śrīḥ

śrīmatē rāmānujāya namaḥ

śrīmatē nigamāntamahādēśikāya namaḥ

villūr naḍādūr śrī śrīnidhēḥ kṛtiṣu

॥ *śrīrāmacatuśślōkī* ॥

with

word-by-word meaning (padārtha),

word separation (padacchēda), prose order (anvaya),

glossed translation (padamālā) and summary (bhāvārtha)

by

Sunder Kidāmbi

Prepared with the gracious blessings of

all my ācāryas, elders and well-wishers

Introduction
(upōdghāta)

The *Śrī Rāma Catuśślōkī* tells the story of *Śrī Rāma* in four verses. It was composed by *Śrī U. Ve. Villūr Naḍādūr Śrī Śrīnidhi Svāmī*, who bears the title *Āśukavisārvabhauma*, "the sovereign among extempore poets." It appears that *Śrī Rāma* Himself arranged to have His story told so concisely through this great poet.

Around 1940, when he was still young, the *Svāmī* was struck by smallpox, a dreaded disease that took many lives in those days. The doctors who examined him said that he would not live beyond the next morning. That night, he resolved to recite, in his own words, the story of *Śrī Rāma*, which brings even the departed back to life, and he trusted that the Lord would protect him. Amid his suffering, he composed these four verses and, after describing the coronation of *Śrī Rāma*, ended with the words "While the consort of *Sītā* stays awake to protect me, what fear is there for me?" He also added a *phalaśruti* declaring that these verses would serve as a medicine for smallpox. When the doctors came the next day, as a matter of form, they were astonished to find that he had recovered. Thus, through this work, *Śrī Rāma* showed the world that the *Svāmī* was not only an *āśukavi*, an extempore poet, but also a *varakavi*, a poet whose words bear fruit.

Many who later received these four verses from the *Svāmī* by *upadēśa* obtained all that they wished for. Seeing that the *stōtra* was not a medicine for smallpox alone, but granted every fruit sought by those who recited it, the *Svāmī* changed the *phalaśruti* accordingly.

Since many devotees wished to understand the meaning of this *Catuśślōkī*, the *Svāmī*'s son, *Śrī U. Ve. Dr. V. S. Karuṇākarācāriar Svāmī*, a renowned scholar and poet in his own right, who counts himself among the many who have benefited from reciting it, published it with a short commentary in his *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa Trayī*, as a concise prelude to the *Svāmī*'s *Mañju Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mandasmita Rāmāyaṇa*, just as the *Saṃkṣēpa Rāmāyaṇa* opens *Vālmīki*'s *Rāmāyaṇa*.

śrīḥ

śrīmatē rāmānujāya namaḥ

śrīmatē nigamāntamahādēśikāya namaḥ

॥ *śrīrāmacatuśślōkī* ॥

kavitājitakallōlikanyakākāntavakṣasē ।

karuṇādiguṇāḍhyāya kamalānidhayē namaḥ ॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

kavitā-jita-kallōli-kanyakā-kānta-vakṣasē ।

karuṇā-ādi-guṇa-āḍhyāya kamalā-nidhayē namaḥ ॥

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Salutation *(namaḥ)* to ***Kamalānidhi*** (***Śrīnidhi Svāmī***) *(kamalā-nidhayē)*, who is endowed with compassion and other qualities *(karuṇā-ādi-guṇa-āḍhyāya)* and who, by his poetry, has conquered the Lord's bosom, which shines with the presence of the daughter of the ocean (***Lakṣmī***) *(kavitā-jita-kallōli-kanyakā-kānta-vakṣasē)*.

