

On Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha's Rāmāyaṇa commentary and the Rūpa Raghunātha Vāṇi edition of Śrī Rāmāyaṇa

by
Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa
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About Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha

According to Dr. Vyasanakere Prabhanjanacharya, Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha (1749-1830) was a pīṭhādhipati of the Uttarādi Maṭha of the Madhva-sampradāya from 1797. He was a prolific writer, having more than thirty works to his credit. This saintly scholar was born in Savanur in Haveri District in Karnataka. He had traced the stolen Śrī Vigrahas of Śrī Mūla Rāma, Śrī Mūla Sītā and Śrī Vedavyāsa, because of which Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha, the former pontiff of Uttarādi Maṭha, made him its pīṭhādhipati with the name Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha. He then toured South India, visited Pune and Tryambak and stayed at Arani for one year when he fed the people during a very big drought. He spent most of his time at Holenarasipur (Hassan) and Holehannur (Shimoga). He wrote his commentaries on the 6th to the 11th and the 12th Skandhas of the Bhāgavata, the Virāṭa and Udyoga Parvas of the Mahābhārata, and the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa when he stayed at Holenarasipur. He entered into mahā-samādhi at Holehannur on the banks of River Bhadra.¹

Dr. B.N.K. Sharma notes that according to *Sat-kathā* [a biographical work from the Mādhva-sampradāya on a number of its saints], Satyadharmā Tīrtha was a contemporary of Peshwa Baji Rao (1795-1818) and his adviser Ghorpade, who is said to have honored him with presents in Pune. Dr. Sharma says, "His most outstanding work . . . is his useful partial commentary on the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa (Kāṇḍas ii-vii), extracts from which have been published by T.R. Krishnacharya in his edition of the Epic (Bombay, 1910). As the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa has received practically little canonical recognition at the hands of Madhva or his commentators, who look to other versions like the Mūla Rāmāyaṇa for inspiration and support, this commentary on Vālmīki's work assumes special significance. The doctrinal aspect is not lost sight of by Satyadharmā in his commentary."²

According to S.M. Sulibhavi, Śrī Satyadharmā's commentary on the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa is named Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa.³

About Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa

Its current availability

Even a casual look at Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha's commentaries on Skandhas 6 to 10 and 12 of the Bhāgavata, and the Virāṭa Parva, Udyoga Parva and Sanat-sujātīya of the Mahābhārata is enough to convince the student of Śrī Satyadharmā's extensive scholarship and deep insight of the texts that he comments on. His comments on the Bhāgavata and Mahābhārata are *not* sporadic like the available portions of Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa. Rather, they are quite detailed in their exposition. It is therefore not unlikely that his commentary on Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa was as extensive as his other scriptural commentaries. In fact, it is also possible that large parts of

¹ This information has been extracted from Sri Prabhanjanacharya's edition of the Virāṭa Parva of the Mahābhārata with Satyadharmā Tīrtha's commentary. Śrī Satyadharmā has also written a commentary on the Sanat-sujātīya of the Mahābhārata.

² This is from Dr. B.N.K. Sharma's *History of the Dvaita School of Vedānta and its Literature*, pages 511-512, second edition.

³ See Sulibhavi's dissertation entitled *Madhvācārya's Contribution to Rāmāyaṇa as reflected in his Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya*, page 109.

it could have been destroyed by the outbreak of fire that had once engulfed the Uttarādi Maṭha. The Maṭha's website describes that event as follows:

Once a fire broke out in the Matha store. It engulfed the entire matha and become unmanageable. It was a miracle indeed that the Swamiji, the Samsthana deities and the works of Srimad Acharya [Madhva] could be saved by a few self-sacrificing disciples . . . and some wealth was destroyed. Jewellery that could not be recovered from the debris of the fire was made up by Diwan Baburao and the religious activities of the matha continued as before.⁴

Its sources and their significance

The Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa is based on (1) Rāmopākhyāna in Śrī Vyāsadeva's Mahābhārata, (2) Rāma-carita as presented in Śrī Madhvācārya's Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya, and (3) Śrī Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita's Saṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa.

Rāmopākhyāna is an Upaparva within the Vana-parva of the Mahābhārata.⁵ Herein, Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi summarizes the history of Lord Rāma to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja in 776 verses.⁶

Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya is a metrical summary study of the Mahābhārata by Śrī Madhva in over 5,000 verses. Chapters 3 to 9 of this book contains the history of Lord Śrī Rāma in 697 verses.⁷

Saṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa is a summary study of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa in about 3,500 verses. As pointed out by Dr. B.N.K. Sharma in his *History of the Dvaita School of Vedānta and its Literature*, it strictly follows the outline and spirit of the history, characterization, significance of the incidents described and the part played by the different characters as set forth by Madhvācārya in the Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya. Satyadharma Tīrtha refers to Saṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa as a summary of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa following the Mahābhārata.⁸

A few observations about the commentary

As the following excerpts from his commentary show, Śrī Satyadharma Tīrtha was a careful and systematic thinker who sought to harmonize diverse scriptural accounts of particular events. His adherence to the Mādhva tradition is explicit. He frequently resegments the lines of the Rāmāyaṇa in ways that are unique within the extant commentarial literature on the text. At times, he even offers interpretations that are entirely unique. He draws on other portions of the Rāmāyaṇa as well as the Mahābhārata, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, other Purāṇas and various thesauri to rationally reconcile apparent contradictions. Occasionally, he brings out the Vaiṣṇava theology embedded in the Rāmāyaṇa.⁹

A few interesting snippets from Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa

In the excerpts from Śrī Satyadharma Tīrtha's commentary that follow, I sometimes include an entire comment on a verse and at other times I present only an excerpt. Since Sanskrit commentaries do not readily admit of literal, word-for-word translation, I have chosen to paraphrase them. When the commentator provides glosses for individual words, I have sought to incorporate them into the translation of the verses themselves. For each verse, I give the verse numbers according to the Nirṇaya Sagar and Oriental Institute (Baroda) editions. The

⁴ From <https://www.uttaradimath.org/parampara/sri-satyadharma-tirtha>. According to the same source, Śrī Satyadharma Tīrtha is said to have been personally blessed by Lord Śiva. (Content accessed on 8 March 2026).

⁵ In the Udipi edition, it is the 16th Upaparva and it comprises Chapters 261 to 281. In the Nirṇaya Sagar edition, it is the 18th Upaparva and it comprises Chapters 274 to 293. In the Oriental Institute (Baroda) edition, it comprises Chapters 257 to 276.

⁶ According to the Udipi edition.

⁷ According to the Udipi edition.

⁸ Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa 4.58.6 (Nirṇaya Sagar edition): *bhāratānuyāyi-vālmīki-rāmāyaṇa-saṅgraha-rūpa-saṅgraha-rāmāyaṇe ca*.

⁹ Cf. the well-known text: vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārāte tathā, ādāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate (Hari-varṇa BORI 3.132.95).

text of the verses follows the former; where the Oriental Institute edition differs, I note the variants in the footnotes. When the commentator's reading differs from that of the Nirnaya Sagar edition, I note this in the paraphrase. The translations of the verses from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are generally those of Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. When the commentator quotes a portion of a scriptural verse, I have quoted the entire verse in the paraphrase.

