



## CHAPTER 53

### Rāma Requests Lakṣmaṇa to Return to Ayodhyā

#### SUMMARY

Sitting under a tree, Śrī Rāmacandra critically noted Daśaratha's weakness and the impending disturbances Kaikeyī could give to Kausalyā and Sumitrā, and so requested Śrī Lakṣmaṇa to return to Ayodhyā. Lakṣmaṇa firmly stated that neither He nor Sītā could live without Rāma. Then Rāma accepted Lakṣmaṇa as His constant companion during His stay in the forest for fourteen years.



Lakṣmaṇa prepared a bed  
for Sītā and Rāma to sleep on.  
(2.53.33)

TEXT 1

स तं वृक्षं समासाद्य संध्यामन्वास्य पश्चिमाम् ।  
रामो रमयतां श्रेष्ठ इति होवाच लक्ष्मणम् ॥

*sa taṁ vṛkṣaṁ samāsādyā sandhyām anvāsya paścimām  
rāmo ramayatām śreṣṭha iti hovāca lakṣmaṇam*

*saḥ*<sup>1</sup> *taṁ* = that; *vṛkṣam* = tree; *samāsādyā* = having approached; *sandhyām* = sandhyā-vandana; *anvāsya* = performed; *paścimām* = His evening; *rāmaḥ* = Rāma; *ramayatām* = of the pleasant; *śreṣṭhaḥ* = the best; *iti ha uvāca* = and spoke the following; *lakṣmaṇam* = to Lakṣmaṇa.

Having approached that tree, Rāma, the best of the pleasant, performed His evening sandhyā-vandana and spoke the following to Lakṣmaṇa.

TEXT 2

अद्येयं प्रथमा रात्रिर्याता जनपदाद्बहिः ।  
या सुमन्त्रेण रहिता तां नोत्कण्ठितुमर्हसि ॥

*adyeyaṁ prathamā rātrir yātā jana-padād bahiḥ  
yā sumantreṇa rahitā tāṁ notkaṅṭhitum arhasi*

*adya* = today; *iyam prathamā* = is the first; *rātriḥ* = night; *yātā* = we are; *jana-padāt* = of our country; *bahiḥ* = outside; *yā* = that; *sumantreṇa rahitā* = we are passing without Sumantra; *tām* = of this night; *na* = not; *utkaṅṭhitum* = remember the distress; *arhasi* = You should.

Tonight is the first night we are outside of our country. You should not remember the distresses of this night that we are passing without Sumantra.

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1. Technical note: *saḥ rāmaḥ*.

GLOSS. “You should not remember the distresses” means “You should not remember Your home, wife and so on and become disturbed in mind.”

## TEXT 3

जागर्तव्यमतन्द्रिभ्यामद्यप्रभृति रालिषु ।  
योगक्षेमं हि सीताया वर्तते लक्ष्मणावयोः ॥

*jāgartavyam atandribhyām adya-prabhṛti rātriṣu*  
*yoga-kṣemaṁ hi sītāyā vartate lakṣmaṇāvayoḥ*

*jāgartavyam* = awake; *atandribhyām* = we should be attentively; *adya-prabhṛti* = from today; *rātriṣu* = at night; *yoga-kṣemaṁ* = protection; *hi* = for; *sītāyāḥ* = Sītā’s; *vartate* = depends; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa; *āvayoḥ* = on Us.

**Lakṣmaṇa, we should be attentively awake at night, for Sītā’s protection depends on Us from today.**

## TEXT 4

रालिं कथंचिदेवेमां सौमिले वर्तयामहे ।  
उपावर्तामहे भूमावास्तीर्य स्वयमार्जितैः ॥

*rātrim kathañcid evemāṁ saumitre vartayāmahe*  
*upāvartāmahe bhūmāv āstīrya svayam ārjitaiḥ*

*rātrim* = night; *kathañcit eva* = somehow or other; *imām* = this; *saumitre* = Saumitri; *vartayāmahe* = we should pass; *upāvartāmahe* = let us sleep; *bhūmau* = on the ground; *āstīrya* = after spreading; *svayam ārjitaiḥ* = grass and leaves that We have personally collected.

Saumitri, we should pass this night somehow or other.<sup>2</sup> Let us sleep on the ground after spreading grass and leaves that We have personally collected.

“Somehow or other” because it was the first time They are passing a night [without Sumantra and outside Their kingdom]. The night had fallen before They could make [relatively comfortable] arrangements for sleeping.

## TEXT 5

स तु संविश्य मेदिन्यां महार्हशयनोचितः ।  
इमाः सौमित्रये रामो व्याजहार कथाः शुभाः ॥

*sa tu saṁviśya medinyām mahārha-śayanocitaḥ  
imāḥ saumitraye rāmo vyājahāra kathāḥ śubhāḥ*

*saḥ tu saṁviśya* = resolved to prepare [such]; *medinyām* = a bed on the ground; *mahā-arha-śayana-ucitaḥ* = who was fit to sleep on a greatly valuable bed; *imāḥ* = the following; *saumitraye* = to the son of Sumitrā; *rāmaḥ* = Rāma; *vyājahāra* = and spoke; *kathāḥ* = words; *śubhāḥ* = auspicious.

Rāma who was fit to sleep on a greatly valuable bed resolved to prepare [such] a bed on the ground and spoke the following auspicious words to the son of Sumitrā.

