

Additional information on Sita Jayanti

Srila Prabhupada speaks about Sita Devi.

Sītā-devī is also expansion of Srimati Rādhārāṇī. They are the same tattva.

Lecture on Srimad Bhagavatam 1.7.43 -- Vrndavana, October 3, 1976:

“This morning I was reading about Sītā-devī's being kidnapped by Rāvaṇa. Now, because there was not Rāmacandra present and Lakṣmaṇa was also not present, she was unguarded and Rāvaṇa took the opportunity to kidnap her. So even Sītā-devī, she is goddess of fortune, she is the spiritual potency of Lord Rāmacandra, she is not ordinary woman, but showing us the example that even Sītā-devī... Sītā-devī is the original potency. Of course, Rāvaṇa could not kidnap Sītā-devī as she is. That is not possible. This is described in another Purāṇa, that when Rāvaṇa came to kidnap Sītā, Sītā-devī disappeared from there and she kept a māyā form, false form, and Rāvaṇa kidnapped her. This is stated in very authoritative scripture. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was traveling in South India, a brāhmaṇa invited Him. So Caitanya Mahāprabhu at noontime went there, but He saw the brāhmaṇa has not cooked anything. There was nothing prepared. And he was crying and reading Rāmāyaṇa. So Caitanya Mahāprabhu inquired, "Brāhmaṇa, why you are in such a depressed condition, you are crying?" "Sir, I am so..." He was in the ecstasy of Hanumān. "Sir, I am so unfortunate that Sītā-devī has been taken by Rāvaṇa and I could not rescue her still." In this way he was puzzled. So he did not cook anything. Then Caitanya Mahāprabhu pacified him. Then he cooked. He could understand that "I invited..." It was done. Then, when he was returning, I forget the name of the Purāṇa... Kūrma Purāṇa. He got evidences that Sītā-devī, when she was supposed to be kidnapped by Rāvaṇa, her a false form was kidnapped, and when Sītā-devī was tested, putting her into the fire, she entered into the fire and the māyā Sītā was burned and the original Sītā came out. So it was not possible for Rāvaṇa to touch even the lotus feet of mother Sītā. But apparently it is externally manifested that Sītā was taken away just to teach us that even Sītā-devī...

Sītā-devī is the origin of all potencies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Cit-śakti. Parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate (Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport). The Supreme Personality of Godhead has got many potencies, multipotencies, and one of the potency is hlādinī-śakti, pleasure potency. That pleasure potency is Sītā, Rādhārāṇī, Lakṣmī-devī. This has been described by Svarūpa-dāmodara Gosvāmī, rādhā kṣṇa-praṇaya-

vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktir asmād ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau (CC Adi 1.5). These are described, that the Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency, Rādhārāṇī, is Kṛṣṇa. But to take pleasure They became two. Ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau. They became divided into two, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Again, Śrī Caitanya, prakāṣam. When Kṛṣṇa came as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa combined together. Therefore the devotees of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Caitanya Mahāprabhu, they worship śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya. They say. This is a fact. So Lord Rāmacandra is also Kṛṣṇa. Sītā-devī is also expansion of Rādhārāṇī. They are the same tattva.

rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan
nānāvātāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi
(Brahma Samhita 5.39)

So here the example that even Sītā-devī, the direct potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, she is showing that without being protected, she can be ravished, she can be kidnapped, she can be misused by the rākṣasas. This is the example. Sītā-devī was quite competent, but this is the example.

The Lord has got unlimited potencies, so one of the potency is Rādhārāṇī or Lakṣmī or Sītā.

Lecture on Srimad Bhagavatam 7.9.26 -- Mayapur, March 4, 1976: The Lord has got unlimited potencies, parasya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate (Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport). So one of the potency is Rādhārāṇī or Lakṣmī or Sītā. They are equal. There is no difference. Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir āhlādinī-śaktir asmāt. These loving affairs between Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī or Sītā and Rāma, they are both of them the same. One is potency; another is potent. That is the difference, potent and potency.

Heartiest Greetings of Sri Sita-Navami!

Today is Vaishakha-Shukla-Navami, the most auspicious day of the appearance of the princess and dearest daughter of Maharaj Janaka, enhancer of the bliss of Sunayana, the divine mother of entire world, the dearest consort of Sri Raam.

