

**Main Chopai:** Aranya kand - Doha 9 and Lanka kand - Doha 112

Taatey muni hari leen na bhayau | Prathamahin bheid bhagati bara layau ||

Taatey uma mochchh nahin paayo | Dasarath bheid bhagati mana laayo ||

**Meaning:**

The sage was not absorbed in to the person of Sri Hari because he had received the boon of personal devotion before his death. Uma, Dashrath did not attain liberation because he had set his heart on devotion while maintaining his seperate identity.

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**DAY 1**

Bapu says, "I want to express my happiness that we have assembled for katha in this teertha. I try to begin the new year (after Diwali) with the first katha in a teertha. And this place is the focal point for all Nimbarkis."

Ram katha is unique in itself, which has been flowing on for ages like Ma Ganga. In fact, its vastness is growing day by day. Everyone knows Ramkatha as the story of Bhagwaan Ram's life, but still people are drawn towards it for its spirituality/divinity.

We'll take up a particular topic from Ramkatha for this katha tomorrow, whatever inspiration comes; otherwise Ramkatha as a whole is always there!!

Truth is such a strong element that even falsehood (lie) has to take help of truth in some form or the other.

Unless one feels contentment inside, his/her mind cannot become steady/sound.

## DAY 2

Bapu began today's katha with paying heartfelt homage to Guntant bhai (sangeet ni duniya) who departed from this earth yesterday.

Bapu said, ' I've decided the topic for this katha as MANAS NIMBARK and in the coming days we would discuss where there is a sync between the Nimbark thought and Tulsidas jee's views in Shri Ramcharitmanas. Parsuram maharaj of Nimbark tradition has been revolutionary in his thought as he spoke of avoiding unnecessary customs/rituals. His writings show that he wanted to bring about unity in the country.

Tulsidas jee indicates the Nimbark philosophy of 'bhed-abheda', where there is segregation from the Lord but at the same time full union in other way. Bhagwaan Ram gives deeksha (spiritual initiation) to Hanuman jee in Kishkindha kand by saying

So ananya jaakein asi mati na tarayi hanumant |

Main sevak sacharaachar roop swaami bhagwant || (Doha 3)

Bhagwaan Ram said that the servant of the Lord sees everything as a form of Almighty only but always considers himself as a humble attendant. The Nimbark thought is evident here as on one side nothing is away from the God but the servant remains humbly in the service of the Lord.

**What is the need for a Sadaguru?** – In every thought/tradition there is always a master who is in the base of it. It is not appropriate to consider Sadaguru as any other person and any other person as Sadaguru. He is not just a person, but a supreme element (param tatva) who may be either in human form or may be in any other form.

Sadaguru is needed to guide us understand the pure mysteries of the presence of divine power. Just like we all live in air (as we breathe and survive on air), but we cannot see it. It can only be seen with particular equipment; Similarly, we cannot see the omnipresent but Sadaguru helps us in understanding and feeling its presence around and in us.

If an individual has acute eagerness to find a master, he comes across one at some point or the other in life.

**A hand represents the various elements of a society:**

1. The first finger represents the guiding people who show the right way with their experience.
2. The middle finger represents the wealthy strata.
3. The ring finger represents the auspicious element as it is used by a Sadaguru to do a 'tika' on a shishya's forehead to bring a transformation his mentality.
4. The smallest finger represents the government, which is important but is not greater than the rest.
5. But, **the most vital is the thumb that represents the Sadaguru** without whom any society is incomplete. Just like no hand functions well without a thumb, the Sadaguru is indispensable for an aspirant.

One should try to see only the positive in every happening. Satsang helps a lot in developing a positive mindset. Tulsidas jee describes the Almighty as 'Mangal bhawan' (abode of auspicious) so, it is impossible to get anything negative from Him. Therefore, whatever happens, happens for good.

**Chanting of Ram naam does not require a procedure, but it should be done with faith.**

Two fundamental factors for true devotion are- "Vafaa" (loyalty) and "Vishwaas" (trust).

