

HANUMAN

OUR IDEAL FOR BUILDING
A GREAT PERSONALITY

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Publishers' Note

If a person can speak a few words nicely, and get his work done, he would be considered a man of great accomplishment. That is how personality is defined in the modern times! But is it not hypocritical to think like that? There is a proverb in English which declares, "You can fool some people all the time, all the people for some time but not all the people all the time." Further, we all know the story of the donkey, which was covered with a tiger skin and made to graze freely in the fields and its fate of being beaten to death. Its character was revealed the moment it started braying. So, we need to build a real all-round personality. But, how is it possible?

Personality development implies some change that is internal and enduring. That change needs to be achieved by self-effort. What is it? How to make our personality blossom? How relevant is it to bring Hanuman into this discussion? What did Swami Vivekananda teach us in this regard? By discussing the answers to these questions we will be able to understand how to build and transform our personalities.

The story of Hanuman in this book is based on Valmiki Ramayana. All the ideas presented herein are based on the message of Swami Vivekananda and the word 'Swamiji' used herein refers to him.

We wish to thank the writer of this book Sri Amirapu Natarajan. We also would like to thank the members of the editorial team, Sri Amirapu Suresh, Sri C. Sridhar IAS, Dr. T.G.K.Murthy, Prof. Pannala Syamasundara Murty, Dr. N. Ramagopal, Dr. (Mrs.) Ch. Chiranjeevi, Prof. B. Nagalingam, Sri CVB Subrahmanyam, and Sri KV Ramagopala Sarma.

This book was released in Telugu two years back. It recieved tremendous response and several well-wishers asked us to bring an English vesion of this book as well. We thank Dr. T. Sasi for correcting the English manuscript.

We also exhort the reader to further read the greatest of all epics, Valmiki Ramayana, in order to build a better, all-round personality.



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FOREWORD

This book presents Hanuman in a new angle hitherto not highlighted by anybody. It tries to bring out the personality of Hanuman as presented by Swami Vivekananda. So far, especially in the last millenium, Hanuman was depicted as a devotee with tearful eyes, full of emotion, 'Bashpavari paripoorna lochanam,' etc.

The heroic aspect of Hanuman is almost forgotten except for a few episodes like carrying the Sanjivani Parvata, crossing the ocean and burning the Lanka etc. But to accomplish all these achievements, a person must be having a sound philosophy of dynamic life. Has he done all these with "Bashpavari Paripoorna lochanam?" (Eyes filled with tears by taking the name of Rama). Certainly not! Hanuman is a person with a highly developed personality or in other words, is 'a totally developed person,' to use Swami Ranganathanandaji's words. He has manifested divinity to the fullest extent to use Swami Vivekananda's terminology.

Swami Vivekananda declared in his lectures that the Hanuman is the ideal for youth. But with the available information and the Harikatha type of explanation of Hanuman's personality, many have wondered as to how this Hanuman be the ideal of youth. This book removes that misconception. In this book Sri Amirapu Natarajan has brought out the interesting and inspiring aspect of Hanuman with apt quotations from Swami Vivekananda's works to illustrate the personality of Hanuman in a way appealing to the young generation.

I hope that this book will be a source of inspiration for the youth in search of a role model.

Swami Aksharatmananda

(Swami Aksharatmananda)

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HANUMAN

Our ideal for building a great personality

01. What is personality?

What would you say if you were asked to evaluate a person? How would you go about doing it? Probably you will describe how he/she talks and behaves. That's all! You may quote some instances as examples but it all boils down to what the person talks and how he/she behaves. Therefore, we can broadly say that a person's personality primarily consists of words and deeds. Where do these two originate? They originate from thoughts. Perhaps, because of this, you may remark on a person's thoughts also, when you describe him/her. On the whole, to describe a person's personality we talk about his/her words, deeds and thoughts.

Along with the word 'Personality', 'Character' is also an important word. In fact, these two words express the same idea. But, for the time being, to understand the idea, let us assume that character has a deeper meaning compared to personality. Whereas personality is something that appears conspicuously, character remains deep inside and is usually known by a deeper study.

On the other hand personality is not something which describes how handsome a person is. How a person dresses or combs his/her hair, is not the only measure of a person's real personality. Of course, these may be important, but they are not the only important things. Swami Vivekananda, once remarked to the effect that in the western countries, a tailor makes a gentleman, whereas in India the character of a man makes one a gentleman.

Swami Vivekananda explained at length about personality and how a perfect man lives and behaves. To build a progressive nation and to achieve real independence, he made an impassioned appeal to give the people their lost individuality. With great foresight, he taught how the personality and character of the people need to be transformed, not only at the level of an individual but also at the level of the society. His teachings in this regard would work for uplifting the masses as well.

Now, if we summarize all the teachings of Swami Vivekananda about personality, it may be written as a formula. Make a ratio between the deeds and words of a person. With this ratio we will be able to broadly estimate the extent to which a person is living up to his/her word. This defines a person's true personality.

$$\text{Personality} = \frac{\text{Deeds}}{\text{Words}}$$

When we apply this formula in our daily life we will find that in most of the cases this value is less than 1. That is because people generally do not keep their word. They never show in deed what they have spoken in word. Usually most of the human beings belong to this category.

If the value of the ratio is less than 1, it means that people are not succeeding completely in keeping their word. In case of evil men, it may be that they talk more and act less, or else, they may say one thing and do something else.

For a man who shows in action what he says, this ratio equals to 1. That person becomes a 'perfect human being' and that personality is the greatest.

We may also extend the formula further and use it to broadly define the 'Character' of a person. It may look like this.

$$\text{Character} = \frac{(\text{Words} + \text{Deeds})}{\text{Thoughts}}$$

We can very well imagine the greatness of a man who not only puts into practice what he speaks, but speaks and puts into practice whatever he thinks in his mind, even though that may be physically concealed from others. Thus, whoever equals his words and deeds with his thoughts is a man of supreme personality and paramount character.

From a completely different perspective when we see this ratio to be more than 1, then that person may be hyperactive or even mad.

(These ratios are, certainly, not perfect and they may not hold true in case of great souls. But they are clearly sufficient to give us a fairly good idea about what personality is and what character is.)

Swami Vivekananda said, "If you can make your thoughts and words perfectly at one, if you can, I say, make yourself one in speech and action, money will pour in at your feet of itself, like water." It is not at all an exaggeration to say that Swami Vivekananda thus defined in one phrase the idea of personality development and character building. All our undertakings would be successful when people see that we always keep our word. Nothing stands in the way of a man, who keeps his word and shows in action whatever he speaks.

02. Now, why do we need this discussion about personality?

Once upon a time, India was the greatest nation of the world. The people here were extolled as the greatest in every walk of life. Megasthenese, Hsuan Tsang (pronounced Shwan-dzang), Pahiyan and various other travelers wrote that the people of India are of the greatest honesty and integrity. They also said that the people of India are the most trust-worthy and the most compassionate.

But now we hardly see any of that. India, now-a-days, is labeled as one of the most corrupt nations of the world. How did such a great country degenerate? Today, half of the population of India is illiterate and is languishing in poverty. What has brought things to such a pass?

Swamiji said, "India has for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of, when the very fathers of the modern Europeans lived in the forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her."

Then, why did India degenerate? *Swamiji answered, "The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions."* People failed to put into practice the ideals properly and degeneration, illiteracy, poverty and slavery were the results. He further commented to the effect that a nation is only as great as the great men it can produce. If the nation is degenerating, it shows that the nation is unable to produce men of character and greatness.

Swamiji, however, foresaw that India would once again become great and would achieve its former glory. But to achieve this, he exhorted us to study our history deeply and develop our personalities based on the virtues taught by our ancient rishis.

03. What are the deficiencies in our personality?

Who is an intelligent man? A man who is ready to admit his mistakes and correct himself is the most intelligent man. A man will thus be able to improve his personality. Swamiji pointed out the weaknesses and pitfalls in us, i.e., in the present Indian society. Let us discuss them briefly.

Slavish mind-set

Swamiji described our condition without mincing words. "Brother! We can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy... That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it! ...Quarrelling and abusing each other are our national traits. Lazy, useless, vulgar, jealous, cowardly, and quarrelsome, that is what we are!"

He said we acquired these characteristics because of our long slavery. He further said that, for each of us our own self is important and everyone wants his word to prevail. *Swamiji said, "Everyone wants to command. No one wants to obey!"* Because of this bad characteristic no collective work is possible. Because of this, we not only fail to achieve any greatness at individual level but the society around us also will not prosper.

Our well-being is rooted in the well-being of the society around us. This is an undeniable truth. Only when all our fellow beings are happy and healthy we will also be happy and healthy.

There is no strength in our bodies

"We speak of many things parrot like, but never do them; speaking and not doing has become a habit

with us. What is the cause of that? Physical weakness!" This is what Swamiji said about our weak physical condition and its result. When our bodies are weak, our thought and willpower also become weak. Fear and cowardice become an integral part of such a person's character. How can we expect any great work from people who work out of fear and take decisions with a sagging heart?

Swamiji often quoted a sloka: *"The goddess of wealth resorts to the one with a leonine heart and to the man who is always up and working with the intrepidity of a lion."* Not only that. He also advised us, *"anything that brings spiritual, mental, or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your feet."*

Chronic ill health is a result of physical weakness and it becomes a hindrance to building a good personality. Too much of sleep is also a disease and a sign of bodily weakness. Swamiji said that any disease is caused only by weakness. He said to the effect, *"throw away all weakness and disease. Imagine yourselves as strong men who cannot be touched by any disease. If you can imagine like this for an hour everyday, all of your weakness and disease will vanish."* Therefore building a strong body and a strong mind become an important part of our personality development.

We hate physical work

We hate bodily exertion. We prefer to sit merrily all the time. Such jobs, which are sedentary, are our supreme goal. Generally even for a small task we depend on someone else. As a society we are habituated to depend on the government for everything. The main reason for such an attitude is because of the fact that people who are supposed to be the torchbearers of the society themselves are shunning physical work.

Swamiji pointed out the pitfalls in our educational system. Our educational system is not teaching the value of physical work, dignity of labour and self-esteem. *He said: "Laziness, meanness, and hypocrisy have covered the whole length and breadth of the country. Can an intelligent man look on all this and remain quiet? Does it not bring tears to the eyes? Madras, Bombay, Punjab, Bengal—whichever way I look, I see no signs of life. You are thinking yourselves highly educated. What nonsense have you learnt? Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourselves educated! Fie upon you! Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship, or being a roguish lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistracy, which is*

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another form of clerkship — isn't that all? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its wealth! Will your education fulfil this want?"

Swamiji advised us: "You must learn to make the physique very strong and teach the same to others. Don't you find me exercising everyday with dumb-bells even now? Walk in the morning and evenings and do physical labour. Body and mind must run parallel. It won't do to depend on others for everything. When the necessity of strengthening the physique is brought home to people, they will exert themselves of their own accord. It is to make them feel this need that education is necessary at the present moment."

It does not matter what work we undertake, but what is of the greatest importance is how we do it. We may be in any profession or trade or in any walk of life. All the great men we come across in history concerned themselves more with the way they work than with what work they do.

Swamiji taught, "You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate these fields (Swamiji said this, pointing to

the meadows of the Ramakrishna Math). You must be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras now, and the next moment to go and sell the produce of the fields in the market. You must be prepared for all menial services."

Blind imitation

India remained in slavery for a thousand years. Thus, an important trait you find in a slavish society is the thinking that all that which is their own is decadent and that of the conquering race is good and glorious. Further, it keeps the slavish race under the illusion that imitating the conquering race is the only way to achieve greatness. Even now we are thinking that western culture is superior to ours and by imitating western ideas we will achieve eminence. But Swamiji asserted that imitating the great characters of our own history and culture and imbibing their virtues is the only way of our betterment.