1

Nirnaya Sagar 2.6.22 / Oriental Institute 2.6.22

sarve hy anugr̥hītāḥ sma yan no rāmo mahī-patiḥ
cirāya bhavitā goptā dr̥ṣṭa-loka-parāvaraḥ

“All of us have been blessed by the Lord because Rāma will become the king and protect us for a long time to come, and He perceives both spiritual and material existences.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. dr̥ṣṭo jñāto loko yena sa dr̥ṣṭa-lokaḥ. parāḥ lokottamatvena prasiddhā brahmādayaḥ avarā yasmād iti parāvaraḥ.

PARAPHRASE. Dr̥ṣṭa-loka-parāvaraḥ indicates that Lord Rāmacandra is aware of everyone. It also indicates that Lord Brahmā and others, famous for being the best [of the living beings in the universe], are inferior to Him.

2

Nirnaya Sagar 2.10.1 / Oriental Institute Appendix 1 No. 8

vidarsītā yadā devī kubjayā pāpayā bhṛśam
tadā śete sma sā bhūmau digdha-viddheva kinnarī¹⁰

“When Queen Kaikeyī was abundantly counseled in a perverted manner by the sinful hunchback, she lay on the ground like a kinnara lady pierced by a poisoned arrow.”

COMMENT. yad vā, pāpayā nikṛti-nāmnyā asuryā. “anarhāyās tvayājñaptā kaikeyyā api sad-gatiḥ, sūtvā tu bharataṁ naiṣā gaccheta nirayān iti; tathāpi sā yad-āveśac cakāra tvayy aśobhanam, nikṛtir nāma sāksiptā mayā tamasi śāsvate” iti tātparya-nirṇaye navame ācāryokteḥ.

PARAPHRASE. Pāpayā can also refer to the female asura named Nikṛti [who brought Kaikeyī under her influence].

Chapter 9 of Madhvācārya's Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya states: “[Lord Brahmā told Śrī Rāmacandra after He completed all of His pastimes in this world:] On Your order, even though Kaikeyī does not deserve it, she will attain an auspicious destination. Having given birth to Bharata, she will not go to hell. Nevertheless, I have thrown Nikṛti, due to whose influence Kaikeyī acted disgracefully towards You, into eternal darkness.” (Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya 9.94-96)

3

Nirnaya Sagar 2.17.7 / Oriental Institute 2.15.4

āśīrvādān bahūñ śṛṇvan suhr̥dbhiḥ samudīritān
yathārham cāpi sampūjya sarvān eva narān yayau

¹⁰ Oriental Institute reads the following line between these two lines—atyajat saumya-bhāvaṁ svaṁ raudra-bhāvaṁ samāśrayat: “She gave up her natural gentle nature [and] resorted to a ferocious nature.”

“He traversed [the royal road] while hearing the many blessings uttered by His well-wishers and after honoring every man as appropriate.”

COMMENT. samudīritān ity atra samud ity api pada-vibhāgaḥ. etena nitya-mudo rāmasya suhrd-īritāśīrvāda-śravaṇam tad-anujighṛkṣayety uktam bhavati.

PARAPHRASE. Samudīritān can also be split as samud-īritān indicating that the eternally delighted Rāma heard the blessings offered by His well-wishers to bless them.

4

Nirnaya Sagar 2.17.11 / Oriental Institute 2.15.8

tato hi naḥ priyataram nānyat kiñcid bhaviṣyati
yathābhiṣeko rāmasya rājyenāmita-tejasaḥ¹¹

“Indeed, there will be nothing more pleasing to us than when Rāma of immeasurable prowess is coronated [to rule over] this kingdom.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. rājye nāmita-tejasa iti cchedo vā. nāmitāni prahvī-kṛtāni tejāmsi parākramā yasya saḥ nāmita-tejāḥ.

PARAPHRASE. [Rājyenāmita-tejasaḥ can also be split as rājye nāmita-tejasaḥ indicating that] when Rāma is coronated, the prowess of others would be humbled.

5

Nirnaya Sagar 2.17.12 / Oriental Institute 2.15.9

etās cānyās ca suhrdām udāsīnaḥ kathāḥ śubhāḥ
ātma-sampūjanīḥ śṛṇvan yayau rāmo mahā-patham

“[Despite] hearing these and other auspicious talks of His well-wishers glorifying Him, Rāma was indifferent [to them] and continued to proceed on the grand road.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. udāsīna ity anena sāksāl-lakṣmī-stutyasyedaṁ kiyad iti sūcitarṁ bhavati. pūrvam āśīrvādān ity uktyā itareṣāṁ āśīr-vāda-rūpā api vāco bhagavati sevā-rūpā iti dhvanayati ātma-sampūjanīḥ ity anena | yad vā, ātmanaḥ suhrdaḥ sampūjayantīty ātma-sampūjinyas tāḥ. tataś ca bhagavat-stavanam ātmanāṁ sveṣāṁ sampūjana-rūpam eva bhavatīty uktam bhavati. yathoktam bhāgavate: “yad yaj jano bhagavate vidadhīta mānaṁ tac cātmane pratimukhasya yathā mukha-śrīḥ” iti.

PARAPHRASE. The Lord’s indifference indicates that this glorification of Him is nothing for Him who is glorified by Lakṣmī herself.

Ātma-sampūjanīḥ (“glorifying Him”) hints that even the words of blessings by His well-wishers upon Him were [offerings of] service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Ātma-sampūjanīḥ can also indicate that by such talks, the talkers themselves were glorified. By glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is Himself glorified as stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.11:

¹¹ Oriental institute has ato instead of tato. The meaning is the same.

naivātmanaḥ prabhur ayaṁ nija-lābha-pūrṇo
mānaṁ janād aviduṣaḥ karuṇo vṛṇīte
yad yaj jano bhagavate vidadhīta mānaṁ
tac cātmane prati-mukhasya yathā mukha-śrīḥ

“The Supreme Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is always fully satisfied in Himself. Therefore when something is offered to Him, the offering, by the Lord’s mercy, is for the benefit of the devotee, for the Lord does not need service from anyone. To give an example, if one’s face is decorated, the reflection of one’s face in a mirror is also seen to be decorated.”

6

Nirnaya Sagar 2.17.15 / Oriental Institute 2.15.11

sarveṣāṁ hi sa dharmātmā varṇānāṁ kurute dayāṁ
caturṇāṁ hi vyaḥsthānāṁ tena te tam anuvratāḥ¹²

“Indeed, Rāma of a dhārmika mind is merciful to the four varṇas and to all elderly persons. Therefore they followed Him.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. śrī-rāma-dayodayasya tat-tad-ānurūpyaṁ nirūpayati: sarveṣu sa hīti. sarveṣu deva-dānavādiṣu. hi yasmāt. sa rāmaḥ. dharmātmā dharmā-buddhiḥ. dhāra-katvād ādānādi-kartṛtvād vā dharmātmā. “dhāra-katvād dharmo bhagavān,”¹³ “pṛthivī dharmā-mūrdhani,”¹⁴ ātatavāc ca māṛṭtvāt¹⁵ ity-ādeḥ. caturṇāṁ varṇānāṁ brāhmaṇādīnāṁ. tatṛpi vyaḥsthānāṁ. uparīti śeṣaḥ. saptamy-arthe ṣaṣṭhī vā. yathā-sambhavaṁ dayāṁ kurute. vayasā garuḍena, upalakṣaṇayā śeṣa-grahaḥ, mārga-bhūta-garuḍa-śeṣābhyāṁ prāpya-mukti-sthāna-prāpikā dayeti bhāvaḥ. sarveṣāṁ iti pāṭhe: na kevalaṁ caturṇāṁ varṇānāṁ, api tu sarveṣāṁ ity arthaḥ. uktaṁ ca bhāgavate pañcama-skandhe: “na janma nūnaṁ mahato na saubhagaṁ na vān na buddhir nākṛtis toṣa-hetuḥ, tair yag viśrṣṭān api no vanaukasaś cakāra sakhye bata lakṣmaṇāgrajaḥ; suro ’suro vātha naro ’tha vānaraḥ sarvātmanā yaḥ sukṛtajñam uttamam, bhajeta rāmaṁ manuḥjākṛtiṁ hariṁ ya uttarān anayat kosalaṁ divam” iti.

