



*"Bhuth Pishaach Nikat Nahi Aave
Mahaaveer Jab Naam Sunaave"*

The above verses are taken from Tulsidas' famous Hanuman Chalisa. This means, *"no evil or dark force ever dares to come near those who chant the name of the Mahaveer (the valiant one), Hanuman."*



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HANUMAN

Hanuman is one of the most popular, loved and propitiated deities of Hindu mythology. Hanuman is the very epitome of all the qualities necessary for a spiritual life - physical and mental strength, power, courage, humility, shraddha (dedication to purpose), bhakti (devotion) and abject surrender to his Lord, Rama. Enjoying the pride of place as one of the most important characters in the great Hindu epic, the Ramayana, Hanuman is revered by one and all for the exemplary qualities he exhibited throughout his life. His most impressive feat was to lead the Vanarasena (the monkey army) from the front and fight the terrible Asura (demon) king, Ravana.

In this article, we bring to you the story of Hanuman, starting right from his birth to his youth and his role in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other related interesting stories and anecdotes.

Hanuman's birth

There are many versions of Hanuman's birth. Here are a few of them:

- Hanuman, or Anjaneya (coming from Anjana), as he is also known, was born to Anjana. His birthplace is the now present Aanjan village in a place known as Gumla in the Jharkhand district. Anjana, originally an apsara or celestial being, was named 'Punjikasthala'. She had been cursed to descend on earth as a female vanara (monkey). She was told that she would be liberated from the curse only after she gave birth to an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself.

Anjana and Kesari performed prayers to Shiva and beseeched Him to be born as her child. Shiva, pleased with their devotion, blessed them with the boon they sought. The Yuddha Kanda in the Valmiki Ramayana describes Kesari as the son of Brihaspati and

relates how he too helped Rama in the war He waged against Ravana.

- Yet another record of Hanuman's birth claims that he was born on the Anjaneya Hill at Hampi, Karnataka. This spot near the Rishyamukha mountain is located on the banks of the Pampa river and is said to be the spot where Lord Rama and Sugreeva first met. There is still a temple here to mark that very spot.
- The third version says that at the time when Anjana was propitiating Shiva, Dasharath, the King of Ayodhya was performing a Yagna (sacrificial ritual) to beget children. He received a sacred pudding, which was to be shared among his three wives, Sumitra, Kousalya and Kaikeyi. It was divinely ordained, however, that a kite snatch away a small portion from that pudding and drop it into Anjana's outstretched hands. She considered it a prasada (divine offering) from Shiva and consumed it, thereby giving birth to Hanuman. At the same time, Dasharatha begot four children, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna.
- Hanuman is considered to be an aspect of Lord Shiva. He is also said to be the son and an aspect of Vayu (the God of Wind). There is an interesting story in this connection. It is said that when Ravana tried to enter the Himalayas, the abode of Shiva, the Lord's faithful attendant, Nandi, stopped him in his tracks. Infuriated, Ravana called Nandi a monkey. Nandi in return gave Ravana a curse that monkeys would destroy him and his kingdom. In order to uphold Nandi's dignity, Shiva took the form of the vanara, Hanuman.

Hanuman's childhood and education

References to Hanuman's birth and childhood have been found in classical literature as early as the 5th Century BC, in works such as Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa, Panini's Astadhyayi, Pratima Nataka and Abhiseka Nataka.

In his childhood, Hanuman is said to have mistaken the sun to be a huge ripe mango, which he once took flight to catch hold of, in order to eat it. Indra, the King of the Devas (Gods), saw this and hurled his weapon the thunderbolt, at Hanuman. The child sustained an injury on his jaw and fell unconscious to the ground, a sight which upset Vayu immensely. He went into seclusion, taking the atmosphere with him. Seeing all living creatures asphyxiating, Indra withdrew the effect of his thunderbolt on baby Hanuman. All the devas helped bring the child to his senses and blessed him with several boons. The injury, however, left a permanent mark on his chin and hence the name, Hanuman (derived from the term HanuhH in Sanskrit).

