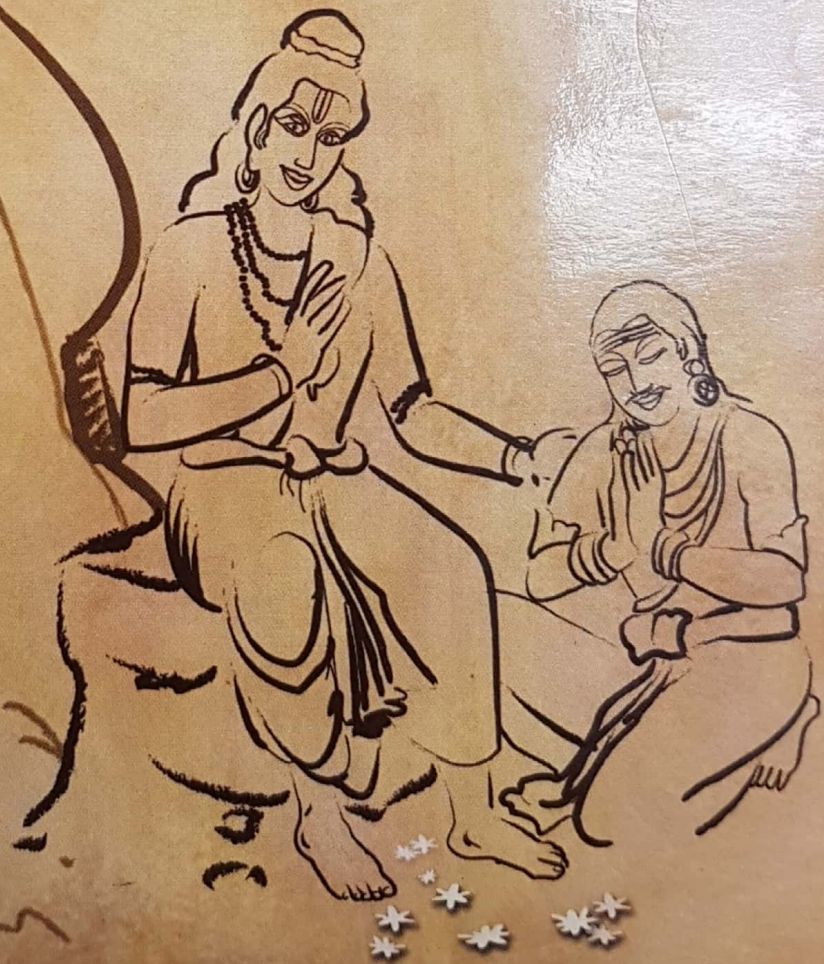


# śaranāgati

Surrender Unto Him



- Swami Tejomayananda

# ŚARANĀGATI (Surrender Unto Him)

by  
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महाराज जी

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Chinmaya Mission, Los Angeles, had organized a spiritual camp in California, United States, in June 2000. It was conducted by Param Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji. He spoke on the topic of *Śaraṇāgati*, and explained the same through the life of Vibhīṣaṇa as given in the *Tulsi Rāmāyaṇa*. The talks were so inspiring that the need was felt to bring it out in book-form for the benefit of the devotees. We, at the CCMT, take great pleasure in publishing this book in the Golden Jubilee Year of the Chinmaya Mission as an offering at the holy feet of Param Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji.

## TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ॐ	om	ho <sup>o</sup> me	ॐ	om	Rome
अ	a	f <u>u</u> n	ट	ṭa	t <u>o</u> uch
आ	ā	car	ठ	ṭha	ant- <u>h</u> ill
इ	i	pi <u>n</u>	ड	ḍa	<u>d</u> uck
ई	i	fe <u>e</u> n	ढ	ḍha	g <u>o</u> dhood
उ	u	pu <u>t</u>	ण	ṇa	th <u>u</u> nder
ऊ	ū	po <u>o</u> l	त	ta	(close to) <u>t</u> hink
ऋ	r	ri <u>g</u>	थ	tha	(close to) pa <u>t</u> hetc
ॠ	ṛ	(long ṛ)	द	da	(close to) fa <u>t</u> her
लृ	ḷ	*	ध	dha	(close to) brea <u>t</u> he <u>h</u> ard
ए	e	pl <u>a</u> y	न	na	<u>n</u> umb
ऐ	ai	hi <u>g</u> h	प	pa	<u>p</u> urse
ओ	o	o <u>v</u> er	फ	pha	sapp <u>h</u> ire
औ	au	cow	ब	ba	<u>b</u> ut
अं	aṁ	**	भ	bha	ab <u>h</u> or
अः	aḥ	***	म	ma	<u>m</u> other
क	ka	<u>k</u> ind	य	ya	<u>y</u> oung
ख	kha	block <u>h</u> ead	र	ra	<u>r</u> un
ग	ga	gate	ल	la	<u>l</u> uck
घ	gha	log- <u>h</u> ut	व	va	<u>v</u> irtue
ङ	ṅa	si <u>ng</u>	श	śa	<u>sh</u> ove
च	ca	<u>ch</u> unk	ष	ṣa	b <u>u</u> shel
छ	cha	mat <u>ch</u>	स	sa	<u>s</u> ir
ज	ja	ju <u>g</u>	ह	ha	<u>h</u> ouse
झ	jha	hedg <u>eh</u> og	ळ	(Note 1)	(close to) w <u>o</u> rld
ञ	ña	bun <u>ch</u>	क्ष	kṣa	work <u>sh</u> ee <u>t</u>
त्र	tra	<u>th</u> ree	ज्ञ	jña	*
ऽ		unpronounced (a)	ऽऽ	"	Unpronounced (ā)

Note 1: "ḷ" itself is sometimes used. \* No English Equivalent.  
 \*\* Nasalisation of the preceding vowel. \*\*\* Aspiration of preceding vowel

## ŚARANĀGATI (Surrender)

Who is Śrī Rāma?

वेदवेद्ये परे पुंसि जाते दशरथात्मजे ।  
वेदः प्राचेतसादासीत् साक्षाद् रामायणात्मना ॥

*vedavedye pare puṁsi jāte daśarathātmaje  
vedaḥ prācetasādāsīt sākṣād rāmāyaṇātmanā.*

"The Supreme Truth revealed in the *Veda*-s incarnated as *Śrī Rāma*, the son of King *Daśaratha*, and the *Veda*-s then manifested as the *Rāmāyaṇa* to reveal the glory of *Śrī Rāma*.

*Vālmīki Ṛṣi* wrote the first *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is said that he himself was reborn as *Gosvāmī Tulsīdāsjī*. *Gosvāmī Tulsīdāsjī* wrote the famous *Tulsī Rāmāyaṇa* in which he says:

जो आनंद सिंधु सुख रासी ।  
सीकर तें त्रैलोक सुपासी ॥  
सो सुख धाम राम अस नामा ।

अखिल लोक दायक बिश्रामा ॥ बालकाण्ड - १९७ ॥

*jo ānanda sindhu sukha rāsī.  
sīkara teṁ trailōka supāsī  
so sukha dhāma rāma asa nāmā.*

*akhila loka dāyaka biśrāmā. (Bālakāṇḍa - 197)*

Śrī Rāma is the ocean of bliss. Even a drop of this infinite bliss is enough to make all the beings of the past,

present, and future in all the worlds happy. He is the true refuge of the entire creation.

### Why do we sing His glories?

Is it a wonder that we sing the glories of one so glorious? Infinite is the glory of the Lord and finite are the instruments through which we praise Him. Whatever little we sing is only to purify our minds and speech. Tulsīdāsjī says:

निज गिरा पावनि करन कारन राम जसु तुलसीं कह्यो ।  
रघुबीर चरित अपार बारिधि पारु कबि कौनें लह्यो ॥  
उपबीत ब्याह उछाह मंगल सुनि जे सादर गावहीं ।  
बैदेहि राम प्रसाद ते जन सर्वदा सुखु पावहीं ॥

बालकाण्ड - ३६१॥

*nija girā pāvani karana kārana rāma jasū tulasīṁ kahyo  
raghubīra carita apāra bāridhi pāru kabi kaunem lahyo  
upabīta byāha uchāha maṅgala suni je sādara gāvahīṁ  
baidehi rāma prasāda te jana sarbadā sukhu pāvahīṁ.*

(Bālakāṇḍa - 361)

I sing the glories of Śrī Rāma to purify my speech. Which poet can ever fathom the depth of the great ocean of His glories. Whoever sings the praise of the Lord with supreme reverence will always gain the blessings and grace of Sītā-Rāma.

