

**THE WORSHIP OF HANUMAN**

**AMONGST HINDUS**

**IN DURBAN**

**BY**

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(ii)

Dedicated to my only daughter

VARSHA SINGH

(B.Sc--University of Durban Westville)

I very sincerely thank you for your motivational pursuit you so forcefully presented from the commencement to the conclusion of my study.

The beauty of giving birth to a baby girl is discovering that you have actually given birth to your own best friend.

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Aims and objectives**

The primary aim of this study is as follows:

To gather information scattered throughout several texts and to present coherently which will permit intelligible interpretation.

To trace the origins of Hanuman worship from the earlier times to the present.

To interpret the symbolic representation of Hanuman and the reason for this depiction in accordance with the role he played in the Ramayana.

To investigate the continuity or discontinuity of meaning in the interpretation of the phenomena of Hanuman.

To broaden the understanding and enhance the significance of Hindu ritual worship.

## **1.2 Methodology**

For the purpose of this study two types of data have been investigated: firstly, the information based on texts, both classical and modern. In order to interpret these texts, the method of hermeneutics is used. The second type of information is drawn from the field research. In accessing and interpreting this data, the researcher has used participant-observer method. Being a devotee of Hanuman, the researcher shared in the beliefs of Hanuman worshippers. This common identity has enabled the researcher to gain access to the informants more easily and also to provide an insider's perspective on the interpretation of the meaning of Hanuman worship.

## **1.3 Motivation**

There is a gap of information within South Africa regarding the worship of Hanuman. The purpose of this study is to fill this intellectual gap in our understanding of Hinduism.

It must be emphasised at the outset that the researcher was motivated to research the worship of Hanuman as she is a devotee of Hanuman. It was a spontaneous desire to pursue the above study to achieve a degree of fulfilment. It is common tradition among the Hindi community to worship Hanuman. But, the researcher also observed that Hanuman worship is now commonly practised among the Tamil speaking community. The popularity of Hanuman worship among

both Hindi and Tamil communities led the researcher to study this phenomenon in South Africa. This observation will be included in a later chapter.

#### **1.4 Limitations of study**

This study is confined to the Ramayana text as it is known in South Africa. Although Hanuman is referred to in other texts such as the Mahabharatha, this study will not go into those details.

Original texts were written in Sanskrit and the researcher was unable to read this text due to lack of knowledge of Sanskrit. Senior members who were interviewed preferred to communicate in Hindi and the researcher was unable to communicate freely due to lack of fluency in the language.

#### **1.5 The influence of the story of Rama in Asian countries beyond India**

The place of the Ramayana amongst the world's classics is indisputable. There are many versions of the Ramayana throughout Asia and they often differ from Valmiki's Ramayana. They were based on the diverse versions of the Ramayana that exist in each region within India, and the countries outside India inherited various adaptations from here. The Valmiki's Ramayana was orally transmitted before it was finally committed to written form. Over the

centuries, this version underwent countless changes and the Ramayana was reinterpreted, and (perhaps) distorted innumerable times. Since the artists who illustrated the Ramayana in painting and sculpture followed the local versions available to them, it is necessary to take them into account. It may come as a shock to most devout Hindus that Hanuman who is known as a *brahmachari* (celibate) is depicted in some paintings in erotic postures (Aryan, 1975:87).

The present section is a speculative note on the various portrayals of the Ramayan, how far they differentiate from Valmiki's epic and which of these versions reached the countries of South-East Asia and influenced their culture.

The story of Rama was current in South India from about the third century AD. since there are clear implications to the episodes in early Tamil literature. The major background to Kamban's great translation of the epic into Tamil was provided by the devotional (*bhakti*) poetry of the Alvars from which Kamban made certain borrowings.

Kamban's work *Iramavataram*, the Descent of Rama, displays an attitude of ardent devotion to an incarnate deity. This is the earliest devotional treatment of the story in the various living languages of India, which was brought out by Sampati's urging of the *vanaras* to repeat Rama's name for achieving success. This emphasis became more marked in later period. In this work, Hanuman's modesty is brought out not only when he prepares for his leap to Lanka, but more

particularly on his return when he does not relate his exploits to the *vanaras* (A.iyar, 1987:567-590).

The Kannada version, known as the Pampa Ramayana composed by Abhinava Pampa, an assumed name for Nagachandra, is in the Jain tradition of Vimalasuri, Ravishena and Gunabhadra. It was composed around the end of the 11th century AD. Another Kannada adaptation is known as the Torave Ramayana which was composed sometime between 1400 and 1600 AD. by Narnappa, better known as Kumaravyasa. In 1500 AD., a Kannada poet Kumaravalmiki who was a follower of the Bhagvata cult, brought out a copy of Valmiki's Ramayana. A number of versions of the Ramayana exist in Kannada language by various poets, for example, the Markandeya Ramayana, the Advaita Ramayana and the Ramchandra Charitra appeared in 1600 AD., the Shankara Ramayana in 1700 AD. and the Ananda Ramayana in 1748 AD. (Coomaraswamy, 1968:145-147).

In most South Indian variations of the Rama story, be it the Ramcharitam and Ramakathapattu or Ezuttacchan's Attiyuttama Ramayanam in Malayalam, the Adhyatma Ramayana in Telugu, Ravana is a more important figure. These, like numerous north Indian versions, branch in several respects from the traditional narrative, among them we have Krittibas' Bengali adaptation which includes the story of Ahi or Mahi Ravana, a son born to Ravana in the netherworld (*Patalaloka*). At Ravana's insistance Mahi Ravana came to his aid and despite Vibhishana's warnings tricked his way into the *vanara*

camp. He resorted to witchcraft and carries off Rama and Lakshmana back to the netherworld. Hanuman managed to enter there, learnt about their forthcoming sacrifice to Goddess Kali and following whose advice, he fooled Mahi Ravana into becoming the object of sacrifice, and finally returned carrying Rama and Laksmana on his shoulders.

This episode is found in both the Malaysian Hikayat-Siri Rama and the Japanese Serat Kanda and forms, together with the episode of Sita drawing Ravana's portrait, the main proof for the spread of the Rama story through Bengal to, South-East Asia. Here Mahi Ravana is mentioned as Maiyarab. The same story was popular also in Tamilnadu and Kerala. Likewise, Orissa, Gujarat, Kashmir, Maharashtra, each has its own adaptation of the Rama Katha.

Tulsidas in his Vinayapatrika often hints to having visions of Rama through the intervention of Hanuman. In his Ramacharitamanas, Hanuman is particularly prominent in the Sundarakanda. Tulsidas broadly follows Valmiki in all the details but here and there we come across rather changed passages. In the course of his wanderings in Lanka in search of Sita, Hanuman sees signs of Vaishnava worship and meets Vibhishana, who informs him about Sita's whereabouts. When he sets fire to Lanka, Vibhishana's house is spared (Krishnananda, 1977:26-36 ).

There are various adaptations of the Rama story in India as well as South East Asia. The traders and Buddhist monks were largely responsible for this diffusion through Central Asia to China and Japan. The spread of Indian culture in South-East Asia began at the dawn of the Christian era and continued till the tenth century AD. To this process, contribution was made by eastern, southern and western (mainly Gujeratis) Indians. In this cultural dispersion the Rama story naturally figured prominently, to the extent of becoming regarded as part of the national heritage in several countries. The production of these versions was taking place over the same period as the adaptations into Indian language with the earliest, the old Javanese being almost at the same time with Kamban. Hanuman is referred to as a philanderer in several South-East Asian versions, contrasting sharply with his being celibate in Indian tradition (Nagar, 1995:456-459).

The oldest evidence for the story of South-East Asia comes from south Vietnam, the ancient Champa, where an inscription of the seventh century AD., engraved on a temple dedicated to Valmiki mentions both the poem and the *avatars* of Vishnu. It has been suggested that its founder King Prakashdharman was indebted to Khmer culture for its admiration for the Ramayana. The inscription reveals his close familiarity with the opening verses of the Balakanda. In north Vietnam, the ancient Annam, the story has been given a local setting with Annam as Ayodhya, the kingdom of Dasharatha and Champa to the south as that of Ravana's Lanka.

In Indonesia, archaeological evidence for the Rama story has been found in the ninth century AD.--beliefs beautifying the Prambanam in Central Java while the oldest literary version, the Ramayana Kakawin of Yogishvara, is not much later since it has been given an early tenth century date. The Ramayana presentation Kakawin in Java is enjoyed in popular theatrical performances of the shadow plays (*wayang*). Java was ruled over by a Hindu king Devavarman as early as 132 AD. (Thomas, 1972:34-39).

In the Hikayat-Siri Rama, the Rama Jataka and other versions of the Ramayana are popular in the countries of South-East Asia. In Thailand, the Rama story known as the Ramakien includes unusual episodes such as a fight between Hanuman and Lakshmana. According to a very famous adaptation of the Thai Ramayana, the Ramajataka, Rama and Ravana were cousins; Rama got married twice after Sita's abduction by Ravana and had several sons by them. These sons helped Rama fight Ravana. It is also mentioned that before his marriage to Sita, Rama had innumerable wives (Aryan, 1975:37-38).

The motif of a bird stealing part of the pudding (*payasa*) is used in the Thai adaptation of the Ramayana to account for the birth of Sita and is presumably derived from the episode of the crow which molests Sita and which subsequently is identified as Maricha's mother. This has been combined with the more usual traditions about Hanuman's birth. This version changes the locales of all the Ramayana episodes as taking place not in India, but in Thailand where they have a city



named Ayodhya. This country is also mentioned as the original home of the Aryans and this race spread to other parts of the world from there. The author goes so far as to state that even Valmiki's Ramayana was composed not in India but in Vali or Vapali script in Thailand (Lal, 1981:59-62).

In the Thai dance-dramas, Hanuman is presented as being pure white, contrary to the Indian tradition of his complexion being golden. He wears two magnificent earrings. This description to be met with in the Malaysian, Thai and Cambodian adaptations seems to have been borrowed from Kutiyattam productions of Bhasa's *Abhisheka-nataka* and Shaktibhadra's *Ashcharyachudamani* in the temple of Kerala, in which the actor playing the role of Hanuman sports identical costume; his body is painted white and he wears two large earrings.

According to Francois Martini, the Khmer version of the Ramayana popularly known as *Ramaker* or *Ramakerti* owes nothing to Valmiki's adaptation, except for its structure which is strictly based on that of the Sanskrit epic. It seems to have been derived from a *non-Brahmanical* version of the epic. The Khmer adaptation is not strictly an epic poem, but a kind of book. It also bears an interesting relationship to the reliefs decorating the great monument of Angkor Vat known as *Lpoek Angkor Vat*, dating from 1620 AD. It closely follows the *Ramakerti* in its sequence of the events depicted, suggesting that the sculptures carved in the twelfth or thirteenth century are based on the *Ramakerti* version (*Ramker--Cambodia*).

Most of the South-East Asian adaptations, particularly the Cambodian, do not display any real appreciation of the *avatara* doctrine. In the Cambodian version, Rama is portrayed as a Bodhisattva and an upholder of the Dharma.

In Father Bulke's opinion, the Cambodian interpretation of the Ramayana has much in common with the Telegu version. The Cambodians were fully conversant with Sanskrit literature and considered Valmiki's epic as the best model for literary compositions, but their adaptation of the Ramayana seems to have been derived from a different source, although its structure is modelled on Valmiki's epic. The Cambodians although Buddhists, have undoubting reverence for Rama. Some of their poets have even asserted that Rama was one of the Bodhisattvas. It may be mentioned that in the countries of South-East Asia, Rama is looked upon not as a divine figure, but as an ideal hero, the symbol of perfection and righteousness, someone to be emulated rather than worshipped (Father Camille Bulke, 1971:655).

The Ramayana was recast within the Sanskritic tradition several times and has been assimilated into the popular culture of Buddhism and Jainism. It has been translated as well as adapted into every modern Indian language, and has spread beyond India to become a part of the culture of the whole of South-east Asia, originally in a Hindu context, but subsequently adapted to Buddhism or Jainism with consequent changes in emphasis (Rowland, 1953:351-356).

The Kushana empire extended up to Khotan in Central Asia in the second century AD. Since the Kushana rulers had embraced Buddhism, this sect not only flourished in their territory but spread over an extensive area in Central and South-east Asia, for the Buddhist monks kept travelling to distant countries, disseminating their message of love, peace and non-violence. It was along with these Buddhist monks, merchants and travellers that the Ramayana travelled to these countries. In the north, the first country to fall under their mantle was Nepal followed by Tibet and China. By the seventh century AD., most Asian countries had trade relations with India and this way Indian cultures spread there. Under the patronage of some enlightened rulers and rich merchants of China, a number of texts were rendered from Pali and Sanskrit into Chinese. In the third century AD., the Anamaka Jataka was translated into Chinese. This work contains detailed description of various episodes from the Ramayana such as Rama's exile, Sita's abduction by Ravana, Jatayu's fight with Ravana to save Sita, combat between Bali and Sugriva, construction of the bridge across the ocean by the monkey and bear soldiers of Rama's army and the fire ordeal (*agnipariksha*) of Sita.

The Buddhist version is known as the Dasharatha Jataka according to which Rama, Sita and Lakshman were children of Raja Dasharatha. There are two Chinese versions of the Rama katha; this fact further illustrates its popularity amongst the Buddhists. One is known as the Jataka of an unnamed king translated into Chinese from the Indian origin by K'and-seng-hui in 251 AD. Here Rama is identified as the

Buddha in the previous birth. It places considerable stress on the activities of a small monkey into whom Indra has transformed himself and who is equivalent to Hanuman. The second version, the Nidana of King Ten-Luxuries, eg. Dasharatha, was translated into Chinese by Chi-Chia-yen in 472 AD. The Dasharatha Jataka is a very abbreviated version of the Ramayana (Oldenburg, 1927:45-46).

From the above information it is rather evident that the story of the Ramayana is quite wide spread both in India and the rest of Asia. Thus when the indentured labourers were brought to work as agricultural labourers on the sugar plantations in Natal, South Africa in 1860, they brought with them the Ramayana and its various teachings. Although they lived in a foreign country, they practised their traditional customs and continued with their cultural beliefs. The growth and development of Hanuman worship in Durban represents the ability of the individual and the community to survive the trauma of transplantation and uncertainty of their relationship to a new environment and to redress their own sense of security and religious beliefs. The researcher will provide more information in Chapter 3 on the historical details pertaining to Hanuman worship in South Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DEPICTION OF HANUMAN IN THE TEXTUAL TRADITIONS

#### 2.1 Story of the Ramayana

The story of the Ramayana is focussed around the prosperous kingdom of Kosala, with its capital in Ayodhya. The kingdom was ruled by Dasartha, a *kstriya* king, who was a renowned warrior and had a rather generous heart and mind. He had three wives, Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra, but no heir to his throne. He sought the advice of the sages and was requested to perform a sacrifice. Thereafter four noble sons were born to his three wives: Rama to Kausalya, Bharata to Kaikeyi, and Laksmana and Satrugna to Sumitra. The first book of the epic states that all those four brothers were partial incarnations of Visnu, and Rama was bestowed with all the qualities and glories of an incarnation. In totality, Rama is presented in the entire text as a man, an ideal man with qualities which all human beings may desire to emulate.

