THE INTERACTION OF LOVE OF GOD
AND SOCIAL DUTY
IN THE RĀMCARITMĀNAŚ
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IN THE RÁTCARITÁNAS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to study Tulsi-Das' views on the interaction of love of God and social duty, as expressed in the Ramcaritmanas. In order to determine the distinctiveness of Tulsi Das' position on the subject under consideration, an effort is made at situating the Ramcaritmanas within the over-all context of the Hindu tradition, to which Tulsi Das repeatedly claimed his own indebtedness.

The typological approach is used in preference to the historical survey in order to describe the place traditionally accorded to both love of God and social duty within the Hindu tradition. On the basis of this approach, it is argued that as the tradition developed there emerged three different emphases which by medieval times had become discernible as distinct types: "orthodox theism" representing the middle, or central stream where both social duty and love of God are kept in balance; "vedic orthodoxy" representing the position where social duty is considered the salvific path par excellence while love of God plays a negligible role; and finally "antinomian theism" representing a position where the emphasis is on love of God to the negligence of traditional duties.

The present thesis claims that the Ramcaritmanas represents an attempt to revive the first or "middle" position in medieval North India. This claim is substantiated by a study of Tulsi Das' Ramcharitmanas in the light of its socio-political, religious and literary background.
It is argued that the Rāmacaritmānas can be considered as a reaffirmation of the Hindu tradition against the menacing impact of the Muslim political rule, which culminated in Akbar's universalist policy; against the antinomian devotional trend, very much alive in medieval North India, which threatened traditional values, particularly those associated with social and domestic duties; against Vedic orthodox circles which tended to diminish the importance of love of God as an important constituent of Hinduism.

The attention given to the literary background of the Rāmacaritmānas is aimed at determining the degree of distinctiveness in Tulsi Dās' own religious views. On the basis of a systematic comparison between the Rāmacaritmānas and its main literary sources, the thesis establishes that while Tulsi Dās reaffirmed the central position, he maintained a distinctiveness of his own. This he achieved by dealing with the tension between love of God and social duty as an important issue, and by relentlessly emphasizing love of God as the preeminent salvific path.

Finally, it is shown that Tulsi Dās offered a way of resolving the growing tension between love of God and social duty by proposing the will of God as the ultimate criterion of decision and the supreme principle of integration. This solution enabled him both to encourage the devotee householder to fulfill his social and domestic duties, and at the same time, justify the desire of certain enthusiasts to spend their whole life and time in the praise and worship of the Lord.
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INTRODUCTION

The Rāmacarita-Rāmānātes is the most popular religious text of North India, and its excellence is generally acknowledged among Hindus of the whole sub-continent. In order to read it in proper perspective, it is important to bear in mind that it was meant to be a rifacimento of the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, written approximately twenty centuries earlier. That is, in rewriting the story of Rāma, Tulsi Dās felt free to make a number of alterations allowing him to present his own religious views and inclinations.

The most consequential change that Tulsi Dās introduced in his new version of the Rāmāyana is the importance given to the interaction of love of God and social duty. It will be argued in this thesis that the attempt to relate these two competing claims in shown in the Rāmacarita-Rāmānātes to result in a state of tension in the sense that the intensity of the devotee's love of God causes a dilemma vis-à-vis his obligation to perform his normal social duties: whether to endure physical separation from the Lord in order to fulfill his obligation, or to abandon his duties in order to follow the Lord more closely.

Rather than using the Rāmacarita-Rāmānātes as an illustration of any particular theory on social causality, this thesis will attempt to attain a clearer insight into the problem of relating love of God and social duty as it arose from Tulsi Dās' own consciousness. In order to do so, an effort will be made in Part I to present the available
information on his life and work, thus highlighting his importance in the history of medieval North India.

In the historical section, which forms the second part of the thesis, we shall attempt to understand how Tulsi Dās might have sought to situate his position in terms of the Hindu tradition to which he repeatedly claims his own indebtedness throughout the Rāmcharitmānas. It will be argued that as he looked back, he could discern, on the question of the tension between love of God and social duty, at least three main alternatives expressed with various emphases at different periods. A first alternative gave priority to the claims and salvific role of social duty to the point of either totally subordinating or denying the role of love of God. Another alternative stressed the priority of love of God while neglecting the value of social duty. A third alternative, which for the sake of convenience will be referred to as the "middle position", held that love of God was not inconsistent with the performance of social duty. Tulsi Dās' understanding of these alternatives led him to choose the third in his attempt to formulate a solution which would emphasize love of God while at the same time insisting as much as he could that social duties were important.

The thesis then studies to what extent Tulsi Dās' perception of this problem might have been affected by his immediate environment. It will be shown that the immediate context could be viewed as a challenge to Tulsi Dās, that his magnum opus may be considered as a res-
response to this challenge, and that his response revived the "middle" alternative. This section is not meant to establish that Tulsi Dās was socially conditioned in his response, nor to show that the impact of his views followed any particular sociological pattern. Rather, it is meant to explain how he chose to meet the challenge of his day on the basis of his own religious inclinations, and in what sense his response could have fulfilled the expectations of his immediate hearers.

The final section of the thesis is devoted to analysis of the Kāmaratānāga, aimed at illustrating Tulsi Dās' understanding of love of God and social duty. In the final chapter, it will be held that in dealing with the tension between love of God and social duty Tulsi Dās formulated a balance which was new in the Kāmaratānāga tradition of North India, and which is one of the most important solutions to this perennial problem of religious mysticism.

The English phrases "love of God" and "social duty" will be used throughout this thesis in preference to Sanskrit equivalents such as bhākta and dharma, partly because the latter are frequently used with differing connotations and partly because the Kāmaratānāga, along with other sources, uses a variety of terms to designate these concepts. The expression "love of God" is taken here in a broad sense so that it may include the various forms of affectionate attache-
ment to the Divine, which Tulsī Dās describes using such terms as bhakti, prem, aneha, priti, bhīva, and ratī. The expression "social duty" is used here to designate the obligations associated with the status of the householder, and transmitted by the oral or written tradition. Social duty is usually referred to in the nāma-rājā as dharma, niti or karma.
PART ONE: LIFE AND WORKS OF TULSI DÂS

I. LIFE OF TULSI DÂS

II. WORKS OF TULSI DÂS
1. LIFE OF TULSI DAS

The biographical sources for a life of Tulsi Das are abundant, although much of the available material is not considered reliable. First, we shall examine the autobiographical indications generally considered authentic. Then, we shall examine the early biographical accounts of Tulsi Das, particularly the Gautamacandrika and the Bhakta Mala. Finally, we shall try to ascertain, from both the legendary material and the research of modern scholars, the central events of Tulsi Das' life.

1. Autobiographical indications

Although Tulsi Das frequently refers to his personal life, particularly in the Vinaya-patrika, such disclosures are meant to confess his sinful condition, to proclaim his utter dependence on Rama, or to deplore his physical ailments, and they do not supply us with much information. When he does make allusions to particular events in his life, their meaning is not always clear.

In a section of Kavitavali, which he wrote in his later years, Tulsi Das writes this concerning his earlier childhood:

His father and mother brought him into the world and abandoned him,
Destiny has written nothing good upon his forehead,
He was low, a vessel for disrespect,
a coward who was glad to get even the scraps thrown out for dogs.

The interpretation generally given of this passage is that the poet was born on an inauspicious day, and as a result his parents felt obliged to disown their new-born baby as an impure and untouchable child. Such an interpretation is corroborated by another statement found in.
The Petition to Râma:

And as the wretched snake casts off its slough, so did my father and mother abandon me... They feared even to touch my shadow such was my misfortune.  

According to the current interpretation of those passages, the child was born at the ill-omened conjunction of two asterisms where astrological indications recommended that he be abandoned. If this explanation is correct it may account for the "anguish and remorse" of his parents alluded to in Kavitâvalî VII.73:

I was born in a family of beggars, when the band played in celebration, My father and mother hearing felt anguish and remorse.

About his childhood, Tulsî Dâs makes only one reference indicating that he was rescued by sants, i.e. believers of Râma:

I told my poverty at every door, I gnashed my teeth and fell at feet, till some holy men (sants) saw my misery and said: Sorrow no more, Râma is the refuge of wretches.

On the basis of a passage in the opening lines of the Râmâ-caritâmânas, it is usually thought that Tulsî Dâs was adopted by a Râmânândî guru named Narahari:

I do homage to the lotus-feet of my guru, Ocean of grace, Nara-rupa Hari.

It is probably from his guru that he received the name Tulsî Dâs, since in Kavitâvalî VII.100 he claims that his name is Râma Bolâ. No indications are given, however, as to Tulsî Dâs' age when
this change of name might have occurred.

According to the Gautamacandrikā, whose author, Krsna Datta, was a contemporary of Tulsi Dās, Narahari Dās lived on the banks of the river Narmada and at Sūkṛakheta. This is confirmed by the information given in the Rāmacaritmānas that, as a child, Tulsi Dās heard from his guru at Sūkṛakheta the story of Rāma, which because of his tender age he was at first unable to understand. He may also have been initiated early to the other works which he admits using as sources of the Rāma-caritmānas, such as the Purānas, particularly the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, and other sources which I shall try to identify in a later section of this dissertation. Additional information may be obtained on this point from another work which has been recently established as one of Tulsi Dās' earlier works, namely the Jñānādīpikā. The colophons of this text give either direct or indirect references to the Mahābhārata, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and the Yoga Vāsishtha, with which we may assume Tulsi Dās was familiar from a rather early age.

Tulsi Dās makes a few allusions to what may have been either his marriage or some love adventure. The following is typical:

In childhood, my mind went straight to Rāma.
And taking Rāma's name I begged and ate the scraps;
but then I fell into the ways of the world.

Of the middle years of his life, Tulsi Dās says next to nothing. His earliest clearly dated poem is the Rāmāhāpradhana, composed in Samvat 1621 (A.D. 1564). The poem also mentions the name of Cangā Rām, who was, according to the Gautamacandrikā, a resident of Banāras and a personal friend of Tulsi Dās. According to a recently discovered
manuscript of the *Jñānadīpikā*, the latter was also composed in *Samvat* 1621.\(^\text{13}\)

*Tulsi Dās* is very specific in revealing the date when he began to write his most famous work, the *Rāmacīrtmānas*, at Ayodhyā:

In the *Samvat* year of sixteen hundred and thirty-one (A. D. 1574), I lay my head on Hari's feet and write the story; on Tuesday, the ninth day of the month of Caita, in the city of Ayadh, I begin the story of his acts.\(^\text{14}\)

The next date considered reliable is the date of a short poem written by *Tulsi Dās*, the *Pārvatī Maṅgala*, written in *Samvat* 1643 (A. D. 1586).

Finally, frequent allusions are made in *Vinaya-Patrika* and *Kavitāvali* to his broken health and to a calamity, and these are generally associated with the pestilence that raged in Banāras in A. D. 1616:

Home of the Goddess and the God, the Ganges,
dwelling-place of saints and excellent sagas,
Wiping away at a glance the ill-fates written on the foreheads of the evil.
Tulsi makes lamentation; O compassionate Rām,
Such is the sad condition of Kaśi
brought about by the terrible Dark Age.\(^\text{15}\)
2. Biographical Notes from the Gautamacandrikā

The information just gleaned from Tulsī Dās's own works is probably the most reliable biographical material that is available.

Among the contemporary or near-contemporary sources, perhaps the most useful and the closest to Tulsī Dās' time, since it claims Saṁvat 1681 (A.D. 1624) as the year of its composition, is the Gautamacandrikā, written by one Kṛṣṇa Datta, already mentioned above.

The latter supports the views that Tulsī Dās was born in Saṁvat 1600 (A.D. 1543), that he was born at the ill-omened conjunction of two asterisms, at an hour when parents were advised to abandon their child, and that the poet's guru was, as already pointed out, Nārāhari Dās, of the Saundilyā gotra, who resided on the banks of the river Narmadā and in Śṛṅgadheta.

The Gautamacandrikā also relates that its author, Kṛṣṇa Datta, met Tulsī Dās for the first time while he was paying a visit to his own guru at Banāras. On that occasion, we are told that Tulsī Dās related in tears how he had come from Ayodhyā and had stayed on the banks of the Jamunā, where he had been struck by "the arrow of the love god".
The Gautamacandrikā also indicates that upon the invitation of
Krṣṇa Datta's guru, Tulsi Dās sang a new hymn to Viṣṇu in front of an
audience of enraptured sādhus gathered at the guru's house. The work
also describes Ganga Rāma, already referred to, as a parama satsangī,
a member of a pious group which probably included Tulsi Dās as well.
It also mentions one Todar Mal who knew Tulsi Dās, and for whose family,
according to a document of A.D. 1612, the latter is known to have
acted as arbitrator. What is significant here is that the same Todar
Mal is mentioned in a list of some twenty persons, which would give
support to the view that the latter may have been the company of saints
so frequently mentioned by Tulsi Dās. The verification of such a hy-
pothesis would be particularly revealing of Tulsi Dās' practical atti-
tude towards the lower-class devotees as, according to indications given
in the same document, the group is composed of a majority of low-castes,
even outcastes, and one Muslim named "Mīr the Muslim minstrel".

The Gautamacandrikā informs us that when Tulsi Dās was twenty
years old, he went with other members of his group on a pilgrimage which
lasted over ten years and which took him to the very places where many
of the incidents related in the Rāmāyaṇa are said to have occurred.
According to this account, Tulsi Dās interrupted his pilgrimage when he
was thirty years old, in order to spend time writing the Rāmacaritāmānas
at Ayodhya. He continued writing most of the following year while
pursuing his pilgrimage, which finally ended in Banaras.

The Gautamacandrikā goes on to describe the enthusiasm which was
aroused by Tulsi Dās' masterpiece, which attracted pilgrims from all
directions, and prompted admirers to compare its author to Mount Sewu.
Krsna Datta also speaks of Nabhâ who wrote the Bhakta Mâla, which would imply that the latter, who speaks of Tulsi Dâsin Chapter 129 of his poem, was also his contemporary.

Of Tulsi Dâs' final years, the Gauthamacandrikâ speaks of the effect produced on him by Todar's death, and the quarrel which arose among the latter's heirs and which Tulsi Dâs was called upon to arbitrate. It also speaks about Tulsi Dâs' failing health, restored through the intercession of Hanumâna, and about the great pestilence which ravaged Banâras in 1616. Finally, it gives the year Sâmvat 1680 (A.D. 1623) as the year of Tulsi Dâs' death, adding that the poet's ashes were deposited in the Gañgâ. Because of the early date of the Gauthamacandrikâ and the way in which most of its information fits in with the impression one could gather from Tulsi Dâs' works, we may consider this source to be generally reliable.

3. Biographical Notes from other Sources

a) The Bhakta Mâla

Although the Bhakta Mâla is often considered unreliable, its author Nabhâ Dâs, seems to have been a contemporary of Tulsi Dâs and there may be some foundation for the information he offers us.

We have already seen that the identification of Tulsi Dâs' guru has been made difficult by the fact that in the Bhakta Mâla several saints are referred to by the name Narahari.

The verse in Chapter 129 already referred to above, which proclaims Tulsi Dâs' fame, is corroborated by a statement in the Kavi-tâvâlî, where it is said that the world likens the author of the Râm-caritmânas to Vâlmikl, and by a passage of the Vinaya-Patrika, where Tulsi Dâs admits that before becoming presumptuous he had been respected. Here is what Nabhâ Dâs writes concerning Tulsi Dâs:
For the salvation of being in this perverse Dark Age
Vālmiki has become Tulsi;
In the former Treta age he made the thousand million verses of the Rāmāyana
Of which but one letter can redeem even a man who has slain a Brahman.
Now he has again published abroad God's many wonders as a comfort for all devotees,
And intoxicated with the love of Rāma's feet he repeats his Name both night and day according to his vow.
Thus he has secured an easily accessible boat for crossing the boundless ocean of existence;
For the salvation of beings in this perverse Dark Age Vālmiki has become Tulsi.

As this dissertation progresses, it will be our duty to verify the truth of the refrain repeated by Nābhā Dās in the poem just quoted: "Vālmiki has become Tulsi".

b) The Commentary on Bhakta Māla

Many popular legends are also contained in Priyā Dās' commentary on the Bhakta Māla, which is dated A.D. 1722, but these are now generally considered unreliable. 19

c) Rāmū Dwivedī's Commentary on the Rāmcaritmānas

Sometime before Saṅvat 1662 (A.D. 1606), a disciple of Tulsi Dās, named Rāmū Dwivedi wrote a commentary on the Rāmcaritmānas which contains an interesting verse considered descriptive of his master:

He is fair skinned, when he hears even
the syllable "Rā" his flesh thrills
and his hair stands on end; on his
breast is a necklace of Tulsi beads;
he wears a loin-cloth, and time on
time in a deep voice he repeats the
line "Then Bharat stood". 20

The above material reveals very little concerning the date and place of Tulsi Dās' birth, his parentage, and his marriage. In the absence
of solid information on these facets of Tulsī Dās' life, a number of legends have developed. Modern scholars have sorted through these legends and ventured a certain number of opinions on these questions, of which the most important will now be presented.

4. The Date of Tulsī Dās' Birth

Modern scholars are far from having reached a consensus on this question. Atkins has suggested 1523 or 1527; scholars Hill and Vau-deville have accepted Grierson's suggested date of 1532; while Allchin has accepted Wilson's and Blumhardt's date of 1543. This last date seems most probable, as it is confirmed by the Gautamacandrika referred to previously.

5. The Place of Tulsī Dās' Birth

According to a popular tradition, Tulsī Dās was born at Rājpūr in the Banda district. However, others have suggested either Hāji-pur, near Citrākūta, Tārī in the Doab, Sūkarakheta or Ayodhyā in the Faizabad district, or Soron in the Etah district. The arguments for these other alternatives are largely conjectural and there seems to be no major reason to doubt the popular tradition.

6. Tulsī Dās' Parentage

Popular tradition holds that Tulsī Dās was a Dūbe of the Parā-sara gotra of the Sarayūpārīna Brāhmaṇas. According to the Bhakt-Sindhu, a modern poem, his father, Ṭāmā Rāma Dūbe, is said
to have been the headman of a village on the Jumna River in the Banda district. The poem adds that his mother’s name was Hulasī.

7. Tulsi Dās’ Marriage

According to a widespread tradition, much of which is based on the Bhakta Māla,27 Tulsi Dās was married to the daughter of Dīnabandhu Pāṭhak called Ratnāvalī, and the couple’s only son, Tāraka, died in infancy.

The story goes that one day, Ratnāvalī decided to visit her father. Unable to bear the pain of separation, Tulsi Dās hurriedly caught up with her, only to hear her disapproving words to the effect that no one but Rāma deserved such devotion and attachment:

Are you not ashamed of following me here?
A curse on such love!
What can I say to you, my husband?
My body is nothing but bone and skin;
and if such love you have for it
had been devoted to the Lord Rāma,
you would have no reason to dread rebirth. 28

The reprimand had such a profound effect on the poet that he abandoned his family ties shortly after, and returned to Banāras, where he became an ascetic vātary to Rāma.

It seems clear that the author of the Rāmacaritmānas was reared from childhood in the cult of Rāma, whose glory he sang until his death. It also seems clear that his rifacimento of the Rāmāyaṇa won him immediate recognition, thus prompting Tulsi Dās’ admirers to liken him during his lifetime to Vālmiki himself.
II. WORKS OF TULŚĪ ĐĀŚ

The study of the works of Tulśī Đāś presents two special difficulties: one, the fact that many poems traditionally attributed to him are no longer considered as authentic, and the other that most of his works cannot be dated.

The first important discussion of Tulśī Đāś' works in Western literature was done at the end of the last century by Sir George Grierson in a long article entitled "Notes on Tulśī Đāś," published in 1893 in *Indian Antiquary*. Most of Grierson's views were accepted by W. Douglas P. Hill, who in 1952 reexamined his list in the introduction to his translation of the *Rāmcaritmānas*. Additional light was also thrown on this question in 1964 by Professor F.R. Allchin who, in the introduction to his translation of the *Kavita vali*, offered a critical analysis of all Tulśī Đāś' works. I have found no grounds for disagreement with Allchin's conclusions.

There can be no doubt that Tulśī Đāś' *magnum opus* is the *Rāmcaritmānas*, whose date is clearly given by the author himself as Saṁvat 1621 (A.D. 1574). We have good reason to believe that it was completed the following year, on the basis of the information given by the *Gaṅgāmacandrikā*, referred to in the preceding chapter.

Next in importance rank the *Vinaya-patrikā* and the *Kavita vali*. Although both are undated, frequent references to the poet's broken health and to the pestilence of A.D. 1616 suggest that the poems were written in the last twenty years of his life. These two long poems
reveal in a striking manner the aging poet's ever-increasing love for Rāma.

The next work whose authenticity is undisputed and which is clearly dated is the Pārvati Maḥāpūra. Written in Saṅvat 1643 (A.D. 1586), this poem deals with the marriage of Śiva and Pārvati.

On the basis of a manuscript recently come to light, we may now consider the poem Jñānadipikā as authentic and accept the date Saṅvat 1621 (A.D. 1564) given in the manuscript as reliable. We have already seen that the colophons of this text supply important informations concerning the author's religious education.

Although Grierson gives Sunday, 4 June 1598 A.D. as the date of composition of the Rāmājanāpraṇā, Allchin affirms that the date given is in reality Saṅvat 1621 (A.D. 1564). The seven chapters of this work, whose authenticity has not been questioned, give a summary of the corresponding seven books of the Rāmāyaṇa, and contain dohās meant to serve in the prediction of omens.

On the basis of its immaturity of style, the undated short poem Rāmalā Mahchū, which deals with Rāma's investiture with the sacred thread, is considered to be one of the earliest, if not the very earliest of Tulsī Dās' poems. Likewise, because the undated Varāgya Sandipinī, another short poem dealing with the nature of the real sant, reveals less poetical talent than the Rāmacaritmānas, it is considered chronologically earlier than the latter.

The undated Gīcāvalī, which Tulsī Dās is believed to have written after a meeting with Sūr Dās, contains sonnets dealing with the Rām-kathā.
Allchin places it around the end of the sixteenth century.

The Jñanaka Haṅgala, which describes the celebration of the marriage of Sitā and Rāma and which betrays the influence of the Adhyātma Rāmāvana is considered earlier than the Rāmacaritmānas, although no precise date has been suggested.

Professor Allchin also includes in the list of works attributable to Tulsi Dās four other undated poems whose authenticity has been questioned by earlier scholarship.

The first poem, Kṛṣṇa Gītāvalī, is dated prior to A.D. 1605, on the basis of a reference to it in the Preram Rāmāvana of Rāmu Dvivedī, written in that year. As the title indicates, this poem deals with Kṛṣṇa rather than Rāma. This factor, coupled with a difference of style, aroused the suspicion of scholars concerning its authenticity.

The second poem, Satsāi is believed by certain scholars like Grierson to be partly attributable to a later Tulsi Dās; contrary to the other works of the author of the Rāmacaritmānas, it gives a systematic account of its author's religious belief. According to Allchin, the poem is dated Sāmvat 1642 (A.D. 1585).

Finally, the third and fourth poems, the Hanumāṇ Bāhuka and the Dohāvalī, both discarded by Hill, are accepted by Allchin as authentic and placed among Tulsi Dās' latest works on the basis of frequent references in both to the author's failing health and to the pestilence of A.D. 1616.

By way of summary, the following list of the fourteen works accepted as authentic by Allchin will now be given in the chronological
order suggested by the same scholar:

1. Rāmalalā Mahācū, undated but shows immaturities of style and of content.


3. Jñānadīpika, dated Samvat 1621 (A. D. 1564) in a new manuscript recently come to light.

4. Varāghva Sandīpīni, undated, but reveals less talent than the Rāmcūrītūnas.

5. Jānakī Maṅgala, undated, shows influence of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana.


7. Satsai, dated Samvat 1642 (A. D. 1585).


9. Gitāvalī (also known as Padāvalī Rāmāyana), undated.

10. Kṛṣṇa Gitāvalī, undated, but written before A. D. 1605, for Rāmū Dvivedī refers to it in his Prema Rāmāyana, which was written in that year; a collection of songs on Kṛṣṇa.

11. Vinayapatrika, undated, but frequent references to Tulsī Dās! broken health and to the pestilence of A. D. 1616 suggest the last twenty years of his life.
The list given by W.D.P. Hill, in his introduction to the translation of the Rāmacaritmānas corresponds roughly to the above, with the addition of the undated Baravai Rāmāyana, which he claims is accepted by most scholars, and with the omission of the Jñāna-dīpikā and the Dohāvalī.

He furthermore gives a list of nine works, including the Hanumān-bāhuka, which are given by the Śivasiṁhasorōja, but which he considers as probably spurious.

Apart from the Rāmacaritmānas, the Vinaya-patrikā and the Kavitāvalī, it is unfortunate that most of the works attributed to Tulsi Dās still remain to be translated in modern European languages. We may also deplore the fact that modern scholarship, both Eastern and Western, has given too little attention to the works of Tulsi Dās, including the Rāmacaritmānas, the Vinaya-Patrikā, and Kavitāvalī.

It is hoped that the study made in Part II of this dissertation, dealing with the immediate context which Tulsi Dās lived in, will throw additional light on both the man and his work.
PART TWO: THE TRADITION

I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

II. THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

III. THE REVIVAL OF THE MIDDLE STREAM
I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The currents of Indian thought have altered from age to age, from community to community. Because of the ease with which Hinduism has absorbed throughout the ages the beliefs and rituals of peoples with whom it came into contact, it is difficult to find distinctive features capable of binding together its different forms. As one looks for common denominators, one is confronted by the difficulty of blending, for instance, the Vedic and the non-Vedic, or the literary and the non-literary traditions. As the total tradition developed, however, there seem to emerge general emphases which by medieval times had worked themselves into distinct streams. Even though these streams do not form an established set of patterns used to characterize the tradition's self-understanding, they are nevertheless helpful in situating Tulsī Dās' position regarding the relation between love of God and social duty.

One of these streams might be defined as "Vedic Orthodoxy", which gives a low place to love of God and relies heavily on traditional regulations to define behaviour in terms of duty. A second stream might be seen as "Antinomian Theism", which considers love of God as an end in itself to the point of dismissing traditional regulations. Between these two conflicting currents stands "Orthodox Theism" in which there is a conscious attempt to integrate love of God and social duty in such a way that social and domestic life is maintained.
1. Vedic orthodoxy

Vedic orthodoxy, as it is viewed here, is that model of religious behaviour which gives a preeminent place to traditional regulations, rather than to love of God, as the guiding principle of man's behaviour. In many aspects of the Hindu tradition, to be a Hindu is essentially to undertake faithfully one's individual duty (sva-dharma) and thereby to contribute to the ordering of the world (loka-saṅgraha). Chaos impinges on society precisely when caste duties and family obligations are not fulfilled. This insistence on the fundamental necessity for social and domestic order is persistent throughout the history of the tradition.

Perhaps the best place to look for an early systematized presentation of this tendency is the Mīmāṃsā school, classified among the six philosophical systems known as jāt倍as. Regarded as the direct continuation of the Vedic culture, the Mīmāṃsā came to be acknowledged by most Hindus of the intellectual class as the orthodox position par excellence. As the Mīmāṃsā school variously emphasized two distinct aspects of the Vedic tradition, namely the ritualistic and the speculative, it is customary to distinguish between the Pārva-Mīmāṃsā, which emphasizes the ritualistic aspect, and the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā, which emphasizes the speculative aspect. The more usual names of the latter two being Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta respectively, the common usage will be followed here.
The earliest authoritative source of the Kīmāṇḍū system is Jaimini's Kīmāṇḍū-sūtra, usually assigned to a date earlier than that of the other dārayana, not later than 200 A.D., although its tradition is much older. The earliest extant commentary of the Kīmāṇḍū-sūtra is the Bhāsya of Śabara, written probably about 100 B.C. Śabara's Bhāsya was in turn given two important commentaries, one by Prabhakara (A.D. 650) and the other by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (A.D. 700) whose influence will be discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation.

For the Kīmāṇḍū school, the Vedic texts are the criterion of what is right and what is wrong. In its anxiety to secure supremacy for the Vedas, this system does not admit the existence of a God whose authority would exceed, or be equal to, that of the Vedas. A good life is therefore one which is led in conformity with the injunctions of the Vedas, and not with the personal will of a divine creator. Although the Vedic hymns show that a cult was addressed to specific deities, the Kīmāṇḍū insists that rituals should be performed because the Vedas prescribe them as injunctions, the deities serving merely to indicate that in whose name an offering is to be offered at a sacrifice. Doubts have been raised as to whether the Kīmāṇḍū could be called atheistic without qualification; the fact remains that we are dealing with a system where “dharma reaches, through ritualism, the highest point of its glory, namely, the conception of duty for duty’s sake”.

True, the Kīmāṇḍū deals with sacrificial rather than social and domestic duties as such. However, its principles stand in close relation
with the social dimension of Hindu life. Skill in the Mīmāṃsā is considered, in the Manu smṛti and other Dharma Śāstras, as a qualification for disputing questions of law. Thus, Medhātithi (ca. 10th or 11th century A.D.), the very first known commentator of the Manu smṛti, was an adept in the Mīmāṃsā principles. 6

Unlike the Mīmāṃsā, the Vedānta's main concern is not with the Vedic injunctions regarding rituals but rather with the philosophical foundations on which ritualism depends. The earliest extant attempt to give a systematic account of Vedānta is the Vedānta Sūtras (also called Brahman Śāstras) which at a very early date became revered as an inspired work. On the basis that this work, attributed to Pāṇdbcayana, contains a refutation of almost all other Indian philosophical systems, scholars have assigned a date as early as the second century B.C. as the time when it was written. 7 In the eighth century, Gaudapāda revived the teaching of the Upaniṣad by an important commentary on the Māndukya Upaniṣad. Gaudapāda's disciple, Govinda, was the teacher of Śaṅkara (720-820 A.D.), acknowledged since by orthodox Brahmins as the most authoritative spokesman of the Vedānta, and thereby of orthodoxy.

On the basis of the Upaniṣadic mystic intuitions, Śaṅkara proposes knowledge (jñāna) as the only direct means of achieving the highest
goal of immortality (moksha) through identification with the impersonal Absolute (nirguna brahman). His views on social duty and love of God are better expounded in his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Throughout his commentary, Sankara presents work (karma) as but a means leading to knowledge:

devotion to action is a means to the end, not directly, but only as leading to devotion to knowledge; whereas the latter, which is attained by means of devotion to action, leads to the goal directly, without extraneous help. 8

He goes on to explain that actions are enjoined to the unenlightened whereas the enlightened who has seen the immutable Self has only to renounce all works. 9 For the enlightened, action is the means of attaining the purity of mind necessary for knowledge. 10 Sankara adds that in spite of the exemption from works, the enlightened may feel obligated to perform his social duty for other reasons such as fidelity to his caste duty or "the purpose of preventing the masses from resorting to a wrong path". 11

The problem of determining the exact nature of Sankara's views on love of God, referred to as bhakti in the Gita, is more complex. When one compares the attention he devotes to the paths of knowledge and work with that of love, it becomes clear that the latter is not treated as an important salvific path.

Compared to other commentators, Sankara treats with coldness many passages dealing with love of God (such as IX. 14, 26, 29, etc...) a coldness which is reflected in his silence or his rather prosaic
considerations. Moreover, contrary to other well-known commentators such as Râmânuja and Madhva, he frequently refers to knowledge and work as the two means—the first direct and the second indirect—of attaining salvation, without including love of God as the third important term of comparison. The explanation for thus minimizing the rôle of bhakti might be sought in Śaṅkara’s tendency to identify bhakti with jñāna in several passages such as VIII.22, XVIII.54, XVIII.55, XIII.11, and XVIII.66.

We may summarize Śaṅkara’s views on social duty and love of God by saying that for him social duty, which is a form of karma, is necessary for the unenlightened. While it is not imposed on the enlightened, it may nevertheless be advised on at least two grounds: i) his station in life; ii) his desire to serve as an example for the unenlightened. On the other hand, the rôle of love of God is not emphasized on a par with that of social duty. Rather, it is suggested that since bhakti is identifiable with jñāna, love of God is ultimately not different from love of Self or rather Self-realization.

Thus, Śaṅkara shares with the Mīmāṃsakas, although with differing degrees and for different purposes, a common concern for the fulfillment of social duty accompanied with a common tendency to minimize the rôle of love of God. The influence of both the Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta systems in post-vedic Hinduism was considerable. In his study of this period, J. Gonda attributes to
Kumārila and Śaṅkara a decisive role in the revival of orthodoxy between 700 A.D. and 1600 A.D., which resulted in a definitive absorption of Buddhism within the fold of Hinduism and a greater sense of solidarity among Hindus, particularly of the intellectual class.  

The Dharma Mātrig may be considered as another instance of Vedic orthodoxy. These documents, the earliest of which are assigned to the period 600 to 300 B.C., deal with righteous conduct, manners and polite behaviour, the administration of the state and justice, and the duties which must be performed in carrying out domestic rituals. The most influential among these in the development and maintenance of Hindu religious practice is the Manu smṛti, a metrical Sanskrit work compiled some time before the second century A.D. This law book, intended for the ruling and educated elements of the population, lays heavy stress on the customs and ceremonies which should surround the life of each individual and accompany him from birth to death. As in the case of the Hīmāṇa and the Veda, the Manu smṛti is based on the authority of the Vedas:

By the Smṛti (revelation) is meant the Veda, and by Smṛti (tradition) the institutes of the sacred law: these two must not be called into question in any matter, since from these two the sacred law shone forth.

Sātricc discists continued to be written down to the British days, and as we shall see in the next chapter of this thesis exercised a certain influence in medieval North India. In these manuals of moral
guidance, as in the Himaṣa and the Vedānta, the emphasis is laid on the fulfillment of one's prescribed duties and regulations, thereby contrasting with the antinomian emphasis on love of God, which will now be discussed.

2. Antinomian Theism

Antinomian theism tends to regard love of God as an end in itself with the implication that traditional social and domestic regulations, insofar as they are prescribed by tradition, may be dismissed.

A relatively early trace of antinomian theism is found in the Tamil tradition, particularly among the Vaisnāvite saints known as the Ālvar, who rose between the sixth and the ninth century A.D. Thus, Nāmaśiva Ālvar is pictured as a contemplative devotee who took up residence under a tamarind tree and remained there in silence and fasting. Likewise, King Kulaśekhara, a Rāma devotee who lived in the ninth century A.D., is especially remembered for having renounced his rich kingdom in order to contemplate and sing the glories of Rāma in the Vaisnāvite sanctuaries of Śrīrangam and
Tirupati, where he spent the rest of his life:

One night the Lord manifested himself to him and he became a different man on the next morning. His heart longed for the spiritual out and out spurning away the material, so much so that he was contemplating on a pilgrimage to Srinangam... He finally renounced his throne and went to the seat of his Lord, the religious center of Sri-Rangam at first, to be followed by that of Sri Venkatesa over the seven hills, singing the glory of his Lord and expressing his feelings of ecstasy in pure and simple Tamil.(sic) 19

The implication, in both of the above examples, is that one must renounce worldly concerns in order to become a real devotee.

The gopi theme represents a still clearer case of antinomian theism. The exact details of the origins of the gopi ideal associated with the Krama cult are not easily determined. The gopi story seems to have been already well known at the time of the Vighu Purana and the Harivamsha, as both documents related, around the fourth century A.D. Krama's sports with the cowherds. However, the most renowned version of the story is found in the Bhagavata Purana, which is among the latest productions of the Hindu Puranic literature and is undoubtedly the most famous and widely used of the Puranas. 23 As the Bhagavata Purana attained prominence by the tenth century A.D., scholars agree that it must have been written at least a century before. After a recent and careful study of this question, T. H. Hopkins prudently affirms that it was written "no earlier than A.D. 500 and no
later than A.D. 900". On the basis of a possible common historical setting with that of the Ālvārs, he goes on to suggest A.D. 850 as the probable date.

Most scholars believe that the Bhāravata Purāṇa comes from the Tamil land of the Ālvārs. Mr. D.A. Pai, whom Miss Rukmani quotes approvingly, adds that the Bhāravata Purāṇa is perhaps the work of a body of Tamil ascetics who may have lived with the Ālvārs. However, until more convincing evidence can be obtained, none of the indications given above can be taken as definitive, except for the rather well established fact that the Bhāravata Purāṇa was written between A.D. 500 and A.D. 900.

The story of the ropigs, as related in the Bhāravata Purāṇa, could leave no doubt in the hearer's mind that the intensity of the devotee's love of God may justify the forsaking of his social duty to follow the Lord more closely. When moved by an intense devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the ropigs are commended for neglecting their duty to follow Him. Thus, upon hearing the notes of Kṛṣṇa's flute, the women of Vraja neglect their duties to get near Him:

Full of intense longing, some who were milking cows, darted off leaving the milking vessel (uncared for); others left as soon as they had placed the milk on the oven (without waiting for its being boiled) and still others went out without removing the (dressed) porridge (from the hearth); some, who were serving food (to their husbands and other relations) went away neglecting that duty... Though being stopped by their husbands, parents, brothers or other relations, they did not turn back (homeward), infatuated as they were (through love),
True, after praising the gopis for having followed Him, gently sends them back to their duties, explaining that "love for Me is fostered not so much by physical proximity as by hearing my praises, looking at Me, meditating on Me or by singing My glories". However, the gopis adamantly insist, using a long argument of which the most significant passage is the following:

As it has been observed by You, the knower of dharma, that the natural duty of woman is to render service to their husband and children as well as to the relations of their husband, O beloved One, let such service be done to You, the almighty Lord, the (central) theme of all teachings: for you are the most beloved Friend, (pray) the (very) self, and, and, and...

Those well-versed in the sacred lore surely find delight in You (alone): their own eternally beloved self, what purpose can be gained through a husband, children and others, who are sources of agony? Therefore, be gracious to us, O supreme Lord: (pray) do not frustrate our hopes centred in You for a long time, O lotus-eyed One.

It is to be noticed that Krishna yields to the above argument of the gopis, for he "proceeded to delight them out of compassion, though revelling in his own self". In a later passage, a similar episode is related, showing the devotees neglecting their duties to follow Krishna, and this time the latter makes no attempt whatsoever to dissuade them from their course of action.

The example of the gopis is illustrative of the view that the intensity of one's devotion may, in certain cases, be sufficient justification for neglecting one's domestic and social duties. The
next chapter will show that this Purânic exaltation of antinomian theism exercised an influence in medieval North India, particularly among the Ksna-Saîts.

