**Sampathi’s Change of Heart**

One of the characters in The Ramayana that chose to follow the path of true service, was an eagle named Sampathi. And doing so, bestowed Sampathi with Lord Rama’s grace and blessings.

Sampathi was Jatayu’s older brother. One day, when they were playing, Jatayu asked Sampathi if they could fly to the sun. Knowing that it was dangerous, Sampathi still agreed and they both started flying. Soon the sun’s heat got unbearable. Sampathi shielded his brother from the heat and saved him while his own wings got burned.

Many years later, Lord Rama and Sita were exiled from their kingdom in Ayodhya, for fourteen years. While living in the forest, Sita was abducted by the evil king Ravana. To search for Sita, Lord Rama asked for help from a Vanara named Sugriva. Sugriva agreed to help Rama. In return, he asked Rama to kill his brother, Vali. After Rama killed Vali, Sugriva sent his armies in all four directions to search for Sita. Vali’s son Angada, Jambavanth, and Hanuman, traveled south, looking for Sita. Soon, they came to the end of the land – only ocean lay ahead of them. Exhausted, they decided to rest for a while.

Sampathi, who was close-by and hunting, saw the resting army and thought “What a feast for me!” Angada saw Sampathi, turned to Hanuman, and spoke of how another eagle, called Jatayu, was so devoted to Rama, that it even gave its life trying to save Sita from Ravana. On hearing this, Sampathi said “Please tell me more! It is my brother Jatayu that you talk about.”

Angada then told Sampathi how Jatayu fought with Ravana and died trying to save Sita. Upon hearing his brother’s noble and brave deed, Sampathi was moved to also be of service to Lord Rama, in finding Sita. He said “With my keen eye-sight, I can see Sita. She is a prisoner in Lanka.” As soon as Sampathi said these words, he got his wings back and flew away.

Sampathi’s change of heart and his decision to be of service in locating Sita, helped him earn Lord Rama’s blessings.