

Appearance of Sitadevi

Śrīmad Bhagavatam 9.10.6-7

Translation

O King, the pastimes of Lord Rāmacandra were wonderful, like those of a baby elephant. In the assembly where mother Sītā was to choose her husband, in the midst of the heroes of this world, He broke the bow belonging to Lord Śiva. This bow was so heavy that it was carried by three hundred men, but Lord Rāmacandra bent and strung it and broke it in the middle, just as a baby elephant breaks a stick of sugarcane. Thus the Lord achieved the hand of mother Sītā, who was equally as endowed with transcendental qualities of form, beauty, behavior, age and nature. Indeed, she was the goddess of fortune who constantly rests on the chest of the Lord. While returning from Sītā's home after gaining her at the assembly of competitors, Lord Rāmacandra met Paraśurāma. Although Paraśurāma was very proud, having rid the earth of the royal order twenty-one times, he was defeated by the Lord, who appeared to be a kṣatriya of the royal order.



Sri Moola Rama the original Deity of King Ikshvaku, Who was given to Maharaj Dasarath before Rama's birth, then to Laxman who worshipped Them during Rama's lifetime, who gave Them to Hanuman, who in the forest gave Them to Bhima, and was given to Narahari Tirtha who gave to Ananda Tirtha - Madhwacharya, now residing in the Raghavendra Tirtha Swami mutt at Mantralayam, Andhra Pradesh

Who is Sitadevi?

- ❁ **Sitadevi is the eternal consort of Lord Rama. Gaudiya Vaisnavas understand that Sitadevi is an incarnation of Radharani as Rama is an incarnation of Krishna. Sitadevi is therefore not a jivatma like us.**
- ❁ **Whenever the Lord descends, She also appears with Him e.g. with Vishnu, She is Lakshmi; with Rama, She is Sita; with Krishna, She is Radha; with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, She appears as Gadadhar etc**
- ❁ **As part of Her Earthly pastimes with Rama, Sitadevi is the daughter of the Earth goddess, Bhumi Devi, and central figure of the Ramayana, included in all the kandas. In Valmiki's own words, Ramayana is known as the noble story of Sita "Sita-ayah Charitam Mahat".**

How Sitadevi appeared

- ❁ The grandson of Ikshvaku was King Nimi, who was cursed to die and had an option to live again but choose not to - so dynasty called Videha. Janakaraja was born in that dynasty in Mithila and was childless & doing sacrifice
- ❁ Janakaraj was ploughing land to prepare it for conducting the Yajna. He unearthed a golden casket in which he found a beautiful girl and was overjoyed. A land ploughed by the yoke is called 'Sita' and so he named the baby as Sita.