The Lord's blessings bestow lasting happiness and well-being on us and make us fulfilled in life.

### What is surrender (śaraṇāgati)?

The topic of this book is "surrender". That which is called Self Realization in the language of knowledge is known as the state of total surrender in the language of

devotion. It is the state of total annihilation of the ego. In the path of knowledge (*jñāna yoga*), initially the mind is made subtler by inquiry (*vicāra*), and finally the ego (the "finite I" notion) is destroyed by the knowledge of one being the Infinite Self. On the other hand, in the path of devotion, the first step itself is surrendering of the ego at the altar of the Lord. All efforts are to be put forth in this direction alone.

There are many aspects of surrender. When we normally say or feel that we have surrendered, we do not really know what surrender is. The attitude "Thy will be done, not mine, not mine" shows surrender. When Mīrābāī was sent poison by her husband, she said, "It is *Bhagavān's* will. So I shall drink it with joy." The poison turned into nectar. That is the glory of total surrender.

On the one hand, we say we have surrendered to God, and on the other we still hold on to our own will and ego. Both these cannot go together. Sometimes we attribute things to God's will, and sometimes to our own. A criminal told the judge, "Everything happens by God's will. It is He who inspired me to kill. Why do you punish me?" The judge replied, "Yes, it is true that everything happens by God's will. It is He who inspired me to give you a death sentence!" We should either exercise our own will, act accordingly and own the results of our own actions in a gracious manner or totally surrender to His will.

We only say that we have surrendered our will, that we have handed over all our responsibilities to the Lord, and that He will take care of everything. But we are not sure of it. We pray to God but also harbour doubts about whether He would listen to or take care of us. We therefore, do not experience the result of total surrender. Thus, it is important to know what true surrender is.

### **Why do we need to surrender?**

Why do we need to seek refuge? When it rains suddenly, we run for shelter. In the scorching heat of the sun, we seek the shade of a tree. When we are suffering from a disease, we seek the help of a doctor. In financial crisis, we look for support from a rich colleague. In family troubles, we seek the company of a sympathetic friend. We seek the support, help, company or refuge of another to alleviate our physical and mental sorrows and for solutions to the problems we face in life.

### **To whom should we surrender?**

Naturally we should surrender to one who is capable of alleviating our sorrow. Can I get help in my financial crisis from a pauper, however much he may sympathize with my condition? I cannot surrender to one who is himself insecure or miserable. Such a person may only add to my own insecurity and sorrow, or in turn seek sympathy and help from me. Also, we find that a person who may give us financial help may not be able to provide psychological solace or physical security. So, it is best to surrender to the Lord alone, as in Him I get support, help, and solace for all my problems at once. The Lord being omniscient, omnipotent, all bliss, ever present, and all love, I can attain real peace in Him alone. Tulsīdāsjī says, "Surrendering unto Him, I have found supreme peace (*pāyo parama viśrāma*)."

### **The Lord's assurance to those who surrender**

On the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, when Arjuna was confounded about the right course of action Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave



him the knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. After expounding various means to purify the mind and gain knowledge through *karma yoga* (path of action), *dhyāna yoga* (path of meditation) etc., the Lord concludes with the famous verse:

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।  
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

(भगवद् गीता १८-६६) ॥

*sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja.*  
*ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpēbhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

(*Bhagavad Gītā* 18-66)

Give up all other means/duties/paths and surrender all unto Me alone. I shall free you from all sins. Rest assured, do not grieve.

Śrī Rāma too says:

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मि इति च याचते ।  
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥ वाल्मीकि रामायणम् ॥

*sakṛdeva prapannāya tavāsmi iti ca yācatē*

*abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmyetad vratam mama.*

(*Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam*)

It is my vow (promise) that if a person comes to me and says even once, "O Lord, I am yours", I will make him or her fearless.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "I will liberate him from all sins", and Śrī Rāma says, "I will release him from all fears". Are these promises and results different? No. Sin causes fear, and vice versa. Sins and fears cause bondage and sorrows. So the Lord is assuring us that those who surrender to Him will be free from all sorrow and bondage.

### The six-fold factors of surrender

The *Vaiṣṇava sampradāya* describes the six-fold factors of surrender as:

1. Entertaining favourable thoughts
2. Renouncing unfavourable thoughts
3. Having firm faith that God will protect
4. Actually seeking refuge in the Lord
5. Submitting oneself completely at the mercy to the Lord and
6. Expressing one's total helplessness.

आनुकूल्यस्य संकल्पः प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनम् ।  
रक्षिष्यति इति विश्वासः गोप्तृत्ववरणं तथा ।  
आत्मनिक्षेपकार्पण्ये षड्विधा शरणागतिः ॥

*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam  
rakṣiṣyati iti viśvāsaḥ goptṛtvavaraṇam tathā  
ātmanikṣepakārpaṇyē ṣadvidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ.*

#### 1. Entertaining favourable thoughts (*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*)

First there must be the thought, "I want the Lord, I want to reach Him. I am willing to do anything that is conducive to my reaching Him. I will make myself fit for receiving His grace. I will equip my mind with the qualities that are required for gaining His vision (*darśana*). I will attend *satsang*, follow the instructions of my guru and do regular spiritual practices. I will try to please the Lord with my actions. I will serve Him in every way. To entertain such thoughts is *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*, the first aspect of surrender.

## 2. Renouncing unfavourable thoughts (*prātikūlyasya varjanam*)

In order to attain the Lord, I am willing to give up anything that is uncondusive. I effortlessly give up all pleasures, name, fame, power, relationships, and wealth if they prove to be obstacles in my path. I give up all objects and attachments (*viṣayatyāga* and *saṅgatyāga*) which obstruct my spiritual progress. I give up all worldly talk of pleasures, wealth, heretics and enemies (*strī-dhana-nāstika- vairi caritram*) and the company of pleasure-loving or evil-minded people (*duḥsaṅgaḥ sarvathā ēva tyājyaḥ*). I willingly give up false notions and prejudices, and work tirelessly to renounce anger, jealousy, pride, hypocrisy etc. (*abhimāna-dambhādikam tyājyam*). Such thoughts and actions are called *prātikūlyasya varjanam* or renouncing the unfavourable.

## 3. Firm faith that God will protect me (*rakṣiṣyati iti viśvāsaḥ*)

It is firm and doubtless faith not only in the existence of God, but that He protects me at all times under every circumstance. He is not just my "wish-fulfiller" but my "well-wisher." He, therefore, does what is best for me. I may not understand or appreciate His ways, but I know that whatever happens, happens for the best, as His protective and guiding hand is behind all that I get in my life. He is kind and compassionate, and His love for me is unconditional. I am His child, and He will never abandon me whatever I do. No problem is too big for Him. He will take care of me. I do not have to worry (*jaba jānakī nātha sahāya kare taba kaun bigāda kare nara tero...*) I am protected by His blessings which He abundantly showers on me, despite what I am.

#### 4. Actually seeking refuge in the Lord (*goptṛtva varaṇam*)

One may have faith but when one actually seeks refuge, it is called *goptṛtva-varaṇam*. One actually prays for protection, blessings and grace. One asks to be liberated. "I come to you as I am; make me what You want me to be." I have come this far, take me further. Hold me. Guide me to the Truth. You have guided me till now, help me further, bless me always....(*aba taka to nibhāyā he, āge bhi nibhā dena...*)

#### 5. Throwing oneself totally at the mercy of the Lord (*ātma-nikṣepa*)

It is falling at the feet of the Lord or surrendering totally to the Lord. "I am Yours to do what You wish. I have no will or wish of my own. I am like the flute in Your hands. You can play whatever tune You wish to play." There is no more resistance or reservations which obstruct total surrender. King Bali not only gave his entire kingdom to Lord Vāmana but finally gave himself to the Lord. He surrendered not only his possessions (my-ness) but also his ego (I-ness). This is *ātma-nikṣepa*, also called *ātma-nivedanam* in the nine-fold aspects of Devotion (*nava-vidhā-bhakti*) propounded by Sage Nārada.

