

॥ श्रीहनूमत्पंचचामरम् ॥

.. shrI hanUmat pancha chAmaram ..

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INTRODUCTION.

This is a short and sweet stotram consisting of nine verses arranged in the Pancha chamara meter.

They constitute a prayer to Hanuman to help one to destroy the six internal enemies that form an obstruction on the road to spiritual progress. They seek his help to place one's mind at the feet of Lord Rama. Thus chanting of these verses will help to calm the mind which is a prerequisite for efficacious prayer or meditation.

Indian mythology offers some unique characters the like of whom are not available in mythologies of other countries. To name some, they are Sage Vyasa, Naradha and Hanuman. We will briefly talk about Hanuman here.

REFERENCES TO HANUMAN IN PURANAS/EPICS.

Hanuman is loved and venerated by all.

He is known for his erudition, bravery, valour and above all his great self effacing humility. His life story appears in chapters 35 and 36 of the Uttara Kanda of Shrimad Valmiki Ramayana. Sage Agastya narrated it to Shri Rama.

Hanuman is also referred to in Siva Purana, Brahma Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Bhavishya Purana and Mahabharata. According to Bhagavata Purana, Hanuman stayed behind after Rama left Ayodhya and remained in Kimpurusha Varsha where he is still living listening to Ramayana being sung by the denizens of the place and himself joining them in the singing.

किंपुरुषे वर्षे भगवन्तमादिपुरुषं

लक्ष्मणाग्रजं सीताभिरामं रामं तच्चरणसंनिकर्षाभिरतः

परमभागवतो- हनुमान् सह किंपुरुषैः

अविरतभक्तिरुपासते । आर्ष्टिषेणेन सह गन्दर्वैरनुगीयमानं

परमकल्याणीं भर्तृभगवत्कथां समुपशृणोति स्वयं चेदं गायति ॥ (5-19-1,2) Full account of Hanuman is given in Parasara Samhita also. The

samhitas are that portion of the vedas that contain the prayers, mantras set to appropriate chandas (meter) and rituals to propitiate the God. They are given out by sages who got them as revelations by

divine grace. The author of this samhita is not the Parasara who was sage Vyasa's father, but his the third generation disciple (Vyasa->Paila->Baskala->Parasara) who learnt Rig veda. The samhita contains in detail the story of Hanuman - the god. According to it, Anjaneya is the ninth incarnation of Hanuman. It contains a sahasranama. Interestingly, one of the 108 names of Hanuman is ॐ भविष्यच्छत्रुराननाय नमः । That is, he will succeed present Brahma as Lord of creation in the next yuga. According to the samhita this boon was granted to Hanuman by Brahma Himself when he visited Brahmaloaka. There is no hint of this in Valmiki Ramayana. Hanuman was born with an aspect of Lord Siva. This is stated specifically in Ananda Ramayana. Vrishakapi is the name of one of the eleven Rudras according to the Vishnu Purana. This name appears in one of the Sivasahasranamams. Brahma Purana refers to Hanuman by this name. The third Yajus in the seventh Anuvaka of Shri Rudram reads:नमो दूताय च प्रहिताय च । dUta

is a messenger who is an expert in conveying information and also gathering information. Prahitha is one deputed by his master on a specific occasion for a specific duty. The commentators state that god Agni is meant here as he is said to be the messenger of the gods. He is also the prahitha or special agent of the yajaman or performer of a sacrifice to carry the oblations to the god specified. Thus the Lord Himself acts as a messenger to His devotees and protects them in that capacity. We may say that it was the Lord as Krishna who acted as a messenger to the Pandavas. Similarly, we may say that it was the Lord who as Hanuman acted as a messenger and conveyed Rama's message to Ravana and also gathered information about Lanka that will be useful to Rama in case He had to engage in a fight with Ravana. Lord Siva incarnated as Hanuman to demonstrate to the world the value of bhakti and the characteristics of a true devotee. He is also known as Vayuputra, the son of Vayu deva or the wind god. The great philosopher Madhvacharya explained that Vayu, in this context refers, not to the Vayu deva but to Mukhyaprana - the first of Lord Vishnu's creation - who is also known as Hiranyagarbha. He represents not the individual (व्यष्टि) prana but the total (समष्टि) prana or the aggregate of all the individual

pranas. Thus the devas depend on Him for their survival. So He is more powerful than all the devas and omniscient too (सर्वज्ञः). That is why he was able to perform deeds that could not be performed by anyone else. Jambavan when he was encouraging Hanuman to cross the ocean said that Hanuman was a great scholar and had no equal in strength, wisdom and courage. Rama himself admitted that what Hanuman had done was impossible even to be imagined by others. (Yuddha Kanda.1.2)

कृतं हनूमता कार्यं सुमहद् भुवि दुर्लभम् ।
मनसाऽपि यदन्येन न शक्यं धरणीतले ॥

Madhvacharya has quoted extensively from Rig Veda, Skanda Purana and Vayu Purana to prove that Mukyaprana took three incarnations. They are Hanuman, Bhimasena and Madhvacharya himself. Hanuman is described

in the Rigveda

as हनु शब्दो ज्ञानवाचि हनुमान् मतिशब्दितः । (i.e) the word Hanuman means one who has perfect knowledge. He is also known as intelligent.

