

Sri Sathya Sai Baba discourse on Hanuman

HANUMAN succeeded in co-ordinating his thought, word and act. Therefore he had the unique distinction of being great in physical strength, mental stability and virtuous character. He shines as an invaluable gem among the personalities of the Ramayana. He was also a great scholar who had mastered, of all things, the nine schools of grammar! He knew the four Vedas {sacred scriptures of the Hindus) and the six Shasthras (spiritual sciences). The Geetha says that a scholar is "one who sees the same Divine force motivating everyone" - Pandithah Samadharsinaha.

Hanuman was a good example of this outlook. He did not pride himself that he knew so much. He was the very picture of humility, born out of genuine sincerity and wisdom. He realised that the Rama-principle, Atmarama, was illumining every being, and he adored it above all else. During their wanderings in the forest in search of clues about Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana arrived at the Rishyamuka Mountain, where they rested awhile in a shady glen. They were sad in mind and weak in physique.

The King of Vanaras, Sugreeva, and his confidante, Hanuman, saw them from the top of a neighbouring hill. At first Sugreeva feared that they might be the emissaries of his brother, Vali, who had sworn eternal vengeance upon him. Or, he thought, they may be his spies moving about incognito. So Hanuman offered to approach them and return with correct information about their identify and Intentions. He advised that Jumping to conclusions without sufficient information is fraught with danger.

The Three Classes Of Messengers

He spoke to the brothers in sweet, pleasing words. Rama was struck by the grammatical accuracy of his sentences. They readily answered all his queries and Hanuman was satisfied with their bonafides. He offered to take them to his master and monarch. The darshan (sight) of Rama and Lakshmana had removed all his sins, their sparshan (touch) burnt away all the consequences of his deeds in previous lives and their sambhashan (conversation) filled his mind with Joy. That is the experience of all who welcome the impact of Divinity. As a result, Rama and Sugreeva, who had common anxieties and problems, entered into a friendly compact, and both were assured that their problems would be successfully solved through mutual help. Hanuman became the messenger of Rama. There are three classes of messengers- those who do not understand the orders of the master or do not care to understand, and who operate to the detriment of the work assigned them; those who do only Just as much as the order literally communicates; and those who grasp the purpose and significance of the orders and carry them out unflinchingly till the purpose is achieved. Hanuman belonged to the last category. He never flinched in his efforts, whatever the obstacle, and reported back only after he was satisfied with the result of his assignment. He could delve into the commands of Rama and know what his order meant.

Rama's Words Made Hanuman Very Efficient

As soon as Hanuman received the order, he felt a thrust of power inside him and a new confidence that since he had been so ordered, the strength and intelligence, the courage and the adventurous spirit needed, would be granted by Rama himself. So he never had any qualms about his capacity or capability. His body and spirit were vitalised by the very fact that Rama asked him to do something.

As electric cable has a copper wire inside its plastic coating; for good operation, both must be of high quality. So, too, the body and the spirit within, have both to be in good trim, and Rama's words made them both efficient and active. The dharshan (sight) of Rama conferred on Hanuman an enormous reinforcement of power, even physical power. How else could he have jumped across a hundred miles of sea, a task that even Jambavan, Angadha and other vanara heroes would, not dare venture upon, which he accomplished by the mere recitation of the Name of Rama.

An Important Feature Of Hanuman's Life

The youth of India must pay special attention to the feature of Hanuman's life. He never calculated the pros and cons - can I succeed? Why am I, of all people, chosen for this mission? When Rama asked him to discover the whereabouts of Seetha. "Why should I weigh the chances of success or failure?" he said to himself. "The Rama who chose me will bear the responsibility." He decided to pray and do his best. While on his flight, a hill rose up from the sea and offered him rest and hospitality, but he refused the invitation. A demoness, rose from the sea and invited him to fight with her before he proceeded further, but he brushed her aside and flew on. He sped through the sky like one of Rama's own arrows. Self-confidence was the basis of his courage; over it he erected the walls of self-satisfaction; on them he constructed the roof of self-sacrifice, and he dwelt in that mansion enjoying the Bliss of self-Realisation. Here is a fine illustration of the devotion of Hanuman to Rama. On the completion of the bridge and on the night before the march across to Lanka, Rama was reclining on the sands of the sea-shore in the cool bright moonlight with Sugreeva, Hanuman, Vibheeshana, Jambavan, Angadha, Nala, Neela and others around him. He was lying with his head on the lap of Lakshmana. Suddenly he threw the question why the Moon had a mark on it and what that patch indicated. Each one ventured on an answer. Some said it was the shadow of the earth, some that it indicated a big hollow or crack on the surface of the Moon, and some said it must be a huge heap of soil. Rama asked Hanuman, who had been silent for long, what he thought about it. Hanuman said that it was the reflection on the Moon of the face of Rama which he adored! He had the unique fortune of visualising Rama in everything that he cast his eyes upon.