Realizing the true power of Surya (the Sun God) as an all-knowing teacher, Hanuman orbited Surya and requested Him to become his teacher. Surya refused to accede to this request, however, as He felt it would be impossible to teach someone while He Himself would be continuously on the move in His chariot. Undeterred from his aim, Hanuman enlarged his body several times the normal size, placed one leg on the eastern ranges and the other on the western ranges, turned his face toward the sun and beseeched Surya yet again. Pleased by his dedication and persistence, Surya accepted to teach



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HANUMAN DEVOURING THE SUN

Hanuman. This way, Hanuman followed Surya wherever He went and finally gathered a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from the latter. When Hanuman requested Surya to quote his 'guru dakshina' (teacher's fee), the latter requested him to help Sugreeva, His spiritual son. Hanuman's act of making the Surya Devata as his teacher, it is said, signifies the attitude of Surya as a Karma Saakshi or eternal and silent witness of all deeds.

Hanuman was a mischievous child and often disturbed the rishis (sages) by snatching away their personal belonging and articles they used for performing religious rituals. Realizing that though Hanuman was invincible, he was only a little child, the rishis placed a mild curse on him, that he would not remember his own strength and prowess unless others reminded him of it. It is hypothesised that, had he not been the victim of this curse, the whole course of the Ramayana would have taken an entirely different course altogether. Despite this curse, Hanuman had shown amazing abilities during the war. The Kishkindha Kanda talks about how Hanuman realizes his own power when Jambavantha reminds him of it. This renews his energy and vigor and he forges ahead to find Rama's consort, Sita Devi. Jambavantha says to Hanuman,

*"Pavan Tanaya Bala Pavan Samaana Buddhi Vivek Vigyaan Nidhaana
Kavan So Kaaj Kathin Jag Maahi Jo Nahi Hoya Taat Tumha Paahi"*

This roughly means, *"You are powerful like the wind, you are intelligent, hardworking and creative. There is nothing that is too difficult for you to achieve in this world. When anyone is stuck with a problem, you are the only one who can truly help."*

Hanuman meets Rama



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RAVANA ABDUCTS SITA

The Sundara Kanda extensively describes Hanuman's adventures. Hanuman met Rama during the latter's 14-year Vanavasa (exile in the forest). Ravana abducts Sita Devi and both Rama and His brother, Lakshmana, desperately search for Her. They are in the vicinity of the Rishyamukha, where Sugriva and his followers are hiding from his elder brother, the cruel Vali (the King of the Vanaras). Vali had banished Sugriva from his kingdom and also holds the latter's wife captive.

Spotting Rama and Lakshmana roaming around in the area, Sugriva and Hanuman set forth to examine their identities. Hanuman approaches them in the guise of a Brahmin. When Hanuman speaks, Rama is impressed by his accent, fluency of language and his general countenance. Rama says to Lakshmana that so powerful and captivating is the brahmin's persona, that even an enemy who has already drawn his sword for attack would be moved. He further praises the brahmin,

adding that He was sure that the king of such an accomplished emissary would achieve complete success and peace in his kingdom.

Hanuman is touched by the Lord's words, and revealing his own identity to the brothers, prostrates in front of Rama. The latter smiles and holds him in a warm embrace. This incident proves to be the turning point of Hanuman's life. He becomes an inexorable part of Rama's

life. This moment also helps forge a strong friendship between Sugriva and Rama. Rama helps Sugriva overcome Vali and makes him the king of Kishkinda. In turn, Sugriva and the vanaras, especially Hanuman, help Rama attack Lanka and defeat Ravana in order to reunite Rama with Sita.

The search for Sita

The entire group of Vanaras set forth to search for Sita. Upon reaching the southern seashore, they lament over their inability to cross over the Mahasagara (the huge ocean) that stretches ahead limitlessly. Hanuman too feels very disheartened fearing the failure of his mission. This is when Jambavantha steps in to remind him of his own powers and prowess. Filled with a huge wave of positive energy, Hanuman enlarges his body and jumps across the mighty ocean. When he encounters a mountain right in the middle of the ocean, it requests him to rest on it for a moment, as it owed his father a long-standing debt. After sitting still for a few moments, Hanuman decides to proceed further on his mission. He meets a sea-monster on the way, whom he outwits effortlessly. He also kills the shadow-eater, Simhika, before he finally enters Lanka.