## DAY 3

The Almighty, Bhagwaan Ram is the supreme power, but the element that leads to its manifestation is 'prem'/ love. And this love is not found in heaven, it is only here on earth that love exists. Thus, a true devotee would prefer to be on earth do bhakti. The joy of satsang is greatest joy, which cannot be found any material comforts.

Dasarath jee pronounced Ram naam six times at the time of his death ( Ram ram kahi ram kahi ram ram kahi ram | Tanu parihari raghubar birah raau gayau sur-dhaam ||) but did not go for salvation and preferred to choose 'Bheda bhakti' i.e. to remain in devotion for Bhagwaan Ram as his father.

1. According to the Nimbark philosophy, The supreme power is seen in four forms.
2. Akshar - Unfathomable (immeasurable) element that is beyond alphabets.
3. Ishwar - The force behind creation.
4. Jeev - Being a part of the supreme, every creature is its form only. Tulsidas jee says in Uttar kand-" Eeswar ans jeev abinaasi | Chetan amal sahaj sukh raasi ||".
5. Jagat- All creation is a form of Brahm, the omnipresent- " Seeya ram-maya sab jaga jaani | Karaun pranaam jori juga paani||"
6. Bheda bhakti may be described as seven types.
  - o Bheda refers to a positive arrangement (su-vyavashtha) according to one's position. It means the way to live in a dignified manner ( maryada).
  - o Every creature is a part of the Almighty, but the way one relates with God differs according to one's inclination/choice ('sambandh bheda' is there but no 'swaroop bheda').
  - o The relation between a Sadaguru and a shishya is a perfect example of bheda bhakti as there always remains a respectable distance between the two in spite of being in harmony.
  - o The subject of worship should be the form of trust (vishwaas) and the devotee should be the form of faith (shradhha).
  - o The Lord is the origin and the jeev is its creation/part.
  - o The God is space/sky and jeev is its earth.

**All creation is a form of God but the devotee considers himself as just a servant of all creation.** A devotee would not say that 'I am God', he would rather say 'I belong to God'.

## DAY 4

Katha may be pronounced in words for masses, but actually the form of katha is 'param maun' (silence). **Katha** is not about raising slogans or creating commotion in the name of dharma; in fact it **is to create tranquility and peace inside**. The sounds of dharma should not be disturbing; they should take an aspirant towards a meditative state. **Dharma is not to intoxicate but to make a person aware. Katha removes the inner dirt and paints the inner being of the listener with the Lord's colour.**

Nimbark Bhagwaan was an incarnation of sudarshan chakra. **Sudarshan means an optimistic approach towards everything**. It also indicates that Nimbark philosophy believes in dharma that is not stagnant but progressing. **An aspirant who follows the sudarshan, remain unaffected by the false criticism of society, as he understands that neither the critic nor his words contain any value; both are worthless**. He does not pay any attention to such criticism. A person with constructive mentality lives life to the fullest.

Knowledge need not be conversational/outspoken, but it should be smiling. A grave person may not be having true knowledge.

**Every individual should take care of environment. If there is a compulsive situation where a tree has to be cut and there is no other option, then first sow seed of a tree wherever possible and then cut the required tree.** The Nimbark sect's main symbol is the Neem tree. It gives an indication that **the way Neem tree provides disease free environment and its components are also used in curing ailments, similarly, the sect aims to make the society free of mental maladies.**

The **Nimbark thought mentions of five main 'Anushtthan'** (religious undertakings/resolutions).

1. **Anugaman** - An aspirant should follow the directives of the Sadaguru who leads him in the spiritual journey.
2. **Upadaan** - An aspirant should collect the best of material, according to one's capacity, for the service of the Lord.
3. **Ijyaa** - An aspirant should perform the pooja of the Lord at five specific times in a day. But, it may not be possible for all. Therefore, **servicing the needy and helping to provide for poor is also Lord's service**. Give time and freedom to your employees to enjoy with their families is also a form of pooja.
4. **Adhyayan** - An aspirant should study the shastra of his choice regularly.
5. **Yoga** - An aspirant should perform all his duties and then sit at peace and try to meditate.

