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## **Hanuman, the Epitome of Human Values: A Study of Sundarkand**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*The paper investigates the charismatic personality of Lord Hanuman as described in the Sundarkand of the great Indian Epic of the Ramayana. In the present world of scientific advancement human values and morality is steadily declining. Sundarkand of Ramayana eulogizes Hanuman whose thoughts, words and deeds were in perfect accordance and which formidably impacts and inspires one's personality with human values and moralities even today. This paper analyzes the rare human values which Hanuman epitomized in his selfless service to Lord Rama and which serve as example of virtue for posterity to emulate.*

Generally Lord Hanuman is understood as an able bodied servant of Lord Rama, known for carrying the Sanjivani Parvat, crossing the vast expanse of ocean or subduing Ravana by burning Lanka. The most amazing facet of Hanuman's personality was his impeccable character and implicit faith which helped him accomplish the entire impossible task easily. He had a charismatic personality and a strong character. Both personality and character complements each other. Personality is something that is conspicuous while character remains dormant deep within. Swami Vivekananda once remarked *that in the western countries, a tailor makes a gentleman, whereas in India the character of a man makes one a gentleman* (Natrajan 10).

India since ancient times was looked upon as a land of pristine purity where people were extolled as exemplars of values and virtues in every walk of life. Many travellers wrote copious accounts about India as a land of abundance and inhabited by people of high integrity and honesty. Their trust, worthiness and compassion were well-famed across continents.

Sadly today's India is labeled as one of the most corrupt nation of the world, where red-tapism, nepotism, corruption has become the way of life. How did such a great country degenerate? Illiteracy and immoralities has come to stalk the Indian society despite scientific and technological advancement. A man of genuine worth and intelligence is totally misunderstood and underestimated. Self audit is lacking in the modern man. He blatantly defies all propriety and refuses to acknowledge his mistakes and failings. Hanuman in Sundarkanda exemplifies the supreme virtue of self-realization. His greatness lies in admitting the reality he is which catapults him at par with the protagonist of Ramayana- Lord Rama.

Hanuman, the son of Anjana mitigates and destroys the misery of Sita. He was the leader of the monkey brigand, who killed Akshakumar the son of Ravana and sent Lanka tumbling into a deluge of fear. Thus Tulsidasji presents Hanuman as a great karma yogi- an accomplished and redoubtable warrior. Hanuman meets Vibhishana during his searching quest for Mata Sita. Vibhishana reels out his deplorable condition to Hanuman. Hanuman genuinely advises

Vibhishana to dedicate himself as ‘Das’ of Lord Rama. Hanuman consoles him by saying that if Shri Ram can accept an inferior being like me, you are superior to me and I am sure he will accept you. Hanuman says: *Prat lei jo naam hamara, tehi din na milai ahara* (Ramcharitmanas 702).

Hanuman accepts his existence and reality without any hesitation. In modern times nobody has the courage to admit his/her weakness. He was never proud of his prowess nor of his proximity to God. He was never shy of declaring openly about his ‘Vanar Jati’ as he replies on being asked about his identity when he set Lanka on fire. *Khayeu phal prabhu lagee bhoonka kapi subhaw tain toreu rookha* (718). Hanuman’s this action testifies the truth that if a person admits his/her true identity and with the nobility of his deeds he can become an epitome of perfection and greatness.

There has been many heroes in the world who have faced failures at every step of their earthly sojourn. These failures have only galvanized their indomitable spirit and crowned them with resounding success. Hanuman robust optimism, devotion to work and Emotional Intelligence made him successful in his endeavor. In Sundarkand when Lord Rama is inconsolably sad over Sita’s abduction, Laxman falls unconscious, the Ocean impedes the way to Lanka, Sugriva is indifferent in his efforts to search Mata Sita, Vibhishana is unhappy to see the arrogance of his brother Ravana - amidst all these hostilities Hanuman remains calm and happy. He loses temper only when Ravana’s army kills Lord Rama’s army. His anger is for a selfless cause. His anger is therefore ‘Sarvik Krodha’. His anger is for the general good and weal of the society. Ravana’s anger is ‘Tamasik’ which brings about only ruin and disaster. In Sundarkand the effects of two types of anger is well illustrated. ‘Satvik’ anger represented by Hanuman restores peace and order while ‘Tamasik’ anger represented by Ravana is disastrous and calamitous.

Excellence and simplicity often go together. With an open mind, noble thought are welcomed from all over the world. At such a peak level of human evolution, we epitomize the sanctified fire, fuel and the invocator- three in one. Levels of instinct, intelligence and intuition are crossed (Verma 33).

Sugriva gave one month’s time to the ‘Vanar Jati’ for accomplishing the stupendous task of searching Mata Sita. Every passing minute was nerve wracking for them. Once sure that Sita was in Lanka, the daunting task before the monkey was ‘Char so Kosh’. Jamvant knew the prowess of Hanuman who was the son of Lord Pawan. Hanuman possessed the cyclonic pace of wind, unparalleled intelligence and unsurpassable confidence. Soon Jamvant reminded Hanuman of his prowess which enabled him to undertake the stupendous task with alacrity. This illustrates the significance of wonder that motivation can work in one’s life. The spirit of camaraderie among the valorous Vanaras enabled them to achieve the impossible.

Hanuman was distinct from other Vanaras. He had the power of thinking, he was wise and had the ability of making quick decision. His decisiveness and wisdom found its consummation in crossing the sea.

