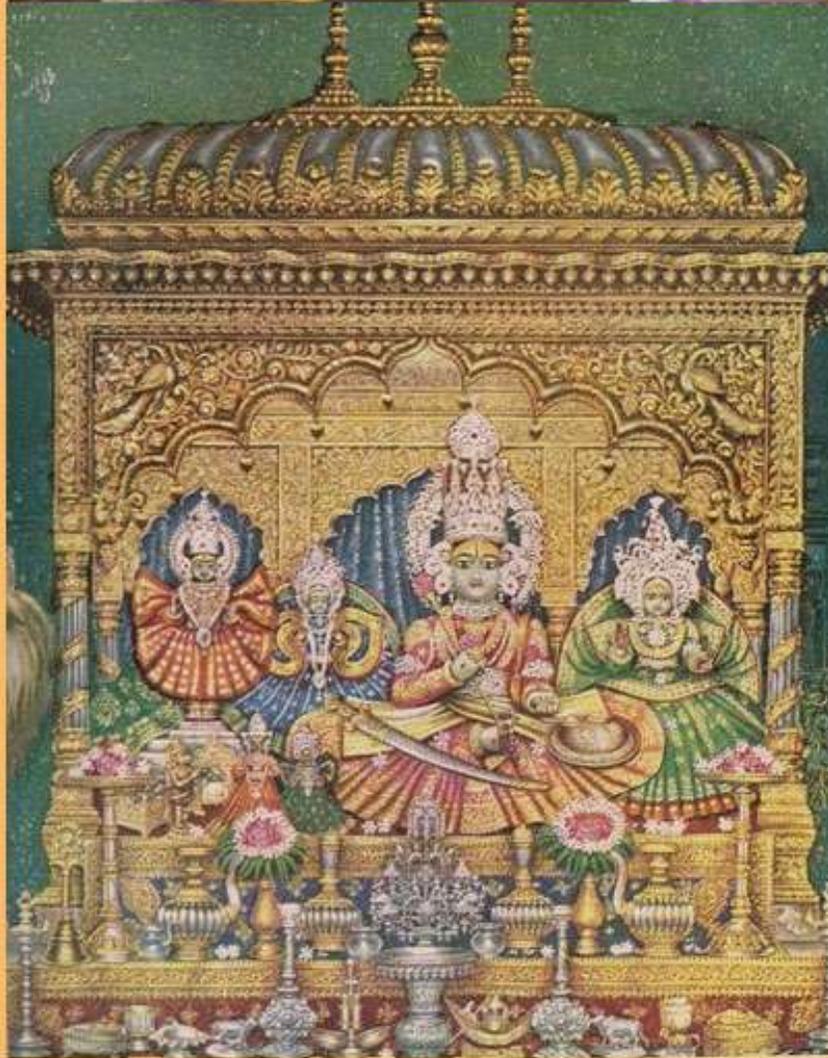


ESSENCE OF VALMIKI AYODHYA RAMAYANA



Translated & Interpreted
by
V.D.N.Rao

Translated and interpreted by V.D.N.Rao, former General Manager, India Trade Promotion Organization, Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, now at Chennai

Other Scripts by the same Author: Essence of Puranas:-Maha Bhagavata, Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, Varaha Purana, Kurma Purana, Vamana Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana; Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Markandeya Purana, Devi Bhagavata; Brahma Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Nilamata Purana; Shri Kamakshi Vilasa

Dwadasha Divya Sahasranaama: a) Devi Chaturvidha Sahasra naama: Lakshmi, Lalitha, Saraswati, Gayatri; b) Chaturvidha Shiva Sahasra naama-Linga-Shiva-Brahma Puranas and Maha Bhagavata; c) Trividha Vishnu and Yugala Radha-Krishna Sahasra naama-Padma-Skanda-Maha Bharata and Narada Purana.

Stotra Kavacha- A Shield of Prayers -Purana Saaramsha; Select Stories from Puranas

Essence of Dharma Sindhu - Dharma Bindu - Shiva Sahasra Lingarchana-Essence of Paraashara Smriti-Essence of Pradhana Tirtha Mahima

Essence of Upanishads : Brihadaranyaka , Katha, Tittiriya, Isha, Svetashwara of Yajur Veda-Chhandogya and Kena of Saama Veda-Atreya and Kausheetaki of Rig Veda-Mundaka, Mandukya and Prashna of Atharva Veda ; Also 'Upanishad Saaraamsa' -Essence of Maha Narayanopanishad; Essence of Maitri Upanishad

Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata- Essence of Bharat Yatra Smriti

Essence of Brahma Sutras

Essence of Sankhya Parijnaana- Essence of Knowledge of Numbers for students

Essence of Narada Charitra; Essence Neeti Chandrika-Essence of Hindu Festivals and Austerities

Essence of Manu Smriti- Quintessence of Manu Smriti- Essence of Paramartha Saara; Essence of Pratyaksha Bhaskra; Essence of Pratyaksha Chandra

Essence of Vidya-Vigjnaana-Vaak Devi; Essence of Bhagya -Bhogya-Yogyata Lakshmi

Essence of Soundarya Lahari- Essence of Popular Stotras- Essence of Pancha Maha Bhutas

Essence of Taittireeya Aranyaka- Quintessence of Soundarya Lahari- Essence of Gayatri

Essence of Ganesha Mahima - Essence of Shiva Raatri Mahima

Essence of Chaturupanishads- Essence of Ashtaadasha Upanishads - Essence of Bhagavad Gita

Essence of Valmiki Ramayana Baala Kaanda

Essence of Valmiki Ramayana Ayodhya Kaanda Note: All the above Scriptures already released on [www. Kamakoti. Org/news](http://www.Kamakoti.Org/news) as also on Google by the respective references.

Preface

Ranging from the Scripts from 'taal grandhas' to the endless paper world editions, countless kinds of the kaleidoscopic reflective patterns of 'Rama - Ayana' are existent . Perhaps the shortest version in the language of Telugu states : 'Katte- kotte-vachhe' or 'Rama Constructed- He Killed- He Returned sounding like the greek phrase Veni-vidi-vichi or 'I came- I saw-I conquered'. But Tretayuga Maha Purusha Shri Rama is peerless!

Aadho Rama tapo vananu gamanam, hathvaa mrugam kanchanam, Vaidehi haranam, jatayu maranam, Sugreeva sambhashanam, Bali nigrahanam, samudhra taranam, Lanka pureem dahanam, paschad Ravana Kumbhakarna madanam, ethat iti Ramayanam/ The Epic Ramayana is summarised as Shri Rama went to forest of Dandakaranya, chased the false deer of Maricha, Maha Jatayu was killed by Ravana, negotiated with Sugreeva to kill Baali, Maha Samudra was crossed with the help of the Monkey Brigade, Lord Hanuman burnt off Lanka, and the Lord killed Kumbhakarna and Ravana. This is Ramayana was all about!

When I approached HH Vijayendra Saraswati of Kanchi Mutt and requested him whether I might attempt scripting the Essence of the Unique Epic of Ramayana, he merely smiled at my symbolism : ' Try Vaamiki but with 'vishleshanas' or explanations as per your ability, he said blessingly! The Essence of Valmiki Baala Ramayana had been blessed already by Him. The next on the series is being attempted now as the Essence of Valmili Ayodhya Ramayana.

Blessed be the day when I had shown a couple of Essences of Puranas with diffidence and mumbled: 'Swami! I scripted these Purana Translations into English for my 'Kaala Kshepa' or Time Pass!'. Even without opening a Page of the Copies, he remarked: "This kind of Kaalakshepa is like Veda Pathana!" Then he touched the Books and asked one of his disciples approvingly that these be might be released on the Kamakoti website. Within a fortnight or so I saw myself that the Essence of Shiva Purana with excellent setting and beautiful Illustration in a Shiva Tandava posture was released stating that so and so a devotee of Kanchi Mutt - a retired Official of Govt. of India, contributed; and I was dumb-struck! And there has been no break of my scripts evensince for about dedade plus on the webtite. Swami's directive is to keep sustain 'dharma prachara' upto my capability.

Then it was dawned : Contentment is a fallacy and fulfillment is self-deception. This is the typical pattern of effort and fruit which is essentially what human life all about! Moreover, there is the factor called a smoky hand or 'Karma' which is a crucible of past actions and fruits. This indefinable force changes the direction and gives a twist to the stream of life. In my case, from the mundane to the spiritual, the energy had taken a gradual drift towards some realisation. Thus the gates of a new meaning of Life opened up ajar, resulting into a flood of new environs.

We have been ever blessed by Him. From Maha Swami to Baala Vaaru!

Recall the squirrel of Setu bandhana!

VDN Rao and family

CONTENTS	PAGE
Preface	3
Introduction	9
Retrospective (Essence of Vaalmiki Baala Ramayana)	9
Sarga One: Considering Shri Rama's eligibility for Ayodhya's Yuvarajatva, King Dasharatha convenes a durbar meeting	12
Sarga Two: King Dasharatha secures public approval for Rama's Yuvarajatva Vishleshana on Gandharva Veda	14
Sarga Three: Dasharatha discusses the details of Rama's Rajyabhisheka with Vasishtha and asks Rama to attend the Rajya sabha	17
Sarga Four: Shri Rama seeks his mother Devi Kousalya's blessings and endears Lakshmana	19
Sarga Five: Dasharatha and Vasishtha ask Rama and Sita to observe fasting before the celebrations of Yuvarajatva- Vishleshana on Kings Nahusha and Yayati	21
Sarga Six: Ayodhya public's joy and pre-celebrations	23
Sarga Seven: Villianous Manthara gets upset on Rama's Yuvarajatva and reaches Kaikeya and provokes	24
Sarga Eight: Kaikeyi defends Rama for his ability but Manthara seeks to poison Kaikeyi's mindset suggesting Rama's Vana Vaasa and Bharata's elevation as Yuvaraja.	26
Sarga Nine: Fully poisoned by Mandhara, Kaikeyi enters 'Kopa griha' - the symbolic Anger Chamber	28
Sarga Ten: King Dasharatha seeks to pacify her beloved queen Kaikeyi	32
Sarga Eleven: Kaikeyi seeks to remind of Dasharatha's promise of granting her of two boons at a battle as she saved him, demands Rama's 'vana vaasa' / Bharata's Rajyabhisheka	32
Sarga Twelve: Dasharatha's remorse at Kaikeyi's undue demands even having admitted the boons and pleads with Kaikeyi not to insist but in vain - [Vishleshanas about Kings Shiabya and Alarka]	34
Sarga Thirteen: Dasharatha's intense cryings and persistent pleadings with Kaikeyi but she argued in the name of dharma citing the tradition of truthfulness of Ikshvaku ancestors- [Vishlesana on Yayati]	37
Sarga Fourteen: Kaikeyi's stubbornness to relent - Vashishta Maharshi's intervention fails and Charioteer Sumanra asked for Rama's arrival at the King's Palace [Vishleshana on Vamanavatara was detailed in Essence of Vaalmiki Bala Ramayana but some excerpts are given for ready reference]	38
Sarga Fifteen: Sumanta arrives at Rama's palace	41
Sarga Sixteen: Rama and Lakshmana on the way to King's Palace enjoying public's joy at Rama's elevation	42
Sarga Seventeen: Excellent preparations in the city for the celebrations by the following day	44
Sarga Eighteen: Rama witnessing heart broken Dasharatha and Kaikeyi's rude intervention demanding Rama's Vana Vaasa for fourteen years in prescribed dress code and of Bharat's Kingship	45
Sarga Nineteen: Rama agrees to her terms and proceeds to Kousalya to break the news	47
Sarga Twenty: Kousalya's sudden and of tragic news leads to agony and standstill senselessness as Rama seeks to pacify	48
Sarga Twenty One: Lakshmana gets agitated at the turn of the events and so did Kousalya but Rama assuages their badly hurt psyche, but Rama explains that 'pitru vaakya paripaalana' ought to be his life's motto and dharma [Vishleshanas on 1. Bhagiratha and 2. Parashu Rama]	51
Sarga Twenty Two: Rama asked Lakshmana to remove all the preparatory materials like the vessels etc. meant for his Rajyabhisheka since that would be unwanted then	54
Sarga Twenty Three: Reacting to remove the material for Rajyabhisheka, Lakshmana argued whether the decision was correct, but Rama once again reiterated as irrevocable	56
Sarga Twenty Four: Devi Kousalya, reacting sharply about Rama's decisiveness to undergo	58