The princes especially Rama and Laksmana were renowned for their alertness and military efficiency. The sage, Visvamitra was constantly disturbed by the demons during the performance of his rituals. Henceforth, he approached the court of Dasaratha and sought the help of Rama and Laksmana to fight the demons. Rather hesitantly, Dasaratha allowed Rama and Laksmana to accompany the sage to the

forest to kill the demons. On their pursuit, they killed Tadaka, an outrageous monstress, and the sage pleased with their initial success, taught them the use of divine weapons. At the hermitage of Visvamitra they destroyed many demons. Thereafter the sage led them to Mithila, the capital of the Videha, kingdom of Janaka.

Janaka had an adopted daughter, Sita for whom he sought a groom. He organised a challenge to the eager suitors. Sita was to marry a *ksatriya* who could string the bow of Siva. Rama not only strung the bow but lifted it with ease and broke it into two in the process. Marriages were arranged between the sons of Dasaratha and Sita, Janaka's daughter, and his nieces. When the marriage ceremony was over, Dasaratha returned to Ayodhya along with his sons and daughters-in-law. King Dasaratha envisaged that with age it would be advisable to appoint Rama as Prince Regent, and to retire to the forest as was customary in those days. On the eve of the consecration ceremony, Kaikeyi, the second queen, influenced adversely by her maid Manthara, asked of the king the two boons which he had promised her when she had assisted him in troubled times. She demanded that Rama should be banished to the forest for fourteen years and her own son Bharata be consecrated as Prince Regent. The king was placed in a turmoil but Rama displayed outstanding maturity and might, and offered to go in exile. Rama was accompanied by his wife Sita and brother Laksmana to the forest. The king died a disappointed man.

Bharata who was at his maternal uncle's home was asked to ascend the throne. However, he refused to accept this offer and set out to the forest to besiege Rama to return to the capital. Rama was, however, determined to fulfil his father's request and continued to go on his course. Bharatha accepted to rule the kingdom in a temporary capacity and only as a representative of Rama. To symbolise this, he placed Rama's wooden sandals on the throne. Rama and Laksmana then entered the forest of Dandaka and lived there in a hut.

While they lived there peacefully, Surpanakha, a *raksasa* woman, sister of Ravana, the mighty *raksasa* king of Lanka, visited the forest. She was passionately overwhelmed with Rama and wanted to marry him, or Laksmana. When they rejected her offer, she interfered with Sita whom she considered to be the main course of obstruction to Rama marrying her. Quite agitated by her motives, Laksmana mutilated her by cutting off her nose and ears. She sought the help of her *raksasa* brothers and urged them to punish Rama and Laksmana. A rather disorganised army by some of the *raksasas*, such as Khara and Dusana, set out for Rama and Laksmana. However, this expedition failed and they were destroyed by Rama and Laksmana.

Then Surpanakha went straight to Ravana and enticed him to carry away Sita, to which enchantment Ravana could not reject. Ravana sought the aid of Marica, another *raksasa*, who disguised himself as an innocent deer. Sita, was intrigued by the presence of this deer and pleaded to Rama to get hold of it. Very opportunely Ravana appeared

before Sita in the guise of a sage and after a short conversation carried her away forcibly in his aerial chariot to Lanka. On their return to the hut Rama and Laksmana, discovered the loss of Sita and made an extensive search in the forest. Rama was emotionally disturbed, and his sorrows described by the poet in a unique beautiful manner.

Finally, Rama was informed that Sita had been abducted by Ravana to Lanka. He met Sugriva, a monkey chief of Kiskindha, who had been deprived of his kingdom by his elder brother Vali. Rama and Sugriva agreed to assist each other. When the two brothers were engaged in a fierce duel Rama killed Vali.

Hanuman had studied the vedas under the guidance of his preceptor, Surya, the Sun God. He had promised Surya that He will undertake to look after Sugriva, the son of Surya as tuition fees, *dakshina*, to Surya.

Henceforth, Hanuman joined forces with Sugriva in the search for Sita. They then received news that Sita was held captive in the grove of Lanka, and arrangements were made to rescue her. A bridge was constructed across the sea to reach out to Lanka from the main land. A fierce battle ensued and Ravana, his brother Kumbhakaran, his son Meghanada alias Indrajit and the entire *raksasa* army were killed. Vibhisana, the noble brother of Ravana, who defected the *raksasa* camp and worked with Rama, was crowned the king of Lanka. Sita was rescued, and to avoid public criticism, she had to pass through a fire ordeal.



When the period of exile was over, Rama along with Sita, Laksmana and his retinue of monkey chiefs, returned to Ayodhya. He was rightfully crowned the King of Ayodhya and he ruled the kingdom with justice to the entire satisfaction of all his subjects.

The Seventh Book, the *Uttarakanda*, consists of many diversities including many myths and legends. It narrates also the story of Rama's last life. His attention is drawn to some idle gossip casting suspicions on the character of Sita regarding her long confinement in Lanka. In response to this, Rama, who as a *ksatriya* king was committed to satisfying his subjects at any cost, decided to banish Sita to the forest, even though she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Laksmana, was then ordered by his king and brother, to perform the unpleasant task of leaving Sita in the forest. He accompanied her and left her in the vicinity of the hermitage of Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana. Here she was accommodated by the sage and a woman in the hermitage. In due course, Sita gave birth to twins who were named Lava and Kusa. Valmiki performed all the religious rites for them. The children were nurtured, educated and taught to recite the Ramayana by the sage.

Rama in Ayodhya made arrangements for performing a horse sacrifice (*asvamedha*), during which his sons, Lava and Kusa appeared at the court. Rama was informed of the life of Sita, since her banishment, from the recital of the Ramayana by Lava and Kusa. He then sent for his beloved wife hoping to reunite with her again. Sita appeared in

the court with Valmiki. She prayed to the Goddess Earth, her mother, to accommodate her once again. The mother earth parches herself and Sita vanishes in her womb for ever. Rama is extensively disturbed and he then hands over the kingdom to his sons and he ends his life by entering the waters of the river of Sarayu.

## 2.2 Treatment of Hanuman in the Ramacaritamanasa

The *Ramacaritamanasa* ("Holy Lake of Rama's Deeds"), is commonly known as *Tulasikrta-Ramayana* ("Tulsai's Ramayana"), is an epic poem composed in the *Avadhi* dialect of Hindi, and it is acclaimed to be the greatest masterpiece of Tulasidas, a righteous poet and a magnanimous religious thinker and reformer, who lived in the second half of the 16th and in the first quarter of the 17th centuries AD. The subject of the *Tulasikrta-Ramayana* is very much similar to that of Valmiki's *Ramayana*; generally it follows the course of Valmiki's story, and like the *Adi-kavya* it is organised into seven *kandas* (books) having the same titles that Valmiki had used to the major sections of his poem. But the *Ramacaritamanasa* is in no way a Hindi translation of Valmiki's epic, nor indeed, of any other poem in Sanskrit. Indeed, on the contrary, *Tulasikrta-Ramayana* differs from Valmiki's Sanskrit epic in regard to the whole spirit and orientation of its central theme. The character of Rama as written by Valmiki in the original part of his epic depicts him as a royal hero who belonged to the *Iksvaku* dynasty.

On the other hand, in Tulasidas' poem, Rama is one with the Supreme Being Visnu and therefore with *Brahma* the Absolute. He is the impersonal Absolute who has assumed a personal form for the benefit of the faithful; at the same time Tulasidas eagerly explains that Rama's humanity is not natural but merely a manifestation of divine *lila* or play.

As a child, Rama playfully amuses himself by revealing his true identity to his mother as the Universal Form. His love for Sita is but a symbolic representation of the love that Visnu bears for Laksmi. When he becomes the victim, in the battle of Lanka, of the serpentine missiles shot at him by Ravana's son Indrajit, he is said to be merely practising illusions (Lal, 1981:24-39).

Rama is also compared to an actor who plays various roles on the stage in various disguises but He himself remains what He really is all the time (Ramchand, 1989:21-24). The poems of Tulasidas and Valmiki also differ in respect to the sequence as well as the presentation of the various episodes and occurrences in the story.

Valmiki's poem commences with a short introduction, which is followed by the description of Ayodhya, King Dasaratha, his ministers, and the king's desire for an heir. Whilst Tulasidas, commences his poem with several lines of invocations followed by a lengthy account of the relations between *Sanbu* (Siva) and *Bhavani*

(Parvati), the stories of Narada and Manu Svayambhuva to account for the incarnation of Visnu on earth as Rama, and the story of Pratapabhanu to explain the birth of Ravana and his family as demons. Valmiki's extensive narration of legends pertaining to the story of Sagara and his sons, how Gods and the titans fought for the *amrta* or *ambrosia* after the churning of the ocean, is omitted in the course of his poem. According to Tulasidas, there is no rivalry between the sages Vasistha and Visvamitra as is related by Satananda in Valmiki's epic. Once again, the lengthy accounts given by Valmiki on certain episodes are condensed by Tulasidas in a few verses. Yet on the contrary, the narration of some events which Valmiki has dismissed in a few *slokas* has been expanded by Tulasidas.

The difference of Tulasidas' poem from the Sanskrit epic, refers first to the dialogue between Rama and the sage Agastya, who relates the story of Ravana's birth and his adventurous exploits. This account is followed by the story of Hanuman's childhood. The remaining sections of the book narrates the exile of Sita and the activities that preceded the great *Asvamedha yoga* - "Horse Sacrifice". This is followed by the subsequent events in the epilogue of Tulasidas' poem and its author substitutes for them the story of Kakabhusundi and long narrations on the nature of *Visnu* and the *Vaisnavite* faith (Ramachand, 1989:21-24).

Another significant point of difference between the two poems is the fact that Tulasidas omitted certain incidents and episodes of Valmiki's work apparently because they changed the moral sense and would therefore tarnish the perfection that is depicted of the central character in his poem. Tulasidas refrains from mentioning the accusing remarks by Valmiki to Lakshmana when he becomes agitated at his father's decision to banish Rama. Nor does he repeat Sita's unkind insinuation that, due to Lakshmana's own selfish desires upon her, he refuses to go to Rama's aid when He seems to be in danger whilst tracking down the mysterious golden deer. There is also no mention in his poem about Rama's justice regarding his unethical act of killing Vali since Vali was only a monkey. Most significant of all omissions is the story of Rama's conduct in reprimanding Sita and later banishing her to the forest as a result of the negative comments made by the people of Ayodhya doubting her fidelity.

According to Valmiki's version, Rama refuses to accept Sita after having rescued her from Ravana. He then organises a fire purification through which Sita had to walk. Sita is restored by the fire-God, Agni, while Rama declares that He only acted thus to prove Sita's innocence publicly. Tulasidas, on the other hand, is cautious and protects Sita's character from all possible stain by causing the true Sita to walk the fire so that Ravana abducts only her illusory form. The true Sita returns from the fire when the substitute Sita undergoes the ordeal after she is rescued by Rama from Ravana. Moreover,

there is no mention of Sita's exile in Tulasidas's poem (Nagar, 1995:351-395).

It would thus seem quite evident from the above that the *Ramacaritamanasa* is certainly not a translation of the Sanskrit *Adi-kavya*, though Tulasidas is known to have acknowledged Valmiki's poem as one of the major sources on which he based his account on the Rama story (Shukla 1989).

### 2.3 Hanuman in the pan Indian tradition

Religion has played a very important discipline in the social, political and economical spheres in India. As a matter of fact, all the activities in the prehistoric past were regulated by seers commencing from the Vedic period. This gave rise to the beginning of various sects and their respective deities in the Indian religious field. Some of these religious gatherings, beliefs and their respective deities, had quite a limited life span and they dissolved from the human mind as quickly as they had appeared whilst some of them became superfluous with the passage of time. On the contrary, certain religious beliefs having had their roots in the Indian religious sphere never lost their righteousness even after centuries of worship and have descended to us in the present times.

These sects had a variety of deities, both human and anthropomorphic, or even having animal forms. In human prediction, we have Brahma, Visnu, Siva and a few of the incarnations of Visnu, like Krishna,

Rama, Parasurama and others. The composite forms include *Narasimha*, *Varaha*, and the animal forms include *Maysya*, *Kurma*, *Nandi* and Hanuman or *Maruti*.

On the contrary, Hanuman, who is also known as *Maruti*, *Pavanaputra*, *Pavanatanaya*, *Anjaneya*, and by several other names, was originally introduced as the devoted minister of Sugriva. After his encounter with Rama, there was a global development of his character, and he attained Godhood much later (Shatri, 1997:461-468).

There are varying opinions regarding the birth place of Hanuman. According to Father Bulke (Ramakatha, 686-87), it would be difficult to define the specific birth place of Hanuman because different regions in India tend to proclaim his birth. The people of Madhya Pradesh believe that Hanuman was born at Anjan village in Gumla Pramandal (Ranchi District) and many interpretations on the subject are strewn all over the huge heritage, relating to the life of Hanuman washing over therein numerous ancient temples.

In the southern part of India, Hanuman, or Anjaneya, Son of Anjana--is an important religious figure, and it is strongly felt that his glory commenced from the South. Ancient *Kiskindha*, which was ruled by the monkey-chiefs Balin and Sugriva, was accepted as been situated near modern *Anegondi* (Gangavati Taluka in Raichur District in Karnataka), on the north bank of Tungabhadra river. Hanuman first

encountered Rama in the palm grove situated near the village of Venkatapura. The large boulders that cover the land around Hampi are believed to have been scattered by Hanuman and his monkey army while building the bridge across the sea to Lanka. The following details hint at Anjanadri, which is located in Karnataka, to be the birth place of Hanuman. This name is rather significant. It comprises two parts--Anjana + Adri. Both of which represent the two wives, Anjana and Adrika of Kesari (Mahta, 1975:69-75).

According to the Brahma Purana (Ch. 84), while the former had the head of a monkey, the latter had the head of a cat on human body. The texts claim Anjana to be the mother of Hanuman, who was none else but Punjikasthala, an *apsara* of Indra, who was cursed to be born as Anjana. This *apsara* named Punjikasthala is also found mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana (Ch. 14), meaning the sides or four quarters or the face of Agni. These directions represent the Wind God who is present everywhere. They also represent *Svargaloka* (heaven).

According to the Valmiki Ramayana, *Apsaras* emerged out of the churning of the ocean. Thus the word *Apsara* denotes one possessing beautiful features of the highest caliber. Wind or *Vayu* is actually the very essence of the universe and is thus the life existence all the creatures and inspires creativeness, earning him the title of *Visvakarma* as well. The combination of Anjana with Vayu, proclaims the heavenly direction which produces a *divya* personality. The association of these two forces culminates into heavenly strength,



light and truth in the form of Hanuman. Hanuman was born on the 15th day of *Chaitra Shukla Paksha* (Lunar Phase).

There are varying accounts in the different texts regarding the birth of Hanuman, and his parents. While most of them have reached a harmonious conclusion that Hanuman was born of Anjana and Kesari. However, there are other texts that provide different interpretation regarding his parenthood. The following are a few of the interpretations:

#### 2.4 Names/epithets of Hanuman

2.4.1. Son of Wind God

2.4.2. Son of Siva

2.4.3. Son of Rama

2.4.4. Born of *Payasam* (pudding) from Dasaratha's *yajna*,  
consumed by Anjana

2.4.5. Incarnation of Rudra

2.4.6. Incarnation of Brahma, Visnu and Siva

2.4.7. Incarnation of Nandi

2.4.8. Narayana's amsa

2.4.9. Evidence of Jain texts

(a) Paumcariya

(b) Uttara Purana

2.4.10. The Laos Tradition

#### 2.4.1. Son of Wind God

The Brahma Purana text acknowledges the birth of Hanuman from Anjana. In Chapter 84 of this Purana, the story is included in the Mahatmya of Paisacyatirtha. According to this academic exposition, Kesari's abode was on the peak of Anjana Mountain. He married two *apsaras*, who had descended to earth following a curse from Indra. One was called Anjana and the other Adrika. While Kesari was away, the sage Agastya visited their dwelling place. He was welcomed cordially by both the womenfolk who paid homage to him respectfully. Being utterly pleased, he offered them each a boon.