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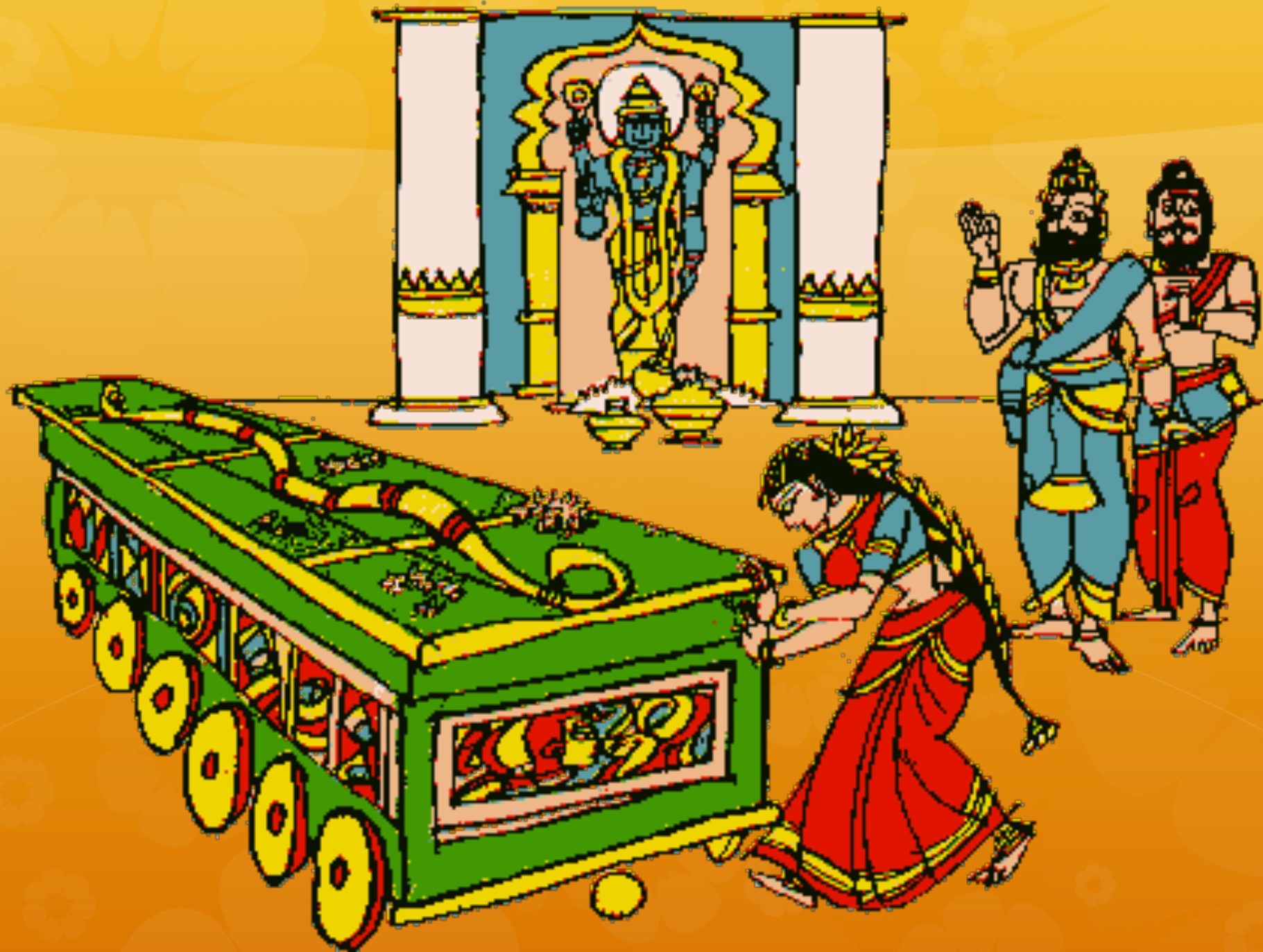


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- ❁ With the arrival of the baby, the king's good luck soared. His queen also gave birth to a daughter named Urmila. The two beautiful girls, by their noble qualities, good behaviour and intelligence, endeared themselves to one and all and grew to become ideal princesses

The Extraordinary Power

- ❁ Sitadevi was extraordinarily beautiful but absorbed in worshipping the Deity of the Lord of the Surya-vamsa.
- ❁ Parasurama came to visit Janakaraj and gave him the famous Shiva's bow to look after. It would take 300 men to lift the bow to move it.
- ❁ One day Sitadevi was playing with her friends and a ball went under the bow. She easily lifted the bow and got the ball out. When Janakaraj heard this he was shocked and decided that the only suitable match for Her would be one who can also lift the bow at a Swayamvara in due course.



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- ❁ Years later the Sage Vishwamitra, accompanied by his disciples Rama and Lakshmana, arrived at Mithila.



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- ❁ The news reached king Dashrath who rushed to Mithila with his entourage in great anticipation. Dashrath happily gave his permission and then the marriage of Rama and Sita Devi was celebrated in a grand manner.



