

Śrī Kāmadā Ekādaśī

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Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami



My dear mind, beware of your desire to attain material reputation. It is misleading you with its attractive vision like an oasis of green trees, but it is simply a mirage in the desert of this world of repeated birth and death. It will cause your utter spiritual destruction. Remember how Ravana, the powerful demon, was bewildered due to false pride and in spite of all his efforts to achieve temporary material prominence he was destroyed by Raghava (Lord Rāmacandra).'

—'Vaiṣṇava Ke' by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura



THE ANCIENT DEITY OF SITA RAMA

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

In the book known as *Adhyātma-rāmāyaṇa*, there are statements in Chapters Twelve to Fifteen about worshipping the Deities of Sri Ramachandra and Sita. There it is stated that during Lord Ramachandra's time there was a brahmana who took a vow to fast until he saw Lord Ramachandra. Sometimes, due to business, Lord Ramachandra was absent from His capital for a full week and could not be seen by the citizens during that time. Because of his vow, the brahmana could not take even a drop of water during that week. Later, after eight or nine days, when the brahmana could see Lord Ramachandra personally, he would break his fast. Upon observing the brahmana's rigid vow, Lord Sri Ramachandra ordered His younger brother Lakshmana to deliver a pair of Sita-Rama Deities to the brahmana. The brahmana received the Deities from Sri Lakshmanaji

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and worshiped Them faithfully as long as he lived. At the time of his death, he delivered the Deities to Sri Hanumanji, who, for many years, hung Them around his neck and served Them with all devotion. After many years, when Hanumanji departed on the hill known as Gandha-madana, he delivered the Deities to Bhimasena, one of the Pandavas, and Bhimasena brought Them to his palace, where he kept Them very carefully. The last king of the Pandavas, Kshemakanta, worshiped the Deities in that palace. Later, the same Deities were kept in the custody of the kings of Orissa known as Gajapatis. One of the acharyas, known as Narahari Tirtha, who was in the disciplic succession of Madhvacharya, received these Deities from the King of Orissa.

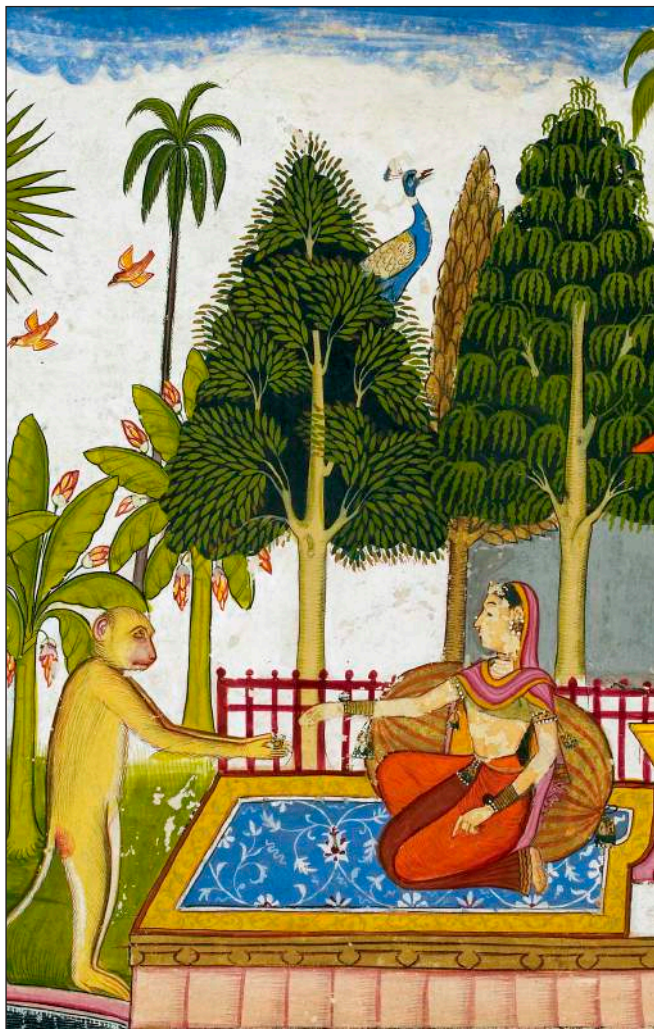
It may be noted that these particular Deities of Rama and Sita have been worshiped from the time of King Ikshvaku. Indeed, They were worshiped by the royal princes even before the appearance of Lord Ramachandra. Later, during Lord Ramachandra's presence, the Deities were worshiped by Lakshmana. It is said that just three months before his disappearance, Sri Madhvacharya received these Deities and installed them in the Udupi temple. Since then the Deities have been worshiped by the *Madhvācārya-sampradāya* at that monastery. As far as the Sri Vaishnavas are concerned, beginning with Ramanujacharya, they also worshiped Deities of Sita-Rama. Sita-Rama Deities are also being worshiped in Tirupati and other places. From the *Rāmānuja-sampradāya* there is another branch known as Ramanandi or Ramat, and the followers of that branch also worship Deities of Sita-Rama very rigidly. The Ramanuja-sampradaya Vaishnavas prefer the worship of Lord Ramachandra to that of Radha-Krishna.

