THE COMPLETE RAMAYANA

BOOK 5

THE BURNING OF LANKA

PARO ANAND

juggernaut

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To Chiki Sarkar,
who knew I could do this, though I didn't.

And to Keshav,
whose love gave me the confidence
to take the leap.

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A MIGHTY LEAP OF FAITH

Standing above the clouds on the edge of Mount Mahendra's cliff, Hanumana took a deep breath. All his good deeds, strength, courage and wisdom were going to be put to the test in that moment. Now was the time that the boons he had received would come to great use. After all, he was in the service of none other than Rama himself. He was determined to find Sita.

The rishis who lived on the mountain strained their necks to look up at Hanumana. He had grown exponentially – and continued growing.



The holy men had already heard how Ravana had abducted Sita. As part of Sugriva's promise, Hanumana was going to attempt a leap never undertaken before. But they were still astounded seeing Hanumana's ability to keep increasing in size until he looked like a mountain atop a mountain.

Since childhood, Hanumana had been fascinated with the sun. He had begged Surya, the sun god, to accept him as a disciple and teach him the four Vedas and the scriptures. At first, Surya refused – he was in constant motion around the earth and could not stay in one place long enough to impart knowledge. However, Hanumana, with his boundless energy, followed Surya on his journey, learning as he went. Not only that, he also flew backwards so that he never turned his back on his guru. So impressed was Surya that he accepted him as a student and watched with admiration as he mastered the Vedas, the scriptures and other

