

T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No. 1095

Price :

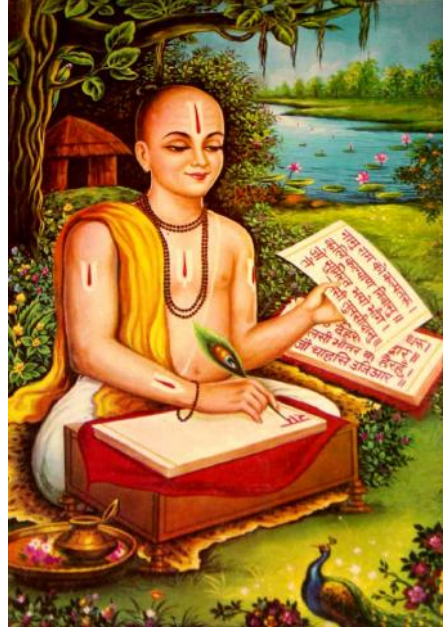
Published by **Sri M.G. Gopal**, I.A.S., Executive Officer,
T.T.Devasthanams, Tirupati and Printed at T.T.D. Press, Tirupati.

Srinivasa Balabharati

TULASIDAS

English Translation

Prof. M. Madhusudhana Rao



**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati**

Srinivasa Balabharati - 147

(Children Series)

TULASIDAS

Telugu Version

Dr. M. Sangamesam

English Translation

Prof. M. Madhusudhana Rao



Published by

Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati.

2014

Srinivasa Balabharati - 147
(Children Series)

TULASIDAS

Telugu Version

Dr. M. Sangamesam

English Translation

Prof. Madhusudhana Rao

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Ravva Sri Hari

T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No : 1095

©All Rights Reserved

First Edition - 2014

Copies : 5000

Price :

Published by :

M.G. Gopal, I.A.S.,

Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams

Tirupati.

D.T.P:

Office of the Editor-in-Chief

T.T.D, Tirupati.

Printed at :

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Press

Tirupati.

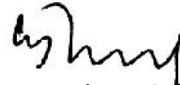
FOREWORD

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets for children in Telugu under Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASABALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord



Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They need apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons at tender so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenets of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lives of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr.S.B. Raghunathacharya under "Bala Bharati Series". The response to these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with, some of the books are now brought out in English and Hindi by T.T.D. for the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets, primarily intended to the growing children and also to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI
Editor-In-Chief
T.T.D.

Welcome To Srinivasa Balabharati Series

The series is the outcome of abundant grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

This will be an unfailing source of inspiration to the young.

It enshrines the best of Bharatiya tradition. May this noble endeavour be successful.

India has been known for its culture and civilization, its ethical and dharmic way of life from time immemorial. India has marched ahead with its commitment to dharma, its resistance to adharma, its espousal of life-affirming values and its humane attitude to life as a journey towards God realization. Those who embodied these values in their life have been a beacon of light to us. Their impact is deep on the life we lead. Young boys and girls will find them exemplary and feel proud of their invaluable heritage. They will love their motherland and dedicate themselves to its service.

It is therefore necessary that the young learn about these great men and women so that they will realize their indebtedness to them for their selfless contribution to the enrichment of life. This should indeed be a chief component of true education which ensures the perennial continuity of Indian culture and civilization. SRINIVASA BALABHARATI SERIES has come into existence to acquaint the young boys and girls with right perspective of Indian life and values through a series of booklets written exclusively for this purpose describing in brief the lives of great men and women.

We welcome you to share our joy in launching these booklets.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Chief Editor

TULASIDAS

In our country, there are many great souls, who have dedicated their precious lives for human welfare. They include great thinkers, poets, kings, emperors, “bhaktas’ and men who have parted with their wealth and prosperity for a noble cause. They might have died, but their fame and legacy are immortal. Their greatness is part of human history. Singing praises of their eternal greatness is our sacred duty. By remembering their holy and noble lives, we may emulate their noble deeds. One such noble soul is Tulasidas, the great Rama bhakta.

