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### “RAMA BHAKTHI OF LORD HANUMAN” - A Glimpse through the krithis of Sri Thyagaraja.

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Aim: This article is a humble attempt to touch upon those compositions of Sri Thyagaraja Swamigal which throws light on the various facets of Hanuman’s devotion for Lord Sri Rama. The many references to Lord Hanuman’s Rama bhakthi as perceived by Sri Thyagaraja are elucidated beautifully by him through a few of his krithis.

Abstract: The ‘bhakthi’ of Hanuman for Lord Sri Ramachandra is unparalleled. To Hanuman, Sri Rama was an ocean of mercy, kindness incarnate. His devotion for the Lord embraces all the ‘Nine forms of Bhakthi’ also known as ‘Nava Vidha Bhakthi’. Hanuman revelled in the joy of being in the service of Lord Rama. Sri Thyagaraja reveals these qualities of Hanuman to us very skilfully through a few selected krithis.

Key words: Rama Bhakthi, Hanuman, Sri Thyagaraja,, Krithis

#### **Introduction:**

Lord Hanuman is a Hindu God. He is a divine Vanara. He is one of the most celebrated and revered Gods in Hindu mythology. He is worshipped by those who wish to gain courage and strength in their lives. He is the commander of his monkey army. Hanuman, an embodiment of bhakti and shakti, is known by many different names. He is Anjaneya as the son of Anjana, Anjaniputra in



Kannada , Anjaneyar in Tamil, Anjaneyudu in Telugu, Kesari Nandana, Bajrangbali - one with hands and legs as powerful as that of lightning. He is “Deenabandhave” as one who is a saviour of the helpless, he is Chiranjivi- one who is immortal, Pavanaputra or Maruti - the son of Wind God, Manojava one who is faster than the mind, Mahadhyuta – the most radiant one, Ramabhaktha-devotee of Lord Rama, Rama Dhutha – messenger of Rama, Sankata Mochana-the remover of sorrows and obstacles, Hanumanta – one with puffy cheeks. In some places, he appears in the form of a red faced monkey who stands erect like a human.

### **A true Rama Bhakth:**

Hanuman is an exemplary devotee of Sri Rama. His Bhakthi for Lord Rama encompasses all forms namely Sravanam, Kirtanam, Smaranam, pAdasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, dAsyam, sakhyam and Atmanivedanam. But what stands out is Lord Hanuman’s “Dasya Bhakthi” for Lord Rama. Dasya Bhakthi of Hanuman is accepting Lord Rama as his master and installing his name in his heart. Wherever the name of Lord Rama is chanted, Lord Hanuman is present .For Hanuman, Lord Rama was his life, his breadth, his All! Once when Lord Rama asked Hanuman, “How do you think of me”? Hanuman replied saying “O Lord, while I identify myself with the body, I am Thy servant. When I consider myself an individual soul, I am thy part, but when I look upon myself as thy spirit, I am one with thee. This is my firm conviction”. Hanuman was Rama’s soldier and understood that a soldier’s duty is to protect his King. He was a good warrior too. Hanuman strongly believed that very word ‘ Rama’ meant ‘Parabrahmam ‘. Rama is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He is the essence of Siva and Vishnu. He is the only destroyer of the mental distress and sorrow of devotees.

RamantheYoginonante- satyAnananda –cit-Atmani

Iti rAmapadenAsau param brahmAbhidhIyate

The mystics derive unlimited transcendental pleasures from the Absolute Truth , and therefore the Supreme Absolute Truth,the Personality of Godhead, is also known as Rama”

In the Sundara Kandamepisode of the great epic Ramayana, Hanuman is the hero or the main



character. Hanuman even appears in another great epic Mahabharatha which tells the story of Lord Krishna another incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

### **Thyagaraja – the great musician and composer.**

Thygaraja is one of the greatest composers of South Indian Classical Music. A prolific composer in Telugu, his songs all revolve around his bhakthi for Sri Rama. Thyagaraja makes references of Lord Hanuman insome of his krithis. His references throw light on the many facets of Hanuman’s devotion for the Lord.