## TEXT 6

ध्रुवमद्य महाराजो दुःखं स्वपिति लक्ष्मण ।  
कृतकामा तु कैकेयी तुष्टा भवितुमर्हति ॥

*dhruvam adya mahā-rājo duḥkhaṁ svapiti lakṣmaṇa  
kṛta-kāmā tu kaikeyī tuṣṭā bhavitum arhati*

2. Saumitri means “son of Sumitrā” and refers to Lakṣmaṇa. It is commonly used in Rāmāyaṇa. Similarly, Dāśarathi (“son of Daśaratha”) is also commonly used to refer to Rāmacandra.

*dhruvam* = certainly; *adya* = tonight; *mahā-rājaḥ* = Mahārāja Daśaratha; *duḥkham* = in distress; *svapiti* = is sleeping; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa; *kṛta-kāmā* = her desires having fructified; *tu* = but; *kaikeyī* = Kaikeyī; *tuṣṭā bhavitum arhati* = is bound to be satisfied.

**Lakṣmaṇa, certainly Mahārāja Daśaratha is sleeping in distress tonight but Kaikeyī, her desires having fructified, is bound to be satisfied.**

TEXT 7

सा हि देवी महाराजं कैकेयी राज्यकारणात् ।  
अपि न च्यावयेत्प्राणान्द्रष्टुं भरतमागतम् ॥

*sā hi devī mahā-rājam kaikeyī rājya-kāraṇāt*  
*api na cyāvayet prāṇān dṛṣṭvā bharatam āgatam*

*sā hi* = she; *devī* = Queen; *mahā-rājam* = Mahārāja's; *kaikeyī* = Kaikeyī; *rājya-kāraṇāt* = to take over the kingdom; *api na* = won't; *cyāvayet* = cause to depart from his body; *prāṇān* = the life airs; *dṛṣṭvā* = when sees; *bharatam* = Bharata; *āgatam* = arrived.

**Won't Queen Kaikeyī cause the Mahārāja's life airs to depart from his body when she sees Bharata arrive to take over the kingdom ?**

One might wonder, "Rāma will speak the following [to Lakṣmaṇa when the latter criticizes Kaikeyī-devī]:

*na te 'mbā madhyamā tāta garhitavyā kathaṅcana*  
*tām evekṣvāku-nāthasya bharatasya kathāṁ kuru*

'Dear Lakṣmaṇa, don't condemn Your middle mother [Kaikeyī]. Just tell me about Bharata, the master of the Ikṣvāku dynasty.'  
(Rāmāyaṇa 3.16.37)

“And Rāma does not hanker for dharma, artha, kāma or mokṣa.

“So how are these statements of His to Lakṣmaṇa consisting primarily of a criticism of Kaikeyī and implying that He did not gain [the kingdom] consistent with Rāma?”

The answer is that Rāma will tell Lakṣmaṇa:

*ayodhyām ita eva tvam kālye praviśa lakṣmaṇa*

“Lakṣmaṇa, go to Ayodhyā from here tomorrow early morning itself.” (Rāmāyaṇa 2.53.16)

In order to convince Lakṣmaṇa to agree to this, Rāmacandra spoke [these words criticizing Kaikeyī].

#### TEXT 8

अनाथश्च हि वृद्धश्च मया चैव विनाकृतः ।  
किं करिष्यति कामात्मा कैकेयीवशमागतः ॥

*anāthaś ca hi vṛddhaś ca mayā caiva vinā-kṛtaḥ  
kim kariṣyati kāmātmā kaikeyī-vaśam āgataḥ*

*anāthaḥ ca hi* = without a caretaker and protector; *vṛddhaḥ ca* = for the old king is; *mayā* = I have; *ca eva* = and; *vinā-kṛtaḥ* = left him there; *kim* = what; *kariṣyati* = will do; *kāma-ātmā* = that passionate soul; *kaikeyī-vaśam* = under the control of Kaikeyī; *āgataḥ* = having come.

For the old king is without a caretaker and protector and I have left him there. What will that passionate soul do, having come under the control of Kaikeyī?

## TEXT 9

इदं व्यसनमालोक्य राज्ञश्च मतिविभ्रमम् ।  
काम एवार्थधर्माभ्यां गरीयानिति मे मतिः ॥

*idam vyasanam ālokya rājñāś ca mati-vibhramam  
kāma evārtha-dharmābhyām garīyān iti me matiḥ*

*idam* = this; *vyasanam* = calamity of Mine; *ālokya* = observing; *rājñāḥ* = the king's; *ca* = and; *mati-vibhramam* = bewilderment of mind; *kāmaḥ eva* = kāma; *artha-dharmābhyām* = than artha and dharma; *garīyān* = is more powerful; *iti me matiḥ* = it appears to Me that.

**Observing this calamity of Mine and the king's bewilderment of mind, it appears to Me that kāma is more powerful than artha and dharma.**

Śrī Rāma's calamity indicates that dharma was not most important [to Daśaratha].<sup>3</sup> Daśaratha's bewilderment of mind, that is, his lack of hankering for [artha over kāma] indicates that artha was not most important [to him too] and that he was only interested in kāma, sensual pleasures.<sup>4</sup>

## TEXT 10

को ह्यविद्वानपि पुमान्प्रमदायाः कृते त्यजेत् ।  
छन्दानुवर्तिनं पुत्रं तातो मामिव लक्ष्मण ॥

3. Putting a dhārmika son in unnecessary calamity will certainly decrease one's piety or dharma. But the fact that Daśaratha banished Rāma indicates that he wasn't serious about losing his pious credits (dharma).