A more iconoclastic example of antinomian theism is that of the Liṅgâyâts, who emerged as a sect between the tenth and the twelfth century A.D. in the Karnâtaka and the Mahârâstra provinces. The question is still debated whether Basâva was the actual founder of the sect. R.G. Bhandarkar believes that he was rather its supporter, thanks especially to his political influence, as he was in charge of the royal treasury under King Bijjala of Kalyâna, who acceded to the throne in 1156. Scholars also debate whether, as it is often contended, Basâva did away with the Hindu caste system, caste duties and some other traditional customs.

Be that as it may, the Liṅgâyâts' expressions of intense devotion (to Śiva), in the poems attributed to Basâva and his companions, are accompanied by an attitude highly critical of social structures, accepted conventions, and Hindu religious traditions:

Classical belief systems, social customs and superstitions (Basavanna 581, 105), the caste system (Bâsimayya 96), the Vedic ritual of yajña (Basavanna 125) as well as local sacrifices of lambs and goats (Basavanna 129) — all of them are fiercely questioned and ridiculed.

Of special relevance to us is a vacâna by Allama Prabhu on the inefficacy of works for spiritual growth, the implication being that
love of God does not necessarily call for good works in order to lead the devotee to liberation:

Feed the poor
Tell the truth
Make water-places
And build tanks for a town...
You may then go to heaven
After death, but you'll get nowhere near the truth of our Lord.
And the man who knows our Lord, he gets no result. \( \text{H0} \)

What seems to be questioned here is the assumption that one must play the rôle expected of him by society and tradition in order to experience genuine love of God. Such conditioned devotion would seem, in the eyes of the Lingāyats, to smack of the notion according to which God's love can be commanded by man's actions or virtues:

All true experience of God is \text{krpa}, grace that cannot be called, recalled, or commanded. The \text{yogas} distinguish \text{anubhava} "experience", and \text{anubhava} "the Experience". The latter in a search for the "unmediated vision", the unconditioned act, the unpredictable experience. Living in history, time and cliché, one lives in a world of the preestablished, through the received (\text{Smrti}) and the remembered (\text{smrti}). But the Experience when it comes, comes like a storm to all such husks and labels. \( \text{H1} \)

It must not be concluded from the above that having overthrown Brahmanical law, the Lingāyats became socially irresponsible. Devara Dasimayya, the weaver, taught that working in the world was a part of worshipping and reaching Śiva. Nor did they object to religious practices as such. Mr. Rāmānuja has shown that the Lingāyats' challenging of the existing culture led to the acclamation of a
counter-culture.

It has been suggested that Basava and his companions were influenced by the Jains whom they tried to win over to their sect. However whereas the importance attached to the foundation of monasteries by the Liṅgāyāts may be seen as traces of Jain influence, their critical attitude towards social inequality is also suggestive of Muslim influence. Yet, despite occasional persecutions the Liṅgāyats, who acknowledge the authority of the Vedas, are generally recognized as Hindus, and their socio-political influence attained an apogee in Mysore, where the Liṅgāyat religion was acknowledged as the official state religion from 1350 to 1610.

The antinomian stream may be seen as a dimension of the rise of the post-Vedic devotional trend in India, which has often been interpreted as a reaction against Vedic orthodoxy. J. Gonda, for instance, sees in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava movement an attempt to counter the influence of Vedic orthodoxy. It is significant that the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas cherished the poems of the Āḷvārs and popularized the Bhāgavita Purāṇa, both of which, as we have just seen, carried seeds of antinomian theism. This anti-orthodox movement can be seen, then, as an opposition to the one-sided reliance on Vedic injunctions preached by the Mīmāṃsakaś, especially Prabhākara and Kumārila, as well as to the advaitic doctrine of Śaṅkara where the insistence on knowledge and to a certain extent on social duty had resulted in an unacceptable minimization of love of God as a path of spiritual liberation. That antinomian theism extended
its influence to the immediate context of Tulsi Dās will be seen in
the following chapter, as the impact of the Śaṅk movement, particularly
the influence of Kabīr, is dealt with among the different factors
that shaped the religious trends of medieval North India.

3. Orthodox Theism

Orthodox theism represents the middle ground between the two
conflicting streams just seen, where social duty and love of God
stood as two opposite poles. The Bhāgavat Gītā may be considered
as representative of this tendency.

The work of an anonymous author, the Gītā forms a small part of
the Mahābhārata, one of the two greatest Indian epics with the Rāmā-
yan. The exact date of its composition is not yet known. Modern
scholars suggest the period between the fifth century B.C. and the
second century B.C., the final recension having been made between
the fourth and the seventh century A.D. ⁵⁰

The Gītā sets forth three spiritual paths whereby one can obtain
spiritual fulfillment: knowledge (jñāna-yoga), work (karma-yoga),
and love of God (bhakti-yoga). There is no opposition among the
three paths. In fact, karma normally calls for bhakti and jñāna.
In order for the man of action to achieve spiritual freedom through
karma, he must detach himself from the fruits of his actions. How-
ever, this selflessness (*niskāma-karma*) in action is best attained through a new attachment to the Divine:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice or give away in alms, whatever penance you may perform, offer it up to me. 51

Likewise non-attachment to the results of one's actions is more easily achieved through the realization (*jñāna*) that the empirical self, and not the real Self, is the doer of those actions:

All actions are performed by the *karma* of *prakṛti* alone. But he who is deluded by I-consciousness (*ahankara*) thinks "I am the doer". 52

This turning away from attachment to all fruits (*phala*) of the action and from the mistaken identity of the real doer constitutes the preliminary step to what is called "higher bhakti", which in turn leads to "higher jñāna", wherein the bhakta transcends the *Consciousness of the negative turning away from what is not liberation, in order to attach himself exclusively to the Lord (*purusottama*), and thereby achieving unity with the Divine:

By devotion (*bhakti*) he knows Me, what my greatness is and what I am really. Then having known (*jñāna*) me as I am, he enters forthwith into Me. 53

From the above, it is clear that bhakti leads to *jñāna*, and the latter leads directly to liberation. It is by thus becoming one with Purusottama that man will be able to act without attachment in fulfillment of the duty attached to his particular state of life (*svadharma*). However, rather than following all the steps indicated
it would seem that one could achieve the same results by opting either for bhakti or for jñāna. The two alternatives are compared in the famous answer to Arjuna's query:

Of those who are thus ever integrated and serve You with loyal devotion, and those who (revere) the Imperishable Unmanifest, which are the most experienced in spiritual exercise? 54

In his answer, Krsna gives priority to those who follow the bhakti-mārga, because it is the easier path. He does admit, however, that those who follow jñāna-mārga by revering the Imperishable, Unmanifest (or nirguna brahman) "also obtain me" (v. 4). He even concedes that if one is unable to follow the two preceding paths, then he may receive the prize by just performing action for His sake:

For if for such effort you lack the strength, then work and act for Me, make this your goal; for even if you work only for my sake, you will receive the prize. 55

The Gita also teaches that by thus fulfilling his appointed duty, the devotee conforms to the will of the Lord, who himself created the four-caste system. 56

Thus, in attempting to promote love of God as the easier way, the Gita does not want to be exclusivistic. Rather, it acknowledges the legitimacy of the three different approaches:

Arjuna, howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them; for all men follow My path—from all sides. 57

We may conclude from the above that contrary to Saṅkara's interpretation, the Gita accepts love of God as a possible and distinct means of salvation. In fact, we may even say, on the basis of passages like
XII. 2, 5, and 6, that the path of love is the most advisable path
for it is easier, possible for everyone and most pleasing to God.
Likewise, the Gitā consistently teaches that perfection can be
reached through work and that the latter is a means to release. In
fact, work coupled with knowledge and love of God should be considered
as the ideal option. For all, disinterested selfless work is comp-
pulsory. It is not only the way to release of the individual: it is
also according to VII. 20 - 24, the way of bettering the Universe.
In the Gitā, therefore, both love of God and social duty are
recommended and both are integrated along with knowledge as complement-
ary ways leading to salvation.

The significance of the Bhagavad Gitā as a precursor to the Rām-
caritānās should not be overlooked. The Upanisads insisted on with-
drawal from the world (sannyāsa) — after the manner of Yājnavalkya —
as the ideal way of escaping the binding effects of action. Citing
King Janaka as an example, the Gitā taught renunciation of the
fruits rather than of the works themselves. With Buddhism and Jain-
ism the sannyāsa ideal was proposed to non-Brahmins as well as to Brahmins.
Such spirit of sannyāsa, when over-emphasized, could lead members
of the society to neglect their appointed duties. The Gitā countered
such possible consequences by insisting that everyone was bound to a
fulfill his svadharma.

The Gitā also brought a satisfying message to a growing number of
Hindus who seemed to incline toward a religion based on the worship of
personal God, a tendency which led to a practical deification of Gautama, Mahāvīra and Krsna. There again, the Gitā, where the Lord Krsna plays an important rôle, was better suited than the speculative Upanisads or the atheistic doctrines of Buddhism and Jainism to answer this need, to the point where it has become "the most revered and celebrated text in Hinduism". 59

Along with the Gitā, the Vālmiki Rāmâyana provided another important instance of the epic pattern tending toward the middle road. As can be expected, however, the middle was constantly changing depending on the pressures from the "sides". After having seen how the Gitā represents the middle stream, we now see that the Vālmiki Rāmâyana played the same rôle but in a different sense.

The composition of the Rāmâyana is traditionally attributed to Maharsi Vālmiki. According to a story found in the Adhyātma Rāmâyana, the Bengali Rāmâyana, and the Mahābhārata, where its earliest traces are found, Vālmiki is supposed to have been a robber whose name had been Ratnākara, and who obtained righteousness by repeating during a thousand yugas the name "Rāma". It is said that at the sight of a male dove killed by a hunter while it was sporting with its mate, Vālmiki uttered the exclamation recorded in Rāla-kānda, 1-4, whereupon a voice from heaven bade him write in the name metrical pattern the story of Rāma.
There have been diverging opinions concerning the date of composition of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa. In 1915 A.B. Keith suggested the fourth century B.C. as the most probable date, but it has been recently suggested that the third century is more likely, on the ground that none of the chief characters of the Epic are found in Pāṇini's grammar, which dates from the fourth century B.C.

There is a general view among scholars that Cantos II to VI of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa are the work of a single poet, because of the unity of conception and style. It is also generally admitted, since the work of Jacobi, that Cantos I and VII, whose style is characteristic of the later Purāṇas, are interpolations, probably added in the first and third century A.D. respectively. In these cantos, Rāma is conceived throughout as an avatāra of Viṣṇu. However, the avatāra theme is also frequent in Canto VI, even more so than in Canto I: this is probably the result of later interpolations.

The task of determining what specific reason Vālmiki had in mind when he set out to write his great Epic is not an easy one. For Dr. Benjamin Khan, Vālmiki's purpose was to show that dharma is the supreme object of human life. For Dr. N.K. Devajara, of the Banaras Hindu University, the distinctiveness of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa must be studied against the background of the two sources of Indian culture. One current of thought stems from the pronouncedly secular Vedic Aryans, which advocates a prosperous and orderly life here on this earth. The other current of thought stems from the pronouncedly ascetic non-Aryans, which mainly looks forward
to the life beyond, through self-denial. On the basis that the Valmiki Ramayana lays great emphasis on dharma while making no reference whatsoever to the ideal of moksa, Dr. Devaarendra concludes that the Ramayana of Valmiki belongs to the Vedic Aryan tradition.

Dr. R.S.D. Sen sees in the Valmiki Ramayana an effort to counter the Buddhist and Jain insistence on monasticism based on celibacy. The numerous cases of young men leaving society to seek Nirvana in monasteries or in the wilderness was, according to Dr. Sen, seen as a threat to the ideal of the householder (grihasthya dharma), considered as an essential element of one's spiritual training. The counter-blows were brought about by an increased emphasis on domestic virtues. Thus, a son could attain salvation only by proving his absolute obedience to his father: a brother, by following his elder brother to exile or even to death; a wife, by being supremely devoted to her husband; a servant, by carrying out the orders of his master with implicit submission. Home is the altar, the battle-field, and the paradise of all virtues. True, Rama, Sitâ, and Laksmana become forest-wanderers, but they do not do so out of a will to sever all ties with the family and society. On the contrary, if Rama leaves aside his royal robes and wears bark or rags, he does so in order to keep his father's sacred pledge. Sitâ, Laksmana, Bharata all accept renunciation, not as a struggle to suppress desire, but out of domestic love. The Ramayana of Valmiki is, therefore, according
to Dr. Sen, an Epic of domestic life:

It was the noble voice of the family-bond raised against the clamour of monasteries crying hoarse over renunciation and severance of all earthly ties. The Rāmāyana is the greatest teacher of Hindu life, holding the banner of reaction against Buddhist asceticism. 69

While the views of N.K. Devajara and R.S.D. Sen offer interesting suggestions, one hesitates to follow the former in applying without qualification the word "sēcular" to the Vedic Aryan tradition, with the possible implication that the Vedic Aryans were not religious and that a religion that seeks to promote or uphold a prosperous and orderly life here on this earth is ipso facto secular. Similarly, Dr. Sen's analysis cannot be adopted without reservation, as in the Rāmāyana itself there are many sections that praise asceticism and many wanderers and rṣis who play positive roles in the story.

No doubt, the safest way of approximating Vālmiki's intention is to consult the Rāmāyana itself. The text makes it clear that for Vālmiki traditional duties are of primary importance. Thus, Rāma should be his father's successor as king of Ayodhya according to a tradition which says that the throne belongs to the eldest son. 70 Sacrifices are performed according to tradition and scriptures, 71 and kings offer the traditional welcome as enjoined by the scriptures. 72
The rulers and guardians of society are praised for their vigilance in fulfilling their social duties by observing the law. The counsellors of King Daśaratha pass judgment on their sons if they break the law. The kings are praised for their knowledge of dharma, and warriors for being fully established in the duties of their caste.

For Vālmiki, caste duties are most important. He notices with satisfaction that no one in Ayodhyā was born of mixed castes, that the warriors were subject to the learned Brahmans, and the merchants to the warriors. Likewise, he mentions that the citizens were invited to attend the sacrifice, "being received in a becoming manner according to their caste". He specifies that invitations were sent to the Brahmans, the warriors, the merchants, the lowest caste.

It is especially in his portrayal of Rāma that Vālmiki highlights the merits of social and domestic duty. Thus, Rāma is shown obeying his father's command, which he considered as his duty, rather than yield to the pressure of his entourage urging him to be inaugurated as heir to the throne of Ayodhyā. In so doing, Rāma is conscious of rejecting another duty, that of succeeding his father according to the traditional rule that the eldest son is the rightful heir, an argument advocated by Bharata to persuade his brother to return to Ayodhyā. This conflict between the unwritten and the written duty is central to the Vālmiki Rāmāyana.
The Vālmiki Rāmāyana presents many other similar episodes aimed at highlighting Rāma's staunch fidelity to traditional duty. For instance, at the risk of provoking violence he agrees to kill demons in the forest in order to protect the ascetics who live there. He welcomes Vibhīṣaṇa, a demon that came to him from the enemy camp. After Sīlā's rescue, Rāma repudiates her against his innermost inclination, in order to assure the people that her conduct with Rāvana had been beyond reproach. In all of these episodes, the same point is made that Rāma chose the difficult decision on account of his duty.

For Vālmiki, Rāma is like his father a "king fixed in his duty", who stands at the very heart of the ideal social order. If the subjects are also fixed in their duty, everything will be as it should, but first the king must set the example of faithfulness to his specific duty as protector and ruler of his people, to the point where "even as he sleeps, he is awake to the ordering of his kingdom".

We must now study to what extent love of God is also present and important in the Vālmiki Rāmāyana. On many occasions in the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, particularly in Cantos II to VI, Rāma is likened to Indra, the chief god of the Ṛg Veda and champion of the kṣatriyas who, with the help of Varuṇa, slays demons chief among whom is Vṛtra. The striking similarities between Rāma and Indra, coupled with the numerous references to Indra in the Vālmiki Rāmāyana suggest that Rāma is seen as the successor of the Vedic god. In this respect it is significant that Rāma kills
Râvana with the help of Indra's weapon.

More than a mere successor of Indra, Râma is also presented as an incarnation (avatâra) of Visnu, particularly in Cantos I, IV and VII. We have already seen that modern scholarship considers these as later interpolations. However, they are not necessarily "corrections". They may just as well be the expression of a deeper truth already latent in the original story and gradually discovered by its hearers.

The most overt statement of Râma's divinity occurs in a long passage in Canto VI, where in answer to Râma's question: "Who then am I in reality?" Brahmâ portrays Râma as Visnu-Dârâyanâ, himself. Indeed Râma is described in this passage as the supreme Purusâ, Brahma, the refuge and protector of his devotees who entered a human body in order to kill Râvana. Even though such an explicit affirmation of Râma's divine nature is an exception, the many references to the avatâra indicate that Râma devotees loved him as God.

As can be expected however, clear expressions of love addressed to God are less numerous in the Valmiki Râmâyana than in the later Râmâyanas, especially the Râmârîtmanâs. The Valmiki Râmâyana is first and foremost a manual of duty where Râma is considered as a human hero in the majority of the Cantos. Nevertheless clear instances of love of Râma as the divine avatâra can be found, particularly in the 6th Canto. For example, "entertained by the grace of Râma's affectionate regard", the monkeys and titans spent a month in Ayodhyâ which seemed like an hour. Likewise, Laksmâna
and Bharata "in their love for him (Rama) and their extremity, forgot that time was passing and thus ten thousand years went by while they devoted themselves to affairs of state." Another instance occurs later when the inhabitants of Ayodhya insist upon following Rama to heaven on the basis that "if thou dost love thy subjects and affection is unsurpassed, let us, with our sons and wives, follow the righteous path with thee." Finally, after his return to heaven, Rama, now seen as Visnu himself, gives his subjects a suitable abode, for "they are my devotees and truly deserving, having sacrificed their lives for me."

We may conclude that the Vālmiki Rāmāvana is interested primarily in presenting Rama as the ideal man, faithful to his social and domestic duties. The original cantos also present him as the successor to Indra, who kills Ravana and the demons. The interpolated sections open up another level of meaning whereby Rama is also considered as the incarnation of Visnu, without necessarily identifying Rama with Visnu. (The passage quoted above where this identification does occur is an extremely rare exception.) The emphasis given to love of God as devotional Lord is far from equalling in proportion that given to bhakti in the Gita. Nevertheless, its role seems sufficiently important to classify the Vālmiki Rāmāvana with the same stream as the Gita.

By opening up new levels of meaning in the Rama symbol considered latent in the old levels, the Vālmiki Rāmāvana provided the paradigm
of the future development which, through the same process of integrating new levels in the old ones, culminated in the Râmcaritmanas where, as we shall later see, love of God emerges as the predominant theme. For this reason, modern Hindus have no difficulty finding back into the Vâlmiki Râmâyana love of God as an important theme, thus justifying its inclusion in the same stream as the Gita, namely orthodox theism. That the Vâlmiki Râmâyana influenced Tulsi Das is beyond question, and the degree to which this influence is reflected in the Râmcaritmanas will be studied in the forthcoming chapters of this thesis.

Along with these passages in the Râmâyana illustrating the ropitâ whose conduct is an example of antinomian theism, other passages of the same Purâna appearing in different settings reflect the middle-stream of orthodox theism, tending to reconcile love of God and social duty. The most important passages illustrating this position are devoted to King Yudhisthira and to Prince Priyavrata, found in Books I and V respectively. The fact that the latter passages adopt a position different from that underlying the ropit stories in Book X presents a difficulty, which is probably due to the inclusion of interpolated passages of different sources and ages.90

As he reflects on his rôle in a war which brought about the destruction of so many, Yudhisthira expresses his dissatisfaction with the traditional views on duty:
The saving clause found in the scriptures that the destruction of enemies in a righteous war on the part of a monarch seeking the protection of his subjects is no sin, fails to satisfy me. The wrong that I have done in this life to the womenfolk whose husbands and other relations have been slain by me or on my account I shall not be able to expiate through sacrificial performances enjoined on a householder. 91

In despair, Yudhisthira calls on Bhishma to seek enlightenment on his duties as king. Bhishma's answer is illuminating as it provides the king with a new criterion of action: the will of God:

Indeed no man, O king, can ever discover the intention of Sri Krsna; even seers get bewildered in their seeking to find it out. Therfore, knowing it for certain, that all these events depend on the will of Providence, O chief of the Bharatas, follow His will, O ruler of men, and protect the helpless people, as you are their sole monarch. 92

Prompted by the king's further question, Bhishma goes on to explain that this change of perspective does not entail the abolition of the various duties (dharma):

Therefore Bhishma, who had realized the Truth, discoursed upon, one by one, the various dharmas determined by the innate disposition of men and apportioned with due regard to their varna and ashrama and the twofold dharmas severally recommended for those endowed with dispassion and those who are full of worldly attachment, the dharmas relating to charitable gifts, the duties obligatory on monarchs, the courses of conduct which are conducive to liberation, the duties of women and the courses of conduct that are intended to propitiate the Lord, both briefly and in detail. He also explained... the four ends of human pursuit, viz., dharma, artha, kama and moksha as well as the means to them in their true perspective with the help of many illustrative anecdotes and stories. 93
The point of this whole passage, therefore, is to show that the
will of God provides social duty with a superior ground, Krsna
being the ultimate source of salvation. Having heard this answer,
the king abandons his despair and, "with the approval of Sri Krsna
ruled his ancestral kingdom with righteousness."

Prince Priyavrata is another example of a ruler whose reluct-
ance to accept his duty could only be overcome by the foregoing
argument. As he was about to make a vow of lifelong contemplation,
Priyavrata is called upon by his father to "rule over the earth".
Now, the prince "did not welcome it, although the command (of his
father) was inviolable: for he had through constant absorption of
his mind in Lord Vasudeva completely resigned all the activities
of his senses and organs of action to Him and he thought that on
his assuming the reins of government (the true nature of) his self
would be obscured by (contact with) the nonself, even though the
latter had no reality."

Having been convinced by Brahma that
his duty was the will of God, the prince accepted the command
with the words "Very well!" his head bent low as a token of his
smallness.

In the two foregoing examples taken from the Bhagavata Purana,
as in the Gita, social duty is not abrogated as a result of the
intensity of the devotee's love. Rather, it is given a theological
basis: the authority of the divine will, thus making it possible
to integrate love of God and social duty.
The three positions described in this chapter, namely Vedic orthodoxy, antinomian theism, and orthodox theism, constitute three typical approaches to the problem of relating love of God and social duty. These streams were very much at work in medieval North India and combined to form the immediate background against which the Rāmacaritāmāvas was written. The next chapter will attempt to show under what guise the said currents presented themselves to Tulsī Dīś at the time he set out to write his magnum opus.
II. THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

In trying to account for the religious atmosphere of medieval North India, one cannot overlook the important repercussions of the socio-political situation of the time, which culminated in Akbar's policy of reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims. It is to this situation that we shall first turn our attention, before attempting to describe the religious atmosphere as such.

1. The Socio-political Context

It should be pointed out at the outset that the following discussion is not meant to be exhaustive of the socio-political background of Tulsi Dās. The purpose of this section is rather to discuss the elements within the socio-political context of medieval North India that appear to be the most important direct influences on the religious trends of the time in which the Râmcaritmānas was written.

If we accept 1543 as the year in which Tulsi Dās was born, it follows that he was only one year younger than Akbar, whose birthday is held to be November 23, 1542. Although the latter was officially proclaimed when he was only thirteen as the successor of his deceased father Humāyūn (1507-1556), he did not take the reins of the government until five years later in 1560. Tulsi
Das was therefore seventeen years of age when Akbar began his effective reign, which lasted forty-five years, excluding the five years of regency.

By the time Tulsī Das was twenty-five years of age, Akbar had already under control Delhi, Lahore, Gwalior, Jaunpur, Mālwa, Allāhābād, and Benares, the latter two in 1567. The violence which accompanied these conquests is a well-known historical fact:

Early in May, 1567, he (Akbar) left Agra in order to crush the rebellion of the Uzbegs, who had been in revolt ever since Hakim's invasion of the Panjāb, and had lately marched on Kālpī. He surprised them when the leaders were drunk and their troops in disorder, and in a battle near Allāhābād defeated them, Khānzaamān being slain and his brother, Bahādur, captured and executed. Several of the leaders taken were trampled to death by elephants, and a reward of a gold coin was paid for every Uzbeg's head. He then marched to Allāhābād, and thence to Benares, which closed its gates against him, and in order to punish the citizens the troops were allowed to sack the city. 2

It is unlikely that Tulsī Das and his immediate hearers had already forgotten such revolting barbarity within a decade after its occurrence, although, as will be shown later, no explicit reference to such political oppression can be found in the Rāmcaritmānas, written only seven years after the conquest of Allāhābād and Benares.
From 1567 on, Akbar extended his conquests at a steady pace. In
1574, the year when Tulsī Dās set out to write the Rāmcarītnāma,
he had already established supreme control over Northern India, in-
cluding Gujrat, and was engaged in the process of annexing Bengal
to his great Empire.

Akbar's plans for the religious life of India were made public
less than a year after Tulsī Dās had started writing his great
masterpiece when, in January 1575, he ordered the construction of
his "Ībādat-khāna", or "House of Worship", destined to serve as a
place for philosophical and religious discussions and debates. In
1582, he loosened his ties with Islam, and in 1582 announced his
project concerning a new "Dīn-i Ilāhī", or "divine Faith", "with the
great advantage of not losing what was good in any one religion,
while gaining what was better in another".3

Although Akbar's universal religion did not come out clearly
in the open before 1582, it would seem that this event had been
prepared, as it were, by a general atmosphere of relative religious
tolerance which prevailed during the entire Mughal Afghān period.
In order to appreciate better, by comparison, the political climate
of this period, a short description of the preceding era, namely that
of the Delhi Sultanate, will be presented.

Although Muslim conquests had been made in India as early as
711 A.D., Muslim suzerainty was not established over the greater
part of the sub-continent before the latter part of the thirteenth century under the reign of 'Alā-ud-dīn, who became Sultan of Delhi in 1296 and extended his dominion to the better part of South India, North India, however, had been under the control of the Delhi Sultanate as early as 1290, when Iltutmish, who had ascended to the throne of Delhi in 1210 or 1211 A.D., was nominated Great Sultan by the Caliph of Baghdad. By that time, Iltutmish had already brought under his control Budāūn, Oudh, Benares, Lahore and Siwālīk, all dependencies of Delhi. As Great Sultan, he extended his dominion further to Bengal, Mālwa and Ujjain. The Delhi Sultanate, whose apogee started with the turn of the thirteenth century A.D., maintained its supremacy in India until the reign of Firuz Tughluq (1351 - 1388), after which it suffered a steady disintegration to be replaced in the sixteenth century by the Turko-Afghan dynasty, whose rule lasted three centuries.

The Delhi Sultanate is generally regarded as a period during which Hindus and Muslims formed two distinct and hostile communities. On the one hand, the Hindus bore towards the Muslim mlechchha (impure) an instinctive repugnance. Al-Birūnī, one of the few contemporary Muslim historians who had a sincere sympathy for the Hindus, notes that "all their (the Hindus') fanaticism is directed against those
who do not belong to them — against all foreigners. They call
them mlechchha i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with
them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationhip, or
by sitting, eating and drinking with them, because thereby, they
think, they would be polluted... They are not allowed to receive
anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished it, or was
inclined to their religion. This, too, renders any connection with
them quite impossible, and constitutes the widest gulf between us
and them. On the other hand, the general attitude of the Muslims
wards their Hindu subjects, to whom the former frequently referred
as "infidels", was also one of arrogant contempt. Throughout this
period, Hindus were not allowed to erect temples unless they paid
a discriminatory poll-tax (jizya), and Hindu pilgrims had to pay
a special fee to visit their own sacred places. The Sultan Firuz
Tughluq (1351 - 1381) held more bigoted views by refusing the
erection of temples even by Hindus who paid the jizya! Almost all
high offices were bestowed upon Muslims, whether Indian or foreign.

The following description of the armies of 'Ala-ud-din (1296 -
1316) by a fifteenth century historian, Fadmaqabha, could apply to
many of the Muslim campaigns of the time:

The conquering army burnt villages; devasted
the land, plundered people’s wealth, took
Brahmapas, children and women of all caste
captive, and flogged them with thongs and
raw hide, carried a moving prison with it,
and converted the prisoners into abjectious
Turks.
Another vivid description from the pen of a Muslim historian is made of Sultan Sikandar Lodi's (1489 - 1517) warfare methods:

He was so zealous a Musalman that he utterly destroyed the diverse places of worship of the infidels, and left not a vestige remaining of them. He entirely ruined the shrines of Hathurâ, the mine of heathenism, and turned their principal Hindu places of worship into caravanserais and colleges. Their stone images were given to the butchers to serve them as meat-weights, and all the Hindus in Hathurâ were strictly prohibited from shaving their heads and beards, and performing their ablutions. He thus put an end to all idolatrous rites of the infidels there: and no Hindu, if he wished to have his head or beard shaved, could get a brush to do it. Every city thus conformed as he desired to the customs of Islam.

The above must not lead us to think that no degree of sympathetic understanding could exist between the two communities during this period. Historians have shown that there was some degree of mutual harmony and toleration in different spheres of life, particularly in literature, art and architecture. Yet, when all is told, the Delhi Sultanate will be especially remembered for "the ferocity of Muslim bigotry, (which,) renewed at intervals and therefore always of recent memory, fed the ulcer that was eating into vitals of communal amity."
We now come to the Mughul-Afghan period, which opened with
the invasion by Babur in 1526. With Babur, who was Akbar's grand-
father, began a century and a half of unprecedented political stability
and cultural harmony between Hindus and Muslims, a period which
attained its apogee under the reign of Akbar.

Contrary to so many of his predecessors, Babur does not seem
to have been a ruthless ruler indulging in needless massacre and
indiscriminate destruction. His son Humayun lost most of the
conquered lands to Sher Shah (1539 - 1545) of the Turk-Afghans;
the latter proved to be an able administrator, who, though an
orthodox Muslim, treated the Hindus with tolerance and justice,
thus showing that "his religious attitude was free from medieval
bigotry." His accidental death having given rise to anarchy
and civil wars, Humayun was able to recover a part of the lost
territory between 1554 and 1556, though his own accidental death
in turn left North India in disorder and famine. The mission of
bringing about political unification and economic prosperity was
left to his son Akbar, whose rule of forty-five years extended
over the whole of Northern and Central India.

It can be said, then, that compared to the atmosphere of in-
tolerance which characterized the Delhi Sultanate, a new spirit
of reconciliation emerged under the Mughul Afrâns. However, while promoting a certain degree of harmony between Hindus and Muslims, the rulers immediately preceding Akbar never questioned the distinctiveness of the two cultures. Akbar would move a step further by proposing a blend of both traditions resulting in a Universal Religion. The latter did not, however, become an official project until 1582 and Akbar's definite break with Islam occurred only in 1580. Thus, by the time Tulsi Dasa set out to write the Rama Charit Manas, in 1574, Akbar's intention had not as yet become public policy. However, it seems clear that the ruler's catholicity of temperament and ideals had not been the result of a sudden conversion. A number of factors which seem to have influenced him much earlier, have been analysed and enumerated by Majumdar, Ray chaudhuri and Datta.

Firstly, the influence of his heredity "endowed him with those qualities of head and heart that prepared him to receive the impress of his environments, and reflect it in the best possible way". In spite of their being conquerors, Timur and his descendants were lovers of art and literature and rose above religious orthodoxy, largely owing to their contact with Sufism. Akbar's mother, the daughter of a Persian scholar, sowed in his mind the seeds of toleration.

Secondly, Akbar's early contact with Sufism, during his stay in the court of Kabul, where many Sufi saints had fled away from Persia under the pressure of Safavi persecution, and subsequently the influence of his tutor, Abdul Latif,
impressed upon his mind the worth of liberal and sublime ideals and made him eager to "attain the ineffable bliss of direct contact with the Divine Reality".

Lastly, his Rajput wives and his contact with Hinduism, and the reformation movements of his time, made an impression on his imaginative mind.

That these influences had been at work before 1560 is evidenced by the fact that as early as 1562 Akbar had inaugurated his policy of conciliation by marrying a Hindu princess and admitting Mân Singh, a Hindu, to high office. Again, in 1563 and 1564 he announced the remission of the tax on Hindu pilgrims visiting their sacred places, and the remission of the jizya. It seems clear, therefore, that "the main lines of his Akbar's) policy, directed to obliterating all difference in treatment between Muslims and Hindus, were fixed as political principles while he was still to all outward appearance an orthodox and zealous Muslim and long before his open breach with Islam."

The synthetic trend encouraged by Akbar extended its influence to various fields such as architecture, painting, and music. In architecture, the Moghul period marked a culmination of a process whereby Muslim and Hindu styles were mingled. Sher Shâh's mausoleum, in the district of Bihâr, is a blend of Hindu and Muslim architecture. In the mausoleum of Humâyûn, completed in 1569 at Old Delhi, the ground-plan of the tomb as well as the white marble
of the exterior are Indian, and the coloured tile-decoration typical of Persian builders is absent. The architectural development in India attained its apogee under Akbar, whose "tolerance of the Hindus, sympathy with their culture, and the policy of winning them over to his cause, led him to use Hindu styles of architecture in many of his buildings." This attitude is illustrated, for example, in many of the buildings of Fatehpur Sikri, the imperial capital between 1569 and 1584.

The same tendencies can be seen in artistic paintings. In a famous painting dated 1562 showing the arrival of the Vaisnava musician Tansen at the Moghul Court, the fusion of Hindu and Sino-Persian styles is manifest. Likewise, between 1569 and 1584, paintings of artists showing Hindu and Persian influences were used to decorate the wall of Akbar's new capital at Fatehpur Sikri, already referred to above.

Like his Moghul predecessors, Akbar also took a great deal of interest in music. Among the thirty-six singers who enjoyed his patronage, the Vaisnava Tansen, referred to above, seems to have been the most renowned.

The spirit of conciliation prevalent in Tulsi Dasa's time can help to throw more light on the significance of the Ramcharitmanas. Although this subject will be discussed later, we can already say at this point that Akbar's impartiality towards the Hindus.
contained both a promise and a threat for the tradition: a promise because a growing atmosphere of tolerance allowed for a reaffirmation of the distinctiveness of the tradition, a threat because group solidarity nurtured by foreign oppression was being undermined as a result of the ruler's growing liberal attitude. Moreover, Akbar's impartiality could just as well be the result of mere disinterestedness towards particular traditions, now considered dépassées. In that sense, the Râmcarîtmânas was needed not only to reaffirm the Hindu tradition, but also to counter the threat underlying the ambiguous policy of conciliation, which had been in the making for some time in North India.

2. The Religious Context

The typology adopted earlier will again provide the guideline for the analysis of the religious context in which the Râmcarîtmânas was written. The present chapter will show that the two "extreme" positions, namely vedic orthodoxy and antinomian theism, were the predominant trends in Tulsi Dās' day. The next chapter will then argue that the Râmcarîtmânas contributed to the revival of the middle stream.

Throughout this period, vedic orthodoxy was kept very much alive by numerous publications of commentaries and digests on mîmâṃsâ and bāṣṭra regulations. Thus, Pârthaśârâthi Miśra wrote
the Śāstradīpikā to explain the Mīmāṃsā sūtra; in 1543 A.D. Rāmakṛṣṇa Rhatta commented on the Śāstradīpikā in the Yuktionehapra-pāraṇī. Important Bāṣṭrig commentaries were written by Mādhava of Vijayanagar, who composed between 1335 - 1360 A.D. a work entitled Kālunirnaya. Viśvebvara, who between 1360 1370 A.D. wrote for King Madanapāla a work called Madanapārijāta; in the fifteenth century, Kullukā, from Benares, wrote a frequently printed commentary of the Mānu smṛti; and Raghunandana Bhāṭacārya from Bengal wrote around 1500 A.D. an important work on the detailed religious duties of the Hindu, entitled the Astāvīṃśati Tattva.

Moving closer to Tulsī Dās' epoch and geographical context, we find that several noteworthy commentaries were produced in Benares in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, the Bhāṭadīpikā, and on a larger scale the Mīmāṃsākaustubha, both written by Khaṇḍadeva who died at Benares in 1665 A.D. deal fully with the Mīmāṃsā sūtra. 16 Nanda-pāṇḍita, whose activity must be placed between 1595 A.D. and 1630, wrote at Benares a Bāṣṭrig commentary called Vaijayanti in 1627-23. 17 Another Benares writer, Kamalākara-bhatta, whose literary activity is assigned to the period between 1610 and 1640, composed twelve works concerned with topics of Dharma Bāṣtra, the Śūrakamalākara, the Vivādatāndeva and the Nirmayasindhu being the most famous. 18 Nārāyaṇa-bhatta, whose works are placed between
1540 - 1570 A.D., wrote numerous works on \textit{Dharma Mātra}, which are standard works used even now almost throughout the whole of India.\textsuperscript{20} A work of a similar type is attributed to Todar Mal, the celebrated finance minister of Akbar and an acquaintance of Tālāsī Dās, who compiled between 1565 - 1589 A.D. an extensive encyclopaedia of civil and religious law, astronomy and medicine.\textsuperscript{21}

In attempting to explain why such works were flourishing, the importance of the socio-political context of the time must be taken into consideration. In a recent study of the classical law of India, Robert Lingat discusses the effect of the Muslim takeover on the elaboration of \textit{śāstraic} regulations.\textsuperscript{22} According to this scholar, Muslim conquests produced a renewal of interest in \textit{śāstraic} digests and treatises, and such renewal is partly attributable to the reactions of the orthodox faithful in regions directly subject to Muslim rule. However, even at the height of Muslim power, an impressive number of similar works also originated in independent Hindu states which enjoyed almost complete internal autonomy. Mr. Lingat concludes that "the flowering of treatises and digests during the Muslim period seems to have been due to the need for a new effort on the part of interpretation to adapt the law to the changes that must have come about in Hindu opinion and manners as a result of the Muslim conquest."\textsuperscript{23} He goes on to explain that at a time when the coexistence of two communities affected their respective
customs Muslim rulers considered it their mission to maintain the presence of Islam in India. At the same time, Hindu Śāstric commentators felt the need to propagate their teaching in order to inform the Hindu population of what were strict duties with which no compromise could be permitted. Thus it is that all over India, authors of repute felt the necessity to appeal to their coreligionists to maintain a faithful observance of the Hindu ethical code.

We have seen that in addition to the Jīmāṇsā and the Dharma Śāstra, the Vedānta school of philosophy was also central to vedic orthodoxy. It is generally agreed that the influence of Śaṅkara's advaitic views was still prevalent among the North Indian Brahmins of this period. This influence is particularly noticeable in the Adhyātma Ramāyanas, which, as we shall see in Part III of the present dissertation, was well known to the disciples of Rāmānanda and no doubt to Tulsī Dās himself.

