows and had wailed and lamented about his distress, and then sage Vishwamitra asked Lord Ram to go and break the bow, and the moment the Lord actually lifted the bow and broke it. All these developments must have taken a couple of hours, and these hours left the citizens on tenterhooks and most nervous, as if they were being kept in boiling water all the while.]

King Janak has been overcome by affection towards these boys even before he came to know who they were[8].

I can only guess that some auspicious tidings are forewarned for us as hinted by this single development, for it is said by the sayer that "a tree that sporteth green leaves wouldest also beareth succulent fruits when the time cometh"[9] (4).

[[8]This is clearly stated in (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/61, stanza nos. 3-4; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 215—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 216.

[9]The fact that king Janak who is renowned as a very dispassionate person is so charmed by these two princes, Ram and Laxman, even before he was formally introduced to the brothers by sage Vishwamitra indicates that some subtle and invisible relationship exists between the two sides, king Janak on the one side and the two brothers on the other side, like it is said by the sayer that "blood attracts blood; blood hideth not from blood; and blood is thicker than water".

If a fruit-tree is rich with a cover of green leaves it means it will grow fruits. Otherwise, if the tree was dead or dry and barren, it would not sprout leaves as well. Therefore, by seeing green leaves on a fruit-tree which is young now one can correctly predict that when the tree grows up and the time comes it will bear fruits also.

So the friend said that as the things stand now and detailed in the above observations, all indications are that Lord Ram would surely and certainly break the bow and marry Sita.

Remember, the women-folk of Janakpur have already made this guess that the two brothers have come here at the invitation of king Janak in verse no. 1/74, stanza no. 3, and no. 1/77, stanza no. 3 earlier.]

Though these boys look simple in their behaviour, and are most modest and hesitant in their speech and demeanours (as they speak very softly, politely and almost inaudibly; 'jadapi saṁkōcī bāni haiṁ')[10].

Verily I say in sooth that the rest of the kings and princes who have come to take part in this competition have become like the stars seen in the sky at dawn when they lose their shine once the sun makes its appearance (bhūpa bhōra-kē-sē uḍugana). Indeed, all of them look depressed, dejected, shameful, downcast and gloomy like these stars (garata garība galāni haiṁ) when they have seen the two princes in their midst because of the shine and radiance effusing out of the latter that point to their inherent dynamism, energy, prowess, valour, strength, majesty, authority and grandness (tēja-pratāpa baṛhata kuṁvaranakō)[11] (5).

[[10]Refer: Verse no. 1/73, stanza no. 6 herein above.

In other words, whereas the other kings and princes are full of false pride and vanity, trying to show-off themselves and outdo each other in their pretension of grandeur and majesty, these two boys are simple and down-to-earth, without a trace of haughtiness and ego. They don't have any kind of 'airs' about them. The other kings are talking loudly and creating a ruckus, these two boys even talk with each others in hushed tones.

[11]In this stanza, the two princes, i.e. Lord Ram and Laxman, are compared to the 'sun at dawn time' in the sky, while all the other kings and princes who have gathered for the bow-breaking ceremony to the 'stars in the morning sky at dawn'.

Inspite of their simplicity and humility and modesty, the two princes are remarkable and they stand out in the crowd of haughty and pompous kings and princes full of vanity who try to outwit others in their show of majesty and grandeur just like the 'sun' in the sky that outshines 'all the stars taken together'.

As soon as the sun rises, the countless stars, that may have been the jewel of the night, instantly become lack-lustre, and as the sun continues to progress in the sky all these stars completely vanish from sight under the splendour of the sun. These hoardes of haughty and proud kings and princes are like the stars that fade away and finally go into oblivion with the arrival of the sun which is represented by Lord Ram here.

The kings had become increasingly gloomy because they were certain that they didn't stand a chance against Sri Ram, while Sri Ram appeared all the more confident and certain that he would break the bow. This confidance was shining on his face, while the gloom and despair that had overcome the kings had darkened their faces in shame and dejection. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 245; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 251.]

Though he (Lord Ram) is only in his teens (is very young; 'baya kisōra'), but still I am certain that he would clasp it (the bow) in the clamp of his immensely strong arms and crumple it with his hands when he would pull or stretch it (i.e. Lord would string and break the bow) (bāhubala-mēru mēli guna tānihaiṁ).

In all sooth we say that it is our view that it is certain that the lotus-eyed Lord Sri Ram (avasi rāma rājīva-bilōcana) would break this bow of Shiva (sambhu-sarāsana bhānihaiṁ) (6).

And as a result of this marvelous feat, all the men and women folk (of Janakpur) haply would see the Lord's marriage ceremony which is like a treasury of all auspiciousness, joy, happiness, gladness and good tidings for one and all (sakala sumaṅgala-khāni).'

Tulsidas asserts that all those who would hear, sing and narrate this story (sunihaiṁ, gā'ihaiṁ, bakhānihaiṁ) in times to come would also be regarded to be as fortunate and lucky as these citizens of Janakpur were (bhūribhāga tulasī tē'ū) (7).

राग केदारा

(1/81)

रामहि नीके कै निरखि, सुनैनी!
मनसहुँ अगम समुझि, यह अवसरु कत सकुचति, पिकबैनी।। 1।।
बड़े भाग मख–भूमि प्रगट भई सीय सुमंगल–ऐनी।
जा कारन लोचन–गोचर भइ मूरति सब सुखदैनी।। 2।।
कुलगुर–तियके मधुर बचन सुनि जनक–जुबति मति–पैनी।
तुलसी सिथिल देह–सुधि–बुधि करि सहज सनेह–बिषैनी।। 3।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/81)

rāmahi nīkē kai nirakhi, sunainī!
manasahum̃ agama samujhi, yaha avasaru kata sakucati, pikabainī.. 1..
baṛē bhāga makha-bhūmi pragaṭa bha'ī sīya sumaṅgala-ainī.
jā kārana lōcana-gōcara bha'i mūrati saba sukhadainī.. 2..
kulagura-tiyakē madhura bacana suni janaka-jubati mati-painī.
tulasī sithila dēha-sudhi-budhi kari sahaja sanēha-biṣainī.. 3..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-9

[The Dialogue Between Wife of sage Shatanand and Sita's Mother]

Verse no. 1/81—[The wife of Janak's Guru Shatanand speaks to Sita's mother Sunaina, also known as 'Sunayani/Sunaini', the one with beautiful eyes—]

'Oh Sunaini! Have a good look at Lord Sri Ram (nirakhi). Oh the one who speaks sweetly (pikabainī)! You must understand that he is beyond the reach and

comprehension of the 'Mana' (mind) (manasahum̃ agama). Say, why do you hesitate at this (opportune and golden) moment (to look closely at him who is a personified form of Supreme Lord who is beyond the mind to access and understand)[1]? (1).

[[1]Shatanand was the learned and wise court priest of the kingdom of Janakpur and the preceptor of king Janak just like sage Vasistha was for king Dasrath of Ayodhya. Shatanand's wife too was wise and knowledgable as her husband just like Vasistha's wife Arundhati was. She knew the secret of who Lord Sri Ram actually was—which was that he was a personified form of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the world. The Lord is almighty and an invisible Supreme Being who is inaccessible even to the wise ones such as ascetics and great sages who spend an entire lifetime meditating and contemplating but still can't access the Lord and understand his true nature. Even the ancient scriptures such as the Vedas have failed to fully comprehend the Lord and have surrendered finally to say that he is 'neti-neti', i.e. not this, not this. In other words, in whatever the scriptures try to describe who the Lord is they find that this description is incomplete, and hence say that whatever they have said with respect to the Lord is not all, there is much beyond it. "The Lord is not all this what the scriptures say, and neither is he what they don't say; for he is 'this' as well as 'that', and he is not limited to 'this' nor 'that, for truly he is his beyond everything said!"

In essence, sage Shatanand's wise wife advises Sunayana, the mother of Sita and the queen of king Janak, that she should feel herself as being very blessed and extremely lucky that the Supreme Being, who even the great ascetics and sages find difficult to perceive and understand even after adopting such powerful tools as meditation and contemplation, is now so easily available to allow her to have her eye's fill of the divine view of the Lord.

So why is she not utilizing this rarest of rare of golden opportunities and foolishly frittering it away by wasting time looking here and there at the other kings and princes who have assembled there in the hope that they would break the bow and marry Sita, trying to weigh and judge them in her mind and ponder about their suitability or otherwise as a prospective groom for her daughter? How foolish it is of her to even harbour such thoughts as someone else marrying Sita when Lord Ram is in their midst? Shatanand's wife clarifies further as follows—]

It is our great good fortune and the best of luck that we can ever think or hope for that Sita—who herself personifies all auspiciousness, well-beings and happiness (sīya sumaṅgala-ainī)—has revealed herself from the ground where the fire sacrifice (known as 'Makha') was organized (by king Janak) (baṛē bhāga makha-bhūmi pragaṭa bha'ī)[2].

And it is because of her that another good fortune and best of luck has presented itself before us in the form of this 'Makha' where the bow would be sacrificed, because it is by this excuse that we have had an opportunity to see (jā kārana lōcana-gōcara bha'i) this wonderful and divine image (or the 'form' of the Supreme Being in the person of Lord Ram) that is a bestower of all sorts of joy and happiness to the beholder (mūrati saba sukhadainī)[3]

{Put simply, this stanza means that it is because of Sita, who is an embodiment of auspiciousness, that Sri Ram and Laxman have come here. And this has given us the opportunity to see such a pair of beautiful princes which otherwise would not have been possible for us. So we must use this rare moment wisely.} (2).

[[2]Sita was found by king Janak in a pitcher buried underground while he was ploughing the field in preparation for a fire sacrifice. At that time, Shatanand had advised Janak to take her and bring her up as his own daughter, and treat her as a blessing or fruit or reward of the sacrifice that he planned to do. In times to come, this infant girl would prove to be the cause of his attaining immense joy and happiness as well as a privilege that no other living being has yet had nor will ever have. This story is narrated in 'Adhyatma Ramayan' of Veda Vyas, Baal Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 59-66.

[3]A religious ceremony where any 'sacrifice' is done is called a 'makha'. Since the ceremony to marry Sita was organized around the 'breaking of a bow' it is also equivalent to 'makha'—because here a bow is being sacrificed. The marriage of a girl to a suitable boy is regarded as a great religious duty for the parent, and it's importance is so great that it is equivalent to performing of a religious sacrifice.

Now, we come to a very interesting conclusion here—the answer to the perennial and vexing question 'why was Shiva's bow broken' is found here. The answer is this: the bow was technically 'sacrificed' (and not 'broken') as part of the 'makha' or religious sacrifice that Janak had organized to marry his daughter Sita. During such sacrifices one offers something very dear to him and something on which his entire reputation hinges as the best offering on his part. This bow was not an ordinary bow, but a mighty bow of the almighty Lord Shiva that had no match in the world and which occupied a place of pride in the household of king Janak. It was very dear to him. So sacrificing this bow was the best offer Janak could make in the religious ceremony held to marry Sita.

Janak is so blessed and lucky that when he did the first sacrifice he was blessed with arrival of Sita, an incarnation of goddess Laxmi, in his household, and now when he is doing the second sacrifice he is blessed with the arrival of Lord Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In fact, Janak was told by sage Narad all about this at the time of king Janak finding Sita in the ground, and it was precisely due to this that he had organized the bow breaking ceremony. This aspect is very explicitly narrated in 'Adhyatma Ramayan' of Veda Vyas, Baal Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 67-75.

The description of Lord Shiva's bow and how it came to be in the custody of Janak is narrated in 'Adhyatma Ramayan' of Veda Vyas, Baal Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 21-22, and 69-70.]

Tulsidas says that on hearing these sweet and enlightening words of the wife of the family's Guru ('kulagura-tiya'; sage Shatanand's wife), the most wise and sharp witted wife of Janak ('janaka-jubati mati-painī'; i.e. Sunaini) lost all awareness of her body and surroundings (i.e. she became thrilled and overwhelmed with emotions upon learning who Lord Ram actually was).

Thence, she began to look at Lord Sri Ram with a sense of natural affection (that one has for the Supreme Lord and the revered deity whom he or she worships)[4] (3).

[[4]Prior to the advise given by her Guru's wife, Sunayana viewed Lord Ram as one of the many competiting princes who were vying with each other for Sita's hand in marriage. But when she learnt the significance of Lord Ram coming here and who he actually was, her perception changed and she was thrilled to realize that she and the rest of the members of her family were exceptionally lucky that they have both Sita and Ram in their midst as personified forms of Goddess Laxmi and Lord Vishnu, which was a rarest of rare chance.]

मिलो बरु सुंदर सुंदरि सीतहि लायकु
साँवरो सुभग, शोभाहूँको परम सिंगारु।
मनहूको मन मोहै, उपमाको को है?
सोहै सुखमासागर संग अनुज राजकुमारु।। 1।।
ललित सकल अंग, तनु धरे कै अनंग,
नैननिको फल कैंधौं, सियको सुकृत–सारु।
सरद–सुधा–सदन–छबिहि निंदै बदन,
अरुन आयत नवनलिन–लोचन चारु।। 2।।
जनक–मनकी रीति जानि बिरहित प्रीति,
ऐसी औ मूरति देखे रह्यो पहिलो बिचारु।
तुलसी नृपहि ऐसो कहि न बुझावै कोउ,
'पन औ कुँअर दोऊ प्रेमकी तुला धौं तारु'।। 3।।

(1/82)

milō baru suṁdara sundari sītahi lāyaku
sāmvarō subhaga, śōbhāhūṁkō parama siṅgāru.
manahūkō mana mōhai, upamākō kō hai?
sōhai sukhamāsāgara saṅga anuja rājakumāru.. 1..
lalita sakala aṅga, tanu dharē kai anaṅga,
nainanikō phala kaindhauṁ, siyakō sukr̥ta-sāru.
sarada-sudhā-sadana-chabihi nindai badana,
aruna āyata navanalina-lōcana cāru.. 2..
janaka-manakī rīti jāni birahita prīti,
aisī au mūrati dēkhē rahyō pahilō bicāru.
tulasī nr̥pahi aisō kahi na bujhāvai kō'u,
'pana au kuṁara dō'ū prēmakī tulā dhauṁ tāru'.. 3..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-10

[The talk of the enchanted women-folk of Janakpur]

Verse no. 1/82—[After a brief interlude of verse no. 1/81, this verse picks up the thread of talk from verse no. 1/80 that narrates the views of the enchanted women-folk of Janakpur who had gathered at the venue of the bow-breaking ceremony.

These enchanted ladies of Janakpur tell each other with respect to the charm and beauty of Lord Ram as follows—]

'Oh Friend! This most lovely, dark complexioned groom (baru suṁdara; sāmvarō subhaga), who is like the crown-jewel and a decoration for the qualities of beauty, charm, magnificence, glamour, prettiness etc. themselves (śōbhāhūṁkō parama siṅgāru), is indeed the one who has been found (milō) to be most suitable for Sita who is equally beautiful and charming (sundari sītahi lāyaku).

He (Lord Ram) is so enchanting that he keeps the Mana (mind and heart) enthralled and captivated (manahūkō mana mōhai). Say, is there anything or being with which or with whom he can be compared? (upamākō kō hai). [That is, he is so unique and rare in beauty and charm that no one and nothing is there in this world with whom or which one can compare him.]

This prince (i.e. Lord Ram) is accompanied by his younger brother (saṅga anuja rājakumāru), and this adds to the charm and glamour as if two great oceans that grant joy and happiness are together (sōhai sukhamāsāgara saṅga) (1).

His (Sri Ram's) entire body is most charming and handsome (lalita sakala aṅga). Say, is he not Kamdeo/cupid himself personified (tanu dharē kai anaṅga)?

Or is he not the reward one expects from having eyes (nainanikō phala kaindhauṁ), and is he not a personified form of all the meritorious and good deeds done by Sita in her life (siyakō sukr̥ta-sāru)?

His (Lord Ram's) form is so bewitching in its charm and attractiveness that it puts to shame the moon when it looks its best on the first full moon's night of winter when it shines with a brilliant sheen as the heavenly pitcher that stores the nectar of bliss known as Sudha (sarada-sudhā-sadana-chabihi nindai badana).

His red-tinged and large eyes (aruna āyata lōcana) are as beautiful as the fresh petals of the newly opened lotus flower (navanalina cāru) (2).

Verily I say that even after seeing such a mind-captivating and heart-enchanting sight of this image (or form of Lord Ram; 'aisī au mūrati dēkhē') if Janak's mind is still so stubborn that it is hooked to his old vow ('rahyō pahilō bicāru'—that necessitates the breaking of the bow as a condition for someone marrying Sita), then certainly and in all sooth he and his mind are so stern and dry that they are truly devoid of any sense of affection and love (which need a soft heart and a mind that has some emotion in it; 'janaka-manakī rīti jāni birahita prīti')!'

[Now, Tulsidas intervenes and exhorts all those present on the occasion that someone should gather courage to tell Janak that he must abandon his stubbornness, and marry Sita to Lord Ram without any reservations or second thoughts.]

Tulsidas wonders why no one advises Janak and tells him (tulasī nr̥pahi aisō kahi na bujhāvai kō'u) to put his (ridiculous) vows on one side of the scale, and these two princes (Sri Ram and Laxman) on the other side of the scale that is symbolised by the glorious virtues of natural love, affection, endearments, sentiments and emotions combined, and then to weigh them to see how the scale tips in favour of Lord Sri Ram and Laxman ('pana au kuṁara dō'ū prēmakī tulā dhauṁ tāru')[1] (3).

[[1]In other words, why is Janak being so old-fashioned and stubborn in his thoughts that he continues to stick to his outdated and ridiculous vow of hinging the entire future of his daughter on the condition of the breaking of a bow? Does he not realise what would happen if an ugly person or someone much older in age than Sita or someone who is cruel and inconsiderate manages to break the bow by which he would be entitled to marry Sita? Would that not put Janak to shame and eternal grief? Forget about Janak; what would happen to Sita and her future happiness?

After all, the main purpose of holding this bow-breaking ceremony was to find someone suitable for Sita, someone who is exceptionally strong and capable and

competent to look after her well-being, happiness and security in future once she goes away from the sanctuary of her father. Besides this, has Janak consulted Sita to seek her personal views; after all, it is she whose life is on the block and she therefore has full right to have her say in it.

Even if one neglects all these factors, how can one overlook the fact that Janak himself had been very impressed by the two brothers, and he has also become aware of their noble birth and high pedigree as being princes of a highly respected kingdom of Ayodhya, and of their stupendous feats and valour in defeating and eliminating the ferocious demons on the one hand and providing liberation to Ahilya on the other hand. Inspite of this if Janak still sticks to his old ways and vows, then what can one say except to lament at his stubbornness of mind and sternness of heart that are dry as a desert and devoid of emotions and love.]

(1/83)

देखि देखि री! दोउ राजसुवन।
गौर स्याम सलोने लोने लोने, लोयननि,
जिन्हकी सोभा तें सोहै सकल भुवन।। 1।।
इन्हहीं ताडका मारी, मग मुनि–तिय तारी,
ऋषिमख राख्यो, रन दले हैं दुवन।
तुलसी प्रभुको अब जनकनगर–नभ,
सुजस–बिमल–बिधु चहत उवन।। 2।।

(1/83)

dēkhi dēkhi rī! dō'u rājasuvana.
gaura syāma salōnē lōnē lōnē, lōyanani,
jinhakī sōbhā tēṁ sōhai sakala bhuvana.. 1..
inhahīṁ tāḍakā mārī, maga muni-tiya tārī,
ṛ̤simakha rākhyō, rana dalē haiṁ duvana.
tulasī prabhukō aba janakanagara-nabha,
sujasa-bimala-bidhu cahata uvana.. 2..

Lord Ram at the Arena of the Bow-breaking Ceremony-11

Verse no. 1/83—'Oh Friend! Just have a look at these two princes.

Look, their dark and fair complexioned bodies[1] are very charming, as are their eyes which are extremely enchanting. All the Bhuvans (literally, all the corners of the world) look wonderful and glorious by the virtue of their presence there[2] (1).

[[1]Lord Ram is dark complexioned, and Laxman is of a fair complexion.

[2]It simply means that wherever the two brothers go, that direction or place acquires special glory and magnificence and importance. From a different perspective it also means that since Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is also known as the 'Viraat Purush', the all-pervading and omnipresent Supreme Lord of creation, and Laxman is a reflection of the Lord's authority, it follows that whatever good and

beautiful that is in the whole creation is nothing else but a form and reflection of the two brothers.]

These princes are the ones who have slayed Tadka and have liberated the sage's wife (Ahilya) on the way. They are the ones who have also protected the fire sacrifice of the sage (Vishwamitra) and have crushed (killed) Subahu and other wicked ones, the demons, in the battle-field[3].'

Tulsidas avers that soon the moon-like glory and fame of Lord Sri Ram would rise over (the sky of) Janakpur[4] (2).

[[3]Refer: Verse no. 1/74, stanza no. 3 herein above.

4Why has Tulsidas compared the success of Lord Ram in breaking the bow to 'the rise of the moon' instead of the 'sun'? Well, it is because the moon is a symbol of beauty and charm, and is a provider of bliss and solace to those whose hearts are in agony. So, since Lord Ram is exceptionally charming and his success in breaking the bow would give immense happiness and joy to the citizens, the moon is an apt metaphor with respect to the Lord.]

राग टोड़ी

(1/84)

राजा रंगभूमि आज बैठे जाइ जाइकै।
आपने आपने थल, आपने आपने साज,
आपनी आपनी बर बानिक बनाइकै।। 1।।
कौसिक सहित राम–लषन ललित नाम,
लरिका ललाम लोने पठए बुलाइकै।
दरसलालसा–बस लोग चले भाय भले,
बिकसित–मुख निकसत धाइ धाइ कै।। 2।।
सानुज सानंद हिये आगे ह्वै जनक लिये,
रचना रुचिर सब सादर देखाइकै।
दिये दिब्य आसन सुपास सावकास अति,
आछे आछे बीछे बीछे बिछौना बिछाइकै।। 3।।
भूपतिकिसोर दुहुँ ओर, बीच मुनिराउ
देखिबेको दाउँ, देखौ देखिबो बिहाइकै।
उदय–सैल सोहैं सुंदर कुँवर, जोहैं,
मानौ भानु भोर भूरि किरनि छिपाइकै।। 4।।
कौतुक कोलाहल निसान–गान पुर, नभ
बरषत सुमन बिमान रहे छाइकै।
हित–अनहित, रत–बिरत बिलोकि बाल,
प्रेम–मोद–मगन जनम–फल पाइकै।। 5।।
राजाकी रजाइ पाइ सचिव–सहेली धाइ,
सतानंद ल्याए सिय सिबिका चढ़ाइकै।
रूप–दीपिका निहारि मृग–मृगी नर–नारि,
बिथके बिलोचन–निमेषै बिसराइकै।। 6।।
हानि, लाहु, अनख, उछाहु, बाहुबल कहि
बंदि बोले बिरद अकस उपजाइकै।
दीप दीपके महीप आए सुनि पैज पन,

कीजै पुरुषारथको अवसर भौ आइकै।। 7।।
आनाकानी, कंठ–हँसी मुँहा–चाही होन लगी,
देखि दसा कहत बिदेह बिलखाइकै।
घरनि सिधारिए, सुधारिए आगिलो काज,
पूजि पूजि धनु कीजै बिजय बजाइकै।। 8।।
जनक–बचन छुए बिरवा लजारु के से
बीर रहे सकल सकुचि सिर नाइकै।
तुलसी लषन माषे, रोषे, राखे रामरुख
भाषे मृदु परुष सुभायन रिसाइकै।। 9।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/84)

rājā raṅgabhūmi āja baiṭhē jā'i jā'ikai.
āpanē āpanē thala, āpanē āpanē sāja,
āpanī āpanī bara bānika banā'ikai.. 1..
kausika sahita rāma-laṣana lalita nāma,
larikā lalāma lōnē paṭha'ē bulā'ikai.
darasalālasā-basa lōga calē bhāya bhalē,
bikasita-mukha nikasata dhā'i dhā'i kai.. 2..
sānuja sānanda hiyē āgē hvai janaka liyē,
racanā rucira saba sādara dēkhā'ikai.
diyē dibya āsana supāsa sāvakāsa ati,
āchē āchē bīchē bīchē bichaunā bichā'ikai.. 3..
bhūpatikisōra duhuṁ ōra, bīca munirā'u
dēkhibēkō dā'uṁ, dēkhau dēkhibō bihā'ikai.
udaya-saila sōhaiṁ sundara kuṁvara, jōhaiṁ,
mānau bhānu bhōra bhūri kirani chipā'ikai.. 4..
kautuka kōlāhala nisāna-gāna pura, nabha
baraṣata sumana bimāna rahē chā'ikai.
hita-anahita, rata-birata bilōki bāla,
prēma-mōda-magana janama-phala pā'ikai.. 5..
rājākī rajā'i pā'i saciva-sahēlī dhā'i,
satānanda lyā'ē siya sibikā caṛhā'ikai.
rūpa-dīpikā nihāri mr̥ga-mr̥gī nara-nāri,
bithakē bilōcana-nimēṣai bisarā'ikai.. 6..
hāni, lāhu, anakha, uchāhu, bāhubala kahi
bandi bōlē birada akasa upajā'ikai.
dīpa dīpakē mahīpa ā'ē suni paija pana,
kījai puruṣārathakō avasara bhau ā'ikai.. 7..
ānākānī, kaṇṭha-haṁsī muṁhā-cāhī hōna lagī,
dēkhi dasā kahata bidēha bilakhā'ikai.
gharani sidhāri'ē, sudhāri'ē āgilō kāja,
pūji pūji dhanu kījai bijaya bajā'ikai.. 8..
janaka-bacana chu'ē biravā lajāru kē sē
bīra rahē sakala sakuci sira nā'ikai.

tulasī laṣana māṣē, rōṣē, rākhē rāmarukha
bhāṣē mr̥du paruṣa subhāyana risā'ikai.. 9..

The Bow-Breaking Ceremony-1
(The Assembly Convenes and the Ceremony Starts)

Verse no. 1/84—[Now, the narration moves on to the spectacle at the arena where the bow breaking ceremony was to be held. The entire episode of the actual breaking of the bow and Sita garlanding Lord Ram with the victory garland is narrated from verse no. 1/84—1/98.

It is also described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 266.]

Today, all the kings have fully decked themselves marvellously in their regal splendour, complete with all the trappings of royalty and majesty that exhibit grandeur, pageantry and pomp. They have gone and seated themselves at places especially ear-marked for them in the arena (the venue) where the bow-breaking ceremony is to be held (1).

At this time, king Janak sent for the two charming boys whose names were Sri Ram and Laxman, to come at the venue along with their Guru Kaushik (Vishwamitra)[1]. With a desire to have their Darshan (privileged viewing), the citizens got out of their homes and rushed towards the site with a cheerful mind and a thrilled body[2] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 239 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 9-10.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 240.

Refer also to Verse no. 1/73 herein above of the present book Geetawali.]

Then, king Janak, accompanied by his younger brother Kushdhwaj, gladly came forward to heartily welcome them. He and his brother then respectfully escorted the two brothers (Ram and Laxman) and the sage (Vishwamitra) around the venue of the bow-breaking ceremony to show the entire arrangement to them.

After that, they took the guests and gave them their assigned seats which were superior to others in their majesty and beauty, in their outstanding fineness and charm, and incorporated every comfort and convenience that one can hope for inasmuch as they were especially erected for this purpose in regal style to seat special guests of honour who were invited to attend the ceremony[3] (as these seats were provided with special upholstery, arm and foot rests, cushions, canopies, shades, provisions for refreshments such as cool drinking water etc.) (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 244 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8.]

[The citizens who had flocked the arena animatedly say to each other—] 'Ah, just have a look at this divine and wonderful sight which is a feast for the eye! The two princess (Ram and Laxman) are seated on either side, and the exalted sage (Vishwamitra) is in the centre.

This is one of the best opportunities or time we have to watch them closely and to our heart's content[4]. Hence, stop looking elsewhere and fix your sights on them.

These two beautiful, handsome and charming princes look as if the morning sun has silently risen over the 'Udaichal Mountain' while still hiding its thousands of rays[5] (4).

[[4]'This' refers to the time when Lord Ram and Laxman as well as sage Vishwamitra were comfortably seated. The first time the citizens had seen the two brothers was when they had gone for sight-seeing in the city when they were constantly on the move from one quarter of the city to another. The second opportunity was when the brothers had left the place where they had been lodged and were on their way to the venue of the bow ceremony. In both the cases the two brothers were constantly on the move, and so the enchanted citizens had to contend with a short time span when to view them. But now the situation was different as the brothers were seated at one place, and this place was on a platform and very prominent so everyone could fix their attention on them and gaze at them for as long as they wanted.

Now, an interesting thing must have occurred then. Those seats in the arena which afforded a front view of the thrones where the two brothers sat with the sage must have been overcrowded with jostling and pushing crowd as everyone would have wished to sit or stand in that part of the arena, leading to it almost bursting to its seams, while those seats at the rear must have been lying almost empty!

[5]The "udaya-saila" is literally the snow-covered lofty Mountain where the sun is first seen to rise from behind it far in the horizon. "udaya" means to rise, and "saila" means a mountain. When the sun rises from behind this mountain it is still in its nascent stage because the mountain his very high and the sun is deemed to be seen by someone who is standing on the summit from where he sees the sun while it is still at or just below the horizon. At this point of time the sun looks merely like an illuminated disc. Only when it has gone up in the sky for some distance does it begin to exhibit its splendour and radiant glory which reaches its zenith when the sun is right overhead in the sky.

In our present stanza, this metaphor is employed to stress that till this point of time no one in the city has actually seen and witnessed the actual marvels enacted by Lord Ram nor of his stupendous powers, prowess, valour and strength-of-arm in practice. They have only heard about it just as one hears about the dazzling splendour of the sun. But nevertheless, it would be seen and witnessed shortly at the time when the Lord would actually go and break the formidable bow effortlessly just like the case when what is heard about the sun is actually seen and witnessed when the sun moves ahead in the sky and reaches the top of the sky at noon.

At present point of time, however, Lord Ram is sitting quietly and modestly, concealing his astounding potentials and powers just like the sun which has just peeped at the horizon to indicate that it has arrived. The raised platform is likened to the 'Udai Mountain', and Lord Ram to the nascent sun here.]

There is a lot of wonder and curiosity amongst the citizens of Janakpur. The whole city meanwhile is reverberating with the sound of musical instruments being played enthusiastically and felicitous songs being sung merrily.

The sky is filled with the vehicles of Gods who shower flowers on the arena below[6].

Everyone, whether a friend or an enemy (i.e. those who liked the two princes and loved them, and even those who were jealous and harboured malice towards them), whether attached or dispassionate (i.e. that majority which was rooting in favour of the two brothers, and the minuscule minority who weren't bothered)—all of them watch enchanted at these two boys, and having got the reward or fruit of taking birth (at Janakpur so as to be able to see this rarest of rare spectacular sight), they are extremely gladdened in their hearts and overcome with happiness[7] (5).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 246; and Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 248.

[7]In other words, everyone, including those who pretended to be neutral even though they were jealous of the developments, felt extremely lucky to see such a wonderful sight that they had never ever witnessed in the days of their lives.]

Thereafter, on getting Janak's signal, the ministers and maids rushed to the inside of the palace and, accompanied by Shatanand, they brought Sita to the venue[8].

Watching the matchless pristine beauty and extraordinarily charm of Sita which was like a lighted lamp that spreads its illumination everywhere, all the men and women folk forgot to even bat their eye-lids as they were spellbound and enchanted by her bewitching beauty and magnificence[9] just like the deer stands still when it sees a lighted lamp in the forest[10] (6).

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 246; and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 248.

[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 247—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 248.

[10]Refer: Verse no. 1/43, stanza no. 3 herein above of this book Geetawali.]

At this moment, the royal heralds and bards were summoned by Janak to announce to the assembly the reason for organising the bow ceremony. Thus, they stood up and said inspiring words that ignited a spirit of competition amongst the invited kings and princes, exhorting them and spurring them to get up forthwith from their seats and try their might at breaking the bow by describing the loss or harm that would come (to them if the bow is not broken), the gain and fame that would be automatically accrue (to him who breaks the formidably strong bow, together with the privilege of being accepted in marriage by Sita), the humiliation, ignominy or depression (that the kings would certainly face if they sit tight, or if they aren't able to break the bow and turn round to show their backs), the encouragement and motivation (that came with the prospect of winning immense fame and the hand of a beautiful girl in marriage), and the strength, powers and valour (of the person who would be successful in breaking the bow which would indisputably establish him as the greatest and the strongest warrior in the world).

The bards and heralds stoked the ego and ignited a sense of self-pride and majesty in the assembled kings and princes in this way while lauding them for their fame, glory and reputation to make them motivated and enthusiastic.

They announced: 'After hearing the vow of king Janak, the great and majestic kings and princes of different continents and islands on earth have assembled here. So, keeping in mind that the time has come for all of you to exhibit your unique virtues of matchless valour, strength, courage, powers and prowess in the front of this huge assembly where all the great warriors on earth have gotten together, rise from your seats and showcase your manhood, your valour, your gallantry, your strength-of-

arm and your courage so that you could be unanimously declared as 'the greatest of them all'![11] (7).

[[11]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 250.]

Hearing this declaration that signalled the start of the competition for breaking the bow, the assembly was filled with the sound of grave murmuring, animated whispering and shyish chuckling amongst the kings and princes as they were all hesitant and reluctant, demurring and debating amongst themselves ('ānākānī, kaṇṭha-hamm̐sī mum̐hā-cāhī hōna lagī') as what to or what not to do (because the situation was very grave, and the outcome was equally hazardous, for if they won then it would be a moment of immense glory, but if they lost then it would be tantamount to being dead while alive, for it is as good as death for a great king or prince to suffer defeat in the front of a huge gathering of their peers like the one never got together any time till now)[12].

Seeing this (i.e. their uncertain demeanours and reluctance to get up and go the bow to try lifting it and breaking it), king Videha (Janak) was agonised and sad beyond measure. He gravely lamented at their lack of manhood, courage and valour, and said sarcastically to them in a taunting, acerbic tone: 'Oh Kings! All of you go back home and look after your routine work (for this task of breaking the bow is beyond your capacity). Now all of you just worship the bow and declare yourself victorious! (Or tell me, are you so scared to go near the bow even for the purpose of worshipping it? I didn't know that the world was devoid of true warriors, and that such glorious virtues as valour, gallantry and manhood have become extinct in the world)[13]' (8).

[[12]The invited kings and princes had thought that it was an ordinary competition, and since kings and their ilk are usually prone to fall victim to their inflated ego and vanity about their valour and majesty which makes them overlook the reality in their haughtiness and arrogance, they all came to Janakpur to win the competition. Once here they realised that the bow was not an ordinary one, but was Shiva's bow, and therefore extraordinary. So all hesitated and were reluctant to go to it as they knew their limitations and seriously doubted if they would be able to succeed. In the face of almost certain failure they thought it was wiser to sit put on their seats and at least preserve a semblance of majesty and power because they would always claim that they could have certainly broken the bow if they had tried but they decided not to try at all for one or the other reason. An excuse can always be found to serve as a face-saver grace.

But in this process of remaining seated and behaving shyly and sheepishly murmuring to each other, they only proved that they had conceded defeat which was more ignominious and shameful than when if they would have at least gone to the bow and pretended to show their respects to it because it was Shiva's bow by bowing before it and worshipping it in a perfunctory manner, and then coming back to their seats. If they had done so they could at least claim that they did not break the bow, though they could have done so if they had wanted, just because they respected it for it was Shiva's bow.

This is what Janak hints at when he taunts them to go and worship the bow and declare themselves victorious.

[13]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 251—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 252.]

Hearing these sarcastic and acrid words of Janak, all those so-called braves drooped their heads in shame like the Mimosa plant.

Tulsidas says that even Laxman got immensely irritated and annoyed at these insulting words of Janak, but seeing Lord Sri Ram's attitude, he toned down his anger and spoke words which were part sweet and part acrimonious[14] (9).

[[14]Refer also verse no. 1/89 herein below.]

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 252 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8.]

(1/85)

भूपति बिदेह कही नीकियै जो भई है।
बड़े ही समाज आजु राजनिकी लाज–पति
हाँकि आँक एक ही पिनाक छीनि लई है।। 1।।
मेरो अनुचित न कहत लरिकाई–बस,
पन परमिति और भाँति सुनि गई है।
नतरु प्रभु–प्रताप उतरु चढ़ाय चाप
देतो पै देखाइ बल, फल, पापमई है।। 2।।
भूमिकके हरैया उखरैया भूमिधरनिके,
बिधि बिरचे प्रभाउ जाको जग जई है।
बिहँसि हिये हरषि हटके लषन राम,
सोहत सकोच सील नेह नारि नई है।। 3।।
सहमी सभा सकल, जनक भए बिकल,
राम लखि कौसिक असीस–आग्या दई है।
तुलसी सुभाय गुरुपाँय लागि रघुराज
ऋषिराजकी रजाइ माथे मानि लई है।। 4।।

(1/85)

bhūpati bidēha kahī nīkiyai jō bha'ī hai.
baṛē hī samāja āju rājanikī lāja-pati
hāmk̐i āmk̐a ēka hī pināka chīni la'ī hai.. 1..
mērō anucita na kahata larikā'ī-basa,
pana paramiti aura bhāmt̐i suni ga'ī hai.
nataru prabhu-pratāpa utaru caṛhāya cāpa
dētō pai dēkhā'i bala, phala, pāpama'ī hai.. 2..
bhūmikakē haraiyā ukharaiyā bhūmidharanikē,
bidhi biracē prabhā'u jākō jaga ja'ī hai.
bihamm̐si hiyē haraṣi haṭakē laṣana rāma,
sōhata sakōca sīla nēha nāri na'ī hai.. 3..
sahamī sabhā sakala, janaka bha'ē bikala,

rāma lakhi kausika asīsa-āgyā da'ī hai.
tulasī subhāya gurupām̐ya lāgi raghurāja
ṛṣirājakī rajā'i māthē māni la'ī hai.. 4..

Laxman's Rebuke to Janak

Verse no. 1/85—[When none of the assembled kings and princes could muster courage to go and break the bow, and instead sat with lowered heads as if ashamed of themselves, Janak was very disheartened and disgusted. He chided them in stern words, telling them to go back home empty-handed as it was clear that no one would break the bow, and so he was calling off the ceremony. This is narrated in stanza no. 8 of verse no. 1/84 herein above.

This declaration of Janak peeved Laxman extremely because the former had not even approached either of the two brothers to try their hands before making a final closure of the competition and asserting that the world was devoid of true warriors. How could Janak dare to make such a sweeping assumption 'that the world was devoid of all warriors' when Lord Ram was present there, especially when Janak was well aware the way the two brothers had easily killed ferocious demons whose mere appearance would send shivers down the spine of even the gods? After all, Lord Ram was also a noble prince of one of the greatest royal families of the time. Rather, he was the best of all the princes assembled there not only in terms of strength, valour, courage and skill with arms, but also the most suitable candidate to be a groom for Sita. Why was Lord Ram not even given a chance? (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 253.)

Unable to bear such deemed insult and humiliation in public, Laxman got up angrily and sternly rebuked Janak for his words, challenging that if his brother, Lord Ram, gives him permission he would upturn the earth and crush it under foot, let alone the old and worn out bow which he would tear apart like the delicate stem of a lotus flower! (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 253 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8.)

The following verse no. 1/85 describes Laxman's strong exception to Janak's words, and how he reacted sharply and angrily at Janak's surmising that since there was no strong warrior left on the face of earth his daughter, Sita, would have to remain unmarried. 'What a stupid assumption it is', asserted an annoyed Laxman!]

Laxman took strong exception to Janak's statement (in verse no. 1/84 above, and no. 1/89 herein below) that implied that there are no true warriors worth their salt on earth, and all those who claim to be so are only pretentious boasters. He took umbrage because Lord Ram was present in the assembly, and did not Janak know that the Lord had so easily vanquished the strongest of demons walking on the face of earth while protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra. So then, how dare and why did Janak make such an uncalled for, such an inappropriate, such a seething and sweeping remark even without letting Lord Ram approach the rusty old bow?

Come to it, declared Laxman in his vehement anger, if he gets the Lord's permission he would tear apart the bow, and with it crush to dust the false sense of

righteousness and soothfastness that Janak has about himself and his stubbornness vis-à-vis his godforsaken vow.

So, Laxman sternly rebuked Janak with a lot of sarcasm, saying: 'Whatever king Janak has said is most appropriate. In this large gathering, the pride, ego, self-respect, honour and dignity of the so-called great kings has been snatched by this single bow which has single-handedly, and even without moving itself a bit, challenged all of them and their authority (1).

I am being a little childish in what I say, so please do not mind my words and do not be offended, but the result, the reward, of breaking this bow is quite different (than what it is made out to be and what meets the eye). Otherwise, I would have myself strung the bow on the strength of my Lord (Sri Ram), and would have answered him (Janak)[1].

I would have shown my strength and valour and abilities, but (what can I do?) I have to exercise restraint as the reward of breaking the bow myself would be very sinful, unrighteous and ignominious for me (because Sita is like my mother, and I can never ever imagine of marrying her by breaking this bow. This is the reason why I don't do it) (2).

[[1]How dare Janak say that none could break the bow when I am present here? Had it not been for certain predestined great destiny that hinges on the breaking of this bow, I would have torn it apart and thrown its broken parts in front of Janak to rebuke him for what he said that no one in the assembly could break the bow! It appears that he does not want his daughter to marry me or my brother, so in that case when I would broken the bow I would have forcibly taken his daughter's hand in marriage. But I do not want to do it because the destiny that is hinged on the bow is markedly different—and it is the Lord of the World in the form of Ram is to be united with the Shakti in the form of Sita, a union that is necessary for the larger good of the world as it would be the ground that would finally lead to the elimination of the demons, the chief purpose for which the Lord and his Shakti have come down to earth.

This foolish assembly and its equally foolish host, Janak, aren't aware of this secret. This ignorant king seems to be so deluded that he has forgotten who Sita, whom he erranously thinks to be his 'daughter', is, and similarly he doesn't know who Lord Ram actually is?]

The Creator has made this bow so strong and invincible that today it has put to shame such excellent warriors who are renowned for their strength and valour—such as 'Vanasur' who is so strong and powerful that once in some ancient time he had stolen the earth by picking it up as if it was merely a small ball and had hidden it. Another instance is that of 'Ravana' who is no less strong and powerful inasmuch as he can uproot huge mountains and lift them in his hands. Both of them have bitten the dust today[2]. [But both of them are today so scared that they do not dare even attempt to lift the bow as they know that they would certainly fail and face huge embarrassment and loss of face. I don't bother about anyone, and if I want and Lord Ram gives me his assent, I will break this rotten bow in a time that the eye takes to blink.]'

Hearing this, Lord Sri Ram smiled in his heart and advised Laxman to stop and be calm[3].

At that time when Lord Ram restrained him, he (Laxman) looked magnificent and charming because he immediately complied with the Lord's orders and stood there with a neck (i.e. the head) bowed with dignity and modesty even as he hesitated to utter a single word thereafter. Laxman silence was a sign of high culture and excellent discipline as it showed his respect and reverence for his elder brother[4] (3).

[[2]The two great demons of the time, Vanasur and Ravana, were also present at the venue. But they too did not dare to approach the bow, rather they slid away quietly to hide their shame and impotence. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 250; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 256.

In fact, when these two demons saw Lord Ram at the venue, they were terrified at the sight as they saw a personified form of Kaal, the god of death, in the place of the Lord. This fact is mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 241.

[3]Refer also: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand,Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 254.

[4]Laxman looked so wonderful and dignified because he showed how well disciplined he was. Obeying elders and paying heed to their advise are great positive traits in one's character. Laxman was not bothered about what others would think of him of being merely a loud-mouthed boastful prince if he suddenly retracted into silence instead of going ahead with what he had just threatened he could do—break the bow. Let it be, Laxman thought to himself, obeying his brother was a priority with him. This showed how well he was disciplined and knew the exercise self restraint without harbouring any trace of ego and pride.]

This angry outburst of resentment caused the whole assembly to be terrified (or shrink in fear). Janak became extremely excited due to a surge of latent affection that he had for Lord Ram even as sage Kaushik (Vishwamitra) glanced at Lord Sri Ram, blessed him, and ordered him to break the bow[5].

Tulsidas says that Lord Sri Ram then respectfully, and out of habit, fell at the feet of the king-amongst-sages (i.e. the great sage Vishwamitra), to pay his respect to him, and accepted his command (to go and break the bow)[6] (4).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 254.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 254; and Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 255.

See also verse no. 1/89 herein below of this book.]

(1 / 86)

सोचत जनक पोच पेच परि गई है।
जोरि कर कमल निहोरि कहैं कौसिकसों,
'आयसु भौ रामको सो मेरे दुचितई है।। 1।।
बान, जातु–धानपति, भूप दीप सातहूके,
लोकप बिलोकत पिनाक भूमि लई है।

जोतिलिंग कथा सुनि जाको अंत पाये बिनु
आए बिधि हरि हारि सोई हाल भई है।। 2।।
आपुही बिचारिए, निहारिए सभाकी गति,
बेद–मरजाद मानौ हेतुबाद हई है।
इन्हके जितौहैं मन सोभा अधिकानी तन,
मुखनकी सुखमा सुखद सरसई है।। 3।।
रावरो भरोसो बल, कै है कोऊ कियो छल,
कैधों कुलको प्रभाव, कैधों लरिकाई है?
कन्या, कल कीरति, बिजय बिस्वकी बटोरि
कैधों करतार इन्हहीको निर्मई है।। 4।।
पनको न मोह, न बिसेष चिंता सीताहूकी,
लुनिहै पै सोई सोई जोई जेहि बई है।
रहै रघुनाथकी निकाई नीकी नीके नाथ,
हाथ सो तिहारे करतूति जाकी नई है'।। 5।।
कहि 'साधु साधु' गाधि–सुवन सराहे राउ,
'महाराज ! जानि जिय ठीक भली दई है'।
हरषै लखन, हरषाने बिलखाने लोग,
तुलसी मुदित जाको राजा राम जई है।। 6।।

(1/86)

sōcata janaka pōca pēca pari ga'ī hai.
jōri kara kamala nihōri kahaiṁ kausikasōṁ,
'āyasu bhau rāmakō sō mērē ducita'ī hai.. 1..
bāna, jātu-dhānapati, bhūpa dīpa sātahūkē,
lōkapa bilōkata pināka bhūmi la'ī hai.
jōtiliṅga kathā suni jākō anta pāyē binu
ā'ē bidhi hari hāri sō'ī hāla bha'ī hai.. 2..
āpuhī bicāri'ē, nihāri'ē sabhākī gati,
bēda-marajāda mānau hētubāda ha'ī hai.
inhakē jitauhaiṁ mana sōbhā adhikānī tana,
mukhanakī sukhamā sukhada sarasa'ī hai.. 3..
rāvarō bharōsō bala, kai hai kō'ū kiyō chala,
kaidhōṁ kulakō prabhāva, kaidhōṁ larikā'ī hai?
kan'yā, kala kīrati, bijaya bisvakī baṭōri
kaidhōṁ karatāra inhahīkō nirma'ī hai.. 4..
panakō na mōha, na bisēṣa cintā sītāhūkī,
lunihai pai sō'ī sō'ī jō'ī jēhi ba'ī hai.
rahai raghunāthakī nikā'ī nīkī nīkē nātha,
hātha sō tihārē karatūti jākī na'ī hai'.. 5..
kahi 'sādhu sādhu' gādhi-suvana sarāhē rā'u,
'mahārāja! jāni jiya ṭhīka bhalī da'ī hai'.
haraṣai lakhana, haraṣānē bilakhānē lōga,
tulasī mudita jākō rājā rāma ja'ī hai.. 6..

Janak's regret

Verse no. 1/86—[When none of the competing kings and princes could break the bow and Janak was filled with dejection, despairing at his own vows that have put him in such a dire situation, and in his utter dismay he had literally declared the bow-breaking ceremony closed, Laxman had stood up and rebuked Janak in very strong words. At that time, realizing that the opportunity has arrived, the all-knowing great sage Vishwamitra intervened and asked Lord Ram to go and break the bow. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 254.

Janak on the one hand felt exceedingly glad that it looks his fortunes are taking a good turn for inside his own heart he had wanted to see Lord Ram as his son-in-law, but on the other hand he had grave doubts about the Lord's ability to actually lift and break the bow which had till now stubbornly refused to budge even an inch and had led all the mighty kings and princes on the face of earth to be defeated and put to shame.

So, when Vishwamitra ordered Lord Ram to go and break the bow so that Janak's agony and grief are taken care of, the latter was flustered and confused. First it was Laxman's sharp tongue with which he was already scathed, and now it is a piquant situation because the mighty sage Vishwamitra has intervened to tell Lord Ram to break the bow, a possibility that seemed very remote and almost hard to imagine for Janak, given the tender body and very young age of the Lord, especially when all the brave warriors who were veterans, war-hardened, with muscular and well-tuned bodies, had already bitten the dust.

Besides this, Janak was also reluctant and doubtful whether Lord Ram should be allowed to go to the bow because he thought that his dignity and self-respect have already been put on the block, and he would be a subject of world-wide laughter, ridicule and scorn if he now allowed anyone to go to the bow after once declaring the ceremony virtually closed (refer: verse no. 1/84, stanza no. 3 herein above).

He was already smarting at Laxman's public rebuke, and so when he faced the prospect of the mighty sage asking Laxman's elder brother Lord Ram to go and break the bow even without seeking as much as a formal nod from Janak, it was like adding salt to his wounds. He didn't have the courage to oppose Vishwamitra and tell him that now that Lord Ram's younger brother Laxman has insulted him in public, he would not have anyone from his family break the bow and marry his daughter. No king having self-respect will allow such a thing!

Hence, Janak expressed his apprehensions in a polite and courteous way to sage Vishwamitra. This verse describes this situation.]

Janak was extremely worried and thoughtful: 'It is a great dilemma; I am in a grave quandary (not knowing what to do).'

He earnestly begged before Kaushik (sage Vishwamitra) with his palms touching each other as he folded-in his hands at the elbow (as a gesture of politeness and showing the urgency of what he wished to say)—'Lord, I am concerned (and worried) and am in doubt about the orders you have given to Sri Ram.

(You must have observed that—) As soon as this bow saw Vanasur, the demon king Ravana, the kings of the seven continents, and the Lokpals (the custodians of the world who had gathered there to try their luck at breaking of the bow), it seemed to have firmly grasped the earth and stuck to it so tightly (pināka bhūmi la'ī hai) that it refused to budge even a fraction of a measurement.

Even as Brahma (the creator) and Vishnu (the sustainer of creation), who had heard about the mystery and the mystical glory of Lord Shiva's 'Jyotirlingam' (a self-illuminated, shaft-of-light symbol of Lord Shiva), had returned empty-handed when they failed to find the beginning or the end of it inspite of their wandering in the heavens and the subterranean world in order to determine it (jōtiliṅga kathā suni jākō anta pāyē binu ā'ē bidhi hari hāri), the same condition prevails with this bow.

[That is, the world's great kings and the brave warriors of great repute and of all dispensations have failed to measure-up to the bow's strength inspite of their trying their best.] (1-2).

Oh sage, think for yourself and look at the condition and demeanours of the assembly. It appears that the science of logic (hētubāda) has destroyed (defied and subverted) the sanctity and importance of the Vedas (bēda-marajāda mānau ha'ī hai)[1].

(Compared to the dejected, morose and despaired countenance of the assembled kings—) The mind of these (two) boys are as delightful as is the increased charm of their bodies, while the beautiful countenance of their faces appears to provide (effuse, show) great pleasure[2]. (3).

[[1]This stanza highlights Janak's immensity of regret. It was observed by him that all the competing kings were of a much senior age than Sita, and none was a suitable match for her when the general charm and appeal of beauty of a married couple was concerned. Say, what would have happened if by fate any one of the assembled kings would have broken the bow; would not Sita be tied to someone not at all to her liking or a remotest match with her?

Forget about that also: consider this—when the kings had failed to move the bow individually, they had tried to move it together in their hundreds and thousands, all of them putting in their full might to push and move it. Didn't any one of them stand back and think about the consequences of this nonsense—about what would happen to Sita's fate if say a hundred kings simultaneously claimed her to be their wife? Its absolutely ridiculous and mad to imagine the consequences—but the irony is that since the vow of Janak said that Sita would be wed to anyone who broke the bow, all successful candidates would have equal right to claim her, and even her father would be forced to consent to this most incongruous development.

This is what Janak hints at. He implies that when these kings decided to break the bow jointly, didn't they realize that they are breaking the sancitity of the bond of marriage as envisaged in the Vedas, the ancient scriptures that lay down strict laws of morality and ethical conduct? Didn't they realize that if they were successful and Janak was forced to give Sita to them in marriage by the law of logic that states that 'anyone who succeeds to fulfil the condition of the competition as declared in Janak's vow would marry Sita', wouldn't it violate the laws of the Vedas and the highest standards of ethics and morality that they expect the people to uphold?

This stanza therefore is as much an expression of dismay at the falling standards of moral conduct amongst the populace as it is a virtual condemnation of Janak for making ridiculous vows.

[2]Janak means that Lord Sri Ram and Laxman are not at all worried or concerned at the prospect of being unable to break the bow and face defeat. They aren't bothered about the formidability of the task at hand should anyone challenge Laxman to carry out his threats of breaking the bow if Lord Ram permits him, and neither is the Lord concerned as to what would happen if he himself is asked to do it instead of Laxman, as presently you have asked him to. Just look at all the kings and princes in the assembly who look as if they have lost all their treasure and dignity and

self-respect by being unable to break the bow. Don't they realize that this is a competition where only one can win, and that greatness lies in having a spirit of sportsmanship in such situations and not in being jealous of others or getting sullen on having failed. After all, not everyone wins a competition, and not all are equally strong and powerful. Say, how nice it would been if the assembled kings had taken their inability to break the bow cheerfully in a lively spirit of a sport. What is there to feel so gloomy, insulted and crestfallen that all of the kings and princes have drooped their necks and drawn a long face?

In this contrast, how pleasant and nice it is to see cheer and a sweet smile on the face of these two brothers! Instead of feeling nervous once you have asked Lord Ram to get up and go to the bow to break it, the two brothers are glowing with confidence as if they are ready to face the challenge happily and to show their mettle and prove their superiority over all the kings, and by extension over the demon Ravana who was also present on this occasion just a while ago.]

(Janak says—) The confidence and radiance on their faces is either due to their reliance on your (i.e. sage Vishwamitra's) unfailing strength and potential powers (because they know that all would be fine with your blessing and they can never fail because you are with them—rāvarō bharōsō bala), or they are some divine Being in this disguise (kai hai kō'ū kiyō chala—because only God or some Divine Entity can have this sort of confidence and fearlessness in him, for no human being can ever gather courage to keep smiling if he was asked to do the same thing as these kings had expected to do after seeing what the latter had faced a while ago), or it may be due to the glorious effect of their race (i.e. the 'Sun/Solar Race' to which the two brothers belonged, here meaning that the shine on their face is due to their inheritance of radiance and splendour from the Sun God—kaidhōṁ kulakō prabhāva), or it might be just due to their childish arrogance and carelessness (because children do not understand the gravity of any situation and continue to play around cheerfully even when the rest of the adults around them are extremely worried and grave—kaidhōṁ larikā'ī hai).

Or, say indeed, is it that the Creator has created my daughter Sita for this treasury of world-wide fame and victory that is embodied in the person of Lord Sri Ram—bijaya bisvakī baṭōri kaidhōṁ karatāra inhahīkō nirma'ī hai)!

Oh Sage! I wonder what (mystery) it is! (4).

I am not worried about my vows and the fear of ignominy that has come to me due to it, and neither am I greatly concerned about the fate of Sita because one reaps what one sows[3].

But I want that the good fame and glory of Raghunath (Sri Ram) should be maintained and retained in the way it stands at present without any blemish on it or without it getting diminished. So, oh Lord, it is in your hand now, as your deeds are full of marvels and mysteries.[4]' (5).

[[3]If my past deeds and Sita's fate prescribe that she remains unmarried, what can I do. It is all my fault that I made such a godforsaken vow, but now it is a thing that can't be changed. I will bear with all the punishment that is destined for me as a penalty, and so would Sita.

[4]Janak bethought to himself that it is a great risk to ask Sri Ram to break the bow, because if he fails to do so the already established charm of the two princes would turn sour and they would be publicly humiliated and subjected to ridicule like the other kings and princes had been. Janak says that he does not want this thing to

happen at all. So he pleaded with sage Vishwamitra that it is better to keep the charm and glory of the two brothers intact and desist from taking any risk that may put the dignity and majesty of Lord Ram to any peril, because it is very uncertain as what would happen if he goes to the bow. Suppose the bow refuses to move, then it would be certain defeat for the Lord, and an utterly depressing moment for all of them who have held the Lord dear to their hearts. It's far better therefore in not insisting on Lord Ram trying to lift the bow and break it, for it would help to maintain the aura of Sri Ram's abilities and invincibility and charm in its pristine and virginal form as it stands at present. No one can predict how the bow would react; if it does the way it had done with the other kings and princes till this time, the result is too obvious to discuss, and it would be devastating.

There is another subtle hint that Janak intented to convey to sage Vishwamitra here. He internally intends to marry his daughter Sita to Lord Ram, to hell with his vows, but he has to wait till the assembly dissolves and all the invited kings go back home. Then he will marry Sita to Lord Ram. For this, it is necessary that Lord Ram's abilities and reputation remain unsullied and as virgin as they are now because they have not been tested in public and therefore it could be assumed later on that Lord Ram could have broken the bow had he been given a chance. This would be a better option than to take the risk of allowing Lord Ram to try to break the bow in view of the uncertainty that surrounds the outcome. Say, what would happen, god forbid, if he fails?

In the present scenario Janak could always say in future that after the bow-ceremony ended in a failure to find a groom for his daughter, and since it a moral and religious duty of a parent to marry off his daughter while he or she is still alive as keeping the daughter unmarried is extremely wrong, Janak had decided to marry her directly to the groom of his choice, or even of his daughter. This would prevent anyone from raising a finger of wrong-doing against Janak or even at the newly-wed couple in the future.

So therefore, Janak bethought to himself and pleaded with sage Vishwamitra to desist from insisting that Lord Ram go and break the bow because the outcome is highly uncertain, and it is exceedingly important to avoid an unsavoury situation in case he fails to do so and joins the group of other failed kings and princes as he (Janak) has in mind that later on he would contrive of some means whereby he would betroth his daughter to Sri Ram, but for that wish of his to fructify it is essential that the fate of what happens when Sri Ram tries his hand on the bow kept under wraps, for if by godforbidden chance he fails then it would be well neigh impossible to give effect to his plans. It is better and advisable to keep quiet now to save face and grace.]

Exclaiming 'Sadhu-Sadhu' ('sādhu sādhu' literally meaning 'you are true, glory be to you'), the son of Gaadhi (gādhi-suvana, i.e. Vishwamitra) praised the king (Janak) and said, 'Oh Great King! You had thought it proper and had wisely decided to do what you did (jāni jiya ṭhīka bhalī da'ī hai). (So, do not worry now)'.

Realising that what he had wanted was being done, Laxman felt glad (haraṣai lakhana). The citizens, on the other hand, were torn between sadness and joy, between feeling distressed and exhilarated (haraṣānē bilakhānē lōga)[5].

Tulsidas, whose Lord and king Sri Ram is certain to be victorious, is also extremely delighted at this prospect (6).

[[5]The citizens were divided on the prospect of allowing Lord Ram to break the bow. Some of them were apprehensive like Janak: what would happen if Lord Ram could not break the bow? Such people felt sad and gloomy.

Others were full of confidence that Lord Ram would certainly break the bow because they had heard of Lord's glories and stupendous feats about his killing fierce demons and of liberating Ahilya from her curse of being in the form of a stone. These people now exulted that their wishes would finally come true.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 255—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 261.]

(1 / 87)

सुजन सराहैं जो जनक बात कही है।
रामहि सोहानी जानि, मुनिमनमानी सुनि,
नीच महिपावली दहन बिनु दही है।। 1।।
कहैं गाधिनंदन मुदित रघुनंदनसों,
नृपगति अगह, गिरा न जाति गही है।
देखे–सुने भूपति अनेक झूठे झूठे नाम,
साँचे तिरहुतिनाथ, साखि देति मही है।। 2।।
रागऊ बिराग, भोग जोग जोगवत मन,
जोगी जागबलिक प्रसाद सिद्धि लही है।
ताते न तरनितें न सीरे सुधाकरहू तें,
सहज समाधि निरुपाधि निरबही है।। 3।।
ऐसेउ अगाध बोध रावरे सनेह–बस,
बिकल बिलोकति, दुचितई सही है।
कामधेनु–कृपा हुलसानी तुलसीस उर,
पन–सिसु हेरि, मरजाद बाँधी रही है।। 4।।

(1/87)

sujana sarāhaiṁ jō janaka bāta kahī hai.
rāmahi sōhānī jāni, munimanamānī suni,
nīca mahipāvalī dahana binu dahī hai.. 1..
kahaiṁ gādhinandana mudita raghunandanasōṁ,
nr̥pagati agaha, girā na jāti gahī hai.
dēkhē-sunē bhūpati anēka jhūṭhē jhūṭhē nāma,
sāmm̐cē tirahutināth̔a, sākhi dēti mahī hai.. 2..
rāga'ū birāga, bhōga jōga jōgavata mana,
jōgī jāgabalika prasāda sid'dhi lahī hai.
tātē na taranitēṁ na sīrē sudhākarahū tēṁ,
sahaja samādhi nirupādhi nirabahī hai.. 3..
aisē'u agādha bōdha rāvarē sanēha-basa,
bikala bilōkati, ducita'ī sahī hai.
kāmadhēnu-kr̥pā hulasānī tulasīsa ura,
pana-sisu hēri, marajāda bām̐dhī rahī hai.. 4..

Verse no. 1/87—The pure-hearted ones (sujana) praised what Janak had just said (in verse 1/86). [That is, those who had began to love Lord Ram and had endeared him to their hearts agreed with Janak that it would not be proper to put the pristine charm and dignity of the Lord to any peril by a risky test, and so it is better to let the things rest as they are at present.]

But considering that this proposal (of Janak) was pleasing to (i.e. found favour with) Sri Ram and seeing that it had the tacit support of Vishwamitra, the rows of wicked kings got burnt (out of jealousy, envy and malice) even without fire#[1] (1).

[#Now, the important question is this: King Janak was obviously speaking softly with Vishwamitra, and it is not possible that those who were sitting at some distance from where the raised platform was on which the sage and the two brothers were seated beside Janak can hear whatever Janak said to the sage. Taking this into consideration, this stanza can be interpreted in a different way to mean that:--

"The kings, who were full of ego and malice, were exceedingly jealous when they observed Janak bowing before sage Vishwamitra, the guardian of the two brothers, and saying something to him very politely in the backdrop of what Laxman had just said a while ago, assuming that he (Janak), after having contrived surreptitiously a way by which none of the kings would break the bow, and then having insulted the other kings for their inability to break the bow, he was now, as pre-planned, ostensibly requesting the sage to tell Lord Ram to go and break the bow for he knew that the latter would certainly succeed in breaking it as has been already devised."

If this was true, guessed the malicious kings and princes, then certainly its unacceptable.

[1]The kings who were defeated in their effort to lift and break the bow were already smarting at their humiliation. They were exceedingly jealous of the two princes, Lord Ram and Laxman, because of the special treatment king Janak had shown them. So when sage Vishwamitra asked the Lord to go and break the bow, they felt glad that now he too would join their ranks in failure because they were exceedingly sure that Lord Ram would never be able to break the bow when all of them have failed to do so inspite of their great strength and valour put to full use individually as well as collectively. And when Lord Ram fails to break the bow, then all the aura of charm and dignity and enchantment surrounding him would be thrown to the wind.

But now when it seems that this possibility of Lord Ram going to the bow and facing defeat is remote, given Janak's request to sage Vishwamitra to desist from insisting on it, these jealous kings felt crestfallen as they had lost a chance to laugh and jeer at their adversary, Lord Ram.

When the kings had failed to lift and break the bow, Janak had sternly rebuked them with scornful words for their incompetence, their inaptness, their impotence, their lack of strength and manhood (refer: verse no. 1/84, stanza no. 8, and no. 1/89). And they had to bear his insult with lowered heads. Their humiliation was further compounded when Laxman had boldly and with impunity let loose a diatribe against Janak in full assembly (with impunity refer: verse no. 1/85), which also implicated all the assembled kings and princes inasmuch as Laxman's words clearly implied that he alone is more than a match against the combined might of all the kings and princes. And now to make matters worse, they see Janak pleading before the guardian of the two princes, i.e. sage Vishwamitra, in a very humble way instead of becoming angry at Laxman and taking strong action against him for the latter's public show of

incourtesy. So these developments literally burnt or chapped the ego and vanity of all the pervert-minded kings to their core.]

{Seeing how Janak was highly emotional and overcome with grief and pain at the ignominious situation that stares him on the face, and how he does not want to aggravate his agony by putting Lord Ram's immaculate charm and dignity on the block for Janak had begun to have a strong feeling of endearment for Lord Ram, the all-knowing and wise sage Vishwamitra praised him in the following stanzas:--}

Then the son of Gaadhi (i.e. Vishwamitra) praised king Janak before Raghunandan (Lord Sri Ram), saying cheerfully to him: 'The mental state of Janak is beyond comprehension; it cannot be described in words. There are a number of great kings I have seen and heard about, but it seemeth to me that all of them are untruthful and dishonest in what they say, and their fame and glory is only for a namesake (i.e. they are unworthy of the fame and reputation that goes with their names).

The only truthful one who is soothfast to his words (i.e. one who stands by his words and upon whom one can rely) is the 'Lord of Tirhut' (tirahutināth**a;** i.e. king Janak; meaning "the kingdom of Janakpur"; or "the king of the whole world which has three divisions, the heaven, the earth and the lower world"). At this time verily, the whole earth (i.e. the entire world that is represented by the assembly of all the great kings and princes from all corners of the earth) stands witness to it (i.e. the fact that Janak is true and steadfast in his words)[2] (2).

[[2]Inspite of the doomed fate of his daughter Sita, Janak has stood steady and fast to his vows. He has openly declared that he would prefer his daughter remain unmarried and bear with its attendent ignominy and humiliation than to rescind on his words regarding marrying her to someone who breaks the bow. Refer: Verse no. 1/89, stanza nos. 5-7, and no. 1/84, stanza no. 8.]

His (Janak's) mental state and level of enlightenment is very unique inasmuch as he presents a study in contrast, for on the one hand he appears to be attached to the world, enjoying its pleasures and material comforts, and is affected by its various inconsistencies like an ordinary man who is engrossed in the affairs of the material world and moved emotionally by its different situations, and on the other hand he remains totally aloof from the world, unconcerned about all its material things and developments as no external stimuli has any effect on his mental state of equanimity and detachment like a true ascetic though he can, at the same time, fully enjoy the world and its charms (rāga'ū birāga, bhōga jōga jōgavata mana, jōgī).

He has acquired all types of Siddhis (spiritual and mystical expertise) by the blessings of the great mystic named Yagyawalka[3]. He is neither scorched by the sun nor calmed by the moon (tātē na taranitēṁ na sīrē sudhākarahū tēṁ; i.e. his nature is one of extreme equanimity, detachment and dispassion, not being affected by any of the worldly emotional inputs, whether they are positive or negative, and he remains totally indifferent to and unaffected by the turmoil and torments as well as the charms and temptations of this mundane existence).

Indeed, he has been able to maintain the stage of natural Samadhi (sahaja samādhi; a natural, and not artificial, trance-like state of existence when a person remains unconscious with regard to the external physical world because he is lost in the thoughts of his 'true self' which is the Atma or the pure conscious soul) without trying to get any honour or fame for it, nor pretending that he is a highly enlightened soul (nirupādhi nirabahī hai) (3).

[[3]Sage Yagyawalkya was the greatest sage of his time with respect to metaphysical knowledge. He had been declared the greatest of all wise men in a huge assembly of learned men once when a conclave was organized by king Janak with the purpose of fostering and spreading metaphysical and spiritual knowledge and cultivating a spirit of healthy debate in this field. Janak was so highly impressed by sage Yagyawalkya knowledge and prowess that he had accepted his discipleship and had entered into a private debate with the sage. This entire episode is narrated in great detail in Shukla Yajur Veda's "Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman nos. 1-9, and Canto 4, Brahman nos. 1-4."]

Inspite of being endowed with such a measureless and fathomless virtues of wisdom and enlightenment (aisē'u agādha bōdha), he presently looks so agitated, excited, nervous, perplexed and consternated as if he is in great mental agony and overwhelmed with worries (bikala bilōkati, ducita'ī sahī hai) because he has immense love and affection for you (Lord Ram) in his heart (rāvarē sanēha-basa).'

Hearing these words of praise for king Janak from his Guru, Lord Ram, who is the Lord of Tulsidas (tulasīsa), felt very glad in his heart (hulasānī ura).

Lord Ram's compassionate and merciful heart, which is like a personified form of the all wish fulfilling cow known as Kamdhenu (kāmadhēnu-krpā), was greatly moved by the pitiful condition of Janak who was tied to his vows just like a calf whose legs were tied by a rope (pana-sisu hēri).

But this cow could not rush to deliver the calf that was tied with the rope because it had to observe certain minimum etiquette, maintain decorum, adhere to established traditions, and show respect to its keeper (marajāda bām̐dhī rahī hai)[4] (4).

[[4]In this stanza, Lord Ram's heart is likened to the Kamdhenu cow, king Janak who did not want to break his vows to the tormented calf tied with the rope, and sage Vishwamitra as the cow's keeper. When the cow sees its calf, the former wishes to rush to the latter but may be restricted by the keeper. In this case, when Lord Ram heard how Janak was mentally tormented and full of grief, he wished to immediately go and break the bow to provide relief to him, but presently he had to restrain himself from doing so without the orders of his guardian and guru, sage Vishwamitra.

Lord Sri Ram's heart was so full of compassion at the miserable condition of Janak that he was very eager to alleviate and mitigate his sufferings immediately, but had to wait for Vishwamitra's orders.]

(1 / 88)

ऋषिराज राजा आजु जनक समान को?
आपु यहि भाँति प्रीति सहित सराहित,
रागी औ बिरागी बड़भागी ऐसो आन को?।। 1।।
भूमि–भोग करत अनुभवत जोग–सुख
मुनि–मन–अगम अलख गति जान को?
गुर–हर–पद–नेहु, गेह बसि भौ बिदेह,
अगुन–सगुन–प्रभु–भजन–सयान को ?।। 2।।
कहनि रहनि एक, बिरति बिबेक नीति,
बेद–बुध–संमत पथीन निरबानको ?
गाँठि बिनु गुनकी कठिन जड़–चेतनकी,

छोरी अनायास, साधु सोधक अपान को।। 3।।
सुनि रघुबीरकी बचन–रचनाकी रीति,
भयो मिथिलेस मानो दीपक बिहानको।
मिट्यो महामोह जीको, छूट्यो पोच सोच सीको,
जान्यो अवतार भयो पुरुष पुरानको।। 4।।
सभा, नृप, गुर, नर–नारि पुर, नभ सुर,
सब चितवत मुख करुनानिधानको।
एकै एक कहत प्रगट एक प्रेम–बस,
तुलसीस तोरिये सरासन इसानको।। 5।।

(1/88)

ṛ̥sirāja rājā āju janaka samāna kō?
āpu yahi bhāmt̐i prīti sahita sarāhita,
rāgī au birāgī baṛabhāgī aisō āna kō?.. 1..
bhūmi-bhōga karata anubhavata jōga-sukha
muni-mana-agama alakha gati jāna kō?
gura-hara-pada-nēhu, gēha basi bhau bidēha,
aguna-saguna-prabhu-bhajana-sayāna kō?.. 2..
kahani rahani ēka, birati bibēka nīti,
bēda-budha-sammata pathīna nirabānakō?
gāmt̐hi binu gunakī kaṭhina jaṛa-cētanakī,
chōrī anāyāsa, sādhu sōdhaka apāna kō.. 3..
suni raghubīrakī bacana-racanākī rīti,
bhayō mithilēsa mānō dīpaka bihānakō.
miṭyō mahāmōha jīkō, chūṭyō pōca sōca sīkō,
jān'yō avatāra bhayō puruṣa purānakō.. 4..
sabhā, nr̥pa, gura, nara-nāri pura, nabha sura,
saba citavata mukha karunānidhānakō.
ēkai ēka kahata pragaṭa ēka prēma-basa,
tulasīsa tōriyē sarāsana isānakō.. 5..

Lord Rām's Reply

Verse no. 1/88—Lord Sri Ram replied to sage Vishwamitra: 'Oh King of Sages (ṛ̥sirāja)! Which king today is as great as Janak that you are so affectionately praising him so much?

Verily, who else is so lucky and fortunate to have attained the eclectic and the rarest of rare spiritual state of existence that makes it possible for him to be involved in the affairs of this gross mundane world on the one hand, and be totally detached from and dispassionate towards it on the other hand simultaneously (rāgī au birāgī)[1]? (1).

[[1]Refer: Verse no. 1/87, stanza no. 3 herein above.]

He enjoys the pleasures of this world, but at the same time also enjoys the bliss of Yoga ('meditation' which helps one to concentrate on the Supreme Lord as well as

the pure conscious Self, to be detached from and be neutral towards the surrounding tumult of the gross world, to be absolutely calm and serene) (bhūmi-bhōga karata anubhavata jōga-sukha).

His mental and spiritual condition is beyond ordinary perception and is so exalted that it is even inaccessible even for the minds and intellect of hermits and sages to comprehend. This being the case, who can know (measure, understand or fathom) it? (muni-mana-agama alakha gati jāna kō?)

He has affection (and devotion) for the holy feet of his Guru (Shatanand, Janak's moral preceptor) as well as for Lord Har (Lord Shiva) (gura-hara-pada-nēhu).

He has attained the exalted state of spiritual realisation that enables a person to be detached from all worldly attachments and the usual entanglements of a family and the responsibilities that are incumbent for a householder's life inspite of living as an ordinary householder who duly and diligently fulfils all his duties and responsibilities in the household (gēha basi bhau bidēha).

Who else is more adept and proficient in worshipping both the Saguna as well as the Nirguna form of the Lord? (aguna-saguna-prabhu-bhajana-sayāna kō?)[2] (2).

[[2]The 'Saguna' form of the Lord is his form that is visible, grosser in comparison to the Nirguna form, and has various attributes and characters, while the 'Nirguna' form is that which is formless, invisible, without specific attributes, and cosmic in nature because it is extremely subtle and sublime. For instance, 'Lord Ram' is the Saguna form of the 'Supreme Being' represented by 'Lord Vishnu' who is Nirguna in form. In the context of Janak it implies that he is so highly enlightened that he knows that he is worshipping the same Supreme Being in the latter's primary form that is 'Nirguna', i.e. a form that is synonymous with pure Consciousness, the true Self, the Atma or the Soul which is all-pervading, all-encompassing, invisible, sublime and subtle, and in the Lord's 'Saguna' form that is present right before his eyes in the person of Lord Ram. Hence, Janak views Lord Ram not as an ordinary prince but as a manifestation of the Supreme Lord, the cosmic Soul, the cosmic Self and the pure Consciousness that he worships, adores and pays his obeisance to during meditation and contemplation.]

Who else is like him in his actions and words that are in sync with each other, and who is so soothfast in his words and actions that are reflected in his life as him (for Janak does what he says; he believes in truth; he is not pretentious, deceitful or boastful)? (kahani rahani ēka?).

Say, who else is like him in being a wise and enlightened traveller on the path of renunciation (Vairagya), one who is bestowed with the virtue of wisdom (Vivek), is an upholder of the laws and regulations or codified codes of conduct as sanctioned by the scriptures (Niti), and follows the spiritual path that leads one to deliverance, emancipation and salvation (Nirvana)? (birati bibēka nīti, bēda-budha-sammata pathīna nirabānakō?)

Verily, he has very effortlessly untied (de-mystified, decoded, simplified, untangled--chōrī anāyāsa) the difficult knot represented by the sense of duality in this world, the notion that there is an inanimate aspect and an animate aspect (gāṁṭhi

kaṭhina jaṛa-cētanakī), a perception that has no merit in it (gāṁṭhi binu gunakī) but that keeps other creatures confused and perplexed[3].

Who else has researched and found out the truth about one's true nature[4] (sādhu sōdhaka apāna kō) (3).

[[3]Janak had reached that exalted state of existence when he did not see any duality in this world, for he saw his Lord everywhere, in all things and in all beings. He did not differentiate between a friend or an enemy, or a human and an animal, or between this flower and that one, and so on. This is because he realised that the same 'pure consciousness' known as the Atma, which is the true identity of any living being, lives in all the Jivas or creatures of this creation no matter of what form and shape, whether that Jiva is mobile (such as animals) or immobile (such as many members of the animal kingdom and a majority of the members of the plant kingdom). For instance, it will be wrong to say that only humans feel pain, for it is equally felt by animals of all denominations. Even science has acknowledged that plants too have life like the members of the animal kingdom.

[4]Janak has become extremely self-realised and enlightened as he has understood the true nature of the 'self'. This 'self' is nothing but pure consciousness, and the latter is a universal entity, being omnipresent and all-pervading. This 'pure consciousness' is called the Atma or the soul of the individual creature who is known as the 'Jiva' at the micro level of creation, and the same Atma in its cosmic form is the Supreme Atma known as the 'Parmatma', the Supreme Self, the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Being. Hence, there is no truth in having duality anywhere, for what is here is there as well. There is no distinction between the two—this is the essential philosophy of Vedant.]

When Janak heard Lord Ram speak courtously and so highly of him, using honourable words that showed the latter's immense respect for the former and also echoed the sage's own respectful view of him, Janak felt shy and humbled, and he was rendered speechless in his modesty just like a lamp whose glow dims at dawn[5].

(Observing the deep analytical ability of Lord Sri Ram in the metaphysical realm, and the fact that he showed the greatest of practial wisdom in undoing the damage done by Laxman's recent impolite behaviour by publicly lavishing the greatest of respects and praises for Janak and declaring that there is indeed no one as noble, as great and as enlightened as Janak in the world, the king felt extremely glad and reassured. Hence—) The great sense of despair and grief and dejection that had clouded Janak's mind and heart a while ago, soon cleared (miṭyō mahāmōha jīkō), and so his worries about Sita and her future were removed forthwith (chūṭyō pōca sōca sīkō).

Janak's doubts were removed (miṭyō mahāmōha jīkō), and he realised that indeed it is true that the 'Puran Purush', the Great Lord about whom the ancient scriptures had said would manifest himself, has finally revealed himself and come down on earth (in the person of Lord Ram) (jān'yō avatāra bhayō puruṣa purānakō)[6]. (4).

[[5]This is a figure of speech to stress that Janak was extremely modest and humble, being unpretentious in his wisdom and enlightenement so much that when both Lord Ram and sage Vishwamitra heaped praises on him and honoured him in public, he felt a bit embarrassed and shy. He lowered his head in modesty and

humility instead of broadening his chest, lifting his shoulders and raising his head a notch higher with bulging pride and fattened ego. It is compared to the situation when the lamp appears to shine a little less brightly as soon as the light of the day dawns, not that it has actually lost its brilliance but it simply feels shy and humbled in front of the sun's rays.

Hence, when two great personalities like sage Vishwamitra and Lord Ram had so lavishly praised Janak, the latter felt exceedingly honoured and fortunate so much that he seemed to be overwhelmed with the laurels and paeans sung in his honour, making him so emotional that he was lost for words to even thank the sage and the prince.

This was the first time since the two brothers had come to Janakpur that Janak had heard Lord Ram speak. So when the Lord spoke for the first time using sweet and pleasant words to praise king Janak, words that not only endorsed what sage Vishwamitra had said about the king but also helped to neutralise the harm that Laxman's scathing remarks a while ago had created, Janak was dumbfounded.

Janak was amazed at the politeness and etiquette and wisdom of Lord Ram, and his prudent, adroit and deft handling of the piquant and nasty situation that arose when his brother Laxman had acted childishly and impolitely by admonishing the noble host, king Janak who was one of the greatest kings of his time, publicly, something that was never heard of anywhere. Lord Ram had, in one master stroke, nullified and neutralised all the wrong done by Laxman by politely heaping praises on him (Janak) with words that were at once extremely elegant, polite, sweet and pleasant to hear so that Janak's ruffled feelings and hurt heart could be soothed and calmed down. So, Janak was amazed at Lord Ram's wisdom and maturity and sense of propriety that he wished to immediately counter his brother's harsh words with words that were exceedingly acceptable and welcome and polite and sweet to the extreme, words that what Laxman had said was not meant to mean any slight on the great king but were said because he is still a child who became angry as is the wont of children.

Therefore, in one deft stroke of prudence Lord Ram not only assuaged Janak's hurt emotions but also gave a signal to the whole assembly that his (Lord Ram's) family holds king Janak in the highest esteem, that the Lord disapproves of his brorther's behaviour, and what Laxman had said of Janak a while ago was not at all either the view of Lord Ram nor of the mighty sage Vishwamitra, nor in any way meant to undermine the greatness and majesty of the great king Janak.

[6]When king Janak had first seen Lord Ram when he went to welcome sage Vishwamitra upon the latter's arrival at Janakpur with the two brothers, he was instantly influenced by the Lord and the halo of divine aura surrounding the latter. It was similar to the case that one cannot overlook the presence of the sun no matter how busy or distracted he may be.

Being a wise man who was extremely detached from all worldly charms, the way the first sight of Lord Ram enchanted king Janak had amazed him no end, and the king had minced no words to express his astonishment to the sage, asking him who this prince was who has moved his heart like no one has ever done before. The all-knowing wise sage Vishwamitra had smiled and hinted to the king that there is truth in his suspicion that Lord Ram was no ordinary prince, but some Divine Being

in a human garb. This episode and conversation is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 215—to Doha no. 216.]

At this moment, all those present at the venue—the whole assembly consisting of the citizens and noble guests, the king (Janak) himself, the two Gurus (Vishwamitra and Shatanand), as well as the Gods who were watching the proceedings from the sky (heavens)—began to watch Lord Sri Ram's face most affectionately, and talking amongst themselves they unanimously expressed their wish that the Lord of Tulsidas, i.e. Lord Ram, should now break the bow[7] (5).

[[7]Vishwamitra had been perhaps waiting for this moment. He wanted to feel the pulse of the people, the host king Janak and the Gods before ordering Lord Ram to go and break the bow. Now the signal was clear. The citizens were totally in favour of Sri Ram breaking the bow, and so were all the noble-hearted guests and the host king Janak himself. The support of the heavenly Gods was crucial because the bow belonged to Lord Shiva, the most revered of all the Gods and their senior most Authority. This is in democratic tradition that the master does what his subjects wish him to do.

This ingenious handling of the sticky situation by Lord Ram and his soothing words that enlivened the heart of Janak as well as the rest of the citizens in the backdrop of Laxman's unsavoury remarks saved the day, and it further endeared Sri Ram to the masses who were by now becoming almost hysterical and impatient with excess of joy. This trick also took care of any chance of defeated kings throwing tantrums as they would have by now realised the way the tide was turning, and would desist from being imprudent for fear of the masses in an alien land who would rise against them if they tried to play any dirty tricks.]

राग मारू

(1/89)

सुनो भैया भूप सकल दै कान।
बज्ररेख गजदसन जनक–पन बेद–बिदित, जग जान।। 1।।
घोर कठोर पुरारि–सरासन, नाम प्रसिद्ध पिनाकु।
जो दसकंठ दियो बाँवों, जेहि हर–गिरि किया है मनाकु।। 2।।
भूमि–भाल भ्राजत, न चलत सो, ज्यों बिरंचिको आँकु।
धनु तोरै सोई बरै जानकी, राउ होइ कि राँकु।। 3।।
सुनि आमरषि उठे अवनीपति, लगै बचन जनु तीर।
टरै न चाप, करैं अपनी सी महा महा बलधीर।। 4।।
नमित–सीस सोचहिं सलज्ज सब श्रीहत भए सरीर।
बोले जनक बिलोकि सीय तन दुखित सरोष अधीर।। 5।।
सप्त दीप नव खंड भूमिके भूपतिबृंद जुरे।
बड़ो लाभ कन्या–कीरतिको, जहँ–तहँ महिप मुरे।। 6।।
डग्यौ न धनु, जनु बीर–बिगत महि, किधौं कहुँ सुभट दुरे।
रोषे लखन बिकट भृकुटी करि, भुज अरु अधर फुरे।। 7।।
सुनहु भानुकुल–कमल–भानु ! जो तव अनुसासन पावौं।
का बापुरो पिनाकु, मेलि गुन मंदर मेरु नवावौं।। 8।।
देखौ निज किंकरको कौतुक, क्यों कोदंड चढ़ावौं।

लै धावौं, भंजौं मृनाल, ज्यों, तौ प्रभु–अनुग कहावौं।। 9।।
हरषै पुर–नर–नारि, सचिव, नृप कुँवर कहे बर बैन।
मृदु मुसुकाइ राम बरज्यौ प्रिय बंधु नयनकी सैन।।10।।
कौसिक कह्या, उठहु रघुनंदन, जगबंदन, बलऐन।
तुलसिदास प्रभु चले मृगपति ज्यौं निज भगतनि सुखदैन।।11।।

rāga mārū

(1/89)

sunō bhaiyā bhūpa sakala dai kāna.
bajrarēkha gajadasana janaka-pana bēda-bidita, jaga jāna.. 1..
ghōra kaṭhōra purāri-sarāsana, nāma prasid'dha pināku.
jō dasakaṇṭha diyō bām̐vōṁ, jēhi hara-giri kiyā hai manāku.. 2..
bhūmi-bhāla bhrājata, na calata sō, jyōṁ biran̐cikō ām̐ku.
dhanu tōrai sō'ī barai jānakī, rā'u hō'i ki rām̐ku.. 3..
suni āmaraṣi uṭhē avanīpati, lagai bacana janu tīra.
ṭarai na cāpa, karaiṁ apanī sī mahā mahā baladhīra.. 4..
namita-sīsa sōcahiṁ salajja saba śrīhata bha'ē sarīra.
bōlē janaka bilōki sīya tana dukhita sarōṣa adhīra.. 5..
sapta dīpa nava khaṇḍa bhūmikē bhūpatibr̥ṁda jurē.
baṛō lābha kan'yā-kīratikō, jaham̐-taham̐ mahipa murē.. 6..
ḍagyau na dhanu, janu bīra-bigata mahi, kidhauṁ kahum̐ subhaṭa durē.
rōṣē lakhana bikaṭa bhr̥kuṭī kari, bhuja aru adhara phurē.. 7..
sunahu bhānukula-kamala-bhānu! jō tava anusāsana pāvauṁ.
kā bāpurō pināku, mēli guna mandara mēru navāvauṁ.. 8..
dēkhau nija kiṅkarakō kautuka, kyōṁ kōdaṇḍa caṛhāvauṁ.
lai dhāvauṁ, bhan̐jauṁ mr̥nāla, jyōṁ, tau prabhu-anuga kahāvauṁ.. 9..
haraṣai pura-nara-nāri, saciva, nr̥pa kum̐vara kahē bara baina.
mr̥du musukā'i rāma barajyau priya bandhu nayanakī saina..10..
kausika kahyā, uṭhahu raghunandana, jagabandana, bala'aina.
tulasidāsa prabhu calē mr̥gapati jyauṁ nija bhagatani sukhadaina..11..

The Bow-breaking Ceremony—1

Verse no. 1/89—[This verse serves to link the story to the previous verse no. 1/84. The intervening verse nos. 1/85—to 1/88 are a sort of interlude used to describe what happened on the sidelines of the main developments.]

The royal heralds declared on behalf of king Janak—'Oh Brothers! Oh Princes! Please lend us your ears. King Janak's vow is final and as firm as being engraved on a stone (bajrarēkha) and etched on ivory (gajadasana). [That is, they can't be changed or rescinded.] It is famed in the Vedas and the world knows it (that Janak is very true to his words, and nothing in this world would make him go back on them)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 250.]

The famed 'Bow' of Purāri (Lord Shiva), known by the name of 'Pināka', is extremely strong and hard. It humbled even the demon Ravana who could prove that the mighty mountain called Mt. Kailash (the abode of Lord Shiva) was of no consequence before him[2]. [But the same Ravana, who could effortlessly life the mighty mountain Kailash, did not summon enough courage to even try to lift the bow which obviously is very small as compared to the huge mountain.] (2).

[[2]Once, the demon king Ravana had asked Lord Shiva to come and stay at Lanka, the demon capital. But the Lord refused. So, determined to fulfill his wish, Ravana had scooped up the entire mountain Kailash where Shiva lives in the upper reaches of the Himalayas in his bid to plant the whole mountain at Lanka. The Gods were flabbergasted and shocked at this, so they devised a device whereby the Wind God and the Water God entered Ravana's abdomen, which resulted in a strong urge in him to urinate somewhere between the original location of Kailash and Lanka.

Now it so happened that at the time of lifting the mountain, Ravana had pledged that he will not place Mt. Kailash on the ground before reaching Lanka, and should he do so then he would not be able to lift it again. Taking advantage of this pre-condition, the two Gods, the Wind and Water Gods, created a situation whereby Ravana could no longer hold his urine, and putting Kailash at a secure place he wnt to relieve himself. But when he came back, the great mountain refused to budge. This immensely annoyed Ravana and in disgust he pushed the Shiva's Lingam with his big toe so hard that it sunk into the ground. It is believed that this insult that Ravana did to Shiva was the root cause of his fall and final death—because Shiva's eleventh form known as 'Rudra', the God of wrath and annihilation, assumed the form of Hanuman, the monkey warrior who led the charge of Lord Ram's army on Lanka that culminated in Ravana's death and defeat of the entire demon army.]

This bow is firmly established on the face of the earth as if it were the latter's crown (bhūmi-bhāla bhrājata). And even as it is most difficult to remove a king's crown from his head, it is equally difficult to lift this bow from the ground (na calata sō).

Verily, it is as unwavering and unmoving as the word of destiny written by the Creator (na calata sō, jyōṁ biranīcikō āṁku).

But nevertheless, whosoever—whether a king or pauper (rā'u hō'i ki rāṁku)—breaks this remarkable Bow, he shall marry Janki (Sita, the daughter of Janak) (dhanu tōrai sō'ī barai jānakī). [This is Janak's vow.]' (3).

Hearing this declaration, all the kings got up excitedly (suni āmaraṣi uṭhē avanīpati); the words of Janak (as spoken through the heralds) pierced them like arrows (because they took it as a challenge to their manhood, valour and strength) (lagai bacana janu tīra).

All the great kings who were very strong, brave and gallant boasted and murmured about their valour and strength even as they puffed and panted and tried all the tricks they knew of in their attempt to move the formidable Bow (karaiṁ apanī sī mahā mahā baladhīra) which, however, refused to budge from its place even a fraction of a measurement (ṭarai na cāpa) (4)[3].

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 251.]

Then they bowed their heads low in utter shame and humiliation; they were overwhelmed with regret and contrition (that they had taken the wrong decision to try to break the bow, and they would have been better off if they had exercised restraint and desisted from approaching the bow). Their faces were sore and sullen, having had their self-respect and dignity crushed to dust. All of them looked excessively gloomy, crestfallen, remorseful, depressed and dejected in the face of abject failure as if all the radiance associated with their majesty, their fame and their reputation, at their individual level as well as the level of their respective royal families, had been overshadowed by the dark shadow of defeat at the hands of the Bow (namita-sīsa sōcahiṁ salajja saba śrīhata bha'ē sarīra)[4].

At this moment, Janak looked pitifully at Sita; he was impatient, full of remorse as well as angry[5] (janaka bilōki sīya tana dukhita sarōṣa adhīra).

Then he (Janak) said very angrily and in a sarcastic tone: 'Ah! The kings from the seven continents and nine parts of the globe have assembled here (sapta dīpa nava khaṇḍa bhūmikē bhūpatibr̥̄nda jurē). They could have had Sita in marriage along with the privilege of acquiring great fame and name for themselves, but they turned back humbly and meekly when opposed by the Bow (baṛō lābha kan'yā-kīratikō, jahaṁ-tahaṁ mahipa murē.). [How incredulous is it! They who boasted of their matchless valour and gallantry a while ago are now sitting like punctured balloons, with darkened faces like the moon that has been eclipsed. Shame to all of you!][6] (5-6).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 251.

[5]On whom was Janak angry? He was angry at himself because he alone was to blame for making such a stern vow without weighing its pros and cons, and without devising any alternate device as a back-up. Even a most optimistic of king would always have some or the other plans ready for facing contingencies, and it was not expected that Janak, known for his wisdom and farsight, to neglect it.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 251—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 252.]

None of you could move the bow even by a fraction (ḍagyau na dhanu). It seemeth that the earth has been rendered without those who are truly brave, strong and powerful (janu bīra-bigata mahi). Or is it that all the brave ones have hidden somewhere underground (kidhauṁ kahuṁ subhaṭa durē)?'

Hearing these sarcastic and scornful words of Janak, Laxman was full of resentment and anger, and his arms and lips began to tremble and flutter (because he was terribly excited and wished to give befitting retort to Janak) (7).

[Addressing Lord Sri Ram, Laxman thundered—] 'Oh the sun for the lotus-like Sun-race (bhānukula-kamala-bhānu)[7]! Listen! If I get your orders now, what to talk of this poor and wretched old worn-out Bow (kā bāpurō pināku), I can string the mountains called Mandrachal and Sumeru and pull them down and bend them (mēli guna mandara mēru navāvauṁ)! (8).

[[7]Sri Ram belongs to the Sun-race, while the first 'sun' refers to the visible sun in the sky which causes the lotus flower to open its petals as soon as it appears.

Tulsidas is playing with words here. He means that even as the lotus flower blooms when the sun rises, the great family of the noble ancient king Raghu has attained its fame and glory with the advent of Lord Ram as one of its descendents and members.]

Just have a look at the wonderful game that I, your humble servant, can play by stringing this Bow (dēkhau nija kiṅkarakō kautuka).

Not only this, I will run with it and snap it like it were the stem of the lotus plant (kyōṁ kōdaṇḍa caṛhāvauṁ. lai dhāvauṁ, bhaṁjauṁ mr̥ṇāla, jyōṁ)—then only would I qualify to be called your 'Daas' (literally, a devoted servant, an obedient servitor, but here meaning your ardent follower and subordinate—tau prabhu-anuga kahāvauṁ)' (9)[8].

[[8]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/85; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 252—to Doha no. 253.]

Hearing these stern words of Laxman, the inhabitants of the city, males and females as well as ministers and the king (Janak) himself, were all extremely glad and satisfied because they approved of what he said and were happy that finally, after a long wait, what they had all along wished appears to be coming true. So they unanimously said, 'The prince (Laxman) has said appropriate words (nr̥pa kum̆vara kahē bara baina).'

But Sri Ram smiled sweetly and signalled his dear brother with his eyes to stop his diatribes and calm down (10)[9].

[[9]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/85, stanza no. 3; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 254.]

Then Vishwamitra said, 'Oh the great Son of Raghu's family (raghunandana; Lord Sri Ram) who is revered by the whole world (jagabandana), and is an abode of immeasurable strength and valour (bala'aina)! Get up (uṭhahu)[10]!'

Tulsidas says that at this (express command of the sage), Lord Sri Ram moved forward majestically like a lion (mr̥gapati, literally, "like the king of animals", a metaphor that means that Lord Ram moved towards the bow fearlessly, confidently and boldly in an elegant style befitting a great prince of high noble pedigree, and one who has learnt all the finesses and etiquettes to be observed during public appearances and ceremonies)[11] (11).

[[10]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/85, stanza no. 4; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 254.

An important point to note here is that Vishwamitra has ordered Lord Ram to "get up", but not to "get up, go and break the bow". Well, it is absolutely obvious that the sage meant it, and no explicitness was needed to tell Ram about something that was as stark clear.

[11]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 255. Here, the majestic style of Lord Ram's way of walking is compared to that of a huge 'elephant' in rut (matta mañju bara kuñjara).]

जबहिं सब नृपति निरास भए।
गुरुपद–कमल बंदि रघुपति तब चाप–समीप गए।। 1।।
स्याम–तामरस–दाम–बरन बपु, उर–भुज–नयन बिसाल।
पीत बसन कटि, कलित कंठ सुंदर सिंधुर–मनिमाल।। 2।।
कल कुंडल, पल्लव प्रसून सिर चारु चौतनी लाल।
कोटि–मदन–छबि–सदन बदन–बिधु, तिलक मनोहर भाल।। 3।।
रूप अनूप बिलोकत सादर पुरजन राजसमाज।
लषन कह्यो थिर होहु धरनिधरु, धरनि, धरनिधर आज।। 4।।
कमठ, कोल, दिग–दंति सकल अँग सजग करहु प्रभु–काज।
चहत चपरि सिव–चाप चढ़ावन दसरथको जुबराज।। 5।।
गहि करतल, मुनि–पुलक सहित कौतुकहि, उठाइ लियो।
नृपगन–मुखिन समेत नमित करि सजि सुख सबहि जियो।। 6।।
आकरष्यो सिय–मन समेत हरि, हरष्यो जनक–हियो।
भंज्यो भृगुपति–गरब सहित, तिहुँ लोक–बिमोह कियो।। 7।।
भयो कठिन कोदंड–कोलाहल प्रलय–पयोद समान।
चौंके सिव, बिरंचि, दिसिनायक, रहे मूँदि कर कान।। 8।।
सावधान है चढ़े बिमाननि चले बजाइ निसान।
उमगि चल्यौ आनंद नगर, नभ जयधुनि, मंगलगान।। 9।।
बिप्र–बचन सुनि सुखी सुआसिनि चलीं जानकिहि ल्याइ।
कुँवर निरखि, जयमाल मेलि उर कुँवरि रही सकुचाइ।।10।।
बरषहिं सुमन, असीसहिं सुर–मुनि, प्रेम न हृदय समाइ।
सीय–रामकी सुंदरतापर तुलसिदास बलि जाइ।।11।।

(1/90)

jabahiṁ saba nr̥pati nirāsa bha'ē.
gurupada-kamala bandi raghupati taba cāpa-samīpa ga'ē.. 1..
syāma-tāmarasa-dāma-barana bapu, ura-bhuja-nayana bisāla.
pīta basana kaṭi, kalita kaṇṭha sundara sindhura-manimāla.. 2..
kala kuṇḍala, pallava prasūna sira cāru cautanī lāla.
kōṭi-madana-chabi-sadana badana-bidhu, tilaka manōhara bhāla.. 3..
rūpa anūpa bilōkata sādara purajana rājasamāja.
laṣana kahyō thira hōhu dharanidharu, dharani, dharanidhara āja.. 4..
kamaṭha, kōla, diga-danti sakala am̆ga sajaga karahu prabhu-kāja.
cahata capari siva-cāpa caṛhāvana dasarathakō jubarāja.. 5..
gahi karatala, muni-pulaka sahita kautukahi, uṭhā'i liyō.
nr̥pagana-mukhina samēta namita kari saji sukha sabahi jiyō.. 6..
ākaraṣyō siya-mana samēta hari, haraṣyō janaka-hiyō.
bhaṁjyō bhr̥gupati-garaba sahita, tihum̆ lōka-bimōha kiyō.. 7..
bhayō kaṭhina kōdaṇḍa-kōlāhala pralaya-payōda samāna.
cauṁkē siva, biraṁci, disināyaka, rahē mūm̆di kara kāna.. 8..
sāvadhāna hvai caṛhē bimānani calē bajā'i nisāna.
umagi calyau ānanda nagara, nabha jayadhuni, maṁgalagāna.. 9..
bipra-bacana suni sukhī su'āsini calīṁ jānakihi lyā'i.
kum̆vara nirakhi, jayamāla mēli ura kum̆vari rahī sakucā'i..10..
baraṣahiṁ sumana, asīsahiṁ sura-muni, prēma na hr̥daya samā'i.

sīya-rāmakī sundaratāpara tulasidāsa bali jā'i..11..

The Bow-breaking Ceremony—2

Verse no. 1/90—At the time when all the assembled kings had given up all hopes, Lord Sri Raghupati (Ram) paid his obeisance at the lotus-like feet of his Guru (Vishwamitra) and approached the bow (1).

His (Sri Ram's) body is dark complexioned like a garland of blue lotuses. His chest, arms and eyes are broad and well-built. He has a Pitambar (which is a yellow length of silk cloth) wrapped around his waist, and an attractive necklace of Gajmukta (a secretion of subcutaneous glands on the head of elephants; considered very rare and of immense value, and it resembles natural pearls) in his beautiful neck (2).

There are lovely ear-rings in the Lord's ears, while a red coloured cap and red flowers adorn his head (that resemble a crown studded with red gems). The Lord's countenance is like that of a full moon, for verily it is an abode or a refuge for the beauty and glamour associated with millions of Kamdeo/cupids (who is the patron god of these qualities). At the same time, there is also a charming Tilak Mark on his forehead (which is a mark consisting of parallel lines drawn by chalk on the forehead by higher castes) which adds to the magnificence of the Lord's pretty face (3).

The denizens of the city and the whole assembly of kings are mesmerised by this wonderful view of the Lord as they watch him affectionately and with reverence in their hearts.

At this moment (when it was sure that the time had come for Lord Ram to break the formidable Bow of Shiva), Laxman alerted all the concerned entities (such as the 'earth' with all its 'mountains', as well as all others who supported the earth, such as 'Seshnath', 'Kurma', 'Varaaha', 'Diggaj' etc., to be ready for the shock waves that would be generated when the Bow snapped, and to ensure that the earth did not crack or sink into the chasm of the nether world). He stoutly ordered everyone concerned to girdle up and be ready.

Hence, Laxman ordered them as follows[@]: 'Oh Sheshnath ('dharanidharu'; the legendary celestial serpent who holds the earth from below on its thousands of hoods), Oh Earth (dharani) and Mountains (dharanidhara)[1]! Become steady and hold fast today so that you do not tremble and shiver due to huge shock waves that would created once the mighty Bow is broken! [Please ensure that you do not move from your present position, otherwise the whole world would sink in the bowls of nowhere as if a mighty earthquake had obliterated the face of earth.] (4).

[[@]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/92, stanza no. 1 herein below; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 259—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 260.

[1]There are three words used in the text, viz. dharanidharu, dharani, dharanidhara. Now, this is very clever use of words on the part of Tulsidas. The earth (dharani) and its mountains are supported from below on the thousand hoods of Lord Seshnath, the legendary celestial serpent who also happens to be the one on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu reclines on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshirsagar. The word 'dharanidhara' has a dual meaning: viz. it means

'one which holds the earth', and 'one who is supported by the earth'. Therefore, it refers to Seshnath who holds the earth from below, and also to the mountains that are supported by the earth itself.

The word 'dharanidharu' again has a dual use. One, it means 'hold the earth' as a verb, and two, 'the one who holds the earth' as a noun.

Hence, Laxman has ordered Seshnath to hold the earth and its mountains so firmly on its hoods that they do not sink into the void of the cosmos due to the shock of the breaking of the Bow. At the same time, he has warned Earth to firmly grip the mountains so that they don't crack and cause a disastrous avalanche or a rain of rocks being flung like missiles in all the directions of the earth which would obliterate large swathes of living population upon whom they fall. He has also warned the Mountains to remain firm where they are, and exercise a firmer grip on their base, the earth.]

Oh Tortoise (kamaṭha)! Oh Boar (kōla)! Oh Diggajs (diga-danti)[2]! Be alert and help fulfill the Lord's work. The prince of Dasrath (Sri Ram) wishes to lift and string the bow of Lord Shiva right now (so be alert and ensure that no hindrance is created).' (5).

[[2]The 'Tortoise' and the 'Boar' are said to be incarnations of Lord Vishnu in some ancient time when the Lord protected the earth from sinking into the void of the fathomless cosmos.

As the 'Tortoise' the earth was supported by the Lord on the former's hard outer shell when the ocean was being churned by the demons and the gods in search for Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity.

As the 'Boar' the Lord had retrieved the earth from the ocean where it was hidden by a demon named Hiranyaaksha.

The 'Diggaj' are a group of mystical elephants who support the weight of the earth from its eight corners or directions—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west and north-west.]

Then he (Lord Sri Ram) created thrill of joy and ecstasy among the sages, hermits and seers (muni-pulaka sahita) as he caught hold of that Bow effortlessly as if playing with it (like it were a toy; 'kautukahi uṭhā'i liyō'), and then bent the Bow even as the assembled kings and princes too bent or drooped or lowered their heads in shame and defeat (nṛpagana-mukhina samēta namita kari)[3].

Verily, this single act of the Lord was the cause of immense joy and pleasure for all those assembled there (saji sukha sabahi jiyō)[4] (6).

[[3]The kings and princes who had been defeated in their effort to break the bow were on their edge, expecting that Lord Ram would also fail like them. They were craning their heads and on the verge of rejoicing should the Lord fail. But as it haply happened, the Lord easily lifted the bow and bent it so much that it finally snapped with a thunderous roar. And as soon as this happened, the craned necks of the jealous kings and princes suddenly drooped just like the bent stem of a creeper that loses its grip on a tree's branch and dangles flaccidly earthwards. The bending of the bow and the drooping of the necks of the kings happened almost simultaneously. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 263.

[4]On the other hand, the rest of the assembly erupted in joy. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 262.]

Thereafter, Sri Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is known as 'Hari') extracted or extricated the Bow's strength unto himself even as he

attracted and enthralled the heart of Sita (whose mind and heart were riveted on the Lord)[5]. (ākaraṣyō siya-mana samēta hari).

This marvellous development cheered the heart of Janak immensely (for this was what he had wanted but was hesitant to express for fear of being accused of changing his words and showing favouritism) (haraṣyō janaka-hiyō)[6].

On this wise, Lord Ram broke the Bow which also coincided with the trouncing of sage Parashuram's haughtiness and arrogance (bhaṅjyō bhṛgupati-garaba sahita)[7].

This happy development whereby the Lord had broken the Bow caused all the three divisions of the world (i.e. the heaven, the earth and the nether world) to be freed of grief and consternations of uncertainties and dilemmas ('tihuṁ lōka-bimōha kiyō'; that is, once the Bow broke, everyone felt very happy and exceedingly joyous, and all uncertainties and doubts were laid to rest) (7).

[[5]Lord Ram 'pulled the string of Bow' as a symbolic gesture to imply that he is at once 'pulling' towards himself both the strength and majesty of the Bow as well as the heart and mind of Sita. The Bow had no regrets by getting broken at the hands of Lord Ram as it was aware that he was none but Lord Vishnu. And Sita was exhilarated as her boon was granted.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263.

[7]Parashuram was a very haughty and arrogant sage. He had become very angry upon learning that someone had broken the Bow of Lord Shiva as he was Shiva's great devotee. So he immediately rushed to the venue with his battle-axe to avenge this imaginary insult to Shiva and was determined to punish the culprit. At the venue he threw a lot of tantrums and was firmly rebuked by Laxman. No matter how hard Parashuram tried, his hands could not lift themselves to wield the axe on either Laxman or Lord Ram, something that vexed Parashuram himself as this was the first time in his life that his hands and his axe did not obey his will. So after the initial shouting and huffing and puffing angrily, he was forced to think over the matter because surely something was seriously amiss. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 280.

Finally, he realised who Lord Ram and Laxman actually were, and so he immediately cooled down and prayed to the Lord begging for forgiveness. This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.]

At the instant the formidably hard Bow broke, there was a thunderous roar like the tumult created by cloud burst at the time of dooms-day (bhayō kaṭhina kōdaṇḍa-kōlāhala pralaya-payōda samāna).

Even the creator Lord Brahma and the concluder Lord Shiva (the two great Gods of the Trinity), along with all the Dikpals (i.e. all other custodians of the world) were so startled and shocked by this noise that they closed their ears (cauṅkē siva, biraṁci, disināyaka, rahē mūṁdi kara kāna)[8] (8).

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 261.]

Recovering their composure and gathering their wits immediately thereafter, they became exuberant (as they realised that their cherished dream of Lord Ram breaking the bow and marrying Sita has been fulfilled). So all of them mounted their vehicles

and departed joyously and in merriment from the site, playing their musical drums and trumpets enthusiastically. Ecstasy, jubilation and euphoria overflowed and swept across the entire city (of Janakpur), while felicitous songs and thunderous chorous of applause resonated in the sky[9] (9).

[[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 262—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 263.]

Thereafter, the virtuous handmaids, lady friends and other chaste women of the palace, upon hearing the command of Brahmins (the learned elders), brought Sita there (at the place where Lord Ram stood after breaking the bow). At that moment, the princess (Sita) put the victory garland around the neck of the prince (Sri Ram), and thereafter stood there hesitantly[10] (10).

[[10]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 263—to Doha no. 264.]

Then the Gods and sages rained (showered) flowers from the sky and began to bless the couple liberally. Love and affection (as well as merriment, joy, ecstasy and happiness) was so immense that they could not be accomodated or contained in their hearts (and therefore it overflowed and spilled over). [In other words, the Gods and sages and other holy Ones were so exceedingly glad and jubilant that no matter how much they blessed the divine couple and showered flowers on them, they felt that they hadn't had enough of it.]

Tulsidas sacrifices himself (i.e. he is euphoric, highly pleased and feels exceptionally privileged) at that beauteous and divine sight of Sri Ram and Sita standing together, a sight of exceeding magnificence and charm[11] (11).

[[11]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 265.]

राग मलार

(1/91)

जब दोउ दसरथ–कुँवर बिलोके।
जनक नगर नर–नारि मुदित मन निरखि नयन पल रोके।। 1।।
बय किसोर, घन–तड़ित–बरन तनु नखसिख अंग लोभारे।
दै चित, कै हित, लै सब छबि–बित बिधि निज हाथ सँवारे।। 2।।
संकट नृपहि, सोच अति सीतहि, भूप सकुचि सिर नाए।
उठे राम रघुकुल–कुल–केहरि, गुर–अनुसासन पाए।। 3।।
कौतुक ही कोदंड खंडि प्रभु, जय अरु जानकि पाई।
तुलसिदास कीरति रघुपतिकी मुनिन्ह तिहूँ पुर गाई।। 4।।

rāga malāra

(1/91)

jaba dō'u dasaratha-kum̐vara bilōkē.
janaka nagara nara-nāri mudita mana nirakhi nayana pala rōkē.. 1..

baya kisōra, ghana-taḍita-barana tanu nakhasikha aṅga lōbhārē.
dai cita, kai hita, lai saba chabi-bita bidhi nija hātha samv̐vārē.. 2..
saṅkaṭa nṛpahi, sōca ati sītahi, bhūpa sakuci sira nā'ē.
uṭhē rāma raghukula-kula-kēhari, gura-anusāsana pā'ē.. 3..
kautuka hī kōdaṇḍa khaṇḍi prabhu, jaya aru jānaki pā'ī.
tulasidāsa kīrati raghupatikī muninha tihūm̐ pura gā'ī.. 4..

The Bow-breaking Ceremony—3

Verse no. 1/91—[This verse summarises the part of the story from the time the citizens of Janakpur first saw Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman, till the time Lord Ram broke the Bow.]

When the men and women folk of Janakpur saw the two princes (Lord Ram and Laxman), they became so enchanted, exhilarated, spellbound and happy that they stopped blinking their eyelids (nirakhi nayana pala rōkē), and gazed at the two brothers as if mesmerised by their sight (1).

They (Lord Sri Ram and Laxman) were in their teens, and had complexions resembling a dark cloud and lightening respectively[1].

Every organ of their bodies, from the tip of the toe to the tuft of hair on the head, were of perfect form, being proportionate, fabulously charming and worthy to be beheld, and verily it seemeth that the Creator had collected all the best of qualities of beauty and charm and magnificence present wheresoever in creation, and then he had employed all his craftsmanship and skills diligently with dedication and sincerity of mind and heart as he moulded the fine forms of the two princes to finesse and perfection (2).

(Torn between his vows and affection for Sri Ram) The king (Janak) was in a terrible state of uncertainty and dilemma (because he could not rescind on his words at this late hour but internally he wished that Lord Ram weds his daughter Sita).

Sita was very dismayed, being hesitant and exceedingly uneasy (because she wasn't able to express her views though it is her future that was at stake).

The assembled kings were sitting with a bowed head in utter shame and rejection (because they had failed to move the bow and had invited ridicule and insult on themselves, besides realising that now if Lord Ram breaks the bow then it would be the climax of their humiliation and disgrace, and all their claim to fame and majesty would be crushed in front of the whole assembly where all the high and mighty had gathered together, an eventuality that would be worse then death itself).

At this juncture, getting the permission (or orders) of his Guru (Vishwamitra), Lord Ram who was the most valiant lion of king Raghu's race (rāma raghukula-kula-kēhari) got up from his seat (to go and break the bow) (3).

The Lord playfully and effortlessly broke the bow, and thereby not only acquired immense fame and glory but also the hand of Sita in marriage.

Tulsidas declares that the fame and glory of Sri Raghupati (kīrati raghupatikī; i.e. Lord Sri Ram) has been sung by the sages and seers down the ages and times in

the three worlds (i.e. the whole creation consisting of the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds) (4).

राग टोड़ी

(1 / 92)

मुनि–पदरेनु रघुनाथ माथे धरी है।
रामरुख निरखि लषनकी रजाइ पाइ,
धरा धरा–धरनि सुसावधान करी है।। 1।।
सुमिरि गनेस–गुर, गौरि–हर भूमिसुर,
सोचत सकोचत सकोची बानि धरी है।
दीनबंधु, कृपासिंधु साहसिक, सीलसिंधु,
सभाको सकोच कुलहूकी लाज परी है।। 2।।
पेखि पुरुषारथ, परखि पन, पेम, नेम,
सिय–हियकी बिसेषि बड़ी खरभरी है।
दाहिनो दियो पिनाकु, सहमि भयो मनाकु,
महाब्याल बिकल बिलोकि जनु जरी है।। 3।।
सुर हरषत, बरषत फूल बार बार,
सिद्ध–मुनि कहत, सगुन, सुभ घरी है।
राम बाहु–बिटप बिसाल बौंड़ी देखियत,
जनक–मनोरथ कलपबेलि फरी है।। 4।।
लख्यो न चढ़ावत, न तानत, न तोरत हू,
घोर धुनि सुनि सिवकी समाधि टरी है।
प्रभु चरित चारु तुलसी सुनत सुख,
एक ही सुलाभ सबहीकी हानि हरी है।। 5।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/92)

muni-padarēnu raghunātha māthē dharī hai.
rāmarukha nirakhi laṣanakī rajā'i pā'i,
dharā dharā-dharani susāvadhāna karī hai.. 1..
sumiri ganēsa-gura, gauri-hara bhūmisura,
sōcata sakōcata sakōcī bāni dharī hai.
dīnabandhu, kr̥pāsindhu sāhasika, sīlasindhu,
sabhākō sakōca kulahūkī lāja parī hai.. 2..
pēkhi puruṣāratha, parakhi pana, pēma, nēma,
siya-hiyakī bisēṣi baṛī kharabharī hai.
dāhinō diyō pināku, sahami bhayō manāku,
mahābyāla bikala bilōki janu jarī hai.. 3..
sura haraṣata, baraṣata phūla bāra bāra,
sid'dha-muni kahata, saguna, subha gharī hai.
rāma bāhu-biṭapa bisāla bauṇṛī dēkhiyata,

janaka-manōratha kalapabēli pharī hai.. 4..
lakhyō na caṛhāvata, na tānata, na tōrata hū,
ghōra dhuni suni sivakī samādhi ṭarī hai.
prabhu carita cāru tulasī sunata sukha,
ēka hī sulābha sabahīkī hāni harī hai.. 5..

The Bow-breaking Ceremony—4

Verse no. 1/92—When the opportune and appropriate moment came, Lord Ram put the dust of sage Vishwamitra's feet to his head (as a token of seeking his blessings and ensuring success in the endeavour he was about to undertake, i.e. breaking of the bow)[1].

At the instructions of Laxman, the mother Earth asked her bearers[2] to beware (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 254.

[2]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/90, stanza nos. 4-5 herein above; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 259—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 260.

Laxman was a manifestation of the legendary celestial serpent known as 'Sheshnath' who is said to hold the earth on its hood. So Laxman requested his assistants such as the Tortoise, the Boar and the Diggajs who were holding the earth to be ready and vigilant because as soon as Lord Ram would break the heavy bow there would be thunderous roar, and this could terrify them, and if either they trembled or the vibrations produced by the terrific sound waves would shake the earth then the earth could topple over and cause a doomsday scenario, something that was not to be done now.]

Janki (Sita, the daughter of Janak) was exceedingly worried and perplexed. She fervently prayed mentally to Lord Ganesh, her Guru Satanand, Goddess Parvati, Lord Shiva and an assortment of other holy men (seeking their blessings and intervention to help in this crucial and most important moment of her life)[3].

She also prayed mentally to Lord Ram, saying fervently but silently—'You are extolled as being an ocean of mercy and compassion, of being a friend of the distressed, of being brave and courageous, and of being graceful and kind. I am facing a fearful dilemma and passing through the evilest moment of my life in the face of the formidable Bow and the rigid vows of my father. What can I do? (Wouldn't you, Lord Ram the Compassionate One, the Merciful One, the Friend of the distressed and the Companion of the lonely, come to my aide now, for it is either now or never!)[4]' (2).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 257 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 4-8.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 258, and Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 259.

Sita seemed to say that she has no choice of her own as she is shackled by the established norms of the society and tradition, and therefore she can't come out in the open to declare her unequivocal decision to marry none else but Lord Ram, irrespective of who broke the bow and what her father had or had not declared. After all, it's her future and life, and no one had ever given her a chance to air her views.

The all-knowing Lord Ram must understand her situation, and therefore he shouldn't waste a moment in breaking the bow lest any last minute hitch crops up from nowhere. So, wouldn't he step forward and break the bow for her sake immediately, without further procrastination?]

At that moment, Lord Sri Ram—having observed the boastful pretension of valour of the assembled kings and princes ('pēkhi puruṣāratha'; and also realizing that they were very jealous and edgy and restless to create a nasty ruckus at the last moment to take revenge for their defeat and humiliation), and keeping in mind the vow of king Janak (that he was bound to marry Sita to anyone whosoever breaks the Bow, and not otherwise—parakhi pana), and also realizing the high level of devotion and faith that Sita had towards himself and the way she was suffering as if being burnt by a severe fire spewed by a huge python (pēma, nēma, siya-hiyakī bisēṣi baṛī kharabharī hai; mahābyāla bikala bilōki janu jarī hai#)—circled the Bow ('dāhinō diyō pināku'; i.e. he went round the Bow in a clock-wise manner to circumambulate in order to pay his due respect and obeisance to it because it was the Bow of Lord Shiva).

At this graceful gesture of the Lord, it appeared that the Bow felt shy and humble, and it shrank in size as well as reduced itself in weight as if a huge python retracts itself when it sights some herb or plant that could be the cause of its death should the former touch the latter (sahami bhayō manāku, mahābyāla bikala bilōki janu jarī hai#) (3).

[#The phrase "mahābyāla bikala bilōki janu jarī hai" applies to Sita as well as to the Bow. Both suffered—Sita was suffering hugely from her worries and uncertain future and wondering what would happen to her if this final chance of Lord Ram breaking the Bow is lost, while the Bow was worried and fearful that though it had trounced the pride and strength of all the kings who had tried to dismember it till now but finally its nemesis in the form of Lord Ram has arrived and the Bow knew it can't survive now. The word "mahābyāla" refers to a huge python or snake; "jarī" means 'to burn' as well as 'a herb or plant with medicinal value', while "bikala" means to be tormented and be in great pain and restlessness.]

Seeing this, all the Gods became joyous with merriment even as they ceaselessly showered flowers (from the sky on the venue, and upon Lord Ram).

The mystics as well as the sages and seers who were experts in their fields (sid'dha-muni) unanimously said that the time and occasion were most auspicious and appropriate (saguna, subha gharī hai).

It appears that the wish of Janak is like a symbolic creeper that has finally sprouted new leaves and borne fruits by the virtue of it having found the support and strength of a huge tree symbolized by Lord Ram's strength-of-arms and valour[5] (4).

[[5]A creeper has no strength of its own to stand and grow and spread; it relies on the trunk and branches of a strong tree to sustain it's self. In the present case, Janak's vows are compared to the 'creeper', Lord Ram's strength-of-arm to the 'tree', and the fact that the Lord is about to break the bow and fulfill Janak's vows to the 'creeper bearing leaves and fruits': "rāma bāhu-biṭapa bisāla bauṇṛī dēkhiyata, janaka-manōratha kalapabēli pharī hai"]

No one could see Lord Ram lifting, stringing and breaking that formidable Bow (i.e. it was done very swiftly and within such a short time that no one could differentiate

between the time the Lord touched, lifted, stringed and broke the bow by pulling hard at it)[6].

The thunderous crashing sound of its snapping broke the meditative posture of Lord Shiva[7].

Tulsidas says that all felt exceedingly happy and jubilant on hearing about this marvellous deed of Lord Ram. [Though the sound was ear-splitting, but it created joy in the hearts of all instead of making them terrified and scared. It was something welcome and to be rejoiced, something for which every soul was eagerly and anxiously waiting. So there was an instant tumult—one cause by the breaking of the bow, and the other caused by instantaneous celebrations.] (5).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 261.

[7]The immensity of the shock waves produced by the breaking of the bow and the thunderous sound equivalent to the roar heard at the time of doomsday has been beautifully described in Tulsidas' another book called "Kavitawali", in its Baal Kand, verse no. 11, as well as in "Ram Charit Manas", Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 261.]

राग सारंग

(1/93)

राम कामरिपु–चाप चढ़ायो।
मुनिहि पुलक, आनंद नगर, नभ निरखि निसान बजायो।। 1।।
जेहि पिनाक बिनु नाक किए नृप, सबहि बिषाद बढ़ायो।
सोइ प्रभु कर परसत टूट्यो, जनु हुतो पुरारि पढ़ायो।। 2।।
पहिराई जयमाल जानकी, जुबतिन्ह मंगल गायो।
तुलसी सुमन बरषि हरषे सुर, सुजस तिहू पुर छायो।। 3।।

rāga sāraṅga

(1/93)

rāma kāmaripu-cāpa caṛhāyō.
munihi pulaka, ānanda nagara, nabha nirakhi nisāna bajāyō.. 1..
jēhi pināka binu nāka ki'ē nr̥pa, sabahi biṣāda baṛhāyō.
sō'i prabhu kara parasata ṭūṭyō, janu hutō purāri paṛhāyō.. 2..
pahirā'ī jayamāla jānakī, jubatinha maṅgala gāyō.
tulasī sumana baraṣi haraṣē sura, sujasa tihū pura chāyō.. 3..

The Bow-breaking Ceremony—5

Verse no. 1/93—At the moment when Lord Sri Ram strung Kāmaripu's Bow (i.e. the Bow belonging to Lord Shiva, the Lord who is had vanquished Kamdeo, the god of

lust and passion[1]), the sage (Vishwamitra) was thrilled, happiness and joy spread over the whole city (of Janakpur), and the Gods saw all this (from the heavens) and played their musical instruments in the sky (in anticipation, because they knew that the moment for celebrations has arrived as it was pre-destined that Lord Ram would break the Bow)[2] (1).

[[1]Once it so happened that Kamdeo had tried to disturb the meditation of Lord Shiva at the behest of the Gods who wanted Shiva to marry Parvati who had done severe austerity to have the Lord as her husband, and also because the son produced by this union would be the only one able to kill the fierce demon Tarkaasur. But Shiva became so angry at Kamdeo that he opened his 'third eye' that spewed fire which reduced Kamdeo to ashes. However, when Rati, the wife of Kamdeo, approached Shiva for mercy and restore her husband, the Lord granted her wish and said that henceforth Kamdeo would live in an invisible form as passion and lust that are natural to all living beings, and his abode would be in the creature's heart. He also assured Rati that in his next birth, her husband would be the son of Lord Krishna and then she would be able to marry him once again in physical terms.

Since Kamdeo had tried in vain to fight with Shiva in his attempt to overcome the latter's defiance and self-restraint, and then Shiva had burnt him to ashes in his anger, it is said that 'Shiva is an enemy of Kamdeo'. From higher spiritual and metaphysical perspective it means that Shiva is the only Lord in the pantheon of Gods who has the self-restraint to overcome such nature inclinations of all living entities as passion and lust and longing for enjoyments.

This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

[2]Refer also to: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/94, stanza no. 2; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 265 also.]

The Bow known as 'Pināka' which had virtually "cut-off the nose" (binu nāka ki'ē; a symbolic way of subjecting someone to derision, insult, abject humiliation, ignominy and surrender) of all the assembled kings and princes, and had enhanced their sense of torment that came with shame and humiliation ('sabahi biṣāda baṛhāyō') when none of them could move the Bow even a fraction of measurement when they tried to lift it individually as well as jointly—verily it was the same relentless Bow that now broke as soon as Lord Ram touched it with his hands (sō'i prabhu kara parasata ṭūṭyō) as if its lord and master, Lord Purari (Shiva), had taught it to do so (janu hutō purāri paṛhāyō)! (2).

Thereafter, Sita offered him (Lord Sri Ram) the 'Jaimal' (the garland of victory) while the ladies accompanying her as well as others in the assembly sang auspicious and congratulatory songs.

Tulsidas says that the Gods felt extremely exhilarated and showered flowers from the sky to celebrate the occasion. This marvellous and magnificent deed of the Lord spread and established his glory, fame and majesty over the whole world consisting of three divisions (i.e. celestial, terrestrial, subterranean) (3)[3].

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 264—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 265.]

राग टोड़ी

(1 / 94)

जनक मुदित मन टूटत पिनाकके।
बाजे हैं बधावने, सुहावने मंगल–गान,
भयो सुख एकरस रानी राजा राँकके।। 1।।
दुंदुभी बाजइ, गाइ हरषि बरषि फूल,
सुरगन नाचैं नाच नायकहू नाकके।
तुलसी महीस देखे दिन रजनीस जैसे,
सूने परे सून–से मनो मिटाए आँकके।। 2।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(1/94)

janaka mudita mana ṭūṭata pināākakē.
bājē haiṁ badhāvanē, suhāvanē maṅgala-gāna,
bhayō sukha ēkarasa rānī rājā rāṁkakē.. 1..
dundubhī bāja'i, gā'i haraṣi baraṣi phūla,
suragana nācaiṁ nāca nāyakahū nākakē.
tulasī mahīsa dēkhē dina rajanīsa jaisē,
sūnē parē sūna-sē manō miṭā'ē āṁkakē.. 2..

The Bow-breaking Ceremony—6

Verse no. 1/94—As soon as the Bow broke, Janak became extremely happy. As a result and immediately thereafter, congratulatory ceremonies started in right earnest with the enthusiastic playing of pleasant ceremonial music and singing of auspicious songs everywhere. At that time, everyone celebrated—whether a king, a queen, a prince or a pauper, everyone felt exuberant and exhilarated with joy exceeding and happiness unbound[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 262—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 263; and (ii) Kavitawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 14, stanza no. 1.]

Even the Gods and other lords of the heavens (such as the Gandharvas, Kinnars, Dikpaals etc.) showered flowers, sounded their kettle-drums and trumpets, and singing merrily, they began to dance in ecstasy[2].

Tulsidas observes that the assembled kings (who had attempted to break the Bow but had dismally failed) resembled a moon during the day time ('mahīsa dēkhē dina rajanīsa[3] jaisē'; i.e. they became exceedingly shameful and lost all their claim to dignity and majesty; all their sense of pride and royalty were overshadowed by

defeat just like the moon loses its shine under the glare of the sun's brilliant light during the day).

These kings appeared to be like the digit 'zero' after removal of numerals that precede it ('sūnē parē sūna-sē manō miṭā'ē āmkakē'; i.e. they became reduced to nothing, lost all their worth, dignity and glory, were greatly depressed and demoted, and were inconsequential as the zero itself) (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 262; Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 265.

[3]The reader should observe how clever Tulsidas is with the use of words. He has used the word "rajanīsa" for the failed kings. This word means 'the king of the night', and refers to the 'moon' which rules the night sky and lords over the millions of stars that dot the realm of the night sky. Just like a king who occupies a special position surrounded by his knights, grandees, lords, nobles, ministers, courtiers etc., the moon too occupies a special place in the night sky surrounded by the stars.

But for all its radiance and majesty displayed during the night, the moon becomes a non-entity once the sun rises at dawn. Its shine begins to fade by the hour, and a time comes when it completely becomes invisible when the sun has risen in the sky for some distance. This metaphor has been employed by poet Tulsidas to highlight that as soon as Lord Ram rose to break the bow, and then when he actually broke the bow, all the competing kings and princes became lustre-less and gloomy, burying their heads in their hands in shame and ignominy, like the moon during the day time.]

(1 / 95)

लाज तोरि, साजि साज राजा राढ़ रोषे हैं।
कहा भौ चढ़ाए चाप, ब्याह ह्वै है बड़े खाए,
बोलैं, खोलैं सेल, असि चमकत चोखे हैं।। 1।।
जानि पुरजन त्रसे, धीर दै लषन हँसे,
बल इनको पिनाक नीके नापे–जोखे हैं।
कुलहि लजावैं बाल, बालिस बजावैं गाल,
कैधौं कूर कालबस, तमकि त्रिदोषे हैं।। 2।।
कुँवर चढ़ाई भौंहैं, अब को बिलोकै सोहैं,
जहँ तहँ भे अचेत, खेतके–से धोखे हैं।
देखे नर–नारि कहैं, साग खाइ जाए माइ,
बाहु पीन पाँवरनि पीना खाइ पोखे हैं।। 3।।
प्रमुदित–मन लोक–कोक–नद कोकगन,
रामके प्रताप–रबि सोच–सर सोखे हैं।
तबके देखैया तोषे, तबके लोगनि भले,
अबके सुनैया साधु तुलसिहु तोषे हैं।। 4।।

(1/95)

lāja tōri, sāji sāja rājā rāṛha rōṣē haiṁ.
kahā bhau caṛhā'ē cāpa, byāha hvai hai baṛē khā'ē,
bōlaiṁ, khōlaiṁ sēla, asi camakata cōkhē haiṁ.. 1..

jāni purajana trasē, dhīra dai laṣana hamm̐sē,
bala inakō pināka nīkē nāpē-jōkhē haiṁ.
kulahi lajāvaiṁ bāla, bālisa bajāvaiṁ gāla,
kaidhauṁ kūra kālabasa, tamaki tridōṣē haiṁ.. 2..
kumm̐vara caṛhā'ī bhaunhaiṁ, aba kō bilōkai sōhaiṁ,
jahamm̐ tahamm̐ bhē acēta, khētakē-sē dhōkhē haiṁ.
dēkhē nara-nāri kahaiṁ, sāga khā'i jā'ē mā'i,
bāhu pīna pāmm̐varani pīnā khā'i pōkhē haiṁ.. 3..
pramudita-mana lōka-kōka-nada kōkagana,
rāmakē pratāpa-rabi sōca-sara sōkhē haiṁ.
tabakē dēkhaiyā tōṣē, tabakē lōgani bhalē,
abakē sunaiyā sādhu tulasihu tōṣē haiṁ.. 4..

The Frustrated Clamour & Ruckus created by the Defeated Kings

Verse no. 1/95—[As soon as Lord Ram broke the Bow and was declared victorious, the frustrated and peeved kings and princes who were overwhelmed with jealousy and malice because they had to face intense shame and humiliation in full public glare, threw all prudence and decorum to the wind and rose up to revolt. This scene is narrated also in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 266.

Remember: Not all kings acted foolishly and recklessly. Some of them were wise not to approach the bow in the first instance*, and others were wise to at least save whatever grace was left by keeping low once they returned unsuccessful from the bow. It was only the ones who were exceptionally haughty and arrogant and egoist who threw tantrums, unable to cope with their humiliation and public ridicule. These were the same kings who had boasted that they would be able to defeat even Kaal, the god of death, for the sake of marrying Sita#.

Now currently in our present verse no. 1/95 we shall recount what happened as soon as Lord Ram broke the bow and these over-jealous pervert kings sprang up to create a nasty ruckus.

*Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 245—to Chaupai line no.7 that precedes Doha no. 246.

#Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 245.]

Worthless kings (rājā rāṛha), abandoning all prudence and shame and throwing dignity and decorum to the wind, were extremely peeved, were full of rancour, and prepared for battle.

They exclaimed in exasperation: 'Ah! What happens by merely stringing the bow[1] (kahā bhau caṛhā'ē cāpa)? The marrige would be finalised after a big deal is done (i.e. with great difficulty; it is not so easy to finalise the wedding as yet because much is yet to be done and seen) (byāha hvai hai baṛē khā'ē)!'

Saying this, they took out their spears (and daggers and lancets; 'khōlaiṁ sēla'), and shone the glistening blades of their swords (asi camakata cōkhē haiṁ) (1)[2].

[[1]Obviously, they were highly stupid. Didn't they see the bow breaking, and didn't they hear its horrific sound as it snapped into two? They refer only to "the stringing of the bow", and overlook that the bow was not only lifted and strung, but also 'broken' right before their eyes. In their overjealous madness they thought that the bow hadn't been broken yet, but had fallen to the ground after Lord Ram lifted and strung it. The great sound that was produced was, in their view, by the falling of the bow to the ground, and not by its breaking.

So, they shouted that the bow is yet intact, and not broken, and therefore the marriage is not yet final. Janak is creating a smokescreen to hide facts, and so they will all wage a battle against him and capture the two brothers, because the entire episode was stage-managed and premeditated to insult them. They cannot allow this to happen, and would fight to preserve their dignity and self-respect as is the wont of great kings and princes!

[2]Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 266.]

Seeing this, the citizens were terrified (because they expected a blood-bath), but Laxman was nonchalant, nonplussed and unmoved. He consoled and pacified them (the citizens), laughed (derisively at the agitated kings) and said sarcastically, 'Ah! Their strength has been perfectly examined and measured by this Bow[3]! These idiots (by being defeated by the Bow) have put their entire clan to shame and ignominy, and now to add further insult to their already soured pride and inflated ego they have resorted to shouting nonsensically in vain, excitedly speaking incoherently as if they are under the intoxicating effect of 'Tridosh' (the three faults; or the three diseases caused by 'Kafa'—cough, mucous, 'Pitta'—bile, and 'Vayu'—air, wind) that is caused by Kalyug[4]!' (2).

[[3]The combined strength of all the kings was no match for the resistance offered by the Bow. In this battle of tug-and-pull, the stronger party always wins. Now as it haply happened, the Bow proved to be stronger than the combined strength of all the kings because no matter how hard and how mightily they tried, huffing and puffing with all their stamina and muscular power, the Bow didn't budge a fraction of a measurement. So all their boast of strength and power of arms was proved hollow and void before the full assembly. But still these stupid fellows dare to invite more ignominy upon themselves.

[4]When a person is suffering from disbalanced or mismatched ratio of these three basic regulators of bodily function, he suffers from a severe malaise, such as high fever that causes delirium. Such person begin to hallucinate and utter incomprehensible words. Laxman likens the angry reaction of the frustrated kings with this condition when the person who is afflicted by the disease does not know what he or she is saying, and mostly it is nonsense.]

Saying this, the prince (Laxman) curved his eye-brows (as a sign of scornful annoyance and anger). Who had the guts to look at his fierce countenance at that time, or who could dare face him)? Like the farmer's scare-crows, all of them (the vanity-

filled kings with pervert minds and a false sense of ego), became lifeless wherever they were (i.e. in all the directions of the arena)[5].

Seeing the miserably wretched condition of these boastful kings (who had shrivelled and felt hesitant as if they had lost their vigour when Laxman roared and glared back at them), the men and women folk of the city further mocked at the kings and derided them when they chided and poured scorn on these kings by saying loudly: 'Their mothers had eaten leafy vegetables before giving them birth (i.e. they lacked a diet rich in protein, which is why they are so weak in constitution and manly vigour and strength), and even after birth these wicked and sinful ones had nothing to eat for nourishment except oil cakes called 'Khali' (which is made from soiled dregs or waste of oil seeds after oil has been extracted—that is why they have no real strength in them) to fatten their arms into worthless lumps of flesh![6]' (3).

[[5]As soon as Laxman got up and retorted to the wild tantrums of the frustrated and defeated kings, all of them folded up and none had the gut to answer Laxman back. They had seen Laxman's anger and dare-devilry a while ago when he had fearlessly dared to take Janak to task for declaring that the world was devoid of 'all' warriors at the time these very kings had failed to move the Bow, because this was a highly inappropriate statement for Janak to make when Lord Ram was sitting in the assembly right beside him, for the word 'all' included the Lord as well, whereas the latter had not even been given a chance to go to the Bow.

So the kings feared for the worse at the hands of Laxman. They had aimed their anger at Janak as they found him to be a quiet and well-disciplined king who was already weakened by the greatness of sorrows, and also because he being the host and the father of the princess would hesitate in acting roguely and use tough manners against his invitees. But of course Laxman was a different proposition all together.

The "farmer's scare-crow" is designed like a man, but is lifeless. Its main use is to chase away the crows and protect the farmer's field from damage. So, Janak may be terrified by these kings just like the crow is in a farmer's field at the sight of the contraption that shakes when wind blows over it, but that is all. No man is scared of this contraption known as the scare-crow, and likewise Laxman is not fearful of these hollow boasts of the kings.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 267 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 also.

[6]These caustic and disparaging remarks against the kings who had created the unseemly ruckus simply mean that they have already proved themselves weak and impotent in the face of the challenge. What right do they then have to shout so much if they virtually faint by a mere glance of Laxman; why have they all fallen silent like a dead scare-crow once Laxman got up from his seat to glare at them? Where is their strength and drawn swords gone now, relying upon which they were jumping and hopping madly a while ago?

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 268 also.]

In this manner, as soon as the splendorous sun represented by Lord Sri Ram's majestic glory, his matchless valour, courage and gallantry, and his brilliant virtues and immensity of fame (rāmakē pratāpa-rabi) rose and shone, all the world represented by the lotus and the birds Chakva-Chakvi (the ruddy goose) became exceedingly cheerful and merry with joy, while the lakes represented by sorrows, agonies, tribulations, troubles and confusions dried up (i.e. vanished)[7].

Tulsidas says that all those who were noble, righteous, virtuous, pure-hearted and good, and who had witnessed and personally seen the events at that time, felt very happy and fully contented (tabakē dēkhaiyā tōṣē, tabakē lōgani bhalē), while all the saintly persons who heard about these glorious events and happy tidings later on also felt exceedingly happy and cheerful, and just like Tulsidas himself feels today (abakē sunaiyā sādhu tulasihu tōṣē haiṁ) (4).

[[7]When the sun rises, the lotus opens its petals as a sign of its gladness on seeing the sun. similarly, the Chakva bird couple had been subjected to sorrow during the night because they had separated from each other, but when the day comes they re-unite and feel happy. Thus, when Lord Ram broke the bow, all those who were good people felt very glad and happy, but those who were evil and pervert were the only ones who were disappointed and peeved like the kings cited in this verse.

With the advent of Lord Ram, the world was freed from all sorrows and grief because the Redeemer had come to live with the people and give them solace and succour.]

(1/96)

जयमाल जानकी जलजकर लई है।
सुमन सुमंगल सगुनकी बनाइ मंजु,
मानहु मदनमाली आपु निरमई है।। 1।।
राज–रुख लखि गुर भूसुर सुआसिनिन्ह,
समय–समाजकी ठवनि भली ठई है।
चलीं गान करत, निसान बाजे गहगहे,
लहलहे लोयन सनेह सरसई है।। 2।।
हनि देव दुंदुभी हरषि बरषत फूल,
सफल मनोरथ भौ, सुख–सुचितई है।
पुरजन–परिजन, रानी–राउ प्रमुदित,
मनसा अनूप राम–रूप–रंग रई है।। 3।।
सतानंद–सिष सुनि पाँय परि पहिराई,
माल सिय पिय–हिय, सोहत सो भई है।
मानसतें निकसि बिसाल सुतमालपर,
मानहुँ मरालपाँति बैठी बनि गई है।। 4।।
हितनिके लाहकी, उछाहकी, बिनोद–मोद,
सोभाकी अवधि नहि अब अधिकई है।
याते बिपरीत अनहितनकी जानि लीबी
गति, कहै प्रगट, खुनिस खासी खई है।। 5।।
निज निज बेदकी सप्रेम जोग–छेम–मई,
मुदित असीस बिप्र बिदुषनि दई है।
छबि तेहि कालकी कृपालु सीतादूलहकी
हुलसति हिये तुलसीके नित नई है।। 6।।

jayamāla jānakī jalajakara la'ī hai.
sumana sumaṅgala sagunakī banā'i manj̃u,
mānahu madanamālī āpu nirama'ī hai.. 1..
rāja-rukha lakhi gura bhūsura su'āsininha,
samaya-samājakī ṭhavani bhalī ṭha'ī hai.
calīṁ gāna karata, nisāna bājē gahagahē,
lahalahē lōyana sanēha sarasa'ī hai.. 2..
hani dēva dundubhī haraṣi baraṣata phūla,
saphala manōratha bhau, sukha-sucita'ī hai.
purajana-parijana, rānī-rā'u pramudita,
manasā anūpa rāma-rūpa-raṅga ra'ī hai.. 3..
satānanda-siṣa suni pāmm̃ya pari pahirā'ī,
māla siya piya-hiya, sōhata sō bha'ī hai.
mānasatēṁ nikasi bisāla sutamālapara,
mānahum̃ marālapāmm̃ti baiṭhī bani ga'ī hai.. 4..
hitanikē lāhakī, uchāhakī, binōda-mōda,
sōbhākī avadhi nahi aba adhika'ī hai.
yātē biparīta anahitanakī jāni lībī
gati, kahai pragaṭa, khunisa khāsī kha'ī hai.. 5..
nija nija bēdakī saprēma jōga-chēma-ma'ī,
mudita asīsa bipra biduṣani da'ī hai.
chabi tēhi kālakī kṛpālu sītādūlahakī
hulasati hiyē tulasīkē nita na'ī hai.. 6..

Sitā puts the Victory Garland on Lord Rām

Verse no. 1/96—[Once the Bow was broken by Lord Ram, his marriage with Sita was sealed. So, Janak's priest ordered Sita to go and put the Victory Garland around the neck of the victor, Lord Ram. This episode of Sita garlanding Lord Ram once the Bow was broken has also been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 263—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 264.

Refer also to Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/93, stanza no. 3 herein above.]

Janki (Sita) has the '**Jayamāla**' (the victory garland) in her hands. Its a beautiful garland which appears to have been strung by Kamdeo/cupid himself, who, disguised as a gardener, had collected the most beautiful of flowers of exceptional charm and lovliness that were available, and had then threaded them together using a pretty thread to create this magnificent garland especially for this auspicious occasion[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 264 also.]

Seeing that the king (Janak) has given his approval, his Guru Shatanand, the Brahmins (elders; priests who would perform the wedding rituals) who were present there, and the virtuous ladies who surrounded Sita as her bridemaids and friends thereat escorted Sita and moved forward towards the place where Lord Ram stood[2].

They had with them all the auspicious paraphernalia needed and suited for the occasion, and kept Sita in front of the procession. All of them were singing auspicious

and felicitous songs. At that instant, musical instruments started playing enchanting music, while affection dripped from the eyes of all those who were anxious, eager and excited to have a Darshan (a glimpse) of Lord Ram alongside Sita (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 263 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it, and line nos. 1-2 that follow it.]

The Gods sounded their kettle-drums and trumpets in the heaven, and happily showered flowers upon the gathering. Having their wishes fulfilled (that Lord Ram should marry Sita), the Gods are experiencing an excess of joy, exhilaration, contentedness, bliss and mental peace[3].

The inhabitants of the city, the servants, the servitors and the subordinates, and the queen and the king (Sunaina and Janak) themselves—all are all highly delighted and exuberant with joy.

All of them are captivated and held in thrall by the magnificence of the Lord's majestic presence, by the immensity of his beauty and grace, by the profundity of his glory and fame all of which are of varied hues and as enchanting as the flagrant flowers of many and varied colours, shapes and sizes[4] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 265 also.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 265.]

Thereat, on the advice of her Guru Shatanand, Sita dropped at the feet (i.e. touched the feet) of Lord Sri Ram (to pay her respect and obeisance), and then garlanded her beloved Lord[5].

At that time, standing by the side of Lord Ram, she looks so splendorous, so magnificent, so wonderful, so regal, so majestic and so lovely that the sight reminds one of a group of 'royal swans' (marāla) who have emerged one after the other from the Mansarovar lake (the pristine pure lake in the Himalayas) and have perched themselves in a row on a beautiful Tamaal tree (the black catechu plant) to decorate it[6] (mānasatēṁ nikasi bisāla sutamālapara, mānahuṁ̐ marālapāṁ̐ti baiṭhī bani ga'ī hai) (4).

[[5]In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 264 we read that Sita was so overpowered with emotions of happiness and joy and ecstasy beyond imagination that for some moments her mind failed to react and her body became stone-cast, unable to respond to the advice of her guru as well as her friends to lift the garland and put it around the neck of Lord Ram as a sign of the Lord's victory and the sealing of the bond of marriage. But she recovered soon and put the 'victory garland' around the neck of her beloved Lord in all willingness and cheerfulness even as her friends sang auspicious songs befitting the occasion.

[6]Here, since the complexion of Sri Ram is dark, he is likened to a Tamal tree, while Sita with her fair complexion is compared to the Swan which has a white skin. The rising of her after bending to touch the feet of Sri Ram, her stretching and lifting of the arms so as to raise the garland above the Lord's head, and then slipping the garland down around his neck and draping it on his shoulders and chest is compared here to the swans coming out of the lake, then swarming towards the black catechu tree, and then finally settling on it. The poetic imagination and similes used by Tulsidas are indeed brilliant and remarkable.

Refer also to: (i) Janki Mangal, verse no. 109; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 264.]

To those who have affection and endearment for the Lord, there is no other greater and opportune moment to rejoice, to feel exhilarated and ecstatic, and to enjoy the magnificence and grandeur of such a happy and rare occasion in their lives.

But on the contrary, those who have malice, envy, jealousy and opposition towards the Lord—their condition, behaviour and demeanours should be considered just the opposite. Anger and jealousy apparently appear to have fully devoured them (5)[7].

[[7]This stanza refers, on the one hand, to the citizens of Janakpur who were absolutely happy and charmed at this auspicious turn of events, and on the other hand to the defeated kings and princes who could not break the Bow and felt frustrated and humiliated.] (5).

Then, expert Brahmins gave their blessings for the welfare and well-being of the couple by using (or invoking) the hymns of the respective Vedas in which they were qualified.

Tulsidas avers that the charming image (chabi) of the merciful, compassionate and gracious 'Groom of Sita' ('sītādūlaha'; Lord Ram) as he appeared on that happy occasion remains fresh in his heart, and this magnificent sight of that instant keeps emerging afresh every day in his mind and heart[8] (6).

[[8]This is one of the chief ways of "Bhakti", i.e. having devotion for Lord God: it is to keep the mind persistently focused on the Lord, and let the Lord's thoughts dominate one's life and subconsciousness.]

राग केदारा

(1 / 97)

लेहु री ! लोचननिको लाहु।
कुँवर सुंदर साँवरो, सखि सुमुखि ! सादर चाहु।। 1।।
खंडि हर–कोदंड ठाढ़े, जानु–लंबित–बाहु।
रुचिर उर जयमाल राजति, देत सुख सब काहु।। 2।।
चितै चित–हित–सहित नख–सिख अंग–अंग निबाहु।
सुकृत निज, सियराम–रूप, बिरंचि–मतिहि सराहु।। 3।।
मुदित मन बरबदन–सोभा उदित अधिक उछाहु।
मनहु दूरि कलंक करि ससि समर सूद्यो राहु।। 4।।
नयन सुखमा–अयन हरत सरोजसुंदरताहु।
बसत तुलसीदास–उरपुर जानकीकौ नाहु।। 5।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/97)

lēhu rī! lōcananikō lāhu.
kum̐vara sundara sām̐varō, sakhi sumukhi! sādara cāhu.. 1..
khaṇḍi hara-kōdaṇḍa ṭhāṛhē, jānu-lambita-bāhu.

rucira ura jayamāla rājati, dēta sukha saba kāhu.. 2..
citai cita-hita-sahita nakha-sikha aṅga-aṅga nibāhu.
sukr̥ta nija, siyarāma-rūpa, biran̄ci-matihi sarāhu.. 3..
mudita mana barabadana-sōbhā udita adhika uchāhu.
manahu dūri kalaṅka kari sasi samara sūdyō rāhu.. 4..
nayana sukhamā-ayana harata sarōja-sundaratāhu.
basata tulasīdāsa-urapura jānakīkau nāhu.. 5..

Lord Rām's Enchanting Image

Verse no. 1/97—[This verse and the one following it, no. 1/98, describe the wonderfully charming image of Lord Ram after the victory. We have read about this similar image in earlier verses also, but they relate to the time prior to the breaking of the bow and Sita putting the victory garland on the Lord. Such earlier verses are nos. 1/76—1/83 herein above.]

[One of the many ladies said to another, her companion—] 'Oh, the sweet-faced friend of mine (rī; sakhi sumukhi!)! Have (or enjoy) the benefit (or reward) of your eyes (or eyesight) now (lēhu lōcananikō lāhu).

Look, the dark complexioned prince (Lord Sri Ram) is exceedingly pretty (kum̐vara sundara sām̐varō). Have a good look at him (with reverence and devotion in your heart—sādara cāhu) (1).

There he is standing after breaking the Bow, with his long arms stretched upto his thighs (jānu-lambita-bāhu).

A beautiful 'victory garland' (known as the jayamāla) adorns his chest and abdomen (rucira ura jayamāla rājati), and this enthralling sight gives joy, delight and happiness to everyone (dēta sukha saba kāhu) (2).

Watch him endearingly and with full attention because his sight gives pleasure and happiness to the mind (citai cita-hita-sahita).

Verily, from the toe nail to the tuft of hairs on his head, his entire body is well moulded and shaped even as it looks very charming and befitting of the occasion (of marriage, when the groom is expected to look in his very best form) (nakha-sikha aṅga-aṅga nibāhu).

Looking at them (i.e. at Lord Ram and Sita standing side-by-side), praise your good and noble deeds that you have got this rare opportunity (sukr̥ta nija), as well as enjoy the beauteous and enchanting image of Sita and Lord Sri Ram standing together (siyarāma-rūpa).

Marvel at the excellence of intelligence and the creativity of imagination of the Creator, his excellent craftsmanship and skillfulness, that he has so expertly crafted and perfectly moulded this couple (the like of which is nowhere to be found in this world created by the same Creator!) (biran̄ci-matihi sarāhu) (3).

Watch, the radiance, the brilliant glow and the charm of the Lord's face are all the more enhanced and appear with heightened beauty and magnificence because of his gladdened heart (as he has broken the Bow and won the hands of Sita in marriage) (mudita mana barabadana-sōbhā udita adhika uchāhu).

Indeed, he looks as if the Moon-God has washed-off the stain that had been tormenting him for long by killing his arch enemy known as 'Rahu' in a duel (manahu dūri kalaṅka kari sasi samara sūdyō rāhu)[1] (4).

[[1]According to mythological legend, the demon named 'Rahu' devours the Moon God occasionally when the latter shows it's self in full glory to the world, i.e. during the full moon night. This refers to the lunar eclipse. It is believed that the moon enters the mouth of Rahu at the beginning of the eclipse, and emerges from the bottom of the demon's severed head when the eclipse ends. The time the moon takes to pass through the Rahu's mouth is the time of the full eclipse when the moon isn't visible.

This is a constant irritant for the Moon God. When he became fed-up with it, he decided to settle the matter once and for all, so there was a battle between Moon God and the demon Rahu. In this duel, Rahu was slayed, thereby freeing the Moon God of his perpetual tormentor.

Now, the second part of the legend, relating to the Rahu being slayed by the Moon God, is imaginary, and is used just for poetic purposes. Just as the Moon looks gloomy when Rahu approaches it though its face is inherently brilliant and shining, Lord Ram looked sad and sorrowful when he watched the agony and grief of Sita, Janak and the rest of the citizens prior to the breaking of the Bow.

And now once the Bow has been broken and all have become joyful, cheer and happiness returned on the face of the Lord with enhanced intensity. Lord Ram's breaking of the Bow is likened here to the Moon God who has killed Rahu and removed the cause of gloom for all times to come.]

His eyes, which are inherently an abode of exceptional beauty, charm and glamour (nayana sukhamā-ayana), appear to have stolen (i.e. defeat, win over, subdue) the lovliness, the prettiness, of the lotus flower (harata sarōja-sundaratāhu).

Verily, this enchanting and heart-pleasing (image of) Lord of Janki (i.e. Lord Sri Ram who is the husband of Sita) resides in the inner sanctum of Tulsidas' heart (basata tulasīdāsa-urapura jānakīkau nāhu)' (5).

[Note—Tulsidas is playing a trick here. In the preceding verse no. 1/96, he asserts that the beautiful, enchanting image of Sri Ram keeps emerging in his heart. And in this verse he has used the women folk of Janakpur to confirm, are rather ratify and assert as a matter of fact, that it really does. When we say something and someone else approves of it or concurs with what we say, then it is, for all practical purposes, taken to be true.

It will be noted while going through the verses of Geetawali that at the end of the majority of verses, Tulsidas has appended a word or two to say, in effect, that such and such charming image or beautiful glory of Sri Ram always resides in his heart. In many cases, he asks Sri Ram for such a boon, at other times he says he already has it and calls in independent witnesses, so to say, to endorse his assertion.

Not that he ever doubted that the Lord resides in his heart because he was a true and realised devotee of Lord Ram, but on and off he invites some independent observer to stand witness to what he says about the Lord residing in his heart, such as the case in this particular verse where the ladies also assert that the beautiful image of Lord Ram is housed in the inner sanctum of Tulsidas' heart.

Tulsidas did not wish to be boastful about his devotion for Lord Ram and the fact that his heart is like a shrine for Lord Ram, lest the Lord would deem him to be showy and pretentious and endeavour to remove that image or reflection from his heart. So he cleverly and wisely first asks the Lord to remain in his heart, and then quotes others to substantiate his assertion that the Lord is always present there!]

राग सारंग

(1/98)

भूपके भागकी अधिकाई।
टूट्यो धनुष, मनोरथ पूज्यौ, बिधि सब बात बनाई।। 1।।
तबतें दिन–दिन उदय जनकको जबतें जानकी जाई।
अब यहि ब्याह सफल भयो जीवन, त्रिभुवन बिदित बड़ाई।। 2।।
बारहि बार पहुनई ऐहैं राम लषन दोउ भाई।
एहि आनंद मगन पुरबासिन्ह देहदसा बिसराई।। 3।।
सादर सकल बिलोकत रामहि, काम–कोटि छबि छाई।
यह सुख समउ समाज एक मुख क्यों तुलसी कहै गाई।। 4।।

rāga sāraṅga

(1/98)

bhūpakē bhāgakī adhikā'ī.
ṭūṭyō dhanuṣa, manōratha pūjyau, bidhi saba bāta banā'ī.. 1..
tabatēṁ dina-dina udaya janakakō jabatēṁ jānakī jā'ī.
aba yahi byāha saphala bhayō jīvana, tribhuvana bidita baṛā'ī.. 2..
bārahi bāra pahuna'ī aihaiṁ rāma laṣana dō'u bhā'ī.
ēhi ānanda magana purabāsinha dēhadasā bisarā'ī.. 3..
sādara sakala bilōkata rāmahi, kāma-kōṭi chabi chā'ī.
yaha sukha sama'u samāja ēka mukha kyōṁ tulasī kahai gā'ī.. 4..

Janak's good fortunes

Verse no. 1/98—[Someone else praises king Janak and asserts—] 'It is the greatness and immenseness of the king's (Janak's) good luck and the reward of his meritorious deeds that the Bow has broken, the wishes of his have been fulfilled (i.e. his vows have been kept), and the Creator has made things go the right way and made things favourable for us (1).

Ever since Janaki (Sita) has been born, Janak's stars have been on the ascendance. Having got her married-off has made his life most fruitful and fulfilled (i.e. Janak is feeling very contented, happy and joyful with no more desires left to be fulfilled)[1].

At this point of time, Janak's great fame, that had hitherto remained unrevealed or hidden from knowledge of the world and was on the verge of being mired in controversy and ignominy (if no one could break the bow and Sita had to remain unmarried), has now emerged in a shining and glorified form and revealed to the whole world consisting of the three divisions known as 'tribhuvana'[2] (2).

[[1]It is a moral and social obligation for the father to marry his daughter during his lifetime. So when Sita's marriage, which was till now dangling by a fragile thread of uncertainty, was finalized with Lord Ram without his having to go back or

changing his vows, it was a like a lifetime reward given to Janak for all the good things he had done in his life.

[2]Till this time, Janak was one of the thousands of kings who ruled over the earth, and there was nothing special about him. But this ceremony in which Shiva's Bow was broken had established his fame and name throughout the three divisions of the world—because not everyone has such a Bow, and this Bow had been the reason why all the renowned kings and princes had assembled at Janakpur. They had all seen Janak's majesty, prosperity and wealth of his kingdom, as well as his sense of righteousness, probity and adherence to his words. So, even those who had hitherto not heard of Janak had now become aware of him and his majestic glory and eclectic virtues. Thus, Janak's fame and name were henceforth established in the heavens, the whole of the earth, and even in the nether world.

This was also aided by the breaking of the Bow, primarily because everyone living in any corner of the creation had become aware of this rare event when a thunderous sound and deafening roar was created at the time the Bow actually broke so much so that its shock waves were felt in all the corners of this creation—the heaven, the whole of the surface of the earth, and the nether world. And naturally everyone had wished to know the cause of this tumult, and upon enquiry all had become aware of the bow-breaking event in the kingdom of one great king by the name of Janak. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 261; and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 262.]

Ah! Now these two brothers, Lord Sri Ram and Laxman, would be visiting us repeatedly as guests of honour (of the king, and by extension of all the citizens of the kingdom) (bārahi bāra pahunaˈī aihaiṁ)[3].'

The citizens, thus, were so overwhelmed and intoxicated with excess of joy, delight and exhilaration (ēhi ānanda magana purabāsinha) that they lost awareness of their bodies ('dēhadasā bisarāˈī'; i.e. they forgot about everything else, about their surroundings, daily chores, their families and everything related to their routine mundane existence—and their mind and heart were completely overcome by the surging waves of happiness and joy that the present moment presented to them) (3).

[3]Now that Lord Ram has married Sita by breaking the Bow, he has become king Janak's son-in-law, and therefore the citizens were sure the Lord would be coming to pay visits in the future also. This made them very happy as then they would have another chance to interact with the Lord. In fact, this was the earnest wish of the citizens of Janakpur ever since they first saw Lord Ram, and this wish of theirs has now been fulfilled. Otherwise, once the two brothers went away when the ceremony closed, they would obviously never be ever coming back again. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 222 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8.]

Everyone was looking reverentially, and with great respect heaving in their hearts, at Lord Sri Ram (sādara sakala bilōkata rāmahi) who was adorned with the beauty and charm that were equivalent to millions of Kamdeo/cupids taken together (kāma-kōṭi chabi chāˈī)[4].

Tulsidas is enthralled and awestruck in amazement at the heavenly sight that wonderful scene presented. He says that it was so amazingly fascinating, so captivating for the mind and so enchanting for the heart that it is not possible for him to describe with a single mouth the immensity and depth of it, as well as of the emotions of happiness and joy that were unleashed at that time, of the pleasant and

most fortunate events, circumstances and ecstatic environment of that time, and of extremely elated, exuberant, euphoric and cheerful assembly that had collected there to enjoy the good and auspicious moment of that time (yaha sukha sama'u samāja ēka mukha kyōṁ tulasī kahai gā'ī)[5] (4).

[[4]In other words, the virtue of 'beauty and magnificence', that is worth or equivalent to millions of Kamdeo/cupids, had spread over Lord Sri Ram to make the already charming Lord of the world more stunning than ever before.

[5]In other words, Tulsidas finds himself inadequate and incompetent to give an idea of the immensity of happiness and joy that surged at that time, because words have their own limitations and they can't do justice with the depth and immensity of emotions and sentiments that are of a sublime and subtle nature, and which cannot be butted and bounded by the limitations inherent in the use of words. The degree of joy, happiness, delight, ecstasy, euphoria and exhilaration that was felt by all present on the occasion, the atmosphere of celebrations and festivities that permeated everywhere, and the emotions of the people were so high and intense at that auspicious time that they virtually overflowed the land as if a river was in spate or an ocean of these virtues was in high tide so much so that even the best of wordsmiths would fail to give others an idea of even a fraction of those glad tidings because they can't be encapsulated and captured in words.]

विवाहकी तैयारी

राग सोरठ

(1/99)

मेरे बालक कैसे धौं मग निबहहिंगे?
भूख, पियास, सीत, श्रम सकुचनि क्यों कौसिकहि कहहिंगे।। 1।।
को भोर ही उबटि अन्हवैहै, काढ़ि कलेऊ दैहै ?
को भूषन पहिराइ निछावरि करि लोचन–सुख लैहै ?।। 2।।
नयन निमेषनि ज्यों जोगवैं नित पितु–परिजन–महतारी।
ते पठए ऋषि साथ निसाचर मारन, मख रखवारी।। 3।।
सुंदर सुठि सुकुमार सुकोमल काकपच्छ–धर दोऊ।
तुलसी निरखि हरषि उर लैहौं बिधि ह्वैहै दिन सोऊ ?।। 4।।

Vivāha kī taiyārī

rāga sōraṭha

(1/99)

mērē bālaka kaisē dhauṁ maga nibahahiṅgē?
bhūkha, piyāsa, sīta, śrama sakucani kyōṁ kausikahi kahahiṅgē.. 1..

kō bhōra hī ubaṭi anhavaihai, kāḍhi kalē'ū daihai?
kō bhūṣana pahirā'i nichāvari kari lōcana-sukha laihai?.. 2..
nayana nimēṣani jyōṁ jōgavaiṁ nita pitu-parijana-mahatārī.
tē paṭha'ē ṛṣi sātha nisācara mārana, makha rakhavārī.. 3..
suṁdara suṭhi sukumāra sukōmala kākapaccha-dhara dō'ū.
tulasī nirakhi haraṣi ura laihauṁ bidhi hvaihai dina sō'ū?.. 4..

Prelude to the departure of the Groom's Party from Ayodhya for the Wedding Ceremony at Janakpur:

The situation in Ayodhya after Lord Ram & Laxman had gone with sage Vishwamitra—1

Verse no. 1/99—[Thus far we have read about the developments at Janakpur where Lord Ram successfully broke the Bow and, having fulfilled Janak's vow, was betrothed to Sita, Janak's daughter.

In the meanwhile, ever since the two brothers had gone away from Ayodhya, their mothers, Kaushalya and Sumitra respectively, were very sad and worried. In verse nos. 1/99-1/100 we read about their emotional condition and sadness.

This verse no. 1/99 describes the fear and worries of Kaushalya. She is extremely worried, pensive and remorseful as she broods and recollects those happy days when her beloved son Lord Sri Ram and his brother Laxman were with her. She had brought up the two brothers with utmost love and care, never allowing them to face any kind of difficulties. And now all of a sudden sage Vishwamitra took them away to his far away hermitage in the deep forest. The two brothers had to walk on foot like ordinary people, and eat and live like ordinary folk. They weren't accustomed to the harsh life of the world, and especially of the forest. They had spent their lives till now in lap of luxury as the princes of a great kingdom, and suddenly they had to undergo extreme hardships. So the mother is worried as to how well they were managing to cope with their new lifes—what were they eating, do they take their bath regularly, where and how were they sleeping, do they feel the ground hard and unable to take rest, weren't they tired of walking on hard earth, are they in any kind of suffering or are they enjoying their first excursion, are they homesick, and so many similar thoughts crowded Kaushalya's mind, making her gloomy and sad.]

In this verse, mother Kaushalya is pensive, brooding, and talking to herself: 'How would my children cope with the toils and travails of the (forest) path? Will they hesitate to tell Kaushik (sage Vishwamitra) about their hunger, thirst, cold, weariness and tiredness etc.[1]?

[And if they hesitate to tell the sage about their problems and discomfort because they would be feeling shy and reluctant to speak before a mighty sage of Vishwamitra's stature as is their wont and natural habit because they are always bashful and softspoken and obedient to the extreme, never even telling me about their needs and be contented with whatso comes their way, then how will the kind sage know about their discomfort, and how will he take measures to alleviate the problem? What would happen then? The two brothers would be suffering in silence without any fault of the gracious sage, for it is sure that if he comes to know that the two brothers

are feeling uneasy in the slightest he is sure to find a solution. But will this happen?] (1).

[[1]Refer verse no. 1/101, stanza nos. 2-3 herein below where Sumitra, the mother of Laxman, too expresses this apprehension.]

Who will bathe them in the morning after rubbing Ubtan[2] on their bodies (as I used to do here)? Who would give them breakfast and snacks, who would adorn them with ornaments, and who would make charity on their behalf and enjoy the benefit of one's eyesight (by looking at them caringly and affectionately)[3]? (2).

[[2]The "Ubtan" is a thick paste made from flour of roasted gram mixed with water, a little bit of powdered turmeric, some selected herbs and scents. It is rubbed on the body to clean it. It is the precursor to the modern-day soap and shampoo.

[3]Mother Kaushalya used to do all these things every morning. As a loving and caring mother, she used to rub the Ubtan on the body of her children, give them a nice bath, then make them eat a good breakfast, and then make alms for their welfare and happiness. She used to enjoy doing all these things, and derived immense pleasure watching her sons grow. Now, who will do these things in the forest? The very thought was very tormenting for her, and she was literally unconsolable.]

They (i.e. Lord Sri Ram and Laxman)—who were always well looked after by their father, mothers, relatives and kins with the same tenderness and care with which the eyelid protects the eye—have been sent by the king (Dasrath) with sage Vishwamitra to protect his fire sacrifice and to destroy the demons!'[4] (3).

[[4]It's so incredulous and unbelievable that the king did not give proper thought of the consequences of his decision when he consented to send these two young and tender boys, who had never seen pain and sufferings, nor had ever experienced the harshness of outside world and its tumultuous realities, with the sage. Why did he not take into consideration the fact that he was sending these two boys alone to face the might of the ferocious demons, for the sage had clearly told him the reason why he wants Lord Ram and Laxman to come with him to his hermitage in the forest? Couldn't at least the king send an armed escort with them; couldn't he ask the sage why he was pressuring him to part with these two inexperienced, young and tender princes who till now had no experience of a real battle-field with ordinary human warriors, what to talk about battling powerful demons who had even terrified the gods of heaven, ere giving his consent? Why did the king take such a risk as to put these two inexperienced and tender sons of mine to such grave peril as to danger their lives, and why didn't he ask the sage to look for alternatives if his main purpose was to protect his fire sacrifice.

It's quite possible that one of our jealous enemies have conspired to devise this deceitful device by which they could bring sorrow and disaster to our whole family, and to give effect to their nefarious design they contrived this cunning method whereby they somehow prevailed upon the simple-hearted sage Vishwamitra, pretending to be his well-wisher, when they advised him that if he wished his fire sacrifice to be protected from being defiled by the demons then he should bring the two princes of king Dasarth with him, as for this they were sure that the noble king would find it impossible to refuse the sage his wish as it pertained to a noble cause such as the protection of a fire sacrifice, and if this comes to happen and their contrivance succeeded, as they hoped in their pervert and malicious mind, then the two princes would be subjected to grave danger and peril while fighting the ferocious demons to fulfill the requirement of the sage, and this would be something that would

rejoice their hearts, and they weren't bothered if it would prove ruinous and devastating for our family, for this was exactly something that they wanted. And unfortunately, the unwary sage fell into their carefully laid-out plan. It's quite possible.

But well, why did the king act in haste, and what was such a compulsion for him? In any case, why didn't he consult me who am a mother of these two children before taking a unilateral decision? After all, it was not something related to the administrative affair of the kingdom where he has an unalienable and unchallenged right to make decisions; it was the question of my sons, and I had equal right as he has to have a say on the issue. Now, what would happen if some harm, god forbid, comes to my dear children; will the king answer me or would he, for his life, able to turn the wheel of time back to restore my beloved children to me?]

Tulsidas says that the mother prayed to the Creator in these words of hope and expectation: 'Oh Creator! Will that day ever come (and when will it come) when I might watch those most beautiful, attractive, lovely, delicate and tender boys with a bun (or a tuft of hair) on their heads and curly locks of hair dangling on the sides of their faces, a bewitching sight that would make me feel exhilarated, and when would I thrillingly embrace them once again?' (4).

(1 / 100)

ऋषि नृप–सीस ठगौरी–सी डारी।
कुलगुर, सचिव, निपुन नेवनि अवरेब न समुझि सुधारी।। 1।।
सिरिस–सुमन–सुकुमार कुँवर दोउ, सूर सरोष सुरारी।
पठए बिनहि सहाय पयादेहि केलि–बान–धुनधारी।। 2।।
अति सनेह–कातरि माता कहै, सुनि सखि! बचन दुखारी।
बादि बीर–जननी–जीवन जग, छत्रि–जाति–गति भारी।। 3।।
जो कहिहै फिरे राम–लखन घर करि मुनिमख–रखवारी।
सो तुलसी प्रिय मोहिं लागिहै ज्यौं सुभाय सुत चारी।। 4।।

(1/100)

ṛ̨si nṛ̨pa-sīsa ṭhagaurī-sī ḍārī.
kulagura, saciva, nipuna nēvani avarēba na samujhi sudhārī.. 1..
sirisa-sumana-sukumāra kum̐vara dō'u, sūra sarōṣa surārī.
paṭha'ē binahi sahāya payādēhi kēli-bāna-dhunadhārī.. 2..
ati sanēha-kātari mātā kahai, suni sakhi! bacana dukhārī.
bādi bīra-jananī-jīvana jaga, chatri-jāti-gati bhārī.. 3..
jō kahihai phirē rāma-lakhana ghara kari munimakha-rakhavārī.
sō tulasī priya mōhiṁ lāgihai jyauṁ subhāya suta cārī.. 4..

The situation in Ayodhya after Lord Ram & Laxman had gone with sage Vishwamitra—2

Verse no. 1/100—[The mother, Kaushalya, continues to brood and lement—] 'The sage (Vishwamitra) appears to have cast a magical spell on the head (intellect) of the king (Dasrath) so much that the latter lost his common sense.

But even if the king was spellbound for any reason, at least his advisors and councilors such as the family's trusted Guru (moral preceptor and family priest who is regarded as very wise and farsighted; sage Vasistha), the king's wise ministers (led by Sumantra, the chief of the ministers), and other lords, nobles, knights, grandees and commanders of the kingdom should have intervened and given him sane council so that this unsavoury situation could have been averted and some excuse could have been devised to avoid the sage's proposal. [But unfortunately, none lived up to their responsibilities.][1] (1).

[[1]Mother Kaushalya's lamentation is typical of how a loving mother thinks of her beloved son. A mother's attitude is more often than not in stark contrast to that of the father, though both love their off-spring equally, for the latter wishes to allow his children to grow up and face the harshness of the real world and become ready to face life one day when he would be no more to look after them and earn bread and butter for the family, but the mother, if she is given her choice, would rather have her sons live in the best of comforts she can afford, and not suffer even the slightest of discomfort, even if that means making them ill-equipped to face the harsh realities of life and learn to fend for themselves once the bread-earning father dies.

Presently, Kaushalya was not aware that king Dasrath was very reluctant to send the two brothers with sage Vishwamitra. In fact, he had initially flatly said 'no' to the sage. He had feared about their safety more than Kaushalya, and he had minced no words in telling the sage that he is willing to do whatever the sage proposes as an alternative other than sending the two princes to the forest to fight demons. It is not acceptable, the king had said. Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/51; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 208.]

[Indeed, it is so painful and worrying and inconsiderate on the part of the king and his councilors to send the two brothers to the forest when one thinks of the task they are expected to do in there.] Come to think of it—on the one hand are the two princes (Lord Ram and Laxman) who are as delicate and tender as the flowers of Siras tree (which is tall lofty tree, similar to Shesham), and on the other hand are the demons (they have been sent to fight and defeat) who are very dangerous, extremely ferocious and exceedingly wrathful.

Inspite of that knowledge, they were sent with toy-like (small) bows and arrows to face this mighty enemy, without any help or support of the kingdom's army, and that too on foot (without any chariot or any other sort of vehicle)!' (2).

Mother Kaushalya was thus extremely anxious due to her motherly affections, and overcome with sorrows and worries. She lamented thus: 'Verily, the life of the mother of a valiant male (warrior) is in vain, and the fate of the Kshatriya caste is all the more perilous, being surrounded in uncertainties and ridden with horrors of pain and suffering[2] (3).

[[2]Kaushalya alludes to the fact that the Kshatriya is a warrior class, and their main occupation is to protect the other classes from being tormented by tyrants. They cannot say 'no' on such occasions. From their very childhood days, they are trained for the purpose. Warfare is a staple for this race of people, and they cannot say 'no' to battle, especially when the cause is righteous and noble as was the case with Lord

Ram and Laxman who were sent to protect the fire sacrifice of a great sage. And 'war' is uncertain and merciless—thousands of sons, brothers and husbands have perished in this fire.

So, the mother of a Kshatriya son feels lucky if she happens to see her son become old during her lifetime—because that is very rare. That is why Kaushalya laments at Sri Ram's accompanying sage Vishwamitra to the forest because she knows that he will have to face and fight ferocious demons, and the risks and perils were great.]

In all sooth I say that anyone who informs me that Ram and Laxman have returned home after having protected the sage's fire sacrifice successfully, verily I say that that person will be naturally as dear to me as my four sons[3].' (4).

[[4]Kaushalya here refers to all the four brothers, Lord Ram and his younger step-brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, as her own sons. Laxman's mother was queen Sumitra, and Kaikeyi was the mother of the other two, Bharat and Shatrughan.

The remarkable point to note here is the extraordinary level of mutual love and affection, a sense of oneness and close bond of familial ties that existed in those times. There was no jealousy between siblings and members of a household, and every member regarded others with full respect and trust as if they were all different bodies but one soul. If one member suffered, all felt the pain; if one rejoiced, all rejoiced as well. Wealth and travails of life were equally shared, home and trade was a joint affair, and so was defeat and victory. There was no feeling of being junior or senior amongst the members of the same family, and all contributed equally to uphold the name and dignity of the family as a whole and each other at the individual level.

One does not fail to note that this unique level of love and affection that created a bond and a feeling of oneness and commonness and brotherliness and comradeship amongst members of a family who shared inviolable trust with each other so much that their relationships and ties truly conformed to the saying that 'blood is thicker than water' was the norm in ancient times, and this is in sharp contrast to the fractured society of today.]

(1 / 101)

जबतें लै मुनि संग सिधाए।
राम लखनके समाचार, सखि ! तबतें कछुअ न पाए।। 1।।
बिनु पानही गमन, फल भोजन, भूमि सयन तरुछाहीं।
सर–सरिता जलपान, सिसुनके सँग सुसेवक नाहीं।। 2।।
कौसिक परम कृपालु परमहित, समरथ, सुखद, सुचाली।
बालक सुठि सुकुमार सकोची, समुझि सोच मोहि आली।। 3।।
बचन सप्रेम सुमित्राके सुनि सब सनेह–बस रानी।
तुलसी आइ भरत तेहि औसर कही सुमंगल बानी।। 4।।

(1/101)

jabatēṁ lai muni saṅga sidhā'ē.
rāma lakhanakē samācāra, sakhi! tabatēṁ kachu'a na pā'ē.. 1..

binu pānahī gamana, phala bhōjana, bhūmi sayana taruchāhīṁ.
sara-saritā jalapāna, sisunakē saṁga susēvaka nāhīṁ.. 2..
kausika parama kṛpālu paramahita, samaratha, sukhada, sucālī.
bālaka suṭhi sukumāra sakōcī, samujhi sōca mōhi ālī.. 3..
bacana saprēma sumitrākē suni saba sanēha-basa rānī.
tulasī ā'i bharata tēhi ausara kahī sumaṅgala bānī.. 4..

The situation in Ayodhya after Lord Ram & Laxman had gone with sage Vishwamitra—3

Verse no. 1/101—[In this verse, we read how Sumitra, Laxman's mother, lamented. She confides to her friend—] 'Oh Friend (sakhi)! Ever since the sage (Vishwamitra) took them away, I have not heard any news about Ram and Laxman (1).

They will have to walk barefoot, eat fruits, sleep on the earth (without any semblance of a mattress) under the shade of a tree, and drink the water of rivers and ponds. There is not even a good and helpful servant with them (2).

There is no doubt that sage Kaushik (Vishwamitra) is indeed very kind and compassionate, most favourable, gracious and benignant, most able and potent, a provider of comfort and happiness, is of course of an excellent character, and is self-restrained.

That is alright. But, at the same time, the simple and pure-hearted (i.e. inexperienced and shy) children are also very delicate and tender and hesitant in their demeanours. [They will feel shy to tell the sage anything they want. How will the sage know if they are thirsty or hungry or want to take a rest? The sage is a veteran of the forest, and living with hardships is normal for him, so how will he understand the needs of delicate and tender princes who have never known the word 'hardship'? since the two brothers would feel shy to ask anything of the sage, they would continue to suffer without the sage even being aware of their suffering. I am sure that if the sage comes to know about their smallest of needs and wants, he will immediately take care of it and ensure that the two boys are happy and contented. But the problem is these two boys won't tell the sage.]

Oh Friend! It is because of this thought that I am very affright and worried.[1]' (3).

[[1]Refer verse no. 1/99, stanza no. 1 herein above where Kaushalya also expresses this apprehension.]

Hearing these words of Sumitra that were at once soaked in love and affection for the two brothers as well as expressed her anguish and pain, all the queens were overcome with motherly love, and they too were pensive and sad.

Tulsidas says that it was just then that Bharat came in and spoke pleasant, comforting and auspicious words[2] (4).

[[2]It so happened that royal messengers of king Janak arrived at Ayodhya with the good tidings of Lord Ram's engagement with Sita after breaking of the bow, and they carried a letter of invitation for king Dasrath. Bharat and Shatrughan learnt of the good news and then Bharat rushed inside the palace to inform the mothers of the happy tidings. This is narrated in detail in the following verse no. 1/102 below.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 290—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 291.]

(1 / 102)

सानुज भरत भवन उठि धाए।
पितु–समीप सब समाचार सुनि, मुदित मातु पहँ आए।। 1।।
सजल नयन, तनु पुलक, अधर फरकत लखि प्रीति सुहाई।
कौसल्या लिये लाइ हृदय, 'बलि कहौ, कछु है सुधि पाई?'।। 2।।
सतानंद उपरोहित अपने तिरहुति–नाथ पठाए।
खेम कुसल रघुबीर–लषनकी ललित पत्रिका ल्याए।। 3।।
दलि ताडुका, मारि निसिचर, मख राखि, बिप्र–तिय तारी।
दै बिद्या लै गये जनकपुर, हैं गुरु–संग सुखारी।। 4।।
करि पिनाक–पन, सुता–स्वयंबर सजि, नृप–कटक बटोर्‌यो।
राजसभा रघुबर मृनाल ज्यों संभु–सरासन तोर्‌यो।। 5।।
यों कहि सिथिल–सनेह बंधु दोउ, अंब अंक भरि लीन्हें।
बार–बार मुख चूमि, चारु मनि–बसन निछावरि कीन्हें।। 6।।
सुनत सुहावनि चाह अवध घर घर आनंद बधाई।
तुलसिदास रनिवास रहस–बस, सखी सुमंगल गाई।। 7।।

(1/102)

sānuja bharata bhavana uṭhi dhā'ē.
pitu-samīpa saba samācāra suni, mudita mātu pahaṁ ā'ē.. 1..
sajala nayana, tanu pulaka, adhara pharakata lakhi prīti suhā'ī.
kausalyā liyē lā'i hr̥daya, 'bali kahau, kachu hai sudhi pā'ī?'.. 2..
satānanda uparōhita apanē tirahuti-nātha paṭhā'ē.
khēma kusala raghubīra-laṣanakī lalita patrikā lyā'ē.. 3..
dali tāḍukā, māri nisicara, makha rākhi, bipra-tiya tārī.
dai bidyā lai gayē janakapura, haiṁ guru-saṅga sukhārī.. 4..
kari pināka-pana, sutā-svayambara saji, nr̥pa-kaṭaka baṭōryō.
rājasabhā raghubara mr̥nāla jyōṁ sambhu-sarāsana tōryō.. 5..
yōṁ kahi sithila-sanēha bandhu dō'u, amba aṅka bhari līnhēṁ.
bāra-bāra mukha cūmi, cāru mani-basana nichāvari kīnhēṁ.. 6..
sunata suhāvani cāha avadha ghara ghara ānanda badhā'ī.
tulasidāsa ranivāsa rahasa-basa, sakhī sumaṅgala gā'ī.. 7..

Good Tidings arrive from Janakpur

Verse no. 1/102—[A messenger arrived at Ayodhya from Janakpur, carrying a letter from king Janak and endorsed by sage Vishwamitra which tells about Lord Ram breaking the bow and his engagement with Sita. It also contained a formal invitation to king Dasrath to come to Janakpur with the bridegroom's party.

These messengers briefed everyone about all the developments that had occurred from the time the two brothers left with sage Vishwamitra till the time Lord Ram broke the bow and was engaged to Sita in marriage.

This was the first news of the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, since they went away with the sage. Therefore, as soon as the news broke, cheer erupted and resonated in Ayodhya, and there were spontaneous celebrations everywhere.

This entire episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 287, and from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 290—to Doha no. 297.]

Accompanied by his younger brother (Shatrughan), Bharat ran towards the palace (as soon as he heard that some news of his two beloved brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, has arrived from another kingdom)[1].

Then, having heard the good news from his father, he rushed happily to inform his mothers (i.e. the queen-mother Kaushalya who was Lord Ram's mother, queen Sumitra who was Laxman's mother, and his own mother Kaikeyi)[2] (1).

[[1]Bharat and Shatrughan were playing when the messenger presented himself with Janak's letter before king Dasrath in his full court. So, as soon as Bharat heard that some good tidings about his brothers has arrived, he rushed to the court with his younger brother. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 290.

[2]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/101, stanza no. 4.

It ought to be noted here that there is a slight variation in who first informed the queens as narrated in Ram Charit Manas and Geetwali. Here in Geetawali it is Bharat, but in Ram Charit Manas it was king Dasrath who summoned the queens and informed them about everything. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 295.]

Tears of joy had swelled in Bharat's eyes, his body was thrilled with exhilaration, and his lips quivered in excitement. Seeing his ecstatic condition, Kaushalya embraced him and said, 'Son, bless you; is there any news?' (2).

[Bharat replied—] 'Mother! The Tirhut king (i.e. king Janak) has sent his Guru Shatanand as a messenger. He has brought a letter of good news about the welfare and happiness of Lord Sri Ram and Laxman (3).

He (Sri Ram) had crushed Tadka and slayed the demon (Subahu), protected the fire sacrifice (of Vishwamitra) and then liberated the sage's wife (Ahilya). Thereafter, he (Vishwamitra) gave them lessons (about the secret of magical weapons), and then took them on a visit to Janakpur. They (Sri Ram and Laxman) are happy there (4).

The king (Janak) had made a vow regarding the Bow (which avowed that anyone whosoever breaks this Bow would marry his daughter named Sita), and to fulfill his vow he had made elaborate preparations and arrangements of all kinds. Then he had invited a lot of great kings and princes of earth to participate in the competition to break the Bow and win the hands of Sita in marriage.

In that unique grand assembly the like of which had never been heard of anywhere, Raghubir (Sri Ram) had broken the Bow (after everyone else had failed) as if it were the stem of a lotus plant (i.e. he had broken the Bow without the least effort).' (5).

Saying thus, both the brothers were so overcome by surging emotion of affection for their beloved elder brother Lord Ram that Bharat could speak no more and fell silent.

The mother (Kaushalya) cheerfully lifted them and made them sit on her laps and repeatedly kissed them.

Then she celebrated the good tidings and the happy occasion by liberally making charities in the form of giving away attractive gems and clothes (to all those who came to her to join her in this auspicious moment)[3] (6).

[[3]Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 295 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8.]

Tulsidas says that as soon as these pleasant, wish-fulfilling words[4] spread in the city of Ayodhya, auspicious felicitous songs began to be sung almost immediately in every household, while in the royal palace the maids too started to sing auspicious and celebratory songs, being overwhelmed with joy and exhilaration (7).

[[4]Every single individual in Ayodhya had hoped to hear some good news about their beloved princes Lord Ram and Laxman. So as soon as the word of the brothers' well-being and happiness spread amongst the masses, they all rejoiced at these words and a thunder of cheer rang out spontaneously everywhere.]

राग कान्हरा

(1 / 103)

राम–लषन सुधि आई बाजै अवध बधाई।
ललित लगन लिखि पत्रिका,
उपरोहितके कर जनक–जनेस पठाई।। 1।।
कन्या भूप बिदेहकी रूपकी अधिकाई,
तासु स्वयंबर सुनि सब आए
देस देसके नृप चतुरंग बनाई।। 2।।
पन पिनाक, पबि मेरु तें गुरुता कठिनाई।
लोकपाल, महिपाल, बान बानइत,
दसानन सके न चाप चढ़ाई।। 3।।
तेहि समाज रघुराजके मृगराज जगाई।
भंजि सरासन संभुको जग जय,
कल कीरति, तिय तियमनि सिय पाई।। 4।।
पुर घर घर आनंद महा सुनि चाह सुहाई।
मातु मुदित मंगल सजैं,
कहैं मुनि प्रसाद भये सकल सुमंगल, माई।। 5।।
गुरु–आयुस मंडप रच्यो, सब साज सजाई।
तुलसिदास दसरथ बरात सजि,
पूजि गनेसहि चले निसान बाजई।। 6।।

rāga kānharā

rāma-laṣana sudhi ā'ī bājai avadha badhā'ī.
lalita lagana likhi patrikā,
uparōhitakē kara janaka-janēsa paṭhā'ī.. 1..
kan'yā bhūpa bidēhakī rūpakī adhikā'ī,
tāsu svayambara suni saba ā'ē
dēsa dēsakē nr̥pa caturaṅga banā'ī.. 2..
pana pināka, pabi mēru tēṁ gurutā kaṭhinā'ī.
lōkapāla, mahipāla, bāna bāna'ita,
dasānana sakē na cāpa caṛhā'ī.. 3..
tēhi samāja raghurājakē mr̥garāja jagā'ī.
bhañji sarāsana sambhukō jaga jaya,
kala kīrati, tiya tiyamani siya pā'ī.. 4..
pura ghara ghara ānanda mahā suni cāha suhā'ī.
mātu mudita maṅgala sajaiṁ,
kahaiṁ muni prasāda bhayē sakala sumaṅgala, mā'ī.. 5..
guru-āyusa maṇḍapa racyō, saba sāja sajā'ī.
tulasidāsa dasaratha barāta saji,
pūji ganēsahi calē nisāna bāja'ī.. 6..

Celebrations in Ayodhya & Departure of the Marriage Party

Verse no. 1/103— [These events are also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 296—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 304.]

[The inhabitants of Ayodhya talked joyously among themselves—] 'Today the news of Sri Ram and Laxman has come, that is why celebratory songs are being sung in Ayodhya. Janak has sent a lovely 'Lagan-Patrika' (a letter or memo containing auspicious tidings about the day when the marriage of Lord Ram and Sita is to be solemnized) through his messenger (the royal priest of Janakpur, named Shatanand) (1).

King Videha (Janak) has a daughter who is matchless in beauty. Hearing of her 'Swyambar' (marriage ceremony where the groom is selected on the spot as per certain pre-declared conditions), the great kings of different parts of the world had come with their 'Chaturangi' armies (i.e. with all the 4 wings of their army consisting of the foot soldiers who wield spears and lancets, the archers, the war horses and elephants, and the heavy canons)[1] (2).

[[1]It was an occasion when every king and prince worth his name had come. It was a rare occasion for all of them to show-off their majesty, power, strength, authority, grandeur and pomp. So every one of them came with all their best of royal paraphernalia and regal accompaniment of grandeur and majesty. The reader can well imagine the huge crowd that must have accumulated at Janakpur at that time, and the immensity of arrangements that Janak needed to make to accommodate all of these egoistic haughty kings and their accompanying retinue of ministers, attendants, army

and the like at once. They must have pitched camps on the outskirts of the city of Janakpur for miles and miles around it, but the issues of logistics and keeping all these kings in good humour must have been mind boggling. Excepting a few noble kings who were reasonable and understanding, the majority were highly egoistic, arrogant and haughty, and even a slight cause of inconvenience to them could have resulted in their throwing tantrums and itching for a showdown.]

The centre-piece of the ceremony was the unique 'Bow of Lord Shiva', the heaviness, sturdiness, invincibility and hardness of which was greater than that of Vajra (which is the strongest weapon ever built and is held only by Indra, the king of gods) as well as Mt. Meru (the mountain where gods live).

That Bow could not be lifted and strung even by the Lokpals (the strongest and mightiest of custodians of the world), by the greatest of assembled kings, as well as by the demons Vanasur and Ravana who were both expert archers (and therefore were well-versed with the construction of a bow, and how to lift, bend and break it; even they failed) (3).

In that assembly, (by saying some acrid, instigating words) king Janak had literally woken up or aroused the 'lion of Raghu's family' (i.e. Lord Sri Ram).

By breaking the Bow of Lord Shiva, he (Lord Ram) has acquired immense glory, fame, good name and a victory like of which has never been heard of anywhere in the world, besides being rewarded by having Sita, who is a jewel among women, as his bride.' (4).

Hearing this pleasant news, celebratory and felicitous songs are being sung in every household of the city[2].

The mothers prepare auspicious accoutrements and paraphernalia, and say, 'Oh Ladies! All these auspicious happenings are due to the grace and kindness of the sage (Vishwamitra).[3]' (5).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 296.

[3]It is such an irony that a while ago these same queens had been blaming the sage for all the sorrows of separation from their beloved sons they were suffering from. Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/100, stanza no. 1 herein above.]