He is a bhakta by virtue of his noble deeds of earlier birth. His birth is full of purity, devotion and joy of chanting the holy name of Rama. His birth is a miracle, as his life afterwards is unique. He was born to a Sarayupraina Brahmin couple called Atmaram Dube and Hulasi. They lived in a village called Rajapur in Banda district, on the banks of river Yamuna. They belonged to Parasara Gothra. They were childless for many years. As they were undertaking many forms of prayers and penance Lord Rama appeared to Atmaram in his dream and told him: “My dear Atmaram, you will be shortly blessed with a noble son with the qualities of Valmiki’s mind and he would be my devotee and bring you permanent name and fame. He would also be responsible for your heavenly abode after death”.

The dream of the blessed couple of Atmaram and Hulasi was fulfilled when they got a son. He was born in 1496 in Sravana masa on Suddha Saptami. Being born in an unholy star, namely, Moola his birth was considered inauspicious by the wise men. There were many unique features in the newly born baby: he lived for full twelve months in his mother's womb. He had thirty two teeth and cried uttering the name of "Rama". He also appeared older for his age-appearing as a five year old child, instead of a newly born child. Naturally, his father was frightened. He feared that God's blessings in giving them a child went in vain. He thought that it could be a monstrous birth and feared that he might have made some mistake. So, he left home in deep and inconsolable sorrow without seeing the face of the newly born baby. Hulasi also was distressed and Atmaram did not come back home even after ten days. And she fell ill and bedridden. She feared that she might ultimately die, without taking care of her son. She left the child in the care of her trusted servant, Muniya. After thus leaving the child in the safe hands of Muniya, she died peacefully.

But, one sad event took place, making the young child an orphan. Muniya looked after the child with great love and care. She called him Rambola, as he was born with uttering the words, "Ram, Ram". Everybody used to call him Rambola. He thus lived like that for five years. But, sadly, Muniya too died of

cholera in the village. As her death was sudden, she could not leave Rambola in any body's care, thus making him an orphan, to lead the pitiable life of a beggar. One day, a man with a saintly disposition, called Naraharidas came to that village. All the villagers came to the Rama temple to see him and seek his blessings. He observed a small child playing all alone in the hot sun. Thus, he noticed none other than Rambola. As he found something unique in that boy, he called him to know about him. Rambola revealed his sorrowful condition to Naraharidas. Naraharidas was greatly pleased with the small boy's obedience and profound mind. The lines in the boy's palms pointed to a bright future. The boy's face was shining with a rare brightness. As he was profoundly impressed with the boy, he took him along with him to Ayodhya, after informing the village elders. He also taught Rambola the precious Rama mantra to make him truly a Ram bhakta. All the learned men and yogis and all men with divine interests found in him a true devotee, blessed with humility and sharp intellect. They were drawn to his marvelous qualities of head and heart. Another important event also took place in his life. When he was preaching the holiest of mantras, called the Gayatri mantra, after performing his Upanayanam, to his utter surprise, Rambola himself chanted that mantra. Naraharidas believed that Rambola must have been blessed with the divine grace of his earlier birth

(Purvajanma sukrutha). He was overjoyed with the thought that the young lad was inspired by the utterance of Ramamantra. Thus, after realizing the great mind and profound intellect in Rambola, Naraharidas took him to live in the Gonda district, on the banks of Sarayu river. They lived in a holy place called Sora, which is also known as Sukera Kshetra. Rambola's profound intellect became even holier and submissive to God's Will. As Naraharidas read the holiest stories of human life and God, like, the Ramayana, the young boy was even more enthused in his spiritual quest to experience bliss. Thus, Narahari Das was teaching him and inspiring his mind by reading the holy books in the holy city of Kasi. There, Rambola began his education. Naturally, his desire for knowledge instantaneously drew the attention of one and all. He was taught by a great scholar called Seshasanthana Swamy in the Gurukula mode of teaching. His shining intellect and resplendent character were deeply admired by his fellow students and endearingly loved by his learned teachers. He learnt all the Vedas and Sastras and also gained the knowledge of all secular arts. After thus learning all the intricacies of the dharmas, during his stay in Kashmir for eighteen years he took leave of his guru, Sri Seshasanathana Swamy and returned to his native place, Rajpur. He returned to his village only because of his love and deep attachment to it, even as it was deserted by his dear friends and relatives. His

stay in his village brought a new spirit and joy. As he spent all his life in chanting the name and holiest story of Rama, all the villager were drawn to him for his noble life and scholarship and made his stay comfortable.