Hanuman learnt all the scriptures from the Sun god himself. The Sun god is always on the move and because of this Hanuman had to learn while on the move. He had to keep flying in front of his guru, the Sun god and also facing him, since he cannot be showing his back to his guru while listening to the guru! He learnt all the vedas and the six vedangas in a very short time. Hanuman wanted to offer his teacher the gurudakshina which is to be given at the end of learning. Initially the Sun god did not want any thing as dakshina. But when Hanuman insisted, the Sun said that his son Sugriva was living on earth with his brother Vali and was not having good relationship with him. Vali was much more powerful than Sugriva. In view of this the Sun god wanted Hanuman to be with his son Sugriva and be of help to him. Accordingly Hanuman stayed with Sugriva all the time as his friend, philosopher and guide.

Hanuman is reputed to have mastered vyakarana - the science of grammar. He is therefore called nava vyakarana pandita (master of the nine systems of grammar). Rama pointed this out to Lakshmana when they meet Hanuman for the first time in Kishkinda forests.

Hanuman met them taking the form of a celibate (brahmachari) and engaged LakShmana in a conversation in a bid to find out their identity as Sugriva was afraid that they might have been sent by Vali to kill him. Rama did not speak a word himself, but was just listening to the conversation. He concluded that Hanuman was no ordinary person as none but an erudite person could speak in that polished manner. He points out these characteristics in Hanuman's speech that made him to arrive at this conclusion to LakShmana. Rama , in his admiration, said: (Valmiki Ramayana.Kishkindha Kanda.3-28 to 33).

नानृग्वेदविनीतस्य नायजुर्वेदधारिणः ।
 नासामवेदविदुषः शक्यमेवं विभाषितुम् ॥ २८।
 नूनं व्याकरणं कृत्स्नमनेन बहुधा श्रुतम् ।
 बहु व्याहरतानेन न किञ्चिदपशब्दितम् ॥ २९।
 न मुखे नेत्रयोश्चापि ललाटे च भ्रुवोः तथा ।
 अन्येष्वपि च सर्वेषु दोषः संविदितः क्वचित् ॥ ३०।
 अविस्तरमसंदिग्धमविलम्बितमव्ययम् ।
 उरःस्थं कण्ठगं वाक्यं वर्तते मध्यमस्वरम् ॥ ३१।
 संस्कारमसंपन्नामद्भूतामविलम्बिताम् ।
 उच्चारयति कल्याणीं वाचं हृदयकर्षिणीम् ॥ ३२।
 अनया चित्रया वाचा त्रिस्थानव्यञ्जनस्थया ।
 कस्य नाराध्यते चित्तमुद्यतासेररेरपि ॥ ३३।

Rough translations of these verses are given below.

To speak in the way he (Hanuman) has done is not possible for one who has not studied Rig veda ,Yajurveda and also Sama veda with meaning. Surely he had studied the entire range of grammar thoroughly, as is clear from the fact that nothing has been wrongly worded by him even though he spoke a great deal. No fault of expression was noticed anywhere in his face, or eyes, or forehead or eyebrows or in anyone of his limbs.The speech emanating from his bosom and articulated by his throat is marked by absence of prolixity, is unambiguous and unfaltering. It does not make a grating impression on one's ears, uttered as it were in a modulated tone. He utters a wholesome, distinct and remarkable speech that is gramatically correct, fluent and delightful to the mind. Whose mind

will not be rendered favourable by this wonderful speech which has its seat in the three articulating organs (the bosom, throat and head)?
The mind even of an enemy with his sword uplifted will be made friendly thereby.

Please note that this encomium is paid by Rama who himself is reputed to be an eloquent speaker and had studied all the shastras like Hanuman. This is stated in the very beginning of Ramayana by sage Narada to Valmiki. In Narada's words: Rama is वाग्मी or eloquent and: वेदवेदान्त तत्त्वज्ञः knows the truth of the vedas and the six sciences (grammar etc.) auxiliary to them and सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञः स्मृतिमान् प्रतिमानवान्; knows the real meaning of all the scriptures, has a sharp memory and is possessed of quick wit. Sage Agastya also mentioned this fact to Rama when he was narrating the life of Hanuman. The sage said:
सर्वासु विद्यासु तपोविधाने प्रस्पृधतेऽयं हि गुरुं सुराणाम् ।
सोऽयं नवव्याकरणार्थवेत्ता ब्रह्मा भविष्यत्यपि ते प्रसादात् ॥

Sita also paid compliments to Hanuman's qualities of speaking. This was when he conveyed to her Rama's victory in the battle with Ravana. She said: (Valmiki Ramayana. Yuddha kanda. 113 - 26).