The most obvious example in medieval North India of the second stream, namely antinomian theism, is the religion preached by Kabīr. Frequently described as the "weaver from Benares," Kabīr lived
in the fifteenth century, probably between 1440 and 1518. The tradition that he was a disciple of Râmânanda does not rest on strong evidence. Whereas at least two of his collections, namely the Kabir-granthâvali and the selection included in the Ādi-granth, have adequate claims to be considered as authentic, the Bhājak, which is later than the former two, is probably a Kabir-panthi recasting.

While the question of classifying Kabir as a monist nirguna or as a worshipper of a personal and qualified (saguna) God is still debated among scholars, what is important for the purpose of this thesis is the fact that love of God played an essential role in his religion. While his writings contain frequent allusions to the mystical absorption of the soul in God, his general attitude is that of the devotee before the Lord "who has bound his heart to His own with gentle bounds". Thus, he entertains relations of the most touching familiarity with God, retains an acute consciousness of his own misery, and counts on the grace of God for his salvation:

How shall I be saved, O Master, how shall I be saved? 
Here I am full of iniquities! 
Weary, I stand at your threshold 
Who then, if not You, will care for me? 
Let me see your face, open the door!

An important trait of Kabir's religion, is that God is conceived as a completely spiritual Being, which one should endeavour to discover in the depths of his own interiority. Consequently the illusory
manifestations of the divine under the form of **avatāras** should be rejected:

They say the Lord of the world finding inequalities of the weak and the strong came as Rāma. But Kabir says, before a one (Rāma) who took birth and died, I cannot bend my head. 30

Another relevant trait of Kabir's religion is the rejection of traditional customs, institutions, and scriptures. It is significant that in a poem attributed to him, he is said to have established a direct causal relation between his conversion to "the Way," i.e. love of God, and his decision to give up all traditional rites and ceremonies:

O Brother! when I was forgetful, my true Guru showed me the Way. Then I left off all rites and ceremonies. 31

This attitude is particularly expected from the **jīvanmukti** whose supreme degree of perfection Kabir claims to have attained:

Only they who understand the fourth degree, have obtained the supreme position: They never entertain love for pilgrimages, fasting, or for religious ceremonies, purifications, and austerities of the superstitious. 32

Kabir extends his condemnation to the caste system and the distinctions between Hindus and Muslims:

Saith Kabir, renounce family caste and lineage; become an ant, and thou canst pick up and eat the sugar. 33

Adam who was first, did not know whence came mother Eve. Then there was no Turk (Muslim) nor Hindu. 34
He is especially critical of the Brahmin caste, who enjoy the privileges attached to that name as a consequence of their birth rather than their degree of virtue:

How art thou a Brahmin? How am I a Sudar (sic)? How am I of blood and you of milk (i.e. superior)? Saith Kabir, only he who meditateth in God Is a Brahmin in my estimation. 35

Finally, Kabir rejects the authority of both the Vedas and the Qur'an, which he describes as so many "cloaks of falsehood". 36

Thus, even though he shows by his own example and his declarations 37 that the life of a householder and the exercise of a trade do not have to be forsaken to follow the path of love of God, Kabir is probably the most iconoclastic of devotees with regards to traditional religious, social framework, and scriptures.

Recent efforts have been made to establish that Kabir's religion is an original synthesis of vaisnavite devotionalism and medieval yoga, with some elements borrowed from the Sufi tradition. 38 Numerous adherents of Tantric yoga in medieval North India belonged to the Nāth sect, known after Gorakh Nāth as Gorakhnāthīa or Kānpat Yugas. 39 Nāth influence is particularly noticeable in Kabir's rejection of Brahmanical authority regarding prescribed ceremonies, varna distinctions, sacred languages, and scriptures; in his emphasis upon mystical unity with God; and in his search for interiority based on experimental truth. 40

That the Vaisnava devotees of the North influenced Kabir is obvious from the latter's insistence on love as the means par ex-
cellence of finding God, even though he did not acknowledge the
Vaishnavite belief in the avatāra. This last trait may be due to
the influence of the third strand which composed this tradition,
namely Muslim Mysticism, which had been spread by the Sufis in
North-west India since the thirteenth century. Muslim Sufis
regarded God as a purely spiritual Being, incompatible with the
possibility of a sensible manifestation under the form of an
avatāra.

The influence of the Sufis on Kabir may also account for the
latter's tendency to oppose traditional duties and love of God.
The Sufis are well known for their antinomian tendencies, and
these tendencies were particularly noticeable among medieval In-
dian Sufis. In his study of Sufism in medieval Hindi literature,
Charles S.J. White comments on a significant passage found in
the Padmāvat:

Someone asks the hero of Padmāvat, "Oh, Yogi,
tell me what is your caste, station in life
and where do you live?" To these and other
similar questions the hero replied quite
simply that as a yogi he had abandoned all
distinctions of caste and the like. More-
ever, he had ceased to care for the opinion
of the world and whether he would be punished
or whether he would receive rewards. In
fact his personal situation was transcended.

Such disregard for traditional social customs and prescriptions was
often severely judged by faithful Muslims who acknowledged the
Koranic authority in social and legal matters. The Sufis defended
their antinomian attitude by claiming for themselves a special way reserved for the initiates:

The Sufi is apparently less free, since he acknowledges the Qur'anic revelation and the principles of Islamic orthodoxy — but he gets around this in his own way, by gnosis: without denying the validity of the traditional path, based on the Qur'anic prescriptions, he willingly leaves it to the mass of believers, in quest of the joys of "Paradise". He chooses another way for himself: the way of love and of intimate experience of God, a way reserved for the initiates only: in this way he will come to a progressive illumination, symbolized by the rending of the veils which separate him from the perfect Beauty. 

The influence of these views must also be taken into consideration as an element which contributed in spreading the antinomian position in medieval North India, a position which, as will be argued in the conclusion of this chapter, Tulsi Dás could not very well ignore.

The Kabirian insistence on interior religion accompanied by the rejection of traditional religious texts, image worship, formal religious exercises, pilgrimage, and ritual bathing, represented a challenge to the conventional pattern of both Hinduism and Islam, where religion consisted essentially, for a large number of their adherents, of external authority and conventional rituals:

In the case of the Hindu community, this authority was generally accorded to the brahmans and through them to the Vedas and Puranas. The required response consisted in the performance of the customary rites appropriate to a man's station within the caste structure.
of society. For the Muslim religion also meant loyalty to objective authority. In his case the authority was the Qur'an and its exercise the acknowledge function of the qādīs. (qādī, i.e. judge) 45

Kabir and his followers are considered as the most typical representatives of what is known as the Saint Movement, whose impact was widely felt throughout North India from the fifteenth century on. The movement included two other important groups, namely the Kūnaite Saints and Rāmaite Saints, that will now be considered.

The most popular representative of the Kūnaite saints in the Hindu-speaking region of India is Sūr Dās (ca. 1472-1537), traditionally known as the blind poet of Āgra, and a disciple of Vallabhācaryā (ca. 1481-1583). According to a sectarian work, the Bhāvaprakāś, at the age of eighteen, Sūr Dās met Vallabhācaryā, who introduced him to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The blind poet's fame, which supposedly reached Akbar, rests mostly on a collection of poems known as the Sūr-sāgar. Although he addressed his devotion mostly to Kṛṣṇa, he also acknowledged other avatāras, especially Rāma, as is testified to by the fact that he wrote his own abridged version of the Rāmāvāna where Rāma is acclaimed as the incarnation of the divine.

In the Sūr-sāgar, Sūr Dās admits that the collection of poems is based on the twelve books of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa:

Vyāsa composed the twelve chapters (sic) of the Bhāgavata and recited them to Sukadeva: Sūr Dās describes and sings the same ones in the popular language and in padas. 46
In following the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Sūrēśāṅgarh, nevertheless added elements which reflect his own religious inclinations. For example, in the first book of Sūrēśāṅgarh, which contains some two hundred poems, he insists in a distinctive way on his own unworthiness, on the transitory nature of this world, and on love as the way par excellence of attaining God. The emphasis upon the repetition of the Names of Kṛṣṇa and on the pangs of separation are also his own.

Drawing not only from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, but also from other traditions, by Sūrēśāṅgarh likes to dwell at length, in the tenth book of the Sūrēśāṅgarh, on the details of Kṛṣṇa's birth; the first feeding ceremony and the piercing of the ears; his activities as a child, such as sleeping, playing, stealing butter, grazing cows, and stealing the clothes of the gopīs. Considerable attention is given in the same book to Kāṇḍa, who was not mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The "bee songs" (brahma-gītās), which express in a satirical tone the gopīs' opposition to Uddhava, a follower of nirguṇa brahman and jñāna-yoga, are also absent in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the eleventh book, Sūrēśāṅgarh explains at length the three traditional paths of bhakti, jñāna, and karma, with a clear emphasis on the priority of bhakti.

For Sūrēśāṅgarh love of God is the only way to salvation. In his eagerness to promote this way, he repeatedly mocks Uddhava's doctrine favoring knowledge (jñāna-yoga):
The milkmaids say, "Uddhava, you force a boat up a dry river... 50

Uddhava, we are not deserving of Yoga. How can a weak woman know the essence of knowledge -- how can she meditate? You tell us to close those eyes where the image of Hari lives. Oh Bee, such deceitful words we will not listen to. Who wants to suffer, having his ears pierced and letting his hair grow long and matted? You tell us to give up sandalwood paste and smear ashes on our bodies, we who have been badly burned by fire of separation from him. He for whom a yogi wanders around until he forgets himself, is within our hearts. 51

Sūr Dās' views on the relation between social duty and love of God are revealed in poems dealing with the love of Rādhā and the other gopīs of Kṛṣṇa:

When the milkmaids heard the flute in the woods, They were disquieted and forgot their household work. They did not at all fear family honor or the sanction of the Scriptures. 52

Rādhā is not only fearless of family honour. She forgets her family altogether:

Smiling, Giridhar spoke these sweet words, "Why do you provoke your elders, inviting their anger and being always regretful? The duty (dharma) of a human being is to take care of one's family, home and kinsmen." Then Rādhā replied, "Let them talk. What can they do by talking? I have forgotten them." 53

In another passage, the gopī, whose eyes are fixed on Hari's face, claims that she has become oblivious of Scriptures, family prestige and tradition:
They (the eyes) follow neither tradition nor scriptures, nor do they care for their family's prestige, they have become contrary. 54

Not only is the importance of one's social duties diminished as a consequence of one's love of God; life itself seems of no value without Kṛṣṇa's presence.

"Nothing has interested me since my treasure Kṛṣṇa left me. I pay no attention to my housework."
A milkmaid says, "Night and day, I repeat his name. We are not dead, but neither are we living."
So says Śūr Dās. 55

Here, as in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the gopīs follow Kṛṣṇa in spite of the latter's protest that a woman's duty is to love her husband and that they should, therefore, return to their home. But the milkmaids do not comply to this entreaty "since they know in their hearts that their real lover is Kṛṣṇa, and he can be attained only through detachment from worldly things, including husbands and children". 56

Śūr Dās' increased attention given to Rādhā and her attitude toward traditional customs and regulations is another illustration of a significant inclination in the Saṅhit tradition toward antinomian theism in medieval North India. Furthermore, his contribution is important to keep in mind as it supports the fact that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa had already influenced North Indian piety a generation before Tulsi Dās.
The Hindi Ramaite Saints represent a third stream of the Saht Movement. Although there is still very little known about Ramananda, scholars generally agree that he was the acknowledged leader of the North Indian Ramaites of the fifteenth century known as the Ramanandins. The question of the date of his birth and death has still not received a definite answer. Some suggest ca. 1400-1470, whereas others opt for an earlier date, namely ca. 1300-1411.

One of the earliest available sources of information on Ramananda, which unfortunately is not always reliable, is the sixteenth century Bhakta Mala, the Vaisnavite text of Nabhadas already referred to. According to this source, Ramananda was the disciple of Raghavanananda, a thirteenth-century Southerner, and a member of the Sri Vaisnava sect. Born in Allahabad, Ramananda is said to have settled in Benares after having taught Rama-bhakti all over India. He is said to have left aside caste barriers, and broken away from his master's sect because of caste restrictions on teaching, eating, and religious life.

It is believed in modern Ramanandi circles that Ramananda had been educated at Benares by a Saikaran advaiti before being transferred to Raghavanananda. According to Dr. P.D. Barhwal, Ramananda managed to accept both philosophical systems, the advaitic and the viśistadvaitic.
The change of masters does not appear to have involved a break with the principles of philosophy that Râmananda devotedly learnt during his early years. He seems to have adopted the Vaishnava Bhakti only to fit it into the Advaita system of Sañkarâcârya. The rupture that he had with the sect of his new guru must have some connection with his philosophic leanings also. Thus did monistic pantheism and the love of a personal God, the essential characteristic of Vaisnavism, join hands in Râmananda. 60

If this is true, then the Râmanandâi use of both Râmunja's Sri-bhâsya based on viśistadvaitic principles and the advaitic Adhyâtma Râmâyana would be explained by Râmananda's double philosophic background.

More light will be thrown on Râmananda's theology when the question of the authorship of the Adhyâtma Râmâyana is definitely solved. J. Gonda sees a similarity between Râmananda's doctrine (as reflected by his disciples' teachings) and that of the Adhyâtma Râmâyana but is unable to find any historical link between the two. 61 J. N. Farquhar thinks that the Adhyâtma Râmâyana may have been the product of some southern Râmaite sect to which Râmananda belonged, a sect based on advaitic theology and bhakti-mârga. He suggests that Râmananda could have brought the work with him to the North, along with the Agastya Sahhita and Râmunja's Sri-bhâsya. 62 Many scholars feel that whatever its origin the Adhyâtma Râmâyana was an instrument used by Râmananda to bring harmony between the Dvaitis and the Advaitis who in his day frequently quarrelled over their differences, sometimes with violence... 63
In 1943, Mr. R.M. Shastri devoted a long paper to this very question. As his arguments cannot be fully presented here because of their complexity, I shall quote from the final section of the paper the author's own summary of his main conclusions:

In fine, Rāmānanda, son of Devala, a Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇa, was born at Prayāga in 1299 A.D. and went to Kāśi at the age of 12, and there pursuing higher studies in the Advaita-Vedānta and practices in Śaivism and Rāma-bhakti, wrote the Ādhvātmārāmavāna as the best synthesis of his achievements in the domain of practical philosophy and religion and a nice specimen of a literary work, before he instituted his own sect which resulted in developing two parallel currents of Bhakti, the Śaivism and Gītāpāpta one, the germ of both having been deposited in this work. 64

This complex theological heritage would explain, according to this same author, the diversity of theological leanings among Rāmānanda's disciples. The fact that most scholars still hesitate to adopt Mr. Shastri's views invites prudence. Likewise, the attribution to Rāmānanda of a poem found in Guru Nānak's Granthasahib is not firmly established. 65

Some of the most significant orientations Rāmānanda seems to have imparted to his disciples are the following. He gave Rāma-bhakti a decisive impetus in the Northern part of India. With regards to caste distinctions, he took a more liberal attitude than his predecessors in the choice of his disciples, which is testified to by such facts as accepting a Muslim among his followers. Rules of eating
such as those enjoined by Rāmānuja seem to have been overlooked. He encouraged his disciples to use modern languages for the propagation of the creed, and he gave up the use of Sanskrit altogether. He gave his disciples a distinctive sect-mark and a mantra ("om Rāmāya namah") which resembled those of the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas closely but were not different.

On the basis of the above, it seems that Mr. A. Barth's contention that Rāmānanda taught "the vanity of merely external observances" is not without foundation, although his disciples, except perhaps Kabir, do not seem to have been conspicuously unorthodox in social matters. We may therefore conclude that to the extent that Rāmānanda was led, on account of the intensity of his devotion, to neglect external observances, we may see another instance of antinomian theism in the movement he promoted.

So far, we have studied the socio-political context of Tulsī Dāsa's day. We have also studied the extent to which the two "extreme" positions, namely Vedic orthodoxy and antinomian theism, influenced the religious climate of his milieu. In order to get a clearer insight of the motives that prompted Tulsī Dāsa to revive the middle stream, we now ask to what extent the Rāmīrīthāniṇī reflects the socio-political and religious situation of the day and to what extent it reveals Tulsī Dāsa's reflections with regard to this situation.
The task of determining to what degree Tulsi Dās reacted in the Rāmacaritānās to the socio-political trends of his day is not an easy one. Although the expression kālī yuga, or Dark Ages, appears frequently in the story, the implications are not clear. It is possible that Tulsi Dās may have used the expression as a reference to Muslim domination. However, one could also agree with F.R. Allchin who argues (in the introduction of his translation of the Vinaya-patrikā) that while the term kālī yuga was used by the poets who lived in the bitter centuries preceding Mūbur as a clear designation of the oppressions of their time, Tulsi Dās continued the ancient usage of referring to his own time with the classical description of Dark Age without necessarily implying a denunciation of Muslim cultural influence or political domination.

Except for these numerous references to the kālī yuga one looks in vain in the Rāmacaritānās for overt judgments on the socio-political context in which it was written. There are, however, some passages in Tulsi Dās' later works which, according to some probably apocryphal stories, were written in reference to the rulers of his day. For example, Kavitāvalī VII. 25 is seen as an answer to those who praised the generosity of great men and rulers:

It is your way, O king of kings,
That whoever seeks your mercy you protect,
And leave him having mitigated
His faults, sorrow and poverty.
Who would abandon him whose very name is a wishing-tree,
Tulsi, and tend thorn-trees,
or kuster-oil plants in its place?
Who would beg from kings, and who endure going from land to land?
Being pleased one may give great increase,
But it is no more than a mere farthing!
Before whom else may the hands be held in supplication
Except the ocean of mercy, King of kings and Lord of Sītā — Raghunāth?
Again, Kavitāvalī VII. 27 is considered a reply to those who urged Tulsi Dās to seek the favour and protection of Akbar:

See the doings of that bearer of the earth
Who took the five inanimate elements and made this body;
He who looks after both living and unliving,
tell me, will he not also care for his servant?
Tulsi, say then, who else is like to Rāma
whose house has Lakṣmī for its hand-maiden?
What care should there be left in the world
for the man whose salvation is the Lord of
the Universe?

What are we to conclude from Tulsi Dās' quasi total silence on
the contemporary socio-political situation? It is reasonable to
assume that he could hardly be oblivious of the fact that most of
his hearers would still remember vividly how in 1561 the gates of
Benares had been closed against Akbar and how the latter, after
forcing his way in, had allowed his troops to sack the Holy City
as a measure of reprisal against its resisting citizens. Yet,
one looks in vain for references to these events in the Rāmcarit-
mānas as well as in the other works. Moreover, the fact that
Tulsi Dās never broke his friendship with, or his appreciation for,
his Hindu friend Todar Māl, who not only held a high administrative
position under Akbar's reign, but seems to have been one of the
latter's best friends, suggests that the author of the Rāmcarit-
mānas was not openly critical of Akbar as a politician.

However, one cannot help seeing in the Rāmcaritmānas an im-
plicit reaction vis-à-vis the universal approach so eloquently
preached less than a century previously by such an influential voice as that of Kabir, a trend which was now reaching its culmination in Akbar. Although we have no direct evidence that Tulsi Dās had Kabir and his followers in mind when he wrote the Rāmcaritmānas, yet in the Dohāvalī (554), one of his later works, he denounces those who expound devotion with sakhiq, śabdās, and dohas, which are forms of verse explicitly associated with Kabir and Nānak. Furthermore, there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to warrant the view that when he set out to write his magnum opus, Tulsi Dās was aware of the religion of Kabir. The latter had died only half a century before the Rāmcaritmānas was composed. He had lived in Benares, where Tulsi Dās had spent some time before 1574. Like Tulsi Dās, Kabir invoked God under the name of Rāma. Both poets preached love of God as the preeminent path. Finally, the extent of Kabir's influence was considerable in medieval North India:

"During the middle ages, there was not a single movement for freedom, whether spiritual or intellectual, which did not bear the stamp of Kabir's influence." 76

On a number of fundamental religious issues, the author of the Rāmcaritmānas is the antithesis of the "weaver from Benares". In fact, one cannot help seeing in the Rāmcaritmānas an effort to counter the iconoclastic drive of Kabir's teachings vis-à-vis Hinduism, both as a culture and as a religion. Kabir's refusal
to bend his head before the son of Dāgarathā; his designation of the Veda as a cloak of falsehood; his alleged claim that a conversion to "the Way" or the attainment of jīvan-mukti leads to the realization that traditional rites, ceremonics, pilgrimages, fasting, purifications, austerities and "superstitions" are futile; his contempt for the Brahmin caste as an hereditary institution; and above all his contention that in the name of the brotherhood of man, Hindus as well as Muslims should be prepared to give up their differences for the sake of unity---on all of these the Rāmcharitmanas takes the opposite stand. When one reads the latter against the background of Kabir's religion, it becomes all the more apparent that Tulsī Dās' masterpiece represents a vibrant appeal on behalf of the scriptures, rituals and social framework that constitute the precious legacy of the immemorial and venerable Hindu tradition "based on the Vedas and the Purānas".

Perhaps the most threatening element of Kabir's religion was its rejection of ceremonial rites and formal worship based on the Vedas and the Purānas, which, along with the respect for the caste system, play an important rôle in expressing the feeling of identity with Hindu culture and religion. The Rāmcharitmanas might be seen as a counter to such a threat, which had become widesread not only in Hindu milieux, but which was also preached by Jain poets such as Munirām Singh, and by the Bengali Sahājiya.
Vaisnavas, especially Candidas, who joined the Hindi poets in criticizing Brahmins and their scriptures, authorities, and ways of worship. 77 Time and again Tulsi Das refers to the Vedas, always with a sense of veneration; nowhere does he suggest that devotees should discard traditional "superstitions", on the contrary the Ram-caritmanas is replete with descriptions of the devotees' scrupulously performing the ceremonies and rites enjoined by the scriptures; and his attachment to the traditional order of varnas (castes) with special respect to the Brahmin caste is conspicuously affirmed throughout. For Tulsi Das, no reason, including social unity, could justify the loss of religious and cultural identity. Such social unity could not be genuine. It is therefore not surprising that in a passage of the Dohavali, quoted by Alchin, in the introduction to his translation of the Kavitavali, Tulsi Das has spoken disapprovingly of Kabir and his disciples, who "expound Bhakti, while scorning the Vedas and Puranas", and who "leave the path of Bhakti to Hari and overcome by delusion dream up many new paths". 78

For Tulsi Das, there is no inherent incompatibility between genuine love of God and the traditional paths expounded in the Vedas and the Puranas. In other words, respect for the traditional is certification that one's love of God is authentic and not illusory.
This preference for the middle path, where both traditional duties and love of God are upheld, also explains Tulsi Das' refusal to adopt the approach of the Mimamsakas or the Sastric scholars then in Benares. While this orthodox approach may have been seen as an effective alternative against the antimonian trend, it failed to give equal insistence to love of God, which was of vital importance to Tulsi Das. As we shall see later (Part III, 1) the importance attached to love of God also explains Tulsi Das' reluctance to espouse the Adhyatma Ramayana's philosophical approach based on Sankara's advaitic system, no doubt shared by most orthodox Brahmins of his day.

The influence of Sur Das is interesting to examine because of his interest in the Ramayana and especially in the Bhagavata Purana which he popularized in North India a generation before Tulsi Das through translations in the vernacular. Professor F.R. Allchin has already pointed to striking similarities between Sur Das' Sursagar and Tulsi Das' Vinaya-patrika. According to him, such features as the following are found in both: sinfulness of the petitioner; purity and loftiness of the Lord; recital of His divine titles; requests that He should honour them; repeated mentions of notorious sinners that have been saved through His mercy; and the idea of sending a letter of petition to the Lord.
Although Tulsī Dās wrote the Vinaya-patrikā in his later years, there is no doubt that by the time he set out to write the Râmcarit-mānas he shared many of the views expressed by Sūr Dās. All of the above features listed by Allchin, except the last one, are also found in the Râmcaritmānas. Tulsī Dās does not, however, approve of Rādhā's attitude suggestive of contempt for family duties, scripture and tradition, thus reflecting the antinomian stream.

Finally, in spite of an obvious affinity with the Rāmānandīs, Tulsī Dās seems to have taken his distance vis-à-vis some of Rāmānanda's teachings. On the theological level, it has been shown that he followed the syncretistic views attributed to Rāmānanda by accepting both the gamāna and the nirguna conceptions of the Absolute. However, whereas Rāmānanda had given up the use of Sanskrit altogether, Tulsī Dās wrote several passages of the Râmcaritmānas in the classical language. Moreover, the fact that Rāmānanda accepted a Muslim among his disciples, not to speak of the fact that Kabir, traditionally considered one of his disciples, promoted a universal brotherhood of men at the cost of one's own religious particularities, suggest a practical syncretistic approach not acceptable to Tulsī Dās.

We have seen that Tulsī Dās lived at a time when antinomian theism was prevalent, a trend which vedic orthodox Brahmins tried to counter by a renewed insistence on dāśtric regulations. The
next chapter will show that Tulsi Dās took up the challenge by reviving the middle stream through a rifacimento of the Ramāyana.
III. THE REVIVAL OF THE MIDDLE STREAM

At a time when the Hindu way of life was threatened not only by the socio-political situation of the day but also by the religious and moral trends examined above, it was understandable that Tulsi Dās might think of the Rāmāyana tradition as the one context where the socio-political, religious, and moral dimensions of his heritage are, as we shall see, dealt with in proper balance, thus typifying the central stream. It has already been shown that in an earlier era the Epic tradition, particularly the Gitā and the Rāmāyana, had affirmed the central position. This problem was one of reinterpreting and revitalizing that center in the light of the contemporary situation. Thus he attempted to do by reviving the Rāmāyana.

We have already seen that, compared to the preceding centuries, the Mughal period was one of relative stability, and that the socio-political context of Tulsi Dās' time was shaped by the dominating influence of Akbar, whose universalism was at the same time promising and threatening. Because of a growing atmosphere of political tolerance and religious freedom since Bihār invaded India in 1526, the Hindus could affirm publicly their own
identity and help their kinsmen to do the same. Yet under such a grandly successful and unchallenged power as that of the Moghuls, the Hindus could not but still feel dispossessed of both their identity as a distinctive culture and of any dreams of political autonomy. By reviving the Rāmāyana, Tulsī Dās expressed the political hope needed to counter such feelings of dispossession, and reaffirmed the identity of Hinduism as a distinctive and rich tradition.

Because of its grandeur, the Rāma-story could not but reawaken, among the Hindus now under Muslim rule, the nostalgic memory of some past glorious eras, such as that of the Guptas, whose empire comprised all of North India, in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. In this sense, the Rāma story was more effective as a legend than the Kṛṣṇa story, as it affirmed the socio-political institutions of traditional Hinduism in an unambiguous way. The Rāmāyana is of its very nature a story with obvious political overtones. Its central personages are members of the royal family. Rāma, its central hero, is presented not only as the exemplar par excellence but also as the prototype of political leadership. Ayodhyā is described as the ideal kingdom and its citizens as the king's praiseworthy subjects.
The social concepts underlying the Rāmāyana reveal a constant concern for the Hindu tradition. The caste system is treated as the ideal framework of Indian society. The guru, who plays a central rôle throughout the tradition, is treated with veneration. The social customs of the family are respected. Janaka and Daśaratha are frequently shown performing social rites. Women are reminded of the duties proper to their social status. The traditional view that the eldest son should be designated as the father's successor is maintained. The authority of the father as head of the family is treated with consideration. One's oath is, in keeping with social customs, considered as binding.

Thus, the Rāmāyana was remarkably suited to revive among its listeners a sense of cultural identity, of pride in the distinctiveness of the tradition, and the possibility of self-reaffirmation—all of which were needed to meet the socio-political challenge of the time.

The social threat accompanying the kind of universalism advocated by Akbar was equally at work in the religious universalism preached by Kabir, who insisted on the necessity of searching for true religion beyond traditional Hinduism and Islam. It was not too difficult to see in such insistence the threatening implication that Hinduism and Islam were both equally rejectable. Kabir's denial of Rāma as the avatāra of the traditional Hindu
divinities, of the divine authority of the Vedas and other acknowledged scriptures, of the sacred character of the caste system, of the appropriateness of ceremonial rites and formal worship based on scriptures constituted so many iconoclastic threats to the Hindu way of life.

It is obvious that, seen against such a background, the revival of the Ramayana would be seen from a Hindu standpoint as a welcome counter-blust and a healthful return to orthodox theism. As opposed to views such as those of Kabir, the Ramayana reminds its listeners that Rama, the son of Dasaratha, is an incarnation of Vishnu; that the other traditional Hindu divinities such as Indra, Siva, Brahma, and Uma, have their place in the devotee's spiritual universe; that the ganga and the Yamuna are to be considered as holy streams; that traditional scriptures are invested with authority; that the varna system, along with the role of preeminence attached to the upper castes, particularly the Brahmans, is to be maintained and respected; that traditional religious rites and practices such as daily bath, austerities (tapas), pilgrimages, prescribed sacrifices, birth and investiture ceremonies, morning rites of purification—all these play an important role in the life of the Hindu.

It has also been seen that in their zeal to promote love of God as the prominent path leading to liberation, the other Saints of medieval North India, whose influence on the masses seems to
have been considerable, also tended to minimize the importance of social duty, a danger which, as we have seen, India had already had to face with the impact of Buddhism. As a devotee, Tulsi Dās was in sympathy with the Śaṅka's eagerness to give love of God the predominant role. At the same time, however, he was eager to avoid the excessive position of antinomian theism, where the role of social duty was neglected. The affirmation of the one without denying the other led him naturally to the Rāmāyana.

Other factors, of course, could explain Tulsi Dās' preference for the Rāmāyana rather than (let us say) the Mahābhārata or the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The story of Rāma's heroic deeds dominates the Rāmāyana throughout, thus giving to the Epic a unity and cohesion not found in the eclectic Mahābhārata or the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Furthermore, the very nature of the Rāma story provided Tulsi Dās with the proper mythological, or legendary, material needed to make his magnum opus appealing, particularly to the masses. Contrary to such devotees as the Lingāyats and Kabir, the author of the Rāmacaritmānaḥ delights in celebrating the mythological setting provided by the story of Rāma (Rāma-kathā), whose sequence the reader never loses sight of even though it is interspersed with didactic elements, particularly under the form of hymns and philosophical discourses. Such affirmation about an important facet of the Hindu tradition, against the possible scorn or indifference
of many a Muslim observer, could not but instill in the reader a sense of identity and pride, and solidarity with Hindu socio-political institutions and traditions.

Moreover, apart from his own personal commitment to Rāma, Tulsī Das' choice of the Rāmāyana could have been influenced by the fact that the Rāma cult had already been given a decisive impetus in the Hindi-speaking regions of North India, more than a century before the Rāmacaritānās was written. The fact that Kābir could use the name Rāma as a synonym for God and not as a designation of Dānāratha's son suggests that his listeners had already learnt to accept that word as part of their religious vocabulary. It is obvious that Tulsī Das' milieu would be receptive to a new rendering of the Rāmāyana to the extent that the Rāma cult had been diffused among the masses.

More research is needed on the growth of Rāma devotion in medieval times. Although it can be safely said, on the basis of Bhandarkar and Bulkey's research, that a Rāma cult arose between the eleventh and the fourteenth century A.D., thus in itself is no evidence pointing to the existence of a Rāma community. However, it can be assumed, on the basis of several passages in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, that a Rāma community existed, probably in the North, at least as early as the fifteenth century A.D. While the Rāmacaritānās gives relatively few references to a specific community whose raison d'être is the Rāma cult, the Adhyātma
Ramayana frequently refers to a community of Rama devotees who fast on special days, who are sacred unto Rama, who recite the name of Rama, who worship Rama, and who "having observed a fast on the Ekadasi day expound the Adhyatma Ramayana to an assembly of devout persons."

It is also probable that the Rama cult had found its most numerous adepts among the uneducated masses. Unfortunately, precise data are still wanting in order to firmly substantiate this claim on the basis of either external or internal evidence. However, it is generally acknowledged that outcastes and women were admitted among Ramannanda's immediate disciples. Kabir, traditionally associated with Ramannanda, was a "weaver from Benares", whose critical attitude towards the educated Brahmins suggests that his followers probably belonged to the lower levels of society. There are indications that Tulsi Das himself associated with a group of saints composed mostly of low-castes and outcastes, referred to in Part I. 1.

In spite of its obvious effort to promote the social position of the upper castes and its rather severe passages on Sudras and women, the Ramcharitmanas itself suggests that Tulsi Das intended his message of political hope and social conservatism for the devotees of lower classes. The fact that he chose to write his version of the Ramayana in the vernacular is not without significance. After admitting, in one of his opening paragraphs, to the risk of writing in common speech (bhagabhanitibhori) he
expresses hope that good men who are not perversely critical — especially those who are devoted to Rāma will listen to the story and praise it with fair words. On the basis of this passage, it may be said that by insisting on writing the Rāmāyana in the vernacular despite the probable breach of disapproval from the critical Sanskritized Brahmans, Tulsi Dāsa gives proof that he wrote for the masses, who were not learned in the sacred language.

Moreover, even though the Rāmāyana does not deal per se with the situation of the lowly and the poor, as most of Rāma devotees are pictured as well-to-do citizens of the prosperous city of Ayodhyā, Tulsi Dāsa’s concern for the lower-class is nevertheless apparent in more than one respect. Not only is Rāma accosted by “friend of the lowly,” but this quality is illustrated in one of the most touching episodes of the entire Rāmacaritāṅgīnas, where Rāma is shown clasping to his breast “as though he were Bharata himself,” the chief of the low-caste Nirādha, explicitly referred to as “this utterly low-born Nirādha.” In the same vein, even though women are described as “inherently impure,” they are nevertheless promised the highest bliss if they meditate on the name of Rāma and serve their husband faithfully.

It is especially in the consideration given to the monkey-devotee Hanumān, presented as the ideal servant (dās, lit. “slave”) that Tulsi Dāsa shows his predilection for the lowly. When his portrayal of Hanumāna is compared with Vālmiki’s, it becomes obvious that the former associate Rāma’s monkey-servant with the lowly and the humble. Thus,
Hanumān describes himself in the Rāmāyaṇa as the "least of the low":

Tell me, do I come of so high a family, a mischievous monkey, the least of the low? Why, anyone who mentions our name first thinks in the morning has to go hungry the rest of the day! So utterly vile am I, but listen, my friend; even on me has Račhubīr (Rāma) had mercy! 12

This picture contrasts radically with Hanumān's self-description in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa:

I am the son of him who shatters the mountain peaks... A thousand times as I ride without pausing, to encircle Kouru... With my strong arms, churning up the sea, I can inundate the world with its mountains... I know of none that... King of the birds, the Wind-god or myself... 22

Whereas in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Sītā addresses Hanumān with terms of respect such as "Hero", "Lion among monkeys", "Destroyer of hostile warriors", "Most skilled of beings", etc., in the Rāmāyaṇa she usually calls him "My friend" — a vocative, also used by others such as Lāṅkīni — or "My son". 14 Likewise, Rāvana speaks to Hanumān with contemptuous arrogance with clear emphasis on the monkey's lowly statute by birth:

A wise guru have I found in a monkey! Pretch, your doom is at hand, who dare base creature as you are, to offer me advice? 16

Hanumān is not addressed with such contempt in either the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa or the Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.
It is significant that Hanumān should be given a predominant role as a devotee in the Rāmāyana, compared to the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, where his importance is diminished and the devotee aspect not emphasized. Tulsī Dīśānās no occasion to remind his listeners that Hanumān had constantly "the image of the Lord laid upon his heart"; that "his thoughts (were) fixed uneasingly on Rāghubir"; that he set out "lay Rāma's lotus feet upon his heart", etc. The scenes describing Hanumān's loving devotion to Rāma and the latter's affection for this servant-devotee are rarely equalled in intensity and emotion. A typical example is the meeting with Rāma upon Hanumān's return from his first trip to Lanka; we are told that "again and again the saviour of the gods (i.e. Rāma) gazed on the monkey with streaming eyes and body trembling with emotion"; that Hanumān fell at Rāma's feet crying out in rapturous devotion: "Save me, save me, O Blessed lord!"; that time after time the Lord would soon have raised him (Hanumān) to his feet, but he would not be raised, so absorbed was he in love", etc. Particularly cherished by Rāma, Hanumān also wins the esteem and affection of Rāma's entourage as well. In addition to Sītā, whose conversation with the monkey-messenger has already been alluded to above, Bhūrīt refers on "reverently embracing him... his heart overflow(ing) with love, tears pour(ing) from his eyes and tremb(ing) with emotion" and claiming that "at the sight of you all my sorrows have passed away, for today I have met in you my beloved Rāma".
We may conclude from Tulsi Dās' portrayal of Hanumān that the latter typifies the low-born and the humble, and that his prominent rôle as a devotee emphasizes the particular affection of the Lord for the humble servant. We might add that the idealization of Hanumān as the dutiful devotee also provided an alternative to the gopi ideal, often considered overly suggestive of antinomianism, if not of immorality, on account of the gopis' carefree attitude toward traditional moral norms, particularly the dictates of social and domestic duty.

It is clear, from the above, that Tulsi Dās' ideal has been espoused to be heard from all levels of society, educated and uneducated alike. However, there are also good reasons to believe that he was especially attentive to the needs of the poor and the humble and that this attention reflects particularly in his portrayal of Hanumān and some of his devotees such as Sūhu and the servant Hanumān.

Thus, while the factors that led Tulsi Dās to revive the Rāmāyanic tradition might have been many and varied — the list just given in that respect is certainly not exhaustive — the need to
reaffirm the middle stream stands among the most fundamental. However, while the *Valmiki Ramayana* represented the central stream insofar as it related love of God to social duty, it consistently maintained that duty played the predominant rôle as the guiding principle of man's actions. It was inevitable that given the rise of ecstatic devotional religion in medieval North India, with the *geeti* given in many instances as the model devotee, the expectation of the ardent desire of the enthusiast to spend all his time in worship and praise as a special calling would also be held by the readers of the *Ramayana*. Tulsi himself and no doubt some of his immediate hearers were ardent enthusiasts but could not find within the Ramayaneic tradition the supporting justification for forsaking social duty that Krishna devotees found in the *Bhagavata Purana*.