His marriage is also an important event in his life. He married Ratnavali, as he was drawn to her by her beauty. He saw her in the Maghamela festival, which occurs once in twelve years. All the villagers used to come to that place to take holy bath in the Yamuna river. Deenabandhu Pandit was the learned Pundit in the nearby village of Rajpur. He also came to the Maghamela. He was well read in all the Vedas and belonged to the Bharadwajasa gothra. His daughter Ratnavali was also well read in all the Sastras and classics. As he was searching for a suitable bridegroom for his daughter, he heard of the noble qualities of Rambola. He was immensely pleased to see and hear of that noble boy. He was particularly pleased with this qualities of humility, obedience, sharp intellect: he was also a gifted speaker and a young man with prowess. After engaging him in debate in scholarly matters, he was immensely pleased with Rambola and decided that he was the right choice for his dear daughter. He stayed for some more days there till the festivals came to an end. The more he came to know about that young man, the greater his joy for making the right choice for his daughter. All the village elders

appreciated his decision in choosing Rambola. Finally, they also made Rambola accept the proposal of Deenabandhu Pathak. Thus, Rambola and Ratnavali were happily married on an auspicious day.

He was greatly drawn to his wife's beauty and splendor and her good behavior and rich scholarship. He was spell bound by her in all respects and loved her, while she also looked after him with great care and concern. He did not want to be away from her for long. His mind was always filled with her thoughts. He used to return home as soon as possible. Ratnavali was equally devoted to him with deep love and respect for her husband. She served him with care and concern. She attended to his needs and advised him correctly on all important matters. An important event took place in his life, which decided his destiny. His devotion to Rama was realized in that moment. Once, he went to the nearby village on some important work. He had to stay there for three days. In the meanwhile, his brother-in-law anxiously came to tell his sister (Ratnavali) that their mother was in a critical condition. It was difficult for her to live any longer in that condition. He told her to immediately start along with her husband. She was deeply distressed to know of the condition of her mother. But, she did not know what to do. She only told his brother that Rambola had left the village only the other day and he was yet to come back. She asked him to go to the neighbouring village and bring

Rambola. Her brother expressed his helplessness. He told her that it was not possible for him to go to Rambola as their mother's condition was precarious. He wanted to take her along with him, if she could come and Rambola would follow them soon. Ratnavali did not know what to do. She was in deep sorrow, unable to decide. Finally, she decided to follow her brother to see their ailing mother. She told her neighbours about the situation and asked them to inform Rambola that she would come back after the condition of her mother improved. Three days after her departure, Rambola returned to his house. He found himself in a lonely manner. He became a bit upset not to find her at home. As he was feeling anxious and concerned about the absence of his wife at home, his neighbours told him about the departure of his wife to see her ailing mother. He did not know what to do. He spent that night with great sorrow and in a lonely manner. He was eager to go to his mother-in-law's house. Though it was very difficult and nearly impossible to make a journey in that dark night, he decided to go to his mother-in-law's house. He had to cross a river. There were no boats in that night to take him. He decided to make the journey, braving all those difficulties. May be, it was for the first time, that he was separated from his beautiful wife. Finally, in a fit of emotion and urgency, he started his journey without informing any body. On his way, he encountered many

difficulties. It was a dark and fearful night. Dark clouds were hovering in the sky. Heavy rains prevented his movement. But, his determination was very strong. He hurriedly reached the river bank. As the river was in spate, he did not know what to do. As he helplessly waited, suddenly, for a moment, there was a bright lightening. In that lightening, he discovered a log from a small boat. Using that log he ventured into the turbulent river. Fortunately, he reached the other end of the river bank and his mother-in-law's house, fully drenched. It was mid-night and no body was stirring in the streets. Rambola reached his mother-in-law's house and knocked at the door quite for some time. Nobody responded. However, after some time, his brother-in-law opened the door, only to notice Rambola in the dim light. He respectfully invited him into the house. Rambola enquired about his mother-in-law's health. His brother replied that she was recovering. As they were conversing with each other, others in the house, too, woke up and made enquiries about his arrival. Ratnavali took him aside in the house, reverentially, after touching his feet. He changed his dress and took a glass of milk from his wife. Then, she told, when they were all alone, like this: "Any way, my mother's condition had improved. Why did you make this arduous journey in pitch darkness, braving heavy rain and inclement weather? What made you make such a difficult journey? You should have anyway

