

Legal Symbolism and Divine Justice: An Analysis of Law via Sunderkand

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, the Sunderkand, a pivotal chapter in Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas, is seen as a devotional work that praises the bravery and devotion of Lord Hanuman. A closer look, however, demonstrates the profound connections between the fundamental tenets of human-made legal systems and the concepts of divine justice put out in Sunderkand. The symbolic legal themes found in Sunderkand, including justice, duty (dharma), truth, loyalty, and retribution, are examined in this essay along

KEYWORDS

Sunderkand, Doha, Chaupai, Dharma, Justice etc.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, there has been a complicated relationship between religion and law, particularly in India, where legal philosophy was influenced by ancient epics and texts. Despite its devotional tone, the Sunderkand contains stories that illustrate important moral and legal lessons. This essay investigates the ways in which Sunderkand's ideas align with conceptions of natural law, morality, and constitutionalism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research Based on doctrinal legal research and hermeneutic examination of religious texts, this study employs a qualitative and interpretative methodology. In order to investigate the Sunderkand's symbolic representations of justice, obligation (dharma), and moral order in connection to legal concepts, the study mainly entails a textual examination of this important canto from the Ramcharitmanas. Important incidents like Hanuman's devotion, Sita's trial, and the encounter with Ravana are examined for their underlying legal concepts through contextual reading and interpretive discussion. To illustrate the similarities between divine justice and human law, comparative references are used from both contemporary legal theories and ancient Indian jurisprudence, such as the Manusmriti and Arthashastra. In order to bolster the interpretive framework, secondary sources such as academic publications, commentaries, and Hindu legal traditions are also examined. The researcher might investigate the ways in which mythological stories impact Indian society's legal consciousness and the moral underpinnings of the law.

RESEARCH SCOPE

Sunderkand tells the story of Lord Hanuman's hunt for Sita in Lanka, his encounter with Ravana's army, and his eventual return to Rama. Unwavering devotion, bravery, loyalty, justice, and righteousness (dharma) are among the main themes. Sunderkand is a that part of Ramcharitmanas in which various offences and general exception are explain those were defined later in Indian Penal Code 1860 and also explained in updated Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023. Sunderkand also explained the duty of diplomatic agent and about previleges too. Sustainable development theory concept are also merged in Sunderkand.

SUNDERKAND'S LAW SYMBOLISM

1. Dharma and Justice

The perfect example of a servant of justice is Hanuman, who acts to uphold righteousness and truth rather than for his own benefit. His behavior is similar to that of a state actor or a law enforcement official working in accordance with the morals of the constitution.

2. The Right to Truth and Information

The goal of Seeking Hanuman is basically to gather information. His ability to enter Sri Lanka and traverse the seas without hurting innocent people is a reflection of the proportionality principle in law enforcement.

3. Tyranny vs the Rule of Law

Tyranny and lawlessness are symbolized by Ravana, the unjust ruler of Lanka. In contrast to the principles of a just society, his administration is marked by arbitrary detention (of Sita), abuse of power, and a lack of moral compass. Ravana was the follower of survival is the fittest maxaim. He abduct ma sita by cheating in the absence of Shri Ram from Panchwati. He was the king of lanka and the laws and morals were applicable for prajajan but for himself the laws.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Natural justice, the rule of law, and obligations in addition to rights are all emphasized in Indian legal doctrine. In Sunderkand, these are mirrored:

- **Natural Law Theory:** The foundation of both Sunderkand and classical natural law theory is the notion that there is a moral order that supersedes rules created by humans. Sunderkand explains various natural justice principle tit for tat in doha no. "Jin mohi mara tai me maare" and also explains private defence principle which is explained in bhartiya nyaya sanhita 2023.
- **Constitutional Duties:** Article 51A of the Indian Constitution's Fundamental Duties are reflected in Hanuman's unwavering observance of his duty. During Sunderkand Shri Ram give

the message of Environment Protection & Sustainable Development under which Shri Ram does not use weapon to cross Samudra (Ocean) and made Ramsetu for crossing ocean.