#### 6. Expressing one's total helplessness (*kārpaṇya*)

As long as we think we can do things by our own effort, independent of the Lord, *Bhagavān* does not interfere. He is very democratic. He says, "If you think you can do something, go ahead and do it." As soon as we seek refuge, surrender and reveal our helplessness, He responds and comes forward to uplift us.

## VIBHĪṢAṆA ŚARAṆĀGATI (Vibhīṣaṇa Surrender)

Vibhīṣaṇa was a great devotee of Śrī Rāma and is considered to be one of the great teachers of devotion (*bhakti ācārya*). We shall now try to understand the afore-mentioned six-fold factors of surrender through the life of Vibhīṣaṇa.

Let us now visit the place where Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna and Vibhīṣaṇa are performing penance. They are invoking Brahmājī, the Creator. Pleased by their intense penance, Brahmājī appears before them.

So what is *tapas* or penance? "Supreme penance is to achieve the single-pointedness of the senses and the mind." Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarna, in spite of their evil tendencies, possessed tremendous concentration. Whatever they decided to put their mind to, they accomplished. Such was their power.

गयउ निकट तप देखि बिधातां ।

मागहु बर प्रसन्न मैं ताता ॥

*gayau nikata tapa dekhi bidhātā.*

*māgahu bara prasanna maiṃ tātā.*

Brahmājī first went to Rāvaṇa and said, "Ask whatever you wish. I am pleased with your penance." *Bhagavān's* nature is such that only when we apply does He reply. For example only when we go to the immigration office, submit our application form and supporting documents, will our visa be granted. Similarly, our wishes are fulfilled only when we perform penance.

Rāvaṇa had ten heads, but he still could not think right. His ego was hugely bloated. The mouth symbolizes indulgence. Rāvaṇa was also called *Daśamukha* - one with ten mouths. He spent too much of his time in indulgence.

करि बिनती पद गहि दससीसा ।  
 बोलेउ बचन सुनहु जगदीसा ॥  
 हम काहू के मरहिं न मारें ।  
 बानर मनुज जाति दुइ बारें ॥  
 एवमस्तु तुम्ह बड़ तप कीन्हा ।  
 मैं ब्रह्माँ मिलि तेहि बर दीन्हा ॥ बालकाण्ड १७७ ॥

*kari binati pada gahi dasasīsā.*  
*boleu bacana sunahu jagadīsā*  
*hama kāhū ke marahiṃ na māreṃ.*  
*bānara manuja jāti dui bāreṃ*  
*evamastu tumha baḍa tapa kīnhā.*  
*maiṃ brahmāṃ mili tehi bara dīnhā. (Bālakāṇḍa 177)*

Rāvaṇa prostrated to Lord Brahmā and asked him, "I should not die. None should be able to kill me." After all the penance, he only wanted to remain on earth forever. Lord Brahmā said, "According to my constitution, I cannot grant you such a boon. Whoever is born has to die. I cannot change that." Rāvaṇa said, "If you cannot grant me a boon of immortality, then grant that except for man or monkey, who are too weak and whom I do not fear, none shall be able to kill me." Rāvaṇa felt that since the denizens of heaven and demons could not kill him, certainly man and monkey would not be able to do so. Lord Brahmā granted him the boon.

पुनि प्रभु कुंभकरन पहिं गयऊ ।  
 तेहि बिलोकि मन बिसमय भयऊ ॥

जौं एहिं खल नित करब अहारू ।  
 होइहि सब उजारि संसारू ॥  
 सारद प्रेरि तासु मति फेरी ।  
 मागेसि नीद मास षट केरी ॥ बालकाण्ड १७७ ॥  
*puni prabhu kumbhakarana pahim गयाū.*  
*tehi biloki mana bisamaya bhayaū*  
*jaum ehim khala nita karaba ahārū.*  
*hoihi saba ujāri saṁsārū*  
*sārāda preri tāsu mati pherī.*  
*māgesi nīda māsa ṣaṭa kerī. (Bālakāṇḍa - 177)*

Next Lord Brahmā went to Kumbhakarṇa. He was so huge that even Brahmājī was scared. After his long penance, Kumbhakarṇa was very tired. Goddess Sarasvatī deluded his mind, and he asked Brahmājī for a boon that he should be able to sleep for six months at a stretch. Brahmājī immediately said, "So be it". It is said that Kumbhakarṇa ate tons of food at a time. Brahmājī thought that if he ate daily, there would surely be a food shortage in the world. So he was readily granted the boon of such sleep.

We see that our minds are also sometimes like that. There are times when we do not feel like doing anything. *Tamogūṇa* (inertia) overpowers us. Some, however, are predominantly in this state of mind. They are lazy, forgetful and lethargic in thinking and acting, and incapable of doing much. Some parents tell us, "Swamiji, my son is doing nothing. He is very lazy. He is good for your Ashram"! Such people's (*saṅkalpa-s*) are also *tāmasika*.

गए बिभीषन पास पुनि कहेउ पुत्र बर मागु ।  
 तेहिं मागेउ भगवंत पद कमल अमल अनुरागु ॥

बालकाण्ड १७७ ॥

*gae bibhīṣana pāsa puni kaheu putra bara māgu  
tehiṃ māgeu bhagavanta pada kamala amala anurāgu.*

*(Bālakāṇḍa - 177)*

Lord Brahmā then went to Vibhīṣaṇa and asked, "Son, what do you want?" He replied, "Please bless me with pure love for the lotus feet of the Lord".

There are times when the *sāttvik* quality in us surfaces. That is when we desire to read the scriptures, attend spiritual discourses or camps etc.

So the first step towards total surrender is to entertain favourable thoughts (*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*). Yearning for the Lord must grow within. It leads to penance. For example, when you attend a spiritual camp, you have to make adjustments in your normal schedule. You have to sincerely participate in all the lectures etc., from dawn to dusk. For spiritual progress, penance is necessary. It is important to nourish all favourable thoughts and actions towards spiritual progress. One has to create an appropriate environment in order to progress and reach the Lord. We should try to do that which pleases the Lord. The Lord does not like unrighteousness. So we should lead a righteous life. We see that Vibhīṣaṇa, who had such intense longing for the Lord, asked Lord Brahmā only for more devotion for the Lord while Rāvaṇa asked for more power, and Kumbhakarna for more sleep. Thus Vibhīṣaṇa was also blessed and granted his wish, and he continued to progress spiritually with greater love for the Lord.

Next, we shall see what happened when Hanumānjī met Vibhīṣaṇa. Vibhīṣaṇa lived in Laṅkā. He was a minister in Rāvaṇa's court. Rāvaṇa loved him as he was his younger



brother. He never opposed Rāvaṇa and was not a threat to his might and power. Rāvaṇa knew that Vibhīṣaṇa had intense love for the Lord. He did not mind that as Vibhīṣaṇa had no courage to leave Laṅkā or protest against Rāvaṇa's actions or policies. He remained in Rāvaṇa's service, indirectly participating in the injustices perpetrated, by remaining a passive witness. He did not show any active resistance to the evil around him. At this stage, Vibhīṣaṇa was unable to follow the second factor of surrender renouncing the unfavourable. However, the saving grace was that he continued his spiritual practices even when in an unfavourable environment. At that time, Hanumānjī reached Laṅkā in search of Sītājī. He went through the entire city in vain. In Laṅkā, night life was very active. He saw people revelling in pleasures or in sleep. Then, he saw something unusual.

भवन एक पुनि दीख सुहावा ।  
 हरि मन्दिर तहँ भिन्न बनावा ॥  
 रामायुध अंकित गृह सोभा बरनि न जाइ ।  
 नव तुलसिका बृन्द तहँ देखि हरष कपिराइ ॥

सुन्दरकाण्ड ५ ॥

*bhavana eka puni dīkha suhāvā.*  
*hari mandira tahaṁ bhinna banāvā*  
*rāmāyudha aṅkita gr̥ha sobhā barani na jāi*  
*nava tulasikā bṛnda tahaṁ dekhi haraṣa kaporāi.*

(Sundarakāṇḍa 5)

Hanumānjī saw a house with a temple. There was also a *Tulasī matha*. The symbols decorating the house were such that it appeared to belong to a devotee of the Lord. He was astonished and pleased as he never expected such a sight in a place like Laṅkā.