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛita, Madhya Lila, 9.11, Purport* ❀

HANUMANA'S MEETING WITH SITA

Sri Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa

After hearing Hanuman's description of Rama, Sita became fully convinced that he was indeed a messenger sent by her husband. Thus, she began shedding tears of joy. Hanuman then took the opportunity to give Sita Rama's ring which had His name inscribed on the inside of the band. When she received it her face blossomed with joy, as if she were experiencing the arrival of Rama Himself. She then said, "O Hanuman, I am eternally indebted to you for this gift. You are so magnanimous to have come here for my sake. Now, please tell me more



about Rama.”

With folded hands, Hanuman replied, “It is only because Rama does not know where you are that He has not come here to rescue you. Without you, Rama does not know a moment’s peace of mind. Truly, as soon as I return and inform Rama of your presence here, He will immediately come and kill Ravana.”

Sita then urged, “You must stress to Rama the urgency of the matter, for after two months, Ravana will kill me. Ravana’s younger brother, Vibhishana, has repeatedly pleaded with Ravana to return me to Rama. Likewise, Vibhishana’s eldest daughter, Kala, has told me how an old and wise minister named Avindhya, forewarned Ravana of the eminent destruction of the Rakshsas by the hands of Rama. Regardless, Ravana refuses to listen to this advice.”

Hanuman then suggested, “If you like, I can immediately deliver you to Rama by carrying you to Kishkindha on my back. I am sure that the Rakshsas could not keep up with me as I fly across the ocean.” Sita was thrilled to hear this prospect, but still, she

replied, “Your proposal seems quite like what a monkey would present. How can someone so small even think of carrying me across the ocean?”

Hanuman was a little offended by this remark, and so he thought, “How little she thinks of me!” Then, to demonstrate his prowess, Hanuman revealed his gigantic form, boasting, “If you like, I can uproot the entire city of Lanka. Then along with Ravana, carry it back to Rama! So please, give up your doubts of me.”

Sita then admitted, “You are certainly strong enough to carry me across the ocean. However, I do not think it such a good idea. What if I become faint as you dash across the sky and fall into the shark and crocodile infested water? Moreover, when the Rakshsas rally and attack you, you will be fully engaged in fighting with them. What will happen with me? Even if you somehow manage to kill all the Rakshsas, this would only serve to diminish the glory of Rama.

“O Hanuman, since I am completely devoted to my husband, I do not want to touch the body of anyone else but Rama. When I was kidnapped by Ravana, I was helpless and had no choice. However, Rama must now come here Himself to rescue me after killing the wicked Ravana. This act alone would be worthy of enhancing His glorious reputation.”

Hanuman replied, “I appreciate your statements, which are just befitting the chaste and righteous wife of Rama. I will now leave, but first, please give me some token that I can give to Rama to help me convince Him that I have actually met you.”

With tear filled eyes, Sita replied in a faint voice, “O Hanuman, to convince Rama that you have met me, you may relate to Him the following incident: ‘One day while we were residing at Citrakuta, after playing in the water, Rama sat down, dripping wet on my lap. At that time a crow came and began pecking at me, as though eager to eat my flesh. I picked up a lump of dirt to throw to scare it away, but the determined crow remained on the scene, hiding nearby. Becoming angered, I accidentally pulled the string that held my slip, causing it to fall down. Seeing this, Rama laughed heartily, taking advantage of my flustered countenance. In the meantime, the crow returned, and again pecked at me. I took shelter of Rama by sitting on His lap, and He comforted me, wiping the tears from my eyes.

