

Hanuman's effective communication-Series on Episodes about Hanuman- A

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Communication skill is an integral part in success of an individual at every walk of life. A study of contents and context of the communications by Sri Rama, Seetha Devi, Hanuman and others in Srimad Valmiki Ramayana would give us a valuable insight of underlying profound thoughts in those communications. More often they not only contain a logical flow of thought but also quotable quotes of wisdom which are eternal truth. An in-depth analysis of words as spoken by each of one them is very much needed to understand the refined gentle way of putting forth one's view. This article is limited to Hanuman's interaction with Ravana as per Sundara Kanada.

Hanuman was hailed as an expert of a study of nine schools of grammars and knower of all Vedas. Both Sri Rama and Seetha Devi admired his natural way of speaking with soft musical friendly voice and choice of apt words. वाक्यज्ञम् मधुरैः वाक्यैः स्नेह युक्तम् ...| He was an orator par excellence and a great musician who can modulate his speech to captivate the attention of the listener in toto. So much so that, even King Ravana, though not comfortable but sat in his throne throughout only to hear unpleasant indictments from Hanuman.

When Hanuman had successfully traced Seetha Devi at Ashok Vanam of Lanka, he was conscious that his mission was not complete without having an audience with Ravana to know his design and thinking with regards to restoration of Seetha to Rama. Though, he had successfully thwarted and killed many army leaders of Ravana who came to fight with him, ultimately, he acted as got immobilised by Brahma's missile only to meet Ravana in his court.

Ravana was an imposing character with an aura of personality of unsurpassable bravery. His intimidating presence was noticed and even appreciated by Sri Rama. Seetha Devi admired the mental stamina of Hanuman as he remained unfazed even after seeing Ravana. Hanuman, too, wondered by the grandeur of the poise, terrific looking and energetic demeanour of Ravana seated in his court. Even powerful Devas are afraid to stand in front of him. He thought aloud if Ravana had taken to the path of righteousness, he would have an opportunity to lead even Devas. Thus, it signifies a lot of courage of Hanuman to see him face to face, evidentially in a hostile atmosphere. To add to his credit, Hanuman presented a picture of intelligence, shrewdness and bravery to handle accusations of unwanted misadventure of loot and waste done to the beautiful highly guarded Ashok Vanam etc.

When he was presented before Ravana in his court, Ravana with red shot eyes asked his minister Prahasta, स राजा रोषताम्राक्षः प्रहस्तम् मन्त्रिसत्तमम्| to enquire the impudent monkey about why he destroyed Ashok Vanam and killed the warriors. Ravana's used offensive words दुरात्मा || दुर्मतिः || to vent out his frustrated feelings. Prahasta, true to the ministership echoed his master's voice and significantly added that only by look he

considered Hanuman as a monkey otherwise he thought he was an able warrior created though penance from Devas. Interestingly, his minister did the enquiry in a little gentle manner but with threatening tone.

Though Hanuman thundered about himself, his master and other Vanaras while he was in Ashoka Vanam, keeping in the mind the sanctity of courtroom, he exhibited extreme restraint. He gave reply in courageous tone looking straight at Ravana. The reply, in brief, given below as it would give us an idea of how to put forth one's points even in an unfriendly atmosphere.

“Hanuman replied that he was neither sent by devas nor by gods. He was sent by Sugriva. He belonged to monkey tribe only. To draw attention of the king and to see him, he initiated damaging a portion of the Vanam. To protect him from the attacking warriors, he had to fight and they were killed in the battle.”

“He was a messenger of Sri Rama, son of king Dasaratha who came to Dandaka Forest in fulfilment of his father's command along with his wife Seetha Devi, brother Lakshmana. His wife was abducted while they were in the forest. In search of her, he came to Kishkinda. He made friendship with king Sugriva who was living in exile due to fear of Vali. To alleviate the sufferings of his friend, Sri Rama killed Vali with a single arrow. He installed Sugriva on the throne.”

“Of course, you need no introduction about the undefeatable valour of Valli, who was shot with a single arrow by Sri Rama. King Sugriva, despatched hundreds of brave monkeys to all directions in search of Seetha Devi. On the advice of Sampati, he crossed over the ocean to search her in Lanka.”

“To his utter surprise, he could see her in your country. It was indeed shocking that a person coming from a great lineage of Pulastya Rishi and a learned scholar like you could abduct somebody's wife against her will.”