It was natural, then, that in the new version of the *Ramayana* love of God would play the predominant rôle in such a way that the devotee's desire to leave his normal social and domestic duties to spend his whole life in the service of Rama would be viewed as a justifiable possibility. The challenge consisted therefore in introducing this new vision without weakening the strength of the *Ramayana* as a medium capable of reaffirming the Hindu's pride in his heritage both as a socio-political reality and as a religious tradition, and without contradicting the point just made that love of God does not per se entail antinomian scorn or disinterested-
ness vis-à-vis traditional social and domestic duty. The following section will show how the Rāmcūritmānas played such a rôle.
PART THREE: LOVE OF GOD AND SOCIAL DUTY IN THE RÂMCHRITMÂNAS

I. THE LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RÂMCHRITMÂNAS

II. SOCIAL DUTY IN THE RÂMCHRITMÂNAS

III. LOVE OF GOD IN THE RÂMCHRITMÂNAS

IV. THE IDEAL DEVOTEES
I. THE LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RAMCARITMANAS

In order to study in proper perspective Tulsi Dās' own views and emphases regarding the two major themes of this dissertation, namely love of God and social duty, we must first examine the nature of the literary setting in which they are treated. The Ramcaritmanas has distinctive characteristics of its own, mainly because it was meant to be a reflection of the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, written twenty centuries earlier. Furthermore, Tulsi Dās himself declares that the reader is expected to find various elements "culled from other sources too".¹

We may now affirm, on the basis of careful research done in recent years, that the most influential of these sources, besides the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, are the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, the Bhusundi Rāmāyana, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and the Prasanna Rāghava. Of these, the Adhyātma Rāmāyana stands out as by far the most important. The influence of the Bhusundi Rāmāyana is noticable in the last portion of the seventh canto. The influence of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is less important as a literary
source, since it belongs to a different genre, but we shall see that it has been an influential source of inspiration in Tulsi Dās’ effort at highlighting the importance of love of God as the central theme of the Rāmacaritmānas. The influence of the Prasanna Rāghava bears on specific passages and details, of which the most significant will be dealt with in due course.

We have already discussed in the previous section of this thesis the main features of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Unfortunately, the Bhuvannī Rāmāyaṇa is not available for consultation. P.C. Bagchi and R.N. Tripāthī have commented on it on the basis of a commentary by Vuḍḍha. Gupta, C. Tadeville believes that the manuscript is kept in a temple at Śravanshikīna. The Prasanna Rāghava is a Sanskrit drama attributed to a logician by the name of Jayadeva from Vidarbha who lived around 1200 A.D. The influence of this medieval drama is particularly noticeable in passages belonging to the first and fifth cantoes of the Rāmacaritmānas.

Because of the special importance of the Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, we will now give a longer analysis of its nature, even though some of the details of its origin and authorship, about which there is still much uncertainty, have already been discussed in relation to Rāmānanda and the Rāma Sants. It is traditionally considered as a part of the Brāhmaṇa Purāṇa, dated in the sixteenth century A.D. The Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa was known by Tulsi Dās and by a Marāṭhi poet who died in 1667. The opinion reported pre-
vously that it came from the South needs solid corroboration.

The Adhyâtma Râmâyana retains the fundamental framework of the Vâlmîki Râmâyana, but is only a fraction its size. Certain portions of the Vâlmîki Râmâyana are left out, such as details of the battle, lengthy descriptions of natural scenery or many of the activities of Bharata before he finds Râma in the forest. The tendency, then, is to leave out the material not immediately related to Râma as the central figure of the story.

Other portions are added to the original stories. Perhaps the most important among these are the numerous hymns (stutis) and philosophical discourses (gîtâs) which in addition to offering speculative comments on the nature of God, man and the universe praise Râma as the Lord of his devotees.

Finally, the Adhyâtma Râmâyana makes a number of changes in the story. While many of these changes are insignificant, some are more consequential, for instance the substitution of the real Sîtâ by a mere shadow, and the frequent reminders that Râma is merely acting when his behaviour appears too human. It must also be pointed out that the narrator is no longer Vâlmîki but Siva, who related the story to his inquisitive wife Pârvatî. The role of Siva is thereby highlighted, in keeping with Śâṅkara's efforts to make him "orthodox".

For the Adhyâtma Râmâyana, Râma is above all the "One without a second (advitiya)", "unmoving (acala)", "Truth, Intelligence and Bliss (saccid-ânanda)". In general, the author tends towards the advaita vedânta conception of God as the formless Absolute (nirguna brahman). In keeping with the philosophy of Śâṅkara, he considers knowledge (jñâna) as the preeminent path of salvation, love of God and social duties being
mere rungs on the ladder towards knowledge.\footnote{14}

This said, it must be pointed out immediately that the Adhyātma Rāmāyana does not discourage the reader from following the paths of social duty and love of God. On the contrary, Rāma teaches that union with Him is obtained through the disinterested fulfillment of one's duty (sva-dharma):

\begin{quote}
Let one, therefore, attain to union with Me by transcending the three attributes of goodness, passion, and darkness, through the performance of duty (sva-dharma) without hope of reward. \footnote{15}
\end{quote}

True, the Adhyātma Rāmāyana contains occasional antinomian passages. For instance, in the well-known Rāmagītā it is said that "knowledge (jñāna) alone is capable of destroying this nescience (ajñāna). Action (karma) cannot destroy it, as it is born of nescience and is not contrary to it."\footnote{16} Again, it says: "Let those who are devoid of devotion to Me, roll in the abyss of the śāstras. Theirs is neither knowledge nor emancipation even through hundreds of incarnations."\footnote{17} However such passages are rare, probably meant to emphasize knowledge (by contrast). Furthermore, as we shall see in the next chapter, these antinomian implications are not followed up in practice.

Likewise, for the Adhyātma Rāmāyana salvation through knowledge does not eliminate love of God, considered as a means to knowledge so that "he who possesses devotion (bhakti) rapidly gains knowledge (jñāna) and... thus obtains deliverance (mokṣa).\footnote{18} Yet, even though love of God and social duty are retained as important themes in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, it remains that the apex is knowledge leading to
ultimate absorption with the divine (nirguna brahman).

We now proceed to a detailed examination of the literary characteristics of the Râmacaritmânas, focussing on the main differences from Tulsi Dâs' two main sources, namely the Vâlmîki Râmâyana and the Adhyâtma Râmâyana. Throughout this section, the abbreviations V.R., A.R., R.C.N., and B.R. will be used to designate the Vâlmîki Râmâyana, the Adhyâtma Râmâyana, the Râmcaritmânas, and the Bhagavata Purâna respectively.

The general framework of the R.C.N. is that of the V.R. The story is divided into seven cantos (kândas) with identical titles except for the sixth kânda, which is entitled Lâñkhâ kânda instead of the traditional Yuddha kânda.

In terms of its length, the R.C.N. is more condensed than the V.R., but not so much as the A.R. The first kânda (Dâlu kânda) is proportionately the longest, unlike both the V.R. and the A.R. where the sixth kânda is the longest. In all three versions, the second kânda is second in length, and this is the only canto the length of which is proportionately the same in the three cases. Kândas three, four and five (Aranya kânda, Kâśchîndha kânda and Sundara Kânda), are considerably diminished so that together they equate only one third of the length of the
Ayodhyā kānda, whereas in both the V.R. and the A.R. each equates more than half of the length of the Ayodhyā kānda. While the sixth kānda is the longest in both the V.R. and the A.R., it is only one third the length of the Bāla kānda in the R.C.M. Finally, the seventh kānda (Uttara kānda) is the third longest, which corresponds to the V.R. but differs with the A.R. where this kānda is the second smallest.

The above indicate that Tulsi Dās felt free to make a number of changes in both of his main sources. The most significant of these changes will be examined in this section.

Before we proceed to examine the structural arrangement of each kānda, it must be pointed out that from a historical point of view it is now acknowledged, mainly on the basis of the research of R.N. Tripathi,19 H.P. Gupta,20 and C. Vaudeville,21 that the R.C.M. contains certain sections within its corpus which Tulsi Dās wrote earlier in time. The sections belonging to the earlier stratum are two passages in the first kānda, the entire second kānda, and the first six verses of the third kānda. In addition to the style of these sections, which is simpler, more regular and more personal, the main reason for considering these as separate is that contrary to the rest of the work, where either Śiva or Bhusundi is presented as the
main narrator, here Tulsi Dās himself claims to play that rôle. In fact, he tells us in the opening invocation of the Bāla kānda that he wrote the story of Raghunāth (Rāma) "for his own soul's delight". We might conclude that these early sections, which are about one fourth of the total, were written as a kind of personal exercise.

Bearing in mind that most Benares brahmīns of his day were Śaivites Tulsi Dās imitates the Ā.R. in setting the rest of the story (excluding the last part of Lāṅkā Kānda) in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and his wife. This gives the story more solemnity than the preceding parts written to satisfy Tulsi Dās' personal devotion. Here the style is less regular and, as will be shown later, the influence of the Ā.R. is more obvious. We might conclude that the bulk of the text was written after Tulsi Dās had decided to follow the Ā.R. and self-consciously set out to write a new Rāmāyana.

The third and latest stratum, written under the influence of the Bhūsundī Rāmāyanā, is narrated by the crow Bhūsundī to Garuda, the king of the eagles, desirous of knowing more about Rāma's divine nature. As Miss Vaudeville has shown, the fact that the conclusion to the entire story following the Bhūsundī narrative is attributed to Śiva shows a later insertion of the Bhūsundī section. With these characteristics of the general framework of the R.C.M. in mind, we now proceed to examine the most important features of each kānda.
1. The Bala kānda

The first kānda contains four main sections, the first three of which owe nothing to the V.R. or the A.R. The first section presents itself as the prologue of the entire book. After explaining that his work is in accord with traditional scriptures even though it is not written in Sanskrit, Tulsi Dās confesses his unworthiness and inadequateness to deal with such a noble task as writing the story of his Lord. He then goes on to exalt the name of Rāma, which he considers greater than both the impersonal Absolute and the personal avatāra, i.e. Rāma. The prologue ends with a description of the R.C.I., which is likened to a Holy Lake, hence the title Rāmcaritmānas (Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma).

The second section of the Bala kānda, which shows some influence from the Śiva Durāna, is narrated by Śiva, who is also the central personage of the entire section. After a short introduction consisting in a dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Bharadvāja, we hear about Śiva and his wife Sati about the sacrifice of Dakṣa, to which — as in the R.P. and against the general tradition — all the gods but Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva were invited, and about the legend of Śiva and Parvati.
The third section includes six stories dealing with the reasons for the incarnation of Rāma: the story of Jaya and Vijaya, the story of Jalandhara, the story of Nārada's punishment for his pride, the story of Hanu and Satarūpā, the story of Pratāpabhadra and the false hermit, and the story of Rāvana. All but the last of these stories are extensions of Purānic tales; the story of Rāvana is related in the last kānda of both the V.R. and the A.R. 

Unlike the preceding section, the fourth section is not new in this sense that it follows the basic outline of the V.R. and the A.R. in relating the events of Rāma. It must be pointed out however that a number of important passages in this section are close to similar passages in the A.R. These include the description of Rāma's supernal appearance to his mother Kausalya, as well as the emphasis upon the childish pranks of Rāma, which the A.R. in turn had learned from the B.P. at least indirectly. These passages also include five hymns of praise which also appear in the A.R.: Brahma's hymn to Siva, Kausalya's hymn to her infant child, Ahalya's hymn to Rāma, Parāshrūma's hymn to Rāma, and Janaka's hymn to Rāma.

Similar instances of Tulsī Dās' preference for the V.R. rather than the A.R. are not found. There are however a few details common to both the R.C.R. and the V.R. and not found in the A.R.
but there could have easily been borrowed from other versions of the Rāmāyana mentioned in the prologue of the R.C.H. For instance, whereas Gandharvas are mentioned in both the R.C.H. and V.R. among the deities that presented themselves to Viṣṇu for protection against Rāvana, they are not mentioned in the A.R. The celestial celebrations accompanying the birth of Rāma are described in both the V.R. and the R.C.H.46 but omitted in the A.R. Whereas in both the R.C.H. and the V.R. Daśaratha is said to have summoned musicians to enhance the celebration, this detail is not mentioned in the A.R.47 Whereas the R.C.H. alludes to the descent of the Ganesas,48 which is described in full in the V.R.,49 this event is not spoken of in the A.R. It is obvious that none of these traces of possible dependence on the V.R. equals in importance the obvious borrowings from the A.R. In the latter case, we are dealing with borrowings of elements that are distinctive of this particular version of the story and, especially in the case of hymns and philosophical comments, with passages containing consequential doctrinal additions.

We must also add that while Tulsi Dās follows the basic framework of his two main sources in the latter section of the Bāla kānda, he freely changes details or emphases. The most noticeable additions in the Bāla kānda are the frequent exhortative or laudatory passages commonly expressed in the forms of dohas (couples),50 and especially the many details added to the account of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā.51
Unlike both the V.R. and the A.R., where Sītā does not see Rāma before the breaking of the bow, in the R.C.H. the two young heroes meet by chance in a garden before the decisive contest. This episode, where the beauty of the scenery and the growing intensity of the love between Rāma and Sītā are described at length, is similar to a parallel passage found in the Prasānna Rāghava. The latter includes other details also retained in the R.C.H.: in both accounts the story takes place in the evening as Rāma and Laksmana enter the garden of Mithilā; in both, Sītā is shown going to the temple dedicated to the goddess Girijā; in both, Sītā is obliged to return home because the evening is far advanced.

Many details have also been added in the R.C.H. to the description of the kings of Sharadapattana, of Sītā, of the jealous competitors (including Rāvana): the spectators' reactions are analyzed at length. These details are not found in the V.R. and are only alluded to in the A.R. Once again, traces of the Prasānna Rāghava can be seen in these additions. Other changes are made in this same context as Parāśu Rāma is introduced immediately after the breaking of the bow, whereas in both the V.R. and A.R. this event occurs only after Daśaratha reaches Mithilā for the wedding ceremony. Likewise, Laksmana plays a central rôle in this encounter with Parāśu-Rāma, thereby replacing Rāma, who in the
proceeding story was playing the leading rôle with Parāvā-Rāma.

Again, these changes are attributable to the influence of the 
Prasannā-Rādhava. Similar developments are also found in the 
description of the wedding ceremony as such, and the return of 
the newly married couple to Ayodhya.55

Some other additions find their counterpart in the B.P. For 
instance, the miraculous manifestation of Rāma's divinity to Kau-
salya56 is reminiscent of similar scenes in book X of the B.P. 
Again, the description of the city of Nīhilā bears a closer re-
semblance to a passage of the B.P.57 where the city of Nathūrā is 
described. So in the subsequent episode showing Rāma and Laksmana 
visiting the city by night inspired by a parallel episode in the 
B.P.58 where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are seen walking in the streets of 
Nathūrā, thereby provoking the enamoured reactions of the on-looking 
women. The episode of the breaking of the bow also reveals occasional 
detailed borrowings from the B.P. For instance, it is said that as 
Rāma was about to accomplish the exploit, each of his admirers saw 
him according to his own attitude of mind.60 The same observation is 
made concerning Kṛṣṇa in the B.P.61

The kānda ends with a short exhortation typical of Tulsī Dās 
and this practice will be maintained in all of the remaining kāndas.
Likewise, the practice of beginning each kānda with an opening 
salutation is followed throughout.
2. The Ayodhya-kanda

As in the last part of the Rāla-kanda, Tulsī Dās follows in the Ayodhya-kanda the main outline sketched in the V.R. and the A.R. Indeed, it is in this book that the most striking evidences of dependence on the V.R. can be found. Examples of these are the description of Hantharā at the outset of the coronation as furious, 62 Dānabāha's bending over Kaikeyī touching her with his hand, 63 the king's pleading with Kaikeyī to put an end to her sorrowful state, 64 Kaikeyī's insistence on her husband's loyalty to his promise, 65 and Dānabāha's hope that the sun might never rise again. 66

Once again, however, Tulsī Dās follows the A.R. in adding a lengthy philosophical comment by Laksmana to the nature of God, man and the universe, 67 in a short hymn of praise by Bharadvāja to Rāma, 68 in Vālāmīkī's extensive hymn of praise of Rāma, 69 in Vāsistha's philosophical comment to Bharata, 70 and in the discussion between Rāma and the boatman. 71

Among the chances he introduces to this kanda, the most noticeable is the visit of Janaka to Rāma in the forest, which is an occasion for an additional lengthy development to the story, and is found in neither the V.R. nor the A.R. More important still, is the expansion added to the story of Bharata, whose dilemma
occupies the second half of this kānda. This section will be analyzed in the last chapter of this thesis, as it is central to the interaction of love of God and social duty as viewed by Tulāśī Dās.

3. The Aranya kānda.

Here again, Tulāśī Dās follows the pattern sketched by his predecessors. However, apart from the description of Lake Pampa, which is quite similar to the parallel description in the V.R., the influence of the A.R. is still more apparent here than in the previous kāndas, as the general tone of the account becomes more speculative and the characters less real. Although Atri’s hymn of praise to Rāma owes nothing to the A.R. and Kabandha’s hymn to Rāma in the A.R. is not found in the R.C.M., the latter nevertheless contains five noticeable passages inspired from the A.R. namely, Sutikṣa’s hymn of praise to Rāma, Agastya’s hymn of praise to Rāma, Rāma’s philosophical comment to Lalāśrama, Jalāyu’s hymn of praise to Rāma, and Rāma’s didactic expose to Śavāri.

Moreover, Tulāśī Dās adopts an important detail from the A.R. in showing Sītā entering the fire before her abduction, to be replaced by an image. This is in accord with the views of the A.R.
on the world as an illusion (māya).

Apart from ṛṣi's hymn, and the opening salutations and the closing exhortations, which are always distinctive of Tulsi Dās, this kānda contains few additions. The most noticeable is the introduction of an episode showing the sage Nārada paying an unexpected visit to Rāma as the latter was resting by the lake Pampā with Laksmana. 82

4. The Kiskindhā kānda

As in the previous book, this kānda generally follows the sequence of events presented in its two main sources, with a clearer dependence on the A.R. The latter is apparent in Rāma's philosophical comment to the disconsolate Tārā after her husband's death, 83 which summarizes a parallel comment in the A.R.; in Jāmbavāna's exhortation to Aṅgada, 85 and in Sugrīva's hymn of adoration to Rāma. 86 However, Tulsi Dās leaves out a long philosophical comment by the sage Saṅgati to Candra. 87

The most remarkable passage of this kānda for its poetical beauty is Rāma's description of the monsoon season, 88 of which there is a parallel version in the V.R., but which is omitted in the A.R. Here again the influence of the R.P. can be detected. Thus, Tulsi Dās imitates the latter in including details such as
the frogs' crooks, which are compared to the recitation of the Vedas; the overflowing waters of the streams, compared to the man who has no self-control; the flashes of lightning, compared to libidinous women; and fire-flies, compared to heresies. 89

There is a popular belief that this kānda was written in Benares. This is a possibility as Tulsi Dās adds to the usual opening invocation in Sanskrit two sūraṇās (metres) in Hindi dealing with Kābi (Benares) and Śiva, who is the divine guardian of the Holy City.

5. The Sundara-kānda

This last of the short kāndas, where Hanumān plays the leading rôle, again follows the outline of both the V.R. and the A.R. It devotes a beautiful passage to the description of Laṅkā 90 which is of the same inspiration as a parallel passage in the V.R. 91 but which is only alluded to in the A.R. 92 Hanumān's considerations addressed to Rāvana on the theological nature of Rāma find a parallel development in the A.R. 93

Unlike in the preceding Rāmāyanas, Vibhīṣaṇa is shown meeting Hanumān on the latter's first trip to Laṅkā and indicating to the monkey emissary where Śītā is kept in confinement. 94 However,
Vibhīsana's hymn of praise after transferring his allegiance to Rāma is close to a parallel hymn in the A.R.95

The first meeting of Hanumāna and Vibhīsana takes place before Hanumāna's first encounter with Rāvana. This is new.96 The description of Rāvana's conversation with Sītā in the grove under the eyes of the hiding Hanumāna owes less to the V.R. or the A.R. than to the Prasanna Rāghava.97 So does the ensuing conversation between Hanumāna and Sītā.98

Contrary to his usual practice, Tulsi Dās concludes this kānda with the opening section of the following kānda in both the V.R. and the A.R. This displaced section deals with Rāvana's repudiation of his brother Vibhīsana and the latter's admittance among the Rāma fold.

6. The Lāṅkā kānda

In general, this kānda, like the yuddha kānda in the A.R., tends to shorten and simplify the narration as related in the V.R. Indeed, more than thirty episodes related in the V.R. are left out in both the A.R. and the R.C.M.99 However, Tulsi Dās also takes more liberty at departing from the A.R. in adding expansions and new material, and in frequently deviating from the outline of his predecessor.
There are few indications of dependence on the Vālmikian account in place where Tulsī Dās departs from the A.R. Among the events not related in the A.R. are the mandate given to Ağrad to visit Rāvana before the battle, the intervention of the physician Susena to cure Laksmana with medicinal herbs, and the description of bad omens accompanying Rāvana's march towards the battle-field, all of which are mentioned in the V.R.

However, the instances of dependence on the A.R. are more important. In both accounts the bridge across to Lakhā becomes a pilgrimage site dedicated to Siva. In both, Kālanemi is sent by Rāvana to throw obstacles in Hanumāna's way as he goes to fetch curative herbs on the mountain; in both, Hanumāna kills a crocodile who reveals Kālanemi's identity and dies a saving death. In both accounts, the demon Khumbhakarna meets Vibhiṣana on his way to the battle-field and congratulates the latter for having become Rāma's devotee. In both, the Sītā that has to undergo the ordeal of fire is illusory. Both narrative present a long hymn to Indra. Both report that at the news of Rāma's return to Ayodhyā women ran out to see him thereby neglecting their domestic duties.

A long passage attributed to Rāvana's wife, Mandodari, is inspired directly from the B.P. in a passage where Siva addresses
himself to Krishna after the latter's victory over Rāvana. This passage is not found in either the V.R. or the A.R.

A number of additions have been made in the R.C.R., many of which are also found in the Brahmāṇidhāra. Thus, Kedārāchācārya heard three times supplicating Rāvana to surrender. On his way back from the mountain with the medicinal herbs Kaunivāna flies over Ayodhya and Bharata shoots him down by mistake. Rāma sells Rāvana's chariot to Brahma but raises him up immediately. Rāma stands in front of Vibhishana so as to protect the latter from being hit by Rāvana's spear. The conversation between Rāma and Gaha is reported in R.C.R. first meets him after the end of the battle. Contrary to his predecessors, Tulsi Dās finishes the sixth lāṇḍa by interrupting the end of the story before Rāma reaches Ayodhya, thus departing once more from the traditional structural arrangement. We may summarize by saying that while Tulsi Dās takes more liberty from the traditional narrative in both the outline and the content of this śkānda, he still depends on the A.R. in important matters and shows relatively little evidence of having borrowed directly from the V.R.
7. The *Uttara kānda*

The first part of the *Uttara kānda* is devoted to Rāma's return to Ayodhya, his coronation and the ensuing happiness in Rāma's kingdom. Again, many incidents are new, such as Ṫuṣṣad and Ḥanumāna's request to stay with Rāma, the meeting with Sanaka in the garden, Rāma's description of the ideal saint and the *kali yuga*, Vasistha's conversation with Rāma on the merits of loving devotion, and Ṭrādena's hymn of praise to Rāma.

We have already described the last part of this *kānda* as the Bhūsundī section, which presents the conversation between the crow Bhūsundī and the eagle Garuda, bearing on the divinity of Rāma. This whole section is new.

We may summarize the content of this chapter by saying that the *R.C.H.* contains three strata which belong to different periods in time. Most of the story follows the traditional narrative based on the original framework provided in the *V.R.* However, there are sufficient reasons to believe that Tulasi Dās relied mostly on the *A.R.* in rewriting his own version of the *Rāmāyana*, which is longer than the *A.R.* but shorter than the *V.R.* In this sense, the *R.C.H.* presents itself as an expansion of the *A.R.* rather than as a summary of the *V.R.*
While depending heavily on the A.R. Tulsī dās nonetheless frequently deviates from the latter in adding new elements of his own or borrowed from other sources. Finally, most of the new material is found in the first and the last kāndas.

The above analysis will help us to study in proper perspective the place of love of God and social duty as two important themes in the R.C.H. Although the latter must be studied as an organic whole and although one must keep in mind that Tulsī dās no doubt agreed with the views presented in the sections inherited from his sources, one may nevertheless expect to find the author's most significant emphases in the parts which are his own and in the changes he introduces in dealing with the traditional material. So far, our analysis has dealt mostly with the structure of the R.C.H. In the following three chapters, we will attempt a more thematical analysis, focussing on the interaction of social duty and love of God.
II. SOCIAL DUTY IN THE RÂNGCARITMÂNAS

As we begin the study of the place social duty holds in the R.C.N., it might not be amiss to recall that as a representative of the "middle stream" Tulsi Dās was confronted with two extreme positions whose attitude towards social duty were at irreconcilable odds. Whereas Vedic orthodoxy stressed the importance of traditional regulations in conformity with the scriptures, namely the ārūtis (what is heard) and the smritis (what is remembered), antinomian theism took the opposite stand of promoting love of God as an end in itself with the implication, sometimes made very explicit, that traditional regulations might be disregarded. We shall see that Tulsi Dās' zeal for promoting love of God did not lead him to reject the authority of the scriptures or to despise the value of traditional regulations based on scriptures. After examining to what extent the poet's respect for the scriptures is reflected in the R.C.N., we shall study the importance attached to social duties dictated by the caste system, the family institution, and the role of the guru.

A. The Importance of Scriptures in the Rângcaritmânasa

The most obvious criterion of a Hindu's respect for his tradition is the place accorded to scriptures. Both the V.R. and the A.R. gave an important place to traditional scriptures, and this importance reflects in some of the passages Tulsi Dās borrows from them. Thus, as she witnesses her son's supernal manifestation Kausalya praises him by referring to
the Vedas and the Purânas:

Veda and Purâna declare thee beyond
illusion (mâyâ), nature's elements
and knowledge immeasurable. 2

Likewise, the corresponding passage in the A.R. refers to the Vedas:

Knower of the Vedas declare Thee to be
beyond speech, intellect and the rest... 3

As a young boy we are told in the R.C.H. that Râma "listened
attentively to the recital of the Veda and Purâna". 4 Likewise,
the V.R. notes that Janaka's children "took pleasure in the
study of the Veda". 5

However, it is obvious that Tulsî Dâs was not solely con-
forming to his sources in this respect. On the contrary, he adds
references to scriptures even when the sources do not. For instance,
in his hymn to Vîrau before the birth of Râma, Brahmâ refers to the
Veda; this detail is not in the preceding versions. Again, the
R.C.H. is the only version to describe the infant child as he
whom the Veda calls 'Not thus'. 6 And to quote Janaka's reference
to the Vedas when he asks if "the Absolute, which the Vedas called
'Not thus' came to earth in dual form". 7

Indeed, the emphasis given to traditional scripture is
particularly strong in passages where Tulsî Dâs writes independently
of his sources. In the very opening Alôka of the R.C.H. Tulsî Dâs
makes it clear that his magnum opus is to be considered as conform
to "all the Purânas, the Vedas and the Āgamas." A few stanzas
later, he refers to the Vedas as a way of authenticating his statement on spiritual benefits accruing from sharing the company of saints. Within the same caupai (a metre or verse consisting of four lines) he refers three times to the Vedas as the foundation for distinguishing between the good and the bad:

It is God who has created all the good and the bad, but the Veda with careful discrimination has distinguished between virtues and faults. The Vedas, the Itihásas (i.e. the Epics) and the Puráñas declare that God’s creation is a mixture of virtue and vice... the Vedas and the Itihásas have made distinction of their merits and demerits. 9

Tulsí Dáś does do so: he italicizes, in the same context, to consider Ráma, whose divine nature he affirms throughout, as the "very essence" of the Puráñas and the Vedas, or the "vital breath of the Veda". Consequently, he holds that "the Vedas, the Puráñas and Agamas are ever singing his perfection." It is also with the "four Vedas" that he opens the long list of those to whom he extends his reverence as he sets out to write his story. The habit of referring to scripture is maintained throughout.

As a result of his high esteem for traditional scriptures, Tulsí Dáś instinctively disapproves of those who say "things as have no warrant in the Veda". As he relates his first narrative of Rávana’s story in the opening section of the Bálá Kánda, he describes the wicked demons as those who defied the Vedic law and who never recited the Vedas and Puráñas. He adds that the evil
Bāvana would inflict various tortures on those who repeated the Vedas or lurked and banish them from the land. In the same vein, Bharata declares that if he has consented to his mother's perverse manoeuvre which led to Rāma's exile, his guilt would be as serious as "those who revile the Veda for profit" and who "revile the Veda"; he adds that he would deserve a lot similar to those "who abandon the Vedic path and follow the opposite road. 16 Tulsi has disapproved of men who walk not on the path of faith "the path approved in scripture... but follow after various heresies and vain imaginings. 17 It is not without significance that among the few whom Tulsi has explicitly denounces by identifying them as the "followers of the left hand path", 18 a clear reference to the Veda śāstras, who were considered unorthodox as they rejected traditional scriptures.

This said, it must be pointed out that Tulsi Dās also highlighted the value of actions performed according to traditional regulations based on the scriptures. Although he does not refer so frequently as his predecessors on the śāstras as such, 19 he nevertheless praises King Pratāpathāna for listening to "the holy śāstras," and Kaikeyi refers to the Hanumāṃstī as a reminder for her hesitating husband that one must keep his promise. 20 Likewise, in describing the funeral rites on the occasion of Daśaratha's death, Tulsi Dās notes that Bharata performed the ceremony "after studying all the Codes (of Hanumāṃstī),"
the Vedas and the Purāṇas”. The R.K. also speaks of the Sāstras in the parallel passage. In general, however, authoritative scriptures are referred to in the R.K. as the Ārụti. Thus, Tulsī Dās speaks about “the Vedas and the Purāṇas and all holy books (Ārụti)”. Even though he is not very explicit about Sāstras as distinct from ritual in general, he nevertheless imitates both of his predecessors in highlighting the importance of Vedic rites performed on special occasions. Like Vālmiki and the author of the R.K., he gives an important place to traditional rituals accompanying important events such as Daśaratha’s sacrifice for the obtaining of a progeny, the marriage of Sītā and Rāma, and Rāma’s installation as king of Ayodhyā. Again, like his two predecessors, he is edified by faithful performance of ritual ablutions and devotions. Thus, Rāma is shown bathing in the Ganges, he recites evening prayers with his brother and the guru, and in the morning he bathes after “performing all the rules of purification”. Likewise, guru Viśvaṅtra tells king Janaka to “perform, as is the custom in your family, whatever rites the Vedas prescribe”. As the two royal families assemble for the wedding of Rāma and Sītā, the two gurus “performed all the rites and ceremonies and usages appropriate to that hour”, and so on.

From this point of view, therefore, Tulsī Dās maintains a strictly orthodox position, in conformity with the R.K. On this point it is significant to see that the Hindi poet
scrupulously avoids certain antinomian statements found in the 
A.R. The latter had denounced Vedic rites in rather strong 
terms when it declared that those who are devoid of devotion 
should "roll in the abyss of the Śāstras". 36 This opposition 
between devotion and what is traditionally viewed as good works 
is made several other times in the A.R. 37 Tulsi Dās prefers 
avoiding such contrasts suggestive of antinomianism; in this he 
is more orthodox than the Vedāntic A.R.

Tulsi Dās' attachment to the tradition as codified in the 
scriptures may also be seen in his attitude towards the Vedic 
pantheon. This is an important point if one bears in mind the 
presence of strictly monotheistic Muslims then in authority, and 
Kabir's insistence on a unique God.

It is true that Tulsi Dās reserves some of his most severe 
judgments for the traditionally accepted gods. The latter 
are pictured as being not only cowardly but jealous. 38 Thus, 
on the eve of Rāma's coronation "the joyous celebrations at Avadh 
(Ayodhyā) pleased them no more than a moonlight night delights 
a thief". 39 As they feel threatened in their prestige by Rāma's 
growing popularity they implore Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech, 
to bring about his exile. Sarasvatī, who reluctantly complies, 
calls their thoughts base and their deeds low for "they cannot 
bear to look on another's power". 40 This scene, which is not 
found in the V.R., is also depicted in the A.R. but no motivation 
is assigned to the gods' intervention. 41 In another scene which
is only found in the R.C.M., the gods are pictured as selfishly dismayed and plunged into despair when they witness that everyone was filled with love for Rāma. Again, they appeal to Sarasvatī begging her to prevent Bharata from bringing Rāma back to Ayodhyā. This time, however, the goddess refuses, leaving the "selfish gods" downcast.  

One must not, on the basis of the above passages, infer that Tulsi Dās was critical of the tradition as such. On the contrary, it was traditional by his time to portray the gods (devas) in a similar light, and so Tulsi Dās was simply reflecting an established attitude toward the gods.

In fact, Tulsi Dās freely affirms the existence of the pantheon and in spite of his critical attitude, he generally gives an important place to the gods by frequently referring to them in a favourable light. Thus, he adopts Vālmiki's habit, also followed by the author of the A.R., of showing the gods partaking of the celebrations accompanying joyful events. On several occasions we are told that Rāma incarnated himself for the sake of the gods, a view also found in the V.R. and the A.R. Devotees, such as King Pratāpabhānu are said to have built "magnificent and marvellous temples" to the gods. In the story of Rāvana narrated in the Kāla kānda, disrespect for the gods is included in the list
of vices attributed to the demon king.\textsuperscript{50} Time and again, faithful
observers of the tradition are exalted for paying service to the
gods or worshipping them.\textsuperscript{51} Rāma himself is shown worshipping the
gods, although Tulsī Dās makes it clear that the gods depend on
the Lord's saving power and as such they are sometimes presented
as devotees. This can be seen in the following description:

Rāma...worshipped (pujā) them (the gods) and
enthroned them in his soul; and the gods
were delighted to mark the loving-kindness
of the Lord. With exceeding love and
gladness: the bright eyes of each one
reverently drank in the beauty of Rāma-
candra's face, as the partridge the light
of the moon. \textsuperscript{52}

Thus, Tulsī Dās' over-all attitude does not depart from the spirit
of the Vedas or of the Manu smṛti, in which daily offerings to the
gods are clearly prescribed.\textsuperscript{52b}

We conclude that Tulsī Dās' attitude toward the Hindu tradition
is one of firm attachment and respect. Throughout his magnum opus
he frequently refers to traditional scriptures, unambiguously acknow-
ledging their authority. His respect for traditional rituals, including
śāstria regulations, is never denied. He freely draws upon Hindu
mythology by affirming the existence of the pantheon which populates
the mythology. This respect for orthodoxy will be reflected in the
place accorded to domestic duties, to the caste system and to the
rôle assigned to the guru.
B. The Importance of Caste Duties in the Rāmacaritānas

In the opening section of the first kānda, Tulsi Dās gives a theological foundation for the existence of the varṇa system. He explains that creation is essentially a mixture: as God has created good and bad, virtue and vice, pain and pleasure, sin and merit, day and night, saint and sinner, so He has created high caste and low. Indeed, the first characteristics of social deterioration are lawlessness and confusion among the castes.

Tulsi Dās notes with satisfaction that king Janaka's servants "gave men and women seats, the nobles and all of less degree, each according to his rank"; a detail which his predecessors had failed to note. Likewise, Rāma is seen in the forest receiving the people of Ayodhyā "according to his or her estate".

Even though faith is more important than caste structure, it does not follow that "the rules of caste and the four orders of life" may be neglected. On the contrary, one should be conscious of his own rank, like Rāma who wears his caste-mark on his forehead and declares openly to what varṇa he belongs.

Unlike the V.R. and the A.R., the R.C.H. avoids excluding the lower-caste from the twice-born. The king is hospitable to all, including beggars who are frequently shown receiving gifts on special occasions of public festivities. However, Tulsi Dās insists that caste identity be maintained and distinctive caste duties observed. Thus, Vasistha tells Bharata that Brahmans who know not the Veda but abandon religious duty and devote themselves to things of sense should be grieved.
for. Likewise, Kṣatriyas who understand not statecraft and love not their people as their own lives, Vaishyas, who are rich but niggardly, unpracticed in hospitality or devotion to Siva, and Śūdras who dishonour Brahmins, are garrulous, ambitious and wise in their own conceits should be grieved for. This new passage is re-echoed in another passage which Tulsi Dās wrote under the influence of the Bhagavata Ramayana, where the philosopher described the kali yuga as a time of confusion among the castes:

Brahmans sold the Vedas... Śūdras gave Brahман lessons in wisdom, and putting on the sacred thread accepted iniquitous aśesa... The Brahman were illiterate, grasping and lascivious, profane and senseless and the husbands of loose-living outcastes. Śūdras indulged in all sorts of prayers and penances and vows and seated themselves on the dais to recite the ṭamanas. Everybody did just exactly what he liked. 64

Tulsi Dās' uncompromising attitude with regards to caste identity leads him to write such a bold statement as this:

A Brahman is to be revered even though he curse and beat you and use harsh words — so say the saints. A Brahman must be revered though he be devoid of goodness and virtue, but a Śūdra never, however virtuous and learned. 65

On this point, as on so many others, Tulsi Dās is directly opposed to the antinomian attitude of Kabir which had found its way in Northern India resulting in the rejection of caste distinctions which were intimately linked with the tradition and clearly codified in the prestigious Manu smrti. Even though he does not refer to the twice-born as a separate class excluding Śūdras and Outcastes, yet he teaches in no uncertain terms as we have just seen that caste distinctions are to be rigidly maintained.
We have seen in a previous chapter that Tulsi Dās gave a special attention to the lowly and the humble. We must examine what place he gave to the Brahmins, who belong to what is usually called the "higher" caste.

It is evident that Tulsi Dās held the Brahmins in high esteem, and that he was particularly mindful of the social duties resulting from their particular situation in society. Rāma declares that Brahmins are his favourite among all men:

\[ \text{All are dear to me for all are my creation,} \]
\[ \text{but the creature I delight in most is man,} \]
\[ \text{of men, the Brāhma, and of Brāhmans, the} \]
\[ \text{student of the Vedas.} \]

The Brahmins belong to a pure caste, and they are even higher than gods. Even the great Śiva is seen bowing to them.

It is for their sake, along with that of the gods, the saints and the cows, that Rāma came down to earth as a man. To slay anyone of these would be the worst of crimes.

It is significant that Tulsi Dās addresses the first homage of his work to the Brahmins and gives them the preeminent place among those he mentions in his final benediction. Likewise, he gives devotion to the feet of Brahmins the first place among the nine expressions of faith. He also emphasizes the power of the Brahmin, particularly by relating stories on the consequence of his curse. Most of these are Tulsi Dās' own additions.
It is interesting to see how Tulsi Dās' appreciation for the Brahmin class affected his treatment of the violent encounter between Parāśurāma and Rāma. In the V.R., Parāśu-

rāma wants to provoke a combat against Rāma to satisfy his hatred of the Kṣatriya class, of which Rāma had proven that he was the mightiest by recently breaking the bow:

In order to avenge the death of his Sire, will he not slay all the warriors anew? Formerly, having destroyed them, his anger was appeased as also his grief; assuredly he has resolved to annihilate the warrior caste once more. 77

Challenged by his belligerent foe, Rāma answers:

Thou art a Brahmin and, being a kinsman
of Vīṇavāmitra, I reverence thee: I can
not, therefore, direct a death-dealing
shaft upon thee, O Parāśurāma.