"O India! With this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty — wouldst thou, with these provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilisation and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic?"

Thus, unless we rid ourselves of the above bad qualities pointed out by Swamiji, we will not be able to build good personalities. At the same time we should not forget that Swamiji asked us to learn whatever that is good in foreigners, without neglecting our own noble characteristics of unselfishness, sacrifice and honesty bequeathed to us by our beloved forefathers. We have to assimilate the characteristics of skill, perseverance, obedience and organization from the western nations.

04. Is it possible to build a great personality?

Yes! It is possible to build a personality! We have to build it on our own. None else can do that for us. None can gift us a great personality.

Now, we have to understand that we already have a personality. It is indeed with its help that we reached wherever we are today. And to become better and greater we have to further improve and build our personality. But this task is to be undertaken by ourself.

Is there a specific method to do this? Yes, there is.

We commit mistakes because of the deficiencies in our personality. As our personality gets better we commit fewer mistakes. First, we have to admit our mistakes. We have to analyze our deficiencies and see that we do not repeat the same mistakes again.

To achieve this we need to be honest with ourselves and should firmly resolve not to repeat the same mistakes again and again. In fact, this is largely what we do in building our personality.

Swamiji said that he would bless the mistakes he committed in his life, and added that they made him a better man. So if we commit a mistake, it is not bad, but if we do not correct ourselves, it is very bad.

05. Do we need an ideal to build our personality?

Swami Vivekananda said, "Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be. If you think yourselves strong, strong you will be." Now, how to think about strength, constantly? We need to keep an ideal in front of us. We need an ideal which is a symbol of strength and which constantly reminds us of strength.

Swamiji declared that we would be better off with an ideal to follow. He further said, "The ideal may be far away, no doubt, but at the same time, we know that we must have it. We must even have the highest ideal (we can possibly imagine)."

"Unfortunately in this life, the vast majority of persons are groping through this dark life without any

ideal at all. If a man with an ideal makes a thousand mistakes, I am sure that the man without an ideal makes fifty thousand."

Therefore for building a great personality, keeping an ideal is absolutely essential.

06. What is an ideal?

We are not happy with our present state. Therefore, we want to reach a state where we are perfect. In that state we will not commit mistakes and there will be no misery. After reaching such a state, we would always be in a state of absolute bliss. After reaching that pinnacle, nothing else remains to be achieved. Such a perfect state is our ideal.

This idea of an ideal may not necessarily originate in our own minds. Someone might have described it to us.

Therefore, we can define an ideal as the highest and greatest idea of something that can be set by a person in his/her own mind. This ideal varies from person to person and also according to the tastes of people. It keeps evolving as we evolve in our own lives.

Naturally, every man aspires to reach that high state. However, most of us do not know how to reach such a state. Never to despair, help is ready at hand in the form of the message of Swami Vivekananda. He gave

us all the details about the ways and means of reaching that ideal.

07. How to bring that ideal to a practical level?

How do we bring that ideal into our daily life? How do we put it into practice? How do we build our own personalities based on that ideal?

Swamiji answered these questions. *He said, "It is better to have an ideal. And this ideal, we must hear about, as much as we can, till it enters into our hearts, into our brains, into our very veins, until it tingles in every drop of our blood and permeates every pore in our body, we must meditate upon it." Swamiji also said, "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh,' and out of the fullness of the heart the hand works too."*

Thus when an ideal fills every cell of our body, we will achieve the same greatness as that ideal. All of our work starts to show the same level of perfection and greatness.

08. Is it necessary that our ideal should have a form?

Two decades back we had computers that worked with DOS (Disk Operating System). While using that operating system we used to see only words and numbers on the monitor. It used to be difficult working

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The same idea was given in Bhagavad Gita (12:5)
klēśōdhika tarastēṣāṃ avyaktāsakta cētasāṃ
avyaktā hi gatir duḥkhaṃ dēhavadbhiravāpyatē

‘It is difficult and troublesome to think about and understand those things that do not have a form. It is easier to understand and imagine things that have a form. And in doing so we face a lesser amount of difficulty.’

Even though Swamiji detailed about an ideal extensively, he knew well that such a verbose description alone would not be sufficient to make us understand an ideal and bring it to a practical level in our daily lives. By listening to a few abstract ideas everybody will not be able to succeed in building a personality. Everyone cannot rise to such an intellectual level and everyone will not have such mental maturity. That is

why Swamiji exhorted us to follow the lives of the great men and women who brought glory to our motherland. Such personalities, which were bequeathed to us, by our culture would be the best suited for us.

However, our drawbacks and deficiencies will not vanish into thin air as soon as we choose an ideal. The ideal will flash on our mind-screen the moment we are on the verge of committing a mistake and prevent us from going wrong. We should remember that Swamiji said: *"If a man with an ideal makes a thousand mistakes, I am sure a man without an ideal will make fifty thousand!"*

09. What sort of a person can be our ideal?

When someone was eulogizing the people of India, in presence of Swamiji, saying that here the people are very moral and ethical, Swamiji heaved a little and said, "Would to God it were otherwise in my land, for this is verily the virtuousness of death!" He meant, that this kind of virtuousness is worse than death. Does this mean that Swamiji wanted people to be bad? No! Far from it, he wanted to emphasize the fact that people are steeped in Tamas and the morality of the people stems out of inertia and incapacity rather than true righteousness. This goodness, being a product of Tamas, which is the direct opposite of

Sattva, very much looks the same. But, a truly ethical and moral life should have Sattva as its basis.

Swamiji said, "In India, a large majority of people claim that they are very Saattvik (calm and composed), but actually, they are steeped in Tamas (inertia and laziness)." He used to tell repeatedly that, first we have to rid ourselves of this Tamas and develop the character of Rajas and only after that we will be able to reach Sattva.

Swamiji asked us to develop Rajas and said, "Then only will the people grow strong by going to work with great energy and will-power. I have considered the matter most carefully and come to the conclusion that of those who profess and talk of religion nowadays in this country, the majority are full of morbidity; they are either crack-brained or fanatic. Without development of an abundance of Rajas, you have hopes neither in this world, nor in the next. The whole country is enveloped in intense Tamas; and naturally the result is - servitude in this life and hell in the next."

By trying to understand which Guna is working predominantly in our personality and endeavoring to rise up to the next Guna, one can gradually improve one's personality.

He further clearly indicated a suitable character for us to take as our ideal and to emulate. *"We now mostly need the idea of a hero with the tremendous spirit of*

The three Gunas and their characteristics

The word Guna is defined as the quality or characteristic of a person, which gets exhibited as attitude. There are three Gunas based on which human behaviour is classified.

Sattva: Purity is the hallmark of this Guna. Because of this we get unmatched peace and great skill in doing work. Those who are full of this do not commit a mistake even by accident. They never hurt others.

Rajas: Great passion is the sign of this Guna. Because of this a great amount of activity is created. This also creates a lot of restlessness. And as a result of tremendous activity, the good and bad that are constantly associated with work, will also bring us their share of happiness and misery.

Tamas: Ignorance is the chief character of this Guna. Recklessness, inertia, sleep and forgetfulness are the result of this Guna.

Rajas thrilling through his veins from head to foot — the hero who will dare and die to know the Truth — the hero whose armour is renunciation, whose sword is wisdom. We want now the spirit of the brave warrior in the battlefield of life, and not of the wooing lover who looks upon life as a pleasure-garden!”

He asked us to make wisdom our sword and renunciation our armour. Let us discuss the armour first. What does armour do? It gives us protection. Why do we feel the need for any protection? Because; we are afraid of losing something. But those who are full of renunciation, i.e. unselfishness, there is nothing to hide or preserve. So, they are not afraid of anything. Can there be anything under the sun, which can help us better in becoming perfect?

The sword takes us forward in a battle. It helps us in killing the enemy and protecting our own kin. Jnana gives the discrimination between what is good and what is bad. Rather, Jnana teaches us, what is to be made our own and what is to be shunned. So when we make this Jnana our sword then we will be able to annihilate the bad characteristics in us and go forward in the right direction.

10. *Who are those ideals?*

After describing how our ideal should be, Swamiji clearly pointed out some illustrious and celebrated personalities specifically and asked us to make them our ideal. Those great men who brought glory to the mankind and showed us the way of logically implementing the age-old virtues of our culture in their lives are to be taken as our ideals.

Swamiji said: "The country must be raised. The worship of Mahavira (Hanuman) must be introduced; the Shakti-puja must form a part of our daily practice; Sri Rama must be worshipped in every home. Therein lies your welfare, therein lies the good of the country — there is no other way... First of all, we have to introduce the worship of the great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realized the eternal truths are to be presented before the people as the ideals to be followed; as in the case of India — Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Mahavira Hanuman, and Sri Ramakrishna, among others. Can you bring in the worship of Sri Rama and Mahavira Hanuman in this country? Keep aside for the present the Vrindavan aspect of Sri Krishna, and spread far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna roaring the Gita out, with the voice of a lion.

And bring into daily use the worship of Shakti — the divine Mother, the source of all power.”

He also clearly explained how the ideal of a strong personality would give us the same strength and vitality while answering one of his disciples.

Disciple: Sir, at times I am overcome by low spirits, I don't know how.

Swamiji: Then think like this: “Whose child am I? (I have such a great ideal!) I associate with him and shall I have such a weak-mind and low spirit?” Stamping down such weakness of mind and heart, stand up, saying, “I am possessed of heroism — I am possessed of a steady intellect.” I belong to the great race whose ancestors were great rishis. Be fully conscious of your dignity. This will produce a good effect. He who has not this pride has no awakening of Brahman within him. Keep such a pride always awake in the mind. Then weakness of mind and heart will no longer be able to approach you. Never allow weakness to overtake your mind. Remember Mahavira Hanuman! Remember the Divine Mother! And you will see that all weakness and all cowardice will vanish at once.

As we can clearly see, Swamiji categorically defined the personalities that can be our ideals.

11. Can someone else from our own culture be our ideal?

Swamiji also cautioned us to keep away for the time being from some specific kinds of ideals that are presented in our culture.

Disciple: Is then the path of love, as depicted in the ideal of the Gopis, false?

Swamiji: Who says so? Not I! (But,) that is a very superior form of worship (Saadhana). In this age of tremendous attachment to sense-pleasure and wealth, very few are able even to comprehend those higher ideals... Under the present circumstances, that worship is of no good to you. Playing on the flute and so on will not regenerate the country. We now mostly need the idea of a hero with the tremendous spirit of Rajas thrilling through his veins from head to foot.

He further said that, the Rajas would induce tremendous activity and enable us to work with great intensity instead of remaining inactive like cold-blooded reptiles.

12. But how and where to find such an ideal man?

Swamiji extolled the greatness of the two great epics — Ramayana and Mahabharata. He said,

“Ramayana and Mahabharata are the two epics that have been the cherished heritage of the whole Hindu world for the last several thousands of years and they form the basis of the thoughts and of the moral and ethical ideas of the Hindus. In fact, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the two encyclopaedias of the ancient Aryan life and wisdom, portraying an ideal civilization, which humanity has yet to aspire after.”

We come across the life stories of such great men in these epics. Swamiji taught that our children and youth should learn the stories and the moral of those epics and mould their personalities accordingly. More than every other, Swamiji emphasized the great personality of Hanuman - the Mahavira as the ideal for us to follow.

13. Why should we take Hanuman as our ideal?

A disciple asked, “What ideal should we follow now?”

Swamiji told him, “You have now to make the character of Mahavira Hanuman your ideal. See how at the command of Rama he crossed the ocean. He had no care for life or death! He was a perfect master of his senses and wonderfully sagacious. You have now to build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that, all other ideals will gradually manifest in life.