In Mahabharata Shri Krishna was the soul mate of Arjuna as the charioteer, guiding and advising him at every step. Hanuman in Ramayana had to shoulder the assigned task all alone. Even then : *Jamwant ke bachan suhay, suni hanumant hiraday ati bhay* (698). This line suggest the zeal of Hanuman. The word *Bachan Shuhay* means the words of advice

spoken by Jamwant appealed to Hanuman and he immediately acted on the advice. The will to act complements all abilities and capabilities. Hanuman response instructs that when one comes across any challenge one should boldly face it as God's order. The instrumentality of man in the Divine will and Divine play is well illustrated in the line which Hanuman speaks to Mainak Mountain who intercedes him to take rest for a while en route Lanka: *Ram kaju keenhe binu, mohi kaha bishram* (699). Instead of saying *Vaidehi kaha bishram* he says *Ramkaj* which underscores his amazing sense of responsibility in discharging his duties.

Every challenge is the beginning of an opportunity, to be the instrument of God- a coveted chance of playing an assigned role in the divine drama of life. *mohi kaha bishram* underscores the rightful conclusion one is supposed to accord to an assigned task. Hanuman was able to practice this highest form of service due to his implicit devotion to Lord Rama. He experienced absolute bliss, calm and peace with Lord Rama in the core of his heart. He was devoted more than respectful to Rama. Devotion and respect appear similar but they mean different. There is no room for misgivings or complain in Devotion unlike respect. Devotion to work metamorphs into worship and one's duty becomes one's God as exemplified by Hanuman. Hanuman could accomplish due to the profound faith he had in Lord Rama and himself.

Sundarkand is the story of Hanuman's ascension to the heights of self-realization through devotion and love to Lord Rama. Hanuman's humility in spite of his prowess and proximity to Lord Rama is a lesson for posterity. Innocents is God's elect. One's pure heart - a heart free from all evils can be the best offering to God. Hanuman won over the heart of Lord Rama with his truth, honesty and sincerity of purpose. The purity of his intentions won him the approbation of the Divine will in every endeavor. Thus truth alone can confer peace to man. Falsehood complicates life while truth facilitates life.

Hanuman didn't have even a modicum of envy in him. The task of searching Sita was initially undertaken by Sugreeva, but when he achieved *Rajpad* he started leading life of pleasure and forgot his duty. This saddened Lord Rama and Laxman. Hanuman reminded Sugreev of his duty. In this competitive world people are envious of each other. Nobody helps the other to improve. Hanuman's reminder to Sugreev of his duties highlights his quality of comradeship and large heartedness.

The most striking quality of Hanuman's character is his Emotional Intelligence. Emotion relates to heart and Intelligence relates to mind in common parlance. If one bases his judgment on emotion only then his judgment and decision therein can be biased. If it is based purely on intelligence, again it would defeat the purpose. Hanuman practiced a balanced outlook. He exercised fundamental judgment in every act. An interesting episode which illustrates his *Emotional Intelligence* is during his search for Mata Sita. When he first finds Mata Sita sitting under Aahoka tree he observes *Kras tanu sees jata ek benee* (703). She had turned weak. The sight of weak Sita makes Hanuman very sad but he doesn't lose hope. He climbs the tree under which Mata Sita is seen sitting secretly. Suddenly Ravan comes to scare Mata Sita in many ways and warns her to get ready to be his wife. Hanuman sees carefully observes everything that is happening, but he keeps his cool without giving vent to anger or emotion. He reasoned that if directly appears before Mata Sita, she wouldn't believe him. He used his Emotional Intelligence. As Tulsidas ji says: *Kapi kari hriday vichar deenhi mudrika dari tab* (709). Hanuman unlike his heart - *hriday vichar*. He throws a ring given by Lord Shri Rama, right in front of Mata Sita. Sita is compelled to look up to locate the singer.

She soon summons Hanuman the singing monkey to appear before her. Yet Mata Sita doesn't trust him and so he again swears: *Ramdoot mai matu Janki, satya sapath karuna nidhan ki* (710). He swears on God to tell her of his genuine mission as a messenger. Such was the purity, perseverance and patience evinced by Hanuman.

Thus Hanuman was the embodiment of nobility and divinity. Something very complex which can be achieved only by Yoga, Meditation, Austerity, Rituals. In Ramchritmanas there is no mention of Hanuman performing rituals, or worshipping to attain spirituality. His every breath was an offering to God, every thought was in constant contemplation of Lord Rama, and every deed was an offering of pure love to Rama. He exemplified what the Vedas state: *Sarvada sarvakaeshu sarvatra Hari Chintanam* (...). A heart suffused with divine feelings and experiences is the real spiritual power. Such a heart becomes a fountain head of all virtues and human values. It becomes the source of all joy and happiness to all those who come in contact with it. Before leaving *Rishyamooka* Lord Hanuman is bound and chained and brought before Ravana as a captive. When he sees Ravana he praises him instead of condemning the demon Ravana. Hanuman says: *Janeu mai tumhari prabhtai, sahasbahu san pari larai* (718). Such was the large heartedness of Hanuman.

Hanuman devotion to Lord Rama has universal and eternal relevance. His life instructs man how to live a life of discipline, devotion, discrimination, dedication- the 5DS of purposeful and useful living. Purity of intention is at the core of any success. The present day world is plagued with problems and troubles because man has deviated from the path of truth and righteousness. The twin values of truth and righteousness forms the bed rock of Indian civilization. Unless every individual upholds these values in their life there cannot be order in the world.

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