(ॐ) अर्वाचीं सुभगे भव सीते वन्दांमहे त्वा।
यथा नः सुभगासंसि यथा नः सुफलासंसि॥
[Rigveda 4.57.6]

“O' auspicious Bhagavati Sri Sita! Please come near us. We propitiate and adore You!
O' supreme deity endowed with the supreme fortune and auspiciousness! Please be kindly disposed towards us in such a manner that You be compassionate-hearted towards us and as a result You be a bestower of beautiful charming fruits for us!”

सीतां पद्मपलाशाक्षीं मन्मथस्य रतिं यथा।
इष्टां सर्वस्य जगतः पूर्णचंद्र प्रभामिव॥
[Valmiki Ramayana 5.13.30]

“Sri Sita with eyes like full-blooming-lotuses, in her beauty, elegance and charm, she is like Rati, the consort of cupid - the love-god (the most beautiful Sri Sita can be given similitude of another devi most renowned for beauty, charm and elegance, otherwise no similitude is present for her in entire cosmos). Just as the radiance of the full moon is dear to whole world, Sri Sita is the Ishta-devi (the tutelary deity, the dearest goddess) of the whole world.”

वन्दे विदेहतनया पद पुण्डरीकं कैशोर-सौरभ-समाहृत-योगि-चित्तं।
हन्तुं त्रितापमनिशं मुनि-हंस-सेव्यं सन्मानसालि परिपीत-पराग-पुञ्जम्॥

“I propitiate and adore Bhagawati Sri Sita, the divine fragrance of whose lotus-feet encaptures the minds of even great Yogis; whom, a great many divine sages forever continually serve, to eliminate their three-way sorrows of the worldly ocean and who is like a golden yellowish nectar for the hearts of noble persons; I adore that Sita, the daughter of King Videha, who is forever youthful.”

JAI SRI SITA-RAAM!

Understanding Lord Raam through Sita devi

In this era of post-modern, post-colonial, post-everything scholarship, we observe that many contemporary scholars, both Indian and Western have been extremely fascinated by the Ramayana and specifically Sita-devi. For some, Sita-devi epitomizes the ultimate sacrifice, for others, she becomes the golden albatross they can hang around Bhagawan Raam's neck. Some westernized feminists all see her as an embodiment of patriarchal oppression, while others try to fashion her into warrior queens and some even make ignorant and quite exasperating attempts at "liberating" her. In this era where only formalized, westernized knowledge is considered worthy and therefore, Hindus who are losing touch with their mother tongues as well as Sanskrit, have completely lost touch with the native, Indic understanding of Ramāyana. It is our hope that this article should make it abundantly clear, how these "readings", "re-tellings" and "interpretations" are misguided at best, and mischievous at worst.

One common perception of "religion", characteristic of this contemporary era, is that all religions are about devi's and deva's, rituals, symbols, images, dogmas, festivals, saints, shrines and so on. After all, all cultures in the world believe in existence of an entity/entities that lead to creation of this vast arrangement called Universe and those entities are considered as the cause of everything one sees or perceives. Therefore, at the end of the day, all religions are the same. This too, perpetuates a situation where only the secular understanding of Ramayana is encouraged, which in turn requires studying it like a pastime/lila with characters, but without its true meaning (Bhaava). So we shall attempt to study, Sita devi's true nature as in Maharishi Valmiki's Ramayana.

All rules, rituals and actions (karma) prescribed by Shastras are tools to know and understand the ultimate reality. If your karma is not in harmony with this goal of the Vedas, it is mere labour. Thus, Manu in the conclusion of his Dharma Shastra says

सर्वेषामपि चैतेषां शुभानामिह कर्मणाम् ।
किं चित्श्रेयस्करतरं कर्मोक्तं पुरुषं प्रति ॥12.84॥
सर्वेषामपि चैतेषामात्मज्ञानं परं स्मृतम् ।
तद् ह्यग्र्यं सर्वविद्यानां प्राप्यते ह्यमृतं ततः ॥12.85।

"From among all these good acts, is there any one act which has been described as more efficacious in securing to man his Highest Good?"—(84)

Of all these, Knowledge of the Self has been declared to be the most efficacious; since it is the best of all sciences, as Immortality is attained by its means. (85)

Who are Lord Raam and Sīta-devi in Mahārishi Vālmikī's Ramāyana?