Vana Vasa, resolves to follow him, and Rama invoked the argument of her preserving Pativratiya and should not desert her husband	
Sarga Twenty Five: With great difficulty, Rama finally convinces Kousalya to let him leave for 'vana vaasa' and she relented finally [Vishleshanas: Vritrasura- Dadhiti-Indra ; Vinata - Garuda-Amrita .	59
Sarga Twenty Six: As Rama left Kousalya with mutual anguish, the Public too was unaware of the tragic development, much less Devi Sita who was horrified	62
Sarga Twenty Seven: Devi pleads her accompanying Rama for the forest life. [Vishlesana of Ashta Siddhis]	64
Sarga Twenty Eight: Rama dissuades Sita to accompany him for Vana Vaasa	66
Sarga Twenty Nine: Sita invokes her 'Paativratya Dharma' and insists	67
Sarga Thirty: Devi Sita sobs heavily and Rama had to finally concede [Vishleshana 1. on Devi Savitri- Satyavan- Yama Raja- and Satyavan's Lasting relief and 2. Surya Deva and Sanjana Devi]	68
Sarga Thirty One: Lakshmana too insists on accompanying Rama- latter agrees; Rama desires of offering charities	73
Sarga Thirty Two: Sita Rama's charity to Vasishtha Kumara Suhyajna and wife- brahmanas, brahmacharis, servants	75
Sarga Thirty Three: Sita Rama Lakshmanas visit Kaikeyas's palace to meet Dasharatha as Nagara vaasis weep away	76
Sarga Thirty Four: Sita Rama Lakshmanas approach Dasharatha with queens before vana vaasa; the latter swoons and recovers and embraces them and swoons again	77
Sarga Thirty Five: Sumantra criticizes Kaikeyi as the latter justifies	79
Sarga Thirty Six: Dasharatha instructs treasure to be sent along with Sumatra for initial phase of vana vaasa; Vishleshana on Sagara Chakravarti and his son Asamanjasa	80
Sarga Thirty Seven: Rama Lakshmanas dressed up in valkala vastras but Maharshi Vasishtha rejects Sita wearing that dress	84
Sarga Thirty Eight: Dasharatha too rejects Sita wearing Valkava vastras even as Kaikeyi was unhappy, but Rama approves	85
Sarga Thirty Nine : Dasharatha breaks into cryings, Sumantra arrives with the chariot, Sita receives 'pati seva upadesha' from Kousalya, Rama Sita Lakshmanas bid farewell to all.	86
Sarga Forty: Sita Rama Lakshmanas perform pradakshinas to Dasharatha and the mothers, Sita Rama Lakshmanas alight the chariot and the crowds get terribly agitated; - [Vishleshana on Meru Mountain and Surya Deva]	88
Sarga Forty One: As the unruly crowd was interrupting the Chariot several times, the citizens were crying away aloud shattering the skies, especially the women folk	90
Sarga Forty Two: King Dasharatha cries and swoons for Rama, distances from Kaikeyi's palace and shifts to Kousalya's	91
Sarga Forty Three: Maha Rani Kousalya's agony	93
Sarga Forty Four: Devi Sumitra assuages Kousalya's tormented psyche; [Vishleshana on Rama's killing Subahu Rakshasa: Refer Essence of Valmiki Baala Ramayana Sarga Thirty:	94
Sarga Forty Five: Rama appeals to the Ayodhya public not to hurt Dasaratha or Bharata- elders insist on following Rama upto Tamasa river banks	96
Sarga Forty Six: Rama Sita Lakshmanas's over night stay at Tamasa banks- they leave earliest unnoticed- public felt bad	97
Sarga Forty Seven: Ayodhya elders and women got disturbed inability to see off Ramas to the deeper forests crossing Tamasa	99
Sarga Forty Eight: Ayodhya woman folk cry away Rama Sita Lakshmanas for further 'vana vaasa'- Vishleshana on Tapatrayas	99

Sarga Forty Nine: Public of Kosala Janapada throng at the Chariot carrying Ramas who also cross Veda shruti-Gomati-Skandika rivers	101
Sarga Fifty: Ramas arrive at Shringavera pura on the banks of Ganga- stay overnight- and Nishada Raja Guha welcomes them-[Vishleshana on Parama Shiva's 'Jataajuta' vide Sarga Forty Three of Valmiki Baala Ramayana is quoted]	102
Sarga Fifty One: Lakshmana - Guha feel and exchange expressions of sadness	105
Sarga Fifty Two: Guha navigates Sita Rama Lakshmanas across Ganga- Rama bids farewell to the reluctant Sumamtra- Sita's intense prayers to the Sacred Ganga- after crossing Ganga reach Vatsa desha for night halt- [Vishleshanas: 1) on Vaanaprastha Dharma as quoted from Manu Smriti -2) on Prayaga	106
Sarga Fifty Three: As Rama asks Lakshmana to return back to Ayodhya at least now but Lakshmana protests	113
Sarga Fifty Four: Ramas reach Bharadvaaja ashram and the Maharshi advises them to settle at Chitrakoota mountain - Vishleshana on Chitrakoota	115
Sarga Fifty Five: Ramas cross Yamuna from Prayaga- Sita prays to Yamuna- their overnight stay at otherside of Yamuna	118
Sarga Fifty Six: Ramas reach Chitrakoota-Maharshi Valmiki at ashram- latter teaches Lakshmana to build 'Rama Kuteera'-Vishleshana on Vaastu Shastra : Matsya Purana	119
Sarga Fifty Seven: Sumantra reaches Ayodhya- 'aarta naadaas' by public and Dasharatha and queens	122
Sarga Fifty Eight: Sumantra conveys Shri Rama- Lakshmanas's messages to the parents	124
Sarga Fifty Nine: Condition of the Ayodhya public and at the state of Rama's distresses Dashatratha extremely	126
Sarga Sixty: Anguish of Devi Kousalya sought to be assuaged by Sumantra	127
Sarga Sixty One: Kousalya's crying protests against Dasharatha	128
Sarga Sixty Two: Regretful Dasharatha with folded hands and prostrations seeks pardon from Kousalya	130
Sarga Sixty Three: Dasaratha's confession to Kousalya about his youthful blunder of killing a Muni Kumara	132
Sarga Sixty Four: Having revealed details of the Muni hatya, the helpless cryings of his blind parents , Vriddha Muni's curse that Dasaradha would die in son's absence, Dasharatha collapsed to death! [Vishleshanas : i) on the process of death- ii) departed jeevatma-iii: Yama- iv: Mrityu Sukta	134
Sarga Sixty Five: Pursuant to Dasharatha's death, his queeens cried out, deathwise- praises and music followed	139
Sarga Sixty Six: Queens, Ministers and staff- and public vision the body as retained in oil vessels	
Sarga Sixty Seven: Maharshis assemble with Purohita Vasishtha to decide on the successor King - [Vishleshana on an Ideal Kingship vide Manu Smriti-Achaara Khanda]	141
Sarga Sixty Eight: Vashishtha despaches messengers to Kaikeya kingdom to bring Bharata along with Shatrughna.	145
Sarga Sixty Nine: As messengers arrive at Bharata's place, the latter felt 'dussvapnas' early morning	146
Sarga Seventy: Ayodhya's messengers arrive at Bharat's maternal uncle's palace, bring gifts and message to return	147
Sarga Seventy One: Bharata Shatrughnas arrive at Ayodhya and found the city as silent and listless!	148
Sarga Seventy Two: Bharata reaches Kaikeyi palace and hears the news of his father's demise- Rama Sita Lakshmana 'vana vaasa' and Bharata's rajyaabhisheka!	149
Sarga Seventy Three: The rattled up Bharata protests violently and detests Kaikeyi's evil mindedness	151
Sarga Seventy Four: Bharata's open protests against Kaikeyi Vishleshana on Surabhi	153

Sarga Seventy Five: Bharata's 'shapatha' / swearing in the presence of Kousalya	154
Sarga Seventy Six: Raja Dasharatha's 'antyeshti' / 'dahana samskaara'	156
[Vishleshanas from Taaitireeya Aranyaka : The departed 'jeevatma' discarding life behind is accompanied by Lord Yama- departed Soul-Pushan- Sayavari / cow- widow-and Agni]	
Sarga Seventy Seven: Bharatha performs Dashartha's 'shraaddha karma' and 'maha daanaas'- collection of ashes and 'nimajjana'- 'daaha samskaara'	161
Sarga Seventy Eight: Shatrugna attacks the villainess Kubja, the servant maid of Kaikeyi, to senselessness and spares her death!	163
Sarga Seventy Nine: Ministers propose Bharata's 'rajyabhisheka'- but the latter proposes only temporary authority as Shri Rama ought to be the real King .	165
Sarga Eighty: Bharata initiates the construction of comfortable 'Raja Marga' from Rivers Sarayu to banks of Ganga.	166
Sarga Eighty One: As 'mangala vaadyas' were heard on a morning, Bharata felt uneasy and asked Vasishtha to come to Rajya sabha with Ministers and officials	167
Sarga Eighty Two: Bharata disagrees with Vasishtha that kingship was Rama's birth right and only a passing solution now	167
Sarga Eighty Three: Bharata's vana yatra and night halt at Shringaverapura	169
Sarga Eighty Four: Nishaada Raja hosts Bharata's overnight stay before crossing Ganga the next day	170
Sarga Eighty Five: Bharata and Nishada Raja exchange wives of Rama's magnanimity	171
Sarga Eighty Six: Nishada Raja extols about the nobility and devotion to Rama of Lakshmana	172
Sarga Eighty Seven: On hearing details of Rama Sita Lakshmanas, Bharata swooned down, Shatrugna and the mothers cried away, and persisted on the details of the threesome regarding their food and sleeping patterns.	173
Sarga Eighty Eight: Guha showed the bed of 'kusha grass' by which Sita Ramas slept on that night and the 'valkala vastras' left behind.	174
Sarga Eighty Nine: Bharata accompanied by sena, mothers, Munis and public arrives at Bharadvaja ashram	176
Sarga Ninety: Bharata visits Bharadvaja 'ashram'	177
Sarga Ninety One: Bharadvaja bestows Bharata and entire entourage including vast army a heavenly hospitality	178
Sarga Ninety Two: Bharata introduces his three mothers and Bharadvaja blesses them and indicates the way to Chitrakoota- Vishleshana on Dwadasa Aadityas	180
Sarga Ninety Three: Bharata's Chitrakoota yatra described	182
Sarga Ninety Four: Shri Rama shows the beauty and grandeur of Chitrakoota to Sita	184
Sarga Ninety Five: Shri Rama displays the exquisiteness of River Mandakini to Sita	185
Sarga Ninety Six: As the wild beasts and birds running astray of Chitrakoota, Lakshmana went up atop a shaala tree as an army was nearing and Lakshmana was angered	186
Sarga Ninety Seven: As Lakshmana saw Bharata approaching, he got angry but Rama cooled him down	187
Sarga Ninety Eight: Bharata and advance party located Rama's 'kuteera' and visited the details inside	188
Sarga Ninety Nine: Bharata Shatrughnas locate Rama, prostrate - crying	189
Sarga One Hundred: Shri Rama having enquired Bharata's welfare gave elaborate lessons of Kshatra Dharmas on his own- [Vishleshanas 1) on King's administrative skill 2) on Videsha Neeti as per Manu Smriti]	191
Sarga One Hundred One: Rama asks Bharata the reason of his arrival- Bharata requests him to return and accept Kingship; but Rama refuses	196
Sarga One Hundred and Two: Bharata requests Rama to reconsider Kingship and informs King Dasharath's sad demise.	197

