



Value-based approach to fulfilling ambitions

The choice we have in using our financial resources is illustrated in the Ramayana through the mentalities of two of its main characters: the divine mentality exemplified by Hanuman, and the demonic mentality exemplified by Ravana. Hanuman, the heroic devotee, strove to re-unite Lord Rama's consort, Sita, with the Lord. By dint of his devotion to the Lord, Hanuman was empowered externally to perform many adventurous feats and enriched internally by the presence of the Lord in his heart. On the other hand, Ravana, the villainous demon, attempted to exploit Sita for his own enjoyment and lost everything. The Vedic texts explain that all wealth is a manifestation of the Lord's consort, Lakshmi or Sita. So, to follow in the footsteps of Hanuman means to use the wealth we have in the service of the Lord. But to use wealth for our own selfish enjoyment means to follow the suicidal path of Ravana. It is unfortunate that today some misled people consider the Hanuman mentality of selfless godly service old-fashioned and the Ravana mentality of self-centered godless enjoyment modern. Irrespective of people's opinions, the satisfaction that enriched Hanuman and the dissatisfaction that impoverished Ravana indicate the destinations of the people who cultivate the Hanuman and Ravana mentalities.

Even if one is not utterly selfless and pure like Hanuman, but has worldly desires, still he can attain good fortune by rendering devotional service to the Lord. This is vividly demonstrated through the example of the prince Dhruva. Desiring a huge kingdom, he worshiped the Lord with devotional discipline centered on chanting His holy names. He not only attained his desire, but he also became so purified and enriched with devotion that he was no longer captivated by worldly wealth. Thus empowered with devotion and detachment, he ruled as a virtuous and prosperous king in the service of the Lord and all His children. The same powerful process of mantra meditation that blessed and purified Dhruva is available to us today. The process of mantra meditation is a scientific process for redirecting our desires from the things of this world to the source of all these things - god. In the present age, the most powerful mantra for meditation is the Hare Krishna naha-mantra.

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