The same atman has been glorified as Raam by Maharishi Valmiki in the Ramayana, at the very beginning of which, he says-

वेद वेद्ये परे पुंसि जाते दशरथात्मजे ।
वेदःप्रचेतसादासीद् साक्षाद् रामायणात्मना - Valmikī Ramayana - 1.1.1

(The Supreme being who is known through Vedas, descended as son of Dashrath, Vedas were rendered in form of Ramayana by son of Pracheta Valmiki.)

This shloka (verse) of Sundarkand is clear indicative of Divinity of Lord Raam

सर्वान् लोकान् सुसम्हृत्य सभूतान् सचराचरान् ।।
पुनरेव तथा स्रष्टुम् शक्तो रामो महायशाः - Valmiki Ramayana- 5.51. 39

(Illustrious Shree *Raam* can put an end to whole creation along with its creatures, and can again create them, such is His potential.)

Valmiki Ramayana is full of such shlokas, for anyone who would attempt to view it.

Ancient seers were wise enough to understand the difficulties regarding knowing the real nature of the self. Thus, they described the reality in a manner that would allow us to perceive reality through each of our faculties, our mind and our sense.

Without understanding the existence, one cannot understand the reason of the existence. Therefore, without understanding the how Maya works, one cannot understand the maya-pati Bhagawan.

In other words without knowing the Goddess (mahamaya), one cannot understand the Supreme Lord. This is the beauty of the Sanatan Dharma. If you want to know Shree Raam, you have to know Sita-devi first.

Sita-devi herself says:

अनन्या राघवेणाहं भास्करेण प्रभा यथा। Valmiki Ramayana - 5.21.16

(I am inseparable from Rāghava (Raam), like radiance from sun)

Sita-devi continues,

अहमौपयिकी भार्या तस्यैव वसुधापतेः॥5.21.17॥
व्रतस्नातस्य विप्रस्य विद्येव विदितात्मनः।

"I, alone, am the righteous wife of the Lord of the Earth. Like the knowledge of the Vedas which rightfully belongs to a wise one who has realised the self after having had his graduation bath, having observed the righteous vows during the period of his study.

Lord Shiva reveals Mother Parvati in the Adhyatma Ramayana, which is part of Brahmanda Purana. The Hanuman-Sita dialogue is narrated by Lord Shiva. Shree Hanuman-ji inquired about Lord Raam and Sita-devi and this is what was said...

रामं विद्धी परं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानंद अद्वयं।

सर्वोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं सत्तामात्रमगोचरं॥ 1.32॥

Know Sri Raam as non-dual Brahm, free from all attributes about which only this much is known that 'it is'.

तत्सान्निध्यान्मया सृष्टं तस्मिन्नारोप्यतेऽबुधैः । अयोध्यानगरे जन्म रघुवंशेऽतिनिर्मले ॥३५
विश्वामित्रसहायत्वं मखसंरक्षणं ततः । अहल्याशापशमनं चापभङ्गो महेशितुः ॥ ३६
मत्पाणिग्रहणं पश्चाद्भार्गवस्य मदक्षयः । अयोध्यानगरे वासो मया द्वादशवार्षिकः॥ ३७
दण्डकारण्यगमनं विराधवध एव च । मायामारीचमरणं मायासीताहृतिस्तथा ॥ ३८॥ जटायुषोमोक्षलाभः क
बन्धस्य तथैव च । शबर्याः पूजनं पश्चात्सुग्रीवेण समागमः ॥ ३९॥ वालिनश्च वधः पश्चात्सीतान्वेषणमेव च ।
सेतुबन्धश्च जलधौ लङ्कायाश्च निरोधनम् ॥ ४०॥ रावणस्य वधो युद्धेऽसपुत्रस्य दुरात्मनः । विभीषणे राज्य
दानं पुष्पकेण मया सह ॥ ४१॥ अयोध्यागमनं पश्चाद्राज्ये रामाभिषेचनम् । एवमादीनि कर्माणि मयैवाचरि
तान्यपि आरोपयन्तिरामेऽस्मिन्निर्विकारेऽखिलात्मनि ॥ ४२॥ रामो न गच्छति न तिष्ठति नानुशोचत्याकाङ्क्ष
ते त्यजति नो न करोति किञ्चित् । आनन्दमूर्तिरचलः परिणामहीनो मायागुणाननुगतो हि तथा विभाति ४३

In these verses Sita-devi narrates the Ramayana and reveals to Hanuman that from the moment of Rāma's appearance before Kaushalya to Rajya Abhisheka of Rāma, everything has been done by Sita-devi herself.