## DAY 5

Let us begin today's katha with a mantra from Maandukya Upanishad –

**Esha sarveshwarah esha sarvagya eshont-anataraya-myeshesha yonih sarvasya prabhavapyayau hi bhootanaanam**

This mantra indicates about Sarveshwar Bhagwaan, who is the subject of worship for Nimbarkis. The Lord sarveshvar is the one who is the God of every creature without any kind of discretion of caste, creed or community.

There was a question about the history of Bhagwaan Sarveshwar, who is in the form of a 'Shaaligram'. In olden times, Brahma jee gave the Shaaligram jee to Sanakaadi for worshipping and they were later passed to Naarad jee from them. Naarad jee gave them to Niyamaanand jee (who established the Nimbark sect). Therefore, that Shaaligram jee (called as Bhagwaan Sarveshwar) is the main deity of Nimbarkis. If seen with some divine grace, one can even see that there are two miniature lines on it that denote Radha jee and Bhagwaan Krishna. Jagadguru of this sect carries the Shaaligram jee in the neck thread if he has to travel. But, it is not possible for everyone. Thus, it can be said that the Black 'bindi' (dot) on forehead can be worn as its form. Jagadguru has to take care of Shaaligram jee, but the one who wears black bindi, he is taken care by the bindi from evil eyes!!

**Question** - We have to face criticism from people around us as they say that youth is not the time for spirituality. What to do?

**Bapu's answer** - One has to accept that criticism is bound to come in this field. **It is an evidence of the fact that you have entered an auspicious sphere!** If compared in society, only a small minority of people criticizes against the majority of people who rather appreciate it. **An aspirant should not pay attention to such views.**

**Do not ask for anything from the Lord, as he knows your requirements. Asking from the Lord is an insult to his omnipresent nature.**

## DAY 6

Let us see how deeply the Nimbark thought and Shri Ramcharitmanas are connected. In Uttar kand, Sanakaadi rishis sing in the praise of the supreme power- ' Sarb sarbgat sarb uraalaya | Basasi sadaa hum kahun pari-paalaya ||' (34). Here, the word 'Sarb' has been used three times and it is a clear indication towards Bhagwaan Sarveshvar as he is the deity for Sanakaadi rishis and thus the whole Nimbark tradition. It can also be directly related to the mantra we discussed yesterday where qualities of Bhagwaan Sarveshvar were discussed-

Esha sarveshwarah = sarb (that is Bhagwaan Sarveshwar)

Esha sarvagya = sarbgat (the omnipresent)

Eshont-anataraya-myeshesha = sarb uraalaya (the one who resides in every heart).

In the same stuti there is another chaupai which indicates towards another persona of Nimbark sec i.e.- Hans Bhagwaan.- ' Muni mana maanas hans nirantar | Charan kamal bandit aja sankar ||'

Bapu says, "And in the conclusion of the stuti, the chaupai has the names of our family's elder generation and who have been following the Nimbark tradition. It is a matter of great joy for us- Taaran taran haran sab dooshan | Tulsidaas prabhu tribhuvan bhooshan ||."

Guru purnima is that stage of a saint when his maternal feelings towards the society reach its ultimate nature.

Bapu says, "There are five sanskars (formal ceremonies) for Nimbarkis and I have my viewpoint for them. They are as follows."

- "Urdhva pund" (vertical tilak on forehead)- It is an inspiration that the intellect of an aspirant should go higher and higher and abstain from low thinking.
- "Shankh-chakra chhaap" (impressions of conch-shell and chakra on arms)- A conch-shell has a sound but it can only be heard if someone hold it in the hand and puts on lips to blow the air in it. It is a pointer to the idea that an aspirant's speech and action should not be different; he should practice what he says. One should not rely just on destiny but do sincere efforts with own hands to make oneself successful.