PARAPHRASE. This verse describes the rising of Śrī Rāma’s mercy and how it is appropriate.

[The commentator follows the reading sarveṣu sa hi dharmātmā that appears in some manuscripts instead of sarveṣāṁ hi sa dharmātmā.] Sarveṣu indicates that Rāma’s mercy extends to all including the devas and dānavas. Dharmātmā can also indicate that He sustains and pervades over [everyone], since the scriptures [indicate that He is called Dharma and Ātmā]: “Bhagavān is [called] Dharma because He sustains [everyone],” “Earth who is sustained by Dharma,” and “The Supreme Being Hari is called Ātmā because He pervades, knows and creates [everything].”

He is merciful to all the four varṇas, [especially] upon the elderly among them. He does this whenever possible.

¹² Oriental Institute substitutes hi sa for sa hi.

¹³ Madhvācārya’s comment on Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.1.20. Tantra-bhāgavata, quoted in Śrī Madhva’s comment on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.10.26: dhāra-katvād dharmā-rūpo hi.

¹⁴ Madhvācārya’s Gītā-bhāṣya 9.3: dharmo bhagavān, tad-viṣayaṁ dharmyam. sarvaṁ jagad dhatta iti dharmāḥ. “pṛthivī dharmā-mūrdhani” iti prayogān mokṣa-dharme.

¹⁵ Parama Upaniṣad, quoted in Chapter 1 of Madhvācārya’s Viṣṇu-tattva-vinirṇaya: ātatavāc ca māṛṭtvād ātmeti paramo hariḥ, ātmābhāsā tad-anye ye na hy eteṣāṁ tatā guṇāḥ. The translation of this verse is based on Śrī Jayatīrtha’s commentary on it. Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.45 quotes “ātatavāc pramāṛṭtvād ātmā hi paramo hariḥ” as a “tantrukti.”

Vayaḥ-sthānām can indicate that His mercy leads one towards liberation that can be attained by Garuḍa and Śeṣa, whose posts are pathways to it.

If the reading sarveṣāṃ hi sa dharmātmā is accepted, it indicates that Lord Rāma was not only merciful to the four varṇas, but to all, [that is, even those below the standard of varṇāśrama-dharma], as stated in the Fifth Skandha of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: “One cannot establish a friendship with the Supreme Lord Rāmacandra on the basis of material qualities such as one’s birth in an aristocratic family, one’s personal beauty, one’s eloquence, one’s sharp intelligence or one’s superior race or nation. None of these qualifications is actually a prerequisite for friendship with Lord Śrī Rāmacandra. Otherwise how is it possible that although we uncivilized inhabitants of the forest have not taken noble births, although we have no physical beauty and although we cannot speak like gentlemen, Lord Rāmacandra has nevertheless accepted us as friends? Therefore, whether one is a demigod or a demon, a man or a creature other than man, such as a beast or bird, everyone should worship Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who appears on this earth just like a human being. There is no need of great austerities or penances to worship the Lord, for He accepts even a small service offered by His devotee. Thus He is satisfied, and as soon as He is satisfied, the devotee is successful. Indeed, Lord Śrī Rāmacandra brought all the devotees of Ayodhyā back home, back to Godhead [Vaikuṅṭha].” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.19.7-8)

7

Nirnaya Sagar 2.20.6 / Oriental Institute 2.36.7

iti sarvā mahiṣyas tā vivatsā iva dhenavaḥ
patim ācukruśuś caiva sasvaram cāpi cukruśuḥ¹⁶

“Thus all the queens [of King Daśaratha] criticized their husband and cried loudly like cows whose calves have been banished.”

COMMENT. mahiṣya iva mahiṣyaḥ. ataḥ “kṛtābhiṣekā mahiṣī” ity amaroktir na viruṇaddhi. yad vā, mahiṣyaḥ sarvā api nṛpa-nāryaḥ, “mahiṣī nṛpa-yoṣiti” iti hemacandraḥ. yad vā, mahiṣī kaikeyī astā nirastā yābhis tā mahiṣy-astāḥ. āhitāgny-ādītvāt para-nipātaḥ. yad vā, mahiṣyā kaikeyyā astāḥ mahiṣy-astāḥ. vivatsā vivāsita-tarṇakāḥ.

PARAPHRASE. [The wives of King Daśaratha] were like queens and so were referred to as queens. Therefore, this usage does not contradict the statement in Amara-kośa: “A ritually consecrated wife [of a king] is a mahiṣī (‘queen’).”

[Besides this], all the wives of a king can be referred to as “queens” [even if they are not sacrificially consecrated as queens] according to Hemacandra: “A mahiṣī is the wife of a king.”

[The words mahiṣyas tāḥ can be read together as a single word: mahiṣy-astāḥ, indicating that] all these [wives of King Daśaratha] opposed Kaikeyī, a [duly consecrated] queen [of King Daśaratha] and that all these wives [of King Daśaratha] were opposed by Kaikeyī, a [duly consecrated] queen [of the king].¹⁷ In this case, the word mahiṣy-astāḥ should be understood to belong to the gaṇa of āhitāgny-ādi.¹⁸

¹⁶ Oriental Institute reads the second half of the verse as: ruruduś caiva duḥkhārtāḥ sasvaram ca vicukruśuḥ. The entire verse would then mean, “Thus all the queens [of King Daśaratha] cried loudly like cows without their calves, weeping in pain and sorrow.”

¹⁷ The verse would then mean, “All these [wives of King Daśaratha] opposed Kaikeyī, a [duly consecrated] queen [of the king], criticized their husband and cried loudly like cows without their calves.”

¹⁸ Cf. See Aṣṭādhyāyī 2.2.37 and its commentaries.

Nirnaya Sagar 2.27.6 / Oriental Institute 2.24.4

na pitā nātmajo nātmā na mātā na sakhī-janaḥ
iḥa pretya ca nārīṇām patir eko gatiḥ sadā

“For women, neither one’s father, nor her son, nor herself, nor her mother, nor her friends [are her shelter] in this life and the next. Their constant and only shelter is their husband.”

COMMENT. yad vā, iḥa loke. nārīṇām na vidyante arayo yeṣāṃ te nārayaḥ, teṣāṃ sādḥūnām tvaṃ na kevalam pitā, api tu ātmajaḥ. na kevalam ātmajaḥ, kintu ātmā svāmī cety anvayaḥ. yathoktaṃ: “mātā rāmaḥ” ity-ādi.