Rāma does nothing –

रामो न गच्छति न तिष्ठति नानुशोचत्याकाङ्क्षते त्यजति नो न करोति किञ्चित् ।

आनन्दमूर्तिरचलः परिणामहीनो मायागुणाननुगतो हि तथा विभाति ॥ 43॥

Rama doesn't go, doesn't stay, doesn't mourn, doesn't long, doesn't shun, doesn't do anything. Rama is bliss, unperturbed, unmoved, unchanged.

Thus its established Sri Raam is atman and Sita-devi, His Shakti. Thus, the lovable Saguna Bhagawan is available to us via the virtue of Bhagawati Sita only. From an atom to Virat Hiranyagarbha, everything is Sita - The Supreme Goddess. This creation, its innumerable creations, this profusion of the galaxies, everything is Mother Goddess. From the vantage point of creation, Sita-devi and Lord Raam are two entities and from the vantage point of non-duality, They are One, like flame and its heat.

त्वं विष्णुर्जानकी लक्ष्मीः शिवस्त्वं जानकी शिवा । ब्रह्मा त्वं जानकी वाणी सूर्यस्त्वं जानकी प्रभा ॥

Ayodhya kand, Adhyatma Ramayana

Rama, you are Vishnu, and Janaki (Sita) is Lakshmi. You are Shiva and Janaki too, is Shiva. You are Brahma and Janaki is Vaani (Saraswati), You are Surya and Janaki is radiance.

Goswami Tulsidas too, agrees -

श्रुति सेतु पालक राम तुम्ह जगदीस माया जानकी।
जो सृजति जगु पालति हरति रूख पाइ कृपानिधान की॥

O Rama, the protector of Shruti, you are the Īshwara and Janakī is Maya, who creates, sustains and destroys because of you.

This is the true essence of “श्रीयते हरिणापि या सा श्री”- the one who is worshipped or served by Hari/Bhagawan is Shree (Devi).

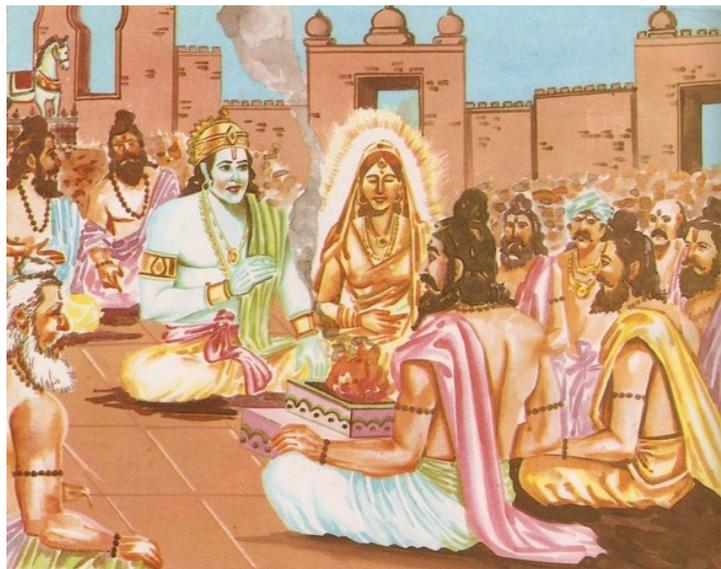
Thus, the Shree in Jai Shree Raam, is Mother Sita as Shree Devi herself, the Supreme Mother, the Divine Feminine, who has been extolled by Vedas and Puranas.