They prayed to the sage to grant them each an excellent brave Son. When Agastya left, the Wind God and Nirrti were attracted to these womenfolk and they thus conceived. Consequently, Hanuman was born to Anjana and Adri to Adrika, who later became the king of Pisacas.

#### 2.4.2. Son of Siva

In the Kamba Ramayana (Purvakanda), Hanuman is described as the son of Parvati and Siva. Siva and Parvati had invited the Gods to their abode for a day of festivities. At the onset of the party, Parvati observed a male and female monkey in a passionate posture. She was rather fascinated by this, and inspired Siva to act accordingly with her but in the form of a monkey. Siva obliged and thereafter Parvati

conceived. Parvati then requested that the foetus be transferred by the Wind God to the womb of Anjana who finally delivered a monkey child called Hanuman.

#### 2.4.3. Son of Rama

According to the Rama Katha of Indonesia, Hanuman has been depicted as the son of Rama , the incarnation of Siva.

#### 2.4.4. Born of payasam from Dasaratha's yajna

According to the Ananda Ramayana, Sarakandam, Sarga 1, when Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya, was performing *putresti yajna*, God Agni appeared from the sacred fire and handed over the divine *payasam* to the king thus enabling his queens to conceive.

Dasaratha shared this *payasam* among his wives, with the desire to be blessed with children. A bird (who was an *Apasara* cursed into a bird by Brahma), seized some *payasam* and flew away with it. Whilst in flight, the *payasam* fell from its beak and landed on the fingers of Anjana, who was engaged in *tapas* in the forest. Anjana swallowed the pudding and thus conception had taken place. Thus Hanuman was born as the son of Anjana, due to the spiritual blessings of the *payasam*.

#### 2.4.5. Incarnation of Rudra

On the other hand, some texts have portrayed Hanuman as the incarnation of Rudra Siva, or the last of the eleven Rudras. In the Siva Purana, Nandisvara once sought the assistance of Sanat Kumara to describe how Mahesvara Siva was incarnated in the form of Hanuman. The Siva purana states clearly that after the churning of the ocean, Lord Visnu was transformed into a Mohini and commenced the dissemination of the *amrita*. The beauty of Mohini captured Siva's passion so much that his semen fell on a leaf which was carried by the Wind God, Vayu, and implanted in the womb of Anjana. Henceforth, Hanuman was born from Anjana's womb with Siva as his father.

#### 2.4.6. Incarnation of Brahma, Visnu and Siva

In the Rasavinda text by Divakrisnadasa, an *Oriya* literature of the seventeenth century, it is evident that Brahma, Visnu and Siva, all combined took the form of Hanuman. In Chapter 37 of the Bhagvata Purana, it is stated that upon the insistence of the Devas, Brahma, Visnu and Siva promised to incarnate themselves enabling them to destroy the *asuras* and Ravana. Siva then informed Visnu, that "I, in the form of a monkey, born of Pavana, will help you" (Bhagvata Purana, Ch. 37).

#### 2.4.7. Incarnation of Nandi

According to the narration in the Siva Purana, Lord Siva was pleased with the *tapas* of the sage Silada. Thereupon, Lord Siva promised the sage that he would incarnate himself as Nandi. In verse 89 of Hanumatashasranama Stotra, Hanuman was also named Nandi. In this respect, there is a rather fascinating episode in the Visnudharmottara which relates that Ravana was flying seated in the *Puspaka Vimana* over Kailasa. His movement was impeded by the monkey-faced Nandi, who was protecting the vicinity. This obstruction of the plane angered Ravana who furiously checked to seek the cause of such an obstruction. Surprisingly, he found a monkey-faced Nandi perched on a hillock. Rather mockingly, Ravana laughed at the monkey who in turn cursed Ravana. Nandi admonished that nobody was to travel across the Dasagriva mountain on which Siva and Parvati were engaged in passionate embrace. Ravana contradicted this request and belittled Nandi. Nandi cursed Ravana and stated that he will be destroyed in totality by the monkey clan.

#### 2.4.8. Narayana's amsa

It is recorded in the Adhyatma Ramayana (4.7:19-21) that Hanuman together with his contemporaries idolised Narayana and became his attendants. They adhered to the strict discipline performed by Narayana and consequently were in turn born as monkeys.

#### 2.4.9. Evidence of Jain Texts

##### (a) Paumacariya

According to the Cantos XV-XVII Anjana having conceived Hanuman, was abandoned in a dense forest. Here she encounters a sage called Amitagati. He escorts her until they unite with her paternal uncle, Vidyadhara. From here they took their leave from the forest and traversed the sky. Whilst travelling, the baby was born and he fell on a mountain slab but was uninjured. Then the entourage entered the city of Hanukkah city. The child's birthday was a grand and pompous ceremony organised by the Vidhyadharas.

The baby associated with the breaking of the mountain slab by its fall was accordingly christened as Srisaila. He was named Hanumat as he was welcomed with a grand reception in the city of Hanupura (Canto XVII: Vs 120-121). Referring to Canto XIX of this text, Hanuman has a thousand wives, which is contrary to his character of celibacy in the epics and other Brahmanical literature.

##### (b) Uttara Purana

Referring to another Jain text by Gunabhadra, Hanuman was the son of Prabhanjana and Anjana and was called *Amitavega* meaning a person with fast speed and velocity.

#### 2.4 10. **The Laos tradition**

The birth of Hanuman was described in the Khvay Thuaraphi manuscript from Laos. In this literature, the king Thattarattha inquired from Nang Khanthapi what strategy she had employed to kill the demon, Nanthiyak. This demon possessed poisonous hands. To demonstrate her plan, she performed an enchanting dance which she had performed before the demon. Viewing her breathtaking dance, the king was so much overcome with passion that his semen streamed down. Nang Khanthapi then gathered the semen and pondered of its disposal. She found Nang Kasi, the blind mother of Ongkhot and Valayot resting under the shade of a fig tree. She placed the semen in the mouth of the blind lady, who consequently gave birth to a son called Hualman (Hanuman) (Shantilal Nagar, 1995:16-24).

#### 2.5 **Mythology of Hanuman**

Hanuman Jayanti, which is the birth date of Hanuman, falls on the 15th day of Chaitra Shukla Paksha (lunar phase) every year. According to the Bhavishya purana, Anjani was alarmed with his unsightly appearance and deserted him. The infant displayed supernatural traits from his early childhood. He had a voracious appetite and whilst searching for something to eat, he caught a glimpse of the sun.

Assuming that the sun was an edible red fruit, he leapt into the cosmos and seized it to devour. The Sun was petrified and called for assistance. From this episode different versions are recorded.

Reading from the Bhavishya purana, Ravana responded to the cries of the Sun and came to his rescue. There was a great deal of struggle followed by a fight between Hanuman and Ravana, in which finally the latter was defeated. Hanuman continuously struck his adversary until Rishi Vishrava intervened.

Another interpretation states that the Sun drifted through the sky with Hanuman hot at its heels. Finally, it sought shelter in Indra's heaven. Indra hurled his *vajra* (thunderbolt) at baby Hanuman to interrupt the chase. The weapon landed on Hanuman's chin and he lost his balance and hurled down to the earth. This is a popular scene in many paintings.

Other paintings displays Indra in his chariot tracking baby Hanuman and targeting him with arrows. The injury imposed by Indra agitated Maruti so much that he decided to avenge Indra and his companion Gods in the *devaloka* by distressing them with colic. Immediately, Indra apologised to the Wind god and bestowed immortality on Hanuman.

After this episode, Brahma gathered all the Gods and in the presence of the prominent Gods, Indra, Agni the Fire God, Varuna the Water God, Shiva Maheshvara and Dhaneshvara (Kubera), he said: "We all



know that the new born baby Hanuman is destined to accomplish great deeds in future. The injury inflicted on him by Indra has greatly hurt Vayu. I wish that the Wind God be compensated by the Gods by showering blessings on his son to enable him to overcome insuperable difficulties with ease” (Shastri, 1997:561-580).

Indra initiated the blessing ceremony by christening him Hanuman, which literally meant “one with an injured (*mana*) chin (*hanu*)” in Sanskrit. Surya, the Sun God, bestowed a hundredth part of the intelligence on him and promised to teach him *Shastric* information and create of him an outstanding scholar and orator in his prime of life. Varuna showered the gift of immortality on him and promised that the waters of the ocean, sea and the river would never harm him. Yama, God of death, ceremoniously blessed him with a life free from disease and death. Kubera, God of wealth, granted him the boon that he will always emerge victorious in the battlefield. Shiva and Vishvakarma blessed Hanuman’s body thereby making him immune to injuries caused by weapons. Brahma showered his blessing on Hanuman, granting him the might to destroy God’s enemies and change his form for any destruction thereof.

Apart from these boons, Hanuman owes his immortality (the *ajara-amara* qualities he shares with the fish, whose character is invariably depicted on his standard), all-outstanding and great brilliance to his ancestor Vayu. According to Hindu philosophy, of all the five elements (*pancha-bhutas*) making up the universe

or macrocosm and the *pinda* or microcosm, air is the purest. Its importance is determined by the central position held by Vayu in the Vedas and other sacred texts. Hanuman, the Vayu *putra*, is also one of the *pancha-mahabhutas*, the Godlings whose worship is eminently lucrative and rewarding, bearing wholesome results (Ananta, 1976:35-40).

After receiving the blessing from all the Gods in the *devaloka* Hanuman returned to live with his parents in the forest. He grew up to be very playful, and often disturbed the rishis during their meditation. The rishis were quite annoyed with this interruption and thereon they pronounced a curse on him, that he would remain ignorant of his divine and spiritual powers until he was reminded of them. The Valmiki Ramayana clearly states that Hanuman was totally unaware of his powers when Sugriva and Balin fought. When Rama approached Angad and Jambavan to assume the responsible task of searching for Sita, the two at once thought of Hanuman. Hanuman was then introduced to his Lord. On this confrontation with Rama, he immediately adorned his outstanding and admirable character and eagerly set out to accomplish his mission (Vivek, 1988:76-79).

When Hanuman reached an educable age, he was sent to Surya. He mastered the Sanskrit language, grammar, and fine arts, and obtained competence in all the *shastras*, including the *arthashastra* which equipped him to become an outstanding politician and military

commander (*tattva-jnana-kala-dharma-visheshavata*) in later times. He also attained mastery in all forms of yoga and psychic powers (*Ashtasiddhi*). This enabled him to change his form from a gigantic figure when he had to fly across the ocean and then change into a small form when he approached Lanka to search for Sita in the palaces and pleasure gardens of Ravana. He had the ability to fly at a lightning speed, uproot trees and carry mountains, increase or decrease his size as he desired, make himself invisible and reappear in any opportune place. His victorious feats and miraculous powers are recorded in the Ramayana. Jambavana, the vainer army general, summaries his character in the *Sudara-kanda* of the Ramayana in the following style.

“Hanuman....the abode of matchless strength.... has a body like the golden mount Meru. He consumed the *rakshasas* like fire, is perfect in wisdom, endowed with excellent virtues, is the chief among the *vanaras*, and Rama’s beloved *bhakta*” (Ramacharitamanasa, SK, 2-3).

We are also informed that in the battlefield, he was an intense fighter, a courageous warrior, gigantic and solid like a mountain with a towering height adorning a luscious golden skin, his red dial reflecting a polished ruby. Confronting the enemies, He demolished all the demons with a earth-shattering roar. Addressing him as a *Mahayogi*, a great seer, “Yoga”, writes Ananda K. Coomaraswami in the Dance of Shiva, “is not merely a mental exercise for a religious discipline,

but the most practical preparation for any undertaking whatever. Before searching the Ashoka grove, he prayed to the Gods and scanned the forest till he found her (Sita); then only did he spring from the walls of Lanka like an arrow from the bow and entered the grove in the flesh” (Coomaraswami, 1972:28-29).

Hanuman was bestowed with an exceptional degree of intellect and wisdom. The Ramayana reflects abundantly on his mental gifts; he is *vakyavid*, *vakya-tattvajnana*, *buddhimatamvarishtha*, *sarva-shastra-vidam-vara* (VR, Kishkindha Kanda, 28.7, 48.6, 65.2, 65.18). Tulsidas in his Ramacharitamanas mentions him as *Veda-vedanta-vid*. A renowned grammarian, an outstanding academic well learned in the *alamkara shastra* and all forms of learning, *sarva vidyadhara*, an unique orator, according to the *Saugandhika harana nataka*, and a proficient phonetician . On his first encounter with Rama, he impressed him with his articulate speech. When he appeared in Ravana’s court, he presented a lengthy speech in artistic expression on the *vedantin* view of *avidya* and benefits of devotion to Rama (VR, Sundara Kanda, 28.17, 18).

Hanuman’s intelligent abilities are inclusive of his expertise in the fine arts, more especially in music and dance (*kala visharad*). Like Shiva, he is a renowned dancer and a learned musician, *sangeetacharya* par excellence. Krishnananda, in his critical analysis of *Sangeeta parijata* which pertains to the revelation of Hanuman’s theory of music, invokes the God’s blessings, sings praises of his excellence in music and mentions his name among the three *pramukha*

*pravartaka*, principal exponents, of classical music, the other two being *Shardula* and *Kahala*.

Hanuman also figures along with Shiva and Bharata Muni and their understanding of music. Sculptors of South India, appear to have been significantly thrilled by the artistic appearances of Hanuman's personality. Temples in the South, from Andhra Pradesh downwards, are adorned with murthis featuring the God manifesting a meaningful dancing pose or playing on musical instruments. The bronze icons depict him in the same positions, engrossed by devotional songs and music, stringing the veena, and playing the cymbals or simply singing praises of his beloved Lord Shri Rama, engrossed in *bhakti* (Krishnananda, 1977:56-59).

Hanuman excelling as an academic, is known to have written the earliest version of Ramakatha popularly known as the *Mahanataka* or *Hanuman-Nataka*. The bronze icons from Kerala depicts Hanuman humbly sitting at Shri Rama's feet and reading, from a manuscript most probably the same *nataka*, to his Lord and Sita who listen attentively (Aryan, 1975:245).

The following information was originally written on stone slabs. Legend claims that when Valmiki composed the Ramayana, he was rather despondent about the inferior quality of his writings as compared to Hanuman's *nataka*. It is recorded that he discussed his misgivings to Hanuman who assisted him by throwing the stone slabs

into the ocean. In the eleventh century A.D., Raja Bhoj of Dhara ordered that these stone slabs be retrieved from the ocean and handed to Damodar Mishra with the intention of editing the Hanuman *nataka*, comprising 548 verses in 14 Acts. The final edition of the *Mahanataka* compiled by Madhusudan Mishra consists of 720 verses and acts and 17 Acts (Nagar, 1995:361-375).