Sita 09/
Swayamvar



Sita's wedding



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- ❁ At the same time Lakshmana married Sitadevi's sister Urmila. Bharat and Shatrughna married Sitadevi's cousin's Mandavi and Shrutakirti

Marriage of Sitadevi (con)

- ✿ **Apart from Their eternal relationship, Sitadevi was happy to marry Rama because of the following reasons:**
 - ✿ **The day before She had seen Rama and already given her heart to Rama**
 - ✿ **The ability of Rama to protect Her due to His great strength**
 - ✿ **The ability to clearly express what is in His heart (usually a man thinks how to deal with a problem whereas a woman may deal with a problem through discussion)**
 - ✿ **His self control / discipline - people have fought wars to marry Her but Rama, although qualified, asked for permission first**
- ✿ **Janakaraj placed the hand of Sitadevi over Rama (usually it's the other way round) because Rama was now under the care of divine love of Sitadevi. This was due to compassionate nature of Sita - Rama would not kill any demon in front of Sitadevi**

Qualities of Sitadevi

- ❁ **Janakaraja explains the qualities of Sitadevi to Rama**
 - ❁ **Born in an extraordinary way just like You**
 - ❁ **When you follow Dharma, She will follow you and if you deviate from the path of Dharma - She will advise you. She does advise Rama on many occasions:**
 - ❁ **When Rama was exiled and wanted Sita to stay and look after father and mother. She corrects that Dharam pati and patni can't be separated - effect of karma are intertwined in joy and sorrow**
 - ❁ **Rama vowed to kill demons in forest Dandakaranya for protection of the sages. Sitadevi was worried and revealed Her mind to Rama that why is He wearing ascetics' clothes and then going to kill. Rama considered Her advise and explained His reasons**
 - ❁ **Sitadevi is like a shadow - with prosperity She will follow and with difficulties She will lead (eg led in forest and to Ravana)**
- ❁ **After hearing, at that time Rama took vow of "ekapatni vrata"**

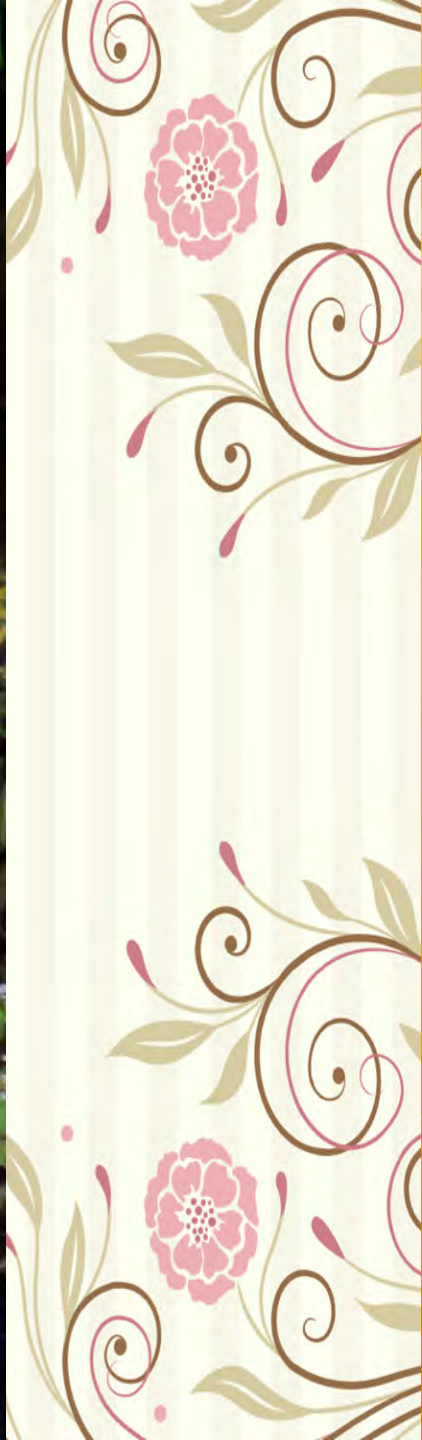
Banishment of Rama

- ❁ After 12 years of happy Royal family life, circumstances led to the banishment of Rama to the forest for 14 years. Sitadevi persuaded Rama that She should go too
- ❁ Lakshman also joined them in the forest and He wouldn't sleep for 14 years and such was His loyalty to Rama that He would only recognise Sitadevi by seeing Her feet

