

STORY TIME

THE STORY OF RAMAYAN

DIWALI - FESTIVAL OF JOY AND HAPPINESS

Thousands of years ago, in the city of Ayodhya, there was a wise and good king named Dasarath who had three queens, one of the them, Kaikeyi, served the king very nicely, and he therefore wanted to give her a benediction. Kaikeyi, however, said that she would ask for the benediction when it was necessary. At the time of the coronation of Prince Ramcandra, Kaikeyi requested her husband to enthrone her son Bharata and send Ramcandra in exile to the forest for fourteen years. Helpless king, Dasarath, being bound by his promise, ordered Ramcandra to go to the forest. And the Lord, as an obedient son, accepted the order immediately. He left everything without hesitation and set off on foot accompanied by His loving wife Sita and loyal younger brother, Lakshman. The grief-stricken King Dasaratha soon died in separation from his beloved son, Ram.

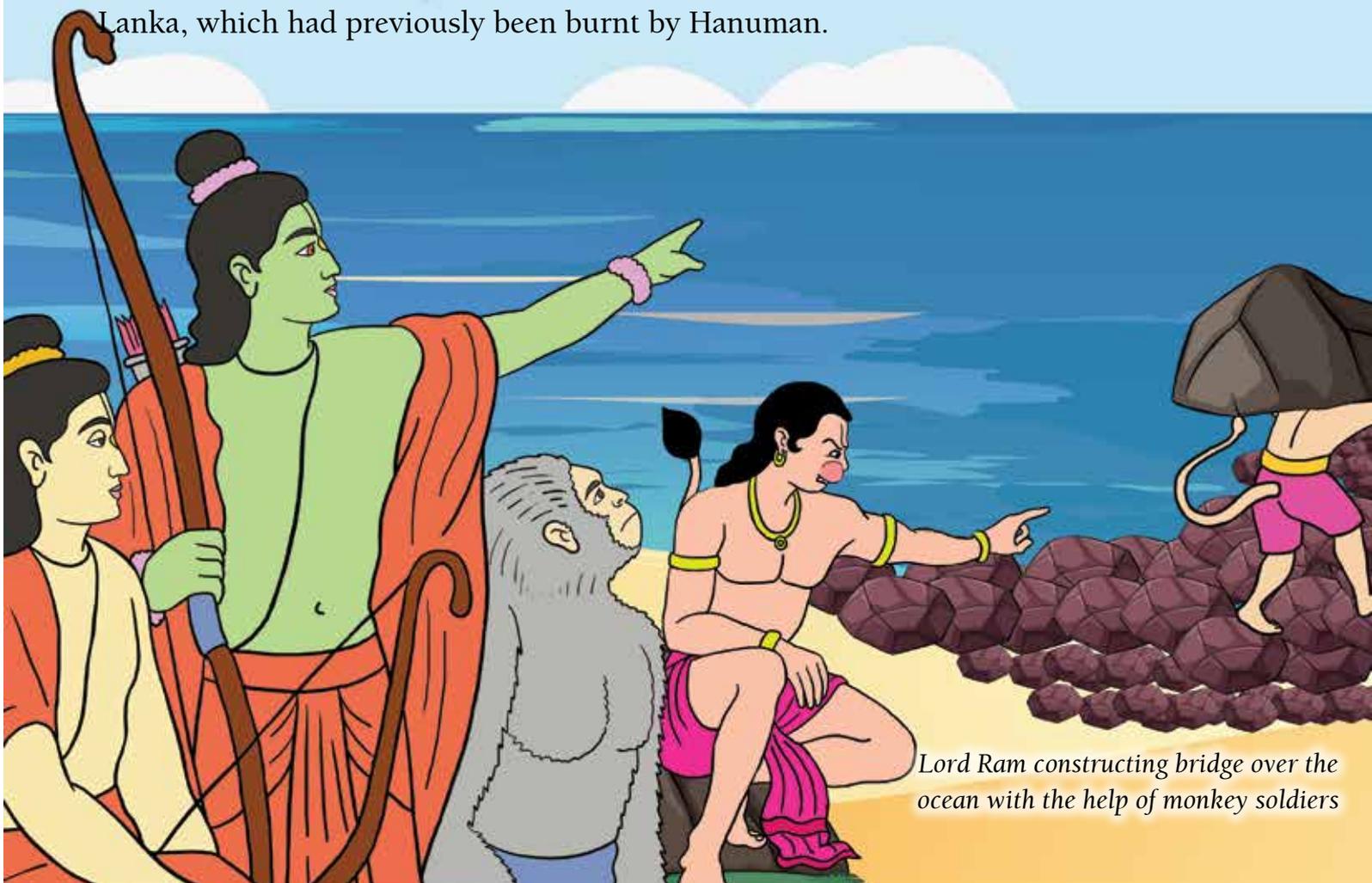


*Ram, Laxman and Sita
wandering in the forest*

A few years into their exile, a demoness named Surpanakha saw Lord Ramchandra and fell for his looks. She asked Lord Ramchandra to marry her. Lord Ramchandra refused and asked her to go to Lakshman instead. But Lakshman also refused. Enraged, Surpanakha showed her true form and Lakshman cut off her nose and ears.

The demoness went wailing to her brother who was none other than ten headed Ravan, the demon King of Lanka. Ravan was furious and swore revenge. With the help of another demon who took the form of a golden deer, he distracted Lord Ramchandra and Lakshman and kidnapped Sita from their hut. When Lord Ramchandra and Lakshman returned, Sita was missing! They realised that something wrong had happened while they were gone and immediately rushed to find her.

After constructing a bridge over the ocean by throwing into the water the peaks of mountains whose trees and other vegetation had been shaken by the hands of great monkeys, Lord Ramcandra went to Lanka to release Sitadevi from the clutches of Ravana. With the direction and help of Vibhishan, Ravana's brother, the Lord, along with the monkey soldiers, headed by Sugriva, Nila, and Hanuman, entered Ravana's kingdom, Lanka, which had previously been burnt by Hanuman.



Lord Ram constructing bridge over the ocean with the help of monkey soldiers

Thus, after rebuking Ravana, Lord Ramchandra fixed an arrow to His bow, aimed at Ravana, and released the arrow, which pierced Ravana's heart like a thunderbolt. Upon seeing this, Ravana's followers raised a tumultuous sound, crying, "Alas! Alas! What has happened? What has happened?" as Ravana, vomiting blood from his ten mouths, fell from his airplane.

Lord Ram and Mother Sita then returned back to Ayodhya. The entire kingdom celebrated the return of victorious and virtuous Ram, Sita, and Laxman as a Deepavali festival.

More than lakhs of years later, still Lord Ram is remembered and worshipped in India. On this festival occasion all people clean their homes and decorate them nicely. All over the country lamps are lit, and homes, shops, offices, streets are decorated, and fireworks set off in honor of Lord Ram.

Lord Ramchandra is not a mythological figure, an ordinary person, or even a very great human being. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead—the source, maintainer, and controller of uncountable universes. He assumed the form of a human being and appeared as the son of King Dasaratha and queen Kausalya with a mission to destroy the demons and re-establish the principles of religion.