अतिलक्षण-संपन्नं माधुर्यगुण-भूषणम् ।

बुद्ध्या-दृष्टाङ्गया युक्तं त्वमेवाहंसि भाषितुम् ॥

You alone are competent to speak words that are endowed with the mark of quality, sweet in expression, adorned with virtues, alert in mind that is characterised by (the well known) eight excellences. ॐ
Buddhi is the awakened, alert mind. The ashtanga, the eight qualities of Buddhi, a sound and ripe intellect are given in the following verse of the Nitisara Kamandaka quoted by the commentators.

शुश्रूषा श्रवणं चैव ग्रहणं धारणं तथा ।

ऊहोऽपोहोऽर्थविज्ञानं तत्त्वज्ञानं च धीगुणाः ॥

They are: (1) keenness to hear discourses especially on spiritual topics, (2) readiness to hear such topics, (3) receptivity, (4) retentive power, (5) reasoning for and, (6) against a proposition, (7) the faculty of comprehension and (8) realisation of the truth.

No wonder, then, that Rama being a shrewd person observed Hanuman's

bearing combined with his gift of powers of communication and concluded that he was suited to be an ideal messenger. Rama stated this after listening to

Hanuman's introductory talk in Kishkinda (referred to above). Rama said (Valmiki Ramayana. Kishkinda Kanda. 3 - 34, 35)

एवं विधो यस्य दूतो न भवेत् पार्थिवस्य तु ।

सिद्ध्यन्ति हि कथं तस्य कार्याणां गतयोऽनघ ॥ ३४।

एवंगुणगणैर्युक्ता यस्य स्युः कार्यसाधकाः ।

तस्य सिद्ध्यन्ति सर्वेर्था दूतवाक्यप्रचोदिताः ॥ ३५।

How can the progress of undertakings of a king in whose service no such envoy exists actually meet with success? By the very pleading of an envoy, all the objects of a sovereign in whose service there happen to be agents adorned with such virtues are surely accomplished. Manu prescribes certain qualifications that a king should look for in a messenger. He says:

दूतं चैव प्रकुर्वीत सर्वशास्त्रविशारदम् ।

इङ्गिताकारचेष्टज्ञं शुचिं दक्षं कुलोद्गतम् ॥

अनुरक्तः शुचिन्दक्षः स्मृतिमान्देशकालवित् ।

वपुष्मान्वीतभीर्वाग्मी दूतो राज्ञः प्रशस्यते ॥

Roughly translated, these verses say that the king should select one who is expert in scriptures, who could read the intention from gestures, physical appearances and features, who is a man of character, clever and belonging to a high family. He should love his king, be pious, dexterous, intelligent, should feel easy at any place, time or circumstance, handsome and strongly built, fearless and a good orator. We find that Hanuman possessed all these qualifications and was fit to be a messenger. Rama had studied the qualities of Hanuman and had no difficulty in choosing him to be his messenger.

Rama, though he claimed himself to be Dasaratha's son, and tried to act like a mortal could not conceal his real identity from the eyes of the devotee Hanuman. So, Hanuman did not waste even a second, but surrendered at Rama's feet. Prahlada classifies devotion into nine kinds. He said this in his reply to his father Hiranyakasipu when he

was asked to say what according to him was the best he learnt at the gurukula.

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यं आत्मनिवेदनम् ॥

इति पुंसांर्पिता विष्णौ भक्तिश्चेन्नवलक्षणा ।
क्रियते भगवत्यद्धा तन्मन्येऽधीतमुत्तमम् ॥
(Shri Bhagavata. 7-5-23 and 24).

The nine types of devotion that Prahlada talks about are:(1) to hear the names, glories and stories of the Lord, (2) to chant them, (3) to remember Him (as well as His names and stories, (4) to wait upon Him, (5) to offer worship, (6) to offer salutations to Him, (7) to dedicate one's actions to Him, (8) to cultivate friendship with Him and (9) to offer one's body and belongings to Him.

Hanuman's devotion comes under the seventh category (viz.) the dasya bhakti (i.e.)

devotedness to the Lord with a sense of service. He proudly proclaimed himself to be the servant of Rama in Lanka when he was surrounded by the solders of Ravana in the Ashoka Vana. दासोऽहं कोसलेन्द्रस्य
रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः । (Valmiki Ramayana. Sundara Kanda - 42-34)

Also his is a solitary example of this type of devotion. This is stated in the following popular verse.