The Quality Of Rajas Is To Be Watched Carefully

Hanuman is pictured as a monkey, and monkeys are by nature, wayward and frolicsome. 'Monkeyish' has become a synonym of fickleness. But Hanuman did not have any trace of this fickleness. He was of Divine descent and distinguished with the Divine qualities mentioned in the Geetha. He derived Bliss in the contemplation of Rama. He had full mastery over physical and sensual cravings. He was shining in Athmic splendour. He had established his life on the foundations of Sathya (Truth) and Dharma (righteousness) and led his companions also on the same path, exercising the force of his example on them. Of the three gunas (qualities), sathwa (the balanced), rajas (the passionate) and thamas (the dull), rajas is the quality to be watched carefully, for its first progeny is kama (lust). Lust destroyed Ravana, who was a great scholar, warrior, emperor and a mighty hero. It can overwhelm and neutralise every good quality in man and reduce him to the level of a beast. Anger is the second among the progeny of this quality. Anger can seize the treasure chest of wisdom from your grasp and break it to smithereens. It is usually compared with fire (anala), which literally means, not enough. It always-relishes more and more fuel to feed its limitless hunger.

Hanuman Considered Every Woman As His Mother

Hanuman had no lust. His anger was not of the 'not enough' variety. In order to search for her, Hanuman had to enter the women's apartments in the palace of Ravana to look into the faces of the sleeping women to compare their features with Rama's description of Seetha. He felt very guilty going through this ordeal and even contemplated suicide, because he would be too ashamed to show his face to Rama after this experience. But consoling himself that it was after all the order of Rama that he was obeying, he returned to continue the search. He considered every woman as his own mother, and thus searched where his mother was, not where Seetha was. This is a good lesson for the youth of today. On the occasion of the Coronation of Sri Rama at Ayodhya, presents were given to the ministers and distinguished visitors, collaborators and companions of Rama - Vibheeshana, Sugreeva, Jambavan, Nala, Neela etc. Hanuman was not given any. Observing this, Seetha, who had benefited most by his selflessness and heroism, devotion and dedication, felt pained. She communicated her feelings to Rama who was beside her on the throne. Rama told her that she could give him any present she wished. So she took off her own pearl necklace and placed it in the hands of Hanuman. Immediately Hanuman took the pearls apart, and putting them one by one between his teeth, he bit each pearl and spat it out in disgust! Seetha became flushed with anger. She whispered to Rama that Hanuman could be nothing but a monkey. When asked, Hanuman said, "I was only examining whether these pearls had Rama in them; I could not find any one which had, so I eat them away. If a thing has no Rama in it, it is to me as worthless as stone."

An Example Of Hanuman's Devotion To His Master

At this, Agasthya, one of the renowned sages who was assembled in the hall, rose up and challenged Hanuman with the question, "Hanuman! You say that you will not wear or bear, eat or carry anything that does not sound of Rama. Well, you carry about this body, don't you? Does it sound of Rama to you?" Hanuman accepted the challenge. He pulled a single hair from his wrist and held it to the ear of the sage. Lo! It was reciting 'Rama, Rama' without interruption. So deep and sincere was Hanuman's loyalty and devotion to all that belonged to his Master. That is the reason why he achieved success, whatever the assignment. After the Coronation celebrations, Seetha, Rama and his brothers sat together, reminiscing over past events, and some of them expressed a desire to have a larger share of serving Rama. Bharatha and Sathrugna were the most eager. So a list was drawn up of all items of service that could be offered to Rama and the items were allotted to those present. Hanuman was not present at the time, and when he came in, the others announced, with certain amount of glee, that he had no more chance to serve Rama as everything was now to be done by others. Rama also joined in the fun.

Hanuman was terribly dejected and pleaded with them- "Pray, go over the list again. Give me any bit of service, however small, that might have been overlooked." They were sure that nothing had been overlooked and so the list was handed over to Hanuman himself. Luckily he discovered one item that had not been allotted. When one yawns, there is a rite of snapping one's fingers in front of one's mouth. Of course the person who yawns usually does it himself, but in the case of Rama, Emperor of Ayodhya, it would surely be *infra dig* if he did it himself.

Hanuman pleaded that he might be given the duty of snapping his fingers whenever Rama yawned. The others agreed, for they thought that the chances of Rama yawning would be very rare indeed. For Hanuman, however, it was a Godsend.

Now he was ever watching the face of Rama, his fingers ready, waiting for the chance of performing the rite that was his duty! This, too, was the Grace of Rama, for what can happen without His knowledge and His plan? Who can keep the devotee away from the presence of God? Rama demonstrated by this Incident that no one can obstruct His wish and stand between His devotee and Himself.

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