“Feeling exhausted, I soon fell asleep in Rama’s arms. Likewise, He soon dozed off, too. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the crow suddenly swooped down and clawed at my breasts. This awakened Rama, who felt drops of my blood

falling on Him, coming from my wounds.

“Seeing the cuts on my breasts, Rama became enraged, and asked me to identify the culprit. Then, before I could answer, He saw the crow sitting at a distance, his claws dripping with blood. In great anger, Rama took a blade of kusha grass from His mat and surcharged it with the power of a *brahmāstra*. As the straw burst into flames, Rama hurled it at the crow. Then, as the bird flew up into the sky, the kusha-grass weapon followed it.

“This crow was, however, the son of Indra, and while being chased by the *brahmāstra*, he tried to obtain shelter all over the universe. Even his father was powerless to help him. Finally, the crow came and surrendered to Rama. Out of compassion, Rama forgave the pale, exhausted bird, but said, “This *brahmāstra* cannot be ineffectual. Therefore, it must be directed somewhere.”

“Saying this, Rama directed the weapon to destroy the crow’s right eye. Thereafter, Indra’s son departed after offering his obeisances.”

Sita became overwhelmed with sorrow while relating her pastime with Rama. Then, with tear stained eyes, she said, “O Hanuman, formerly, Rama used the *brahmāstra* against an insignificant crow. Why does He not attack Ravana now? Does Rama no longer have any affection for me? In some former life I must have committed an abominable



sin to cause Rama to disregard me now.” Hoping to encourage the despondent Sita, Hanuman reassured Sita, saying, “I can personally vouch for the fact that He is feeling great separation from you. Rama is completely merged in the depths of the ocean of sorrow. Now, please give me some object that I can show to Rama.”

Sighing, Sita said, “At least I now have some real hope of being rescued. Somehow you must urge Rama to come quickly, for if I must pass another month away from Him, I will surely die from grief.”

Saying this, Sita took a bright jewel from her cloth that she formerly used to ornament her head, gave it to Hanuman. Sita said, “When Rama sees this jewel, He will remember three persons, since it was given to me by my mother as a dowry gift in the presence of Rama and His father. O Hanuman, please return quickly, and urge Rama to quickly terminate my unbearable suffering.”

— *Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki, By Purnaprajna Dasa.* ❧

KILLING OF RAVANA

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

After constructing a bridge over the ocean by throwing into the water the peaks of mountains whose trees and other vegetation had been shaken by the hands of great monkeys, Lord Ramachandra went to Lanka to release Sitadevi from the clutches of Ravana. With the direction and help of Vibhishana, Ravana's brother, the Lord, along with the monkey soldiers, headed by Sugriva, Nila and Hanuman, entered Ravana's kingdom, Lanka, which had previously been burnt by Hanuman.

After entering Lanka, the monkey soldiers occupied all the sporting houses, granaries, treasuries, palace doorways, city gates, assembly houses, palace frontages and even the resting houses of the pigeons. When the city's crossroads, platforms, flags and golden waterpots on its domes were all destroyed, the entire city of Lanka appeared like a river disturbed by a herd of elephants.

When Ravana, the master of the Rakshasas, saw the disturbances created by the monkey soldiers, he called for Nikumbha, Kumbha, Dhumraksha, Durmukha, Surantaka, Narantaka and other Rakshasas and also his son Indrajit. Thereafter he called for Prahasta, Atikaya, Vikampana and finally Kumbhakarna. Then he induced all his followers to fight against the enemies.

Lord Ramachandra, surrounded by



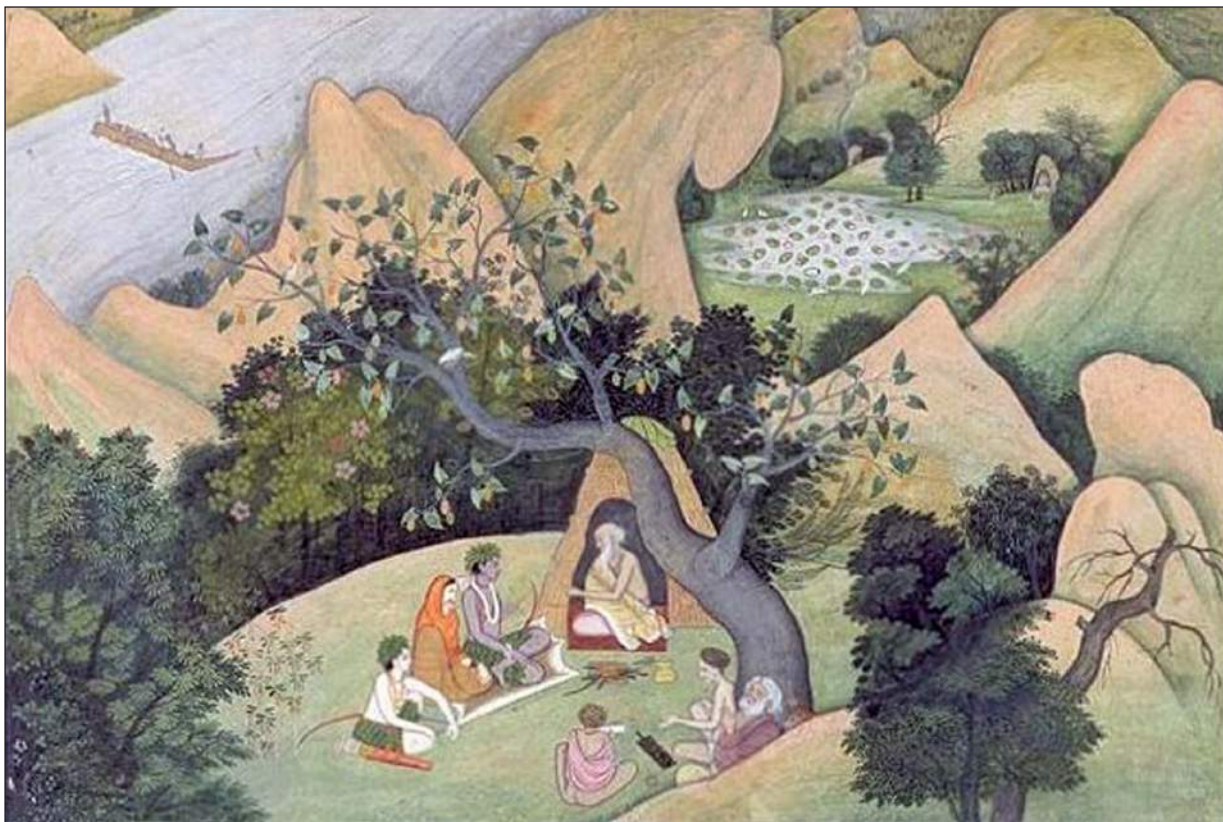
Lakshmana and monkey soldiers like Sugriva, Hanuman, Gandhamada, Nila, Angada, Jambavan and Panasa, attacked the soldiers of the Rakshasas, who were fully equipped with various invincible weapons like swords, lances, bows, *prāsas*, *ṛṣṭis*, *śakti* arrows, *khadgas* and *tomaras*. Angada and the other commanders of the soldiers of Ramachandra faced the elephants, infantry, horses and chariots of the enemy and hurled against them big trees, mountain peaks, clubs and arrows. Thus the soldiers of Lord Ramachandra killed Ravana's soldiers, who had lost all good fortune because Ravana had been condemned by the anger of mother Sita.

Thereafter, when Ravana, the king of the Rakshasas, observed that his soldiers had been lost, he was extremely angry. Thus he mounted his airplane, which was decorated with flowers, and proceeded toward Lord Ramachandra, who sat on the effulgent chariot brought by Matali, the chariot driver of Indra. Then Ravana struck Lord Ramachandra with sharp arrows.

