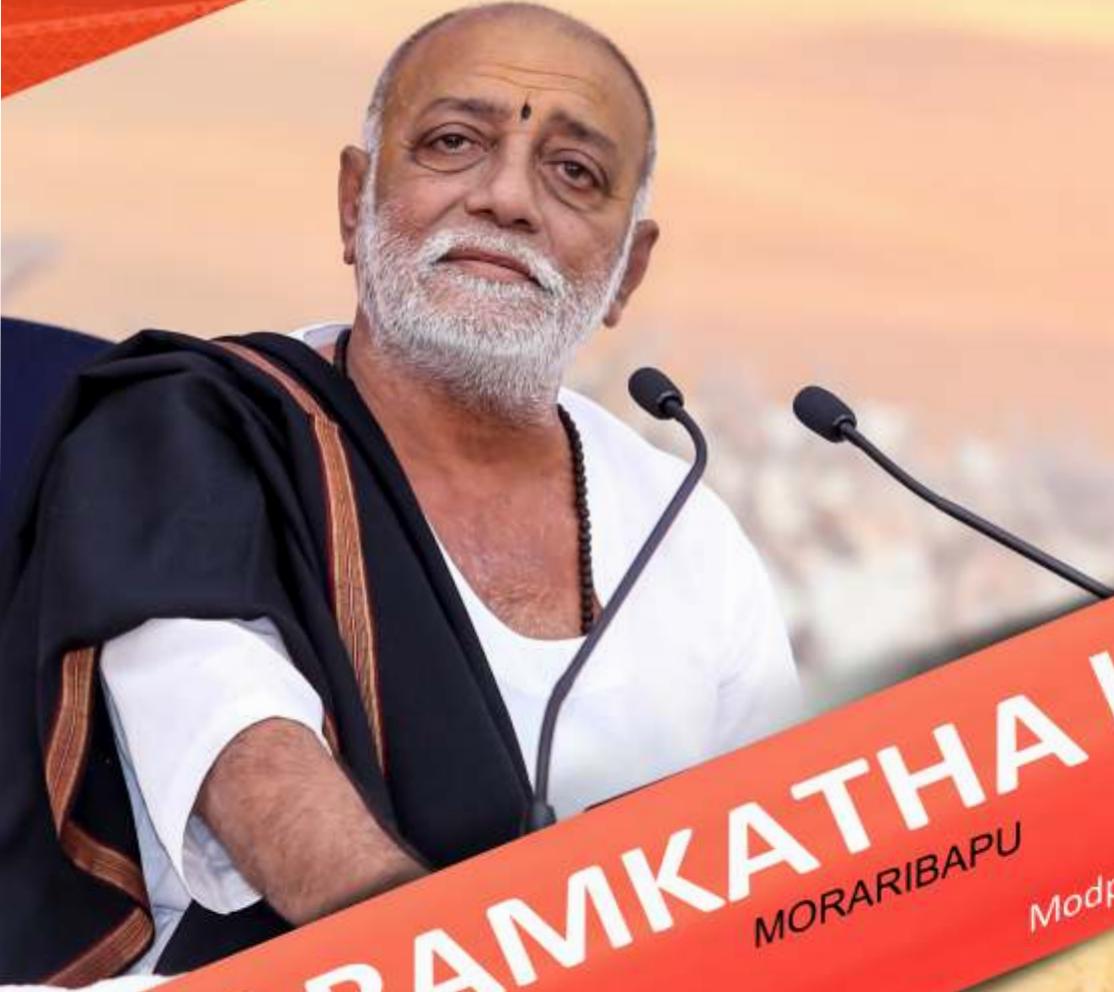


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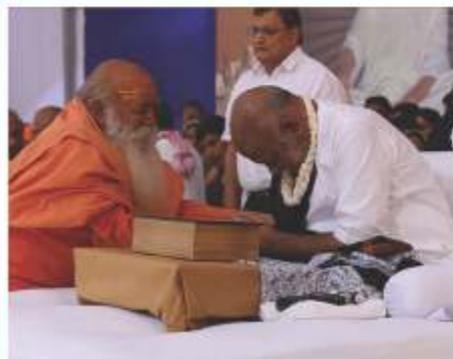
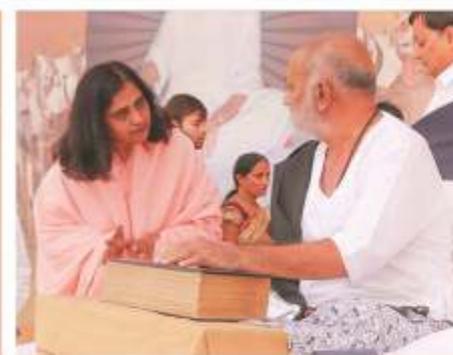
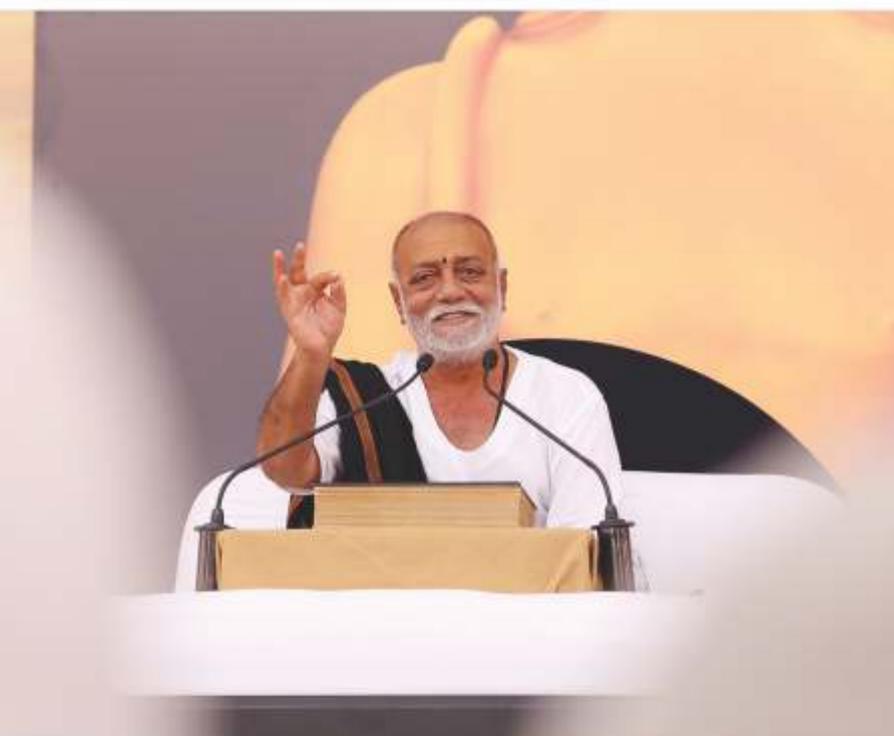
# ॥ RAMKATHA ॥

MORARIBAPU

Modpar, Kutch

Mānasa-Aśoka Vāṭikā

करि सोइ रूप गयउ पुनि तहवाँ। बन असोक सीता रह जहवाँ।  
नाथ एक आवा कपि भारी। तेहिं असोक बाटिका उजारी।।



## II RAM KATHA II

Manasa-AshokVatika

### MORARIBAPU

Modpar (Kutch)

Dt. 26-12-2015 to Dt. 03-01-2016

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### Editor

Nitin Vadgama  
[nitin.vadgama@yahoo.com](mailto:nitin.vadgama@yahoo.com)

To subscribe, please e-mail your  
name, address & preferred  
language to

[ramkathabook@gmail.com](mailto:ramkathabook@gmail.com)  
+91 704 534 2969 (only sms)

### English Translation

Harini Rana  
[harini.rana@gmail.com](mailto:harini.rana@gmail.com)

### Design

swar-anim

## PREM PIYALA

Morari Bāpu's RāmaKathā, 'Mānasa-AśokaVā ikā', was held from December 26, 2015 to January 03, 2016 in Modpar, Kutch which is the place of Venerable LalBapu's esoteric (gebī) consciousness. Bāpu recited this RāmaKathā by focusing on various events of AśokaVā ikā from 'Su darakā a'. He specifically described the meeting between Hanumānājī and Vibhī a a, where Vibhī a a reveals the method or tactic of meeting Sītājī to Hanumāna. While discussing this topic from an essential viewpoint, Bāpu aphoristically stated that knowing the method or tactic of living from an Enlightened-Being will make our life beautiful. These discussions were only aimed to aid our spiritual progress and lead everyone's life towards restfulness.

AśokaVā ikā is not only the name of a grove located in La kā, but also the truth of my and your life, so stated Bāpu by expanding the interpretative scope of AśokaVā ikā. Simultaneously, He presented numerous dualistic notions of this Universe present in AśokaVā ikā. AśokaVā ikā contains both śaya (destruction) and akśaya (indestructible). Akśayakumāra is Rāva a's son. Akśaya means indestructible. But as soon as he entered AśokaVā ikā, he was destroyed the very next moment. AśokaVā ikā contains both fear and peace. The demonesses exhibit fear to Jānakī and so does Rāva a. Whereas in Shankaracharya's terminology, Sītā is peace personified. AśokaVā ikā contains the demonesses with demonic instinct as well as saintly disposed Trija ā. AśokaVā ikā demonstrates both attack and protection. It contains problems as well as reconciliations. It has doubt as well trust.

Additionally, Bāpu also presented His essential observation that AśokaVā ikā has jati (recluse) as well as sati (chaste woman). The sati has been abducted and Her name is Sītā and the jati is Rāva a. Rāva a had assumed the form of a recluse in Da aka forest in Pa cava ī. He is not a recluse or renunciant in reality, but disguised as one. The AśokaVā ikā of Rāva a has two saints. One of them goes to AśokaVā ikā regularly and she is Trija ā. The other saint visits AśokaVā ikā for limited time to accomplish Lord Rāma's task and He is Hanumāna, who entered AśokaVā ikā in quest of Mother Jānakī.

Comparing Janaka's Pu paVā ikā and Rāva a's AśokaVā ikā, Bāpu also stated that Janaka's Pu paVā ikā only contains flowers and no fruits; whereas, Rāva a's AśokaVā ikā contains only fruits and no flowers! However, Jānakī is present in the center of both the groves. The contexts of both the groves are extremely different and yet equally mysterious.

While discussing AśokaVā ikā and Pu paVā ikā during the course of Kathā, Bāpu also presented an introduction about Am taVā ikā of heaven, Bi aVā ikā of nether world as well as NabhaVā ikā of spirituality. Thus, an elaborate discourse about various groves or orchards associated with 'Mānasa' was expressed from VyāsaPī ha. During the conclusion of Kathā, Bāpu appealed everyone to cultivate a Pu paVā ikā in our inner-realm.

- Nitin Vadgama

Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā : I

Knowing the method or tactic of living from  
an Enlightened-Being will make our life beautiful

*Kari Soi Rūpa Gayau Puni Tahavā I Bana Asoka Sītā Raha Jahavā II SDK-07.03 II*

*Nātha Eka Āvā Kapī Bhārī I Tehi Asoka Bāṭikā Ujārī II SDK-17.02 II*

*Assuming the minute form as He had taken before, He set off for the Aśoka grove where Sītā dwelt. O lord, a huge monkey has made his appearance and laid waste the Aśoka grove.*

Bāpu, once again on the land of Kutch I have found an opportunity to recite RāmaKathā. We could behold these Reverend Saints on behalf of the Kathā. I am glad to have received their verbal and silent blessings. I offer an obeisance to the saints, the esoteric (gebī) consciousness of Reverend LalBapu, the Reverend Abbots of various religious places, the devotees of LalBapu and the listeners present in Kathā.

It was MahadevBapu's heartfelt wish to host RāmaKathā on this land. He has strived and waited patiently with devotional faith towards his Guru to make this come true. Finally, the moment has arrived and we are kick starting the Kathā from today. I had not decided the core theme of discussion for this Kathā earlier. However, MahadevBapu has arranged such a beautiful (suṃdara) place for my stay that I felt like speaking on some topic from 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa'. MahadevBapu has named my place of stay as 'KailāsaVāḍī' and it's only because of the grace of the Lord of Kailāsa that our entry into 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa' becomes possible, else we would have remained unacquainted with these scriptures! Thus, I thought of discussing some topic from 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa' with you for next nine days. I therefore resolved in my mind to keep the main theme of discussion of this Kathā as 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā', which will focus on an episode from 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa'. I shall discuss with you few incidents of AśokaVāṭikā, as per my understanding, which can aid our spiritual progress and lead us to restfulness. While we shall definitely recite the chronology of the chronicle of Lord Rāma in brief, the center of our discussion shall remain 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā'. Tulasī uses the syllable 'Sa' instead of 'Śa' and 'Ba' instead of 'Va', thus making it as Aśoka-Bāṭikā instead of Aśoka-Vāṭikā. This is because Tulasī writes the scripture in utmost rural dialect. Therefore, although the original word is 'AsokaBāṭikā', we shall keep the title as 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā'. Hence, I have chosen the aforementioned two verses from 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa'. Let me discuss the background of this episode with you in form of a dialogue. Hanumānājī entered Laṃkā in quest of Sītā. He ransacked each and every corner of Laṃkā. Sītā was nowhere to be found. He ultimately entered Vibhīṣaṇa's forecourt. His mansion stood distinct from the rests. Hanumānājī wondered as to how could a pious monkly man take up his residence in Laṃkā? Hanumānājī reasoned within Himself and eventually, accosted Vibhīṣaṇa. He enquired with Vibhīṣaṇa about the method or tactic of meeting Sītā, which Vibhīṣaṇa revealed. In my view this is a divine episode in the first place. Tulasīdāsajī has used the word 'Jugati'. I vaguely recollect having discussed this point in some Kathā, though I don't remember clearly. Nonetheless, I shall recollect it in coming days. There is a couplet by Wasim Barelvi Sāheb,

*Lagatā To Bekhabara-Sā Hū Lekina Khabara Mein Hū I*

*TerīNajara Mein Hū To SabaKī Najara Mein Hū I*

I am clueless about what I would speak for next nine days; nonetheless, I am getting the hints. "O Lord, O Hanumāna, Your blessings shall indeed trigger my thoughts in the right direction and impel my speech." I want to specifically discuss with you the method or tactic revealed by the brother of a demon. Sāheb, it's easier to lead a saintly life by staying in a hermitage but,

*Laṃkā Nīścara Nikara Nivāsā I*

*Ihā Kahā Sajjana Kara Bāsā II SDK-05.01 II*

There is a man who lives amid drunkards, flesh eaters, fraud, disloyalty, corruption and all such evils, and yet worships the lord and leads a pious life. Tulasī was bound to use three words for Vibhīṣaṇa viz. 'sajjana' (pious or virtuous person), 'sādhu' (monk) and 'saṃta' (saint). These words are figurative of one's spiritual development in progressive order. 'Sajjana' is the most commonly used word, uttered generously even for people who are not virtuous or pious. Let's focus our attention on 'sādhu' and 'saṃta'. These words represent our inner spiritual state, which gets manifested only if an Enlightened-Being reveals the method or tactic to us. The revealer of such method or tactic himself/herself is 'sajjana', 'sādhu' and 'saṃta'. This journey could be undertaken only under the guidance of a spiritual Guru. Buddha's maxim of 'Appa Dīpo Bhava' i.e. 'Be the light unto thyself' is a matter of a different spiritual state because he talks of not needing a Guru. But devotees like us do need someone who can reveal the method or tactic to us. Once you find such a revealer, please overlook his/her caste, creed, source lineage etc. S/He hails from the lineage of ambrosia. The method or tactic that s/he reveals is as divine as ambrosia. We need someone who can reveal the mystery to us. Hanumānājī is the Supreme-Guru Bāpa! He is an incarnation of Lord Śaṃkara, who is the Guru of the three spheres of the Universe. We need to learn the method or tactic from someone to attain devotion or peace personified as Sītā. Hanumānājī, despite being an incarnation of Śaṃkara, asks Vibhīṣaṇa to reveal the method or tactic to behold Jānakī. Tulasī writes the following verse at this moment,

*Jugati Bibhīṣana Sakala Sunāi I*

*Caleu Pavanasuta Bidā Karāi II*

*Kari Soi Rūpa Gayau Puni Tahavā I*

*Bana Asoka Sītā Raha Jahavā II SDK-07.03 II*

The word 'jugati' (method or tactic) is used here, along with the word 'sakala'. I am just sharing with you whatever I understand by my Guru's grace. Every method or tactic has been revealed in this incident. I recollect that in one of the Kathās, VyāsaPīṭha has discussed about the method or tactic to attain

devotion, peace or supreme energy that Vibhīṣaṇa revealed to Hanumānājī. I vaguely recall having discussed this sometime in the past. However, at this moment I shall share with you whatever comes to my memory now. I and you need to know this method or tactic from someone. We need four aspects to know it. Vibhīṣaṇa surrendered to Lord Rāma when Rāvaṇa kicked him out. This means that we cannot surrender to god unless someone kicks us. People like me and you are incapable of renouncing our worldly life metaphoric of Laṃkā. We surrender to Rāma only when someone kicks us out. 'Rāmāyaṇa' writes the following verse when Vibhīṣaṇa surrendered to Rāma, *Saciva Saṃga Lai Nabha Patha Gayaū I SDK-40.01 I* The man who revealed the method or tactic to meet Sītājī resorted to Lord Rāma along with his ministers. This means that an individual, who reveals the mystery of attaining devotion to a worthy inquisitor, will be rewarded by the attainment of Lord Rāma. In order to attain Lord Rāma, one must reveal the method or mystery only to a worthy inquisitor. It must not be revealed to an unworthy recipient. Our ancient psalms present the same idea,

*JoiJoiNe Vahoriae Jātyu,*

*Bibā Viṇa Paḍe Nahī Bhātyu...*

The curiosity of tactic must be raised only before a realised individual and it must be revealed only to a worthy inquisitor. In any case, we do need someone. At this moment, I wish to reaffirm that we unquestionably need someone!

*Main Āsamā Mein Bahuta Dera Raha Nahī Sakatā I*

*Magara Ye Bāta Zamī Ko Kaha Nahī Sakatā II*

*Sahārā Lenā Hī Paḍatā Hai Mujhako Bhī Dariyā Kā I*

*Kyoki Main Eka Katarā Hū Tanhā Beha Nahī Sakatā II*

The poet similises himself with a water droplet and says that I am a drop and I cannot flow alone, I ought to blend myself in a larger flow. Similarly, we ought to accompany a spiritual-seeker who is profoundly engrossed in the quest of mysteries. Feeling jealous or competing with such people will not help. I and you ought to accept that 'Main Eka Katarā Hū Tanhā Beha Nahī Sakatā', these lines are composed by Wasim Barelvi Sāheb.

My listeners, we ought to know the mystery from someone. I shall share with you in simple words

whatever comes to my mind by my Guru's grace. The main subject of this Kathā will be 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā'. We need to have the following four aspects with us in our spiritual journey. Our journey will complete unobstructed provided these four aspects prevail. I am not promising anything, but only sharing my personal experience. The obstructions that I mention are not mundane obstructions, but the ones related to the supreme path of spirituality. One who abides by the following four aspects would face no obstructions in the path of spirituality.

*Saciva Saṃga Lai Nabha Patha Gayaū I SDK-40.01 I* Vibhīṣaṇa resorted to Lord Rāma with his ministers. Who were those ministers? 'Rāmāyaṇa' doesn't mention their names or the number of ministers. It's my belief that they were eight in number. I have no idea how has eight sprung up in my mind! It's not written anywhere. If I find it written somewhere, it will only reinforce my belief. This man took the ministers along with him while on the way to Rāma. I have searched four such ministers. We can reach the Supreme Entity if the four aspects accompany us. We need four ministers, Bāpa! One of the ministers in 'Rāmāyaṇa' is Sumaṃta. He is the minister to King Daśaratha. He is a charioteer as well as a minister. If I and you happen to find a minister like Sumaṃta, we can attain the Supreme Entity unobstructed. VyāsaPīṭha would like to interpret the meaning of Sumaṃta as a benevolent mantra. Obtaining a benevolent mantra from an Enlightened-Being can play the role of the greatest minister in our life. It could be Rāma, Śiva, Allah, Jesus or any esoteric mantra. I harbour no desecration for anything, whatsoever. Nonetheless, the mantra should be benevolent and not foul or related to witchcraft! I fail to understand if black magic really exists!

A woman came to meet me few days ago. Probably Mayabhai was sitting with me. She told me that, I want you tell me if someone has casted an evil spell on me! I replied that you have come to a wrong place! A benevolent mantra could be a two-lettered word 'Rāma' or it could also be a mantra conferred by our Guru. The company of such a mantra will aid our spiritual journey towards the attainment of Lord Rāma. Even if someone like Sūgrīva tries to obstruct our

journey, they would fail to stop us. Someone like Hanumāna will hold our hand and takes us to Lord Rāma. So, the first minister is in form of a mantra and one must seek the mantra from a realised soul who is not only accomplished with that mantra but has also hallowed himself/herself through the mantra as per the verse, 'Bhayau Suddha Kari Ulaṭā Jāpū'. Seek the mantra from the one who has purified their inner realm through that mantra just like Sage Vālmiki. Such a mantra can then play a role of a minister in our life. 'Rāmāyaṇa' mentions another minister as follows,

*Saciva Birāgu Bibeku Naresū I*

*Bipina Suhāvana Pāvana Desū II AYK-234.03 II*

The second minister is in form of dispassion. Come the moment of renouncement, take a lead. Come the moment of hoarding, stay last and accept whatever comes in your part. S/He who takes no time in renouncing, attains the Supreme Godhead forthwith. As far as possible, don't expand your activities, because it becomes extremely difficult to manage if we have not matured spiritually by our Guru's blessings. The spiritually matured seekers face no issues. They pass through the mundane activities as easily as a silken thread passing through cream. The minister in form of dispassion helps us attain Lord Rāma. The third minister is he who upholds righteousness. The season of Christmas is currently on. Jesus has his own scripture and so do Muhammad Paygambar, Shikhs, Jains etc. Our country has Vedas to 'Rāma Carita Mānasa'. Our cherished scripture should play the role of an accompanying minister in our life. It could also be a custom scripture composed of our Guru's words, like that of KabīraSāheb. A minister in form of scripture must be with us. Its guidance is essential. In the final stage, the scriptures are also left behind. But that's not our capacity. It's easier spoken. I can leave Rāma, but I cannot leave RāmaKathā, Sāheb! I don't think Rāma would ever come to meet me in person, because I don't possess that level of penance. However, by your blessings if He does appear before me and asks me to leave RāmaKathā, I will bow down to His feet and modestly tell him that I can leave You, but not RāmaKathā. The reason is that whatever I have attained is all from RāmaKathā. Sahajobai stands by me,

Rāma Tajo Main Guru Na Bisāru I  
Sahajobai said that I can leave Rāma. What about  
'Rāmāyaṇa'?

Sadgura Gyāna Birāga Joga Ke I BAK-31.01 I  
Tulasīdāsajī proclaims 'Rāmāyaṇa' as the Sadguru.  
How can we forsake it? We can forsake Rāma, but not  
this Holy Scripture. So, a minister in form of a scripture  
is an extremely essential aspect.

The virtue of dispassion must act as our  
minister. Renouncement or dispassion must play the  
role of the ministers, with whom Vibhīṣaṇa reached  
Lord Rāma. These assisting elements must accompany  
us. This becomes possible only when our worship stays  
intact regardless of the situations around us. The most  
glorious point about Vibhīṣaṇa is that despite staying  
amid adverse surroundings, he worships the lord and  
could reveal the method or tactic to Hanumānājī.  
Hanumānājī understood the method or tactic and  
managed to meet Sītā. The abridged exposition of the  
entire 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' is 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa', I had  
so stated once. The abridged exposition of Vedas is  
Upaniṣad. The abridged exposition of Upaniṣad is  
'Bhagavad Gītā'. All maxims described in 'Bhagavad  
Gītā' are literally practiced in 'Rāma Carita Mānasa'.  
This is not my conclusion, but Pundit Ramkinkarjī  
Maharaj has concluded it. The abridged exposition of  
'Rāma Carita Mānasa' is 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa' in my  
understanding. The abridged exposition of  
'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa' is 'HanumānaCālīsā'. I have reached  
this understanding. I believe 'HanumānaCālīsā' as an  
abridged exposition of 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa'. Vibhīṣaṇa's  
courtyard is full of clusters of young Tulasī plants,  
'Nava TulasīKā Br̥mda Taha Dekhi Haraṣa Kapirāi'.  
As I entered my cottage, I was amazed to see diverse  
varieties Tulasī plants in the surrounding! And I  
anyways stay amid Tulasī! Tulasī constantly  
surrounds me every moment; I am almost  
insignificant in His absence. I have started calling  
myself as 'jamtu' (literally, insect; figuratively, being  
insignificant) since last few Kathās. The good point  
about an insect is that once it gets the support of a base,  
no one can move it even if the base moves! It just needs  
the base.

Knowing the method or tactic of living from  
an Enlightened-Being will make our life beautiful.

Ashish was telling me that researchers are globally  
contemplating that no age in the past has been as much  
peaceful as the current age. These researchers are not  
spiritual, but scientific and intellectual people. Yet we  
witness enormous turmoil around us. The wise men  
have identified its cause. I really liked the cause and I  
have been reflecting over it lately. The only cause of  
this unrest is that currently we have countless devices  
that keep us constantly connected with the outer  
world. Thus, even trivial news disseminates across the  
world in no time! Moreover, the media constantly  
relays the same news over and over again, nonstop!  
This disturbs us all the more! Otherwise, 'KaliJuga  
Sama Juga Āna Nahi', my Tulasī says there is no age  
like Kaliyuga. In olden days, people would not get the  
news till a couple of months or sometimes, even a  
couple of years. By the time people come to know,  
everything would have settled. Tulasī was true enough  
to state five hundred years ago that there is no age like  
Kaliyuga, Sāheb! In the ancient age, two communities  
viz. deities and demons were at war. They constantly  
clashed on several occasions ever since Satayuga,  
Sāheb! You wouldn't find any other lineage fighting in  
earlier age. Meghani wrote a lovely message to  
Gandhiji,

*Sura-AsuraNā Ā Navayugī Udhadhi-Valoṇe,*

*Śi Che Gatāgama RatnaNā KāmīJanone?*

*Tu Vinā, Śambhu Koṇa Piṣe Jhera Doṇe!*

*Haiyā Lagī Galavā Garala Jhata Jāo Re, Bāpu!*

*O Saumya-Raudra! Karāla-Komala! Jāo Re, Bāpu!*

*Chello Kaṭoro JheraNo Ā Pi Jajo, Bapu!*

*Sāgara Pīnārā! Aṃjali Nava Dholajo, Bapu!*

These were the only two communities at war.  
Thereafter, soon came a time when two families fought  
with each other. The entire family got destroyed  
between the clash of Kauravas and Paṃḍavas! The age  
of 'Rāmāyaṇa' depicts the clash between the two towns  
viz. Laṃkā and Ayodhyā. It was the struggle between  
the demonic instinct and the pious instinct. The  
current age is far away from communal clashes.  
Someone instigating a clash could only be an  
exception! The clash in current age is only between  
two individuals. People envy each other with the  
thoughts like, how come s/he progressed more than  
me? How come s/he learned more than me? How

come s/he earned inordinately in a limited span of five  
years? These clashes have begun today! These are the  
clashes between individuals. Hence, if we wish to feel  
content in this beautiful life, this age presents a  
beautiful opportunity.

Bāpa, you have waited for twelve long years to  
host this beautiful discourse and I am delighted that  
today my VyāsaPīṭha is here to recite the Kathā. We  
shall unite with each other for next nine days on this  
behalf. I shall share with you whatever comes to my  
mind through the episodes of 'Mānasa'. We shall have a  
pious and essential discussion about 'Mānasa-  
AśokaVāṭikā' in form of a harmonious dialogue. We  
shall also take up the episodes of 'Rāmāyaṇa'. This sets  
the background for next nine days. The first day of Kathā  
usually starts with opening invocations or *Mamgalācaraṇa*.  
Our philosophy doesn't claim invocative hymns as  
*Mamgalācaraṇa*. Everyone can recite invocative  
hymns; in fact, the educated class can recite more  
precisely. However, *Mamgalācaraṇa* refers to  
practicing the hymns in our life instead of recitation alone.

This supreme-scripture consist of seven  
cantos. In the beginning of the first canto, seven  
mantras were written as part of opening invocations.  
The first mantra offers obeisance to the goddess of  
speech, Sarasvatī and Lord Vināyaka.

*VarnāNāmArthaSamghānam*

*RasāNām ChandaSāmapī I*

*Mamgalānām Ca Karttārau*

*Vande VāṇiVināyakaḥ II BAK-Śl.01 II*

Śaṃkara and Pārvatī were offered obeisance, followed  
by the Gurus, Hanumānājī and Vālmikijī. Thereafter,  
Tulasī announced his resolve, 'SvāntaḥSukhāya Tulsī  
RaghunāthaGāthā', I am about to recite the story of the  
Lord of Raghur for the gratification of my own self, this  
was his first resolve. His second resolve was  
'BhāṣāBaddha Karabi Mein Soī', I shall versify this story  
for my own realisation. His third resolve was 'Nija Girā  
Pāvani Karan Kāra...', I shall recite this story to  
sanctify my speech. With these three resolves in heart,  
Tulasī proceeds to compose the scripture. Tulasī  
presented the opening invocations in seven ślokas in  
Saṃskṛta. He thereafter began in common dialect. He  
wants to speak in folk language. He wanted to bring  
ślokas amid folk people and hence he resorted to

*sorthas, dohās, chaṃdas* and majorly *copāis* to present  
the entire scripture before us in a commonly spoken  
language. He wrote five *sorthas*. He recalled Lord  
Gaṇeśa, Goddess Bhavānī, Lord Śaṃkara and sung the  
hymn of praise for the Sun God and Lord Viṣṇu. Tulasī  
has established the ideology of Lord Shankaracharya.  
We are the adherents of Hinduism which is a timeless  
religion and the offspring of Vedic tradition. Lord  
Shankaracharya has admonished us to worship the five  
Gods viz. Gaṇeśa, Pārvatī, Śiva, Viṣṇu and the Sun  
God. Jagatguru Shankaracharya has taught the  
methodical worship of these five gods. He follows  
absolute non-dualistic philosophy. Tulasīdāsajī is an  
adherent of the school of qualified non-dualism.  
Nonetheless, all wise are of the same opinion. Tulasī  
commences the scripture with the philosophy of  
Shankaracharya. I deeply adore this aspect. This  
illustrates Tulasī's idea of unity. The five gods were  
offered obeisance in five *sorthas*. And RāmaKathā  
commences by the obeisance to Guru who is an  
embodiment of the aforementioned five gods.

*Baṃdau Gurū Pada Kamja*

*Kṛpā Śiṃdhu NaraRūpa Hari I*

*MahāMoha Tama Puṃja Jāsu*

*Bacana Rabi Kara Nikara I BAK-So.05 I*

My VyāsaPīṭha has discussed this thought  
umpteenth times with you. Let me remind you once  
again that Tulasījī has offered obeisance to the Guru  
and in VyāsaPīṭha's viewpoint, if an individual gets  
devoted to Guru, s/he inadvertently performs Gaurī's  
worship, Gaṇeśa's worship, Lord Śaṃkara's  
anointment, Lord Viṣṇu's recitation of Purushasuktam  
as well as the sun salutation. Everything is contained in  
one Guru. Our philosophy states that no element is  
supreme to Guru, 'Nāsti Tatvaṃ Guroḥ Param', these  
words are not mine but that of scripture's. Of course,  
S/He must be a genuine Guru, which we must be  
mindful about. Nonetheless, it is the outlook of Guru  
and not the devotees. The devotees only need to place  
trust. Guru must be mindful of being a genuine Guru or  
otherwise the devotee will surpass the Guru. I tweak the  
psalm of 'Mein To Siddha Re Jāṇīne Tamane Seviyā' to  
'Mein To Śuddha Re Jāṇīne Tamane Seviyā'. However,  
our LakshmanBapo tweaks it further, 'Mein To Śuddha  
Re HṛdayaThī Tamane Seviyā'. O Guru, I have adored

you with pure heart, your genuineness is your own outlook. We are incapable of examining you. We have surrendered to you with immaculate heart. And you would know it instantly. Sāheb, let me tell you one point that the trained sniffer dogs can identify criminals. A four-legged beast can come to know whether an individual is criminal or innocent! Wouldn't a Guru come to know whether the opposite person is approaching with a pure intent or not? He upfront realises the intent. Cherish no intent in order to worship the Guru to the fullest, Sāheb! On that day Guru will pour Him/Her out profusely! While S/He is ready to offer an ocean, we are standing with tiny spoons! There is also a poem with this message.