Sarga One Hundred and Three: Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas cry away at father's death- offerings of tarpana and pinda daana -[Vishleshana on Tapan Vidhaana]	198
Sarga Hundred and Four: With Vasishtha ahead the three Devis arrive, all the sons prostrate the mothers and Vasishtha too	201
Sarga One Hundred and Five: Bharata broaches about Rama's return & kingship	203
Sarga One Hundred and Six: Bharata again pesters Rama to assume kingship	205
Sarga One Hundred and Seven: Shri Rama instructs Bharata to return to Ayodhya at once [Vishleshana in reference to a) Gayaasura and b) Puta / Prithu Chakravarti]	206
Sarga One hundred and eight: Muni Jaabali supports Bharata and his arguments that sounded spread of 'nastikata'	209
Sarga One Hundred and Nine: Rama asserts that karma and rebirth are the corner stones of 'Astikata'	210
Sarga One Hundred and Ten: Vasishtha traces the geneology of Ikshvaku-Vamsha and asks to uphold its fame and assume Kinghip as the eldest son of Dasharatha [Vishleshana of Varaha:]	212
Sarga One Hundred and Eleven: Shri Rama reiterates that 'Pitru Agina' was paramount yet doubled edged that he should undergo vana vaasa and Bharata should rule for that period !	214
Sarga One Hundred and Twelve: As Bharata was not ready yet to return to Ayodhya, Shri Rama grants his 'charana paadukaas' and finally bid farewell to Bharata and the entourage	216
Sarga On Hundred and Thirteen: Bharata and the entourage reach back to Maharshi Bharadwaja's ashram and return to Ayodhya	217
Sarga One Hundred and Fourteen: On return to Ayodhyam Bharata realises the sad state of the city of Ayodhdya	218
Sarga One Hundred and Fifteen: Bharata instals Shri Rama 'Paadukaas' at Nandigrama and administers Ayodhya from there	219
Stanza One Hundred Sixteen: All the Rishis of Chitra koota commenced leaving the place due to problems of Rakshasas	220
Sarga One Hundred Seventeen: Sita Rama Lakshmanas too decided to leave Chitrakoota and proceeded to Maharashi Ashram of Atri and Maha Pativrata Anasuya Vishleshana about Devi Anasuya	221
Sarga One hundred and Eighteen: Devis Anasuya and Sita exchange views- Anasuya gives gifts to Sita- Sita describes her 'swayamvara' [Vishleshana on Savitri and Rohini Devi Pativrataas: 1. Sati Savitri: (Refer Sarga Thirty above.)]	223
Sarga One Hundred and Nineteen: Thus Devi Sita having accepted the gifts from Devi Anasuya reaches Shri Rama for overnight stay at Atri Maharshi Ashram for further journey	226

Shri Ramachandracharanou manasaa smaraami, Shri Rama chandra charanou vachasagranaami, Shri Ramachandracharanou shirasaa namaami, Shri Ramachandra sharanam prapadye/ My reverences to Shri Rama with a bowed head, memory in mind, stuti in speech, and my body in total surrender!

ESSENCE OF VALMIKI AYODHYA RAMAYANA

INTRODUCTION

Essence of Valmiki Ayodhya Ramayana is a sequel to the Essence of Valmiki Bala Ramayana. Maharshi Valmiki while bathing in Tamasa River gets aghast seeing a couple of frolicking Krouncha birds shot down by a merciless hunter and his expression was the inspirational beginning of Valmiki Ramayana! The incident of cruelty causing suffering to any Living Being, be it a human, animal or bird would surely result in a retaliatory rebound either in the same birth or the following birth. Such acts of 'adharma' inciting 'mara mara' or expressions of killings of the innocents could be nullified by the reversal expressions of 'raama raama' or the transformation of 'Rama Ayana' or from 'adharma' to 'dharma' or the travel of transformation. This is relevant now as much as in the past -present and for ever as narrated in Six Khandas or sugar cane stems viz. Baala Khanda-Ayodhya Khanda- Aranya Khanda-Kishkinda Khanda- Sundara Khanda-Yuddha Khanda. Baala Khanda comprises seventy seven Sargas-Ayodhya Khanda one hundred nineteen Sargas-Aranya Khanda has seventy five Sargas-Kishkinda Khanda has sixty seven Sargas-Sundara Khanda comprises of sixty eight Sargas- Yuddha Khanda has one twenty eight Sargas. Additionally Uttara Khanda has one hundred eleven Sargas. The current presentation is relevant to Ayodhya Khanda

RETROSPECTIVE *

[*Essence of Valmiki Bala Ramayana]

Brahmarshi Narada initiated the delineation of Shri Rama to Valmiki Maharshi and thereafter departed for a bath in river Tamasa near Ganga along with his disciples; he addressed his shishya named Bharadvaja and expressed as to how refreshing was the bath. As he looked around, he spotted on the banks of the cool water flows, two krouncha birds in chirruping play and fun in a nest on a tree branch. But just then a cruel hunter released an arrow at the loving male bird which got dropped dead in blood and the female bird crooned in anguish and misery. The two love birds had always been together infatuated with each other and Muni Valmiki was truly pained and hurt in his heart and inner consciousness. The natural instinct of the Maharshi prompted him involuntarily to burst out rather reprimandingly: *Mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhām tvam agamah śāśvatīḥ samāḥ, yat krauñcamithunād ekam avadhīḥ kāmā mohitam/* 'Hey hunter! Why have you so mercilessly killed the male partner of such loving birds suddenly! You too would soon die as a retribution!' Having shouted spontaneously thus, the Maharshi got retrospective and addressed his disciples that a few words were slipped from my tongue as the feeling was intense! The shishyas replied unanimously: Guru sire! Whar ever has slipped out from your tongue has admirably fitted itself in a four lined stanza of glory with rhythmic sound metered with perfection of eight letters of prosody just as a 'veena dhvani' of the stringed musical instrument! The prime disciple Bharadvaja instantly agreed affirmingly that a meaningful stanza by framed as what the Guru has stated involuntarily! As this incident had happened, the entire troupe concluded their bath and moved on to their ashram even as the hot deliberation of the entire ashram was on the singular topic of the day. The Guru shishya 'samvada' on the principles of dharma took place subsequently although the background was basically hovering on the morning incident only. Meanwhile, the Charurmukha Brahma himself appeared

and alerted Valmiki Maharshi. The latter was taken aback and prostrated to Brahma along paadya- arghya- aasana-puja- stotra formalities while Brahma endearingly made the Maharshi seated comfortably beside him. But the Maharshi was at the back of his mind about the morning incident especially recalling what he stated at that juncture. Brahma smilingly understood what the Maharshi was cogitating about recalling what all the Maharshi stated. He then suggested: ‘Maharshi! What you had stated spontaneously as a stanza was truly as per ‘chhandas’ or prosody and need not torment your psyche so much; let this stanza under reference be the inspiration of scripting the entirety of ‘Rama charitra’; Bhagavan Shri Rama as the incarnation of Maha Vishnu Himself was indeed the exemplary human figure of the Treta Yuga of virtue- sacrifice-charity-tolerance but simultaneously of bravery-heroism-and everlasting renown! This was what Brahmarsi Narada conveyed to Valmiki Muni as having expressed by Brahma to Narada. Let this Rama Charitra be publicised so far kept dormant and undescribed and let the world be aware of the completed details as to how dharma prevails as the lasting reality, despite the vicissitudes and tests of Adharma as Truth is vindicated ultimately. Narada with the inspiration of Brahma affirmed to Valmiki Maharshi: Maharshi! what ever you are going to script as the ‘Ramayana’ - Rama’s Aayana- shall most certainly be the truth and factual and hence be prepared soon as per ‘anushtup cchhandas’. *Yāvat sthāsanti girayaḥ saritaś ca mahītale, tāvad rāmāyaṇakathā lokeṣu pracariṣyati/ yāvad rāmasya ca kathā tvatkr̥tā pracariṣyati, tāvad ūrdhvam adhaś ca tvam mallokeṣu nivatsyasi/*’ As long as rivers flow and the might of mountains is sustained, the worlds should be fully saturated with ‘Ramayana Prachaara’.

The Ramayana that you would script soon ought to become popular world wide and what ever seriatum and content followed by you would be lasting too! Narada thus informed Valmiki after the disappearance of Lord Brahma. Valmiki Maharshi was nonplussed with the rapid sequence of what all happened on that day. Once sensitised thus, the disciples of Valmiki kept on resounding repeatedly the shloka as they were literally dipped steep in. At the same time Valmiki Maharshi was mentally getting ready to take up the enormous task of Ramanayana of twenty four thousand stanzas plus and seeking to select the style of scripting according to meter as per ‘chhando vedaanga’, with tuneful phrases, conjunctions, and rhymes with aptness and of tunes enriching the content and inner meanings and appropriate emotional appeals embedded therein. As per Brahmarsi Narada’s directive, Valmiki Maharshi sought to script of Sampurna Ramayana as it should be such as to fulfill the ‘Chaturvidha Phala’ or the human aspirations of Dharma- Artha- Kaama- Mokshas. Then he dutifully squatted in ‘padmaasana’, performed ‘aouposhana’ of water as a mark of ‘trikarana shuddhi’ or three folded purity of manasa-vaachaa-karmana or by way of topping up the thoughts by the heart-word -and deed. Then he pondered over the imaginary picture of Shri Rama- Lakshmana- Devi Sita; the Ayodhya Kingdom reigned by King Dasharatha with his queens; the related incidents of their collective incidents of laughter-mutual conversations-thought patterns, the do’s and don’ts of administration, and such detailing as filled on his powerful thought and memory screen. The Maharshi imagined the scene of the visits of Rama- Lakshmana and Devi Sita in sprawling garden tours and the interesting incidents thereof. Then the Maharshi seated firmly and had a rapid visual coverage on his mental retina. Just on the lines of what Sage Narada described, he visualised the Raghuvamsha Rama’s ‘Kaavya Nirmana’ or the outline of the epic of Ramayana. Rama’s birth, his outstanding bravery, his ready amiability to one and all, his unique popularity, his extreme patience and sense of forgiveness, his unparalleled truthfulness are to be emphasised on the memory screen. Maharshi Valmiki then imprinted on the screen as to how Rama and Lakshmana duo had experienced the amusing as also auspicious acts in the pioneering company of Sage Vishvamitra as imprinted on his retina including Shurpanakha’s teaching a lesson, Mithila King Janaka’s announcement of Devi Sita’s swayamvara, Shiva Dhanush bhanga in an encounter with Parashu Rama and Shri Rama Samvada ,

detailings of weddings of Sita Rama and Urmila Lakshmana; Rama Rajyaabhisheka vighna, the villainous role of Kaikeyi, Rama Lakshmana Sita Vana Vaasa, Dasharatha shoka vilaapa followed by his death, the sorrow of the public, the devotion of Guha the boatman, the charioteer Sumanta's loyalty.