Notes (*ṭippaṇī*)

This invocatory verse has a second meaning. Since the scriptures enjoin regarding one's ***ācārya*** as the Lord Himself, it can also be read as a salutation to the Lord: to ***Kamalā-nidhi***, the treasure of ***Kamalā*** (***Lakṣmī***), that is, ***Nārāyaṇa***, who is rich in compassion and other auspicious qualities, and whose chest, the seat of the daughter of the ocean, is won over by poetry. The name ***Kamalā-nidhi*** also renders the ***Svāmī***'s own name, ***Śrī-nidhi***, since ***Kamalā*** and ***Śrī*** are both names of ***Lakṣmī***.

rāmaḥ kauśikamanvagātpathi munērvācāvadhīttāṭakāṃ
satraṃ tasya rarakṣa tēna kathitāḥ śuśrāva tāstāḥ kathāḥ ।
gatvāthō mithilāṃ vidhāya dṛṣadaṃ yōṣinmaṇiṃ sanmunēḥ
bhaṅktvā dhūrjaṭicāpamāpa ramaṇīṃ sītābhidhānāmapi ॥ **1** *॥*

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

rāmaḥ kauśikam anvagāt pathi munēḥ vācā avadhīt tāṭakām
satram tasya rarakṣa tēna kathitāḥ śuśrāva tāḥ tāḥ kathāḥ ।
gatvā athō mithilām vidhāya dṛṣadam yōṣit-maṇim sat-munēḥ
bhaṅktvā dhūrjaṭi-cāpam āpa ramaṇīm sītā-abhidhānām api ॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

rāmaḥ kauśikam anvagāt, pathi munēḥ vācā tāṭakām avadhīt, tasya satram rarakṣa, tēna kathitāḥ tāḥ tāḥ kathāḥ śuśrāva, athō mithilām gatvā, dṛṣadam sat-munēḥ yōṣit-maṇim vidhāya, dhūrjaṭi-cāpam bhaṅktvā, sītā-abhidhānām ramaṇīm api āpa ।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
rāmaḥ	Lord *Rāma*
kauśikam	the sage *Kauśika* (*Viśvāmitra*)
anvagāt	followed (went along with)
pathi	on the way
munēḥ	of the sage
vācā	at the word (command)
tāṭakām	the demoness *Tāṭakā*
avadhīt	slew
tasya	his

Word	Meaning
satram	sacrifice (*yajña*)
rarakṣa	protected
tēna	by him
kathitāḥ	narrated
tāḥ tāḥ	those many
kathāḥ	stories
śuśrāva	heard
athō	then
mithilām	towards *Mithilā*
gatvā	having proceeded
dṛṣadam	the stone
sat-munēḥ	of the noble sage (*Gautama*)
yōṣit-maṇim	into the jewel among women (*Ahalyā*)
vidhāya	having turned
dhūrjaṭi-cāpam	the bow of Lord *Śiva*
bhaṅktvā	having broken
sītā-abhidhānām	named *Sītā*
ramaṇīm	the lovely lady
api	also
āpa	obtained (in marriage)

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Lord ***Rāma*** *(rāmaḥ)* followed *(anvagāt)* the sage ***Kauśika*** *(kauśikam)*. On the way *(pathi)*, at the word *(vācā)* of the sage *(munēḥ)*, He slew *(avadhīt)* the demoness ***Tāṭakā*** *(tāṭakām)*. He protected *(rarakṣa)* his *(tasya)* sacrifice

(satram) and heard *(śuśrāva)* those many *(tāḥ tāḥ)* stories *(kathāḥ)* narrated *(kathitāḥ)* by him (the sage) *(tēna)*. Then *(athō)*, proceeding *(gatvā)* towards ***Mithilā*** *(mithilām)*, He turned *(vidhāya)* the stone *(dṛṣadam)* into the jewel among women *(yōṣit-maṇim)*, the wife of the noble sage *(sat-munēḥ)*. Having broken *(bhaṅktvā)* the bow of Lord ***Śiva*** *(dhūrjaṭi-cāpam)*, He also *(api)* obtained *(āpa)* the lovely lady *(ramaṇīm)* named ***Sītā*** *(sītā-abhidhānām)*.