The physical condition of Hanuman during his old age is described extensively in the Aranya Parvan of the Mahabharata, which was observed by the mighty Bhima, *Pandava* hero. It can be safely stated here that both Bhima and Hanuman were the sons of Vayu - the Wind God and were naturally brothers. Both of them encountered each other near the Kadali forest, which was guarded by Hanuman. As stated in the Mahabharata, when the *Pandavas* were living in the forest, a ghaat of wind, once blew a beautiful lotus flower with a thousand petals to Yudhishthira, which he handed to Pancali (Puri, 1995:125-129).

However, Draupadi was inspired with the beauty and the aroma of the lotus flower, that she persisted on having more of them. So Bhima set out to the forest for these flowers. When Hanuman encounters Bhima walking with his gigantic build, he lays there obstructing the entrance of Bhima to the Kadali forest.

Getting close to Hanuman, the mighty Bhima saw a huge monkey-chief lying like a second Himalaya, blocking the path to

heaven. Seeing him alone in that great forest, fearless, the enormous and strong Bhima, marched rapidly to him and sent out a thunderous roar like a lion, which frightened the beasts and birds of the forest. Bhima asked Hanuman to move out of the way so he could gain entrance to the forest. Hanuman responded in rather a composed manner that Bhima should attempt to pick only his tail and if he succeeded then he would willingly clear the way. With great confidence, Bhima, scorned this request and rather gently stepped forward to pick Hanuman's tail. Much to Bhima's astonishment, it was impossible to pick his tail even with two hands. Having failed this task, Bhima's pride disappeared. He saluted Hanuman and requested his identity (Kokandakar, 1996:117-119).

Hanuman subsequently introduced himself to Bhima and finally Hanuman related the *Ramacarita* beginning from his acquaintance with Sugriva to the miraculous return of Rama and Laksmana with Sita to Ayodhya, and the final destruction of Ravana - the King of Lanka. Hanuman embraced Bhima and promised him that he would hoisten his flag on Arjuna's *ratha* in the *Mahabharata* war (Sukthankara, 1936:256-259).

## 2.6. Conclusion

In the Ramayana, Hanuman with his supernatural powers is depicted as a symbol of strength and power. He was born of Anjana and Kesari. Since there are varying interpretations regarding his

parenthood, each interpretation has accorded him a specific name and hence he is known by at least ten different names.

Hanuman with his extraordinary appetite had attempted to devour the sun and followed the sun in the cosmos. To protect the sun, Indra strikes Him with the thunderbolt. Maruti, the wind God is rather alarmed so Indra and the other Gods bestowed upon Hanuman their most revered blessings. Thus we see Hanuman as an outstanding scholar, a talented musician, a victorious commander in the battlefield, one possessing the gift of immortality and granting Him the might to destroy God's enemies and change His form for any destruction thereof. It is this last quality that He utilised to seek Sita from Ravana. Hanuman also plays a significant role in the Mahabharata. Arjuna, even before stepping onto the battlefield, hoists Hanuman flag on his chariot. Hanuman's flag symbolises victory which eventually leads to the Pandavas' overwhelming success.



## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **HANUMAN AS THE GUARDIAN DEITY**

#### **3.1 Indian settlers in South Africa**

The contribution made by the Indian population towards the development of South Africa is exemplary. Very little is known of the consequences that propagated the movement of the first Indian indentured labourers in 1860 to South Africa.

During the first half of the nineteenth century a minor group of British immigrants had initiated cultivation of sugarcane in the coastal belt of Natal, South Africa. Shortage of labour was a major problem from the onset. To resolve this situation the Government of Natal decided to import Indian labour to work in the sugarcane plantations.

After much deliberation the Indian Government agreed to Indian emigration only on condition that certain obligations were to be met. The following conditions were to be offered to the indentured Indians after they fulfilled their period of contract: they should be entitled to the vote, be free to own landed property, enjoy freedom of movement and completely unrestricted in the choice of schools for their children (Indian Annual Settlers Issue, 1980:9).

The first large batch of immigration of Indians into South Africa occurred in 1860 with the arrival of 342 indentured labourers on board the “Truro” which reached Durban on 16 November 1860. Statistics indicate that the first batch of immigrants were of various religious and linguistic groups viz., 101 Hindus, 78 Malabars, 61 Christians, 16 Muslims, 1 Rajput and 1 Marathee. Ten days later the “Belvedere” arrived on 26 November. These immigrants were listed as: 69 gardeners, 61 *Brahmins*, 25 Chutrees or warriors, 18 dairymen, 16 pigrearers, 14 fruit-growers, 14 potters, 11 salt-dealers, 11 porters, 9 clerks, 8 herdsmen, 7 boatmen, 6 leather-workers, 5 policemen, 5 messengers, 5 laundrymen, 2 hunters, 2 jewellers, a confectioner, a weaver and a dealers in enamelware (Bhana, 1987:32-34).

Between 1860 to 1866 an estimated number of 5 500 labourers arrived in Natal, having come from Calcutta or Madras. When immigrants completed their contracts and chose to remain in Natal for a further ten years they could either accept a passage to India or receive land to the value of the passage. After completing their ten years of industrial residence in the Colony, the majority of the first batch of labourers returned to India in terms of the free passage arrangements.

Irrespective of their important task, they were abused by their employers who overworked them for long hours. The conditions laid down were not adhered to and they were subjected to reductions in wages, flogging and received unsatisfactory rations. Amidst all these

unpleasant experiences, the Indians with their tenacious potentials excelled as cultivators and made their impact on the sugarcane fields. From an export figure of 19 401 pounds in 1861 it rose to 180 496 pounds in 1871 (Indian Annual Settlers Issue, 1980:59).

Within twenty years of the arrival of the indentured Indians there was in the province of Natal, a marked Indian population. This consisted up of ex-indentured labourers who chose to remain here as free people together with an increasing number of so-called passenger Indians who came here with the intention of trade and business. The Indian population then increased to 20 536 in 1880 and by 1885 the figure rose to 30 150. An absolutely new phenomena had been introduced into the population group. This however gave rise to tension and unpleasantness within the European population.

With time the economic situation of the Indian population changed positively as the Indians progressed. This change in the economical field led to the darting of the first shots on the anti-Indian campaign which proposed to become worse in later years. After many unpleasant political activities, the Indian was recognised as a South African citizen in 1960 (Meer, 1969:16-20).

### **3.2. Early religious practices**

About sixty percent of the Indian population of South Africa is represented by Hindus. Forty percent of the population is represented

by the Moslems, Christians, Buddhists and a small Parsee community. The indentured Indians brought with them their cultural heritage, their religious beliefs and rituals, their language and literature, and their ceremonies and festivals. They thus set up a “small India” in South Africa (Singh, 1990:79).

Making great references from their ancient rites and rituals, the moral teachings culture, of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the spiritual attainments of the saints and sages, they founded a religious way of life similar to that in India.

“The religious practices of the early Hindu covers a wide emotional and intellectual spectrum. It ranges from the most elementary, popular forms of traditional worship, eg. worship centred around a *murthi* or idol (such as Shiva, Krishna, Vishnu, Muruga, Hanuman, Lakshmi, Saraswati or any of the well known deities of the Hindu pantheon) through various interpretations of the neo-Hindu renaissance movements, to rigidly traditional Vedic observances and refined Vedantic philosophies” (Ramanam, 1978:22).

At this point I would like to make reference to a period of political history in India which was instrumental in inculcating the belief of Hanuman as a guardian and protector. From the 10th to the 16th century AD. the struggle for the firm establishment of the Muslim rule in India continued and ended with the Mughal rule in AD 1526. The

Hindu spirit during these five centuries was completely demoted, and they faced tremendous humiliation at the hands of the Muslim rulers.

Though the rulers like Akbar made sincere efforts to calm the feelings of the Hindus, but the rhythm was short-lived and almost disappeared with the ruin of Akbar from the Indian political scene. The prime reason of the Muslim rulers was to establish the superiority of Islam, by the conversion of the Hindus and the destruction of their religious buildings. The Hindus persevered to struggle for the next five centuries (10th-16th) to withhold the raid by the foreigners but without much success (Shantilal Nagar, 1995:239).

It was this period that brought the pantheon of Hindu deities to the forefront and Hanuman happened to be one of them. Soon he became the deity not only of the Hindu rulers but also of the masses when everything concerning the Hindus was in turmoil. Their honour, their religion, their social, political and economic status had lost its meaning. During such chaotic conditions there was the need for a vibrant and fearless deity who could help in building the morale of masses against the ruthless rulers.

In Hanuman, they found a deity who was not only a great warrior but also one who had never faced defeat in his life and was always available to protect his worshippers; and could be invoked to destroy his enemies. During this period of religious, and social turmoil of the country there arose on the Indian religious scene the strong wave of the *Bhakti* cult.

The achievements of Rama, Krishna, with Hanuman as the devotee of Rama, were propounded by the great sages of the time, like Namadeva, Nimbarka, Suradasa, Tuncatt Eluttacchan, Krttivasa and Tulasidas who stressed on the Hanuman-Rama relationship as the ideal of *Bhakti*. The entire objective was to unite the people against their common foe rather than let the tyrants divide and rule (Shantilal Nagar, 1995:240).

This ideal of brotherhood was conveyed to the colony of Natal. The indentured labourers brought with them the worship of Hanuman as a symbol of brotherhood. Having organised themselves into communal religious groups they kept alive their religious beliefs by building temples and setting up classes and schools, by performing rituals and ceremonies, celebrating festivals such as Diwali, Ram

Naumi, Krishnasthmi, Navaratri, Pongal, Saraswati Puja and Kavadi. The reading of the Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita, Thevaram, Thirukurral and Thiruvagasam helped to restore in them their spiritual heritage. Since Hanuman was ordained as the guardian and custodian of the household, his prayers were conducted outside in an area designated for him. To symbolise victory, the red flag, *jhand*a was hoisted (Singh, 1990:84).

### 3.3 South African Temples

South African temples are generally dedicated to one of the three main Hindu representations of the Divine - Vishnu, Shiva or Sakti. Rather significantly, the *murthi* of Hanuman is present in all these temples. Larger temples, though dedicated to a particular deity, have shrines or smaller temples in their grounds for the other deities (Singh, 1990:84). In South Africa there is a distinction between South Indian Temples and North Indian Temples. Hindu devotees belong to various religious sects in their worship. Some devotees have their faith in the Saivite tradition where Lord Shiva is worshipped as the Supreme. Other devotees attend the Vaishnavite Temples where Lord Vishnu is worshipped as the Creator, whilst some belong to the Shakti sect worshipping the Mother as the Supreme.

A very unique phenomenon is observed in these temples. The *murthi* of Hanuman is found highly prominent in almost all the temples. Every temple dedicated to Rama invariably has a *murthi* of Hanuman. Rama and Hanuman are obviously inseparable. Presently, however there is no temple in Durban which is dedicated solely to Hanuman and worships Him as the main presiding deity.

Amongst the Tamil speaking people, the worship of Hanuman is very popular. The Vishnu South Temple in Tongaat is predominantly attended to by the Tamil speaking community. At this temple

Hanuman *Jayanthi* is observed. Although they do not hoist the flag, *rout* (sweetmeat made of flour, sugar, milk and butter-ghee) the main *prasad* for Hanuman worship, is offered as sanctified food. In Verulam the Shri Emmperumal Temple observes the hoisting of the flag. It must be noted that the flag is hoisted only for a specific function. The *Jaganath pooja* which is a chariot procession commences with the hoisting of the *Jhanda* in the temple yard.

The Ram *Bhajan* ceremony which is also known as *Ramana Bhajan* is a rather popular tradition amongst the Tamil community. It was practised by the indentured labourers on their arrival to Natal in 1860. The actual performance commenced in Mt Edgecombe and Illovo. Gradually, with time it began to infiltrate into the other so called villages and today it is a highly successful and well-attended ceremony. The *Ramana Bhajan* is generally held in the month of *Partassi* during which the Tamil community abstain from meat.

The *Ramana Bhajan* commences from 20:00 and continues to 00:00 or even later. Prior to this the *Jhanda* is hoisted and the guests are fed. A *vedi*--shrine is prepared and a lamp comprising 108 small lamps are lit. This magnificent glitter is called the Rama Tree. In the *vedi* there is a huge picture of Hanuman, Rama and Sita. Hanuman is lovingly called Anjaneya amongst the Tamil community. Also present are frames and *murthis* of other deities. The *Ramana Bhajan* is generally conducted at the house. The function commences at a road intersection or if a temple is close by then the function commences



from there. If the ceremony commences at the temple, then the starting point will be the *Balipedam*--place where the flag is generally hoisted. At the starting point there are two containers which look like goblets. They are metal goblets and damp saw dust is placed in them. Then cloth soaked in oil or ghee are placed in them and lit. This has the burning Olympic torch appearance and symbolises the destruction of Lanka. The person who is going into "trance" will actually set alight these two wicks. This devotee has to fast for 40 days abstaining from meat and sometimes salt. Once the *bhajans* are sung, he picks the two goblets and in the "trance" state leads the procession to the house. His gait is very similar to that of Hanuman and his cheeks blow out to give him the physical appearance. The tempo of the *bhajans* increases and the spirit of Hanuman is clearly present. When the procession reaches the house, he trots around the *vedi* three times and returns to his normal state. Thereafter, the *bhajans* continue and the devotees are totally involved in body and mind. With swaying heads and stamping feet the devotees play musical instruments and sing the praises of Hanuman. All the *bhajans* are sung in Telugu.

Just half an hour before midnight, the devotee who was in a "trance" state goes into that state again. This time he blesses the other devotees after which he partakes of the *prasad*. The devotees then prostrate at the feet of Hanuman and take their leave. The one very positive aspect of the *Ramana Bhajan* is the involvement of the youth. It is very enlightening to see the youth playing musical instruments and sing *bhajans* without any inhibitions. In this manner, the tradition

and culture of our religion is sure to persevere and confront any obstacles that we may encounter.

The Hanuman phenomenon is very extensive and it has reached the masses extensively. It is rather difficult to see Hanuman as a peripheral God. His *murthi* is present in all the Vishnu Temples as well as the Ram Temples. He is honoured and worshipped in the Krishna Temples (Shree Gopalall Temple--Verulam). He is also worshipped in the *Shakti* Temples (*Gayathree Peedam--Verulam*). Majority of the temples celebrate his birthday and devotees throughout the country fast on this auspicious day and attend *sathsang* in the evening.

In South Africa the Tamil Ramayana is not as popular as the Ramayana of Tulsidas. There is no major Tamil temple in Durban that reads the Tamil Ramayana. The Ramayana of Tulsidas/Valmiki is written in either Hindi or Sanskrit which are foreign languages to the Tamilians. A rather limited number of Tamil devotees actually recite the Hanuman *Chaalisa*.

Tamil devotees worshipping Hanuman accept Him as the God of power and strength. He is represented in two postures: when in the company of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, he is shown standing humbly at a distance or sitting devotedly at the feet of Rama.

In shrines specially erected for him, he strikes a heroic pose, usually with the *gadda* (mace) in his left hand and carrying the Sanjivini mountain in his right hand. His destruction of Lanka has inspired devotees to invoke Him as a force to ward off evil. Some devotees who worship Him in the mode of “trance” depict this strength by pulling huge chariots pierced onto their bodies.

Hanuman worship is deeply entrenched amongst the Hindi speaking population. Hanuman is idolised as the guardian and protector of the house. Almost every Hindi home has a specific area set aside in the yard for Hanuman worship. In this small shrine the *Jhanda* is hoisted. Knowledge of Hanuman is disseminated to children at an early age. Almost every home has a *murthi* and a picture of Hanuman which propagates the flow of belief and total acceptance of Him. Majority of the Hindi devotees set aside Tuesday, the day of His birth, as a day of worship to Hanuman. On this day, devotees abstain from meat and offer their prayers with sanctified food (*parsad*).