He had extensively advised him taking cue from Seetha's sane advice to Ravana which was overheard by him in Ashok Vanam. “You were aware that such an act was unexpected from intellectual like you as any action as against the righteousness could result in ruin of the doer. Especially, in your case, it was not proper to put your exceptional longevity and the massive unimaginable fortune acquired through arduous penance to futility.”

न हि धर्म विरुद्धेषु बहू अपायेषु कर्मसु । मूल घातिषु सज्जन्ते बुद्धिमन्तो भवत् विधाः ॥

तपः सन्ताप लब्धः ते यो अयम् धर्म परिग्रहः । न स नाशयितुम् न्याय्य आत्म प्राण परिग्रहः ॥

“He further added that abduction of Seetha Devi and her continued captivity would be akin to rearing a poisonous snake inviting one's own downfall.”

As Ravana looked angrily at him hearing truthful submissions, “Hanuman advised the king to willingly hand over Seetha Devi with due respects. He assured him as messenger of Sri Rama, that his master would not take revenge or kill him. Otherwise, be prepared to get killed”.

He paused and looked for any positive signal which was not forthcoming. “He boldly told him that Ravana could not be proud of his penance and result of good deeds

to come to his rescue. He might be rest assured that the beginning of end of his downfall had started the moment he laid hands on Seetha Devi by abducting.”

In a challenging voice, “he recalled that Sri Rama, as a human being and King Sugriva being monkey tribe, would kill him and the entire clan of demons. None could help him out in view of the unchallengeable prowess of Sri Rama.”

With these highly profound brave messages delivered without any fault or diffidence, Ravana faced a humiliating threat to his authority in his own court. He only satisfied himself ordering the demons to set the tail of Hanuman on fire with due timely intervention of Vibhishana from his original outburst to kill Hanuman.

In this context, one may observe that many a times, when a person is on the right side, he usually charges the wrong doer with offensive remarks in a condescend manner escalating already the strained relations.

Hanuman could have directly accused Ravana as an offender and justified his killings. But he did not attempt to take that route. Instead, he had adopted phased and measuredly accelerating mode of the delivery of Ravana’s offence.

By introducing himself in polite and confident manner as Sri Rama’s messenger, he meant business.

To put him at ease, he complimented about Ravana’s lineage. This in effect, he indirectly pointed out the lineage which he brazenly squandered through his immoral act.

Hanuman used complimentary words like you were a scholar and knower of what is ethical etc. ... तत् भवान् दृष्ट धर्म अर्थः तपः कृत परिग्रहः | An act steeped in humility and a reflection of self-confidence. He remained unprovoked even in extenuating circumstance.

His accusations were factual with which king Ravana was familiar. Ravana’s accusative words were unwarranted. Here, Maharishi Valmiki want to convey that despite physical strength and material affluence, a person always shows his true colour unconsciously through his utterances.

Hanuman demoralised Ravana’s over confidence by alluding his acquaintance, encounter and defeat at the hands of Vali. He indirectly hinted that Ravana did not have any chance of winning over Sri Rama, who was decried as forest ranger by Ravana.

On seeing visible arrogant attitude from facial expression of Ravana, as a good diplomat, he advised reconciliation with complete surrender at the lotus feet of Sri Rama. In the face of continued unresponsiveness and indifferent attitude, he actuated the intensity through challenging words and fearlessly told him to prepare for ultimate death of himself and destruction of entire clan at the hands of Sri Rama.

One has to appreciate that Hanuman, in short, gave Ravana a salutary advice free from malice. His blunt words of imminent result of fatal end to him and his clan in the event of his delinquency was to drive home a point that the reconciliation not stemmed from position of any sort of weakness.

It may look as though Hanuman exerted a wasted effort of sowing seeds of words of wisdom on a barren land, it is not so. The indirect use of it was to send across the message to his able ministers present in the court about the immoral act done by their king and to read the writing on the wall just in time to convince Ravana. Vibhishana was the solitary minister to take the heed and tried an unsuccessful advisory to the king.

Never had Hanuman delayed his flow of speech for want of proper word or usage of words. The delivery of the message was in a measured tone aligned to the desired intended effect on the listener.

One of the important quotable quotes of wisdom in that message was न तु धर्म उपसम्हारम् अधर्म फल सहितम् ॥ तत् एव फलम् अन्वेति धर्मः च अधर्म नाशनः ॥ Unsavoury consequence of unrighteousness would always prevail over the fruit of righteousness.

An another one was अल्प यत्नेन कार्ये अस्मिन् मम स्यात् सफलः श्रमः ॥ The crux of this message was that “any small exertion or effort in any known cause would result in furthering the cause towards its fulfilment”.