श्रीः
श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः
श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

विल्लूर् नडादूर् श्री श्रीनिधेः कृतिषु

॥ श्रीरामचतुश्श्लोकी ॥

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*.

श्रीः
श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः
श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

॥ श्रीरामचतुश्श्लोकी ॥

कविताजितकल्लोलिकन्यकाकान्तवक्षसे।
करुणादिगुणाढ्याय कमलानिधये नमः ॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

कविता-जित-कल्लोलि-कन्यका-कान्त-वक्षसे।
करुणा-आदि-गुण-आढ्याय कमला-निधये नमः ॥

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Salutation **(नमः)** to *Kamalānidhi* (*Śrīnidhi Svāmī*) **(कमला-निधये)**, who is endowed with compassion and other qualities **(करुणा-आदि-गुण-आढ्याय)** and who, by his poetry, has conquered the Lord's bosom, which shines with the presence of the daughter of the ocean (*Lakṣmī*) **(कविता-जित-कल्लोलि-कन्यका-कान्त-वक्षसे)**.

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*.

रामः कौशिकमन्वगात्पथि मुनेर्वाचावधीत्ताटकां
सत्रं तस्य ररक्ष तेन कथिताः शुश्राव तास्ताः कथाः।
गत्वाथो मिथिलां विधाय दृषदं योषिन्मणिं सन्मुनेः
भङ्क्त्वा धूर्जटिचापमाप रमणीं सीताभिधानामपि॥ 1॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

रामः कौशिकम् अन्वगात् पथि मुनेः वाचा अवधीत् ताटकाम्
सत्रम् तस्य ररक्ष तेन कथिताः शुश्राव ताः ताः कथाः।
गत्वा अथो मिथिलाम् विधाय दृषदम् योषित्-मणिम् सत्-मुनेः
भङ्क्त्वा धूर्जटि-चापम् आप रमणीम् सीता-अभिधानाम् अपि॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

रामः कौशिकम् अन्वगात्, पथि मुनेः वाचा ताटकाम् अवधीत्, तस्य सत्रम् ररक्ष, तेन कथिताः ताः ताः कथाः शुश्राव, अथो मिथिलाम् गत्वा, दृषदम् सत्-मुनेः योषित्-मणिम् विधाय, धूर्जटि-चापम् भङ्क्त्वा, सीता-अभिधानाम् रमणीम् अपि आप।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
रामः	Lord *Rāma*
कौशिकम्	the sage *Kauśika* (*Viśvāmitra*)
अन्वगात्	followed (went along with)
पथि	on the way
मुनेः	of the sage
वाचा	at the word (command)
ताटकाम्	the demoness *Tāṭakā*
अवधीत्	slew
तस्य	his

Word	Meaning
सत्रम्	sacrifice (*yajña*)
ररक्ष	protected
तेन	by him
कथिताः	narrated
ताः ताः	those many
कथाः	stories
शुश्राव	heard
अथो	then
मिथिलाम्	towards *Mithilā*
गत्वा	having proceeded
दृषदम्	the stone
सत्-मुनेः	of the noble sage (*Gautama*)
योषित्-मणिम्	into the jewel among women (*Ahalyā*)
विधाय	having turned
धूर्जटि-चापम्	the bow of Lord *Śiva*
भङ्क्त्वा	having broken
सीता-अभिधानाम्	named *Sītā*
रमणीम्	the lovely lady
अपि	also
आप	obtained (in marriage)

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Lord *Rāma* (रामः) followed (अन्वगात्) the sage *Kauśika* (कौशिकम्). On the way (पथि), at the word (वाचा) of the sage (मुनेः), He slew (अवधीत्) the demoness *Tāṭakā* (ताटकाम्). He protected (ररक्ष) his (तस्य) sacrifice (सत्रम्) and heard

(शुश्राव) those many (ताः ताः) stories (कथाः) narrated (कथिताः) by him (the sage) (तेन). Then (अथो), proceeding (गत्वा) towards *Mithilā* (मिथिलाम्), He turned (विधाय) the stone (दृषदम्) into the jewel among women (योषित्-मणिम्), the wife of the noble sage (सत्-मुनेः). Having broken (भङ्क्त्वा) the bow of Lord *Śiva* (धूर्जटि-चापम्), He also (अपि) obtained (आप) the lovely lady (रमणीम्) named *Sītā* (सीता-अभिधानाम्).