The Hanuman *Chaalisa* is recited in most homes in the evening. The *Chaalisa* was written by Tulsidas whilst he was in prison and it comprises of forty couplets. Many Hindus believe that the spiritual power generated from the recital has the potential to perform miracles in times of difficulty and sicknesses. Generally it is recited one, three, seven or eleven times continuously. An odd number is an auspicious number among the Hindus. The Hanuman *Chaalisa* and its meaning will be found in the appendix.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Hanuman worship has gained massive momentum in Hinduism. The indentured labourers had introduced His *pooja* here and it has spread extensively. Almost every Hindi speaking Hindu household dedicates their prayers to him on Tuesdays. After the destruction of Lanka and the rescue of Sita from Ravana, devotees have intense faith in Hanuman as a guardian and protector. Hanuman is a Ram *bhakta* and wherever Ram is present, so is Hanuman. The only way to reach Ram is via Hanuman. Hindus throughout the world have experienced the spiritual powers of the Hanuman *Chaalisa*. Some chant the *Chaalisa* daily, while others chant once a week. In times of crisis due to sickness or accidents, devotees chant the *Chaalisa* three, five, seven or eleven times. Hanuman is acclaimed as the guardian and the protector of the household and has a specific area designed for His prayers in the yard.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### HANUMAN WORSHIP

#### 4.1. Festivals

##### 4.1.1. Hanuman Jayanthi—birthday

According to mythological texts, Hanuman was born at the most auspicious hour on the morning of the eighth of the Lunar month, *Chait*, at 4:00 on the most blessed day, Tuesday. Most Hindus observe this day in honour of Hanuman.

Before the Hanuman *Jayanthi yajna*, prayer, a preliminary prayer invoking Lord Ganesha is performed. This prayer signifies the removal of any obstacles and at the same time the opening of the pathway leading to the spiritual reception of the various offerings.

The devotees participating in the prayer are required to wash their hands first. Then they sip water, *aachan*, three times. The *maarjan*--sprinkling with water for purification is performed.

##### 4.1.2. Ganesha's pooja

The first prayer is dedicated to the invocation of Lord Ganesha. A clay lamp is lit. This signifies the removal of darkness and the

enjoyment of light; the destruction of evil and the bestower of goodwill. Ganesha's feet are then bathed with water. The *murthi* is then clothed with raw cotton or ribbon. These symbolise garments to adorn Him. A *chandan thiluk*, dot, is placed on the forehead. After He is adorned, we offer Him a seat, *asan*, in the shrine especially prepared for the ceremony.

**The following items are offered:**

vermillion	<i>kum-kum</i>
orange powder	
saffron coloured vermillion	<i>sindoor</i>
red powder	
betel nut and betel leaf	<i>paan supari</i>
honey	
fruits	
sugar	
sour milk	

#### 4.1.3. Kailash Devtha

The second step is dedicated to the invoking of *KALASH DEVATA*. *Devata* represents Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwari depicting Creation, Preservation and Dissolution. The *Kalash* is an clay pot which is filled with water. A few coins, some tumeric, *kusa* grass, the betel nut and betel leaf together with a few flowers are placed in the

water. The tumeric is used to purify the water. The coins symbolise *dakshina*, charity. Five mango leaves are placed in the mouth of the *Kalash*. These leaves represent the natural plantation. The kernel, the white of the coconut represents food and the red cloth symbolises garments. The *Kalash Devatha* now represents the entire universe. The following *mantra* is chanted when the *Kalash* is completed:

*Aum Kalashasya mykhe Vishnu kante Rudra sama shrita. Moole tatra stitho Brahma madhye matri grina smrita. Kuksho thy sagara sarve sapta dhvipa vasundara. Rig vedo atha Yajur vedo Sam vedo hytharvana. Angaschai kalashanthu sama shrita. Atha Gayatri savithri shanti pushti kari sada. Twayi tishtanti bhoothani twayi pranah pratishthita. Shiva swayam twamevasi Vishnu stwamcha prajapati. Aditya vasavo Rudra vishvedeva sapaitrika. Twayi tishtanti sarve api yath kaam phal pradaa. Twat prasaada dimaam yagyam kar thy mihe jalod bhava. Saanidhyam kurume deva prashano deva sarvadaa.*

The mouth of the *Kalash* is Vishnu.

The neck is Rudra.

The source on which it is situated is Brahma.

In the container is a group of mothers represented by the Ganges.

In You is contained the seven seas and the seven layers of earth.

You are the source of the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda.

You are verily the source of the related branches of the *Shastras*.

The items offered to Lord Ganesha are once again offered to *Kalash Devata*.

#### 4.1.4. Navagraha Devtha (Nine planets)

In the *Navagraha Pooja*, the deities of the nine planets are worshipped so as to render the occasion auspicious for Hanuman *Jayanthi*. The prayer is focussed on the removal of any *garas*--misfortunes that may fall on the family, children or the parents. The nine deities are as follows:

- 4.1.4.1 Surya Devtha
- 4.1.4.2 Chandra Devtha
- 4.1.4.3 Bhuma Devtha
- 4.1.4.4 Budh Devtha
- 4.1.4.5 Guru Devtha
- 4.1.4.6 Shukhra Devtha
- 4.1.4.7 Shani Devtha
- 4.1.4.8 Rahu Devtha
- 4.1.4.9 Kethu Devtha

Rahu and Kethu are the chief causes of eclipses. They are invoked and pleaded to so that no eclipses may occur and no destructions may occur. Each deity is accorded a seat in the *vedi* and is symbolically represented by a betel-nut (shape of a planet) and a betel-leaf (seat). Flowers are offered to the deities as the following *mantra* is chanted:



Aum, let Brahma, Vishnu (the foe of Mura), Shiva (Slayer of Tripura), Bhanu (Sun), Shasi (Moon), Bhumisuto (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Guru (Jupiter), Sukrah (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu-Ketu (the ascending and descending modes of the moon), let all the celestials make the occasion auspicious for me.

The offerings following this *mantra* are the same as for Lord Ganesha.

Once the preliminary prayers are performed the Hanuman *Pooja* is then conducted. The devotees must sit facing the Hanuman *murthi*.

## 4.2 Hanuman Pooja

The following *mantras* for the Hanuman pooja are extracted from the book Hanuman *Upasna*.

The devotees sit facing the Hanuman *murthi*.

### 4.2.1 Avahan (Welcome)

*Hemkoot giripraanth Jananaam girisanygaam. Pampa mavahaya yasyaam naadhyam hridyaam prayatmana.*

The presence of Hanuman is invoked and the devotees welcome Hanuman wholeheartedly and accept His presence warmly.

#### 4.2.2. Asan (Seat)

*Tarangshat kallole ringattam raso jwale. Pampanadi  
namosthybhyam grihan aasan muthamam.*

Hanuman is offered a seat in the humble surrounding.

#### 4.2.3. Paadhyam (Washing of the feet)

*Hrydayam sugandh sampannam sudham sudhaam busath  
kritam padhyam grihaan pampalchayi mahanadi namo astute*

This is a sign of humility and sincere devotion.

#### 4.2.4. Arghyam (Washing of the face)

*Bhagirathi namasthubhyam salilena sushobane anarghyam madyam  
managhe grihatam idamuthamam*

This water is offered to Hanuman to wash His face as in preparation for His worship.

#### 4.2.5. Archmanyam (Sipping of sanctified water)

*Ampadhi mahapuniye sampadithe sushobane godavari jalenadhya  
grihana archmanyam*

Hanuman is offered sanctified water which is symbolic of purity.

#### 4.2.6. Snaanam (Bathing of Hanuman)

*Dudhajyeksurasi puny char maduna tatha panchamrithey  
snaapyishyeye pampanadi namosthute.*

The bathing signifies physical cleanliness which is a prerequisite to spiritual enlightenment.

#### 4.2.7. Pancha Amrit (five ingredients to make a nectar)

*Dudhajyeksurasi punye char maduna tatha panchamrithey  
snaapyishyeye pampnadi namosthutee.*

The five ingredients: milk, sour-milk, ghee, sugar, and honey. These ingredients can be offered separately or combined and offered as one unit. These ingredients are pure in nature and therefore helps the devotee to maintain pure thoughts.

#### 4.2.8. Archmanyam (water to rinse the mouth)

*Shrdhniley shudh jaleinarikelam bubistata punyey  
Krishnanaditohyeya singchami tvaam saridevarie*

This water symbolises the rinsing of the mouth after the devotee has offered to Hanuman the *pancha amrit*.

#### 4.2.9. **Vashtram (offering of Clothing)**

*Mahamulyam chakaarpasam divya vastra muthamam pampa nadi  
maha punye pampa shobati shobhane*

A red piece of cloth is tied around Hanuman which signifies His readiness for appearance to the devotees. Red is symbolic of power and Hanuman Himself personifies power.

#### 4.2.10. **Yagyopavit (sacred string )**

*Shrotha smarthadi sathkarma phaladam pavanam shubhnam  
yagoyopavith madhuna kalpaye mariduthame*

This string symbolises protection from evil forces and mishaps.

#### 4.2.11. **Thiluk (Chandan dot)**

*Chandanasye mahat punyam pavatram paap nashanam apada harte  
nithyam lutkshmee tishetee sarvadaa*

We adorn the *murthi* with a dot of *chandan* which creates a atmosphere of serenity. This dot is then placed on the forehead of every devotee.

#### 4.2.12. Gandh (Perfumed water)

*Karpoor gutikarmishram kasturia cha vimaarditham yetnen kalpitam  
gandham lepyedemgam saridware*

We apply scented water on the *murthi* so that a pleasant aroma surrounds him.

#### 4.2.13. Auspicious Powders (hurdee, kum kum: sindoor)

*Huridra kumkumam chaive sindoor aadi samavitha soubhagyam  
sukhadam mokshadam prati archatham prati grihatam*

*Hurdee* symbolises purity; *kum kum* (vermillion) symbolises beauty and *sindoor* is applied to only one male deity and that is Hanuman. According to traditional text, Hanuman had covered Himself with *sindoor* thinking that this will qualify Him into entering Rama's bed chamber.

#### 4.2.14. Akshat (White rice)

*Akshatashcha surushreshi kum kum akate sushobhite mayo nividita  
bhatiya grihaan parmashwara*

White rice is offered to Hanuman which symbolises prosperity.

#### 4.2.15. Pushpamala (Garland of flowers)

*Malyadini sungandini malyadini vaiprabho mayahritani pujartham  
pushpanjali prati grihatam*

The *murthi* is honoured with a garland of flowers. Preferably red flowers are used.

#### 4.2.16. Dhoop (Agarbathi)

*Vanaspathi rasooth pannam sugandadyo manoharam dhoopoyam  
sarvanam pratiartam pratigrihathaam*

Just as the fragrance of the incense sticks envelop the atmosphere, similarly the presence of God pervades the air.

#### 4.2.17. Deep (Waving of the lamp)

This symbolises the removal of any obstacles and evil that may be present. It signifies the removal of darkness and despair.

#### 4.2.18. Naivedh (Mixture of maas and sugar)

*Shalyananam swaranam patrastham shaakapoop samalivitam.*

*Sajyamdadhi payasam chahaivedhyam pratigrihyataam.*

This mixture is offered to sweeten the deity's mouth.

#### 4.2.19. Prasad (Sanctified food)

##### 4.2.19.1. Fruit

*Idam phalam maya devam staapit purustastarva ten me safala vaptir  
bhava janmani janmani.*

We offer to thee a small portion of the fruits that you have provided for us so abundantly.

##### 4.2.19.2. Sweetmeats

*Sharkara khaad khaachyani dadhi kshire dritani chaaharam bhaksam  
bhojam cha naivedyam pratigrihyatam.*

Kindly partake of these sweetmeats that have been lovingly prepared.

#### 4.2.20. Archmanyam (water to sip)

After offering Hanuman sanctified food, water is offered to quench His thirst.

#### 4.2.21. Paansupari (Betel nut and betel leaf)

*Poogey syshobhaneyshapi naag bali daleyrytaam. Taambylam grihyataam dev pampani namastute.*

May this *paansupari* assist in the digestion of the meals we have offered to you.

#### 4.2.22. Flowers

*Malyadini syeandini malyadini vaiprabho. Maya hritani pujaarjam pushpanjali prati grihyataam.*

The devotees place a flower between both hands and pray to Hanuman for guidance and protection.

### 4.3 Hanuman's Jhanda (Flag)

Hanuman's *jhanda* is mentioned originally in the Mahabharata. Here He promises Arjuna that He would hoist His flag in his chariot before



the commencement of the battle. Following the text, in the ceremony *Katha* and *Jhanda*, the *Jhanda* is hoisted first, followed by the *Katha*. According to the Ramayana, Sita had presented to Hanuman a string of pearls as a gift for her safe return.

Hanuman acknowledged the kind gesture and started opening the pearls one by one. Rama henceforth inquired what did Hanuman desire. Hanuman stated that He was searching for Rama in the pearls. In response to this, Rama emphasised that Hanuman will be the gateway to his worship (Lal, 1981:56-59).

Hanuman then besieged devotees to hoist His *Jhanda* first as this would open the path of worship to Rama.

#### 4.3.1 **Jhanda Pooja (flag prayers)**

##### 4.3.1.1. **Washing of the pole**

*Aum gange saroswati raive payoshini narmada jale snaapte asi maya dev atashanit kurushwa me*

The *jhanda* pole is washed with tumeric water.

#### 4.3.1.2 Fitting on the flag

*Sarve bhushadike somye loka lajja nivarahe. Mayo papadite  
tybhyamyam vastram artam prati grihyatam.*

#### 4.3.1.3 Raising of the flag (Do sankalp)

*Hari aum tatsat tatsat tatsat . Vishnu Vishnu Vishnu. Shrimad  
bhagvato mahapurushanya, Vishnuragya pravart manasya adhya  
brahmano dwitya praade shri shwetvaraha kalpe vaivas manvantare  
ashaam vim shantit me yuge kali yuge kalipratam jambudeepe  
deepantargat sindhu tate nana parvat dakshin Afrika khande  
Kwa-Zulu Natal prante (name of region) naam puri nagare sthaan  
maasanaam maasothame maase maas paksh titho vasre gotra (name  
of devotee) naamasye sarve dev aadi atha sankshipt Shri Hanumaan  
Jhanda pujanam aham karishye*

#### 4.3.1.4. Planting of the Jhanda pole

*Place the paansupari, rice, flower and coin with the pole.*

ALL THE DEVOTEES CHANT:

*PREM SE BOLO SHRI PAVAN PUTRA HANUMAN KI JAY!*

The concluding rites are as follows:

Light the lamp, the camphor and the *agarbathi*. The devotee places flowers in the hands and prays to Hanuman for guidance.

The *panchamrit*, the *prasad* and a *lota* of milk are then offered.

The devotee prostrates and seeks the blessings of Hanuman.

#### 4.4 The theology of Hanuman

In the tantric literature, Hanuman appears with five faces representing five different aspects of the deity. At the same time, Hanuman has been seen to be the *tejas* of Siva, Visnu and Brahma or all three combined. Of these representations, the most popular one is the aspect of Hanuman which portrays him as one of the *Ekadasa-rudras*. Siva as a *rudra* has five elements.

“We learn from the *Linga Purana* that Siva is to the universe what clay and the potter are to the pot, namely the *upadana karana* (material cause) and *nimitta-karana* (instrumental or generative cause). Such a being manifests in five different forms. He who is the Soul of the universe is called *Isana*; the illusory material world (*maya*) is *Tatpurusa*; *Buddhi* with its eight components beginning from *dharma* is *Aghora*; *Vamadeva* pervades the whole of the universe in the form of *aharikara* and the *manasa-tattva* (mind) is *Sadyojata*” (Krishnananda, 1977:306-308).

It is interesting to note that various authorities have agreed in taking these aspects as the manifestations of the Supreme deity in the elements of nature, such as fire, air, earth, wind and sky. Besides Siva, Hanuman is also seen to be an *amsa* of Visnu and in the *Vaikuntha* form of Visnu, according to *Rupamandana*, he is to have four faces: of a human, *Narasimha*, female and *Varaha*.

According to the various texts, Visnu has the following faces: *Vasudeva*, (human) *Samkarsana*, (lion) *Pradyumna* (boar) and *Aniruddha* (demonic) (Shantilal Nagar, 1995:225:229).

It is therefore clearly noticed that some elements in the *Pancavaktra* form of Siva and the four-faced *Vaikuntha* form of Visnu are common. These elements in one way or the other were represented in the five-faced Hanuman and have been mentioned mainly in the tantric texts. The five faces of Hanuman are *Garuda* representing Visnu, Lion representing *Bala* (strength), Boar representing Ganesa, Monkey representing Siva and Horse representing *Surya*. The above elements of Siva, Visnu, Ganesa and Bala have intermingled in the formation of *Pancamukhi* Hanuman. The Horse's head has been analysed by some scholars to represent *Hayagriva* form of Visnu. Although *Surya* seems more appropriate, since in the Vedic literature, horse sometimes represented *Surya* (Thomas, 1985:56-59).

With reference to the horse-head of *Pancamukhi*-Hanuman as the *Hayagriva* form of Visnu, it could be safely mentioned that Hanuman was exclusively a Vaisnava deity. In this instance, all the faces of

boar, *Narasimha*, horse and *Gaurada*, besides the monkey-face could be classified as Vaisnava elements. At the same time, the horse-head could represent *Surya* which is another Vaisnava element, since horse has been conceived to represent the Sun from the early periods starting from the Rgvedic period.

The horse has been linked to Siva and Visnu in the Vedic literature. Thus the horse and Visnu have been linked in the Vedic scriptures to represent *Surya*. At the same time, it can be mentioned that Hanuman has been closely associated with *Surya* from his childhood. *Surya* had educated Hanuman and had asked Hanuman to serve the monkey-king Sugriva as his adviser. Considering all these facts, it would be quite in order to interpret the horse-head in the figure of *pancamukhi*--Hanuman to represent *Surya*.

Hanuman was also conceived in *Pancamukhi* form, combining in him the faces of *Narasimha*, *Hayagriva*, *Garuda*, Boar and the Monkey. The intermingling of the *tejas* (energies) of established deities of the Brahmanical pantheon projected Hanuman as a very vibrant and powerful deity who was worshipped by the masses in various forms.

The five faces of Hanuman could also represent the *tejas* (energies) of the five deities, viz., Visnu, Sakti, Ganesa, Siva and *Surya*. The Visnu element facing the west tends to remove the ill effects of snake or other poison. The Ganesa element facing the north tends to remove

danger from the enemy. The Shakti element facing the south will remove the ill-effects of spirits and goblins. The eastern Siva face is meant for the removal of epidemics, physical harm, domestic quarrels. Surya, being the one who educated Hanuman, is rightfully placed on the top most position. Hence we find evident that the *Pancamukhi*-Hanuman protects the devotees from any misfortune and assists in their advancement in life (Vivek, 1988:56-59).

In the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Hanuman is known as the great hero, symbolic of bravery, wisdom, intellect and selfless service. Apart from the epics, he is also found in the Upanishads wherein he creates an impression in which devotees respected him. With all these virtues not possessed collectively by any other personality, he was not perceived as a deity to be worshipped individually. Although many scholars have attempted to trace his presence in the early Indian religious period he is shown as an attendant of Rama during the 9th-10th century AD and his portrayal as an independent deity only appears in the early medieval period (Shantilal Nagar, 1995:231).

The adoration of Hanuman as a deity commenced with the advent of Muslim invaders and subsequent practise of the Muslim rule in the country. On the eve of Islamic invasion, Hindu culture was highly pronounced with temples and monasteries prevalent in different shapes and sizes. Hindus were skilled in the art of construction and their society was endowed with schools and places of worship.

However, and sadly so at the end of the invasion, almost all of these Hindu places of worship had either disappeared or were fast becoming ruins. Majority of the sacred sites were reoccupied by a variety of Muslim monuments, *masjids* and *idgahs* (mosques), *madradas* and *maktabs* (seminaries), *takiyas* and graveyards. Materials from the demolished buildings were utilised to construct new buildings to satisfy the demands of Islamic Theology (Venkatadri, 1989:130-145).

Besides the ruination of religious buildings, the Hindu population was subjected to inhuman and hostile experiences. Temples were burnt down and Hindu Gods and Goddesses were destroyed. From the 10th-16th century AD, every attempt was made to enforce Muslim rule in India and it ended with the establishment of the Mughal rule in 1526 AD. The morale and psychological conditions of the Hindus were low and helpless. However, the Hindus continued with the struggle to uplift the Hindu Dharma during these five centuries.

It was indeed during this period that various Hindu deities emerged to the forefront and Hanuman was one of them. Hanuman's destruction of Lanka and the restoration of Sita conveyed in the troubled minds of the Hindus a feeling of hope and security. During this chaotic period, there was a need for a vibrant and fearless deity who could help in building the morale of masses against the ruthless rulers. In Hanuman, they found a deity who was not only a great warrior but also one who had never faced defeat in his life and was always available to protect his worshippers and be invoked to destroy his enemies. It was during this period of religious and social turmoil that

gave rise to the strong wave of the *Bhakti* cult. The achievements of Rama, Krishna, with Hanuman as the devotee of Rama, propounded by the great sages of the time, like Namadeva, Nimbarka, Suradasa, Tuncatt Eluttacchan, Krttivasa and Tulasidas stressed on the Hanuman-Rama relationship as the ideal of *Bhakti*. The entire objective was to unite the people against their common foe rather than let the tyrants divide and rule. (Shantilal Nagar, 1995:240)

According to Jawhar Sircar: “Perhaps, it would not do full justice if Hanuman’s popularity were to be ascribed only to his utility as a Hindu cult symbol propped up against Buddhism and Islam. His genius in music and grammar and his *Panca-mukhi* virtues are most likely after-thoughts that follow the trail of deification.

Nevertheless, one of the primary reasons for the continuing success of his being canonised, idolised and deified, as were the host of animals and birds, is the great reconciliation of Hindu beliefs. Even the leader of the opposition, Buddha, found himself on the *avatara*’s throne, seated quite close to Rama.

By the time Mahmud of Gazni commenced his raids in the eleventh century, Bhandarkar finds the worship of Rama and Hanuman fairly well-established. The next five centuries were remarkable not only for the gradual take-over by the Muslims but also for the sheer proliferation of Rama stories in several languages and various versions” (India Today, 1992:46).



Tulasidas was a great author and an outstanding exponent of Rama and Hanuman. He not only wrote the Ramacaritamanasa but also composed several poems and verses on Hanuman. According to the *Loka Katha*, the emperor Akbar prisoned Tulasidas at Fatehpur Sikri soon after he had completed the Ramacaritamanasa. However, this act did not prevent his determined mind but rather he was inspired to such an extent that he wrote the Hanuman *Chaalisa* (40 couplets/verses in adoration of Hanuman) and recited the *Chaalisa* for forty days in prison. Having recited the Hanuman *Chaalisa* for forty days, the entire area of Fatehpur Sikri was surrounded by thousands of monkeys who destroyed the place completely. Tulasidas was then released with honour and thereafter the monkeys peacefully dispersed (Munundra, 1987:351-356).

The Hindu propagation was not confined to the *Bhakti*-movement alone but also a vibrant regrouping of actions and thoughts towards the masses. The onset can best be seen in the launch of Samartha Ramadasa, his disciple Sivaji, who propagated the Hanuman cult.

The chanting of “*Har-Har-Mahadeva*” and “*Jai Bajrangabali*” soon spread amongst the Hindus and a new surge of spirit invaded India. A spirit of hope and security. Hanuman was now projected as one of the most powerful *deities*. Hanuman henceforth gained momentum by the masses in the medieval period. At this time, many *deities* in composite form also emerged in the Indian religious environment.

They were:

- 4.4.1. *Hari-Hara--Pitamaha.*
  - 4.4.2. *Hari-Hara--Surya Buddha.*
  - 4.4.3. *Sakti-Ganesa-Siva.*
  - 4.4.4. *Ardhanarisvara.*
  - 4.4.5. *Vaikuntha form and others.*
- (Father Bulke, 1982:251-255).

His worship gained much momentum during the Muslim rule. His *murthis* were enshrined under trees and outside the villages in the hope that his spiritual powers will guard and protect the residents. The invasion of the Muslim rule unknowingly contributed greatly towards the popularity of Hanuman.

With the publication of literary works on Indian religion by the genius sage Tulasidas and others, Hanuman became the deity of the masses and almost every Hindu household worshipped him as the only saviour from ill or dangers. The masses had thus found in Hanuman a deity who would restore in them confidence and bestow upon them success and peace. His popularity grew as the Mughal period weakened and in several towns Mahabir-dals and Bajrangdals were formed to unite the people under a common banner (Mahta, 1975:251-264).

The faith in Hanuman and the restoration of goodwill and prosperity was not confined to the Hindus alone, for there are instances where Muslims have actually sought his help to resolve their problems. In the 17th century, the ruler of Faizabad and Lucknow Nawab Mansur Ali's son suffered from a rare disease which the best of medical practitioners failed to cure. He then sought the blessings of Hanuman to help cure his son's disease which was ultimately cured. To show his faith, the Nawab donated fifty two *bighas* of land at Hanuman Garhi at Ayodhya upon which a temple of Hanuman was built. (Kalyana, Annual Number , 49th year, 1975:432).

Another rather interesting case to be reported is from Lucknow where the Hanuman temple at Aliganj was built on the bank of the river Gomati in the beginning of the 19th century by Alia Begum. She was the daughter of the Mughal king of Delhi and the grandmother of the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. It is believed that the Begum had difficulty in conceiving and thereby sought the blessings of Hanuman after which she delivered a healthy son. In gratitude, the Begum built a temple for Hanuman at Aliganj in Lucknow.

It is evident that the popularity of Hanuman as a deity commenced in the early medieval period but rose magnificently during the period that followed. At the same time, it may be reported that a large number of texts idolising Hanuman was printed and circulated during this period as well.

In the *Ramacaritamansa* of Tulasidas, Hanuman is portrayed as the ideal servant, a highly intelligent monkey, a brave soldier, a splendid musician and a devoted worshipper of Rama. In practice the consort of Rama (Sita) should be the natural mediator between him and his devotees. However in this case, Hanuman plays the role of mediator and it is he who acts as a sign post leading to the worship of Rama. Devotees invoke Hanuman and hence have the hoisting of the *Jhanda* first and then the worship of Rama commences.

In the epics, Hanuman was almost a non-entity and functioned as a devoted servant to Sugriva. It was only when he came into contact with the Ayodhya princes, Rama and Laksmana, the sudden development of his personality and performance emerged. Once he became conscious of his inherent qualities, he utilised them for the benefit of the Ayodhya princes, Sugriva and against the evil forces. His popularity grew tremendously during the Muslim rule when a strong and powerful deity was required.

Hanuman satisfied these requirements because he was the only one in whom even Rama and Laksmana had complete faith. It can safely be mentioned that Hanuman accomplished some feats which even Rama and Laksmana could not execute. It was Hanuman who had crossed the vast ocean to Lanka which Rama or Laksmana failed to do until the bridge was built. Hanuman had brought the *Sanjivani* herb for the cure of Laksmana, when everybody failed. In the Mahiravana episode it was Hanuman who rescued the Ayodhya princes.

At Rama's coronation, Hanuman was asked to seek something for himself. Much to everyone's surprise he prayed for eternal devotion to Rama. These courageous feats performed by him highly impressed the common man in the country and his adoration gradually commenced, as a devotee of Rama, though he never claimed himself to be a god or a deity.

A rather interesting aspect of his popularity of Hanuman is his penetration into Tantricism where numerous tantric practices were prescribed for the achievement of success or removal of various ills. It is under the Tantric fold that he was conceived as *Pancamukhi* or *Ekadasamukhi* forms. While the story of Rama crossed the Indian frontiers, the achievements of Hanuman also became popular with the masses (Krishnananda, 1977:251-256).

Hanuman has become the mediator between Rama and the devotees and is found in the art and literature of Thailand, Tibet, Laos, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Japan, Burma, Malaya, Phillipines, Khotan and Vietnam. The personality of Hanuman is composed of the height of wisdom, bravery, courage, selfless service, mastery in music and poetic excellence, together with the utmost devotion towards Rama.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Hanuman *Jayanthi*, the birthday of Hanuman is celebrated by the majority of Hindus throughout the country. It is an auspicious day on

which devotees honour Hanuman as the guardian deity of the household. Hanuman's *jhanda* (flag) graces the yard of many devotees thus symbolising victory and protection. The concept of the *jhanda* was first introduced in the Mahabharatha when Hanuman promised Arjuna that he would hoist his flag in his chariot before the commencement of the battle.

Hanuman was also conceived in *Pancamukhi* form. The five faces of Hanuman represented the *tejas* (energies) of the five deities, viz. Visnu, Sakti, Ganesa, Siva and Surya. Each deity represented the destruction of evil forces prevalent in society. Thus Hanuman is the embodiment of a vibrant force to remove the ill effects of poison, to protect the devotees from danger, to remove the negative influence of spirits and goblin, to remove epidemics, physical harm and restore peace in the household.

Hanuman became a cult deity during the period of the Mughal rule in India. During this chaos the masses needed a forceful and fearless deity for protection. In Hanuman they found a deity who was a great warrior and one who had never faced defeat. It was during this period that Hanuman emerged as a protector and a saviour to the masses.

The Hanuman *Chaalisa* (40 couplets/verses in adoration of Hanuman) is recited by the devotees to remove any illnesses and to restore peace in their homes. The Hanuman *Chaalisa* has a vast

depth of spiritual essence and the magical effects of the *Chaalisa* has expounded the belief and faith in Hanuman. Devotees recite the *Chaalisa* to enjoy inner peace and to gain strength to tackle the difficulties of life.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, I have discussed the importance of Hanuman worship in South Africa. Although in the classical tradition, Hanuman is a peripheral deity, in popular Hinduism he occupies a significant place. Hindus in South Africa consider him a very prominent deity and approach him for protection against all evils.

In order to contextualise Hanuman, I have provided a general background on him in the classical text drawn mainly from the Ramayana version of both Sanskrit and vernacular. My source for the research was focussed on the Ramacaritamanasa by Goswami Tulasidas.