श्रीविष्णोः श्रवणे परीक्षिद्भवद् वैयासिकिः कीर्तने
प्रह्लादःस्मरणे तदङ्घ्रिभजने लक्ष्मीः पृथुः पूजने ।
अक्रूरस्त्वभिवन्दने कपिपतिर्दास्येऽथ सख्येऽर्जुनः
सर्वस्वात्मनिवेदने बलिरभूत् कृष्णासिरेषां परम् ॥

A devotee practising this type of devotion is inspired with a sense of service to the Lord and feels that the Lord is his master and he is His servant. He does not nourish any kind of ego but surrenders himself, body and soul to the Lord. The master can expect any kind of work from him. In the case of Hanuman, his devotion was so intense that it transcended the boundaries of this particular type and spanned the full extent of types 8 and 9 also: that is, he was considered a friend by Rama and he also surrendered himself totally to Rama. He tried to be in Rama's company as much as possible so that

he could enjoy His glories from close quarters. Also since proximity creates affection, by being close to Rama, he could receive Rama's love. He is the one chosen by the Lord to obtain His love as mentioned by the Katha Upanishad that states (2-23) यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः । □ He is attained only by the one whom He chooses □. This also brings to our mind the verse in Varadarajapanchasat by the great poet Shri Vedanta Desika. He says:

सौशील्यभावितधिया भवता कथञ्चित्
संछादितानपि गुणान् वरद त्वदीयान् ।

प्रत्यक्षयन्त्यविकलं तव सन्निकृष्टाः

पत्युस्त्वेषामिव पयोदवृतान् मयूरान् ॥ २७ ॥

One peculiarity of the types 4, 7,8 and 9 of devotions is that it involves acceptance by the other party, namely the Lord also. One cannot claim himself to be the Lord's friend or servant unless the Lord also accepts the offer of friendship or service. Did Rama accept Hanuman's services? We find that Rama unhesitatingly acknowledged his services. He told the sage Agastya that but for Hanuman he could not have had the news about Sita languishing in Lanka, win the war with Ravana, regain Sita, Lakshmana and others. (Valmiki Ramayana. Uttara Kanda. 35-9 and 10)

एतस्य बाहुवीर्येण लङ्का सीता च लक्ष्मणः ।

प्राप्ता मया जयश्चैव राज्यं मित्राणि बान्धवाः ॥ ९ ॥

हनुमान् यदि मे न स्याद् वानराधिपतेः सखा ।

प्रवृत्तिमपि को वेत्तुं जानक्याः शक्तिमान् भवेत् ॥ १० ॥

This is evident from the following incident narrated in Uttara Kanda. After Rama's coronation, all those who all those who helped him were given presents and given leave to depart. Rama sends back other friends, including monkeys, bears and ogres. At that time Hanuman said

स्नेहो मे परमो राजंस्त्वयि तिष्ठतु नित्यदा ।

भक्तिश्च नियता वीर भावो नान्यत्र गच्छतु ॥ १६ ॥

याव्द्रामकथा वीर चरिष्यति महीतले ।

तावच्छरीरे वत्सन्तु प्राणा मम न संशयः ॥ १७ ॥

Hanuman pleaded saying May my supreme affection for you stand for ever. May my devotion to you be constant. Let not my love be diverted to anyone else. May life continue in my body as long as your story remains current on this earth. On hearing this, Rama was moved and said

एकैकस्योपकारस्य प्राणान् दास्यामि ते कपे ।

शेषस्येहोपकाराणां भवाम ऋणिनो वयम् ॥ २३।

मदङ्गे जीर्णतां यातु यत् त्वयोपकृतं कपे ।

नरः प्रत्युपकाराणामापत्स्वायति पात्रताम् ॥ २४।

In reply Rama said You have done me numerous services. For anyone of them my life is an adequate return. If my life is pledged in return for one of your services then I shall be in debt in respect of others. I shall be indebted to you in a manner that I can never think of repaying you. Let there be no occasion for me to repay your services; for one deserves to be requitted for services rendered only when one is in trouble. Can there be a better way of acknowledging the services rendered by Hanuman?

Incidentally the above request by Hanuman whose whole being was imbued with the spirit of service to the Lord shows that such a devotee will not accept any of the many types of liberation. He is content with the thought that Lord to whom services has been offered by him had accepted his services. This was said by Lord Kapila in His advice to His mother Devahuti.

सालोक्यसार्ष्टिसामीप्यसारूप्यैकत्यमप्युत ।

दीयमानं न गृह्णन्ति विना मत्सेवनं जनाः ॥ (Shri Bhagavata.

3-30-13).

Hanuman had other endearing qualities too. Sita found in him the following qualities: energy, firmness, renown, dexterity, competence, modesty, prudence and intelligence. Rama had given a beautiful pearl necklace (given to him by the wind-god) to Sita. She, in turn, with the consent of Rama gave it to Hanuman with whom she was very pleased and found the above said qualities in him.

तेजो धृतिर्यशो दाक्ष्यं सामर्त्यं विनयो नयः ।

पौरुषं विक्रमो बुद्धिर्यस्मिन्नेतानि नित्यदा ॥

(Valmiki Ramayana. Yuddha Kanda. 128-82.)

That is why it is said that one who worships Hanuman will inherit

these qualities. This is mentioned in this following popular verse.