Obedience to the Guru without questioning, and strict observance of Brahmacharya—this is the secret of success. As on the one hand Hanuman represents the ideal of service, so on the other hand he represents leonine courage, striking the whole world with awe. He has not the least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama. A supreme indifference to everything except the service of Rama, even to the attainment of the status of Brahma and Shiva, the great World-Gods! Carrying out the Rama's best is the one vow of his life! Such whole-hearted devotion is wanted."

14. Some more good qualities that need to be cultivated

Because of the long slavery, our eating habits; our thinking power; the music, literature and arts that give us entertainment; have all degenerated. To build a great personality we have to pay attention to these things as well.

The food we eat should make us strong. The music we listen to, the arts we learn and the literature we read must create ideas of strength in our mind. They should help us to gain willpower and a firm hold on our mind and should enable us to reach higher levels of performance physically, mentally and spiritually.

Those arts, literature and cinemas, which turn our minds more and more towards our body and its ephemeral pleasures and make us weak and slavish, are of no use. Talking to the same disciple, in addition to praising Hanuman, Swamiji also gave us several tips on cultivating the character of Rajas.

“Are not drums made in the country (India)? Are not trumpets and kettle-drums available in India? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of these effeminate forms of music and listening to the kirtana, the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. What more degradation can you expect? Even the poet’s imagination fails to draw this picture (the picture of the heroic Hanuman)! The Damaru and horn have to be sounded, drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes, and with “Mahavira, Mahavira” on your lips and shouting “Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom”, the quarters are to be reverberated. The music, which awakens only the softer feelings of man, is to be stopped now for some time. Stopping the light tunes such as Kheal and Tappa for some time, the people are to be accustomed to hear the Dhrupad music. Through the thunder-roll of the dignified Vedic hymns, life is to be brought back into the

country. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood is to be revived. In following such an ideal lies the good of the people and the country. If you can build your character after such an ideal, then a thousand others will follow. But take care, that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing, or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage. Then only will you attain the grace of Mahashakti, the Divine Mother."

15. Meditation on Hanuman and how to do it?

Imagine a person or God whom we like. If we go on remembering him again and again, thinking about his physical and mental characteristics and about his great accomplishments, then we can call it a meditation on that particular character.

In fact, whether we know it or not, we go on doing this day and night. Take the example of an actor or player who is our favourite. We go on remembering that person. We keep thinking how well he plays or acts. In addition to that, we go on describing him to our friends for hours together. We jump at the slightest opportunity to praise him to the very heights of greatness. In our view even the smallest of his achievements is the

most praise-worthy. Whatever he speaks is Veda for us. And to top it all, we take great pains to support his case if people find some fault in him. All this can be taken as a meditation on a particular character.

Now consider what happens because of this? Sooner than later, we can perceive on our own, how the characters of those persons about whom we are thinking day and night, are influencing our personality. We start imitating that person in the way we walk, talk and dress. Our language and hairdo as well, start to imitate that particular person. It is not rare to see that it happens so, even without our knowledge.

Actually, these characters in question are not so great as to attract so much of our attention. That is exactly the reason why even our personalities do not develop beyond a particular level. And then, imagine what would be the fate of our mind and character if that player or actor turns out to be a bad person and a disgrace to the nation? Whatever it is, we have to agree, that even such actors and players are able to instill a little enthusiasm and inspiration in us.

Now, did not Swamiji describe Hanuman as the ideal for the youth of India? Imagine how great would be the benefit if we think and meditate about his character?

16. *How did Valmiki describe Hanuman?*

Ramayana is the greatest gift ever given to mankind. Valmiki Maharshi was its original author. We all know the gist of that great epic. *Describing it, Swamiji said: “Ramayana is an epic that is an authority on character building.”*

The hero of the story in the Ramayana was Rama. But, the other character, which was as great as Rama, was none other than Hanuman. There was no mention of Hanuman in the first three chapters (a chapter is called a ‘kaanda’) of Valmiki Ramayana. Hanuman appears in the fourth chapter i.e. Kishkindha-kaanda. In the next chapter, Sundara-kaanda, Hanuman shows his multi-faceted personality. And after that until the end of final chapter, Yuddha-kaanda i.e., the end of Valmiki Ramayana, the story virtually revolves around Hanuman.

Valmiki, the Adikavi, described Hanuman as
 anjanānandanam vīraṃ jānakī śōkanāśakam
 kapīśam akṣa hantāraṃ vandē laṅkābhayaṅkaram

“Hanuman, the son of Anjana, is the destroyer of the misery of Sita. He is the leader of the monkeys. He killed Akshakumar who was the son of Ravana and sent lanka tumbling into a deluge of fear.” Thus Valmiki presented Hanuman to us as a great Karma Yogi, an accomplished man and a great warrior.

However, the great personality of Hanuman, as was presented by Valmiki, was given little prominence later on. The devotees of Sri Rama in later times presented Hanuman with their focus greatly deviated from that of Valmiki. *We have seen how Swamiji lamented that; "Even the poet's imagination fails to draw this (heroic) picture (of Hanuman)!"*

In the last one thousand years, Hanuman's personality was not presented in the same way as was by Valmiki. He was presented as a devotee who would get absorbed in God consciousness at the very mention of the name of Rama. That kind of devotion is also very much necessary. However, along with that, to suit our modern day needs, we have to see and understand Hanuman as presented by Valmiki Maharshi. The character of Hanuman, bubbling with Rajas and glowing with Sattva, is the greatest need of the hour. We have seen how the personality of a person can be gauged from his words and deeds.

Now, let us try to see how Hanuman behaved and talked to others during the course of Valmiki Ramayana. By imitating his behavior and conduct, we too will be able to inculcate his virtues.

17. The story line of Ramayana

Vali and Sugreeva were the sons of Riksharaja and were the rulers of Kishkindha. Some misunderstanding cropped

up between them. Vali drove away Sugreeva, appropriated his wife Ruma and was ruling the Kingdom of Kishkindha. Sugreeva was a righteous man but did not have enough valour to fight Vali all by himself. He was living on a mountain named Rishyamooka, which was nearby. Hanuman was one of the ministers of Sugreeva.

Rama left his kingdom and vowed to live in the forest for fourteen years in order to keep the word of his father Dasaradha. Sita, his wife and Lakshmana, his younger brother, also followed him into the forest. Ravana who was the Rakshasa-king of Lanka, abducted Sita and carried her away to Lanka. He wanted to make her his wife, even though she was the wife of someone else. Rama was a man of great valour. He along with Lakshmana started searching for Sita. Someone advised him to take the help of Sugreeva. To meet Sugreeva, Rama came to Kishkindha. Hanuman appears here for the first time in Ramayana. From now on, we will try to understand the role of Hanuman in Ramayana and try to analyze his character and conduct in the light of the message of Swami Vivekananda.

18. Learn to understand where true greatness is!

Hanuman spent all his life as one of the ministers of Sugreeva. Even though he is the greatest of all the monkeys, he never aspired to be the king himself. He never felt that the profession of a minister would be

disgraceful for an accomplished man like him. He considered the duties of a minister to be the highest and carried them with utmost attention. This is the most important characteristic of Hanuman.

Swamiji said, "He who does the lower work is not therefore a lower man. No man is to be judged by the mere nature of his duties, but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they perform them."

In fact, this is how the world actually evaluates us. More than anything else, the world looks at our honesty and integrity. Superficially it may not appear to be so, but after all, the world actually runs on honesty.

Then, is it wrong to aspire to get promoted in our work and aspire for greater responsibilities and through that gain more name and fame? No. Swamiji clearly explained how to get to higher positions in life and the means to achieve it. *He said, "Everyone thinks he is quite as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first show that he has done the duty of his own position; and then higher duties will come to him."* Therefore we have to clearly understand that unless we perform the duty on hand with the greatest accuracy and sincerity, higher responsibilities would not come our way.

And then, can everyone become a leader? Even if a man somehow succeeds in becoming a leader, will he be able to sustain that position? *Swamiji taught, "When we begin to work earnestly in the world, nature gives us blows right and left and soon enables us to find out our position. No man can long occupy satisfactorily a position for which he is not fit. There is no use in grumbling against nature's adjustment."*

This clearly tells us that our first duty is to carry out the task on hand with the best possible efficiency. When we do that, depending on our capabilities, greater responsibilities will be bestowed on us. This is an important lesson in personality building.

Now look at the history from a different angle. Who is the greatest character in Ramayana after Rama and Sita? As we have already observed clearly, it is Hanuman! None else got so much of veneration! He was only a minister of Sugreeva, among several other ministers, while Sugreeva himself was the leader of a small kingdom. But see how Hanuman is being venerated as the ideal for an entire race, through the millennia, and is being worshipped by millions.

19. Be like the humble Squirrel

Swamiji narrated a small story while delivering a lecture on Ramayana. This story was narrated while explaining how the bridge across the sea was constructed.

“The monkeys removed whole hills, placed them in the sea and covered them with stones and trees, thus making a huge embankment. A little squirrel, so it is said, was there rolling himself in the sand and running backwards and forwards on to the bridge and shaking himself. Thus in his small way he was working for the bridge of Rama by putting in sand. The monkeys laughed, for they were bringing whole mountains, whole forests, huge loads of sand for the bridge — so they laughed at the little squirrel rolling in the sand and then shaking himself. But Rama saw it and remarked: “Blessed be the little squirrel; he is doing his work to the best of his ability, and he is therefore quite as great as the greatest of you.” Then he gently stroked the squirrel on the back, and the marks of Rama’s fingers, running lengthways, are seen on the squirrel’s back to this day.”

Now, the squirrel knows that the effort of building a bridge across the ocean is an effort that is on a gigantic scale. It also knows that compared to that its own contribution is very small. But it did not remain idle assuming that its contribution would not be of much

significance. It wanted to contribute to the work with all its might. This is what we have to learn. Working like that squirrel according to once own capacity is the way to build a complete personality.

20. Be ready to shoulder responsibility

Now lets go back to the story of Ramayana. Rama and Lakshmana, wandering in search of Sita reached Kishkindha. Sugreeva saw them from a distance and started fleeing. His ministers were following him. He said to them, "Look at those warriors. They must have been sent by my brother Vali to kill me. They disguised themselves as ascetics. Let us run away from here!" Saying this, he ran to another mountain nearby. But he couldn't stop there even. He ran again and reached another mountaintop. While thus running away, he broke branches of mighty trees and laid them in the way to stop Rama and Lakshmana from reaching him quickly. At last, he stopped on a mountain.

Hanuman, who is one of his ministers, followed the fleeing Sugreeva. He said to Sugreeva: "My lord! We came a long way. Now there is no fear of Vali here. Really, I don't think you need to be so afraid! With a fickle mind and the nature of a monkey, you are being consumed by fear. A king is not supposed to think with such an unsteady mind. A king is supposed to work with a steady mind and get all works done by his subordinates."

Hanuman was well aware of the fears that were occupying the mind of Sugreeva. He understood that Sugreeva was taking wrong decisions because of his hastiness, and suggested appropriate remedial measures for his fears.

Moreover, he did not shirk from his duty of advising his king. He did not hesitate to speak out an inconvenient truth. He did not feel that there were other ministers as well, and he need not take the entire responsibility on himself. Always keeping the best interests of his king topmost in his mind, he took the responsibility on himself. *Swamiji said, "Know that the entire responsibility is on your own shoulders. Then only you will be able to work with the greatest efficiency!"*

The ability to take responsibility is an essential trait to build a great personality. Men of slavish mentality try to avoid responsibility. Someone was asked, "How's your job!" He replied, "Oh, I love the job, but hate the work!" We like to make merry with the money and status a job gives us, but we do not try to give its full due.