PARAPHRASE. Nārīṇām can also mean “for saints who do not consider anyone to be their enemy.” [The verse would then mean], “For saints who do not consider anyone to be their enemy, You are not just their father, but their son. [You are] not just their son, but their very soul and beloved master.”¹⁹ This is understood from statements such as:

mātā rāmo mat-pitā rāmacandraḥ svāmī rāmo mat-sakhā rāmacandraḥ
sarvasvaṃ me rāmacandro dayāluḥ nānyaṃ jāne naiva jāne na jāne

“My mother is Rāma. My father is Rāmacandra. My master is Rāma. My friend is Rāmacandra. My everything is the merciful Rāmacandra. I don’t know, don’t know and don’t know anyone else.” (Budha Kauśika’s Rāma-rakṣā-stotra 30)

Nirnaya Sagar 2.34.29 / Oriental Institute 2.31.25*816

nava pañca ca varṣāṇi vana-vāse vihr̥tya te
punaḥ pādaḥ grahīṣyāmi pratijñānte narādhipa

“O king, after sporting during My residence in the forest for nine and a five years, I will grasp your feet again after fulfilling your promises.”

COMMENT. pratijñānte catur-daśa-varṣānantaram. svargād āgatya sthitasya te pādaḥ grahīṣyāmīty abhiprāyaḥ. yathoktam atraivottaratra yuddha-kāṇḍe, “mahādeva-vacaḥ śrutvā kākutsthaḥ saha-lakṣmaṇaḥ, vimāna-śikharasthasya praṇāmam akarot pituḥ” iti. “vihr̥tya” ity anena rākṣasa-hananādikaṃ mama vihāra iti sūcayati.

PARAPHRASE. Rāma intended to tell His father that after the promised fourteen years, He would offer His obeisances unto His father who would come from the heavens. [This is exactly what happened], as noted later in the Rāmāyaṇa, in Yuddha-kāṇḍa:

“Upon hearing the words of Mahādeva, the descendant of Kakutstha as well as Lakṣmaṇa offered obeisances unto Their father who was standing on top of a celestial airplane.” (Rāmāyaṇa 6.122.9)

In the current verse of the Rāmāyaṇa, Lord Rāma refers to “sporting in the forest.” This is an indication that killing the rākṣasas and so on would be a [mere] sport for Him.

¹⁹ The verse would then mean, “For saints who do not consider anyone their enemy, You are not only their father, not only their son, not only their master, not only their mother, not only their friend, in this life and in the next. You are always their one and only caretaker and shelter at all points in time.”

Nirnaya Sagar 2.72.22-23 / Oriental Institute 2.66.18, 18*1685

tam ārtam deva-saṅkāśam samīkṣya patitam bhuvī
nikṛttam iva sālasya skandham paraśunā vane

matta-mātaṅga-saṅkāśam candrārka-sadṛśam bhuvah
utthāpayitvā śokārtam vacanam cedam abravīt

“Bharata was pained in sorrow like a distressed deva fallen on earth. He resembled a branch of the sāla tree in the forest that had been cut down by an axe. He resembled an intoxicated elephant and was like the moon and the sun on earth. Kaikeyī saw Him, raised Him up and spoke the following words.”

COMMENT. matta-mātaṅga-saṅkāśam dhūli-prakṣepeṇa gaja-sadṛśam. candrārka-sadṛśam rāma-pakṣāṇām candra-sadṛśam, anyeṣām tāpakatvena sūrya-sadṛśam iti vivekaḥ.

PARAPHRASE. Bharata resembled an intoxicated elephant because He [fell on the ground and thus] threw dust [around Him]. He was [pleasing] like the moon to those who took the side of Rāma and burning like the sun to others.

Nirnaya Sagar 3.49.17 / Oriental Institute 3.47.16

vāmena sītām padmākṣīm mūrdhajeṣu kareṇa saḥ
ūrvos tu dakṣiṇenaiva pariagrāha pāṇinā

“He caught the lotus-eyed Sītā by her hair with his left hand, and by her thighs with his right hand.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. atrānuktaṁ māyā-sītākṛti-nirmāṇādikaṁ purāṇāntarād avagantavyam. tathā coktaṁ kūrma-purāṇe catus-trimśe ’dhyāye: “sṛṣṭvā māyāmayīm sītām sa rāvaṇa-vadhecchayā, sītām ādāya rāmeṣṭām pāvako ’ntaradhīyata”²⁰ ity-ādi. tathā āgneya-purāṇe ṣaṭ-saptatitamādhyāye “ity uktvā sva-prabhāvena pratibimbarṁ manomayam, yathā-rūparṁ yathā-veṣam kalpayitvātisundaram; vahnāv ācchādayantī svam agnāv eva samāsthītā, atha māyāmayī sītā” ity-ādy-uktam. etac ca dvāra-pradarśana-param mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇayādau kailāsa-gamanokteḥ.

PARAPHRASE. That a form of Māyā Sītā was created and so on is not stated here, [but] it should be gathered from other Purāṇas.

Statements such as the following are found in Chapter 34 of the Kūrma Purāṇa: “Desirous of having Rāvaṇa killed, Agni created a Māyā Sītā, took the [real] Sītā who was dearest to Lord Rāma, and disappeared.”

Statements such as the following are found in Chapter 76 of Āgneya Purāṇa: “Having said this, she created a mental reflection of herself. That reflection was identical in appearance and costume, and extremely beautiful. Covering herself with fire, she sat on the fire. Then the magical Sītā . . .”

²⁰ In the Varanasi edition of Kūrma Purāṇa, this verse appears as 2.33.127. One of the manuscripts used for that edition has rāmeṣṭām instead of dharmīṣṭhām. It is clear from the Varanasi edition that the above verse appears in Chapter 34 of the Venkateswara Steam Press edition.

Nirnaya Sagar 3.53.19 / Oriental Institute 3.51.17

yathā cāsmin bhaya-sthāne na bibheṣi daśānana
vyaktam hiraṇmayān hi tvarān sampaśyasi mahī-ruhān

“Daśagrīva, it is evident that you are seeing golden trees because you are not frightened [even] in this dangerous situation.”

COMMENT. suvarṇa-vṛkṣādi-darśanasya mṛti-sūcakatvaṁ “svarṇa-pratītir vṛkṣeṣu” iti-pūrvārdha-bhāgavate spaṣṭam.

PARAPHRASE. It is clear from the first half of [the Tenth Skandha of] Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.42.26-31) that seeing golden trees and so on are indications of death:

kamsas tu dhanuṣo bhaṅgam rakṣiṇām sva-balasya ca
vadham niśamya govinda-rāma-vikrīḍitam param

dīrgha-prajāgaro bhīto durnimittāni durmatih
bahūny acaṣṭobhayathā mṛtyor dautya-karāṇi ca

“Wicked King Kamsa, on the other hand, was terrified, having heard how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had broken the bow and killed his guards and soldiers, all simply as a game. He remained awake for a long time, and both while awake and while dreaming he saw many bad omens, messengers of death.”

adarśanam sva-śirasah pratirūpe ca saty api
asaty api dvitīye ca dvai-rūpyam jyotiṣām tathā

chidra-pratītiś chāyāyām prāṇa-ghoṣānupaśrutih
svarṇa-pratītir vṛkṣeṣu sva-padānām adarśanam

svapne preta-pariṣvaṅgaḥ khara-yānam viśādanam
yāyān nalada-māly ekas tailābhyakto dig-ambaraḥ

anyāni cettham-bhūtāni svapna-jāgaritāni ca
paśyan maraṇa-santrasto nidrām lebhe na cintayā

“When he looked at his reflection he could not see his head; for no reason the moon and stars appeared double; he saw a hole in his shadow; he could not hear the sound of his life air; *trees seemed covered with a golden hue*; and he could not see his footprints. He dreamt that he was being embraced by ghosts, riding a donkey and drinking poison, and also that a naked man smeared with oil was passing by wearing a garland of nalada flowers. Seeing these and other such omens both while dreaming and while awake, Kamsa was terrified by the prospect of death, and out of anxiety he could not sleep.”