Bāpa, Guru is Gaṃgā. Guru is Gaṇeśa, Guru is the Sun-God. Guru is Viṣṇu. Guru is Maheśvara. Tulasī commences RāmaKathā with the surrender to the Guru. Find someone who is awakened and endowed with wisdom before this life ends. Being solely endowed with wisdom could be a characteristic of a pundit. Hence, find a Guru who is awakened or mindful. 'Rāmāyaṇa' contains two words: 'PrabhuPrasāda' and 'GuruPrasāda'. Whatever happens is only by our Guru's grace. Our capacity is limited. Very few people are blessed by the Guru's grace. Whom can s/he criticise whose eyes get sanctified by the dust of Guru's divine feet? I clearly believe in this. I am not exhorting. Even as we may be pure in all respects but so long as we think to criticise others, realise that our eyes are foul. One cannot criticise anyone if eyes are sanctified by the dust of the Guru's feet. Tulasī perceived the whole world worthy of offering obeisance. No one appeared stranger to Him. He finally stated, 'Sīya Rāmamaya Saba Jaga Jānī'. The whole world is the manifestation of Lord Sītārāma for me. He presented the very idea of

Upaniṣad in the copāi. The dust of the Guru's holy feet can transform our vision to perceive the whole world as the manifestation of the divine. Thus, while offering obeisance to everyone Tulasīdāsajī offered obeisance to Kausalyā and other mothers, along with Daśarathajī followed by King Janaka, the four brothers and Śrī Hanumānajī,

*MahāBīra Binavau Hanumānā I  
Rāma Jāsu Jasa Āpa Bakhānā II BAK-16.05 II  
Pranavau PavanaKumāra  
Khala Bana Pāvaka GyānaGhana I  
Jāsu Hṛdaya Āgāra Basahi  
Rāma Sara Cāpa Dhara II BAK-17 II*

Hanumānajī is an incarnation of Śaṃkara. He is the god of common people. Every village has Hanumānajī in some form or other. Therefore, we have worshipped Hanumānajī as the god of common people. Hanumānta is the supreme element. Seek His shelter when you realise. Tulasī has sought His shelter. Trusting His words, the element of Hanumānta turns out to be exceedingly essential.

*Maṃgala-Mūrti Mārūta-Naṃdana I  
Sakala-Amāṃgala-Mūla-Nikaṃdana II VP-XXXVI.1 II  
Pavana-Tanaya Saṃtana-Hitakārī I*

*Hṛdaya Birājata Avadha Bihārī II VP-XXXVI.3 II*  
Why did Tulasī discuss about Hanumānajī after discussing about the Guru in depth? If you cannot trust any human, consider Hanumānajī as your Guru. In short, seek Hanumānajī's shelter if you don't find a worthy Guru. Ladies and gentlemen, being rural people we are unaware of mantra and worship. Hence, Hanumānajī's shelter should be good enough. He gambols in and out from our navel to nostril everyday in form of our breaths. Seek the shelter of Hanumānajī as He is the vital force of life. I usually pause the first day Kathā at the obeisance of Hanumānajī. I am thus pausing today's Kathā.

***The age of 'Rāmāyaṇa' depicts the clash between the two towns viz. La kā and Ayodhyā. It was the struggle between the demonic instinct and the pious instinct. The current age is far away from communal clashes. Someone instigating a clash could only be an exception! The clash in current age is only between two individuals. People envy each other with the thoughts like, how come s/he progressed more than me? How come s/he learned more than me? How come s/he earned inordinately in a limited span of five years? These clashes have begun today!***

## AśokaVāṭikā is the truth of my and your life

'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' is the central thought of this spiritual discourse. Before we discuss further, let me address a few questions briefly. A foreign listener has asked one question, "Jaya Sīyārāma Bāpu, What is 'gebī'?" A devotee who has experienced a gebī Guru can alone explain its meaning. The rest would only be commentary, exposition or mere play of words. Only those who have truly experienced can tell its meaning. Either LalBapu can explain it or a devotee who has total faith in LalBapu's consciousness can describe it. But Bāpa, since you have asked me let me tell you that one meaning of geba is something that cannot be deciphered. It's called as 'alakha' (unknown) in the terminology of Upaniṣad or 'Mānasa', something that cannot be known. Even if it's known, it cannot be described. Many have known, but are unable to articulate. It is utmost occult or mysterious. The Supreme Entity or the Entity of Guru which transcends our sense of understanding is called as Gebī-Guru by LalBapu. LalBapu himself can talk more about it. The term gebī refers to something that cannot be comprehended and he who comprehends cannot explain it to others. It refers to an indescribable element.

Another meaning of geba is space or ether. I am glad to know that a young listener of VyāsaPīṭha who works at NASA has sent 'Rāma Carita Mānasa', 'Bhagavad Gītā' and a small idol of Hanumānajī in a spacecraft! The spacecraft has returned unharmed with the three entities! He who remains hale, healthy and unharmed despite reveling in geba is called as gebī. Otherwise a plunge into the unknowns doesn't keep even the wise men hale! Hence, geba means something that cannot be understood, Sāheb! It is utmost mysterious! It can be interpreted in various ways. It's something that's unwritten. The speech is capable of describing, but it cannot describe without seeing since it's sightless. Eyes can see but it cannot describe without tongue. This indescribable story could be the element of geba, This is what I personally believe. This concludes one question.

The second letter is not a question, but a poem shared by Pankaj! Takhatdanji has written a lovely poem which became quite renowned,

MojaMā Re'vu, MojaMā Re'vu, MojaMā Re'vu Re,  
Agama Agocara AlakhadhañiNī KhojaMā Re'vu Re...  
- Dan Algari

It was later altered in Kathā with an idea that a spiritual aspirant must stay mindful. Hence, Pankaj tweaked few more words, which sounds good. I like everything that's good. Someone asked me, Bāpu, don't you like the bad aspects? I don't perceive anything as bad, Sāheb! The feeling of like and dislike would arouse only if I perceive things as good and bad. I am not habituated of categorising things as good or bad, because it is not present in our very genes, Sāheb! Many people tell me that the other person is too evil, yet You respect him enormously! It's you who perceive him as bad, I cannot think of him as being bad! It's a good composition,

BhānaMā Re'vu, BhānaMā Re'vu, BhānaMā Re'vu Re,  
Sugama Sugocara SadguruNī ŚānaMā Re'vu Re...

One gentleman has written a letter to me titled 'Morari Bāpu in Kutch: From Madhapar To Modpar'. He has written his name as well. The letter has come from Bhuj. He has asked good questions. It would be a lengthy discussion if I read all the questions. He has asked, "Bāpu, why was Lord Rāma obstinate to not budge from going to the woods even if His father Dasratha was on the verge of dying? Show me at least one copāi in RāmaKathā from Dasratha's lips where he has ordered an exile to Rāma. Neither has Kaikeyī ordered Rāma directly. When Rāma enquired about the father's tensed state, Kaikeyī did inform about the two promises which she sought. Apart of

this Kaikeyī has not ordered Rāma. Even though Dasratha would have ordered an exile to Rāma, Sītā could have returned obeying Dasratha's order. This would have saved his life. At the cost of Dasratha's life, Sītā was insistent to follow her husband's footsteps, is this justified? Rāma appears to be in hurry to leave for the forest. Why did Rāma rush to the woods with obstinacy?" This is one question. He has asked several such questions! I shall read all of them. Bāpa, I am pleased that people are thinking beautifully after listening to the Kathā. I welcome such thoughts.

Bāpa, let me at least answer one question. I shall concur with your point as well. Daśaratha never ordered Rāma an exile into the woods. He had only given two promises. No one including Kaikeyī has ordered Rāma to leave for the forest. The questioner's name is Maheshbhai from Bhuj. Why was Lord obstinate? Why didn't He stay back? This is his first question. His second question is that despite extensively convincing Sītājī, why did She not stay back? Both the questions are equally good. Three people have tried to convince Sītājī. Mother Kausalyā has convinced Sītājī to stay back. Daśaratha has attempted to convince Her. Lastly, Lord Rāma Himself tries to convince Sītājī.

'Rāmāyaṇa' has three Vāṭikās or groves. The center of all three groves is Mother Jānakī. The first is Janka's 'PuṣpaVāṭikā' which has Sītā in the center. The second is Rāvaṇa's 'AśokaVāṭikā' which also has Sītā in the center. And while convincing Sītā to stay back, Kausalyājī names another grove as 'BiśaVāṭikā'. This is the third grove manifested in 'Rāmāyaṇa',

Biśa Bāṭika Ki Soha Suta Subhaga Sajīvani Mūri II  
Can a life-giving herb fit in a poisonous grove? Sītā personifies life-giving herb. There was no need for Hanumānājī to visit Dronachal. He had already seen the life-giving herb earlier in form of Sītā, 'Subhaga Sajīvani Mūri'. These are Tulasī's words. The third grove is extremely mysterious. Why did Hanumānājī go to Dronachal instead? The reason is that it was Lord's wish to get the life-giving herb from there. The first mundane reason could be that the local life-giving herb may not have appeared as valuable as the herb from Dronachal! Hence, He ordered an imported medicine! This is what happens with us. We don't value the in-house Guru! As a reciter of 'Rāmāyaṇa', I

can state with utmost faith and immense responsibility that had Lakśmaṇājī sipped the juice of a single leaf of AśokaVāṭikā, he would have instantly turned conscious. But Hanumānājī was sent to Dronachal only to make us realise the mundane reason; we fail to value the in-house physician! The second reason is Lord Rāma's resolve. God's acts of incarnation are always preplanned, which we often fail to understand! Lord's plan was to confer nirvānā to every demon. Their nirvānā would free them from the cycle of transmigration and also free the world from their evil acts, thus avoiding the downfall of righteousness. Had Hanumānājī informed Laṃkā's physician about the presence of the life-giving herb in AśokaVāṭikā by virtue of Sītā's presence, he would have instantly informed Rāvaṇa who would have used it to revive the dead demons! Thus, their nirvānā would be blocked! This was my Rāghava's secret plan as I perceive. These are His master strokes!

Tulasī terms the life-giving herb as subhaga. Subhaga means beautiful. Jānakī is beautiful. There is no life-giving herb or vital force of life like devotion in the world. There is no life-giving herb like peace in the world. There is no life-giving herb like unqualified energy in the world. My mother Jānakī incarnates in 'Rāmāyaṇa' in these three forms. I want to discuss with you the method to attain the following three aspects: Sītā present in AśokaVāṭikā in form of cosmic energy, Sītā present in AśokaVāṭikā in form of devotion and Sītā present in AśokaVāṭikā in form of peace in the opinion of Jagatguru Shankaracharya. There are nine methods to attain devotion. Devotion is nine-fold and Vibhīṣaṇa cites nine methods for its attainment. Secondly, Sītā also personifies peace and five methods have been described to attain peace. Lastly, Sītā is the manifestation of cosmic energy or transcendental power and there are four methods to attain it. Thus, we shall collectively discuss about eighteen methods. Before we discuss about the nine methods of devotion, let us understand some background of 'AśokaVāṭikā'.

Bāpa, 'AśokaVāṭikā' is a grove located in Laṃkā. However, it is not only the name of a grove located in Laṃkā, but also the truth of my and your life. Let us try to understand this with the help of few traits. Life is an intermixture of dualities. This whole creation is dualistic by nature. Everything is relatively

integrated in the world. Existence of bliss proves the existence of sorrow. Existence of honour proves the existence of dishonour. Existence of criticism proves the existence of praise. Existence of monks proves the existence of evils.

Vāṭikā is the truth of life. 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' contains the words 'bāga', 'vana', 'araṇya' and 'vāṭikā'. Each word has a different meaning. Our erudition obtained from the Guru assists by a great extent in understanding the fine line of difference between these words. One must constantly realise that it's the grace of Guru behind our every accomplishment, Bāpa! This feeling is extremely necessary. Let me tell you as well that if the Guru has bestowed grace on you, please don't take undue advantage. The disciples of a true Guru would never publicise the Guru's grace, Sāheb! The Guru's grace is like a fixed deposit. If S/He bestows grace on us, don't take undue advantage! The day a devotee takes advantage of the Guru's grace, s/he faces a downfall! Unrighteousness has no power to harm righteousness. Darkness has no power to stop the sun from rising. Righteousness faces a downfall only by fake religions, which are not religion in true sense! 'Dharma' is the purest word! Don't seek advantage of being a monk!

Bānu Lajavāya Nahī Ho, Mālā Che Ḍokamā...  
One needs to cultivate this kind of faith towards our Guru. There is a couplet by Raj Kaushik,

Mujhe Jitanī Jarurata Thī Vo  
Utanā Ho Gayā Merā I  
Phira Usake Bāda Vo Kisakā  
Vo Allāh Jāne Yā Vo Jāne II

Once our Guru gives us the mantra or explains us the idea of truth, mutual love and compassion, we should not feel jealous of others? Do we have the capacity to absorb more than our need? Our capacity is too weak! We cannot take in more! The Guru controls every instinct of a devotee, Sāheb! Don't take advantage of your penance. Don't take advantage of the erudition bestowed by the Guru. He gives copiously, Bāpa! Ocean doesn't invite a river, but the rivers merge into the ocean uninvited.

So, AśokaVāṭikā is the truth of life. Our life is intermixed. It's full of dualities. We cannot absorb more divinity than our capacity. Whenever I am given lodging, I first sit on the swing, have a look at my yajña

altar and check the switches of light, fan, geyser etc. in the room. This is not only true for me, but you as well. If we are to stay in a room for a couple of days, we identify the switches of various equipments. We also control the speed of fan as we need. Similarly, a true devotee of Guru may get angry, but s/he can control its intensity. Such a devotee should have identified the switch or trigger point of anger within her/himself to control its intensity! We ought to be aware of our switch. We must be in possession of the switch of discretion to control its degree. Buddha talks about 'samyak' or moderateness in everything.

Now observe AśokaVāṭikā. AśokaVāṭikā contains both śaya (destruction) and Akśaya (indestructible). Akśayakumāra is Rāvaṇa's son. Akśaya means indestructible. But as soon as he entered AśokaVāṭikā, he was destroyed the very next moment. Hence, both śaya (destruction) and Akśaya (indestructible) are present in AśokaVāṭikā. AśokaVāṭikā contains both fear and peace. The demonesses exhibit fear to Jānakī and so does Rāvaṇa. Whereas in Shankaracharya's terminology, Sītā is peace personified. AśokaVāṭikā contains the demonesses with demonic instinct as well as saintly disposed Trijaṭā. The two opposite natures are intermixed in the same place. AśokaVāṭikā demonstrates both attack and protection. Let me go further to state that it contains problems as well as reconciliations. It has doubt as well trust. Sītā was gripped by doubt after hearing the monkey's talks! She wondered as to how will this monkey free me from Rāvaṇa's trap? The moment Hanumānājī manifested in colossal form, Sītā's trust was reinforced. Therefore, this grove is not only an orchard in Rāvaṇa's Laṃkā but also the truth of our life. Several dualities are intermixed in AśokaVāṭikā! It can be reached by means of both devotion as well as tactic!

Let me and you absorb the truth of AśokaVāṭikā through the spiritual discourse. The introduction of AśokaVāṭikā beings from the verse, 'Taba Asoka Pādapa Tāra Rākhisi Jatana Karāi'. Rāvaṇa abducted Jānakī in 'Rāmāyaṇa', 'Hāri Parā Khala Bahu Bidhi Bhaya Aru Prīti Dekhāi'. He tried to fear and allure Jānakī through various means. When he could not convince Jānakī to his will, he gave up in all

respects. At that moment, he placed Sītā well guarded in AśokaVāṭikā beneath the Aśoka tree, 'Bana Asoka Sītā Raha Jahavā'. No prisoner will ever say that, "I am staying in prison." One would always say that, "I am in prison." The reason is that one is not in prison by will, but by force. Which word has Tulasī used here?

Bana Asoka Sītā Raha Jahavā II SDK-07.03 II He doesn't say that Sītā is present in AśokaVāṭikā, but he says that Sītā stays in AśokaVāṭikā. Devotion dwells everywhere equally alike. It has no disgust between Rāvaṇa and Rāma. It harbours no contempt for anything. It dwells in PuṣpaVāṭikā of Janaka's dispassionate town in form of Jānakī and also dwells in Rāvaṇa's carnal town in form of Sītā. The reason is that She Herself is Vaidehi, an epitome of dispassion and hence, she permeates everywhere. It's not that devotion can be attained only in pilgrimages. At times, devotion can also be witnessed in the huts of destitute people, Sāheb! So, AśokaVāṭikā is not just an episode or a piece of land or a location in Lamkā. AśokaVāṭikā is the truth of our life. It contains every problem as well as reconciliation. Vibhīṣaṇa reveals the method to reach AśokaVāṭikā to Hanumānājī in the previous line.

Let us discuss the methods of nine types of devotion. Now, I am in a dilemma whether to choose the devotions described in 'Rāmāyaṇa' or the ones from 'Bhāgvat'.

Prathama Bhagati Saṁtanha Kara Saṁgā I  
Dūsari Rati Mama Kathā Prasamgā II ARK-34.04 II  
This depicts nine types of devotions described by Lord Rāma before Sabrī in 'AraṇyaKāṇḍa'. You are also aware of the devotion from 'Bhāgvat',

Śravaṇam Kīrtanam Viṣṇouḥ  
Smaranam PādaSevanam I  
Archanam Vandanam Dāsyam-  
SakhyamĀtmanivedanam II SB-VII-5.23 II

Let us seek shelter of the greatest Purāṇa. The first devotion is listening to the Lord's glorifications. When does listening devotion turn possible? It turns possible in the company of a saint. One cannot obtain this devotion by accompanying a non-saintly person. One instead falls prey to hearing rebukes from the person in concerned as well as others. There is a vast difference between hearing and listening devoutly. While we hear, we barely listen! I can state on the basis of 'Rāma

Carita Mānasa' that once must expect no reward of listening to the spiritual discourse. Tulasīdāsajī has said in 'Mānasa' that the spiritual discourse itself is the reward and not the means of reward. Please do not forget this. The spiritual discourse is the result. My Tulasī endorses the fact that the reward or result of every spiritual discipline is the spiritual discourse. And the only thing left to be attained after attaining this reward is the aesthetic relish or rasa of Lord's Name. The element of aesthetic relish is the only attainment to be sought in the end. Therefore, please don't stay in a myth that attending the spiritual discourse will run your business successfully or shall attain you heaven after life or shall save you from abiding in hell! As per Tulasīdāsajī's writ, the spiritual discourse is the reward.

The listening-devotion is the very first devotion. What is the method to attain listening-devotion? Its method is the metaphoric earring in the ears. The ear-piercing ceremony is not only a mundane ritual, Sāheb! It's figurative of someone's command. The way Karṇa's earrings were fraudulently snatched by Indra in 'Māhābhārata', the deceptive people of the society have snatched our metaphoric earrings as well! The earrings are symbolises our listening skills. I strongly feel that if Karṇa's earrings, symbolic of his listening skills, were not snatched earlier, he would have listened to 'Gītā' more than Arjuna. However, Kṛṣṇa was aware that Karṇa was the son of sun-god and therefore, his listening-devotion towards 'Gītā' would bring him instant enlightenment as compared to Arjuna. Bāpa, the first method of listening-devotion is to protect the science of listening skills from few people in the society. People who stop others from listening to the spiritual discourse by undervaluing Kathā are engaged in the act of snatching our listening-devotion. The episode of snatching earrings is not only confined to 'Māhābhārata'. It's necessary to preserve our listening skills, because listening to spiritual discourse will endow us with discretion.

Binu Satasamga Bibeka Na Hoī I  
Rāma Kṛpā Binu Sulabha Na Soī II BAK-02.04 II  
Listening in apt manner will endow us with erudition and discretion. S/He who is blessed with erudition by listening to the Guru-time and again, must use

discretion at the right moment. S/He who is blessed with listening skills attains the method of listening-devotion, which ultimately takes one to surrender or self-confession, which is the highest state of devotion. It makes one completely surrender. Therefore, listening to the spiritual discourse is the first devotion and its method is protecting our listening skills from being snatched. Please note that while I encourage listening to spiritual discourse, I am not insisting to listen to my discourse alone. I do listen to others with an equal interest for I know that it's the first devotion. Listening to someone's discourse or address is listening-devotion for me. Listening to saṁtavāni, spiritual discourse, muśāyara or ḍāyarā is listening-devotion for me. We attain in abundance through these programs. Nonetheless, please be mindful of protecting our listening-skills from the snatchers in the society. Alternately, it also refers to being staunch on the path of truth regardless of others' opinion. For instance, when someone speaks ill about others, we blindly tend to accept it as truth; this mindset is also symbolic of our earrings being snatched! In 'Māhābhārata', the earrings were snatched by Indra, who is a deity and hence, immortal. Few people in society engaged in such acts are also like Indra and they would continue to exist eternally. Listening-devotion is not confined only to the spiritual discourse but any virtuous discussion.

Kīrtana or singing devotional hymns is the second devotion. Its method is the cognizance of time and place. Kaliyuga holds the glory of reciting Lord's Name and its method in my VyāsaPīṭha's view is due cognizance of time and place. As Hanumānājī entered AśokaVāṭikā with the devotion of kīrtana, He did not immediately start singing the devotional hymns with cymbals in hands! He instead reflected to find the right moment to appear before Sītā and recite Lord Rāma's story. Hanumānājī illustrated these discretions because He had taken the method from Vibhīṣaṇa. He began reciting Lord's story or singing devotional hymns when it was the right time to do so. He identified the right opportunity. The moment He saw Jānakī suffering extensively, He dropped the signet ring embossed with 'Rāma' and it was only when Jānakī enquired, "Who are you?" that He began to extol Lord Rāma's glory, 'Rāmacandra Guna-Baranai-Lāgā'. This

is the method of kīrtana. The third devotion is 'Viṣṇouḥ Smaraṇam', Lord's remembrance. The method or tactic of Lord's remembrance must be practiced deep within our heart, instead of chanting superficially by lips! Remembrance is the disposition of our heart. Remembrance is an act of heart. It may initially appear as an activity of mind, but its eventual encampment is heart. Note that the third method is completely opposite to the second one. The method of kīrtana is being cognizant of time and place, whereas one is not conscious of time and place when engrossed in Lord's remembrance! Lord could be remembered in America as well as Amreli! Lord could be remembered at dawn as well as at dusk! The limitation of time and place as cited by Vibhīṣaṇa doesn't apply to Lord's remembrance. Can there be a timetable for crying in Lord's remembrance? Remembrance probably transcends the measure of distance. The truth for the adherents on this path is that, the greater the distance, the more intense the remembrance and the lesser the distance, the less intense the remembrance. This is its method. Lord's remembrance arouses suddenly, impromptu. By my Guru's grace I also understand that we are utmost incapable to remember the Lord. The reason we tend to remember the Lord is only because S/He has remembered us somewhere. The source of this telepathy is Him/Her and not us. It's only when the Supreme Entity remembers us that our eyes brim over with tears.

Kaha Hanumanṁta Bipati Prabhu Soī I  
Jaba Tava Sumirana Bhajana Na Hoī II SDK-31.02 II  
Śrī Hanumānājī has stated that the greatest adversity in the world is ceasing to remember or adore our Lord. In my personal view, the place where devotion of remembrance has manifested copiously is Vrindavan or Chitrakut. The author of my 'Mānasa' says that whenever Lord Rāma remembers Ayodhyā, His eyes brim over with tears. This is the devotion of remembrance. There are different methods for each of the nine types of devotions. We shall discuss the next devotion tomorrow. Let me recite some chronology of Kathā.

Yesterday we offered obeisance to Hanumānājī. Thereafter, Lord Rāma's companions were introduced and offered obeisance. This was followed by Lord SītāRāma. They are essentially one.

Tulasīdāsajī has written the next chapter on the glory of Lord's Name at length. He offered obeisance to Lord's Name and extolled its glory. Lord's Name is the very form of the sacred and mystical syllable 'Om'. Śiva chants Lord's Name with the mindset of the greatest mantra and it's by the glory of Name that He confers the benefaction of salvation to all those who pass away in Kashi, regardless of the person's karma.

Lord's Name is an amazing element. You may chant any name as you like e.g. Rāma, Śiva, Durgā, Buddha, Mahāvīra or even Allah. The Indian saints have not discriminated at all. They have rather collapsed the walls of discrimination. Tulasījī says that Rāma is His cherished god. The glory of the Name Rāma is highly extraordinary, I agree. But Tulasī doesn't impose His decision on anyone insisting to chant only the Name 'Rāma'. You are free to chant any Name towards which you feel innately inclined. In this Kaliyuga, we cannot practice yajña or meditation. Anyone doing so is highly appreciable. But it's beyond our capacity. Neither can we worship or perform methodical adoration for hours together! Just chant any of the Lord's Name as per your inclination. Seek enormous shelter of Name. The glory of Name pervades all four ages, but Tulasī says that the glory of Name has been especially extolled in the Kaliyuga. Chant Lord's Name in any form, for all Names are one. We ought to convey this to the society boldly and fearlessly. Moreover, the realised saints from the land of Kutch like Dada Mekran have undertaken a highly important job. Words don't emanate noise, but are laced with fragrance. It's we who create the noise to make sure our word is heard by everyone. The Muslim mendicants instead possess the fragrance of words.

*AśokaVā ikā is not only the name of a grove located in La kā, but also the truth of my and your life. Life is an intermixture of dualities. This whole creation is dualistic by nature. AśokaVā ikā contains both śaya (destruction) and Akśaya (indestructible). Akśayakumāra is Rāva a's son. Akśaya means indestructible. But as soon as he entered AśokaVā ikā, he was destroyed the very next moment. Hence, both śaya (destruction) and Akśaya (indestructible) are present in AśokaVā ikā. AśokaVā ikā contains both fear and peace. The demonesses exhibit fear to Jānakī and so does Rāva a. Whereas in Shankaracharya's terminology, Sītā is peace personified. AśokaVā ikā contains the demonesses with demonic instinct as well as saintly disposed Trija ā. AśokaVā ikā demonstrates both attack and protection. It contains problems as well as reconciliations. It has doubt as well trust.*

They don't shout at top of their voice, yet their fragrance disseminates far and wide. Word has form (rupa), aesthetic relish (rasa) and fragrance (gamdha). And word has the sense of touch (sparśa) as well. Any word has a distinct fragrance, Sāheb! Those who have experienced cannot describe much. Tulasīdāsajī writes in 'Rāmāyaṇa',

Sadgura Baida Bacana Bisvāsā I

Samjama Yaha Na Biṣaya Kai Āsā II UTK-121.03 II  
Those who have heard His/Her word with faith experience its fragrance, Sāheb! Parveen Shakir says,

Terī Khuśbū Kā Patā Kartī Hai,

MujhaPe Ehasāna Havā Kartī Hai!

Mujhako Is Rāha Pe Calanā Hī Nahī,

Jo Mujhe TujhaSe Judā Karatī Hai I

Word contains aesthetic relish or rasa. When someone utters a beautiful word, we enjoy its rasa. Word bathes us in the nine rasas. Word touches us as well. Even if touching words are spoken from a far distance, our eyes fill up with tears. Word possesses the trait of touch. Word has a form. Word is a deity. It has a distinct form. The knower of word can manifest or create its form. Word manifests in form of a deity, provided we have faith. It's the matter of experience. The realised men who have attained the Guru's grace have had these experiences. This is the glory of words. Lord's Name is the divine word. As per my 'Mānasa', Lord's Name is synonymous of the mystical syllable Om. The Name and the God, whose Name we are chanting are not two separate entities. They are essentially one. It means Name and Form are essentially one and the same. Thus, Tulasīdāsajī has extolled enormous glory of Lord's Name.



## The quest of Sītā is the quest of energy or devotion

We are engaged in a pious and essential dialogue primarily on 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' in this Kathā. I have received several queries. Let me first begin with yesterday's curiosity. His first question related to 'Rāmāyaṇa' is that why is Lord Rāma rigidly obstinate for His exile? If neither Daśaratha nor Kaikeyī has ordered Rāma an exile into the woods, why is Rāma in hurry to leave for the forest, given the adverse situation at home? His second concern is that everyone has tried best to convince Sītājī to stay back and She staying back would have saved Daśaratha's life. She was anyways not ordered an exile, yet She laid so much emphasis on serving Her husband that the family became secondary! This is the first curiosity. I would like to share my thoughts on this based on my understanding by my Guru's grace and based on whatever I have heard from the saints, read from various sources or discussed with erudite men. Having said this, a monk's inner cognizance is deemed as the ultimate evidence.

Let's consider the following analogy. Assume that your father has promised a sum of Rupees One Lac for someone's wedding. Your father may not order you to fulfill the promise on his behalf; nonetheless, he is conscious of his words. Hence, it becomes the duty for a true son to fulfill the father's promise. Even though the king has not ordered Rāma, he is bound by his words. If a son like Rāma fails to fulfill the father's promise, the future of Indian civilization would be at stake! We can understand if it were an ordinary person in place of Rāma. Further observe that the listener has distinctly noted that no order has been given. However, you should also note that when Rāma leaves for the forest, the word 'bacana' has been used. Our philosophy lays great significance on the spoken word. Vedas, Upaniṣad, Preceptors and 'Bhagavad Gītā' can order everyone e.g. 'Yudhhāya KṛtaNīśchayaḥ...', 'Māmekam Śaraṇam Vraja...'. The orders can be relayed only from such authorities. However, please don't forget that a word holds greater significance in our philosophy than an order.

The father may not have ordered, the mother may not have clearly articulated, but Lord Rāma has said that, "I comply with my father's order", "Tāta Bacana". Please comply with the words of three entities without fail, Bāpa! Firstly, comply with the words of scriptures in all honesty. Do so until you reach a state where you can overtake the words of the scriptures. There comes a state in spirituality where the scriptures are left behind and the spiritual-seeker moves ahead. In this state, the scriptures follow the seeker. But the words of the scriptures are necessary for people like us. Secondly, abide by the words of truth. If someone tells us the truth, please accept it, even if s/he is our enemy. Here I would like to state the same for the words of a father. Eventually, I would only say that regardless of whether you can abide by anyone else's words or not, but please ensure you don't breach the words of the Guru. I would like to say from the bottom of my heart that we all have endured on the words of our Guru. Our tradition lives on the glory of words, Sāheb! Order can also be given by a policeman while regulating the traffic or by officials having the authority to command! But here it's about the words. And we have gone till the words of a Guru. Although Upaniṣad uses the word 'Ācārya' or Preceptor, but we could replace it with 'Guru'. However, Upaniṣad has admonished us with 'Mātru Devo Bhavaḥ', 'Pitru Devo Bhavaḥ' even before a Guru. This means that first comes the words of the mother, followed by the words of the father and lastly, the words of the preceptor. And the stature of Guru is altogether a different matter. Thus, even though it's not an order, shouldn't a son fulfill the father's words? Words hold infinite times more glory than an order. It's ultimately the glory of words. Lord Rāma felt that I must abide by the promise given by my father to someone, so what if he has not ordered me directly. This is the duty of a mature son. A rightful disciple must fulfill the words of the Guru. Therefore, Lord Rāma has not been obstinate as it appears. Rāma and obstinacy cannot go together, Sāheb! Rāma is extremely guileless and simple!

The second concern is that why did Sītā leave? Why did She lay greater emphasis to serve Her husband? Sītājī gives a lovely answer to this query. Can the sunlight leave the sun? Can the radiance of the moon leave the moon? O the lord of Raghus, can a shadow be torn away from its substance? I am ready to stay where You tell me. Even here there is no obstinacy. This episode just reflects oneness between Rāma and Sītā. Jānakī and Rāma can never separate. Therefore, there is no scope of question in my view.

Bāpa! The third concern is that, as per Jāyāyū's information Rāma very well knew that Rāvaṇa has abducted Sītā and kept Her in Laṃkā. Why did Lord then dispatch the troops of monkeys in every direction and wasted everyone's energy? He has not dispatched the troops to waste energy, but to quest the very source of supreme-energy. It may have wasted some energy, but the ultimate intent was to attain the supreme-energy. Rāma already knows everything being the Supreme Entity. So, this is indeed not the waste of energy. A Guru can give everything to a devotee in a moment, but S/He makes the devotee work for it by means of spiritual practice. To what extent is our spiritual practice necessary? It is necessary until we realise that nothing can materialise by our penance. Jānakī personifies the supreme-energy or supreme-power. It was the quest of this energy. Jānakī personifies devotion. Hence, dispatching the teams in every direction in Jānakī's quest also means that one need not pay much attention to specific directions while questing for devotion. Leave in any direction which comes first, because devotion has the importance of spiritual state and not the directions. It also means that devotion can be attained from any direction and hence, the teams were dispatched in every direction. The quest of Sītā is the quest of energy, power or devotion. Spiritual discipline is necessary until one realises that nothing can materialise by our practice.