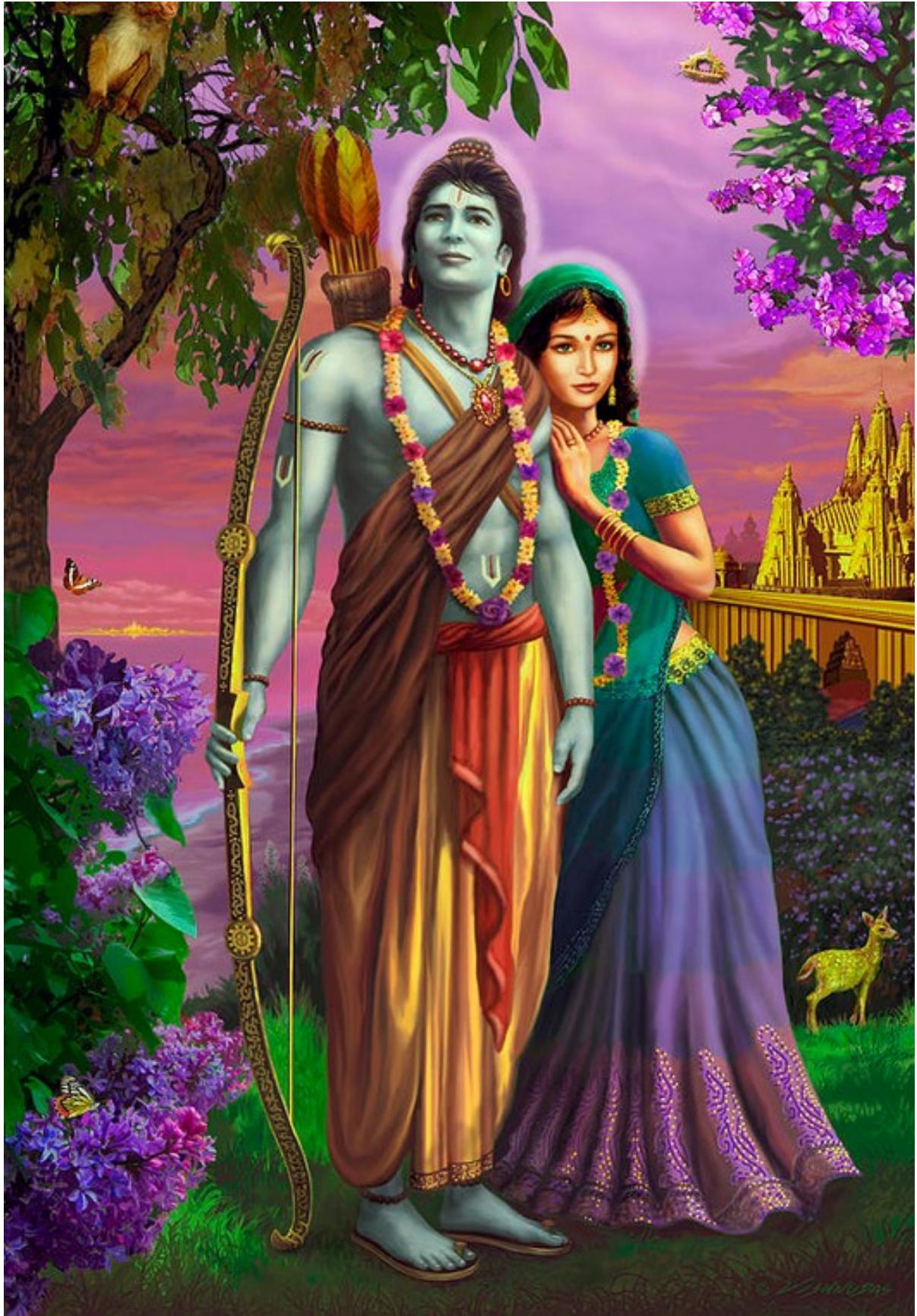
One must have pity at the misfortune of those who see the glorious proclamation of Jai Shree Rama as a “masculine” or “patriarchal” war cry. We have even come across ignorant narratives of how Sita-devi was dropped from colloquial “Jai Siya Raam” to make it patriarchal “Jai Shree Raam”. For after all, it is they, who are truly ignorant of the Glory of the Divine Mother who pervades all creation as Shakti. It is fundamentally impossible to drop Mahamaya Sita-devi from anything pertaining to Shree Raam, for He cannot be understood without her. It is therefore, also our ignorance to assume that Sita-devi was “victimized” or “oppressed”.

Let us vanquish ignorance with the knowledge that Sita-devi, the Mother of all creation, needs no “advocates”. She is the Divine Feminine, the Shakti, the reason of all existence and inseparable from our Glorious Bhagawan Shree Raam.