बुद्धिर्बलं यशो धैर्यं निर्भयत्वमरोगता ।

अजाड्यं वाक्पटुत्वं च हनुमत्स्मरणाद् भवेत् ॥

Hanuman is renowned for his great strength. In North India he is known as Bajrang Bali. This is a dialectical variation of the word वज्राङ्ग बली (vajranga ballee) implying he has a body strong as Indra's Vajrayuda. But he was equally known for his humility because of which he preferred to call himself as the servant of Rama.(दासोऽओहं कोशलेन्द्रस्य रामस्य). With the combination

of these qualities and gift of supernatural powers got even when he was a child he could easily accomplish great feats like crossing the ocean, bringing the mountain etc.. which no mortal can even think of. The great poet Kalidasa, known for his similies, describes Hanuman's crossing of the ocean with an apt simile thus.मारुतिः सागरं

तीर्णः संसारमिव निर्ममः । Hanuman crossed the ocean like one

having no attachments goes across the ocean of samsara. Hanuman himself talked of his ability to perform superhuman acts to Rama when he said ॥Whenever Hanuman takes a pledge fate itself is nullified and death turns into life॥हनुमति कृतप्रतिज्जे दैवमदैवं

यमोऽप्यर्यमः ।(Hanumannataka.XIII-16) This is not an idle boast but the result of his immense faith that with Rama's blessings he could accomplish anything.

It was said earlier that Hanuman was blessed with long life by Rama. So, though he served Rama in the Treta Yuga he continued to live and was present during the Lord's descent as Krishna in the next Dwapara Yuga. He had a meeting with the Pandava prince Bhima. This is mentioned in the Aranya Parva of Mahabharata. Initially Bhima could not make out who the monkey was. But later on when Hanuman disclosed his identity, Bhima was overjoyed and saluted him. He sought Hanuman's blessings. Hanuman was only too happy to bless him. He said he could not take up arms and fight in the ensuing KurukShetra war: but he would be seated in the banner of Arjuna and discourage his enemies by his loud roars. This is referred to in the Bhagavat Gita (Ch1-20) wherein Arjuna is called कपिध्वजः -one with the mark of monkey in his flag.

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥

As a result, he had the great fortune to listen to the song celestial - Bhagavat Gita- first hand as it flowed out of the sacred lips of the Lord. The Muktikopanishad says that he had earlier learnt the upanishads from Rama in Ayodhya. According to a popular verse Gita is the milk drawn from the upanishads - the cow. Krishna milked the cow using Arjuna as the calf.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

Hanuman, having studied the upanishads at the feet of the Lord already, listened to the teaching of Gita from the Lord (as Krishna) with rapt attention and could understand the purport of Gita without difficulty.

The saint composer Thyagaraja says in his song Gitartamu that the true meaning of Gita was grasped only by Hanuman the savant.

HANUMAN AS GURU. The Ramayana of Valmiki is known as Itihasa or a

historical narrative. But, for a devout Hindu, it is not merely a narrative but a book of great spiritual significance. It was the supreme Being who incarnated as Rama to carry out certain specific tasks. This is mentioned in the following popular verse:

वेदवेद्ये परेषुसि जाते दशरतात्मजे ।

वेदः प्राचेदसादसीत् साक्षात् रामामायणात्मना ॥

When the Supreme Being, who is to be known (only) on the authority of vedas, was born as the son of Dasaratha, the vedas became Ramayana through (the agency of) the sage Valmiki. This implies that the Ramayana is vedas in the form of the story of Rama. That is why the great book has been rendered in many Indian Languages. Many commentaries have been written on it and will continue to be written in future also. The ardent devotees of Rama have the habit of regularly reading one or more chapters of the text daily. They believe that the holy book has the power to ward off or alleviate the evil effects of past karma. Great acharyas have dived deep into the sacred text and coaxed rare interpretations that are a

great treat to chew and digest. They substantiate their interpretations with quotations from vedas, upanishads and works of saints and philosophers. A phrase from a popular verse describes this phenomenon by comparing Ramayana to the ocean.

समुद्रमिव रत्नाढ्यम् । The ocean is believed to be the repository of precious stones. So it is known as रत्नाकरः.

A casual visitor to the sea may take a stroll along the beach and come across some shells cast by the waves. A novice diver will be able to dive to a short depth only and may chance upon one or few diamonds of little value. The more experienced diver can plunge to greater depth, stay for a longer time and find many more valuable diamonds. But the case of an experienced one is very different. He has studied the characteristics of the ocean in his area. He is equipped with special equipments and will be able to go down to greater depths, stay for as long as is required. He can make a thorough search of the dark recesses that could not have been accessed by the lesser divers and gather very rare gems. Similar is the case with Ramayana. It has, just like other spiritual texts the capacity to divulge newer and rare meanings pari passu with one's scholarship, faith and devotion.

No wonder then then a devotee uses Ramayana to aid on the spiritual path.

A guru is a must for one who wants to proceed on the spiritual path. One has to seek a guru to know the truth about God. Krishna says this in Gita.(4-34).

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

The Munadakopanishad also says that one should approach a guru and gain knowledge from him only.

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्

समित्पाणिः श्रोतियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥ (1-2-12).

A discussion on the need for a guru and his qualifications are available in Gurushtakam with meaning in this site. As said earlier Rama is the Supreme Being who incarnated as Dasaratha's son. He may be worshipped either in Hisसगुण aspect; that is as the Lord

with attributes or in His निर्गुणम् aspect. In the निर्गुणम् aspect the supreme Being is spoken of in the upanishads as being without form and beyond sense perception.