Everybody wants a big job with a big responsibility. But how does it come? We want to become great. But how would we become great? Most of the time we do not properly perform even those tasks, which we claim to be of our greatest interest. This is slavish behavior. A slave always

grumbles at his work, because there is no freedom in him. Our society might have eradicated slavery in its physical form but it still remains in the mind-set of people.

Swamiji said, "He who grumbles at the little thing that has fallen to his lot to do will grumble at everything. Always grumbling, he will lead a miserable life, and everything will be a failure. But that man who does his duty as he goes, putting his shoulder to the wheel, will see the light, and higher and higher duties will fall to his share."

Hanuman showed us in action what Swamiji taught. He did not shirk from giving the advice. He did not fear the consequences of his action. He thought well and gave proper advice, which immensely benefited Sugreeva.

21. Learn to speak appropriately

After listening to the advice of Hanuman, Sugreeva came to his senses. He vented out his fears: "Hanuman! Did you see them? They have well-built arms and broad, beautiful eyes. They are carrying bows, arrows and swords. Anybody would fear them! Perhaps they are sent by Vaali to kill me. Would you say that fearing such enemies is wrong? Now, go and talk to them! We should know what is in their mind and why they have come here. Make sure that your face is always turned towards me when you are talking to them."

Sugreeva asked Hanuman to keep his face turned towards him while he was talking to Rama. He wanted to see the changes in the facial expression of Hanuman while he was talking to Rama. We all know the famous saying, “face is the index of mind.” All the thoughts, fears and worries that are in our mind find expression on our face, almost without exception. In that way by reading the face of Hanuman, Sugreeva wanted to assess the content of their conversation and perhaps through that the real intent of Rama in coming to that place.

If you read Kishkinda-kaanda, Sundara-kaanda and Yuddha-kaanda of Ramayana and remember how Hanuman conversed with others, you will understand “What to talk and when to talk; how to talk and how much to talk.” There is a proverb in Telugu, which says, “The town’s people are as good as does our tongue!”

There is a sankrit sloka, which can explain this better.

jihvāgrē vartatē lakṣmī

jihvāgrē mitrabāndhavāḥ

jihvāgrē bandhanaḥ prāptiḥ

jihvāgrē maraṇaṃ dhruvam

“On our tongue dwells the goddess of wealth. On our tongue all our friendships and relationships take root and grow. If we do not use our tongue properly

and wisely, we will land in all sorts of troubles and surely, a wagging tongue would lead us to death.”

From this sloka we can understand that we should always talk honestly and respectfully. We should speak with a clear mind. In the guise of talking freely and frankly, we should not cause pain to others. This also leads to the conclusion that we should talk only as much as needed and only when it is most essential.

Under the instructions of Sugreeva, Hanuman approached Rama and Lakshmana in the guise of an ascetic. He said to them, “O handsome men! Who are you? Why have you come here? You are wearing coarse clothing and look like ascetics. But your strength and valour are unmistakable. It can be clearly seen that you are capable of defeating even the greatest of enemies. It seems you are not willing to disclose who you are. This place belongs to Sugreeva. He is the king of the monkeys and is a righteous man. His elder brother Vali, dethroned him unjustly. I am one of his ministers. He wants to make friendship with you. Since I have the ability to change my appearance, I have come to you in the form of an ascetic.”

Hanuman spoke guilelessly, true to the idea that is in his mind. He disclosed his true identity at the very outset. He did not try to conceal who he is and why

he has come to them. He wanted to win-over their hearts by telling them the truth as it is.

Those who are well accomplished in life tell us that speaking the truth and presenting a true picture is usually more benefiting than concealing the truth. Generally, we are afraid of presenting the picture as it is, because of our own preconceived notions, which are usually unjustified. When we tell a lie, it usually leads to more and more lying, as we have to cover it up further and further. This may help us in the short run, but the consequences would be sour if our falsehood gets exposed later on.

Consider a situation! You come across a stranger. Instead of talking to him in a straightforward manner, you tell him all sorts of lies and cooked-up-stories, either to cheat him or fool him. Later on, naturally, the truth will come out. Imagine what that person would feel about you, when he knows the truth? Try to imagine how it would affect your relationship with him?

Swamiji taught us to respect every person, however devilish be his appearance. Forming an idea without understanding a man properly will turnout to be a great drawback in our character.

Rama was listening to Hanuman silently. From the few words spoken by Hanuman, Rama was able to gauge the

character of Hanuman and describe it, then and there, to Lakshmana. He told Lakshmana: "Brother! We wanted to meet Sugreeva and see what happened! Sugreeva himself sent his minister Hanuman to us! And see how well Hanuman spoke to us. It is only possible for a man who mastered Rigveda, Yajurveda and Saamaveda to talk like that. I am also sure he studied grammar quite well. You can well see that from the fact that there is not a sound that is out of place in his speech."

Rama stated that an oratory of the standard of Hanuman is not possible for someone who has not studied the Vedas thoroughly. He also declared that Hanuman mastered grammar and that is why there are no inappropriate words in his speech. We can learn from Rama's observation that the words spoken by us must be clear and the listener must be able to understand them clearly and completely. The sentences we speak should be correct grammatically. After all, what we speak is intended for the other man and not for ourselves!

Let it be English or Sanskrit or any vernacular language, if the grammar is not correct, how can the listener understand it properly? If people do not understand what we speak, it is a problem. If people misunderstand us, it is a catastrophe. Thus, any

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amount of time and energy spent on mastering gram-
mar, and the ability to converse would never go waste.

Swamiji said that prestige goes along with Sanskrit learning. He also said, studying Vedas frees one's mind from dogma. Sanskrit, English or any vernacular – whatever the language - we have to practise clear pronunciation and should speak the language idiomatically.

Rama made a few more observations: “While Hanuman is speaking, there are no unnecessary movements either in his face, or eyes or forehead or eye-brows or any other organ of his body. I could see nothing wrong. Neither is he dragging his speech nor is he faltering for words. His speech is neither slow nor hurried and is originating from the region of his heart and coming out of his throat in a steady tone and is very pleasing to the ear. Speaking like that is possible only for a man of pure heart. His words sound auspicious and would easily win the hearts of his listeners. His sentences are most meaningful. He is speaking clearly by using the three areas of his lungs, throat and head. Even an enemy who is about to pounce with sword in hand would calm down and turn favourable in the face of such oratory.”

Here Rama enumerated all the good characteristics in the speech of Hanuman. We have to understand them well and should also practise to speak like that.

Swamiji taught: "Use agreeable and wholesome language towards even the greatest enemy."

And to top it all, Rama said, "O Lakshmana! How can any king who does not employ such ministers get his works done successfully? A king who has the benefit of employing such ministers who are virtuous and capable has no problems. He will be able to accomplish all his works merely by delegating his employees."

Now, we can well understand the importance of speech. Our very lives are dependent on how well we express ourselves. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in practising and learning to speak properly. Any amount of our effort in that direction would not go waste. Learning to speak properly is perhaps the most important part of building a great personality.

22. Always keep your word

Rama killed Vaali and made Sugreeva the king. Sugreeva made Angada the crown prince. He promised Rama that he would send search parties to find Sita at the end of rainy season. However, Sugreeva got engrossed in the pleasures of the royalty and forgot the promise he made to Rama. As the rainy season was coming to an end, Hanuman approached Sugreeva and reminded him of his duty.

“O my lord! Now you have got your kingdom back. But you have not kept your promise yet. You should keep your word without fail. He who carefully remembers and meticulously executes the promises he made to his friends and behaves in a manner that does not trouble their mind will find his kingdom prosperous”.

“O Sugreeva! You are a man of righteous conduct. So you should keep your word and see that the promise made to Rama was executed promptly. Whoever works diligently to keep his promises will be successful in every one of his endeavours, even though he neglects his own works. Whoever neglects his promises and does not help his friends in time will soon find failure elsewhere as well since his help would not really be useful to his friends. Thus the help that is not rendered in time is no help at all.”

“My lord! Now your immediate task is to find the whereabouts of Sita. So, act swiftly, find where Sita is, and inform Rama about it to make him happy. We have to start working before Rama reminds us. If we wake up early and start the work on our own, we will not be blamed for negligence and delay. If we start working after he reminds us, because of the delay, the blame of cheating a friend will befall us”.

“Now is the time to keep our word. A king should take care of his treasury, army and friends on par with himself. If he neglects his promise, he will face all sorts of troubles. We know the strength and valour of Rama. He will not remind you again and again. So we should act without further delay.

You are a righteous man who is always ready to help his friends. In fact, it is because of Rama that you were able to become the king once again. So you should not be careless in regard to such a great man. We are waiting for your orders! We are ready to trace the location of Sita where ever she might be in the three worlds!”

Swami Vivekananda taught, “Whenever you promise to do any work, you must do it exactly at the appointed time, or people lose faith in you”. We have to do everything at its appointed time without fail. Sleep, negligence and forgetfulness are categorised as Tamasic in the Bhagavad Gita. Because of these three, we fail to do what we have to do on time. We have to work with bubbling enthusiasm. Through that we will be able to acquire great qualities.

But usually, only a few of us succeed in keeping our word. Then shall we give it up entirely, thinking that it is bestowed only on a select few? Certainly not! In

fact, this is a learnable quality and can be learnt by all of us. How to do it? By constant practice! In our daily life, we should try to do every work by keeping our mind alert and steady and finish the work at the appointed time. It does not matter how small the task is. If we go on working like this, we will be able to finish all our works at the appointed time. Gradually this will pave the way to a great personality.

The society dearly needs men who keep their word and deliver results. In fact the future of a society depends heavily on such men. They need not be doctors and engineers alone. Masses – farmers, carpenters, masons, vendors, shop-keepers, rickshaw-pullers, tailors or chefs – whatever their profession – ‘the men of honour’, who keep their word and deliver a job on time acquire great respect and prosperity.

Our personality never depends on our profession but always on our character, honesty and unselfishness. We should not forget this even for a moment.

There is a story. Three men took shelter in the verandah of a thatched house to avoid getting wet in a downpour. The family living in the house wanted to invite them in, as they are the guests of the house. The three guests who said that their names were honesty, prosperity and fame refused to enter the house

together and suggested that only one of them might be invited into the house. The owner of the house suggested that they should invite 'fame'. His wife suggested that they should invite 'prosperity'. However, their daughter-in-law suggested that they better invite 'honesty'. Everyone liked this idea and 'honesty' was invited into the house. And to the surprise of everyone, along with honesty, prosperity and fame also entered into the house. What is the import of this story? Where there is honesty, there are prosperity and fame without fail.

Swami Vivekananda taught us to the effect: "Unselfishness is more paying. Only people don't have the patience to practise it. Life depends on the idea of give and take. But a man who goes on calculating whether he is getting enough returns for the efforts he is putting forth will never be able to achieve anything. When you read the lives of great men you will always find that they are always engrossed in giving. Ultimately fame and prosperity come searching for them. In fact, life is all about giving rather than taking."

23. Learn to work unitedly

Sugreeva sent the monkey warriors in all four directions in search of Sita. Along with Hanuman, Neela, Gaja, Gavaya, Gavaaksha, Sushena, Vrishabha, Mainda,

Dvididha, Vijaya, Gandhamaadana, Ulkaamukha, Angada and Jambavantha were sent in the direction of south. Angada was appointed as their leader. Sugreeva gave them a deadline of thirty days. When they were about to start Sugreeva called Hanuman and told him, "O son of Anjana! You are capable of making it to any place on earth. You are as capable as your father Vayu, the wind god, in crossing rivers and oceans. You have a good understanding of the various regions and seasons. You are a knowledgeable man. So the responsibility is chiefly on your shoulders."