Maharshi Valmiki's trance continued: Shri Rama, Lakshmana and Devi Sita reaching Ganges- Bharadwaaja Muni darshana and as per his directive reaching Chitra Koota and enjoying the grandeur of its surroundings and building up a hutment for the threesome to live in-arrival of Bharata to meet them and requesting them to return back - performing the remainder obsequies of their departed father- Bharata's return with the 'Rama Paduka' on his head to keep it back on the 'Rajya Simhasana' with veneration- Bharata's stay at Nandigrama-Rama's trio move out to dandaka -aranya-Viraadha vadha- Sharabhangi Muni darshana- Suteekshana samaagama- Anasuya and Sita devi together for some time [Devi Anasuya the daughter of Kardama Muni and the wife of Atri Maharshi residing in their hermitage in the periphery of Chitrakuta- being the mother of Dattatreya as Tri Murtis sought to test her chastity but converted them as toddling babes, popular as Maha Pativratas like Ahalya, Draupadi, Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Anasuya and Sumati] Having heard the background of Devi Sita's life, Anasuya gifted a miraculous ointment which could maintain her beauty and paativratya for ever!] - Maharshi Agastya darshana as he gifted Vaishnava dhanush to Rama-confrontation with Surpanakha and Lakshmana's cutting off her ears and nose- Shri Rama's killing of Khara- Dushana- Trishira's killings by Rama- his killing of Maricha disguised as a golden deer desired by Devi Sita- avenging his sister Shurpanakha's act, Ravanaasura disguised as a Muni forcibly abducts Devi Sita- Shri Rama's heart -pangs of due to Devi viyoga- Jatayu vadha by Ravanaasura- Rama Lakshmana getting snared by Kabandha the headless demon and their killing of the demon-Rama Lakshmana thrilled by the surroundings of Pampa sarovara- Shabari blessed by Shri Rama- the latter's severe pangs of Devi Sita Viyoga- meeting Hanuman at the foothills of 'Gandhamaadana' mount and along with Hanuman escorted to the exiled Vaanara King, Sugreeva- firming up friendship with Sugreeva-Baali Sugreeva battle- Rama's killing Baali- Sugreeva regained the Kingship- Devi Tara the widow of Baali cries away and Rama assuaging her sorrow-'sharatkaala' interrugnman months put a stop of Sugreeva's search for Devi Sita's whereabouts- Sugreeva 'pratijna' or swearing for 'Sita anveshana' or her whereabouts and his extensive for her- the blind Kite Sampati, the brother of Jatayu, with inner vision bestowed by Surya Deva, finally makes a break through of pointing out at Lanka the other side of the ocean shores under King Ravana's rule-Hanuman despatched to Lanka with Rama's golden ring to convince Devi Sita in exile- Hanuman seeks cross the ocean- Sumudra Deva warns Hanuman about 'Minaaki' who would rise up to halt but to be warned by Hanuman, Raakshasi 'Simhini' the shadow detector as Hanuman was flying be killed by him and ' Trikuta' mountatain the indicator of Lanka. Hanuman clearly followed the indicators by Samudra and entered the kingdom of Ravana's Lanka at midnight time. Being lonely he pondered over the next step as he peeped in the palace of Ravana who was enjoying liquor and then waited for the day break assuming a mini monkey form in the Ashoka Vatika and having spotted Devi Sita brooding with successive cryings when he saw Ravana visiting her too as she was surrounded by female rakshasis headed by Trijata. On the exit of Ravana, Hanuman sneaked in and having assumed his normal form approached Devi Sita with prostrations and gave his introduction as the devout follower as a Rama Bhakta. To convince Devi Sita, he handed over Lord Shri Rama's finger ring of gold- in return she gave her 'choodaamani'. Thereafter Hanuman resorted to violent deasstruction of Lanka's capital city helterskelter as the army of Lanka was annihilated and the survivals fled away. He then purposively surrendered by himself so that he would be taken away to the King Ravana who was seated the royal court. In the court, Hanuman thundered and with his tail elongated and got lit up by the Ravana sena burnt off all over the city regions creating a huge scare of the Lanka

Capital. There after, Hanuman crossed back the ocean, participated in a revelling party to the waiting co-monkey comrades in the Madhuvan, approached Shri Rama and conceeded about the welfare of Devi Sita and gave back her ‘choodamani’ the hair ornament as a memoir, made preparations for travel to Lanka, Rama’s interaction with Samudra Deva, Nala the architect constructs a setu bridge across the Sea to let the Vanara Sena and the Selves walkk over, overnight surrounding bt Rama Sena around Lanka, Vibbhishana- Shri Rama ‘maitri’, Vibhishana giving hints of killing Ravana, Rama’s killing of the massive Kumbhakarna, killing of Meghanatha the son of Ravana, Ravana Vinaasha, Devi Sita’s final relief, Vibhishana pattaabhisheka at Lanka, Rama’s pushpaka vimana yatra with Sita-Lakshmana-Hanuman and Vibhushana and the full entourage to Ayodhya, Bharata’s warm reception, Shri Rama - Devi Sita pattaabhisheka celebrations, warm send off to vaanara sena, Devi Sita ‘tyaaga’ to forests on false accusations by a washerman in Ayodhya, her subsequent happenings and the future episodes were picturesquely described by the oustanding Valmiki Maharshi of eternal fame.

Sarga One

Considering Shri Rama’s eligibility for Ayodhya’s Yuvarajatva, King Dasharatha convenes a durbar meeting

Kasya cit tv atha kālasya rājā daśarathaḥ sutam, bharataṁ kekayīputram abravīd raghunandanah/ ayam kekayarājasya putro vasati putraka, tvām netum āgato vīra yudhājīn mātulas tava/ śrutvā daśaratha - syaitad bharataḥ kekayīsutaḥ, gamanāyābhicakrāma śatrughnasahitas tadā/ āpṛcchya pītarāṁ sūro rāmāṁ cākliṣṭakāriṇam, māṭṛmś cāpi naraśreṣṭhaḥ śatrughnasahito yayau/ yudhājīt prāpya bharataṁ saśatrughnaṁ praharṣitaḥ, svapuram prāviśad vīraḥ pitā tasya tutoṣa ha/ sa tatra nyavasat bhrātrā saha satkārasatkṛtaḥ, mātulenāśvapatinā putrasnehena lālitaḥ/ tatrāpi nivasantau tau tarpyamāṇau ca kāmataḥ, bhrātarau smarataṁ vīrau vṛddham daśaratham nṛpam/ rājāpi tau mahātejāḥ sasmāra proṣitau sutau, ubhau bharataśatrughnau mahendraravāṇopamau/ sarva eva tu tasyeṣṭāś catvāraḥ puruṣarṣabhāḥ, svaśarīrād vinirvṛttāś catvāra iva bāhavaḥ/ teṣāṁ api mahātejā rāmo ratikaraḥ pituḥ, svayambhūr iva bhūtānāṁ babhūva guṇavattaraḥ/ gate ca bharate rāmo lakṣmaṇaś ca mahābalaḥ, pītarāṁ devasamkāśaṁ pūjayāṁ āsatus tadā/ pitur ājñāṁ puraskṛtya paurakāryāṇi sarvaśaḥ, cakāra rāmo dharmātmā priyāṇi ca hitāni ca/ māṭṛbhyo māṭṛkāryāṇi kṛtvā paramayantritaḥ, gurūṇāṁ gurukāryāṇi kāle kāle ’nvavaiḥṣata/ evaṁ daśarathaḥ prīto brāhmaṇā naigamāś tathā, rāmasya śīlavṛttena sarve viśayavāśinaḥ/ sa hi nityaṁ praśāntātmā mṛdupūrvaṁ ca bhāṣate ucyaṁāno ’pi paruṣaṁ nottaraṁ pratipadyate/ katham cid upakāreṇa kṛtenaikena tuṣyati, na smaraty apakāraṇāṁ śatam apy ātmavattayā/ śīlavṛddhair jñānavṛddhair vayovṛddhaiś ca sajjanaiḥ kathayann āsta vai nityam astrayogyāntareṣv api/ kalyāṇābhijanaḥ sādhu adīnaḥ satyavāg ṛjuḥ, vṛddhair abhivinītaś ca dvijair dharmārthadarśibhiḥ/ dharmārthakāmatattvajñāḥ smṛtimān pratibhāvanān, laukike samayācare kṛtakalpo viśāradaḥ/ śāstrajñāś ca kṛtajñāś ca puruṣāntarakovidāḥ, yaḥ pragrahānugrahayor yathānyāyaṁ vicakṣaṇaḥ/ āyakarmaṇy upāyajñāḥ samdṛṣṭavyayakarmavit, śraiṣṭhyaṁ śāstrasamūheṣu prāpto vyāmiśrakeṣv api/ arthadharmau ca samgṛhya sukhatanro na cālasaḥ, vaihārikāṇāṁ śilpānāṁ vijñātārthavibhāgavit/ ārohe vinaye caiva yukto vāraṇavājīnāṁ, dhanurvedavidāṁ śreṣṭho loka ’tirathasammataḥ/ abhiyātā prahartā ca senānayaviśāradaḥ, apradhṛṣyaś ca samgrāme kruddhair api surāsuraiḥ/ anasūyo jitakrodho na drpto na ca matsarī, na cāvamantā bhūtānāṁ na ca kālavaśānugah/ evaṁ śraiṣṭhair guṇair yuktaḥ prajānāṁ pārvivātmajaḥ, sammatas triṣu lokeṣu vasudhāyāḥ kṣamāguṇaiḥ, buddhyā bṛhaspates tulyo vīryeṇāpi śacīpateḥ/ tathā sarvaprajākāntaiḥ prītisamjananaiḥ pituḥ, guṇair viruruce rāmo dīptaḥ sūrya ivāṁśubhiḥ/ tam evaṁvṛttasampannam apradhṛṣya parākramam, lokapālopamāṁ nātham akāmayata medinī/ etais tu bahubhir yuktaṁ guṇair anupamaiḥ sutam, dṛṣṭvā daśaratho rājā cakre cintāṁ paramtapaḥ/ eṣā hy asya parā prītir hṛdi samparivartate,

kadā nāma sutarāṁ drakṣyāmy abhiṣiktam aham priyam/ vṛddhikāmo hi lokasya sarvabhūtānukampanaḥ mattaḥ priyataro loke parjanya iva vṛṣṭimān/ yamaśakrasamo vīrye bṛhaspatisamo matau, mahādhara samo dhṛtyām mattaś ca guṇavattaraḥ/ mahīm aham imām kṛtsnām adhitiṣṭhantam ātmajam, anena vayasā dṛṣṭvā yathā svargam avāpnuyām/ tarā samīkṣya mahārājo yuktaṁ samuditair guṇair, niścitya sacivair sārddham yuvarājam amanyata/ nānānagaravāstavyān pṛthagjānapadān api, samānināya medinyāḥ pradhānān pṛthivīpatiḥ/ atha rājavitūrṇeṣu vividheṣv āsaneṣu ca, rājānam evābhimukhā niṣedur niyatā nṛpāḥ/ sa labdhamānair vinayānvitair nṛpaiḥ; purālayair jānapadais ca mānavaitḥ, upopaviṣṭair nṛpatir vṛto babhau; sahasracakṣur bhagavān ivāmaraiḥ/

