

**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

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सुग्रीवः शङ्कितश्चासीन्नित्यं वीर्येण राघवे ॥ १-१-६३

राघवप्रत्ययार्थं तु दुन्दुभेः कायमुत्तमम् । दर्शयामास सुग्रीवो महापर्वतसंनिभम् ॥ १-१-६४

उत्स्मयित्वा महाबाहुः प्रेक्ष्य चास्थि महाबलः । पादाङ्गुष्ठेन चिक्षेप सम्पूर्णं दशयोजनम् ॥ १-१-६५

बिभेद च पुनस्तालान् सप्तैकेन महेषुणा । गिरिं रसातलं चैव जनयन् प्रत्ययं तदा ॥ १-१-६६

ततः प्रीतमनास्तेन विश्वस्तः स महाकपिः । किष्किन्धां रामसहितो जगाम च गुहां तदा ॥ १-१-६७

तत्तोऽगर्जद्धरिवरः सुग्रीवो हेमपिङ्गलः । तेन नादेन महता निर्जगाम हरीश्वरः ॥ १-१-६८

अनुमान्य तदा तारां सुग्रीवेण समागतः । निजघान च तत्रैनं शरेणैकेन राघवः ॥ १-१-६९

*sugrīvaḥ śaṅkitaścāsīnnityaṁ vīryeṇa rāghave ॥ 1-1-63*

*rāghavapratyayārthaṁ tu dundubheḥ kāyamuttamam |*

*darśayāmāsa sugrīvo mahāparvatasannibham ॥ 1-1-64*

*utsmayitvā mahābāhuḥ prekṣya cāsthi mahābalaḥ |*

*pādāṅguṣṭhena cikṣepa sampūrṇaṁ daśayojanam ॥ 1-1-65*

*bibheda ca punastālān saptaikena maheṣuṇā |*

*giriṁ rasātalaṁ caiva janayan pratyayaṁ tadā ॥ 1-1-66*

*tataḥ prītamanāstena viśvastaḥ sa mahākapiḥ |*

*kiṣkindhāṁ rāmasahito jagāma ca guhāṁ tadā ॥ 1-1-67*

*tatto'garjaddharivaraḥ sugrīvo hemapiṅgalaḥ |*

*tena nādēna mahatā nirjagāma harīśvaraḥ ॥ 1-1-68*

*anumānya tadā tārāṁ sugrīveṇa samāgataḥ |*

*nijaghāna ca tatrainaṁ śareṇaikena rāghavaḥ ॥ 1-1-69*

When Rama made the *pratijñā* to take care of Vali, Sugriva reasonably doubted Rama's capacity to do damage to Vali. Even though Rama was strong, broad-shouldered and big-armed, Sugriva wondered whether Rama had the strength required. Sugriva, with his misgivings, decided to test Rama in order to determine the extent of Rama's strength. Dundubhi was the *rākṣasa* who had been killed by Vali when they two were in the cave. Once Vali had caught up with Dundubhi, he made short work of him. The body of this gigantic Dundubhi had not yet cleared, and the skeleton was there in the forest as a hillock. The skeleton

of Dundubhi was just lying there like a mountain. Sugriva showed Rama the skeleton of the fellow killed by Vali, that Rama might understand what he was in for if he faced Vali. Vali was not an ordinary fellow to be taken lightly.

Rama knew that Sugriva doubted his strength. One *yojana* is eight miles, a little more than eight. In order to demonstrate his strength, Rama, whose hands are mighty, a man of inner strength as well as physical strength, seeing the mountain-like skeleton, smiling, with his big toe flicked the entire bone pile ten *yojanas* distant. Rama gave rise to the knowledge in Sugriva about his strength and prowess. Rama decided that one nearly effortless act was not enough. Rama took one charmed arrow and pierced seven stout trees that were standing all in a row nearby. Beyond, the arrow pierced a hillock and disappeared into the earth. Where it stopped, who knows – perhaps in *rasatala*, that *loka* which is down below the earth. Now Sugriva knew that Rama was not just an ordinary human. Having gained confidence in Rama, and happy now because of their friendship and his great good fortune, this great monkey, Sugriva, along with Rama, went to Vali's palace in Kishkinda.