come here in the day time.” As those words confounded him, he meekly replied thus: “As I reached the house yesterday evening, I failed to see you. I was deeply disappointed. I could not stay there even for a moment without seeing you.” Ratnavali, not being sympathetic to his explanation, insisted that he should have shown that much desire in chanting the name of Rama. She made him realize that, after all, her beauty is transitory, even as her life is ephemeral. But, Rambola was still in that illusion. He believed that Ratnavali was the essence of his life’s joy and fulfillment. Then, his wife struck the true philosophical note. She made him realize that he was haunted by a desire. It is called Vyaamoha - a senseless desire for the body and its supposed beauty. What is our physical self, except a heap of bones. It is decorated by the shining and alluring layer of bright skin, as it is nothing but a lump of petrifying flesh. What is immortal and what is blissful in this? Nothing. It is all a cauldron of desire, which is extinguished by age and senility. Instead, she asked her husband, whom she loved so dearly, to direct all his mind and soul in celebrating the glory of Rama in his chantings and prayers. She showed him the beautiful picture of Sri Ramapattabhishekam(coronation of Sri Rama). She inspired him with these words: “Look at Sri Rama! He is permanent. He is the true bliss. Now, shift your love from me, whose beauty is transitory, towards that divine beauty and bliss of Sri Rama. Our

life becomes meaningful and purposeful. From now onwards, start chanting His names (*Sthothra*), so that both of us can have His blessings. We can live a life of true fulfillment and joy.”

These words truly transformed the mind of Rambola. His mind experienced the joy of his life. By looking at the picture of Sri Rama on the wall, he became a different self altogether. The travails of darkness disappeared. His mind was filled with the transcendent thoughts of His glory and greatness. He gave up all his past desires, which were present in the ocean of ignorance of his mind. Ratnavali’s words filled his mind with the bright, transcendent light of His thought. Thus, he began his true life of fulfilling the cause of his birth- that is, always living in the thought and presence of his noble deeds.

He left the house, unconcerned with his wife’s pleadings to stay with her. He never came back to his village, nor did he ever desire to see his wife. For him, Sri Rama is “every thing”, in his “Thrikarana” - in his thoughts, utterances and actions. He is Tulasidas, but not Rambola, anymore. Having left the worldly desires behind him and never mindful of his village or family, he visited all the holy places. He made pilgrimages to such holy places, as Puri Jagannath, Rameswaram, Dwaraka, Badarivanam, Kailasagiri and Manasa sarovaram to finally reach Kasi. In the course of his

journey far and wide, he met a number of learned people, Yogis and Siddhas, to know the many stories, in circulation, about the life and stories of Sri Rama. He participated in all the bhajans along with all His disciples. His desire to spend all his thoughts in his devotion to Sri Rama became his life-breath. He spent all his life in chanting the holy Ramayana; for him, Rama is his world and mind. Nothing detracts him from his thought. However, his desire to see the Lord before him became a deep craving. It was not to be fulfilled. He reached Varanasi to set up his “Ashram” in Asseeghat. He used to chant Ramayana everyday. Many devotees used to visit his ashram to listen to his exposition of Ramayana. As they were spell-bound, his name and fame became widespread. He was known everywhere. Many bhaktas and holy men used to congregate in his ashram. But he was disinterested in all those worldly matters. His mind was only engrossed in the thoughts of Rama and His blessings. His desire to have his darshan was his only goal of life. As he was praying to him for his darshan, one day, he had a strange experience. There was a huge banyan tree. He used to pour all the remaining water after completing his daily rituals at that tree. After some days, one day, a monster came down from that tree. It really fell on him. It prostrated before him and told him that it was a monster, under curse. Its curse was redeemed by Tulasidas. Then it explained its story thus: “I am a

monster. As monsters, we should not touch the waters in rivers or other places.