The third question is that, “Bāpu, in 'Śrīmad Bhāgvatī' the people of Vraja stopped worshipping Indra on Kṛṣṇa's advice and instead worshipped Mount Govardhan. Being displeased by this, enraged Indra flooded Vraja. Kṛṣṇa lifted Mount Govardhan to save the inhabitants of Vraja. Wasn't Indra aware that

Kṛṣṇa Himself is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that he should not mess up with Him?” In my view, only eight people were able to recognise Kṛṣṇa in that age and Indra was not among them. Please understand one point clearly that Indra also failed to recognise Rāma! Indra is constantly indulged in sensuous pleasures. Hence, people indulged in sensuous pleasures can never recognise the Supreme Entity. Only those who lead a life that transcends sensuous pleasures can alone recognise god. The souls who transcend mundane virtues and who can control the organs of body can alone identify the Supreme Entity. It's beyond the capacity of a sensuous person like Indra to recognize Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa had incarnated to safeguard Indra's pleasures, but he failed to realise! He alone can know the God to whom God makes Himself known. The principle of Upaniṣad has been presented in 'Mānasa' in this way.

The fourth question is, “Bāpu, How old is Guru Sage Vaśiṣṭha?” I don't have his birth certificate! But I wish to answer this question because my listener is thirty-five years old. I have no idea about Vaśiṣṭhaji's age, but anyone who is genius in his field is felicitated by the title of 'Vaśiṣṭha', similar to the title of 'Vyāsa' being conferred today. I have no information how long did Vaśiṣṭha live as a person. As such seers can have extraordinarily long life, Sāheb! They are endowed with that kind of power and penance. He must have lived much longer. There is no point in discussing his age, because a Guru never dies! Can a Guru ever die? The divine incarnations of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa also had to forsake their body. If we reach a lofty spiritual state by walking on the footsteps of the Guru, there comes a time when Guru Himself comes to behold us in person. Bāpa, a Guru can never die. Vaśiṣṭha is capable enough to change ones destiny. ShardaMa was always insistent that Thakur Ramkrishna has not passed away, why should I relinquish my ornaments of a married woman? A Guru never dies. S/He just passes through this world. Osho's epitaph reads, "Osho - Only Visited this Planet Earth between Dec 11 1931 – Jan 19 1990". However, Osho's epitaph was installed lately. But our villages always said, “Our father passed away.” People never say that, s/he has died. We just pass through this world. So, Guru Vaśiṣṭha has arrived in the same flow.

The next question is, “Bāpu, What was Sītājī's crime that Lord Rāma abandoned Her? Just because an ordinary citizen was of the opinion that Rāma must not accept Sītājī since She has stayed in Laṃkā as a lone woman, should the king take such a critical decision on the opinion of a washerman? I don't feel Rāma should have abandoned Sītā.” I have shared three points with the young generation in Ahmedabad Kathā. Please remember three things viz. 'nimitta', 'niyati' and 'neti'. The episode of Sītā's abandonment needs to be thought from these three perspectives. The washerman is only 'nimitta' or an instrument. Further, we cannot comment of Lord's decision because, 'Ati Bicitra Bhagavaṃta Gati', 'neti' is the only word that can describe God's ways. The third cause could be 'niyati' or destiny. Destiny plays a role every moment and it spares none.

I and you ought to remember these three words in order to understand the jolts or setbacks of life. Some people are just become an instrument of giving us painful experiences. Eventually as we fail to understand the ways or course of God, we have no option but to pause with the word 'neti'. And we are unaware of our destiny. Who can know the destiny? Nowadays people talk about majority in democracy. The democracy during the reign of Rāma was such that the nation was not run by majority, but by 100% consensus. Hence, the power can change overnight even on the opinion of the most trivial man. If Rāma and mother Kaikeyī fight an election, Rāma would win by majority. Kaikeyī would receive only three votes! She would vote for herself. Mamtharā would vote for her. And my Rāma being an epitome of generosity would have definitely voted for her! Remember one more point that in this episode Rāma is not 'SītāPati' but 'PrajāPati'. In today's democratic terminology, I can state that Rāma is the President. As a President or the Lord of all created beings, it's Rāma's duty to think about even the most trifling man. The third force is destiny. Why do you worry if Sītā has not complained! We could have thought about it if Sītājī would have objected. But Jānakī has not complained. Otherwise, I as well feel pained thinking about Jānakī's fire ordeal and Her second abandonment when She had conceived. Nonetheless, these mysteries are impossible to understand.

“Bāpu, You have shared earlier that when Lord Rāma pledged to free this earth from the demons, Sītājī was displeased. She expressed disapproval by stating that You should have taken my concern. Since I am the mother of the Universe, I am a mother to the demons as well. But Bāpu, what about the evil disposition of the demons? Given this fact, they must be destroyed. What is your opinion?” Lord Rāma pledged,

Nisicara Hīna Karau Mahi Bhuja Uṭhāi Pana Kīnha I Sakala Muninha Ke Āśramanhi Jāi Jāi Sukha Dīnha II

Sītājī says, how could You take this decision without my concern? I am a mother to everyone. Sāheb, Sītājī has not challenged Rāma's pledge, but She Herself has taken a decision. She thought that the demons are my children, whom You are planning to kill and hence, it's my duty to stay with them till they are alive! Rāvaṇa has no power to abduct Jānakī. The mother has instead chosen to stay with the demons for a few days. Hence, this decision was Her own.

Bāpa, let's commence the discussion on 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā'. Tulasī has used the words bana, bipina, araṇya, bāga, upavana and vāṭikā generously in the entire 'Rāma Carita Mānasa'. 'Bana' means a vast forest, which is a dwelling place of living creatures, insects and beasts violent in nature. It's difficult to walk safely through it. It's also called as bana, bipina or araṇya. Upavana is the place of pastime. It's mentioned in our Saṃskṛta scriptures or books that the kings or the wealthy people had their private upavana for their pastime. While bāga means orchard or garden, it also means rest or 'ārāma'. Tulasīdāsajī uses the word 'ārāma' for PuṣpaVāṭikā. Janaka's orchard is synonymous of rest. People visit the gardens, sit on the benches and experience rest – this is bāga. However, our discussion is focused on vāṭikā. Yesterday we discussed that Sītā is the center of both the vāṭikās. Whether Jānakī is present in Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā or Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā, Sītā is present in the center of both the places. Only difference being that Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā has Rāma as well as Sītā. But Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā only has Sītā and not Rāma. Instead there is Rāvaṇa. This is an essential difference. Secondly, Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā has the temple of Gaurī. Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā has no mention of temple. Laṃkā otherwise is full of temples. But there is

no mention of temple in AśokaVāṭikā. In Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā, the companions accompanying Sītā are her guides and mentors; whereas in Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā, Sītā is consoled by Trijaṭā by Her side. The other demonesses try to scare Sītā by assuming dreadful forms on Rāvaṇa's order. PuṣpaVāṭikā has both Rāma and Sītā, but misses Hanumāna. Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā has Hanumānaji's entry and Vibhīṣaṇa shows Him the method to enter AśokaVāṭikā.

In Tulasī's view, Sītā is devotion personified and the method to attain devotion is revealed to Hanumānaji by a demon. Yesterday, we saw three methods on the basis of 'Bhāgvat',

Śravaṇaṃ Kīrtanaṃ Viṣṇouḥ

Smaranaṃ PādaSevanam I

Archanam Vandanaṃ Dāsyam-

SakhyamĀtmanivedanam II SB-7.5.23 II

Today someone has asked me a question, "Please explain how we can ward off the fear of death." The fear of death can be warded off by Lord's remembrance. 'Hāni Lābhu Jīvanu Maranu Jasu Apajasu Bidhi Hātha', it's written in 'Rāmāyaṇa' that these six aspects are in the hands of the Providence. However, by virtue of discretion attained through spiritual discourse, we can tell the Providence that even if the loss that I may face is the matter of your hands, not being disheartened by the loss is in my hands by my Guru's grace. Benefit may be in the hands of the Providence, but tell the Providence that auspicious is the matter of my hands. Giving life is in your hands, but once obtained, how to live to the fullest is the matter of my hands. Lastly, death is in your hands, but Lord's remembrance is in my hands. And Lord's remembrance alone can alleviate the fear of death. Death is a definite truth. We should not fear death; instead increase Lord's remembrance. There is nothing to fear. We have discussed the method of Lord's remembrance, which is the third devotion. The fourth devotion of 'Bhāgvat' is 'PādaSevanam'. Which is its method? Let's first understand its details. Our philosophy has significance of five aspects. Pāda means someone's divine feet and five aspects are associated with it in our philosophy. The first word associated with the divine feet is 'CarāṇaSparśa' i.e. touching the divine feet. The second word is

'CarāṇaPrakśālana' i.e. to lave the divine feet. The way devotees lave the Guru's divine feet. The third word is 'CarāṇaPūjā'. The fourth word is 'CarāṇaVaṃdana'. And the fifth word is 'CarāṇaSevā'. Bāpa, Kaliyuga has taken everything under its sway. Please be mindful while practicing the aforementioned five ceremonies. I cannot deny the glory of Guru's CarāṇaPūjā, CarāṇaSparśa, CarāṇaPrakśālana, CarāṇaVaṃdana and CarāṇaSevā. But these may promote personal adoration. PādaSevanam means laving the divine feet, touching the divine feet, adoring the divine feet, offering obeisance to the divine feet as well as offering the service of massaging the divine feet. Pāda also means carāṇa i.e. a metrical line of a composition. Even if we remember the last line of our Guru's composed psalm and practice it in our life, it's nothing but PādaSevanam. Pāda means GuruPada. GuruPada means the verses sung by the Guru. Carāṇa means an aphorism of the Guru or a verse composed by the Guru or a sentence of the Guru. It could be the last line of the composition or any line in between. Thus, practicing Guru's words is the method of the devotion of PādaSevanam in the understanding of my VyāsaPīṭha. Live your life complying with words, aphorisms and ideas emanated from Guru's lips. The tradition of Guru definitely holds the glory of Guru's divine feet in gross form, but in my view PādaSevanam refers to practicing the Guru's words.

The next devotion is 'Archanam'. The method of worship or methodical adoration is to do so with prideless consciousness. Not being proud of the service rendered to the Guru or God is its method. Instead, we discuss our doership proudly with others after offering the service. We need to be rather mindful of not falling prey to the pride of service. Narsinh has taught us,

Hu Karu Hu Karu Aeja Ajñānatā,

ŚakaṭaNo Bhāra Jyama Śvāna Tāṇe...

In Mehtaji's vision, ignorance is nothing but the feeling of doership or 'I-ness'. The next devotion is 'Vandanaṃ'. I have heard the meaning of Vandanaṃ from a saint. When we bow down to someone by joining our palms, we are promising him/her that we would not be dishonest. If we cannot promise, please do not bow down. No one is seeking obeisance. But

many people bow down on one hand and also betray on the other hand. The world is strangely surprising, Sāheb! The religious field is no exception! People applaud on the face and the very next moment, they talk ill on our back! The method of the devotion of Vandanaṃ is the promise or assurance of not being dishonest. The devotion of Vandanaṃ refers to not being dishonest towards the Guru. The method of the devotion of Vandanaṃ is that a devotee must not renounce honesty or loyalty towards the Guru. The next devotion is Dāsyam. I had heard the interpretation of dāsa from Pandurangdada several years ago. He said that we should become dāsa of such a person that we would never feel udāsa or sad in future. The day we feel sad, realise that our devotion is not firm. Don't ever be sad after attaining a Guru, one should become indifferent (udāsina) instead. Live in a frequency that neither criticism nor praise can touch us. Rise beyond the dualisms of honour and dishonour. This is the method of the devotion of dāsyam in the viewpoint of VyāsaPīṭha.

The eight devotion is 'Sakhyam' i.e. to befriend the Supreme Godhead. Friendship thrives on common traits, common addictions or common conduct. Addictions are not only limited to similar eating or drinking habits. Addition means vyasana in Devnagri. Vyasana means suffering in Samskrta. Devotion is often adjectivised with the word 'vyasana'. Devotion is commonly believed to be addictive. The devotion of friendship refers to practicing virtuous conduct similar to that of God. It's about practicing the virtuous conduct of our God or our Guru. Tulasī goes on to say in 'VinayaPatrika' that when would I live a life of a lofty Guru or a realised monk?

Kabahuka Hou Yahi Rahani Rahoungo I

ŚrīRaghunātha-Kṛpālu-Kṛpā Te

Samta-Subhāva Gahoungo II VP-172.01 II

Striving to inherit the virtuous conduct of our Guru or our Lord must be the course of the devotion of friendship. And the last devotion is 'Ātmanivedanam'. The state of Ātmanivedanam manifests after going through the previous eight stages, because it needs immense courage. Those who have become utmost fearless have confessed openly. The fact that Gandhiji has written his auto-biography in form of 'My

Experiments with Truth' only reflects his bold fearlessness. Morarjibhai Desai has also written fearlessly. His mausoleum has an epithet as 'AbhayaGhāṭa'. It's extremely difficult. One cannot become fearless without truth. Self-confession demands courage. The saints could do it. Self-confession is impossible without being fearless. Imagine a realised man, who composed a great scripture, confesses in the end: "I am dull-witted and there is no one as miserable as I am." All saints in our tradition have confessed in similar manner. The method of this ninth devotion is courage. It's easy to open the Holy Scripture, but tough to open our heart. It's only method or key is courage and fearlessness. Thus, concludes the discussion about nine types of devotion. Jānakījī in AśokaVāṭikā is devotion personified. Vibhīṣaṇa reveals the method to attain devotion personified Jānakī.

Tulasīdāsajī proclaims Sītājī as peace. By my Guru's grace, I understand five methods to attain peace. Further, Tulasīdāsajī proclaims Sītājī as primordial power or cosmic energy. I shall also share with you the four methods to attain this power or energy. The first method to attain Sītā in form of peace is solitude, which is necessary even if it's in gross form. Jagatguru Śaṅkara said, 'Ekāṃte SukhaMāsyatām'. When we get fed up we often say, 'Let there be peace!' At times, we may go away from the chaos for a couple of days to experience peace. Thus, solitude is a necessity. Crowd is the successful means of depleting penance of the spiritual aspirants! Tulasīdāsajī compares public opinion with fire. There is a difference between ekāgratā (intentness in the pursuit of a person or object) and ekāṃta (solitude). In Ekāgratā, the person or the object in concern still exists. And the presence of one automatically creates the existence of the other. Ekāṃta means the person doesn't need even himself/herself or cessation of even a single individual i.e. eka+amta. It essentially means that the person has become non-existent subtly. Ekāṃta or solitude is the first step to attain peace personified Sītā.

The second method to attain peace is to choose the night time. The realised men engrossed in the felicity of worship have always chosen the night.

The Lord of Yogis, Kṛṣṇa says 'Yā Niśā Sarva Bhūtānām', a monk stays awake when the world sleeps. Solitude assists the most in the night. The day time is dominant of restless energy. The morning time is definitely serene. Post 9 or 10 am, the restless energy starts dominating. The worldly activities start in full force by then! Hence, night is the time of worship for the monks. Hence, the night time is the method to attain peace. Let me iterate once again that day is to see, night is to cry in Lord's remembrance. The third method to attain peace is the practice to reduce the resolves and alternatives in mind as much as possible. The resolves and alternatives don't let us live in peace. This point is extremely difficult. I am aware that it's easier said than done. Nonetheless, it is definitely the method to attain peace. Therefore, Jagatguru says 'Ahaṃ Nirvikalpo', I am free from alternatives. When our resolves are free from alternatives, our Guru fulfills them. The only condition is that there should be no alternatives. Our resolves must be free from alternatives.

The fourth method is not having fear. This is the fourth trait of peace, because a fearful individual can never stay in peace. This is indeed difficult. It's easy to advice others to stay fearless. Even I use the phrase, "He who fears is not a monk." But it's equally difficult to practice! Being free from fear is the key to peace. Fear and allurements are the two aspects that trouble everyone extensively. Our practice of righteousness is either due to fear or allurements. Our country has witnessed many faiths which have intentionally failed to convey the core religion and instead presented allurements to the devotees. And the immature devotees regarded allurements as the final goal and missed to see the core religious values! Allurement is the fifth aspect that makes us restless. It will keep us constantly desperate. It will deceive us. It will delude us. These are the five keys to attain peace personified as Sītā. Lastly, there are four aphorisms to attain power or energy personified as Sītā, which I shall discuss tomorrow.

Let me recite some chronology of Kathā to you. Yesterday we offered obeisance to Lord's Name and extolled its glory. As per Tulasīdāsajī, Lord Śiva has composed 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' and formed four ghats. Tulasīdāsajī begins the Kathā from the ghat of

surrender and takes us to the ghat of karma on the bank of Prayāg, where Bharadvājajī asks Yajñavalkyajī to explain him about the element of Rāma. Sire Yajñavalkyajī commences the RāmaKathā with discretion and narrates the exploits of Śiva as the first topic. This is the process of unity. Even though the main story is about Rāma, the narrative begins from the exploits of Śiva. My ghat has always felt that Śiva is the door to Rāma. Therefore, the devotion to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa remains incomplete without the element of Śiva. Śiva is a necessity. It's impossible to understand Rāma without the element of Śiva. It's impossible to understand Kṛṣṇa without the element of Śiva. And therefore, the Kathā kick starts from the exploits of Śiva.

In one Tretāyuga, Lord Śiva visited Sage Kuṃbhaja's hermitage along with Satī to listen to the Kathā. Sage Kuṃbhaja worshipped both of them. Śiva accepted the worship respectfully, whereas Satī interpreted the sage's act wrongly. She doubted the competency of the sage to recite the Kathā since he worshipped the listeners. She misunderstood the sage's modesty. During that time, the sportive acts of Rāma's incarnation were on going in the then Tretāyuga. Sītājī had been abducted. Rāma was weeping like an ordinary mortal. At that moment, Śiva and Satī happened to cross Rāma's path. Śiva offered obeisance to Rāma. On observing this act, Satī's mind was gripped by doubt. She thought to herself, "My husband is the Supreme Entity and He offered an obeisance to a man who is weeping in His wife's separation and further acclaimed Him as 'Saticidananda'!" Satī doubted that Rāma is not the Supreme Entity. Lord Śaṃkara explained her in every way, but Satī failed to understand. Lord Śiva said, O good lady, if you doubt the divinity of the Supreme Entity, please go and examine for yourself. Satī tried to examine Rāma. She was stunned by Lord's divine opulence. Lord Śaṃkara enquired with Satī. She replied in affirmation, but hid the details. Śiva saw the entire incident in meditation. Lord Śaṃkara made a resolve impelled by God that if my wife has assumed the form of Sītā, I can no longer lead a householder's life with her for Sītā is a mother to me. I shall have no relationship with Satī until she exists in this body.

Śiva reached Kailāsa, sat outside the home and got immersed in natural incessant meditation. Śiva stayed in samādhi for eighty-seven thousand years, post which He awoke. Satī surrendered. Śiva gave her a seat in front of Him and began to recite delightful stories. At that instance, a yajña was organised in the abode of Satī's father, Dakśa. Prajapati Dakśa had invited everyone but for Śaṃkara, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Satī insisted, I am his daughter, even if You don't wish to accompany me, I would like to visit father's yajña. Satī arrives at her father's abode. No one honoured Satī due to Dakśa's fear. Satī was hurt. She sacrificed her body in Dakśa's yajña. Pundit Raminkarji Maharaj is of the opinion that Satī is figurative of intellect. Hence, intellect got burnt in fire and was reborn in form of reverence as Himālaya's daughter, Pārvatī. The daughter began to grow up soon. One fine day, Nāradaġi arrived. He performed Pārvatī's naming ceremony and forecasted her future by reading her palm-lines, "O Himācala, your daughter shall get a husband who would be 'Aguna Amāna Mātu Pitu Hīnā'." The parents were disheartened to know that their beautiful daughter shall receive a hideous husband. Pārvatī was wise to realise that the traits that were forecasted are present in none other than Māhādeva. Nāradaġi advised Pārvatī to practice penance in order to obtain Śiva as the husband. If Śiva becomes her husband, the evilness will get converted into divinity. Pārvatī started her penance. On the other hand, Lord Śaṃkara was engrossed in meditation when the Supreme Godhead appeared. Lord woke up Śiva and said, Satī whom You had abandoned is reborn as Himālaya's daughter. Please be kind to marry her now. Śiva accepted Lord's command as his paramount duty. Shortly, the deities approached Śiva and began to praise

Him. Śaṃkara realised their intent, for He is the God of the gods! He said, I agree to marry not because of your persuasion but because of my Lord's order. Māhādeva mounted the bull, Naṃdī. He held the trident in His hand. The bull is symbolic of righteousness. Young boys, uphold righteousness when you go to marry! Everyone reached Himachal Pradesh. Empress Mainā arrived to welcome the groom in a traditional manner. On seeing the serpents and scorpions around Śaṃkara's neck, she swooned!

Nāradaġi revealed the facts, "Mainā, the one whom you believe as your daughter is not your daughter, but she is a mother to you as well. She is the mother of the Universe, Pārvatī. It's only your fortune that She is born as your daughter. And the one whom you have insulted is none other than Śiva Himself." I have always iterated my interpretation of this incident that the element of Śiva is already present on our door and the element of primordial energy is already lying within us, but we remain ignorant of this fact until a Guru like Nāradaġi explains us. This explains the indispensability of a Guru. Everyone looked upon them with revered emotions and bowed down to Pārvatī. Lord Śaṃkara's wedding procession began. The daughter of Himālaya was devoted to Lord Śaṃkara. Pārvatī arrived at Kailāsa along with Śiva. Stipulated time span ended. Pārvatī gave birth to Kārtikeya. He conferred nirvānā to a demon named Tāḍakāsura through supreme exertion. Thereafter, one fine day, Lord Śaṃkara takes a seat in an innate posture beneath the banyan tree on Kailāsa who glory is known even in Vedas. Pārvatī arrives and asks nine questions to the Lord. And thus, Māhādeva commences the RāmaKathā from Kailāsa's ghat of wisdom.

*A Guru can give everything to a devotee in a moment, but S/He makes the devotee work for it by means of spiritual practice. To what extent is our spiritual practice necessary? It is necessary until we realise that nothing can materialise by our penance. Jānakī personifies the supreme-energy or supreme-power. It was the quest of this energy. Jānakī personifies devotion. Hence, dispatching the teams in every direction in Jānakī's quest also means that one need not pay much attention to specific directions while questing for devotion. Leave in any direction which comes first, because devotion has the importance of spiritual state and not the directions.*

## The center of Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā is Jānakī

'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' is the central point of this Kathā. Yesterday we discussed about the interpretations of different words chosen by the author of 'Mānasa' namely *bana*, *upavana*, *bāga*, *vāṭikā* etc. One meaning of *vāṭikā* is an orchard with inordinately high number of flowers. Therefore, King Janaka's *vāṭikā* in Mithilā is fully bloomed with flowers. The saints have called it as the *vāṭikā* of a dispassionate town. Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā on the other hand is the *vāṭikā* of a carnal town. I have heard this interpretation from the saints. However, the queerness about Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā is that it closely resembles an orchard of flower. It has only flowers and no fruits. The sad part about Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā is that it has no flowers, but only fruits. Both the orchards are extremely different *and yet* equally mysterious. These mysteries are revealed only by the Guru. They cannot be found in translation summaries or scriptural commentaries. It can only be known from the Guru's lips. Therefore, I have stated after profound reflection that I am still reciting the opening invocations of the Kathā. I have yet been unable to enter the real Kathā.

PuṣpaVāṭikā contains flowers. The fruits in terms of rewards will be given by the Guru. A devotee's capacity is figurative of flowers. Rāvaṇa's orchard is of a carnal town. He is endowed with physical pride. Rāvaṇa is a materialistic or carnal man. Janaka is a man who lives with no body, for he is no ordinary man. In the dialogue between Janaka and AṣṭāVakra, when they discuss about the country, AṣṭāVakra clasped Janaka's hand and asked, which country are you talking about? Are you taking about Āryāvarta or India or some other country? Janaka said, these places are just a finite pieces of land. At this moment, we recall the word of ṚgVeda, '*Viśvamānuṣa*' i.e. universal or cosmic man. Vinobājī has presented a lovely interpretation about Tulasīdāsajī by proclaiming Him as '*Viśvamānuṣa*'. He not only belongs to India, but to the entire Universe. Muhammad Paigambar is a '*Viśvamānuṣa*'. Jñāneśvar is a '*Viśvamānuṣa*'. Tulasī is a '*Viśvamānuṣa*'. Kabīra is a '*Viśvamānuṣa*'. Do remember one point Bāpa, he who gets endowed with saintliness longer remains confined to one specific country; he becomes the citizen of the whole world. He cannot be bound to one specific religion. A Guru is the universal man. He doesn't belong only to us. He belongs to the whole world. Therefore, we have the phrase of '*Kṛṣṇaṃ Vande JagatGurum*'. Kṛṣṇa is proclaimed as Jagatguru and so is Rāma in 'Rāmāyaṇa',

*Jagadguruṃ Ca Śaśvataṃ I Turīyameva Kevalaṃ II ARK-03-Chaṃda-09 II*

*Namāmi Bhakta Vatsalaṃ I Kṛpālu Śīla Komalaṃ II ARK-03- Chaṃda.01 II*

We have proclaimed Lord Śaṃkara as the Guru of the three spheres of the Universe. Thus, carnal people like us only perceive fruits or rewards instead of flowers. Note that fruits are symbolic of religious rewards or merits and flowers are symbolic of fragrance or aesthetic relish, *rasa*. I and you are only seeking rewards. We solicit the reward of righteousness, wealth, desire or liberation! Who wants to enjoy the fragrance of life? 'Rāmāyaṇa' talks of aesthetic relish or *rasa*; it talks about the fragrance or the essence of life. Thus, I perceive this difference between the mysteries of two *vāṭikās* by the Guru's grace. We can identify several more differences if we expand our contemplation by bulldozing our self-manifested ego, pride, envy, rivalry and jealousy! The bulldozer for destroying these woes is not obtained elsewhere but from our Guru, who neither takes its rent, nor keeps a driver to run it. The Guru Her/Himself would clear our woes and expand our contemplation.

The center of both the *vāṭikās* is Jānakī. We have chosen three forms of Sītā in this Kathā. Goswāmījī says, Sītā personifies devotion. Shankaracharya says, Sītā personifies peace. Yet again Tulasī says, Sītā personifies cosmic energy. Vibhīṣaṇa reveals the method to attain the three forms, on which have focused our discussion. Today we shall discuss the four methods or keys to attain the divine power or cosmic energy, which Vibhīṣaṇa has

revealed to Hanumāna. I have been thinking since morning that our contemplation is too narrow! Does Sītā only exist in the three aforementioned forms in 'Rāmāyaṇa'? No, absolutely not. After bulldozing my woes, I soon realised that Sītā manifests in several forms in 'Rāmāyaṇa'! Look at the evidence,

*JanakaSutā Jaga Janani Jānakī I*

*Atisaya Priya Karunā Nidhāna Kī II BAK-17.04 II*

Sītā's first form is Janaka's daughter. She is unlike an ordinary girl born in our families. She is not born from anyone's womb or body. She has originated from the earth. Janaka ploughed the land to eradicate drought and Jānakī emanated in form of devotion. Another form of Sītā is perceived in the opening invocations as '*Udbhavasthitisamhārakāriṇīm...*', She is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the Universe. '*Kleśahāriṇīm...*', She is destroyer of the five tribulations cited in Patanjali's YogaSūtra. And '*Sarvasreyaskarīm*', She ensures welfare of the whole world.

*Sarvasreyaskarīm Sītāṃ Nato'haṃ Rāmavallabhām II*

*'JanakaSutā'* is Her one form. Her second

form is the mother of the world '*JanakaSutā Jaga Janani Jānakī*'. Further, being Lord Rāma's consort is Her third form '*Atisaya Priya Karunā Nidhāna Kī*'. As the Guru bulldozes our woes further, we can perceive yet one more form of Sītā, which I have already shared with you, '*Samjīvani Mūri*', Sītā is the very source of life. I have already discussed this with you in the context of *BiṣaVāṭikā*. If we clear our woes further by Guru's grace, yet another form of Sītā comes to light wherein She shines like the asterism of Rohiṇī between Budha and the moon-god. These metaphors are worth interpreting. No word in 'Mānasa' is written without interpretation or explication, Sāheb! So, Sītā manifests in myriad forms. She pervades in form of Rohiṇī. Yet again Tulasī says, '*Brahma Jīva Bica Māyā Jaise*'. Sītā is *māyā* i.e. Lord's illusive power. The way Lord's illusive power stands between God and an individual soul, Sītā shines between Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. In front of Manu, '*ĀdiSakti Jehi Jaga Upajāyā*', Sītā pervades as the primordial power or the greatest illusive power. As we clear our woes further, we see yet another form of Her. Tulasīdāsajī says that Sītā is a female cuckoo. Sītā is the primordial energy or the mother of the Universe. Her every form is that of a mother. Tulasīdāsajī perceives a

mother even in Rāma. He stated in 'UttaraKāṇḍa', '*Durgā Koṭi Amita Ari Mardana*', He perceives millions of Durgā in Lord Rāma, who is potent enough to destroy the evils. The divine mother of the Universe was directly seen in Lord Rāma. So, Sītā is the primordial cosmic energy that pervades the entire Universe because Rāma and Sītā are not two separate personalities, they are one and the same.

In order to attain Sītā in form of energy, Vibhīṣaṇa has shown four methods, which I perceive by Guru's grace. Firstly, we experience power or energy by means of words. We realise the power lying within us through the words of some Enlightened-Being. Forget about the Enlightened-Being, even if an ordinary person appreciates us, on hearing his/her words we start feeling proud from within! If the words are true and the examiner is genuine, a distinct power or energy starts manifesting within us. The words are potent enough to do this. Brahma or the Supreme Entity is capable of invoking our dormant energy, Sāheb! And word is proclaimed as the Supreme Entity. We have treated word as the sibling of the Supreme Entity or as the cognate word of the Supreme Entity. When the Brāhamaṇas recite ChandiPath before the Goddess during the yajña, it manifests a powerful aura in the surrounding! Words have the power to infuse energy or power in an individual. Words of an Enlightened-Being can activate the energy within us. It motivates us when we are disheartened. Someone's word revives us from depression. Word is the first method to attain energy. Touch is the second method that can trigger our energy. Touch can activate our coiled energy which is otherwise dormant. This is neither our path, nor my interest. But there are few vital points in body which when touched triggers a profuse flow of energy. Touch activates our inner energy. Thirdly, someone's glance on us awakes our energy. The moment when S/He looks at us, a new energy starts manifesting. The fourth source of manifesting energy is surrender to any Supreme Entity. Śrī Hanumānjī goes to behold Jānakī, who is the manifestation of this energy. Hanumānjī is anyways the repository of divine energy, but if you observe the latter part, Tulasīdāsajī says that Hanumānjī's words were endowed with

extraordinary power or energy! Mother Herself has says this when She is pleased.

*Mana Saṃtoṣa Sunata Kapi Bānī I*

*Bhagati Pratāpa Teja Bala Sānī II SDK-16.01 II*

His words were laced with power. The mother felt gratified to hear Śrī Hanumānājī's words. How were those words? '*Mana Saṃtoṣa Sunata Kapi Bānī*' There are four types of words. The scriptures have cited several types of speeches or words. But here Tulasī's scripture presents four types of speech. The first trait of speech should be devotion. It must be laced with emotions. '*Bhagati Pratāpa...*', Tulasī cited the second trait of speech as majesty. The speech should be majestic, and not weak. Tulasī stated the third trait of speech as glory. The speech should be glorious or radiant. Every word has a distinct glory or radiance. The fourth trait is strong speech. It's not about physical strength, but the strength of soul.