लंका निसिचर निकर निवासा ।  
 इहाँ कहाँ सज्जन कर बासा ।  
 मन महुँ तरक करै कपि लागा ॥

*laṅkā nisicara nikara nivāsā.*  
*ihāṁ kahāṁ sajjana kara bāsā.*  
*mana mahum̐ taraka karaiṁ kapi lāgā.*

Hanumānjī was pleased to see a devotee's house and yet a thought came to his mind that since in Laṅkā everything was illusory (*māyāvī*), maybe this too was a trap or deception. He wondered how a devotee and good person could survive amongst such monsters. He thought that everyone in Laṅkā would be like Rāvāna.

तेहीं समय बिभीषनु जागा ।  
 राम राम तेहिं सुमिरन कीन्हा ।  
 हृदयँ हरष कपि सज्जन चीन्हा ।  
 एहि सन हठी करिहउँ पहिचानी ।  
 साधु ते होइ न कारज हानी ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ६ ॥

*tehiṁ samaya bibhīṣanu jāgā*  
*rāma rāma tehiṁ sumirana kīnhā.*  
*hṛdayaṁ haraṣa kapi sajjana cīnhā*  
*ehi sana haṭhī karihauṁ pahicānī.*  
*sādhu te hoi na kāraja hānī. (Sundarakāṇḍ 6)*

Suddenly Hanumānjī's doubts were dispelled. Vibhīṣaṇa woke up saying "Rāma, Rāma". Hanumānjī instantly understood that here was a true devotee. A person who sleeps taking the name of the Lord, also wakes up saying it. In the daytime or in the presence of others, one may put on a show of devotion to impress others. But in the middle of the night

or early morning, with no one around, one does not pretend. One's real nature manifests when one is alone. So a person who prays first thing in the morning must be a true devotee, surmised Hanumanji.

बिप्र रूप धरि बचन सुनाए।  
 सुनत बिभीषन उठी तहँ आए।।  
 करि प्रनाम पूँछी कुसलाई।  
 बिप्र कहहु निज कथा बुझाई।।  
 की तुम्ह हरि दासन्ह महँ कोई।  
 मोरे हृदय प्रीति अति होई।।  
 की तुम्ह रामु दीन अनुरागी।  
 आयहु मोहि करन बडभागी।। सुन्दरकाण्ड ६।।

*bipra rūpa dhari bacana sunāe.*  
*sunata bibhīṣana uṭhī tahaṁ āe*  
*kari pranāma pūṁchī kusalāī.*  
*bipra kahahu nija kathā bujhāī*  
*kī tumha hari dāsanha mahaṁ koī.*  
*more hṛdaya prīti ati hoī*  
*kī tumha rāmu dīna anurāgī.*  
*āyahu mohi karana baḍabhāgī. (Sundarakāṇḍa 6)*

Hanumānjī took the initiative of befriending Vibhīṣaṇa as he appeared to be a good person. A good person (*sādhu*) is one who helps others accomplish their tasks (*para kāryaṁ sādhnōti*). He does not harm others by his thought, word or deed.

*Hanumānjī* was adept in the art of disguise. He disguised himself as a *Brāhmin* and chanted aloud, "Rāma, Rāma". This surprised Vibhīṣaṇa, "Here in Laṅkā everyone says

'*kāma*, *kāma* (desire and passion)'. Who is saying 'Rāma, Rāma'?" As soon as Vibhīṣaṇa saw that a *Brāhmin* had come to his house, he fell prostrate at his feet and asked him who he was and why he had come. Vibhīṣaṇa said, "I think you are also a devotee of the Lord. Even though I do not know you, I feel very close to you. My heart is filled with love just by seeing you. I feel I have known you since long. Are you a devotee of the Lord or the Lord Himself disguised?"

तब हनुमंत कही सब राम कथा निज नाम ।

सुनत जुगल तन पुलक मन मगन सुमिरि गुन ग्राम ॥

सुन्दरकाण्ड ६ ॥

*taba hanumanta kahī saba rāma kathā nija nāma*  
*sunata jugala tana pulaka mana magana sumiri guna*  
*grāma. (Sundarakāṇḍa 6)*

Hanumānjī then introduced himself as Śrī Rāma's devotee and servant. He then narrated Śrī Rāma's story in great detail. Vibhīṣaṇa was overjoyed. He had never before got to listen in Laṅkā someone singing *Bhagavān's* glories. His heart was filled with great love and devotion. Hanumānjī then asked Vibhīṣaṇa what it was to live in a place like Laṅkā and how he had sustained his regular spiritual practices and devotion for the Lord.

सुनहु पवनसुत रहनि हमारी ।

जिमि दसनन्हि महुँ जीभ बिचारी ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ७ ॥

*sunahu pavanasuta rahani hamārī.*

*jimi dasananhi mahūṁ jībha bicārī. (Sundarakāṇḍa 7)*

Vibhīṣaṇa responded thus, "The poor tongue is so soft and yet lives between 32 sharp teeth. It inadvertently gets

bitten, yet it serves the teeth by removing the food that gets stuck in them. Similarly, I too remain amongst these harsh demons, serving Rāvaṇa." Hanumānjī, however, assured Vibhīṣaṇa, "When a person is born, he has no teeth. The first set of teeth falls in childhood and the second set in old age. But the tongue lasts a lifetime. If a tooth decays, the tongue is used by us to tell the dentist to remove it. The tooth, however, cannot have the tongue removed. Similarly, wicked and harsh people around you will soon fall. Their end is near. You, with your soft and gentle nature, will survive. In the world, it is seen that hard and rough things break quickly, whereas the soft and subtle survive."

तात कबहुँ मोहि जानि अनाथा ।  
 करिहहिं कृपा भानुकुल नाथा ॥  
 तामस तनु कछु साधन नाहीं ।  
 प्रीति न पद सरोज मन माहीं ॥  
 अब मोहि भा भरोस हनुमंता ।  
 बिनु हरिकृपा मिलहिं नहिं संता ॥  
 जौ रघुबीर अनुग्रह कीन्हा ।  
 तौ तुम्ह मोहि दरसु हठि दीन्हा ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ७ ॥  
*tāta kabahuṁ mohi jāni anāthā.*  
*karihahiṁ kṛpā bhānukula nāthā*  
*tāmasa tanu kachu sādhana nāhīm.*  
*prīti na pada saroja mana māhīm*  
*aba mohi bhā bharosa hanumantā.*  
*binu harikṛpā milahiṁ nahim santā*  
*jaum raghubīra anugraha kīnhā.*  
*tau tumha mohi darasu haṭhi dīnhā. (Sundarakāṇḍa 7)*

Vibhīṣaṇa said, "Hanumānjī, I am like an orphan. You are a great devotee of Śrī Rāma. Please tell me whether He

will shower His blessings on someone like me. This body is made of *tamoguṇa*, and I am deeply identified with it. Also I do not do enough spiritual practices, nor is my heart filled with great devotion."

Even though Vibhīṣaṇa was doing so much of spiritual practices (*sādhana*) and he had such great devotion, he felt he was doing little. In contrast, even whilst doing so little, we often think we do so much! Even the little we do is done with a distracted mind and is more than often half-hearted. A daughter-in-law once told a guest that her father-in-law had gone out to buy shoes when he was in fact in the *pūjā* room. The father-in-law was upset at her words, but on looking within realized that even whilst sitting in front of the Lord in the *pūjā* room, his mind was actually in the shoe shop, choosing shoes!

Vibhīṣaṇa continued, "Why should the Lord shower His grace on someone like me? On the other hand, I feel that He has already done so. How could I ever have got your *darśana* and *satsaṅg* without His grace? You came to Laṅkā and to my house, on your own accord. You narrated to me Śrī Rāma's glories. All that is ample evidence of the Lord's grace."

Remember the story of little Dhruva who left his father's palace in search of God. Sage Nārada came before him and said, "You are only five years old. This is the age for you to play. Where are you going for penance? Do you think it is so easy to find God?" Dhruva replied, "Nāradaji, God's grace is already with me. That is why as soon as I left my father's palace I have met a great sage like you. Now you take me to Him."

