

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

T S Krishnamachari

This article highlights briefly effective communications skill of Hanuman in his interaction with other Vanaras and Sri Rama.

Innumerable significant twists and turns experienced by Hanuman in Lanka in search of Seetha Devi could be summarised under broad headings namely, events unfolded while flying over the Ocean, affluent Lanka and the inhabitants, intense search undertaken, locating Seetha Devi in Ashok Vanam and taking to her, destructive act at Ashok Vanam and fight with demons leaders sent by Ravana, meeting of Ravana and diplomatic address to him in his court, burning of the city and final departure of Hanuman to the other side of ocean where the other Vanaras awaited his return.

Hanuman commenced historic return journey triumphantly as he had successfully met Seetha Devi who had given him her head ornament (Chudamani) to be presented to Sri Rama. Seetha had then fervently requested him that within two months she should be rescued. Secondly, he should report her feelings, perilous position in appropriate effective manner to hasten the rescue operation with high degree of commitment of all concerned.

Thus, not only an important responsibility of ensuring a time bound rescue of Seetha by Sri Rama rested on him but also a task of faithfully reporting what had transpired. For any human being, to report a matter verbatim is next to impossible in the light of human being's limitation to remembrance and unconscious tendency of exaggeration or downplaying of the situation. With these thoughts in mind, the happiest Hanuman had the foremost thought of meeting Sri Rama, King Sugriva at the earliest to share the glad news and request for planning timely assault on Lanka by assembling huge army of Vanaras, which was famously remarked as "second Ocean of monkeys" by Ravana's spy to him.

Triumphant noise of his flying over the Ocean attracted the attention of fasting Vanaras. Jambhavan, who had immense faith on the ability of Hanuman, declared to the worried members of the team that Hanuman would in all probability had seen Seetha. On his initiative, all Vanaras assembled to welcome their hero and waited anxiously to hear from him. Intelligent Hanuman, on seeing them, uttered in brief that he had seen a devoted determined faithful Seetha Devi alive.

अशोक वनिका संस्था दृष्टा सा जनक आत्मजा | रक्ष्यमाणा सुघोराभी राक्षसीभिः अनिन्दिता |
These words were enough for the diffident monkeys to spring to life with joyous relief.

Once, the commotion on venting the burst of happiness settled down, Hanuman narrated the tale of how he located Seetha. His speech to the leaders like Angada, Jambhavan and other Vanaras is one of the longest Sargas, Sarga 58. Other sargas are 59, 65, 66, 67 and 68 in Sundara Kanda. It may be noted that the prior sargas right from 1 to 57 extensively described the activities of Hanuman in Lanka. Thus, the reader was acquainted with the entire happenings. Hanuman only paraphrased them to brief his companions and his master about his expedition which was incumbent upon him to do so.

The report of Hanuman throws an invaluable insight on 'Whom, What, How and Why' to report. It also enables studious students to learn how to go about discussing any incidents with due regard to privacy and dignity of the persons or incidents reported upon. It is always cherished goal of a speaker to try to succeed in presenting an impactful talk covering relevant points of a given issue to different groups or stakeholders.

In the given context, Hanuman ought to deliver the address which should result in evincing empathy, acquiescing them to the situation mentally and creating an unconditional spontaneous support to commence war from the Vanaras risking their life.

Hanuman, in his report to his fellow leaders, other companions briefly talked about the obstacles faced by him while crossing over the ocean, his impression on the unimaginable affluence and description of demons of Lanka. Whereabouts of Seetha devi, the exchange of ring and receipt of head jewel from her and her pious unblemished character were narrated as a matter of fact briefly. Ravana's intimidating behaviour, warning and threatening her, time limit of two months, demons' disrespectful conduct and dealings with Seetha were also highlighted. His fight with demons, their strength, speech in Ravana's court, fire set on his tail and destruction of the city was also spoken by him.

In terms of analysis of above brief by Hanuman, we may mainly arrive to the following conclusions. By indicating his obstacles, fight with demon leaders, he hinted about the likely challenges ahead. Secondly, by highlighting the Ravana's intolerant behaviour and mental torture to Seetha Devi, he attempted to raise a feeling of hatred towards Ravana. Through praiseworthy conduct of Seetha devi in spite of unfavourable conditions, he underscored the greatness of her and ensured the feeling of empathy by the monkeys which would impel them to fight for her rescue risking their dear life and family. By reminding Vanaras their prowess and capability to challenge successfully the demons, he boosted their morale. By the way of requesting Jambhavan to decide further course of action, he made them to feel part of the ensuing battle. Though Hanuman was undisputably superior to all, through his humility, choice of words without any hint of arrogance but with full of caring in a friendly tone, he made the other Vanaras comfortable to face the ensuing onslaught. Even the young leader of the group, Prince Angada profusely praised his dedication to the cause of the team and devotion towards his master by completing a challenging task in front of other Vanaras.

सत्त्वे वीर्ये न ते कश्चित् समो वानर विद्यते | यत् अवप्लुत्य विस्तीर्णम् सागरम् पुनः आगतः ॥

To Sri Rama in front of Lakshmana and king Sugriva, the same Hanuman reported in a different manner. He briefly informed about location of Seetha in Ashok Vanam in Lanka which was accessible by crossing over Ocean. He gave importance to his eye witness account of dedication, steadfast faith on Sri Rama in spite of Ravana's frightful demeanour and threats. While handing over the head jewel sent by her, he reproduced verbatim the words of Seetha devi about the personal identification details known only to Rama. In the same breadth, he conveyed her request to rescue within a period of two months. One may add here that Hanuman had in fact succeeded exceedingly well in creating a scene as if Seetha spoke through Hanuman. He also gave a grave description of Seetha being surrounded by ugly, threatening lady demons and severity of the unbearable situation.

In terms of analysis, one can clearly notice that Hanuman had conveyed the personal details though in the presence of all Vanaras only to Sri Rama giving importance to privacy. Through his brief on her unwavering faith on Sri Rama's ability he hastened the commencement of journey to attack Ravana. With presentation of her head jewel, he gave credence to his report. By explaining Sri Rama's position in well couched words to her and repeated in verbatim to Sri Rama, त्वत् शोक विमुखो रामो देवि सत्येन ते शपे ॥ रामे दुहख अभिभूते च लक्ष्मणः परितप्यते | he assured Sri Rama that he had given valid reasons for the delay and readiness

of him to urgently commence the attack. By this conduct, Hanuman ensured that Seetha Devi had still undergoing suffering awaiting his definite arrival meaning urgency from all concerned.

Significantly Hanuman did not mention about difficulties and obstacles faced by him to Sri Rama presumably on the lines of management by exception principle. Similarly, Hanuman did not elaborate to anybody about his diffidence and low in spirits, suicidal thoughts when his thorough search not yielded any clue about the whereabouts of Seetha Devi. Though, some more points can be added upon, for brevity and in true practice of effective writing, it would be better to end this article with the closing words of Hanuma as given in the last verse of the last Sarga of Sundara kadam.

ततो मया वाग्भिः अदीन भाषिणी | शिवाभिः इष्टाभिः अभिप्रसादिता | जगाम शान्तिम् मम मैथिल आत्मजा | तव अपि शोकेन तथा अभिपीडिता ||

“Seetha Devi who was tormented by the grief of her separation from you, she became calm and obtained a peace of mind by my careful, comfortable, aggregable words spoken to her with well deposed manner by me” so said Hanuman.