Hence, I have been an atheist for the last so many years. You have given life with the pure waters of prayers. You have made life meaningful by giving me-“Sadgathi”. I want to greartfully reciprocate your kind help by fulfilling your desire”. However, Tulasidas was puzzled. When he was desirous of seeing God, he saw a monster. Chuckling to himself, he, however, asked the monster if it could fulfill his deepest and only desire, that is the vision (darshan) of Sri Rama. The monster, while accepting its incapacity, however, gave a good suggestion: “Every day an old Brahmin comes to your exposition of Ramayana. He sits all alone in one corner and after the completion of your pravachana, leaves, by wiping the tears of joy in his eyes. He also takes the harati given by you. He is none other than Maruthi, in disguise. He is Lord Anjaneya. If you can seek his blessings, you can easily see your Lord. So, you should try to recognize Anjaneya today itself to fulfill your desire”. It disappeared with those words. Tulasidas was Unsure whether what happened was a dream or reality. In any case, he decided to recognize Hanuman in the devotees, who came to his ashram to listen to his pravachan. One night, as usual, many devotees came to his ashram to listen to his pravachana. Tulasidas was intently observing everybody. He found that there

were many old people among them. He did not know how to recognize Hanuman. But, undeterred in his attempt he went on observing people. Finally, he found an old Brahmin, at the time of the harathi, wiping his eyes and standing quiet and undisturbed. He believed that, whom he was seeing was none other than Hanuman and kneeled before him with devotion and humility, and told him like this; “Oh! holy man, how can I recognize you in human form. It is my good fortune that you are coming to my ashram everyday. To-day, I will not leave you until you give your blessings”. Hanuman first pretended to be unaware of what was happening. But, afterwards, being deeply moved by Tulasidas’s deep devotion and bhakthi, blessed him with these words: “You will be blessed by Lord Rama. Who am I to grant his darshan to you?” But, Tulasidas persisted with his plea to Hanuman for Rama’s darshan. Finally, Hanuman advised him to go and live in a place called Chitrakutam. Lord Rama would give his darshan. With these words, Hanuman disappeared and Tulasidas was elated and left for Chitrakutam the next day.

He built a small house there. After taking bath in the Mandakini river and offering prayers, he continued his chanting of Ramayana. He was waiting in great desire to have His darshan. He continued his devotional practices uninterruptedly. On every poornima day, he used to walk around the hill (Pradakshina). As he was

doing 'Pradikshna', one day, he found two princes riding on rare horses on their way to the ashram. Dressed elegantly with bright and shining ornaments, they were having bows and arrows in their hands. Their resplendent presence brightened up the surroundings. He was spell-bound by seeing those royal princes. He merely imagined that they could be some princes, returning home after their hunting. After intently looking in the direction in which they left, he returned to his ashram, not without a nagging doubt about those princes. There was some inexplicable anxiety to somehow once again see those princes. It is, indeed sorrowful to note here that Tulasidas never imagined that those two princes were Rama and Lakshmana, for whom he had been praying ardently for years. He realized his mistake only when Hanuman reminded him whether he saw Rama and invited him to his Ashram. Then realizing his mistake, he felt deeply anguished. He did not forgive himself. He cursed his ignorance and lost himself in deep thought. Hanuman, however, told him that Rama would once again come the next day and he should not make any mistake.

Next morning, Tulasidas was all prepared, in his mind and spirit and dream and reality to receive Rama and Lakshmana in his ashram. He was ready to perform all the necessary rituals to receive them. He was ready with sandal paste and resplendent flowers. Waiting eagerly with keen attention to even the smallest sound

and sight, he was intently walking around. As he was waiting in hope till the noon by preparing sandal paste, two extremely handsome small boys came to ask for the sandalwood paste. He was so spell bound and drawn to their lustrous presence that he failed to imagine that they could be Rama and Lakshmana. Then, Hanuman, appearing in the form of a parrot, told Tulasidas that they were indeed, Rama and Lakshmana. Tulasidas recognized his Lord but he was so deeply touched by his presence that he became unconscious. He swooned. It was his good fortune, however, that Rama, after applying the sandal paste on His forehead gave it His brother Lakshmana, who also applied it on his forehead (like thilakam). Tulasidas after gaining consciousness, had only the vision of two small children playing in front of him. He was elated and forgot himself and the surroundings. Thus, his dream was fulfilled.