Exiled to the forest







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- ❁ Bharat came with residents of Ayodhya to persuade Rama to come back to the kingdom but Rama would not break the promise of His father.
- ❁ Eventually the 3 of them moved to Panchvati, where Shurpanakha nose was cut off by Lakshman. Rama singlehandedly destroyed the 14,000 army of Khara





Roles of Sitadevi in Ramayana

- ❁ **Divine mother with the concept of love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness**
- ❁ **Dharam patni with the concept of companionship, support, service, advice**
- ❁ **Attraction to temptation (as lessons to us)**
 - ❁ **Deer was called abhirama. When attracted to something other than Rama, then Rama walks away**

The Charming Deer





Sita charmed by the deer



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Ravana

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Ravana grabs

Sita



Sita kidnapped by Ravana



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 - ❁ **Surrounded by one-eyed and one-eared demons (representing "I" and "mine" attitude of the materialists in this world)**

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 - ❁ Atithi devo bhava - even though She was prisoner, Sitadevi never forgot the etiquette of how to treat uninvited guests
 - ❁ Between woman and stranger there must separation
 - ❁ This grass for Rama is brahmastra and this grass will be in Ravana's mouth when he loses
- ❁ Sitadevi distraught so Hanuman recites Ramayana while hiding. Narrator of Ramayana should be hidden and Rama should be in the front. Later Hanuman gave Her Rama's ring



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- ❁ Sitadevi sees small Hanuman who also shows Her his huge size. Sitadevi asks his real size and in humility he says small.

The March to Lanka

- ❁ Sitadevi says to Hanuman that Rama should rescue Her within 60 days. The estimated timeline (which needs to be confirmed) is as follows:
 - ❁ 2 day - Hanuman is captured & burns Lanka
 - ❁ 5 day - Hanuman and monkey army reach back to Rama
 - ❁ 20 days march to Rameswaram by Rama and monkey army
 - ❁ 3 days Rama waits for the ocean to assist to cross (breaks rules)
 - ❁ 20 days to build 800 miles bridge
 - ❁ 10 days war in Lanka
- ❁ After Ravana was killed, Sitadevi was rescued on 60th day. Shortly after that was also the end of the 14th year and Bharat had vowed to kill himself if Rama did not return at the end of the 14th year.

The slaying of Ravana



Agni Pariksha

Was Sitadevi really kidnapped?

- ❁ In the Kurma Purana, Sita prays to Agni just when Ravana arrives to kidnap her.
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Lakshman Rekha



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- ❁ **While Sita is taken by Agni to heaven, Maya Sita is confined in Lanka.**
- ❁ **After Ravana's death, when Maya Sita enters the fire at Agni Pariksha, Agni restores the real pure Sitadevi to Rama**





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- ❁ Gauranga met a Brahmin Rama bhakta in Madurai who is devastated after learning that mother Sita was stained by Ravana's touch and gives up food. He later consoles the brahmin saying actually Maya Sita was taken away by Ravana

Sitadevi's compassion

- ❁ After Ravana was killed, Hanuman went to the Ashoka vana to meet Sitadevi and inform her of the good news of Rama's victory. Sita was extremely delighted on hearing this and asked Hanuman to ask for any boon he desired
- ❁ Sri Hanuman was full of anger against the demons who were guarding Sitadevi because they were always causing trouble for her. So he wanted permission to kill them.
- ❁ Mother Sita exhibited her unlimited compassion and magnanimity when she said that those Raksasis were simply and helplessly working under the instructions of the evil Ravana as his servants and it is not right to punish them. [like Draupadi] At that time, she told the following story about the hunter, bear and lion.