• **Proportionality and Justice:** Hanuman upholds the idea of proportional justice by solely destroying that which is wrong, protecting the innocent while facing the guilty. In Darbar of Ravan Hanuman holds to ravan justice is not given to watching faces, Justice is Justice, if a king of any country is thief than he is not able to give punishment to any offender.

SIGNIFICANCE IN PRESENT-DAY LEGAL THEORY

The lesson learned from Sunderkand—that truth and righteousness must come first—is particularly pertinent in a time of complicated proceduralism and legal formality. It reminds legal practitioners that the law is an instrument for justice, not oppression, and advocates for a moral and humanitarian interpretation of the law. We can see the impact of Sunderkand in our Constitution, Criminal Laws, Environment Laws, Humanitarian Laws, International Laws, Refugee laws etc.

(a) Criminal Laws

As well as we all know that the Indian government replaced three criminal laws in 2023 and enforced in July 2024. Indian Penal Code 1860 replaced with Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Criminal Procedure Code 1973 replaced with Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and Indian Evidence Act 1872 replaced with Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023.

(1) **Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023** :- During Ramayan Period there non codified criminal laws were existed. In Sunderkand whenever Hanuman Came to darbar of lannka following allegations & offence were imposed upon hanuman:-

(I) Allegation first is related to Doha 3,4,17,18 & 19 Chaupai of Sunderkand that, Hanuman caused injury to army ashok vatika and also fracture or dislocated of a bone or tooth which is a offence accepted Under Section 115 & 117 as Hurt & Greivous Hurt of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

मुठिका एक महा कपि हनी। रुधिर बमत धरनीं ढनमनी।।

(II) Allegation Second is related to Doha 3,4 & 5 Chaupai of Sunderkand that, Hanuman entered in Lanka with the intention to commit offence in night without permission of Owner of Lanka which is a offence accepted Under Section 333 as House Trespass of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

(III) Allegation Third is related to Doha 17,18 & 19 Chaupai of Sunderkand that, Hanuman destroyed ashok vatika of lanka which is a offence accepted Under Section 324 as Mischief of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

**खाएसि फल अरु बिटप उपारे। रच्छक मर्दि मर्दि महि डारे।।
अति बिसाल तरु एक उपारा। बिरथ कीन्ह लंकेस कुमारा।।**

(IV) Allegation fourth is related to Doha 17, 18 & 19 Chaupai of Sunderkand that, Hanuman killed to Akshay Kumar which is a offence accepted Under Section 103 as Murder of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

**दो0-कछु मारेसि कछु मर्देसि कछु मिलएसि धरि धूरि।
कछु पुनि जाइ पुकारे प्रभु मर्कट बल भूरि।।**

(V) Allegation fifth is related to Doha 17,18 & 19 Chaupai of Sunderkand that, Hanuman punched to Indrajeet and others by which indrajeet & others become unconcious which is a offence accepted Under Section 109 as Attempt to Murder of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

**सब रजनीचर कपि संघारे। गए पुकारत कछु अधमारे।।
मुठिका मारि चढ़ा तरु जाई। ताहि एक छन मुरुछा आई।।**

Upon above allegation Hanuman take the following defence which can be in Bhartiya Nyaya sanhita 2023 as follows:-

(I) Hanuman Says in doha no. 21 of sunderkand ramcharitmanas that I am doing work of my owner and also diplomatic agent of my owner thats why my act is under the act of vicarious liability which is a defence Under chapter III of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

मोहि न कछु बाँधे कइ लाजा। कीन्ह चहउँ निज प्रभु कर काजा।।

(II) Hanuman Says in chaupai between doha no. 21 to 22 of sunderkand ramcharitmanas I was hungry by which i ate fruits of vatika, to eat fruits is necessity of my body it is not a offence because dharma says Hungers right is first i which explained under chapter III of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 as act of necessity.