Then, after getting the go-ahead (command, order) of the Guru (Vashishtha), the Mandap (a central canopy or a decorative pavilion for holding auspicious ceremonies) was erected wherein all types of auspicious paraphernalia and things needed for the wedding as well as the necessary items of daily use and other things needed for the long journey to and fro from Janakpur were collected.

Tulsidas says that Dasrath got everything arranged, and accompanied by embellished accoutrements and relevant accompaniments (befitting his stature and occasion), and then after having worshipped Lord Ganesh, the marriage party of the groom (Lord Ram) sounded the trumpets and kettle-drums and proceeded merrily towards Janakpur[4] (6).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 298—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 304.]

मनमें मंजु मनोरथ हो, री !
सो हर–गौरि–प्रसाद एकतें, कौसिक, कृपा चौगुनो भो, री !।। 1।।
पन–परिताप, चाप–चिंता निसि, सोच–सकोच–तिमिर नहिं थोरी।
रबिकुल–रबि अवलोकि सभा–सर हितचित–बारिज–बन बिकसोरी।। 2।।
कुँवर–कुँवरि सब मंगल मूरति, नृप दोउ धरमधुरंधर धोरी।
राजसमाज भूरि–भागी, जिन लोचन लाहु लह्यो एक ठौरी।। 3।।
ब्याह–उछाह राम–सीताको सुकृत सकेलि बिरंचि रच्यो, री।
तुलसिदास जानै सोइ यह सुख जेहि उर बसति मनोहर जोरी।। 4।।

rāga kēdārā

(1/104)

manamēṁ manju manōratha hō, rī!
sō hara-gauri-prasāda ēkatēṁ, kausika, kr̥pā caugunō bhō, rī!.. 1..
pana-paritāpa, cāpa-cintā nisi, sōca-sakōca-timira nahiṁ thōrī.
rabikula-rabi avalōki sabhā-sara hitacita-bārija-bana bikasōrī.. 2..
kum̐vara-kum̐vari saba maṅgala mūrati, nr̥pa dō'u dharamadhurandhara dhōrī.
rājasamāja bhūri-bhāgī, jina lōcana lāhu lahyō ēka ṭhaurī.. 3..
byāha-uchāha rāma-sītākō sukr̥ta sakēli biran̄ci racyō, rī.
tulasidāsa jānai sō'i yaha sukha jēhi ura basati manōhara jōrī.. 4..

Arrival of the Groom's party at Janakpur

Verse no. 1/104—[After elaborate arrangements were made, king Dasrath and the royal priest sage Vasistha led the procession of the groom's marriage party to Janakpur to participate in the wedding ceremonies of Lord Ram and Sita. This verse narrates the happenings at Janakpur when the party arrived there.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 304—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 307.]

Seeing the groom's marriage party, the women folk of Janakpur began to talk amongst themselves—] 'Oh Dear (rī)! The pretty desire that we had in our hearts (that Lord Ram should wed Sita)[1] has not only been fulfilled but also increased four-fold[2], thanks to the blessings of Lord Shiva and Parvati (the patron deities of Janakpur) as well as the grace and kindness of Kaushik (sage Vishwamitra—as he was the motivator who ordered Lord Ram to go and break the bow when Janak had felt very depressed and low)' (1).

[[1]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/70, stanza nos. 3-8, and verse no. 1/74—to 1/83; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 222—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 223.

[2]The citizens had seen Lord Ram and Laxman till now but were seeing the other two brothers, Bharat and Shatrughan, for the first time. So they now hope that all the 'four' brothers are married together to the four princesses of Janakpur—king Janak's two daughters, viz. Sita and her younger sister Urmila, and Janak's younger brother Kushdwhaj's two daughters Maandavi and Srutkirti. They silently prayed to Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati that since they had been so kind and gracious to have heard their initial prayer that Lord Ram should marry Sita so much so that Shiva had no objection to Lord Ram breaking his Bow, then let their one more prayer also be heard and fulfilled. And this was that all the four brothers become related to the kingdom of Janakpur by the inviolable bond of marriage. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 309—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 312.]

[The lady continues to speak—] 'See friend (rī)! The gloomy darkness symbolized by the regrets and lamentations that the king suffered from at having made such a difficult and intractable vow (pana-paritāpa) regarding the Bow which was like a dark night when no path is visible ('cāpa-cintā nisi'; i.e. when Janak was so extremely perplexed that he could not think of any way out of the grave situation and dilemma that he had landed himself into with respect to the Bow), and the worries of what would now happen if the Bow remained unbroken (with respect to the future of Sita and his own reputation), were not small and easy to overcome ('sōca-sakōca-timira nahiṁ thōrī'; i.e. were immensely horrifying)—but it is such a good fortune and good luck for all of us and the king as well that we, the ones who are attending this grand assembly which is like a huge pond (sabhā-sara), have had the good luck to be able to see ('avalōki'; i.e. have in our midst) the 'Sun of the Solar Race' ('rabikula-rabi'; Lord Ram) so much so that the Lord's sight injected cheer and joy in our minds and hearts just like the dense cluster of lotus flowers in a pond open up their petals and feel glad at the sight of the sun in the sky (hitacita-bārija-bana bikasōrī)[1]. (2).

[[1]Here, the similes are obvious. The citizens and king Janak are compared to the lotus flowers, and Lord Ram to the sun. The lotus remains closed during the night but opens as soon as the sun is sighted. The 'closed lotus' symbolizes its state of gloom and depression, and it opening its petal to it feeling cheerful and joyful.

So, as soon as the people saw Lord Sri Ram stand up from his seat to break the bow after Janak had expressed his utter dismay and frustration when none of the assembled kings could budge the Bow, the atmosphere of despair and dejection vanished, and it was replaced by one of hope, cheer, jubilation and encouragement. This is what this stanza means.]

Lord Sri Ram and other princes (i.e. his three brothers) as well as Sita and other princesses (i.e. Sita's and her three sisters) are all auspiciousness personified, and both the kings (Janak and Dasrath) are also leaders in the field of Dharma (i.e. they are both well-versed and steeped in the laws of righteousness, noble conduct, probity, propriety, ethics etc.).

Indeed this royal assembly is also very lucky that it has reaped the rewards and benefits of having eyes (eyesight) because all those present here are able to behold a personified form of all the best of virtues and glories that exist in this world at a single place, something which is an extreme rarity[2] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 309—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 310.]

Oh Dear (rī)!This exciting and exhilarating ceremonial occasion of the marriage of Lord Sri Ram with Sita has been created (i.e. made to happen) by the Creator by carefully selecting and gathering all auspicious, virtuous and good deeds of all the people who are participating on this happy occasion (byāha-uchāha rāma-sītākō sukṛ̥ta sakēli biranci racyō).'

Tulsidas asserts that only those who have this lovely pair (of Sri Ram and Sita) permanently residing in their hearts can ralise the immensity of exhilaration, joy and delight that everyone present on this occasion felt in their hearts (for others it is simply a narrative by a poet) (4).

(1 / 105)

राजति राम–जानकी–जोरी।
स्याम–सरोज जलद सुंदर बर, दुलहिनि तड़ित–बरन तनु गोरी।। 1।।
ब्याह समय सोहति बितानतर, उपमा कहुँ न लहित मति मोरी।
मनहुँ मदन मंजुल मंडपमहँ छबि–सिंगार–सोभा इक ठौरी।। 2।।
मंगलमय दोउ, अंग मनोहर, ग्रथित, चूनरी पीत पिछोरी।
कनककलस कहँ देत भाँवरी, निरखि रूप सारद भइ भोरी।। 3।।
इत बसिष्ठ मुनि, उतहि सतानँद, बंस बखान करैं दोउ ओरी।
इत अवधेस, उतहि मिथिलापति, भरत अंक सुखसिंधु हिलोरी।। 4।।
मुदित जनक, रनिवास रहसबस, चतुर नारि चितवहिं तृन तोरी।
गान–निसान–बेद–धुनि सुनि सुर बरसत सुमन, हरष कहै कोरी?।। 5।।
नयननको फल पाइ प्रेमबस सकल असीसत ईस निहोरी।
तुलसी जेहि आनंदमगन मन, क्यों रसना बरनै सुख सो री।। 6।।

(1/105)

rājati rāma-jānakī-jōrī.
syāma-sarōja jalada sundara bara, dulahini taḍita-barana tanu gōrī.. 1..
byāha samaya sōhati bitānatara, upamā kahum̐ na lahita mati mōrī.
manahum̐ madana manjula maṇḍapamaham̐ chabi-siṅgāra-sōbhā ika ṭhaurī.. 2..
maṅgalamaya dō'u, aṅga manōhara, grathita, cūnarī pīta pichōrī.
kanakakalasa kaham̐ dēta bhām̐varī, nirakhi rūpa sārada bha'i bhōrī.. 3..
ita basiṣṭha muni, utahi satānam̐da, bansa bakhāna karaiṁ dō'u ōrī.
ita avadhēsa, utahi mithilāpati, bharata aṅka sukhasindhu hilōrī.. 4..
mudita janaka, ranivāsa rahasabasa, catura nāri citavahiṁ tr̥na tōrī.
gāna-nisāna-bēda-dhuni suni sura barasata sumana, haraṣa kahai kōrī?.. 5..
nayananakō phala pā'i prēmabasa sakala asīsata īsa nihōrī.
tulasī jēhi ānandamagana mana, kyōṁ rasanā baranai sukha sō rī.. 6..

The Glorious Pair of Rām and Sitā-1

Verse no. 1/105—[This verse describes the magnificent sight of Lord Ram and Sita while they are undertaking the various rites of marriage, such as the 'Bhanwari' mentioned in stanza no. 3 in this verse. It is a fascinating verse inasmuch as its narrator being the same happy lady who had spoken in the previous verse no. 1/104 is indicated only in its last two stanzas, i.e. nos. 5 and 6 where the word 'rī', an affectionate way of addressing one's lady friend, has been used.

This beautiful sight of Lord Ram and Sita during the marriage rituals is also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 319—to Doha no. 325 that describe the entire process of the marriage ceremony in vivid detail.]

The pair of Lord Sri Ram and Sita is gloriously present (or, making their glorious, magnificent, most exalted presence felt) in the grand assembly.

The groom is most lovely (charming, pretty, endearing) like a blue lotus or a dark rain-bearing cloud (because Lord Ram's complexion is of a dark shade), while the bride is of a fair complexion like that of lightening (i.e. which is dazzling, glowing and brilliant, signifying that Sita is most attractive and charming) (1).

At the time of the marriage ceremony, they look most magnificent and glorious under the 'Mandapam' (a specially erected canopy under which all marriage rituals are performed).

My (Tulsidas') mind fails to find an appropriate simile or comparison anywhere. It appears that beauty and splendour of the 'Sringar-Ras' (which is one of the various excellent qualities of literature) have personified themselves (in the form of Lord Ram and Sita) and have come together as a couple under the canopy (the Mandapam) into which Kamdeo/cupid (the patron deity of beauty, glamour and love) has transformed himself (2).

Both of them (Sri Ram and Sita) possess most auspicious, pretty and charming bodies (forms). They are tied to each other by the knot linking (Sri Ram's) Pitambar (that is wrapped around the Lord's body) with the Chunri (worn by Sita)[1] as they are going round and round the golden pitcher in a ceremonial ritual called 'Bhanwari'[3].

Even the intellect of Saraswati (the goddess of speech, knowledge, wisdom, intellect) was confused and dumbfounded at the sight of that spectacular beauty (as she was unable to find words to describe its greatness of magnificence, its fabulous beauty and its stupendous grandeur) (3).

[[1]The 'Pitambar' is the silk yellow cloth that Lord Ram usually wore. The 'Chunri' is a colourful drape covering the head and shoulders of chaste young women, a mark of modesty and chastity. It is worn by married women during all religious ceremonies.

[3]The 'Bhanwari' is a marriage ritual wherein one end of the groom's body-wrapping cloth is tied to an end of the bride's Chunri. Then they go around the sacred fire and ceremonial pitchers placed near it seven times to say their marriage vows. During this cirumambulance, dried and puffed rice flakes are sprinkled on their path with the help of a wicker basket or plate. This ritual stands for their happy and fruitful married life, and signifies their irrevocable bond of mutual trust and love. Refer: (i)

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1 and 7 that precede Doha no. 325, and (ii) Janki Mangal, Chanda no. 18, line no. 3.]

Sage Vashishtha on this side (representing king Dasrath and the groom's side) and sage Shatanand on the opposite side (representing king Janak and the bride's side) are lauding and singing eulogy of the greatness of the family tree of their respective patrons, enumerating the various achievements and glories of all the members of the two families.

The king of Avadha (i.e. king Dasrath) on this side (groom's side) and the king of Mithila (i.e. king Janak) on the other side (bride's side) are extremely jubilant and happy so much so that they appear to be continuously filling their laps with the ocean symbolized by the virtues of happiness, joy and bliss that continues to pour into their laps without their having enough of it (bharata aṅka sukhasindhu hilōrī). (4).

Oh Dear (rī)! At this point of time, Janak is extremely glad and euphoric. The women in his household are overwhelmed with love and affection, while the clever and wise amongst the women-folk are breaking blades of reed (a gesture done to ward-off evil omens and bad spirits) and gazing intently, full of affection and endearment, at the couple (Lord Ram and Sita).

Hearing the (adulatory, laudatory) songs, the playing of kettle-drums and the chanting of hymns of the Vedas, the Gods shower flowers (from the sky)[4]. Who can ever describe those wonderful moments of jubilation and merriment? (5).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 323.]

In this way, getting the fruits (benefits, rewards) of their eyes, all the men and women folk affectionately bless the couple by invoking the grace of the Lord (Shiva) (sakala asīsata īsa nihōrī).

Oh Dear (rī)! Those wonderful moments of happiness, joy and pleasure as well as the magnificently divine and glorious sight of the couple (Lord Ram and Sita) that has made Tulsidas' mind and heart also feel extremely exhilarated and overwhelmed with happiness and joy (tulasī jēhi ānandamagana mana)—say, how can the tongue (i.e. the speaker' tongue; the lady who is describing these events) ever be able to describe the dimension, the intensity and depth and excellence, of those amazing moments of joy and happiness (kyōṁ rasanā baranai sukha sō)[5] (6).

[[5]The exhilaration, euphoria, happiness and rejoicing of that occasion were so intense and measureless like a fathomless ocean that they had numbed the mind and intellect to such an extent that the latter were paralysed and could not direct the tongue to utter a single word. It was something so divinely blissful and exhilarating that it had to be experienced and witnessed to have an idea of its intensity and depth, and not something that can be butted and bounded by words with their limited ability to transmit information or sufficently describe them.]

(1 / 106)

दूलह राम, सीय दुलही री !
घन–दामिनि बर बरन, हरन–मन सुंदरता नखसिख निबही, री।। 1।।
ब्याह–बिभूषन–बसन–बिभूषित, सखि अवली लखि ठगि सी रही, री।

जीवन–जनम–लाहु, लोचन–फल है इतनोइ, लह्यो आजु सही, री।। 2।।
सुखमा सुरभि सिँगार–छीर दुहि मयन अमियमय कियो है दही, री।
मथि माखन सिय–राम सँवारे, सकल भुवन छबि मनहु मही, री।। 3।।
तुलसिदास जोरी देखत सुख सोभा अतुल, न जाति कही, री।
रूप–रासि बिरची बिरंचि मनो, सिला लवनि रति–काम लही, री।। 4।।

(1/106)

dūlaha rāma, sīya dulahī rī!
ghana-dāmini bara barana, harana-mana sundaratā nakhasikha nibahī, rī.. 1..
byāha-bibhūṣana-basana-bibhūṣita, sakhi avalī lakhi ṭhagi sī rahī, rī.
jīvana-janama-lāhu, lōcana-phala hai itanō'i, lahyō āju sahī, rī.. 2..
sukhamā surabhi simg̃āra-chīra duhi mayana amiyamaya kiyō hai dahī, rī.
mathi mākhana siya-rāma samv̐ārē, sakala bhuvana chabi manahu mahī, rī.. 3..
tulasidāsa jōrī dēkhata sukha sōbhā atula, na jāti kahī, rī.
rūpa-rāsi biracī biran̄ci manō, silā lavani rati-kāma lahī, rī.. 4..

The Glorious Pair of Rām and Sitā-2

Verse no. 1/106—The friends and handmaids of Sita cheerfully converse with each other, exclaim with joyous abandon—'Oh dear friend (rī)! Lord Sri Ram is the groom and Sita is the bride (dūlaha rāma, sīya dulahī)!

Look at their beauty dear (rī). One (i.e. Lord Ram) is of a dark complexion like the shade of a dark rain-bearing cloud, while the other (i.e. Sita) has a fair shining complexion like that of the lightening (ghana-dāmini bara barana)[1].

Their beauty that extends from the tip of their toe nails right upto their heads is so astounding that it steals the attention of the beholder and keeps his mind enthralled and captivated (harana-mana sundaratā nakhasikha nibahī). (1)

[[1]In other words, they are related to each other just like the dark cloud representing Lord Ram's dark complexion is to the lightening representing Sita's fair and dazzling countenance. Lightening is a part of the dark rain-bearing cloud. A cloud that has no lightening is not as dynamic and does not produce as much rain as the one in which streaks of lightening constantly shine through. Thus, here it means that both Lord Ram and Sita compliment and supplement each other. Lord Ram's glory and magnificene and majesty are enhanced by the presence of Sita by his side.]

See dear friend (rī). All our friends who are watching (sakhi avalī lakhi) the pair (of Lord Ram and Sita) attired in their full marriage regalia and decorative paraphernalia (byāha-bibhūṣana-basana-bibhūṣita) have become so exceedingly enthralled by this fabulously wonderful sight that it appears as if their mind has been captivated by it (ṭhagi sī rahī).

Verily my dear friend (rī) I say that by watching them we have got today the full fruit (reward) of taking birth and having an eye ('jīvana-janama-lāhu, lōcana-phala hai itanō'i, lahyō āju sahī'; because if we hadn't been born at Janakpur or didn't have our eyes we wouldn't have had this rare opportunity to watch Lord Ram

and Sita standing side-by-side as a couple and enjoy the sight of our lifetime, nor would it have been possible for us to participate and witness this auspicious and glorious event) (2).

Oh Dear (rī)! It appears that a milkman represented by Kaamdeo ('mayana'; the patron god of beauty, charm and glamour) has 'milked' beauty, glamour, magnificence and charm from a 'milch cow' representing attractiveness, splendour and glory (sukhamā surabhi siṁgāra-chīra duhi).

Then from this milk he prepared 'curd' representing the elixir of life known as 'Amrit' (nectar; here meaning the essential part of the milk representing the qualities of beauty, charm, glamour and magnificence) (amiyamaya kiyō hai dahī).

This Amrit was then churned to produce 'butter' (or cream) with which he decorated the bewitching image (form) of Lord Sri Ram and Sita (mathi mākhana siya-rāma saṁvārē), and the remaining part that was the 'butter-milk' (after extraction of the cream from the butter) was transformed into residual beauty (which is comparatively very dull, drab, unattractive, lustre-less and taste-less) that exists on earth (sakala bhuvana chabi manahu mahī)[2] (3).

[[2]In this metaphor Tulsidas means that Lord Ram and Sita look exceptionally beautiful and charming as if the best part of the qualities known as 'beauty, charm, attractiveness, glmour, magnificence et al' have been collected together to form the image of the couple, while the residual part of these qualities, parts that did not stand at the top and did not qualify to be called the 'best and the most excellent' were distributed to all other beautiful and lovely things that were created in this creation.

In other words, the lovely image of Lord Ram and Sita represented the epitome and pinnacle of beauty, prettiness, magnificence, attractiveness, glamour and charm. There is nothing in this world created by the Creator that can be used to compare Lord Ram and Sita with.]

Oh Dear (rī)! Even Tulsidas avers that when one sees that pair (of Lord Ram and Sita) one finds such an immensity of happiness, delight and bliss that it cannot be compared with anything ever experienced before (tulasidāsa jōrī dēkhata sukha sōbhā atula) so much so that he says that he is unable to describe its uniqueness and rarity (na jāti kahī).

Oh Dear (rī)! Verily it appears that the Creator has created them as a treasury of beauty, magnificence, splendour and attractiveness (rūpa-rāsi biracī biranci manō), while Rati and Kamdeo/cupid had only 'silā and lavani[3]' in their share. (4).

[[3] "Silā" is the left over seeds remaining in the field after the crop is harvested, while "Lavani" is the part of the harvest which is given to labourers in lieu of money.

In other words, the best part of the Creator's "crop" sybmolised by the qualities of beauty, lovliness, prettiness, charm, glamour, magnificence and majesty that was harvested (created) by him, qualities that helped him to get renown as a "Creator of good and marvellous things", and of which the Creator was proud of just like a rich farmer who derives his importance and standing in the society by the richness of his treasury (or granary) which is filled with the best part of his crop, is represented by Lord Ram and Sita, while the residual part of the harvest (or "crop" representing beauty and other like qualities in this creation), which is not of top grade, is represented by the rest of the world.]

जैसे ललित लषन लाल लोने।
तैसिये ललित उरमिला, परसपर लषत सुलोचन कोने।। 1।।
सुखमासार सिँगारसार करि कनक रचे हैं तिहि सोने।
रूपप्रेम–परमिति न परत कहि, बिथकि रही मति मौने।। 2।।
सोभा सील–सनेह सोहावनो, समउ केलिगृह गौने।
देखि तियनिके नयन सफल भये, तुलसीदासहूके होने।। 3।।

(1/107)

jaisē lalita laṣana lāla lōnē.
taisiyē lalita uramilā, parasapara laṣata sulōcana kōnē.. 1..
sukhamāsāra siṁgārasāra kari kanaka racē haiṁ tihi sōnē.
rūpaprēma-paramiti na parata kahi, bithaki rahī mati maunē.. 2..
sōbhā sīla-sanēha sōhāvanō, sama'u kēligṛha gaunē.
dēkhi tiyanikē nayana saphala bhayē, tulasīdāsahūkē hōnē.. 3..

Laxman and Urmila

Verse no. 1/107—[All the four brothers, i.e. Lord Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, were married simultaneously at the same venue and at the same time with the four princesses of Janakpur, i.e. Lord Ram with Sita, Laxman with Sita's younger sister Urmila (both were the daughters of Janak), Bharat with Sita's cousin sister Maandavi, and Shatrughan with the latter's younger sibling Srutkirti (who were daughters of Janak's younger brother Kushdwaj). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 5-12 that precede Doha no. 325.

Presently, this verse no. 1/107 describes the beauty of the couple consisting of Laxman and his wife Urmila.]

Urmila is as beauteous as is Laxman who is an abode of extreme magnificence, charm, beauty and elegance. They are glancing at each other from the corners of their eyes (1).

The Creator had apparently made gold out of the essence of loveliness, beauty and 'Sringar-Ras' (the extract of love and beauty), and then created these two images out of that gold (tihi sōnē)[1].

One cannot therefore describe their (Laxman's and Urmila's) beautiful image (which is literally moulded from gold) and their mutual affection for each other. In fact, the mind and intellect gets tired at trying to do so, and has become silent as a consequence of its failure to describe it (2).

[[1]Both Laxman and Urmila are of fair complexion, hence their comparison with 'gold'.]

At the time they went inside the 'keligriha' ('kēligṛha gaunē'; i.e. the site of the marriage ceremonies), the women-folk were rewarded for their eye sights by looking at the magnificent sight of the couple complete with their charm, beauty and glamour (sōbhā), their dignified behaviour and excellence of manners (sīla), and their mutual affection and love for each other (sanēha) which was very pleasing to behold (sōhāvanō).

Tulsidas asserts that now it is his turn to have the benefit of his eye sight[2] (3).

[Note—[2]It appears from this last stanza that when Laxman and Urmila sat together, the citizens were given a chance to come closer to them and offer their personal good wishes, greetings, blessings and gifts to them, as was the tradition in those days and is still prevalent now. First it were the ladies who crowded around the newly married couple to wish them a happy married life, and then the men-folk who had been eagerly waiting in a queue till the ladies were finished had their chance to came to the couple to greet them.

Tulsidas imagines that he was standing with the gentlemen to greet Laxman and Urmila, and it is clear from the wordings of this last stanza.

It ought to be recalled in this context that the majority of verses of this book Geetawali are written in the "present tense narrative" instead of the grammatically correct way of using the "past tense" as the events related to some time long long ago. But Tulsidas is not a historian or an ordinary poet; he is a devotee of the Lord God who had manifested himself as Lord Ram. A devotee feels closeness with his Lord as if the latter is right in his front, for there is no distance between the Lord and his beloved devotee, especially the Lord's chosen one as Tulsidas indeed was. So therefore, Tulsidas had mentally transported himself to that place and time in a virtual spiritual time-machine when the events of the story of the Ramayana were actually taking place, and hence his narrative is similar to a first-hand report by a scribe who is witness to the events as they unfold.

This very premise as outlined above gives authenticity and lends credence to what Tulsidas describes in all his books—for they are not heresay or a retelling of history relying on someone else's account, but a narration of the events witnessed personally by the narrator as they unfolded before his eyes.]

राग बिलावल

(1 / 108)

जानकी–बर सुंदर, माई।
इन्द्रनील–मनि–स्याम सुभग, अँग–अंग मनोजनि बहु छबि छाई।। 1।।
अरुन चरन, अंगुली मनोहर, नख दुतिवंत, कछुक अरुनाई।
कंजदलनिपर मनहु भौम दस बैठे अचल सुसदसि बनाई।। 2।।
पीन जानु, उर चारु, जटित मनि नूपुर पद कल मुखर सोहाई।
पीत पराग भरे अलिगन जनु जुगल जलज लखि रहे लोभाई।। 3।।
किंकिनि कनक कंज अवली मृदु मरकत सिखर मध्य जनु जाई।
गई न उपर, सभीत नमित मुख, बिकसि चहूँ दिसि रही लोनाई।।4।।
नाभि गँभीर, उदर रेखा बर, उर भृगु–चरन–चिन्ह सुखदाई।
भुज प्रलंब भूषन अनेक जुत, बसन पीत सोभा अधिकाई।। 5।।
जग्योपबीत बिचित्र हेममय, मुक्तामाल उरसि मोहि भाई।

कंद–तड़ित बिच जनु सुरपति धनु रुचिर बलाक पाँति चलि आई।। 6।।
कंबु कंठ चिबुकाधर सुंदर, क्यों कहौं दसनन की रुचिराई।
पदुमकोस महँ बसे बज्र मनो निज सँग तड़ित–अरुन–रुचि लाई।। 7।।
नासिक चारु, ललित लोचन, भ्रकुटिल, कचनि अनुपम छबि पाई।
रहे घेरि राजीव उभय मनो चंचरीक कछु हृदय डेराई।। 8।।
भाल तिलक, कंचन किरीट सिर, कुंडल लोल कपोलनि झाँई।
निरखहिं नारि–निकर बिदेहपुर निमि नृपकी मरजाद मिटाई।। 9।।
सारद–सेस–संभु निसि–बासर चिंतत रूप, न हृदय समाई।
तुलसिदास सठ क्यों करि बरनै यह छबि निगम नेति कह गाई।।10।।

rāga bilāvala

(1/108)

jānakī-bara sundara, mā'ī.
indranīla-mani-syāma subhaga, am̐ga-aṅga manōjani bahu chabi chā'ī.. 1..
aruna carana, aṅgulī manōhara, nakha dutivanta, kachuka arunā'ī.
kanjadalanipara manahu bhauma dasa baiṭhē acala susadasi banā'ī.. 2..
pīna jānu, ura cāru, jaṭita mani nūpura pada kala mukhara sōhā'ī.
pīta parāga bharē aligana janu jugala jalaja lakhi rahē lōbhā'ī.. 3..
kiṅkini kanaka kanja avalī mr̥du marakata sikhara madhya janu jā'ī.
ga'ī na upara, sabhīta namita mukha, bikasi cahūm̐ disi rahī lōnā'ī..4..
nābhi gam̐bhīra, udara rēkhā bara, ura bhr̥gu-carana-cinha sukhadā'ī.
bhuja pralamba bhūṣana anēka juta, basana pīta sōbhā adhikā'ī.. 5..
jagyōpabīta bicitra hēmamaya, muktāmāla urasi mōhi bhā'ī.
kanda-taḍita bica janu surapati dhanu rucira balāka pām̐ti cali ā'ī.. 6..
kambu kaṇṭha cibukādhara sum̐dara, kyōm̐ kahaum̐ dasanana kī rucirā'ī.
padumakōsa maham̐ basē bajra manō nija sam̐ga taḍita-aruna-ruci lā'ī.. 7..
nāsika cāru, lalita lōcana, bhrakuṭila, kacani anupama chabi pā'ī.
rahē ghēri rājīva ubhaya manō can̄carīka kachu hr̥daya ḍērā'ī.. 8..
bhāla tilaka, kan̄cana kirīṭa sira, kum̐ḍala lōla kapōlani jhām̐ī.
nirakhahim̐ nāri-nikara bidēhapura nimi nr̥pakī marajāda miṭā'ī.. 9..
sārada-sēsa-sambhu nisi-bāsara cintata rūpa, na hr̥daya samā'ī.
tulasidāsa saṭha kyōm̐ kari baranai yaha chabi nigama nēti kaha gā'ī..10..

The Beauty of Lord Rām as the Groom

Verse no. 1/108—[In previous verse no. 1/106 the beauty of Lord Ram was discussed by young ladies as is clear from the use of the word "rī"—which is a friendly term of address between girls and ladies when they talk with each other—at the end of every stanza there.

But in the present verse no. 1/108, the speaker is a young lady talking to her elders because she addresses them with the word "mā'ī" which means 'mother'.]

'Oh Mother (mā'ī)! The groom of Sita (i.e. Lord Ram) is very pretty, charming and handsome.

His lovely and attractive body is dark (bluish) hued like the gem called ‘sapphire’ (indranīla-mani-syāma), while the beauty and glamour of many a Kamdeo/cupids appear to have spread over every part of his body (am̐ga-aṅga manōjani bahu chabi chā'ī) (1).

His feet are red-coloured (aruna carana), the toes are well chiselled and attractive (aṅgulī manōhara), and the toe-nails are radiant with a slight hint (tinge) of red (nakha dutivanta, kachuka arunā'ī) as if ten ‘Mars’ (the red planet), who have gathered together to attend a conference (susadasi banā'ī), are sitting comfortably and without moving (acala) in a row on the petals of the lotus flower (kan̐jadalanipara manahu bhauma dasa baiṭhē)[1] (2).

[[1]Here, the ‘petals of the lotus’ are the feet of Lord Ram, and the toe-nails are the ten shining, red hued planet ‘Mars’ that appear to be sitting in a row on the edge of these symbolic petals as if they have been stuck to these petals to embellish them and add beauty to them just like a ‘crown jewel’ embedded at the helm of a crown adds beauty to the latter.

Another imagination is that ten great kings represented by ten planets known as Mars have gathered together to attend a conference, and they sit in a semi-circle around a large table made of red gem symbolised by the feet of Lord Ram that is additionally decorated beautifully for this special occasion. The ‘special occasion’ in this case is the Lord’s marriage.]

His knees are well-formed and muscular (‘pīna jānu’; i.e. they are not skinny and weak), and the Lord’s chest is also well-built and attractive (ura cāru).

His feet have gem-studded anklets (with tiny bells attached to them) which give out a pleasant sound as they chime and tinkle very softly (jaṭita mani nūpura pada kala mukhara sōhā'ī).

This sight reminds one of a row of black bees that hum around two lotus flowers full of nectar (pīta parāga bharē aligana janu jugala jalaja), and are so enamoured by the lotus and its charm that they remain engrossed in buzzing around the flower in their search for nectar (lakhi rahē lōbhā'ī)[2] (3).

[[2]Here, the feet of Lord Ram are the ‘two lotus flowers’, the anklets are the ‘row of black-bees that circle the lotus, the sound emanating from them is the ‘humming and buzzing of the bees’, and the charm of the Lord’s feet is the ‘nectar’ that the bees yearn for.]

The golden waist-band tied around the Lord’s waist resembles a garland of beautiful golden lotuses (kiṅkini kanaka kan̐ja avalī mr̥du) which had emerged in the central part of a valley of the mountain called Markat-Mani (a mountain made of emerald) (marakata sikhara madhya janu jā'ī), and being shy or afraid of looking up to see the moon (symbolised by Lord Ram’s face) (ga'ī na upara), these lotus flowers bloomed (bikasi) with their faces pointing downwards (towards the Lord’s feet) (sabhīta namita mukha)[3].

This beautous sight is so magnificent that its charm has spread in all the ten directions (cahūm̐ disi rahī lōnā'ī)[4] (4).

[[3]The waist-band has tiny bells shaped like a lotus dangling from a thread. The body of Lord Sri Ram is compared to the Mount of Emerald (“marakata sikhara”)—because it is dark coloured. The lotus-like golden tiny trinkets and bells hanging from

the waist-girdle are compared here to the yellow-tinged lotus flower growing in the valley of Mt. Markatmani.

Since the tiny decorative attachments of the waist-band are dangling from a thread, they are naturally pointing downward towards the feet of Lord Ram. This sight is compared to the lotus in the valley of the mountain that point downwards because they have a soft and tender stem. Besides this, the sun is not visible due to the lofty height of the mountain, and the lotus does not point its petals skywards in the absence of a direct view of the sun. This natural phenomenon is used here by poet Tulsidas to say that the lotuses are looking downwards because they feel shy of the 'moon-like face of Lord Ram'. This is because a lotus flower cannot remain open during the night in the presence of the moon; it opens its petals only in the presence of the sun.]

His (the groom's; Sri Ram's) navel is deep (nābhi gaṁbhīra); there are pretty linings (folds of skin) in the abdomen (udara rēkhā bara); and there is a mark of sage Bhrigu's foot on the Lord's chest, a sight that gives comfort to his devotees (ura bhṛgu-carana-cinha sukhadā'ī)[4].

The Lord's long arms are adorned with numerous ornaments (bhuja pralamba bhūṣana anēka juta); and the Pitambar (the yellow coloured silk cloth that the Lord wears around his body) is looking extremely magnificent (basana pīta sōbhā adhikā'ī) (5).

[[4]The footprint of sage Bhrigu is marked on the chest of Lord Vishnu. This indicates that Lord Ram is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu himself. This sight gives comfort to his devotees because it reminds them of the tolerant, forgiving, merciful, compassionate and gracious nature of the Lord who does not mind if his devotee even hits out at the Lord in pain and anger. A brief note about this footprint is given at the end of Baal Kand, verse no. 1/26 of this book Geetawali.]

I ('mōhi'; i.e. the lady who is describing Lord Ram's beauty) like very much (bhā'ī) the view of the excellent and rare-looking gold-coloured sacred thread (jagyōpabīta bicitra hēmamaya) and a beautiful garland of pearls (muktāmāla) that are present on the Lord's chest (urasi). They remind me of the "Bow of the King of Gods", i.e. the 'rainbow', that has formed between the cloud and the lightening (kanda-taḍita bica janu surapati dhanu), and a row of cranes that have also arrived at the spot (rucira balāka pāṁti cali ā'ī)[5]. (6).

[[5]Here, Lord Sri Ram's dark complexion is the 'cloud', the dazzling and shimmering shine of the silk of the Pitambar that the Lord wears is compared to the 'lightening around the cloud', the sacred thread is the 'rainbow' as it has many threads of different colours, and the pearl garland is the 'row of cranes or storks' that fly near this rainbow.]

His neck is like a conch ('kambu kaṇṭha'; i.e. it is well built and with smooth lines, and when the Lord speaks his voice is loud and clear like the sound when the conch is blown).

His chin and lips are indeed very lovely (cibukādhara suṁdara).

And say, how can I describe the beauty of the Lord's teeth (kyōṁ kahauṁ dasanana kī rucirā'ī) because they resemble a personified form of Vajra (diamond; 'bajra manō') which have adopted the radiance and brilliance of a young sun as well as of the lightening, and brought these qualities with it (manō nija saṁga taḍita-

aruna-ruci lā'ī) when it came to abide (dwell) in the central part (the thallus) of the lotus (padumakōsa maham̐ basē)[6] (7).

[[6]Here, Lord Ram's mouth with its red-hued lips is compared to the 'lotus flower with red petals', the cavity of the mouth is the 'thallus', the teeth are the 'Vajra', the red coloured lips are the 'early morning sun' which is also red-hued, and the glitter and radiance of the teeth are like the dazzle of 'lightening'.]

His nostrils are pretty (nāsika cāru), the eyes are pleasing and bewitching (lalita lōcana), the eyebrows are curved or arched (like a bow; 'bhrakuṭila'), and the hairs on the Lord's head have been blessed with peerless beauty (kacani anupama chabi pā'ī) as if black/bumble-bees are surrounding two lotuses (rahē ghēri rājīva ubhaya manō cam̐carīka) in a very hesitant and shy manner as if they are affright of it in their hearts (kachu hr̥daya ḍērā'ī)[7] (8).

[[7]Here, the Lord's eyes are the 'lotus', while the eyebrows are the rows of 'black/bumble-bees' that hover over the lotus flower and cover it from top.

Lord Ram's hairs are glistening and beautiful. They dangle on his 'lotus like face' and reminds one of the 'black-bees' that sway to and fro above the lotus but are afraid to cover it completely with the 'fear' that if the lotus feels annoyed it will close its petals and deny these bees the chance to drink its nectar.]

He has a Tilak Mark on the forehead (bhāla tilaka), a golden tiara on the head (kam̐cana kirīṭa sira), and swaying ear-rings in the ears which cast their glow as a reflection on the Lord's cheeks (kuṁḍala lōla kapōlani jhām̐ī).

Seeing the most charming and bewitching image of Lord Ram, the ladies of Janakpur (nāri-nikara bidēhapura) were so enamoured and enthralled that they lost control of their emotions and went against the established norm of behaviour of the 'Nimi race' (the race to which all the kings of Janakpur belonged; 'nimi nr̥pakī marajāda miṭā'ī') as they stared unblinkingly at the Lord (nirakhahiṁ)[8] (9).

[[8]The chaste women of this exalted and noble race were not expected to stare at males, let alone those who were not a member of their family. It was very indecent, immodest, uncultured and impolite to do so. But the ladies of Janakpur were so overwhelmed with affection for Lord Ram that for once they threw all precautions to the wind and enjoyed the sight of Lord Ram in all his beauty and charm.]

Saraswati ('sārada'; the goddess of speech), Sheshnath ('sēsa'; the legendary serpent with thousand hoods and tongues) and Lord Shiva (sambhu) remember the divine form of Lord Ram day and night (i.e. they meditate upon and focus their mind and intellect on the Lord; 'nisi-bāsara cintata rūpa') but still their heart is not contented with viewing this fascinating sight of the Lord in all his beauty (as described in these verses; 'na hr̥daya samā'ī').

If this is the case with them, then say how can this dude and dud (blockhead, ill-witted) Tulsidas (tulasidāsa saṭha kyōṁ kari) describe the Lord's bewitching image or form that even the Vedas have failed to describe and finally said "Neti-Neti" about him (kyōṁ kari baranai yaha chabi nigama nēti kaha gā'ī)[9] (10).

[[9]The phrase Neti-neti means 'not this; not this', or 'neither this nor that'. The Vedas are the most ancient scriptures that have described even the toughest and most esoteric of metaphysical and spiritual topics because they are deemed to be the best of

literature ever known to mankind as they have skilfully used the best form of language and grammar for expression. But when it came to describing the Lord, the Supreme Being, the Vedas failed because after citing all the metaphors and similes and the skills they commanded over language, words, grammar and expression they still found that the description wasn't complete. So they said 'neti-neti'—or that 'what we have said here and now is not the Lord in his entirety, and what we have said elsewhere at some other time too do not give a complete picture of the Lord' for the Lord is truly beyond comprehension!

In this context, the reader should also refer to Tulsidas' book "Kavitawali", Baal Kand, verse no. 1/16 which expresses a similar idea. Its English version has already been published by this author.]

अयोध्या–आगमन

राग कान्हरा

(1 / 109)

भुजनिपर जननी वारि–फेरि डारी।
क्यों तोर्‌यो कोमल कर–कमलनि संभु–सरासन भारी ?।। 1।।
क्यों मारीच सुबाहु महाबल प्रबल ताडका मारी ?
मुनि–प्रसाद मेरे राम–लषनकी बिधि बड़ी करवर टारी।। 2।।
चरनरेनु लै नयननि लावति, क्यों मुनिबधू उधारी।
कहौधौं तात! क्यों जीति सकल नृप बरी है बिदेहकुमारी।। 3।।
दुसह–रोष–मूरति भृगुपति अति नृपति–निकर खयकारी।
क्यों सौंप्यो सारंग हारि हिय, करी है बहुत मनुहारी।। 4।।
उमगि–उमगि आनंद बिलोकति बधुन सहित सुत चारी।
तुलसिदास आरती उतारति प्रेम–मगन महतारी।। 5।।

ayōdhyā-āgamana

rāga kānharā

(1/109)

bhujanipara jananī vāri-phēri ḍārī.
kyōṁ tōryō kōmala kara-kamalani sambhu-sarāsana bhārī?.. 1..
kyōṁ mārīca subāhu mahābala prabala tāḍakā mārī?
muni-prasāda mērē rāma-laṣanakī bidhi baṛī karavara ṭārī.. 2..
caranarēnu lai nayanani lāvati, kyōṁ munibadhū udhārī.
kahaudhauṁ tāta! kyōṁ jīti sakala nr̥pa barī hai bidēhakumārī.. 3..
dusaha-rōṣa-mūrati bhr̥gupati ati nr̥pati-nikara khayakārī.
kyōṁ saumpyō sāraṅga hāri hiya, karī hai bahuta manuhārī.. 4..
umagi-umagi ānanda bilōkati badhuna sahita suta cārī.

tulasidāsa āratī utārati prēma-magana mahatārī.. 5..

Arrival of the four Brothers with their Brides at Ayodhya-1

Verse no. 1/109—[In this ballad, mother Kaushalya expresses her astonishment at the miraculous feats that Lord Ram had done while away from home with sage Vishwamitra. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 356—to Doha no. 357.

It ought to be noted that in this version of the story of the Ramayan, Tulsidas has skipped all other details pertaining to the actual marriage ceremony, the celebrations and festivities that followed it, the way the four brothers were bid an emotional good-by from Janakpur, the immensity of marriage gifts that Janak had given to them at the time of departure from Janakpur for Ayodhya, and the celebrations in Ayodhya itself upon arrival of the marriage party in the city and the way it was welcomed back home. All these events however have been narrated in detail by him in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Doha no. 355.]

On arrival at the palace gates of Ayodhya, the mother (Kaushalya) came out to welcome and receive Lord Sri Ram and Sita. She lovingly moved her hands on the arms and shoulders of the Lord, saying affectionately, 'I wonder, how you could break the heavy Bow of Lord Shiva with these tender, delicate and soft hands[1]! (1).

[[1]Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 357.]

I wonder how you could slay the most powerful and ferocious demoness known as Tāḍakā as well as the equally powerful and ferocious demons named Mārīca and Subāhu[2].

God had, with the blessings of sage Vishwamitra, repulsed a grave danger to my beloved son and shielded him from the greatest of perils to which he was exposed.[3]' (2).

[[2]Actually only Tāḍakā and Subāhu were killed by Lord Ram, whereas Mārīca was simply flung away by a tip-less arrow to the middle of the far away ocean where he landed on an island. But no one could know that out of the thousands of demons who attacked and fought with Lord Ram, and were ultimately killed during the ensuing battle at the time when the Lord was protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra, Mārīca was the only one to escape death and was flung away. The battle was so fierce and horrifying that no one could dare to stand there and record what happened. So for all practical purposes all the demons were deemed to have died.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 356 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.]

The mother then put some dust of Lord Sri Ram's feet to her eyes and asked, 'Say, how could you liberate Ahilya (munibadhū) with this dust[4]? And how did you vanquish all the princes and marry Janki?[5] I am indeed wonderstruck with amazement! (3).

[[4]Refer: (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/57—1/58 herein above; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 357.

The mother had heard that when her son Ram had touched a stone with his foot, it immediately converted to Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam. So the mother was full of wonder at this novel feat which was nothing short of a miracle for her. Being awestruck with this bit of information, she put some dust of the Lord's feet over her own eyes out of curiosity to see what happens. But nothing happened! Why was it so that Kaushalya did not experience any divine feeling by putting the dust of Lord's holy feet to her eyes?

The answer is very simple—Lord Ram did not want the truth of his divine powers to be revealed before all and sundry at the drop of a hat, as it were, because that would be detrimental to the main job at hand—which was to eliminate the demons, and for this it was absolutely imperative to keep a low profile lest the demons would get wind of the true identity of the Lord and run away to hide somewhere.

[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 357.]

Parashuram (bhrgupati) is an embodiment of anger and is an exterminator of kings[6], then say how could he be subdued by you so much so that he not only surrendered before you but had also handed over his own bow to you, besides praying to you for forgiveness and mercy[7]? It's really a wonder of wonders!' (4).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 269; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 270; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 272.

[7]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 280; and (ii) Doha no. 284—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.]

Tulsidas says that joy and happiness surged and heaved in the mother's heart as she watched delightedly and affectionately all the four brothers with their respective brides. The mother performed the 'Aarti' of the newly wed couples even as she was overwhelmed with love and affection that brimmed over in her heart for them[8].

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 348—to Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 349.

The 'āratī' is a formal ceremonial ritual whereby lighted earthen lamps arranged on a plate with other auspicious items such as rice grains, coloured powder, turmeric, green grass, flowers, incense, milk or curd etc. are waved before a guest to indicate that he or she is warmly welcome. It is also done as a matter of routine before an image of God or family deity on other religious occasions, festivals and ceremonies to show respect and offer worship. It is a sign for casting off evil spirits as well as praying for the well-being and happiness of the person whose āratī is done.

The way the āratī is done has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 346 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8.]

मुदित–मन आरती करैं माता।

कनक–बसन–मनि वारि–वारि करि पुलक प्रफुल्लित गाता।। 1।।
पालागनि दुलहियन सिखावति सरिस सासु सत–साता।
देहिं असीस ते 'बरिस कोटि लगि अचल होउ अहिबाता'।। 2।।
राम सीय–छबि देखि जुबतिजन करहिं परसपर बाता।
अब जान्यो साँचहू सुनहु, सखि ! कोबिद बड़ो बिधाता।। 3।।
मंगल–गान निसान नगर–नभ आनँद कह्यो न जाता।
चिरजीवहु अवधेस–सुवन सब तुलसिदास–सुखदाता।। 4।।

(1/110)

mudita-mana āratī karaiṁ mātā.
kanaka-basana-mani vāri-vāri kari pulaka praphullita gātā.. 1..
pālāgani dulahiyana sikhāvati sarisa sāsu sata-sātā.
dēhiṁ asīsa tē 'barisa kōṭi lagi acala hō'u ahibātā'.. 2..
rāma sīya-chabi dēkhi jubatijana karahiṁ parasapara bātā.
aba jān'yō sām̐cahū sunahu, sakhi! kōbida baṛō bidhātā.. 3..
maṅgala-gāna nisāna nagara-nabha ānam̐da kahyō na jātā.
cirajīvahu avadhēsa-suvana saba tulasidāsa-sukhadātā.. 4..

Arrival of the four Brothers with their Brides at Ayodhya-2

Verse no. 1/110—Mother Kaushalya is exceptionally delighted and euphoric. She liberally gives away gold, clothes, precious gems and jewels as alms and charities, and performs Arti (ceremonial showing of lamps as a token or symbol of welcome and auspiciousness) of the Lord with great affection, with a thrilled body, and a mind that is full of happiness and cheer[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 345—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 346; (ii) Doha no. 348—to Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 349; and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 350.]

The mother teaches the brides to reverentially touch the feet of the other 700 mothers-in-law[2], and all of them bless them (the brides) thus—'We bless you that your husbands live for a million years, and remain healthy throughout their lives.' (2).

[[2]This statement may have two meanings: One is that king Dasrath had three chief queens—viz. Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi, and many more ordinary royal ladies who were part of his royal gynacium as was the custom of great kings in those ancient times. The other meaning is that Dasrath had only the above three queens, and the rest of the ladies of the royal household, such as queen's maids and friends and other women, were all given equal respect and status as that of the queens as a noble gesture of goodwill and honour that was extended to every citizen by a wise and noble king. This fostered loyalty and a sense of belonging amongst the king's subjects that stood him in good stead in the long run so much so that his subjects were willing to sacrifice their lives for the safety and well-being of their king who loved them as his equal.]

Seeing the pretty and charming image of Lord Sri Ram and Sita, the maids and ladies of the royal household talk with each other, saying—'Oh Friend (sakhi)! Listen, it is now that we realise that the Creator is very clever indeed![3]' (3).

[[3]Why is the 'Creator clever'? Because when he decided as fate that Lord Ram and Laxman would go with sage Vishwamitra to the forest, we were all extremely sad and worried about the safety and well-being of the two brothers, and actually we were silently cursing the Creator for creating such a destiny that forced the brothers to leave the kingdom. But come to think of it, they would not have married such beautiful princesses if they hadn't gone, and the glory of Lord Ram and the astounding deeds he did that have now become so well-established and world-renowned and legendary would not have happened had the Lord not gone to the forest to protect the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra.

The Creator is also very clever that he arranged things in such a manner that not only Lord Sri Ram but all his other brothers, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, too got married simultaneously. It's such a wondrous development that it is almost dream-like.]

Auspicious songs are being sung in the city and the sky (heavens), and musical instruments of all sorts are too being played.

One cannot describe the intensity and immensity of joy, happiness, euphoria, exultation and exhilaration that swept all over on that auspicious moment and the eventful day[3].

Everyone blesses that all the sons of the king of Avadh (i.e. king Dasrath), who are the bestower of happiness and joy to Tulsidas, should have a long life (4).

[[3]The celebrations in Ayodhya have been elaborately described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 344—to Doha no. 353.]

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

अयोध्याकाण्ड

राज्याभिषेककी तैयारी

राग सोरठ

(2 / 1)

नृप कर जोरि कह्यो गुर पाहीं।
तुम्हरी कृपा असीस, नाथ ! मेरी सबै महेस निबाहीं।। 1।।
राम होहिं जुबराज जियत मेरे, यह लालच मन माहीं।
बहुरि मोहिं जियबे–मरिबेकी चित चिंता कछु नाहीं।। 2।।
महाराज, भलो काज बिचार्‌यो, बेगि बिलंब न कीजै।
बिधि दाहिनो होइ तौ सब मिलि जनम–लाहु लुटि लीजै।। 3।।
सुनत नगर आनंद बधावन, कैकेयी बिलखानी।
तुलसीदास देवमायाबस कठिन कुटिलता ठानी।। 4।।

ōṁ
śrīsītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

Ayōdhyākāṇḍa

rājyābhiṣēka kī taiyārī

rāga sōraṭha

(2/1)

nr̥pa kara jōri kahyō gura pāhīṁ.
tumharī kr̥pā asīsa, nātha! mērī sabai mahēsa nibāhīṁ.. 1..
rāma hōhiṁ jubarāja jiyata mērē, yaha lālaca mana māhīṁ.
bahuri mōhiṁ jiyabē-maribēkī cita cintā kachu nāhīṁ.. 2..
mahārāja, bhalō kāja bicāryō, bēgi bilamba na kījai.
bidhi dāhinō hō'i tau saba mili janama-lāhu luṭi lījai.. 3..
sunata nagara ānanda badhāvana, kaikēyī bilakhānī.
tulasīdāsa dēvamāyābasa kaṭhina kuṭilatā ṭhānī.. 4..

AYODHYA KAND

Preparations for Ram's Anointment as Prince Regent

Verse no. 2/1—King Dasrath approached his Guru Vasistha humbly, with the palms of his hands touching each other as a gesture of respect and a prelude to making a formal request. He pleaded with Vasistha—'Oh Lord! By your blessings, Lord Shiva has fulfilled all my wishes. [My four sons have been married to beautiful and loving wives, and all I desired as a father have been granted to me.] (1).

Now I have only one more desire left—and it is that Lord Ram be appointed Prince Regent while I am alive; I shall not be worried about life or death thereafter (2).'

Vasistha replied, 'Oh King! You have thought of a noble thing that ought to be done. Do it soon; don't delay and don't procrastinate. If God is favourable (bidhi dāhinō hō'i tau), then fully enjoy this happy event of your life, and let others too join you in the rejoicings (3).[1]'

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 4.]

Tulsidas says that when Kaikeyi heard of this good news that had sent waves of jubilation and cheer amongst the citizens of the city of Ayodhya, she, unfortunately, became uneasy instead of rejoicing, and as was destined by fate and providence, she thought of creating mischief (4)[2].

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 12—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 23.]

वनके लिए विदाई

राग गौरी

(2/2)

सुनहु राम मेरे प्रानपियारे।
बारौं सत्य बचन श्रुति–सम्मत, जाते हौं बिछुरत चरन तिहारे।। 1।।
बिनु प्रयास सब साधनको फल प्रभु पायो, सो तो नाहिं सँभारे।
हरि तजि धरमसील भयो चाहत, नृपति नारिबस सरबस हारे।। 2।।

रुचिर काँचमनि देखि मूढ ज्यों करतलतें चिंतामनि डारे।
मुनि–लोचन–चकोर–ससि–राघव, सिव–जीवनधन, सोउ न बिचारे।। 3।।
जद्यपि नाथ तात ! मायाबस सुखनिधान सुत तुम्हहिं बिसारे।
तदपि हमहि त्यागहु जनि रघुपति, दीनबंधु, दयालु, मेरे बारे।। 4।।
अतिसय प्रीति बिनीत बचन सुनि, प्रभु कोमल चित चलत न पारे।
तुलसिदास जौ रहौं मातु–हित, को सुर–बिप्र–भूमि–भय टारे?।। 5।।

vanakē li'ē vidā'ī

rāga gaurī

(2/2)

sunahu rāma mērē prānapiyārē.
bārauṁ satya bacana śruti-sam'mata, jātē hauṁ bichurata carana tihārē.. 1..
binu prayāsa saba sādhanakō phala prabhu pāyō, sō tō nāhiṁ sam̐bhārē.
hari taji dharamasīla bhayō cāhata, nr̥pati nāribasa sarabasa hārē.. 2..
rucira kām̐camani dēkhi mūḍha jyōṁ karatalatēṁ cintāmani ḍārē.
muni-lōcana-cakōra-sasi-rāghava, siva-jīvanadhana, sō'u na bicārē.. 3..
jadyapi nātha tāta! māyābasa sukhanidhāna suta tumhahiṁ bisārē.
tadapi hamahi tyāgahu jani raghupati, dīnabandhu, dayālu, mērē bārē.. 4..
atisaya prīti binīta bacana suni, prabhu kōmala cita calata na pārē.
tulasidāsa jau rahauṁ mātu-hita, kō sura-bipra-bhūmi-bhaya ṭārē?.. 5..

Departure of Lord Ram for Forest Exile—Kaushalya's Pleadings-I

[When Lord Sri Ram's mother Kaushalya heard that her beloved son has been ordered to go to forest for fourteen years by king Dasrath at the behest of Kaikeyi, she was shocked and overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. She became extremely distraught and mournful. In the following verse nos. 2/2—2/4 we read about her grief and laments, her sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Her wailing and lamentation are really heart-wrenching.

This entire episode is narrated in Tulsidas' book 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 52—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 57.

Kaushalya's grief and lamentations have been described in Tulsidas' other book 'Kavitawali' also, in its Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/3.]

Verse no. 2/2—[Hearing that Sri Ram has decided to go to the forest for fourteen years of exile at the behest of his step mother Kaikeyi who had forced king Dasrath to give her his word of honour that he would prevail upon Lord Ram to go the forest and make her son Bharat the Prince Regent instead, Lord Ram's mother Kaushalya was stunned and speechless. She was extremely sad, and her heart almost burst in grief as she tried to come to terms with this sudden nasty turn of events that defied any

reasoning or logic. Gathering courage and overcoming her emotions as demanded by the situation however, she said to her son with a quiver in her voice—]

'Oh Ram, the beloved of my heart! Listen, I invoke the Vedas to stand witness to the truthfulness of my words, and I say in all sooth how pained and anguished and grieved and inconsolable I am to be forced to be separated from your (august and holy) feet (i.e. am forced to live away from you and suffer your absence)[1] (1).

[[1]I speak the truth when I say that I am extremely sorrowful and pained and hurt to be forced by circumstances to live a life devoid of the joy of seeing you at all times of the days of my life, which will rob me of the opportunity to have the good fortune to see your divine form daily in my life. Why, I would not be able to see you now for a very long time to come, and I cannot reconcile myself to this. Say, tell me oh son, how shall I survive?

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 54.]

We (i.e. king Dasrath and me) were so fortunate, privileged and blessed that we have had the rare luck to have the Supreme Lord of this world, who is the attained only after the greatest of efforts and as an auspicious reward of all Sadhans (paths, means and ways that one undertakes to obtain emancipation and salvation) that a person employs to attain his lifetime goal, as our dear son.

Say, what an irony and twist of fate it is that people (here referring to king Dasrath who was acting at the behest of Kaikeyi) could not take good care of such a merciful Lord who had kindly and out of compassion consented to live amongst us (or with us, just to oblige us), and instead such people pretend to be upholders of the laws of Dharma (the laws of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct, truthfulness etc.)[2].

Alas! The king has lost everything under the influence of a (wicked, crooked and pervert) woman (Kaikeyi)[3] (2)

[[2]This is a caustic and a sarcastic remark against Dasrath. He had agreed to Kaikeyi's demand because otherwise he would be blamed as going back on his promise and being untruthful to his words, something that is ignoble and would give him a bad name. He agreed because by keeping his words he is upholding the laws of Dharma which ordains that if one promises something he must live up to his words notwithstanding the sufferings that it might entail. But in the process he forgot that he is sending an innocent son to the forest at the best of a cunning, wily, pervert, selfish and jealous woman. He forgot that his actions would cause suffering to thousands of his subjects and even to his other queens for no fault of theirs. Even if he might be held guilty of not keeping his words given to a cunning and evil-minded selfish woman who had exploited her closeness with him and his steadfast vows to be truthful to his words for her selfish goals, but the greater good that rescinding on his words would do to the kingdom and his subjects who are preparing for Lord Ram's anointment would far outweigh this single sin. Didn't the king imagine the calamity that would descend on the kingdom and horrors of dismay and pain to which the citizens of Ayodhya would be subjected if he pretended to be truthful to his words? Didn't he imagine that he has been instructed by his Guru to make haste to anoint Ram to the throne, and by sending Ram to the forest he would be disobeying his Guru, which is a far greater sin than chiding a selfish lady?

[3]That is, Dasrath has lost his wisdom and intellect, he has lost his right to be called a loving father, he has lost his right to be equal to all the queens and his sons,

he has lost the right to be called kind and graceful to all, he has lost the right to be called an upholder of Dharma, and he has lost the right to be a king who worries about the welfare of his subjects in a dispassionate manner.]

King Dasrath's actions resemble a man who is so stupid as to drop a Chintamani (a gem said to possess power to remove worries) on seeing an artificial gem made of worthless glass. The king did not pay any attention to the fact that Sri Ram is so dear to the sages and saints that they fix their sight (attention and mind) on him just like the bird Chakor (the Indian red-legged partridge) fixes its eyes on the moon. He even did not consider that Sri Ram is so dear to Shiva that he is like the latter's life, that Shiva cannot live without Ram. How unfortunate! (3).

[Kaushalya again ridicules her husband.] Oh Son! Though the lord (Dasrath) has abandoned you by being under the spell of Maya (delusions and infatuation with a wily woman, by being ignorant of your true nature as the incarnate Divine Being, and his unique luck of having you as his son), but oh my dear son Raghupati (Sri Ram), oh the friend of the distressed, the lowly, the meek, the downtrodden, the underdog and the hapless creatures, oh the merciful, compassionate, gracious son! At least you should be wise enough not to abandon (forsake) us for no fault of ours.[4]' (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 55—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 57.]

[This pitiful pleading of Kaushalya is really very moving and heart wrenching. This heart-touching appeal of his mother put Sri Ram in a quandary—] Tulsidas says that on hearing these most affectionate and emotional words of his grieving mother, words that were earnest and full of humble bessechings in a last minute attempt by her to somehow make Lord Ram change his decision and stay back home, the soft-hearted, the soft-spoken, the kind and loving, the merciful and the compassionate Lord Sri Ram could not move from there (because he did not know how to console his mother and behave stone-heartedly with her, something the 'merciful, kind and compassionate' Lord was not accustomed to).

So, Lord Ram began to ponder—'If I stay back to please my mother, who would remove the fears, the torments and the agonies being suffered by the Gods, the Brahmins and the mother Earth (that they are facing at the hands of the cruel demons)?[5]' (5).

[[5]Ram was on the horns of a grave dilemma. The choice was hard and difficult indeed. On the one hand he would have to subject his mother and the rest of the subjects of the kingdom to the great agony and insurmountable pain of separation, and being of a merciful and loving nature this was an extremely difficult option to accept for the Lord. But on the other hand the stakes were greater and graver, for any negligence or dithering on the part of the Lord in going to the forest to eliminate the demons would be very dangerous and harmful for the entire creation. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 184—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 188.

It was imperative and obligatory upon him to eliminate the greater danger that affected the whole of creation first, and temporarily let the lesser pain of forcing the pain of separation on his loving devotees be accepted. Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/3, stanza no. 4 herein below.

Come to think of it, there were so many other devotees and sages and hermits living in the remote villages and far-flung forests on earth who will benefit by the Lord's going out of Ayodhya to meet them, who would otherwise miss this opportunity for which they had been waiting for all their lives.

When Lord Ram weighed all the things in the scale of his mind and wisdom, after the initial hesitation he made up his mind—that he will go to the forest exile. After all, he was not being banished forever; fourteen years is a very small period of time in a man's overall lifespan. Time flies away, and one fine day the Lord will be back. The period of agony and grief is a passing thing because one fine day at the end of forteen years the Lord will return, and sorrow and sadness will that day melt away and pave the way for rejoicings and celebrations in abundance. One has to sacrifice something small and inconsequential to gain something bigger and better and important. Lord Ram has clearly hinted this to Sita when he tried to persuade her to stay back. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 62.]

[Note—In the context of this verse, refer also to Tulsidas' book "Kavitawali", Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 3-4 also.]

(2 / 3)

रहि चलिये सुंदर रघुनायक।
जो सुत! तात–बचन–पालन–रत, जननिउ तात! मानिबे लायक।।1।।
बेद–बिदित यह बानि तुम्हारी, रघुपति सदा संत–सुखदायक।
राखहु निज मरजाद निगमकी, हौं बलि जाउँ, धरहु धनुसायक।। 2।।
सोक कूप पुर परिहि, मरिहि नृप, सुनि सँदेस रघुनाथ सिधायक।
यह दूसन बिधि तोहि होत अब रामचरन–बियोग–उपजायक।। 3।।
मातु बचन सुनि स्रवत नयन जल, कछु सुभाउ जनु नरतनु–पायक।
तुलसिदास सुर–काज न साध्यौ तौ तो दोष होय मोहि महि आयक।। 4।।

(2/3)

rahi caliyē sundara raghunāyaka.
jō suta! tāta-bacana-pālana-rata, janani'u tāta! mānibē lāyaka..1..
bēda-bidita yaha bāni tumhārī, raghupati sadā santa-sukhadāyaka.
rākhahu nija marajāda nigamakī, hauṁ bali jā'uṁ, dharahu dhanusāyaka.. 2..
sōka kūpa pura parihi, marihi nr̥pa, suni saṁdēsa raghunātha sidhāyaka.
yaha dūsana bidhi tōhi hōta aba rāmacarana-biyōga-upajāyaka.. 3..
mātu bacana suni sravata nayana jala, kachu subhā'u janu naratanu-pāyaka.
tulasidāsa sura-kāja na sādhyau tau tō dōṣa hōya
mōhi mahi āyaka.. 4..

Departure of Lord Ram for Forest Exile—Kaushalya's Pleadings-II

Verse no. 2/3—[Kaushalya continues—] 'Oh lovely Raghunayak (Sri Ram)! Son, please stay back. If you are so eager to keep the words of your father, then your

mother should also be equally important and venerable for you; her wishes she should be equally honoured by you. [How can you disobey her or cause pain to her heart? Tell me, if you are going to the forest just to keep the honour of your father's words and his wishes, why don't you have the same attitude for me, who am your mother? Is not one's mother at least as important and respected as one's father?][1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 56.]

It is renowned even in the Vedas that Raghupati (Sri Ram) always provides comfort, happiness, succour and joy to the saints and those with a pious heart (i.e. to those who are good, virtuous, righteous and noble). Hence, I invoke this grand virtue of yours. You should uphold these rules and traditions established and declared by the Vedas (and uphold their sanctity and authority), and put down your bow and arrow. [That is, don't go to the forest. I plead with you.] (2).

Remember son—as soon as the news of Raghunath's (Sri Ram's) departure (for the forest) spreads, the whole city will drown in a deep well of un-surmountable sorrows and the gravest of griefs and lamentations, and the king will also die.

Oh the cruel Creator who is separating us from the holy feet of (our beloved and the sustainer of our lives) Lord Ram![2] Watch, this stain and ignominy is going to be cast upon you (i.e. upon the Creator) as well.'

[Why? Because the Creator Brahma is the one who determines destiny of a person and the course that his or her life takes. The Creator can't disown his role and responsibility, being the controller of the destiny of each individual and everything else in this creation, for the series of calamatious events that are about to unfold in Ayodhya. He will have to bear the tremendous infamy that would come his way because he is the one who tweaked the fate in such a way that horrifying grief attended by endless pain and misery were foistered on the people of Ayodhya for no personal fault or sin of theirs.] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 57; (ii) Doha no. 46 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8.]

Tulsidas says that on hearing these pitiful and heart-wrenching wailings of the mother, tears began to roll down from the eyes of Sri Ram—partly because of human nature (that makes a man become emotionally and sentimentally upset when faced with such a mournful and distressing situation as the present one, because the Lord had to behave like an ordinary human being and play his part properly and to perfection), and partly because he was in a fix, not knowing what to do, for he thought that if he didn't fulfill the object of his manifestation in a human body—which was to do the work of the Gods by killing the cruel demons—then that option would be most objectionable and unacceptable[3] (4).

[[3]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/2, stanza no. 5 herein above.]

राग सोरठ

(2/4)

राम ! हौं कौन जतन घर रहिहौं ?
बार बार भरि अंक गोद लै ललन कौनसों कहिहौं।। 1।।

इहि आँगन बिहरत मेरे बारे! तुम जो संग सिसु लीन्हें।
कैसे प्रान रहत सुमिरत सुत, बहु बिनोद तुम कीन्हें।। 2।।
जिन्ह श्रवननि कल बचन तिहारे सुनि सुनि हौं अनुरागी।
तिन्ह श्रवननि बनगवन सुनति हौं मोतें कौन अभागी?।। 3।।
जुग सम निमिष जाहिं रघुनंदन, बदनकमल बिनु देखे।
जौ तनु रहै बरष बीते, बलि कहा प्रीति इहि लेखे?।। 4।।
तुलसीदास प्रेमबस श्रीहरि देखि बिकल महतारी।
गदगद कंठ, नयन जल, फिरि–फिरि आवन कह्यो मुरारी।। 5।।

rāga sōraṭha

(2/4)

rāma! hauṁ kauna jatana ghara rahihauṁ?
bāra bāra bhari aṅka gōda lai lalana kaunasōṁ kahihauṁ.. 1..
ihi āmm̆gana biharata mērē bārē! tuma jō saṅga sisu līnhēṁ.
kaisē prāna rahata sumirata suta, bahu binōda tuma kīnhēṁ.. 2..
jinha śravanani kala bacana tihārē suni suni hauṁ anurāgī.
tinha śravanani banagavana sunati hauṁ mōtēṁ kauna abhāgī?.. 3..
juga sama nimiṣa jāhiṁ raghunandana, badanakamala binu dēkhē.
jau tanu rahai baraṣa bītē, bali kahā prīti ihi lēkhē?.. 4..
tulasīdāsa prēmabasa śrīhari dēkhi bikala mahatārī.
gadagada kaṇṭha, nayana jala, phiri-phiri āvana kahyō murārī.. 5..

Departure of Lord Ram for Forest Exile—Kaushalya's Pleadings-III

Verse no. 2/4—[Mother Kaushalya said—] 'Ram! How would I stay in the house (without you)? Whom will I repeatedly embrace affectionately (or literally, lift in my lap) and lovingly call him 'Son'?[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 52.]

My dear! You used to move about in the palace courtyard playing with so many of your friends—Ah! Alas! How will I now live and survive when I remember (recall) those pleasant days of your childhood activities, for the memory of those days and how you used to play here would be too much a burden for my soul (and son, I don't think I would be able to cope with the endless grief and depth-less agony that would accompany it)?[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 68 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.]

The ears through which I used to hear you speak pleasant and sweet words, and used to be overwhelmed by love and affection upon hearing them, I am hearing the news of your exile to the forest with the same ears today! Say indeed, who is more unfortunate and devoid of any luck (abhāgī) in this world than me? (3).

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Without seeing your lovely face, each moment of my life henceforth would appear to be like an age for me. Say, if this body of mine survives after the passage of (fourteen) long years (of your forest exile)—I say in all sooth, how can it be said that it (my body, i.e. 'me') has any sort of love and affection for you? [Because I am not expected to live that long without you and still claim that I love you exceedingly like one loves one's own life. Both the statements are contradictory: for either I don't love you as much as I claim to do, or I won't live for fourteen years to see you come back. Oh dear son; I dread the thought that you may not find your mother alive when you come back from the forest!][3]' (4).

[[3]This stanza may also be interpreted to mean as follows: 'Oh son! My body, however emaciated, may survive for fourteen long years in the expectation of seeing you once again. But if it lives after that, say how then can it be said that I have love for you?'

In other words, the mother seems to tell Ram in an indirect manner that if he does not return after the exile period of fourteen years has expired for any reason whatsoever, then let him be sure that she would not live even for a moment thereafter. So, the Lord must give her his word of honour that he will not delay even for a single day past the designated time of exile of fourteen years. See stanza no. 5 below.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 57.]

Tulsidas says that on seeing the mother so overcome with grief and woefully agitated, distraught, hapless and hopeless, being submerged as she was in surging waves of distress and agony of separation from Sri Hari (Sri Ram), the Lord became very anxious and worried as well as distressed himself (because he feared that she would die as soon as he leaves her).

Indeed, Lord Ram became extremely upset emotionally. His throat chocked, tears rolled down his eyes, and he repeatedly asserted to his mother that he would come back soon (5)[4]."

[[4]Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 57; and (ii) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/3, stanza no. 4 herein above.]

[Note—As it turned out later on, it was king Dasrath who had died due to the grief of separation from Lord Ram, but mother Kaushalya survived. What may be the reason for this? Well, Dasrath had a guilt playing heavily on his conscience that led to his ultimate death, for it was he who was instrumental in sending Lord Ram to the forest. On the other hand, mother Kaushalya was free from such a guilty conscience. She had even pleaded with the Lord to listen to her and stay back.

But the fact of the matter is that even Dasrath loved Lord Ram to the extreme, and he had tried his best to keep the Lord from going to the forest—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 76 and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 77—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 78.

Therefore, when Sri Ram did not change his decision of going to the forest inspite of Dasrath's soulful requests, the king realised that he himself was the culprit and the one who has caused so tremendous a calamity to befall on all of them. It made him feel that he deserved the sternest of punishments for the evil he has committed by being enamoured of a wicked and deceitful woman as Kaikeyi and playing into her hands. This pricked his conscience so piercingly and punctured his heart so intensely with a sharp stab of guilt and evil-doing that the wound it caused lacerated his innerself so deeply and so morbidly that the it failed to heal, and the shock proved fatal for him.]

राग बिलावल

(2/5)

रहहु भवन हमरे कहे, कामिनि!
सादर सासु–चरन सेवहु नित, जो तुम्हरे अति हित गृह–स्वामिनि।। 1।।
राजकुमारि! कठिन कंटक मग, क्यों चलिहौ मृदु पद गजगामिनि।
दुसह बात, बरषा, हिम, आतप कैसे सहिहौ अगनित दिन जामिनि।। 2।।
हौं पुनि पितु–आग्या प्रमान करि ऐहौं बेगि सुनहु दुति–दामिनि।
तुलसिदास प्रभु बिरह–बचन सुनि सहि न सकी,
मुरछित भइ भामिनि।। 3।।

rāga bilāvala

(2/5)

rahahu bhavana hamarē kahē, kāmini!
sādara sāsu-carana sēvahu nita, jō tumharē ati hita gṛha-svāmini.. 1..
rājakumāri! kaṭhina kaṇṭaka maga, kyōṁ calihau mṛdu pada gajagāmini.
dusaha bāta, baraṣā, hima, ātapa kaisē sahihau aganita dina jāmini.. 2..
hauṁ puni pitu-āgyā pramāna kari aihauṁ bēgi sunahu duti-dāmini.
tulasidāsa prabhu biraha-bacana suni sahi na sakī,
murachita bha'i bhāmini.. 3..

Lord Ram's Advice to Sita

Verse no. 2/5—[When Sita, Lord Ram's wife, learnt about the developments, she instantly decided to accompany the Lord to the forest. But it was fraught with grave dangers for a woman to go the forest. Besides the question of her security there were the other uncountable problems of discomfort and troubles and hardships and horrors that are a part of life in the wilderness.

So, Lord Ram tried to dissuade her from insisting on accompanying him to the forest exile in this verse. This advice of Lord Ram to Sita is also narrated in Goswami Tulsidas' epic known as 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 61—to Doha no. 63.]

'Oh Dear! I advise you to stay home. Oh the mistress of the household! You should serve the feet of your mother-in-law with due reverence and fervour—this is the best thing you can do[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 61.]

Oh Princess! The path of the forest is very difficult, arduous and full of thorns and prickles. Oh Gajgamini (literally, one whose gait is as regal, majestic and elegant as that of an elephant)! How will you walk on that path with your tender feet? How would you cope with the terrible wind, rain, cold and heat for innumerable number of days?[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 62—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 63.]

Oh the one with a lightening-like radiance and glow! I will come back soon after fulfilling my father's words'[3].

Tulsidas says that on hearing these words indicating separation, Sita could not cope with them, and she was so shocked and dismayed that she fainted[4] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 62.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 64. Here it is not mentioned that Sita 'fainted out of shock', but nevertheless she was extremely distraught and distressed. Her eyes were filled with tears, but she gathered courage and pleaded with Lord Ram to take her with him.]

(2/6)

कृपानिधान सुजान प्रानपति, संग बिपिन ह्वै आवोंगी।
गृहतें कोटि–गुनित सुख मारग चलत, साथ सचु पावोंगी।। 1।।
थाके चरनकमल चापौंगी, श्रम भए बाउ डोलावोंगी।
नयन–चकोरनि मुखमयंक–छबि सादर पान करावोंगी।। 2।।
जौ हठि नाथ राखिहौ मो कहँ, तौ सँग प्रान पठावोंगी।
तुलसिदास प्रभु बिनु जीवत रहि क्यों फिरि बदन देखावोंगी?।। 3।।

(2/6)

kr̥pānidhāna sujāna prānapati, saṅga bipina hvai āvōṅgī.
gr̥hatēṁ kōṭi-gunita sukha māraga calata, sātha sacu pāvōṅgī.. 1..
thākē caranakamala cāpauṅgī, śrama bha'ē bā'u ḍōlāvōṅgī.
nayana-cakōrani mukhamayaṅka-chabi sādara pāna karāvōṅgī.. 2..
jau haṭhi nātha rākhihau mō kahaṁ̐, tau saṁ̐ga prāna paṭhāvōṅgī.
tulasidāsa prabhu binu jīvata rahi kyōṁ phiri badana dēkhāvōṅgī?.. 3..

Sita's Reply to Ram-I

Verse no. 2/6—[Sita decided that no matter what, she will accompany her husband wherever he goes. After all, this is the vow made during the formal marriage ceremony that the bride and the groom will be inseparable from each other. Besides

this, the main duty and obligation for a wife is to serve her husband, and this precedes and overrides all other duties and obligations.

Sita's reply to Lord Ram is narrated in the following verse nos. 2/6—2/8.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 64—to Doha no. 67.]

Sita said to Lord Ram, 'I can, and will, stay with the 'Lord of my life' in the forest. [Don't attempt to tell me about the hardships of the forest in order to frighten me off.] Walking with you on the forest path, I truly shall feel thousands times happier than being at home[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 64 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 65; and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 66.

(b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/7, stanza no. 1 herein below.]

When you get tired, I shall massage your weary legs, I shall fan you when you feel the heat, and my eyes shall treat upon the beauty of your face even as the bird Chakor gazes constantly at the moon (and feels extremely contented and amply rewarded)[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 67.]

And oh Lord, if you forcefully leave me behind, I shall send my soul with you (I shall die), for tell me what face would I have to show this world without you?[3]' (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 66.

Sita means to say that a loyal, honourable and conscientious wife is expected to share the grief as well as the joy of her husband. When her husband is in trouble and passing through bad times, it is enjoined upon her and obligatory for her to sacrifice everything else and help her husband and take care of him to the best of her ability. What will the world say if she stays back at Ayodhya even as her husband is sent to the forest? It will be a highly dishonourable and most abominable thing for her to do even in her dreams.]

(2/7)

कहौ तुम्ह बिनु गृह मेरो कौन काजु ?
बिपिन कोटि सुरपुर समान मोको, जो पै पिय परिहर्‌यो राजु।। 1।।
बलकल बिमल दुकूल मनोहर, कंद–मूल–फल अमिय नाजु।
प्रभुपद–कमल बिलोकिहैं छिन–छिन,
इहि तें अधिक कहा सुख–समाजु।।2।।
हौं रहौं भवन भोग–लोलुप है, पति कानन कियो मुनिको साजु।
तुलसिदास ऐसे बिरह–बचन सुनि कठिन हियो बिदरो न आजु।। 3।।

(2/7)

kahau tumha binu gṛha mērō kauna kāju?
bipina kōṭi surapura samāna mōkō, jō pai piya pariharyō rāju.. 1..

balakala bimala dukūla manōhara, kanda-mūla-phala amiya nāju.
prabhupada-kamala bilōkihaiṁ china-china,
ihi tēṁ adhika kahā sukha-samāju..2..
hauṁ rahauṁ bhavana bhōga-lōlupa hvai, pati kānana kiyō munikō sāju.
tulasidāsa aisē biraha-bacana suni kaṭhina hiyō bidarō na āju.. 3..

Sita's Reply to Ram-II

Verse no. 2/7—'Say, what work (purpose) do I have in this house without you? When my beloved has decided to forsake the kingdom, then the forest is like crores of heavens for me[1] (1).

[[1]Refer also to: (1) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/6, stanza no. 1 herein above; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 65; and Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 66.]

For me, "Balakal" (clothes befitting mendicants, ascetics and forest dwellers; made of two pieces of body covering garment that is fashioned from bark and leaves of trees) would be pleasant and most acceptable form of attire. The edible roots, stems and fruits that would be available in the forest would be as palatable and nectar-like (nourshing, delicious) as home cooked cereals for me[2].

Ah! My eyes would glance (i.e., have Darshan) at the lotus-like feet of the Lord every now and then—which object can be more comfort providing (to me) than that?[3] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 66.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 66.]

Alas! I should live in a palace desiring worldly comforts and pleasures while my honourable husband would live in the forest like hermits or mendicants—why does my heart not burst hearing such painful words indicative of separation (from my beloved)?[4]' (3).

[[4]Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 67; and (ii) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/6, stanza no. 3.]

(2/8)

प्रिय निठुर बचन कहे कारन कवन ?
जानत हौ सबके मनकी गति, मृदुचित परम कृपालु, रवन!।। 1।।
प्राननाथ सुंदर सुजानमनि, दीनबंधु, जग–आरति–दवन।
तुलसिदास प्रभु–पदसरोज तजि रहि हौं कहा करौंगी भवन ?।। 2।।

priya niṭhura bacana kahē kārana kavana?
jānata hau sabakē manakī gati, mr̥ducita parama kr̥pālu, ravana!.. 1..
prānanātha sum̐dara sujānamani, dīnabandhu, jaga-ārati-davana.
tulasidāsa prabhu-padasarōja taji rahi hauṁ kahā karauṁgī bhavana?.. 2..

Sita's Reply to Ram-III

Verse no. 2/8—'Oh dear! Why have you said such harsh (and intolerably cruel) words today (that you will leave me alone and to to the forest)?

Oh 'Ravan' (an affectionate way of addressing a companion)! You are of a sweet, kind, considerate and an affable mind and heart, and are most merciful, compassionate and graceful. You know what is inside the mind of all as you are all-knowing (because you are the Supreme Being in your primary form). [Therefore, you must have by now become aware the distress I am going through, as well as my firm determination to accompany you to the forest. You must also be aware that whatever I say is truthful and honest, and that there is no trace of deceit or pretension in it.] (1).

Oh the Lord of my life (prānanātha)! Oh the beautiful one (sum̐dara)! Oh the most exalted among the virtuous, noble, righteous and wise ones (sujānamani)! Oh the friend of the distressed, lowly, wretched, meek, underdog and downtrodden ones (dīnabandhu)! Oh the vanquisher of the troubles, tribulations, torments, sorrows and agonies of the world (jaga-ārati-davana)! What will I do living in the house if I abandon your lotus-like feet!' (2).

(2/9)

मैं तुमसों सतिभाव कही है।
बूझति और भाँति भामिनि कत, कानन कठिन कलेस सही है।। 1।।
जौ चलिहौ तौ चलो चलि कै बन, सुनि सिय मन अवलंब लही है।
बूड़त बिरह–बारिनिधि मानहु नाह बचनमिस बाँह गही है।। 2।।
प्राननाथके साथ चलीं उठि, अवध सोकसरि उमगि बही है।
तुलसी सुनी न कबहुँ काहु कहुँ, तनु परिहरि परिछाँहि रही है।। 3।।

(2/9)

maiṁ tumasōṁ satibhāva kahī hai.
būjhati aura bhām̐ti bhāmini kata, kānana kaṭhina kalēsa sahī hai.. 1..
jau calihau tau calō cali kai bana, suni siya mana avalamba lahī hai.
būṛata biraha-bārinidhi mānahu nāha bacanamisa bām̐ha gahī hai.. 2..
prānanāthakē sātha calīṁ uṭhi, avadha sōkasari umagi bahī hai.
tulasī sunī na kabahum̐ kāhu kahum̐, tanu parihari parichām̐hi rahī hai.. 3..

Lord Ram's Reply to Sita

Verse no. 2/9—[Lord Ram determined that what Sita said was true and so he immediately accepted her request. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 68.

In this verse we read how Lord Ram gave Sita permission to accompany him to the forest.]

[Lord Ram replied to Sita—] 'Dear! I have told you truthfully what I thought was proper for you in my mind; why do you take it otherwise! It is really troublesome and horrible in the forest[1](1).

[[1]I love you so much that I just did not wish to make you go through the horrors and sufferings that are natural to life in the forest. It was not that I wished to abandon you and completely snap all ties with you on the pretext of going to the forest on my father's orders. I merely had your comfort and well-being in mind when I advised to stay back home. So, don't feel sad and distressed.]

If you indeed want to come along, then get up, and get ready for the forest.[2],

Hearing this, Sita's mind and heart found solace and hope as if she was caught by her arms by her husband while she was on the verge of sinking (and drowning) in the fathomless ocean of separation-induced agony and misery (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 68.]

She got up cheerfully and accompanied her husband. At that point of time, the stream of sorrows and grief swelled and flowed all over in Ayodhya[3].

Tulsidas says that (there is no wonder Sita went with Sri Ram because) it is never heard that a shadow (here referring to Sita) can ever live or exist if it is detached and separated from the parent body (here meaning Lord Ram)[4] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 76.

[4]The shadow is a silhouette formed only when there is the principal object present at the place. Therefore, if the principal object that casts its shadow is no more, the shadow, which is actually an outline of the object, automatically vanishes. Each movement of the principal object is replicated by its shadow. Here, Tulsidas means that even as a shadow can't leave its principal object, it is likewise impossible to imagine Sita living without Lord Ram.]

(2 / 10)

जबहि रघुपति–सँग सीय चली।
बिकल–बियोग लोग–पुरतिय कहैं, अति अन्याउ, अली।। 1।।
कोउ कहै, मनिगन तजत काँच लगि, करत न भूप भली।
कोउ कहै, कुल–कुबेलि कैकेयी दुख–बिष–फलनि फली।। 2।।
एक कहैं, बन जोग जानकी! बिधि बड़ बिषम बली।
तुलसी कुलिसहुकी कठोरता तेहि दिन दलकि दली।। 3।।

jabahi raghupati-samm̐ga sīya calī.
bikala-biyōga lōga-puratiya kahaiṁ, ati an'yā'u, alī.. 1..
kō'u kahai, manigana tajata kāmm̐ca lagi, karata na bhūpa bhalī.
kō'u kahai, kula-kubēli kaikēyī dukha-biṣa-phalani phalī.. 2..
ēka kahaiṁ, bana jōga jānakī! bidhi baṛa biṣama balī.
tulasī kulisahukī kaṭhōratā tēhi dina dalaki dalī.. 3..

Lamentation and Grief in Ayodhya

Verse no. 2/10—When Sita also got ready to accompany Lord Sri Ram (to exile in the forest), the inhabitants of the city of Ayodhya were overcome with grief and overwhelmed with the sorrows of separation[1].

They were exceedingly distressed and agitated beyond measure even as they wailed most woefully, lamenting amongst themselves—'Oh Friend! This is a great injustice that is being perpetrated'[2] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 46—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 51; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 81.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 46 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 76.]

Someone else said with an anguish-ridden heart, 'The king has not done the right thing. He is abandoning gems in favour of glass beads.[3]'

There were still others who vented their anger openly, accusing Kaikeyi for all the misery and calamity that has befallen upon the royal family as well as the kingdom as a whole, saying angrily, 'The accursed Kaikeyi is like a parasitic creeper for this great family, and she is now like that creeper that becomes richly laden with terrible and poisonous fruits symbolizing sorrows and grief.'[4] (2).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1- that precede Doha no. 48.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 46; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 51.

This view that the parents, king Dasrath and the step-mother Kaikeyi, hadn't done the correct and just thing by sending Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman to the forest has been repeatedly expressed by the dismayed villagers. Refer in this context Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/26 (stanza no. 1); verse no. 2/27 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/34 (stanza no. 1).]

Someone gravely lamented, accusing the Creator for all the misery and pain that has befallen upon them, saying, 'The Creator is very difficult to please and unpredictable; he is not only cruel, merciless, unreasonable, tyrannical and despotic but also too stubborn, strong and stern to oppose or resist or reason with (for no one can dare to argue with him, no one dare oppose him, not even Lord Sri Ram and Sita who also have bowed to his whims without as much as even a whisper of protest, so it seemeth).[5]

Just see (imagine)! Is Janaki (Sita) fit for the forest?[6]*'

Tulsidas says that that day, even the sternness and hardness of 'Bajra' (the weapon of the king of Gods and the hardest material in existence) appeared to crack.

[In other words, the situation was so grave, so full of grief and sorrowful that even the sternest and the strongest of hearts failed to control themselves and yielded to wailing and lamenting woefully. The people of Ayodhya were grieved beyond measure. They were extremely dismayed, distressed, distraught, miserable, stunned and unconsolable at this sudden ominous development that defied their logic and imagination.] (3).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 49.

The villagers were very dismayed and pitiful when they saw Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman walking barefoot on the path to the forest. The Lord and his two companions showed no sign of grief, pain, suffering or resentment at having been sent to the forest, but the villagers couldn't come to terms with the Lord's exile. Surely, they thought rightly, that the trio, Lord Ram, Sita or Laxman, had done nothing so wrong and sinful as to be subjected to this punishment and pain and toil that has become their lot at present. For in all sooth and without doubt it is not due to any of their own fault or misdeed but it is by the decree of Destiny and the fiat of Misfortune and evil Fate that even their own parents had turned hostile against them.

It is unimaginable, and well-nigh absurd and incredulous to think that Lord Ram, who is so kind, merciful, loving and graceful by his looks and behaviour, would aught have ever done anything to annoy or insult his parents, or irritate the Creator to the extent that they had become so ruthless and merciless and senseless that they had lost sight of what is right and what is not before deciding to do what they did.

[6]It is narrated in Ram Charit Manas that Lord Ram had also tried his best to persuade Sita to stay back, telling her that the forest was too difficult a place for her. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 62—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 63.

*Does this not prove that the Creator has a merciless and stern heart—because he has not even spared Sita, who has never ventured out of her home and had never ever suffered physical hardships of any kind, from being forced to bear the horrors and tribulations of the wild forest? Perhaps the Creator may have been antagonized by king Dasrath for some wild reason of his own, but tell me, what wrong or harm did Sita did to him that she is being punished so mercilessly? And if you ask me, oh friend, I say on oath and put my honour at stake when I proclaim that Lord Ram has never done wrong bad enough to invite such ruthless treatment on the hands of the Creator! Woe to the Creator. Let him punish me and the rest of us if he dares to do so for making this insinuation against him, but let him spare Sita and Lord Ram because a grave injustice is being done against them. Does the Creator not know that he, being the 'creator' of the laws of Dharma, is also bound to uphold its clauses and by-laws in letter and spirit? Say, isn't it expected that the Creator, who sits in judgement on the destiny of all the living beings, acts impartially and neutrally, judging all with equanimity and equality, not in a partisan and prejudiced manner to settle personal vendetta. Why punish someone who is innocent for the misdeeds of others? If indeed the Creator argues that he is subjecting Sita and Lord Ram to the horrors of forest exile for some yet unknown misdeed of theirs, then let him come clean and declare them publicly to us. But the way things are at present, it seemeth the Creator has gone nuts.]

ठाढ़े हैं लषन कमलकर जोरे।
उर धकधकी, न कहत कछु सकुचनि, प्रभु परिहरत सबनि तृन तोरे?।। 1।।
कृपासिंधु अवलोकि बंधु तन, प्रान–कृपान बीर–सी छोरे।
तात बिदा माँगिये मातुसों, बनिहै बात उपाइ न औरे।। 2।।
जाइ चरन गहि आयसु जाँची, जननि कहत बहुभाँति निहोरे।
सिय–रघुबर–सेवा सुचि ह्वैहौ तौ जानिहौं, सही सुत मोरे।। 3।।
कीजहु इहै बिचार निरंतर, राम समीप सुकृत नहिं थोरे।
तुलसी सुनि सिष चले चकित–चित उड्यो मानो बिहग बधिक भए भोरे।।
4।।

(2/11)

ṭhāṛhē haiṁ laṣana kamalakara jōrē.
ura dhakadhakī, na kahata kachu sakucani, prabhu pariharata sabani tr̥na tōrē?.. 1..
kr̥pāsindhu avalōki bandhu tana, prāna-kr̥pāna bīra-sī chōrē.
tāta bidā mām̆giyē mātusōṁ, banihai bāta upā'i na aurē.. 2..
jā'i carana gahi āyasu jām̆cī, janani kahata bahubhām̆ti nihōrē.
siya-raghubara-sēvā suci hvaihau tau jānihauṁ, sahī suta mōrē.. 3..
kījahu ihai bicāra nirantara, rāma samīpa sukr̥ta nahiṁ thōrē.
tulasī suni siṣa calē cakita-cita uḍyō mānō bihaga badhika bha'ē bhōrē.. 4..

Laxman's Decision

Verse no 2/11—[Lord Ram's younger brother Laxman, when he heard the news, was sore indignant, flabbergasted, dumbfounded and angry. He could not initially believe what he had heard, but soon the truth and the gravity of the news struck him with a hard cuff to his mind and heart. Like Sita, he decided instantaneously that he would, under all circumstances, accompany his brother to wherever he goes.

Even as Lord Ram had tried to dissuade Sita from taking the risk of coming with him to the forest, the Lord had also tried his best to persuade Laxman to stay back, explaining to him all the pros and cons of his advice. But Laxman, like Sita, will not take anything: for him living without his beloved brother would be worst than dying for Laxman has decided that there is naught anything in this world nor any relationship that would suffice to replace Lord Ram for him.

Besides the present verse no. 2/11 of Geetawali, this episode is also narrated in detail in Goswami Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 76.]

Sri Laxman stood motionless and speechless (in front of Lord Ram) with palms of his hands touching each other in a gesture of unspoken prayer (asking the Lord for his orders). He was hesitant to speak, wondering what the Lord wants him to do.

With baited breath and mind in a turmoil, he thinks, 'Alas! At this moment it seemeth to me that the Lord is breaking all ties (with everyone here). Now, I wonder, would he also break his ties with me? (I pray it is wrong for me to assume this. Perish

this thought that has thrown me into a tailspin of sorrow and grief, that has horrified me beyond measure, that has made my soul restless, that has churned my mind and lacerated my heart, that has agitated my body and has pulled the earth below my feet, literally.)'[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 70.]

When Lord Ram saw the condition of Laxman and realised that he has drawn the dagger, so to say, and is ready to take his own life, is ready to strike and kill himself (if the Lord refused to take him along to the forest), the Lord told him, 'Dear brother, go and ask leave of your mother. This is the only way out (and the solution for your predicament and sorrows).'[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 73.]

When Laxman went to his mother (Sumitra) and asked for her permission, she replied—'Oh Son, I shall consider you as being worthy of being called 'my son' only if you purify and make yourself worthy by serving Lord Ram and Sita. (I advise you son, in all sooth and with all the meritorious deeds of my life at stake, and with the Lord God as a witness to the soothness of my words that if you serve the Lord during these testing times, you will be honoured and lauded for all times to come. There is no gainsay in what I speak.)[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 74—to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 75.]

Always remember (while at forest) that to stay with Lord Ram (and serve him) is no less a deed of righteousness and purity and merit than all other means put together.[4]'

Tulsidas says after that getting such a whole-hearted permission from his mother, Laxman flew, as it were, like a bird finding freedom from the clutches of a hunter as soon as the bird finds that hunter's attention is diverted or when he is careless[5] (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 75.

[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Sortha no. 75 and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.]

राग सोरठ

(2/12)

मोको बिधुबदन बिलोकन दीजै।
राम लषन मेरी यहैं भेंट, बलि, जाउ, जहाँ मोहि मिलि लीजै।। 1।।
सुनि पितु–बचन चरन गहे रघुपति, भूप अंक भरि लीन्हें।
अजहुँ अवनि बिदरत दरार मिस सो अवसर सुधि कीन्हें।। 2।।
पुनि सिर नाइ गवन कियो प्रभु, मुरछित भयो भूप न जाग्यो।
करम–चोर नृप–पथिक मारि मानो राम–रतन लै भाग्यो।। 3।।
तुलसी रबिकुल–रबि रथ चढ़ि चले तकि दिसि दखिन सुहाई।
लोग नलिन भए मलिन अवध–सर, बिरह बिषम हिम पाई।। 4।।

rāga sōraṭha

(2/12)

mōkō bidhubadana bilōkana dījai.
rāma laṣana mērī yahaiṁ bhēṇṭa, bali, jā'u, jahāṁ mōhi mili lījai.. 1..
suni pitu-bacana carana gahē raghupati, bhūpa aṅka bhari līnhēṁ.
ajahuṁ avani bidarata darāra misa sō avasara sudhi kīnhēṁ.. 2..
puni sira nā'i gavana kiyō prabhu, murachita bhayō bhūpa na jāgyō.
karama-cōra nṛpa-pathika māri mānō rāma-ratana lai bhāgyō.. 3..
tulasī rabikula-rabi ratha caḍhi calē taki disi dakhina suhā'ī.
lōga nalina bha'ē malina avadha-sara, biraha biṣama hima pā'ī.. 4..

Dasrath's grief and Lord Ram's Departure for Forest

Verse no. 2/12—[When king Dasrath heard that Lord Ram was about to leave for the forest with his wife Sita and brother Laxman, his sorrow, regret, grief and misery knew no bounds. Now that it was final that no effort would succeed in keeping the Lord home, Dasrath wailed woefully, sobbing and crying and trembling like a worldly man who has lost everything that he ever loved in this world. This episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 76—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 79.

Realizing that there was not much time left, Dasrath wished to see the face of his two beloved sons, Ram and Laxman, for one last time before he fainted. So he sobbed unconsolably even as he managed to mutter the following final soulful words—]

'Oh Sri Ram and Laxman! Let me see your moon-like face for one last time. This is my last meeting with you here (in this world, for it is sure that I am to die, and when you come back I will not be able to see your faces in a human body known to you as your 'father') (mērī yahaiṁ bhēṇṭa).

I earnestly beseech you: wherever you go, meet me before departure (bali, jā'u, jahāṁ mōhi mili lījai)[1]' (1).

[[1]This request of Dasrath is exceptionally important and significant. It has a hidden meaning in it. He knows that he won't survive. Then he also knows that Lord Ram is a human manifestation of Lord Vishnu. Further, the king is aware that he will not go to heaven with the burden of sin of inflicting uncountable pain and horrors that have been cast on the subjects of his kingdom due to his actions no matter if that action had to be taken in the larger interests of the world because the curse of the demons had to be removed and it was not possible to do it without Lord Ram going to the forest. But in the process the innocent citizens of Ayodhya, who loved Lord Ram no less than Dasrath, had to suffer without their fault. So this sin was unpardonable, though it was an unavoidable and collateral suffering which is more like a sacrifice that has to be made for bigger gains. So therefore, Dasrath realized that immediate liberation and salvation for his 'soul' was not possible, and that he would have to undergo some priod of suffering in the form of a 'Spirit' after leaving his physical

body upon death. But he wished that before the time of his punishment ends and he is freed from his 'Spirit' existence to attain complete 'liberation and deliverance', he must see Lord Ram for the last time—so that he can ask the Lord for forgiveness for the pain he had to inflict upon him, and seek the Lord's blessing for his own 'Self'.

Hence, in this light it becomes evident that Dasrath means to request Lord Ram that the latter should ensure that he meets his father one last time before the Lord's departure from earth to go back to his heavenly abode after completing his task on earth, which was to eliminate the demons. And Lord Ram fulfilled his father's wish: When the war at Lanka ended and the cruel demons were eliminated, all the gods had come to thank and offer their respect to the Lord, and at that time Dasrath too had come and blessed Lord Ram for his success.

Till this moment Dasrath had lived as a 'Spirit' which did not find emancipation or final liberation for reasons mentioned above, but after paying his obeisance to the Lord post the elimination of the demons and prior to the Lord's return to Ayodhya, Dasrath came to the battle-field, blessed the Lord and sought the boon of emancipation and salvation in return. This episode is clearly narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 112.

Another way of interpreting this stanza is that it was the last wish of Dasrath that Lord Ram should tarry there a little while longer till his father dies, and only after his demise should he proceed to the forest so that the king could see his beloved son, the soul and essence of his life, before he closes his eyes for ever. Indeed, this is the last wish of any father—he wants to spend his last seconds in the presence of his beloved son. This incident also shows how providence is sometimes extremely cruel on us—it suddenly throws a spanner in all our plannings and scheme of things. The spirit of rejoicings and happiness is turned into mournings and lamentations at the flicker of an eye-lid, as it were. If this can happen with Sri Ram's father, it teaches us to stoically cope with such situation with maturity and forebearance.]

Hearing such pitiful and grieving words of his father, Raghupati (Sri Ram) touched his feet. Then the king clasped them (Sri Ram and Laxman) to his bosom. When that moment is recalled even today, the earth seems to crack and tear apart. [That is, the shock of that moment of grief and anguish was so intense and grave and frightening that it resembled an earthquake of high magnitude that rocks the bowls of the earth and tears apart its surface.] (2).

Thereafter, the Lord bowed his head (to pay his last respects to his father Dasrath) and departed for the forest[2]. At that instant, the king fainted[3], and he did not recover from it (i.e. he died of the shock of Lord Ram leaving for the forest) as if his 'Karma' (the deeds that he had done in his life) had disguised itself as a thief to strick a traveler represented by Dasrath, and had escaped with all his jewels that were represented by Sri Ram[4]. (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 77.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 79; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 82.

[4]In this wonderful metaphor, king Dasrath is likened to a 'traveling merchant' who carries with him a lot of precious gems when he goes out on a long journey so as to meet his expenses on the way. These gems may also represent the traveler's gains that he has made during the course of his journey, buying and selling his wares and

merchandise. Then it happens that a gang of robbers waylay him and rob him of all his belongings. In this stanza, these 'robbers' are represented by the many deeds that Dasrath had done in his life, i.e. his 'Karma' in the present life as well as the previous lives. Once robbed of all his treasures, the merchant is so shocked at having lost all the gains of his toil that he faints, and unable to recover he ultimately dies a sorrowful death. If this 'merchant' represents king Dasrath, then all his 'treasure' is symbolized here by Lord Ram.]

Tulsidas says that after that, the sun of the Sun-race ("rabikula-rabi"; a reference to Lord Sri Ram) boarded a chariot and proceeded in the southern direction[5].

At that point of time, due to the difficulty (or rather, the impossibility) of coping with the interminable horrors of sorrows and grief arising out of separation from Lord Sri Ram, the citizens of the lake-like Ayodhya shrivelled and shrunk like a lotus flower does under the influence of the snow (or frost) resembling that horrible grief of separation[6] (4).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 81—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 83.

It so happened that king Dasrath summoned his chief minister named Sumantra and asked him to take a chariot, go to Lord Ram after the Lord had left the palace, and ask him to board it. Dasrath did not want Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita to walk barefoot.

Dasrath also realized that Sita had never gone out of the royal palace, and it would be highly demeaning and scandalous for the entire family that its daughter-in-law is allowed to walk on foot in full gaze of the subjects of the kingdom, especially when she is banished in exile and is not even granted protection of her maids and guards. It was unthinkable just a few hours ago!

On the face of it it looks that Dasrath had attempted to hasten Lord Ram's exit from the city by ordering him to be given a ride in a chariot. But this is not so—because he had done this in a last ditch attempt to persuade the Lord to return. This was the clear mandate he had given to Sumantra when he had asked his minister to take the chariot—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 81 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that follow it.

Why did Lord Ram board the chariot? It is because he wished to move fast enough to escape the citizens of Ayodhya who were walking with him en-mass because the entire city had decided that it will follow the Lord wheresover he goes, as life without him was unimaginable for the citizens.

And of course, there was this reason also that the Lord realized that he ought to save Sita from the embarrassment of having to walk with the surging masses around her.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Doha no. 84.

Here in this stanza, the city of Ayodhya is likened to a 'large lake', its inhabitants to the countless 'lotus flowers' in this lake, and the grief of separation from Lord Sri Ram to the 'frost or the heavy snowfall'. The lotus shrinks and dies when it is covered by frost or snow, and this natural phenomena is employed here to give an idea how extremely gloomy and distraught the people felt when the Lord went to the forest.]

राग बिलावल

(2 / 13)

कहौ सो बिपिन है धौं केतिक दूरि।
जहाँ गवन कियो, कुँवर कोसलपति, बूझति सिय पिय पतिहि बिसूरि।। 1।।
प्राननाथ परदेस पयादेहि चले सुख सकल तजे तृन तूरि।
करौं बयारि, बिलंबिय बिटपतर, झारौं हौं चरन–सरोरुह–धूरि।। 2।।
तुलसिदास प्रभु प्रियाबचन सुनि नीरजनयन नीर आए पूरि।
कानन कहाँ अबहिं सुनु सुंदरि, रघुपति फिरि चितए हित भूरि।। 3।।

vanakē mārgamēṁ

rāga bilāvala

(2/13)

kahau sō bipina hai dhauṁ kētika dūri.
jahāṁ gavana kiyō, kuṁvara kōsalapati, būjhati siya piya patihi bisūri.. 1..
prānanātha paradēsa payādēhi calē sukha sakala tajē tr̥na tūri.
karauṁ bayāri, bilambiya biṭapatara, jhārauṁ hauṁ carana-sarōruha-dhūri.. 2..
tulasidāsa prabhu priyābacana suni nīrajanayana nīra ā'ē pūri.
kānana kahāṁ abahiṁ sunu sundari, raghupati phiri cita'ē hita bhūri.. 3..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-I

Verse no. 2/13—[The present verse that narrates how Sita was extremely tired and felt way-weary while walking on the path heading to the far away forest, as she was not accustomed to such toil and enduring hardships, is pitiful and touches the heart of even the sternest of persons. Stanza no. 1 of the next verse no. 2/14 follows up on this description of Sita's miserable condition.

This verse however also mirrors the idea expressed in one of Tulsidas' other version of the story in his book known as "Kavitawali", in its Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/11 where a similar scene has been described.]

Sita became tired and weary, so she asked Lord Ram, 'Lord, how far is the forest for which you have started from Ayodhya? [I am feeling tired; how far more do we have to travel on foot?] (1).

Oh my Lord! You had snapped your relationship with all materialistic comforts of home and are proceeding to an unknown place on foot. You must be tired too. Take a

little rest under the shadow of this tree. Come, I shall fan you, massage your legs, and scrub the dust from it (and wash it)[1].'

[The pain and suffering as well as the emotional state of Sita that are so succinctly depicted in stanza nos. 1-2 is very heart-touching indeed. Sita is so tired that she wants to sit down, and wonders how long would she be forced to travel—this is clear from her question 'how far is your destination' in stanza no. 1.

Then she saw the pain and grief this query of hers had caused to her beloved husband Lord Ram as was evident by the expression on the Lord's face, and so she quickly corrected herself, showing courage, resilience, fortitude and boldness. Hadn't she be forewarned of hardships like this and many unknown other tribulations of life in the forest by the Lord before leaving home, and had she not insisted then that it is no matter for her? Where is that courage and boldness now when it is too late to retract her steps? Is she not putting her husband to unsurmoutable mental agony by showing weakness, by implying that she is feeling sick and weary even at the commencement of the long journey that will last for fourteen long years? Hadn't she boasted that she would act as a pillar of strength for Lord Ram instead of being a burden upon him when he had tried to dissuade her from accompanying him to the forest? The Lord was not at all to be faulted on this count for he had outlined all the horrors of the forest life to her. It was she who had put up a brave face then. So, why is she behaving like a weakling now?

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 62—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 68; and (b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/5—2/9.

Hence, Sita immediately rebound and showed her inner courage and firmness of resolve to share all the grief and toil and pain and hardships with the Lord during a bad patch of his life like a true companion should do without compulsion.

So, overlooking and neglecting her own tiredness, she offers to massage Lord Ram's feet and wash it with cold water to give him comfort if they would stop walking for a while and take rest under the shade of the yonder tree.]

Tulsidas says that hearing such affectionate words of Sita, tears (of sorrow and sympathy as well as endearment for Sita) welled-up in Lord Ram's eyes. Presently he replied to her with a pitiful voice (as if teasing her for even allowing her mind to pay attention to physical discomfort of the body once she had voulantarily chosen the path of hardship as a means of doing penance and sacrifice alongside her husband, even as the Lord encouraged her to show true grit and courage in the face of adversity).

Lord Ram said—'There you are! Where is the forest now! [We have just started on our journey and have passed through inhabited areas of our kingdom, through villages and hamlets etc. The real forest with its horrors is yet to come. And even now in the very beginning you say you feel tired, then say how will you bear the torture of the journey when we enter the real forest which is harsh to the extreme? Didn't I tell you to stay back, but you had insisted on coming with me. So have courage now and girdle-up your spirits; be strong, spirited, resolute and bold—because it's not the time to regret or repent on the decision that's taken as it's too late to change it or rescind on it now. Soon you will be accustomed to walking long distances on foot. Everything will be alright in due course of time.]' (3).

फिरि–फिरि राम सीय तनु हेरत।
तृषित जानि जल लेन लषन गए, भुज उठाइ ऊँचे चढ़ि टेरत।। 1।।
अवनि कुरंग, बिहँग द्रुम–डारन रूप निहारत पलक न प्रेरत।
मगन न डरत निरखि कर–कमलनि सुभग सरासन सायक फेरत।। 2।।
अवलोकत मग–लोग चहूँ दिसि, मनहु चकोर चंद्रमहि घेरत।
ते जन भूरिभाग भूतलपर तुलसी राम–पथिक–पद जे रत।। 3।।

(2/14)

phiri-phiri rāma sīya tanu hērata.
tr̥ṣita jāni jala lēna laṣana ga'ē, bhuja uṭhā'i ūm̆cē caḍhi ṭērata.. 1..
avani kuraṅga, bihaṁ̆ga druma-ḍārana rūpa nihārata palaka na prērata.
magana na ḍarata nirakhi kara-kamalani subhaga sarāsana sāyaka phērata.. 2..
avalōkata maga-lōga cahūm̆ disi, manahu cakōra candramahi ghērata.
tē jana bhūribhāga bhūtalapara tulasī rāma-pathika-pada jē rata.. 3..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-II

Verse no. 2/14—[Stanza no. 1 of the present verse is an extension of the previous verse. It describes how miserable and way-weary Sita was feeling on the path to the forest—she was very 'thirst'. When a traveler walking on foot becomes thirsty he or she is extremely exhausted too, especially when water is rare to find and difficult to fetch.

Refer also to Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/12.

After briefing the reader on this sad state of Sita to underline the intensity of hardships she had endured to support Lord Ram in the forest and share the Lord's misfortunes shoulder-to-shoulder, the narrative changes course from stanza no. 2 onwards. It now becomes a pleasant narrative henceforth. We read how the villagers and travelers were charmed by the divine sight of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman as they wended their way slowly through the villages and hamlets of the countryside falling on the path they took to the forest.

Remember: These ordinary humble folks had not known much about the concept of 'Bhakti' (devotion), 'Yoga' (meditation), 'Dhyan' (contemplation), 'Tapa' (penances, religious austerity), 'Daan' (making charity), 'Gyan' (attaining true knowledge by studying the scriptures or hearing discourses), and such other means of attaining spiritual bliss and blessedness. But they all had a 'pure soul' in their individual bodies. A pure soul deserves this reward, albeit it was not possible for these folks to get the high exalted privilege that king Dasrath or king Janak had got by the virtue of being the father and father-in-law of Lord Ram respectively, because there were many other factors that had come into play that prevented these ordinary folks from achieving such distinction as Dasrath and Janak had achieved. But nevertheless, they had to be rewarded, and so the Lord of creation, Lord Ram, decided to give them this reward himself by literally walking right upto their doorsteps and meeting them up close, even sharing food they offered to the Lord, exchanging pleasantries with them, asking for their welfare, and promising them his eternal remembrance!

The privilege of viewing the divine form of the Supreme Lord for which sages and hermits and ascetics spend a lifetime doing Tapa, that even Dasrath and Kaushalya had done in their previous life as Manu and Satrupa, that same boon was granted by the Lord to these non-descript and non-resourceful ordinary people of the land without the least trouble and effort being made by them—showing thereby how gracious, benevolent, beneficent, magnanimous and obliging Lord Ram is by his inherent nature.

Lord Ram's walking on the surface of the earth not only purified and holy-fied the land but also blessed innumerable creatures, humans, animals and birds as well as trees and other inanimate beings by providing them the Lord's divine view and ensuring their souls find eternal peace and happiness. The view or sight of Lord Ram was so extremely beautiful and profoundly enchanting that once someone viewed it he or she never forgot it for the rest of their lives. The image of Lord Ram got eternally etched on the walls of their hearts and mind so much so that the Lord's remembrance never faded from their memory and sub-conscience, and it turned into a sort of continuous form of meditation for them, which in due course of time bore fruits for them by way of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. Refer the following verses of Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand: verse nos. 2/36, 2/38, 2/39 and 2/40 which are very explicit on this idea.

This pleasant narrative starts from stanza no. 2 of the current verse nos. 2/14 and continuous till verse no. 2/42 of Geetawali. Briefly, these verses describe the charming scene of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman as they wended their way forward on the path to the forest, and how the people whom they met on their way were eternally brought into the fold of Lord Ram by way of remembering this divine image of the Lord for all times to come.

Refer also to Tusidas' "Kavitawali", Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/11—2/26; and "Ram Charit Manas", Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 113—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 124 that also deal with this theme.]

Sri Ram repeatedly looks back to glance at Sita. Seeing that she was thirsty, Laxman went to fetch water for her. Lord Ram strode on a high mound (or boulder, rock) and raised his arms to call out to him (Laxman). [The Lord mounted a high ground and called out after Laxman, warning him not to go far away lest he may get lost in the wilderness or be attacked by a wild beast. Laxman should stay within earshot. He must be careful not to do anything that would add to the woes that are already adding up by each passing day.] (1).

The animals on the land and the birds on the trees are watching the beauty and majestic grandeur of the Lord's magnificent image—they do not bat an eye-lid nor feel afraid when he moves his hand on the bow and arrow[1]. On the contrary, they feel captivated and enthralled by this magnificent view, and are feeling intoxicated in affection for the Lord (2).

[[1]The animals are not at all afraid of the Lord even if he moves his hands on his weapons—the bow and arrow. The animals know by instinct that the Lord means no harm to them. The Lord's inherent nature is so affable, friendly, merciful, compassionate, loving and kind that it reflects in his behaviour and mirrors on his face. By merely having even a casual glance at the Lord's face one could tell that he does not intent any harm whatsoever.]

On the way, people are thronging from all the directions and watching them as if Chakor birds (the Indian red-legged partridge) have surrounded the moon from all directions[2].

Tulsidas says that those who are devoted to (i.e. concentrate their attention on) the holy feet of the mendicant Lord Sri Ram, are extremely fortunate in this world (3).

[[2]When the moon is sighted, this Chakor bird constantly fixes its gaze on it as it is enthralled and spellbound by its beautiful sight. The Chakor seems to be eternally enamoured of the moon as it repeats this behaviour every time the moon is sighted. The Chakor looks at the moon without wavering and follows the course of the moon through the sky, from the east to the west.

Similarly, the people of the way side villages, hamlets and other travelers of the path fixed their gaze on the trio—Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita—and followed them till they vanished from their field of vision. It was such a beautiful and enchanting sight that all those who saw Lord Ram and his companions never forgot it for the rest of their lives. The memory of Lord Ram was so firmly etched on the firmament of their heart and embedded so deeply in their minds that no matter what it never ever erased from their sub-conscience!

For as long as they lived in this mundane world, they remembered the Lord with the greatest of fondness and affection—turning a casual meeting into a life-time bond of remembrance that fostered eternal love and endearment.]

(2 / 15)

नृपति–कुँवर राजत मग जात।
सुंदर बदन, सरोरुह–लोचन, मरकत कनकबरन मृदु गात।। 1।।
अंसनि चाप, तून कटि मुनि पट, जटामुकुट बिच नूतन पात।
फेरत पानि सरोजनि सायक, चोरत चितहि सहज मुसुकात।। 2।।
संग नारि सुकुमारि सुभग सुठि, राजति बिन भूषन नव–सात।
सुखमा निरखि ग्राम–बनितनिके नलिन–नयन बिकसित मनो प्रात।। 3।।
अंग–अंग अगनित अनंग–छबि, उपमा कहत सुकबि सकुचात।
सियसमेत नित तुलसिदास चित, बसत किसोर पथिक दोउ भ्रात।। 4।।

(2/15)

nr̥pati-kum̆vara rājata maga jāta.
sundara badana, sarōruha-lōcana, marakata kanakabarana mr̥̆du gāta.. 1..
ansani cāpa, tūna kaṭi muni paṭa, jaṭāmukuṭa bica nūtana pāta.
phērata pāni sarōjani sāyaka, cōrata citahi sahaja musukāta.. 2..
saṅga nāri sukumāri subhaga suṭhi, rājati bina bhūṣana nava-sāta.
sukhamā nirakhi grāma-banitanikē nalina-nayana bikasita manō prāta.. 3..
aṅga-aṅga aganita anaṅga-chabi, upamā kahata sukabi sakucāta.
siyasamēta nita tulasidāsa cita, basata kisōra pathika dō'u bhrāta.. 4..

Verse no. 2/15—[The following verses describe the magnificent beauty, the bewitching charm and the comeliness of the image of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman. In this context, refer also to: (a) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/14—2/19, 2/26; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 115—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116.]

The two princes (Sri Ram and Laxman) look very magnificent, majestic and glamorous while on their way to exile in the forest. Their faces are very pretty, the eyes are like lotus, while their tender bodies have the complexion resembling emerald (dark, Sri Ram's) and gold (fair, Laxman's)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 116 and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it; and (ii) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/13, 2/15, 2/21 etc.]

They each have a bow slung on their shoulders; there is a quiver of arrows and hermit-like clothes tied around their waists; the head has a crown of matted hairs with newly plucked leaves stuck here and there in it. They are sliding their hands (literally, 'lotus-like palms') on their bows and seem to steal (enchant, enthral, captivate) the mind and intellect of the beholder by their naturally bewitching smile[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 115 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.]

They are accompanied by a most beautiful and comely woman (Sita) who looks lovely and magnificent even without wearing any of the nine and seven (=16) decorative paraphernalia that are used by women to adorn themselves ("bhūṣana nava-sāta").

Seeing her beauty, magnificence and charm, the eyes of the village women-folk lit up like the lotus flower (opens its petals) at day break (i.e. when the sun rises at dawn)[3] (3).

[[3]The lotus flower opens its petals as a gesture of joy as soon as the sun rises on the eastern horizon. Here, this natural phenomenon is employed to say that the women of the countryside felt exuberant when they saw the charming image of Sita.]

Their bodies are as beauteous and splendorous as numerous Kamdeo/cupids taken together. Even accomplished poets hesitate to compare them with anything (or, to find any suitable simile—because these two princes are one of their kind in this world and can't be compared with anything that the Creator has created)[4].

Tulsidas asserts that those two young mendicant travelers (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman), accompanied by Sita, always reside in his heart (4).

[[4]We shall read in the following verses that this is the common refrain in all of them—that all those who saw Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman walking on the path to the forest were awestruck by their beauty and charm so much so that their mind was held captive and heart overflowed with wave after surging wave of love and affection for them. All those who saw and interacted with Lord Ram never ever forgot him for the rest of their lives. Every time they found some time to spare from their humdrum activities of existential life, they thought of Lord Ram. Refer verse nos. 2/35—to 2/40 herein below.]

तू देखि देखि री! पथिक परम सुंदर दोऊ।
मरकत–कलधौत–बरन काम–कोटि–कांतिहरन,
चरन–कमल कोमल अति, राजकुँवर कोऊ।। 1।।
कर सर–धनु, कटि निषंग, मुनिपट सोहैं सुभग अंग,
संग चंद्रबदनि बधू, सुंदरि सुठि सोऊ।
तापस बर बेष किए, सोभा सब लूटि लिए,
चितके चोर, बय किसोर, लोचन भरि जोऊ।। 2।।
दिनकर–कुलमनि निहारि प्रेम–मगन ग्राम–नारि,
परसपर कहैं, सखि ! अनुराग ताग पोऊ।
तुलसी यह ध्यान–सुधन जानि मानि लाभ सघन,
कृपिन ज्यों सनेह सो हिये–सुगेह गोऊ।। 3।।

(2/16)

tū dēkhi dēkhi rī! pathika parama suṁdara dō'ū.
marakata-kaladhauta-barana kāma-kōṭi-kāntiharana,
carana-kamala kōmala ati, rājakuṁvara kō'ū.. 1..
kara sara-dhanu, kaṭi niṣaṅga, munipaṭa sōhaiṁ subhaga aṅga,
saṅga candrabadani badhū, sundari suṭhi sō'ū.
tāpasa bara bēṣa ki'ē, sōbhā saba lūṭi li'ē,
citakē cōra, baya kisōra, lōcana bhari jō'ū.. 2..
dinakara-kulamani nihāri prēma-magana grāma-nāri,
parasapara kahaiṁ, sakhi! anurāga tāga pō'ū.
tulasī yaha dhyāna-sudhana jāni māni lābha saghana,
kṛpina jyōṁ sanēha sō hiyē-sugēha gō'ū.. 3..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-IV

Verse no. 2/16—[As Lord Ram wended his way forestward through the countryside, the women-folk of the wayside villages and hamlets were enthralled by the captivating beauty of not merely the Lord but also of Sita and Laxman who walked alongside Lord Ram. Earlier, when Lord Ram and Laxman had gone to visit Janakpur with sage Vishwamitra and had gone to the city for sight-seeing, a similar scene is witnessed. The ladies, the gents and the children of the city were completely won over by the charm of the Lord.

Tulsidas has now virtually paused in his narrative of the story of the Ramayan to describe at ease the beautiful image of Lord Ram that enthralls and captivates the mind and enamours the heart so that he himself can enjoy as well as let the reader enjoy the divine nectar-like charm of the Lord by employing a number of verses set to different Ragas that are all dedicated to describing this single theme.]

[Someone amongst the village women-folk say—] 'Oh Friend! You just have a look—these two mendicant travelers are very handsome and pretty to look at. They are dark and fair complexioned like emerald and gold respectively, can dull the radiance and charm of crores (millions) of Kamdeo/cupids combined, while their lotus-like feet are very soft and tender[1]. It appears that they are some princes (and not ordinary boys) (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/15 herein above.]

They each have a bow and an arrow in their hands, a quiver on their waist, and the clothes that adorn their handsome bodies are like those that are worn by exalted hermits and mendicants. Accompanying them is a woman with a moon-like face. She is also very pretty.

Attired like those who do severe austerities (e.g. hermits, sages, ascetics, mendicants, renunciates), they seem to have gathered all the available magnificence, glamour, majesty, beauty and grandeur (on this earth) and adorned themselves with these grand virtues. [That is, they seem to embody everything considered beautiful and charming in this world; they seem to personify the rare virtues of beauty, glamour, majesty and charm par-excellence all rolled into one fantastic sight that they present to the beholder.]

Just fill your eyes with this fabulous and rare sight of these young fellows who seem to steal our minds and hearts.[2]' (2).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19, stanza no. 3 herein below.]

On her advice, all the village women-folk became enchanted and were spellbound with affection and endearment on seeing Lord Sri Ram, who is like a jewel amongst all the kings of the Sun-race (dinakara-kulamani).

Awestruck by the bewitching beauty and astounding charm of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman, a sight they had never witnessed before in their lives, they talked animatedly amongst themselves, saying one to another—'Oh Friend! Thread these gems (dinakara-kula "mani")[3] in a string of endearment and affection ("anurāga tāga pō'ū"; i.e. make a virtual garland of this beautiful image so that we can wear it close to our hearts for all times to come).'

(Tulsidas endorses their view and advises himself, saying—) 'Considering this image or form as most auspicious and a rare form of wealth, bring it gladly inside your heart and conceal it carefully there with due diligence like a miser who hides his coveted treasure and always keeps thinking of it (lest someone steals it if he is careless even for a moment)[4] (3).

[[3]Tulsidas plays on the word 'gem or jewel' ("mani") here. First he uses this word to stress that Lord Ram is the most exalted member of the solar race (dinakara-kulamani), and then he advises that just like a miser greedily hides his newly acquired priceless gem, a person will do good to himself and his soul if he covets this beautiful image of Lord Ram, the Supreme Being in a human form, and spends his time thinking of it, which would mean 'meditating on it', just like a miser keeps his mind hooked to the gem that he has hidden in his treasury.

The sight of Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita is a rarest of rare opportunity for the villagers. So by symbolically 'threading them in a string' of love, affection and endearment, they wish to prevent these jewels from scattering around and going wasted beyond their reach. The allusion to a 'garland or necklace' implies that they wish to preserve this rare view in the treasure trove of their hearts for all times to come just like a miser keeps a priceless garland of gems hoarded in his treasury.

Whenever they wished they will peep in their hearts, recall that beautiful view, feel contented at possessing such a treasure, and then shut it once again in their hearts.

[4]And where is this 'treasury' where the 'gem' represented by Lord Ram be kept? It is the 'heart' of the devotee! Tulsidas advises one to keep the venerated image of the Lord affectionately and devotionally enshrined in his heart like one conscrates an image in a temple, and afford his time in worshipping and praying to this secret deity residing in his own heart.

It is to be hidden and kept secret, but why? Once the world comes to know that one has become devoted to the Lord, i.e. has turned away from the lust, greed, perversion, corruption and deceitful ways of the world, and instead has turned towards spiritual pursuits, the selfish and jealous world will try its best to pull the rug from under his feet so that he is forced to remain enslaved to the world and engaged in carrying out its humdrum affairs. This would rob the devotee of peace of mind and spiritual solace that he seeks.]

(2 / 17)

कुँवर साँवरो, री सजनी ! सुंदर सब अंग।
रोम रोम छबि निहारि आलि बारि फेरि डारि,
कोटि भानु–सुवन सरद–सोम, कोटि अनंग।। 1।।
बाम अंग लसत चाप, मौलि मंजु जटा–कलाप,
सुचि सर कर, मुनिपट कटि–तट कसे निषंग।
आयत उर–बाहु नैन, मुख–सुखमाको लहै न,
उपमा अवलोकि लोक, गिरामति–गति भंग।। 2।।
यों कहि भईं मगन बाल, बिथकीं सुनि जुबति जाल,
चितवत चले जात संग, मधुप–मृग–बिहंग।
बरनौं किमि तिनकी दसहि, निगम–अगम प्रेम–रसहि,
तुलसी मन–बसन रँगे रुचिर रूपरंग।। 3।।

(2/17)

kum̐vara sām̐varō, rī sajanī! sundara saba aṅga.
rōma rōma chabi nihāri āli bāri phēri ḍāri,
kōṭi bhānu-suvana sarada-sōma, kōṭi anaṅga.. 1..
bāma aṅga lasata cāpa, mauli manj̃u jaṭā-kalāpa,
suuci sara kara, munipaṭa kaṭi-taṭa kasē niṣaṅga.
āyata ura-bāhu naina, mukha-sukhamākō lahai na,
upamā avalōki lōka, girāmati-gati bhaṅga.. 2..
yōm̐ kahi bha'īm̐ magana bāla, bithakīm̐ suni jubati jāla,
citavata calē jāta saṅga, madhupa-mr̥ga-bihaṅga.
baranauṁ kimi tinakī dasahi, nigama-agama prēma-rasahi,
tulasī mana-basana ram̐gē rucira rūparaṅga.. 3..

Verse no. 2/17—'Oh Friend! This dark complexioned youth (i.e. Sri Ram) is very handsome and pretty indeed.

Oh dear! Forsooth I say that after looking at every part of his form and features ("sundara saba aṅga") I can safely vouchsafe that you could sacrifice crores (millions) of Ashwini Kumars, the full Moon of a winter night, and Kamdeo/cupid on this image (because all of them taken together wouldn't be any match for the beauty, charm and magnificence of this single image of Lord Ram)[1] (1).

[[1]In other words, even if you sacrifice or eliminate all the beautiful entities in this creation, whether they are animate entities such as the Ashwini Kumar and Kamdeo, or inanimate entities such as the moon, you would still not lack in the grand virtues of beauty, charm and glamour because Lord Ram is far superior than all of them taken together. Verily I say in all sooth that all these entities won't add up to match the charm and comeliness of Lord Ram.

If you wish to compare the beautiful image of Lord Ram with all the entities cited here, not in their single form but even in their multiple forms and their variants, I am certain that you will find them all failing in this test. Indeed I say in all sooth that there is naught anyone or anything in the Creator's creation that would come any way close to the magnificence and charm of Lord Ram's divine form.]

He has a bow slung on the left side of his body, attractive matted hairs on his head, a pretty arrow in his (right) hand, and a quiver and hermit-like clothes that are tied around his waist. His chest, arms and eyes are broad, while no one in this creation can ever compare himself with the radiance, charm and splendour of his face. Trying to search for a comparison, even the mind and intellect of Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge, wisdom, speech and intellect) has failed (girāmati-gati bhaṅga).[2]' (2).

[[2]That is, even the patron goddess of speech and knowledge known as 'Saraswati' has failed to find a comparison with Lord Ram. Say then, how can we humans do so?]

Saying thus, the young maidens of the village (bāla) were mesmerized and overwhelmed by the enthralling sight of the beauty and magnificent radiance of the Lord so much so that they literally became intoxicated by it (bha'īṁ magana), while other young women (jubati) were spellbound upon hearing them talk so sweetly and endearingly about the Lord among themselves[3].

What to talk of humans, even the black bees, the animals and the birds were so enthralled and enamoured of the Lord that they followed him.

Tulsidas expresses his inability to describe the thrill and ecstatic condition of their bodies and the juice (emotions) symbolizing their love and affection for the Lord that flowed (effused) out of them (and virtually flowed like a river to follow Lord Ram), something that is beyond the grasp of even the Vedas[4].

Tulsidas says that the mind-intellect-heart of these ladies were like clothes that had been coloured by the pleasant and attractive colours that symbolized the Lord's image that was exceptionally beautiful, charming and magnificent[5] (3).

[[3]The younger girls were more chirpy and exuberant as they could not hide their excitement. They talked animatedly, loudly and gleefully among themselves even as the elder amongst them listened silently and marveled whereat what they heard. The elder women were more restrained in expressing their emotions openly than their younger friends to avoid scorn and scandal for praising a stranger, though

of course their excitement was difficult to conceal as their demeanours and facial expression would betray them.

[4]That is, the depth and intensity and quality and purity of love and affection for Lord Ram, the Lord of the world, that sprouted and flowed out freely and abundantly from the heart of these ordinary women-folk, who were no experts in the scriptures, was so fulsome, wholesome, sweet and nectar-like that it provided these ladies with the highest form of bliss and beatitude surprised the Vedas for they neither could fathom or measure it, nor were able to understand why and how could these ordinary women derive such great magnitude of pure bliss and beatitude without ever having undertaking any prescribed spiritual or religious duties for this purpose as ordained by the scriptures themselves.

Why was it so that the Vedas were amazed? Because the Vedas speak of spiritual philosophy and metaphysics in dry terms that lack the nectar of emotions and sentimentality that are associated with love and endearment, for the Vedas speak of renunciation, detachment and dispassion as well as many other means such as meditation, contemplation, austerity, penance, study, self-restraint and such like stern practices to attain the Lord and the bliss associated by this attainment. But these ordinary people achieved success in both the objectives of a person's spiritual pursuit—attaining the Lord and spiritual bliss—by the simple method of allowing themselves to be drowned in love and affection for Lord Ram and enshrining him in their heart. This astonished and dumbfounded the Vedas!

[5]When a person wishes to colour his clothes, he dips them in the dye of his choice. Surely enough he would choose the best of dyes and the most attractive of colours that are not only charming but lasting as well. So likewise these lucky ladies have permanently 'coloured themselves' in the colour of love and affection for Lord Ram by soaking their heart, mind and intellect in the nectar of love, endearment and affection for the Lord.

And even as a colour by which a person colours his clothes becomes known to the world when he or she wears this coloured garment, the fact that these good ladies had emotionally been won-over by Lord Ram could not be any longer hidden from the knowledge of the world. Their enthusiasm and exuberance of the moment while Lord Ram was still in sight, and their despair and gloom of separation that followed when Lord Ram moved ahead on his journey onwards to the forest, were so profound and heightened even as it had dominated their sub-conscious and behaviour that no matter how hard they tried they failed to conceal their emotional condition.]

राग कल्याण

(2/18)

देखु, कोऊ परम सुंदर सखि ! बटोही।
चलत महि मृदु चरन अरुन–बारिज–बरन,
भूपसुत रूपनिधि निरखि हौं मोही।। 1।।
अमल मरकत स्याम, सील–सुखमा–धाम,
गाौरतनु सुभग सोभा सुमुखि जोही।
जुगल बिच नारि सुकुमारि सुठि सुंदरी,
इंदिरा इंदु–हरि मध्य जनु सोही।। 2।।
करनि बर धनु तीर, रुचिर कटि तूनीर,

धीर, सुर–सुखद, मरदन अवनि–द्रोही।
अंबुजायत नयन, बदन–छबि बहु मयन,
चारु चितवनि चतुर लेति चित पोही।। 3।।
बचन प्रिय सुनि श्रवन राम करुनाभवन,
चितए सब अधिक हित सहित कछु ओही।
दास तुलसी नेह–बिबस बिसरी देह,
जान नहि आपु तेहि काल धौं को ही।। 4।।

rāga kalyāṇa

(2/18)

dēkhu, kō'ū parama sundara sakhi! baṭōhī.
calata mahi mr̥du carana aruna-bārija-barana,
bhūpasuta rūpanidhi nirakhi hauṁ mōhī.. 1..
amala marakata syāma, sīla-sukhamā-dhāma,
gāauratanu subhaga sōbhā sumukhi jōhī.
jugala bica nāri sukumāri suṭhi suṁdarī,
indirā indu-hari madhya janu sōhī.. 2..
karani bara dhanu tīra, rucira kaṭi tūnīra,
dhīra, sura-sukhada, maradana avani-drōhī.
ambujāyata nayana, badana-chabi bahu mayana,
cāru citavani catura lēti cita pōhī.. 3..
bacana priya suni śravana rāma karunābhavana,
cita'ē saba adhika hita sahita kachu ōhī.
dāsa tulasī nēha-bibasa bisarī dēha,
jāna nahi āpu tēhi kāla dhauṁ kō hī.. 4..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-VI

Verse no. 2/18—'Oh Friend! Just have a look—some exceptionally pretty princes attired as mendicants are going (or walking) with their red, lotus-like soft feet on this earth (i.e. on the path passing through the countryside). I have become enchanted and am in thrall by looking at that great treasure of beauty, charm and grandeur[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19, stanza no. 1 also.]

Oh the sweet-faced one (sumukhi)! I have seen their virtuous demeanours and the treasury of their beauty and comeliness (sīla-sukhamā-dhāma), as well as their magnificently attractive forms, one of which is of a dark complexion like pure emerald (a reference to Lord Sri Ram), and the other is most lovely with its fair complexion (a reference to Laxman)[2].

In between them there is a lady with a tender body, one who is extremely charming, attractive, elegant and beautiful (a reference to Sita) as if goddess Laxmi herself is present between the Moon God and Sri Hari (Lord Vishnu)[3] (2).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/29, stanza no. 4.

[3]Here, 'Lord Ram' is likened to Lord Vishnu because his complexion was exactly like that of Vishnu as Ram, in his primary form, is none else but Vishnu; 'Laxman' is likened to the Moon God because of his bright complexion and beauty; and of course 'Sita' is likened to goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, because of the rich aura of magnificence and glamour and grandeur that are associated with Laxmi who had manifested herself as Sita at the time Vishnu came down to earth as Lord Ram.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 114; Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 116; and Doha no. 123 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

(b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19, stanza no. 2 herein below.]

They have pretty bows and arrows in their hands, and lovely quivers are tied around their waists. They possess the eclectic virtues of fortitude, courage and resilience, are the bestowers of happiness and delight to the Gods, and are the vanquishers and crushers of those who are the enemies of (mother) earth (here, meaning the demons).

Their eyes are large like the petals of the lotus flower, and the radiance of their faces are like many Kamdeo/cupids taken together even as they charm and attract everyone around with their clever and bewitching glances.' (3).

When Lord Ram, who is merciful, compassionate and gracious, overheard their words, he looked at them with greater charm, affection and endearment so as to enhance his enchantment.

Tulsidas says that being overwhelmed with the emotions of love and affection for the Lord, they began to lose awareness of their own bodies (i.e. of their surroundings), and no one was aware of himself or herself at that moment[4] (4).

[[4]In the beginning when the villagers heard that some extremely pretty princes and a princess who accompanied them were passing through the village path, they rushed out to see the sight. But this was not an ordinary sight—it was like a magnet passing near iron pieces scattered around. The mere glance at the magnificent sight of the two princes, Lord Ram and Laxman, and the princess who accompanied them, i.e. Sita, was sufficient to mesmerize the villagers and made them dazed with astonishment. At this stage the village folk had not made any eye contact with any of the three divine travelers.

When they began to chatter animatedly and openly praise the beauty, virtue and glory of three strangers passing by their homes in loud voices because they were unable to conceal their excitement and amazement, Lord Ram overheard their comments and pleasant talk. The Lord was moved by the love and affection showered upon him and his brother and wife by ordinary people of the land, and so as a gesture of thanks and an acknowledgement for their sweet thoughts for him the Lord turned towards the crowd of villagers and smiled sweetly and politely at them. Naturally he looked at them when he turned his face to smile at them, and during this brief moment he made eye contact with many of them.

This instant was electrifying for the villagers. All those who managed to have eye contact with the 'Lord of the world' felt as if a dynamic wave of spiritual energy, which was no less powerful and potent than electricity, had just passed through their entire frame. Shocked and awestruck beyond measure, all the villagers became influenced by the magnetic appeal of Lord Ram's glorious personality and the aura of divinity around him just like the countless pieces of iron get magnetized in the presence of a powerful magnet.

Forsooth this experience transmewed ordinary country folk into realized souls who have tasted the nectar of bliss and beatitude that comes with attainment of the Lord, the Supreme Soul of creation! That is why the Vedas themselves were amazed at them as stated herein above in Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/17, stanza no. 3.

And likewise in all sooth it can be vouchsafed that when a person reaches this transcendental state of blessedness and beatitude, the surrounding gross world is meaningless for him, and so is his gross body and its gross organs of perception. This means that he has become virtually 'senseless' as far as the world and his own body is concerned. This is what has haply happened to the villagers when Lord Ram looked at them: at that very instant they crossed the threshold of awareness of mundane and gross matters of the world, and instead reached that state of transcendental existence where bliss and beatitude and felicity are the only feelings that remain.

Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/29, stanza no. 6.]

राग केदारा

(2/19)

सखि ! नीके कै निरखि, कोऊ सुठि सुंदर बटोही।
मधुर मूरति मदनमोहन जोहन–जोग,
बदन सोभासदन देखि हौं मोही।। 1।।
साँवरे–गोरे किसोर, सुर–मुनि–चित–चोर,
उभय–अंतर एक नारि सोही।
मनहु बारिद–बिधु बीच ललित अति,
राजति तड़ित निज सहज बिछोही।। 2।।
उर धीरजहि धरि, जनम सफल करि,
सुनहि सुमुखि ! जनि बिकल होही।
को जानै, कौने सुकृत लह्यो है लोचन–लाहु,
तहितें बारहि बार कहति तोही।। 3।।
सखिहि सुसिख दई, प्रेम–मगन भई,
सुरति बिसरि गई आपनी ओही।
तुलसी रही है ठाढ़ी पाहन गढ़ी–सी काढ़ी,
कौन जानै, कहाँतें आई, कौनकी को ही।। 4।।

rāga kēdārā

(2/19)

sakhi! nīkē kai nirakhi, kō'ū suṭhi suṁdara baṭōhī.
madhura mūrati madanamōhana jōhana-jōga,
badana sōbhāsadana dēkhi hauṁ mōhī.. 1..
sāmv̆arē-gōrē kisōra, sura-muni-cita-cōra,
ubhaya-antara ēka nāri sōhī.
manahu bārida-bidhu bīca lalita ati,

rājati taḍita nija sahaja bichōhī.. 2..
ura dhīrajahi dhari, janama saphala kari,
sunahi sumukhi! jani bikala hōhī.
kō jānai, kaunē sukr̥ta lahyō hai lōcana-lāhu,
tahitēm̐ bārahi bāra kahati tōhī.. 3..
sakhihi susikha da'ī, prēma-magana bha'ī,
surati bisari ga'ī āpanī ōhī.
tulasī rahī hai ṭhāṛhī pāhana garhī-sī kāṛhī,
kauna jānai, kahām̐tēm̐ ā'ī, kaunakī kō hī.. 4..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-VII

Verse no. 2/19—'Oh Friend! See carefully. Some very pretty travelers attired as mendicants are on their way (through our village). Look, their bewitching image—which can charm and enthral even Kamdeo/cupid (the god of beauty)—is worth beholding. I have myself become attracted towards their beauteous form, and am enchanted by the sight of their magnificently comely faces[1] (1).

[[1]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18, stanza no. 1.]

These dark and fair complexioned teen-aged boys (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman respectively) steal (i.e. charm, enthral and bring under one's sway) the mind and intellect of even the exalted gods and learned sages.

In between them there is a beautiful, young lady who looks exceptionally glorious and lovely as if lightening, having abandoned its inherent fickle and transient nature, is present steadly between the cloud and the moon[2] (2).

[[2]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18, stanza no. 2.

Here, Lord Ram is the dark rain-bearing 'cloud' because of his dark complexion, Laxman is the 'moon' because of his fair complexion, and Sita is like the dazzle of 'lightening' as she is most radiant and splendorous. The lightening has the nature of playing hide and seek as it appears suddenly and disappears as suddenly. But Sita, though as dazzling and brilliant as the lightening in her form and radiance, is a steady or constant feature between Lord Ram and Laxman.]

Oh Friend! Harken to what I prithee: don't get agitated and too excited as to lose your senses, but be calm, have patience in your mind and stabilize your intellect in order to make your life fruitful (worthwhile and successful).

[That is, don't waste time by unnecessarily gossiping and chattering excitedly at the sight of these divine beings passing before your eyes, but act wisely and let this view sink deep inside your heart, mind and sub-conscious—because in a few moments they will be out of sight as they move ahead on their journey, and then you will have left with nothing but frustration and dismay at having missed the opportunity while there was time. Therefore, concentrate your mind and focus your attention on these three divine forms, and try to see them properly so that you can observe them closely. And then try to create an firm and clear imprint of this image in your inner being, so that after they are gone you can always close your eyes and re-view this exotic sight on the canvas of your mind and intellect as many times as you want for your lifetime.]

Who knows by which good and noble deed that we may have done in our lives, and its accumulated good effect, are we getting the rewards of our eyes (by way of beholding such a pleasant and magnificent sight of these three divine beings coming all the way from their homes to oblige us and reward us with the opportunity to see their divine forms and make our lives successful).

This is the reason why I am insisting and repeatedly imploring upon you to look at that image intently and with devotion (i.e. with full attention and diligence, because this is a golden opportunity that won't come our way anytime again in our lives, and if you miss it now you will miss it forever, and there would be nothing gained by regretting later on)[3]' (3).

[[3]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/29, stanza no. 5.]

In this way, giving a good practical advice to her friend, the speaker virtually drowned herself in (the nectar-like water of) affection and endearment for Lord Ram and his companions, and became unaware of herself (and her surroundings)[4].

Tulsidas describes her condition and says that she was so spellbound and enthralled that she stood standstill as if chiselled (or carved) out of stone. [That is, the lady who spoke the words narrated in this verse was so dazed by the enchanting sight of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman that she lost awareness of everything else and stood motionless like a stone idol.].

No one could know from whence had she come, where she belonged, and to whom was she related[5]. (4).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18, stanza no. 4.

[5]This devoted lady stood incognito in the crowd. No one knew who she was and from whence she had come. This seems impossible as these villages and hamlets on the way were small places where everyone knew virtually everyone else. They were not large metropolitan cities where one may not recognize the resident of the next building of the same neighbourhood. Therefore, it is not possible that none knew who this speaker was, from whence had she come, and to whom was she related. So it is sure that some goddess had come to advice the villagers.

Some goddess had decided to take the form of a human and sneak in quietly and incognito into the crowd of awe-struck village women-folk to make them aware of the significance and importance of the moment, and about the rarity and the greatness of their luck which they should not miss.

As is usually the case of such divine revelations as this present occasion when the Supreme Lord himself comes visiting his devotees, the people aren't able to recognize the Lord at that moment because the Lord uses his 'Maya' (power to create delusions) to hide his identity. This is the Lord's way to keep himself free from ties even as he comes to bless his chosen ones, for if the Lord reveals his true identity then there are fair chances that one of the many devotees who recognizes him would surely clasp the Lord's feet and would not let him go from there under any circumstances! What then would the Lord do? He wouldn't be able to tear himself forcibly away from weeping and wailing devotee because that is aginst the Lord's nature of showing mercy, kindness and compassion to one and all; the Lord can't have the sternness of the heart to allow his loving devotee wail and weep. So definitely it is wiser and better for the Lord to keep himself secret.

But the thing is that these innocent devotees of the villages and countryside would miss this opportunity for good if no one warns them, though of course only a few wise ones could pick up the hint. This seems evident here. The speaker of this verse has clearly advised others not to waste time in chattering excitedly and

commenting about the sight they are witnessing as if this was a worldly miracle. On the other hand, these villagers should calm themselves down and make the most and the best of this moment—by trying to make an indelible print of the image of the three divine beings, i.e. Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman, on the canvas of their mind, heart and sub-conscious so that once the excitement ends and the Lord has moved ahead to vanish from the field of view, these devotees can close their eyes and view the Lord inside their own selves, on the screen of their sub-conscious mind and the canvas of their subtle hearts.]

(2 / 20)

माई ! मनके मोहन जोहन–जोग जोही।
थोरी ही बयस गोरे–साँवरे सलोने लोने,
लोयन ललित, बिधुबदन बटोही।। 1।।
सिरनि जटा–मुकुट मंजुल सुमनजुत,
तैसिये लसित नव पल्लव खोही।
किये मुनि–बेष बीर, धरे धनु–तून–तीर,
सोहैं मग, को हैं, लखि परै न मोही।। 2।।
सोभाको साँचो साँवरि रूप जातरूप,
ढारि नारि बिरची बिरंचि, संग सोही।
राजत रुचिर तनु सुंदर श्रमके कन,
चाहे चकचौंधी लागै, कहौं का तोही ?।। 3।।
सनेह–सिथिल सुनि बचन सकल सिया,
चितई अधिक हित सहित ओही।
तुलसी मनहु प्रभु–कृपाकी मूरति फिरि
हेरि कै हरषि हिये लियो है पोही।। 4।।

(2/20)

mā'ī! manakē mōhana jōhana-jōga jōhī.
thōrī hī bayasa gōrē-sāmँvarē salōnē lōnē,
lōyana lalita, bidhubadana baṭōhī.. 1..
sirani jaṭā-mukuṭa manjula sumanajuta,
taisiyē lasita nava pallava khōhī.
kiyē muni-bēṣa bīra, dharē dhanu-tūna-tīra,
sōhaiṁ maga, kō haiṁ, lakhi parai na mōhī.. 2..
sōbhākō sāmँcō sāmँvari rūpa jātarūpa,
ḍhāri nāri biracī biranci, saṅga sōhī.
rājata rucira tanu suṁdara śramakē kana,
cāhē cakacaundhī lāgai, kahauṁ kā tōhī?.. 3..
sanēha-sithila suni bacana sakala siyā,
cita'ī adhika hita sahita ōhī.
tulasī manahu prabhu-kr̥pākī mūrati phiri
hēri kai haraṣi hiyē liyō hai pōhī.. 4..

Verse no. 2/20—'Oh Mother (mā'ī)! These enchanting ones (i.e. Lord Sri Ram and Laxman) are worth seeing. I have seen them today[1]. They are young and of a tender age. Those dark and fair complexioned travelers attired as mendicants, who have beautiful charming eyes and moon-like faces, are pleasing and appealing for the eyes[2] (1).

[[1]The speaker is addressing an elderly lady as is clear from the address 'Mother'. This elderly woman perhaps could not come to the front of the jostling crowd to see Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman as they were passing through the village. So this young damsel rushed back to excitedly tell this elderly woman what she had witnessed.

[2]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/18, stanza no. 1; 2/19, stanza no. 1.]

There is a beautiful crown of matted hairs that is studded with lovely flowers on their heads[3]. A similarly beautiful 'Khohi' of newly plucked leaves also adorn their heads[4].

Those best among braves and valiant ones are dressed like hermits, and with bow and arrow in hands, they look most magnificent and glorious on the forest path. I do not know who they are (2).

[[3]The use of the present tense in the narrative shows that this young lady has successfully brought the image of Lord Ram and Laxman inside her heart, and henceforth she never thinks that the two brothers have gone away from the subtle eyes of her mind as she always remembers them and feels that they are always with her and within her sight. Remember: This is exactly the intent of the speaker in the previous verse no. 2/19 herein above.

[4]The "Khohi" (khōhī) was a broad brimmed hat-like shade made from leaves that was used by Lord Ram and Laxman to protect themselves from the scorching heat of the sun.]

The Creator had made a 'mould' out of beauty, glamour, majesty and magnificence, then he made 'gold' out of the qualities of attractiveness and charm, and then he used this gold to cast an 'image' in this mould to create this wonderfully beautiful lady (a reference to Sita) who looks most adorable with these two travelers.

Drops of sweat are present on their lovely bodies[5]. What can I tell you—the eyes are dazzled by looking at them (just as one feels stunned at looking at the lightening as well as the sun and the moon).' (3).

[[5]It is hot and sunny. In stanza no. 2 we have read that Lord Ram had a Khohi on his head to protect himself from the sun. So obviously the three travelers, Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman, were perspiring due to heat.]

Overhearing all these words spoken by her, Sita was overcome with affection, and she looked at her lovingly and endearingly[6].

Tulsidas says that it appears that Lord Ram's grace, benevolence and beneficence were showered upon this fortunate girl in the form of Sita's affectionate glance at her[7] (4).

[[6]This young girl was so excited that she was almost shouting when she spoke to the 'mother'. She was so loud that Sita heard her and sensed her enthusiasm. So she looked affectionately at her with amusement in her smile.

[7]One ought to note how careful Tulsidas is to maintain high levels of dignity, decorum, modesty and good norms of conduct that is adhered to here when he describes this scene. Lord Ram did not wish to look directly at a woman not known to him, but at the same time he wished to thank her for her nice words for them—for the Lord himself as well as for Laxman and Sita. So the Lord hinted to Sita who was like the Lord's own shadow to thank this girl by looking at her lovingly!]

(2 / 21)

सखि सरद–बिमल बिधुबदनि बधूटी।
ऐसी ललना सलोनी न भई, न है, न होनी,
रत्यो रची बिधि जो छोलत छबि छूटी।। 1।।
साँवरे गोरे पथिक बीच सोहति अधिक,
तिहुँ त्रिभुवन–सोभा मनहु लूटी।
तुलसी निरखि सिय प्रेमबस कहैं तिय,
लोचन–सिसुन्ह देहु अमिय घूटी।। 2।।

(2/21)

sakhi sarada-bimala bidhubadani badhūṭī.
aisī lalanā salōnī na bha'ī, na hai, na hōnī,
ratyō racī bidhi jō chōlata chabi chūṭī.. 1..
sāmv̐varē gōrē pathika bīca sōhati adhika,
tihum̐ tribhuvana-sōbhā manahu lūṭī.
tulasī nirakhi siya prēmabasa kahaiṁ tiya,
lōcana-sisunha dēhu amiya ghūṭī.. 2..

Sita on the Forest Path-I

Verse no. 2/21—[Till now we have read how the ladies of the far-flung villages and hamlets of the countryside had been enchanted by the pretty image of Lord Ram and Laxman, and how they had praised the Lord's immaculate beauty and had enshrined him in their hearts.

Now, in the following verses we shall read what these women-folk had to say about Sita.]

'Oh Friend! This daughter-in-law (badhūṭī--Sita) is of a beautiful, charming and endearing face that is like the clear and bright face of the full moon during a winter night.

Verily I say in all sooth without any gainsay that such a lovely and comely lady has never been seen aforetime, is not to be seen anywhere at present, and shall never be seen any time hence. Forsooth I vouchsafe that the Creator had created 'Rati' (the consort of Kamdeo/cupid) from the residual beauty and glamour left over after creating her (1).

She looks all the more glorious and magnificent between these two dark and fair complexioned pedestrians[1] who are attired like mendicants—it appears that these three have looted the magnificence and beauty of the three 'Lokas'[2] (and shared it among themselves).

Tulsidas says that on seeing Sita, the women-folk were cast under the spell of sympathy, affection and endearment for her. They advice each other—'Oh! Let your eye-like children drink this nectar-like 'Ghutti' (which is a herbal concoction given to infants as a medicine to keep them in good health)[3].' (2).

[[1]The two pedestrians referred here are the dark-complexioned Lord Ram, and the fair complexioned Laxman.

[2]The 'three Lokas' refer to the three divisions of the whole creation—viz. the heaven, the earth and the lower worlds. It simply means 'the entire world'.

[3]The 'Ghutti' is a herbal combination that is given to toddlers and very young children for good health. Here it means that if one looks at the bewitchingly beautiful sight of Sita walking on the forest path alongside Lord Ram and Laxman to one's heart content, then all the pain and grief of the heart would vanish, and one would find enduring joy and happiness and bliss even as the child feels happy and cheerful when his bodily sufferings end.]

(2 / 22)

सोहैं साँवरे पथिक, पाछे ललना लोनी।
दमिनि–बरन गोरी, लखि सखि तृन तोरी,
बीती हैं बय किसोरी, जोबन होनी।। 1।।
नीके कै निकाई देखि, जनम सफल लेखि,
हम–सी भूरि–भागिनि नभ न छोनी।
तुलसी–स्वामी–स्वामिनि जोहे मोही हैं भामिनि,
सोभा–सुधा पिए करि अँखिया दोनी।। 2।।

(2/22)

sōhaiṁ sāmv̐varē pathika, pāchē lalanā lōnī.
damini-barana gōrī, lakhi sakhi tr̥na tōrī,
bītī haiṁ baya kisōrī, jōbana hōnī.. 1..
nīkē kai nikā'ī dēkhi, janama saphala lēkhi,
hama-sī bhūri-bhāgini nabha na chōnī.
tulasī-svāmī-svāmini jōhē mōhī haiṁ bhāmini,
sōbhā-sudhā pi'ē kari am̐khiyā dōnī.. 2..

Sita on the Forest Path-II

Verse no. 2/22—This beautiful daughter (lalanā) looks glorious and magnificent (while walking) behind this dark complexioned pedestrian (i.e. Lord Ram). She is of a fair complexion like the dazzle of lightening.

Seeing her, the village friends break grass stalks (as a charm to ward-off evil eyes or bad omens), and say, 'She is past her childhood, has attained adolescence, and is nearing puberty (bītī haiṁ baya kisōrī, jōbana hōnī)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/23, stanza no. 2.]

Watch her beauty and glamour carefully, and consider your life as being worthwhile (well lived). There is no other more fortunate woman than us either on this earth or in the heavens.'

Tulsidas says that the village women-folk drink the nectar of the beauty and charm and comeliness of the Lord as well as of the Lady accompanying him (i.e. Sri Ram and Sita) through the medium of their eyes[2], and become intoxicated under its influence (2).

[[2]A drink is generally imbibed through the mouth, but in this case the beautiful vision of Sri Ram-Sita-Laxman has to be imbibed through the instrument of sight, which is the eye. Hence the pharase 'drinking through the eyes'.

Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/23, stanza no. 2.]

[Note—Refer also to Tulsidas' book "Kavitawali", Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18.]

(2 / 23)

पथिक गोरे–साँवरे सुठि लोने।
संग सुतिय, जाके तनुतें लही है द्युति सोन सरोरुह सोने।। 1।।
बय किसोर–सरि–पार मनोहर बयस–सिरोमनि होने।
सोभा–सुधा आलि! अँचवहु करि नयन मंजु मृदु दोने।। 2।।
हेरत हृदय हरत, नहि फेरत चारु बिलोचन कोने।
तुलसी प्रभु किधौं प्रभुको प्रेम पढ़े प्रगट कपट बिनु टोने।। 3।।

(2/23)

pathika gōrē-sāmv̐varē suṭhi lōnē.
saṅga sutiya, jākē tanutēṁ lahī hai dyuti sōna sarōruha sōnē.. 1..
baya kisōra-sari-pāra manōhara bayasa-sirōmani hōnē.
sōbhā-sudhā āli! am̐cavahu kari nayana maṁju mr̥du dōnē.. 2..
hērata hr̥daya harata, nahi phērata cāru bilōcana kōnē.
tulasī prabhu kidhauṁ prabhukō prēma paṛhē pragaṭa kapaṭa binu ṭōnē.. 3..

Sita on the Forest Path-III

Verse no. 2/23—'These dark and fair complexioned pedestrians are very pretty and pleasant to look at. Accompanying them is a beautiful and charming lady who has given a fraction of the radiance and glow of her body to the pink-coloured lotus as well as to gold[1] (1).

[[1]In other words, the pink-coloured lotus flower and gold have derived their charm, brilliance and splendour from a part of these qualities possessed by Sita. The

beauty and charm of the lotus flower and the radiance and attractiveness of gold are but only a fraction of what Sita is bestowed with.] (1).

Having passed the river of her childhood, she is about to enter adolescence (and puberty)[2] which is the best period in a women's life.

Oh dear friend (ālī)! Make (or convert) your eyes into pleasant and soft cups made of leaves, and drink the nectar of her beautiful and glamorous image through this medium[3] (2).

[[2]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/22, stanza no. 1.

[3]In verse no. 2/22, stanza no. 2 herein above, the speaker advises her listeners in a similar manner to enjoy the enthralling sight of Sita's matchless charm by literally drinking this nectar through their eyes—because one can see anything only through the medium of the eye.]

They (i.e. Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman) steal (enthral, captivate, enchant) one's heart as soon as one haply happens to lay one's eyes on them, while the eyes themselves do not wish to move away while gazing at them. [And therefore it becomes a situation wherein it becomes impossible, I say in all forsooth, to turn the mind away from them and think of something else.]'

Tulsidas says that the beautiful image of the Lord (Sri Ram) viewed at the gross lever of existence by the physical viewing of it by the organs of sight known as the eye, or his devotion, affection and endearment that one develops in one's heart and mind at the subtle level of one's existence are both so divine in their quality and magnetic in their appeal that they are equally capable to hold the beholder enthralled and captivated by their inherent magical charm which is genuine and without any trace of conceit or deceit[4] (3).

[[3]In other words, the happiness and joy that sprouts in one's heart and the way one's mind is captivated by the magnificent image of Lord Ram, and the purity of devotion and affection that are generated for the Lord in one's heart and mind are genuine and true. One cannot externally pretend to be enchanted by Lord Ram's image and develop affection for the Lord in his heart while being indifferent to him or be against him internally.

So therefore, the outpouring of emotions of love, affection and endearment for Lord Ram by these women-folk of the countryside is genuine and heart-felt. There is no deception or pretension in it.

Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse 27, stanza 3 which says that the enchanting image of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita taken together is so overwhelmingly magnificent that it has held the whole world, the inanimate as well as the animate, in its thrall.]

[Note—Refer also to Tulsidas' book "Kavitawali", Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19.]

(2/24)

मनोहरताके मानो ऐन।
स्यामल–गौर किसोर पथिक दोउ, सुमुखि! निरखु भरि नैन।। 1।।
बीच बधू बिधुबदनि बिराजति, उपमा कहुँ कोऊ है न।
मानहु रति ऋतुनाथ सहित मुनिबेष बनाए है मैन।। 2।।
किधौं सिँगार–सुखमा–सुप्रेम मिलि चले जग–चित–बित लैन।

अदभुत त्रयी किधौं पठई है बिधि मग–लोगन्हि सुख दैन।। 3।।
सुनि सुचि सरल सनेह सुहावने ग्रामबधुन्हके बैन।
तुलसी प्रभु तरु तर बिलँबे, किए प्रेम कनोड़े कै न ?।। 4।।

(2/24)

manōharatākē mānō aina.
syāmala-gaura kisōra pathika dō'u, sumukhi! nirakhu bhari naina.. 1..
bīca badhū bidhubadani birājati, upamā kahuṁ kō'ū hai na.
mānahu rati ṛtunātha sahita munibēṣa banā'ē hai maina.. 2..
kidhauṁ siṁgāra-sukhamā-suprēma mili calē jaga-cita-bita laina.
adabhuta trayī kidhauṁ paṭha'ī hai bidhi maga-lōganhi sukha daina.. 3..
suni suci sarala sanēha suhāvanē grāmabadhunhakē baina.
tulasī prabhu taru tara bilaṁbē, ki'ē prēma kanōṛē kai na?.. 4..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-IX
(contd. from verse no. 2/20)

Verse no. 2/24—'Oh my friend with a charming face (sumukhi)! Have your eye-full view of these two pedestrians, respectively dark and fair complexioned and in their teens, who are the shelter (or abode, fount, treasury, dwelling) of the qualities of charm, beauty, attractiveness, enchantment and pleasantness (manōharatākē mānō aina)[1] (1).

[[1]These qualities seem to have taken permanent residence with them. They captivate and enchant the mind with their appealing vision.] (1).

Between them there is a moon-faced lady (Sita) who has no comparison anywhere. It appears that Kamdeo/cupid himself has taken the form of a hermit and is present along with his consort Rati and Basant, the king of seasons (i.e. spring)[2] (2).

[[2]Here, Lord Sri Ram is Kamdeo/cupid, Sita is Rati, and Laxman is Spring or Basant.

Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/17, stanza 1; verse no. 2/25, stanza 3; and verse no. 2/39, stanza no. 2.]

Or, is it that 'Charm' ("siṁgāra"), 'Beauty' ("sukhamā") and 'Sincere Affection' ("suprēma") (these three qualities have been personified here) have joined hands (or, got together) to steal the wealth of the world represented by the mind, the intellect and the heart of all living beings[3]?

Or else, is it that the Creator as sent these "Adabhuta Trayī"[4] to give happiness and delight to the people of the wayside villages?' (3).

[[3]There are three qualities mentioned here to synchronise with the three divine Beings walking along the path, i.e. Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita. Tulsidas means that they embody the three qualities mentioned here, and their sight is so magnificent and enchanting that it captivates the mind, heart and intellect of all those who see the Lord with Sita and Laxman.

[4]"Adabhuta Trayī": This is an extension of what has been said above. The word "adabhuta" means 'strange, rare, phenomenal, unusual'; and the word "trayi"

means ‘three’. In other words, these three people who are being watched by the villagers of the countryside are no ordinary humans but ‘Divine Being’ who have sent by the Creator to bless ordinary living beings of this world.

The phrase also refers to the three miraculous powers that helps to captivate the mind, intellect and heart of the beholder. These three are the following; ‘Vashikaran’, ‘Aakarshan’ and ‘Mohini’, meaning the power to control, the power to attract, and the power to create infatuation or enchantment respectively.]

Tulsidas says that on hearing these pure, deceitless, honest, simple, affectionate and pleasant words of the village women-folk, the Lord (Sri Ram) stopped under the shade of a tree because he does not neglect or forsake anyone who shows love and affection towards him[5] (4).

[[5]In other words, Lord Ram wished to oblige these ordinary people by tarrying with them for a while longer so that they can have their heart-full of his divine view. The Lord also wanted to give these people a chance to interact with him so that they get more joy and happiness with his acquaintance.]

(2 / 25)

बय किसोर गोरे साँवरे धनुबान धरे हैं।
सब अँग सहज सोहावने, राजिव जिते नैननि–बदननि बिधु निदरे हैं।। 1।।
तून–सुमुनिपट कटि कसे, जटा–मुकुट करे हैं।
मंजु मधुर मृदुमूरति, पान्ह्यों न पायनि, कैसे धौं पथ बिचरे हैं।। 2।।
उभय बीच बनिता बनी, लखि मोहि परे हैं।
मदन सप्रिया सप्रिय सखा मुनि–बेष बनाए लिये मन जात हरे हैं।। 3।।
सुनि जहँ तहँ देखन चले अनुराग भरे हैं।
राम–पथिक छबि निरखि कै, तुलसी, मग–लोगनि धाम–काम बिसरे हैं।। 4।।

(2/25)

baya kisōra gōrē sām̐varē dhanubāna dharē haiṁ.
saba am̐ga sahaja sōhāvanē, rājiva jitē nainani-badanani
bidhu nidarē haiṁ.. 1..
tūna-sumunipaṭa kaṭi kasē, jaṭā-mukuṭa karē haiṁ.
manjju madhura mr̥dumūrati, pānhyōṁ na pāyani, kaisē dhauṁ
patha bicarē haiṁ.. 2..
ubhaya bīca banitā banī, lakhi mōhi parē haiṁ.
madana sapriyā sapriya sakhā muni-bēṣa banā'ē liyē mana jāta harē
haiṁ.. 3..
suni jahaṁ tahaṁ dēkhana calē anurāga bharē haiṁ.
rāma-pathika chabi nirakhi kai, tulasī, maga-lōgani dhāma-
kāma bisarē haiṁ.. 4..

Verse no. 2/25—'The princes (Lord Ram and Laxman) are in their teens, are of dark and fair complexions respectively, and hold a bow and arrow each. All the parts of their bodies are of natural beauty and magnificence. Their eyes appear to have won over the lotus flower by their beauty, while their facees scorn at (i.e. put to shame) even the moon (which had always prided itself for its brilliance, magnificence, radiance and beauty) (1).

They have hermit-like clothes, quivers tied around their waists, and a crown of matted hairs on their heads. Their image is most beautiful, sweet and charming. They do not have any footwear (as all the three are walking barefoot)—I do not know how they can walk on this (rough, hard and harsh) path[1] (2).

[[1]Refer also to: (a) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19; and (b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/27 (stanza no. 4); 2/28 (stanza no. 1); 2/29 (stanza no. 1); 2/30 (stanza no. 3); 2/34 (stanza no. 3).

The common people feel the pain of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman walking on the hard earth without even a footwear to give some comfort. Since they are dressed like a hermit or mendicant, wearing a footwear would have been rather odd for them. One can imagine the hardships and sufferings and pain the 'Lord of the world' had to endure to rid the earth of the torment and tyranny of the cruel demons.]

Between the two princes is a dignified lady of exceptional modesty, charm and magnificence ("banitā banī"). Forsooth we have become enthralled and enchanted by her sight, and are captivated the image of her enduring beauty. It appears that Kamdeo/cupid himself, accompanied by his beloved Rati (his consort) and his dear friend Basant (the Spring season), has assumed the form of a hermit, and stealing away our minds and intellects[2]' (3).

[[2]Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/24, stanza 2.]

Hearing this (news and description of the pretty travelers), everyone, everywhere—moved by love, affection and eagerness to see such a unique sight which was once in a life time view—started-off to see them (Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman)[3].

Tulsidas says that on seeing the beauteous sight of Lord Ram traveling as a mendicant, all the people forgot about their own household chores as they were spellbound and mesmerized by this divine sight[4] (4).

[In the beginning, not everyone was aware of the passage of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman through the villages falling by the side of the path leading to the distant forest. Initially only some of the village folk may have had the good fortune so see them pass, but it was such a fantastic sight they those who first saw it were dazed for some time, but soon rushed home to their villages and informed all others to come forthwith and look at the stranger travelers before they move ahead on their path to their next destination. So, by and by, the news spread like wild fire, and soon huge crowds gathered by the side of every village and hamlet through which our Lord Ram passed.

Some of the villagers were made to stand as watch to see when the three divine Beings approached their village, and as soon as they sighted them from afar they rushed to inform others.

Of course, the sight of Lord Ram with Sita and Laxman for so electrifying and divine that the people lost all awareness of themselves and their immediate world. It ought to be noted that the same thing had happened at Janakpur when Lord Ram and

Laxman had gone to visit the city after their arrival there with sage Vishwamitra to attend the marriage ceremony of Sita. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 220—to Doha no. 223.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 114; and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 122.]

(2 / 26)

कैसे पितु–मातु, कैसे ते प्रिय–परिजन हैं ?
जगजलधि ललाम, लोने लोने, गोरे–स्याम,
जिन पठए हैं ऐसे बालकनि बन हैं।। 1।।
रूपके न पारावार, भूपके कुमार मुनि–बेष,
देखत लोनाई लघु लागत मदन हैं।
सुखमाकी मूरति–सी साथ निसिनाथ–मुखी,
नखसिख अंग सब सोभाके सदन हैं।। 2।।
पंकज–करनि चाप, तीर–तरकस कटि,
सरद–सरोजहुतें सुंदर चरन हैं।
सीता–राम–लषन निहारि ग्रामनारि कहैं,
हेरि, हेरि, हेरि ! हेली हियके हरन हैं।। 3।।
प्रानहूके प्रानसे, सुजीवनके जीवनसे,
प्रेमहूके प्रेम, रंक कृपिनके धन हैं।
तुलसीके लोचन–चकोरके चंद्रमासे,
आछे मन–मोर चित चातकके घन हैं।। 4।।

(2/26)

kaisē pitu-mātu, kaisē tē priya-parijana haiṁ?
jagajaladhi lalāma, lōnē lōnē, gōrē-syāma,
jina paṭha'ē haiṁ aisē bālakani bana haiṁ.. 1..
rūpakē na pārāvāra, bhūpakē kumāra muni-bēṣa,
dēkhata lōnā'ī laghu lāgata madana haiṁ.
sukhamākī mūrati-sī sātha nisināth-mukhī,
nakhasikha aṅga saba sōbhākē sadana haiṁ.. 2..
paṅkaja-karani cāpa, tīra-tarakasa kaṭi,
sarada-sarōjahutēṁ sundara carana haiṁ.
sītā-rāma-laṣana nihāri grāmanāri kahaiṁ,
hēri, hēri, hēri! hēlī hiyakē harana haiṁ.. 3..
prānahūkē prānasē, sujīvanakē jīvanasē,
prēmahūkē prēma, raṅka kr̥pinakē dhana haiṁ.
tulasīkē lōcana-cakōrakē candramāsē,
āchē mana-mōra cita cātakakē ghana haiṁ.. 4..

Verse no. 2/26—'Oh Friend! What sort of parents do they have? And what sort of kins/relatives are they who have sent these lovely dark and fair complexioned boys—who are like beautiful jewels of the world-like ocean—to the forest?[1] (1).

[[1]The people are utterly perplexed and they wonder in sore amazement how cruel, stern, merciless and stone-hearted those parents must have been who had sent such delicate and tender children to the forest. It's cruelty and senselessness of the highest kind.

Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 110; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 111; (iii) Doha no. 121; (iv) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 122; and (b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/27 (stanza no. 2); and verse no. 2/40 (stanza no. 4).]

There is no end or measure of their astounding beauty, magnificent charm and radiant splendour. Even Kamdeo/cupid pales (i.e. looks miserably wretched and poor) in comparison to the beauty and glamour of these princes who are attired like hermits[2].

Accompanying them is a young moon-faced lady who is like an image of beauty and prettiness, whose whole body—from the toe-nail to the bun on the head—seems to embody the eclectic qualities of beauty, charm, glamour and magnificence (2).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/30, stanza no. 1.]

Both the princes have a bow in their hands and a quiver full of arrows tied around their waists, while their feet are more glamorous than a lotus blooming during winter.'

In this way, watching Sita, Lord Sri Ram and Laxman intently, the women-folk of the wayside villages were dazed and spellbound. Unable to restrain their emotions, their amazement, their excitement and exuberance, they talked chirply amongst themselves and prodded each other to look at the wonderful sight of Lord Ram—'Oh Friend! Look, Look, Look (hēri, hēri, hēri)! In all sooth and without gainsay I say that they are so very enchanting, so captivating and so capable of stealing our minds and hearts! (3).

They are like the 'life of our souls'. Nay, they are like 'the essence of life itself', and more than that, in full sooth, they are like the 'substance of what love is essentially made of', and like the 'wealth of the miser and the poor'[3].

They are like the Moon for the Chakor-like eyes of Tulsidas, while for the mind-like Peacock and intellect-like Chatak bird, they are like the Cloud[4] (4).

[[3]The village ladies mean to say that after seeing Lord Ram along with Laxman and Sita they have become so enamoured of them that from this day they feel that it will be impossible for them to live without the memory of them.

They declare their fulsome and wholesome affection and love for Lord Ram by saying that the Lord has become the very essence of their lives, the soul of their hearts, it seemeth now that they won't be able to live without the image of the Lord being firmly enshrined inside their hearts.

And if there is any emotion known as 'love' in this world, then in all truth it is represented by Lord Ram—or in other words, Lord Ram embodies the eclectic virtues of love and affection. This transmutes into devotion and submission for the Lord, for indeed he is the 'soul' of all living beings in this creation as he is the 'Supreme Soul', the 'Parmatma'.

A miser and a poor man covets and loves his wealth more than anything else. He would hide it carefully lest it gets stolen. Likewise, these enchanted ladies wish to

conceal their love and affection for Lord Ram in the secret chambers of their hearts, away from the prying eyes of the world. In this context, refer Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19 and 2/20.

[4]The Chakor is enamoured of the 'moon', while the Peacock and the Chatak become ecstatic at the sight of rain-bearing 'clouds'.

So Tulsidas cites these three birds to say that his mind, heart and intellect be similarly devoted to Lord Ram and remain submerged in the love and affection for the Lord.

Even the mention of Lord Ram's divine name must be enough to make Tulsidas dance with joy like the peacock.

If he wants to quench the thirst of his soul then let him drink the nectar of Lord Ram's divine name like the bird Chatak which depends on rain drops falling directly into its beak to satisfy its thirst.

And let his mind be so enthralled that he would think of nothing else but the glories of Lord Ram in this world like the bird Chakor that fixes its gaze on the full moon without letting its mind wander anywhere else.]

राग भैरव

(2 / 27)

देखि ! द्वै पथिक गोरे–साँवरे सुभग हैं।
सुतिय सलोनी संग सोहत सुभग हैं।। 1।।
सोभासिंधु–संभव–से नीके नीके नग हैं ।
मातु–पितु–भाग बस गए परि फँग हैं।। 2।।
पाइँ पनह्यो न, मृदु पंकज–से पग हैं ।
रूपकी मोहनी मेलि मोहे अग–जग हैं।। 3।।
मुनि–बेष धरे, धनु–सायक सुलग हैं ।
तुलसी–हिये लसत लोने लोने डग हैं।। 4।।

rāga bhairava

(2/27)

dēkhi! dvai pathika gōrē-sāmँvarē subhaga haiṁ.
sutiya salōnī saṅga sōhata subhaga haiṁ.. 1..
sōbhāsindhu-sambhava-sē nīkē nīkē naga haiṁ.
mātu-pitu-bhāga basa ga'ē pari phamँga haiṁ.. 2..
pā'imँ panahyō na, mr̥du paṅkaja-sē paga haiṁ.
rūpakī mōhanī mēli mōhē aga-jaga haiṁ.. 3..
muni-bēṣa dharē, dhanu-sāyaka sulaga haiṁ.
tulasī-hiyē lasata lōnē lōnē ḍaga haiṁ.. 4..

Verse no. 2/27—'Oh Friend! Look, two most beauteous dark and fair complexioned pedestrians are on their way. A most beautiful and charming lady looks splendidly magnificent and glorious with them (1).

They resemble the jewels of the ocean of beauty, magnificence and glamour. But unfortunately it seems that at this moment they have been trapped in the noose-like fate of their parents[1] (2).

[[1]Their parents seem to be under the influence of bad stars and have to suffer themselves as a consequence. But unwittingly, these princes have been dragged into the personal ill fate of their parents by suffering being forced upon them for no fault of theirs. It is such a paradoxical situation in this creation that someone else has to suffer for the misdeeds or bad fate of others.

A similar idea is expressed by Dasrath when he deeply regrets the calamity that has befallen on him and the kingdom by Lord Ram's going to the forest—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 77.

The villagers were sorely sorry and extremely perplexed that Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman be sent to endure suffering and hardship of the forest without any apparent fault of their own. Surely the three, Lord Ram, Sita or Laxman, had ought naught done any wrong and sinful deed of such magnitude that they be punished with the punishment meted out to them by their parents and the Creator. For in all sooth and without doubt it is not due to any of their own fault or misdeed but it is by the decree of Destiny and the fiat of Misfortune and evil Fate that they are made to undergo untold suffering and hardship.

It is absolutely improbable and beyond reason that Lord Ram, who is so kind, merciful, loving and graceful by his even his looks and behaviour, would aught have ever done anything to insult his parents or irritate the Creator in any way whatever to the extent that they had become so ruthless and merciless and thoughtless that they would throw all sense of probity, justice and fair-play to the wind in their mad determination to wreak vengeance upon the Lord.]

See, their feet are soft and tender like the lotus flower, but they do not have even a footwear (to protect their legs from the hard and rough surface of the forest path)[2].

They have cast a spell of their beauty and charm over all the animate as well as the inanimate creatures, and have forsooth put all of them under their magical wand of charm, affection and attraction[3] (3).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/25, stanza no. 2 and its accompanying note.

[3]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/24, stanza 3; verse no. 2/25, stanza no. 3 etc.]

They (Lord Ram and Laxman) are attired like a hermit, but both also have a bow and arrow with them[4].

Their pretty and charming steps (footprints made on the ground) have been etched (i.e. found permanent, eternal mark) in the heart of Tulsidas.[5]' (4).

[[4]It is unusual for hermits to have a bow and arrow. So, this aspect of Lord Ram and Laxman holding bows and arrows surprised the wayside villagers. The wise amongst them realized that these two gentlemen were not mendicants or hermits actually, but were noble princes.

[5]Tulsidas here uses the lady who is speaking this verse to reiterate his own love and devotion for Lord Ram when she says that the Lord's footprint is also firmly marked on the heart of Tulsidas.]

(2 / 28)

पथिक पयादे जात पंकज–से पाय हैं।
मारग कठिन, कुस–कंटक–निकाय हैं।। 1।।
सखी ! भूखे–प्यासे, पै चलत चित चाय हैं ।
इन्हके सुकृत सुर–संकर सहाय हैं।। 2।।
रूप–सोभा–प्रेमके–से कमनीय काय हैं ।
मुनिबेष किये, किधौं ब्रह्म–जीव–माय हैं।। 3।।
बीर, बरियार, धीर, धनुधर–राय हैं ।
दसचारि–पुर–पाल आली उरगाय हैं।। 4।।
मग–लोग देखत करत हाय हाय हैं ।
बन इनको तो बाम बिधि कै बनाय हैं।। 5।।
धन्य ते, जे मीन–से अवधि अंबु–आय हैं ।
तुलसी प्रभुसों जिन्हहूँके भले भाय हैं।। 6।।

(2/28)

pathika payādē jāta paṅkaja-sē pāya haiṁ.
māraga kaṭhina, kusa-kaṇṭaka-nikāya haiṁ.. 1..
sakhī! bhūkhē-pyāsē, pai calata cita cāya haiṁ.
inhakē sukr̥ta sura-saṅkara sahāya haiṁ.. 2..
rūpa-sōbhā-prēmakē-sē kamanīya kāya haiṁ.
munibēṣa kiyē, kidhauṁ brahma-jīva-māya haiṁ.. 3..
bīra, bariyāra, dhīra, dhanudhara-rāya haiṁ.
dasacāri-pura-pāla ālī uragāya haiṁ.. 4..
maga-lōga dēkhata karata hāya hāya haiṁ.
bana inakō tō bāma bidhi kai banāya haiṁ.. 5..
dhan'ya tē, jē mīna-sē avadhi ambu-āya haiṁ.
tulasī prabhusōṁ jinhahūm̐kē bhalē bhāya haiṁ.. 6..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-XIII

Verse no. 2/28—'Alas! These pedestrians are walking barefoot with their lotus-like feet (which are soft and tender). The path is very hard and is full of thorns, reeds and prickly grass[1] (1).

[[1]The path is rough and hard, while the feet of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita are soft and tender like the lotus flower. The common folks feel the pain and wonder how difficult it must be for them to walk barefoot on the ground on their long journey to their destination.

Refer also to: (a) Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 112.

(b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/25 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/27 (stanza no. 3); verse no. 2/29 (stanza no. 1); verse no. 2/30 (stanza no. 3); verse no. 2/34 (stanza no. 3).

(c) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18.]

Oh Friend! Inspite of it (being barefoot on a difficult terrain) they are cheerfully moving on, though they are hungry and thirsty. It appears that due to their virtuous and good deeds, the Gods and Lord Shiva are helping them in their journey (by aiding them to overcome the travails, pain and suffering of the arduous passage as if it were of no consequence for them, and they were accustomed to such hardships as a routine affair of life) (2).

They are in forsooth like attractive 'idols' (personified form; embodiment; image) of the glorious virtues of beauty, charm, magnificence, glamour, love and affection.

Or else, they appear to be the manifestations of 'Brahm' (the Supreme Lord; the Supreme Being), 'Maya' (his delusion creating power; the dynamism and potential energy of Brahm), and 'Jiva' (the creature, the macrocosmic soul which is an image of the Supreme Macrocosmic Soul) in the form of hermits[2] (3).

[[2]Here, Lord Ram is 'Brahm', the Supreme Being, Sita is his 'Maya', and Laxman is the 'Jiva'. It appears that the three have taken human forms as hermits or mendicants to hide their original identity. But their divine origin is apparent and difficult to conceal. Indeed they are embodiments of the virtues of beauty and charm because all these three, Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman, represent one or the other aspect of the Supreme Being.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 123.]

He (Sri Ram) has fortitude, is brave, valiant, strong and courageous, and is the best (expert) amongst the archers.

He is a personified form of 'Sri Hari' (Lord Vishnu) who protects the fourteen Bhuvans (the fourteen sections of the world)[3], and he is most glorious and famed.' (4).

[[3]The 'fourteen Bhuvans' = Refer Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/6 and its accompanying note.]

The wayside spectators (villagers) despair and lament at the suffering of Lord Ram and his companions (Sita and Laxman). They are all distraught and distressed with excess of grief, exclaiming with a sense of abject helplessness—'Alas, Alas! The malevolent and unjust Creator has been so cruel, heartless and unfair that he has created a such a painful destiny for these three enchanting travelers that they have been sent to exile in the forest (a fate they, in all sooth, don't deserve).[4]' (5).

[[4]Refer: Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 119 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follow it.]

Tulsidas asserts that those people who had spent the days of their lives for the period of Lord Ram's sojourn in the forest and waited for the Lord's return home (i.e. for fourteen long years), behaving just like fish does in water, were, in all sooth and without gainsay, most fortunate, blessed and praise-worthy.

Tulsidas says that those who keep true, pure and deceitless relationship (of devotion, faith, trust) with the Lord are also adorable, admirable and praise worthy like these blessed souls[5] (6).

[[5]For fourteen years the people waited for Lord Ram's return. All the while their mind and heart were submerged in the thoughts and memory of the Lord. They went about their daily chores at the physical plane of their existence, but their inner selves were constantly thinking and remembering Lord Ram—which turned out to be the best form of meditation for them. They loved their Lord exceedingly and beyond measure, and the wait was worthwhile. It was a veritable Tapa (spiritual austerity and penance) for them, and during this long period they took special care and diligence to observe the strictest forms of religious observances and practices to please the Gods and wash away any traces of evil fate that had brought this present calamity upon them, and to ensure that the outcome, the reward that would become due to them for their leading a pious and devout life, would be joyful in the form of Lord Ram's return to live with them.

After all, when sages, hermits and ascetics did Tapa and Yoga or any other kind of spiritual practice, the reward took some time to come. For most of them it was a lifetime effort. In comparison to them, the fourteen years of suffering and agony of separation that the citizens and devotees of Lord Ram had to endure that was merely like a child's play for all them who had loved the Lord and waited eagerly for his return.

Tulsidas advises that if one follows the example of these people who lived during the time of Lord Ram then it is possible for anyone to realise his spiritual goal very easily. What is needed is the mental state and the level of faith and love and devotion that these common people had at that time. These humble people had not studied any scriptures, nor were they experts in spiritual practices, but they were ordinary householders living a routine life. Still they were so lucky that the Supreme Being went out of his way to walk right up to their doorsteps to oblige them. The Lord lived and mingled with them, interacted with them, ate and drank with them. None of them did any Tapa or Yoga.

The only factor that marked them and entitled them to be the favoured ones of the Lord was the intensity and purity of their love, affection and devotion for Lord Ram that they had in their hearts which compelled the Lord to reciprocate them in equal measure by being specially attentive towards them.]

राग आसावरी

(2 / 29)

सजनी ! हैं कोउ राजकुमार।
पंथ चलत मृदु पद–कमलनि दोउ सील–रूप–आगार।। 1।।
आगे राजिवनैन स्याम–तनु, सोभा अमित अपार।
डारौं वारि अंग–अंगनिपर कोटि–कोटि सत मार।। 2।।
पाछैं गौर किसोर मनोहर, लोचन–बदन उदार।

कटि तूनीर कसे, कर सर–धनु, चले हरन छिति–भार।। 3।।
जुगुल बीच सुकुमारि नारि इक राजति बिनहि सिँगार।
इंद्रनील, हाटक, मुकुतामनि जनु पहिरे महि हार।। 4।।
अवलोकहु भरि नैन, बिकल जनि होहु, करहु सुबिचार।
पुनि कहँ यह सोभा, कहँ लोचन, देह–गेह–संसार ?।। 5।।
सुनि प्रिय–बचन चितै हित कै रघुनाथ कृपा–सुखसार।
तुलसिदास प्रभु हरे सबन्हिके मन, तन रही न सँभार।। 6।।

rāga āsāvarī

(2/29)

sajanī! haiṁ kō'u rājakumāra.
pantha calata mr̥du pada-kamalani dō'u sīla-rūpa-āgāra.. 1..
āgē rājivanaina syāma-tanu, sōbhā amita apāra.
ḍ̣āraum̐ vāri aṅga-aṅganipara kōṭi-kōṭi sata māra.. 2..
pāchaiṁ gaura kisōra manōhara, lōcana-badana udāra.
kaṭi tūnīra kasē, kara sara-dhanu, calē harana chiti-bhāra.. 3..
jugula bīca sukumāri nāri ika rājati binahi sim̐gāra.
indranīla, hāṭ̣aka, mukutāmani janu pahirē mahi hāra.. 4..
avalōkahu bhari naina, bikala jani hōhu, karahu subicāra.
puni kaham̐ yaha sōbhā, kaham̐ lōcana, dēha-gēha-sansāra?.. 5..
suni priya-bacana citai hita kai raghunātha kr̥pā-sukhasāra.
tulasidāsa prabhu harē sabanhikē mana, tana rahī na sam̐bhāra.. 6..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-XIV

Verse no. 2/29—'Oh my dear lady (sajanī)! These (two) gentlemen are some princes (though they are attired as mendicants). Both of them are treasuries of eclectic virtues and noble characters, and are of charming countenance and demeanours. They are going barefoot on the path, walking with their soft lotus-like feet[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Verse no. 2/28, stanza no. 1 and its accompanying note.]

In the front is the lotus-eyed and the dark-complexioned prince (i.e. Lord Ram) whose beauty, charm and radiance are stupendous and matchless.

I can in all sooth and without gainsay sacrifice hundreds of thousands of Kamdeo/cupids on each part of his body. [That is, Lord Ram is so bewitchingly charming and extraordinarily handsome that millions of Kamdeo/cupids, the patron god of beauty, attractiveness and glamour, would be no match for the Lord if all of them are weighed simultaneously on a scale against the Lord.][2] (2).

[[2]Refer to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/15 (stanza no. 4); verse no. 2/16 (stanza no. 1); verse no. 2/17 (stanza no. 1); verse no. 2/25 (stanza no. 3).]

Behind him is an equally charming prince in his teens who has a fair complexion (a reference to Laxman). His eyes and face are also very enchanting like the first prince.

They (both Sri Ram and Laxman) appear to be going on their journey (to the forest) with the purpose of removing the burden of the earth (in the form of demons, sinners and evil souls). That is why, I guess, each of them have a quiver (full of arrows) tied to his waist, and hold a bow and arrow in his hand (3).

In betwixt them is present a gracious lady with a tender form; she is shorn of all ornamentations (a reference to Sita who is also dressed as a hernitress).

Taken (viewed) together, the three resemble a garland made of sapphire (indranīla), gold (hāṭaka) and pearls (mukutāmani) being worn by the (Mother) Earth[3] (4).

[[3]Here, 'sapphire' stands for Sri Ram because of his complexion that is blue like the sky, 'gold' for Sita because of her radiant and glowing complexion, and 'pearl' for Laxman because of his fair complexion.]

Just have a good look at them and be patient; don't waste your precious time by being agitated, excited or dismayed[4].

Think it over (for there is not much time left to waste on fruitless guesses, chatter and gossip, because)—where will you find such glamour, beauty and magnificence again anywhere in your lifetime? Where will our eyes be, where will this homestead be, and this world be (tomorrow or the days to come)[5]? (5)

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/19, stanza no. 3 and its accompanying note.

[5]No one knows what will perchance happen tomorrow or in the yonder days. We may die, or be forced to abandon our homes and go somewhere else. So, have the full enjoyment of this once-in-a-life time opportunity while still there is time, instead of conjuring up reasons for their coming to the forest, or making comparisons of them with others, or trying to describe how beautiful, mind enchanting and heart captivating they are, or getting excited and running hither and thither making wild observations and debating things with your friends. So don't disturb me and stay put and drink this nectar-like view yourself while there is time—for very soon these three, the two handsome princes and the gracious princess, would move ahead on their onwards journey, robbing all of us of this golden opportunity to see them till our eyes are satisfied.]

Hearing these kind words of praise from the enchanted ladies watching the Lord from the side of the road, words that were soaked in the nectar of love, affection, admiration and devotion for the Lord, Sri Ram—who is the embodiment of happiness and bliss—looked at them most affectionately (so as to thank them, acknowledge their devotion for the Lord, and to reciprocate their affectionate gestures)[6].

Tulsidas says while doing this, Lord Sri Ram cast his magical charm upon them, making them spellbound and stupefied with enchantment. Verily, in all sooth, the village folks lost awareness of even their bodies. [That is, even as these common people watched the Lord with heart full of love and affection for him and eyes fixed at him, their mind and intellect were so engrossed in drinking and enjoying this heavenly nectar and experiencing its accompanying bliss and joy that all the villagers forgot everything about the mundane world and their surroundings, who they were, what relationships they had with each other, their daily chores, and all such things that usually occupies one's mind.] (6).

[[6]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18, stanza no. 4.]