In the Ramayana, Hanuman is portrayed as a devoted servant who served his master, Sugriva, well. As a devotee, *Bhakta*, of Rama his dedication and loyalty is one to be emulated. He served Sugriva with utter loyalty and he was confined to foster the interest of his master and to protect him from the dangers of Balin. However, there was a welcome change in his duties after Sugriva's pact of friendship with Rama. His encounter with Rama expressed the most outstanding character of his personality where he was viewed as an ideal servant, an outstanding scholar, a courageous soldier, a talented musician and



a dedicated worshipper of Rama. At no given time, did he neglect his duties and it is rather evident that all the successes in the Ramayana hovers around him.

He possessed some rather outstanding qualities which pronounced him as a vibrant and popular character of the Ramayana. The text provides some rather interesting qualities of Hanuman where in some instances he possesses a colossal body and then again he reduces himself to the size of a thumb. He also possessed the unique ability to change his form into a human being when the occasions warranted it though in the text he maintains his monkey form. He changed to a colossal form in Valmiki's Ramayana when he was faced with the challenge of crossing the ocean to Lanka. He merely took a great step and while doing so expanded his body gigantically. In the same text, reference is made to Hanuman expanding his body ten, thirty, fifty seventy and ninety *yojanas*, while confronting the demoness Surasa. Reference is also made to Hanuman's physique in the Asokavana of Lanka, wherein he projects his gigantic form to convince Sita that he can rescue her from Lanka with the help of the monkeys. In the Mahabharata, he once again exhibits his terrifying form to instil fear in Bhima. On the eve of his departure to Lanka, Hanuman projects his colossal form thus having an appearance of a huge mountain with gold-like appearance.

In the Campu Ramayana of Bhoja, Hanuman is seen as an equivalent of the mountain Mandaracala while perceiving Sita as Laksmi, Rama

as Visnu, the army of Raksasas as the sea waves, Lanka as the ocean, which was churned with the serpent Vasuki as the rope around Mandaracala by Hanuman. Once again when he entered Lanka, in the night, he transformed himself to the size of a cat. However, in the Ranganatha Ramayana, on reaching Asokavatika in Lanka, Hanuman changed his shape into a size of a thumb and thereafter climbed over the Asoka tree, in close proximity to the whereabouts of Sita. Here he concealed himself amongst the tree leaves which can be compared to the form of Visnu, as an infant lodged over the leaf of a banyan tree floating over the sea-water. It is rather interesting to note that in the Hanumannataka, Hanuman reduces himself to the tiniest size of a mosquito when he sees the demoness Lankini at the of entrance of Lanka (Anantha N, 1967:45). These outstanding qualities of Hanuman gradually built his popularity amongst the masses in India especially during the Gupta period.

Hanuman was portrayed as a cultured personality in the Ramayana, which is of utmost importance in view of the fact that there is a school of thought which considers him to be of non-Aryan origin.

This is evident when he portrays himself before the two brothers, viz, Rama and Lakshmana first in disguise, and when he ascertains the true identities of the brothers, he introduces himself to Rama and Laksmana as the messenger of Sugriva. His speech was fluent with the most appropriate grammar and his pronunciation together with his mannerisms were exemplary. His tone was smooth and articulate.

To convince himself with the true identity of Sita, with the lady in the Asoka-Vatika, he reasoned with the rules of Logic. Upon being captured by Indrajita and appearing before Ravana, he embraced himself confidently and presented himself as an ambassador of Rama. He was undisturbed by the presence of the mighty monarch like Ravanna and addressed him on the capture of Sita with great diligence.

Hanuman was unparalleled in bravery, courage and competence. These characteristics can be observed in his crossing the vast ocean, carrying the hill with the medicinal plants to cure Lakshmana of the ailment, destroying Lanka with wit and correct planning single-handed, finding Sita in Asoka-vana in Lanka and finally conveying the message of Rama's return to Ayodhya for Bharata. In the Uttara Kanda, Sarga 35, of the Valmiki Ramayana, Rama personally declares that he was totally indebted to Hanuman for his victory over Ravana. Hanuman's strength overpowered the immense strength of Balin and Ravana.

As a trusted and devoted servant of Rama, he was allocated two very important tasks. One was to find a route across the channel to facilitate the movement of large troops safely and expediently to the shores of Lanka. If this route was undiscovered then further movements to Lanka would come to a standstill. The second task was to influence Vibhishana and to seek his assistance to spread out a

network of informers and underhand workers within the stronghold of Ravana. This strategy had to be adopted to weaken Ravana's stronghold from within, failing which will make the mission of Hanuman virtually impossible.

Hanuman practised a life of chastity or *brahmacarya*. His controlled state of mind assisted him to pursue this choice of life. However, the most trying time for him was his encounter with the innumerable wives of Ravana in his palace. The sight of these half-naked wives disturbed his line of thought immensely. However, the most consoling thought filtered his mind that he had encountered this experience as the result of performing his duty to his master Rama.

Another great aspect of his personality was his ability to gain the confidence of the Ayodhya princes, Rama and Laksmana in a short space of time. While other members of the *vanara* tribe were delegated duties in the search for Sita, Hanuman was delegated the most important assignment in the South. To facilitate the movement, not only did Rama hand Hanuman his inscribed ring, but also disclosed secrets of his personal life to him in utter confidence. This shows clearly that Hanuman enjoyed the complete confidence of Rama which non else besides Laksmana shared. For Hanuman this was one of the biggest achievements of his career.

Hanuman's outstanding quality of devotion with which he served Rama procured for him the highest esteem of the people. His selfless

and continued devotion with which he served Rama has no parallel in the Indian religious scene nor in the global context. There is a beautiful sculpture on one of the pillars in the central part of the Ramaswamy temple, Kumbhakonam. Here Rama and Sita are seated with Rama holding the *Vyakhyana-mudra*. Hanuman is seated at his feet and listens attentively with a palm leaf in his hand. The image portrays Rama as a preacher or teacher of the Supreme knowledge and Hanuman characterises a disciple. Rama himself once wondered how he would repay Hanuman for his astounding kindness.

Hanuman's height of devotion towards Rama was evident at the time of Rama's coronation as King of Ayodhya. Sita had presented to Hanuman a string of precious gems as appreciation for his past devotion and service. On receiving this piece of jewellery, Hanuman spontaneously began breaking the gems individually thereby looking for Rama in each one. Not finding him there, he tore open his chest, to exhibit the fact that the name of Rama was enshrined within him. The sight of Rama's presence embedded in the physical heart of Hanuman captured the audience greatly.

It can thus be clearly seen that Hanuman was first portrayed on the Indian religious scene as a humble servant of Sugriva and then of Rama. He created for himself an outstanding image in the religious beliefs, finally achieving for himself godhood, by his selfless, sustained and continued devotion towards his master. His spiritual movement from an ordinary monkey to godhood is utterly remarkable

and captivating. He is perhaps the only deity who had originated in the South but however is more popular in the North rather than the South. Hanuman's image is present in the majority of temples irrespective whether they are Vaisnavite, Saivite or Sakta. He became rather popular during the Gupta period or in the early medieval times and has grown in spiritual strength since then.

Hanuman's popularity by the masses commenced as a result of the consequences the Hindus faced during the Muslim invasion. This unwholesome invasion coupled by the fall of the Hindu governor created panic and insecurity amongst the Hindu community. The Hindus and Muslims confronted each other with great vibrance to gain power for the rule of India. However, much to the dismay of the Hindus, the Muslims finally succeeded in the 16th century. The morale of the Hindu community was broken and their degree of belonging was shattered. However, the Hindus did not succumb totally to the Mughal rule but instead retaliated fervently. With very little to hold on to, the Hindus needed a vibrant and forceful deity to restore their dignity and strength.

Hanuman having conquered Lanka and rescued Sita from the demon Ravanna was highly respected by the Hindu rulers. He symbolised strength and depicted fearless attributes. Hanuman was successful in every endeavour that he had undertaken and never feared confronting any obstacles. Hanuman's popularity grew and soon he became the deity not only of the Hindu rulers but also of the masses. The

worship of Hanuman also gave rise to the Hanuman-Rama relationship as the ideal of *Bhakti*. The Hanuman-Rama relationship was also emphasised by Tulasidas to enforce unity amongst the masses and to propagate the idea of brotherhood thus enforcing unity rather than the divide and rule policy. The popularity of Hanuman as a deity rose to an all time high and since the time of the medieval period, up to the present, he is acclaimed to be the protector and guardian of the household.

In South Africa majority of the temples observe Hanuman *pooja* especially Hanuman *Jayanthi* which is the birthday of Hanuman. Almost all temples be it a Vishnavite, Saivite or Shakta has a *murthi* of Hanuman. Majority of the temples have a sacred place in the yard which is reserved for the hoisting of the *Jhanda*. Most of the Hindu homes worship Hanuman as a deity, presiding as a guardian to the household and thus hoist a *jhanda*, flag, in the front of the house in the yard. The Hanuman *Chaalisa* or 40 couplets is a sacred hymn which is recited during a *sathsang*, or it is recited once in the evening in various homes, or it can be recited more than once depending on the desires of the devotees. The power of the *chaalisa* is said to be unexplainable and devotees have experienced magical changes in their problems just by the mere recitation of it. The pictures of Hanuman and *murthis* available have mobilised his spiritual traits and devotees of all ages seem to be aware of his power and his presence.

At the present moment devotees in both the Tamil and Hindi communities in South Africa acclaim Hanuman as a main deity and place their utter confidence and faith in him. The *Ram Bhajan* ceremony, which is practised more commonly by the Tamil speaking communities, had begun by the 1860 settlers in Illovo and Mt.Edgecombe. Today, this has become a tradition which reaches out to the devotees of all ages. The *Ram Bhajan* festival is a sacred one and immense spiritual vibrations are emanated from it. This enhances the faith and belief of Hanuman as a guardian to the devotees. If one has to comprehend the meaning of the *payasam* episode (holy pudding), (a kite had snatched a fragment of the pudding which was intended for the queens of Dasaratha and dropped it into the outstretched palm of Anjana,) then it would mean that Hanuman was none other than the brother of Rama as were Lakshmana, Shrutogana and Bharata.

This study has focussed on Hanuman and his various outstanding qualities as a devoted servant of Sugriva and then Rama. The study of Hanuman was confined to the interpretation of Goswami Tulasidas as was related in his *Ramacaritamanasa*. It would be rather interesting for another scholar to pursue the interpretation of Hanuman as related by Valmiki. The concept of Hanuman as a guardian deity in the village or in folk Hinduism can be pursued further.



Another rather interesting study will be the various interpretation of Valmiki's Ramayana. There are many versions of the Ramayana throughout Asia and they often differ from Valmiki's Ramayana. His Ramayana was first orally transmitted before it was finally committed to written form. Over the centuries, this version underwent countless changes and the Ramayana was reinterpreted and (perhaps) distorted many times. It would therefore be rather interesting to study the various versions of the Ramayana and how they influenced the respective cultures involved.

## ODE TO HANUMAN

From: (BROTHER CHANDRASEKHAR HEGDE, Advaita Ashram,  
pithoragarh, Himalayas, India, 1987).

Hanuman's idol transports me to the seventh heaven of delight,  
His character is engraved on my mind throughout day and night.  
He had only one exalted, perfect, spiritual master,  
His yeoman's service helped him kill Ravana, the monster.

In every breath was contained his master's sacred name,  
Just to please his master was his eternal aim.  
Gems are precious but Rama was more than a gem to him,  
In everything he searched him with frantic whim.

Even in dream he could not bear his master's slightest agony,  
And wept for kidnapped Sita, as if beaten by ebony.  
A searching he went and in one jump crossed the ocean,  
This monkey chief is the symbol of infinite love and devotion.

His achievements showed who should be an ambassador,  
He made Ravana and his rakshasas shiver and shudder.  
On the one hand he burnt Lanka the golden city,  
On the other he protected Ayodhya with redoubtable capacity.

Indeed, he was always alert and dynamic,  
But deep down in his soul, he was a true mystic.

His greatness lies in his total surrender  
His glories are indeed, difficult to render.

In a full assembly he tore open his chest  
And there everyone saw, Rama at rest.  
And though on the outside he appears coarse  
Rama will himself, his beauty endorse.

This Master and servant are unique, it's true  
And because of them India is holy too.  
Let us strive to find truth and seek our solace

In him who resides in the Hanuman-heart palace.

## APPENDIX 2

## HANUMAN CHAALESA (40 COUPLETS)

The Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa.

*DOHA*

*Sri guru caran saroj raj*

*Nij man mukar sudar*

*Baranau raghubar bimal yas*

*Jo dayak phalacar*

Having cleansed the mirror of my mind with the lotus feet of Sri Gurudev, I now proceed to describe the untarnished glory of Sri Ram (the most excellent of the Ragh's) which bestows the four fruits.

## NOTE

The four fruits are the four Purusharthas or goals of human life which are Dharma (righteous deeds), Artha (material riches gained by honest means), Kama (fulfillment of desires in accordance with Dharma, and Moksha (release from the bondage of worldly existence).

*Buddhi hin tanu jani ke*

*Sumirau pavan kumar*

*Bal bhuddi vidya dehu mohi*

*Harahu kales vikar*

Realising the inadequacy of my intellect, I meditate upon you  
Hanuman (son of the wind-god; grant me strength, intelligence, and  
true knowledge, and remove all my afflictions blemishes.

NOTE:

Reference to Hanuman as son of Pavan (Wind) or Pavandev  
(wind-god or deity presiding over the wind) can be taken as a  
personification or Prana or life-breath.

*CAUPAI*

*(1)*

*Jay Hanuman gyan gun sagar,*

*Jai kapis tihu lok uजार*

Victory to you O! Hanuman, ocean of wisdom and virtue.

Victory to O! Hanuman (Lord of the monkeys), enlightener of the three worlds.

NOTE

a) In order to overcome the evil Ravana, Lord Rama had to manifest Himself as a human being (in terms of Brahman's boons to Ravan); and in order to assist Lord Rama, the other gods manifested themselves as monkeys and bears. Thus we find that Lord Siva manifested Himself as Hanuman, Lord Indra as Sugriva and Lord Brahman as Jambhavan.

b) The three worlds are the three regions which are, the heavenly, the earthly and the nether regions.

(2)

*Ram dut atulit bal dhama,*

*Anjani putra pavan sut nama*

You are the messenger of Sri Rama, abode of immeasurable strength, and son of Anjani, known as Pavanasuta (son of the wind-god).

NOTE

What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads it is the word fearlessness.

(3)

*Mahabir bikram bajarangi,*

*Kumati nivar sumati ke sangi*

You are a great hero of exceptional valour with a body as strong as a thunderbolt. You are the dispeller of wicked thoughts and a companion of good sense and wisdom.

NOTE

This is a great fact: strength is life; weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life is eternal, immortal; weakness is consistent strain and misery: weakness is death.



(4)

*Kancan baran biraj-subesha,*

*Kanan kundal kuncit kesa*

You are golden colour and wear fine clothes. You wear shining earrings and have beautiful curly hair.

NOTE

The wearing of the orange garb of the Sannyasin naturally causes sacred thoughts to rise in the mind. Every kind of dress has its own associations, although dress in itself has no special significance.

(5)

*Hath bajra au dhavaja birajai,*

*Kadhe muj janeu sajai*

You have the thunderbolt and flag in hand, whilst the sacred thread across your shoulder is made of sacred grass.

NOTE

Divine power is greater in those who are honoured, respected and obeyed by a large following than in those who have no such influence.

(6)

*Sankar suvan kesarinandan,  
Tej pratap maha jag vandan.*

You are an incarnation of Siva and the son of Kesari, and you are adored by the whole world on account of your radiance and courage.