खायउँ फल प्रभु लागी भूँखा। कपि सुभाव तें तोरेउँ रूखा।।

(III) Hanuman Says in chaupai between doha no. 21 to 22 of sunderkand ramcharitmanas that i had not attempted to anyone those people try to injured to me i only injured to them which is done in private defence of myself which explained under chapter III of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 as act of private under section 34,35 & 38.

जिन्ह मोहि मारा ते में मारे। तेहि पर बाँधेउ तनयँ तुम्हारे।।

(2) **Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023:-** Sunderkand is a best part of ramcharitmanas which explains the criminal justice system of lanka. Ravan ruled as king of lanka and supreme authority of justice there were mantri in his darbar those assist to ravan in the system of court. Vibhisan, Indrajeet, and prahasta are the authority to coordinate in him. In the Darbar of lanka Ravan Asked from ministry of lanka what kind of offence committed by Hanuman and than ministry of judicial system hold that hanuman committed Hurt, Greivous Hurt, Mischief, Murder, & Attempt to murder offences. which there are provisions regarding charge sheet which explained under section 193 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

कह लंकेस कवन तें कीसा। केहिं के बल घालेहि बन खीसा।।

की धौं श्रवन सुनेहि नहिं मोही। देखउँ अति असंक सठ तोही।।

मारे निसिचर केहिं अपराधा। कहु सठ तोहि न प्रान कइ बाधा।।

It is also shows from Sunderkand that Jambu Maali reported to Ravana that a Monkey detroyed Ashok Vatika and injured or murdered to soldiers of vatika which shows that First Information Report related provisions were existed which also mentioned under section 173 of Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023.

चलेउ नाइ सिरु पैठेउ बागा। फल खाएसि तरु तोरें लागा।।

रहे तहाँ बहु भट रखवारे। कछु मारेसि कछु जाइ पुकारे।।

नाथ एक आवा कपि भारी। तेहिं असोक बाटिका उजारी।।

खाएसि फल अरु बिटप उपारे। रच्छक मर्दि मर्दि महि डारे।।

(3) **Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023:-** Sakshya word used in several time in our ved, purana, Veadang are the mejour sources of laws. Each dynasty had their own rules and regulations by

which they provide justice. Smriti and shruti are also the grand norms plays an important role to maintain law and order. Dynasties have their court system in which mostly king plays the role of judge and rajguru plays the role of Advocate or explainer of dynasties law. Senapati and Mantri were in role of govt advocate and police. King decide the cases through evidence which also called Sakdshya. Mostly there was evidence in oral form and shruti , smriti, veda, vedang, puranas were in the form of presumptions. In Sunderkand the allegation those were charged upon Hanuman were based on oral evidence of Jambu Maali, Indrajeet and others.

(b) International Law

Our Ved, Puran & Mahakavya's are the meyor source of Indian laws. Sunderkand also explains international laws concepts. It explains about privileges of diplomatic agents. In Darbar of Ravan Ministry of Ravan told that act of Diplomatic Agent is not act of himself it act of his owner, if any offence is committing Rajdoot than dharma say he will not be Punished any Stiuation. But in case Hanuman Ravan was not satisfied with the principle he told that the act of hanuman is not excusable and he decided that to burn the tail of hanuman as punishment. In other side when a Diplomatic Agent came to in front of Luxman he released Suk without any kind of torture by following dharma. We can see the principles of Diplomatic agents are following in International level.