Consequent on King Dasharatha's return from Mithila after the glorious weddings of Shri Rama with Devi Sita as wells as of Lakshmana-Bharata- Shatrughnas with Devis Urmila-Mandaveeka and Shutakeeri, and settling back at Ayodhya, Rama had increasingly taken over the responsibilities of the kingdom ably assisted by Lakshmana. Bharata Satrugnas left for their residence of maternal uncle Yudhajita the King of Ashvayutha, as the latter was extremely fond of the Princes. King Dasharatha in course of time felt the absence of Bharata Shatughnas who too had turned out to be valiant warriors of virtue. Indeed he felt like a four armed Vishnu himself with two arms were away. At the same time, he had always felt that Shri Rama was like Maha Vishnu Himself; indeed. Was he not destined to show up on Earth to destroy the worst symbol of Viciousness named Ravanaasura and revive Dharma and Nyaya! Equally blissful was the prime Queen Devi Koushalya just as Devi Aditi was fond of Indra Himself! Truly, Shri Rama was not only exemplary with graceful and radiant body build but an unparalleled intrepidity. He was ever peaceful in his countenance and sweet in his voice; even when he heard harsh voices, he would reply smilingly, softly yet firmly. He would always reciprocate goodness to the helpful but never carry vengeance to the unhelpful, yet never hesitate to punish the evil. As per his Kshaatriya Dharma, he had always been kind, magnanimous, and providing safety to the needy thus being exemplary to his upbringing. While avoiding any thing inauspicious, his counsels and deeds were of what Brihaspati, the Deva Guru would be like. He was not only an erudite scholar and of convincing speech maker having digested the essence of veda-vedanga- yuddha dharmas and what was more a practitioner besides being a preacher appealing to the commoners and the intellectuals alike. In the context of the finesse of 'Astra Vidya' he excelled his father- since Brahmarshi Vishmamitra trained him thoroughly vide Bala Kanda. Shri Rama was an outstanding practitioner of the 'chatushta purusha paramarthas' of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Mokshas keeping in view the prevailing social conditions. He had been seeking to act upon the counsels of Gurus in which he had retained trust and devotion and ever anchored to the traditional precepts of proven peripheries. Besides having been bestowed with such practical and virtuous decisiveness, Shri Rama was a known linguist, an outstanding expert of fine arts of music-dance-painting -sculpture - handicrafts and also of sports, entertainment, and group activities . *Anasūyo jitakrodho na dṛpto na ca matsarī, na cāvamantā bhūtānām na ca kālavaśānugaḥ/ evam śraiṣṭhair guṇair yuktaḥ prajānām pāṛthivātmajaḥ, saimnatas triṣu lokeṣu vasudhāyāḥ kṣamāguṇair, buddhyā bṛhaspates tulyo vīryeṇāpi śacīpateḥ/ tathā sarvaprajākāntair prītisaṁjananair pituḥ, guṇair viruruce rāmo dīptaḥ sūrya ivāmśubhiḥ/* Such is the glory of Rama devoid of any shortcoming of his multi sided magnificence but is replete with idealism worthy of commendation in trilokas. Just as Surya Deva is known for his splendour by his endless rays of brightness, Shri Rama is thus famed for his countless qualities of excellence. *Tam evamvṛttasampannam apradhṛṣya parākramam, lokapālopanam nātham akāmayata medinī/* This type of a 'sadaachaara sampanna' or of qualities of excellence of conduct Shri Rama be decided to be the King of Earth! Indeed the enemies of this Illustrious Kingdom had already been concerned that such a perfectionist would be soon enough turn out as the potential King and this had by now crept into the psyche of the comity of

kingdoms. *Atha Raagjno babhuvaiva vriddhasya chirajeevinah, preetereshaa katham Rama Raja syaanmayi jeevati*/King Dasharatha had thus been planning and cogitating seriously that Shri Rama be blessed to take over as Yuva Raja the ‘primo geniture’ soon. In fact, his mind had been churning his mind as to how soon that this might fructify as Shri Rama had already become mature for the elevated status just as black clouds had hovered over the sky and that the ripe time had arrived for the monsoon to break any time! *Mahīm aham imām kṛtsnām adhitiṣṭhantam ātmajam, anena vayasā dṛṣṭvā yathā svargam avāpnuyām/ tam samīkṣya mahārājo yuktam samuditair guṇaiḥ, niścitya sacivaiḥ sārđham yuvarājam amanyata*/King Dasharatha longed to visualize soon a situation when Shri Rama should soon become a chakravarti of the entire earth and in course of time he might leave for swarga with that glory to be fulfilled. Thus King Dasharatha’s decision impelled his ministers and close associates in the Royal Court to be convened to finalise the arrangements. At the same time, in his mind there were lurking fears and expressed them too to the closed session of ministers and others. Eventually, King Dasharatha instructed that all the required arrangements for the big event be made publicly. He convened a conclave of the contemporary Kings and Ministers to make the significant announcement, along with the very important personalities of his and other kingdoms too. However he had somehow not been able to intimate the great news to King Kaikeya - besides Bharata Shatrughnas- and to Mithila Kings as he was very confident that both the Kings would get excited about the most significant development any way!

Sarga Two

King Dasharatha secures public approval for Rama’s Yuvarajatra

Tataḥ pariṣadam sarvām āmantrya vasudhādhipaḥ, hitam uddharṣaṇam cedam uvācāpratimam vacaḥ/ dundubhisvanakalpena gambhīreṇānūnādinā, svareṇa mahatā rājā jīgmūta iva nādayan/ so 'ham ikṣvākubhiḥ pūrvair narendraiḥ paripālitaḥ, śreyasā yuktukāmo 'smi sukhārham akhilaḥ jagat/ mayāpy ācaritaḥ pūrvaiḥ panthānam anugacchatā, prajā nityam atandreṇa yathāśakty abhirakṣatā/ idaḥ śārīram kṛtsnasya lokasya caratā hitam, pāṇḍur asyātapatrasyac chāyāyām jaritaḥ mayā/ prāpya varṣasahasrāṇi bahūny āyūṃṣi jīvitaḥ, jīrṇasyāsya śārīrasya viśrāntim abhirocaye/ rājaprabhāvajūṣṭām hi durvahām ajitendriyaiḥ, pariśrānto 'smi lokasya gurvīm dharmadhuraḥ vahan/ so 'ham viśramam icchāmi putram kṛtvā prajāhite, samnikṣṭān imān sarvān anumānya dvijarṣabhān/ anujāto hi me sarvair guṇair jyeṣṭho mamātmajaḥ, puraṇdarasamo vīrye rāmaḥ parapuramjayah/ tam candram iva puṣyeṇa yuktam dharmabhṛtām varam, yauvarājyena yuktāsmi prītaḥ puruṣapuṅgavam/ anurūpaḥ sa vo nātho lakṣmīvāml lakṣmaṇāgrajaḥ, trailokyam api nāthena yena syān nāthavattaram/ anena śreyasā sadyaḥ saṁyojyāham imām mahīm, gatakleśo bhaviṣyāmi sute tasmin niveśya vai/ iti bruvantaḥ muditāḥ pratyānandan nṛpā nṛpam, vṛṣṭimantaḥ mahāmeghaḥ nardantaḥ iva barhiṇaḥ/ tasya dharmārthaviduṣo bhāvam ājñāya sarvaśaḥ, ūcuś ca manasā jñātvā vṛddham daśaratham nṛpam/ anekavarṣasāhasro vṛddhas tvam asi pārthiva, sa rāmaḥ yuvarājānam abhiṣiñcasva pārthivam/ iti tadvacanaḥ śrutvā rājā teṣāḥ manahpriyam, ājñān iva jijñāsur idaḥ vacanam abravīt/ katham nu mayi dharmena pṛthivīm anuśāsati, bhavanto draṣṭum icchanti yuvarājāḥ mamātmajam/ te tam ūcur mahātmānam paurajānapadaiḥ saha, bahavo nṛpa kalyāṇā guṇāḥ putrasya santi te/ divyair guṇaiḥ śakrasamo rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ, ikṣvākubhyo hi sarvebhyo 'py atirakto viśāmpate/ rāmaḥ satpuruṣo loke satyadharmaparāyaṇaḥ, dharmajñāḥ satyasamdhāś ca śīlavān anasūyakaḥ/ kṣāntaḥ sāntvayitā ślakṣṇaḥ kṛtajño vijitendriyaḥ, mṛduś ca sthiracittaś ca sadā bhavyo 'nasūyakaḥ priyavādī ca bhūtānām satyavādī ca rāghavaḥ, bahuśrutānām vṛddhānām brāhmaṇānām upāsītā/ tenāsyehātulā kīrtir yaśas tejaś ca vardhate, devāsuramanuṣyāṇām sarvāstreṣu viśāradaḥ/ yadā vrajati saṁgrāmaḥ grāmārthe nagarasya vā, gatvā saumitrisahito nāvijitya nivartate/ saṁgrāmāt punar āgamyā kuñjareṇa rathena vā, paurān

svajanavan nityam kuśalam pariṣcchati/ putreṣu agniṣu dāreṣu preṣyaśiṣyagaṇeṣu ca nikhilenānu pūrvyā ca pitā putrān ivaurasān/ śuśrūṣante ca vaḥ śiṣyāḥ kaccit karmasu damśitāḥ, iti naḥ puruṣavyāghraḥ sadā rāmo 'bhībḥāṣate/ vyasaneṣu manuṣyāṇām bhṛśam bhavati duḥkhitāḥ, utsaveṣu ca sarveṣu piteva parituṣyati/ satyavādī maheṣvāso vṛddhasevī jitendriyaḥ vatsaḥ śreyasi jātas te diṣṭyāsau tava rāghavaḥ, diṣṭyā putraguṇair yukto mārīca iva kaśyapaḥ/ balam ārogyam āyus ca rāmasya viditātmanaḥ, āśamsate janaḥ sarvo rāṣṭre puravare tathā/ abhyantaraś ca bāhyaś ca paurajānapado janaḥ, striyo vṛddhās taruṇyaś ca sāyaṃprātaḥ samāhitāḥ/ sarvān devān namasyanti rāmasyārthe yaśasvinaḥ, teṣāṃ āyācitaṃ deva tvatprasādāt samṛdhyatām, rāmam indīvaraśyāmam sarvaśatru nibarhaṇam, paśyāmo yauvarājyasthām tava rājottamātmajam/ taṃ devadevopamam ātmajam te; sarvasya lokasya hite niviṣtam, hitāya naḥ kṣipram udārajuṣtam; mudābhiṣektuṃ varada tvam arhasi/

King Dasharatha initiated the proceedings of the Maha Sabha in his thunderous voice in high and excited voice addressing the invitees stating that in the true traditions of Ikshavaku Vamsha, the administration in his kingdom had been as per the footprints of dharma and nyaaya and for the welfare of all the sections of the Society. Sincere endeavors had been made to safeguard the rightful demands of the public and to make this Kingdom a star in the comity of the kingdoms. For some sixty thousand and odd years, my lifetime had gradually started dwindling my erstwhile body strength and mental alertness and had come to demand retirement. *so 'ham viśramam icchāmi putram kṛtvā prajāhite, samnikṣṣṭān imān sarvān anumānya dvijarṣabhān/ anujāto hi me sarvair guṇair jyeṣṭho mamātmajaḥ, purāmdarasamo vīrye rāmaḥ parapuramjayah/* Therefore, with the approval of learned pandits, ministers, and now from you all, I would like to propose my eldest son Shri Rama for the kingship next as his glory had been well recognised as of Indra Himself in valour and mental strength. *Tam candram iva puṣyeṇa yuktaṃ dharmabhṛtām varam, yauvarājyena yoktāsmi prītaḥ puruṣapuṃgavam/* In terms of ability and proven maturity, Rama be therefore named to take over the status of Yuva Raja by the next day's pushya nakshakra! Hence Rama the elder and true follower Lakshmana would assist in the discharge of the responsibilities of Royalty. *anena śreyasā sadyaḥ samyojyāham imām mahīm, gatakleśo bhaviṣyāmi sute tasmin niveśya vai/* Dasharatha further affirmed: I should therefore soon bless Shri Rama by enrusting the auspicious responsibility of kingship and be happy and contented. Even as the announcement was thus made, the audience including the co-kings and the learned responded positively and unanimously and readily congratulated King Dasharatha with clappings and loud cheers. One after another in the audience especially the Kings and also the learned panditas showered encomiums on Shri Rama- his popularity, his energy, his level of balance of thinking, ability to express his conviction and skilful aptitude to enforce the rules. They said: *rāmaḥ satpuruṣo loke satyadharmaparāyaṇaḥ, dharmajñaḥ satyasamḥsaś ca śīlavān anasūyakaḥ/ kṣāntaḥ sāntvayitā ślakṣṇaḥ kṛtajño vijitendriyaḥ, mṛduś ca sthiracittaś ca sadā bhavyo 'nasūyakaḥ/* In this entire 'samsara' Rama should be an ideal satya vaadi- satya parayana - satpuruṣa and 'saakshaat' or ever-ready epitome of exemplariness. He is the singular provider of contentment and calmness to all Beings like Chandra and at the sametime of the quality of forgiving one's shortages of lapses like Mother Earth. He is like Brihaspati in 'buddhi' or mental maturity and knowledge, and in valour and invincibility like Devendra himself. Shri Rama is known as a dharmajna, satya pratigjna, sheela vaan, deena dukkha saantvana, mridu bhaashi, kritagjna, jetendriya, komala svabhaava, sthira buddhi, kalyana kari, asuyaa rahita, satya vaadi. At the same time, he excels in 'dhanurvidya' far above the levels of devas-asuraas, manushyas. *Gandharvecha bhuvi shreshtho babhuva Bharataagraja/ Bharataagraja Shri Rama is also an expert of 'gandharva veda' or of sangeeta shastra whom none on earth could compete with.him.*

