

DASHAVATAR – RAMA AVATAR (Ramayan – Part 10)



As you remember, Hanuman flew all the way across the ocean to reach Lanka! Even after jumping 100 yojanas, Hanuman did not feel the least bit tired, nor did he gasp for breath. He came to see if Ravana was hiding Sita, Rama's wife in Lanka.

Lanka was an incredible city. Gold was paved into the streets, and precious gems were inlaid in the buildings. The City was built for Kubera, Lord of Wealth, by Vishwakarma, architect of the gods. Kubera was Ravana's stepbrother. Ravana was very mean and kicked his stepbrother Kubera out of the city, and took command of it himself. The demons living in Lanka were very warlike. They drank intoxicating liquor, and all they respected was the power of their physical bodies. Ravana was their King.

Hanuman assumed the form of a little monkey, and started to enter the City. Then he heard a voice. "What are you doing you little monkey, trying to sneak into Lanka?" a rakshasi (lady demon) snarled. Each city has its own protector. This was a rakshasi, called Lankini, whose job it was to protect Lanka. She tried to stop Hanuman from entering, and invited him for a fight by giving him a box on his face. Hanuman would never hurt a woman, but in this case, he punched her hard in the face, knocking her to the ground. "Lord Brahma told me that when a monkey punched me in the face, then the end of Lanka was near" she said, letting Hanuman enter.

Hanuman started searching the whole city for Sita. He came across one large palace, where he was surprised to hear someone chanting "RAMA, RAMA, RAMA". Hanuman assumed the form of a Brahmana, and humbly inquired "Will you please tell me who you are, chanting the name of Rama in this City of Demons?" He replied "My name is Vibhishana. I am the brother of the Demon King Ravana." "How is it that you are chanting the name of Rama?" asked Hanuman. "Like the entire demon race, I am lost in sensuality and sinfulness. But still I am chanting Rama in hopes of purifying myself" said Vibhishana. Hanuman introduced himself, and told him that Rama was a gracious Lord, and would accept Vibhishana as his devotee.

After meeting Vibhishana, Hanuman continued to search for Sita. He entered the royal apartments. In a big hall, he saw the demon King sleeping (it was nighttime now) with his hundreds of wives. Ravana was very greedy. All the most beautiful women from various parts of the world had been captured and brought to Lanka by Ravana. All of them had cried and struggled when they were captured and sworn to kill themselves, but in the end they had succumbed to his charms. He had been cursed by their parents over and over again and by those whom he had brought forcibly. This is one of the reasons the gods had begged Vishnu to come to Earth as Rama – in order to rid the world of Ravana and his greed and destruction.

Hanuman looked at all the women there. He had never seen Sita, but he knew she would never sleep in the same room as Ravana. He had looked everywhere, but he could not find her! Hanuman felt very depressed. He did not want to go back to Sri Ram and say he had failed. He thought "Rama will surely

die if I tell him I could not find Sita". These thoughts went through his mind, as he wandered further, not knowing what to do.

Then, by some miracle, he came across a garden of Asoka trees that he had not yet seen. He suddenly noticed a small lady sitting under a tree, and he knew unmistakably that this was Sita – the beloved of Rama. She looked like the crescent moon, thin and wan. It was obvious that she had been fasting for a long while. Her beauty was like a flame hidden by smoke. She was draped in a crumpled piece of yellow silk. She had no ornaments. Tears were flowing from her lovely eyes. Sorrow seemed to be her constant companion. She was surrounded by ugly looking rakshasis, who were her guards. Most were very ugly. There were some with big bellies. Some had only one eye, right in the middle of their stomachs. One had a head like a fish. Most were all very cruel. In the midst of these, she looked like a frightened deer, surrounded by fierce hounds. She had never known sorrow before and now she knew only sorrow.

Hanuman did not know how to approach her without scaring her. So he clambered into the tree above her, and started singing about the glory of Lord Rama, her husband. "Who is that?" said Sita. Hanuman, still in his little monkey form, dropped out of the tree. "I am the messenger of Lord Rama" he said, bowing to her. Sita wondered if Ravana was trying to trick her. Hanuman showed Sita Rama's ring, which Rama had given him to give to Sita. This convinced her that he was a genuine messenger of Rama.

"Oh, please tell Rama that he must come rescue me within two months!" said Sita. Ravana keeps begging me to become his wife, and I refuse" said Sita. He has told me that if I do not forget Rama and marry him within two months, he will have me cut up into little pieces and he will eat me for dinner!" said Sita. "Rama will come, I promise" said Hanuman. "In the meantime, I will teach these demons a lesson" said Hanuman. "But you are only a little monkey! I would be very afraid if you fought with any of these fierce demons!" said Sita. Hanuman smiled. He began to grow and grow in size, until he was much bigger than any of the trees in the garden. He began to pick all the fruits in the garden and eat them, as he remembered that he was very hungry!

The demon guards got very alarmed. They ran to Ravana. "Sire! There is a huge monkey destroying your Asoka garden. What shall we do?" Ravana looked puzzled. "A monkey? Send a platoon of guards and capture him." A platoon of guards rushed out of the palace to capture Hanuman. Hanuman was not in the least disturbed. With one hand, he continued eating fruits. With the other, he picked out the largest tree and swatted the soldiers like they were flies. Those that survived ran back to King Ravana.