सुनहु बिभीषन प्रभु कै रीती ।  
 करहिं सदा सेवक पर प्रीती ॥  
 कहहु कवन मैं परम कुलीना ।  
 कपि चंचल सबहीं बिधि हीना ॥  
 प्रात लेइ जो नाम हमारा ।  
 तेहि दिन ताहि न मिलै अहारा ॥  
 अस मैं अधम सखा सुनु मोहू पर रघुबीर ।  
 कीन्ही कृपा सुमिरि गुन भरे बिलोचन नीर ॥ ७ ॥  
 जानतहूँ अस स्वामि बिसारी ।  
 फिरहिं ते काहे न होहिं दुखारी ॥  
 एहि बिधि कहत राम गुन ग्रामा ।  
 पावा अनिर्वाच्य विश्रामा ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ८ ॥

*sunahu bibhīṣana prabhu kai rītī.*  
*karahiṃ sadā sevaka para prītī*  
*kahahu kavana maiṃ parama kulīnā.*  
*kapi cañcala sabahīṃ bidhi hīnā*  
*prāta lei jo nāma hamārā.*  
*tehi dina tāhi na milai ahārā*  
*asa maiṃ adhama sakhā sunu mohū para raghubīra*  
*kīnhī kṛpā sumiri guna bhare bilocana nīra. (7)*  
*jānatahūṃ asa svāmi bisārī.*  
*firahiṃ te kāhe na hohiṃ dukhārī*  
*ehi bidhi kahata rāma guna grāmā.*  
*pāvā anirvācya viśrāmā. (Sundarakāṇḍa 8)*

Hanumānjī said, "We may forget the Lord, but He never forgets us. *Bhagavān's* grace is on everyone at all times. We do not have the vision to see it. An ordinary man waits for *Bhagavān's* grace, whereas a devotee sees His grace in

everything. Even in the greatest of difficulties, he experiences His grace. Look at me. I am born as a monkey which is considered to be fickle-minded. Nobody respects a monkey. 'Monkey tricks' and 'monkey business' are commonly used low terms! Some even believe that if you remember a monkey in the morning, you will not get food that day!" Some ignorant people avoid thinking of Hanumānjī in the morning because of these words in the Rāmāyaṇa! They should understand that this only reveals Hanumānjī's humility. Such people misunderstand the teachings of Rāmāyaṇa. Hanumānjī was implying that when *Bhagavān* could shower His grace on a monkey, then why not on someone as great as Vibhīṣaṇa.

Hanumānjī's eyes were filled with love and gratitude as he remembered the Lord's grace on him. He said, "How can people be so ungrateful and forget such a Lord? Is it a wonder that we are miserable!"

In the world, we see that when two sports lovers meet, they talk endlessly about sports, and music lovers about music. When devotees of Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji meet, they talk for hours about the glory of Gurudev and share with each other their experiences with him. Here, when Vibhīṣaṇa and Hanumānjī met, they revelled in talking about Śrī Rāma. They found great joy and fulfillment in such talk.

पुनि सब कथा बिभीषन कही ।

जेहि बिधि जनकसुता तहँ रही ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ८ ॥

*puni saba kathā bibhīṣana kahī.*

*jēhi bidhi janakasutā tahaṁ rahī. (Sundarakāṇḍa 8)*



Hanumānjī was very astute. He said, "Vibhīṣaṇa! You have been continuously remembering Śrī Rāma . That is great. Now you have to serve Śrī Rāma by doing His work. You know that your brother has kidnapped Sītājī. I am sent here by Śrī Rāma to search for her. Tell me where Sītājī is."

It is not only important to be good but also to do good. Hanumānjī inspired Vibhīṣaṇa to do good. It is not enough to just chant the Lord's name, but we should also do the Lord's *karma* (work) and thereby spread His *vibhūti* (glories). Hanumānjī was told where Sītājī was kept. He thanked Vibhīṣaṇa and left. Hanumānjī served as Vibhīṣaṇa's guru who guided him to serve the Lord. This gave Vibhīṣaṇa greater strength in his spiritual practices and the courage to live his spiritual life uncompromisingly.

We see that so many people talk of how great Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji was. He spent his entire life in spreading the knowledge of the scriptures and serving humanity all over the world. It is not enough to glorify him and his work. We should join in his mission and propagate his work. We should do what pleases him, what he loved, and what will strengthen his mission of spreading knowledge and goodness. This is called *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*, encouraging thoughts and actions favourable to one's spiritual unfoldment.

Then Hanumānjī went to the Aśoka vāṭika, where he met Sītājī. He played havoc in Rāvaṇa's beautiful garden and was caught by Indrajīt. He was taken to Rāvaṇa's court. Hanumānjī tried to explain to Rāvaṇa that kidnapping Sītājī was a heinous crime. But Rāvaṇa would not pay any heed. He ordered Hanumānjī to be killed. Vibhīṣaṇa came to the court then and said, "It is wrong to kill a messenger. You

may, if you have to, give him a milder form of punishment." We find a gradual change in Vibhīṣaṇa. For the first time, he found the courage to speak up for righteousness. This happened because his faith in God was slowly increasing. Rāvaṇa ordered Hanumānjī's tail to be set on fire. Hanumānjī escaped and burnt Laṅkā. Hanumānjī thereafter took leave of Sītājī and returned to Śrī Rāma. Some say that Hanumānjī should not have burnt Laṅkā. At that time, Laṅkā symbolized rank materialism. So Hanumānjī symbolically burnt material values. Laṅkā itself was intact, and was handed over to Vibhīṣaṇa after Rāvaṇa was killed.

From the day Laṅkā was burnt, everybody in Rāvaṇa's kingdom was scared. But nobody had the courage to say anything against Rāvaṇa. There was a total censorship on free speech. If anyone raised a voice against Rāvaṇa, they were either imprisoned or killed. However, Rāvaṇa's wife, Maṇḍōdarī, who was aware of her husband's deeds and the people's fear, approached Rāvaṇa. She told him that it was not right to kidnap another's wife and hold her against her wish. Also, that Śrī Rāma was great and noble and that Rāvaṇa should return Sītājī to him. She expressed her fears at the consequence of Rāvaṇa's actions. If anyone other than his beloved wife had said this, Rāvaṇa would have killed him. Rāvaṇa just told her not to fear and assured her of his might in dealing with any eventuality.

Now that Śrī Rāma knew where Sītājī was, He collected a huge army of monkeys and proceeded towards Laṅkā. When Rāvaṇa was told that Śrī Rāma's forces had reached Laṅkā, he asked his courtiers what should be done. They said, "Let them come. We will devour them alive. We need not do anything."

This pleased Rāvaṇa. At that time, Vibhīṣaṇa came to Rāvaṇa's court. He bowed and sought permission to talk.

जौ कृपाल पूँछिहु मोहि बाता ।  
 मति अनुरूप कहउँ हित ताता ॥  
 जो आपन चाहै कल्याना ।  
 सुजसु सुमति सुभ गति सुख नाना ॥  
 सो परनारि लिलार गोसाईं ।  
 तजउ चउथि के चंद कि नाईं ॥  
 काम क्रोध मद लोभ सब नाथ नरक के पंथ ।  
 सब परिहरि रघुबीरहि भजहु भजहिं जेहि संत ॥

सुन्दरकाण्ड ३८ ॥

*jau kṛpāla pūṁchihu mohi bātā.*

*mati anurūpa kahauṁ hita tātā*

*jo āpana cāhai kalyānā.*

*sujasu sumati subha gati sukha nānā*

*sō paranāri lilāra gosāīṁ.*

*tajau cauthi ke canda ki nāīṁ*

*kāma krodha mada lobha saba nātha naraka ke pantha*

*saba parihari raghubīrahi bhajahu bhajahim jehi santa.*

(Sundarakāṇḍa 38)

Vibhīṣaṇa said, "Based on my understanding, I will tell you what is beneficial for you. Your welfare, good name, right understanding, auspicious future and happiness lie in returning Sītājī to Śrī Rāma. It is not right to set one's heart on another's wife. Such action will lead you to your own destruction. Lust, passion, anger, arrogance, and greed are the gateways to hell. Leave all ignoble thoughts and worship Śrī Rāma. He is not a mere mortal. He is the Lord Himself incarnated to establish the kingdom of righteousness.

The great sage Pulastya who belongs to our lineage sent his disciple to tell me about Śrī Rāma's glory."

At that time, Rāvaṇa's grandfather, the great Malyavānjī came to the court and told Rāvaṇa, "Vibhīṣaṇa is very wise, and what he says is right. Please follow his advice." When Rāvaṇa heard this, he was angry and ordered his guards to throw out both Vibhīṣaṇa and Malyavānjī. No one dared to do so. Malyavānjī himself walked out with dignity. At that time, Vibhīṣaṇa again pleaded with his brother.

