*Jatayu*

*By Akhila Rajesh*

*Jatayu, an old vulture king, was devoted to Lord Rama in many ways. He gave up his life trying to rescue Sita. Jatayu was not only like a father to Rama and Sita, he was also the nephew of Garuda, who was the son of Sage Kashyapa.*

*When Lakshmana and Sita heard Rama cry for help, (actually a rakshasa) Sita insisted that Lakshmana help Rama. While Sita was alone Ravana came in the form of an ascetic and took her away.*

*Jatayu saw that Sita was being carried away and immediately took action. Even though Jatayu knew he was old and weak and that Ravana was more powerful than him Jatayu still fought because of his tender love for Sita. Jatayu and Ravana fought for a long time, in the end Ravana cut Jatayu’s wings and talons off but Jatayu had also hurt Ravana a little*

*Jatayu fell to the ground, hurt badly and much later Rama came, and thinking Jatayu was a rakshasa disguised Rama picked up his bow and arrow. But Jatayu stopped him and told Rama Ravana took Sita and how he took her. He also said that he tried to stay alive to convey this message.*

*Lord Rama rewarded Jatayu by giving him moksham, which means freedom from the cycle of rebirth. Rama and Lakshmana did Jatayu’s funeral rites because they loved him as they would a second father.*