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*.

****

सीतायाः करलालनेन स कृती जित्वा मुनिं भार्गवं
साकेतं तरसा प्रविश्य जननीमानन्दयन् मध्यमाम्।
आसीद्यो विपिने चतुर्दश समा रक्षन् मुनीनानतान्
रक्षस्सङ्घमथावधीदघटयद्राज्यं च सूर्यात्मजे॥ 2॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

सीतायाः कर-लालनेन सः कृती जित्वा मुनिम् भार्गवम्
साकेतम् तरसा प्रविश्य जननीम् आनन्दयन् मध्यमाम्।
आसीत् यः विपिने चतुर्दश समाः रक्षन् मुनीन् आनतान्
रक्षस्-सङ्घम् अथ अवधीत् अघटयत् राज्यम् च सूर्य-आत्मजे॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

सः सीतायाः कर-लालनेन कृती, भार्गवम् मुनिम् जित्वा, तरसा साकेतम् प्रविश्य, यः मध्यमाम् जननीम् आनन्दयन् चतुर्दश समाः विपिने आसीत्, आनतान् मुनीन् रक्षन् अथ रक्षस्-सङ्घम् अवधीत्, सूर्य-आत्मजे राज्यम् च अघटयत्।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
सः	He
सीतायाः	of *Sītā*
कर-लालनेन	by tenderly holding the hand (in marriage)
कृती	complete, fulfilled
भार्गवम्	*Bhārgava* (*Paraśurāma*)
मुनिम्	the sage
जित्वा	having defeated
तरसा	swiftly
साकेतम्	*Sākēta* (*Ayōdhyā*)
प्रविश्य	having entered
यः	who
मध्यमाम्	the middle
जननीम्	mother (*Kaikēyī*)
आनन्दयन्	to please
चतुर्दश	fourteen
समाः	years
विपिने	in the forest
आसीत्	resided
आनतान्	who had taken refuge (in Him)
मुनीन्	the sages

Word	Meaning
रक्षन्	to protect
अथ	then
रक्षस्-सङ्घम्	the hordes of *rākṣasa*s
अवधीत्	destroyed
सूर्य-आत्मजे	to the son of the Sun-god (*Sugrīva*)
राज्यम्	the kingdom (of *Kiṣkindhā*)
च	and
अघटयत्	gave

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

He (सः), having become complete (कृती) by tenderly holding the hand (कर-लालनेन) of *Sītā* (सीतायाः), defeated (जित्वा) the sage (मुनिम्) *Bhārgava* (भार्गवम्) and swiftly (तरसा) entered (प्रविश्य) *Sākēta* (साकेतम्). He is the one who (यः), to please (आनन्दयन्) the middle (मध्यमाम्) mother (*Kaikēyī*) (जननीम्), resided (आसीत्) in the forest (विपिने) for fourteen (चतुर्दश) years (समाः). Then (अथ), to protect (रक्षन्) the sages (मुनीन्) who had taken refuge in Him (आनतान्), He destroyed (अवधीत्) the hordes of *rākṣasa*s (रक्षस्-सङ्घम्), and (च) gave (अघटयत्) the kingdom (राज्यम्) to the son of the Sun-god (सूर्य-आत्मजे).

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.

****

वायोरात्मभुवा ततो हनुमता पाथोधिपारस्थितां
प्राणेभ्योऽपि गरीयसीं प्रियतमां विज्ञाय रक्षोहृताम्।
सेतुं वारिनिधौ विधाय विविधानन्ताघविध्वंसनं
लङ्कायां विलुलाव रावणशिरोवृन्दानि वन्देय तम्॥ 3॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

वायोः आत्मभुवा ततः हनुमता पाथोधि-पार-स्थिताम्
प्राणेभ्यः अपि गरीयसीम् प्रियतमाम् विज्ञाय रक्षस्-हृताम्।
सेतुम् वारिनिधौ विधाय विविध-अनन्त-अघ-विध्वंसनम्
लङ्कायाम् विलुलाव रावण-शिरस्-वृन्दानि वन्देय तम्॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