So Bāpa, VyāsaPiṭha feels that these are the mediums or tactics to attain the primordial energy. After accepting Vibhīṣaṇa's advices, Hanumānājī assumes a different form and leaves for AśokaVāṭikā. Which form did Hanumānājī assume? In fact, before taking this form Hanumānājī had assumed the form of a Brāhamaṇa, '*Bipra Rūpa Dhari Bacana Sunāe*'. Even before this episode, Hanumānājī entered Laṃkā in form of mosquito, '*Masaka Samāna Rūpa Kapi Dhari*'. Going further reverse in '*KiṣkindhāKāṇḍa*' Hanumānājī dwelled in form of a Brāhamaṇa, '*Bipra Rūpa Dhari Kapi Taha Gayaū*'. Once again in '*SumḍaraKāṇḍa*' He assumed a minutest form while dealing with Surasā, '*Ati Laghu Rūpa Pavanasuta...*'. In the current episode when Hanumānājī goes to meet Jānakī after seeking Vibhīṣaṇa's advice, it's written that He assumed '*Soi Rūpa*', what does '*Soi*' refer to? Let me recite two couplets to you. Dila has given me these couplets of Khalil Dhanjetvi's ghazal two days ago. It beautifully conveys the problem with people. Listen to it, it will give you strength and empower you to reach the divine power. The first couplet is somewhat different wherein Khalil Sāheb says,

*Āpa Cho BhāṣābhavanaNā Māstara,*

*Lo, Jarā Ṭahukāno Tarajūmo Karo.*

This cannot be translated. One must only enjoy hearing it. However, the second couplet is what I want to convey,

*JheraNo To Praśna Kyā Che, Jhera To Hu Pi Gayo,*

*Ā BadhāNe Aeja Vāṃdho Che Ke Hu Jivī Gayo!*

The problem with people is that we are enjoying! Man has already consumed poison. Mīrā has already consumed poison. The fact that such people are still alive is everyone's real problem! Śaṃkara has consumed the poison! So Bāpa, which form Hanumānājī must have assumed? Now, let me clarify one point before you. The copāi of 'HanumānaCālisā' is different from the context of 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa'. Although in my personal faith 'HanumānaCālisā' is the abridged exposition of 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa'. Yes, I agree. But few lines of 'HanumānaCālisā' have no reference to 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa'. The five blessings that Mother Jānakī bestowed on Hanumānājī in 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa' are different than those in 'HanumānaCālisā'. Jānakī recognised Hanumānājī as being dear to Rāma and bestowed the blessings, '*Āsiṣa Dīnhi RāmaPriya Jānā*'. He is either Rāma's lover or Rāma Himself loves Him. He whom Rāma embraces, on whose head Rāma rolls His hand, whom Rāma calls proactively and whom Rāma gives a sit close to His own – Hanumānājī has been truly blessed with these four opportunities in 'Rāma Carita Mānasa'. Hanumānājī is dear to Rāma and Rāma loves Him therefore Jānakī bestows blessings to Hanumānājī by recognizing Him as Lord Rāma's beloved. Now count the blessings,

*Hohu Tāta Bala Sīla Nidhānā II SDK-16.01 II*

The first blessing that the mother conferred on Hanumāna is that, may you become the repository of strength. Mother has conferred blessings after deep understanding because a person who becomes strong, but lacks virtuous conduct, will only waste his strength. Karṇa is as strong as Arjuna. Probably on the weighing-scale of Talgājarḍā, Karṇa turns out stronger than Arjuna. I have my own weighing-scale. Karṇa is weighty. And he is tough for Arjuna only because he is stronger than Arjuna! When Arjuna exhibited his prowess with weapons, Droṇa was exceedingly pleased. Droṇa is completely biased towards Arjuna. At that moment, mother Kuṃtā was witnessing Arjuna's skills by sitting behind the curtain. The more heroically Arjuna exhibited his skill, the more pleased was Kuṃtā. She profusely showered her blessings. The more she saw his skills, the more blessings she bestowed. She was equally overwhelmed while

witnessing Karṇa exhibiting his skills. Let me say that while beholding Arjuna's skills Kuṃtā's eyes were filled with tears, but her bosom did not overflow with milk. But on witnessing Karṇa's skills, her bosoms overflowed with milk. He is a weighty son! If I compare both Arjuna and Karṇa with respect to strength, on my responsibility then I feel that Karṇa is weighty. Despite snatching away both earrings and armour, his weightiness has not reduced. His weightiness has increased because he got deceived knowingly with due understanding. Those who get deceived knowingly with due understanding, their weightiness will only increase. And those who deceive others, even if they may be highly weighty, their weightiness will reduce to half! So, if we weigh Arjuna and Karṇa in terms of strength and if we examine them justly with an unbiased vision then Karṇa will turn our weightier. Both are equally weighty. Yet in my view, Karṇa is slightly weightier. Yet this man has been humiliated on few occasions. He appears lacking virtuous conduct due to evil company. His decency of speech was refuted when Draupadī was being disrobed. Otherwise, he is the son of light, Sāheb! We cannot deny this fact! Mother Jānakī is very much aware that if I only bestow the blessings of strength without virtuous conduct, the strength will drive Him to wrong path. Bāpa, Hanumāna, may you become physically stronger and may you become virtuous of conduct from within and then,

*Ajara Amara GunaNidhi Suta Hohū I*

*Karahu Bahuta RaghuNāyaka Chohū II SDK-16.02 II*

The third blessing was, Hanumāna, You shall remain immune from old age, Bāpa! You shall stay free from old age. The fourth boon was, You shall be immortal. The fifth and last boon was, You shall become the storehouse of virtues. What if one is blessed with these five boons but lacks Rāma's grace? As soon as the mother said that may you attain Rāma's love,

*Karahu Krpā Prabhu Asa Suni Kānā I*

*Nirbhara Prema Magana Hanumāna II SDK-16.02 II*

The moment Hanumānājī heard in AśokaVāṭikā that Rāma shall bestow blessings on Him, He was overwhelmed with emotions, '*Nirbhara Prema Magana Hanumāna*'. What does '*Nirbhara Prema*' mean? After receiving the five rare blessings, one can feel burdened. But as soon as the point of grace was

mentioned, Hanumānājī felt as light as a feather with the thought that these blessings are the result of grace and not my greatness. Hence, He felt free from the burden. The question is that none of the various forms that Hanumānājī assumed are mentioned in the above boons. They are in fact present in 'HanumānaCālisā'.

*Sūkṣma Rūpa Dhari Siyahi Dikhāvā I*

*Bikaṭa Rūpa Dhari Laṃka Jarāvā II HC-09 II*

*Bhīma Rūpa Dhari Asura Saṃhāre I*

*RāmaCaṃdra Ke Kāja Savāre II HC-10 II*

Hanumānājī's exploits in 'Rāmāyaṇa' describes the various forms He assumes. The act of assuming various forms is the application of supernatural powers. He has been blessed with the boon of supernatural powers by Jānakī Herself, not in RāmaKathā but in 'HanumānaCālisā',

*Aṣṭa Siddhi Nau Nidhi Ke Dātā I*

*Asa Bara Dīna Jānakī Mātā II HC-XXXI II*

O Hanumānājī, eight supernatural powers and nine heavenly treasures will dwell in You. This blessing is not present in 'Mānasa'. Were they the blessings of 'Mānasa', Hanumānājī would have used the power of turning minute and colossal immediately after 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa'. But He was already blessed with these blessings much before. Hanumānājī has assumed several forms during the journey in 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa'. The main form that He assumed while entering Laṃkā is,

*Masaka Samāna Rūpa Kapi Dhari I SDK-03.01 I*

Hanumānājī assumed a form as small as a mosquito. Many people interpret '*masaka*' as a cat. But whenever Tulasīdāsaṃjī writes the word '*masaka*', it always refers to mosquito. The word '*masaka*' is used in 'Mānasa' while describing the seasons only in context of mosquito. This 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' is a universal encyclopedia. It has different meanings in different contexts, Sāheb! When Hanumānājī enters Laṃkā, He assumes a form as small and as minute as a mosquito. After entering Laṃkā, He roams around in the same form. But the moment He enters Vibhīṣaṇa's courtyard,

*Bipra Rūpa Dhari Bacana Sunāe I SDK-05.03 I*

He appeared in form of a Brāhamaṇa. However, He stayed in the form of a Brāhamaṇa only for a short while. Note that while presenting his introduction to Vibhīṣaṇa, He Himself says that,

*Kapi Caṃcala Sabahī Bidhi Hinā II SDK-06.04 II*  
I am a monkey, see for yourself. He has appeared in form of a monkey. One must not change too many forms in front of devotee and devotion. One must instead appear before them in one's true form. In this episode, Hanumānājī appears in His original form from that of Brāhmaṇa. Thus, He has appeared in two forms in Vibhīṣaṇa's courtyard: First, in form of a Brāhmaṇa and afterwards, in form of a monkey. When Vibhīṣaṇa revealed the method, Hanumānājī left from there, at that moment following words were written,

*Kari Soi Rūpa Gayau Puni Tahavā I SDK-07.03 I*  
He assumed the same form and went where Sītā was present. The word 'soi' refers to the form of a mosquito. His intent is to inform Laṃkā that He is not a thief. A thief would not enter anyone's house buzzing or singing! Hanumānājī moved further in form of a mosquito buzzing to the tune of 'Śrī Rāma Jaya Rāma Jaya Jaya Rāma'. He thus proved the allegation made by Laṃkinī of being a thief as baseless. A thief would not enter anyone's home singing. S/He would rather enter hiding from everyone. He also hinted that, Laṃkinī, the greatest thief in the world is the ruler of Laṃkā, Rāvaṇa. He is the greatest thief. You are serving a thief and falsely alleging an emissary of Rāma as a thief. Our servitorship could be as trivial as a mosquito, but we must not deceive anyone, we must rather move around singing. I don't plan to enter AśokaVāṭikā by hiding myself, because I am not going there to steal anything. I am instead going there to search for something that you have stolen. I am in search of my country's wealth, my country's primordial energy, my country's genius which Rāvaṇa has stolen, even if she may be in an illusory form. Hanumānājī entered AśokaVāṭikā singing because He wants to find the primordial energy. Why do the saints wear wooden footwear? The footwear of wood makes sound while walking. Ordinary footwear or flip-flops don't make sound. This means that wherever the saints go, they don't go hiding. Their footsteps make a sound. Thus, Hanumānājī assumed a minute form of a mosquito while going to AśokaVāṭikā. On another note, He went there without *matsara* i.e. envy or jealousy. *Matsara* is hollow pride. He assumed the form of a mosquito and His mindset was free from envy or jealousy. Hanumānājī has proceeded in this

way. And in order to attain devotion, one must bear a mindset free from envy or jealousy.

Rāvaṇa has abducted Sītā and kept Her beneath the Aśoka Tree. He perhaps knows that Jānakī exists in an illusory form. But he thought that as long as She stays in my town, may She be free from mental anguish. Therefore, Mother Jānakī sits beneath the Aśoka Tree. Śrī Hanumānājī enters AśokaVāṭikā in the same form and the moment He saw the Mother, He rightly guessed that this must indeed be devotion,

*Kṛsa Tanu Sisa Jaṭa Eka Benī I SDK-07.04 I*  
She was engrossed in incessant chanting of the Name 'Raghuvīra'. Mother's body has been emaciated. The matted hair on Her head was formed into a single braid. He guessed that this could be none other than the embodiment of devotion. The form of Sītā that is described now represents the traits of devotion. Those who are truly engaged in devotion are always emaciated. They are not bulky or gross, but subtle. Mature devotion is always emaciated, instead of being stout. The embodiment of devotion is emaciated because he/she has nothing to worry about. I am talking about stoutness in terms of weight. Nonetheless, a devotee is always lean and humble.

*Bhakti Re Karvī Ene Rāṃk Thaine Re'vu...*  
Thus, one trait of devotion is modesty or meekness. Secondly, when women form a braid, it's usually with three strands. Sītā is not wearing a braid with three strands. She wore a single braid of matted hair. This means She has no distinction of wisdom, karma or devotion. An adherent of devotion doesn't discriminate between the followers of wisdom, karma or devotion. He/She only perceives oneness in everyone. Listen to the next trait of devotion,

*Japati Hṛdaya Raghupati Guna Śrenī II SDK-07.04 II*  
Sītā doesn't chant 'Rāma... Rāma... Rāma...' aloud. Neither does She chant 'Rāma Rāma' by Her lips. Mother is chanting Lord's Name in her heart. She is alive due to trust on Lord. Hanumānājī precisely noted the sitting posture of the Mother. She had Her eyes fixed on the soles of Her feet. The vision of devotion is not unsteady and doesn't wander randomly. In devotion we need to fix the vision at one place. Jānakī has fixed the vision in the soles of Her feet. Today Rāma's feet are not present with Her and therefore, the Mother looks at the auspicious marks of Rāma's feet inscribed in Her own feet. Secondly, the mother

rebukes the soles of Her feet because they impelled Lord Rāma to run behind the golden deer. The soles of feet are symbolic of motion or activity. Secondly, a devotee will not look at others' conduct but its own footsteps to ensure that s/he doesn't imitate others; a devotee must have his/her own elegance of living life, Sāheb! A devotee always looks at one's own feet, instead of others. The next trait is that Sītā has fixed Her mind in Rāma's divine feet. Her eyes are fixed in Her own feet. A devotee needs to fix vision in one's own feet and mind in Rāma's divine feet. Hanumānājī hid Himself amid the leaves of the Aśoka Tree. He is in a dilemma. He felt worried on witnessing the Mother's suffering. He searches for the right opportunity to appear before the Mother. At that moment, Rāvaṇa arrives there with Maṃdodarī and other queens. He comes there in pomp. As Hanumānājī saw Rāvaṇa, He dropped the plan of revealing Himself. He thought to check the way Rāvaṇa behaves and talks with the Mother. The reason is that Hanumāna had seen Rāvaṇa in sleeping state and not when he was awake. We are different in sleep and different when awake! People are different when under the sway of delusion, which is metaphoric of dark night and they are different when awakened by Guru's grace. Today Rāvaṇa is awakened. Hanumānājī thought to Himself, earlier I had seen him when he was asleep, but this man appears truly awakened because he has not come to see my Mother alone, but with his queens.

Śrī Hanumānājī's peculiar vision is evaluating this man. Thereafter, Rāvaṇa allures Sītājī stating that I shall make Maṃdodarī and other queens your handmaids, please cast Your look on me once. Hanumānājī is observing everything from the tree. Janaka's daughter, Jānakī held a blade of grass in Her hand while talking to Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa realised what Jānakī was about to say. She retorted, Rāvaṇa, even as you allure me to make Maṃdodarī and other queens as my handmaids, forget not that your affluence and prosperity is as trivial as this blade of grass. A devotee is as humble as a blade of grass. Jānakī conveys that even as you attack us like a wild storm, being devotees we shall always remain as nimble as a blade of grass. No one can uproot us. Rāvaṇa was enraged. As Rāvaṇa proceeds to attack Sītā, he is stopped by Maṃdodarī. If someone tries to kill us when our worship is genuine then a family member of the attacker itself stands in our

support. Maṃdodarī said, you cannot kill a woman. Rāvaṇa then said, I give You a month's time, yet if You don't agree to my wish, I shall behead You with a sword. Thereafter, when Hanumānājī beheld Sītā extremely distressed due to separation from Her Lord, He dropped the signet-ring embossed with Rāma's Name. Jānakī forthwith took the ring thinking that Aśoka Tree had thrown an ember. The ring has Rāma's Name embossed on it. She identified that it was the same ring. We shall talk about it tomorrow. Let me recite the story of Rāma's birth in the remaining time.

Pārvatī raised a curiosity to Lord Śaṃkara about who is Rāma? In the response, Lord Śaṃkara presented the background. He says, Goddess, there is no definite cause for the all pervasive Supreme Element to assume an embodied form. The reason is that the Law of Cause and Effect applies to the world, but not to God. However, there are five causes of Rāma's incarnation. The first cause cited was of Jaya and Vijaya. The second cause was about Satīvṛmdā. The third cause is Nārada's curse to Lord Nārāyaṇa because of which Lord was bound to assume a human form. As the fourth cause, the penance of self-born Manu and Śatrūpā was described. The fifth and last cause was the story of king Pratāpabhānu in 'Mānasa'. Pratāpabhānu was reborn as Rāvaṇa. Arimardana took the second birth as Kum̃bhakarṇa. Their prime-minister named Dharmaruci was reborn as Vibhīṣaṇa from the womb of the second mother. The birth-story of the three brothers is written before the story of Rāma. The story of demonic lineage is described first in sequence. It's always dark before the sun rises in the dawn. The story of solar dynasty was written later.

*Ziṃdagī Śammā Kī Māniṃḍa Jalāuṃgā 'Nadim',  
Carāga Hū, Bujha To Jāuṃgā  
Lekina Subaha Karake Jāuṃgā II*  
Rāvaṇa, Kum̃bhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa performed rigorous penance and attained insurmountable boons. After attaining the boons, Rāvaṇa began to misuse his supernatural powers. Corruption spread in the whole world. The earth was perturbed. She assumed the form of a cow. Cow has felt the pain first. This RāmaKathā has been organised for the service of cows, at this moment I would like to request the adherents of timeless Hindu religion as well as others to think seriously for the protection of cows. No worries if we cannot worship the cows, but let's at least love them,

because worship can be done in few pennies, but love demands sacrificing our entire life. The saints are already serving the cows from the ancient age till date. The earth assumed the form of a cow and approached the seers, the sages and the deities. Everyone thought of approaching Brahmā in anticipation of a remedy. They eventually decided to resort to the Supreme Entity. All of them surrendered to the Lord and sang Lord's hymn of praise. A divine voice sounded from the sky, "Have patience, I shall bear an incarnation on earth", the deities were pleased to hear this.

King Daśaratha was introduced. He is a confluence of the disciplines of devotion, karma and wisdom. He is married to queens like Kausalyā. The queens are pious in conduct. He is blessed in every respect, but for a son. He is already old in age. The world shares its pain with the king, but with whom should the king share his pain? Our civilization provides a beautiful guidance in this regard. When we cannot share our pain with anyone, resort to our Guru. Hence, Daśaratha went to the Guru's hermitage. He placed his concern before Sire Vaśiṣṭha. Vaśiṣṭha pleasingly said, King, the Supreme Entity will be born in your home as a son. Please be patient. You shall father four sons. A yajña for the boon of sons was conducted. The oblations were offered with devotion. The deity of yajña appeared from the sanctum sanctorum with the gracious offering. The offering was given to Vaśiṣṭha, who in turn handed it to Daśaratha. Daśaratha called for his beloved queens. One-half of the offering was given to Kausalyā. One-fourth was given to Kaikeyī. The remaining one-fourth was divided into two equal portions and given to Sumitrā by the hands of Kausalyā and Kaikeyī. The three queens began to experience the state of being conceived.

*Janaka's Pu paVā ikā closely resembles an orchard of flower. It has only flowers and no fruits. The sad part about Rāva a's AśokaVā ikā is that it has no flowers, but only fruits. Both the orchards are extremely different and yet equally mysterious. Carnal people like us only perceive fruits, instead of flowers. Note that fruits are symbolic of religious rewards or merits and flowers are symbolic of aesthetic relish or rasa. I and you are only seeking rewards. We solicit the reward of righteousness, wealth, desire or liberation! Who wants to enjoy the essence of life? 'Rāmāya a' talks of aesthetic relish or rasa; it talks about the essence of life.*

The moment of Lord's arrival appeared closer. The queens experienced auspicious omens. The hymns of Lord's advent began. The one who permeates the whole world and the one in whom the entire cosmos dwells, that Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Entity appeared in Mother Kausalyā's chamber. The all-gracious Lord appeared. I have heard from the saints that when the Lord appeared before the Mother, she turned her face away. Lord asked, "O Mother, why are you turning your face away?" "Lord, You are welcome. But You have missed Your promise" said the mother. You had promised in the last birth, "I shall take birth in your home in human form. Today You have arrived not in form of a human, but in form of Lord Nārāyaṇa with four arms. You have not arrived as a son, but as a father." "O Mother, have I missed my promise? Don't I appear like a human?" enquired the Lord. The mother explained, "No, humans don't have four hands. I want God with two hands." Lord assumed the form of a newborn infant and asked, "Ma, do I now look like a newborn?" The more said, "Yes, You do look like an infant, but You talk like an elder! A newborn baby must cry." The mother asked the Lord to cry. The Lord began to cry like a newborn in Kausalyā's lap. The Supreme Entity manifested in form of a child. On hearing a child's cries, other queens rushed in flurry. Whether the newborn is the Supreme Entity or an ordinary mortal, only the Guru could decide. The Guru arrived. The moment Guru cleared everyone's doubt, the king was overwhelmed with supreme joy with a thought that, "The Lord whose very name brings blessings with It even when It reaches one's ears, has incarnated in my house!" Daśaratha began the celebrations. I convey my greetings of Rāma's birth to everyone from this VyāsaPīṭha.



## AśokaVāṭikā has jati (recluse) as well as sati (chaste woman)

With 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' as the central theme, we are collectively engaged in an essential and pious dialogue. Let's proceed further. AśokaVāṭikā is located in Laṃkā. The scripture which I have been reciting by your goodwill, presents Laṃkā in four forms. Today I wish to share with you these four perspectives by my Guru's grace. Laṃkā has been perceived from four viewpoints and AśokaVāṭikā being present in Laṃkā also needs to be seen from four perspectives. Laṃkā has four forms. First is the gross form of Laṃkā. In gross form, it's a piece of land containing the town of Rāvaṇa having a fort made up of gold. There are two opinions. The fort of Laṃkā is made up of gold. But the houses inside it are not of gold. The buildings and other structures in Laṃkā are not made of gold. The original form of Laṃkā is quite different. Upaniṣad states that truth is covered with gold, and it's truly so. It's sometimes covered with pomp presentation or restless actions; at times it's veiled by our endeavours, destiny or artfulness and many a times it's concealed by our fame or prestige. Therefore, as per Tulasī's vision the houses of Laṃkā don't seem to be made of gold. But in common parlance we say that the entire Laṃkā is made of gold. Yet it's a mystery. Thus, one form of Laṃkā which the author of 'Mānasa' presents before us is its gross form. In order to describe the gross form of Laṃkā, Tulasīdāsajī presented the entire town in metrical composition through Hanumānājī's eyes. Hanumāna is the Guru. As a Guru, He has beheld Laṃkā from gross viewpoint. Think about the following line by Guru's grace,

*Kanaka Koṭa Bicitra Mani Kṛta Suṃdarāyatanaḥ Ghanā I SDK-Chaṃda-011*

It says 'Kanaka Koṭa' i.e. only the fort is of gold. The houses within the fort are beautiful, 'Suṃdarāyatana'. A person doesn't look charming only by gold, but by truth. Why is this canto named as 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa'? Goswāmijī described the houses of Laṃkā as 'Suṃdarāyatana'. He then says 'Ghanā' i.e. it has many houses. They are strange, lovely and decorate. Tulasījī calls every house as a temple. 'Cauhaṭṭa', haṭṭa means bazaar or shops. Every word in this meter signifies a unique meaning. Beautiful bazaar and shops have been setup. 'Baṭṭa' means roads or crossroads. There are four-lane, six-lane or two-lane roads throughout the city. The town is affluent with four-fold army.

*Gaja Bāji Khaccara Nikara Padacara Ratha Barūthanhi Ko Ganai I SDK-Chaṃda-01 I*

The town of Laṃkā is inhabited by four types of troops similar to Caturamgiṇī army. Laṃkā is exceedingly beautiful. It contains, 'Nara Nāga Sura Gaṃdharba Kanyā Rūpa Muni Mana Mohahī', the daughters of human beings, serpents, demigods and gandharvas (celestial musicians). All are equally beautiful. It's stated that their beauty could enrapt the minds of the sages. Apparently, there are no sages in Laṃkā. Which sage does this line refer to then? There is one sage named Kalanemi, who assumed the form of a fake-sage. Baring him, there is no sage in this town! Yes, we can consider Vibhīṣaṇa as a sage because he is a pious man, a monk and a devotee. But Tulasīdāsajī writes 'Rāmāyaṇa' by observing everything meticulously. Hanumāna climbed a beautiful mountain and viewed the town of Laṃkā. While entering Laṃkā, Tulasījī beholds Hanumānājī and Laṃkā before running His quill. Therefore, He wrote, 'Muni Mana Mohahī', a sage is entering Laṃkā for the first time today and He is Hanumāna. Vālmiki also calls Him a sage. Pay attention, Hanumāna is a sage. 'Muni Uttamā', the superior in sages, Hanumāna, is entering Laṃkā.

Jainism has even declared Rāvaṇa as a sage! Everyone has their own 'Rāmāyaṇa'. Everyone has their own Rāvaṇa. Please remember one point Bāpa! Rāvaṇa is rebellious. He is rebellious physically, but not mentally.

Therefore, he is a sage. We may have pledged to not touch a woman physically, but what about the mind? When I compare the eras of both 'Māhābhārata' and 'Rāmāyaṇa', I feel that the age of 'Rāmāyaṇa' was much better! The era of 'Māhābhārata' would leave us shocked even today! The assembly of 'Māhābhārata' was most decorated with heroic high-souled men as powerful as Himālayas. Yet a hideous and shameless attempt was made to disrobe a woman clad in single robe right in middle of the fraught assembly! In 'Rāmāyaṇa' no one has been disrobed, but the evil instincts of mankind have been abducted. 'Mānasa' impels me to say that he who rebels mentally can never live fearlessly. This is an aphorism of 'Mānasa'. Can the one who rebels against others ever live in fearlessly? Rāvaṇa revels fearlessly in Laṃkā. Rāvaṇa is a rebellious man, states his wife. Yet Sampāti who is blessed with far-sightedness says that, '*Taha Raha Rāvana Sahaja Asaṃkā*', Rāvaṇa is living there fearlessly by nature. Therefore, I can infer that Rāvaṇa was rebellious physically, but not mentally. He who rebel none mentally is Muni or Sage. As for us, we are unable to rebel against others physically, because we fear the opinion of the society. Our civilization stops us! Our noble lineage stops us! Our mother who has brought us up stops us! Thus, if we consider Rāvaṇa as a sage from one perspective then we can say that it was the town where the beautiful women could enrapture the minds of the sage. This is the gross form of town. Alternately, it also refers to Hanumānājī who is superior among the sages. This is the gross description of Laṃkā.

*Bana Bāga Upabana Bāṭikā Sara Kūpa Bāpi Sohaḥī I*

Laṃkā has lakes and big and small wells. My Tulasījī uses four words in this meter, '*Bana Bāga Upabana Bāṭikā*'. These four words are exclusively used for the location of AśokaVāṭikā. These four words are used for one and the same place, AśokaVāṭikā. I actually want to discuss about AśokaVāṭikā. However, if we understand the four forms Laṃkā, we can understand the four traits of AśokaVāṭikā in Laṃkā. Tulasījī has used four names for the same place in different contexts and interpretations. It is *bāṭikā*,

*bāga, bana as well as upabana*. So, the first form of Laṃkā is the gross form. The second form of Laṃkā is that of a woman,

*Nama Laṃkinī Eka Nisicārī I*

*So Kaha Calesi Mohi Niṃdarī II SDK-03.01 II*

This is its feminine form. It's believed that there was a demoness named Laṃkinī. I have heard this story from the scholars of 'Rāmāyaṇa'. Laṃkā assumed the form of a woman in the night to protect the town. Here Laṃkā exists in form of a woman made up of five vital elements of nature. Bāpa, Laṃkā's second form is of a woman. The third form of Laṃkā is the yogic form. I have read these thoughts from a realised man. The description of all the incidents of Laṃkā right from when Hanumānājī enters Laṃkā, meets Jānakijī, takes Her blessings and returns to the team is highly yogic in nature. It's described in terms of the yogic process. Hanumānājī's flight to Laṃkā is deemed to begin from *mūlādhara-cakra* or *root-support* and meeting with Jānakijī is the counterpart of *sahasrāra* or *crown-cakra*. We cannot deny this interpretation, Sāheb! The author has interpreted *copāis* in myriad ways along with factual evidences to present the yogic form of Laṃkā. After reading this interpretation, one will be amazed to know what kind of treasure 'Mānasa' is! It's indeed the greatest treasure. The word 'greatest' falls short to describe 'Rāma Carita Mānasa'! It's such a great treasure that it invites us to revel in its mysteries! Thus, few saints have described Laṃkā from yogic viewpoint. I offer my obeisance to all those realised men from VyāsaPīṭha.

Tulasījī describes the fourth form of Laṃkā as spiritual. We will have to read the entire verse of 'VinayaPatrikā' in order to understand this. This verse describes the entire town of Laṃkā from spiritual perspective. It states that human body is the cosmos. The mundane activities that we perform in human body are symbolic of Laṃkā. Our delusion is metaphoric Rāvaṇa who takes a seat within us. The emotion of lust is the counterpart of Indrajit. Our pride or ego represents Kuṃbhakarṇa. The woes of attachment, hatred etc. are compared with various elements of Laṃkā. What does the fort of Laṃkā

signify? What does the valley around Laṃkā signify? Tulasīdāsājī has interpreted every aspect of Laṃkā in an elaborate verse of 'VinayaPatrikā'. If you cannot understand the right meaning of this verse, I request you to go through the spiritual interpretation of Ramkinkarjī Maharaj. Later, if you discuss this with others, please do quote Kinkarjī Maharaj's name duly. Myriad divine consciousnesses have worked on 'Rāmāyaṇa', Sāheb! I sincerely bow down to them. Thus, the four forms of Laṃkā are the spiritual form, the feminine form, the yogic form and the gross form. The four forms of AśokaVāṭikā situated in Laṃkā are *bana, upabana, bāga and bāṭikā*.

*Bana Bāga Upabana Bāṭikā Sara Kūpa Bāpi Sohaḥī I*  
*Nara Nāga Sura Gaṃdharba Kanyā Rūpa-*  
*Muni Mana Mohaḥī ISDK-Chaṃda-02 I*

AśokaVāṭikā is presented in four forms. *Bana* means *vana* i.e. AśokaVana. By my Guru's grace, I interpret its meaning as the domain of mind because my Goswāmijī interprets *vana* as mind. *Vana* literally means forest.

*Daṃḍaka Banu Prabhu Kīnha Suhāvana I*  
*Jana Mana Amita Nāma Kie Pāvana II BAK-23.04 II*  
Thus, *vana* means undeveloped chaotic land of forest. We have failed to understand our mind till date, it's nothing but chaotic! There is a poetic couplet of Badshah Jayपुरi,

*Ulazano Mein Khūda Ulaza Kara*  
*Raha Gae Vo Badanasība I*

*Jo Terī Ulazī Huī Zulpho Ko Sulazāne Gae I*  
*Vana* is the domain of mind.

*Caleu Nāi Siru Paiṭheu Bāgā I SDK-17.01 I*  
*Bāga* is the domain of intellect. People randomly roam in *bāga* at leisure. If you observe, you shall realise that our intellect also wanders randomly from one point to another. It doesn't get fixed on one point. *Bāga* also means rest. Intellect fails to determine where it can be at rest! *Bāga* is the domain of intellect. *Upabana* is called as the spot of pastime. It's the basis of subconscious-mind. Our subconscious-mind sports in pastime. Patamjalī is determined and insistent only on one principle of yoga which states: neutralizing the

waves of our subconscious-mind is nothing but yoga. Our subconscious-mind is constantly wandering and confused. The Saṃskṛta scholars call it as *dolācalacittavṛtti* i.e. constantly agitated state of subconscious-mind is akin to a swing. It never becomes steady. This is our very state. Lastly, *vāṭikā* is the state dominant of ignorance or pride. And therefore, Rāvaṇa enters AśokaVāṭikā. It is the foundation of pride. Thus, these are the four forms of AśokaVāṭikā.

Bāpa, AśokaVāṭikā has *jati* (*recluse*) as well as *sati* (*chaste woman*). The *sati* has been abducted and Her name is Sītā and the *jati* is Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa had assumed the form of a recluse in Daṃḍaka forest in Paṃcavaṭī. He is not a recluse or renunciant in reality, but disguised as one. Similarly, Sītā is also not a chaste woman in reality because she does not exist in Her real form, but an illusory form. The two unreal elements are sporting against one another. Pundit Ramkinkarjī Maharaj has said that Śūrpaṅakhā desires Rāma and her brother Rāvaṇa desires Sītā. Ironically, none of them want both Rāma and Sītā. Had they sought both Rāma and Sītā together, they would have been liberated by now. Both brother and sister attack the same family. Śūrpaṅakhā solicits Rāma and Rāvaṇa solicits Sītā. A woman solicits a man and vice-versa. Ramkinkarjī Maharaj uncovers a lovely interpretation in this episode that any woman has the right to attain Rāma. Any woman has the right to attain liberation. Any woman has the right to perform religious rituals. While Tulasījī grants this freedom, if the means of attainment is inapt, it will result into punishment. The Supreme Entity is not restricted to males alone. It's also not that women don't have the right to attain the Supreme Entity. It would have been so in the ancient age. But we need to reform it now. I am recalling Karṇa again and again. This man became a communal victim; else he would have married Draupadī in pomp much earlier. Just because he was a *suta-putra* i.e. belonging to a lower-caste, he was kept out of Draupadī's ceremony. Let the communal discriminations be limited to 'Māhābhārata'. We all need to rise above and beyond casteism. For instance, the fact that I am sitting

on the dais doesn't mean I am superior and that you are sitting on ground doesn't mean you are inferior. It's not discrimination but an arrangement. I have discussed this umpteen times, is it that women have no right to attain the Supreme Entity? My Tulasī provides freedom even to women to attain the Supreme Entity, provided the means of attainment is pure. Gandhiji has greatly emphasised on purity of means. Let's understand this with an example. On a chilly winter night, you may purchase a blanket from a shop to beat the cold and sleep peacefully. However, instead of buying the blanket from shop, you may also snatch it from someone else's body. While you can beat the cold with the snatched blanket, but it cannot let you sleep fearlessly, because your means was impure. Bhagatbapu says on the same lines,

*Zaḍapelu Amī Amara Karaṣe,  
Paṇ Abhaya Nahī Āpī Śakaṣe.*

Ambrosia snatched from others can make your immortal, but not fearless. And the glory of

fearlessness should be more than the glory of immortality. Any woman has the right to attain Rāma. Why not? I request men and women here that please choose your ideal relevant to the contemporary age. The current age is Kaliyuga. If the women can become Sītā in Kaliyuga, it will be highly appreciated. But women need to become Mīrā, Gangasati, Sahajobai or Dayabai in Kaliyuga. Therefore, women must have every right in Kaliyuga. 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' has already granted this freedom. Many scriptures have become the means of bondage, whereas few rare scriptures have opened the doors to liberation for everyone. One of those Holy Scriptures is 'Rāmāyaṇa'.