देखु री सखी ! पथिक नख–सिख नीके हैं।
नीले पीले कमल–से कोमल कलेवरनि,
तापस हू बेष किये काम कोटि फीके हैं।। 1।।
सुकृत–सनेह–सील–सुषमा–सुख सकेलि,
बिरचे बिरंचि किधौं अमिय, अमीके हैं।
रूपकी–सी दामिनी सुभामिनी सोहति संग,
उमहु रमातें आछे अंग अंग ती के हैं।। 2।।
बन–पट कसे कटि, तून–तीर–धनु धरे,
धीर, बीर, पालक कृपालु सबहीके हैं।
पानही न, चरन–सरोजनि चलत मग,
कानन पठाए पितु–मातु कैसे ही के हैं।। 3।।
आली अवलोकि लेहु, नयननिके फल येहु,
लाभके सुलाभ, सुखजीवन–से जी के हैं।
धन्य नर–नारि जे निहारि बिनु गाहक हू,
आपने आपने मन मोल बिनु बीके हैं।। 4।।
बिबुध बरषि फूल हरषि हिये कहत,
ग्राम–लोग मगन सनेह सिय–पी के हैं।
जोगीजन–अगम दरस पायो पाँवरनि,
प्रमुदित मन सुनि सुरप–सची के हैं।। 5।।
प्रीतिके सुबालक–से लालत सुजन मुनि,
मग चारु चरित लषन–राम–सी के हैं।
जोग न बिराग–जाग, तप न तीरथ–त्याग,
एही अनुराग भाग खुले तुलसी के हैं।। 6।।

(2/30)

dēkhu rī sakhī! pathika nakha-sikha nīkē haiṁ.
nīlē pīlē kamala-sē kōmala kalēvarani,
tāpasa hū bēṣa kiyē kāma kōṭi phīkē haiṁ.. 1..
sukr̥ta-sanēha-sīla-suṣamā-sukha sakēli,
biracē biran̄ci kidhauṁ amiya, amīkē haiṁ.
rūpakī-sī dāminī subhāminī sōhati saṅga,
umahu ramātēṁ āchē aṅga aṅga tī kē haiṁ.. 2..
bana-paṭa kasē kaṭi, tūna-tīra-dhanu dharē,
dhīra, bīra, pālaka kr̥pālu sabahīkē haiṁ.
pānahī na, carana-sarōjani calata maga,
kānana paṭhā'ē pitu-mātu kaisē hī kē haiṁ.. 3..
ālī avalōki lēhu, nayananikē phala yēhu,
lābhakē sulābha, sukhajīvana-sē jī kē haiṁ.
dhan'ya nara-nāri jē nihāri binu gāhaka hū,
āpanē āpanē mana mōla binu bīkē haiṁ.. 4..
bibudha baraṣi phūla haraṣi hiyē kahata,

grāma-lōga magana sanēha siya-pī kē haiṁ.
jōgījana-agama darasa pāyō pāmv̐varani,
pramudita mana suni surapa-sacī kē haiṁ.. 5..
prītikē subālaka-sē lālata sujana muni,
maga cāru carita laṣana-rāma-sī kē haiṁ.
jōga na birāga-jāga, tapa na tīratha-tyāga,
ēhī anurāga bhāga khulē tulasī kē haiṁ.. 6..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-XV

Verse no. 2/30—'Oh Friend! See, these two pedestrians are handsome and pretty from the toe-nail to the tuft of hair on their heads. Inspite of being attired like a hermit, their delicate forms (tender bodies), which are like the lotus flowers with petals of blue and yellow hues respectively (Lord Ram and Laxman), are so bewitchingly beautiful and enchanting they dim (i.e. put to shame) crores of Kamdeo/cupids when the is compared to them[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/28, stanza no. 2.]

Is it not that the Creator has accumulated (collected) all the qualities of good and noble deeds, love and affections, virtues and characters, prettiness and glamour, happiness, joy and bliss, and then out of it has created (or moulded) them? Forsooth, they are the essential ingredient or essence of nectar. [In other words, Lord Ram and Laxman are embodiments of all these grand virtues which they have been blessed with in great abundance. It seems that the Creator had dowered them with all the fine qualities and excellent virtues at the time of creating them.]

Accompanying them is a charming and gracious lady who is splendorous and electric-like in beauty and glamour. Each of the parts of her form is superior (in divinity and holiness) to that of Uma (Parvati) and Rama (Laxmi)[2] (2).

[[2]Uma is the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is the third god of the Trinity, and Rama is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu who is the second god of this Trinity.]

They (Sri Ram and Laxman) are wearing hermit-like clothes around their waists, and bear a quiver, a bow and an arrow each. They possess the eclectic qualities of fortitude, bravery, valour and courage, as well as being very merciful, kind, gracious and benevolent. Indeed in all sooth and without gainsay, they are the sustainers and the guardians of all in this creation (or world).

But, unfortunately, they do not even have a footwear on their feet—they are walking barefoot on the forest path with their soft lotus-like feet. Alas! How stern-hearted are their parents who have sent them to the forest[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/26, stanza no. 1; verse no. 2/27, stanza no. 2; (b) Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 110; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 111; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 122.]

Oh Friend! Have a good look at them. Verily and truthfully, this is the great reward of having (or possessing) eyes. [Because it is through these eyes that we can see them and feel so happy and blissful as if we have get the reward of our lives.]

It (this divine view of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman) is the true essence of all gains and rewards one gets in one's life. Not only this, for in all sooth I vouchsafe and

assert that this reward is also like the blissful life that the mind and intellect yearn for[4]. [That is, the sight of this beautiful three-some is providing immense bliss, peace, comfort, solace and succour to our mind. Indeed it seemeth that we have grabbed the main element or laid our hands on the key to all the gains and rewards that one can ever hope to acquire in this world.]

Those men and women who have literally 'sold' themselves voluntarily and cheerfully (āpanē āpanē mana) at their hands, without bargaining or dithering or debating and arguing at all ("mōla binu bīkē haiṁ"), are worthy of great praise and honour even as we applaud their good luck.' [That is, those who have voluntarily submitted themselves to Lord Ram at the level of their mind and heart by developing pure love and devotion for him are indeed worthy of the greatest of praise and honour.][5] (4).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/26, stanza no. 4.

[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 123 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.]

The Gods shower flowers (from the sky), and, thrilled in their hearts, they praise these ordinary country folks, saying in unison: 'Look, these village folks are so intoxicated and soaked in love and affection for Lord Sri Ram! These ordinary and lowly people have had the opportunity of getting 'Darshan' (divine sight; holy viewing) of the Lord who is inaccessible even for the Yogis (ascetics). [Therefore, very truly, these humble folks are worthy of our praise.][6]'

Hearing that the Lord has embarked (on his mission) to the forest, even the mind of Indra and Shachi (the king of gods and his consort respectively) felt jubilant and euphoric with excitement (because now the gods would soon be freed from the tyranny of their tormentors, the demons) (5).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 113.]

The stories, events and marvellous but mysterious activities/deeds of the Lord on the forest path are like the affectionate children symbolising the eclectic virtues of 'love, affection, endearment, enchantment' who are loved (i.e. these events are cherished) by the father-like gentlemen symbolised by the numerous saintly people, the hermits, the sages and the seers. [That is, even as a father fondly remembers the playful activities of his beloved son and never tires of remembering them, the saints, sages, seers and holy people derive immense bliss and spiritual peace by recalling the many deeds Lord Ram had done while he was on the path to the forest to fulfil his commitment to the Gods and Mother Earth—that he would eliminate the scourge of the demons, and in this process he would oblige all the devotees who yearned for having at least one chance of seeing the Lord and interacting with him in their lives.]

Tulsidas asserts that as far as he is concerned, he can emphatically affirm that despite the dearth of any of the spiritual practices such as Yoga (meditation), Vairagya (renunciation, detachment), Yagyas (vows, religious rituals, sacrifices), Tapa (austerities, penances), Tirtha (pilgrimage) and Tyag (renunciation, being dispassionate) etc., the pandora's box of his immense good luck has opened just on the basis (on the strength) of this attachment or affection that he has towards Lord Ram[7]. (6).

[[7]Tulsidas says that he is very humble and without any spiritual merit like the humble villagers. But like them he has one quality—and it is that he loves Lord Ram with the deepest of love and sincerity like these villagers. So therefore he too feels as blessed as them. In this verse, Tulsidas has assured himself that inspite of lacking any other means of attaining the Lord and obtaining spiritual bliss and solace, he is lucky to have developed intense love and devotion for Lord Ram—for this quality is the 'essence' of all other spiritual practices listed by him in this stanza. And the icing of the cake is that while all other practices and observances entail great effort and endurance of hardship, the practice of 'love, affection and devotion' is effortless and most easy to follow. It's a veritable boon that the Lord has granted to all of us—we may very easily attain the Lord by the simple and time-tested method of having pure love and devotion for him.]

(2/31)

रीति चलिबेकी चाहि, प्रीति पहिचानिकै।
आपनी आपनी कहैं, प्रेम–परबस अहैं,
मंजु मृदु बचन सनेह–सुधा सानिकै।। 1।।
साँवरे कुँवरके बराइकै चरनके चिन्ह,
बधू पग धरति कहा धौं जिय जानिकै।
जुगल कमल–पद–अंक जोगवत जात,
गोरे गात कुँवर महिमा महा मानिकै।। 2।।
उनकी कहनि नीकी, रहनि लषन–सी की,
तिनकी गहनि जे पथिक उर आनिकै।
लोचन सजल, तन पुलक, मगन मन,
होत भूरिभागी जस तुलसी बखानिकै।। 3।।

(2/31)

rīti calibēkī cāhi, prīti pahicānikai.
āpanī āpanī kahaiṁ, prēma-parabasa ahaiṁ,
manj̃u mr̥du bacana sanēha-sudhā sānikai.. 1..
sāmm̃varē kumm̃varakē barā'ikai caranakē cinha,
badhū paga dharati kahā dhauṁ jiya jānikai.
jugala kamala-pada-aṅka jōgavata jāta,
gōrē gāta kumm̃vara mahimā mahā mānikai.. 2..
unakī kahani nīkī, rahani laṣana-sī kī,
tinakī gahani jē pathika ura ānikai.
lōcana sajala, tana pulaka, magana mana,
hōta bhūribhāgī jasa tulasī bakhānikai.. 3..

Verse no. 2/31—The men and women folk of the wayside villages—on watching the pleasant mannerisms and affable attitude adopted by Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita while walking down the forest path, as well as their mutual affection for each other and also towards the villagers—became overwhelmed with gratitude and expressed their emotions of respect, love and affection for the three travelers (Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman) according to the ability of their mind and intellect. [They were not educated people who would use well chosen words to express their feelings. They said what came to their mind, in an informal, rustic and colloquial way, albeit these words were very sweet to hear, heart-warming and sincere to the core.]

The words they spoke were imbuded in the nectar of love and endearment for the Lord (Sri Ram) and his companions (Sita and Laxman). They spoke about their feelings and expressed their thoughts in sweet words as follows—(1).

'Look, this daughter-in-law (Sita) is very careful not to step on the mark made by the dark-complexioned prince's (Lord Ram's) feet on the ground. And this fair-complexioned prince (Laxman), being probably aware of the importance of the pair (Sri Ram and Sita) is very cautious as he walks, and avoids stepping on both their footprints.[1]' (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 123.]

(Tulsidas asserts that—) What those people say is correct for the mannerisms, etiquettes, attitude, standards of probity, propriety, ethics and decency, demeanours and examples set by Sita and Laxman (in following Sri Ram from the rear) are very examplary and worth emulating. Those who bring the image of these pedestrians (Sri Ram, Sita, Laxman) in their hearts are also worth keeping company with, and are worthy of all praise, honour and respect.'

Tulsidas further says that he feels most privileged and lucky to be able to describe all this even as his eyes well-up with tears (of love, affection and joy), his body feels exceedingly thrilled, and his mind becoming enthralled and intoxicated by the mere thought of the exceptionally charming and captivating image of Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita. The feeling of bliss, ecstasy and joy that this creates is beyond the ability of Tulsidas to describe except to say that he is very blessed and fortunate (3).

राग केदारा

(2/32)

जेहि जेहि मग सिय–राम–लखन गए,
तहँ–तहँ नर–नारि बिनु छर छरिगे।
निरखि निकाई–अधिकाई बिथकित भए,
बच बिय–नैन–सर सोभा–सुधा भरिगे।। 1।।
जोते बिनु, बए बिनु, निफन निराए बिनु,
सुकृत–सुखेत सुख–सालि फूलि–फरिगे।
मुनिहु मनोरथको अगम अलभ्य लाभ,
सुगम सो राम लघु लोगनिको करिगे।। 2।।
लालची, कौड़ीके कूर पारस परे हैं पाले,

जानत न को हैं, कहा कीबो सो बिसरिगे।
बुधि न बिचार, न बिगार न सुधार सुधि,
देह–गेह–नेह–नाते मनसे निसरिगे।। 3।।
बरषि सुमन सुर हरषि हरषि कहैं,
'अनायास भवनिधि नीच नीके तरिगे'।
सो सनेह–समउ सुमिरि तुलसीहूके–से
भली भाँति भले पैंत, भले पाँसे परिगे।। 4।।

rāga kēdārā

(2/32)

jēhi jēhi maga siya-rāma-lakhana ga'ē,
tahaṁ-tahaṁ nara-nāri binu chara charigē.
nirakhi nikā'ī-adhikā'ī bithakita bha'ē,
baca biya-naina-sara sōbhā-sudhā bharigē.. 1..
jōtē binu, ba'ē binu, niphana nirā'ē binu,
sukṛ̥ta-sukhēta sukha-sāli phūli-pharigē.
munihu manōrathakō agama alabhya lābha,
sugama sō rāma laghu lōganikō karigē.. 2..
lālacī, kauṛīkē kūra pārasa parē haiṁ pālē,
jānata na kō haiṁ, kahā kībō sō bisarigē.
budhi na bicāra, na bigāra na sudhāra sudhi,
dēha-gēha-nēha-nātē manasē nisarigē.. 3..
baraṣi sumana sura haraṣi haraṣi kahaiṁ,
'anāyāsa bhavanidhi nīca nīkē tarigē'.
sō sanēha-sama'u sumiri tulasīhūkē-sē
bhalī bhāṁti bhalē painta, bhalē pāṁsē parigē.. 4..

The Profound Good Luck of the Common People of the Countryside

Verse no. 2/32—[This verse extols the great luck and the good fortune of the villagers, the laity and the plebeians, the 'common folk', of the countryside, the villages and hamlets lying on the side of the path taken by Lord Ram to the forest—for they were blessed by the divine sight of Lord Ram, the incarnation of the Supreme Lord of the world, which granted them the boon of immense spiritual bliss and beatitude and joy that would normally be difficult, if not impossible, for even the great sages, ascetics and hermits to attain. The wonder of wonders is that this boon was made available to these commoners who had neither any access to the scriptures or any kind of spiritual knowledge or practices, nor had they ever done any known and acknowledged meritorious deed that would merit the grant of such boon for them. It was certainly their undiluted love and affection for the Lord that leads one to have 'Bhakti' or devotion for the Lord that they became entitled for this honour.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 89; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 113; (iii)

Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 120; (iv) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 122.]

All the men and women folk of all the wayside villages and places through which Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita passed (on their way to the forest) were literally swept off their feet even as they became dazed and numbed and mesmerized, as if they had been thrashed or cuffed by an overpowering force that had not even touched them physically (binu chara charigē)[1], by the unique blissful and joyous experience they had when they viewed the divine sight of the Lord.

The people were so amazed at the extreme beauty and magnificence of Lord Sri Ram, Laxman, Sita that they were rendered speechless (bithakita bha'ē, baca). Verily, if one were to regard their bodies as being equivalent to the earth, then forsooth their eyes were like deep lakes which got filled to the brim with the Amrit (nectar) symbolizing the sight of the divine beauty of Lord Ram and his companions (biya-naina-sara sōbhā-sudhā bharigē) (1).

[[1]These villagers had not even come near to Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman nor had they interacted with them or gained any acquaintance with them because they had watched them passing through the villages from a distant. But the divine sight of Lord Ram stuck them like a violent storm, sweeping them off the ground inasmuch as they became stunned at the sight, losing awareness of themselves and their surroundings, of their household work that they had been doing or had to do in these moments, as they steadily gazed transfixed at Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman in great amazement and wonder. Such was the immensity of the attraction and charm of the Lord that these common folks instantly fell in love for the Lord, their mind and heart developing spontaneous affection for him that transmued to a bond of devotion for the Lord so much so that they enshrined the beautiful image of the Lord permanently in their subtle hearts and etched it on the canvas of their sub-conscious mind. This bond of love and affection was mutual because Lord Ram had reciprocated their gesture and emotional outburst by looking back at them sweetly, and even taking a break from his journey to tarry with them for some time so as to talk with them and eat whatsoever they offered to the Lord by way of obliging them. This gave these common people the eclectic reward and the rarest of rare privilege of serving the Lord and becoming acquainted with him, chatting with him and developing a personal equation with him that was yearned and longed for by even the great sages, hermits and ascetics but was denied to them.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 114—to Doha no. 118; and (b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18 (stanza no. 4); verse no. 2/24 (stanza no. 4); verse no. 2/29 (stanza no. 6); verse no. 2/30 (stanza no. 5)—all of which are very explicit on this subject.

The phrase that is used in stanza no. 1 of this verse is "binu chara charigē". The word "chara" refers to the beating or thrashing of rice to remove the husk from the grain—or in other words, to clean the rice grains. This practice is cited by Tulsidas to emphasise that unlike the case when the rice grains are subjected to suffering when they are thrashed to make them clean, these villagers had the impurities of their hearts and minds removed without undergoing any pain and suffering by the simplest of means one can imagine of—i.e. developing undiluted and unstinted and sincere love, affection and devotion for Lord Ram which cleansed their

inner-selves of all worldly impurities, and replaced it with pure bliss and joy that comes with God realization!

In other words, these common folks were enthralled, captivated and made slaves of love and affection for the Lord without having to be forced to do so, or without having to undertake any rigorous practice or follow any strict path of austerity and penance etc. They were purified and liberated from the bondage of this mundane existence without having made any efforts for it, having any experience of doing it, or without as much as having ever hoped or desired for it. It was a god-sent boon for them from the heaven.]

'Paddy' in the form of happiness, joy and bliss (that the common villagers derived when they saw Lord Ram) bloomed in the 'field' of noble, good and virtuous deeds (that these common people had done without being aware of them or their rewards that had become due to them over time) even without 'sowing the seeds, weeding or harvesting' it (i.e. without making any special effort to seek that reward)[2].

Forsooth and without gainsay it can be vouchsafed that rarest of rare reward or gain (in the form of emancipation and liberation of the soul from the entrapments of this world of delusions)—which is beyond the reach of hermits and sages, and which is most difficult to access—was made easily available by Lord Sri Ram to even the ordinary, lowly and humble plebeians, the laity of the countryside villages and hamlets that fell of his way (2).

[[2]It was an agrarian society, and the chief occupation of the villagers was farming. So in this stanza the metaphors used are relevant to the subjects being discussed—i.e. the villagers who were mostly farmers. These people were simple hearted and pious, and they wot naught of any kind of deceit and foulplay. This stanza essentially stresses that those with a simple and pure heart are the ones whom the Lord God obliges, and it is such people who can expect the Lord to come within their reach. It further emphasizes that the love and affection and endearment that these villagers had developed for Lord Ram was of pure and ethereal kind that had a sublime and subtle dimension to it, and not of the gross level that a pervert mind may imagine it to be.]

Those poor people who had coveted even small worthless change by way of reward or gain for whatever effort they could do (lālacī, kauṛīkē kūra) were suddenly transmewed into the most lucky, favoured and fortunate ones when they were unwittingly granted the boon of getting (or possessing) a 'Paras Mani' ("pārasa"; the philosopher's stone), albeit most unexpectedly and without their being even aware of its astounding value and significance[3].

The ignorant, simple folks were so overwhelmed by this sudden stroke of good fortune that they do not even know 'who these travelers are?' before they fell head over heels in love with them. They had also forgotten in their excitement 'what to do with them, how to treat them, and how to make the best of this golden opportunity?'

They were so stunned and stupefied by this rendezvous with the Lord with its accompanying wholesome blissful spiritual experience that they lost their bearing even as their intellect and wisdom failed them (i.e. they virtually lost their wits as if their mind had just stopped thinking) so much so that they weren't even aware of the gains or the losses that had accrued to them[4].

Verily indeed, endearment for Lord Ram and undiluted love and affection for the Lord had overcome their entire being so much that these emotions replaced all

other relationships that they might have had till that time. For in all sooth these humble folks broke all their ties with the body, their homes, their kith and kin, and the humdrum world and its countless attachments and attractions during those electrifying moments of ecstasy, joy and bliss when they watched Lord Ram with love and affection heaving in their hearts and minds inasmuch as that they remembered none of these mundane things[5] (3).

[[3]These ordinary poor people who had to toil so much to try to appease ordinary gods by making offerings to them, have now got all their wishes fulfilled in abundant measure when they got the privilege of meeting Lord Ram, the Supreme Lord who could grant them whatever they wanted without the least trouble.

Here, the 'small change' refers to the countless gods that these folks tried to please for petty things of life. The access to the 'Paras Mani' in the form of Lord Ram will now enable them to fulfill their wishes for all their worldly and spiritual needs. And the benefits are already visible—for what more would a person want in his life than happiness and joy that bring undiluted bliss the way these people have enjoyed upon seeing Lord Ram. Till now they had been pleasing so many deities but the gains were fleeting and momentary. The reward of bliss and happiness that they have now got by being acquainted with Lord Ram is not only great but enduring as well.

[4]What were the 'gains and losses'? These were uneducated common folks: they could not realize that the reward that has come to them by way of having a divine view of Lord Ram was very rare and priceless. They didn't understand its spiritual value and significance. Had some sage or ascetic or hermit been in their place, he would have truly understood the great spiritual import of his meeting with Lord Ram; it would have been like the fulfillment of all his religious and spiritual pursuits. But these common folks just took Lord Ram to be some great prince on his way to the forest due to some bad luck that has come his way. They hadn't realized that he was the Supreme Being in their midst.

In other words, these innocent villagers didn't know the richness of the spiritual reward that was given to them for free. The extreme bliss and ecstasy and joy and contentedness that they experienced when they saw Lord Ram was like that which is experienced by ascetics when they reach transcendental state of existence when they realize the Supreme Soul, the 'Self'. This was the great 'gain' these people had without their being aware of it.

And what is the 'loss'. Well, the fact that they didn't realize the profundity of this moment and the significance of its spiritual import was their lifetime loss—for once the Lord went ahead on his onwards journey to the forest, these villagers went back to carry on their routine work and live their ordinary lives! For truly had they understood the import of meeting Lord Ram and the true reason of their feeling extremely blissful and ecstatic and joyous, they would have renounced the world and lived as hermits and ascetics for the rest of their lives. But unfortunately, none did it.

[5]These people, all of a sudden, and as if by a spell, became detached from this world like a true renunciate is, and nothing mattered to them anymore even as their mind, intellect, wisdom and heart were literally captured and captivated by the enchanting sight of Lord Ram and the sublime emotion of love and affection that were generated in their hearts and minds for the Lord. But unfortunately, as has been explained above, this renunciation was fleeting for as long as Lord Ram was with them, for soon as the Lord went away these people went back to the routine affairs of their lives.]

[But nonetheless, they were indeed extremely lucky. So therefore—] The Gods shower flowers and happily praise them, saying, 'Ah! These lowly and resourceless people have for once crossed this ocean-like mundane world without having to make any efforts[6].

Just by remembering the profound exhilaration, joy and bliss these villagers experienced, as well as the purity of love and affection for the Lord that they had developed, even humble people like Tulsidas have had the dice cast in their favour and have Luck favouring them[7] (4).

[[6]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/30, stanza no. 5 also.

In other words, unknown to these people, spiritual liberation and deliverance came to be their lot in their lifetime unawares and without seeking it—because though they led a routine life after Lord Ram went his way, the deep love and true affection for the Lord had so firmly entrenched itself in their heart and mind that they always remembered the Lord all times of the day and night, thinking aught of nothing else but the Lord, whereat this transmued itself into veritable meditation and contemplation for these humble folk, rewarding them with the fruit of liberation and deliverance that is a natural fruit of it.

They had transmewed themselves from ordinary people engrossed in mundane worldly affairs into those whom the scriptures call 'Jivan Mukta'—i.e. a person who has attained spiritual deliverance and obtained the eclectic blissful state of transcendental existence even though such a person has a gross body and lives in this gross world like ordinary mortals. Such a person goes about his routine life and its needs at the physical level, but internally at the subtle level he is like a renunciate person who is unconcerned with anything related to the gross world.

Therefore, these ordinary villagers had become 'Jivan Mukta' during their lifetime itself after their encounter with Lord Ram. This was the 'great and the matchless gain' they they were blessed with, albeit unknown to them.

[7]Tulsidas means that even stupid and unworthy people, who perchance and by a stroke of good luck happen to spend their time remembering the glories of the Lord, would surely get favourable circumstances for themselves, would surely have emancipation and liberation of their souls, and without doubt they would be freed from the shackles of this mundane, illusionary world of false relations and pleasures, and instead attain true bliss.

No matter how bad Luck may have been for such people earlier, but once they take the shelter of Lord Ram and develop devotion for the Lord, the same Luck itself feels lucky to oblige and serve them!]

(2 / 33)

बोले राज देनको, रजायसु भो काननको,
आनन प्रसन्न, मन मोद, बड़ो काज भो।
मातु–पिता–बन्धु–हित आपनो परम हित,
मोको बीसहूकै ईस अनुकूल आजु भो।। 1।।
असन अजीरनको समुझि तिलक तज्यो,
बिपिन–गवनु भले भूखेको सुनाजु भो।
धरम–धुरीन धीर बीर रघुबीरजूको,
कोटि राज सरिस भरतजूको राजु भो।। 2।।
ऐसी बातैं कहत सुनत मग–लोगनकी,

चले जात बंधु दोउ मुनिको सो साज भो।
ध्याइबेको, गाइबेको, सेइबे सुमिरिबेको,
तुलसीको सब भाँति सुखद समाज भो।। 3।।

(2/33)

bōlē rāja dēnakō, rajāyasu bhō kānanakō,
ānana prasanna, mana mōda, baṛō kāja bhō.
mātu-pitā-bandhu-hita āpanō parama hita,
mōkō bīsahūkai īsa anukūla āju bhō.. 1..
asana ajīranakō samujhi tilaka tajyō,
bipina-gavanu bhalē bhūkhēkō sunāju bhō.
dharama-dhurīna dhīra bīra raghubīrajūkō,
kōṭi rāja sarisa bharatajūkō rāju bhō.. 2..
aisī bātaiṁ kahata sunata maga-lōganakī,
calē jāta bandhu dō'u munikō sō sāja bhō.
dhyā'ibēkō, gā'ibēkō, sē'ibē sumiribēkō,
tulasīkō saba bhāmt̐i sukhada samāja bhō.. 3..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-XVII
(contd. from verse 31)

Verse no. 2/33—The residents of the villages and small hamlets lying on the way talked with each other when they saw Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman walking barefoot on their way to the forest—'The king (Dasrath) had planned to give him (Lord Ram) the crown, but suddenly ordered him to go to the forest[1]. But at this, Lord Ram felt very happy, and his face became radiant and glowing with joy (instead of getting upset and angry).

He started thinking to himself—"Well, a great thing has happened, for this will result in keeping my parents (father Dasrath and step-mother Kaikeyi) as well as my brother (Bharat) happy and contented, for it will satisfy their wishes, and at the same time it will also make me happy (because now I will get a chance to go and do the job for which I have come to this world in a human form, and it is to kill the demons and free the earth of their burden). It looks to me that the Creator has become very kind and favourable on me today.[2]" (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 10; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 11; (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 29.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 42; (ii) Doha no. 51.

Lord Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who had promised the Gods and Mother Earth that he would come down to this mortal world in the form of a human being to eliminate the demons who had run amock, plundering, killing, creating havoc

and spreading their reign of terror and mayhem throughout the surface of earth. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 187.]

Then, regarding kinghood as a food which causes indigestion, he abandoned it willingly and forthwith, while accepting departure for the forest as being equivalent to an appetizing food laid out for the hungry[3].

This way, for the extremely righteous and noble Lord Ram, the crowning of Bharat (as the Prince Regent of Ayodhya) was equivalent to his own crowning a million of times over. [Lord Ram was never jealous of Bharat, and he was rather glad that Bharat got the chance to get the crown of Ayodhya without the Lord having to resist his own anointment—for he thought that all the brothers had the same right to share the glory of the kingdom, and it ought not only be made the sole privilege of his.][4] (2).'

[[3]That is, Lord Ram abandoned the kingdom of Ayodhya most willingly and without any regret or harbouring any ill-will against anyone. Rather, he willingly came to the forest, without any sort of grief or anger in his mind, for in all sooth and without gainsay the Lord hast treated both the circumstances, of being crowned as Prince Regent or being banished to the forest, equally and with exemplary equanimity and fortitude. For the Lord both were the same thing, and it mattered not to him whether he lived in Ayodhya as its Prince Regent, or in the forest as a hermit.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 10; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 42.]

Hearing such affectionate talk from the people of the countryside villages and hamlets, and even from the travelers he met on his way to the forest, Lord Ram, who was attired as a hermit, felt nice even as he continued on his long journey onwards.

As for Tulsidas, the mere remembrance of Lord Ram, the very thought of the Lord and his divine life and deeds on this earth, the opportunity to speak about them and sing the divine story of Lord Ram and his glories is the provider of all imaginable happiness and joy for him (3).

(2 / 34)

सिरिस–सुमन–सुकुमारि, सुखमाकी सींव,
सीय राम बड़े ही सकोच संग लई है।
भाईके प्रान समान, प्रियाके प्रानके प्रान,
जानि बानि प्रीति रीति कृपासील मई है।। 1।।
आलबाल–अवध सुकामतरु कामबेलि,
दूरि करि केकई बिपत्ति–बेलि बई है।
आप, पति, पूत, गुरुजन, प्रिय परिजन,
प्रजाहूको कुटिल दुसह दसा दई है।। 2।।
पंकज–से पगनि पानह्यौं न, परुष पंथ,
कैसे निबहे हैं, निबहैंगे, गति नई हैं ?।
येही सोच–संकट–मगन मग–नर–नारि,
सबकी सुमति राम–राग, रँग रई है।। 3।।
एक कहैं, बाम बिधि दाहिनो हमको भयो,
उत कीन्हीं पीठि, इतको सुडीठि भई है।

तुलसी सहित बनबासी मुनि हमरिऔ,
अनायास अधिक अघाइ बनि गई है।। 4।।

(2/34)

sirisa-sumana-sukumāri, sukhamākī sīnva,
sīya rāma baṛē hī sakōca saṅga la'ī hai.
bhā'īkē prāna samāna, priyākē prānakē prāna,
jāni bāni prīti rīti kṛpāsīla ma'ī hai.. 1..
ālabāla-avadha sukāmataru kāmabēli,
dūri kari kēka'ī bipatti-bēli ba'ī hai.
āpa, pati, pūta, gurujana, priya parijana,
prajāhūkō kuṭila dusaha dasā da'ī hai.. 2..
paṅkaja-sē pagani pānahyauṁ na, paruṣa pantha,
kaisē nibahē haiṁ, nibahaiṅgē, gati na'ī haiṁ?.
yēhī sōca-saṅkaṭa-magana maga-nara-nāri,
sabakī sumati rāma-rāga, ramm̆ga ra'ī hai.. 3..
ēka kahaiṁ, bāma bidhi dāhinō hamakō bhayō,
uta kīnhīṁ pīṭhi, itakō suḍīṭhi bha'ī hai.
tulasī sahita banabāsī muni hamari'au,
anāyāsa adhika aghā'i bani ga'ī hai.. 4..

Lord Ram on the Forest Path-XVIII

Verse no. 2/34—[This verse describes the feelings and conversation of the countryside villagers, as well as the hermits, sages and others who lived in the forest when they saw and met Lord Ram.

First of all, they talked amongst themselves about the reason why the Lord had brought along Sita and Laxman with him though he knowest well of the hardships of the wilderness that they, especially Sita, would have to endure.]

'Lord Sri Ram, who is an embodiment of mercy, compassion, grace and kindness (kṛpāsīla ma'ī)—who is also, verily, like the 'soul' (life) for his beloved brother Laxman (bhā'īkē prāna samāna), and is like the very 'life-force' itself of the soul of his beloved wife Sita (priyākē prānakē prāna)—has brought Sita, who is tender like the flower of the Shesham tree and extremely beautiful, along with him to the wild forest, albeit with great reluctance and hesitation, because the Lord had to consider her natural inclinations and desires (which were that she will never leave her beloved Lord no matter what happens, and was ready to shed her life if forced otherwise) as well as the demands and standards of love and affection (that required that the Lord should honour her desire to be with her beloved notwithstanding all the troubles that would accrue to her for this single decision to accompany the Lord to the forest) when he took the decision to bring her along[1] (1).'

[[1]This stanza gives the reason and explains why Lord Sri Ram had deemed it necessary and fit to bring Sita along with him to the wilderness though he wot exceedingly well the sufferings and harships that would accrue to her. To wit, Sita's

unflinching love and devotion for Lord Ram had compelled the Lord to overcome all other considerations and agree to let her come with him to the forest—for in all sooth the Lord had realised that if he did not bring her along, she would die due to the agony of separation.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 49; (ii) from Doha no. 64—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 68.]

[Then, they accused Kaikeyi of being the cause of all the mishchief that has befallen on Ayodhya, and had also caused such pain on Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman.]

'Kaikeyi (the deluded, selfish and accursed step-mother of Lord Ram) had planted the creeper of troubles and misfortunes (for everyone) by removing the Kalpa Tree (in the form of Lord Sri Ram) and the Kalpa Creeper (in the form of Sita) from the yard of the dwelling represented by Ayodhya[2].

On this wise and behaving under the influence of delusions, she has created a very harsh, intolerable, ignominious and abominable situation for herself as well as for her husband, son, kins and relatives, elders and subjects of the kingdom—et al[3] (2).'

[[2]The 'Kalpa Tree' is an evergreen tree of the gods, said to possess mystical powers to fulfill all wishes. Here, Lord Ram is likened to this tree because the Lord fulfils all the desires of his devotees.

The creeper twines around the tree and it its existence is due to the tree, for without the tree the creeper would fall to the ground and die. As we have read in stanza no. 1 above, Lord Ram was like the life and soul of Sita, and she had no existence without the Lord. This is why she is likened to the 'Kalpa Creeper' that depends on the Kalpa Tree for her survival.

Ayodhya is likened to the garden where this tree was present. By her evil deeds and perverted mind, Kaikeyi uprooted this Kalpa Tree with its Creeper by sending Lord Ram and Sita to the forest.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 46—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 49; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 76; (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 51.]

'The path is very arduous, hard and harsh, and they (Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman) don't have even a footwear to give basic comfort to them[4].

Hence we marvel with great wonder how have they yet coped with it (walking on this harsh path) with their feet that is soft like the lotus flower, and how wilst they do so for the rest of their long journey.'

All the men and women who saw and met Lord Ram while the Lord was wending his way to the forest were immensely moved by the suffering and pain and hardships that the Lord had to endure, whereat their minds were completely engrossed in this thought, wherewith they became very worried and grieved.

All their wisdom and intellect appeared to have been painted in the colour of affection, love and endearment for Lord Ram[5] (3).

[[4]There are umpteen numbers of verses in Geetawali, Ayodhya that say this thing. For instance, refer: verse no. 2/25 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/27 (stanza no. 3); verse no. 2/28 (stanza no. 1); verse no. 2/30 (stanza no. 3).

A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 119; and (ii) Doha no. 120.

[5]In all sooth it looked as if the Lord had cast a magical charm on everyone he met on the way to the forest, bewitching them, mesmerizing them and enchanting them beyond measure and description. Everyone seemeth to have been cast under Lord Sri Ram's spell, and the Lord had become the topic of common talk amongst the country folk as well as the travelers whom he met. The people talked aught nothing but of him.]

Someone amongst them suggested, 'The Creator who has been unfavourable and malevolent to them (i.e. Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman on the one hand, and the citizens of Ayodhya on the other hand), howbeit he appears at least to be favourable and benign towards all of us[6].

Forsooth, whereas it appears that the Creator may have turned his back on them (by inflicting so much pain and hardship upon them), he seems to have turned his face towards us (because he has given us haply this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enjoy the company of Lord Ram and derive immense joy and happiness with this interaction).[7]'

Tulsidas feels elated and delighted at the thought that he too is extremely privileged, lucky and fortunate like these forest-dwelling hermits and sages (i.e. all the simple-hearted and pious people who lived in the forest, including the humble villagers, who had had the glory of seeing and interacting with Lord Ram whereat they derived immense happiness and bliss)—for in all sooth he has gotten the same nectar of spiritual bliss and ecstasy while narrating the story of Lord Ram during the Lord's passage through the countryside and the forest as they had done while witnessing these events first hand.

Verily he asserts that he feels that like these fortunate people who had met Lord Ram he too has become eligible and worthy of being blessed with the reward of emancipation and salvation even without any effort being made on his part, as this boon has come to him unexpectedly, almost unawares[8] (4).

[[6]Refer also to: (a) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/32; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precedes Doha no. 89; (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precedes Doha no. 120.

[7]What is a curse for one becomes a blessing for the other! For the citizens of Ayodhya Lord Ram's exile to the forest was like doom, but for the forest dwellers it became a boon. For Lord Ram himself as well as for Sita and Laxman this forest exile meant hardships and sufferings, but for all those whom the Lord met it was a blessing par excellence.

[8]The underlying sentiment of Tulsidas, and the implied or subtle implications of this last stanza, is that though he is sinful and has not done any worthy deeds or performed rituals or had undertaken any exercise worth mention which would qualify him for any spiritual elevation or higher stature in life, but the mere opportunity—which he designates as a great luck and privilege—of narrating the divine story of Lord Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman on the forest path, which needed concentration and fixing of the mind on the job at hand, has changed his destiny for good, because he is now sure of his own salvation.

Another interesting deduction from this last stanza—as in numerous preceding ones—is that Tulsidas is mentally following his beloved Lord Sri Ram wherever he goes along the forest path.]

नीके कै मैं न बिलोकन पाए।
सखि! यहि मग जुग पथिक मनोहर, बधु बिधु–बदनि समेत सिधाए।। 1।।
नयन सरोज, किसोर बयस बर, सीस जटा रचि मुकुट बनाए।
कटि मुनिबसन–तून, धनु–सर कर, स्यामल–गौर, सुभाय सोहाए।। 2।।
सुंदर बदन बिसाल बाहु–उर, तनु–छबि कोटि मनोज लजाए।
चितवत मोहि लगी चौंधी–सी, जानौं न, कौन, कहाँ तें धौं आए।। 3।।
मनु गयो संग, सोचबस लोचन मोचत बारि, कितौ समुझाए।
तुलसिदास लालसा दरसकी सोइ पुरवै, जेहि आनि देखाए।। 4।।

rāga gaurī

(2/35)

nīkē kai maiṁ na bilōkana pā'ē.
sakhi! yahi maga juga pathika manōhara, badhu bidhu-badani samēta sidhā'ē.. 1..
nayana sarōja, kisōra bayasa bara, sīsa jaṭā raci mukuṭa banā'ē.
kaṭi munibasana-tūna, dhanu-sara kara, syāmala-gaura, subhāya sōhā'ē.. 2..
sundara badana bisāla bāhu-ura, tanu-chabi kōṭi manōja lajā'ē.
citavata mōhi lagī caundhī-sī, jānauṁ na, kauna, kahāṁ tēṁ dhauṁ ā'ē.. 3..
manu gayō saṅga, sōcabasa lōcana mōcata bāri, kitau samujhā'ē.
tulasidāsa lālasā darasakī sō'i puravai, jēhi āni dēkhā'ē.. 4..

Lord Ram's Passage Through the Countryside-I

Verse no. 2/35—[There were many who weren't so lucky to see Lord Ram as he passed through the countryside. When they heard of him from others, they regretted with immense regret, lamenting at their bad luck that they missed the opportunity.

Refer also to: (a) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/24; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 121.

This verse narrates the conversation betwixt two good ladies of the countryside. Both are sad and dismayed, lamenting and regretting, albeit for different reasons. The first speaker is sorry that she missed the opportunity to see Lord Ram and his companions, Sita and Laxman, whom everyone who chanced to see have so profusely praised and honoured, hereat this has become the base of her endless regret, whereat the second speaker said that she too has endless regrets but it is because she, having seen the Lord had been so exceedingly enchanted by his lovable image which has firmly won her over and had left an indelible impression on her mind and heart so much that now she excessively misses the Lord, for she is unable to shake-off the sweet memory of the Lord from her mind and sub-conscious.

Refer also to verse nos. 2/36—2/39 that follow this verse as they too describe the same theme.]

[The first good lady said to her friend who had seen Lord Ram—] 'Oh Friend! I could not have a good look at the two attractive pedestrians (Lord Ram and Laxman), along with the moon-faced lady (Sita), who have gone by this path (1).

[I have heard that—] Their (Lord Ram and Laxman) eyes were like lotus, they were in their sweet teens[1], they had worn crowns made of matted hairs on their heads, they wore hermit-like clothes around their waists, and each of them had a quiver tied to his waist and held a bow in his hand

They had dark and fair complexions respectively, and were naturally handsome, pretty, charming and glamorous of a heightened degree (2).'

[[1]'Lord Ram and Laxman were in their teens': refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 22 (stanza no. 1), and verse no. 23 (stanza no. 2).]

[Hearing her friend, the second lady who had had the good luck to see Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita first hand, endorsed her views about the stupendous charm of the Lord. She reiterated—] 'Their faces were bewitchingly attractive and beautiful as beauty can be. They had broad chests and long arms, and forsooth they had put to shame crores (millions) of Kamdeo/cupids by the virtue of the spectacular radiance and glamour of their bodies[2].

I was so extremely dazed by their sight and dazzled by the glare of their splendour and the charm of their beauty that I could not even properly see them (because my mind had been numbed into a state of stupor, and my intellect lost its bearing), nor could I gather my wits to find out who they were and from where they had come[3] (3).

[[1]The beauteous sight of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxnan has been described elsewhere also. Refer: (i) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/13, 2/15, 2/21; and (ii) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/18—2/20, 2/23—2/29.

For comparison with Kamdeo, refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/16 (stanza no. 1); verse no. 2/18 (stanza no. 3); verse no. 2/26 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/29 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/30 (stanza no. 1).

[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/20 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/37 (stanza no. 1).]

In all sooth I say without gainsay that my heart has literally gone with them! To wit, I can't forsake the memory of Lord Ram; I can't shake-off the Lord's thoughts from my mind and sub-conscious. My eyes are raining tears due to the grief of separation whenever I remember him (Lord Ram). I had tried my best to reason with my mind and heart and advice them to be practical and come to terms with this situation of separation (for after all he was a traveling stranger, and I shalt gain naught aught by grieving for him or remembering him, for I will never see him again).

But unfortunately my mind wouldn't agree with me, my heart wouldn't abandon that comely image, and my sub-conscious refuses to remove the Lord's memory from its treasury, hereat forcing me to think of naught save the sweet memory of the Lord, for my heart and mind longs with exceeding longing to have his sight once more again, and this craving has virtually robbed all peace in my life!

So verily I say and pray that 'he' (the Creator), who had been so benevolent and kind as to have brought 'him' (Lord Ram) here one time, would, in times to come, once again bringeth the Lord here again to quench the desire and longing of my mind and sub-conscious.' (4).

पुनि न फिरे दोउ बीर बटाऊ।
स्यामल गौर, सहज सुंदर, सखि! बारक बहुरि बिलोकिबे काऊ।। 1।।
कर–कमलनि सर, सुभग सरासन, कटि मुनिबसन–निषंग सोहाए।
भुज प्रलंब, सब अंग मनोहर, धन्य सो जनक–जननि जेहि जाए।। 2।।
सरद–बिमल बिधु बदन, जटा सिर, मंजुल अरुन–सरोरुह–लोचन।
तुलसिदास मनमय मारगमें राजत कोटि–मदन–मदमोचन।। 3।।

(2/36)

puni na phirē dō'u bīra baṭā'ū.
syāmala gaura, sahaja sum̐dara, sakhi! bāraka bahuri bilōkibē kā'ū.. 1..
kara-kamalani sara, subhaga sarāsana, kaṭi munibasana-niṣaṅga sōhā'ē.
bhuja pralamba, saba aṅga manōhara, dhan'ya sō janaka-janani jēhi jā'ē.. 2..
sarada-bimala bidhu badana, jaṭā sira, mañjula aruna-sarōruha-lōcana.
tulasidāsa manamaya māragamēm̐ rājata kōṭi-madana-madamōcana.. 3..

Lord Ram's Passage Through the Countryside-II

Verse no. 2/36—'Oh Friend! Those brave mendicant travelers did not come back on this path again. Those two dark and fair princes were naturally pretty and charming. Can we ever see them once again?[1] (1).

[[1]This is an excellent warning by Tulsidas to us—we get only one chance in the long chain of birth and death to find liberation from the shackles of this mundane, illusionary world. If we miss it, if we forego this golden opportunity to see or witness our Lord Sri Ram in this life, we will repent for all our lives and times to come. Sri Ram— symbolizing bliss, emancipation and salvation—will not come back to us. So beware!

Presently, the good ladies of the countryside waited patiently but endlessly for Lord Ram to return. They did not know that the Lord was on his way to the distant great forest. They had thought that the two princes and the princess accompanying them were out of their city of Ayodhya on some excursion or walk around for adventure. Therefore, they ought to have come back after some days while returning back home. But it was not to be—for the Lord never returned on that path again.

But nevertheless, this hope that Lord Ram would surely retrace his steps kept the women folk and the men folk of the countryside keep a regular watch on the horizon so that they can get the first glimpse of the Lord as he returned, whereat they would spread the word fast amongst the villagers, and all those who missed seeing the Lord on the first occasion would get the happy chance to see him now. Likewise, those who did see him on his way out would now have the added bonus to see him yet once again.

Therefore, ever since Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita passed through the countryside, casting the spell of their magical charm upon the villagers and the

common folks, it was the only topic of discussion amongst the people, everywhere and at all times. This had its own spiritual rewards—for this constant remembrance of Lord Ram was like practicing regular meditation upon the Lord and repetition of his holy name by the people, albeit this reward was gotten by the people without their being aware of it. Refer especially to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/19 and 2/34 (stanza no. 3).]

Their lotus-like hands held a bow and arrow, while hermit-like clothes and a quiver adorned their waists. Their arms were long, and their bodies (their image; form; demeanours) were most attractive. Those parents who gave them birth are worthy of great praise and honour (2).'

Tulsidas says that (for him) the Lord—whose face is like a winter's full moon, who has matted hairs on the head, eyes as beauteous as the red lotus, and who can crush the pride and haughtiness of millions of Kamdeo/cupids—is ever present in the path of our (i.e. devotees like Tulsidas') hearts[2] (3).

[[2]The idea is that if one enshrines the Lord in one's heart, one's mind and one's sub-conscious, if one remembers the divine story and the divine glories of the Lord at all moments of his life, then it is sure that he will not have to regret like these village women who had missed the chance to have a glimpse of the Lord as he walked down the path. Well, we might also not be able to see the Lord ourselves in the physical sense of the term, but at the ethereal level of the Spirit, the soul should be completely imbued in the colour of love for the Lord. If this haply happens, the Lord will always be with us at all moments of our lives as we walk down the path of life, from its beginning when the soul enters the body till the time it leaves it to find its emancipation and salvation, its liberation and deliverance.]

राग केदारा

(2/37)

आली ! काहू तौ बूझौ न, पथिक कहाँ धौं सिधैहैं।
कहाँतें आए हैं, को हैं, कहा नाम स्याम–गोरे,
काज कै कुसल फिरि एहि मग ऐहैं ?।। 1।।
उठति बयस, मसि भींजति, सलोने सुठि,
सोभा–देखवैया बिनु बित्त ही बिकैहैं।
हिये हेरि हरि लेत लोनी ललना समेत,
लोयननि लाहु देत जहाँ जहाँ जैहैं।। 2।।
राम–लषन–सिय–पंथकी कथा पृथुल,
प्रेम बिथकीं कहति सुमुखि सबै हैं।
तुलसी तिन्ह सरिस तेऊ भूरिभाग जेऊ,
सुनि कै सुचित तेहि समै समैहैं।। 3।।

rāga kēdārā

ālī! kāhū tau būjhau na, pathika kahāṁ dhauṁ sidhaihaiṁ.
kahāṁtēṁ ā'ē haiṁ, kō haiṁ, kahā nāma syāma-gōrē,
kāja kai kusala phiri ēhi maga aihaiṁ?.. 1..
uṭhati bayasa, masi bhīnjati, salōnē suṭhi,
sōbhā-dēkhavaiyā binu bitta hī bikaihaiṁ.
hiyē hēri hari lēta lōnī lalanā samēta,
lōyanani lāhu dēta jahāṁ jahāṁ jaihaiṁ.. 2..
rāma-laṣana-siya-panthakī kathā prthula,
prēma bithakīṁ kahati sumukhi sabai haiṁ.
tulasī tinha sarisa tē'ū bhūribhāga jē'ū,
suni kai sucita tēhi samai samaihaiṁ.. 3..

Lord Ram's Passage Through the Countryside-III

Verse no. 2/37—[The women and the men of the countryside as well as the wayfarers who passed that way wondered with high wonderment about the two noble princes, Lord Ram and Laxman, and the pretty princess, Sita, accompanying them, who had come meandering into the forest. 'Who they were' none knoweth aught about them, so they all made their own guesses, some informed while others mere conjectures at the fiat of Fate that had made these two lovely souls sally into the wilderness, treading on the rough path barefoot, and enduring all the great hardships natural to and characteristic of the harsh environs in the forest to which, in all sooth, they weren't accustomed, being princes and princess of a great kingdom.

All those who saw Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita discussed and debated about them animatedly, speculating as from whence they have wandered hither, and whither wouldst they now wend; wouldst they return anon homebound or wouldst they wayfare ahead thither to tarry a while at a place of their fancy and choice ere moving further ahead on their Destiny-decreed destination about which none wot aught. Hereat, someone wise and informed amongst them advised that the three would tarry a while at a place on a hilltop called Chitrakoot, abiding cheerfully amongst sages and hermits who have made the place their dwelling, whereat someone else praised these hill-dwellers as well as the animals and plants and birds and other creatures who abound around that hill who would now be able feel blessed and enjoy the same happiness and joy that hast been the privilege of these country folks, albeit more abundantly and for more enduring a time as the Lord would surely spend some good time in and around this hill ere wending his way to the yonder, not to mention of course the good luck of the earth that would be blessed and sanctified by the touch of Lord Ram's holy feet.

Some marveled with exceeding marvel at the sort of stone-hearted parents they art who, clearly appearing to be under the spell of Doom, had lost their senses and wit ere casting such tender and lovely children to the sufferings and harsh conditions of the wilderness; some proffered that they have come hither voluntarily for sight-seeing, and are making an outdoor excursion to enjoy the pleasant sights and sounds and smells of the lust green countryside and the surrounding verdant forest; someone else opined that it was the writ of Destiny that had brought them here; still others were sure that the three children of a great and noble king had come amidst

them, the commoners, with the sole object to oblige them, whereat someone agreed and suggested that it was naught aught but their own good luck and great fortune that had maneuvered things in such a way that these two princes and the princess wouldst come so long a distance to meet them at a place where they lived, so that they, the ordinary folks who were denied all comfort, happiness, joy and bliss of life till that day, could get the reward of their eyes and feel extremely privileged by way of getting acquainted with these three exalted souls even without stirring from their hearth and leaving their homes for any whit, for in all sooth it would naught otherwise have been possible for the ordinary men and women to have such a rarest of rare privilege that even the great sages, hermits and ascetics, not to say of the gods, deem lucky to have.

Howbeit the country folks were sore perplexed at the coming into the forest of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita, wondering with great amazement at the decree of Destiny to which none can gainsay, albeit they were all astonished with exceeding astonishment when they marked the beguiling charm, the extraordinary beauty, the remarkable politeness, the good mannerisms, the pleasing personality, the friendly demeanours and the excellent virtues and qualities of the three wayfaring strangers who had come meandering their way majestically to their villages and hamlets.

At the same time as thanking their stars and their good luck as well as the destiny-writer Creator that he had been so kind, benevolent and magnanimous towards them that he has so cleverly devised a device whereby he has given them the rare opportunity to see Lord Ram and his two companions from such close a quarter till the treasury of their eyes were filled with the treasure of this divine view, and their minds and hearts had their fill of drinking this nectar, they were also sore grieved and sorrowful and distressed at the plight of the two princes and the princess who had been subjected to such miseries and sufferings that shouldn't have been their lot at all, for that they had to walk barefoot on an uncompromising rough and hard terrain with their tender feet, had naught even a shade to protect them from the beating of the sun, or any other sort of basic comfort that they were surely accustomed to.

Further, realizing that aught good comes to a quick end, they decided to make the best of these golden moments by intently and attentively, and shunning all distractions, watching the enchanting view of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita, and then ensuring that this image is etched clearly and sharply on the walls of their mind and sub-conscious even as they indelibly impressed it on the pages of their memory and enshrined it within the secret chambers of their subtle heart to ensure privacy and safety of this image from getting lost.

Therefore, the passage of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita through the far-flung realm of the countryside left in its wake a trail of mystified and dazed folks, the residents of the wayside villages and hamlets as well as the wayfarers on their onwards journey to their destinations who had haply happened to meet the Lord on the winding path. Some were sore distressed whilst others were exceedingly glad, but all of them were nevertheless stunned, amazed and awestruck at the beguiling and enchanting sight of the divine Lord and his two companions.

Some were feeling distraught and sorrowful and sad at the cruel fiat if Fate and the merciless nature of Destiny that has made the Lord suffer the way he and his two companions suffereth, while others felt exceedingly blessed, lucky, thankful, glad, happy and joyous at their own god-sent good fortune that enabled them to see Lord Ram and his two companions, his brother Laxman and wife Sita, from up so close, thereby allowing them to reap a rich harvest of spiritual blessedness, deriving immense bliss and happiness of the highest order by this encounter, for which even great sages and hermits and ascetics spend their lifetimes pursuing stringent vows and

undertaking the sternest of measures, but rarely succeed—for in all sooth, all this came to these ordinary folks unbeknown to them!

Meanwhile, in this present verse we go a little back in time when Lord Ram has just arrived at the village. Everyone is eager to know about him and his companions, Sita and Laxman—who they are, from whence have they come and to whither they are going. Since ages countless strangers and travelers had gone that way, but never such curiosity was aroused amongst the country folks. The reason for this is that Lord Ram was not an ordinary human passing through some village as a wayfarer, but an incarnate Supreme Being. And since he was the 'Supreme' amongst the Creator's 'Beings', everything related to Lord Ram was exceptional and divine and blessed so much so that anyone who saw him even from a distant was enchanted by the Lord's charm just as one is covered by the light of the sun during the day even without asking for it.]

'Oh Friend! Ask someone whither would these pedestrians go, from whence have they come, who are they, what is the name of these dark and fair complexioned princes, and will they return back by this path after completion of their mission (in the forest)[1]? (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/20 (stanza no. 2); verse no. 2/35 (stanza no. 3). We shall read in verse no. 2/39, stanza no. 1 herein below that one of the women has answered this query by saying that the travelers who had passed through the village were named Sri Ram and Laxman, and they had come from Ayodhya.]

They (Lord Ram and Laxman) are growing in their youthfulness, their bodies seem to be acquiring the colour of youth, they appear very pleasant and simple to look at, and those who behold their charm, beauty, glamour and magnificence are literally selling themselves free of cost (i.e. all those who see them are exceedingly enchanted by them, and held in thrall by their magnificence and beauty so much so that they have submitted themselves to them and would do their bidding like slaves would do).

The well-built pretty daughter with a chiseled frame (i.e. Sita) who accompanies them appears to steal (i.e. captivate, enchant and enthrall) the mind and intellect of the people by her mere glance.

Wherever they go, they would bestow the benefit (fruit, reward) of possessing eyes to the people[2].' (2).

[[2]The people would feel lucky and glad that they saw them with their own eyes, a sight which they would cherish forever in their lives, for in all sooth and without any gainsay it is the best sight they had ever seen or hope to see with their eyes again in this life.

Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/29 (stanza no. 4); verse no. 2/30 (stanza no. 4); verse no. 2/32 (stanza no. 1) among others.]

On this wise, all the pretty-faced women-folk narrate the immensely marvelous stories of the pedestrian trio, Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita, as they wend their way through the path of the countryside leading to the forest.

Tulsidas asserts that those who involve their mind and intellect in these divine stories (of Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita as they walked on the path to the forest) are as lucky and privileged as those women-folk of the wayside villages and hamlets who had had the privilege of seeing them first hand[3] (3).

[[3]The aim is to fix the mind on Lord Ram, which is tantamount to doing meditation and contemplation. Another aim is the talk about Lord Ram, because this would entail taking the holy name of the Lord repeatedly. Both these methods lead to spiritual bliss, beatitude, joy and happiness. And in due course of time it paves the path for one's liberation and deliverance from this gross mundane world of birth and death with all its grief, horrors and pains.]

(2 / 38)

बहुत दिन बीते सुधि कछु न लही।
गए जो पथिक गोरे–साँवरे सलोने,
सखि ! संग नारि सुकुमारि रही।। 1।।
जानि–पहिचानि बिनु आपुतें, आपुने हुतें,
प्रानहुतें प्यारे प्रियतम उपहीं।
सुधाके, सनेहहूके सार लै सँवारे बिधि
जैसे भावते हैं भाँति जाति न कही।। 2।।
बहुरि बिलोकिबे कबहुक, कहत,
तनु पुलक, नयन जलधार बही।
तुलसी प्रभु सुमिरि ग्रामजुबती सिथिल,
बिनु प्रयास परीं प्रेम सही।। 3।।

(2/38)

bahuta dina bītē sudhi kachu na lahī.
ga'ē jō pathika gōrē-sāṁvarē salōnē,
sakhi! saṅga nāri sukumāri rahī.. 1..
jāni-pahicāni binu āputēṁ, āpunē hutēṁ,
prānahutēṁ pyārē priyatama upahīṁ.
sudhākē, sanēhahūkē sāra lai saṁvārē bidhi
jaisē bhāvatē haiṁ bhāṁti jāti na kahī.. 2..
bahuri bilōkibē kabahuka, kahata,
tanu pulaka, nayana jaladhāra bahī.
tulasī prabhu sumiri grāmajubatī sithila,
binu prayāsa parīṁ prēma sahī.. 3..

Lord Ram's Passage Through the Countryside-IV

Verse no. 2/38—'Oh Friend! Many days have passed, but there is no information yet about the two dark and fair complexioned pedestrians (Lord Ram and Laxman respectively) who were accompanied by a charming lady of a tender and delicate frame (a reference to Sita) (1).

[Refer also to Verse nos. 2/36—2/37, 2/39—2/41 in the context of this verse.]

Those strangers—though completely unknown and alien to us—appeared to be more dear and loveable to us than our own selves, our kith and kin, and all those whom we

have known to be our relatives, near or distant. Forsooth and without doubt, they looked very precious and extremely dear to us as if they were personified forms of our own lives. [Just as a person's life is dearest to him or her, Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman have become extremely dear to all of us, the villagers.]

The Creator has, in all sooth, created them out of the essence drawn from 'Amrit', the elixir of life, as well as from the best of qualities of love and affection. We just cannot describe in words how dear and lovable they are to us (2).

Will we be able to see those pedestrians once again?'

Saying this, the bodies of the common folks living in the countryside along the path taken by Lord Ram to the forest got thrilled, and streams of tears (of affection and remembrance) rolled down from their eyes[1].

Tulsidas observes that by remembering the Lord (Sri Ram), the village women-folk became benumbed with overwhelming emotions, whereat, for all practical purposes, they virtually became true experts (or well-versed) in the art and skill of the eclectic virtues of love, affection and endearment, without making any effort to learn it[2] (3).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/35, stanza no. 4.

[2]In other words, these ordinary rural folks who were rustics, had no knowledge of high culture and society, and did not even know what is the true meaning of having love for someone, or how one behaves and thinks as a lover, had all of a sudden transmewed into great lovers, behaving like experts in this field, and exhibiting expressions and demeanours behoving great lovers. Anyone who observed their behaviour would not doubt that they were experts in the art of showing love and affection and endearment, and were skilled in these qualities.]

(2/39)

आली री! पथिक जे एहि पथ परौं सिधाए ।
ते तौ राम–लषन अवधतें आए।। 1।।
संग सिय सब अंग सहज सोहाए ।
रति–काम–ऋतुपति कोटिक लजाए।। 2।।
राजा दसरथ, रानी कौसिला जाए ।
कैकेयी कुचाल करि कानन पठाए।। 3।।
बचन कुभामिनीके भूपहि क्यों भाए ?
हाय! हाय! राय बाम बिधि भरमाए।। 4।।
कुलगुर सचिव काहू न समुझाए ।
काँच–मनि लै अमोल मानिक गवाँए।। 5।।
भाग मग–लोगनिके, देखन जे पाए ।
तुलसी सहित जिन गुन–गन गाए।। 6।।

(2/39)

ālī rī! pathika jē ēhi patha parauṁ sidhā'ē.
tē tau rāma-laṣana avadhatēṁ ā'ē.. 1..

saṅga siya saba aṅga sahaja sōhā'ē.
rati-kāma-ṛtupati kōṭika lajā'ē.. 2..
rājā dasaratha, rānī kausilā jā'ē.
kaikēyī kucāla kari kānana paṭhā'ē.. 3..
bacana kubhāminīkē bhūpahi kyōṁ bhā'ē?
hāya! hāya! rāya bāma bidhi bharamā'ē.. 4..
kulagura saciva kāhū na samujhā'ē.
kāmc̆a-mani lai amōla mānika gavāmc̆ē.. 5..
bhāga maga-lōganikē, dēkhana jē pā'ē.
tulasī sahita jina guna-gana gā'ē.. 6..

Lord Ram's Passage Through the Countryside-V

Verse no. 2/39—'Oh my dear friend (ālī rī)! The pedestrians who had gone this way two days ago were named Sri Ram and Laxman, and they had come from Ayodhya[1] (1).

[[1]The women of the countryside had gathered together in small and large groups, and were animatedly discussing Lord Ram's passage through the many villages through which Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman passed. This verse is an answer to the query of many amongst them who wanted to know who these travelers were who had passed through the village a while ago, and who had captured the imagination of one and all so much so that everyone who saw them seems to be overwhelmed with affection and love for them. Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/20, stanza no. 2; verse no. 2/35, stanza no. 3; and verse no. 2/37, stanza no. 1.]

They were accompanied by Sita. They were naturally beauteous, enchanting and comely in their forms (i.e. there was no artificiality in their lovliness and attractiveness).

Forsooth, crores (millions; countless) of 'Ratis' (consort of Kamdeo), 'Kamdeo/cupids' (the god of beauty and charm), and 'Rituraaj' (the king of seasons; Spring) felt ashamed or inferior in comparison to them[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/17, stanza no. 1; verse no. 2/24, stanza no. 2.

Here, 'Rati' is compared to Sita, 'Kamdeo' to Lord Ram and Laxman, and the 'Spring season' to the general charm and comeliness of the Lord and his two companions, Sita and Laxman.

All these three entities, i.e. Rati, Kamdeo and Spring, had aforetime been proud of their beauty and charm, but when they saw Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita, all their sense of pride perished. Their radiance and splendour, their magnificence and glamour, their beauty and enchantment faded into oblivion just as the light of a lamp dulls in the presence of the sun.]

He (Lord Ram) is an offspring of king Dasrath and queen Kaushalya. The rascal Kaikeyi, the accursed one, had hatched a conspiracy, wherat she has been sent him to the forest[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/34, stanza no. 2.]

Alas! How come the king (Dasrath) had liked and agreed with the words of that wicked women (Kaikeyi)?

Alas, Alas! An opposed and malevolent Creator had caused an illusion in the mind of the king (when he thought that he is following the principles of 'Dharma', that is, the path of righteousness and probity, when he decided to send Lord Ram to the forest)[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/26, stanza no. 1.

The king had, in some past time, given a word to Kaikeyi that he would grant her two wishes of her choice. She had kept it pending. When she learnt that Lord Ram would be appointed Regent of the kingdom, she, as was destined by Destiny, was instigated by her trusted maid named Manthara to devise an evil plan to install her own son Bharat on the throne, and to prevent the contender Lord Ram from creating any disturbance, she devised a device whereby he would be kept at arm's length, by sending him to exile in the forest. So, to give effect to her pervert intentions, she invoked her pending wishes and prevailed upon the king to fulfill them.

The king was caught in a big quandary—for if he said 'no' it would be tantamount to rescinding on his own promise which would be against the principles of Dharma as it amounted to violating one's own 'word of honour', because for a king his word itself is his Royal Bond. So, caught between the devil and the deep sea, the king kept silent. But his silence was like his subtle approval for what Kaikeyi demanded—banishment of Lord Ram to the forest. And therefore, the king cannot say that he is not to be blamed or cursed for all the sufferings that Lord Ram had to endure because of some archaic laws and whimsical decisions taken by someone else in a fit of emotion.

This is what this friend alludes to. She means to say that the king thought that he is doing some great thing by honouring his words, but he forgot that circumstances have changed, and a wise king is one who adapts his strategy according to the prevailing situation. It is foolhardy and stupidity of the highest order to apply one rule at all times, for what is good once may be ruinous at some other time.

The king was deluded in his belief that history would praise him for being steadfast to his words, but rather he would go down as one who was so depraved that he allowed himself to become a slave of a wicked woman who was selfish, heartless and pervert in mind and intellect, and inspite of this he had meekly submitted to her senseless demands.]

Not even the clan's Guru (sage Vasistha) or the ministers (e.g. Sumant) advised him (against what ruinous actions he had taken by falling in the trap of Kaikeyi).

He (the king) had picked up a glass bead and lost an immensely priceless gem in the bargain!' (5).

Those wayside people who physically saw them (Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita) are most fortunate and privileged ones.

Tulsidas says that he, accompanied by those who sing the Lord's glories, are also very lucky and are equally fortunate (like these village folks who had seen Lord Ram personally)[5] (6).

[[5]Tulsidas clearly means that it is possible to easily attain Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, the Parmatma or the Supreme Atma or the Supreme Soul of creation by the simple method of thinking and speaking about the Lord. This easily bestows upon the devotee the same spiritual bliss and beatitude that great sages, hermits and ascetics obtain by following other more arduous path of spiritual elevation.]

सखि ! जबतें सीतासमेत देखे दोउ भाई ।
तबतें परै न कल, कछू न सोहाई ।। 1 ।।
नखसिख नीके, नीके निरखि निकाई ।
तन–सुधि गई, मन अनत न जाई ।। 2 ।।
हेरनि–हँसनि हिय लिये हैं चोराई ।
पावन–प्रेम–बिबस भई हौं पराई ।। 3 ।।
कैसे पितु–मातु प्रिय परिजन–भाई ।
जीवत जीवके जीवन बनहि पठाई ।। 4 ।।
समउ सो चित करि हित अधिकाई ।
प्रीति ग्रामबधुनकी तुलसिहु गाई ।। 5 ।।

(2/40)

sakhi! jabatēṁ sītāsamēta dēkhē dō'u bhā'ī.
tabatēṁ parai na kala, kachū na sōhā'ī.. 1..
nakhasikha nīkē, nīkē nirakhi nikā'ī.
tana-sudhi ga'ī, mana anata na jā'ī.. 2..
hērani-haṁsani hiya liyē haiṁ cōrā'ī.
pāvana-prēma-bibasa bha'ī hauṁ parā'ī.. 3..
kaisē pitu-mātu priya parijana-bhā'ī.
jīvata jīvakē jīvana banahi paṭhā'ī.. 4..
sama'u sō cita kari hita adhikā'ī.
prīti grāmabadhunakī tulasihu gā'ī.. 5..

Lord Ram's Passage Through the Countryside-VI

Verse no. 2/40—'Oh Friend! Ever since we have seen the two brothers (Lord Ram and Laxman) with Sita, we have not found peace and comfort for ourselves, nor do anything give us rest or happiness; it appears to us that it was not yesterday that we saw them, but it is today itself[1] (1).

[[1]That is to say, our heart, mind and sub-conscious are completely engrossed and submerged in the thoughts of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita, hereat we have lost all peace of mind and restfulness at heart. To wit, we have lost all interest in all the routine affairs of our lives and homestead, and even those things or persons that evoked interest in us not long ago have now become a cause of irritation and annoyance, for we like to be left alone and allowed to enjoy the sweet memories of the Lord. We have become immune to all the charms of the world, and naught save the memories of Lord Ram gives solace and succour to us.

Another important point to note is that these women adore all the three, viz. Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita, equally. This is apparent in umpteen numbers of verses

we have read till now. Even here, they recall the sight of the 'two brothers with Sita'. This fact eliminates the remotest of possibilities of any sort of negative connotation to the love and affection that these women-folk have for Lord Ram—for it is pure, distilled and uncorrupt love of the individual's soul for the Parent Soul, the 'Parmatma'. This understanding is of utmost importance to correctly interpret the verses of Geetawali.]

They were pretty and handsome from the toe-nail to the tuft on the head. By having a good look at them we were steadily losing awareness of our environs (literally our bodies and surroundings), and the mind does not find comfort and solace anywhere else now (for we aren't able to shake-off and forget the charming sight of Lord Ram from our mind and heart) (2).

His bewitching glances and pleasing smiles have stolen my mind and intellect so much so that I have become an alien even to myself[2] (3).

[[2]That is to say, I have lost awareness of myself; I am not what I used to be. My behaviour has become odd, and I don't even recognize even my kith and kin. I have become indifferent to my chores, and have begun to dislike everything I had liked. Verily they say that I am like one who is 'possessed'. Indeed, the thoughts of Lord Ram has 'possessed' me, I am smitten by love, and I am like a love-lorn person who loses all interest in all things, becomes restless and careless of his own welfare, and spends time brooding and sighing even as he remains submerged in the thoughts of his beloved.]

What kind of heartless mother, father, dear ones and brothers are they who have sent him (Lord Ram)—who is akin to the very life of all creatures—to the forest while still being alive themselves[3] (4).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/26, stanza no. 1.

Lord Sri Ram is the 'Parmatma', the 'Supreme Atma' or the 'Supreme Soul' of creation. This 'Atma' is the essence of life as it is nothing but pure Consciousness. Anything alive has consciousness in it; without 'consciousness' there is no life. In simple terms it means that once the parents and others who were close to Lord Ram had sent him out of Ayodhya, it is great wonder that they had survived and manage to live in peace—for it is impossible to live without the Atma. And according to these villagers, since they did survive it shows that they had cruel hearts. They should have rather died instantly due to the agony of separation.

But unknown to these good ladies, the citizens of Ayodhya loved Lord Ram no less than they did. This is evident when the whole city ran after the Lord as he moved out of the city gates. Later, when Lord Ram evaded them by playing a trick, the forlorn and heart-broken citizens returned home, and managed to survive the agony of separation from the Lord in the same way as these ladies—by keeping their mind and heart submerged in the sweet memories of the Lord and managing to survive the ordeal in the hope that one day of the days the Lord would come back to them.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Doha no. 86.]

By remembering those wonderful moments (that had generated ecstasy and profound affection for the Lord amongst the common people of the countryside), there is

enhancement of the virtues of love, affection, devotion and endearment towards the Lord for anyone who recalls those moments.

This is why Tulsidas has sung that virtue of affection, love and endearment of the village folk towards the Lord (because it helps to kindle devotion and submission for Lord Ram in the heart and mind of Tulsidas too) (5).

राग केदारा

(2/41)

जबतें सिधारे यहि मारग लषन–राम,
जानकी सहित, तबतें न सुधि लही है।
अवध गए धौं फिरि, कैधौं चढ़े बिंध्यगिरि,
कैधौं कहुँ रहे, सो कछू, न काहू कही है।। 1।।
एक कहै, चित्रकूट निकट नदीके तीर,
परनकुटीर करि बसे, बात सही है।
सुनियत, भरत मनाइबेको आवत हैं,
होइगी पै सोई, जो बिधाता चित्त चही है।। 2।।
सत्यसंध, धरम–धुरीन रघुनाथजूको,
आपनी निबाहिबे, नृपकी निरबही है।
दस–चारि बरिस बिहार बन पदचार,
करिबे पुनीत सैल, सर–सरि, मही है।। 3।।
मुनि–सुर–सुजन–समाजके सुधारि काज,
बिगरि बिगरि जहाँ जहाँ जाकी रही है।
पुर पाँव धारिहैं, उधारिहैं तुलसीहू से जन,
जिन जानि कै गरीबी गाढ़ी गही है।। 4।।

rāga kēdārā

(2/41)

jabatēṁ sidhārē yahi māraga laṣana-rāma,
jānakī sahita, tabatēṁ na sudhi lahī hai.
avadha ga'ē dhauṁ phiri, kaidhauṁ caṛhē bindhyagiri,
kaidhauṁ kahuṁ rahē, sō kachū, na kāhū kahī hai.. 1..
ēka kahai, citrakūṭa nikaṭa nadīkē tīra,
paranakuṭīra kari basē, bāta sahī hai.
suniyata, bharata manā'ibēkō āvata haiṁ,
hō'igī pai sō'ī, jō bidhātā citta cahī hai.. 2..
satyasandha, dharama-dhurīna raghunāthajūkō,
āpanī nibāhibē, nr̥pakī nirabahī hai.
dasa-cāri barisa bihāra bana padacāra,
karibē punīta saila, sara-sari, mahī hai.. 3..
muni-sura-sujana-samājakē sudhāri kāja,

bigari bigari jahāmँ jahāmँ jākī rahī hai.
pura pāmँva dhārihaiṁ, udhārihaiṁ tulasīhū sē jana,
jina jāni kai garībī gāṛhī gahī hai.. 4..

The Stories the People tell in the wake of Lord Ram's passage through the countryside

{The next verse describes how the people of the countryside, those who had some knowledge of the developments at Ayodhya that led to Lord Ram's departure for the forest, as well as those who had no such knowledge but were eager to learn more about the Lord from those who had seen him or had heard of him, discussed the events of the past and what could possibly happen next after Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita had passed through their villages.

The news of Lord Ram going to the forest had spread far and wide like wild-fire from village to village, by way of word of mouth, to distant parts of the realm, carried forth by village messengers as well as by the wayfarers and traders who happened to have haply come across the Lord and his two companions while on their way. Everyone, from a child to a grown-up, was eager to hear more about the Lord, especially when they came to learn of the Lord's exceptional charm, friendliness and simplicity. They were all awe-struck, and wondered about the developments with amazement as well as vexation. Many of the hearers made wild guesses, while others made logical deductions about all the possibilities that can unfold in the future.]

Verse no. 2/41—[Some amongst the gathered village folk say that—] 'Ever since Lord Sri Ram and Laxman, accompanied by Sita, had gone ahead through this path, there is no information about them.

Whether they returned to Ayodhya, climbed the Vindhyachal mountains, or went somewhere else—no one has said anything about it (i.e. no one is certain where they have gone) (1).'

[Some others say that—] 'They (Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita) have erected a thatched hut on the banks of river Mandakini near Chitrakoot and have taken up a dwelling there—this is probably very true[1].

It is heard that Bharat is coming to try and seek rapprochement and reconciliation with Lord Ram (and persuade the Lord to return, even offering to live himself in the forest for fourteen years in lieu of the Lord)[2], but the end result depends on what the Creator has in his mind[3] (2).

[[1]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 132—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 134;

(ii) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/42—2/50; Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/18; and

(iii) Kavitawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/141—1/143.

[2]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 177—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 184; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 192; Doha no. 222; (iii) Doha no. 239—to Doha no. 241; (iv) from Doha no. 259—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 263; and finally, (v) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 297—to Doha no. 308.

Special attention is to be paid to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 269 where Bharat has explicitly made this offer.

(b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/64—2/78.

[3]It was absolutely necessary that Lord Ram stayed on in the forest if the primary reason for Lord Vishnu coming down to the mortal world in the form of Lord Ram was to be fulfilled—which was to eliminate the demons. So, the gods contrived a method whereby the mind and intellect of Bharat was influenced and he finally agreed to return to Ayodhya and let Lord Ram remain in the forest for fourteen years, but subject to the condition that the Lord would not spend one single day past the fourteen years in exile and would return immediately on the expiry of this time frame. Bharat vowed that if one day passed after this time, he would die.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, (i) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 265—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 266; Doha no. 313 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8; (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 1 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8; and

(b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/76—to 2/78.]

The king (Dasrath) proved himself true to his words (by keeping his vows and dying for it). Now it is the turn of Sri Raghunath (Lord Ram) to keep his words, for he is very diligent in upholding the sanctioned code of conduct known as 'Dharma', an expert in it, and is an ocean of truthfulness as well[4].

Hence, he would wander in the forest for fourteen years on foot, and in the process would make the mountains, the lakes, the rivers and the earth, et al, purified and sanctified by the steps of his holy feet and the aura of his divine presence[5] (3).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 28.

One of the cardinal principles of Dharma (laws of noble conduct and righteous behaviour) is to speak the truth whatever its consequences, and not rescind on one's word of honour no matter if it costs one's life. The rulers of Ayodhya who descended from the great king Raghu were especially renowned for upholding this noble principle of being unflinchingly and boldly Truthful. Since Dasrath had kept this noble tradition by preferring to die and inviting uncountable curse and infamy upon himself by sending Lord Ram to the forest just because he didn't want to go back on his words of honour given to Kaikeyi, albeit in some long past time that others would have deemed superceded and nullified by the passage of time and changed circumstances, it is also expected that now Lord Ram would uphold this great tradition of the family by keeping the words he had given to his father that he would go to the forest for fourteen years and that Bharat should get the crown of Ayodhya in his stead as his step-mother Kaikeyi had desired. These words of honour given to Kaikeyi by Lord Ram are clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 42.

[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 113 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 136; (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 139.]

Verily and in all sooth, wherever there are sages, hermits, seers, gods, saints and mendicants who are finding themselves in difficulties due to any cause whatsoever will now be redeemed by him (Lord Sri Ram) during his sojourn in the forest (when the Lord would go and meet them personally to bless them and their souls)[6], and having done so he would go back to his capital city (of Ayodhya).

Besides them, he (Lord Ram) would also redeem and provide liberation and deliverance (from the fetters of this mundane world, the cycle of birth and death, and their accompanying miseries and tribulations) to his servants and devotees who, like Tulsidas, have diligently held on to the virtues of simplicity and humility ("garībī gāṛhī gahī hai"; in the hope that one day of the days in their lives they would be blessed by the merciful and compassionate Lord Ram)[7] (4).'

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 137.

[7]Lord Sri Ram has a special tender feeling towards the underdogs, the humble, simple, meek, weak, lowly and downtrodden people. So, by possessing these qualities, Tulsidas is assured of getting Lord Ram's special attention, grace, compassion, mercy and benevolence.

In this last stanza, as is his wont, Tulsidas has used the speaker, in this case one of the many common people of the countryside, to ressure himself of his liberation and deliverance by the virtue of remembrance and devotion for Lord Ram. In this context, the reader should also refer to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/37 (stanza no. 3), verse no. 2/39 (stanza no. 6), and verse no. 2/40 (stanza no. 5) among many other such verses where this sentiment of Tulsidas is clearly expressed.]

राग सारंग

(2/42)

ये उपही कोउ कुँवर अहेरी।
स्याम गौर, धुन–बान–तूनधर चित्रकूट अब आइ रहे, री।। 1।।
इन्हहि बहुत आदरत महामुनि, समाचार मेरे नाह कहे, री।
बनिता–बंधु समेत बसे बन, पितु हित कठिन कलेस सहे, री।। 2।।
बचन परसपर कहति किरातिनि, पुलक गात, जल नयन बहे, री।
तुलसी प्रभुहि बिलोकति एकटक, लोचन जनु बिनु पलक लहे, री।। 3।।

rāga sāraṅga

(2/42)

yē upahī kō'u kum̐vara ahērī.
syāma gaura, dhuna-bāna-tūnadhara citrakūṭa aba ā'i rahē, rī.. 1..
inhahi bahuta ādarata mahāmuni, samācāra mērē nāha kahē, rī.
banitā-bandhu samēta basē bana, pitu hita kaṭhina kalēsa sahē, rī.. 2..
bacana parasapara kahati kirātini, pulaka gāta, jala nayana bahē, rī.
tulasī prabhuhi bilōkati ēkaṭaka, lōcana janu binu palaka lahē, rī.. 3..

Verse no. 2/42—[This verse is a continuation of the discussion between the commoners described in the previous verse no. 2/41 herein above. The speaker in the present case is a "tribal woman", a "Kriaatini"—see stanza no. 3.]

[Someone else amongst the women-folk, this time one of the tribals, joined the discussion to make her own guess about who the two princes were, and where they had gone, saying—] 'Oh Friend! These alien (stranger) princes are probably on a hunting mission. These dark and fair complexioned boys bearing bows, arrows and quivers have taken up residence now on the hills of Chitrakoot (1).

My husband has given me this news (information) that great hermits and sages are showing great respect, honour and reverence to them[1].

He (Lord Sri Ram) has come and taken his dwelling in the forest, accompanied by his wife (Sita) and brother (Laxman), and has suffered immensely for the sake of his father's words[2].' (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 134 along with its preceding Chaupai line noa. 1-8.

[2]Refer to note appended to verse no. 2/41, stanza no. 3 herein above.]

In this way, the forest-dwelling tribal women ("kirātini") talk among themselves, their bodies are thrilled, and tears are streaming down their eyes*.

Tulsidas observes that on seeing Lord Sri Ram, their eyes appear to have become like those eyes that don't have lids—that is, they gazed at Lord Ram without blinking while the Lord was passing in front of them, and later on they stared unblinkingly into the distant horizon, down the path Lord Ram had taken on his onwards journey to the forest[3].

[[3]The women-folk, as we have already read in countless verses heretofore, were completely dazed and held in thrall of Lord Ram's bewitching charm when they saw the Lord so much so that their eyes remained opened without blinking once.

And this dazed condition of the people continued even in the wake of the Lord's passage onwards on his journey.

This phenomenon of one not blinking at all for a certain length of time when one sees some stunning sight that overwhelms one's mind and intellect with amazement and awe is a figure of speech to refer to one's stunned and dazed mental condition, rather than to the actual failure of the eyelids to close and open (blink) which is an involuntary physical action natural to the body.

To wit, the view of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita was extremely and exceptionally enchanting, hereat the women-folk who rushed to see this sight were simply overwhelmed by its magnificence and beauty so much so that they forgot to bother about natural physical processes of the body, of which 'closing and opening the eyelid' is one. They didn't want to waste even a fraction of a second, and wished to make the best use of the eye and the time while the Lord was still within view, for soon this chance would be lost forever as the Lord would move ahead on his onwards journey to the forest.

And once Lord Ram left the village and wended his way onwards on his journey to the distant horizon, these enchanted good ladies followed the Lord as far as their eyes would allow them!

*Of course 'tears rolled down their eyes'—these tears were as much due to their love and affection for the Lord as they were for the grief and pain that overtook them when the Lord went away and they heard of the conditions under which he has come to the forest, as also the hardships the Lord would have to bear in the harsh environs of the wild forest.

The 'tears falling from their eyes' was also due to the fact that they had been staring unblinkingly for so long, because this irritated the eye.]

चित्रकूट–वर्णन

राग चंचरी

(2/43)

चित्रकूट अति बिचित्र, सुंदर बन, महि पबित्र,
पावनि पय–सरित सकल मल–निकंदिनी।
सानुज जहँ बसत राम, लोक–लोचनाभिराम,
बाम अंग बामाबर बिस्व–बंदिनी।। 1।।
रिषिबर तहँ छंद बास, गावत कलकंठ हास,
कीर्तन उनमाय काय क्रोध–कंदिनी।
बर बिधान करत गान, वारत धन–मान–प्रान,
झरना झर झिँग झिँग जलतरंगिनी।। 2।।
बर बिहारु चरन चारु पाँडर चंपक चनार
करनहार बार पार पुर–पुरंगिनी।
जोबन नव ढरत ढार दुत्त मत्त मृग मराल
मंद मंद गुंजत हैं अलि अलिंगिनी।। 3।।
चितवत मुनिगन चकोर, बैठे निज ठौर ठौर,
अच्छय अकलंक सरद–चंद–चंदिनी।
उदित सदा बन–अकास, मुदित बदत तुलसिदास,
जय जय रघुनंदन जय जनकनंदिनी।। 4।।

citrakūṭa-varṇana

rāga cam̐carī

(2/43)

citrakūṭa ati bicitra, sundara bana, mahi pabitra,
pāvani paya-sarita sakala mala-nikandinī.
sānuja jaham̐ basata rāma, lōka-lōcanābhirāma,
bāma aṅga bāmābara bisva-bandinī.. 1..
riṣibara taham̐ chanda bāsa, gāvata kalakaṇṭha hāsa,
kīrtana unamāya kāya krōdha-kandinī.
bara bidhāna karata gāna, vārata dhana-māna-prāna,
jharanā jhara jhim̐ga jhim̐ga jalataraṅginī.. 2..

bara bihāru carana cāru pām̐ḍara campaka canāra
karanahāra bāra pāra pura-puraṅginī.
jōbana nava ḍharata ḍhāra dutta matta mr̥ga marāla
manda manda gun̄jata haiṁ ali aliṅginī.. 3..
citavata munigana cakōra, baiṭhē nija ṭhaura ṭhaura,
acchaya akalaṅka sarada-canda-candinī.
udita sadā bana-akāsa, mudita badata tulasidāsa,
jaya jaya raghunandana jaya janakanandinī.. 4..

Description of Chitrakoot-I

Verse no. 2/43—[After passing through the villages, casting his lovable charm on all and sundry, Lord Ram moved ahead and reached the hermitage of sage Valmiki. He asked the sage to tell him a place where he can live peacefully for some time in the forest. The sage then advised him to go to Chitrakoot, a place named after a hill of this name.

The following verses of Geetawali, verse nos. 2/43—to 2/50, describe its natural beauty. This description glorifies the beauty of Mother Nature at her best.

Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 132—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 133; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 136; (iii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 139.

(b) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 7/141—7/143.

(c) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 23-24.]

Chitrakoot is very magical in its charm. It is most enchanting, fabulous and marvelous (to behold as well as to live in).

Its forest is very pleasant and the land is extremely holy and pure. There is a divine and holy river named ‘Payaswini’ (another name of Mandakini) flowing there, a river which is so holy that it is able to destroy all sins and the evil effects of unrighteousness and misdemeanours.

It is the place where Lord Ram, who is appealing and pleasing to the eyes of all the creatures in this world, resides along with his younger brother (Laxman). Sita, who is revered and adored by the world and is like a jewel among women, stays to his (Lord Ram's) left. [According to Hindu custom, a wife always stays on the left hand side of her husband.] (1).

Numerous exalted hermits live there freely, without any sort of mental fear or physical sufferings. They not only compose melodious hymns in honour of the Lord and adulatory songs extolling and lauding the glories of the Lord, but also sing them cheerfully themselves in voices that are melodious and sweet.

Those hermits sing the verses of the Vedas with great respect, and in accordance to the established norms and standards for such chanting or singing. They sacrifice (offer) all their wealth, honour and life on the Lord (Sri Ram). [That is to say, they offer all that they have to Lord Ram as they would do to the deity they worshipped.]

The rivers have swift currents and they make splashing and gurgling sound as they pour water in the form of various water-falls (2).

The women-folk of the surrounding villages sacrifice themselves at the magnificent and most enchanting sight of Lord Ram (i.e. they were all enthralled and captivated by the sight of Lord Ram) who walks barefoot among the trees of 'Pandar' (the Balsam plant with yellow flowers), 'Champak' (the Magnolia flower plant), and 'Chanar' (or Kachnar, the tree Bambinia Variegata, the flowers of which are used as vegetables).

It appears that all the beauty, charm, glamour and radiance associated with the term 'youth' are being cast in a new mould in the form of the majestic view of the Lord.

The deer (i.e. animals) and swans (i.e. birds) are euphoric and cheerful as they move around excitedly, while the male and female species of the black/bumble-bee are buzzing and humming around sweetly (3).

Sitting in their own hermitages in Chitrakoot, the various hermits and sages, who transfix their attention on the thoughts and the divine sight of Lord Ram and Sita, represent the 'Chakor' birds (Indian red-legged partridge) which sits in its perch and gazes constantly and without interruption at the enchanting sight of the full moon, accompanied by its beautiful and enchanting light, that rises in the clear sky during the winter season in Chitrakoot[1].

[[1]Here, the sages and the hermits who live in the dense forest of Chitrakoot and spend their time meditating and contemplating on Lord Ram's divine form and name are like the 'Chakor' birds. The beautiful and enchanting sight of Lord Ram is like the 'full moon', and the equally enchanting sight of Sita accompanying him and giving the Lord an aura of glamour and magnificence is like the 'rays of the moon'. The forest of Chitrakoot where the Lord moves about is like the 'sky' where the full moon moves from one end of the sky to another in the night.]

Tulsidas also fixes his gaze on the divine sight of Lord Ram and Sita, and enthusiastically applauds them most cheerfully, saying, 'Hail Raghunandan (Lord Ram) and Hail Janaknandini (Sita)! Glory to both of you!' (4).

(2 / 44)

फटिकसिला मृदु बिसाल, संकुल सुरतरु–तमाल
ललित लता–जाल हरति छबि बितानकी।
मंदाकिनि–तटिनि–तीर, मंजुल मृग–बिहग–भीर
धीर मुनिगिरा गभीर सामगानकी।। 1।।
मधुकर–पिक–बरहि मुखर, सुंदर गिरि निरझर झर,
जल–कन घन–छाँह, छन प्रभा न भानकी।
सब ऋतु ऋतुपति प्रभाउ, संतत बहै त्रिबिध बाउ,
जनु बिहार–बाटिका नृप पंच बानकी।। 2।।
बिरचित तहँ परनसाल, अति बिचित्र लषनलाल,
निवसत जहँ नित कृपालु राम–जानकी।
निजकर राजीवनयन पल्लव–दल–रचित सयन,
प्यास परसपर पीयूष प्रेम–पानकी।। 3।।
सिय अँग लिखैं धातुराग, सुमननि भूषन–बिभाग,
तिलक–करनि का कहौं कलानिधानकी।
माधुरी–बिलास–हास, गावत जस तुलसिदास,

(2/44)

phaṭikasilā mr̥du bisāla, saṅkula surataru-tamāla
lalita latā-jāla harati chabi bitānakī.
mandākini-taṭini-tīra, man̐jula mr̥ga-bihaga-bhīra
dhīra munigirā gabhīra sāmagānakī.. 1..
madhukara-pika-barahi mukhara, sundara giri nirajhara jhara,
jala-kana ghana-chām̐ha, chana prabhā na bhānakī.
saba r̥tu r̥tupati prabhā'u, santata bahai tribidha bā'u,
janu bihāra-bāṭikā nr̥pa pan̐ca bānakī.. 2..
biracita tham̐ paranasāla, ati bicitra laṣanalāla,
nivasata jham̐ nita kr̥pālu rāma-jānakī.
nijakara rājīvanayana pallava-dala-racita sayana,
pyāsa parasapara pīyūṣa prēma-pānakī.. 3..
siya am̐ga likhaiṁ dhāturāga, sumanani bhūṣana-bibhāga,
tilaka-karani kā kahauṁ kalānidhānakī.
mādhurī-bilāsa-hāsa, gāvata jasa tulasidāsa,
basati hr̥daya jōrī priya parama prānakī.. 4..

Picturesque Beauty of Chitrakoot-II

Verse no. 2/44—The large 'Phatikshila' (a huge boulder made of quartz) became very soft (to give comfort to Sri Ram). [It is on this boulder that the Lord used to sit near the river front to relax.]

The black Catechu plants (the 'Tamaal Tree'; the *Xanthocymus Epictorius* plant) are like the 'Kalpa Tree' (the evergreen tree of the gods), and the cluster of attractive and beautiful creepers growing on them seem to steal the beauty and charm of beautiful canopies of creepers found in beautifully maintained gardens.

There is always a throng of pleasing and amiable (non-violent) animals and birds on the banks of the river Mandakini, while the sound of the sonorous singing of the hymns of the Sam Veda by the learned hermits and sages permeates all around in the atmosphere (1).

Bumble/black-bees, cuckoos and peacocks continuously create a cacophonous clamour; the waterfalls cascade down (the slopes of) beautiful mountains; the sky is overcast with rain-laden dark clouds so that there is no sunlight (and therefore, no heat) even for a moment.

The charming effect of the Spring season perpetually prevails there (in Chitrakoot) through all the seasons of the year, and three types of breeze (cool, soft and fragrant) blows constantly.

It seems that this forest is the playground of Kamdeo/cupid (the god of beauty and charm) (2).

There (in Chitrakoot), a very strange and marvellous thatched hut has been erected by Laxman where the merciful and gracious Lord Sri Ram and Sita always live.

The lotus-eyed Lord Sri Ram has made a bed of newly plucked and soft leaves with his own hands, because both the lover and his beloved are thirsty to drink the nectar of love and affection towards each other[1] (3).

[[1]Lord Sri Ram wished to ensure that the best of comfort could be provided to Sita in the prevailing circumstances. And like a true and devoted wife, Sita too wished to ensure that Sri Ram could be given the maximum comfort that was possible. This is the basic meaning of this stanza. We must remember that Tulsidas was very careful in what he was writing—he had always maintained the highest standards of etiquette, decency, decorum, propriety and reverence while describing Lord Sri Ram's story. No crooked or pervert or vulgar inference should be derived from this stanza and the one following it below.]

Lord Sri Ram makes tattoos on Sita's body (using metals and 'Mehadi' i.e. myrtle, the leaves of this plant give red colour which is used by ladies to decorate their palms, feet etc.), and also makes ornaments of flowers for her.

How can I (Tulsidas) describe the (beauty, attractiveness of) the Tilak created by Lord Sri Ram who is an expert artist[2]?

This couple (Lord Ram and Sita), who is most endearing and dearer-than life, resides eternally in the heart of Tulsidas, and he sings about their days spent in happiness and joy, as well as their glories and fames, while they stayed in Chitrakoot (4).

[[2]This "Tilak mark" is put by Sri Ram on his own forehead as well as that of Sita.

Again, the words Tilak Mark are clearly indicative of where the myrtle or paint was applied on Sita—it was used to decorate her face in the absence of ornaments that she used to wear at Ayodhya. We must remember that no mirror was available in the forest. So, probably, Sita had asked her husband to make the Tilak on her forehead because she couldn't do it herself without a seeing glass.

Lord Ram did not wish Sita to feel sad on this account that she couldn't even make the Tilak mark on her forehead in the absence of a mirror. So what choice did he have except to keep her happy and not let her feel deprived because of a lack of the viewing mirror or even the basics of decorative ornaments which all women are used to in India.

Therefore, when Tulsidas narrates this scene of Lord Ram putting the Tilak mark on the forehead of Sita or making "tattoos" on her hand etc., he has not violated any norms of decency or compromised in anyway whatsoever here.]

राग केदारा

(2/45)

लोने लाल लषन, सलोने राम, लोनी सिय,
चारु चित्रकूट बैठे सुरतरु–तर हैं।
गोरे–साँवरे सरीर पीत नीलनीरज–से
प्रेम–रूप–सुखमाके मनसिज–सर हैं।। 1।।
लोने नख–सिख, निरुपम–निरखन जोग,

बड़े उर कंधर बिसाल भुज बर हैं।
लोने लोने लोचन, जटनिके मुकुट लोने,
लोने बदननि जीते कोटि सुधाकर हैं।। 2।।
लोने लोने धनुष, बिसिष कर–कमलनि,
लोने मुनिपट, कटि लोने सरघर हैं।
प्रिया प्रिय बंधुको दिखावत बिटप, बेलि,
मंजु कुंज, सिलातल, दल, फूल, फर हैं।। 3।।
ऋषिनके आश्रम सराहैं, मृग–नाम कहैं,
लागी मधु, सरित झरत निरझर हैं।
नाचत बरहि नीके, गावत मधुप–पिक,
बोलत बिहंग, नभ–जल–थल–चर हैं।। 4।।
प्रभुहि बिलोकि मुनिगन पुलके कहत
भूरिभाग भये सब नीच नारि–नर हैं।
तुलसी सो सुख–लाहु लूटत किरात–कोल
जाको सिसकत सुर बिधि–हरि–हर हैं।। 5।।

rāga kēdārā

(2/45)

lōnē lāla laṣana, salōnē rāma, lōnī siya,
cāru citrakūṭa baiṭhē surataru-tara haiṁ.
gōrē-sāmv̐varē sarīra pīta nīlanīraja-sē
prēma-rūpa-sukhamākē manasija-sara haiṁ.. 1..
lōnē nakha-sikha, nirupama-nirakhana jōga,
baṛē ura kandhara bisāla bhuja bara haiṁ.
lōnē lōnē lōcana, jaṭanikē mukuṭa lōnē,
lōnē badanani jītē kōṭi sudhākara haiṁ.. 2..
lōnē lōnē dhanuṣa, bisiṣa kara-kamalani,
lōnē munipaṭa, kaṭi lōnē saraghara haiṁ.
priyā priya bandhukō dikhāvata biṭapa, bēli,
maṇjju kuṇja, silātala, dala, phūla, phara haiṁ.. 3..
ṛṣinakē āśrama sarāhaiṁ, mr̥ga-nāma kahaiṁ,
lāgī madhu, sarita jharata nirajhara haiṁ.
nācata barahi nīkē, gāvata madhupa-pika,
bōlata bihaṅga, nabha-jala-thala-cara haiṁ.. 4..
prabhuhi bilōki munigana pulakē kahata
bhūribhāga bhayē saba nīca nāri-nara haiṁ.
tulasī sō sukha-lāhu lūṭata kirāta-kōla
jākō sisakata sura bidhi-hari-hara haiṁ.. 5..

Fascinating Charm of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita While they lived at Chitrakoot

Verse no. 2/45—Son (lāla) Laxman, Lord Sri Ram and Sita—all of them are immensely charming, beautiful and magnificent to behold.

These three are sitting under the Kalpa Tree on the summit of Mt. Chitrakoot which is exceedingly fascinating, attractive and picturesque.

Their bodies are fair and dark complexioned like a yellow and blue lotus flowers respectively (a reference to Laxman and Lord Ram in that order). Verily, they are like two wonderful lotus flowers that embody the virtues of affection, beauty and charm that grow in a pond of Kamdeo/cupid[1] (1).

[[1]Here, 'Chitrakoot' is likened to a beautiful pond or lake belonging to Kamdeo, the patron god of love, beauty and charm, while Lord Sri Ram's dark complexioned body and Laxman's fair complexioned body are compared to the blue and yellow lotuses respectively.]

They (Lord Ram and Laxman) are very charming, matchless in beauty and adorable from the tip of the nails on their toes to the tuft of hair on their heads so much so that they are worth seeing closely[2].

[[2]To wit, the sight of Lord Ram and Laxman is so high wonderful and marvelously enchanting that one would be wiser to have a good look at them carefully just as one would closely watch some extremely wonderful and enchanting sight that catches one's eyes while scanning the landscape for some visual treat that can give comfort to the eye as well as the soul, forsooth such a sight is rare to come across and worthy of admiration and preservation in one's mind and heart for it is like nectar that can be drunk only through the medium of the eye.]

Their chest and shoulders are broad, their arms are strong and muscular, and their eyes and the crown of matted hairs on their heads are also very magnificent.

Indeed, they are so extremely beautiful and beguiling to behold that they have literally won over (trounced the pride of, or put to shame) crores (millions) of Moons by the charm and splendour of their (pretty and attractive) faces[3].

[[3]That is to say, thousands and hundreds of Moons would fade into oblivion when its 'face', i.e. its full disc, which is regarded by poets as a symbol of beauty, charm, attractiveness and magnificence, is compared with the face of Lord Ram and Laxman—so enchanting the two brothers are.] (2).

Beautiful bow and arrow is in his (Lord Ram's) hands, while hermit-like clothes and a quiver of arrows adorns his waist.

Lord Ram shows his beloved (wife Sita; "priyā") and dear brother (Laxman; "priya bandhu") the trees and creepers, the attractive alcoves and canopies made of creepers and leaves and flowers that abound in the numerous groves, the boulders and the rocks, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits etc. (that grow in mighty abundance in and around Mt. Chitrakoot as the Lord wanders around in the forested hill seeing its enchanting sights, enjoying its smells, and marveling at its sounds and wonders) (3).

He praises the hermitages of hermits and sages who live there.

He tells them (Sita, Laxman) the names of the various animals (that roam freely and without fear on the hill).

Everywhere—in all the directions—there is sweetness and pleasantness in great abundance.

Rivers and waterfalls are gurgling, splashing and splurting crystal clear water; the peacock dance ecstatically, the black/bumble-bees and cuckoos are singing merrily, while other birds and creatures living in the sky, on land or water are warbling cheerfully and making attractive calls (4)[4].

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 132 and Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it.]

Seeing the Lord, the sages and hermits feel thrilled and ecstatic as thrill and ecstatic one can be.

Full of amazement and wonderstruck at the good luck of the tribals, called the 'Kiraats and Kols', living in and around Chitrakoot, these exalted sages and hermits exclaim—'Watch and marvel at this wonderful turn of fate that even the lowly men and women folk (of the villages and hamlets surrounding Chitrakoot) are becoming most fortunate and privileged today (because they have had the happy chance to see and interact with Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being, so very friendly, freely and without any inhibitions as if the Lord was one of them).[5]'

Tulsidas says that the fortune and happiness for which even the Lords like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva long for is easily available to these Kiraats and Kols (tribals), and they are virtually getting it free and in abundance (5).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137.]

राग सारंग

(2/46)

आइ रहे जबतें दोउ भाई।
तबतें चित्रकूट–कानन–छबि दिन दिन अधिक अधिक अधिकाई।। 1।।
सीता–राम–लषन–पद–अंकित अवनि सोहावनि बरनि न जाई।
मंदाकिनि मज्जत अवलोकत त्रिबिध पाप, त्रयताप नसाई।। 2।।
उकठेउ हरित भए जल–थलरुह, नित नूतन राजीव सुहाई।
फूलत, फलत, पल्लवत, पलुहत बिटप बेलि अभिमत सुखदाई।। 3।।
सरित–सरनि सरसीरुह संकुल, सदन सँवारि रमा जनु छाई।
कूजत बिहँग, मंजु गुंजत अलि जात पथिक जनु लेत बुलाई।। 4।।
त्रिबिध समीर, नीर, झर झरननि, जहँ तहँ रहे ऋषि कुटी बनाई।
सीतल सुभग सिलनिपर तापस करत जोग–जप–तप मन लाई।। 5।।
भए सब साधु किरात–किरातिनि, राम–दरस मिटि गइ कलुषाई।
खग–मृग मुदित एक सँग बिहरत सहज बिषम बड़ बैर बिहाई।। 6।।
कामकेलि–बाटिका बिबुध–बन–लघु उपमा कबि कहत लजाई।
सकल–भुवन–सोभा सकेलि मनो राम बिपिन बिधि आनि बसाई।। 7।।
बन मिस मुनि, मुनितिय,मुनि–बालक बरनत रघुबर–बिमल–बड़ाई।
पुलक सिथिल तनु, सजल सुलोचनु, प्रमुदित मन जीवन फलु पाई।। 8।।
क्यों कहौं चित्रकूट–गिरि, संपति–महिमा–मोद–मनोहरताई।
तुलसी जहँ बसि लषन–रामसिय आनँद–अवधि अवध बिसराई।। 9।।

rāga sāraṅga

(2/46)

ā'i rahē jabatēṁ dō'u bhā'ī.
tabatēṁ citrakūṭa-kānana-chabi dina dina adhika adhika adhikā'ī.. 1..
sītā-rāma-laṣana-pada-aṅkita avani sōhāvani barani na jā'ī.
mandākini majjata avalōkata tribidha pāpa, trayatāpa nasā'ī.. 2..
ukaṭhē'u harita bha'ē jala-thalaruha, nita nūtana rājīva suhā'ī.
phūlata, phalata, pallavata, paluhata biṭapa bēli abhimata sukhadā'ī.. 3..
sarita-sarani sarasīruha saṅkula, sadana saṁvāri ramā janu chā'ī.
kūjata bihaṁga, manjju guñjata ali jāta pathika janu lēta bulā'ī.. 4..
tribidha samīra, nīra, jhara jharanani, jahaṁ tahaṁ rahē ṛṣi kuṭī banā'ī.
sītala subhaga silanipara tāpasa karata jōga-japa-tapa mana lā'ī.. 5..
bha'ē saba sādhu kirāta-kirātini, rāma-darasa miṭi ga'i kaluṣā'ī.
khaga-mṛga mudita ēka saṁga biharata sahaja biṣama baṛa baira bihā'ī.. 6..
kāmakēli-bāṭikā bibudha-bana-laghu upamā kabi kahata lajā'ī.
sakala-bhuvana-sōbhā sakēli manō rāma bipina bidhi āni basā'ī.. 7..
bana misa muni, munitiya,muni-bālaka baranata raghubara-bimala-baṛā'ī.
pulaka sithila tanu, sajala sulōcanu, pramudita mana jīvana phalu pā'ī.. 8..
kyōṁ kahauṁ citrakūṭa-giri, sampati-mahimā-mōda-manōharatā'ī.
tulasī jahaṁ basi laṣana-rāmasiya ānaṁda-avadhi avadha bisarā'ī.. 9..

Fascinating & Enchanting Beauty and Glory of Chitrakoot-I

Verse no. 2/46—[The matchless beauty and glory of Chitrakoot ever since Lord Ram came to live there has been described by Tulsidas elsewhere also besides Geetawali.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 139; (b) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/141—7/143; and (c) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 23—24.

The following verses of Geetwali describe the glory and magnificence of Chitrakoot. The description is in the present tense because Tulsidas imagines himself to be present there at the time the Lord tarried there, and wishes to make his account of Chitralkoot as true and honest as possible like a trusted scribe who describes events first hand.]

Ever since the two brothers (Lord Ram and Laxman) have taken up residence, the charm and magnificence of the forest of Chitrakoot is increasing day by day (1).

That pleasant land marked by the footprints of Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita is beyond description. By merely taking a bath in or having a Darshan (holy, divine viewing) of river Mandakini, the three types of sins and torments are destroyed[1] (2).

[[1]These three torments that arise due to the effect of sins are called “Traitaaps” = the three (“trai”) torments (“taap”). They are Daivik—related to demi Gods or supernatural forces; Daihik—related to body, such as diseases; and Bhautik—related to terrestrial creatures.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 136.]

Those aquatic and terrestrial plants, which had hitherto withered and lost their charm and glory, have begun to bloom with gladness and vibrancy once again, while the lotuses are enjoying enhanced beauty with the passage of each day.

All types of wonderful trees and creepers that one desires to provide one with comfort, happiness and joy that are so characteristic of Nature at its pristine best are blooming with renewed vigour and blossoming with verdant greenery, becoming laden with fragrant flowers of all colours, succulent fruits and colourful leaves[2] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precedes Doha no. 137.]

Lotuses are blooming in abundance in the ponds and the rivers as if Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity) has taken good care of her household and has taken up dwelling there with a cheerful mind.

Birds are chirping and warbling merrily around, and there is a sweet humming and buzzing of bumble/black-bees—as if they are all inviting travelers to come hither by their pleasing words of invitation[3] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 137 and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it.]

Cool, soft and fragrant breeze is blowing; water is cascading majestically down waterfalls.

Great sages and hermits have erected huts here and there and dwell in them. Meanwhile, ascetics are doing Japa (chanting or repetition of the holy Mantras), Tapa (penances, austerities) and Yoga (meditation, contemplation) on the cool and pleasant rocks and boulders (that are strewn along the banks of river Mandakini and at randomly at other places in the forest), with due concentration and vigilance[4] (5).

[[4]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/42 (stanza nos. 1-2); (b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 134 along with Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede it.]

All the male and female Kiraats (forest dwelling inhabitants; the tribals) have become one like saints. Their stains (blemishes, bad habits, sins and vices that had tainted their character and were hitherto characteristic of them) have gradually faded away on having had the Darshan (divine, holy viewing) of Lord Sri Ram[5].

The birds and animals have forgotten their inherent and natural animosity and incompatibility towards each other, and they live, play and move together[6] (6).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 135.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 138.]

A poet feels ashamed (or incompetent) when comparing it (Chitrakoot) with the humble playground of Kamdeo/cupid (a forest called Nandan Van) because it seems that the Creator has collected all the available beauty, charm and glamour that are available in all the Bhuvans (the different sectors of creation, i.e. the whole world) (sakala-bhuvana-sōbhā), and has placed them at one place called "rāma bipina", literally 'Lord Sri Ram's forest' (here meaning Chitrakoot) (7).

The sages, their consorts and their children praise and sing the glory and fame of Lord Sri Ram on the pretext of describing the remarkable beauty of Chitrakoot (which has

acquired immense importance, glory and renown ever since Lord Sri Ram has taken up his dwelling in it)[7].

Verily and in all sooth, by doing so they get the fruit (reward) of this life (i.e. they feel lucky to be alive at a time when Lord Sri Ram also haply happens to be abiding there in their midst), become thrilled, spellbound, euphoric and benumbed (due to affection for Lord Ram and the extreme sense of joy and happiness this communion with the Lord brings to their lives), and have their eyes filled with tears (of gratitude and affection for the Lord) and the mind fully contented and cheerful (because they can desire for nothing more)[8] (8).

[[7]To wit, since Lord Ram is a personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being from whom 'Nature', with its stupendous beauty and charm, has emerged, so therefore when these hermits and their kith laud the glory of Chitrakoot, which has, for all practical purposes, come to be identified with the beauty and charm of Lord Ram, they are actually praising the cosmic form of Lord Ram as 'Nature' whose beauty is beyond description by words with their limited reach.

The 'children' mentioned here may have been the off-springs or their disciples who stayed at their hermitages for education. Remember: In ancient times, it was not uncommon to find forest dwelling sages who were householders, with their families abiding with them in the hermitages they established in the serene environs of the remote forests. Here, they lived in peace and solace to pursue their spiritual objectives without being disturbed by the affairs of humdrum life as would have been the case if they had lived in towns and cities. The young disciples who came to their hermitages to study were treated by them as their sons.

[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 139.]

Tulsidas expresses his inability to describe the richness of the wealth of glory, the immensity of the magnificence, the magnitude of the fascinating beauty, and the stupendity of the majestic grandeur of Chitrakoot where Lord Sri Ram—who is like a gold-standard or the benchmark of extreme happiness and bliss—has come to live, accompanied by his brother Laxman and wife Sita, after forsaking the pleasures and comforts of Ayodhya[9] (9).

[[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 139.]

राग गौरी

(2/47)

देखत चित्रकूट–बन मन अति होत हुलास।
सीता–राम–लषन–प्रिय, तापस–बृंद–निवास।। 1।।
सरित सोहावनि पावनि, पापहरनि पय नाम।
सिद्ध–साधु–सुर–सेवति देति सकल मन–काम।। 2।।
बिटप–बेलि नव किसलय, कुसुमित सघन सुजाति।
कंदमूल, जल–थलरुह अगनित अनबन भाँति।। 3।।
बंजुल मंजु, बकुलकुल, सुरतरु, ताल तमाल।
कदलि, कदंब, सुचंपक, पाटल, पनस, रसाल।। 4।।

भूरुह भूरि भरे जनु छबि–अनुराग–सभाग।
बन बिलोकि लघु लागहिं बिपुल बिबुध–बन–बाग।। 5।।
जाइ न बरनि राम–बन, चितवत चित हरि लेत।
ललित–लता–द्रुम–संकुल मनहु मनोज निकेत।। 6।।
सरित–सरनि सरसीरुह फूले नाना रंग।
गुंजत मंजु मधुपबन, कूजत बिबिध बिहंग।। 7।।
लषन कहेउ रघुनंदन देखिय बिपिन–समाज।
मानहु चयन मयन–पुर आयउ प्रिय ऋतुराज।। 8।।
चित्रकूटपर राउर जानि अधिक अनुरागु।
सखासहित जनु रतिपति आयउ खेलन फागु।। 9।।
झिल्लि झाँझ, झरना डफ नव मृदंग निसान।
भेरि उपंग भृंग रव, ताल कीर, कलगान।।10।।
हंस कपोत कबूतर बोलत चक्क चकोर।
गावत मनहु नारिनर मुदित नगर चहुँ ओर।।11।।
चित्र–बिचित्र बिबिध मृग डोलत डोंगर डाँग।
जनु पुरबीथिन बिहरत छैल सँवारे स्वाँग।।12।।
नाचहिं मोर, पिक गावहिं, सुर बर राग बँधान।
निलज तरुन–तरुनी जनु खेलहिं समय समान।।13।।
भरि भरि सुंड करिनि–करि जहँ तहँ डारहिं बारि।
भरत परसपर पिचकनि मनहु मुदित नर–नारि।।14।।
पीठि चढ़ाइ सिसुन्ह कपि कूदत डारहि डार।
जनु मुँह लाइ गेरु–मसि भए खरनि असवार।।15।।
लिये पराग सुमनरस डोलत मलय–समीर।
मनहु अरगजा छिरकत, भरत गुलाल–अबीर।।16।।
काम कौतुकी यहि बिधि प्रभुहित कौतुक कीन्ह।
रीझि राम रतिनाथहि जग–बिजयी बर दीन्ह।।17।।
दुखवहु मोरे दास जनि, मानेहु मोरि रजाइ।
'भलेहि नाथ' माथे धरि आयुस चलेउ बजाइ।।18।।
मुदित किरात–किरातिनि रघुबर–रूप निहारि।
प्रभुगुन गावत नाचत चले जोहारि जोहारि।।19।।
देहिं असीस, प्रसंसहिं मुनि सुर बरषहिं फूल।
गवने भवन राखि उर मूरति मंगलमूल।। 20।।
चित्रकूट–कानन–छबि को कबि बरनै पार।
जहँ सिय–लषनसहित नित रघुबर करहिं बिहार।। 21।।
तुलसिदास चाँचरि मिस कहे राम–गुनग्राम।
गावहिं, सुनहिं नारि–नर, पावहिं सब अभिराम।। 22।।

rāga gaurī

(2/47)

dēkhata citrakūṭa-bana mana ati hōta hulāsa.
sītā-rāma-laṣana-priya, tāpasa-br̥ṁda-nivāsa.. 1..
sarita sōhāvani pāvani, pāpaharani paya nāma.

sid'dha-sādhu-sura-sēvati dēti sakala mana-kāma.. 2..
biṭapa-bēli nava kisalaya, kusumita saghana sujāti.
kandamūla, jala-thalaruha aganita anabana bhāmṫi.. 3..
baṉjula maṉju, bakulakula, surataru, tāla tamāla.
kadali, kadamba, sucampaka, pāṭala, panasa, rasāla.. 4..
bhūruha bhūri bharē janu chabi-anurāga-sabhāga.
bana bilōki laghu lāgahiṁ bipula bibudha-bana-bāga.. 5..
jā'i na barani rāma-bana, citavata cita hari lēta.
lalita-latā-druma-saṅkula manahu manōja nikēta.. 6..
sarita-sarani sarasīruha phūlē nānā raṅga.
guṉjata maṉju madhupabana, kūjata bibidha bihaṅga.. 7..
laṣana kahē'u raghunandana dēkhiya bipina-samāja.
mānahu cayana mayana-pura āya'u priya ṛturāja.. 8..
citrakūṭapara rā'ura jāni adhika anurāgu.
sakhāsahita janu ratipati āya'u khēlana phāgu.. 9..
jhilli jhāmṁjha, jharanā ḍapha nava mṛḍaṅga nisāna.
bhēri upaṅga bhṛṅga rava, tāla kīra, kalagāna..10..
hansa kapōta kabūtara bōlata cakka cakōra.
gāvata manahu nārinara mudita nagara cahuṁ ōra..11..
citra-bicitra bibidha mṛga ḍōlata ḍōṅgara ḍāṁga.
janu purabīthina biharata chaila saṁvārē svāṁga..12..
nācahiṁ mōra, pika gāvahiṁ, sura bara rāga baṁdhāna.
nilaja taruna-tarunī janu khēlahiṁ samaya samāna..13..
bhari bhari suṇḍa karini-kari jahaṁ tahaṁ ḍārahiṁ bāri.
bharata parasapara picakani manahu mudita nara-nāri..14..
pīṭhi caṛhā'i sisunha kapi kūdata ḍārahi ḍāra.
janu mumṫha lā'i gēru-masi bha'ē kharani asavāra..15..
liyē parāga sumanarasa ḍōlata malaya-samīra.
manahu aragajā chirakata, bharata gulāla-abīra..16..
kāma kautukī yahi bidhi prabhuhita kautuka kīnha.
rījhi rāma ratināthahi jaga-bijayī bara dīnha..17..
dukhavahu mōrē dāsa jani, mānēhu mōri rajā'i.
‘bhalēhi nātha’ māthē dhari āyusa calē'u bajā'i..18..
mudita kirāta-kirātini raghubara-rūpa nihāri.
prabhuguna gāvata nācata calē jōhāri jōhāri..19..
dēhiṁ asīsa, prasansahiṁ muni sura baraṣahiṁ phūla.
gavanē bhavana rākhi ura mūrati maṅgalamūla.. 20..
citrakūṭa-kānana-chabi kō kabi baranai pāra.
jahaṁ siya-laṣanasahita nita raghubara karahiṁ bihāra.. 21..
tulasidāsa cāṁcari misa kahē rāma-gunagrāma.
gāvahiṁ, sunahiṁ nāri-nara, pāvahiṁ saba abhirāma.. 22..

Verse no. 2/47—[This verse is a fine example of the beauty and charm of Nature. Chitrakoot was not a lifeless stretch of terrain with barren hills, craggy rocks, large and small boulders and jutting peaks. Nay, it was a forest that was rich, verdant and vibrant: rich with a variety of plant and animal life. It had the best of trees that bore a thick canopy of creepers and were covered with colourful foliage, seented flowers and succulent fruits. Then there was the excellent river named Mandakini, also called Payaswini because of its nectar-like sweet water. Birds of all feathers flocked there in great abundance, merrily frolicking about and warbling cheerfully, making calls and sounds that reverberated and echoed enticingly everywhere. Great sages and hermits and ascetics had made this forest their dwelling because it met all their requirements of peace, solitude and serenity so that they could pursue their spiritual quest without disturbance and in comfort.

After all, it was not without any reason that sage Valmiki had recommended this place to Lord Ram, and also it was not without reason that the Lord had finally selected this remote place to spend some quality time in peace and solace, giving himself as well as Laxman and Sita some time to rest ere the arduous journey onwards through the real tough part of the wild that was infested by demons and an ever presence fear of death that caused affright even to the sturdiest of souls.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 132—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 133.]

The mind feels extremely cheerful and exhilarated on seeing the forest of Chitrakoot which is very dear (i.e. liked by) Sita, Lord Sri Ram and Laxman (sītā-rāma-laṣana-priya), and which is an abode of great ascetics and austre hermits (tāpasa-brṃda-nivāsa) (1).

A river called 'Payaswini', which is very pleasant, purifying and sin-vanquishing, flows there. It is is served by Siddhas (the attained ones, mystics), Sadhus (saints, ones with a pure heart) and Gods, and is capable of fulfilling all desires[1] (2).

[[1]Here it means that Siddhas and Sadhus live on its banks and do their worship and austerities, while the Gods too come there to take a dip in the holy waters of this river and accept the offerings by these Siddhas and Sadhus. The fact that the Gods come frequently to dip in this river had inspired the hermits, ascetics and sages to set up their dwellings along its banks so that they can easily worship the Gods and make them offerings from close quarters.]

This place is dense with verdant trees of excellent quality that are covered with creepers that are equally excellent. [That is, both the trees and creepers are of high quality and belong to good families and genres of the plant kingdom.]

All of them are lavished with abundance of new leaves and flowers, while various types of roots and stems that are edible and sweet, as well as fine aquatic and land plants of various denominations are to be found there (3).

Numerous trees that were beautiful and attractive were in great abundance there. Some of these charming trees were the following: the Cane tree (i.e. the bamboo tree), the Bakul tree (*Ninsops Dengi*, flowers of which are very fragrant), the Kalpa Tree (celestial tree of Gods; called Parijat or Harsingar in local parlance; or coral Jasmine in English; *Nyctanthes Arbortristis* in latin), the Taal tree (palm), the Tamaal tree (the black catechu; *Xanthocymus Epictorius*), the Kadali tree (the banana or plantain tree), the Kadamb tree (a kind of grass; a tree called *Neculea Cadamba*), the pleasant

Champak tree (magnolia plant), the Paatal tree (tree of trumpet flowers which are red coloured), the Panas tree (Jack fruit tree; also called the Katahal tree in colloquial language) and the Rasaal tree (the mango tree, so called because it bears the mango plant which is full of sweet juice, the "rasa")—[4] ---

----All these trees densely covered the landscape (bhūruha bhūri bharē), and seemed to be bestowed richly with the excellent qualities one can expect from trees, such as being beautiful and attractive, charming and pleasant, and ones that provide comfort, joy and happiness that come with the arrival of good times and good fortunes (janu chabi-anurāga-sabhāga).

After seeing that majestic and fascinating forest (of Chitrakoot), the many forests, gardens, orchards and groves of Gods appear to be dull and lack-lustre (laghu lāgahiṁ bipula bibudha-bana-bāga). [5] (4-5).

One cannot describe the forest of Lord Sri Ram (i.e. Chitrakoot), for in all sooth and without any gainsay it steals (enchants, enthralls, spellbounds) one's mind as soon as it is seen, because it resembles naught aught but the dwelling of Kamdeo/cupid that is richly endowed with excellent creepers and trees.

[To wit, though the private garden of Kamdeo, the god of beauty and everything that is charming in creation, is excellent in itself, but nevertheless it is no comparison to the forest of Lord Ram, the forest known as 'Chitrkoot'. It is vibrant and verdant with the best quality of greenary and vegetation, with excellent trees, creepers, foliage, fruits and flowers.] (6).

Lotuses of different shades and colours are blooming there in the rivers and ponds and lakes. On these lotuses, attractive black/bumble-bees are humming and buzzing joyously even as many other varieties of birds are cheerfully playing around these lotus flowers in merry abundance (7).

Laxman joyfully points out the magnificent beauty of Chitrakoot to his brother Lord Sri Ram. He says: 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Just have a look at the grandeur, magnificence and pomp of this forest! it appears that Kamdeo/cupid's close friend known as 'the king of seasons' (i.e. 'Basant', the Spring season) has come to enjoy himself in the former's (Kamdeo's) garden-city[2] (8).

[[2]Here, Lord Ram is like Kamdeo himself, and Kamdeo's garden-city, which is his dwelling place, is the lust green forest of Chitrakoot. Laxman uses this similie to stress that like Kamdeo, Lord Ram is exceptionally charming and beautiful among all living beings, and the place the Lord has selected to live for a while, i.e. Chitrakoot, is no less charming than the garden-city of Kamdeo.]

Or else, observing that you (Lord Ram) have special (or great) liking for Chitrakoot, Kamdeo/cupid has come here with his friend (the Spring season) to play 'Phaag' ["Holi"; the festival of colour held during the Spring season]'[3] (9).

[[3]Laxman means that when Kamdeo found that his own Lord, Sri Ram who is the supreme Lord of all the Gods, has chosen Chitrakoot to live, Kamdeo decided to come here to pay his obeisance to the Lord. To make this terrestrial abode of the Lord as pleasant, charming and comforting as possible, Kamdeo brought his friend, the Spring season, to make this place Chitrakoot as colourful and vibrant as any other royal garden is during the spring season—with abundance of fresh plants, leaves, flowers and fruits, as well as cheerful birds and insects of all kinds and colours. To

wit, Chitrakoot has become a playground of Kamdeo and Spring, the kings of beauties and seasons respectively.

"Phaag" is a colourful festival that falls during the spring season, when people sprinkle coloured powder and liquid on each other to celebrate the arrival of spring, a harbinger of new life and cheer after the long, dull and chilly winter season. Here it means that the forest of Chitrakoot is having a riot of colours of all shades with so many trees and flowers and fruits along with as many varieties of birds and insects.

And to add life and vibrant energy to this celebration, these birds and insects are making their own sounds while playing around merrily just like jubilant people sing and dance during the celebrations of the festival of Phaag, also known as "Holi".

Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/48 herein below.]

[Not only with vibrant plant life, Chitrakoot was blessed with colourful and cheerful animal life, including birds and insects of different varieties as well.]

The sound made by the cricket is the playing of the cymbol, that made by waterfalls is the playing of the tambourine, the timbrel or the kettle-drums, the humming and buzzing sound of the bumble/black-bees is the playing of the stringed-instruments such as the violin, the harp, the cello or the single-stringed muscial instrument called 'Upang' (or the "Taanpura"), while the sweet staccato of squawking and chattering of the parrots is like imitating the musical played by the woodwind instruments such as the flute or the clarinet (10).

[[4]These are the metaphors used to describe how the different units of Nature are celebrating the arrival of Lord Ram amidst them.

Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/48, stanza no. 3 herein below.]

The Hansa (swans or geese), Kapot (doves), Kabutar (pigeons), Chakvas (ruddy goose, ostrich) and Chakor (Indian red-legged partridge) etc. are all warbling cheerfully in their own tongues that reminds one of the men and women of this city of Kamdeo/cupid (called "Kaam Nagar") who are singing away merrily to celebrate the arrival of Spring and while enjoying Phaag[5] (11).

[[5]Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/48, stanza no. 3 herein below.]

The marvellously beautiful animals of different kinds, different forms and different hides, who are roaming on the high ground (i.e. the upper parts of the hill) of the dense forest of Chitrakoot resemble playful children moving around in this city (of Kamdeo/cupid) under various disguises[6] (12).

[[6]Remember that the scene of Phaag is being described here. During this celebration, while the adults enjoy singing and dancing and sprinkling colour on each other, the children of the city don colourful clothes and make-ups, and move around in different disguises, clapping, hopping and jumping, laughing, shouting, and merry-making in the general way. The animals of Chitrakoot are compared to these joyful children. Even as these children have no enemies and are friendly towards all, young and old, these animals too harbour no animosity for each other, and they roam in the wild forest of Chitrakoot fearlessly and without any aggressiveness.]

The peacocks are dancing merrily without any inhibition, while the cuckoo is singing aloud in a sweet, melodious voice without bother or restraint—it looks as if male and female youths (of the city of Kamdeo) are having a fun-time of their lives even as

they frolick around, singing and dancing merrily without any inhibition, naught having any sort of restraint, a whit of bother or shame that would restrain them from their boisterous enjoyment (13).

Male and female elephants fill water in their trunks and spray at each other as if men and women are playing 'Holi' with coloured water by using the spray guns to sprinkle this water on each other (14).

(Black and red faced) Monkeys with their young ones clasped on their backs, jump from one branch of a tree to another as if artistes in various disguises or face masks with red or dark blue colours are riding on donkeys[7] (15).

[[7]During the enjoyment of the Holi festival it is usually noticed that young people wear colourful masks of monkeys and other cartoon characters, and then ride on the back of donkeys to go around the town to the entertainment of others. Here, the young ones of the monkeys are likened to these young riders, and the monkeys on whose back they ride are likened to the donkeys.]

Sandalwood-scented breeze laden with the essence of nectar and pollen of flowers is blowing as if to spread 'Argaza' (yellow perfume made from sandalwood), or as if to rub 'Abir' and 'Gulal' (coloured powder used during the Holi festivities) on the faces of all[8] (16).'

[[8]Once again, playing of Holi is cited here. People spray coloured powder and various perfumes and fragrances in the air during this celebration, and the soft breeze that blows carries this colour and scent to other places. In the present stanza it means that a soft breeze is blowing at Chitrakoot that helps in spreading the sweet scent emanating from the sandalwood tree far and wide even as it helps the flowers in the natural phenomenon of pollination.

Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/48, stanza no. 4 herein below.]

In this way, the maverick Kamdeo/cupid appears to be playing for the entertainment of Lord Sri Ram, and this is the reason why the Lord has rewarded him with a boon to be the 'conqueror of the world' (jaga-bijayī bara dīnha) (17).

But, while granting this boon, the Lord also warned him by putting a restraint on him—'Look! Do not torment my devotees. Always be careful about this edict of mine.'

Then saying 'Alright Lord, so it would be', he (Kamdeo/cupid)[9] went away from there (Chitrakoot) (18).

[[9]In other words, true devotees of Lord Ram are not tormented by passions and lust for enjoyment of the senses and material charms of the world.

Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/48, stanza no. 5 herein below.]

The male and female Kiraats (tribals) are very delighted on seeing the fascinating and beauteous image of the Lord; they come, sing and dance, salute and pay their obeisance to him and then go away[10] (19).

[[10]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137.]

The hermits, sages and seers bless the Lord and praise him, while the Gods rain flowers and after having established the auspicious and wellfare providing image of the Lord in their hearts, they go to their own abodes[11] (20).

[[11]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 134 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.]

Which poet can think of being competent enough to describe the magnificence, the beauty, the importance, the majesty and the grandeur of Chitrakoot where Lord Sri Ram always stays along with Sita and Laxman[12] (21).

[[12]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 139.

Remember: Chitrakoot represents Nature in its pristine and most beautiful form, which is also the primary cosmic form of Lord Ram, for he is indeed none else but Lord Vishnu, the macrocosmic form of Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

Tulsidas says that he has sung some of the virtues and glories of Lord Sri Ram by way of 'Chanchar' ("cām̐cari"; songs of merriment sung during the Phaag or the Holi festival).

Verily, all the men and women folk who listen to or sing these songs themselves would get auspicious and gracious fruits of all kinds (i.e. they would be spiritually blessed, and find peace of mind and solace for their hearts) (22).

राग बसन्त

(2/48)

आजु बन्यो है बिपिन देखो, राम धीर। मानो खेलत फागु मुद मदनबीर।। 1।।
बट, बकुल, कदंब, पनस, रसाल। कुसुमित तरु–निकर कुरव–तमाल।
मानो बिबिध बेष धरे छैल–जूथ। बिच बीच लता ललना–बरूथ।। 2।।
पनवानक निरझर, अलि उपंग। बोलत पारावत मानो डफ–मृदंग।
गायक शुक–कोकिल, झिल्लि ताल। नाचत बहु भाँति बरहि मराल।। 3।।
मलयानिल सीतल, सुरभि, मंद। बह सहित सुमन–रस रेनु बृंद।
मनु छिरकत फिरत सबनि सुरंग। भ्राजत उदार लीला अनंग।। 4।।
क्रीडत जीते सुर–असुर–नाग। हठि सिद्ध–मुनिनके पंथ लाग।
कह तुलसिदास, तेहि छाडु मैन। जेहि राख राम राजीव नैन।। 5।।

rāga basanta

(2/48)

āju ban'yō hai bipina dēkhō, rāma dhīra. mānō khēlata phāgu muda madanabīra.. 1..
baṭa, bakula, kadamba, panasa, rasāla. kusumita taru-nikara kurava-tamāla.
mānō bibidha bēṣa dharē chaila-jūtha. bica bīca latā lalanā-barūtha.. 2..
panavānaka nirajhara, ali upaṅga. bōlata pārāvata mānō ḍapha-mr̥daṅga.
gāyaka śuka-kōkila, jhilli tāla. nācata bahu bhām̐ti barahi marāla.. 3..

malayānila sītala, surabhi, manda. baha sahita sumana-rasa rēnu br̥̄nda.
manu chirakata phirata sabani suraṅga. bhrājata udāra līlā anaṅga.. 4..
krīḍata jītē sura-asura-nāga. haṭhi sid'dha-muninakē pantha lāga.
kaha tulasidāsa, tēhi chāṛu maina. jēhi rākha rāma rājīva naina.. 5..

Fascinating & Enchanting Beauty and Glory of Chitrakoot-III

Verse no. 2/48—[In verse no. 2/47, we have read how Laxman points out the beauty of Chitrakoot to his brother Lord Sri Ram. The present verse is in continuation of it.]

'Oh steadfast and gallant (dhīra) Sri Ram! Look, today the forest appears so magnificent, charming, fascinating and majestic as if brave Kamdeo/cupid is, cheerfully and joyfully, playing 'Phaag'[1] (i.e. enjoying the colourful festival of 'Holi') here (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/47, stanza no. 9 herein above.]

The trees of Vat (the banyan tree), Bakul (*Ninsops Dengi*), Kadamb (a kind of grass, a tree called *Neculea Cadamba*), Panas (the jack fruit tree), Rasaal (the mango tree), Kurav (a fragrant tall grass called *Cypsrus Rotundus*; or flowers of Amarnath) and Tamaal (the black catechu plant) etc. are flowering beautifully[2] as if multitudes of youths have worn different attires (or assumed different disguises) while enjoying the festival of 'Phaag'.

The clusters of beautiful creepers that are seen here and there between these trees are like the countless women folks who mingle with these groups of youths, looking adorable in their best of attires and spreading their charm everywhere (2).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/47, stanza no. 4 herein above.]

The sound of waterfalls appear like big and small musical drums being played, the buzzing and humming of bumble/black-bees resemble the sound of violin or other stringed musical instruments, while the voice of pigeons are like the sound of tambourine or a drum.

The singers are the parrots and the cuckoos, the resonating, vibrating, chirping sound of the cricket is the melodious beat, while the geese (or swans) and peacocks are dancing to the tune in various styles[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/47, stanza nos. 10-11 herein above.]

Cool, soft and fragrant breeze with the scent of sandalwood is blowing, and it is laden with the scent of nectar and pollen of flowers[4].

Verily forsooth it appears that the playful and frolicking Kamdeo/cupid is generously spraying colours (of Holi) on all those who are present on the occasion (4).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/47, stanza no. 16 herein above.]

After having won over all the creatures and establishing his influence over them effortlessly, including the gods, the demons, the serpents (subterranean creatures) etc., he (i.e. Kamdeo) has now begun to play his tricks even upon great Siddhas (mystics) and Munis (sages), creating hurdles in their spiritual paths[5].

Tulsidas avers that this Kamdeo/cupid (representing attachments, lusts, greed, desires, avarice, infatuations) leaves alone only those people who are protected by the lotus-eyed Lord Sri Ram (because Kamdeo has given Lord Ram his word that he won't disturb the devotees of the Lord)[6] (5).

[[5]This is because 'Kamdeo' represents the negative qualities of passion, lust, attachment and desires related to worldly things and pleasures of the senses, with an overwhelming urge for self gratification. He has succeeded in his designs so much so that even mystics, sages and hermits who are supposed to be immune to these corrupting influences have fallen prey to them. Obviously this creates a hurdle in their spiritual pursuits.

[6]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/47, stanza no. 18.

Now, there is no contradiction in what Lord Ram had ordered Kamdeo in this cited verse no. 2/47, and what is said in the current stanza of the present verse no. 2/48. Lord Ram had told him "not to disturb his devotees", and gentlemen referred to here who were disturbed by Kamdeo are the "sages, hermits and ascetics". But there is a subtle difference between the two.

The devotees of the Lord are called 'Bhakts', i.e. those who love, adore and worship Lord Ram as their deity, submit themselves to him, and completely and undisputably rely on the Lord for all their spiritual needs; for them Lord Ram is the ultimate goal of all spiritual endeavours. On the other hand, the sages and hermits and ascetics are called 'Gyanis', i.e. those who have knowledge, or pursue that path that leads to wisdom and enlightenment that gives truthful knowledge of the 'Self', the pure conscious Atma, the Soul.

Though the ultimate reward is the same spiritual blessedness and beatitude, yet the paths followed to achieve this objective are different and the deity is different. The devotee follows the path of 'Bhakti' or the path of devotion, submission, service, love and affection for the Lord which is an easy path that even a lay person can adopt, while the 'Gyani' or the learned sage does Tapa (austerity; penance), Yoga (meditation), Dhyaan (concentration; contemplation), and adopts other means which require through knowledge of the different steps of these processes if one expects to succeed, which therefore become rigorous and difficult to practice.

The difference between the paths of Bhakti and Gyan, and that Lord Ram favours them who adopt Bhakti as their chosen spiritual mean has been highlighted by Lord Ram himself while advocating the former (Bhakti path) in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-15 that precede Doha no. 45.]

(2/49)

ऋतु–पति आए भलो बन्यो बन समाज। मानो भए हैं मदन महाराज आज।। 1।।
मनो प्रथम फागु मिस करि अनीति। होरीमिस अरि पुर जारि जीति।
मारुत मिस पत्र–प्रजा उजारि। नयननगर बसाए बिपिन झारि।। 2।।
सिंहासन सैल–सिला सुरंग। कानन–छबि रति, परिजन कुरंग।
सित छत्र सुमन, बल्ली बितान। चामर समीर, निरझर निसान।। 3।।
मनो मधु–माधव दोउ अनिप धीर। बर बिपुल बिटप बानैत बीर।
मधुकर–सुक–कोकिलबंदि–बृंद। बरनहिं बिसुद्ध जस बिबिध छंद।। 4।।
महि परत सुमन–रस फल पराग। जनु देत इतर नृप कर–बिभाग।
कलि सचिव सहित नय–निपुन मार। कियो बिस्व बिबस चारिहु प्रकार।। 5।।
बिरहिनपर नित नइ परै मारि। डाँड़ियत सिद्ध–साधक प्रचारि।

तिनकी न काम सकै चापि छाँह। तुलसी जे बसहिं रघुबीर–बाँह।। 6।।

(2/49)

ṛtu-pati ā'ē bhalō ban'yō bana samāja. mānō bha'ē haiṁ madana mahārāja āja.. 1..
manō prathama phāgu misa kari anīti. hōrīmisa ari pura jāri jīti.
māruta misa patra-prajā ujāri. nayananagara basā'ē bipina jhāri.. 2..
sinhāsana saila-silā suraṅga. kānana-chabi rati, parijana kuraṅga.
sita chatra sumana, ballī bitāna. cāmara samīra, nirajhara nisāna.. 3..
manō madhu-mādhava dō'u anipa dhīra. bara bipula biṭapa bānaita bīra.
madhukara-suka-kōkilabandi-bṛṁda. baranahiṁ bisud'dha jasa bibidha chanda.. 4..
mahi parata sumana-rasa phala parāga. janu dēta itara nṛpa kara-bibhāga.
kali saciva sahita naya-nipuna māra. kiyō bisva bibasa cārihu prakāra.. 5..
birahinapara nita na'i parai māri. ḍāṁḍiyata sid'dha-sādhaka pracāri.
tinakī na kāma sakai cāpi chāṁha. tulasī jē basahiṁ raghubīra-bāṁha.. 6..

Fascinating & Enchanting Beauty and Glory of Chitrakoot-IV

Verse no. 2/49—[As is the wont of Tulsidas, he has used the present tense while narrating this verse. It implies, as elsewhere throughout Geetawali, that he has mentally transported himself back in time to that era and days when Lord Ram had actually lived there, so that his narration becomes a first-hand reporting of the events and the situation that prevailed at Chitrakoot at that time. It is therefore not a wild imagination of a poet, but the reality on the ground.

Remember: This is not an ordinary narration of some story from the hoary past that is narrated by a story-teller of the yore. It is the narration of the events and times during which the Supreme Being, who had assumed the form of a human prince by the name of Lord Ram, had lived on earth, and it is being narrated by a great devotee of the Lord and an attained soul who had the spiritual reach and the level of blessedness where he could commune with the Lord and feel closeness with his Lord at a level that is beyond comprehension of ordinary souls.

Hence, whatever Tulsidas describes about Chitrakoot must truly have been the scene there during those great days when Lord Ram had abided there with his brother Laxman and wife Sita.]

[Tulsidas says—] 'With the arrival of Spring, the king of seasons (ṛtu-pati), the magnificence, the beauty and the charm of the forest (of Chitrakoot where Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita have made their dwelling) has been immensely enhanced as if Kamdoe/cupid has been anointed an Emperor of the place[1] (1).

[[1]When a new emperor is crowned, he spruces up his capital city and does his best to make it exceptionally attractive and beautiful as much as it is possible. He pays especial attention to his own residences, and with great care and diligence, without any let or delay, he ensures that its buildings and its surrounding gardens and orchards

and forests are made to look extremely magnificent as magnificence can be, as if they are directly brought down from the heaven. Kamdeo is the patron god of the qualities of beauty, charm, magnificence and glamour. So naturally he wouldn't have left any stone unturned and spared any effort to make Chitrakoot beautiful and heavenly to the best of his ability.

But was Kamdeo doing it for himself? No, he was making Chitrakoot so beautiful and charming, so pleasant and comfortable to serve his Lord Sri Ram. When Lord Ram chose this place to tarry a while ere his onwards journey to fulfill the promise he had made to the Gods and Earth in his primary cosmic form of Lord Vishnu that he would remove the scourge of the demons by personally intervening and getting rid of them, the Gods and the Earth felt it was now their duty to serve the Lord as best they can. So we read that the earth became as soft as possible; the gods showered flowers on the path to make it more softer; the rivers carried sweet water; the forests became green with abundant trees, flowers, fruits and leaves to give comfort and pleasure and eatables to the Lord; the seasons allowed Spring to be remain for the whole year round; the clouds provided shade; the animals, birds and insects provided company to the Lord; the waterfalls sprayed fragrant spray to bathe the Lord and cool the air; the mountains and hills gave the path; and to cap it all the gods themselves became monkeys and bears to help the Lord conquer the demons in the epic war at Lanka. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 187—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 188; (b) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 132; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 139; and (c) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 7.}

In other words, each and every unit and aspect of creation did its best to serve Lord Ram, and felt honoured and lucky to do so. Kamdeo also wished to serve the Lord in the best way he could, and the best device he could devise was to make the environ as beautiful and pleasant and comfortable and charming as he could because he was the presiding deity of these qualities. Therefore, till the time Lord Ram dwelt at Chitrakoot, the gods gave the mandate to Kamdeo to rule over the place and do what he thinketh best by way of serving the Lord.

It ought to be noted here that while unleashing his charm offensive at Chitrakoot, Kamdeo kept in mind the strictures placed upon him by Lord Ram—that he shouldn't disturb his devotees, such as the sages and hermits who lived there and had come to pay their obeisance to Lord Ram. {Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/47, stanza no. 18.} So Kamdeo was restrained in his endeavour.

Remember: It is the same Kamdeo who had unleashed such a tremendous amount of lust and passion earlier when he had gone to disturb the meditation of Lord Shiva, at that time also at the behest of the gods, that no one was spared, not even the sages, hermits and ascetics who had renounced the world and its charms; everyone fell prey to lust, passion and desire at that time. {This event is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Sortha/Doha no. 85.}

But this time at Chitrakoot, Kamdeo was serving his Lord, Sri Ram, and he didst naught aught that wouldst annoy him. His intent at the present occasion was to provide solace and comfort to Lord Ram for a little while ere the Lord would embark on the real tough part of his mission—to move ahead into the forest infested by demons and start their elimination one by one.]

Hence, using ‘Phaag’ as an excuse (i.e. using the ‘Spring season’ during which the festival of colours known as ‘Holi’ is celebrated, and the fact that Spring had prevailed in Chitrakoot till Lord Ram stayed there), he (Kamdeo-cupid) has abandoned all pretensions of righteous conduct and probity.

So, after having obtained victory on the enemy's city (i.e. the forest of Chitrakoot), and having torched (burnt) it on the pretext of burning the sacrificial fire in preparation for Holi, and using his weapon symbolized by gusts of strong wind he plundered it and looted its inhabitants represented by dry leaves (that were scattered and swept off the ground, making the place clean and broomed), he has now established a completely new city of exceptional charm and beauty (by sprouting new leaves, branches, flowers as well as new plants and saplings—to welcome his Lord Sri Ram)[2] (2).

[[2]When Kamdeo decided to serve Lord Ram by making the Lord’s dwelling place Chitrakoot cheerful and pleasant like it were a garden of heaven on earth, he had to first clean the old place and sweep it with a large broom so at to remove all the dirt and litter. So how did he do it? He used strong wind as his broom to remove all the dead leaves, flowers, litter and dust, and wipe the land clean. The Spring season helped Kamdeo by planting and sprouting new plants quickly, and making grown-up trees green and lavished them with creepers, fruits, flowers and a thick foliage. Then the two decided to welcome the Lord in all pomp and ceremony—by spraying colours and perfumes. This is the way ‘Phaag’ or Holi is played in India.

But prior to the actual commencement of the festival of Holi during which ‘Phaag’ or colour is played, a huge bonfire is lit where worship is offered in the sacred fire. This was done by Kamdeo with the objective of burning the dead leaves and the garbage it had collected by its broom of strong gust of wind. So that when Lord Ram finally arrived at Chitrakoot, the place was fine and all decked up.]

[In the following stanzas, metaphors are employed to describe the reign of Kamdeo in Chirakoot.]

The wonderful ‘throne’ of king Madan (Kamdeo) is the beautiful rock of the mountain (or the hill of Chitrakoot). His consort named ‘Rati’ is the ‘splendour, the magnificence and the fascinating beauty’ of the forest.

The resident animals of this forest are his ‘kith and kin’, his extended family and relatives; the countless flowers represent the white ‘ceremonial royal umbrella’ over his head; the canopy of creepers is his ‘royal tent’ (because the creepers interwine to form a thick canopy or covering resembling a tent or a cover), the breeze is the ‘whisk’; and the waterfalls are the ‘kettle-drums’ (because they make a roaring sound produced by cascading water that thunders like the sound of the kettle-drums, resonating throughout the area) (3).

It appears that the two months of Chaitra and Baisakh (the two Indian months of April to June) are like the two courageous, resilient, brave and gallant ‘commanders’ (of Kamdeo’s army).

The multitudes of trees are his stocky, resolute, steady and determined ‘soldiers’, while the bumble/black-bees, the parrots and the cuckoos are the royal ‘bards’ (or heralds) who sing his and praise his fame by composing numerous verses in his honour (4).

The pollen, nectar and fruits that fall to the ground are like the 'taxes or tributes' which other subordinate kings and knights pay him.

In this manner, Kamdeo-cupid—who is an expert in the laws of kinghood, with the assistance of his minister Kaliyug (the fourth of the 4-era cycle of creation and end)—has subjugated the whole world by using the four principles of 'Saam', 'Daan', 'Danda' and 'Bhed' that a clever ruler employs to control his subjects[3] (5).'

[[3]A great king uses four tactics as instruments of statecraft. They are (i) 'Saam'—that is using sweetness of behaviour and courteousness to win over friends even amongst enemies and keep the subjects happy; (ii) 'Daan'—which is using charity, largesse, donations and giving of alms to achieve the same objective; (iii) 'Danda'—which is to use the baton, or the fear of punishment to excercise control over others; and (iv) 'Bhed'—which is spying, finding out secrets, using covert and cunnint means, and creating dissention and discord amongst adversaries to control them.

A wise king uses a combination of all these tacts in a judicious way depending upon the job at hand. During Kaliyug, the present time of the 4-era cycle of creation and destruction, these four tacts play a crucial role in governance.]

[Now, Tulsidas uses the basic nature of Kamdeo to describe the situation that prevails during Kaliyug, the present age.]

In the kingdom of Kamdeo, those who are separated from their dear and beloved ones are thrashed or tormented daily (i.e. those who are separated from their beloved ones are subjected to constant grief and agony), while Siddhas (mystics and enlightened ones) and spiritual seekers are challenged, disparaged, rebuked and punished (i.e. those who pursue spiritual paths are ridiculed and laughed at; they are called outdated and mad).

But, Tulsidas says that those who live under the protection (shelter, refuge) of Lord Sri Ram's arms, this Kamdeo-cupid is unable to even touch their shadows (i.e. such people are free from his fears; he is scared to touch them and cast his evil eyes on them)[4]. (6).

[[4]Here, 'Kamdeo' represents one of the chief negative characteristics of Kaliyug, which is to have worldly lust, passion, greed, infatuation, desire and rapacity. Kamdeo has such a vicious grip over all the creatures that no one is happy, except the devotees of Lord Ram who are not affected with this malaise. That is to say, if one wishes to get mental peace during the emotionally testing times of the era of Kaliyug, one has to develop devotion for Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being.]

राग मलार

(2/50)

सब दिन चित्रकूट नीको लागत।
बरषाऋतु प्रबेस बिसेष गिरि देखन मन अनुरागत।। 1।।
चहुँदिसि बन संपन्न, बिहँग–मृग बोलत सोभा पावत।
जनु सुनरेस देस–पुर प्रमुदित प्रजा सकल सुख छावत।। 2।।
सोहत स्याम जलद मृदु घोरत धातु रँगमगे सृंगनि।
मनहु आदि अंभोज बिराजत सेवित सुर–मुनि–भृंगनि।। 3।।
सिखर परस घन–घटहि, मिलति बग–पाँति सो छबि कबि बरनी।

आदि बराह बिहरि बारिधि मनो उठ्यो है दसन धरि धरनी।। 4।।
जल जुत बिमल सिलनि झलकत नभ बन–प्रतिबिंब तरंग।
मानहु जग–रचना बिचित्र बिलसति बिराट अँग अंग।। 5।।
मंदाकिनिहि मिलत झरना झरि झरि भरि भरि जल आछे।
तुलसी सकल सुकृत–सुख लागे मानो राम–भगतिके पाछे।। 6।।

rāga malāra

(2/50)

saba dina citrakūṭa nīkō lāgata.
baraṣā'ṛtu prabēsa bisēṣa giri dēkhana mana anurāgata.. 1..
cahum̐disi bana sampanna, bihaṁga-mr̥ga bōlata sōbhā pāvata.
janu sunarēsa dēsa-pura pramudita prajā sakala sukha chāvata.. 2..
sōhata syāma jalada mr̥du ghōrata dhātu ram̐gamagē sr̥ṅgani.
manahu ādi ambhōja birājata sēvita sura-muni-bhr̥ṁgani.. 3..
sikhara parasa ghana-ghaṭahi, milati baga-pām̐ti sō chabi kabi baranī.
ādi barāha bihari bāridhi manō uṭhyō hai dasana dhari dharanī.. 4..
jala juta bimala silani jhalakata nabha bana-pratibimba taraṅga.
mānahu jaga-racanā bicitra bilasati birāṭa am̐ga aṅga.. 5..
mandākinihi milata jharanā jhari jhari bhari bhari jala āchē.
tulasī sakala sukr̥ta-sukha lāgē mānō rāma-bhagatikē pāchē.. 6..

Chitrakoot During the Rainy Season

Verse no. 2/50—'The mountains of Chitrakoot are naturally beautiful, pleasant and charming every day of the year, but its magnificence and enchantment, its beauty and attractiveness are especially enhanced with the onset of the rainy season so much so that the mind and heart become very eager to see it then (because of its augmented magnificence and increased beauty) (1).

Surrounding it on all the four sides are forests that are well bestowed and rich with flowers and fruits.

The sound of fearless and happy birds that are chirping and warbling and frolicking around, as well as the clamour of animals who are roaming around freely and friendly in those forests appear to resemble the happy and contented subjects of a noble and benevolent king who are enjoying all types of comforts, pleasures and prosperity in the capital city as well as other parts of the realm during his prosperous reign (2).

Dark clouds rumbling softly and sweetly over the mountain tops having different hues and shades of colour because their rocks have different constituents elements and shapes, reflecting light in different ways, resemble the humming and buzzing of the black-bees, representing different gods, as they hover over the celestial lotus flower (from which the creator Brahma had emerged)[1] (3).

[[3]Here, the high peaks of the hills having different shades of colours are like the 'celestial lotus flower' because they are so high up in the sky that from the ground they appear to be in the heaven. The clouds that shroud these peaks from all sides are like the celestial ocean in which the primordial lotus bloomed. The distant rumbling of these clouds are like the humming and buzzing of the bees who hover over a lotus in search of nectar. But since this lotus is 'primordial', the imaginary bees are like the 'gods' who are paying their obeisance to Brahma.

The instances from Nature that are cited here are actually meant to offer obeisance to Lord Ram who lives atop one of these peaks. Since the Lord is the suprme Lord of creation, he is like 'Brahma' the Creator.

Lord Vishnu reclines on the celestial ocean of milk which is represented by the dense clouds. Remember: the sound of an ocean also very closely resembles the distant rumbling of the clouds.

The gods have come to offer their worship to Lord Ram, and their prayers are symbolized by the rumbling of the clouds.

The 'summit of the hills with their different shades of colour' are the multi-coloured petals of lotus from which the creator Brahma emerged; the 'rumbling of the clouds' is the buzzing and humming of the bees who represent the gods who have come to pay their respects to the Lord; the 'clouds' themselves are like the celestial ocean where the primordial lotus bloomed.]

When the rows of cranes flying high are seen against the backdrop of the dark mountainside, and then as they rise higher up in the air they are seen first against the top of the various peaks of this mountain range and then against the background of the dark clouds in the sky that surround these peaks—this scene of exceptional beauty is described by an expert poet as one which resembles the scene of the legendary Boar (who is one of the many incarnations of Lord Vishnu) when he had emerged from the ocean with the earth held on his snout and safely perched between the pair of white teeth[4] (4).

[[4]Here, the dark and huge mountains rising high up in the air are like the 'Boar#', the row of cranes is the 'white teeth' of the Boar, and the dark clouds are like the 'earth'. The cranes fly in formation, and at times they fly in two rows, one on each side of the mountain, in such a way that when they reach its summit which is covered in a thick cloak of dark clouds, the scene from the ground reminds a poet of the legendary Boar rising up with the earth held on its snout, between its teeth.]

In the clean puddles of rain water that are formed in the hollows of rocks and boulders, the reflection of the sky and the forest (i.e. the tall trees) is like the mysterious creation called the Universe (or the World) which is seen in (or is contained in) every part of the body of the 'Viraat Purush'[5] (5).'

[[5]The word 'Viraat' means huge, large, big, colossal, all-encompassing, while the word 'Purush' means the primary and primordial Male of creation. The phrase 'Viraat Purush' refers to the invisible, all-encompassing macrocosmic form of the Supreme Lord from whom this whole universe is said to have been revealed, and each pore of this Lord's macrocosmic body is said to harbour countless worlds.

In this metaphor, the 'rocks and boulders' are representatives of the gross aspect of Nature, and therefore like the gross parts of the body of the Viraat Purush. The 'reflection of the sky and the trees' that are seen in the scoops of water that collect in the hollow of these rocks and boulders are like this world—meaning that they are simply an 'image' of the sky and the tall trees but not the real thing just like

this world which is illusionary and only a reflection of Nature, only an image, but not the reality as it appears to be.]

Tulsidas says that 'Waterfalls full of crystal clear water cascade down to merge with the river Mandakini below as if all the good deeds and their attendent happiness pursue those who follow the path of devotion for Lord Ram (6).'

[Note—#The story of the 'Boar"—It is the third incarnation of Vishnu in which he killed the demon Hiranyaaksha and lifted the earth from the flood water where it had vanished. According to some versions, this demon had hidden the earth in the bowls of the ocean. This extrication and resurrection of the earth is a symbolic way of saying that the Lord saves the creation from being submerged in the vast ocean of sins and evil. An Upanishad preached by Lord Varaaha appears in the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition as its 30th Upanishad. The female aspect of Varaaha is known as Goddess Vaaraahi.]

कौसल्याकी विरह–वेदना

राग सोरठ

(2 / 51)

आजुको भोर, और सो, माई।
सुनौं न द्वार बेद–बंदी–धुनि गुनिगन–गिरा सोहाई।। 1।।
निज निज सुंदर पति–सदननितें रूप–सील–छबिछाईं।
लेन असीस सीय आगे करि मोपै सुतबधू न आईं।। 2।।
बूझी हौं न बिहँसि मेरे रघुबर 'कहाँ री ! सुमित्रा माता ?'।
तुलसी मनहु महासुख मेरो देखि न सकेउ बिधाता।। 3।।

kausalyākī viraha-vēdanā

rāga sōraṭha

(2/51)

ājukō bhōra, aura sō, mā'ī.
sunauṁ na dvāra bēda-bandī-dhuni gunigana-girā sōhā'ī.. 1..
nija nija sundara pati-sadananitēṁ rūpa-sīla-chabichā'īṁ.
lēna asīsa sīya āgē kari mōpai sutabadhū na ā'īṁ.. 2..
būjhī hauṁ na bihaṁsi mērē raghubara 'kahāṁ rī! sumitrā mātā?'.
tulasī manahu mahāsukha mērō dēkhi na sakē'u bidhātā.. 3..

{Meanwhile, Ayodhya wore a desolate look ever since Lord Ram, along with Laxman and Sita, had gone to the forest. Tulsidas has poignantly narrated the woeful scene through the eyes and words of Kaushalya, Lord Ram's mother, in verse nos. 2/51—2/55 as follows—}

Verse no. 2/51—[Extremely remorseful, distraught, sad and grieved on account of separation from her beloved son Sri Ram, mother Kaushalya expresses her sense of profound anguish and deep sorrow to another old woman of the household and laments as follows—] 'Oh Mother (mā'ī)! Today's dawn looks different to me. [This line indicates that it is the day following the one in which Sri Ram proceeded to his exile in the forest.]

Neither the singing of the hymns of the Vedas nor the voices of royal bards and heralds are heard at the palace gates today, sounds that used to please the sages and seers and were pleasant for the ears to hear[1] (1).

[[1]It was customary that royal bards and singers used to recite the hymns of the Vedas and other scriptures near the royal palace in the morning. But from the day Lord Ram had gone to the forest, a thick pall of gloom and hopelessness had descended upon the city. No one had the inclination or the interest to sing anything and chant the hymns in an atmosphere of overriding grief and mental agony. This is what Kaushalya is alluding to.]

Even my daughters-in-law, who are endowed with beauty, charm, virtues and magnificence, have not come out of their husband's places, and with Sita in the lead, they have not come to take my blessings (or pay respects to me as they used to do daily previously) (2).

Today, Sri Raghubar (Lord Sri Ram) has not smilingly asked me, 'Oh Mother! Where is mother Sumitra?'

Alas! It seems my immense good fortune and profound joys and happiness were too much for the Creator to bear (and he became so jealous of me that he has snatched the cause of joy and happiness from me)[2] (3).'

[[2]Mother Kaushalya laments that the Creator could not tolerate that she feel blessed and joyful. So he snatched her happiness by creating a situation whereby her beloved son Ram was sent to exile in the forest, along with her equally dear daughter-in-law Sita and dear son Laxman. He was jealous of her happiness and luck, and out of malice and envy he snatched away her peace and happiness by sending Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita to exile.

Refer also to verse no. 2/53 herein below.]

(2 / 52)

जननी निरखति बान–धनुहियाँ।
बार–बार उर नैननि लावति प्रभुजूकी ललित पनहियाँ।। 1।।
कबहूँ प्रथम ज्यों जाइ जगावति कहि प्रिय बचन सँवारे।
उठहु तात! बलि मातु बदनपर, अनुज–सखा सब द्वारे।। 2।।
कबहूँ कहति यों, बड़ी बार भइ, जाहु भूप पहँ, भैया।
बंधु बोलि जेंइय जो भावै, गई निछावरि मैया।। 3।।
कबहूँ समुझि बन–गवन रामको रहि चकि चित्र लिखी–सी।

तुलसिदास वह समय कहेतें लागति प्रीति सिखी–सी।। 4।।

(2/52)

jananī nirakhati bāna-dhanuhiyāṁ.
bāra-bāra ura nainani lāvati prabhujūkī lalita panahiyāṁ.. 1..
kabahūṁ prathama jyōṁ jā'i jagāvati kahi priya bacana samvārē.
uṭhahu tāta! bali mātu badanapara, anuja-sakhā saba dvārē.. 2..
kabahūṁ kahati yōṁ, baṛī bāra bha'i, jāhu bhūpa pahaṁ, bhaiyā.
bandhu bōli jēṁiya jō bhāvai, ga'ī nichāvari maiyā.. 3..
kabahūṁ samujhi bana-gavana rāmakō rahi caki citra likhī-sī.
tulasidāsa vaha samaya kahētēṁ lāgati prīti sikhī-sī.. 4..

Mother Kaushalya's Lamentations-II

Verse no. 2/52—[The mother is so overcome with grief and sadness that she seems to have lost her mental bearings and appears to be hallucinating. The following narration of her state of mind poignantly reminds the reader of the extreme agony and pain that she was enduring due to her separation from Lord Ram.]

The mother looks at the small toy-like bows and arrows of Lord Sri Ram (which he used to play with as a child), and repeatedly clasps the small shoes (or sandals) of the Lord (which he used to wear during his childhood days) to her heart and touches her eyes affectionately with them (1).

Sometimes, as was her habit earlier, she goes to his (Lord Ram's) quarters and says such sweet words to wake him up—'Oh Dear! Get up. The mother sacrifices herself on the (beauty of your) moon-like face. Look! All your younger brothers and friends are standing at the door (waiting for you).' (2).

At other times, she says—'Son! It is getting very late. Go to the king, call your friends, and partake whatever you wish to eat according to your taste—the mother adores you so much that she willingly sacrifices herself upon you!' (3).

While still at some another time she becomes immobile and stunned (as if in a trance) like someone in a portrait, becoming thoughtful and speechless as if she has lost all consciousness of herself and her surroundings when she remembered those poignant moments of Lord Sri Ram's exile to the forest, moments that were laden with extreme pain, agony and grief.

Tulsidas observes that by narrating those moments it seems that one has already learnt the skills of love, affection and endearment (because remembering the miserable, wretched, distressed and contrite condition of Kaushalya, the heart of even the most hardened and un-emotional person becomes very mellowed, and the mind is overwhelmed by surging waves of emotions, with tears welling-up in the eyes and the throat getting so chocked as to make speech impossible)[1] (4).

[[1]In other words, a stern-hearted person is not expected to become emotional and sentimental; he or she is not expected to weep or get chocked so much as to become speechless due to emotions. But when one reads of the condition of Kaushalya he or she is so moved that tears well-up in the eyes and the throat feels chocked. To others it appears that this person who was known to be of a stern heart and non-emotional temperament has learnt what is meant by being emotional and sentimental, and now he or she empathizes with mother Kaushalya, sharing her grief, pain and agony.]

(2 / 53)

माई री ! मोहि कोउ न समुझावै।
राम–गवन साँचो किधौं सपनो, मन परतीति न आवै।। 1।।
लगेइ रहत मेरे नैननि आगे राम–लषन अरु सीता।
तदपि न मिटत दाह या उरको, बिधि जो भयो बिपरीता।। 2।।
दुख न रहै रघुपतिहि बिलोकत, तनु न रहै बिनु देखे।
करत न प्रान पयान, सुनहु, सखि! अरुझि परी यहि लेखे।। 3।।
कौसल्या के बिरह–बचन सुनि रोइ उठीं सब रानी।
तुलसिदास रघुबीर–बिरहकी पीर न जाति बखानी।। 4।।

(2/53)

mā'ī rī! mōhi kō'u na samujhāvai.
rāma-gavana sām̐cō kidhauṁ sapanō, mana paratīti na āvai.. 1..
lagē'i rahata mērē nainani āgē rāma-laṣana aru sītā.
tadapi na miṭata dāha yā urakō, bidhi jō bhayō biparītā.. 2..
dukha na rahai raghupatihi bilōkata, tanu na rahai binu dēkhē.
karata na prāna payāna, sunahu, sakhi! arujhi parī yahi lēkhē.. 3..
kausalyā kē biraha-bacana suni rō'i uṭhīṁ saba rānī.
tulasidāsa raghubīra-birahakī pīra na jāti bakhānī.. 4..

Mother Kaushalya's Lamentations-III

Verse no. 2/53—[Once again, as in verse no. 2/51 herein above, mother Kaushalya addresses an elderly companion in her palace, sharing her pain with her. Kaushalya says—] 'Oh Mother (mā'ī rī)! No one understands me. I am still not able to believe that Ram has gone to the forest, or is it some kind of a bad dream (a nightmare) that I am dreaming[1]? (1).

[[1]Kaushalya could not come to terms with the hard fact that her beloved son Ram has actually gone to the forest. She hopes against all hope that it is merely a nightmare and not a fact of life.]

Ram, Laxman and Sita are always in front of my (mind's) eyes, yet the Creator has become so malicious and opposed to me that the torments and miseries of this (i.e. my) heart are not removed[2] (2).

[[2]The mother hopes that it is a bad dream when she sees and hears that Lord Ram has gone away from her to the forest. But if it is so, then why isn't she seeing her son anywhere near? That means the Creator wishes to torment her by creating a magic world where she would not see her son around! She is not ready to believe, out of her shock and agony, that her beloved son, Lord Sri Ram, has actually left her to go to the forest. She hopes it is merely a bad dream!]

When Sri Raghupath (Lord Ram) is seen, sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations cannot survive, while it is impossible for the body to survive without seeing him.

But, Alas! My soul has not departed (from this body; i.e. I have not died) yet. Hence, friend, listen! There is definitely some error in this principle.[3] (3).'

[[3]The mother is suffering immensely from pain, grief and agony due to separation from her son Lord Ram so much so that she appears to be hallucinating and imagining things like a man under great emotional shock. So one the one hand she thinks Lord Ram has not gone to the forest after all, and the vacant place is merely a bad dream she is seeing. But if this is so, i.e. if Lord Ram is somewhere around though she isn't able to see him, then what is the reason she is feeling so miserable, sad and tormented—because wherever the Lord is such things can't exist.

And if it is true that the Lord has indeed gone to the forest, then how has she survived without him; why didn't she die instantly? The fact that she lives shows that the Lord hasn't gone anywhere, but then why is she not able to see him anywhere around?

Both these two situations as narrated in the first half of this stanza are contradictory to each other, and since both appear to prevail it follows that the principle that says so itself is erroneous.

Kaushalya was so shocked and dazed that she lost her wits, and her intellect and mind were totally confused and perplexed and appear to have deserted her.]

Hearing such grave and heart-churning lamentations and mournful words of Kaushalya, all the queens began to weep.

Tulsidas says that the agony originating from Lord Sri Ram's separation cannot be described in words (because words have their own limitations) (4).

(2 / 54)

जब जब भवन बिलोकति सूनो।
तब तब बिकल होति कौसल्या, दिन दिन प्रति दुख दूनो।। 1।।
सुमिरत बाल–बिनोद रामके सुंदर मुनि–मन–हारी।
होत हृदय अति सूल समुझि पदपंकज अजिर–बिहारी।। 2।।
को अब प्रात कलेऊ माँगत रूठि चलैगो, माई !।
स्याम–तामरस–नैन स्रवत जल काहि लेउँ उर लाई।। 3।।
जीवौं तौ बिपति सहौं निसि–बासर, मरौं तौ मन पछितायो।
चलत बिपिन भरि नयन रामको बदन न देखन पायो।। 4।।
तुलसिदास यह दुसह दसा अति, दारुन बिरह घनेरो।
दूरि करै को भूरि कृपा बिनु सोकजनित रुज मेरो ?।। 5।।

jaba jaba bhavana bilōkati sūnō.
taba taba bikala hōti kausalyā, dina dina prati dukha dūnō.. 1..
sumirata bāla-binōda rāmakē sundara muni-mana-hārī.
hōta hr̥daya ati sūla samujhi padapaṅkaja ajira-bihārī.. 2..
kō aba prāta kalē'ū mām̐gata rūṭhi calaigō, mā'ī!.
syāma-tāmarasa-naina sravata jala kāhi lē'um̐ ura lā'ī.. 3..
jīvauṁ tau bipati sahauṁ nisi-bāsara, marauṁ tau mana pachitāyō.
calata bipina bhari nayana rāmakō badana na dēkhana pāyō.. 4..
tulasidāsa yaha dusaha dasā ati, dāruna biraha ghanērō.
dūri karai kō bhūri kr̥pā binu sōkajanita ruja mērō?.. 5..

Kaushalya's Lamentations-IV

Verse no. 2/54—Whenever mother Kaushalya sees the vacant house, she becomes emotionally very upset, greatly agitated and extremely distraught. Her sorrow, anguish and agonies are increasing day by day (1).

She recalls the childish pranks and frolickings of Lord Sri Ram when the Lord was a child. His childhood days and their memories are so pleasant and enchanting that they captivate the mind and heart of sages, seers and hermits.

She is further tormented by the thought of Lord Sri Ram's lotus-like, soft and delicate feet which were fit only for the floor of the royal palace. [Sri Ram was not accustomed to walk barefoot on hard, stony, thorny, rough ground. When the mother thinks of the pain, sufferings and difficulties that the Lord will have to cope with while walking in the forest, her agonies, anguish and sorrows know no bounds.] (2).

[Recalling Lord Ram's childhood days, she addresses the same old lady companion and laments woefully—] 'Oh Mother (mā'ī)! Who will now run away from me, annoyed that the breakfast is getting late as soon as the day breaks[1]?

Whom will I embrace on seeing tears rolling down from his blue lotus-like eyes (because the breakfast is served late and he crying for he is hungry)? (3).

[[1]Mother Kaushalya poignantly and with a heavy heart recalls those early days when Lord Ram would get up early in the morning and would demand something to eat as he would feel hungry. If the breakfast couldn't be made immediately available, the child would run away and start crying. The mother would rush to pick him up in her arms and wipe the tears from his eyes, assuring him that she would get the snacks ready in haste. Now that Lord Ram has gone away, all these sights and scenes from the past come to haunt Kaushalya.]

If I live now, I will have to cope with the sorrows and agonies day and night, while if I die, I will have the regret that I could not see Ram's face to my heart's content before he went to the forest[2] (4).'

[[2]Kaushalya means that if she dies anytime now, before Lord Ram comes back from the forest at the end of his term of exile, her soul would regret this death as she

couldn't see the Lord at that time when he had departed for the forest till her heart was contented so that she could die peacefully. It was because she was so shocked and dazed during those moments of the Lord's departure that she did not know what to do and what not to.

But if she decides to live and wait for the Lord's return at the end of the term of forest exile, she will be constantly tormented by the Lord's memories that would heap an immense burden of sorrows and agonies upon her. So she finds herself in a quandary, not knowing aught what to decide.]

Tulsidas says that in all sooth this is a very perplexing situation (for the mother) that has caused grave agony and immense grief of separation (to her) (dusaha dasā ati, dāruna biraha ghanērō).

[Kaushalya wonders—] 'Who is there in this world who can remove my huge sorrows, agonies and tribulations, except the extreme grace and kindness of the Lord?[3]' (5).

[[3]That is, mother Kaushalya says that the only way to overcome her distresses, sorrows and agonies is when the Lord shows mercy and grace upon her, and not otherwise. No one else can give reprieve to her tormented soul except the Lord himself.]

(2 / 55)

मेरो यह अभिलाषु बिधाता।
कब पुरवै सखि सानुकूल ह्वै हरि सेवक–सुखदाता।। 1।।
सीता–सहित कुसल कोसलपुर आवत हैं सुत दोऊ।
श्रवन–सुधा–सम बचन सखी कब आइ कहैगो कोऊ ?।। 2।।
सुनि संदेस प्रेम–परिपूरन संभ्रम उठि धावोंगी।
बदन बिलोकि रोकि लोचन–जल हरषि हिये लावोंगी।। 3।।
जनकसुता कब सासु कहैं मोहि, राम लषन कहैं मैया।
बाहु जोरि कब अजिर चलहिंगे स्याम–गौर दोउ भैया।। 4।।
तुलसिदास यहि भाँति मनोरथ करत प्रीति अति बाढ़ी।
थकित भई उर आनि राम–छबि मनहु चित्र लिखि काढ़ी।। 5।।

(2/55)

mērō yaha abhilāṣu bidhātā.
kaba puravai sakhi sānukūla hvai hari sēvaka-sukhadātā.. 1..
sītā-sahita kusala kōsalapura āvata haiṁ suta dō'ū.
śravana-sudhā-sama bacana sakhī kaba ā'i kahaigō kō'ū?.. 2..
suni sandēsa prēma-paripūrana sambhrama uṭhi dhāvōṅgī.
badana bilōki rōki lōcana-jala haraṣi hiyē lāvōṅgī.. 3..
janakasutā kaba sāsu kahaiṁ mōhi, rāma laṣana kahaiṁ maiyā.
bāhu jōri kaba ajira calahiṅgē syāma-gaura dō'u bhaiyā.. 4..
tulasidāsa yahi bhāmṫi manōratha karata prīti ati bāṛhī.
thakita bha'ī ura āni rāma-chabi manahu citra likhi kāṛhī.. 5..

Kaushalya's Wish

Verse no. 2/55—'Oh Friend (sakhi)! When will Sri Hari (Lord God), who provides happiness and contentedness to his devotees, become favourable and fulfill my this only one wish[1] (1).

[[1]And what is Kaushalya's 'one wish'? The following stanzas tell us about it.]

Oh Friend! When will someone come and say these sweet nectar-like words to me that "my two sons (Ram and Laxman), accompanied by Sita, have happily come back to Ayodhya" (2).

Hearing these (pleasant and auspicious) words, I will rush out overwhelmed with love, and seeing their faces, I'll somehow control my tears of joy even as I warmly embrace them excitedly, full of exhilaration and unbound delight (3).

When will Sita address (or call) me 'oh my mother-in-law', and when will Ram and Laxman call me 'oh mother'? And when will these two dark and fair complexioned brothers once again roam in my courtyard (i.e. in the palace), arm in arm?' (4).

Tulsidas says that while making such wishes, the love and affection of Kaushalya increased manifold (and for all practical purposes her innerself was overwhelmed with these affectionate emotions even as she became highly sentimental).

Remembering the beauteous image of Lord Sri Ram in her heart, she became speechless and immobile by buffeting of emotions that hit her hard, making her look dazed and dumb as if she was part of a picture[2] (5).

[[2]Kaushalya suddenly stopped speaking. She was overwhelmed with emotions so much that her voice failed even as her throat chocked. Her mind was numbed into non-thinking like a dazed person who is in a stupefied state of shock. She appeared to be part of a painting or portrait where the person whose picture it is shows no signs of life.]

महाराज दशरथका देहत्याग

(2/56)

सुन्यौ जब फिरि सुमंत पुर आयो।
कहिहै कहा, प्रानपतिकी गति, नृपति बिकल उठि धायो।। 1।।
पाँय परत मंत्री अति ब्याकुल, नृप उठाय उर लायो।
दसरथ–दसा देखि न कह्यो कछु, हरि जो सँदेस पठायो।। 2।।
बूझि न सकत कुसल प्रीतमकी, हृदय यहै पछितायो।
साँचेहु सुत–बियोग सुनिबे कहँ धिग बिधि मोहि जिआयो।। 3।।
तुलसिदास प्रभु जानि निठुर हौं न्याय नाथ बिसरायो।
हा रघुपति कहि पर्‌यो अवनि, जनु जलतें मीन बिलगायो।। 4।।

(2/56)

sun'yau jaba phiri sumanta pura āyō.
kahihai kahā, prānapatikī gati, nr̥pati bikala uṭhi dhāyō.. 1..
pām̐ya parata mantrī ati byākula, nr̥pa uṭhāya ura lāyō.
dasaratha-dasā dēkhi na kahyō kachu, hari jō sam̐dēsa paṭhāyō.. 2..
būjhi na sakata kusala prītamakī, hr̥daya yahai pachitāyō.
sām̐cēhu suta-biyōga sunibē kaham̐ dhiga bidhi mōhi ji'āyō.. 3..
tulasidāsa prabhu jāni niṭhura hauṁ n'yāya nātha bisarāyō.
hā raghupati kahi paryō avani, janu jalatēṁ mīna bilagāyō.. 4..

Dasrath's Lamentation and Death-I

Verse no. 2/56—[King Dasrath had sent his chief minister named Sumantra behind Lord Ram after he exited from the palace and was on the path leading out of the city of Ayodhya. Sumantra had been instructed to take a chariot with him, take Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita on it, go to some distance from the city till its boarders near the river Ganges where the village of Sringberpur was situated, and during the time he spends with the Lord employ all his intelligence, wisdom, wits and skills at persuasion to somehow bring the three back to the city.

But Lord Ram, who in his primary form was Lord Vishnu, the Lord of the world, had to undertake and fulfill a great mission for which he had descended upon earth—and it was to bring to an end the scourge of the cruel demons. To successfully accomplish this it was imperative that the Lord overcome emotional ties and formalities of the world to move ahead on his mission to the depth of the wild forest which was the breeding ground of these ferocious demons.

Therefore, Lord Ram very politely sent Sumantra back to Ayodhya. When Dasrath learnt that his minister has returned without Lord Ram, he was inconsolable, and wailing and lamenting woefully his soul ultimately left his body.

This episode is described in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 81—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 142—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 156.]

When the king (Dasrath) heard that Sumantra has come back to Ayodhya, then eagerly desirous of finding out what news or information he has brought back concerning the 'Lord of his soul' ("prānapati"; i.e. the one who was dearest of his soul, a reference to Lord Sri Ram), he rushed forward anxiously to meet him[1] (1).

[[1]The king was so eager to learn what news Sumantra had brought back that he did not wish to waste time by waiting for his minister to come in and report to him as usually he would have done when sent on any mission, but the king had rushed to the front of the palace to meet him some half-way down the corridors or the courtyard.]

Then, seeing the minister (Sumantra) falling at his feet, distressed, full of remorse and emotionally upset, the king lifted him and clasped him to his bosom. The minister, too, seeing the miserable and wretched condition of the king, did not say a word about the message that Hari (Sri Ram) had sent[2] (2).

[[2]Even without a word being uttered, the message was clear and loud. Seeing the facial expression of Sumantra, Dasrath immediately realized that he had failed in his mission, and that Lord Ram has not come back.]

(So overwhelmed and distressed was Dasrath with overriding sorrow, regret, remorse and grief that—) He could not ask about the welfare (i.e. any news) of his son (Sri Ram) because (he realized that Lord Ram did not return). This filled the king with extreme remorse and contrition even as he regretted that the Creator has kept him alive to hear of the news of his dear son's separation from him. It was like a severe curse being cast upon him[3] (3).

[[3]The king would have preferred death to be alive to hear that he would have to suffer the loss of his son by way of separation. His sorrow and pain were highly aggravated for the fact that he himself was to blame for all this. He does not accuse the Creator for bringing about separation of his beloved son Ram from him, but rather for keeping him alive to hear this bad news.]

Tulsidas adds that the king began to feel extremely contrite and remorseful. He grieved and lamented woefully—'Forsooth, the Lord (Sri Ram) has forsaken me because he had realized that I am a heartless person who has no sense of love and affection in him; I am stone-hearted, and the Lord thought it proper and fit not to have anything to do with such a person!'

And then, crying and wailing in a most distraught manner, he wept, calling out the Lord's name repeatedly—'Oh Raghupati (Ram)'—as he fell to the ground (i.e. fainted) as if a fish has been taken out of the water[4] (4).

[[4]The miserable condition of Dasrath has also been described in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 153—to Doha no. 155.]

(2 / 57)

मुएहु न मिटैगो मेरो मानसिक पछिताउ।
नारिबस न बिचारि कीन्हौं काज, सोचत राउ।। 1।।
तिलकको बोल्यौ, दिये बन, चौगुनो चित चाउ।
ह्रदय दाड़िम ज्यौं न बिदर्‌यो समुझि सील–सुभाउ।। 2।।
सीय–रघुबर–लषन बिनु भय भभरि भगी न आउ।
मोहि बूझि न परत, यातें कौन कठिन कुघाउ।। 3।।
सुनि सुमंत ! कि आनि सुंदर सुवन सहित जिआउ।
दास तुलसी नतरु मोको मरन अमिय पिआउ।। 4।।

mu'ēhu na miṭaigō mērō mānasika pachitā'u.
nāribasa na bicāri kīnhauṁ kāja, sōcata rā'u.. 1..
tilakakō bōlyau, diyē bana, caugunō cita cā'u.
hṛdaya dāḍima jyauṁ na bidaryō samujhi sīla-subhā'u.. 2..
sīya-raghubara-laṣana binu bhaya bhabhari bhagī na ā'u.
mōhi būjhi na parata, yātēṁ kauna kaṭhina kughā'u.. 3..
suni sumanta! ki āni sundara suvana sahita ji'ā'u.
dāsa tulasī nataru mōkō marana amiya pi'ā'u.. 4..

Dasrath's Lamentation and Death-II

Verse no. 2/57—[In the context of this present verse, refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/59 below where a similar idea is expressed.]

The king (Dasrath) is full of contrition, remorse and regret, 'Under the influence of a woman (Kaikeyi), I did not act with prudence and wisdom. The resultant mental anguish, guilt, sorrow and regret will not be removed even on my death (1).

Look, I called Sri Ram to anoint him as prince-regent, and instead I sent him to exile in the forest. But inspite of that he maintained his calm and poise, and instead of getting annoyed and angry, he maintained his nature to follow my instructions with four-times more enthusiasm (caugunō cita cā'u)[1].

Even after realising his such a virtuous, noble and righteous character and temperament, my heart did not break into splinters like a broken 'dāḍima' (i.e. a pomegranate)[2] (2).

[[1]To wit, Lord Ram took the orders to go to forest exile with the same cheerfulness as he would have accepted the orders to become a Regent. Nay, he was more enthusiastic about the forest than the regent-hood when he leant that his dear brother Bharat was to be anointed in his stead. Lord Ram went out of his way to cheerfully keep the words of his father and do his bidding, with not even the slightest sign of irritation.

[2]Can anyone in this world be a better human being, more righteous, an upholder of Dharma, and more loving and caring than Lord Ram? And look at me, Dasrath, who is so hard at heart as if I am nothing but a soul-less craggy rock personified! Surely, I have no right to live, and sure enough I have not right to be called 'father of Lord Ram'. So that is truly the reason why the Lord decided to politely leave me alone to my destiny decreed ill fate.]

If my life does not run away (i.e. abandon me; leave me to die) out of fear of the sufferings and horrors that would have to be suffered now due to the wound inflicted by separation from Sita, Ram and Laxman (sīya-raghubara-laṣana), say then I don't understand which wound or which misery is larger and more horrifying than this (which would let me die)? [In other words, if I do not die now with the grief and pain inflicted upon me by the separation from Sita, Ram and Laxman, which situation would be more painful and horrifying than this that would make me die? It's an emotional injury that has stabbed me like a dagger through my heart; if I don't die now then when would I do?] (3).

Oh Sumant, listen. Either bring back my lovely sons and let me live with them, or else let me taste the taste of death which would be like nectar for me (as it would at least relieve me of the constant pain and grief that I would otherwise have to endure if I live without my beloved sons Ram and Laxman, and my equally beloved daughter-in-law Sita). [In other words, I would prefer death now as it would give my mind and heart rest and peace.]' (4).

(2 / 58)

अवध बिलोकि हौं जीवत रामभद्र–बिहीन !
कहा करिहैं आइ सानुज भरत धरमधुरीन।। 1।।
राम–सोक–सनेह–संकुल, तनु बिकल, मनु लीन।
टूटि तारो गगन–मग ज्यों होत छिन–छिन छीन।। 2।।
हृदय समुझि सनेह सादर प्रेम पावन मीन।
करी तुलसीदास दसरथ प्रीति–परमिति पीन।। 3।।

(2/58)

avadha bilōki hauṁ jīvata rāmabhadra-bihīna!
kahā karihaiṁ ā'i sānuja bharata dharamadhurīna.. 1..
rāma-sōka-sanēha-saṅkula, tanu bikala, manu līna.
ṭūṭi tārō gagana-maga jyōṁ hōta china-china chīna.. 2..
hr̥daya samujhi sanēha sādara prēma pāvana mīna.
karī tulasīdāsa dasaratha prīti-paramiti pīna.. 3..

Dasrath's Lamentation and Death-III

Verse no. 2/58—'Alas! Now I shall live to see Ayodhya devoid of Lord Sri Ram who was an image of happiness and auspiciousness. What will the most righteous and upright Bharat and his brother Shatrughan, who are experts in laws of Dharma (meaning principles of righteousness, propriety, probity, moral and ethical conduct, good and noble behaviour) do even if they come back now[1]?' (1).

[[1]It so happened that Bharat and his younger brother Shatrughan, the sons of Kaikeyi, had gone to their maternal uncle's place at the time their mother had hatched the conspiracy to send Lord Ram to forest exile. Dasrath's statement is clearly indicative that he is certain Bharat has no hand in this evil plot. So when he comes back, what would he be able to do now at this late stage. Had he been at Ayodhya or had come back home in time, it is very certain that he would not have allowed Lord Ram to go to the forest in the very first place. But it's too late.]

In this way, king Dasrath's body was extremely agitated and tormented, and his mind was gradually sinking into the bottomless pit where one loses all his senses (i.e. goes into a coma, just prior to death), due to the combined effect of overwhelming sorrows and agonies of separation from Lord Ram, as well as the torments inflicted upon his

heart by his love and affection for the Lord, as if a falling star streaking across the sky gets bleaker (or fades away) at ever passing moment (2).

Tulsidas observes that Dasrath drew inspiration from the pure love and enduring endearment of the fish (for the water), and strengthened (or fortified) the standards of love, affection and endearments in his heart. [To wit, Dasrath decided that even as the fish cannot survive without water, so he too would not live without Lord Ram.][2] (3).

[[2]This last stanza reflects the king's resolution to die. Refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/57, stanza no. 4 herein above.]

राग गौरी

(2 / 59)

करत राउ मनमों अनुमान।
सोक–बिकल, मुख बचन न आवै, बिछुरै कृपानिधान।। 1।।
राज देन कहि बोलि नारि–बस मैं जो कह्यो बन जान।
आयसु सिर धरि चले हरषि हिय कानन भवन समान।। 2।।
ऐसे सुतके बिरह–अवधि लौं जौ राखौं यह प्रान।
तौ मिटि जाइ प्रीतिकी परमिति, अजस सुनौं निज कान।। 3।।
राम गए अजहूँ हौं जीवत, समुझत हिय अकुलान।
तुलसिदास तनु तजि रघुपति हित कियो प्रेम परवान।। 4।।

rāga gaurī

(2/59)

karata rā'u manamōṁ anumāna.
sōka-bikala, mukha bacana na āvai, bichurai kr̥pānidhāna.. 1..
rāja dēna kahi bōli nāri-basa maiṁ jō kahyō bana jāna.
āyasu sira dhari calē haraṣi hiya kānana bhavana samāna.. 2..
aisē sutakē biraha-avadhi lauṁ jau rākhauṁ yaha prāna.
tau miṭi jā'i prītikī paramiti, ajasa sunauṁ nija kāna.. 3..
rāma ga'ē ajahūṁ hauṁ jīvata, samujhata hiya akulāna.
tulasidāsa tanu taji raghupati hita kiyō prēma paravāna.. 4..

Dasrath's Lamentation and Death-IV

Verse no. 2/59—[In the context of this present verse, refer also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/57 where a similar idea is expressed.]

The king was thinking to himself. He was unable to come to terms with the fact that Lord Ram, who was an abode of mercy, compassion, benevolence and grace, was

separated from him. He was intensely perplexed, shocked and stunned beyond measure with distress and agony so profound that he was made speechless (1).

He brooded and lamented in contrition and grief, 'Ah! Alas! When I called him (Sri Ram) and, under the influence (or a wicked spell) of a woman (Kaikeyi), I told him to go to the forest instead of anointing him as prince regent—at that time, he had obeyed my orders (literally, kept my words over his head as if in great reverence and showing me honour) and had gone to the forest cheerfully, without a trace of regret or unhappiness or anger, as if he was proceeding to his own home (2).

If I keep myself alive during the period of separation (extending to fourteen years of Ram's exile), it would violate or breach the high standards needed to have love and affection for someone who is extremely dear. Besides this, I will have to bear the ignominy and hear derogatory, defamatory and sarcastic remarks with my own ears.

[To wit, I will have to bear infamy at two levels. One, I will be derided by the world for being a liar for saying I loved my son who is extremely dear to my heart, because had this been true I wouldn't have sent him to the forest in the first place, and if it is supposed that I had to do it due to certain moral obligations to uphold the sanctity of my words as a noble king ought to do, then at least I should have sacrificed my life as well. And two, I will become a subject of constant ridicule and scorn in the society of king; with what face will I meet them?] (3).

'Alas! Aha! I am still alive inspite of Sri Ram going away from here'.

Thinking thus over and over in his mind and overwhelmed with grief and agony, his heart became extremely distressed, utterly miserable and woeful.

Tulsidas says that at that moment he left his mortal coil (the mortal physical body; i.e. he died) to prove (establish beyond doubt) his (deep and abiding) love and affection for Sri Raghupati (Sri Ram) for all times to come[1] (4).

[[1]By dying due to the sorrow of Lord Ram's separation, king Dasrath not only washed away the ignominy and the immensity of agony that his act of sending the Lord to the forest had brought to him, but he had also proved that he indeed loved the Lord from the core of his heart so much so that his life was directly dependent upon his nearness to the Lord.

He had proved that though he was driven by fate to do what he was forced to do, but he should not be treated as being a willing conspirator in the Lord's exile to the forest and the suffering through which he had to undergo there.

By his death king Dasrath proved that he did love Lord Ram sincerely and most deeply, but he had to accept the will of Providence, the decree of the Destiny-Writer, and the fiat of Fate which he could not in anyway gainsay, and against which he had no control, or the power to resist or oppose.]

भरतजी अयोध्यामें

(2/60)

ऐसे तैं क्यों कटु बचन कह्यो री ?
'राम जाहु कानन', कठोर तेरो कैसे धौं हृदय रह्यो, री।। 1।।

दिनकर–बंस, पिता दसरथ–से, राम–लषन–से भाई।
जननी! तू जननी? तौ कहा कहौं, बिधि केहि खोरि न लाई?।। 2।।
हौं लहिहौं सुख राजमातु ह्वै, सुत सिर छत्र धरैगो।
कुल–कलंक मल–मूल मनोरथ तव बिनु कौन करैगो ?।। 3।।
ऐहैं राम, सुखी सब ह्वैहैं, ईस अजस मेरो हरिहैं।
तुलसिदास मोको बड़ो सोच है, तू जनम कौनि बिधि भरिहै।। 4।।

bharatajī ayōdhyāmēṁ

(2/60)

aisē taiṁ kyōṁ kaṭu bacana kahyō rī?
'rāma jāhu kānana', kaṭhōra tērō kaisē dhauṁ hr̥daya rahyō, rī.. 1..
dinakara-bansa, pitā dasaratha-sē, rāma-laṣana-sē bhā'ī.
jananī! tū jananī? tau kahā kahauṁ, bidhi kēhi khōri na lā'ī?.. 2..
hauṁ lahihauṁ sukha rājamātu hvai, suta sira chatra dharaigō.
kula-kalaṅka mala-mūla manōratha tava binu kauna karaigō?.. 3..
aihaiṁ rāma, sukhī saba hvaihaiṁ, īsa ajasa mērō harihaiṁ.
tulasidāsa mōkō baṛō sōca hai, tū janama kauni bidhi bharihai.. 4..

Bharat's contrition & grief when he returned to Ayodhya-I

Verse no. 2/60—[When Dasrath died, the kingdom's chief priest, Vasistha, advised the chief minister Sumantra to immediately send messengers to bring Bharat and Shatrughan back to Ayodhya from their maternal uncle's place where the two had gone for a visit some time back.

Upon return Bharat saw the calamity that had befallen upon his family as well as the kingdom: his father Dasrath had died, and his two brothers Lord Ram and Laxman had been sent to exile in the forest. He discovered that the root of all this evil was no one else but his own mother Kaikeyi. Dumbfounded due to shock and seething with anger beyond measure, he had severely taken his mother to task, sparing no harsh words he could think of to scold her even as he condemned himself because it was he whom she wished to be make a Regent for which Lord Ram was sent to the forest which resulted in the death of their father Dasrath.