He then decides as an alternative to deprive his enemy of his power and of his realms, thereby obliging him to withdraw to the Mahendra Mountain. 78

In the A.R. Parāśurāma speaks with even more contempt of the "vile Kṣatriyas" and challenges Rāma to fight with him in a duel after having stringed the bow of Viṣṇu. Rāma "eyeing him angrily snatched away the bow from his hand" and told his im-
pudent adversary that "neither to this world nor the next canst thou go, without my command." Upon hearing such words of bravery Parāśurāma acknowledged Rāma as his saviour. 79
In the B.G.K. Rāma responds to Parāshurāma's challenge by first trying to placate his anger:

Lord, it must be one of your servants who has broken (the bow); what is your bidding?

The ensuing verbal confrontation is then led by Laksmana and Parāshurāma, where the latter is being ridiculed by Rāma's younger brother. Again Rāma tries to quench the Brahmin's wrath by asking him to excuse the childish impudence of his younger brother. He goes on to call himself Parāshurāma's servant and asking him how he could assuage his wrath. Seeing that his enemy's disposition had still not changed he then repeated his plea by calling him "sage", "master", "noble Brahmin" and by admitting his own inferiority. He added that Laksmana was impudent because he mistook the Brahmin challenger for a warrior, given the latter's accoutrement: "Had you come as an anchorite, holy sir, the child would have placed the dust of your feet on his head." Still not satisfied, Parāshurāma repeats his threat, to which Rāma gave a convincing reply by admitting that he will not fight against him on account of his respect for Brahminhood:

Such is the dignity of Brahman descent that he fears you who fears none other.

Hearing this, Parāshurāma recognized Rāma as his Lord and sang a hymn of praise.

It is clear that Tulsi Dās tried to avoid attributing to
Rāma any sign of impatience, anger or disrespect vis-à-vis a Brahmin. Such attitude would not have been in keeping with the over-all treatment given to the Brahmins throughout the R.G.U.

If Tulsi Dās calls his listener's attention to the importance of the Brahmin and the duties they command, he also reminds the Brahmins their own duties towards society. They are expected to be learned, and to give instructions on religion, morality, detachment and discernment. Although Tulsi Dās goes as far as saying that Brahmins are to be revered regardless of their virtue, he nevertheless adds that "The sole mark of a Brahmin is not the sacred thread".

In the latter part of the book, which owes nothing to the V.R. nor the A.R., Tulsi Dās insists on the importance of doing service to the Brahmins. He praises the citizens of Ayodhya for doing "humble service to the Brahmins". Siva declares that "the only vow that pleases Hari (Visnu) is a vow to do service to Brahmins". Service rendered to Brahmins is described as a path leading to Hari.

The Brahmins' relation to the king is also emphasized. The latter is praised for building houses for the Brahmins. As it is frequently mentioned in both the A.R. and the V.R., the king gives generous gifts to Brahmins. Viśvāmitra is overheard saying to himself that by leaving his father for
the first time to help kill demons in the forest Rāma gave a proof of his devotion to Brahmans, a detail not found in the V.R. nor the A.R.

Brahmins are given a prominent place in the public functions of the royal family. They recite the Vedas in the palace; they accompany the king when he welcomes important visitors, and they accompany the royal family in important matters such as the search of Rāma in the forest, in public ceremonies, and in the decisive combat between Rāma and Rāvana.

The increased emphasis given to Brahmans in the R.C.R. suggests that Tulsi Dās tended to enhance their prestige. Having lost control of the political power, which was now in the hands of Muslim rulers, it was important for the Hindus to realize that they were not left without spiritual and moral leadership consonant with the tradition, which was the very raison d'être of the Brahmin caste. Their rôle had now become vital to the maintenance of the integrity of the tradition, and it was fitting that Tulsi Dās should give them a prominent place in the R.C.R. We may go further and say that Tulsi Dās' portrayal of Rāma suggests the spiritual and moral leader more than the temporal king. He is even the Brahmin par excellence. This is strongly suggested in the final portion of the story, which owes nothing to the V.R. nor the A.R. where Rāma
is described as "beautiful with the mark of the Brahmān's lotus foot". It is also suggested in two episodes where Rāma is shown teaching the Brahmāns on the nature and aim of the spiritual quest, and in Nārada's hymn of praise where Rāma is said to bless the Brahmāns, two functions which are normally performed by Brahmāns. This tendency will be further illustrated in the coming section dealing with the place of the guru in society.

C. The Importance of Traditional Domestic Duties in the Rāmacaritmānas

The family household is traditionally considered as the basic structure of society and the Śāstras devote detailed regulations to its organization. These deal specifically with the duties of the son, of the mother, and of the father. It is to their place in the R.C.II. that we shall devote this section of the present chapter.

The ideal son is pictured as respectful, obedient, devoted and affectionate. He performs the religious rituals and he is industrious.

He manifests his attitude of respect by bowing his head before his parents' feet, before the guru, and before the Brahmāns.
One of the characteristics of the dement is precisely the fact that they "honour not mother or father".\textsuperscript{103}

The ideal son is obedient. He is subject to his parents' bidding.\textsuperscript{104} We are reminded that Rāma went into exile "at his father's command".\textsuperscript{105} The son is also obedient to his mother; Bharat "obediently mounted his chariot" at the command of his mother rather than complete on foot the journey in the forest.\textsuperscript{106}

The son owes obedience to the family guru.\textsuperscript{107}

Tulsī Dāsa emphasizes a particular quality of obedience by showing Rāma conforming with ENTHUSIASM to his father's command sending him into exile. In the Vālmīki version, Rāma accepted the order in perfect serenity:

\begin{center}
On renouncing sovereignty and leaving for exile to the forest, Rāmacandra resembled a great Yogi, and none observed any change of mood in him.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{center}

In the A.R. Rāma accepted the news with joy:

\begin{center}
To me by living in the forest, there is million times more happiness than in ruling the kingdom.\textsuperscript{109}
\end{center}

In the H.C.H. Rāma is enthusiastic, seeing in the event not only a chance to meet with the sages in the forest but especially an opportunity to act in obedience to his father's command:

\begin{center}
Hear me, my mother; blessed is the son who loves to obey his parents' bidding.
\end{center}
Hard to find, mother, in all the world
is a son who thus contents his father
and mother. It is altogether to my
profit that I should go to the forest
where I may most easily meet with sages.
Now, moreover, I obey my father's
command and follow your advice, my
mother. 110

The ideal son proves his devotedness and affection by speaking
to his parents with affectionate words,111 by being especially
diffident towards a parent from whom he has been separated for
a length of time,112 and by comforting a parent in desolation.113
All of these are exemplified in Rāma's conduct as well as in that
of his brothers.

The ideal son strives to acquit himself of his religious
duties by submitting at the appointed time to the traditional rituals,
such as the investment of the sacred thread,114 by studying,
reciting, and teaching the sacred scriptures,115 and by per-
forming the daily rituals.116 Finally, he learns young to become
industrious: as a prince, Rāma would engage every day "in the
business of the city".117

In relation to his brothers, the son is also reminded that
he must observe "strict service to his brother... in thought and
word and deed".118 He enjoys being in the company of his brothers,119
particularly for the daily rites of purification, bath and prayers.120
He is especially considerate of his senior brother, by serving
him obediently and loving him tenderly. In return, the eldest son loves his other brothers dearly, even above his own wife. He contributes to their education, thus imitating Rāma who "told his brother (atśāma) many tales of devotion and continence and the art of kingship and wise judgement."

The domestic duties of the parents are also dealt with in the R.C.H. to wives, women are given a list of duties, which could be considered as the wife's charter, or : the, of the R.C.H. that is not found in the two previous versions of the Rāma. Anasūyā, the wife of the saintly sage Atri, advises Sītā above all to pay reverence to her husband, "though he be old, diseased, stupid or poor, blind, deaf, bad-tempered, or in great distress." Anasūyā insists on this point. The wife's devotion to her husband's feet is "her one religious duty, her one vow and observance." Sītā could only agree with this since in a previous passage she herself had been heard expressing her admiration for "faithful wives who adore their husbands as gods." Anasūyā then makes a distinction between four grades of faithful wives: 1) the best is convinced her husband is the only man in the world; 11) the next considers other husbands as her own brother, father or son; iii) the
third in order is chaste for the mere sake of duty and honour; iv) finally, the lowest is the one whom fear alone restrains and want of opportunity. As to the unfaithful wife, she "is cast for a hundred years into the depths of the lowest hell". 127

Tulsī Dās wrote many distinctive passages on women that are particularly harsh. 128 This harshness is repeated in Aṇḍāya’s statement that "women are inherently impure"; she adds, however, that "if she serve her husband faithfully, she wins to highest bliss." 129 She concludes her long exposition by saying that those who meditate on Sītā’s own name will be faithful wives, thereby explicitly proposing to the female listener an ideal and a model wife to be imitated.

With regard to her children, the good mother is shown accompanying her husband and the gāru for the investment of the sacred thread to their sons thus showing her interest in the children’s religious education. She gives good advice to her children in kindness and simplicity, 130 and even speaks to them with authority when necessary. 131 Above all, the good mother is the one whose love for the children is boundless. Among the many passages in the R.C.N. where such love is portrayed, 132 we could select for demonstration the scene which shows Kausalya giving her blessing to Rāma as he prepares to leave for his silvan exile. The same scene is described in both the V.R. and the A.R. The V.R. devotes a long passage to Kausalya’s numerous
wishes for her son. This is followed by a brief description of the queen's emotional feelings, which is one of the most moving in the whole story:

Although a prey to grief, she spoke in cheerful tones with deep emotion, in a quivering voice, and the illustrious princess bent over her son, placed her arms round him and embraced him. 133

After invoking the protection of the gods, her emotions are once more described in these terms:

Thereafter, her eyes full of tears, having completed the benedictory rites, she circumambulated Raghuva reverently, and, her gaze fixed on him, she embraced him tenderly again and again. 134

The A.B. is particularly brief in its description of Kausalya's physical expression of motherly love:

In bearing this, Kausalya became greatly confused and fell into a swoon; then she got up and (was) in great pain and sunk in the ocean of sorrow. 135

Tulai Describes the scene in the following way:

She blessed him and clasped him to her bosom and lavished on him embraces and caresses. Again and again his mother kissed his face, with tears of love in her eyes and trembling with emotion.

Again she took him on her lap and pressed him to her heart, and the milk of love poured from her fair breasts. Her gladness and affection were indescribable, as when a beggar becomes rich as Kukura.

Reverently gazing on his beauteous face, his mother spoke in tender tones. 136
What distinguishes Tulsi Dasi's description is the warmth and the spontaneous simplicity of the mother's love. Like Vālmiki, Tulsi Dasi notes Kauśalya's reverence, but in the new description Kauśalya is no longer shown circumambulating her son nor is she trying to dissimulate her feelings by attempting to speak in cheerful tones.

Tulsi Dasi places less attention to Tulsi's obligations as a husband. Nevertheless he reminds him of his duty to be true to his wife, by not looking with a lustful eye at "a younger brother's wife, a sister, the wife of a son and a virgin maid". He should strive to love his own wife as dearly as Rāma loved Sītā. As head of a household and as father, he is shown tolerating "no display of valour against gods or Brāhmins or vedānties or cows". He performs the appointed religious rites and ceremonies, and gives proper hospitality. He gives gifts to Brāhmins and guests and shows a high respect for the guru. He rejoices at the birth of his children and educates them in the strict observance of their duties, in collaboration with his wife and the family guru. Above all, he gives love, kindness, and solicitude to his children, by considering them as dear to him as his own life.
Again, Tulsi Dās reaffirms the orthodox position. Unlike Radhā in the Śūraśāgar, it is clear from the above that Tulsi Dās avoids statements which might suggest that "family, home and kinsmen" may be forgotten.

D. The Rôle of the Guru in the Rāmcaritmānas

We now study the importance of the guru in the R.C.M. both insofar as he plays a rôle within the family circle and insofar as he is the king's personal adviser and preceptor.

Tulsi Dās describes the guru as the ocean of wisdom who considers the universe as a plum in the hollow of his hand.151 He is the physician,152 whose words are the rays of the sun to disperse the deep darkness of powerful ignorance.153 The dust of his feet are "sweet to the taste and fragrant and full of the flavour of love, delightful powder of the ambrosial root that heals all life’s attendant ills."154 The brightness of the nails of his feet is compared to the brightness of jewels which scatters the darkness of ignorance.155

In the opening verses he pays homage to the guru, whom he likens to Śiva.156 Again and again different members of the family are shown bowing their head before his feet.157 Respect to the guru is frequently reminded as an important duty.158 He is considered as sacred, and to kill him would be as serious an offence as to kill a Brahmin or a cow.159 He is given a place of honour in royal circles.
His rôle as a family preceptor is important not only as a religious figure, but also as a confidant and as a consultant. He is pictured as a comforter of the family and he is affectionately attached to each of its members. He relates sacred stories and tales and takes part in their festivities. In return, the family misses no occasion to show him affection and devotedness. His rôle as educator is not overlooked, and he is also seen admonishing the members of the household.

The guru is often seen giving commands to different members of the family. This point deserves special consideration as we are dealing with an aspect of the guru particularly emphasized in the R.C.H. Upon learning that Daśaratha wished to have a progeny, Guru Vasistha summoned Śrūṅgi and commanded him to perform a sacrifice. This was not so in either the V.R., where the king himself invited Śrūṅgi to assist him in the sacrifice, nor in the A.R., where the guru let the king himself bring Śrūṅgi to the palace in order to perform the sacrifice with them both.

Again, at the contest organized by Sītā's father to determine who was to be her husband, Rāma awaits the guru's command before bending the bow. The episode is related differently in the V.R., where the guru asks Rāma to look at the bow. Rāma looks at the bow and declares that he will take it into his hand, raise it and
bend it. The king and the guru agree and "on the assent of the guru", Rāma raises the bow. Likewise, in the A.R. the guru orders the bow to be shown to Rāma, without commanding the latter to bend it. Thus, the R.C.N. is the only version where Rāma is clearly given a command by the guru to bend the bow.

The same obedient attitude towards the guru is seen in the following episode. Upon receiving the visit of Vasistha, who comes to announce the king's decision to install him as king, Rāma addresses the guru as his master, and expresses his readiness to obey his command:

Though the coming of a master to a servant's home is a source of joy and a fear to sorrow, yet more it more natural, Lord, and customary that you should graciously send for your servant at need. But in that my Lord has laid aside his right as Lord (prabhu) and done me this loving favour, this house today is sanctified. Now command me, holy saint, and I will do your bidding, for it is a servant's joy to do his master (swāmi) service. 176

This is new; in the preceding versions, Rāma does not speak a word to the guru.

Tulsi Dās insists on this point. Thus, Bharata presides at his father's funeral rites "upon the guru's bidding". This is not new in itself, since both of his sources mention the same point. However, Tulsi Dās adds an insistence of his own by saying that Bharata "carried out a thousand times over" all the order the guru gave him. In the same context, Vasistha
summons Bharata and tells him to act in obedience to the king's command. This is understood by the entourage as the guru's own command since the ministers say, "Be sure to obey the guru's command", which is echoed by Kausalya's remark that "your guru's commands are for the best". No such comments on the guru's authority are found in the preceding versions of the episode.

The same stress on the guru's prestige is again found in a further episode of the R.C.N. Worried by the people's fasting in the forest as they await Rama's acceptance to return with them to Ayodhya, Rama asks the guru to set out with them all for the city. He then remembers the guru's authority and corrects a possible impression of lack of respect: "I have said enough and presumed too greatly; so act, holy master, as seems good to you". The guru's reply is significant:

O Rama, perfectly righteous, home of compassion, it is like you to suggest it. But the people are wearied, let them take rest for two days and enjoy the sight of you. 

Once again, this conversation which highlights the guru's ascendancy is not reported in the V.R. or in the A.R. In the whole conversation which ensues, prompted by Bharata's effort at persuading his brother to return as king, the guru again plays a major role.

Thus, it is Vasishtha (rather than Bharata as in the other versions), who takes the initiative of opening the conversation by asking
Rāma to devise "a plan which will benefit the citizens and your mothers and Bharata". Rāma's reply is significant:

Lord, it is you who must decide. The good of all lies in regarding your wishes, in cheerfully obeying your commands and acknowledging them as truly wise. First, then, whatever you bid me do, I will dutifully obey your instructions, and next, holy father, I will engage without reserve in whatsoever service you impose.

This addition is completely new. The rest of the conversation is mostly carried by Rāma and Bharata although Vasiṣṭha's dominating presence is still very much in the picture. He bids Rāma and Bharata to speak, he is frequently referred to by the two brothers and he himself is again occasionally heard. It is important to note, however, that while approving Rāma's above-quoted words the guru nevertheless refused to comply by taking a decision.

Giving as a reason that Bharata's affection disturbed his judgment, he conceded all his authority to Rāma. This marks the emergence of an important theme, namely the will of God, that will be dealt more at length in the last chapter of this thesis. It is also a first indication that in Tulsī Dās' eyes Rāma is the ideal guru; again this aspect will be treated later when the social rôle of the guru is dealt with.

There are several other instances of this same emphasis on the guru's authority. The two brothers are shown, in another new passage, asking their guru permission to pluck flowers, and
to retire to rest. Likewise, in preparation for Rāma's coronation, the citizens are shown zealously carrying out the guru's orders:

Obdient to the great sage's word, each one set about his own special business. Each carried out the orders the high sage had given him, as it seemed, before he was bidden. 187

This last description concurs with a parallel passage in the Vālmikian account, but the A.R. offers a slight variation in that Vasisthā confides the minister with the responsibility of carrying out the king's orders. 188

In the same vein, Tulsī Dās adds another anecdote showing nām immediately after meeting with his mother in his exile, and asking permission to the guru "to go with them, and the citizens, with the permission of the high sage". In describing the return of the citizens of Ayodhya in the capital city, Tulsī Dās adds another note of his own when he writes that "all the men and women of the city, in obedience to the guru's instructions, settled down peacefully in Rāma's capital". 189

Finally, upon arriving at Ayodhya Bharata is shown going to the guru's house and asking his permission to live in observance of the ascetic rule. The guru agrees but gives him his instructions before he leaves. This episode is not found in the A.R. It is recorded in the Vālmikian version, with a few variations: Rāma is shown asking permission "to his holy guru and the elders", and not to Vasisthā alone in his own residence; secondly,
Valmiki does not say that Rāma received "instructions" from his guru, as Tulsi Das significantly adds.

Thus, as Tulsi Das rewrote a story where the family guru was assigned an important rôle, he added an insistence of his own which highlights still more the importance of that rôle. The same tendency characterizes the portrayal of the guru's social rôle as the king's adviser, thus suggesting that Rāma is less the ideal king than the guru par excellence.

Admittedly, the king is given an important place in the R.C.M. and his virtues are highlighted especially as they are personified in the person of Rāma. Rāma is repeatedly referred to as King of Kosala. He identifies himself as a Ksatriya and as the son of a king, who observes the rules of royal conduct. He is seen with an army of four divisions, with rich possessions. He crowns new kings, gives orders to his subjects, and rules over a prosperous city. The good king is pictured as true to his word, as a man of high integrity, and as the upholder of righteousness. He is the treasure-house of sound judgement, virtue and wisdom.
The bad king is also given an important place. We are often reminded that Rāvana is a demon king. His vices are also shown, thus contrasting with the good king's qualities. He is described as lacking in piety, its four typical vices are conciliation, bribery, punishment, and the causing of dissension.

The duties of the king are brought to mind either by word or by example. The good king consults his guru and the Brahmins, and the ministers. He learns the science of statecraft and every day listens to "the holy Śāstras, the Vedas and the Purānas". He generously distributes gifts to the Brahmins, the ministers and beggars.

In spite of its importance, the rôle of the king is less emphasized in the R.C.H. than that of the guru. Rarely do we see a king commanding a guru. Dāsaratha orders Vasiṣṭha to make Rāma regent and prepare for the celebration and then sends him to Rāma's abode to announce the news of his coronation. Rāma is seen instructing the guru as to the care of the citizens during his exile, and he summons them with others after his return from the forest to instruct them in their duties.

On the other hand, we see the king obeying the guru. Thus,
Daksharatha takes permission from the guru before setting forth for a procession. Likewise, he is shown twice asking permission of the guru before performing the family rites, and he awaits the guru's word before making his entry in the wedding hall with his retinue. Again Sita's father, king Janaka, takes permission of the guru to see his own daughter.

These details are now.

The importance of the guru in the life of the king is acknowledged by Rama when he says:

In the absence of my father only the favour of the guru has helped me; else would any people, my household and my family have all been ruined together with myself.

He emphasizes the place of the guru in public social life as well as in the domestic circle:

All the affairs of the state, our honour and good name, religion, our land and wealth and homes — all these the guru's power will protect, and all will be well at the end. Both you and I and all our companions, at home or in the forest, are guarded by the guru's grace.

Upon returning to Ayodhya as king, Rama immediately summons all his comrades together and directs everyone to touch his guru's feet; adding the following explanation:

The guru Vasishta is to be revered by the whole of my house; it is of his grace that the demons were slaughtered on the field.
Rāma thus continues in his father's traces, who was seen
"humly worshipping his guru's lotus feet with exceeding
devotion in his heart." This now insistence in the R.C.H
on the importance of the guru produces a subtle shift of em-
phasis from the king to the guru. Not only is there more em-
phasis on the importance of the guru as such, but the over-
all picture that is presented of Rāma himself is more suggest-
ive of the ideal guru than the ideal pājā (king). This general
impression is created in a number of ways.

First, Tulsi Dās significantly leaves out passages of the
Y.R. that were meant to highlight the duties of the kindly office.
Thus, in the Vālmikian version, Bāli, who was hit from behind by
Rāma's arrow, addressed reproaches by reminding Rāma of his royal
duties:

> Self-mastery, forbearance, loyalty, fixity
of purpose, good-will and heroism are the
virtues of kings, O Prince... Equanimity
of soul, liberality, forbearance, justice,
loyalty, constancy and courage are the
characteristics of a king, O Prince... In
temporal and spiritual matters, as well as
in the dispensing of reward and punishment,
a king should be wholly given up to the
task of government... etc. ??

In the A.R., Bāli is also heard reminding Rāma about the duties
of a king and a protector of dharma, although the insistence is
not so strong as in the Y.R. ?? In the R.C.H there is but one
allusion to the king's duty when Bāli tells Rāma that the latter
has come down from heaven "to further righteousness".227

Likewise, in the V.R. the guru Viśvāmitra who was wel-
comed by Dāharatha inquired about the latter's kingdom,228
and similarly guru Vasistha was heard asking King Viśvā-
mitra several questions on the state of the kingdom.229
Those are omitted in the R.C.M.

Likewise, upon proposing to the elders and counsellors
that Rāma be installed as his successor, King Dāharatha gives
a long list of qualities that are necessary to fulfill the
royal office all of which Rāma possesses.230 Again, this is
omitted in the R.C.M.

In two distinct passages of the V.R. Rāma's father and
mother remind their son of his royal duties.231 No such re-
minders are found in the R.C.M.

Quite significantly, a somewhat lengthy passage in Vālmiki's
version232, where Rāma is seen questioning Bhurata concerning the
discharge of his royal duties is completely omitted in the R.C.M.
In the same vein, Tulsi Dās leaves out the opening section of
the third kānda in the V.R. which also deals entirely with the
duties of the king.233

It is not obvious that Tulsi Dās was actually making a
conscious choice when excluding such passages. We have seen
that his main source was the A.R., and this version also excludes the same passages. The fact remains, however, that Tulsi Das chose not to stress the royal figure in the same way as he emphasized the role of the guru. In this sense his tendency to de-emphasize the importance of the king can be said to be conscious.

The same tendency may be observed in the distinctive changes Tulsi Das brings in his portrayal of Rama. Thus, for Rama Bharat is to replace him on the throne of Ayodhya mainly on the ground that without a king "Avadh would be left quite desolate, and guru, father, mother, subjects and kinsfolk would all have to bear the burden of intolerable pain. He adds that "that king in whose realm the subjects he loves are sad assuredly merits hell." In the corresponding passage of the I.R., which is left out by the A.R., the argument hinged on the necessity to protect and defend the people and to regard their needs. This suggests the powerful ruler, and it is not retained in Tulsi Das' portrayal.

The same contrast appears in the description of the people's motive for following Rama into the forest rather than staying in Ayodhya without him. In the V.R., the people's main argument had to do with lack of security, whereas in the A.R., it was sorrow that propelled them to follow Rama.
Was also noted that the people were distressed and frightened at the thought of living without Rāma as their king. However, he adds another motive which becomes the most important one: "How can luxury's delights constrain those who love the lotus feet of Rāma?" Again, it is not first and foremost on account of his royal power that Rāma is needed. On the human level, his leadership is more spiritual and moral than temporal.

A further illustration of this tendency can be made by a comparison of the three accounts of Rāma's visit to Srīngavera, the capital city of Guha, king of the low-caste Niśādās. In the V.R., Guha welcomes Rāma in these words:

Great-armed warrior, be thou welcome, this country is wholly thine! We are thy servants, thou art the master, this kingdom is thine, issue thy commands. Here are dishes of various kinds and confections and wines at thy disposition as also excellent beds and provender for the horses. 237

The A.R. reports Guha's welcome address in the following terms:

Having touched thy person I have become very happy. This kingdom of the Niśādās is at thy service, O thou best of Rāghus, I am thy servant dependent upon Thee, I shall live. Do thou, O best of Rāghus, protect us. Come we will go to our city, do thou sanctify my house. Take thou the fruits and roots which I have collected there for thy sake, do thou be gracious unto me. I am, O best of gods, thy slave. 238

Tulsī Das first quotes Guha and then adds a distinctive comment of his own:
"Now, O Lord, that we have seen your feet, we have all found a Lord. Blessed are we that you have come among us, O King of Kosala! Happy that earth, that forest, road and hill, wherever, Lord, you have set your feet! Happy those birds and beasts that haunt the woods, that have beheld you and crowned their lives with joy! Happy, too, are all we and our families, who have feasted our eyes on your presence! It is a fair spot you have chosen to dwell in, and one where you may stay at ease in every season. We shall do you all possible service, protecting you from elephants, lions, snakes and tigers. We, O Lord, are familiar with every step of the wild woodlands, the hills and caves and chasms. We shall take you out hunting in this place and that and show you lakes and springs and other spots where there is water. We and all our kinsfolk are your servants, Lord; hesitate not to give us your commands."

That Lord whom the Veda cannot define nor the mind of the sage comprehend, the home of compassion, listened to the words of the Kiráta as a father to the wailing of his child. Nothing but love is dear to Ráma; let him who will understand this understand. 239

Again, the royal figure in Ráma is de-emphasized in Tulsí Dáś' version. He is still called "King of Kosala" but Guha's words do not suggest that he sees Ráma as a Great-armed Warrior, a Master or a Protector. Ráma's presence brings above all spiritual joy, fatherly love and brotherly compassion.

The same subtle changes are repeated over and over again. Besides the above, the most significant instances are the descriptions of Ráma's actions as leader of his army in the battle against Rávana. Typical is the description of Ráma's plans for the attack on Lánká. The Válmíki narrative of the scene opens
With a description of Rāma as "King of men, the Sovereign of the Monkeys, the Son of the Wind, Jámbavān the king of the Bears, the Titan Bibhisana with Bāli's son Aṅgada and Saumitra..." Thereafter Vālmiki shows Rāma's counsellors drawing up the plans, under the leadership of Vibhīsana, who reports the result of the discussion to Rāma. It is he, Rāma, who then assumes the role of commander in chief by giving precise orders. Vālmiki ends his description by noting that "at the head of his great army which spread over the earth, the magnanimous Rāma set out for Lāṅkā with a joyous and exultant air, resolved to destroy his enemy".

Tulsi Dās' corresponding description does not retain the list of prestigious titles. Vibhīsana does not report the counsellors' plan, nor does Rāma assume direct command after the discussion. Instead, we are told that the leaders impressed on the commanders the power of the Lord, and that the soldiers "bowed their heads before Rāma's feet". Rather than ending by describing the splendour of Rāma, the king, Tulsi Dās describes the army who went "dauntless in the power of the Lord".

These and other similar episodes emphasize Rāma's spiritual power rather than his temporal power. The result is that Rāma emerges as the ideal guru without ceasing to be the rāja of the Rāmāvāna.

It is not without significance that Rāma is frequently
and explicitly described in the R.C.M. as the guru. Thus Bharata addresses him as "my father, my mother, my friend, my guru, and my master". Siva tells his wife that "there is no guru in the world, no father, mother, brother or lord so kind as Rama". Añjada addresses him as "my Lord, my guru, my father and my mother". Upon hearing Rama's speech shortly after his coronation, the gurus, Brahmins, and sages clasped the feet of the Lord and said, "You, O gracious Lord, are our mother and our father, our guru and our brother, dearer to us than life itself; you, O Rama, are our selves, our property, our homes, our never-failing friend, the suppliant's comforter!" The sage Atri calls him "the eternal guru of the world". It is significant that Vasistha, the guru par excellence in the Rāmāyana, is among those who, in the final portion of the story acclaim Rama as guru.

By thus emphasizing Rama's spiritual power, Tulsī Dās allayed a possible malaise among his listeners who might have had some difficulty in accepting emphasis on kingly prestige when the Muslims were actually in power. As Rama had been in former times the paradigm of the ideal king, so could he become the model of the ideal guru at a time when Hinduism could not rely on civil authority to maintain the integrity of the tradition.
We conclude this chapter by saying that on the question of social duty Tulsī Dās unambiguously reaffirms the orthodox position. Unlike Kabir, who denounced the Vedas as so many cloaks of falsehood, he acknowledges the authority of the scriptures and considered their injunctions as normative. Unlike Kabir again, he reaffirms the binding character of caste duties. Unlike Sūr Dās, he emphasizes the importance of domestic duties. Finally, the R.C.M. enhances in a distinctive way the rôle of the guru by portraying Rāma as the guru par excellence. The subtle shift of emphasis from Rāma the rāja to Rāma the guru enabled Tulsī Dās to remind his fellow Hindus that the loss of political power to foreign rulers did not entail the deprivation of spiritual and moral leadership capable of maintaining the integrity of the religious heritage.
III. LOVE OF GOD IN THE RAMCARITMANAS

Before we proceed to study in detail the theme of love of God in the R.C.M., it is important to recall briefly the living alternatives with which Tulsī Dās was confronted when he set out to write his magnum opus. The first set of living alternatives was provided by his own religious education, which he received in early infancy. We know from his writings that as a child he was initiated into the devotion to Rāma by a group of Rāma saṅhs who had rescued him after seeing his misery. We know also that his early piety was nourished by the Rāmāyana, which because of his age he had to hear over and over again before he could grasp its meaning. Moreover, the fact that he used the A.R. as his main literary source in writing the R.C.M. is evidence that he also knew this medieval version of the story. Although he had some acquaintance with other medieval versions of the Rāmāyana, we shall limit ourselves once more to the V.R. and the A.R. as the two main sources of living alternatives regarding the question of love of God.

Another source was the Purānic tradition, particularly through the Bhāgavata Purāna. Traces of the latter can be found in the R.C.M., and we have seen that its impact in North Indian piety was already noticeable by the time the R.C.M. was written.

A third main source of living alternatives was the religion preached by Kabir. We have seen that Tulsī Dās could hardly have
been unaware of this tradition although he makes no explicit references to it in the R.C.M.

While Vedic orthodoxy was still alive at the time of Tulsi Dās, we may consider for our purpose the Vedāntic Adhvātma Rāmāyana as sufficiently representative of that tendency although it does not adopt the extreme Mīmāṃsācī position which denies a place to love of God. Likewise, while the Sufis provided a distinctive alternative of their own, the most significant traits of their influence were also found in the religion of Kabir, to which we shall limit ourselves in order to avoid unnecessary dispersion.

We shall see that Tulsi Dās' approach to love of God coincided with none of the alternatives just enumerated. The following analysis will attempt to delineate the main features that combined to give to his piety a distinctiveness of its own.

It must be pointed out that this section will not attempt to give a complete account of Tulsi Dās' theology as such. This would require a thesis in itself and it has been attempted elsewhere. Rather, in this chapter we try to determine, on the basis of the R.C.M., the importance Tulsi Dās attached to love of God as a salvific path.
A. The Emergence of Love of God as the Central Theme of the Rāmacaritmānas.

The first important question to be asked is to what extent Tulsi Dās considered Rāma, the son of Dašaratha, as divine? In other words, when he speaks about love of Rāma, are we to understand that he implies love of the Absolute?

The answer to this question is given in a countless number of adjectives describing Rāma's nature. In one of the opening passages of the Dīla kānda, Tulsi Dās describes Rāma as "one, desireless, without form or name, unborn, True Being, Consciousness and Bliss (saccidānādānāha), Spirit Supreme (parādhāmā), all-pervading, universal... single-minded, almighty, Lord of all". In another passage, Śiva explains to his wife that Rāma is "the impersonal (aguna), formless, invisible, unborn". He goes on to say that "Rāma is the sun, True Being, Consciousness and Bliss (saccidānāhā), untouched by the shadow of the night of delusion. He is the Blessed Lord, whose being is Light itself, and in him is no place for a dawn of wisdom. Sorrow and joy, knowledge and ignorance, self-conceit and pride — these are the lot of mortal man; but Rāma as all the world knows, is the all-pervading Absolute (brahman) Supreme Bliss, God on high from everlasting".
It is clear from the above and from numerous other similar affirmations that Tulsi Dās has moved far beyond Vālmiki in his conception of Rāma as the Absolute. We have seen that in the later portions of the V.R. Rāma was presented as the successor of Indra, and the incarnation of Viṣṇu. In the Rāmcaritmānas, Rāma clearly transcends both Viṣṇu and Indra, as he is now identified as the Supreme Absolute.

On the other hand, while he shares with the author of the A.R. the view that Rāma is the Absolute, he disagrees with him by proclaiming his preference for saguna Rāma rather than nirguna Rāma. He says so in more than one place. For instance, Bhusundi says that "all the sages whom I questioned told me that God is present in all creation; but this doctrine of the impersonal (nirguna) did not satisfy me; I became ever more attached to the Absolute made personal (saguna brahman)". In another passage, the personified Vedas again proclaim their preference for saguna brahman without condemning those who meditate on nirguna brahman:

> Let those who contemplate the Absolute, from everlasting and without a second, attainable only by intuition, beyond intellectual reach, speak of It and know It: we, O Lord, hymn unceasingly thy glory as personal.

In the same vein, Indra sings, "Some there are who contemplate the impersonal Absolute which scripture hymns as the unmanifest: but I delight in the king of Kosala, the Lord Rāma himself in personal
From this last quotation, it is also clear that Tulsì Dās acknowledges Rāma both as the Absolute and as the divine avatāra. Insofar as he accepts Rāma as the incarnation of the Absolute he differs from Kabīr who, as already seen, refused to bow his head before the son of Daśaratha.

Summing up, we may say that Rāma is unambiguously presented in the R.C.M. as the divine Absolute, and that while Tulsì Dās does not reject the nirguna conception of the Absolute he differs from the author of the A.R. by preferring the saguna form and he disagrees with Kabīr in accepting the son of Daśaratha as the human incarnation (avatāra) of the Absolute. This said, we now proceed to show that love of God is the central theme of the R.C.M., thus differing from both the V.R. and the A.R. which present duty and knowledge respectively as the supreme salvific paths. This change of emphasis was effected in a number of ways in the R.C.M. The most noticeable are the exclusion of certain passages, the addition of others, and the changes within the portions of the original story that have been maintained.

We have seen in the foregoing chapter that Tulsì Dās, like the author of the A.R., excluded a remarkable number of important
passages of the original story which dealt with the duties related to the royal office. In addition to these, Tulsī Dās decided to leave out many portions of the story that are not immediately concerned with Rāma, and consequently not conducive to emphasize love of God. Some examples of these are the narrative of how Valmīki created the metrical form for the Rāmāyana, Sumantra's tales to Dararatha containing predictions related to the birth of Rāma, the description of how Risyasrīga was brought to king Romapada's court, Vibhāmitra's account of his ancestry and the dynasty of king Kubera, the marriage of the sage Brahmadhatta with the hundred princesses, and so on. We have seen that the most conspicuous exclusions are those of passages dealing with many incidents of the combat in the forest where Rāma is not in the picture; and the entire Uttara Kanda, of which the A.R. presents a summarized version but which Tulsī Dās excludes completely, probably due again to the mass of tales not related to Rāma, at least in an immediate way.

While he followed the A.R. in eliminating many sections not immediately related to Rāma, Tulsī Dās added some new sections, many of which are his own. We have already seen that these added sections are new. We must now see to what extent they are meant to highlight the importance of love of God.
An important category of additions consist in the introductory and concluding sections of each kānda. All fourteen poems are centred on Rāma. All seven introductory hymns are devoted to expressing the poet’s love of Rāma, to whom are also added Śiva (in all seven kāṇḍas), the guru, Vānī and Vināyaki (in kānda I), Sītā (in kāṇḍa I and IV), Laksmana (in kānda III), Bhavāni (in kāṇḍa I and IV), and Bhagavān (in Kānda V). Likewise, all concluding sections are exhortations either to worship Rāma (kāṇḍa III, VI, VII), to hear or recite the story of his deeds (all kāṇḍas) or to praise his devotees such as Bharata (kānda II) and Guha (kānda VI).

The other category of additions are the short pauses written in the form of dohās or sorathas (Hindi couplets) which are inserted in the corpus of the story to allow the author to make a personal comment. While a small proportion of these are devoted to other subjects than Rāma, such as the guru, Nānamūna, Sītā, Śiva and his wife, and a number of purely moral exhortations, the majority either extol the merit of hearing or reciting the story of Rāma, praise the glory of Rāma, or address a prayer of worship directly to Him.

Other major additions, the substance of which was borrowed from other sources than the V.R. or the A.R., are found, as we have previously seen, in the first half of the Rāla kānda and
the concluding section of the book which forms the major portion of the Uttarā kānda. The first half of the Bāla kānda begins with a prologue where love of God is immediately presented as the central theme of the story. After paying his homage to Rāma and to all creatures, good or bad, Tulsī Dās implores the saints to bestow on him devotion (rāti) to the feet of Rāma. He insists that the aim of his enterprise is above all to tell a story of Rāma's virtue which Rāma devotees will welcome. After admitting a feeling of awe when confronted with the Lord's infinite power, he recalls that Rāma "has taken bodily form and wrought all manner of works, simply to do his faithful servants good, a Lord of perfect grace who loves his suppliant people. He bestows his affection and gracious favour on his own, and in his loving-kindness has refrained from wrath: Raghurāja restores what is lost and befriends the poor."