4. Having a good kingdom under one's control is certainly a prosperity and who can rule better than Rāma? Banishing Rāmacandra will not result in a good kingdom under Daśaratha's control because Rāma was most attentively fulfilling King Daśaratha's desires and no one else could be like Him. Daśaratha certainly knew this but the fact that he banished Rāma indicates that he wasn't serious about losing his prosperity (artha).

*ko hy avidvān api pumān pramadāyāḥ kṛte tyajet  
chandānuvartinam putram tāto mām iva lakṣmaṇa*

*kaḥ hi* = which; *avidvān api pumān* = even if he is foolish; *pramadāyāḥ* = of an enchanting woman; *kṛte* = for sake; *tyajet* = will abandon; *chanda-anuvartinam* = obedient to his desires; *putram* = a son; *tātaḥ* = father; *mām* = Me; *iva* = like; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa.

**Lakṣmaṇa, which father, even if he is foolish, will abandon a son obedient to his desires, like Me for sake of an enchanting woman ?**

Here Rāmacandra establishes that *kāma* is more powerful than *artha* and *dharma*.

TEXT 11

सुखी बत सभार्यश्च भरतः केकयीसुतः ।  
मुदितान्कोसलानेको यो भोक्ष्यत्यधिराजवत् ॥

*sukhī bata sabhāryaś ca bharataḥ kekayī-sutaḥ  
muditān kosalān eko yo bhokṣyaty adhirājavat*

*sukhī bata* = would be happy; *sabhāryaḥ ca* = with His wife; *bharataḥ* = Bharata; *kekayī-sutaḥ* = Kaikeyī's son; *muditān kosalān* = the happy land of Kosala; *ekaḥ* = alone; *yaḥ<sup>5</sup> bhokṣyati* = enjoying; *adhirājavat* = like an emperor.

**Kaikeyī's son Bharata would be happy with His wife, enjoying the happy land of Kosala alone like an emperor.**

TEXT 12

स हि सर्वस्य राज्यस्य मुखमेकं भविष्यति ।  
ताते च वयसातीते मयि चारण्यमस्थिते ॥

5. Technical note: *yaḥ bharataḥ*.

*sa hi sarvasya rājyasya mukham ekam bhaviṣyati  
tāte ca vayasātīte mayi cāraṇyam āsthite*

*saḥ hi* = He; *sarvasya* = of the entire; *rājyasya* = kingdom; *mukham ekam* = the unrivalled chief person; *bhaviṣyati* = will become; *tāte ca* = when Our father; *vayasā atīte* = becomes very old; *mayi ca arāṇyam āsthite* = and when I am in the forest.

**He will become the unrivalled chief person of the entire kingdom when Our father becomes very old and when I am in the forest.<sup>6</sup>**

TEXT 13

अर्थधर्मौ परित्यज्य यः काममनुवर्तते ।  
एवमापद्यते क्षिप्रं राजा दशरथो यथा ॥

*artha-dharmau parityajya yaḥ kāmam anuvartate  
evam āpadyate kṣipram rājā daśaratho yathā*

*artha-dharmau* = artha and dharma; *parityajya* = who abandons; *yaḥ* = he; *kāmam* = kāma; *anuvartate* = and follows; *evam āpadyate* = falls into a crisis; *kṣipram* = quickly; *rājā* = King; *daśarathaḥ* = Daśaratha; *yathā* = like.

**He who abandons artha and dharma, and follows kāma quickly falls into a crisis like King Daśaratha.**

Here Rāma incidentally criticizes the exclusive pursuit of kāma.<sup>7</sup>

NOTE. Bhagavad-gītā 16.21 notes:

*tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ  
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

6. Technical note: *vayasā atīte ativayaske sati ity arthaḥ*.

7. This is a great warning to all of us—to never fall into a similar state of extreme misery.

“There are three gates leading to this hell—lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul.”

## TEXT 14

मन्ये दशरथान्ताय मम प्रव्राजनाय च ।  
कैकेयी सौम्य संप्राप्ता राज्याय भरतस्य च ॥

*manye daśarathāntāya mama pravrajānāya ca  
kaikeyī saumya samprāptā rājyāya bharatasya ca*

*manye* = I think that; *daśaratha-antāya* = the destruction of King Daśaratha; *mama* = Me; *pravrajānāya ca* = to exile; *kaikeyī* = Kaikeyī; *saumya* = gentle Lakṣmaṇa; *samprāptā* = has appeared to bring about; *rājyāya* = to give the kingdom; *bharatasya* = to Bharata; *ca* = and.

Gentle Lakṣmaṇa, I think that Kaikeyī has appeared to bring about the destruction of King Daśaratha, to exile Me and to give the kingdom to Bharata.

## TEXT 15

अपीदानीं न कैकेयी सौभाग्यमदमोहिता ।  
कौसल्यां च सुमित्रां च संप्रबाधेत मत्कृते ॥

*apīdānīm na kaikeyī saubhāgya-mada-mohitā  
kausalyām ca sumitrām ca samprabādhetā mat-kṛte*

*api*<sup>8</sup> *idānīm* = now; *na* = won't; *kaikeyī* = Queen Kaikeyī; *saubhāgya-mada-mohitā* = bewildered by pride due to her good fortune; *kausalyām ca* = Queen Kausalyā; *sumitrām* = Queen Sumitrā; *ca* = and; *samprabādhetā* = oppress; *mat-kṛte* = considering My relationship with them.