Summary (*bhāvārtha*)

Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, who appeared as ***Śrī Rāma***, went along with the sage ***Viśvāmitra***. On the way, at the sage's word, He slew the demoness ***Tāṭakā***. He protected the sage's sacrifice and listened to the many beautiful stories the sage narrated. Then, by the touch of His divine feet, He turned a stone into ***Ahalyā***, the jewel among women, the beloved wife of ***Gautama***, a sage rich in penance. Reaching ***Mithilā***, He broke the bow of Lord ***Śiva*** and took the hand of the lovely ***Sītā***.

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sītāyāḥ karalālanēna sa kṛtī jitvā muniṃ bhārgavaṃ
sākētaṃ tarasā praviśya jananīmānandayan madhyamām ।
āsīdyō vipinē caturdaśa samā rakṣan munīnānatān
rakṣassaṅghamathāvadhīdaghaṭayadrājyaṃ ca sūryātmajē ॥ **2** *॥*

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

sītāyāḥ kara-lālanēna saḥ kṛtī jitvā munim bhārgavam
sākētam tarasā praviśya jananīm ānandayan madhyamām ।
āsīt yaḥ vipinē caturdaśa samāḥ rakṣan munīn ānatān
rakṣas-saṅgham atha avadhīt aghaṭayat rājyam ca sūrya-ātmajē ॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

saḥ sītāyāḥ kara-lālanēna kṛtī, bhārgavam munim jitvā, tarasā sākētam praviśya, yaḥ madhyamām jananīm ānandayan caturdaśa samāḥ vipinē āsīt, ānatān munīn rakṣan atha rakṣas-saṅgham avadhīt, sūrya-ātmajē rājyam ca aghaṭayat ।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
saḥ	He
sītāyāḥ	of *Sītā*
kara-lālanēna	by tenderly holding the hand (in marriage)
kṛtī	complete, fulfilled
bhārgavam	*Bhārgava* (*Paraśurāma*)
munim	the sage
jitvā	having defeated
tarasā	swiftly
sākētam	*Sākēta* (*Ayōdhyā*)
praviśya	having entered
yaḥ	who
madhyamām	the middle
jananīm	mother (*Kaikēyī*)
ānandayan	to please
caturdaśa	fourteen
samāḥ	years
vipinē	in the forest
āsīt	resided
ānatān	who had taken refuge (in Him)

Word	Meaning
munīn	the sages
rakṣan	to protect
atha	then
rakṣas-saṅgham	the hordes of *rākṣasa*s
avadhīt	destroyed
sūrya-ātmajē	to the son of the Sun-god (*Sugrīva*)
rājyam	the kingdom (of *Kiṣkindhā*)
ca	and
aghaṭayat	gave

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

He *(saḥ)*, having become complete *(kṛtī)* by tenderly holding the hand *(kara-lālanēna)* of *Sītā (sītāyāḥ)*, defeated *(jitvā)* the sage *(munim) Bhārgava (bhārgavam)* and swiftly *(tarasā)* entered *(praviśya) Sākēta (sākētam)*. He is the one who *(yaḥ)*, to please *(ānandayan)* the middle *(madhyamām)* mother (*Kaikēyī*) *(jananīm)*, resided *(āsīt)* in the forest *(vipinē)* for fourteen *(caturdaśa)* years *(samāḥ)*. Then *(atha)*, to protect *(rakṣan)* the sages *(munīn)* who had taken refuge in Him *(ānatān)*, He destroyed *(avadhīt)* the hordes of *rākṣasa*s *(rakṣas-saṅgham)*, and *(ca)* gave *(aghaṭayat)* the kingdom *(rājyam)* to the son of the Sun-god *(sūrya-ātmajē)*.