Śūrpaṇakhā must have the right to attain Rāma, but her means is impure. Rāma is god and He belongs to everyone. But Śūrpaṇakhā converted her form into a beautiful lady. Hence her means has fouled. These are the thoughts of Pundit Ramkinkarji Maharaj. I am extremely mindful of not committing anyone's offence by sharing others' aphorisms or



thoughts in my name. I fear such acts because even if we do so, we would get caught in future. One must not make immoral statements even to gather applaud! Bāpa! Punditji shared beautiful thoughts. Śūrpaṇakhā was ugly demoness, yet she disguised herself in fake beauty. She could not attain Rāma because her means was impure, instead she was insulted. When Rāvaṇa went to abduct Sītā, his means was impure as well. Had he been there as a real recluse, he would have attained Sītā, but he disguised himself as a fake recluse.

So Bāpa, AśokaVāṭikā has both a recluse and a chaste woman. Now these thoughts are of a monk. They are not the thoughts of a Pundit. Jānakī is sitting in the AśokaVāṭikā, She is a chaste woman, the mother of the Universe. When Rāvaṇa approaches Sītā to abduct Her, both Rāvaṇa and Sītā are not in real form. Jānakī is in illusory form and Rāvaṇa is a fake recluse. When Rāvaṇa approaches Sītā in AśokaVāṭikā, he comes as the King of Laṃkā. So, the AśokaVāṭikā of 'Mānasa' contains a *sati* and a *jati*. There is one more *sati* in Laṃkā who enters AśokaVāṭikā with Rāvaṇa and she is Maṃdodarī. The AśokaVāṭikā of Rāvaṇa has two saints. One of them goes to AśokaVāṭikā regularly at scheduled time and the other visits AśokaVāṭikā for limited time to accomplish Lord Rāma's task. The one who goes there at scheduled time is Trijaṭā. And the other saint is Hanumāna who has entered AśokaVāṭikā in quest of Mother Jānakī. AśokaVāṭikā is the place which has bondage as well as liberation. It has bondage in form of *nāgapāsa* i.e. the noose of serpents and Brahmastra i.e. the weapon of Brahmā. When Hanumānaji entered AśokaVāṭikā, many demons were blessed by liberation. The AśokaVāṭikā of Rāvaṇa has both poisonous as well as delicious fruits. Therefore, Jānakī insisted Hanumānaji to employ discretion while having fruits. AśokaVāṭikā is a place where a son is hungry and a mother is feeding the son to His heart's content. These truths are perceived in myriad forms in AśokaVāṭikā. The name of this place is Aśoka which means dispeller of sorrows. One who dwells in AśokaVāṭikā must be free from sorrows, yet Sītā is sitting there worried and immersed in sorrows. Thus, we can perceive several paradoxes in AśokaVāṭikā.

Rāvaṇa threatens and allures Jānakī. He employs countless fears and allurements to obtain one glance of Jānakī. Jānakī feels extremely distressed by this act. Hanumānaji was witnessing the entire incident by sitting on the tree. He is in search of a right opportunity to speak. Young ladies and gentlemen, I would like to tell you specifically, problems invariably occur in our life, but if trust prevails then even before the problem arrives the solution would have already arrived. Rāvaṇa is symbolic of problem. Hanumāna is symbolic of solution. Even before Rāvaṇa arrives in AśokaVāṭikā, Hanumānaji had already arrived. When a problem arrives in our life, God has already arranged its solution beforehand. Unfortunately, at that moment we are lost in thoughts and wander for solution here and there, but we miss to look up! Solution descends from up, just like Hanumāna. I like this sequence and it can benefit us greatly. But how can we know the solution? If we are mindful, the solution will arrive right in front of us. Being mindful is the key to uncover the solution. Spirituality only demands exclusive trust. Trust on one Supreme Entity. We place trust randomly everywhere! Look at Surdāsa's trust on Śrīmad Vallabha! This is my adored verse,

*Ḍṛdha Ina Caranana Kairo Bharoso,  
Ḍṛdha Ina Caranana Kairo,  
Śrī Vallabha Nakha Caṃdra Chatā Bina,  
Saba Jaga Māhi Aṃdhero...*

So Bāpa, Rāvaṇa leaves after exhibiting fear and allurement. Sītāji talks of burning Herself in fire and seeks an ember. Jānakī is extremely afflicted. Hanumānaji thought this is the right moment to drop the signet ring before appearing in front of the Mother. Sītāji asked for a burning star from the sky to burn Herself in its fire. As She raised Her hands in solicitation, Hanumānaji dropped the ring. Sītā momentarily thought that Her request of ember was accepted! The sky has given me an ember. She looked at the ring with wonder and surprise and soon realise that it was Her ring! She further thought, who could bring the ring here? No one can conquer invincible Rāma and neither can anyone bring this ring without conquering Rāma. On another note, She thought that

this must be made through *māyā* or conjuring trick! Rāvaṇa is endowed with conjuring tricks, hence She thought that Rāvaṇa must have manifested this ring to delude Her! Yet She thought that it's impossible to create this ring by *māyā*. As Sītā got indulged in various thoughts, Hanumānājī spoke honeyed words and began to recount Lord Rāma's story.

*Rāmacaṁdra Guna Baranai Lāgā I*

*Sunatahī Sītā Kara Dukha Bhāgā II SDK-12.03 II*

He began to extol Lord Rāma's glory. The moment the words reached Jānakī's ears, Her grief took a flight. We all can experience that whenever we hear Lord's glorifications, even though our sorrows don't cease permanently, they do get dispelled during that span of time. This is the glory of Lord's Kathā. Our sorrows later surround us again, which is a different matter. But while listening to the spiritual discourse, our sorrows definitely disappear. Hanumānājī commenced beautiful narrative. Sītā's sorrows disappeared. Bāpa, what runs away can return anytime. Same is the case with bliss. Our bliss ceases when we hear something we don't like. But do not worry. The moment we stop lending ears to such discussions, our bliss will return in no time. What is its remedy? Narsinh Mehta provides its answer,

*Sukha Dukha ManaMā Na Āñīye,*

*Ghaṭa Sāthe Re Ghaḍīyā,*

*Ṭālyā Te KoiNā Nava Ṭale,*

*RaghuNatha Na Jaḍīyā I*

Sītājī said, You have narrated a lovely story, please reveal Yourself! Sītā is devotion personified. Hence, devotion tells the narrator to appear. Hanumānājī jumped from the branch and revealed Himself at once. As He suddenly appeared before Sītājī, She was scared to behold a monkey! She thought that definitely a demon has arrived in form of a monkey. She turned her back! As Hanumānājī stopped talking, Jānakī brought up a topic to make Him speak. She asked, have you brought the ring? How come You say,

*Rāma Duta Main Mātu Jānkī I*

*Satya Sapatha KarunāNidhāna Kī II SDK-12.05 II*

Hanumānājī had solemnly sworn by the Lord, hence Jānakī questioned, what brought about the

fellowship between men and monkeys? Rāma is the most superior in men. You are a monkey. What brought about this union? In order to explain this union, Hanumānājī once again began the entire narrative. This was Jānakī's method or tactic to listen to the story once again. Hanumānājī was bound to recite His own story. Initially, Hanumānājī intended to recite only the story of Rāma. But Sītājī felt that I not only want to hear Lord's story, but I also wish to hear the story of a saint. The narrative of Rāma will dispel sorrows, but the narrative of saints will dispel doubts. In order to explain the cause of union between men and monkeys, Hanumānājī was forced to say, of course with hesitance, that when You were abducted, Lord reached Kiṣkindhā via PāmpāSarovara in Your quest. In Kiṣkindhā, Lord befriended Sugrīva. Later, Lord dispatched us in Your search. Hanumānājī was forced to recite His own story in this way before Jānakī. When Jānakī heard the story of a saint, a sense of faith manifested. RāmaKathā destroys sorrows, SaṁtaKathā destroys suspicions. The entire story was narrated. Jānakī had an inclination to trust Him. Jānakījī delightedly blessed Hanumānājī that, You shall become the repository of strength and virtuous conduct. You shall be ageless, immortal and mine of virtues etc. etc. She further said, Lord will love you inordinately and bestow boundless compassion on You. On hearing this, Hanumānājī was instantly drowned in burdenless love. And then Hanumānājī told the Mother, Ma, I am feeling terribly hungry now. Jānakī said, what can you eat here? Didn't you feel hungry on the way? He replied, I was hungry on the way, but there was no one who could provide me food. All of whom I met on the way were none but devourer. Devotion is mother personified. It will bring us a satiating burp. It's only when the Mother serves that an individual soul is gratified. Yesterday when I went to the kitchen with Bāpu, I was deeply touched with what I saw. Firstly, the kitchen is too vast and secondly, the Muslim people of neighbouring villages were serving food in the kitchen! What apart from spiritual discourse can cause this unity, Sāheb! The spiritual discourses, monks, saints and mendicants are engaged

in nothing but uniting everyone. These activities that promote unity can alone free our religions from clashes and friction, and manifest oneness among everyone.

Jānakījī told Hanumānājī, eat delicious fruits with Your heart fixed on Lord Rāma. Bāpa! This is AśokaVāṭikā. It contains poisonous fruits as well. But make sure You eat luscious fruits with Your heart fixed on Lord Rāma. Hanumānājī offered an obeisance to the Mother and entered the orchard. He had the fruits and uprooted few trees. A celibate alone can uproot the metaphoric trees of worldly delusions. A self-restraint person alone can uproot the metaphoric trees of worldly delusions. The demons rushed to stop Hanumānājī. Hanumānājī attacked few of them and killed the rests. They informed Rāvaṇa's court. Rāvaṇa was agitated to know a monkey playing havoc in AśokaVāṭikā! He sent few more demons. Hanumānājī hit them as well! They ran away. Hanumānājī killed Rāvaṇa's son Akśaya. On hearing the news of Akśaya's death, Rāvaṇa was extremely pained. He ordered Indrajita to capture the monkey and present him in the royal court. I want to see who is the monkey? Two equally powerful warriors are fighting head on today! The war began. Consequently, Indrajita released Brahmastra on Hanumānājī. As a result, Hanumānājī collapsed in unconscious state. Indrajit tied Him with the noose of serpents and very proudly carried Him in Rāvaṇa's court. When Rāvaṇa was insulted, he announced capital punishment for Hanumāna. The moment demons approached to kill Him, Vibhīṣaṇa entered the kingdom. He said, it is against all statecraft to kill an envoy. You may announce an alternate punishment. Hanumānājī was delighted to know the

glory of Lord's Name and Lord's devotion. He thought that, when Rāvaṇa was about to kill my Mother Sītā, his own wife stopped him and saved my mother. This is the power of devotion. The person from our enemy's family is the one who saves us! When the capital punishment was announced, Rāvaṇa's own brother stood by my side to save me.

They decided to burn His tail with the thought that, when the tailless monkey returns, his Master will withdraw the troops and go away out of fear. Gold cannot be burned. The more it burns, the more it shines. Nonetheless, it is the rule of the world that a devotee who has had an experience of devotion is always targeted by the society, Sāheb! When people want to hurt someone the one most, they attack the person's center of attachment. A monkey is attached to its tail, hence they targeted the tail. Even as the society tries to harm a devotee, an awakened devotee like Hanumānājī will escape unharmed. He will instead nullify the society's false belief and evil instincts. They paraded Hanumānājī in the entire town. Hanumānājī gamboled above and beyond, and set the entire Laṁkā ablaze! In a way, He destroyed the society's false beliefs and convictions. The whole town of Laṁkā was bursting in fire. Tulasī writes, Vibhīṣaṇa's house was barred, for he was a devotee. He burnt the whole Laṁkā from one end to the other. The demons were wailing. They were calling forth their mother and father to rescue them. Piteous cries disseminated everywhere! After exhibiting His prowess by setting Laṁkā ablaze, Śrī Hanumānājī leapt into the ocean to take a dip. Yet again He assumed a minute form and stood before Janaka's daughter with joined palms. He tried to console Jānakījī and took Her leave.

*AśokaVā ikā has jati (recluse) as well as sati (chaste woman). The sati has been abducted and Her name is Sītā and the jati is Rāva a. Rāva a had assumed the form of a recluse in Da aka forest in Pa cava ī. He is not a recluse in reality, but guised as one. The AśokaVā ikā of Rāva a has two saints. One of them goes to AśokaVā ikā regularly at scheduled time and the other visits AśokaVā ikā for limited time to accomplish Lord Rāma's task. The one who goes there at scheduled time is Trija ā. And the other saint is Hanumāna who has entered AśokaVā ikā in quest of Mother Jānakī.*

## *Kathā-Daraśana*

- ♦ In 'Rāmāyaṇa' no one has been disrobed, but the evil instincts of mankind have been abducted.
- ♦ Religion is not the field of struggle. Find some other field if you want to struggle with each other.
- ♦ Comply with the words of scriptures in all honesty.
- ♦ There is no vital force of life like devotion in the world.
- ♦ Devotion dwells everywhere equally alike. It harbours no contempt for anything.
- ♦ Devotion has the importance of spiritual state and not the directions.
- ♦ A true Guru never speaks a word. It's the God dwelling within Him/Her who speaks.
- ♦ If the Guru has bestowed grace on you, please don't take undue advantage.
- ♦ Cherish no intent in order to worship the Guru to the fullest.
- ♦ Regardless of whether you can abide by anyone else's words or not, but please ensure you don't breach the words of the Guru.
- ♦ We cannot absorb more divinity than our capacity.
- ♦ It's easy to open the Holy Scripture, but tough to open our heart.
- ♦ Worship is potent enough to reduce our poisonous vices.
- ♦ Lord's remembrance must be practiced deep within our heart, instead of chanting superficially by lips.
- ♦ There is a vast difference between hearing and listening devoutly.
- ♦ Hearing good about someone is also devotional listening.
- ♦ Fear and allurements troubles everyone extensively.
- ♦ He who rebels none mentally is Muni or Sage.
- ♦ The religious places must provide shelter to the needy.
- ♦ The virtue of darkness has its own light.
- ♦ Alms, education and initiation must not be given forcefully.



Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā has flowers;  
Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā has fruits

We are closely analysing 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' from different perspectives. The more we stick to the topic, the more we can understand devotion. We want to closely understand Sītā and Sītā personifies devotion, god-gifted power and peace. The more we digress from the topic, the farther we shall drift from the core point of discussion. Hence, let's examine the topic as closely as we can. We must also ensure that the mundane activities of our everyday life don't drift us from the center of divinity. The idea is to stick to the center.

Bāpa, we have been constantly thinking about the differences and similarities between Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā. Let's understand one point very clearly that while Sītā is the center of both the groves, PuṣpaVāṭikā has the presence of Rāma, whereas AśokaVāṭikā has the presence of Rāvaṇa. PuṣpaVāṭikā contains only flowers, but no fruits. Devotion doesn't seek fruits or rewards, but disseminates its fragrance as that of flowers. Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā is symbolic of expectations of rewards, it has no fruits! I have also heard from the saints that Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā symbolises love and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā symbolises delusion. Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā stands witness to the union of Rāma and Jānakī; Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā has witnessed their separation. Since Jānakī personifies peace, Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā is symbolic of peace. It must be noted that both the groves contain a Mother or a Goddess. PuṣpaVāṭikā has the presence of Mother Jagadaṃbā,

*Sara Samīpa Girijā Gṛha Sohā I BAK-227.02 I*

AśokaVāṭikā also has a Mother and that is,

*Mātu Bipati Saṃgini Tai Morī II SDK-11.01 II*

The name of that Mother is Trijaṭā, whom Jānakī addresses as Mother. Rāma and Jānakī enter PuṣpaVāṭikā in the morning. Even though Rāvaṇa enters PuṣpaVāṭikā in the morning, but it's not immediately after sunrise. He has entered around dawn, while it's still dark. The question is whether devotion must be searched in darkness or amid light? This could be a highly occult curiosity. Upaniṣad however says, '*Tamaso Mā Jyotirgamaya*', lead us from darkness to light. We have recited the following meter of prayer in schools,

*Asatyo Māhethī Prabhu Parama Satye Tu Lai Jā.*

*Ūṃḍā Aṃdhārethī Prabhu Parama Teje Tu Lai Jā.*

Upaniṣad opines us to walk from darkness to light for attaining truth. Sītā personifies truth. Sītā personifies peace. Sītā personifies everything we can think of. Only because She has incarnated as a woman for divine pastime, doesn't mean She is not the Supreme Entity. Sītā is the Supreme Entity. Sītā is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sītā is God. Sītā is divinity. The term '*bhaga*' (*bhagavāna* or *God*) applies to both Rāma and Sītā. It applies to both Śiva and Śakti. One meaning of '*bhaga*' is divine opulence. One who is endowed with six types of divine opulence is called as *bhagavāna*. *Bhagavāna* means a person with '*bhaga*' or divine opulence. The mother of the Universe is also God. Both male divinity and female divinity are nothing but God.

Hanumānājī went to search for Sītā when it was dark. Upaniṣad on the other hand says, lead to light. Who is correct in this case, a scripture or a saint? Whom should we consider as ideal? Whose guidance should we seek? Follow the scriptures until we attain an Enlightened-Being. After attaining an Enlightened-Being, don't throw away the scripture but the scripture itself will tell you to overtake it. Lord Shankaracharya has said that you can

overtake the scriptures after attaining an enlightened realised being. You can. Hanumānājī has entered AśokaVāṭikā in the night. He has determined so in 'Rāmāyaṇa',

*Pura Rakhavāre Dekhi Bahi Kapi*

*Mana Kīnha Bicāra I*

*Ati Laghu Rūpa Dharau Nisi*

*Nagara Karau Paisāra II SDK-03 II*

After seeing the host of demons defending the city, '*Kapi Mana Kīnha Bicāra*', the chief of monkeys thought to Himself. Here '*Kapi Mana*' means two things. '*Kapi Mana*' means Hanumāna. Hanumānājī thought deeply. '*Kapi Mana*' also means frivolous mind. A frivolous mind like that of a monkey was engrossed in thoughts and decided to assume a very minute form and enter the city at night. So, should devotion be quested in light or darkness?

First listen to the answer provided by Vinobājī to the question, why did Hanumānājī decide to enter Lamkā in the night and He also entered AśokaVāṭikā in the night? Vinobājī believes that the reason nighttime was chosen to search Sītā was because any individual's real form can be seen only in the night. We all are bound to stay civilised during the daytime! The society doesn't permit us to be uncivilised! It's only the night that reveals our real form. Secondly, Hanumānājī doesn't have the feeling of being great. Devotion can be attained only when we are humble, hence '*Ati Laghu Rūpa*'. This is Vinobājī's belief. This is the belief of the realised beings who have attained enlightenment. We cannot reach their level. We need to think at our level. People who have seen RamdulariBapu would know that he always lived in dark surroundings. I have seen him live in darkness ninety percent of his life. Jain sages mostly refrain from sitting in light. What does the term *guphā* means? *Guphā* means staying in dark surroundings. People who have lived in villages might know that darkness as well has its own light. If you walk in profound darkness, darkness itself will reflect light to show you the way. Darkness has its own light which science cannot possibly prove. In Arabic language, the term 'Lailā', the

beloved of Majanu, means darkness. Majanu means insanity, madness or craziness. Don't we call a crazy person as Majanu in common parlance? It's but Majanu's insult to compare him with any ordinary person. Majanu means unrestrained joy of a Sufi mendicant. Lailā means darkness. If Majanu is crazy to attain Lailā, it only means that he is seeking darkness. He wants to attain light through darkness.

The question is, "Bāpu, when Hanumānājī went to search Sītā in AśokaVāṭikā, he faced several obstacles. Would we also face these obstacles in our quest of devotion?" The obstacles are bound to occur. However, I don't intend to fear you. I want to talk with you at peace. There is a difference between obstacle and test. Hanumānājī has no obstacles in life. The wayfarers on the path of devotion face no obstacles, but they are definitely tested. People say that the adherents of truth are always troubled. In my view, truth never feels disturbed or troubled. Nonetheless, I would like to keep my opinion aside and present the most common belief. Truth may perhaps feel troubled in this world, but it is never defeated. It's we who seek victory and defeat. But truth is God. Hence, personally I would deem these incidents neither as obstacles, nor as tests.

However, Hanumānājī went through five tests while on the way to AśokaVāṭikā. His first test was when the gold mountain Maināka emerged from the ocean. As Tulasījī takes us through '*SumḍaraKāṇḍa*', He shows us everything made of gold. Hanumānājī's body is gold, Mount Maināka was of gold, Lamkā's fort was made of gold and few attics were of gold as well! In my view, Mount Maināka is not an obstacle. A devotee can only face a test, but never an obstacle. And a devotee who goes through such tests, only experiences pleasure throughout the process. Though, we may pity his/her state on the face value! Socrates was poisoned as he proclaimed truth! Gandhi was shot as he promulgated the truthfulness of Lord Rāma's Name! Jesus Christ was crucified! Apparently these are the horrors of our perception. The worshippers on this path have never felt horrified or anxious by the tests.

The world infers by analysing the actions superficially. The world always sees actions and the Guru doesn't see a disciple's actions, but only sees if the person is a disciple. A Guru never sees anyone's actions, but only sees whether the person has surrendered to Him/Her or not? If yes, they begin their job thereon. An Enlightened-Being doesn't see anyone's actions, for S/He wants to bestow compassion.

Being the season of Christmas, many things are coming to my mind. Today is the last day of the year. The New Year begins tomorrow. Please celebrate the New Year in a civilised manner and refrain from the madness of eating, drinking and dancing! Please don't humiliate the seers of our country by engaging in evil acts in the name of celebration. Our country is, 'Sāre Jahā Se Acchā Hindustān Hamārā', the best in the world. Bāpa, during Navrātri you must play *garabā* and enjoy. At the same time, please be mindful of your limits being the festival of Goddess. This is the new generation. Many people have started the practice of not placing the divine *garabī* or the Goddess' picture in the center while playing *garabā*! Righteousness can never be harmed by unrighteousness, for it has no power to cause harm. Hinduism is a timeless and eternal religion. Our mother is ours. Even as we address other elder women as mothers, our mother is ours. Our Guru is ours. Even as we may bow down to others, no one can replace the one to whom we have offered our life, Sāheb! We may not criticise other Gurus, but our Guru is the only one who is ours! TrapajkarDada has written a *dohā* for Kutch,

*Kabūtara Ūḍyu KutchThī, Mumbai Āvyu Joi,  
Ene Vahālu Na Lāgyu Koi Vāgaḍa Jevu Viththalā.*

I equally honour Bible. I share many thoughts of Jesus. I like his guilelessness and simplicity. A very few Enlightened-Beings have spoken as simply as Jesus. His aphorisms are extremely simple. It's believed that his aphorisms were much simpler and he has spoken much lesser than what has been versified today. The original ideas and aphorisms were burned after two hundred years of Jesus and were

replaced by arbitrary maxims! Nowadays foul attempts are being made to destroy the aphorisms of Hinduism in a similar manner. All of us thus need to stay extremely vigilant. Our mother is ours. India is India. Do celebrate the New Year. I wish Happy New Year to the whole world in advance. Do enjoy and celebrate, but do as it suits India. Do celebrate Christmas and New Year, but in lines with our civilisation. I truly adore Jesus, Sāheb! His words are very simple. None of the realised men who were born have hypocritically flaunted their erudition. Mohammad Paigambar Sāheb has spoken immensely simple words, Sāheb! He has preached in a very simple terminology. It's we who later complicate everything! Kabīra Sāheb has spoken very simple words! Buddha has interacted in rural language. Lord Mahāvira has given Āgama. Tulasī wrote the scripture in native dialect. These realised beings have simplified everything to the last bit.

There is an aphorism of Lord Jesus, "Knock and the door shall open unto you." It means call forth the God from the deepest corner of your heart or knock the door of God and it shall be opened unto you. Jesus has spoken in short sentences. Sufi saint Rābiyā and Islamic saints Hassan have interacted with each other. Rābiyā is an enlightened woman. She said, Hassan, the door need be knocked if it's closed, but the door is already open. This woman moved a step further! We cannot reach her level. They are realised souls. However, I am of the opinion that there is no door at all. Hence there is no need to knock. Does the sky have a door? Even as God is compared to the sky, He is much greater than the sky, hence He cannot have doors. Canals can have doors, not the dams. Can ocean have a door? There is no door at all. It's an open ground. We resort to indecent acts of dancing, eating and drinking in the name of New Year! This is also the result of children studying in convent schools! The convent institutes invariably impose their religious beliefs unto you in some or other form. And spirituality is not about imposing religious beliefs, but



snatching it away! Children are being punished more than being educated! The sources of true knowledge are the places incessantly engaged in everyone's welfare without seeking fame. Only a few realised beings are able to do so. Be mindful, don't forget our roots Bāpa! You are free to celebrate every festival, but make sure you don't forget the Indian festivals like Navrātri and Hindu New Year. And stay cautious of our own people who are trying to cut the roots of our timeless aphorisms. Since you are listening to Kathā with utmost concentration, I thought of sharing these ideas to maintain awareness. This is the righteous duty of monks, because the society gives them immense honour.

Why do monks make us aware? The reason is that the society gives them immense honour. Even as the rural families and their children might be starving, the monks visiting their homes would be served a feast. Such is our country. Therefore, it's the very duty and responsibility of all religious places and VyāsaPīṭhas to keep the society aware of the possible threats. This act demands courageous humility. Humility is mandatory,

but it must be courageous. Today, I wanted to commence the Kathā with the idea of humility. Therefore, I have written down and brought a Vedic mantra with me, which calls humility as God. Please recite this mantra after me,

*Nama Idugraṃ Nama Ā Vivāso-  
Namo Dādihāra Prthivīmuta Dhyam I  
Namo Devebhyo Nama Īśa Eṣāṃ-  
Kṛtaṃ Cideno Namasā Vivāso II  
R̥gVeda: 2.6.51.8*

The reason I wrote down this mantra is because I wanted to share with you about who can attain Sītā personified as devotion, in the context of AśokaVāṭikā. The expounders of Vedas have interpreted *nama* as *namratā* or humility. *Nama* also means to bow down or to offer an obeisance. And he alone who is humble can bow down. Humility is an extremely difficult trait to attain. In order to attain devotion, peace and energy in form of Sītā present in AśokaVāṭikā surrounded by the demons, the first trait needed is humility. '*Idugraṃ*', the seer stops us from being furious. Don't

be furious after attaining the stature of humility because you are soon to attain devotion. If we are furious right in the beginning, how would we attain devotion? The sage further adds that metaphoric God of humility upholds the elements of earth and sky. Humility is the metaphoric of god, who bears the sky and the earth. Humility is divinity. Humility is godliness. Humility is nothing but god. Here 'vivāse' means to dwell in god's proximity in a very especial way. This can be interpreted as synonymic of *upāsana* (*sitting close to someone*) because only those who have incarnated to interpret Vedas can alone reveal the true meaning, it's not our capacity. We would fall short to understand its meaning! Nonetheless, let us catch the interpretation given by such realised beings.

So, Hanumānājī has not faced obstacles. He has indeed undergone tests while reaching AśokaVāṭikā. First test was the emergence of the gold mountain Maināka. Our legendary stories have described mountains having wings. As a result, they would fly and settle over any village, thus destroying the villages! As we fly high, our flight must be to ascend others higher, instead of destroying them. When people complained to God, it was announced to cut off the mountains' wings. After the wings were cut, the mountains became steady at the given position. In the same course, Maināka flew to seek ocean's shelter to save its wings from being cut. Hence, ocean provided shelter to Maināka in the water. When Hanumānājī flew over the ocean to meet Jānakī in AśokaVāṭikā, mount Maināka emerged from the ocean and offered an obeisance to Him. Maināka was a gold mountain. It was neither an obstacle, nor a test for Hanumānājī in my view; however, at our level we call it a test. How did Hanumānājī respond? He touched Maināka respectfully. When someone offers us something to eat, which we may have vowed not to eat, instead of refusing bluntly we touch it with respect so as to refuse. Similarly, as Maināka emerged from the ocean, Hanumānājī touched it and said, "I accept your honour, but I would like to proceed due to lack of

time." Thus, gold is the first test in the attainment of peace, devotion or power in AśokaVāṭikā.

Which is the second test? The deities sent across Surasā. Then came the demoness Laṃkinī, the woman form of Laṃkā. The other obstacles were sent through the deities. Similarly, the enemies lay trivial obstacles in our way. We ourselves are responsible for our own obstacles! There is a poetic couplet,

*Āga To Apāne Hī Lagāte Hai I  
Gaira To Sirpha Havā Dete Hai II*

So Bāpa, all tests were sent by the deities. Surasā approached to devour Hanumānājī. As we renounce gold and money, our fame spreads far and wide. At that moment, few elements from the society try to harm us. The more we renounce worldly affluence respectfully, the more our fame will spread. The more famous we become, the more the society will try to harm us. When the test is from deities, instead of fighting it head on, assume a tiny form i.e. be humble or nimble.

The third test is in form of the demoness named Sihikā. As you all know, this demoness preys on the birds flying in the sky. Being a demoness, she is a terrestrial creature, but she stays in the ocean and preys on the aerial creatures! Sihikā is thus a strange demoness. She is supposed to be the mother of the planet Rahu. Rahu is habituated of devouring. Therefore, the mother devours everyone as well. This third test is about jealousy. She targets the creatures flying in the sky. Due to lack of wings, she could not reach out to the flying creatures. As she failed to capture the flying creatures, she grabbed their shadows! These are the traits of the jealous beings. When one cannot target the individual in person, the jealous people try to find other means to harm the person. But He is Hanumānta, an Enlightened-Being. He forthwith saw through her deceit. Whirling round, He arrived on the floor of the ocean and destroyed the demoness. He thus demonstrated that in order to reach AśokaVāṭikā, the evil of jealousy ought to be destroyed. Successfully passing through this test, Hanumānājī destroyed jealousy personified Sihikā.

Courageous humility, unpretentious simplicity, unpublicised renouncement, undeceptive love and judicious decisions manifested in god-gifted intellect can take us to devotion personified Sītā. Devotion demands humble heroism. Devotion demands prideless wisdom. Devotion demands open-minded and free wisdom. He who is endowed with these traits can successfully pass the tests and attain peace or devotion personified as Sītā in AśokaVāṭikā.

After killing Sihikā, Hanumānājī alighted on the shore of the ocean. The demoness Laṃkinī, who was guarding the city, stopped Him. This is the next test. Laṃkā had assumed a human form in form of Laṃkinī. When she told Śrī Hanumānājī that every thief is her food, He did not like it, because the greatest thief of the world was staying in Laṃkā and yet she spared him! This test for the attainment of devotion is called as discriminative-intellect. It's about discriminating everyone! Hanumānājī thought, Rāvaṇa is the greatest thief whom you are protecting! I am here in search of Rāma's consort, whom you are alleging as a thief! Hanumānājī did not take it pleasantly and blew her with His fist. She toppled down vomiting blood! Losing blood was figurative of being dispassionate. Laṃkinī turned dispassionate. A monk is known only by his grace in some or other form, as it happened with Laṃkinī. Tulasī uses the words with deep understanding, '*Puni Saṃbhāri Uṭhī So Laṃkā*'. After attending the spiritual discourse one must not lay in leisure. Instead one must arise once again for having attained a mantra, an initiation and a new consciousness. Now, I shall take my Guru's thoughts forward. She arose, joined her palms and humbly narrated her entire story. I misunderstood you as thief, but now I know the truth by Your grace, '*Dekheu Nayana Rāma Kara Dūtā*'. Now I no longer perceive you as a thief, but Lord Rāma's servant. This is the very job of a monk. S/He transforms everyone's vision. S/He brings everyone out of discriminating vision. Śrī Hanumānājī thus admonishes Laṃkinī and enters Laṃkā.

Firstly, one who is humble and courageous can attain devotion in form of Jānakī in AśokaVāṭikā. Secondly, one who is ready to sacrifice can attain peace personified Sītā in AśokaVāṭikā. Śrī Hanumānājī is an embodiment of auspiciousness or love. One who is blessed with the state of unqualified love, where the fourfold inner faculty dissipates completely, can alone attain devotion. One who is blessed by the Guru's grace with the prowess of doing that which others find impossible, yet when such an individual bows down to everyone before commencing any activity, can attain devotion. Despite being capable in every respect s/he who, before commencing the journey to devotion, accepts love from the younger ones, affection from the people of same age and blessings of the elders, can alone attain devotion. Śrī Hanumānājī conferred honour to everyone. He who nurtures this mindset from the heart can alone attain devotion. Everyone else in the team backed off, yet Hanumānājī bowed down to everyone before commencing the journey. Young children, you must humbly employ courage, be ready for sacrifice and tread the path of unqualified love, but don't forget to seek blessings from the elders. Jāmavanta was old, yet Hanumānājī has bowed down to him. Although He is charged up to attain Mother Jānakī, He has not lost discretion. The all-in-all essence is that he who enters even a carnal town with worship, returns successfully. Hanumānājī possessed worship. Laṃkā is a carnal town. This man could successfully return even from the carnal town after accomplishing Lord Rāma's job by the prowess of worship.