A long development within the prologue deals with the NAME of Rāma. In this passage, Tulsī Dās declares that the Name is greater than the two forms of the Absolute — impersonal and personal. He goes on to explain that both forms are made known by the Name. The Absolute "within the heart" (nirguna) which leaves every creature miserable and sad is made manifest by uttering the Name of Rāma. So also while Rāma in his incarnate
form (saguna) is physically limited in his action, he can easily reach out to all devotees who invoke his Name. It seems that in this passage the word "Name" is synonymous with "Love". Tulsī Dās was not interested in philosophical subtleties; rather he wanted to propose the most beneficial, or salvific, way of considering God, namely as Supreme Love.

The prologue ends with a comparison between the story of Rāma and a beautiful lake. Again, love of God is the central theme, as we are told that "for those who have no faith... and love for Raghunāth, the Lake is inaccessible". 25

After the prologue comes a long dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī, introduced by a short preliminary dialogue between sages Yājñavalkya and Bharadvāja. It may seem strange that Tulsī Dās should add of his own initiative such a long development where Śiva, and not Rāma, is the prominent figure. Indeed, Tulsī Dās writes that Śiva and Bhavāni are the Mother and Father of the whole world! 26 Such an emphasis can be explained in two ways. First, we must not forget that Tulsī Dās was writing in the Benares area, where devotion to Śiva was strong. Second, the point of this section is given at the end where we are told that "those who are not devoted to Śiva's lotus feet can never dream of pleasing Rāma". 27 Insofar as devotion to Śiva leads to love of Rāma, it is important in Tulsī Dās' eyes.

The last part of this new section relates a series of

26
Purānic tales dealing with the incarnation of Rāma. The first story tells us about Jaya and Vijaya, reincarnated as Rāvana and Kumbhakarna as a result of a Brahminical curse, thus causing one of Rāma's incarnations. It is said that Rāma came down to save them.

The second story deals with another Rāma devotee, namely Jalandhara, who was reborn as Rāvana, again as a result of a curse. Out of mercy, Rāma "slew him in battle and granted him final release (param pada)." 29

The next story relates Nārada's self-pride and his subsequent punishment by Viṣṇu, followed by his deliverance which allowed him to depart to Brahmā loka singing the praise of Rāma's virtues. The point of the story is made in the final verse:

The Lord is sportive and acts for his suppliants' weal; he is to be found of those that worship him, one who eases every pain. There is no god or man or sage whom his powerful illusion (māyā) does not lead astray. This remember and worship in your heart the Lord of mighty illusion. 30

The story of Manu and his wife Śatarūḍhā relates the example of king Manu who renounced his kingdom and went with his wife to practice tapas in order to obtain a vision of Hari-Rāma. Hari rewarded him by showing him His supernal manifestation and, at the request of Manu himself, by promising to become the king's son.

The fifth story deals with Pratāpabhānu, king of the Kekayas,
who even though he was guiltless and a fervent devotee of Vishnu reincarnated as Rāvana, the result of another Brahminical curse, thus causing Rāma's reincarnation in order to deliver him. Only Rāma can deliver one from a Brahmin's curse.

Unlike the first five stories, the last one summarizes a long section of the Uttara Kānda in the V.R. The aim of this story is to explain the origin of Rāvana who became of evil form by the power of a Brahmin's curse, though he was "pure, stainless and incomparable." This situation led to the actual incarnation of Rāma and the eventual saving death of Rāvana.

It is clear that the dominant aim of this section is to enhance the love of God for his devotees which causes him to take a human form in order to save them. This marks a departure from the A.R., which gives equal importance to three reasons for the incarnation of Rāma: accomplish the work of the gods, bring rescue to the devotees and kill the demons. While Tulsī Dās explicitly admits the other reasons offered in the A.R., he definitely emphasizes love for his devotees as the first reason.

The other major addition is the final portion of the whole book, found in the Uttara Kānda. Here again, the central theme is love of God. Complying with Bhurata's request, Rāma explains the characteristics of the saints. Having finished enumerating the virtues of the saints — among which he includes the virtue
of those who think of nothing but His name — and by contrast
the list of sinner's vices, Tulsî Dâs notes that Râma's listeners
could not contain their love. 37

The next episode shows the sage Nârada who constantly came
and sang of Râma's holy deeds to the gods; 39 thus prompting the
latter to "awake from their contemplative trance and listen
attentively". This is followed by a long passage reporting
Râma's speech to all the citizens, including the guru, the sages
and the Brahmînas. This passage is crucial. After explaining that
it is a blessing to be a human being, Râma explains emphatically
that "the way of devotion (bhagati) to me... is an easy path and
leads to bliss". He then contrasts love of God with knowledge
(jâhana), which is "hard to pursue". Even though he does not con-
demn jâhana as such he adds that "he is not dear to me if he (the
pursuer of jâhana) lack faith (bhakti)". 40

This episode is followed by Vasistha's visit to Râma where
we learn that the guru accepted his office as family preceptor
for the sake of unceasing devotion to Râma's lotus feet. Here,
Râma becomes the Supreme guru. Vasistha closes by asking a boon:
"Let my love for my Lord's lotus feet never grow less as life
succeeds life". 41

This section of the narrative ends with a hymn in which
Nârada sings the virtues of Râma, after which the old sage "de-
parted to Brahmâ's realm, laying the ocean of beauty on his heart". 41
After a transitional section on the merits of the *Rāmāyana*, we pass to the last section devoted to the dialogue between Bhusundi and Garuda.\(^2\)

In the first part of the Bhusundi-Garuda section, Bhusundi relates, in a summarized form, the story of Rāma to Garuda. This is followed by a number of considerations and autobiographical accounts where again the main emphasis is on love of God. We are told once more that Rāma assumed the form of a king "for the sake of his worshipers".\(^3\) We are warned that if a man "aims at final release (nirvāṇa) without worshipping Rāma, he is but a beast without tail or horns".\(^4\) It is interesting to notice how Tulsi Dās reverses the Vedāntic order of priority in the following statement:

> Ignorance affects not the servants (dās) of Hari, for knowledge (jñāna) sent by the Lord possesses them. Hence, Garuda, the servant is not destroyed, but his devotion (bhakti) to his master grows ever stronger.\(^5\)

Bhusundi relates how he was awe-stricken by Rāma's supernal manifestation and how the Lord checked the influence of his mâyā "when (he) saw that I was distraught with love".\(^6\) He also relates how he obtained the gift of devotion to Rāma.\(^7\) He reports the Lord's declaration, that he preferred to all men, including Brahmins and the student of the Veda, his own servant who looks to Him for refuge and whose trust is in no other.\(^8\) In a long development, we are told that the way of *bhakti* is the only sure
way of salvation.49

Bhusunudi then relates a confrontation with his guru as a result of the latter's statement that Śiva and Brahmā worship Rāma. As a result of his obstinate opposition to this doctrine, Bhusunudi was punished by Śiva himself. Bhusunudi repented and was granted the boon of devotion to Rāma.50 Reincarnated as a Brahmin, Bhusunudi tried to find an ascetic who would teach him how to contemplate the Lord, but they all taught him the doctrine of the impersonal which did not satisfy him: "I became ever more attached to the Absolute made personal".51 Neither would the Rṣi Lomaśa, whom he met on Mount Meru, teach him how to worship saguna brahman. A confrontation ensued and Bhusunudi was transformed into a crow by the Brahmin's power. Rāma then enlightened Lomaśa who was thereby enabled to impart to his disciple "unwavering faith in Rāma".52

The final strophes are devoted to an explanation of the relation between bhakti and jñāna, which culminates in the proclamation that "Śiva, Brahmā, Sukadeva (son of Vyāsa), Sanaka and his brethren and Nārada, sages pre-eminent in apprehension of the divine, all agree... in this doctrine — one must love the lotus feet of Rāma. Veda, Purāṇa and all the holy books proclaim that without faith in Raghu- pati there is no peace".53

We now study the main corpus of the story, where Tulsi Dās follows the general outline sketched in the V.R. and the A.R. We
will stop at the most significant passages only, first dealing with the new inserted material not yet examined.

The most noticeable insertion within the Bāla kānda is the episode relating Rāma's visit to the garden of Mithilā with his brother Laksmana. There, Rāma and Sītā see each other for the first time. The whole scene is meant to show the intense love between Rāma and Sītā. The latter's love is especially highlighted:

Then with firm resolve she drew Rāma into her heart and turned to go... Pretending to look back at a deer or a bird or a tree, she turned again and again, and as each time she beheld the beauty of Rāghu-bir, her love grew ever greater. 55

Of course, the author does not say whether Sītā recognized the Lord in Rāma at this point, but this is implicit because the listener has been led to consider Rāma as the āvatāra throughout. Sītā's love of Rāma, here as elsewhere in the story, is therefore the devotee's love of God.

The Ayodhya kānda contains two major additions, the first of which, namely the special development on the story of Bharata's dilemma, will be dealt with in the last chapter of this thesis. The other addition introduces a new episode, namely Janaka's visit to Rāma at Citrakūṭa, in the forest. 56 Although we are not explicitly told why the king of Mithilā left his capital city, the description of his feelings as he arrived at Citrakūṭa makes it sufficiently clear that it is out of love for Rāma that he went to find him in the forest.
So eager and delighted were they (Janaka and his retinue) to see Râma that no one felt the least fatigue or weariness from their journey; for their souls were with Raghubar and the princess of Videha, and who without a soul can feel bodily pain or pleasure? Thus Janaka and his retinue came forward, intoxicated with love. 57

It would seem that Tulsi Dâs also meant to give more emphasis to Bharata’s love for Râma by showing Janaka as an admirer of Râma’s brother-devotee. Tulsi Dâs draws our attention to “so self-restrained a one as Janaka” who was, like the others, overwhelmed by Bharata’s love for Râma. 58

The Aranya kânda presents a new hymn of praise not found in the A.P. In this hymn, Atri addresses the Lord as love of his devotees, gracious and tender-hearted, the eternal guru of the world, lover of love. He concludes by asking Râma to grant him devotion (bhakti) to his lotus feet. 59 The Aranya kânda ends with Nárada’s visit to Râma, which again is a new insertion. After asking Râma a boon, namely that the name “Râma” be the greatest of all names, the sage wants to know why Râma would not allow him to marry. The core of Râma’s answer is contained in the following passage:

Those who worship me, relying on none other, I ever guard as a mother guards her child... The wise are like my grown-up sons, but my servants who rely not on themselves are like my infant children. My servant depends upon my strength, the wise man on his own, but both have lust and anger for their foes. With this in mind the learned worship me and even
when they attained to wisdom forsake not their devotion (bhagati). 60

The answer rejoices Nārada who then asks Rāma to enumerate the qualities of the saints. Rāma enumerates a number of them, which culminate in loving devotion to Him: "They love me most sincerely... (and) are ever singing or listening to my aoritive acts". 61

The **Sundara kānda** presents a new episode which shows Hanumān and Vibhisāna meeting before Hanumān's first encounter with Rāvana. The intent, once again is clearly to emphasize love of God. As he awakes, Vibhisāna utters the name of Rāma. Upon seeing Hanumān, he feels an instinctive affection for him, wondering if the monkey now disguised as a Brahmin is not Rāma himself. Complaining that he lives in Lāṅkā "like a wretched tongue between the teeth", and that "there is in my heart (no) devotion to his lotus feet", he asks Hanumān if Rāma will have mercy on him. Hanumāna answers that "even on me has Raghūbir had mercy". The author adds that Vibhisāna also gave Hanumān the needed information concerning Sītā's whereabouts. The main emphasis of the episode, however, is on Rāma's love and not on the information given to Hanumān.

We have seen that several episodes were added to the **Lāṅkā kānda**. An important one is the three long interventions of Māndodarī in an attempt to dissuade her husband Rāvana from resisting
Rāma's power. The A.R. reports only one such intervention, where the demon's wife reminds her adamant husband that Rāma has taken a human form for his sake and therefore he should submit to him. In all three interventions recorded in the R.C.M., Mandodari adds an important element by insisting that Rāvana should give up his resistance in order to worship Rāma.

The episode relating Bharata's shooting of Hanumān by mistake is also meant to show the mutual love between Rāma and his devotee. In his effort to arouse the injured monkey Bharata makes this significant pledge:

If in thought and word and deed I have unspeakable love for Rāma's lotus-feet, and if Raghupati is graciously inclined towards me, may the monkey recover from his weariness and pain.

We are told that Hanumān immediately sat up, saying, "Glory, glory to the Lord of Kosala!"

The new episodes showing Rāma on the battle-field raising up Rāvana's charioteer, and standing in front of Vibhīsana as a way of protecting him from Rāvana's spear are also obviously meant to show Rāma's love for his devotees.

The final episode in the Laṅkā kāṇḍa relating Rāma's visit to Guha at the latter's home is also new. The scene culminates in Guha's confession of love:

Now, all is well with me, for I behold those lotus feet which Brahmā and Śāṅkara adore. O Rāma, home of bliss, whose every
wish has been fulfilled, I worship thee! Rāma, I worship thee! 67

The greater part of the Uttara kānda contains additions, and these have already been dealt with. The above analysis shows once again that Tulsi Dās' additions were meant to highlight the centrality of love of God as the leitmotiv of his story.

We now turn to the modifications that Tulsi Dās brought to the material inherited from the V.R. and the A.R. This material can be divided into two main categories. The first comprises the sequence of events, most of which are related in both the V.R. and the A.R. The second category comprises the hymns and philosophical comments inspired from the A.R. It is obvious that we will have to make a selection, as Tulsi Dās' modifications are numberless. We shall therefore examine only the most typical among the important ones.

The Bāla kānda of the V.R. relates Viśvāmitra's request to obtain the help of Daśaratha's sons, Rāma and Laksmana, in order to destroy the demons who create impediments to the performance of the sage's sacrifice. 68 The A.R. relates the same event but
adds a detail to Viśvāmitra's motivation: he had come to "know of the supreme self's incarnation as such through māyā." The R.C.M. adds another motivation — besides the one suggested in the A.R. — which emphasizes the sage's love of Rāma:

Then the great sage betought him that the Lord had become incarnate to relieve earth of its burdens. He thought, "I will make this excuse to go and see his feet...; thus shall I feast my eyes on the Lord, in whom all knowledge and detachment and virtue dwell." 70

As Viśvāmitra and the two princes arrive at Janaka's court, the king's whole attention, according to Vālmiki, was first focussed on the sage. After a while Janaka asked Viśvāmitra about the two youths. The sage's answer is followed by a long comment from Janaka's guru Satānanda, the eldest son of Gautama, whose mother Rāma had just restored to life. Most of Satānanda's comment, however, is a praise to guru Vasistha. In the A.R., Janaka first worshipped Viśvāmitra, and then he enquired of Viśvāmitra who were "those lions amongst men resembling gods attracting his heart forthwith like Nara and Nārāyaṇa." 71 Having heard the sage's answer, the king worshipped the two princes according to rites.

In the R.C.M., the princes arrived only some time after Viśvāmitra. As they entered and sat by the sides of their guru, the spectators' eyes "were filled with tears and they trembled with emotion." 72 The king himself exclaimed his wonder, asking the
sage if these were the Absolute come to earth in dual form. He "gazed time and again at the Lord with a thrill of emotion and passionate devotion in his heart". In this episode, as in the previous one, it is clear that Tulsi Dās goes far beyond the A.R. in emphasizing love of God as the central theme.

Again in the episode showing Laksmana's farewell to his mother, Tulsi Dās modifies the details to emphasize love of God. In the V.R., Sumitra tells her son to consider Rāma as his own father, Sītā as his mother and the forest as Ayodhya. The same advice, which is not found in the A.R., is repeated in the R.C.M. However, Tulsi Dās attributes a significant addition to Sumitra thus presenting her as a Rāma devotee:

May your devotion to the feet of Sītā and Raghubir be constant, selfless and never-wearying.

The devotee's love of God is sometimes said in the R.C.M. to cause one's fatigue to vanish. This is shown in the comment added to a scene showing Rāma, Laksmana, Sītā and Sumantra bathing in the Ganga: "To say that he was weary, by thinking on whom the burden of all weariness is removed, is but to use a conventional phrase".

Tulsi Dās thus multiplies the occasions to remind the reader/listener that love of God is the central "message" of the R.C.M. This tendency is again seen in the episode showing Rāma asking a boat-
man to help him cross the Gâhgâ. In relating this episode, which is not found in the V.R., the author of the A.R. clearly stressed the POWER of the Lord. The boatman refuses to allow Râma to ride in his boat because he knows that the dust of the Lord's feet has the power to transform a stone into a woman. Râma allows him to wash his feet and is then allowed to ride in the boat. 77 In the R.C.M., the boatman is clearly presented as a devotee and the scene is clearly intended to show the Lord's MERCY. We are told that the boatman washed Râma's lotus feet "in an ecstasy of bliss" and that the gods rained down flowers and obiously praised him, crying, "None is so meritorious as thee". The text also adds that by allowing the boatman to wash his feet, Râma was being merciful: "He, the merciful (krsna)... made request of a boatman". 78

Whereas in the V.R. the scenery surrounding Citrakûta filled Râma with delight and made him forget his banishment from Ayodhya, 79 in the R.C.M. it is the very presence of Râma which gladdens his surroundings at Citrakûta. In a long passage this idea is suggested by such statements as these: "The very beasts were glad when they beheld the beauty of Râma... All creatures that had eyes, gazing on Raghunâr, forgot their sorrows..." 80
In the Aranya kānda all three versions of the Rāmāyaṇa relate the story of Sarabhaṅga who had waited for the Lord's coming before mounting the funeral pyre. In both the V.R. and the A.R., the ascetic enters the fire and then goes to Brahmā loka in Indra's chariot. In addition to his ascetic practices, the A.R. mentions that he meditated (jñāna) on Rāma, and that he was his devotee (bhakti). The sage dies by asking Rāma and Sītā to ever abide in his heart. In the R.C.M., Sarabhaṅga also practised asceticism and asks Rāma to dwell in his heart. Tulsī Dās adds that the sage went to Vaikuntha (Vishnu's, i.e. Rāma's heaven) and that "he was not absorbed into Hari because he had received the gift of separate devotion (bhedabheda) before he died."  

Tulsī Dās imitates the A.R. in explaining the act of dying at the hands of Rāma as an act of divine mercy. He goes further in this direction however by saying, unlike the A.R., that fourteen thousand enemies of Rāma died crying "Rāma! Rāma!" In the A.R., Rāvana himself chooses to be killed by Rāma in order to "enjoy the kingdom of heaven". Tulsī Dās attributes the same motivation to the King of demons but is more explicit in saying that Rāvana thereby hoped to worship the Lord. Elsewhere, Tulsī Dās had been still more explicit about Rāvana's interior devotion as he described him as being enraged against Sītā and yet finding delight "in mental adoration of her feet".
The same insistence is made in the story of Márka who was asked to take part in Rāvana's scheme to kidnap Sītā. In the V.R., Rāvana forces him to comply,97 in the A.R., Márka complies after realizing that if Rāma killed him he would "be released from this ocean of worldly life". 88 In the R.C.M., the dominant motivation is loving devotion to Rāma's feet. 89

An episode unique for its moral implications is the slaying of Bāli. All three versions report the incident but with different modifications. In the V.R.,90 Bāli reproaches Rāma for having hit him from behind; Rāma counters with a number of excuses and Bāli apologizes. In the A.R.,91 Bāli both apologizes and prostrates himself before Rāma, whom he recognizes as God, and implores his permission to attain to His supreme abode. In the R.C.M.,92 Bāli's body is restored to health but he asks the boon to be reborn in any womb whatsoever provided he be devoted to Rāma's feet.

The crossing of the bridge to Laṅkā is another typical episode meant to highlight the importance of love of God. In the Vālmikian version, the monkeys who build the bridge are the centre of attraction. Even the gods look down to see them at work!93 The A.R. is very concise except for an addition concerning a Saivite pilgrimage site which, as we have seen, is also mentioned in the R.C.M. In the R.C.M., all eyes are on Rāma. Even the creatures of the deep come forth to gaze at him, the "source of mercy". The crossing of the bridge has become in the R.C.M. a long description of a pilgrimage to Rāma.
Also typical of Tulsī Dās is his habit of inserting in his description of the final battle recurrent reminders that Rāma's servants had their hearts fixed on the Lord. Thus, Sugrīva, Jāmbavān and Vibhīṣana took counsel together "with their thoughts fixed on the jewel of the Solar race". The army pounces everywhere on Rāvana's palace "singing the praises of Rāma". The monkeys trample down the throne of demons by the power of Rāma. Hanumāna sets out "laying Rāma's lotus feet upon his heart".

Many other instances can be adduced to show that even when dealing with his sources Tulsī Dās never lost sight of his central theme and that he made the necessary modifications in order to make it emerge forcefully. The most important among these other passages are the numerous hymns and philosophical comments inspired by the A.R. These have all been listed in a previous chapter. In order to avoid repetition, we shall deal with a limited number of them considered as representative. These will include Abhalyā's hymn to Rāma, Parasurāma's hymn to Rāma, Vālmiki's hymn of praise to Rāma, Laksmīna philosophical comment to Guha, and Rāma's philosophical comment to Laksmanā. Then, we shall conclude with a comparative study of the treatment given to Rāma's visit to Guha in both versions of the story.

_Abhalyā's Hymn to Rāma_

In the A.R. Abhalyā's hymn to Rāma dwells at length on the
theological nature of Rāma, on Rāma's relation with creation, on the misconceptions that people who are deluded by māyā have of Rāma, on Ahalyā's incapacity to comprehend the true nature of Rāma, and on her prayer for constant devotion to the feet of Rāma. In the corresponding hymn, Tulsi Dās summarizes in the opening statement the first four of the original themes: "Glory to Raghu, whom only wisdom may reveal". All the rest is a development of the fifth theme, namely loving devotion to Rāma. Ahalyā admits her sinfulness, she asks the Lord to purify her and to save her from rebirth, she sings her joy of being able to feast her eyes on the saviour, and she asks the boon of loving devotion to Rāma. It is clear that Tulsi Dās has shifted the emphasis in favour of loving devotion to God.

Paraśurāma's Hymn to Rāma

In the Ar., Paraśurāma's hymn to Rāma contains two different sections. Verses 22 – 30 are inserted within its corpus to explain how Paraśurāma became a foe of the Ksatriya caste and how his encounter with Rāma happened according to predictions. The hymn proper deals with the following themes: Rāma's essential nature, Rāma's relation with māyā, the worldly ignorance caused by māyā, the relation between the ātma and the buddhi, the means of escaping the world of māyā (i.e. company of saintly devotees, worship of the Lord and search of knowledge under a guru), and a prayer to obtain
loving devotion to the saintly devotees. In the corresponding hymn, Tulsi Dasa abandons his predecessor's efforts to grasp the nature of the Lord in se. Rather, the whole hymn sings the glory of the Lord's attributes by which the Supreme communicates with his devotees: God is hymned as the fire that burns the harmful demons, as the friend of gods, Brahmins and cows, as the dispeller of sin, as the bringer of virtues, joys and beauties, and as the friend of Siva. Here again, the shift of emphasis is clear. In the first instance interest is focussed on the ultimate nature of God, man and the universe. In the second, God is approached as the loving saviour of his devotees.

Vālmiki's Hymn to Rāma

In the A.R., Vālmiki's hymn to Rāma describes those whose heart is the temple of Rāma. Most of the characteristics enumerated are usually associated with knowledge (jnāna): enjoying a peaceful disposition, looking upon all with equal eye, cherishing no enmity to any creature, etc. Nevertheless, love of God is also clearly mentioned, but as a secondary theme: "Those whose minds have become firm by incessant devotion to thee, those who are always devoted to the service of thy feet, those whose sins have been washed off by the recitation of thy name (are thy Temple)." The first portion of Vālmiki's hymn in the R.C.M. has nothing in common with the corresponding hymn in the A.R. Strangely enough,
this portion is philosophical in tone dealing with themes usually found in the hymns of the A.R. such as God's ultimate nature, the world as māyā, the salvific value of knowledge.

The second portion deals with the same subject as the hymn of the A.R., namely Rāma's mystical abodes. This passage deals exclusively with themes associated with love of God: fitting abodes of God are those who yearn for God's presence, who sing the glory of God, who worship the feet of Rāma and none other, who fulfill their duties, who practice the saintly virtues of which charity and loyalty are the most important, and those who live in spiritual detachment from all that is not the Lord. 105

Laksmana's philosophical Comment to Guha

In this passage of the A.R. Laksmana tries to console Guha, who grieves over Rāma's situation, by pondering on the nature and consequences of karma which no one can avoid unless he acquires wisdom: "The wise do not... show joy on occasions of joy nor sorrow on occasions of sorrow, but patiently bear the advent of the pleasurable and the painful and are not deluded, knowing all to be māyā". 106 Here, Tulsi Dās follows the A.R. very closely except for the very last sentence where he adds loving devotion as the culminating point: "Remember this, my friend, and rid yourself of delusion; be devoted to the feet of Sītā and Rāghubir". 107
Rāma’s Philosophical Comment to Laksmana

As in the previous case, Tulsi Dās stays very close to the A.R. in reporting Rāma’s philosophical comments to Laksmana. Both texts follow the same outline: Rāma explains how one obtains release through knowledge (jñāna); he enumerates the means of acquiring knowledge; he proposes devotion (bhakti) as the easier and safer way; he enumerates the means of obtaining devotion. [104]

There is however a crucial difference between the two approaches.

For the author of the A.R. bhakti is a means to jñāna:

He who possesses devotion (bhakti) rapidly gains knowledge (jñāna) and realisation thus obtains deliverance (mokṣa). [105]

For Tulsi Dās, love of God is independent from knowledge (jñāna).

Indeed, knowledge depends on faith:

From the performance of duty (dharma) springs detachment; from austerity, knowledge (jñāna); knowledge brings release — so says the Veda. But, brother, it is faith (bhakti) in me that quickly melts my heart and brings bliss to the faithful. Faith is its own support; it needs no other stay. On it depends all knowledge, material and divine (gyāna bigyāna). [110]

Thus, while Tulsi Dās borrows from the A.R. the idea of inserting hymns and philosophical comments, and while he sometimes deals with the same themes, he does not depart from his fundamental position which considers love of God as the preeminent salvific path. Without being exclusive, it is nevertheless a self-sufficient path: it is the easier one and the preferable one for Tulsi Dās.
I have not been able to find in the R.C.M. one single hymn or philosophical comment borrowed from the A.R. where the balance is not tilted in favour of loving devotion. This process has been sufficiently illustrated in the above examples, and it is not necessary to pursue it further.

We conclude this first portion of the present chapter by showing how Tulsî Dâs' tendency is once more apparent in dealing with the story of Guha. Once again, the treatment given in the R.C.M. is compared to the parallel treatment in the A.R.

Râma's Visit to Guha

In the AdhyÂtma Râmâyana, Râma's visit to Guha is described in these terms:

Then approaching Guha who was standing with folded hands, Râma said, "My friend, do thou go to thy city, the beautiful Sringvera. Thinking of me, do thou enjoy things obtained by thee through thy own exertion. At the end of life thou shalt attain to my own form, there is no doubt in this". So saying he gave him celestial ornaments and having bestowed upon him a wide kingdom communicated to him the highest wisdom. Embraced by Râma, Guha returned home happy.

Nothing is more instructive than the comparison of this description
with that given by Tulsi Das, who sees in Guha an "utterly low-born Nisåda" purified by loving devotion to Råma:

At the news (of Råma's arrival) Guha came forward in an ecstasy of love and blissfully drew near to the Lord; and when he saw the Lord and the princess of Videha, he fell unconscious to the ground. Beholding his marvellous devotion, Råguråja joyfully raised him and clasped him to his bosom. He clasped him to his breast, even Lakñã's lord, the treasure-house of grace, the chiefest of the wise. He seated him very close beside himself and asked him how he fared. Guha humbly replied, "Now all is well with me, for I behold those lotus feet which Brahmå and Siva adore. O Råma, home of bliss, whose every wish has been fulfilled, I worship thee! Råma, I worship thee!"

In the Adhyåtma Råmâyana, Guha welcomes Råma standing still with his hands folded, which reveals above all an attitude of reverence; in the Råmacaritmånas, Guha's behaviour reveals the intensity of his love, causing him to run towards Råma upon hearing of his arrival, and then losing consciousness upon seeing him. In the first instance, the devotee is struck by Råma's grandeur; in the second, he is enraptured by Råma's saving and loving presence.

In the Adhyåtma Råmâyana, Råma sends Guha to the city, enjoining his devotee to think of Him and to enjoy the fruit of his own efforts. In the Råmacaritmånas, Råma affectionately clasps Guha to his bosom, and rather than sending him away to "think" about Him and
enjoy the fruit "of his own exertion", he enters into an intimate conversation with his devotee. It is more important for Tulsi Dās to be in the very presence of Rāma than merely to think about him. It is easier to obtain salvation through God's grace, than to achieve it through one's own efforts. Finally, in the Adhvātma Rāmāyana, Guha is granted material wealth and wisdom (jñāna), whereupon he happily leaves Rāma. In the Rāmcaritmānas, Guha is seen finding his happiness in worshipping the object of his devotion. Love, not wisdom, still less material wealth, is the devotee's only reward in the Rāmcaritmānas.

From the above, it can be said that whereas the author of the Adhvātma Rāmāyana reveals speculative interests in the nature of God and creation, Tulsi Dās prefers a practical language more conducive in bringing the reader to submit to the salvific power and love of Rāma. Whereas the Adhvātma Rāmāyana is especially concerned with the possibility of reconciling the path of bhakti with the supreme path of jñāna leading to nirguna brahman, Tulsi Dās' aim is to extol love of God as the privileged path leading to liberation in union with the Lord (agniṣṭhota brahman).

The above comparisons show that Tulsi Dās transferred the pivotal axis of his two sources. The Vālmīkī Rāmāyana emphasized social duty without denying love of God; Tulsi Dās emphasizes love of God without denying social duty. The Adhvātma Rāmāyana emphasized knowledge as the path par excellence leading to the formless Absolute, without denying the role of social duty and
love of God; the Rāmcaritmānas insists on the preeminence of love of God, without denying the value of knowledge and social duty.

B. The Ecstatic Quality of Love of God in the Rāmcaritmānas

Having established that love of God emerges clearly as the central theme of the R.C.M. we must now study the special ecstatic quality which characterizes devotion as it is portrayed in the Hindi Rāmāyana. We will see that this characteristic is noticeable in both joyful and tragic contexts.

Upon learning, through the sacrifice ceremony, that he will have a progeny, Daśaratha's heart is gladdened. According to the V.R., Daśaratha was "in the height of joy". The A.R. says nothing on the king's emotions in this context. In the R.C.M. it is said that "the king was in an ecstasy of bliss; his heart could not contain his joy".

While the V.R. is silent on the king's feelings at the birth of his sons, the A.R. says that "he became immersed in a sea of joy" and that "he shed tears of joy". Tulsi Das describes Daśaratha's joy in these terms:
When Daśaratha heard of the birth of his son, his joy was like the joy of the blessed; in his soul was love supreme and he trembled with delight. He would have risen, but composed himself... (His) heart was filled with perfect bliss.

Tulsī Dās also adds that the king summoned minstrels, the guru, the Brahmins to look at the peerless child and sing the charms of his beauty. All the queens, the handmaids and the citizens also came to admire "in ecstasies" Rāma and his three brothers.

Again in the R.C.M. Janaka displays the same ecstatic emotion as he sees Rāma for the first time. He is described as losing all consciousness of self, inarticulate with emotion, overwhelmed by love, with a thrill of emotion and passionate devotion in his heart. The V.R. does not describe Janaka's emotional feelings at this point, while the A.R. merely notes that Janaka "knowing the two youths to be deserving of worship worshipped them according to rites".

In the scene showing Rāma going to Janaka's garden where he met Sītā for the first time, Tulsī Dās describes the citizens of Mithilā "running like beggars that run to spoil a treasury" and young women gathering at the lattice-windows of their houses, gazing "with passion on Rāma's graceful form". This, as we have seen, is a new passage, in which the atmosphere is obviously close to that of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
It is also interesting to compare how the three versions describe Daśaratha's emotions upon learning the news of Rāma's wedding. In the V.R., Daśaratha is said to have been "in the height of joy". The A.R. is just as laconic: "He became immersed in joy". In the R.C.M., Daśaratha is pictured reading the letter carrying the news with his eyes full of tears, trembling with emotion, his heart full of joy. Rāma's brothers also "felt a thrill of joy and could scarce contain their feeling of affection". "Overpowered by affection", the king hastily read the letter of invitation to the guru and to the ladies of the court, who were "filled with joy... and overwhelmed with affection and delight". The news eventually spread to the whole city and the people "were wild with joy" and adorned the city "for the love (they)bore him". The poet ends this description, not found in the preceding versions, by saying that "great was the rejoicing, and it seemed to overflow in all directions".

Upon meeting his two sons again after their first sojourn in the forest, Daśaratha is said the V.R. to have enjoyed "supreme satisfaction". In the A.R. it is said that "he smelt Rāma on the forehead and repeatedly embraced him, filled with joy as if he had attained to the bliss of Braham". In the R.C.M. Daśaratha, upon seeing Janaka and the two boys, "rose in joy and advanced, as one who feels bottom in a sea of bliss..." Not able to contain his joy, "he clasped his sons to his heart and eased
the intolerable anguish he had borne, like a dead man quickened
to new life" 174.

The wedding ceremony gave Tulsi Das another occasion to em-
phasize the devotees' ecstatic admiration. In the V.R. little effort
is made at describing the emotions of the on-lookers. We are told
that Janaka had his eyes suffused with tears of joy as he wedded
Laksmana to his daughter Urmila, and there is a short description
of the celebrations that accompanied the ceremony:

In the midst of immense splendour, a rain of
flowers fell from the sky. To the sound of
of celestial gongs, hymns and music, troops
of Apsardas danced with Gandharvas broke into
pascons of praise, while the nuptial ceremony...
was taking place, a marvel indeed! 175

Here again, the A.R. is more laconic. The place of marriage
"resounded with the sounds of drums and was filled with people
dancing and swinging". Besides, the mothers are shown embracing
Sītā (who was weeping) and giving her good advice "with tears in
their eyes" 176. The R.C.M. describes at length the feelings of Rāma's
admirers. Upon seeing the two princes as they went to the royal
palace, the ladies of the court rose in delight, the queens "in
rapturous joy scattered gifts and waned the lustral lamps about
their heads. In an ecstasy of devotion they looked on Rāma's beauty;
constrained by love, again and again they touched his feet. They
felt no shame, for their hearts were filled with affection; no
words can tell the love they could not but feel". As she entrusted
Sitâ to Râma, her mother “clasped his feet, as though her speech were sunk in the quicksand of love”. Indeed, all the queens “laid up in their hearts his sweet and charming image and grew faint with love”. Janaka’s emotions are again described: his heart overflowed with love his composure fled, the strong restraints of his wisdom were broken down, and his eyes brimming over with tears of love. The courtiers were all “overpowered with emotion” and the queens are again described as “so overcome with joy and rapture that they waxed faint and could not move”. The citizens gazed at Râma “with brimming eyes and trembling limbs”. Even Sarasvati, the goddess of speech, "ransacked her store of similes, but none could she find they all seemed too trivial, and she could only fix her gaze upon them (the newly wed) entranced by their beauty".177

A similar stress on intensive love for Râma is again noticeable in the long passages Tulsî Dâs devotes to describe the reactions of forest-dwellers upon seeing Râma. Such developments find no parallels in the two preceding versions of the story. The forest-dwellers are described as constrained by love, trembling with emotion and with tears in their eyes, enchanted, in a blissful state no tongue can describe”. Other spectators would “draw his beauty into their hearts by the pathway of their vision, unable to move or think or even speak good words”.128 Gods and sages come to admire him.129 The lowly tribes gaze upon Râma with devotion.
They stood there all about him like painted figures trembling with emotion, and their eyes overflowed with tears. When Rāma perceived that they were all beside themselves with love, he received them with honour and spoke to them kindly.

Thus, everywhere Rāma passes, he provokes intense loving reactions. Tulsī Das does not miss an occasion to underline this fact, and his insistence finds no parallel in the VēR. or the A.R.

The most obvious case of emotional mysticism is reported in a scene of the R.C.M. which owes nothing to the V.R. or the A.R. or to any other source. The scene describes a sage by the name of Sūtikṣana as he welcomes Rāma to his hermitage. The sage's rapturous delight is described in these vivid terms:

The wise sage was so utterly absorbed in love that his state was beyond description. He lost all sense of direction on the road; he knew not who he was or where he was going; at one time he would turn and go back and then again advance; at another he would dance, singing of Rāma's virtues. Ever more profound grew the sage's love and devotion, while the Lord watched him, hiding behind a tree. Seeing his exceeding love, Rāhubhir... manifested himself in his heart. The sage stood motionless in the middle of the road, and every hair on his body stood erect as on a jackfruit. Then Rāghunāth drew near to him, rejoicing to see his servant's emotion, Rāma tried every means to awaken the sage, but he awoke not, for he was absorbed in the bliss of contemplation. Then Rāma withdrew his form as a king and revealed himself as the four-armed in his heart, and the sage started up in agitation like a serpent distressed by the loss of its jewel. Seeing before him dark-hued Rāma, the home of bliss, with Sītā and his brother, the great sage fell prostrate at his feet, lost in love and greatly blessed.
Emotional intensity is also portrayed to illustrate the devotee's pain caused by separation from Rāma. We shall demonstrate this by analyzing the description of Daśaratha's death which occurred shortly after Rāma's departure for his sylvan exile.

The V.R. gives a much more lengthy and pathetic account of the old king's death, which is considerably shortened in the A.R. This may be seen as a result of the philosophy in the A.R. which views worldly events, including human tragedies, as illusory. After relating how the turn of events was the result of a muni's curse, Daśaratha, in the V.R., dies in sorrow exclaiming:

Alas, O valiant Raghava! Alas, Thou who hast robbed me of my strength by thy departure! Alas, Thou who art full of filial devotion, thou, my support! Alas, Thy virtuous Sumitra! Woe unto thee, my cruel enemy, Kaikeyī, O obliquity of thy Race.

The narrator sadly adds that the king "who was distraught on account of the exile of his beloved son, passed away at midnight and under the weight of suffering yielded up his life." The A.R. also says that Daśaratha died "greatly agitated with sorrow," and that his last words were:

O Rāma! O son! O Sītā! O Laksmana! mines of all good qualities, through separation from thee I am meeting my death caused by Kaikeyī.