After thus fulfilling the dream of his life, he left for Ayodhya, on the advice of Hanuman. He realized that it was easier to live in constant companionship in his mind of Ram at Ayodhya than any other place. He stayed there for some time. In the meanwhile, the Maghamela festival arrived. He reached Holy Prayaga and after performing all the rituals there, he felt joyful. As he decided to stay there till the completion of the festivities, on the sixth day, he saw a bright light beckoning him. In great surprise and wonder, marveling

at it, he went in that direction. He continued to discover the light becoming brighter and more resplendent. His mind filled with nothing but that transcendental divine light. In utter dismay and delight, too, he looked at it intently, as he discovered two persons in a debate in a blissful mode. They were in a debate on divine matters. He somehow moved still further with some courage. As he reached closer to them, he could see them clearly and listen to their words explicitly. They were the holy souls, Yagnavalkya and Bharadwaja. They were in celestial debate about Ramayana. As he paid his respects, he realized that they were discussing the same issues which his mentor, Naraharidas was talking. His mind was thrilled in a moment of reverential gratitude to both of those “Rishis” of yore, he also remembered his mentor and offered his profound regards to him. He also realized that, in a moment, those two rishis disappeared from his view. He continued to revel at those divinely blissful moments of his vision of two holy souls. He thought that those were the divinely sanctioned moments of Sri Rama.

The next most important event in his life, which brought him eternal fame and grandeur, his writing of the great work of blissful joy, called “Ramacharitamanas”. After the Maghamela festivals were over, he continued his Ramayana *pravachanam* in Kasi in the house of a Brahmin in Prahladghat. While he was devoutly performing Ramayana *pravachanam*, in a flash, he

realized, his dormant poetic inspiration. His poetic mind became explicit. He was deeply inspired, while he was attempting to write in Sanskrit, in the night he was forgetting all the poetic lines.. While he was composing his poetic rhymes in a somewhat cumbersome manner, one night he was blessed by the vision of Kasi Visweswara and his divine consort Annapurna, who advised him to write the divine story of Sri Rama in his native tongue, Hindi, in Ayodhya. Accordingly, he left for Ayodhya to perform this divinely ordained duty. He started composing the holiest of books for humanity, called Ramayana in 1573 on the auspicious day of Sri Rama Navami. He completed that task in Hindi in two years to fulfill his soul's desire. Perhaps, the intention of God in choosing him for this pious duty was also realized. He returned to Kasi after completing his work. In Kasi, he read the entire Ramayana of his creation to Lord Visweswara. After reading it, he kept it at the feet of Lord Visweswara. To his delight and joy, he found the imprints of Lord Visweswara, indicating His acceptance. Thus, his work was devoted to God, who accepted, making Tulasidas a happy man. His life's mission was thus completed.

‘It drew widespread attention’. All the people came to listen his Pravachana. On coming to know that it was blessed by Lord Visweswara, it also drew contempt and derision from some people, who were jealous of its increasing popularity. All the learned men



and poets in the royal court showed their disregard by condemning that book as low in quality and poor in subject. It was denigrated because it was written in Hindi. They also ridiculed the fact that it was blessed by Lord Visweswara. As the general public continued to accept its sweetness (madhurya) and greatness, they could not tolerate its increasing significance in the people's mind. So, they decided to test its greatness, by once again keeping it at the feet of Lord Visweswara for his blessings. This time they kept this book at the bottom of other books, like Bhagavadgita and Valmiki Ramayana. But, when they opened the doors next morning, to their utter disbelief and dismay, they found Tulasi Ramayana at the top of the books.