Nirnaya Sagar 4.19.17 / Oriental Institute 4.19.17

alpāntara-gatānām tu śrutvā vacanam aṅganā
ātmanaḥ pratirūpaṁ sā babhāṣe cāru-hāsinī

“Upon hearing the words of the [monkeys] who had gotten a slight opportunity to talk to her, the lady of lovely smiles spoke [the following words] that were befitting her intelligence.”

COMMENT. cāru-hāsinī pūrvam.

PARAPHRASE. [Tārā] was of lovely smiles *in the past*.

14

Nirnaya Sagar 4.20.1 / Oriental Institute 4.20.1-2a

rāma-cāpa-visrṣṭena śareṇāntakareṇa tam
drṣṭvā vinihataṁ bhūmau tārā tārādhipānanā
sā samāsādyā bhartāraṁ paryaṣvajata bhāminī

“When the moon-faced and angry Tārā saw her husband on the ground, vanquished by a deadly arrow shot from the bow of Lord Rāma, she came to him and embraced him.”

COMMENT. tārādhipānanā prak. yad vā, mukhasya kalāṅkitatvena tathoktiḥ.

PARAPHRASE. Tārā was *formerly* moon-faced [but now angry]. Besides, her face has been described as moon-faced because it was now contaminated [by anger just as the moon is contaminated by spots].

15

Nirnaya Sagar 4.47.14 / Oriental Institute 4.46.14

udāra-sattvābhijano mahātmā sa maithilīm drakṣyati vānarendrah
diśaṁ tu yām eva gatā tu sītā tām āsthito vāyu-suto hanūmān

“Hanumān set out in that very direction where Mother Sītā had gone. That monkey chief will find Maithilī. He is greatly perseverant, he is born in a dynasty of greatly powerful beings and he is the son of Vāyu.”

COMMENT. yām diśaṁ gatā sītety anena manaḥ-pūrvam rakṣaḥ-kṣayāyaiva gatā, na tu svāsāmarthyena nītetī dhvanayati. anyathā nītetī avakṣyat.

PARAPHRASE. “That very direction where Mother Sītā had gone” alludes to the fact that she intentionally went [to Laṅkā] to bring about the destruction of the rākṣasa [Rāvaṇa]. It was not that she was incapable and that she was taken [to Laṅkā], in which case the text would have stated “to that very direction where Mother Sītā was taken.”²¹

16

Nirnaya Sagar 5.15.32-36 / Oriental Institute 5.13.33-36

abhūtenāpavādena kīrtim nīpatitām iva

rāmoparodha-vyathitām rakṣo-haraṇa-karṣitām
abalām mrga-śāvākṣīm vīkṣamāṇām tatas tataḥ

bāṣpāmbu-paripūrṇena kṛṣṇa-vakrākṣi-pakṣmaṇā²²
vadanenāprasannena niḥśvasantīm punaḥ punaḥ

²¹ Cf. Oriental Institute 7.17.31: eṣā vedavati nāma pūrvam āsit kṛte yuge, tretā-yugam anuprāpya vadhārthaṁ tasya rakṣasaḥ, sītopanneti sītaiṣā mānuṣaiḥ punar ucyate. The Nirnaya Sagar edition reads this as 7.17.43-44, with the following verse replacing the third line: utpannā maithila-kule janakasya mahātmanaḥ, sītopannā tu sītetī mānuṣaiḥ punar ucyate.

²² In the Oriental Institute edition, this line reads as bāṣpāmbu-pratipūrṇena kṛṣṇa-vaktrākṣi-pakṣmaṇā.

mala-pañkadharām dīnām mañdanārḥām amañditām
prabhām nakṣatra-rājasya kāla-meghair ivāvṛtām

tasya sandidihe buddhir muhuḥ sītām nirīkṣya tu
āmnāyānām ayogena vidyām praśīthilām iva

“She was like a reputation lost through false rumors. She was pained at her imprisonment by the [rākṣasa] women. She was emaciated by the rākṣasa’s abducting her. That young girl with the eyes of a doe was looking about here and there. Her distressed face with its black-tipped curved eyelashes was fully covered by a flood of tears. She was sighing again and again. Covered with dirt and dust, dejected, devoid of ornaments—though she deserved them—she resembled the light of the king of stars, when it is covered by a dark cloud. As he examined Mother Sītā closely, his intelligence was again filled with doubt. She was like scriptural learning that had been slackened through lack of recitation.”

COMMENT. rāmoparodha-vyathitām rāmābhiḥ rākṣasa-strībhiḥ ya uparodhaḥ itas tato gamana-pratibandhas tena vyathitām.

PARAPHRASE. Rāmoparodha-vyathitām [which is generally understood to mean “she was distraught at being obstructed [from rejoining] Śrī Rāma”] means “she was pained at her imprisonment by the [rākṣasa] women.”²³

17

Nirnaya Sagar 5.22.31 / Oriental Institute 5.20.29

anayenābhisampannam artha-hīnam anuvrate
nāśayāmy aham adya tvām sūryaḥ sandhyām ivaujasā

“You are devoted to that [Rāma], who is unrighteous and devoid of good fortune! I will destroy you today just as the sun destroys the darkness before dawn with its radiance.”

COMMENT. anayena strī-vadha-tan-nāsikā-cchedādy-anyāyena. abhisampannam yukta. artha-hīnam nirbhāgyam. etādṛśam rāmam anuvrate sīte, tvām nāśayāmi. sandhyām sandhyā-kālikam tamaḥ.

PARAPHRASE. According to Rāvaṇa, Rāmacandra is unrighteous because of killing a woman (Tātakā) and cutting off the nose of a woman (Śūrpaṅkhā) and so on.”²⁴

18

Nirnaya Sagar 5.57.35-36 / Oriental Institute 5.55.23-24

hanūmāms tu gurūn vṛddhāñ jāmbavat-pramukhāms tadā
kumāram aṅgadaṁ caiva so ’vandata mahā-kapiḥ

sa tābhyām pūjitaḥ pūjyaḥ kapibhiś ca prasāditaḥ
dṛṣṭā sīteti vikrāntaḥ sañkṣeṇa nyavedayat²⁵

²³ Note that this interpretation is consistent with the commentator’s stand, which is itself based on the Purāṇas, that the kidnapped Sītā is the Māyā Sītā and not the real Sītā.

²⁴ There is nothing unusual in Rāvaṇa’s invoking the principles of dharma when it serves his own purposes. After all, his sister Śūrpaṅkhā had already urged him to uphold dharma *by abducting Sītā* (see Araṇya-kāṇḍa, Chapter 33 in the Nirnaya Sagar edition and Chapter 31 in the Oriental Institute edition).