Let me recite some chronology of Kathā. We celebrated the birth of Lord Rāma. Mother Kaikeyī as well gave birth to a son. Sumitrāji begot two sons. Ayodhyā was blessed with four sons. The boys began to grow up quickly. The naming ceremony ritual was held. Vaśiṣṭhājī named the four children. He named Kausalyā's son as Rāma. Kaikeyī's son was named Bharata. The youngest son of Sumitrā was named Śatrughna. The third son was named Lakṣmaṇa. This was followed by the sacred thread ceremony. The four

brothers then went to the Guru's hermitage for education. What has He to study whose very breath is the form of four Vedas? Nonetheless, while enacting this human sport, Lord taught us to acquire education from a preceptor. Nowadays by Lord's grace the rural society of our country has started studying. Please educate the children who still don't go to school. Education is utmost necessary. The educational institutes should not impose their own religion on the students. In fact, they should impart the lessons of social harmony, instead of confining children into narrow sects. Spirituality is about snatching away religious mindsets. Whenever I visit the educational institutes, I do tell them to take as much fee as they wish, but I request them to keep the children free. Don't bind them to your religious beliefs, Sāheb! The very meaning of wisdom is to grant freedom. We bind people through the means of erudition whose very motive is to free everyone! Educate the children. Even Rāma had gone to study. Lord returned after attaining all branches of knowledge in a very short duration. He practices in life whatever was studied in Upaniṣad. He offered obeisance to the mother, the father and the preceptor in the morning. Young boys and girls, if you are well-educated, bow down to your parents before leaving home in the morning. Offer obeisance to the elders at home. Kowtow to the preceptor.

In 'Māhābhārata', Yudhiṣṭhira asked a crucial question to Patriarch Bhīṣma, who should be honoured in this world? Bhīṣma was counting his last breaths. Kṛṣṇa motivates the Paṇḍavas to clarify their curiosities with Bhīṣma before he passes away, because Bhīṣma was a scripture in himself. Their curiosities included questions around politics, education, religion and spirituality. Yudhiṣṭhira has asked one question in the same course, Grandsire, who in your view must be honoured in the world? All answers of Grandsire are equally great. It also includes answers which I cannot accept in the current age. Yes, it's not necessary to accept that which is not relevant to the current age. In response to one such political question it was also stated that s/he who appreciates us must be

honoured. I cannot accept it. The mendicants cannot accept it. People of other fields may very well accept this maxim. Why praise someone just because s/he praises us? A monk's tongue only praises the Lord. Lord has assigned specific responsibilities to every individual's tongue. Brāhmaṇa's tongue is tuned to recite *śloka*. No one else can recite *ślokas* with as much ease as the Brāhmaṇas. The ease with which a Cāraṇa's tongue can recite folk literature, no one else can. The way a monk's tongue can worship, no one else can. Many tongues are suited to cunningness! Bāpa, scriptures must undergo a review process. I have been stating this since several years now. And Lord Vyāsa would be very pleased by doing so. He can never be displeased, because the very meaning of Vyāsa is vastness.

Bāpa, Bhīṣma has cited five traits in response to the question, who must be honoured? Grandsire Bhīṣma says, O the embodiment of righteousness, honour a penanceful hermit. 'Tapodhani', honour the one who possesses the wealth of penance. Those who have gone through penance for others are penanceful. There is no penance in the world as great as enduring criticism from everyone. Not forsaking worship in the most trying situation is a penance. People who practice this must be honoured. As the second trait, he must be honoured who is *vedavid*. Please don't derive narrow meaning of *vedavid*. In the broadest contemplation of the seers of my country, *vedavid* is the one who has known everything that is worth knowing. Knowing everything worth knowing from 'Bible' makes one *vedavid*. Knowing everything worth knowing from 'Quran' makes one *vedavid*. Knowing everything worth knowing from 'Āgama' makes one *vedavid*. Knowing everything worth knowing from 'Guru Granth Sahib' makes one *vedavid*. The ethic-givers have stated that offering obeisance to a knowledgeable person increases our lifespan. The third trait states that s/he is worth honouring who never boasts about his/her own self by one's own lips or by setting up organised networks for one's own publicity. These are Bhīṣma's words, while he was lying on the bed of

arrows with blood dripping from his body! These are the aphorisms manifested from pain. Honour any spiritual-seeker who is free from self-boasting. The fourth aphorism states that s/he who is engaged in creative activities solely aimed towards the welfare of the world is worth honouring, so says Grandsire Bhīṣma. As the fifth aphorism he said, Kṛṣṇa is present here, s/he who has worshipped Kṛṣṇa must be honoured. Honour the one who has worshipped the lord.

Young men and women, offering obeisance to these personalities helps us pass the rest of our life with joy. Our fame and recognition multiplies in the society even if we don't wish for it. Our soul-strength grows. Erudition is of two types, the one that binds us and the other that grants us freedom. Honouring such people will only augment our erudition that grants us freedom. The days began to elapse. Viśvāmitrajī arrived. He was honoured and offered dinner. The sons were made to offer obeisance. Daśaratha handed over Rāma and Lakśmaṇa to the sage. Tāḍakā is given nirvānā on the way. Viśvāmitra was assured that this is the Supreme Entity. The yajña began on the next day. Subāhu was given nirvānā. The yajña concluded successfully. Rāma and Lakśmaṇa joyfully commenced the journey to Janakapura with Viśvāmitra and other sages. Sage Gautama's hermitage came on the way. The sage's wife was lying there stone-bodied, unconscious and scorned. She lay there still and silent. Lord raised a curiosity on beholding the sight, who is this? "This is Gautama's consort Ahalyā.

She is cursed. Gautama's consort is not subjugated by sin, but by curse. She has assumed the form of a stone and seeks the dust of Your divine feet. Please be kind to bestow grace." My Rāghava has done the job of freeing the women and establishing them in the society since the ancient age! There are sects that say, "One must not talk with women! One must not speak with women!" The sad part is that the abbots who accept handsome charity don't utter a word against this ideology! And I am toiling myself all alone! This is the question of *SanātanaDharma (Hinduism, the timeless religion)*. It's necessary to spread this awareness. Ahalyā is a woman. Lord bestowed grace. The dust of Lord's divine feet was offered in benevolence. At the very touch of Lord's holy feet, Ahalyā emerged as a true embodiment of austerity. Who doesn't commit a mistake? It happens. But if we can understand Ahalyā's life then I and you need not go to Ayodhyā to meet Rāma. Some monk of our country will bring Ayodhyā's Rāma from His kingdom to us in order to emancipate us. There is a poetic couplet of Milind Gadhavi,

*Vo Būḍhā Bhikhārī Duāo Ke Zarie  
Merī Gardīso Ko Raphū Kara Rahā Hai I  
Jo Sopā Gayā Thā Kabhī Āsūo Ko  
Vo Hī Kāma Merā Lahū Kara Rahā Hai I*

A monk cures our woes. S/He never criticises, but cures. A monk has taken Ahalyā's side. Today Ahalyā was blessed. Lord proceeded and shortly reached Janakapura. King Janaka welcomed everyone and offered lodging in '*SumḍaraSadana*'. Lord had lunch with Viśvāmitra and rested for the noon.

*The question is whether devotion must be searched in darkness or amid light? Vinobājī believes that the reason nighttime was chosen to search Sītā was because any individual's real form can be seen only in the night. We all are bound to stay civilised during the daytime! The society doesn't permit us to be uncivilised! It's only the night that reveals our real form. People who have lived in villages might know that even darkness has its own light. If you walk in profound darkness, darkness itself will reflect light to show you the way.*

## The root of Aśoka tree is faith

By the Guru's grace, we are engaged in reforming our lives with the discussion on AśokaVāṭikā in 'Rāma Carita Mānasa', which has Jānakī in the center. Let us proceed further. Analysing 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' closely, we realise that Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā both contain door or gate. It's necessary as well. Although, we discussed yesterday that spirituality is a domain without doors. But RāmaKathā is the truth of our life. The incidents that occurred in Tretāyuga are now helping us realise the truth in our personal lives. When Lord Rāma entered PuṣpaVāṭikā in Janakapura, Tulasī was forced to write,

*Locana Maga RāmaHi Ura Ānī I*

*Dīnhe Palaka Kapāṭa Sayānī II BAK-231.04 II*

Lord Rāma has visited PuṣpaVāṭikā to collect flowers for Guru's worship. At the same time, Sītājī arrives there for Gaurī's adoration along with Her companions on the mother's command. One companion, who was left behind, happens to see Rāma. She motivates Sītājī to first behold Rāma and perform the worship later. Jānakī places her beloved companion in the leading position and proceeds to behold Rāma in PuṣpaVāṭikā. She eventually sees the Lord. The companions have accompanied Her. Jānakī is the daughter of Janaka, who is a realised man. Rāma, an ideal in propriety, is in front of Her. Beholding Him with a fixed glance would breach the bounds of propriety. Therefore, please observe the meeting between Rāma and Jānakī in PuṣpaVāṭikā. AśokaVāṭikā describes the separation of Sītā and Rāma. Tulasī doesn't present an erotic description of Lord Rāma's life post the wedding. Though, the episode of PuṣpaVāṭikā is indeed erotic. Literature contains nine aesthetic relish or *rasa*, all of which are present in 'Rāmāyaṇa'. However, the scholars of literature have opined that there are three main *rasas* viz. quietism, eroticism and pathos. The dialogue of PuṣpaVāṭikā is through the medium of eyes. Both have maintained the bounds of propriety. It also contains the aesthetic relish of eroticism, definitely.

Today a young boy has asked me, "Bāpu, I am going to get married after this Kathā. It's my wish that after the wedding, I and my wife should listen to a Kathā before going for honeymoon." What do you think my answer to him would be? What response do you expect from me? If you regard me as a religious person, I can guess your answer. You would probably guess that Bāpu would welcome him to Kathā after the wedding. However, my 'Rāmāyaṇa' denies this fact. One must not go to Kathā immediately after the wedding. This is Tulasī. He is a very practical man. He is the composer of a revolutionary scripture. 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' gives an extremely practical decision! Therefore, we realise the truths of our lives through this scripture. My last resort for any question is only and only 'Mānasa'! 'Mānasa' is my all-in-all possession. 'Mānasa' is my god, my mantra and everything you can think of. After Lord Śiva and Pārvatī got married, Tulasī has described their erotic pastime extremely cautiously,

*Karahi Bibidha Bidhi Bhoga Bilāsā I*

*Ganaha Sameta Basahī Kailāsā II BAK-102.03 II*

But what has Tulasī written? Did RāmaKathā started immediately after the wedding? No. How much time has Tulasīdāsajī mentioned between wedding and Kathā?

*Ehi Bidhi Bipula Kāla Cali Gayaū II BAK-102.03 II*

The couple enjoyed erotic pastime for considerable time, *Bipula Kāla*. Thereafter, one fine day, Pārvatī took a seat beneath the tree and Śiva commenced the Kathā. Young children, do go for honeymoon after the wedding. But before getting married, make sure you listen to the Kathā once. Give an ear to righteousness in 'Rāmāyaṇa' before

getting married. All aspects of life must be analysed in right manner. Listening to Kathā immediately after wedding is a strict no, no and no! Beware if you ever come to Kathā after your wedding!

Bāpa, life has a place for righteousness, wealth, desire as well as salvation. Sometimes I feel really proud because no one in the world has thought as the seers of my country. Their contemplation is so wide and profound that it has touched every aspect of life. 'Mānasa' has also touched the aesthetic relish of eroticism. But this is about the erotic sentiment of a town where the townsmen don't identify themselves by their body. This is not the erotic sentiment of Lamkā. The erotic sentiment is described in PuṣpaVāṭikā, but its intent is completely different. It has doors. One needs to possess the discretion of when to close and open the door. This discretion exists in form of eyes. The dialogue of PuṣpaVāṭikā is about the discretion of eyes. It's the dialogue of a town where no one identifies themselves by their physical body. Mother Jānakī's essential beauty is even capable to enamour the subconscious-mind of the ascetics of the finest order. The author says, I offer obeisance to such a mother. Bāpa, the door is necessary, so that the virtuous aspects don't escape after entering us. Jānakī has used the door,

*Locana Maga RāmaHi Ura Ānī I BAK-231.04 I*

Through the door of eyelids, Sītājī received Lord Rāma's beauteous form in the forecourt of Her heart and closed the doors of Her eyelids in order to avoid Rāma from escaping. This is a similarity of both the groves. The point I want to convey to you is that there are several differences as well as similarities between Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā. Whenever I read 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa', I realise that it has beautiful forests, orchards, groves, wells, gardens as well as parks, but no birds! Can you imagine? Wherever there is water, there are birds. Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā contains birds.

*Cātaka Kokila Kira Cakorā I BAK-226.03 I*

It contains Cātakas, cuckoos, parrots and Cakorās. The peacocks are dancing. What about Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā? There is no single bird! When we enter

'LamkāKāṇḍa', we see two birds namely vultures and crows! Why are the birds observed in PuṣpaVāṭikā absent in AśokaVāṭikā? It contains beautiful orchards, lovely gardens and pretty groves. Wherever there are wells and lakes, birds must inhabit. Would Rāvaṇa not be serving bird food? Or was it the influence of gold? I have heard an interpretation from Dr. Shrinathji from Banaras. He said that PuṣpaVāṭikā contains four birds. We feel much pleased when the saints give us these interpretations. One must feel pleased on receiving anything new, regardless of the source. He said, what does *Cātaka* say? It says, '*Piyu... piyu... piyu....*' How about cuckoo? It says, '*Coohoo, coohoo, coohoo...*'. What about parrot? Parrot speaks closely to humans e.g. '*Rāma*', '*Rāma*', '*Rāma*'. This is a hint in the episode of PuṣpaVāṭikā. *Cātaka* asks, '*Piyu (lover)?*' The cuckoo asks, '*Who is Piyu here?*' The parrot says, '*It's Rāma, Rāma, Rāma...*'. In the end, came the chance of *Cakorā*. *Cakorās* is attached to the moon or *camdra*. Hence, it says *Rāmacamdra*. As the parrot uttered '*Rāma*', the *Cakorā* said that He is that Rāma whose name is suffixed with '*Camdra*'. After beholding the Lord, cuckoo raised a curiosity, who is this? Parrot revealed the mystery that He is Rāma. Who Rāma? *Cakorā* clarified that He is *Rāmacamdra*. Unfortunately these birds were only engaged in commentary; hence, they missed the real essence! But peacock was lucky enough to start dancing on beholding Rāma! Therefore, dancing is superior to commentary or discussion, *Sāheb*! People can comment as elaborately as their intellect. Listeners are extremely generous! They are little aware of whether the commentary is sourced from the scriptures or it is made up arbitrarily! Not much can be gained from the commentaries. One must instead dance on getting such a chance. Hence, live in the present. Thus, this sight of birds is observed in PuṣpaVāṭikā. No birds are seen in AśokaVāṭikā. What could be the reason? We can only know if Tulasī reveals it. But there are no birds in AśokaVāṭikā. Every bird is symbolic of every spiritual discipline. *Cātaka* is symbolic of the spiritual discipline of ardently calling forth the Lord. This episode depicts each spiritual discipline of every spiritual aspirant. Many seekers are only engaged in

ardent calls from within. There is a tale in the story of Ramdevpir Baba that when a couple was on the way to the fair, the thieves robbed them. What did they do in response? They called forth Ramdevpir from within,

*Vāṇiyo Ne Vāṇiyaṇa Jātarāe Jāya,  
Māla DekhīNe Cora VāheVāhe Jāya,  
Māro Helo Sāmbhalo, Ho Ho Ho Jī...*

The thieves follow people with money; they never follow anyone with rosary. I don't believe in miracles. But the monks and saints of our country were so endowed with supernatural powers that they could resurrect corpses. Isn't it DurgadasBapu? I accept this truth. But nowadays, the saints need not exert to this extent. Doctors and medicines can save lives. My only request is that there is no need to resurrect corpses, just let the living beings live! Nonetheless, monks are capable of doing this. Yes, I agree.

*Kodhiyānā Bāpā Kodha Maṭādyā,  
Have Māro Śhu Che Vāka...*

Let me recall Mother Teresa. No one would have introduced her as an immortal soul, but as a mother. This is the country of mothers! Hence, our country is known as Mother India, unlike other countries. The word 'Mother' only applies to India because our country is one. Mother Teresa has performed many social activities. 'Rāmāyaṇa' has talked about seven types of intellects. Let me explain it in order. The first type is *kumati* or *kubuddhi* i.e. evil-intellect. The second type is *mati* or intellect; it's neither evil-intellect nor virtuous-intellect. The next type is *sumati* or virtuous-intellect. The fourth type is *parama-mati* or supreme-intellect, which Upaniṣads term as *prajña* or wisdom. It's also called as *ṛtaṃbharā* or intellect which contains the truth in itself. These are the four characteristics of intellect. The bearer of *kumati* is unaware of causing his own loss! Tulasī wondered, what has Maṃtharā and Kaikeyī done? They cut off the tree, dropped the leaves on the ground and watered them! This is called as *kumati*. No spiritual-seeker must cut the branch of her/his Guru on which s/he is sitting. Follow your own religion Bāpa! But don't set networks to belittle other religions! We usually cut off the same branch on which we are sitting! We are the descendants of a timeless religion. The root of every

religion is *SanatanaDharma*. But you are engaged in cutting off the same branch!

So Bāpa, being constantly engaged in an activity causing our own loss reflects evil-intellect. The next type is *mati* or intellect. Intellect is cautious of causing one's own loss; it however doesn't care for others. It's only concerned of one's own hindrances. The next type is *sumati* or virtuous-intellect. It can be attained by reciting and listening to Kathā. A person with virtuous-intellect would think of one's own benefit as well as others' benefit. This is the third stage. The next state is wisdom, *parama-mati* or supreme-intellect. An individual with this trait is unbothered of his own loss, but cares for the loss of others. S/He would rather think that the opposite person is also my very own form. I am him/her and s/he is me. It's about this feeling of oneness or non-dualistic mindset. In this age, the saints need not engage in miracles to give feet to the limping person. The injured person can be sent to Jaipur! Saints need not use their penance. Nonetheless, they are capable of miracles. I believe this fact. However, not everyone is capable to do so. Many of them pretentiously portray of being endowed with supernatural powers! Thus, the miraculous stories of Ramdevpir Baba are not miracles, but an idea or a state of mind. This is my viewpoint. The couple was only engaged in the spiritual discipline of raising ardent calls from within. They had no other means. Hence, they have raised ardent calls from within.

The *copāi* '*Cātaka Kokila Kīra Cakorā*' depicts the spiritual discipline of every seeker. A child knows no mantra. It only yells and cries when in pain and the mother realises that either his/her stomach must be aching or wants a diaper change or must be hungry or wants to get my attention or there could be no reason at all. A devotee cries for five things. S/He either cries to get the attention of the Guru that my Bāpa, are we so irrelevant that you are turning a blind eye to us! Secondly, mundane desires may make us cry. Thirdly, a devotee cries either because of committing a mistake or because of a mental woe. Fourthly, a devotee cries when s/he longs to hear the Guru's words or speech, thus beseeching the Guru to speak! The devotee then raises an ardent call in form of a curiosity.

At times, a devotee cries for no reason at all. A devotee also cries when the Guru bestows total grace. This state is described in 'VinayaPatrikā',

*Hari! Tuma Bahuta Anugraha Kīnhoṃ I  
Sādhana-Dhāma Bibudha-Duralabha Tanu,  
Mohi Kṛpā Kari Dīnhoṃ II VP-CII-01 II*

I have a request that if we desire surrender to a reverent personality or if we are interested in living a life under someone's surrender then do think for five minutes whenever you find time and your inner soul will definitely vouch that the Guru has bestowed copious grace than our worth. My point is that god has bestowed enormous compassion on us, much more than our worthiness. What else can we do except ardently calling forth the god? A child sometimes also cries for no reason at all. When a spiritual-seeker cries when the Supreme Godhead has bestowed every type of grace, it only means that the devotee is recollecting god's infinite benefaction. The spiritual discipline of *Cātaka* bird is of ardent call. These are the paths followed by various spiritual aspirants. *Cātaka* raises an ardent call in PuṣpaVāṭikā. It knows nothing except calling forth the lord. The cuckoo is inquisitive just like a spiritual-seeker who raises a curiosity by the justification of '*Athāto Brahma Jijñāsā*' or '*Athāto Bhakti Jijñāsā*'. Thus cuckoo represents an inquisitive seeker. 'Bhagavad Gītā' has described four types of devotees. 'Rāmāyaṇa' has as well accepted these four types.

*Rāma Bhagata Jaga Cāri Prakārā I  
Cāriu Sukṛtī Anagha Udārā II BAK-21.03 II*

The second type of seeker is the one who raises a curiosity. S/he is called a cuckoo type of seeker. There was a hermit in Vridavan by the name Sai Kokila. He lived his entire with the mindset of being Sitāji's companion and with the feeling of passing Sitāji's message to Lord Rāma. There is another type of seeker who knows nothing. S/He neither calls forth the lord, nor suffers in affliction, nor understands any curiosity, but only chants 'Rāma... Rāma...' like a parrot. This is the third type of spiritual-seeker. But when such a great spiritual discipline of chanting becomes so easy of access, people feel that it doesn't contain religious principles! They perceive chanting 'Rāma Rāma' as

senseless act of parrot! This is the mantra which Śaṃkara chants. Not only Śaṃkara but His son and His wife chant the same mantra as well. Chant the Name of Rāma. Chant the Name of god. This episode represents different types of spiritual-seekers. The spiritual discipline of the bird *cakorā* is to behold the Supreme Entity with fixed glance. He neither resorts to chanting, nor curiosity, nor ardent call. The eyes of Viṣṇu devotees fill up with tears while beholding the Lord. Similarly, many devotees cry while beholding their Guru! I have observed the same among the devotees of LalBapu, whenever I have seen them during the fair of Shivratri. I have witnessed several devotees doing nothing but crying incessantly while beholding Bāpu! The devotees wept silently nonstop! This is also a spiritual discipline, provided no propriety is breached. In PuṣpaVāṭikā, we hear the birds chirping. However, no such spiritual discipline is observed in AśokaVāṭikā. The reason could be that it's a carnal town. It's a city fraught with restless and wrathful activities. This could also be the reason. We are thus trying to understand the foundation of AśokaVāṭikā in this Kathā by means of a comparative study of various groves. We are engaged in a pious discussion on AśokaVāṭikā because it reflects the truth of our life. When Rāma arrived in Janakapura, He stayed in a mango-grove. On the other hand, Jānakī is placed guarded beneath the shade of Aśoka tree. What does Aśoka tree represent? Let's discuss it as per our understanding and move ahead.

Few things are primarily present in any tree. Trees have root, trunk, stems and branches, leaves and fruits. The fruits are not present in AśokaVāṭikā. PuṣpaVāṭikā has the mention of flowers, '*Sumana Pāi Muni Pūjā Kīnhī*'. The word Aśoka is an extremely lovely. It's the ultimate state, wherein an individual despite performing every karma is free from its burden. Sometimes our attempts may not succeed at all and on other instances they may succeed in unexpected ways, but s/he who is neither agitated, nor grieving is believed to be in the state of Aśoka. What is the root of Aśoka tree? Jānakī has chosen to sit beneath Aśoka tree. Our philosophy distinctly describes the presiding deities for every tree. Any idea about the

presiding deity of *Khejri tree* (scientific name, *prosopis cineraria*)? There is a village named Lapliya on the way from Amreli to Savarkundla. Sometimes when I take that route, I see a few Khejri trees there. When we come from Amreli, there are about three Khejri trees to our right. If I am early for the subsequent program, I sit beneath those trees in solitude. I visited that place quite often. Later, people started talking that Bāpu sits beneath the Khejri tree to worship the evil spirits and ghosts! I thus stopped going there, because people just want to spread a false rumours! Now I just behold the trees when I pass through that place.

So Bāpa, how is the root of Aśoka tree beneath which Jānakī sits? Even as it was an illusion, it nevertheless belonged to Jānakī. In order to attain the state of Aśoka, one must have faith. The root of Aśoka tree is faith. S/He who lacks faith in the root, cannot attain the state of Aśoka. Faith or trust is the root of Aśoka tree. Our ancient psalms have described our body as a tree without root, 'Mūla Re Vinānu Kāyā Zāḍavu'. But one who has the root of faith, for that person this rootless metaphoric tree of our body becomes as beneficial as the divine wish fulfilling tree, KalpaVriksha and one thus attains the ultimate state of Aśoka.

The next part of tree is trunk. The underground roots traverse in the direction of water. Faith is the element that secretly traverses in the direction of supreme aesthetic relish and attains the same. Who waters a banyan tree? It searches for water automatically. Madhav Ramanuja has composed a lovely poetry about the roots of trees. Faith constantly does its job. Faith doesn't let an individual become disinterested towards aesthetic relish. The reason is that faith is personified as Śaṃkara and Śaṃkara is not disinterested towards aesthetic relish. There is no enjoyer of aesthetic relish as good as Śaṃkara in the whole world. When such a faith arouses on some individual, our souls vouches it as true faith. This is the root faith. All family members then live on the same faith and abide by the words of such an individual. Even as S/He may say something that we may dislike, nonetheless agree to that person, because it might not be His/Her words, but the words of God. I am not

talking about miracles. Neither am I seeking individual adoration. But a true Guru never speaks a word. It's the God dwelling within Him/Her who speaks. It's always the God who is speaking, because the position of Guru is so paramount that God doesn't wish to trouble the Guru to speak and hence He says, I shall speak on your behalf. To protect your eyes from damage, I shall behold on your behalf. To rest your hands from doing karma, I shall act on your behalf. To rest your feet from fatigue, I shall become your vehicle.

The trunk grows thicker and taller. The roots are invisible, but the plinth is visible. The plinth is extremely mature. Dada Mekran's roots must be fraught with faith. Can anyone imagine how strong a faith it must be? His devotees have trusted his words, Sāheb! Next comes branches. We must be quite mindful about this, because later the branches start in the Guru's name! They are just like the branches of any organisation or banks. When this happens, we get engaged in the contemplation of branches, forgetting the roots! Bāpa, branches should only be an arrangement to offer effective service. They should provide shelter to the needy. Branches are necessary. Didn't Shankaracharya build four *mathas*? This is necessary to unite the country in one ideology, but there must not be any struggle, because religion is not the field of struggle. Find some other field if you want to struggle or fight with each other. Can there be struggle amid religions? The fourth part is leaves. The roots being symbolic of faith are the safest. The trunk also faces no threat because so long as people live under one faith, the family stays united. The branches represent benevolent activities of the saints; hence, they are safe as well. However, the leaves are affected by seasons, one of which is fall. Fall breaks the leaves and it makes the leaves make noise. The noise of branches lessens and the noise of leaves begins. The noise that we hear today in religious fields is only about the proclamations made by the religious-heads about their number of disciples or followers. The author of Upaniṣad says, 'Na Prajyā', you won't attain ambrosia by counting your followers. You shall attain ambrosia solely by renouncement. The leaves make noise as they grow in number. The root is anyways pleased to see

green lushly leaves. However, you might know that the green leaves make lesser noise. But the dried leaves fallen on ground in a heap make more noise, Sāheb! The roots that have lost touch from the ground, people whose lives are destroyed from within, people who have lost hope for some reason, when two disciples of the same Guru are jealous of each other I feel that these leaves have withered and fallen down! The root however wishes that the leaves may stay green and lushly. The last state of Aśoka is fruits or rewards. It represents the element of Aśoka. So, Jānakī is sitting beneath such a Aśoka tree. By the Guru's grace, this could be the mystery of Aśoka tree.

Let me recite some chronology of Kathā in the leftover time. Lord Rāma and Lakśmaṇajī arrived at Janakapura with the Guru Viśvāmitrajī. There is a palace in Mithilā named 'Sumḍara-Sadana'. The saints are of the opinion that there are two palaces named 'Sumḍara-Sadana', one of which was occupied by Sītājī and the other was vacant. Sītā is devotion personified. Hence, Rāma is bound to arrive there. Hence, the other palace of 'Sumḍara-Sadana' was kept vacant to lodge Rāma when He arrives. The reason is that the people of Mithilā worship Sītā and Rāma together even today. The place where devotion dwells is most aptly called 'Sumḍara-Sadana' i.e. a beautiful abode, it can never be ugly. Oh, the place of AśokaVāṭikā where Jānakī dwells in illusory form, Tulasī named that entire canto as 'SumḍaraKāṇḍa'. Lord Rāma had lunch and rested in the noon. In the evening, Lord stepped out in Janakapura with an excuse of showing the town to Lakśmaṇa. The whole town was immersed in Rāma's beauty. Rāma is the abode of beauty, virtuous conduct and might. By these three virtues, Rāma has inundated and attracted three towns in His love. He won over the town of Ayodhyā by His virtuous conduct. Lord subjugated the city of Mithilā with His beauty, where Name and beauty were deemed futile. With strength, Lord attained victory over Laṃkā as the last milestone of His human pastime. As the evening approached, Lord Rāma returned and offered the dusk prayer. Post dinner, they indulged in Vedantic discussion. Rāma and Lakśmaṇajī visits Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā to collect flowers for Guru's adoration. At the same time,

Empress Sunayanā sent her daughter Jānakī for Gaurī's worship along with Her companions. Sītājī beholds Rāma through one of Her companions. This is their first union, where two embodiments of the same Supreme Entity behold each other. Jānakī entered Gaurī's temple with the companions. She sings the hymn of praise. My VyāsaPīṭha gives no allurements of benefit or loss. I can definitely say that this hymn of Gaurī will indeed give you joy. Unmarried girls will experience joy in present moment by singing this hymn of praise.

*Jaya Jaya GiriBaraRāja Kisorī I*

*Jaya Mahesa Mukha Caṃḍa Cakoṛī II BAK-234.03 II* Beautiful hymn was sung. It's written in 'Mānasa' that Pārvatī was pleased, the idol smiled and spoke. The world knows that I don't believe in miracles, nonetheless I would not disregard this incident either. Only because we have not reached that state, we may wonder as to how an idol can speak! As for us, even our neighbours don't smile with us! Hence, conversation with an idol is indeed a far cry! Forget about the neighbours, even two members of the same family staying in the same house don't smile before each other! Jānakī returned home with the companions. On the other hand, Rāma and Lakśmaṇa returned to the Guru with the flowers. They worshipped the Guru with the flowers. The Guru bestowed the blessings. The bow-breaking ceremony is planned on the following day.

Rāma and Lakśmaṇa arrived at the venue of the bow-breaking ceremony along with the assemblage of the sages. The kings from all parts of the world were present in the ceremony. They make failed attempts to break the bow one after the other. None could break the bow. A wise man like King Janaka was disturbed at this sight. My Rāma has arrived with His Guru. He alone who comes with the Guru can break the metaphoric bow of ego. Lord Rāma was commanded by the Guru, "Rāghava, please rise. Break the bow and dispel Janaka's anguish. As such, You and Jānakī are one and the same." Rāma mentally bows down to the Guru and rose. Lord Rāma broke the bow in middle of a moment. Jānakī adorns the Lord with the victory wreath. Paraśurāmajī arrived. He was stunned to behold Rāma!

On realising the Lord's majesty, Paraśurāmājī returned for penance after hailing the Lord's glory. The date and time of wedding was decided. The chosen day of Rāma and Sītā's wedding was *Māgśara Śukla Paṃcamī* (5th day of bright lunar phase in the month of Māgśara, around November or December) and the time was the most auspicious moment before sunset marked by the clouds of dust raised by cow's hoofs when they are returning home from pasture. Sītā was devoted to Rāma. Janaka had one more daughter named Ūrmilā and his younger brother had two daughters named Śrutakīrti and Māṇḍavī. They thought of getting the three daughters married with the three princes of Ayodhyā. This is a spiritual episode, where the four daughters represent the four states of consciousness viz. waking, dream, sound sleep and absorption into Brahma (*jāgrata, svapna, susupti and turiya respectively*).

The wedding took place. The days began to elapse. King Janaka gave farewell to the four daughters. King Daśaratha reached Ayodhyā with everyone. The traditional rituals are performed one after the other. The guests took their leave. Lastly, comes the farewell episode of Sage Viśvāmītra. The entire royal family bids an emotional farewell to Lord Viśvāmītra. Tulasīdāsājī writes these lines: Sire, my entire wealth is yours. We are your mere servants. Whenever you find time amid your penance, please be kind to bless us with your sight. Please gratify us with your sight time and again. Viśvāmītrājī took a leave. He left for his hermitage reminiscing Rāma's beauty and Rāma's devotion. I truly adore this episode. A monk arrived to Ayodhyā and accomplished every task of King

Daśaratha. He had arrived on feet and after accomplishing the tasks, he left on feet. This is the duty of a monk. A monk must accomplish the householder's task if s/he is capable. But after the task is accomplished a monk must leave forthwith. One must do nothing at the cost of penance and worship. These are the aspects of lofty ideology like that of renouncement and dispassion.

