

## **Hanuman's friendliness with other Vanaras - Series on Episodes about Hanuman - C**

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In this article, conduct of Hanuman in the most affable manner with other lesser-known multitude of Vanaras are highlighted to bring home certain points for usefulness in our day-to-day life. At the outset, it looks rudimentary to read about the conduct of Hanuman, but one has to understand that what is being talked about is the attitude of Hanuman who was undoubtedly brave, truly intelligent and been praised by friends and foes alike.

The Vanaras sent to the Southern direction in search of abducted Seetha Devi had to traverse difficult terrain. It almost made them weak, tired apart from feeling pain of arduous journey. There were moments of self-doubts about successfulness to their sacred mission. Many a times, they had to endure the pangs of thirst, hunger for a long stretch of distance.

On one such occasion, most of the members of the team could not proceed further without quenching the thirst. They were frantically in search of water beds. Hanuman noticed the sufferings of his fellow members and set his mind to find out any source of water, temporarily setting aside the main task.

He was the first one to notice an assembly of birds, movement of birds from a particular spot. Instinctively, he surmised that there would be some water beds nearby as the flock of birds suggest. He took the large contingent to that place which was covered by lot of bushes and difficult to approach. He made them to plod through the dense thickets only to see that they reached somewhat at an entrance of possible hidden cave as only an opening was visible. He asked them to jump into it without harbouring any thought. He also told them that we can manage any eventualities. Such a confident words from none other Hanuman made them to take the plunge.

Surely, they too found spacious underground dwelling place inside the cave with plentiful water and other fruits etc. Alert Hanuman found out that Swayamprabha, a lady saint manages the cave. He respectfully went to her introduced, explained their nature of search and the reason for coming over there.

She got impressed by the polite speech and behaviour of Hanuman. She hosted a grand feast to the starved Vanaras. It so turned out that who enters into the cave can never come out. Assuaging feelings of startled fellow members, Hanuman pleaded with her. He convinced her to be a part of their noble mission by finding out a face-saving way out. She indeed made an exception to the custom and get them out by contriving some mechanism. Thus, the monkeys had spared an inevitable fate of ending up in a cave and definite failure in their assigned duty by the timely intervention and lead taken by Hanuman.

The Vanaras' outcome from the cave did in no way help them in their further pursuit as they stared at a vast expanse of Ocean. Neither do they had the ability to cross over the ocean nor do have any certainty of success of search beyond the Ocean. In the face of certainty of failure, they, which includes Hanuman, decided to undergo fasting unto death. Here too, Hanuman knew from the general directions given by their king before the commencement of the search, they had to cross over a sea. But he did not go against the wishes of the Vanaras as at that time he was too not aware of Seetha's kept in captivity at Lanka. Providentially, Sampati, an eagle, informed them of abduction of Seetha Devi by Ravana and her presence in Ashok Vanam.

Though the news had, once again, ignited their interest but they were all diffident to cross over the sea. With the timely intervention of Jambhavan, Hanuman decided to go to Lanka in search of Seetha. The Vanaras forsook the fast to death, but kept fasting for success in Hanuman's difficult part of journey till his return. Grateful Hanuman assured the crestfallen Vanaras that he would find out the whereabouts of Seetha and return safely.

Hanuman was successful in locating Seetha Devi. He talked to her and assured her of timebound rescue by Sri Rama. Seetha Devi requested him that he should get the things move fast and see that within a months' time, Sri Rama should rescue her. Hanuman promised to do so. He gave enough life sustaining assurance and boldly remarked that the end for her sorrow had just begun.

इमम् मुहूर्तम् दुःखानाम् अन्तम् द्रक्ष्यसि भामिनि ॥

Satisfied and determined Hanuman started return journey deeply thinking of meeting Sri Rama, Sugriva at the earliest without further loss of time. In no time, he reached the other shore. On his return, he duly broke the glad news of locating Seetha. He also gave a true description of grave situation and problem faced by her. Confident Vanaras, awaiting their king's order to attack Ravana, made the happiest return journey.

At the outskirts of Kishkindha, a beautiful Madhavana was situated with plenty of trees laden with fruits. It was safely guarded and no one were allowed inside without the permission of the king Sugriva. Vanaras expressed their desire to taste the fruits and make merry in that highly restricted garden. Angada permitted them to enter into the Madhavana with the concurrence of the elders in the group. As expected, the entry of the Vanaras inside the restricted place was met with stiff resistance from the watch and guard staff. They were beaten. The bruised monkeys reported the matter to Angada.

Hanuman, this time, took the lead and made their leader Angada to permit them to enter into the Madhavana. Angada, then, thoughtfully remarked that if Hanuman had thought upon giving permission though the said act was not accepted in the light of restriction imposed, there would be some definite purpose. Hanuman was the one who never broke the rule nor encourage other.

हनुमतो वाक्यम् हरीणाम् प्रवरो अनादः | प्रत्युवाच प्रसन्न आत्मा पिबन्तु हरयो मधु | अवश्यम् कृत कार्यस्य वाक्यम् हनुमतो मया ॥

They had enjoyable time there before they met their leaders to convey the glad news.

Here, it is important to note that Hanuman had willingly accepted the demands of the fellow members despite his intention of urgency in view of constraint of time limit to begin attack on Ravana. Had he expressed meeting of king and Sri Rama before spending time in the Madhavana, all the monkeys including other leaders would definitely agree with him. But he didn't stop their partaking the fruits in the Madhavana due to sympathetic feelings of ordeal underwent by them. Further, presumably, he did not choose that option, mainly, the starved monkeys who were also dutiful monkeys deserve better treatment. Secondly, Hanuman knew that the situation demands immediate departure of the monkey troop towards Lanka without any loss of time. There may be no scope of spending time in that Madhavana by his fellow members later. Thirdly, he wanted to reward the self-less fellow members for their

determination to attack Ravana thinking that harm caused to Sri Rama and Seetha was the injury inflicted on them too.

Similarly, Hanuman, on his return from the successful venture to Lanka neither spoke boastfully nor did anything to belittle the other fellow monkeys. Instead, he exhorted them if he can do, others can emulate and do join the battle.

In the eyes of Hanuman, the fasting of his fellow members till his return worth the same commendation as his act of crossing over the ocean, meeting Seetha and encounter in Lanka. A true spirit of companionship and subtly conveying a message that popularity or capability or being a go getter does not preclude one from acting in the most appropriate manner with other fellow members. Hanuman's action always reflected compassion, helpfulness, respect to the fellow members. He was ready to embark on the most difficult tasks without hurting the sensibilities of his equal and the leader of the group. It is also a lesson on leadership that everybody in the team has their role cut and should be treated well. As a member of a team, one should be respectful and attentive to his superiors, accommodative and cooperative with his equals and friendly and helpful to the subordinates.