Verse nos. 2/60—2/61 herein below narrate how he had bitterly condemned Kaikeyi, disdainfully denouncing and deriding her, and decrying her for bringing unwarranted and untold misery and infamy on his head .

This episode is described in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 156—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 163.]

Vehemently scolding and taking to task his mother, Bharat tells her, 'Oh You wretched woman! How could you utter the harsh words "Ram go to the forest"? How could your heart be so cruel and inhuman?[1] (1).

[[1]It should be observed that such public outburst of Bharat against his own mother was a great exercise in public relations and to show that he was innocent, for otherwise he would have treated Kaikeyi nicely and granted Manthara, the hunch-back crooked handmaid of the queen who was the architect of this ruinous plan, great gifts.

Bharat was very wise and prudent and, while entering the city, had had the feel of the people's pulse. He had realised that any sincere attempt to even temporarily accept the crown for 14 years to prevent anarchy in the kingdom, and handing it over to Sri Ram when he came back to Ayodhya at the end of the exile period would not be accepted by the people. There would be an open revolt and probable assasination. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 158—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 159.

So, wise as he was, he successfully prevented a ruinous inter-clan civil war and carved a niche for himself in the legends of righteous and noble persons, became a benchmark in propriety, probity, devotion and fair play. He not only saved himself from disgrace and ignominy, but also saved Ayodhya from a calamity.]

Oh, I was so fortunate that I got birth in the Solar-race, had king Dasrath as a father and Ram-Laxman as brothers. And for mother, oh my ill fate and evil luck, I got you (how shameful it is for me)! What can I say for I'm utterly ashamed of myself (to be recognized as being your son) (2).

Who else but you lowly wretched person with a pervert mind and an ugly heart could have thought that your son would wear the crown and rule over the kingdom, and you would be honoured as queen-mother? [To wit, you had thought that Lord Ram was the only obstacle in the path of your unlucky son from ascending the throne, so you plotted to remove this hurdle for good so that your son would get the crown and you will lord over the kingdom as the queen-mother! Woe to you and your soul for harbouring this thought.] (3)

Lord Ram shall come back, the people shall be happy once more, and God will forgive me—but what about you (oh wretched woman)? How will you spend the rest of your days after such an ignoble and detestable deed that you have done? [To wit, don't think that Lord Ram will remain in the forest for all times to come and I will ascend the throne. The Lord will and surely come back, and this will pave the way for happiness and good times to come back to the people of Ayodhya. The Gods will forgive me because they know I am not a party to this despicable deed you have done. But tell me, what will now happen to you. You will be condemned for the rest of your life. Be sure that I will have nothing to do with you, and be sure you will never be able to do sufficient penance to atone for your sins, or sufficiently repent for the evil mischief you've done.]'* (4)

[*Bharat was totally innocent as he was away visiting his maternal uncle's place along with his younger brother Shatrughan at that time. When message was sent to him to rush back home to Ayodhya, and on coming back he discovered all what grief and misfortune had befallen upon the family and the kingdom due to the nuisance his mother had committed, he was sorely startled and extremely disconsolate. He wept bitterly and was filled with exceeding fury at his mother. His eyes glared as he waxed in wroth in exceeding wrath as he lamented most woefully and grieved at the crest of grieving even as he vented his ire on his mother,

denouncing her, chiding and upbraiding her in the sternest possible words he could muster.

Quoth he—'Oh thou accursed woman. Fie upon thee! Oh thou yonder foolish woman, the selfish of the selfiest and lowly in the trough of lowliness, how dareth thou standiest before me with a face blackened with deeds darker than the darkest lamp-black? Woe betide thee, thou the meanest, the wickedest and the vilest women that walketh on the surface of the earth. Dost not thee realize and ashamed at thy self that thine act hasth broughtest upon mine family a tainted scourge likest of which none couldest have ever imagined? Wost dost thou not kill me whence thou had brought forth me into this world to face this ignominy? Shame to me that I be calleth thine son, and thou my mother. Woe to thy womb and woe to thy name. By the Creator, why should'st thou, and how durst thou, have done what thou did? Why, thou have become the cause of bereavement at the death of mine father, banishment of mine dearest brother, the parcel of mine heart without whom I can't live, and heapest thou upon me the lowliest of ill-fame by the bucket-load, the ignominy of which I wilt ne'er tidedth over till breath leaveth mine body! Woe to thee and thine name; woe to me and mine life! And let the Creator suffer me and casteth upon me the greatest of sufferance by way of punishment that he haseth written in his scroll of destiny. Now, in severance of all relations with thee, I command that thou wilt hasten away from my presence and scoot to the yonder at this instant and hide thine tarry face, thee and thine Gobbo companion (the hunch-back maid Manthara)—for verily I raiseth mine hands and proclaimeth as a soothsay that I not henceforward be suffered to ever haveth an unfortunate chance to casteth mine eyes upon thine evil-omened contours, and let the Creator honour mine this pledge ne'er e'er to see thy accursed face till death overtakes me. Fie upon thee and woe betide thee. Now, I ask of thee to spare me mine peace and leave me alone!!']

(2 / 61)

ताते हौं देत न दूषन तोहू।
रामबिरोधी उर कठोरतें प्रगट कियो है बिधि मोहू।। 1।।
सुंदर सुखद सुसील सुधानिधि, जरनि जाइ जिहि जोए।
बिष–बारुनी–बंधु कहियत बिधु ! नातो मिटत न धोए।। 2।।
होते जौ न सुजान–सिरोमनि राम सबके मन माहीं।
तौ तोरी करतूति, मातु ! सुनि प्रीति–प्रतीति कहा हीं ?।। 3।।
मृदु मंजुल सींची–सनेह सुचि सुनत भरत–बर–बानी।
तुलसी 'साधु–साधु' सुर–नर–मुनि कहत प्रेम पहिचानी।। 4।।

(2/61)

tātē hauṁ dēta na dūṣana tōhū.
rāmabirōdhī ura kaṭhōratēṁ pragaṭa kiyō hai bidhi mōhū.. 1..
sundara sukhada susīla sudhānidhi, jarani jā'i jihi jō'ē.
biṣa-bārunī-bandhu kahiyata bidhu! nātō miṭata na dhō'ē.. 2..
hōtē jau na sujāna-sirōmani rāma sabakē mana māhīṁ.

tau tōrī karatūti, mātu! suni prīti-pratīti kahā hīṁ?.. 3..
mr̥du manjula sīmcī-sanēha suci sunata bharata-bara-bānī.
tulasī 'sādhu-sādhu' sura-nara-muni kahata prēma pahicānī.. 4..

Bharat's contrition & grief when he returned to Ayodhya-II

Verse no. 2/61—[Bharat was seething with anger and was full of remorse; he severely reprimanded his mother Kaikeyi in the harshest terms he could think of. His pain and grief burst out openly when he angrily condemned her in these words—]

'The Creator has made (or had forced) me take birth from the womb of one whose heart is opposed (or is malicious and envious) towards Lord Sri Ram. That is why I cannot blame you (because it is the Creator's fault that he made me your son).

[In all sooth and to tell you the truth, I am extremely and absolutely ashamed to be known as your son. It would have been better if I wasn't born at all. Woe to the Creator who chose to heap all the sins, ills, evils and infamies that he had in his stock upon my head. Since he is the writer of one's destiny, how can I blame you?] (1).

See! The Moon is so enchanting and beautiful, is a provider of solace and comfort to the beholder, is very pleasing and soothing, and is the heavenly treasury (or reservoir) of ambrosia (sundara sukhada susīla sudhānidhi) that acts as an all-times soother that gives solace, succour and peace to those who seek its blessings to calm down the scorch created by agitations of the heart and mental torments of all kinds (jarani jā'i jihi jō'ē). But it is such an irony and fiat of Fate overseen by the Creator that the same graceful and benevolent Moon is called the 'brother of poison and liquor (or all harmful liquids and intoxicants)' (biṣa-bārunī-bandhu kahiyata bidhu).

Forsooth and without gainsay the relationships one inherits by the virtue of one's birth cannot be so easily washed off or wished off even if one likes to steer clean of them, and they stick as long as one lives (nātō miṭata na dhō'ē)[1] (2).

[[1]It means that inspite of having such good and graceful characteristics, the Moon still faces infamy and disgrace for no fault of its own. The Moon is called a 'brother of poison and liquor' because all the three were born at the time of the legendary churning of the ocean by the gods and demons. Since they had the same origin—the celestial ocean which was churned in search of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss—they share a common parent, and therefore the Moon becomes a brother of both the poison and the liquor. But this is the great paradox of creation—the Moon has no qualities associated with either the poison or the liquor, and neither the liquid it stores in any of them for it is 'ambrosia'. But unfortunately, while everyone enjoys this 'ambrosia' of comfort, peace, solace and succour for agitated nerves, tormented mind and vexed heart, no one feels guilty in demeaning the Moon by calling it the 'brother of poison and liquor'.

In the same way, though the world would soon come to know that Bharat had no hand in the conspiracy hatched by Kaikeyi, that he had no role to play in sending Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita to the forest and the resultant death of Dasrath and the subsequent calamity that befell Ayodhya, that he was innocent and clean, that he had

regretted the events more than his father and tried his best to correct things by going to the forest and pleading with Lord Ram to come back to Ayodhya, even offering himself to take the Lord's place if the Lord sticks to his position of living in the forest for the designated period of fourteen years—but no matter how hard Bharat tries to the contrary, the world would still call him the son of Kaikeyi. It is so unfortunate for him! How can he wipe off this relationship that he inherited by the virtue of his birth. This is a sore point for Bharat.]

If Sri Ram—who is the most exalted among gentlemen and noble persons—had not resided in the heart of all, then oh mother, considering your wicked deeds, how could he have had affection and endearment left for me in his heart[2]? (3).'

[[2]Bharat means that Lord Sri Ram knows that he was not a party to his mother's conspiracy and nefarious designs. That is why he was sure that the Lord's love and affection for him still remains the same inspite of Kaikeyi's horrific misdemeanours, maliciousness of her evil heart, her greed for the crown, the pervertness of her lowly intellect and corrupt mind, and her short-sightedness that had led her to completely disregard what is right and what is wrong.]

Tulsidas says that hearing these most sweet, pleasant, truthful and honest words of Bharat, words that were imbued in love and affection for Lord Ram, and recognizing his deep reverence for the Lord, the gods, the humans and the congregation of hermits and sages (sura-nara-muni kahata) lauded Bharat profusely, saying 'sādhu-sādhu' (an exclamation meaning 'truly holy, truly saintly, truly graceful, truly pure and truly truthful'), and praised his integrity, his sense of probity and propriety, and his love for Lord Ram (prēma pahicānī)[3] (4).

[[3]Everyone praised Bharat and his noble thoughts. All unanimously applauded him and endorsed what Bharat had said, and proclaimed that he was being honest and his statement was truthful.]

(2/62)

जो पै हौं मातु मते महँ ह्वैहौं।
तौ जननी ! जगमें या मुखकी कहाँ कालिमा ध्वैहौं।। 1।।
क्यों हौं आजु होत सुचि सपथनि ? कौन मानिहै साँची?
महिमा–मृगी कौन सुकृतीकी खल–बच–बिसिषन बाँची ?।। 2।।
गहि न जाति रसना काहूकी, कहौ जाहि जोइ सूझै।
दीनबन्धु कारुण्य–सिंधु बिनु कौन हियेकी बूझै ?।। 3।।
तुलसी रामबियोग बिषम–बिष–बिकल नारि–नर भारी।
भरत–सनेह–सुधा सींचे सब भए तेहि समय सुखारी।। 4।।

(2/62)

jō pai hauṁ mātu matē mahaṁ hvaihauṁ.
tau jananī! jagamēṁ yā mukhakī kahāṁ kālimā dhvaihauṁ.. 1..

kyōṁ hauṁ āju hōta suci sapathani? kauna mānihai sāṁcī?
mahimā-mṛgī kauna sukṛtīkī khala-baca-bisiṣana bāṁcī?.. 2..
gahi na jāti rasanā kāhūkī, kahau jāhi jō'i sūjhai.
dīnabandhu kāruṇya-sindhu binu kauna hiyēkī būjhai?.. 3..
tulasī rāmabiyōga biṣama-biṣa-bikala nāri-nara bhārī.
bharata-sanēha-sudhā sīñcē saba bha'ē tēhi samaya sukhārī.. 4..

Bharat's contrition & grief when he returned to Ayodhya-III

Verse no. 2/62—[After having scolded his own mother Kaikeyi in the severest terms he could think of, Bharat then went to mother Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram. He assuaged her saddened and grieved heart and tried his best to reassure her that he is absolutely innocent and has nothing to do with what Kaikeyi had done. He offered to willingly undergo whatever punishment is meted out to him, cursing himself and weeping woefully in the lap of Kaushalya. Bharat's deft handling of the situation vowing his allegiance to Lord Ram cleared all air of doubt and suspicion that people had harboured of him. All apprehension that Bharat was a secret party to the evil conspiracy that had led to Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita go to the wilderness were removed for good.

It bade good for the future of Bharat. When he had returned to Ayodhya, as soon as he entered the city he could sense an air of abject distress, utter repulsion, and grave suspicion in the minds of the citizens even as signs of suppressed anger against him were very evident. People turned their backs upon him; they did not salute him or wish him a welcome as was the normal protocol when a prince returned from a foreign trip. Bharat immediately realized that an air of revolt hanged like a thick pall of dark clouds and an impending mutiny was imminent against him.

So, wise and alert as he was, he immediately decided, even before being aware of the cause of all the gloom and suppressed anger, that whatever be the cause he would set it right. And his prudence, deftness and wise handling of this sticky issue proved to be his wisest decision in life, for not only did he endeared himself to the masses instantly but washed his hands clear of the heap of ignominy that would otherwise have tainted this great family of noble kings for all times to come by establishing that he was not a party to the evil conspiracy, and that he would not accept the crown come what may!

To firmly settle matters in his favour, he first severely scolded his own mother Kaikeyi and used the strongest of words to condemn her. Then he met Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram, wept bitterly before her, and asked for forgiveness. Finally, when the royal court met and all the ministers, courtiers, the nobles of the kingdom, his own Guru Vasistha, and even Lord Ram's mother Kaushalya tried to persuade him to accept the crown of the kingdom in the absence of his elder brother Ram, he flatly refused. Not only this, he made it clear his intent that he would immediately go to the forest wherever Lord Ram is and put the crown on him right there, and bring him back.

Bharat, who was treated with contempt upon his arrival at Ayodhya, suddenly became the dear of the masses.

These developments are narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 158—to Doha no. 184.

Presently, in verse nos. 2/62—2/63 of Geetawali we read what transpired between Bharat and Kaushalya.

In the context of this instant verse as well as the one that follows it, the reader should also refer to Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 163—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 169.]

[Bharat was overwhelmed with grief and contrition as he met mother Kaushalya and observed her ruthful condition of misery and sufferings that had bestrided her from all sides. In an effort to assuage her feeling and assure her that he had no hand in the evil tide of things, and his mother Kaikeyi is the sole perpetrator of the conspiracy that led to the happening of the calamity, he thought of no wise except to sternly reproach his own mother Kaikeyi in front of Kaushalya. So he told her—] 'Mother! If I am agreeable to what my mother wants, or am a party to it, or have given my secret consent to what she did, where in this world would I wash my blackened (tarnished, stained, sinful) face? (1).

How can I absolve myself of my sins and repent sufficiently by merely swearing of my ignorance and innocence? Who will ever believe me in the first place?

Say, which she-deer representing the glory and fame of people who are righteous, good, noble and virtuous has ever escaped the arrows symbolizing taunts and cruel words shot at her by others who are jealous of her and shoot her with sharp arrows without having any mercy like a cruel, wicked and pervert hunter does[1] (2).

[[1]Bharat means that though it is the truth that he has no role to play in all the turmoil that has engulfed Ayodhya, but would that ever prevent people from accusing him of guilt and being the cause of all this agony and calamity that has befallen upon the family and the kingdom? No one wouldst ever believe that Bharat was innocent.

Here, the she-deer is Bharat who is innocent and of a noble heart, and the eternal taunts and ignominy that would now be targeted at him are like the sharp arrows of the cruel hunter who has no mercy on the poor animal.]

No one can hold anyone's tongue: no one can stop the tongues of the people of Ayodhya from wagging; no one can stop them from gossiping in hush-hush tones and spreading far and wide, by way of word of mouth, a non-existent scandal as if it was the truth. So let everyone say what they wish (for it is useless to try to stop it).

Besides Lord Sri Ram—who is an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness as well as is a friend of the distressed, lowly and tormented ones (dīnabandhu kāruṇya-sindhu)—who else would know what is in my heart?[2] (3).'

[[2]Bharat is sure that notwithstanding what others say, Lord Ram knows that he is innocent, and this is what matters to him.

The glory of Bharat and his profound devotion for Lord Ram has been repeatedly acknowledged in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand. Refer: (i) King Janak's endorsement: from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 288—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 289; (ii) By the Gods: Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 294; (iii) By the country folk: from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 222—to Doha no. 223; Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 206; (iv) Sage Bharadwaj: Doha no. 207—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210; and (v) Triveni, the holy confluence of the three rivers, Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati: Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 205.]

Tulsidas says that all the men and women folk (of Ayodhya) were extremely agitated, tormented and worked-up by the harsh poison-like separation from Lord Sri Ram that was scalding them.

At that time, the comforting, soothing and compatible nectar-like affectionate words of Bharat (had a tremendous impact in calming tempers, assuage ruffled emotions, prevented a mutiny, and) made people feel happy and comfortable (4).

(2/63)

काहेको खोरि कैकयिहि लावौं ?
धरहु धीर, बलि जाउँ तात! मोको आज विधाता बावौं।। 1।।
सुनिबे जोग बियोग रामको हौं न होउँ मेरे प्यारे।
सो मेरे नयननि आगेतें रघुपति बनहि सिधारे।। 2।।
तुलसिदास समुझाइ भरत कहँ, आँसू पोंछि उर लाए।
उपजी प्रीति जानि प्रभुके हित, मनहु राम फिरि आए।। 3।।

(2/63)

kāhēkō khōri kaikayihi lāvauṁ?
dharahu dhīra, bali jā'uṁ tāta! mōkō āja vidhātā bāvauṁ.. 1..
sunibē jōga biyōga rāmakō hauṁ na hō'uṁ mērē pyārē.
sō mērē nayanani āgētēṁ raghupati banahi sidhārē.. 2..
tulasidāsa samujhā'i bharata kahaṁ, āṁsū pōnōchi ura lā'ē.
upajī prīti jāni prabhukē hita, manahu rāma phiri ā'ē.. 3..

Bharat's contrition & grief when he returned to Ayodhya-IV

Verse no. 2/63—[Mother Kaushalya condoles Bharat saying—] 'Son! Why should I blame Kaikeyi? I most earnestly ask you to have courage, fortitude, resilience and patience in this time of adversity. Today, the Creator himself is malicious and opposed to me (so there is no reason to blame Kaikeyi for all the misfortunes and ill fate that has befallen upon us and the rest of the kingdom) (1).

Oh my dear son! I had previously thought that I wouldn't ever be able to cope with hearing anything related to being separated from dear Ram, but it is so great a quirk of fate and the force of destiny that it is the same me who has watched him go away to the forest right before my own eyes (even as I watched helplessly, and neither did my soul leave me alone to die peacefully).' (2).

Tulsidas says that the mother consoled Bharat, wiped his tears and embraced him[1]. Recognising that he was favourably inclined towards Sri Ram, the mother was extremely pleased and reassured so much so that affection and love for Bharat emerged and sprouted in her heart as if Lord Sri Ram himself has come back from the forest[2] (3).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 165.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 168 and Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it.

Kaushalya's doubts about Bharat's integrity and intentions vanished when she saw how Bharat was grieving and lamenting for Lord Ram. She was now fully assured that Bharat had no role to play in the conspiracy that Kaikeyi had hatched which led to Lord Ram being sent to the forest.

The result was that she was overwhelmed with emotions and motherly love for Bharat, more so because she had all along treated him with equal—or even more, but never less—love and affection that she had for her own son Sri Ram. Her outbursts of love and emotions for Bharat were natural and spontaneous.]

भरतजीका चित्रकूटको प्रस्थान

(2/64)

मेरो अवध धौं कहहु, कहा है।
करहु राज रघुराज–चरन तजि, लै लटि लोगु रहा है।। 1।।
धन्य मातु, हौं धन्य, लागि जेहि राज–समाज ढहा है।
तापर मोको प्रभु करि चाहत सब बिनु दहन दहा है।। 2।।
राम–सपथ, कोउ कछू कहै जनि, मैं दुख दुसह सहा है।
चित्रकूट चलिए सब मिलि, बलि, छमिए मोहि हहा है।। 3।।
यों कहि भोर भरत गिरिवरको मारग बूझि गहा है।
सकल सराहत, एक भरत जग जनमि सुलाहु लहा है।। 4।।
जानहिं सिय–रघुनाथ भरतको सील सनेह महा है।
कै तुलसी जाको राम–नामसों प्रेमे–नेम निबहा है।। 5।।

bharatajīkā citrakūṭakō prasthāna

(2/64)

mērō avadha dhauṁ kahahu, kahā hai.
karahu rāja raghurāja-carana taji, lai laṭi lōgu rahā hai.. 1..
dhan'ya mātu, hauṁ dhan'ya, lāgi jēhi rāja-samāja ḍhahā hai.
tāpara mōkō prabhu kari cāhata saba binu dahana dahā hai.. 2..
rāma-sapatha, kō'u kachū kahai jani, maiṁ dukha dusaha sahā hai.
citrakūṭa cali'ē saba mili, bali, chami'ē mōhi hahā hai.. 3..
yōṁ kahi bhōra bharata girivarakō māraga būjhi gahā hai.
sakala sarāhata, ēka bharata jaga janami sulāhu lahā hai.. 4..
jānahiṁ siya-raghunātha bharatakō sīla sanēha mahā hai.
kai tulasī jākō rāma-nāmasōṁ prēmē-nēma nibahā hai.. 5..

Bharat decides to go to Chitrakoot (forest) to bring Lord Ram back-I

Verse no. 2/64—[After the initial period of shock and grief, Bharat performed the last rites of his dead father, king Dasrath. When the official mourning period was over, the royal court assembled to anoint Bharat on the throne of the kingdom because it could not be left vacant. Bharat was determined that he had no right to ascend the throne, no matter who said what and no matter how urgent the situation may be, as it rightly belonged to his elder brother Lord Ram. So inspite of all the persuasion and assurances given by all his seniors, such as the royal priest sage Vasistha, mother Kaushalya, the chief minister Sumantra, and all other nobles, Brahmins and elders of the kingdom, that no moral taint, no ill fame and bad name would come to Bharat if he accepts the crown for the interim period while Lord Ram is in the forest for fourteen years, Bharat flatly refused. He said that his only duty was to serve the Lord, which unfortunately has been denied to him, and therefore he has decided that he would do nothing but to serve Lord Ram. To give effect to this, he would go to where the Lord was in the forest at that time, a place called Chitrakoot, without delay, and anoint him right there even as he would try his best to bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya forthwith. He would not hear or do anything else.

This single declaration and determination of Bharat was a master-stroke in diplomacy and polity—for he instantly endeared himself to the masses; nay, even to those who had been trying to persuade him to ascend the throne. Everyone, big and small, high and low, applauded Bharat profusely and declared that there is no one more righteous and an upholder of the principles of Dharma than Bharat.

So, all arrangements were made to depart for Chitrakoot the very next morning. Everyone who mattered in the royal court and the seniors of the kingdom joined the procession which was duly escorted by a fully armed army.

This episode is narrated in great detail in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 177—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 187.]

Bharat said, ‘Tell me, what do I have left for me at Ayodhya? People advise me to rule the kingdom at the cost of abandoning the chance to serve Lord Ram's feet[1]; they all beat the same drum (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 178; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 182.]

Thanks to my mother and thanks to me for whom all this mischief was created! Inspite of all this, you people want to crown me the King and wish to burn yourselves without a fire.

[Don’t you know that if a sinful person becomes a King, all his subjects suffer horribly. Don’t you all know that I am a most unfortunate person who is the cause of so much misery and grief and calamity that has descended upon this once-happy kingdom? And inspite of all this knowledge, you still wish to make me your unfortunate King, and then expect happiness and welfare for your selves!][2] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 177; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 178—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 179; (iii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 180.]

In the name of Lord Ram, please do not tell me anything anymore. I have tolerated immense sorrows already. I urge you, come forward. Let us all start for Chitrakoot. I beg you to forgive me and excuse me[3] (3).'

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 177; (ii) Doha no. 182; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2, and 7-8 that precede Doha no. 183.]

Saying this to indicate his final decision, and as soon as the day dawned the next morning, Bharat asked the way and started on the journey for Chitrakoot.

All the people praised him, saying, 'Bharat has gained the real benefit of taking birth (because he has stood the test of Dharma—the laws governing ethical conduct, righteousness, probity and propriety)![4]' (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 184—to Doha no. 187.

The citizens of Ayodhya were very glad at this decision of Bharat not to accept the crown and instead go to the forest and bring Lord Ram back by asking for forgiveness and pleading with the Lord that he has no role to play in this sordid drama which was a conspiracy hatched by his mother alone without his remotest consent. Bharat was very wise for he knew that if he accepted the crown under pressure of any kind, the world and Lord Ram would think that he was a party to the conspiracy, and this ignominy of being one who had schemed to send his older brother to the forest in the greed of the kingdom would be impossible for him to shake off for all times to come, whereas the fact was that he was totally innocent. It was also sure that then Lord Ram would never return back even after the expiry of the fourteen year exile period thinking that if Bharat wants to have the kingdom then let him have it. Why? Because Bharat knew that the Lord loved him very much and would prefer to abdicate the throne in his favour instead of claiming his rights and fighting for it. When the brothers were young, Ram used to lose a game voluntarily so that Bharat could win—Bharat knew that. Now it was a test for Bharat to reciprocate the same sentiments and tell the Lord that his love for him was no less than the Lord's love for him. The story of Lord Ram going to the forest so that Bharat could get the kingdom, and of Bharat refusing the crown saying that it rightly belongs to the Lord, his going to the forest to try his best to bring the Lord back, and in the eventuality of the Lord refusing to oblige him spending the fourteen years of the exile period observing severe austerity and doing penance like a reclusive hermit is a sterling instance of brotherly love and affection, of how one should behave in this world according to the laws of Dharma—the laws of righteousness, probity, propriety and good conduct.]

Tulsidas says Bharat's love, affection and conduct are known either to Lord Ram and Sita or to those who have great affection and attachment to the holy name of Lord Ram[5] (5).

[[5]This is because ordinary people would have expected Bharat to accept the crown, especially when his Guru, ministers, mothers and elderly citizens are advising him to do so, and even telling him that if he did accept the crown till Lord Ram comes back he would not be violating any law as this was the wish of his dead father. He would simply be obeying them like his elder brother Sri Ram who had gone to the forest precisely to obey his father's command and his mother's wish. From the practical point also this would be in perfect order—because when a king or an emperor is out of the capital or has gone on a long campaign somewhere, someone is invariably appointed to look after the routine affairs of the kingdom or the empire till

the time the king or the emperor comes back. But such people who would advocate Bharat's ascending the throne of Ayodhya do not realise the rules of love and devotion which were the guiding principles for Bharat's exemplary conduct. On more than one occasion Bharat had clearly stated that for him all the laws and regulation are valid only if they are Ram-specific, only if they help him to serve the Lord, and if they fail to do so he is not bothered about their sanctity and validity whatsoever. Bharat's character and the example that he has set was to become a gold-standard and a touchstone against which the world would measure and judge the purity of love, affection, submission and devotion for the Supreme Lord for all times to come. We must note that the story of the Ramayana is told to teach the human being how he should act and conduct himself in this world, how goodness, love, amity and brotherhood can be established in his life, and how he can get peace of mind and good fame instead of being materialistic and an opportunist.]

(2/65)

भाई ! हौं अवध कहा रहि लैहौं।
राम–लषन–सिय–चरन बिलोकन काल्हि काननहि जैहौं।। 1।।
जद्यपि मोतें, कै कुमाततें ह्वै आई अति पोची।
सनमुख गए सरन राखहिंगे रघुपति परम सँकोची।। 2।।
तुलसी यों कहि चले भोरही, लोग बिकल सँग लागे।
जनु बन जरत देखि दारुन दव निकसि बिहँग–मृग भागे।। 3।।

(2/65)

bhā'ī! hauṁ avadha kahā rahi laihauṁ.
rāma-laṣana-siya-carana bilōkana kāl'hi kānanahi jaihauṁ.. 1..
jadyapi mōtēṁ, kai kumātatēṁ hvai ā'ī ati pōcī.
sanamukha ga'ē sarana rākhahiṁgē raghupati parama saṁkōcī.. 2..
tulasī yōṁ kahi calē bhōrahī, lōga bikala saṁga lāgē.
janu bana jarata dēkhi dāruna dava nikasi bihaṁga-mr̥ga bhāgē.. 3..

Bharat decides to go to Chitrakoot (forest) to bring Lord Ram back-II

Verse no. 2/65—[Addressing the citizens of Ayodhya and others who had assembled in the royal court, Bharat said—] 'Brother! What will I gain by staying at Ayodhya? I will proceed to the forest tomorrow itself (without delaying any further) to see the revered feet of Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 182 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.]

Though a great misdeed has been done by me, or by my mother, but (I am sure that) when Sri Ram—who is most courteous and obliging by nature—sees me standing in front seeking his refuge (shelter, forgiveness), he will surely accept (and forgive) me.[2]' (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 183 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it.]

Tulsidas says that having declared so, Bharat set out for the forest at the crack of dawn[3].

Others also joined him because they were all emotionally upset and extremely eager to go with him[4] because they all wished to quit Ayodhya in the absence of Lord Ram even as the birds and animals run out of the forest when they find it burning by the onslaught of a fierce wildfire[5] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 183; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 185; (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 187; and Doha no. 187.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 184—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 188.

[5]It is narrated in Ram Charit Manas that at the time of Lord Ram's departure for the forest, the entire city determined that they will live where the Lord lives, and without him they have no purpose of staying at Ayodhya. So overcome with grief the citizens were that the whole city followed Lord Ram as he wended his way out, crowding him from all sides. But eventually Lord Ram thought that it was impractical to allow this to happen, and so cleverly devised a device whereby he managed to sneak out in the darkness of the night. When the tired and weary citizens discovered that the Lord has gone away without leaving a trace, they were crestfallen and felt helpless. They knew that the Lord had abandoned them not because he did not love them, but because out of his love for them he did not want them to suffer the same fate as had befallen upon him.

The citizens returned home with a heart as heavy as lead, somehow passing time of their lives in the hope that one day they will meet Lord Ram once again. This hope now seemed to materialise when Bharat declared that he is proceeding forthwith for the forest. Hence, all able men cheerfully joined him. On his part Bharat gave his tacit approval because he thought that when the Lord sees such a huge crowd of citizens he would be certain that Bharat was not alone in asking him to return, and it was a popular demand.

Besides this, Bharat thought it would be all the better for him if a large number of people accompanied him to wherever Lord Ram was—because should his enterprise fail and the Lord refused to return, at least he would have so many people to bear him witness that he had tried his best. It would rest any future scandals and gossips.]

(2/66)

सुकसों गहवर हिये कहै सारो।
बीर कीर! सिय–राम–लषन बिनु लागत जग अँधियारो।। 1।।
पापिनि चेरि, अयानि रानि, नृप हित–अनहित न बिचारो।
कुलगुर–सचिव–साधु सोचतु, बिधि को न बसाइ उजारो ?।। 2।।
बवलोके न चलत भरि लोचन, नगर कोलाहल भारो।
सुने न बचन करुनाकरके, जब पुर–परिवार सँभारो।। 3।।
भैया भरत भावतेके, सँग बन सब लोग सिधारो।

हम पँख पाइ पींजरनि तरसत अधिक अभाग हमारो।। 4।।
सुनि खग कहत अंब ! मौंगी रहि समुझि प्रेमपथ न्यारो।
गए ते प्रभुहि पहुँचाइ फिरे पुनि करत करम–गुन गारो।। 5।।
जीवन जग जानकी–लषनको, मरन महीप सँवारो।
तुलसी और प्रीतिकी चरचा करत, कहा कछु चारो।। 6।।

(2/66)

sukasōṁ gahavara hiyē kahai sārō.
bīra kīra! siya-rāma-laṣana binu lāgata jaga aṁdhiyārō.. 1..
pāpini cēri, ayāni rāni, nr̥pa hita-anahita na bicārō.
kulagura-saciva-sādhu sōcatu, bidhi kō na basā'i ujārō?.. 2..
bavalōkē na calata bhari lōcana, nagara kōlāhala bhārō.
sunē na bacana karunākarakē, jaba pura-parivāra saṁbhārō.. 3..
bhaiyā bharata bhāvatēkē, saṁga bana saba lōga sidhārō.
hama paṁkha pā'i pīn̄jarani tarasata adhika abhāga hamārō.. 4..
suni khaga kahata amba! mauṅgī rahi samujhi prēmapatha n'yārō.
ga'ē tē prabhuhi pahuṁcā'i phirē puni karata karama-guna gārō.. 5..
jīvana jaga jānakī-laṣanakō, marana mahīpa saṁvārō.
tulasī aura prītikī caracā karata, kahā kachu cārō.. 6..

The Parrot's Wisdom-I

Verse no. 2/66—A Black Bird ("sārō") said to a Parrot ("sukasōṁ") with a heavy heart, 'Oh brave brother Parrot (bīra kīra)! The whole world appears bleak, dark and gloomy without Sita, Sri Ram and Laxman (1).

It's such an irony of fate and quirk of destiny that the slave women (called 'Manthara', the hunch-back handmaid of Kaikeyi) turned out to be very sinful and pervert; in all sooth queen Kaikeyi is also very foolish and stupid (that she lent her ears to this selfish crook and believed that she was her best friend); and to top it all even the king (Dasrath) did not think what is or is not fit and proper to do (though he is highly regarded as a wise man who thinks carefully ere taking any decision).

This is why all those who are wise, elderly and experienced in the society, such as the preceptor of the clan (sage Vasistha), the wise ministers and the saintly people (i.e. the elders of the city), think (ponder over the matter) and agree that there is no one in this world who is spared by the whims of the destiny-writer, the Creator (known as 'Vidhata'), for he is oftentimes inclined to uproot even those whom he had himself established in his creation. [And the situation is such that no one has the power to gainsay him, bowing to his dictates with utter sense of helplessness and haplessness.][1] (2).

[[1]The Creator had first made things look so fine and excellent: the king is wise and pious, and he loved his sons as well as his queens; Kaikeyi too loved Lord Ram as much as she loved her own son Bharat; and this crooked hunch-back was merely a slave-woman who came as a dowry with the duty to serve the queen. Everything was fine and happy, and a day was designated when Lord Ram would ascend the throne as was the tradition of the time. No one had an inkling even a day ago that all of a

sudden the tide would change and the boat would quickly capsize. And who is to blame for all the calamity that has all of a sudden fallen upon the kingdom? Surely no one else but the Creator, because he is the one who determines destiny and fate. Why has he so suddenly become so malicious and jealous when only a day ago he seemed to be favourable and beneficient?]

We are so unfortunate and sorry that we did not even get an opportunity to see the merciful Lord (Sri Ram) well, till our eyes had their full of his divine sight, at the time of his departure (for the forest), at the time when he was ensuring that everything would be taken care of in his absence, speaking politely with everyone and assuring them that everything would be fine and that no one should worry at all even as he bid farewell to one and all.

Alas, there was so much noise, grieving and turmoil in the city that our ears could not even hear the last words spoken by our beloved Lord as he left for the forest for good![2] (3).

[[2]The Parrot and the Black Bird were in their cage in the palace at the time Lord Ram left for the forest. The poor birds loved Lord Ram as well as his brother Laxman and Sita as dearly as others, but they were so unfortunate, being caged, that they could not fly out and accompany the Lord like other citizens who had left the city to go quite a distance behind the Lord. The two poor souls lament gravely that they are the most unluckiest of the lot as Lord Ram did not think it proper to spare a moment to say good-bye to them. And they curse the destiny-writer Creator for making them 'birds' and then 'condemning them to a cage' so that they could not even say 'farewell' to their beloved Lord!]

Look at our extreme misfortune today: see that now everyone is accompanying dear brother Bharat to the forest, but inspite of having wings, we languish in the cage—this is our great misfortune, this is our plight wrought by the evil writ of our destiny and doomed fate!'[3] (4).

[[3]The two birds lament that had they been 'free birds of the sky' as birds are born to be, they would have gone out, flying with the Lord to wheresover he goes for all the fourteen years of his forest sojourn. Everyone is heading to the forest with Bharat, to meet Lord Ram there, but these two poor creatures can't do anything except just flutter inside their cage with agony and grief in their hearts.]

Hearing these pitiful words of the Black Bird, the wise Parrot replied, 'Oh dear lady (suni khaga kahata amba)! Keep quiet considering the mysterious ways of love and endearment. Look, those (whom you consider to be lucky and) who had tried to go to the forest with the Lord (at the time of his departure) had to come back empty-handed, cursing their ill-luck and the bad consequences of their own deeds that has created this fate for them[4].

[[4]The Parrot refers to the citizens of Ayodhya who had left their homes and followed Lord Ram out of the city with a firm determination to go where the Lord goes. But destiny destined otherwise: Lord Ram silently slipped away, and all of them had to return home, dismayed, crestfallen, heavy in heart, but having to surrender to their fates which demanded that they suffer from the separation from their beloved Lord as much as these two poor birds do. They weren't any more lucky than these two birds. So, the wise Parrot consoles the grieving Black Bird that she should not feel as if she was the unluckiest of all living beings just because she could not fly out of the city with the Lord. If the Creator does not want and if it is not written in her destiny,

she wouldn't have been able to accompany the Lord how hard she may have tried. So it is better now to have patience and courage, show resilience and fortitude like the rest of the citizens, and worship the Lord by continuously remembering him in her heart just like the way the rest of the people are doing.

True love does not mean that one needs to be close to the beloved and talk with him or her daily; even while separated love can bloom and blossom. Rather, separation is a test for true love—for it tests whether one remains steadfast in the longing and remembrance of the beloved or forgets him or her over the passage of time.

Hence, the wise Parrot advises his companion, the Black Bird, to enshrine Lord Ram in her heart and worship the Lord there by remembering him at all times of day and night just as the citizens are doing.

The event that the Parrot refers to has been explicitly narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Doha no. 86.

The wise Parrot's words of wisdom will prove to be true later on also when all those who had accompanied Bharat to the forest in an attempt to bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya had to return empty-handed. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 320—to Doha no. 322.]

[Lauding the true love of Sita and Laxman because they had sacrificed everything else to accompany Lord Ram and serve him in the forest, and king Dasrath who sacrificed his own life on the altar of love for the Lord by dying, the wise Parrot said—]

'In this world it can be truthful said that a life worth lived is that of Sita and Laxman, and only the king (Dasrath) had died a noble (worthy) death. For all the rest, they merely talk about love and affection, they can't do anything more than that![5]' (6).

[[5]The Parrot means that everyone is talking of love and affection for Lord Ram, but are they really serious about it? Even Bharat: is he really serious in what he says that he cannot live without Lord Ram and serving the Lord is his only aim in life? Well, compare all of them with Sita and Laxman: they had actually accompanied Lord Ram to the forest, and not merely talked about it.

See, albeit king Dasrath is shown in poor light because he had been instrumental in Lord Ram going to the forest, but he had lived and walked the talk he talked—for he had always insisted that his life is directly dependent upon his closeness with Lord Ram and that he cannot live a moment separated from the Lord. Forsooth, he proved his integrity and truthfulness by dying when it was final that Lord Ram would not return.

Has anyone decided to remain at Chitrakoot and not come back to Ayodhya? No, everyone came back. Say then, can they ever compare their love and affection for Lord Ram with that of Sita and Laxman? The obvious answer is: No.

Similarly, has a single person died due to the grief of separation from Lord Ram like king Dasrath had done? None.

So, in effect, the Parrot chides everyone in Ayodhya, saying that all this talk of love and affection for Lord Ram is not upto the mark!

The wise Parrot is making this statement in deep sarcasm. The parrot means that only Sita and Laxman had the determination and guts and the grit to actually do what they said, brushing aside all advice and objections—even from Sri Ram himself—and went to the forest to serve him. Similarly, Dasrath upheld his vows to die without Sri Ram. The rest of the people only talk and talk endlessly of love and affection for Lord Sri Ram. Why, if Laxman and Sita could defy Lord Sri Ram's

advice, couldn't Bharat, the citizens et al have done so by insisting to tarry in the forest as long as Lord Ram abides there?

If Dasrath could die without Sri Ram, couldn't Kaushalya too have done so? The inferences are very clear and stark to be overlooked.

Remarkable indeed. The Parrot has shot down all pretensions of love and devotion for Sri Ram by all of them with this one single logic. As for Bharat, Tulsidas has clarified his position in verse nos. 2/67, 2/76 and 2/77, while Kaushalya's version is in verse nos. 2/83-85.]

(2 / 67)

कहै सुक, सुनहि सिखावन, सारो !
बिधि–करतब बिपरीत बाम गति, राम–प्रेम–पथ न्यारो।। 1।।
को नर–नारि अवध खग–मृग, जेहि जीवन रामतें प्यारो।
बिद्यमान सबके गवने बन, बदन करमको कारो।। 2।।
अंब, अनुज, प्रिय सखा, सुसेवक देखि बिषाद बिसारो।
पंछी परबस परे पींजरनि, लेखो कौन हमारो।। 3।।
रही नृपकी, बिगरी है सबकी, अब एक सँवारनिहारो।
तुलसी प्रभु निज चरन–पीठ मिस भरत–प्रान रखवारो।। 4।।

(2/67)

kahai suka, sunahi sikhāvana, sārō!
bidhi-karataba biparīta bāma gati, rāma-prēma-patha n'yārō.. 1..
kō nara-nāri avadha khaga-mr̥ga, jēhi jīvana rāmatēṁ pyārō.
bidyamāna sabakē gavanē bana, badana karamakō kārō.. 2..
amba, anuja, priya sakhā, susēvaka dēkhi biṣāda bisārō.
pan̄chī parabasa parē pīn̄jarani, lēkhō kauna hamārō.. 3..
rahī nr̥pakī, bigarī hai sabakī, aba ēka sam̐vāranihārō.
tulasī prabhu nija carana-pīṭha misa bharata-prāna rakhavārō.. 4..

The Parrot's Wisdom-II

Verse no. 2/67—The Parrot told the Black Bird to listen to his sane words: 'Oh Black Bird! Harken to my advice carefully. When the Creator is opposed, malevolent or malicious towards someone, the deeds and their rewards (or fruits) also turn against him (or become bitter and quite the opposite of what is expected).

But remember: The path of love, devotion, affection and endearment towards Lord Sri Ram is strange and uniquely different (1).

[Usually it is said that 'one reaps what one sows'. This is the basic tenet regarding deeds and their rewards. But when the Creator is unfavourable, even the best of deeds and the best of efforts fail to produce the expected results.

But there is one exception to this rule: it is love, devotion and affection for Lord Ram. The more one has it, the purer and the more intense it is, the Lord rewards

one in right measure and in accordance to these virtues that one possesses. Here, the Creator can't play his dirty tricks. This will be explained in the following stanzas.

Briefly, though the Creator had suddenly become malicious towards the citizens of Ayodhya by first forcing upon them separation from Lord Ram and then denying them all chances to bring the Lord back. But since their love and devotion for Lord Ram was sincere and pure, the Lord obliged them by giving his own sandals (footwear) in lieu of his own presence, and which Bharat had put on the throne of Ayodhya when he returned. Lord Ram had also assured them, the citizens as well as Bharat, that he would certainly come back on the dot of the end of fourteen years, not delaying for even a single day. That means, no matter what the ill-willed and jealous Creator might do now, he won't be able to stop Lord Ram's return home. All this is possible because Lord Ram had realized that the love and affection and devotion that Bharat and the rest had for him were true, honest and pure.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 231—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 233; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 304—to Doha no. 306; (iii) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Doha no. 316.]

Say, which animal or bird, man or woman in Ayodhya has his or her life more dearer to him or her than Lord Sri Ram? But, he (Sri Ram) went to the forest despite the presence of all of them. This incident casts a stain on the face of Karma[2] (2).

[[2]The people proclaimed that Sri Ram was more dear to them than their own lives, but inspite of this assertion, no one died, and Sri Ram proved them wrong by going to the forest. Then, what was the result of doing good deeds? Couldn't those good effects or potential powers of the good deeds by the people prevent Sri Ram from going to the forest or else prevent Kaikeyi from doing what she did? This symbolically blackened the face of the good deeds. Here, the good deeds of the people have been personified and ridiculed. After all, what happened to the principle that all good deeds bear good fruits, and one cannot suffer in life if one's good deeds are sufficient and robust. The citizens of Ayodhya were lauded even by the Gods for their good luck as they had the chance to closely interact with Lord Ram, the personified Supreme Being. But every principle came to a naught now.]

Inspite of seeing (observing) all this, the mothers, the brothers, the kin-folk and other dear ones, the friends and the loyal servants also (gradually) forgot those moments of sorrow and anguish (when Sri Ram had departed for the forest, for in due course of time life limped back to apparant normalcy).

Say, if those who had the benefit of good deeds at their disposal could not prevent Lord Ram from going to the forest, what can we humble birds, who are not independent as we are trapped in a cage due to our past misdeeds, do?[3] (3).

[[3]The wise Parrot gives consolation to his companion, the Black Bird, saying that she should not regret her inability to accompany Lord Ram to the forest, nor at having been unable to prevent it at all. All these people of Ayodhya had done noble deeds in their lives because that is why they had had the good chance to become citizens of the city of the Lord. They are all born as humans, a birth considered the best of all the births. Then they are all lucky to be born as independent individuals; not with some fetters or bonds. Unlike them, the Parrot and the Black Bird are not free, for they are confined to a cage. Then they surely hadn't done as good many deeds as the rest for the simple reason that they were born lowly as birds and not as humans. But that is all; as far as the virtues of love, affection and devotion for Lord

Ram is concerned, it has nothing to do with one's physical body and condition. It is a matter of the heart and related directly to the soul.

Therefore, inspite of being born in bondage and caged, inspite of being born as birds and unable to show external signs of love and affection and devotion for Lord Ram like the rest, they—i.e. the Parrot and the Black Bird—can have these virtues just like the others. Rather, the two birds can be more steady and fast in their love and affection and devotion for Lord Ram, always remembering the Lord and worshipping him every single moment of their lives as they have no other thing to do or worry that would disturb them in their meditation unlike other so-called lucky humans who have become so engrossed in the daily grind of their routine lives that they have virtually forgotten those poignant days of grief and misery arising out of separation from Lord Ram as they go about their lives and its chores.]

Only the king (Dasrath) was true to his words, the rest of them all faltered and failed[4].'

[Now, Tulsidas intervenes to counter the observations made by the Parrot by adding his own understanding of the events. He says—] 'But, look, there is on thing that is outstanding here (despite what the Parrot has said)! And it is that Lord Sri Ram has given his own wooden sandals to Bharat to act as a life-guard or a buoy that would protect the latter.[5]' (4).

[[4]Dasrath kept his promise not to live without Sri Ram, while the rest of them all wept and wailed for some time, and then slowly brought themselves around over time and became engrossed in the routine affairs of life. All survived without Lord Ram, and life moved on! This is the Parrot's interpretation or version.

[5]But Tulsidas does not agree. Bharat and others did not survive because of any lack of love, affection, endearment and devotion for Lord Ram in their hearts, but because the Lord had given them a buoy to help them live. And this buoy was in the form of the Lord's wooden sandals. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 316.}

The Lord knew that if he forced Bharat to return empty-handed, the latter is sure to end his life. Not only Bharat, but the rest of the citizens would find it difficult to survive long if there is no sign of Lord Ram amidst them. So the Lord mercifully gave them his own sandal as a token of his personal presence in their midst.

As to the question 'why did Bharat and others returned to Ayodhya from Chitrakoot leaving behind Lord Ram?', the answer is provided in Ram Charit Manas where Lord Ram has himself asked Bharat to let him obey the father's wish and share his duties like a true friend and companion. Besides this, sage Vasistha had advised Lord Ram secretly that it was imperative for him to proceed to the forest because the god's work of elimination of the demons was at stake. So though Lord Ram would have preferred to do what Bharat wished, but he was obliged to do otherwise. Bharat on his part was only obeying Lord Ram's commands in returning to Ayodhya. {Refer respectively to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 316; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 290—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 291.}

So, Tulsidas says he does not agree with the Parrot here. It is not correct to say that only Dasrath was true to his words that he wouldn't survive without Lord Ram. Bharat too would have died, and so would have countless others who loved Lord Ram dearer than their own lives. But they managed to survive because the Lord gave them

a token of his presence by way of his own footwear. Bharat regarded this wooden footwear with the same reverence as he would have Lord Ram if he was present himself—and this is proved by the fact that he put this footwear on the throne of the kingdom and took orders from it like a minister would from his sovereign. This is the reason why Bharat did not die, and the Parrot is not correct when it says that Bharat and others forgot Lord Ram over time as they got involved in the routine humdrum of life.

The last stanza is unique in as much as Tulsidas stands as an advocate for the sincerity of Bharat's devotion. After taunting all the inhabitants of Ayodhya of having love for Sri Ram which is not up to the mark by using the Parrot as a spokesman for himself, Tulsidas realised that, inadvertently though, that includes Bharat also. But he knows that Bharat's devotion and love for Sri Ram is matchless and he is repeatedly praised by the Lord himself. So Tulsidas corrected the assertions he has made, and excluded Bharat from his generalisation by this last stanza with a perfect argument in his favour, and by extension all other citizens of Ayodhya. See also verse 2/75, stanza 3 and verse 2/76, stanza 4.]

(2 / 68)

ता दिन सृंगबेरपुर आए।
राम–सखा ते समाचार सुनि बारि बिलोचन छाए।। 1।।
कुस–साथरी देखी रघुपतिकी हेतु अपनपौ जानी।
कहत कथा सिय–राम–लषनकी बैठेहि रैनि बिहानी।। 2।।
भोरहिं भरद्वाज आश्रम है, करि निषादपति आगे।
चले जनु तक्यो तड़ाग तृषित गज घोर घामके लागे।। 3।।
बूझत 'चित्रकूट कहँ जेहि तेहि, मुनि बालकनि बतायो।
तुलसी मनहु फनिक मनि ढूँढ़त, निरखि हरषि हिय धायो।। 4।।

(2/68)

tā dina sr̥ṁgabērapura ā'ē.
rāma-sakhā tē samācāra suni bāri bilōcana chā'ē.. 1..
kusa-sātharī dēkhī raghupatikī hētu apanapau jānī.
kahata kathā siya-rāma-laṣanakī baiṭhēhi raini bihānī.. 2..
bhōrahiṁ bharadvāja āśrama hvai, kari niṣādapati āgē.
calē janu takyō taṛāga tr̥ṣita gaja ghōra ghāmakē lāgē.. 3..
būjhata 'citrakūṭa kahaṁ jēhi tēhi, muni bālakani batāyō.
tulasī manahu phanika mani ḍhūṁṛhata, nirakhi haraṣi hiya dhāyō.. 4..

Bharat en-route to Chitrakoot

Verse no. 2/68—[Once Bharat made it clear that he would set out for the forest in search of Lord Ram at the crack of dawn as soon as the morning morrowed the very next day, all preparations were readied, and the royal procession gathered together on

the outskirts of the city. Mother Kaushalya and all the leading members of the royal court, the chief citizens of Ayodhya, Bharat and his younger brother Shatrughan—all were going to the forest. Bharat made adequate arrangements and left the city in the hands of able caretakers. The party that left for the forest had all the necessary accoutrements needed for the long-haul journey, ration, tents, cariers, beasts of burden, servants and servers, the things needed to anoint Lord Ram as the king in the forest itself, as well as all other royal paraphernalia behoving a grand procession of a great kingdom, and it was accompanied by a huge escorting army. At an appointed time, without further delay and let, Bharat sallied forth on foot, discarding any chariot or horse because he said he would follow the footsteps of Lord Ram and endure all that the Lord had endured, and not ride in comfort like a king. and all the, started on its long journey for Chitrakoot where the Lord had took up his temporary residence in the forest.

They first reached the banks of river Tamsa, and then crossing it, reached river Gomti. Further ahead they arrived at the village of Sring-ber-pur, the place where the chief of the boatman community, i.e. Nishad who was also called Guha, lived. This place is situated on the banks of river Ganges. Bharat met Guha, who had earlier taken Lord Ram across the river on his boat, and befriended him. Moving further ahead, Bharat arrived at the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj which was situated at Triveni, the confluence of three rivers Ganges, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati.

This part of the story is narrared in detail in Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 189—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 216.]

Bharat reached Sring-ber-pur that day[1]. He met Lord Ram's friend Guha, the head of the boatman community (and befriended him, embracing him most affectionately meeting him with the same affection as if he has met Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram)[2].

From Guha Bharat heard tidings of Lord Ram. Even as he listened, tears welled-up in Bharat's eyes (and he was overwhelmed with emotions with a renewed surge of love and affection for Lord Ram) (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 188—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 189.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 193—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 194; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 195—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 196.]

Seeing the temporary bed made of grass on which Lord Ram had taken rest (at Sring-ber-pur), and finding himself the cause of all his (Ram's) miseries, troubles and tribulations, Bharat spent the whole sleepless night remembering the Lord (lamenting and weeping and wailing woefully, full of regret and contrition)[3] (2).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 198—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 199.]

As soon as the next day dawned, taking the king of Nishads (i.e. Guha, the chief of the boatman community) as a guide, he proceeded towards the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj[4].

Bharat looked as eager and anxious as a thirsty elephant, who is extremely distressed by the hot summer heat, when he sees some watering hole (such as a pond where the distressed animal can quench his thirst)[5] (3).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 202—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 206.

[5]A thirsty elephant is very anxious for water, and he looks here and there for some water body so that he can quench his thirst, for otherwise he would die. And when he finally locates one such watering hole, the elephant makes a mad dash for it. The condition of Bharat was almost the same. He yearned to have sight of his beloved Lord Ram, and was looking excitedly hither and thither, left and right, hoping against all the odds that he would be able to get a hint of the Lord somewhere. So when he met Guha who could give him a first hand news of the Lord's arrival at this place and offered to guide him in the direction the Lord had wended forth from there, Bharat's hopes of meeting the Lord soared, and he got swiftness in his strides just like the elephant who suddenly happens to have smelled the presence of water nearby. The speed with which Bharat moved towards the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj was marked with urgency of purpose, and he did not wish to let even a moment pass during which some distance wasn't covered.]

En-route to the forest where Lord Ram lived, Bharat asked all the children of hermits and sages who he met on the way about the direction for Chitrakoot[6].

Tulsidas says that finally when he saw the hills of Chitrakoot, Bharat felt so happy as if a snake has found its lost 'Mani'[7] (4).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 224.

[7]A 'Mani' is a mythical luminescent sac that is said to present on the hood of some serpents. This Mani glows in the dark like the glow-worm. It is believed that a Mani-bearing snake becomes blind if it looses it—hence its close affinity with the Mani. When the lost Mani is found, the snake becomes excessively jubilant as if it has been leased a fresh lease of life.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 237—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 241.]

राम–भरत–मिलन

राग केदारा

(2/69)

बिलोके दूरितें दोउ बीर।
उर आयत, आजानु सुभग भुज, स्यामल–गौर सरीर।। 1।।
सीस जटा, सरसीरुह लोचन, बने परिधन मुनिचीर।
निकट निषंग, संग सिय सोभित, करनि धुनत धनु–तीर।। 2।।
मन अगहुँड़, तनु पुलक सिथिल भयो, नलिन नयन भरे नीर।
गड़त गोड़ मानो सकुच–पंक महँ, कढ़त प्रेम–बल धीर।। 3।।
तुलसिदास दसा देखि भरतकी उठि धाए अतिहि अधीर।
लिये उठाइ उर लाइ कृपानिधि बिरह–जनित हरि पीर।। 4।।

rāma-bharata-milana

rāga kēdārā

(2/69)

bilōkē dūritēṁ dō'u bīra.
ura āyata, ājānu subhaga bhuja, syāmala-gaura sarīra.. 1..
sīsa jaṭā, sarasīruha lōcana, banē paridhana municīra.
nikaṭa niṣaṅga, saṅga siya sōbhita, karani dhunata dhanu-tīra.. 2..
mana agahumm̐ṛa, tanu pulaka sithila bhayō, nalina nayana bharē nīra.
gaṛata gōṛa mānō sakuca-paṅka mahaṁ, karhata prēma-bala dhīra.. 3..
tulasidāsa dasā dēkhi bharatakī uṭhi dhā'ē atihi adhīra.
liyē uṭhā'i ura lā'i kṛpānidhi biraha-janita hari pīra.. 4..

Bharat meets Lord Ram

Verse no. 2/69—[Bharat finally arrived at the hermitage at Chitrakoot where Lord Ram used to live with Laxman and Sita. This verse describes the meeting between them. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 237—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 242.]

Bharat saw the two brothers Lord Ram and Laxman from a distance. [Now, the narration is in the present tense to indicate what Bharat sees—] The two brothers are characterised by broad chests and knee-long arms, and they have a dark and a wheatish complexion (of Lord Ram and Laxman) respectively (1).

They have matted hairs, lotus-like eyes, and are attired as a hermit. The quiver is placed near their seats. Sita looks most adorable (seated) next to them. The two brothers are holding their bows and arrows in a causal manner (2).[1]

[[1]Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 239.]

Bharat's mind and wish was eager to rush forward towards the Lord, but his body was overwhelmed with thrill and excitement so much so that it became virtually immobile, slowing his movements as if someone was in a state of trance and extremely benumbed by emotions when he finds the object of his toil and labour was ready at hand waiting to be grasped by him.

Tears welled-up in his eyes even as his legs refused to move because they appeared as if they were bogged down in quick-sand, and he had to pull them out courageously by force of will energized by the power of affection and love to enable him to move forward[2] (3).

[[2]In brief, the sight of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman dazed Bharat so much that his legs became stiff with emotions and refused to move. So overwhelmed was he at the sight of the Lord that he became completely immobile for some time.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 234.]

Tulsidas says that when Lord Ram saw Bharat's condition, he himself stood up instantly, with love overflowing and drowning him also, as he ran towards Bharat, lifted him forcefully from the ground where he (Bharat) had been lying prostrate, and then embracing him most affectionately, thereby removing all the sorrows and woes as well as doubts and consternations that had been tormenting Bharat for so long[3] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 240—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 242.]

(2 / 70)

भरत भए ठाढ़े कर जोरि।
है न सकत सामुहें सकुचबस समुझि मातुकृत खोरि।। 1।।
फिरिहैं किधौं फिरन कहिहैं प्रभु कलपि कुटिलता मोरि।
हृदय सोच, जलभरे बिलोचन, नेह देह भइ भोरि।। 2।।
बनबासी, पुरलोग, महामुनि किए हैं काठके–से कोरि।
दै दै श्रवन सुनिबेको जहँ तहँ रहे प्रेम मन बोरि।। 3।।
तुलसी राम–सुभाव सुमिरि, उर धरि धीरजहि बहोरि।
बोले बचन बिनीत उचित हित करुना–रसहि निचोरि।। 4।।

(2/70)

bharata bha'ē ṭhāṛhē kara jōri.
hvai na sakata sāmuhēṁ sakucabasa samujhi mātukr̥ta khōri.. 1..
phirihaiṁ kidhauṁ phirana kahihaiṁ prabhu kalapi kuṭilatā mōri.
hr̥daya sōca, jalabharē bilōcana, nēha dēha bha'i bhōri.. 2..
banabāsī, puralōga, mahāmuni ki'ē haiṁ kāṭhakē-sē kōri.
dai dai śravana sunibēkō jahaṁ tahaṁ rahē prēma mana bōri.. 3..
tulasī rāma-subhāva sumiri, ura dhari dhīrajahi bahōri.
bōlē bacana binīta ucita hita karunā-rasahi nicōri.. 4..

Ram-Bharat Conference-I

Verse no. 2/70—[The first few days were spent taking rest and planning what to do next. Then on a certain day, the people gathered together for a conference where Bharat made a strong pitch for Lord Ram to return to Ayodhya. He was lost for words and did not fully know how to express his grief and contrition for all the misfortune that has befallen upon them all.

Not one but a number of meetings were held to discuss Lord Ram's return. These are described in the following verse nos. 2/70—to 2/78 of Geetawali.

Elsewhere, these meetings have been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Doha no. 253—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 279; (ii)

from Doha no. 296—to Doha no. 308; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Doha no. 318.]

Then Bharat stood up with folded hands and palms joining each other as a token of submission and humble request. Recognizing the misdeeds, misdemeanours and malfeasance of his mother, he was too hesitant and reluctant to stand before the Lord (Sri Ram) and speak (1).

His eyes were full of tears, the body was numbed by emotions of affection, and he was in a grave dilemma and in a state of excess of mental flux, wondering whether the Lord will come back (to Ayodhya) or will refuse, telling him to go back considering his (Bharat's) wicked deeds, misdemeanours and malfeasance[1] (2).

[[1]Bharat was uncertain how the Lord would react to his pleadings and requests to come back to Ayodhya. He doubted whether the Lord would take him seriously, or he might take him to be clever and crafty in attempting to hide his real intentions behind the guise of showing love. The Lord might deduce that Bharat is attempting to appease him just to avoid infamy and revolt in the kingdom, but internally he wishes that the Lord remain in the forest. Perhaps this is why Bharat says that 'we will all obey your orders'*—because he had somehow got to feeling that the Lord would certainly refuse to go back, and an this be the case, that the Lord refuses to rescind on his decision to stay in the forest, Bharat would at least have an excuse to save his face and honour and bid his time at Ayodhya till the time the Lord comes back and ascends the throne. Now at least everyone would stand a witness to vouch for Bharat that he did request the Lord to come back, and he did his utmost best, but the Lord himself refused, so Bharat was helpless; he obviously couldn't gainsay what the Lord commanded.

*Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 269 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 298; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 307.]

The forest dwellers, citizens (of Ayodhya) and the great sages and hermits who attended the conference appeared to be cast in wood (i.e. they were all immobile and in a great dilemma), and they were standing here and there. With their mind and heart soaked in love and affection, to hear in rapt attention what was being said (at the meeting) (3).

Tulsidas says that at this opportune moment, Bharat recalled the merciful temperament, the kind, benevolent and gracious nature of Lord Sri Ram, gathered courage in his heart, and spoke words which were humble, prayerful, full of pity and piety, expressed tenderness of feelings, and were fit and appropriate for the occasion (4)[2].

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 260—to Doha no. 262; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 297—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 301; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 314.]

जानत हौ सबहीके मनकी।

तदपि, कृपालु! करौं बिनती सोइ सादर सुनहु दीन–हित जनकी।। 1।।
ये सेवक संतत अनन्य अति, ज्यों चातकहि एक गति घनकी।
यह बिचारि गवनहु पुनीत पुर, हरहु दुसह आरति परिजनकी।। 2।।
मेरो जीवन जानिय ऐसोइ, जियै जैसो अहि, जासु गई मनि फनकी।
मेटहु कुलकलंक कोसलपति, आग्या देहु नाथ मोहि बनकी।। 3।।
मोको जोइ लाइय लागै सोइ उतपति है कुमातुतें तनकी।
तुलसिदास सब दोष दूरि करि प्रभु अब लाज करहु निज पनकी।। 4।।

(2/71)

jānata hau sabahīkē manakī.
tadapi, kr̥pālu! karauṁ binatī sō'i sādara sunahu dīna-hita janakī.. 1..
yē sēvaka santata anan'ya ati, jyōṁ cātakahi ēka gati ghanakī.
yaha bicāri gavanahu punīta pura, harahu dusaha ārati parijanakī.. 2..
mērō jīvana jāniya aisō'i, jiyai jaisō ahi, jāsu ga'ī mani phanakī.
mēṭahu kulakalaṅka kōsalapati, āgyā dēhu nātha mōhi banakī.. 3..
mōkō jō'i lā'iya lāgai sō'i utapati hai kumātutēṁ tanakī.
tulasidāsa saba dōṣa dūri kari prabhu aba lāja karahu nija panakī.. 4..

Ram-Bharat Conference-II

Verse no. 2/71—Bharat said, 'Oh merciful and compassionate Lord! Albeit thou knowest what is in everybody's mind, I still make a humble submission. Thou art the benefactor of the distressed, so please listen to me (1).

These citizens of Ayodhya have always been your faithful subjects. Oh Lord, even as the bird called 'Papiha' has the cloud as its saviour (because this bird is constantly dependent on the rain dropping from the cloud directly into its beak for survival), you should also return to the blessed city of Ayodhya and be the saviour of its distressed citizens who are tormented with great torment in your absense[1] (2).

[[1]To wit, we, thine subjects, cannot live without thine auspicious presence in our midst just as the bird known as the Papiha cannot survive if the cloud does not vouchsafe a drop of rain in its mouth, for this bird has vowed not to drink aught other then the rain drops. You are our solace, refuge and lord. Forsooth, we wot no one but you. So, an thou refuse to come back with us, there is but little chance that we wouldest be able to live.]

Treat me and mine life like a Mani-bearing serpent that is forced to live without it (i.e. I cannot live without you)[2].

Oh Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya)! Please remove the grave ignominy and taint from our noble family, and especially from the face of your dear and younger brother (that he had accepted the crown while his elder brother was still alive).

Please, I plead, I beg and I beseech thee therefore to let me go to the forest in your stead (and you return to Ayodhya and accept the crown that rightfully belongs to you)[3] (3).

[[2]The 'Mani' is a sac-like structure on the hood of a special and rare species of serpents, and it glows in the dark. According to legend, if that sac is stolen, the

serpent dies. Here, Bharat means to say that if he is forced to live in separation from Lord Ram, his life would be as burdensome, anguished and weary as that of a Mani-bearing serpent who has lost its gem.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 269; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 314.]

And since I am born of a dishonourable mother, any blame can be put on my head. But oh Lord, you should (being merciful and understanding) forgive me for my commissions and omissions (i.e. my misdeeds and sins) and keep your fame alive (that you are an ocean of forgiveness, compassion and mercy)[4]' (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 261—to Doha no. 262; (ii) Doha no. 299 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8.

Bharat pleads with Lord Ram to live upto his reputation as being the great forgiver of sins and the most compassionate Lord in the world. Hereat the Lord assured Bharat that he understands the truth and realises that he is faultless and innocent, that Bharat should not harbour any misgivings on this count, that the Lord loves him as dearly as he had always done since their birth, that Bharat should not feel guilty as things are destined before hand and no one has the power to gainsay what has been decreed by the fiat of Destiny. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263—to Doha no. 264.]

(2 / 72)

तात ! बिचारो धौं, हौं क्यों आवौं।
तुम्ह सुचि, सुहृद, सुजान सकल बिधि,
बहुत कहा कहि कहि समुझावौं।। 1।।
निज कर खाल खैंचि या तनुतें जौ पितु पग पानही करावौं।
होउँ न उरिन पिता दसरथतें, कैसे ताके बचन मेटि पति पावौं।। 2।।
तुलसिदास जाको सुजस तिहूँ पुर, क्यों तेहि कुलहि कालिमा लावौं।
प्रभु–रुख निरखि निरास भरत भए,
जान्यो है सबहि भाँति बिधि बावौं।। 3।।

(2/72)

tāta! bicārō dhauṁ, hauṁ kyōṁ āvauṁ.
tumha suci, suhṛda, sujāna sakala bidhi, bahuta kahā kahi kahi samujhāvauṁ.. 1..
nija kara khāla khaiñci yā tanutēṁ jau pitu paga pānahī karāvauṁ.
hō'uṁ̐ na urina pitā dasarathatēṁ, kaisē tākē bacana mēṭi pati pāvauṁ.. 2..
tulasidāsa jākō sujasa tihūṁ̐ pura, kyōṁ tēhi kulahi kālimā lāvauṁ.
prabhu-rukha nirakhi nirāsa bharata bha'ē, jān'yō hai sabahi bhāmṁti bidhi bāvauṁ.. 3..

Verse no. 2/72—[Lord Sri Ram replied—] 'Brother, just think. How can I return? You are faultless, most dear to me, and wise. [Why are you feeling so contrite, remorseful and guilty?]

Say, what more can I tell to explain things to you? [To wit, you are wise enough to think for yourself and understand the pros and cons of every action and decision that we make, and you must understand that it would be highly improper for me to return home at this juncture.][1] (1).

[[1]Lord Ram explains things to Bharat in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 304—to Doha no. 306; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 315.]

Even if I shear my skin with my own hands and use it to make footwear (shoes) for my father's feet, I still would not be able to overcome his obligations (literally, repay his debts) as a son. Then, how can I be called righteous and noble by neglecting or going against his words or orders?[2] (2).'

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 42.]

Tulsidas says that the Lord (Sri Ram) continued, 'How can I cause ignominy to a clan which is famed and glorious in the three Lokas (worlds) for being upholders of their words (for in all sooth, a king's word is his bond and honour)?'

At these words of Lord Ram, Bharat lost all hopes that the Lord would return home. So he was utterly crestfallen, distressed and distraught even as he was certified that the Creator (Vidhi) is fully opposed, malevolent and full of malice towards him[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 293; (ii) Doha no. 301; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 320; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 322.]

(2/73)

बहुरो भरत कह्यो कछु चाहैं।
सकुच–सिंधु बोहित बिबेक करि बुधि–बल बचन निबाहैं।। 1।।
छोटोहुतें छोह करि आए, मैं सामुहैं न हेरो।
एकहि बार आजु बिधि मेरो सील–सनेह निबेरो।। 2।।
तुलसी जो फिरिबो न बनै, प्रभु ! तौ हौं आयसु पावौं।
घर फेरिए लषन, लरिका हैं, नाथ साथ हौं आवौं।। 3।।

(2/73)

bahurō bharata kahyō kachu cāhaiṁ.
sakuca-sindhu bōhita bibēka kari budhi-bala bacana nibāhaiṁ.. 1..
chōṭōhutēṁ chōha kari ā'ē, maiṁ sāmuhaiṁ na hērō.
ēkahi bāra āju bidhi mērō sīla-sanēha nibērō.. 2..

tulasī jō phiribō na banai, prabhu! tau hauṁ āyasu pāvauṁ.
ghara phēri'ē laṣana, larikā haiṁ, nātha sātha hauṁ āvauṁ.. 3..

Ram-Bharat Conference-IV

Verse no. 2/73—Bharat wanted to say something. Faced with a moral dilemma and an exceptional situation, he does not know how to react and what to say.

Literally, when Bharat faced a great ocean symbolized by his hesitation and reluctance to speak and in any way gainsay what Lord Ram wants, he devised a device whereby to cross this ocean. So he cleverly made a symbolic boat out of wisdom, and on it he put his words like travelers who wish to cross this ocean of uncertainty and dilemma, and then made intellect its rower (1).

[In other words, not knowing how to counter Lord Ram's views that one should not disobey one's father as it is highly inappropriate as stated in verse no. 2/72 herein above, Bharat made a last attempt to see if he could somehow find a way round it. Bharat decided that since Lord Ram has taken the stand against which he could not say anything, he must use his wits to circumvent it and prevent any taint to stick to his own reputation by offering to accompany the Lord during the rest period of his journey through the forest. This will be clear in the following stanzas.]

He begins to say, 'Since our childhood, the Lord (Sri Ram) has been always affectionate and most affable towards me, and I too never stood in front and looked you in your face (i.e. never looked you in your eyes because I respected you so much that I kept myself on your side, and always stood with bowed head and lowered eyes before you). But the Creator has for once made me seem un-courteous and rude today because I am facing you, and have dared to answer back at you, and have even refused to obey your commands without asking any questions. I have gathered enough courage and audacity to defy your honour, and inspite of your reverential presence I have had the temerity to stand up and speak so boldly in public in front of you.

[So, oh merciful Lord, first and foremost I beg pardon and forgiveness from you. When a man is in utter distress, he loses all sense of propriety and decency, and his only aim then is to somehow fulfill his wants and attain his objectives. So I plead for kindness and forgiveness.][1] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 293 and Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 260—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 263; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 301.]

Alright, an it is not possible for you to return home, then Oh Lord, give me the order so that I might accompany you, while Laxman, being younger than me and still a child, should return home[2] (3).

[[2]Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 269.]

(2 / 74)

रघुपति ! मोहि संग किन लीजै?

बार बार 'पुर जाहु', नाथ ! केहि कारन आयसु दीजै।। 1।।
जद्यपि हौं अति अधम, कुटिलमति, अपराधिनिको जायो।
प्रनतपाल कोमल–सुभाव जिय जानि, सरन तकि आयो।। 2।।
जो मेरे तजि चरन आन गति, कहौं हृदय कछु राखी।
तौ परिहरहु दयालु, दीनहित, प्रभु, अभिअंतर–साखी।। 3।।
ताते नाथ! कहौं मैं पुनि–पुनि, प्रभु पितु, मातु, गोसाईं।
भजनहीन नरदेह बृथा, खर–स्वान–फेरुकी नाईं।। 4।।
बंधु–बचन सुनि श्रवन नयन–राजीव नीर भरि आए।
तुलसिदास प्रभु परम कृपा गहि बाँह भरत उर लाए।। 5।।

(2/74)

raghupati! mōhi saṅga kina lījai?
bāra bāra 'pura jāhu', nātha! kēhi kārana āyasu dījai.. 1..
jadyapi hauṁ ati adhama, kuṭilamati, aparādhinikō jāyō.
pranatapāla kōmala-subhāva jiya jāni, sarana taki āyō.. 2..
jō mērē taji carana āna gati, kahauṁ hr̥daya kachu rākhī.
tau pariharahu dayālu, dīnahita, prabhu, abhi'antara-sākhī.. 3..
tātē nātha! kahauṁ maiṁ puni-puni, prabhu pitu, mātu, gōsā'īṁ.
bhajanahīna naradēha br̥thā, khara-svāna-phērukī nā'īṁ.. 4..
bandhu-bacana suni śravana nayana-rājīva nīra bhari ā'ē.
tulasidāsa prabhu parama kr̥pā gahi bām̐ha bharata ura lā'ē.. 5..

Ram-Bharat Conference-V

Verse no. 2/74—[Bharat argues—] 'Oh Raghupati (Sri Ram)! Why don't you take me along? Oh Lord! Why do you repeatedly order me to go back to Ayodhya? [Say, now that I agree with you that it will not be good and proper for you to return home because of our father's words, but what is against me accompanying you and letting Laxman go back? Why then do you insist otherwise?] (1).

Though I am vile, most lowly, sinful, malefic and born from the womb of a culprit (i.e. my mother Kaikeyi) (jadyapi hauṁ ati adhama, kuṭilamati, aparādhinikō jāyō), I still have come to seek your refuge (shelter and forgiveness) recognising (or on the strength of) your tender, courteous, affable and sweet temperament and your nature of being kind and merciful towards the refugees (pranatapāla kōmala-subhāva jiya jāni, sarana taki āyō). [So, why don't you take this into consideration? After all, you have a great reputation as the one who does not deny refuge to anyone who comes seeking it from you, then why are you making an exception for me?] (2).

If I have any other destination (recourse, shelter, goal, desire) other than (remaining at) your feet and serve you, or I speak with some conceit in my mind and hear, or have any malefic and evil intentions, then oh the benefactor of the distressed and lowly, oh merciful and gracious Lord, abandon me outright! For, the Lord is witness

to the internal (mental) thoughts of all and whatso one bears in his heart. [Hence, nothing remains hidden from you, and therefore I can't say lies to you and play dirty tricks with you) (3).

Oh Lord! You are our father, mother and Lord (prabhu pitu, mātu, gōsā'īṁ)! This is why I repeatedly express my desire to remain with you and serve you because this human body is like that of a donkey, a dog and a jackal (khara-svāna-phērukī nā'īṁ) without having devotion and love for you, without worshipping and serving you, without having faith in you, and without submitting one self before you (bhajanahīna naradēha bṛthā).' (4).

Hearing these wise and sweet words of his brother, the Lord's lotus-like eyes were filled with tears, and he was so moved with compassion and love for Bharat that he gracefully and affectionately caught hold of the latter's arms, and embraced him most lovingly (5).

(2 / 75)

काहेको मानत हानि हिये हौ ?
प्रीति–नीति–गुन–सील–धरम कहँ तुम अवलंब दिये हौ।। 1।।
तात! जात जानिबे न ए दिन, करि प्रमान पितु–बानी।
ऐहौं बेगि, धरहु धीरज उर कठिन कालगति जानी।। 2।।
तुलसिदास अनुजहि प्रबोधि प्रभु चरनपीठ निज दीन्हें।
मनहु सबनिके प्रान–पाहरू भरत सीस धरि लीन्हें।। 3।।

(2/75)

kāhēkō mānata hāni hiyē hau?
prīti-nīti-guna-sīla-dharama kahaṁ tuma avalamba diyē hau.. 1..
tāta! jāta jānibē na ē dina, kari pramāna pitu-bānī.
aihauṁ bēgi, dharahu dhīraja ura kaṭhina kālagati jānī.. 2..
tulasidāsa anujahi prabōdhi prabhu caranapīṭha nija dīnhēṁ.
manahu sabanikē prāna-pāharū bharata sīsa dhari līnhēṁ.. 3..

Lord Ram consoles Bharat

Verse no. 2/75—[When Lord Ram saw the ruthful condition of Bharat and measured his intensity of grief and misery, the Lord was intensely moved and his heart literally went out to assuage Bharat. In this verse we read how Lord Ram used soothig words of wisdom to encourage Bharat to bear things with fortitude and patience, with a calmed mind and strong heart.

Lord Ram was all praise for Bharat, and he was explicit in his admiration for him, even going to the extent of saying that he will accept what Bharat says. Then

Lord Ram made his best effort to sooth Bharat, lauding his devotion and sense of propriety. The Lord finally persuaded Bharat to share the misfortunes jointly with him as this is in accordance with the principle that the two brothers should share all things in life equally. After all, fourteen years is not a long time, and it will fly away soon, and good tidings are there on the yonder horizon. On the contrary, if aught else is done, only bad name would come to them all. So, Bharat agreed because he thought that it was his primary duty to obey Lord Ram, and to force something otherwise upon the Lord would be contrary to his own declaration that he wishes to serve Lord Ram and nothing else. To serve means to obey.

In the context of this verse, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 259—to Doha no. 264; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 301; (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 303—to Doha no. 306; (iv) from Doha no. 314—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 316.]

Lord Ram consoled Bharat, saying—'Brother, why are you feeling so remorseful, sad and ruthful in your heart as if you have lost all (kāhēkō mānata hāni hiyē hau)?

You have been exemplary in following, supporting and upholding (tuma avalamba diyē hau) all the principles of love and affection, of righteousness, established rules, excellent virtues, good deeds and noble conduct (prīti-nīti-guna-sīla-dharama kahaṁ) (1).

Oh Dear (tāta)! These days of sorrow and misfortune will fly away soon, and you will not even notice them go by[1]. I will, in the meanwhile, complete our father's vows and return immediately. Please have courage, fortitude, patience and forbearance in the face of adversities, and considering that the time and occasion are unfavourable for us, please bear with me for some more time, then everything will be alright[2] (2).'

[[1]Lord Ram has told Sita the same thing in his attempt to dissuade her to accompany him to the forest. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 62.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 305—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 306; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 315.]

Tulsidas says, thus consoling his brother and encouraging him to cooperate, Lord Ram gave his wooden sandals to him, and Bharat, with due reverence, accepted those sandals on behalf of everyone, putting them on his head, considering them to be the 'guard of the soul of all the citizens' ("sabanikē prāna-pāharū"). [That is, Bharat accepted Lord Ram's footwear on behalf of all the citizens of Ayodhya as a token of the Lord's presence amongst them. This would help all to tide over the time and survive the ordeal of suffering from their beloved Lord so that they can see him once again at the end of the exile period.][3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 313 and Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that follow it; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 316.]

बिनती भरत करत कर जोरे।

दीनबंधु ! दीनता दीनकी कबहुँ परै जनि भोरे।। 1।।
तुम्हसे तुम्हहि नाथ मोको, मोसे जन तुमको बहुतेरे।
इहै जानि, पहिचानि प्रीति, छमिए अघ–औगुन मेरे।। 2।।
यों कहि सीय–राम–पाँयनि परि लषन लाइ उर लीन्हें।
पुलक सरीर, नीर भरि लोचन, कहत प्रेम–पन–कीन्हें।। 3।।
तुलसी बीते अवधि प्रथम दिन जो रघुबीर न ऐहौ।
तौ प्रभु–चरन–सरोज–सपथ जीवत परिजनहि न पैहौ।। 4।।

(2/76)

binatī bharata karata kara jōrē.
dīnabandhu! dīnatā dīnakī kabahum̐ parai jani bhōrē.. 1..
tumhasē tumhahi nātha mōkō, mōsē jana tumakō bahutērē.
ihai jāni, pahicāni prīti, chami'ē agha-auguna mērē.. 2..
yōṁ kahi sīya-rāma-pām̐yani pari laṣana lā'i ura līnhēṁ.
pulaka sarīra, nīra bhari lōcana, kahata prēma-pana-kīnhēṁ.. 3..
tulasī bītē avadhi prathama dina jō raghubīra na aihau.
tau prabhu-carana-sarōja-sapatha jīvata parijanahi na paihau.. 4..

Bharat's Vow

Verse no. 2/76—[Having received Lord Ram's commands and his wooden footwear as a token of the Lord's presence in their midst, Bharat got up and took his leave from the Lord. During these final moments, he prayed fervently to Lord Ram to remember his words to come back at the end of the designated time, for otherwise should the Lord delay even for a day let it be known that Bharat won't survive.

Lord Ram remembered his vows. When the war ended at Lanka and preparations were being made for the return journey home, the Lord has clearly indicated this when he told Vibhishan, the brother of Ravana, the demon king, who had taken refuge with the Lord upon being publicly humiliated by his elder brother, that he has to hurry back because Bharat was eagerly awaiting his return, and one day delay would be too late. This is clearly stated in stanza no. 4 of this present verse herein below.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 116; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 1..]

Bharat prays with folded hands (with his palms touching each other in front of his breast as a gesture of prayerful submission and showing of great respect by Bharat for Lord Ram), 'Oh the friend of the distressed and lowly (dīnabandhu)! Let not the humbleness, the simplicity and the submissive attitude of this humble servant of yours ever be lost, goes astray, or be forgotten[1] (1).

[[1]To wit, Bharat asks Sri Ram to bless him so that he, Bharat, is not overcome with the lust of power and greed for the kingdom in the intervening period during Lord's absence from Ayodhya. Bharat says that let it be so that he assumes charge of the kingdom only as a caretaker for the period of Sri Ram's exile, and let not arrogance that comes with power and authority ever delude him and lead him astray

from the chosen path. Let not pomp and pageantry, the taste of royalty and pelf of power ever go into his head and make him haughty and arrogant, making him forget his humbleness and petty standing. These weaknesses in human character are the various errors, the follies and pitfalls to which Bharat is referring to when he says that 'he should not go astray'. He should never forget the ground he is standing upon; he should never forget the entreaties he had made to Lord Ram in Chitrakoot, that he is merely a servant, or at best a minister of the King, who in this instant is Lord Ram, and he has agreed to return to Ayodhya only because the Lord commands him to do so, as all servants are duty-bound to obey their sovereign.]

Oh Lord! For me, you are the only Lord that I know of (tumhasē tumhahi nātha mōkō), but for you there are many servants like me (mōsē jana tumakō bahutērē).

Albeit of this fact (ihai jāni), consider and recognize my inherent and sincere affection, love and devotion for you, and by the virtue of it please forgive all my countless faults, my endless follies, my so many shortcomings, my great misdeeds, my grave misdemeanours and my sins-high, and also the temerity that I had shown before you by having the audacity to stand face to face before you and talk with you so boldly (chami'ē agha-auguna mērē)[2] (2).'

[[2]Bharat essentially pleads with Lord Ram that though he, Bharat, has commited so many mistakes, yet the Lord should always keep in mind his unbound and abiding love and affection for the Lord, and by this single virtue the Lord should forgive him and never look down upon him.

Albeit Lord Ram can claim the service of countless servants and devotees who will willingly do whatsoever their Lord decrees, but nonetheless it would immensely pain Bharat's innocent heart should the Lord choose to neglect him and seek other's services. If indeed Lord Ram truly loves Bharat as he proclaims that to do, then let the Lord remember this prayer. And it will give immense contentment and happiness to Bharat should this be so without gainsay.

At least this much Lord Ram owes him inasmuch as Bharat has offered to suffer and keep aside his own vow to bring the Lord back to Ayodhya just to honour the Lord's wishes, so it is now the time for the Lord to keep his part of the bargain, give heed to Bharat's wishes, and vouchsafe this promise to him!]

Saying this, Bharat fell at the feet of Lord Ram and Sita, embraced Laxman most affectionately (sīya-rāma-pāmm̐yani pari laṣana lā'i ura līnhēm̐)[3], and then began to say final words of farewell with an emotionally chocked voice, and a body that was overwhelmed with thrill so much so that tears overflowed from the eyes (pulaka sarīra, nīra bhari lōcana).

Bharat made a solemn vow that was soaked with love and affection (kahata prēma-pana-kīnhēm̐) (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 317; and (ii) Doha no. 318, as well as (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 318.

[Tulsidas says that Bharat made this solemn vow—] 'Oh Raghubir (Sri Ram)! If you do not come back on the very first day immediately following the expiry of the last day of your exile (i.e. the 1st day after the 14th year end), then I swear by your lotus-feet that you will not find this servant of yours alive!'[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 116; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 1.]

(2 / 77)

अवसि हौं आयसु पाइ रहौंगो।
जनमि कैकयी–कोखि कृपानिधि! क्यों कछु चपरि कहौंगो।। 1।।
'भरत भूप, सिय–राम–लषन बन', सुनि सानंद सहौंगो।
पुर–परिजन अवलोकि मातु सब सुख–संतोष लहौंगो।। 2।।
प्रभु जानत, जेहि भाँति अवधिलौं बचन पालि निबहौंगो।
आगेकी बिनती तुलसी तब, जब फिरि चरन गहौंगो।। 3।।

(2/77)

avasi hauṁ āyasu pā'i rahauṅgō.
janami kaikayī-kōkhi kṛpānidhi! kyōṁ kachu capari kahauṅgō.. 1..
'bharata bhūpa, siya-rāma-laṣana bana', suni sānanda sahauṅgō.
pura-parijana avalōki mātu saba sukha-santōṣa lahauṅgō.. 2..
prabhu jānata, jēhi bhāmti avadhilauṁ bacana pāli nibahauṅgō.
āgēkī binatī tulasī taba, jaba phiri carana gahauṅgō.. 3..

Bharat's sarcasm at himself

Verse no. 2/77—[Addressing Lord Ram, Bharat says—] 'Oh a treasury of grace, kindness and compassion (kṛpānidhi)! By your orders, forsooth, I will surely stay on (or stay back) in Ayodhya. How can I gainsay thy commands and disobey thine decree, more so because of having taken birth from the evil womb of Kaikeyi (janami kaikayī-kōkhi) I have no moral grounds to say anything, for whatso I speak would sound loud-mouthed, boastful, pretentious, cunning and deceitful (kyōṁ kachu capari kahauṅgō)[1] (1).

[[1]To wit, this way of birth has already tarnished my reputation and has cast me in a negative light as one who is greedy, dishonest, deceitful, unrighteous and scheming. So whatever I do or say, no matter with what sincerity and integrity, but all my words would be heard with scepticism and a pinch of salt.]

Now onwards, I shall be constrained to hear, and be content with it, that 'Bharat is the king, while Sita, Sri Ram and Laxman are in the forest'[2]!

Not only that, I would feel contented on seeing everyone, the kith and kin, the subjects of the kingdom as well as the mothers, around me (even as they are constrained to live their own lives, putting up a brave face as if everything was alright, albeit they would be suffering hugely in the inside of their hearts, and would silently scorn at me by my mere sight)[3] (2).

[[2]What Bharat says is being said in acute sarcasm at himself, and to highlight the piquant situation that he would have to face. When some stranger comes to Ayodhya and enquires who is its king, the people would curtly say that Bharat is the king. Then if further querries are made, they would reply that Ram, Sita and Laxman

are in the forest. Bharat regrets what a huge burden of ignominy has been heaped upon his unwilling head. It is not practical to explain things to each person who makes such querries, or to counter each and everyone who makes this statement. How can Bharat henceforth explain to each and everyone that these statements lack the spirit of truth and are misleading. For all practical purposes, he will be assigned the title of a 'king' despite his total abhorrence to even hear of it.

[3]Not only that. Being the caretaker of the kingdom it would be his moral duty to see that all the dependants are happy and well-provided for. Though all of them would be burdened with grief and remorse like Bharat himself, but every now and then it would be incumbent upon him to ask for their welfare and ensure that they are happy, albeit he knows that it is futile to ask this question from anyone as no one would be happy without Lord Ram, and also that the answer they would give him that all is right would also be equally wrong. But this would be the face of things to come. Bharat would be contented if the citizens at least make a show of a happily lived life of basic comfort and contentment because it would be his moral duty as the regent to ensure it, but it would be a superficial and borrowed form of life as well as a delusion of contentment. But what can be done; no one can gainsay the mysteries of the decree of Destiny and the fiat of Fate, no matter how ridiculous, ironic, paradoxical and cruel they may be!

No one would like to even look at my misfortuned face, nay they would loathe my sight, but afraid to annoy me they would all pretend that they love to see me happy and would also, much against their will, salute me or offer their obeisance to me as their ruler!

These observations of Bharat clearly show that he is not happy with Sri Ram's advice to go back and rule Ayodhya for the interim period of exile. His bitterness, fears, consternation, dismay and frustration is evident in these caustic remarks.

See also Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse 2/66, stanza nos. 5-6 in this context.]

The Lord knows fully well and wise how I will have to spend the period of your forest exile. Now, what I have to say more will be said only at the time when I catch hold of your feet once again.[4]' (3).

[[4]Bharat's anger and indignation is reflected here also. He avers that, 'Alright Lord, I keep your words and shall cope with all the ignominy and humiliation that I have to suffer in consequence. And then you'll be forced to be obliged towards me. Perhaps then—when I'll be through with my part of the bargain and be in a position where you wouldn't be able to refuse my requests—I'll ask something from you, when you will not be able to refuse it to me at that time. Wait till that time, I will not disclose it now!'

To wit, Bharat tells Lord Ram that he has nothing more to say. He just wants to ensure that the Lord comes back to Ayodhya dot on time at the end of the forest exile period. It is then that Bharat will say whatever he has to say.]

(2 / 78)

प्रभुसों मैं ढीठो बहुत दई है।
कीबी छमा, नाथ ! आरतितें कही कुजुगुति नई है।। 1।।
यों कहि, बार बार पाँयनि परि, पाँवरि पुलकि लई है।

अपनो अदिन देखि हौं डरपत, जेहि बिष बेलि बई है।। 2।।
आए सदा सुधारि गोसाईं, जनतें बिगरि गई है।
थके बचन पैरत सनेह–सरि, पर्‌यो मानो घोर घई है।। 3।।
चित्रकूट तेहि समय सबनिकी बुद्धि बिषाद हई है।
तुलसी राम–भरतके बिछुरत सिला सप्रेम भई है।। 4।।

(2/78)

prabhusōṁ maiṁ ḍhīṭhō bahuta da'ī hai.
kībī chamā, nātha! āratitēṁ kahī kujuguti na'ī hai.. 1..
yōṁ kahi, bāra bāra pāmv̐yani pari, pāmv̐vari pulaki la'ī hai.
apanō adina dēkhi hauṁ ḍarapata, jēhi biṣa bēli ba'ī hai.. 2..
ā'ē sadā sudhāri gōsā'īṁ, janatēṁ bigari ga'ī hai.
thakē bacana pairata sanēha-sari, paryō mānō ghōra gha'ī hai.. 3..
citrakūṭa tēhi samaya sabanikī bud'dhi biṣāda ha'ī hai.
tulasī rāma-bharatakē bichurata silā saprēma bha'ī hai.. 4..

Bharat Picks up Lord Ram's Sandals

Verse no. 2/78—[Bharat continued—] 'At this point of time, I behaved with impudence and had the temerity to shamelessly talk haughtily before you. But oh Lord, if I had uttered anything improper due to my grief and mental distress, please forgive me.[1]' (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 258.]

Saying this, Bharat fell at the feet of the Lord repeatedly, and thrillingly and overcome with emotions, he picked up his (Sri Ram's) wooden sandals and then said, 'I am sore affright of my unfortunate (bad) time which is responsible for sowing all the seeds of this creeper of poison for me[2] (2).

[[2]This 'poisonous creeper' represents discord, malice, distress, agonies of separation, tumult in the family and the kingdom, death of the father, exile of the brothers, ignominy and ill-will all around, not to mention endless wailings and lamentations and grief.]

Oh Lord (gōsā'īṁ)! Whenever this servant had done anything wrong, you had always stepped in to rectify it. [So, whatever be my faults, oh Lord, just forgive me. And in case I had inadvertently or otherwise committed any error of omission or commission, please correct it without second thoughts.]'

Saying this, Bharat's voice faltered (due to overwhelming sorrow and surging emotions that chocked his voice). He fell silent as if he had fallen in a fierce whirlpool after swimming for a long time in the river of endearment, love and affection[3] (3).

[[3]Bharat felt extremely weary and heart-broken. He had tried all his wits and skills at persuasion to try to make Lord Ram return to Ayodhya, but failed. Till now he had felt that his misery and grief would be short-lived as soon the Lord would return and free him from all the burdens and botherations. But the things did not turn

the way Bharat had wished them. So he was now caught in a nightmarish situation, with no relief in sight. He was virtually sucked in an eddy of grief, sorrow, misery and distress.

He was constrained to just let go without offering any resistance, destined to his fate, just like someone caught in a churning whirlpool, because this unfortunate person knows that now there is no escape.

Here it is meant that Bharat thought to himself that it is futile to speak any more; it is impossible to take Lord Ram back to Ayodhya; it is not possible to convince Sri Ram to change his decision and return home.

So Bharat literally surrendered himself to his fate in abject despair, not knowing what to say more. He was so flooded with emotions that his throat chocked, his voice was strangled even as he faltered in his words, his faculties, his wisdom and intellect just collapsed and refused to work. It was such an overwhelming emotional moment for Bharat that he literally felt that he had drowned in the whirlpool of grief, sorrows and miseries untold, as if eddy of misfortunes have got the better of him and has sucked him in its dark void of gloom and doom.]

रामविधुरा अयोध्या

(2/79)

जबतें चित्रकूअतें आए।
नंदिग्राम खनि अवनि, डासि कुस, परनकुटी करि छाए।। 1।।
अजिन बसन, फल असन, जटा धरे रहत अवधि चित दीन्हें।
प्रभु–पद–प्रेम–नेम–ब्रत निरखत मुनिन्ह नमित मुख कीन्हें।। 2।।
सिंहासनपर पूजि पादुका बारहि बार जोहारे।
प्रभु–अनुराग माँगि आयसु पुरजन सब काज सँवारे।। 3।।
तुलसी ज्यों–ज्यों घटत तेज तनु, त्यों–त्यों प्रीति अधिकाई।
भए, न हैं, न होहिंगे कबहूँ भुवन भरत–से भाई।। 4।।

rāmavidhurā ayōdhyā

(2/79)

jabatēṁ citrakū'atēṁ ā'ē.
nandigrāma khani avani, ḍāsi kusa, paranakuṭī kari chā'ē.. 1..
ajina basana, phala asana, jaṭā dharē rahata avadhi cita dīnhēṁ.
prabhu-pada-prēma-nēma-brata nirakhata muninha namita mukha kīnhēṁ.. 2..
sinhāsanapara pūji pādukā bārahi bāra jōhārē.
prabhu-anurāga mām̐gi āyasu purajana saba kāja sam̐vārē.. 3..
tulasī jyōṁ-jyōṁ ghaṭata tēja tanu, tyōṁ-tyōṁ prīti adhikā'ī.

bha'ē, na haiṁ, na hōhiṅgē kabahūm̐ bhuvana bharata-sē bhā'ī.. 4..

Ayodhya Without Lord Ram:

Bharat Returns to the City

Verse no. 2/79—[When Bharat returned to Ayodhya he decided to place Lord Ram's sandals on the throne of the kingdom as a token of the Lord's anointment as the King, and he himself decided to lead an ascetic's or a hermit's life by retiring to a secluded place on the outskirts of the city. Here he made a thatched hut for himself and lived a life of renunciation for the rest of the period of Lord Ram's exile in the forest. Meanwhile, his younger brother Shatrughan was assigned the task of looking after the day-to-day affairs of the kingdom.

When the need arose, Shatrughan would consult Bharat, and the two brothers took any action only after first taking a symbolic permission from the sandals of Lord Ram, and then obtaining approval from their Guru, sage Vasistha, as well as Sumantra, the chief minister of the kingdom. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 325.

Bharat's decision was hailed by one and all, and he made a place for himself in the annals of history as a very righteous, upright and truthful person who upheld the laws of Dharma and the principles of morality and good conduct in their best tradition.

Refer: Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 322—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 324; and Sortha/Doha no. 326 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8.

In the present verse which is narrated in the present tense, we read how Bharat spent his days at Ayodhya after returning from Chitrakoot. He chose a place called 'Nandi-gram' on the outskirts of the city, built a hut for himself, and lived a life of austerity there like a true hermit. In this context, refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 324.]

[Tulsidas says—] "Ever since Bharat came to Ayodhya from Chitrakoot, he resides in a thatched hut made of leaves and twigs, with its floor made from dug-out earth that is covered with Kush grass[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 324.]

He is wearing the skin of a deer (as is done by a hermit) instead of the royal robes, has a tuft of matted hair on his head, and has his mind fixed on the exile period (i.e. he is counting each passing day).

Seeing his devotion, love and observances even established hermits and ascetics are ashamed at their own incompetence[2] (2).

[[2]To wit, the hermits and ascetics who had till now prided themselves for doing severe Tapa, or austerity and penance, and leading a life of renunciation and dispassion towards all material comforts of the world now felt that whatever they did faded away and paled into insignificance when compared to what Bharat was doing, as his observances and vows were far more stricter, more severe and of a high degree.

Therefore, all praised Bharat in one voice for his Tapa, for his righteousness, his conduct, his self-restraint, his sense of renunciation and dispassion, his ability to do meditation and contemplation of the highest order.

Forsooth, Bharat's penances and austerities were more striking because he was a prince and had access to all the comforts and pleasures that come naturally with a royal inheritance. If Bharat wished he could have led a life of extreme comfort, enjoying all the physical pleasures and luxuries that belong to a king, and no one would have raised a finger against him. But he had voluntarily forgone these privileges and chose to live like a true ascetic. This was indeed remarkable and rare.
Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precedes Doha no. 324; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 325; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 326.]

Bharat has established (installed) Lord Ram's sandals on the throne of Ayodhya, and carry out all his duties towards the state and its subjects by seeking permission from these sandals[3] (3)."

[[3]Refer also to: (a) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/80, stanza no. 3; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 323; and Doha no. 325.]

Tulsidas says his devotion to Lord Ram increases day by day even as his body is becoming emaciated. Forsooth and without gainsay, a brother like Bharat has never been in this world, is not in the present time anywhere, and shall never ever be in the future also[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Sortha/Doha no. 326.]

राग रामकली

(2/80)

राखी भगति–भलाई भली भाँति भरत।
स्वारथ–परमारथ–पथी जय जय जग करत।। 1।।
जो ब्रत मुनिवरनि कठिन मानस आचरत।
सो ब्रत लिए चातक–ज्यों सुनत पाप हरत।। 2।।
सिंहासन सुभग राम–चरन–पीठ धरत।
चालत सब राजकाज आयसु अनुसरत।। 3।।
आपु अवध, बिपिन बंधु, सोच–जरनि जरत।
तुलसी सम–बिषम, सुगम–अगम लखि न परत।। 4।।

rāga rāmakalī

(2/80)

rākhī bhagati-bhalā'ī bhalī bhām̐ti bharata.
svāratha-paramāratha-pathī jaya jaya jaga karata.. 1..
jō brata munivarani kaṭhina mānasa ācarata.

sō brata li'ē cātaka-jyōṁ sunata pāpa harata.. 2..
sinhāsana subhaga rāma-carana-pīṭha dharata.
cālata saba rājakāja āyasu anusarata.. 3..
āpu avadha, bipina bandhu, sōca-jarani jarata.
tulasī sama-biṣama, sugama-agama lakhi na parata.. 4..

The Glory of Bharat-I

Verse no. 2/80—[Verse nos. 2/80—2/81 are in praise of Bharat and his immense glory, as well as the matchless example he had set for devotion and love for Lord God. He had shown by his personal life and example how one should actually practice these virtues if one is truly devoted to one's God, and if his not just trying to please the world and gain some superficial honour as a good, honourable and religious man. In this context, refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 323—to Sortha/Doha no. 326.]

"Bharat has proficiently and steadfastly protected the greatness of the qualities and virtues of that come under the definition of devotion, dedication and submission to one's Lord, as well as good conduct and well-being of all. This attitude of Bharat and the exemplary example that he had set for the general welfare of all is unmatched and unparalleled. [He showed by example what devotion, humility and renunciation actually mean, and how they can be actually implemented. He also showed by way of his own conduct what is meant by being selfless and righteous, what is the proper thing to do and how one can rid onself of ill fame and bad name.]

He is, in all sooth, a traveler who is expert and equally at ease in walking the two divergent paths that a person has to choose in his life—viz. one is the path leading to serving one's self interest, and the other is the path leading to gaining religious merit and good fame as being the upholder of the laws of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, good and noble conduct)[1].

This is the reason why the whole world has unanimously applauded Bharat, and hailed him and his glories in unison. (1).

[[1]Bharat was an expert in the path of serving self-interest because he was wise and adroit enough to relinquish the throne, because had he ascended it against the wish of his subjects it would have proved dangerous for him. There were fair chances of an open mass revolt, or even of a secret conspiracy to dethrone him. Besides that, the prospect of a huge burden of infamy and guilt stared Bharat in the face if he accepted the throne by purportedly conspiring to banish its rightful claimant, Lord Ram, his elder brother.

Having refused the crown, Bharat was able to salvage his reputation and garner loyalty amongst his subjects, besides gaining world-wide fame as a selfless, noble and righteous person.

Bharat also treaded expertly on the second path that leads religious merit because he had refused to be a party to the evil conspiracy hatched by his mother and had even condemned her in stern words, vowing to uphold noble traditions of the family that the elder brother should get the crown, and then leading a life of exemplary renunciation and austerity that even put to shame great ascetics and hermits. These are deeds of an extremely wise and righteous person of noble thoughts and a broad heart, and not one who is driven by shortsighted selfish goals. Bharat

established himself as a pious and humble person who is a strict follower of the laws of Dharma.]

The strict vows and severe austerities and penances that Bharat observed were of such a high degree and refinement that even great sages, hermits and ascetics find it difficult to follow them easily. Bharat had diligently and with great sincerity practiced all these observances with the same zest and enthusiasm that the bird Chatak has[2].

Forsooth, the deeds and actions of Bharat are so high and great, so spiritually uplifting and purifying for the soul that merely hearing them one is freed from all the evils associated with sins[3] (2).

[[2]The bird Chatak has taken a strict vow that it would not drink any other water but the drops falling directly in its beak from the clouds. Chatak would prefer to die due to thirst than to seek to quench its thirst from any other means. This vow and its strict practice has made this bird famous in the scriptures and amongst poets. Here, the decisions that Bharat took and the steadfastness with which he followed them rivaled the decision of Chatak, and like the latter Bharat too has been praised by all.

[3]Hearing about what Bharat had done, and the great honour and acclaim that he got for his conduct, inspires the listener to follow in Bharat's footsteps in his own personal life. Bharat acted as a beacon of the principles of Dharma, and his life showed one the path of all things that are regarded as right and righteous. Obviously, if one follows a noble path of right thought, right conduct and right speech, he moves so much away from sins, or the opposite path that is unrighteous and evil.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Sortha/Doha no. 326.]

He has kept Lord Ram's sandals on a magnificent throne and carries out the royal duties of the kingdom as per their instructions[4] (4).

[[4]Wooden sandals don't speak. What it signifies is that Bharat always signed his royal orders on behalf of Lord Sri Ram. Bharat acted merely as a care-taker of the kingdom, but not as its monarch.

Refer also to: (a) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/79, stanza no. 3; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 325.]

He is constantly distressed at the thought that 'while his beloved brother (Lord Ram) is in the forest, he lives in Ayodhya'[5]. [That is, Bharat laments that while Lord Ram has to endure the hardships of the forest, he himself is relatively leading an easy life in the great city of Ayodhya.]"

Tulsidas observes that while on the one hand Lord Ram does not feel the hardships and the harshness of life in the forest, Bharat on the other hand does not enjoy any of the comforts that are associated with living in a capital city (that is as prosperous as Ayodhya). [To wit, the forest is like a comfortable kingdom for Lord Ram. And as for Bharat, it does not matter at all that he lives in the city of Ayodhya, for he chose to stay away from it in a far away place, in a hut dwelling, sleeping on a grass mat on the floor, and living the life that of a hermit, doing all the penances and austerities that hermits do.][6] (4).

[[5]Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Sortha/Doha no. 326.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 324.

Lord Sri Ram is in the forest but he is very happy there; he does not feel the drudgery and travails of a forest life. Bharat is in a prosperous city, but he lives like a hermit and a recluse, in great austerities. Besides, he is full of guilt and overcome by sorrows and anguish. So, inspite of living surrounded by all the comforts becoming of a monarch, he leads a harsh life of a hermit, perhaps harsher than that led by Sri Ram. For, Sri Ram has the pleasant surroundings of Nature—rivers, mountains, flowers, birds, animals, trees, springs and waterfalls etc.—to enjoy and behold, but Bharat is virtually in captivity which is self imposed. He lives like he was in a jail. That is why the Tapa—severe austerities and penances—of Bharat are superior to those of Sri Ram.

It is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas that Lord Ram felt exceptionally glad when he heard that he has been ordered to go the forest: refer—Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 51.]

(2 / 81)

मोहि भावति, कहि आवति नहि भरतजूकी रहनि।
सजल नयन सिथिल बयन प्रभु–गुन–गन कहनि।। 1।।
असन–बसन–अयन–सयन धरम गरुअ गहनि।
दिन दिन पन–प्रेम–नेम निरुपधि निरबहनि।। 2।।
सीता–रघुनाथ–लषन–बिरह–पीर सहनि।
तुलसी तजि उभय लोक रामचरन–चहनि।। 3।।

(2/81)

mōhi bhāvati, kahi āvati nahi bharatajūkī rahani.
sajala nayana sithila bayana prabhu-guna-gana kahani.. 1..
asana-basana-ayana-sayana dharama garu'a gahani.
dina dina pana-prēma-nēma nirupadhi nirabahani.. 2..
sītā-raghunātha-laṣana-biraha-pīra sahani.
tulasī taji ubhaya lōka rāmacarana-cahani.. 3..

Glory of Bharat-II

Verse no. 2/81—[Tulsidas says—] "The life-style, habits and demeanours of Bharat are liked by me (Tulsidas) very much but I am unable to describe them.

[Now Tulsidas points out some of the salient features that make Bharat's devotion and renunciation so remarkable and unique.]

Bharat sings the praises and virtues of the Lord (Sri Ram) with eyes wet with tears, and voice that is calm, serene and low (1).

He follows strict and severe regimen for self-restraint in matters of food, clothes, residence and sleep. He diligently follows the rules and traditional norms set-out for being steadfast and single-minded towards strict adherence to vows, to principles

governing the virtues of affection, devotion and love (for the Lord), without accepting or desiring any honour or fame for the same (2).

He tolerates, with courage and fortitude, the pain of sorrow, torment and anguish arising from his separation from Sita, Sri Ram and Laxman.

Having abandoned any desire for anything from either this mortal world (i.e. its comforts and pleasures, its fame and honour) or the next world (i.e. desire for emancipation, salvation, liberation and deliverance of the soul if one does some meritorious deed during one's life in this mortal world), he desires only one thing—and it is to attain the (exalted, holy) feet of Lord Sri Ram (i.e. his only desire is that he should have unadulterated and steady devotion, faith, affection, submission and loyalty for the holy lotus-like feet of Lord Sri Ram, who for him is his deity) (3).

[Note—In the context of this verse, please see also Tulsidas epic "Ram Charit Manas", Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 324; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 325; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8, Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Sortha/Doha no. 326.]

(2 / 82)

जानी है संकर–हनुमान–लषन–भरत राम भगति।
कहत सुगम, करत अगम, सुनत मीठी लगति।। 1।।
लहत सकृत, चहत सकल, जुग जुग जगमगति।
राम–प्रेम–पथतें कबहुँ डोलति नहिं, डगति।। 2।।
रिधि–सिधि, बिधि चारि सुगति जा बिनु गति अगति।
तुलसी तेहि सनमुख बिनु बिषय–ठगिनि ठगति।। 3।।

(2/82)

jānī hai saṅkara-hanumāna-laṣana-bharata rāma bhagati.
kahata sugama, karata agama, sunata mīṭhī lagati.. 1..
lahata sakr̥ta, cahata sakala, juga juga jagamagati.
rāma-prēma-pathatēṁ kabahuṁ ḍōlati nahiṁ, ḍagati.. 2..
ridhi-sidhi, bidhi cāri sugati jā binu gati agati.
tulasī tēhi sanamukha binu biṣaya-ṭhagini ṭhagati.. 3..

The Importance of having Bhakti (devotion) for Lord Ram

Verse no. 2/82—[The eclectic virtue of 'Bhakti' is highly extolled in almost all ancient scriptures. It is theme common in all the writings of saint-poets of the 'Bhakti Movement' who placed this virtue at the top of a high pedestal amongst the various means to attain spiritual beatitude, felicity, bliss, happiness, emancipation and salvation. Tulsidas was one such poet-saint.

In his epic 'Ram Charit Manas' he has dwelt upon this theme at sundry places. Some of the more prominent ones are the following: (a) Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 128—to Doha no. 131 where sage Valmiki describes the characteristic qualities of Lord Ram's devotee; (b) Aranya Kand, from

Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 where Lord Ram has himself described these qualities for the benefit of Sabari, the old woman devotee of the Lord; (c) Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45 where Lord Ram preaches the virtues of Bhakti to the citizens of Ayodhya; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 85 where Lord Ram blesses the crow saint named Kaagbhusund with Bhakti and briefly highlights is glorious virtues; (iii) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 120 where Kaagbhusund describes the grand virtues of Bhakti to Garud, the legendary Eagle who was the vehicle of Lord Vishnu and had visited the saintly crow to hear the story of Lord Ram and learn the secret of his extreme beatitude.]

Lord Shiva, Hanuman, Laxman and Bharat have known the true meaning and essentials of Bhakti (devotion, love, submission, faith) for Lord Ram (rāma bhagati)[1].

It is easy to say ("kahata sugama"; that one is devoted to the Lord) but most difficult to implement ("karata agama"). [To wit, it is easy than done.]

Nevertheless, it is extremely sweet and pleasant (and spiritually rejuvenating) to hear (and it invariable inspires the hearer to practice it and follow the example of the four mentioned herein above) (1).

[[1]That is to say, out of all living beings in the world and gods in the heaven, only Lord Shiva, Hanuman, Laxman and Bharat have shown by example what the true meaning of devotion, love, faith and submission to Lord Ram means. There is no one else to match them.]

Everyone desires to have this virtue of Bhakti (devotion), but rarely anyone can achieve it in the true sense.

Inspite of this rarity and inaccessibility, Bhakti keeps on shining (as the most glorious of spiritual practices out of a large repository of practices that lead one to attain spiritual bliss and beatitude as well as liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) from one age (or era) to another (without fading or diminishing in any manner in its brilliance and potential powers).

It (Bhakti) is so powerful that once one takes its recourse it ensures that the person never wavers or goes astray from the path of having devotion, love, faith and submission to Lord Sri Ram (which results in a stronger commitment from Lord Ram to ensure not only the devotee's spiritual welfare but also his worldly well-being) (2).

Tulsidas asserts that without possessing the virtue of 'Bhakti', all other achievements become merely superficial successes. Some of the rare achievements that people regard as yard-sticks or the gold standards to judge one's success in life are (i) ridhi-(good fame, prosperity, material well-being, wealth), (ii) sidhi (expertise in and attainment of many mystical powers) and (iii) the four types of meritorious end for the soul (cāri sugati)[2]. But they are inconsequential and less effective when compared to Bhakti.

Besides this, as long as one does take refuge of Bhakti, the deceitful entrapments of this deluding and materialistic world represented by the various attractions of the sense objects continue to distract the peace of the spiritual aspirant. [To wit, none of the three powers of Ridhi, Sidhi or Sugati are powerful enough to help a person completely overcome the temptations presented by the sense objects of this world or the inherent nature of the corresponding sense organs to seek gratification from them.

It is only Bhakti that can empower the aspirant to successfully deflect all the onslaught of these corrupting factors.] (3).

[[2]There are four types of honourable fates that a person expects to attain upon death. These are: (i) 'Saaujya Mukti'—union of the individual's microcosmic soul with the supreme, all-pervading, macrocosmic soul of the creation; merger of the Atma with the Parmatma; considered the best fate. (ii) 'Saarupya Mukti'—a kind of deliverance from the gross boy where one loses one's identity and becomes uniform with the object of his worship. (iii) 'Saalokya Mukti'—this refers to the soul obtaining a final resting place for itself in likeness to the deity the person worshiped while alive. (iv) 'Saakshi-roop Mukti'—it refers to a form of liberation where a person gets totally detached from his physical gross body so much so that the body lies prostrate like a log of wood and the soul voluntarily lifts itself away from it.]

राग गौरी

(2/83)

कैकयी करी धौं चतुराई कौन ?
राम–लषन–सिय बनहि पठाए, पति पठए सुरभौन।। 1।।
कहा भलो धौं भयो भरतको, लगे तरुन–तन दौन।
पुरबासिन्हके नयन नीर बिनु कबहुँ तो देखति हौं न।। 2।।
कौसल्या दिन राति बिसूरति, बैठि मनहिं मन मौन।
तुलसी उचित न होइ रोइबो, प्रान गए सँग जौ न।। 3।।

rāga gaurī

(2/83)

kaikayī karī dhauṁ caturā'ī kauna?
rāma-laṣana-siya banahi paṭhā'ē, pati paṭha'ē surabhauna.. 1..
kahā bhalō dhauṁ bhayō bharatakō, lagē taruna-tana dauna.
purabāsinhakē nayana nīra binu kabahuṁ tō dēkhati hauṁ na.. 2..
kausalyā dina rāti bisūrati, baiṭhi manahiṁ mana mauna.
tulasī ucita na hō'i rō'ibō, prāna ga'ē saṁga jau na.. 3..

Mother Kaushalya's Lamentation-I

Verse no. 2/83—[Kaushalya, the chief queen and the mother of Lord Ram, sorrowfully laments at the mischief Kaikeyi, the other queen and the mother of Bharat, had done in an arbitrary fashion, being driven by utter selfishness and without giving thoughts to its consequences. She morosefully says—]

'What cleverness or expertise in statecraft has Kaikeyi shown? [What great or beneficial deed has she done? Who has benefited from her misdeeds? Even her son Bharat for whom she had gone to such low level has absolutely disowned her, and

while she had expected him to enjoy the fruits of a prosperous kingdom by being its ruler, he is suffering more than anyone else.]

She has uselessly sent Ram, Laxman and Sita to the forest, and as if that was not enough she had been instrumental in sending the husband (king Dasrath) to the abode of Gods (heaven; i.e. causing his death) (1).

Say, by this (i.e. by her selfish deeds), what gain or benefit has Bharat got?

The fierce fire of separation (from his beloved brother Lord Ram) has swept through his youthful body (as a result of which he his decaying in health and has become withered and emaciated).[1]

Besides this, I never see the eyes of the citizens without tears (2).'

[[1]Kaikeyi had planned to put Bharat on the throne of Ayodhya. She implemented her pervert plans without any moral guilt or shame. She was so selfish and cruel and maddened by passion to fulfil her plans that she asked her husband to redeem some archaic vows he had made in some long past—one was to put Bharat on the throne, and the other was to send Lord Ram to the forest for fourteen years. When Dasrath wailed and collapsed due to shock, and pleaded with her like an accused pleads with a king by holding his feet to show mercy and spare his life, she laughed him aside and sternly rebuked him. During those hours it looked she was possessed by some demonic spirit or satan.

And what did she gain by all this intrigue? Nothing to wit; only she spread pain and misery all around. Bharat rebuked her in the strongest possible way he could muster and vowed never to talk to her as long as he lived; Shatrughan caught hold of the hairs of Manthara, her morally pervert and filthy hunch-back instigator, and dragged her around the palace even as she shrieked and yelled violently, placing a kick or two on her in the meantime; Dasrath died, leaving the kingdom without an heir.

The citizens were utterly miserable, and never had they imagined in their wildest of dreams that such a sorrowful fate will be their lot in their lifetime. Sita and Laxman refused to stay back in Ayodhya and followed Lord Ram to the forest.

What to talk of ascending the throne of the kingdom and enjoying its comforts and pleasures as his wicked mother had envisaged for him, Bharat led a life more austere and more severe than even seasoned hermits and ascetics.

So what did Kaikeyi gain except inviting untold calamity and misery upon the whole family and the subjects of the kingdom, and as for own self, allowing herself to be buried in shame and ignominy from which her soul never found redemption!]

Tuslidas observes that in this way, Kaushalya sits remorsefully and passes her gloomy days and mournful nights in a grave and distressed silence.

She wonders what is the use of weeping now if she could not send her life behind Lord Ram when he had abandoned her[2] (3).

[[2]Tulsidas means that Kaushalya and the rest of the people of Ayodhya should have died when Sri Ram left the city for the forest just as Dasrath had did if they wish to tell the world that they love Lord Ram intensely and cannot live without him. Since they did not, then what great purpose will be served by weeping and wailing for the next 14 long years? Neither will this weeping and lamenting now at this late hour would shorten the days, or reduce the agonies, nor would Sri Ram come back earlier. All this is waste of time, energy and unnecessarily frittering away of precious moments. Though of course the other option—to go about their lives with no impression that they sorely missed Lord Ram—would have been highly unacceptable,

disloyal and as selfish an act as that of Kaikeyi, but since the decree of Destiny cannot be gainsaid it is now better to be calm and poised, and wait for the bad time to pass through. It is better now to stoically bear with it the situation with courage and fortitude. What is the great idea in ruining one's health by weeping over spoilt milk? See also to Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse 2/66 (stanza nos. 5-6), and verse no. 2/67.]

(2 / 84)

हाथ मींजिबो हाथ रह्यो।
लगी न संग चित्रकूटहुतें, ह्याँ कहा जात बह्यो।। 1।।
पति सुरपुर, सिय–राम–लषन बन, मुनिब्रत भरत गह्यो।
हौं रहि घर मसान–पावक ज्यों मरिबोइ मृतक दह्यो।। 2।।
मेरोइ हिय कठोर करिबे कहँ बिधि कहुँ कुलिस लह्यो।
तुलसी बन पहुँचाइ फिरी सुत, क्यों कछु परत कह्यो ?।। 3।।

(2/84)

hātha mīn̐jibō hātha rahyō.
lagī na saṅga citrakūṭahutēṁ, hyāṁ kahā jāta bahyō.. 1..
pati surapura, siya-rāma-laṣana bana, munibrata bharata gahyō.
hauṁ rahi ghara masāna-pāvaka jyōṁ maribō'i mr̥taka dahyō.. 2..
mērō'i hiya kaṭhōra karibē kahaṁ bidhi kahuṁ kulisa lahyō.
tulasī bana pahuṁcā'i phirī suta, kyōṁ kachu parata kahyō?.. 3..

Mother Kaushalya's Lamentation-II

Verse no. 2/84—[Kaushalya broods remorsefully—] 'I was destined by the decree of Destiny to wring my empty hands in frustration and dismay. Say, what was being swept away without me (i.e. my presence in Ayodhya) that I did not join Ram at least from Chitrakoot (for the remaining part of his exile in the forest)[1] (1).

[[1]Mother Kaushalya lamented that if she could not stop Lord Ram from leaving Ayodhya because of a variety of reasons, she could have at least stayed back with him at Chitrakoot. But did she do it? It is merely a hypothetical question—because it would have been absolutely impossible for a queen to live in the wild forest with just her son (Ram), her step-son (Laxman) and daughter-in-law (Sita) to accompany her. Besides its impracticability, it would have created a nightmare for Lord Ram and a huge scandal for the kingdom of Ayodhya which was already put under the spotlight for all the wrong reasons, reeling as it was under the glare of ignominious events that were coupled with malicious gossip and a hugely bad image in the arena of the world.

Nevertheless, she would have tried her best if Bharat had been successful in persuading Lord Ram to accompany him in the forest, but since everyone returned she kept her council and remained quiet. She did not wish to throw tantrums and make a clown of herself by creating a mightily laughable scene in the middle of the forest in

full view of her subjects. Palace squabbles and intrigues are best carried out within the confines of its high walls, beyond view of the public.]

The husband (Dasrath) went to the abode of Gods (i.e. died), Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita took up residence in the forest, while Bharat accepted (or vowed for) the austre life of a hermit, but I (was forced to) remain in the householed like the fire of the cremation ground (that smoulders slowly and reminds all those who come there that some one had departed from this world from that spot, and it is therefore an ominous place to be).

I have sort of burnt the 'Death' itself with my presence (so Death cannot come and kill me now, and as a result, I cannot even die and get rid of this horrible life full of endless torment, grief and misery that seems to have no end)[2]. (2).

[[2]The cremation ground is considered very inauspicious. The fire of the funeral pyre is perpetually burning in pilgrim cities such as Varanasi or Ayodhya because the dead bodies keep on coming one after another. This funeral fire is such that anybody who comes in contact with it gets burnt—he never goes unscathed. So, Kaushalya has likened herself to this inauspicious, all consuming fire. Whoever comes in contact with this unfortunate woman would only go back with scorched mind and body, and if lucky to escape much burn then at least with soot covering his entire body.

She takes the example of her husband to say that at least he could find rest in the lap of Death, but she is so ominous and ill-begotten that Death would not come to her to give the same peace. Her sins and evils are making her so hot and unapproachable that even Death fears her. So she can expect no relief in her life now by way of death. Rather, anyone who comes to her would be cursing one's day for having seen her.]

The Creator has crafted (moulded) my heart out of Bajra[3] (i.e. made it extremely stern, merciless, scowling, loveless, emotionless, inhuman).'

Tulsidas says that Kaushalya continues with her lamentations, 'Alas! I virtually ensured that my son is actually in the forest before returning home. That being the case, what could I say anything any longer?[4]' (3).

[[3]Bajra is Indra's weapon. Indra is the king of gods. Bajra is considered the hardest and strongest thing existing in this creation. So, Kaushalya means that her heart is stern, harsh, cruel, unemotional and tough as the Bajra.

[4]Kaushalya had a golden chance of persuading Sri Ram at Chitrakoot to return home but she didn't do it. What can be more surprising. Then, what is the use of fruitlessly wailing now? See also verse 2/66, stanza nos. 5-6.

The last line of this verse (tulasī bana pahuṁcā'i phirī suta, kyōṁ kachu parata kahyō?) can be interpreted in a different way as follows:

"Tulsidas says that she left her son, Sri Ram, in the forest and voluntarily returned home. And now she is saying so many things. If she loved Lord Ram as much as she claims to do, then why is she blaming the Creator and finding excused for not dying herself like her husband Dasrath? For instance, who was preventing her from abstaining from food, and did she not know that if she honestly forsook victuals than she would die without any effort within a month's time. She continued to live like a queen, and therefore it makes no sense in uttering the words she does as her words go against her actions and intentions. Say, what can be said in such a situation."]

राग सोरठ

(2 / 85)

हौं तो समुझि रही अपनो सो।
राम–लषन–सियको सुख मोकहँ भयो, सखी ! सपनो सो।। 1।।
जिनके बिरह–बिषाद बँटावन खग–मृग जीव दुखारी।
मोहि कहा सजनी समुझावति, हौं तिन्हकी महतारी।। 2।।
भरत–दसा सुनि, सुमिरि भूपगति, देखि दीन पुरबासी।
तुलसी 'राम' कहति हौं सकुचति, ह्वैहै जग उपहाँसी।। 3।।

rāga sōraṭha

(2/85)

hauṁ tō samujhi rahī apanō sō.
rāma-laṣana-siyakō sukha mōkahaṁ bhayō, sakhī! sapanō sō.. 1..
jinakē biraha-biṣāda baṁṭāvana khaga-mrga jīva dukhārī.
mōhi kahā sajanī samujhāvati, hauṁ tinhakī mahatārī.. 2..
bharata-dasā suni, sumiri bhūpagati, dēkhi dīna purabāsī.
tulasī 'rāma' kahati hauṁ sakucati, hvaihai jaga upahāṁsī.. 3..

Mother Kaushalya's Lamentation-III

Verse no. 2/85—[Mother Kaushalya talks with one of her close companions. She tells the latter—]

'Friend (sakhī)! I can only say about myself (and don't know what others speak). For me, the days of happiness, enjoyment and pleasures of living with and seeing Ram, Laxman and Sita has become like a dream (i.e. unrealistic and imaginary) (1).

Why do you try to console me about him (i.e. Lord Ram) whose separation has created immense sadness, grief, sorrow, misery and pain even for the birds and animals and other creatures. They are all trying to lessen the unbearable burden of torment and sorrow that this separation has created for them by sharing it with others.

If this is their condition, why, I am his mother, and so it can be well imagined what my condition would be![1] (2).

[[1]To wit, if birds and animals and other living beings who are not even related with Lord Ram are feeling so extremely sad, despaired, gloomy and distressed by being separated from him, what can be said about the mental or physical condition of the mother of Sri Ram? Surely, it would be umpteen times more worse and more aggravated than the rest.]

Forsooth, when I consider the condition of Bharat, when I remember the fate of the king (Dasrath), and when I watch the distressed, gloomy, sad and helpless condition

of the citizens (of Ayodhya), I feel absolutely crestfallen and very guilty (hesitant; reluctant) even to pronounce the word 'Ram' because it will result in my becoming a laughing stock in the world[2] (3).'

[[2]The people would say—look, those who are not even related to Sri Ram, such as birds and animals, or even the subjects of the kingdom, are in such great distress and so very sad and gloomy, but she, though being his mother, lives, eats and drinks like a queen, and then has the temerity to shed crocodile tears for Lord Ram and claim that she loves him. What to talk of dying like was the fate of Dasrath, or becoming emaciated in sorrows and anguish of separation like the case of Bharat and the rest of the citizens, she enjoys life in the royal palace and then makes sermons!]

(2/86)

आली ! हौं इन्हहिं बुझावौं कैसे ?
लेत हिये भरि भरि पतिको हित, मातुहेतु सुत जैसे।। 1।।
बार–बार हिहिनात हेरि उत , जो बोलै कोउ द्वारे।
अंग लगाइ लिए बारेतें करुनामय सुत प्यारे।। 2।।
लोचन सजल, सदा सोवत–से, खान–पान बिसराए।
चितवत चौंकि नाम सुनि, सोचत राम–सुरति उर आए।। 3।।
तुलसी प्रभुके बिरह–बधिक हठि राजहंस–से जोरे।
ऐसेहु दुखित देखि हौं जीवति राम–लखनके घोरे।। 4।।

(2/86)

ālī! hauṁ inhahiṁ bujhāvauṁ kaisē?
lēta hiyē bhari bhari patikō hita, mātuhētu suta jaisē.. 1..
bāra-bāra hihināta hēri uta, jō bōlai kō'u dvārē.
aṅga lagā'i li'ē bārētēṁ karunāmaya suta pyārē.. 2..
lōcana sajala, sadā sōvata-sē, khāna-pāna bisarā'ē.
citavata cauṅki nāma suni, sōcata rāma-surati ura ā'ē.. 3..
tulasī prabhukē biraha-badhika haṭhi rājahansa-sē jōrē.
aisēhu dukhita dēkhi hauṁ jīvati rāma-lakhanakē ghōrē.. 4..

The Pitiful Condition of Lord Ram's Horses-I

Verse no. 2/86—[Lord Ram had some favourite horses in his stable at Ayodhya. When these poor animals learnt their beloved Lord has left them and gone away, and perhaps they won't see him in their lives again, they were distraught and there was no consolation for them. The following two verses, nos. 2/86—2/87 describe their pitiful and melancholic condition.

Presently, mother Kaushalya feels sorry for these horses and points out their condition to her friend.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 99, and Doha no. 142 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 that describe very briefly the emotional condition of the horses that pulled the chariot which took Lord Ram till the

banks of river Ganges, at the time Sumantra, the royal minister, had to turn the chariot back homewards.]

[Mother Kaushalya tells her friend—] 'Oh Friend (ālī)! How can I console these horses (of Lord Ram's stable). Even as a child is eager and emotionally upset and agitated for re-union with its mother, the emotions of affection and endearment towards their master (Sri Ram) are repeatedly swelling, surging and overflowing in the heart of these horses (making them absolutely restless and inconsolable) (1).

If they hear a gatekeeper say anything at the door (of their stable or the palace wherever they may be stationed at the time), they repeatedly begin to neigh excitedly. Why? Because my two merciful, compassionate and kind sons (Ram and Laxman) had endeared and befriended them so much since their early childhood[1] (2).

[[2]So, when the guards call out from the gate, these horses think that either Sri Ram or Laxman has come back, and as is the wont of pet and pampered animals, especially horses who are known to be extremely loyal and faithful and attached to their masters, they become extremely excited at the prospect of seeing their beloved masters once again. This condition of the horses can be well imagined by those people who have some experience of rearing horses personally, as well as by other animal lovers who keep pet dogs, cats, rabbits etc. in their homes.]

Their eyes are always full of tears, and having abandoned eating and drinking, they lie in a dazed state as if they are gravely sick and would rather be left alone to sleep.

Whenever they hear the name of the Lord "Ram" being spoken by someone, they wake up from their trance-like state with a start, and becoming instantly alert they begin to stare in all the directions to discern from whither the name was pronounced.

But soon they discover that the Lord is not present. So, the memory of the Lord resurfaces in their hearts with renewed pain which makes them depressed and melancholic all over again so much so that they appear to have been overcome with extreme distress, sadness and dejection. They once again sink in the depths of sorrows, anguish and silent lamentation (3).

These horses of Ram and Laxman are like a pair of royal Swans. Alas! Even after watching them being so helplessly tormented and mentally tortured by the hunter represented by the agonies and sorrows of separation from Sri Ram and Laxman, I still live (and do not die due to grief). [In all sooth, how stone-hearted I am!] (4).'

(2 / 87)

राघौ ! एक बार फिरि आवौ।
ए बर बाजि बिलोकि आपने, बहुरो बनहि सिधावौ।। 1।।
जे पय प्याइ, पोखि कर–पंकज, बार–बार चुचुकारे।
क्यों जीवहिं, मेरे राम लाड़िले ! ते अब निपट बिसारे।। 2।।
भरत सौगुनी सार करत हैं, अति प्रिय जानि तिहारे।
तदपि दिनहिं दिन होत झाँवरे, मनहु कमल हिम–मारे।। 3।।
सुनहु पथिक! जो राम मिलहिं बन, कहियो मातु–सँदेसो।

तुलसी मोहि और सबहिनतें इन्हको बड़ो अँदेसो।। 4।।

(2/87)

rāghau! ēka bāra phiri āvau.
ē bara bāji bilōki āpanē, bahurō banahi sidhāvau.. 1..
jē paya pyā'i, pōkhi kara-paṅkaja, bāra-bāra cucukārē.
kyōṁ jīvahiṁ, mērē rāma lāḍilē! tē aba nipaṭa bisārē.. 2..
bharata saugunī sāra karata haiṁ, ati priya jāni tihārē.
tadapi dinahiṁ dina hōta jhāmaँvarē, manahu kamala hima-mārē.. 3..
sunahu pathika! jō rāma milahiṁ bana, kahiyō mātu-samaँdēsō.
tulasī mōhi aura sabahinatēṁ inhakō baṛō amaँdēsō.. 4..

The Pitiful Condition of Lord Ram's Horses-II

Verse no. 2/87—[The intensity of the agony and pain in the heart of mother Kaushalya bursts through the medium of what she says of the horses. The author of this English version does not know how much the reader would be moved, but he can say for himself that he had great difficulty while penning the following lines, his eyes so filled with warm tears that it obscured vision of the computer screen, and his heart breaking out in sobs uncontrollable that made it difficult to type on the keyboard and keep his wits together.

According to the author's opinion, the poignant description of the miserable and pitiful emotional condition of the horses as described in verse nos. 2/86 and 2/87 is the most heart-touching in the whole of Geetawali.]

'Or Raghav (Sri Ram)! You should come back, for once atleast. After seeing your (beloved) horses once, you can go back to the forest (1).

These horses whom you had offered milk by your own hands, reared them yourself, fondled and carrassed them affectionately with love and care as you grew up—oh my dearest Ram; say, how will they survive if you suddenly choose to forget (or neglect, ignore) them[1]? (2).

[[1]Every now and then they jerk their heads with a startled appearance on their face if anyone even utters your name and this word falls in their ears. Nay, not only this; if anyone at the gate calls out for something, they immediately become alert and stare in that direction, perhaps hoping to see you enter the stable or the palace grounds. They have stopped eating and drinking, and sit quietly as if sick, with their eyes filled continuously with tears as if they are in great pain. Refer: verse no. 2/86 herein above.]

Though Bharat pays special attention to them and takes hundred times more care of them realising this fact that these horses were very dear to you, and are very remorseful and sad without you, they are still getting progressively emaciated day by day as if a lotus has been stricken by frost (3).

Oh travelers to yonder places and wayfarers, listen please (sunahu pathika)! If you happen to meet Sri Ram on the way, tell him his mother's message that she is more worried about these horses (fearing that they would die without him, would not survive the long, painful 14 years of your exile period) more than anyone or anything else.' (4).

राग केदारा

(2/88)

काहूसों काहू समाचार ऐसे पाए।
चित्रकूटतें राम–लषन–सिय सुनियत अनत सिधाए।। 1।।
सैल, सरित, निरझर, बन, मुनि–थल देखि–देखि सब आए।
कहत सुनत सुमिरत सुखदायक, मानस–सुगम सुहाए।। 2।।
बड़ि अवलंब बाम–बिधि–बिघटित बिषम बिषाद बढ़ाए।
सिरिस–सुमन–सुकुमार मनोहर बालक बिंध्य चढ़ाए।। 3।।
अवध सकल नर–नारि बिकल अति, अँकनि बचन अनभाए।
तुलसी राम–बियोग–सोग–बस, समुझत नहिं समुझाए।। 4।।

rāga kēdārā

(2/88)

kāhūsōṁ kāhū samācāra aisē pā'ē.
citrakūṭatēṁ rāma-laṣana-siya suniyata anata sidhā'ē.. 1..
saila, sarita, nirajhara, bana, muni-thala dēkhi-dēkhi saba ā'ē.
kahata sunata sumirata sukhadāyaka, mānasa-sugama suhā'ē.. 2..
baḍi avalamba bāma-bidhi-bighaṭita biṣama biṣāda baṛhā'ē.
sirisa-sumana-sukumāra manōhara bālaka bindhya caṛhā'ē.. 3..
avadha sakala nara-nāri bikala ati, am̐kani bacana anabhā'ē.
tulasī rāma-biyōga-sōga-basa, samujhata nahiṁ samujhā'ē.. 4..

News of Lord Ram Reaches Ayodhya by Word of Mouth-I

Verse no.2/88—Someone has heard from someone else that Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita have left Chitrakoot and wended their way ahead to somewhere else—this is what is heard by way of news spread by word of mouth (probably by the travelers who arrived at Ayodhya from that direction)[1] (1).

[[1]After Bharat took leave of Lord Ram, accepted the Lord's wooden sandals as a token of his presence and returned back to Ayodhya, Lord Ram tarried at Chitrakoot for some more time. Then he decided to move on. He could have spent the rest of the days of his forest exile in the relatively comfortable and charming environs of that place, but there were two primary reasons why he decided to move out of Chitrakoot and go ahead into the deeper, denser, wilder and inhabitable part of the forest.

The first probable reason is that he wished not that a continuous stream of people, even in ones and twos, should come from Ayodhya to this place once his location was known to all. He was quite certain that it would be so as he knew how much the people loved him and would find the first opportune moment and excuse to come to him. He had already witnessed this attitude at the time of leaving Ayodhya, and at that time had to shake off the grieving citizens who had vowed to go where the Lord goes with a stratagem that he didn't like to implement but had to reluctantly due to the expediency of the situation (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Doha no. 86.)

Further, Lord Ram had noted that when they were forced to return from Chitrakoot, they were all gloomy and distraught to the highest degree, and from all signs they were extremely reluctant to do so. Hence, it was quite probable that some amongst them had broken away from the procession that was returning home and had hid themselves somewhere incognito, in the guise of hermits and sages to avoid recognition, with the sole purpose of remaining near to their dear Lord Ram. Lord Ram did not want anyone of his subjects to undergo the same tough ordeal that he was going through because the Lord was merciful and tender at heart and would not bear with the torments of his dear subjects. Once he moved out quietly, those who may have hidden themselves somewhere would discover it sooner or later, and since their very purpose of suffering the hardships of the forest was defeated, they would gradually return home. Perhaps they were the ones who had conveyed the news of Lord Ram moving out of Chitrakoot to some unknown destination.

Bharat could also have left some spies of the kingdom to oversee Lord Ram's security issues and inform him should the need be on this count or any other necessity that arises so that compensate actions can be initiated. Lord Ram did not want all this; he wished to be left alone.

So the only option was to leave this well-known address and go somewhere else.

The second obvious reason why Lord Ram chose to move away from Chitrakoot into the deeper and more fearful parts of the forest was that this would enable him to accomplish the task for which he, in his primary form as Lord Vishnu, had come down to earth in the first place, and then had insisted to remain in the forest even at the cost of inflicting so much suffering to Bharat and the rest—which was to eliminate the 'demons'. These blood-thirsty, cruel and ferocious demons lived deep in the inhospitable parts of the wilderness that was beyond the reach of the population. It was from here that they carried out their activities with impunity. After carrying out their pillage and rampage, they would quickly retire there to hide themselves in this safe haven and escape. Even the gods and the mighty armies of great emperors were sore affright to enter this wilderness for fear of their own safety and life.

The few sages, hermits and ascetics who ventured there alone were killed by these demons, and even Lord Ram had come across a huge pile of their bones, whereupon being told of it by other sages who had survived, the Lord had made a solemn vow that he would free the earth of the scourge of the demons. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 9 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it.)

Now, even this wild part of the forest had two divisions: one was comparatively accessible and was habited by great sages, hermits and ascetics because it provided for their basic needs such as water, edibles and open spaces where they lived in groups for security purposes. This part of the forest was the one that Lord Ram entered after leaving Chitrakoot. It was here that the Lord met some of the

greatest spiritual seekers of the time (viz. sages Atri, Sarbhanga, Sutikshan, Agastya), and it was here he saw the huge heap of bones of those who were killed by the demons.

On the advice of sage Agastya, Lord Ram took up a temporary residence at a place called 'Pancha-vati'. It was at this place that his wife Sita was abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, setting the stage for the final decimation of the cruel demon race. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 14 that precedes Doha no. 13—to Doha no. 29.)

Coming to our part of the story as related in Geetawali, the report that reached Ayodhya was confined to the time when Lord Ram had moved out of Chitrakoot and entered that part of the forest where he had met great sages as cited herein above. This forest was on the southern side of the great mountain range called 'Vindhyaachal'. It marked the time the Lord had actually stepped on the southern half of the Indian peninsula on his onwards journey to the island nation of Lanka where the demon race had its ancient capital.

What happened thereafter, whither the Lord went from there and what was his fate—no one had any inkling. No one got wind that he lived at Panch-vati, or that Sita had been abducted. It is clear when the news bearers said Lord Ram had gone somewhere else from Chitrakoot, but they did naught aught whither. ("citrakūṭatēṁ rāma-laṣana-siya suniyata anata sidhā'ē.")

Obviously it is because that part of the forest where Lord Ram went after leaving Chitrakoot and crossing the outer fringes of the wilderness that surrounded Panch-vati and where he met the great sages such as Atri, Agastya etc., it was so terrifying and blood-curdling further ahead that no soul durst to investigate any more.]

They (i.e. those travelers and wayfarers who brought the news) said that they had seen the mountains, rivers, waterfalls, forests and hermitages of sages and hermits. [This was said to prove that the travelers had actually been to the place because their description matched the memory of the place which the citizens had brought back from Chitrakoot.]

All these things are pleasant to hear as well as soothing for the troubled minds and hearts of the citizens of Ayodhya[2] (2).

[[2]The news that the travelers brought offered a soothing balm to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Ayodhya who were burning in the fire of separation from their beloved Lord. They eagerly crowded around the arriving travelers and the messengers who spread the news within the city to hear whatever whit of news they could gather that pertains to Lord Ram and his welfare in the distant land of the forest the would in some way satisfy them and make them feel assured that the Lord is okay.]

At this news, some other citizens observed, 'The malevolent and malicious Creator who is opposed to us had earlier dashed our hopes (that Lord Ram would be anointed a King, and forced the Lord to forest exile), and not satisfied with that he has now increased our sorrows and despairs severely further by sending the pretty children (Ram, Laxman, Sita)—who are as tender, gentle and pleasant as the flowers of the Sesham tree—to a place that forced them to climb the lofty heights of the great mountains of the Vindhyaachal range (bindhya caṛhā'ē)[3]' (3).

[[3]The citizens lament that the malicious Creator is out to wreak vengeance on them and derives a sadistic pleasure from their sufferings. In order to make them feel more miserable and more distraught than they were already, he has decided to afflict

more suffering on Lord Ram and his tender wife Sita and his young brother Laxman by not allowing them peace of any sort by letting them stay in the pleasant environs of Chitrakoot, but forcing them to move ahead and beyond into the harsh environs of the Vindhyaachal mountains.]

Hearing these unpleasant words (which were full of bitterness, contrition and remorse) all the inhabitants of Ayodhya, men and women, became exceedingly agitated and uneasy; their sorrows and grief were beyond measure.

Tulsidas says that no matter how much one tried to console them and tried to reason with them, they were inconsolable and unconvinced. They were very remorseful due to being overcome by the pain and agonies of separation from Sri Ram (4).

(2 / 89)

सुनि मैं सखि ! मंगल चाह सुहाई।
सुभ पत्रिका निषादराजकी आजु भरत पहँ आई।। 1।।
कुँवर सो कुसल–छेम अलि ! तेहि पल कुलगुर कहँ पहुँचाई।
गुर कृपालु संभ्रम पुर घर घर सादर सबहि सुनाई।। 2।।
बधि बिराध, सुर–साधु सुखी करि, ऋषि–सिख–आसिष पाई।
कुंभजु–सिष्य समेत संग सिय, मुदित चले दोउ भाई।। 3।।
बीच बिंध्य रेवा सुपास थल बसे हैं परन–गृह छाई।
पंथ–कथा रघुनाथ पथिककी तुलसिदास सुनि गाई।। 4।।

(2/89)

suni maiṁ sakhi! maṅgala cāha suhā'ī.
subha patrikā niṣādarājakī āju bharata pahaṁ ā'ī.. 1..
kuṁvara sō kusala-chēma ali! tēhi pala kulagura kahaṁ pahuṁcā'ī.
gura kr̥pālu sambhrama pura ghara ghara sādara sabahi sunā'ī.. 2..
badhi birādha, sura-sādhu sukhī kari, r̥si-sikha-āsiṣa pā'ī.
kumbhaju-siṣya samēta saṅga siya, mudita calē dō'u bhā'ī.. 3..
bīca bindhya rēvā supāsa thala basē haiṁ parana-gr̥ha chā'ī.
pantha-kathā raghunātha pathikakī tulasidāsa suni gā'ī.. 4..

News of Lord Ram Reaches Ayodhya by Word of Mouth-II

Verse no. 2/89—[A woman of Ayodhya is excitedly telling her friend—] 'Oh Friend! I have heard auspicious good news. Today, an auspicious letter (containing happy tidings) has come to Bharat from the king of the boatman community by the name of Nishad (1).

Oh Friend! That letter containing news of the welfare and well-being of Lord Ram was sent by the prince (Bharat) immediately to his Guru (sage Vasistha), who, after reading it himself wished that everyone in the city should know its happy content. So

he called in the royal heralds and instructed them to go out and cheerfully declare its contents so that each household becomes aware of the joyous news[1] (2).

[[1]When the good news of the Lord's well-being arrived by means of a letter sent by Nishad, the Guru summoned royal heralds and asked them to go to the city and read it out at public places so that the citizens can learn about the Lord's welfare in the forest.]

(It is written in it that—) "Both the brothers (Sri Ram and Laxman), having slayed the demon Viradh, making the Gods and saintly people happy and delighted, and after having received the blessings, advice and (spiritual and moral) guidance from the sages residing in the forest, have gone further ahead to some other forest.

The brothers are accompanied by Sita as well as by sage Sutikshan who is a disciple of sage Agastya[2] (3).

[[2]Sutikshan has been allowed by the Lord to accompany him so that the former can show the Lord the path leading to the hermitage of sage Agastya.

The details of this part of the story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 12.]

At the present time, they are residing at a convenient place between Vindhyaachal and the river Rewa (Narmada) by erecting a cottage of leaves."

Tulsidas says that he has also sung this divine, glorious and purifying story of Lord Sri Ram disguised as a mendicant traveler as he has heard it and learnt about it from his own Guru and the Purans (ancient histories of the Hindus)[3] (4).

[[3]In all the earlier verses, right from the Lord's birth through all the events that led the Lord to reach Chitrakoot and stay there, Tulsidas' description of Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita has been written in the first person narrative as if Tulsidas was personally present on all these occasions. But now he has changed the mode of narration to the second and the third person narrative.

It indicates that mentally Tulsidas had accompanied Lord Ram ever since the Lord's birth, but has returned to Ayodhya with Bharat when the latter came back with the Lord's wooden sandals and had enthroned them on the seat of power at Ayodhya. By extension, this also establishes that Tulsidas' heart is where Lord Sri Ram's lotus-like holy feet are, and he has such great empathy for Bharat that like the latter he prefers to stay mentally at Ayodhya with Bharat and worship the symbol of Lord's holy presence in the form of his footwear (sandals).

In umpteen numbers of verses of Vinai-Patrika, Tulsidas has emphasized this point that more than Lord Ram himself, it is the Lord's holy feet and holy name which are of greater importance for him from the perspective of his spiritual welfare as well as the attainment of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of his soul. Devotion for the Lord, submission to him, yearning for him and his divine love, and remaining submerged in his thoughts is easier when one is away from the physical presence of the Lord rather than when one is near him. Bharat is an epitome of Bhakti—which is total devotion and surrender for the Lord. He is constantly chanting Sri Ram's holy name and worshipping his sandals—both activities which are also very dear to Tulsidas. So, the poet has decided to return to Ayodhya with Bharat, and to follow his example of devotion and worship rather than continue with the onward journey with Sri Ram.

Besides this, Tulsidas wished to put the record straight. He wanted to clear his stand: that whatever he has narrated in his classical books pertaining the story of Lord Ram is not that is a creation of his imagination, but as he has heard and learnt from his Guru and the ancient scriptures; only the words and the style are his. The last stanza of verse no. 2/89 of Geetawali is ample proof of it because Tulsidas clearly says narrates the story 'as he has heard and learnt about it from others' (pantha-kathā raghunātha pathikakī tulasidāsa suni gā'ī).]

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

अरण्यकाण्ड

भगवान्का वन–विहार

राग मलार

(3 / 1)

देखे राम पथिक नाचत मुदित मोर।
मानत मनहु सतड़ित ललित घन, धनु सुरधनु, गरजनि टँकोर।। 1।।
कँपे कलाप बर बरहि फिरावत, गावत कल कोकिल–किसोर।
जहँ जहँ प्रभु बिचरत, तहँ तहँ सुख, दंडकबन कौतुक न थोर।।2।।
सघन छाँह–तम रुचिर रजनि भ्रम, बदन–चंद चितवत चकोर।
तुलसी मुनि खग–मृगनि सराहत, भए हैं सुकृत सब इन्हकी ओर।।3।।

Araṇyakāṇḍa

ōṁ

śrī sītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

bhagavānkā vana-vihāra

rāga malāra

dēkhē rāma pathika nācata mudita mōra.
mānata manahu sataḍita lalita ghana, dhanu suradhanu, garajani ṭaṁkōra..
1..
kaṁpē kalāpa bara barahi phirāvata, gāvata kala kōkila-kisōra.
jahaṁ jahaṁ prabhu bicarata, tahaṁ tahaṁ sukha, daṇḍakabana kautuka na thōra..2..
saghana chāṁha-tama rucira rajani bhrama, badana-canda citavata cakōra.
tulasī muni khaga-mr̥gani sarāhata, bha'ē haiṁ sukr̥ta saba inhakī ōra..3..

ARANYA KAND

Lord Ram in the Dandak Forest-I

(The Jubilant Birds and Animals of the Forest)

Verse no. 3/1—[Before we move on with this narration, let's pause a bit and look at the background of this current chapter called 'Aranya Kand'.

The word 'Aranya' means 'the forest'. Till Lord Ram stayed in Chitrakoot, he was not far from the boundaries of the mighty kingdom of Ayodhya. After he left that place, he crossed over the mighty mountain range of the Vindhyaachal. Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/88, stanza no. 3. The other side of this mountain had thick forests, and the mountain itself acted as a natural boundary between the northern planes and the kingdom of Ayodhya and the rest of the Indian peninsula stretching right upto its southern tip opposite the island of Lanka.

The forest path that Lord Ram took down the southern half of India, below Vindhyaachal to the tip of the Indian peninsula in the south, was divided, for the purposes of the narration of the story of the Ramayan, into two parts: the first part of this journey is narrated under the head 'Aranaya Kand', and the second half under 'Kishkindha Kand'. The reason is that Kishkindha was another great kingdom ruled by the monkey race, and it appeared beyond that extensive part of the forest which extended from down below the Vindhyaachal mountains, and was extremely dangerous to navigate because it was very dense and infested by ogres and blood-thirsty demons.

In these forests of the 'Aranya', great sages, hermits and ascetics who wished to snap all ties with the world lived in complete seclusion and peace. Its location helped because on the north was the great natural wall of the Vindhyaachal mountains, and in the south of the areas where they had established their small hermitages was that most severe part of the forest known as 'Dandak'—i.e. where only thorny and life-less trees grew that were like a 'Danda' or stick, and was inhospitable for human and animal life to the extreme. It was here that the demons lived, it was their habitat and breeding ground, and it was from here that they launched their attacks, rampaged and pillaged and killed and pummeled the inhabited parts of the peninsula, returning after each sortie and partaking of whatever meat they could grab and bring back.

So, after leaving Chitrakoot, as Lord Ram wended his way south, he entered the first half of the southern part of the land, into the area called 'Aranya', where great sages, hermits and ascetics lived. We shall read that further on his journey he entered the second half of this Aranya, into that part called 'Dandak'.

In Aranya Kand, Lord Ram meets great sages, hermits and ascetics who lived there, the notable amongst them being Atri, Sarbhanga, Sutikshan and Agastya. Here, on the advice of sage Agastya, the Lord tarried for sometime in a place called 'Panch-vati', i.e. a place with 'five banyan trees' that gave a lot of shelter to him. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes Doha no. 13.)

It was here that his wife Sita was abducted by Ravana. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 29 ka.)

Moving on from Panch-vati, the Lord met one of his greatest devotee of all times, an old tribal woman by the name of 'Sabri'. The Lord preached her the nine-fold path of Bhakti (devotion) that became a landmark pronouncement on this spiritual theme, before providing her final liberation and deliverance of her soul. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.)

Though it is not mentioned in Geetawali, but it is during his passage through this part of the forest that the Lord, on various occasions and for different reasons, had provided liberation and deliverance to the demons Viraadha, Kabandha, Khar and Dushan, Marich. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) Viraadha = Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 7; (ii) Khar and Dushan = from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 21; (iii) Marich = Chaupai line nos. 1-17 that precede Doha no. 27; (iv) Kabandha = from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 33—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 34.)

During this time Lord Ram had also given salvation and deliverance to the vulture Jatau who had laid down his life to try to save Sita while she was being kidnapped by Ravana. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line nos. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.)

Finally, before exiting this part of the forest and entering the kingdom of Kishkindha, about which we shall read in the next chapter, Lord Ram was offered obeisance by the great celestial sage Narad, to whom the Lord emphasised the principle that he always keeps the interests of his devotees in view while making any decision. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 5 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 46.)

Now, coming back to our narration of the story as it appears in Geetawali, verse no. 3/1 describes how the animals and birds of the forest felt jubilant and ecstatic when they found Lord Ram in their midst.]

The peacocks dance in jubilation on seeing Lord Sri Ram as a pedestrian traveler (rāma pathika). They think Lord Sri Ram (being dark complexioned) is the beautiful 'rain-bearing cloud that is accompanied by lightening' (represented by Sita), while the Lord's bow is regarded by these birds as the 'rain-bow', and its twang as the 'rumbling of the clouds'[1] (1).

[[1]The peacock is naturally attracted to the cloud that brings rain. This cloud is dark with lightening streaking through it, and it rumbles and thunders as it progresses across the sky. The beautiful rain bow is also etched in the sky against its background.

When the peacock sights such a cloud and hears its rumble, it begins to dance in joy. In this imagery, Lord Ram is like the cloud; Sita walking by his side is the lightening; the Lord's bow held against his body is the rain-bow against the dark background of the cloud; and the many occasions when Lord Ram twangs the string of his bow to scare away wild animals the sound is interpreted by the peacock as the rumbling of the cloud.]

Beautiful peacocks shake their hind feathers and open their plumes even as they dance and sing in ecstasy in a well-bred manner, with a voice that appears to be well-tuned and melodious like that of an expert cuckoo.

Wherever the Lord goes, there is an abundance of joy, happiness, delight and ecstasy all around. As a result, there is no dearth of marvels and mysteries of Nature unfolding themselves in their best of charms and variations of forms everywhere in the Dandak forest through which Lord Ram wended his way (2).

[To highlight how wonderful the sight of Lord Ram walking through the dark and dense realm of the wilderness is, Tulsidas sights a marvelous instance as follows:--]

In the dark shadow caused by a thick canopy of trees (where the sunlight cannot penetrate), there is an illusion of night. When the bird known as Chakor (Indian red-legged partridge) sees Lord Ram's beautiful moon-like face it thinks that it is the physical moon one sees in the night sky. Hence, as is its natural habit and wont, the bird starts gazing at the Lord's beauteous face as he moves along the forest path[2].

Tulsidas says that the hermits and sages (residing in that forest) are all praises for the animals and birds there, saying that all the rewards or effects of good deeds, and their accompanying auspiciousness are in their favour[3] (3).

[[2]The Chakor is so enamoured of the Moon that as soon as it rises in the eastern sky, the bird fixes its gaze upon it. Then, as the Moon traverses across the sky, the bird follows its path by tilting its head and moving it slowly so its eyes can follow the path of the Moon.

In the darkness of the dense forest, when Lord Ram appeared on one end of its many paths winding through its thick woods, carefully picking his way through undergrowth, tackling thick creepers and wild trees as he slowly wended his way through to the other end, the Chakor birds who lived in those forests thought that the Moon has risen—so shining and radiant was the face of Lord Ram!

[3]Lord Sri Ram is the divine Supreme Being, the 'Brahm', in a human form. The shine and radiance on Lord Ram's face is due to this singular reason—that he was not an ordinary mortal like other humans are, but an incarnate Supreme Being.

The animals and birds however do not have the wisdom and intellect to realise and recognise this fact. But nevertheless, the Lord's sheer physical appearance was so electrifying that it held every living soul within reach in its thrall, leaving them mesmerized and enchanted beyond measure. Whether they be men or women, sages or householders, birds or animals—albeit the effect was the same; and it was just like the case of the sun when it shines in the sky, for its light equally shines upon all, and illuminates the entire world.

To wit, the two birds cited in this verse, i.e. the 'peacock' and the 'Chakor', are representatives of all the wild life that thoroughly enjoyed and warmly welcomed

Lord Ram in that forest. They were all filled with euphoria, exhilaration and ecstasy, and had the best time of their lives.]

राग कल्याण

(3/2)

सुभग सरासन सायक जोरे।
खेलत राम फिरत मृगया बन, बसति सो मृदु मूरति मन मोरे।। 1।।
पीत बसन कटि, चारु चारि सर, चलत कोटि नट सो तृन तोरे।
स्यामल तनु स्रम–कन राजत, ज्यों नव घन सुधा–सरोवर खोरे।।2।।
ललित कंध, बर भुज, बिसाल उर, लेहिं कंठ–रेखैं चित चोरे।
अवलोकत मुख देत परम सुख, लेत सरद–ससिकी छबि छोरे।। 3।।
जटा मुकुट सिर, सारस–नयननि गौहैं तकत सुभौंह सकोरे।
सोभा अमित समाति न कानन, उमगि चली चहुँ दिसि मिति फोरे।।4।।
चितवत चकित कुरंग–कुरंगिनि, सब भए मगन मदनके भोरे।
तुलसिदास प्रभु बान न मोचत, सहज सुभाय प्रेमबस थोरे।। 5।।

rāga kalyāṇa

(3/2)

subhaga sarāsana sāyaka jōrē.
khēlata rāma phirata mr̥gayā bana, basati sō mr̥du mūrati mana mōrē.. 1..
pīta basana kaṭi, cāru cāri sara, calata kōṭi naṭa sō tr̥na tōrē.
syāmala tanu srama-kana rājata, jyōṁ nava ghana sudhā-sarōvara khōrē..2..
lalita kandha, bara bhuja, bisāla ura, lēhiṁ kaṇṭha-rēkhaiṁ cita cōrē.
avalōkata mukha dēta parama sukha, lēta sarada-sasikī chabi chōrē.. 3..
jaṭā mukuṭa sira, sārasa-nayanani gauhaiṁ takata subhaunha sakōrē.
sōbhā amita samāti na kānana, umagi calī cahum̐ disi miti phōrē..4..
citavata cakita kuraṅga-kuraṅgini, saba bha'ē magana madanakē bhōrē.
tulasidāsa prabhu bāna na mōcata, sahaja subhāya prēmabasa thōrē.. 5..

Lord Ram in the Dandak Forest-II

(Lord Ram's magnificent Beauty)

Verse no. 3/2—Lord Sri Ram, with a stringed bow and a mounted arrow, is moving around in the forest to play the game of 'hunting' (khēlata rāma phirata mr̥gayā bana).

That charming, lovely and most pleasant image of the Lord resides in my (Tulsidas') heart (1).

He has a Pitambar (a cloth made of yellow colour silk that is used to cover the body) and four arrows tucked around his waist (in a quiver).

Seeing him walk majestically, crores of (i.e. numerous) dancers ("nața") become so enthralled and enchanted by the sight that they break grass blades or reeds (as a charm to cast-off evil spirits and ensure that they do not cause any harm upon the Lord).

Sweat drops that appear on the Lord's dark complexioned body look so magnificent as if a newly formed rain-bearing dark cloud has just emerged after dipping itself in a lake of Amrit (elixir of eternal life)[1] (2).

[[1]Here, Lord Ram's dark body is likened to the rain cloud, and the sweat drops on his body to the drops of Amrit that would stick on the body of a person who has just taken a dip in a pond of Amrit. To wit, these sweat drops glisten against the dark complexion of Lord Ram's radiant body.]

The Lord's shoulders are very attractive, his arms are as enchanting, his chest is large and broad, and the folds of skin (linings, creases) on the neck appear to steal (captivate, charm, enchant) one's mind and intellect.

His beautiful face gives immense pleasure and delight to the beholder; it seems to steal or defeat or put to shame the beauteous image of the full moon during the night of winter[2] (3).

[[2]The poets regard the disc of the full moon during the nights of winter as epitomes of beauty, and the best form of the moon throughout the year.

Here in this stanza it is meant that Lord Ram's face was so bewitching and beautiful that the glamour, magnificence, and beauty of this moon was no match for the Lord's face.]

There is a crown of matted hairs on the Lord's head, and at the time when he creases (draws) his eyebrows and concentrates (focuses) his eyes on the target, the beauty and magnificence of this sight is so great that if the whole forest were to be converted into a container it would not be able to contain it[3]. It seems to overflow its limits (boundaries) and flow (spread) in all the directions (4).

[[3]The forest represents a vast and pristine reservoir of the beauty of Nature. Tulsidas means, just for comparison purposes, that Sri Ram looks more beauteous and charming than all the natural beauty and majesty of Nature put together.]

The deer of both the sexes (or all the animals, whether male or female) become stunned (at Lord Sri Ram's stupendous beauty), and they begin to gaze transfixed in his direction as if all of them have thought that Lord Ram was none other than Kamdeo/cupid[4] in a personified form. This made all of them absolutely enchanted, infatuated, enthralled, captivated, and fascinated by the wondrous sight of Lord Ram amongst their midst.

Tulsidas says that—contrary to what one expects—Lord Ram does not shoot an arrow (though he has gone to 'hunt') because he is naturally overwhelmed (i.e. overpowered, overcome, controlled or easily won over) by even a little amount of love and affection for him (so the Lord could not muster courage to shoot these poor animals who stood still to watch him intently or even came of their hiding places to crowd around him out of their sheer affection for the Lord)[5] (5).

[[4]Kamdeo/cupid is the patron god of beauty and all things charming in this world. So these animals thought that he has come to the forest in the guise of Lord Ram.

[5]These animals are in complete enthral of the Lord. Since Lord Sri Ram is very merciful, compassionate and kind-hearted by nature and temperament, he just can't gather enough courage to kill these innocent animals though he had gone out to hunt!

By this single stanza, Tulsidas has stood himself a strong advocate for his beloved Lord Sri Ram. It is generally held that Lord Sri Ram 'hunted' animals as this was a favourite sport of princes. But does it mean that he 'killed' those animals? No, Lord Ram didn't kill innocent and harmless animals; he only pursued them for amusement, for some exercise and fun. Of course there were exceptions: all the animals weren't innocent and harmless souls; some were sinful and preyed upon other humbler animals for their food or out of their natural habit of killing other creatures. Such cruel and blood-thirsty animals were no different than the demons whom Lord Ram had vowed to eliminate. Hence, the few animals who were actually shot by the Lord fell under the second category.

Further, Lord Ram also slayed demons who had disguised themselves as animals to deceive others, and one such example is that of Marich about whom we shall read in verse nos. 3/3-3/6 herein below.]

मारीच–वध
राग सोरठ

(3/3)

बैठे हैं राम–लषन अरु सीता।
पंचबटी बर परनकुटी तर, कहैं कछु कथा पुनीता।। 1।।
कपट–कुरंग कनकमनिमय लखि प्रियसों कहति हँसि बाला।
पाए पालिबे जोग मंजु मृग, मारेहु मंजुल छाला।। 2।।
प्रिया–बचन सुनि बिहँसि प्रेमबस गवहिं चाप–सर लीन्हें।
चल्यो भाजि, फिरि फिरि चितवत मुनिमख–रखवारे चीन्हें।। 3।।
सोहति मधुर मनोहर मूरति हेम–हरिनके पाछे।
धावनि, नवनि, बिलोकनि, बिथकनि बसै तुलसी उर आछे।। 4।।

mārīca-vadha

rāga sōraṭha

(3/3)

baiṭhē haiṁ rāma-laṣana aru sītā.
pan̄cabaṭī bara paranakuṭī tara, kahaiṁ kachu kathā punītā.. 1..
kapaṭa-kuraṅga kanakamanimaya lakhi priyasōṁ kahati ham̐si bālā.
pā'ē pālibē jōga man̄ju mr̥ga, mārēhu man̄jula chālā.. 2..
priyā-bacana suni biham̐si prēmabasa gavahiṁ cāpa-sara līnhēṁ.
calyō bhāji, phiri phiri citavata munimakha-rakhavārē cīnhēṁ.. 3..
sōhati madhura manōhara mūrati hēma-harinakē pāchē.

dhāvani, navani, bilōkani, bithakani basai tulasī ura āchē.. 4..

The slaying of the Demon Marich-I

Verse no. 3/3—[Marich was one of the demons who had gone to disturb the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra which Lord Ram and Laxman had stood to guard. He was accompanied by another demon named Subahu, and they led a huge army of demons to attack the fire sacrifice. In the battle that ensued, Subahu was burnt to death while Marich was hit by the head-less shaft of Lord Ram's arrow which spared his life but flung him 700 Yojans (1 Yojan = appx. 8 or 16 miles depending upon different measuring scales) away to an island in the middle of the ocean where he lived hidden in utter affright of the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 210.

Now it so happened that when Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman entered the deep realms of the wild forest, beyond the mountains of Vindhyaachal, they decided to tarry a while and take shelter in Panch-vati, a pleasant place surrounded by five huge banyan trees on the banks of river Godavari, to abide there for some time ere moving ahead on their wanderings in the forest. This place was the play-ground of demons and demonesses. One such female demon was Supernakha, a sister of Ravana, the king of the demon race. She was extremely lascivious and pervert as was the wont of her ilk. When she descried the handsome and well-built beauteous and charming form of Lord Ram, she was overcome with passion and wished to marry the Lord. She disguised herself as a beautiful maiden and approached Lord Ram with this absurd proposal. Obviously the Lord rejected her overtures. She became furious and lunged at Sita to kill her. Then Lord Ram signalled Laxman to snip-off her nose and ears as punishment. Bleeding and aghast, she rushed to her cousin brothers named Khar, Dushan and Tisira, asking them to take revenge. Peeved beyond measure and felt challenged, they attacked Lord Ram with a fierce army. Howbeit, they were all decimated in the battle that ensued. Stunned and flabbergasted, Supernakha rushed to Ravana to inform him of all the developments. She made a strong case for Ravana to intervene and take up arms for her, as the person who could do this to her and kill her invincible cousins surely posed a grave danger to Ravana himself. So, after due thought and council, Ravana devised a device to settle scores with Lord Ram, and to implement his plans he went to Marich and forced him, under the threat of death should he refuse to do as was told, because Marich was very reluctant to confront Lord Ram, to disguise himself as a deer with a golden hide and play around the hermitage of Lord Ram.

By and by, as was decreed by Destiny and was the fiat of Fate which only helped Lord Ram to carry out his pre-planned strategy, Sita asked the Lord to fetch the deer as she wanted to keep it as a pet to play with in the hermitage. Hereat, Lord Ram went behind Marich who was now disguised as a golden deer. Marich ran far away from the hermitage when the Lord finally shot him as he refused to be trapped. While dying, Marich lent out a shrill cry, shouting the name of Laxman at the top of his voice. When Sita heard it she felt Lord Ram was in danger and needed Laxman's help. So she forced Laxman to go to the aid of his brother, and was thus left alone in the hermitage.

Meanwhile, Ravana lay in wait for this precise moment. He came to Sita disguised as a mendicant, begging for alms. When she came out to offer something to him, he caught hold of her, and forcing her on his chariot, he took her to his capital city of Lanka and held her captive.

This entire episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Doha no. 29 ka.

However, Marich-specific narration appears in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 23—to Doha no. 27.

In Geetawali however, we come straight to the narration of the incident of the slaying of Marich, in verse nos. 3/3—3/6 herein below.]

Lord Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman are sitting inside the beautiful thatched hut in the Panchvati forest (1).

At the moment when Sita saw the deceitful deer with a golden hide that was studded with priceless gems, its skin glistening with the hue of gold, she said to her husband (Lord Ram), 'If you can trap and bring this deer alive, it is worth keeping; and even if it is killed, its hide is very beautiful (and we can use it as a seating mat).'[1] (2)

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 27.]

Hearing the words of his beloved, Lord Ram lifted the bow and arrow. Seeing Lord Ram pursuing it, the deer ran away, but constantly kept glancing back (because) he could recognise Lord Ram who had protected sage Vishwamitra's sacrifice (and had thrown Marich far onto the island in the middle of the ocean with one shot of his headless arrow) (3).

The image of Lord Ram running behind a golden deer is very attractive and indescribably beautiful. The Lord's running, bending, taking aim, getting tired and resting a while, and then resuming his run to pursue the golden deer—Tulsidas says that he has permanently etched this enchanting scene in his heart[2] (4).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10-13 that precede Doha no. 27.]

राग कल्याण

(3/4)

कर सर–धनु, कटि रुचिर निषंग।
प्रिया–प्रीति–प्रेरित बन–बीथिन्ह बिचरत कपट–कनक–मृग संग।। 1।।
भुज बिसाल, कमनीय कंध–उर, स्रम–सीकर सोहैं साँवरे अंग।
मनु मुकुता मनि मरकत गिरिपर लसत ललित रबि–किरनि प्रसंग।।2।।
नलिन नयन, सिर जटा–मुकुट, बिच सुमन–माल मनु सिव–सिर गंग।
तुलसिदास ऐसी मूरति की बलि, छबि बिलोकि लाजैं अमित अनंग।।3।।

rāga kalyāṇa

(3/4)

kara sara-dhanu, kaṭi rucira niṣaṅga.
priyā-prīti-prērita bana-bīthinha bicarata kapaṭa-kanaka-mr̥ga saṅga.. 1..
bhuja bisāla, kamanīya kandha-ura, srama-sīkara sōhaiṁ sāmv̐varē aṅga.
manu mukutā mani marakata giripara lasata lalita rabi-kirani prasaṅga..2..
nalina nayana, sira jaṭā-mukuṭa, bica sumana-māla manu siva-sira gaṅga.
tulasidāsa aisī mūrati kī bali, chabi bilōki lājaiṁ amita anaṅga..3..

The slaying of Demon Marich-II

Verse no. 3/4—Lord Ram has a bow and arrow in his hands, and an attractive quiver tied to his waist.

Inspired by his beloved's love (or, being unable to deny her, his beloved wife Sita, what she so longingly desired), he is moving around the forest paths behind the decoy, evasive golden deer (1).

His arms are long and muscular; his shoulders and chest are pretty to behold. The sweat drops that adorn his dark complexioned body look as magnificent as pearls that embellish a mountain of Markat-mani (i.e. a mountain of emerald) when the sunlight falls upon them[1] (2).

[[1]Here, the dark-complexioned body of Lord Ram is like the mountain of emerald, and the sweat drops are like the pearls that decorate its sides. Both the sweat drops as well as the pearls dazzle and shine with a twinkle when the sunlight falls upon them, while the body of the Lord glistens in the sunlight even as the smooth sides of the mountain of emerald does when the sunlight is reflected from its surface.]

The Lord's eyes are like lotuses; the head has a crown of matted hairs with a garland of flowers tucked in its folds resembling the holy river Ganges on the head of Lord Shiva. [The garland is made of white flowers, resembling the frothy and milky waters of the river.]

Tulsidas says that he has sacrificed himself on this majestic and extremely enchanting sight of the Lord (i.e. he is in thrall and totally spellbound by this astounding vision of Lord Ram) which puts to shame the image of even countless Kamdeo-cupids taken together. [To wit, a thousand Kamdeos, who is the patron god of beauty and charm, would be no match for this wonderful image of Lord Ram.] (3).

राग केदारा

(3/5)

राघव, भावति मोहि बिपिनकी बीथिन्ह धावनि।
अरुन–कंज–बरन–चरन सोकहरन, अंकुस–कुलिस–

केतु–अंकित अवनि।। 1।।
सुंदर स्यामल अंग, बसन पीत सुरंग, कटि निषंग
परिकर मेरवनि।
कनक–कुरंग संग, साजे कर सर–चाप, राजिवनयन
इत उत चितवनि।। 2।।
सोहत सिर कुमुट जटा–पटल–निकर, सुमन लता
सहित रची बनवनि।
तैसेई स्रम–सीकर रुचिर राजत मुख, तैसिए ललित
भ्रकुटिन्हकी नवनि।। 3।।
देखत खग–निकर, मृग रवनिन्हजुत थकित बिसारि
जहाँ–तहाँकी भँवनि।
हरि–दरसन–फल पयो है ग्यान बिमल, जाँचत भगति
मुनि चाहत जवनि।। 4।।
जिन्हके मन मगन भए हैं रस सगुन, तिन्हके लेखे
अगुन–मुकुति कवनि।
श्रवन–सुख करनि, भवसरिता–तरनि, गावत तुलसिदास
कीरति पवनि।। 5।।

rāga kēdārā

(3/5)

rāghava, bhāvati mōhi bipinakī bīthinha dhāvani.
aruna-kaṅja-barana-carana sōkaharana, aṅkusa-kulisa-kētu-aṅkita avani.. 1..
sundara syāmala aṅga, basana pīta suraṅga, kaṭi niṣaṅgaparikara mēravani.
kanaka-kuraṅga saṅga, sājē kara sara-cāpa, rājivanayana ita uta citavani.. 2..
sōhata sira kumuṭa jaṭā-paṭala-nikara, sumana latā sahita racī banavani.
taisē'ī srama-sīkara rucira rājata mukha, taisi'ē lalita bhrakuṭinhakī navani.. 3..
dēkhata khaga-nikara, mrga ravaninhajuta thakita bisāri jahāṁ-tahāṁkī bhaṁvani.
hari-darasana-phala payō hai gyāna bimala, jāṁcata bhagati muni cāhata javani.. 4..
jinhakē mana magana bha'ē haiṁ rasa saguna, tinhakē lēkhē aguna-mukuti kavani.
śravana-sukha karani, bhavasaritā-tarani, gāvata tulasidāsa kīrati pavani.. 5..

The slaying of Demon Marich-III

Verse no. 3/5—[Tulsidas addresses Sri Ram and says—] 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Forsooth I very much like (or am enchanted by the vision of) your running on the unpaved, rough ground of the forest (bipinakī bīthinha dhāvani), as a result of which the earth of that place is getting marked by the footprints of your holy feet which have the colour of red lotus, are the eliminator of sorrows, tribulations and agonies, and have the three auspicious sign of the Ankush (the goad), the Vajra (thunderbolt) and the Dwhaja (divine standard or flag of Vishnu) etc. marked on their soles[1] (1).

[[1]Lord Vishnu has these three signs on the sole of his feet. The 'standard' or the flag of Vishnu symbolizes his determination to uphold the law of Dharma, i.e. the principles of righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility in thought and conduct.

Tulsidas hereby stresses that he is taking so much interest in the narration of the story of Lord Ram not because the Lord was some great prince and Tulsidas is some bard trying to please his followers and gain acclaim as a great narrator of history, but because the Lord was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, and Tulsidas has used this means of narration to remember the Lord, focus his mind on the Lord, and thereby purify himself and his inner-being, fill his heart with devotion and love for the Lord, whereat his entire being feels ecstatic and his life fulfilled, and that he has found it the best way to attain bliss and beatitude that suits him because he is unable to follow the rigours of meditation and other means of spiritual peace.]

I (Tulsidas) am enchanted by the most charming image of the Lord wearing a yellow silk cloth called the 'Pitambar' around his most beautiful dark complexioned body, the quiver and waist-cloth that are tied around the Lord's waist, his pursuing (running behind) the golden deer with a bow and arrow in hand, and his glancing quickly here and there with alert eyes (2).

Besides this, the crown of matted hairs on the Lord's head, with flowers and creepers tucked here and there in it, look extremely magnificent. Similarly, sweat drops adorn and look magnificent on the Lord's beauteous face, while the curvature of his two eyebrows are no less marvelous to behold (3).

At that time, the flock of birds and animals, both male and female, who come out to watch the Lord, become benumbed and stunned into immobility due to the awe they find themselves in when they observe the extremely enchanting, the spellbinding, the stunning and captivating beauty of Lord Ram's sight as he runs behind the golden deer.

By their good fortune they have already got (even without asking) the fruit of pure, pristine Gyan (realization of the Truth) that comes naturally as a result of having Darshan (divine, holy viewing) of the Lord[2]. Now, as they stand still gazing at Lord Ram they appear to beg and plead with the Lord for blessing them with having selfless devotion and affection for him which is much sought after by even the sages and hermits[3] (4).

[[2]This refers to the ultimate bliss that an aspirant achieves when he realizes the Truth of the Self. These poor creatures didn't have the benefit of doing great religious practices to achieve it. But when they saw Lord Ram, the intensity of blessedness they experienced was the same that is attained by becoming self-realised. Since Lord Ram is a manifestation of the Supreme Self, the 'Parmatma', his sight was equivalent to viewing the true Self in a visible form.

[3]Albeit that was alright, but it was a temporary period of feeling blessed, for soon the Lord would go far away and these animals and birds would lose sight of the Lord. Likewise, it is a very difficult to retain the spiritual gains made by realization of the Self, called the path of 'Gyan', so much so even great sages and hermits come to the conclusion that it is far easier and better to follow the path of Bhakti for the Lord, i.e. the path of devotion and love. This latter path is smooth, without any cumbersome procedures, and easy to follow, and more importantly, its gains can be maintained

easily for long durations. It gives eternal blessedness more easily and sustainably as compared to the path of Gyan.

So, in this imagery, Tulsidas envisages that the way these birds and animals stand transfixed gazing at Lord Ram, it appears to him that they are pleading with the Lord to bless them with Bhakti so that even after the few moments when the Lord would have gone beyond their field of vision they could still remember the Lord for all times in their lives and derive the same sense of bliss that they are getting in the present moment.]

[Lauding the glorious virtues of Bhakti as opposed to dry and abstract philosophy of obtaining Mukti, or blessedness, by pursuing the path of Gyan, Tulsidas makes the following observation—] Those whose mind and intellect are submerged in the succulent juice-like vision of the image of the manifest form of the Lord (which in this case is the form of Lord Ram), what values (or importance, significance) do the virtues of an abstract form of salvation and emancipation have for them?

That is why, to wit, Tulsidas sings the glories and fame of Lord Ram (as a means for attaining his own blessedness, bliss and beatitude) that are holy and divine, are pleasant to the ears, and can help one cross the river symbolized by this deluding and mundane world (5).

[Note–Stanza nos. 4 and 5 lay emphasis on 'Saguna' form of devotion for the Lord as opposed to the 'Nirguna' form. The former represents the formed, physically verifiable, visible and known form of the Lord God that has attributes. The latter would be the opposite of it: i.e. it would be to worship the Lord in his macrocosmic form, a form that is invisible, attributeless, all-pervading, omnipresent.

Even as the presence of the lamp will automatically eliminate darkness, so does the presence of the Lord remove the darkness of ignorance, and in the absence of ignorance, wisdom shines through. It is like removing the dark soot or rust from the surface of a vessel to bring out the shine of brass from underneath it.

It is far more practical and better to have the lamp burning right in front and get illumination from it (Saguna) than to use a mirror to reflect the sun that is far away to get its light for the purpose of getting the same illumination (Nirguna)!

This is what Tulsidas alludes to in stanza no. 4. He has used the metaphor of birds and animals to highlight his philosophy of Bhakti vis-à-vis Gyan.]

राग सोरठ

(3/6)

रघुबर दूरि जाइ मृग मार्‌यो।
लषन पुकारि, राम हरुए कहि, मरतहु बैर सँभार्‌यो।। 1।।
सुनहु तात ! कोउ तुम्हहि पुकारत प्राननाथकी नाईं।
कह्यो लषन, हत्या हरिन, कोपि सिय हठि पठयो बरिआई।। 2।।
बंधु बिलोकि कहत तुलसी प्रभु 'भाई ! भली न कीन्हीं।
मेरे जान जानकी काहू खल छल करि हरि लीन्हीं।। 3।।

rāga sōraṭha

raghubara dūri jā'i mṛga māryō.
laṣana pukāri, rāma haru'ē kahi, maratahu baira saṁbhāryō.. 1..
sunahu tāta! kō'u tumhahi pukārata prānanāthakī nā'īṁ.
kahyō laṣana, hatyā harina, kōpi siya haṭhi paṭhayō bari'ā'ī.. 2..
bandhu bilōki kahata tulasī prabhu 'bhā'ī! bhalī na kīnhīṁ.
mērē jāna jānakī kāhū khala chala kari hari līnhīṁ.. 3..

The slaying of Demon Marich-IV

Verse no. 3/6—[Lord Ram went far away pursuing the golden deer, far enough to give Ravana the chance and the freedom to abduct Sita comfortably. As has been noted above, it was a part of the greater scheme of the Lord, and he wished to make sure that this opportunity was not lost. He did not wish to make Ravana doubt whether he would be able to abduct Sita successfully or not. So he went as far away as was reasonable. Then he shot the deer, who was actually the demon Marich in disguise. The demon cried out aloud the name of Laxman and then the holy name of the Lord softly before he died. His utterance of Lord Ram's name at the final moment of his life ensured his emancipation and deliverance.

Meanwhile, when Sita heard Laxman's name being called out, she thought that the Lord was in trouble. So she persuaded Laxman to go forthwith to the aid of the Lord. This was the opportunity the wicked Ravana was waiting for. He disguised himself as a hermit and came to the hermitage from his hiding place to ask Sita for food. As soon as she came close, he caught hold of her and fled.

The Lord was on his way back after killing the deer, and so when he saw Laxman coming towards him, he knew at once that things have gone wrong, that Sita is not safe.

See introductory note to Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/3 herein above. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 27 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-17 that precede it.]

Lord Ram went very far away before killing the deer. The deer cried aloud 'Oh Laxman', and then softly uttered 'Oh Ram' before dying.

In this way, even while dying, he remembered his old enmity, and at the same time he ensured his salvation[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10-17 that precede Doha no. 27.

By calling out for Laxman, Marich made it appear that Lord Ram was in danger so that Laxman leaves Sita alone and rushes to help Lord Ram. This will give Ravana an opportunity to kidnap her. This will also help Marich settle squares with Ram who had shot and flung him earlier when Marich had gone to defile sage Vishwamitra fire sacrifice. By saying 'Ram' as he collapsed dying, Marich had also pronounced the Lord's holy name which is at once a provider of emancipation and salvation. The Lord's holy name liberates and delivers the soul from the cycle of transmigration and gives it permanent rest. So we see how clever Marich was—he has kept his word to Ravana that he would help him to steal Sita, he has settled his old enmity with Ram, and to cap it all he had even ensured his own Mukti, i.e. his own

emancipation and deliverance simultaneously by uttering the Lord's divine name 'Ram' while dying. Definitely it is very clever of him!]

On hearing someone call out Laxman's name, Sita said to him, 'Laxman, someone is calling you in the same manner as Lord Ram would. [So, it appears that the Lord needs you. Hence, you must go immediately.]'

Laxman attempted to assure her that there is nothing to worry about, for it is the deer that has been certainly killed.

At this, Sita became angry and forcefully sent Laxman away (2).[2]

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 28.]

Seeing Laxman coming towards him, Tulsidas' Lord Sri Ram said, 'Brother, you have not done good. In my view (i.e. I have an intuitive feeling that) some scoundrel has used deceit to abduct Sita.[3]' (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 30.]

सीता–हरण

(3 / 7)

आरत बचन कहति बैदेही।
बिलपति भूरि बिसूरि 'दूरि गए मृग सँग परम सनेही'।। 1।।
कहे कटु बचन, रेख नाँघी मैं, तात छमा सो कीजै।
देखि बधिक–बस राजमरालिनि, लषन लाल ! छिनि लीजै।। 2।।
बनदेवनि सिय कहन कहति यों, छल करि नीच हरी हौं।
गोमर–कर सुरधेनु, नाथ ! ज्यौं त्यौं परहाथ परी हौं।। 3।।
तुलसिदास रघुनाथ–नाम–धुनि अकनि गीध धुकि धायो।
'पुत्रि पुत्रि! जनि डरहि, न जैहै नीचु, मीचु हौं आयो'।। 4।।

sītā-haraṇa

(3/7)

ārata bacana kahati baidēhī.
bilapati bhūri bisūri 'dūri ga'ē mr̥ga sam̐ga parama sanēhī'.. 1..
kahē kaṭu bacana, rēkha nām̐ghī maiṁ, tāta chamā sō kījai.
dēkhi badhika-basa rājamarālini, laṣana lāla! chini līजai.. 2..
banadēvani siya kahana kahati yōṁ, chala kari nīca harī hauṁ.
gōmara-kara suradhēnu, nātha! jyauṁ tyauṁ parahātha parī hauṁ.. 3..
tulasidāsa raghunātha-nāma-dhuni akani gīdha dhuki dhāyō.
'putri putri! jani ḍarahi, na jaihai nīcu, mīcu hauṁ āyō'.. 4..

Verse no. 3/7— [Now it so happened that when Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman entered the deeper parts of the wild forest, beyond the mountains of Vindhyaachal, they decided to tarry a while and take shelter in Panch-vati, a pleasant place surrounded by five huge banyan trees on the banks of river Godavari, to abide there for some time ere moving ahead on their wanderings in the forest. This place was the play-ground of demons and demonesses. One such female demon was Supernakha, a sister of Ravana, the king of the demon race. She was extremely lascivious and pervert as was the wont of her ilk. When she descried the handsome and well-built beauteous and charming form of Lord Ram, she was overcome with passion and wished to marry the Lord. She disguised herself as a beautiful maiden and approached Lord Ram with this absurd proposal. Obviously the Lord rejected her overtures. She became furious and lunged at Sita to kill her. Then Lord Ram signalled Laxman to snip-off her nose and ears as punishment. Bleeding and aghast, she rushed to her cousin brothers named Khar, Dushan and Tisira, asking them to take revenge. Peeved beyond measure and felt challenged, they attacked Lord Ram with a fierce army. Howbeit, they were all decimated in the battle that ensued. Stunned and flabbergasted, Supernakha rushed to Ravana to inform him of all the developments. She made a strong case for Ravana to intervene and take up arms for her, as the person who could do this to her and kill her invincible cousins surely posed a grave danger to Ravana himself. So, after due thought and council, Ravana devised a device to settle scores with Lord Ram, and to implement his plans he went to Marich and forced him, under the threat of death should he refuse to do as was told, because Marich was very reluctant to confront Lord Ram, to disguise himself as a deer with a golden hide and play around the hermitage of Lord Ram.

By and by, as was the fiat of Fate and the decree of Destiny which only helped Lord Ram to carry out his pre-planned strategy, Sita asked the Lord to fetch the deer as she wanted to keep it as a pet to play with in the hermitage. Hereat, Lord Ram went behind Marich who was now disguised as a golden deer. Marich ran far away from the hermitage when the Lord finally shot him as he refused to be trapped. While dying, Marich lent out a shrill cry, shouting the name of Laxman at the top of his voice. When Sita heard it she felt Lord Ram was in danger and needed Laxman's help. So she forced Laxman to go to the aid of his brother, and was thus left alone in the hermitage.

Meanwhile, Ravana lay in wait for this precise moment. He came to Sita disguised as a mendicant, begging for alms. When she came out to offer something to him, he caught hold of her, and forcing her on his chariot, he took her to his capital city of Lanka and held her captive.

As Ravana was taking her away, Jatau, the old vulture whom Lord Ram had befriended on his way, heard her wailings and lamentations, and discovering that she was Lord Ram's wife, he intervened and chased the chariot. However hard he tried to rescue Sita from the clutches of Ravana, he was no match for the ferocious and well-armed demon, who seeing no other way finally drew his sword and cut the bird's wings, at which the poor Jatau fell on the ground mortally wounded.

This entire episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Doha no. 29 ka.

However, the narration that specifically describes the abduction of Sita and the way she squealed pitifully like a frightened fowl sore affright when it is caught in the talons of a cruel hawk, wailing and lamenting as she was being taken by Ravana aboard his chariot, and Jatau's intervention which is the subject matter of the present verse of Geetawali, appears in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Doha no. 28— to Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 29.

Albeit, when Ravana fled with Sita, she wailed and lamented woefully. She was filled with contrition and regretted what she did—first telling Lord Ram to go and bring the golden deer for her, and then asking Laxman to go away from the hermitage. Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/3 and 3/6 herein above.]

Sita wailed and lamented most woefully—'Alas! Alack! Oh my beloved Lord Ram; who knows how far has he gone pursuing the deer! [To wit, an he haply be somewhere near by, he would definitely hear my wailings, and would immediately rush to help me.] (1).

Oh dear Laxman, I said harsh words to you and crossed the line marked by you. So oh son, excuse me. And save me from this hunter (Ravana)[1] (2).'

[[1]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 28; and (b) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/6.

At the time of dying, Marich had let out a shrill cry, calling out the name of Laxman. When Sita heard it she thought that Lord Ram was calling, and forced Laxman to go to his brother's aid. Laxman knew that it was not Lord Ram but Marich calling, but Sita got so angry at his reluctance to go that he decided that it was wiser for him to leave. But before going away, he had marked a circle on the ground around the boundary of the hut, activating it as a sort of shield with some mystical Mantras to protect the area of the hermitage from any danger, asking Sita not to step out of it.

But the ways of destiny and the doing of fate are so mysterious that when an accident is to occur, all wit, wisdom and precautions fail. So, when Ravana approached Sita disguised as a mendicant seeking alms, he stood at a distance from the circumference of this circle, and in order to reach him to put the alms in his begging bowl, Sita inadvertently and errantly stepped out of this protected circle. Seizing the moment, Ravana grabbed her and pulled her onto his waiting chariot as he quickly fled the sight.]

Then she said to the forest deities, 'Please tell Lord Ram that I have been kidnapped by the vile Ravana. Oh Lord (Ram)! I am in the clutches of this rascal like a cow called 'Surdhenu' (or Kaam-dhenu)[2] is in the hands of a butcher (3).'

[[2]This is the cow of the gods.]

Tulsidas says that hearing Sita's pitiful cry and hearing Lord Ram's name being said by her in utter distress, the vulture king Jatau rushed forward angrily to help her rescue from the clutches of the demon.

He said, 'Daughter! Don't be afraid! This scoundrel (Ravana) can't escape from me now; I've come disguised as his own death!'[3] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-11 that precede Doha no. 29.]