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं तथारसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।

अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात्

प्रमुच्यते ॥ (Kathopanishad.(1-3-15). Conceiving of such a Being which is not accessible to one's senses and then worshipping Him is obviously a very difficult job. This is beyond the reach of most people and not an attractive proposition too. In view of this, our scriptures allow us to worship God in a form that appeals to us.

Thus, one may worship the Lord as Rama, Krishna, Ganapathi, Devi etc., in a picture or icon or any other suitable medium. Krishna, in Gita, says (7-21) that He accepts such a worship done with faith.

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

Such devotees who worship the Lord with form also make progress. The Lord endows them with necessary wisdom by which they can reach Him as their own Self.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ (10-10).

The saint composer Thyagaraja was a great devotee of Rama and worshipped Rama in an icon, but had described Rama in both forms in his songs. The saint Sadasiva Brahmendra had said in one of his songs beginning खेलति मम हृदये that Rama is the supreme being whose nature is existence, knowledge and bliss that shines in his heart.

शान्तिविदेह-सुतसहचारी दहरायोध्या-नगरविहारी ।

परमहंससाराज्योद्धारी सत्यज्ञानानन्दशरीरी ।

He took on a human form for a specific purpose. People use a tame elephant to train a newly captured elephant. In the same way the Lord put on a

human form to teach righteous conduct to other men. Shri Bhagavatam says this:(5-19-5) that is - the descent of the Lord in a human form

is to teach mankind the ways of the great and not merely to

exterminate the demon race.मर्त्यावतारस्त्वह मर्त्याशिक्षणं

रक्षोवधायैव न केवलं विभोः । Rama set an example to all by strict adherence to the scriptural injunctions. Hanuman had known Rama and served him devoutly. As a result he had received Rama's blessings in abundance. He also has all the qualifications prescribed for a guru in our scriptures.

According to one interpretation of Ramayana, Sita represents the individual soul or Jivatma. It is living happily with Rama who represents the supreme being or paramatma. Unfortunately, in a moment of weakness, its attention is diverted from the paramatma, who represents bliss, towards the worldly attractions outside. That these external attractions are illusory and not real is shown by the golden deer. There is no such thing as a golden deer. The moment the jivatma's attention is diverted and is separated from the Lord, it falls a prey to the senses, as denoted by the ten headed Ravana. The sense organs are ten. As the jivatma is held a prisoner in the control of the sense organs, it repents its folly and pines for reunion with the Lord. As the longing becomes intense with the passage of time, the kindly Lord, who is never away from the jivatma, senses the desperate situation. He sends a guru (represented by Hanuman) to meet the jiva. The guru offers consolation. He gives the news about the Lord, instils the hope that the day of deliverance is not far away and so there is no need for despair. The overly perturbed jiva, thus gets encouragement, continues its prayers and looks forward to redemption. Sure enough, the Lord comes and redeems the jiva who once again joins Him. This is the story behind Ramayana. Sage Narada includes Hanuman's name along with the names of renowned sages like Sanatkumara, Vyasa and Sukadeva as great teachers of devotion in his aphorisms on bhakti.(No:83 of Narada Bhakti Sutra.) Even in worldly matters we find that when we want to approach a highly placed dignitary, like a minister, for a favour we have to observe the required protocol and go through the proper channel. The proper channel for approaching the Lord is via devotees. The Lord appeared as Kapila to teach His mother Devahuti the way to liberation. During the course of the teaching Kapila says more than once that He is the Lord Himself. But nevertheless, He advises her to have recourse to saints who have great devotion to Him. He Himself

did not directly grant her salvation. Similarly we find in Bhagavatam that the Lord appeared as Rishabadeva and ruled the earth for a long time. He decided to renounce and hand over the rule to His son. Before departure He called His sons and advised them that the human birth is very valuable and is not meant to be frittered away in pursuit of petty sense pleasures that are enjoyed even by lowly animals. Instead life should be used to work for attaining the greatest good, that is liberation from the cycle of birth and death. To do this one has to seek the help of sadhus. As in the case of Kapila, He also hints that He is the Lord Himself, but advises His sons to come through the proper channel. Thus it is most proper that one resorts to Hanuman for getting Rama's grace as is being done in the following verses. Incidentally, we are told in the Mundakopanishad (3-2-10) that one can get mundane prosperity by approaching and worshipping a realised person.

आत्मज्ञं अर्चयेत् भूतिकामः । It is not wrong to ask for wealth from Him as one requires money for having a comfortable life. And money is definitely required for leading a religious life by performing the religious rites as ordained by the scriptures. In Gita, Krishna says that he considers the one who prays to Him for prosperity as His devotee. He welcomes such a devotee also and fulfils his desires.

Let us move on to the stotram proper. Rough translations of the verses are given.