8. Technical note: *api na*.

Won't Queen Kaikeyī, bewildered by pride due to her good fortune, now oppress Queen Kausalyā and Queen Sumitrā, considering My relationship with them?

## TEXT 16

मा स्म मत्कारणाद्देवी सुमित्रा दुःखमावसेत् ।  
अयोध्यामित एव त्वं काल्ये प्रविश लक्ष्मण ॥

*mā sma mat-kāraṇād devī sumitrā duḥkham āvaset  
ayodhyām ita eva tvam kālye praviśa lakṣmaṇa*

*mā sma* = should not; *mat-kāraṇāt* = because of Me; *devī* = Queen; *sumitrā* = Sumitrā; *duḥkham* = distress; *āvaset* = undergo; *ayodhyām* = to Ayodhyā; *itaḥ eva* = from here; *tvam*<sup>9</sup> *kālye* = tomorrow early morning itself; *praviśa* = go; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa.

Lakṣmaṇa, Queen Sumitrā should not undergo distress because of Me. Go to Ayodhyā from here tomorrow early morning itself.

## TEXT 17

अहमेको गमिष्यामि सीतया सह दण्डकान् ।  
अनाथाया हि नाथस्त्वं कौसल्याया भविष्यसि ॥

*aham eko gamiṣyāmi sītayā saha daṇḍakān  
anāthāyā hi nāthas tvam kausalyāyā bhaviṣyasi*

*aham* = I; *ekaha* = alone; *gamiṣyāmi* = will go; *sītayā saha* = with Sītā; *daṇḍakān* = to the Daṇḍaka forests; *anāthāyāḥ hi* = of the unprotected; *nāthaḥ* = the protector; *tvam* = You; *kausalyāyāḥ* = Queen Kausalyā; *bhaviṣyasi* = should become.

I will go to the Daṇḍaka forests alone with Sītā. You should become the protector of the unprotected Queen Kausalyā.

9. Technical note: *tvam praviśa*.

## TEXT 18

क्षुद्रकर्मा हि कैकेयी द्वेष्यमन्याय्यमाचरेत् ।  
परिदद्या हि धर्मज्ञे भरते मम मातरम् ॥

*kṣudra-karmā hi kaikeyī dveṣyam anyāyyam ācaret  
paridadyā hi dharmajñe bharate mama mātaram*

*kṣudra-karmā hi* = of vile conduct; *kaikeyī* = Kaikeyī; *dveṣyam* = inimically; *anyāyyam* = and disrespectfully; *ācaret* = may behave; *paridadyāḥ hi* = hand over; *dharmajñe* = who knows dharma; *bharate* = to Bharatā; *mama* = My; *mātaram* = mother.

**Kaikeyī of vile conduct may behave inimically and disrespectfully.  
Hand over My mother to Bharatā who knows dharma.**

Sometimes *dveṣād* is seen in the place of *dveṣyam*. [The meaning of the verse is unchanged.]

## TEXT 19

नूनं जात्यन्तरे कस्मिन्स्त्रियः पुत्रैर्वियोजिताः ।  
जनन्या मम सौमित्रे तस्मादेतदुपस्थितम् ॥

*nūnam jāty-antare kasmin striyaḥ putrair viyojitāḥ  
jananyā mama saumitre tasmād etad upasthitam*

*nūnam* = certainly; *jāti-antare* = previous life; *kasmin* = in some; *striyaḥ* = women; *putraiḥ* = from their sons; *viyojitāḥ* = has separated; *jananyā* = mother; *mama* = My; *saumitre* = Saumitri; *tasmāt* = therefore; *etad upasthitam* = I have been separated from her.

Saumitri, My mother has certainly separated women from their sons in some previous life. Therefore I have been separated from her.<sup>10</sup>

## TEXT 20

मया हि चिरपुष्टेन दुःखसंवर्धितेन च ।  
विप्रायुज्यत कौसल्या फलकाले धिगस्तु माम् ॥

*mayā hi cira-puṣṭena duḥkha-saṁvardhitena ca  
viprāyujyata kausalyā phala-kāle dhig astu mām*

*mayā hi* = I; *cira-puṣṭena* = have been nourished by her for long; *duḥkha-saṁvardhitena* = she brought Me up with difficulty; *ca* = and; *viprāyujyata* = has been separated from Me; *kausalyā* = Queen Kausalyā; *phala-kāle* = at the time I was meant to serve her; *dhik astu mām* = fie unto Me.

I have been nourished by her for long and she brought Me up with difficulty. At the time I was meant to serve her, Queen Kausalyā has been separated from Me! Fie unto Me!

## TEXT 21

मा स्म सीमन्तिनी काचिज्जनयेत्पुत्रमीदृशम् ।  
सौमित्रे योऽहमम्बाया दद्वि शोकमनन्तकम् ॥

*mā sma śīmantiṇī kācij janayet putram īdṛśam  
saumitre yo 'ham ambāyā dadmi śokam anantakam*

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10. Statements such as this is to instruct us that if we engage in any sinful activity, in a future lifetime, we have to suffer the consequence. Neither the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nor His associates are under the control of the law of karma as is clear from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and allied scriptural texts. For a detailed analysis of this with reference to Kṛṣṇa and His associates, see Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha.

*mā sma sīmantinī kācit* = may no married lady ever; *janayet* = give birth; *putram* = to a son; *īdr̥sam* = like Me; *saumitre* = Lakṣmaṇa; *yaḥ aham* = for I; *ambāyāḥ* = to My mother; *dadmi* = give; *śokam* = distress; *anantakam* = unending.