“*Hari*” has two meanings. Lord Vishnu is called *harati*, *pāpāni harati*. He takes away your *pāpa*. A monkey is also called *harati*, *harati phalāni*. From your hand it will take your fruit. If you have a banana, in India you will know what it is. The monkey, very clever, will come and take it from your hand. *Bhagavān harati pāpāni*. Both are *hari*, all right. *Hari* has those two meanings.

Sugriva was the exalted among the Vanaras. Now he and Rama were going to deal with Vali. Sugriva, the Vanara who is yellowish, went to the royal cave where Vali lived and shouted for him to come out and fight. A fight was to take place between Sugriva and Vali. Due to the great noise that Sugriva made, Vali came out. When Vali came out, Tara also came out. Vali prepared to fight, but Tara said, “No, do not fight with Sugriva now. He knows better than to do this. He knows who you are; he would not challenge you. Calling you for a fight means he has some extra strength, he has befriended somebody, somebody to back him up. Do not pick up this fight now.” But Vali would not listen. In India, if the men are to go and fight, their women should wish them well and send them

off. They should not stand weeping and all that. The soldier has to convince his wife, and then he can go out. Tara stood there between Vali and Sugriva, and Vali convinced her that no matter who backed up Sugriva, nothing was going to happen to him.

Raghava stood behind a tree, because one cannot meet directly with Vali without half his strength going. Rama drew one arrow with which to slay Vali. At that time, there was a big conversation between Rama and Vali. Indeed Vali stops and holds Rama's arrow at his heart, not allowing it to go through him. Vali asks, "What is this arrow? From where does it come? Is it Lord Vishnu's *chakra*? No, it is an arrow. It is like lightning; no person could send this." He goes on and on talking about it. Then he finds Rama. "Rama! Rama did this? What for? Why should he do this to me? What did I do to him?" After some time and talking between them, Rama convinced Vali that what he had done to Sugriva was wrong. That was the reason for this arrow.

Rama said, "Otherwise, Vali, you are a great person, *pūjya*, to be respected." Vali accepted Rama's judgment and then went to *svarga*. He placed his own son, Angada, in Rama's care and told the boy to serve Rama. Vali was happy that he died at the hands of Rama. He was released from his monkey *śarīra*. That is the story, Vali had to die. Rama was shown how to distinguish between the two Vanaras who looked alike, and he slew Vali.

ततः सुग्रीववचनाद्धत्वा वालिनमाहवे । सुग्रीवमेव तद्राज्ये राघवः प्रत्यपादयत् ॥ १-१-७०

स च सर्वान् समानीय वानरान् वानरर्षभः । दिशः प्रस्थापयामास दिदृक्षुर्जनकात्मजाम् ॥ १-१-७१

*tataḥ sugrīvavacanāddhatvā vālinamāhave |*

*sugrīvameva tadrājye rāghavaḥ pratyapādayat || 1-1-70*

*sa ca sarvān samānīya vānarān vānararṣabhaḥ |*

*diśaḥ prasthāpayāmāsa didṛkṣurjanakātmajām || 1-1-71*

In Vali's kingdom, in Kishkinda, Rama consecrated Sugriva as the king and returned Tara to him. Among a herd of cattle, the bull, *ṛṣabha*, always stands out. From that we have the expression *puruṣarṣabha et cetera*. It means the exalted, the one who stands out. Here, the one who stands out among the monkeys, *vānararṣabha*, is Sugriva. Sugriva, now king, called together all his citizens, those citizens

with big tails. He instructed them to spread out all over and find out where Sita was. One batch of monkeys, Hanuman and some others, including Angada and Jambavan, searched toward Lanka, because they knew Ravana must be involved in this. On the way they met the other great eagle, Sampati, elder brother of Jatayu. This Sampati was one who could see things that were far, far away. Sampati confirmed that he could see Sita there in Lanka. Hearing the words of the eagle-like Sampati, the troop headed south toward the seashore. On the southern border of India they stopped and talked about which of them should cross to Lanka.