Lord Ramachandra said to Ravana: You are the most abominable of the man-eaters. Indeed, you are like their stool. You resemble a dog, for as a dog steals eatables from the kitchen in the absence of the householder, in My absence you kidnapped My wife, Sitadevi. Therefore as Yamaraja punishes sinful men, I shall also punish you. You are most abominable, sinful and shameless. Today, therefore, I, whose attempt never fails, shall punish you. After thus rebuking Ravana, Lord Ramachandra fixed an

arrow to His bow, aimed at Ravana, and released the arrow, which pierced Ravana's heart like a thunderbolt. Upon seeing this, Ravana's followers raised a tumultuous sound, crying, "Alas! Alas! What has happened? What has happened?" Ravana was vomiting blood from his ten mouths, fell from his airplane, just as a pious man falls to earth from the heavenly planets when the results of his pious activities are exhausted. Thereafter, all the women whose husbands had fallen in the battle, headed by Mandodari, the wife of Ravana, came out of Lanka. Continuously crying, they approached the dead bodies of Ravana and the other Rakshasas. Striking their breasts in affliction because their husbands had been killed by the arrows of Lakshmana, the women embraced their respective husbands and cried piteously in voices appealing to everyone.

O my lord, O master! You epitomized trouble for others, and therefore you were called Ravana. But now that you have been defeated, we also are defeated, for without you the state of Lanka has been conquered by the enemy. To whom will it go for shelter? O greatly fortunate one, you came under the influence of lusty desires, and therefore you could not understand the influence of mother Sita. Now, because of her curse, you have been reduced to this state, having been killed by Lord Ramachandra.



Before entering Ayodhya Sita, Rama, Lakshmana stop at Bharadvaja rishi's ashram

RETURNING TO AYODHYA

Sri Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa

After getting back the original Sita from Agni, Ramachandra said, "Now we must go to Ayodhya." Vibhishana went quickly and brought Rama the Pushpaka chariot. This wonderful chariot originally belonged to Kuvera before it was stolen from him by Ravana. The chariot was constructed from gold by Vishvakarma, with seats of vaidurya gems. The wonderful spaceship could travel anywhere, following the mental indication of its driver. Thus, when Rama and Lakshmana saw the chariot hovering before them, awaiting their command, they were quite astonished. Then, standing before Rama with folded hands, Sugriva and Vibhishana pleaded, O Lord, please allow us to accompany You to Ayodhya. Then, after seeing the coronation ceremonies, we shall return home."

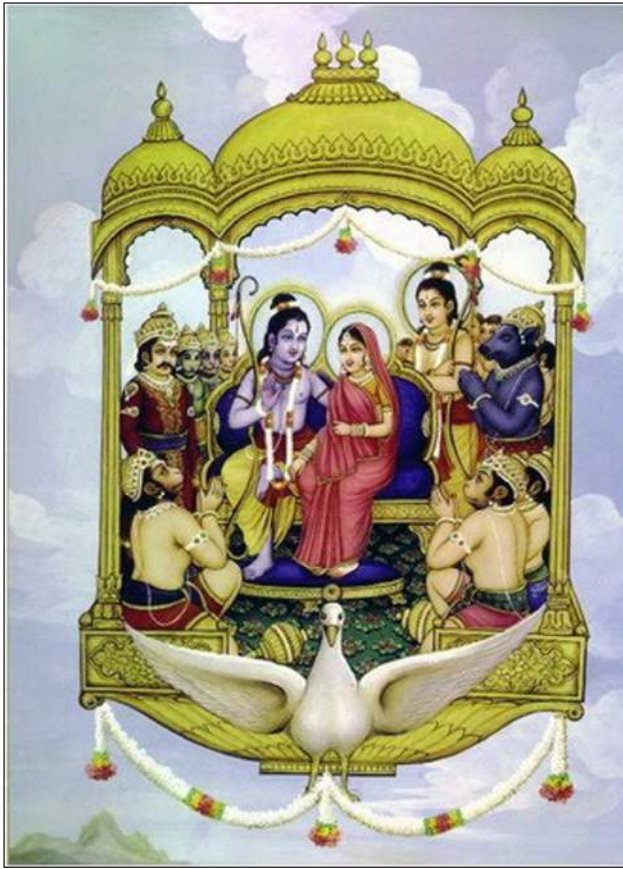
Rama replied, "Nothing would please Me more than to return to Ayodhya with all of My dear friends. Therefore, you and all the other monkey heroes can get up onto the Pushpaka chariot and we will embark immediately."