Ayodhyā's prosperity has multiplied manifold times since Sītājī's arrival. Every kind of joy took its abode in Ayodhyā. The blessings were bestowed in the end of 'BālaKāṇḍa'. If you observe the 'Rāmāyaṇa' of Venkatesh Press, it has different rewards at the end of every canto, unlike our 'Rāmāyaṇa' that states '*Vimala Vairāgya Saṃpādanonām*' in the end. However, whenever I recite the Kathā before you, I have always been reciting '*Vimala Vairāgya Saṃpādanonām Dvītiya Sopāna, Tṛtīya Sopāna*' in the conclusion of every canto. The reason for this is my Guru's command. I was told that a monk must seek no other reward than dispassion (*vairāgya*) after reciting 'Rāmāyaṇa'. Therefore, I have been following this order till date. Even as it talks about dispassion, it refers to *vimala-vairāgya* i.e. unalloyed-dispassion. It doesn't state *rajogunī-vairāgya* or restless-dispassion. It only states unalloyed-dispassion. What else do we need yaar? Lord has bestowed enormous grace. We are enjoying. People honour us wherever we go. They give us food to eat! But keep in mind that eventually a monk must only seek unalloyed-dispassion. This is the last step. Therefore, I have been following my Guru's order till date.

**The bearer of kumati is unaware of causing his own loss! Tulasī wondered, what has Ma tharā and Kaikeyī done? They cut off the tree, dropped the leaves on the ground and watered them! This is called as kumati. No spiritual-seeker must cut the branch of her/his Guru on which s/he is sitting. Follow your own religion Bāpa! But don't set networks to belittle other religions! We usually cut off the same branch on which we are sitting! The root of every religion is SanatanaDharma. But you are engaged in cutting off the same branch!**

## Tears is the trait of our heart

Bāpa, we are having a dialogue on 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' for the quest of our life with an aim to attain restfulness. As such the more we contemplate on the scriptures, the more groves we shall find in 'Mānasa' by the Guru's grace. Mainly there are two groves, Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā, which we are constantly comparing. Tulasī has also mentioned another grove in 'Mānasa' which we touched upon,

*Biṣa Bāṭika Ki Soha Suta Subhaga Sajivani Mūri II AYK-59 II*

Tulasī mentions the grove of poison in the above *copāi*. You must have read in scriptures or heard elsewhere that there is a *vana* (forest or grove) in heaven named as 'Nandanvana'. But we have no clue about the location of heaven! Nonetheless, our scriptures do discuss about heaven and hell. Heaven is inhabited by the deities and it has a *vana* called 'Nandanvana'. A synonymous or cognate word of 'Nandanvana' is 'AmṛtaVāṭikā', the grove of ambrosia, literally. It's believed that the deities possess ambrosia. There are descriptions about a river of *somarasa* flowing in heaven. The scriptures have myriad descriptions of heaven. The strange point is that every religion has described its own heaven! Let's not get into it. However, 'Nandanvana' is also called as 'AmṛtaVāṭikā'. It means that there is a place called 'AmṛtaVāṭikā' in the forest of 'Nandanvana' located in heaven where people drink ambrosia. However, it's further difficult to decide whether it contains ambrosia or *somarasa*! The description of *somarasa* is found in Vedas as well. The mention of *somarasa* has also extended to the process of yajña in our philosophy. Our scriptures have also discussed the ritual of drinking *somarasa*. It must be a drink that triggers excitement. If someone asks me about *somarasa*, I would say,

*Rākā Rajanī Bhagati Tava Rāma Nāma Soi Soma I*

*Apara Nāma Uḍagana Bimala-*

*BasahuBhagata Ura Byoma II ARK-42(A) II*

Tulasīdāsājī says in 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' that Lord's countless names are like stars in the sky, but the name Rāma is the moon. We believe that a *rasa* rains down from the moon which nourishes the herbs. We can call this *rasa* as ambrosia. Hence, from the viewpoint of 'Mānasa' Lord Rāma's Name is moon and the *rasa* of Lord Rāma's Name that a devotee relishes by the Guru's grace is called as *amṛta* or *somarasa*. I would not say that *somarasa* is a drink that arouses excitement. Purāṇas might have described *somarasa* on similar lines. However, in my view it doesn't trigger excitement, but pacifies our futile exertions. A *rasa* that pacifies countless dilemmas, mental arguments, deliberations and wavering state of mind is *somarasa*. It's *Rāma-rasa*. Our Narsinh Mehta is eager to relish the same *rasa* and hence he says,

*Rāma Sabhā Mā Ame Ramavāne Gyā'tā,*

*Pasalī BharīNe Rasa Pīdho Re...*

'Nandanvana' is called as 'AmṛtaVāṭikā'. Hence, there is a grove named 'AmṛtaVāṭikā' in heaven as well. Further, there is a grove in the nether region too. Nether region is inhabited by the serpents and hence, it's copiously filled with poison. As per one description, the serpents were devout worshippers and because of their

worship, the inherent poison contained in them began to reduce. Although their body would naturally produce poison, the prowess of worship made them lesser poisonous. If this would have continued, the struggles between heaven and nether region would have been avoided. In the mythological age, heaven and nether world have fought wars umpteen times! Wars and struggles happen everywhere. It needs poisonous and hateful mindset. It needs envious mindset to arouse violent instinct. The scriptures call this mindset as '*manyu*'. *Manyu* means anger, it also termed as '*punya-prakop*'. People have thus sugarcoated the woe of anger and permitted a few men to exhibit it! It's similar to politics where people tweak the rules of constitution to their advantage! These games were played in the mythological age as well. *Manyu* means anger, but people have justified their action by calling it as '*punya-prakop*'.

The nether world, the heaven and the earth have fought wars. The inhabitants of nether region are also engaged in worship because Nāradaḥ visits the nether world quite often and admonishes everyone on the path of devotion. Hence, the demons are also engaged in worship. Worship is potent enough to reduce the poison. I don't want to narrate a lengthy tale to you. Nonetheless, you would understand that one needs to worship to reduce poisonous mindset. The world of worship is different. In my view, trust itself is worship. However hard we may worship, but what if we lack trust on the Supreme Entity? Bāpa, worship reduces the poison of the demons of nether region. They soon realised that they would need poison and hence anger in order to fight a war. Therefore, everyone began to stock up poison at one place in the nether world. They also planted few poisonous trees at that place to generate more poison. They cultivated the field of devil's trumpets, opium, tobacco and many similar herbs. And they christened that orchard of nether region as 'ViṣaVāḍī'. The grove in heaven is

called as 'AmṛtaVāṭikā'. The grove in nether world is called as 'ViṣaVāṭikā'. The grove of Janaka is called as 'PuṣpaVāṭikā'. The grove of Rāvaṇa is called as 'AśokaVāṭikā'. However, there is another grove called as 'NabhaVāṭikā'. It's worth reciting an entire Kathā on this subject. Tulasī reveals a completely different spiritual world. With 'NabhaVāṭikā', He presents the entire sky as a grove. It's constantly changing, it's completely lit and it embraces all elements within itself and thrives to the fullest. Thus Tulasī presents 'NabhaVāṭikā' which is transcendental, detached, colourless and touchless. You cannot touch it, but can feel it.

In this nine-day Kathā we are discussing various types of groves. As this Kathā is named as 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā', 'Mānasa' means heart and it also means mind.

*Raci Mahesa Nija Mānasa Rākhā I*

*Pāi Susamau Sivā Sana Bhākhā II BAK-34.06 II*

'Mānasa' means heart. Hence, 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' means that heart is also AśokaVāṭikā. The booklet of 'Mānasa-Dharama' was just launched from here, where it's discussed that 'Mānasa' is also a *dharama*. It refers to the righteousness of heart. Out heart is our righteousness. Righteousness is believed to dwell in heart, whereas unrighteousness is believed to inhabit in our back. Righteousness is born from chest and heart exists in chest, hence a better word for everyone would be '*HṛdayaDharma*' or the religion or righteousness of heart. Our country has various religions like Hinduism, Islam etc. The followers must be proud of their respective religions. While following our own faith, we must not harm, fight or hate other faiths. Everyone must revel in their own beautiful faiths. Our philosophy also discussed one more righteousness as 'MānavaDharma', the righteousness of mankind or humanity. This thought is equally good. However, later people thought that 'MānavaDharma' includes only the humans, whereas there are countless creatures and components in the Universe. Hence,

they expanded the scope beyond humanity. However, if we interpret 'Mānasa-Dharama' as the righteousness of heart then don't you feel that the word '*HṛdayaDharma*' is much better? All living creatures have a heart. The trees also have consciousness in them lying in utmost dormant state. The scientists are researching and tend to believe that stones also contain life in utmost subtle state.

Vinobāḥ earlier said '*Jaya Jagata*' and later took a step ahead by saying '*Jaya Viśva*'. Hence, we can take 'MānavaDharma' further and term it as '*HṛdayaDharma*'. Wherever there is heart, righteousness ought to exist. Absence of heart will only spread unrighteousness. Hence, the next step of 'MānavaDharma' can be 'MānasaDharma'. Hence, we can interpret 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā' as the AśokaVāṭikā of heart or heart itself is AśokaVāṭikā or the grove of heart (*HṛdayaVāṭikā*). Tulasī's presentation of Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā describes three places associated with water,

*Bana Bāga Upabana Bāṭikā-*

*Sara Kūpa Bāpi Sohāhī I SDK-02.02 I*

Four types of plantation lands are cited for herbs namely *Bana Bāga Upabana Bāṭikā*. Similarly, our heart which is a limb of our body is also a pumping station that beats constantly. From spiritual viewpoint, I can state that well water is deep. One needs to step down deep to see the water. *Vāva* is a step-well which is also a type of well. It contains steps built at definite distance, which anyone can descend to fetch water. The next reservoir is *sara* or lake. It's further easier of access. The description of AśokaVāṭikā indicates three types of water reservoirs. If we compare these reservoirs with that of heart we can say that the grove of heart or *HṛdayaVāṭikā* also contains well, step-well and lake. It also contains forest, orchard, garden and grove.

Even though many hearts are beating, sensitivity is a far cry! An insensitive beating heart is analogous to a well pump that draws water situated

deep down! The more we dig the well, the more stones we encounter. The more we melt such hearts, the more adversely it reacts! Hence, Urdu and Persian literature has used the word 'SaṅgaDila' or stone-hearted. Today the whole world is talking about sensitivity. Ours is the country of sensitivity. Our religion is nothing but sensitivity. Our 'Rāmāyaṇa' has originated from sensitivity. Even through Rāma was born from fire and Sītā from earth, the scripture of 'Rāmāyaṇa' that extols their exploits has originated from sensitivity. A hunter disturbs a crane couple engrossed in love making, due to which the pair dies. On seeing this, sage Vālmīki was subdued by sensitivity, which consequently originated 'Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa'. The scholars believe that the first śloka that Vālmīki spoke became the first verse of 'Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa' and thus the entire 'Rāmāyaṇa' was composed.

Our country is filled with sensitivity. When one religion strategically tries to belittle other religion by forming networks, it only reflects loss of sensitivity by different faiths! People engaged in these activities are the ones who lack sensitivity of heart. These types of heart are analogous to wells with scanty water deep down the bottom. The element of water is figurative of sensitivity, exertion, endeavour, penance or worship. The element of water also refers to tears emanating from our eyes on remembering someone close to our heart. This is the trait of our heart or *HṛdayaVāṭikā*. Many people tell me that Bāpu, when we listened to the Kathā earlier, we wept incessantly on hearing the *copāis* and the episodes. But after we started large-scale business and factories, we did recall *copāis* amid our busy schedule, but we could no longer cry! The *rasa* and joy experienced earlier has vanished due to busy schedule. This is a deal of loss in my view! The state when you are unable to speak because of overwhelming emotions on remembering your Guru is difficult to attain. However successful you may become in your life, but if you lose this state, you have dealt in complete loss, Sāheb!

As such non-dualistic mindset is prohibited between the Guru and the disciple. We ought to maintain dualistic mindset that S/He is my Guru and I am Her/His disciple. In all other cases, non-dualistic notion is allowed. Lord Shankaracharya can definitely say that 'Gururnaiva Śiṣyaḥ'. At that stage we may not need this differentiation, but until then a Guru and a disciple are separate. I don't want to reach the state of non-dualistic mindset. This is my personal belief. As for me, my Guru should exist and I too should exist distinctly. We don't want to pretend non-dualistic mindset! I am recalling a poetic couplet of Khumar Barabankavi Sāheb,

*Mere Rāhabara Mujhako Gumarāha Kara De,  
Sunā Hai Ki Maṃzila Karība Ā Rahī Hai I*

Non-dualism between Guru and disciple will kill the joy. A Guru is free from the four-fold inner faculty. But a disciple ought to persist it. The disciple ought to persist mind, because without mind whom would you remember? Many people tell me that Bāpu, please do

something that our mind ceases to exist! I said, my own mind has not ceased as yet and I don't wish to cease it anyways! Please approach someone else! You have come to the wrong place. Go to some knowledgeable. We need mind, Bāpu! Mind is not good or bad. Mind is god's divine manifestation. Kṛṣṇa has not proclaimed eyes, ears, feet or skin as His divine manifestation. But Kṛṣṇa says in 'Gītā', Arjuna, among the ten organs of body, your mind is my divine manifestation. We need mind to worship. In one context, worship means Lord's remembrance. In order to decide whose shelter we must seek, we need mind. Otherwise, we may surrender to a wrong place. This needs discretion of intellect, which is manifested by spiritual discourse. Many devotees of LalBapu who wore red threads in their hand earlier, have removed it now. The reason is that they have started coming to me and I am a non-believer of such customs. I was forced to tell one such individual about it that, "You can definitely come to me if you feel happy, but that doesn't

mean you should remove the offering of your Guru. Do you think I would be happy now that you have removed LalBapu's thread?" Yesterday, a woman approached me for *berakhā* (eleven beaded rosary). Oh, I don't carry rosaries in bulk wherever I go. Our intellect is unable to decide whom should we surrender. Until our intellect doesn't decide, we don't wander for Truth, Love & Compassion. We instead wander to accomplish our selfish-interests of being praised. This is our state. We are humans after all. We are the puppets of weaknesses. Human body is made up of five vital elements. However, I want to add a sixth element to it and that is my and your weaknesses. It's our shortcomings, our hankerings, our selfish intents! Who wants the Supreme Entity instantly and unconditionally? While we do want the Supreme Entity, we first seek fame, reputation and recognition! Anyways, I am not condemning anything because all said and done, we are humans. This is only mass-contemplation, mass-dialogue or mass-conversation.

Vinobāji used to say that mass-penance must be practiced. Just like mass-labor, mass-education, mass village industries Kathā is mass-contemplation or mass-conversation. This is not an admonition, but a mutual talk with you. Those who surrender with a genuine heart, their own soul would vouch that this is the right place for us. I am able to articulate this as I have experienced. It's difficult to put the matter of realisation into words. There is a difference between experience (*anubhava*) and realisation (*anubhūti*) as per my 'Mānasa'. A person who has had an experience can say something about it. But those who have realised are unable to put into words. Two characters of 'Rāmāyaṇa' have articulated their experience. Even though they are the high-souled men of realisation, they have spoken only with the intent of explaining the opposite person.

*Nija Anubhava Aba Kahau Khagesā I*

*Binu Hari Bhajana Na Jāhi Kalesā II UTK-88.03 II*

*Umā Kahau Mai Anubhava Apanā I*

*Sata Hari Bhajanu Jagata Saba Sapanā II ARK-38.03 II*

Till the state of experience, the spiritual-seeker can explain in words that this is truth and that is dream. S/He who gets realisation, transcends the dualisms of truth and dream. It is what it is. The notion of noun ceases. Then there is no question of adjective! The concept of nouns eliminates. No name or form exists in realisation.

Alms, education and initiation must not be given forcefully! We need not run behind them with a noose to make them our followers! They would proactively come to you once they realise there is no other place except this for them. The day they do so, welcome them. Look at the number of listeners who attend the spiritual discourse of various reciters, whether it's 'Bhāgvat' or any other scripture. Does anyone bring them forcefully? You all come here proactively. Thus, my point is that a disciple must have intellect. S/He must have the power to think. A Guru is free from the four-fold inner faculty. S/He doesn't have



mind (*mana*). Mind is symbolic of resolves and alternatives. S/He is free from wandering intellect (*buddhi*). S/He is free from dilemma or disturbances of subconscious-mind (*citta*). The position of a Guru is completely free from the sense of pride (*ahaṃkāra*). But people like us will have to maintain dualism. Hence, the moment you determine, instantly surrender to someone instead of wandering elsewhere.

*Abhyāsa Jāgyā Pachī Bahu Bhamavu Nahi Pānabāi,  
Rahevu Nahī Bhedavāḍīnī Saṃga...*

Tears and surrender are the only two resorts. I don't like to call them spiritual means, but tears and surrender are the only two resorts for a spiritual-seeker. One needs to walk only on these two tracks. There is no third track. One recourse is the feeling of surrender that I have to live here. Another recourse is the tears of eyes. I was discussing with you that sometime our heart lacks sensitivity. One must be sensitive in some corner of the heart. We should be easily able to arouse sensitivity in our heart through means of spiritual discipline. But the spiritual disciplines must not be tough to practice. They must be easily doable to arouse sensitivity. The next reservoir is lake. What is the meaning of life? Taking a dip in the lake of love is an arrangement of the grove of heart or *HṛdayaVāṭikā*. Thus, heart is a grove. It must be sensitive. We should be able to take a dip in the lake of love in heart. This is 'Mānasa-Vāṭikā'.

Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā contains *vana*, *upavana* and *bāga* (*forest, garden and orchard*). The place that gives us rest is called as *bāga*. *Bāga* means rest. Janaka's *bāga* is synonymous to restfulness. Laṃkā's AśokaVāṭikā is difficult to reach. King Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā cannot be visited without going to Mithilā. As for the deities' 'AmṛtaVāṭikā' in Nandanvana', we don't wish to go there. Hence, let's forget about it! The 'ViṣaVāṭikā' of nether world is full of poison.

Bāpa, we are discussing 'Mānasa-Vāṭikā'. If we experience true rest from within while reciting or

listening to 'Mānasa', realise that 'Mānasa' is Vāṭikā i.e. 'Mānasa' is the orchard for our heart where we can experience rest. Probably we all have experienced that reciting or narrating the episodes of 'Mānasa' has brought us immense rest. As for me, it's very clear that I experience rest nowhere else but here. Yes, I experience total rest. Many great men in our country are saying that we haven't taken vacation. I have not taken vacation since last fifty-five years. Paradoxically, I am enjoying incessant vacation, because one needs rest when on vacation and my VyāsaPiṭha confers me nothing except rest. *Vana* means life. We have a verse in our philosophy where both the words are associated,

*Jivana Vana Ati Vege Vaḥavyu.*

*Dvāra Ūbho Śīsu Bholo.*

*Dayārāma Maṃgala Maṃdira Kholo.*

There is a poem by Jayant Pathak. I like it,

*Daravājo Khullo Hato,*

*Hu To Ūbho Hato.*

*Aṃdara Jai Śakāya Evu Hatu.*

*Are! Aṃdara Lagī Javāya Evu Hatu Eṭaluja Nahī,*

*Aṃtara Lagī Javāya Evu Hatu. Jo Javā Icchata To.*

*Daravājo Khullo Hato.*

*Jo Hu Bahāra Nīklyo Hota,*

*To Sarahada Sudhī Javāya Evu Hatu.*

*Are Nahī! Anahada Sudhī Javāya Evu Hatu.*

*Paṇa Na Hu Aṃdara Gayo, Na Hu Bahāra Nīklyo!*

My and your state is very much similar.

*Vana* means life. Our heart must be considered *vāṭikā* in real sense when it feels life. As a general belief, a beating heart is indicative of being alive. But it's about physical life. However, *vana* in context of a live heart means being sensitive towards every living creature. Others' pain must become our pain. Though, I have no clue if we can live such a life.

Life is akin to a forest. Confining life only within defined notions is foolishness. It's not discretion. There are myriad paths to attain life!

'Upavana' is the third trait of the grove of heart or *HṛdayaVāṭikā*. An Upavana-like heart is endowed with loving disposition, such an individual leads a gentle and placid life, others feel coolness in his/her company, s/he is the one whom everyone longs to visit and the very wish of meeting that person makes one feel overwhelmingly elated. Such an individual is the metaphoric *upavana* of 'HṛdayaVāṭikā'. The word '*Upa*' itself means that s/he has come too close. Understanding the essential meanings of these concepts shall prove beneficial for my and your personal life.

So, do remember that 'HṛdayaVāṭikā' is PuṣpaVāṭikā or the orchard of flowers. However, as we compare our heart with AśokaVāṭikā, we ought to think through all points from an essential perspective. AśokaVāṭikā is full of demons who rushed to attack Hanumānājī and demoness who frighten Sītā. While we compare our heart with AśokaVāṭikā, how can we determine whether the grove of our heart contains demons or not? We need to ask Tulasī.

*Mama Hṛdaya Bhavana Prabhu Torā I*

*Jahā Āi Base Bahu Corā II*

Tulasī says, Lord the abode of my heart is Yours, it has been hijacked by the thieves who are not sparing me! They are pressurising me. They have taken it into custody! Our heart as well contains the woes like lust, anger etc. These metaphoric thieves have subjugated our heart. When a Guru enters the AśokaVāṭikā of our heart, S/He deals with the metaphoric thieves of woes troubling us, in a similar manner. S/He kills a few, crushes a few and lays few of them swooned to bless our heart more than ever. These woes are otherwise potent enough to cause our downfall. But seekers living in moderation stay unaffected.

Let me further some chronology of Kathā. 'AyodhyāKāṇḍa' begins with notable opening invocations. However, in my view the first most striking incident in the beginning of 'AyodhyāKāṇḍa' is

an inordinate surge in the prosperity of Ayodhyā after the four brothers namely Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna returned home duly married. The surge in prosperity is good. Who wouldn't like a surge in the prosperity of nation, society, family and individuals? However, a surfeit of prosperity instantly changed everyone's state in Ayodhyā. This incident in 'Mānasa' is probably a hint for my and your life. If the winter extends unusually, we solicit the warmth of sun. Similarly, in the state of torrential downpour or famine, we seek a respite. When Rāma returned to Ayodhyā duly married, there was a surge of prosperity, so much so that Tulasīdāsājī was bound to write that the torrential rain of bliss began to shower in the entire city! A torrential shower of bliss inundated the whole town! During a downpour, the rivers get flooded and flow copiously into the ocean. Similarly, Tulasīdāsājī says that the rain of bliss showered to such an extent that the metaphoric rivers of Riddhi and Siddhi were flooded and began to empty their bliss and prosperity in the metaphoric ocean of Ayodhyā. This is the extreme state of bliss, Sāheb! And therefore, this incident is immediately followed by Rāma's exile into the woods. The destiny continues this cycle. We must indeed endeavour to multiply our prosperity and wealth, as per the current age. But along with prosperity, we must also cultivate a sense of understanding that extreme bliss also needs the warmth of the sun. This is the aphorism between the episodes of Rāma's coronation and Rāma's exile. Inordinate bliss is showered. The metaphoric rivers of Riddhi and Siddhi have flooded the metaphoric ocean of Ayodhyā. In this state, King Daśaratha took a mirror in hand and beheld his countenance. On seeing the crown slightly tilted, he set it straight. Everyone must hand over the crown to someone when it gets tilted, otherwise someone might snatch it! Don't many people fight for a seat in RajyaSabha, if they lose LokSabha election!

Bāpa, when King Daśaratha beholds himself in the mirror Tulasī says that the hair beside his ears had turned grey. It seemed as if old age was whispering into his ears. We usually tell a secret by whispering in someone's ears. While giving a genuine advice, we hold the person's ear. A guru gives an initiation of mantra in someone's ear. This is our tradition. Here Tulasīdāsajī indicates that the grey hair beside the ear is an admonition of old age. The old age in form of grey hair was whispering into his ears. The old age is symbolic of wise and mature Guru. It's symbolic of a Guru who has no blemishes in life. Such a Guru hints into our ears. Daśaratha thought as if the grey hair admonishing in his ears that, Rāma has now become worthy of managing the kingdom. You must now hand over the responsibility and the reins of state affair to Rāma, and follow the path of renouncement to emancipate your life. A real parent is the one who hands over everything to the children at the right time. At times we feel that God is extremely gracious to admonish us at the right age. While the scriptures do admonish us, a person's age also acts as a great admonition. After this incident the King immediately resorted to the Guru. He bowed down to the Guru's feet, "Holy Sir, Rāma has become worthy in all respects, with your permission I would like to enthrone Him?" Vaśiṣṭhajī said, King, you have had a very auspicious thought Bāpa! If you wish to handover the kingdom to Rāma, do it at the earliest without any delay. The moment Rāma sits on the royal throne itself would be the auspicious moment. There is

no need to search an auspicious moment. This was the hint that there is no need to look for an auspicious moment, just handover everything to Rāma right away. But Daśaratha thought to perform the ceremony the next day. A night fell in between!

I have one request to you. If you are unable to decide something, ask an Enlightened-Being on whom you have total trust. If that Enlightened-Being gives the same answer thrice to your question and even after presenting your alternatives, if the same answer is provided thrice then forthwith start working towards whatever S/He has said without applying your own wisdom! Lately, I am of the opinion that one must not even let the Guru speak thrice. Even as the Guru speaks once, the matter ends! There is no need for Him/Her to repeat thrice. Although, speaking anything thrice holds a glory in our philosophy. But Guru's words are equally effective even when spoken once. Daśaratha need not have delayed. However, a gap of one night came in between. Tulasīdāsajī similised the darkness of night to attachment. The gap of one night aroused Kaikeyī's attachment towards her son. The dark night to attachment caused Rāma's exile into the woods instead of the Rāma's coronation. The incident changes completely. The king failed to understand the Guru's hint. Or it must have happened by the Lord's wish or it must be the decision of destiny. A great celebration has begun for Lord Rāma's coronation. But one night of attachment has upset the plan.

*Even though many hearts are beating, sensitivity is a far cry! The more we melt such hearts, the more adversely they react! Hence, Urdu and Persian literature has used the word 'Sa gaDila' or stone-hearted. Today the whole world is talking about sensitivity. Ours is the country of sensitivity. Our religion is nothing but sensitivity. Our 'Rāmāya a' has originated from sensitivity. Even through Rāma was born from fire and Sitā from earth, the scripture of 'Rāmāya a' that extols their exploits has originated from sensitivity.*



## Let's cultivate an orchard of flower or PuṣpaVāṭikā in our inner-realm

We have been engaged in a dialogue about 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā'. There is a great similarity between Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā, Bāpa! Rāma enters Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā before Sītājī. Sītājī arrived later to perform Gaurī's adoration with Her companions. One of the companions, lost in seeing the orchard, happens to behold Rāma. She rushes to the temple and insists Sītājī to behold Rāma on priority. Finally, Sītājī gets the sight of Rāma. She attains Rāma. Though Sītājī and Rāma are no different, they are one and the same. However, as per the order of events of their divine pastime Sītājī arrived in the orchard, Her companion rushed to the temple and thereafter, She attained Rāma. As we similise our lives to Vāṭikā, this is the truth of our life as well. Sītā is devotion personified. The shrine of Bhavānī is figurative of reverence. Sītā's companion is the counterpart of a Guru. Hence, whenever devotion or reverence manifests in our lives, a Guru who has beheld Rāma approaches us proactively instead of we visiting Him/Her. This is an obvious fact. Just like Sītājī's companion, a Guru would approach us and make us behold Rāma. This is the natural order of events. First manifests devotion or reverence, followed by the attainment of a Guru and through the Guru, we attain God.

The same sequence of events is observed in AśokaVāṭikā as well. In AśokaVāṭikā, Sītā enters before anyone else. Sītā personifies devotion, but She exists in an illusory form in AśokaVāṭikā. Even if devotion manifests in our life in an illusory form, it's only to our advantage. We might perhaps be unable to assimilate devotion if it manifests in a real form! Sītā is the primordial cosmic energy pervading the Universe; hence, She would only accompany Rāma. It's would be good enough for us even if She blesses us partially in an illusory form. Even if we do nothing but sit in the blessed company of an individual engrossed in the felicity of worship, we are praised in the world. This is the glory of someone's blessed company. Even though Sītā exists in an illusory form in Laṃkā, She nonetheless personifies devotion. She sits there in an illusory form of devotion and therefore, Hanumānajī has arrived as the next event. Hanumānajī is a Guru. It was only after Hanumānajī's arrival that Rāma Himself arrived in Laṃkā. My VyāsaPīṭha perceives this episode in this manner. Every individual will have to cultivate this kind of vāṭikā in his/her life. This is all I wish to convey on the last day today before taking your leave. King Janaka's town has evident devotion in form of Sītā. She has born there as a daughter. It's also written in 'BālaKāṇḍa' that the people of Janaka's town were wise and accomplished. We have thus spoken about PuṣpaVāṭikā and Rāvaṇa's AśokaVāṭikā. These events have occurred in Tretāyuga. Today we are living in Kaliyuga. I would like to use the word 'camatakāra' or miracle, but not in the context of miracles that way people use nowadays. Or let me not use it at all. Please don't misunderstand. Nowadays there is a vast majority of the believers of miracle as well as the people engaged in performing miracles. Our world doesn't want sāksātkāra or direct realisation. Everyone only seeks miracles! Why is an ideal reign or RāmaRājya so much in demand today? It was the reality in Tretāyuga, but what about today? Oh, how do I wrap up today's discourse? Tulasīdāsajī is revealing myriad mysteries. Open 'UttaraKāṇḍa' and read the description of Ayodhyā. Tulasīdāsajī writes an



extremely mysterious line, Bāpa! We wish to live under an ideal reign or RāmaRājya. But how will an ideal reign manifest in our hearts? Tulasī has given a hint after RāmaRājya was established, 'SumanaVāṭikā'. This is the last usage of the word 'Vāṭikā'. Tulasī describes the town of Ayodhyā as it was after the establishment of Lord Rāma's reign. We ought to go through the description of Ayodhyā through 'Mānasa'. It represents the spiritual Ayodhyā of our heart. Goswāmījī writes that after the reign of Rāma was established in Ayodhyā, every individual made a vāṭikā,

Sumana Bāṭikā Sabahi Lagāi I

Bibidha Bhāti Kari Jatana Banāi II UTK-27.01 II

Every inhabitant in Ayodhyā had planted a flower garden or vāṭikā in a characteristic design and trimmed with the greatest care, as per their liking.

Latā Lalita Bahu Jāti Suhāi I

Phūlahi Sadā Basamta Ki Nāi II UTK-27.01 II

Tulasī says, even though the seasons changed in the other parts of the world, Janaka's PuṣpaVāṭikā was blossomed with flowers all the year round as in the vernal season. Tulasī similes the vernal season with our reverence and thus advises that one's reverence must not be ephemeral, but eternal. He uses the phrase 'Phūlahi Sadā' post the establishment of Rāma's reign, which is analogous to the phrase 'taila dhārāvata' i.e. incessantness. People cultivated their life in such a way that incessant reverence thrived every moment.

Phūlahi Sadā Basamta Ki Nāi II UTK-27.01 II

After hearing the Kathā of 'Mānasa-AśokaVāṭikā', let me and you try to cultivate our lives in the same manner. It's still not late. I share the aphorisms with you only because I am reciting. But I am equally unsure if I have understood whatever I have spoken. It's only when my Guru would endorse, that I shall realise having understood everything. Therefore, I would like

to request everyone to devote few moments in twenty-four hours in the practice of manifesting the purity of our inner-realm. The day our inner-realm becomes utmost purified, even if it's for a few moments, our Guru's memory will descend in us. The grace of our Guru already encompasses us every moment, but we fail to receive and realise it! If the inner-realm of worldly souls like us becomes purified even for five minutes, the divine memories will start manifesting in our inner-realm. Chanting or reciting divine scriptures are necessary to realise the Guru's grace, but if our inner-realm doesn't get purified then the divine memories will return displeased. These are my overwhelming realisations and I am only sharing this with everyone because you all are mine.

Dhā Kiṭa Dhā... Dhā Kiṭ Tā...

Dhātrak... Dhātrak... Dhin Dhin Tinnā...

