



The Majestic Glory of Lord Hanuman

An Excerpt from
Mysticism of the Ramayana
by Swami Jyotirmayananda

Hanuman is one of the most majestic and inspiring figures in the story of Rama. With the tail of his monkey form pointing to the sky, Hanuman is the very personification of the great mystic Sanskrit symbol, OM.

Although Hanuman is represented as a monkey because he belongs to the realm of the mind and senses, he certainly is no ordinary monkey. In most people, the mind and senses are like monkeys—ever-distracted and jumping from one thing to another. However, when one has unfolded the Hanuman within, all externalized tendencies easily come under his lordly control. By the power of Hanuman, the energy operating at the plane of mind and senses is integrated, controlled, and channelized towards generating *shubha samskaras* or pure impressions.

Hanuman is symbolic of *atmabal*—that power which enables one to go beyond the world of relativity. The dazzling sun that he was ready to devour as an infant represents the total enjoyments of the world of relativity. A similar symbolism is adopted in the Hindu tradition

when an aspirant receives initiation into *san-yasa* (the order of renunciation). At that time, the initiate is asked to look at the sun—representing the entire realm of time and space—and imagine that the sun is trembling before his own spiritual effulgence.

Hanuman symbolizes *sadhana shakti*, the power created by constant *sadhana* or spiritual discipline. He represents the spiritual strength that develops in an aspirant through *satsanga*, austerity, and persistent practice of the *yamas* and *niyamas* (the ethical restraints and observances). That spiritual strength is a blend of faith, purity, devotion, and insight. Endowed with that strength, one's intellect becomes intuitive and one becomes the abode of all Divine qualities (known in the Gita as *Daivi Sampat*). So Hanuman is a blend of all the best ingredients of *sadhana*. Without the grace of Hanuman, without *atmabal*, one cannot be led to Rama, one cannot attain Self-realization.

Hanuman also symbolizes the power of purity that results from perfect *brahmacharya*.

The term *brahmacharya* literally implies celibacy or abstinence from sex. Although there is a physical component in *brahmacharya*, it is the mental aspect that is most important. True *brahmacharya* implies attaining a state of mind that allows one to rise above the temptations and illusions of passion through understanding. It implies becoming established in the knowledge that the soul is sexless, neither male nor female; that one is not confined to the body, but is the *Atman* that envelopes and transcends all. With the channelized energy or power of purity that results from such *brahmacharya*, one can successfully root out the demon of ignorance within one's lifetime.

The story of Jambavan's awakening of Hanuman is a powerful reminder that Hanuman's immense spiritual power is hidden or sleeping in every individual. Every soul is essentially Sat-Chit-Ananda—Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. But one has to be reminded of his essential nature, reminded of the inner grandeur that he has somehow forgotten. Through *satsanga* and the influence of Guru, that Self-knowledge is awakened.

Everyone has within him the “sleeping” Hanuman—the soul force needed to cross the ocean of the world-process, the ocean of illusion. This Hanuman has to be awakened by the guidance of one's Guru. When awakened, Hanuman enables you to cross that mystical gap between you and your unconscious and enter into the city of Lanka, where the basis of ignorance abides.

Hanuman is referred to as Vayuputra—the son of the wind god, which implies that the *pranic* energy operating through every individual has issued from the Cosmic *Prana* (an aspect of the Cosmic Mind). The awakening of Hanuman (*pranic* energy) is the same as awakening of the Kundalini Shakti—the mystical energy that ascends through the spine leading to the highest state of Divine communion. The control of *prana* (*pranayama*) and of *vasana* (*vasanayama*) are interdependent. Hanuman's exploits symbol-

ize the control of *prana* in particular, and that of *vasana* (subtle desires) in general.

According to a well-known story, Lord Rama once said to Hanuman, “Oh Hanuman, tell me, how are you related to me?” Hanuman replied, “Oh Lord, from a physical point of view, when I consider myself as the body, I am your slave. Seen through the mental plane, from the point of view of the *jiva* (individual soul), I am a ray and you are the sun. From the highest spiritual point of view, I am your very Self.”

In this answer lies a profound understanding of the philosophy of Vedanta that is taught in the Ramayana. Every individual must seek union with God in three planes—in body, mind and spirit. In your body you must be a servant of God, a channel of his Divine will. In your mind you must be a ray of God, and the Divine power must radiate through your thoughts and feelings. In your spirit, in the depths of your heart, you must discover your identity with God. That is the spiritual ideal of perfection embodied by Hanuman in the majestic role he plays in the Ramayana.

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