Finally, after all were comfortably seated, the Pushpaka chariot rose majestically into the air. Thus, while all the monkeys and bears were thoroughly enjoying the flight, Rama pointed out

the sights to Sita: "Look there at the battlefield where all the heroic Rakshasas lay dead, all killed for your sake. Look, there is Ravana, there is Kumbhakarna, there is Indrajit, and there is Prahasta. Over there is the bridge called Nalasetu, by which we crossed the ocean to Lanka. There, on the far shore, is the place called Setubandha (Rameshvaram), where Lord Shiva appeared to Me, and the bridge construction began. From this time onward, Setubandha will be a very sacred place, capable of washing away all of one's accumulated sinful reactions." Then, as Rama pointed to Kishkinda, Sita said, "I would be pleased if I could return to Ayodhya in the company of the wives of the monkey chiefs."

Happy to grant Sita's request, the chariot halted as Rama instructed Sugriva and the other warriors to quickly bring their wives. Then, when everyone was seated, their journey continued. In this way, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana's entire forest life was remembered in reverse order as they retraced their way back to Ayodhya. Finally, the river Sarayu came into view, and at last, the outskirts of Ayodhya.

Before entering the city, however, Rama stopped at the ashram of Bharadvaja Rishi to inquire about His relatives' welfare before meeting them.



In the meantime Hanuman told Ramachandra, “We must go as early as possible, otherwise Bharata will jump in the fire. Because you have already completed your fourteen years of exile.” Ramachandra told Hanuman, “You go before us.” So Hanuman flew very fast and jumped in front of Bharata. By that time it was sunrise already, and Bharata was circumambulating the fire and preparing to jump into it. He went once, twice round. On the seventh round he would get into the fire. When he completed the second round he heard the sound, “Rama is coming! Rama is coming!” As he looked up, he asked, “Where is Rama coming?” Then he went around again. The third round he saw this figure jumping in front of him, a big tail and a club on his shoulder with a crown and so many ornaments on his chest. Bharata looked at him and said, “Who are you?” Hanuman then approached Bharata, announcing, “I have come as a messenger from Rama. He inquires about your welfare, and wishes to inform you that He will soon return to Ayodhya.”

Hearing these glorious words, Bharata's face immediately lit up with great delight. Then, becoming exhilarated with transcendental emotion, he suddenly fainted to the ground. Upon coming to his senses, Bharata stood up

and embraced Hanuman with great satisfaction. Then, while bathing Hanuman with torrents of tears, Bharata said, “Because you have brought me this good news, I shall immediately reward you with 100,000 cows, 100 villages and sixteen virgin girls to marry. Now, please sit down and tell me everything that happened during Rama's exile.”

Thereafter, once Hanuman had finished telling Bharata everything of Rama's exile, up to the point of His immanent return, Bharata exclaimed, “My long cherished desire has finally been fulfilled!”

Bharata then ordered Shatrughna to make all arrangements for Rama's reception. Thus, Sumantra and the other ministers soon arrived at Nandagram, riding elephants. Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi then arrived on palanquins, while engineers hurriedly constructed a new road connecting Nandagram with Ayodhya.

After all arrangements had thus been made, Bharata picked up Rama's sandals, a white royal umbrella and *cāmaras*. Then, accompanied by many brahmanas, he left his cottage amidst the blowing of conchshells and the beating of drums, awaiting Rama's arrival.

Meanwhile, since the news of Rama's arrival had spread like wildfire, almost the entire population of Ayodhya came to Nandagram, hoping to see Rama. However, when, after some time, there was no sign of Rama, Bharata told Hanuman, “I pray you were not exhibiting your frivolous monkey nature by joking with me.”

Hanuman then pointed to the distance where clouds of dust were being raised by the approaching monkeys. Likewise, at that moment, the tumultuous sounds of their roaring could be heard. When Hanuman suddenly sighted the Pushpaka chariot in the distance, he shouted, “Here comes Sri Rama!”

A loud, spontaneous cheer suddenly arose from the crowd as they too, sighted the Pushpaka chariot, which appeared to be just like the full moon, rising in the sky. Everyone then respectfully got down from their chariots, elephants and horses, as Bharata began worshipping Rama from a distance.