Suppose you are given a task. It is a difficult task. You do not know the depth of the problem, to begin with. Even then, you have to complete the task by the appointed time. There is no "supervisor" to observe and guide you each and every minute. Still, you will deliver the job without a hitch and you will never break the trust that is reposed in you. This is how an exemplary man works. Under such conditions we see Hanuman working and completing the task successfully. The creativity, dexterity, enthusiasm and commitment of Hanuman demonstrate to us such a character, in all its' splendour.

These monkey warriors reached the south seacoast after a long and arduous search. Even the thirty-day

deadline given to them was well past. They had not a clue where Sita was. At this juncture, prince Angada addressed the monkey warriors: "The deadline given to us by king Sugreeva is long past. We still haven't a clue where Sita is. Now if we go back with empty hands, he will put all of us to death. Now, in these conditions, it is better for us to die here rather than go back to Kishkindha. I will go on a fast unto death and give up my life here itself. You may think that Sugreeva may show some lenience towards me since I am the prince. But Sugreeva does not like me from my very childhood. It is only at Rama's insistence, that he made me the prince. Now he has a chance to blame me and put me to torture. It is better for me to die here rather than go through that punishment."

Hanuman listened to the words of Angada. Hanuman felt that Angada might start a revolt against Sugreeva with the help of these monkey warriors by planting seeds of anarchy in their minds. Angada is only a young man and the leader of a small group. Hanuman felt unhappy with the way Angada was talking about Sugreeva. Because of such talk, the important mission of searching for Sita might go unfulfilled. He wanted to somehow avoid that.

All the clever ideas we use to manage human beings may be classified into four categories. They are assurance, appeasement, discord and punishment. Hanuman here used the third idea of creating discord, spoke cleverly and ensured that the contingent of monkey-warriors does not rise in revolt. By using threat he created a little fear and made them change their minds.

He told the monkey-warriors: "We should not do anything without properly weighing its consequences. If we do not carry the message of Sita's whereabouts to Sugreeva and die here, then Rama, Lakshmana, Sugreeva and all others would as well give up their lives in Kishkindha. And we will be responsible for their death. Moreover, imagine the fate of your own kith and kin? Who would look after them? So, giving up our lives is not a good idea."

Then he used the fourth idea of punishment and changed Angada's mind. Talking positively, Hanuman told Angada, "Oh Angada! You are a man of great valour. You are mightier than your father. If you become the king, you would be a greater ruler than your father himself. But you are forgetting something. These monkeys are fickle minded. They have come here leaving behind their wives and children at Kishkindha. Do you think they would be prepared to give up their lives here, in this way? Moreover, Jambavantha, Neela, Sushena and myself are the minis-

ters of Sugreeva and would always remain in his service. We would never leave him. Please do not forget that, after Sugreeva, in course of time, you will inherit the kingdom anyway, because he has no children of his own." Listening to these words Angada remained calm.

If all our dreams come true effortlessly, then where is the necessity for building a better personality? When we continue with the work, the problems as well would increase. Changing circumstances should not divert our attention from the work we take up. Rather, we have to properly direct the attention of our team members and continue with the work.

Usually, whenever we take up a work we come across many obstacles. Some of them sometimes turn into a real headache. We also come across some people who very convincingly tell us that we better give up the work on hand and do something else, which they say is more important. This also is a kind of an obstacle. Now, the man who is able to keep his mind steadily directed towards a single goal in the face of all these distractions and obstacles, is the greatest man on earth.

24. Help from unexpected, unforeseen sources

Hearing the wise counsel of Hanuman, Angada calmed down. Then, something strange happened. A great kite, named Sampaathi came there. He is the brother of

Jataayu, the friend of Dasaratha. He told the monkey warriors: "I saw Ravana forcibly carrying away a very beautiful woman. She was weeping and throwing away her ornaments and was crying. "Rama! Rama!" Perhaps she might be Sita. If you cross this ocean you will reach Lanka, the kingdom of Ravana. You will be able to find Sita there. The sage Nisaakara asked me to wait here until the time of your arrival. I am leaving now. Gird up your loins and get to work! You will succeed!"

Help comes from unknown and unforeseen sources to those who work steadfastly. In the same way, Sampathi directed the monkey warriors. He gave the information about the whereabouts of Sita. But, he did not give them all the information they needed. Others may guide us a little, but they will not be able to solve our problems completely. We have to solve them ourselves. There is no point in losing heart.

A man who works with honesty and unselfishness will have a clear mind. He is not bogged-down by several ideas, all cropping up at the same time in his mind. He does not calculate whether it is profitable or not to do a particular work. Such a mind with the passage of time gains great purity and such a pure mind itself can work as the "Guru" for us. By auto-

suggestion, it gives all the solutions we need. This is how the people of honesty succeed in their life.

25. Be steadfast in the face of ordeals

Now the monkey warriors know the location of Sita. But they have to see her in order to give a proper report to Sugreeva. They happily camped on the beach. But looking at the sea, fearsome with huge waves and tremendous rumble and with no other shore in sight they soon lost hope again.

Now they need to cross the ocean. How to do it? Angada started the discussion by saying, "Oh warriors! We were told that the sea is of a width of one hundred Yojanas (Yojana is a measure of distance like a mile or kilometer, used in ancient India. The exact measurement is disputed amongst scholars with distances being given between 6 to 15 kilometres for a yojana). Whoever capable of crossing the ocean, may come forward. Such a man would save our lives. He would enable us to go back to Kishkindha and live happily with our kith and kin." But no monkey came forward.

Then Angada asked: "At least tell me how far each of you can jump?" Gaja said that he could jump ten yojanas. Gavaaksha claimed twenty. Gavaya said he

might do thirty and Sarabha said that he could do forty. Gandhamaadana added ten more and Mainda said sixty. Dwividha said seventy and Sushena said that he would cross eighty yojanas. Jambavantha said that he would jump ninety yojanas. After listening to all of them Angada said that he can jump all the one hundred yojanas and reach Lanka but is not sure whether he can jump back from there.

Then, Jambavantha said to him: "Oh young prince! You can jump all the hundred and return as well. In fact, you can jump a thousand yojanas. But right now, you cannot do that. Because you are our leader and should not straight away take the job on your own shoulders. We are all here to do the job for you!" Angada got vexed and said, "None of you are ready to cross the ocean and neither would allow me to go. It seems death is the only option left for us!" In this way the monkey warriors remained quite confused about the next course of action.

Swami Vivekananda said, "How much of tempest and waves one has to weather, before one reaches the haven of peace! The greater a man has become; the fiercer ordeal he has had to pass through. Their lives have been tested true by the touchstone of practical life, and only then have they been acknowledged great

by the world. Those who are faint-hearted and cowardly sink their barks near the shore, frightened by the raging waves of the sea. He who is a hero never casts a glance at these. Come what may, I must attain my ideal first — this is Purushakara, 'manly endeavour' (the same term 'Purushakaara' applies to women also); without such manly endeavour no amount of Divine help will be of any avail."

Swamiji said this, perhaps, keeping in mind this very episode. The "Purushakaara" i.e., 'manliness' can be found manifested to the fullest extent in Hanuman.

Imagine the personality and mental make up of those people who climb the Everest or swim across the ocean or those that circumnavigate the earth in a boat or in an aeroplane. Even in the modern world we can see such manliness in those people. What we need is such 'Manly Endeavour'.

26. Remind yourself of the great strength that is already in you

While the monkey warriors remained in a state of indecision, Jambavantha said to them, "Oh warriors! Please be at rest. There is one man yet among us who can easily accomplish this insurmountable task. I shall go and enthuse him to jump into action!" He went to

Hanuman, who was sitting calmly at a distance watching them.

Jambavantha said to him. "Hanuman! What is this? You are a man of immense strength and knowledge and still you are sitting here as if you know nothing. Does it befit you to sit silently at this hour of crisis? I saw Garuda. You are equal in strength to him. Not only that. Both in intellect and physical strength – you are unrivaled. You are the son of mother Anjani and you are born of the vigour of Vayu, the great god of wind. When you were a baby, assuming the raising sun to be a fruit, you jumped into the sky to catch him. Even the heat of sun could not deter you. At this Indra got frightened and hit you with his Vajra. With that blow you fell on a mountaintop. Because of that, your left cheek dented a little. That is the reason why you got the name Hanuman. When the wind-god got wind of what happened to you he stopped moving. Because of that, the entire universe turned chaotic. Everybody started praying to the wind god to give up his protest. To pacify him, Brahma gave you a boon that no weapon would be able to kill you. Devendra gave you the boon of voluntary death. You are a man of such exceptional strength, blessed with such great boons. How can you sit like this in a moment of crisis? The

lives of all the monkeys depend on you. You are our saviour! Now, arise and show your strength!”

“Arise, O warrior of leonine strength! Arise to relieve these warriors from the worry of the tragedy that would befall them in the event of not being able to find Sita. Cross the ocean and save us all!”

As Jambavantha praised him, Hanuman felt very happy. His body began to grow up in size by measures of palm trees. All the monkey warriors were fascinated to see his exceptional size. All of them started praising Hanuman. That made him grow all the more.

Hanuman saluted all the elders and said to them: “Oh great warriors! The great god of wind, who can move mountains, is my father. And he is a great friend of the Fire-god. I can fly even to the mount Meru and come back, any number of times. The turbulence generated from the movement of my hands will send the ocean churning. I can travel with the same speed as that of Garuda. My intellect and mind are filled with the enthusiasm of seeing mother Sita. I will leave for Lanka, now and travel like the arrow released from the bow of Rama. Be at peace till I return. I shall uproot the island of Lanka and bring it here, if necessary!” When Hanuman spoke like this, the monkey warriors

hailed and cheered him. In that din, even the roar of the ocean could not be heard.

Looking at Hanuman who is ready to go, Jambavantha said, "Oh Hanuman! You removed the worry from the hearts of these monkey warriors. Now we are all happy. You filled our hearts with faith and strength. All the elders here join me in blessing you. You will cross the ocean by the blessings of our ancestors and teachers. We shall all wait here eagerly for your return. You are our only hope. Now, complete the mission and return successfully!"

Sometimes in life, we tend to lose faith in ourselves. What does one do in such an eventuality? We have to remember the successes we have already achieved. That will give us enthusiasm and inspiration.

Swami Vivekananda taught us to always remember that the blood of the great Rishis of yore is flowing through our veins. We have to remember the greatness of our ancestors and parents. We should feel proud of them. That builds our self-confidence and fills us with enthusiasm.

More than anything else, we should always remember the power of the atman that resides in all of us. When we remember that, our willpower becomes stronger and gives us the self-assuring faith that we

can achieve anything and everything. The more we remind ourselves of the strength of the atman and keep it fresh in our minds, the better will we be able to work and build a personality of great strength.

27. Face the brute!

When we start any work, we will be troubled with all sorts of problems. Swamiji explained the ways and means of facing problems at great length. We can see all of them exemplified in the life of Hanuman.

Hanuman climbed onto a mountain called Mahendragiri and from there jumped into the air. Soon he faced his first obstacle. There is a mountain called Mainaaka, which sits at the bottom of the ocean, in the path of Hanuman. At the behest of the Ocean-god, Mainaaka stood up tall so that Hanuman would land on him and take a little rest. Hanuman saw the mountain standing up in his path and thought that the mountain is trying to block his way. With the same energy of Vayu disintegrating a cloud, he pushed aside the mountaintop with his chest and continued his journey.

Then the mountain Mainaaka took a human form and invited Hanuman saying, "Oh Hanuman! You are able to achieve an extraordinary feat. Please step on me and rest a while".