Chakra shows that there should be a 'sudarshan' constructive attitude towards every incident in life.

The impressions of the two symbols may not be permanent on arms but if seen in the above perspective, they may have life long impressions in an aspirant's heart.

- "Naam-karan" (assigning a name)- Attaching words like 'das' and 'sharan' with the name indicates that how much ever great you become, don't lose your humbleness.
- "Kantthi-dhaaran" (wearing a rosary of tulsi beads)- Bapu says, ' I wear a rudraksh mala as a remembrance of Vishnu dada, but the meru of this mala is of tulsi.' When a Sadaguru controls the throat of his shishya is a true of Kantthi.
- "Mantropadesh" (granting a mantra)- Following the sutras of instructions of a Sadaguru.

In the katha, one of the reasons of Ram-janma is the curse given to Jai-Vijay by Sanakaadi rishis at the doorstep of Vaikunth. This incident signifies that the downfall of feelings of unnecessary competition (winning more and more) can lead to birth of true joy in life. And also the fact that even the curse of saints is always for betterment of an aspirant.

## DAY 7

**Question - There are sects for human beings, but the birds do not have any sect. So, how come Hans Bhagwaan (in the form of a bird) belongs to Nimbark tradition?**

**Bapu's answer - A bird may not set up a fixed route of flying, but it definitely has a direction, which it follows according to seasonal changes. A sect is an assimilation of auspicious thoughts; it is not to make walls in society. But there is a risk of narrow-mindedness if it gets stuck in boundaries. It may lead to fanaticism if the followers create an extremist attitude towards their philosophy and do not accept anybody else's thought.** Further on this line, there arises a need to grab power through the sect and thus leads to politics in religion. Spiritual journey is lost when politics come into minds of aspirants. Therefore, followers of any sect should be very careful and remain away from politics.

**Everyone should donate 10% of his or her income towards charity. There have been incidents where even children take out 10% of their pocket money to help the needy. Elders should take inspiration from such kids!!**

According to Gorakhnath, there are **four steps for learning from any thought:**

1. **Aarambh** - In the initial stage, go bit deeper and look inside to check your nature. The term 'conversion' of Jesus Christ, actually meant to go reverse into oneself for analyzing nature; it does not mean to use ways to convert people's religion to spread Christianity.
2. **Ghat** - Respect your body and take care of it as a medium of spiritual journey. Neither pamper it nor torture it unnecessarily, just take care of it in a balanced way.
3. **Parcha** - Look at the divine present in every creature.
4. **Nishkarsh** - Find a conclusive knowledge from life and then share your experience with others.

**Question - You say that the katha is trying to mainly address youth. Who is young and old in your view?**

**Bapu's answer - Young and old are not defined by age but with the attitude towards life.** An old person is the one who thinks that satsang has not been successful in transforming people's mentality, so there is no hope for future also. But, the **young are those who are optimistic that whatever has not happened in past will definitely happen in future.** Katha would surely bring revolutionary mental transformation in people and take them further in spiritual journey. **Pessimistic thoughts make an individual old and jarred in spite of being young in age.**

Never try to ape any ideal personality blindly. Look into your nature and take inspiration from eminent people accordingly to develop your personality for betterment.

**In the Nimbark tradition, there is a scripture called 'Vedaant kamdhenu' and it mentions the ten main shlokas (das-shloki). We would discuss the first and the last mantra from this.**

**The first mantra discusses the actual form of Jeev.** It says that every creature is a form of divine power, but only knowledge supports him to realize this fact. Tulsidas jee says in Shri Ramcharitmanas –“ Parabas jeev swabas bhagwanta | Jeev anek ek shri kanta ||”

**The last mantra defines the one who should be worshipped** i.e. Shri Radha-Krishna. But, it does not mean that Radha-Krishna are just two deities, they signify the Infinite divine power. Next, in the mantra, there is an indication towards the one who worships i.e. the Jeev. It further says that the grace of the Lord comes in the form of bhakti and it bears the fruit of salvation. In conclusion, it says that an aspirant should be aware of risky elements that create harm to faith. People with harmful tendencies oppose the aspirant's way of life do not gain much; they just waste their energy.