With folded hands, Bharata recited many prayers in glorification of Lord Rama, as he offered water and other paraphernalia in puja. Finally, when Bharata could clearly see Rama,

Who was magnificently glowing, seated at the front of the Pushpaka chariot, he bowed down with great reverence.

Thereafter, as the celestial airship landed, Bharata rushed forward and climbed onto the chariot to greet his older brother. Rama immediately got up from His seat to embrace Bharata, then taking him on His lap. Afterwards, Bharata greeted Lakshmana and Sita, showering them with praise. He then greeted Sugriva by embracing him, saying, “Although we are four, you are now just like our fifth brother.”

Thereafter, Bharata came before Rama, His wooden shoes in hand. While carefully placing the slippers upon Rama’s lotus feet, Bharata said, “Here is the kingdom I have overseen in Your absence. By Your mercy, Ayodhya is flourishing, and the treasury, storehouses and army have all increased ten-fold. My duty is now over, and I hereby relinquish everything unto You.”

—‘Sri Valimiki Ramayana’, Compiled from the translations of Srila Bhakti Vikas Swami and Atma tattva Das ❀

SRI MURARI GUPTA’S DEVOTION UNTO SRI RAMACHANDRA

Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu embraced Murari Gupta and began to speak about his firm faith in devotional service. This was heard by all the devotees.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “Previously I induced Murari Gupta again and again to be allured by Lord Krishna. I said to him, ‘My dear Gupta, Lord Sri Krishna, Vrajendra-kumara, is the supreme sweetness. “Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the origin of all incarnations and the source of everything. He is pure transcendental love itself, and He is the reservoir of all pleasure. Krishna is the reservoir of all transcendental qualities. He is like a mine of gems. He is expert at everything, very intelligent and sober, and He is the summit of all transcendental humors. His character is very sweet, and His pastimes are melodious. He is expert in intelligence, and thus He enjoys all His pastimes and mellows. I then requested Murari Gupta, “Worship Krishna and take shelter of Him. But for His service, nothing appeals to the mind.” In this way, he heard from Me again and again. By My influence, his mind was a little

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converted. Murari Gupta then replied, ‘I am Your servant and Your order- carrier. I have no independent existence.’

After this, Murari Gupta went home and spent the whole night thinking how he would have to give up the association of Raghunatha, Lord Ramachandra. Thus he was overwhelmed. Murari Gupta then began to pray at the lotus feet of Lord Ramachandra. He prayed that death would come that night because it was not possible for him to give up the service of the lotus feet of Raghunatha. Thus Murari Gupta cried the entire night. There was no rest for his mind; therefore he could not sleep but stayed awake the entire night. In the morning Murari Gupta came to see Me. Catching hold of My feet and crying, he submitted an appeal.

Murari Gupta said, ‘I have sold my head unto the lotus feet of Raghunatha. I cannot withdraw my head, for that would give me too much pain. It is not possible for me to give up the service of Raghunatha’s lotus feet. At the same time, if I do not do so I shall break Your order. What can I do?’ In this way Murari Gupta appealed to Me, saying, ‘You are all-merciful, so kindly grant me this mercy: Let me die before You so that all my doubts will be finished.’

Hearing this, I became very happy. I then raised Murari Gupta and embraced him. I said to him, ‘All glories to you, Murari Gupta! Your method of worship is very firmly fixed—so much so that even upon My request your mind did not turn. The servitor must have love and affection for the lotus feet of the Lord exactly like this. Even if the Lord wants separation, a devotee cannot abandon the shelter of His lotus feet. Just to test your firm faith in your Lord, I requested you again and again to change your worship from Lord Ramachandra to Krishna.

In this way, I congratulated Murari Gupta, saying, ‘Indeed, you are the incarnation of Hanuman. Consequently you are the eternal servant of Lord Ramachandra. Why should you give up the worship of Lord Ramachandra and His lotus feet?’ Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu continued, “I accept this Murari Gupta as My life and soul. When I hear of his humility, it perturbs My very life.”

—Caitanya-caritāmṛita, Madhya-līlā, 15.137-156 ❀



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