Sitadevi's compassion

- ❁ **Once a hunter in the forest tripped and fell down while hunting a lion and lost his weapons.**
- ❁ **The lion then started chasing the hunter.**
- ❁ **The hunter ran and he climbed upon a tree.**
- ❁ **On the tree he could see that there was a bear sitting.**
- ❁ **The man was completely helpless and he took shelter of the bear requesting the bear to spare his life.**
- ❁ **Meanwhile the lion came to the bottom of the tree and instigated the bear to push the man down so that they can both eat the man.**
- ❁ **The bear refused saying that the man has taken shelter of him and hence he would not push him down.**

Sitadevi's compassion

- ❁ **After sometime the bear started sleeping and the lion told the hunter, I am feeling very hungry. So you push the sleeping bear down from the tree so that I can kill and eat him and you can be relieved.**
- ❁ **The ungrateful hunter, so much concerned about his own life, pushed the sleeping bear.**
- ❁ **The bear somehow woke up while falling down and caught hold of a branch of the tree and was saved.**
- ❁ **The lion told the bear that even though the bear tried to save the hunter, he was so ungrateful as to push him down. Hence the bear should now help the lion by pushing the hunter.**
- ❁ **The saintly bear replied that great souls never have the inimical attitude towards others and it is their nature to be compassionate even if the others are of a bad nature. Thus the bear stood by its principles and did not harm the hunter who was greatly ashamed seeing the behaviour of the bear.**





RAM DAS



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Why Rama "abandoned" Sitadevi

- ❁ **This act by Rama has been scrutinised by spiritualists:**
 - ❁ **Selflessness demonstrated by Rama and dignity by Sitadevi:**
 - ❁ **When rumours began, Rama was obliged to act because He has the role of the King. Dilemma -for higher purpose Rama sent Sita away**
 - ❁ **Separation but no abandoned as taken to Valmiki ashram and still under Rama's protection. Sita heart broken but she understood**
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 - ❁ **Sita also had no bad feelings towards Rama as exemplified by her sons, Luv & Kush, who recited Ramayana as taught by Valmiki**
 - ❁ **Sita stopped Luv and Kush when they were going to fight against Rama and she introduced Rama to them as their father**
 - ❁ **Curse of Bhrigu Muni to Lord Vishnu for being separated from his dharam patni, Khyati**
 - ❁ **On the other hand, Krishna married 16000 princesses who were captured by Bhaumasura. This is demonstrating compassion**

Sitadevi returns to Earth

- ❁ At one such sacrifice, some 15 years later, two boys came into the arena of the sacrifice while Rama was sitting on his 'asana' and recited the Ramayana. Rama was convinced they were his very own sons born to Sitadevi. He sent word to Valmiki that Sitadevi can come and prove her purity and take Her place on His side.
- ❁ Sitadevi came and prayed, "If Rama has always been foremost in my heart, then may my Mother Earth (Bhumi) herself deliver me". As she spoke, the earth rumbled, shook and cracked open where Sita stood. Bhumi devi then appeared, seated on a throne of incredible natural earthly opulence, surrounded by 'nagas' (snakes), and she invited Sita to take her seat along side her and thus took Sitadevi.

Sripad Madhvacarya's
Mahabharata Tatparaynirnaya 9:40

pravisya bhumau sa devi
loke drstyanusaratah
reme ramenavi yukta
bhaskarena prabha yatha

"That beautiful Sita devi seemingly entered into the earth though actually she always remains with Lord Rama, just as the sun's rays are always with the sun."

Qualities of Sri Sita Devi Reveal Her Inner Harmony

- ❁ **Sitadevi's forgiveness:** In accord with Her noble character, Sita is ever kind to the downtrodden. 'A righteous person does not consider the offenses of others.'
- ❁ **Sitadevi's openheartedness:** As Sita, Rama, and their soldiers are returning to Ayodhya, they reach Kishkindha, the home of the monkey warriors. Sitadevi asked Rama if all the wives of the monkeys could also come. Rama stops the chariot, the monkeys quickly got their wives, and only then did they continue their journey.
- ❁ **Sitadevi's gratitude:** After the coronation of Sita-Rama, Sitadevi gave Hanuman the necklace that Rama has given her, as a token of Her appreciation of him.