**Lakṣmaṇa, may no married lady ever give birth to a son like Me for I give unending distress to My mother !**

TEXT 22

मन्ये प्रीतिविशिष्टा सा मत्तो लक्ष्मण शारिका ।

यस्यास्तच्छ्रूयते वाक्यं शुक्र पादमरेदश ॥

*manye prīti-viśiṣṭā sā matto lakṣmaṇa śārikā*  
*yasyās tac chrūyate vākyaṁ śuka pādamaṛeśa*

*manye* = I think that; *prīti-viśiṣṭā* = has more love; *sā* = the; *mattaḥ* = then Me; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa; *śārikā* = female parrot [in My home]; *yasyāḥ* = for My mother; *tat śrūyate vākyaṁ* = because she was heard to say; *śuka* = O parrot; *pādama* = the foot; *areḥ* = of the enemy; *daśa* = bite.

**Lakṣmaṇa, I think that the female parrot [in My home] has more love for My mother than Me because she was heard to say, “O parrot, bite the foot of the enemy!”**

Rāma now says that He does not even love her as much as a bird grown up by His mother.

“That parrot” refers to a parrot that both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa had known. Rāma considers here that that female parrot loved His mother more than Rāma loved His mother and that that parrot had generated more love in Kausalyā than Rāma had. “Bite the foot of the enemy” means “Bite the foot of the cat, our enemy” for it is [commonly] seen in the world that the female parrot nourished [at

home] tells the parrot near it to bite the cat. “Bite the foot of the enemy” also indicates that the female parrot wants the male parrot to bite the foot of Kausalyā’s enemy. Rāma sorrowfully implies here that He didn’t speak to His mother words to ward off His mother’s enemies [in her presence] like the parrot.

This text indicates that it is easier to surrender unto a bona fide ācārya than to execute [pure] devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead for it has been stated:

*na hy ammayāni tīrthāni na devā mṛc-chilāmayāḥ  
te punanty uru-kālena darśanād eva sādavaḥ*

“The holy places are not merely made up of water. The devas are not merely made of clay and stones. They purify over a long period of time. But [genuine] saints purify as soon as they are seen [with faith].”<sup>11</sup>

Here *śārikā* (“female parrot”) refers to a bona fide ācārya who has knowledge [of the Supreme Lord in devotional service] and engages in prescribed duties [in and favorable to devotional service] as his two wings.<sup>12</sup> *Śārikā* is in the feminine gender, indicating that he is dependent on the Lord in accordance with the statement—*strī-prāyam itarat sarvam*: “Everything other [than the Supreme Personality of Godhead] is like a woman.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, the

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11. A similar statement is found in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.15—*yat-pāda-saṁśrayāḥ sūta munayaḥ praśamāyanāḥ / sadyaḥ punanty upasprṣṭāḥ svardhuny-āpo ’nusevayā*: “O Sūta, those great sages who have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord can at once sanctify those who come in touch with them, whereas the waters of the Ganges can sanctify only after prolonged use.”

12. A parrot has two wings. This is a reference to that.

13. In the Seventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā, the living entities (jīvatmās) and matter are both considered the Supreme Lord’s prakṛtis—female in gender. The bona fide ācārya is a living entity and is also voluntarily dependent on the Supreme Lord. Therefore, it is appropriate that he is compared to a *female* parrot here.

bona fide ācārya is an easier source of generating the bliss of liberation from material existence than the Supreme Personality of Godhead because it has been stated:

*paśur manuṣyaḥ pakṣī vā ye ca vaiṣṇava-saṁśrayāḥ  
tenaiva te prayāsyanti tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam*

“Those who take full shelter of a pure Vaiṣṇava, whether an animal or human or bird, attain the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu because of that Vaiṣṇava.”

The second line of this verse states the nature of such an ācārya. *Yasyāḥ* indicates that confidential mantras are heard as received through the disciplic succession of bona fide spiritual masters. What kind of prayers? *Śuka pādama arer daśa* which can then mean, “O parrotlike Supreme Lord, that is, O Supreme Lord whose complexion is like that of a parrot, please remove the basis of my material existence.”

The basis of our material existence is the sense of *I* and *mine* here:

*anātmany ātma-buddhir yāsve svam iti yā matiḥ  
avidyā-taru-sambhūti-bijam etad dvidhā sthitam*

“The germinating seed of the tree of ignorance is of two types: the conception that the non-self is the self and the conception that that which is not one’s own is one’s own.”

Lord Rāma indicates here that he from whom one learns prayers like the above-mentioned prayer is better than Him.

This meaning is also clear from the context. The city of Ayodhyā represents Vaikuṅṭha. Having left that Vaikuṅṭha and having crossed over the Virajā river [and the Gaṅgā represents Virajā], the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters the forest which

represents material existence. He then situates Himself in a tree which represents a material body with a living entity as noted in the Vedānta:

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśvasajāte  
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty anaśnann anyo ’bhicākaśīti*

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same pippala tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.6)

The Supreme Lord helps the living entity experience the results of his actions (karma-phala):

*ṛtam pibantau sukṛtasya loke guhām praviṣṭau parame parārdhe  
chāyātapau brahmavido vadanti pañcāgnayo ye ca tri-ṇāciketāḥ*

“The expansions of Lord Viṣṇu as the tiny living entity and the Supersoul are both situated within the cave of the heart of this body. Having entered that cavity, the living entity, resting on the chief of the life airs, enjoys the results of activities, and the Supersoul, acting as witness enables him to enjoy them. Those who are well-versed in knowledge of Brahman and those householders who carefully follow the Vedic regulations say that the difference between the two is like the difference between a shadow and the sun.” (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.1)