Hanuman replied, "Oh Mainaaka! I am much pleased at your invitation. But I can't stop now. Your kind words themselves show your hospitality. Please don't mind my refusal. I am going on an important assignment. I vowed that I would travel like the arrow released from the bow of Rama and reach Lanka before the sunset. Hence, I should not stop anywhere." He touched Mainaaka with his hand and continued his journey.

Mainaaka requested Hanuman to stop with a view to help him. But Hanuman thought even this hospitality would turn out to be a hindrance. Swamiji used to quote a proverb, which says, "*One who is very particular gets nothing!*" This means, to achieve a greater goal one should not be too particular about formalities that are too trivial. When he was determined to reach Lanka by sunset, stopping to rest anywhere would be an obstacle. That is why Hanuman did not like the idea of taking rest. Not only that. Even though he pushed aside Mainaaka, immediately he changed his tone, answered him politely and made him happy. Once again, this shows the greatness of Hanuman.

Now the Devas, Gandharvas, Siddhas and Maharshis, observing this impossible mission undertaken by Hanuman, wanted to test his abilities. They approached

Surasa, the goddess-mother of snakes and requested her to test the strength and intelligence of Hanuman on their behalf. They told her, "Hanuman is crossing the ocean. We want to test him. We want you to take the form of a great demon of the size of a great mountain and obstruct his course and test him!"

Surasa assumed a terrifying form and stood in the way of Hanuman and said to him, "O Hanuman! The gods gifted you as food to me. I am very hungry and will eat you up. Now you cannot but enter my mouth!" Hanuman listened to her and said, "Mother! Now I am going on a mission in the service of Rama. I shall first find the whereabouts of Sita. After giving that information to Rama I shall happily offer myself to you!" But Surasa was unrelenting. She said, "I don't care! You cannot escape me. Brahma gave me a boon that whoever comes to me should enter my mouth. So you have to enter my mouth." Now Hanuman started to increase the size of his body to circumvent this ordeal. Surasa too started increasing the size of her mouth. Seeing her mouth attain an enormous size, Hanuman thought, "Now her mouth is very big. I shall make myself very small, enter her mouth and come out in a flash. That would have her boon fulfilled and perhaps she will leave me." He made himself very small,

quickly entered her mouth and came out in a flash. Standing high in the sky, he bowed to her with folded hands and said, "O Surasa! Kindly accept my salutations! I entered your mouth as per the boon given to you by Brahma. Now please allow me to leave!" Surasa felt very happy and blessed him with success.

The encounter with Surasa, though hostile, is similar to that of Mainaaka. But it was not possible to escape Surasa. We also come across such obstacles in work. We will be able to go forward only after overcoming them. We may feel that there is no solution in sight to surmount such obstacles and Hanuman showed us how to deal with them.

As he continued the journey, he came across yet another demon whose name was Simhika. She was capable of pulling down anything flying in the sky by catching hold of its shadow. She looked at Hanuman and thought, "It is quite some time since had a good meal. At last, I found an animal that is big enough to satisfy my hunger. I shall eat this!" Simhika caught hold of Hanuman's shadow and started pulling him down. Hanuman understood that he was being pulled down. He looked around and found a big animal like demon pulling him down. He remembered what Sugreeva told him about this demon. This demon, Simhika, is capa-

ble of pulling down flying creatures by holding on to their shadows. He, once again, started increasing the size of his body. Simhika too started making her mouth wider. Hanuman could see her vital organs through her mouth. He made his body small in a flash, entered her body, ripped apart her vital organs, killed her and came out and continued his journey. The gods and goddesses were watching the spectacle from sky with awe. They said, "O Hanuman! You are the best among all the monkeys. For someone of such courage, intellect, willpower and efficiency in work, no work would be difficult. You will be able to achieve whatever you aim at. You will always be successful!"

In the case of Simhika there was no way but to exterminate the obstacle. Hanuman had the strength enough to do that. Hanuman knew about the animal before hand. Swamiji said, "You need an all-sided intellect to do efficient work". For success in life, we should have the proper understanding, commonsense and a good deal of knowledge, of as many things as possible. The importance of such a quality cannot be over-emphasized. More than mere knowledge, we should carefully develop the power of applying that knowledge in daily life. That is the mark of a great personality.

28. We need to conquer despair

Hanuman searched every inch of the city of Lanka but could not find Sita. He was filled with despair. He thought, "Sita might have committed suicide in order to protect herself from Ravana. She might have died of shock, looking at the terrible forms of all these demons. How can I go back without finding Sita? What would I tell Angada and others who will be waiting for me eagerly? How can I show my face to them? Come what may! I will not leave Lanka without locating Sita. After all, what on earth, is this despair? I will throw it off and continue my search for Sita."

He searched every nook and corner of the inner quarters of Ravana's house. But could not find Sita anywhere. His mind was filled with despair. He thought, "It seems Sita is not in Lanka. May be the cruel Ravana ate her up. May be that she might have given up her body thinking of Rama. How can I convey this message to Rama? If I tell them that I could not find Sita, then along with Rama and Lakshmana, Sugreeva and all others would give up their bodies as well. I crossed the ocean undergoing so much trouble; shall all that go waste? Here is my resolve! I will not leave this place until I find Sita!" Then he went to the Ashoka

grove and found Sita sitting under a tree called Sinsupa.

Hanuman was faced with a situation like we all do in our lives. His thinking was pretty similar to what we usually do in the modern times. On one side, he was filled with worry and despair that he may not succeed in his mission of finding Sita. On the other side, he was trying to pacify himself by making his mind steady and bringing it under control. He eliminated all that despair from his mind and continued with the work, and achieved success at last. We have to develop similar ability to conquer despair and remain focussed on our goal. *Swamiji said, "All power is within you! All the energy, help and succour you need is within you... hold the ideal a thousand times, and if you fail a thousand times, attempt once more."* By taking a firm resolution that he will not leave Lanka without finding Sita, Hanuman showed us how to behave resolutely during the times of crisis. With that will power he succeeded in finding Sita.

29. We should be able to see others miseries as our own

Hanuman saw Sita just before sunrise. She was sitting under a Sinsupa tree and was thin from all the fasting

and appeared pale. Meanwhile, Ravana came there. By fear or favour, he tried to convince her to marry him. But Sita was unrelenting. She said, "Soon Rama will come here to kill you and take me back." Ravana became angry and threatened her: "I will give a period of one month to change your mind and marry me. If you don't, I will cut you up, have you cooked and will eat you!"

Hanuman thought, "At last, I could see Sita who brings felicity to the universe. I should talk to her carefully. If she gets scared by looking at me and cries out, then all the Rakshasas will wake up and start a big fight. That would spoil my mission. I will not be able to tell Sita that Rama is searching for her and would soon arrive to rescue her. The whereabouts of Sita will also not reach Rama. That is why Aryans say that the messengers of the king should act very carefully, keeping in mind the time and circumstance. Otherwise everything will come to naught. Now, Sita is thinking about Rama. So I will introduce myself to her by praising Rama, so that she will be impressed."

As soon as Ravana departed, all the rakshasas fell asleep. But Hanuman did not come down from the tree all of a sudden. He did not want to jump in front of her, as it might scare her. When you are talking to

someone in distress, it is better that you introduce the topic slowly. Keeping this in mind, he started narrating the story of Rama from the tree itself. He started with the birth of Rama and stated how he went to forest and how Sita was abducted. Then he continued with the story of the friendship of Rama and Sugreeva and how he himself came to Lanka searching for Sita. After listening to this, Sita mustered a little courage and looked into the tree canopy to find Hanuman. Hanuman climbed down from the tree and gave her the royal ring of Rama. He assured her that Rama would soon arrive with a great army of monkeys and bears, under the leadership of Sugreeva and defeat Ravana. Sita felt happy listening to this.

When we talk to people who are in despair and fear, we have to be very careful. We have to create a little faith in them by our gentle behaviour. Only those who can see the trials and tribulations of others as their own, can bring solace to others. Swamiji said, "Try to see others problems as your own!" This is called empathy and is a great quality.

Who can achieve such a feat of convincing and impressing someone, who is lost in doubt and despair? Only those who have a great deal of unselfishness

and who are devoid of all pride. This is not possible to those who do lip service. For a completely selfless man, the words come out of the fullness of heart. Only those, whose heart is filled with compassion and sincerity, can really achieve the tremendous feat of speaking reassuringly and bringing solace to others.

30. Learn to develop foresight

Usually men react and work at the spur of the moment. They do not try to think of the consequences while they work. We not only should do the work that is given to us, but also be careful enough to consider its after-effects.

After finding Sita, Hanuman thought, "I have seen Sita. Now it would be better if I try to know what Ravana is up to. I have to find out what Ravana's real strength is. I have to understand the tactics of warfare employed by the Rakshasas by engaging them in a battle. If I do that, then I would have completed my task properly."

"In the case of Ravana, the first three tactics of assurance, appeasement and discord would not work. Ravana is a Rakshasa. So talking assuringly to him would not work. And then he is extremely wealthy. So he would not be appeased by gifts. And then he is a man of great

valour. All his ministers, army and others are completely under his control. So the tactic of creating discord also would not work. Only by showing my strength I will be able to control him. Now I will try to kill some of the rakshasa warriors in order to weaken him a little.”

He further thought, “Whoever, along with the job assigned to him does any other associated work which, when remains unfinished, may create problems in future for the overall project, is a man of accomplishment. When we undertake a great mission like defeating Ravana and rescuing Sita, we have to keep various aspects in mind, which would influence the work. If we keep only one thing in our mind and work, even a small task cannot be accomplished. Then how can we achieve a big task like routing Ravana? And, more than anything else, whoever is capable of finding several ways of accomplishing a mission would be successful, but not others. So, I shall not limit myself to just finding the whereabouts of Sita.”

“Now I have to start a fight. By that Ravana would be able to estimate my strength and also get an idea about the strengths of the monkey army and I will be able to gauge the strength of his army. I must also meet Ravana face to face and deliver him the message of Rama. This Ashoka grove is a beautiful place and Ravana likes it

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Hanuman started uprooting and breaking trees and tore apart the bowers and arbors. Within no time he destroyed the whole place.

Whenever we are given some work, we have to think about it from all directions and consider all the pros and cons, and the impact of a particular work on the total project. We should not limit ourselves to the work assigned to us. We cannot disown its effects and cannot say that the rest of the project is of no concern to us. Depending on how arduous the work is, we have to raise our commitment. Swamiji said, “the most important thing I have to say is that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired.” He also said, “whoever looks into the distant future, thinks accordingly and works, will be able to accomplish great works.” This foresight is not a character that is inherited by birth. We have to cultivate it by practice.

31. Take the lead and work

Hanuman destroyed the Ashoka grove in order to irritate Ravana. Ravana sent a whole contingent of Rakshasas to contain Hanuman. Hanuman killed all of them in no time. Then he killed Jambumali, who was

the son of Prahasta, the chief of Ravana's army, along with seven others who are the sons of Ravana's ministers. Then Ravana sent his own son Akshakumar to fight Hanuman. Akshakumar was a great warrior. He was adept in archery. Hanuman himself was filled with awe looking at his valour. He thought, "Even though this Akshakumar is young, he is very powerful. If I do not kill him now, he will become a big hurdle in the forthcoming war. A flame should be put out even when it is small. After it turns into a blaze, it becomes difficult to douse it. Therefore I shall eliminate him now itself." In a terrible fight, Hanuman killed him.

Thus, Hanuman was able to assess the strength of the rakshasas and killed many warriors especially, Akshakumar and Jambumaali. Thereby, he paved the way for success in the ensuing war.