[Vishleshana on Gandharva Veda: In the Swara Shastra, the Swara of Archika is related to Rig Veda, ‘Gaandhik’ is to ‘Gaadha’ and ‘Saamik’ is to Sama Veda. A ‘Swara’ is according to ‘Ruchas’ (Hymns) and their variations, while in ‘Gathas’ or metered rhythmic verses Sama Veda has ‘Vyavadhaanas’ or pauses. The Yajna stotras, karanas and Mantras are required to be pronounced as per Swaras; otherwise they turn out to be ‘Viruddha Swaras’. In the entire ‘Vangmaya’ Shastra (Vocabulary), pronunciation originates from ‘Vakshasthala’ (chest), ‘Kantha’ (throat) and ‘Mastaka’ (head); from the chest emerges the low level sounds normally resorted to morning singing, from the Kantha emerge the medium and very broad variety of sounds and from Mastaka are emanated high pitch sounds and their variations of volume. The *Sapta Swaras*-Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, and Ni-are ‘Prathama’ (Shadaja), ‘Dwitiya’ (Rishabha), ‘Tritiya’ (Gandhara), ‘Chaturtha’ (Madhyama), ‘Mandra’ (Panchama), ‘Krushtha’ (Dhaivata) and ‘Atiswara’ (Nishadha). Shadaja-Sa- stands for ‘Sagar’ (Sea) with peacock as the representative bird, ‘Muladhara’ (the base of the spine) as the Chakra (body part) and the ruling Deity as Ganapati. Rishabha Re-means bull representing the bird Skylark, ‘Swadhishtana’ or genital as the Chakra and the ruling Deity is Agni. Gandhara Swara ‘Ga’ means Gagan or Sky with goat as the representative animal, ‘Manipura’ (solar plexus/ naval) as the Chakra and Rudra is the concerned Deity. Madhyama-Ma-means the Middle, represented by the bird dove, Anahata (heart) being the relevant body part and Vishnu as the Ruler concerned. Panchama-Pa-means the fifth, represented by nightingale and ‘Vishuddha’ (throat) as the relevant body part and the Ruling Deity is Sage Narada. The Swara titled Dhaivata-Dha- means Dharti or Earth, the representative animal being horse, the relevant Chakra being ‘Aajna’ or the third eye and the Ruler being Sada Shiva. The Seventh Swara viz. Nishada-Ni- meaning Hunter and standing for the animal Elephant, has ‘Sahasrara’ (the crown of the head) as the body part, the Ruler being Surya as the Deity. Besides the Swaras, Shadaja, Madhyama and Gandhara are known as three ‘*Graamaas*’ (gamut or scale in music). Those who render ‘Saama Gana’ approve twenty graamas in Madhyama Swara, fourteen in Shadaja and fifteen in Gandhara. Source : Narada Purana.]

Sarga Two continued:

In the context of Dharma and Artha of the Purushardhas, Shri Rama had excellent schooling by Veda Panditas; while in the context of security of villages and cities, his excellence along with Lakshmana was such that any detail of an issue had ever been ignored! As and when Rama Lakshmanas return from major battles with thumping success to their kingdom, they get anxious to learn of the welfare of the citizens, be they panditas or agnihotris, or house wives, servants and so on. Even in normal conditions, when Rama Lakshmanas meet other’s parents they enquire of the offspring, so also the teachers about their students, kashatriyas about their war materials, and the staff about the treatment from their bosses and so on. Whenever any person faced a tragedy or problem, the famed brothers meet them and readily offer any kind of assistance for ready compliance. The brothers were indeed satyavaadis, maha dhanurdharas, jitendriyas and vriddha jana sevakas. Whenever Shri Rama would initiate conversation with others, he would smile foremost heartily; he would endear, befriend and converse only auspiciousness and never indulge in negativities. Being arrestingly handsome with sparkling eyes, he had been like Vishnu himself. In his conversational style, he was like Brihaspati himself. *Ramo lokabhiraamoyam shourya veerya paraakramaihi, prajaapaalana samyukto na raagopahatendriyah/* As he could endear and provide contentment to all the lokaas arising from his invincibility and undefinable bravery of righteousness and administrative excellence, neither traces of his sensuousness nor any of his faulty conduct could ever dare him from his decisive steadfastness. Let alone the earthly matters but of three lokaas too, He is the singularmost personality who could save and safeguard the universe. But his anger against injustice and

egoitism could never ever be wasted as a futility. What ever the age old Scriptures prescribed, no penalty would be small that justifies vindication. *Tameva guna sampannam Raamam satyaparaakramam, lokapaalopamam naadhamakaayata medini/* It is that type of ‘Sarvaguna sampanna’, ‘sarvalokapaalaka samaana’, ‘satya paraakrama’ Shri Rama alone would be the most befitting Prithvi palaka indeed. It is that singular most Rama who is needed by Davaasura, manushya, gandharvaas as the favorite King of earth. Most particularly, Ayodhya’s older and younger generation especially the feminine community are head over heels passionate to welcome HIM alone as their next King. *Rāmam indīvaraśyāmam sarvaśatru nibarhaṇam, paśyāmo yauvarājyasthaṁ tava rājottamātmajam/ taṁ devadevopamam ātmajam te; sarvasya lokasya hite nivīṣtam, hitāya naḥ kṣipram udārajuṣtam; mudābhiṣektuṁ varada tvam arhasi/* King Dasharatha! It is He who has the graceful blue vision luster, ‘shatrusamhara samartha’, your eldest son of unparalleled glory that one and all would look forward to be anointed as the celebrated Yuva Raja soon.

Sarga Three

Dasharatha discusses the details Rama’s Rajyabhisheka with Vasishtha and asks Rama to attend Rajya sabha

Teṣām ajñalipadmāni praghītāni sarvaśaḥ, pratigrhyābravīd rājā tebhyaḥ priyahitaṁ vacaḥ/ aho ’smi paramaprītaḥ prabhāvaś cātulo mama, yan me jyeṣṭhaṁ priyaṁ putraṁ yauvarājyasthaṁ icchatha/ iti pratyarcya tān rājā brāhmaṇān idam abravīt, vasiṣṭhaṁ vāmadevaṁ ca teṣām evopaśṅvatām/ caitraḥ śrīmān ayaṁ māsaḥ puṇyaḥ puṣpitakānanah, yauvarājyāya rāmasya sarvam evopakalpyatām/ kṛtam ity eva cābrūtām abhigamya jagatpatim, yathoktavacanaṁ prītau harṣayuktau dvijarṣabhaḥ/ tataḥ sumantraṁ dyutimān rājā vacanam abravīt, rāmaḥ kṛtātmā bhavatā śīghram ānīyatām iti/ sa tatheti pratijñāya sumantro rājaśāsanāt, rāmaṁ tatrānayaṁ cakre rathena rathinām varam/ atha tatra samāśinās tadā daśarathaṁ nṛpam, prācyodīcyāḥ pratīcyāś ca dākṣiṇātyāś ca bhūmipāḥ/ mlecchāś cāryāś ca ye cānye vanaśailāntavāsinaḥ, upāsām cakrire sarve taṁ devā iva vāsavam/ teṣām madhye sa rājārṣir marutām iva vāsavaḥ, prāsādastho rathagataṁ dadarśāyāntam ātmajam/ gandharvarāja pratimaṁ loke vikhyātapauruṣam, dīrghabāhuṁ mahāsattvaṁ mattamātaṅgāminam/ candrakāntāna - naṁ rāmam atīva priyadarśanam, rūpaudāryaguṇaiḥ puṁsām dṛṣṭicittāpahāriṇam/ gharmābhīptāḥ parjanyaṁ hlādayantam iva prajāḥ, na tatarpa samāyāntaṁ paś yamāno narādhipaḥ/ avatārya sumantras taṁ rāghavaṁ syandanottamāt, pituḥ samīpaṁ gacchantam prāñjaliḥ pṛṣṭhato ’nvagāt/ sa taṁ kailāsaśṅgābhaṁ prāsādam narapuṅgavaḥ, āruroha nṛpaṁ draṣṭuṁ saha sūtena rāghavaḥ/ sa prāñjalir abhipretya praṇataḥ pitur antike, nāma svam śrāvayan rāmo vavande caraṇau pituḥ/ taṁ dṛṣtvā praṇataṁ pārśve kṛtāñjalipuṭam nṛpaḥ, grhyāñjalau samākṛṣya sasvaje priyam ātmajam/ tasmai cābhilyudayataṁ śrīmān maṇikāñcanabhūṣitam, dideśa rājā ruciraṁ rāmāya paramāsanam/ tad āsanavaram prāpya vyadīpayata rāghavaḥ, svayeva prabhayā merum udaye vimalo raviḥ/ tena vibhrājitā tatra sā sabhābhivyarocata, vimalagrahanakṣatrā śārādī dyaur ivendunā/ taṁ paśyamāno nṛpatīḥ tutoṣa priyam ātmajam, alaṁkṛtam ivātmānam ādarśatalasaṁsthitam/ sa taṁ sasmitam ābhāṣya putraṁ putravatām varaḥ, uvācedaṁ vaco rājā devendram iva kaśyapaḥ/ jyeṣṭhāyām asi me patnyām sadṛśyām sadṛśaḥ sutaḥ, utpannas tvam guṇaśreṣṭho mama rāmātmajaḥ priyaḥ/ tvayā yataḥ prajāś cemāḥ svaguṇair anurañjitāḥ, tasmāt tvam puṣyayogena yauvarājyam avāpnuhi/ kāmatas tvam prakṛtyaiva vinīto guṇavān asi, guṇavaty api tu snehāt putra vakṣyāmi te hitam/ bhūyo vinayam āsthāya bhava nityam jitendriyaḥ, kāmakrodhasamutthāni tyajethā vyasanāni ca/ parokṣayā vartamāno vṛtṭyā pratyakṣayā tathā, amātyaprabhṛtīḥ sarvāḥ prakṛtīś cānurañjaya/ tuṣṭānuraktaprakṛtir yaḥ pālayati medinīm, tasya nandanti mitrāṇi labdhvāmṛtam ivāmarāḥ, tasmāt putra tvam ātmānam niyamyai va samācara/ tac chrutvā suhṛdas tasya rāmasya priyakāriṇaḥ tvaritāḥ śīghram abhyetya kausalyāyai nyavedayan/ sā hiraṇyam ca gāś caiva ratnāni vividhāni ca, vyādideśa priyākhyebhyaḥ kausalyā