नमोऽस्तु ते हनूमते दयावते मनोगते
सुवर्णपर्वताकृते नभस्स्वतः सुताय ते ।
न चाङ्गनेय ते समो जगत्त्रये महामते
पराक्रमे वचःक्रमे समस्तसिद्धिसङ्गमे ॥ १ ॥

Salutations to you, merciful Hanuman, son of wind god! You are fast like mind and shining like mount Meru. You have no equal in all the worlds in valour or the art of speaking or acquisition of supernatural powers. You possess immense wisdom. (नभस्वत् = the wind). मतिः is synonymous with बुद्धिः and means intellect. So महामतिः is same as महाबुद्धिः । Shri Sankaracharya defines महाबुद्धिः occurring as one of the

names (No.173) of Lord Vishnu in Vishnusahasranama to mean बुद्धिमतामपि बुद्धिमत्त्वात् महाबुद्धिः best amongst jnanis or realised persons. We may, without hesitation, accept this meaning and say that Hanuman is a great jnani and so most suited to be taken as a guru.

रविं ग्रसिष्णुरुत्पतन् फलेच्छया शिशुर्भवान्
रवेर्गृहीतवानहो समस्तवेदशास्त्रकम् ।
भवन्मनोज्ञभाषणं बभूव कर्णभूषणं
रघूत्तमस्य मानसांबुजस्य पूर्णतोषणम् ॥ २ ॥

When you were a child, you once wanted to eat a fruit. You saw the sun and (taking him to be a fruit) you jumped towards it and were about to seize it. What a wonder! from the same sun you learnt all the vedas and scriptures. Your endearing way of talking became an ornament to the ears of Rama, the best of Raghus and immensely delighted his heart.

धरात्मजापतिं भवान् विभावयन् जगत्पतिं
जगाम रामदासतां समस्तलोकविश्रुताम् ।
विलङ्घ्य वारिधिं जवात् विलोक्य दीनजानकीं
दशाननस्य मानसं ददाह लङ्कया समम् ॥ ३ ॥

You could find out that Rama was none other than the Lord of the universe Himself. You became renowned as Rama's servant. You jumped across the ocean quickly, met the hapless Janaki. You burnt Lanka along with heart of Ravana.

विलोक्य मातरं कृशां दशाननस्य तद्वने
भवानभाषत प्रियं मनोहरं च संस्कृतम् ।
समस्तदुष्टरक्षसां विनाशकालसूचनं
चकार रावणाग्रतः नयेन वा भयेन वा ॥ ४ ॥

You met the Mother Sita in the (Ashoka) garden of Ravana. You talked to her in a pleasing manner in beautiful Sanskrit. You also met Ravana and indicated to him, through gentle persuasion and also by serious threat, that the time of the destruction of his entire retinue is not far away.

Note. When Hanuman Sita in the garden of Ravana (Ashoka) she was

surrounded by Ravana's servants. He was waiting for a suitable opportunity to talk to her. At that time he was deliberating how to talk to her and in what language. He felt that if he talked in chaste Sanskrit spoken by learned brahmins she may imagine that Hanuman was only Ravana in disguise and may be frightened. So he decided to talk to her in the colloquial Sanskrit as used by the common people.

वाचं चोदाहरिष्यामि मानुषीमिह संस्कृताम् ।
यदि वाचं प्रदास्यामि द्विजातिरिव संस्कृताम् ।
रावणं मन्यमाना मां सीता भीता भविष्यति ॥

(Sundara kanda. 30-17 and 18). This is referred to here.

महाबलो महाचलं समुह्य चौषधिप्रभं
भवान् ररक्ष लक्ष्मणं भयावहे महावहे ।
महोपकारिणं तदा भवन्तमात्मबान्धवं
समस्तलोकबान्धवोऽप्यमन्यत स्वयं विभुः ॥ ५ ॥

You possessed immense strength. You carried the huge mountain that was shining brightly with medicinal plants and revived LakShmana (who fell down unconscious) in the fearful battle. The Lord Rama, though He is the intimate relative of all beings, considered you, who thus rendered an invaluable help, a close relative.

भवांश्च यत्र यत्र तत् शृणोति रामकीर्तनं
करोति तत्र तत्र भोः सभाष्यमस्तकाञ्जलिम् ।
प्रदेहि मेऽञ्जनासुत त्वदीयभक्तिवैभवं
विदेहि मे निरञ्जनं च रामदासदासताम् ॥ ६ ॥

Oh Anjaneya, wherever you hear the glories of Rama being sung, you are present there with tears flowing from your eyes and hands raised over your head in salute. Please grant me the grandeur of your devotion and the untainted status of being servant to you - the servant of Rama.

Note. It was said earlier that Hanuman's devotion was pure and unalloyed. The devotee prays for such a sincere devotion here: because very often people pray to God for getting relief from some suffering or for gain. In such cases one uses God as a means to attain some material gain. This is an inferior type of devotion. Also, please note the prayer here is for being a servant of servant

of God. In Bhagavatam, Krishna said to His devotee Uddhava that He follows a sincere devotee. Thus by following such a devotee one is sure to find Him. This is like saying that by locating a calf one finds the cow which is inextricably tied by bonds of love to the calf. The devotee Kulasekhara prays for similar boon from Krishna in Mukundamala. He wants the Lord to grant him the status of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the Lord.