Hanuman acted on his own, in killing Akshakumar. He did not think that it was not his duty or that he could do it when all other monkey warriors join him in the up-coming war. He did not think of it as an unnecessary burden.

People usually try to avoid work. Rather, they generally try to 'postpone the evil.' When they have to work and can no longer escape it, they go on lamenting and grumbling and end up with mediocre results.

To top it all, they try to lay the blame of such results on someone else or God. But great men work differently. They think well on the course of action and once they are decided on how to go about the work, they set about executing it like Hercules.

Swamiji said: "If the whole responsibility is thrown upon our own shoulders, we shall be at our highest and best. When we have nobody to grope towards, no devil to lay our blame upon, no Personal God to carry our burdens, when we alone are responsible, then we shall rise to our highest and best. Working in that way, your whole character will change."

32. We must be able to recognize greatness in others

When Akshakumar fell, Indrajit came to the battlefield. He was the eldest son of Ravana. He used Brahmaastra to capture Hanuman. It could not kill Hanuman but ensnared him. He was tied down and was taken to the court of Ravana. Hanuman saw Ravana and was stuck with awe. He said to himself, "This king of the rakshasas is so handsome! His courage, power and strength are awesome. It is strange to see that he is endowed with so many good characters. But for his bad character of yearning for other's wives, he would be a king fit to rule the three worlds."

The ability to appreciate greatness in others is a character of great men. Hanuman could identify and appreciate the good characters and the strong points even in the worst enemy. We also have to cultivate this virtue, if we want such greatness.

Hanuman then advised Ravana to return Sita to Rama. But Ravana could not appreciate that advice and ordered that Hanuman be put to death.

33. We should be able to acknowledge our mistakes

However Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, pleaded that a messenger should not be killed, but may be insulted by amputation, branding or whipping. Ravana ordered that the tail of Hanuman should be removed by setting it on fire, because the tail happens to be a cherished organ of all monkeys. The rakshasas set fire to the tail of Hanuman and started parading him in the streets of Lanka. Hanuman observed closely and memorized the layout of Lanka. Then he freed himself, and with his burning tail started setting ablaze all the houses. The whole of Lanka was engulfed in flames. Then suddenly he remembered Sita and was struck dumb with the fear that she might have been burnt in the fire as well.

He said to himself: "I have done a terrible mistake in burning down this city in a fit of anger. A man who is unable to conquer his anger will commit any sin. He may even kill his Guru or insult a man of virtue. The man ensnared by anger will not be able to discriminate between what to speak and what not to. Such a man may abuse others indiscriminately or resort to any heinous and terrible act".

"To put out a fire we sprinkle water on it. In the same way, whoever controls his anger with help of his intellect, is a great man indeed! Just as a snake sheds its old skin, whoever casts off his anger is called a PURUSHA. (It implies that others cannot be called Purushas! The same word applies even to women just like the word Purushakaara which we came across earlier.)"

"Without considering the fact that Sita also is in Lanka, I burnt down the whole city. I have betrayed my Lord Rama and I have no sense of shame. Now, I too will jump into this fire and kill myself. I hope she met with no harm!"

But then wisdom dawned on him. He thought, "The god of fire did not burn my tail! Would he burn Sita? Definitely not!" He ran to the Sinsupa tree in the Ashoka grove and saw Sita there. He saluted her once again and told her that he would like to return to Rama.

"There is one great danger in human nature. It is that man never examines himself", said Swamiji. A character that shines like daylight in all great men is their ability to analyse themselves. This rare virtue can be called self-analysis. Whoever succeeds in analysing his past mistakes and firmly decides not to repeat them, will be the most successful man. Hanuman stood out as the most exemplary character, not only in realizing his mistake but admitting it and correcting himself.

Controlling anger is a trait of utmost importance. Swamiji said: *"Our religion teaches that anger is a great sin, even if it is righteous."* Swamiji further said, *"Each time we suppress hatred, or a feeling of anger, it is so much good energy stored up in our favour; that piece of energy will be converted into the higher powers."* Hanuman demonstrated the ill effects of anger and the method of controlling it, in a most practical way. As Swamiji said, by constantly practising the control of anger and other passions, we may raise to super-human levels.

34. Do not boast about yourself! Do not denigrate others!

Now that he knew the welfare of Sita, Hanuman prepared himself to leave. But now, Sita got a doubt. She

was skeptical about the strength of the monkey army in being able to face the rakshasas in war. She asked Hanuman, “Oh Hanuman! I think only the god of wind; Garuda and you can cross this vast ocean to reach Lanka. Will the rest of the monkey warriors be able to cross this ocean?”

He said, “Mother! Sugreeva himself can kill all the rakshasas in Lanka. He will soon descend on Lanka with millions of warriors. They are extremely strong and can travel faster than mind. They are waiting for the orders of Sugreeva. They are capable of travelling on land, on water and also in the air.”

“They are so many warriors who are far superior to me and I am the least strong of them all. Mother! Whenever any work is to be done, the least strong would be sent first. That is why I have been sent first. Yet, I could cross the ocean. So, you can be sure that others would be able to cross the ocean easily and you would soon be rescued.”

Hanuman did not boast of his own greatness. He did not belittle his fellow warriors. This is called ‘modesty’. Those in quest of a great character need this. Only when a man completely rids himself of ego and selfishness he will be able to attain such modesty, and that will make him the greatest of all beings. There are several proverbs in Telugu about modesty:

“A Tree laden with fruit always bends low!” “An empty vessel makes more noise!” etc.

35. Try to gauge the feelings of others before you speak

On his return from Lanka, Hanuman addressed Rama by saying, “I saw Sita!”

When you are going to address someone who is awaiting your message with great expectation, you should not beat around the bush for a long time before giving him the actual message. (This is different from the case when one is in great sorrow.) Rama was in a state of great anxiety. He was desperate to know where Sita is. That is why Hanuman started his sentence by saying ‘I saw!’ He did not mention the name of Sita in the beginning of the sentence for the fear of keeping Rama in confusion, may be, even for a fraction of a second.

There is one more virtue we can learn from this episode. Hanuman took great care in even the smallest and simplest of things. This character is the crest jewel of his personality. We can see how Swamiji taught us to be careful about things that we usually consider trivial. He said, “If you really want to judge of the character of a man, look not at his great per-

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formances. Every fool may become a hero at one time
or other. Watch a man do his most common actions;
those are indeed the things, which will tell you the
real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse
even the lowest of human beings to some kind of
greatness, but he alone is really great whose charac-
ter is great always, the same wherever he be."

36. Think with a broad mind

When we come across a particular situation, we have
to understand it properly. Without studying it deeply,
we should not form an opinion about it.

Vibhishana was not in agreement with his elder brother
Ravana and advised him to return Sita back to Rama.
Ravana got furious and banished Vibhishana from Lanka.
Vibhishana came to Rama who was on the other shore of
the sea and sought refuge. A great debate took place
whether to give Vibhishana refuge or not. The ideas ex-
pressed by Hanuman at this juncture in giving refuge to
Vibhishana aptly describe the sharp intellect of Hanuman.
Many of the monkey warriors felt that Vibhishana should
not be accorded any refuge. However, Hanuman differed
with them and stated otherwise.

Hanuman said, "O Rama! You are the best among all
intellectuals and are a very capable man. You are a
master of communication. Even Brihaspathi, who is

the guru of gods, can not converse better than you do. So I will try to present whatever that comes to my mind as good and true. I am not trying to impress you. Neither do I want to win over others in argument, nor have I any personal liking for Vibhishana. Considering the respect you show me, I am telling you whatever I feel as good and beneficial.”

“First of all, the ministers are suggesting that we should see if there is any lacuna in the character of Vibhishana. This doesn’t seem reasonable to me. Unless you give him some responsibility, you will not know his true character. But then, if you give him responsibility without knowing his character, he will bring ruin to us if he is a man of bad character. So the argument of considering the good and the bad of his character is like asking who is first, the plant or the seed? It is simply not possible to evaluate his character by that method.”

“Sarabha gives an advice that we should send a few detectives to evaluate the character of Vibhishana. This idea is also not practical. It may work in a situation where the man in question is far away. But now it is not possible as Vibhishana is already here and is watching our movements though from a distance.”

“Jambavantha says that the time and place chosen by Vibhishana are both flawed and hence he should be asked to leave. But I think his timing is all right. Vibhishana heard about your good qualities and he knows the bad characteristics of Ravana. That is why he has come seeking your refuge. Abducting Sita and not releasing her even after the repeated requests by all his brothers and ministers are the two bad qualities of Ravana. Vibhishana knows that you killed the two great Rakshasas, Khara and Dushana. He also knows that you killed Vali and made Sugreeva the king. Keeping all these things in mind, Vibhishana opted for leaving Ravana and joining you. All this seems reasonable to me. I think it is fair enough to say that Vibhishana came to you at the most appropriate hour.”

“Mainda says that some of us should go and talk to him in order to evaluate his character. I am doubtful whether such a strategy would work. All of a sudden if we go and start interviewing him, he will become suspicious. In such a situation any sane man would be apprehensive about what to say and what not to. Not only that! Because of the element of suspicion that has crept in, our well-meaning enquiries would turn sour and he might think that we have some evil design. And even if he talks to us, there is every possi-

bility that he may conceal his real intent. In such a situation it becomes almost impossible to know his mind. So, that method also would not work.”

“It is better for us to consider the situation in a more direct way. We listened to Vibhishana when he presented his case. I did not perceive anything wrong in his approach. His face was pleasant. That shows his good character. Anyone with an evil intent will not be able to come to us so fearlessly. If there is any evil intention in his heart it will come out and show up on his face. But there was not the slightest trace of that on his face.”

“Considering all this I think we can give refuge to Vibhishana. O Rama! I gave you the best advice I could. Now that you listened to what I said, you may do as it pleases you!”

Hanuman listened to the views expressed by different people and evaluated them all with an ‘open-mind’, without any pre-conceived notion. He did not feel that he was more intelligent than others. He wanted to act in such a way as to bring the greatest good to them all. And because of that he completely eliminated his ego from his thought process. With a mind that was devoid of all selfishness and egotism, he could place

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in front of them an idea that is pretty different from
others. It, no doubt, brought great benefit to them.

How could Hanuman make such an unbiased assessment of the character of Vibhishana? Only those who are completely free from the idea of 'I and mine' can accomplish that.

Swami Vivekananda taught, "The man who works through freedom and love cares nothing for results. But the slave wants his whipping; the servant wants his pay. So it is with all life. Take for instance the public life. The public speaker wants a little applause or a little hissing and hooting. If you keep him in a corner without it, you kill him, for he requires it. This is working through slavery. Next comes the work of the servant, who requires some pay; I give this, and you give me that. Nothing is easier than to say, "I work for work's sake", but nothing is so difficult to attain. I would go twenty miles on my hands and knees to look on the face of a man who can work for work's sake."

Learning to work through freedom, with a view to do good to others and without caring for results is the most important task in trying to build a great personality. We should learn to work like that and it is possible to master that virtue. Such a personality, which is built by constant self-effort is real. The life

of Hanuman as described in Valmiki Ramayana would be the best aid for us in achieving that goal.

37. Conclusion

A man's personality and character are essentially what he speaks and what he does. All great men showed in practice whatever they preached. We have to assimilate this virtue carefully. This is the essence of personality building. The easiest method of achieving this is to take the example of great men, enshrined in our own culture, think about them constantly and try to emulate them in our own life. Swamiji showed Hanuman as one such an example to us.

Let us recollect the characteristics of Hanuman. Let us think deeply about them and let us meditate on Hanuman.