²⁵ Oriental Institute reads dṛṣṭā devīti in the place of dṛṣṭā sīteti.

“The great monkey Hanumān offered his obeisances to his superior authorities headed by Jāmbavān and to Prince Aṅgada. He was [then] honored by both of them and welcomed by the monkeys. The valiant one then delivered a brief report: ‘I saw Sītā-devī!’”

COMMENT. devī dṛṣṭeti paurvāparye devī vilokitā na veti śānkā syāt. sā mā hi bhūd iti dṛṣṭeti pūrvam uktir iti jñeyam.

PARAPHRASE. [The commentator reads dṛṣṭā devīti (“I saw the Queen”) in place of dṛṣṭā sīteti (“I saw Sītā-devī”).] If [Hanumān] had reversed the words by saying devī dṛṣṭā (“The Queen has been seen [by me]”), there could have been a doubt about whether [Hanumān] had found Sītā-devī or not [in the minds of his authorities for a moment, *before* he could complete the sentence]. But [Hanumān] did not want them to experience that doubt [for even a moment]. And so he uttered, dṛṣṭā devī (“I saw the Queen”).²⁶

19

Nirnaya Sagar 6.22.17-18a / Oriental Institute 6.15.1

tato madhyāt samudrasya sāgaraḥ svayam utthitaḥ
udayan hi mahā-śailān meror iva divākaraḥ
pannagaiḥ saha dīptāsyaiḥ samudraḥ pratyadrśyata

“Then Sāgara himself arose from the midst of the ocean. Rising together with great serpents, whose mouths blazed with flames, Sāgara looked like the sun rising above the peak of Meru.”

COMMENT. sāgaraḥ varuṇaḥ. meror iva vidyamānāt udayādrer mahā-śailāt śṛṅgāt divākara iva. meroḥ dhanuṣo bhayāt utthita iti vā. “merur bhūdhara-dhanvanoḥ” iti viśvaḥ.

PARAPHRASE. Sāgara is Varuṇa. Meroḥ can also mean “because of the bow” because Viśva-kośa states that Meru can refer to a mountain or a bow.²⁷

20

Nirnaya Sagar 6.28.11 / Oriental Institute 6.19.11

jyeṣṭhaḥ kesariṇaḥ putro vātātmaja iti śrutaḥ
hanumān iti vikhyāto laṅghito yena sāgaraḥ

“Kesarī’s eldest son, who is said to be Vāyu’s natural son, is well known as Hanumān. He is the one who had crossed the ocean.”

COMMENT. jyeṣṭha ity anenānye ’py avarajāḥ santīti jñāyate. vātātmajaḥ vātasya vāyoḥ ātmajaḥ aurasah.

PARAPHRASE. “Kesarī’s eldest son” implies that [Hanumān] had younger brothers.

²⁶ The difference in effect between devī dṛṣṭā and dṛṣṭā devī is not readily reproducible in English if both expressions are translated literally. I have therefore taken the liberty of rendering the former in the passive voice and the latter in the active, in order to preserve, insofar as possible, the respective placement of the finite verb—later in the former and earlier in the latter—which parallels the Sanskrit here.

²⁷ “Because of the bow” would contextually mean “because of Lord Rāma’s bow,” that is, “frightened of Lord Rāma’s bow.” The verse would then mean: “Frightened of Lord Rāma’s bow, Sāgara himself arose from the midst of the ocean. Rising together with great serpents, whose mouths blazed with flames, Sāgara looked like the sun rising above a great mountain.”

Nirnaya Sagar 6.46.13 / Oriental Institute 6.36.12

dūṣaṇasya ca hantārau kharasya ca mahā-balau
sādītau māmakair bāñair bhrātarau rāma-lakṣmaṇau

“My arrows have struck down the two mighty brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the killers of Khara and Dūṣaṇa.”

COMMENT. dūṣaṇasya ca hantārāv ity-ādy-uktiś chatri-nyāyena. rāmasyaiva tad-dhanṛtvāt.

PARAPHRASE. Indrajit refers to Rāma *and* Lakṣmaṇa as the killers of Khara and Dūṣaṇa on the basis of the maxim of the umbrella-holders (chatri-nyāya) because it was Rāma alone who had factually killed them.²⁸

Nirnaya Sagar 6.47.5 / Oriental Institute 6.37.6

rākṣasyas trijaṭā cāpi śāsanāt tam upasthitāḥ
tā uvāca tato hr̥ṣṭo rākṣasī rākṣaseśvaraḥ

“On his order, Trijaṭā and the [other] rākṣasīs came to him. Then, in delight, the lord of the rākṣasas spoke to the rākṣasīs.”

COMMENT. rākṣasyaḥ itarāḥ. “trijaṭā” iti tābhyāḥ pṛthak-kṛtyoktiḥ, uttaratra sāmānyato “rākṣasīḥ” ity uktiś ca trijaṭā sītā-pakṣe vartata iti rāvaṇa-manasi sandeham sūcayataḥ.

PARAPHRASE. [In the first half of the verse], Trijaṭā has been distinguished from the other rākṣasīs. In the next [half of the verse], all of them have been referred together as “the rākṣasīs.” These indicate that Rāvaṇa suspected Trijaṭā of taking Sītā’s side.

Nirnaya Sagar 6.59.113 / Oriental Institute 6.47.108

atha vāyu-sutaḥ krudhho rāvaṇam samabhidravat
ājaghānorasi krudhho vajra-kalpena muṣṭinā

“The angry son of Vayu then became enraged. He rushed at Rāvaṇa and struck him on his chest with his fist, which resembled the thunderbolt.”

COMMENT. tataḥ krudhhaḥ lakṣmaṇākarṣaṇato ’tikrudhhaḥ. krudhhaḥ pūrvam ārabhya kopī.

PARAPHRASE. [The commentator reads tataḥ krudhho vāyu-sutaḥ (“enraged because of that, the son of Vāyu”) in the place of atha vāyu-sutaḥ krudhhaḥ.] “Enraged because of that” means “enraged because of Rāvaṇa’s attempt to carry Lakṣmaṇa.” “Angry” indicates that Hanumān was angry even before [Rāvaṇa attempted to carry Lakṣmaṇa away].²⁹

²⁸ Chatri-nyāya, a maxim commonly employed in Sanskrit literature: From the observation that some among a group (e.g., people in the street) possess a given attribute (such as carrying umbrellas), a statement may be made of the group as a whole—“The people are carrying umbrellas”—despite its not being universally applicable. A similar extension underlies expressions such as “World War I” and “World War II,” in which participation was not literally global.

²⁹ Therefore, there is no redundancy in Śrī Vālmīki’s double usage of krudhhaḥ to describe Hanumān here.

Nirnaya Sagar 6.61.11 / Oriental Institute 6.49.11

śūla-pāṇim virūpākṣam kumbhakarṇam mahā-balam
hantum na śekus tri-daśāḥ kālo 'yam iti mohitāḥ

“Kumbhakarṇa had a lance in his hand, his eyes were dreadful and he possessed great power. The demigods were unable to kill him [and] they mistook him to be Kāla himself.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. virūpākṣam śūlapāṇim rudram iveti vā.

PARAPHRASE. [They mistook the greatly powerful Kumbhakarṇa to be Rudra himself because] he resembled Rudra whose eyes are dreadful and who has a lance in his hand.