#### NOTE

Hanuman's earthly father was Kesari (a monkey chief who was brave as a lion) and his divine godfather was Pavandev (the wind-god).

When nature shines, upon what depends the shining? Upon God and not upon the sun nor the moon nor the stars. Wherever anything shines, whether it is the light in the sun, in our own consciousness, it is He. He is shining , all shines after Him.

(7)

*Vidyavan guni ati catur,*

*Ram kaj karibe ko atur*

You are learned, virtuous and extremely intelligent and you are always eager to do the work of Sri Rama.

#### NOTE

In this age work without devotion to God has no legs to stand upon. It is like a foundation on sand. First cultivate devotion. All the other worldly things will add to you.

(8)

*Prabhu caritra sunibe ko rasiya,  
Ram lakhan Sita man basiya.*

You delight in listening to the glories of the Lord and you have Rama, Lakshmana and Sita residing in your mind.

## NOTE

Bhakti is to adore God with body, mind and words. “With body” means to serve and worship God with one’s hands, to go to holy places with one’s feet, hear the chanting of the name and glories of God with one’s ears, and behold the divine image with one’s eyes. “With mind” means to contemplate and meditate on God constantly and to remember and think of His lila. “With words” means to sing hymns to Him and chant His name and glories.

(9)

*Suksma rup dhari siyahi dikhave,*

*Vikat rup dhari lanka jarava*

You assumed a minute (subtle) form when you revealed yourself to Sita; and by assuming an awesome form you burnt the city of Lanka.

NOTE

If it pleases the Lord, He can even pass an elephant through the eye of a needle. He can do whatever He likes.

(10)

*Bhim rup dhari asur sahare,*

*Ramachandra ke kaj savare*

Then you assumed a gigantic form and destroyed the demons, thereby accomplishing the mission of Lord Rama.

#### NOTE

An Avatara (incarnation) is a human messenger of God. He is like a viceroy of a mighty monarch. As the king sends the viceroy when there is any disturbance in some far-off province in order to quell it, so whenever there is waning of religion in any part of the world, God sends there His Avatara to guard virtue and to foster its growth.

(11)

*Lay sajivan lakhan jiyaye*

*Sri Raghubir harasi ur laye*

When you brought the life-giving medicinal herb (sanjivini) and revived Lakshmana, Sri Rama embraced you joyfully.

NOTE

Whatever you offer to the Lord is returned to you, multiplied. Take care therefore, that you do not offer anything that may offend Him.



(12)

*Raghupati kini bahut barai,  
Tum mam priya bharat sam bhai*

Sri Rama extolled you greatly and declared you to be as dear to Him as His brother Bharata.

NOTE

Bhagavan (the Lord), Bhagavata (His word or scripture) and Bhakta (devotee) are all one and the same.

(13)

*Sahas badan tumharo yas gavai,  
As khai sripati kanth lagavai*

Taking you into His embrace, Sri Rama stated that even Sesnag (the thousand headed serpent) sings praises of your glory.

NOTE

The thousand headed serpent can be taken as personification of the scriptures.

The fish may be far away, yet when a sweet, savoury and attractive bait is thrown into the water, they hastily rise to it from all quarters. Similarly, the Lord approaches quickly the holy devotee whose heart is full of devotion and faith.

(14)

*Sanakadik brahmadi munisa,*

*Narad sarad sahit ahisa*

The sages Sanak, Sanatan, Sanandan and Sanat Kumar, Brahma and the other Gods, Lord Shiva, Narada, Sarasvathi and Sesnag.

NOTE

God is formless, and God is possessed of form too. And He is also that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone knows all that He is.

(15)

*Yam kubar dikapal jaha te**Kavi kovid kahi sakai kaha te*

The God of death (Yamraj), the God of wealth (Kuber), the guardian deities (Digpal), poets and scholars have all failed to adequately describe your glory.

## NOTE

God is like a hill of sugar. A small ant fetches from it a tiny grain of sugar, and a bigger one takes from it another grain considerably larger in size. But in spite of this the hill practically remains as large as ever. So are the devotees of God. They become estatic even with a single Divine attribute. No one can contain within him the realisation of all His glories and excellences.

(16)

Tum upkar sugrivahi kinha,  
Ram milay raj pad dinha.

You rendered an invaluable service to Sugriva by introducing him to  
Sri Rama and restoring him to the throne.

NOTE

A man ought to live in this world like a lotus leaf, which grows in  
water but is never moistened by water; so a man ought to live in the  
world--his heart to God and his hands to work.

(17)

*Tumharo mantra vibhishan mana,  
Lankeshvar bhaye sab jag jana*

The whole world knows that Visbhisana heeded your advice and became Lord of Lanka.

#### NOTE

The disciple should never criticise his Guru. He must implicitly obey whatever the Guru says. A certain couplet in Bengali says: “Though my Guru may visit the tavern, still my Guru is holy Rai Nityandanda; and though my Guru may visit the unholy haunts of drunkards and sinners, still to me he is my own pure and faultness Guru”.

(18)

*Yug shastra yojan par bhamu,*

*Lilyo tahi madhur phal jamu*

You swallowed the sun from a distance of sixteen thousand miles,  
considering it to be a sweet fruit.

NOTE

As a patch of cloud hides the blazing sun, "Maya", in the form of  
desire, hides Iswara. When the cloud disappears the sun becomes  
visible. When desire disappears Iswara reveals Himself.

(19)

*Prabhu mudrika meli mukh mahi,  
Jaladhi ladhi gaye acaraj nahi.*

Carrying the Lord's ring in your mouth, you crossed the ocean, there is no wonder in that (because of your previous deeds).

NOTE

All beings, great or small, are equally God; the difference is only in the manifestation.



(20)

*Durgam kaj jagat ket jete,  
Sugam anugrah tumhare tete.*

All the difficult tasks of the world are rendered easily possible by your grace.

NOTE

The wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on the sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the strong always keep the sails of their minds unfurled to catch the favourable wind and thus reach their destination very soon.

(21)

*Ram duvare tum rakhavare,*

*Hot na agya bin paisare*

You are the gate-keeper of Sri Rama's kingdom, where none may enter without your permission.

NOTE

The Guru is a mediator. He brings man and God together, even as a match-maker brings together the lover and the beloved.

(22)

*Sab sukh lahai tumhari sarna,*

*Tum rakshak kahu ko darna.*

He who seeks refuge in you enjoys every happiness. What is there to be afraid of if you are the protector?

NOTE

He for whom you work will supply you with your necessities. God made provisions for your support before He sent you into this world.

(23)

*Apan tej samharo apai,  
Tino lok hak te kapai.*

You alone are able to control your energy; all three worlds tremble before You.

NOTE

The magnetic needle always points to the North, and hence the sailing vessel does not lose her direction. So, long as the heart of man is directed towards God, he cannot be lost in the ocean of worldliness.

(24)

*Bhut pisac nikat nahi avai,*

*Mahabir jan nam sunavai.*

No evil spirits dare approach one who utters your name as Mahavir  
(great warrior).

NOTE

The devil never enters the house wherein songs in praise of Hari are  
always sung.

(25)

*Nasai rog harai sab pira,  
Japat niranthar Hanumant bira.*

All diseases are destroyed and pains vanish when your powerful name (Hanuman) is repeated incessantly (with love and devotion)

NOTE

Expressing his own attitude towards illness, the Master said: “Let the disease run its course and let the body suffer, but O mind, be thou ever in bliss.”

(26)

*Sankat se Hanuman churavai,  
Man kram bacan dhyan jo lavai.*

Hanuman free from difficulties all those who contemplate upon Him  
in thought, word and deed.

NOTE

The more a man approaches the Universal Being, the newer and  
greater become the revelations of His infinite nature, and in the end he  
merges in Him through the consummation of knowledge.

(27)

*Sab par Ram tapasvi raja,*

*Tin ke kaj sakal tum saja.*

You fulfilled all the missions of Lord Rama who fulfils the divine desires of the devotees engaged in penance.

NOTE

That which you think you should speak. When mind an speech unite earnestly asking for a thing. that prayer is answered.



(28)

*Aur manorath jo koi lavai,  
Tasu amit jivan phal pavai.*

And together with any other desires any devotee may have, they will ultimately secure the imperishable fruit (realisation of the highest reality).

NOTE

God is like the wish-yielding tree of the celestial world (Kalpataru), which gives whatever one asks of it. So one should be careful to give up all worldly desires when one's mind has been purified by religious exercises.

(29)

*Carahu yug paratap tumhara**Hai parasiddh jagat ujjyara*

Your glory prevails throughout the four ages (*Satyug, Tretayug, Dvaparyug, and Kaliyug*); and your fame radiates throughout the world.

Note:

On the tree of *Sacchidananda* (Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) there hangs innumerable bunches of Ramas, Krishnas, Buddhas, Christs. Out of these, one or two now and then come down into this world and produce mighty changes and revolutions.

(30)

*Sadhu sant ke tum rakhavare,  
Asur nikandan Ram dulare.*

You are the protector of the holy saints, and sages, and, beloved of Ram, you destroy the demons (all evil forces).

NOTE

As a large and powerful steamer moves swiftly over the water, towing rafts and barges in its wake, so when a Saviour comes, he easily carries thousands to the haven of safety across the ocean of Maya.

(31)

*Ast siddhi nav nidhi ke data,*

*As bar din janaki mata.*

Mother Sita (daughter of Janak) granted you the boon that you will be the bestower of the eight supernatural powers and the nine forms of wealth.

NOTE

THE EIGHT SUPERNATURAL POWERS ARE:

1. Anima (the faculty of reducing one's body to the size of an atom).
2. Mahim (the power of expanding one's body to an infinite large size).
3. Garima (the power of becoming infinitively heavy).
4. Laghima (the power of becoming infinitively light).
5. Prapti (unrestricted access to all places).
6. Prakamya (realising whatever one desire).
7. Isitva (absolute overlordship).
8. Vasitva (subjugating all).

(32)

*Ram rasayan tumhare pasa,  
Sada rahau raghupati ke dasa.*

The essence of devotion to Sri Rama is with you; may you always be the servant of the Lord.

NOTE

Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind. Do everything that is necessary in the proper time, and let your mind be always fixed on God.

(33)

*Tumhare bhajan Ram ko bhavai,  
Janma janma ke dukh bisaravai.*

Through devotion to you one obtains Sri Rama and the sorrows of life after life are culminated.

NOTE

Does the Lord care for all the wealth that one may offer Him? No. His grace lights on him alone who offers Him love and devotion. What He values are only love and devotion, discrimination and renunciaion for His sake.

(34)

*Ant kal raghupati pur jai,  
Jaha janmi hari bhakti kahai.*

At the end of a lifespan of such devotion one goes to the abode of Sri Rama and there is known as a devotee of the Lord.

#### NOTE

A man's rebirth is determined by what he has been thinking about just before death. Devotional practices are therefore very necessary. If, by constant practice, one's mind is free from all worldly ideas, then the thought of God, which fills the mind in their place, will not leave it even at the time of death.

(35)

*Aur devata cit na dharai,*

*Hamumat sei sarva sukh karai.*

All happiness is granted even to that devotee who worships no other deity besides Hanuman.

NOTE

Many are the names of God and infinite are the forms through which He may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship Him through them you will realise Him.



(36)

*Sankat harai mitai sab pira,  
Jo sumirai Hanumat bal bira.*

All difficulties and pains are removed for those who contemplate on the all-powerful Hanuman.

NOTE

If you clap your hands standing under a tree, the birds perching on it will fly away. So if you chant the “name” of Hari clapping your hands at the same time, the birds of evil thoughts will fly away from the tree of your body.

(37)

*Jai jai jai Hanuman gosai,  
Kripa karahu gurudev ki nai.*

Victory, victory, victory to you Oh Hanuman; as our supreme Guru,  
give us grace.

NOTE

Who is whose Guru (spiritual guide and teacher)? God alone is the  
guide and Guru of the universe.

(38)

*Yah sat bar path kar joi,  
Chutahi bandi mahasukh hoi.*

He who recites this *chaalisa* a hundred times (and performs worship as laid down in the scriptures) is sure to be freed from worldly bondage and enjoy great happiness.

#### NOTE

That man whose hair stands on ends at the mere mention of the “name” of God, and from whose eyes flow tears of love--he has indeed reached his last birth.

(39)

*Jo yah parhai Hanuman calisa,  
Hoy siddhi sakhi gaurisa.*

He who reads the Hanuman chaalisa (and follows its precepts) will become perfect, as Siva (Lord of Gauri) is the witness.

NOTE

If you wish to see God, have firm faith in repeating the “name” of Hari and try to discriminate the real from the unreal.

(40)

*Tulasidas sada hari cera,*

*Kijai nath hrday maha dera.*

Tulsadas always the servant of the Lord prays that the Lord takes residence in his heart.

NOTE

The peace of the Bhakta's calm resignation is a peace that passeth understanding, and is of incomparable value.

*DOHA*

*Pavan taney sankat haran,*

*Mangal murati rup,*

*Ram lakhan Sita sahit,*

*Hriday basahu sur bhup.*

May Hanuman (embodiment of wind) who removes difficulties, who has an auspicious form and is king of the Gods dwell in my heart along with Sri Rama , Lakshmana and Sita.

(The Ramakrishna Centre Of South Africa)

**APPENDIX 3*****BAJARANGABALI KI ARATI***

*Arati kijay Hanuman lala ki,  
 Dustadalan Raghunath kala ki.  
 Jake balase girivar kapai,  
 Rog dosajehi nikat na jhakar.  
 Anjani putra maha baladai,  
 Santan ke prabhu sada sahai.  
 De bira raghunath pathaye,  
 Lanka jari siya sudhi laye.  
 Lanka so kot samudra si kai,  
 Jat pavanasut bar na lai.  
 Lanka jari asur sab mare,  
 Ramacandra ke kaj savare.  
 Paithi patal tori yam kare,  
 Ahiravan ki bhuj ukhare.  
 Bae bhuj sab asur sahare,  
 Dahine bhuj sab sant ubare.  
 Sur nar muni arati utarai,  
 Jai jai jai Hanuman ucarai,  
 Kancan thar kapur ki bati,  
 Arati karat Anjani mai.  
 Jo Hanumanjiki arati gavai,*

*Basi vaikunth amar pad pavai.*

### **Translation**

Honour the adorable Hanuman with waving light, for he destroys the enemies like Sri Rama Raghunatha Himself.

The earth trembles at his power, sorrow and affliction venture not near him.

The son of Anjani bestows infinite power; and is ever ready to help the Saints and Sages.

With his left arm he vanquished all the demons, the right hand delivered the holy men.

Lakshmana lay moribund on the ground, Hanuman rescued him from the God of Death himself, for it was Hanuman who found the sanjivini--elixir of life--after digging up the mountains.

In my distress O Venerable King of Monkeys, I supplicate you. Kindly grant me your grace.

The fortress of Lanka, across the deep sea, was reached by you, O Hanuman without delay.

You killed the demons and reduced Lanka to ashes, thus did you advance Sri Rama's cause.

Bells and other instruments of music fill the air, Ayodhya is resplendent with joyous lights.

Whosoever recites the glories of Hanuman, will attain the Supreme goal in Vaikuntha.

O Lord of the Raghus, you razed Lanka to the ground and Ramananda sings thy praise. The Gods, the mortals and the



Sages all wave lights and sing thy glories; Victory be to Hanuman,  
the Adorable servant of Rama.

(From: Ramchandra Shukla: Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas (1968) Page  
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