Hanuman persisted as a dutiful minister of Sugreeva all through his life. By that he has shown to us that greatness lies, not in what we do, but how well we do it. Even though he was the greatest of all monkeys, he did not feel it would belittle his stature to be a minister of Sugreeva and the servant of Rama. Rather, he considered that itself as his noblest duty. Thus he explicitly showed us that he does not have even a trace of ego in him.

He cultivated the art of speaking to people by careful self-effort and was ever mindful of what to speak, how to speak and when to speak. He would not speak from the tip of his tongue to impress people but would speak from the depths of sincerity and purity of heart. He was able to impress even his enemies by his conversational abilities.

He was a man of great courage. He could acknowledge the greatness in others and even in that of his worst enemies. He never resorted to belittle anyone. He never boasted of his own great qualities. He never tried to prevail over others. He always tried to carry everyone along. He voluntarily worked for the welfare of his fellow citizens. He unselfishly thought for their good and brought great benefit to them by his selfless acts.

He always kept his word. He also helped Sugreeva and others do the same.

He was a man of exceptional physical strength. He also strove to develop a great intellect. He was a scholar in all the scriptures and developed a great skill in various subjects. To achieve such a feat he had to put in a Herculean effort. He exhibited great courage and valour. He never shirked from work.

He was always ready to analyse himself, admit his mistakes and correct them. When he came across any imperfection in himself, he sincerely tried to set it right.

He evaluated people and situations with an open-mind without any pre-conceived notions.

Those are some of the great characteristics in the personality of Hanuman. We should all try to emulate them. Let us constantly think of them and put them into practice. Thus we will be able to develop a personality that is as great as Hanuman.

Swamiji said, "What do I care if Mohammed was a good man, or Buddha? Does that alter my goodness or evil? Let us be good for our own sake on our own responsibility." This clearly tells us, we should strive to achieve greatness on our own responsibility and not because some one way back was great.

"This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive!" was the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda. He also said, *"Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practice it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely*

moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. In the first place, a man who can work for five days, or even for five minutes, without any selfish motive whatever, without thinking of future, of heaven, of punishment, or anything of the kind, has in him the capacity to become a powerful moral giant."

Such a personality is, ultimately, what we want. It would make our personality immortal and will enable us to leave a mark of our own on the world. That is the aim of all personality development. To conclude, in short, the one and only way to build a great personality is to learn renunciation and unselfishness. There is no other way.

Hanumān cālīsā

- Sant Tulasi Das

To read Hanuman chalisa repeatedly is a good method for meditating on Hanuman.

Prārthana

śrī gurucaraṇa sarōjaraja nijamana mukura sudhāri
 varaṇauraghuvāra vimala yaśa jōdāyaka phalacāri
 buddhihīna tanu jāni kē sumirau pavāna kumār
 balabuddhi vidyā dēhu mōhi harahukalēśa vikār

Prayer: Tulasidas says: I shall clean the mirror of my mind with the brightness that emanates from the lotus-feet of my Guru. I shall describe the greatness of Sri Rama whose holy name will bestow the four cherishable fruits of human life that are capable right-ousness, reasonable wealth, controlled desire and deliverance.

I got this body as a result of 'Ignorance' (because of which I am unable to raise beyond a certain level.) I shall clearly understand this fact and think and meditate on the wonderful personality of Hanuman. That will endow me with physical strength, intellect and knowledge. It will also cleanse my heart of all wrongful desires and their ill effects.

1. Jai hanumāna ñānaguṇasāgara

jai kapīśa tihulōka uJāgara

1. O Hanuman! When Indra struck you with his Vajra weapon, you had a dent on your jaw and because of that you were hailed by the name Hanuman. You are an ocean of knowledge and manliness. You bestow the light of knowledge to the three worlds. Victory unto thee!

2. rāmadūta atulita baladhāmā

aṃjaniputra pavanasantanāmā

2. You are the messenger of Rama. None can equal you in physical strength. You are the son of Anjani. Since you are born with the vigour of the wind-god Vayu, you are hailed as Vayuputra or Pavanakumara.

3. mahāvīra vikrama bajarāṅgī

kumatinivāra sumatikē saṅgī

3. You are the very form of valour. You have a body that is as strong as the Vajra weapon of Indra. Meditating on you will destroy all the evil traits in us and bestow us with noble characteristics.

4. kañcanavaraṇa virāja suvēśā

kānana kuṇḍala kuñcita kēśā

4. Your body is in the colour of gold. You wear a beautiful dress. You are adorned with beautiful earrings. You braid your hair, beautifully.

5. hāthavajra aur dhvajā virājai
kāndhē mūñja janēvūsājai

5. In one hand you carry a mace that is equal in power to that of the Vajra weapon. You carry the flag of Rama in the other hand. You wear a sacred thread on your shoulder.

6. śaṅkarasuvana kēsarīnandana
tēJapratāpa mahāJagavandana

6. You are born by the power of Shiva. Kesari is your father. You are a man of great vigour and brilliance. The whole world bows to you in admiration.

7. vidyāvāna guṇī aticātura
rāmakāJakarivēkō ātura

7. You are a great artiste and a scholar. You are a man of good character. You are very adept in conversing and skillful in working. You are always eager to execute the orders of Rama.

8. prabhucaritra sunivēkō rasiyā
rāmalakhana sītā mana basiyā

8. You enjoy listening to the story of Rama. Your mind is full to the brim with the noble ideas of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana.

9. sūkṣmarūpadhari siya hi dikhāvā

vikaṭarūpadhari laṅkajarāvā

9. When you went to meet Sita, you made your body small and obedient whereas when you were about to burn down Lanka you assumed a gory form.

10. bhīmarūpadhari asurasamhārē

rāmacandrakē kāja savārē

10. When fighting the rakshasas you assumed a terrible form and executed the work of Rama with unmatched ruthlessness.

11. lāya sajiṽana lakhana jiyāyē

śrīraghuvīra haraṣi uralāyē

11. You carried the Sanjivani-mountain to bring back life to Lakshmana.

12. raghupati kīnhī bahuta baḍhāyī

tuma mama priyabharata sama bhāyī

12. Rama was greatly impressed with your resourcefulness and said that you are equal to his brother Bharata.

13. sahasavadana tumharō yaśagāvai

asakahi śrīpatikaṅṭha lagāvai

13. Rama praised you profusely and hugged you affectionately.

14. sanakādika brahmādi muniśā
nārada śārada sahita ahīśā

14. All of the Maharshis, Brahma and other rulers of the three realms, the goddess Saraswathi and others will not be able to praise you enough.

15. yamakubēra dikpāla jahātē
kavikōvida kahi sakē kahātē

15. Any number of poets and pundits will not be able to sing your glories enough.

16 tuma upakāra sugrīvahikīnhā
rāmamilāya rājapadadīnhā

16. You are instrumental in building the friendship between Rama and Sugreeva and making Sugreeva the king of Kishkindha.

17. tumharō mantra vibhīṣaṇa mānā
laṅkēśvarabhaya saba jaga jānā

17. Because of your wise advice, Vibhishana could become the king of Lanka and the world knows it well.

18. yugasahasra yōjana parabhānū
līlyōtāhi madhuraphalajānū

18. Thinking that it is a fruit hanging in the sky, you jumped two thousand yojanas to catch hold of the sun.

19. prabhūmudrikā mēlimukhamāhī

jaladhi lāṅghigayē acarajanāhī

19. You are a man of such super-human strength. What is there to wonder when you crossed the ocean carrying the ring of Rama?

20. durgamakāja jagatakē jētē

sugama anugraha tumharē tētē

20. For those who consider you as their ideal and meditate on you constantly, every work in the world becomes easy.

21. rāmaduvārē tuma rakhavārē

hōtana ājñā binubaisārē

21. You are the door-keeper of Rama. No one would be able to reach and realize Rama without your blessings.

22. saba sukhalahai tumhārī śaranā

tuma rakṣaka kāhūkō ḍaranā

22. Every good would come to those that take refuge in your ideal. What is there to fear when your character is taken as the ideal? Where else could one find better protection?

23. āpanatēja samhārō āpai

tīnōlōka hāṅkatē kāmpai

23. You are the only one who is capable of keeping such power and intellect under control. If you roar but once, the three worlds would tremble with fear.

24. bhūtapīśāca nikaṭa nahi āvai

mahāvīra jaba nāma sunāvai

24. O Mahavira! Merely by the mention of your name, all the demons, ghosts and spirits would run away; so would my vices and weaknesses.

25. nāśai rōga harai saba pīrā

japata nirantara hanumata vīrā

25. By thinking constantly about you all diseases would be cured. Because, you are the very embodiment of health and strength.

26. saṅkaṭasē hanumāna chuḍāvai

mana krama vacana dhyānajōlāvai

26. Whoever meditates on you by repeating your name with steadfastness would be able to surmount all the difficulties, just like you did in your own life.

27. sabapararāma tapasvīrājā

tinakēkāja sakalatumasājā

27. Rama is like the crest jewel of all the kings. He is the god of all the virtuous. You are ever engaged in serving him.

28. auramanōratha jōkoyilāvai

tāsu amita jīvana phala pāvai

28. Those who meditate on you constantly would be able to accomplish all their endeavours.

29. cārōyuga paratāpa tumhārā

hai prasiddha jagata vujiyārā

29. Your valour would stand till the ends of time. It made the world all the more beautiful.

30. sādhusantakē tumarakhavārē

asura nikandana rāmadulārē

30. You are always engaged in protecting the virtuous and the good. By annihilating the rakshasas you endeared yourself to Rama.

31. aṣṭasiddhi navanidhikē dātā

asavara dīnha jānakī mātā

31. Sita gave you the boon of bestowing on anyone the eight super-human powers and the nine riches.

32. rāmarasāyana tamharē pāsā

sadārahō raghupatikē dāsā

32. You have the nectar of the name of Rama in your possession. You are ever engaged in the service of Rama.

33. tumharē bhajana rāmakō pāvai

janma janmakē duḥkhabisarāvai

33. By praying to you, Rama would be propitiated, as you are the best among his followers. One would get rid of all the miseries that are accumulated over many births too.

34. aṃtakāla raghupati purajāyī
jahājanmi haribhakti kahāyī

34. Those that worship you would be called the servants of Rama irrespective of their condition. They would reach the realm of Rama after their death.

35. aṃra dēvatā cittaṇa dharayī
hanumata sēyi sarvasukha karayī

35. Whosoever thinks of you with single-minded devotion would be bestowed with all the virtuous joys of the world.

36. saṅkaṭa haṭai miṭai sabapīrā
jōsumirai hanumata balavīrā

36. Whoever meditates on Hanuman who is the embodiment of strength and valour would be able to get rid of all the obstacles in their life. All of their miseries would come to an end.

37. jaijaijai hanumāna gosāyī
kṛpākarō gurudēva kinhāyī

37. Victory to Hanuman! O Hanuman! Kindly shower your grace on me as did my Guru!

38. yahaśatavāra pāṭhakara jōyī
chūṭa hi bandi mahāsukhaḥōyī

38. Whoever recites this Hanuman Chalisa a hundred times would find success in all his endeavours, as such a repetition would enable one to imbibe the great characteristics of Hanuman.

39. jōyahapaḍhai hanumāna cālīsā

hōyasiddhi sākhi gaurīsā

39. I vouchsafe in the name of Parvati and Shiva that all their troubles would end.

40. tulasidāsa sadā haricērā

kijainātha hṛdayamaḥḍērā

40. Tulasidas would always remain the servant of Rama! O my Lord! Kindly remain in the recess of my heart.

dōhā-

pavana tanaya saṅkaṭa haraṇa

maḷa mūrati rūpa

rāmalakhana sitā sahita

hṛdaya basahu surabhūp

Doha: O son of the god of wind! O destroyer of all miseries! Kindly reside in my heart along with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana!