Summary (*bhāvārtha*)

Having become complete by holding the hand of *Sītā*, *Śrī Rāma* defeated *Paraśurāma* and swiftly entered *Sākēta* (*Ayōdhyā*). To please His step-mother *Kaikēyī*, He went to the forest to reside there for fourteen years. To protect the

sages who had taken refuge in Him, He destroyed the hordes of ***rākṣasa***s, and He gave the kingdom of ***Kiṣkindhā*** to ***Sugrīva***, the son of the Sun-god.

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vāyōrātmabhuvā tatō hanumatā pāthōdhipārasthitāṃ
prāṇēbhyō'pi garīyasīṃ priyatamāṃ vijñāya rakṣōhṛtām ।
sētuṃ vārinidhau vidhāya vividhānantāghavidhvaṃsanaṃ
laṅkāyāṃ vilulāva rāvaṇaśirōvṛndāni vandēya tam ॥ **3** *॥*

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

vāyōḥ ātmabhuvā tataḥ hanumatā pāthōdhi-pāra-sthitām
prāṇēbhyaḥ api garīyasīm priyatamām vijñāya rakṣas-hṛtām ।
sētum vārinidhau vidhāya vividha-ananta-agha-vidhvaṃsanam
laṅkāyām vilulāva rāvaṇa-śiras-vṛndāni vandēya tam ॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

tataḥ vāyōḥ ātmabhuvā hanumatā, prāṇēbhyaḥ api garīyasīm priyatamām rakṣas-hṛtām pāthōdhi-pāra-sthitām vijñāya, vārinidhau vividha-ananta-agha-vidhvaṃsanam sētum vidhāya, laṅkāyām rāvaṇa-śiras-vṛndāni vilulāva, tam vandēya ।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
tataḥ	then
vāyōḥ	of the Wind-god
ātmabhuvā	by the son
hanumatā	through ***Hanumān***
prāṇēbhyaḥ	than life itself
api	even

Word	Meaning
garīyasīm	dearer
priyatamām	the most beloved (wife)
rakṣas-hṛtām	abducted by the *rākṣasa* (*Rāvaṇa*)
pāthōdhi-pāra-sthitām	held on the other shore of the sea
vijñāya	having come to know
vārinidhau	in the ocean
vividha-ananta-agha-vidhvaṃsanam	which destroys the sins committed endlessly in various ways
sētum	the bridge (*sētu*)
vidhāya	having built
laṅkāyām	in *Laṅkā*
rāvaṇa-śiras-vṛndāni	the clusters of heads of *Rāvaṇa*
vilulāva	cut off
tam	Him
vandēya	let me bow to

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Then *(tataḥ)*, having come to know *(vijñāya)* through *Hanumān (hanumatā)*, the son *(ātmabhuvā)* of the Wind-god *(vāyōḥ)*, that His most beloved *(priyatamām)*, who is dearer *(garīyasīm)* to Him even *(api)* than life itself *(prāṇēbhyaḥ)*, had been abducted by the *rākṣasa (rakṣas-hṛtām)* and was held on the other shore of the sea *(pāthōdhi-pāra-sthitām)*, He built *(vidhāya)* in the ocean *(vārinidhau)* the bridge *(sētum)*, which destroys the sins committed endlessly in various ways *(vividha-ananta-agha-vidhvaṃsanam)*. In *Laṅkā (laṅkāyām)*, He cut off *(vilulāva)* the clusters of heads of *Rāvaṇa (rāvaṇa-śiras-vṛndāni)*. Let me bow *(vandēya)* to Him *(tam)*.

Summary (*bhāvārtha*)

Through the valiant ***Hanumān***, the son of the Wind-god, ***Śrī Rāma*** came to know that His beloved wife ***Sītā***, who was dearer to Him than His own life, had been abducted by ***Rāvaṇa*** and was held captive on the other shore of the sea. He built the ***sētu***, a bridge across the ocean, the very sight of which destroys all the sins that we commit endlessly in various ways. Reaching ***Laṅkā***, He cut off ***Rāvaṇa***'s heads cluster by cluster and defeated him. I bow to that Lord.