King Ravana then sent the sons of his five ministers and many soldiers. They also were killed. He sent one of his powerful sons, Akshayakumar, and he was also killed. Finally he sent Meghanada, a very powerful son of his. He and Hanuman fought for a long time. Meghanada had many powerful missiles, like atomic weapons. He sent them at Hanuman. But remember how all the gods had blessed Hanuman when he flew to the Sun? None of these weapons had any effect on Hanuman. Finally, Meghanada sent

the powerful Brahmastra at Hanuman. It also had no effect on him, but out of respect for Brahma, he fell down as if he had been knocked unconscious. Then, all the foolish demons wrapped ropes around Hanuman, as if these would hold him.

Hanuman was then dragged in front of King Ravana. “Who are you, and why are you destroying my Asoka Garden and all my troops!” demanded Ravana in anger. Hanuman looked around at the throne room of Ravana. He felt not the slightest fear of Ravana. He also bore Ravana no hatred, even though he had deeply wronged Lord Rama. He admired the strength and majesty of Ravana, and thought “If only this sinner did well to others, he would be a really great King”.

Hanuman answered Ravana “I am the emissary of Sri Rama. I killed your guards because they attacked me while I was eating fruit in the garden. I am here to tell you, if only you would surrender to Sri Rama, and beg his pardon for stealing Sita, he will forgive you and allow you to continue to reign in Lanka.” Ravana laughed! “Me surrender to a puny man! Do you know who you are talking to! I have conquered both heaven and earth!” Ravana was deluded by egoism. He did not know that Rama was really God incarnate.

“Let us kill this monkey!” said Ravana. His brother Vibhishana was there. He said “Ravana, it is not proper to kill an ambassador. If you want to punish this monkey, do something else to him.” They decided to set his tail on fire, as the tail is the most precious part of the body for a monkey. So they took Hanuman in the big square, and wrapped his tail in oily rags, and set it on fire. Hanuman did not mind this at all. He wanted them to drag him through the streets so he could better understand the layout of Lanka. He knew war was coming, and wanted to know what parts of Lanka to attack in the future.

They started dragging Hanuman through the streets of Lanka with his tail on fire. Everywhere he was taken, the demons laughed and jeered at him. Some ran up and kicked him in the sides, or spit on him. Hanuman was always continuously lost in love trance of Sri Ram. All this abuse of his physical body did not bother him in the least.

In the Asoka Grove, the guards told Sita that Hanuman had been captured, and was being dragged through the streets with his tail on fire. “Oh Fire God, if I have been true in my heart to Sri Rama, please do not burn Hanuman!” prayed Sita. Hanuman was surprised to find that although his tail was lit on fire, he felt no heat at all and it didn’t burn him. After he had seen enough, he shrunk his body a little bit, so that all the ropes fell off his body. Then he started growing to an enormous size. He started flying around the city. He let loose his terrible roar, terrifying the citizens. His tail was still on fire, and wherever he went, he set the city on fire. The whole city began to burn, with the exception of Vibhishana’s home, and the Asoka Grove of Sita, which he spared. “GLORY TO SRI RAM! GLORY TO SRI RAM!” shouted Hanuman.

Hanuman then returned to the Asoka grove, assumed a small form and knelt at the feet of Sita. She gave him some of her trinkets to take to Sri Ram. She blessed Hanuman, and then he flew back across the ocean to his waiting comrades on the ocean seashore.

Questions:

- Were all the demons bad?
- Is Vibhishana a demon? Is he a good person? Why?
- Was Ravana great? Was his city Lanka great?
- Was Ravana good? Why or why not?
- Was Hanuman afraid of Ravana? Why or why not?
- How did Hanuman appear to Sita at first? Why?
- What could Hanuman do with his body that most people can't do?
- When Hanuman's tail caught on fire, did it burn him? Why or why not?
- Did ALL of Lanka burn? How was it set on fire?

Achyutashtakam

**Achyutam Keshavam Rama Narayanam
Krishna Damodaram Vasudevam Hari
Shri Dharam Madhavam Gopika Vallabham
Janaki Nayakam Ramachandram Bhaje (1)**

**Achyutam Keshavam Satyabha Madhavam
Madhavam Shri Dharam Radhika Radhitam
Indira Mandiram Chetasa Sundaram
Devakinandanam Nandajam Sandadhe (2)**

**Vishnave Jishnave Sankhine Chakrine
Rukmini raagine Janaki janaye
Vallavi vallabha yarchita yatmane
Kamsavi dhvansine Vansine Te Namah (3)**

***Krishna Govinda He Rama Narayana
Shripate Vasudev aachyuta Shrinidhe
Achyutananda He Madhavaa dhokshajam
Dvarakanayaka Draupadi rakshaka (4)***

**Rakshasa sobhitah Siitaya Sobhito
Dandakaa ranyabhu Punyata Kaaranah
Lakshmane naanvito Vaanarai Sevito
Agastya Sam pujito radhava Paatu Maam (5)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFpVxy6jNPM>

CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

- 1 Ravana's brother
- 5 The name of the Garden where Sita was kept
- 6 The portion of Hanuman's body was put on fire
- 7 One of Ravana's sons
- 9 Ravana's stepbrother
- 11 Who was the king of demons at Lanka?

DOWN

- 1 Who built the city Lanka?
- 2 Name of the weapon that knocked Hanuman unconscious
- 3 Hanuman came to Lanka to search
- 4 Sita's Husband
- 8 Sri Rama's great devotee
- 10 Hanuman showed Sita that Rama gave him