सुमति कुमति सब कें उर रहहीं ।  
 नाथ पुरान निगम अस कहहीं ॥  
 जहाँ सुमति तहँ संपति नाना ।  
 जहाँ कुमति तहँ बिपति निदाना ॥  
 तव उर कुमति बसी बिपरीता ।  
 हित अनहित मानहु रिपु प्रीता ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ४० ॥  
*sumati kumati saba keṃ ura rahahīṃ.*  
*nātha purāna nigama asa kahahīṃ*  
*jahāṃ sumati tahaṃ sampati nānā.*  
*jahāṃ kumati tahaṃ bipati nidānā*  
*tava ura kumati basī biparītā.*  
*hita anahita mānahu ripu prītā. (Sundarakāṇḍa 40)*

Vibhīṣaṇa said, "Because of our inherent tendencies (*vāsanā-s*), both good and bad thoughts arise in our mind. It is not possible to predict what thought will arise when. However, once the thoughts have risen, we become aware of them. At that time, we should be very alert. We should encourage the good thoughts and discourage the bad ones." For example, if there is a sudden urge to pocket a beautiful watch we see in our friend's house, we should not act on it.

If there is desire to give in charity, we should decide and give before the good intentions vanish. When we follow the good in us, we prosper; and when we act on negative thoughts, we have problems and suffer. Our suffering is largely self-created.

पुण्यस्य फलम् इच्छन्ति पुण्यं न कुर्वन्ति मानवाः।

पापस्य फलं नेच्छन्ति पापं कुर्वन्ति यत्नतः।।

*puṇyasya phalam icchanti puṇyaṃ na kurvanti mānavāḥ  
pāpasya phalaṃ necchanti pāpaṃ kurvanti yatnataḥ.*

People desire the result of meritorious acts, which is joy, but do not do such actions. They do not desire the result of sins, which is sorrow, but they deliberately engage in sinful acts.

"Rāvaṇa, you acted on the bad thoughts that you entertained towards Sītājī, and hence kidnapped her. Please return her to Śrī Rāma, to whom she belongs. Surrender to Him. That is the best thing for you."

We see that after meeting Hanumānjī, there is a transformation in Vibhīṣaṇa's personality. He has now the courage to tell Rāvaṇa what is right. He openly supports the righteous and resists the unrighteous. He is gradually seen to oppose and rise above things uncondusive to his *sādhana*. He plucks up the courage to give up that which is harmful to him. This is called *prātikūlyasya varjanam*. This happened because not only did he listen to Hanumānjī's advice, but he also acted on it. Many of us seek the advice of the wise, but rarely follow what they tell us to do.

सुनत दसानन उठा रिसाई।

खल तोहि निकट मृत्यु अब आई।।

जिअसि सदा सठ मोर जिआवा ।  
 रिपु कर पच्छ मूढ तोहि भावा ॥  
 मम पुर बसि तपसिन्ह पर प्रीती ।  
 सठ मिलु जाइ तिन्हहि कहु नीती ॥  
 अस कहि कीन्हेसि चरन प्रहारा ।  
 अनुज गहे पद बारहिं बारा ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ४१ ॥

*sunata dasānana uthā risāī.*  
*khala tohi nikata mṛtyu aba āī*  
*jiāsi sadā saṭha mora jiāvā.*  
*ripu kara paccha mūḍha tohi bhāvā*  
*mama pura basi tapasinha para prīti.*  
*saṭha milu jāi tinhahi kahu nīti*  
*asa kahi kīnhesi carana prahārā.*  
*anuja gahe pada bārahiṃ bārā. (sundarakāṇḍa 41)*

Vibhīṣaṇa's advice made Rāvaṇa furious. He said, "How dare you speak to me this way. Your days are now numbered. You are inviting death. You live off me, and yet you take the side of my enemy and praise Him. Go to Him if you so wish." Saying so, he kicked Vibhīṣaṇa. Even under such provocation, Vibhīṣaṇa, instead of cursing and reacting, fell at his feet and told him, "You are like my father. I still say that your welfare lies in worshipping Śrī Rāma."

रामु सत्यसंकल्प प्रभु सभा कालबस तोरि ।  
 मैं रघुबीर सरन अब जाउँ देहु जनि खोरि ॥

सुन्दरकाण्ड ४१ ॥

*rāmu satyasaṅkalpa prabhu sabhā kālabasa tori*  
*māiṃ raghubīra sarana aba jāuṃ dehu jani khori.*

(Sundarakāṇḍa 41)

Vibhīṣaṇa finally tells Rāvaṇa, "Whatever Śrī Rāma wills alone will happen. Your rule is nearing its end. I have tried my best, but you are not listening to me. Do not blame me afterwards that I did not warn you. I am now leaving you. It is you who have kicked me out of your kingdom. Do not accuse me later of betraying you." Saying thus, he left Laṅkā.

Was it not Vibhīṣaṇa's duty to stand by his brother at the time of crisis? Remember, Vibhīṣaṇa left only when he realized that Rāvaṇa was not going to listen to good advice. Also, our first relationship is with God. All other relationships are secondary. The wave is ever related to the ocean without which and apart from which it has no existence. The wave rises in the ocean, lives because of it, and merges in it, to rise again. Its relationship with other waves is temporary. Similarly, our worldly relationships last for this life at the most. Our relationship with the Lord is eternal and absolute. Therefore, to choose the Lord is not betrayal. Also, as a human being, we should always take the side of *dharma* or righteousness and give up *adharma* or unrighteousness. Vibhīṣaṇa made the right decision of leaving the nonconducive atmosphere of Laṅkā and the company of the wicked Rāvaṇa. That is *prātikūlyasya varjanam*, the second step in surrender.

The great saint Mīrābāi too was troubled by her relatives who were against her worshipping the Lord. She wrote to Gōsvāmī Tulsīdāsjī asking him what she should do. He advised her, "Do not bother about those who do not love the Lord and stand in your path of worship. If they oppose you to the extent that you are not allowed to worship the Lord, leave

them. Daśaratha repelled his wife, and Bharata his mother, when Kaikeyī sent Śrī Rāma to the forest."

अस कहि चला बिभीषनु जबहीं ।

आयूहीन भए सब तबहीं ॥

साधु अवग्या तुरत भवानी ।

कर कल्यान अखिल कै हानी ॥

रावन जबहिं बिभीषन त्यागा ।

भयउ बिभव बिनु तबहिं अभागा ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ४२ ॥

*asa kahi calā bibhīṣanu jabahīm.*

*āyūhīna bhae saba tabahīm*

*sādhu avagyā turata bhavānī.*

*kara kalyāna akhila kai hānī*

*rāvana jabahim bibhīṣana tyāgā.*

*bhayau bibhava binu tabahim abhāgā. (Sundarakāṇḍa 42)*

It was because of the presence of Vibhīṣaṇa, a good soul (sādhu), that Laṅkā was prosperous. Once he left Laṅkā, after being kicked out by Rāvaṇa, its days of prosperity and peace were numbered. A saint does not curse or punish us when we insult him. However, the Lord seems to say, "When you insult Me, I can tolerate that, but when you insult or hurt a saint, I cannot. Punishment is immediate." Rāvaṇa felt all along that it was he who was feeding Vibhīṣaṇa. The Lord says, "The clouds shower rains and there is prosperity in the land where there are good people and *dharma* is followed". So actually Rāvaṇa was living on the goodness of Vibhīṣaṇa! When he left, Rāvaṇa lost all his fortune and luck. We too have the false notion that we take care of our children and support them with our wealth. Who knows, our prosperity may be due to the child's good fortune. It is really



the Lord alone who feeds all. Others are just instruments for Him to act in the world.

Bhakta Rahim was a wise and generous man. Whenever he gave in charity, he always looked down. When asked why he did so, he replied, "People call me generous and think that I give. It is the Lord alone who gives to all. When I am given credit for what the Lord does, I feel embarrassed."

Vibhīṣaṇa left Laṅkā with the firm faith in his heart that the Lord would protect him, shower His grace on him, and give him shelter. This faith was strengthened by Hanumānjī, and this gave him the courage to leave Laṅkā and seek refuge at the feet of the Lord. This is called *rakṣiṣyati iti viśvāsaḥ*, the third factor of surrender. Vibhīṣaṇa started visualizing the Lord's feet that he would soon see. His mind was filled with sweet thoughts as he proceeded towards the Lord.