The Lord then hankers for [the deliverance of] His associate suffering because of not [directly] experiencing Him, [but] not having fulfilled the purpose for which He came to associate with the conditioned souls in material existence, He concludes that the ultimate means to deliver them is the best means.<sup>14</sup>

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14. The “ultimate means” is that they surrender unto a bona fide ācārya, strictly obey his

## TEXT 23

शोचन्त्या अल्पभाग्याया न किञ्चिदुपकुर्वता ।  
पुत्रेण किमपुत्राया मया कार्यमरिदम ॥

*śocantya alpa-bhāgyāyā na kiñcid upakurvata  
putreṇa kim aputrāyā mayā kāryam arindama*

*śocantyaāḥ* = and in a state of lamentation; *alpa-bhāgyāyāḥ* = she has meagre good fortune; *na kiñcit upakurvata* = when I do not benefit her in any way; *putreṇa* = being her son; *kim* = what is; *aputrāyāḥ* = and hence sonless; *mayā* = Me; *kāryam* = the use of; *arindama* = O subdue of enemies.

**O subduer of enemies, what is the use of Me being her son when I do not benefit her in any way? She has meager good fortune and hence sonless and in a state of lamentation.**

## TEXT 24

अल्पभाग्या हि मे माता कौसल्या रहिता मया ।  
शेते परमदुःखार्ता पतिता शोकसागरे ॥

*alpa-bhāgyā hi me mātā kausalyā rahitā mayā  
śete parama-duḥkhārtā patitā śoka-sāgare*

*alpa-bhāgyā hi* = of meager good fortune; *me* = My; *mātā* = mother; *kausalyā* = Kausalyā; *rahitā mayā* = without Me; *śete* = is sleeping [now]; *parama-duḥkhārtā* = anguished in extreme distress; *patitā* = she has fallen; *śoka-sāgare* = into an ocean of sorrow.

**My mother Kausalyā of meager good fortune is sleeping [now], anguished in extreme distress without Me. She has fallen into an ocean of sorrow.**

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instructions on spiritual life and please him. This invokes the Lord's special mercy upon such bona fide disciples of the bona fide ācārya.

Rāma states here that she is not just not benefited by Him—she is also in distress because of Him.

Then why can't Rāma assail [His father's] kingdom to remove His mother's distress? That is answered in the next two verses.

## TEXT 25

एको ह्यहमयोध्यां च पृथिवीं चापि लक्ष्मण ।  
तरेयमिषुभिः क्रुद्धो ननु वीर्यमकारणम् ॥

*eko hy aham ayodhyāṁ ca pṛthivīm cāpi lakṣmaṇa  
tareyam iṣubhiḥ kruddho nanu vīryam akāraṇam*

*ekaḥ hi* = singlehandedly; *aham* = I; *ayodhyāṁ ca* = Ayodhyā; *pṛthivīm* = the earth; *ca* = and; *api* = even; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa; *tareyam* = can overtake; *iṣubhiḥ* = with My arrows; *kruddhaḥ* = in anger; *nanu* = but; *vīryam akāraṇam* = that would be prowess shown unnecessarily.

Lakṣmaṇa, I can overtake Ayodhyā and even the earth singlehandedly with My arrows in anger, but that would be prowess shown unnecessarily.

“That would be prowess shown unnecessarily” indicates that one should not take shelter of prowess that destroys one's piety. Why? That is stated in the next verse.

## TEXT 26

अधर्मभयभीतश्च परलोकस्य चानघ ।  
तेन लक्ष्मण नाद्याहमात्मानमभिषेचये ॥

*adharmabhaya-bhītaś ca para-lokasya cānagha  
tena lakṣmaṇa nādyāham ātmānam abhiṣeçaye*

*adharmā-bhaya-bhītaḥ ca* = I am afraid of the danger caused by adharma; *para-lokasya* = the destruction of a superior destination in the next life; *ca* = and; *anagha* = sinless; *tena* = therefore; *lakṣmaṇa* = Lakṣmaṇa; *na* = not; *adya* = today; *aham* = I have; *ātmānam* = Myself; *abhiṣecaye* = coronated.

**Sinless Lakṣmaṇa, I am afraid of the danger caused by adharma and the destruction of a superior destination in the next life. Therefore I have not coronated Myself today.**

The danger caused by adharma is public criticism.

GLOSS. *Adharma-bhaya-bhītaḥ* indicates that Rāma was afraid that if He did not carry out His father's instructions, everyone would do so and they would attain adharma [in the form of sinful reactions]. Thus Rāma was afraid of the danger that people would face when people attain sinful reactions. *Para-lokasya ca* indicates that He was more frightened than others, that is, He was afraid of the public criticism, "Rāma disobeyed the order of His father."

#### TEXT 27

एतदन्यच्च करुणं विलप्य विजने वने ।  
अश्रुपूर्णमुखो रामो निशि तूष्णीमुपाविशत् ॥

*etat anyac ca karuṇam vilapya vijane vane*  
*aśru-pūrṇa-mukho rāmo niśi tuṣṇīm upāviśat*

*etat* = with these words; *anyat* = otherwise; *ca* = and; *karuṇam* = piteously; *vilapya* = having lamented; *vijane* = lonely; *vane* = in the forest; *aśru-pūrṇa-mukhaḥ* = with His face full of tears; *rāmaḥ* = Rāma; *niśi* = at night; *tuṣṇīm upāviśat* = became quiet.