**Every aspirant of path of devotion should ask himself/herself the following six questions about bhakti:**

1) **kya (what)** – Bhakti is nothing but pure form of love towards creation i.e. Prem. There may be a consequent question from this that what is pure love?..**Prem has three main features**

1. **Care** - one would take minutest care of the beloved.
2. **Sacrifice** - unconditional sacrifice would come automatically if your love is pure.
3. **Respect** - there would be a regardful feeling always.

**Love destroys the dryness in a person, makes a person softhearted.** Nobody seems bad as every creature is seen as a form of God only.

2) **Kyon (why)**- Bhakti helps in experiencing the essence (rasa) of the supreme power.

3) **Kab (when)** - There is no particular time for devotion. Anytime and all the time, keep the Lord engaged with you.

4) **Kaise (how)** - An aspirant's devotion should be free feelings and affection.

5) **Kahaan (where)** - There are no boundaries for the Lord, so no specific place is required for bhakti. The holy places have helpful spiritual vibrations. One can do bhakti wherever he/she is.

6) **Kaun kare (who)** - Everybody is entitled for bhakti, there are no bars of age, sex, caste or community.

## DAY 9

To make 'bheda-abheda' thought easier to understand, take the example of human body where there are two eyes at a certain distance from each other, the distance is the bheda. But, the view of both the eyes, in spite of being away from each other, is one; that oneness is abheda.

Sidhhi can make a robust person, small in physical form. But shudhhi can make even a small person, great in nature.

Don't ask for forgiveness from God, but from the person whose wrong you've done. After expressing your apology to that person, then go and tell the Lord that you did so.

### **Question - Is there any indication of seven facets of Bhakti in Shri Ramcharitmanas?**

**Bapu's answer** - Yes, there's a clear indication in Uttar kand about the seven facets of devotion- " Ehi mahan ruchir sapta sopaana | Raghupati bhagati ker panthaana ||"

Vinay patrika is full of bhakti's various aspects. Bapu says, "I would say that the aspirants on the path of devotion should also study Vinay patrika along with Shri Ramcharitmanas".

**Shandilya Rishi says in his bhakti sutra that shradhha is not same as bhakti. Belief is the initial stage but devotion is the ultimate stage.**

**In our scriptures, there are seven main aspects of bhakti.**

1. Dainya - Humbleness is the core of bhakti. Every aspirant should be always aware of his insignificance (laghuta) and the Lord's greatness (prabhuta).
2. Maan marshitvam - freedom from ego. Even the pride of japa, tapa,sadhana,humbleness should be checked and stopped immediately. If you have attended many kathas, do not try to make them your eligibility for special favours. You should become more gentle and humble instead.
3. Bhayasya darshanam - Warn your mind that there is no joy without lord's devotion.
4. Bhartsna - Train your mind with satsang to face any situation.
5. Ashwaasanam - Console your mind that many people have attained bliss with satsang.
6. Manoraajyam - Try to think positively and aim to be free from faults. Keep your mind free from depressing thoughts.
7. Vichaarana - -Think about the various aspects of spirituality. In the ultimate stage, devotion gets blessed with knowledge and knowledge gets in the mould of devotion.

According to a scholar, Hanuman jee explained the five scientific features of Ram naam to Tulsidas jee.

1. Taarak - Ram naam takes an aspirant ashore the enormous ocean of rebirth.
2. Dandak - It becomes a support for the aspirant and helps one to tackle the faults like anger, greed and desire.
3. Kundal - It is an ornament for ears as the sense of hearing is only successful if you hear Ram naam and satsang.
4. Ardh-chandraakaar
5. Bindu

Let us offer the fruit of virtue of this katha in the feet of Lord 'Radha-Madhav', whose alliance was celebrated yesterday on tulsi vivah.