फिरत न बारहि बार प्रचार्यो।
चपरि चोंच–चंगुल हय हति, रथ खंड खंड करि डार्यो।। 1।।
बिरथ–बिकल कियो, छीन लीन्हि सिय, घन घायनि अकुलान्यो।
तब असि काढ़ि, काटि पर, पाँवर लै प्रभु–प्रिया परान्यो।। 2।।
रामकाज खगराज आजु लर्यो, जियत न जानकि त्यागी।
तुलसिदास सुर–सिद्ध सराहत, धन्य बिहँग बड़भागी।। 3।।

jaṭāyu-vadha

(3/8)

phirata na bārahi bāra pracāryō.
capari cōn̄ca-caṅgula haya hati, ratha khaṇḍa khaṇḍa kari ḍāryō.. 1..
biratha-bikala kiyō, chīna līnhi siya, ghana ghāyani akulān'yō.
taba asi kāḍhi, kāṭi para, pām̆vara lai prabhu-priyā parān'yō.. 2..
rāmakāja khagarāja āju laryō, jiyata na jānaki tyāgī.
tulasidāsa sura-sid'dha sarāhata, dhan'ya bihaṁ̆ga baṛabhāgī.. 3..

Death of Jatau

Verse no. 3/8—[The valiant and brave Jatau attacked Ravana with all the ferocity and strength he could muster, though old age acted a severe drag on his agility and powers. A fierce fight ensued wherein Jatau managed to inflict severe deep wounds on Ravana, and at one point of time even managed to take Sita out of the chariot and keep her safe somewhere. But the poor bird was obviously no match for the muscular, powerfully built and angry Ravana who was not only stoked by vengeance which made him mad and reckless to the extreme, but was also armed to the teeth. He drew his sword and snipped off Jatau's wings. Thus incapacitated and mortally wounded, the poor Jatau fell to the ground, wailing and marveling at the way Fate and Destiny finally have their say. He groaned and continued to repeat the holy name of Lord Ram, and somehow managed to hold on to his breath, which albeit was very shallow, till the time Lord Ram and Laxman came that way in search of Sita so that he (Jatau) could convey the news to the Lord, and then make peace with his soul.

The fight between Jatau and Ravana has been described vividly in Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-22 that precede Doha no. 29.]

Jatau scolded and reproached Ravana severely, most sternly, and repeatedly, but the latter did not relent. Then Jatau swiftly attacked the horses with his beaks and claws and killed them, and broke the chariot into splinters (1).

Then he snatched Sita from Ravana's clutches, who being severely wounded and seething with anger, drew his sword and cut off the wings of the vulture, recovered Sita (from the safe hideout where Jatau had hidden her temporary), and escaped (2).

Tulsidas says that at that moment, the gods and enlightened ones praised Jatau that as long as he lived, he fought the demon valiantly and did not let him proceed with Sita. Jatau is forsooth and without gainsay extremely lucky; we hail him; glory to him! (3).

रामकी वियोग–व्यथा

राग गौरी

(3/9)

होमको हरिन हनि फिरे रघुकुल–मनि,
लषन ललित कर लिये मृगछाल।
आश्रम आवत चले सगुन न भए भले,
फरके बाम बाहु, लोचन बिसाल।। 1।।
सरित–जल मलिन, सरनि सूखे नलिन,
अलि न गुंजत, कल कूजैं न मराल।
कोलिनि–कोल–किरात जहाँ तहाँ बिलखात,
बन न बिलोकि जात खग–मृग–माल।। 2।।
तरु जे जानकी लाए, ज्याये हरि–करि–कपि,
हेरैं न हुँकरि, झरैं फल न रसाल।
जे सुक–सारिका पाले, मातु ज्यों ललिक लाले,
तेऊ न पढ़त न पढ़ावैं मुनिबाल।। 3।।
समुझि सहमे सुठि, प्रिया तौ न आई उठि,
तुलसी बिबरन परन–तृन–साल।
औरे सो सब समाजु, कुसल न देखौं आजु,
गहबर हिय कहैं कोसलपाल।। 4।।

rāmakī viyōga-vyathā

rāga gaurī

(3/9)

hōmakō harina hani phirē raghukula-mani,
laṣana lalita kara liyē mr̥gachāla.
āśrama āvata calē saguna na bha'ē bhalē,
pharakē bāma bāhu, lōcana bisāla.. 1..
sarita-jala malina, sarani sūkhē nalina,
ali na guñjata, kala kūjaiṁ na marāla.
kōlini-kōla-kirāta jahāṁ tahāṁ bilakhāta,
bana na bilōki jāta khaga-mr̥ga-māla.. 2..
taru jē jānakī lā'ē, jyāyē hari-kari-kapi,
hēraiṁ na huṁkari, jharaiṁ phala na rasāla.

jē suka-sārikā pālē, mātu jyōṁ lalika lālē,
tē'ū na paṛhata na paṛhāvaiṁ munibāla.. 3..
samujhi sahamē suṭhi, priyā tau na ā'ī uṭhi,
tulasī bibarana parana-trṇa-sāla.
aurē sō saba samāju, kusala na dēkhauṁ āju,
gahabara hiya kahaiṁ kōsalapāla.. 4..

Lord Ram's anguish and distress when he discovered that
Sita has been abducted -I

Verse no. 3/9—[When Lord Ram saw Laxman coming his way, he immediately concluded that there was something amiss, and in all probability Sita was in grave danger. When the two brothers returned to the hermitage they found it empty. Shocked and overcome with grief by the cuff of misfortunes that struck him hard, the Lord felt lost for words, and so distraught and dismayed he was that he wailed and lamented like an ordinary human being. This display of extreme grief and utter sense of hopelessness was also a major part of his plan: he wished to ensure that any spies who might be espying his activities, as sure Ravana must have posted some of his trusted hands to do so, they would not get a hint that to allow Sita to be abducted by Ravana was planned by Lord Ram secretly so that an overwhelming excuse could be found to eliminate the demon race, the purpose for which Lord Vishnu had come down as Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precedes Doha no. 24.

So therefore, in order to keep his own identity secret and to prevent Ravana to hide Sita at some inapproachable place rather than in his capital of Lanka, the Lord had to behave and act in a way that showed he was taken by surprise and had no inkling of where she was and who took her away. Hence, he wailed and lamented for the loss of Sita like a man ordinarily would do.

The Lord’s grieving and wailings have been described presently in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/9—3/11 herein below.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-17 that precede Doha no. 30.]

Just at that time (when Ravana had taken Sita away), the jewel of Raghu's clan (“raghukula-mani”; Lord Sri Ram) returned after having killed the (decoy) golden deer.

Laxman had its golden hide in his hands. While returning to the hermitage, they faced some inauspicious signs—such as, Lord Ram’s left arm and his large left eyelids began to quiver or flutter involuntarily. [This involuntary fluttering, quivering, or palpitation of the muscles is considered inauspicious and a bad omen.] (1).

(Other inauspicious signs that portended some unpleasant, calamitous event were—) The water of the rivers looked turbid; the lotuses were drying up inspite of being in ponds; the bumble/black-bees weren't humming; while the goose did not squeak in a pleasant voice.

The Kirats, the Kols (i.e. the tribals) and their women-folk were wailing with unknown anguish here and there, and it was difficult to look at the miserable sufferings of the birds and animals in general (2).

The trees which Sita had planted and cared for, did not bear succulent fruits (i.e. all their fruits suddenly dried up and fell to the ground), while the lion cubs, young ones of elephants and monkeys whom she had reared and nourished, did not look up and called out cheerfully and excitedly (as they normally used to do earlier) when they saw the two brothers coming home.

The pair consisting of the parrot and the black bird, which were so fondly reared and were affectionately looked after like a mother by Sita, did not speak a word or chatter in the usual way as was their wont, and neither did the daughters of hermits attempt to teach them (i.e. to speak) (3).[1]

[[1]The general environment of gloom and sadness as if some very bad thing has happened in the area in and around the hermitage where Lord Ram lived is being described here. All liveliness and cheer have suddenly vanished, and they are replaced with a sense of dejection and despair. Whereas the place a while ago was live with merrily chirping birds and the sound of frolicking animals, was made pleasant with the fragrance of flowers and sweet smell of ripened fruits, it had all of a sudden transmewed into an area that resembled a graveyard: silent, sullen, grave, lifeless, forlorn and forbidding.]

Tulsidas says that when Kōsalapāla (Lord Sri Ram; the king of Kaushal, or Ayodhya) saw that Sita has not come forward to receive them (him and Laxman) and the thatched hut (the dwelling of Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita) looked forlorn, desolate and abandoned, he at once guessed that something was wrong.

Overcome with great grief and distress, he said with a voice that showed his dismay and consternation: 'Today, everything looks very odd and full of discomfiture; I guess that something is very wrong and seriously amiss.[2]' (4).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 30.]

(3 / 10)

आश्रम निरखि भूले, द्रुम न फले न फूले,
अलि–खग–मृग मानो कबहुँ न हे।
मुनि न मुनिबधूटी, उजरी परनकुटी,
पंचबटी पहिचानि ठाढ़ेइ रहे।। 1।।
उठी न सलिल लिए, प्रेम प्रमुदित हिए,
प्रिया न पुलकि प्रिय बचन कहे।
पल्लव–सालन हेरी, प्रानबल्लभा न टेरी,
बिरह बिथकि लखि लषन गहे।। 2।।
देखे रघुपति–गति बिबुध बिकल अति,
तुलसी गहन बिनु दहन दहे।
अनुज दियो भरोसो, तौलों है सोचु खरो सो,
सिय–समाचार प्रभु जौलों न लहे।। 3।।

āśrama nirakhi bhūlē, druma na phalē na phūlē,
ali-khaga-mr̥ga mānō kabahuṁ na hē.
muni na munibadhūṭī, ujarī paranakuṭī,
pan̄cabaṭī pahicāni ṭhāṛhē'i rahē.. 1..
uṭhī na salila li'ē, prēma pramudita hi'ē,
priyā na pulaki priya bacana kahē.
pallava-sālana hērī, prānaballabhā na ṭērī,
biraha bithaki lakhi laṣana gahē.. 2..
dēkhē raghupati-gati bibudha bikala ati,
tulasī gahana binu dahana dahē.
anuja diyō bharōsō, taulōṁ hai sōcu kharō sō,
siya-samācāra prabhu jaulōṁ na lahē.. 3..

Lord Ram's anguish and distress when he discovered that
Sita has been abducted -II

Verse no. 3/10—He (Lord Sri Ram) could not recognise his own hermitage because the trees there neither had fruits nor flowers on them.

Bumble/black-bees, birds and deer (or other animals) vanished without a trace as if they were never present there ever before.

Besides this, there weren't any hermits or hermitresses in the vicinity too. The thatched cottage was also in a dilapidated and unkempt condition. He recognised the 'Panchvati' (the general area by the presence of the five banyan trees; the 'Panch Vat') and stood still, stunned, stupefied and immobile (1).

He wondered with great wonderment: 'Today, the beloved (Sita) has not risen joyfully to meet (receive) us with a glass of water (as she would usually do), and she has not uttered any sweet words (of welcome), and (like on previous occasions) she has not called out from amongst the cluster of leaves.[1],

In this way, seeing that the Lord was overwhelmed with grief and burdened with sorrow, feeling extremely distraught and distressed, and woefully lamenting with agony at the separation (from his beloved wife Sita), Laxman caught hold of him (i.e. he supported and consoled him)[2] (2).

[[1]When Lord Ram or Laxman came to the hermitage from their short trip into the forest in search of firewood or eatables, and to the river Godavari for water, Sita would first descry them from a concealed place in the dense shadow of the foliage that formed in alcove of trees and creepers inside their hermitage, before calling out that she is coming to unlatch the door. This was done as a caution to espy any predator who may cause danger because it was a wild forest.

Laxman had played a stellar role of a true brother and friend to Lord Ram when the Lord was in a dire mental state of distress and dismay which made him lose all courage and he had felt like collapsing and lying down on the ground to wait for death as it comes calling. Laxman encouraged Lord Ram to gather himself and his wits to be able to face adversities with courage and fortitude and resilience, and that ultimate victory comes not with yielding and lying down with dejection, but by getting up and fighting back.]

Tulsidas says that seeing such a wretched and miserable condition of Lord Sri Ram, the gods became very emotionally upset and uncomfortable, while the forest appeared to burn even without a fire.

Laxman consoled him saying that this sorrow and misery shall remain standing only as long as the news of Sita's whereabouts does not reach the Lord. [For, as soon as any news of Sita arrives, the Lord and he, Laxman, will at once take steps to retrieve her. And there is no force potent enough on this earth to oppose or stop them from doing so. Here, by saying that sorrow is 'standing', Laxman means that it is arrogantly and defiantly tormenting and causing misery to Sri Ram, but shall fall down—or literally would get cut to size—as soon as Sita's news is heard.] (3).

राग सोरठ

(3/11)

जबहि सिय–सुधि सब सुरनि सुनाई।
भए सुनि सजग, बिरहसरि पैरत थके थाह–सी पाई।। 1।।
कसि तूनीर–तीर धनु–धर–धुर धीर बीर दोउ भाई।
पंचबटी–गोदहि प्रनाम करि, कुटि दाहिनी लाई।। 2।।
चले बूझत बन–बेलि–बिटप, खग–मृग, अलि–अवलि सुहाई।
प्रभुकी दसा सो समौ कहिबेको कबि उर आह न आई।। 3।।
रटनि अकनि पहिचानि गीध फिरे करुनामय रघुराई।
तुलसी रामहि प्रिया बिसरि गई, सुमिरि सनेह–सगाई।। 4।।

rāga sōraṭha

(3/11)

jabahi siya-sudhi saba surani sunā'ī.
bha'ē suni sajaga, birahasari pairata thakē thāha-sī pā'ī.. 1..
kasi tūnīra-tīra dhanu-dhara-dhura dhīra bīra dō'u bhā'ī.
pan̄cabaṭī-gōdahi pranāma kari, kuṭi dāhinī lā'ī.. 2..
calē būjhata bana-bēli-biṭapa, khaga-mr̥ga, ali-avali suhā'ī.
prabhukī dasā sō samau kahibēkō kabi ura āha na ā'ī.. 3..
raṭani akani pahicāni gīdha phirē karunāmaya raghurā'ī.
tulasī rāmahi priyā bisari ga'ī, sumiri sanēha-sagā'ī.. 4..

Lord Ram's departure from Panchvati in search of Sita; meeting Jatau

Verse no. 3/11—When the Gods conveyed all the news and recollections of Sita to Lord Sri Ram (i.e. when the Gods hinted to the Lord the reason why Sita was abducted), he (Sri Ram) became alert and determined (to stop uselessly lamenting and instead do something positive and diligent so that the search for Sita could begin in right earnest).

He was literally swimming in the river of agonies, sorrows, miseries and anguish of separation from Sita. The words of the Gods gave Lord Sri Ram solace and courage, and he gathered his wits around him and decided to take firm steps to recover her (1).

Thereafter, the two brothers, who were courageous, resilient, brave and valiant, as well as the best and the most skilled among archers and users of the bow, tied their arrows and quivers, bowed their heads to Panchavati forest and river Godavari, circumambulated their hermitage to pay their respects to it, and then embarked on their long onward journey (in search of Sita), asking the wayside creepers, trees, birds, animals and beautiful black/bumble-bees the way[1].

The poets lost courage to try to describe the condition of the Lord at that point of time[2]. (2-3).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-16 that precede Doha no. 30.

[2]The poets were so overwhelmed with empathy and sadness at the condition of the Lord, and shared his sorrows and the miserable state of his mind and heart that they felt emotionally incompetent and completely unable to describe those poignant moments in words because they felt that words, with their own limitations, would not be able to convey the depth and intensity of Lord Ram's sorrows.]

The brothers had moved ahead when they suddenly heard the woeful mutterings, full of anguish and pain, of someone chanting (or calling out) the name of 'Ram'. The merciful and compassionate Lord recognised that it was the vulture (Jatau), and he immediately retraced his steps (i.e. came back to that spot from where the voice was heard).

Tulsidas asserts that when Sri Ram recalled the vulture's affectionate relationship with him, he forgot even his beloved (wife Sita). [To wit, Lord Ram was overcome with grief when he descried the pitiful and miserable condition of Jatau.][3] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30 along with Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes it.]

जटायुसे भेंट

(3 / 12)

मेरे एकौ हाथ न लागी।
गयो बपु बीति बादि कानन ज्यों कलपलता दव दागी।। 1।।
दसरथसों न प्रेम प्रतिपाल्यौ, हुतो जो सकल जग साखी।
बरबस हरत निसाचर पतिसों हठि न जानकी राखी।। 2।।
मरत न मैं रघुबीर बिलोके तापस बेष बनाए।
चाहत चलन प्रान पाँवर बिनु सिय–सुधि प्रभुहि सुनाए।। 3।।
बार–बार कर मींजि, सीस धुनि गीधराज पछिताई।
तुलसी प्रभु कृपालु तेहि औसर आइ गए दोउ भाई।। 4।।

jaṭāyusē bhēṇṭa

(3/12)

mērē ēkau hātha na lāgī.
gayō bapu bīti bādi kānana jyōṁ kalapalatā dava dāgī.. 1..
dasarathasōṁ na prēma pratipālyau, hutō jō sakala jaga sākhī.
barabasa harata nisācara patisōṁ haṭhi na jānakī rākhī.. 2..
marata na maiṁ raghubīra bilōkē tāpasa bēṣa banā'ē.
cāhata calana prāna pāmv̐vara binu siya-sudhi prabhuhi sunā'ē.. 3..
bāra-bāra kara mīṁji, sīsa dhuni gīdharāja pachitā'ī.
tulasī prabhu kr̥pālu tēhi ausara ā'i ga'ē dō'u bhā'ī.. 4..

Lord Ram meets Jatau-I

Verse no. 3/12—[Verse nos. 3/12—3/16 describe Lord Ram's meeting with the injured Jatau, the old vulture who had fought valiantly with Ravana in an attempt to rescue Sita but was unable to protect her as he was mortally wounded. He fell down on the ground when Ravana clipped-off his wings with his sword. Lying bleeding and writhing in pain, Jatau concentrated his mind and heart in the holy feet of Lord Ram and waited for his arrival so that he could convey the developments regarding Sita to the Lord, and find an eternal rest for his soul in the presence of the Lord whom he knew to be a personified form of the Supreme Being.

Meanwhile, Lord Ram reached that spot while he was wondering in the wilds in search of Sita. He heard a soft and pitiful groan like someone dying from a little way off his path, and when he espied the cause he discovered Jatau. The Lord immediately recognized him as he had met him earlier also when the two had struck a friendship, and Jatau had said that he was an acquaintance of Dasrath, Lord Ram's father, and he would be in constantly on the vigil and stay near about to afford protection to the Lord, Sita and Laxman to the best of his ability. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 13.

Now, when Lord Ram descried Jatau in such a pathetic condition, he was extremely sorry and moved emotionally. He extended all love and affection that one would do to one's father, tended to Jatau's wounds, cleaned them with his long tresses, and picked him up gently onto his lap, resting his head on his arms. Jatau conveyed to the Lord all the tidings, and then though the Lord told him that if he wished he could grant him a long life but Jatau preferred to leave this mortal body which he would nevertheless have to one or the other day, but this unique opportunity of having the Lord tending to him and sitting so close to him won't come again. So, Jatau discarded his mortal body and obtained liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. Say, how luck he was: while alive he offered himself at the service of the Lord, and while dying he had the Lord in front of his eyes. Lord Ram performed his last rites with tears in his eyes as he would have done for his own father. This was a rarest of rare privilege that was extended to Jatau by the Lord as not even Dasrath had got this benefit. In this singular way, Jatau made himself immortal in the annals of history, and even the gods found no sufficient words to praise his good fortune.

This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Doha no. 32.]

[The vulture Jatau was full of anguish and remorse as he lay on the ground, mortally wounded and writing in pain. He sorely lamented—] 'Alas! I have lost everything (or literally, I could not lay my hands on anything worthwhile!). Even as the Kalpa-creeper dies in a forest fire without being of any good to anyone, my body too was spent in vain (1).

The whole world is witness and knows very well that I and Dasrath were friends; we were affectionately acquainted with each other. But unfortunately I could not sustain (uphold, live up to) that relationship because when the king of demons (Ravana) was taking Sita away, I could not forcibly stop him from doing so (2).

Even at the time of my death (which is imminent), I could not see Lord Sri Ram attired as a hermit.

Now this sinful soul wishes to make its exit (from my sinful body) even before I could convey Sita's news, whereabouts and welfare to him (Sri Ram).' (3).

In this way, the king of vultures repeatedly wrings his hands and beats his head in utter frustration and despair. Just at that precise moment, Tulsidas' kind and gracious Lords, the two brothers (Sri Ram and Laxman)[1], came there. (4)

[[1]The words "Tulsidas' kind and gracious Lords, the two brothers" (tulasī prabhu kṛpālu---dō'u bhā'ī) are very important in as much as they establish—and assert—that Tulsidas has equal respect for both Lord Ram and Laxman albeit he has focused his writings on Lord Ram as he is the Supreme Being himself.

Further, Tulsidas means that if Jatau, a vulture by birth, could inspire so much love and affection for himself in the heart of Sri Ram by asserting that he (Jatau) was a friend of Lord Ram's father, king Dasrath, so much so that the Lord treated the bird with the same respect as he would have had for his father as stressed in stanza 2 of this verse, Tulsidas goes a step further and says that: "Well, if this is the case then I too have a right to assert that the two brothers, Lord Sri Ram and Laxman, are dear to me equally, and they have affection for me as well." This is because he, i.e. Tulsidas, too is a devotee of the Lord and loves him as dearly as did Jatau.]

(3 / 13)

राघौ गीध गोद करि लीन्हों।
नयन–सरोज सनेह–सलिल सुचि मनहु अरघजल दीन्हों।। 1।।
सुनहु लषन ! खगपतिहि मिले बन मैं पितु–मरन न जान्यौ।
सहि न सक्यौ सो कठिन बिधाता, बड़ो पछु आजुहि भान्यौ।। 2।।
बहु बिधि राम कह्यो तनु राखन, परम धीर नहि डोल्यौ।
रोकि, प्रेम, अवलोकि बदन–बिधु, बचन मनोहर बोल्यौ।। 3।।
तुलसी प्रभु झूठे जीवन लगि समय न धोखो लैहौं।
जाको नाम मरत मुनिदुरलभ तुमहि कहाँ पुनि पैहौं ?।। 4।।

rāghau gīdha gōda kari līnhōṁ.
nayana-sarōja sanēha-salila suci manahu araghajala dīnhōṁ.. 1..
sunahu laṣana! khagapatihi milē bana maiṁ pitu-marana na jān'yau.
sahi na sakyau sō kaṭhina bidhātā, baṛō pachu ājuhi bhān'yau.. 2..
bahu bidhi rāma kahyō tanu rākhana, parama dhīra nahi ḍōlyau.
rōki, prēma, avalōki badana-bidhu, bacana manōhara bōlyau.. 3..
tulasī prabhu jhūṭhē jīvana lagi samaya na dhōkhō laihauṁ.
jākō nāma marata muniduralabha tumahi kahāṁ puni paihauṁ?.. 4..

Lord Ram meets Jatau-II

Verse no. 3/13—Lord Ram lifted the wounded Jatau on to his lap, and washed him with his tears full of love and affection[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30; and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 31.]

Then he said, 'Oh Laxman, listen! When I had met the vulture king in the forest, I forgot about the death of our father[2]. But the wicked gods could not tolerate my peace and they destroyed even this solace which I had been left with (2).'

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 13.

It is to be noted here that Jatau is the only and the exclusive character in the whole of the story of the Ramayana who has this privilege of being put on the same or even a notch higher pedestal than Dasrath. It is indeed remarkable that Lord Ram openly accepted him as his father given the fact that a vulture is a meat-eating bird. It indeed remarkable Lord Ram went further to honour Jatau by cremating him with his own hands, something he didn't do for his own father Dasrath. In Hindu system, it is the eldest son who gets this privilege, and it is a curse, or most unusual, that a father is cremated by someone else. However, by cremating Jatau, Lord Ram gave him the rarest of rare privilege which is not even available to the gods, or for that matter to those great sages and ascetics who spend their entire lives in doing austerity and penances.

The underlying idea is that the only relationship that Lord Ram knows and acknowledges is that of sincere and abiding love, affection, devotion, submission and complete faith in him as the 'Supreme Redeemer, Supreme Atma and Supreme Protector' of creation. Anything less is not upto the mark. The Lord does not weigh the merits of a creature on the basis of his physical body, and by extension by the natural inclinations of this body such as what it would eat to survive or whether it does penances and austerities, because the body is nevertheless gross by nature and cannot be expected to behave like a sublime and holy entity. What matters is the driver of this body: the 'soul', or the 'self' that lives inside it and controls the body like a driver of a motor vehicle. If any accident occurs, it is not the vehicle that is to be blamed, but the driver whose carelessness that has caused it.

Therefore, if the soul of the individual creature is pure and reflects its purity by exhibiting characters possessed by the supreme Soul represented by Lord Ram, the 'Parmatma', the mutual attraction is spontaneous and natural. Only a pure magnet would attract iron, and not something that masquerades as a magnet while being merely a piece of lead. Polishing and pretensions can deceive the world, but not the Lord.

In the present context we deduce that albeit Jatau was born as a meat-eating vulture that is universally regarded as sinful and vile, his Atma was purer than the rest of the creatures, and hence it qualified for the highest form of peace and blessedness that it indeed got.]

Then Lord Ram requested Jatau to keep his body (not to die)[3], but the courageous vulture did not move from his resolve, and said (3)—

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31.]

'Oh Lord! I wouldn't be cheated for this false life (i.e. I don't want to trade the rare opportunity I've got to attain salvation with living a life which is false and illusionary).

Well, he—whose name is unavailable even to the sages at the time of death—is standing before me. Say, in all sooth, where shall I find you again, where shall I find such a golden chance to attain liberation and deliverance again? [I'm not so stupid that I'll let go of such a golden and god-sent opportunity for attaining emancipation and salvation that leads the soul to eternal blessedness, beatitude and bliss by bargaining it with a life that is mortal.]'[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 31.]

(3 / 14)

नीके कै जानत राम हियो हौं।
प्रनतपाल, सेवक–कृपालु–चित, पितु पटतरहि दियो हौं।। 1।।
त्रिजगजोनि–गत गीध, जनम भरि खाइ कुजंतु जियो हौं।
महाराज सुकृती–समाज सब–ऊपर आजु कियो हौं।। 2।।
श्रवन बचन, मुख नाम, रूप चख, राम उछंग लियो हौं।
तुलसी मो समान बड़भागी को कहि सकै बियो हौं।। 3।।

(3/14)

nīkē kai jānata rāma hiyō hauṁ.
pranatapāla, sēvaka-kr̥pālu-cita, pitu paṭatarahi diyō hauṁ.. 1..
trijagajōni-gata gīdha, janama bhari khā'i kujantu jiyō hauṁ.
mahārāja sukr̥tī-samāja saba-ūpara āju kiyō hauṁ.. 2..
śravana bacana, mukha nāma, rūpa cakha, rāma uchaṅga liyō hauṁ.
tulasī mō samāna baṛabhāgī kō kahi sakai biyō hauṁ.. 3..

Lord Ram meets Jatau-III

Verse no. 3/14—[Jatau continued—] 'Oh Lord Sri Ram! I recognise the true nature and graciousness of your heart. You are the protector of those who have taken your shelter and refuge, and are kind, benevolent and merciful towards your servants

(devotees, those who have surrendered themselves to you and serve you selflessly).

This is why you have compared me with your father (or, have raised me to the exalted stature of being your father)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/13, stanza no. 2 herein above.]

I was born from a lowly womb (i.e. I had a very low form of birth from an egg) in the family of vultures, and survived by eating numerous lowly, uneatable creatures (cadavers). Today, oh great king, you have raised such a vile creature (i.e. me) to the highest pedestal in the assembly of those who are righteous, noble and exalted! [Tell me, what more would I want!] (2).

Oh (how lucky am I)! My ears hear you speak; I am taking your holy name with my mouth; I am enjoying seeing your beauteous form sitting right before me, with my own eyes; and to top it all, you are having me in your lap!

Then say, who else is there who can call himself more lucky than me?[2]' (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precedes Doha no. 31.]

(3 / 15)

मेरे जान तात ! कछू दिन जीजै।
देखिअ आपु सुवन–सेवासुख, मोहि पितुको सुख दीजै।। 1।।
दिब्य–देह, इच्छा–जीवन जग बिधि मनाइ मँगि लीजै।
हरि–हर–सुजस सुनाइ, दरस दै, लोग कृतारथ कीजै।। 2।।
देखि बदन, सुनि बचन–अमिय, तन रामनयन–जल भीजै।
बोल्यो बिहग बिहँसि रघुबर ! बलि, कहौं सुभाय, पतीजै।। 3।।
मेरे मरिबे सम न चारि फल, होंहि तौ, क्यों न कहीजै।
तुलसी प्रभु दियो उतरु मौन हीं, परी मानो प्रेम सहीजै।। 4।।

(3/15)

mērē jāna tāta! kachū dina jījai.
dēkhi'a āpu suvana-sēvāsukha, mōhi pitukō sukha dījai.. 1..
dibya-dēha, icchā-jīvana jaga bidhi manā'i mam̐gi lījai.
hari-hara-sujasa sunā'i, darasa dai, lōga kr̥tāratha kījai.. 2..
dēkhi badana, suni bacana-amiya, tana rāmanayana-jala bhījai.
bōlyō bihaga biham̐si raghubara! bali, kahauṁ subhāya, patījai.. 3..
mērē maribē sama na cāri phala, hōnhi tau, kyōṁ na kahījai.
tulasī prabhu diyō utaru mauna hīṁ, parī mānō prēma sahījai.. 4..

Lord Ram meets Jatau-IV

Verse no. 3/15—Lord Ram said, 'Oh Dear (tāta)! In my view, you should live a bit longer for a few more days. Give me an opportunity to serve you as a son, so that you can enjoy the privileges of being a father[1] (1).

[[1]This emotion is an extension of what Lord Ram has said in verse no. 3/13, stanza no. 2 herein above. Lord says in essence that he hadn't been able to serve his own father Dasrath at Ayodhya, but at least he would be able to serve his 'another father' Jatau if he agrees to live a bit longer. Since Jatau was a bird, it would be easier for the latter to remain close in the vicinity of Lord Ram whom he should treat as his son, and this would also give the Lord an opportunity to serve Jatau in the best way he could so that it would mitigate his sense of sorrow at losing his human father to some extent.]

Gods are now pleased with you, so ask them for a divine form and a boon to live according to your wishes, and please everyone by praising and singing the Glory of Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva (2).[2]'

[[2]Lord Ram advises Jatau to discard this evil body of a vulture and assume some holy form, or the form of a holy Spirit like one of the gods, and live in that form for as long as he wants while enjoying the benefits of heaven.]

Then, hearing such sweet-as-nectar voice and words of Lord Ram, and finding his body drenched in the tears overflowing from Lord Ram's eyes, Jatau looked up to him and said, 'Son! I'm so exceptionally lucky and so very glad! Believe me, I speak from my heart (3).

Even the four fruits (i.e. "Artha" or prosperity, wealth; "Dharma" or righteousness; "Kaam" or wish fulfillment; and "Moksha" or liberation from transmigration of soul) are no match to my death (while I am in your arms)!

[So, what do you expect me to ask for? Nay, I don't want any of the forms you have suggested as ultimately my soul would be trapped in that form. Nay, I don't want any entrapments now. Even a holy body is a trap for the soul. The true freedom for the soul is when it is freed from all encumbrances and becomes one with the Supreme Soul. I don't want to be cheated at this juncture by any of the honey-traps you have promised me. I yearn for final liberation and deliverance that would give eternal salvation and emancipation to me and rest to my soul. I want beatitude and felicity and bliss that cannot come with assuming any form, holy or otherwise as all of them have their own set of problems. Say, even if I become god-like, will I become eternal? Surely not, because when the good effects of my service to you wears off, I would have to suffer the consequences of all that I do in the new form which I may assume now. What would happen then? When ultimately my soul would yearn for peace, will I get to see you again, or place my head on your lap again? So, my answer is 'no', I don't want all this stuff. To wit, if thou willst forsooth want to express thine gratitude to me, and if thou can grant emancipation to a soul, then grant me eternal bliss and beatitude by way of salvation and deliverance, nothing less than that my soul yearnest for!]'

Tulsidas says that this argument and logic of Jatau made Lord Ram speechless because it was the irrefutable truth of existence. Lord Ram's silence was a seal of approval of Jatau's devotion and love for the Lord, as well as his views regarding his destiny that was sealed in the form of his emancipation and salvation inspite of his having a body that is regarded as most despicable and vile and lowly (because it was that of a vulture) (4).

मेरो सुनियो, तात ! सँदेसो।
सीय–हरन जनि कहेहु पितासों, ह्वैहै अधिक अँदेसो।। 1।।
रावरे पुन्यप्रताप–अनल महँ अलप दिननि रिपु दहिहैं।
कुलसमेत सुरसभा दसानन समाचार सब कहिहैं।। 2।।
सुनि प्रभु–बचन, राखि उर मूरति, चरन–कमल सिर नाई।
चल्यो नभ सुनत राम–कल–कीरति, अरु निज भाग बड़ाई।। 3।।
पितु–ज्यों गीध–क्रिया करि रघुपति अपने धाम पठायो।
ऐसो प्रभु बिसारि तुलसी सठ ! तू चाहत सुख पायो।। 4।।

(3/16)

mērō suniyō, tāta! samdēsō.
sīya-harana jani kahēhu pitāsōṁ, hvaihai adhika amdēsō.. 1..
rāvarē pun'yapratāpa-anala mahamd alapa dinani ripu dahihaiṁ.
kulasamēta surasabhā dasānana samācāra saba kahihaiṁ.. 2..
suni prabhu-bacana, rākhi ura mūrati, carana-kamala sira nā'ī.
calyō nabha sunata rāma-kala-kīrati, aru nija bhāga baṛā'ī.. 3..
pitu-jyōṁ gīdha-kriyā kari raghupati apanē dhāma paṭhāyō.
aisō prabhu bisāri tulasī saṭha! tū cāhata sukha pāyō.. 4..

Lord Ram meets Jatau-V

Verse no. 3/16—[Lord Sri Ram replied to Jatau—] 'Oh Dear (tāta)! Please hear my message. Do not tell father (Dasrath) anything about Sita being abducted, as this will enhance his sorrows and worries[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 31.]

All the enemies and opponents would burn themselves soon in the fire of your glory, fame, righteousness and noble deeds. [This is a way of Lord Ram showing respect to Jatau.]

At that time, Ravana would himself, along with all his kin and relatives, go and convey all this news in the assembly of Gods. [By saying these words, Sri Ram has ensured a place for Ravana amongst the 'assembly of Gods' in the heaven. Indeed, though being a ferocious, cruel, vile and most despised creature because he was a 'demon' by birth, Ravana and his near and dear ones nevertheless went to the heaven just by the virtue of them constantly remembering Lord Ram, which, in practical terms, became a sort of meditation for them even as a spiritual aspirant constantly remembers the Lord and repeats his holy name to attain the Lord. This fact is endorsed in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71; (iii) Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 103.] (2).'

Hearing these words (of Sri Ram), keeping his beauteous image in his mind and heart, bowing his head reverentially at his holy feet, and hearing Sri Ram's fames and glories as well as his own being sung in the sky (by the Gods), the vulture left for his

heavenly abode through the path of the sky. [Here, by saying 'Jatau went to heaven', it alludes to his soul that went to the heaven or the abode of the Lord.][2] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 32.]

Raghupati (Sri Ram) performed the last rites of the vulture as if he were his (Sri Ram's) own father, and thereafter, the Lord sent him to his own abode[3].

Tulsidas addresses himself and wonders, 'Oh you idiot and wicked fool! Do you want to have comfort, happiness, joy and bliss by forsaking (or forgetting, ignoring, neglecting, being opposed to) such a (benign, merciful, gracious, compassionate, benevolent, magnanimous, munificent) Lord?[4]' (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precedes Doha no. 33.]

शबरीसे भेंट
राग सूहो

(3 / 17/1)

सबरी सोइ उठी, फरकत बाम बिलोचन–बाहु।
सगुन सुहावने सूचत मुनि–मन–अगम उछाहु।।
मुनि–अगम उर आनंद, लोचन सजल, तनु पुलकावली।
तृन–पर्नसाल बनाइ, जल भरि कलस, फल चाहन चली।।
मंजुल मनोरथ करति, सुमिरति बिप्र–बरबानी भली।
ज्यों कलप–बेलि सकेलि सुकृत सुफूल–फूली सुख–फली।। 1।।

śabarīsē bhēṇṭa

rāga sūhō

(3/17-1)

sabarī sō'i uṭhī, pharakata bāma bilōcana-bāhu.
saguna suhāvanē sūcata muni-mana-agama uchāhu..
muni-agama ura ānanda, lōcana sajala, tanu pulakāvalī.
tr̥na-parnasāla banā'i, jala bhari kalasa, phala cāhana calī..
manj̃ula manōratha karati, sumirati bipra-barabānī bhalī.
jyōṁ kalapa-bēli sakēli sukr̥ta suphūla-phūlī sukha-phalī.. 1..

Lord Ram's meeting with Sabari
(The tribal woman devotee of the Lord)

[Geetawali describes the meeting of Lord Ram and his ardent devotee Sabari in beautiful words. The text has been divided into eight verses, each having four lines.

The Lord's meeting with Sabari has also been described in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.

After granting liberation and emancipation to Jatau, Lord Ram moved ahead in the direction told to him by Jatau. He reached the hermitage of Sabari, an old tribal woman devotee of the Lord who had been waiting the Lord's arrival for a long time.

*A brief life-sketch of Sabari is given at the end of this verse no. 3/17/1.

She extended motherly-like affection to Lord Ram and Laxman, worshipped them and fed them with fruits she had plucked herself. Lord Ram had preached her the famous 'nine-deemed paths of Bhakti'. Finally, like Jatau, she discarded her gross body in the fire of Tapa and her last rites were done by Lord Ram himself! Its again noteworthy that Lord Ram had done the last rites of another living being who was regarded as out-cast by the society. Lord Ram made Jatau exalted by elevating him to the high pedestal of being his 'father' by performing his last rites with his own hands, and now he elevates Sabari to the rank of his own mother by performing her last rites himself. Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 36 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede it; and (ii) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/17/8.

This fact has also been reiterated in 'Adhyatma Ramayan' of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 10, verse nos. 39—41.

Before attaining salvation, Sabari had told Lord Ram to proceed towards lake Pampa where he will meet Sugriv and his companions who would help the Lord to trace and recover Sita. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10-12 that precedes Doha no. 36.]

Verse no. 3/17/1—Ever since Sabari woke up today morning, her left eyelids and left arms are fluttering (quivering; palpitating, vibrating)[1]. These auspicious signs indicate that some good tidings which would give joy and happiness even to the sages and hermits are in the offing.

Her heart has filled with immense bliss and joy which is rare even for the sages. Her eyes are full of tears, and the body is thrilled.

She erected a thatched hut of reeds and grass, filled a pot with water, and started towards the forest path (from where she expected Sri Ram and Laxman to arrive). [To wit, she hurriedly repaired her hut and prepared it to welcome Lord Ram and Laxman whom she had been expecting for a very long time. The auspicious signs she witnessed convinced her that her wait is about to end.]

She has pleasant hopes in her heart and repeatedly recalls the auspicious prophesy made by her preceptor sage Matang (that she will have the good fortune of seeing the divine form of Lord Sri Ram one day of the days).

It appears that the Kalpa-creeper, already blooming with beautiful flowers, has collected all the rewards (fruits) of the good deeds there are in Sabari's fate, converted them into fruits of bliss, happiness and joy, and has got itself laden with them[2]. (3/17/1).

[[1]It is believed that if the left arms and eyes of a male flutters then it is deemed a bad sign, whereas for a woman it is a good omen.

[2]Here, the creeper is Sabari, the flowers are her virtues and noble characters, the good deeds are the long services she had rendered to sage Matang after being castrated by the society and condemned by it, and the fruit is her final reward in the

form of having Darshan or divine and holy viewing of the Lord, followed by her emancipation and final salvation.

*According to the story of Ramayana, Shabari was a woman belonging to a forest tribe called 'Shabari'. This tribe was classified as Shudras or lower caste, and sustained themselves by collecting and selling honey and fruits from the forest trees. Being of a low caste, she is said have been ostracized by others. She served a sage named Matanga very devotedly. The sage was a realised soul, and so pleased was he with her devotion and service that he blessed her at the time of leaving his body that she would find her emancipation and salvation when Lord Ram visits her while searching for Sita. Like her Guru, Shabari too left her mortal body after having the privilege of meeting and worshipping the Lord in person by lighting the pyre herself with her mystical powers. According to Adhyatma Ramayana of sage Veda Vyas, it was Lord Ram who had performed her last rites himself, a rare privilege that was even denied to his own worldly father Dasrath.

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

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

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

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

The entire episode of Sabari appears in Ram Charit Manas in Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precede Doha no. 34, to Doha no. 36. In these verses of Ram Charit Manas, the episode of Sabari is described in detail.]

प्रानप्रिय पाहुने ऐहैं राम–लषन मेरे आजु।
जानत जन–जियकी मृदु चित राम गरीबनिवाज।।
मृदु चित गरीबनिवाज आजु बिराजिहैं गृह आइकै।
ब्रह्मादि संकर–गौरी पूजित पुजिहौं अब जाइकै।।
लहि नाथ हौं रघुनाथ–बानो पतितपावन पाइकै।
दुहु ओर लाहु अघाइ तुलसी तीसरेहु गुन गाइकै।। 2।।

(3/17-2)

prānapriya pāhunē aihaiṁ rāma-laṣana mērē āju.
jānata jana-jiyakī mr̥du cita rāma garībanivāja..
mr̥du cita garībanivāja āju birājihaiṁ gr̥ha ā'ikai.
brahmādi saṅkara-gaurī pūjita pujihauṁ aba jā'ikai..
lahi nātha hauṁ raghunātha-bānō patitapāvana pā'ikai.
duhu ōra lāhu aghā'i tulasī tīsarēhu guna gā'ikai.. 2..

Verse no. 3/17/2—[She contemplates—] 'Ah! How lucky am I today that my dearer-than-life guests Sri Ram and Laxman would come.

Lord Sri Ram—who is of a sweet temperament, is the sustainer and benefactor of the underdog, the poor, lowly, humble and downtrodden—knows what is inside the mind of his devotees (because he is all-knowing, all-pervading, omniscient, omnipresent and resides in the heart of his devotees).

Now, I shall (go and) worship Lord Sri Ram who is worshipped by Brahma, Shiva, Parvati and other Gods.

Invoking Raghunath's (Sri Ram's) promise and famed glories that he makes even the downtrodden, the sinful, the lowly and the wretched ones into pure and holy ones, I shall now see him as my "Lord" (i.e. as my benefactor, liberator, purifier, sustainer and protector as well as one who provides for my succour and solace).

Thereby, I shall, as a result, reap multifold benefits: the rarest of rare rewards that one can have in this existential world (i.e. I will be getting the rewards of being alive, and especially at a time when the Lord has manifested himself on this earth and is passing this way so that I can personally serve and worship him), and also the rarest of rare rewards by way of spiritual bliss and beatitude that comes with attaining liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Besides this, the third beneficiary would by Tulsidas who would benefit by singing the virtues and glories of the Lord for eternity[1] (3/17/2).'

[[1]The point to note here is that Sabari has kept Tulsidas in mind while thinking of the benefits she will get on seeing Sri Ram. Perhaps Tulsidas was present as a 'spirit' on that occasion to witness that rarest of rare occasion just as he was present at Janakpur garden where Sri Ram had met Sita. Lovely indeed!

Sabari would become Videha Mukta, i.e. she would discard her gross mortal body and attain salvation and emancipation when she meets Lord Ram, while Tulsidas would become Jivan Mukta, i.e. he would continue to live in this body but attain an equivalent sense of bliss and beatitude by singing the divine stories of Lord Ram as well as the Lord's holy name and glories for as long as he does not one day attain the same fate as that of Sabari!

The narration of these verses is in the present tense which also indicates the poet's presence on the occasion in a 'spirit' form. Here he acts as a scribe, a correspondent, a first hand witness to the unfolding drama of ardent devotion, matchless faith and conviction, as well as of the liberation of a downtrodden, an outcaste and an old wretched lady who was lifted instantaneously to a pedestal higher than that of a mother. This will be evident as we read on—]

(3 / 17/3)

दोना रुचिर रचे पूरन कंद–मूल, फल–फूल।
अनुपम अमियहुतें अंबक अवलोकत अनुकूल।।
अनुकूल अंबक अंब ज्यों निज डिंब हित सब आनिकै।
सुंदर सनेहसुधा सहस जनु सरस राखे सानिकै।।
छन भवन, छन बाहर, बिलोकति पंथ भूपर पानिकै।
दोउ भाइ आये सबरिकाके प्रेम–पन पहिचानिकै।। 3।।

(3/17-3)

dōnā rucira racē pūrana kanda-mūla, phala-phūla.
anupama amiyahutēṁ ambaka avalōkata anukūla..
anukūla ambaka amba jyōṁ nija ḍimba hita saba ānikai.
sundara sanēhasudhā sahasa janu sarasa rākhē sānikai..
chana bhavana, chana bāhara, bilōkati pantha bhūpara pānikai.
dō'u bhā'i āyē sabarikākē prēma-pana pahicānikai.. 3..

Verse no. 3/17/3—Then, Sabari made beautiful cups or bowls (out of green and freshly plucked leaves), and filled them with the most pleasant, the sweetest and the most appealing edible roots, stems, fruits and flowers that she could find, all of which were most succulent, tastier than Amrit (elixir of life) and most charming to behold.

Even as a mother gathers, prepares and keeps the best of things for her loving child, she brought most attractive and lovely fruits etc. for the Lord, dipped them symbolically in the nectar of love and affection which was thousands of times more succulent and sweeter than Amrit, and kept them away safely for Lord Sri Ram.

She spiritedly went inside her hut one moment, came out horridly a moment later, shaded her old worn-out eyes with her palms that acted like a hood over her thick set of eyebrows, and looked intently, expectantly, yearningly and most eagerly down the path from where Lord Sri Ram was expected to approach her hermitage.

Just at that moment, realizing the intensity of Sabari's love, affection, devotion, endearment and yearning, the two brothers came to her Ashram (3/17/3).

(3 / 17/4)

स्रवन सुनत चली, आवत देखि लषन–रघुराउ।
सिथिल सनेह कहै, 'है सुपना बिधि, कैधौं सति भाउ'।।
सति भाउ कै सपनो ? निहारि कुमार कोसलरायके।

गहे चरन, जे अघहरन नत–जन–बचन–मानस–कायके।।
लघु–भाग–भाजन उदधि उमग्यो लाभ–सुख चित चाय कै।
सो जननि ज्यों आदरी सानुज, राम भूखे भायकै।। 4।।

(3/17-4)

sravana sunata calī, āvata dēkhi laṣana-raghurā'u.
sithila sanēha kahai, 'hai supanā bidhi, kaidhauṁ sati bhā'u'..
sati bhā'u kai sapanō? nihāri kumāra kōsalarāyakē.
gahē carana, jē aghaharana nata-jana-bacana-mānasa-kāyakē..
laghu-bhāga-bhājana udadhi umagyō lābha-sukha cita cāya kai.
sō janani jyōṁ ādarī sānuja, rāma bhūkhē bhāyakai.. 4..

Verse no. 3/17/4—When Sabari heard of the arrival of Lord Sri Ram and Laxman, she went forward, and seeing them with her eyes she became overwhelmed with affection, wondering in amazement at her good fortune and the divine sight she beheld—'Oh God! Is this a dream or a reality?'

Saying this, she welcomed the Lord by falling at his feet and clasping them with her hands. These are the same holy feet that provide liberation to the devotees from all their sins. [This is because the Lord's holy feet are not only so pure and holy but they also possess so great a dynamic force and energy in them that any thing that is unholy and unclean immediately is transmewed into one that is holy and clean as soon as it comes into contact with these feet.]

Realising that she is immensely blessed, most fortunate, exceptionally lucky and very privileged though being of a low birth, an ocean of joy emerged from Sabari's heart. The Lord regarded her as if she was his own mother. (3/17/4).

(3 / 17/5)

प्रेम–पट पाँवड़े देत, सुअरघ बिलोचन–बारि।
आस्रम लै दिए आसन पंकज–पाँय पखारि।।
पद–पंकजात पखारि पूजे, पंथ–श्रम–बिरति भये।
फल–फूल अंकुर–मूल धरे सुधारि भरि दोना नये।।
पुभु खात पुलकित गात, स्वाद सराहि आदर जनु जये।
फल चारिहू फल चारि दहि, परचारि–फल सबरी दये।। 5।।

(3/17-5)

prēma-paṭa pāmvaṛē dēta, su'aragha bilōcana-bāri.
āsrama lai di'ē āsana paṅkaja-pāmya pakhāri..
pada-paṅkajāta pakhāri pūjē, pantha-śrama-birati bhayē.
phala-phūla aṅkura-mūla dharē sudhāri bhari dōnā nayē..
pubhu khāta pulakita gāta, svāda sarāhi ādara janu jayē.

phala cārihū phala cāri dahi, paracāri-phala sabarī dayē.. 5..

Verse no. 3/17/5—She laid a red-carpet of affection to welcome them (Sri Ram and Laxman), washed their feet by the water of her tears, and then brought them reverentially inside the hermitage and seated them.

She washed Lord Ram's feet and worshipped him, and this helped Lord Ram to overcome the weariness of the journey. Then she brought edible bulbs, roots, fruits, and germinated seeds etc. in new bowls made of leaves and placed them in front of them (Sri Ram-Laxman). Lord Ram started eating them, all the while relishing them and enjoying their delicious taste—thereby showing his due respects to the poor old woman.

Symbolically, Lord Ram, by eating those fruits, devoured all the four worldly fruits[1] that Sabari may have accumulated over time due to her austerities and penances, while compensating her with divine fruits that are far superior and rarer to obtain (in the form of spiritual bliss and beatitude, as well as liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for her soul). (3/17/5).

[[1]The usual fruits or rewards one gets for a well-conducted life are the following: "Artha" (prosperity), "Dharma" (righteousness), "Kaam" (wish fulfillment), and "Moksha" (freedom). But these rewards are not imperishable and it may happen that they may be nullified by some evil deeds done by the creature evan unawares.

So, Lord Ram replaced these transient rewards with the fruit of devotion and eternal bliss that are a rarity to attain.]

(3 / 17/6)

सुमन बरषि, हरषे सुर, मुनि मुदित सराहि सिहात।
'केहि रुचि केहि छुधा सानुज माँगि माँगि प्रभु खात।।
प्रभु खात माँगत देति सबरी, राम भोगी जागके'।
पुलकत प्रसंसत सिद्ध–सिव–सनकादि भाजन भागके।।
बालक सुमित्रा कौसिलाके पाहुने फल–सागके।
सुनि समुझि तुलसी जानु रामहि बस अमल अनुरागके।। 6।।

(3/17-6)

sumana baraṣi, haraṣē sura, muni mudita sarāhi sihāta.
'kēhi ruci kēhi chudhā sānuja māmm̐gi māmm̐gi prabhu khāta..
prabhu khāta māmm̐gata dēti sabarī, rāma bhōgī jāgakē'.
pulakata prasansata sid'dha-siva-sanakādi bhājana bhāgakē..
bālaka sumitrā kausilākē pāhunē phala-sāgakē.
suni samujhi tulasī jānu rāmahi basa amala anurāgakē.. 6..

Verse no. 3/17/6—The Gods are happily showering flowers and feeling very glad, while the sages and saints too feel extremely delighted and praise Sabari for her good fortune.

They observed, 'Look how Lord Ram and Laxman are enjoying the offerings (of fruits, edible roots and stems) made by her (Sabari), and relishing their taste as if they were very hungry.

Lord Sri Ram (as the macrocosmic Viraat Purush or the Supreme Soul of creation) is the consumer of the various offerings made in a fire sacrifice. It is a great marvel that he is relishing these ordinary and humble fruits, desiring more of them, and Sabari is also repeatedly giving him the fruits one by one with great joy and cherish in her heart'.

This is how Sabari is being praised by the most exalted and fortunate persons such as the Siddhas (mystics, attained ones), sages Sankadi etc., and Lord Shiva. They all feel thrilled and emotional at the sight of the Lord being served by her.

Ah! The sons of Kaushalya and Sumitra (Sri Ram and Laxman respectively)[1] are partaking (or relishing, enjoying the taste of) raw fruits and vegetables offered to them (by Sabari) as her most honoured guests.

[[1]By referring to their mothers, Tulsidas means that Lord Sri Ram and Laxman were born to queens, were accustomed to most delicious of foods, and were pampered with the choicest of delicacies. But today, in order to uphold the sanctity of the old Sabari's love and affection for them, they are relishing raw fruits and vegetable products as if they were the most delicious and choicest of eatables offered in the royal palace by their respective mothers.]

Tulsidas asserts that after hearing what he (Tulsidas) says, one must become certain and convinced that Sri Ram is moved only by, or is subject to control only by, or can be overcome only by devotion and love which are sincere, pure and without any trace of deceit, and by nothing else[2].

[[2]Indeed, even the most humble, downtrodden, out castes and lowly creatures were embraced by Sri Ram relying on the basis of their having undiluted love, affection and devotion of the highest order for the Lord. Some of these examples are the following—the Kols, Kirats, Bhils (forest tribal), Nishad (the boatman), Guha (cave dwellers), vulture (Jatau), Sabari (the outcaste old lady), monkeys (Sugriv), bears (Jamvant), demons (Vibhishan) etc.] (3/17/6).

(3 / 17/7)

रघुबर अँचइ उठे, सबरी करि प्रनाम कर जोरि।
हौं बलि बलि गई, पुरई मंजु मनोरथ मोरि।।
पुरई मनोरथ, स्वारथहु परमारथहु पूरन करी।
अघ–अवगुनन्हिकी कोठरी करि कृपा मुद मंगल भरी।।
तापस–किरातिनि–कोल मृदु मूरति मनोहर मन धरी।
सिर नाइ, आयसु पाइ गवने, परमनिधि पाले परी।। 7।।

(3/17-7)

raghubara am̃ca'i uṭhē, sabarī kari pranāma kara jōri.
hauṁ bali bali ga'ī, pura'ī manjju manōratha mōri..
pura'ī manōratha, svārathahu paramārathahu pūrana karī.
agha-avagunanhikī kōṭharī kari kr̥pā muda maṅgala bharī..
tāpasa-kirātini-kōla mr̥du mūrati manōhara mana dharī.

sira nā'i, āyasu pā'i gavanē, paramanidhi pālē parī.. 7..

Verse no. 3/17/7—[After eating—] Raghubar (Sri Ram) drank a sip of water (i.e. he sipped a little quantity of water just enough to clean his mouth), and got up.

Then Sabari brought together her hands and joined her palms as a sign of surrender and prayer. She bowed her head reverentially before Lord Ram and said, 'I sacrifice myself upon you (literally, thank you very much indeed) for you have fulfilled my most earnest desire.

You have fulfilled my (life long) quest and have also satisfied my self interest related to this mundane existence (by accepting my fruits, by being my honoured guest and letting me serve you with the same affection as you would have allowed your own mother), as well as my spiritual well being (by ensuring my emancipation and salvation).

I was a store-house (treasury, fount) of sins, evils, vices, unrighteousness and what not, but you have (eliminated all these and) filled it instead with happiness, bliss, joy and auspiciousness.'

At that time, the hermits and sages who had practiced austerities and penances, as well as the Kirats and Kols and other such forest-dwelling tribes (who were present on that happy and auspicious occasion), established the Lord's beautiful, pleasant and magnificent image in their respective hearts, bowed their heads in front of him (in reverence and to pay obeisance), got his permission (to leave), obtained the most precious gift (literally, wealth) of devotion, affection and love for the Lord, and then went their ways. (3/17/7).

(3 / 17/8)

सिय–सुधि सब कही नख–सिख निरखि–निरखि दोउ भाइ।
दै दै प्रदच्छिना करति प्रनाम, न प्रेम अघाइ।।
अति प्रीति मानस राखि रामहि, राम–धामहि सो गई।
तेहि मातु–ज्यों रघुनाथ अपने हाथ जल–अंजलि दई।।
तुलसी–भनित, सबरी–प्रनति, रघुबर–प्रकृति करुनामई।
गावत, सुनत, समुझत भगति हिय होय प्रभु पद नित नई।। 8।।

(3/17-8)

siya-sudhi saba kahī nakha-sikha nirakhi-nirakhi dō'u bhā'i.
dai dai pradacchinā karati pranāma, na prēma aghā'i..
ati prīti mānasa rākhi rāmahi, rāma-dhāmahi sō ga'ī.
tēhi mātu-jyōṁ raghunātha apanē hātha jala-aṁjali da'ī..
tulasī-bhanita, sabarī-pranati, raghubara-prakr̥ti karunāma'ī.
gāvata, sunata, samujhata bhagati hiya hōya prabhu pada nita na'ī.. 8..

Verse no. 3/17/8—Sabari gave Lord Ram the entire news about Sita. Then, watching the beauteous countenance of the two brothers, she reverentially circumambulated them repeatedly even as her affection (motherly love) for them knew no bounds.

She made her heart the abode of Lord Ram, and brimming with devotion, she went to the heavenly abode of the Lord. Lord Ram cremated her and performed her last rites as befitting his own mother.

By singing the verses of Tulsidas, remembering the prayers and devotion of Sabari and singing the praises of the Lord of a benevolent and merciful nature, one can surely achieve the Eternal Blissful state of consciousness (existence) obtained by attaining the Shanti Pad (i.e. by obtaining the Holy Feet of the Lord that gives eternal peace and bliss to the soul of the creature). (3/17/3).

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

किष्किन्धाकाण्ड

ऋष्यमूकपर राम

राग केदारा

(4 / 1)

भूषन–बसन बिलोकत सियके।
प्रेम–बिबस मन, कंप पुलक तनु, नीरजनयन नीर भरे पियके।। 1।।
सकुचत कहत, सुमिरि उर उमगत, सील–सनेह–सुगुनगन तियके।
स्वामि–दसा–लखि लषन सखा कपि, पिघले हैं आँच माठ मानो घियके।।2।।
सोचत हानि मानि मन, गुनि–गुनि गये निघटि फल सकल सुकियके।
बरने जामवंत तेहि अवसर, बचन बिबेक बीररस बियके।। 3।।
धीर बीर सुनि समुझि परसपर, बल–उपाय उघटत निज हियके।
तुलसिदास यह समउ कहेतें कबि लागत निपट निठुर जड़ जियके।। 4।।

Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa

ōṁ

śrī sītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

r̥syamūkapara rāma

rāga kēdārā

bhūṣana-basana bilōkata siyakē.
prēma-bibasa mana, kampa pulaka tanu, nīrajanayana nīra bharē piyakē.. 1..
sakucata kahata, sumiri ura umagata, sīla-sanēha-sugunagana tiyakē.
svāmi-dasā-lakhi laṣana sakhā kapi, pighalē haiṁ āmm̐ca māṭha mānō ghiyakē..2..
sōcata hāni māni mana, guni-guni gayē nighaṭi phala sakala sukiyakē.
baranē jāmavanta tēhi avasara, bacana bibēka bīrarasa biyakē.. 3..
dhīra bīra suni samujhi parasapara, bala-upāya ughaṭata nija hiyakē.
tulasidāsa yaha sama'u kahētēṁ kabi lāgata nipaṭa niṭhura jaṛa jiyakē.. 4..

Lord Ram's meeting with Sugriv

Verse no. 4/1—[As advised by Sabari, Lord Ram wended his way towards Lake Pampa and seeing its pleasant surroundings he tarried there for a while to take rest and refresh himself as well as Laxman. From there the Lord moved to the foothills of the Rishyhamook mountain. Sugriv, the monkey prince of the kingdom of Kishkindha abided there with his few chosen companions after he was expelled from the capital by his elder brother Baali due to some unfortunate misunderstanding between the two brothers.

When Sugriv espied Lord Ram and Laxman wandering below he was sore affright, thinking that his inimical brother has sent some warrior to locate him and kill him in exile. So, to find out the truth, he sent Hanuman, one of his trusted companions. Hanuman, who in due course would become Lord Ram's most trusted and faithful follower and devotee, came down the slope disguised as a young Brahmin. He asked Lord Ram who he was and why was he wandering and looking here and there so eagerly as if searching for some lost thing. The Lord briefed him about his condition, whereby Hanuman immediately realized who he was: forsooth Lord Ram was no one else but Lord Vishnu for whose arrival the gods had been waiting for so long disguised as monkeys and bears as advised by their patriach Brahma, the creator. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 187 and Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it.

Hanuman and Lord Ram whereat had an emotional meeting, with Hanuman falling at the Lord's feet and clasping it with devotion, and Lord Ram lifting him and affectionately embracing him. After that, Hanuman told Lord Ram about his master Sugriv, and proposed that they become friends, with the assurance that Sugriv would do his best to help the Lord find and rescue Sita.

Lord Ram, wise as he was, realised that the enterprise of finding Sita and rescuing her was no mean task, and that he would need help in any form it came. If that help meant the support of an army, so much the better. So, seizing the opportunity, Lord readily agreed, whereat Hanuman made the two brothers sit on his shoulders and took them up the mountain to its summit.

Hanuman introduced the two brothers to Sugriv with a hint to the latter that if they became friends it would be for mutual benefit. To wit, Hanuman subtly hinted to Sugriv that Lord Ram may help him settle scores with his enemy brother Baali and restore his rightful claim to the throne of Kishkindha, and in return Sugriv must oblige

the Lord to locate and recover his wife Sita. It was a gain-gain situation for both, each being able to help the other's cause. So a solemn deal of friendship was made, with Hanuman and others as well as the fire as witnesses.

This part of the story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kiskindha Kand, from Chaupai line no.15 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 4.

After making friendship with Sugriv, Lord Ram sat down with him and both exchanged news and information about each other. Then Sugriv showed him some of the ornaments and pieces of clothes that Sita had thrown from the sky as Ravana's chariot was passing over the Rishyamook mountain towards Lanka. She thought it wisely that if anyone picks them up and showed them to the Lord when he comes that way searching for her trail, these things would help to convince the Lord that she was being taken in the direction where the Lord was heading. It also helped to establish the authenticity of Sugriv's story about his seeing Sita being taken away by Ravana.

Sugriv had picked them up at that time, and now he showed them to the Lord for identification. Then, Sugriv promised the Lord that he would do whatever was necessary and within his means to find Sita and get her back. This is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede Doha no. 5.

Now a word about the inhabitants of Kiskindha as being 'monkeys' would be in order. First of all, they weren't like some animal whose image is conjured up in the mind by the use of the word "monkey". This is clear in the very beginning of Kishkindha Kand. Lord Ram and Hanuman had conversed fluently with each other, and surely this dialogue was intelligible to both of them. It would be incredulous to think that a monkey, an animal that is, would talk in a tongue spoken by high-bred human prince. In Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas it is clearly said that they conversed in Sanskrit, the classical language spoken by educated humans; Hanuman's speech was immaculate in grammar and accent, and Lord Ram had praised him for his manners and articulate language. Refer Adhyatma Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 17-18.

Not only Hanuman, but Lord Ram was freely able to talk with others too amongst the so-called 'monkeys and bears'. Therefore in all sooth they weren't "animals" as we would be inclined to identify them and think of them with the common use of the word 'monkey' for the residents of the kingdom of Kishkindha.

So here lies the catch. The 'Monkey race of Kishkindha' were, in all logical probabilities, a forest-dwelling warrior tribe more like the 'Pygmies' of inter-tropical Africa. They were dwarfs in appearance, because compared to the ordinary height of a man of other human races they had a short stature, perhaps a 'two-cubit man'. There were many like tribes in Africa (such as Akka, the Doko, the Tiki-Tiki, the Wambilikimo etc.) that shared land that was surrounded by habitats of taller men.

This tribe sprouted from mutation of the human gene, and normal men took their abnormalities of their ugly contours and stunted growth, which was around four spans high, as having been caused because of some curse or because they were possessed by some demon or evil spirit. So this tribe was pushed to the fringes of civilization, and cast-off by the society they were forced out of habitated areas and into the wilderness of the forests and mountains. Thus, they moved south of the Vindhya mountain range and lived in the densely forested mountainous region in the present day state of Karnataka in South India. It was called Kishkindha in earlier times.

Living in the midst of the wild-life of the forest and the wilderness of the mountains, this tribe, with the passage of time, had to adopt itself to the life-style and

habits of the dwellers of the wilderness who were cut off from civilization and its trappings. They hunted and ate and lived like apes and monkeys, by way of necessity of survival, to adapt themselves to the forest and its cruel environs, becoming, over time, ferocious in nature and completely different and unrecognizable from their ancestors who were in the era gone by were pushed out by the society into the jungle. Their external appearances underwent gradual but sure metamorphosis, such as they grew long hairs over the whole body like felt, had long nails and agile limbs that could aid them to climb and leap from trees to suit life in the forest, yellow-eyed, black-faced and speaking a language alien to humankind. In South Africa, the aboriginals speak a tongue called 'Bantu' which is a corrupted version of the main language of the southern part of the continent.

These sort of unconventional men were encountered by Sindabad the Sailor in his third journey across the oceans where he and his companions met such men on the 'Mountain of the Zughb' as narrated in the original version of the legendary tale of the 1001 Arabian Nights.

Nevertheless, though quite at odds with what civilization knew as 'men', they traced their roots to the human race, of course to back in time by, say, a couple of dozen or even a hundred or so centuries. During the intervening long period of time, the original tribe may have multiplied and diversified into many sub-tribes much like the humans of the civilized world. Each went its own way, and populated far-off places on earth when their original home, the area around Kishkindha, could not support the demands of an ever-increasing population. This is why we read that when Lord Ram's army of monkeys was to be assembled, they came from 'all corners of the earth, and its members were of different appearances and of various countenances, means and habits'. But they had their capital city and headquarters at Kishkindha. It's like people today migrating to different corners of the planet to make a living, even settling down there, but they are rooted to their mother-land and always recognized by the country of their forefathers. [Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 19; (ii) Doha no. 21; Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 54; (b) Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Kiskindha Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 5-6.

Some were very wise among them, like among other members of the human race. Eager to relate to and trace their past roots, and to find ways to integrate with the society of the current time, as during the era of Lord Ram's birth in Treta-yug when the Lord had gone to Kishkindha on his way to search for his stolen wife Sita, these ancient inhabitants of Kishkindha made efforts to learn the modern language of India, which was Sanskrit. Some excelled in it—such as the case was with Hanuman. [Refer: Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Kiskindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 17-18.]

By this time of course, the present generation of humans around Kishkindha had all but forgotten the bitterness and the circumstances of castration of this primitive tribe of yore, and so there were few inhibitions for learning and interacting.

Coming back to our narration of the story as it appears in Geetawali, when Sugriv showed to Lord Ram the ornaments that Sita had dropped from the sky from the chariot in which she was being whisked away by Ravana to Lanka, the Lord recognized them, and holding them close to his heart he was jubilant because it proved that he was proceeding in the right direction, but at the same time he wailed as these ornaments refreshened her memory and caused the agony of separation to get stoked.]

On seeing Sita's ornaments, Lord Ram was thrilled; his eyes became wet with tears, and his heart overflowed with affection and joy (1).

He hesitated at overtly praising the glory of Sita[1], but her memory filled his heart with joy as well as grief. Seeing his condition, Laxman, Sugriv and other monkeys also felt very emotional as if butter has started melting on contact with (emotional) heat (2).

[[1]Sita was Lord Ram's wife, and therefore it would look highly unconventional and inappropriate to utter praises for her in front of other male companions.]

They became dejected and distressed at the thought of Sita's sufferings. At that time, the old bear-king called Jamvant consoled Lord Ram in different ways, using words of wisdom and courage (3).

Encouraged by him, the assembly began to ponder on ways to find and rescue Sita instead of wasting time in wailings and lamenting uselessly.

Addressing himself, Tulsidas says that a poet's heart appears to be emotionless, merciless and harsh because he is describing those moments (i.e. he should not describe such a pitiful and heart-wrenching scene, but there is no way out as he has to narrate the story as it happened)[2] (4).

[[2]Here, Tulsidas is referring to himself because he is the poet who is describing these moments. What he actually means is that one should not regard him as being merciless and heartless simply because he describes such poignant moments, but one should understand that as a poet and a scribe it is his moral duty that he narrates everything as it happened in a neutral manner, regardless of whether any event or moment is painful or not.]

सीताजीकी खोजका आदेश

(4/2)

प्रभु कपि–नायक बोलि कह्यो है।
बरषा गईं, सरद आईं, अब लगि नहि सिय–सोधु लह्यो है।। 1।।
जा कारन तजि लोकलाज, तनु राखि बियोग सह्यो है।
ताको तौ कपिराज आज लगि कछु न काज निबह्यो है।। 2।।
सुनि सुग्रीव सभीत नमित–मुख, उतरु न देन चह्यो है।
आइ गए हरि जूथ, देखि उर पूरि प्रमोद रह्यो है।। 3।।
पठये बदि–बदि अवधि दसहु दिसि, चले बलु सबनि गह्यो है।
तुलसी सिय लगि भव–दधिनिधि मनु फिर हरि चहत मह्यो है।। 4।।

sītājīkī khōjakā ādēśa

prabhu kapi-nāyaka bōli kahyō hai.
baraṣā ga'īṁ, sarada ā'īṁ, aba lagi nahi siya-sōdhu lahyō hai.. 1..
jā kārana taji lōkalāja, tanu rākhi biyōga sahyō hai.
tākō tau kapirāja āja lagi kachu na kāja nibahyō hai.. 2..
suni sugrīva sabhīta namita-mukha, utaru na dēna cahyō hai.
ā'i ga'ē hari jūtha, dēkhi ura pūri pramōda rahyō hai.. 3..
paṭhayē badi-badi avadhi dasahu disi, calē balu sabani gahyō hai.
tulasī siya lagi bhava-dadhinidhi manu phira hari cahata mahyō hai.. 4..

Search for Sita Begins

Verse no. 4/2—[Sugriv was made the king of Kishkindha by the intervention of Lord Ram. The Lord himself tarried on the summit of a mountain called 'Prabarshan' during the four wet months of the rainy season. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 11—to Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 12.

At the end of this period, Lord Ram sent Laxman to remind Sugriv of the promises he had made in connection with Sita, because as is the usual habit of all living beings, Sugriv had forgotten the Lord's work after he was crowned king and got involved in routine work of the realm, as well as in enjoying the comforts and pleasures of kinghood. Hereat, Sugriv assembled groups of wise and agile monkeys and bears and send them in all the directions to search for Sita, with strict injunction that they are to report in a month's time. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 22.]

Lord Ram summoned Sugriv and said, 'Brother! The rainy season has gone and winter has come, but you have not yet made any effort to search Sita (1) for whom I have borne this body (i.e. I have not died due to the sorrow of parting with my beloved in the hope that one day I will see her). You have not done my work yet (2).'

Hearing this polite admonishment from the Lord, Sugriv became afraid (that he has offended the Lord who has obliged him so much, and his inaction in helping the Lord and fulfilling his promises made to him at the time of making friendship on the Rishyamook mountain, he may invite the wrath and punishment of the Lord).

Sugriv humbly bowed his head in shame. At that moment, huge companies of monkeys arrived in the town of Kiskindha, and their arrival led to celebrations (3).

All of them were sent in the 10 directions[1] and ordered to report back within a specified time-frame[2].

Tulsidas says that it appeared that Lord Ram wished to churn the ocean in search of Sita (an allegory to the mythical churning of ocean by the demons and the gods in search of nectar) (4).

[[1]The 10 directions are the following = north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.

[2]In Ram Charit Manas it is mentioned that this time limit was one month. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 22.]

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

सुन्दरकाण्ड

अशोकवनमें हनूमान्

राग केदार

(5 / 1)

रजायसु रामको जब पायो।
गाल मेलि मुद्रिका, मुदित मन पवनपूत सिर नायो।। 1।।
भालुनाथ नल–नील साथ चले, बली बालिको जायो।
फरकि सुअँग भए सगुन, कहत मानो मग मुद–मंगल छायो।। 2।।
देखि बिवर, सुधि पाइ गीधसों सबनि अपनो बलु मायो।
सुमिरि राम, तकि तरकि तोयनिधि, लंक लूक–सो आयो।। 3।।
खोजत घर घर, जनु दरिद्र–मनु फिरत लागि धन धायो।
तुलसी सिय बिलोकि पुलक्यो तनु, भूरिभाग भयो भायो।। 4।।

Sundarakāṇḍa

ōṁ

śrī sītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

aśōkavanamēṁ hanūmān

rāga kēdāra

(5/1)

rajāyasu rāmakō jaba pāyō.
gāla mēli mudrikā, mudita mana pavanapūta sira nāyō.. 1..

bhālunātha nala-nīla sātha calē, balī bālikō jāyō.
pharaki su'aṁga bha'ē saguna, kahata mānō maga muda-maṅgala chāyō.. 2..
dēkhi bivara, sudhi pā'i gīdhasōṁ sabani apanō balu māyō.
sumiri rāma, taki taraki tōyanidhi, laṅka lūka-sō āyō.. 3..
khōjata ghara ghara, janu daridra-manu phirata lāgi dhana dhāyō.
tulasī siya bilōki pulakyō tanu, bhūribhāga bhayō bhāyō.. 4..

Departure of Hanuman for Lanka

Verse no. 5/1—[When all the monkey groups sent to reconnoiter for Sita had been dispatched, one final group consisting of the chief members of Sugriv's court was awaiting orders from Lord Ram to proceed. It consisted of Hanuman, Angad, Jamvant, Nal and Neel etc.

Lord Ram, who was omniscient and all-knowing, knew who will finally accomplish success in this daunting task: it would be Hanuman. So the Lord called him close and gave him his personal signet ring to be taken to Sita for the purpose of establishing Hanuman's identity as well as a token to remind her that the Lord was on his way. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-13 that precede Doha no. 23.

This group headed southwards, in the direction where the chariot bearing Sita had gone through the sky. Finally, they reached the shores of the mighty "southern ocean", and seeing this formidable barrier, all lost hope.

Here, they met Sampati, the old brother of the vulture Jatau. When he discovered who these monkeys and bears were and their purpose of coming hither, he mounted the top of a mountain summit and gazed in the distant horizon whereat he descried Sita sitting forlorn and broken by distress under a tree in the royal garden of Ravana in the city of Lanka in the middle of the ocean. The question now was how to go there and who would do so.

At this juncture, Jamvant persuaded Hanuman to shed his withdrawn, humble, meek, submissive and docile nature, and instead come out in his true form and mettle. So encouraged, Hanuman assumed a colossal form, and prepared to leap across the ocean in one mighty leap. This part of the story is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Doha no. 23—Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 30.

The present verse no. 5/1 of Geetawali summarises these developments. From the ground Hanuman looked like a comet streaking against the dark firmament of the heavens as he made his way to Lanka.]

When Hanuman got Lord Ram's permission, he bowed his head reverentially at the holy feet of the Lord with an exhilarated mind, and kept (tucked away safely) the signet ring (given to him by Lord Ram as a token of recognition of Hanuman by Sita) in his mouth (gāla mēli mudrikā)[1] (1).

[[1]This freed both the hands of Hanuman and also ensured that the ring does not fall on the way. It is common observance that monkeys have a pouch of skin at the back of their mouths where they tuck away eatables quickly when they find some, only to retrieve it later on when they are at ease, and ruminate on it, chewing the food properly before actually swallowing it.

So, Hanuman tucked Lord Ram's signet ring safely here.]

Accompanying him on the mission (to find Sita) were Jamvant (the bear king), Nal, Neel (the engineers of the monkey army), and Angad, the brave son of Baali. At the time of departure, the parts of their bodies began to flutter or quiver to indicate auspicious results (or success in their endeavours), and a happy and comfortable journey (2).

On the way, they came across a cave and examined (or explored) it, found Sampati, the king of vultures (and brother of Jatau) who told them the whereabouts of Sita[2].

(Realising that they have a vast ocean stretching before them which has to be crossed twice—once while going to Lanka, and the second time to come back from there, besides the task of penetrating the impregnable fort of Lanka and warding off the ferocious demons who will have to be fought and won over—) They (the bears and the monkeys) weighed (judged) their strengths and abilities. [All discovered that the they cannot match the task at hand.[3]]

(At last, on Jamvant's encouragement—) Hanuman remembered the potential powers of the holy name of Lord Sri Ram, glanced at the ocean (in both contempt as well as a challenge), jumped and crossed it (i.e. flew over it) like a bright streak of lightning (i.e. like a bright comet or meteor), and finally landed in Lanka[4] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 29.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 30.

[4]Hanuman looked at the ocean with 'contempt' because it was creating a formidable hurdle in fulfilling the Lord's task because of its stubbornness and arrogance. The ocean was haughty that no one can dare to cross it. Hanuman took it as a 'challenge', and wished to tell the ocean 'look, let us see who is stronger—try to stop me if you can. I have great faith in the strength of the Lord's holy name, and I'll invoke it while flying across you, and I dare you to stop me if you have the guts.']

Tulsidas says that even as a pauper (or anyone who is in dire need of money) wistfully wanders everywhere searching for money, Hanuman went from house to house in search of Sita, and when he finally saw her (in the Ashok grove), he was extremely thrilled and euphoric. In this way, having achieved his goal (or, being successful in his endeavour of finding Sita), he considered himself to be profoundly fortunate[5] (4).

[[5]After landing on the soil of Lanka, Hanuman had to first defeat the city's formidable gate-keeper, a demoness by the name of Lankini. Hanuman overcame her easily. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 4.

Having overcome this first hurdle, Hanuman began his search for Sita, looking into each home and place throughout the night, but could not espy her anywhere. Finally, on the next morning of his arrival, he met Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana who happened to be of a pious nature as opposed to the rest of the demon race. Vibhishan guided Hanuman to the garden where Ravana had kept Sita in confinement. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 5—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 8.

Thereafter, Hanuman silently sneaked in the garden and his himself in the thick foliage of the tree under which Sita stayed, contemplating upon his next move.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 5—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 9.]

(5 / 2)

देखी जानकी जब जाइ।
परम धीर समीरसुतके प्रेम उर न समाइ।। 1।।
कृस सरीर सुभाय सोभित, लगी उड़ि उड़ि धूलि।
मनहु मनसिज मोहनी–मनि गयो भोरे भूलि।। 2।।
रटति निसिबासर निरंतर राम राजिवनैन।
जात निकट न बिरहिनी–अरि अकनि ताते बैन।। 3।।
नाथके गुनगाथ कहि कपि दई मुँदरी डारि।
कथा सुनि उठि लई कर बर, रुचिर नाम निहारि।। 4।।
हृदय हरष–बिषाद अति पति–मुद्रिका पहिचानि।
दास तुलसी दसा सो केहि भाँति कहै बखानि ?।। 5।।

(5/2)

dēkhī jānakī jaba jā'i.
parama dhīra samīrasutakē prēma ura na samā'i.. 1..
kr̥sa sarīra subhāya sōbhita, lagī uḍi uḍi dhūli.
manahu manasija mōhanī-mani gayō bhōrē bhūli.. 2..
raṭati nisibāsara nirantara rāma rājivanaina.
jāta nikaṭa na birahinī-ari akani tātē baina.. 3..
nāthakē gunagātha kahi kapi da'ī mum̐darī ḍāri.
kathā suni uṭhi la'ī kara bara, rucira nāma nihāri.. 4..
hr̥daya haraṣa-biṣāda ati pati-mudrikā pahicāni.
dāsa tulasī dasā sō kēhi bhām̐ti kahai bakhāni?.. 5..

Hanuman in the Ashok Garden where he discovers Sita

Verse no. 5/2—After entering Lanka, when Hanuman saw Sita, his affection knew no limits and it virtually overflowed from his heart (1).

He found that Sita's body was emaciated but effused radiance. It was covered with dust (for she hadn't bathed for a long time), and she looked like Kamdeo (cupid) devoid of his glamour and glory (2).

She chanted Lord Ram's holy name day and night. Hearing her agony-filled words and laments, even the cool breeze did not go near her because it feared of getting heated by the fire of her agonies (3).

Seeing this pitiful condition of Sita, Hanuman began to sing praises of Lord Ram, and dropped the signet ring (of Lord Ram that he had brought).

Sita heard the praises and the life-history of Lord Ram, and noticing the ring, she picked it up (4).

Seeing her beloved's article, she was at once thrilled as well as overcome with grave sorrow[1]. Tulsidas says he is unable to describe that moment (5).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 12 along with Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow this Doha.

Sita was stunned when she first heard some unseen voice narrating the story of Lord Ram, and then seeing the Lord's ring dropped before her. She had never expected under the circumstances she was in both these things as she knew that the place was tightly secured by ferocious demons, and that it lied in the middle of the ocean which was like a no-man's land in the wilderness of creation. Till this moment she was virtually reconciled to her doomed fate, waiting for that day when her breath would finally leave her emaciated body.

But Hanuman's singing Lord Ram's glories and the signet ring of the Lord seemed like a bolt from the heaven to her. So, on the one hand she was exceptionally thrilled and ecstatic as one can ever be when one sees hope at the end of a dark tunnel, but on the other hand she immediately became suspicious and apprehensive. Is it that these demons have subdued or killed the Lord, and have brought his ring to prove it to her? Is it that they have sent one of their guards to tease her by singing the praises of the Lord before dropping the ring, thereby deriving sadistic and malicious pleasure at her compounded misery and grief?]

राग सोरठ

(5 / 3)

बोलि, बलि, मूँदरी ! सानुज कुसल कोसलपालु।
अमिय–बचन सुनाइ मेटहि बिरह–ज्वाला–जालु।। 1।।
कहत हित अपमान मैं कियो, होत हिय सोइ सालु।
रोष छमि सुधि करत कबहू ललित लछिमन लालु ?।। 2।।
परसपर पति–देवरहि का होति चरचा चालु।
देवि ! कहु केहि हेत बोले बिपुल बानर–भालु।। 3।।
सीलनिधि समरथ सुसाहिब दीनबंधु दयालु।
दास तुलसी प्रभुहि काहु न कह्यो मेरो हालु।। 4।।

rāga sōraṭha

(5/3)

bōli, bali, mūm̐darī! sānuja kusala kōsalapālu.
amiya-bacana sunā'i mēṭahi biraha-jvālā-jālu.. 1..
kahata hita apamāna maiṁ kiyō, hōta hiya sō'i sālu.
rōṣa chami sudhi karata kabahū lalita lachimana lālu?.. 2..
parasapara pati-dēvarahi kā hōti caracā cālu.
dēvi! kahu kēhi hēta bōlē bipula bānara-bhālu.. 3..

sīlanidhi samaratha susāhiba dīnabandhu dayālu.
dāsa tulasī prabhuhi kāhu na kahyō mērō hālu.. 4..

Sita's astonishment when she saw the Signet Ring of Lord Ram

Verse no. 5/3—[Sita, stunned at seeing Lord Sri Ram's signet ring coming to her without any apparent bearer in sight, said—] 'Oh Ring! I offer (literally, surrender) myself to you, and I sincerely ask you: say, tell me, is the king of Kaushal clan (Lord Sri Ram) happy and well along with his younger brother?

Quench (or douse) my fire of torments and agonies of separation by letting me hear your nectar-like (sweet, pleasant, favourable and soothing) words. (In other words, tell me the good news about Lord Ram and Laxman.) (1).

Alas! I had scorned at, reproached and humiliated Laxman by using harsh words for him though he was most sincere and bonafide in his advice to me[1]. My heart never ceases to regret it. Does dear Laxman ever remember me; has he overcome his bitterness and anger and frustration at me? (2).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/6, stanza no. 2, and verse no. 3/7, stanza no. 2 herein above.]

What is the topic of discussion now-a-days between my husband and my brother-in-law? Goddess! Do tell me, why has he (Sri Ram) called so many bears and monkeys[2]? (3).

[[2]The question arises, how did she know that Lord Ram has collected bears and monkeys around him? Well, she had a good companion with her in the person of the demoness Tadka. It was she who used to reassure Sita every time the latter sank in deep despair—this will be clear later on in verse no. 5/47-5/51 of this chapter. The spies of Ravana were constantly bringing news of the developments in Kishkindha, and this leaked to the public and ultimately reached the ears of Sita through Trijata. So, Sita was not totally unaware about Sri Ram though she might not have been aware of the details. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 12 where we read that Trijata has assured Sita that things would be alright if she holds her courage just before Hanuman dropped the ring.]

Oh Ring! The Lord is a treasury of virtues and courage, is potent and able in every respect, is a true Lord and Master (having all the good virtues that is expected of them), is a friend of the distressed, the lowly, the humble, the underdog, the downtrodden and the miserable ones, and is most kind, merciful and compassionate. It appears that no one has conveyed my news (about my whereabouts, my pathetic condition etc.) to the Lord till now (otherwise, he wouldn't have delayed so much) (4).

(5/4)

सदल सलषन हैं कुसल कृपालु कोसल राउ !
सील–सदन सनहे–सागर सहज सरल सुभाउ।। 1।।

नींद–भूख न देवरहि, परिहरेको पछिताउ।
धीरधुर रघुबीरको नहि सपनेहु चित चाउ।। 2।।
सोधु बिनु, अनुरोध रितुके, बोध बिहित उपाउ।
करत हैं सोइ समय साधन, फलति बनत बनाउ।। 3।।
पठए कपि दिसि दसहु, जे प्रभुकाज कुटिल न काउ।
बोलि लियो हनुमान करि सनमान, जानि समाउ।। 4।।
दई हौं संकेत कहि, कुसलात सियहि सुनाउ।
देखि दुर्ग, बिसेषि जानकि, जानि रिपु–गति आउ।। 5।।
कियो सीय–प्रबोध मुँदरी, दियो कपिहि लखाउ।
पाइ अवसर, नाइ सिर तुलसीस–गुनगन गाउ।। 6।।

(5/4)

sadala salaṣana haiṁ kusala kr̥pālu kōsala rā'u!
sīla-sadana sanahē-sāgara sahaja sarala subhā'u.. 1..
nīnda-bhūkha na dēvarahi, pariharēkō pachitā'u.
dhīradhura raghubīrakō nahi sapanēhu cita cā'u.. 2..
sōdhu binu, anurōdha ritukē, bōdha bihita upā'u.
karata haiṁ sō'i samaya sādhana, phalati banata banā'u.. 3..
paṭha'ē kapi disi dasahu, jē prabhukāja kuṭila na kā'u.
bōli liyō hanumāna kari sanamāna, jāni samā'u.. 4..
da'ī hauṁ saṅkēta kahi, kusalāta siyahi sunā'u.
dēkhi durga, bisēṣi jānaki, jāni ripu-gati ā'u.. 5..
kiyō sīya-prabōdha mum̆darī, diyō kapihi lakhā'u.
pā'i avasara, nā'i sira tulasīsa-gunagana gā'u.. 6..

The Signet Ring's reply and assurance to Sita

Verse no. 5/4—[The signet ring replied[1]—] 'The most merciful, compassionate, kind, benevolent and gracious Lord of the Kaushal clan (Sri Ram) is happy and comfortable with his army, companions and Laxman. He is by nature an abode of virtues and noble characters, is an ocean of affection and endearment and is of a simple, straight forward and humble temperament and bearing (1).

[[1]A ring does not speak. But this is the way employed by poets where they personify inanimate things and make them behave and speak like ordinary living beings. We have other examples of this tactic employed by poets: after Sita was abducted, Lord Ram had started his search for her by asking the trees, creepers, birds and animals if they knew where she was. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-16 that precede Doha no. 30.

Some very interesting modern-day interpretations can be made with regards to this signet ring speaking. It could have been, perhaps, a pre-recorded message from Sri Ram himself. Or the ring had a remote controlled transmitter or speaker, operated by Hanuman hiding behind the leaves. Stanza no. 5 is also very amusing—'and Sri Ram gave Hanuman certain clues or hints...' which probably can mean 'gave direction to Hanuman how to operate the device'.

Further, the ring could also have incorporated in it an in-built navigational device which guided Hanuman during his cruise across the ocean.

All these are not mere flight of imagination. If the science of that age was advanced enough to design a plane called Pushpak which was pilot-less and could be steered by mere thought waves, no wonder such devices were in existence. Tulsidas was a poet all right, but he wasn't exaggerating things beyond a certain limit. He couldn't say 'the ring spoke' if it didn't. So, the only possible conclusion and plausible explanation is as proposed above.]

Your brother-in-law has forsaken his sleep and hunger, for he is full of regret and contrition that he had left you alone inspite of your scornful words of reproachment that you spoke to him. As a result he has stopped eating and sleeping properly.

On the other hand, Lord Raghubir (i.e. Lord Ram), who is very courageous, brave and valiant, has no happiness in his mind even in his dreams (2).

It was because of the rainy season that attempts could not be made to begin the search for you. Now, when the appropriate (and favourable) time has come, necessary arrangements are being made and resources put together so that success can be assuredly achieved. [That is, all efforts are being made to find about your whereabouts, and then a campaign would be launched in a well-planned manner so that you can be rescued from here. Have patience meanwhile, and be assured that none of the two brothers have neglected you.] (3).

With this aim or task in view, he (Sri Ram) has sent such monkeys (and bears) in all the 10 directions who will never show carelessness, negligence or apathy towards the Lord's work. However, recognising the fact that only Hanuman was competent enough to accomplish this herculean task, he (Sri Ram) summoned him (Hanuman) (4).

And, the Lord gave Hanuman some clues and indications, including giving me to him, and ordered, 'Tell Sita about our well-being. Have a good look at the enemy's fort, and reconnoitre about his strength, preparedness and armour. Take special care to meet Sita (to reassure her and to see her first hand) before coming back.' (5).

In this way, the signet ring reassured Sita and showed her the hiding place of Hanuman.

Thereafter, Hanuman (came out from behind the foliage where he had concealed himself), seeing that it was the right moment, and then bowed his head before Sita (to pay his obeisance) and began to sing (narrate, describe) the virtues, glories and fame of Tulsidas' Lord (6).

(5 / 5)

सुवन समीरको धीरधुरीन, बीर–बड़ोइ।
देखि गति सिय–मुद्रिकाकी बाल ज्यों दियो रोइ।। 1।।
अकनि कटु बानी कुटिलकी क्रोध–बिंध्य बढ़ोइ।
सकुचि सम भयो ईंस–आयसु–कलसभव जिय जोइ।। 2।।
बुद्धि–बल, साहस–पराक्रम अछत राखे गोइ।

सकल साज–समाज साधक समउ, कहै सब कोइ।। 3।।
उतरि तरुतें नमत पद, सकुचात सोचत सोइ।
चुके अवसर मनहु सुजनहि सुजन सनमुख होइ।। 4।।
कहे बचन बिनीत प्रीति–प्रतीति–नीति निचोइ।
सीय सुनि हनुमान जान्यौ भली भाँति भलोइ।। 5।।
देबि ! बिनु करतूति कहिबो जानिहैं लघु लोइ।
कहौंगो मुखकी समरसरि कालि कारिख धोइ।। 6।।
करत कछू न बनत, हरिहिय हरष–सोक समोइ।
कहत मन तुलसीस लंका करहुँ सघन घमोइ।। 7।।

(5/5)

suvana samīrakō dhīradhurīna, bīra-baṛō'i.
dēkhi gati siya-mudrikākī bāla jyōṁ diyō rō'i.. 1..
akani kaṭu bānī kuṭilakī krōdha-bindhya baṛhō'i.
sakuci sama bhayō īnsa-āyasu-kalasabhava jiya jō'i.. 2..
bud'dhi-bala, sāhasa-parākrama achata rākhē gō'i.
sakala sāja-samāja sādhaka sama'u, kahai saba kō'i.. 3..
utari tarutēṁ namata pada, sakucāta sōcata sō'i.
cukē avasara manahu sujanahi sujana sanamukha hō'i.. 4..
kahē bacana binīta prīti-pratīti-nīti nicō'i.
sīya suni hanumāna jān'yau bhalī bhāṁti bhalō'i.. 5..
dēbi! binu karatūti kahibō jānihaiṁ laghu lō'i.
kahauṅgō mukhakī samarasari kāli kārikha dhō'i.. 6..
karata kachū na banata, harihiya haraṣa-sōka samō'i.
kahata mana tulasīsa laṅkā karahuṁ saghana ghamō'i.. 7..

Hanuman's meeting with Sita--I

Verse no. 5/5—The son of the Wind God (suvana samīrakō) was most brave and courageous, but seeing the signet ring and Sita's pitiful condition (and hearing their sorrowful talk), he began weeping like a child (1).

Hearing the bitter, scornful and contemptible talk of the wicked demon Ravana[1], his (Hanuman's) anger and indignation had began to rise like Mt. Vindhyachal, but on seeing sage Agastya represented by Sri Ram's command (verse no. 5/4, stanza no. 5), it became hasitant, docile and reluctant, and remained under control[2] (2).

[[1]When Hanuman waited in hiding in the thick cover of foliage of the tree under which Sita was confined, Ravana had come to the garden and had threatened Sita with dire consequences if she did not surrender herself to him. Hanuman refers to this here. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 9—to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 10.

[2]Once, Mt. Vindhyachal asked the sun to circumambulate it. When the latter refused, the former got annoyed and began to rise to obstruct its path. Seeing a calamity in the offing, the Gods asked sage Agastya—who was the Guru of Vindhyachal—to restrain the mountain. The sage approached the haughty and

stubborn mountain, and the latter prostrated before his Guru in reverence. The sage asked him to remain at that position—flat, horizontal—till the time he came back again. It was simply a ruse. The sage never ever came back, and the mountain could not rise.

Here, when Hanuman watched the way Ravana treated Sita, he anger rose to a boiling point, but he had to restrain himself because he was told to just go and bring the news of Sita.]

Though he (Hanuman) possessed immense wisdom, intellect, strength, valour, courage and might etc. he suppressed (and restrained) them because everyone says (i.e. it is common belief or adage) that all resources and efforts give fruits (results) only when the time is opportune[3] (3).

[[3]Hanuman had decided in his mind that before he leaves Lanka he will teach Ravana a good lesson. But it was dangerous to act just now—for there were fair chances that in the melee that is bound to follow Ravana could draw his sword and harm Sita. So it was wiser to wait for some other more opportune time. And sure enough that time would come soon when Hanuman would destroy the royal garden on the pretext of eating fruits, would be caught by Ravana's henchmen, and then after a heated debate with the demon king where Hanuman would get an ample opportunity of insulting Ravana in full court, he would burn the city to ashes.]

Hanuman got down from the tree (where he had been hiding), bowed his head at the feet of Sita and became hesitant and pensive as if a gentleman misses an opportunity to be of some help to another noble person and then has to approach him with a guilty conscience. [To wit, Hanuman felt very sorry he could not punish Ravana right there, and had to bear with his harsh treatment of Sita.] (4).

Thereafter, Hanuman spoke polite words that were full of affection, respect and sincerity, words that were according to established principles of good manners, civility, etiquette and traditional wisdom. [He wished to assure Sita that he is cultured, well-mannered, polite and well-bred, and not some foul-mothed rascal out to torment her further.]

Hearing these (well regulated, apt, full of decorum, carefully weighed, civilised and courteous) words, Sita was assured (i.e. she realised) that Hanuman was a noble and gentle person (of good rearing and education) (5).

He said, 'Oh Goddess! Without taking any serious action that is compatible with what I wish to tell you, people would regard me as merely boasting with a loud mouth. Forsooth, I shall wash the black stain on my face in the river of battle tomorrow, and then speak to you.[4]' (6).

[[4]This stanza clearly indicates that Hanuman considered his circumstantial compulsion of tolerating whatever Ravana had said to Sita as a virtual cuff on his face and a stain, because he heard it being said right in his front without doing anything to punish the speaker. Refer also to verse no. 5/6, stanza no. 2 herein below.

During his meeting with Sita, Hanuman will assure her that soon Lord Ram would come with a huge army of monkeys and bears, and launch a fierce offensive to free her from the clutches of the demon. In this process, let he be sure, her tormentors would be sufficiently punished. Now, all this appeared to Sita as mere boast and she was very doubtful of it actually happening, especially when she observed the diminutive form of Hanuman who had sneaked in Lanka with a size not bigger than

an average mosquito. So, in order to overcome all her apprehensions, Hanuman had, for an fleeting moment, showed her the colossus form with which he had crossed the ocean, a sight that reassured her. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 15—to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 17.

The present stanza should be read in this context. Hanuman was getting ready to convey Lord Ram's message and give her the assurance as noted above. But just a few moments ago Sita was tormented by Ravana while Hanuman lay hidden in the foliage and sat there quietly. Immediately after the demon left, Hanuman appeared. So it must have been obvious to Sita, Hanuman rightly guessed, that he was witness to all that Ravana had said a while ago. If what he would soon say his companions are capable of doing, then why did he keep quiet when the opportunity arose and Ravana was just right in his front? Why did he not trounce him then and there and take Sita back? It is to address this question in Sita's mind that he makes the observations in this verse. Stanza nos. 2-3 also explain why Hanuman didn't react then.

So he told Sita that first he would remove this stain by squaring up the account with Ravana by trouncing his army to prove that he indeed is brave and valiant and powerful as he claims to be to assure Sita, and then he goes on to tell her that a huge army of monkeys and bears is poised to launch an offensive to rescue her. He calculated that this would assure her that whatever Hanuman says is not mere boast but a fact as was proved by the developments that he plans to do now.

Now the question arises: how did Hanuman actually prove his strength and his vows to settle accounts with Ravana? As we read on with the story we shall soon see that he first destroyed a substantial part of the demon army, and then finding an excuse he had burnt the city of Lanka to ashes. Refer stanza no. 7 of this present verse, as well as (a) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 26; and (b) more vividly described in Kavitawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 5/3—5/25.]

Hanuman could not in the beginning decide what to do (and how to punish Ravana) because overwhelming sorrows (at the pitiful condition of Sita) and surging indignation and anger (at her treatment at the hands of Ravana) had made him indecisive[5].

At the end, the Lord of Tulsidas (i.e. Hanuman) decided in his mind that he would pound, plummet, batter and pulverise Lanka to a pulp (i.e. he would reduce the golden city to a mound of rubble) (7).

[[5]It was wise of him, indeed, to hold back at that time. One should always take action when the mind is cool and calculating. An agitated mind leads to bellicose and rash actions which might prove counter productive. The situation at that time was too dangerous for Hanuman to intervene, for there were fair chances that Ravana would draw his scythe and go for Sita's head immediately. Besides this, if he had intervened at that time, Hanuman would not have got a chance to sternly rebuke Ravana and trounce his pride in full public view as would be possible if he somehow confronts the demon in his court. Then, Sita would also be out of harm's way. So Hanuman decided to wait and watch.]

हौं रघुबंसमनि को दूत।
मातु मानु प्रतीति जानकि ! जानि मारुतपूत।। 1।।
मैं सुनी बातैं असैली, जे कही निसिचर नीच।
क्यों न मारै गाल, बैठो काल–डाढ़नि बीच।। 2।।
निदरि अरि, रघुबीर–बल लै जाउँ जौ हठि आज।
डरौं आयसु–भंगतें, अरु बिगरिहै सुरकाज।। 3।।
बाँधि बारिधि, साधि रिपु, दिन चारिमें दोउ बीर।
मिलहिंगे कपि–भालु–दल सँग, जननि ! उर धरु धीर।। 4।।
चित्रकूट–कथा, कुसल कहि सीस नायो कीस।
सुहृद–सेवक नाथको लखि दई अचल असीस।। 5।।
भये सीतल स्रवन–तन–मन सुने बचन–पियूष।
दास तुलसी रही नयननि दरसहीकी भूख।। 6।।

rāga kēdārā

(5/6)

hauṁ raghubansamani kō dūta.
mātu mānu pratīti jānaki! jāni mārutapūta.. 1..
maiṁ sunī bātaiṁ asailī, jē kahī nisicara nīca.
kyōṁ na mārai gāla, baiṭhō kāla-ḍāṛhani bīca.. 2..
nidari ari, raghubīra-bala lai jā'umँ jau haṭhi āja.
ḍarauṁ āyasu-bhaṅgatēṁ, aru bigarihai surakāja.. 3..
bāmँdhi bāridhi, sādhi ripu, dina cārimēṁ dō'u bīra.
milahiṅgē kapi-bhālu-dala samँga, janani! ura dharu dhīra.. 4..
citrakūṭa-kathā, kusala kahi sīsa nāyō kīsa.
suhṛda-sēvaka nāthakō lakhi da'ī acala asīsa.. 5..
bhayē sītala sravana-tana-mana sunē bacana-piyūṣa.
dāsa tulasī rahī nayanani darasahīkī bhūkha.. 6..

Hanuman's Assurance to Sita

Verse no. 5/6—[Hanuman introduces himself to Sita and assures her that her freedom would come soon. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 15—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16.]

Hanuman said to Sita, 'Mother Janki, believe me! I am a messenger of him who is the jewel in the family of kings of the Raghu dynasty (i.e. Lord Sri Ram; "hauṁ raghubansamani kō dūta"); I am the son of the Wind-God (mārutapūta) (1).

I have heard all the mischievous things which Ravana had said[1]; he is in the jaws of death, so his mind has gone wild and astray (2).

[[1]Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 9—to Doha no. 10 describe what Ravana had said even as Hanuman lay hidden in the foliage of the same tree under the shadow of which Sita sat. In essence, Ravana threatened her with death if she did not agree to surrender herself to him within a month's time. At this, Sita had strongly rebuffed him, whereat Ravana got exceedingly peeved and poured vitriol at her, appointing demonesses to torment her.]

I can defeat the enemy and forcefully take you back, today itself. But I'm afraid to break my Lord's order (because Hanuman's brief was to go, search and report back about Sita, and do nothing more), as well as my intervention may hamper the God's work (because Lord Ram was destined to destroy the entire loto of the demons who were tormenting the Gods, and so it would be very improper to interfere with what the Creator has ordained) (3).

So, Mother, have patience—the two brothers (Ram and Laxman) will construct a bridge within the next four days across the ocean, and accompanied by an army of bears and monkeys, they shall come and meet you[2] (4).'

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 16.]

Then Hanuman reminded her about Jayant's episode at Chitrakoot[3] (with the twin purpose in mind viz.—one, to reassure Sita that anyone who hurts her will be punished by Lord Ram, and second, as a proof of his being Lord Ram's confidante and favourite because that episode was so secret that even Laxman did not know about it). Then he bowed his head in reverence. Thereafter, Sita blessed him[4] (5).

[[3]This incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Doha no. 3.

Jayant was the wicked son of Indra, the king of Gods. Once he decided to tease Lord Ram and Sita. So, diguised as a crow, he came and pricked Sita with its beak on her feet while Lord Ram lay to rest. Seeing blood oozing out of Sita's feet and the pervert crow crowing merrily nearby, the Lord got angry, and picking up a reed to act as an arrow, he shot it at Jayant. Terrified Jayant went around the whole of the heaven and the rest of the world in his attempt to hide or find someone to protect him. The reed-turned arrow pursued it wheresover he went, and no one durst to offer him protection. Finally, on the verge of collapse out of fatigue and sorely lamenting, he met Narad, the celestial sage, who advised him to go back and surrender at the feet of Lord Ram if he wishes to survive, for there is no power in the entire creation which can neutralise the Lord's wrath. Hence, Jayant went to Lord Ram and ask for forgiveness. Considering all the facts, and that since Jayant was the spoilt and pervert son of Indra and had assumed the form of a crow which is by nature crooked and meat-eater, and that he has come to surrender unconditionally, the Lord spared his life but took out one of his eyes because the arrow of the Lord, once shot, cannot go in vain.

This episode was unbeknown to Laxman. And it was good for Jayant that Laxman didn't know of it: for it was sure that had Laxman been aware of this mischief he would have certainly killed that wicked fellow then and there.

Lord Ram had told Hanuman to narrate it to Sita because it would help convince her that he was a genuine messenger of the Lord as this particular incident

was very confidential, and unless Lord Ram tells it to someone himself, no one would have been aware of it.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precedes Doha no. 17.]

Hearing the words of Hanuman, Sita's ears, heart and body found peace and solace[5]; now only her eyes were eager to quench their thirst for the sight of Lord Ram[6] (6).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 17.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 14.]

(5 / 7)

तात ! तोहूसों कहत होति हिये गलानि।
मनको प्रथम पन समुझि अछत तनु,
लखि नइ गति भइ मति मलानि।। 1।।
पियको बचन परिहर्‌यो जियके भरोसे,
संग चली बन बड़ो लाभ जानि।
पीतम–बिरह तौ सनेह सरबसु, सुत !
औसरको चूकिबो सरिस न हानि।। 2।।
आरज–सुवनके तो दया दुवनहुपर,
मोहि सोच, मोतें सब बिधि नसानि।
आपनी भलाई भलो कियो नाथ सबहीको,
मेरे ही दिन सब बिसरी बानि।। 3।।
नेम तो पपीहाहीके, प्रेम प्यारो मीनहीके,
तुलसी कही है नीके हृदय आनि।
इतनी कही सो कही सीय, ज्योंही त्योंही
रही, प्रीति परी सही, बिधिसों न बसानि।। 4।।

(5/7)

tāta! tōhūsōṁ kahata hōti hiyē galāni.
manakō prathama pana samujhi achata tanu,
lakhi na'i gati bha'i mati malāni.. 1..
piyakō bacana pariharyō jiyakē bharōsē,
saṅga calī bana baṛō lābha jāni.
pītama-biraha tau sanēha sarabasu, suta!
ausarakō cūkibō sarisa na hāni.. 2..
āraja-suvanakē tō dayā duvanahupara,
mōhi sōca, mōtēṁ saba bidhi nasāni.
āpanī bhalā'ī bhalō kiyō nātha sabahīkō,
mērē hī dina saba bisarī bāni.. 3..
nēma tō papīhāhīkē, prēma pyārō mīnahīkē,

tulasī kahī hai nīkē hr̥daya āni.
itanī kahī sō kahī sīya, jyōnhī tyōnhī
rahī, prīti parī sahī, bidhisōṁ na basāni.. 4..

Sita's reply to Hanuman

Verse no. 5/7—'Oh dear son (tāta)! I feel grieved and melancholic even while talking to you. Remembering my mind's primary (first) vow (that I shall not live without my belove husband), and finding that my body is still alive, my mind and intellect are full of gloom, contrition and remorse (1).

I had relied on (the firm conviction of) my mind and intellect, and had violated (or did not pay heed to) the advice of my husband and accompanied him to the forest thinking that (or under the impression that) it was in the best of my interests and well-being[1].

Oh Son! Separation from the husband and its accompanying sorrows, tribulations, agonies, miseries and pains are akin to snatching away everything there is to take away (or, that can be taken away) from the person representing the virtues of 'love and affection'[2].

It is true that if one loses a chance to prove the sincerity of oneself, there is no greater calamity (or damage to one's reputation) (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 61—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 68.

[2]Here, the virtues of love and affection have been personified. Sita simply means that she should have died when she was kidnapped, or forcibly separated from Sri Ram, but she regrets and laments that she did not. This was the argument she had proferred at Ayodhya when Sri Ram had asked her to stay back in the city. At that time, she had argued that it was not possible for her to survive without him. Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/6, stanza no. 3.]

'Arya Putra' (literally, a person belonging to the Aryan race, here meaning Sri Ram) has mercy and compassion even on his enemies (and opponents). My only regret is that everything went wrong for me. The Lord has been most benevolent, munificent and gracious on all—but when my turn (day, chance) came, he appeared to forget his natural temperament and habit[3]. [To wit, it appears to me, at least, that this is the reason why he is neglecting me, to teach me a lesson that I should have obeyed his commands at Ayodhya and stayed back instead of being stubborn and pretending to be too overtly devoted to him so much that I can't live without him! So now here I am: living without him!!] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 14.]

Forsooth and without gainsay it is true that it is only the 'Papiha' (the sparrow hawk) and the 'fish' that are true to their vows of love towards their respective objects[4], and this is why both of them have been rightfully honoured by the people after proper deliberations and scrutiny.'

Tulsidas says that after saying this much, Sita abruptly felt silent; this was enough to endorse her intensity of affection and love for the Lord. [Probably, Sita had

fainted, or was so overcome with grief and sorrows that she could not utter a word more.]

No one has control over what the Creator (of destiny) wants (4).

[[4]The 'Papiha' drinks only the rain drops falling from the sky during the appearance of a special asterism called the Swati Nakshatra, for this bird would prefer death to drinking any other form of water to survive. Likewise, the 'fish' will not survive without water. Their unflinching loyalty towards their lovers—rain and water respectively—are legendary. Sita here means that she would go down in history as an imposter and deceitful person who only pretended to have great love for her husband, for she did not die the instant she was separated from her. If her love would have been true like the sparrow hawk and the fish, she should have not survived so long without Lord Ram.]

(5/8)

मातु ! काहेको कहति अति बचन दीन ?
तबकी तुही जानति, अबकी हौं ही कहत,
सबके जियकी जानत प्रभु प्रबीन।। 1।।
ऐसे तो सोचहि न्याय निठुर–नायक–रत
सलभ, खग, कुरंग, कमल, मीन।
करुनानिधानको तो ज्यों ज्यों तनु छीन भयो,
त्यों त्यों मनु भयो तेरे प्रेम पीन।। 2।।
सियको सनेह, रघुबरकी दसा सुमिरि
पवनपूत देखि भयो प्रीति–लीन।
तुलसी जनको जननी प्रबोध कियो,
'समुझि तात ! जग बिधि–अधीन'।। 3।।

(5/8)

mātu! kāhēkō kahati ati bacana dīna?
tabakī tuhī jānati, abakī hauṁ hī kahata,
sabakē jiyakī jānata prabhu prabīna.. 1..
aisē tō sōcahi n'yāya niṭhura-nāyaka-rata
salabha, khaga, kuraṅga, kamala, mīna.
karunānidhānakō tō jyōṁ jyōṁ tanu chīna bhayō,
tyōṁ tyōṁ manu bhayō tērē prēma pīna.. 2..
siyakō sanēha, raghubarakī dasā sumiri
pavanapūta dēkhi bhayō prīti-līna.
tulasī janakō jananī prabōdha kiyō,
'samujhi tāta! jaga bidhi-adhīna'.. 3..

Verse no. 5/8—[Hanuman replied to Sita—] 'Mother (mātu)! Why do you speak so sorrowful and gloomy words that are full of despair and anguish? What sort of affection the Lord (Sri Ram) had for you earlier, you are the best person to judge it; but what he has for you now, I too am a witness to it.

The Lord is very expert and proficient in it, for he knows what is inside the heart of all (as he is omniscient, all-knowing, omnipresent and all-pervading). [To wit, why do you feel so depressed and say that Lord Ram has forgotten you or has less love for you. I have personally seen his distressed condition and the way he has been searching for you from forest to forest, wondering barefoot and wailing all the way. Forsooth I can vouchsafe that he is more concerned about you than you can ever imagine.][1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15.]

This kind of sorrow, mournful and distressful behaviour can suit those who endear themselves with stone-hearted, stern and cruel lovers, such as the 'moth' (which endears itself to the lamp and gets burnt by its flame), the 'Papiha' (sparrow hawk yearns for rain drops, but gets battered by hail and scorned by the cloud in the form of thunder), the 'deer' (who is attracted to music, and gets trapped and killed by the hunter), the 'lotus' (that opens its petals at day break, but gets scorched by the sun) and the 'fish' (that cannot survive without water, but the latter isn't bothered about the fish's welfare as is evident when shoals of fish die due to a variety of causes inspite of being surrounded by water on all sides). [That is to say, the 'wick of the lighted lamp', the 'rain-bearing cloud', the 'music used to lure the deer into the trap', the 'daylight of the sun', and the 'water' are not at all bothered about the good or bad fortune of their respective lovers.]

That is alright as far as they are concerned. But the condition of Lord Ram is absolutely different, and there is no comparison. [Hanuman makes this comment because Sita has alluded to the 'Papiha' and the 'fish' in verse no. 5/7, stanza no. 4 to chide Lord Ram in the guise of admonishing herself over the quality of love she has for the Lord, saying in effect that he has forgotten her and neglected her just like the cloud and the water neglect the Papiha and the fish respectively.]

Look, I have observed that even as the body of Sri Ram—who is an abode of mercy, compassion, kindness, benevolence, munificence, benediction and grace—gets gradually emaciated, his heart gets all the more robust and strengthened by the nourishment that it derives by the virtue of having love, endearment and affection for you.' (2).

Presently, seeing Sita's affection and recalling Raghubar's (Sri Ram's) condition, the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) was himself drenched and submerged in surging waves of love and affection. [To wit, Hanuman was overwhelmed with the emotions of pure love and affection for Lord Ram, and by the virtues of its purity and intensity, that he witnessed in his meeting with Sita.]

Tulsidas says that then, the mother (Sita) consoled and advised her son (Hanuman), saying, 'Oh dear son! This world (creation) is under the control of (i.e. is subservient) to the Creator. Understand this (and do not feel despaired or remorseful).' [Now, when Sita saw the distressed condition of Hanuman, she immediately recovered herself and regained her composure, encouraging him to have courage and fortitude, for she feared that at this crucial juncture if Hanuman lost his

wits and courage then everything would crumble and whatever chances there are of redemption would be lost for ever.] (3).

राग जैतश्री

(5 / 9)

कहु कपि ! कब रघुनाथ कृपा करि, हरिहैं निज बियोग संभव दुख।
राजिवनयन, मयन–अनेक–छबि, रबिकुल–कुमुद–सुखद,
मयंक–मुख।। 1।।
बिरह–अनल–स्वासा–समीर निज तनु जरिबे कहँ रही न कछु सक।
अति बल जल बरषत दोउ लोचन, दिन अरु रैन रहत
एकहि तक।। 2।।
सुदृढ़ ग्यान अवलंबि, सुनहु सुत ! राखति प्रान बिचारि दहन मत।
सगुन रूप, लीला–बिलास–सुख सुमिरति करति रहति
अंतरगत।। 3।।
सुनु हनुमंत ! अनंत–बंधु करुनासुभाव सीतल कोमल अति।
तुलसिदास यहि त्रास जानि जिय, बरु दुख सहौं, प्रगट
कहि न सकति।। 4।।

rāga jaitaśrī

(5/9)

kahu kapi! kaba raghunātha kṛpā kari, harihaiṁ nija biyōga sambhava dukha.
rājivanayana, mayana-anēka-chabi, rabikula-kumuda-sukhada, mayaṅka-mukha.. 1..
biraha-anala-svāsā-samīra nija tanu jaribē kahaṁ rahī na kachu saka.
ati bala jala baraṣata dō'u lōcana, dina aru raina rahata ēkahi taka.. 2..
sudṛṛha gyāna avalambi, sunahu suta! rākhati prāna bicāri dahana mata.
saguna rūpa, līlā-bilāsa-sukha sumirati karati rahati antaragata.. 3..
sunu hanumanta! ananta-bandhu karunāsubhāva sītala kōmala ati.
tulasidāsa yahi trāsa jāni jiya, baru dukha sahauṁ, pragaṭa kahi na sakati.. 4..

Sita's reply to Hanuman-I

Verse no. 5/9—[Then Sita said—] 'Say, Oh Monkey (kahu kapi)[1]! Tell me, will Lord Sri Ram ever come? Tell me, when will the Lord whose beauteous face is like the full moon's disc that provides happiness to the lily symbolising the exalted Solar race (in which Lord Ram was born), and say when will the Lord whose radiance is like that of millions of Kamdeos provide solace and succour to me by removing my agonies and pain arising out my separation from him?[2] (1).

[[1]The use of the word 'monkey' is not meant to be derogatory or demeaning in any manner whatsoever for Hanuman. Since the physical appearance of Hanuman

resembled that of a monkey, Sita used this word. Remember, she has also addressed him as 'son', 'dear' etc. How can a monkey be a human's son? These are affectionate and endearing forms of address.

[2]Lord Ram was born in the Sun Race, or the Solar Race. The lily flower thrives in the light of the moon. So here Sita means that Lord Ram provides happiness to the Solar-race just like the moon provides joy to the lily flower.

Kamdeo/cupid is the patron god of beauty and charm. Hence, Lord Ram is compared to this god here because he is extremely charming and handsome to behold.]

There is no doubt that my body would has been charred by the fierce fire of separation that was stoked by the wind called 'Pran Vayu' (a form of wind force which sustains life inside the body of all living beings). But howbeit I managed to survive because my these two eyes continued to douse the flame by constantly raining a torrent of water (tears). [This is why I could not die and my body could not be burnt.] (2).

Listen dear son (sunahu suta)! I have taken recourse to sound and solid wisdom, and with its help, I have been able to protect my life and prevent this body from being burnt (or scorched to death). [Now I shall tell you how I managed to survive.]

Forsooth, I had always, constantly and persistently, thought of (or concentrate my thoughts on) the Lord's divine form (which is called 'Sagun' or visible aspect or manifestation of the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Sri Ram), and I had been focusing my memory in remembering all his divine activities, and have all along been cherishing these sweet memories deep down in my heart. [To wit, this does not leave space for evil thoughts and forebodings to ever enter my heart. They give me sufficient courage, solace and succour, and in all sooth they act as a prop to support my morale from sinking to an abysmal low level.] (3).

Listen Hanuman! Laxman's brother ("ananta-bandhu"; i.e. Sri Ram[3]) is of a very merciful, compassionate and kind temperament, is extremely calm and poised, and is of an immense soft heart that has tender emotions (karunāsubhāva sītala kōmala ati).

Hence, realising that he will feel extremely distressed and sorrowful on hearing these things (i.e. about my woeful condition, how I managed to keep alive, my miseries, sorrows, troubles and tribulations), I cannot (or do not) say it overtly though I am in extreme distress and anguished, and going through intolerable miseries, agonies and pain[4] (4).

[[3]Laxman was a manifestation of Seshnath, the legendary Serpent on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu reclines on the surface of the celestial ocean. This Serpent is also called 'Anant'. Hence the phrase "ananta-bandhu" has been used by Sita for Lord Ram who is the brother of Laxman.

[4]To wit, I wish to keep my miseries secret and confined to myself. I prithee that you would also not tell much of it to Lord Ram when you return, except to give him a hint of my situation, because if he hears of my condition as truly as it stands, he would grieve exceedingly, I am certain of it. And I don't want him to feel sad and depressed and dejected as this is not the time for it. He has to remain strong and resolute at this crucial juncture, and if he feels weak in his heart and drops down on his knees in grief, everything will be lost. So it is wise for me to keep my agonies to myself and put up a brave face!

Refer to Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/15, stanza no. 2 in this context.]

राग केदारा

(5/10)

कबहूँ, कपि ! राघव आवहिंगे ?
मेरे नयनचकोर प्रीतिबस राकाससि मुख दिखरावहिंगे।। 1।।
मधुप, मराल, मोर, चातक है लोचन बहु प्रकार धावहिंगे।
अंग–अंग छबि भिन्न–भिन्न सुख निरखि–निरखि तहँ–तहँ छावहिंगे।। 2।।
बिरह–अगिनि जरि रही लता ज्यों कृपादृष्टि–जल पलुहावहिंगे।
निज बियोग–दुख जानि दयानिधि मधुर बचन कहि समुझावहिंगे।। 3।।
लोकपाल, सुर, नाग, मनुज सब परे बंदि कब मुकतावहिंगे?
रावनबध रघुनाथ–बिमल–जस नारदादि मुनिजन गावहिंगे।। 4।।
यह अभिलाष रैन–दिन मेरे, राज बिभीषन कब पावहिंगे।
तुलसिदास प्रभु मोहजनित भ्रम, भेदबुद्धि कब बिसरावहिंगे।। 5।।

rāga kēdārā

(5/10)

kabahūm̐, kapi! rāghava āvahiṅgē?
mērē nayanacakōra prītibasa rākāsasi mukha dikharāvahiṅgē.. 1..
madhupa, marāla, mōra, cātaka hvai lōcana bahu prakāra dhāvahiṅgē.
aṅga-aṅga chabi bhinna-bhinna sukha nirakhi-nirakhi taham̐-taham̐
chāvahiṅgē.. 2..
biraha-agini jari rahī latā jyōṁ kr̥pādr̥ṣṭi-jala paluhāvahiṅgē.
nija biyōga-dukha jāni dayānidhi madhura bacana kahi samujhāvahiṅgē.. 3..
lōkapāla, sura, nāga, manuja saba parē bandi kaba mukatāvahiṅgē?
rāvanabadha raghunātha-bimala-jasa nāradādi munijana gāvahiṅgē.. 4..
yaha abhilāṣa raina-dina mērē, rāja bibhīṣana kaba pāvahiṅgē.
tulasidāsa prabhu mōhajanita bhrama, bhēdabud'dhi kaba bisarāvahiṅgē.. 5..

Sita's reply to Hanuman-II

Verse no. 5/10—'Oh monkey! (See verse no. 5/9, stanza no. 1.) Will Raghav (Sri Ram) ever come? Will he ever show his moon-like face to my Chakor-like eyes which are enamoured by his love and affection[1]? (1).

[[1]The Chakor is the Indian red-legged partridge. This bird is said to be highly enamoured of the moon so much that it starts gazing at the moon as soon as it rises in the east, and continues to gaze at it till it sets in the west.]

When I see him, my eyes will rush forward in various modes and in different ways to see him and have a glimpse of him in the best possible way they can, transmewing

themselves into a bumble or a black-bee, a goose (or a swan), a peacock and a Papiha (the sparrow hawk) to enable me to have the best sight, the best view of Lord Ram's divine form from different perspectives and angles[2] (2).

[[2]Like a 'black or the bumble-bee', my eyes would rest on his lotus-like face, eyes, palms, and soles of his holy feet. Like a 'swan', they will swim in the lake represented by his navels Like a 'peacock', they will dance and spread their plumes on seeing his dark complexioned body that resembles dark rain-bearing clouds, complete with its dazzle of lightening that would come with the shine of the Pitambar the Lord wears. And like a bird 'Papiha' my eyes would rush to drink the nectar of beauty that would drop from this dark-as-cloud body of the Lord.]

Like a humble creeper, I am being scorched by the fire of separation. Will he revive me and make me blossom once again with the water of his merciful, compassionate and kind glance?

Will he—who is an abode of kindness and graciousness—console and comfort me with his sweet words, realising that I am tormented by the sorrows, pains and anguish of separation? (3).

The Lokpals (custodians of the various Lokas or worlds), the Gods, the legendary Serpents and Humans—all of them are lying locked up in the prison (of the demon Ravana). [That is, the demons have subdued them all, and no one is free from their tyranny.]

When will he (Sri Ram) liberate them, and when will Narad (the celestial sage) and other sages get an opportunity to hail the slaying of the demon Ravana, as well as the opportunity to sing about the pristine, pure and magnificent glories of Lord Raghunath (Sri Ram), and about the great, marvellous and stupendous great deeds that the Lord would have done? (4).

I am anxious, day and night, to know when Vibhishan shall be crowned as the sovereign (of Lanka)? And, when will the Lord forget and forgive me for first for the delusions I had (with respect to Marich whom I had erroneously thought to be a golden deer, and which error of judgement had led to such horrendous consequences), and then for my doubting the integrity and sincerity of Laxman (when he had tried to convince me that Lord Ram was in no danger, and I had utterly disregarded his advice and forced him to leave me alone in the wild forest and go to where the Lord was pursuing the deceitful deer)[3]? (5).

[[3]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/3—to 3/6.

Sita realized that it was she who is to blame for all the misfortunes and miseries that have befallen upon them all—herself as well as Lord Ram and Laxman. She sorely regrets that she had fallen prey to delusions, not realizing that there cannot be a living deer that has a golden hide. It was she who had insisted that Lord Ram bring it for her. That was not all: for it was she who had forced Laxman to go behind the Lord inspite of the former telling her that the sound she heard of his name being called out was made by Marich and it was not a call by Lord Ram seeking his help.

To wit, all the root of suffering can be traced back to her own foolishness, and therefore she is so worried if Lord Ram and Laxman would ever excuse her for her stupidity and stubborn nature.]

सत्य बचन सुनु मातु जानकी !
जनके दुख रघुनाथ दुखित अति, सहज प्रकृति करुनानिधानकी।। 1।।
तुव बियोग–संभव दारुन दुख बिसरि गई महिमा सुबानकी।
नतु कहु, कहँ रघुपति–सायक–रबि, तम–अनीक कहँ जातुधानकी।। 2।।
कहँ हम पशु साखामृग चंचल, बात कहौं मैं बिद्यमानकी !
कहँ हरि–सिव–अज–पूज्य–ग्यान–घन, नहि बिसरति वह लगनि कानकी।।3।।
तुव दरसन–संदेस सुनि हरिको बहुत भई अवलंब प्रानकी।
तुलसिदास गुन सुमिरि रामके प्रेम–मगन नहि सुधि अपानकी।। 4।।

(5/11)

satya bacana sunu mātu jānakī!
janakē dukha raghunātha dukhita ati, sahaja prakṛ̥ti karunānidhānakī.. 1..
tuva biyōga-sambhava dāruna dukha bisari ga'ī mahimā subānakī.
natu kahu, kahaṁ raghupati-sāyaka-rabi, tama-anīka kahaṁ jātudhānakī.. 2..
kahaṁ hama paśu sākhāmr̥ga cam̐cala, bāta kahauṁ maiṁ bidyamānakī!
kahaṁ hari-siva-aja-pūjya-gyāna-ghana, nahi bisarati vaha lagani kānakī..3..
tuva darasana-sandēsa suni harikō bahuta bha'ī avalamba prānakī.
tulasidāsa guna sumiri rāmakē prēma-magana nahi sudhi apānakī.. 4..

Hanuman Assures Sita of Lord Ram's Gracious Nature

Verse no. 5/11—[Hanuman replied—] 'Mother Janki ("mātu jānakī"; i.e. Mother Sita)! Here my truthful and sincere words. Lord Sri Ram is always sorrowful, distressed, anguished and full of remorse at the miseries, agonies, sorrows and distresses of his devotees—this is the natural temperament and habit of the Lord who is an abode of mercy, compassion and grace (1).

It is because of the intensity of the mental agonies generated by your separation that he has almost forgotten the potential powers of his arrows (and appears to be so dejected and despaired).

Otherwise, say, whereas on the one hand is the sun-like splendour of Sri Ram's arrows, and on the other hand are the demons representing darkness; so how could the latter have survived in the presence of the former? [How can darkness ever survive or prevail in the presence of the sun? It is just that he has forgotten this fact about the powers of his arrows because his intellect has been mired by and submerged in the sorrows of your separation so much that the Lord's intellect has virtually become numb and he has lost his wits.] (2).

I am telling you about ourselves—on the one hand are we, the fickle minded monkeys born as animals, and on the other hand is Lord Sri Ram who is most wise and intelligent as well as revered and worshipped by even the Trinity Gods consisting of (the creator) Brahma, (the sustainer) Vishnu and (the annihilator) Shiva. Inspite of this, I cannot forget how the Lord lends his ears to us and listens to our advice closely.

In order to have private discussion, to seek our personal opinion, and to give instructions, I cannot forget how he brings his head close to our ears as if we are equal in stature to him even though we are very humble creatures and no match for the Lord's exalted being. [To wit, the Lord is omniscient and all-knowing as well as so exalted that even the Trinity Gods pay their respects to him, while we are simple living beings and no match for him. Yet, the Lord is so gracious and kind that he listens to us and pays heed to our advice; he consults us on all matters though he need not.] (3).

When he had heard the news about you from the mouth of Sugriv, it was a kind of great prop or support for his life; the news rejuvenated his sagging spirits and injected life in his body.'

Tulsidas observes that by thus narrating the condition of Sri Ram and recalling his great virtues, noble bearing and excellent character, Hanuman was submerged (overwhelmed, imbued or soaked) in the virtues of love and affection for the Lord so much so that for some moments he even forgot who he was and what the prevailing situation was (i.e. he became unaware of his surroundings because of his surging emotions of love and affection for Lord Ram as he remembered the Lord's gracious nature) (4).

हनुमान् और रावणकी भेंट

राग कान्हरा

(5/12)

रावन ! जू पै राम रन रोषे।
को सहि सकै सुरासुर समरथ, बिसिष काल–दसननितें चोषे।। 1।।
तपबल, भुजबल, कै सनेह–बल सिव–बिरंचि नीकी बिधि तोषे।
सो फल राजसमाज–सुवन–जन आपु न नास आपने पोषे।। 2।।
तुला पिनाक, साहु नृप, त्रिभुवन भट–बटोरि सबके बल जोषे।
परसुराम–से सूरसिरोमनि पलमें भए खेतके धोषे।। 3।।
कालिकी बात बालिकी सुधि करि समुझि हिताहित खोलि झरोखे।
कह्यो कुमंत्रिनको न मानिये, बड़ी हानि, जिय जानि त्रिदोषे।। 4।।
जासु प्रसाद जनमि जग पुरषनि सागर सृजे, खने अरु सोखे।
तुलसिदास सो स्वामि न सूझ्यो, नयन बीस मंदिर के–से मोखे।। 5।।

hanūmān aura rāvaṇakī bhēm̐ṭa

rāga kānharā

(5/12)

rāvana! jū pai rāma rana rōṣē.
kō sahi sakai surāsura samaratha, bisiṣa kāla-dasananitēm̐ cōṣē.. 1..

tapabala, bhujabala, kai sanēha-bala siva-biran̄ci nīkī bidhi tōṣē.
sō phala rājasamāja-suvana-jana āpu na nāsa āpanē pōṣē.. 2..
tulā pināka, sāhu nr̥pa, tribhuvana bhaṭa-baṭōri sabakē bala jōṣē.
parasurāma-sē sūrasirōmani palamēm̐ bha'ē khētakē dhōṣē.. 3..
kālikī bāta bālikī sudhi kari samujhi hitāhita khōli jharōkhē.
kahyō kumantrinakō na māniyē, bar̥ī hāni, jiya jāni tridōṣē.. 4..
jāsu prasāda janami jaga puraṣani sāgara sr̥jē, khanē aru sōkhē.
tulasidāsa sō svāmi na sūjhyō, nayana bīsa mandira kē-sē mōkhē.. 5..

Hanuman meets Ravana-I

Verse no. 5/12—[As it happened, after Sita and Hanuman had exchanged their respective news and Hanuman had assured her that soon Lord Ram will come with the army of monkeys and bears to free her from the clutches of the demons by defeating and slaying them in the war to free her, he requested her permission to feed himself on the fruits of the trees in the orchard where she was held captive. Sita first expressed her reservations as she did not wish any harm to come to Hanuman, but judging that he was exceptionally powerful and would be able to trounce her tormentors, she gave her consent. Hereat, Hanuman started to eat fruits, and using this as an excuse he commenced to destroy the royal orchard of Ravana by breaking and uprooting its trees and plundering the place in general.

The guards who tried to stop him were beaten black and blue. They rushed to report and complain to Ravana who became very peeved. He sent his son Meghanad to capture the intruder and bring him bound to court. Hanuman saw this as an opportunity to have a face-to-face with Ravana, and so he submitted himself to be bound and taken prisoner to the court of Ravana.

In the full demon court where a large crowd had meanwhile gathered to witness the spectacle, an acerbic verbal dual full of vitriol ensued betwixt Ravana and Hanuman, with each calling the other names, and Hanuman severely rebuffing and rebutting Ravana in a very strong language that amounted to severe censor and insult for the demon king to which he was not accustomed.

When the heated exchange reached its climax and got out of hand, Ravana ordered his ministers and attendants to punish Hanuman by burning his tail. Why the tail? Because the tail is very dear to a monkey and it is equivalent to inflicting severe insult to a person’s dignity and self respect by snipping off his ears or nose to deform him and make a clown of him. But this was one error that Ravana made and which led to the burning of his golden city of Lanka: for Hanuman first elongated his tail endlessly so that all the cloth available in Lanka was used to wrap it and soak it in oil, then he suddenly reduced the size of his body to loosen the grip of the ropes with which he was tied, slipped out easily, and then dragging the coiled cloth that burnt behind him and whipping it around him like a whip or a sling string, he jumped from one house to another, and in due course set the whole city afire.

Having accomplished his task of settling accounts with Ravana on the one hand, and on the other hand successfully instilling sore affright in the minds and hearts of the demons as a whole to demoralize them, he jumped in the ocean, doused the flame, went to Sita and took her permission, and flew back boldly across the

ocean to the other side of its shore where his companions were eagerly waiting for his arrival with the news of Sita.

This part of the great story is narrated in great detail in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 28.

The 'burning of Lanka' has been vividly described in Tulsidas' book "Kavitawali", Sundar Kand, verse nos. 5/3—5/25.

Presently, we read about these developments in our book Geetawali, Sundar Kand, from verse nos. 5/12—to 5/15.]

Now, in the court of Ravana at Lanka, when Hanuman was presented as a captive, the latter said, 'Oh Ravana! If Lord Ram becomes angry and agressive during the battle, which God or Demon is there in this world who can withstand his arrows which are like the jaws of death itself? (1).

You have satisfied Lord Shiva and God Brahma with your austerities, strength and devotion. Now, in all wisdom and prudence, I advice you not to destroy your kith and kin who you've got as a blessing and a boon from them (Shiva and Brahma), and have nourished and sustained them yourself. [That is, don't do anything reckless and without thinking that would put you and your kin in great danger. Do not be the cause of destruction of your own family and kith and kin by being inimical to Lord Ram.] (2).

King Janak had weighed the strength of all the princes in this world against the bow of Lord Shiva and found them inept; even the most courageous and brave Parashuram became a dud (like a scare-crow in a farmer's field) in front of the valour and powers of Lord Ram[1] (3).

[[1]Hanuman refers to the Bow-breaking ceremony where Lord Ram had broken Lord Shiva's bow which no other warrior could as much as move an inch, and then when sage Parashuram came angrily to vent his ire at the Lord for breaking the bow of Lord Shiva whom Parashuram worshipped, Lord Ram had calmly tackled him and dissipated his anger effortlessly.

Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/89—to 1/90; and Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.]

Even a little while ago (a few days ago), don't you remember the fate of Baali (the king of Kishkindha who was killed by Lord Ram using a single arrow), and can't you think what is good for you (aren't you aware that the same fate awaits you)?

Look! Do not pay heed to sycophants and flatterers and ill-advised ministers, for you'll come to harm that way because your advisors' wisdom have been eclipsed by the so-called three faults[2] (4).

[[2]The three faults are the following—Adhibhautik which refers to the faults of the mind and lack of wisdom related to worldly behaviour and action, Adhyatmic which relates to one's wisdom in the field of spiritual welfare, and Adhidaivic which relates to Gods and stars when they become angry, antagonistic and malevolent. When the three faults occur simultaneously the creature is brought to ruin because his mind and

intellect cannot think properly, rationally, righteously, and for the welfare of the creature.]

Oh you dull witted one! Don't you know that Lord Ram's predecessors who were born on this earth had first dug up the earth to create the mighty reservoir of water called the ocean, and then they had subdued the pride of the same ocean which had become haughty that no one can measure it or conquer it because of its vast size and bulk[3].

Say, if you can't recognize the Lord (who belongs to this great family of kings who had created the ocean and then conquered it), then forsooth all your twenty eyes are nothing but hollows in the wall of a home! (5).

[[3]The legend has it that the ocean was 'created' by King Priya Vrat, son of Manu and Satrupa. He circumambulated the earth 7 times, creating the 7 oceans made of milk, curd, Ghee, butter-milk, sugarcane juice, salt and wine. The oceans were 'dug-up' by King Sagar's 60,000 sons in search of the horse hidden by God Indra. The ocean was 'consumed' by sage Agastya in three gulps on the strength of Lord Ram's legendary holy name.]

राग मारू

(5/13)

जो हौं प्रभु–आयसु लै चलतो।
तौ यहि रिस तोहि सहित दसानन ! जातुधान दल दलतो।। 1।।
रावन सो रसराज सुभट–रस सहित लंक–खल खलतो।
करि पुटपाक नाक–नायकहित घने घने घर घलतो।। 2।।
बड़े समाज लाज–भाजन भयो, बड़ो काज बिनु छलतो।
लंकनाथ ! रघुनाथ–बैरु–तरु आजु फैलि फूलि फलतो।। 3।।
काल–करम, दिगपाल, सकल जग–जाल जासु करतल तो।
ता रिपुसों पर भूमि रारि रन जीवन–मरन सुफल तो।। 4।।
देखी मैं दसकंठ ! सभा सब, मोंतें कोउ न सबल तो।
तुलसी अरि उर आनि एक अब एती गलानि न गलतो।। 5।।

rāga mārū

(5/13)

jō hauṁ prabhu-āyasu lai calatō.
tau yahi risa tōhi sahita dasānana! jātudhāna dala dalatō.. 1..
rāvana sō rasarāja subhaṭa-rasa sahita laṅka-khala khalatō.
kari puṭapāka nāka-nāyakahita ghanē ghanē ghara ghalatō.. 2..
baṛē samāja lāja-bhājana bhayō, baṛō kāja binu chalatō.
laṅkanātha! raghunātha-bairu-taru āju phaili phūli phalatō.. 3..
kāla-karama, digapāla, sakala jaga-jāla jāsu karatala tō.
tā ripusōṁ para bhūmi rāri rana jīvana-marana suphala tō.. 4..

dēkhī maiṁ dasakaṇṭha! sabhā saba, mōntēṁ kō'u na sabala tō.
tulasī ari ura āni ēka aba ētī galāni na galatō.. 5..

Hanuman Meets Ravana-II

Verse no. 5/13—Severely reprimanding Ravana, Hanuman admonishes him: 'Oh you ten-headed one ("dasānana"; Ravana)! If I had come with the Lord's permission, I would have found my capturing by you as an excuse to slay you along with all your demon army in my anger and wrath (1).

I would have used the crucible representing Lanka and stirred the broth consisting of the (metal) mercury representing you, Ravana, along with the juice representing other warrior demons, whom I would have squeezed into a pulp into this crucible, to prepare a medicinal concoction for Indra, the king of gods who is being subjected to a great disease because of you rascals. Then, having readied this potion, I would have destroyed all the houses in Lanka and used them as cups and pots to serve this medicine to Indra[1] (2).

[[1]Here, Hanuman cites the practice of ancient medicine-men of preparing remedies to cure serious ailments by mixing different herbs and metals and boiling them in proclaim crucibles to prepare medicinal concoction that is then served to the patient. This is the usual way traditional medicinal potions are prepared.

In this analogy, the city of Lanka is treated as a huge crucible in which a variety of metals and herbs represented by the demons and their king Ravana would be crushed and beaten to pulp, then thoroughly mixed, stirred and heated by Hanuman to produce a concoction that has remedial values by way of redemption and retribution for the gods for the way the demons had been tyrannizing them since long. It will be like preparing an anti-biotic remedy to get rid of infection of germs and viruses symbolizing the demons that need the latter's 'juice', their 'serum', their blood and flesh for its preparation.

In brief, Hanuman says that for the purpose of preparing a remedy for Indra and other gods who are suffering from a disease that needs an unconventional anti-biotic medicine prepared from the blood and flesh of the germs and viruses representing the demons and their king Ravana, he would need to kill them all and squeeze them to pour out their 'juice' on the streets of Lanak. Then, he would upturn the houses and mansions and use them as cups to serve this concoction to the gods to satisfy their thirst and cure them of their desire for retribution upon the demons who had been tormenting these gods since long. But unfortunately, his hands are tied as his Lord, Sri Ram, has not given him the permission to do so.

Hanuman hinted to Ravana not to provoke him beyond a certain tolerable limit. Because if Ravana did not desist and continues with his haughty behaviour, then Hanuman would be forced to take immediate steps to carry out the treatment for the disease of the gods which is the basic mandate of his Lord Sri Ram. And in doing so Hanuman would be well within his brief, and would not be violating the Lord's mandate, because when a war is fought, then a wise commander leaves many decisions to be taken by the foot soldier on the battle field as the situation demands on the spot, with the broad aim of winning the war, rather then being too overtly concerned with procedures and processes like a bureaucrat, that would entail obeying the commander and seeking his permission for each and every move on the battle field, which may not be feasible and practical in the heat of battle. Some discretion

and freedom is always given to the messenger or the soldier by a wise and prudent lord and commander.]

Today, I am ashamed to be defamed and become a victim of derision and shame at your hands without any cause (especially when I am fully competent to give a befitting reply to you) in this huge gathering. I would have done this great work (refer stanza 2 herein above) most easily.

Oh king of Lanka! The tree of enmity with Raghunath (Sri Ram) that you have sown would have blossomed and borne large fruits (by way of your death and the slaying of the entire demon race)! (3).

Forsooth, even 'Kaal' (death, time and circumstances), 'Karma' (deeds, their effects, and one's destiny), and 'Dikpals' (the custodians of the four corners of the world; a kind of demi gods), along with the rest of this deluding creation, is subject to the control of Lord Ram, and are under his hands (i.e. all of them obey his commands as he is the Lord of creation).

Say, how lucky and fortunate I would have been if I had had an opportunity to fight his battle for him, right inside the country and the capital city of the Lord's enemy. Verily, then both my life as well as my death would have been proved worthwhile, fruitful and successful (i.e. put to good use) (4).

Oh 10-necked (or 10-headed) Ravana (dasakaṇṭha)! I have seen your whole assembly. There is no one more strong and brave in it than me. If I had got my Lord's permission, I would not have so meekly and so easily submitted myself to you, having judged the strength of the enemy.

[To wit, having recognised that you do not stand a fig of a chance in front of me, I am not that stupid that I would have let you humiliate me with impunity in the way you are doing. I wouldn't have taken it lying down with docility and humbleness. I would have taught you a lesson that you wouldn't have forgotten in your life. But, the only constraint is that Sri Ram has barred me to harm you—refer verse no. 5/4, stanza no. 5.] (5).'

सीताजीसे विदाई

(5 / 14)

तौलौं, मातु ! आपु नीके रहिबो।
जौलौं हौं ल्यावौं रघुबीरहि, दिन दस और दुसह दुख सहिबो।। 1।।
सोखिकै, खेतकै, बाँधि सेतु करि उतरिबो उदधि, न बोहित चहिबो।
प्रबल दनुज–दल दलि पल आधमें, जीवत दुरित दसानन गहिबो।। 2।।
बैरिबृंद–बिधवा–बनितनिको देखिबो बारि–बिलोचन बहिबो।
सानुज सेनसमेत स्वामिपद निरखि परम मुद मंगल लहिबो।। 3।।
लंक–दाह उर आनि मानिबो साँचु राम सेवकको कहिबो।
तुलसी प्रभु सुर सुजस गाइहैं, मिटि जैहै सबको सोचु दव दहिबो।। 4।।

sītājīsē vidā'ī

taulauṁ, mātu! āpu nīkē rahibō.
jaulauṁ hauṁ lyāvauṁ raghubīrahi, dina dasa aura dusaha dukha sahibō.. 1..
sōkhikai, khētakai, bām̐dhi sētu kari utaribō udadhi, na bōhita cahibō.
prabala danuja-dala dali pala ādhamēṁ, jīvata durita dasānana gahibō.. 2..
bairibr̥ṁda-bidhavā-banitanikō dēkhibō bāri-bilōcana bahibō.
sānuja sēnasamēta svāmipada nirakhi parama muda maṅgala lahibō.. 3..
laṅka-dāha ura āni mānibō sām̐cu rāma sēvakakō kahibō.
tulasī prabhu sura sujasa gā'ihaiṁ, miṭi jaihai sabakō sōcu dava dahibō.. 4..

Hanuman takes leave from Sita to return to Lord Ram-I

Verse no. 5/14—[In Geetawali, the details of the 'burning of Lanka' has been skipped, perhaps because the book's primary author, Goswami Tulsidas, has aleady narrated it in vivid detail in one of his other books on the story of Lord Ram, i.e. in 'Kavitawali', Sundar Kand. An English version of this book has already been published by me, the present author of these books. A brief glimpse is also provided in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Doha no. 24—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 26.

Having reduced Lanka to ashes, Hanuman jumped in the ocean to douse the flame of his burning tail, and then having cooled himself he came back to Sita to seek her permission to go back to Lord Ram and report to him. This is narrated in verse nos. 5/14—5/15 herein below.]

At the time of departure, Hanuman said to Sita, 'Oh Mother! Take care of your self till the time I bring Lord Ram here. Tolerate this agony and sorrow for another ten days (dina dasa aura dusaha dukha sahibō) (1).

We have to cross the ocean either by drying it, filling it, or constructing a bridge over it. We do not need a boat or a ship. Then our great army will destroy the enemy's army in half a second ("prabala danuja-dala dali pala ādhamēṁ"; literally meaning 'very soon'), and catch hold of the ten-headed Ravana alive (jīvata durita dasānana gahibō)[1] (2).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/6, stanza no. 4.]

You shall watch the widows of the enemy shed tears, and shall derive immense joy seeing Sri Ram and Laxman with their army (3).

Seeing what I've done to Lanka, you should be now reassured and believe me in what I, the messenger of Lord Ram, say[2].'

Tulsidas says that soon the time would come for the Gods to sing the glory of Lord Ram and for the end of their burning in the fire of sorrows (inflicted upon them by the demons)[3] (4).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/5, stanza nos. 6-7.

[3]It will be pertinent to note here that Tulsidas has completely excluded the burning of Lanka and its accompanying havoc in Geetawali. For, he had described this feat with great enthusiasm and aplomb in the Sundar Kand of Kavitawali as well as in Ram Charit Manas—where he has painted a very vivid picture of the mayhem and destruction. See authors book on Kavitawali as well as Ram Charit Manas. What Hanuman did to Lanka is just mentioned in the passing in stanza 4 line 1 here. A little better hint is available when Laxman describes to Sri Ram the achievements of Hanuman on the latter's return to Kishkindha in verse no. 5/16, stanza nos. 1-11 which follows shortly.

Well, though not specifically narrated in Geetawali, the burning of Lanka by Hanuman is an incontrovertible fact narrated in all other versions of the story of Ramayan, even those classics penned by Tulsidas himself as indicated above.

Now, after completely burning Lanka to ashes, Hanuman jumped in the ocean to douse the burning cloth that he had being dragging behind him, and also to refresh himself by taking a cool bath in the water of the ocean. Then he met Sita once again before making his exit from Lanka to report back to Lord Ram in Kishkindha.]

(5 / 15)

कपिके चलत सियको मनु गहबरि आयो।
पुलक सिथिल भयो सरीर, नीर नयननन्हि छायो।। 1।।
कहन चह्यो सँदेस, नहि कह्यो, पियके जिय की जानि
हृदय दुसह दुख दुरायो।
देखि दसा ब्याकुल हरीस, ग्रीष्मके पथिक ज्यों धरनि तरनि–तायो।। 2।।
मीचतें नीच लगी अमरता, छलको न बलको निरखि थल
परुष प्रेम पायो।
कै प्रबोध मातु–प्रीतिसों असीस दीन्हीं ह्वैहै तिहारोई मनभायो।। 3।।
करुना–कोप–लाज–भय–भरो कियो गौन, मौन ही चरन कमल
सीस नायो।
यह सनेह–सरबस समौ, तुलसी रसना रूखी, ताही तें परत गायो।। 4।।

(5/15)

kapikē calata siyakō manu gahabari āyō.
pulaka sithila bhayō sarīra, nīra nayananhi chāyō.. 1..
kahana cahyō saṁdēsa, nahi kahyō, piyakē jiya kī jāni hṛ̣daya dusaha dukha durāyō.
dēkhi dasā byākula harīsa, grīṣmakē pathika jyōṁ dharani tarani-tāyō.. 2..
mīcatēṁ nīca lagī amaratā, chalakō na balakō nirakhi thala paruṣa prēma pāyō.
kai prabōdha mātu-prītisōṁ asīsa dīnhīṁ hvaihai tihārō'ī manabhāyō.. 3..
karunā-kōpa-lāja-bhaya-bharō kiyō gauna, mauna hī carana kamala sīsa nāyō.
yaha sanēha-sarabasa samau, tulasī rasanā rūkhī, tāhī tēṁ parata gāyō.. 4..

Verse no. 5/15—As soon as Hanuman left, Sita's heart overflowed and was overwhelmed with emotions. Her body was thrilled and benumbed, while tears welled up in her eyes (1).

She wanted to send a message (for Sri Ram), but considering the mental condition of her husband, she decided to hold back her insurmountable sorrows and profound torments inside her heart (i.e. she did not want to reveal them as it would only add to his miseries)[1].

Seeing her woeful and agitated condition, torn as she was in a dilemma[2] and grieving beyond measure, the king of monkeys (Hanuman) became emotionally upset, anguished, agitated and extremely tormented[3] like a pedestrian gets horrified when he has to walk on the ground which is heated by a scorching sun in the summer month[4]. (2).

[[1]Refer to Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/9, stanza no. 4 in this context.

[2]What dilemma did Sita have? Well, on the one hand she wished to die due to the grief of separation from Lord Ram, and on the other hand she wished to live to see the Lord once again. Then, sometimes she wished to tell Hanuman to convey details of her miserable condition to Lord Ram, then she would decide against it as it would cause unnecessary sorrows for the Lord. She was like on a see-saw, thinking one way for a moment, and then deciding on another the other moment.

[3]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/5, stanza no. 1, and verse no. 5/8, stanza no. 3.

[4]The ground under the feet becomes so hot that it literally burns one's soles, and walking barefoot is an exercise in torture and horror. Blisters form and one gets immensely agitated and woeful.]

He regretted at his eternal life which he considered worse than death[5].

Seeing that there was no scope for employing cunning, trickery, and use of force and strength of arms (to destroy the enemy there and there), he felt that his love (devotion for and loyalty to Sri Ram) was too much for him to bear with under the present circumstances (because it is out of his respect for Lord Ram that he had to somehow restrain himself, for otherwise he would have himself killed all the demons and take Sita back to Kishkindha on his back without even once asking the Lord for his permission)[6].

Thence, Sita consoled him affectionately like a mother, and blessed him saying 'What you have in your mind will be done. (But, wait for the right moment)[7].' (3).

[[5]Hanuman had a boon of a long, eternal life, and because of it he wouldn't die even if he wanted to. So, he was so remorseful that he would have preferred death to being alive and be a witness to such a woeful spectacle of Sita without being able to do anything about it; for he was unable to avenge Sita's torments inflicted upon her by Ravana inspite of being capable of doing it because the Lord had not instructed him to do so. This frustration—at being tied down because of Sri Ram's constraining orders—added to his despair and woes.

[6]He felt that had it not been for the danger of violating established norms of devotion, which include following the Lord's orders without asking questions and to do as you are told, he would have crushed the demons like nine pins and would have taken Sita back.

[7]This almost sealed the fate of the demons, for Hanuman had wished that he would crush the demon army single handedly and avenge Sita's agonies. This is perhaps the reason why the entire credit for demolishing the enemy was given to Hanuman in the Sundar and Lanka Kands of Kavitawali. There, even Lord Sri Ram was spellbound and astonished at the valour and marvelous deeds of Hanuman in the battle ground, so much so that he expressed this in clear terms to Laxman. Refer: Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/40. In fact, even a cursory reading of the Sundar and Lanka Kands of Kavitawali would make it abundantly clear that the war of Lanka was fought and won by Hanuman single-handedly, and the rest of the warriors of the Lord's army only played a secondary role.]

Thereafter, Hanuman silently bowed his head at the feet of Sita (to pay his obeisance to her), and filled with compassion and pity (for Sita), anger and indignation (at Ravana), shame and regret (at himself, that he could not avenge his insult and pour his wrathful anger on the demons) and fear (that Sri Ram would become annoyed because he had burnt the city of Lanka without his permission), he made his exit from there (from Lanka).

Tulsidas admonishes himself by saying that he is so insensitive and emotionless that is able to describe those touching moments of Hanuman taking his leave from Sita. [To wit, it was a gravely poignant moment, and Sita was left alone to face her fate till the Lord comes to rescue her. The bidding of good-bye by Hanuman was a moment full of emotions and grief, for neither he nor Sita wished to be out of touch with each other. Hanuman was worried about what would happen to her in his absence, and Sita was worried as to what would happen next after Hanuman left the place.][8] (4).

[[8]Much is left here on imagination. Sita's last and only channel of communicating with Sri Ram was gone. The future was uncertain, and she found herself once again alone and forlorn in an enemy's land.

The condition can be compared to a person marooned on a desolate island with cannibals all around. Then a ray of hope comes as a spy sent by the king of the realm to locate that person, and the spy also leaves with promise of coming back with reinforcements to rescue him. What if the reinforcements so promised do not materialize? There are hordes of imponderables, a sea of uncertainties. The endless barrier of the ocean has to be crossed; the demons are so fierce that they had subdued and imprisoned even the gods, and were armed to the teeth. The Lord has to fight a war on an alien soil whereas the demons were on their home turf, which is always a dangerous prospect for an invading army.

One can well visualize the state of that person's mind and physical bearing. The tortures at the hands of the enemy are bound to increase—because the spy was revealed and caught red handed, the city was burnt by him, the impotence and incompetence of the demons in the face of Sri Ram's single messenger had come to the fore—and it is sure now that they will wreak vengeance upon her for all they had to endure, finding her without any protection once Hanuman left for Kishkindha. There was the looming danger of a calamitous war. In all sooth, Sita must have been petrified with fear!

This verse highlights Sita's anguish and apprehension on one hand, and her indomitable spirit and confidence on the other hand.]

राग बसन्त

(5 / 16)

रघुपति! देखो आयो हनूमंत। लंकेस–नगर खेल्यो बसंत।। 1।।
श्रीराम–काजहित सुदिन सोधि। साथी प्रबोधि लाँघ्यो पयोधि।। 2।।
सिय–पाँय पूजि, आसिषा पाइ।फल अमिय सरिस खायो अघाइ।। 3।।
कानन दलि, होरी रचि बनाइ। हठि तेल–बसन बालधि बँधाइ।। 4।।
लिए ढोल चले सँग लोग लागि। बरजोर दई चहुँ ओर आगि।। 5।।
आखत आहुति किये जातुधन। लखि लपट भभरि भागे बिमान।। 6।।
नभतल कौतुक, लंका बिलाप। परिनाम पचहिं पातकी पाप।। 7।।
हनुमान–हाँक सुनि बरषि फूल। सुर बार बार बरनहिं लँगूर।। 8।।
भरि भुवन सकल कल्यान–धूम। पुर जारि बारिनिधि बोरि लूम।। 9।।
जानकी तोषि पोषेउ प्रताप। जय पवन–सुवन दलि दुअन–दाप।।10।।
नाचहिं–कूदहिं कपि करि बिनोद।पीवत मधु मधुबन मगन मोद।।11।।
यों कहत लषन गहे पाँय आइ।मनि सहित मुदित भेंट्यो उठाइ।।12।।
लगे सजन सेन, भयो हिय हुलास। जय जय जस गावत तुलसिदास।।13।।

hanumānjīkā bhagavān rāmakē pāsa pahuṁcanā

rāga basanta

(5/16)

raghupati! dēkhō āyō hanūmanta. laṅkēsa-nagara khēlyō basanta.. 1..
śrīrāma-kājahita sudina sōdhi. sāthī prabōdhi lāṁghyō payōdhi.. 2..
siya-pāṁya pūji, āsiṣā pā'i.phala amiya sarisa khāyō aghā'i.. 3..
kānana dali, hōrī raci banā'i. haṭhi tēla-basana bāladhi baṁdhā'i.. 4..
li'ē ḍhōla calē saṁga lōga lāgi. barajōra da'ī cahuṁ ōra āgi.. 5..
ākhata āhuti kiyē jātudhana. lakhi lapaṭa bhabhari bhāgē bimāna.. 6..
nabhatala kautuka, laṅkā bilāpa. parināma pacahiṁ pātakī pāpa.. 7..
hanumāna-hāṁka suni baraṣi phūla. sura bāra bāra baranahiṁ laṁgūra.. 8..
bhari bhuvana sakala kalyāna-dhūma. pura jāri bārinidhi bōri lūma.. 9..
jānakī tōṣi pōṣē'u pratāpa. jaya pavana-suvana dali du'ana-dāpa..10..
nācahiṁ-kūdahiṁ kapi kari binōda.pīvata madhu madhubana magana mōda..11..
yōṁ kahata laṣana gahē pāṁya ā'i.mani sahita mudita bhēṇṭyō uṭhā'i..12..
lagē sajana sēna, bhayō hiya hulāsa. jaya jaya jasa gāvata tulasidāsa..13..

Hanuman back in Kishkindha to report to Lord Ram

Verse no. 5/16—[Hanuman roared back with a thunder over the ocean with increased enthusiasm than what he had on his way to Lanka, because he was successful in his

mission and this injected a sense of extreme joy and excitement in him. His companions were waiting for him on this side of the shore, and as soon as they saw him and espied his cheerful countenance they immediately deduced that he had found Sita. Soon upon landing, Hanuman was thronged by them, all caressing him, showering their love and prise upon him, and applauding him as their saviour and hero. Then the company departed from the shore of the ocean in a procession of victory, and like an army returning to its king after a successful campaign, all the messengers who had accompanied Hanuman to the ocean's shore from Kishkindha regarded themselves as one team which has won. They danced and sang on the way back, and when near the capital they entered the royal orchard of the monkey king Sugriv, eating and jumping around as is the wont of frolicking monkeys who are let loose.

Meanwhile, one of the companions was rushed to Kishkindha with an express order to report about Hanuman's successful mission. He went fortwith and told everyone in the capital about the exploits of Hanuman. The news reached the ears of Laxman who conveyed it to Lord Ram even before the main party arrived.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 30.]

Hearing the news of Hanuman's successful return from Lanka, Laxman said to Ram, 'Lord! See, Hanuman has come back. He has literally played Holi[1] in Lanka (1).

[[1]Holi—It is a festival of colours celebrated in the Basant season which falls roughly in February-March. It is related to the story of Prahalad, a child devotee of Lord Vishnu whose father was a demon named Hiranyakashipu. The child was put to great torture by his demon father so that he stops worshipping Lord Vishnu. The demon had attempted to get him burnt alive on a fire but Prahalad survived unscathed. In the night a fire is lit and rituals performed to commemorate that event. On the next day coloured water and powder is used to celebrate. It is also a festival to honour the spirit of universal brotherhood as even strangers are welcome to join and celebrate. The colour removes all distinction of caste and creed, and the entire mass of humanity looks like one big sea of colour. The spring season also heralds flowers and trees of myriad colours, and this is metaphorically depicted by playing with colours on the streets and in the homes.

In the present case, Holi is cited with reference to the burning of Lanka because the city was burnt to ashes while Sita and Vibhishan's residence remained unscathed just like Prahalad escaped from the fire in which his aunt was burnt.]

Fixing an auspicious day for your work, he had assured his companions and leapt across the ocean (2).

There he worshipped Sita's holy feet and ate his full of the sweet fruits in the Ashok grove (3).

Then he lay waste that garden and prepared for playing a symbolic form of Holi, and respectfully urged the demons to wrap his tail with cloth soaked in oil (4).

People mocked him and beat drums before he set fire in all the four directions (corners) of the city (5).

He offered the demons as sacrifice in the fire; seeing its leaping flames, even the chariots of Gods hurriedly escaped from the site (6).

At that moment, there was a lot of wonder and marvel amongst the Gods in the sky and wailing amongst the demons; a sinner is at last burnt in his own sins (7).

Hearing his roar, the God's repeatedly showered flowers and praised his tail (8).

In this way, spreading the good news everywhere (about the Lord's glories and his arrival to eliminate the scourge of the demons as had been promised to the Gods on some previous occasion), then burning to ashes the city of Lanka (as a prelude to the final destruction of its inhabitants, the demons), he had jumped in the ocean to douse his tail. Thereafter, he consoled Sita, and reinforced your glory.

Verily, we all praise the glory of Hanuman who is the destroyer of false pride of all enemies (of the Lord as well as his devotees) (9-10).

At present, he and his companions are enjoying themselves on their success by drinking honey in the Forest of Honey (Madhu Van)[2] (11).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 28—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 29.]

While Laxman was talking with Lord Ram, Hanuman came and clasped the Lord's feet, and Lord Ram embraced him most affectionately[3].

Then, the Lord took the jewel of Sita's hair (a pin; "Chudamani") that Hanuman had brought along with him as a token of his meeting with Sita (just as he had taken Lord Ram's signet ring when he had gone to Lanka to convince Sita of his credentials)[4] (12).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 30; Doha no. 32 and Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that follows it.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 27; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 31.]

All were very happy on Hanuman's return and started to prepare the army (for the assault on Lanka)[5].

Tulsidas also joins them in singing the glories of Lord Ram at that auspicious moment (13).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35.]

राग जैतश्री

(5/17)

सुनहु राम बिश्रामधाम हरि ! जनकसुता अति बिपति जैसे सहति।
'हे सौमित्रि–बंधु करुनानिधि!' मन महँ रटति, प्रगट नहिं कहति।।1।।
निजपद–जलज बिलोकि सोकरत नयननि बारि रहत न एक छन।
मनहु नील नीरज ससि–संभव रबि–बियोग दोउ स्रवत सुधाकन।। 2।।
बहु राच्छसी सहित तरुके तर तुम्हरे बिरह निज जनम बिगोवति।

मनहु दुष्ट इंद्रिय संकट महँ बुद्धि बिबेक उदय मगु जोवति।। 3।।
सुनि कपि बचन बिचारि हृदय हरि अनपायनी सदा सो एक मन।
तुलसिदास सुख–सुखातीत हरि सोच करत मानहु प्राकृत जन।। 4।।

rāga jaitaśrī

(5/17)

sunahu rāma biśrāmadhāma hari! janakasutā ati bipati jaisē sahati.
'hē saumitri-bandhu karunānidhi!' mana mahaṁ raṭati, pragaṭa nahiṁ kahati..1..
nijapada-jalaja bilōki sōkarata nayanani bāri rahata na ēka chana.
manahu nīla nīraja sasi-sambhava rabi-biyōga dō'u sravata sudhākana.. 2..
bahu rācchasī sahita tarukē tara tumharē biraha nija janama bigōvati.
manahu duṣṭa indriya saṅkaṭa mahaṁ bud'dhi bibēka udaya magu jōvati.. 3..
suni kapi bacana bicāri hṛdaya hari anapāyanī sadā sō ēka mana.
tulasidāsa sukha-sukhātīta hari sōca karata mānahu prākṛta jana.. 4..

Hanuman's Report to Lord Ram-I

Verse no. 5/17— [When the group led by Hanuman reached Lord Ram, he bowed his head in respect to the Lord and narrated the soulful condition of Sita to him. The following verse nos. 5/17—to 5/20 from Geetawali narrate the intensity and poignancy of Sita's emotional sufferings and physical torments.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Doha no. 31.]

[Hanuman reported—] 'Oh Sri Ram, Oh Hari (another name for Lord Vishnu)! You are an abode or treasury of bliss (rāma biśrāmadhāma hari)! Listen to the way Sita is coping with extreme sorrows and insurmountable torments and anguish.

She does not overtly say anything about her anguish and tribulations, arising out of separation from you. Instead of it, she consistently mutters the words 'Oh brother of Laxman, the son of Sumitra[1]! Oh the merciful Lord who is compassionate and kind! (hē saumitri-bandhu karunānidhi)' (1).

[[1]In the Hindu tradition, a wife is not supposed to take the first name of her husband. That is why Sita remembered Sri Ram, but pronounced his name indirectly by referring to him as 'Lord' and 'brother of Laxman' even as she freely called Laxman by his name as he was her husband's brother and no such restrictions applied on him.]

She constantly stares intently at her lotus-like feet, while the tears from her sorrowful eyes do not stop even for a moment as if the two blue lotuses, which have emerged from the moon, incessantly drip drops of nectar because of the agony of separation from the sun[2] (2).

[[2]Here, the 'moon' is Sita's beautiful face, the 'blue lotus flowers' are her eyes; the 'sun' is Sri Ram and the 'drops of nectar' which are dripping are the flow of

tears from her eyes. As is evident, a lotus loves the sun, but since it is trapped inside the moon, it cannot face or see its beloved sun, for the sun and the moon do not rise together but are slotted for the day and night respectively.]

Surrounded by numerous demonesses and submerged in the anguish of your separation, she passes her days most remorsefully under a tree as if the intellect, trapped amongst the wicked sense organs, is awaiting the rising of wisdom (to liberate it from their shackles)[3] (3).'

[[3]The sense organs of a creature's body keep on constantly distracting him as they always yearn to derive the pleasures from their respective sense objects in this material world. This robs the creature of his peace and happiness. As soon as wisdom dawns upon him, he realizes the futility of this pursuit, and consequentially withdraws himself from the material world and its deluding charms. This metaphysical truth is being alluded to here by Hanuman.]

Hearing the words (i.e. narration of Sita's miserable, wretched and woeful condition) from Hanuman, the Lord determined in his heart that Sita has my eternal, stable and pure devotion firmly entrenched (rooted, established) in her heart.

Tulsidas says that thinking thus, Sri Hari (Ram) began lamenting and grieving, though he is beyond the reach of such mundane emotions as happiness and distress, joys and sorrows[4] (4).

[[4]By using the word "Hari", meaning Lord Vishnu, for Lord Ram, Tulsidas wishes to emphasis that we should not be misled by seeing Sri Ram wailing for a woman like an ordinary man. This is part of the play he has to act—because the Lord has assumed a human form. Would it not look highly incongruous and untenable if he laughs and shows that he cares not a dime about Sita because he is the Lord of all creation, and as such, worldly emotions do not affect him?

A good actor is one who plays the role perfectly, without faltering a whit, as long as he is on the stage. But once off the stage, he regains his composure, becomes his former self. This will answer the skeptics who say that Ram was infatuated by a woman. No; not at all. The Lord was simply playing his role as a human being to perfection. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 16-17 that precede Doha no. 30; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37; and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 39.]

राग केदारा

(5/18)

रघुकुलतिलक ! बियोग तिहारे।
मैं देखी जब जाइ जानकी, मनहु बिरह–मूरति मन मारे।। 1।।
चित्र–से नयन अरु गढ़ेसे चरन–कर, मढ़े–से स्रवन, नहि सुनति पुकारे।
रसना रटति नाम, कर सिर चिर रहै, नित निजपद–कमल निहारे।।2।।
दरसन–आस–लालसा मन महँ राखे प्रभु–ध्यान प्रान–रखवारे।
तुलसिदास पूजति त्रिजटा नीके रावरे गुन–गन–सुमन सँवारे।। 3।।

rāga kēdārā

(5/18)

raghukulatilaka! biyōga tihārē.
maiṁ dēkhī jaba jā'i jānakī, manahu biraha-mūrati mana mārē.. 1..
citra-sē nayana aru garḥēsē carana-kara, maṛhē-sē sravana, nahi sunati pukārē.
rasanā raṭati nāma, kara sira cira rahai, nita nijapada-kamala nihārē..2..
darasana-āsa-lālasā mana mahaṁ rākhē prabhu-dhyāna prāna-rakhavārē.
tulasidāsa pūjati trijaṭā nīkē rāvarē guna-gana-sumana saṁvārē.. 3..

Hanuman's Report to Lord Ram-II

Verse no. 5/18—'Oh the most exalted one in king Raghu's clan ("raghukulatilaka")! When I first went and saw Sita, she looked so pathetic, tormented and miserable by the agony of your separation that she resembled 'Separation and Loss' personified, sitting in the form of an uncared for and neglected statue to me (1).

[Describing her pathetic state, he goes on to tell the Lord—] Her eyes were immobile like that of a portrait; the limbs were cast in a fixed position as if moulded or sculpted from a stone; her ears too appeared to be chiseled out from the same stone. As a result of which, she did not listen (and respond) when someone called out to her. She chants your name incessantly. Her hand pensively support her head, while the eyes are constantly transfixed at her own lotus-like feet (2).

She has a great yearning to have your Darshan (divine and holy viewing).

Hence (in order to prevent the exit of her soul from her body), she has made her 'concentration' as her guard to keep vigil on her soul.[1]'

Tulsidas says that, further, it is also true that the demoness Trijata worships her with the symbolic flowers that represent Lord Ram's glories, virtues, fame and majesty[2]. (3)

[[1]To wit, she concentrates on your name, on your glories, on your divine form, on your activities and the hope of meeting you once again. This acts as a guard against her soul from leaving her body. Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/9 in this context.

[2]Trijata constantly reminds Sita about the Lord's name and glories. She keeps Sita's hopes alive by reminding her of Lord's great powers and strength. She is the only one who supports Sita in the otherwise desolate, hostile and bleak surroundings at Lanka.Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 11; Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precede Doha no. 99—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precede Doha no. 100.]

(5/19)

अतिहि अधिक दरसनकी आरति।
राम–बियोग असोक–बिटपतर सीय निमेष कलपसम टारति।। 1।।

बार–बार बर बारिजलोचन भरि भरि बरत बारि उर ढारति।
मनहु बिरहके सद्य घाय हिये लखि तकि–तकि धरि धीरज तारति।।2।।
तुलसिदास जद्यपि निसिबासर छिन–छिन प्रभुमूरतिहि निहारति।
मिटति न दुसह तउ तनकी, यह बिचारि अंतर गति हारति।। 3।।

(5/19)

atihi adhika darasanakī ārati.
rāma-biyōga asōka-biṭapatara sīya nimēṣa kalapasama ṭārati.. 1..
bāra-bāra bara bārijalōcana bhari bhari barata bāri ura ḍhārati.
manahu birahakē sadya ghāya hiyē lakhi taki-taki dhari dhīraja tārati..2..
tulasidāsa jadyapi nisibāsara china-china prabhumūratihi nihārati.
miṭati na dusaha ta'u tanakī, yaha bicāri antara gati hārati.. 3..

Hanuman's Report to Lord Ram-III

Verse no. 5/19—[Hanuman continued—] 'Sita is greatly eager to have your Darshan (i.e. she is eager to have your divine and sacred sight).

She is spending each moment like it were a 'Kalpa' (i.e. a very long period of time), drowned in the sorrows and anguish of your separation as she sits sad and forlorn under that Ashok Tree (1).

She fills her eyes with warm water (tears) and repeatedly pours it on her heart as if she is trying to wash the blisters representing pains of separation which keep forming repeatedly in her heart with warm water so as to soothe them and prevent them from spreading.[1]' (2).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/9.]

Tulsidas says that though she recalls the image of the Lord (on her mental screen) and remembers him day and night, the torments, sorrows and agitations of her body do not seem to abate or end.

Hence, the internal peace (which she gets by remembering the Lord) gets defeated in the face of external signs of agonies and miseries (as is evident from her transfixed stare, immobile body, constant tears pouring down from her eyes, lack of hunger and proper care of the body that has made her very emaciated and weary, and so on.) (3).

(5/20)

तुम्हरे बिरह भई गति जौन।
चित दै सुनहु, राम करुनानिधि! जानौं कछु, पै सकौं कहि हौं न।।1।।
लोचन–नीर कृपिनके धन ज्यों रहत निरंतर लोचनन कोन।
'हा' धुनि–खगी लाज–पिंजरी महँ राखि हिये बड़े बधिक हठि मौन।।2।।
जेहि बाटिका बसति, तहँ खग–मृग तजि–तजि भजे पुरातन भौन।

स्वास–समीर भेंट भइ भोरेहु, तेहि मग पगु न धर्‌यो तिहुँ पौन।। 3।।
तुलसिदास प्रभु ! दसा सीयकी मुख करि कहत होति अति गौन।
दीजै दरस, दूरि कीजै दुख, हौ तुम्ह आरत–आरति दौन।। 4।।

(5/20)

tumharē biraha bha'ī gati jauna.
cita dai sunahu, rāma karunānidhi! jānauṁ kachu, pai sakauṁ kahi hauṁ na..1..
lōcana-nīra kṛpinakē dhana jyōṁ rahata nirantara lōcanana kōna.
'hā' dhuni-khagī lāja-piṁjarī mahaṁ rākhi hiyē baṛē badhika haṭhi mauna..2..
jēhi bāṭikā basati, tahaṁ khaga-mṛga taji-taji bhajē purātana bhauna.
svāsa-samīra bhēṇṭa bha'i bhōrēhu, tēhi maga pagu na dharyō tihuṁ pauna.. 3..
tulasidāsa prabhu! dasā sīyakī mukha kari kahata hōti ati gauna.
dījai darasa, dūri kījai dukha, hau tumha ārata-ārati dauna.. 4..

Hanuman's Report to Lord Ram-IV

Verse no. 5/20—[A lot of metaphors have been used by Hanuman in this verse to describe the exceedingly sorrowful condition of Sita.]

'Oh Lord Ram, the abode of mercy and compassion (rāma karunānidhi)! Listen carefully at the (physical and mental) state of Sita that she is suffering from as a consequence of your separation. I am aware of it a bit, but I cannot (fully) narrate (or describe) it (because words have their own limitations and they won't be able to do justice to the gravity and intensity of Sita's grief, horrors and torments) (1).

The tears in her eyes always remain at the corner like the wealth of a miser[1].

[[1]To wit, a miser is very careful about his wealth; he does not want to show it to others and so hides it somewhere, but keeps a close watch on it from the corners of his eyes. Likewise, the tears are not shed from the eyes of Sita because she does not want others to know about the gravity and intensity of her grief and agonies. She makes her best effort to conceal her tears, but they continue to pop up on the corners of her eyes just like the great riches of a miser that are so huge that they virtually spill over from his coffers though he tries to keep them firmly under lock and key.]

A mighty hunter representing 'silence' has forcibly caught hold of a bird called 'Alas' (i.e. the sound of lamentation, woes, anguish and sorrows), and has trapped it in a 'cage' of shame and hesitation, and 'tucked it away' in the secret chambers of his heart[2].

[[2]Hence, that sound of moaning and utter dismay—"Alas, Ah, Alack" etc.—remains muted and cannot come out or be heard openly from the mouth of Sita as she is both ashamed to pronounce them and hesitant too as it may invite taunt and sarcasm from the demonesses who have been assigned by the demon king Ravana to guard her and keep tormenting her. In other words, Sita sighs silently as she has been overcome

with hopelessness and haplessness. She is distraught and resigned to her ill-fate. She is counting her days and waiting for death to relieve her of her miseries.] (2).

In the garden where she lives, all the birds and animals have abandoned their traditional homes (i.e. they have left the Ashok grove and fled from there because of the heat generated by the fire of Sita's sorrows and miseries), and the wind—which is usually cool, soft and fragrant—does not step in that direction for fearing to get heated and become foul and unpleasant if it happens to come in contact with her breath even once (3).

Oh Tulsidas' Lord (tulasidāsa prabhu)[3]! Trying to describe Sita's sorrows and tribulations with this mouth of mine (i.e. Hanuman's mouth) seems to make them negligible or inconsequential because words can't capture the poignancy of the situation; words can never do justice to the actual state of suffering in which Sita is, for they have their limitations.

Hence oh Lord, now you should give her your Darshan (i.e. present yourself of in front of her and give her the chance to have your divine sight), thereby removing all the the causes of her miseries and agonies because you are the vanquisher of the sorrows, anguish, miseries and tribulations of the meek, humble, lowly, hapless and helpless ones (tumha ārata-ārati dauna) (4).'

[[3]The point to note is that Hanuman addresses Lord Ram as the "Lord of Tulsidas". At the time these events had unfolded long-long ago, Tulsidas was not there. This single instance establishes that Tulsidas wishes to convey to all that he is indeed a devotee of Lord Ram, and to endorse his claim he has made Hanuman acknowledge it by addressing Lord Ram as being the "Lord of Tulsidas"! A true devotee has the same relation with his Lord God as a mother has for her son or a friend for his dearest friend. The mother takes pride in calling her son as 'her own', and so does a true friend. And if that 'son' or 'friend' happens to be some great person of renown and stature, the pride of calling him one's own is all the more profound. Now, Lord Ram is not an ordinary prince but the Lord God in a personified form, and he is therefore the Lord of all living beings. So Tulsidas has all the more reasons to feel proud that he is so favourite of the Lord that the latter has chosen him to narrate his divine story for the benefit of the rest of the world, a rare privilege that the Lord has bestowed upon Tulsidas over the heads of other more experienced and able poets and bards. So naturally Tulsidas has an occasion and reason to celebrate his elevation to such a high pedestal as being the scribe chosen by the Lord God himself to write down his history for the sake of posterity.]

(5/21)

कपिके सुनि कल कोमल बैन।
प्रेमपुलकि सब गात सिथिल भए, भरे सलिल सरसीरुह–नैन।। 1।।
सिय–बियोग–सागर नागर–मनु बूड़न लग्यो सहित चित–चैन।
लही नाव पवनज–प्रसन्नता, बरबस तहाँ गह्यो गुन–मैन।। 2।।
सकत न बूझि कुसल, बूझे बिन गिरा बिपुल ब्याकुल उर–ऐन।
ज्यों कुलीन सुचि सुमति बियोगिनि सनमुख सहै बिरह–सर पैन।।3।।
धरि–धरि धीर बीर कोसलपति किए जतन, सके उत्तरु दै न।

तुलसिदास प्रभु सखा अनुजसों सैनहिं कह्यो चलहु सजि सैन।। 4।।

(5/21)

kapikē suni kala kōmala baina.
prēmapulaki saba gāta sithila bha'ē, bharē salila sarasīruha-naina.. 1..
siya-biyōga-sāgara nāgara-manu būṛana lagyō sahita cita-caina.
lahī nāva pavanaja-prasannatā, barabasa tahāṁ gahyō guna-maina.. 2..
sakata na būjhi kusala, būjhē bina girā bipula byākula ura-aina.
jyōṁ kulīna suci sumati biyōgini sanamukha sahai biraha-sara paina..3..
dhari-dhari dhīra bīra kōsalapati ki'ē jatana, sakē uttaru dai na.
tulasidāsa prabhu sakhā anujasōṁ sainahiṁ kahyō calahu saji saina.. 4..

Condition of Lord Ram and the decision to invade Lanka

Verse no. 5/21—Hearing such sweet and tender words of Hanuman, Lord Sri Ram's body was thrilled and benumbed with an upsurge of affection and emotions even as his lotus-like eyes were filled with tears (1).

The clever/expert swimmer represented by Lord Sri Ram's mind and heart had begun to sink, along with his happy and contented intellectual bearing and temperament that is normally resolute and neutral from emotions and sentiments, in the ocean of anguish and sorrows at Sita's separation.

Just at this moment (when he was about to drown), he found a boat of hope, solace, succour and happiness in the form of her news heard from the mouth of Hanuman. But it appeared that 'Kamdeo' (i.e. his intense desire or eagerness to meet his beloved Sita) seemed to hold that boat forcibly (so that Sri Ram's hope and happiness was short-lived, and he appeared to plunge in gloom and remorseful mood once again)[1] (2).

[[1]When Sita was abducted, Lord Ram felt so depressed, distraught and dejected in his heart and mind that he virtually sort of began to sink in an ocean of despair and hopelessness. He had thought that he will never hear of Sita ever again in his life. This thought made him abjectly gloomy and he despaired for life.

In this helpless condition, when Hanuman arrived with the news of Sita, it acted as a buoy for Lord Ram, and his hopes were refreshed. But soon he was once again subdued with agony when he reflected upon Sita's miseries.]

This is why (being overwhelmed by emotions that chocked his throat) Lord Ram could not utter a word of enquiry about Sita, and at the same time he felt that his voice was being stifled (strangulated, suffocated) in his own heart because he could not express himself openly and let known his agonies to anyone.

It was like the case of some noble, pure and chaste woman, who being separated from her beloved, suffers internally, but has to stoically bear the sharp, caustic, sarcastic, derogatory and insinuating words spoken by others for her, on her face or behind her back, without her being able to answer back or retort sharply to her tormentor (because if she does try, her tormentors would become all the more louder

and more verbal in passing taunts at her to tease her even more, and thereat derive sadistic pleasure from her discomfiture) (3).

Kaushalpati ('the Lord of Kaushal, Ayodhya'; i.e. Lord Sri Ram) tried many a times to gather enough strength and courage to speak, but not a word came out of his mouth.

Tulsidas says that, finally, the Lord indicated by signs to his friend Sugriv and brother Laxman that they should immediately collect the army and embark on the mission without delay (to rescue Sita from Lanka)[2] (4).

[[2]Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35; and (ii) Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no.13 also.]

वानरसेनाकी लंकायात्रा

राग मारू

(5 / 22)

जब रघुबीर पयानो कीन्हों।
छुभित सिंधु, डगमगत महीधर, सजि साएँग कर लीन्हों।। 1।।
सुनि कठोर टंकोर घोर अति चौंके बिधि–त्रिपुरारि।
जटापटल ते चली सुरसरी सकत न संभु सँभारि।। 2।।
भए बिकल दिगपाल सकल, भय भरे भुवन दस चारि।
खरभर लंक, ससंक दसानन, गरभ स्रवहिं अरि–नारि।। 3।।
कटकटात भट भालु, बिकट मरकट करि केहरि–नाद।
कूदत करि रघुनाथ–सपथ उपरी–उपरा बदि बाद।। 4।।
गिरि–तरुधर, नख मुख कराल, रद कालहु करत बिषाद।
चले दस दिसि रिस भरि 'धरु घरु' कहि, 'को बराक मनुजाद'?।।5।।
पवन पंगु पावक–पतंग–ससि दुरि गए, थके बिमान।
जाचत सुर निमेष, सुरनायक नयन–भार अकुलान।। 6।।
गए पूरि सर धूरि, भूरि भय अग थल जलधि समान।
नभ–निसान, हनुमान–हाँक सुनि समुझत कोउ न अपान।। 7।।
दिग्गज–कमठ–कोल–सहसानन धरत धरनि धरि धीर।
बारहि बार अमरषत, करषत, करकैं परीं सरीर।। 8।।
चली चमू, चहु ओर सोर, कछु बनै न बरने भीर।
किलकिलात, कसमसत, कोलाहल होत नीरनिधि–तीर।। 9।।
जातुधानपति जानि कालबस मिले बिभीषन आइ।
सरनागत–पालक कृपालु कियो तिलक लियो अपनाइ।।10।।
कौतुकही बारिधि बँधाइ उतरे सुबेल–तट जाइ।
तुलसिदास गढ़ देखि फिरे कपि, प्रभु–आगमन सुनाइ।।11।।

vānarasēnākī laṅkāyātrā

rāga mārū

jaba raghubīra payānō kīnhōṁ.
chubhita sindhu, ḍagamagata mahīdhara, saji sāraṁga kara līnhōṁ.. 1..
suni kaṭhōra ṭaṅkōra ghōra ati cauṅkē bidhi-tripurāri.
jaṭāpaṭala tē calī surasarī sakata na sambhu saṁbhāri.. 2..
bha'ē bikala digapāla sakala, bhaya bharē bhuvana dasa cāri.
kharabhara laṅka, sasaṅka dasānana, garabha sravahiṁ ari-nāri.. 3..
kaṭakaṭāta bhaṭa bhālu, bikaṭa marakaṭa kari kēhari-nāda.
kūdata kari raghunātha-sapatha uparī-uparā badi bāda.. 4..
giri-tarudhara, nakha mukha karāla, rada kālahu karata biṣāda.
calē dasa disi risa bhari 'dharu gharu' kahi, 'kō barāka manujāda'?..5..
pavana paṅgu pāvaka-pataṅga-sasi duri ga'ē, thakē bimāna.
jācata sura nimēṣa, suranāyaka nayana-bhāra akulāna.. 6..
ga'ē pūri sara dhūri, bhūri bhaya aga thala jaladhi samāna.
nabha-nisāna, hanumāna-hāṁka suni samujhata kō'u na apāna.. 7..
diggaja-kamaṭha-kōla-sahasānana dharata dharani dhari dhīra.
bārahi bāra amaraṣata, karaṣata, karakaiṁ parīṁ sarīra.. 8..
calī camū, cahu ōra sōra, kachu banai na baranē bhīra.
kilakilāta, kasamasata, kōlāhala hōta nīranidhi-tīra.. 9..
jātudhānapati jāni kālabasa milē bibhīṣana ā'i.
saranāgata-pālaka kṛpālu kiyō tilaka liyō apanā'i..10..
kautukahī bāridhi baṁdhā'i utarē subēla-taṭa jā'i.
tulasidāsa garḥa dēkhi phirē kapi, prabhu-āgamana sunā'i..11..

The Departure of the Monkey Army for Lanka

Verse no. 5/22—[A huge army of brave and valiant monkeys and bears who were war veterans was immediately assembled and it departed from Kishkindha for Lanka. The following verse describe this army and how it wended its way to the shores of Lanka. Ravana's younger brother too joined hands with Lord Ram after he was insulted by his brother in open court.

The narration of these events are described in detail in Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, (i) Doha no. 35 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 8-19 and Chanda line nos. 1-8; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 46; (iii) Doha no. 57—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 60; and (b) Lanka Kand, (iv) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 2; (v) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Doha no. 5; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 11.]

At the time of Lord Ram's departure (with his army), the ocean became turbulent and mountains trembled. [There was a great tumult in the world as the earth shook and the oceans heaved and the mountains rocked as if a great earth-quake was occuring.]

Presently, Lord Ram took his bow in his hands (as he got ready for departure from Kishkindha) (1).

The Lord twanged his formidable bow to announce the departure of his army, whereat even Brahma (the creator) Mahadeo (Lord Shiva, the concluder) and other exalted Gods were startled and stunned at its fierce sound that resembled the sound of the thunderbolt (as it is heard at the time of dooms-day).

River Ganges slipped (in shock) from Lord Shiva's matted hairs, and he could not control her (i.e. there were floods) (2).

All the guardians of the world became uneasy and alarmed; all the fourteen directions of the world were filled with fear.

Meanwhile, there was turmoil in Lanka. Ravana's ears stood on alert, and wives of the demons miscarried (3).

The bears and monkeys began to grind their teeth, and invoking Lord Ram and taking oath in his name, they jumped one on top of the other in excitement (4).

They had trees and mountains in their raised hands. Even the God of death feared their ferocious-looking sharp nails, claws and teeth.

Shouting 'catch him, catch him (with reference to Ravana, the demon king)—what is that demon in front of us'—they enthusiastically soared and moved in all the directions (like the dark clouds that cover the sky on the dooms-day) (5).

So much dust was raised by the movement of the Lord's army that the Wind God got paralysed (i.e. he was unable to move due to the weight of dust particles; the atmosphere was suffocative and dust got suspended thickly in the air).

The sun, the moon and the fire were eclipsed; the chariots of Gods lost their way (in darkness); and since the Gods don't blink their eyes, they got chocked with dust so much so that Indra's (king of God's) eyelids became heavy and swollen, and all the other Gods prayed so that this turmoil ends quickly (6).

Many ponds and lakes got filled with the kicked-up dust, and the hollow formed when mountains were uprooted and shifted or toppled over were filled with huge ocean-like water bodies.

No one could hear even himself due to the din and noise created by God's drums in the sky and the roaring of Hanuman on the ground (7).

The brave 'Kurma' (the Tortoise), Varaaha (the Boar) and Shesh Nath (the Serpent God) had somehow managed to hold the earth somehow, with courage and great difficulty, and prevent it from toppling over on its side. Their bones creaked due to fatigue and weight of the army, so they had to repeatedly stretch in weariness to ease their tired bones and muscles (8).

In this way, when the army of monkeys started on their mission, there was phenomenal turbulence, turmoil, uproar and upheaval everywhere on this earth.

It is not possible to describe the immensity and the huge proportion of the crowd: the monkeys were jeering, yelling and cheering, and they were so large in number that they jam-packed the path elbow to elbow. There was a loud and uproarious noise near the ocean's shore (9).

At this moment, Vibhishan came to meet Lord Ram because he had recognised the fact that the demons had subjugated themselves to God of Death and Destruction (Kaal).

Lord Ram, who is naturally benevolent and merciful to refugees who have come to seek refuge at his holy feet, anointed him (as the king of Lanka), and accepted him[1] (10).

[[1]It so happened that Vibhishan had tried to make Ravana see sense and avoid a ruinous war for the sake of a woman, a cause of war that made made no sense. But death was facing Ravana in his face and had corrupted his wisdom. He publicly insulted Vibhishan and taunted him to leave his kingdom and go join Ram if he is so favourably inclined to him, forcing the latter to abandon Lanka and go to seek refuge with Lord Ram. The Lord immediately accepted him, and by way of showing his appreciation as well as a military strategy he anointed Vibhishan the future king of Lanka. This the Lord did to motivate Vibhishan to remain royal to him with the hope that if the Lord wins the war he would be made the king of Lanka.

These developments are narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 49.]

Then, they constructed a bridge across the ocean[2] as if it was a mere play for them, crossed it, and landed on the other side, and set up camp near Mt. Subel[3].

Tulsidas says that the scouts among the monkeys went ahead, surveyed the fort, and leaving the message of Lord Ram's arrival at Lanka, came back to the camp[4] (11).

[[2]Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 2.

[3]Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 11.

[4]Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 3-10 that precede Doha no. 5.]

रावणकी मन्त्रणा

राग आसावरी

(5 / 23)

आए देखि दूत, सुनि सोच सठ–मनमैं।
बाहर बजावैं गाल, भालु कपि कालबस।
मोसो बीरसों चहत जीत्यो रारि रनमैं।। 1।।
राम छाम, लरिका लषन, बालि–बालकहि,
घालिको गनत ? रीछ जल ज्यों न घनमैं।
काजको न कपिराज, कायर कपिसमाज,
मेरे अनुमान हनुमान हरिगनमैं।। 2।।
समय सयानी मृदु बानी रानी कहै पिय !
पावक न होइ जातुधान बेनु–बनमैं।
तुलसी जानकी दिए, स्वामीसों, सनेह किये

कुसल, नतरु सब ह्वैहै छार छनमैं।। 3।।

rāvaṇakī mantraṇā

rāga āsāvarī

(5/23)

ā'ē dēkhi dūta, suni sōca saṭha-manamaiṁ.
bāhara bajāvaiṁ gāla, bhālu kapi kālabasa.
mōsō bīrasōṁ cahata jītyō rāri ranamaiṁ.. 1..
rāma chāma, larikā laṣana, bāli-bālakahi,
ghālikō ganata? rīcha jala jyōṁ na ghanamaiṁ.
kājakō na kapirāja, kāyara kapisamāja,
mērē anumāna hanumāna hariganamaiṁ.. 2..
samaya sayānī mr̥du bānī rānī kahai piya!
pāvaka na hō'i jātudhāna bēnu-banamaiṁ.
tulasī jānakī di'ē, svāmīsōṁ, sanēha kiyē
kusala, nataru saba hvaihai chāra chanamaiṁ.. 3..

Ravana's Council-I

Verse no. 5/23—[When Lord Ram's formidable army landed on the soil of Lanka, Ravana summoned his ministers and sought their advice for the next course of action. All of them were flatterers and sycophants, telling Ravana what he wished to hear instead of giving him wise council. Then his wife Mandodari tried to dissuade him from entering into a bloody war for senseless cause, against a formidable enemy with which he has no chance to win.