In the R.C.M. Daśaratha's sorrow is also mentioned but the king overcomes that sorrow before dying as he realizes that his body is impeding him from going in the presence of Rāma. He
dies therefore with a cry not of despair but of love for Râma, which reaches a climax of ecstasy in these words:

Crying, 'Râma, Râma!' and again 'Râma!' and yet again, 'Râma, Râma!' and 'Râma!'
the king, parted from Raghurâ, abandoned his body and entered the abodes of the gods. 137

Tulsî Dâs hastens to make it explicit that Daśaratha's death was glorious because he died "for the loss of Râma" as he had lived "in the face of Râma". 138

Several other instances could be adduced to illustrate the same tendency; the most important among these will be dealt with in the last chapter of this thesis. The above make it sufficiently clear that Tulsî Dâs consistently added a special insistence on the ecstatic quality of loving devotion which gives to the R.C.M. a distinctive place in the Râmâyânic tradition.

It must be added, however, that the mystical ecstasy portrayed in the R.C.M. has characteristics of its own. While it is more emotional than the type of devotion advocated in the Bhâgavat Gîtâ, it is also more restrained than the devotion advocated in the Bhâgavata Purâna.

In the Gîtâ, which the Vedântins recognize as authoritative, the ideal devotee is portrayed as self-controlled, free from joy and impatience, fear and excitement. He neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires. He is alike to enemy and friend, to
pleasure and pain. He renounces all actions to God, is "intent on Him", and worships with complete discipline and meditation. Having restrained his senses he is equal minded and rejoices in the welfare of all beings.

This type of devotion characterized by self-control, dispassion and indifference is obviously not the same as the devotion advocated in the R.C.M. As we have seen, the latter emphasizes ecstatic emotions accompanied with abundant tears, hoarpilations, thrills of joy, overflowing rejoicings, dancing and singing. Devotees are often pictured as unable to contain their emotion, as overpowered by affection, as overwhelmed with delight, as wild with joy, as growing faint with love, as having lost all sense of direction. In this sense, therefore, Tulsî Dâs clearly departs from Vedic orthodoxy.

On the other hand, Tulsî Dâs avoids the display of unrestrained behaviour sometimes suggestive of eroticism, typified in the lilâs of Krsna as a child and as a lady charmer. For instance, while Tulsî Dâs adopts from the A.R. the description of the child Râma, obviously inspired from the description of the child Krsna in the Bhâgavata Purâna, he avoids showing Râma crying and being so mischievous that when he could not obtain immediately from his busy mother something to eat, he grew angry, "broke the vessels containing milk, curds and butter with stick and threw down the whole of it". Such behaviour would be too undisciplined for Tulsî Dâs.
As Rāma grows, he keeps in the R.C.M the same distinctive blend of charming affection and dutiful restraint. Unlike Kṛṣṇa who provokes wherever he goes the most unbridled display of mystico-erotic passions, Rāma's passage arouses unambiguous love and pure joy. The description of his first love follows the same tendency. The poet tells us that after seeing Sītā, Rāma "drank in the beauty of her face as the bee sips honey from the lotus". As he confides to his brother how much he thinks of Sītā to the point of being disturbed by his love, he immediately recalls his moral duties:

Men of the house of Rāghu never even in thought set foot upon the road of evil; that is their nature. So I feel in perfect confidence, for I have never even dreamed of looking on another's wife. Few in the world are those honourable men who turn not their back on the foe in battle nor even in thought let their eyes rest on another's wife nor send a beggar empty away. 143

For Tulsi Dās love and duty go hand in hand. In the same vein, the descriptions of the beauty of Sītā avoid giving details suggestive of eroticism. Such details are uttered by Rāvana in the Vālmīkian version of the story:

How even, sharp and white are thy teeth, how large thy slightly reddened eyes with their dark pupils, how well proportioned and rounded are thy thighs and how charming thy legs, resembling the tapering trunk of an elephant! How round and plump are thy cheeks, like unto the polished fruit of the Tala trees; how en-
chanting is thy bosom, decorated with pearls. 143

In the parallel passage of the A.R., Rāvana tells Sītā that he burns with love for her and he invites her to abandon her life with a muni to enjoy the pleasures of life with him. 144 In this respect, Tulsī Dās simply says that Rāvana "spoke of love". 145 The same tendency can be observed regarding Rāvana's impudent words to Sītā in the groves of Laṅkā as they are reported in the V.R. 146 It can also be observed in Tulsī Dās' description of Sītā's beauty as she enters the garden of Mithilā, which shows more restraint in the R.C.M. than in the parallel passage of the Prasādana Rāghava from which it is inspired.

We may say, therefore, that while Tulsī Dās draws closer to antinomian theism insofar as he adopts the North Indian sāṅkta' tendency of stressing ecstatic mysticism, he nevertheless refuses in this respect to portray Rāma and his devotees on the Purānic model of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs. Here again, he stands between two "extremes".
We conclude this chapter saying that Tulsī Dās' approach to love of God is distinctive from all the alternatives with which he was confronted as he set out to write his magnum opus. Unlike Vālmīki, he considered Rāma as God, the Supreme Absolute. Unlike the author of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana he considered loving devotion not as a mere means to knowledge but as the preeminent salvific path. Unlike the promoters of the unbridled mystico-erotic devotion, Tulsī Dās did not dissociate mystical ecstasy from moral duty. Unlike Kabir, he acknowledged without hesitation Rāma, the son of Dāsaratha, as the avatāra par excellence. In this sense, therefore, the distinctiveness of Tulsī Dās' spirituality allowed him to offer a new alternative to the religious aspirations of his time.

This chapter has attempted to show that love of God has emerged with Tulsī Dās, as the leitmotiv of the Rāmāyana. The previous chapter had studied to what extent social duty was an important theme in the Rāmcaritmānas. There remains to be seen, in the final chapter, how social duty and love of God are interrelated in Tulsī Dās' magnum opus.
IV. THE IDEAL DEVOTEES

The historical part of this dissertation dealing with the immediate context of the Rāmcaritmānas has shown that the devotees of medieval North India often experienced a tension between their loving attachment to God and the traditional dictates of social and domestic duties. While this tension is absent in the Vālmiki Rāmāvana and is rarely reflected in the Adhyātma Rāmāvana,1 it is given a place of importance in the Rāmcaritmānas.

In certain cases the tension between love of God and social duty, as illustrated in the Rāmcaritmānas, does not entail serious repercussions. For instance, upon seeing Rāma as he happens to pass by, admirers are frequently shown temporarily abandoning their household duties to gaze at him.2 They are also said to forget their own homes when they are with the Lord.3 Such behaviour is obviously seen with admiration in the Rāmcaritmānas.

Again, whereas the previous versions of the story had shown Rāma refusing to allow Guha to follow him in the forest,4 Tulsī Dās describes the situation in this way:

Then the Lord bade Guha return home;
but when he heard it, he grew pale and there was anguish in his heart. With folded hands Guha humbly said, "Hear my petition, O jewel of the house of Raghu! I shall stay with my lord and show him the way and for a few days wait upon his feet; and in whatever forest you stay, Raghu, I shall fashion a hut of leaves; and after that I shall obey whatever command you give me..." When he perceived his heartfelt affection, Rama took him with him and Guha was overjoyed.

We know, however, that Guha was given this permission for only a short while as Rama asked him to return home before leaving for the hermitage of the sage Valmiki:

Then Raghu earnestly desired his friend to return home, and in obedience to Rama's command he went his way.

The element of tension is also highlighted in the scene depicting the Lord's farewell to his fellow combatants after the return of Ayodhya. Whereas in the Adhyatma Ramayana Angad was mentioned only casually among those who received a gift before leaving, he is heard in the Ramaaritmanas beseeching Rama to allow him to stay as his servant:

Whither shall I go if I leave your lotus feet? Consider, O king, and tell me, what can I do at home if I part from my Lord?... Shelter your humble servant... Command me not now, O Lord, to return to my home.

In this case, however, Rama maintains his decision:
Raghupati...raised him and clasped him to his heart, and his lotus eyes were full of tears... With many words of consolation (he) bade him farewell.  

Tulsi Dasa prolongs the scene with obvious delight as he portrays the ever hopeful Aṅgad reluctantly taking leave of Rāma:

Aṅgad's heart overflowed with love as again and again he turned and looked back at Rāma, repeatedly prostrating himself and hoping that even then Rāma would bid him stay. He dwelt continually with anxious longing on the way Rāma looked and spoke and walked and on his smiling embraces; but when he saw it was the Lord's will, with many a humble prayer he laid upon his heart the lotus feet and set forth.  

Unlike Aṅgad, Hanumāṇ obtains from Surērā, with the approval of Rāma, permission to stay ten more days in Ayodhyā. Both of these scenes are new, and both illustrate a certain tension between love of God and social duty.

Other devotees, however, experience a tension much more dramatic than the examples just given. Such is the case of the citizens of Ayodhyā, Laksman, Sītā, Vibhisēna and Bhārata, who are all exalted as exemplary devotees. The following analyses will show how the tension is dealt with in these typical cases, and how it is finally resolved within the framework of orthodox theism.
The Citizens of Ayodhya

In the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, the point was made that the people of Ayodhya forsook their duty to follow Rāma in the forest. They resolved to leave gardens, fields and houses in order to "follow the virtuous Rāma through good or evil fortune". Rāma deplored that the people had followed him "without considering their homes". After Rāma's departure from Ayodhya "merchants no longer exhibited their wares nor did those in charge of the home attend to the cooking". Even the "holy reading and sacred recitations" were interrupted!

The Vālmiki Rāmāyana makes it clear that in the judgment of the citizens, the decision to send Rāma into exile was contrary to the law. Thus, Daśaratha, who is said to have spoken "under the influence of some evil spirit", is blamed for sending his son to the forest, an act reprehensible in itself "even if a son be bereft of every virtue". The same accusation is repeated later when the grieving people insist that "in his folly, the king, for the destruction of the world of beings, has banished the faithful and virtuous Rāma to the forest". They even look askance at Rāma who seems to condone a decision contrary to the law; thus, the Brahmans ask that Rāma be brought back to Ayodhya "in accord with the law", and the people express wonder that Rāma "who ever
protected us, like a father the children born of his loins, how could he leave us in order to enter the forest?"

The next significant element is that the main reason behind the people's behaviour and objections is not love of God but insecurity engendered by the impending chaos which will invade Ayodhya once Rama is gone. Several times in this account, the point is made that Rama is the protector of Ayodhya, nay the protector of the whole world order. Thus, the women ask, "Where has he gone, he the protector of the whole world, now banished to the forest by his Sire, goaded on by Kaikeyi?" Later, the reminder is again made that "through Kaikeyi's fault, all will be brought to ruin; the whole universe, without a support or a defender, will be destroyed". The insecurity of the people is explicitly voiced by the women in the following passage:

Who can enjoy this mournful place (Ayodhya) filled with anxious people, who are despondent and apprehensive? Since, by Kaikeyi's action, the king is without guidance, what further use is life to us?"

A striking contrast is painted by Vālmiki between Rama and Kaikeyi, who respectively personify dharma and adharma. Thus, Ayodhya is described as "the kingdom of Kaikeyi", where disorder reigns supreme. Kaikeyi's fault is even seen as the cause of the world disorder; it is through her fault that "all will be brought to ruin", that "the whole universe will be destroyed". Several descriptions are made of the city in chaos under the rule of Kaikeyi, contrasted with the picture of the forest where Rama now dwells. It is clear
that by abandoning Ayodhya the people were convinced they were escaping a world where chaos (adharma) reigned supreme, in order to follow Rāma in the forest where order (dharma) was restored because of the king's securing presence:

Let the forest where Rāghava (Rāma) is going be our city; and the city we are abandoning become a forest.

Vālmiki and Tulsi Dās differ in two important respects. Whereas Vālmiki stresses insecurity as the people's motive for abandoning Ayodhya, Tulsi Dās emphasizes love. Whereas Vālmiki shows that in the people's judgment the abandonment of Ayodhya was not the abandonment of social duty as such, Tulsi Dās admits overtly that by following Rāma the people were conscious of acting against their social duty.

The Adhyātma Rāmāyana introduces a new dimension to the story by making superior knowledge the pole around which everything revolves. Bewildered by the king's decision to banish "his dear son of truthful resolve for the sake of a woman", they express their desire to follow Rāma in the forest:

0 men, it does not befit us to live here. We shall go to the forest this very day and accompany Rāma to the place where he wishes to go with his brother and Sītā.

Upon hearing this, a sage by the name of Vāmadeo immediately dissuades his grieving hearers from following Rāma by showing that just as in his previous incarnations the Supreme Vīsmāna assumed various forms to relieve humanity in distress, so "this very person has now
incarnated as Rāma — the Lord of the world (in order to) kill Rāvana and other demons by the millions. He adds that
Vishnu incarnated as Rāma after having been propitiated to that
effect by Dāsarathā. The people should not, therefore, pass
judgment on Dāsarathā or Kaikeyi since they are "not at all the
slightest agent(s) here"; it is the creator who deludes the world
through the influence of māyā. He concludes by inviting the
people to consider all that is happening as the result of Vishnu's
incarnation "for helping his devotees in their devotion, for the
destuction of Rāvana, for accomplishing the object of his father
the king". Amedeo's argument proves convincing for we are told
that "on hearing all this and knowing Rāma to be the all pervading
Hari, (the people) left off the doubt which like a knot had become
fastened in their hearts and meditated upon Rāma."

For the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, then, the people's desire to leave
Ayodhyā was reprehensible as their sorrow was rooted in ignorance of
the true nature and purpose of Rāma's exile. Throughout the story, the
reader will be reminded again that what is happening really belongs to
the order of illusion, for ultimately all men are of the same changeless
essence, and men of superior knowledge realize that at this level
nothing really happens. Here again, the tension is not between
social duty and love of God, but between social duty and sorrow
rooted in ignorance.

With the above in mind, we now proceed to examine Tulsī Dās'
approach to the subject at hand. Upon hearing that Rāma left
Ayodhya for his sylvan exile, the citizens realize that without him life will become meaningless:

Apart from Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, there is no happiness. Where Rama is, is all we need. What can we do in Ayodhya now (that) Raghunath (Rama) has gone? 37

In adding that the people set out to join Rama in exile, Tulsi Das is careful to point out on the one hand that this entails an abandonment of their “happy homes”, and on the other hand that the motivation behind this departure was “love to the lotus feet of Rama”. 38

The next episode shows Rama trying to persuade his followers to return, but to no avail:

He repeatedly instructed them in their duty (dharma) but they loved (urama) him so much that they refused to turn back. 39

Thus, the intensity of their love for Rama impells the people to abandon their home thereby refusing to comply to their social duty.

Such behaviour is obviously edifying in the eyes of Tulsi Das, who seldom misses an occasion to observe that when Rama happens to pass by a village, people all “(sacrifice) their household duties and (come) running out to see him”. That the link between devotion and abandonment of one’s duty is consciously set forth is illustrated by a passage immediately following the above episode where it is stated in a long hymn of praise that “the one who abandons caste and brotherhood, wealth, duty (dharma) and position, dear kinsfolk and happy home (sadam sadhada) and treasures in his soul yourself (i.e. Rama) alone -- in his heart Raghuvarai, make your stay”. 40
It is to be noted, however, that Râma persistently refuses to allow the citizens to stay with him in exile. His will in this case is that the devotees remain lovingly attached to him, without forsaking their social and domestic duties.

From the above three-fold analysis, it may be concluded that Tulsi Dâs is the first author who clearly sets forth the difficult tension between social duty and love of God. These two themes emerge clearly as the two predominant poles in the passages of the Râmcharitmânas referred to above, and their centrality will be maintained in the other character portrayals about to be analyzed. It may also be concluded that Tulsi Dâs' portrayal of the citizens of Ayodhyâ reveals both his sympathy for the devotional trends of his time and his approval of the orthodox insistence on duty. Although he praises the devotees for desiring to follow Râma above all else he nevertheless makes it clear that Râma does not approve of their negligence towards social duty. The fact remains, however, that from the devotees' point of view, social duty constitutes an impediment to one's desire to follow Râma more closely. Thus, after being told for the last time to return to Ayodhyâ, the people still complain that "wealth and home and pleasure and parents and brothers...lend not cheerful aid to our quest for Râma's feet".42
In the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, Laksmāna obtained Rāma's consent after proving that there could not be a real conflict between social duty and his desire to accompany Rama since there was in fact no duty for him to stay in Ayodhyā. In answer to Rāma, who had pleaded with him to stay behind in order to protect their respective mothers, Laksmāna argued that his presence in Ayodhyā would not be necessary since Bhurata was quite capable of looking after the queens, and Kausalyā was sufficiently well guarded:

Undoubtedly on account of thine power, O Hero, Bhurata will show himself to be full of deference and consideration for Kausalyā and Sumitrā. If, having been invested with supreme authority, the wretched Bhurata, in his perversity and pride, does not protect them, I shall destroy that wicked and cruel being without mercy, as also all his sympathizers and the Three Worlds themselves. But then the noble Kausalyā is well able to command countless warriors like myself, she who owns thousands of villages. My reverend mother also has innumerable defenders like unto me to protect her. Therefore take me with thee, there is no wrong in this! Thus my purpose will be accomplished and thine interests safeguarded. 43

Once again, the tension between love of God and social duty is not envisaged by Vālmiki. By accompanying his brother, Laksmāna was not infringing upon any duty, and therefore he could say that "there (was) no wrong in this."
The case of Laksmana is briefly dealt with in the Adhyātma Nārāyaṇa. In asking Rāma permission to accompany him to the forest, Laksmana presents two arguments. The first deals, once more, with knowledge: "Rāma thou hast dispelled from my mind the doubt that had lurked there". This is obviously a reference to Rāma's long previous discourse to Laksmana, dealing with the importance of high knowledge (jñāna). It seems, therefore, that Laksmana's first reason to follow Rāma is gratitude for the knowledge received. The second argument has to do with Laksmana's emotional incapacity to suffer separation: "Do thou be gracious unto me, otherwise I shall give up my life breaths". Although loving devotion is present in this episode, there is no allusion made to Laksmana's duty to stay at Ayodhya.

Once more, Tulsī Dās adopts a distinctive approach. Contrary to the citizens, Laksmana hesitates before voicing his desire to follow him:

What will Raghunāth tell me to do?
Will he make me stay at home or will he take me with him?  

While Rāma admires his brother's readiness to renounce "life and home and all", he clearly reminds him that his duty is to stay home and be a comfort to his parents:

Those who willingly accept the advice of their mother or father or guru or lord have achieved their life's purpose...
Remember this, my brother, and heed my
counsel: do service to the feet of your father and mother... I go to the forest, and if I took you with me, you would be left quite desolate and grieved father, mother, subjects and kinsfolk would all have to bear the burden of intolerable pain. Stay then, and be a comfort to them all: any other course, dear brother, would be very wrong... Stay, then, and regard this as your duty (niti). 48

Lakṣmāna's response clearly sets forth the tension between "the moral precepts of the scriptures" and the way of love:

I am your slave (dīs) and you my master (svāmi); if you desert me, what can I do? Master, you have given me good advice, but I cannot take it for I am a coward. Only great men, steadfast upholders of the right (dharma) are to follow the moral precepts of the scriptures but I am a mere child, nurtured in my lord's affection. I know no guru, father or mother save yourself — believe me, Lord, I speak in all sincerity! All the love (prema) in the world, all claims of kinship, all affection and confidence of which the Vedas themselves have spoken, all these that are mine are centered in yourself alone. Teach the precepts (dharma) of religion to one who aims at glory, dominion and high estate; but should he be abandoned, O ocean of grace, who is devoted (rata) in thought and word and deed to your feet? 49

This argument wins over Rāma's heart and he allows his devoted brother to follow him. Although it is not clear why Rāma gives Lakṣmāna his assent whereas he refused it to the citizens of Ayodhya, it is important to note that Lakṣmāna is allowed to follow Rāma in spite of his duty, that of being a comfort to the people of Ayodhya, and because of his loving devotion to his Lord.
In the Valmiki Ramayana, Sitā is advised not to follow her husband mainly because of the dangers of forest dwelling. There is no reference to any duty incumbent upon her to stay in Ayodhya. Thus, not only Sitā does not transgress any duty by leaving with Rāma, but she herself reminds the latter of her obligation to abide by the law according to which a wife must not be separated from her husband.

The Adhyātma Ramayana again deals briefly with the case of Sitā. Contrary to the previous case, Rāma objects to Sitā's desire to follow him, on the grounds that life in the forest is too rugged for a woman. Sitā counters with a five-fold argument: i) she is Rāma's lawful and faithful wife; ii) no one can assail her in the company of Rāma; iii) rather than cause Rāma trouble, she will be his helpmate; iv) she must conform to the Rāmāyanic tradition: "I have heard divers Rāmāyanas from Brahmins; where and when did Rāma go to the forest without Sitā, do thou tell me?" v) should Rāma refuse, she would in his presence give up her life.

Here again, as in the previous cases, there is no tension between love of God and social duty. Rather, Sitā seems to convince Rāma by proving that in fact her duty was to accompany her husband, and like Laksmi in showing her emotional incapacity to bear separation from her husband.

In the Rāmacarīmānas Sitā's mother-in-law, Kausalyā, is the first to voice her opposition to letting her son's delicate wife accompany him to the forest. Her twofold argument is contained within this one verse:
Hearken, my son; Sītā is very delicate, and dear to your father and mother and all the household. 

Kausalyā expands at length on the above saying on the one hand that Sītā is "frightened at the sight of a monkey in a picture" and that on the other hand if she remains at home "she will be my strong support". Having said this, the Queen leaves the whole matter in her son's hands.

In support of his mother's views, Rāma speaks to his wife in a firm tone, adding to his mother's twofold argument the severe warning that the refusal to submit to one's duty eventually leads to all sorts of troubles:

Listen, princess, to my advice, and think no other thoughts than these. If you desire your own good and mine, pay heed to what I say and stay at home. My will (āyasa) is this, that you should serve my mother... There is no other duty (dharma) higher than this—to do reverent service to the feet of your husband's parents... It is for my mother's sake that I leave you here. The reward of submission to the duty (dharma) that both the guru and scripture impose can easily be won; Cālepa and king Nahusa had to endure all sorts of troubles because they were obstinate... If you are stubborn, wife, because you love me so, you will be sorry in the end. Impenetrable are the woods and very fearful; dreadful the heat and cold, the water and the wind... She who is too proud to pay heed to the advice of her guru or her husband, who sincerely wish her well, shall in the end have her fill of remorse, and of a surety her good shall turn to ill. 

Tulsī Dās' insistence on Sītā's duty to stay home and serve her husband's parents contrasts with the Vālmīkian account, where Sītā was advised not to follow her husband mainly because of the dangers of forest dwelling. The difference helps bring out the
cumstances transgress his duty; hence Sītā transgresses no duty by following her husband. For Tulsi Dās, Sītā has a definite duty to stay home; hence, by following her husband, she transgresses her social duty.

In her answer to Rāma, Sītā emphasizes clearly her main reason for persisting in her demand: she would be unable to bear the pain of separation (vivora dukha):

Mother, father, sisters and dear brothers, the loved ones of the family and the circle of friends, the mother and father of her lord, the guru, relatives and helpers, fair sons and noble who bring happiness, nay, all there is of love and kinship, O my husband, is to a wife without her lord a grief that burns even more fiercely than the sun... With you, my husband, all is happiness, if only I behold your face like the pure autumn moon... You have told me, my lord, of the many hardships in the forest; but, O lord of grace (krpā), all these together are nowise to be compared with separation (vivora) from a husband... If you make me stay at Avadh till your return, know well that my life will not endure! 78

In comparison with the previous accounts, the above shows a significant difference. In the Vālmiki Rāmāyan, Sītā's argument hinged on the obligation to abide by the law according to which a wife must not be separated from her husband. The same point headed the list of Sītā's five-fold argument presented in the Audhyālma Rāmā-
yāna. In the Nāmadīrītānāna Sītā's argument emphasizes the pain of separation caused by her love for her husband. She acknowledges her duty as her husband and her mother-in-law have spelled it out.
Yet her love makes separation impossible:

The lord of my life has given me such advice (to stay home) as is the very best for me; but still I think and feel in my heart that there is no sorrow (dukhā) in the world like separation from a husband. 59

Rāma yields to his wife's persistent demand, realizing that if he compels her to stay, she would die. Rather than admonishing her further for her "stubbornness", he consols her with affectionate words:

Grieve no more, but come with me to the forest; this is no time for sorrowing; make haste and prepare for our journey to the woods. 60

Before leaving, Rāma and Sītā pay a farewell visit to King Daśaratha. The latter pleads with Sītā to stay home on the same twofold ground that the dangers of the forest are too great and that she should stay with her parents. Again, Sītā resists, not out of respect for the law of non-separation from her husband, but out of devotion to the feet of Rāma:

But Sītā's soul was devoted to the feet of Rāma; home pleased her not, nor did the forest frighten her. All the rest then warned Sītā with tales of the manifold troubles to be encountered in the woods. The minister's wife and the prudent wife of the guru lovingly and tenderly said, "It was not you whom the king banished to the forest; do what your lord's parents and the guru advise". But Sītā would have none of this cautious advice, well-meant and soft and gentle though it was. 61

The gravity of Sītā's duty to stay with her husband's parents is further brought home by a later episode showing Daśaratha sending Sumantra after the departed trio, instructing him to beg Sītā to come back, or else he would die:
So try every means to bring her back; if she returns, my life will be preserved; if not, the end of the matter will be my death. 62

Upon hearing his father's message from the mouth of Sumantra, Rāma tries further to convince his wife to comply to the King's desperate request. Again Sītā refuses out of love towards Rāma:

My lord's father is the emperor... whose influence extends throughout the fourteen worlds... Such an one have I for a father-in-law, Ayadh for my home, a beloved family and a mother-in-law who is to me a mother. Yet in none of these can I dream of finding happiness apart from the dust of Rāghupati's lotus-feet. 63

From the above, it is clear that in the Rāmacaritānanda Sītā is, like Lakṣman, allowed to follow Rāma in spite of her "highest duty" and because of her love to the Lord. The last member of Rāma's immediate family whose case must now be examined is Bharata. However, as the latter deserves special attention because of the importance Tulsi Dās attached to his dilemma, and because of the particular way in which it highlights the role of Rāma's will, the case of Vībhīsana will first be considered.

Vībhīsana

The case of Vībhīsana is particularly interesting as it shows a subject preferring Rāma to his own sovereign. In the Vīmāli Rāmīvāna, Vībhīsana's
reasoning hinges on a two-fold argument which is neither motivated by his
love for the Lord nor by a desire to bring Rāvana to worship Rāma.

The first argument is that Rāma is both innocent and invincible:

He has subdued his passions and is invincible, yet you seek to defeat him... What error has
the illustrious Rāma ever done to the King of
the Titans that he should go to Janasthana and
bear away the consort of that great one? 64

The second argument is that Rāvana is both perverse and vulnerable:

You (Rāvana's courtiers), the friends of this
monarch (Rāvana) who is dominated by passion,
vicious by nature and whose acts are thoughtless,
flaunt him, as the Delhi ram will... It is for you unitedly to rescue that monarch
from the surging waters of the ocean Rāma. 65

It is on the basis of the above arguments that Vibhịsana opposes
Rāvana, thus prompting the latter to repudiate him.

In the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, Vibhịsana's argument focusses on
Rāma's might against which Rāvana's resistance would be futile. He
explains to his obdurate brother that Rāma's strength is that of
kāla (death) who has become incarnate "for the purpose of re-
moving the load of the earth. Since Rāvana refuses to give
up Sītā, he will surely be destroyed. It is in order to avoid
witnessing the inevitable destruction of Rāvana and the other demons
that Vibhịsana, who was repudiated by his brother for his severe
warnings, goes "to the lotus feet of Râma desirous of serving him with a mind overflowing with devotion..." for the purpose of emancipation (mokṣa)." After addressing Râma as "lover of thy devotees (bhakti)," Vibhishana goes on to declare the well-known verse where devotion (bhakti) is clearly described as but a means leading to knowledge (jnâna). Thus, even though love of God plays a certain role, it is subordinated to knowledge.

We now turn to the Râmâyana. Having been reassured by Hanumâna as to Râma's merciful affection towards all those who sincerely want to become his servants, Vibhishana entreats his brother Râvana, the demon sovereign of Lanka, to give up his evil deeds and worship Râma:

Again and again I touch your feet and beseech you, O ten-headed, have done with pride, delusion and conceit, and worship the King of Kosala! 71

Râvana retorts by accusing Vibhishana of praising the enemy, but Vibhishana insists that the demon king should return Sîtâ to Râma.
Again, Rāvana accuses him of taking the enemy's part, and repudiates him by striking him with a kick! Vibhīsana justifies his brother's violence but confesses his resistance to Rāma:

You have done well to strike me for you are as my father; but still, O King, it were well for you that you should worship Rāma. 72

Having exhausted all means of converting his brother, Vibhīsana complies with the latter's command to leave Lāṅkā, and seeks refuge with Rāma:

Rāma is true to his promise, the mighty Lord, and your court is doomed to death! Now I go to seek refuge with Rāghubīr; let no one blame me. 73

In spite of his entourage's suspicion, Rāma welcomes the demon devotee, praising him for gathering up "all objects of natural affection -- mother, father, brother, son and wife, wealth, home, friends and family -- like strands, and making of them one strong rope to bind his soul to my (Rāma's) feet". 74

Vibhīsana's expulsion, prompted by his love for Rāma, is not basically different from the point already made, namely that in certain cases one's ardent love of God justifies the abandoning of one's social situation in order to follow the Lord more closely. Tulsī Dāsa concludes by praising Rāma who "accepted Vibhīsana as his votary and made him his own, and all the monkeys were delighted with the Lord's loving-kindness". 75
From the above, it is clear that contrary to Vālmīki and the author of the Adhyātma-āmāyah, Pulsi Dās' intention is to show that Viśvāmitra's separation was due above all to the intensity of his love for Rāma.

Bharata

For Vālmīki, Bharata's refusal of the throne is not an act of disobedience to his social duty. On the contrary, since no one but the eldest son can be made a king, Bharata considers it his duty to refuse the throne and bring back his brother from the forest:

Early on the fourteenth day, these wise men came together addressed Bharata, saying:

"Our venerable master, Dhārāratha, has ascended to heaven, after banishing thine elder brother, Rāma, to the forest with the valiant Laksman. From now on do thou be our king, lest some unanticipated hostile attack find the empire without defence."

Then, Bharata, faithful to his duty, having circumambulated the sacred urn, keeping it on his right, said to them all: "It has ever been the tradition in our family, that the throne should belong to the eldest son; therefore, you, who are righteous men, cannot proclaim me king."

Thus, in the Vālmīkian account, Bharata's first reason for refusing to replace Rāma is that it would make of him a usurper of the crown. Moreover, the king's decision to send Rāma into exile is questionable as it is due to a loss of judgment and to the enslavement of passion.
The *Adhyāta Rāmāyana* imitates the *Vālmiki Rāmāyana* in showing that for Bharata nothing, not even his father's command, justifies replacing the older son on the throne:

> that have I to do with the kingdom, o Manu? Rāma is our lord and king.
> We are but his servants. Tomorrow morning we shall go to bring Rāma back forthwith. 79

Upon meeting Rāma in the forest, Bharata begs him in the name of social and domestic duty, to rule the kingdom of Ayodhyā:

> it is the duty of the kṣatriya to protect the people. Having celebrated diverse sacrifices and begotten sons for the continuation of the race and placed thy son on the throne, thou shalt go to the forest. 80

Moreover, Bharata argues that he is not bound by his father's command, for "if overpowered with love and of a foolish disposition, conquered by a woman and bereft of intellect the father says anything, it should not be taken as truth". 81 Rāma retorts that his father was only being true to his word; therefore, his command had to be obeyed. Bharata then vows to live in the forest and serve Rāma during his fourteen year exile.

Vasistha then enters the scene and explains to Bharata that both he (Bharata) and Rāma should follow their father's order, which is but an element in the plan to kill Rāvana. 83 The
argument at last proves convincing and Bharata gladly returns to Ayodhya to serve as regent. Thus, instead of conforming to the personal will of God, Bharata complies with a plan to kill the demons. Instead of returning to Ayodhya prompted by his love of God, he does so after obtaining a deeper knowledge of the situation. It is because ignorance has been discarded that he is now able to overcome the dilemma.

Bharata's dilemma plays a central rôle in the Rāmacaritānanda. It is dealt with at length in the second half of the Ayodhya-kanda.

Immediately after the death of his desperate father, Kaikeyi's son is sent for and told of the scheme to make him his father's successor on the throne of Ayodhya. Contrary to his mother's expectations, Bharata refuses and resolves to convince Rāma to return as king of Ayodhya.

After performing the elaborate cremation rites for his father, Bharata is summoned by the sage Vasistha along with ministers and nobles, to discuss the problem of the royal succession. He is told solemnly, in front of all those present and with their approval, that he should act in obedience to the king's command:

Act in obedience to the king's command (raṣṭram; the king has given you the throne and you must honour your father's word (vācu); the king valued his word, but not his life; honour then, my son, your father's word; obey the king's command, for in obedience is your highest good... It is a Vedic rule ---- that he receives the royal dignities on whom his father confers them.
After hearing Kausalyā's approval of Vasistha's declaration, Bharata replies by first acknowledging his duty to obey:

The advice of a guru, a father, a mother, a master or a friend should be cheerfully followed, as for the best; and to ponder whether it be right or wrong is to fall in duty (dharma) and incur a load of guilt. 85

Nonetheless, because he feels he is the cause of his brother's exile, because he knows his good lies in the service of Rāma, and because he knows that Rāma is more righteous than he is, he determines to leave the following morning to seek the rightful heir and ask him to return to his capital:

My good lies in the service of Rāma, but my mother's crooked dealings have robbed me of this good; yet reflection has shown me that herein and nowhere else can I find happiness...I tell you truly...a monarch must be righteous...and I am the villainous cause of all this trouble and yet I sit here in my right senses to listen to all this talk. 86

Bharata's argument meets with the approval of the assembly, whose appraisal, voiced by the great sage Bharadvāja, is based on the principle that love of Rāma is the superior motivation. Action dictated by tradition is good, Action dictated by love of Rāma is better:

Had you reigned, you would not have been at fault, and Rāma would have been well content to hear of it. Now, Bharata, you have acted very rightly...for devotion to Rāma's feet is the source of all good fortune in the world. 87

This passage brings out clearly the central issue of Bharata's predicament, which does not consist in a conflict between right and wrong. Rather, Bharata must choose between a good (social duty) and a superior good (love of God). It is a question of priority.
After having reached Rāma's hermitage in the forest, Bharata is shown in anxiety over the result of his journey. From this point on, the will (āyasu) of Rāma will be emphasized in a special way. Thus, Bharata thinks that Rāma will certainly return if the guru bids him, "but then the sage will only bid Rāma do what he knows to be his will."

The following morning, the sage Vasiṣṭha reminds Bharata in front of all the Brahmins, nobles, ministers and councillors, that "Brāhma, Hari, Hara, the moon, the sun and the guardians of the quarters, illusion, life, and fate and time in their entirety --- the will of Rāma rules them all." Accordingly, he advises Bharata to keep in mind Rāma's will and pleasure when deciding upon a plan to bring about Rāma's coronation, warning him that "no one can possibly win to success who withstands Rāma."

The following episode shows Bharata and Vasiṣṭha, together with the whole company, in the presence of Rāma. Both Rāma and Vasiṣṭha refuse each other's invitation to take a decision concerning the throne of Ayodhya. Upon Vasiṣṭha's invitation, Bharata first apologizes to Rāma for being through the fault of Kaikeyī the cause of his exile. Rāma reassures his brother, attributing the fault to kāla and not to Kaikeyī, still less to her innocent son. It is significant that the whole situation should be attributed to kāla, which is itself subordinated to Rāma's will.

Thus rehabilitated and realizing that obedience to Rāma's infinite will lies his highest good, Bharata is now ready to submit his request to the Lord:
It is to the interest of all that my Lord should return (to Ayodhya), but to yield to your will is a thousand times better... Listen, divine Lord, to this my one petition, and then do as you think right. I have prepared and brought what is needed for your coronation; if you think proper, Lord, make use of it... O Lord of compassion, do whatever pleases you... By my Lord's feet I swear and affirm in all sincerity, that is the only plan that can bring blessing to the world. If my lord gladly and freely will give each one of us his commands, all will dutifully obey them and all this trouble and misunderstanding will be at an end. 93

The arrival of King Janaka and his followers further delays Rāma's answer and brings more hesitation. Asked to give a decision over the whole matter, the King of Mithilā refuses; whereupon Bharata repeats his entreaty to Rāma that he make his will known. In his request, he admits his folly in annuling Rāma's word and his father's by assembling a host to seek Rāma, but sings the praises of the Lord for his pardon:

Whether it was from grief or affection or childishness that I came hither despite your commands, you in your mercy have reckoned me your friend and taken it all in good part. 94

Yielding to his brother's insistent request, Rāma finally agrees to make his will known. Without condemning Bharata for having, against his will, followed him to the forest, Rāma nevertheless maintains his decision that his father's command be respected;
Obedience to the command of parents, guru or master upholds all righteousness, as Soma upholds the world. Obey, then, this command, and cause me to obey it too, and so, dear brother, be the guardian of the Solar Race. Only obedience lends the aspirant to perfect success.

The above illustrates clearly a fundamental aspect of Tulsi Dwāsa's views on the relation between social duty and love of God. Fidelity to one's social duty is conducive to salvation insofar as it is an expression of Rāma's will which he reveals to his devotees. Before carrying out his father's order, Bharata has made sure that by doing so he would be serving the Lord. Only when communion with Rāma is restored, by the latter's rehabilitating grace, will he be able to accept his duty as provisional regent:

Bharata was greatly comforted, for the kindness of his master had put to flight his pain and sense of guilt. His face was cheerful, his soul no more disconsolate; he seemed like a dumb man to whom Sarasvatī had granted the gift of speech. Again, doing loving obeisance, he folded his lotus hands and said, "Lord, I am as happy as if I were to journey with you; I have reaped the reward of my birth into this world. Now, gracious Lord, whatever be your command, that will I reverently and dutifully obey.

Thus, we may say that whereas in the Vālmīki Rāmāyana the conflict between written duty and unwritten duty (i.e. the king's will) was resolved in favour of the latter, in the Rāmacaritānanda the parallel problem revolves around two different poles: love of God and social duty, priority being given to the former. By means of a delicate substitution, Tulsi Dāsa has been able to introduce love of God as the dominant theme of an Epic which was intended to
promote duty, without however diminishing the dramatic intensity of the original story.