Hanuman was of tremendous strength, but he did not know it. Therefore it is like Vedanta. In the tenth man story Hanuman sometimes takes the place of the tenth man. It was more than an eight hundred mile leap to Lanka. Jambavan said, "My problem is that I can leap, but I will go beyond this. I cannot be the one to go." Jambavan became a *guru* for Hanuman. Jambavan told him, "You have the strength. You are the only one who can do this. Just go and come back."

Thus Hanuman was told of his great capacity. Just as with *tattvamasi*: The truth is there but you have to be told by one who knows. Hanuman had to be told in order for him to realize his strength. He had the strength but he did not know. The words of Jambavan helped him discover his own strength. Having realized this, Hanuman went to Lanka. He found Sita, and he showed her the ring Rama had given him - Rama knew Hanuman alone could find her.

ततो गृध्रस्य वचनात् सम्पातेर्हनुमान् बली । शतयोजनविस्तीर्ण पुप्लुवे लवणार्णवम् ॥ १-१-७२

तत्र लङ्कां समासाद्य पुरीं रावणपालिताम् । ददर्श सीतां ध्यायन्तीमशोकवनिकां गताम् ॥ १-१-७३

*tato grdhrasya vacanāt sampāterhanumān balī |*

*śatayojanavistīrṇa pupluve lavaṇārṇavam || 1-1-72*

*tatra laṅkāṁ samāsādyā purīm rāvaṇapālītām |*

*dadarśa sītāṁ dhyaīyantīmaśokavanikāṁ gatām || 1-1-73*

Hanuman sailed the entire eight hundred miles over the salty ocean. Reaching Lanka, overcoming all obstacles, he met Lankadevi, the guardian of Lanka city, the keeper of the city, a great *rākṣasī* who covered the city. She confidently rose up to thwart him, and in fact wanted to kill him. But Hanuman struck one

good blow, a blow the likes of which she said she had never received. She knew then that this was no ordinary being. It had taught her a lesson and reminded her of a story. As a result, Lankadevi told Hanuman that the other *rākṣasas* were there on the island, and she gave him her complete permission to go and do whatever he liked, a blank check. That is how he was able to quietly enter Lanka.

Hanuman began to search for Sita. There are lengthy descriptions of the island, but for now, the story looks as though it moves from killing to killing. We will hear the descriptions. At first only the main events are told, but in between there are thousands of verses. Those verses talk about *dharma*. You will find these all blend very well. We will see that there are a lot of ideas and a good description of the city of Lanka, the flora and fauna, and the beautiful city itself. There Hanuman sees the glory of Ravana. To cross to Lanka, Hanuman, being one who could assume any form at will, had assumed a giant form. To enter Lanka, the island kingdom ruled by ten-headed Ravana, Hanuman assumed a simple monkey form, a form that he knew would not bother the *rākṣasas*. As a monkey, it was no problem to enter Ravana's palace. Within the palace Hanuman observed all that was there. Ravana's beautiful wife, Mandodari, and other queens, all the palatial fittings, gold and marble and fine woods and everything were all there. Hanuman also visited the house of Prahasta, one of Ravana's ministers. Hanuman explored the entire city but did not see Sita anywhere. This made him very sad, and he thought, "The only place I have not looked is the *aśokavana*." Ashokavana was a park-like place with ashoka trees, banyan trees, *ficus religiosa*. It was there he found Sita sitting, surrounded by *rākṣasīs*. She was wearing the same dress she had on when she was kidnapped. Eyes closed like an ascetic, she was meditating upon Rama.

निवेदयित्वाभिज्ञानं प्रवृत्तिं विनिवेद्य च । समाश्वास्य च वैदेहीं मर्दयामास तोरणम् ॥ १-१-७४

पञ्च सेनाग्रगान् हत्वा सप्त मन्त्रिसुतानपि । शूरमक्षं च निष्पिष्य ग्रहणं समुपागमत् ॥ १-१-७५

*nivedayitvābhijñānaṁ pravṛttiṁ vinivedya ca |*

*samāśvāsya ca vaidehīṁ mardayāmāsa toraṇam || 1-1-74*

*pañca senāgragān hatvā sapta mantrisutānapi |*

*śūramakṣaṁ ca niṣpiṣya grahaṇaṁ samupāgamat || 1-1-75*

Hanuman climbed into a nearby tree and approached Sita. Quietly, not letting the *rākṣasīs* hear, he began talking. Sita looked up and saw Hanuman sitting there. Hanuman revealed who he was, and he told her what was going on.