However, not being satisfied those Pundits of Kasi, made another attempt to defame his Ramayana. They approached a great pundit and scholar called Madhusudana Saraswathi, who was leading a scholarly life without seeking the support of kings. He was non-controversial and only devoted to his world of learning. They asked him to read Tulasidas Ramayana and express his opinion. After reading Tulasi Ramayana with great pleasure and satisfaction, he wrote the following lines, in its praise: "In this joyful garden called Kasi, there is the holy plant of Tulasidas, Sri Rama himself came like a bee to sit on this beautiful flower of this Tulasi to make it sweet and bright for ever".

Further, not at all being satisfied with their deceitful efforts born out of jealousy, they tried to destroy his Ramayana. Their jealousy and envy were boundless. They thought of somehow destroying that great book. They asked two thieves to steal it and throw it river Ganga. They believed, in their ignorance, that, it would be forgotten by everybody. But ,their efforts did not fructify. On seeing the presence of Lord Rama himself and Lakshmana as two young princes, the thieves disappeared. They tried to hide themselves behind the house of Tulasidas. There also they were frightened on seeing Hanuman in an angry mood. They finally fled away. When they told those things to the pundits, who asked them to steal that holy book, they were puzzled. They disbelieved it. But the thieves next morning fell on the feet of Tulasidas and prayed to him to pardon them. But, Tulasidas thought that though they were thieves, they were fortunate in having the darshan of Rama and Lakshmana as princes. So, he honoured them. Tulasidas also realized that it was not safe to keep that holy book in his custody and decided to keep it in the custody of his trusted friend, Todarmal. He wrote another copy of the book for his use. Subsequently many people copied that poem. As a result, it spread to many parts of the country. It travelled to every nooks and corners and Tulasidas's fame and greatness spread to all corners. Other scholars and pundits also changed their minds. They also began to

show respect to Tulasidas. Many devotees and others interested in spiritual issues also came to have his darshan. All the pundits were longing for his love and friendship. He also began to visit other holy places like Ayodhya, Prayaga, Chitrakutami and Brindavan and lived in the company of noble souls.

Once he went to Brindavan. There he discovered many devotees of Krishna. His devotion to Sri Rama is manifested in this incident. At Brindavan, all the devotees were worshipping Lord Krishna, though they belonged to different faiths. For them, Lord Krishna was the only benefactor. There Tulasidas met his distant relative and childhood friend called Nandadas. He was a devotee and a poet. He wrote many poems describing the divine acts of Lord Krishna. He took Tulasidas to the temple of Lord Krishna in Brindavan and sang in ecstatic praise of this Land, and Lord Krishna. When he asked Tulasidas also to compose a few poems in praise of Lord Krishna, Tulasidas uttered some poems, which were only describing the divine form of Sri Rama. For him, every thing in this world was nothing but the presence of Sri Rama. When Nandadas asked in great wonder, if all the forms in this world are incarnation of Sri Rama, Tulasidas joyfully said “Yes”. For him Sri Rama was the only “form” and “presence” in this world, When Nandadas asked him to compose a few poems in praise of Lord Krishna, he wrote a

book called ‘Krishnageethavali” and presented it to him.

In those days, there was another great devotee, called Mirabai. She was the contemporary of Tulasidas. She was a true devotee of Lord Krishna since her childhood. Born in a Rajput family and endowed with all the riches and pomp, she was deeply immersed involved in the worship of Lord Krishna. She used to spend all her time in singing. As her way of leaving all the royal pride was not liked by the royalty, they created many obstacles to her in her life of worship of Lord Krishna. She approached Tulasidas and asked him what she should do. Then, he advised her to continue her path of devotion, unmindful of all the obstructions. Sri Rama would remove all the obstructions and pave the way for moksha. He gave her courage not to unduly worry about all those obstructions, created by the small-minded and ignorant people. He wrote Varary Ramayana. It was written to console the sorrowful mind of his dear companion and Rambhakta called Rahimkhan Khana. Rahimkhan was also a learned scholar in many languages, such as Parsee, Sanskrit, Arabic and Hindi. He was good at heart and very generous in helping the needy people. He had a lot of respect and love for Tulasidas. Though he was a Muslim, he had a great faith in Sri Rama. He and Tulasidas used to correspond with each other in verse. His generous nature had to face many difficulties, when

he lost all prosperity and became poor. Tulasidas consoled him by telling him to have faith in God. He wrote Varavai Ramayana in varying rhyme scheme and read it to his friend and soul mate. His greatness and fame spread far and wide. It drew people from all important places. Though he did not desire for any employment or honour from the kings, he spent his life always in the company of good and noble persons. He believed in “satsang”. Many learned people were drawn to him by his purity and sanctity of devotion, His association was most revered by one and all. Among them were Raja Mansigh, Todarmal, Birbal, who were constantly aspiring for his sanctifying presence.