*pramadottamā/ athābhivādyā rājānam ratham āruhya rāghavaḥ, yayau svam dyutimad veśma janaughaiḥ
pratipūjitāḥ/*

King Dasharatha was overjoyed with the highly enthusiastic and spontaneous response from the ‘maha sabha’ ranging from co kings to vidvans and commoners. Then Maharshis Vasishtha and Vamadeva expressed that the most suited month for the Yuva Rajaabhisheka of Shri Rama be in Chaitra Month when there would be greenery all around in the Nature. As there was considerable free flow of ideas and plans as to what all be done at the joyous time, King Dasharatha asked Vasishtha Maharshi: *abhishakaaya Raamasya yat karma saparicchhadam, tadadya Bhagavan sarvamaagjnaapayitumarhasi/* Vasishtha then announced to the royal staff that procurement be initiated with gold and precious jewels, all kinds of oushadhis, white flower garlands, honey and ghee, new clothings of enormous variety, chariots, asthras-shastras, recruitment of chaturanaga sena, excellent elephants, vyanjanas made of cow tails, dhvajas, white umberllas, all the relevant paraphernaliya’s for agni karyas, bright ‘kalashas’ of varying sizes, tiger skin ‘aasanaas’- all to be supplied to the Maha Raja’s agni shaala forthwith. Then ‘antahpura saamagri’ to the entire Ayodhya be supplied including garlands of fresh flowers of fragrance, and door ornamentation of chandana-dhupa-sugandhas. Then varied types of chitraanna, dadhi anna, etc. for lakhs of citizens, apart from morning ‘satkaara’s to vedic brahmanas along with ample quantities of milk, curd, and dakshinas be arranged. There should be ‘swasti vachanas’ be before sunrise and arrangements be made of brahmanas and their welfare be arranged. All over Ayodhya there should be festivities with colourful flags, kites on the sky, group dances, and musical instrumentation, especially in the fore grounds of the Royal Court. The festivities should span all over in the temples, conjunctions of four roads, and street ends. There should be provisions for mini-meals and cool drink facilities at market places and a variety of gifts too signifying Shri Rama’s elevation. May royal soldiers donned with battle dresses and long swords and headgears step in and out of the fore yards of the royal court to liven up the hearts of the citizens with enthusiasm and fanning up their spirits. Maharshis Vasishtha and Vamadevas thus passed on instructions to the respective departmental heads for immediate compliance. Having waited for a few hours for the compliance of the instructions and on receipt of feed back, Vasishtha approached King Dasharatha and reported compliance of big and minute actions and conveyed readiness for the much awaited Shri Rama YuvaRaja Pattaabhisheka. The King then called for Sumantra the Royal Charioteer to report to Shri Rama and bring him to the Raja Bhavan. There the Kings of all directions were assembled where the King was seated like Lord Indra amid Marud ganas. As Rama made an entry in the court yard, King Dasharatha was happy to receive him even as the former touched the feet of the father as the latter embraced Rama; they proceeded as followed by Sumanta. It appeared there was a flash of sustained radiance as a King of Elephant with poise and grace was walking with the countenance of full moon. There was a whiff of air of congeniality as Rama glanced the dignitaries seated all around. King Dasharatha was so happy with the way Rama was dressed up and looked around that the onlooker co Kings were truly thrilled to vision the ideal father-son duo of heavenly affinity. Then King Dasharatha addressed Shri Rama as though Kashyapa Maharshi addressed Indra as follows: *Jyeṣṭhāyām asi me patnyām sadṛśyām sadṛśaḥ sutaḥ, utpannas tvam guṇasreṣṭho mama rāmātmajaḥ priyaḥ/ tvayā yataḥ prajāś cemāḥ svaguṇair anurañjitāḥ, tasmāt tvam puṣyayogena yauvarājyam avāpnuhi/ kāmatas tvam prakṛtyaiva vinīto guṇavān asi, guṇavaty api tu snehāt putra vakṣyāmi te hitam/ bhūyo vinayam āsthāya bhava nityam jitendriyaḥ, kāmakrodhasamutthāni tyajethā vyanāni ca/* My dear son, Shri Rama, you being my eldest son from the Prime Queen Koushalya, you happen to be of the most eligible with qualities of outstanding excellence endearing the public and of pride of co Kings, it has been universally approved to become the Yuva Raja of the Kingdom of Ayodhya at Pushya Nakshatra . My sincere counsel to you would be to upkeep and enrich the proven and popular age old principles of Ikshvaku Vamsha of lineage of Kings as a ‘Jitendriya’ being a controller of ‘kama krodha lobha moha mada matsaras’. You should take into account of ‘Pratyaksha- Paroksha Nyaya’ or justice keeping in view the ready and hidden evidences. You must always keep in humor and excellent affinity with Mantris and Senapatis or Ministers and Heads of Army. Hence my dear son, keep up your equanimity and sharpness of decision making as of an ideal king. In reference to fair sex, keep them always in excellent humor with grace and lenience by gifting them away

with jewellery and gold ornaments at all possible opportunities of public or in small groups. As King Dashratha had counselled Shri Rama this in a confernece, the co Kings departed happily, stalwarts of public left too in rejoicement and exultation.

Sarga Four

Shri Rama seeks his mother Devi Koushlya's blessings and endears Lakshmana

Te cāpi paurā nṛpater vacas tac; chrutvā tadā lābham iveṣṭam āpya, narendram āmantya gṛhāṇi gatvā; devān samānarcur atīva hr̥ṣṭāḥ/ gateṣv atha nṛpo bhūyāḥ paureṣu saha mantribhiḥ, mantrayitvā tataś cakre niścayajñāḥ sa niścayam/ śva eva puṣyo bhavitā śvo 'bhiṣecyeta me sutaḥ, rāmo rājīvatāmrākṣo yauvarājya iti prabhuh/ athāntargṛham āviśya rājā daśarathas tadā, sūtam ājñāpayām āsa rāmaṁ punar ihānaya/ pratigṛhya sa tadvākyaṁ sūtaḥ punar upāyayau, rāmasya bhavanaṁ śīghraṁ rāmam ānayitum punaḥ/ dvāḥsthair āveditaṁ tasya rāmāyāgamaṁ punaḥ, śrutvaiva cāpi rāmas taṁ prāptaṁ śaṅkānvito 'bhavat/ praveśya cainaṁ tvaritaṁ rāmo vacanam abravīt, yad āgamanakṛtyaṁ te bhūyas tad brūhy aśeṣataḥ/ tam uvāca tataḥ sūto rājā tvāṁ draṣṭum icchati, śrutvā pramaṇam atra tvāṁ gamanāyetaṛāya vā/ iti sūtavacaḥ śrutvā rāmo 'tha tvarayānvitaḥ prayayau rājabhavanaṁ punar draṣṭum nareśvaram/ taṁ śrutvā samanuprāptaṁ rāmaṁ daśaratho nṛpaḥ, praveśayām āsa gṛham vivikṣuḥ priyam uttamam/ praviśann eva ca śrīmān rāghavo bhavanaṁ pituḥ, dadarśa pitaraṁ dūrāt praṇipatya kṛtāñjaliḥ/ praṇamantaṁ samutthāpya taṁ pariṣvajya bhūmipaḥ, pradiśya cāsmāi ruciram āsanaṁ punar abravīt/ rāma vṛddho 'smi dīrghāyur bhuktā bhogā mayepsitāḥ annavadbhiḥ kratuśatais tatheṣṭam bhūridakṣiṇaiḥ/ jātam iṣṭam apatyam me tvam adyānupamaṁ bhuvi, dattam iṣṭam adhītam ca mayā puruṣasattama/ anubhūtāni ceṣṭāni mayā vīra sukhāni ca, devarṣi pitṛviprāṇām aṅṛṇo 'smi tathātmanaḥ/ na kim cin mama kartavyam tavānyatrābhīṣecanāt, ato yat tvāṁ aham brūyām tan me tvam kartum arhasi/ adya prakṛtayaḥ sarvās tvāṁ icchanti narādhipam, atas tvāṁ yuvarājānam abhiṣekṣyāmi putraka/ api cādyāśubhān rāma svapnān paśyāmi dāruṇān sanirghātā maholkās ca patantīha mahāsvanāḥ/ avaṣṭabdhāṁ ca me rāma nakṣatraṁ dāruṇair grahaiḥ, āvedayanti daivajñāḥ sūryāṅgarakarāhubhiḥ/ prāyeṇa hi nimittānām īdṛśānām samudbhave, rājā vā mṛtyum āpnoti ghorām vāpadam ṛchati/ tad yāvad eva me ceto na vimuhyati rāghava, tāvad evābhīṣiṅcasva calā hi prāṇinām matiḥ/ adya candro 'bhyupagataḥ puṣyāt pūrvaṁ punar vasum, śvaḥ puṣya yogaṁ niyataṁ vakṣyante daivacintakāḥ/ tatra puṣye 'bhiṣiṅcasva manas tvarayatīva mām, śvas tvāham abhiṣekṣyāmi yauvarājye paramtapa/ tasmāt tvayādyā vratinā niṣeyam niyatātmanā, saha vadhvopavastavyā darbha prastaraśāyīnā/ suhrdaś cāpramattās tvāṁ rakṣantv adya samantataḥ, bhavanti bahuvighnāni kāryāṇy evamvidhāni hi/ viproṣitaś ca bharato yāvad eva purād itaḥ, tāvad evābhīṣekas te prāptakālo mato mama/ kāmaṁ khalu satām vṛtte bhrātā te bharataḥ sthitaḥ, jyēṣṭhānuvaratī dharmātmā sānukrośo jitendriyaḥ/ kim tu cittam manuṣyāṇām anityam iti me matiḥ, satām ca dharmanityānām kṛtaśobhi ca rāghava/ ity uktaḥ so 'bhyanujñātaḥ śvobhāviny abhiṣecane, vrajeti rāmaḥ pitaram abhivādyābhyaṅyād gṛham/ praviśya cātmano veśma rājñoddiṣṭe 'bhiṣecane, tasmīn kṣaṇe vinirgatya mātur antaḥpuraṁ yayau/ tatra tāṁ pravaṇām eva mātaram kṣaumavāsīnīm, vāgyatām devatāgāre dadarśa yācatīm śriyam/ prāg eva cāgatā tatra sumitrā lakṣmaṇas tathā, sītā cānāyitā śrutvā priyam rāmābhīṣecanam/ tasmīn kāle hi kausalyā tasthāv āmīlitekṣaṇā, sumitrayānvāsyamānā sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca/ śrutvā puṣyeṇa putrasya yauvarājyābhīṣecanam, prāṇāyāmena puruṣam dhyāyamānā janārdanam/ tathā saniyamām eva so 'bhigamyābhivādyā ca, uvāca vacanam rāmo harṣayaṁs tāṁ idaṁ tadā/ amba pitrā niyukto 'smi prajāpālanakarmani, bhavitā śvo 'bhiṣeko me yathā me śāsanam pituḥ/ sītayāpy upavastavyā rajanīyam mayā saha, evam ṛtvigupādhyāyaiḥ saha mām uktavān pitā/ yāni yāny atra yogyāni śvobhāviny abhiṣecane, tāni me maṅgalāny adya vaidehyās caiva kāraya/ etac chrutvā tu kausalyā cirakālābhi - kāṅkṣitam, harṣabāṣpakalam vākyaṁ idaṁ rāmam abhāṣata/ vatsa rāma ciram jīva hatās te paripanthinaḥ, jñātīn me tvam śriyā yuktaḥ sumitrāyās ca nandaya/ kalyāṇe bata nakṣatre mayi jāto 'si putraka, yena tvayā daśaratho guṇair ārādhitāḥ pitā/ amogham bata me kṣāntam puruṣe puṣkarekṣaṇe, yeyam ikṣvākurājyaśrīḥ putra tvāṁ samśrayiṣyati/ ity evam ukto mātredam rāmo bhāratam abravīt,

prāñjaliṃ prahvam āsīnam abhivīksya smayann iva/ lakṣmaṇemām mayā sārddham praśādhi tvam vasumḍharām, dvitīyaṃ me 'ntarātmānam tvām iyaṃ śrīr upasthitā/ saumitre bhukṣva bhogāms tvam iṣṭān rājyaphalāni ca, jīvitam ca hi rājyam ca tvadartham abhikāmaye/ ity uktvā lakṣmaṇam rāmo mātarāv abhivādya ca, abhyanuñjāpya sītām ca jagāma svam niveśanam/