In most countries, fundamental rights are automatically enjoyed by all the citizens. However, if one desires special favours or privileges, one has to apply for the same. Those are then granted after due procedure. Similarly, *Bhagavān's* blessings are generally showered on all equally. A saint or sinner, animal or human receive air to breathe, rains, sunlight etc. Even the atheist who denies the existence of God breathes. The Lord does not deny him his air supply. However, if I seek His special favour/grace, then I have to have faith in Him and actually apply for the same by seeking His refuge. This is called *gopṭṛtva varaṇam*, the fourth factor in surrender.

When Vibhīṣaṇa reached Śrī Rāma's camp, he told the monkeys who were on guard that he had come to seek refuge in Śrī Rāma. When Śrī Rāma was informed, He asked

Sugrīva, the king of monkeys, what should be done. Sugrīva replied, "*Bhagavān*, I think we should tie him up and imprison him. After all, he is Rāvaṇa's brother and belongs to the same *Rākṣasa* lineage. The *Rākṣasa*-s are known to create illusions and perform tricks. For all that we know, he may not be Vibhīṣaṇa. We do not know his true intentions. He may even harm us, so I feel it is best to imprison him."

सखा नीति तुम्ह नीकि बिचारी ।

मम पन सरनागत भयहारी ॥

सुनि प्रभु बचन हरष हनुमाना ।

सरनागत बच्छल भगवाना ॥

सरनागत कहूँ जे तजहिं निज अनहित अनुमानि ।

ते नर पावँर पापमय तिन्हहि बिलोकत हानि ॥

सुन्दरकाण्ड ४३ ॥

*sakhā nīti tumha nīki bicārī.*

*mama pana saranāgata bhayahārī*

*suni prabhu bacana haraṣa hanumānā.*

*saranāgata bacchala bhagavānā*

*saranāgata kahūṁ jē tajahi nija anahita anumāni*

*te nara pāvāṁra pāpamaya tinhahi bilokat hāni.*

(*Sundarakāṇḍa* 43)

Śrī Rāma said, "What you say is right from your standpoint. However, see things from My standpoint. Even though each *jīva* (individual) is a part (*aṁśa*) of Me, he has as though become apart from Me. He has drifted away from Me, forgetting Me in worldly pursuits. I am always awaiting his return to Me. A child may in anger leave home or disown his parents, but the mother never disowns or forgets her child. When the child decides to return home, she is delighted as

her long wait is nearing an end. I am therefore eagerly waiting for Vibhīṣana. Also, it is my promise that I will protect and liberate all who seek my shelter. Even if one is a terrible sinner, if he comes to me, apologizes, repents and promises not to repeat his mistakes, I forgive him, accept him and take him under My care. It is My nature to ignore your faults and remember you a hundred times if you have remembered Me even once with love. I do not see your past record or bear grudges like an ordinary mortal. Just as a mother has no hesitation in picking up and embracing her child however dirty he may be, I do not hesitate to accept those who come to me. Since Vibhīṣana has come with a pure mind, I shall protect him. However if he has come to harm me, as you suspect, Lakṣmaṇa is amply capable of dealing with even a hundred demons, let alone Vibhīṣana. Please send for Vibhīṣana." Hanumānjī was pleased when he heard this, as this is what he had assured Vibhīṣana that Śrī Rāma would say. A true devotee knows the nature of the Lord.

Can you imagine the state of Vibhīṣana's mind when he was invited to come in front of Śrī Rāma. This was something he had been waiting for years. He was about to meet the altar of his worship. Years of regular spiritual practices are done only to reach the Lord. Vibhīṣana was exhilarated at the thought of seeing Śrī Rāma. He was escorted to meet him by Hanumānjī and Angadajī with great respect.

From a distance, Vibhīṣana saw Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. They were both so beautiful that his eyes feasted on the wonderful sight. Vibhīṣana had heard about the

beauty of Śrī Rāma. But what met his eyes was totally beyond his grandest imaginations. Śrī Rāma's beauty was incomparable.

नाथ दसानन कर मैं भ्राता ।  
 निसिचर बंस जनम सुरत्राता ॥  
 सहज पापप्रिय तामस देहा ।  
 जथा उलूकहि तम पर नेहा ॥  
 श्रवन सुजसु सुनि आयउँ प्रभु भंजन भव भीर ।  
 त्राहि त्राहि आरति हरन सरन सुखद रघुबीर ॥

सुंदरकाण्ड ४५ ॥

*nātha dasānana kara maim bhrātā.*  
*nisicara baṃsa janama suratrātā*  
*sahaja pāpapriya tāmāsa dehā.*  
*jathā ulūkahi tama para nehā*  
*śravana sujasu suni āyauṃ prabhu bhañjana bhava bhīra*  
*trāhi trāhi ārati harana sarana sukhada raghubīra.*

(Sundarakāṇḍa 45)

When Vibhīṣaṇa saw the Lord, he was so captivated by His beauty, love and compassion that his surrender was complete. The last two factors of surrender - falling at the feet of the Lord (*ātma nikṣēpa*) and expressing one's total helplessness (*kārpāṇya*) - burst forth in him. He told the Lord, "I am the brother of *Rāvaṇa* who has kidnapped your wife. I am born in a *rākṣasa* lineage, which is always up in arms against the *dēvata*-s whom You always protect. I myself have taken this birth due to my past sins. Just as an owl is fond of darkness, we too revel in ignorance and then come to suffer because of it. We love that which is forbidden. We are compelled from within and without to do prohibited things."

(A man said, "Everything I like to do is either illegal, immoral, or fattening!") Vibhīṣaṇa continued, "Even though I am undeserving, I have come here seeking refuge after hearing of Your great glory and compassion. I have heard that You are capable of anything and everything. You can remove all fears and sorrows. You bestow happiness and peace on all. You accept all unconditionally. All are equal in Your eyes. I have come to You, please save me. I am helpless, please protect me. I surrender to You, please accept me."

अस कहि करत दंडवत देखा ।

तुरत उठे प्रभु हरष बिसेषा ॥

दीन बचन सुनि प्रभु मन भावा ।

भुज बिसाल गहि हृदयँ लगावा ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ४६ ॥

*asa kahi karata daṇḍavata dekhā.*

*turata uthe prabhu haraṣa biseṣā*

*dīna bacana suni prabhu mana bhāvā.*

*bhuja bisāla gahi hṛdayaṁ lagāvā. (Sundarakāṇḍa 46)*

Saying thus, Vibhīṣaṇa fell prostrate at the feet of the Lord. Listening to the words of total surrender, Śrī Rāma was pleased and got up immediately and embraced Vibhīṣaṇa.

*Nārada Bhakti Sūtra* says, '*īśvarasya api abhimāna dveṣitvāt dainya priyatvāt ca*'. The Lord does not like arrogance. He loves humility. The Lord is omniscient and omnipotent. We are but a speck before Him. When we approach Him puffed with pride about our little wealth, power or fame, it is ridiculous. It is our ego alone that keeps us away from Him. When we speak sweet words of helplessness and surrender, we immediately invoke His compassion and grace. Does not a mother rush to the helpless cry of her child?

Blessed indeed was Vibhīṣaṇa when Śrī Rāma embraced him. The touch of the Lord (*brahma saṁsparśa*) is the touch of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*). It can send a person to *samādhi* - a deep state of meditation. Kauśalyājī was overjoyed at the birth of Śrī Rāma. She asked her maid what she desired. The maid, a wise woman, said, "I do not want any ornaments, money, or gems. Let me hold the divine Babe in my arms." She went into *samādhi* when she held Śrī Rāma. Similarly, Vasiṣṭha Ṛṣi was requested by King Daśaratha to chant Vedic incantations (*mantra-s*) on the auspicious occasion of the birth of Śrī Rāma. Beholding Śrī Rāma, sage Vasiṣṭha said, "I have forgotten even my own name, how can I remember any *Vēda mantra-s*!" Vibhīṣaṇa had never expected such a wonderful acceptance from Śrī Rāma. He was in ecstasy.