These developments are also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 8.]

Ravana's spies had come back after seeing (during their reconnaissance mission) Sri Ram's army[1]. Hearing their report, that hypocrite and wicked fellow was worried internally, but overtly he boasted, 'Ah! Impelled by death, these bears and monkeys want to get victory in battle over a brave and valorous one like me![2] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 51—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 56.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57.]

Lord Sri Ram is emaciated (because of sorrows of Sita's separation); Laxman is still a boy; the son of Baali (Angad) is ruinous and fatal for his own clan (because he is taking sides with Sugriv, his uncle, who had got his father Baali killed): who bothers about him; Jamvant (the aged bear chief) is impotent or inconsequential like a rain-

less cloud (because of his old age); Sugriv has no stature (because he is a betrayer of his own brother and got him killed due to his greed for the crown); and the whole of the monkey community is coward.

Yes, in my opinion, there is only one monkey among them all who is really brave and full of valour—and that is Hanuman! (2).

Tulsidas says that at this opportunity, the most wise queen Mandodari spoke with a sweet voice, 'My dear! Do not become a fire in the forest of bamboo represented by the demons. [To wit, like a single spark of fire readily destroys a forest of bamboo trees, likewise your single stubbornness would destroy the entire demon race. Say, what sense is in it?]

It is wise to return Sita back to Sri Ram and make peace with him. Otherwise, everything would soon be ruined in a fraction of a moment.[3]' (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 8.]

(5 / 24)

आपनी आपनी भाँति सब काहू कही है।
मंदोदरी, महोदर, मालवान महामति,
राजनीति पहुँच जहाँलौं जाकी रही है।। 1।।
महामद–अंध दसकंध न करत कान,
मीचु–बस नीच हठि कुगहनि गही है।
हँसि कहै, सचिव सयाने मोसों यों कहत,
चहै मेरु उड़न, बड़ी बयारि बही है।। 2।।
भालु, नर बानर अहार निसिचरनिको,
सोऊ नृप–बालकनि माँगि धारि लही है।
देखो कालकौतुक, पिपीलिकनि पंख लागो,
भाग मेरे लोगनिके भई चित–चही है।। 3।।
'तोसो न तिलोक आजु साहस, समाज–साजु,
महाराज–आयसु भो जोई, सोई सही है'।
तुलसी प्रनामकै बिभीषन बिनती करै,
'ख्याल बेधे ताल, कपि केलि लंका दही है'।। 4।।

(5/24)

āpanī āpanī bhāmँti saba kāhū kahī hai.
mandōdarī, mahōdara, mālavāna mahāmati,
rājanīti pahumँca jahāmँlauṁ jākī rahī hai.. 1..
mahāmada-andha dasakandha na karata kāna,
mīcu-basa nīca haṭhi kugahani gahī hai.
hamँsi kahai, saciva sayānē mōsōṁ yōṁ kahata,
cahai mēru uṛana, baṛī bayāri bahī hai.. 2..

bhālu, nara bānara ahāra nisicaranikō,
sō'ū nr̥pa-bālakani māmm̐gi dhāri lahī hai.
dēkhō kālakautuka, pipīlikani paṅkha lāgō,
bhāga mērē lōganikē bha'ī cita-cahī hai.. 3..
'tōsō na tilōka āju sāhasa, samāja-sāju,
mahārāja-āyasu bhō jō'ī, sō'ī sahī hai'.
tulasī pranāmakai bibhīṣana binatī karai,
'khyāla bēdhē tāla, kapi kēli laṅkā dahī hai'.. 4..

Ravana's Council-II

Verse no. 5/24—Mandodari as well as Mahodar and the most wise Malyawan etc. [1] all tried to make Ravana see reason as well as they could, according to their best judgement and wisdom, and as far as they were proficient in the science of politics and persuasion. [But to no avail as Ravana rebuked them all.][1] (1).

[[1]Mandodari = Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 8; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 16; (iii) Doha no. 35 kha—to Doha no. 37; (b) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/17—6/29.

Prahasta = Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Doha no. 8—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 10.

Malyawan = (a) Ram Charit Manas, (i) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 40; (ii) Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 49; (b) Kavitawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 5/21—5/22.]

But, blinded as he was by his haughtiness, ego, hypocrisy and vanity, Ravana did not listen (and pay heed) to any of their advice. That wicked rascal, being under the spell of imminent death (and impelled or instigated by it), willingly followed the path of unrighteousness (which would lead to his ruin and disaster for the whole demon race).

He laughed and said derisively, 'Ah! Our clever ministers (advisors) appear to suggest that a strong wind (gale, storm) is blowing, and so the Sumeru mountain[2] can blow away by its force! (2).

[[2]Here, Ravana compares him to Mt. Sumeru, the huge mountain on earth where the Gods have their terrestrial abode. He means that just like it is impossible for a storm, no matter how strong it blows, to shift this mighty mountain, so it is also impossible for this seemingly huge army of Lord Ram to do any harm to him or his demon army.]

Indeed, monkeys and humans are staple food of the demons by nature. Besides this, these princes have a borrowed army[3].

[[3]To wit, Ram's army consists of monkeys and bears who owe their allegiance to Sugriv, the betrayer of his own brother. This army does not belong to Ayodhya whence I could have thought it to be loyal to its prince Sri Ram. How can this 'borrowed army' be loyal to the two brothers Ram and Laxman when they find that they are sure to be annihilated in the battle field, fighting someone else's war? They are sure to run away fearing for their own safety and families. They are not fighting

for their own sake or for their own king; after all, the two brothers are strangers for their kingdom. What serious interest would this army have in the battle?]

Look at the marvel of Kaal (death, time, circumstance) that even ants have got wings[4]!

[[4]Here, Ravana compares the monkeys and bears to the humble ants; when the time for the ants come to die they develop wings so that they rush to a flame only to burn themselves to death.]

It is due to my luck that the people (i.e. the demons who are my subjects; the citizens of Lanka) have got what they desired (i.e. now they can have a good meal by devouring monkeys, bears and these two princes and douse their fire of hunger).' (3).

Tulsidas says that it was then that Vibhishan intervened, bowed his head reverentially and said, 'Oh great king! Really it is true that there is no one like you in the three Lokas (i.e. the terrestrial, the subterranean and the celestial worlds) who has as much courage and strength, and a strong army as you have. It will be done as you order (or wish). But, please be practical and weigh the strength of the opposite side as well—for, he (Sri Ram) had pierced the seven (tall and robust) coconut trees by a mere wish (at the time preceding Baali's death), and the monkey Hanuman had reduced Lanka to ashes almost playfully (i.e. without the least effort). [Therefore, the enemy is not easy to be overcome as you imagine him to be.][4]' (4).

[[4]Vibhishan's entreaty to Ravana is continued in the next verse no. 5/25.]

(5 / 25)

दूसरो न देखतु साहिब सम रामै।
बेदऊ पुरान, कबि–कोबिद बिरद–रत,
जाको जसि सुनत गावत गुन–ग्रामै।। 1।।
माया–जीव, जग–जाल, सुभाउ, करम–काल,
सबको सासकु, सब मैं, सब जामैं।
बिधि–से करनिहार, हरि से पालनिहार,
हर–से हरनिहार जपैं जाके नामैं।। 2।।
सोइ नरबेष जानि, जनकी बिनती मानि,
मतो नाथ सोई, जातें भलो परिनामैं।
सुभट–सिरोमनि कुठारपानि सारिखेहू
लखी औ लखाई, इहाँ किए सुभ सामैं।। 3।।
बचन–बिभूषन बिभीषन–बचन सुनि
लागे दुख दूषन–से दाहिनेउ बामैं।
तुलसी हुमकि हिये हन्यो लाता, 'भले तात',
चल्यो सुरतरु ताकि तजि घोर धामैं।। 4।।

(5/25)

dūsarō na dēkhatā sāhiba sama rāma.
bēda purāna, kabi-kōbida birada-rata,

jākō jasi sunata gāvata guna-grāmai.. 1..
māyā-jīva, jaga-jāla, subhā'u, karama-kāla,
sabakō sāsaku, saba maiṁ, saba jāmaiṁ.
bidhi-sē karanihāra, hari sē pālanihāra,
hara-sē haranihāra japaiṁ jākē nāmaiṁ.. 2..
sō'i narabēṣa jāni, janakī binatī māni,
matō nātha sō'ī, jātēṁ bhalō parināmaiṁ.
subhaṭa-sirōmani kuṭhārapāni sārikhēhū
lakhī au lakhā'ī, ihāṁ ki'ē subha sāmaiṁ.. 3..
bacana-bibhūṣana bibhīṣana-bacana suni
lāgē dukha dūṣana-sē dāhinē'u bāmaiṁ.
tulasī humaki hiyē han'yō lātā, 'bhalē tāta',
calyō surataru tāki taji ghōra dhāmaiṁ.. 4..

Ravana's Council-III

Verse no. 5/25—[Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana, and as destiny would have it and as an example of paradoxes in creation, he was a pious soul and a devotee of Lord Vishnu, about whom he had got a wind that the Lord has manifested as Lord Ram, instead of his being cruel and inimical to Gods like the rest of his race. The reason is that very long ago when the three demon brothers, Ravana, Kumbhakaran and Vibhishan, had done severe Tapa (penances and austerities) to please Brahma, the creator, the latter appeared before them and asked them to seek a boon about whatever they desired. While Ravana sought invincible powers to rule the world, Kumbhakaran sought a ridiculous boon that he should enjoy sleeping for months on end, and finally Vibhishan sought unwavering devotion for Lord Vishnu so that when the time comes to leave this mortal body and die he can find emancipation and salvation for his soul and free it from the horrors of living in a demon's body. Brahma granted their will. This is how Vibhishan became an ardent devotee of Lord Ram whom he knew to be Lord Hari in a human form.

The origin of the three brothers and their subsequent Tapa and acquiring their desired wishes has been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 176—to Doha no. 177.

The fact that Vibhishan was a great devotee of Lord Ram is highlighted in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 8 when Hanuman meets him during the search for Sita.

Now, Vibhishan did not want ruin to come to the whole family and the entire demon race because of the reckless and non-sensical behaviour of one individual, Ravana, especially when the cause of all mischief is highly sinful, degrading, unrighteous and unethical, such as kidnapping someone's wife and forcibly keeping her captive, and trying to force oneself on her. Hence, he tried his best to persuade his brother to come to his senses and return Sita to her husband to avoid the calamity that stares on the face of the entire demon race. But as Destiny had different plans already chalked out to get rid of the cruel demons, Ravana's intellect and wisdom went for a toss; he wouldn't listen to anyone, and anyone who talked of making peace with Lord

Ram and return his wife to him was deemed to be a traitor by him, and charged with sedition that deserved severe punishment.

In the present verse no. 5/25 we read how Vibhishan tried to convince Ravana to make peace with Lord Ram.

The earnest request by Vibhishan to Ravana to make peace with Lord Ram was taken in the wrong light by Ravana who regarded this plea as high treason and sedition, and therefore he not only rejected it but vented his ire on his brother by kicking Vibhishan in the chest for taking sides with his enemy, whereat Vibhishan abandoned Lanka and took refuge with Lord Ram where he was warmly welcome. Besides the present book Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 5/25—5/46, these developments are also narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Doha no. 49.]

[Vibhshan tried to plead with Ravana to make peace with Lord Ram. He prayed—]

'There is no other more exalted Lord in sight than Lord Sri Ram anywhere in the world, the Lord whose great fame, immense glories, magnificent virtues, noble deeds and excellent characters are being incessantly sung by the Vedas, Purans (i.e. the ancient scriptures and histories), the Bards (scribes and other narrators of the landmark events of the past) and the Wise Ones (i.e. sages, hermits, seers, mystics etc.) (1).

He (Lord Ram) is the ruler (sovereign, controller, Lord) of māyā (worldly delusions), jīva (living beings; the creatures of this creation), jaga-jāla (the deluding and entrapping web of mundane existence in this mortal world), subhā'u (one's inherent tendencies, habits, inclinations, nature), karama (all the deeds and actions undertaken by a creature) and kāla (factors of time, circumstance, death); he is all-pervading, omnipresent and all encompassing, being present in each individual unit of this creation (saba maiṁ, saba jāmaiṁ); and his holy name is constantly chanted (repeated, remembered, recalled) by the most exalted Gods in this creation, such as the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Shiva[1]---- (2).

[[1]Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 39.]

----The same Lord (the Supreme Being; the Brahm; the Parmatma, the Supreme Soul of creation) has manifested himself as a human (in the body of Lord Ram), and you would be well advised to treat and recognise him as such.

And therefore my Lord (Ravana), please pay heed to this humble servant's pleadings, and do such things which have a pleasant ending. Look! Even sage Parashuram who wields a battle axe, is most brave, strong and valorous (and who is so furious and uncompromising by nature that he had mercilessly slayed all the kings of the Kshatriya clan repeatedly to wipe them off the surface of the earth)—even he had judged and weighed the pros and cons of antagonizing and confronting Lord Ram, and had come to the conclusion that it was wise and prudent for him to make peace and amends with the Lord (at the bow-breaking ceremony at Janakpur, whereat he surrendered before Lord Ram and even gave the Lord his own bow, and went away to the forest to resume his Tapa)[2] (3).'

[[2]This event is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.]

Hearing these words of Vibhishan, which were albeit so adorable and truthful as to be like being jewels among words and which were undoubtedly most beneficial for Ravana, the latter regarded them as most contemptible, exceedingly derogatory, very insinuative, highly treacherous, most painful and tormenting to hear, greatly corrupt and utterly blasphemous.

Hence (literally charging Vibhishan with high treason and sedition), he got up seething with wrath, and angrily kicked Vibhishan in the chest in a most contemptuous way.

Then, saying, 'Alright dear brother, what you did is for good' (bhalē tāta), Vibhishan abandoned the scorching heat (represented by Ravana), and started towards the Kalpa Tree (represented by Sri Ram) to seek its shelter/shade (which would give him peace, protection and comfort from the grave danger to his life that he now faced in Lanka if he still abided there after being so severely threatened, humiliated and kicked by its king Ravana)[3] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 40—to Doha no. 41.]

विभीषण–शरणागति

(5 / 26)

जाय माय पायँ परि कथा सो सुनाई है।
समाधान करति बिभीषनको बार बार,
' कहा भयो तात ! लात मारे, बड़ो भाई है।। 1।।
साहिब, पितु समान, जातुधानको तिलक,
ताके अपमान तेरी बड़िए बड़ाई है '।
गरत गलानि जानि, सनमानि सिख देति,
'रोष किये दोष, सहें समुझें भलाई है।। 2।।
इहाँतें बिमुख भये, रामकी सरन गए
भलो नेकु, लोक राखे निपट निकाई है'।
मातु–पग सीस नाइ, तुलसी असीस पाइ
चले भले सगुन, कहत 'मन भाई' है।। 3।।

vibhīṣaṇa-śaraṇāgati

(5/26)

jāya māya pāyam̃ pari kathā sō sunā'ī hai.
samādhāna karati bibhīṣanakō bāra bāra,
'kahā bhayō tāta! lāta mārē, baṛō bhā'ī hai.. 1..
sāhiba, pitu samāna, jātudhānakō tilaka,
tākē apamāna tērī baḍiē baṛā'ī hai'.

garata galāni jāni, sanamāni sikha dēti,
'rōṣa kiyē dōṣa, sahēṁ samujhēṁ bhalā'ī hai.. 2..
ihāṁtēṁ bimukha bhayē, rāmakī sarana ga'ē
bhalō nēku, lōka rākhē nipaṭa nikā'ī hai'.
mātu-paga sīsa nā'i, tulasī asīsa pā'i
calē bhalē saguna, kahata 'mana bhā'ī' hai.. 3..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-I

Verse no. 5/26—[Insulted by his brother Ravana, Vibhishan decided to quit Lanka and join Lord Ram. It had been his long-standing desire to take refuge with the Lord as is clear from his conversation with Hanuman in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 7. But he did not want to do anything from his side that would seem like his deserting his family and his king for selfish reasons, to switch sides in favour of an enemy of the king (Ravana) in whose realm he lived. But when Ravana kicked him he decided that it was the right time to say good-bye.

Now, as it happened, many of Ravana's close family members had also advised him against confronting Lord Ram, such as his wife Mandodari, his own spies whom he had sent behind Vibhishan to report about the strength of the Lord's army, his son Prahasta, and his old uncle Malyawan (refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 5/23, stanza no. 3 and 5/24; Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/1), as well as by his brother Kumbhakaran (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 62—to Doha no. 63 where we read that like Vibhishan, Kumbhakaran too had sternly admonished Ravana for all the mischief he has done for a wrong cause, and on his part he felt happy that at last he would get an opportunity to find liberation and deliverance from the unholy body of a demon by being killed at the hands of Lord Ram).

In the following verse nos. 5/26—to 5/46 of Geetawali we shall read in detail how Vibhishan reached Lord Ram's camp, the way he was warmly welcomed and accepted by Lord Ram.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.]

Vibhishan went straight to his mother, fell at her feet and told her the entire episode. His mother tried to comfort him, saying, 'Son, what great harm is done by his (Ravana's) kicking you? After all, he is your elder brother (1).

Firstly, he is your king and lord of the kingdom in which you live and is sustained by him. Secondly, he is an elder brother equivalent to a father. And thirdly, he is the best in the demon clan.

His insulting you is no less than a favour for you. [How? To wit, firstly this has motivated you to seek refuge in the holy feet of Lord Ram, and secondly you must remember that he is a 'demon' who pays little heed to civil manners and courteous behaviour. It is his nature to be rude and haughty, every time wanting to have his way on all matters, and never tolerating dissent or opposition. So therefore, you must take it lightly.]'

Seeing that Vibhishan was full of despair, very aggrieved and highly indignant at being publicly humiliated, she continued to try to placate his ruffled feelings, and said, 'Son, getting angry and revengeful at this point time is very unwise and futile, while being reasonable and tolerant will be most advisable and would provide for the well-being of all of us (because a calamitous war is looming over the city, and at this juncture everyone ought to keep his calm so that the enemy does not get a hint that there is some sort of revolt in the kingdom) (2).

Indeed, albeit it is better for you to turn away from here and take shelter with Lord Ram (because you have been publicly insulted and declared a traitor by your brother who happens to be a king of this place, and therefore it is highly dangerous for you to stay here any longer), yet I would suggest that it would be far more better for you if you are able to resist this temptation (to leave Lanka and join Lord Ram) and hold out here as it would look good in the eyes of the world that you forgave your brother at a time when he faces a war and that you didn't become a traitor by joining the enemy and being the cause of destruction of the family and kingdom to which you belong and which has sustained you till now.[1]'

[[1]Clever use of words by Vibhishan's wise mother! She did not support treason; she could not openly support sending Vibhishan to Sri Ram knowing full well that it would be abetting revolt and speed-up the death of her elder son, Ravana. But, at the same time, there were three prominent factors at play in her mind to give a subtle and tacit approval for Vibhishan's decision to leave Ravana and join Sri Ram.

First and foremost was that she realised that Vibhishan had his mind made up, would not listen, especially after being publicly rebuked and insulted. Secondly, in the case of a complete route of the demons and their annihilation in the war, at least one of her sons would survive to carry forward the demon clan. And thirdly, she realised that what Vibhishan had decided was indeed the correct and wise path, for by this time she must have been herself disgusted by Ravana's evil ways and sinful demeanours. As such, here she saw an opportunity of cleaning the demon race of all evil mongers and unrighteous characters, because as an elderly woman she could not consent to excesses of unrightful behaviour by her own sons.

Being by now certain that Ravana would not listen to anyone, and therefore decimation of the demon race was now a forgone conclusion, she preferred that Vibhishan join Lord Ram's camp to escape annihilation with the rest of the family, and thereby carry on the race to the next generation. It is every mother's wish that if destruction can't be avoided, then at leas one of her sons must live to carry on the family line.]

Tulsidas says that hereat, Vibhishan bowed his head at the mother's feet, took her blessings, and left the place (for Sri Ram's camp). Seeing auspicious omens on the way, he thought—"I have got what I desired (i.e. my decision is correct)" (3).

(5 / 27)

'भाइ को सो करौं, डरौं कठिन कुफेरै।
सुकृत–संकट पर्‌यो, जात गलानिन्ह गर्‌यो,
कृपानिधिको मिलौं पै मिलिकै कुबेरै'।। 1।।
जाइ गह पाँय, धाइ धनद उठाइ भेट्यो,
समाचार पाइ पोच सोचत सुमेरै।

तहँई मिले महेस, दियो हित उपदेस,
रामकी सरन जाहि 'सुदिनु न हेरै।। 2।।
जाको नाम कुंभज कलेस–सिंधु सोखिबेको,
मेरो कह्यो मानि, तात ! बाँधे जिनि बेरै'।
तुलसी मुदित चले, पाये हैं सगुन भले,
रंक लूटिबेको मानो मनिगन–ढेरै।। 3।।

(5/27)

'bhā'ira kō sō karauṁ, ḍaraum̐ kaṭhina kuphērai.
sukr̥ta-saṅkaṭa paryō, jāta galāninha garyō,
kr̥pānidhikō milauṁ pai milikai kubērai'.. 1..
jā'i gaha pāmm̐ya, dhā'i dhanada uṭhā'i bhēṭyō,
samācāra pā'i pōca sōcata sumērai.
tahamm̐ milē mahēsa, diyō hita upadēsa,
rāmakī sarana jāhi 'sudinu na hērai.. 2..
jākō nāma kumbhaja kalēsa-sindhu sōkhibēkō,
mērō kahyō māni, tāta! bāmm̐dhē jini bērai'.
tulasī mudita calē, pāyē haiṁ saguna bhalē,
raṅka lūṭibēkō mānō manigana-ḍhērai.. 3..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-II

Verse no. 5/27—[After his discussions with his mother as narrated in verse no. 5/26 herein above, Vibhishan thought to himself—] 'I should respect my elder brother (Ravana), but I have a big problem. (He has threatened my life, kicked me, publicly humiliated me, and has held me to be a spy of his enemy; so staying any longer is full of grave dangers).'

So, he decided to first meet his brother Kuber (the God's treasurer), and then decide on meeting Sri Ram (1).

So he went to Kuber and clasped his feet. Kuber rushed forward and embraced him. Hearing the entire episode, he (Kuber) stood on Mt. Sumeru and became thoughtful.

Meanwhile, Vibhishan met Lord Shiva there who gave him this advice: 'Vibhishan! You go and seek refuge at the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram; you need not wait for an auspicious day or time for it (i.e. you need not take anyone's permission or discuss the matter with anyone to take their opinion) (2).

Oh dear! The Lord whose name is like sage Agastya for the purpose of drying up the ocean of sorrows, miseries and pains, there is no need to imagine any obstacles in going to take refuge at such a Lord's holy feet. Pay heed to this singular wise advice of mine, and you do not need to make preparations for it!'

Tulsidas says, hearing this, Vibhishan's doubts were removed, and he happily started for meeting Lord Sri Ram. On the way, he met many auspicious and good omens which made him all the more enthusiastic as if a pauper is thrilled while he is on his way with the prospect of looting a treasury of jewels (3).

राग केदारा

(5 / 28)

संकर–सिख आसिष पाइकै।
चले मनहि मन कहत बिभीषन सीस महेसहि नाइकै।। 1।।
गये सोच, भए सगुन, सुमंगल दस दिसि देत देखाइकै।
सजल नयन, सानंद हृदय, तनु प्रेम–पुलक अधिकाइकै।। 2।।
अंतहु भाव भलो भाईको, कियो अनभलो मनाइकौ।
भइ कूबरकी लात, बिधाता राखी बात बनाइकै।। 3।।
नाहित क्यों कुबेर घर मिलि हर हितु कहते चित लाइकै।
जो सुनि सरन राम ताके मैं निज बामता बिहाइकै।। 4।।
अनायास अनुकूल सूलधर मग मुदमूल जनाइकै।
कृपासिंधु सनमानि, जानि जन दीन लियो अपनाइकै।। 5।।
स्वारथ–परमारथ करतलगत, श्रमपथ गयो सिराइकै।
सपने कै सौतुक, सुख–सस सुर सींचत देत निराइकै।। 6।।
गुरु गौरीस, साँइ सीतापति, हित हनुमानहि जाइकै।
मिलिहौं, मोहि कहा कीबे अब, अभिमत, अवधि अघाइकै।। 7।।
मरतो कहाँ जाइ, को जानै लटि लालची ललाइकै।
तुलसिदास भजिहौं रघुबीरहि अभय–निसान बजाइकै।। 8।।

rāga kēdārā

(5/28)

saṅkara-sikha āsiṣa pā'ikai.
calē manahi mana kahata bibhīṣana sīsa mahēsahi nā'ikai.. 1..
gayē sōca, bha'ē saguna, sumaṅgala dasa disi dēta dēkhā'ikai.
sajala nayana, sānanda hr̥daya, tanu prēma-pulaka adhikā'ikai.. 2..
antahu bhāva bhalō bhā'īkō, kiyō anabhalō manā'ikau.
bha'i kūbarakī lāta, bidhātā rākhī bāta banā'ikai.. 3..
nāhita kyōṁ kubēra ghara mili hara hitu kahatē cita lā'ikai.
jō suni sarana rāma tākē maiṁ nija bāmatā bihā'ikai.. 4..
anāyāsa anukūla sūladhara maga mudamūla janā'ikai.
kr̥pāsindhu sanamāni, jāni jana dīna liyō apanā'ikai.. 5..
svāratha-paramāratha karatalagata, śramapatha gayō sirā'ikai.
sapanē kai sautuka, sukha-sasa sura sīn̄cata dēta nirā'ikai.. 6..
guru gaurīsa, sāmm̐ sītāpati, hita hanumānahi jā'ikai.
milihauṁ, mōhi kahā kībē aba, abhimata, avadhi aghā'ikai.. 7..
maratō kahāmm̐ jā'i, kō jānai laṭi lālacī lalā'ikai.
tulasidāsa bhajihauṁ raghubīrahi abhaya-nisāna bajā'ikai.. 8..

Verse no. 5/28—Having received the wise advice and blessings of Lord Shiva (as narrated in verse no. 5/27 herein above), Vibhishan bowed his head to him and started forthwith for Sri Ram's camp, contemplating in his mind as follows—(1).

'I can discern auspicious signs in all the ten directions (and therefore my journey will be fruitful and for my good).' This observation caused all his sorrows, dilemmas, uncertainties and perplexities to be removed (eliminated instantly).

His eyes were filled with tears (of joy), his heart was overcome with exhilaration, and his body was highly thrilled with surge of affectionate emotions (for Lord Ram) (2).

[He muttered to himself—] 'Indeed, the action of my brother proved to be my boon and well-being in disguise, albeit his intention was just the opposite (for, he had wanted to scornfully reproach and humiliate me).

The Creator has made me fortunate (for he has turned circumstances in my favour), because for me, Ravana's kicking has become akin to the kick that is administered on the haunched-back[1] (3).

[[1]Even as a sprained back or bent back can be straightened by a violent kick, Ravana's kick has made me turn towards Lord Sri Ram by symbolically straightening my resolve to seek redemption with him and get rid of all moral deformities and spiritual taints I had naturally inherited by the virtue of my birth as a member of the demon. Further, Sri Ram would also have no reservations accepting me because I have been ousted by Ravana himself.

This stanza also shows that there is no rancour or bitterness in the mind of Vibhishan. The following stanzas also show that in fact he considers Ravana's kicking him and throwing him out of his court as a blessing in disguise.]

Had I not been so lucky and blessed, why then would Lord Shiva have met me at the palace of Kuber and advised me to do this (i.e. seek Sri Ram's shelter immediately without further procrastinations; refer verse 5/27 above), hearing which advice I have forsaken my wickedness, conceit and imposterings, and have decided to seek refuge in the holy feet of Sri Ram's? (4).

That bearer of the trident, who is an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness (i.e. Lord Shiva), has involuntarily and without any self or vested interest, shown me this path of joy and happiness.

The Lord (Shiva) has recognized me as one of his own humble and meek servants, and that is why he has accepted me (and has shown his benevolence and munificence on me by voluntarily advising me to go and take shelter with Lord Ram without any reservations) (5).

By his (Shiva's) grace and kindness, both my worldly self-interest (in this mundane world) as well as my soul's salvation and emancipation in the after life has been ensured, and I have been freed from my torments and travails.

I marvel with exceeding wonder—is it a dream that I see, or is it for real? For in all sooth it seems that the exalted Gods themselves appear to be watering my harvest of joy, delight, happiness and bliss (i.e. I am euphoric, exhilarated and ecstatic with immense joy that is only possible when the Gods are agreeable) (6).

Now, I shall go and meet my Guru, Lord Shiva, my Lord Sri Ram (the husband of Sita), and my benefactor and well-wisher Sri Hanuman. What more I have to do now (or what more good and fortunate circumstance can I ever want and expect).

I have got my fill of the best of fruits (i.e. highest of rewards that one can ever expect to get in this life) (7).

Who knows where otherwise I would have gone and died while pursuing, and at the same time being pursued by, the intense and huge delusions, greeds and infatuations created by this sensual, illusionary world of sense objects and their accompanying torments, anguish and sorrows?[2],

[[2]To wit, if I hadn't been kicked by Ravana, and not advised by Lord Shiva to seek redemption by surrendering before Lord Ram, who knows what my bad fate would have been. Like all other demons and creatures, I would have remained entangled in this world of sense objects, spending my entire life mired in delusions and pursuing gratifications for my sense organs. When finally my life would have come to an end, I would have died an ignominious death, faced with the horrible fate of having to bear the consequences of all the deeds that I would have done in my lifetime, none of which would have contributed to my peace and bliss. I would have suffered even after death. But now the tide has turned in my favour: for now my redemption and deliverance is certain.]

Quoting Vibhishan, Tulsidas says for himself that he too would now beat the kettle-drum of victory and fearlessness which comes when one surrenders one's self to Lord Ram and develops devotion for Lord Raghubir (Ram), worshipping him and adoring him with love and affection[3].

[[3]Tulsidas cites the example of Vibhishan to express his own joyous sentiments that he is also lucky like him to have surrendered himself to Lord Ram and have developed devotion and affection for the Lord.] (8).

(5 / 29)

पदपदुम गरीबनिवाजके।
देखिहौं जाइ पाइ लोचन–फल हित सुर–साधु–समाजके।। 1।।
गई बहोर, ओर निरबाहक, साजक बिगरे साजके।
सबरी सुखद, गीध–गतिदायक, समन सोक कपिराजके।। 2।।
नाहिन मोहि और कतहूँ कछु, जैसे काग जहाजके।
आयो सरन सुखद पदपंकज चोंथे रावन–बाजके।। 3।।
आरतिहरन सरन, समरथ सब दिन अपनेकी लाजके।
तुलसी 'पाहि' कहत नत–पालक मोहुसे निपट निकाजके।। 4।।

(5/29)

padapaduma garībanivājakē.
dēkhihauṁ jā'i pā'i lōcana-phala hita sura-sādhu-samājakē.. 1..
ga'ī bahōra, ōra nirabāhaka, sājaka bigarē sājakē.
sabarī sukhada, gīdha-gatidāyaka, samana sōka kapirājakē.. 2..

nāhina mōhi aura katahūm̐ kachu, jaisē kāga jahājakē.
āyō sarana sukhada padapaṅkaja cōnthē rāvana-bājakē.. 3..
āratiharana sarana, samaratha saba dina apanēkī lājakē.
tulasī 'pāhi' kahata nata-pālaka mōhusē nipaṭa nikājakē.. 4..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-IV

Verse no. 5/29—'Ah! Now I shall go and have a look at the holy feet of the friend and sustainer of the poor, the meek, the underdog, the downtrodden and the wretched ones (i.e. the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram), and consequentially I shall get the fruit (reward) of my eyes by having the Lord's divine sight.

These august feet (of Sri Ram) are the best benefactor of all, and they are a provider of all welfare to the Gods and the community of saints (1).

Lord Sri Ram can revive lapsed happiness and bliss; he is the protector till the end; and he is the one who can rectify or redo what has already been erred or undone[1].

He is the one who has provided comfort and solace to Sabari, has liberated (i.e., delivered from this cycle of birth and death) the vulture (Jatau) and has quelled the sorrows and anguish of Sugriv, the king of monkeys (2).

[[1]Reviving lapsed happiness and redoing the undone means that he can pull one back from the quagmire and slush of delusions of ignorance, infatuations, avarice/greed, lust/passion, anger/malice, discord and hordes of evils, sins and misdemeanours that the creature indulges in, or is trapped in, which together are the cause of his spiritual miseries and downfall. And once the creature is pulled out of the slush and muck, the pristine purity of the soul re-emerges from under the thick layer of these vices, resulting in its reverting back into its inherent state of blissfulness, happiness and contentedness.]

Like the crow perching on the (mast of a) ship; I do not have any shelter or protection anywhere (because there is no land in sight nor shelter from the scorching sun, or anywhere to hide), and when tormented (attacked) by the falcon-like Ravana, my only succour is to take refuge in his (Sri Ram's) lotus-like holy feet (3).

He (Lord Ram) is always alert, eager and able to protect the dignity and esteem of his devotees, and is the remover (eliminator) of the sorrows and tribulations of his refugees (i.e. those who have taken protection of his holy feet).'

Tulsidas says that by merely pleading earnestly 'Save me[2]', he (Lord Sri Ram) becomes the protector of those persons who are the most worthless duds in the world like me (Tulsidas)[3] (4).

[[2]Refer also to Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 5.

[3]Tulsidas praises the glory of Lord Ram as the most munificent and gracious Lord anyone can ever find. For, in all sooth, even the most worthless of creatures can be sure of Lord's attention and protection if he simply says "Lord, save me". It's as easy as this; what more would one wish to have from one's lord?

This fact is endorsed by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 44.]

महाराज रामपहँ जाउँगो।
सुख–स्वारथ परिहरि करिहौं सोइ, ज्यौं साहिबहि सुहाउँगो।। 1।।
सरनागत सुनि बेगि बोलि हैं, हौं निपटहि सकुचाउँगो।
राम गरीबनिवाज निवाजिहैं, जानिहैं, ठाकुर–ठाउँगो।। 2।।
धरिहैं नाथ हाथ माथे, एहितें केहि लाभ अघाउँगो।
सपनो–सो अपनो न कछू लखि, लघु लालच न लोभाउँगो।। 3।।
कहिहौं, बलि, रोटिहा रावरो, बिनु मोलही बिकाउँगो।
तुलसी पट ऊतरे ओढ़िहौं, उबरी जूठनि खाउँगो।। 4।।

(5/30)

mahārāja rāmapahaṁ jā'uṁgō.
sukha-svāratha parihari karihauṁ sō'i, jyauṁ sāhibahi suhā'uṁgō.. 1..
saranāgata suni bēgi bōli haiṁ, hauṁ nipaṭahi sakucā'uṁgō.
rāma garībanivāja nivājihaiṁ, jānihaiṁ, ṭhākura-ṭhā'uṁgō.. 2..
dharihaiṁ nātha hātha māthē, ēhitēṁ kēhi lābha aghā'uṁgō.
sapanō-sō apanō na kachū lakhi, laghu lālaca na lōbhā'uṁgō.. 3..
kahihauṁ, bali, rōṭihā rāvarō, binu mōlahī bikā'uṁgō.
tulasī paṭa ūtarē ōḍhihauṁ, ubarī jūṭhani khā'uṁgō.. 4..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-V

Verse no. 5/30—'Now that I will go to the Great King Sri Ram (mahārāja rāma), I shall forsake all my personal comforts and vested self-interests, and do all those things which would please the Lord (or, which would make the Lord pleased with me and treat me favourably) (1).

As soon as the Lord hears that I have come to seek his refuge he would immediately call me (i.e. accept me), but I will feel extremely hesitant. Then he, who is a friend of the poor, the meek, the humble, the underdog, the downtrodden, the lowly and the distressed ones, would protect me, realising the fact that I have no other patron Lord (over my head to act as my benefactor and protector other than Lord Ram), or that I have no other destination or standing except the Lord (i.e. I have no where else to go except at the holy feet of Lord Ram which are now my only destination and succour in life) (2).

Forsooth, the Lord would place his hands on my head! What greater benefit or profit there is than this privilege which would satisfy me?

This world is like an illusionary dream; I shall not henceforth regard any of its (illusionary, perishable) objects as mine, and I shall also not be enticed or tempted by any of the world's lowly tendencies such as avarice, greed, lust, passions and desires (3).

I shall say, 'Lord! I say honestly, I shall survive by eating your left-overs and shall sell my self without a price at your hands (i.e. I shall serve you like a faithful and loyal servant all my life). Also, I shall wear clothes discarded by you, and shall eat

morsels of food from your plate that you leave on it or ask me to partake of them.[1]' (4).

[[1]This is only a way of expressing Vibhishan's desire to surrender and submit himself before Lord Ram with a sincere spirit of humility and devotion for the Lord. It does not mean that he will actually eat the left-over food from Sri Ram's plate, or wear his clothes—its highly incongruous to think that Lord Ram would stoop so low as to allow it to happen. It's below the Lord's own dignity to allow his loyal, faithful and loving devotees to do so like arrogant masters demand from their serfs and slaves. The Lord is exceptionally gracious and nice, and he will never want his devotee to behave like a slave of his. In fact, it will hurt the Lord if this happens.

But when the devotee makes these statements it is because he wishes to express his sincere desire to surrender and submit before the Lord even as he knows that the Lord will not allow this to actually happen.]

(5/31)

आइ सचिव बिभीषनके कही।
कृपासिंधु! दसकंधबंधु लघु चरन–सरन आयो सही।। 1।।
बिषम बिषाद–बारिनिधि बूड़त थाह कपीस–कथा लही।
गये दुख–दोष देखि पदपंकज, अब न साध एकौ रही।। 2।।
सिथिल–सनेह सराहत नख–सिख नीक निकाई निरबही।
तुलसी मुदित दूत भयो, मानहु अमिय–लाहु माँगत मही।। 3।।

(5/31)

ā'i saciva bibhīṣanakē kahī.
kṛpāsindhu! dasakandhabandhu laghu carana-sarana āyō sahī.. 1..
biṣama biṣāda-bārinidhi būṛata thāha kapīsa-kathā lahī.
gayē dukha-dōṣa dēkhi padapaṅkaja, aba na sādha ēkau rahī.. 2..
sithila-sanēha sarāhata nakha-sikha nīka nikā'ī nirabahī.
tulasī mudita dūta bhayō, mānahu amiya-lāhu mām̐gata mahī.. 3..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-VI

Verse no. 5/31—When Vibhishan reached the camp of Lord Ram, his minister or the assistant who had accompanied him, came to the Lord and said, 'Oh Lord who is an ocean of mercy and compassion (kṛpāsindhu)! The younger brother (i.e. Vibhishan) of he who has ten necks (i.e. Ravana; "dasakandhabandhu laghu"), has come to seek refuge at your feet without any trick and deceit in his heart[1] (1).

[[1]When Vibhishan left Lanka, one of his trusted aides accompanied him, and when they reached the camp of Lord Ram, the monkeys immediately accosted them. Hanuman recognized Vibhishan who told him the reason of his coming. Hanuman was glad beyond measure, and he took the companion of Vibhishan and went to Lord Ram to report. This aide of Vibhishan was well aware of all the circumstances on both

sides of the camps, i.e. Lord Ram's side as well as Ravana's side, and he was also privy to the thoughts of Vibhishan, his lord.

So, when the messenger was accompanied by Hanuman and other chief monkey warriors to convey the reason of Vibhishan coming to Lord Ram, and that he had come with a clean conscience and had no trick in his mind while coming to seek the Lord's shelter, it convinced Lord Ram, even more so because Hanuman had already briefed the Lord about the way he found Sita at Lanka with the help of Vibhishan, and now Hanuman was there to identify that the demon who has come to seek the Lord's refuge is indeed the same person as Vibhishan, and no imposter.]

He (Vibhishan) was almost drowned in the sea of distress and dismay, feeling helpless and hopeless, when the story of Sugriv[2] (as told to him by Hanuman by way of introducing himself at the time they met in Lanka when the latter had gone there in search of Sita) gave him hope and buoyed his spirits.

[Since then, Vibhishan was longing for a chance to escape from the cage he was finding himself trapped in, and now he has found a way out.] Oh Lord, now having reached your feet, all his woes, troubles and tribulations are over, and he has no other wishes left (except that you will accept him and give him your protection). Hence, will you please accept him? (2).'

[[2]When Hauman had briefed Vibhishan about how Sugriv, who was being subjected to immense torment by his elder brother Baali, was assured protection by Lord Ram and ultimately made king of Kishkindha by slaying his inimical brother, Vibhishan immediately saw a ray of hope as his condition was almost similar. He too was subjected to immense miseries at the hands of his elder brother Ravana who was doing unrighteous things to which Vibhishan did not agree, and so upon hearing Sugriv's story he too hoped that one day he would find his freedom.]

Lord Sri Ram's countenance and attitude looked charming and welcoming, and the minister (or messenger of Vibhishan) felt relaxed in the Lord's presence[3].

[[3]The Lord's demeanours and expressions showed that he was not annoyed or angry upon learning that his enemy's brother has come; he had not become alarmed or suspicious. Rather his attitude was friendly, welcoming, amiable and gracious. This instilled confidence and hope in the heart and mind of Vibhishan's messenger.]

Tulsidas says that at that moment, the minister was so happy as if he got nectar while asking for mere butter-milk[4].

[[4]To wit, the minister of Vibhishan had not expected such kind reception in an enemy's camp, so he was pleasantly surprised when Lord Ram welcomed him.] (3).

(5 / 32)

बिनती सुनि प्रभु प्रमुदित भए।
रीछराज, कपिराज नील–नल बोलि बालिनंदन लए।। 1।।
बूझिये कहा ? रजाइ पाय नय–धरम सहित ऊतर दए।
बली बंधु ताको जेहि बिमोह–बस बैर–बीज बरबस बए।। 2।।
बाँहपगार द्वार तेरे तैं सभय न कबहूँ फिरि गए।
तुलसी असरन–सरन स्वामिके बिरद बिराजत नित नए।। 3।।

binatī suni prabhu pramudita bha'ē.
rīcharāja, kapirāja nīla-nala bōli bālinandana la'ē.. 1..
būjhiyē kahā? rajā'i pāya naya-dharama sahita ūtara da'ē.
balī bandhu tākō jēhi bimōha-basa baira-bīja barabasa ba'ē.. 2..
bāmṁhapagāra dvāra tērē taiṁ sabhaya na kabahūmṁ phiri ga'ē.
tulasī asarana-sarana svāmikē birada birājata nita na'ē.. 3..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-VII

Verse no. 5/32—The Lord (Sri Ram) felt very glad on hearing the prayers of the messenger.

He summoned the bear king (Jamvant), the king of monkeys (Sugriv), Neel, Nal (the architects and engineers) and the son of Baali (Angad) (1).

(He asked them—) 'What do you think (and advice) on this matter?'

Getting his permission, they answered according to established edicts and traditions of Dharma (noble conduct, probity, propriety, righteousness) and Law (of politics), 'He (Vibhishan) has great strength and is the brother of the person who has willingly and forcibly sowed the seeds of enmity and hatred with you. [Hence, it is advisable to be careful of him.][1] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 43.

Lord Ram's advisors were very apprehensive, sceptical and weary of Vibhishan. They feared that if he is allowed inside the camp, he would secretly pass on all strategic information to the demon enemy, for after all they reasoned that blood is thicker than any other relation. But they had forgotten one important point: and it was that Vibhishan has been kicked out of Lanka in a most ignominious and insulting way, being branded a traitor and charged with treason, and so his chances of rapproach with his brother Ravana were not at all practically feasible.]

But, Lord Ram's advisors continued, oh the one who protects the shelter-seekers by using your arms as a rock-solid wall of support for them (bāmṁhapagāra).

In all sooth, no one who is frightened and tormented has ever returned empty handed (i.e. without assurance of your help) from your doorway!' [To wit, oh Lord you have a reputation that you never turn back anyone who is afraid and has come to your door seeking protection and refuge: dvāra tērē taiṁ sabhaya na kabahūmṁ phiri ga'ē.]

Tulsidas avers that the Lord's fame as the one who gives shelter to those who are shelter-less (asarana-sarana svāmikē birada) is well established (and well known) everywhere, and every day some instance is found to affirm its truth (birājata nita na'ē) (3).

हिय बिहसि कहत हनुमानसों।
सुमति साधु सुचि सुहृद बिभीषन बूझि परत अनुमानसों।। 1।।
'हौं बलि जाउँ और को जानै ?' कही कपि कृपानिधानसों।
छली न होइ स्वामि सनमुख, ज्यों तिमिर सातहय–जानसों।। 2।।
खोटो खरो सभीत पालिये सो, सनेह सनमानसों।
तुलसी प्रभु कीबो जो भलो, सोइ बूझि सरासन–बानसों।। 3।।

(5/33)

hiya bihasi kahata hanumānasōṁ.
sumati sādhu suci suhṛda bibhīṣana būjhi parata anumānasōṁ.. 1..
'hauṁ bali jā'uṁ aura kō jānai?' kahī kapi kṛpānidhānasōṁ.
chalī na hō'i svāmi sanamukha, jyōṁ timira sātahaya-jānasōṁ.. 2..
khōṭō kharō sabhīta pāliyē sō, sanēha sanamānasōṁ.
tulasī prabhu kībō jō bhalō, sō'i būjhi sarāsana-bānasōṁ.. 3..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-VIII

Verse no. 5/33—Then he (Lord Sri Ram) smiled (feeling amused internally) and said to Hanuman, 'In my estimate (view, opinion, understanding), Vibhishan is of a righteous mind and noble thoughts, he is saintly at heart, pure and wise, and he has an uncorrupt intellect (sumati sādhu suci). Besides this, he seems to be favourably inclined and has a friendly disposition (suhṛda).' (1).

Hanuman (the "kapi", literally the monkey) replied to the Lord who is an abode of kindness, grace and munificence ("kṛpānidhāna"; i.e. Lord Sri Ram), 'I say truthfully, indeed, who can know better than you on this subject? Even as darkness cannot exist in the presence of sunlight, so an imposter, someone who is crooked, cunning and deceitful in his heart and mind, a wicked person, cannot dare to come in front of the Lord[1] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 44.]

He is frightened and tormented; so, notwithstanding whether he is good or bad, you should sustain (and protect) him with due affection and respect as is deserving of you (i.e. without showing any undue favour while respecting his dignity and self respect, and making him feel welcomed and at home)[2].

Or else, (if you are still unable to decide) ask your bow and arrows and do what is suitable in such a situation (because your bow and arrows are habitually and traditionally the protector of righteous and saintly people, and are the slayer of wicked and rascals, so they will be able to advice you)[3]' (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 43 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.

[3]What Hanuman means here is this: If the Lord is doubtful about whether or not to accept Vibhishan and allow him access to the Lord's camp because he is an ememy's

brother and there are chances that at the last moment he may turn a turncoat, a betrayer, then it would be proper for the Lord to judge him by weighing his own strength against Vibhishan's, so that in case the latter plays any dirty tricks and betrays the Lord then the Lord should be able to handle him alone, relying on his own strength, without depending upon any of the monkeys and bears, for who knows in which way the tide of war would turn.

Hence, if the Lord has this confidence that he would be easily able to tackle Vibhishan under all situations, then he should accept him, but if he thinks that in a one-to-one face-off his personal strength and valour may not be a match against Vibhishan in case he betrays, then it will be well to reject him now in the beginning before damage is done.

Another way of interpreting this stanza is this: Hanuman means that Sri Ram has a reputation of being the protector of refuge seekers, distressed and tormented ones as well as those who are righteous, upright and humble. He has drawn Sri Ram's attention to the bow and arrow with the subtle hint that this is one of your (Sri Ram's) duties, responsibilities and promises/vows, and for which purpose, as a Kshatriya lord, you bear a bow and arrows. Besides, you have nothing to fear—in case Vibhishan tries dirty tricks, you have potent arms with you. So, why worry? It must be noted that Hanuman has only hinted at these things, but he does not give a positive reply as to whether the demon should be accepted or not—the final decision is with the Lord.]

(5 / 34)

साँचेहु बिभीषन आइहै ?
बूझत बिहँसि कृपालु, लखन सुनि कहत सकुचि सिर नाइ है।। 1।।
ऐहै कहा, नाथ ? आयो ह्याँ, क्यों कहि जाति बनाइ है।
रावन–रिपुहि राखि, रघुबर बिनु, को त्रिभुवन पति पाइहै।। 2।।
प्रभु प्रसन्न, सब सभा सराहति, दूत–बचन मन भाइहै।
तुलसी, 'बोलिये बेगि', लषनसों भइ महाराज–रजाइ है।। 3।।

(5/34)

sāmcēhu bibhīṣana ā'ihai?
būjhata bihamsi kṛpālu, lakhana suni kahata sakuci sira nā'i hai.. 1..
aihai kahā, nātha? āyō hyāmṅ, kyōṁ kahi jāti banā'i hai.
rāvana-ripuhi rākhi, raghubara binu, kō tribhuvana pati pā'ihai.. 2..
prabhu prasanna, saba sabhā sarāhati, dūta-bacana mana bhā'ihai.
tulasī, 'bōliyē bēgi', laṣanasōṁ bha'i mahārāja-rajā'i hai.. 3..

Vibhishan comes to seek refuge with Lord Ram-IX

Verse no. 5/34—The kind and gracious Lord (Sri Ram) laughed wonderingly (or smiled in amusement), and asked, 'Will Vibhishan really come here?'

Hearing his query, Laxman[1] bowed his head and said hesitantly..... (1).

[[1]Getting feedback from all his advisors, Lord Ram turned to his younger brother Laxman and smiled at him with amusement in his countenance. He was like asking Laxman if he thought that Vibhishan really has the guts to come near them.]

'Lord! What to talk about 'whether he will come', for he has already come here. How can we (i.e. all the monkeys, bears and the rest of the group) dare to speak cunningly in front of you; how can we ever speak a lie or ambigiously, dubiously with you?

Indeed, by keeping the enemy of Ravana in his company, who can remain established in this world except Raghubar (Sri Ram)[2]?' (2).

[[2]Keeping Vibhishan is sure to antagonise Ravana exceedingly, and incur his wrath. Who will durst do it except the Lord who is all-powerful and omnipotent? Opposing such a fierce, ferocious and invincible enemy as Ravana by instigating him by giving refuge to a person hated by him is a sure invitation to incur his strongest of revenge. It is only Lord Sri Ram who can stand up and face this enemy up-front and accept the challenge, and emerge victorious in whatever follows.]

At this reply, the Lord was pleased (because Laxman hinted that he is agreeable), the whole assembly (council of ministers) praised it, and even the messenger (who had come with Vibhishan) liked the words in his heart.

Tulsidas says that Laxman received instructions from the Lord to bring him (Vibhishan) soon (immediately and speedily)[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 44.]

(5 / 35)

चले लेन लषन–हनुमान हैं।
मिले मुदित बूझि कुसल परसपर–सकुचत करि सनमान हैं।। 1।।
भयो रजायसु पाँउ धारिए, बोलत कृपानिधान हैं।
दूरितें दीनबंधु देखे, जनु देत अभय–बरदान हैं।। 2।।
सील सहस हिमभानु, तेज सतकोटि भानुहूके भानु हैं।
भगतनिको हित कोटि मातु–पितु अरिन्हको कोटि कृसानु हैं।। 3।।
जनगुन रज गिरि गनि, सकुचत निज गुन गिरि रज परमानु हैं।
बाँह–पगारु, बोलको अबिचल बेद करत गुनगान हैं।। 4।।
चारु चाप–तूनीर तामरस–करनि सुधारत बान हैं।
चरचा चलति बिभीषनकी, सोइ सुनत सुचित दै कान हैं।। 5।।
हरषत सुर, बरषत प्रसून सुभ सगुन कहत कल्यान हैं।
तुलसी ते कृतकृत्य, जे सुमिरत समय सुहावनो ध्यान हैं।। 6।।

(5/35)

calē lēna laṣana-hanumāna haiṁ.
milē mudita būjhi kusala parasapara-sakucata kari sanamāna haiṁ.. 1..
bhayō rajāyasu pāmǔ dhāri'ē, bōlata kr̥pānidhāna haiṁ.
dūritēṁ dīnabandhu dēkhē, janu dēta abhaya-baradāna haiṁ.. 2..
sīla sahasa himabhānu, tēja satakōṭi bhānuhūkē bhānu haiṁ.

bhagatanikō hita kōṭi mātu-pitu arinhakō kōṭi kr̥sānu haiṁ.. 3..
janaguna raja giri gani, sakucata nija guna giri raja paramānu haiṁ.
bāmha-pagāru, bōlakō abicala bēda karata gunagāna haiṁ.. 4..
cāru cāpa-tūnīra tāmarasa-karani sudhārata bāna haiṁ.
caracā calati bibhīṣanakī, sō'i sunata sucita dai kāna haiṁ.. 5..
haraṣata sura, baraṣata prasūna subha saguna kahata kalyāna haiṁ.
tulasī tē kr̥takr̥tya, jē sumirata samaya suhāvanō dhyāna haiṁ.. 6..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-I

Verse no. 5/35—[Vibhishan's meeting with Lord Ram has been described also in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

Presently, in Geetawali, Sundar Kand, it is narrated in verse nos. 5/35—to 5/46 herein below.]

Getting instructions from Lord Ram to bring Vibhishan to him, Laxman and Hanuman started-off to bring the latter to meet the Lord.

They happily met Vibhishan, exchanged pleasantries, paid mutual respects and asked for his well-being, both the sides feeling hesitant and uneasy all the while (1)[1].

[[1]This was very natural. Both, Vibhishan on one side, and Laxman and Hanuman of the other side, belonged to opposite camps. It was the first meeting between Vibhishan and Laxman, both being brothers of two principal enemies, viz. Ravana and Lord Ram respectively. There were hidden apprehensions and suspicions and doubts on both sides.

Vibhishan wondered if his decision to come to the ememy's camp was correct and wise: has he not escaped the devil to fall in the deep sea; would Lord Ram hold him captive and subject him to more torture than what he had to endure at Lanka. No one can say anything at this juncture.

Similar apprehensions were thick in the mind of Laxman. What if Vibhishan has been sent by Ravana to act as a spy, and all the story of his being kicked out was pre-planned and a mere stratagem so that he could be planted in the enemy's camp. What if he suddenly changes sides and betrays in the thick of battle, even holding him (Laxman) and the Lord hostage?

So the two, Laxman and Vibhishan, met with coldness in the air; it was by no means a cordial welcome to a known friend. The only person who was doubtless was Hanuman as he had had first hand knowledge of Vibhishan's condition and that he was speaking the truth when he said that he has come to seek the Lord's shelter without any deceit or conceit hidden in his heart.

Hanuman was also comfortable with Vibhishan on another count: the latter had seen the former's strength and valour when Lanka was burnt, and so he wouldn't dare play dirty tricks when Hanuman was around!]

They (Laxman and Hanuman) said to Vibhishan, 'Welcome and well come! The Lord has given his permission, and the merciful, gracious and kind one (Sri Ram) is calling you. So come along with us!'

Thereafter, Vibhishan saw the Lord (Sri Ram) who is a friend of the distressed, the wretched, the lowly and the humble ones (dīnabandhu), sitting in a

posture which appeared to give a boon (blessing) of fearlessness to those who come to him (janu dēta abhaya-baradāna haiṁ) (2).

(Besides this, Sri Ram is) Peaceful, curteous and tranquil like thousands of moons (sīla sahasa himabhānu), is like millions of suns in splendour and radiance (tēja satakōṭi bhānuhūkē bhānu haiṁ), is a well-wisher, favourable and benevolent benefactor of devotees like crores of parents are towards their off-springs (bhagatanikō hita kōṭi mātu-pitu), and is like millions of fierce and ferocious fires as far as the enemies are concerned (arinhakō kōṭi kṛṣānu haiṁ) (3).

He (Sri Ram) considers even a miniscule, dust-like petty (or tiny) virtues of his devotees as being large (great, huge, immense and potent) enough like a mountain (janaguna raja giri gani)[2]; and the Lord feels hesitant (in front of them) while regarding his own mountain-like virtues and glories as being negligent as a particle of dust (sakucata nija guna giri raja paramānu haiṁ)[3].

The Lord protects his refugees by the strength of his arms; the Lord protects his protectees by holding their arms so that no harm comes to them (bāṁha-pagāru). The Lord is extremely steadfast in his vows and promises (i.e. he is true to his words; "bōlakō abicala").

Forsooth, this is how the Vedas (ancient scriptures) sing his glories and assert about him (bēda karata gunagāna haiṁ) (4).

[[2]To wit, the Lord always acknowledges whatever goodness his devotee has, even if it is a trifling, and tries to enhance this quality manifold for the devotee's benefit so that he can get maximum rewards from it.

[3]The Lord never allows his devotee to feel shy, hesitant, reluctant and afraid to present himself before the Lord's glorious, majestic and exalted presence. The Lord is never proud of his own virtues and glories, for after all he is a treasure of all the excellent virtues and glorious qualities that exist in this creation. He never allows his devotees to feel overly self-conscious and guilty of low virtues and qualities vis-à-vis the Lord's; on the contrary the Lord always tries to encourage his devotees and give them honour for whatever goodness they have.]

Presently, when Vibhishan approached Lord Ram, he was causally moving his hands over his bow, arrow and quiver (to indicate to Vibhishan that he is getting them ready for any emergency; and also as a warning to Vibhishan not to try any dirty tricks with him).

The Lord was very intently listening to all that was being said and discussed about Vibhishan (in order to judge the general opinion, and to gather nuggets of valuable information about him from his monkey and bear advisors) (5).

The Gods are happily showering flowers (to celebrate the occasion). These good omens portend future auspiciousness and good tidings (for Vibhishan, and helped him to overcome his initial shyness, hesitation and reluctance).

Tulsidas says, "Those who recall and concentrate on that pleasant moment and circumstance, are most privileged and fortunate[4]." (6).

[[4]To wit, this was a moment when the Lord is about to give refuge to a demon, and by extension, it is a general signal to all those who are unfortunate and low-born, with a sinful body and vile demeanours, but wish to become good by turning themselves over to the care of the Lord, that they are most welcome like Vibhishan

was. It was an event of momentous importance for all the devotees of Lord Ram who have doubts whether or not the Lord would accept them due to their sins and lowly nature.]

(5 / 36)

रामहि करत प्रनाम निहारिकै।
उठे उमँगि आनंद–प्रेम–परिपूरन बिरद बिचारिकै।। 1।।
भयो बिदेह बिभीषन उत, इत प्रभु अपनपौ बिसारिकै।
भलीभाँति भावते भरत–ज्यों भेंट्यो भुजा पसारिकै।। 2।।
सादर सबहि मिलाइ समाजहि निपट निकट बैठारिकै।
बूझत छेम–कुसल सप्रेम अपनाइ भरोसे भारिकै।। 3।।
नाथ! कुसल–कल्यान–सुमंगल बिधि सुख सकल सुधारिकै।
देत–लेत जे नाम रावरो, बिनय करत मुख चारिकै।। 4।।
जो मूरति सपने न बिलोकत मुनि–महेस मन मारिकै।
तुलसी तेहि हौं लियो अंक भरि, कहत कछू न सँवारिकै।। 5।।

(5/36)

rāmahi karata pranāma nihārikai.
uṭhē umaṁgi ānanda-prēma-paripūrana birada bicārikai.. 1..
bhayō bidēha bibhīṣana uta, ita prabhu apanapau bisārikai.
bhalībhāmṁti bhāvatē bharata-jyōṁ bhēṇṭyō bhujā pasārikai.. 2..
sādara sabahi milā'i samājahi nipaṭa nikaṭa baiṭhārikai.
būjhata chēma-kusala saprēma apanā'i bharōsē bhārikai.. 3..
nātha! kusala-kalyāna-sumaṅgala bidhi sukha sakala sudhārikai.
dēta-lēta jē nāma rāvarō, binaya karata mukha cārikai.. 4..
jō mūrati sapanē na bilōkata muni-mahēsa mana mārikai.
tulasī tēhi hauṁ liyō aṅka bhari, kahata kachū na samṁvārikai.. 5..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-II

Verse no. 5/36—Seeing Lord Sri Ram, Vibhishan bowed his head most reverentially, remembering his nature of giving refuge to the distressed and being merciful to the sinful.

Lord Ram's heart overflowed with joy, and he rose to welcome him affectionately. At the moment, on the one hand Vibhishan had lost consciousness of his surroundings, so thrilled and overwhelmed with joy he was, and on the other hand Lord Ram, remembering his earlier meeting at Chitrakoot with brother Bharat, embraced Vibhishan with wide open arms, and clasped him most affectionately to his bosom[1](2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 45 along with Chaupai line nos.1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.

The meeting between Lord Ram and Vibhishan was most cordial, warm and welcoming. Compare this with the way Laxman and Vibhishan had met in verse no. 5/35, stanza nos. 1-2. It was a formal meeting, but the way Lord Ram met Vibhishan was more informal and warm. Whatever misgivings Vibhishan may have harboured in his heart were immediately dispelled, and he felt that he is warmly accepted, without any reservations. This was a strategic move by Lord Ram: by a simple warm hug he had made Vibhishan feel comfortable and homely, and this first interaction helped to cement a tie that lasted for a lifetime. Vibhishan's heart was injured by the way his own brother Ravana had treated him, and in this background when he recived a warm bear-hug, his happiness knew no bounds. He decided that this is the right place to be: for here in Lord Ram's camp his self respect and dignity would be shown due respect and honour.

Vibhishan was all the more overjoyed as he found that whatever he had heard of Lord Ram's nature and attitude proved to be absolutely true and correct. This instilled reassurance in his heart and gave comfort to his mind.]

Then, introducing him to all his companions, Lord Ram seated him near himself, and accepting him as one of his own men, reassured him and asked about his welfare[2] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 46.]

Vibhishan replied, 'Oh Lord! Those who chant your name are highly regarded by Brahma (the creator) and provided by all welfare, happiness and peace by him, so what to talk of me[3]! (4).

[[3]That is, those who merely take your holy name are blessed by good fortune by the Creator, but here I am sitting directly in front of you, hence these benefits are guaranteed to me in abundance. The Creator would shower me with his blessings. I am indeed so fortunate that you have seated me beside you.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 46—to Doha no. 47.]

Even eminent sages and gods find it difficult to have a vision of the Lord in their dreams despite all austerities and penances they do. That same Lord has embraced me!

Say, in all sooth, how lucky I am indeed! I do not boast, nor am trying to please you or flatter you. [To wit, it is a fact.] (5).'

(5 / 37)

करुनाकरकी करुना भई।
मिटि मीचु, लहि लंक संक गइ, काहूसो न खुनिस खई।। 1।।
दसमुख तज्यो दूध–माखी–ज्यौं, आपु काढ़ि साढ़ी लई।
भव–भूषन सोइ कियो बिभीषन मुद मंगल–महिमामई।। 2।।
बिधि–हरि–हर, मुनि–सिद्ध सराहत, मुदित देत दुंदुभी दई।
बारहि बार सुमन बरषत, हिय हरषत कहि जै जै जई।। 3।।
कौसिक–सिला–जनक–संकट हरि भृगुपतिकी टारी टई।
खग–मृग सबर–निसाचर, सबकी पूँजी बिनु बाढ़ी सई।। 4।।
जुग–जुग कोटि–कोटि करतब, करनी न कछू बरनी नई।

राम–भजन–महिमा हुलसी हिय, तुलसीहूकी बनि गई।। 5।।

(5/37)

karunākarakī karunā bha'ī.
miṭi mīcu, lahi laṅka saṅka ga'i, kāhūsō na khunisa kha'ī.. 1..
dasamukha tajyō dūdha-mākhī-jyauṁ, āpu kāḍhi sāṛhī la'ī.
bhava-bhūṣana sō'i kiyō bibhīṣana muda maṅgala-mahimāma'ī.. 2..
bidhi-hari-hara, muni-sid'dha sarāhata, mudita dēta dundubhī da'ī.
bārahi bāra sumana baraṣata, hiya haraṣata kahi jai jai ja'ī.. 3..
kausika-silā-janaka-saṅkaṭa hari bhr̥gupatikī ṭārī ṭa'ī.
khaga-mr̥ga sabara-nisācara, sabakī pūm̐jī binu bāṛhī sa'ī.. 4..
juga-juga kōṭi-kōṭi karataba, karanī na kachū baranī na'ī.
rāma-bhajana-mahimā hulasī hiya, tulasīhūkī bani ga'ī.. 5..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-III

Verse no. 5/37—In this way, when the Lord who shows mercy, compassion and grace showered his blessings and benedictions upon Vibhishan, the latter's worries and lamentations regarding his fear of death were erased[1], he got the kingdom of Lanka as a reward[2], and the constant fear of Ravana that had made him sore affright was eliminated (from his heart and mind).

Verily, Vibhishan's inner-self felt so blessed and contented that he no more harboured any ill-will, malice, hatred, discord and suspicion towards anyone, and he had no fear from any quarter (1).

[[1]Prior to his being accepted by Lord Ram, Vibhishan was constantly tormented by the fear of death, for he knew that once Ravana had become openly hostile towards him, the fear of death always loomed over his head. But now he became fearless.

[2]Lord Ram had anointed him as the 'king of Lanka' to express his thanks to him for coming to join him in the war. This was another master stroke of wise military strategy of the Lord: for now Vibhishan had all the more reasons to remain loyal to the Lord because if the Lord wins the impending war he would be made the next king of Lanka. Otherwise, if Ravana survives and the tide of war does not turn favourable, the worst affected would be Vibhishan. Ravana would go hammer and tong after him, baying for his blood, and no matter where he hides he would be caught and summarily executed.]

Vibhishan—who was summarily discarded with utter contempt like a 'fly in the milk' by Ravana who had usurped the entire cream (i.e. the entire wealth of Lanka without sharing it with his brothers)—was made a jewel of the world by the virtue of his being accepted by Lord Ram and more so by taking the side of righteousness and morality (represented by Lord Ram) vis-à-vis unrighteousness and immorality (represented by Ravana), and was bestowed with the fame and glory which were not only fne but also rare and unprecedented (2).

Brahma, Vishnu, Lord Shiva, Sages, Hermits and Siddhas (mystics; the attained ones) began to praise his luck and good fortune, while the Gods played kettle-durms (and other musical instruments) in delight and showered flowers repeatedly with a joyful heart and cries of applause for Vibhishan (3).

He (Sri Ram) had removed the troubles and tribulations of sage Vishwamitra (by protecting his fire sacrifice)[3], Janak (by breaking the bow and marrying his daughter Sita when the king faced a piquant situation as no one else had been able to even move the bow, resulting in the king worrying about the fate of his daughter)[4], and the rock-like Ahilya (when the Lord had given her deliverance by touching her with his feet)[5]. Not only this, the Lord had vanquished the terror caused by Parshuram[6].

*At the same time, he had improved the stature (and the fate) of the bird (Jatau)[7], the deer (Marich)[8], Sabari (the tribal woman)[9] and the demon (Vibhishan)[10] even without their having any capital (good deeds, high birth, righteousness, noble characters etc.) at their disposal (4).

[*Refer also to Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 1.
[3]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/47—1/56; 1/60, stanza no. 1; 1/66.
[4]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/73—1/90.
[5]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/57—1/59.
[6]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/90, stanza no. 7.
[7]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/12—3/16.
[8]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/3—3/7.
[9]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/17/1—3/17/8.
[10]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 5/33—5/37.]

The Lord has numerous such divine, marvelous and spectacular deeds to his credit spread over different ages (eras, Yugs)—nothing astonishing or new has been said here.

Tulsidas asserts about himself that by remembering such excellent virtues of the Lord, there is an upsurge of emotional warmth, devotion and affection for the Lord in his heart; he wants to worship, do service to, and submit himself all the more to Lord Ram. The excellent glories and renowned fame and fine virtues of the Lord have firmly enshrined themselves in his (Tulsidas') heart, and this has made him most lucky and fortunate too (like the ones described above) (5).

(5 / 38)

मंजुल मूरति मंगलमई।
भयो बिसोक बिलोकि बिभीषन, नेह देह–सुधि–सींव गई।। 1।।
उठि दाहिनी ओरतें सनमुख सुखद माँगि बैठक लई।
नखसिख निरखि–निरखि सुख पावत भावत कछु, कछु और भई।। 2।।
बार कोटि सिर काटि, साटि लटि, रावन संकरपै लई।
सोइ लंका लखि अतिथि अनवसर राम तृनासन–ज्यों दई।। 3।।
प्रीति–प्रतीति–रीति–सोभा–सरि, थाहत जहँ जहँ तहँ घई।
बाहु–बली, बानैत बोलको, बीर बिस्वबिजई जई।। 4।।
को दयालु दूसरो दुनी, जेहि जरनि दीन–हियकी हई ?
तुलसी काको नाम जपत जग जगती जामति बिनु बई।। 5।।

manjula mūrati maṅgalama'ī.
bhayō bisōka bilōki bibhīṣana, nēha dēha-sudhi-sīnva ga'ī.. 1..
uṭhi dāhinī ōratēṁ sanamukha sukhada māṁgi baiṭhaka la'ī.
nakhasikha nirakhi-nirakhi sukha pāvata bhāvata kachu, kachu aura bha'ī.. 2..
bāra kōṭi sira kāṭi, sāṭi laṭi, rāvana saṅkarapai la'ī.
sō'i laṅkā lakhi atithi anavasara rāma tṛṇāsana-jyōṁ da'ī.. 3..
prīti-pratīti-rīti-sōbhā-sari, thāhata jahaṁ jahaṁ taha ṁ gha'ī.
bāhu-balī, bānaita bōlakō, bīra bisvabija'ī ja'ī.. 4..
kō dayālu dūsarō dunī, jēhi jarani dīna-hiyakī ha'ī?
tulasī kākō nāma japata jaga jagatī jāmati binu ba'ī.. 5..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-IV

Verse no. 5/38—Seeing the most attractive and auspicious image (of Lord Ram), Vibhishan became free from all sorrows, anguish and miseries, and he was so enchanted and enraptured by its captivating view that he encroached upon the limits of the awareness of his body (i.e. he became unaware of himself or his surroundings)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 45.]

Then he (Vibhishan) got up from the right side (where he had been seated uptil now) and asked to be seated right in front of the Lord, facing him[2]. There, he observed the Lord intently from the toe-nails to the tuft of hair on his head, and became exhilarated (at his stupendous beauty and charm). He wanted something different while something else happened[3] (2).

[[2]By sitting right in front, Vibhishan wised to ascertain the facial expressions of Lord Ram to judge for himself if he is sincerely welcome as a friend, or was there some sort of doubt in the mind of Lord Ram which would be evident from the Lord's expressions. Besides this, it will also give the Lord an opportunity to judge Vibhishan by looking directly into his eyes. The resultant trust that would be built between them would be more robust and sustaining then what they have garnered about each other by way of hearing from others.

[3]What was that he wanted or expected, and what different thing happened? This question is answered in the next stanza. Vibhishan had merely expected to be accepted by Lord Ram so that he could escape the wrath of his brother Ravana. He came as a refugee, and a refugee in a king's court can't expect the same status as the original inhabitants of the country immediately, with full honour as is bestowed on others in the royal court. But the treatment he got at the hands of Lord Ram was beyond his imagination. First, the Lord embraced him as if he was very dear to him and were like his own brother Bharat (refer: verse no. 5/36, stanza no. 2 herein above). Second, he seated Vibhishan close to him like he would make his close confindantes and ministers sit (refer: verse no. 5/36, stanza no. 3 herein above). Third,

the Lord anointed him as the next king of Lanka (refer: verse no. 5/38, stanza no. 3 herein below).

What more would Vibhishan want; he got more than was due to him. So he was astonished and felt exceedingly obliged towards Lord Ram.]

The Lanka which Ravan had got as a boon (blessing) from Shiva after having offered his head to him numerous of times (literally crores of times), and suffering immense troubles and difficulties to get this boon ("bāra kōṭi sira kāṭi, sāṭi laṭi, rāvana saṅkarapai la'ī"), the same realm of Lanka was given by Lord Ram to Vibhishan even though the latter never asked for it, with great hesitance as if this was an inadequate gift by the Lord to his guest who had come uninvited and sudden at a time when the Lord had nothing more to offer him as a gift that is usually given to an honoured guest, for the Lord regarded this gift (of offering him the kingship of Lanka) as very inconsequential and humble like offering a valueless reed or a blade of grass to an honourable guest that does not match is stature or standing in society (in the absence of anything more valuable or worthwhile that could be given to be given to him at the moment) (sō'i laṅkā lakhi atithi anavasara rāma tr̥ṇāsana-jyōṁ da'ī)[4]. (3).

[[4]Or conversely, it can also mean that Sri Ram gave Vibhishan a seat made of grass or reed, which is a humble seat for a king, in the absence of a better seating arrangement. And this seat of grass was symbolically the throne of Lanka. Since Lanka had been stripped bare of all its gold, fortunes and fames of being invincible at the hands of Hanuman earlier, Sri Ram indeed felt reluctant to give such a desolate city as a reward to Vibhishan. Another probable reason for his reluctance and hesitation was the fear that he (Sri Ram) would go down in history as the one who—inspite of being the epitome of righteousness and probity—had rewarded a person for treason and betrayal because, notwithstanding the spiritual aspects of devotion, humility, worship, surrender before the Lord, abandoning those who are evil and vile etc., what Vibhishan had actually done was exactly this—treason and betrayal. Thirdly, Ravana was still alive, the outcome of the war may not be certain or known now. So, Sri Ram thought—what if Ravana is not killed, or the war ends in such a way that the throne is retained by the latter. What shall he give to Vibhishan then? This is why Lord Ram felt hesitant and shy at the time of anointing Vibhishan in a symbolic manner as the king of Lanka.

Remember: Vibhishan was not an ordinary defecting demon who came to join an enemy's camp out of disenchantment with his own king Ravana, or for seeking personal gains when he realized that the invading army was stronger and sure to conquer the land. He was a prince in his own right, and an apparent heir to the throne of Lanka should the present king Ravana pre-decease him. Welcoming a great prince who would be the next king of the country by offering him a seat of grass was not in accordance to his royal stature. This is also why Lord Ram felt hesitant.

Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 49 along with Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede it; and (b) Kavitawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/52.]

He (Sri Ram) is like a river of love and affection who upholds mutual trust and endearing relationships, one who obeys the laws and regulations of code of good behaviour and respect for each other, and one who generally is adorned by excellent virtues, adorable qualities and immaculate character that are like his ornaments (prīti-pratīti-rīti-sōbhā-sari).

Wherever and whenever attempts are made to measure his glorious virtues and noble characters, they are found to be measureless and fathomless (thāhata jahaṁ jahaṁ tahaṁ ghaˈī).

The Lord's arms are very strong and his is exceedingly valiant (bāhu-balī). He is steadfast in his vows (i.e. he is true to his words and promises; "bānaita bōlakō"). And he is the conqueror of those who are world-conquerors themselves (e.g. sage Parshuram, demon Ravana; "bīra bisvabijaˈī jaˈī") (4).

Who else is so merciful, compassionate and kind in this world that he has removed (erased, eliminated) the burnings (anguish, sorrows, tribulations, miseries, agonies) in the heart of those who are the underdogs, who are downtrodden, poor, humble, meek and lowly (kō dayālu dūsarō dunī, jēhi jarani dīna-hiyakī haˈī)?

Tulsidas declares assertively—who else is there in this world, chanting (or repeating, remembering, recalling, taking shelter of) whose name the earth gives produce even without sowing (i.e. one gets the auspicious blessings or rewards even without doing noble and virutous deeds) (tulasī kākō nāma japata jaga jagatī jāmati binu baˈī)[5]. (5)

[[5]Tulsidas does not advise one to become indolent, lithargic and lazy. It is evident that the earth will not produce anything without sowing seeds. It's absolutely absurd. He was a poet, so his words should be understood in their true 'spirit content' rather than the 'letter content'. For him, Sri Ram's holy name is far superior than Sri Ram himself, and personifies dignity and holiness. When one constantly remembers the Lord's name it guards him from any evil doings, evil thoughts or evil mongerings. So, what Tulsidas' intention is, is to safeguard us from vices, sins and evils by keeping the holy name as a constant guard against these vices and misdemeanours, and not to sit idle at home doing nothing, with a rosary in hand and saying 'Ram-Ram'. That will be of no use. Advice of philosophers should be properly understood and interpreted to be of any benefit. This should clear the air of accusation which Tulsidas is generally subjected to—that he advocates indolence, lithargy and in-action in the name of chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy name.]

(5 / 39)

सब भाँति बिभीषनकी बनी।
कियो कृपालु अभय कालहुतें, गइ संसृति–साँसति घनी।। 1।।
सखा लषन–हनुमान, संभु गुर, धनी राम कोसलधनी।
हिय ही और, और कीन्हीं बिधि, रामकृपा औरै ठनी।। 2।।
कलुष–कलंक–कलेस–कोस भयो जो पद पाय रावन रनी।
सोइ पद पाय बिभीषन भो भव–भूषन दलि दूषन–अनी।। 3।।
बाँह–पगार, उदार–सिरोमनि, नत–पालक, पावन पनी।
सुमन बरषि रघुबर–गुन बरनत, हरषि देव दुंदुभी हनी।। 4।।
रंक–निवाज रंक राजा किए, गए गरब गरि गरि गनी।
राम–प्रनाम महामहिमा–खनि, सकल सुमंगलमनि–जनी।। 5।।
होय भलो ऐसे ही अजहुँ गये राम–सरन परिहरि मनी।
भुजा उठाइ, साखि संकर करि, कसम खाइ तुलसी भनी।। 6।।

saba bhāmँti bibhīṣanakī banī.
kiyō krpālu abhaya kālahutēm̐, ga'i sansrti-sāmँsati ghanī.. 1..
sakhā laṣana-hanumāna, sambhu gura, dhanī rāma kōsaladhanī.
hiya hī aura, aura kīnhīm̐ bidhi, rāmakrpā aurai ṭhanī.. 2..
kaluṣa-kalaṅka-kalēsa-kōsa bhayō jō pada pāya rāvana ranī.
sō'i pada pāya bibhīṣana bhō bhava-bhūṣana dali dūṣana-anī.. 3..
bāmँha-pagāra, udāra-sirōmani, nata-pālaka, pāvana panī.
sumana baraṣi raghubara-guna baranata, haraṣi dēva dundubhī hanī.. 4..
raṅka-nivāja raṅka rājā ki'ē, ga'ē garaba gari gari ganī.
rāma-pranāma mahāmahimā-khani, sakala sumaṅgalamani-janī.. 5..
hōya bhalō aisē hī ajahumँ gayē rāma-sarana parihari manī.
bhujā uṭhā'i, sākhi saṅkara kari, kasama khā'i tulasī bhanī.. 6..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-V

Verse no. 5/39—Vibhishan had achieved everything in all respects. The merciful Lord Sri Ram made him fearless from the God of Death, as well as from the torments of this world (1).

He (Vibhishan) found good friends such as Laxman and Hanuman, Guru such as Lord Shiva, and his lord and master such as Lord Ram. He had something different in his heart (fear of Ravana and worry for his own safety), but with Lord Ram's mercy an opposite prevailed (i.e. he became fearless and the happiest being in the world) (2).

Ravana, who as a demon, had become the treasury of sins, most disgraceful in his race, and a storehouse of wickedness upon becoming the king of Lanka, but the same post or designation (of being a demon king of Lanka) turned Vibhishan into the jewel of his race, and a slayer (eliminator) of all that was un-righteous and un-holy (3).

The Gods showered flowers, beat trumpets and sang the glory of Lord Ram whose arms are like walls to protect the distressed (bāmँha-pagāra), who is the most magnanimous and kind Lord of all the Lords (udāra-sirōmani), who is an eternal maverick sustainer of the universe (nata-pālaka), and who makes righteous vows and keep them diligently (pāvana panī) (4).

The helper of the poor (i.e. Lord Ram) had made the pauper Vibhishan into a King (of Lanka) (raṅka-nivāja raṅka rājā ki'ē). This crushed the false pride of the so-called millionaires and super-rich people (who boast of being charitable by giving only a miniscule portion of their fortunes as charity or alms while hiding the bulk of their wealth and treasures) (ga'ē garaba gari gari ganī).

Bowing before Lord Ram and submitting one's self to the Lord is like a rich mine that bestows all types of honour, fame, achievements and glory that are priceless (rāma-pranāma mahāmahimā-khani)[1].

[[1]That is, if one surrenders one's self before the Lord, all the goodness that exists in this world, all the auspicious virtues and qualities, all the good fortunes and

luck, all sorts of peace and happiness—everything becomes easily accessible by him.] (5).

Tulsidas says that if one goes to seek refuge at the feet of Lord Ram even now, all these benefits can be had by him. He says this with Lord Shiva as a witness, raising his hands and making a solemn oath that what he says is the truth, without gainsay, and he is very definite about it[2] (6).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 50; and (ii) Doha no. 60 along with Chanda line nos. 3-4 that precede it.]

(5 / 40)

कहो, क्यों न बिभीषनकी बनै ?
गयो छाडि छल सरन रामकी, जो फल चारि चार्यौं जनै।। 1।।
मंगलमूल प्रनाम जासु जग, मूल अमंगलके खनै।
तेहि रघुनाथ हाथ माथे दियो, को ताकी महिमा भनै ?।। 2।।
नाम–प्रताप पतितपावन किए, जे न अघाने अघ अनै।
कोउ उलटो, कोउ सूधो जपि भए राजहंस बायस–तनै।। 3।।
हुतो ललात कृसगात खात खरि, मोद पाइ कोदो–कनै।
सो तुलसी चातक भयो जाचत राम स्यामसुंदर घनै।। 4।।

(5/40)

kahō, kyōṁ na bibhīṣanakī banai?
gayō chāḍi chala sarana rāmakī, jō phala cāri cāryauṁ janai.. 1..
maṅgalamūla pranāma jāsu jaga, mūla amaṅgalakē khanai.
tēhi raghunātha hātha māthē diyō, kō tākī mahimā bhanai?.. 2..
nāma-pratāpa patitapāvana ki'ē, jē na aghānē agha anai.
kō'u ulaṭō, kō'u sūdhō japi bha'ē rājahansa bāyasa-tanai.. 3..
hutō lalāta kṛsagāta khāta khari, mōda pā'i kōdō-kanai.
sō tulasī cātaka bhayō jācata rāma syāmasuṁdara ghanai.. 4..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-VI

Verse no. 5/40—Say, why should Vibhishan not be rewarded (or be treated as being most fortunate and lucky)? For, after forsaking all trickery, deception, prentension, cheating and stratagem, he had come to seek refuge with and shelter of Lord Sri Ram who gives all the four types of celebrated fruits to all the four types of devotees[1] (1).

[[1]The 4 types of fruits are—"Artha" = wealth, prosperity; "Dharma" = virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety; "Kaam" = fulfilled of all desires; and "Moksha" = emancipation, salvation, liberation and deliverance from the shackles of this mundane, delusory world.

The 4 types of devotees are as follows— (a) "Aarta" = one who worships the Lord to get rid of their sorrows, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations; (b) "Arthaarthi" = those who worship the Lord for material gain, wealth, prosperity etc.; (c) "Jigyaasu" = those who worship the Lord in order to seek Him, or find out about His true nature, the Supreme Truth, the essence of existence etc.; and (d) "Gyani"= those who have realised Him, and worship Him selflessly. They are also aware of the true nature of the soul.

Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/15, stanza no. 3; verse no. 7/16, stanza no. 2; verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 2.]

Doing 'Pranam' (i.e. paying obeisance by bowing the head) to Lord Sri Ram is the root of all auspiciousness and well-beings, and is potent enough to uproot all inauspiciousness and evil forebodings in this world. Verily, it is the same Raghunath (Sri Ram) who had placed his benevolent and merciful hands on the head of Vibhishan. Say, how can one describe his (Vibhishan's) privilege and good luck, and the resultant fame that he acquired for himself? (2).

The power and might of the Lord's holy Name has purified even those sinners and vile ones who were never tired of doing evil, sinning and committing misdemeanours and unrighteousness of all kinds[2]. Some had chanted his name in the correct order, and others in the reverse order (i.e. some as RAAM and some as MARAA)[3], and by doing so, even those whose characters and deeds were like crows became as exalted as royal swans (3).

[[2]The glory of Lord Ram's holy name is extolled in (a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28; (b) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 7/89—7/93; and (c) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 46, 64—70.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19. The legendary sage Valmiki had repeated Lord Ram's name in the reverse order to achieve an exalted stature amongst the greatest sages and seers of his time.]

[Talking about himself, Tulsidas says—] 'He, who was of a weak body (i.e. under-nourished, emaciated) and had to eat husk (i.e. eat worthless, left-over food), who yearned for bits and morsels of food, and had to content himself with ordinary food and felt happy even to get it (in short, who was extremely impoverished and hungry to even find sufficient to feed his stomach)—now is so privileged that he is able to directly ask or seek like a Papiha (a sparrow hawk) from the beautiful dark cloud representing Sri Ram[4] (4).

[[4]Tulsidas cites his early life when he was so poor that he had to beg for food, but no one cared for him. Now that he has declared himself as a servant and devotee of the Lord, everyone around wishes to please him and get his blessings, and therefore there is no dearth of anything that he needs. All this is because of one factor: that is his surrendering before Lord Ram.

Realizing the import of this, Tulsidas has decided not to seek from anybody other than his Lord Ram who is compared here to the dark rain-bearing clouds. The cloud is symbolic of magnanimity, generosity and charity, and used as a metaphor for life and its abundant pleasures and joys. The cloud showers rain which sustains life on this earth so much so that when it rains and the dark cloud is cited in the sky, the farmer rejoices and the animals begin to sing in the garden and the forests. The 'Papiha' asks for rain-drops from the cloud to satisfy its own thirst, but the gracious and kind cloud

gives rain not only to him, but at his behest or on his excuse, to the whole world at large.

Similarly, Tulsidas asks from Lord Sri Ram for his own benefit, but the magnanimous Lord showers his grace and munificence on the whole creation. Tulsidas rejoices at the Lord's grace and benevolent nature.]

(5/41)

अति भाग बिभीषनके भले।
एक प्रनाम प्रसन्न राम भए, दुरित–दोष–दारिद दले।। 1।।
रावन–कुंभकरन बर माँगत सिव–बिरंचि बाचा छले।
राम–दरस पायो अबिचल पद, सुदिन सगुन नीके चले।। 2।।
मिलनि बिलोकि स्वामि–सेवककी उकठे तरु फूले–फले।
तुलसी सुनि सनमान बंधुको दसकंधर हँसि हिये जले।। 3।।

(5/41)

ati bhāga bibhīṣanakē bhalē.
ēka pranāma prasanna rāma bha'ē, durita-dōṣa-dārida dalē.. 1..
rāvana-kuṁbhakarana bara māṁgata siva-biranci bācā chalē.
rāma-darasa pāyō abicala pada, sudina saguna nīkē calē.. 2..
milani bilōki svāmi-sēvakakī ukaṭhē taru phūlē-phalē.
tulasī suni sanamāna bandhukō dasakandhara haṁsi hiyē jalē.. 3..

Vibhishan meets Lord Sri Ram-VII

Verse no. 5/41—Vibhishan is extremely fortunate for Lord Sri Ram was pleased by his bowing his head once, and, as a result, all his sins, faults and poverties were eliminated (erased, removed) for good (1).

At the time when Ravana and Kumbhakarn propitiated Lord Shiva and Brahma respectively and received boons, both of them were deceived by the latter two[1].

But even at that time, Vibhishan was blessed with a boon that would bring him stable good fortune and eternal glory and exalted stature (by way having devotion for Lord Ram) which fructified and took effect when he started on his journey to meet the Lord[2].

Forsooth, Vibhishan had embarked on his journey to meet the Lord on an auspicious day and time as he was blessed with a stable stature and eternity of life by simply having a divine sight of Lord Ram. (2).

[[1]To wit, these two Gods used clever ploys and use of words that had double meaning and interpretations to mislead these two demon brothers so that when the time came to ask for boons they asked for things that made no sense, and rendered them vulnerable. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 177.

Both Ravana and Kumbhakaran had asked and got boons that related to worldly fame and comfort; they had not sought anything for their spiritual welfare. This single error on their part proved to be their undoing, for the body is perishable and one or the other day it has to come to an end. And that is what happened: both the brothers died in the war of Lanka. Whereas their brother Vibhishan got the blessing of devotion for Lord God that made him live a life for a long time that transcended the era. It is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas that Vibhishan ruled over Lanka till the time Lord Ram himself left this world, and at that time the Lord asked Vibhishan to stay back and look after the remnants of the demon race. Refer: Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 32—34.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 177 where Vibhishan has asked for the boon of having devotion for Lord God. And as it turned out this paved his way for his meeting and acceptance by Lord Ram who was a manifestation of the 'Lord God'.]

Watching this union of the Lord and his servant (devotee, follower Vibhishan), even the dried-up trees blossomed once again, bearing flowers and fruits.

Tulisdas says that when Ravana heard that his brother had been welcomed by Sri Ram, he laughed overtly, but jealousy and envy burnt his heart[3] (3).

[[3]He laughed externally to hide his embarrassment, to conceal his annoyance and indignation that his own brother has joined his enemy's camp, and to show his utter contempt for Vibhishan. But internally he was scared stiff because Vibhishan knew all the secrets of Lanka, and this may prove dangerous when the war starts.

At the same time as this, Ravana had an inkling and his sixth sense told him that Sri Ram was no ordinary human prince, but was actually an incarnation of the Supreme Lord himself in a human form (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 22 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow it).

He was repeatedly told that this is a fact, first by Marich (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 25 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it), then by his own wife Mandadori (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 36 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-10 that precede it), his old minister and uncle Malyawan (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 40), and later on by his own brother Kumbhakaran (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 62 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow it).

Ravana felt envious of Vibhishan because the latter had reached the Lord even before he himself had a chance to see him face to face and seek deliverance from his gross body of a demon. Also because the Lord had welcomed Vibhishan and had put his hand on his head, something for which all souls yearned but rarely had the privilege to get.

Then, Lord Ram had declared Vibhishan as the future king of Lanka, and this peeved Ravana the most and made him burn out of jealousy, as no king would ever want that his crown should be so easily usurped in favour of someone whom he despises.]

गये राम सरन सबकौ भलो।

गनी–गरीब, बड़ो–छोटो, बुध–मूढ़, हीनबल–अतिबलो।। 1।।
पंगु–अंध, निरगुनी–निसंबल, जो न लहै जाचे जलो।
सो निबह्यो नीके, जो जनमि जग राम–राजमारग चलो।। 2।।
नाम–प्रताप–दिवाकर कर खर गरत तुहिन ज्यों कलिमलो।
सुतहित नाम लेत भवनिधि तरि गयो अजामिल–सो खलो।। 3।।
प्रभुपद प्रेम प्रनाम–कामतरु सद्य बिभीषनको फलो।
तुलसी सुमिरत नाम सबनिको मंगलमय नभ–जल थलो।। 4।।

(5/42)

gayē rāma sarana sabakau bhalō.
ganī-garība, baṛō-chōṭō, budha-mūṛha, hīnabala-atibalō.. 1..
paṅgu-andha, niragunī-nisambala, jō na lahai jācē jalō.
sō nibahyō nīkē, jō janami jaga rāma-rājamāraga calō.. 2..
nāma-pratāpa-divākara kara khara garata tuhina jyōṁ kalimalō.
sutahita nāma lēta bhavanidhi tari gayō ajāmila-sō khalō.. 3..
prabhupada prēma pranāma-kāmataru sadya bibhīṣanakō phalō.
tulasī sumirata nāma sabanikō maṅgalamaya nabha-jala thalō.. 4..

Benefits of Taking Shelter with Lord Ram

Verse no. 5/42—Everyone stands to gain and have welfare by seeking refuge in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram—whether he is rich or impoverished, whether he is of high or low birth, of whatever stature and position in society he is, whether he is wise or an idiot, and whether he is weak or most strong and valiant (1).

Even those who are lame, blind, without any virtues and qualities, and most impoverished and wretched, who do not even get water to drink when desired—if they took birth in this world and followed the highway that leads to Lord Ram (i.e. the path of devotion, worship, adoration, love, affection, surrender, submission and service etc.), they were well looked after and sustained by the Lord (2).

In the face of the brilliant and splendorous rays of the sun representing the might, glory, fame and virtues of Sri Ram's Holy Name, the faults (i.e. evils, vices, misdemeanours, sins etc.) of Kaliyug melt away like snow.

Even the wicked rascal such as Ajaamil crossed the ocean of this illusionary and mundane world, and attained emancipation and salvation just by calling out his name ("Narayan"), even though he had meant to call out to his son of the same name[1] (3).

[[1]Ajaamil was so horrified at seeing the messengers of death that he called for his own son, named Narain, to protect him. But since the word also was the name of Vishnu, the latter immediately sent his own messengers to rescue the wretched Ajaamil and bring him to heaven.]

The bowing of his head by Vibhishan (to pay obeisance to Lord Ram) proved to be a Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree) for him, and it bore fruits for him immediately too[2].

Tulsidas cites this as an example to say that similarly, when one recalls or remembers the Lord's Holy Name, the sky, the earth (land) and the water (rivers, oceans etc.) all become auspicious and full of good omens for him (4).

[[2]Vibhishan was subjected to great humiliation in Lanka by his own brother Ravana who treated him with great contempt because Vibhishan was a stout follower of Lord Vishnu. But when Vibhishan came and took the shelter of Lord Ram, he was not only warmly welcomed but also given respect and a position in the hierarchy of Lord's ministers. Not only this, his honour was restored as the Lord anointed him as the next king of Lanka.]

(5 / 43)

सुजस सुनि श्रवन हौं नाथ ! आयो सरन।
उपल–केवट–गीध–सबरी–संसृति–समन,
सोक–श्रम–सीव सुग्रीव आरतिहरन।। 1।।
राम राजीव–लोचन बिमोचन बिपति,
स्याम नव–तामरस–दाम बारिद–बरन।
लसत जटाजूट सिर, चारु मुनिचीर कटि,
धीर रघुबीर तूनीर–सर–धनु–धरन।। 2।।
जातुधनेस–भ्राता बिभीषन नाम
बंधु–अपमान गुरु ग्लानि चाहत गरन।
पतितपावन ! प्रनतपाल ! करुनासिंधु !
राखिए मोहि सौमित्रि–सेवति–चरन।। 3।।
दीनता–प्रीति–संकलित मृदुबचन सुनि
पुलकि तन प्रेम, जल नयन लागे भरन।
बोलि, 'लंकेस' कहि अंक भरि भेंटि प्रभु,
तिलक दियो दीन–दुख–दोष दारिद–दरन।। 4।।
रातिचर–जाति, आराति सब भाँति गत
कियो सो कल्यान–भाजन सुमंगलकरन।
दास तुलसी सदयहृदय रघुबंसमनि
'पाहि' कहे काहि कीन्हों न तारन–तरन?।। 5।।

(5/43)

sujasa suni śravana hauṁ nātha! āyō sarana.
upala-kēvaṭa-gīdha-sabarī-sansr̥ti-samana,
sōka-śrama-sīva sugrīva āratiharana.. 1..
rāma rājīva-lōcana bimōcana bipati,
syāma nava-tāmarasa-dāma bārida-barana.
lasata jaṭājūṭa sira, cāru municīra kaṭi,
dhīra raghubīra tūnīra-sara-dhanu-dharana.. 2..
jātudhanēsa-bhrātā bibhīṣana nāma
bandhu-apamāna guru glāni cāhata garana.
patitapāvana! pranatapāla! karunāsindhu!
rākhi'ē mōhi saumitri-sēvati-carana.. 3..

dīnatā-prīti-saṅkalita mr̥dubacana suni
pulaki tana prēma, jala nayana lāgē bharana.
bōli, 'laṅkēsa' kahi aṅka bhari bhēṇṭi prabhu,
tilaka diyō dīna-dukha-dōṣa dārida-darana.. 4..
rāticara-jāti, ārāti saba bhāmt̐i gata
kiyō sō kalyāna-bhājana sumaṅgalakarana.
dāsa tulasī sadayahr̥daya raghubansamani
'pāhi' kahē kāhi kīnhōm̐ na tārana-tarana?.. 5..

Vibhishan speaks to Lord Ram, and his Anointment
As the King of Lanka-I

Verse no. 5/43—[Vibhishan said—] 'Oh Lord! I have come to seek shelter at your holy feet after having heard your renown, glory and fame with my own ears[1].

You are the one who brought to rest the cycle of birth and death of the rock-like Ahilya, Kewat (the boatman), the vulture (Jatau) and Sabari (the old out caste Bhil woman) as well as are the remover of the sorrows and miseries, travails and weariness of Sugriv (the king of monkeys)[2] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 45.
[2]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/37, stanza no. 4.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! You have lotus-like eyes, are the destroyer of all types of troubles, misfortunes, difficulties and adversities, have a countenance which is radiant and glowing like a dark blue lotus, and a complexion like a dark rain-bearing cloud.

A crown of matted hairs adorns your head. There are attractive clothes suitable for a hermit around your waist, and you are a most patient, courageous and steadfast warrior of Raghu's clan, who holds a bow, arrow and a quiver (2).

I am a brother of the demon king Ravana. My name is Vibhishan. I am anguished, exceedingly remorseful and dejected at being scornfully humiliated and reproached publicly by my brother (in the full assembly of demons).

Oh the purifier of the lowly, downtrodden, wretched, sinful and humble ones (patitapāvana)! Oh the protector or sustainer of those who have surrendered themselves before you and have sought your refuge/shelter by bowing their heads before you (or those who are humble, modest and meek = pranatapāla)! Oh an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness (karunāsindhu)! Please give me the shelter of your feet which are served by Laxman too.[3]' (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 45 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.]

Hearing these humble, meek and pleasant words of Vibhishan that were soaked in affection and earnest pleadings, the Lord's body was thrilled with affectionate emotions and tears began welling-up in his eyes.

The Lord, who removes the sorrows, miseries, troubles, faults and wants (poverty) of the meek, lowly, humble, poor and downtrodden ones, called him by the title of 'Lankesh' (meaning 'the king of Lanka'), spread his arms and embraced him, and then anointed him (as the king of Lanka), putting a ceremonial Tilak Mark on his forehead to formalise it[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/36, stanza no. 2; verse no. 5/38, stanza no. 3; verse no. 5/42, stanza nos. 1-2; verse no. 5/44, stanza no. 4; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 46; Doha no. 48 and Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; and Doha no. 49 along with Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede it.]

Vibhishan, being a demon by birth and belonging to the enemy camp, was to be forsaken and avoided at all costs (or looked at with suspicion and scepticism). Inspite of that, he was made an abode of auspiciousness and good fortune by him (Sri Ram) who is the bestower of all auspiciousness, good fortunes and welfares.

The servant (of Lord Sri Ram, i.e.) Tulsidas asserts that the jewel of Raghu's clan ("raghubansamani"; i.e. Lord Sri Ram) is of a very merciful, simple, pure and tender heart (sadayahṛdaya). Simply by pleading 'Save me[5]', who has he not made so exalted and potent that the latter himself becomes capable of liberating others? (5).

[[5]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/29, stanza no. 4.]

(5 / 44)

दीन–हित बिरद पुराननि गायो।
आरत–बंधु, कृपालु, मृदुल–चित जानि सरन हौं आयो।। 1।।
तुम्हरे रिपुको अनुज बिभीषन, बंस निसाचर जायो।
सुनि गुन–सील–सुभाउ नाथको मैं चरननि चितु लायो।। 2।।
जानत प्रभु दुख–सुख दासनिको, तातें कहि न सुनायो।
करि करुना भरि नयन बिलोकहु, तब जानौं अपनायो।। 3।।
बचन बिनीत सुनत रघुनायक हँसि करि निकट बुलायो।
भेंट्यो हरि भरि अंक भरत–ज्यों, लंकापति मन भायो।। 4।।
करपंकज सिर परसि अभय कियो, जनपर हेतु दिखायो।
तुलसिदास रघुबीर भजन करि को न परमपद पायो ?।। 5।।

(5/44)

dīna-hita birada purānani gāyō.
ārata-bandhu, krpālu, mṛdula-cita jāni sarana hauṁ āyō.. 1..
tumharē ripukō anuja bibhīṣana, bansa nisācara jāyō.
suni guna-sīla-subhā'u nāthakō maiṁ caranani citu lāyō.. 2..
jānata prabhu dukha-sukha dāsanikō, tātēṁ kahi na sunāyō.
kari karunā bhari nayana bilōkahu, taba jānauṁ apanāyō.. 3..
bacana binīta sunata raghunāyaka haṁsi kari nikaṭa bulāyō.
bhēṇṭyō hari bhari aṅka bharata-jyōṁ, laṅkāpati mana bhāyō.. 4..
karapaṅkaja sira parasi abhaya kiyō, janapara hētu dikhāyō.
tulasidāsa raghubīra bhajana kari kō na paramapada pāyō?.. 5..

Verse no. 5/44—[Vibhishan pleads with Lord Ram—] 'Oh Lord! The Purans (ancient histories of the Hindus) have sung your glories (i.e. made you renowned) as being one who is the well-wisher and benefactor of the meek, weak, lowly, humble, wretched and downtrodden, the underdogs and the miserable ones (dīna-hita birada purānani gāyō).

I too have come to seek your refuge and shelter, recognising you as a friend of the lowly, the humble and the distressed, as being merciful, compassionate and gracious, and of being a sweet, amiable and friendly temperament (ārata-bandhu, kṛpālu, mṛdula-cita) (1).

I am born in the demon clan and am a younger brother of your arch enemy Ravana. Hearing your virtues, noble characters and merciful temperament, I have concentrated my mind in your holy feet (with the hope that you will bless me and be compassionate towards me) (2).

The Lord is aware of the joys and sorrows of those who serve him faithfully, with devotion and sincerity (i.e. the Lord knows the pain and sufferings as well as joys and happiness of all his devotees, followers and subordinates—because he is omniscient and resides in the heart of all as their soul). This is the reason why I have not told you anything; I did not mention in detail about my sufferings and agonies.

Now, only when you intently look at me with merciful, loving and compassionate eyes will I know that you have accepted me (as one of your own, as your devotee whom you have given refuge and shelter—taba jānauṁ apanāyō) (3).'

Hearing such prayerful words of earnest pleadings spoken by Vibhishan, Raghunayak (i.e. the Lord of king Raghu's race; Lord Sri Ram) laughed (i.e. smiled politely) and called him near, embraced him, and held him close to his bosom as if he were his own brother Bharat[1], and regarded him as a king of Lanka for all practical purposes[2] (4).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/36, stanza no. 2; verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 4.

[2]Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/38, stanza no. 3; verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 4.]

Then, touching his (Vibhishan's) head with his lotus-like hands (i.e. palms), the Lord made him fearless—this is how Lord Ram exhibited his affection for his devotee (and faithful, loyal follower)[3].

Tulsidas observes that indeed, who has not attained the most exalted and the supreme state (or status) of existence[4] by worshipping and having devotion for Lord Sri Ram? (5).

[[3]To wit, the Lord not only elevated Vibhishan to the high stature of being equivalent to his own beloved brother Bharat, embracing him with the same affection as he would have embraced Bharat, but also made him the king of Lanka, and to top it he blessed Vibhishan by putting his hands on his head as a gesture of providing him fearlessness and abiding protection from his side.

[4]The 'supreme post or stature' for Vibhishan here has different connotations—in the material world it is the kingship of Lanka and freedom from Ravana's fear. In the

spiritual realm it is to be blessed by the divine sight and blessing of the Lord, be recognised as his devotee, and attain the chance to serve his holy feet. And in the highest realm of metaphysics it is the oneness with the Supreme Soul. Frankly speaking, without any prejudice and interpolating with the context, this third state was attained by Ravana and Kumbhakarn but not by Vibhishan.

During the final battle, a bright shaft of effulgence representing the life-force or Soul had emerged from their bodies and merged with Sri Ram (Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 103, and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71 respectively), but this privilege was denied to Vibhishan, albeit it is true that a devotee prefers to eternally serve the holy feet of the Lord, but the ultimate peace and bliss is attained only when the microcosmic soul merges with the macrocosmic Soul that is an eternal ocean of bliss—this stature both Ravana and Kumbhakarn achieved, but Vibhishan missed!]

राग धनाश्री

(5/45)

सत्य कहौं मेरो सहज सुभाउ।
सुनहु सखा कपिपति लंकापति, तुम्ह सन कौन दुराउ।। 1।।
सब बिधि हीन–दीन, अति जड़मति जाको कतहुँ न ठाउँ।
आयो सरन भजौं, न तजौं तिहि, यह जानत रिषिराउ।। 2।।
जिन्हके हौं हित सब प्रकार चित, नाहिन और उपाउ।
तिन्हहिं लागि धरि देह करौं सब, डरौं न सुजस नसाउ।। 3।।
पुनि पुनि भुजा उठाइ कहत हौं, सकल सभा पतिआउ।
नहि कोऊ प्रिय मोहि दास सम, कपट–प्रीति बहि जाउ।। 4।।
सुनि रघुपति बचन बिभीषन प्रेम–मगन, मन चाउ।
तुलसिदास तजि आस–त्रास सब ऐसे प्रभु कहँ गाउ।। 5।।

rāga dhanāśrī

(5/45)

satya kahauṁ mērō sahaja subhā'u.
sunahu sakhā kapipati laṅkāpati, tumha sana kauna durā'u.. 1..
saba bidhi hīna-dīna, ati jaṛamati jākō katahuṁ̃ na ṭhā'uṁ̃.
āyō sarana bhajauṁ, na tajauṁ tihi, yaha jānata riṣirā'u.. 2..
jinhakē hauṁ hita saba prakāra cita, nāhina aura upā'u.
tinhahiṁ lāgi dhari dēha karauṁ saba, ḍarauṁ na sujasa nasā'u.. 3..
puni puni bhujā uṭhā'i kahata hauṁ, sakala sabhā patī'ā'u.
nahi kō'ū priya mōhi dāsa sama, kapaṭa-prīti bahi jā'u.. 4..
suni raghupati bacana bibhīṣana prēma-magana, mana cā'u.
tulasidāsa taji āsa-trāsa saba aisē prabhu kahaṁ̃ gā'u.. 5..

Verse no. 5/45—[After giving refuge and shelter to Vibhishan, Lord Ram made his basic kind and merciful nature known to the assembly. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 48 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it where the same declaration has been made by Lord Ram.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 85—to Doha no. 87 where Lord Ram has preached the saintly crow Kaagbhusund on the same theme; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 36—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 42 where Lord Ram has preached to Hanuman and Bharat and the rest of the company about the characters of saintly people who are dear to him; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 47 where Lord Ram has preached the citizens of Ayodhya about the characters of people who are dear to him.

If one understands the import of these teachings, one is motivated to improve one's self and inculcate these virtues that would make him feel very comfortable and assured of redemption at the hands of Lord Ram. It also motivates one to surrender himself fearlessly before the Lord who is none but the Supreme Being in a visible human form, a prospect that makes seeking deliverance and salvation so much the easier as compared to worshipping a God who is unknown and unseen.]

[Lord Sri Ram proclaimed—] 'I speak truthfully about my inherent and natural temperament. Listen attentively, the king of monkeys (Sugriv) and the king of Lanka (Vibhishan). There is nothing which I have to conceal from you (1).

He—who is lowly, drowntrodden, meek, humble, most foolish and highly unfortunate, one who has no where to go and has no destination, one who has no succour and solace anywhere in this world—if any such person comes to me seeking shelter and refuge, I 'serve' him in all possible ways, and never abandon, avoid or forsake him. This fact is well known to (and endorsed by) sage Valmiki and other exalted sages and seers (2).

Those whose mind and intellect regard me as their sole benefactor, their only protector, and their single well-wisher, and who find no solution (or way out) of their problems except seeking my refuge (i.e. they are in a virtual log-jam in this mundane world but sincerely seek a way out of their quandary)—I assume a human form for them and finish off all their works for them, not bothering (or fearing) that by doing any such act my reputation and fame will be harmed or tainted in any way[1] (3).

[[1]To wit, I am not tardy and reluctant at helping my devotees, even at the cost of tarnishing my immaculate image or reputation. Sri Ram seems to justify his many acts that would seem a little bit unrighteous on their face. But since those acts would be of good of his devotees, the Lord did not hesitate to do them. For instance, his acceptance of Vibhishan would seem as a strategic military move to spark dissention and desertion in the enemy's camp, as well as to give shelter to such deserters and traitors to serve strategic gains on the battle field and get insider information on the enemy's army and preparedness. But the Lord did not accept Vibhishan for this reason; the Lord accepted him as he was subjected to immense torment and was suffering horrors under the rule of his cruel and selfish demon brother Ravana who did not know what good treatment to his dependants meant.

Think what would be the fate of Vibhishan if Lord Ram had turned him away for fear of inviting ill-fame in the world for giving refuge to traitors such as Vibhishan? The latter would have surely been tortured to death by Ravana. Since Vibhishan came to seek help from the Lord when he was in immense consternation and fear of his life, it was incumbent upon the Lord to extend his protection to him because it his declared policy to give protection to all who come to seek it, and especially when Vibhishan was not in the wrong and was a pious soul. The Lord just could not refuse him.

Similar accusation can be made with respect of Lord Ram dethroning Baali and putting Sugriv on the throne of Kiskindha—because then Sugriv would be obliged to the Lord and be under his command, almost like his vassal, providing the much needed army and arms for the campaign of Lanka. In this case, Lord Ram was more concerned for the good and welfare of Sugriv who had been wronged by his brother Baali. If mere help of the monkey army was the Lord's concern in making Sugriv the king of Kishkindha, the same objective could have been more easily achieved by seeking the help of Baali if Lord Ram would have helped the latter in capturing Sugriv. But the Lord preffered to accept the ignominy of taking sides in what was a mutual conflict between two brothers as it helped Sugriv to regain his honour and rightful share.

Earlier also, Lord Ram had liberated Ahilya, the wife of sage Guatam who was in the form of a stone, by 'touching her with his feet', something which is not totally beyond reproach as it is not right to touch a woman, especially if is she is a sage's wife. But since this seemingly not-so-right action was necessary for the good of Ahilya, the Lord did it, fully knowing that the coming generation would continue to raise fingers at him for this kind act.]

I repeatedly lift my arms and declare, let the whole assembly listen carefully to it and believe my words—no one is dearer to me than my servant (i.e. my ardent devotee, humble follower, refuge seeker). But yes, that servant should be of pure intellect, pure mind and pure heart, uncorrupt, truthful, honest, free from deceit and conceit, and of pure disposition in all possible ways[2] (4).'

[[2]To wit, the Lord does not accept rascals and pretenders who wish to escape judgement by taking the garb of a devotee of the Lord for the time till he can hide himself from punishment, only to rear his ugly head and go back to his old evil ways once the danger of punishment is over. For in all sooth, this is not allowed; the Lord makes it clear here when he says that he abhors deception, pretensions, conceit, deceit, or cunning of any kind. If one wishes the Lord to help him or her, then he or she has to first clean the heart and mind before expecting anything from the Lord.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 44; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 48.]

Hearing these words of Raghupati (Sri Ram), Vibhishan was overwhelmed with waves of surging affections and emotions of endearment for the gracious Lord, while his heart and mind were greatly encouraged and enthused by the Lord's solemn oath.

Tulsidas advises that one should avoid or abandon all hopes of succour and solace from this world, and become fearless by taking refuge with Lord Ram. One should sing the glories, the virtues and the fames of such a (munificent, benevolent, merciful, compassionate, gracious, benign, magnanimous and kind) Lord as Sri Ram! (5).

नाहिन भजिबे जोग बियो।
श्रीरघुबीर समान आन को पूरन–कृपा–हियो।। 1।।
कहहु, कौन सुर सिला तारि पुनि केवट मीत कियो ?
कौने गीध अधमको पितु–ज्यों निज कर पिंड दियो ?।। 2।।
कौन देव सबरीके फल करि भोजन सलिल पियो ?
बालित्रास–बारिधि बूड़त कपि केहि गहि बाँह लियो ?।। 3।।
भजन–प्रभाउ बिभीषन भाष्यौ, सुनि कपि–कटक जियो।
तुलसिदासको प्रभु कोसलपति सब प्रकार बरियो।। 4।।

(5/46)

nāhina bhajibē jōga biyō.
śrīraghubīra samāna āna kō pūrana-kr̥pā-hiyō.. 1..
kahahu, kauna sura silā tāri puni kēvaṭa mīta kiyō?
kaunē gīdha adhamakō pitu-jyōṁ nija kara piṇḍa diyō?.. 2..
kauna dēva sabarīkē phala kari bhōjana salila piyō?
bālitrāsa-bāridhi būṛata kapi kēhi gahi bāṁha liyō?.. 3..
bhajana-prabhā'u bibhīṣana bhāṣyau, suni kapi-kaṭaka jiyō.
tulasidāsakō prabhu kōsalapati saba prakāra bariyō.. 4..

Vibhishan Praises Lord Ram

Verse no. 5/46—[When Vibhishan heard Lord Ram make a solemn promise as described in verse no. 5/45 above, he praised the Lord in the following way—]

'There is no one else more worthy to be worshipped, adored and have devotion for than Lord Sri Ram.

Forsooth, whose heart is as full with mercy, grace, munificence and kindness as that of Sri Ram? (1).

Say, which other God (sura)[1] has liberated the rock ("Ahilya", from her curse that turned her into a stone)[2] and made Kewat (the boatman) his friend[3]? And who has offered 'Pinda' (a round ball-shaped offering given to dead ancestors, especially parents, as a part of funeral rites) to the most sinful and lowly vulture (Jatau)[4] with his own hands as if he was the Lord's father? (2).

[[1]The word used in the text is "sura", meaning 'a God'. Vibhishan clearly hints that such divine intercessions and the privilege of granting of boons fall under the realm of Gods. They are expected to lift the downtrodden and the lowly so that their souls can find peace and happiness. But none bothered to pay attention to any of the three mentioned here; none tried to do something for their liberation and deliverance even though they were pious and led a righteous life. Vibhishan uses this

opportunity to praise Lord Ram, saying that it was he who took pains to walk upto them and saw that they got what they wanted.

To wit, Ahilya was freed from her curse that had turned her into a stone. Kewat got the promise of deliverance at the time of his death and a permanent friendship with the king of his realm, i.e. Lord Ram. And Jatau too got deliverance though he was a vulture by birth, a birth that is not holy and high by any count.

[2]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/57—1/59.

[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102.

[4]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/12—3/16.]

Which God has eaten the fruits offered by Sabari[5] and drank water at her place (because she was of a low caste and castracised by society)? And who has taken out Sugriv[6] by grasping his arms and prevented him from drowning in the ocean of grief and fear caused by (his elder brother and arch rival) Baali? (3).'

[5]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/17/1—3/17/8.

[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Doha no. 5—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 12.]

When Vibhishan praised the Lord as aforesaid, highlighting the potential powers of devotion and worship of the Lord and the benefits that accrue from them (by citing the above examples), the whole army of monkeys[7] heard these words in rapt attention, and discussed it amongst themselves most cheerfully and animatedly.

Really, the Lord of Tulsidas (tulasidāsakō prabhu), the King of Kaushal (Ayodhya), Lord Sri Ram, is indeed the 'best' (the most exalted, supreme and one of his kind) in all possible ways (kōsalapati saba prakāra bariyō) (4).

[7]The fact that the words of Vibhishan made the monkey army become alert, vigilant, animated, cheerful and joyous is significant. Prior to this sermon by Vibhishan, the monkeys had their doubts. But now they were convinced that their Lord was no ordinary prince, and his super-human powers are no less than divine than the Gods. Nay, the Lord is much more compassionate and graceful than even the Gods whom the world pay its obeisance, for the Lord pays attention for the welfare and happiness of all his dependants as compared to the Gods who are only interested in accepting offerings.

This discourse of Vibhishan was a great morale booster for the entire army and ensured that they fought with surety of victory in the up-coming war. They thought that if the enemy's brother is praising the Lord so much, then surely there must be truth in it. Besides his own case that needed to be praised, Vibhishan has also cited so many other independent examples to stress the truth of what he says. In all probabilities, many in the ranks of the monkey and bear army may not have known of these events. This definitely helped them to overcome their doubts, dilemmas and uncertainties, and infused them with renewed vigour, enthusiasm and zeal to serve the Lord in the best way they can, both individually as well as together as a group, attitudes which are essential to win a war. It was a dose of great morale booster for the army.]

राग जैतश्री

(5/47)

कब देखौंगी नयन वह मधुर मूरति ?
राजिवदल–नयन, कोमल, कृपा–अयन,
मयननि बहु छबि अंगनि दूरति।। 1।।
सिरसि जटा–कलाप, पानि सायक,
चाप, उरसि रुचिर बनमाल लूरति।
तुलसिदास रघुबीरकी सोभा सुमिरि,
भई है मगन नहि तनकी सूरति।। 2।।

jānakī-trijaṭā-sanvāda

rāga jaitaśrī

(5/47)

kaba dēkhauṅgī nayana vaha madhura mūrati?
rājivadala-nayana, kōmala, kr̥pā-ayana,
mayanani bahu chabi aṅgani dūrati.. 1..
sirasi jaṭā-kalāpa, pāni sāyaka,
cāpa, urasi rucira banamāla lūrati.
tulasidāsa raghubīrakī sōbhā sumiri,
bha'ī hai magana nahi tanakī sūrati.. 2..

Conversation between Sita and Trijata-I

Verse no. 5/47—[After Hanuman had left Lanka, Sita felt lonely and dejected. A demoness named Trijata was deputed by Ravana to keep an eye on Sita. Trijata was a noble soul despite of her body being that of a demoness. She felt deeply sympathetic towards Sita and empathized with her case, feeling very pity for her. She was Sita's only constant companion all through her confinement in Lanka. By and by, the two became friends, and Sita used to confide in her all her emotions and sentiments. So Sita told her in a very poignant mood that she is very depressed and distressed, and wonders whether she will ever meet her beloved husband Lord Ram again in life. Trijata, like a true and trusted friend and companion, kept her spirit buoyed and morale boosed by always assuring her that she should not doubt that she would be rescued by the Lord sooner rather than later. The conversation between the two has been described in Geetawali, Sundar kand, verse no. 5/47 to 5/51.

This conversation is also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 12; (b) Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 99—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 100.

Refer also to Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/2—6/3.

Now, let us read the conversation betwixt Trijata and Sita.]

[Sita said to the demoness Trijata—] 'When shall I see that enchanting and lovable (sweet, pleasant) image (of my beloved husband Sri Ram) with these eyes? When shall I see him whose eyes are akin to the lotus flower, who is most tender, who is a mine of mercy and kindness, and whose most enchanting image puts to shame the magnificence and glamour of numerous Kamdeo-cupids put together? (1).

(When shall I meet—) The Lord (who) has matted hairs on the head, a bow and arrow in the hands, and an attractive 'Van-mala' (a garland made of marigold flowers) always hanging on his broad chest.'

Tulsidas says that Sita has become immersed in the thoughts of Raghubir (literally the strong and brave warrior of king Raghu's clan; i.e. Lord Ram) whose magnificence, majesty and spectacular beauty is so overwhelming and enrapturing that she appears to have lost awareness of her body (and her surroundings) by the remembrance of the Lord (2).

राग केदारा

(5/48)

कहु, कबहुँ देखिहौं आली ! आरज–सुवन।
सानुज सुभग–तनु जबतें बिछुरे बन,
तबतें दव–सी लगी तीनिहू भुवन।। 1।।
मूरति सूरति किये प्रगट प्रीतम हिये,
मनके करन चाहैं चरन छुवन।
चित चढ़िगो बियोग–दसा न कहिबे जोग,
पुलक गात, लागे लोचन चुवन।। 2।।
तुलसी त्रिजटा जानी, सिय अति अकुलानी
मृदुबानी कह्यौ ऐहैं दवन–दुवन।
तमीचर–तम–हारी सुरकंज–सुखकारी
रबिकुल–रबि अब चाहत उवन।। 3।।

rāga kēdārā

(5/48)

kahu, kabahuṁ dēkhihauṁ ālī! āraja-suvana.
sānuja subhaga-tanu jabatēṁ bichurē bana,
tabatēṁ dava-sī lagī tīnihū bhuvana.. 1..
mūrati sūrati kiyē pragaṭa prītama hiyē,
manakē karana cāhaiṁ carana chuvana.
cita caḍhigō biyōga-dasā na kahibē jōga,
pulaka gāta, lāgē lōcana cuvana.. 2..

tulasī trijaṭā jānī, siya ati akulānī
mr̥dubānī kahyau aihaiṁ davana-duvana.
tamīcara-tama-hārī surakanja-sukhakārī
rabikula-rabi aba cāhata uvana.. 3..

Conversation between Sita and Trijata-II

Verse no. 5/48—[Sita continued—] 'Friend Trijata! Say, will I be ever able to have a 'Darshan' (a reverential viewing) of the 'Aaryaputra' (the son born in the Aryan race; here referring to Lord Ram), who is an image (i.e. embodiment, personification) of beauty and magnificence, as well as of his brother (Laxman)?

Ever since I was separated from them in the forest, the three Lokas (subterranean, terrestrial and heavenly worlds; literally meaning the whole world) seem to be engulfed in a wild forest-fire for me[1] (1).

[[1]To wit, I don't find peace and comfort anywhere. Day and night, morning and evening, summer or winter, rainy season or dry days—I feel equally tormented and burn inside by the fire ignited due to the agony and misery caused by separation from Lord Ram. The grief and anguish are roasting me alive.]

My beloved (Ram) reveals himself in my heart as soon as I remember his image (form) which is most adorable and loving. I want to touch his feet by the hands of my mind (imagination), but when I recall his separation from me, then my (physical and mental) condition cannot be described—the body becomes thrilled and tears roll down my eyes (2).'

Tulsidas says that when Trijata saw that Sita was excessively agitated and anguished, she consoled her with these sweet and comforting words, 'Sri Ram, who is the destroyer of enemies, will come soon. The 'Sun' of the Solar Race is the destroyer (eliminator, remover, vanquisher) of darkness representing the demons, and is favoured by the garden of lotuses representing the Gods. This Sun is about to rise[2]!'

[[2]Here, the 'Sun' is a metaphor for Sri Ram. The phrase 'the Sun of the Solar-Race' means that Lord Ram is the brightest, the most glorious and the most renowned amongst all the kings of the Sun-Race.

The 'demons' stand for all the wicked, evil and unrighteous creatures. The Gods are compared to the 'lotus' because of their good virtues just like the lotus flower, which is deemed to be pure and clean and inspite of it living inside a dirty pond.

The Lord is a favourite with the Gods because he affords them his full support and protection, and like the celestial 'sun' he removes the darkness represented by the evil and wicked demons.

In other words, just as the lotus flower blooms and find joy when the sun rises in the sky, the Gods will find joy as soon as Lord Ram and his army is sighted on the horizon of Lanka, because it would mean the end of the tyranny that the demons had spread throughout the world.]

अबलौं मैं तोसों न कहे री।
सुन त्रिजटा! प्रिय प्राननाथ बिनु बासर निसि दुख दुसह सहे री।।1।।
बिरह बिषम बिष–बेलि बढ़ी उर, ते सुख सकल सुभाय दहे री।
सोइ सींचिबे लागि मनसिजके रहँट नयन नित रहत नहे री।। 2।।
सर–सरीर सूखे प्रान–बारिचर जीवन–आस तजि चलनु चहे री।
तैं प्रभु सुजस–सुधा सीतल करि राखे, तदपि न तृप्ति लहे री।। 3।।
रिपु–रिस घोर नदी बिबेक–बल, धीर–सहित हुते जात बहे री।
दै मुद्रिका–टेक तेहि औसर, सुचि समीरसुत पैरि गहे री।। 4।।
तुलसिदास सब सोच पोच मृग मन–कानन भरि पूरि रहे री।
अब सखि सिय सँदेह परिहरु हिय, आइ गए दोउ बीर अहेरी।। 5।।

(5/49)

abalauṁ maiṁ tōsōṁ na kahē rī.
suna trijaṭā! priya prānanātha binu bāsara nisi dukha dusaha sahē rī..1..
biraha biṣama biṣa-bēli baṛhī ura, tē sukha sakala subhāya dahē rī.
sō'i sīn̄cibē lāgi manasijakē rahaṁṭa nayana nita rahata nahē rī.. 2..
sara-sarīra sūkhē prāna-bāricara jīvana-āsa taji calanu cahē rī.
taiṁ prabhu sujasa-sudhā sītala kari rākhē, tadapi na trpti lahē rī.. 3..
ripu-risa ghōra nadī bibēka-bala, dhīra-sahita hutē jāta bahē rī.
dai mudrikā-ṭēka tēhi ausara, suci samīrasuta pairi gahē rī.. 4..
tulasidāsa saba sōca pōca mrga mana-kānana bhari pūri rahē rī.
aba sakhi siya saṁdēha pariharu hiya, ā'i ga'ē dō'u bīra ahērī.. 5..

Conversation between Sita and Trijata-III

Verse no. 5/49—[Sita replied to Trijata—] 'Dear, I have not disclosed this to you until now. Listen Trijata, I have suffered intensely day and night without (the company of) my beloved (husband, Sri Ram) (1).

The poisonous creeper representing horrible miseries of separation has grown robust in my heart. It has naturally burnt (sucked out and destroyed) all my joys and happiness.

It appears that my eyes are like the bulls who are always yoked to the water-wheel of Kamdeo to draw water so that somehow this fire of agony caused by separation from the Lord is doused and kept under control[1] (2).

[[1]Sita means that tears constantly flow from her eyes to soothe her weary, exhausted, pained and tormented nerves. Her grief is somewhat alleviated when she weeps. She compares the condition of her eyes that continuously shed tears to that of the bulls who are yoked to a water-wheel and go round and round to draw water to irrigate dry land. So similarly, Sita's eyes continue to shed endless streams of tears to douse her fire of agony and grief that keeps burning inside her heart.]

My body-like lake has dried up (i.e. it has become emaciated and withered). Hence, the water-bird representing my soul (life) residing in it now wants to depart (i.e. I wish to die).

Albeit you have temporarily stopped them from departing by attempting to quench their thirst by providing them with the life-sustaining nectar in the form of reassurance (that the Lord would definitely come to my rescue), alongside narrating the divine glories and the auspicious virtues of the Lord (Sri Ram) to keep my sagging spirits buoyed, they still are not satisfied (quenched and contented)[2] (3).

[[2]Sita means that inspite of all the reassurances by Trijata, she is finding it too much of a burden to live any longer without her beloved Lord Ram. She is longing desperately for the Lord, and mere words and assurances do not seem to help substantially unless there is some sort of positive signal or development to prove them. The odds are so heavily stacked against her that inspite of all the assurances of Trijata that the Lord would come soon and kill the demons and release her from captivity, Sita does not seem to rely or believe in them. Of course such sweet and reassuring words give her temporary relief, but sooner than later the feeling of wretchedness and misery returns with a vengeance.]

These birds (representing my soul, my body and life) were just floating or drifting away in the fierce current of the river symbolized by wrath of the enemy (demons) with courage derived from the strength that comes with wisdom and fortitude[3].

[[3]To wit, I would have drowned in the turbulent river with very fierce currents of water representing the torments and horrors that I faced in the hands of my captors. But I held on to dear life with courage and fortitude, in the hope that I will gain nothing by losing hope and dying, but if I manage somehow to keep my life afloat then haply there may be a chance I may see light at the end of the dark tunnel and meet my Lord once again. Hereat, and aught but this, I managed to survive so long.]

But the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman), who is of a pure heart and intellect, swam across swiftly, caught hold of them and prevented them from getting lost by giving them a life-support (a buoy) in the form of the signet ring (that the Lord had given him to be delivered to me). Thus, these birds[4] were not only saved from drowning but also from getting lost for ever.

[[4]The birds symbolize the life and body of Sita. Wisdom had prevented her from dying because she knew that if she lost courage and died then whatever chance she had of meeting the Lord again would be lost for ever. So she drew on her reserve of courage and fortitude to somehow linger on with life in a tenacious manner. But life was slowly ebbing away from her body just like the bird which was drifting away in the vicious current of the rapid water of the fast-flowing river. Then Hanuman came and threw the life-buoy in the form of the ring of Lord Ram. Sita clinged to this ring to save her precious life from sinking in the ocean of agony, misery, grief and torment to which she was subjected. Hanuman's arrival had helped to pull her out from the brink of certain death by injecting hope in her. The hope and the expectation that now she will soon meet her beloved Lord provided her the will and the encouragement to live on for some more time till the Lord comes and rescues her.] (4).'

Tulsidas continues his narration and says that Sita told Trijata—'Oh Trijata! In my mind representing a forest, there are hordes of wild animals representing all sorts of sorrows, miseries, grief, distresses and troubles to which I am being subjected to. [And these wild animals continue to harass me and create endless horrors for me.]'

[Trijata replied to Sita, reassuring her once again with her wise words. She said—] 'Oh friend Sita (sakhi siya)! Shrug-off the doubts in your heart now. Both the hunters (Sri Ram and Laxman) have arrived, and they are ready to hunt down the game[5].' (5).

[[5]In other words, Lord Ram and Laxman would soon kill the demons like hunter-princes pursue their games and kill them. This will be the end of Sita's cause of so much pain.]

राग बिलावल

(5 / 50)

सो दिन सोनेको, कहु, कब ऐहै !
जा दिन बँध्यो सिंधु त्रिजटा! सुनि तू संभ्रम आनि मोहि सुनैहै।। 1।।
बिस्व–दवन सुर–साधु–सतावन रावन किया आपनो पैहै।
कनकपुरी भयो भूप बिभीषन, बिबुध–समाज बिलोकन धैहै।। 2।।
दिब्य दुंदुभी, प्रसंसिहैं मुनिगन, नभतल बिमल बिमाननि छैहै।
बरषिहैं कुसुम भानुकुल–मनिपर, तब मोको पवनपूत लै जैहै।। 3।।
अनुज सहित सोभिहैं कपि महँ, तनु–छबि कोटि मनोजहि तैहै।
इन नयनन्हि यही भाँति प्रानपति निरखि हृदय आनँद न समैहै।। 4।।
बहुरो सदल सनाथ सलछिमन कुसल कुसल बिधि अवध देखैहै।
गुर, पुरलोग, सास, दोउ देवर, मिलत दुसह उर तपनि बुतैहै।। 5।।
मंगल–कलस, बधावने घर–घर, पैहैं माँगने जो जेहि भैहै।
बिजय राम राजाधिराजको, तुलसीदास पावन जस गैहै।। 6।।

rāga bilāvala

(5/50)

sō dina sōnēkō, kahu, kaba aihai!
jā dina bam̐dhyō sindhu trijaṭā! suni tū sambhrama āni mōhi sunaihai.. 1..
bisva-davana sura-sādhu-satāvana rāvana kiyā āpanō paihai.
kanakapurī bhayō bhūpa bibhīṣana, bibudha-samāja bilōkana dhaihai.. 2..
dibya dundubhī, prasansihaiṁ munigana, nabhatala bimala bimānani chaihai.
baraṣihaiṁ kusuma bhānukula-manipara, taba mōkō pavanapūta lai jaihai.. 3..
anuja sahita sōbhihaiṁ kapi maham̐, tanu-chabi kōṭi manōjahi taihai.
ina nayananhi yahī bhām̐ti prānapati nirakhi hr̥daya ānam̐da na samaihai.. 4..
bahurō sadala sanātha salachimana kusala kusala bidhi avadha dēkhaihai.
gura, puralōga, sāsa, dō'u dēvara, milata dusaha ura tapani butaihai.. 5..
maṅgala-kalasa, badhāvanē ghara-ghara, paihaiṁ mām̐ganē jō jēhi bhaihai.
bijaya rāma rājādhirājakō, tulasīdāsa pāvana jasa gaihai.. 6..

Conversation between Sita and Trijata-IV

(Sita visualises the Victory Day)

Verse no. 5/50—[Sita said—] 'Oh Trijata! When will that golden (auspicious, fortunate) day dawn when, hearing that the ocean has been tamed (i.e. bridged), and you will come hurriedly to convey this good news to me? (1).

When will the Gods rush to see (the spectacular marvel) that Ravana, who has crushed the world and tormented the Gods, has got the fruit of (i.e. punishment for) his (evil, sinful and unrighteous) deeds, and Vibhishan has become the king of Lanka instead? (2).

[I'm eagerly waiting for that fine day when—] There would be a loud chorus of kettle-drums (musical instruments) being played in the sky (by the Gods) to celebrate the victory, the sages and hermits shall be singing praises (of Lord Ram and Laxman), the clear sky shall be covered by the vehicles of Gods from which flowers would be showered on the 'Bhanukul Mani' (literally, the jewel or the gem of the Solar Race, i.e. Lord Sri Ram), and at the opportune moment the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) would take me there (to where my beloved Lord Sri Ram is) (3).

When I would see him (Sri Ram), along with his younger brother (Laxman), amongst the monkeys? His divine sight and its spectacular beauty would be so magnificent and bewitching to behold that it would be putting to shame millions of Kamdeo-cupids by its enrapturing charm and profound magnificence.

Indeed my heart will swell with joy and exhilaration on seeing my heart's beloved with mine own eyes at that time (4).

Will the clever Creator let me happily see Ayodhya once again, accompanied by our group (of monkeys, bears etc.), alongside our Lord (Sri Ram) and Laxman?

The fierce and intolerable fire burning in my heart shall be doused when I see the Guru (sage Vasistha), the citizens (of Ayodhya), the mothers-in-law (Kaushalya, Sumitra etc.), and both my brothers-in-law (Bharat and Shatrughan) (5).

On that occasion, auspicious pitchers and pots would be put up as decorations in each and every household, and celebratory, felicitous songs would be sung everywhere. The alms-seekers would get what they want, while Tulsidas[1] will sing the song of glorious victory of the Great King, Lord Sri Ram! (6).'

[[1]Once again Tulsidas prophesizes that when the happy days return to Ayodhya, he will be present, in a symbolic manner, at the time of Sri Ram's coronation to participate in the rejoicings and celebrations there. And as true scribe, he will give a first-hand account of the rejoicings, celebrations and festivities accompanying the Lord's ascension to the throne of Ayodhya.]

सिय ! धीरज धरिये, राघौ अब ऐहैं।
पवनपूतपै पाइ तिहारी सुधि, सहज कृपालु, बिलंब न लैहैं।। 1।।
सेन साजि कपि–भालु कालसम कौतुक ही पाथोधि बँधैहैं।
घेरोइपै देखिबो लंकगढ़, बिकल जातुधानी पछितैहैं।। 2।।
निसिचर–सलभ कृसानु राम सर उड़ि–उड़ि परत जरत जड़ जैहैं।
रावन करि परिवार आगमनो, जमपुर जात बहुत सकुचैहैं।। 3।।
तिलक सारि, अपनाय बिभीषन, अभय–बाँह दै अमर बसैहैं।
जय धुनि मुनि, बरसिहैं सुमन सुर, ब्योम बिमान निसान बजैहैं।। 4।।
बंधु समेत प्रानबल्लभ पद परसि सकल परिताप नसैहैं।
राम–बामदिसि देखि तुमहि सब नयनवंत लोचन–फल पैहैं।। 5।।
तुम अति हित चितइहौ नाथ–तनु, बार–बार प्रभु तुमहि चितैहैं।
यह सोभा, सुख–समय बिलोकत काहू तो पलकैं नहिं लैहैं।। 6।।
कपिकुल-लखन-सुजस-जय-जानकि सहित कुसल निज नगर सिधैहैं।
प्रेम पुलकि आनंद मुदित मन तुलसिदास कल कीरति गैहैं।। 7।।

(5/51)

siya! dhīraja dhariyē, rāghau aba aihaiṁ.
pavanapūtapai pā'i tihārī sudhi, sahaja kr̥pālu, bilamba na laihaiṁ.. 1..
sēna sāji kapi-bhālu kālasama kautuka hī pāthōdhi bam̐dhaihaiṁ.
ghērō'ipai dēkhibō laṅkagaṛha, bikala jātudhānī pachitaihaṁai.. 2..
nisicara-salabha kr̥sānu rāma sara uḍi-uḍi parata jarata jaṛa jaihaiṁ.
rāvana kari parivāra āgamanō, jamapura jāta bahuta sakucaihaiṁ.. 3..
tilaka sāri, apanāya bibhīṣana, abhaya-bām̐ha dai amara basaihaiṁ.
jaya dhuni muni, barasihaiṁ sumana sura, byōma bimāna nisāna bajaihaiṁ.. 4..
bandhu samēta prānaballabha pada parasi sakala paritāpa nasaihaiṁ.
rāma-bāmadisi dēkhi tumahi saba nayanavanta lōcana-phala paihaiṁ.. 5..
tuma ati hita cita'ihau nātha-tanu, bāra-bāra prabhu tumahi citaihaiṁ.
yaha sōbhā, sukha-samaya bilōkata kāhū tō palakaiṁ nahiṁ laihaiṁ.. 6..
kapikula-lakhana-sujasa-jaya-jānaki sahita kusala nija nagara sidhaihaiṁ.
prēma pulaki ānanda mudita mana tulasidāsa kala kīrati gaihaiṁ.. 7..

Conversation between Sita and Trijata-V

(Trijata's Reply and Reassurance to Sita)

Verse no. 5/51—[Trijata replied to Sita as she sought to reassure her—] ‘Have courage and patience! Now, having got information about you from the son of the

Wind-God (Hanuman), Raghav (Sri Ram) will come soon. He is merciful and kind by nature, and hence he will delay no further[1] (1).

[[1]Trijata's guess was correct. When Hanuman returned to Kishkindha and conveyed all the tidings to the Lord, he pleaded with the Lord to start preparations forthwith. The Lord too did not waste any time, and the Lord's army started for Lanka soon thereafter. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 31; and from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35.]

The Lord would bridge (tie, tame) the ocean playfully (without effort, easily), like Kaal (the God of death) does (with a creature when the time of its death arrives), after assembling an army of monkeys and bears.

Now you would soon see Lanka surrounded on all the sides (i.e. besieged), and the demonesses would become extremely agitated and regret at the turn of events (2).

The foolish moths[2] representing the demons would fly towards and get burnt by the fire of Sri Ram's arrows (i.e. they will be enticed and lured towards Sri Ram's arrows, and die in multitudes by being shot by these arrows of the Lord), even as Ravana would feel extremely contrite, remorseful and repentant while going to the 'Yam Lok' (the abode of Yam, the God of death and hell) upon his death, and he would be accompanied by his family following him in the vanguard[3] (3).

[[2]Like the moths that fly towards the fire only to get burnt to death, the demons would voluntarily go and get killed by the arrows shot by Lord Ram and Laxman. When Ravana would be finally killed, he would go to the abode of the God of death, known as 'Yam', and would be regretting at his decision of creating un-necessary enmity with Lord Ram that eventually led to the slaying of the entire demon race, except of course some who did not oppose the Lord, such as Vibhishan and his companions.

[3]Ravana had died last of all the demons. Hence it is said that all other members of his family and race would precede him to the abode of the God of death.]

The Lord (Sri Ram) would accept Vibhishan's right to the throne and anoint him as the King of Lanka. Simultaneously, the Lord would also make the Gods fearless and establish (reinstate) them in the heavens.

At that auspicious moment, the sages and hermits would applaud, saying aloud in chorus: 'Hail, Hail the Lord and his glories!'

Meanwhile, the Gods would shower flowers from the sky as they watch the events from their aerial vehicles even as they simultaneously play their musical instruments to celebrate the occasion (4).

All the creatures would destroy (overcome, vanquish) all their sorrows, heart-burns and torments by touching the holy feet of Lord Ram and his brother (Laxman).

All the creatures who have eyes would get the reward (fruit) of their eye-sight by seeing you (Sita) sitting on the left-hand side of Lord Ram (5).

You would look (glance) at the Lord with most affectionate glances with enchanted eyes, and the Lord would reciprocate.

Watching those adorable, happy, joyous and magnificent moments, (a view of spectacular and of momentous importance and charm), all would be transfixed,

staring at the wonderful image of Lord Ram by your side, without blinking even for a moment (6).

Thereafter, Lord Sri Ram—accompanied by the monkey army and Laxman, with the glory and the good fame that he has acquired by the victory of Lanka as a trophy to his credit, and with Sita by his side—would go back happily to his city (capital, Ayodhya).

Tulsidas says that he will sing the Lord's glories, virtues and famous deeds that are most magnificent and stupendously fascinating, with a thrilled body and a mind that is exhilarated and euphoric beyond description (7).

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

लंकाकाण्ड

मन्दोदरी–प्रबोध

राग मारू

(6 / 1)

मानु अजहू सिष परिहरि क्रोधु।
पिय पूरो आयो अब काहि, कहु, करि रघुबीर–बिरोधु।। 1।।
जेहि ताडुका–सुबाहु मारि, मख राखि जनायो आपु।
कौतुक ही मारीच नीच मिस प्रगट्यौ बिसिष–प्रतापु।। 2।।
सकल भूप बल गरब सहित तोर्‌यो कठोर सिवचापु।
ब्याही जेहि जानकी जीति जग, हर्‌यौ परसुधर–दापु।। 3।।
कपट–काक साँसति–प्रसाद करि बिनु श्रम बध्यो बिराधु।
खर–दूषन–त्रिसिरा–कबंध हति कियो सुखी सुर–साधु।। 4।।
एकहि बन बालि मार्‌यो जेहि, जो बल–उदधि अगाधु।
कहु, धौं कंत कुसल बीती केहि किये राम–अपराधु।। 5।।
लाँघि न सके लोक–बिजयी तुम जासु अनुज–कृत–रेषु।
उतरि सिंधु जार्‌यो प्रचारि पुर जाको दूत बिसेषु।। 6।।
कृपासिंधु, खल–बन–कृसानु सम, जस गावत श्रुति–सेषु।
सोइ बिरुदैत बीर कोसलपति, नाथ ! समुझि जिय देषु।। 7।।
मुनि पुलस्य जस–मयंक महँ कत कलंक हठि होहि।
और प्रकार उबार नहीं कहुँ, मैं देख्यो जग जोहि।। 8।।
चलु, मिलु बेगि कुसल सादर सयि सहित अग्र करि मोहि।
तुलसिदास प्रभु सरन–सबद सुनि अभय करैंगे तोहि।। 9।।

ōṁ

śrīsītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

mandōdarī-prabōdha

rāga mārū

(6/1)

mānu ajahū siṣa parihari krōdhu.
piya pūrō āyō aba kāhi, kahu, kari raghubīra-birōdhu.. 1..
jēhi tāṛukā-subāhu māri, makha rākhi janāyō āpu.
kautuka hī mārīca nīca misa pragaṭyau bisiṣa-pratāpu.. 2..
sakala bhūpa bala garaba sahita tōryō kaṭhōra sivacāpu.
byāhī jēhi jānakī jīti jaga, haryau parasudhara-dāpu.. 3..
kapaṭa-kāka sāmm̐sati-prasāda kari binu śrama badhyō birādhu.
khara-dūṣana-trisirā-kabandha hati kiyō sukhī sura-sādhu.. 4..
ēkahi bana bāli māryō jēhi, jō bala-udadhi agādhu.
kahu, dhauṁ kanta kusala bītī kēhi kiyē rāma-aparādhu.. 5..
lāmm̐ghi na sakē lōka-bijayī tuma jāsu anuja-kṛṭa-rēṣu.
utari sindhu jāryō pracāri pura jākō dūta bisēṣu.. 6..
kṛpāsindhu, khala-bana-kṛsānu sama, jasa gāvata śruti-sēṣu.
sō'i birudaita bīra kōsalapati, nātha! samujhi jiya dēṣu.. 7..
muni pulasya jasa-mayaṅka mahamm̐ kata kalaṅka haṭhi hōhi.
aura prakāra ubāra nahīṁ kahumm̐, maiṁ dēkhyō jaga jōhi.. 8..
calu, milu bēgi kusala sādara sayi sahita agra kari mōhi.
tulasidāsa prabhu sarana-sabada suni abhaya karaiṅgē tōhi.. 9..

Mandodari's Entreaty

Verse no. 6/1—[Mandadori was the chief queen of the demon king Ravana. She had always been wary of the haughty, cruel and unrighteous ways of her husband. Being very wise and prudent, she was extremely worried and full of consternation as she watched the alarming developments in Lanka since Hanuman had burnt it. She repeatedly tried to persuade her husband on different occasion to abandon his reckless and senseless behaviour and come to see reason, so that a devastating war can be avoided, albeit he wouldn't pay any heed to her, even calling her a coward, of showing typical womanish nature of being too unnecessarily concerned and affright at trifles that were virtually non-issues with him.

There are many instances in Tulsidas' books where we come across Mandadori's earnest request to Ravana to avoid the war and return Sita to her husband.

Refer: (a) Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/23, stanza no. 3; verse no. 5/24, stanza nos. 1-3; Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/1.

(b) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/17—6/29.

(c) Ram Charit Manas, (i) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 36—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37; (ii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 8; Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 18; Doha no. 35—to Doha no. 37.]

Mandodari beseeched Ravana must urgently and earnestly (at a time when Lord Ram's army had landed on the soil of Lanka, and war was imminent), 'My dear! It is yet not too late. Listen to my advice and bid farewell to anger. Dear, you tell me yourself, who has benefitted by rebelling and going against Lord Ram? (1).

He had manifested and spread his glory and fame by killing the demoness Tadka[1] and the demon Subahu[2] even in his pre-adolescent days[3], had protected sage Vishwamitra's fire-sacrifice[4], and showed the might of his arrow by throwing Marich 800 miles away by a headless shaft[5] (2).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 6; verse no. 1/55, stanza no. 6; verse no. 1/67, stanza no. 2; verse no. 1/74, stanza no. 3; verse no. 1/83, stanza no. 2.

[2]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/60, stanza no. 3; Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 208 (where Lord Ram's father says that the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, are of a tender age at the time when sage Vishwamitra had sought them for the protection of his fire sacrifice); Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 256 (where Sita'a mother also reiterates the view that Lord Ram is merely an adolescent boy at the time of breaking the bow).

[3]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/60, stanza no. 3; verse no. 1/66, stanza no. 3.

[4]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 6; verse no. 1/67, stanza no. 2; verse no. 1/74, stanza no. 3; verse no. 1/83, stanza no. 2.

[5]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/67, stanza no. 2; Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 210.]

Then, he vanquished the pride of all the assembled knights, princes and kings by breaking the strong, strudy bow of Lord Shiva, and married Sita as a symbol of conquering the world[6], besides pacifying the haughty and angry sage Parasuram[7] (3).

[[6]This incident refers to Lord Ram breaking the Bow of Lord Shiva at Janakpur to marry Sita, the daughter of king Janak. It is narrated in detail in (a) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/89—to 1/96; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Doha no. 264.

[7]When the Bow was broken, sage Parashuram, who was a great devotee of Lord Shiva, came angrily to punish the prince who had insulted his Lord, Shiva, by doing so. He confronted Lord Ram, and after a lot of acrimonious exchange of words with Laxman, Lord Ram finally prevailed upon him and calmed the sage down. Refer: (a) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 90, stanza no. 7; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.]

He (Lord Ram) first punished Jayant[8] (who had pricked Sita with his beak and injured her to test the might of the Lord), and then, when the latter came and surrendered himself before the Lord, seeking forgiveness and protection by taking refuge at the Lord's holy feet, he forgave him.

Then, by slaying the demons Viraadh, Khar-Dusan, Trishara and Kabandh[9], playfully and without much effort, the Lord brought about peace and happiness for the Gods and sages and hermits (4).

[[8]Jayant's story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2. Briefly, Jayant, who was the son of Indra, the king of gods, decided to test the might of Lord Ram. So with his wicked intentions he assumed the form of a crow and pricked at Sita's feet. Annoyed, Lord Ram picked up a reed and shot it at him like it were a head-less arrow. Jayant ran to all corners of the creation to hide and seek shelter, but this arrow followed him everywhere. Terrified out of his wits, he met sage Narad who advised him to seek pardon from Lord Ram if he wants to survive. Jayant came and surrendered to the Lord unconditionally, whereat the Lord granted him his life, but took out one of his eyes because the Lord's arrow could not go in vain.

[9]The killing of these four demons are narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 7 (Viraadh); (ii) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 20 (Khar, Dushan and Trishira); and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 33—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 34 (Kabandh).]

Then, he killed Baali[10] who was an ocean of strength.

Say, my dear husband! Who can ever imagine his well-being by offending one such as Lord Ram? (5).

[[10]Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 8.]

Even you, who prides himself to be the conqueror of the world, could not cross the line marked by Laxman at the time of abducting Sita[11].

How durst you imagine in your foolish mind to face him (i.e. Lord Ram) whose one single messenger leapt across the ocean and burnt the whole city of Lanka from end to end (and you couldn't stop him) (6).

[[11]When Sita had forced Laxman to go after Lord Ram when she heard someone calling out Laxman's name at the time the Lord had gone to bring the golden-deer, who was none else but the demon Marich deployed by Ravana to lure Lord Ram away so that he can kidnap Sita, Laxman had drawn a circle on the ground and had asked Sita not to step out of it. When Laxman was gone, Ravana appeared disguised as a mendicant, seeking some alms. He stood at some distance from this circle drawn by Laxman as he dare not go near it. When Sita stepped out of this circle in order to give this imposter mendicant the alms he had sought, Ravana immediately caught hold of her and made good his escape.

This is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 36.]

The Lord's glories and praises are sung by Sheshnath (the legendary Serpent with a thousand tongues) and Sruti (the ancient scriptures, so-called because they were transmitted by the oral tradition of hearing and teaching from one to the next generation) with the words "Merciful Lord; One who is like a fire for the forest of rascals, scoundrels and wretches (kṛpāsindhu, khala-bana-kṛsānu sama)".

Oh Lord! Think in your heart (before it's too late to make amends): for in all sooth, the Lord whom Seshnath and the Sruti praise so much is the same Lord who is famed the world over and renowned for his valour, courage and strength, and is known as the great King of Kaushal (i.e. 'Lord Ram', the king of Ayodhya, which is also known as the kingdom of Kaushal) (7).

Why are you willingly, adamantly and foolishly proving yourself a sinful scar in the moon-like fame of the race of sage Pulsastya[12]? I have searched the world for all options, but have come to the conclusion that your welfare lies in no other way than this (as suggested by me). [To wit, the only way you can escape certain annihilation is to make peace with Lord Ram.][13] (8).

[[12]Ravana traced his lineage to sage Pulastya. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 20.

The birth and lineage of Ravana in the family of sage Puslastya has been elaborately narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas. Refer: Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 23—61.

[13]Mandadori's entreaties as narrated in the present verse no. 6/1 of Geetawali find an echo in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Doha no. 7.]

Hence, I finally plead before you, with the greatest of stress, sincerity and humility that I can muster, that it will be in your own benefit and welfare if you immediately proceed to meet Lord Ram, accompanied by Sita, and putting me in the front to guard your entourage from any harm. This is the only way out for you and your welfare. The Lord shall make you fearless as soon as he hears the word "I have come to seek refuge" from your mouth[14] (9).'

[[14]Mandadori pleads with Ravana to immediately surrender Sita to Lord Ram and bow his head before the Lord as a token of surrender if he wished for his good. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 6.]

अंगदका दूतकर्म

राग कान्हरा

(6/2)

तू दसकंठ भले कुल जायो।
ता महँ सिव–सेवा, बिरंचि–बर, भुजबल बिपुल जगत जस पायो।। 1।।
खर–दूषन–त्रिसिरा, कबंध रिपु जेहि बाली जमलोक पठायो।
ताको दूत पुनीत चरित हरि सुभ संदेस कहन हौं आयो।। 2।।
श्रीमद नृप–अभिमान मोहबस, जानत अनजानत हरि लायो।
तजि ब्यलीक भजु कारुनीक प्रभु, दे जानकिहि सुनहि समुझायो।। 3।।
जातें तव हित होइ, कुसल कुल, अचल राज चलिहै न चलायो।
नाहित रामप्रताप–अनलमहँ है पतंग परिहै सठ धायो।। 4।।
जद्यपि अंगद नीति परम हित कह्यो, तथापि न कछु मन भायो।
तुलसिदास सुनि बचन क्रोध अति, पावक जरत मनहु घृत नायो।। 5।।

aṅgadakā dūtakarma

rāga kānharā

(6/2)

tū dasakaṇṭha bhalē kula jāyō.
tā mahaṁ siva-sēvā, biran̄ci-bara, bhujabala bipula jagata jasa pāyō.. 1..
khara-dūṣana-trisirā, kabandha ripu jēhi bālī jamalōka paṭhāyō.
tākō dūta punīta carita hari subha sandēsa kahana hauṁ āyō.. 2..
śrīmada nr̥pa-abhimāna mōhabasa, jānata anajānata hari lāyō.
taji byalīka bhaju kārunīka prabhu, dē jānakihi sunahi samujhāyō.. 3..
jātēṁ tava hita hō'i, kusala kula, acala rāja calihai na calāyō.
nāhita rāmapratāpa-analamahaṁ hvai pataṅga parihai saṭha dhāyō.. 4..
jadyapi aṅgada nīti parama hita kahyō, tathāpi na kachu mana bhāyō.
tulasidāsa suni bacana krōdha ati, pāvaka jarata manahu ghr̥ta nāyō.. 5..

Angad as an Emissary of Lord Ram in the court of Ravana-I

Verse no. 6/2—[Lord Ram himself wished to avoid the bloody war at all costs. So he sent Angad, Sugriv's nephew and one of the chief commanders of the Lord's army and his faithful follower, as a diplomatic emissary in a last-ditch attempt to see if the war can be avoided and Sita can be retrieved without bloodshed.

The conversation between Angad and Ravana was very acrimonious and full of vitriol. It is narrated here in (i) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, in verse nos. 6/2—6/4, as well as in (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Doha no. 35 ka; and (iii) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/9—6/16.

When Angad entered Lanka, its citizens were terrified to their bones, as everyone thought that the fellow who had burnt the city earlier (i.e. Hanuman) has come again. He was given a clear way to the court of Ravana, as no one dared to resist him for fear of his life. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede Doha no. 18.

Once there, what transpired is being narrated herein below.]

Addressing Ravana, Angad said—'Oh Ravana! You are born in a good race and clan (because Ravana was born in the Brahmin race in the clan of sage Pulastya). Besides this, you have received a boon from Lord Brahma by worshipping him, and you have also acquired great fame in this world by worshipping Lord Shiva, and also through the various victories achieved by the means of your arm's strength[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 20.]

I am a messenger of Lord Hari who has an excellent character and noblest of virtues (punīta carita hari). The Lord is the one who has slayed the demon such as Khar,

Dushan, Trishara and Kabandha etc., and enemies such as Baali[2], and has sent them to the abode of the God of death known as Yam.

I have come to convey the Lord's auspicious message to you. [It is for your good, and its content is in accordance with the principles of probity and propriety.] (2).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/1, stanza nos. 4-5.]

Either due to ignorance, or misled due to false pride of your fame and your crown (kinghood of Lanka), you have kidnapped Sita[3].

Now you should heed my advice and return her to Lord Ram, and setting aside all deceit and mischief, chant the holy name of Sri Hari (Lord Ram) who is all merciful[4] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 20.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 20 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8.]

By doing this you will benefit, your clan will have welfare and be alright, and your kingdom would become invincible and stable. Otherwise, oh you fool, you demons will burn yourselves in the fire of Lord Ram's valour and glory (and his wrath)[5] (4).'

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 27.]

Though Angad gave sane and wise council to Ravana, but he did not like it. Tulsidas says that he grew furious as if clarified butter (or ghee) had been added to a raging fire, making it burn more viciously and ferociously. [To wit, Ravana took umbrage at what Angad said.][6] (5).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 27.]

(6/3)

तैं मेरो मरम कछू नहिं पायो।
रे कपि कुटिल ढीठ पसु पाँवर! मोहि दास–ज्यों डाटन आयो।। 1।।
भ्राता कुंभकरन रिपुघातक, सुत सुरपतिहि बंदि करि ल्यायो।
निज भुजबल अति अतुल कहौं क्यों, कंदुक ज्यों कैलास उठायो।। 2।।
सुर, नर, असुर, नाग, खग, किंनर सकल करत मेरो मन भयो।
निसिचर रुचिर अहार मनुज–तनु, ताको जस खल! मोहि सुनायो।। 3।।
कहा भयो, बानर सहाय मिलि, करि उपाय जो सिंधु बँधायो।
जो तरिहै भुज बीस घोर निधि, ऐसो को त्रिभुवनमें जायो ?।। 4।।
सुनि दससीस–बचन कपि–कुंजर बिहँसि ईस–मायहि सिर नायो।
तुलसिदास लंकेस कालबस गनत न कोटि जतन समझायो।। 5।।

taiṁ mērō marama kachū nahiṁ pāyō.
rē kapi kuṭila ḍhīṭha pasu pāmv̐vara! mōhi dāsa-jyōṁ ḍāṭana āyō.. 1..
bhrātā kumbhakarana ripughātaka, suta surapatihi bandi kari lyāyō.
nija bhujabala ati atula kahauṁ kyōṁ, kanduka jyōṁ kailāsa uṭhāyō.. 2..
sura, nara, asura, nāga, khaga, kinnara sakala karata mērō mana bhayō.
nisicara rucira ahāra manuja-tanu, tākō jasa khala! mōhi sunāyō.. 3..
kahā bhayō, bānara sahāya mili, kari upāya jō sindhu bam̐dhāyō.
jō tarihai bhuja bīsa ghōra nidhi, aisō kō tribhuvanamēṁ jāyō?.. 4..
suni dasasīsa-bacana kapi-kuṁjara bihamv̐si īsa-māyahi sira nāyō.
tulasidāsa laṅkēsa kālabasa ganata na kōṭi jatana samajhāyō.. 5..

Angad as an Emissary of Lord Ram in the court of Ravana-II

Verse no. 6/3—[When Angad had praised the glories of Lord Ram and pleaded with Ravana not to be so reckless and boisterous, and plunge into a destructive war for no reason or rhyme, and to give Sita back to the Lord and make peace with him, Ravana retorted haughtily and talked about his own strengths, valour, powers and glories, as if to answer Angad and warn him that this time his Lord, of whom he has glorified so much, has met his match, and that he, Ravana, is not a meek straw as to be carried away or bend with the slightest draft of wind. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 21; (ii) Doha no. 25 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; and (iii) Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 28.]

[Ravana replied to Angad—] 'Oh you wicked, stubborn and lowly monkey (rē kapi kuṭila ḍhīṭha). You have not at all realised my influence and powers. Oh you lowly and sinful animal (pasu pāmv̐vara)! This is why you have come to admonish and discourse me with a lecture as if I were your slave (or servant, subservient to you)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 21.]

Don't you know? My brother is Kumbhakarn, who is a renowned destroyer of enemies, and my son (called Indrajeet) had captured and brought the king of Gods (Indra) himself bound in shackles. What much can I say about my matchless strength of arms which had lifted Mt. Kailash (the abode of Lord Shiva) like it were a mere ball[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, line no. 1 of Doha no. 27.]

Gods, humans, demons, serpents (and all the creatures of the subterranean and nether worlds), and the Kinnars (a special type of demi-gods who are said to be celestial singers and dancers)—all of them follow my wishes[3].

Oh you wicked rascal (khala)! The human body is a staple and delicious food for the demons. And you are trying to make me hear his (Sri Ram's) glories and fames (whose body is naught aught but of a human being)[4] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 8; (ii) Doha no. 25 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) line no. 2 of Doha no. 27.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 8.]

Even if he has taken the help of monkeys, made efforts and has crossed the ocean, so what; how and what does it matter? But (the ocean your Lord has crossed is merely a body of water, but tell me) who has been born in any of the three worlds (tribhuvana) who could cross the ocean represented by (the valour and strength of) my 20 arms[5]? (4).'

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 28.

The "three worlds" known as "tribhuvana" consists of the three levels of this creation—viz. the heavens, the earth, and the nether world.]

Hearing these arrogant, haughty and irreverent words of Ravana, Angad, who was the lion amongst monkeys (kapi-kuṁjara), smiled and bowed his head to (i.e. marveled at) the delusory powers of the Supreme Being (bihaṁsi īsa-māyahi sira nāyō)[6].

Tulsidas says that Angad tried millions of ways (i.e. all possible methods and arguments were employed by him) to make Ravana see reason (and return Sita, make peace with Sri Ram, and avoid a calamitous war), but under the influence of death (Kaal) as he was, Ravana did not pay any attention (5).

[[6]Angad sighed and felt amused at the delusions that the Lord creates. The power of the Lord makes a creature hallucinate and have a false notion of his own grandeur and majesty as well as of his invincibility and strength inspite of clear evidence to the contrary. Ravana, being a king of the demon race, was supposed to be intelligent, wise and practical enough, as all kings are expected to be, to have realised the consequences of fighting a war of which the result was a foregone conclusion. He should have been alarmed especially after having experienced what havoc Hanuman had earlier caused to Lanka by burning it to ashes. He had also known how the other demons who had tried to act smart with Lord Ram earlier had met their death: there were a number of them, viz. Tadaka, Subahu, Marich, Khar, Dushan, Kabandh, Viradh etc. (refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/1).

But even in the face of such obvious and incontrovertible signs of impending devastation, Ravans remains stubborn under delusions of his own strength and invincibility. Instead of being prudent and making peace with Ram, he adopted a stubborn and a confrontational attitude.]

(6 / 4)

सुनु खल ! मैं तोहि बहुत बुझायो।
एतो मान सठ ! भयो मोहबस, जानतहू चाहत बिष खायौ।। 1।।
जगत–बिदित अति बीर बालि–बल जानत हौ, किधौं अब बिसरायो।
बिनु प्रयास सोउ हत्यो एक सर, सरनागतपर प्रेम देखायो।। 2।।
पावहुगे निज करम–जनित फल, भले ठौर हठि बैर बढ़ायो।
बानर–भालु चपेट लपेटिन मारत, तब ह्वैहै पछितायो।। 3।।

हौं ही दसन तोरिबे लायक, कहा करौं, जो न आयसु पायो।
अब रघुबीर–बान–बिदलित उर सोवहिगो रनभूमि सुहायो।। 4।।
अबिचल राज बिभीषनको सब, जेहि रघुनाथ–चरन चित लायो।
तुलसिदास यहि भाँति बचन कहि गरजत चल्यो बालि–नृप जायो।। 5।।

(6/4)

sunu khala! maiṁ tōhi bahuta bujhāyō.
ētō māna saṭha! bhayō mōhabasa, jānatahū cāhata biṣa khāyau.. 1..
jagata-bidita ati bīra bāli-bala jānata hau, kidhauṁ aba bisarāyō.
binu prayāsa sō'u hatyō ēka sara, saranāgatapara prēma dēkhāyō.. 2..
pāvahugē nija karama-janita phala, bhalē ṭhaura haṭhi baira baṛhāyō.
bānara-bhālu capēṭa lapēṭina mārata, taba hvaihai pachitāyō.. 3..
hauṁ hī dasana tōribē lāyaka, kahā karauṁ, jō na āyasu pāyō.
aba raghubīra-bāna-bidalita ura sōvahigō ranabhūmi suhāyō.. 4..
abicala rāja bibhīṣanakō saba, jēhi raghunātha-carana cita lāyō.
tulasidāsa yahi bhāmṁti bacana kahi garajata calyō bāli-nr̥pa jāyō.. 5..

Angad as an Emissary of Lord Ram in the court of Ravana-III

Verse no. 6/4—[In stanza no. 5 of verse no. 6/3 herein above, we have read how Angad smiled and bowed his head at the delusions that the Lord creates in the minds of those who are in the final throes of death. In this verse we read Angad's angry reply to Ravana. In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Doha no. 24 along with Chaupai line nos. 12-16 that precede it; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31; (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 33—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 34; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 6-13 that precede Doha no. 35.]

Angad said once again (as a rebuke and retort to Ravana's haughty talk), 'You wicked rascal, listen (sunu khala)! I tried to make you see reason (which would have saved you from destruction), but out of delusion you have become so haughty and arrogant that you willfully wish to eat poison (1).

Don't you remember the world famous warrior Baali, or have you forgotten him? Look, Lord Ram killed him by a single arrow[1], and showed affection towards Sugriv who had sought his (Lord Ram's) refuge (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Sortha/Doha no. 33 ka.]

You would also follow suit: for in all sooth you have dug your own grave by making Lord Ram an enemy! Now, during the battle, when you'll be thrashed and pounded and pulverized by monkeys and bears, then you'll repent (but it would be too late by then)[2] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Sortha/Doha no. 33.]

I am capable of knocking off your teeth; but I have not got this command from Lord Ram, and I am so sorry I couldn't do it (knock your teeth off)[3]! Now soon you'll lie down in the battlefield on being perforated by Lord Ram's arrows[4] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 34.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-9 that precede Sortha/Doha no. 33.]

Your kingdom would be given to Vibhishan who has diverted his mind to Lord Ram's holy feet and has developed devotion for them (i.e. for Lord Ram himself).'

Tulsidas says, after saying such harsh words of warning and reproach, Angad departed from there, roaring loudly (5).

लक्ष्मण–मूर्च्छा

राग केदारा

(6 / 5)

राम–लषन उर लाय लये हैं।
भरे नीर राजीव–नयन सब अँग परिताप तए हैं।। 1।।
कहत ससोक बिलोकि बंधु–मुख बचन प्रीति गुथए हैं।
सेवक–सखा भगति–भायप–गुन चाहत अब अथए हैं।। 2।।
निज कीरति–करतूति तात! तुम सुकृती सकल जए हैं।
मैं तुम्ह बिनु तनु राखि लोक अपने अपलोक लए हैं।। 3।।
मेरे पनकी लाज इहाँलौं हठि प्रिय प्रान दए हैं।
लागति साँगि बिभीषन ही पर, सीपर आपु भए हैं।। 4।।
सुनि प्रभु–बचन भालु–कपि–गन, सुर सोच सुखाइ गए हैं।
तुलसी आइ पवनसुत–बिधि मानो फिरि निरमये नए हैं।। 5।।

lakṣmaṇa-mūcrchā

rāga kēdārā

(6/5)

rāma-laṣana ura lāya layē haiṁ.
bharē nīra rājīva-nayana saba am̃ga paritāpa ta'ē haiṁ.. 1..
kahata sasōka bilōki bandhu-mukha bacana prīti gutha'ē haiṁ.
sēvaka-sakhā bhagati-bhāyapa-guna cāhata aba atha'ē haiṁ.. 2..
nija kīrati-karatūti tāta! tuma sukr̥tī sakala ja'ē haiṁ.
maiṁ tumha binu tanu rākhi lōka apanē apalōka la'ē haiṁ.. 3..
mērē panakī lāja ihāmlauṁ haṭhi priya prāna da'ē haiṁ.
lāgati sām̃gi bibhīṣana hī para, sīpara āpu bha'ē haiṁ.. 4..
suni prabhu-bacana bhālu-kapi-gana, sura sōca sukhā'i ga'ē haiṁ.

tulasī ā'i pavanasuta-bidhi mānō phiri niramayē na'ē haiṁ.. 5..

Laxman's Fainting-I

Verse no. 6/5—[In this book "Geetawali", Goswami Tulsidas has skipped a detailed narration of the War at Lanka, and after describing how Mandodari tried and failed to dissude Ravana from entering a destructive war and Angad, who was sent by Lord Ram to explore the option of making peace and avoid bloodshed, too tried and failed in his attempt to make Ravana see reason, the poet has come straight to an incident when Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram and his comrade-in-arm in the war, was wounded by an arrow shot by Meghnad, the son of Ravana, during their battle. This story of Laxman's fainting and his subsequent revival has been narrated in Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/5—to 6/15.

Briefly, the story is this: Upon being shot by a poisonous arrow by Meghnad, Laxman fell unconscious in the battle-field. When the battle for the day ended at sunset, Hanuman found Laxman lying on the ground, so he lifted him and brought him to where Lord Ram was. The Lord grieved and lamented sorely over Laxman's apparent loss of life. This event spread gloom and loss of all hopes of victory amongst the army of the Lord; everyone was distraught and dismayed no end, while there was obvious rejoicing in Ravana's camp.

Jamvant, the old bear king who happened to be Brahma, the Creator, in his form, advised that Sushen, the medicine man of Lanka, be brought there, as he would be able to prescribe the herb that would revive Laxman. Hanuman immediately brought him there, lifting his whole house for this purpose. Sushen advised that a herb called "Sanjivani" should be brought immediately from the mountains in the north of the mainland (i.e. one of the mountains of the mighty Himalyan range to the north of the Indian peninsula), and it has to be done quick because the herb has to be administered to Laxman before dawn.

The Lord asked Hanuman to get it, because Hanuman had proved himself as the only one in the whole group who could jump long distances by his crossing of the great ocean in one gigantic leap. So, Hanuman went to the northern mountains, and unable to decide which herb to pick up, he uprooted the whole mountain in his hand and cruised back to Lanka through the sky like a plane.

Meanwhile, as he was passing over Ayodhya with the huge mountain in one hand, Bharat, the brother of Lord Ram, saw him a streak of light passing over the night sky, and thinking him to be a demons, Bharat shot him down with a headless arrow to investigate the matter. Hanuman fell down, but since the arrow was only a shaft and Hanuman himself was exceptionally strong in body, no mentionable injury occurred to him. He narrated the latest developments to Bharat, sought his permission and once again resumed his journey to Lanka.

He reached just before dawn; Sushen administered the herb and Laxman was revived, sending cheer in the rank and file of the Lord's army while a thick pall of gloom and dejection spread over the demon army.

This event, "the fainting of Laxman and his revival" has been narrated in (i) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 54—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 62; and (ii) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/52—6/55 in detail.

In the meanwhile, the probable reason why Tulsidas chose not to describe the details of the War of Lanka in this book, but limit himself to narrating some isolated

incidents, such as Mandadori's pleading with Ravna and Angad as an emissary to Ravana's court, is that he had already narrated all other events extensively in his other two version of the Ramayan, viz. "Ram Charit Manas" and "Kavitawali", in their respective Lanka Kands.

As the reader may have noted, the present book "Geetawali" is more focused on Lord Ram, describing the Lord's various moods, emotions and thoughts, his divine deeds and marvelous acts, as well as on some milestone incidents that highlight the role played by some of the more prominent and faithful devotees and followers of the Lord, some of whom had used their wit and words of wisdom to honour and glorify Lord Ram (e.g. Mandadori, Angad), some worshipped him and lived a lived like the Lord himself had led (Bharat), some helped the Lord to complete the task for which he had come down to earth, which was to eliminate the demons, by aiding him in his mission (Sugriv), some who actually acted as the foot-soldier to accomplish the task (Hanuman), some who showed how a soul awaits its deliverance and salvation by seeking the Lord (Sabari, Ahilya), some who made the ultimate sacrifice by laying down their lives in the service of the Lord (Jatau), and some who not only helped the Lord in his day-to-day activity but took upon himself to uphold the sanctity of the words of the Lord even it meant sacrificing his own life in the service of the Lord (Laxman).

We find that each such character finds a mention in Geetawali, and events related to them vis-à-vis Lord Ram are narrated in the book, some such events in great detail (such as was the case of 'Bharat' in Ayodhya Kand), and others a little more conservatively ('Ahilya' in Baal Kand, 'Jatau' and 'Sabari' in Aranya Kand, 'Mandodari' and 'Angad' in Lanka Kand).

In the case of Laxman, he shared a close bond of mutual love and affection with Lord Lord Ram that made him the closest of all the Lord's devotees and associates. The personal sacrifices that Laxman had made were unmatched. He had suffered all the pains, the miseries, the tribulations and the physical difficulties that Lord Ram had undergone during the fourteen years in the forest in his endeavour to finally eliminate the demons, something that Bharat had missed, albeit the latter's devotion for the Lord was in no way less than that of Laxman. Even Lord Ram has expressly acknowledged this fact. {Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/7, stanza no.1.}

Laxman was Lord Ram's only companion and friend in the days when the Lord found himself absolutely desolate, dejected, hopeless and inconsolable after Sita was abducted. Imaging what would have happened if Laxman was not at his side in those crucial moments when Lord Ram discovered Sita was stolen: he was completely dejected, distraught, crestfallen and helpless, swooning in distress, about to faint, and on the verge of well nigh losing all courage and hope, and wishing to lie down and dye. At that time it was Laxman who had lent him his shoulder, who encouraged the Lord to gather himself and face the situation bravely rather then surrendering meekly, because those who have courage and resilience are the winners in the end, and this was the need of the hour. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 30.}

Whenever Lord Ram was attacked by the ferocious demons, it was Laxman who fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Lord, and there are umpteen instances of it. Then, throughout the fourteen years of exile in the wilderness, Laxman had kept vigil during the night and other times when Lord Ram and Sita lied down to rest. {This particular fact is clearly hinted at in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 90.}

Further, Laxman took it upon himself to ensure that all the words of honour that Lord Ram gave to others, the promises the Lord had made, are kept, even if it meant putting his own life in danger, as is highlighted in the current verse no. 6/5, stanza no. 4 of Geetawali as narrated herein below.

And to top it all, Laxman made the ultimate sacrifice that anyone can make: preferring to die in the cause of the Lord, the event that is the subject matter of the present verse nos. 6/5—6/15 of Geetawali.

Therefore, the event of Laxman fainting and the subsequent developments are narrated to show how Lord Ram loved his younger brother intensely, inspite of the fact that he had violated the Lord's order not to leave Sita alone, and which one disobedience on the part of Laxman had led to all the subsequent sufferings and miseries the Lord as well as Laxman himself had to endure.

Further, this incident sort of acts as a bridge of information that links the Lord Ram and his condition and whereabouts towards the end of his fourteen year exile period which was about to end, and Bharat who was eagerly awaiting the Lord's return to Ayodhya, for we shall soon see that after the full narration of this event of Laxman's fainting and revival, Tulsidas immediately starts on the next important milestone in the story of the Ramayan: viz. the Lord's victory in the War of Lanka, and his return to Ayodhya.]

[When Laxman fainted at being shot by an arrow of Meghnad, Hanuman brought the wounded Laxman to where Lord Ram was.]

Lord Ram lifted Laxman and clasped him to his bosom. His lotus-like eyes were filled with tears, and his entire body was extremely weary with lamentation, contrition, sorrow and anguish (1).

Seeing the face of his brother, he was overwhelmed with sorrows and anguish and said these woeful words soaked in deep regret but full of affection and love for Laxman: 'It appears that all the qualities and characteristics of an excellent servant, a friend, a devotee or worshipper and a brotherhood are about to set[1] (2).

[[1]That is to say: "Since Laxman has all these grand and desirable qualities and characteristics in him, if he dies then it would be equivalent of all these noble virtues coming to an end for good."

Lord Ram is expressing his intense love and affection as well as respect for Laxman; he acknowledges Laxman's sacrifices for him and says that he is extremely obliged to him. In Ram Charit Manas, Lord Ram has said that one can find all other relations in this world, but it is impossible to find a loving, faithful, devoted and dear brother: refer, Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 61.]

Oh Dear (brother Laxman)! You have acquired great fame and renown in the world by the virtue of your noble characters, and your good and virtuous deeds.

By keeping this mine body (i.e. by keeping myself alive) without you (at my side), I have only earned a bad name and a lot of infamy[2] (3).

[[2] "To wit, one one side of the scale are you, Laxman, who has laid down your life for me; and on the other side of the scale is me, Ram, who has used all your services and let you face the wrath of the enemy which I should have faced myself instead. Tell me my dear brother, what face do I have to live without you?"

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4, 9-10 that precede Doha no. 61.]

Ah, alas! You are indeed so vigilant and resolute about upholding my vows that you had laid down your life for it.

That is why, though the 'Shakti' (an arrow with a specially charged tip and so potent that it cannot go in vain) was aimed at Vibhishan, you had borne it like a shield.[3]' (4).

[[3]The story goes that Ravana had aimed his arrow to shoot down Vibhishan, but Laxman interceded and accepted the arrow himself. This was done by him to protect Vibhishan from any harm so as to uphold Lord Ram's promise of giving him unconditional protection. This is what the Lord means here: Laxman laid down his life like a true friend and brother to keep the Lord's words that he would give full protection to Vibhishan.

This incident is narrated in "Adhyatma Ramayan" of Veda Vyas, Lanka Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-8.]

Hearing these mournful words of lamentation being spoken by Lord Sri Ram, the bears, monkeys and Gods became very disheartened, dejected, depressed, anguished, forlorn, gloomy and sad[4].

Tulsidas says that just at this moment, the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) appeared (with the life saving Sanjivani herb) as if he was the Creator (Brahma) himself, and infused new life in him (Sri Ram)[5] (5).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Sortha/Doha no. 61.

[5]Brahma is the Creator and the one who injects life in the body of a living being at the time of its birth. So Tulsidas means that when a new lease of life was granted to Laxman by Hanuman by bringing the herb that revived him, it was like Hanuman playing the role of the Creator vis-à-vis Laxman.]

राग सोरठ

(6/6)

मोपै तो न कछू है आई।
ओर निबाहि भली बिधि भायप चल्यो लखन–सो भाई।। 1।।
पुर, पितु–मातु, सकल सुख परिहरि जेहि बन–बिपति बँटाई।
ता सँग हौं सुरलोक सोक तजि सक्यो न प्रान पठाई।। 2।।
जानत हौं या उर कठोरतें कुलिस कठिनता पाई।
सुमिरि सनेह सुमित्रा–सुतको दरकि दरार न जाई।। 3।।
तात–मरन, तिय–हरन, गीध–बध, भुज दाहिनी गँवाई।
तुलसी मैं सब भाँति आपने कुलहि कालिमा लाई।। 4।।

rāga sōraṭha

(6/6)

mōpai tō na kachū hvai ā'ī.
ōra nibāhi bhalī bidhi bhāyapa calyō lakhana-sō bhā'ī.. 1..
pura, pitu-mātu, sakala sukha parihari jēhi bana-bipati bam̐ṭā'ī.
tā sam̐ga hauṁ suralōka sōka taji sakyō na prāna paṭhā'ī.. 2..
jānata hauṁ yā ura kaṭhōratēṁ kulisa kaṭhinatā pā'ī.
sumiri sanēha sumitrā-sutakō daraki darāra na jā'ī.. 3..
tāta-marana, tiya-harana, gīdha-badha, bhuja dāhinī gam̐vā'ī.
tulasī maiṁ saba bhām̐ti āpanē kulahi kālimā lā'ī.. 4..

Laxman's Fainting-II

Verse no. 6/6—[Lord Ram laments and grieves—] 'Alas! I couldn't do anything! Today, Laxman, who was matchless as a brother, upheld the rules and sanctity of brotherhood, and most unfortunately, he has gone now (died) (1).

He, who had resolutely forsaken the city, father, mother and all types of comfort and happiness to share the troubles and tribulations of my forest exile[1]—I could not abandon my sorrows and send my soul with him to the abode of Gods (i.e. I could not die with him) (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5, 9-10 that precede Doha no. 61.]

It appears that Vajra (the strong and hard weapon of Indra) has obtained its hardness (toughness, sternness) from my hardened (stiff, emotionless) heart.

Verily, this is why perhaps why my heart did not crack by recalling and remembering the affection and love that Laxman had for me (as soon as I heard that he has fallen to the ground in the battle-field) (3).

Alas! I was the cause for my father's (Dasrath's) death, my wife (Sita) was abducted due to my misfortunes, the vulture king (Jatau) too lost his life for my cause, and now I had to lose this right arm of mine (i.e. Laxman). Thus, I have tarnished the reputation of my whole clan in all of my actions[2] (4).'

[[2]Lord Ram laments that the events of his life will be remembered by history as one in which many souls had to suffer for the sake of one individual: for instance, (a) king Dasrath died because he could not bear separation from Lord Ram, and his death could have been avoided if the Lord paid heed to Sumantra and his own mother Kaushalya and stayed back at Ayodhya; (b) Sita was kidnapped because of his carelessness as he ought to have sternly refused her request to bring the deer because the forest was full of dangers and he would not venture to take a grave risk such as this; (c) Jatau died also due to him, because it was due to his attempt to protect Sita from being taken away by Ravana; and (d) it is now Laxman who too is on the verge of losing his life due to Lord Ram, because Laxman could have stayed comfortably at Ayodhya, but he chose to go with the Lord to the forest, share all the Lord's pains nad miseries, and not he is on his death bed because he chose to lend his helping hand to Lord Ram in his war efforts to get Sita back.

In short, Lord Ram laments that so many people suffered because of their association with him. It is he who has misfortune writ large in his destiny, and it is he who has dragged other innocent souls to suffer alongside with him.

The Lord regrets that all the great kings of the Raghu dynasty were known for providing solace and succour to others, and not for being instrumental in their pain and sufferings like Lord Ram has been.]

(6/7)

मेरो सब पुरुषारथ थाको।
बिपति बँटावन बंधु–बाहु बिनु करौं भरोसो काको।। 1।।
सुनु, सुग्रीव ! साँचेहू मोपर फेर्‌यो बदन बिधाता।
ऐसे समय समर–संकट हौं तज्यो लषन–सो भ्राता।। 2।।
गिरि, कानन जैहैं साखा–मृग, हौं पुनि अनुज–सँघाती।
ह्वैहै कहा बिभीषनकी गति रही सोच भरि छाती।। 3।।
तुलसी सुनि प्रभु–बचन भालु–कपि सकल बिकल हिय हारे।
जामवंत हनुमंत बोलि तब, औसर जानि प्रचारे।। 4।।

(6/7)

mērō saba puruṣāratha thākō.
bipati bam̐ṭāvana bandhu-bāhu binu karauṁ bharōsō kākō.. 1..
sunu, sugrīva! sām̐cēhū mōpara phēryō badana bidhātā.
aisē samaya samara-saṅkaṭa hauṁ tajyō laṣana-sō bhrātā.. 2..
giri, kānana jaihaiṁ sākhā-mr̥ga, hauṁ puni anuja-sam̐ghātī.
hvaihai kahā bibhīṣanakī gati rahī sōca bhari chātī.. 3..
tulasī suni prabhu-bacana bhālu-kapi sakala bikala hiya hārē.
jāmavanta hanumanta bōli taba, ausara jāni pracārē.. 4..

Laxman's Fainting-III

Verse no. 6/7—[Lord Ram continues with his grieving and lamenting—] 'All my manly courage, resilience, strength, valour and vigour seem to have become tired now ("mērō saba puruṣāratha thākō"; i.e. I have lost the courage, the resolution and the spirit to do anything further now; I have lost all hopes and feel doomed and dismayed exceedingly).

Without my brother who had shared my woes and troubles, and who was the strength of my arms and an embodiment of my courage, who else should I rely upon now in his absence? [To wit, I say, no one can ever replace Laxman.] (1).

Listen, Sugriv! The Creator has indeed turned his face away from me (i.e. he has become opposed and malicious towards me). For, this is why when the fear of war is looming large and the war is imminent, the Creator has contrived it that Laxman-like brother would also forsake me. [I am so unfortunate and evil-omened that Laxman who represented my arm, my strength, my courage, my valour, and was my friend and companion of all times, has left me at this crucial juncture when the war is about to

start. Surely and without gainsay it appears that the envious Creator is hell-bent at tormenting me and wreaking his vengeance upon me, and he had therefore devised this device of falling Laxman to make a mockery of me.] (2).

The monkeys would go back to the mountains and forests (from whence they had come), while I would follow my brother Laxman (i.e. I would too die), but my only worry and concern now is: what, then, will be the fate of Vibhishan?[1] (3).'

[[1]Such a remarkable observation of the gracious and munificent Lord! He is more concerned about Vibhishan whom he had given shelter and refuge, with a promise of protecting him and restoring his honour by crowning him the king of Lanka, in the same court in which his elder brother Ravana had kicked him and insulted him. Now what would happen? Laxman is almost dead, Lord Ram says that he too will die due to grief, and the monkeys and bears would go back to their respective lands—and what about Vibhishan? He would be left high and dry; he would be marooned alone in an island that is surrounded by sharks, with no where to run away! Ravana would now become wroth with exceeding wrath upon him, and vent his anger upon him with exceeding vengeance, torturing him viciously, especially when he treats Vibhishan as a traitor, a betrayer and a turncoat.

The Lord's worry is not limited to this; it is more profound and sinister: Lord Ram has a reputation of living upto his words of granting protection to his devotees, to those who have been rejected by the world and have taken shelter and refuge with the Lord; but what about this reputation now if the tide of war goes against him, as seems the case with the loss of Laxman? The poor Vibhishan would be the worst hit. This prospect worries Lord Ram more than anything else.

Forsooth it shows how much the Lord is concerned about the good, the well-being and the welfare of his devotees and those who surrender themselves to him.]

Tulisdas says that hearing such mournful lamentations of the Lord, words that were soulful and full of remorse, contrition and regrets, all the monkeys and bears became extremely anguished, agitated and weary.

At this mournful, woeful and pitiful moment, (the bear king) Jamvant summoned Hanuman, and encouraged him (to come to the rescue of all and save the day by doing what was the need of the hour—which was to arrange for a medicine man and bring the necessary herbs he prescribes, without delay and second thoughts)[2] (4).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 55.]

राग मारू

(6/8)

जौ हौं अब अनुसासन पावौं।
तौ चंद्रमहि निचोरि चैल–ज्यों, आनि सुधा सिर नावौं।। 1।।
कै पाताल दलौं ब्यालावलि अमृत–कुंड महि लावौं।
भेदि भुवन, करि भानु बाहिरो तुरत राहु दै तावौं।। 2।।
बिबुध–बैद बरबस आनौं धरि, तौ प्रभु–अनुग कहावौं।
पटकौं मीच नीच मूषक–ज्यौं, सबहिको पापु बहावौं।। 3।।

तुम्हरिहि कृपा, प्रताप तिहारेहि नेकु बिलंब न लावौं।
दीजै सोइ आयसु तुलसी–प्रभु, जेहि तुम्हरे मन भावौं।। 4।।

rāga mārū

(6/8)

jau hauṁ aba anusāsana pāvauṁ.
tau candramahi nicōri caila-jyōṁ, āni sudhā sira nāvauṁ.. 1..
kai pātāla dalauṁ byālāvali amr̥ta-kuṇḍa mahi lāvauṁ.
bhēdi bhuvana, kari bhānu bāhirō turata rāhu dai tāvauṁ.. 2..
bibudha-baida barabasa ānauṁ dhari, tau prabhu-anuga kahāvauṁ.
paṭakauṁ mīca nīca mūṣaka-jyauṁ, sabahikō pāpu bahāvauṁ.. 3..
tumharihi kr̥pā, pratāpa tihārēhi nēku bilamba na lāvauṁ.
dījai sō'i āyasu tulasī-prabhu, jēhi tumharē mana bhāvauṁ.. 4..

Hanuman's assurance to Lord Ram

Verse no. 6/8—[Hanuman consoled Lord Ram not to grieve for Laxman as long as he, Hanuman, is with him. He encouraged the Lord to have strength and courage. He assured the Lord by saying—] 'If I get your permission, I will wring the moon as if it were a piece of cloth, and sqeeze the Amrit (nectar of life) out of it, bring it to you (in order to revive Laxman)—and then only I will bow my head before you! (1).

Or, should I kill the legendary serpents in the nether world who are protecting the pitcher of Amrit, and bring it to the surface (so that it can be given to Laxman to bring him back to life)?

If that did not serve the purpose, should I crack the universe, throw the Sun out of it, and bring Rahu, the enemy of the Sun, and seat him in the vacant place (caused by throwing the Sun out) and close the cavity (so that the Sun cannot rise over the world again, and Laxman can remain in suspended animation till the time a remedy is found, and till the time the demons are vanquished and Vibhishan is put on the throne of Lanka, a matter that is causing you so much worry)[1]? (2).

[[1]In those days, wars were faught only during the day time. If the Sun is pushed out from the sky and his eternal enemy Rahu is placed in the vacant space in his place, the day won't dawn, and so the war wouldn't start. In the meanwhile, Hanuman would go alone in the city during the darkness of the night and do away with Ravana and his ilk. Then he would put Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka.]

Not only this, I shall prove my loyalty to my Lord (Sri Ram) only when I will bring Ashwini Kumar, the physician of the Gods, forcefully. [And as forcefully make him contrive a device whereby Laxman can be revived.]

Or, shall I trounce 'death' underfoot like a humble mouse, and make the creatures fearless from it? [To wit, if the Lord permits, I would kill 'death' itself, or at least keep it pressed under my foot till it dies of its own due to strangulation. Once the 'death' is done away with, the fear of it would be eliminated for all times to come.

This would mean that no one would die henceforth; and obviously Laxman would too be spared from the clutches of 'death'.] (3).

Lord! It is because (or on the strength) of your grace and your might that I shall not delay a whit nor think for a moment in carrying out these works in full as promised by me to you.

Hence, oh Lord of Tulsidas (tulasī-prabhu), order me to do whatever you think fit, and which would please you and will make me (more) endeared to you[2] (4).'

[[2]It hurts and pains my heart when I see you in this pitiful condition. Tell me, have you forgotten me and my abilities? Don't you remember that when everything seemed lost and there was no hope of ever finding where Sita was, especially when our group was confronted by the formidable barrier of the ocean and the prospect of single-handedly entering the fortified city of the demons, a virtual forbidden place where even the Gods durst not peep, and coming back alive, it was I who had cheerfully done the imaginable. I had not only crossed the ocean, trounced the demons' morale and strength, but had burnt their so-called invincible city of Lanka to a smouldering heap of burnt out buildings and gardens, and had safely brought back the news of Sita. And you had then acknowledged my deeds publicly.

Now then, I prithee, why don't you take my service now; why don't you put me to good use? Do you doubt me or my loyalty or my abilities? There is aught naught that I canst do for you, if only I get your nod. And in all sooth, I am eagerly waiting for this nod!]