I cherish a strong memory behind this rhythm. However, I would like to proceed by only stating that this rhythm is known as 'Rudra Tāla'. We also have a rhythm known as 'Brahma Tāla'. Dada had stated that when Rāvaṇa performed Tāṇḍava dance, 'Rudra Tāla' was played in the background. It has thirty-two beats. Which other rhythm could be superior for me than 'Rudra Tāla', Sāheb! My Dada has taught me 'Rudrāṣṭaka' as the very first step,

Namāmīśamīśāna NirvāṇaRūpaṃ I

Vibhuṃ Vyāpakaṃ Brahma VedaSvarūpaṃ II

Nijaṃ Nirguṇaṃ Nirvikalpaṃ Nirīhaṃ I

Cidākāśamākāśavāsaṃ Bhaje'haṃ II UTK-108 II

We just need to purify our inner-realm for few moments. We are worldly souls and hence, we fail in such attempts and are unable to live in a constant state all the while. Even as we are alive, the surroundings cause disturbing waves in our mind. In such an age chanting Lord's Name, trust in God and firm surrender to the Sadguru are the only recourse to purify our inner-realm. Please remember one point, this is

Kaliyuga. If it were Satayuga, Tretāyuga or Dvāparayuga, Śaṅkara would have been in samādhi. But He doesn't sit in samādhi in Kaliyuga. Instead, He constantly looks at us with a fixed glance expecting someone to awaken spiritually, expecting someone to hear His tune, expecting someone to hear His rhythm, expecting someone to understand His allusion! Māhādeva cannot afford undergoing samādhi in this age! I feel that our god is constantly encompassing us in an utmost awakened state. In the current age, god is not resting in the mythological ocean of milk. If reverence builds in our heart, we can attain a Guru. Once we attain a Guru, we will definitely attain god. Alternately, we can do without god even if we attain a Guru in completion. However, we cannot attain Guru in completion! And even if it happens, we often fail to recognise Him/Her!

Bāpa, let's cultivate an orchard of flower or PuṣpaVāṭikā in our inner-realm. Let's build it ourselves as per our liking. And Allah willing, let it eternally harbor incessant reverence. On the contrary, we harbor reverence only until our selfish interests prevail. Once our motives are met, we leave upfront! And if our intents remain unfulfilled, we leave forever! This is how the world runs. Therefore many a times I wonder, what kind of society are we living in? Anyways! We are nonetheless enjoying. We recite the Kathā, listen to it and enjoy at the same time. Let's hope to manifest a similar orchard of flower in our life. By alleviating our differences, attachments, hatreds and other strange woes, let's try to purify our inner-realm for few moments in twenty-four hours. We shall experience Śaṅkara's grace in our life more than ever by doing so. In short, my concluding gist is that Allah willing, may our reverence and faith stay as much incessant as possible. We are worldly souls. Don't we even rebuke god if our objectives are unmet? So Bāpa, PuṣpaVāṭikā and AśokaVāṭikā are the orchards of the

age of 'Rāmāyaṇa'. 'Sumana Bāṭikā Sabahi Lagāī', people in Ayodhyā have planted a flower garden in their forecourts after the establishment of Rāma's reign. We are not living in Tretāyuga, but Kaliyuga. After reciting and listening to Kathā, let's cultivate a similar orchard of flower in our heart that harbors incessant reverence and trust.

Yesterday in the chronology of Kathā we discussed that King Daśaratha decided to hand over the reins of state affairs to Rāma. Kaikeyī's attachment upset the entire plan and resulted in Rāma exile into the woods. Lord's coronation was planned the next day, but it resulted into His exile into the woods. Sītājī was not ready to stay back, neither was Lakśmaṇajī. This came as a strong shock to the town of Ayodhyā. Rāma-Lakśmaṇa-Jānakī reach the bank of River Sarajū along with Sumaṃta. Extreme bliss eventually results in sorrow. Lord arrived on the bank of Gaṃgā and requested Kevaṭa for a ferry to cross the holy river. Kevaṭa said, Lord, I know your mystery. No one can know Lord's mystery, but here a Niṣāda was aware of it! It must only be his merits of previous births that he knew lord's mystery! On hearing Kevaṭa's words imbued with love, Lord looked at Sītā and Lakśmaṇa and smiled! 'Rāmāyaṇa' contains devotees who make the Lord smile and also the ones who make the Lord cry. It contains the devotees who make the Lord feel hesitant. There are devotees in 'Rāmāyaṇa' who make the Lord arise from His seat and the ones who make the Lord sit on His seat. This is the orchard of devotees, BhaktaVāṭikā.

Bāpa, Kevaṭa laved Lord's divine feet and dropped the Lord on the other bank. When Lord gave the signet-ring to Kevaṭa, he said, Lord what have I not already received today? I have been laboring since countless years. Today you have blessed me with every reward! I shall not accept any toll, but I shall thankfully accept whatever boon You bestow on me while

returning. Kevaṭa did not accept any toll. Lord stayed there overnight. The next day Lord performed Śiva's adoration and commenced the feet journey. Rāma-Lakśmaṇa-Jānakī reached Sage Bharadvāja's hermitage. Lord requests the sage to show them the way. Bharadvājajī said, Sire! Who am I to show You the way? Every path is easy of access to You. Yet the sage described the path to admonish the world. Many disciples rushed to show the direction to the Lord. The sage chose four of them. The four disciples are symbolic of the four Vedas. Vedas and its aphorisms can direct us to the right path. I have heard from the saints that Lord Rāma has walked the path of Vedas. Vedas have guided the right direction. Lord took a leave. A hermit arrived. After his arrival, Lord gives leave to King Guha, the four disciples of Bharadvājajī and to the rests. Who was the hermit on whose arrival Lord gave leave to the guides?

Manahu Premu Paramārathu Dou I AYK-110.01 I  
When the hermit and Lord Rāma embraced each other, Tulasī says that today love and supreme Reality are embracing each other. Rāma is embodiment of the supreme Reality.

Rāma Brahma Paramāratha Rūpā I AYK-92.04 I  
Rāma is all accomplished. The hermit is love. Tulasī penned this down. It's true! When love enters one's life, Vedas and the guides have to return. The manifestation of love in our life ends every formality.

While furthering the journey, Lord entered Vālmiki's hermitage. Vālmiki's joy knew no bounds. He was delighted at the sight of Lord who was an embodiment of auspicious. The next day Lord enquired with Vālmikijī about the places where they can stay for next fourteen years. Vālmikijī said, I shall certainly recommend the places to stay but first show me a place devoid of You. You pervade the entire cosmos. He then showed fourteen spiritual destinations for the Lord to reside. Vālmiki has

indirectly described fourteen types of devotions. Rāma-Lakśmaṇa-Jānakī arrived in Citrakūṭa.

Sumaṃta returns to Ayodhyā. Tulasīdāsajī has described his state of mind from utmost psychological viewpoint. As the sun set, it began to get dark. Finding a right opportunity, Sumaṃta entered Daśaratha's chamber. The entire city of Ayodhyā has surrounded the palace to know the updates. Sumaṃta apprises the king gently and gradually. The king renounced the hope of living. Kausalyā realised that the helmsman of solar dynasty is about to sink. With every moment that passed, the king of Avadha was sinking more and more. A father who requested the Supreme Entity to be his son is taking a leave today! Ayodhyā felt like an orphan! There were no sons at home to perform the obsequies! Bharata and Śatrughna were at their maternal uncle's house. The messengers rushed to bring them back. Both the brothers started the return journey to Ayodhyā. Bharata had a strong desire to meet Rāma before anyone else. Hence, instead of visiting Kausalyā's chamber, he first chose to visit Kaikeyī's chamber, because at that moment Rāma was always present with Kaikeyī. The entire town of Ayodhyā was silent. Only two individuals were pleased, Maṃtharā and Kaikeyī! Bharata has rebuked Kaikeyī extensively! And finally he makes the most painful statement! Vaśiṣṭhajī tries to console everyone. Adhering to the Guru's command, Bharata performs the final rites of the father. A crucial meeting takes place thereafter.

The entire town of Ayodhyā goes to Citrakūṭa. A town of love got inhabited in Citrakūṭa. King Janaka reached Citrakūṭa as soon as he got the news. The decision was finally taken. Bharata accepted and said, Lord be kind to order us as it pleases Your mind. This is the aphorism of surrender. It takes a long time to reach this level.

Prabhu Kari Kṛpā Pāvārī Dīnhī I  
Sādara Bharata Sīsa Dhari Līnhī II AYK-315.02 II

In the end, Lord gave His pādukā by bestowing grace. Pādukā cannot be purchased. It's attained only by grace and not by karma. Pādukā is the greatest resort of surrender in our country. When you have a pādukā at home, regard it as the very embodiment of God. Śrī Bharatajī reverently placed pādukā on his head and returned home. He placed Lord's divine pādukā on the throne and runs the state affairs by taking the pādukā's buy-in. Pādukā provides guidance on every front. Yes, pādukā definitely provides answers to a surrendered devotee in some or other language. Its allusions are different. As many moments as our inner-realm is pure, so many allusions can we grab. Otherwise, our network becomes unreceptive! Vivekanandji has experienced these allusions. The German disciple of Maharshi Raman has experienced these allusions. Swami Anand has experienced these allusions. Arvind has definitely experienced by a great extent. The Mother has also received several such allusions. These allusions descend into us when our inner-realm is pure.

In 'AraṇyaKāṇḍa', Lord arrived in Sage Atri's hermitage. While meeting several saints on the way, Lord conversed with Sage Kuṃbhaja and began to reside in Paṃcavaṭī. One fine day in Paṃcavaṭī, Lakśmaṇajī asked five questions to Lord Rāma. Lord recited 'RāmaGītā' in the response. In the same course of events, Śūrpaṅakhā arrived and was punished. Khara-Dūṣaṇa attacked the Lord and attained nirvāṇā. Śūrpaṅakhā instigates Rāvaṇa and he thus plans Sītā's abduction. When Lakśmaṇajī stepped out to bring fruits, Lord Rāma told Sītājī, "Please contain Yourself in fire. I wish to perform lovely human sport." Jānakī contains Herself in fire. Shortly, Rāvaṇa arrives and abducts Sītā. The king of vultures Jaṭāyu sacrifices himself. Rāvaṇa brings Sītā to Laṃkā,

Taba Asoka Pādapa Tara Rākhisi Jatana Karāi  
II ARK-29(A) II

He placed Sītā beneath the Aśoka tree in 'AśokaVāṭikā'. On the other hand, on seeing the cottage without Jānakī, Lord wept like an ordinary mortal as part of divine pastime and proceeded in Sītā's quest. Jaṭāyu met on the way and informed the Lord about everything. Rāma performed Jaṭāyu's last rites. He attained sārūpya-mukti (liberation where one attains same form as the Lord). Lord shortly reached PāmpāSarovara Lake in Sabri's hermitage. He discussed nine-fold devotion. Nāradaḥ met the Lord in PāmpāSarovara and here concludes 'AraṇyaKāṇḍa'.

In 'KiṣkindhāKāṇḍa', Sugrīva resides on mount Rishyamuka. Rāma and Sugrīva befriended each other through the medium of Hanumāna. Vāli

was given nirvānā. Sugrīva was enthroned. Aṅgada was appointed as the crown-prince. Lord observed religious austerities in the holy month of Catura on Mount Pravarsana. The plan for Jānakī's quest was initiated four months later. The monkeys and the bears were dispatched in every direction. A team led by Aṅgada, guided by Jāmavanta and having Śrī Hanumānaḥ as a member was sent to the southern quarter. Lord gave a signet-ring to Hanumānaḥ. In Sītā's quest this team sought SvayaṃPrabhā's guidance and reached the shore of ocean where they met Saṃpāti. Saṃpāti informed that Jānakī is present in the orchard named Aśoka. Jāmavanta guided the team. Hanumānaḥ prepares Himself to reach Laṃkā and soon commences 'SuṃdaraKāṇḍa'. Śrī Hanumānaḥ ransacks the entire town of Laṃkā in Sītā's quest. He eventually met Vibhīṣaṇa who revealed the tactic or method to meet Sītā.

Kari Soi Rūpa Gayau Puni Tahavā I

Bana Asoka Sītā Raha Jahavā II SDK-07.03 II

He met the mother and obtained Her blessings. As He was having fruits, the demons complained to Rāvaṇa. Hanumānaḥ was captured and presented in Rāvaṇa's court. They set His tail on fire. Hanumānaḥ burned the whole town of Laṃkā from one end to the other. He then took the cuḍāmaṇi (lotus-shaped hair ornament) from the mother and returned. Everyone came where Lord Rāma was present. Jāmavantaḥ recited the story of Hanumaṃta's exploits to Lord Rāma. Lord embraced Hanumānaḥ. He said, do not delay any further and the great campaign kick starts. Vibhīṣaṇa tries to convince Rāvaṇa, but Rāvaṇa fails to agree. He instead kicked his brother. Vibhīṣaṇa surrenders to the Lord. Lord accepts the surrenderer. Vibhīṣaṇa's opinion was sought on how to cross the ocean? He advised that Lord, the deity presiding over the ocean is Your ancestor. You may fast for three days and refrain

from using power if the ocean provides the way. Lord fasted for three days. The ocean doesn't forsake its crassness. Lord mounted the bow and arrow. The ocean surrenders to the Lord. Lord liked the ocean's proposal of bridging and the ocean took a leave from there.

The beginning of 'LaṃkāKāṇḍa' describes the spirit of time. The ocean was bridged. Lord thought of installing Lord Śiva's emblem on the shore of ocean and did so. Lord's troops reached Laṃkā and camped on Mount Subel. Rāvaṇa arrived in his amphitheatre. Lord interrupted his great revelry. Maṃdodarī tried to convince Rāvaṇa in her personal chamber, but he failed to agree. The following day, Aṅgada approached Rāvaṇa for a compromise. The talks failed and the war became inevitable. A fierce battle was fought. The great warriors attained nirvānā one after the other. In the end, a tumultuous war was fought between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Lord mounted thirty-one arrows and shot Rāvaṇa's ten heads, twenty arms and the thirty-first arrow aimed his navel. It was an attack of grace. Rāvaṇa's splendor got blended in Lord's countenance. Maṃdodarī arrived. On seeing her dead husband, she sang Rāma's hymn of praise. Lord Rāma sent the companions and His younger brother to coronate Vibhīṣaṇa on the throne. Jānakī was informed. Jānakī had archived Her original form in the container of fire earlier, wherefrom She manifested Her real form. Jānakī was reunited with the Lord. Puṣpaka aircraft was prepared and it took off for Ayodhyā. Meeting the sage on the way, Lord's aircraft landed in Śṛṅgaverapura. Hanumānaḥ went to Ayodhyā to inform Bharata about Lord's arrival. Here concludes 'LaṃkāKāṇḍa'.

In the beginning of 'UttaraKāṇḍa', the entire town of Ayodhyā is perturbed. Hanumānaḥ arrived as a saviour to rescue Bharataḥ from sinking in Lord's separation. He informed that Lord is arriving any

moment. The news disseminated in the whole town of Ayodhyā. Lord alighted from the aircraft and bowed down to the motherland. As soon as the monkeys and the bears stepped on the land of Ayodhyā, they assumed a lovely human form. The saints have interpreted this incident as the Lord's sport to manifest humanity in everyone. Human must become a human, to say the least. Such is this entire journey. When Bharata and Rāma embraced each other, an ambience of compassion overtook everyone. Lord realised that everyone would be satisfied only if He meets everyone personally and thus,

Amita Rūpa Pragāṭe Tehi Kālā I

Jathā Joga Mile Sabahi Kṛpālā II UTK-05.03 II

Lord manifested in countless forms and met everyone as per their respective emotions. Lord went to Mother Kaikeyī's chamber very first in order, followed by Mother Kausalyā. On beholding Jānakī's emaciated body, the mother's eyes were filled with tears! Vaśiṣṭhaḥ arrived. He advised the Brāhmaṇas to perform the coronation right away. The delay of one day pushed back the reign of Rāma by fourteen years! Everyone took a bath and wore divine attire and ornaments. The divine throne arrived. Offering an obeisance to the motherland, the mothers, the Guru, the Brāhmaṇas, the directions, the subjects and the sun-god who is presiding deity of the sky, Lord took on to Ayodhyā's royal throne along with Sītāḥ. Vaśiṣṭhaḥ applied the sacred coronation mark on Lord's forehead while promulgating the reign of Rāma or the ideal reign to the whole world,

Prathama Tilaka Basiṣṭa Muni Kīnhā I

Puni Saba Bipranha Āyasu Dīnhā II UTK-11.03 II

Lord's glory was extolled across the three spheres. Vedas sang Lord's hymn of praise. Lord Śaṃkara Himself arrived in Lord's kingdom to sing the hymn of praise all the way from Kailāsa. Seeking the boon of devotion again and again, Śiva returned to Kailāsa. The

divine reign of Rāma or the ideal reign was established,  
Sumana Bāṭikā Sabahi Lagāi I UTK-27.01 I

Everyone has built their personal orchards of flowers in anticipation that presence of an orchard will sometime manifest devotion. The manifestation of devotion will impel the Guru to arrive. The arrival of the Guru will keep our reverence intact. This is how the journey is depicted analogous to the episode of PuṣpaVāṭikā. Hanumānājī has stayed back. Rest everyone has left. The stipulated time period has ended. This is Lord Rāma's human pastime and hence, Jānakījī gave birth to two sons named Luv and Kush, whose glory is extolled even in Vedas and Purāṇas. Tulasī paused RāmaKathā by citing the heirs of the lineage of Raghu's race. He doesn't include the episodes like Sītājī's second abandonment etc. in 'Mānasa'. Having both Sītā and Rāma together is the only thing acceptable to Tulasī. The later part of 'Mānasa' contains the life story of Sire KāgaBhuṣuṇḍijī, the curiosities and questions of Garuḍa etc. Finally, Bhuṣuṇḍi concluded the Kathā in front of Garuḍa. Lord Śiva concludes the Kathā before Pārvatī. Whether or not Yajñavalkya concludes the Kathā in front of Bharadvājajī is not very clear. Tulasī who is seated on the bank of surrender concludes the Kathā while convincing His mind. Goswāmijī as well concluded the Kathā.

We were reciting the Kathā since last nine days in the abode of cows. Venerable Lalbapu's

consciousness and his devotees must be impelled to organise a Kathā in this place. At this moment, while this Kathā is concluding successfully and as I take your leave, I appreciate everyone for listening to Kathā in an apt manner. The Kathā, well-organised in all respects by the divine grace, is today proceeding towards conclusion. I was reciting since last nine days and you all were listening to it. The ball is now in your court. If you have grabbed the aphorisms appropriately and find anything worth practicing in life, it shall certainly fill your life with pleasure and felicity more than ever.

Bāpa, I am happy that you all listened to the Kathā calmly. This Yajña-of-Love is concluding in a nice manner and before I give leave to Hanumānājī, let me and you devote the accumulated merit of the nine day Kathā to the divine feet of all the cows throughout the world. O mother cow, be kind to accept our offering. The reason is because this Kathā was primarily held for the welfare of the cows. Let us wish that may the mother cows bestow especial blessings on all of us and by their blessings may we continue to recite, listen and perform these beautiful acts of service incessantly.

*Abbreviations: BAK-BālaKāṇḍa, AYK-AyodhyāKāṇḍa, ARK-AraṇyaKāṇḍa, KKK-KiṣkindhāKāṇḍa, SDK-Sum̐daraKāṇḍa, LNK-LaṁkāKāṇḍa, UTK-UttaraKāṇḍa, HC-HanumānaCāṁsā, Śl:Śloka, So-Sorthā, SB-ŚrīmadBhāgvatjī, VP-VinayaPatrikā.*

*Let's cultivate an orchard of flower or Pu paVā ikā in our inner-realm. Let's build it ourselves as per our liking. And Allah willing, let it eternally harbor incessant reverence. On the contrary, we harbor reverence only until our selfish interests prevail. Once our motives are met, we leave upfront! And if our intents remain unfulfilled, we leave forever! This is how the world runs. Therefore many a times I wonder, what kind of society are we living in? Anyways! Let's hope to manifest a lovely orchard in our life, where our reverence and faith stays as much incessant as possible.*

## क्वचिदन्यतोऽपि

One need not be dressed in a specific uniform to practice penance



Morari Babu's inspirational address on the occasion  
'Nagrik Sanman Samaroh' organised by Shishuvihar, Bhavnagar

First of all, I make obeisance to the consciousness of Mandada. I also offer an obeisance to the departure of PremshankarBapa who passed away recently. As every year, we have gathered here to felicitate distinct personalities who have played crucial role in their field of work. I feel fortunate to partake in this program every year, provided my schedule permits. I offer obeisance to the rare and genius personalities adept in their field, whom we felicitated for this year. The chief of Shishuvihar Institute, Nanubhai, his entire team and you all ladies and gentlemen, I welcome everyone. Nanubhai just told me that Bāpu, we are unable to felicitate the awardees by a big sum of money. We offer them a trivial amount. After deducting travelling and other expenses, we offer them a small sum of Rupees Fifteen Thousand only. I feel that none of the awardees are seeking money. In fact, they can never be felicitated by money; 'Patram

*Puṣpaṁ Phalaṁ Toyam'* is enough for them. These personalities undergo rigorous penance in their field of work! I am myself a witness to their penance, at least for a few of them. A couple of fields of work are new to me. Nonetheless, I was pleased to read about them today. Bāpa! Firstly I express my pleasure. It's written in my 'Rāmāyaṇa' that Kārtikeya, who is symbolic of exertion, has six faces. Hence, exertion is also six-fold.

*Jagu Jāna Śanmukha Janmu Karmu-  
Pratāpu Puruṣārathu Mahā I  
Tehi Hetu Mai Bṛṣaketu Suta Kara Carita-  
Saṁchepahi Kahā II BAK-Chaṁḍa-102 II*

Tulasī says, the whole world knows that the son born from Śiva and Pārvatī has six faces. His name is Kārtikeya. Having six faces may sound like a miracle. Tulasī is too practical. He is not just conservative. Many people have alleged Him to be a stereotyped rut; it's their personal notion! In reality, Tulasī is a monk

who has established new and novel practices and maxims contemporary to the current age! One such maxim similises Kārtikeya with exertion and describes exertion as six-fold. We are short of time to describe the six faces. Also, this is not a Kathā. During such programs, the organisers often request me to talk by sitting on a couch! But the moment I sit down, I feel as if I am reciting Kathā and tend to speak for four hours! I forget that it is not a Kathā. Hence, I always prefer to speak in standing position. We are short of time right now. However, today as we offer obeisance to the six personalities, I feel that the six awardees are symbolic of the six-fold exertion in their respective field of work. I am a witness to the work of Goraj. I am acquainted with Vidyutbhai. Mother is indeed a mother to everyone; I am acquainted with her as well. All the recipients are exerting in their own field. And exertion is six-fold. The first aspect of exertion is 'Nimittamātram Bhava Śakti Sarjanām', being a mere instrument of doing something is the first aspect of exertion.

When Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Duryodhana were asked in 'Māhābhārata' to estimate the duration in which they can conclude the war of 'Māhābhārata', they gave their numbers. When Arjuna was asked the same question, he replied that, "I can win the war of 'Māhābhārata' in a moment." Kṛṣṇa was pleased to hear this. Someone asked Kṛṣṇa, if it was true? He said that he who regards oneself as a mere instrument can finish the job in no time. Therefore, one aspect of six-fold exertion is to be a mere instrument. I feel that these personalities are inspiring us from their respective fields. They are serving their field of work with the mindset of being a mere instrument. Thus, their exertion is in the right direction. While we are felicitating the six personalities, I would like to state that the three aspects present in an individual would be futile if they fail to sanctify others like the holy river of Gaṅges, Sāheb! The first aspect is fame. We may have attained fame in our field of work either by exertion, luck or lastly, Lord's grace. The song which the

daughters sang here earlier contained the solicitation of grace. Our fame is nothing but Lord's grace. Fame includes reputation, honour, praise, glorification etc. The domain of fame is very vast. The second aspect is 'bhaniti' i.e. literature or poetry. The third aspect is 'bhūti' i.e. opulence or prosperity. These three aspects hold no value if they don't ensure welfare and benevolence of ordinary people.

I feel that here someone is serving the literature and someone else is using the fame received by God's grace to eliminate malnutrition among the deprived people. The award recipients are serving the society through various means. Their service must sanctify everyone like the Gaṅges and their resolve to serve must be never ending. Only then we will experience more joy than ever. I really like partaking in such events, why not? The award money, the shawl, the books and the cheque are provisioned by others; all I have to do is just touch my hand to them! Who wouldn't like this? Bāpa! I am extremely pleased. I have shared one feeling umpteen times, let me iterate once again. We may not contribute anything in such programs, but when our hands felicitate the award recipients, they become purer than what they already were. This was Lord Vedavyāsa's thought. My greatest advantage of attending such programs is the sheer joy that I experience by sitting amid such erudite people and the delight that I experience to hear and understand their field of work.

As we felicitate the six personalities, I recall six aphorisms of Vyāsa. Vyāsa stated that sitting near those who have served the society for the welfare of mankind transforms six chemicals in our body. Vyāsa transcends the boundaries of community, religion, time and place. Vedavyāsa is a personality akin to the sky. 'Namostute Vyāsa Vishāla Buddhe', this is Vedavyāsa. He is of the opinion that we experience chemical transformations in ourselves by visiting and sitting near our Enlightened-Being. The visitors who met and sat beside GandhiBapu, experienced radical chemical changes! It holds true for Vinobāji's

hermitage in Paunar as well. Several foreigners have confessed that as they enter the hermitage, they experience a strange transformation within themselves. Hence, the company of people who have served and are serving the world for the welfare of mankind definitely benefits us by a great extent, Sāheb! Listening to these great personalities is only to our advantage. If we haven't turned blind eyes and deaf ears around us and are ready to accept truth then six aspects can multiply. Why am I extolling Tulasī's glory now and then? Tulasī doesn't send me a money order! Why do I reinforce His philosophy time and again? The only reason is His center of discussion is human. The constant center of ManBapa's acts is human. The center of GandhiBapu's acts is human. The center of Vinobāji's acts is human. Vinobāji talks to an extent of Viśvamānuṣa or Cosmic-Man as proclaimed by Vedas. He makes a handsome attempt to present this idea before us. The first Brahmanical word of 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' is 'varṇa',

*VarnāNāmArthaSamghānam  
RasāNām ChandaSāmapī I  
Maṅgalānām Ca Karttārau*

*Vande VāṇiViṇāyakau II BAK-Śl.01 II*

My Dada said while teaching me 'Rāmāyaṇa' that son, if anyone asks you in future that to which caste does the scripture of 'Rāmāyaṇa' belong? Does it belong to Brāhamaṇa (priest class of the society), Kśatriya (men of warrior lineage), Vaiśya (merchants or traders) or Śūdra (the servitor class)? It belongs to none of these castes. My Dada said that the first word of 'Rāmāyaṇa' is 'varṇa' and 'Rāma Carita Mānasa' ends with the word 'mānavāḥ'.

*ŚrīMadRāmaCaritRāmaānasaMidam  
Bhaktyāvagāhanti Ye*

*Te SaṃsāraPatamgaGhoraKiraṇairDahyanti No  
Mānavāḥ II UTK-Śl.130 II*

The last word of 'Rāmāyaṇa' is 'mānavāḥ'. You may tell everyone that the caste of 'Rāmāyaṇa' is only and only human. 'Rāmāyaṇa' has no caste other than human. It

cannot be allotted a specific caste. Human-being is its center. The monkeys like Hanumāna, Nala, Nīla etc., the demons like Vibhīṣaṇa and the bears like Jāmavaṃta are the disregarded section of our society. Rāma has transformed all of them into humans after the war with Rāvaṇa. We celebrated the festival of Dussehra few days ago. Many television interviewers were following me for the message of Dussehra. Initially I avoided the question, but they insisted me to comment something. I stated that Dussehra is celebrated with the common notion of victory of truth over untruth, victory of divine instinct over demonic instinct, victory of noble conduct over indecent behaviour, victory of divine power over evil energy etc. etc. These beliefs are nonetheless good. They asked my opinion. I feel that Dussehra is the victory of harmonious dialogue over controversy, innuendo and reproach. What did Rāvaṇa do? He babbled abuse.

*Sanyapāta Jalpasi Durbādā I*

*Bhaesi Kālabasa Khala Manujādā II LNK-32.03 II*

A monkey like Aṅgada criticised him for babbling abuse. Your mouth smells foul of innuendo. When you are unable to bear the glory of another person, you babble abuse, condemn and speak evil! In my view, Dussehra is the dialogue of harmony before Rāvaṇa's condemnation. Please don't consider the following incident as a miracle. But Tulasī clearly writes in 'Mānasa' that when Puṣpaka aircraft landed in Ayodhyā, Lord Rāma alighted first followed by Hanumāna, Aṅgada, Sugrīva, Nala, Nīla, Jāmavaṃta, Vibhīṣaṇa, Kevaṭa, Niṣāda etc. and then,

*Dhare Manohara Manuja Sarīrā II UTK-07.01 II*

None of them alighted as monkeys, bears or demons! They alighted from the aircraft in lovely human form. 'Rāmāyaṇa' is a formula of making everyone humans. Humans are its central theme. The acts of service of Mandada, Premshankardada, Mahātmā GandhiBapu, Vinobāji etc. have humans as the center. The six personalities have practiced penance and realised something divine. One need not be dressed in a specific uniform like me to practice penance. People in

uniform cannot penance as much as others! Definitely! A man in shorts practiced live penance in Bhavnagar, he was Mandada! Felicitation, obeisance and acquaintance with the thoughts of such personalities trigger six chemicals in us. Lord Vyāsa says that we get endowed with patience. Sitting near an Enlightened-Being invigorates us with a new hope when we are disheartened. The words of an Enlightened-Being don't let us lose hope. The virtue of patience gets manifested in us. Secondly, courage manifests in us when we feel discouraged or timid. We begin to chant 'Rāma' instead of 'Marā'. 'Marā' is a dead or negative mantra. 'Rāma' is a live or positive mantra. Chanting the mantra 'Marā' repeatedly converts it into 'Rāma' and that's what emancipated Vālmiki. We are living like dead. We are living in negative thoughts. I cannot opine in the matters of literature, but I do request the litterateurs to avoid promoting or composing poetries that spread despair or sadness. The mankind must realise the value of life.

*Koi KoiNu Nathī Re, Koi KoiNu Nathī Re...*

Oh, please refrain from reciting negative verses! The world is one family, 'Paraspara Devo Bhava'. A sense of courage manifests in us by sitting with the realised men. We get incited and feel encouraged to live our life. Listen to a poetic couplet Sāheb.

*Pakisīe Hāra Na Jītanā Jarurī Hai I*

*Ye Saba Khela Hai, Yahā Khelanā Jarurī Hai II*

The company of people, who practice the penance of service by being a mere instrument, manifests courage in us. We get endowed with the patience of living our life. Thirdly, an individual becomes heroic. S/He experiences extraordinary might of achieving the impossible. Fourthly, Lord Vyāsa says that the divine opulence that latently pervades within us begins to manifest gradually. A sense of divinity is lying latent within me and you. Give it an opportunity to manifest. We shall shortly start realising its benefit. Fifthly, an individual starts becoming sensitive. This is utmost essential, because

sensitivity is going extinct day by day. A feeling of sensitivity manifests by sitting near a penanceful man; this is the fifth aphorism. The company of such a man manifests judicious renunciation. Note the word judicious. It's not ad-hoc renunciation. Nishkulanand says,

*Tyāga Na Take Vairāgya Vinā...*

So, Manbapa has incessantly served the society throughout his life for the welfare of mankind. Nanubhai and all others have worked without the aspiration of recognition. I adore this mindset. None of you care for fame or recognition. Your only motive is to serve the mankind nonstop. Every time that I meet him, I hear the beginning of some or other new initiative. These personalities have exerted to serve the society for the welfare of mankind. The scale of their service is immaterial. I often give the date of functions in advance because of my busy schedule. On many instances, I am unaware of what the function is about! When people insist me again and again to attend the functions, I give them the date without knowing the details. Later when I attend the function, I check the backdrop to know what the function is about. It's only then that I get to know the details of the function! Many people advice me that Bāpu, why don't you get the information before coming to the function! I said,

*Badanāma Hama Ko Honā Thā*

*Hara Hāla Mein Sanama I*

*Acchā Huā Ki Nāma Tere Sātha Juḍa Gayā II*

Hold on! Please accept a small offering from Talgājarḍā. To address your pain, please increase the award money from Rupees Fifteen Thousand to Rupees Twenty-Five Thousand from the next year onwards. Please accept a small offering on behalf of our Talgājarḍā. I shall be delighted and pleased. Thank-You!

*(An excerpt from Morari Bapu's address delivered on the occasion of Shishuvihar, Bhavnagar on account of 'Nagrik Sanman Samaroh-2016' on October 22, 2016)*

## Evening Performance



Mayabhai Ahir



Lakshman Barot



Niranjan Pandya



Bharatiben Vyash



Dan Alagari



Morardan Gadhavi



Parasottam Pari



Abhesinh Rathod



Devraj Gadhavi (Nano Dero)



Kirtidan Gadhavi



Hemant Chauhan



Osaman Meer



॥ JAI SIYARAM ॥