कहु लंकेस सहित परिवारा ।

कुसल कुठाहर बास तुम्हारा ॥

खल मंडलीं बसहु दिनु राती ।

सखा धरम निबहइ केहि भाँती ॥ सुन्दरकाण्ड ४६ ॥

*kahu laṅkēsa sahita parivārā.*

*kusala kuṭhāhara bāsa tumhārā*

*khala maṇḍalīṁ basahu dinu rātī.*

*sakhā dharama nibahai kehi bhāṁtī. (Sundarakāṇḍa 46)*

Śrī Rāma said, "O *Lankeśa*, is all well with you? How did you manage to live in a place like *Laṅkā*? How did you manage to remain steadfast in your spiritual practices?"

Śrī Rāma addressed Vibhīṣaṇa as "*Lankeśa*", the Lord of *Laṅkā*. At that time Rāvaṇa was still the king of *Laṅkā*. The moment the Lord called Vibhīṣaṇa *Lankeśa*, Rāvaṇa's days

as the king were numbered. Whomsoever *Bhagavān* ordains with a title, certainly attains it. It is said that if the Lord wishes, He can make Brahmājī a mosquito and vice versa. There is an Urdu saying "*khudā meherbāna tō gadhā pahelvān*", which means "with the Lord's grace, even a donkey can become a mighty person".

Also *Bhagavān* appreciates Vibhīṣaṇa for his consistency in spiritual practices and steadfastness in being righteous even in unconducive circumstances. It is said that it is better to be in hell than in the company of the wicked. At least the sorrow experienced in hell would make one think more about one's life and actions and long to overcome the suffering. But in the company of the wicked and the licentious, we forget the Lord and encourage only the baser instincts in us.

Vibhīṣaṇa says, "All is well by Your grace. When man forgets You, he suffers. He has no peace even in his dreams. I wonder what meritorious deeds I have done that I now behold You. You sent Hanumānjī to me, and now I am in Your presence. I feel that I am in a beautiful dream. How could one like me be so blessed! I now behold the feet worshipped by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and all the great sages. Devotees long for Your vision, and here I am, an ordinary mortal, beholding Your divine form."

सुनहु सखा निज कहउँ सुभाऊ ।

जान भुसुंङि संभु गिरिजाऊ ।।

जौ नर होइ चराचर द्रोही ।

आवै सभय सरन तकि मोही ।।

तजि मद मोह कपट छल नाना ।

करउँ सद्य तेहि साधु समाना ।।

समदरसी इच्छा कछु नाही ।  
 हरष सोक भय नहिं मन माहीं ॥  
 अस सज्जन मम उर बस कैसें ।  
 लोभी हृदयँ बसइ धनु जैसें ॥  
 तुम्ह सारिखे संत प्रिय मोरें ।  
 धरउँ देह नहिं आन निहोरें ॥ सुंदरकाण्ड ४८ ॥

*sunahu sakhā nija kahauṁ subhāū.  
 jāna bhusuṇḍi sambhu girijāū  
 jaum nara hoi carācara drohī.  
 āvai sabhaya sarana taki mohī  
 taji mada moha kapaṭa chala nānā.  
 karauṁ sadya tehi sādhu samānā  
 samadarasī icchā kachu nāhīṁ.  
 haraṣa soka bhaya nahīṁ mana māhīṁ  
 asa sajjana mama ura basa kaiseṁ.  
 lobhī hṛdayaṁ basai dhanu jaiseṁ  
 tumha sārikhe santa priya moreṁ.  
 dharaum deha nahim āna nihoreṁ. (Sundarakāṇḍa 48)*

The Lord says, "I will tell you something about My nature that very few like *Kakabhusundi*, Lord Śiva and Goddess Pārvatī understand. Everyone knows Me as *karma adhyakṣa* (one who presides over all actions) and *karma phala dātā* (one who awards the fruits of actions). They know me as one who metes out justice, one who gives what one deserves. They do not know that I dispense justice with compassion and wisdom. If I gave only what each individual deserved, his or her life would be very difficult."

Lord Śiva has three eyes. One is the eye of justice, the other is the eye of compassion, and the third, the eye of



wisdom. Justice without compassion is harsh. Compassion without justice would not be right. People would then not follow the path of righteousness and self-control. They would feel that they can get away with anything. We see that even a death sentence can be commuted by the President. Lord Śiva wisely dispenses justice with compassion.

The Lord says, "If even a great sinner gives up ego and pretence, and surrenders to Me, I shall release him or her from all impurities and make him or her perfect. Thereafter, I consider that person as a noble soul." Every saint has a past and every sinner a future. So no person is beyond the reach of the Lord's grace. If a sinner is thus blessed, then what to talk of devotees who love and worship the Lord alone and walk the path of righteousness. The Lord says, "I love them and they are always one with Me. I love them just as a greedy person loves money." A storm of desire arises, and thereafter subsides. Similarly, anger too arises and abates. But greed remains with a person all the time. It slowly and surely grows. Also, a greedy person knows that while he loves money, it is a love which is not returned, yet the one-way traffic of love continues. In contrast the Lord loves us whether we love Him or not. His love for a noble soul is intense. The Lord says, "Vibhīṣaṇa, you are a noble soul, and you are therefore very dear to me". If we love someone and tell him or her so, it feels good when it is reciprocated. Imagine the precious moment when the devotee tells the Lord, "I love you", and the Lord in turn says, "I love you too, much more than you can ever imagine!" The Lord says, "Vibhīṣaṇa, I am incarnated as Śrī Rāma to save and protect the noble, to kill the wicked, and to establish righteousness.

Therefore to protect people like you is the very purpose of my incarnation."

जदपि सखा तव इच्छा नाही ।  
 मोर दरसु अमोध जग माहीं ॥  
 अस कहि राम तिलक तेहि सारा ।  
 सुमन बृष्टि नभ भई अपारा ॥  
 जो संपति सिव रावनहि दीन्हि दिऐँ दस माथ ।  
 सोइ संपदा बिभीषनहि सकुचि दीन्हि रघुनाथ ॥

सुन्दरकाण्ड ४९ ख ॥

*jadapi sakhā tava icchā nāhīm.*  
*mora darasu amodha jaga māhīm*  
*asa kahi rāma tilaka tehi sārā.*  
*sumana bṛṣṭi nabha bhāī apārā*  
*jo sampati siva rāvanahi dīnhi diēm̐ dasa mātha*  
*soi sampadā bibhīṣanahi sakuci dīnhi raghunātha.*

(Sundarakāṇḍa 49 kh)

Vibhīṣaṇa was blessed thereafter by the Lord with unswerving devotion. Even though he had no desires for any worldly name, fame, power or wealth, the Lord wanted to give him something. The vision of the Lord bestows both worldly and spiritual wealth. The Lord told Vibhīṣaṇa, "Since you do not have any desire of your own, I give you the task of taking care of Laṅkā. The people of Laṅkā have suffered a lot under Rāvaṇa's rule. Establish a kingdom of righteousness and make the people happy." The Lord thereafter coronated Vibhīṣaṇa as the king of Laṅkā by putting a *tilaka* on his forehead and sprinkling him with holy waters. To mark the auspicious occasion, the deities in heaven showered flowers on all in joyous celebration.

Being pleased by Rāvaṇa's penance and worship, Lord Śiva had gifted Laṅkā to Rāvaṇa. Now, the Lord hands it over to Vibhīṣana, without his having done any specific penance. Who can be as generous as the Lord. He showers His gifts and blessings in plenty, unconditionally and unasked. Should we not surrender our all to One so great?

We have seen all the six factors of surrender in Vibhīṣana. He is considered to be one of the great teachers of devotion (*bhakti ācārya*).

May we too be inspired to surrender totally like Vibhīṣana and attain supreme devotion, peace, and fulfillment. May we too open our hearts to receive the highest divine grace and blessings.

**ŌṂ TAT SAT ŚRĪ SĪTĀ-RĀMĀRPAṆAMASTU.**



A creeper clings to the tree, a cloud hangs on to the sky and a baby sleeps in the lap of its mother... the sweetness of these scenes is heightened by the fact that the creeper, the cloud and the baby have surrendered in all purity to the sources of their support.

But, when we pray to God to grant a wish or look after us, we almost, always do it half-heartedly. Our surrender, if at all, is partial and questionable. We do not believe that God is really omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, although we may say it often. Therefore, we are not at peace, despite praying.

Our surrender should be like that of Vibhisana's. Swami Tejomayanandaji, in this book, explicitly and lucidly defines surrender, the need to surrender and the factors that lead to true and unconditional surrender.



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