Policy of Ravan Darbar is Diplomacy Relations

नाइ सीस करि बिनय बहु ता। नीति बिरोध न मारिअ दूता।।

Policy of Ram Dynasty regarding Diplomacy Relations

रिपु के दूत कपिन्ह तब जाने। सकल बाँधि कपीस पहिं आने।।
सुनि लछिमन सब निकट बोलाए। दया लागि हँसि तुरत छोडाए।।
तुरत नाइ लछिमन पद माथा। चले दूत बरनत गुन गाथा।।

(c) Environmental laws

In Indian culture the importance of tree is equal to god. In Ramcharitmanas Tulsidas ji told that,

क्षिति, जल, पावक, गगन, समीरा। पंच रचित इति अधम शरीरा।।,

Means body of human being is made with five element to which we called Environment. If any element of body will be misbalanced it will cause decease to human body just like same

will be happened with environment too. To save the nature of future generations it is necessary that development should not be done to decrease the environment. In Sunderkand there is message and best example regarding sustainable development & environment protection In Doha & Chaupai 50,51, 58,59, 60. Shri Ram was a powerful man who had weapon by which he may drought ocean but he knows that in his personal interest he can use that weapon, He built a dam which called Ramsetu for saving ocean, fishes, and other animals with the help of Nal, Neel & Vanarsena.

कह लंकेश सुनहु रघुनायक। कोटि सिन्धु सोशक तव सायक।।
जदपि तदपि नीति अस गाइ। विनय करी सागर संग जाई।।
विनय न मानत जलधि जड़ गए तीन दिन बीत।
बोले राम सकोप तब भय बिनु होइ न प्रीत।।
अस कहि रघुपति चाप चढ़ावा। यह मत लक्ष्मण के मन भावा।।
मकर उरग झस गण अकुलाने। जरत जंतु जलनिधि जब जाने ।।
कनक थार भरी मनि गन नाना। विप्र रूप आयौ तजि माना।।
सभय सिन्धु गहि पद प्रभु केरे। छमहु नाथ सब अवगुण मेरे।।
गगन समीर अनल जल धरनी। कर नाथ सहज जड़ करनि ।।
में पुनि उर धरि प्रभु प्रभुताई। करिहौ बल अनुमान सहाई ।।
याहि विधि नाथ पयोधि बधैहि। जाहि यः सुजस लोक तिहु गयहु ।।

(d) Refugee Laws

Indian Culture is a best example of mercy, Kindness and love. In Sunderkand when Ravana deported His brother Vibhishan from lanka than Vibhishan came to door Shri Ram takin asylum. Shri Ram Discussed from his misnistry regardin vibhishan and after discussion he give Sharan to Vibhishan follwing Sharnagat principles. The impact of Sunderkand also seen on refujee laws. Doha 43 holds about Refujee Law as Follows:-

सुनि प्रभु वचन हरषि हनुमाना। शरणागत वच्छल भगवाना।।
शरणागत को जे तजहि, निज अनहित अनुमान।
ते नर पांवर पापमय, तिन्है बिलोकत हानि ।।

(e) Law of Torts

The principle of vicarious liability is also explained in Sunderkand in which it was explained whenever anyone is serving for his owner that work shall be counted in favour of owner. In Darbar of Lanka Vibhishan told that the act of Hanuman is not punishable because he is doing work for his owner Shri Ram. So we can see that there is a implementation of Vicarious liability principle "Respondent Superior" in era of Sunderkand.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Sunderkand provides profound insights on moral and legal philosophy, despite being largely a spiritual story. For legislators, jurists, and people alike, its depiction of justice, responsibility, and moral leadership has eternal teachings. By combining spiritual knowledge with constitutional principles, we can improve our moral and legal systems.

Consequently, after brief discussion about Sunderkand & Law I would like to Suggest:-

- (1) Our moral values are a message for upcoming laws and will be more helpful in research.
- (2) Indian Knowledge system is gold mine for research and in future it will be helpful to maintain global relations.
- (3) Sunderkand Give the best example for sustainable development and give message to world if any country is more powerful regarding weapons it does not destroy the world for personal interest.
- (4) Sunderkand Give message of high level morals if any enemy is on the door of us as refugee, he has right to shelter in Under Indian Culture.

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