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āruhyātha vibhīṣaṇēna subhagaṃ bhaktyā samāvēditaṃ
mānyaṃ puṣpakamañjasā nijapurīmāgatya mitrairvṛtaḥ ।
ānandāya vasiṣṭhakāśyapamukhaiḥ paṭṭābhiṣiktō vibhuḥ
tasmin jāgrati jānakīpriyatamē kā nāma bhītirmama ॥ **4** *॥*

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

āruhya atha vibhīṣaṇēna subhagam bhaktyā samāvēditam
mānyam puṣpakam añjasā nija-purīm āgatya mitraiḥ vṛtaḥ ।
ānandāya vasiṣṭha-kāśyapa-mukhaiḥ paṭṭa-abhiṣiktaḥ vibhuḥ
tasmin jāgrati jānakī-priyatamē kā nāma bhītiḥ mama ॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

atha vibhīṣaṇēna bhaktyā samāvēditam subhagam mānyam puṣpakam āruhya, mitraiḥ vṛtaḥ añjasā nija-purīm āgatya, vibhuḥ ānandāya vasiṣṭha-kāśyapa-mukhaiḥ paṭṭa-abhiṣiktaḥ (abhūt) । tasmin jānakī-priyatamē jāgrati, mama kā nāma bhītiḥ (asti)?

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
atha	then

Word	Meaning
vibhīṣaṇēna	by ***Vibhīṣaṇa***
bhaktyā	with devotion
samāvēditam	offered
subhagam	the beautiful
mānyam	venerable
puṣpakam	***Puṣpaka*** (aerial chariot)
āruhya	having ascended
mitraiḥ	by friends
vṛtaḥ	surrounded
añjasā	swiftly
nija-purīm	to His own city (***Ayōdhyā***)
āgatya	having come back
vibhuḥ	the all-pervading Lord
ānandāya	for the joy (of all)
vasiṣṭha-kāśyapa-mukhaiḥ	by the sages headed by ***Vasiṣṭha*** and ***Kāśyapa***
paṭṭa-abhiṣiktaḥ	crowned as king
(abhūt)	was (implied)
tasmin	while He
jānakī-priyatamē	the most beloved of ***Jānakī***
jāgrati	stays awake (to protect me)
mama	for me
kā	what
nāma	indeed

Word	Meaning
bhītiḥ	fear
(asti)	is there (implied)

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Then *(atha)*, having ascended *(āruhya)* the beautiful *(subhagam)* and venerable *(mānyam)* ***Puṣpaka*** *(puṣpakam)*, offered *(samāvēditam)* with devotion *(bhaktyā)* by ***Vibhīṣaṇa*** *(vibhīṣaṇēna)*, and surrounded *(vṛtaḥ)* by friends *(mitraiḥ)*, the all-pervading Lord *(vibhuḥ)* swiftly *(añjasā)* came back *(āgatya)* to His own city *(nija-purīm)*, and for the joy of all *(ānandāya)* was *(abhūt)* crowned as king *(paṭṭa-abhiṣiktaḥ)* by the sages headed by ***Vasiṣṭha*** and ***Kāśyapa*** *(vasiṣṭha-kāśyapa-mukhaiḥ)*. While He *(tasmin)*, the most beloved of ***Jānakī*** *(jānakī-priyatamē)*, stays awake *(jāgrati)* to protect me, what *(kā)* fear *(bhītiḥ)* is there *(asti)* indeed *(nāma)* for me *(mama)*?

Summary (*bhāvārtha*)

Śrī Rāma then ascended the beautiful ***Puṣpaka vimāna***, which ***Vibhīṣaṇa*** offered Him with devotion, and flew swiftly back to ***Ayōdhyā*** with all His friends. There, to the joy of all, He was crowned king by ***Vasiṣṭha***, ***Kāśyapa*** and other great sages. While that consort of ***Sītā*** stays awake to protect me, what fear is there for me?