Having piteously lamented with these words and otherwise in the lonely forest at night, Rāma became quiet with His face full of His tears.

*Anyat* indicates that His lamentation at that time was beyond the expression of words. *Vijane vane* indicates that being in that lonely forest [that night] was the cause of His lamentation.

GLOSS. Rāma lamented to imitate ordinary people. Such imitation on His part was appropriate because even at that time the night-ranging demons wandered about.

TEXT 28

विलप्योपरतं रामं गतार्चिषमिवानलम् ।  
समुद्रमिव निर्वेगमाश्वासयत लक्ष्मणः ॥

*vilapyoparatam rāmaṃ gatārciṣam ivānalam*  
*samudram iva nirvegam āśvāsayata lakṣmaṇaḥ*

*vilapya uparatam* = after He had stopped crying; *rāmam* = Rāma; *gata-arcīṣam* = that had lost its brilliance; *iva* = Rāma resembled; *analam* = a fire; *samudram iva* = and an ocean; *nirvegam* = that had lost its force; *āśvāsayata* = consoled; *lakṣmaṇaḥ* = Lakṣmaṇa.

Lakṣmaṇa consoled Rāma after He had stopped crying. Rāma resembled a fire that had lost its brilliance and an ocean that had lost its force.

*Vilapyoparatam* indicates that it was inappropriate to console Him while He was crying.

TEXT 29

ध्रुवमद्य पुरी राजन्नयोध्यायुधिनां वर ।  
निष्प्रभा त्वयि निष्क्रान्ते गतचन्द्रेव शर्वरी ॥

*dhruvam adya purī rājann ayodhyāyudhinām vara  
niṣprabhā tvayi niṣkrānte gata-candra iva śarvarī*

*dhruvam* = certainly; *adya* = today; *purī* = the city; *rājan* = O king; *ayodhyā* = of Ayodhyā; *āyudhinām* = of those who bear weapons; *vara* = O best; *niṣprabhā* = would be devoid of its effulgence; *tvayi niṣkrānte* = since You left it; *gata-candra iva śarvarī* = it would be like the night without the moon.

O king, O best of those who bear weapons, certainly the city of Ayodhyā would be devoid of its effulgence today since You left it. It would be like the night without the moon.

## TEXT 30

नैतदौपयिकं राम यदिदं परितप्यसे ।  
विषादयसि सीतां च मां चैव पुरुषर्षभ ॥

*naitad aupayikaṁ rāma yad idam paritapyase  
viṣādayasi sītām ca mām caiva puruṣa-rṣabha*

*na* = not; *etat* = it is; *aupayikaṁ* = reasonable [1]; *rāma* = Rāma; *yat* = that; *idam* = in this manner; *paritapyase* = You lament; *viṣādayasi* = because You are putting in anxiety; *sītām ca* = Sītā-devī; *mām* = Me; *ca eva* = and; *puruṣa-rṣabha* = O leader of men.

Rāma, O leader of men, it is not reasonable that You lament in this manner because You are putting Sītā-devī and Me in anxiety.

*Puruṣa-rṣabha* (“O leader of men”) indicates that it not appropriate for Rāma, the leader of men, to lament in this manner.

## TEXT 31

न च सीता त्वया हीना न चाहमपि राघव ।  
मुहूर्तमपि जीवावो जलान्मत्स्याविवोद्धूतौ ॥

*na ca sītā tvayā hīnā na cāham api rāghava  
muhūrtam api jīvāvaḥ jalān matsyāv ivoddhṛtau*

*na ca* = neither; *sītā* = Sītā; *tvayā hīnā* = without You; *na ca* = nor; *aham api* = I; *rāghava* = Rāghava; *muhūrtam api* = for even a muhūrta; *jīvāvaḥ* = can live; *jalāt* = of water; *matsyau* = fish; *iva* = like; *uddhṛtau* = taken out.

**Rāghava, neither Sītā nor I can live without You for even a muhūrta, like fish taken out of water.**

This is Lakṣmaṇa’s response to Rāmacandra’s request in text 16 that He go to Ayodhyā the next day.

Text 3.15.6 will note that Lakṣmaṇa will surrender unto Lord Rāmacandra and beg Him for service *in the presence of Sītā-devī—sītā-samakṣam kākutstham idam vacanam abravīt*: “Lakṣmaṇa spoke the following words in the presence of Sītā-devī.” Therefore, the statement that Sītā-devī and Lakṣmaṇa won’t be able to live without Rāma implies that if Lakṣmaṇa does not attain the result of surrendering unto Rāmacandra, Sītā will also not [attain the benefit of being a mediator between Lakṣmaṇa and Rāmacandra].