As his devotional spirit spread itself far and wide, people from all walks of life, rich and poor alike, used to visit his holy ashram to listen to his Ramayana pravachana. Their prayers and devotional chantings reverberated the holy city of Kasi. He used to prepare different forms of his pravachana, according to the desires of the devotees. He wrote Kavitavali for those who took delight in seeking pleasure of their soul. He wrote Geethavali for those who have a desire for chanting the holy Ramayana. He wrote Dohavaki for those interested in learning attitudes of good behaviour, worldly affairs, good character. “Janakimangal”, Parvathimangal” “and Ramlalanahabhu” for the benefit of women and other festival occasions to sing songs

at the time of marriage and other occasions. 'Hanumanchaleesa' is meant for protecting people from bad omens and other unnatural fears and apprehensions. He wrote a book called, "Ramajnaprasna" to satisfy the desire of his friend, Gangaramjoshi, who lived in Prahladghat. He lived in the house of Gangaramjoshi, a Brahmin. He also composed some lines in the form of Ramasalaka Prasna

He was thus spending his life in spreading the message of Sri Rama. The chanting of Rama's name became a ceaseless activity in his ashram, as well as in all the places of Kasi. People became deeply devoted to chanting His name. They used to wish each other by uttering the holy name, "Rama". But, unfortunately, terrible famine occurred in Kasi, due to the anger of Kalimahadevata. As a result of that, there were atrocities, immoral and unjust practices, untimely deaths and ill-health among people. People were found at a loss to know how to live happily. One day, a noble lady drew the attention of every body, while the prayers were going on. She kneeled before Tulasidas respectfully. He wished her husband long life and a happy life to her. When he offered flowers, she refused and told him her sad story. He, however, assured her that Sri Rama's words would not become untrue. He would always utter Truth. Then that woman told him her sad story in these words: 'Oh! Tulasidas, great man of wisdom and nobility, yesterday, my husband passed

away and all the preparations are made to cremate him. I have also decided to perform satee sahagamana, according to our practice. I have come to see and seek your blessings and finally pray to Sri Rama". To those words, he quietly said "Do not worry! Your husband is safe. Sri Rama's words would never fail you. Trust me." With those words, she left for her house and was getting ready to perform cremation of her deceased husband. when she touched his feet, flowers in her hair fell on the his feet. It appeared as if he was breathing slowly. Then, all the people untied the knots from his coffin and her husband opened his eyes. Naturally, all the relatives, who gathered there were also filled with unspeakable joy and delight. All of them praised her noble character. As a result of that incident, people's faith in him increased. There was increasing devotion to him and his pravachanas.

Thus, he lived for 126 years, spending all his life in his devotional service of Sri Rama. All his thoughts and words were filled with His noble thoughts. Finally, he left for heavenly abode and became one with the Almighty in 1622, on a Saturday on Sravan bahula Thruthiya in Asseghat in Kasi. As his life became a beacon of light for spiritual wisdom and divine sanction of grace to the suffering humanity, his kavya is known as RAMCHARITHA MANAS. What is Ramcharirha manas? It is a symbol of purity and sweetness of wisdom of Rama's life. All its morals are like the

eternally shining pearls. All the righteous people and men of wisdom read this work to taste the ambrosial of the wisdom of Rama's life. This is not only about the life of Sri Rama, but also of the life of the secular world. It teaches us the triumphs and morals of happy living. Written in a sublime style, it describes our age-old dharmikatha. He lived the life of dharma-as enunciated in Ramayana and spread His message of dhramic values. There are many poems and sthothras in praise of Sri Rama.