Notes (*ṭippaṇī*)

The ***Svāmī*** composed the words ***kā nāma bhītirmama*** during his own illness. Later, seeing the greatness and power of the ***stōtra***, he also gave the fourth line as:

tasmin jāgrati jānakīpriyatamē sarvatra samyagjayaḥ ॥

"While He, the most beloved of ***Jānakī***, stays awake, there is excellent victory *(samyak-jayaḥ)* for us everywhere *(sarvatra)*."

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dhanuṣkaracatuḥślōkī dhanuṣpurakavīritā ।
sarvadā kurvatāṃ cittē sarvadā bhātu sanmatā ॥ **5** *॥*

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

dhanuṣkara-catuḥślōkī dhanuṣpura-kavi-īritā ।
sarvadā kurvatām cittē sarva-dā bhātu sanmatā ॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

(iyam) dhanuṣpura-kavi-īritā sanmatā dhanuṣkara-catuḥślōkī, sarvadā cittē kurvatām sarva-dā bhātu ।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
(iyam)	this (implied)
dhanuṣpura-kavi-īritā	composed by the poet of *Dhanuṣpura* (*Villūr*)
sanmatā	praised by the learned
dhanuṣkara-catuḥślōkī	the four verses on the one who holds the bow in His hand (*Śrī Rāma*)
sarvadā	always
cittē	in the mind
kurvatām	for those who keep (it), i.e., recite (it)
sarva-dā	as the giver of all (that is wished for)
bhātu	may it shine

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

May this *(iyam)* set of four verses on the one who holds the bow in His hand *(dhanuṣkara-catuḥślōkī)*, composed by the poet of *Dhanuṣpura (dhanuṣpura-kavi-īritā)* and praised by the learned *(sanmatā)*, shine *(bhātu)* as the giver of

all *(sarva-dā)* for those who *(kurvatām)* always *(sarvadā)* keep it in their mind *(cittē)*.

Summary (*bhāvārtha*)

Composed by the poet of ***Dhanuṣpura*** (***Villūr***), these four verses celebrate ***Śrī Rāma***, who holds the bow (***dhanuṣ***) in His hand. Praised by the learned, this work will always grant all that is wished for to those who recite it. The verse plays on the word ***sarvadā***, which occurs twice: first as "always," and then, read as ***sarva-dā***, as "the giver of all."

Notes (*ṭippaṇī*)

When the ***Svāmī*** first composed this verse, during his own illness with smallpox, its second line read:

mārīkātaracittānāṃ mārītimitarāṃ diśēt ॥
mārī-kātara-cittānām mā-rītim itarām diśēt ॥

"May it show *(diśēt)* those whose minds are fearful *(kātara-cittānām)* of the pestilence *(mārī)* the other *(itarām)* way, the way of ***Mā*** (***Lakṣmī***) *(mā-rītim)*." That is, those who fear diseases such as smallpox and recite these verses will not fall into the grip of such diseases, but will obtain every kind of wealth and be happy. The line plays on ***mārī*** (pestilence) and ***mā-rīti*** (the way of ***Mā***).

The line can also be read by dividing ***mārītimitarāṃ*** as ***mā rītim itarām***: "May it not *(mā)* show *(diśēt)* any other course *(itarām rītim)* to those whose minds are fearful *(kātara-cittānām)* of the pestilence *(mārī)*." That is, they will not be affected by the disease and will not succumb to it.

When those who recited the ***stōtra*** found that it fulfilled all their wishes, the ***Svāmī*** replaced this line with the present one, ***sarvadā kurvatāṃ cittē sarvadā bhātu sanmatā***.

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॥ iti villūr naḍādūr śrī śrīnidhēḥ kṛtiṣu śrīrāmacatuśślōkī ॥

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