(6 / 9)

सुनि हनुमंत–बचन रघुबीर।
सत्य, समीर–सुवन ! सब लायक, कह्यो राम धरि धीर।। 1।।
चहिये बैद, ईस–आयसु धरि सीस कीस बलऐन।
आन्यो सदनसहित सोवत ही, जौलौं पलक परै न।। 2।।
जियै कुँवर, निसि मिलै मूलिका, कीन्हीं बिनय सुषेन।
उठ्यो कपीस, सुमिरि सीतापति चल्यो सजीवनि लेन।। 3।।
कालनेमि दलि बेगि बिलोक्यौ द्रोनाचल जिय जानि।
देखी दिब्य ओषधी जहँ तहँ जरी, न परि पहिचानि।। 4।।
लियो उठाय कुधर कंदुक–ज्यौं, बेग न जाइ बखानि।
ज्यौं धाए गजराज–उधारन सपदि सुदरसनपानि।। 5।।
आनि पहार जोहारे प्रभु, कियो बैदराज उपचार।
करुनासिंधु बंधु भेंट्यो, मिटि गयो सकल दुख–भार।। 6।।
मुदित भालु कपि–कटक, लह्यो जनु समर पयोनिधि पार।
बहुरि ठौरही राखि महीधर आयो पवनकुमार।। 7।।
सेन सहित सेवकहि सराहत पुनि पुनि राम सुजान।
बरषि सुमन, हिय हरषि प्रसंसत बिबुध बजाइ निसान।। 8।।
तुलसिदास सुधि पाइ निसाचर भए मनहु बिनु प्रान।
परी भोरही रोर लंकगढ़, दई हाँक हनुमान।। 9।।

suni hanumanta-bacana raghubīra.
satya, samīra-suvana! saba lāyaka, kahyō rāma dhari dhīra.. 1..
cahiyē baida, īsa-āyasu dhari sīsa kīsa bala'aina.
ān'yō sadanasahita sōvata hī, jaulauṁ palaka parai na.. 2..
jiyai kuṁvara, nisi milai mūlikā, kīnhīṁ binaya suṣēna.
uṭhyō kapīsa, sumiri sītāpati calyō sajīvani lēna.. 3..
kālanēmi dali bēgi bilōkyau drōnācala jiya jāni.
dēkhī dibya ōṣadhī jahaṁ tahaṁ jarī, na pari pahicāni.. 4..
liyō uṭhāya kudhara kanduka-jyauṁ, bēga na jā'i bakhāni.
jyauṁ dhā'ē gajarāja-udhārana sapadi sudarasanapāni.. 5..
āni pahāra jōhārē prabhu, kiyō baidarāja upacāra.
karunāsindhu bandhu bhēṇṭyō, miṭi gayō sakala dukha-bhāra.. 6..
mudita bhālu kapi-kaṭaka, lahyō janu samara payōnidhi pāra.
bahuri ṭhaurahī rākhi mahīdhara āyō pavanakumāra.. 7..
sēna sahita sēvakahi sarāhata puni puni rāma sujāna.
barasi sumana, hiya harasi prasansata bibudha bajā'i nisāna.. 8..
tulasidāsa sudhi pā'i nisācara bha'ē manahu binu prāna.
parī bhōrahī rōra laṅkagaṛha, da'ī hāṁka hanumāna.. 9..

Hanuman's Glorious Achievement:
The Bringing of the Sanjivani Herb that Revived Laxman

Verse no. 6/9—Hearing the words of Hanuman, Raghubir (Lord Ram) felt reassured and please, and he patiently said, 'It is true, oh son of the Wind-God! You can indeed do all these things (1).

Now, there is first and foremost the immediate need of a physician (a doctor, a medicine man who uses herbs in the traditional method of treatment of diseases or ailments; a 'Vaidya').'

Keeping the Lord's orders on his head (i.e. he carried out the orders immediately on priority basis), the strong monkey (Hanuman) brought a 'Vaidya' who was asleep in his home, by scooping up the entire house in the fraction of a moment so small that one could not bat an eye-lid during the course of the time taken in this process[1] (2).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 55.]

The Vaidya was named Sushen. He said politely, 'If the Sanjivani herb can be brought during the night itself (before sunrise), then the prince (Laxman) can be revived.'

As soon as he heard this, the lord of monkeys (Hanuman) got up, remembered (invoked) Lord Sri Ram (in his heart and mind), and started-off to bring the herb[2] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 55 and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.

Hanuman did not feel it necessary to take an express oral permission of Lord Ram before the journey, as this was implied when the Lord gave his permission to

bring the medicine man named Sushen. Hanuman simply invoked the Lord's strength by remembering him in his heart before he launched on his journey to the northern mountains where this rare herb was to be found.]

On the way he slayed Kalnemi[3], and soon saw Mt. Dronachal and recognised it by his sharp intellect. There he saw numerous herbs scattered here and there, but he could not specify (specifically recognise) the herb needed to revive Laxman[4] (4).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 58.

It so happened that a spy told Ravana that Sushen has been taken away, and he has given some advice to the enemy, i.e. Lord Ram. Hanuman has been deputed to go bring the necessary herb, and he is on his way through the passage of the sky. Immediately then, Ravana forced one of his demons named Kalnemi to go and stop Hanuman. This demon assumed the form of a hermit and created an illusion of a pond and a hermitage in the path of Hanuman. Flying overhead, when Hanuman saw this green patch of land with a water body, he decided to refresh himself with a drink of fresh water. On the ground he met this imposter Kalnemi who tried to poison him in the guise of giving him water to drink from his water pot. Hanuman meanwhile asked him to wait, and let him first go and take a bath in the pond. While he was bathing, another demoness who lived in it as a crocodile caught hold of Hanuman's feet and began pulling him inside the deep waters of the pond, whereat Hanuman killed him by tearing his mouth into two by pulling his jaws. At the time of death, this demoness resumed her original form of an Apsara (celestial damsel). She warned Hanuman about Kalnemi. So, Hanuman came back to this deceitful hermit and did him to death. The great wonder is that at the time of his death, this demon pronounced the holy name of Lord Ram, by the virtue of which he found his deliverance. This incident astonished Hanuman and pleased him at the same time. He was astonished that even demons had a soul that was yearning for salvation, and that they could find deliverance by saying the holy name of Lord Ram. This fact please him very much, and reinforced his belief in the mystical powers of Lord Ram and his divine name.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 58.]

Then he lifted the entire mountain like it were a ball (playfully, without any effort)[5].

No one can describe his speed and swiftness of that time. It appeared that the discus-bearing Lord Vishnu is rushing (dashing) forward to save the elephant king Gajraaj (from the jaws of death)[6] (5).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 58.

It so happened that Hanuman could not recognise the specific herb needed to revive Laxman. He had but little time in his hands to research and procrastinate. So he thought it wise to scoop the whole mountain and take it back to Lanka.

[6]The story of the Elephant King named "Gajraaj" is this: In the ancient country of Dravid (the present day South India), there was a kingdom called Pandyaraaj whose king was named Indradumna. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to offer regular worship to the Lord with great diligence. Once, sage Agastya passed that way with his retinue of disciples. The king was so engrossed in the worship of the Lord that he did not notice the sage and neither did he get up to welcome him or pay his obeisance to him. This annoyed the sage and he cursed—'You are like a haughty and wild elephant who pays no heed to those standing in the

front. Therefore, you deserve to become an elephant—so you would take a birth as an elephant.' When the king died he became an elephant in a pleasant island in the middle of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk.

He had a majestic body and was very strong in his herd. Once he was playing with his she-elephants and companions in a large and beautiful pond. In this pond lived an alligator/crocodile who was actually a Gandharva (a semi-god) named Huhu in his previous life and had become an alligator due to a curse of sage Deval. The alligator /crocodile caught hold of the leg of the elephant and started pulling him inside the deep lake. The Gaja himself and all his companions tried their best but failed to free him from the mouth of the alligator. A long tussle followed and the elephant became completely exhausted. When the situation became so bad that the Gaja, the elephant, was about to sink fully inside the water, he broke a lotus flower and offered it to Lord Vishnu as his last worship and offering before dying. The merciful Lord rushed instantly astride his mount, called the Garud, to save him. Reaching the spot within a moment, the Lord pulled the Gaja out of the water with one hand, and with the other he opened the mouth of the alligator to yank the leg of the elephant free from its clutches. Then the Lord cut off the alligator's head with his circular weapon known as the Chakra.

Both the alligator/crocodile and the elephant found liberation—the alligator/crocodile reverted to his earlier form of a Gandharva, and Gaja the elephant assumed a divine form similar to that of the Lord and went to his abode in the heaven.]

In this swift way, he brought the mountain and bowed before the Lord. And the Vaidya (Sushen) administered the proper herb (drug) to Laxman (so that he was instantly revived).

Thereafter, the ocean of mercy and compassion, Lord Ram, embraced his brother, and the entire burden caused by this unpleasant episode was removed[6] (6).

[[6]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 61 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that follow it.]

The community (i.e. the army) of bears and monkeys was exceedingly jubilant as if they have already crossed the ocean of war. [With the revival of Laxman, not only Lord Ram but the entire army of the Lord too regained their lost hopes and spirits. A loud chorus of greetings and cheer rang out in their rank and file.]

Thence, Hanuman took the mountain and placed it at its proper place[7] (7).

[[7]Hanuman also took Sushen and placed his house at the spot from where he had brought it ealier. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 62.]

At that time, the most wise Lord Sri Ram, accompanied by the whole army, repeatedly praised his servant (follower, devotee: Hanuman) even as the Gods showered flowers (upon Hanuman), became joyous in their hearts, played their trumpets/kettle-drums to celebrate the occasion, and praised him profusely in laudatory terms (8).

Tulsidas says that when the demons heard this news (of Laxman's revival), they appeared to become lifeless (discouraged, despaired, hopeless and panicky)[8].

At the crack of dawn, when Hanuman roared, there was a tumult and panic in Lanka (9).

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 62.]

राग केदारा

(6/10)

कौतुक ही कपि कुधर लियो है।
चल्यो नभ नाइ माथ रघुनाथहि, सरिस न बेग बियो है।। 1।।
देख्यो जात जानि निसिचर, बिनु फर सर हयो हियो है।
पर्‌यो कहि राम, पवन राख्यो गिरि, पुर तेहि तेज पियो है।। 2।।
जाइ भरत भरि अंक भेंटि निज, जीवन–दान दियो है।
दुख लघु लषन मरम–घायल सुनि, सुख बड़ो कीस जियो है।। 3।।
आयसु इतहि, स्वामि–संकट उत, परत न कछू कियो है।
तुलसिदास बिदर्‌यो अकास, सो कैसेकै जात सियो है।। 4।।

rāga kēdārā

(6/10)

kautuka hī kapi kudhara liyō hai.
calyō nabha nā'i mātha raghunāthahi, sarisa na bēga biyō hai.. 1..
dēkhyō jāta jāni nisicara, binu phara sara hayō hiyō hai.
paryō kahi rāma, pavana rākhyō giri, pura tēhi tēja piyō hai.. 2..
jā'i bharata bhari aṅka bhēṇṭi nija, jīvana-dāna diyō hai.
dukha laghu laṣana marama-ghāyala suni, sukha baṛō kīsa jiyō hai.. 3..
āyasu itahi, svāmi-saṅkaṭa uta, parata na kachū kiyō hai.
tulasidāsa bidaryō akāsa, sō kaisēkai jāta siyō hai.. 4..

Hanuman-Bharat Meeting-I

Verse no. 6/10—[Tulsidas now describes the incident that occurred while Hanuman was returning to Lanka with the mountain and the herb. As he flew in the night sky with the glittering herbs all decorating the sides of the huge mountain, and also due to his speed, from the ground it appeared that a comet is passing through, or a demon is flying away. Bharat saw this spectacle, and apprehending that something was amiss, he shot a headless arrow to bring down this mysterious being. Thereat, Hanuman fell to the ground, but even as he fell he muttered aloud the holy name of Lord Ram. Bharat was shocked to hear the Lord's name, and came rushing forward to investigate. He met Hanuman and they exchanged notes. Bharat enquired about the whereabouts and welfare of the Lord, whereat Hanuman briefed him of the latest developments.

Bharat was full of regrets and contrition. He was torn on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand he had the orders from Lord Ram to stay in Ayodhya and take care of it and its citizens till the time the Lord comes back, and on the other hand he felt the urge to go to the Lord's aid. The second option was impractical from the tidings of the state of affairs that Hanuman gave him. What would Bharat do alone, and it was impossible to assemble an army at such short notice and cover a huge distance from Ayodhya to Lanka. Besides this, the Lord already had an able army at his disposal. It made no sense to add to the confusion.

Then there was no time: Hanuman had to rush because the herb had to be given to Laxman before dawn, and it was already late in the night. There were no planes in Ayodhya. So, giving thoughts to all the matters and weighing the pros and cons, Bharat thought it prudent to let Hanuman resume his journey forthwith, without any delay or demurring.

These developments have been narrated herein below in verse nos. 6/10—6/14.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Doha no. 60.]

Hanuman playfully scooped up (and lifted) the mountain. Then, bowing his head to Raghunath (Sri Ram), he started on the way back through the path of the sky. No one had the speed and swiftness that Hanuman had at that time (1).

Seeing him passing over (Ayodhya) and thinking that he was some demon, Bharat shot a headless arrow (i.e. only the shaft) at his heart.

Thus shot, he (Hanuman) cried aloud 'Ram' as he fell down upon the ground. It seemed that the magnetic pull of the city of Ayodhya had sucked his strength.

Meanwhile, the Wind God kept the huge mountain aloft (to protect Ayodhya from being crushed under its expanse and weight) (2).

Then Bharat, having heard Hanuman exclaim 'Ram', went near him, lifted him in his arms, and gave him the boon (blessing) of life. [That is, Bharat removed the arrow stuck in his body, gave him emergency treatment and first aid so that Hanuman was immediately revived back and his wound tended to.]

Hearing that Laxman was wounded caused a little whit of worry and sadness to Bharat, but seeing that Hanuman was alive was a greater source of joy for him[1] (3).

[[1]This is because getting wounded is not a great source of worry for a brave warrior; it is part of the game and a way of life for them, to which all great warriors are trained to cope with and are accustomed to. But getting proper medicine in time for Laxman was far more important.

This is the reason that finding Hanuman alive and active was a greater source of joy for Bharat—for now the medicine would reach Laxman, who was lying wounded in Lanka, on time. This would make it sure that Laxman rises hale and hearty.

The power of herbs to give instant relief from injury and serious wounds is proved in the case of Hanuman also. Just like Laxman, Hanuman too was shot by an arrow. If he could be revived so easily and quickly by Bharat, then surely it is obvious that Bharat knew very well the powers and potentials of herbs to give immediate relief and heal the wound. So he was not unduly worried about Laxman as he knew that once the proper medicine was applied on his wound and even given orally, Laxman

would be out of danger immediately. What was more important now was to make sure that the bearer of that medicine, in this case it was Hanuman, reaches him soon and within the time frame.

Bharat was very relieved to see that Hanuman was alright and out of danger; he was daring to resume his journey. Say, what would have happened if Haunman was so seriously injured that he wouldn't have been able to resume his journey with the huge mountain in hand? No one else knew the location where Lord Ram and Laxman were present at that time: it was a far away land beyond the end of the land, in the middle of the vast ocean where no human had set foot till that date. No one in Ayodhya either knew the way to go there, nor would they dare to go. So it was extremely important that Hanuman was alright, hale and hearty after this accident.

This is the reason why Bharat was more happy at Hanuman's recovery than being sad at Laxman's injury.]

The Lord (Sri Ram) has ordered him (Bharat) to stay at Ayodhya while there is a looming danger of war on his (Lord's) head—this caused a huge consternation and dilemma for Bharat, but he could not do anything.

Tulsidas compares Bharat's dilemma and perplexity to the question: if the sky is torn, how do we sew it? (There is no plausible solution to it; there is no answer to it) (4).

(6 / 11)

भरत–सत्रुसूदन बिलोकि कपि चकित भयो है।
राम–लषन रन जीति अवध आए, कैधौं मोहि भ्रम,
कैधौं काहू कपट ठयो है।। 1।।
प्रेम पुलकि, पहिचानिकै पद्पदुम नयो है।
कह्यो न परत जेहि भाँति दुहू भाइन
सनेहसों सो उर लाय लयो है।। 2।।
समाचार कहि गहरु भो, तेंहि ताप तयो है।
कुधर सहित चढ़ौ बिसिष, बेगि पठवौं, सुनि
हरि हिय गरब गूढ़ उपयो है।। 3।।
तीरतें उतरि जस कह्यो चहै, गुनगननि जयो है।
धनि भरत ! धनि भरत ! करत भयो,
मगन मौन रह्यो मन अनुराग रयो है।। 4।।
यह जलनिधि खन्यो, मथ्यो, लँघ्यो, बाँध्यो, अँचयो है।
तुलसिदास रघुबीर बंधु–महिमाको सिंधु
तरि को कबि पार गयो है?।। 5।।

(6/11)

bharata-satrusūdana bilōki kapi cakita bhayō hai.
rāma-laṣana rana jīti avadha ā'ē, kaidhauṁ mōhi bhrama,
kaidhauṁ kāhū kapaṭa ṭhayō hai.. 1..

prēma pulaki, pahicānikai padpaduma nayō hai.
kahyō na parata jēhi bhām̐ti duhū bhā'ina
sanēhasōm̐ sō ura lāya layō hai.. 2..
samācāra kahi gaharu bhō, tēnhi tāpa tayō hai.
kudhara sahita caṛhau bisiṣa, bēgi paṭhavauṁ, suni
hari hiya garaba gūṛha upayō hai.. 3..
tīratēm̐ utari jasa kahyō cahai, gunaganani jayō hai.
dhani bharata! dhani bharata! karata bhayō,
magana mauna rahyō mana anurāga rayō hai.. 4..
yaha jalanidhi khan'yō, mathyō, lam̐ghyō, bām̐dhyō, am̐cayō hai.
tulasidāsa raghubīra bandhu-mahimākō sindhu
tari kō kabi pāra gayō hai?.. 5..

Hanuman-Bharat Meeting-II

Verse no. 6/11—Seeing Bharat and Shatrughan (who were look-alikes of Sri Ram and Laxman respectively), Hanuman was very confused and perplexed.

He wondered: has Lord Ram and Laxman won victory in the war and returned to Ayodhya, or is this an illusion (as I seem to be hallucinating)?

Or is this some sort of ploy, mischief or deception (created by the enemy, the demons) to deceive me? (1).

Then when he (Hanuman) recognised them (and realized the truth that they were indeed the brothers of Lord Ram), he was thrilled with affection and bowed his head (reverentially) at their lotus-feet.

The way those two brothers (endearingly, affectionately, enthusiastically, emotionally and eagerly) embraced him (Hanuman) cannot be described in words (2).

Then he (Hanuman) gave them (i.e. updated them with) the whole news (about Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita), and said urgently, 'I am getting late'.

Hearing all this, Bharat was overcome with grief and anguish, and said, 'You climb on (ride, mount) my arrow with the mountain; I shall send you immediately to where Lord Ram is.' Hearing these words, a sense of pride emerged in the heart of Hanuman, albeit covertly[1] (3).

[[1]Hanuman was proud because he vainly thought that he is so heavy, and added to his own weight was the weight of the mountain—how can the arrow lift them both, he wondered. So, he mounted the arrow to test its ability. He discovered to his amazement that the arrow could actually lift him with the mountain in his hand when Bharat raised his bow to shoot the arrow with Hanuman astride on it.

Hanuman's pride vanished when he found that he looked like a mere fly atop the huge shaft of Bharat's arrow. So he climbed down from it as he felt he would be blown away or slip once the arrow was air-borne.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 60 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it.]

He began to sing the glories and good fame (virtues, valour, strength etc.) of Bharat, for the latter's excellent qualities and noble characters had won him over (or overwhelmed him).

His mind was submerged in love, affection and endearment for Bharat, and saying 'Bharat is great; Hail him', he was so benumbed with surging emotions (and astonishment) that he fell silent (as he was unable to say anything more) (4).

Tulsidas (compares the fame and glory of Bharat with an ocean and) says, 'This physical ocean on the earth was dug up (by the sons of king Sagar), was churned (by the gods and demons in some ancient time in search of Amrit, the elixir of bliss and eternal life), was leapt across and measured (by Hanuman), was bridged or tamed (by the monkey architects Nal and Neel), and was drunk (by sage Agastya). But no poet (or any of the learned bards) has ever been able to cross the symbolic ocean represented by immensity of Bharat's greatness of glories, the immaculacy of his character, the auspiciousness of his nature and thoughts, and the excellence of his noble virtues which are matchless, famous and known world-wide. [To wit, though it is easy to fathom the physical ocean, it is impossible to measure the glories and virtues of Bharat. They are profound, immense and countless.] (5).

(6 / 12)

होतो नहि जौ जग जनम भरतको।
तौ, कपि कहत, कृपान–धार मग चलि आचरत बरत को ?।। 1।।
धीरज–धरम धरनिधर–धुरहूँतें गुर धुर धरनि धरत को ?।
सब सदगुन सनमानि आनि उर, अघ–औगुन निदरत को ?।। 2।।
सिवहु न सुगम सनेह रामपद सुजननि सुलभ करत को ?।
सृजि निज जस–सुरतरु तुलसी कहँ, अभिमत फरनि फरत को?।। 3।।

(6/12)

hōtō nahi jau jaga janama bharatakō.
tau, kapi kahata, kr̥pāna-dhāra maga cali ācarata barata kō?.. 1..
dhīraja-dharama dharanidhara-dhurahūm̐tēm̐ gura dhura dharani dharata kō?.
saba sadaguna sanamāni āni ura, agha-auguna nidarata kō?.. 2..
sivahu na sugama sanēha rāmapada sujanani sulabha karata kō?.
srji nija jasa-surataru tulasī kaham̐, abhimata pharani pharata kō?.. 3..

Hanuman-Bharat Meeting-III
(Hanuman Praises the Glory of Bharat)

Verse no. 6/12—[In this verse, Hanuman praises the excellent virtues of Bharat and his sense of love and devotion for Lord Ram. A similar praise for Bharat is mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4, 7-8 that precede Doha no. 325; Chaupai line nos. 3-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 326.

Refer also to: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 2/79—2/81.]

Hanuman said, 'Had Bharat not been born in this world, who would have set such an exemplary example of an immaculate life led in accordance with the best principles of living in a righteous and honourable way, because it is not an easy path to follow as it is similar to walking on the edge of a sharp sword[1] (1).

[[1]Bharat had shown by his example what is the meaning of deep love, affection, devotion, worship, reverence, steadfastness of vows, austerities, penances, renunciation, sacrifice, selflessness, righteousness, probity, propriety, brotherhood, spirit of surrender etc. He did not preach, but lived such a life. In the world where we live, practicing these principles is a most difficult proposition, fraught more with the danger of faltering and failing midway than of any achieving any measurable and commendable success.]

Who would have borne in this world the burden of Dhiraj ("dhīraja"; having great patience, tolerance, courage, forebearance and fortitude, as well as of upholding the principles of Dharma ("dharama"; righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility, virtuous conduct), which are heavier than the burden of mountains (dharanidhara-dhurahūm̐tēm̐ gura)?

Who else would have, on the one hand, respectfully and willingly accepted in his heart all the good virtues and noble characters that one is expected to inculcate and practice (saba sadaguna sanamāni āni ura), and, on the other hand, resolutely drive away or banish everything that is regarded as unrighteous, unethical, improper, vile and evil (agha-auguna nidarata kō)? (2).

Besides this, the virtue of having love and devotion for the lotus-like feet of Lord Sri Ram (sanēha rāmapada), which is not easily possible (i.e. difficult) even for Lord Shiva to access or have (sivahu na sugama)—who would have made it so easily accessible for those who are pious and noble at heart (sujana) by showing them how it can be actually practiced if it was not Bharat (sulabha karata kō)?

Who would have created the all wish-fulfilling Tree of Gods ("surataru") out of his own glories, good virtues and fame (srji nija jasa) to produce the desired fruits ("abhimata pharani pharata kō"; of devotion, worship, veneration, love and affection for Lord Ram that ultimately leads to emancipation and salvation of the soul) for Tulsidas (tulasī kahaṁ)?[2] (3).

[[2]Tulsidas means that for him and for all other devotees of Lord Ram, Bharat had set an example of devotion, love, surrender and service for the Lord. These virtues are like the fruits of the Kalpa Tree, the Tree of Gods, that fulfil all spiritual needs of the seeker.]

(6 / 13)

सुनि रन घायल लषन परे हैं।
स्वामिकाज संग्राम सुभटसों लोहे ललकारि लरे हैं।। 1।।
सुवन–सोक, संतोष सुमित्रहि, रघुपति–भगति बरे हैं।

छिन–छिन गात सुखात, छिनहिं छिन हुलसत होत हरे हैं।। 2।।
कपिसों कहति सुभाय, अंबके अंबक अंबु भरे हैं।
रघुनंदन बिनु बंधु कुअवसर, जद्यपि धनु दुसरे हैं।। 3।।
'तात ! जाहु कपि सँग', रिपुसूदन उठि कर जोरि खरे हैं।
प्रमुदित पुलकि पैंत पूरे जनु बिधिबस सुढर ढरे हैं।। 4।।
अंब–अनुजगति लखि पवनज–भरतादि गलानि गरे हैं।
तुलसी सब समुझाय मातु तेहि समय सचेत करे हैं।। 5।।

(6/13)

suni rana ghāyala laṣana parē haiṁ.
svāmikāja saṅgrāma subhaṭasōṁ lōhē lalakāri larē haiṁ.. 1..
suvana-sōka, santōṣa sumitrahi, raghupati-bhagati barē haiṁ.
china-china gāta sukhāta, chinahiṁ china hulasata hōta harē haiṁ.. 2..
kapisōṁ kahati subhāya, ambakē ambaka ambu bharē haiṁ.
raghunandana binu bandhu ku'avasara, jadyapi dhanu dusarē haiṁ.. 3..
'tāta! jāhu kapi samm̆ga', ripusūdana uṭhi kara jōri kharē haiṁ.
pramudita pulaki painta pūrē janu bidhibasa suḍhara ḍharē haiṁ.. 4..
amba-anujagati lakhi pavanaja-bharatādi galāni garē haiṁ.
tulasī saba samujhāya mātu tēhi samaya sacēta karē haiṁ.. 5..

Hanuman meets Laxman's Mother Sumitra

Verse no. 6/13—Sumitra, the mother of Laxman, heard (the news) that Laxman is lying wounded in the battle-field, and that he had faught valiantly with the warrior of the opposite side, i.e. Meghnad, for the sake of his Lord (Sri Ram) (1).

At this information, she was indeed extremely anguished and worried at the condition of her son, albeit at the same time she felt happy and satisfied that he (Laxman) has accepted Raghupati's (Sri Ram's) devotion[1].

[[1]To wit, Sumitra was glad that her son Laxman has obeyed her advice that she gave him at the time of departure for the forest. He has lived upto her expectation by faithfully and loyally serving his Lord Sri Ram like a true devotee and follower should do, and to prove his faith and love for Lord Ram he has cheerfully made the supreme sacrifice by laying down his life. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 74—to Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 75 wherein Sumitra has very explicitly advised Laxman to treat Lord Ram and Sita as his father and mother respectively, and make all sincere efforts in good faith to serve them to the best of his ability. So when she heard from Hanuman's accounts that Laxman was lying mortally wounded because he had fought for the Lord's cause, she felt very contented in her heart.]

She was swaying between two extremes of emotions: at one moment her body got agitated and shivered by overwhelming sorrows and grief (at the ominous news that Hanuman had brought, especially that her dear son Laxman was mortally wounded and on the verge of death), and the next moment she recovered herself and regained her poise, feeling cheerful and proud (about her son Laxman and his noble

deeds, that he has lived upto her expectations and stood fast in his vows of love and loyalty for Sri Ram). (2).

Then, mother Sumitra had tears in her eyes and said to Hanuman earnestly, 'It is because of grave misfortunes and malignant forces of destiny that Sri Ram has been separated from his brother (Laxman) though both of them (Sri Ram and Laxman) had their bows with them[2] (3).

[[2]The two brothers were well armed and were competent enough to protect themselves and each other. They had defeated most fearsome demons while protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra. It is only because of malicious and unfavourable stars that Laxman is dying and his brother Sri Ram could not protect him from getting harmed.]

[Then she turned towards Shatrughan and said—] 'Dear! You go with Hanuman!' Immediately on hearing it, Shatrughan stood up with hands joined together at the palms (as a gesture of humble submission and a signal that he fully agrees with what has been ordered him to do). His body was overcome with thrill, and he was so glad as if all the bets had been set in his favour[3] (4).

[[3]Shatrughan was raring to go with Hanuman and help Lord Ram in the war, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the Lord and replacing Laxman should it so happen that he is not revived. He saw in this his chance to prove that his love and affection and loyalty for Lord Ram was no less even by a whit than that of Bharat or Laxman.]

Seeing such a condition of the mother and the younger brother (Shatrughan), both Hanuman as well as Bharat became contrite and remorseful.

Tulsidas says that the mother, on her part, when she observed the depressed mental state of the three (Hanuman, Bharat and Shatrughan), immediately recovered her self and overcame her emotions. She acted prudently now, and alerted the three about the urgency of the task at hand[4]. (5).

[[4]When Sumitra saw that Bharat, Hanuman and Shatrughan have become overcome with grief and sorrows, thereby losing their wits, their sense of judgement, prudence and wisdom in a surging tide of gloomy emotions, she immediately recovered her composure and decided to act wisely. She realized that what she had ordered, that Shatrughan should go with Hanuman to join the battle at Lanka, was most impractical and grave in its import. There are a variety of reasons why it was improper and rash to send Shatrughan away to Lanka because any reckless action could be ruinous and detrimental to the welfare of all, specially when a calamitous war was looming over Sri Ram.

Shatrughan had been taking care of the affairs of the kingdom of Ayodhya during the long period of absence of Bharat who was living in self-imposed exile as a recluse, and Lord Ram who was away in the forest. Such impulsive actions as sending Shatrughan to a far away land at so short a notice would leave Ayodhya without a care-taker, and it would result in total chaos and anarchy.

Then there was the question of his actually traveling to Lanka: while Hanuman could fly in the sky, how will Shatrughan go? If he is made to mount on Hanuman's shoulders, that would only add an additional weight on him because he has to carry the mountain too. It will also slow him down, and it would be suicidial because it was necessary that he swiftly reached Lanka so that the herb could be administered to Laxman before dawn. Hanuman would be in a quandary: he would not be able to

refuse to carry Shatrughan on his back as it would seem very bad and impolite, but it would be very cumbersome for him to carry an addional weight of Shatrughan, in addition to the weight of the great mountain that he was already bearing in his hand, who is sure to be heavily armed and carry some extra weapons and arsensel for Lord Ram and Laxman as the two brothers had nothing but their bows and arrows at the time. So that practically rules out any way by which Shatrughan can reach Lanka in the short course of the remaining time of the night.

Secondly, she loved Shatrughan and Bharat no less than she loved Sri Ram and Laxman. She did not wish to take the fateful, horrific risk of sending another son to face an uncertain future, for the outcome of the ongoing war at Lanka was yet unknown and unpredictable—as all wars are!

This explains why Sumitra immediately changed her decision of sending Shatrughan with Hanuman. That Shatrughan remained in Ayodhya and didn't go to Lanka is a fact, and in the context of this verse and especially stanza no. 4, this is the only plausible explanation for it.]

(6 / 14)

बिनय सुनायबी परि पाय।
कहौं कहा, कपीस ! तुम्ह सुचि, सुमति, सुहृद सुभाय।। 1।।
स्वामि–संकट–हेतु हौं जड़ जननि जनम्यो जाय।
समौ पाइ, कहाइ सेवक घट्यो तौ न सहाय।। 2।।
कहत सिथिल सनेह भो, जनु धीर घायल घाय।
भरत–गति लखि मातु सब रहि ज्यौं गुड़ी बिनु बाय।। 3।।
भेंट कहि कहिबो, कह्यो यों कठिन–मानस माय।
'लाल ! लोने लषन–सहित सुललित लागत नाँय'।। 4।।
देखि बंधु–सनेह, अंब सुभाउ, लषन–कुठाय।
तपत तुलसी तरनि–त्रासुक एहि नये तिहुँ ताय।। 5।।

(6/14)

binaya sunāyabī pari pāya.
kahauṁ kahā, kapīsa! tumha suci, sumati, suhr̥da subhāya.. 1..
svāmi-saṅkaṭa-hētu hauṁ jaṛa janani janamyō jāya.
samau pā'i, kahā'i sēvaka ghaṭyō tau na sahāya.. 2..
kahata sithila sanēha bhō, janu dhīra ghāyala ghāya.
bharata-gati lakhi mātu saba rahi jyauṁ guṛī binu bāya.. 3..
bhēṇṭa kahi kahibō, kahyō yōṁ kaṭhina-mānasa māya.
'lāla! lōnē laṣana-sahita sulalita lāgata nām̆ya'.. 4..
dēkhi bandhu-sanēha, amba subhā'u, laṣana-kuṭhāya.
tapata tulasī tarani-trāsuka ēhi nayē tihum̆ tāya.. 5..

Verse no. 6/14—[Bharat said to Hanuman—] 'Oh Kapis (i.e. Hanuman, the lord of the monkeys)! When you reach Lord Ram, please catch hold of his feet (on my behalf) and convey my prayer to him. What more can I tell you? You are by nature of a pure and wise mind and intellect (suci), have wisdom (i.e. maturity of thought: sumati), and are of an amiable, friendly, brotherly and affable temperament (suhṛda subhāya) (1).

My wicked mother (Kaikeyi) has given birth to me to give (or to be the cause of) a lot of trouble to the Lord (Sri Ram)[1]. How unfortunate and evil-lucked I am that when the time came to help the Lord, I could not provide any service to him inspite of being called his servant (here meaning, his 'younger brother' and 'not a menial servant').' (2).

[[1]Bharat refers to Lord Ram going to the forest and suffering from all the subsequent horrors because of his wicked mother Kaikeyi who was so extremely selfish that she wished to make her son, Bharat, the king, and in her evil over-zeal she inflicted uncountable miseries on Lord Ram, and Laxman and Sita were too dragged into the vortex of this misery by the virtue of their love for the Lord. Bharat laments that in the end it was he who proved to be the villain of the piece, albeit he was absolutely innocent and had no inkling of his mother's vicious nature till it was too late.]

Saying thus, he became was overcome with emotions of love and affection, benumbed like a person, no matter how brave and valiant and courageous he is, becomes weary and lacking in energy due to his serious wounds[2].

Seeing this condition of Bharat, all the mothers[3] became distraught and heavy at heart like a kite without an air current to support it (3).

[[2]A brave warrior's spirit is not broken by the physical injuries he suffers during battle, but grave injuries to the body do indeed sap his energy and vigour, and makes him physically crippled and unable to continue the fight. This is what is meant by getting 'weary due to wounds'.

[3]The 'other mothers' here are Sumitra, the mother of Laxman, and Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram. It should be noted that the third mother, i.e. Kaikeyi, was shunned by Bharat for the rest of his life. {Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/37.}

Hence, Kaikeyi was forced to hide her face in obscurity for life in some inner part of the royal palace. It were Sumitra and Kaushalya who came rushing to the spot when the word spread that Bharat has met some messenger of Lord Ram.]

[Then Kaushalya, mother of Lord Ram, said—] 'Dear (Hanuman)! Meet Sri Ram and tell him that his stern hearted (emotionless) mother has said these words—"Oh son! Your name looks adorable only when conjoined (i.e. in conjunction, accompanied) with that of my lovely son Laxman.[4]" (4).

[[4]She means that you will be adored, admired or welcomed only when you come back to Ayodhya with Laxman by your side. Conversely, it means that it would be better if Sri Ram does not show his face in Ayodhya without Laxman who has laid down his life for him.

To Lord Ram's credit, this is exactly what he said while lamenting for Laxman. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-17 that precede Doha no. 61.]

Tulsidas observes that Hanuman, who could torment even the scorching sun[5], was himself now being tormented by the three sorrows originating from the surge of affection on part of Bharat (and his frustration and despair), at the statement of the mother (that Sri Ram sould not return without Laxman), and at the thought of Laxman's wound (and the chances of his revival) (5).

[[5]This alludes to his childhood episode when he had lunged forward to eat the sun thinking it to be a ripe red fruit in the sky.]

(6/15)

हृदय घाउ मेरे पीर रघुबीरै।
पाइ सजीवन, जागि कहत यों प्रेमपुलकि बिसराय सरीरै।। 1।।
मोहि कहा बूझत पुनि पुनि, जैसे पाठ–अरथ–चरचा कीरै।
सोभा–सुख, छति–लाहु भूपकहँ, केवल कांति–मोल हीरै।। 2।।
तुलसी सुनि सौमित्रि–बचन सब धरि न सकत धीरौ धीरै।
उपमा राम–लषनकी प्रीतिकी क्यों दीजै खीरै–नीरै।। 3।।

(6/15)

hr̥daya ghā'u mērē pīra raghubīrai.
pā'i sajīvana, jāgi kahata yōṁ prēmapulaki bisarāya sarīrai.. 1..
mōhi kahā būjhata puni puni, jaisē pāṭha-aratha-caracā kīrai.
sōbhā-sukha, chati-lāhu bhūpakahaṁ, kēvala kānti-mōla hīrai.. 2..
tulasī suni saumitri-bacana saba dhari na sakata dhīrau dhīrai.
upamā rāma-laṣanakī prītikī kyōṁ dījai khīrai-nīrai.. 3..

Laxman's Revival

Verse no. 6/15—[Coming back to the battle-field, Tulsidas resumes his narration—] When Laxman was revived back to life after administration of the Sanjivini herb and asked how he felt, he forgot about any pain or wound afflicting his body, and said cheerfully with an emotionally thrilled body, 'My heart has suffered only the wound, but its pain is actually felt by Raghubir (Sri Ram)[1] (1).

[[1]The Shakti or the energized arrow that Meghnad had shot, had hit Laxman on the chest, near his heart. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 54.

Though he was revived by the herb, the physical wound would take some time to heal and its scar to blend with the skin tissue. It cannot be expected that is healed by magic as if nothing had happened. The healing process of the physical wound and its scar would take some time.

What Laxman means here is that albeit the physical wound was suffered by him, the real pain in the form of extreme shock and profound agony and grief was suffered by Lord Ram.

Laxman says that as far as he is concerned, nothing serious has happened; getting injured in the battle-field is a part of a warriors life. What actually matters is this trifling issue was the cause of so much pain and agony for Lord Ram.]

Even as someone asks a parrot about the meaning of the words it is repeatedly pronouncing, so why do you all repeatedly pester me with such irrelevant querries[2]?

[[2]A parrot learns the words by heart and chatters incessantly what he has learnt, but he does not understand an iota of it. So, when everyone around him asked him how he felt, he got annoyed. Laxman says all his feelings rest with Sri Ram; his personal feelings have no consequence. No one understands the special emotional bond of love and affection that he and Lord Ram share. It is clear in the next instance—]

The richness, glamour, magnificence, majesty and joy that is associated with the possession of a diamond, or the pain of loss and the pride of getting or acquiring it belongs to the king (who wears or possesses it), whilst only the intrinsic value and glitter belongs to the diamond[3] (2).

[[3]Here, Lord Ram is like the 'king', and Laxman is like the 'diamond'. It is the king who knows the real worth of the diamond. If it is rare and priceless, the king will exult when he possesses it, and if he loses it he would go into severe bout of dejection and despair, and would barter any thing he possesses if someone brings that diamond to him.

The diamond does not know its value or worth or qualities or characteristics; it is the king who knows them. It is the king who feels the pain of losing a priceless diamond; it is he who rejoices on getting it. The diamond only serves the king mutely by adding to his joys and pleasures and splendour and grandeur when he wears it; it only exacerbates his agony and pain when it is lost.

Similarly, Laxman's value is known and measured only by Lord Ram: it is he only who knows how important Laxman is in his life. No one else can judge it.]

Tulsidas says that hearing such emotional words of Laxman that were marked by humility, modesty and submission, even those who are renowned for their patience, courage and fortitude would be moved and become emotional and sentimental.

Forsooth and in all sooth, the bond of love and affection betwixt Lord Ram and Laxman is so intangible and profound that no comparison can be made; nay, not even with 'water and milk' (khīrai-nīrai)[4] (3).

[[4]Usually poets and bards compare the inseparable relationship between two individuals by comparing it with the relationship of water with milk. They are both inseparable from one another. But sometimes this comparison fails: for water can be drained out or evaporated from milk, leaving only the latter's solidified constituents.

But in the case of Lord Ram and Laxman, the bond is so strong and abiding and unbreakable that either both live together, or none of them lives.]

विजयी राम

राग कान्हरा

(6 / 16)

राजत राम काम–सत–सुंदर।
रिपु रन जीति अनुज सँग सोभित, फेरत चाप–बिसिष बनरुह–कर।। 1।।

स्याम सरीर रुचिर श्रम–सीकर, सोनित–कन बिच बीच मनोहर।
जनु खद्योत–निकर, हरिहित–गन, भ्राजत मरकत–सैल–सिखरपर।। 2।।
घायल बीर बिराजत चहुँ दिसि, हरषित सकल रिच्छ अरु बनचर।
कुसुमित किंसुक–तरु समूह महँ, तरुन तमाल बिसाल बिटप बर।। 3।।
राजिव–नयन बिलोकि कृपा करि, किए अभय मुनि–नाग, बिबुध–नर।
तुलसिदास यह रूप अनूपम हिय–सरोज बसि दुसह बिपतिहर।। 4।।

vijayī rāma

rāga kānharā

(6/16)

rājata rāma kāma-sata-sundara.
ripu rana jīti anuja samm̐ga sōbhita, phērata cāpa-bisiṣa banaruha-kara.. 1..
syāma sarīra rucira śrama-sīkara, sōnita-kana bica bīca manōhara.
janu khadyōta-nikara, harihita-gana, bhrājata marakata-saila-sikharapara.. 2..
ghāyala bīra birājata cahum̐ disi, haraṣita sakala riccha aru banacara.
kusumita kinsuka-taru samūha maham̐, taruna tamāla bisāla biṭapa bara.. 3..
rājiva-nayana bilōki kr̥pā kari, ki'ē abhaya muni-nāga, bibudha-nara.
tulasidāsa yaha rūpa anūpama hiya-sarōja basi dusaha bipatihara.. 4..

Victorious Lord Ram

Verse no. 6/16—[As had been already noted in an introduction to verse no. 6/5 herein above, Tulsidas has preferred to skip the details of the War of Lanka in this book Geetawali. The probable reasons are also outlined therein.

So, he comes straight to the point of time when the demons were defeated and Lord Ram won the war. This point of time in the story—Lord Ram's victory—is also narrated in (i) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 6/56—6/58; and (ii) Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 103 along with Chaupai line nos. 10-11 and Chanda line nos. 1-8 that precede it.]

Having conquered his enemy, victorious Lord Ram is present in the battle-field with his brother Laxman. He appears most charming and magnificent like thousands of Kamdeos (cupids) appearing in his person at once. He is moving his hands on his bows and arrows (1).

Sweat drops interspersed with blood drops are glistening on his dark complexioned body as if red creepers look magnificent surrounded by hordes of glow-worms on the summit of Mt. Markat Mani (i.e. a mountain of emerald)[1] (2).

[[1]Here, the dark complexioned body of Lord Ram is likened to Mt. Markat Mani; the streams of blood flowing from his body to the 'creepers of red colour' that drape the sides of this mountain; and the glistening sweat drops to the 'glow worms'.]

Wounded warriors are sitting around him. All those monkeys and bears are extremely happy. Lord Ram looks as magnificent as a large and young but huge Tamaal Tree (taruna tamāla bisāla biṭapa bara) amongst smaller Kinskuk Trees that have blooming flowers (kusumita kinsuka-taru samūha mahaṁ)[2] (3).

[[2]The "Tamaal tree" is the Black Catechu tree (Xanthocymus epictorius); the "Kinsuk tree" is the Butea Frondosa tree which bears beautiful flowers.

Here, Lord Ram is likened to the Black Catechu tree because of his dark complexion, and the monkeys who sit around him in a jubilant mood to the countless flowers that bloom on the comparatively smaller tree called Butea Frondosa.]

At that moment, that lotus-eyed Lord glanced at the gods, hermits, legendary serpents and men, and made them fearless[3].

Tulsidas prays that this vision of peerless beauty which vanquishes all mighty troubles of the heart and torments of the mind, should ever reside in his heart (4).

[[3]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 2; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 103.]

अयोध्यामें प्रतीक्षा

राग आसावरी

(6/17)

अवधि आजु किधौं औरो दिन ह्वैहै।
चढ़ि धौरहर बिलोकि दखिन दिसि, बूझ धौं पथिक कहाँते आये वै हैं।।1।।
बहुरि बिचारि हारि हिय सोचति, पुलकि गात लागे लोचन च्वैहैं।
निज बासरनि बरष पुरवैगो बिधि, मेरे तहाँ करत कठिन कृत व्कैहैं।। 2।।
बन रघुबीर, मातु गृह जीवति, निलज प्रान सुनि सुनि सुख स्वैहैं।
तुलसिदास मो–सी कठोर–चित कुलिस सालभंजनि को ह्वै है।। 3।।

ayōdhyāmēṁ pratīkṣā

rāga āsāvarī

(6/17)

avadhi āju kidhauṁ aurō dina hvaihai.
caḍhi dhaurahara bilōki dakhina disi, būjha dhauṁ pathika kahāṁtē āyē vai haiṁ..1..
bahuri bicāri hāri hiya sōcati, pulaki gāta lāgē lōcana cvaihaiṁ.
nija bāsarani baraṣa puravaigō bidhi, mērē tahāṁ karata kaṭhina kṛta vkaihaiṁ.. 2..
bana raghubīra, mātu gṛha jīvati, nilaja prāna suni suni sukha svaihaiṁ.
tulasidāsa mō-sī kaṭhōra-cita kulisa sālabhaṁjani kō hvaihai.. 3..

Verse no. 6/17—When the days of exile were almost over, mother Kaushalya became very anxious about Lord Ram's return. She broods and became pensive. She wonders: 'Why, does the period of exile end today, or are some more days left?'

Then going to the roof of her palace and looking southwards, she sights some pedestrians approaching the city. Seeing them, she orders one of her attandents to find out from where those people are coming (1).

Then realising that the last day of the exile period is yet to come, her heart fills with gloom and despair, her body is thrilled, tears roll down her eyes, she feels distraught and speaks poignantly to herself, 'It appears that the Vidhata (the Creator Brahma) shall count those fourteen years according to his own calculations (because, Brahma's days are equivalent to hundreds of thousands of earth days, and so it appears that the days are getting longer and longer, and the wait for Lord Ram seems not to come to an end).

Verily, it's a very long time for me to wait any longer (2).

Oh, "Ram is in the forest and his mother enjoys the comforts of home"—now this shameless life of mine has to bear this ignominy for the rest of my life! Well, where else can there be a heartless and emotionless statue like that of me?' (3).

(6 / 18)

आली, अब राम–लषन कित ह्वै हैं।
चित्रकूट तज्यौ तबतें न लही सुधि, बधू–समेत कुसल सुत द्वै हैं।। 1।।
बारि बयारि, बिषम हिम–आतप सहि बिनु बसन भूमितल स्वै हैं।
कंद–मूल, फल–फूल असन बन, भोजन समय मिलत कैसे वैहैं।। 2।।
जिन्हहि बिलोकि सोचिहैं लता–द्रुम, खग–मृग–मुनि लोचन जल च्वैहैं।
तुलसिदास तिन्हकी जननी हौं, मो–सी निठुर–चित औरो कहुँ ह्वैहैं।। 3।।

(6/18)

ālī, aba rāma-laṣana kita hvai haiṁ.
citrakūṭa tajyau tabatēṁ na lahī sudhi, badhū-samēta kusala suta dvai haiṁ.. 1..
bāri bayāri, biṣama hima-ātapa sahi binu basana bhūmitala svai haiṁ.
kanda-mūla, phala-phūla asana bana, bhōjana samaya milata kaisē vaihaiṁ.. 2..
jinhahi bilōki sōcihaiṁ latā-druma, khaga-mrga-muni lōcana jala cvaihaiṁ.
tulasidāsa tinhakī jananī hauṁ, mō-sī niṭhura-cita aurō kahuṁ hvaihaiṁ.. 3..

Verse no. 6/18—[Kaushalya addresses one of her close confidantes—] 'Oh Friend! Where would Ram and Laxman be at this moment (do you have any idea about it)? Ever since they left Chitrakoot, there is no news or information about them. Are my two sons alright with my daughter-in-law (Sita)[1]? (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/41—2/42.]

They must be coping (bearing) with the vagaries of Nature: rain, wind, and extremes of cold and heat; they have no proper clothes to wear, and would be compelled to lie down on the bare ground without any cover.

In the forest, only roots, stems, fruits and some varieties of edible flowers are available to eat, and that too are not available at all times (and easily), do they? (2).

Even creepers and trees would be anguished and remorseful seeing their pathetic condition, while the birds, the animals, the sages and the hermits shed tears at their miseries and woes. But the greatest irony is this: I am their mother! Alas! Is there anyone as stone-hearted as me? [To wit, even trees, animals and birds feel their pain; even sages and hermits shed tears for them. And here I am, their unfortunate mother—my eyes are dry of tears (because all have dried up), and my heart has turned into a stone (as it is benumbed with grief) so much so that I can't even wail and weep).]' (3).

राग सोरठ

(6/19)

बैठी सगुन मनावति माता।
कब ऐहैं मेरे बाल कुसल घर, कहहु, काग ! फुरि बाता।। 1।।
दूध–भातकी दोनी दैहौं, सोने चोंच मढ़ैहौं।
जब सिय–सहित बिलोकि नयन भरि राम–लषन उर लैहौं।। 2।।
अवधि समीप जानि जननी जिय अति आतुर अकुलानी।
गनक बोलाइ, पाँय परि पूछति प्रेम मगन मृदु बानी।। 3।।
तेहि अवसर कोउ भरत निकटतें समाचार लै आयो।
प्रभु–आगमन सुनत तुलसी मनो मीन मरत जल पायो।। 4।।

rāga sōraṭha

(6/19)

baiṭhī saguna manāvati mātā.
kaba aihaiṁ mērē bāla kusala ghara, kahahu, kāga! phuri bātā.. 1..
dūdha-bhātakī dōnī daihauṁ, sōnē cōn̄ca maṛhaihauṁ.
jaba siya-sahita bilōki nayana bhari rāma-laṣana ura laihauṁ.. 2..
avadhi samīpa jāni jananī jiya ati ātura akulānī.
ganaka bōlā'i, pāmm̐ya pari pūchati prēma magana mr̥du bānī.. 3..
tēhi avasara kō'u bharata nikaṭatēṁ samācāra lai āyō.

prabhu-āgamana sunata tulasī manō mīna marata jala pāyō.. 4..

The Wait in Ayodhya for Lord Ram's return -III

Verse no. 6/19—[Mother Kaushalya sights a crow and talks with it. It is believed that when one eagerly awaits some news about a dear person and a crow comes to call and begins to crow, there is surely some good news coming in. It is an auspicious omen.]

The mother looks for good omens. She says, 'Oh crow! Tell me the truth: when shall my children come back home safely? (1).

When I embrace my beloved Ram-Sita and Laxman and see them till my eyes are satisfied (i.e. see them to my heart's content), I shall feed you milk and rice, and get your beak decorated (plated) with gold.' (2).

Then as the final days of exile draw nearer, she summons a soothsayer (an astrologer), and falling at his feet, overwhelmed as she was with sadness and emotions, she asks him to prophesize when Lord Ram is going to come back (3).

Just at that time a messenger arrived from Bharat's place with the news of Lord Ram's arrival.

Tulsidas says that as soon as she heard about Ram's arrival from his mouth, her condition was like a fish, on the verge of dying, but being restored to water just at the last moment (4).

राग गौरी

(6/20)

छेमकरी ! बलि, बोलि सुबानी।
कुसल छेम सिय राम–लषन कब ऐहैं, अंब ! अवध राजधानी।। 1।।
ससिमुखि, कुंकुम–बरनि, सुलोचनि, मोचनि सोचनि बेद बखानी।
देवि ! दया करि देहि दरसफल, जोरि पानि बिनवहिं सब रानी।। 2।।
सुनि सनेहमय बचन, निकट है, मंजुल मंडल कै मड़रानी।
सुभ मंगल आनंद गगन–धुनि अकनि–अकनि उर–जरनि जुड़ानी।। 3।।
फरकन लगे सुअंग बिदिसि दिसि, मन प्रसन्न, दुख–दसा सिरानी।
करहिं प्रनाम सप्रेम पुलकि तनु, मानि बिबिध बलि सगुन सयानी।। 4।।
तेहि अवसर हनुमान भरतसों कही सकल कल्यान–कहानी।
तुलसिदास सोइ चाह सजीवनि बिषम बियोग ब्यथा बड़ि भानी।। 5।।

rāga gaurī

(6/20)

chēmakarī! bali, bōli subānī.
kusala chēma siya rāma-laṣana kaba aihaiṁ, amba! avadha rājadhānī.. 1..
sasimukhi, kuṅkuma-barani, sulōcani, mōcani sōcani bēda bakhānī.
dēvi! dayā kari dēhi darasaphala, jōri pāni binavahiṁ saba rānī.. 2..
suni sanēhamaya bacana, nikaṭa hvai, manjula maṇḍala kai maṛarānī.
subha maṅgala ānanda gagana-dhuni akani-akani ura-jarani juṛānī.. 3..
pharakana lagē su'aṅga bidisi disi, mana prasanna, dukha-dasā sirānī.
karahiṁ pranāma saprēma pulaki tanu, māni bibidha bali saguna sayānī.. 4..
tēhi avasara hanumāna bharatasōṁ kahī sakala kalyāna-kahānī.
tulasidāsa sō'i cāha sajīvani biṣama biyōga byathā baḍi bhānī.. 5..

The Wait in Ayodhya for Lord Ram's return –IV
(Good Omen of the Red-faced Kite)

Verse no. 6/20—'Oh Chēmakarī (a red faced kite)! I sacrifice myself on you! Oh mother ("amba")! Tell me with your auspicious and sweet voice when will Sita, Ram and Laxman come back hale and hearty to their capital city of Ayodhya[1]! (1).

[[1]Chēmakarī is a bird which when sighted and heard is considered very auspicious, a portender of good fortunes and happy tidings, and its sighting is a good omen.]

Oh Goddess (dēvi)! Your face is like the moon (i.e. beautiful, charming, attractive), your countenance is red like 'Sindoor' (red colour put by women on the head between parted hairs and as a dot on the forehead as a sign of auspiciousness), and you have beautiful eyes.

The Vedas have described you as the one who can give relief (freedom, succour) from all sorts of sorrows, agonies, worries and troubles). So please be kind and gracious to give us the benefit of your 'Darshan' (auspicious sighting) and its attendent rewards (in the form of our seeing Ram, Sita and Laxman once again).'

All the queens pray to the bird in this manner (2).

Hearing their affectionate prayers (or earnest words), that Kite came nearer and began circulating overhead in an auspicious circle. Hearing its auspicious, joyful voice which portended good omens, the heat of torments and woes in the heart of the queens subsided (3).

Everyone in Ayodhya observed the Kite flying in a circle above the city. This kindled hope and joy amongst all the people. Everywhere, in all the directions, people experienced that parts of their bodies fluttered as an auspicious sign of some good that was about to happen. This filled their hearts and minds with joy and renewed hope, ending their sense of gloom and distress.

Meanwhile, Kaushalya and other clever women like her grabbed on the hope that the auspicious signs provided them, and they made liberal vows and abundant promises of doing meritorious deeds (such as making sacrifices, charities, giving alms and donations etc.) if these signs actually fructify and bear results. They became thrilled, and prayed and bowed their heads to their respective deities and gods. (4).

Just about this time, Hanuman came and conveyed all the good, happy and auspicious news (about Lord Ram's arrival).

Tulsidas says that this 'Sanjivani herb' (in the shape of the good news of arrival of Lord Ram with Laxman and Sita) proved to be the rejuvenator of Bharat, and it destroyed all the terrible agonies, sorrows, anguish and torments caused by his separation from Lord Sri Ram[2] (5).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, all the verses that precede Doha no. 3.]

अयोध्यामें आनन्द

राग धनाश्री

(6/21)

सुनियत सागर सेतु बँधायो।
कोसलपतिकी कुसल सकल सुधि कोउ इक दूत भरत पहँ ल्यायो।। 1।।
बध्यो बिराध, त्रिसिर, खर–दूषन सूर्पनखाको रूप नसायो।
हति कबंध, बल–अंध बालि दलि, कृपासिंधु सुग्रीव बसायो।। 2।।
सरनागत अपनाइ बिभीषन, रावन सकुल समूल बहायो।
बिबुध–समाज निवाजि, बाँह दै, बंदिछोर बर बिरद कहायो।। 3।।
एक–एकसों समाचार सुनि नगर लोग जहँ तहँ सब धायो।
घन–धुनि अकनि मुदित मयूर–ज्यों, बूड़त जलधि पार–सो पायो।। 4।।
'अवधि आजु' यौं कहत परसपर, बेगि बिमान निकट पुर आयो।
उतरि अनुज–अनुगनि समेत प्रभु गुर–द्विजगन सिर नायो।। 5।।
जो जेहि जोग राम तेहि बिधि मिलि, सबके मन अति मोद बढ़ायो।
भेंटी मातु, भरत भरतानुज, क्यों कहौं प्रेम अमित अनमायो।। 6।।
तेहि दिन मृनिबृंद अनंदित तुरत तिलकको साज सजायो।
महाराज रघुबंस–नाथको सादर तुलसिदास गुन गयो।। 7।।

ayōdhyāmēṁ ānanda

rāga dhanāśrī

(6/21)

suniyata sāgara sētu bam̐dhāyō.
kōsalapatikī kusala sakala sudhi kō'u ika dūta bharata paham̐ lyāyō.. 1..
badhyō birādha, trisira, khara-dūṣana sūrpanakhākō rūpa nasāyō.
hati kabandha, bala-andha bāli dali, kr̥pāsindhu sugrīva basāyō.. 2..
saranāgata apanā'i bibhīṣana, rāvana sakula samūla bahāyō.
bibudha-samāja nivāji, bām̐ha dai, bandichōra bara birada kahāyō.. 3..
ēka-ēkasōṁ samācāra suni nagara lōga jaham̐ taham̐ saba dhāyō.
ghana-dhuni akani mudita mayūra-jyōṁ, būṛata jaladhi pāra-sō pāyō.. 4..
'avadhi āju' yauṁ kahata parasapara, bēgi bimāna nikaṭa pura āyō.

utari anuja-anugani samēta prabhu gura-dvijagana sira nāyō.. 5..
jō jēhi jōga rāma tēhi bidhi mili, sabakē mana ati mōda baṛhāyō.
bhēṇṭī mātu, bharata bharatānuja, kyōṁ kahauṁ prēma amita anamāyō.. 6..
tēhi dina mr̥nibr̥nda anandita turata tilakakō sāja sajāyō.
mahārāja raghubansa-nāthakō sādara tulasidāsa guna gayō.. 7..

Rejoicing & Celebrations in Ayodhya when Lord Ram returned

Verse no. 6/21—Hearing the various events and stories related to the period of Lord Ram's sojourn in the forest, the citizens of Ayodhya said, 'Why, it is heard that Lord Ram had constructed a bridge across the ocean! Some messenger had brought the news of Lord Ram's safety and welfare to Bharat (1).

It is said that Lord Ram had slayed the demons Viraadh, Khar, Dushan and Trishira; deformed or mutilated Supernakha, killed Kabandh, and subjugating the proud Baali, he has made Sugriv the king of Kiskindha (2).

Then accepting Vibhishan, who had come to seek his refuge and protection, he had destroyed Ravana (the demon king) along with his kinsmen, thereby liberating the Gods from their eternal fear of Ravana, and proved his fame as 'the liberator and protector of all' (3).'

This news spread like wildfire, and the citizens ran happily, exhilarated and joyous like a peacock is when it hears the rumbling of the rain-bearing dark clouds, or a drowning man when he find the sea-shore (4).

'Today is the last day of exile', they said, and almost as on cue, the plane[1] appeared over the sky near the city.

Disembarking from it, Lord Ram and Laxman bowed their heads to their guru Vasistha and other Brahmins[2] (5).

[[1]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 4.

The 'plane' referred to here was called "Pushpak". It belonged to Kuber, the Gods' treasurer. Ravana had snatched it from him and kept it at Lanka. When it was time to come back from Lanka, Lord Ram had requested Vibhishan to bring this air-plane so that they can quickly return to Ayodhya by the path of the sky. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 116—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 119.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 5.]

Lord Ram met all according to their standing and status and filled their heart with joy[3]. Then he met Bharat, Shatrughan and mothers[4].

Tulsidas finds no words to describe the flood of emotions, love, affections and unfathomable joy that flowed at that moment (6).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-75 that precede Doha no. 6.

Here, 'standing and status in the society' not only means the heiarchial position of a particular person in society, but also the level of his love and devotion

for the Lord as well as the depth of sorrow on separation from Lord Ram that he had experienced. However, the point to note is that the Lord met everyone with affection, and he did not discriminate between them based on their caste, creed or clan. Albeit, he showed a little bit of more affection by exchanging pleasantries with those whom the Lord felt had suffered the agony of his separation more than others.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6 that precedes Doha no. 5—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 7.]

The community of saints, sages and holy men immediately made arrangement for Lord Ram's coronation.

Tulsidas also sings the song of Lord Ram's glories, and praises him according to his ability (7).

राज्याभिषेक

राग जैतश्री

(6 / 22)

रन जीति राम राउ आए।
सानुज सदल ससीय कुसल आजु, अवध आनंद–बधाए।। 1।।
अरिपुर जारि, उजारि, मारि रिपु, बिबुध सुबास बसाए।
धरनि–धेनु, महिदेव–साधु, सबके सब सोच नसाए।। 2।।
दई लंक, थिर थपे बिभीषन, बचन–पियूष पिआए।
सुधा सींचि कपि, कृपा नगर–नर–नारि निहारि जिआए।। 3।।
मिलि गुर, बंधु, मातु, जन, परिजन, भए सकल मन भाए।
दरस–हरस दसचारि बरसके दुख पलमें बिसराए।। 4।।
बोलि सचिव सुचि, सोधि सुदिन, मुनि मंगल–साज सजाए।
महाराज–अभिषेक बरषि सुर सुमन निसान बजाए।। 5।।
लै लै भेंट नृप–अहिप–लोकपति अति सनेह सिर नाए।
पूजि, प्रीति पहिचानि राम आदरे अधिक, अपनाए।। 6।।
दान मान सनमानि जानि रुचि, जाचक जन पहिराए।
गए सोक–सर सूखि, मोद–सरिता–समुद्र गड़िराए।। 7।।
प्रभु–प्रताप–रबि अहित–अमंगल–अघ–उलूक–तम ताए।
किये बिसोक हित–कोक–कोकनद लोक सुजस सुभ छाए।। 8।।
रामराज कुलकाज सुमंगल, सबनि सबै सुख पाए।
देहिं असीस भूमिसुर प्रमुदित, प्रजा प्रमोद बढ़ायो।। 9।।
आस्रम–धरम–बिभाग बेदपथ पावन लोग चलाए।
धरम–निरत, सिय–राम–चरन–रत, मनहु राम–सिय–जाए।।10।।
कामधेनु महि, बिटप कामतरु, कोउ बिधि बाम न लाये।
ते तब, अब तुलसी तेउ जिन्ह हित सहित राम–गुन गाये।।11।।

rājyābhiṣēka

rāga jaitaśrī

(6/22)

rana jīti rāmā rā'u ā'ē.
sānuja sadala sasīya kusala āju, avadha ānanda-badhā'ē.. 1..
aripura jāri, ujāri, māri ripu, bibudha subāsa basā'ē.
dharani-dhēnu, mahidēva-sādhu, sabakē saba sōca nasā'ē.. 2..
da'ī laṅka, thira thapē bibhīṣana, bacana-piyūṣa pi'ā'ē.
sudhā sīm̐ci kapi, kr̥pā nagara-nara-nāri nihāri ji'ā'ē.. 3..
mili gura, bandhu, mātu, jana, parijana, bha'ē sakala mana bhā'ē.
darasa-harasa dasacāri barasakē dukha palamēṁ bisarā'ē.. 4..
bōli saciva suci, sōdhi sudina, muni maṅgala-sāja sajā'ē.
mahārāja-abhiṣēka baraṣi sura sumana nisāna bajā'ē.. 5..
lai lai bhēṇṭa nr̥pa-ahipa-lōkapati ati sanēha sira nā'ē.
pūji, prīti pahicāni rāma ādarē adhika, apanā'ē.. 6..
dāna māna sanamāni jāni ruci, jācaka jana pahirā'ē.
ga'ē sōka-sara sūkhi, mōda-saritā-samudra gaim̐rā'ē.. 7..
prabhu-pratāpa-rabi ahita-amaṅgala-agha-ulūka-tama tā'ē.
kiyē bisōka hita-kōka-kōkanada lōka sujasa subha chā'ē.. 8..
rāmarāja kulakāja sumaṅgala, sabani sabai sukha pā'ē.
dēhiṁ asīsa bhūmisura pramudita, prajā pramōda baṛhāyō.. 9..
āsrama-dharama-bibhāga bēdapatha pāvana lōga calā'ē.
dharama-nirata, siya-rāma-carana-rata, manahu rāma-siya-jā'ē..10..
kāmadhēnu mahi, biṭapa kāmataru, kō'u bidhi bāma na lāyē.
tē taba, aba tulasī tē'u jinha hita sahita rāma-guna gāyē..11..

Coronation of Lord Sri Ram as the Monarch of Ayodhya-I

Verse no. 6/22—[Verse nos. 6/22—6/23 describe the celebrations in Ayodhya when Lord Ram returned at the end of his fourteen years of forest exile period and achieving victory in his Lanka campaign. Preparations were made to crown him as the Monarch of the great kingdom of Ayodhya.

The present verse no. 6/22, however, briefly describes these events: of the Lord's victory at Lanka and its effects (stanza nos. 1-3), his warm welcome in Ayodhya, the celebrations that marked his arrival and his coronation as the kingdom's Monarch (stanza nos. 3-8), and the glory of the great kingdom over which he ruled, its prosperity, its lawful citizens, the general happiness and well-being that prevailed on the earth during his time (stanza nos. 9-11).

The same narration has been elaborately done in Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, in its Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 20 that describe the Lord's warm welcome at Ayodhya, the celebrations and his coronation; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 24 that describe the glory of the kingdom of Ayodhya, its prosperity, the excellent characters of its

citizens, and the general sense of happiness and well-being that pervaded on the serface of the earth.]

The Great King Ram has returned to Ayodhya after being victorious in the war (of Lanka). He is accompanied by his brother (Laxman), the army (of monkeys and bears), and Sita. That is why there are celebrations in Ayodhya[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 1.]

He (Lord Ram) has laid to waste and burnt to the ground the enemy's city (Lanka), thereby rehabilitating the Gods.

All the distress, torments, horrors and agonies of earth (created by the cruelty of the demons), the cows (who represented harmless and docile creatures who were tyrannized by the demons), the Brahmins (the elderly human beings and the wise ones) and Sadhus (pious and saintly people who were the object of cruelty unleashed by the demons) have been dispelled[2] (2).

[[2]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/16, stanza no. 4; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 103.]

He has given the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhishan, installing him as a permanent king of that place[3], and after reviving the dead monkeys (in the battle-field) by the rain of life-giving divine nectar (Amrit)[4], he has come and given a new lease of life by glancing lovingly, mercifully and benevolently at the men and women of Ayodhya[5] (3).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 106.

[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 114.

[5]Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 6.]

Guru (Vasistha) brothers (Bharat, Shatrughan), mothers (Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi), servants and kinsman met Lord Ram and all their wishes were fulfilled[6]—they forgot the sufferings of fourteen years of separation on seeing their Lord once again (4).

[[6]Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 5—to Doha no. 8 that describe Lord Ram meeting everyone at Ayodhya, viz. his Guru, brothers and mothers; and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 10 that specifically says that Lord Ram went and met Kaikeyi to remove traces of ill-will and help mutual rapprochement and reconciliation.]

Sage Vasistha summoned Sumantra and other ministers who had wisdom and noble thoughts, and ordered them to find out an auspicious day and time, as well as collect all the needed materials that are required for the auspicious occasion of the coronation ceremony of Lord Ram[7].

At the time of Lord Ram's coronation, Gods showered flowers and sounded trumpets and other musical instruments to celebrate this happy occasion[8] (5).

[[7]Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 10 and Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it.

[8]Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 12.]

All the invited kings, knights, land-lords, nobles, grandees and lok-patis (a title similar to a king) had assembled on the auspicious occasion of the coronation of Lord Ram. They offered various gifts on the occasion, and bowed their heads. Lord Ram gave them full due respect, and accepted their offerings[9] (6).

[9]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 3 herein below.]

Then he donated liberally and respectfully to alms-seekers and Brahmins according to their wishes and desires, satisfying them to the full[10]. This dried up their pond of distress, as it were, (i.e. all their wants and desires were removed), and the river and ocean of happiness became deep (i.e. they all became deeply contented) (7).

[10]Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 12; (ii) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 15.]

The owl of sins, vices and darkness representing malevolence and un-holiness, disappeared. The Chakva-Chakvi (a pair of birds symbolising pure quality of love) and the Lotus (symbolising pureness and detachment) became free of distress.

The fame of Lord Ram spread throughout the world[11] (8).

[11]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 22.]

{The following stanzas, nos. 9-11, describe in brief the glory and the majesty of the reign of Lord Ram. Refer also to: (a) Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/1; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20— to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 24.}

In the reign of Lord Ram, the entire world remained holy and incorrupt. All the living beings enjoyed all possible types of joy, happiness and comfort. And the Brahmins used to give their blessings for the prosperity of the citizens (9).

Lord Ram divided the society according to the sanctions of the Vedas into various ‘Ashrams’ (segments of life), and made the people follow this sanctified way of life[12]. All the people were righteous and noble in their conduct[13] as if they were all born from Lord Ram himself (10).

[12]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 20; Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 21.

There are four “Ashrams” in Hindu society. The life of a Hindu man is divided into four segments or sections of roughly twenty-five years each. These are called the ‘Ashrams’. They are the following—(a) Brahmacharya—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihasta—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihasta Ashram which is a householder’s life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and

miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and mediation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

[13]Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 21.]

The earth became like the mythical Kamdhenu cow[14] (i.e. the earth provided all the necessities of life and there was an abundance of everything), and the trees were like the mythical Kalpa Tree (the all wishful-filling tree of the Gods that gave abundance of fruits, flowers, seeds, vegetables, shade, wood for buildings, and firewood). The Creator was benevolent towards all[15].

Tulsidas says this was (with respect to stanza nos. 7-10) true not only then, but even today—all those who devote themselves selflessly to Lord Ram, get the same happiness as that prevailed in the time of Lord Ram himself (11).

[[14]Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 5; verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 5; Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/1, stanza no. 3.

[15]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/1, stanza no. 3; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 23 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-10 that precede it.]

राग टोड़ी

(6/23)

आजु अवध आनंद–बधावन, रिपु रन जीति राम आए।
सजि सुबिमान निसान बजावत मुदित देव देखन धाए।। 1।।
घर–घर चारु चौक, चंदन–मनि, मंगल–कलस सबनि साजे।
ध्वज–पताक, तोरन, बितानबर, बिबिध भाँति बाजन बाजे।। 2।।
राम–तिलक सुनि दीप दीपके नृप आए उपहार लिये।
सीयसहित आसीन सिंहासन निरखि जोहारत हरष हिये।। 3।।
मंगलगान, बेदधुनि, जयधुनि, मुनि–असीस–धुनि भुवन भरे।
बरषि सुमन सुर–सिद्ध प्रसंसत, सबके सब संताप हरे।। 4।।
राम–राज भइ कामधेनु महि, सुख संपदा लोक छाए।
जनम जनम जानकीनाथके गुनगन तुलसिदास गाये।। 5।।

rāga ṭōṛī

(6/23)

āju avadha ānanda-badhāvana, ripu rana jīti rāma ā'ē.
saji subimāna nisāna bajāvata mudita dēva dēkhana dhā'ē.. 1..
ghara-ghara cāru cauka, candana-mani, maṅgala-kalasa sabani sājē.
dhvaja-patāka, tōrana, bitānabara, bibidha bhāmṫi bājana bājē.. 2..
rāma-tilaka suni dīpa dīpakē nr̥pa ā'ē upahāra liyē.
sīyasahita āsīna sinhāsana nirakhi jōhārata haraṣa hiyē.. 3..
maṅgalagāna, bēdadhuni, jayadhuni, muni-asīsa-dhuni bhuvana bharē.
baraṣi sumana sura-sid'dha prasansata, sabakē saba santāpa harē.. 4..
rāma-rāja bha'i kāmadhēnu mahi, sukha sampadā lōka chā'ē.
janama janama jānakīnāthakē gunagana tulasidāsa gāyē.. 5..

Coronation of Lord Sri Ram as the Monarch of Ayodhya-II

Verse no. 6/23—The Great King Lord Sri Ram has won victory over the enemy and has come back. This is why there is rejoicing, merriment, festivities and celebrations in Ayodhya[1].

The Gods have decorated their beautiful aerial vehicles, and playing their musical instruments, they are rushing forward, happily and cheerfully as they are exhilarated to see him (Sri Ram) back in Ayodhya and become its King-Emperor[2] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 1; Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/23.

[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 11, ga.]

In every household of the city, attractive ritualistic designs shaped like squares and rectangles have been painted on the ground with a paste made out of sandal-wood, and these have been decorated with gems to enhance their beauty.

Everyone has put up auspicious and colourful flags, banners, buntings, arches and other celebratory paraphernalia, while various types of musical instruments are being played here and there, everywhere, in the city[3] (2).

[[3]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 9.]

Hearing about the coronation of Lord Sri Ram, kings, knights, nobles and grandees from far-off and nearby continents and islands have come, carrying with them gifts for the Lord[4].

Seeing him (Sri Ram) on throne alongside Sita, they pay their respects to him in a most delightful and cheerful manner. All of them are exhilarated in their hearts upon seeing the Lord on the throne (of Ayodhya) (3).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 6.]

All the abodes of the city, and by extension, all the corners of the realm and the world, are reverberating with auspicious and delightful songs, chanting of the Vedic hymns, and the applause and blessings of sages, hermits and seers[5].

The Gods and Siddhas (mystics, those who possess special powers) shower flowers and praise the Lord[6].

The Lord, on his part, has removed all the sorrows and miseries of everyone[7]. (4).

[[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 12.

[6]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 12; and (b) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 5.

[7]Lord Ram ensured that everyone was happy and contented. No sorrow or grief of any kind was allowed to survive in Ayodhya once the Lord ascended the throne. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 21 along with Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede it.]

The earth has become like a Kamdhenu cow[8] (i.e. it gives all the desired yields in the form of crops, fruits, flowers, rainfall, minerals, gems, wealth and prosperity) in the reign of Sri Ram, and happiness and prosperity has spread over all the Lokas (worlds)[9].

Tulsidas says that he has been singing the glories, the virtues, the great fame and the great deeds of the Lord of Sita (i.e. Sri Ram) in all the births he has taken (5).

[[8]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 11; verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 5; Uttar Kand, stanza no. 3.

[9]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/1, stanza no. 1; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 24.]

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

ओम
श्रीसीतारामाभ्यां नमः

उत्तरकाण्ड

रामराज्य

राग सोरठ

(7 / 1)

बनतें आइकै राजा राम भए भुआल।
मुदित चौदह भुअन, सब सुख सुखी सब सब काल।। 1।।
मिटे कलुष–कलेस–कुलषन, कपट–कुपथ–कुचाल।
गए दारिद, दोष दारुन, दंभ–दुरित–दुकाल।। 2।।
कामधुक महि, कामतरु तरु, उपल मनिगन लाल।
नारि–नर तेहि समय सुकृति, भरे भाग सुभाल।। 3।।
बरन–आश्रम–धरमरत, मन बचन बेष मराल।
राम–सिय–सेवक–सनेही, साधु, सुमुख, रसाल।। 4।।
राम–राज–समाज बरनत सिद्ध–सुर–दिगपाल।
सुमिरि सो तुलसी अजहुँ हिय हरष होत बिसाल।। 5।।

Uttarakāṇḍa

ōṁ

śrīsītārāmābhyāṁ namaḥ

rāmarājya

rāga sōraṭha

(7/1)

banatēṁ ā'ikai rājā rāma bha'ē bhu'āla.
mudita caudaha bhu'ana, saba sukha sukhī saba saba kāla.. 1..
miṭē kaluṣa-kalēsa-kulaṣana, kapaṭa-kupatha-kucāla.
ga'ē dārida, dōṣa dāruna, dambha-durita-dukāla.. 2..
kāmadhuka mahi, kāmataru taru, upala manigana lāla.
nāri-nara tēhi samaya sukr̥ti, bharē bhāga subhāla.. 3..
barana-āśrama-dharamarata, mana bacana bēṣa marāla.
rāma-siya-sēvaka-sanēhī, sādhu, sumukha, rasāla.. 4..
rāma-rāja-samāja baranata sid'dha-sura-digapāla.
sumiri sō tulasī ajahuṁ hiya haraṣa hōta bisāla.. 5..

The Glorious Reign of Lord Sri Ram

Verse no. 7/1—[The glory, the majesty, the magnificene, the importance and the prosperity that had spread in all the corners of the earth during the time Lord Ram ruled as the Sovereign of Ayodhya has been described in this verse no. 7/1. It is because of the greatness of his rule that was marked by all the best of qualities that makes life happy and contented on earth, as well as the excellent virtues that were practiced by all its inhabitants during the Lord's reign that it has been so lauded and remembered in the annals of history as the unique Utopian era of excellence and peace on earth, the like of which never preceded it nor proceeded it.

Refer also to: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza nos. 9-11; Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/24; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 24.]

Lord Ram became the Sovereign (of the mighty kingdom of Ayodhya) on his return from the forest[1].

In his reign, all the fourteen Bhuvans (i.e. the whole creation) became happy, and all the people lived a contented life of joy and happiness everywhere, at all times and in all possible manners and ways[2] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 1.

[2]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 5; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 20 to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 22.

The "fourteen Bhuvans" have been briefly explained in Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1, stanza no. 6.]

All types of sins, misdemeanours, distresses, bad behaviours, evil characters, deceits, corruptions, un-righteous paths, vices and viles were destroyed and eliminated, while poverty, extreme depravations, immorality, bad times etc. vanished from the scene[3] (2).

[[3]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza no. 8; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 21—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 22.]

The earth became like it was a Kamdenu cow (a wish fulfilling cow of the gods; here meaning that the earth provided all the necessities of life in great abundance), trees became akin to the Kalpataru (the all wish fulfilling tree of the gods; here meaning that the trees, plants and herbs provided all things expected of them for sustenance of life in this world—such as fruits, seeds, vegetables, flowers, shade, firewood, medicinal herbs etc.)[4], and ordinary stones became as beautiful and magnificent as if they were priceless gems.

All the men and women were lucky and blessed with good fortune; they possessed good characters and noble virtues. They did deeds that were righteous and virtuous and beyond reproach[5] (3).

[[4]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza no. 11; verse no. 7/23, stanza no. 3; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-10 that precede Doha no. 23.

[5]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 21.]

They all followed the rules that pertained to their respective Varnas and Ashrams of life ("barana-āśrama-dharamarata": duties that were assigned to them according to their castes and status in society, as well as obeying the rules of life as sanctioned by the scriptures)[6].

By virtue of leading such an auspicious way of life that was in accordance with the laws laid down by the scriptures as well as tradition (for maintaining discipline and order in the society), they were all like Swans (a bird used as a metaphor for good characters, immaculacy, purity and wisdom) in their words, thoughts and deeds.

They were devoted and faithful followers of Lord Ram and Sita[7]. They loved each other and everyone with distinction[8]. They were of pure character, did noble deeds that were beyond reproach, were healthy and courteous[9] (4).

[[6]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza no. 11; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 20; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 21.

[7]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 21.

[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 21.

[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 21 along with Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede it.]

Even the Gods, the Siddhas (mystics; persons with special spiritual powers) and the Dikpals (the guardians of the world) praised the kingdom and polity of Lord Ram[10].

Tulsidas says that by remembering those qualities, the heart is overjoyed even today[11] (5).

[[10]Refer: (a) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 7/23, stanza no. 4; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 22; Doha no. 26.

[11]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza no. 11; verse no. 7/23, stanza no. 5.]

रामरूप–वर्णन

राग ललित

(7 / 2)

भोर जानकी–जीवन जागे।
सूत मागध, प्रबीन, बेनु–बीना–धुनि द्वारे, गायक सरस राग रागे।। 1।।
स्यामल सलोने गात, आलसबस जँभात प्रिया प्रेमरस पागे।
उनींदे लोचन चारु, मुख–सुखमा–सिंगार हेरि हारे मार भूरि भागे।। 2।।
सहज सुहाई छबि, उपमा न लहैं कबि, मुदित बिलोकन लागे।
तुलसिदास निसिबासर अनूप रूप रहत प्रेम–अनुरागे।। 3।।

rāmarūpa-varṇana

rāga lalita

(7/2)

bhōra jānakī-jīvana jāgē.
sūta māgadha, prabīna, bēnu-bīnā-dhuni dvārē, gāyaka sarasa rāga rāgē.. 1..
syāmala salōnē gāta, ālasabasa jam̐bhāta priyā prēmarasa pāgē.
unīndē lōcana cāru, mukha-sukhamā-siṅgāra hēri hārē māra bhūri bhāgē.. 2..
sahaja suhā'ī chabi, upamā na lahaiṁ kabi, mudita bilōkana lāgē.
tulasidāsa nisibāsara anūpa rūpa rahata prēma-anurāgē.. 3..

The stupendous & out-of-the-world Beauty of Lord Ram

Verse no. 7/2—[In the following verse nos. 7/2—7/17 the beauty of Lord Ram, both from its physical perspective as well as from its spiritual angle has been described. A liberal use of similes and metaphors have been made in these wonderful verses that are shining examples of the poetic expertise of Goswami Tulsidas, of his scholastic aptitude and mastery over words, and the way he has employed the various aspects of Nature to describe Lord Ram as a personified form of the Cosmic Nature, being the Supreme Being himself in a human form. Hence, when one reads about the physical charm of Lord Ram, one should have a broad view and understand that one is actually reading about the wonderful form and the endless fascination of Nature, and the nature of its astounding mystery.

Besides this, another reason why Tulsidas chose to describe Lord Ram's physical beauty so elaborately has been explained in Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 10 and the note appended to it.]

The Lord of Janki (Sita; i.e. Lord Sri Ram) woke up in the morning. At that instant, the royal bards and singers began to sing his 'Birdawali' (which are the legendary glories, fames, virtues and noble characters of Lord Ram and his predecessors). Flute and the Indian lute were played at the gates (of the palace), while singers began singing ballads in pleasant lyrics (1).

The Lord's most handsome, dark complexioned body became drowsy (because he was tired after the long exile in the forest as well as the war at Lanka) even as he was soaked in love and affection for his beloved (wife Sita) as he stretched himself on the bed.

Seeing his sleepy eyes, and the glamour and majestic splendour of his face, even numerous Kamdeo-cupids felt ashamed of their own beauty, and they literally ran away to avoid embarrassment. [To wit, Lord Ram's face looked so magnificently beautiful that the patron God of beauty, passion and glamour, i.e. Kamdeo, felt himself inferior, and his pride, that is the most handsome of the Gods, vanished.] (2).

His (Sri Ram's) image is inherently magnificent, majestic, captivating and most charming. No poet can find a comparison to it. Hence (in the absence of anything similar or better to look at and compare it with), they always prefer to avoid looking here and there, and instead fix their attention on the image of Lord Ram exclusively.

Tulsidas says that in this way, they are engrossed (submerged) at all times in the pleasure and happiness that are derived in watching the matchless and most fascinating beauty and charm of the Lord (3).

राग कल्याण

(7/3)

रघुपति राजीवनयन, सोभातनु कोटि मयन,
करुनारस–अयन चयन–रूप भूप, माई।
देखो सखि अतुलित छबि, संत–कंज–कानन रबि,
गावत कर कीरति कबि–कोबिद–समुदाई।। 1।।
मज्जन करि सरजुतीर ठाढ़े रघुबंसबीर,
सेवत पदकमल धीर निरमल चित लाई।
ब्रह्ममंडली–मुनींद्रबृंद–मध्य इंदुबदन
राजत सुखसदन लोकलोचन–सुखदाई।। 2।।
बिथुरित सिररुह–बरूथ कुंचित, बिच सुमन–जूथ,
मनिजुत सिसु–फनि–अनीक ससि समीप आई।
जनु सभीत दै अँकोर राखे जुग रुचिर मोर,
कुंडल–छबि निरखि चोर सकुचत अधिकाई।। 3।।
ललित भ्रुकुटि, तिलक भाल, चिबुक–अधर–द्विज रसाल,
हास चारुतर, कपोल, नासिका सुहाई।
मधुकर जुग पंकज बिच, सुक बिलोक नीरजपर
लरत मधुप–अवलि मानो बीच कियो जाई।। 4।।
सुंदर पटपीत बिसद, भ्राजत बनमाल उरसि,
तुलसिका–प्रसून–रचित, बिबिध–बिधि बनाई।

तरु–तमाल अधबिच जनु त्रिबिध कीर–पाँति–रुचिर,
हेमजाल अंतर परि तातें न उड़ाई।। 5।।
संकर–हृदि–पुंडरीक निसि बस हरि–चंचरीक,
निर्ब्यलीक–मानस–गृह संतत रहे छाई।
अतिसय आनंदमूल तुलसिदास सानुकूल,
हरन सकल सूल, अवध–मंडन रघुराई।। 6।।

rāga kalyāṇa

(7/3)

raghupati rājīvanayana, sōbhātanu kōṭi mayana,
karunārasa-ayana cayana-rūpa bhūpa, mā'ī.
dēkhō sakhi atulita chabi, santa-kañja-kānana rabi,
gāvata kara kīrati kabi-kōbida-samudā'ī.. 1..
majjana kari sarajutīra ṭhāṛhē raghubansabīra,
sēvata padakamala dhīra niramala cita lā'ī.
brahmamaṇḍalī-munīndrabr̥ṁda-madhya indubadana
rājata sukhasadana lōkalōcana-sukhadā'ī.. 2..
bithurita siraruha-barūtha kuṁcita, bica sumana-jūtha,
manijuta sisu-phani-anīka sasi samīpa ā'ī.
janu sabhīta dai am̐kōra rākhē juga rucira mōra,
kuṇḍala-chabi nirakhi cōra sakucata adhikā'ī.. 3..
lalita bhrukuṭi, tilaka bhāla, cibuka-adhara-dvija rasāla,
hāsa cārutara, kapōla, nāsikā suhā'ī.
madhukara juga paṅkaja bica, suka bilōka nīrajapara
larata madhupa-avali mānō bīca kiyō jā'ī.. 4..
suṁdara paṭapīta bisada, bhrājata banamāla urasi,
tulasikā-prasūna-racita, bibidha-bidhi banā'ī.
taru-tamāla adhabica janu tribidha kīra-pām̐ti-rucira,
hēmajāla antara pari tātēṁ na uṛā'ī.. 5..
saṅkara-hr̥di-puṇḍarīka nisi basa hari-cam̃carīka,
nibryalīka-mānasa-gr̥ha santata rahē chā'ī.
atisaya ānandamūla tulasidāsa sānukūla,
harana sakala sūla, avadha-maṇḍana raghurā'ī.. 6..

Lord Ram on the Bank of River Saryu-I

Verse no. 7/3—[Lord Ram often went to river Saryu that flowed to the north of Ayodhya to take a bath in it and generally enjoy its pleasant surroundings. The river banks were usually crowded by the locals, and this provided them an opportunity to interact with their beloved Lord and be close to him.

The following verses narrate how the women-folk were charmed by the magnificence and beauty of the Lord.]

‘Oh mother (mā'ī)! Raghupati (the Lord of Raghu's clan, i.e. Lord Sri Ram) is akin to crores of Kamdeo-cupids in having a beautiful, charming and handsome body.

Not only this, he has characters and virtues that are equally beautiful, charming and magnificent, for in all sooth he is a treasury of mercy, compassion and kindness, as well as is an embodiment of happiness and bliss.

Oh friend (sakhi)! Look, his matchless and unique beauteous image is like a sun for the forest of lotuses representing the community of saints, people who are pious and holy, while his glories, renowns, fames, virtues and noble characters are sung by the poets and the community of wise ones and experts everywhere (1).

Ah! Raghubansabīra (i.e. the great and brave warrior of king Raghu's clan; i.e. Lord Sri Ram) is standing on the banks of river Saryu after having taken a bath in it.

His lotus-like feet are being served by wise devotees with their pure (uncorrupt) mind and intellect[1].

In this way, Lord Sri Ram—who provides delight to the eyes of all the creatures of the Lokas (worlds), who is an abode of bliss and happiness, and is like (i.e. as beauteous as) a moon—stands in the centre of (i.e. surrounded by) the community of Brahmins and groups of sages and seers (who were present on the banks of river Saryu) (2).

[[1]This clearly means that no physical service is needed to serve the Lord; only mental service is enough to please him. What is important is that this service should be done with a pure and uncorrupt heart and mind, without expecting anything in return, for otherwise it becomes a selfish deed and a sort of bargaining with the Lord.]

His curved lock of hairs are untied (as he has just taken a bath, and the hairs are disheveled), in between which are stuck bunches of flowers. They (the hairs, flowers etc.) resemble groups of young serpents along with their ‘Manis[2]’ who have come to have a look at the moon, whereby the latter got scared, and to keep the serpents at bay, had enticed two peacocks to guard him (the moon). The young serpents, then, became reluctant to move ahead (over the face of the moon) because of the fear of these two peacocks[3] (3).

[[2]This refers to a special class of serpents who have a sac on their heads. It consists of secretions from its skin tissues that solidify and look like a gem, or a “Mani”, on the serpent’s head. It is believed that this solidified secretion glows in the dark, and the snake sees in its light.

[3]Here the curved, entwined lock of hairs on the head of Lord Ram are likened to the ‘serpents’, the white flowers tucked amongst them are the ‘Mani’, Lord Sri Ram's beauteous face is the ‘moon’, the two large ear-rings behind which the hairs have been tucked to prevent them from falling on the Lord’s face and eyes are the two ‘peacocks’. In other words, the hairs that are tucked behind the ear-rings dangling from Lord Ram’s ears cannot come in the front of his face just like the serpents are scared to come out in the open from behind the bush to look at the beautiful moon as they are afraid of the two peacocks. The ‘peacock’ is an eternal enemy of the ‘serpent’ as it devours the latter.]

The Lord’s eyebrows are most attractive and beauteous. A ‘Tilak Mark’[4] adorns his forehead, while the chin, lips and the row of teeth of the Lord are very fascinating and pleasant to behold.

His laughter (or smile) is very fascinating and enchanting; while the cheeks and nostrils of the Lord are well built (i.e. they are prominent and well-shaped).

It appears that two bumble/black-bees (representing the two eye-brows) are sitting over two lotuses (representing the Lord's two eyes). Besides this, it appears that a few black bees (representing the few strands of the Lord's hairs that are dangling over his lips) are struggling and fighting amongst themselves to see the surface of the moon (representing the Lord's face, because these hairs move to and fro in front of it as if vying with each other to have a better view of the Lord's face) even as a parrot (representing the Lord's nose) is trying to intervene and separate them so that they do not quarrel[5] (4).

[[4]The "Tilak Mark" is a mark made by a paste of sandalwood and other substances on the forehead by all noble men in Hindu society. It has a few variations: such as either of two or three horizontal lines, or else two vertical lines like the English letter "U", or a tuning fork, with a dot at the lower inside of the bend.

[5]Here, the 'bumble bees' are the eyebrows, the 'lotuses' are the eyes, the 'parrot' is the nose, the 'black bees' are the curls of hairs that have slipped from behind the ears and are dangling in front of the face, and the 'surface of the moon' is Sri Ram's beautiful and charming face.]

A most beautiful and long 'Pitambar' adorns Lord Ram's body, while a large and thick garland made of 'Tulsi' (Basil leaves) and many varieties of flowers adorns his chest. This garland resembles a row of tri-coloured parrots perched on a 'Tamal tree' (the black catechu tree) and are unable to fly off because they are trapped in a snare made of gold[7] (5).

[[6]The "Pitambar" is a seamless yellow silk cloth used to wrap a male's body; it is the usual attire of Lord Vishnu as well as noble men of high birth.

[7]Here, the "tri-coloured parrots' row" is the thick, multi-coloured garland, the "Tamal tree" is the dark complexion of Lord Sri Ram's body, and the "golden snare" is the Pitambar. In other words, the Pitambar is so draped on the Lord's body that it prevents the garland from slipping.

The "golden snare" may also refer to the thread used to make the garland as it prevents the flowers from breaking loose and scattering.]

The bumble bees representing Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) that always reside in the lotus-like heart of Lord Shiva (saṅkara-hṛdi-puṇḍarīka nisi basa hari-cañcarīka), also have their abiding abode in the temple-like heart of those persons who are saintly, pious, pure, holy, uncorrupt, simple and deceitless (nibryalīka-mānasa-gṛha santata rahē chā'ī)

Tulsidas prays that Raghurā'ī (the king of the Raghu dynasty; Lord Sri Ram)—who is the root of supreme happiness and bliss (atisaya ānandamūla), who is the remover (eliminator) of all the torments and agonies (harana sakala sūla), and who is the jewel of Ayodhya (avadha-maṇḍana)—should always be benevolent, gracious, kind, munificent and beneficent on him too (tulasidāsa sānukūla) (6).

(7 / 4)

राजत रघुबीर धीर, भंजन भव–भीर, पीर–
हरन सकल सरजुतीर निरखहु, सखि ! सोहैं।

संग अनुज मनुज–निकर, दनुज–बल–बिभंग–करन;
अंग–अंग छबि अनंग अगनित मन मोहैं।। 1।।
सुखमा–सुख–सील–अयन नयन निरखि निरखि नील
कुंचित कच, कुंडल कल, नासिका चित पोहैं।
मनहु इंदुबिंब मध्य कंज–मीन–खंजन लखि
मधुप–मकर–कीर आए तकि तकि निज गौहैं।। 2।।
ललित गंड–मंडल, सुबिसाल भाल तिलक झलक
मंजुतर मयंक–अंक रुचिर बंक भौहैं।
अरुन अधर, मधुर बोल, दसन–दमक दामिनि दुति,
हुलसति हिय हँसनि चारु चितवनि तिरछौहैं।। 3।।
कंबुकंठ, भुज बिसाल उरसि तरुन तुलसिमाल,
मंजुल मुकतावलि जुत जागति जिय जोहैं।
जनु कलिंद–नंदिनि मनि–इंद्रनील–सिखर परसि
धँसति लसति हंससेनि–संकुल अधिकौहैं।। 4।।
दिब्यतर दुकूल भब्य, नब्य रुचिर चंपक चय,
चंचला–कलाप, कनक–निकर अलि ! किधौं हैं।
सज्जन–चष–झष–निकेत, भूषन–मनिगन समेत,
रूप–जलधि–बपुष लेत मन–गयंद बोहैं।। 5।।
अकनि बचन–चातुरी तुरीय पेखि प्रेम–मगन
पग न परत इत, उत, सब चकित तेहि समौ हैं।
तुलसिदास यह सुधि नहि कौनकी, कहाँतें आई,
कौन काज, काके ढिग, कौन ठाउँ को हैं।। 6।।

(7/4)

rājata raghubīra dhīra, bhaṁjana bhava-bhīra, pīra-
harana sakala sarajutīra nirakhahu, sakhi! sōhaiṁ.
saṅga anuja manuja-nikara, danuja-bala-bibhaṅga-karana;
aṅga-aṅga chabi anaṅga aganita mana mōhaiṁ.. 1..
sukhamā-sukha-sīla-ayana nayana nirakhi nirakhi nīla
kuṁcita kaca, kuṁḍala kala, nāsikā cita pōhaiṁ.
manahu indubimba madhya kaṁja-mīna-khaṁjana lakhi
madhupa-makara-kīra ā'ē taki taki nija gauhaiṁ.. 2..
lalita gaṇḍa-maṇḍala, subisāla bhāla tilaka jhalaka
maṁjutara mayaṅka-aṅka rucira baṅka bhauhaiṁ.
aruna adhara, madhura bōla, dasana-damaka dāmini duti,
hulasati hiya haṁsani cāru citavani tirachauhaiṁ.. 3..
kambukaṇṭha, bhuja bisāla urasi taruna tulasimāla,
maṁjula mukatāvali juta jāgati jiya jōhaiṁ.
janu kalinda-nandini mani-indranīla-sikhara parasi
dhaṁsati lasati hansasēni-saṅkula adhikauhaiṁ.. 4..
dibyatara dukūla bhabya, nabya rucira campaka caya,
caṁcalā-kalāpa, kanaka-nikara ali! kidhauṁ haiṁ.
sajjana-caṣa-jhaṣa-nikēta, bhūṣana-manigana samēta,
rūpa-jaladhi-bapuṣa lēta mana-gayanda bōhaiṁ.. 5..
akani bacana-cāturī turīya pēkhi prēma-magana

paga na parata ita, uta, saba cakita tēhi samau haiṁ.
tulasidāsa yaha sudhi nahi kaunakī, kahāṁtēṁ ā'ī,
kauna kāja, kākē ḍhiga, kauna ṭhā'uṁ kō haiṁ.. 6..

Lord Ram on the Bank of River Saryu-II

Verse no. 7/4—'Oh friend! Look, Raghubir (Sri Ram)—who is the remover of the sorrows, tribulations and miseries of the entire world (of the whole living creation), and is courageous, brave, patient and valiant—is standing majestically on the banks of river Saryu.

Accompanying him are his younger brothers (Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) and many other people.

He himself is capable of dispersing (scattering) the army of enemies, while the glamour, majesty and beauty of his body is so enchanting that it keeps in its thrall the mind and heart of numerous (countless) Kamdeo-cupids (who feel defeated in the presence of the Lord) (1).

Watch his charming, fascinating and beautiful eyes which are a store-house of modesty and joy. [To wit, even his glances and stares are not immodest, threatening or aggressive. They, on the other hand, give solace, succour, hope and encouragement to those in distress.]

See also his black curls (of hairs). Oh! His attractive ear-rings and nostrils seem to captivate (and magnetically pull) our mind and intellect towards themselves.

It appears that on seeing the images of a lotus, a fish and a Khanjan bird (a striped bird seen between fall and winter) in the centre of the surface of the moon, and thinking them to belong to the same family as themselves, the bumble/black-bees, the crocodile and the parrot have arrived (to share the pride of place and enjoyment of the beauty of the moon with them)[1]. (2).

[[1]Here, Lord Sri Ram's face is the 'surface of the moon'; the eyes are compared to the 'lotus, fish and Khanjan bird', the curls of hairs are the 'black bees', the ear-rings are the 'crocodiles or the alligators', and the nose of the Lord is the 'parrot'. It ought to be noted here that the beak of the parrot is traditionally regarded as a standard for a good-shaped nose by poets.]

His (Lord Sri Ram's) cheeks are very enchanting, the 'Tilak Mark' is visible on his very broad forehead, while the most beauteous and fascinating curls of hairs look like the dark spots (signs, marks) on the face (surface) of the moon (i.e. on the face of Sri Ram).

The Lord's red (or pink) lips, sweet talk (pleasant voice), electric-like dazzle and glitter of teeth, enchanting and pleasant smile, and curved (slanted, oblique, sideways) glances create an upsurge of emotional warmth in the mind and intellect of the beholder (3).

The Lord's neck is like a conch shell[2]. His arms are long, and an attractive garland made of newly plucked (and fresh) Tulsi (basil) leaves and Mukta (pearls; also buds of magnolia or jasmine flowers) adorns his chest.

The ascetics (Yogis) view this image of Lord Ram in their heart as if river Yamuna (kalinda-nandini), along with rows of swans (hansasēni-saṅkula), touches

the summit of a mountain of sapphire (mani-indranīla-sikhara parasi), and then looks majestic and spectacular while descending on the earth (dhaṁsati lasati---adhikauhaiṁ)[3] (4).

[[2]The "conch shell" is used as a metaphor to describe a smooth and muscular neck with folds of skins like the marking on the conch's shell. The main reason why the neck is compared to the conch is that a person speaks through the vocal cord located in the neck. A good conch shell makes a sound that is resonating and deep, and is heard far and wide. Likewise, a person whose voice is deep and attractive and makes an impact on others has his neck compared to the conch shell by poets.

[3]Here, the garland of white pearls is the 'row of swans'; the garland of Tulsi leaves is the river 'Yamuna'; and Lord Sri Ram's shoulders are the 'summit of Mt. Indraneel' or 'the mountain of sapphire'.

Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/7, stanza no. 5.]

Oh Friend (ali)! Is the most fresh, charming and majestic looking upper garment that the Lord wears not a group of magnolia flowers? Or is it electric or a spread of gold (dazzling, glittering, shining, lusterous, radiant). [This refers to the Pitambar that Lord Ram has wrapped around his body.]

The Lord's (Sri Ram's) body—which is an ocean of beauty, elegance and charm, which is the dwelling place for the alligators[4] representing the eyes of noble, virtuous and righteous people (sajjana-caṣa-jhaṣa-nikēta), and which is adorned by a rich collection of gems and jewels that the Lord wears as his ornaments—seems to pull the elephant representing our minds and hearts in its vortex. [To wit, Lord Sri Ram is so handsome, lovely to look at, and enchanting to behold that we are held in thrall of him. It seems that the alligators that are present in the swift currents of a great river have caught hold of the legs of elephants and are dragging the latter inside.] (5).'

[[4]The comparison to an alligator seems odd, but the meaning is clear. The alligator drags into the water anyone it manages to catch hold of. So is the case with the eyes of those who look at the beauteous form of Lord Ram—they are involuntarily attracted by the Lord's charm so much that their eyes refuse to look away.]

Hearing the amazing play of words spoken by her friend and watching Sri Ram in the 'Turiya state' (this is the state of consciousness when one attains Supreme Bliss), all the female friends literally drowned (submerged) themselves in emotions of love and affection for the Lord[5]. They were transfixed and dazed so much that their legs could not move forward or backward.

Tulsidas says that (they were so fascinated, enthralled and intoxicated at the vision of such stupendous beauty and charm) they forgot their mutual relationships, from whence have they come, what was their work or duty, with whom are they standing, and who is standing where? [In short, they were so enraptured by the sight of Lord Ram's enchanting image that they became momentarily disinterested in anything, even became unaware of themselves as well as their surroundings.] (6).

[[5]This "Turiya state of consciousness" is a higher state of transcendental existence when the person concerned has detached himself from the mundane attractions and affairs of this material world of sense objects and has risen to a higher level of consciousness that enables him to remain perpetually in a state of bliss. This fact clearly establishes that Lord Ram was not an ordinary human being enjoying the pleasures of the world as its king and emperor; he was a realised soul, an ascetic of the highest order, wherefore Tulsidas is singing so much of the Lord's glory in such laudatory terms.

It ought to be noted here howbeit that such a person who perpetually lives in the Turiya state of consciousness is untainted and uncorrupted by any of the grossness associated with this gross world whereof he appears to be a part. For in all sooth, Lord Ram was the Supreme Consciousness in a personified form. Hence, when the Lord's beauty is described, it is a way of describing the 'beauty of this Supreme Consciousness', and not the physical beauty of a gross body.]

(7 / 5)

देखु सखि ! आजु रघुनाथ–सोभा बनी।
नील–नीरद–बरन बपुष भुवनाभरन,
पीत–अंबर–धरन हरन दुति–दामिनी।। 1।।
सरजु मज्जन किए, संग सज्जन लिए,
हेतू जनपर हिये, कृपा कोमल घनी।
सजनि ! आवत भवन मत्त–गजवर, गवन,
लंक मृगपति ठवनि कुँवर कोसलधनी।। 2।।
सघन चिक्कन कुटिल चिकुल बिलुलित मृदुल,
करनि बिबरत चतुर, सरस सुषमा जनी।
ललित अहि–सिसु–निकर मनहु ससि सन समर
लरत, धरहरि करत रुचिर जनु जुग फनी।। 3।।
भाल भ्राजत तिलक, जलज लोचन, पलक,
चारु भ्रू, नासिका सुभग सुक–आननी।
चिबुक सुंदर, अधर अरुन, द्विज–दुति सुघर,
बचन गंभीर, मृदुहास भव–भाननी।। 4।।
स्रवन कुंडल बिमल गंड मंडित चपल,
कलित कलकांति अति भाँति कछु तिन्ह तनी।
जुगल कंचन–मकर मनहु बिधुकर मधुर
पियत पहिचानि करि सिंधुकीरति भनी।। 5।।
उरसि राजत पदिक, ज्योति रचना अधिक,
माल सुबिसाल चहुँ पास बनि गजमनी।
स्याम नव जलदपर निरखि दिनकर–कला
कौतुकी मनहुँ रही घेरि उडुगन–अनी।। 6।।
मंदिरनिपर खरी नारि आनँद–भरी
निरखि बरषहिं बिपुल कुसुम कुंकुम–कनी।
दास तुलसी राम परम करुनाधाम,
काम–सतकोटि–मद हरत छबि आपनी।। 7।।

(7/5)

dēkhu sakhi! āju raghunātha-sōbhā banī.
nīla-nīrada-barana bapuṣa bhuvanābharana,
pīta-ambara-dharana harana duti-dāminī.. 1..
saraju majjana ki'ē, saṅga sajjana li'ē,
hētū janapara hiyē, kṛpā kōmala ghanī.
sajani! āvata bhavana matta-gajavara, gavana,

laṅka mr̥gapati ṭhavani kum̐vara kōsaladhanī.. 2..
saghana cikkana kuṭila cikula bilulita mr̥dula,
karani bibarata catura, sarasa suṣamā janī.
lalita ahi-sisu-nikara manahu sasi sana samara
larata, dharahari karata rucira janu juga phanī.. 3..
bhāla bhrājata tilaka, jalaja lōcana, palaka,
cāru bhrū, nāsikā subhaga suka-ānanī.
cibuka sundara, adhara aruna, dvija-duti sughara,
bacana gambhīra, mr̥duhāsa bhava-bhānanī.. 4..
sravana kuṇḍala bimala gaṇḍa maṇḍita capala,
kalita kalakānti ati bhām̐ti kachu tinha tanī.
jugala kan̄cana-makara manahu bidhukara madhura
piyata pahicāni kari sindhukīrati bhanī.. 5..
urasi rājata padika, jyōti racanā adhika,
māla subisāla cahum̐ pāsa bani gajamanī.
syāma nava jaladapara nirakhi dinakara-kalā
kautukī manahum̐ rahī ghēri uḍugana-anī.. 6..
mandiranipara kharī nāri ānam̐da-bharī
nirakhi baraṣahiṁ bipula kusuma kuṅkuma-kanī.
dāsa tulasī rāma parama karunādhāma,
kāma-satakōṭi-mada harata chabi āpanī.. 7..

Lord Ram Returns after Bathing in River Saryu

Verse no. 7/5—'Oh friend, look (dēkhu sakh)! How magnificent, charming and majestic does Raghunath (Sri Ram) looks today. His body is radiant like a blue (dark) rain-bearing cloud, and is like an ornament of the world.

He is wearing a beautiful Pitambar (a body wrapping, seamless yellow coloured cloth: pīta-ambara-dharana) over his body, and this cloth appears to snatch (i.e. win victory over) the dazzle, the shine, the radiance, the lustre and the splendour of the celestial lightening (i.e. the lightening that streaks through the dark rain-bearing clouds (harana duti-dāminī) (1).

Oh Sajani ("sajani"; a form of address for a good and noble lady)! Look, Prince Lord Ram, the Lord of the Kaushal ("kum̐vara Kōsaladhanī"), having bathed in the river Saryu and accompanied by gentlemen, is coming towards his palace in the majestic style like that of an elephant (āvata bhavana matta-gajavara, gavana).

Forsooth, he has the welfare of his subjects and dependants uppermost in his heart and mind (hētū janapara hiyē), and he is the one who is rich in the qualities of compassion, benevolence, graciousness, munificence, kindness and tenderness of heart and feelings (kr̥pā kōmala ghanī).

Note that his waist and chin are robust and muscular like that on a lion (laṅka mr̥gapati ṭhavani). (2).

Dense (thick), smooth, curled (curved) and soft hairs are scattered on his face; they are being carefully and expertly tucked away (behind the ears) by him (Sri Ram).

This produces such an enchanting, enrapturing and beautiful scene as if groups of attractive young snakes are fighting for the Amrit (elixir) stored in the moon, while they are being told to behave and are being restrained (from squabbling and fighting) by two larger serpents[1] (3).

[[1]Here, the swaying curls of hairs are the 'young snakes'; the face of Sri Ram is the 'moon'; its beauty is the 'Amrit'; and the two hands of the Lord that he uses to tuck away the hairs behind his ears or above his head are the 'two larger serpents'.]

The 'Tilak Mark' adorns his forehead. His eyes are like lotuses, the eyebrows and eyelids are very attractive and enchanting, the beautiful nose is like the beak of a parrot, the chin is very attractive, the lips are red (or pink) in hue, the radiance (glitter, dazzle) of the teeth is very pleasant, the voice is deep and sober, while the sweet smile of the Lord can douse (quell, cool down) the fire (torments, agitations) arising out of of this mundane, illusionary and mortal world[2] (4).

[[2]To wit, all the mental and emotional miseries and grief arising out of existence in the mortal world full of pain and troubles vanish once one diverts his attention away from them and focuses it on Lord Ram.]

His ears have large ear-rings which have adorned his clean cheeks and have spread a charming radiance and glow on them. These ear-rings appear to be like two golden alligators drinking (enjoying) the sweet, soothing rays of the moon (represented by the Lord's face), and having got the information (of the moon's origin) from them, they are praising (singing) the glories of the ocean[3] (5).

[[3]Here the two ear-rings are the 'alligators'; Sri Ram's face is the 'moon'; its beautiful glow and radiance is the 'ray and shine of the moon; and 'ocean' is the family of king Sagar to which Sri Ram belongs. Alternatively, the ocean may also allude to the fathomless glories, fames, virtues of Sri Ram.

It was king Sagar who had been instrumental in getting the ocean dug by his sons. The Moon as well as the Amrit trace their origin to the ocean—because they were produced when the ocean was churned by the gods and the demons in search of this Amrit. Many things came out of this churning. The Moon became the celestial pitcher of Amrit.]

A medallion adorns his chest, the shine (glint) of which is spread over a large area. Surrounding it is a large garland of 'Gajmukta' (which is a secretion from the sebaceous glands from the crown of wild elephants, which when dried form pearl-like beads used for decorative purposes). This sight looks as if the constellation of stars has, out of curiosity and wonder, surrounded the sun which is displaying its splendour against the backdrop of dark clouds[4] (6).

[[4]Here, Sri Ram's body is the 'dark cloud'; the golden medallion on the chest is the 'splendorous sun'; and the pearl garland is the chain or ring of 'stars'.

The spectacle to behold here is the shine of the medallion as it is reflected from the surface of dark skin of the Lord's chest just like a sun's light is reflected from the surface of a dark cloud in the sky. The garland is draped on the Lord's chest in such a way that it surrounds the medallion which hangs in the middle. The beads of the garland are like the stars that surround the sun.

Usually it is impossible that the sun and the stars can exist simultaneously in the sky, but it may be possible if the sky is so overcast by dark clouds that it is virtually a night-like situation when the sun is completely obscured. Here it means that the garland is so thick that it virtually hides the shine of the golden pendant

hanging on Lord Ram's chest, albeit some occasional shine from it is seen here and there on the Lord's chest when this garland moves away from it or sways when the Lord walks or bends.]

At this point of time, the women folk of the city are watching the Lord from their house tops and attics, and are showering numerous varieties of flowers and perfumed saffron on him.

Tulsidas becomes enraptured and euphoric, and says delightfully that Lord Sri Ram vanquishes (or crushes, removes, overcomes) the pride millions of Kamdeo/cupids (who regards himself as the most handsome, most enchanting and most glamorous God of creation) (7).

(7 / 6)

आजु रघुबीर–छबि जात नहि कछु कही।
सुभग सिंहासनासीन सीतारवन,
भुवन–अभिराम, बहु काम सोभा सही।। 1।।
चारु चामर–व्यजन, छत्र–मनिगन बिपुल
दाम–मुकुतावली–जोति जगमगि रही।
मनहुँ राकेस सँग हंस–उडुगन–बरहि
मिलन आए हृदय जानि निज नाथ ही।। 2।।
मुकुट सुंदर सिरसि, भालबर, तिलक–भ्रू,
कुटिल कच, कुंडलनि परम आभा लही।
मनहुँ हर–डर जुगल मारध्वजके मकर
लागि स्रवननि करत मेरुकी बतकही।। 3।।
अरुन–राजीव–दल–नयन करुना–अयन,
बदन सुषमासदन, हास त्रय–तापही।
बिबिध कंकन हार, उरसि गजमनि–माल,
मनहुँ बग–पाँति जुग मिलि चली जलदही।। 4।।
पीत निरमल चैल, मनहुँ मरकत सैल,
पृथुल दामिनि रही छाइ तजि सहजही।
ललित सायक–चाप, पीन भुज बल अतुल
मनुजतनु दनुजबन–दहन, मंडन–मही।। 5।।
जासु गुन–रूप नहि कलित, निरगुन सगुन,
संभु, सनकादि, सुक भगति दृढ़ करि गही।
दास तुलसी राम–चरन–पंकज सदा
बचन मन करम चहै प्रीति नित निरबही।। 6।।

(7/6)

āju raghubīra-chabi jāta nahi kachu kahī.
subhaga sinhāsanāsīna sītāravana,
bhuvana-abhirāma, bahu kāma sōbhā sahī.. 1..
cāru cāmara-vyajana, chatra-manigana bipula

dāma-mukutāvalī-jōti jagamagi rahī.
manahuṁ rākēsa saṁga hansa-uḍugana-barahi
milana ā'ē hr̥daya jāni nija nātha hī.. 2..
mukuṭa sundara sirasi, bhālabara, tilaka-bhrū,
kuṭila kaca, kuṇḍalani parama ābhā lahī.
manahuṁ hara-ḍara jugala māradhvajakē makara
lāgi sravanani karata mērukī batakahī.. 3..
aruna-rājīva-dala-nayana karunā-ayana,
badana suṣamāsadana, hāsa traya-tāpahī.
bibidha kaṅkana hāra, urasi gajamani-māla,
manahuṁ baga-pāṁti juga mili calī jaladahī.. 4..
pīta niramala caila, manahuṁ marakata saila,
pr̥thula dāmini rahī chā'i taji sahajahī.
lalita sāyaka-cāpa, pīna bhuja bala atula
manujatanu danujabana-dahana, maṇḍana-mahī.. 5..
jāsu guna-rūpa nahi kalita, niraguna saguna,
sambhu, sanakādi, suka bhagati dr̥ṛha kari gahī.
dāsa tulasī rāma-carana-paṅkaja sadā
bacana mana karama cahai prīti nita nirabahī.. 6..

The Charm of Lord Ram as He Sits on the Throne of Ayodhya-I

Verse no. 7/6—[After returning from bathing in the river Saryu, Lord Ram sits on the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya to carry out his royal responsibilities of administering the affairs of the realm judiciously. The following verses now describe the Lord's magnificent form as he sits on the throne.]

Today, one cannot describe the beauteous and spectacular image of magnificence and charm that Lord Raghubir (Sri Ram, the brave warrior of king Raghu's line) presents.

The dear husband of Sita ("sītāravana") is sitting on a beautiful throne. He is the most beautiful and charming in the three worlds (i.e. the entire livinv word consisting of subterranean, terrestrial and celestial divisions).

Forsooth, he is the embodiment of splendour, glamour, majesty, magnificence and radiant beauty like those of numerous Kamdeo/cupids taken together (1).

[Describing the royal decorations and paraphernalia that adorn Lord Ram as he sits on the throne as the Sovereign of Ayodhya, Tulsidas says—] A wonderful whisk, various ornaments, a royal umbrella (on his head; the throne's parasol), and other distinguished marks of royalty adorns the Lord (Sri Ram), even as the light shining from the necklaces (or garlands), studded by numerous jems and pearls, that he wears, glitters and dazzles with its brilliance.

Verily, the whole scene resembles the group of visitors lead by the Moon and accompanied by a royal Swan, the Stars and a Peacock who have come to meet Lord Ram (to pay obeisance to him)[1] (2).

[[1]Here in this metaphor, the concave parasol that shades the Lord is the crescent 'moon'; the white whisk that is usually swayed before a king as he sits on his throne resembles the 'swan'; the glittering gems are the twinkling 'stars'; and the

various colourful ornaments and other insignia of royalty that the Lord wears are the 'peacocks'.]

There is a lovely crown on the Lord's head. A Tilak Mark and curved eyebrows adorn his charming forehead.

The large ear-rings swaying near curls of hairs (dangling around the ears) look spectacular. Verily, they (the ear-rings) appear to resemble the two alligators of Kamdeo/cupid's standard (flag; insignia), who being affright of inviting Lord Shiva's wrath (because Sri Ram is the Lord God whom Shiva worships, and vice-versa because Lord Ram adores Shiva himself), are consulting each other to somehow make a compromise[2] (3).

[[2]Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/7, stanza no. 3; verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 4.

Kamdeo's flag (standard or insignia) has the sign of two alligators, as well as of a bow and an arrow. {Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 4.} The import of these signs is that whomever Kamdeo manages to catch hold of in his snare of passions and lust are dragged by him like an alligator, which can drag even a mighty elephant into the water if it can get hold of the latter's leg, and if that is not possible then Kamdeo shoots him or overpowers his victim by hitting him hard with the arrows symbolizing passions and lust. This is the way he had overpowered Lord Shiva when he had gone to disturb his meditation. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 87.}

Here, the two ear-rings are likened to these 'alligators'. The ear-rings sway from side to side at each movement of Sri Ram's head as if the two alligators are saying some sweet and pleasing words confidentially in the ears of Sri Ram to plead on behalf of Kamdeo who wishes to offer himself or sacrifice his own beauty on the Lord's form, and prevent Lord Shiva from casting his wrath on Kamdeo for having the guts to do so. This is because Shiva had once punished Kamdeo for disturbing his meditation when he was meditating upon Lord Ram and repeating the Lord's holy name during his spiritual practices. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 87.

Nevertheless, the poor Kamdeo was so enamaoured by Lord Ram's fabulous beauty and charm that he could not resist the urge to offer his services to the Lord, but he durst not do so as he was sore affright of Lord Shiva. So he asked, his two trusted aides, the alligators, to quietly seek Lord Ram's permission!]

The Lord's red lotus-like eyes are a treasury of mercy, compassion and kindness. His face is the abode (or the shelter) of beauty, charm and prettiness, while his smile (or laughter) is the destroyer of the three 'Traitaaps' ("traya-tāpahī"; horrors of this world)[3].

He wears various types of bracelets and armbands on his wrists and upper arms, and has a garland (or a necklace) made of Gajmukta on his chest which resemble two rows of cranes (or storks) going towards the dark cloud to meet it[4] (4).

[[3]The "three Traitaaps" are the torments inflicted upon a creature by the following three entities: Daihik—related to body; Daivik—related to gods and stars; and Bhautik—related to terrestrial creatures.

[4]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/5, stanza no. 6.]

The Lord (Sri Ram) is wearing a very clean 'Pitambar' which resembles lightening spread over the mountain of emerald (marakata saila) after abandoning its inherent transient and unstable nature[5].

There is a bow and arrow in his hands, while the Lord's muscular and robust arms have peerless strength and valour in them.

His 'human' body (i.e. the Supreme Being's incarnation as a human being in the physical form of Lord Sri Ram) is the destroyer of forests of demons (symbolizing all that is evil, sinful, unholy, vile and unrighteous), and it is an ornament for this earth (i.e. the Lord is like a jewel of the earth; he is an exemplary and the best example of a human being and a noble ruler on this earth) (5).

[[5]Here, the 'mountain of emerald' is the chest and shoulder of Sri Ram because the Lord has a dark complexion; the 'lightening' is the reflection of the silk cloth of the Pitambar from the Lord's body; while the 'abandoning of the fickle nature of lightening' refers to the steady shine of the Pitambar as it is reflected from the surface of the Lord's body. This is because the cloth is tied firmly around his body.]

Lord Ram has a visible or a manifested (Saguna) form in this gross world, albeit his primary form being invisible and unmanifest (Nirguna)[6] at the cosmic level.

The Lord's virtues and noble characteristics cannot be described by anyone. Even Lord Shiva, Sankaadi (the celestial sages) and Shukdeo (the sage parrot) have held fast to his devotion and worship (as a means of emancipation and salvation).

Tulsidas says that his only wish is to have steadfastness in devotion that grows stronger by the passage of each day—by employing his entire being and all his faculties, such as his words and speech, his mind and heart, as well as his deeds—for the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Ram whose glories and divinity have been narrated herein above[7] (6).

[[6]Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/7, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 10.

The Cosmic Consciousness as represented by the Supreme Being has no physical form and attributes, for it is invisible, all-pervading and uniform throughout this creation. The nearest that comes to the visible form of this Supreme Being at the macro level of existence is his revelation as 'Nature'. When the same macrocosmic Consciousness reveals itself at the micro level of creation, it assumes a physical body of a creature known as a 'Jiva'. By corollary, when the Supreme Being revealed himself in this physical world at micro level, he had to conform to the laws of Nature at this level of existence, i.e. he had to assume a physical body. In the present case, this 'body' was in the form of Lord Ram. As with everything else in this world at its gross level of physical existence, the 'body' was visible and had its attributes and qualities.

The former macrocosmic and subtle form of the Supreme Being which is invisible is called "Nirguna" as it has no specific attributes, while its counterpart in the gross world is called "Saguna" as it has specific attributes.

[7]It is abundantly clear that the Lord Ram whom Tulsidas adores and worships and praises in his writings is the "Nirguna Supreme Being himself in the Saguna form of Lord Ram", and not some great human king by the same name (of Ram) of some great ancient empire known as Ayodhya. Perish this thought if someone harbours it out of ignorance.]

राम राजराजमौलि मुनिबर–मन–हरन, सरन–
लायक, सुखदायक रघुनायक देखौ री।
लोक–लोचनाभिराम, नीलमनि–तमाल–स्याम,
रूप–सील–धाम, अंग छबि अनंग को री ?।। 1।।
भ्राजत सिर मुकुट पुरट–निरमित मनि रचित चारु,
कुंचित कच रुचिर परम, सोभा नहि थोरी।
मनहुँ चंचरीक–पुंज कंजबृंद प्रीति लागि
गुंजत कल गान तान दिनमनि रिझयो री।। 2।।
अरुनकंज–दल–बिसाल लोचन, भ्रू–तिलकभाल,
मंडित स्रुति कुंडल बर सुंदरतर जोरी।
मनहुँ संबरारि मारि, ललित मकर–जुग बिचारि,
दीन्हें ससिकहँ पुरारि भ्राजत दुहुँ ओरी।। 3।।
सुंदर नासा–कपोल, चिबुक, अधर अरुन, बोल
मधुर, दसन राजत जब चितवत मुख मोरी।
कंज–कोस भीतर जनु कंजराज–सिखर–निकर,
रुचिर रचित बिधि बिचित्र तड़ित–रंग–बोरी।। 4।।
कंबुकंठ उर बिसाला तुलसिका नवीन माल,
मधुकर बर–बास–बिबस, उपमा सुनु सो री।
जनु कलिंदजा सुनील सैलतें धसी समीप,
कंद–बृंद बरसत छबि मधुर घोरि घोरी।। 5।।
निरमल अति पीत चैल, दामिनि जनु जलद नील
राखी निज सोभाहित बिपुल बिधि निहोरी।
नयनन्हिको फल बिसेष ब्रह्म अगुन सगुन बेष,
निरखहु तजि पलक, सफल जीवन लेखौ री।। 6।।
सुंदर सीतासमेत सोभित करुनानिकेत,
सेवक सुख देत, लेत चितवत चित चोरी।
बरनत यह अमित रूप थकित निगम–नागभूप,
तुलसिदास छबि बिलोकि सारद भइ भोरी।। 7।।

(7/7)

rāma rājarājamauli munibara-mana-harana, sarana-
lāyaka, sukhadāyaka raghunāyaka dēkhau rī.
lōka-lōcanābhirāma, nīlamani-tamāla-syāma,
rūpa-sīla-dhāma, aṅga chabi anaṅga kō rī?.. 1..
bhrājata sira mukuṭa puraṭa-niramita mani racita cāru,
kuṁcita kaca rucira parama, sōbhā nahi thōrī.
manahuṁ cam̐carīka-punja kam̐jabr̥nda prīti lāgi
gun̐jata kala gāna tāna dinamani rijhayō rī.. 2..
arunakam̐ja-dala-bisāla lōcana, bhrū-tilakabhāla,
maṇḍita sruti kuṇḍala bara sundaratara jōrī.
manahuṁ sambarāri māri, lalita makara-juga bicāri,
dīnhēṁ sasikahaṁ purāri bhrājata duhuṁ ōrī.. 3..
sundara nāsā-kapōla, cibuka, adhara aruna, bōla

madhura, dasana rājata jaba citavata mukha mōrī.
kaṇja-kōsa bhītara janu kaṇjarāja-sikhara-nikara,
rucira racita bidhi bicitra taḍita-raṅga-bōrī.. 4..
kambukaṇṭha ura bisālā tulasikā navīna māla,
madhukara bara-bāsa-bibasa, upamā sunu sō rī.
janu kalindajā sunīla sailatēṁ dhasī samīpa,
kanda-bṛnda barasata chabi madhura ghōri ghōrī.. 5..
niramala ati pīta caila, dāmini janu jalada nīla
rākhī nija sōbhāhita bipula bidhi nihōrī.
nayananhikō phala bisēṣa brahma aguna saguna bēṣa,
nirakhahu taji palaka, saphala jīvana lēkhau rī.. 6..
sundara sītāsamēta sōbhita karunānikēta,
sēvaka sukha dēta, lēta citavata cita cōrī.
baranata yaha amita rūpa thakita nigama-nāgabhūpa,
tulasidāsa chabi bilōki sārada bha'i bhōrī.. 7..

The Charm of Lord Ram as He Sits on the Throne of Ayodhya-II

Verse no. 7/7—Oh Friend (rī)! Look at Raghunāyaka (Sri Ram) who steals (enchants, enraptures) the mind and heart of even the sages and the hermits, who is the most exalted among the kings and the emperors, who is worthy of taking refuge (and shelter) with, and who is a bestower of happiness, comfort and bliss.

He gives delight to the eyes of all the Lokas (worlds), is dark complexioned like sapphire (nīlamani) and a Tamāla tree (the black catechu plant), and is an abode (dwelling, shelter, fount) of beauty and attractiveness, characters and virtues.

What is Kamdeo/cupid (or where does Kamdeo/cupid stand) as compared to the virtues of charm, magnificence, beauty, attractiveness and glamour that have manifested themselves in the form of the body of the Lord? (1).

A most beautiful golden crown studded with gems and jewels adorns the Lord's head, while under it are dangling the most attractive locks of curled black hairs. The beauty of these curls are astounding inasmuch as they appear to resemble buzzing and humming black/bumble-bees which have prevailed upon the sun (represented by the golden crown) by their sweet lyrics and melody for the joy and happiness of the lotuses (represented by Sri Ram's face and eyes)[1] (2).

[[1]In this imagery, the two eyes of Lord Ram are likened to two 'lotuses'; the golden crown with its brilliant shine to the 'sun'; and the curls of hairs to the many 'black bees'.

The lotus opens its petals when the sun rises in the sky, and black bees hum and buzz over it in search of nectar while at the same time shading the lotus from the heat of the sun and its glare. The curl of hairs dangle and sway over the Lord's eyes, and they keep the crown in place over the Lord's head and prevent it from slipping to one side. It looks as if these hairs are playing the role of bees who act as intermediaries betwixt the lotus and the sun, humming around the lotus to entertain it and motivate it to keep its petals open, while shading it from the heat and glare of the sun overhead.]

The Lord's eyes are large as the petals of red lotus flowers; the Lord's eyebrows and a Tilak Mark adorns the forehead, while the ears are decorated by a pair of large and most attractive ear-rings—it appears that Lord Shiva has slayed Kamdeo/cupid, and, realising the beauty of the two alligators on his standard (flag; insignia), has extracted them from it and presented them to the Moon (represented by Sri Ram's face), whereby these two alligators (ear-rings) adorn the two sides of the Moon (represented by the face of Sri Ram)[2] (3).

[[2]Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/6, stanza no. 3.

Here, the ear-rings are like the 'two alligators of Kamdeo's flag'; and the beautiful face of Lord is the 'Moon'.]

The Lord's nostrils, cheeks, chin, and red or pink lips are most attractive, charming, fascinating and beautiful, while his talk (or his voice) is extremely sweet and pleasant to hear.

When the Lord turns his face to glance and smile, his teeth look so magnificent as if the Creator has crystallised the nectar of lotus flowers into conical shapes, soaked them in the colour of lightening (dazzle, glitter, brilliance, brightness), and then arranged them in neat rows on the thallus of the lotus flower (4).

Oh Friend! (rī)! There is a garland of newly plucked Tulsi (Basil) leaves around his conch-like neck, and it is hanging on his broad chest. The pleasant scent (fragrance) emanating from it has enticed (or attracted) the bumble bees which are humming around it as if dark clouds are rumblings and thundering near the river Kalindi (river Yamuna; "kalindajā"), and pouring rain of beauty, magnificence and charm as it descends to earth (dhasī samīpa) from the summit of a beautiful mountain of sapphire (sunīla sailatēm̐)[3] (5).

[[3]Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/4, stanza no. 4.

Here, the shoulders of Lord Ram are likened to the 'summit of a mountain of sapphire' because of the dark bluish hue of the Lord's complexion; the Tulsi garland is the river 'Yamuna'; the black bees humming around it are the 'dark clouds'; their buzzing or humming is the 'thundering or rumbling' of those clouds; and the nectar dripping from the mouth of these bees is the 'rain' of the clouds.]

A spotlessly clean Pitambar (niramala ati pīta) adorns the Lord's dark complexioned body. It appears that some dark cloud has kept the lightening with it, after much persuasion, to enhance its own beauty, charm and magnificence[3].

Oh! This manifestation of Lord Ram is a visible form with certain attributes of what essentially is the unmanifest, attributeless Supreme Brahm[4]. This form is the best reward (or treat) for the eyes to behold. Hence, stop blinking your eyelids and stare (unblinkingly) at the Lord, and consider your life as being well-lived (successful, fortunate, worthy, well spent and fully rewarded because you are fortunate to see the divine form of the Supreme Being with your own eyes, a privilege that eludes even the sages and hermits and ascetics) (6).

[[3]Here, the dark complexioned body of Lord Ram is likened to the 'dark cloud'; and the shine of the golden silk Pitambar as it reflects from the body of the Lord to the bright light emanating from the 'lightening' that shines through the cloud. Whereas the shine of the lightening through the cloud is transient as it keeps on appearing and disappearing, the reflection of the Pitambar's brilliance from the body of the Lord is steady as it is worn by him.

[4]Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/6, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 10.

When Tulsidas describes the physical beauty of Sri Ram, there is no negative connotation or wrong implications in it. He treats Lord Sri Ram as the manifest form of the Supreme Being who is unmanifest cosmic Lord of creation; the Lord who is beyond description, all encompassing, all pervading, omnipresent and attributeless. The best and foremost manifest form of this entity is what we know or call as 'Nature'—both the physical and subtle. The Nature has always fascinated both the scientists as much as the poet—the latter has never ceased and never felt contented in describing its beauty, while the former are still unravelling its mysteries. When a poet describes the beauty of a valley of flowers, or a stream gushing down a slope of a glade, or of sunlight playing hide and seek through a thick canopy of foliage, or the canvas painted by a setting sun over the western horizon, or nearer to text, the bees humming around a flower or a garland of Tulsi, a rain-bow and stars surrounding a sun (verse no. 7/8, stanza no. 3), or river Yamuna cascading down a mountain of emerald or sapphire with clouds rumbling and thundering over head (verse nos. 7/4, stanza no. 4, and 7/7, stanza no. 5), or better still, comparing the beauty of various organs/parts of the body to the different aspects of nature (such as eyes and face to the lotus and the moon, shoulders and chest to mountains and their peaks, teeth to lightening, curly hairs to bees, glances and smiles to the rain of beauty and charm etc.)—the poet is actually worshipping the cosmic aspect of Lord Ram that incorporates Nature at its best.

But as was the tradition in the time when such compositions were penned, to describe the physical beauty of the hero of the composition, the play or the poetry was a standard way of eugolising and adoring him, as well as a way to embellish the literature with beauty and charm. So, Tulsidas' physical description of Lord Ram's astounding charm and beauty should be viewed in this context. A similar allusion to Lord Sri Ram as being the Supreme Being is incorporated in verse 7/6, stanza no. 6 of Uttar Kand, as well as verse 7/25, stanza no. 6 of Bal Kand of Geetawali.]

Accompanied by pretty Sita, Lord Ram, who is a wonderful abode of mercy, compassion and kindness, bestows happiness, joy and comfort to his servants (i.e. his devotees, subordinates, followers), even as he enchants, enthralls and captivates (literally, steals) the mind and intellect of one and all as soon as he casts his bewitching glance upon them.

Tulsidas asserts that the Vedas and the legendary Sheshnath became tired of describing this matchless beauty, charm and magnificence, while Saraswati (the goddess of wisdom, speech and learning) became stunned and awe struck looking at their (Sri Ram's and Sita's) beautiful and charming image (7).

राग केदारा

(7/8)

सखि ! रघुनाथ–रूप निहारु।
सरद–बिधु रबि–सुमन मनसिज–मान भंजनिहारु।। 1।।
स्याम सुभग सरीर जन–मन–काम–पूरनिहारु।

चारुचंदन मनहु मरकत–सिखर लसत निहारु।। 2।।
रुचिर उर उपबीत राजत पदिक गजमनि–हारु।
मनहु सुरधनु नखतगन बिच तिमिर–भंजनिहारु।। 3।।
बिमल पीत दुकूल दामिनि–दुति–बिनिंदनिहारु।
बदन सुषमासदन सोभित मदन–मोहनिहारु।। 4।।
सकल अंग अनूप, नहिं कोउ सुकबि बरननिहारु।
दासतुलसी निरखतहि सुख लहत निरखनिहारु।। 5।।

rāga kēdārā

(7/8)

sakhi! raghunātha-rūpa nihāru.
sarada-bidhu rabi-sumana manasija-māna bhaṅjanihāru.. 1..
syāma subhaga sarīra jana-mana-kāma-pūranihāru.
cārucandana manahu marakata-sikhara lasata nihāru.. 2..
rucira ura upabīta rājata padika gajamani-hāru.
manahu suradhanu nakhatagana bica timira-bhaṅjanihāru.. 3..
bimala pīta dukūla dāmini-duti-binindanihāru.
badana suṣamāsadana sōbhita madana-mōhanihāru.. 4..
sakala aṅga anūpa, nahiṁ kō'u sukabi barananihāru.
dāsatulasī nirakhatahi sukha lahata nirakhanihāru.. 5..

The Charm of Lord Ram as He Sits on the Throne of Ayodhya-III

Verse no. 7/8—Oh Friend (sakhi)! Have a good look at the enchanting and beautiful image and the magnificence of Lord Raghunātha (the Lord of king Raghu's race; Sri Ram). It is able to crush (vanquish, defeat, put to shame) the pride of the full Moon on a winter night, Ashwini Kumar and Kamdeo/cupid[1] (who are very proud of having these qualities of beauty, charm, splendour, magnificence, glamour, majesty etc.) (1).

[[1]These three entities, viz. the full moon during the nights of winter when the sky is clear, Ashwini Kumars who are the twin young gods regarded as the medicine men of the gods, and Kamdeo who is the patron god of charm and beauty, are used as examples of exemplary beauty and charm by poets. The image of Lord Ram surpasses all of them in this virtue.

Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 11.]

The dark complexioned and handsome body of him (Sri Ram), who is the fulfiller of all the wishes in the heart of his devotees, is smeared by a paste of sandalwood which resembles the covering of mist on the summit of Mt. Markat-Mani (mountain of emerald)[2] (2).

[[2]Here, the sandalwood paste is the 'mist'; and the 'mountain' is the upper half of Lord Sri Ram's body. That is, a thin coating of sandalwood paste has been rubbed on the Lord's body, abdomen upwards, on the chest, the shoulders, the forearms, and the forehead.]

On the attractive chest (of the Lord) are draped the following adorable things: a sacred thread, a medallion and a garland of Gajmukta[3] as if the sun is present between the rainbow and the constellation of stars[4] (3).

[[3]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/5, stanza no. 6.

[4]Here, the medallion is the 'sun', the sacred thread is the 'rainbow', and the pearl necklace/garland is the 'constellation of stars'.] (3).

The clean and magnificent yellow silk cloth that the Lord wears on his body (pīta dukūla: called a "Pitambar") is capable of putting to shame even the shine, the lustre, the light, the radiance and the dazzle of lightening.

The Lord's lovely and beauteous face is so attractive that it can enrapture, enthral and prove appealing, captivating and enchanting for even Kamdeo/cupid (who is himself so charming and attractive that he generally does not get attracted to others because he believes that no one is more beautiful and handsome to look at than him)[5] (4).

[[5]The Pitambar that the Lord wears is superior in brightness and shine to the lightening that dazzles in the clouds, while the Lord's face is more attractive than that of Kamdeo/cupid who is traditionally considered the most beautiful entity in creation.

The "Pitambar" is known by various names: viz. a "peet" because of its yellow colour, and as a "dukul" because it covers the lower as well as the upper parts of the wearer's body, and hence is in 'two parts'. Another reason for calling it a "dukul" is that it has two layers of embroidered border.]

All the parts of the Lord's body are most pretty, handsome and peerlessly beautiful. Forsooth, there is no poet or bard competent enough who can describe them.

Tulsidas says that all those who have the Darshan of the Lord (i.e. those who look at Sri Ram with reverence, devotion and affection) become happy and contented (5).

(7 / 9)

सखि ! रघुबीर मुख–छबि देखु।
चित्त–भीति सुप्रीति–रंग सुरूपता अवरेखु।। 1।।
नयन–सुषमा निरखि नागरि ! सफल जीवन लेखु।
मनहुँ बिधि जुग जलज बिरचे ससि सुपूरन मेखु।। 2।।
भ्रुकुटि भाल बिसाल राजत रुचिर–कुंकुम–रेखु।
भ्रमर द्वै रबिकिरनि ल्याए करन जनु उनमेखु।। 3।।
सुमुखि ! केस सुदेस सुंदर सुमन–संजुत पेषु।
मनहुँ उडुगन–निबह आए मिलन तम तजि द्वेषु।। 4।।
स्रवन कुंडल मनहु गुरु–कबि करत बाद बिसेषु।
नासिका, द्विज, अधर जनु रह्यो मदनु करि बहु बेषु।। 5।।
रूप बरनि न सकत नारद–संभु, सारद–सेषु।
कहै तुलसीदास क्यों मतिमंद सकल नरेषु।। 6।।

sakhi! raghubīra mukha-chabi dēkhu.
citta-bhīti suprīti-raṅga surūpatā avarēkhu.. 1..
nayana-suṣamā nirakhi nāgari! saphala jīvana lēkhu.
manahuṁ bidhi juga jalaja biracē sasi supūrana mēkhu.. 2..
bhrukuṭi bhāla bisāla rājata rucira-kuṅkuma-rēkhu.
bhramara dvai rabikirani lyā'ē karana janu unamēkhu.. 3..
sumukhi! kēsa sudēsa suṁdara sumana-saṁjuta pēṣu.
manahuṁ uḍugana-nibaha ā'ē milana tama taji dvēṣu.. 4..
sravana kuṇḍala manahu guru-kabi karata bāda bisēṣu.
nāsikā, dvija, adhara janu rahyō madanu kari bahu bēṣu.. 5..
rūpa barani na sakata nārada-sambhu, sārada-sēṣu.
kahai tulasīdāsa kyōṁ matimanda sakala narēṣu.. 6..

The Charm of Lord Ram as He Sits on the Throne of Ayodhya-IV

Verse no. 7/9—Oh Friend (sakhi)! Have a good look at the beauteous, radiant and charming image of Raghubir's (Sri Ram's) face (raghubīra mukha-chabi dēkhu).

You should make it a point to mark this remarkable image permanently by etching it or painting it (surūpatā avarēkhu) on the wall (or canvas) of your mind, memory and sub-conscious (citta-bhīti) using the indelible paint consisting of love, endearment and affection (suprīti-raṅga) (1).

Oh Urbane Woman (nāgari)! Watching the bewitching beauty and the charm of the Lord's eyes, you should consider your life as being well lived (and fully rewarded). Verily, the eyes of the Lord resemble two lotuses made by the Creator (bidhi juga jalaja biracē) on the surface of the full moon in the zodiac sign of Aries (sasi supūrana mēkhu) (2).

The broad forehead of the Lord are adorned by the eyebrows, as well as by the (two) magnificent lines made by a paste of saffron ("rucira-kuṅkuma-rēkhu"; representing the Tilak Mark).

In all sooth the sight reminds one of two bumble/black bees who have brought two rays of the sunlight (for the development of two lotuses)[1] (3).

[[1]Here, the eyebrows of Lord Ram are the 'bees'; the two lines of the Tilak Mark on his forehead are the two 'rays of the sunlight'; and the eyes are the two 'lotuses'.]

Oh the Sweet-Faced One (sumukhi)! Watch the wonderful sight of the black hairs on the Lord's head that are decorated with beautiful white flowers.

Verily it appears that the stars (represented by the white flowers) have abandoned their natural opposition, malice, animosity and apprehension of darkness (represented by the black hairs), and have arrived to meet it (for rapprochement and reconciliation)[2] (4).

[[2]Here in this imagery, the hairs of the Lord are likened to the 'darkness of the clouds'; and the white flowers that are studded in the locks of hairs to decorate them

are like the 'stars'. Normally the stars shun the cloud: the cloud and the stars can't coexist. But here it seems that both have abandoned their natural opposition and apprehension of each other, and have come together to enjoy the privilege of being present on the head of Lord Ram.]

The two large ear-rings in the Lord's ears resemble Jupiter and Venus who are engaged in dispute or debate with each other[3], while the nose (nostrils), teeth and lips look so splendorous and fascinating as if Kamdeo/cupid himself has assumed different forms to get an opportunity to find a place on the body of Lord Ram[4] (5).

[[3]The ear-rings are swaying to and fro as if the two great sages known as Brihaspati, who is the moral preceptor of the gods and is represented by the giant planet Jupiter, and sage Shukracharya, the moral preceptor of the demons and is represented by the planet Venus, are involved in some serious debate—shaking, jumping, gesturing, articulating, gesticulating and showing one-upmanship in the debate on some spiritual or metaphysical topic they are engaged in, which they usually are.

[4]Kamdeo's body is chiselled to perfection. But when he saw Lord Ram he felt inferior. In order to hide and overcome his embarrassment that his beauty is not up to the mark, he decided that he would find an excuse to quietly and subtly transmute himself into some part of Lord Ram's divine body itself so that henceforth no one would be able to say that Kamdeo is inferior in beauty.]

The astounding beauty, magnificence, charm, radiance, majesty, glamour and allure of Lord Ram's bewitching image or form (rūpa) cannot be described even by Shankar (Lord Shiva), the legendary Sheshnath (the thousand-tongued celestial Serpent), Goddess Saraswati (the patron goddess of learning, speech and knowledge) as well as by the celestial sage Narad (who is an expert in grammar, language and the art of singing), then say how can it be done by Tulsidas who is the very unskilled and like a king of duds and fools (i.e. he is most incompetent, ignorant and illiterate person)[5]? (6).

[[5]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 5; verse no. 7/16, stanza no. 8; verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 16.

The use of these words by Tulsidas for himself shows his great simplicity, humility and modesty. He does not boast of his scholarly aptitudes and mastery over the language, for it is not that he was actually a fool or dumb-witted, for in fact he was an acclaimed scholar of his time as is evidenced by the wonderful books that he has written, books that have become bench-marks of excellent literature.]

राग जैतश्री

(7 / 10)

देखौ, राघव–बदन बिराजत चारु।
जात न बरनि, बिलोकत ही सुख, मुख किधौं छबिबर नारि सिंगारु।। 1।।
रुचिर चिबुक, रद–ज्योति अनूपम, अधर अरुन सित हास निहारु।
मनो ससिकर बस्यो चहत कमल महँ प्रगटत, दुरत, न बनत बिचारु।।2।।
नासिक सुभग मनहुँ सुक सुंद चितवत चकि आचरज अपारु।

कल कपोल, मृदु बोल मनोहर रीझि, चित चतुर अपनपौ वारु।। 3।।
नयन सरोज, कुटिल कच, कुण्डल, भ्रुकुटि, सुभाल तिलक सोभा–सारु।
मनहुँ केतुके मकर, चाप–सर गयो, बिसारि भयो मोहित मारु।। 4।।
निगम–सेष, सारद, सुक संकर, बरनत रूप न पावत पारु।
तुलसिदास कहै, कहौ, धौं कौन बिधि अति लघुमति जड़ कूर गँवारु।। 5।।

rāga jaitaśrī

(7/10)

dēkhau, rāghava-badana birājata cāru.
jāta na barani, bilōkata hī sukha, mukha kidhauṁ chabibara nāri siṅgāru.. 1..
rucira cibuka, rada-jyōti anūpama, adhara aruna sita hāsa nihāru.
manō sasikara basyō cahata kamala mahaṁ pragaṭata, durata, na banata bicāru..2..
nāsika subhaga manahuṁ suka sunda citavata caki ācaraja apāru.
kala kapōla, mr̥du bōla manōhara rījhi, cita catura apanapau vāru.. 3..
nayana sarōja, kuṭila kaca, kuṇḍala, bhrukuṭi, subhāla tilaka sōbhā-sāru.
manahuṁ kētukē makara, cāpa-sara gayō, bisāri bhayō mōhita māru.. 4..
nigama-sēṣa, sārada, suka saṅkara, baranata rūpa na pāvata pāru.
tulasidāsa kahai, kahau, dhauṁ kauna bidhi ati laghumati jaṛa kūra gaṁvāru.. 5..

The Charm of Lord Ram as He Sits on the Throne of Ayodhya-V

Verse no. 7/10—'Look! Rāghava's (Sri Ram's) body is so handsome and adorable that it cannot be described. One gets immense pleasure by merely seeing it.

Is this bewitching beauty and charm pertains to the Lord's face, or is it the magnificent allure of the pretty face of a beautiful woman who is fully decorated in all her finery? (1).

His (Sri Ram's) chin is beautiful and charming, while the shine and light of the teeth are matchless.

Look at the reflection of his white teeth on his red (or pink) lips as he smiles or laughs. It reminds one of the rays of the moon that wish to reside in a red lotus, but unable to decide what to do, emerges and disappears in quick succession (2).

[[1]Here, the white glistening teeth are like the 'moon'; their shine is like the 'moonlight'; and the red lips are like the 'red-hued lotus flower'. Lord Ram opens and shuts his mouth in quick succession while smiling or laughing briefly, whereby these teeth appear and disappear from sight repeatedly. This scene is like the light of the rays of the moon that fain would want to reside upon the red lotus, but remains undecided what to do—because the lotus closes its petals in the presence of the moon's light just like Lord Ram closing his mouth or lips after a brief smile or laughter.]

His prominent (and well built) nose resembles the attractive beak of a parrot, looking at which the mind is filled with immense marvel and astonishment (that there is virtually no difference in the shape of the nose and a parrot's beak, and both appear to be well chiseled and curved to perfection)[2].

Oh clever and wise mind and intellect (collectively known as the 'Mana')! Get enthralled and enamoured by the soft and tender cheeks, and sweet talk (voice, words) and sacrifice or offer yourself to them (3).

[[2]A parrot's beak is considered to be the best possible shape for a nose.

Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/3, stanza no. 4; verse no. 7/4, stanza no. 2; verse no. 7/5, stanza no. 4; verse no. 7/12, stanza no. 7.]

His eyes are like the lotus flower, the hairs are curled, and the ear-rings, the eyebrows and the Tilak Mark on a pretty forehead appear to be the essence or fine examples of the virtues of magnificence, splendour and majestic beauty.

Verily it appears that Kamdeo/cupid was so bewitched, so much enthralled and enamoured at the beauty and charm (of Lord Sri Ram's face) that he lost awareness of himself as he watched the Lord, and at the time of going away from there he left the signs of his flag, i.e. the two alligators, the bow and the arrow, there on the Lord's face[3] (4).

[[3]Here, the two ear-rings are the 'alligators' that are marked on the standard or the flag of Kamdeo; the eyebrows of the Lord are like the curved 'bow'; and the two lines of the Tilak Mark on his forehead, just above the nose and between the arched eyebrows, are like the 'arrows' of Kamdeo's flag. Refer Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/6, stanza no. 3 and its accompanying note.]

Even the Vedas, legendary Seshnath, Saraswati, (the parrot sage) Shukdeo and Lord Shiva are unable to fully describe the beauty, charm, attractiveness, splendour and magnificence of Sri Ram's image. Then, say, how can it be done (described) by Tulsidas who is very foolish, naive, of low intellect, stone-hearted (i.e., emotionless and illiterate)[4] (5).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/9, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/16, stanza no. 8; verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 16 also.

Of course, he wasn't! This is a courteous way of saying things modestly. Tulsidas does not want to appear bombastic or verbose, trying to prove his mettle in a crafty use of words and his expertise with poetry composition. That would be expressly immodest for a saint of his stature. But, who will deny his expert 'engineering' skills with the use of words?]

राग ललित

(7 / 11)

आज रघुपति–मुख देखत लागत सुख
सेवक सुरुष, सोभा सरद–ससि सिहाई।
दसन–बसन लाल, बिसद हास रसाल
मानो हिमकर–कर राखे राजीव मनाई।। 1।।
अरुन नैन बिसाल, ललित भ्रुकुटि, भाल

तिलक, चारु कपोल, चिबुक–नासा सुहाई।
बिथुरे कुटिल कच, मानहु मधु लालच अलि,
नलिन–जुगल उपर रहे लोभाई।। 2।।
स्रवन सुंदर, सम कुंडल कल जुगम,
तुलसिदास अनूप, उपमा कही न जाई।
मानो मरकत सीप सुंदर ससि समीप
कनक मकरजुत बिधि बिरची बनाई।। 3।।

rāga lalita

(7/11)

āja raghupati-mukha dēkhata lāgata sukha
sēvaka suruṣa, sōbhā sarada-sasi sihā'ī.
dasana-basana lāla, bisada hāsa rasāla
mānō himakara-kara rākhē rājīva manā'ī.. 1..
aruna naina bisāla, lalita bhrukuṭi, bhāla
tilaka, cāru kapōla, cibuka-nāsā suhā'ī.
bithurē kuṭila kaca, mānahu madhu lālaca ali,
nalina-jugala upara rahē lōbhā'ī.. 2..
sravana sum̐dara, sama kuṇḍala kala jugama,
tulasidāsa anūpa, upamā kahī na jā'ī.
mānō marakata sīpa sundara sasi samīpa
kanaka makarajuta bidhi biracī banā'ī.. 3..

The Charm of Lord Ram as He Sits on the Throne of Ayodhya-VI

Verse no. 7/11—Today, one finds joy and comfort (solace and succour) by looking at the face of Lord Raghupati (i.e. Lord Sri Ram, the Lord of king Raghu's line) because he is benevolent, favourably inclined, benevolent and munificent towards his servants (devotees, followers, subordinates etc.) (sēvaka suruṣa).

Even the full moon of a winter's night praises this beauty and magnificnce. His lips are red-tinged, and the broad smile on his face is very sweet to behold, as if the soothing rays of the smiling moon have been politely kept by the lip-like lotuses within their folds[1] (1).

[[1]Here, the 'moon' represents the cheerful face of Lord Sri Ram which is spreading pleasure and comfort in all the directions by its cheerful smile that provides solace to his devotees; this smile of the Lord is the 'soothing ray of the moon'. The lips of the Lord are like the 'petals of the lotus' which have trapped these qualities in their folds. When the lotus opens—that is, the lips part—the smile spills over to drench every beholder in its enrapturing and enamouring spell of beauty and charm, alongside giving solace to those who need the Lord's blessings and comfort to those who are tormented and suffering from the miseries associated with this world. As soon as such people approach Lord Ram, he smiles at them, at once giving them cheer of hope.]

The Lord's red coloured and large eyes, attractive eyebrows, a Tilak Mark on the forehead, enchanting cheeks, chin and nostrils—all are very charming and beautiful. His curved (curled) hairs are scattered as if black/bumble bees remain hovering over two lotuses in the hope of getting honey (nectar) from them[2] (2).

[[2]Here, the hairs are the 'bees'; the eyes are the 'lotuses'; and the enchanting beauty effusing from the eyes through Sri Ram's glances is the 'honey'. The curly hairs dangle over the eyes of the Lord as if these 'bees' hover over the 'lotuses' in search of a chance to alight and suck 'nectar'.]

His lovely ears have a pair of similar looking ear-rings each.

Tulsidas says that they are peerless in beauty, charm, splendour and magnificence, and one cannot compare them with anything. It appears that the Creator has moulded two oyster shells (represented by the two ears) out of emerald along with two golden fishes (represented by the ear-rings), and placed them near a beautiful, enchanting and enrapturing image of the full moon (represented by Lord Ram's face) that he created[3] (3).

[[3]Here, the ears of Lord Ram are likened to the 'oyster shells'; the two ear-rings to the two 'golden fish'; and the face of Sri Ram to the 'full moon'. This analogy refers to the origin of the moon in the celestial ocean. All the three entities mentioned here—viz. the oyster shell, the fish and the moon—have their origin in the ocean.]

राग भैरव

(7 / 12)

प्रातकाल रघुबीर–बदन–छबि चितै, चतुर चित मेरे।
होहिं बिबेक–बिलोचन निरमल सुफल सुसीतल तेरे।। 1।।
भाल बिसाल बिकट भ्रुकुटी बिच तिलक–रेख रुचि राजै।
मनहुँ मदन तम तकि मरकत–धनु जुगुल कनक सर साजै।। 2।।
रुचिर पलक लोचन जुग तारक स्याम, अरुन सित कोए।
जनु अलि नलिन–कोस महँ बंधुक–सुमन सेज सजि सोए।। 3।।
बिलुलित ललित कपोलनिपर कच मेचक कुटिल सुहाए।
मनो बिधुमहँ बनरुह बिलोकि अलि बिपुल सकौतुक आए।। 4।।
सोभित स्रवन कनक–कुंडल कल लंबित बिबि भुजमूले।
मनहुँ केकि तकि गहन चहत जुग उरग इंदु प्रतिकूले।। 5।।
अधर अरुनतर, दसन–पाँति बर, मधुर मनोहर हासा।
मनहुँ सोन सरसिज महँ कुलिसनि तड़ित सहित कृत बासा।। 6।।
चारु चिबुक, सुकतुंड बिनिंदक सुभग सुउन्नत नासा।
तुलसिदास छबिधाम राममुख सुखद, समन भवत्रासा।। 7।।

rāga bhairava

(7/12)

prātakāla raghubīra-badana-chabi citai, catura cita mērē.
hōhiṁ bibēka-bilōcana niramala suphala susītala tērē.. 1..
bhāla bisāla bikaṭa bhrukuṭī bica tilaka-rēkha ruci rājai.
manahuṁ madana tama taki marakata-dhanu jugula kanaka sara sājai.. 2..
rucira palaka lōcana juga tāraka syāma, aruna sita kō'ē.
janu ali nalina-kōsa mahaṁ bandhuka-sumana sēja saji sō'ē.. 3..
bilulita lalita kapōlanipara kaca mēcaka kuṭila suhā'ē.
manō bidhumahaṁ banaruha bilōki ali bipula sakautuka ā'ē.. 4..
sōbhita sravana kanaka-kuṁḍala kala lambita bibi bhujamūlē.
manahuṁ kēki taki gahana cahata juga uraga indu pratikūlē.. 5..
adhara arunatara, dasana-pāṁti bara, madhura manōhara hāsā.
manahuṁ sōna sarasija mahaṁ kulisani taḍita sahita kṛta bāsā.. 6..
cāru cibuka, sukatuṇḍa binindaka subhaga su'unnata nāsā.
tulasidāsa chabidhāma rāmamukha sukhada, samana bhavatrāsā.. 7..

Tulsidas gives Advice to his Sub-conscious Mind and Intellect

Verse no. 7/12—Oh my clever and wise sub-conscious mind and intellect (catura cita mērē)! You should look at the magnificent charm and beauty of Raghubir's (Sri Ram's) divine body (or face) early in the morning (or, the first thing in the morning). This would help make your eyes of wisdom and thoughts (bibēka-bilōcana) become pure and uncorrupt; they would be rewarded and feel contented and glad (niramala suphala susītala)[1] (1).

[[1]Remember: Tulsidas views Lord Ram as a personified form of the Supreme Being, and not as some ordinary human prince. Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/6, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/7, stanza no. 6.

Hence, he exhorts his mind, intellect and sub-conscious to think of Lord Ram and remember him the first thing in the morning upon awaking, because this practice would help Tulsidas to focus his mind and heart on the Lord, and help him to peacefully live the days of his life immersed in the thoughts of his beloved Lord. This practice would be like daily meditation for him, and it would go a long way in not only eliminating the worries and miseries of the world that afflict him, but also pave the way for his spiritual bliss and ultimate deliverance.]

The curved eyebrows of Lord Ram adorn his broad forehead, and, in between them, are two straight lines representing the attractive Tilak Mark.

Verily it appears that Kamdeo/cupid has targeted darkness, and has mounted two golden arrows on a bow of emerald[2] (2).

[[2]Here, from the physical perspective, the dense crop of hairs on the Lord's head is the 'darkness'; the curved eyebrows are the 'bow'; and the two 'arrows' are the two strands of the Tilak Mark. The eyebrows are dark in colour, hence they are likened to the 'bow made of emerald'.

From the spiritual perspective, the remembrance of Lord Ram and the constant thought of him helps to eliminate the darkness of spiritual ignorance.]

The beautiful and charming eyes of the Lord are provided with lids that are red tinged; these eyes also have two dark-hued iris, while their corneas are white in

colour—as if two bumble/black bees, trapped (enclosed) in by the petals of the lotus, are resting atop its thallus[3] (3).

[[3]Here, the 'petals' of the lotus are the lids; the 'lotus' is the eyes; the 'bees' are the two irises, and the 'thallus' represents the cornea.]

The black and curly locks of hairs dangling on charming cheeks of the Lord look so magnificent as if numerous black/bumble bees have assembled out of curiosity on seeing flowers of lotus (the eyes) emerging on the surface of the moon (Lord Sri Ram's face)[4] (4).

[[4]Here, the black hairs are the 'bees'; the face of Lord Ram is the 'moon'; and the eyes are the 'lotus'.]

Hanging from the ears, the two large golden ear-rings, which extend up to the shoulder joints, look like two peacocks trying to catch hold of two long snakes which are malicious towards or opposed to the moon[5] (5).

[[5]Here, the hands are the 'snakes'; the ear-rings are the 'peacocks'; and the face of Sri Ram is the 'moon'. The hands are said to be opposed to the moon-like face of Lord Ram because they have to reach out up to it to repeatedly tuck away the hairs which are constantly falling over the eyes, or to 'swat away the bees that buzz and hum around his lotus like eyes'. In this process, from a distance, it looks that the hands are trying to swipe at the face of the Lord, albeit their intention is only to remove the hairs falling over the eyes. And when the hands reach up to touch the face and jerk the hairs aside, it is natural that the Lord's head moves, and this makes the two large ear-rings swing wildly as if trying to remove the two serpent-like hands away from the face of the Lord which is like the moon.]

His (Sri Ram's) lips are of deep red colour, the row of Vajra-like teeth are beautiful, while the smile is very pleasing and sweet—as if lightening (or electric) has taken a dwelling in some golden lotus[6] (6).

[[6]Here, the teeth are compared to the 'Vajra' because the latter is the hardest weapon known, is said to be made of raw diamond, and it belong to Indra, the king of gods; the smile is the 'lightening'; and the lips are the 'golden lotus'.]

The Lord's chin is very attractive, while a prominent and jutting-out nostrils put to shame the beak of a parrot (i.e. they are superior in beauty to it)[7].

Tulsidas says that the face of Lord Sri Ram, who is an abode of beauty, charm, magnificence, majesty, radiance and holiness, is most comforting, is a provider of bliss, and it calms (removes) the fear of birth and death (i.e. the fear from transmigration of soul that it endlessly suffers from by being trapped in an endless cycle of birth and death) (7).

[[7]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/3, stanza no. 4; verse no. 7/4, stanza no. 2; verse no. 7/5, stanza no. 4; verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 3.]

राग केदारा

(7 / 13)

सुमिरत श्रीरघुबीरजीकी बाहैं।

होत सुगम भव–उदधि अगम अति, कोउ लाँघत, कोउ उतरत थाहैं।।1।।
सुंदर–स्याम–सरीर–सैलतें धँसि जनु जुग जमुना अवगाहैं।
अमित अमल जल–बल परिपूरन, जनु जनमी सिँगार सविता हैं।। 2।।
धारैं बान, कूल धनु, भूषन जलचर, भँवर सुभग सब घाहैं।
बिलसति बीचि बिजय–बिरदावलि, कर–सरोज सोहत सुषमा हैं।। 3।।
सकल–भुवन–मंगल–मंदिरके द्वार बिसाल सुहाई साहैं।
जे पूजी कौसिक–मख ऋषियनि, जनक–गनप, संकर–गिरिजा हैं।।4।।
भवधनु दलि जानकी बिबाही, भए बिहाल नृपाल त्रपा हैं।
परसुपानि जिन्ह किये महामुनि जे चितए कबहू न कृपा हैं।। 5।।
जातुधान–तिय जानि बियोगिनि दुखई सीय सुनाइ कुचाहैं।
जिन्ह रिपु मारि सुरारि–नारि तेइ सीस उघारि दिवाई धाहैं।। 6।।
दसमुख–बिबस तिलोक लोकपति बिकल बिनाए नाक चना हैं।
सुबस बसे गावत जिन्हके जस अमर–नाग–नर सुमुखि सना हैं।। 7।।
जे भुज बेद–पुरान, सेष–सुक–सारद सहित सनेह सराहैं।
कलपलताहुकी कलपलता बर, कामदुहहुकी कामदुहा हैं।। 8।।
सरनागत–आरत–प्रनतनिको दै दै अभयपद ओर निबाहैं।
करि आईं, करिहैं, करती हैं तुलसिदास दासनिपर छाहैं।। 9।।

rāga kēdārā

(7/13)

sumirata śrīraghubīrajīkī bāhaiṁ.
hōta sugama bhava-udadhi agama ati, kō'u lām̃ghata, kō'u utarata thāhaiṁ..1..
sundara-syāma-sarīra-sailatēṁ dham̃si janu juga jamunā avagāhaiṁ.
amita amala jala-bala paripūrana, janu janamī sim̃gāra savitā haiṁ.. 2..
dhāraiṁ bāna, kūla dhanu, bhūṣana jalacara, bham̃vara subhaga saba ghāhaiṁ.
bilasati bīci bijaya-biradāvali, kara-sarōja sōhata suṣamā haiṁ.. 3..
sakala-bhuvana-maṅgala-mandirakē dvāra bisāla suhā'ī sāhaiṁ.
jē pūjī kausika-makha r̤siyani, janaka-ganapa, saṅkara-girijā haiṁ..4..
bhavadhanu dali jānakī bibāhī, bha'ē bihāla nr̤pāla trapā haiṁ.
parasupāni jinha kiyē mahāmuni jē cita'ē kabahū na kr̤pā haiṁ.. 5..
jātudhāna-tiya jāni biyōgini dukha'ī sīya sunā'i kucāhaiṁ.
jinha ripu māri surāri-nāri tē'i sīsa ughāri divā'ī dhāhaiṁ.. 6..
dasamukha-bibasa tilōka lōkapati bikala binā'ē nāka canā haiṁ.
subasa basē gāvata jinhakē jasa amara-nāga-nara sumukhi sanā haiṁ.. 7..
jē bhuja bēda-purāna, sēṣa-suka-sārada sahita sanēha sarāhaiṁ.
kalapalatāhukī kalapalatā bara, kāmaduhahukī kāmaduhā haiṁ.. 8..
saranāgata-ārata-pranatanikō dai dai abhayapada ōra nibāhaiṁ.
kari ā'īṁ, karihaiṁ, karatī haiṁ tulasidāsa dāsanipara chāhaiṁ.. 9..

Verse no. 7/13—As soon as one remembers (invokes) the strength of the (helpful) arms of Raghubir (Lord Sri Ram), the fathomless ocean represented by this mundane, deluding world which is difficult, terrible and horrifying, becomes easy to cross and be tamed. Then some can jump over (leap across) it, while others can swim across it[1] (1).

[[1]There are two ways to get across over this vast ocean-like world of transmigration. One is 'to leap across it', and the other is 'to swim across it'. What does it mean?

The first way is to develop complete detachment from this material world and its charms, completely renounce it like the way it is done by Sanyasis, or by enlightened ascetics and hermits. By doing so, one does not have to undergo through the pains and sufferings that are associated with mundane life in this material world. They just 'leap across' these horrors just as one crosses a turbulent river on a bridge.

The second way is to live a normal life in the world as an ordinary householder, but remembering Lord Ram at all times. This helps the aspirant remain calm and poised albeit he has to pass through all the turmoil, worries and pains that are part and parcel of mundane life. This is like 'swimming across the water' because it needs effort, diligence, practice, and focus of mind on the objective of life. A slight carelessness sinks the boat.

And where does the spiritual aspirant find his strength to follow either of these two paths? He finds it in Lord Ram's arms; he who seeks the protection of the Lord and asks him to lend his arms in the struggle is sure to get help.]

These two arms of Lord Ram are symbolically like the two branches of river Yamuna emerging from the mountain representing the Lord's dark complexioned body. This river is fathomless and full of crystal clear water, and its currents are swift and strong representing measureless strength, vigour, valour, and courage. It appears to have emerged from the Sun of splendour, beauty and magnificence[2] (2).

[[2]To wit, two imageries are used here. The first one is: The shoulder of Lord Ram is the 'mountain', and from it has emerged the 'two branches of river Yamuna' symbolizing the Lord's two arms. This river is fathomless and full of clean water, and its currents are swift and strong—i.e. the arms of Lord Ram have immense strength and they swiftly give protection to the Lord's devotees, while at the same time sweeping away all difficulties and obstacles like the fast currents of river Yamuna that sweeps away every obstacles that fall in its way.

The second imagery is this: Lord Ram's beauteous form is the sun, and the sun's brilliant rays and its radiance remove the darkness of the night and spread the message of life and light and hope in all the directions like the Lord spreading his arms and giving assurance of his benevolence, grace, kindness and mercy to all, as well as promising his help to remove the darkness of ignorance and the fear of gloom created by evil and sins.]

The Lord's arrows are the (swift) currents of this symbolic river, the bow is the (curved) bank, the ornaments are the aquatic creatures (because they are many in numbers and spread over the body of the Lord like these creatures who are present everywhere in the river), and the space between the fingers are the whirlpools (because when the Lord holds someone he does not let his slip like these whirlpools which do not allow anyone sucked in by them to escape).

The valiant and noble deeds as well as the immense glories of the Lord are this river's symbolic waves (as they are high, endless and countless, surging forward with vigour and majesty, like these great and high deeds and glories of the Lord).

The lotuses present in this magnificent river are represented by the palms of the Lord's hands (because the palms are like the petals of the lotus) (3).

They (the long, strong and robust arms of Lord Ram) resemble the two magnificent, broad and robust 'pillars of the doorway of the palace' representing auspiciousness and welfare of the whole world (i.e. the entire living creation)[3].

Verily, these arms of the Lord were worshipped by the sages during the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra[4], as well as by king Janak[5], Ganesh[6], Lord Shiva and Parvati[7].

In all sooth, these arms have fulfilled the wishes and desires of all (the devotees of Lord Ram) (4).

[[3]Lord Ram's arms support 'Dharma' (principles of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble thoughts and conduct) in this world by lending their strength to maintain all the good virtues in the world.

[4]Lord Ram had used the strength of his arms to give protection to the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra by slaying the demons who had been continuously defiling it. Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/66, stanza nos. 2-3.

[5]The Lord had broken the sturdy Bow of Lord Shiva at Janakpur by employing the strength of his arms, thereby removing the torments of king Janak. This is because Janak had made a vow that anyone who would break this bow would marry his daughter Sita, but all the mighty kings and princes of the world who had come there to try their luck had failed to even move this bow. Only Lord Ram could actually break it. Refer: (a) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 1/89—1/90; (b) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 254; Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 261; and Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263 that explicitly say this.

[6]Once there was a dispute between Ganesh and Kartikeya, the two brothers and sons of Lord Shiva, as to who was greater. Lord Shiva devised a device whereby he said that any one of them who went round the creation and came back first would be the winner. Kartikeya got on his mount, the peacock, and flew away. Ganesh had a heavy body and his mount was the humble mouse; so it was impossible to expect from him to go around the world. He approached his mother Parvati, who loved him very much. She told him to write the holy name of RAM on a piece of paper and go around it, for it would be equivalent to circumambulating the creation. Ganesh did as told, and sat quietly. When Kartikeya returned he found Ganesh already there. Shiva declared Ganesh as the winner. Peeved, stunned and astonished, Kartikeya demanded an explanation from Shiva, whereat the Lord told him that Lord Ram encompasses the entire creation, and his name symbolizes everything that exists. Hence, by going round Lord Ram's holy name, Ganesh has gone round the world.

This incident, albeit it may be imaginary, but it nevertheless tells us the glory of Lord Ram and his divinity.

[7]Parvati had assumed the form of Sita, the wife of Lord Ram, to test the divinity of the Lord, and this mischief of hers had angered her husband Lord Shiva who abandoned her. However, Lord Ram is so gracious that he did not feel bad at Parvati's misdemeanours, but rather arranged the subsequent events in such a way that they reconciled and Shiva married Parvati in her next birth. That is, Lord Ram, being merciful and gracious, was instrumental in bringing peace and happiness in the

lives of Shiva and Parvati once again. This story is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

He broke Lord Shiva's bow and married Sita putting to shame all the assembled kings and princes[8], while Parashuram, who had never thought of mercy, compassion and kindness towards anyone, was converted (transformed) into a great sage (full of mercy, compassion and kindness after his encounter with Sri Ram)[9] (5).

[[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5 that precedes Doha no. 265.

[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 272; Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 283; and Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 285.]

When the demonesses tormented Sita by saying numerous unpleasant and derogatory things to her, thinking her to be engrossed (submerged) in sorrows of separation (from Lord Ram), these arms of the Lord had slayed the enemy and made the demon-wives remove their head scarfs or head coverings (as a token of surrender, humiliation, lamentation and remorse) even as they wailed loudly[10] (6).

[[10]This refers to the war at Lanka and Lord Ram's victory over the demon army to liberate Sita. At that time, the wives of demons had grieved and wailed due to the death of their husbands. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 104.]

Ravana had forced himself on (i.e. conquered, triumphed over) the three Lokas (subterranean, terrestrial, celestial worlds), had tormented their Lords (known as the "Lokpals"), and had forced them to literally pick up grams by their noses ("bikala binā'ē nāka canā"; a figure of speech symbolising trampling underfoot, forced labour, slavery, abject humiliation and torture of those who are conquered at the hands of the conqueror).

(When that Ravana was killed—) The gods, legendary serpents and humans began to reside peacefully in their respective abodes with their respective spouses, whereat they liberally and in a loud voice sang the glories, the valour and the strength of these arms of Lord Ram (because the Lord's arms had liberated them from the horrors perpetrated upon them by the demon Ravana) (7).

These arms (of Sri Ram) are praised affectionately by the Vedas, Purans, legendary Sheshnath, Saraswati (the Goddess of wisdom, knowledge) and (the parrot sage) Shukdeo.

Forsooth, these arms of Lord Ram represent the best of virtues for which the Kalapalatā as well as the Kāmaduhā are famous for[11] (8).

[[11]The "kalapalatā" is the evergreen creeper of heaven, and like its counterpart, the kalapalataru, it is an eternal source of fulfilling all the needs of the world. Similarly, the "kāmaduhā" is the cow of the gods, and it also gives whatever is asked from it.

In this stanza it is said that Lord Ram and his arms combine the glorious virtues of both: they can grant any boon that the devotee as well as ordinary creatures seek from them.

This idea is further elaborated in the next verse no. 7/14 herein below.]

These arms of Lord Ram give (bestow) fearlessness to those who are the underdogs, the weak, the humble, the lowly and the downtrodden, those who have sought their refuge, shelter and protection, and who have bowed (or surrendered) before them (in all humility and sincerity) till the end.

Tulsidas assertively declares that such arms of the Lord have always cast a protective shadow upon his devotees and followers (servants) since time immemorial, shall do it at present, and shall do till eternity (9).

राग भैरव

(7 / 14)

रामचंद्र–करकंज कामतरु बामदेव–हितकारी।
सियसनेह–बर बेलि–बलित बर–प्रेम बंधु बर बारी।। 1।।
मंजुल मंगल–मूल मूल तनु, करज मनोहर साखा।
रोम परन, नख सुमन, सुफल सब काल सुजन–अभिलाषा।। 2।।
अबिचल, अमल, अनामय, अबिरल ललित, रहित छल छाया।
समन सकल संताप–पाप–रुच–मोह–मान–मद–माया।। 3।।
सेवहिं सुचि मुनि भृंग–बिहग मन–मुदित मनोरथ पाए।
सुमिरत हिय हुलसत तुलसी अनुराग उमगि गुन गाए।। 4।।

rāga bhairava

(7/14)

rāmacandra-karakaṅja kāmataru bāmadēva-hitakārī.
siyasanēha-bara bēli-balita bara-prēma bandhu bara bārī.. 1..
manjula maṅgala-mūla mūla tanu, karaja manōhara sākhā.
rōma parana, nakha sumana, suphala saba kāla sujana-abhilāṣā.. 2..
abicala, amala, anāmaya, abirala lalita, rahita chala chāyā.
samana sakala santāpa-pāpa-ruca-mōha-māna-mada-māyā.. 3..
sēvahiṁ suci muni bhr̥ṅga-bihaga mana-mudita manōratha pā'ē.
sumirata hiya hulasata tulasī anurāga umagi guna gā'ē.. 4..

The Glory and Symbolism of Lord Ram's Arms—II

Verse no. 7/14—The lotus-like arms[1] of Lord Sri Ram are indeed the benefactor, the well-wisher, and friendly disposed (towards his devotees).

[[1]The long fore arm of the hand is the 'stem of the lotus'; the palms is like the 'thallus'; and the open fingers are like the 'petals' of this flower.]

Verily, they are like a Kāmataru (the "Kalpa-Tree" which is the all wish-fulfilling tree of the gods) that immensely pleases Lord Shiva (because Shiva relies upon the strength of Lord Ram's glories and divine powers to get bliss for himself, as well as provide salvation to a dying person by uttering the Lord's holy name in his or her ears).

It (the Kalpa Tree) is interwined by a creeper representing affection and endearment of Sita, while Laxman's purity of affection, selfless service and devotion denote the hedge surrounding it (1).

The Lord's (Sri Ram's) charming and most auspicious body (image) is the 'root' of this tree; the Lord's fingers are the attractive 'branches'; the body hairs are the (numerous) 'leaves'; the nails are the 'flowers'; while fulfilment of the wishes of righteous and noble persons is the 'perennial good fruit' that this tree bears (2).

The shadow that this tree provides is stable (abicala), faultless (amala), without sorrows and agonies (anāmaya), dense (thick), most pleasant (abirala lalita) and without any crookedness or deceit (rahita chala; i.e. is straight forward and upright)[2].

[[2]By using these words Tulsidas means that the shelter, patronage, protection or refuge which is provided by Lord Sri Ram's arms to his devotees is all inclusive, without any buts and ifs, is given selflessly, without any kind of strings attached, and it is steady, sturdy, reliable and free from obligations.]

That tree (represented by Lord Ram) is the one which eliminates (or overcomes and decimates) such negative traits as sorrows (santāpa), sins/evils/vices (pāpa), torments created by different spiritual ills associated with the world (ruca) such as attachments/infatuations (mōha), uncontrolled mind and heart (māna), haughtiness/arrogance/pride/ego/hypocrisy (mada), and delusions of all kinds (māyā) (3).

The bumble/black bees and birds representing pure-hearted, simple and humble sages, hermits and seers delightfully enjoy it, and get their wishes fulfilled.

Forsooth, even Tulsidas feels exhilarated in his heart on remembering this divine Tree (i.e. the Kalpa Tree represented by Lord Ram and his strong arms that are like the sturdy branches of this tree), and its potential powers and glories, whereat he experiences a surge of intense love and affection in his heart (for Lord Ram) even as he sings the divine glories, virtues and fame of this symbolic Tree (representing Lord Ram) (4).

(7 / 15)

रामचरन अभिराम कामप्रद तीरथ–राज बिराजै।
संकर–हृदय–भगति–भूतलपर प्रेम–अछयबट भ्राजै।। 1।।
स्यामबरन पद–पीठ, अरुन तल, लसित बिसद नखस्रेनी।
जनु रबि–सुता सारदा–सुरसरि मिलि चलीं ललित त्रिबेनी।। 2।।
अंकुस–कुलिस–कमल–धुज सुंदर भँवर तरंग–बिलासा।
मज्जहिं सुर–सज्जन, मुनिजन–मन मुदित मनोहर बासा।। 3।।
बिनु बिराग–जप–जाग–जोग–ब्रत, बिनु तप, बिनु तनु त्यागे।
सब सुख सुलभ सद्य तुलसी प्रभु–पद–प्रयाग अनुरागे।। 4।।

rāmacarana abhirāma kāmaprada tīratha-rāja birājai.
saṅkara-hṛ̣daya-bhagati-bhūtalapara prēma-achayabaṭa bhrājai.. 1..
syāmabarana pada-pīṭha, aruna tala, lasita bisada nakhasrēnī.
janu rabi-sutā sāradā-surasari mili calīṁ lalita tribēnī.. 2..
aṅkusa-kulisa-kamala-dhuja suṁdara bhaṁvara taraṅga-bilāsā.
majjahiṁ sura-sajjana, munijana-mana mudita manōhara bāsā.. 3..
binu birāga-japa-jāga-jōga-brata, binu tapa, binu tanu tyāgē.
saba sukha sulabha sadya tulasī prabhu-pada-prayāga anurāgē.. 4..

Lord Ram's Holy Feet

Verse no. 7/15—The most attractive holy lotus-like feet of Lord Sri Ram (rāmacarana abhirāma), which can fulfill all the desires and wishes (of his devotees: kāmaprada), are like a personified form of the best of pilgrim sites, literally the sites that are like a 'king amongst all the pilgrim places' (tīratha-rāja). [To wit, the benefits got from visiting different pilgrim cities can be got by worshipping the holy feet of Sri Ram alone.]

It is like an 'Achayabaṭa' (the tree of immortality; another name for the 'Kalpa-Tree' whose fruits symbolize fulfillment of all desires) representing love and affection (prēma-achayabaṭa) for Lord Ram that grows on the ground represented by the devotion and worship in the heart of Lord Shiva (saṅkara-hṛ̣daya-bhagati-bhūtalapara) (1).

The upperside of the Lord's feet are dark in complexion (syāmabarana pada-pīṭha), the soles are red or pink in hue (aruna tala), while the white coloured nails on these feet shine and look glamorous (lasita bisada nakhasrēnī)—as if the three holy rivers Yamuna, Saraswati and Ganges (rabi-sutā sāradā-surasari) are flowing together in a pretty and auspicious confluence known as 'Triveni' (mili calīṁ lalita tribēnī)[1]. (2).

[[1]Here, the upperside of the dark coloured feet of Lord Ram represent the river 'Yamuna' which has a dark hue of its water; the underside of the feet, i.e. the sole of the feet which are concealed from view, represent the river 'Saraswati' which flows underground and is hidden from view; and the white toe-nails are the currents of the river 'Ganges' whose water is grayish in colour.

The confluence of these three rivers is known as "Triveni" (in modern day city of Allahabad in north-central India), and it is deemed to be superior to all other pilgrim sites as it brings together the spiritual virtues of all these three holy rivers at one place, whereat it is also called Tīratha-rāja, the King amongst holy places.]

The marks on the skin of the sole—a goad (aṅkusa), a Vajra ("kulisa"; Indra's weapon), a lotus (kamala) and a flag or standard (representing Dharma: -dhuja)—are the symbolic pretty whirlpools and currents of these three rivers.

Gods and saints bathe in these rivers (in their physical forms), while holy men such as sages and hermits find peace and joy by focusing their minds abidingly in these feet of the Lord (in a subtle and symbolic form of bathing in these holy rivers)[2] (3).

[[2]To wit, there are two ways or planes whereby one takes a holy dip in the water of these three holy rivers. One way is at the physical plane when a person actually makes a pilgrimage to the holy site known as Triveni and takes a dip at a

point midstream where the three rivers mingle. But this cannot be done regularly and daily by all the people as not everyone can go and live at Triveni for their lifetime.

The other easier and subtler form of taking a dip in these holy rivers is to remember and focus one's mind in the holy feet of Lord Ram, worshipping them as a personified form of Triveni. This can be done by all, at any time of the day, on a regular basis, and throughout one's lifetime, whereby one derives immense spiritual bliss and peace even while sitting at home or wherever one happens to be.

This method of deriving benefits of a symbolic pilgrimage to the Triveni by worshipping and having devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram is extremely easy, done without the least effort and trouble, and is a better way of attaining spiritual rewards because it gives the additional bonus of receiving blessings, benevolence and grace from Lord Ram, the Supreme Being himself.]

Tulsidas says that by worshipping, having devotion for, and developing love, endearment and affection towards these holy feet of Lord Ram, which are like 'Prayag' (another name for Triveni; the confluence of the three holy rivers described above) (tulasī prabhu-pada-prayāga anurāgē), it is possible that the seeker of spiritual happiness and peace can attain all his objectives almost immediately (saba sukha sulabha sadya) without (binu) having to undertake the hardships associated with other avenues to attain spiritual rewards, such as practicing Vairagya (renunciation: birāga), Japa (constant repetition of the Lord's name: japa), Yagya (various religious sacrifices: jāga), Yoga (meditation: jōga), Vrat (religious fastings or vows: brata), and Tapa (austerities, penances: tapa).

In fact, all these rewards are available by worshipping Lord Ram's holy feet during one's lifetime, and one need not with for these efforts to bear in the next life after death binu tanu tyāgē) (4).

राग बिलावल

(7 / 16)

रघुबर–रूप बिलोकु, नेकु मन।
सकल लोक–लोचन–सुखदायक, नखसिख सुभग स्यामसुंदर तन।।1।।
चारु चरन–तल–चिह्न चारि फल चारि देत परचारि जानि जन।
राजत नख जनु कमल–दलनिपर अरुन–प्रभा–रंजित तुषार–कन।।2।।
जंघा–जानु आनु कदली उर, कटि किंकिनि, पटपीत सुहावन।
रुचिर निषंग, नाभि, रोमावलि, त्रिबलि, बलित उपमा कछु आव न।। 3।।
भृगुपद–चिह्न, पदिक, उर सोभित, मुकुतमाल, कुंकुम–अनुलेपन।
मनहुँ परसपर मिलि पंकज–रबि प्रगट्यो निज अनुराग, सुजस घन।।4।।
बाहु बिसाल ललित सायक–धनु, कर कंकन केयूर महाधन।
बिमल दुकूल–दलन दामिनि–दुति, यज्ञोपवीत लसत अति पावन।। 5।।
कंबुग्रीव, छबि सींव, चिबुक, द्विज, अधर, कपोल, बोल, भय–मोचन।
नासिक सुभग, कृपापरिपूरन तरुन अरुन राजीव बिलोचन।। 6।।
कुटिल भ्रुकुटिबर, भाल तिलक रुचि, सुचि सुंदरता स्रवन–बिभूषन।
मनहुँ मारि मनसिज पुरारि दिय ससिहि चाप सर–मकर अदूषन।। 7।।
कुंचित कच, कंचन–किरीट सिर, जटित ज्योतिमय बहुबिधि मनिगन।

तुलसिदास रबिकुल रबि–छबि कबि कहि न सकत सुक–संभु–सहसफन।।8।।

rāga bilāvala

(7/16)

raghubara-rūpa bilōku nēku, mana.
sakala lōka-lōcana-sukhadāyaka, nakhasikha subhaga syāmasuṁdara tana..1..
cāru carana-tala-cihna cāri phala cāri dēta paracāri jāni jana.
rājata nakha janu kamala-dalanipara aruna-prabhā-ranjita tuṣāra-kana..2..
jaṅghā-jānu ānu kadalī ura, kaṭi kiṅkini, paṭapīta suhāvana.
rucira niṣaṅga, nābhi, rōmāvali, tribali, balita upamā kachu āva na.. 3..
bhṛgupada-cihna, padika, ura sōbhita, mukutamāla, kuṅkuma-anulēpana.
manahuṁ parasapara mili paṅkaja-rabi pragaṭyō nija anurāga, sujasa ghana..4..
bāhu bisāla lalita sāyaka-dhanu, kara kaṅkana kēyūra mahādhana.
bimala dukūla-dalana dāmini-duti, yajñōpavīta lasata ati pāvana.. 5..
kambugrīva, chabi sīnva, cibuka, dvija, adhara, kapōla, bōla, bhaya-mōcana.
nāsika subhaga, kṛpāparipūrana taruna aruna rājīva bilōcana.. 6..
kuṭila bhrukuṭibara, bhāla tilaka ruci, suci sundaratā sravana-bibhūṣana.
manahuṁ māri manasija purāri diya sasihi cāpa sara-makara adūṣana.. 7..
kuṁcita kaca, kañcana-kirīṭa sira, jaṭita jyōtimaya bahubidhi manigana.
tulasidāsa rabikula rabi-chabi kabi kahi na sakata suka-sambhu-sahasaphana..8..

Lord Ram's Magnificent Beauty and Charm-I

Verse no. 7/16—[Tulsidas addresses his Mana, i.e. his mind and heart, and advises it as follows—] "Oh my Mana! Just have a good look at the beautiful and pleasant countenance of Lord Raghubar (Sri Ram). This form of the Lord is the bestower of happiness, comfort and a sense of contentment to the eyes of the world (i.e. the Lord gives happiness to all the creatures in this world).

The Lord's divine body is dark in complexion, and adorable from the toe-nail to the tuft of hairs on his head (1).

The four marks of divinity on the sole of the Lord's holy feet[1] appear to search for his devotees, recognise them, and then gladly offers them the four rewards that one gets for meritorious life and deeds[2].

The toe-nails look so glorious and remarkable as if dew drops that are present on the petals of a lotus are looking radiant (or glowing) with the reflected light from the fresh rays of the 'infant sun' (i.e. the early morning sun whose rays are of a red tinge)[3] (2).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, (a) Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/40, stanza no. 1; (b) Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/15, stanza no. 3; verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 2.

These divine markings on the sole of Lord Ram are the following: the "Goad"—representing power to control; the "Vajra"—power of invincibility; the "Standard or the Flag"—signifying that the Lord is an upholder of Dharma, or the principles of righteousness and probity; and the "Lotus"—pristine purity amidst filth and muck of the gross world, representing the various evils and vices of this world.

[2]The four great rewards that a person gets for his spiritual merits and leading a life in accordance to the principles of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, noble thoughts and conduct) are the following: of "Artha"—abundance of wealth, prosperity; "Dharma"—success in following the path of righteousness, probity, noble conduct etc., and their associated fame and good-will; "Kaam"—fulfillment of all desires; and "Moksha"—emancipation and salvation of soul upon death; final liberation and deliverance. Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 2.

[3]In this imagery, the toes of the Lord's feet are like the 'petals of the lotus flower'; the toe-nails are the 'dew drops atop these petals'; and the shine of these nails are like the 'rays of the morning sun falling on these dew drops perched on the petals of the lotus'.]

The Lord's thighs and knees remind one of the plantain stem (smooth, even, glowing and shiny skin), and the waist of the Lord is adorned by the waist-band (of precious metal such as gold and having decorative engravings on it) and a 'Pitambar' (which is a seamless, yellow length of silk that is wrapped around the body by noble men; also worn by Lord Vishnu).

There is nothing to compare with his beautiful quiver, the navel, the body hairs, and the folds of the skin on the abdomen (3).

On Lord Ram's chest, there is a mark of sage Brighu's foot, a medallion, a garland (or necklace) of pearls, and a smear of paste of saffron. They together look so adorable and magnificent as if the sun and the lotus have joined hands to manifest (overtly express) their affection for each other, and at the same time reveal their own glories, virtues and fame in a joint effort[4] (4).

[[4]Here, the mark of the sage Brighu's foot is the thallus of the 'lotus flower'; the shining 'medallion' is the splendorous sun; the chest and its folds of skin are the 'petals'; the smear of saffron is the 'yellowish hue of the lotus flower'; and the pearl necklace represents the simmering 'whiteness of the flower' or the 'dew drops on its petals'.

The 'sun' in the sky, and the 'lotus' on the earth are two unique entities. The sun is the most brilliant object in the sky, while the lotus is the most beautiful flower in a pond. They have a mutual affinity for each other—for the lotus opens its petals when it sees the sun.

In the present case, the poet views the four entities on Lord Ram's chest as perfect match for each other just like the pair of the sun and the lotus.]

He (Lord Sri Ram) is holding a pretty bow and an arrow in his big hands. He wears a precious bracelet and an armband on each of his wrists and arms.

The perfectly clean and shiny Pitambar, known as a "dukūla"[5], that adorns the Lord's body appears to snatch the light, lustre, radiance, glamour and dazzle of lightening (i.e. its dazzle, shine, lustre, radiance and splendour are like electric).

A holy sacred thread known as the "yajñōpavīta" too adorns his body (5).

[[5]The Pitambar is known as a "dukūla" because it covers the lower as well as the upper parts of the wearer's body, and hence is in 'two parts'. Another reason for calling it a "dukūla" is that it has two layers of embroidered border.]

The Lord's neck is like a conch; the chin, row of teeth, lips and cheeks are like the benchmarks (i.e. the best examples of, yardsticks, standards to measure the virtues) of beauty and prettiness; and his words (speech, talk, voice) can remove all types of fears.

His nostrils are well built (prominent, well moulded), and the eyes, which are like a newly born (opened) red lotus, are full of compassion, mercy and kindness (6).