From the above it follows that for Tulsi Dās devotees are expected, in general, to fulfill their normal social and domestic duties. To that extent, we may say that love of God and social duty go hand in hand, and that Tulsi Dās has, as Macfie observed, linked morality and religion:

He has made religious enthusiasm the inspiration of right living...
Devotion to Rāma must produce good men. 97

However, there are cases when love of God releases one from social duties. In other words, if in most cases love of God should be expressed in the fulfillment of one's social duty, in some other exceptional cases it could equally entail the immediate forsaking of such duty as the better way of expressing that same love of God. In both cases, the ultimate criterion of decision can only be Rāma's will.

In the Valmiki Rāmāyana, Bharata was faced with the dilemma of having to decide whether he should conform to his father's morally
doubtful command, or else abide by the written law according to which the eldest son is the rightful heir. In the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, the dilemma is solved by right knowledge: in the Rāmārāṇa, it is solved by loving submission to the will of Rāma.

Tulsi Dās has summed it up admirably by describing Bhurata as "he pattern of devotion (sārūch), who would never even think of thwarting Rāma's will (rājasa)."

By loving Rāma in conformity with his will, the devotee rests assured that he is following the better way. Rāma, who is the quintessence of love and righteousness (the antithesis of Ravana), cannot command what is wrong. Unlike Kṛṣṇa, who is the very teacher, Rāma is first and foremost a leader who has given convincing evidence of his moral integrity in the very exercise of his leadership. Because the devotee knows that Rāma's will is the expression of God's love and righteousness, he gladly conforms to his command in devotion and obedience. Thus, Rāma's will becomes not only the ultimate criterion of decision but also the supreme principle of integration by which the tension between love of God and social duty is dissolved.
From the devotee’s standpoint, however, Rāma’s will remains mysterious, as the Ramcaritmānas keeps reminding its listeners. Although inward detachment from worldly concerns is required of all those who seek salvation, the will of Rāma, like that of Krṣṇa in the Bhagavad Gītā, is that the devotee achieve this inward detachment without ceasing to perform his social and domestic duties. Such is the case of the citizens of Ayodhya, Bharata and Hanumān. But it is also Rāma’s will that concessions be made to certain devotees who out of sincere love and devotion ask deliverance from even the external observance of social and domestic duties in order to follow Him more closely. Such is the case of Sītā, Laksmana and Vibhīṣṇa.

The foregoing of one’s ordinary social and domestic duties is not, therefore, a matter of individual initiative, let alone of selfish caprice; it is a decision the ultimate criterion of which can only be the will of God. Nor is the abandonment of one’s ordinary duties to be interpreted as the abrogation of duty as such. For the devotee is now entrusted with a duty of another level, to serve the Lord through praise and worship.
Conclusion of Part III

The systematic comparison of the Ramāritmānas with the Vālmīki Rāmāyana and the Adhyātma Rāmāyana warrants the conclusion that on the question of the relation between love of God and social duty, Tulsī Dās consciously introduced new dimensions to the Rāmāyanic tradition of North India. While both the Vālmīki Rāmāyana and the Adhyātma Rāmāyana maintained the "middle stream", neither had considered love of God as the predominant "message" of the Rāma Story. Neither had emphasized the tension between love of God and social duty. Neither had justified the desire of certain devotees to forsake social duty out of love for the Lord.

It also follows from the above analysis that the Ramcaritmānas agrees with the Bhagavad Gītā in preferring loving devotion as the easiest way to God, in considering one's appointed duties as a way of conforming to God's will, and in proposing the obligation to fulfill one's social duties as the general rule. However, contrary to the Bhagavad Gītā, the Ramcaritmānas provides justification for the exceptional devotees who, like Tulsī Dās himself, considered spending their whole time in worship and praise of the Lord as a special calling.
On the other hand, Tulsi Dās' closeness to the Puranic views on these same issues can now be affirmed on the basis of several elements common to both the Bhāṣyāṣṭā Purāṇa and the Rāmacaritāmānas. Both consider love of God as the preeminent path leading to salvation. Both hold the view that the mere pursuit of social duty without love of God is meaningless. Both hold that the intensity of one's devotion does not necessarily entail the abolition of one's social and domestic duties. Both consider the will of the Lord as the ultimate criterion of man's actions, with the consequence that one's social duty is to be observed not as an end in itself, but because it is the mysterious will of God. Both consider with admiration certain devotees who, moved by an intense devotion to the Lord, neglect their duty to follow Him. There can be little doubt that in his rifacimento of the Rāmāyana, Tulsi Dās had in mind the Bhāṣyāṣṭā Purāṇa, and that the influence of the latter is reflected in his attempt to integrate love of God and social duty. It may be affirmed, therefore, that Tulsi Dās revived the middle stream by adopting a position better attuned to the temperament of his milieu, a position distinct not only from that of the Vālmiki Rāmāyana but also from that of the Bhāgavat Gītā, both of which in other times and for different purposes had also reaffirmed the middle stream of orthodox theism. The subordination of social duty to love of God had become a part of the Krsnaite doctrine with the spread of the Bhāṣyāṣṭā Purāṇa, and this doctrine had gained acceptance in North India, particularly
under the influence of Vallabha\'carya and S\'r\' D\'as. Although there is no documentary evidence to prove it, it seems likely that the same doctrine had by the sixteenth century become accepted among R\'ama devotees.

It has also been shown, however, that the emergence of love of God as the preeminent salvific path does not entail, in the R\'amcaritm\'anas, any inherent incompatibility with the obligation to perform one's social duties. In fact, most of the subjects of Ayodhya are asked to perform their social duty at the cost of enduring physical separation from R\'ama. Such emphasis on \'astric values, at a time when the influence of antinomanian theism pervaded contemporary cultic trends, can be interpreted as the reaffirmation of the middle stream of orthodox theism. In a context where a growing number of devotees tended to oppose genuine love of God to the traditional paths expounded "in the Vedas and the Pur\'anas", Tulsi D\'as maintains that respect for the traditional is certification that one's love of God is real and not illusory.

Thus, while he disagreed with the exclusivistic views of the "extreme" positions, namely Vedic orthodoxy and antinomanian theism, Tulsi D\'as' marked sympathy for the devotional trends of his time favoured a rapprochement with his antinomanian hearers, and his insistence on the fulfillment of social and domestic duties favoured a similar rapprochement with his orthodox listeners. In this respect, one could, with few alterations, say of Tulsi D\'as what
R.S.D. Sen said of Vālmīki himself:

The old traditions and tales may get a new and up-to-date interpretation at the hands of the epic master, or otherwise undergo some change or modification in his poem as far as details are concerned, but it is the old story told again with greater eloquence, force and refinement than ever being interpreted in the light of contemporary thought. The more the poet forgets himself and loses himself in the life of the nation, the wider will be the circle of his admirers and the more lasting his performance. 99

Until the advent of Tulsī Dās, it seems that no complete version of the Rāmāyana had attempted to apply to the Rāmāyanic tradition his approach to the problem of relating love of God and social duty. The fact that he was able to give enduring expression to such a change of approach without alienating himself from the admirers of the old Epic bears witness to his special aptitude for acclaiming renovation without destroying tradition, for promoting change without sacrificing continuity.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

Among the impressive number of publications on the different religious documents of India, little scholarly attention has been given thus far to the Rāmacaritamānas in spite of its enduring and wide acceptance, particularly in North India. The present thesis is an attempt at fulfilling such a need.

This thesis has sought to demonstrate that in rewriting the Rāmāyana, Tulai ḍāśa had foremost in his mind the important theme of the interaction of love of God and social duty. On the assumption that an awareness of the poet's heritage as a Hindu and the immediate context in which he lived is necessary for a proper understanding of his views, an effort was made to discern within the variegated and complex framework of the tradition a basis for establishing conventional types that might prove helpful in situating his distinctive position. It has been argued that the tradition offered sufficient evidence for the existence of three typical streams with differing emphases. Whereas the "central" stream sought to maintain a balance between the two "poles", namely love of God and social duty, the two "extreme" tendencies tended to emphasize either one or the other of these poles. It has been shown that while all three streams were still very much alive in medieval North India, the antinomian emphasis on love of God, with the accompanying tendency to minimize the
important place traditionally assigned to prescribed social and domestic duties, was a rising trend whose influence was especially noticeable on the masses.

Again on the assumption that religious trends do not live in complete isolation from the socio-political context in which they develop, an attempt was made to describe that context, dominated by Akbar's vision of universality, as another possible source of menace which combined with the antinomian to undermine the tradition. After showing that orthodox milieux responded in a typical way to the situation by intensified commentarial activity on traditional regulations, the thesis has argued that Tulsi Dās chose to reaffirm the middle stream of orthodox theism by reviving the Râmâyana, which had nourished his personal piety since early infancy.

On the basis of a comparative study with the Vālmīki Râmâyana and the Adhyātma Râmâyana, accepted as Tulsi Dās' two most influential Râmâyanic sources, it has been shown that while all three versions maintained the middle position, the predominance accorded to love of God in the Râmcaritmānas constituted a distinctive feature of the latter. As a consequence, it was seen that the Râmcaritmānas is closer not only to the spirit of the Bhagavad Gītā and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, but also to the growing devotional trends of medieval North India, especially among the uneducated masses.
whom Tulsi Das seemed to have particularly in mind when writing his *magnum opus*.

Finally, it was also shown that Tulsi Das, like the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* but unlike his Rāmāyanic sources, explicitly dealt with the tension between love of God and social duty, which was felt as a malaise shared by a rising number of contemporary devotees; that he resolved the tension by proposing the will of God as the ultimate criterion of decision and the supreme principle of integration; that by proposing the will of God as the ultimate criterion of decision he was able both to emphasize the obligation for most devotees to fulfill their social duties as prescribed by tradition and to justify the claim that in certain cases social duties might be forsaken by those who, like Tulsi Das himself, considered spending their entire life in praise and worship of God as a special calling; that by proposing the will of God as the supreme principle of integration he suggested a way of dissolving the tension between love of God and social duty.

It is hoped that the present dissertation will help to throw additional light on the relevance of the *Rāmcaritmānas* as an important "event", both religious and sociological, in the history of the Hindu tradition, particularly in its quest for a better integration of devotion and duty.
It is also hoped that this dissertation will be a contribution to research in the field of comparative religion. The interaction of love of God and social duty is of vital importance to other religious traditions besides Hinduism. For instance, early Christianity had to take dramatic decisions vis-à-vis its Jewish or Roman entourage on the basis of its understanding of the relation between love of God and social duty. Likewise, as early as the third century after the death of Muhammad, tensions had developed between the sufis and the guardians of Muslim orthodoxy, which led to the martyrdom of Hallâj (922 A.D.), accused of having denied the value of the pilgrimage at Mekka in virtue of his doctrine that love of God was an interior experience. The examination of how in such traditions the central position was challenged and reaffirmed would bring into perspective the significance and distinctiveness of the tradition itself, and would provide an interesting basis of comparison between the different traditions.

The Hindu reader — particularly if he is a Râma devotee — who looks upon the Râmcharitmanas as the timeless expression of the essence of the tradition, may look askance at the concern of the present thesis for the distinctiveness and sociological relevance of Tulsî Dâs' magnum opus. It is hoped that he will nevertheless not remain indifferent to the point of view of a Western "outsider", whose approach
both in intent and methodology is perhaps different, but whose appreciation for the Hindu tradition has deepened as a result of his contacts with Tulsi Dās.

It has been recently held that the crisis which confronts Western man today is the result of his excessive fragmentation of law and religion. Among Tulsi Dās' contemporary listeners, many had good reasons to pronounce a similar diagnosis on the society in which they lived. The Ṛgvedic Hāmcaritraṁānas came as a timely reminder that while mysticism must not be stifled as a special calling, a religious tradition also faces disintegration when social duty and love of God are divorced rather than properly integrated.
NOTES

General Introduction

1. Thus, Bharata, who is shown affectionately clearing Rama's feet is described as "overpowered by love (prema)" and promises Rama he will serve him "with sincere devotion (vande)". At the sight of such a touching scene, Rama and the assembly of saints and sages praise his "greatness of devotion (bhagati)". (Ramanaritamah, II. Cauhi 701 - Chapter 12, pp. 283 - 284. The quotations from the Ramanaritamah are taken from W.D. Hill's translation: Holy Loke of the Acts of Rama, London: Oxford University Press, 1971. First published in 1952. Henceforth, this translation will be referred to as Hill's R. Likewise, allusions will be referred to as C.; chandás, as Ch.; dohas, as D.; srethas, as S.; and sklokes as S.) Likewise, after describing Bharata placing on his eyes the dust of Rama's footprints, Tulsi Dasa praises such "exceeding love (priti) which no tongue can tell". (Ibid., II. D. 198, p. 241.) In the same vein, the sage Bharadvaja's love (bhava) and devotion (bhakti) fills all with joy. (Ibid., II. C. 108, p. 205). Finally, the sage Valmiki praises those who "demand but one reward, devotion (rati) to the feet of Rama". (Ibid., II. D. 129, p. 214.)

2. Thus, Rama's mother declares that if she keeps her son from going to the forest "(I) shall not have done (my) duty (dharma)". (Ibid., II. C. 55, p. 184.) Likewise, Dasa orders Laksména to stay at Ayodhya "and regard this as your duty (niti)". (Ibid., II. C. 71, p. 150.) Finally, Rama instructs Laksména about "careful attention to one's own special duty (karan)"; as a method of faith. (Ibid., II. C. 15, p. 305.)
Chapter I


3. This interpretation, shared by such scholars as W.D.P. Hill and R. Allchin, is based on the *Gautamacandrika*, which claims A.D. 1624 as its date of composition.

4. *Vinaya-pātrikā*, 275; see also 227.2.

5. Hill, W.D.P. *op. cit.* There are several saints mentioned in the *Bhakta Māla* bearing the name Narahari. The Rāmānanda referred to above could be the disciple of either Ananta Deva or of his disciple Sri Janga, who are both spiritual descendants of Rāmānanda. But there are other possibilities. See Allchin, F.R. *Kavitāvālī*, pp. 34-35.

6. *H.L.A.R.*, I, śloka 1, p. 2. (Henceforward, ślokas will be referred to as S.)

7. For more information on the *Gautamacandrika*, see infra, pp. 10-12.


14. *H.L.A.:R.*, I, caupai 34, p. 22. (Henceforward caupais will be referred to as C.)


17. *Vinayā-pātra*ka, 35.


19. W.D.P. Hill gives examples of such legends in his introduction to the translation of the *Râmcaritmanás*, p. xi-xiii.


26. According to Growse the *Bhakt-Sindhu* is a poem of no great authority; see introductory notes to his translation of the *Râmcaritmanás*.

27. See F.S. Growse's introduction to his translation of the *Râmcaritmanás*.

28. Quoted by Hill, W.D.P. *op. cit.*, p. x.
PART TWO

Chapter I


2. Ibid.


5. Ibid., p. 339.


7. For instance, Dasgupta, S. op. cit., p. 418.


9. Ibid., II. 27.

10. Ibid., III. 20. IV. 15.

11. Ibid., III. 20.

12. For example: Ibid., II. 10, 54, etc.


22. "The *Harivamsa* clearly cannot be dated later than A.D. 400, and the *Visnu Purana* is so like it in most of its features that it is probable that it belongs to the same general date." (Farquhar, J.N. *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967 (first published in 1920), p. 143.


29. Ibid., x. 29. 23.
30. Ibid., x. 29. 27.
31. Ibid., x. 29. 32-33.
32. Ibid., x. 29 - 42.
33. Ibid., x. 41. 24 - 31.
42. Ibid., p. 30.
43. Ibid., pp. 34 - 37.
45. Ibid., p. 294.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., pp. 160 - 169.
48. Ibid., p. 162.
49. Ibid., p. 184.
50. For instance see Eliot Deutsch's introduction (pp. 3 - 4) to his translation of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

51. Bhagavad Gîtâ, IX. 27.

52. Ibid., XIII. 27.

53. Ibid., XVIII. 55.

54. Ibid., XII. 1.

55. Ibid., XII. 10.

56. Ibid., IV. 13.

57. Ibid., IV. 11.

58. Ibid., XIII. 20.

59. Deutsch, E. op. cit., p. 3.

60. Adhyatma Râmâyana, II. 6. 64 - 86.


68. See Dr. N.K. Devajara's forward to Dr. Benjamin Khan's book, op. cit.


92. *B.P.*, I. 9, 16 - 17.
94. *B.P.*, I. 9, 40.
95. *B.P.*, V. 1, 6.
96. *B.P.*, V. 1, 70.

Chapter Two


5. Majumdar, R.C. "Hindu Muslim Relations", The Delhi Sultanate, vol. 6 of the series The History and Culture of the Indian People, 1960, p. 620.


7. Quoted by Dr. K.M. Munshi in the Forward to The Struggle for Empire, p. xv.

8. Quoted by R.C. Majumdar in "Hindu Muslim Relation", p. 626.

9. For instance, see Majumdar & others, An Advanced History of India, pp. 393 - 415.
10. Majumdar, R.C. "Hindu Muslim Relations", p. 627.
12. Ibid., p. 435.
18. Ibid., p. 70.
19. Ibid., pp. 432 - 437.
23. Ibid., p. 260.
29. Ibid., p. 193.
31. One Hundred Poems of Kabir, poem 65.
33. Adi Granth, Ramkali, 12.
34. Brijak, Ramanī, 62.
37. "I devote myself to and perform the duties which God assigned me". (Adi Granth, Guru 4.)
39. Ibid., p. 152.
42. Tringham, J.S. op. cit., p. 93.
46. (Le mot "Sant") s'applique originellement à l'individu qui a dépassé sa propre individualité et qui a fait l'expérience de l'Être divin, ou de la Réalité suprême. C'est en général un synonyme de sâdhu: "saint". Cependant, dès avant Kabîr le terme avait déjà servi à désigner une école, ou plutôt un groupe particulier de bhakta vaisnava, appartenant à la secte Vârakari (adorateurs de Vitthal) au Mahârâstra, pour désigner le Vitthal sampradaya, c'est-à-dire la secte Vârakari, non que les sectateurs des autres sampradaya en étaient pas sans — mais ceux-ci sont les Sant par excellence. Deux d'entre eux, Gyandev et Namdev, sont mentionnés par Kabîr comme des ancêtres. À leur suite, le terme fut appliqué à Kabîr et à leurs successeurs, qui leur ressemblaient sur plusieurs points. Vaudeville, C. Kabîr Granthavali (Doha), Pondicherry: Institut d'Indologie français, 1957, p. xiv.


48. Sûrâshkâr, Chapter I, pada 225. All quotations from the Sûrâshkâr are taken from Pandey & Zide's translation.

50. Sūrḍās, 87.


55. *Ibid.*, 72.


63. See Mr Sītā Ramā's response to Mr. Farquhar's article on the historical position of Rāmānanda, J.R.A.S., LII, p. 239-241.
61. Shastri, R.N., op. cit., p. 239.

65. Ibid., pp. 236-237.


68. Raneade, R.D. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 100.


70. For this question, I have relied mostly on Mr. J.N. Parquhar's article "The Historical Position of Ramananda", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, LII, 1920.

71. See Parquhar's rejoinder to Mr. Sita Ram's reply, in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1922, pp. 376 - 378.


74. Ibid., p. 349.

75. Allchin, F.R. Kavitāvali, p. 49.


78. Dehavali, 554, quoted by Allchin, F.R. Kavivāli, p. 49.

79. Ibid., 55, quoted by Allchin, F.R. Kavivāli, p. 49.
Chapter Three

1. According to Bhandarkar, the first clear evidence of a Rāma-cult is found in a biographical note on Madhva who is represented as having brought, about the year 1264 A.D., the image of Digvijaya Rāma from Bararikāśrama, and having sent Naraḥaritirtha to Jagannātha. From the above Bhandarkar concludes that the cult of Rāma must have come into existence about the eleventh century. (Bhandarkar, R.G., op. cit., pp. 46–48.)

Dr. Kamīl Rulkey sees in the Samhitās and the Purāṇas, attributed to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, the principal witnesses of the process which led to the cult of Rāma. These works, which were composed between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries, are: the Agastya Samhitā, the Kaliraghava Samhitā, the Vṛhadāghava Samhitā, and the Rāghaviya Samhitā; the Rāmapurva tāpanīya Upanisad, the Rāmottara tāpanīya Upanisad, and the Rāmarahasyopanisad. The Rāmapurva tāpanīya Upanisad, whose theological conception is reflected in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, refers to the cult of which Rāma is the object as the incarnation of Brahman:

The Brahman, spiritual, without a second,  
Without parts and without a body,  
Will nevertheless in its diverse manifestations  
Be considered as the object of a cult.

Deussen, P. Sechzig Upanishads des Veda,  
(The translation from the German is mine.)


4. Ibid., I. 1. 36–37.
6. Ibid., III. C. 5, p. 298.
7. This episode will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter.
8. Ibid., VI. Ch. 37, p. 430.
9. Ibid., III. C. 4, p. 298.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., V. C. 7 - D. 7, p. 342.
15. For instance, Ibid., V. C. 15 - C. 1, pp. 345 - 347.
16. Ibid., V. C. 24, p. 349.
17. Ibid., IV. C. 23, p. 335.
18. Ibid., V. C. 1, p. 339.
20. Ibid., V. C. 32 - C. 33, p. 353.
21. Ibid., VII. C. 2, p. 432.
PART THREE

Chapter One


2. Vaudeville, C. Étude sur les sources et la composition du Râmâyana de Tulsî dâs, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1935. Among the recent studies in the West, this work is the most thorough on the subject.


6. Ibid., p. xix.

7. See above Part II. 2.


11. Ibid., VII. 8. 19.

12. Ibid., I. 1. 91.

13. Ibid., VII. 5. 9.

14. Ibid., VI. 3. 31. The passage VII. 3. 33, where bhakti is identified with jñâna, is an exception.

15. Ibid., VII. 7. 67.

16. Ibid., VII. 5. 9.
17. Ibid., I. I. 111.

18. Ibid., III. 4. 51.


23. Ibid., I. D. 54 - D. 125, pp. 32 - 62.


33. Ibid., I. C. 65 - C. 122, pp. 36 - 60.

34. Ibid., I. C. 122 - C. 184, pp. 60 - 85.

35. The story of Jaya and Vijaya is found in B.P. III. 15 - 16; the story of Jolandhara in Padma Purāṇa, quoted by C. Vaudeville in Etude, p. 64; the story of Nārada, in Śiva Purāṇa, II. 2. 2-3; the story of Manu and Batarāṇa, in B.P. X. 3. 39 - 45; the origin of the story of Pratāpabhūtī is uncertain; see Vaudeville, C. Etude, p. 78.
45. A.R. I. 2. 7.
46. H.L.A.R. I. Ch. 190, p. 88; V.R. I. Ch. 18, p. 45.
50. For instance, H.L.A.R. I. D. 192, p. 89; D. 193, p. 91; D. 199, p.
    p. 92; D. 205, etc.
52. See Vaudeville, C. Étude, p. 104.
53. Ibid., pp. 107 - 114.
54. Ibid., pp. 115 - 116.
55. Ibid., pp. 119 - 126.
58. B.P., X. 41. 
59. Ibid.


61. B.P., X. 43. 17.


74. H.L.A.R., II. Ch. 4, pp. 296 - 297.


87. A.R., IV. 8. 8-52.
92. V.R., V. 1. 11.
98. Ibid., p. 223 ff.
99. These include V.R., VI. 25-34, 40, 45, 47-58, 64, 66, 69, 70, 75-79, 81, 84, 97-99, 100. vol. III passim.


107. B.P., X. 63. 34 - 36.


111. Ibid., VI. C. 91, p. 411.

112. Ibid., VI. C. 94, p. 412.

113. Ibid., VI. Ch. 37, p. 430.

114. Ibid., VII. C. 19 - D. 19, p. 442.

115. Ibid., VII. C. 30 - C. 34, pp. 449 - 450.

116. Ibid., VII. C. 35 - C. 40, pp. 450 - 452.

117. Ibid., VII. C. 46 - D. 49, p. 455.

118. Ibid., VII. 49, p. 456.
Chapter Two

1. These include the bruti and the smrti.
8. Ibid., I. C. 7; p. 4.
10. Ibid., I. C. 10, p. 8.
12. Ibid., I. C. 12, p. 10.
13. Ibid., I. C. 13 - D. 14, p. 11.
15. Ibid., I. C. 183, p. 85.
17. Ibid., VI. D. 100; p. 478.
18. Ibid., VI. C. 31, p. 380.
22. Ibid., II. C. 170, p. 230.
29. Ibid., VII. C. 19 ff., pp. 437 ff.
32. Ibid., I. C. 223, p. 103.
33. Ibid.; see also, I. C. 234, p. 107; I. C. 235, p. 108 etc.
34. Ibid., I. C. 283; see also: I. C. 299, p. 133.
35. Ibid., I. C. 320.
37. Ibid., II. 16; III. 2. 35; III. 10. 21; IV. 1. 76 etc.
38. Ibid., I. C. 257, p. 316.
39. Ibid., II. C. 11, p. 166.
40. Ibid.
41. A.R., II. 2. 44 - 46.


62. For example; *U.I.A.R.*, I. D. 295, p. 130; C. 303, pp. 134 - 135; C. 34, p. 148, etc.

64. Ibid., VII, c. 97 - 98, pp. 477 - 478.
65. Ibid., XI, c. 31, p. 317.
66. Ibid., VII, c. 84, p. 471.
70. Ibid.; I, n. 192, p. 69; C. 181, p. 160.
71. Ibid.; II, c. 147, p. 221; II, c. 167, p. 229; III, c. 31, p.
317; IV, c. 17, p. 352; V, c. 44, p. 358; VI, c. 45, p. 367.
72. Ibid.; I, c. 7.
73. Ibid.; VII, c. 122, p. 497.
74. Ibid.; III, c. 15, p. 305.
75. Ibid.; I, c. 123, p. 51; D. 174, p. 81; C. 165, pp. 77 - 78.
76. On the gravity of the slaying of a Brahmin see A.R., II, 7.
which corresponds to H.H.A.R., I, c. 167, p. 229.
77. V.R., I, 74, vol. 1, p. 147.
78. Ibid., p. 147 - 150.
81. Ibid.; I, c. 300; p. 134; II, c. 172, p. 231.
82. Ibid.; I, c. 278, p. 274; VII, c. 96 - C. 97, pp. 476
477.
83. Ibid.; III, c. 31, p. 317.
84. Ibid.; VII, D., 1 - 76.
99. Nanu smriti, I - IV.
106. *Ibid.* I, C. 183, p. 237; this episode is not found in the
      V.R. or the A.R.
107. Ibid., ii. c. 251, p. 114.
108. V. R., ii. 10, p. 212.
110. II., A.R., ii. c. 41, p. 178.
111. Ibid., ii. c. 53, p. 103.
112. Ibid., I. c. 304, p. 135.
113. Ibid., J. C. 61, p. 189.
114. Ibid., I. C. 202, p. 94.
115. Ibid., I. C. 202 - C. 204, p. 94.
117. Ibid., I. C. 203, p. 94.
118. Ibid., I. I. c. 17, p. 305; this detail is not mentioned in the corresponding passage of the A.R., III. 4, 48ff.
which deals with the nine means of devotion.
119. Ibid., I. C. 94, p. 94; C. 305, p. 135; II. C. 10, p. 166.
120. Ibid., I. C. 223, p. 103.
121. Ibid., C. 196, p. 91; C. 223, p. 103; II. C. 70, p. 190;
C. 71, p. 290, etc.
122. Ibid., VI. C. 61, p. 394; see also II. C. 42, p. 178;
C. 200, p. 242.
123. Ibid., IV. C. 13, p. 330.
124. Ibid., I. I. c. 4, p. 298.
125. Ibid.,
127. Ibid., III. C. 4, p. 298.


132. *Ibid.* L. D. 291, p. 92; II. c. 52, p. 183; c. 60, p. 189; c. 245, p. 260, etc.


145. This will be discussed in the section of this chapter dealing with the guru.


150. ibid., J. C. 206, p. 95.
151. ibid., II. C. 182, p. 234.
152. ibid., VII. C. 117, p. 494.
153. ibid., I. S. 1, p. 2.
154. ibid., I. C. 1, p. 2.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid., I. S. 10, p. 1.
158. Ibid., I. C. 163, p. 84; VII. 38, p. 451; C. 104, p. 481.
159. Ibid., I. C. 147, p. 221; VII. D. 99, p. 477.
160. Ibid., I. S. 11, p. 22.
161. Ibid., I. C. 202, p. 224.
162. Ibid., I. D. 45, p. 28; C. 183; p. 87; C. 234, p. 107; D. 293, p. 139; II. C. 3, p. 163; VII. C. 3, p. 433.
163. Ibid., I. C. 188, p. 87; C. 206, p. 95; D. 286, p. 127; II. D. 70, p. 190.
164. Ibid., II. 3. 151, p. 223.
165. Ibid., I. C. 396; II. C. 184; p. 235; C. 259, p. 266; C. 268, p. 270; C. 291, p. 279, etc.
166. Ibid., I. C. 356, p. 160.
167. Ibid., C. 191, p. 89.
169. Ibid., I. C. 291, p. 130; II. C. 9, p. 165; C. 250, p. 266, etc.
171. Ibid., II. C. 278, p. 274.
172. Ibid., I. C. 183, p. 87.
175. II., A.R., I. C. 251, p. 114.
177. A.R., I. 6, 23.
178. II., A.R., II. C. 9, p. 165.
179. Ibid., II. D. 169, p. 230.
182. Ibid., II. C. 248, p. 262.
183. Ibid., II. C. 757, p. 266.
184. Ibid.
185. Ibid., I. C. 224, p. 103.
186. Ibid., I. C. 235, p. 108.
187. Ibid., II. D. 6, p. 164.
189. A.R., II. 2. 1 - 16.
191. Ibid., II. C. 322, p. 292.
192. ibid.; VI. C. 71, p. 399; C. 97, p. 412; D. 100, p. 417;
    C. 106, p. 421, etc.
194. ibid.; III. C. 2, p. 325.
196. ibid.; II. C. 777, p. 251.
197. ibid.; II. C. 185, p. 236.
198. ibid.; VI. C. 105, p. 420.
199. ibid.; VI. C. 107, pp. 421-422.
200. ibid.; VII. C. 26, p. 446.
201. ibid.; I. C. 246, p. 112; II. C. 40, p. 176.
202. ibid.; I. C. 241, p. 130.
204. ibid.; II. C. 257, p. 266.
206. ibid.; VI. B. 30, p. 384.
207. ibid.; VI. C. 38, p. 384.
208. ibid.; I. B. 286, p. 127.
211. ibid.; I. C. 179, p. 75.
212. ibid.; I. B. 193, p. 89.
213. ibid.; I. B. 303, p. 136.
214. ibid.; I. C. 9, p. 165.
215. Ibid., H. C. 80, p. 194.
216. Ibid., V. I. 411, p. 453.
217. Ibid., I. C. 297, p. 133.
219. Ibid., C. 344, p. 156.
220. Ibid., C. 216, p. 277.
221. Ibid., H. I. 305, p. 285.
222. Ibid., D. 305, p. 286.
223. Ibid., V. I. 4, p. 435.
224. Ibid., I. E. 410, p. 158.
226. V. R., IV, p. 61 - 63.
228. V. R., I, 10, p. 47.
235. These paragraphs will be discussed at length in the last chapter of this thesis.
236. Ibid., II, C. 84, p. 195.


244. Ibid., VII. C. 16, p. 442.

245. Ibid., VII. C. 45, p. 454.

246. Ibid., III. Ch. 4, p. 297.
Chapter Three


6. There are a number of passages where Tulsī Dās explicitly says that *rāma transcendens viṣṇu*; e.g., I. C. 146, pp. 69 - 70; J.C. 217, p. 101; II. C. 241, p. 259, etc.


10. V.R., II


16. Out of 76 such passages in the *Rāla kānda*, 23 are devoted to all these combined. The proportion is about the same in the other kāndas.
17. There are 21 such passages out of 76 in the Bāla kānda.
18. There are 26 such passages out of 76 in the Bāla kānda.
19. There are 6 such passages out of 76 in the Bāla kānda.
20. Part II. 1.
22. Ibid., I. D. 3, p. 4.
23. Ibid., I. C. 8 - C. 9, pp. 7 - 8.
24. Ibid., I. C. 13, p. 10.
26. Ibid., I. C. 81, p. 42.
27. Ibid., I. C. 104, p. 53.
28. Ibid., I. C. 122 - C. 184, pp. 60 - 85.
29. Ibid., I. C. 124, p. 61.
30. Ibid., C. 140, pp. 67 - 68.
32. H.L.A.R., I. C. 176, p. 82.
33. A.R., I. 6. 57; II. 2. 23; II. 5. 27; IV. 1. 15; IV. 6. 56;
      VI. 15. 7, 49, etc.
34. H.L.A.R., I. D. 121, p. 60.
35. Ibid., VII. C. 30 - end.
36. Ibid., VII. C. 34 - 41.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., VII. C. 40 - D. 42.
39. Ibid., VII. C. 41 - C. 45, pp. 453 - 454.
40. Ibid., VII. C. 46 - C. 47, p. 455.
41. Ibid., VII. C. 49, p. 456.
42. Ibid., VII. C. 53 - end.
43. Ibid., VII. D. 72, p. 465.
44. Ibid., VII. D. 78, p. 466.
45. Ibid., VII. C. 77, p. 468.
46. Ibid., VII. C. 81, p. 469.
47. Ibid., VII. C. 82, p. 470.
48. Ibid., VII. C. 84, p. 471.
49. Ibid., VII. D. 96 - D. 104, pp. 476 - 480.
50. Ibid., C. 101, - p. 480.
51. Ibid., VII. C. 105, p. 484.
52. Ibid., VII. C. 108, p. 487.
53. Ibid., VII. C. 117, p. 494.
55. Ibid., I. C. 231, p. 106.
57. Ibid., I. C. 275, p. 273.
59. Ibid., III. Ch. 4, pp. 296 - 297.
60. Ibid., III. C. 41, p. 322.
61. Ibid., III. C. 44, p. 323.
63. See note 109, Part III. 1.
65. See note 111, Part III. 1.
70. H.L.A.R., I. C. 204, p. 95.
73. Ibid.
76. Ibid., II. C. 87, p. 197; see also II. C. 275, p. 273.
80. Ibid., II. C. 137 ff., pp. 217 ff.
83. Ibid., D. 20, p. 309.
84. A.R., III. 5. 60.
86. Ibid., III. C. 26, p. 313.
88. A.R., III. 6. 36.
91. A.R., IV. 2. 64 ff.
96. Ibid., VI. C. 40, p. 386.
97. Ibid., VI. C. 42, p. 386.
98. Ibid., C. 56, p. 392.
100. A.R., I. 5. 43 - 58.
104. A.R., II. 6. 52 - 60.
110b A.R., VI. 16, 18 - 19.
115. Ibid.
120. A.R., I: 6, 35.
123. A.R., I. 6, 43.
128. Ibid., II. C. 110 - C. 116, pp. 207 - 209.
129. Ibid., II. C. 132 - C. 134, p. 215.
130. Ibid., II. C. 135, p. 216.
131. Ibid., III. C. 9, p. 301.
133. A.R., II. 7. 16 - 51.
135. Ibid.
138. Ibid.
140. Ibid., XII. 1 - 8.

142. Except perhaps for one passage inspired from the Bhâgavata Purâna, where the on-looking damsels of Mithilâ are shown gathered at the lattice-windows to gaze "with passion" on Râma's graceful form, (H.L.A.R., I. C. 217, p. 101.)

144. A.R., III. 7. 45 - 46.
Chapter Four

1. For instance, upon learning from Rāma that he must go to the forest, his mother Kausalya contradicts her husband by commanding her son to remain home. However, she does give her consent immediately after hearing her son's long exposition on right knowledge, which suggests that her first reaction was much more due to ignorance than to genuine love. (A.R., I. 4. 12)


3. Ibid., I. C. 301, p. 134; VII. C. 114, p. 428.


6. Ibid., II. D. 111, p. 207.

7. A.R., VI. 14. 5; Aṅgad is not mentioned in the corresponding passage of the Vālmiki Rāmāvya.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., VII. C. 17, p. 442.

12. This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Others, such as Janaka and especially Dārāratha, would be other obvious examples of this tension, but as they have been dealt with previously, they will not be reconsidered in this chapter.


21. We have already seen that Rama was still considered as a human hero when Canto 11, which we are now considering, was written.

22. Ibid., II. 41, vol. I, p. 266.


26. Ibid.


30. A.R., II. 5. 4 - 5.

31. Ibid., II. 5. 20.

32. Ibid., II. 5. 21 - 22.

33. Ibid., II. 5. 24.

34. Ibid., II. 5. 28.
35. Ibid., II. 5. 29.
36. Ibid., II. 5. 20.
38. Ibid., pp. 195 - 196.
39. Ibid., c. 85, p. 196.
40. Ibid., c. 114, p. 209.
41. Ibid., c. 131, p. 214.
42. Ibid., D. 185, p. 236.
44. A.R., II. 4. 51.
45. Ibid., II. 4. 18.
46. Ibid., II. 4. 2.
47. H.L.A.R., c. 70, p. 190.
48. Ibid., D. 70 - C. 72, pp. 190 - 191.
49. Ibid., D. 71 - C. 72, p. 191.
53. Ibid., II. 4. 78.
54. Ibid.
57. See note 37 above.
58. H.L.A.R., II. C. 65 - D. 66, p. 188.
59. Ibid., II. c. 64, p. 183.
60. Ibid., C. 63, p. 189.
61. Ibid., C. 78 - D. 78, p. 193.
63. Ibid., C. 88, p. 201.
64. V.R., VI. 9, vol. III, p. 22.
66. A.R., VI. 2. 35.
67. Ibid., VI. 2. 73.
68. Ibid., VI. 2. 46.
69. Ibid., VI. 3. 6.
70. Ibid., VI. 3. 11.
71. II. A. A.R., V. II. 39, p. 357.
72. Ibid., C. 41, p. 357.
73. Ibid., V. D. 41, p. 357.
74. Ibid., V. C. 48, p. 360.
75. Ibid., V. C. 50, p. 361.
79. A.R., II. 8. 5 - 6.
80. Ibid., II. 8. 23 - 24.
81. Ibid., II. 8. 33.
82. Ibid., II. 8. 39.
83. Ibid., II. 8. 43 - 47.
84. _R.J.A.R._, II. C. 175, p. 222.
87. _Ibid._, II. B. 207, p. 245.
88. _Ibid._, II. C. 203, p. 264.
89. _Ibid._, II. C. 254, p. 264.
90. _Ibid._, II. C. 256, p. 265.
91. _Ibid._, II. C. 254, p. 264.
92. _Ibid._, II. C. 266, p. 269.
94. _Ibid._, II. C. 260, p. 283.

**General Conclusion**

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