*Api* can mean “if” and this indicates that if Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā were to live [in Rāmacandra’s absence], it would only be for a short while like fish taken out of water. Just as fish taken out of water survive as long as they are in touch with water and die in the absence of water, similarly Sītā-devī and Lakṣmaṇa would live, Lakṣmaṇa states here, as long as talks about Rāmacandra occupy their hearts. This will be stated in Sundara-kāṇḍa (Canto 5):

*na cāsya mātā na pitā ca nānyaḥ  
snehād viśiṣṭo ’sti mayā samo vā*

*tāvat tv ahaṁ dūta jijīviṣeyam  
yāvat pravṛttim śṛṇuyām priyasya*

“O messenger, neither His mother nor His father nor anyone else is equal or greater in affection to Him. So I desire to live as long as I can hear about my beloved husband.” (Rāmāyaṇa 5.36.30)

## TEXT 32

न हि तातं न शत्रुघ्नं न सुमित्रां परंतप ।  
द्रष्टुमिच्छेयमद्याहं स्वर्गं वापि त्वया विना ॥

*na hi tātaṁ na śatrughnaṁ na sumitrām parantapa  
draṣṭum iccheyam adyāhaṁ svargaṁ vāpi tvayā vinā*

*na hi* = don’t; *tātaṁ na* = Our father; *śatrughnaṁ na* = Śatrughna; *sumitrām* = or Queen Sumitrā; *parantapa* = O scorcher of enemies; *draṣṭum* = to see; *iccheyam* = want; *adya* = now; *ahaṁ* = I; *svargaṁ* = svarga; *vā* = or; *api* = even; *tvayā vinā* = without You.

**O scorcher of foes, now I don’t want to see Our father, Śatrughna or Queen Sumitrā or even Svarga without You.**

This is Lakṣmaṇa’s response to text 2.

## TEXT 33

ततस्तत्र सुखासीनौ नातिदूरे निरीक्ष्य ताम् ।  
न्यग्रोधे सुकृतां शय्यां भेजाते धर्मवत्सलौ ॥

*tatas tatra sukhāsīnau nātidūre nirīkṣya tām  
nyagrodhe sukṛtām śayyām bhejāte dharma-vatsalau*

*tataḥ* = after Lakṣmaṇa spoke; *tatra* = under a tree; *sukha-āsīnau* = Sītā and Rāma who had been comfortably sitting; *na-atidūre* = not very far away; *nirīkṣya* = noticed; *tām* = a; *nyagrodhe* = under a fig tree; *sukṛtām* = that Lakṣmaṇa had nicely prepared for them;

*śayyām* = bed; *bhejāte* = they went and slept on it; *dharma-vatsalau* = being affectionately devoted to dharma.

After Lakṣmaṇa spoke, Sītā and Rāma who had been comfortably sitting under a tree noticed a bed that Lakṣmaṇa had nicely prepared for them under a fig tree not very far away. Being affectionately devoted to dharma, they went and slept on it.

TEXT 34

स लक्ष्मणस्योत्तमपुष्कलं वचो निशम्य चैवं वनवासमादरात् ।  
समाः समस्ता विदधे परंतपः प्रपद्य धर्म सुचिराय राघवः ॥

*sa lakṣmaṇasyottama-puṣkalam vaco  
niśamya caivaṁ vana-vāsam ādarāt  
samāḥ samastā vidadhe parantapaḥ  
prapadya dharmam sucirāya rāghavaḥ*

*saḥ*<sup>15</sup> *lakṣmaṇasya* = Lakṣmaṇa's; *uttama-puṣkalam* = excellent and perfect; *vacaḥ* = words; *niśamya ca* = upon hearing; *evam vana-vāsam* = while residing in the forest; *ādarāt* = to carefully; *samāḥ samastāḥ* = for all the years to come; *vidadhe* = decided; *parantapaḥ* = the scorcher of His opponents; *prapadya* = follow; *dharmam* = the dharma of the vānaprasthas with Lakṣmaṇa; *sucirāya* = for a long time; *rāghavaḥ* = Rāghava.

Upon hearing Lakṣmaṇa's excellent and perfect words, Rāghava, the scorcher of His opponents, decided to carefully follow the dharma of the vānaprasthas with Lakṣmaṇa for a long time, for all the years to come, while residing in the forest.

Some authorities state that this verse indicates that Rāghava permitted Lakṣmaṇa [to be with Him] for all the years [He resided in the forest].

15. Technical note: *saḥ rāghavaḥ*.

GLOSS. [Upon hearing Lakṣmaṇa's excellent and perfect words, Rāghava, the scorcher of His opponents,] accepted Lakṣmaṇa's dharma of service to Him and approved of Lakṣmaṇa's residence in the forest [for the long period of] fourteen years [along with Him].

## TEXT 35

ततस्तु तस्मिन्विजने वने तदा महाबलौ राघववंशवर्धनौ ।  
न तौ भयं संभ्रममभ्युपेयतुर्यथैव सिंहौ गिरिसानुगोचरौ ॥

*tatas tu tasmin vijane vane tadā  
mahā-balau rāghava-varṁśa-varadhanau  
na tau bhayaṁ sambhramam abhyupeyatuh  
yathaiva siṁhau giri-sānugocarau*

*tataḥ tu* = from then; *tasmin* = in that; *vijane* = lonely; *vane* = forest; *tadā*<sup>16</sup> *mahā-balau* = greatly powerful; *rāghava-varṁśa-varadhanau* = enhancers of the dynasty of Raghu; *na* = not; *tau* = the two; *bhayaṁ sambhramam abhyupeyatuh* = were afraid of or agitated about tigers or other beasts; *sambhramam* = or agitated; *yathā eva* = like; *siṁhau* = two lions; *giri-sānugocarau* = roaming on mountainous table-lands.

**Like two lions roaming on mountainous table-lands, the two greatly powerful enhancers of the dynasty of Raghu were not afraid of or agitated about tigers or other beasts in that lonely forest from then.**

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were not agitated, that is, apprehensive of some danger by looking here and there.

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16. Technical note: *tadā na bhayaṁ sambhramam abhyupeyatuh*.

## QUOTATION

[1] *yuktam aupayikam.* (Amara)