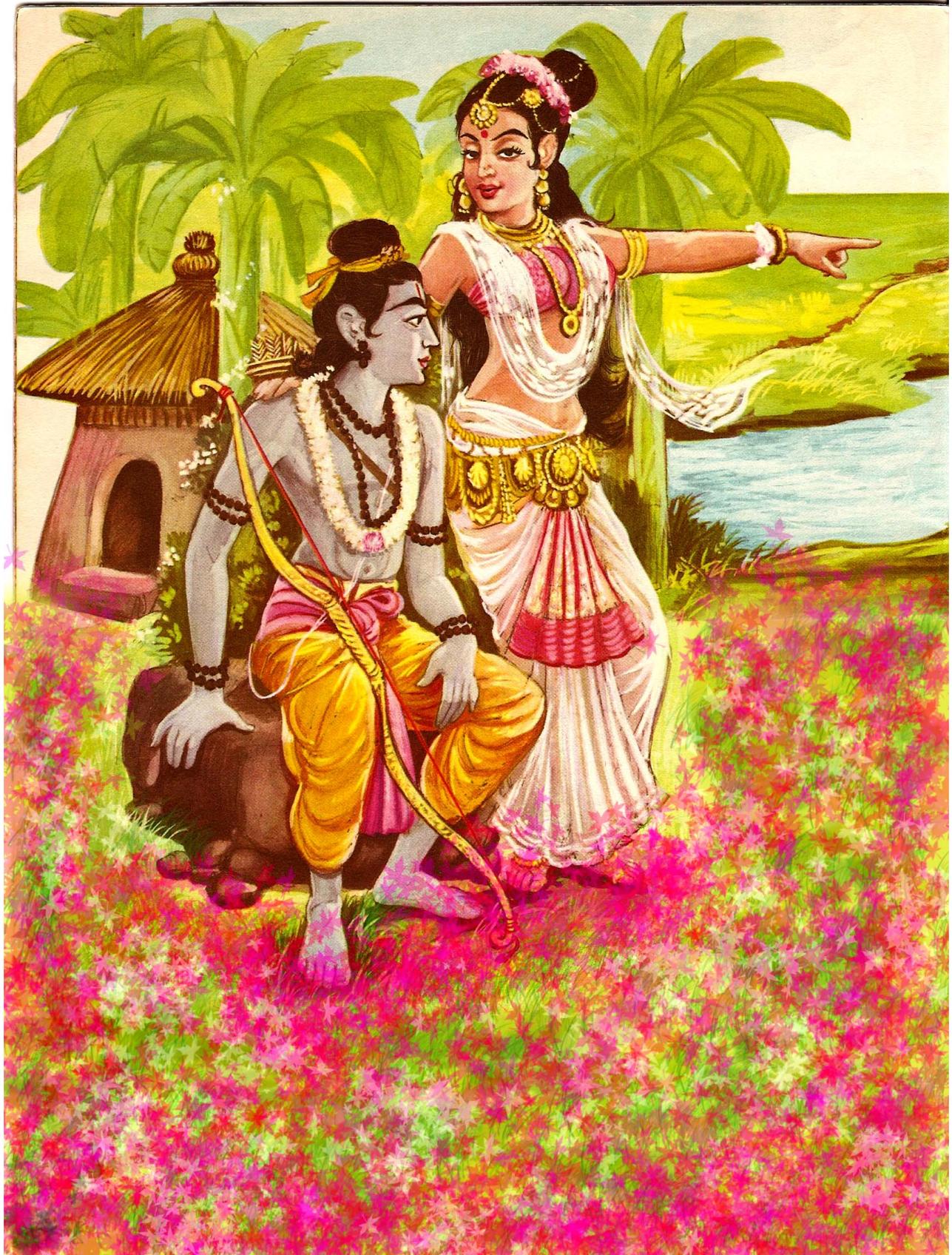
Let us proudly proclaim:

Jai Shree Sita-Raam-Lakshman-Hanuman!











Ravan clipping the wings of Jatayu



The Pushpak Vimana (the Flower Airplane) the transported Lord Raam and His team back to Ayodhya)



The Ashoka Vatika where Sita Devi was held captive for months.
The Footprint is of Shree Hanumanji.

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Narottam das & Arjun Nandlal

E-mail info@dipika.org.za

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