### **References to Hanuman’s bhakthi in many segments in his krithis.**

Sometimes Thyagaraja praises Hanuman’s Dasya bhakthi for the Lord, at other moments he sounds envious of Hanuman’s closeness with Sri Rama and yearns for the same. There are instances where he beseeches the Lord not to ignore him in the presence of another staunch Rama devotee, Hanuman. Often Thyagaraja expresses in his songs, his desire to be a part of the royal guard in the Assembly of Sri Rama along with Hanuman and Lakshmana and the other servants to serve his Lord. This is revealed in the kriti in HamsanAdham “*BanturitiKoluviyyavaiyya Rama*”. While inthe Bhairavi krithi“*UpacaramucEsEvaru*”Thyagaraja conveys that Hanuman is standing guard at the door itself vigilantly. Thyagaraja has to remind Lord Rama - ‘O Lord, please don’t forget me, please don’t reject my application for a post to serve youjust because of your Bhaktha Hanuman - ‘vAkiTanEpadilamugavAdAtmajuDunnADani’. In another song in Kunthalavarali – “*Centane SadA yuncukovaiyya- mantukekkusrimantudau Hanumantu riitiga Sri kanta*” , he begs Rama “ Just keep me by your side as you do Hanuman, and Bharatha. I do not wish for more. You need not talk to me much. Please do not ignore me. I will know your “ingitha” and understand whatever you think of and cheerfully carry it out “

Hanuman is addressed as ‘ *Pavanasunu*’ – son of Wind God - in the Pancharathnakrithi in Raga Sri. Where he is saluted to, by Thyagaraja when he says ‘ *antharikiVandanamu*’ as a ‘MahAnubhavulu ‘ a great BhAgavathothaman -“ since Anjaneya knows the secrets of BrahmAnanda . In the Nata Pancharathna krithi ‘ *JagadAnandakAraka*’, Surasa , the demon, who



obstructs Hanuman's passage to Lanka when he goes in search of Sita Mata, is vanquished by him. Thyagaraja hails Hanuman as the vanquisher of Surasa – *Surasa ripu*. Thyagaraja says in the Anupallavi of "Sangitha Nyanamu" in Dhanyasi Raga, "*Bhrungi NatEsha SamIrajaghatajA*" – samIraja – son of wind God. Lord Nataraja and Anjaneya worship you through music full of devotion. Is there a more supreme mode of worship? "*Sugunudanila Thanayudu Gava Yagavakshulukoluvagagani*" in the charanam of Sundara Dasaratha nandana in Kapi, Thyagaraja tells Rama "Beholding the virtuous Anjaneya, the good son of wind God, gavaaya and gavaKsha serve you, I pay obeisance to you! . "*Vara jatAyu Moksha phaladapavamaanasuthuduneedhumahimatelpa*" in the Varali pancharatna, Thyagaraja tells Rama "Oh God who blessed the bird Jatayu with salvation, when the son of the wind God – "*pavamaanasuthuduneedumahimatelpa*" - told Sita about your greatness, was she not happy and charmed.? Thyagaraja says that Hanuman is very fortunate as he meditates your "Rama Nama" and derives pleasure in surrendering at your Lotus feet most devotedly – "*Kaminchi Prema meeraKaramulaneedhupaadakamalamulabattukonu vadusakshi Rama namaRasikudu*" for which Lord Siva, Narada, Parasara Sukha are witnesses .

In "*Lekana Ninnu*" in Asaveri raga, Thyagaraja says that Anjaneya is single-mindedly surrounding you because there is comfort (sukhamu) in your holy feet to him.- pAdasevanam - "*charanayugamunandusukamAnjeyuniki*" . In "*Yukthamugadu*" in Sri Raga, Thyagaraja questions whether Anjaneya held the Lord's feet firmly and made Him swear that he will not go to protect Thyagaraja ?, please let me know, Is that why you did not come to protect me, your devotee – "*padduna pavaanasutuDu vaddani nIpadamupaTTukonenOtelpamu*" - *Yukthamu*)

In the Prahlada Bhakthi Vijayam krithi '*O rama O rama*' in Nagagandhari raga , through the lines '*satimATalusadAkapijuce(Anjaneya) vinisammatinikaugilincina*' Thyagaraja tells us that Lord Rama embraced Hanuman out of sheer joy as he conveyed Sita Mata's message. This saddens Thyagaraja and Thyagaraja wonders why Rama does not even acknowledge his presence. Rama meting out special kindness and affectionate consideration for Hanuman is hurting Thyagaraja and it is reflected in the lines "*ManasuDelisiKalasiHanumanthudundagaga, chanavumataladukandesarvabhoomudu*' – Understanding the desire of Rama , when Hanuman



stood joining with them that the Lord talked to him kindly - in the charanam of the Divyanama in Karaharapriya raga ‘*Pahi Rama Ramayanuchu*’ .