Hanuman locates Sita

Reaching Lanka, Hanuman is so enamored of its beauty, that he, for a moment, regrets that all this beauty would be lost when Rama waged war against Ravana. After a long search, Hanuman finds a distressed Sita sitting under the shade of a tree at Ashok Van. He prostrates in front of Her and reveals his identity. In order that She believes his words, he gives Her one of Rama's fingerrings (anguleeya pradanam) and tells Her that he is willing to carry her away from Lanka and back to Rama. But Sita refuses the offer, saying that Rama's honor was at stake and that He should come to get Her Himself. She gives him Her Chudamani (hair ornament) and asks him to deliver the same to Her Lord.

After meeting Sita, Hanuman begins a massive destruction drive, damaging palaces and properties of Lanka. He also destroys the asuras Jambumalli and Akshaa. This angers Ravana's son, Indrajit, who uses the Brahmastra to subdue him. Though invincible, Hanuman lets himself become bound by the weapon, in order to show his respect to Brahma. This, he decides, would also let him meet the much-feared ruler of Lanka. On meeting Ravana face-to-face, Hanuman gives Ravana the message that Rama would be willing to forgive him if he returned Sita honorably. Enraged, Ravana plans to execute Hanuman. But Vibheeshana, Ravana's brother, intervenes and tells him it would never be right to kill an emissary.

Ravana, then, orders that Hanuman's tail be set on fire. As the asura king's forces attempt to tie a cloth around his tail, Hanuman starts to lengthen it. He then escapes his captors and with his tail, burns down many parts of Lanka. After extinguishing his flaming tail in the sea, he proceeds back to Rama.

Lifting the Dronagiri

Rama and Lakshmana engage in fierce battle with Indrajit and his troops in Lanka. There is a point in the battle where Indrajit overpowers Lakshmana and the latter is severely wounded and falls to the ground. Hanuman is then sent to fetch the life-restoring herb, Sanjivani, that grew only on the Dronagiri mountain in the Himalayas. Ravana knows that Rama would be shattered if He lost Lakshmana and would probably give up all thoughts of battle. He therefore asks his uncle, the asura Kalanaimi, to tempt Hanuman with luxuries, in order to divert his mind from his present mission. But Hanuman is warned by a crocodile (acutally a celestial being fallen to a curse) of Kalanaimi's intentions. He ends up killing the asura and resumes his journey toward Dronagiri.



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**HANUMAN LIFTING THE
DRONAGIRI MOUNTAIN**

Reaching Dronagiri at dusk, he is unable to find the Sanjivani. Realizing it would be nightfall soon, he decides not to waste anymore time searching and instead, lifts up the entire mountain and flies back with it to Lanka. This help the others find the Sanjivani herb and apply the paste on Lakshmana, thus reviving him completely. An emotional Rama embraces Hanuman and states that Hanuman is as dear to Him as His own brother, Bharata.

The incident at Patala (the Netherworld)

There is this one very interesting incident during the war, that brought about Hanuman's Panchamukha (five-faced) form. Rama and Lakshmana are caught by the asuras, Mahiravana and his brother Ahiravana. Mahiravana is a powerful practitioner of black magic and the dark arts. He holds them at his palace in Patala or Patalpuri and decides to offer them as a bali (sacrifice) to his deity. Hanuman goes in search of Rama and Lakshmana and reaches the gates of Patala, which are guarded by a half-reptile, half-monkey creature called Makardhwaja or Magar Dhawaja.

The story of Makardhwaja

Though it is well-known that Hanuman remained a celibate for life, it is said that Makardhwaja was his son. When Hanuman was dipping his burning tail in the ocean after setting most of Lanka on fire, a drop of his own sweat had fallen into the ocean, unknown to him. A crocodile swallows up this great droplet of sweat and becomes pregnant. Once Mahiravana comes to know of this incident, he raises the child as his own and entrusts him to guard the gates of Patala. Though Hanuman has no knowledge that Makardhwaja is his son, the latter knows that Hanuman is his father, though he never met him.

When Hanuman reveals his identity to Makardhwaja, the youngster falls at his feet to seek his father's blessings, but also decides to fight him, as it is his duty to do so. Needless to say, Hanuman tames him and ties him up before entering Patalpuri.