The Lord's pretty eyebrows are curved, there is an attractive Tilak Mark on his forehead, while the two ear-rings are also very charming—as if Lord Shiva, after slaying Kamdeo (māri manasija purāri diya), has given the latter's faultless bow and arrow, and his two alligators (cāpa sara-makara adūṣana), to the moon (diya sasihi)[6] (7).

[[6]Here, the eyebrows of Lord Sri Ram are the 'bow'; the Tilak mark on his forehead is the 'arrow'; the two ear-rings are the 'two alligators'; and the Lord's pretty face is the 'moon'.

Kamdeo has these three signs on his flag or standard. Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 4 and its accompanying note.

Kamdeo, the patron god of passion, lust and desire, was slayed by Lord Shiva when he went to disturb the Lord's meditation. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 8.]

The Lord's hairs are curled and curved, and there is a golden crown on his head which is studded by various types of radiant and lusterous gems and jewels.

Tulsidas says that the beauteous and stupendously magnificent image of Lord Sri Ram—who is like a sun in the Sun-race—cannot be described by any poet when Shukdeo (the sage parrot), Lord Shiva, Sheshnath (the serpent with the thousand hoods) etc. are unable (or incompetent, inept) to do so[7] (8).

[[7]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/9, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 5; verse no. 7/17, stanza no. 16.]

राग कान्हरा

(7 / 17)

देखो रघुपति–छबि अतुलित अति।
जनु तिलोक–सुषमा सकेलि बिधि राखी रुचिर अंग–अंगनि प्रति।।1।।
पदुमराग रुचि मृदु पदतल धुज–अंकुस–कुलिस–कमल यहि सूरति।
रही आनि चहुँ बिधि भगतनिकी जनु अनुरागभरी अंतरगति।। 2।।
सकल–सुचिह्न–सुजन–सुखदायक, ऊरधरेख बिसेष बिराजति।
मनहुँ भानु–मंडलहि सँवारत धर्‌यो सूत बिधि–सुत बिचित्रमति।। 3।।
सुभग अँगुष्ठ, अंगुली अबिरल, कछुक अरुन नख–ज्योति जगमगति।

चरन–पीठ उन्नत नत पालक, गूढ़ गुलुफ, जंघा कदलीजति।। 4।।
काम तून–तल–सरिस जानु जुग, उरु करिकर करभहि बिलखावति।
रसना रचित रतन चामीकर, पीत बसन कटि कसे सरसावति।। 5।।
नाभी सर, त्रिवली निसेनिका, रोमराजि सैवल–छबि पावति।
उर मुकुतामनि–माल मनोहर मनहु हंस–अवली उड़ि आवति।। 6।।
हृदय पदिक, भृगु–चरन चिह्नबर–बाहु बिसाल जानुलगि पहुँचति।
कल केयूर पूर कंचन–मनि, पहुँची मंजु कंजकर सोहति।। 7।।
सुजव सुरेख सुनख अंगुलिजुत सुंदर पानि मुद्रिका राजति।
अंगुलित्रान–कमान–बानछबि सुरनि सुखद, असुरनि उर सालति।। 8।।
स्याम सरीर सुचंदन–चरचित पीत दुकूल अधिक छबि छाजति।
नील जलदपर निरखि चंद्रिका दुरनि त्यागि दामिनि जनु दमकति।। 9।।
यज्ञोपबीत पुनीत बिराजत गूढ़ जत्रु बनि पीन अंस तति।
सुगढ़ पुष्ट उन्नत कृकाटिका, कंबु–कंठ–सोभा मन मानति।।10।।
सरद–समय–सरसीरुह–निंदक मुख सुषमा कछु कहत न बानति।
निरखतही नयननि निरुपम सुख, रबिसुत–मदन–सोम–दुति निदरति।।11।।
अरुन अधर, द्विजपाँति अनूपम, ललित हँसनि जनु मन आकरषति।
बिद्रुम–रचित बिमानमध्य जनु सुरमंडली सुमन–चय–बरसति।।12।।
मंजुल चिबुक, मनोरम हनुथल, कल कपोल, नासा मन मोहति।
पंकज–मान–बिमोचन लोचन, चितवनि चारु अमृत–जल सींचति।।13।।
केस सुदेस, गँभीर बचन बर स्रुतिकुंडल–डोलनि जिय जागति।
लखि नवनील पयोद, रवित सुनि, रुचिर मोर जोरी जनु नाचति।।14।।
भौंहैं बंक मयंक–अंक–रुचि, कुंकुमरेख भाल भलि भ्राजति।
सिरसि, हेम–हीरक–मानिकमय मुकुट–प्रभा सब भुवन प्रकासति।।15।।
बरनत रूप पार नहिं पावत निगम–सेष–सुक–संकर–भारति।
तुलसिदास केहि बिधि बखानि कहै यह मन–बचन अगोचर मूरति।।16।।

rāga kānharā

(7/17)

dēkhō raghupati-chabi atulita ati.
janu tilōka-suṣamā sakēli bidhi rākhī rucira aṅga-aṅgani prati..1..
paduma rāga ruci mr̥du padatala dhuja-aṅkusa-kulisa-kamala yahi sūrati.
rahī āni cahum̆ bidhi bhagatanikī janu anurāgabharī antaragati.. 2..
sakala-sucihna-sujana-sukhadāyaka, ūradharēkha bisēṣa birājati.
manahum̆ bhānu-maṇḍalahi sam̆vārata dharyō sūta bidhi-suta bicitramati.. 3..
subhaga am̆guṣṭha, aṅgulī abirala, kachuka aruna nakha-jyōti jagamagati.
carana-pīṭha unnata nata pālaka, gūṛha gulupha, jaṅghā kadalījati.. 4..
kāma tūna-tala-sarisa jānu juga, uru karikara karabhahi bilakhāvati.
rasanā racita ratana cāmīkara, pīta basana kaṭi kasē sarasāvati.. 5..
nābhī sara, trivalī nisēnikā, rōmarāji saivala-chabi pāvati.
ura mukutāmani-māla manōhara manahu hansa-avalī uḍi āvati.. 6..
hr̥daya padika, bhr̥gu-carana cihnabara-bāhu bisāla jānulagi pahum̆cati.
kala kēyūra pūra kan̆cana-mani, pahum̆cī manju kan̆jakara sōhati.. 7..
sujava surēkha sunakha aṅgulijuta sundara pāni mudrikā rājati.

aṅgulitrāna-kamāna-bānachabi surani sukhada, asurani ura sālati.. 8..
syāma sarīra sucandana-caracita pīta dukūla adhika chabi chājati.
nīla jaladapara nirakhi candrikā durani tyāgi dāmini janu damakati.. 9..
yajñōpabīta punīta birājata gūṛha jatru bani pīna ansa tati.
sugaṛha puṣṭa unnata kṛ̊kāṭikā, kambu-kaṇṭha-sōbhā mana mānati..10..
sarada-samaya-sarasīruha-nindaka mukha suṣamā kachu kahata na bānati.
nirakhatahī nayanani nirupama sukha, rabisuta-madana-sōma-duti nidarati..11..
aruna adhara, dvijapāmt̃i anūpama, lalita hamt̃sani janu mana ākaraṣati.
bidruma-racita bimānamadhya janu suramaṇḍalī sumana-caya-barasati..12..
manj̃ula cibuka, manōrama hanuthala, kala kapōla, nāsā mana mōhati.
paṅkaja-māna-bimōcana lōcana, citavani cāru amṛ̊ta-jala sīn̆cati..13..
kēsa sudēsa, gamb̃hīra bacana bara srutikuṇḍala-ḍōlani jiya jāgati.
lakhi navanīla payōda, ravita suni, rucira mōra jōrī janu nācati..14..
bhaunhaiṁ baṅka mayaṅka-aṅka-ruci, kuṁkumarēkha bhāla bhali bhrājati.
sirasi, hēma-hīraka-mānikamaya mukuṭa-prabhā saba bhuvana prakāsati..15..
baranata rūpa pāra nahiṁ pāvata nigama-sēṣa-suka-saṅkara-bhārati.
tulasidāsa kēhi bidhi bakhāni kahai yaha mana-bacana agōcara mūrati..16..

Lord Ram's Magnificent Beauty and Charm-II

Verse no. 7/17—Just have a look at the image of Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) with its stupendous, matchless and bewitching beauty and charm (dēkhō raghupati-chabi atulita ati).

Forsooth and without gainsay it appears that the Creator had collected the best of the qualities of magnificence, beauty, charm, glamour and majesty from all the three Lokas (the entire creation; the three levels of the world: heaven, earth and nether world) that existed anywhere, and then vested the Lord's body with them. [To wit, when the Creator was creating the image of Lord Ram, he diligently collected all the best qualities that existed anywhere in his creation, and then used them to mould the body of Lord Ram.] (1).

On the soles of the Lord's lotus like feet—which are charming and pleasant like nectar of the lotus which has effused out of it's sac on to the surface of the flower (paduma rāga ruci mṛ̊du padatala)—are the marks of a divine Flag/Standard, a Goad, a Vajra and a Lotus (dhuja-aṅkusa-kulisa-kamala) which represent the inherent devotional inclinations and spiritual tendencies of the four types of the Lord's devotees[1], which have come to take up residence at the Lord's feet (2).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, (a) Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/15, stanza no. 3; verse no. 7/16, stanza no. 2; and (b) Sundar Kand, verse 5/40, stanza no. 1.

The 4 types of devotees are as follows— (a) "Aarta" = one who worships the Lord to get rid of their sorrows, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations; (b) "Arthaarthi" = those who worship the Lord for material gain, wealth, prosperity etc.; (c) "Jigyaasu" = those who worship the Lord in order to seek Him, or find out about His true nature, the Supreme Truth, the essence of existence etc.; and (d) "Gyani"= those who have realised Him, and worship Him selflessly. They are also aware of the true nature of the soul.

The 4 types of fruits that these devotees get are the following—"Artha" = wealth, prosperity; "Dharma" = virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety; "Kaam" = fulfilled of all desires; and "Moksha" = emancipation, salvation, liberation and deliverance from the shackles of this mundane, delusory world.

These 4 divine markings on the sole of Lord Ram are the following: the "Goad"—representing power to control; the "Vajra"—power of invincibility; the "Standard or the Flag"—signifying that the Lord is an upholder of Dharma, or the principles of righteousness and probity; and the "Lotus"—pristine purity amidst filth and muck of the gross world, representing the various evils and vices of this world.

In other words, all the four aspirations of the Lord's four types of devotees are fulfilled if the devotee has affection for Lord Ram and worships his holy feet that bears the four divine marks as mentioned in this verse, with the understanding of their importance and significance.]

Though all the auspicious signs (marks) on the Lord's sole give comfort, solace and succour to those who are righteous, noble and pious (sakala-sucihna-sujana-sukhadāyaka), but the central vertical line marked on the Lord's sole (i.e. a line that runs from the toe to the heels: ūradharēkha) has special significance (bisēṣa birājati)—for it appears that the very wise, expert and clever artisan of the Gods, known as "bidhi-suta" (literally the 'son of the Creator Vidhi' or Brahma; his other commonly known name is "Vishwakarma" who is believed to be the architect and builder of the Gods and the world) had made it while constructing (building, developing) the solar system (bhānu-maṇḍalahi saṁvārata), to use it as a measuring thread (or the builder's plumb-line: dharyō sūta) to keep the planets and other celestial bodies in perfect alignment! (3).

The Lord's large (the first) toe is pretty and stands out from the other toes that are well-built and stand close to each other. The slightly red-hued toe-nails have luster and brilliant shine in them.

The upperside (outer surface) of the feet are raised (i.e. have a convex curvature), and are the protector of the lowly, meek, weak and humble ones.

The ankle joints are concealed (because the Lord's legs are muscular and fleshy), while the thighs resemble the stem of the plantain tree (because the thighs are smooth, soft and glistening like the stem of the plantain tree) (4).

Both the knees of the Lord resemble the lower end of Kamdeo/cupid's quiver (i.e. are flabby and cup shaped); the well built thighs crush the pride of (i.e. are superior in built and muscular strength to) an elephant's trunk and its young one.

A waist-band made of gold and studded with gems is worn by him around the waist, while a Pitambar that is tied around it looks adorable (5).

The Lord's navel is like a deep lake (or a large pond): the three lines (folds of skin) on the abdomen are like the steps leading to this pond, while the body hairs resemble the beauty of the moss (that grows around the lake). The garland of pearls on the chest resembles a row of swans emerging from that lake (6).

There is a medallion and the mark of sage Bhrigu's foot-print on his chest.

The Lord's long arms extend up to the knees. Beautiful amulets and armlets of jewels, gold and other precious metals adorn these arms, while attractive bracelets adorn his wrists (7).

A finger-ring adorns the Lord's beautiful hand (i.e. his fingers) which has auspicious linings on the fingers and the palm, and has beautiful nails and attractive fingers.

Verily, the beauty of the image of the protective jewel-encrusted covering of the fingers (known as "aṅgulitrāna"), as well as the bow and arrows that the Lord holds, give comfort, joy and succour to the Gods, while at the same time they produce (create) torment (fear) in the heart of demons[2] (8).

[[2]The Gods feel reassured and freed from all fears when they see the bow and the arrow of Lord Ram who is ready to use his weapons as is signaled by his wearing the aṅgulitrāna which is used when one uses a bow and arrow to protect the skin of the thumb and the fingers from injury. The same sight instills fear in the heart of the demons who are sore affright of the Lord as he is the vanquisher of these evil and sinful fellows.]

The Pitambar wrapped around (or draped on) the Lord's dark complexioned body, that is smeared with a paste of sandalwood, looks very attractive and magnificent—as if the lightening has stopped its fickle nature of playing hide-and-seek (appearing and disappearing in the clouds), and has, instead, decided to shine constantly on seeing the dark (rain-bearing) cloud ablaze (glow; shine) in the rays of the moonlight[3] (3).

[[3]Here, the 'dark cloud' is Lord Sri Ram's dark-complexioned body; the 'shine or dazzle of lightening' is the shine of the silk Pitambar that he wears; and the 'moonlight' is the glow and radiance of Lord Sri Ram's countenance when the light of the moon reflects from the Lord's face.

The lightening is naturally present in a rain-bearing cloud, but its shine is transient as it appears and disappears quickly. In the present imagery, the Pitambar is compared to the 'lightening' because of it shine and dazzle, and the dark-complexioned body of Lord Ram to the 'dark rain bearing clouds'. Now, since the Pitambar is a constant feature on Lord Ram's body, the light of the moon or the sun that it reflects from its smooth silken suface is constant. And when this reflected light falls on the Lord's face or other parts of the body, it reminds the poet of the scene when the light of the moon or the sun falls on the surface of dark clouds, making them glow with reflected light. When this happens, the pride of the lightening that it is the one which makes the cloud illuminated is crushed—as the cloud gets a constant light from the moon or the sun.]

A holy and clean sacred thread known as the 'yajñōpabīta' adorns the neck of the Lord (as it is slung around the neck). His collar bone is concealed (gūṛha jatru), the shoulders are well built, muscular and broad (bani pīna ansa tati), the Adam's Apple is prominent, muscular and well developed (sugaṛha puṣṭa unnata kṛ̥kāṭikā), while the conch-like neck looks appealing and pleasant to the mind (kambu-kaṇṭha-sōbhā mana mānati) (10).

The Lord's face is so pretty and attractive that one cannot describe it, for it seems to put to shame the lotus flowers during the winter, and make the latter feel inferior to it in beauty and charm[4].

Indeed, the eyes of the beholder get immense pleasure and comfort by merely watching the Lord's face). This beauteous image scoffs at (shows disrespect to; puts to shame even) the radiance, glamour and beauty of Ashwini Kumar, Kamdeo/cupid and a full Moon[5] (11).

[[4]The lotus flower looks most beautiful during the winter months. But when they are compared to the charm of Lord Ram's pretty face, their beauty seems not upto the mark.

[5]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/8, stanza no. 1.]

Most beautiful row of teeth are present between the Lord's red or pink hued lips, the charming smile of which seems to pull the mind magnetically towards itself—well, it appears that the community of Gods are showering a hail of white flowers from their aerial vehicles made of red corals upon the world[6] (12).

[[6]Here, the red lips are the 'red corals'; the shower of 'white flowers' is the teeth.]

The Lord's attractive chin, a charming '**hanuthala**' (which is part of the chin below the lower jaw), and lovely cheeks and nostrils—all enrapture and enchant the mind of the beholder.

His eyes crush the pride and haughtiness of lotus (regarding its beauty and charm), while his glances appear to shower a rain of Amrit (elixir of life and happiness; here meaning his glances provide great hope and solace to those whom the Lord sees even causally) (13).

Hairs adorn the Lord's head; his voice (talk, words, speech) is very sweet, pleasant and sober.

The two ear-rings that sway to and fro in the ears of the Lord provide thrill to the heart of the beholder—for it reminds one of a pair of peacocks who dance at the sight of dark clouds and the sound of its rumbling and thundering[7] (14).

[[7]Here, the ear-rings are the 'peacocks'; Lord Sri Ram's complexion is the 'dark cloud'; and his sweet talk with a deep sounding voice is the grave 'rumbling and thundering' of the clouds.

The peacock begins to dance as soon as it hears the rumbling and thundering of the clouds because it knows that the rainy season and its rains are imminent. The meaning here is that when one hears Lord Ram speak politely but with a voice that is serious and means business, the devotee feels glad at heart that the Lord has payed heed to him and all his problems would now be taken care of.]

Like the dark spots or lines on the surface of the moon, there are the curved eyebrows and the Tilak Mark of saffron paste on the Lord's forehead (or on his 'moon like face'), while the majestic radiance and splendour of the golden crown, studded with diamonds and gems, that adorns the Lord's head gives light to the whole world[8] (15).

[[8]In this metaphor it is meant that when the world sees Lord Ram with the golden crown on his head, it feels reassured that a benevolent and merciful King is here to give it protection and succour. The 'crown' signifies that Lord Ram is indeed the King-Emperor, the Sovereign and the Supreme Authority of this world. And the shine of this crown is like the light of the sun that spreads in all the directions uniformly, implying that the Lord shows his benevolence and grace upon the whole world without any sort of discrimination or bias.

Further, the shining crown also means that all sorts of darkness symbolizing negativities and evils that prevails in this world are eliminated when Lord Ram takes up the responsibility for the world's welfare.]

Even the Vedas, (the legendary) Sheshnath, (the parrot sage) Shukdeo, Lord Shiva and Goddess Saraswati etc. cannot find the end trying to describe the beauty, charm, splendour, majesty and magnificence of the Lord—then say, how can Tulsidas describe an image which cannot be understood (or, which is beyond the scope of, or is not the subject of comprehension) by the mind, intellect and speech[9] (16).

[[9]Lord Sri Ram's glories and stupendous beauty is beyond the grasp of the mind and intellect, and therefore, they cannot be described by the tongue.

Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/9, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/10, stanza no. 5; verse no. 7/16, stanza no. 8.]

राम–हिंडोला

राग मलार

(7 / 18)

आली री ! राघोके रुचिर हिंडोलना झूलन जैए।।
फटिक–भीति सुचारु चहुँ दिसि, मंजु मनिमय पौरि।
गच काँच लखि मन नाच सिखि जनु, पाँचसर–सुफँसौरि।।
तोरन–बितान–पताक–चामर–धुज सुमन–फल घौरि।
प्रतिछाँह–छबि कबि–साखि दै प्रति सों कहै गुरु हौं रि।। 1।।
मदन–जयके खंभ–से रचे खंभ सरल बिसाल।
पाटीर–पाटि बिचित्र भँवरा बलित, बेलन लाल।।
डाँड़ो कनक कुंकुम–तिलक–रेख–सी मनसिज–भाल।
पटुली पदिक रति–हृदय जनु कलधौत कोमल माल।। 2।।
उनये सघन घनघोर, मृदु झरि सुखद सावन लाग।
बगपाँति, सुरधनु, दमक दामिनि हरित भूमि–बिभाग।।
दादुर मुदित, भरे सरित–सर, महि उमग जनु अनुराग।
पिक–मोर–मधुप–चकोर–चातक–सोर उपबन बाग।। 3।।
सो समौ देखि सुहावनो नवसत सँवारि–सँवारि।
गुन–रूप–जोबन–सींव सुंदरि चलीं झुंडनि झारि।।
हिंडोल–साल बिलोकि सब अंचल पसारि–पसारि।
लागीं असीसन राम–सीतहि सुख–समाजु निहारि।। 4।।
झूलहिं, झुलावहिं, ओसरिन्ह गावैं सुहो, गौंडमलार।
मंजीर–नूपुर–बलय–धुनि जनु काम–करतल–तार।।
अति मुचत स्रमकन मुखनि, बिथुरे चिकुर, बिलुलित हार।
तम तड़ित उडुगन अरुन बिधु जनु करत ब्योम–बिहार।। 5।।
हिय हरषि, बरषि प्रसून निरखति बिबुध–तिय तृन तूरि।
आनंद–जल–लोचन, मुदित मन, पुलक तनु भरि पूरि।।
सब कहहिं, अबिचल राज नित, कल्यान–मंगल भूरि।
चिर जियौ जानकिनाथ जग तुलसी–सजीवनि–मूरि।। 6।।

rāga malāra

(7/18)

ālī rī! rāghōkē rucira hiṇḍōlanā jhūlana jai'ē..
phaṭika-bhīti sucāru cahum̐ disi, maṋju manimaya pauri.
gaca kām̐ca lakhi mana nāca sikhi janu, pām̐casara-suphaṁsauri..
tōrana-bitāna-patāka-cāmara-dhuja sumana-phala dhauri.
pratichām̐ha-chabi kabi-sākhi dai prati sōṁ kahai guru hauṁ ri.. 1..
madana-jayakē khambha-sē racē khambha sarala bisāla.
pāṭīra-pāṭi bicitra bham̐varā balita, bēlana lāla..
ḍānm̐ṛō kanaka kuṅkuma-tilaka-rēkha-sī manasija-bhāla.
paṭulī padika rati-hṛḍaya janu kaladhauta kōmala māla.. 2..
unayē saghana ghanaghōra, mṛḍu jhari sukhada sāvana lāga.
bagapām̐ti, suradhanu, damaka dāmini harita bhūmi-bibhāga..
dādura mudita, bharē sarita-sara, mahi umaga janu anurāga.
pika-mōra-madhupa-cakōra-cātaka-sōra upabana bāga.. 3..
sō samau dēkhi suhāvanō navasata sam̐vāri-sam̐vāri.
guna-rūpa-jōbana-sīnva sundari calīṁ jhuṇḍani jhāri..
hiṇḍōla-sāla bilōki saba an̄cala pasāri-pasāri.
lāgīṁ asīsana rāma-sītahi sukha-samāju nihāri.. 4..
jhūlahiṁ, jhulāvahiṁ, ōsarinha gāvaiṁ suhō, gauṇḍamalāra.
maṋjīra-nūpura-balaya-dhuni janu kāma-karatala-tāra..
ati mucata sramakana mukhani, bithurē cikura, bilulita hāra.
tama taḍita uḍugana aruna bidhu janu karata byōma-bihāra.. 5..
hiya haraṣi, baraṣi prasūna nirakhati bibudha-tiya tr̥na tūri.
ānanda-jala-lōcana, mudita mana, pulaka tanu bhari pūri..
saba kahahiṁ, abicala rāja nita, kalyāna-maṅgala bhūri.
cira jiyau jānakināṭha jaga tulasī-sajīvani-mūri.. 6..

"Ram Hindola"
(A Musical Composition Sung on a Swing)

Verse no. 7/18—[The word "Hiṇḍōlā" refers to a 'Swing' (a noun). It consists of a seat suspended by ropes or chains from a tree or a rafter put across poles standing vertically erect on the ground. People sit on this seat and swing back and forth.

It is a tradition amongst women-folk in India that during the rainy season, called the 'Sawan Month' (see stanza no. 3 of this verse), when swings are hung from trees or erected in gardens and other public places, they go there to enjoy an outing for pleasure and enjoyment with their friends and acquaintances. When they are enjoying themselves while swaying on the swing, they sing melodious songs that are exclusive for such occasions.

Lord Ram was the king of Ayodhya, so he got many such swings made within his palace gardens, which were open to the citizens, as well as at public places for general use. The Lord treated his subjects as if all of them were members of a single extended family, and he used to mingle with them freely. So he used to go to these swings himself where the citizens joined their beloved Lord to enjoy the weather and the rains. Once he left, these swings were made available to the public.

In this verse, the young ladies of the city decide to go to one such swing especially made for Lord Ram, and hence the title of this verse: "rāma-hiṇḍōlā". It will be noted that Tulsidas is at his best as a poet when describing this scene. He has liberally used metaphors and similes from Nature to narrate the beauty of the sight.]

[One young lady exhorts her friends to come along with her to the Swing of Lord Ram, so-called as it was especially made for his use.] 'Oh my dear friend (ālī rī)! Come, let us go to enjoy swinging on the fascinating and attractively charming Swing of Lord Ram (rāghōkē rucira hiṇḍōlanā jhūlana jai'ē).

[Now, the lady friend describes this Swing itself.] All around it (the Swing) is a wall of beautiful crystal (phaṭika-bhīti sucāru cahum̐ disi), and the doors are made of (i.e. studded with) beautiful gems (manju manimaya pauri).

Seeing its hard floor made of glazed glass, one's mind begins to dance like a peacock (gaca kām̐ca lakhi mana nāca sikhi), as if it was nothing but an entangling loop used by Kamdeo/cupid (janu, pām̐casara-suphaṁsauri). [To wit, the floor is so attractive that it captivates one's mind so much that one wishes to keep on looking at it and observing one's image as it is reflected from this floor. It gives the impression that the mind has been captured by the snare of Kamdeo who is the patron god of beauty and attractiveness.]

The festoons, buntings and canopies (or parasols) made of flowers and green leaves, the flags, the royal whisks, the standards and flags, and the various patterns or designs made from flowers and fruits that adorn the Swing and are used as its decorations (tōrana-bitāna-patāka-cāmara-dhuja sumana-phala dhauri), challenge their own images reflected on the floor of the Swing as if to say that these images are inferior to the original things (pratichāṁha-chabi prati sōṁ kahai guru hauṁ ri). They make the poets as their witnesses (kabi-sākhi dai) when they make this assertion of superiority over their own images (kahai guru hauṁ ri). [There was a reflection on the glazed floor of the original items put up to decorate the Swing. The poet uses his imagination here to say that albeit the floor was polished to perfection but the images formed in it were no match in their beauty and charm to the original things on the Swing.] (1).

In this Swing, there are straight and huge pillars (khambha sarala bisāla) resembling the 'Victory Towers' of Kamdeo/cupid (madana-jayakē khambha-sē racē).

Across the top of these pillars is fixed a red coloured rolling pin (bēlana lāla), from which are suspended chains with strange designs and contours (bicitra bhaṁvarā balita) that hold aloft a magnificent wooden board at their lower end (pāṭīra-pāṭi). [The pillars are fixed in the ground. Across their upper end is put a rolling pin which rotates when the person sitting on the Swing's seat makes it sway to and fro. The seat is hung from this rolling pin with the aid of chains.]

The golden rod (ḍānmṛ̐ō kanaka) that passes through the rolling pin resembles Tilak Mark (a horizontal line) of saffron paste (kuṅkuma-tilaka-rēkha-sī) made on the forehead of Kamdeo/cupid (manasija-bhāla), whereas the seating board

of the Swing (that hangs from the rolling pin) resembles a medallion (paṭulī padika) that hangs on the heart (chest) of Rati (the wife of Kamdeo) (rati-hṛdaya janu), while the golden chains suspending this seat from the rolling pin (and which act like ropes to hold the seating board above the ground) look like a soft golden necklace on her bosom (kaladhauta kōmala māla) (2).

The pleasant season of 'Sawan' (i.e. the rainy season) has started in earnest (sukhada sāvana lāga)—wherefore thick banks of dark rain-bearing clouds are emerging (over the horizon) (unayē saghana ghanaghōra), and there is a pleasant continual drizzle (mṛdu jhari).

The row of cranes and the rainbow look majestic in the sky against the background of these clouds (bagapāmt̐i, suradhanu); the lightening is dazzling with a brilliance (damaka dāmini); and the entire land is full vibrant with greenery (harita bhūmi-bibhāga).

Toads and frogs are ecstatic (as they croak away merrily, without a worry in the world) (dādura mudita); while the rivers, lakes and ponds are overflowing with water (bharē sarita-sara) as if the whole earth is deluged with a flood of love and affection (mahi umaga janu anurāga).

The tumultous cacophony and din created by the simultaneous chattering (or screaming) of peacocks, the humming and buzzing of black/bumble-bees, the sweet call of the Chakors (the Indian red-legged partridge) and the Chataks (the cuckoo) (pika-mōra-madhupa-cakōra-cātaka-sōra) is resounding and echoing in all the directions, in the groves, the gardens, the orchards and the forests (upabana bāga) (3).

Seeing that pleasant and merry occasion for celebrations has arrived (sō samau dēkhi suhāvanō), many beautiful young maidens (sundari) who were extremely pretty and charming to behold so much so that they can be called benchmarks or standards (sīnva) of beauty and magnificence (rūpa), were of virtuous and noble characters (guna), and were in the prime of their youths (jōbana), decorated (adorned) themselves with 16 types of ornamentations (i.e. were fully decked up in all finery for the happy occasion, wearing the best of ornaments and garments) (navasata samv̆āri-samv̆āri), proceeded in large groups towards the 'Hindola' (Swing) of Sri Ram (calīṁ jhuṇḍani jhāri).

Seeing the magnificent Swing (hiṇḍōla-sāla bilōki), all of them felt exhilarated, and joy and happiness overflowed in their hearts as they looked at the charming surroundings that portrayed happiness and joy that prevailed in the kingdom ruled by Lord Ram (sukha-samāju nihāri), whereat these enchanted ladies liberally blessed Lord Sri Ram and Sita, their King and Queen (lāgīṁ asīsana rāma-sītahi) by spreading the fringes (boarders; ends) of their Saris (garments) as a gesture to bless the (divine) couple (saba an̄cala pasāri-pasāri) (4).

Thereafter, singing melodious songs using the different tunes of 'Suho', 'Gond Malaar' etc. Raagas (i.e. they sung songs in different tunes with a sweet melodious voice) (ōsarinha gāvaiṁ suhō, gauṇḍamalāra), they began swinging on the Swing one after another in turns (jhūlahiṁ, jhulāvahiṁ).

The sound produced by the clanking of cymbals, the jingling and tinkling of anklets, and the clinking of bangles (man̄jīra-nūpura-balaya-dhuni) resembled the

clapping by Kamdeo/cupid as he joined these damsels in their singing and merrymaking (janu kāma-karatala-tāra), while the sweat drops spread on their faces (sramakana mukhani), the dishevelled hairs (bithurē cikura) and entangled necklaces or garlands on their bosoms (bilulita hāra) looked extremely wonderful (ati mucata) as if darkness, lightening, stars, the baby-sun (i.e. the early monring sun) and the moon (tama taḍita uḍugana aruna bidhu janu) were joyfully frolicking around and enjoying themselves at play in the sky (karata byōma-bihāra)[1].

[[1]Here, the scattered hairs are the 'darkness'; the glamour and radiance of their bodies are the 'lightening'; the sweat drops are the 'stars'; the locket or the small medallion on the necklace is the 'sun'; and the beauty of the face is the 'moon'.] (5).

At that point of time, seeing the glamorous sight, the Goddess (and celestial maidens: bibudha-tiya) are becoming enraptured and thrilled in their hearts with pleasure and happiness (hiya haraṣi) even as they showered flowers on the swinging ladies (baraṣi prasūna) and broke blades of grass or reed as a charm against evil spirits (and as a token of good omen, so that no harm can come to these maidens from any evil spirits who may be envious or jealous of them) (trṇa tūri).

Their eyes are wet with tears of joy and delight (ānanda-jala-lōcana), the heart and mind are happy and exhilarated (mudita mana), while their whole body is thrilled with ecstasy (pulaka tanu bhari pūri).

All of them are saying (i.e. hoping, praying and blessing: saba kahahiṁ) that this happy and auspicious kingdom (of Lord Ram) should remain full of happiness, auspiciousness and glory for eternity (abicala rāja nita, kalyāna-maṅgala bhūri), and that Lord Sri Janki Nath (i.e. Lord Ram, the dear husband and lord of Sita: jānakināth), who is like the root and essence of life and the very cause of existence for Tulsidas (tulasī-sajīvani-mūri), should have a long and happy life in this world (cira jiyau) (6).

अयोध्याकी रमणीयता

वर्षा–वर्णन

राग सूहो

(7 / 19/1)

कोसलपुरी सुहावनी सरि सरजूके तीर।
भूपावली–मुकुटमनि नृपति जहाँ रघुबीर।।
पुर–नर–नारि चतुर अति, धरमनिपुन, रत–नीति।
सहज सुभाय सकल उर श्रीरघुबर–पद–प्रीति।।
श्रीरामपद–जलजात सबके प्रीति अबिरल पावनी।
जो चहत सुक–सनकादि, संभु–बिरंचि, मुनि–मन–भावनी।।
सबहीके सुंदर मंदिराजिर, राउ–रंग न लखि परै।
नाकेस–दुरलभ भोग लोक करहिं, न मन बिषयनि हरै।। 1।।

ayōdhyākī ramaṇīyatā

varṣā-varṇana

rāga sūhō

(7/19/1)

kōsalapurī suhāvanī sari sarajūkē tīra.
bhūpāvalī-mukuṭamani nr̥pati jahāṁ raghubīra..
pura-nara-nāri catura ati, dharamanipuna, rata-nīti.
sahaja subhāya sakala ura śrīraghubara-pada-prīti..
śrīrāmapada-jalajāta sabakē prīti abirala pāvanī.
jō cahata suka-sanakādi, sambhu-birañci, muni-mana-bhāvanī..
sabahīkē sundara mandirājira, rā'u-raṅga na lakhi parai.
nākēsa-duralabha bhōga lōka karahiṁ, na mana biṣayani harai.. 1..

The Fascinating Beauty and Magnificence of Ayodhya
'The Rainy Season'

[Note—This verse no. 7/19 is divided into 5 sub-verses, each having 8 lines. They together describe the magnificent beauty and charm of the city of Ayodhya during the rainy season. It is a natural flow from the previous verse no. 7/18 that has dealt with the Swing festival which is celebrated during this season. It is followed by verse no. 7/20 that describes the festival of Diwali that was celebrated at Ayodhya after the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the winter season. After that, the next three verses, viz. 7/21—7/23 further elaborate on the charm of Ayodhya and the celebrations that were held there after Lord Ram returned from the forest and his Lanka victory at the end of the fourteen years.]

Verse no. 7/19/1—On the banks of river Saryu is the most pleasant city of Ayodhya (kōsalapurī) whose Sovereign is the Great King Lord Raghubir (Lord Sri Ram) who is like a crown-jewel among the community of great and mighty Kings and Lords.

All the citizens (both males and females) are very clever, wise, righteous and abiders of law. All of them have affection (respect) for the lotus-like feet of Lord Sri Ram.

All have steady, uniform and pure affection for the lotus-like feet of Lord Sri Ram, the holy feet which are also desired (sought after) by sages Shukdeo, Sankadi, Lords Shiva, Brahma etc., and which are pleasing to the heart and mind of the sages, hermits and seers too.

All the citizens have pleasant and comfortable homes and yards. There is no distinction between a king and a pauper (i.e. there is equality in the society, and everyone is reasonably prosperous and happy).

They enjoy the pleasures and comforts of life which are difficult even for Indra (the king of Gods) to access, still they are not attached to or infatuated by them. [To wit, thought the citizens live surrounded by material comforts and charms of the

world, yet there are not mentally attached to them. This flows from the fact that they are wise and devoted to the holy feet of Lord Ram, which kindles enlightenment in them and a great sense of detachment and renunciation towards the world and the temptations of the sense objects. The people have exemplary self-control over their sense organs and their natural urges.][1] (7/19/1).

[[1]The excellent characters and virtues of the citizens in the kingdom ruled by Lord Ram has also been enumerated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 21; and Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precedes Doha no. 22.]

(7/19/2)

सब रितु सुखप्रद सो पुरी, पावस अति कमनीय।
निरखत मनहिं हरत हठि हरित अवनि रमनीय।।
बीरबहूटि बिराजहीं, दादुर–धुनि चहु ओर।
मधुर गरजि घन बरषहिं, सुनि सुनि बोलत मोर।।
बोलत जो चातक–मोर, कोकिल–कीर, पारावत घने।
खग बिपुल पाले बालकनि कूजत उड़ात सुहावने।।
बकराजि राजति गगन, हरिधुन, तड़ित दस दिसि सोहहीं।
नभ–नगरकी सोभा अतुल अवलोकि मुनि–मन मोहहीं।। 2।।

(7/19/2)

saba ritu sukhaprada sō purī, pāvasa ati kamanīya.
nirakhata manahiṁ harata haṭhi harita avani ramanīya..
bīrabahūṭi birājahīṁ, dādura-dhuni cahu ōra.
madhura garaji ghana baraṣahiṁ, suni suni bōlata mōra..
bōlata jō cātaka-mōra, kōkila-kīra, pārāvata ghanē.
khaga bipula pālē bālakani kūjata uṛāta suhāvanē..
bakarāji rājati gagana, haridhuna, taḍita dasa disi sōhahīṁ.
nabha-nagarakī sōbhā atula avalōki muni-mana mōhahīṁ.. 2..

Verse no. 7/19/2—Though this city is enjoyable and pleasant in all the seasons, but during the rainy season it looks especially very alluring and magnificent.

At that time, the verdantly green and blooming fields seem to steal (enrapture, attract, entice, pull) the mind immediately towards itself when beheld.

Herbs and shrubs are blooming everywhere. The frogs and toads are croaking, while the clouds rumble softly and pour (shower) rain in abundance, and the reverberating deep sound of these clouds coaxes the peacocks to sing.

At that time, one can hear many types of free birds chattering and warbling simultaneously everywhere, such as the Chatak (the cuckoo), the peacock, the Indian cuckoo, the parrot, the pigeon et al. At the same time, many pet birds, reared by the children of the city, play about and fly around pleasantly.

In the sky, there are rows of cranes and storks, a rainbow, and lightening of the clouds that shine in all the ten directions (i.e. everywhere). This sight looks most magnificent and majestic.

Watching that peerless beauty and the stupendous attractions of the city and the sky over it, even the mind and heart of the sages, hermits and seers become enthralled and captivated by the scene. [To wit, even the otherwise dispassionate sages and hermits who are normally not attracted to such physical charms and beauty, and are supposed to be indifferent or neutral towards them, feel enthused when they watch the fascinating sight at Ayodhya where Mother Nature is at its best display.] (7/19/2).

(7 / 19/3)

गृह–गृह रचे हिडोलना, महि गच काँच सुढार।
चित्र बिचित्र चहू दिसि परदा फकि–पगार।।
सरल बिसाल बिराजहीं बिद्रुम–खंभ सुजोर।
चारु पाटि पटि पुरटकी झरकत मरकत भौंर।।
मरकत भवँर डाँड़ी कनक मनि–जटित दुति जगमगि रही।
पटुली मनहु बिधि निपुनता निज प्रगट करि राखी सही।।
बहुरंग लसत बितान मुकुतादाम–सहित मनोहरा।
नव–सुमन–माल–सुगंध लोभे मंजु गुंजत मधुकरा।। 3।।

(7/19/3)

gṛha-gṛha racē hiḍōlanā, mahi gaca kām̐ca suḍhāra.
citra bicitra cahū disi paradā phaki-pagāra..
sarala bisāla birājahīm̐ bidruma-khambha sujōra.
cāru pāṭi paṭi puraṭakī jharakata marakata bhaunra..
marakata bhavam̐ra ḍām̐ṛī kanaka mani-jaṭita duti jagamagi rahī.
paṭulī manahu bidhi nipunatā nija pragaṭa kari rākhī sahī..
bahuraṅga lasata bitāna mukutādāma-sahita manōharā.
nava-sumana-māla-sugandha lōbhē mañju gunjata madhukarā.. 3..

Verse no. 7/19/3—[This verse describes the Swings that are erected in each household of Ayodhya during the rainy season. Refer also to verse no. 7/18 herein above that describes the "Ram Hindola".]

Every household has a Swing, the lovely floor of which is made of hardened mortar covered by glass, while curtains hang from the walls of crystal in all its directions (i.e. on all the four sides of the enclosure where the Swing is set-up).

There are majestic, straight, large and strong pillars of corals (which form the support for the Swing). The seats are made of wood whose boarders are girdled with plated of gold, and intricate geometrical patterns or designs made of emerald adorn the seats themselves.

Further, the rolling pins (straddled across the pillars) are cast in gold and studded with gems, while the chains (that hang down from these rolling pins to support the wooden seat of the Swing) are decorated with trinkets of emerald that are

shaped like numerous bumble/black-bees. Together, golden rods and the chains give out a dazzling, radiant, shining light.

Meanwhile, the wooden seats of these Swings look so magnificent and glamorous as if the Creator has made them as a show-piece of his craftsmanship (i.e. has created these seats as masterpieces of his astounding skills at making the most wonderful things in creation).

The swings are adorned by numerous multi coloured parasols (or umbrella like concave decorations) from which hang laces and hangings made of pearl.

The black/bumble-bees, attracted by the sweet scent (fragrance) are humming around merrily near the garlands of newly plucked flowers which are dangling from these parasols (7/19/3).

(7 / 19/4)

झुंड–झुंड झूलन चलीं गजगामिनि बर नारि।
कुसुँभि चीर तनु सोहहीं, भूषन बिबिध सँवारि।।
पिकबयनी मृगलोचनी सारद ससि सम तुंड।
रामसुजस सब गावहीं सुसुर सुसारँग गुंड।।
सारंग गुंड–मलार, सोरठ, सुहव सुघरनि बाजहीं।
बहु भाँति तान–तरंग सुनि गंधरब किंनर लाजहीं।।
अति मचत, छूटत कुटिल कच, छबि अधिक सुंदरि पावहीं।
पट उड़त, भूषन खसत, हँसि–हँसि अपर सखी झुलावहीं।। 4।।

(7/19/4)

jhuṇḍa-jhuṇḍa jhūlana calīṁ gajagāmini bara nāri.
kusum̐bhi cīra tanu sōhahīṁ, bhūṣana bibidha sam̐vāri..
pikabayanī mr̥galōcanī sārada sasi sama tuṇḍa.
rāmasujasa saba gāvahīṁ susura susāram̐ga guṇḍa..
sāraṅga guṇḍa-malāra, sōraṭha, suhava sugharani bājahīṁ.
bahu bhām̐ti tāna-taraṅga suni gandharaba kinnara lājahīṁ..
ati macata, chūṭata kuṭila kaca, chabi adhika sundari pāvahīṁ.
paṭa uṛata, bhūṣana khasata, ham̐si-ham̐si apara sakhī jhulāvahīṁ.. 4..

Verse no. 7/19/4—[This verse describes the groups of young ladies who have gone out to enjoy the Swings. In this context, refer to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/18, stanza nos. 4-5 herein above.]

Group after group of beautiful women, whose gait resemble that of an elephant (i.e. majestic, elegant) are going to swing on those 'Hindolas'.

Red coloured Saris ("kusum̐bhi cīra"; it is a single piece of garment worn by women covering their entire body) as well as different varieties of ornaments adorn their bodies.

Their voices are like the sweet sound of the Indian cuckoo (i.e. they speak softly, sweetly and pleasantly); their faces are like a full moon of a winter night; and their eyes are like that of a doe.

These beautiful maidens are singing the glories and fames of Lord Sri Ram in the various Raagas (lyrics, tunes of Indian classical music) called 'Sāramॅga' and 'Guṇḍa'.

In the households of Ayodhya, melodious songs set to the different tunes of Indian classical music, such as 'sāraṅga, guṇḍa, malāra, sōraṭha, suhava' are being sung and played on musical instruments.

Even the 'Gandharvas' (celestial musicians) and 'Kinnars' (a type of demi Gods; celestial singers and dancers) feel shy on hearing their (the maidens') melodious tunes and songs. [That is to say, these heavenly singers and musicians feel inferior and ashamed at their notion of being experts in the art of music, singing and dancing when they see the ladies of Ayodhya singing melodiously and dancing to the tune of fine music during the festivities associated with the Swing Festival.]

In this way, there is a great deal of rejoicing and merry-making at Ayodhya. The curly locks of hairs of those on the Swing get scattered and dishevelled by the draft of air that rubs against them as they sway to and from on the Swing. This enhances their beauty and glamour all the more.

Further, the draft of wind causes their clothes (i.e. their Saris) to trail behind and flap, while their ornaments slip from their assigned places on the body as the Swing makes its full oscillation backwards and forwards.

At this, other lady-friends jest and laugh at them, and push them higher up on the Swing's arc (7/19/4).

(7 / 19/5)

फिरि फिरि झूलहिं भामिनी अपनी अपनी बार।
बिबुध–बिमान थकित भए देखत चरित अपार।।
बरषि सुमन हरषहिं उर, बरनहिं हरिगुन–गाथ।
पुनि पुनि प्रभुहि प्रसंसहीं 'जय जय जानकिनाथ।।
जय जानकीपति बिसद कीरति सकल–लोक–मलापहा।
सुरबधू देहिं असीस, चिरजिव राम, सुख–संपति महा।।
पावस समय कछु अवध बरनत सुनि अघौघ नसावहीं।
रघुबीरके गुनगन नवल नित दास तुलसी गावहीं।। 5।।

(7/19/5)

phiri phiri jhūlahiṁ bhāminī apanī apanī bāra.
bibudha-bimāna thakita bha'ē dēkhata carita apāra..
barasi sumana haraṣahiṁ ura, baranahiṁ hariguna-gātha.
puni puni prabhuhi prasansahīṁ 'jaya jaya jānakināth a..
jaya jānakīpati bisada kīrati sakala-lōka-malāpahā.
surabadhū dēhiṁ asīsa, cirajiva rāma, sukha-sampati mahā..
pāvasa samaya kachu avadha baranata suni aghaugha nasāvahīṁ.
raghubīrakē gunagana navala nita dāsa tulasī gāvahīṁ.. 7/19/5..

Verse no. 7/19/5—All the lady-friends take their turns on the Swing.

This majestic and wonderful scene is being watched by the Gods, who are dazed and spellbound, from their air-planes.

They shower flowers, feel euphoric in their hearts, and sing the glories, virtues and fames of Sri Hari (i.e. Lord Vishnu who is in the person of Lord Sri Ram) by hailing and praising him with exclamations of 'Hail Janki Nath' (jaya jaya jānakināth a) repeatedly.

They applaud the Lord and sing his glories in chorus, saying—'Glory to Lord Sri Ram, the husband of Janki (Sita). The Lord's immense glories and countless virtues can destroy the sins, vices, evils and their accompanying (or resultant) stains and blemishes caused by Kaliyug.' [The Kaliyug is the present era of time when negativities and evil tendencies are prevalent in the society. The Gods essentially say that if one takes the shelter of Lord Ram and develops devotion for him, then these negativities and evil influences of Kaliyug don't have any effect on the living being.]

Even the Goddesses bless Lord Sri Ram, saying—'Long live Lord Sri Ram, and his happiness and fame should go on increasing eternally.'

By hearing the description of Ayodhya during the rainy season, the whole treasury (i.e. accumulations) of sins, vices, evils and misdemeanours are destroyed.

Tulsidas says that the Lord's glories, fames, virtues and noble characters are always being sung by his devotees (7/19/5).

दीपमालिका

राग आसावरी

(7/20)

साँझ समय रघुबीर–पुरीकी सोभा आजु बनी।
ललित दीपमालिका बिलोकहिं हित करि अवधधनी।। 1।।
फटिक–भीत–सिखरन–पर राजति कंचन–दीप–अनी।
जनु अहिनाथ मिलन आयो मनि–सोभित सहसफनी।। 2।।
प्रति मंदिर कलसनिपर भ्राजहिं मनिगन दुति अपनी।
मानहुँ प्रगटि बिपुल लोहितपुर पठइ दिये अवनी।। 3।।
घर घर मंगलचार एकरस हरषित रंक–गनी।
तुलसिदास कल कीरति गावहिं, जो कलिमल–समनी।। 4।।

dīpamālikā

rāga āsāvarī

(7/20)

sāmँjha samaya raghubīra-purīkī sōbhā āju banī.
lalita dīpamālikā bilōkahiṁ hita kari avadhadhanī.. 1..
phaṭika-bhīta-sikharana-para rājati kaṁcana-dīpa-anī.
janu ahinātha milana āyō mani-sōbhita sahasaphanī.. 2..
prati mandira kalasanipara bhrājahiṁ manigana duti apanī.
mānahumँ pragaṭi bipula lōhitapura paṭha'i diyē avanī.. 3..
ghara ghara maṅgalacāra ēkarasa haraṣita raṅka-ganī.
tulasidāsa kala kīrati gāvahiṁ, jō kalimala-samanī.. 4..

The Festival of 'Diwali (lights)' in Ayodhya

Verse no. 7/20—[It is a generally held traditional view that the festival of Diwali has its origin in Lord Sri Ram's victorious return to Ayodhya. In days when there was no electricity, earthern lamps were used to decorate and lighten up the city. Diwali is held roughly sometimes during late October till November. This current verse no. 7/20 describes the occasion when the city of Ayodhya was brightly illuminate and decorated wonderfully with variety of lamps for the first time after Lord Ram returned to the city at the end of his fourteen years sojourn in the forest during which period he had overcome the cruel demons.

Lord Ram's arrival and the subsequent illumination of Ayodhya in a magnificent way to celebrate this joyous occasion coincided with the time this "Festival of Diwali" (or the 'Festival of Lights') is traditionally observed today, and ever since that time it has become a national festival of India. It signifies that 'light always overcomes darkness', for this festival is centered on the lighting of lamps in every home as well as at public places during the night: the 'darkness of the night' symbolizes all that is negative and evil, and the cause of fear in the minds of people about imaginary ghosts that stand for spiritual and temporal problems, that albeit have no substance but still seem real, and the 'bright light of the lamps' that eliminate this darkness to illuminate each single individual's home, symbolizing his or her individual inner self, to help remove all fears arising out of evil and sins and gloomy thoughts, and instead infuse hope and cheer and enlightenment in life.

The title of this verse is "Deep-Malika" (dīpamālikā) which means 'a garland of lighted earthen lamps'. It is because hundreds of lighted lamps are placed on roof-tops and in front of homes and everywhere else in rows that surround any given place, giving the impression of a string of lighted lamps that resemble garlands. In fact, the whole city of Ayodhya looked, from the sky during the night, as if it was draped in uncountable numbers of large and small garlands consisting of beads of glittering gems that illuminated the whole place like hundreds and thousands of glow-worms arranged in systematic rows.]

Today evening, there are lot of grand festivities and joyous celebrations marked with grandeur, pomp, pageantry, magnificence and euphoria in the capital city (Ayodhya) of Raghubir (Lord Sri Ram).

The Lord of Ayodhya (avadhadhanī) is enjoying the sights of Dipawali celebrations (called 'the Festival of Lights'.] (1).

Golden lamps made of crystal, that have been arranged on walls of individual homes and public buildings, look so majestic and fantastic as if a thousand hooded legendary serpent called Sheshnath, who has a Mani (gem) on each of his hoods, has come to meet Lord Sri Ram (and offer his tributes to the Lord) (2).

Glittering gems on the top of spires (steeples and domes) of every palace (or household) look so radiant and splendorous as if many 'Mars' (or auspicious worlds) have been created and sent (by the Creator) to the earth (to adorn the city by their magnificence and light to celebrate Lord Ram's coming back to Ayodhya, and the restoration of peace and happiness in the world after the elimination of the demons and their tyranny) (3).

There are auspicious hymns being sung in every household of the city, while the rich and the poor are equally euphoric and participating in the celebrations.

Tulsidas says that he sings the auspicious and holy deeds, the glories, the great virtues and famed legend of Lord Sri Ram which is capable of destroying (eliminating) all the sins, evils and vices, along with their effects, during the era of Kaliyug (the present times that are rife with these spiritual problems) (4).

वसन्त–विहार

राग गौरी

(7 / 21)

अवध नगर अति सुंदर बर सरिताके तीर।
नीति–निपुन नर–तिय सबहिं धरम–धुरंधर, धीर।। 1।।
सकल रितुन्ह सुखदायक, तामहँ अधिक बसंत।
भूप–मौलि–मनि जहँ बस नृपति जानकीकंत।। 2।।
बन उपबन नव किसलय, कुसुमित नाना रंग।
बोलत मधुर मुखर खग पिकबर, गुंजत भृंग।। 3।।
समय बिचारि कृपानिधि, देखि द्वार अति भीर।
खेलहु मुदित नारि–नर, बिहँसि कहेउ रघुबीर।। 4।।
नगर–नारि–नर हरषित सब चले खेलन फागु।
देखि राम छबि अतुलित उमगत उर अनुरागु।। 5।।
स्याम–तमाल–जलदतनु निरमल पीत दुकूल।
अरुन–कंज–दल–लोचन सदा दास अनुकूल।। 6।।
सिर किरीट स्रुति कुंडल, तिलक मनोहर भाल।
कुंचित केस, कुटिल भ्रू, चितवनि भगत–कृपाल।। 7।।
कल कपोल, सुक नासिक, ललित अधर द्विज जोति।
अरुन कंज महँ जनु पाँति रुचिर गज–मोति।। 8।।
बर दर–ग्रीव, अमितबल बाहु सुपीन बिसाल।
कंकन–हार मनोहर, उरसि लसति बनमाल।। 9।।
उर भृगु–चरन बिराजत, द्विज–प्रिय चरित पुनीत।
भगत हेतु नर बिग्रह सुरबर गुन–गोतीत।।10।।

उदर त्रिरेख मनोहर, सुंदर नाभि गँभीर।
हाटक–घटित, जटित मनि कटितट रट मंजीर।।11।।
उरु अरु जानु पीन, मृदु, मरकत खंभ समान।
नूपुर मुनि–मन मोहत, करत सुकोमल गान।।12।।
अरुनबरन पदपंकज, नखदुति इंदु–प्रकास।
जनक–सुता–करपल्लव–लालित बिपुल बिलास।।13।।
कंजकुलिस–धुज–अंकुस–रेख चरन सुभ चारि।
जन–मन–मीन हर कहँ बंसी रची सँवारि।।14।।
अंग अंग प्रति अतुलित सुषमा बरनि न जाइ।
एहि सुख मगन होइ मन फिरि नहि अनत लोभाइ।।15।।
खेलत फागु, अवधपति, अनुज–सखा सब संग।
बरषि सुमन सुर निरखहिं सोभा अमित अनंग।।16।।
ताल, मृदंग, झाँझ, डफ बाजहिं पनव–निसान।
सुघर सरस सहनाइन्ह गावहिं समय समान।।17।।
बीना–बेनु–मधुर–धुनि सुनि किंनर–गंधर्ब।
निज–गुन गरुअ हरुअ अति मानहिं मन तजि गर्ब ।।18।।
निज–निज अटनि मनोहर गान करहिं पिकबैनि।
मनहुँ हिमालय–सिखरनि लसहिं अमर–मृगनैनि।।19।।
धवल धामतें निकसहिं जहँ तहँ नारि–बरूथ।
मानहुँ मथत पयोनिधि बिपुल अपसरा–जूथ।।20।।
किंसुकबरन सुअंसुक सुषमा सुखनि समेत।
जनु बिधु–निबह रहे करि दामिनि–निकर निकेत।।21।।
कुंकुम सुरस अबीरनि भरहिं चतरु बर नारि।
रितु सुभाय सुठि सोभित देहिं बिबिध बिधि गारि।।22।।
जो सुख जोग, जाग, जप, अरु तीरथतें दूरि।
राम–कृपातें सोइ सुख अवध गलिन्ह रह्यो पूरि।।23।।
खेलि बसंत कियो प्रभु मज्जन सरजूनीर।
बिबिध भाँति जाचक जन पाए भूषन चीर।।24।।
तुलससिदास तेहि अवसर माँगि भगति अनूप।
मृदु मुसुकाइ दीन्हि तब कृपादृष्टि रघुभूप।।25।।

vasanta-vihāra

rāga gaurī

(7/21)

avadha nagara ati sundara bara saritākē tīra.
nīti-nipuna nara-tiya sabahiṁ dharama-dhurandhara, dhīra.. 1..
sakala ritunha sukhadāyaka, tāmahaṁ adhika basanta.
bhūpa-mauli-mani jahaṁ basa nṛpati jānakīkanta.. 2..
bana upabana nava kisalaya, kusumita nānā raṅga.
bōlata madhura mukhara khaga pikabara, guñjata bhṛṅga.. 3..
samaya bicāri kṛpānidhi, dēkhi dvāra ati bhīra.
khēlahu mudita nāri-nara, bihaṁsi kahē'u raghubīra.. 4..

nagara-nāri-nara haraṣita saba calē khēlana phāgu.
dēkhi rāma chabi atulita umagata ura anurāgu.. 5..
syāma-tamāla-jaladatanu niramala pīta dukūla.
aruna-kaṁja-dala-lōcana sadā dāsa anukūla.. 6..
sira kirīṭa sruti kuṇḍala, tilaka manōhara bhāla.
kuñcita kēsa, kuṭila bhrū, citavani bhagata-kr̥pāla.. 7..
kala kapōla, suka nāsika, lalita adhara dvija jōti.
aruna kaṁja mahaṁ janu pāṁti rucira gaja-mōti.. 8..
bara dara-grīva, amitabala bāhu supīna bisāla.
kaṅkana-hāra manōhara, urasi lasati banamāla.. 9..
ura bhr̥gu-carana birājata, dvija-priya carita punīta.
bhagata hētu nara bigraha surabara guna-gōtīta..10..
udara trirēkha manōhara, sundara nābhi gaṁbhīra.
hāṭaka-ghaṭita, jaṭita mani kaṭitaṭa raṭa maṁjīra..11..
uru aru jānu pīna, mr̥du, marakata khambha samāna.
nūpura muni-mana mōhata, karata sukōmala gāna..12..
arunabarana padapaṅkaja, nakhaduti indu-prakāsa.
janaka-sutā-karapallava-lālita bipula bilāsa..13..
kaṁjakulisa-dhuja-aṅkusa-rēkha carana subha cāri.
jana-mana-mīna hara kahaṁ bansī racī saṁvāri..14..
aṅga aṅga prati atulita suṣamā barani na jā'i.
ēhi sukha magana hō'i mana phiri nahi anata lōbhā'i..15..
khēlata phāgu, avadhapati, anuja-sakhā saba saṅga.
baraṣi sumana sura nirakhahiṁ sōbhā amita anaṅga..16..
tāla, mr̥daṅga, jhāṁjha, ḍapha bājahiṁ panava-nisāna.
sughara sarasa sahanā'inha gāvahiṁ samaya samāna..17..
bīnā-bēnu-madhura-dhuni suni kinnara-gandharba.
nija-guna garu'a haru'a ati mānahiṁ mana taji garba..18..
nija-nija aṭani manōhara gāna karahiṁ pikabaini.
manahuṁ himālaya-sikharani lasahiṁ amara-mr̥ganaini..19..
dhavala dhāmatēṁ nikasahiṁ jahaṁ tahaṁ nāri-barūtha.
mānahuṁ mathata payōnidhi bipula apasarā-jūtha..20..
kinsukabarana su'ansuka suṣamā sukhani samēta.
janu bidhu-nibaha rahē kari dāmini-nikara nikēta..21..
kuṅkuma surasa abīrani bharahiṁ cataru bara nāri.
ritu subhāya suṭhi sōbhita dēhiṁ bibidha bidhi gāri..22..
jō sukha jōga, jāga, japa, aru tīrathatēṁ dūri.
rāma-kr̥pātēṁ sō'i sukha avadha galinha rahyō pūri..23..
khēli basanta kiyō prabhu majjana sarajūnīra.
bibidha bhāṁti jācaka jana pā'ē bhūṣana cīra..24..
tulasasidāsa tēhi avasara māṁgi bhagati anūpa.
mr̥du musukā'i dīnhi taba kr̥pādr̥ṣṭi raghubhūpa..25..

Verse no. 7/21—[After the winter season comes the 'Spring season' called "Basanta". It is the time to celebrate: after the cold days of the winter now it is bright sunlight and warm days; the trees begin to sprout new shoots and leaves, and the flowers start blooming and spreading their colour. To welcome this beauty and pleasantness of Nature, people celebrate the "Festival of Holi", which is also called 'Phāg' or the 'Festival of Colours'.

During these celebrations, multi-coloured scented powders of various hues, chiefly pink, red, saffron, orange and yellow, are sprayed in the air and sprinkled on the ground by dissolving them in scented water, as well as by people on each other. This is accompanied by dancing, singing and merry-making in general terms.

The following two verses, i.e. no. 7/21 and 7/22, describe the magnificent scene of Ayodhya and Lord Ram participating in the celebrations during this season of Basant.]

Ayodhya, situated on the banks of river Saryu which is said to be the best among rivers, is very beautiful. All the inhabitants of the place are experts in various laws, are most righteous and strict in following the path of Dharma (probity; propriety; noble thoughts and conduct), and are courageous, patient and tolerant (1).

Though that city where 'Jānakīkanta' (Lord Sri Ram)—who is the best amongst Sovereigns—resides is pleasant all the year round, but its charm during the Spring season known as 'Basanta' is remarkable and more enhanced (2).

In the gardens, groves and forests, the trees have sprouted new leaves and multi-coloured flowers.

There is a clamour of sweet chattering and warbling of birds and beautiful cuckoos, while the black/bumble-bees are buzzing and humming merrily everywhere (3).

Seeing an ecstatic crowd of joyous citizens standing at the door (the entrance of the palace), and observing that it was an appropriate time, Raghubir (Lord Sri Ram) laughed cheerfully and said, 'All you men and women are welcome to play 'Holi' joyfully, and enjoy yourselves.' (4).

Getting his permission, all the citizens of the city started playing Holi, known as 'Phāg'[1], most cheerfully.

Seeing Lord Sri Ram's matchlessly image of beauty and magnificence, huge affection for the Lord began to surge and swell in their hearts (5).

[[1]As noted in the introduction to this verse, during these celebrations of Holi or phāg, coloured perfumed powder, either in a dry form or mixed with scented water, is sprayed and sprinkled by people on each other as well as in the air and on the streets and everywhere at public places they can think of. It marks the onset of the Spring season.

Traditionally, the celebrations commence from the royal palace where the people assemble to take the king's permission to start celebrating. They first apply colour respectfully on the king's person who reciprocates by spraying colour on his subjects as a gesture of his goodwill, grace and magnanimity. Then the crowd moves on and general celebrations start in the city. Often, the king also announces clemency for certain numbers of people held for petty crimes.]

His (Sri Ram's) form (image; body)[2] looks magnificent and glorious like the black Tamal tree (the catechu plant), or dark rain-bearing clouds. A very clean Pitambar adorns it.

His eyes resemble red lotus flowers, and he always looks upon his servants (devotees, followers, subordinates) with benevolence, grace, mercy, compassion and kindness (6).

[[2]The captivating beauty and charm of Lord Ram's image are described in fine detail elsewhere also in Geetawali, and the reader will do fine by referring to these verses while going through the present one: e.g. Uttar Kand, verse nos. 7/2—7/17.]

The Lord wears on his head a crown with a decorative jewel at its top (the diadem), has large ear-rings in his ears, and a Tilak Mark that adorns his attractive forehead.

His hairs are curled; the eyebrows are also curved (like a bow), and his glances bestow benevolence, mercy and kindness on the devotees (7).

The Lord's cheeks are lovely; the nostrils are like the beak of a parrot, while the lustrous teeth amidst pleasant (red) lips are glistening as if two rows of Gajmukta (pearls) are present in the middle (surrounded by) of the petals of a red lotus flower (8).

The Lord's neck is as beautiful as a conch, while his long, sturdy and well-built muscular arms have immense strength. He is wearing an attractive bracelet as well as a necklace, while a thick garland of large flowers, known as a '**banamāla**', adorns his chest (9).

He loves (respects) Brahmins. He has a noble character and posseses excellent virtues. The footprints of sage Brighu are marked on his chest.

Albeit the Lord is the Supreme Being who is beyond the comprehension or grasp of the gross sense organs of a creature, and is without any form, any quality or attribute, for his primary form is invisible, subtle, sublime and cosmic in nature (**surabara guna-gōtīta**), yet the same exalted Lord has, most graciously and gracefully, accepted to assume the form of a human being (in the body of Lord Ram, in which form he has assumed certain qualities, virtues and characteristics that are part of his role as a human) only for the sake (benefit, welfare) of his devotees (**bhagata hētu nara bigraha**)[3] (10).

[[3]Refer: Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/6, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/7, stanza no. 6.]

The Lord's abdomen has three lines on it that are made by folds of skin, and are just above his pleasant looking deep navel.

A golden waist-band that the Lord wears around his waist is studded with gems (and has tiny tinkling bells on it that) gives out a sweet and enchanting sound (that resemble the jingling and tinkling of tiny bells and trinkets when the Lord moves) (11).

The Lord's thighs and knee-caps are well built (rounded, robust and muscular) and smooth like pillars made of emerald (**marakata khambha**), while the sweet sound emanating from the anklets (worn around his ankles) seem to steal (enchant, enrapture, enthral) the mind of even the hermits and the sages (12).

His lotus-like feet are red coloured. The toe-nails have radiance and splendour like that of the moon light.

The feet as well as their toes and the nails are being lovingly served by Sita (janaka-sutā) with her own hands which are like the soft leaves of a young plant (karapallava). [To wit, Sita serves Lord Ram herself, and she takes special care to diligently message and politely rub the Lord's feet with great affection, love and dedication.] (13).

The four auspicious marks of a Lotus, a Vajra, a Standard or Flag and a Goad[4] that are present on the sole of the Lord's holy feet are symbolic of a carefully and cleverly made bait and hook to catch the fish-like mind of his (Lord Sri Ram's) devotees[5] (14).

[[4]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/15, stanza no. 3; verse no. 7/16, stanza no. 2. These four marks are present on the sole of Lord Vishnu; it shows that Lord Ram is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu himself.

[5]The simple meaning of this stanza is that when the devotees look at these marks on the soles of Lord Ram's feet, they are assured that he is none else but Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being and the Lord of creation, himself, that Lord Vishnu has revealed himself in a human form as Lord Ram so that his devotees can better understand him and feel related to him in terms of parameters and characteristics with which they are accustomed to in this gross physical world, making it easier for them to worship the Lord and have devotion for him, rather than in the Lord's original cosmic form which though is all-pervading, sublime and subtle, but is invisible and therefore too abstract for the common man to understand and relate to, making the Lord beyond the comprehension of mind and intellect, and therefore very difficult to worship and have devotion for.

The form which is visible and about which a history is known, a form that has known virtues, attributes and characteristics, is easier for the mind and intellect to understand and adore and relate to, rather than a form which is invisible and without any attributes, as the latter form seems inaccessible and beyond understanding.]

In this way, the entire body (image) of Lord Sri Ram has matchless beauty, charm, magnificence and glamour—it is such stupendous in these qualities that it cannot be described.

If the mind (and intellect) gets intoxicated by this charm, it does not stray anywhere else (and gets permanently hooked to it)[6] (15).

[[6]This is the obvious reason why Lord Ram has consciously made his visible form so bewitchingly beautiful and charming. It is natural for a creature's mind to get attracted towards pleasant objects, and shun unpleasantness in any form. In order to attract the devotee's mind and heart towards himself it became necessary for the Lord to employ such means that this objective can be achieved, and physical beauty is one of the many means that the Lord employed to pull-in the mind and heart of the devotee towards himself.

Further, the Lord had to ensure that his beauty was exceptionally excellent and it surpassed the charm of all other attractive things in this physical world, for otherwise the mind and the heart of the devotee would be distracted by and attracted towards the better charms of the world, as this is the natural inclination of both the mind and the heart of a creature that they get attracted by particular things which they judge to be more pleasing and comforting to them in contrast to others.

To wit, Lord Ram made his presence so exceedingly and exceptionally attractive, charming, beautiful and pleasing as well as rewarding that the creature's mind and heart would spontaneously find abiding solace, peace, joy and happiness in being close to the Lord and thinking of him, which results in development of steady devotion and loyalty for the Lord, whereat it becomes easier to automatically resist all temptations to seek comfort and happiness in any other thing in this physical world—because the external world and its sense objects do not seem to the mind and heart of the devotee to be as rewarding and provider of joy, happiness and solace as the view and thoughts of Lord Ram do.]

At the time the Lord of Ayodhya ("avadhapati"; Sri Ram), along with his younger brothers and companions, plays Holi, the Gods shower flowers (from the sky)[7] and watch his stupendous beauty, charm and magnificence (16).

[7Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza no. 1.]

At that time, the citizens clap and play musical instruments such as cymbals, drums, timbrels, tambourines, kettle-drums etc., and they sing sweet, lyrical, melodious songs that accompany the sound of well-tuned and decorated clarionets, as befitting the happy occasion[8] (17).

[8Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza no. 3.]

Hearing the sweet and melodious sound of harps and flutes, even the Kinnars (celestial singers and dancers) and Gandharvas (celestial musicians) abandon their pride of having expertise in this art, and consider themselves most humble and modest (as compared to the singers and musicians of Ayodhya) (18).

Beautiful maidens with cuckoo-like sweet voices have climbed on the roof-tops of their houses and sing pleasant songs as if celestial damsels adorn the peaks of the mountains of the Himalayas[9] (19).

[9There are thousands of homes in Ayodhya, and on every roof-top there are a number of young ladies who sing and dance. This scene reminds the poet of countless fairies enjoying themselves on the summits of the mountains in the Himalayan range that lie to the north of India.]

Here and there, groups of women come out of their brightly coloured houses as if numerous 'Apsaras' (celestial damsels; dancers in the court of Indra, the king of Gods) have come out to churn the ocean (of pleasure, happiness and joy) (20).

Covered with Saris of 'Basant colour' (i.e. green, yellow, orange), they look most beauteous and charming as if a number of moons have taken up dwelling in houses of lightening[10] (21).

[10The "Sari" is a single long piece of cloth that is wrapped around the body of a woman, and is the national dress of the Indian mainland. Here, the women are the 'moons'; and the Saris that they wear are the 'lightening'. Since the Sari is wrapped around the body of the lady and gives it covering and protection, it is visualized here as her home. The Sari is likened to 'lightening' because it is made of smooth, glazed and shiny cloth material such as silk that shimmers and dazzles when light fall on it. The ladies are likened to the 'moon' because their faces are extremely beautiful.]

Those clever and beautiful women mix 'Abir' (a red powder) with saffron, and make a coloured liquid of this mixture by dissolving it in water, which they then use to spray over each other (to celebrate the Spring season and play Holi or Phag).

While doing so, they crack jokes, tease each other, mocking and poking fun even as they sing songs according to the time and occasion, using language and lyrics that teenagers and young friends are usually in the wont to use amongst themselves when they are in an extremely jovial and celebratory mood[11] (22).

[[11]The word used in the text for the language employed by these young ladies while teasing each other, and in the lyrics of the songs they sang, is "gāri". Literally it means 'an abusive language', so called because it consists of certain words and phrases that cannot be used openly in polite talk in a civil society. These words and phrases are confined to select groups of close friends who are open to each other and find pleasure in such use, for they know very well that no hurt is meant by the use of such impolite language, and it is just to make light banter, make people laugh and cheer the moment that they are exclusively used during celebratory gatherings of close friends of roughly the same age.

Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/22, stanza nos. 8-9.

That supreme sense of euphoria, contentment, bliss and happiness which is not experienced even by doing 'Yoga' (meditation, contemplation), 'Yagya' (different religious sacrifices), and 'Japa' (recitation and repetition of Mantras which are certain words and phrases that have mystical powers), as well as by going to 'Tirtha' (pilgrimage), is spread in the lanes and by-lanes of Ayodhya, thanks to the grace and kindness of Lord Sri Ram[12] (23).

[[12]This is never an attempt to demean or degrade or undermine the importance and significance of these great spiritual practices such as Yoga, Yagya, Japa and Tirtha. The comparison of the contentment and happiness obtained by practicing these great and proven spiritual methods with the euphoria and joy that flowed through Ayodhya at the time of celebrating Holi during the Spring season in the presence of Lord Ram is simply intented to highlight the intensity of happiness that prevailed at the time.

While Yoga, Yagya, Japa and Tirtha are solemn occasions requiring a lot of strict discipline and self-control, the celebrations and merry making in Ayodhya was a free-wheeling event where everyone sang and danced and had a good time of their lives in the way they wanted, without any restrictions, forgetting for the time being about their daily life-problems, treating strangers and acquaintances alike, and deriving immense pleasure, joy, happiness and contentment in this celebration.

Further, while the benefits of Yoga, Yagya, Japa and Tirtha are limited to the person who undertakes these exercises, the joy and euphoria derived during the celebrations of Holi and the Spring season in Ayodhya had spread all over and enjoyed equally by one and all, irrespective of their age, gender, caste, profession and vocation.

Forsooth, even the common man on the street enjoyed and felt happy as much as the king in his palace: this is the hidden meaning of this stanza.]

Thus having played Holi, the Lord (Sri Ram) took a bath in the river Saryu.

Thereafter, alms-seekers liberally received all varieties of garments and ornaments as charity (24).

Just at that moment (when the Lord was making charities to alms-seekers), Tulsidas too joined the line, and (when his turn came he) asked (his beloved) Lord Sri Ram to grant him the boon of having an eternal devotion for the Lord, at which the King (Sri Ram) smiled sweetly, and most graciously gave what he wanted[13] (25).

[[13]This is the high point of Geetawali. Refer also to: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/24, stanza no. 4.

Tulsidas is standing in the line with other alms-seekers. Sri Ram has emerged from the river Saryu after taking a dip, and as is customary among great Kings, he is giving away desired objects to all those who line up to receive his largesse.

When Lord Ram came to Tulsidas, the latter seized the opportunity and asked the Lord what was most dear to his heart, most precious for him, and most sought after by him—and that was "having eternal devotion for Lord Sri Ram"!

Tulsidas did not ask for material things of this world, nor even for bliss and salvation. So clever he was that he asked for something that is a panacea that grants the best of spiritual rewards and worldly happiness one can ever hope to get; it is one single remedy for all spiritual ills and worldly delusions. Devotion for Lord Ram would automatically bring to Tulsidas a plethora of benefits and rewards without asking for them specifically, and in addition it would make him dear to the Lord, and bring Tulsidas in direct connect with him.

This boon shows how shrewd Tulsidas was! The very fact that the Lord smiled at his cleverness is ample proof of it—because the Lord realised that while others were satisfied with worldly objects, what Tulsidas has asked for is indeed priceless. And, the Lord was bound to give or donate it, or in other words 'to meet the demands of Tulsidas', because it was such an occasion: for in all sooth the Lord couldn't have refused it under any pretext. This clever trick or ruse of Tulsidas made the Lord smile, and Tulsidas made himself immortal in the annals of history as a great devotee of Lord Sri Ram.

A similar episode is recorded in Ram Charit Manas where it is described how the crow saint named Kaagbhusund too was blessed by Lord Ram with the boon of devotion after Kaagbhusund refused to accept anything in its place. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 85.

This episode—of Tulsidas standing directly in front of Lord Ram and getting the Lord's personal attention in order to get his wishes fulfilled—is also reflected in the concluding verses of Vinai-Patrika, the magnificent book of devotional hymns written by Tulsidas, wherein the Lord has himself stamped, sealed and signed his petition while accepting Tulsidas as his devotee. Refer: Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 276—270.

Verily, it is indeed a most remarkable master-stroke that has been devised by this clever devotee of Lord Ram to get the Lord's seal of approval for his devotion from the Lord himself. See also Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/38, stanza no. 11.]

राग बसंत

(7 / 22)

खेलत बसंत राजाधिराज। देखत नभ कोतुक सुर–समाज।। 1।।

सोहैं सखा–अनुज रघुनाथ साथ। झोलिन्ह अबीर, पिचकारि हाथ।। 2।।
बाजहिं मृदंग, डफ, ताल, बेनु। छिरकैं सुगंध भरे मलय–रेनु।। 3।।
उत जुबति–जूथ जानकी संग। पहिरे पट भूषन सरस रंग।। 4।।
लिये छरी बेंत सोंधैं बिभाग। चाँचरि झूमक कहैं सरसराग।। 5।।
नूपुर–किंकिनि–धुनि अति सोहइ। ललना–गन जब जेहि धरइँ धाइ।।6।।
लोचन आँजहिं फगुआ मनाइ। छाड़हिं नचाइ, हाहा कराइ।। 7।।
चढ़े खरनि बिदूषक स्वाँग साजि। करैं कूटि, निपट गई लाज भाजि।। 8।।
नर–नारि परसपर गारि देत। सुनि हँसत राम भाइन समेत।। 9।।
बरषत प्रसून बर–बिबुध–बृंद।जय–जय दिनकर–कुल–कुमुदचंद।।10।।
ब्रह्मादि प्रसंसत अवध बास। गावत कलकीरति तुलसिदास।।11।।

rāga basanta

(7/22)

khēlata basanta rājādhirāja. dēkhata nabha kōtuka sura-samāja.. 1..
sōhaiṁ sakhā-anuja raghunātha sātha. jhōlinha abīra, picakāri hātha.. 2..
bājahiṁ mṛdaṅga, ḍapha, tāla, bēnu. chirakaiṁ sugandha bharē malaya-rēnu.. 3..
uta jubati-jūtha jānakī saṅga. pahirē paṭa bhūṣana sarasa raṅga.. 4..
liyē charī bēnta sōndhaiṁ bibhāga. cāmm̐cari jhūmaka kahaiṁ sarasa rāga.. 5..
nūpura-kiṅkini-dhuni ati sōha'i. lalanā-gana jaba jēhi dhara'iṁ dhā'i..6..
lōcana āmm̐jahiṁ phagu'ā manā'i. chāṛahiṁ nacā'i, hāhā karā'i.. 7..
caṛhē kharani bidūṣaka svāmm̐ga sāji. karaiṁ kūṭi, nipaṭa ga'ī lāja bhāji.. 8..
nara-nāri parasapara gāri dēta. suni hamm̐sata rāma bhā'ina samēta.. 9..
baraṣata prasūna bara-bibudha-brṇda.jaya-jaya dinakara-kula-kumudacanda..10..
brahmādi prasansata avadha bāsa. gāvata kalakīrati tulasidāsa..11..

The Spring Season at Ayodhya; Celebration of 'Holi'-II

Verse no. 7/22—The King of kings (the Emperor, the Sovereign, Lord Sri Ram) is playing Holi. The Gods are watching this marvel from the sky[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 16.]

Younger brothers and companions accompany Raghunath (Sri Ram); they have 'Abir' in their bags and spray-guns in their hands[2] (2).

[[2]The "Abir" is a coloured powder that is used in two ways: it is either rubbed on a person's cheek or sprayed in the air in its dry form as powder, or mixed with scented water to which a bit of saffron or sandalwood is mixed, and then sprayed by special syringes with a plunger at one end and a nozzle at the other—called the 'spray gun'.

Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 22; and stanza no. 3 herein below.]

At this moment, musical instruments such as drums, timbrels, tambourines, cymbals and flutes etc. are being played, while scented water mixed with sandalwood powder is being sprayed[3] (3).

[[3]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 17.]

Accompanied by Sita, hordes of youthful women who are dressed in multi-coloured garments and decked-up with various ornaments, and armed with short sticks made of cane, search the way (towards their friends who may have run away out of fear of being sprayed by coloured powder or drenched in liquid) to play with coloured powder and water with them, all the while singing sweet melodies set to the tunes of 'cāmt̆cari and jhūmaka' rāgas (tunes and lyrics of classical music)[4] (4-5).

[[4]This stanza has dual meaning. One is that it refers to the practice common during the Holi festivities when the females playfully search for their men folks, and finding them they politely strike them with cane sticks. It is joyfully done with no intention to hurt. The males retaliate with a spray of coloured water from their spray guns to keep the ladies at bay. In the ensuing melee, if the males catch hold of the females, they rub colour on the latters' cheeks and the entire face. No indecency is done, and everything is done in a playful manner. The significance of this aspect of the Holi celebrations is to foster gender equality in the society.

The second meaning is quite obvious: Some of the more playful and excited young ladies form groups and go out searching for their reserved and docile friends who might be hiding in their homes to avoid being smeared by coloured powder or getting wet in coloured water. The stick in their hands is just a playful gesture to warn those who try to escape from joining this merry group in the celebrations, to motivate them to at least once forget about their natural inhibitions and reserved temperament to come out and enjoy the festivities.]

When those exuberant and cheering ladies rush forward and catch someone, the (clinking, tinkling, jingling and clanking) sound made by their anklets as well as by the bangles (of brass/gold/other precious metals) sound very pleasant and enticing (6).

When they get hold of someone, they put 'Anjan' (a black coloured eye ointment that is applied on the eyelids for decorative purpose) on his or her eyes, play Holi with him or her, make him or her dance, and then let him or her go after a lot of pleadings to be released (7).

Many an exuberant revelers are disguised as jokers, clowns, jesters and comedians, dressed in the funiest and the funkiest of attires, and are riding astride donkeys!

They make funny sounds and catcalls, and jocularly utter words that are teasing and not normally used in polite conversations, for this is a way by which the revelers shed their inhibitions and help others to enjoy the occasion[5] (8).

[[5]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 22. This gives the people an opportunity to become open and symbolizes freedom of speech and expression as well as open-mindedness.]

Women and men are so ecstatic that they use teasing words and phrases for each other that one would not normally use in daily life in polite conversation, hearing which

Lord Sri Ram laughs along with his brothers (i.e. the Lord and his brothers enjoy such free-wheeling language themselves)[6] (9).

[[5]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 22, and its accompanying note.]

The Gods shower flowers at the carnival spirit prevailing below at Ayodhya, exclaiming, 'Hail and Glory to Lord Sri Ram. Oh Lord, you are like a sun for the Sun-race, and like a moon for the lily.'[7] (10).

[[7]Here, the 'lily' represents the devotees of the Lord because they find happiness when they see the face of Lord Ram which is like the 'moon'. In the context of this verse, the lily represents the citizens of Ayodhya.

The phrase 'sun of the Sun-race' implies that Lord Ram, who belonged to the exalted Solar race of kings, is the brightest, the most exalted and noble, and the most glorious amongst them all.]

The good fortune and luck of residing in Ayodhya is being praised by Brahma (the Creator) and others. Tulsidas also sings the pristine pure fame and magnificent glories of the Lord (Sri Ram)[8] (11).

[[8]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/19/5.]

अयोध्याका आनन्द

राग केदारा

(7 / 23)

देखत अवधको आनंद।
हरषि बरषत सुमन दिन दिन देवतनिको बृंद।। 1।।
नगर–रचना सिखनको बिधि तकत बहु बिधिबृंद।
निपट लागत अगम, ज्यों जलचरहि गमन सुछंद।। 2।।
मुदित पुरलोगनि सराहत निरखि सुखमाकंद।
जिन्हके सुअलि–चख पियत राम–मुखारबिंद–मरंद।। 3।।
मध्य ब्योम बिलंबि चलत दिनेस–उडुगन–चंद।
रामपुरी बिलोकि तुलसी मिटत सब दुख–द्वंद।। 4।।

ayōdhyākā ānanda

rāga kēdārā

(7/23)

dēkhata avadhakō ānanda.
harași barașata sumana dina dina dēvatanikō br̥̄nda.. 1..
nagara-racanā sikhanakō bidhi takata bahu bidhibr̥nda.

nipaṭa lāgata agama, jyōṁ jalacarahi gamana suchanda.. 2..
mudita puralōgani sarāhata nirakhi sukhamākanda.
jinhakē su'ali-cakha piyata rāma-mukhārabinda-maranda.. 3..
madhya byōma bilambi calata dinēsa-uḍugana-canda.
rāmapurī bilōki tulasī miṭata saba dukha-dvanda.. 4..

The Glory and Excellence of Ayodhya

Verse no. 7/23—[Ayodhya where Lord Ram lived was not an ordinary city. It has special significance as it was the place chosen by the Supreme Being where he would reveal himself as a human being: this is Ayodhya's special importance.

Except for the fourteen years when Lord Ram was in the forest to undertake the task of eliminating the cruel demons, the job for which the Lord had to come down to earth as a human and endure all the problems associated with life in this gross mortal world, the rest of the time in Ayodhya was one of uniform happiness and celebrations. It was a prosperious place for the simple reason that the Lord who bestows every imaginable boon had lived there himself.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 16; (ii) Doha no. 195 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it; (c) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 4.]

Exhilarated at the joy, happiness and charm of Ayodhya, the Gods shower flowers upon the city daily (1).

In order to learn the intricate design (the layout and the plan of the city) and mysteries of Ayodhya, the creator Brahma observes it very closely, but he finds it very difficult to understand even as an aquatic creature finds it impossible to move unhindered on land[1] (2).

[[1]Brahma was unable to learn about the intricacies and mysteries of Ayodhya because, being the capital city of Lord Sri Ram, it had a divine origin, and was not created like other worldly cities by the creator Brahma.

When any creature who is accustomed to living in water finds its way on land, it is totally perplexed and dumbfounded, for all its organs are adapted for life in water and so it finds impossible to survive on land and navigate on it. Similarly, the Creator is accustomed to building the world that is gross and subject to so many problems, but he was astonished that Ayodhya did not conform to anything he has ever built. Brahma was mystified, and he could not understand the mystery behind the uniqueness of Ayodhya which defied all his reasoning and surpassed everything he has ever built to perfection.]

The Gods happily praise and honour the citizens of Ayodhya[2] whose bumble bee-like eyes watch Lord Sri Ram who is the root of all beauty, magnificence, elegance and charm, and drink the nectar from his lotus-like face[3] (3).

[[2]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 16; (b) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 4.

[3]The people feel extremely happy, privileged and glad to be able to watch Lord Sri Ram from up so close, and to think that they are his subjects and he is their Lord. This is because Lord Ram was not an ordinary king, but a personified form of

the Supreme Being whose holy sight is rare and difficult to behold even by great ascetics, hermits and sages.

In this stanza, the citizens who used to enjoy seeing Lord Ram to their hearts' content are like the 'bees', and the pleasure and spiritual bliss that they derived by looking at Lord Ram's charming and sweet form is the 'nectar'.]

Tulsidas asserts that by seeing the city of Sri Ram, all the sorrows, agonies, trials and tribulations associated with this mundane world, as well as doubts, confusions, discords, agitations and turmoils, cease to exist (i.e. they are bestroyed). That is why, he says, even the sun, the stars and the moon slow down while traversing the sky overhead (so as to have an abiding panoramic view of Ayodhya to their hearts' content from a strategic or vantage point in the sky)[4] (4).

[[4]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 195.]

रामराज्य

राग सोरठ

(7 / 24)

पालत राज यों राजा राम धरमधुरीन।
सावधान, सुजान, सब दिन रहत नय–लयलीन।। 1।।
स्वान–खग–जति–न्याउ देख्यो आपु बैठि प्रबीन।
नीचु हति महिदेव–बालक कियो मीचुबिहीन।। 2।।
भरत ज्यों अनुकूल जग निरुपाधि नेह नवीन।
सकल चाहत रामही, ज्यों जल अगाधहि मीन।। 3।।
गाइ राज–समाज जाँचत दास तुलसी दीन।
लेहु निज करि, देहु निज–पद–प्रेमपावन पीन।। 4।।

rāmarājya

rāga sōraṭha

(7/24)

pālata rāja yōṁ rājā rāma dharamadhurīna.
sāvadhāna, sujāna, saba dina rahata naya-layalīna.. 1..
svāna-khaga-jati-n'yā'u dēkhyō āpu baiṭhi prabīna.
nīcu hati mahidēva-bālaka kiyō mīcubihīna.. 2..
bharata jyōṁ anukūla jaga nirupādhi nēha navīna.
sakala cāhata rāmahī, jyōṁ jala agādhahi mīna.. 3..
gā'i rāja-samāja jām̆cata dāsa tulasī dīna.
lēhu nija kari, dēhu nija-pada-prēmapāvana pīna.. 4..

The Glorious Reign of Lord Ram

Verse no. 7/24—[The glorious reign of Lord Ram as the Sovereign of the kingdom of Ayodhya has been elaborately described in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 23.

Refer also to: Geetawali, (a) Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza nos. 9-11; verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 5; (b) Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/1.]

In this way, the King, Lord Sri Ram, who is an expert in the principles of Dharma (righteousness, propriety, probity, noble conduct and thought) looks after his kingdom. ['In this way' means that in a way that makes his subjects happy, contented and well looked after so much so that even the Gods feel envious of them.]

That most righteous, noble and courteous gentleman (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) is always alert (vigilant towards his responsibilities), and he actively follows the established and sanctioned laws and regulations (i.e. the tenets as established by the Vedas) (1).

The expert Lord Ram presided over the judgement given to the dog, the bird and the ascetic, while he slayed the low-caste to provide a new life to the son of a Brahmin. [Refer a note at the end of this verse.]* (2).

Like Bharat, the whole world used to have an abiding devotion and affection for Lord Ram in a selfless manner, devotion and affection that were enhanced with passage of time.

Even as a fish wants water that is in abundance (and desires nothing else but water), so did everyone wished to have no one other than Lord Ram as their only Lord (as their protector, their benefactor, their saviour, their only hope and succour, and they wanted nothing else) (3).

Having described the reign and the kinghood of Lord Sri Ram (i.e. its glories, happy times, virtues etc.), the lowly and humble Tulsidas also asks for only one thing— that the Lord (Sri Ram) should accept him (as one of his own), and grant him (Tulsidas) the boon of having eternal devotion and affection of the purest kind for the Lord's feet that are divine and holy[1] (4).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 25 and its accompanying note.]

[Note—*These stories are narrated in 'Anand Ramayan' purported to have been written by sage Valmiki.

(1) The *story of the dog and the ascetic*—This is narrated in Anand Ramayan's Rajya Kand, Purvaardha (first half), verse nos. 1 to 49. Briefly it is as follows— Once, a dog wailed in front of Lord Ram's palace. It was chased away by the guards for three consecutive days, but when the Lord heard the wailing on the fourth day he sent Laxman to bring the dog to the royal court, and asked it the reason for its agony. The dog replied that an ascetic had broken its legs by hitting with a stone. Lord Ram summoned the ascetic and asked him why he had hit the poor creature. The ascetic replied that one afternoon he had collected some food by begging but this dog touched

it, thereby polluting it. He was hungry, and so he became angry. So he threw a stone to chase away the dog, but unfortunately the stone hit the leg and it broke.

The Lord told the ascetic that it was his fault to get angry at this poor creature who did not have the wisdom to know that it was not supposed to touch the ascetic's food. Perhaps the dog was hungry too. But still it was not so big a crime that would incur such a severe punishment. So the culprit was the ascetic, and therefore he must bear the punishment. The Lord asked the dog what punishment it wished the ascetic be given. At this the dog requested that the ascetic be made an Abbot of a Shiva temple. Immediately, the ascetic was appointed as an Abbot and sent to head a Shiva temple with all the necessary pomp and circumstance.

It was a most un-usual punishment, so the people who had assembled to watch the proceeding asked the Lord to explain. Lord Ram advised them to ask the dog himself. The clever dog replied that in its previous life he was an Abbot himself, and has become a dog in this life due to the sins an abbot commits. Therefore it is sure that this ascetic would become a dog in his next life, and suffer the horrors of such a life as I am subjected to. The dog meanwhile died and its soul attained liberation and deliverance by the grace of Lord Ram because during its last moments the dog had a divine Darshan (sight, view) of the Lord. The ascetic of course thought that that he was extremely lucky, and submerged headlong in enjoying the sensual pleasures of life. In the next birth he did become a dog and was subjected to immense horrors.

(2) The *story of the bird* revolves around a dispute between an owl and a vulture. It is narrated in Anand Ramayan, Rajya Kand, Purvaardha, verse nos. 123 to 141. Briefly this story is as follows—One day Lord Ram saw an owl and a vulture quarreling fiercely. The bone of contention was the nest on a mango tree. The owl said that the nest belonged to it because it had built it, and the vulture has illegally occupied it and is not vacating. The vulture claimed that the nest belonged to him because it was he who had built it, and the owl had illegally occupied it before he re-occupied the nest.

The Lord asked them if they had any witness to prove who had actually built the nest. Both replied in the negative. So the Lord asked the owl—'Tell me, when did you built the nest?' The owl replied—'Lord, I built it when this earth was created.'

The Lord asked the vulture the same question, and it replied—'Lord, I built the nest on the mango tree when the earth was still submerged in water prior to its rising to the water's surface.'

The Lord gave the following judgment—'When the earth was still under water, where was the question of a mango tree, and upon what did it stand? The mango tree can't stand on water. Obviously it is the vulture who is telling the lie.' So the Lord punished the vulture by getting it hanged, and the nest was restored to the owl.

(3) The third *story of a Brahmin's son* being revived from death also appears in Anand Ramayan, Rajya Kand, Purvaardha, verse nos. 50 to 120. Briefly it is as follows—Once, a Brahmin's five year old son died. Both the parents came to the palace gates of Lord Ram, grieving and wailing. When the Lord asked them the reason they replied that some sort of wrong activities are going on in his kingdom, and since a king is responsible for everything that happens in his kingdom, the Lord cannot absolve himself from the negative consequences of such acts. When the king is marred by the taint of sin, the subjects suffer by way of pre-mature death, diseases, natural calamities etc. Now therefore, since the son has died due to the king's share of sins, if the Lord does not do anything to revive the dead son, the parents threatened to

die also, and then the Lord Ram would be squarely responsible for the horrendous consequences.

The Lord assured the Brahmin that he would ensure that the dead son is revived, but till that time his dead body was put in a tub of oil to prevent decomposition. He even assured the Brahmin parents that if he is unable to revive the dead son then he will offer his own two sons, Lav and Kush to them as compensation. Lord Ram consulted his Guru Vasistha, and on his advice he mounted on the Pushpak plane to survey his kingdom and find out where any wrong is being done. During the inspection he was confronted with six more dead persons who had died before ripe age. One was a husband whose wife was wailing inconsolably, the second was the dead body of a Kshatriya living in a village called Madhupur, the third was that of a prostitute living in Prayag (Triveni; Allahabad), the fourth was that of an oil merchant from Hastinapur, the fifth was that of a daughter-in-law of an ironsmith of Haridwar, and the sixth was that of a daughter of a woman tanner or cobbler. All the corpses were kept in oil at Ayodhya till the Lord returned.

Meanwhile, the Lord saw at a place that a Shudra (a low caste man) was performing severe penances by hanging upside down from a tree over a fire on the ground and inhaling smoke. This man wished to attain liberation and deliverance, and so he was doing severe form of Tapa. The Lord intervened and said that a Shudra is not supposed to do Tapa because his duty is to serve the society and if he does it diligently then it is equivalent to doing severe Tapa for him. He had violated the sanctified way of code of conduct proclaimed by the Vedas, and since it was a violation of the edict of the scripture it was indeed a sin and a wrongful conduct. It was this wrongful act of his that violated the sanctions of the Vedas which indirectly created a situation when unwarranted deaths and grieving overcame the kingdom of Ayodhya.

The Shudra asked the Lord to give him an easy means to attain liberation and deliverance of his soul if he is not supposed to do Tapa. Seeing that the soul of the Shudra had all the right to attain its emancipation and salvation though it was not supposed to do Tapa, the Lord provided him a simple key—'My holy name 'RAM' is the easiest way for obtaining spiritual liberation and deliverance. So repeat it, and you shall get your desired destination. But since your act that violates the sanction of the Vedas has brought misfortune to my kingdom and others are suffering due to it, I must punish you by killing you. Concentrate your mind upon my divine Name 'RAM', and though you have to die now you will definitely find emancipation and salvation for yourself. When you die at my hands, you will go straight to my abode in the heaven, the divine abode of Lord Vishnu which is called Vaikunth.' Thus, the Shudra found the heavenly abode of the Supreme Lord very easily.

As soon as this Shudra was punished by the Lord by way of killing him, all the dead persons—including the Brahmin's son—were revived because the sin of violating the sanctions of the scriptures had been eliminated.]

सीता–वनवास

(7 / 25)

संकट–सुकृतको सोचत जानि जिय रघुराउ।

सहस द्वादस पंचसतमें कछुक है अब आउ।। 1।।
भोग पुनि पितु–आयुको, सोउ किए बनै बनाउ।
परिहरे बिनु जानकी नहि और अनघ उपाउ।। 2।।
पालिबे असिधार–ब्रत, प्रिय प्रेम–पाल सुभाउ।
होइ हित केहि भाँति, नित सुबिचारु, नहि चित चाउ।। 3।।
निपट असमंजसहु बिलसति मुख मनोहरताउ।
परम धीर–धुरीन हृदय कि हरष–बिसमय काउ ?।। 4।।
अनुज–सेवक–सचिव हैं सब सुमति, साध सखाउ।
जान कोउ न जानकी बिनु अगम अलख लखाउ।। 5।।
राम जोगवत सीय–मनु, प्रिय–मनहि प्रानप्रियाउ।
परम पावन प्रेम–परमिति समुझि तुलसी गाउ।। 6।।

sītā-vanavāsa

(7/25)

saṅkaṭa-sukr̥takō sōcata jāni jiya raghurā'u.
sahasa dvādasa pan̄casatamēṁ kachuka hai aba ā'u.. 1..
bhōga puni pitu-āyukō, sō'u ki'ē banai banā'u.
parihарē binu jānakī nahi aura anagha upā'u.. 2..
pālibē asidhāra-brata, priya prēma-pāla subhā'u.
hō'i hita kēhi bhām̐ti, nita subicāru, nahi cita cā'u.. 3..
nipaṭa asaman̄jasahu bilasati mukha manōharatā'u.
parama dhīra-dhurīna hr̥daya ki haraṣa-bisamaya kā'u?.. 4..
anuja-sēvaka-saciva haiṁ saba sumati, sādha sakhā'u.
jāna kō'u na jānakī binu agama alakha lakhā'u.. 5..
rāma jōgavata sīya-manu, priya-manahi prānapriyā'u.
parama pāvana prēma-paramiti samujhi tulasī gā'u.. 6..

Sita's Exile & Birth of her two Sons, Lava and Kush

{The story of Sita's exile and the birth of her two sons Lava and Kush has not been included by Tulsidas either in his epic 'Ram Charit Manas', or in 'Kavitawali' which are his other two books that describe the life and times of Lord Ram.

'Geetawali' is the only place where Tulsidas has narrated this tale of Sita's forest exile, where she was given shelter in the hermitage of sage Valmiki, and where her two sons were born. It is narrated below from verse no. 7/25—to verse no. 7/36.

This episode, the reason for Sita's exile and subsequent developments, is described in sage Veda Vyas' classic narration in Sanskrit, titled "Adhyatma Ramayan", in its Uttar Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 32—to Canto 9. An English version of this book has been written and published by the author of this present book of Geetawali.}

Verse no. 7/25—Once, Lord Ram became contemplative and wondered, 'Out of the total of 12500 yrs. of my life span (sahasa dvādasa pañcasata) in this world (on earth), only a few years are left (1).

After that it is writ in fate and provided in providence that I must live more for the number of days my father would have lived had he not died prematurely. But to live for an extended period of time that would represent my father's life had he lived the full span of his life and not died before it was normally due (and in which case I will be deemed to be him in a symbolic way), it is imperative that I leave (and have nothing to do with) Sita, as no other alternative honourable and righteous way is available out of this quandary[1] (2).

[[1]King Dasrath had died even before his full time of life on this earth was completed. He had died prematurely out of shock and grieving for Lord Ram at the time the latter was sent to fourteen years of forest exile. A son is deemed to be his father's image and fraction, and whatever is left incomplete by the father, it is the duty and responsibility of his son to complete.

Hence, any numbers of days that Dasrath would have lived if he had not died prematurely are now to be lived by his son who is supposed to be Dasrath's fraction and image, i.e. Lord Ram. These days of life would be an extension, an addition to the normal life-span of Lord Ram which is 12500 years as stated by the Lord himself in stanza no. 1 herein above.

But there was a huge problem here: During this extended period of life, Lord Ram would be deemed to be living as an image of his father, for this extended period of his life would be on behalf of Dasrath as the Lord's own lifespan would have come to an end. Therefore it was necessary to cut-off all physical relations with Sita as she was Dasrath's daughter-in-law, and so she can't live with Lord Ram as his wife during this period. There being no way out, the only solution was to leave her or abandon her.]

Now, Lord Ram faced the gravest of dilemma and was in a piquant situation[2] that was like the sharp edge of a sword. On the one hand he was expected to follow the ordinance of Fate and live a life of strict vows and renunciation because he had to live the remaining numbers of days of his life on Dasrath's behalf, and on the other hand, as was his natural habit, he had to uphold his vows of love and affection as well as his natural duty towards Sita who was his beloved, devoted and loyal wife.

In this situation, what should be the proper thing to do which would serve good for all—the Lord was deeply contemplative on this issue but could not decide what to do. For this reason he became very perplexed, pensive and gloomy, and his usual cheerfulness and enthusiasm ebbed away (3).

[[2]The reason for his dilemma is that Sita had not committed any mistake, and so it will be very wrong to abandon her as punishment for no crime of hers. But then to live with her when he would be playing the role of his late father would be equally sinful because that would be tantamount to living with one's daughter-in-law. It's unthinkable. So Lord Ram was sorely perplexed and unable to decide what should be done.]

But, even in such uncertainties, Lord Ram's face glowed and looked very charming because it is not possible to have either happiness and joy, or dejection and gloom in the heart of Lord Ram who was an expert in the grand virtues of fortitude, equanimity, tranquility and self-control[3] (4).

[[3]To wit, albeit Lord Ram faced a dilemma and could not decide which of the two options he should adopt, yet his external visage remained ever so calm and poised as if nothing had happened.]

No one except Sita could realise the dilemma faced by the Lord—not even his brothers, servants, ministers and friends (5).

This is because both Lord Ram and Sita know and understand each other's sentiments and thoughts very closely.

Tulsidas also sings the glory of this most pure form of devotion that Lord Sri Ram and Sita had towards each other[4] (6).

[[4]Sita could sense the mental state of sadness, grief and distress through which Lord Ram was passing, and the emotional turmoil he was experiencing. She also realized that the reason for this sadness of Lord Ram was that he loved her exceedingly, and as such he could not bring himself to bear the agony of telling Sita that he would have to abandon her due to compulsions of situation, albeit this decision would tear him apart from the inside and would hurt him more than it would her.

Sita gathered her courage and girdled herself to face what was to come next. She had no ill-will or hard feelings against Lord Ram as she herself had witnessed the mental and emotional upheaval through which the Lord was passing—just because he did not actually want to leave her.

A true devotee and lover is one who finds joy in whatever keeps the object of his or her devotion and adoration happy and free from any tension, in putting the latter's wishes above one's own wishes, even if this meant suffering hugely personally.

So therefore, both Lord Ram and Sita mutually decided that they will part with each other to keep the sanctity of tradition even if it meant huge personal sacrifices and un-surmountable sufferings and pain for the rest of their lives.]

(7 / 26)

राम बिचारि कै राखी ठीक दै मन माहिं।
लोक–बेद–सनेह पालत पल कृपालहि जाहिं।। 1।।
प्रियतमा, पति देवता, जिहि उमा रमा सिहाहिं।
गुरुविनि सुकुमारि सिय तियमनि समुझि सकुचाहिं।। 2।।
मेरे ही सुख सुखी, सुख अपनो सपनहूँ नहिं।
गेहिनी–गुन–गेहिनी गुन सुमिरि सोच समाहिं।। 3।।
राम–सीय–सनेह बरनत अगम सुकबि सकाहिं।
रामसीय–रहस्य तुलसी कहत राम–कृपाहिं।। 4।।

(7/26)

rāma bicāri kai rākhī ṭhīka dai mana māhiṁ.
lōka-bēda-sanēha pālata pala kr̥pālahi jāhiṁ.. 1..
priyatamā, pati dēvatā, jihi umā ramā sihāhiṁ.
guruvini sukumāri siya tiyamani samujhi sakucāhiṁ.. 2..
mērē hī sukha sukhī, sukha apanō sapanahūm̐ nahiṁ.

gēhinī-guna-gēhinī guna sumiri sōca samāhiṁ.. 3..
rāma-sīya-sanēha baranata agama sukabi sakāhiṁ.
rāmasīya-rahasya tulasī kahata rāma-krpāhiṁ.. 4..

Verse no. 7/26—At last, after considerable thought, Lord Ram decided to leave Sita and snap all relationships with her (permanently).

Lord Ram spent each moment of his life (during the few days left of his own life-span, and before he was to assume the role of his father and live the days on his behalf) loving and showing great affection to Sita in accordance with the sanctions of Vedas and customs of the world (1).

'Sita is most dear to me; even Parvati (consort of Shiva) and Laxmi (consort of Vishnu) are jealous of her faithfulness and integrity. At the moment she is pregnant, and is like a jewel amongst women.'

Thinking this, Lord Ram became exceptionally hesitant and reluctant to abandon her. [But, there was no choice; what could he do?] (2).

'Sita's happiness lies in my happiness,' thinking this, Lord Ram becomes virtually drowned in a sea of worries and grief and sadness at the prospect of having to leave her inspite of knowing fully well that she is faultless and immaculate (3).

Even accomplished poets find themselves inept to describe the love of Lord Ram and Sita. It is only as a result of Lord Ram's blessing that Tulsidas is able to sing their glories (4).

(7 / 27)

चरचा चरनिसों चरची जानमनि रघुराइ।
दूत–मुख सुनि लोक–धुनि घर घरनि बूझी आइ।। 1।।
प्रिया निज अभिलाष रुचि कहि कहति सिय सकुचाइ।
तीय–तनयसमेत तापस पूजिहौं बन जाइ।। 2।।
जानि करुनासिंधु भाबी–बिबस सकल सहाइ।
धीर धरि रघुबीर भोरहि लिए लषन बोलाइ।। 3।।
'तात तुरतहि साजि स्यंदन सीय लेहु चढ़ाइ।
बालमीकि मुनीस आस्रम आइयहु पहुँचाइ'।। 4।।
'भलेहि नाथ', सुहाथ माथे राखि राम–रजाइ।
चले तुलसी पालि सेवक–धरम अवधि अघाइ।। 5।।

(7/27)

caracā caranisōṁ caracī jānamani raghurā'i.
dūta-mukha suni lōka-dhuni ghara gharani būjhī ā'i.. 1..
priyā nija abhilāṣa ruci kahi kahati siya sakucā'i.
tīya-tanayasamēta tāpasa pūjihauṁ bana jā'i.. 2..
jāni karunāsindhu bhābī-bibasa sakala sahā'i.

dhīra dhari raghubīra bhōrahi li'ē laṣana bōlā'i.. 3..
'tāta turatahi sāji syandana sīya lēhu caṛhā'i.
bālamīki munīsa āsrama ā'iyahu pahum̐cā'i'.. 4..
'bhalēhi nātha', suhātha māthē rākhi rāma-rajā'i.
calē tulasī pāli sēvaka-dharama avadhi aghā'i.. 5..

Verse no. 7/27—The most wise and clever Lord Ram (raghurā'i) discussed with his royal spies the secret news they had brought to him about the kingdom and its affairs.

Hearing from them about the opinion of the subjects of the kingdom, Lord Ram went to his palace and asked Sita—(1) 'My beloved! What is your desire?' Then Sita replied hesitantly, 'I want to go to the forest and worship (i.e. serve) the sages, their wives and children![1]' (2).

[[1]In the context of what has been already said in the preceding verses, it clearly indicates that Sita had been briefed by the Lord of what he would be forced to do. And since the Lord's happiness and carrying out his wishes was the primary concern and duty of Sita as a devoted and loyal wife, she took the initiative of telling him that she voluntarily wishes to go to the forest to serve the sages and hermits living there so that her husband is excused from the embarrassment of forcefully sending his wife—who is not an ordinary wife but a Queen of an Empire—into the forest for exile. That would have been a very sticky situation. So she decided to free the Lord of this single guilt and infamy, and volunteered to go to the forest herself.]

Then, realising what was ordained by providence, the most merciful Lord Ram called Laxman at the crack of dawn (3), and said to him, 'Brother, get a chariot ready immediately, and take Sita on it and drop her at the hermitage of Valmiki.'

[Lord Ram requested Laxman to take Sita to the hermitage of sage Valmiki, and put her in his care before he returns.] (4).

Then, although Laxman overtly said 'Oh Lord, its okay (I'll follow your orders),' but he was extremely distraught and stunned; he clasped his head with his hands in utter dismay as if lamenting with sorrow, and feeling extremely guilty of the outcome of what he was ordered to do.

Fully carrying out the duties as an obedient follower of the Lord (without questioning the probity of the Master's orders), Laxman proceeded from there (to bring the chariot and take Sita away to the forest) (5).

(7 / 28)

आइ लषन लै सौंपी सिय मुनीसहि आनि।
नाइ सिर रहे पाइ आसिष जोरि पंकजपानि।। 1।।
बालमीकि बिलोकि ब्याकुल लषन गरत गलानि।
सरबबिद बूझत न, बिधिकी बामता पहिचानि।। 2।।
जानि जिय अनुमानही सिय सहस बिधि सनमानि।
राम सदगुन–धाम–परमिति भई कछुक मलानि।। 3।।
दीनबंधु दयालु देवर देखि अति अकुलानि।
कहति बचन उदास तुलसीदास त्रिभुवन–रानि।। 4।।

(7/28)

ā'i laṣana lai saumpī siya munīsahi āni.
nā'i sira rahē pā'i āsiṣa jōri paṅkajapāni.. 1..
bālamīki bilōki byākula laṣana garata galāni.
sarababida būjhata na, bidhikī bāmatā pahicāni.. 2..
jāni jiya anumānahī siya sahasa bidhi sanamāni.
rāma sadaguna-dhāma-paramiti bha'ī kachuka malāni.. 3..
dīnabandhu dayālu dēvara dēkhi ati akulāni.
kahati bacana udāsa tulasīdāsa tribhuvana-rāni.. 4..

Verse no. 7/28—Then Laxman brought Sita to the hermitage of sage Valmiki, bowed his head before the sage, and stood still with the lotus-like palms of his hands touching each other as a gesture of respect and prayerful submission (1).

Seeing Laxman full of regret, extremely distraught, sad, contrite and uneasy, Valmiki did not ask him any questions (realising that something was seriously amiss) (2).

The sage could guess, by virtue of his sixth sense of perception and wisdom, what might have happened, and he therefore welcomed Sita with immense respect, love and affection (as if his own daughter has arrived in his care).

But wondering how Lord Ram, who was an embodiment of all righteousness and virtues, could take such an extreme step to abandon his most faithful and highly virtuous wife, the sage became slightly gloomy, dejected and distressed (3).

Tulsidas says that Sita, who was the queen of the three worlds (tribhuvana-rāni), became full of sorrows, and she said to Laxman, who was her brother-in-law and most merciful and friend of the distressed, as follows:- (4).

(7 / 29)

तौलों बलि, आपुही कीबी बिनय समुझि सुधारि।
जौलों हौं सिखि लेउँ बन रिषि–रीति बसि दिन चारि।। 1।।
तापसी कहि कहा पठवति नृपनिको मनुहारि।
बहुरि तिहि बिधि आइ कहिहै साधु कोउ हितकारि।। 2।।
लषनलाल कृपाल ! निपटहि डारिबी न बिसारि।
पालबी सब तापसनि ज्यों राजधरम बिचारि।। 3।।
सुनत सीता–बचन मोचत सकल लोचन–बारि।
बालमीकि न सके तुलसी सो सनेह सँभारि।। 4।।

(7/29)

taulōṁ bali, āpuhī kībī binaya samujhi sudhāri.
jaulōṁ hauṁ sikhi lē'umm̐ bana riṣi-rīti basi dina cāri.. 1..
tāpasī kahi kahā paṭhavati nr̥panikō manuhāri.

bahuri tihi bidhi ā'i kahihai sādhu kō'u hitakāri.. 2..
laṣanalāla kṛpāla! nipaṭahi ḍāribī na bisāri.
pālabī saba tāpasani jyōṁ rājadharama bicāri.. 3..
sunata sītā-bacana mōcata sakala lōcana-bāri.
bālamīki na sakē tulasī sō sanēha samʹbhāri.. 4..

Verse no. 7/29— [Sita said—] 'Pray Laxman! Pray to the Gods for my well-being till I become adapted to and learn the way of living in a hermitage in another 4-5 days (1).

Being a hermitress, what message can I give which is suitable for a King (Lord Ram)! I believe that (like someone had cast aspersion on my character and forced Lord Ram to abandon me[1]) someone else would also come and say some good things about me to the Lord (so that the scar and taint cast on my character would be washed away some day, I hope) (2).

[[1]The story goes that one washer-man had some dispute with his wife and wished to throw her out of the house. In the course of heated argument with her he rebuked her by saying—'I am not Ram who would consent to accept you as my wife once it is established that you had been in the house of another man.' When the spy reported this to Lord Ram, he thought that the proper thing would be to abandon Sita in order to uphold the laws of righteousness, propriety and probity which he expects his subjects to follow. Of course it was inappropriate to keep a woman as a wife if she had loose character. This was only an excuse that the Lord was waiting for, because the decision to leave Sita and the reason behind it is already discussed above.]

'Oh merciful Laxman! Do not forget me so quickly, but like other ladies who stay in the various hermitages in your realm, do look after me and take care of me like other hermitress, though without showing any special privilege for me.[2]' (3).

[[2]Ram was a most merciful, kind, gracious, magnanimous and benevolent Emperor and King. It was a standard practice for a great King of his stature to provide for the necessities of life to all the hermits and sages living within the boundary of the kingdom. What Sita means here is that she should not be shown any special favour because she happens to an erst-while queen of Ayodhya. She should be treated at par with other hermitresses of the kingdom. But she loved Laxman as if he was her son, and so this moment was all the more poignant and sorrowful. She pleads with him to keep in touch and ensure that he does not forget her or forgo a relationship that had deep roots.]

Tulsidas says that all those present on the occasion started weeping on hearing these pitiful words of Sita (4).

(7 / 30)

सुनि ब्याकुल भए, उतरु कछु कह्यो न जाइ।
जानि जिय बिधि बाम दीन्हों मोहि सरुष सजाइ।। 1।।
कहत हिय मेरी कठिनाई लखि गई प्रीति लजाइ।
आजु अवसर ऐसेहू जौं न चले प्रान बजाइ।। 2।।

इतहि सीय–सनेह–संकट उतहि राम–रजाइ।
मौनही गहि चरन, गौने सिख–सुआसिष पाइ।। 3।।
प्रेम–निधि पितुको कहे मैं परुष बचन अघाइ।
पाप तेहि परिताप तुलसी उचित सहे सिराइ।। 4।।

(7/30)

suni byākula bha'ē, utaru kachu kahyō na jā'i.
jāni jiya bidhi bāma dīnhōṁ mōhi saruṣa sajā'i.. 1..
kahata hiya mērī kaṭhinā'ī lakhi ga'ī prīti lajā'i.
āju avasara aisēhū jauṁ na calē prāna bajā'i.. 2..
itahi sīya-sanēha-saṅkaṭa utahi rāma-rajā'i.
maunahī gahi carana, gaunē sikha-su'āsiṣa pā'i.. 3..
prēma-nidhi pitukō kahē maiṁ paruṣa bacana aghā'i.
pāpa tēhi paritāpa tulasī ucita sahē sirā'i.. 4..

Laxman's Regrets and Lamentations-I

Verse no. 7/30—Hearing the anguished and mournful words of Sita, Laxman became highly emotionally tormented and agitated; he could not say anything so lost for words he was. He realised in his heart that the Creator has been very malicious towards him, and as such has viciously and wrathfully punished him (1).

He thought to himself, 'Alas! Forsooth, even 'Affection' would feel shy and ashamed to see my stern and emotionless heart, for my life has not departed from my body inspite of such a woeful sight1'. (2).

[[1]"I had always maintained that I had the greatest of affection for Lord Ram and Sita, but woe betide me that today I have become so stone-hearted that I have watched such a pitiful state of Sita, and couldn't I feel the ocean of pain and grief in Lord Ram's heart at the moment when he had told me to take Sita to the forest and leave her at sage Valmiki's hermitage? How then can I claim that I have affection for them? In all sooth, if 'Affection' came today and saw my evil-omened face, he would be ashamed of himself for doing so, for verily I am not worthy for Affection to have any place in my heart. Why; why don't I die when I see Sita in such a miserable, pathetic and wretched condition? What more horrendous grief and extremes of sorrows can there be which would make mine heart sink in a void of gloom and despair that would causeth me to shed mine body and give my soul peace by lying down dead?]'

[Hence, Laxman was on the horns of a great dilemma.] On the one hand, he was tied to Sita's (son-like) affections for him, and on the other hand there were the orders of Sri Ram. [To wit, Laxman could not decide what to do. It was a tearing his heart to leave Sita alone in a forest because she loved Laxman like her own son, while on the other hand he had clear instructions from Lord Ram to go and leave her there, and then come back to Ayodhya.]

In the end, his mind was so numbed and stupefied that he became emotionless and acted mechanically like a puppet as he silently touched Sita's feet, got her blessings and advice, and exited from there with a heavy heart burdened by guilt and gloom (as he wended his way back to Ayodhya) (3).

(On the way back, the distraught and dejected Laxman grieved and lamented sorely—) 'Woe betide me. I had said most acrimonious and harsh words in abundance for my father who was full of love and affections for me[2]. It is that sin which has rewarded me (i.e. punished me) with this insurmountable sorrow and the gravest of anguish, not to mention the ignominy that I will have to bear for the rest of my life as the one who had physically been the cause of abandonment of Sita in the forest. And now this sorrow and grief and ignominy can only be overcome (or alleviated, mitigated or coped with) by tolerating it and facing it with the greatest of resilience, forbearance, fortitude and courage.' (4).

[[2]At the time when Laxman had first come to know that his father has ordered, though under extreme emotional blackmail by his step-mother Kaikeyi and surely against his will, to send Lord Ram to the forest for fourteen years, he rose up in revolt. He had then vehemently insulted his father and opposed him, refusing to obey him any longer, and had even gone to the extent of threatening to tie him up like a condemned prisoner and throwing him into prison, and slaying Bharat should he interfere in anointment of Lord Ram as the Prince Regent as was planned him along with Bharat, or throwing him and Bharat to prison if he got the permission from Lord Ram, which, however, and obviously, the Lord denied, as he calmed Laxman down with his advice about the futility of becoming angry at things that are non-issues from metaphysical perspective. This episode is narrated in Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Ayodhya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 14—44.

As for Dasrath's love for Laxman, it is clearly mentioned in Tulsidas' "Ram Charit Manas" that Dasrath loved all his four sons (Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) equally (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 208), and further that he specially treated Lord Ram and Laxman as a source of sustenance of his life (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 208).]

(7 / 31)

गौने मौनही बारहि बार परि परि पाय।
जात जनु रथ चीर कर लछिमन मगन पछिताय।। 1।।
असन बिनु बन, बरम बिनु रन, बच्यौ कठिन कुघाय।
दुसह साँसति सहनको हनुमान ज्यायो जाय।। 2।।
हेतु हौं सियहरनको तब, अबहु भयो सहाय।
होत हठि मोहि दाहिनो दिन दैव दारुन दाय।। 3।।
तज्यो तनु संग्राम जेहि लगि गीध जसी जटाय।
ताहि हौं पहुँचाइ कानन चल्यों अवध सुभाय।। 4।।
घोरहृदय कठोर–करतब सृज्यो हौं बिधि बायँ।
दास तुलसी जानि राख्यो कृपानिधि रघुराय।। 5।।

gaunē maunahī bārahi bāra pari pari pāya.
jāta janu ratha cīra kara lachimana magana pachitāya.. 1..
asana binu bana, barama binu rana, bacyau kaṭhina kughāya.
dusaha sāmँsati sahanakō hanumāna jyāyō jāya.. 2..
hētu hauṁ siyaharanakō taba, abahu bhayō sahāya.
hōta haṭhi mōhi dāhinō dina daiva dāruna dāya.. 3..
tajyō tanu saṅgrāma jēhi lagi gīdha jasī jaṭāya.
tāhi hauṁ pahumँcā'i kānana calyōṁ avadha subhāya.. 4..
ghōrahṛdaya kaṭhōra-karataba srjyō hauṁ bidhi bāyamँ.
dāsa tulasī jāni rākhyō krpānidhi raghurāya.. 5..

Laxman's Regrets and Lamentations-II

Verse no. 7/31—Once again, he repeatedly fell at her (Sita's) feet, and then left the place silently. He was extremely distraught and gloomy, submerged in remorse and so full of contrition and lamentation that he looked like a mere effigy that is wrapped in clothes as he sat motionless on the chariot. [To wit, Laxman looked like a lifeless puppet moving mechanically, as he sat on the chariot on the way back to Ayodhya.] (1).

[He was full of remorse, grief and contrition, and lamented thoughtfully to himself—] 'Alas! I lived without food in the forest (during 14 year of exile), and nothing (no harm) happened to me in the battle-field even though I had no armour to protect my body. Even when I was struck by the 'Shakti' (a especially powerful arrow shot at him by Meghnad), I survived—at that time Hanuman had brought the medicine to revive me.

But verily, now I regret it. [In all sooth and without any doubt in my mind I say that it would have been better for me if I had died at that time on the battle-field of Lanka because I would not have had to face this most unpleasant and ignominious task of abandoning Sita in the forest that I am being forced to do now today. Why did I survive then? Oh God, if I had died then, I would have been spared this day; I would have got fame and good name and the honour of dying like a warrior, serving my Lord Sri Ram and laying down my life for a noble cause. Perhaps the malevolent Creator did not like it, and so he revived me at that time so that I would one day be made to suffer more horribly and be denounced by the world for all times to come as the 'cruel and merciless person who had offered Sita to the fire of great suffering by abandoning her alone in the middle of a wild forest though he knew that she was innocent and immaculate as innocence and immaculacy can be'. But now I will be roasted alive for the rest of my life in the interminable fire of endless agony, grief, sorrows, lamentations and pain as well as ignominy and contemp with no one coming forward to offer a bit of solace to my weeping soul. Nay, if I meet someone, I will be treated with utter contempt and as being a harbinger of ill omen.] (2).

I was the cause for Sita's abduction (or rather, it was my negligence or anger at Sita's provocative words that I left her alone, and that single misstep of mine had enabled Ravana to abduct her).

Woe betide me, for today it is again me who has become instrumental in sending her to exile, and it is me who has today caused her the same distress and agony that Ravana had caused to her at that time!

Oh Creator! All my efforts to do righteous deeds and live an honourable life that should have kept me in your good books, and make my time and life happy and joyful, has gone in vain. Rather, you have viciously turned things on their heads and used me as a pawn to implement your malicious plans. Forsooth, whereas you should have made things favourable for me considering my righteous life, you have instead turned everything foul and nasty to the extreme. [This is why, though I've always stuck to righteousness and had staunchly followed every word of Lord Sri Ram, I've been made a scapegoat by you for your malicious designs, and forced to suffer the highest degree of disgrace by being instrumental in all the horrific torments that Sita has had to undergo in her life. First she was abducted by Ravana because I left her alone in the hermitage when Lord Ram had gone behind the golden deer, and now it is me who has to leave her alone in the forest. Oh God, what sin did I commit that you had chosen me to be an instrument that causes all the problems of Sita? Why are you making me a pawn for the purpose of carrying out your own plans ?] (3).

Alas! The most glorious Jatau (the vulture) had left his mortal coil (i.e. had died) in the battle-field trying to free Sita (from the clutches of Ravana)[1], and here I am, putting her to exile in the forest voluntarily, and as is my wont (i.e. as I've always been doing), I am returning to Ayodhya empty-handed (4).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/8, 3/12—to 2/16.

Laxman praises Jatau and laments that though he was born as a lowly bird, a 'vulture', he had made himself immortal and had attained deliverance and eternal peace by laying down his life to protect Sita as Ravana was taking her away to Lanka on his chariot. Jatau had heard her cries and had leapt forward to valiantly fight with Ravana to the best of his ability till his wings were chopped off by the demon.

Laxman regrets that as compared to Jatau, he has become the cause of pain, grief and sorrows for Sita, for while Jatau had done his best to help her in need, Laxman has been so merciless and cruel that he has put Sita to great agony by leaving her in the forest, and when she wailed and cried pitifully he has turned his back on her and is heading to the city of Ayodhya, instead of at least refusing to go back and deciding to live in the forest himself for the rest of his life in self-imposed exile! Laxman wonders and laments: couldn't he do this at least? But no, the irony is he is sitting on the chariot and heading home to the comforts of the city of Ayodhya!]

It appears that the stern and malicious Creator has created me to do all the detestable, ignominious, repulsive, reprehensible and infamous deeds that he wants to get done (and that is why he has made me so stern-hearted so that I can do them).

Perhaps also, Sri Ram knows this secret (and hence he chose me to carry out this mission; say, why couldn't he send Bharat or Shatrughan or anyone else to do this dirty and most ignoble job; why did he select me for this nasty thing?) (5).'

पुत्रि ! न सोचिए आई हौं जनक–गृह जिय जानि।
कालिही कल्यान–कौतुक, कुसल तव, कल्यानि।। 1।।
राजरिषि पितु–ससुर प्रभु पति, तू सुमंगलखानि।
ऐसेहु थल बामता, बड़ि बाम बिधि की बानि।। 2।।
बोलि मुनि कन्या सिखाई प्रीति–गति पहिचानि।
आलसिन्हकी देवसरि सिय सेइयहु मन मानि।। 3।।
न्हाइ प्रातहि पूजिबो बट बिटप अभिमत–दानि।
सुवन–लाहु, उछाहु दिन दिन, देबि, अनहित–हानि।। 4।।
पाप–ताप–बिमोचनी कहि कथा सरस पुरानि।
बालमीकि प्रबोधि तुलसी, गई गरुइ गलानि।। 5।।

(7/32)

putri! na sōci'ē ā'ī hauṁ janaka-gṛha jiya jāni.
kālihī kalyāna-kautuka, kusala tava, kalyāni.. 1..
rājariṣi pitu-sasura prabhu pati, tū sumaṅgalakhāni.
aisēhu thala bāmatā, baḍi bāma bidhi kī bāni.. 2..
bōli muni kan'yā sikhā'ī prīti-gati pahicāni.
ālasinhakī dēvasari siya sē'iyahu mana māni.. 3..
nhā'i prātahi pūjibō baṭa biṭapa abhimata-dāni.
suvana-lāhu, uchāhu dina dina, dēbi, anahita-hāni.. 4..
pāpa-tāpa-bimōcanī kahi kathā sarasa purāni.
bālamīki prabōdhi tulasī, ga'ī garu'i galāni.. 5..

Sage Valmiki's Reassurance to Sita

Verse no. 7/32—Sage Valmiki welcomed Sita with the heart-felt warmth of a father who feels very happy to see his daughter. He comforted and reassured her, saying, 'Daughter (putri)! Think that you have arrived at your father's place, and stop lamenting and worrying at all for any kind of thing. You will soon get happiness (1).

Both your father (Janak) and father-in-law (Dasrath) are the most honourable and exalted in the fraternity of kings, the Supreme Lord himself is your husband (a reference to Lord Ram), and you yourself are a mine (treasury) of all the excellent virtues—inspite of these auspicious combination of circumstances when one observes you in such a dire and distressed state, one marvels with great wonder at the deceptively uncertain and stern nature of the Creator[1].' (2).

[[1]Valmiki expresses his surprise that Sita has been subjected to such pain and agony though she has been blessed with a high quality of personal virtues and character, a birth in the household of king Janak who was one of the greatest scholary kings of his time, renowned for his metaphysical knowledge, as well as for righteousness and noble conduct and life, and marriage into such an honourable and exalted family as that of king Dasrath who had even helped the Gods whenever his help was sought, belonged to the exalted Solar race and was a descended in a family whose earlier king Sagar had created the great oceans on the earth. Besides these good

fortunes, she had Lord Ram, who was a personified form of Lord Vishnu himself, as her husband, and she was a Queen of a mighty empire.

Its indeed therefore a wonder of wonders that she has to suffer in this way. This surely shows that the Creator is extremely unpredictable, and no one can be sure that whatever good one does with the hope that one would be rewarded accordingly will actually happen, for it may be just the opposite and contrary to expectations and logic.]

Then, Valmiki called Sita and advised her as he would have done to his own daughter—'Oh Sita! Serve the holy river Ganges which gives salvation to even lazy people (because it is believed that by taking a dip in the holy water, a person absolves himself of all sins which would have otherwise needed lots of penances, fire-sacrifices, rituals, pilgrimages etc.). In the morning, after taking your bath, worship the Vat-Tree (Banyan Tree).

Oh Goddess (i.e. Sita)! You'll be blessed with sons by doing so[2]. You shall find greater encouragement and courage to face the fiat of Fate and the dictates of Destiny with the passage of time, and (by observing some basic religious vows such as bathing in the holy river Ganges and worshipping the holy Tree) all your malign stars would gradually recede (and soon you will find yourself happy once again).[3]' (4).

[[2]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/26, stanza no. 2 which says that Sita was pregnant at the time of her forest exile.

[3]The blessing of this great sage that she would soon have two sons was a source of great encouragement and solace for Sita. She now looked forward to those days, and once the two sons were born her days would pass easily taking care of them and showering her love on them. She would forget her pain and grief when she would see her sons playing around, and what seemed till now a marooned forlorn life in the wilderness would soon turn into an oasis of joy and cheerfulness.

Sita had been well acquainted with sage Valmiki and had been to his hermitage earlier too: Lord Ram had come to his hermitage on his way to the forest. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124.} This meeting had a positive impression on Sita, and she had sensed the sage's loving and affectionate nature. Therefore, when she was sent here she did not feel completed alienated, or felt herself in a strange place with an unknown sage. She had also witnessed how great sages (like sages Bharadwaj, Agastya and Atri) had maintained their hermitages which were reasonably comfortable places.

So, during her forest exile, Sita did not feel absolutely lonely, abandoned and discarded. She had the aged sage Valmiki has her guardian and foster-parent to look after her. And when the sage welcomed her with the warmth of a father, her grief and shock were soon dispelled. After the initial days of weeping and lamenting as is normal in her situation, she gathered herself and got her wits together.]

Tulsidas says after that Valmiki consoled her and kept her mind diverted from her sorrows by narrating many thoughtful, inspiring and interesting stories. This resulted in alleviating Sita's distress a great deal (and by-and-by she came around, gathered her with, and became accustomed to the new way of life in the sage's hermitage)[4] (5).

[[4]This was not at all difficult or new for Sita, and soon she became comfortable and felt at home in the hermitage of sage Valmiki—for she had lived a long time in hermitages in the forest with Lord Ram and Laxman during the Lord's fourteen years of life in the forest, and was accustomed to this way of life. Hence, she

started keeping herself busy in tending to the sage's hermitage: cleaning it, gardening, cooking, serving the sage and other great sages who came visiting, helping the sage in his religious duties, doing some religious duties herself, and so many other ordinary things of life that helped time start passing effortlessly for her.]

(7 / 33)

जबतें जानकी रही रुचिर आस्रम आइ।
गगन, जल, थल बिमल तबतें, सकल मंगलदाइ।। 1।।
निरस भूरुह सरस फूलत, फलत अति अधिकाइ।
कंद–मूल, अनेक अंकुर स्वाद सुधा लजाइ।। 2।।
मलय मरुत, मराल–मधुकर–मोर–पिक–समुदाइ।
मुदित–मन मृग–बिहग बिहरत बिषम बैर बिहाइ।। 3।।
रहत रबि अनुकूल दिन, ससि रजनि सजनि सुहाइ।
सीय सुनि सादर सराहति सखिन्ह भलो मनाइ।। 4।।
मोद बिपिन बिनोद चितवत लेत चितहि चोराइ।
राम बिनु सिय सुखद बन, तुलसी कहै किमि गाइ।। 5।।

(7/33)

jabatēṁ jānakī rahī rucira āsrama ā'i.
gagana, jala, thala bimala tabatēṁ, sakala maṅgaladā'i.. 1..
nirasa bhūruha sarasa phūlata, phalata ati adhikā'i.
kanda-mūla, anēka aṅkura svāda sudhā lajā'i.. 2..
malaya maruta, marāla-madhukara-mōra-pika-samudā'i.
mudita-mana mr̥ga-bihaga biharata biṣama baira bihā'i.. 3..
rahata rabi anukūla dina, sasi rajani sajani suhā'i.
sīya suni sādara sarāhati sakhinha bhalō manā'i.. 4..
mōda bipina binōda citavata lēta citahi cōrā'i.
rāma binu siya sukhada bana, tulasī kahai kimi gā'i.. 5..

Sita in Sage Valmiki's Hermitage

Verse no. 7/33—Ever since Sita has made her dwelling at sage Valmiki's hermitage, the sky, water and earth—all have become clear, and bestow (provide) all types of auspiciousness, well-being and welfare. [That is, since Sita came to live in the hermitage of sage Valmiki, its environment became very pleasing and auspicious. It is not that earlier the place was not auspicious and pleasing, for this cannot be so as a great and illustrious sage of Valmiki's stature lived there, but after Sita came to abide there its glories were greatly enhanced by her august presence.] (1).

Dried trees have become green and are laden (blossoming, blooming) with large quantities of sweet-scented flowers and ripe-succulent fruits, while different varieties

of edible roots, stems and sprouts that grow there have put to shame even Amrit (the sweet elixir of life) by their taste (2).

Fragrant breeze blows over the place. Birds and insects such as the swans, the black bees, the peacocks and the cuckoos in their multitudes, as well as deer and other animals of different kinds have all abandoned their inherent animosities with each other, and instead they happily roam around the place, cheerfully playing and enjoying themselves in perfect peace and harmony in a general environment of friendliness (3).

The sun is favourable during the day time (i.e. it is never too hot), while the moon looks pleasing and appealing to the women during the night.

When Sita hears all this from her companions (i.e. the other ladies residing in the hermitage as well as the surrounding villages and hamlets, and other forest-dwelling tribal women), she becomes delighted and praise them instead for their good fortune[1] (4).

[[1]This stanza shows that almost every day some or the other person visited the hermitage, and so Sita usually had company and rarely found herself alone. This helped her as it prevented her from feeling forlorn and lonely. When these guests told her how the environment has changed for good ever since she has come to live with them, Sita instead praised them and their good deeds and fortunes. Her modesty, politeness and unpretentious nature and courteous behaviour endeared her to all the women folk who lived near the hermitage of sage Valmiki.]

Externally the forest and its environs look so verdant, vibrant and exuberant with joyous, delightful and happy tidings and the days which were passing extremely cheerfully and auspiciously that the whole place seems to steal (enchant, captivate, enthrall, enrapture) the mind.

But is the forest sufficiently joyful and a provider of peace and comfort for Sita without Sri Ram? This is a question that cannot be answered by Tulsidas[2] (5).

[[2]How can Tulsidas say that Sita is happy and enjoying her days in the forest without the company of Lord Sri Ram, albeit the pleasant surroundings have made her stay as comfortable as they could possibly can. Internally she is being burnt by the fire of agony of separation from her beloved Lord, but at the same time she is happy that she has obeyed the Lord and helped him to carry out the divine mandate of the Creator in a way a faithful and loyal wife should be doing even if that meant immense suffering on her part.

Forsooth, even if she had stayed in the palace with him, she was duty bound to obey what the Lord wished. So, as far as she is concerned, neither the palace nor the forest can give her true happiness if Lord Ram, her beloved husband, is not with her. But she reconciled herself and drew peace and solace from the fact that albeit she was subjected to the agony of separation from the Lord, but if this pleased him, then it is the cause of happiness for her too.]

सुभ दिन, सुभ घरी, नीको नखत, लगन सुहाइ।
पूप जाये जानकी द्वै, मुनिबधू, उठीं गाइ।। 1।।
हरषि बरषत सुमन सुर गहगहे बधाए बजाइ।
भुवन, कानन, आस्रमनि रहे मोद–मंगल छाइ।। 2।।
तेहि निसा तहँ सत्रुसूदन रहे बिधिबस आइ।
माँगि मुनिसों बिदा गवनें भोर सो सुख पाइ।। 3।।
मातु–मौसी–बहिनिहूतें, सासुतें अधिकाइ।
करहिं तापस–तीय–तनया सीय–हित चित लाइ।। 4।।
किए बिधि–ब्यवहार मुनिबर बिप्रबृंद बोलाइ।
कहत सब, रिषिकृपाको फल भयो आजु अघाइ।। 5।।
सुरुष ऋषि, सुख सुतनिको, सिय–सुखद सकल सहाइ।
सूल राम–सनेहको तुलसी न जियतें जाइ।। 6।।

lava-kuśa-janma

(7/34)

subha dina, subha gharī, nīkō nakhata, lagana suhā'i.
pūpa jāyē jānakī dvai, munibadhū, uṭhīṁ gā'i.. 1..
haraṣi baraṣata sumana sura gahagahē badhā'ē bajā'i.
bhuvana, kānana, āsramani rahē mōda-maṅgala chā'i.. 2..
tēhi nisā tahaṁ satrusūdana rahē bidhibasa ā'i.
māṁgi munisōṁ bidā gavanēṁ bhōra sō sukha pā'i.. 3..
mātu-mausī-bahinihūtēṁ, sāsutēṁ adhikā'i.
karahiṁ tāpasa-tīya-tanayā sīya-hita cita lā'i.. 4..
ki'ē bidhi-byavahāra munibara biprabr̥nda bōlā'i.
kahata saba, riṣikr̥pākō phala bhayō āju aghā'i.. 5..
suruṣa r̥ṣi, sukha sutanikō, siya-sukhada sakala sahā'i.
sūla rāma-sanēhakō tulasī na jiyatēṁ jā'i.. 6..

Birth of Lava and Kush-I

Verse no. 7/34—Sri Janki (Sita) gave birth to two sons on an auspicious day, auspicious time, and auspicious celestial configuration of stars and planets (Nakshatra and Lagna). The wives of hermits began to sing carols at that moment (1).

The Gods, being extremely joyous, played their musical instruments and showered flowers, and happiness spread over the entire world, in the forest and the hermitages (2).

By chance, Shatrughan came to that hermitage that night for a halt (during his regular journey through the different areas of the kingdom).
Having seen the happy event, he took leave of the sage Valmiki and left (3).

The wives and daughters of the hermits served Sita with more dedication and attention than her own mother, aunt, mother-in-law and sisters would have done (4).

Sage Valmiki called all the hermits and sages, and honoured them all according to the circumstance (like Sita's own father and father-in-law would have done).

All said that the blessings of the sage have taken fruit (in the form of two beautiful sons of Lord Ram) (5).

Tulsidas says that although Sita gets all affection and love from the (fatherly) sage Valmiki and the two adorable sons (Lava-Kush), she is unable to remove the thorn of Lord Ram's separation from her heart (6).

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मुनिबर करि छठी कीन्हीं बारहेंकी रीति।
बन–बसन पहिराइ तापस, तोषि पोषे प्रीति।। 1।।
नामकरन सुअन्नप्रासन बेद बाँधी नीति।
समय सब रिषिराज करत समाज साज समीति।। 2।।
बाल लालहिं, कहहिं 'करिहैं राज सब जग जीति'।
राम–सिय–सुत, गुर–अनुग्रह, उचित, अचल प्रतीति।। 3।।
निरखि बाल–बिनोद तुलसी जात बासर बीति।
पिय–चरित–सिय–चित–चितेरो लिखत नित हित–भीति।। 4।।

(7/35)

munibara kari chaṭhī kīnhīṁ bārahēṅkī rīti.
bana-basana pahirā'i tāpasa, tōṣi pōṣē prīti.. 1..
nāmakarana su'annaprāsana bēda bāmdhī nīti.
samaya saba riṣirāja karata samāja sāja samīti.. 2..
bāla lālahiṁ, kahahiṁ 'karihaiṁ rāja saba jaga jīti'.
rāma-siya-suta, gura-anugraha, ucita, acala pratīti.. 3..
nirakhi bāla-binōda tulasī jāta bāsara bīti.
piya-carita-siya-cita-citērō likhata nita hita-bhīti.. 4..

Birth of Lava and Kush-II

Verse no. 7/35—Sage Valmiki performed the children's '**chaṭhī**' ceremony (rites on the 6th day of birth) and '**bārahēṅkī rīti**' ceremony (rites on the 12th day of birth)[1]. He adorned the assembled hermits and sages with suitable hermit-like clothes (robes), and satisfied them with cheerfully (1).

[[1]In the '**chaṭhī**' ceremony, some sweet dish, generally a milk-rice pudding is made and distributed among all the near and dear ones as a mark of celebration. In the '**bārahē**' ritual, almost a similar process is repeated, with some extra snacks thrown-in for good measure; also some religious books/scriptures are recited to invoke the Gods to bless the child.]

Sage Valmiki did all the various rites and ceremonies as sanctioned by the Vedas for a child from time to time after calling the community (of sages, hermits, saints), and after making due preparations for such rites and ceremonies (2).

While playing with the children, he used to say, 'They will indeed rule over the whole world. These two children are, first, the sons of Lord Ram, and second, are bestowed with the sage's blessings. Therefore it was right and expected of them that they would become as famous and glorious as their exalted and illustrious father Lord Ram.'

Everyone believed what sage Valmiki proclaimed (3).

Tulsidas says, 'Sita's days were passed watching pranks and playful gestures and activities of the children, but internally the mind as a painter continued to paint the story of Lord Ram on the stone of love and affection in the heart of Sita.' (4).

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बालक सीयके बिहरत मुदित–मन दोउ भाइ।
नाम लव–कुश राम–सिय अनुहरति सुंदरताइ।। 1।।
देत मुनि मुनि–सिसु खेलौना, ते लै धरत दुराइ।
खेल खेलत नृप–सिसुन्हके बालबृंद बोलाइ।। 2।।
भूप–भूषन–बसन–बाहन, राज–साज सजाइ।
बरम–चरम, कृपान–सर, धनु–तून लेत बनाइ।। 3।।
दुखी सिय पिय–बिरह तुलसी, सुखी सुत–सुख पाइ।
आँच पय उफनात सींचत सलिल ज्यों सकुचाइ।। 4।।

(7/36)

bālaka sīyakē biharata mudita-mana dō'u bhā'i.
nāma lava-kuśa rāma-siya anuharati sundaratā'i.. 1..
dēta muni muni-sisu khēlaunā, tē lai dharata durā'i.
khēla khēlata nr̥pa-sisunhakē bālabr̥nda bōlā'i.. 2..
bhūpa-bhūṣana-basana-bāhana, rāja-sāja sajā'i.
barama-carama, kr̥pāna-sara, dhanu-tūna lēta banā'i.. 3..
dukhī siya piya-biraha tulasī, sukhī suta-sukha pā'i.
ām̆ca paya uphanāta sīn̆cata salila jyōm̐ sakucā'i.. 4..

Birth of Lava and Kush-III

Verse no. 7/36—Sita's two sons move about the forest playing happily. Their names are Lava and Kush. They are as handsome, magnificent to behold, and lovely as Sri Ram and Sita are (1).

When sage Valmiki gave them toys suitable for hermitage boys, they playfully hide them; they join many boys and play the games played by princes (2).

They create king-like ornaments, clothes, vehicles and other royal paraphernalia, besides arms such as shield, body-armour, sword, arrows, bows and quiver (3).

Tulsidas says, 'Sita is extremely contrite, sorrowful and distraught at the separation from her husband (Lord Ram), but at the same time her agonies are somewhat alleviated and overcome when she sees the two lovely sons (of Lord Ram) staying with her. She derives some semblance of comfort, peace and solace from this fact much like a sprinkle of water helps to subside the bubbles and the froth that rises up and begin to spill over when the milk is boiled.' [To wit, when Sita's heart is about to boil over with sorrow and pain of separation from Lord Ram, the sight of the two children gives her peace, emotional support, solace and courage.] (4).

In Valmiki Ramayan, 7/66/1-8, details of the Birth and Naming of Ram's two sons appear as follows:-

यामेवरात्रिंशत्रुघ्न: पर्णशालांसमाविशत् ।। तामेवरात्रिंसीतापिप्रसूतादारकद्वयम् ।।1।।
ततोऽर्धरात्रसमयेबालकामुनिदारका:।। बाल्मीके: प्रियमाचख्यु: सीताया:प्रसवंशुभम् ।।2।।
भगवन्नामपत्नीसाप्रसूतादारकद्वयम् ।। ततोरक्षांमहाते ज:कुरुभूतविनाशिनीम् ।।3।।
तेषांतद्वचनंश्रुत्वामहर्षि:समुपागत् ।। बालचन्द्रप्रतीकाशौदेवपुत्रौमहौजसौ ।।4।।
जगामतत्रदृष्टात्माददद र्शचकुमारकौ।। भूतघ्नींचाकरोत्ताभ्यांरक्षांरक्षोविना-शिनीम् ।।5।।
कुशमुष्टिमुपादायल-वंचैवतुसद्विज:।। वाल्मीकि:प्रददौताभ्यांरक्षांभूत विनाशिनीम् ।।6।।
यस्तयो:पूर्वजोजात:सकुशैर्मेत्रसत्कृतै:।। निर्मार्जनीयस्तुतदाकुश-इत्यस्यनामतत् ।।7।।
यश्चावरोभवेत्ताभ्यांलवेनसु समाहित:।। निर्मार्जनीयोवृद्धा-भिर्लवेतिचसनामत:।।8।।
[Valmiki Ramayan, 7/66/1-8]

"yāmēva rātriṁ śatrughna parṇaśālāṁ samāviśat.
tāmēva rātriṁ sītāpi prasūtā dārakadvayam.. 1..

tatōऽrdharātrasamayē bālakā munidārakāḥ.
vālmīkēḥ priyamācakhyuḥ sītāyāḥ prasavaṁ śubham.
tasya rakṣāṁ mahātējaḥ kuru bhūtavināśinīm.. 2..

tēṣāṁ tadvacanaṁ śrutvā munir'harṣamupāgamat.
bhūtaghnīṁ cākarōttābhyā rakṣāṁ rakṣōvināśinīm.. 3..

kuśamuṣṭimupādāya lavaṁ caiva tu sa dvijaḥ.
vālmīkiḥ pradadau tābhyāṁ rakṣāṁ bhūtavināśinīm.. 4..

yastayōḥ pūrvajō jātaḥ sa kuśairmantrasanskr̥taiḥ.
nirmārjanīyastu bhavētkuśa ityasya nāmataḥ.. 5..

yaścāparō bhavēttābhyāṁ lavēna susamāhitaḥ.

nirmārjanīyō vr̥d'dhābhirlavaścēti sa nāmataḥ.. 6..

ēvaṁ kuśalavau nāmnā tāvubhau yamajātakau.
matkr̥tabhyāṁ ca namābhyāṁ khyātiyuktau bhaviṣyataḥ.. 7..

tē rakṣāṁ jagr̥hustāṁ ca munihastātsamāhitāḥ.
akurvanśca tatō rakṣāṁ tayōrvigatakalmaṣāḥ.. 8..”

[Valmiki Ramayan, 7/66/1-8]

“Sita gave birth to two sons during the night when Shatrughan stayed in the hermitage in a thatched hut (1). The disciples of the sage came at mid night and informed Valmiki of the birth of the 2 sons (2), ‘Oh Lord, Lord Ram's wife has given birth to 2 sons, please bless them and protect them (3).’

Hearing their words, Valmiki started for the place where the children were born (4), saw the 2 moon like beautiful sons and protected them against evil spirits by casting a charm (5).

Then he took a fistful of Kush grass (a reed) and divided the tuft into two halves from the middle (6). The son, who was sprinkled by sanctified water (baptized) first, using the upper half of the Kush grass, was called Kush (7). The other son, who was blessed (baptized) by the lower, root bearing part of Kush grass was called Lav (Lav = root) (8). [Valmiki Ramayan, 7/66/1-8]

[Note—(1) Traditionally, Lava is regarded as the elder son while Kush as the younger son—for the simple reason that Lava’s name comes first. But careful analysis of Valmiki's Ramayan as narrated above shows that Kush was baptised first and Lava after him. Valmiki could not have committed such a glaring error of baptising the younger son first instead of the elder. Though Lava was born (emerged into this world from his mother's womb) prior to Kush, the actual conception was in the reverse order. And sage Valmiki who was an expert, wise and enlightened person could understand the intricate biological phenomenon involved and decided to baptise Kush first, making him the biologically elder brother. But traditionally and customarily, Lav was regarded as the elder brother.

(2) From the moment the thought that now he has to live his father's role till the time he disclosed this to Sita that it is in-appropriate that she stay with him any longer, Lord Ram spent each moment showing love and affections to Sita as per the sanctions of Vedas and customs of the society (Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/26, stanza no. 1) because 'Sri Ram and Sita understood each other well and their most pure love is being sung by Tulsidas within sanctioned limits of 'Maryada' (decorum, sanctioned code of propriety, etiquette)' [Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/25, stanza no. 6].

Thereafter, Lord Ram was hesitant to abandon her because she was pregnant [Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/26, stanza no. 2]. This, coupled with the fact that Valmiki reassured Sita on her arrival at his hermitage 'you should worship Vat Tree, bathe in Ganges etc., so that soon you'll be blessed by two sons.' [Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/32, stanza nos. 3-4]—from this narration it appears that in all probabilities, Sita's two sons were conceived during the period when the thought

occurred in Lord Ram's mind that he ought to leave Sita and when he actually told her his intention."]

The night that erst no name had worn, to it a happy name is given; for in that stable lay new-born the peaceful Prince of Earth and Heaven, in the solemn midnight centuries ago. [A Christmas Hymn]

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कैकेयी जौलों जियति रही।
तौलों बात मातुसों मुँह भरि भरत न भूलि कही।। 1।।
मानी राम अधिक जननीतें, जननिहु गँस न गही।
सीय–लषन रिपुदवन राम–रुख लखि सबकी निबही।। 2।।
लोक–बेद–मरजाद दोष–गुन–गति चित चख न चही।
तुलसी भरत समुझि सुनि राखी राम–सनेह सही।। 3।।

(7/37)

kaikēyī jaulōṁ jiyati rahī.
taulōṁ bāta mātusōṁ mum̐ha bhari bharata na bhūli kahī.. 1..
mānī rāma adhika jananītēṁ, jananihu gam̐sa na gahī.
sīya-laṣana ripudavana rāma-rukha lakhi sabakī nibahī.. 2..
lōka-bēda-marajāda dōṣa-guna-gati cita cakha na cahī.
tulasī bharata samujhi suni rākhī rāma-sanēha sahī.. 3..

Ignominy of Kaikeyi

Verse no. 7/37—As long as Kaikeyi lived, Bharat did not talk with her even by mistake for the rest of his life (1).

But Lord Ram regarded her more respectfully than his own mother, and Kaushalya also did not harbour any ill-will against her.

Sita, Laxman and (the youngest brother) Shatrughan also followed Lord Ram (in their attitude towards Kaikeyi) (2).

Tulsidas says that for Bharat, Sri Ram's love and devotion was the essence and meaning of his being; he did not bother or pay any heed to the sanctions of the Vedas or customs of the society, nor what was good or bad (except for love and devotion for Lord Ram (3).

रामचरितका उल्लेख

राग रामकली

रघुनाथ तुम्हारे चरित मनोहर गावहिं सकल अवधबासी।
अति उदार अवतार मनुज–बपु धरे ब्रह्म अज अबिनासी।। 1।।
प्रथम ताड़का हति, सुबाहु बधि, मख राख्यो द्विज, हितकारी।
देखि दुखी अति सिला सापबस रघुपति बिप्रनारि तारी।। 2।।
सब भूपनको गरब हर्‌यो, हरि भंज्यो संभु–चाप भारी।
जनकसुता समेत आवत गृह परसुराम अति मदहारी।। 3।।
तात–बचन तजि राज–काज सुर चित्रकूट मुनिबेष धर्‌यो।
एक नयन कीन्हों सुरपति–सुत, बधि बिराध रिषि–सोक हर्‌यो।। 4।।
पंचबटी पावन राघव करि सूपनखा कुरुप कीन्हीं।
खर–दूषन संहारि कपटमृग–गीधराज कहँ गति दीन्हीं।। 5।।
हति कबंध, सुग्रीव सखा, करि, बेधे ताल, बालि मार्‌यो।
बानर–रीछ सहाय, अनुज सँग सिंधु बाँधि जस बिस्तार्‌यो।। 6।।
सकुल पुत्र दल सहित दसानन मारि अखिल सुर–दुख टार्‌यो।
परमसाधु जिय जानि बिभीषन लंकापुरी तिलक सार्‌यो।। 7।।
सीता अरु लछिमन सँग लीन्हें औरहु जिते दास आए।
नगर निकट बिमान आए, सब नर–नारी देखन धाए।। 8।।
सिव–बिरंचि, सुक–नारदादि मुनि अस्तुति करत बिमल बानी।
चौदह भुवन चराचर हरषित, आए राम राजधानी।। 9।।
मिले भरत, जननी, गुर, परिजन चाहत परम अनंद भरे।
दुसह–बियोग–जनित दारुन दुख रामचरन देखत बिसरे।।10।।
बदे–पुरान बिचारि लगन सुभ महाराज अभिषेक कियो।
तुलसिदास जिय जानि सुअवसर भगति–दान तब माँगि लियो।।11।।

rāmacaritakā ullēkha

rāga rāmakalī

(7/38)

raghunātha tumhārē carita manōhara gāvahiṁ sakala avadhabāsī.
ati udāra avatāra manuja-bapu dharē brahma aja abināsī.. 1..
prathama tāṛakā hati, subāhu badhi, makha rākhyō dvija, hitakārī.
dēkhi dukhī ati silā sāpabasa raghupati bipranāri tārī.. 2..
saba bhūpanakō garaba haryō, hari bhaṁjyō sambhu-cāpa bhārī.
janakasutā samēta āvata gṛha parasurāma ati madahārī.. 3..
tāta-bacana taji rāja-kāja sura citrakūṭa munibēṣa dharyō.
ēka nayana kīnhōṁ surapati-suta, badhi birādha riṣi-sōka haryō.. 4..
paṁcabaṭī pāvana rāghava kari sūpanakhā kurupa kīnhīṁ.
khara-dūṣana sanhāri kapaṭamṛga-gīdharāja kahaṁ gati dīnhīṁ.. 5..
hati kabandha, sugrīva sakhā, kari, bēdhē tāla, bāli māryō.
bānara-rīcha sahāya, anuja saṁga sindhu bāṁdhi jasa bistāryō.. 6..

sakula putra dala sahita dasānana māri akhila sura-dukha ṭāryō.
paramasādhu jiya jāni bibhīṣana laṅkāpurī tilaka sāryō.. 7..
sītā aru lachimana samm̐ga līnhēm̐ aurahu jitē dāsa ā'ē.
nagara nikaṭa bimāna ā'ē, saba nara-nārī dēkhana dhā'ē.. 8..
siva-biran̄ci, suka-nāradādi muni astuti karata bimala bānī.
caudaha bhuvana carācara haraṣita, ā'ē rāma rājadhānī.. 9..
milē bharata, jananī, gura, parijana cāhata parama ananda bharē.
dusaha-biyōga-janita dāruna dukha rāmacarana dēkhata bisarē..10..
badē-purāna bicāri lagana subha mahārāja abhiṣēka kiyō.
tulasidāsa jiya jāni su'avasara bhagati-dāna taba māmm̐gi liyō..11..

A Recapitulation of Lord Ram's Legend known as the 'Ramayan'

Verse no. 7/38—Oh Raghunath (Sri Ram)! All the citizens of Ayodhya sing your glorious divine stories. You are most magnanimous, gracious and generous, and are a human manifestation (form) of the Supreme Lord known as 'Brahm' who is without birth and without death (eternal)[1] (1).

[[1]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/6, stanza no. 6; verse no. 7/, stanza no. 7; verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 10.]

To start with, Lord Sri Ram, who is a well-wisher and benefactor of Brahmins, slayed Tadka and Subahu and protected sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice (from being desecrated by the demons)[2].

Thereafter, seeing that Ahilya was very much tormented and sorrowful due to the curse (which has turned her into a stone), he liberated her (from the inanimate state of being a stone, and had granted her pardon whereat she regained her original form as the divine wife of sage Gautam and went back to her husband)[3] (2).

[[2]Refer: (a) Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 209—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210; (b) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 6; verse no. 6/1, stanza no. 2.

[3]Refer: Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/52, stanza no. 7; verse no. 1/57—to verse no. 1/60.]

At Janakpur, the Lord broke the heavy bow of Lord Shiva and crushed (destroyed) the haughtiness, pride, hypocrisy and vanity of all the (assembled) kings and princes[4].

Then, while returning back home (to Ayodhya) with Sita (after marrying her), he vanquished the haughtiness, pride and arrogance of sage Parashuram[5] (3).

[[4]Refer: (a) Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 261—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 262; (b) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 1/89—1/91; verse no. 6/1, stanza no. 3; (c) Kavitawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 2/9—to 2/11.

[5]Refer: (a) Tulsidas' "Geetawali", Baal Kand, verse no. 1/91, stanza no. 7; and (b) Sage Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Baal Kand, Canto 7.

The meeting place between Sri Ram and Parshuram is different between Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas and the present book Geetawali. In the former, the meeting took place before marriage in the Swayambar arena itself at Janakpur and not on the way back to Ayodhya. In the latter case, Tulsidas seems to be relying more on

the Valmiki version of the Ramayan, and therefore appears to be more authenticate because Valmiki was a contemporary of Sri Ram. Perhaps Tulsidas had described the sage's tantrums in Ram Charit Manas at the arena itself just to dramatise the whole episode, and also to justify why the assembled kings, who were instigated by rogue elements amongst them to take up arms and fight it out with Sri Ram after he had broken the bow, had suddenly cowered for cover and fell silent. Had it not been for Parashuram's angry intervention which frightened the kings out of their wits, there would have been an unnecessary quarrel and a free-for-all which would have been very shameful for both the clans. Here, Parashuram's episode was an easy and welcome way out of the quandary.

Thence, forsaking the kinghood (of Ayodhya) to keep (uphold) the words of his dear father, as well as to complete the pending job of the Gods (which was to eliminate the cruel demons who were tyrannising the whole world), he assumed the form of an ascetic/hermit and stayed on the mountains of Chitrakoot[6].

There, he made Indra's son Jayant (who was disguised as a wicked crow) one-eyed[7], and in due course of time slayed the demon named Viraadh[8], thus ending the torments of the forest dwelling sages and hermits (4).

[[6]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 132—to Doha no. 138; (b) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 2/42—2/50.

[7]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2; (b) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/1, stanza no. 4.

[8]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 7.]

Then, Raghav (Sri Ram) purified the Panchvati forest[9], deformed (the demoness) Supernakha[10], slayed (the demons) Khar and Dushan[11], and gave an auspicious end (literally 'physical death', but providing deliverance and salvation to the soul) to the demon Marich (who had come to cheat Sri Ram as a decoy deer)[12], as well as Jatau (the vulture king)[13] (5).

[[9]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes Doha no. 13—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 14.

[10]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 17 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-20 that precede it.

[11]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 21; (b) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/1, stanza no. 4.

[12]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 27; (b) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/3—3/6; (c) Kavitawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 3/1.

[13]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33; (b) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 3/8, 3/12—3/16.]

Moving ahead, Lord Ram slayed the demon named Kabandh (who lived as a headless trunk)[14], made friends with Sugriv[15], pierced the tall 'Tal' (coconut) trees[16], and killed Baali[17].

Thereafter, with the help of bears and monkeys, and accompanied by his brother Laxman, the Lord got a bridge constructed over the ocean—an achievement that spread his fame[18] (6).

[[14]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 33—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34.

[15]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 5; (b) Geetawali, Kiskindha Kand, verse nos. 4/1.

[16]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 7.

[17]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Doha no. 6; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 7—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11.

[18]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 60 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede it—to Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 5; (b) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/6; verse no. 6/56, line no. 4.]

Then, he killed Ravana along with his relatives and sons, thereby removing all the cause of sorrow and tribulation for the Gods[19]. And, recognising that Vibhishan was a pious and saintly person, he anointed him as the king of Lanka[20] (7).

[[19]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 71 (the slaying of Kumbhakarna, the brother of Ravana); (ii) Doha no. 76 along with Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes it (slaying of Meghnad, the son of Ravana); (iii) Doha no. 102—to Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 103 (the slaying of Ravana); (b) Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/16 (the slaying of Ravana); (c) Kavitawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/57, line nos. 1-2; verse no. 6/58, line no. 1.

[20]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 106; (b) Geetawali, (i) Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 4; (ii) Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/22, stanza no. 3; (c) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/10, line no. 3.]

Thereafter, taking along Sita, Laxman and all those who had come with the Lord to help him in his Lanka campaign (i.e. the chiefs of the monkey and bear army), Lord Ram boarded the plane (called Pushpak) and came near Ayodhya[21].

At that time (as the news of the Lord's arrival spread in Ayodhya), all the men and women folk of the city rushed to have a glimpse of the Lord (and welcome him)[22] (8).

[[21]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 119; Doha no. 120 along with Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes it; and Uttar Kand, Doha no. 4.

[22]Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 3 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-10 that precede it; (b) Geetawali, Lankar Kand, verse no. 7/23, stanza no. 1.]

All the creatures of all the 14 Lokas (abodes; the 14 divisions or levels of the creation) became exhilarated and delighted even as Shiva (the 3rd God of the Trinity and the concluder of creation), Brahma (the 2nd God of the Trinity and the creator of the living world), Shukdeo (the parrot sage), Narad (the celestial sage) et al, came to the capital

city of Ayodhya, praising and singing Lord Ram's glories in articulate words, lauding the Lord and praising his stupendous achievements[23] (9).

[[23]Refer: Geetawali, Lanka Kand, verse no. 6/23, stanza no. 4.]

Upon his return to Ayodhya, Bharat, all the mothers, the Guru (sage Vasistha) and other members of the family met the Lord most cheerfully, joyously and affectionately[24].

Their terrible sorrows and anguish caused by separation from their beloved Lord Sri Ram were forgotten the instant they saw the holy feet of the Lord[25] (10).

[[24]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 5—to Doha no. 6.

[25]Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line no. 4 that precede Doha no. 6.]

Finally, consulting the Vedas and Purnas, Guru Vasistha ascertained an auspicious moment and crowned the Lord (Sri Ram) as the King of kings, the Emperor and Sovereign of the kingdom of Ayodhya (mahārāja abhiṣēka kiyō).

It was at this moment that Tulsidas, realising it to be an idealic, most opportune instant, begged Lord Ram to give him alms in the form of the virtue of 'devotion for the Lord'[26] (11).

[[26]Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 7/21, stanza no. 25.

It will be observed that in both the cases, Tulsidas has approached Sri Ram seeking devotion and love for him at a time when kings are bound by religious vows not to deny anything asked of them as alms or charity. These are the only two occasions when Sri Ram is giving out liberally, generously. While others ask for material benefits, our great Tulsidas stands out shoulders above the crowd with his fascinating request—he asks for devotion and love for the Lord which are the 'master keys', as it were, to emancipation and salvation. By a master-stroke, he has literally conquered the Lord himself, for, as is well known, the Lord is subservient to the love and affection of his devotees—this 'devotion and love' factor is the only weapon which can win over the Lord. No other means—Yoga, Japa, Tapa, Yagya, Gyan etc.—can ever conquer him.

And fittingly enough, this is the last line of Geetawali—Tulsidas, in effect, says that after all the efforts that he has made, this is the only reward that he wants.]

------— THE END —------

Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

APPENDIX – 1.1

The Main Characters of the Story of Gītāvalī Rāmāyan

Baal Kand:--

Dasrath (Daśaratha): He was the king of the kingdom of Ayodhya (Ayōdhyā), which was also known as 'Avadh'. He headed an empire that covered a major part of north India of those days. Hence, he was also called a 'Chakravarti King'—i.e. one whose rule extended over a wide swathe of land that had a huge parameter or circumference ("Charka" = a circle).

Kaushalya (Kauśalyā), Kaikei (Kaikeyī) and Sumitra (Sumitrā) were his three chief queens. Kaushalya was the eldest, but the king was more enamoured with Kaikeyi.

Sri Ram (Rāma), Bharat (Bharatha), Laxman (Lakṣmaṇa) and Shatrughan (Śatrughna) were his four sons. Ram was the eldest of the four brothers and the son of Kaushalya; Bharat was the son of Kaikeyi, and Laxman and Shatrughan were the twin sons of Sumitra.

Sage Vishwamitra (Viśvāmitra): The sage who lived in the forest. His fire sacrifice was continuously defiled by the demons. He had gone to Ayodhya to bring Lord Ram to get rid of these demons.

Ahilya: She was the cursed wife of sage Gautam, who had been converted into a stone. She was freed from this curse when Lord Ram touched her by his foot.

Janak: He was the king of Janakpur at the foothills of the Himalayan mountain range. His daughter Sita was married to Lord Ram. Another of his daughter named Urmila was married to Laxman. The two daughters of his younger brother Kushketu, i.e. Maandavi and Srutkirti were married to Bharat and Shatrughan respectively.

Sita (Sītā): The eldest daughter of Janak, and the wife of Lord Ram. It was her abduction by the demon king Ravana that led to the famous war of Lanka around which the story of the Ramayana is built.

Sage Vashistha (Vasiṣṭha): The royal priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya and the teacher of the four princes.

Sage Parashuram: He was the son of king Gaadhi and a great devotee of Lord Shiva. When he heard that Lord Ram had broken Shiva's bow to fulfil a condition of his marriage with Sita, the sage was extremely angered because he took it as an insult of Shiva. He came to take revenge, but was pacified by the grace of Lord Ram.

Ayodhya Kand:--

Manthara (Mantharā): The favoured maid of Kaikeyi who became jealous when she heard that Lord Ram was to be anointed the prince regent of Ayodhya. She instigated her mistress Kaikeyi to compel king Dasrath under some pending promises that were due to her that Ram be sent to a 14 year forest exile, and her own son be installed on the throne of the kingdom.

Kevat (Kēvaṭu): The boatman who took Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita across the river Ganges as they headed for the forest.

Aranya Kand:--

Supernakha (Śūrpaṇakhā):-- She was a half-sister of Ravana, the king of the demon race. She was so enamoured by the charm of Lord Ram that she proposed to marry him. At this the Lord got her nose and ears chopped-off at the hands of Laxman.

Khar and Dushan (Khara Dūṣana):-- They were the cousin brothers of Supernakha and commanders of the demon army deputed to take care of the forest around Chitrakoot in central India.

Maarich (Mārīca):--The demon who was forced by Ravana to become a deer with a golden skin so that Sita could be distracted. Seeing this unique deer, Sita asked her husband Lord Ram to go and bring the deer for her. When the Lord went away, Ravana abducted Sita. Maarich was eventually shot down by Ram.

Jatau (Jaṭāyu): The great and courageous vulture who had intercepted the chariot in which Ravana was taking Sita to Lanka. Jatau tried his best to free Sita, but his wings were cut by the abductor, Ravana. Jatau fell to the ground and was spotted by Lord Ram and Laxman. Before dying, Jatau had told the Lord who had taken Sita away. Lord Ram did his last rites himself.

Sabari (Śabarī):-- She was an old woman who had served sage Matanga. She was blessed by the sage that she will have a divine communion with Lord Ram, an incarnation of the Supreme Being, which would give her final deliverance. Sri Ram

had visited her hermitage while searching for Sita. It was she who directed him to Kishkindha where the Lord befriended the monkeys who helped him to conquer Lanka and rescue Sita.

Kishkindha Kand:--

Baali/Vaali (Vālī):-- The king of Kishkindha and the monkey race. He was also the elder brother of Sugriv, the friend of Lord Ram.

Sugriv (Sugrīva):-- The younger brother of Baali who was thrown out of the kingdom due to certain misunderstands between the two brothers. He lived in exile on top of the Rishyamook mountain where Lord Ram and he became friends. He was reinstated on the throne of Kishkindha, and in return he had helped Lord Ram in finding out about the whereabouts of Sita and rescuing her by lending his huge army of monkeys and bears to the Lord.

Hanuman (Hanumāna):-- A companion of Sugriv and said to be the son of the Wind God. He became an ardent follower of Lord Ram. It was he who went to Lanka to discover Sita, and burn the city down. Later on in the war, he had brought the herb to revive Laxman when he was wounded in the battle field. Hanuman played a pivotal role in the epic war and the conquest of Lanka.

Sampaati (Sampāti): He was the brother of Jatau. He lived on the shore of the ocean. When the monkey search tem army reached there in search of Sita, it was he who had told them she was present in Lanka, an island in the middle of the ocean. Anyone who could go there will find her.

Sundar Kand:--

Vibhishan (Vibhīṣaṇa): The younger brother of the king of demons, Ravana. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, and by extension of Lord Ram. When Hanuman was searching for Sita in the city of Lanka, it was he who told him about the garden where Sita was help captive. Later on, he was insulted and kicked by his elder brother Ravana when he tried to persuade his brother to become reasonable and give Sita back to her husband. It was due to this humiliation that he joined sides with Lord Ram.

Ravana (Rāvaṇa): The great king of the demon race and seemingly an invincible ruler of Lanka, the capital city of the demons. He had kidnapped Sita, and was finally killed in the epic war.

Trijataa (Trijaṭā): The demoness deputed by Ravana to keep a close watch on Sita. She became sympathetic towards her ward Sita and had always encouraged the latter to keep hope.

Mandadori: She was the wise wife of Ravana who had tried on several occasions to persuade her husband to return Sita and prevent the ruinous war.

Lanka Kand:--

Angad (Aṅgada): The son of Baali who later on became a faithful follower of Lord Ram. His devotion for the Lord was no less than that of Hanuman. Lord Ram had sent him as his messenger to Ravana in a last attempt to avoid the war.

Kumbhakaran/Kumbhakarna: He was the brother of Ravana. He had also tried to persuade Ravana to avoid the war. He was later killed in the war.

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

APPENDIX – 1.2

Brief outline of the epic Story of the 'Ramayana' That narrates the Life and Times of Lord Ram

Now, finally, let us read a brief outline of this magnificent epic known as Ramayana. The story is as follows:

The earth and its living beings as well as the gods were being terrorized by the demons led by their king Ravana of Lanka. They appealed to the creator, Brahma, to find out a solution. Together they prayed to Lord Vishnu, the protector of this creation and a manifested form of the Supreme Being. Vishnu assured them that he himself will come down to earth in a human form as Lord Ram and take care of things.

So, Lord Vishnu along with his close associates manifested himself as Lord Ram, the scion of the ruling family of a huge empire of which Ayodhya was the capital. The ruling monarch was king Dasrath, and he had three queens. Kaushalya was the eldest, and the other two were Sumitra and Kaikeyi.

In their previous life, Dasrath and Kaushalya were Manu and Satrupa (the first male and female) respectively. They had done severe Tapa (penance) with a wish to have Lord Vishnu as their son. Their wish was fulfilled in their present life when Vishnu became their son in the form of Lord Ram.

The story goes that Dasrath had become old of age but he had no heirs. He took advice from his royal priest sage Vashistha and performed a son-begetting fire sacrifice with an expert sage named Sringi to preside over the rituals. The Fire God was pleased and he revealed himself during the course of the sacrifice. He gave a divinely blessed and empowered sweet pudding made of milk and rice to king Dasrath with a request that it be given to his queens so that they could share and eat it. As a result of this divine intercession, the four brothers were born. Lord Ram became a son of Kaushalya, Bharat of Kaikeyi, and the twin brothers Laxman and Shatrughan manifested themselves as sons of Sumitra. When the four brothers grew up, they were taught by sage Vashistha in all the skills that were necessary for them.

Meanwhile, sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice was being defiled by the demons. He decided to visit Ayodhya and bring Lord Ram to protect it. The Lord was accompanied by his younger brother Laxman. On the way from Ayodhya to the sage's

hermitage, Lord Ram slayed a demoness named Tadka. Then the two brothers eliminated all the demons who had been troubling Vishwamitra.

Having accomplished this great feat, Lord Ram and Laxman accompanied the sage to Janakpur to attend the marriage ceremony of Sita, the daughter of king Janak of that kingdom. On the way Lord Ram liberated Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, who had become a stone due to an unfortunate curse on her.

Janak had made a vow that anyone who would lift, string and bend or break an old bow of Lord Shiva that was lying with him from some past time, would marry Sita. All the great and mighty kings and princes of the time had assembled to try their luck, but all failed. Finally, Lord Ram broke the bow easily, and as a reward was married to Sita. She was not an ordinary princess, but was a manifestation of Laxmi, Lord Vishnu's divine consort.

All the four brothers were married at the same venue and in the same family. Sita's younger sister Urmila was married to Laxman; her two cousins Maandavi and Srutkirti, daughters of her uncle Kushketu or Kushdwaj, were married to Bharat and Shatrughan respectively.

Everything went well except for a brief and angry intervention of sage Parashuram. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva and was exceedingly peeved that Shiva's bow should be broken in such a manner. So he came fretting and fuming to take revenge, but was finally pacified.

After the marriage party returned home to Ayodhya, many days passed peacefully. But destiny has its own way of steering things in one's life, making events happen in a way over which one has no control. Destiny is so powerful a force to reckon with that no matter what one plans, and how meticulous and flawless that planning is, everything turns turtle and upside down if they do not conform to what destiny wants.

Lord Vishnu had come to earth in the form of Lord Ram to eliminate the demons and not to sit comfortably on the throne of a mighty empire, enjoying its pleasures and privileges, and rolling in its luxury and pomp. To fulfill this mission, it was necessary that the Lord should go to the forest, travel all the way to the fort of the demons at Lanka, and maneuver things in such a way that an excuse could be found to kill the demons and free the earth of its tormentors. So, the events had to be manipulated and tweaked accordingly.

Dasrath wanted to appoint his eldest son Ram on the throne, and full preparations were made to do so. Meanwhile, for the reasons set out in the previous paragraphs, the gods sent Saraswati, the goddess who controls mind and thought, to corrupt the wisdom of Manthara, the closest maid of Kaikeyi. Manthra poisoned Kaikeyi's mind, and told her that if Ram became a king then Bharat would have to serve him as a courtier or a serf. Stunned at this prospect, Kaikeyi prevailed upon king Dasrath to honour the two promises that had been made to her in the past and which were still pending.

She asked that Lord Ram be sent to forest exile for fourteen long years, and her son Bharat be crowned as prince regent instead.

The honourable king had no choice because he could not muster courage to rescind on his promised word, and Lord Ram too did not want his father to suffer ignominy as the one who went back on his words. Being true to one's words was a time honoured quality of the family, and it would be virtually a sacrilege to the royal honour and reputation even to think of breaking one's promise. So, like an obedient son and a noble prince upholding glorious virtues of Dharma (righteousness, propriety, probity, morality, ethics, and nobility of thought and conduct), Lord Ram

willingly and cheerfully offered to go to the forest. After all, merely fourteen years is not a big period in a person's long life if these fourteen years help to establish one's glories as well as uphold the noble traditions and reputation of his family.

Laxman and Sita could not bear separation from the Lord, and they unanimously decided to accompany Lord Ram to the forest. But as has been noted herein above, 'fate and destiny' are great forces of Nature; they are the Master Puppeteers and Ring Masters in the circus of life. 'Destiny' knew that if Ram had to go to the forest and if Bharat's mother is to be the cause, then sure enough Bharat has to be out of the picture—for it was sure that if Bharat remained in Ayodhya he will certainly not let this happen. And if Ram does not go to the forest, how will the demons be eliminated?

Therefore this Master Puppeteer manoeuvred things in such a way that at the time the great drama unfolded on the stage of Ayodhya, Bharat and Shatrughan had gone to Bharat's maternal uncle's place.

Dasrath tried all ways and means possible to dissuade Lord Ram from going to the forest, but the Lord had greater obligations to fulfil. The three—Ram, Laxman and Sita—left the city, crossed river Ganges, blessed the boatman, and finally reached a densely forested area in the central part of India, a place known as 'Chitrakoot', where they stayed for quite some time. On the way, they passed through many villages and hamlets, providing their humble residents the privilege of their divine Darshan (holy viewing). They also met and received blessings of many a sages and seers on the way. The notable among them were Bharadwaj and Valmiki.

Meanwhile, when Sumantra, the charioteer sent behind Ram by Dasrath to persuade the Lord to come back, failed in his mission and had to return empty-handed, the king was shocked and shaken to the core. He soon died out of the intensity of the grief. Ayodhya, that was already reeling under the pain and grief of Lord Ram going to the forest, sunk further in the void of pain and darkness.

Bharat was informed through a messenger, and the two brothers rushed back home. Crestfallen, flabbergasted and taken aback at the nasty developments for which all blames fell on his shoulders though he was not at all a party in them, Bharat erupted in anger. He kicked, punched and dragged Manthara by her hair all over the courtyard; he cursed and used most uncouth words for his mother Kaikeyi, disowning her as his mother and vowing not to see her fact till the end of his life.

The last rites of Dasrath were done, and then the royal court assembled to appoint Bharat to the throne—because the throne could not be allowed to remain unoccupied for practical reasons and governance of the kingdom. 'Nothing doing', Bharat said. The throne belonged to Lord Ram, and so it will be; he cannot ascend it even in his dreams!

This brotherly love and noble gesture immediately made Bharat the dear of the masses. He declared his intention to go and bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya from the forest, and for this a procession would start the next day. So, Bharat, Shatrughan and the rest of the court of Ayodhya, including the royal priest sage Vashishta, the mothers, servants, ministers, courtiers, and a great chunk of the royal army went on a long journey to Chitrakoot.

Janak also arrived there. After a tearful, emotional and long discussion, Lord Ram was eventually able to convince Bharat about the wisdom of his remaining in the forest for the designated period. The Lord must have told Bharat that he has certain duties, responsibilities and obligations to fulfil and expectations to live up to as he was not merely the king of Ayodhya but of the whole world in his primary form as Lord Vishnu. Hence, his obligations and responsibilities were much bigger and more

important then what meets the eye. Lord Ram must have requested Bharat to extend a helping hand so that the larger good of the society and the inhabitants of the world can be taken care of. Of course Lord Ram was alluding to his main job of eliminating the demons with their capital at Lanka, and for that he cannot return back. Emotions and sentiments should not act as spoil-sports in this implementation of the divine mission.

Bharat loved Ram so much that the latter's wish was of top priority for him, and sure enough he would happily help Lord Ram to fulfil his obligations as the Lord of the world. So Bharat accepted the Lord's advice and returned back to Ayodhya. But Bharat had brought back the Lord's sandals, and he put them on the throne of Ayodhya as a token anointment of the Lord. He himself decided to live a life similar to what Lord Ram was leading in the forest—a life of a hermit. So he spent the next fourteen years at a place known as 'Nandigram' on the outskirts of the city, in a hut and like a true hermit. The routine affairs of the kingdom were taken care of by Shatrughan.

Meanwhile, after spending some time at Chitrakoot, Lord Ram and his brother Laxman and wife Sita moved ahead towards south. They met a number of sages and saints on the way, notable being sage Atri and his wife Anusuiya, sage Sarbhanga and sage Agastya. On Agastya's advice, the trio took up temporary residence at a charming place called 'Panchavati'. On their way, however, the Lord eliminated some of the most fearful demons such as Viraadh.

Now, the second phase of the story unfolds. This phase deals with the fulfilment of the Lord's promise made to mother earth, the gods and the sages to whom Lord Vishnu had promised that he will personally eliminate the demons. It so happened that a half-sister of the demon king Ravana was so enamoured by the charm of Lord Ram that she disguised herself as a beautiful lady and approached the Lord with a marriage proposal. Seizing this opportunity, Lord Ram got Laxman to cut-off her ears and nose. This sowed the seed for the rest of the drama that the Lord had planned to stage.

Supernakha went and asked her brothers Khar, Dushan and Trishira to take revenge. The demon army attacked, and was eliminated. Then she went and cried in the court of her half-brother, the mighty king of demons, Ravana, and teased him that she has come with chopped-off ears and nose to show how strong he was if he could not protect the honour of his own sister!

That was the spark that ignited the ego of Ravana. He forced Marich, a demon who escaped being killed when Lord Ram had protected the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra and had been living in fear on an island in the middle of the ocean, to accompany him so that he can kidnap Sita as a revenge for Supernakha. Marich was forced to become a deer with a golden hide, and the two went to the hermitage at Panchavati.

Lord Ram took Sita into confidence and told her everything that he had planned. So, Sita entered the fire element and left her shadow behind. This 'false Sita' persuaded Lord Ram to bring the deer to her, and when the Lord went behind Marich to catch him, Ravana came disguised as a mendicant, caught hold of Sita and rushed back to Lanka.

When Lord Ram returned after killing Marich, the hermitage was empty. Acting his role of a human being to utmost perfection, the Lord wailed and grieved like any man whose wife is stolen. Then began the long-haul odyssey that culminated in the sack of Lanka and elimination of the sinful demons.

Ram gathered himself after the initial shock, and the two brothers moved around the forest in search of Sita. They came across Jatau, the vulture king who had

fought Ravana in his bid to save Sita, but was mortally wounded. Jatau lay writhing in pain and remembering the holy name of Lord Ram. The Lord saw him and showed exceptional affection for him, wiping his wounds and caressing him. Jatau told the Lord about Ravana and the direction in which Sita was taken. Thereafter Jatau died, and Lord Ram performed his last rites as if Jatau was his own father. So noble was the Lord that he did not think twice for elevating a vulture to the status of his own father. Come to think of it: Even Dasrath, Lord Ram's father, was denied this privilege and honour that Jatau got—that the Lord of the world would perform his last rites with his own hands.

Moving ahead, the two brothers came to the hermitage of Sabari, the old woman who was waiting for this golden moment because she was a great devotee of the Lord and was advised by her own Guru, sage Matang, that one day she will get her final chance of salvation and emancipation when Ram visits her. Like a mother, she fed the two brothers with her own hands, and advised them to go to the lake Pampa and then onwards to the Rishyamook mountain where they will find the monkeys who would help them. She then died, and Lord Ram performed her last rites himself. This is the second and the last character (the other being Jatau) in the entire story of Ramayana whose last rites were performed by Lord Ram himself! How fortunate and privileged they were indeed!!

Lord Ram and Laxman made their way to the banks of the lake Pampa where they stayed for some time to relax and take stock of the situation. It was here that Narad visited them.

Moving ahead, the Lord and Laxman reached the Rishyamook mountain where the exiled prince of the monkey race, Sugriv, lived with his chosen companions, and Hanuman being one of them. Sugriv had been expelled from the kingdom of Kishkindha by his elder brother Baali due to some unfortunate misunderstanding. When he saw the two brothers roaming in the forest down below, he sent Hanuman to investigate. When Lord Ram introduced himself to Hanuman, the latter immediately recognized his eternal Lord, and fell at the Lord's holy feet. Then, Hanuman took the two brothers to the summit of the mountains and a friendship was struck between them and Sugriv. Ram heard the pitiful story of Sugriv and volunteered to help him in getting his rightful share of the kingdom from which he was unjustly ejected by Baali. In the ensuing events, Baali was killed and Sugriv crowned on the throne of Kishkindha.

Lord Ram spent some time on a nearby mountain. Sugriv was obliged towards the Lord so he volunteered to help the Lord to find and rescue his wife Sita. So, uncountable numbers of monkeys and bears were sent in all the directions to search for her. The all-knowing Lord knew who will actually locate her, so he called Hanuman and gave his signet ring to him as an identification sign for Sita.

Out of all the groups, one led by Angad, the son of Baali who had turned Lord Ram's great follower no less important than Hanuman, reached the shore of the southern ocean. This group included Hanuman and Jamvant, the old bear king. There they were met by Sampati, the brother of Jatau, who told them that Sita was held captive in Lanka, and therefore anyone of them who could go and come from there against the formidable barrier of the ocean would meet Sita. Everyone expressed their limitations, and finally Hanuman was motivated by Jamvant to accomplish this gigantic task.

So finally Hanuman leapt across the ocean. He met with some initial resistance from some demons living in the middle of the ocean but he overcame all of them, and finally landed on the soil of Lanka. There, he trounced Lankini, the

ferocious demoness who guarded the gates of the fort, and entered the city. Inside the city of Lanka, he met Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana who happened to be a great devotee of Lord Ram as he knew him to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and later on Sita herself. Hanuman presented Lord Ram's ring to her and comforted her, saying that the Lord would come soon to her rescue.

Hanuman was seething with anger, and on the pretext of eating some fruits to quell his hunger he laid the fruit orchard of Ravana to waste, killing the guards and beating back the initial brigade of demon soldiers who came to their aid. The full force of the demon army headed by Ravana's son Indrajeet came, and Hanuman allowed himself to be captured so that he can get an opportunity to meet Ravana face to face though he could have easily killed all the demons single-handedly as he had already done by this time.

In the demon court, a heated and acrimonious argument ensued between Hanuman and Ravana which culminated in Ravana ordering that the tail of Hanuman be set ablaze so that he goes back deformed as a token insult and rebuke to his Lord, Sri Ram. This led to the famous episode of the 'burning of Lanka'.

Hanuman took leave of Sita and came back to Lord Ram. He briefed the Lord of the developments. Meanwhile, Vibhishan also abandoned Ravana and joined the camp of Lord Ram after he was publicly insulted by his brother when he tried to reason with him in order to avoid a ruinous war.

A huge army was assembled and the two brothers, Lord Ram and Laxman, aided by the monkey king Sugriv and all his warriors, and accompanied by Vibhishan too, finally made their departure to launch an offensive on Lanka.

A bridge was constructed across the ocean, and the Lord's army finally landed on the shores of Lanka. A last-ditch attempt was made by Lord Ram to avoid the war when he sent Angad as his peace emissary. A fierce and acrimonious verbal duel followed between Angad and Ravana in the full court of the demon king, and finally Angad humiliated the demon king by planting his leg on the ground and challenging him to move it, which of course none of the mighty demons as well as Ravana managed to do. This event marked a token defeat of the demons and broke the morale of the demon army which was already demoralized after the burning of Lanka by Hanuman earlier.

A fierce and no-holds-barred war ensued in which all the cruel demons were killed one by one. Finally Lord Ram was victorious, Vibhishan was made the king of Lanka and the remnants of the demon race, and Sita was restored to Lord Ram.

Lord Ram, accompanied by his brother Laxman and wife Sita, the chief of the monkeys such as Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman and others, the bear king Jamvant, and his demon friend Vibhishan and his close companions etc. rode the Pushpak plane to come back to Ayodhya. By now, the exile period of fourteen years had also ended.

Cheer broke out in Ayodhya and there were mass celebrations. Lord Ram met overjoyed Bharat and other members of the royal family. Not only that, the Lord ensured that he met each individual citizen of Ayodhya independently with equal affection, a miracle of sorts because there were hundreds of thousands of people eager to embrace and welcome their beloved Lord.

A day was set and Lord Ram was anointed king-emperor. All the gods and sages attended that ceremony, and so did all the friends of Lord Ram who had accompanied him aboard the plane from Lanka.

By and by, the monkeys, bears and demon friends were requested to go back to their respective homes with a promise of a life-time bond of mutual friendship,

brotherhood and affection. Only Hanuman was the fortunate one amongst them who remained in the service of Lord Ram for all times to come.

Lord Ram ruled over his subjects as if they were his own children, with a lot of forgiveness, brotherhood, tolerance, fortitude, magnanimity, benevolence, love, mercy and compassion as the guiding principles of state policy. His rule was marked by 'Dharma'—i.e. laws of righteousness, probity, propriety, morality, ethics, nobility of thought and conduct, and all other auspicious virtues that were practiced in their best forms.

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Gītāvalī Rāmāyaṇ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Elaborate Notes)

APPENDIX – 1.3

A THANKS-GIVING PRAYER
Flowing from the Author's Heart

My beloved and dearest Ram!

Your spellbinding and stunning beauty of character
and your stupendously majestic virtues and glories
have held in their sway sages, seers, mystics and hermits.
Both big and small rejoice, exult and revel in your divine stories.
But for a child what matters most is how you are lovable and lovely.
I am dumbstruck how you had used me to get your work done,
more so because I am so dumb, dud and numb.
Had you not impelled me to read and write Tulsidas' great works
unravelling to me that the 'Ram' I hold so dear to my heart
Is indeed as vast and fathomless as the ocean, as broad as the sky,
of immaculate virtues and pristine glories which words wouldn't contain.
Thereby at last, and not the least, making me fulfilled and exhilarated
and happy at the thought my life was not spent in vain.
Tulsidas' great works which you got rendered in English
using my benumbed fingers as a pen
are destined to shine like a splendorous Sun
and lighten the nooks and corners
of the dark, dank, gloomy realms of this mundane existence
for all times to come.

For me, its but a tribute to your immortal, unfading and unmatched
love for me!
In return of which I have nothing to say—
Except a swelling, surging, heaving, buffeting and
a splashing ocean of love and affection for you
which has swept my boat away!

And when the calm returns,
I behold the harbour my boat is nearing
the waters whereof are tranquil, placid, calm and serene.

Hand in hand, we'll step ashore of that paradise triumphantly.
From where who will ever think of foolishly returning?
My Ram!

Behind me, Oh World!
If you heed the profound words of great import
that the Lord has got written for you
through the great works of his own Tulsidas
by using my nimble fingers as if it were his own pen,
in a language you can understand,
so that the word of God grows and multiplies
and is published in all the regions.
You too, Oh World!
Can land on the yonder shore of eternal blissful Paradise,
Cheering and applauding, rejoicing and exulting, in ecstasy and euphoria,
and never thinking of ever looking back again!

As for me, Oh World!
Nothing else is left to be said.
With my dear Ram by my side
his arms as a pillow to rest my weary head
his tender-as-lotus hands dabbing the tear drops rolling down my cheeks
his attention rivetted to my happiness and well-being,
his eyes eager to see that flicker of smile on my face,
his love and affection washing the dirt clinging to me through
the long and arduous journey of numerous wombs
his moral obligation, his solemn pledge, his word of honour
to throw open the vast doors of his heart for me to stay
eternally like a pampered prince and son.
And with my beloved Ram here and now to redeem me at the end of
my journey,

What more can, or do, you expect me to say!
Rejoice in Ram, exult in Ram. make merry, for He is here to stay
So, AMEN!!

{It's a prayer sprouting spontaneously from the heart of the author of this English version of Tulsidas' epic narration of the divine story of Lord Sri Ram, i.e. the book titled: "Geetawali",
Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, Ayodhya.}

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