Lord Hanuman’s devotion becomes the focal point in the krithis-‘*Pahi ramaDootha*’ in Vasantha Varali and ‘*Kalugunapadaniraja*’ in Purna Lalitha. Hanuman is addressed as Rama’s messenger in the Krithi- ‘*Pahi rAmaDhootha Jagath Praana kumara mAm*’ in Vasantha Varali raga-“O messenger of Sri Rama, O son of Vayu, replete with compassionate feelings towards devotees, whose body is like the Meru mountain , besought by the great devotees of Lord Bhagavatha , bestower of boons to devotees, moves with speed equivalent to Wind, who holds in his hands, the Holy feet of Sri.Raghuvara – ‘*KaradruthaRaghuvara su-carana*’ - praised by this Thyagaraja., deigned to protect to me.”

Hanuman does Dasya seva to his Lord Rama which Thyagaraja expresses beautifully in the Purna Lalithaa Krithi – ‘*Kalugunaa paadha Neeraja seva?* . and he envies Hanuman for that. He pictures Hanuman doing seva to the Lord , sitting close to his beloved Lord Rama and touching his feet!! How fortunate, how lucky !!!-‘*vEguvajAmunanIkaramunandisrikAntudamrtasnanamujEsi*’

At predawn hours, The Lord takes bath in nectar holding your hands , having offered the sacred foods to Lord Ranganatha, he partakes food laid by the hands of Sita and then he commands you to read out the holy Scriptures .O Anjaneya, You are the foremost of the devotees .You have the privilege of experiencing the supreme bliss by beholding the Lord Sri Rama, the consort of Lakshmi, the King of Ayodhya and the Lord praised by Thyagaraja.Will it be possible for me too to have the privilege of beholding the Lord Sri Rama and perform such service at his Lotus feet?

The Anupallavi of “*Geetharthamu Sangitha*”krithi in RagaSurutti ‘ conveys that ‘*Seethapathicharanabhjamunidukonna, vAtAtmajunikibhAgathelisurA*’ – It is well known to Lord Hanuman who held the feet of consort of Sita that Lord Rama was the essence of Gita and Sangitha.No auspicious function is complete without the popular mangalam of Thyagaraja in Raga Sourashtram where he says “*pavamAnasutudUbaTTupAdAravindamulaku*’ – Your sacred feet supported reverently by Anjaneya !



**‘DasohamKosalendrasya’**

When Ravana asked Hanuman who he was, Hanuman immediately replied “*DasohamKosalendrasya*”- meaning, “I am Sri Ramachandra’s servant”. There is no better recognition than this for Hanuman who always considered himself as the eternal servant of Sri Rama. He says ”My dear Lord, if You like, You can give me salvation from this material existence, or the privilege of merging into Your existence, but I do not wish any of these things. I do not want anything which diminishes my relationship with You as servant to master even after liberation”.

**CONCLUSION**

In the numerous references to Hanuman in his compositions, Sri Thyagaraja highlights the many aspects of Hanuman’s unqualified Bhakthi for the Lord, to the extent , Thyagaraja doubts his own worthiness to serve the Lord. At the same time, there are also instances where one sees a Rama Bhakth saluting another Rama Bhakth. For both the devotees , Rama Nama was Taraka mantra. For Hanuman, Rama Nama was always on his lips. “Sri Ram Jai ram Jai Jai ram “ was his mantra. Hanuman never waived from the path of righteousness and Bhakthi. The picture of Rama and Sita when he tears open his chest is evidence to the depth of his devotion and selfless surrender at the Lord’s lotus feet.

In the Dhyana shloka of Ramayana, it is said that “wherever Ramayana is being recited, there the great Maruti, who is the destroyer of rakshasas, sits listening humbly with folded hands and with eyes overflowing with tears of joy.” Thus Ramabhakti and consequential peace and joy can be enjoyed by worshipping Lord Hanuman.

*Yatra yatraraghunAthakeerthanamThathraThathrakruthamasthakAnjalim  
BhashpavAriparipoornalochanamMarutheemnamatharAkshasAnthakam*

Like Lord Hanuman, Thyagaraja ‘s devotion to Rama was steadfast and like an empire ,( *Ram Bhakthi Samraajaym*).It encompassed all forms of Bhakthi .It was the greatest gift from the Lord . If Thyagaraja chose Lord Rama as his ‘Istha Devatha’, it is only because he identified in Hanuman, not only a Guru in Rama Bhakthi to guide him but also in music also. His numerous songs are



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inspired by this Rama bhakthi. When one's heart is purified by Bhakthi, one will be able to understand what is true Jnana or The knowledge. True knowledge when attained will lead to Vairagya or renunciation of the worldly pleasures. It is this bhakthi that bestows on us Brahmananda and SvAnubhava by the grace of Lord Rama.

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