ततः वायोः आत्मभुवा हनुमता, प्राणेभ्यः अपि गरीयसीम् प्रियतमाम् रक्षस्-हृताम् पाथोधि-पार-स्थिताम् विज्ञाय, वारिनिधौ विविध-अनन्त-अघ-विध्वंसनम् सेतुम् विधाय, लङ्कायाम् रावण-शिरस्-वृन्दानि विलुलाव, तम् वन्देय।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
ततः	then
वायोः	of the Wind-god
आत्मभुवा	by the son
हनुमता	through *Hanumān*
प्राणेभ्यः	than life itself
अपि	even
गरीयसीम्	dearer
प्रियतमाम्	the most beloved (wife)
रक्षस्-हृताम्	abducted by the *rākṣasa* (*Rāvaṇa*)

Word	Meaning
पाथोधि-पार-स्थिताम्	held on the other shore of the sea
विज्ञाय	having come to know
वारिनिधौ	in the ocean
विविध-अनन्त-अघ-विध्वंसनम्	which destroys the sins committed endlessly in various ways
सेतुम्	the bridge (*sētu*)
विधाय	having built
लङ्कायाम्	in *Laṅkā*
रावण-शिरस्-वृन्दानि	the clusters of heads of *Rāvaṇa*
विलुलाव	cut off
तम्	Him
वन्देय	let me bow to

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Then (ततः), having come to know (विज्ञाय) through *Hanumān* (हनुमता), the son (आत्मभुवा) of the Wind-god (वायोः), that His most beloved (प्रियतमाम्), who is dearer (गरीयसीम्) to Him even (अपि) than life itself (प्राणेभ्यः), had been abducted by the *rākṣasa* (रक्षस्-हृताम्) and was held on the other shore of the sea (पाथोधि-पार-स्थिताम्), He built (विधाय) in the ocean (वारिनिधौ) the bridge (सेतुम्), which destroys the sins committed endlessly in various ways (विविध-अनन्त-अघ-विध्वंसनम्). In *Laṅkā* (लङ्कायाम्), He cut off (विलुलाव) the clusters of heads of *Rāvaṇa* (रावण-शिरस्-वृन्दानि). Let me bow (वन्देय) to Him (तम्).

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.

****

आरुह्याथ विभीषणेन सुभगं भक्त्या समावेदितं
मान्यं पुष्पकमञ्जसा निजपुरीमागत्य मित्रैर्वृतः।
आनन्दाय वसिष्ठकाश्यपमुखैः पट्टाभिषिक्तो विभुः
तस्मिन् जाग्रति जानकीप्रियतमे का नाम भीतिर्मम॥ 4॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

आरुह्य अथ विभीषणेन सुभगम् भक्त्या समावेदितम्
मान्यम् पुष्पकम् अञ्जसा निज-पुरीम् आगत्य मित्रैः वृतः।
आनन्दाय वसिष्ठ-काश्यप-मुखैः पट्ट-अभिषिक्तः विभुः
तस्मिन् जाग्रति जानकी-प्रियतमे का नाम भीतिः मम॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

अथ विभीषणेन भक्त्या समावेदितम् सुभगम् मान्यम् पुष्पकम् आरुह्य, मित्रैः वृतः अञ्जसा निज-पुरीम् आगत्य, विभुः आनन्दाय वसिष्ठ-काश्यप-मुखैः पट्ट-अभिषिक्तः (अभूत्)।
तस्मिन् जानकी-प्रियतमे जाग्रति, मम का नाम भीतिः (अस्ति)?

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
अथ	then
विभीषणेन	by *Vibhīṣaṇa*
भक्त्या	with devotion
समावेदितम्	offered

Word	Meaning
सुभगम्	the beautiful
मान्यम्	venerable
पुष्पकम्	*Puṣpaka* (aerial chariot)
आरुह्य	having ascended
मित्रैः	by friends
वृतः	surrounded
अञ्जसा	swiftly
निज-पुरीम्	to His own city (*Ayōdhyā*)
आगत्य	having come back
विभुः	the all-pervading Lord
आनन्दाय	for the joy (of all)
वसिष्ठ-काश्यप-मुखैः	by the sages headed by *Vasiṣṭha* and *Kāśyapa*
पट्ट-अभिषिक्तः	crowned as king
(अभूत्)	was (implied)
तस्मिन्	while He
जानकी-प्रियतमे	the most beloved of *Jānakī*
जाग्रति	stays awake (to protect me)
मम	for me
का	what
नाम	indeed
भीतिः	fear
(अस्ति)	is there (implied)