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PANCHAMUKHI HANUMAN

Once inside, Hanuman realizes that he would be able to kill Mahiravana only if he simultaneously extinguished five lamps burning in different directions. This is when Hanuman assumes his Panchamukha form. Of his five faces, Sri Varaha faces North, Sri Narasimha faces south, Sri Garuda faces west, Sri Hayagriva faces the sky and his own face faces the east. Blowing out all the lamps at the same time with his five faces, he immediately kills Mahiravana, thereby rescuing Rama and Lakshmana. With this done, Rama asks Hanuman to crown Makardhwaja king of Patalpuri.

There is a significance for each of the five faces of the Panchamukha Hanuman. This is as follows:

- Sri Hanuman bestows purity and success
- Sri Narasimha grants fearlessness and victory
- Sri Garuda removes poisons from the body, as also the ill-effects of black magic
- Sri Varaha showers wealth and prosperity
- Sri Hayagriva is the giver of knowledge and progeny.

But this is not all. Hanuman still continues to play a very vital role in the war between Rama and Ravana.

Stopping Bharat from self-immolation

Bharata had vowed to self-immolate if Rama did not return back to Ayodhya after exile. Rama had made a promise to Bharata that he would return to the kingdom exactly on the day His 14-year Vanavasa ended. But realizing that He would be just a little late to reach Ayodhya, He requests Hanuman to stop Bharat from ending his own life. Always willing to serve his Lord, Hanuman immediately comes to the rescue. He flies to Ayodhya and gives Bharata the message, thereby stopping him from self-immolating.

The coronation of Rama

Rama's return with Sita and Lakshmana is joyously celebrated by the people of Ayodhya. Rama is then crowned the Emperor of Ayodhya. He then decides to reward all his well-wishers by asking them to take turns at the throne. When it is Hanuman's turn to ascend the throne, however, he refuses to do so, as he never expected or desired a reward. Rama embraces Hanuman and declares that He would never be able to repay him for all that he did for Rama and His family.



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THE CORONATION OF LORD RAMA



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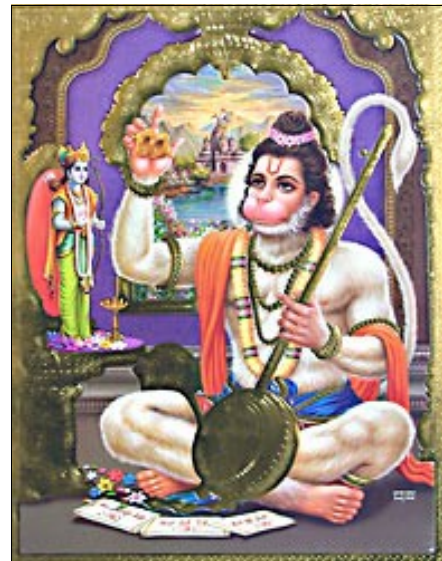
**HANUMAN TEARS OPEN HIS
CHEST TO REVEAL AN
IMAGE OF RAMA AND SITA**

Sita, however, insists that Hanuman ask a favor of Her. Upon his request, Sita gives him a necklace made of precious stones, that adorned Her neck. Upon receiving it, Hanuman immediately pulls each stone apart and peers into each one, to see if Rama and Sita's form is to be seen in them. He says that the necklace would otherwise be of no value to him. When people present in the court mock him on his behavior and allege that he is only putting on a show of bhakti (devotion), he immediately tears open his chest to reveal the forms of Rama and Sita actually, quite literally, in his heart!

The Hanumad Ramayana

After having completed his mission, Hanuman goes to the Himalayas in order to keep up the worship of his Lord, Rama, in absolute solitude. Once there, he decides to script the entire story of the Ramayana in his own words, on one of the Himalayan mountains. He uses his nails for this purpose and painstakingly records every little detail of Rama's life and deeds. Maharishi Valmiki (author of the Valmiki Ramayana) then happens to visit Hanuman to show him his own version of the Ramayana. He is amazed by Hanuman's devotion and dedication toward the Lord.

Valmiki, who, till then, had been happy with his version of the Ramayan, also becomes crestfallen when he realizes that the Ramayana he had authored taking so much pains was simply no match to the utter splendor of Hanuman's version. He also fears that his own Ramayana would then go totally unnoticed. When Hanuman learns of Valmiki's concern, he decides to take immediate action to resolve the issue.



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**HANUMAN SINGING HYMNS
IN PRAISE OF LORD RAMA**

He carries the mountain (on which he inscribed the Ramayana) on one shoulder and Valmiki on the other and flies toward the sea. He then drops the mountain into the sea as a humble offering to his Lord, Rama. It is said that this version, called the Hanumad Ramayana, just went into sea, never to be available to anyone ever again.

Maharishi Valmiki, it is said, was so touched by Hanuman's humility and great act of magnanimity, that he remarked that he would have to take yet another birth, just to sing the praises of Hanuman, who had so understated in his version of the Ramayana.

There is one story in this connection, which says that one tablet of the Hanumad Ramayana had floated from the sea and reached the hands of Mahakavi (great poet) Kalidasa, who instantly recognised this as part of the great work of Hanuman himself. Kalidasa is said to have displayed it publicly and asked several scholars to decipher the same. Kalidasa is also said to have commented that he considered himself very fortunate to have been the recipient of at least one pada of this extinct script.

Hanuman's life after the Ramayana

Rama reigned as Emperor of Ayodhya for many years post the Ramayana war. Hanuman continued to offer his humble services to Rama throughout this time. Then the time arrived for Rama to shed his divine avatar and depart to his heavenly abode. Many of Rama's entourage, including Sugriva and many other vanaras, decided to move away along with Rama to the other world. Hanuman, though, decided to stay behind on earth and requested to Rama that he wanted to remain on earth and sing Rama's praises and hear His name being chanted by devotees in this world itself.

While Rama was very touched by Hanuman's devotion, it was Sita who granted the boon to Hanuman that his idol would be installed in various locations, immortalizing him, so that he could continue to listen to Rama's name being chanted. Today, Hanuman is venerated as one

of the Chiranjivins of Hinduism.

During the era of the Mahabharata

As Hanuman is the son of Vayu, the Wind God, he is also considered to be the half-brother of Bhima, one of the Pancha Pandavas. Bhima is said to have had a great ego about his own strength and prowess. During the Pandavas' exile, Hanuman appears in disguise before Bhima, as a weak, old monkey, just to teach him a lesson about the value of humility. Hanuman lies on Bhima's path, with his tail blocking the way. When Bhima walks along that path, he fails to see through Hanuman's disguise and asks him to move his tail out of the way.

Hanuman claims he is too tired to move it and asks Bhima to do it instead. Bhima tries with all his might to move the tail, but is unable to do so. Realizing that this entity must be someone really mighty and powerful, Bhima is immediately humbled and requests him to reveal his identity. This is when Hanuman gets up and shows himself to Bhima. The latter is thrilled to meet his brother and hugs him warmly. It is also said that Hanuman shows him his enlarged form, as Bhima desired to see how he looked when he crossed to sea to reach Lanka.

There is yet another story that talks about Arjuna's encounter with Hanuman. Hanuman appears before Arjuna as a small monkey, when the latter goes to visit Rameshwaram, the very place where Rama had built the great bridge to Lanka, with the help of the vanara sena (army of monkeys). Arjuna wonders aloud as to why Sri Rama had to take the help of mere vanaras, instead of having constructed a bridge of arrows, made by Himself.

This is when Hanuman (appearing in the form of the little monkey) challenges Arjuna to make such a bridge, that would be capable of bearing his weight alone. Unaware of Hanuman's identity, Arjuna proudly proceeds to build the bridge and presents it before the monkey. Of course, Hanuman ends up destroying the bridge effortlessly, leaving Arjuna humiliated and depressed. He decides that he is totally worthless and contemplates on ending his own life. Vishnu then appears before them and chides Arjuna for being so vain and egoist and Hanuman too, for making a great warrior like Arjuna feel so worthless.



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**KRISHNA PREACHING THE GITA TO
ARJUNA WITH HANUMAN
SITTING ATOP THE CHARIOT**

While Arjuna is honored to have come into contact with a great soul such as Hanuman, the latter decides to show his penitence by helping Arjuna stabilize and strengthen his chariot during the imminent great battle of Kurukshetra. During the war, Hanuman's image features on the flag of Arjuna's chariot. It is said that Hanuman is one of the three people to have heard the Bhagavad Gita emanating from the mouth of Lord Sri Krishna Himself, the other two being Sanjaya (Dhritarashtra's counsel) and Arjuna.

Hanuman's relevance in the present day

Hanuman still enjoys an exalted place in India's religious, traditional and cultural milieu. Hanuman is still depicted in Indian classical and folk arts, like in the popular Yakshagana, a folk art of Karnataka. You can find sculptures of Hanuman at various temples, art museums and art and craft shops as well. Recently, there has even been an animation film on Hanuman, in order to reach the story of Hanuman to the next generation.

Besides, there are many contemporary prophets who claim to have had a glimpse of Hanuman. These include Tulsidas, Raghavendra Swami, Sri Ramdas Swami, Madhavacharya, Swami Ramdas and others.

As a popular verse in Sanskrit goes,

*"Yatra Yatra Raghunatha Keertanam Tatra Tatra Krita Mastaka Anjalim
Bashpaavari Paripoorna Lochanam Maarutim Namascha Rakshasa Antakam"*

This means, *"That wherever the deeds of Sri Rama are sung,
At all such places does Hanuman cry tears of devotion and joy,
At all such places does his presence remove the fear of demons."*

Similar references are found in verses of other texts such as the Rishi Ved Vyasa' Mahabharata, Tulsidas' Vinaya Patrika, Anand Ramayana and others.

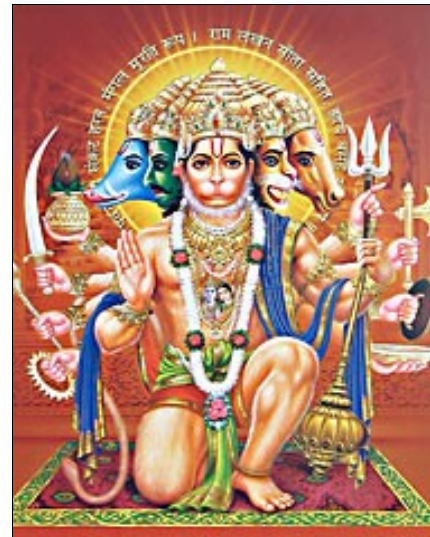
Worship of Hanuman

- There are many places in India where Hanuman is venerated as a God by himself. Wherever the holy ritual of Ramayanpath (discourse on the Ramayana) takes place, there is always a separate asan (seating space) reserved for Hanuman.
- There are temples of Hanuman even at Sri Lanka (one is near Nuwara Eliya). The largest idols of Hanuman installed out of India are the ones at Trinidad and Tobago. There are, of course, unaccountable Hanuman temples in India.
- An icon for strength, Hanuman is traditionally worshipped by wrestlers in India and Southeast Asia. Idols of Hanuman are also installed in temples of Vishnu and His avatars.
- Installing Hanuman idols, it is believed, wards off all evil and dark forces, such as Rakshasas and the like.
- Hanuman idols can also be found very often on mountain roads, as they are believed to be capable of warding off accidents.
- There are many huge idols of Hanuman installed in India itself. One of them is the 32-foot Sri Anjayneyar Idol at Nanganallur, Chennai (the erstwhile Madras). What makes this idol so special is that it is said to be sculpted from one single, huge piece of rock!
- The other huge Hanuman idol is 33 feet high and is situated at Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. This idol is fitted onto a pedestal that is 12 feet high, so that makes the total height of the idol 45 feet. This impressive idol also now has a Silver Kavacham or covering.

The Panchamukha Hanuman

Sri Panchamukha Hanuman Swami was the Ishta Devata of Raghavendra Swami. This Hanuman is also known as the Panchamukhi. There is yet another Panchamukha Anjaneya Swami temple at Kumbhakonam in Tamil Nadu, India. A 40-foot Panchamukha Hanuman presides over Thiruvallur in Tamil Nadu. This place, known as Rudravanam in the earlier days, was blessed by several rishis and seers. The Panchamukha Hanuman Ashram here was set up by the saint, Venkatesa Battar.

A 36-foot Panchamukha Hanuman idol is installed at Panchavatee in Pondicherry. This is known as the Viswaroopa Jayamangala Panchamukha Sri Anjaaneyaswamy.



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PANCHMUKHA HANUMAN

Hanuman and Shani Devata



LORD SHANI
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

In Hindu mythology, there are only two entities that are not affected by Shani Devata (Lord ruling Saturn). These are Hanuman and Ganesha, the elephant-headed Lord. Hanuman is said to reign over the planets - it is believed that he controls them with the power of his tail. Hence, is is considered that those who are devoted to him are freed from the planets' effects.

According to Hindu mythology, there is a clear relation between Shani and Hanuman. We bring you three versions of the story explaining why devotees of Hanuman are never affected by Shani's exploits.

- There is an instance in the Ramayana, where Shani is caught and held by Ravana. Hanuman rescues Shani from that bondage. In gratitude, the latter promises him that those who propitiate Hanuman would never again experience the painful ill-effects of Saturn. Saturn, according to Hindu astrology, is known to give rise to much pain and hardships, when 'negatively' afflicted with this planet in his horoscope. Jyotisha Shastra (astrology) also says that this is ultimately for the spiritual good of the person who undergoes the trials and tribulations.
- Yet another version of this story says that Shani Bhagavan once climbed onto Maaruti's (Hanuman) shoulder, thereby indicating that he was coming under Shani's influence too. Hanuman at once took an enlarged form, trapping Shani between his

own shoulder and the ceiling of the room they were in. As Shani writhed in pain and discomfort, he requested Hanuman to release him, giving him his word that he would moderate his own malefic influence on people who prayed to Hanuman for help and strength.

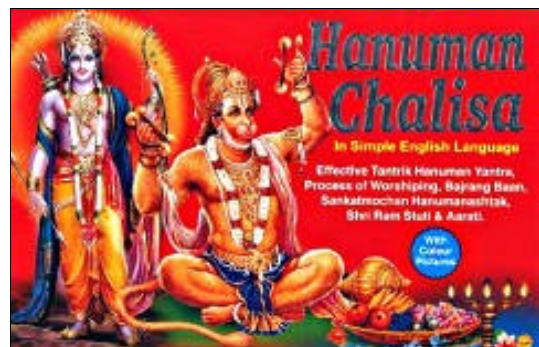
- The third version of the story relates how Shani Bhagavan tries to tease Hanuman when he is immersed in prayers, chanting Rama's name. He starts pulling Hanuman's tail and keeps pinching him. Hanuman warns him to go away, telling him that he only chooses to remain quiet, considering the fact that Shani is the son of his Guru, Surya Devata. But Shani does not heed the warning and continues to pester him. Hanuman takes hold of Shani and gives him a good thrashing, letting him go only after Shani promises never ever to hurt or harm Hanuman's devotee who is meditating on Lord Rama.

Whatever the real version of the story, there is an underlying spiritual significance about this relationship of Hanuman and Shani. Hanuman is known to embody selflessness. Shani, on the other hand, symbolizes ego and pride. According to Hindu astrology, Lord Shani brings on a period of Saade Saati in everyone's life, which causes a troubled phase of seven and half years. Shani is said to afflict the sign in the planet where the moon is placed in the person's natal chart. In order to counter karma brought forth by our own selfish acts, we must learn to be humble, just like Hanuman.

Hymns on Hanuman

The Hanuman Chalisa is the most widely read prayer on Hanuman. This comprises a set of 40 verses and is written by Tulsidas. It is said that reciting the Chalisa on a daily or weekly basis (especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays) gives the devotee inner strength and liberates him from troubles.

The Hanuman Aarti is yet another famous ritual and is performed at the very end of a Puja (prayer) or Bhajan (devotional song) session.



HANUMAN CHALISA
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

This article was written by **Saipriya Viswanathan**. Saipriya is a teacher/performer of Bharata Natyam, Carnatic vocal music and Carnatic Veena. She is a recipient of several awards for both dance and music, including the Sur Mani and Singar Mani titles. She is a recipient Govt. of India Merit Scholarship for dance and is a diploma holder in Carnatic vocal music.

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