Nirnaya Sagar 6.66.6 / Oriental Institute 6.54.5

sādhu saumyā nivartadhvam kim prāṇān parirakṣatha
nālam yuddhāya vai rakṣo mahatīyam vibhīṣikā

“Enough of this, gentle friends! Turn back. Why are you trying to save your lives? This ‘rākṣasa’ cannot attack us. It is just a huge object to frighten [us]!”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. he saumyāḥ, kraurya-pradarśana-kāle 'pi tad-aprakāśakā itīrṣyayā sambodhanam. prāṇān kim parirakṣatha: svāmi-kāmitākaraṇena jīvanam dhig iti bhāvaḥ. idam rakṣaḥ asmābhiḥ saha yuddham kartum nālam na samartham. mahatī vibhīṣikā mahad vibhīṣaṇam.

PARAPHRASE. “Gentle friends” is [Aṅgada’s] sarcastic taunt because at this moment when the monkeys are supposed to exhibit their ferocity, they don’t. “Why are you trying to save your lives?” means “Fie on your lives when it does not fulfill the mission of our master [Lord Rāmacandra]!”

Nirnaya Sagar 6.67.173 / Oriental Institute 6.55.124

tad rāma-bāṇābhihatam papāta
rakṣaḥ-śiraḥ parvata-sannikāśam
babhañja caryāgrha-gopurāṇi
prākāram uccam tam apātayac ca

“The rākṣasa’s head, which appeared to be like a mountain, fell when it was struck by Rāma’s arrow. It smashed the gates of the buildings on the highways and knocked down the tall rampart.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. “brāhmenāstreṇa saumitir dadārādri-varopamam”³⁰ iti bhārate vana-parvaṇi mārkaṇḍeyopākhyāne lakṣmaṇāt kumbhakarṇa-vadha uktaḥ, atra tu rāmād; ato virodha iti cet, satyam. sumitrāyā apatyam hi saumitriḥ. tasyāś ca lakṣmaṇād api prema-padam rāma iti tad-apatyatvenokto vyāsena dāśarathir iti vā, puri-vyatyāso 'pi, śatam duryodhanādīms te dhanañjaya-śarair hatān, darśayiṣyāmīti kṛṣṇena kṛṣṇām praty udīrite vacasi³¹ bhīmasena-śarair hatān iti vaktavye dhanañjayety uktivad vā jñeyāḥ.

³⁰ Mahābhārata BORI 3.271.16c reads: tam brahmāstreṇa saumitir dadāhādrīcayopamam.

³¹ Mahābhārata BORI 3.13.114-117: athainām abravīt kṛṣṇas tasmin vīra-samāgame, roḍiṣyanti striyo hy evam yeṣām kruddhāsi bhāmini; bībhatsu-śara-sañchannāñ śoṇitaugha-pariplutān, nihatāñ jīvitam tyaktvā śayānān vasudhā-tale; yat samartham

PARAPHRASE. The Mārkaṇḍeya Upākhyāna of the Vana-parva in the Mahābhārata states that Saumitri killed the rākṣasa Kumbhakarṇa using a brahmāstra. But here Rāma is said to be the killer of Kumbhakarṇa.

Is this not a contradiction? Yes, [but both statements are true because]:

(1) Rāma is the Saumitri mentioned in the Mahābhārata since He was dearer to Sumitrā than her own son Lakṣmaṇa.

(2) Even if Saumitri is interpreted to mean only Lakṣmaṇa, the Rāmopākhyāna description can be understood to be an instance of puṁ-vyatyāsa (“interchange of persons” as noted by Madhvācārya in his Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya): Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Draupadī in the Mahābhārata that the hundred Kauravas headed by Duryodhana will be killed by Dhanañjaya’s arrows, [though they were actually killed by Bhīmasena].³²

27

Nirnaya Sagar 7.1.27 / Oriental Institute 7.1.19

saṅkhye tasya na kiñcit tu rāvaṇasya parābhavaḥ
dvandva-yuddham anuprāpto diṣṭyā te rāvaṇir hataḥ

“Defeating Rāvaṇa in battle was an insignificant affair [for You]. By good fortune, Rāvaṇi was killed by You while in a single combat.”

EXCERPT FROM COMMENT. te diṣṭyā ādiṣṭyā ājñayā dvandva-yuddham anuprāptaḥ rāvaṇir indrajit. hataḥ lakṣmaṇeneti śeṣaḥ. te tvayā. hataḥ ghātita iti vā.

PARAPHRASE. Rāma’s killing of Rāvaṇi should be understood in the causative sense. The second half of the verse can also be understood as “By Your order, Rāvaṇi was killed while in a single combat [with Lakṣmaṇa].”

28

Nirnaya Sagar 7.4.31b-32a / Oriental Institute 7.4.29

amaraṁ caiva taṁ kṛtvā mahādevo ’kṣayo ’vyayaḥ
puram ākāśagaṁ prādāt pārvatyaḥ priya-kāmyayā

“With the desire to please Pārvatī, the indestructible and unchangeable Mahādeva made [the rākṣasa child] immortal and gave him a city that could fly through the sky.”

COMMENT. bāleṣu, tatrāpi rakṣaka-rahiteṣu, prāyeṇa strīṇām anukrośāt pārvatyaḥ priya-kāmyayety uktam.

PARAPHRASE. “To please Pārvatī-devī” has been used here because women in general are compassionate towards children, and that too when the children are devoid of caretakers.

29

Nirnaya Sagar 7.82.9 / Oriental Institute 7.73.9

atyadbhutam idaṁ vākyaṁ tava rāma śubhākṣaram
pāvanaḥ sarva-lokānām tvam eva raghu-nandana

pāṇḍavānām tat kariṣyāmi mā śucaḥ, satyaṁ te pratijānāmi rājñām rājñī bhaviṣyasi; pated dyaur himavāñ sīryet pṛthivī śakalī bhavet, śuṣyēt toya-nidhiḥ kṛṣṇe na me moghaṁ vaco bhavet.

³² Śrī Madhva talks about other exegetical principles in his Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya 9.125-136.

“O Rāma, O delight of the Raghus, these words of Yours, filled with auspicious syllables, are extremely astonishing, [because] it is You alone who is the purifier of all the worlds.”

COMMENT. pāvanārtham ity uktasya bāhyārtham asahamāno 'gastya āha: pāvana iti. “pavitrāṇām pavitraṁ yaḥ” iti mānād iti bhāvaḥ.

PARAPHRASE. [Sage Agastya] utters the current verse because he is unable to tolerate the superficial meaning of [Lord Rāma's earlier] statement [in this chapter] that He would return and meet the sage to purify Himself. Śrī Agastya implies that the authoritative [conclusion] is that Rāma is the purifier of all purifiers—pavitrāṇām pavitraṁ yaḥ (Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotra 10).

30

Nirnaya Sagar 7.110.8 / Oriental Institute 7.100.6

tataḥ pitāmaho vāṇīm antarikṣād abhāṣata
āgaccha viṣṇo bhadrām te diṣṭyā prāpto 'si rāghava

“Then Grandfather Brahmā spoke these words from the sky: ‘Come, Lord Viṣṇu! May there be auspiciousness unto You. O Rāghava, it is by our good fortune that You have come [to the earth].’”