Sita, learning that this messenger had come from Rama, was very pleased. Hanuman assured her that the preparations were underway, they would bring her back, and Ravana was as good as finished. Hanuman confirmed the whole thing by giving Sita the ring Rama had entrusted to the great monkey. Hanuman gently assured her that soon she would be with her dearest. He soothed her and encouraged her. She, Vaidehi, the daughter of the kingdom of Videha, of Janaka, knew Hanuman meant business. Then, leaving her behind in the inner garden, he went to the outer gate and began the destruction of Lanka. Bringing down the outer gate, he wanted to get the attention of all the *rākṣasas* and declare to them what for he had come. After seeing Sita, Hanuman was furious and he initiated the fight, and the soldiers all came. He made short work of them. A second wave came, larger fellows, five commanders of army divisions, and they too fell. Then seven sons of various ministers were defeated. Then Akshakumara, a son of Ravana, a great fighter, charged and fell to Hanuman. Hanuman pulverized these foes. Ravana had heard news of a simple monkey disturbing things in Ashokavana, but when he heard about his son's fate, Ravana was worried. He knew this was no ordinary monkey.

Ravana sent Indrajit, another son, a fearless archer, a near equal to Arjuna of the Mahabharata, a great hero. Indrajit, also known as Meghanada, was a beautiful person, a man of great accomplishments. He had special powers, and special missiles, and he wielded the *brahmāstra*. An *āstra* is an arrow given by the creator Brahmaji himself. Indrajit, doing *tapas*, having invoked Brahmaji, received this arrow that would never miss its target. Indrajit drew an *āstra* named Mohanam, which would paralyze and bind any target. He wanted to capture this monkey fellow and take him to Ravana. Hanuman wanted to see Ravana. Therefore he allowed himself to be bound by this *āstra*. Hanuman himself had been blessed by Brahmaji and given the boon that were he ever in trouble due to any of the creator's own *āstras*, after a short time the power of the arrow would wane and Hanuman would not be injured or detained. Hanuman, knowing all this, allowed himself to fall to the *āstra*, to be bound and dragged to Ravana's court by the *rākṣasas*. Proudly Indrajit led the procession that dragged this troublesome monkey through the streets of Lanka. Even as they were going, Hanuman was freed. Still



he pretended to be bound. Patiently he tolerated the abuse of these fellows.

Ravana was there on his throne, and Hanuman wanted to have a seat, a seat higher than Ravana's. What did he do? He caused his tail to grow large and long, and he spiraled it below him round and round until it was higher than Ravana's throne, and he sat upon the top of it. Oh, Ravana, like a real monkey. This was Hanuman. Hanuman told Ravana that he had been sent by Rama, who was coming, and that Ravana had better hand over Sita or he was finished. Ravana said he was always prepared to fight; he cared not about this Rama or Lakshmana. These were but *mānuṣyas*, nothing to worry about. Hanuman was a *dūta*, a messenger, an ambassador, and thus he was not be killed. But the *rākṣasas* decided to set fire to Hanuman's tail. Ravana ordered it to be done. They brought cloth to wrap the tail and to be lit on fire, not knowing that this great monkey was no longer bound by the power of the *āstra*. Then Hanuman caused his tail to grow and grow, and he charged off with his tail like a torch. The burning cloth fell off in flaming pieces as Hanuman ran from palace to palace and house to house. Hanuman himself was not burned, all cool inside, but the entire city of Lanka caught fire. Fire raged, but Sita's sanctuary in the ashoka grove was wonderfully saved. This was how Hanuman let Ravana know what the *rākṣasas* were in for from the monkeys. By Hanuman's rampage Ravana was filled with pride, ego, fear, anger, and a great inner conflict. Hanuman did all this.

*To be continued...*

“A value, any value, universal or situational, is a value for me only when I see the value of the value as valuable to me. Me-the comfortable me-is the source of my values. I fail to follow a universal value only when I do not clearly see its value for me. I make expedient situational choice only when I think such choices will make me feel good.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati