

**Main Chopai:** Sunder Kand – Doha 39

Sumati kumati saba ke ura rahahi | Natha purana nigama asa kahahi ||  
Jaha sumati taha sampati nana | Jaha kumati taha bipati nidana ||

**Meaning:**

Wisdom and unwisdom dwell in the heart of all: so declare the Puranas and Vedas, my lord. Where there is wisdom, prosperity of every kind reigns; and where there is unwisdom misfortune is the inevitable end.

🚩 Day 1

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**DAY 1**

Here is a brief summary of what Bapu said yesterday in his own inimitable style. Bapu began by tracing and explaining the genesis, the evolving origin, of this *Katha* that is the second in the series of five devoted to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the state of Gujarat. Bapu paid glowing tributes to litterateurs and activists who nourished the language, the *Asmita* of Gujarat.

Bapu has dedicated five *kathas* to Swarnim Gujarat as his personal contribution to the celebrations. Karnavati Club Katha was the first, this here in Edison is the second. Third katha would be for the nomadic tribes of Gujarat, the most backward section of society, because Bapu believes in approaching and uplifting those who are at the lowest rung of the social scale. The fourth would be held during Navratri Festival and the series will end at Gandhinagar on the second of May 2011.

Bapu explained how this Edison katha came to be constituted by the organizers led by Shri Rambhai Gadhavi.

Some unthinking critiques feel that so many kathas for Gujarat is narrow provincialism. As an heir and successor to Vyas, Bapu is free from such provincial spirit and he expressed his willingness for such kathas if people in other states organize them.

Bapu clarified that his kathas makes no pretence of dispensing *gnyan*. His kathas are prayerful songs for spreading harmony. He appealed to the Gujarati diaspora to spread love and harmony wherever they settle down.

He then chose the main theme and thrust of this Katha that would be focused on, *sumati* and *kumati*, on the good and evil mindsets that exists within us because a good mindset, *sumati*, the basis of good governance, a harmonious society and a happy, balanced family life. In the next few days, he would discuss the forms and implications of *sumati* and *kumati* and illustrate his discussion by the incidents and personalities from *Ramcharit Manas*. This katha would revolve around the conversation between Vibhishan and Ravana from Sundarkand, where Vibhishan declares that *sumati* and *kumati* lie in every human heart.

Bapu then took up the potency and the effectiveness of speech (*vani*) for transmission of ideas, opinions and emotions. He formulated five basic elements and ingredients for a speech embodying *sumati*. Whatever and whenever we speak, our words must consist of thoughtful expression (*vichar maya*) but speech must attain a balance (*vivek*) which can be cultivated only by *satsang*. Our *vani* should reflect our readiness to sacrifice (*virag*) for the benefit of others. Our speech must be an outcome of a confidence arising from within (*vishvas*) and our words must be a soothing solace (*vishram*) for those who listen and to those to whom they are addressed.

Such a *vani* would create a good state, a happy society and a precious *swarnim* family life. Bapu proposed an exhaustive analysis of such *sumati* and *kumati*.

Prior to launching upon such analysis, Bapu mentioned our tradition of introducing *Ramcharit Manas* that was going to be the foundation of discussions. *Ramayana* is an age old epic and well known to every Indian. Bapu quoted Mahatma Gandhi to say that an Indian who knows nothing of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* does not deserve to be an Indian.

But *Ramayana* is not an old and dusty epic. *Ramayana* is new and fresh every time you read it. Bapu quoted his own experience that he has read *Ramayana* hundreds of times but has never found it dull or stale. Every time he reads or speaks about *Ramayana* he always discovers something new, some fresh aspects, some new meanings of old phrases. This, said Bapu, is his experience, a bare truth without any exaggeration or embellishment. Books like the *Ramayana* are inspired creations of God and whatever God creates, be it a flowering bud or be it a rising sun, whatever has divine touch is ever fresh and new because touch of God is like giving touch of immortality, (*piyush pani*). The touch of man pollutes but the touch of God redeems.

He then described the seven sections (*Sopana*) of *Ramcharit Manas* forming a stair case of seven steps for spiritual upliftment for whoever reads it. Tulsidas has clarified that he has not written *Ramcharit Manas* only for others, but he has composed *Ramcharit Manas* basically for his own internal happiness, for his own bliss. Bapu explained that without such internal happiness or bliss, a balanced peace or equanimity of mind is impossible to secure. Tulsidas dared to write his *manas* in the language of the people and he was supported and congratulated by the foremost *Vedanties* of his days like Madhusudan Saraswati. Such choice of vernacular was Tulsi's way of bridging the gap across social divisions and discords.

Tulsidas boldly discarded another tradition of invoking *Ganesh* at the beginning and he chose *Vani*, the goddess of speech. Moreover, Tulsidas, a devoted *Vaishnav* that he was, chose to begin with *panchaayatana* of *Shankaracharya*, *Ganesh*, *Vishnu*, *Surya*, *Shiva* and *Durga*.

Bapu explained the inner meanings of these deities, *Ganesh* stands for cultivating balance in every act of life which prevents us from exploiting others. *Vishnu* stands for broad mindedness and generosity. *Surya* is an attempt to live a life seeking enlightenment and avoiding darkness. *Shiva* is benevolence in action, speech and thought while *Durga* personifies *shraddha*; neither *ashraddha* nor *andhshraddha* of blind faith.

Tulsidas then pays a rich tribute and respect to *Guru*, who guides us, who goads us from behind, helps us from right and left; often standing above us but at times putting wheels beneath our feet for skating rapidly to progress.

Bapu is aware of several great minds who insist on self help and do not need the help of *Guru*. He quoted *appya depo bhava* of Buddha. But we are not so strong and able. We need a *guru* to take our hands and lead us through as a parent does for children.

Bapu clarified that he is not talking about *guru* as individuals, he is referring to *gurupad*, the institution of *guru*; "Gurudom" if we say so. Such *gurupad* gives us vision and reveals the final goal. *Guru* as an individual might have his own weakness and limitations, but not the institution of *guru* – *gurupad*.

*Guru* may not necessarily be a person. He quoted examples to show that *guru* may be a book; a poem can be a *guru*, a single short sentence can become a *guru* for us. If we are not careful, jealousy and rivalry may grow up between *guru* and his pupils. He quoted the *Shanti patha* of *Upanishad*, "ma vidvishad mahai".

Bapu ended the discourse for the day with a recitation of *Hanuman Vandana*.

Jai Siya Ram.

Bapu began with a reference to the auspicious occasion of the fourth of July and congratulated the audience, and also all the Americans from the highest to the lowest ranks – from Obama to the poorest of Americans on this day of Independence. He mentioned that the fourth of July is an important date in the history of modern democracy but the seeds of democracy were sown in ancient Indian ideals and in *Ramayana*. Rama made ceaseless efforts in this direction. His protest against the tradition of primogeniture – the tradition of making the eldest son a ruler and fully cooperated in the installation of Bharat as a ruler. During his exile, he established loving relations with the lower caste people like fishermen and *Nishadas* from Shrungberpur and onwards.

It was in Chitrakut conference when Vashishta, the family priest and chief adviser insisted that before taking decision on the request of Bharat, Rama should give it deep thought and he should consult the *saadhun*, the scriptures, the scholars and all people – *lokmat*. Rama imbibed the lessons of democracy and in his first address to the people of Ayodhya after his coronation, he exhorted them to be fearless and to check him if there was any impropriety in his thoughts or words. It was because of public opinion that Rama took the most painful and the hardest decision of his life in exiling Janki.

Bapu declared that his Katha's are mainly oriented to the younger generations who are attending Katha in larger and larger numbers. As he puts it, he wanted to greet the rising sun. He advised young people to respect persons who are scholars and saintly irrespective of outward forms of dress and style of life.

Bapu returned to the concept of democracy in ancient Indian ideals of democracy – equality and pursuit of happiness. The concept in *Ramayana* is that the King is the servant of the people and the kingdom belongs to people. Society made *Ramrajya* is an ideal democracy. No one would be poor or illiterate. All would be healing and die only natural death. Bapu quoted Aristotle saying that Plato might be great but Truth is supreme and Bapu insisted that Truth ought not to be made rigid and fixed. Truth is a flowing river.

Indian tradition treats truth as the highest element – *satya param dhimahi* and happiness as a way to spirituality. He quoted *Shankaracharya* that happiness is a precondition to divine experiences. One must be happy and also be *karma yogi* doing work as one's duty. Indians began by asking as to who we are *ko hum* and ended by declaring that we are divine *so hum*.

Such happiness needs nothing but love, which is the most potent force in human life. He quoted at length a dialogue between Krishna and Radha, where Radha deploras that their intense love had dried up because of prosperity and power which Krishna had attained in his later life. Love is the most powerful factor promoting spiritual progress and only lovers know the secret of spirituality. The longing of separated lovers is intensified during the rainy season and Bapu quoted from folklore, from *Ramcharit Manas* and from classical poetry to illustrate his point.

Bapu then turned to the main theme of the katha and described the discussions in the court of Ravana where everybody flattered Ravana but Malyavan and Vibhisan dared to give him proper and correct advice about *sumati* and *kumati*. Bapu warned that flattery and untruth are very destructive. A kingdom is destroyed by flattering ministers, a patient suffers if doctors hide the real condition of the body and a *saadhak* would be led astray by a greedy *guru*. Bapu advised the youth not to be misguided by flatterers. Truth must be declared but need not be declared in harsh words.

Bapu then returned to the Vibhishan who declared that every one of us has both *sumati* and *kumati*, the difference is only a difference of degrees. He then said that katha can be enjoyed only by *shrotas* who develops *sumati*. The audience must be respectful but also discriminative between good and evil.

Every katha includes people of three types. The *ayojak* or organizers who make efforts to bring about Katha, the disarming audience (*aashvad*) who enjoy katha and feel happy about it but there are some cynics who are out to denounce and find faults everywhere. Doubts, differences of opinions are welcome, questions ought to be raised and discussed but such questions should not arise out of jealousy and ill will *duusht tark*. We should enjoy katha but overlook and forget those who are bent upon negative and carping criticism. We ought to develop constructive discussions *shatvik tark*. Critical appraisal is welcome, what is not good is a nihilist approach or criticism out of malice and ill will.

## DAY 3

Yesterday's katha was a stunning demonstration of Bapu's style of packing profound philosophy in the envelopes of music and jokes. In yesterday's katha, there are two parallel currents leading to a confluence – a *sangam*. Bapu continued with his analysis of *sumati* and *kumati* through the medium of Vibhishan. Second was his running commentary on various definitions and requisites of *prasanata* – happiness.

Bapu agreed that happiness needs a firm determination (*sankalp*) to be happy under any and all conditions of life. Happiness is to enjoy what we have without yearning for what is not there. A happy person never bothers about troubles and difficulties in life. He always looks for the merits (*goon*) of others, not their defects. Bapu advised us to also seek truth and never to blame others.

Bapu pointed out that there are several unknown centers in our body which get activated by such an approach and which would make us happy. We should be aware of our limitations but also about our abilities.

Bapu argued that good and bad, happiness and misery, merits and defects, praise and blame are inseparable pairs like two sides of a coin. You can either accept both or reject both but you can never get one without getting the other. He warned that harsh sun is reality in life, shades and shadows are mere myths. Happiness lies in accepting the ups and downs in life as the grace of god or as the will of god. Happiness is to enjoy the everyday ordinary incidents of life without striving too much for achievements. Happiness is to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of nature and to respect the inner richness and not the external showmanship. A happy person does not bother about death but lives a full life.

Bapu pointed out that we are not fully and totally independent. We are dependents (*paradhin*) upon climatic conditions, upon situations. Total freedom can be secured by realizing our true self through *satsang*. Real freedom and happiness arise out of doing our duty and therefore we should avoid shirking (*kam chori*), insincerity (*dil chori*), thievery (*dravya chori*) or appropriating credit of others (*pragyna chori*).

Such happiness, said Bapu, is possible only for those who live only in the present, without bothering about past or future. Be alive today, just now, and do not wait for then, nor for tomorrow, nor for yesterday. Bapu quoted songs and concepts from Narsi Mehta and Bullesha in one breath and exhorted us to pick up precious moments, the pearls of wisdom and joy (*moti*) because life is as short and as fickle as lightening in the sky.

Bapu wanted his audience to enjoy katha without preconditions and rituals like fasting or night long vigils. Let us be and act natural (*sahaj*) without being a nuisance to others. He quoted Suman Shah that even a few and fleeting moments of goodness and awareness and freedom from evil thoughts are all that we need for being happy and good. Please remember that happiness cannot be attained by mere cleverness because all our cleverness is futile against divine dispensation. He illustrated his point by the story of *Hiranyakashyap* and *Narsinh Avatar* in support of such description. Gita describes those *goon* and those final results because Gita is theory – *yog* while Ramayana is a *prayoga* - a practical demonstration through the incidents and characters of Ramayana. Ramayana is not merely to be read but we must try to understand the underlying, inner significance of every event in Ramayana.

Vibhishan was *sakhyagunni* and therefore his advice and the speech in Raavan Sabha contained all the five (best) qualities – *Vichaar*, *Vivek*, *Viraag*, *Vishwas*, and *Visram* – that were explained by Bapu on the very first day of Katha.

Bapu referred to the three main associates of Ram – Nishaadh, Sugriva, and Vibhishan. Nishaadh merely served Ram, Vibhishan advised Ram whenever he was consulted, but Sugriva was a friend fully and totally trusted by Ram. Their friendship had been consecrated and sealed in the presence of fire as we do in marriage ceremonies and was witnessed by Pavan Putra Hanuman who brought them together.

Bapu mentioned Bhushundi who is devoted to Balak Rama and Bapu went one step further by saying that every child is a potential Ram and ought to be loved as such. Such *bhakti* emphasizes the importance of *shravan* - hearing. Vibhishan had never meet Ram or even seen him, but he had heard about him. In her love letter to Krishna, Rukhmani also said that she had heard about Krishna.

People often say that religious discussions and discourses – *katha* are a waste because they do not produce any visible, tangible results. Bapu disagreed because he has observed tremendous changes in the life of several persons on account of *katha*. Vibhishan has given a firm opinion that *sumati* invariably produces happiness. Since we all want to be happy we should cultivate *sumati* and Bapu listed the ways and methods to cultivate such a mind set of *sumati*. The first and the most powerful way is *namsmran*. Continuous *namsmran* over a long period of time helps us to break down all barriers and obstacles in the path of spiritual progress. Therefore, *namsmran* is the best *sadhana* for *kalyug* – the age in which we are living. The second requisite is *satsung* –the company of those whose hearts are pure and whose character is without any blemish. Such *satsung* develops *Sumati Bhagvat Katha* of reading. Listening or studying the holy books would produce a sense of joy and happiness and make us feel the presence of divine. Bapu believes literary and artistic creations have a touch of divinity and association with literature. Music, dancing and paintings help us to purify, to enlighten, and to ennoble our hearts. These practices - *namsmaran satsung katha* or contact with arts may appear to be small and trifles, but then let us remember that huge and strong animals like elephants are controlled and guided by small goading devices – small *ankush* – in hands of their *mahavats*.

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## DAY 4

This is a brief summary of what Bapu said the other day. He continued to list the ways and means to cultivate *sumati*. After referring to those he had listed earlier, *hari nam*, *satsang*, *bhagvat katha*, and *susahitya*, Bapu said that *prasad* of *katha*, the grace of God, be it Rama or Krishna or Hanuman or Janki – grace of any God would help us to develop *sumati*. But such divine grace is given to those who intensely yearn for it, to those who have *talaveli* or *talab* for it. Such yearning must be pure and simple. There should not be any cleverness in it. If we surrender everything we have, including our divisive intellect, such *prasad* or *krupa* would descend on us. Hanuman also gives such *sumati* and Hanuman has several names, each with a special meaning and significance. But we should worship Hanuman in his simple (*soumya*) benign form. Bapu advised to avoid complicated *tantrik* ceremonies and *sadan*s that may lead to dangerous results.

Bapu has found that silence (*moun*) to be a very effective way for attaining *sumati*. He then said that Tulsidas has often compared *sumati* to Earth (*pruthvi*) and even to a beautiful woman who serves the saints as a wife. Bapu continued the metaphor and described the common qualities. Just as Earth has dust, mountains, water, vegetation, metals, fire and seeds, similarly a person who has *sumati* feels as humble as dust, but his mind is as unshakeable as mountain Meru. A man with *sumati* is aware that we are nothing compared with the existence (*astitva*). *Sumati* helps us to cultivate *rus* that is as fluid as water. A person who has no *rus* or interest in anything would be morose and half dead because he suffers from negativity. Krishna has great interest in music and dancing and he is therefore described as *rass raseswar*. Such a *sumati* would help us to love and attachment to children and to less fortunate people. Just as Earth has many precious objects *sumati* is also *bahu ratna*. *Sumati* is always agog with *jiganyasha* for *gyan* and *gyan* is compared to fire. *Sumati*, like trees, is always devoted to oblige others (*paropkar*). He mentioned the example of Madan Mohan Malavyaji's effort to uphold the prestige of Nizam who had turned him away empty handed.

Bapu is convinced that *Ramcharit Manas* is basically a text written for the purpose of cultivating goodness through frank and beneficial dialogue. Dialogue implies open hearted and unconditional contacts. The dialogues with conditions and stipulations are futile and barren as they lead nowhere and produce no results. Bapu expressed his anguish that people fight and struggle for trifling material benefits. People fight for land, for controlling oceans and energy resources like oil and gas.

*Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are full of struggles and war. While war in *Mahabharata* was fought for physical, materialistic benefits, war in *Ramayana* is for Sita who personifies human consciousness (*chetna*). Rama never cared for controlling or possessing either Ayodhya or Kishkindha or even Lanka. When he says this he is not comparing *Ramayana* with *Mahabharata* as one being superior or inferior because such distinction and valuations are imposed by us they are not natural or real.

*Ramacharit Manas* is a treatise of harmonious dialogue and such good will (*sad bhav*) is possibly only by developing saintly qualities (*sadhu bhav*). Mutual good will and personal saintliness are both needed and both are possible only if we are ready and willing to accept individuals with all their limitations and defects. Such an approach requires us to rise above good or bad, praise or blame and between all such dualities (*dvaita*). Bapu dislikes comparing one saint with another. When we try to judge saints we are imposing our comparisons on them. Bapu said that when people abuse us or denounce us we should treat it just as a happening; just a minor incident or an accident. Even abuses need to be accepted because one has to pay for ones prestige in terms of abuses. When Jesus said "love thy enemy" you are still aware of enmity. A real spiritual stage is reached when we forget that there is an enemy or any enmity against us. Dualities maybe a part of practical life but in spiritual life only *adhavait* exists.

Bapu accepted that it is very difficult to rise above and beyond dualities but acceptance of life as it comes is comparatively easy. All dualities are the products of ignorance (*agyan*) and such *agyan* ignorance is the outcome of our ego. But what are we in comparison to the entire universe or existence. We are nothing and count for nothing. We should feel the humility which arises out of recognition of the insignificance of ourselves. To speak about such *sadhana* is easy but to practice and feel humility is very difficult and needs prolonged *sadhana*. Each individual would follow a separate *sadhana* suitable for himself. He then appealed to young people to accept all dualities. Bapu said that divisions and quarrels and hatreds he finds in the name of religions (*dharma*) are much more painful for him and young people should free themselves from such quarrels.

Bapu then picked up the main thread of Ram Katha. Tulsidas begins his Ram Katha with Shiva Chritra. Bapu referred to the visit of Shiva and Sati to Agastya (*kumbhuj*) for hearing ram katha. While returning Sati decided to test Rama and Rama recognized her. She concealed this truth from Shiva. Shiva decided to keep her away and after her death she was reborn as Parvati after prolonged austerities she married Shiva, had a son Kartikeya and once upon a time requested Shiva to disclose *Ramcharit* to her. Shiva started his narration.



## DAY 6

Bapu expressed his happiness for the musical evening and paid rich tribute to Shri Raghuvirbhai Chowdhrey for his talk on Mirza Ghalab. Answering a question on *Ramayana* he said Valmiki Ramayana was written by an *adikavi* but the author of Tulsi Ramayana is *anadi shiva* himself. Tulsidas is traditionally believed to be a reincarnation of Valmiki and Tulsidas has great respect for Valmiki.

*Sumati* has been designated as a woman by Tulsidas and as also a regal princess. Sita is a *rajrani*, her spiritual form is *Bhakti* or *pragnya* or *sad buddhi*. Bapu chose Sita as an embodiment of *sumati* and explained the three ornaments used by all women be it an ordinary one or a royal queen. Tulsidas in *Balkanda* has described three such ornaments: bangles (*kangan*), waist band (*kamar band*) and anklets (*nupur*). The occasion is the first meeting in *puspa vatika* an abode of eternal spring, where there was neither fall nor autumn. Rama was visiting this garden for picking flowers and Sita was visiting the temple of Bhavani.

Bapu used this as an allegory for describing spiritual union and declared that Sita like every *sadhak* preferred Rama to the routine worship. Bapu explained that even routine activity if undertaken sincerely and honestly is spiritual; attending to a hungry child is more important than worship. A doctor's stethoscope is as sacred as a *mala*. Bapu deplored that we have divorced *sadhana* from our daily life and that is one reason why *bhakti* has disappeared from our life that has become disunited and divisive (*vibhakti*). Such narrow domestic walls have destroyed the basic unity of mankind.

A companion (*sakhi*) of Sita reported the presence of Rama and Sita followed her towards Rama. Bapu interpreted the incident to suggest that we should follow our Guru who is more experienced in order to achieve spiritual progress. *Sakhi* advised Sita to visit Rama, who is supreme divinity itself that is not confined to the narrow walls of temples and idols. People often fight shy in becoming the followers but such hesitation is the outcome of our ego. He told the story of a vain glorious cock who believed that the Sun rises only because he crows. There should be no hesitation in acknowledging the superiority of our Guru.

It was on this occasion that Tulsidas has mentioned three major ornaments of Sita that was *Bhakti* personified and therefore an embodiment of *sumati*.

Bapu said that bangles denote total surrender which is a characteristic of both *bhakti* and *sumati*. Such *samarpan* involves an inclination to give, an innate generosity of nature. Bapu exhorted people to give, to denote a part of our income and he narrated his experience that often young children donate a part of their pocket money. It is the act of giving the desire to give that is important, not the amount or nature of things given. Bapu went to the extent of saying that even religious and charitable institutions should donate their surplus money to other institutions or individuals.

The second ornament of Sita or characteristic of *sumati* is waist band or *kamar band*, a symbol of controlled and balanced life (*samyam*). *Kumati* would lead to indulgence and unbalanced life. A *sadhak* has to cultivate awareness that is the outcome of his understanding or his discernment. The third ornament of Sita was anklets (*nupur*) which implies good behavior (*sadaachar*).

In order to cultivate *sumati* one needs a habit of giving, a balanced, disciplined life and good habits or behavior. A striving for such qualities is *sadhana*, a readiness to accept both *sumati* and *kumati* makes us *shuddha*, but one who rises beyond both *sumati* and *kumati* becomes *siddhi*.

Bapu pointed out that Ravana did not have a single quality of *sumati*. He had acquired immense wealth in terms of gold but never gave anything to anybody and his entire property, Lanka, was burnt by Hanuman. He had strength and power but no *samyam* or discipline in life and he did not behave according to rules of morality (*sadaachar*). He assumed the form of a *sanyasi* that was a fake or a pretense. He did surrender his heads to Shiva but that was to gain more power. Bapu named different categories of *sanyasi's* leading up to the highest category of *paramhauns*. Bapu argued that *sumati* can be developed by *satsang* and that ultimately we get what we ourselves have created or constructed; the royal palaces that we are deputed to build. God gives us what we ourselves make.

Bapu then turned to Rama Katha and explained the inner spiritual meaning of incidents in the childhood of Rama. He explained the implications of the names given to the four brothers. Rama is a solace, a *vishrama* for the entire universe. Bharata would nourish the world. Shatrugna is the elimination of enmity or *shatrutva* and Lakshmana had all great qualities of humanity. Bapu then entered into the deeper analysis. Ram is *vishrama* but such *vishrama* comes only after great exertion. *Vishram* without *karma* is *pramaad* which is a synonym with death.

Bharata is nourishment, the quality of giving renunciation (*tyag*) , the outcome of love. Lakshmana is awareness and elimination of enmity needs silence (*moun*). Bapu then explained the pairing of the names of brothers, Rama-Lakshmana and Bharat-Shatrugna. Ram who is *vishrama* needs to be with Lakshmana, awareness and incessant action (*karma shilta*). An idle person is useless and even dangerous for the society while love and *tyag* (Bharata) needs silence (Shatrugana). We should not advertise our generosity or *tyag*.

He then described play and pranks of child Rama and the spiritual implications. Kaushalya often saw him simultaneously in two places sleeping in the cradle and eating in a different place. Bapu referred to *vishwaroop darshan* in *Bhagvat*, in *Ramcharit Manas* and in *Mahabharata* on different occasions. Rama delayed coming to Dasharatha but responded to the call of Kaushalya. *Brahm* is never at the beck and call of power but instantly responds to motherly love. Another interpretation was that Dasharatha represents *gyan*. We can visualize *Brahm* by knowledge (*gyan*) but it is only by love, by Kaushalya that we can attain *brahm*.

Bapu described the visit of Vishwamitra at length and Dasharatha's unwillingness to hand over Rama but *brahm* can never be confined to royal palaces, *brahm* is for the entire universe and needs to be freed. Rama and Lakshmana followed Vishwamitra on foot and Vishwamitra then surrendered all his weapons to Rama because all those who were killed Rama attained Nirvana. The *yagna* of Vishwamitra was completed under the protection of Rama and then on advice of Vishwamitra they all started for Janakpur to attend *dhanush yagna*.



## DAY 8

Bapu began by picking up two questions and the second question that he answered in brief was about the rituals and the ceremonials for regular *path* of Ramayan. Bapu rejected all rituals and all restrictions. Read Ramayan as and when it suits you: read it anywhere and any way: read it as or as little that is convenient to you. But read it with interest and with understanding. Bapu does not want anyone to be enslaved by ceremonials. Bapu is not interested in tying *kanthies* or in collecting followers or his groups of *chellas*. He prefers to move alone and independent and he wants to do as much as he can do but he never bothers about the future of his work. He has no sect, no institution, no followers or disciples and he refused to be a guru. Those who come to listen to his kathas are not his disciples but only the listeners. He is not opposed to institutions as such or to their expanding their activities. But he prefers his lonely furrow. He is a sort of spiritual nomad, a *vanzara* who moves on from place to place singing his Ramkatha. He wants nothing, needs nothing and accepts nothing except the barest minimum and can get adjusted to any condition. He has no rigid schedules, no strict regulations to restrict his freedom and spontaneity. He aims to a life style which can accommodate to all conditions and circumstances. So he prescribes no rules and regulations for reading Ramcharitmanas.

The second question was from a medical practitioner who wanted to know if Bapu has actually installed Rama without weapons and if that was true he wanted to know the reasons why Bapu did it. Bapu invited him to visit his Rammandir and verify that the idols have no weapons. Bapu clarified that this was his personal initiative and he would not impose it on anyone -not even on the leaders of his village. Bapu pointed out that there were several such temples in Ayodhya and in other places where the weapons were absent. But he has his own convictions and this is the Truth as he sees it. He advised people to respect and appreciate the Truth of others.

He argued that Ramcharitmanas basically aims at humanizing and further refining human race. Rama left aside all his weapons when he went to bow down to his Guru Vashishtha. Rama used weapons so long as they were needed to eliminate the evil spirits at Lanka. But the war was over and Ramrajya was established. So why do you need arms and weapons and wars? He was in anguish and raised the question as how long are we going to fight and kill one another in the name of religion or nation? He implored to give Peace a chance all over the world and urged UNO to totally prohibit wars for five years at least. Let us experiment with Truth and Love and Peace and understanding for establishing relations between people and people. Bapu felt uneasy that even the saints in India have started keeping arms and use weapons. We the human beings have had more than enough of wars and the world today needs scriptures [shastras] not swords. [shatras]. He himself would never use weapons even in self defense and would prefer death if somebody chose to kill him. He pointed out that doctors use a number of sharp instruments for surgery but once the work is over they keep it aside. They do not carry them with them. After Ramrajya was established weapons are not needed and Rama was sitting in his home. Nobody carries arms in home. But Hanuman has to keep his mace [*gada*] because he is the security officer for Rama and security needs weapons for protection and guarding duties.

Bapu deplored that Tulsidas has not been properly studied or understood. He quoted Tulsidas who in his Dohavali said that all wars whatever be the weapons are dangerous and destructive. Yadavas fought with leaves that were sharp at the edge and perished. Ksamdev attacked Shiva with flowers and was reduced to a heap of ashes. Bapu was highly impressed by the ideals of Vinoba Bhave who wanted philosopher rulers who were devoid of fear [*nibhaya*] who were devoid of spite [*nirvair*] and devoid of desires [*nishkam*] Bapu then traced the origin of war of Yadava to alcoholism and described the mental anguish of Krishna who saw his entire family and tribe perish in a fratricidal war. Yadav youths had misbehaved with a venerable rishi. Yadavas were under a double curse-- one from Gandhari and the other from that rishi. Bapu assured the audience the idols of Rama in his temple represents Bapu's total rejection and repudiation of war and violence in any form and for any reason.

Bapu then turned to the analysis of the results of Kumati. He had listed four factors on the previous day ending with perverted vision [*viparit darshan*]. Bapu said that both Kaikeyi and Ravan suffered from such perverted visions. Kumati like the moss covers water or stone and is very slippery. Bapu said the Sumati leads to happiness which takes a variety of forms. The best and the highest type of happiness is the internal bliss a happiness that steadies mind and enlightens our Chittta. Besides such personal or individual happiness, sumati produces happiness for people around [*parsukha*] and universal happiness. Tulsidas has promised happiness in the next world but Bapu has no interest in heaven and for him heaven implies pleasure of good company. Sumati gives prestige and happiness of Satsang that is the highest and the

best happiness. People of Ayodhya experienced all types of intense happiness when Rama and his brothers returned with their brides and such overflowing happiness would pose a danger of calamity.

Bapu summarised Ayodhya Sopan and highlighted the meeting between Nishad Guharaj and Rama and the insistence of Guharaj on washing the feet of Rama. Overwhelmed by his devotion- bhakti Rama simply did what Guharaj wanted him to do. After crossing the Ganges, Rama settled at Chitrakuta where Bharat visited him and earnestly requested him to return to the throne of Ayodhya. Rama declined to do so but gave his Paduka to Bharat who ruled the kingdom for the next 14 years in the name of Rama and on his behalf. Bharat lived a simple life of same austerity that Rama was living in the forest life.

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TOP

## DAY 9

On this last day of katha, Bapuy thanked the audience because speakers can not do much in the absence of listeners. He compared Sumati with a digging blade that is a potential instrument for all search and research that bring out the hidden treasures from the mines of the mountains like Vedas and Puranas. The digging blade needs the handle and Sumati needs faith or trust. Such search needs silence while the research is going on. But while sowing the seeds of thought speech is necessary to spread the seeds of thought by communication with the listeners.

Silence or Maun is very necessary and useful while the exploration is going on because by silence one can carve out one's own universe even in midst of surging crowds. Let us remember that we often talk too much. Bapu quoted President Coolidge of U S A who used to say that whatever little that he speaks, he speaks too much. The less we speak there are lesser occasions to regret or repent because the spoken words can never be withdrawn. Lao Tzu said that speech spoils the experience. We must enjoy serenity of Nature without trying to put it in words.

Books can teach us both silence and serenity and books were highly revered in ancient India. Bapu pointed out that the digging blade never destroys the roots. Similarly we should enjoy life without destroying the Satvic approach in experiences. Enjoy life but with discrimination [*vivek*] and we should try to live a life that others would like to write about it. We should not worry about being misunderstood because saints and prophets have always been misunderstood.. let us follow our own way with all humility and without ego because we are insignificant in the universe.. very often our ego prevents us from accepting and submitting to the wider existence. [*astitva*] Sumati leads us to explore and a healthy hunger for better things of life. Of all the worse things that can happen to us, the worst is forgetting or neglecting God and this can be avoided by Satsang. We must remember our real self and shed our ego because ego will destroy our naturalness and then even simplicity can become crooked hypocrisy. Bapu advised that we should always respect and revere our elders and those who are our superiors and avoid maligning others.

Bapu then summarised the remaining sopsans of Ramcharitmanas and pointed out to the hidden meanings and implications of the various incidents.