COMMENT. diṣṭyā bhuvam prāpto 'si, no bhāgyataḥ. “adhyardha-yojanam gatvā nadīm paścān-mukhaḥ sthitaḥ, sarayūṁ puṇya-salilām praviveśa sahānugaḥ; abravīd rāghavam brahmā praviṣṭam sarayū-jalam, samāgaccha viṣṇo bhadrām te, param dhāma samāśraya” iti pādmokteḥ. te sakāśād bhadrām no 'stv iti vā.

PARAPHRASE. Diṣṭyā prāpto 'si means “It is by our good fortune that You have come to the earth.”

The Padma Purāṇa describes [this event] as follows: “Having proceeded for one and a half yojanas, He faced the west and then entered the holy waters of Sarayū along with His followers. Brahmā then addressed Rāghava who had entered the Sarayū, ‘Come, Lord Viṣṇu! May there be auspiciousness unto You. Please enter Your supreme abode.’”

[Bhadrām te (“May there be auspiciousness unto You”)] can also mean, in this context, “May there be auspiciousness unto us because of You.”

On the Rūpa Raghunātha Vāṇī edition of Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) explicitly desired a detailed multi-volume edition of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, like his detailed edition of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He wrote to an acquaintance on 26 July 1975:

I have a great desire to translate the Valmiki Ramayana because that is authorized. . . . I wish to translate Valmiki Ramayana exactly in the way I have done Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Prabhupāda's edition of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam contains the Sanskrit text in devanāgarī, its roman transliteration, Sanskrit-English equivalents, a translation and an explanation (“purport”) summarizing the commentaries on the Bhāgavatam by standard Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyic representatives. And he wanted to present the Rāmāyaṇa in the same manner.

And so, as a follower of Prabhupāda, I have ventured to present this edition of Śrī Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa as per Prabhupāda's guidelines. Appropriate to each kāṇḍa, it contains these elements:

1. Verses from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam on Rāma-līlā with Prabhupāda's Sanskrit-English equivalents, translations and commentary.

2. An annotated and abridged translation of Saṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa.

3. A brief summary of each chapter.

4. Each text of Śrī Rāmāyaṇa in devanāgarī, followed by its roman transliteration, Sanskrit-English equivalents and a translation. The Sanskrit-English equivalents that we have presented here are contextual and not literal in order to make sure that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the English equivalents and the translation.

5. An annotated and abridged English rendition of Śrī Govindarāja's Rāmāyaṇa-bhūṣaṇa, that also happens to be the only commentary that covers the entirety of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa from the four Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas.³³ The commentator Śrī Govindarāja states that it is based on the eighteen cardinal teachings of the Rāmāyaṇa that Śrī Rāmānuja had learnt from one of his gurus, Śrī Śailapūrṇa. The commentary takes care to note the various aspects of śaraṅgati, the process of surrender unto the Supreme Lord.

6. An abridged rendition of Śrī Satyadharmā Tīrtha's Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa as found in the Nirṇaya Sagar edition from Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa to Uttara-kāṇḍa. This is presented as a gloss. When Śrī Satyadharmā has a reading of the Rāmāyaṇa that is different from Śrī Govindarāja's but the meaning of the verse is unaffected, I have not noted these variants; but when it yields a difference in meaning, I have noted the variant in the gloss itself. I have not paraphrased the Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa into English when it conveys essentially the same sense as the Rāmāyaṇa-bhūṣaṇa.

7. Inline notes: I have quoted, for the sake of additional clarification, from the writings of Śrīla Prabhupāda, especially from his annotated translation of Śrī Bhagavad-gītā. Occasionally, I have quoted from his predecessor-ācāryas in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, sometimes from the ācāryas of the four Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas and standard scriptural authorities.

8. Footnotes: This is where I have added further annotation from my end.

9. To clarify certain portions of the text and its commentaries, I have included a number of additional appendixes that may be of interest to the contemporary learned reader: (1) "Defending the Vedic View," (2) "Animal Sacrifice in the Rāmāyaṇa," (3) "Additional Notes," (4) "Additional Commentary on Texts 3.16.11–25," (5) "Prabhupāda's Application of Varṇāśrama to ISKCON," (6) "The Vedic Conception of the Universe," (7) "Lessons from the Lord's Lamentations," (8) "Additional Remarks by the Commentator on Chapter 1 [of the Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa]," (9) "Additional Notes to Text 4.3.29," (10) "Abortion, the Language of Unconsciousness, and the Unborn," (11) "The Seven Tāla Trees," (12) "Additional Notes to Text 4.18.44," (13) "Additional Commentary on Texts 4.28.14–24," (14) "Elements of Vedic Astronomy, Physics, and Cosmology," (15) "Additional Notes to Text 4.43.59," (16) "On Māyāvī and Dundubhi," and (17) "The Problem with the Darwinian Narrative."³⁴

I have mostly followed the reading of the Nirṇaya Sagar edition of the Rāmāyaṇa, which is generally attested by Rāmāyaṇa-bhūṣaṇa. My translation of the text is generally derived from Rāmāyaṇa-bhūṣaṇa and Rāmāyaṇa-bhāva-dīpa.

³³ Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's Prameya-ratnāvalī 1.5 quotes Padma Purāṇa thus: sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te viphalā matāḥ, ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti catvāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ; śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā vaiṣṇavā kṣīti-pāvanāḥ, catvāras te kalau bhāvyaḥ hy utkale puruṣottamāt. Garga Saṁhitā (Aśvamedha-khaṇḍa 61.24-26) states: vāmanaś ca vidhiḥ śeṣaḥ sanako viṣṇu-vākyataḥ, dharmārtha-hetave caite bhaviṣyanti dvijāḥ kalau; viṣṇusvāmī vāmanāṁśas tathā madhvas tu brahmaṇaḥ, rāmānujas tu śeṣāṁśo nimbārkaḥ sanakasya ca; ete kalau yuge bhāvyaḥ sampradāya-pravartakāḥ, saṁvatsare vikramasya catvāraḥ kṣīti-pavanāḥ; sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā smṛtāḥ, tasmāc ca gamanaṁ hy asti sampradāye narair api.

³⁴ Appendixes (1), (5), (6), (9), (10), (12), (14) and (17) comprise insightful articles or excerpts from books by learned members of Prabhupāda.

Bāla-kāṇḍa has been rendered in three volumes, Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa in five volumes, Araṇya-kāṇḍa in three volumes, and Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa in four volumes. Each volume has an index of the Sanskrit verses of the Rāmāyaṇa as an appendix.

Each chapter of the Rāmāyaṇa opens with a captioned ink drawing depicting a scene from it. The front and back covers of each printed volume has a colored painting. These works are the sincere and devoted creations of Rasikānanda dāsa (Novikov Viacheslav), a colleague based in Russia.

To help the readers better understand Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa as it has been understood by devoted practitioners of Bhāgavata-dharma, I have placed in the front matter of the first volume of Bāla-kāṇḍa an abridged English rendition of Śrī Govindarāja's description of the eighteen cardinal teachings of Śrī Rāmāyaṇa.

The preparation and publication of this series are the result of the devoted efforts of a dedicated team, of which I am a member, serving as the provider of textual content. A list of contributors and consultants for this project, together with an electronic errata, may be found at <http://www.ruparaghunathavani.com>. To promote wider study of our edition of the Rāmāyaṇa, we have also initiated the online publication of the text at <https://srivalmikiramayana.com>.