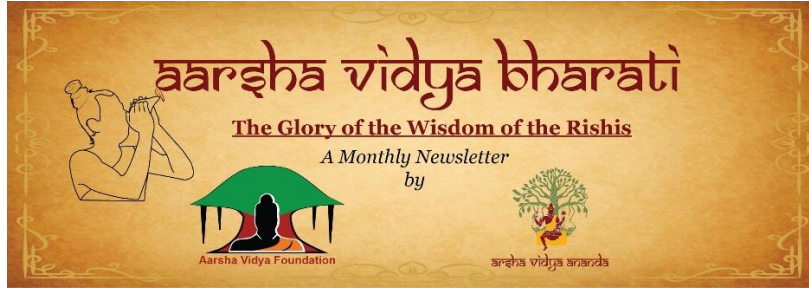

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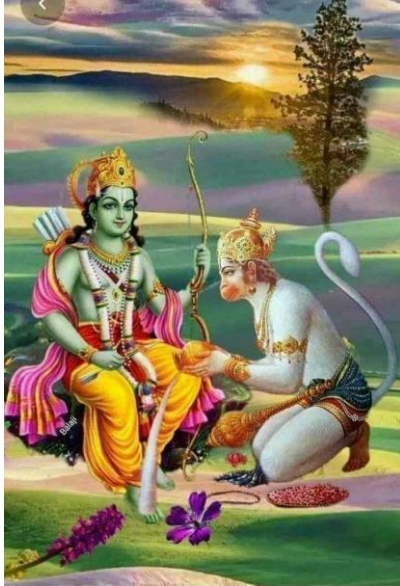
A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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Living Our Traditions - Hanuman Jayanti

By Bina Nangia, Delhi



Hanuman Jayanti is a significant Hindu festival that marks the birth anniversary of Lord Hanuman, the *parama bhakta* of Shri Rama. This festival is celebrated on different days in different parts of India. It is celebrated during the Hindu month of Chaitra (April, May) and the festival can last a single day or go on for 41 days. In North India, Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi and Hanuman Garhi at Ayodhya are the venues of great celebrations.

The great Hanuman is known for his great strength, power and immortal devotion towards Lord Rama. He is also known as Sankat Mochan whom people remember in both good and bad times. As the son of *Pavana*, the God of winds, and *Añjanī*, he is often referred to as *Pavanaputra*. He is blessed with immense physical and mental strength that is greatly inspiring. Lord Hanuman is considered to be the eleventh Rudra manifestation of Lord Shiva. He symbolizes strength and selfless devotion, and his ability and determination to achieve impossible feats has been chronicled in several episodes of the Ramayana. He showed his unconditional love for Lord Rama, who also blessed him and reciprocated his devotion by treating him like a brother.

After *Bhagavān* Rama, if there is anyone who is worshipped and has become beloved, it is Hanuman. He is seen as a unique embodiment of heroic shakti (power and strength) and bhakti (devotional love towards *Bhagavān* Rama). In later literature, he is seen as the deity of martial arts such as wrestling, acrobatics, meditation and diligent scholarship.

Hanuman Jayanti is an occasion to remember Lord Hanuman's unbridled devotion to Lord Rama and his feats of daring. In their quest to fight against *Rāvaṇa*, Lord Hanuman led the *Vānara senā* and built a bridge to Lanka. He also carried a whole mountain of magic herbs on his shoulders to save Lakshman. The standing statue of Lord Hanuman with his heart open is at once a metaphoric as well as literal illustration of his infinite devotion to Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshman.

When we reflect on Hanuman's service there are important questions that come to mind. What is the source of his extraordinary motivation, the strength and enthusiasm that he brings to his work? What helped him to put up with the humiliation in Lanka and to strive against all odds? Surely it was not material reimbursement - since he neither requested nor received any such reward from Rama. Yet his work brought him great joy, meaning and fulfilment. When Sri Rama asks him 'What service can I do for you in return? He replies, everything is attainable by your grace. Hanuman further says – Love for you is the source of the greatest happiness. Please grant me unending love'. To these heartfelt and sincere words Sri Rama says – so be it.



Through Hanuman's life of service to *Bhagavān* Rama we see that power and strength is worth its while when used to serve the cause of dharma. In recent times servant style leadership is spoken of in management circles. It is a willingness to serve the cause, your clients, customers, a willingness to serve your students, doing what needs to be done. We now have a role model and a source of blessing in Hanuman.

It is said that when Sri Rama asks Hanuman, how he related to him, Hanuman said –

Deha Buddhya tu Dāsoham

Jīva Buddhya Tvadāśśakaḥ |

Ātma Buddhya Tvamevāham

Iti me niścita matiḥ ||

“Oh Lord, while I identify myself with my body, I am your servant. When I consider myself as Individual (Soul), I am a part of you. But when I see myself as the Atma, I am you.”

Such wisdom grants us the freedom to play any role including the role of a human being and a servant. Jai Shri Ram! Jai Shri Hanuman!

Such is his glory, such is his devotion that he could move mountains (and he did!) and he moved us with his shakti and bhakti. Time and again, it is seen that anyone who invokes the grace of Hanuman becomes more loving, powerful and committed to serve dharma. There are no exceptions.

How to celebrate Hanuman Jayanti

- Devotees perform pooja in temples or homes.
- Meditate on Lord Hanuman.
- People fast, apply red sindoor from Lord's feet on their forehead.
- Offer red vermilion with ghee to his murti.
- Red flowers, rui leaves with areca nuts, fruits especially bananas and diyas are lit.
- Recite Hanuman chalisa and Bajrang Baan



The glory of Hanuman

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