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

Then (अथ), having ascended (आरुह्य) the beautiful (सुभगम्) and venerable (मान्यम्) *Puṣpaka* (पुष्पकम्), offered (समावेदितम्) with devotion (भक्त्या) by *Vibhīṣaṇa* (विभीषणेन), and surrounded (वृतः) by friends (मित्रैः), the all-pervading Lord (विभुः) swiftly (अञ्जसा) came back (आगत्य) to His own city (निज-पुरीम्), and for the joy of all (आनन्दाय) was (अभूत्) crowned as king (पट्ट-अभिषिक्तः) by the sages headed by *Vasiṣṭha* and *Kāśyapa* (वसिष्ठ-काश्यप-मुखैः). While He (तस्मिन्), the most beloved of *Jānakī* (जानकी-प्रियतमे), stays awake (जाग्रति) to protect me, what (का) fear (भीतिः) is there (अस्ति) indeed (नाम) for me (मम)?

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 **का नाम भीतिर्मम** during his own illness. Later, seeing the greatness and power of the *stōtra*, he also gave the fourth line as:

तस्मिन् जाग्रति जानकीप्रियतमे सर्वत्र सम्यग्जयः ॥

"While He, the most beloved of *Jānakī*, stays awake, there is excellent victory (सम्यक्-जयः) for us everywhere (सर्वत्र)."

****

धनुष्करचतुःश्लोकी धनुष्पुरकवीरिता।
सर्वदा कुर्वतां चित्ते सर्वदा भातु सन्मता ॥ 5 ॥

Word Separation (*padacchēda*)

धनुष्कर-चतुःश्लोकी धनुष्पुर-कवि-ईरिता।
सर्वदा कुर्वताम् चित्ते सर्व-दा भातु सन्मता ॥

Prose Order (*anvaya*)

(इयम्) धनुष्पुर-कवि-ईरिता सन्मता धनुष्कर-चतुःश्लोकी, सर्वदा चित्ते कुर्वताम् सर्व-दा भातु।

Word-by-Word Meaning (*padārtha*)

Word	Meaning
(इयम्)	this (implied)
धनुष्पुर-कवि-ईरिता	composed by the poet of *Dhanuṣpura* (*Villūr*)
सन्मता	praised by the learned
धनुष्कर-चतुःश्लोकी	the four verses on the one who holds the bow in His hand (*Śrī Rāma*)
सर्वदा	always
चित्ते	in the mind
कुर्वताम्	for those who keep (it), i.e., recite (it)
सर्व-दा	as the giver of all (that is wished for)
भातु	may it shine

Glossed Translation (*padamālā*)

May this (इयम्) set of four verses on the one who holds the bow in His hand (धनुष्कर-चतुःश्लोकी), composed by the poet of *Dhanuṣpura* (धनुष्पुर-कवि-ईरिता) and praised by the learned (सन्मता), shine (भातु) as the giver of all (सर्व-दा) for those who (कुर्वताम्) always (सर्वदा) keep it in their mind (चित्ते).

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:

मारीकातरचित्तानां मारीतिमितरां दिशेत् ॥
मारी-कातर-चित्तानाम् मा-रीतिम् इतराम् दिशेत् ॥

"May it show **(दिशेत्)** those whose minds are fearful **(कातर-चित्तानाम्)** of the pestilence **(मारी)** the other **(इतराम्)** way, the way of *Mā* (*Lakṣmī*) **(मा-रीतिम्)**." 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 **मारीतिमितरां** as **मा रीतिम् इतराम्**: "May it not **(मा)** show **(दिशेत्)** any other course **(इतराम् रीतिम्)** to those whose minds are fearful **(कातर-चित्तानाम्)** of the pestilence **(मारी)**." 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, **सर्वदा कुर्वतां चित्ते सर्वदा भातु सन्मता**.

****

॥ इति विल्लूर् नडादूर् श्री श्रीनिधेः कृतिषु श्रीरामचतुश्श्लोकी ॥

References (*ādhāragranthāḥ*)

1. Śrī U. Ve. Dr. V. S. Karuṇākarācāriar Svāmī, *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa Trayī*.
2. Śrī U. Ve. Dr. P. Rāmānujācārya Svāmī, *Śrī Yādavādristuti - Śrī Rāmacatuśślōkī*.