मज्जन्मनः फलमिदं मधुकैटभारे! मत्प्रार्थनीयमदनुग्रह एष एव ।

त्वत्भृत्यभृत्य-परिचारक-भृत्यभृत्यभृत्यस्य भृत्य इति मां स्मर लोकनाथ! ॥

One commentator had given an interesting explanation for Kulasekhara wishing to be a devotee's devotee than just being a devotee. He says that any one who is heriditarily rich is entitled to greater honour than one who suddenly finds himself rich due to a windfall. In the same way devotion secured by inheritance and that had percolated down several layers of devotees is refined and has got an unique flavour not to be seen in the devotion obtained by one's own effort.

अगण्यपुण्यवान् भवान् अनन्यधन्यजीवनः
विमुच्य मौक्तिकस्रजं ददौ धरात्मजा मुदा ।
भवन्तमालिलिङ्गं यद् रघूत्तमः स्वयं वदन्
इदं हि मे हनूमतः प्रदेयसर्वमित्यहो ॥ ७ ॥

You are of inconceivable merit and greatly blessed unlike any one else. Sita herself took out her pearl necklace from her neck and gave it to you. Also Rama Himself embraced you exclaiming "This is the only thing I can give to Hanuman."

धरा = earth. So, धरात्मजा = daughter.of earth, meaning Sita.

विदेहराजनन्दिनीमनोहरे वरे परे
विदेहमुक्तिदायके विधेहि मे मनो हरे ।
क्षणं क्षणं निरीक्षणं भवेद् यथा मयि प्रभोः
तथा निवेदयस्व महशां दशाननान्तके ॥ ८ ॥

O Hanuma! please place my mind on Shri Rama, the beloved consort of Sita. He confers liberation after the fall of the body. Please bring my plight to His notice so that He may cast His glances at me very often.

Note. What happens when one is caught in the range of His glance? One of His names (No:393 in Vishnusahasranama)

is शुभेक्षणः । One with auspicious looks. Shri Sankaracharya in his commentary explains

the significance of the name as follows.

ईक्षणं दर्शनं यस्य शुभं शुभकरं,
मुमुक्षूणां मोक्षदं, भोगार्थीनां भोगदं,
सर्वसन्देहविच्छेदकारणं, पापिनां
पावनं, हृदग्रन्देविच्छेदकरं, सर्वकर्माणां क्षपणं,
अविद्यायाश्च निवर्तकं स शुभेक्षणः । “भिद्यते

हृदयग्रन्तिः” इत्यादि श्रुतेः ॥ His auspicious looks grants

liberation (mokSha) to those who seek liberation, grants pleasures to those who seek pleasures, destroys the sins of the sinners, removes all doubts, removes the knot of ignorance that ties up the mind and destroys all remnants of karma and also ignorance. What more can one desire from Him? A similar idea is expressed in a highly poetic form by the well known acharya Shri Vedanta Desika in his Shreestuti. This poem is in praise of Shree (LakShmi) Devi.

आर्तत्राणव्रतिभिरमृतासार नीलांबुवाहैः

अंभोजानामुषसि मिषतामन्तरङ्गैरपाङ्गैः ।

यस्यां यस्यां दिशि विहरते देवि दृष्टिस्त्वदीया

तस्यां तस्यां अहमहमिकां तन्वते संपदोघाः ॥ १५ ॥

The poet says that Her eyes are like freshly blown lotuses. They are verily the dark clouds that pour rains of nectar that yield mokSha or immortality. In whichever direction Her glances travel, to the end of that direction, all good things are showered. In fact there seems to be a competition amongst the good things to flood the devotee with prosperity and relieve him of his material wants.

इदं च पञ्चचामरं गृहाण दासकल्पितं

समीरणात्मसंभव प्रमोदमानचेतसा ।

रिपून् षडान्तरान् विनाशयाशु दुर्दमान्

पुनर्भवाख्यकर्दमात् विमुच्य पाहि पाहि माम् ॥ ९ ॥

O Hanuman! please deign to accept this hymn composed by your servant with pleasure. Please destroy the six (internal) enemies that are

hard to be won over by me. Please extricate me from the mire known as rebirth. Please save me, save me!

Note. षड् = six. अन्तरान् = internal. रिपून् = enemies.

The six internal enemies are mentioned in our scriptures are: कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभो मदमोहौ च मत्सरः । These are said to be internal because they perturb the mind and are thus form obstacles one faces in his spiritual path. They are difficult to conquer.

Krishna warns Arjuna to be careful and avoid falling a prey to them.

For example He said

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

Here He calls lust, anger and greed as the three gateways to hell. मदः pride, arrogance. मोहः = delusion, confusion.

मात्सर्यम् = envy, jealousy.

<:रु>

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.. shrI hanUmat pancha chAmaram ..
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