King Dasharatha convened a meeting with his ministers and programmed the Yuvaraja Pattaabhishekha on the next day as that would coincide with the 'pushyami nakshatra'. The over enthusiastic King instructed Sumantra despatched for Rama to arrive as the latter wondered why was the father was asking for him once again so soon. Rama was ushered in and prostrated to the father who embraced Rama with great affection; then Dasharatha stated that he had become old and during his life time, he had countless tasks of virtue including maha yagjnas, had conquered several battles, established glory, amassed experience and blessings from Deva- Rishi- Pitru-Brahmana- Prajas alike. He continued further stating that there could be no further ambition for him except to make him the Yuva Raja. *Api cādyāśubhān rāma svapnān paśyāmi dāruṇān sanirghātā maholkās ca patantīha mahāsvanāḥ/ avaṣṭabdham ca me rāma nakṣatram dāruṇair grahaiḥ, āvedayanti daivajñāḥ sūryāngārakarāhubhiḥ/ prāyeṇa hi nimittānām idṛśānām samudbhava, rājā vā mṛtyum āpnoti ghorām vāpadam ṛcchatī/* My son! Of late, I have been experiencing bad dreams in the nights and even during day times have been witnessing fearful sounds as though there have been frequent falls of meteors. These inauspicious prognostics are indicative that my end of life ought to be round the corner. This indeed is the reason why that I should desire to hasten the process of making you the heir apparent as early as possible. To day, Moon is about to exit Punarvasu nakshatra very soon and enter Pushya nakshatra and hence my great anxiety to take over the position of 'Yuva Rajatva', come what may! To night, control your body senses and along with Devi Sita too practise 'brahmacharya' and 'upavasa', do sleep on a ground mat. This type of precaution would be called for necessarily to ensure that all should pass through well auspiciously. King Dasharatha further stated that even Bharata and Shatrughna were away to their maternal king, the 'abhisheka karya' ought not to be postponed but be completed as planned. Indeed there was no doubt at all that Bharata would readily be happy and consent to Rama's 'pattabhishekha' as he had been a true and ardent follower of Rama's foot steps being a dharmatma, daya swarupa, and jitendriya being truly self restrained and ever fond of Rama. Ragunandana! No doubt even the mentality of self controlled person be wavery at times but certainly not so in respect of Bharata Kumara! Having heard what all had been stated by his father, Shri Rama took leave of the father with admiration and veneration and returned back to his chamber. But since Devi Sita left for his mother Devi Koushalya, he approached the latter's chamber and found that his mother was in meditation with prayers for the auspicious time of Rama's 'abhisheka' should approach soon and without any remote issue whatsoever. On hearing the happy news of Devi Sumitra and Lakshman were excited with excitement and reached Devi Koushalya even as Devi Sita too reached there. That was precisely the time when Koushalya opened her eyes from her meditation, the entirety of Rama-Sita-Sumitra-and Lakshmana were there altogether. Shri Rama prostrated to his mother and stated: Mother! Father has now instructed me to get ready for the 'yuva rajyabhisheka' tomorrow and further gave certain duties tonight to me and Sita and your blessings are sought to let us get ready. As Rama made the statement, the mother was moved with joyful tears and in a bass tone said : *Vatsa rāma ciraṃ jīva hatās te paripanthinaḥ, jñātīn me tvam śriyā yuktaḥ sumitrāyās ca nandaya/ kalyāṇe bata nakṣatre mayi jāto 'si putraka, yena tvayā daśaratho guṇair ārādhitaḥ pitā/ amogham bata me kṣāntam puruṣe puṣkarekṣaṇe, yeyam ikṣvākuraḥ rājyaśrīḥ putra tvām saṃśrayiṣyati/* My beloved son! You were born at an extraordinarily auspicious 'nakshatra' and endeared the father and the whole world. May the hearty and most earnest prayers of mine that had been meditated by me now may come to fruition now, without traces of even minutest troubles so that the high flagship of Ikshvaku Lineage be blessed with Rajya Lakshmi for ever! As Shri Rama was blessed by Devi Koushalya, Shri Rama held both his hands together in endearing effacement and smiled at Lakshmana standing next to both the illustrious mother Devi Sumitra. Rama said: *Lakṣmaṇemām mayā sārddham praśādhi tvam vasumḍharām, dvitīyaṃ me 'ntarātmānam tvām iyaṃ śrīr upasthitā/ saumitre bhukṣva bhogāms tvam iṣṭān rājyaphalāni ca, jīvitam ca hi rājyam ca tvadartham abhikāmaye/* Dear Lakshmana! You too must join me in the administration as you are my

‘alter ego’ or my secondary conscience and this Rajya Lakshmi or the Empress of the Kingdom belongs to you too. The fruits of Kingship are to be indeed shared by both of us. So pronouncing, Shri Rama left the chamber of Devi Kousalya along with Devi Sita with his mother’s permission.

Sarga Five

Dasharatha and Vasishtha ask Rama and Sita to observe fasting before the celebrations of Yuvarajatra

*Samdiśya rāmam nṛpatiḥ śvobhāviny abhiṣecane, purohitaṃ samāhūya vasiṣṭham idam abravīt/
gacchopavāsam kākutstham kārayādyā tapodhana, śrīyaśorājyalābhāya vadhvā saha yatavratam/ tatheti
ca sa rājānam uktvā vedavidām varaḥ, svayam vasiṣṭho bhagavān yayau rāmaniveśanam/ rāma
bhavanam prāpya pāṇḍurābhraḥṇanaprabham, tisraḥ kakṣyā rathenaiva viveśa munisattamaḥ/ tam
āgatam ṛṣim rāmas tvarann iva sasambhramaḥ, mānāyīṣyan sa mānārham niścakrāma niveśanāt/
abhyetya tvaramāṇas ca rathābhyaśam maṇiṣiṇaḥ, tato ’vatārayām āsa parigṛhya rathāt svayam/ sa
cainam praśritaṃ dṛṣṭvā sambhāṣyābhiprasādyā ca, priyārham harṣayan rāmam ity uvāca purohitaḥ/
prasannas te pitā rāma yauvarājyam avāpsyasi, upavāsam bhavān adya karotu saha sītayā/ prātas tvām
abhiṣektā hi yauvarājye narādhipaḥ, pitā daśarathaḥ prītyā yayātiṃ nahuṣo yathā/ ity uktvā sa tadā
rāmam upavāsam yatavratam, mantravat kārayām āsa vaidehyā sahitaṃ muniḥ/ tato yathāvad rāmeṇa
sa rājño gurur arcitaḥ, abhyanujñāpya kākutstham yayau rāmaniveśanāt/ suhṛdbhis tatra rāmo ’pi tām
anujñāpya sarvaśaḥ, sabhājito viveśātha tām anujñāpya sarvaśaḥ/ hṛṣṭanārī narayutaṃ rāmaveśma tadā
babhau, yathā mattadvijagaṇam praphullanalinam saraḥ/ sa rājabhavanaprakhyāt tasmād rāmani
veśanāt, nirgatya dadṛṣe mārgam vasiṣṭho janasamvṛtam/ vṛndavṛndair ayodhyāyām rājamārgāḥ
samantataḥ, babhūvur abhisambādihāḥ kutūhalajanair vṛtāl/ janavṛndormi samgharṣahasvanavatas
tadā, babhūva rājamārgasya sāgarasyeva nisvanaḥ/ siktasammṛṣṭarathyā hi tad ahar vanamālinī, āsīd
ayodhyā nagarī samucchritagrhadhvajā/ tadā hy ayodhyā nilayaḥ sastrībālābalo janaḥ, rāmābhiṣekam
ākāṅkṣann ākāṅkṣann udayam raveḥ/ prajālamkārahūtam ca janasyānandavaradhanam, utsuko ’bhūj
jano draṣṭum tam ayodhyā mahotsavam/ evam tam janasambādham rājamārgam purohitaḥ, vyūhann
iva janaugham tam śanai rāja kulaṃ yayau/ sitābhraśikharaprakhyam prāsadam adhiruhya saḥ,
samiyāya narendreṇa śakreṇeva bṛhaspatiḥ/ tam āgatam abhipreṣya hitvā rājāsanaṃ nṛpaḥ, papraccha
sa ca tasmai tat kṛtam ity abhyavedayat/ guruṇā tv abhyanujñāto manujaugham viṣṭjya tam, viveśantaḥ
puraṃ rājā simho giriguhām iva/ tad agryaveṣapramadājanākulaṃ; mahendraveśmapratimam
niveśanam, vyadīpayamś cāru viveśa pārthivaḥ; śaśīva tārāgaṇasamkulaṃ nabhaḥ*

As Shri Rama’s Yuva Raja Pattabhisheka was scheduled on the following day, King Dasharatha requested Vasishtha Maharshi to let Rama perform ‘Kalyana Siddhi Vighna Naashaka Upavasa Vrata’. Then Vasishtha along with veda panditas proceeded to Shri Rama Mandira. Shri Rama with great devotion and courtesy received the Maharshi along with the group of Panditas. Vasishtha addressed Rama to emphasise that King Dasharatha was extremely fond of the famed son and had therefore decided to arrange for Rama and Devi Sita to observe ‘upavasa’ with seriousness. *Prātas tvām abhiṣektā hi yauvarājye narādhipaḥ, pitā daśarathaḥ prītyā yayātiṃ nahuṣo yathā/ ity uktvā sa tadā rāmam upavāsam yatavratam, mantravat kārayām āsa vaidehyā sahitaṃ muniḥ/ tato yathāvad rāmeṇa sa rājño gurur arcitaḥ, abhyanujñāpya kākutstham yayau rāmaniveśanāt/* Raghu nandana! Your father’s serious desire is to let the vrata be performed impeccably in a manner that King Nahusha performed his son Yayati’s Rajyabhisheka on the following morning. As the formal Puja was thus performed, Vasishtha and Panditas blessed Rama and Sita with most endearing compliments and left.

[Vishleshana on Kings Nahusha and Yayati:

Nahusha who was in the lineage of Pururava and had the distinction of performing ninety nine Ashwamedha Yagnas and was nearly qualified to become Indra who should have executed hundred

Yagnas. Meanwhile there was a temporary vacancy of Indratwa since Indra fled away since he killed Vritrasura with the help of the Vajrayudha made out of Sage Dadhichis's backbone; Vritrasura who was a Brahmana by birth and Brahma Hatya Sin chased Indra. Brahma thus appointed Nahusha as temporary Indra. Nahusha who was originally a King of Great Virtue became arrogant and powermongering as he became Indra and claimed all the privileges belonging to Indra like Vajrayudha, Irvata and even Indra's wife Sachi Devi. Yayati, the son of Nahusha was a famed Emperor who defeated all the Kings of the World and married Devayani the daughter of Asura Guru Shukracharya, besides Sharmishtha the daughter of Vishvaparva, a Rakshasa King. Indra was pleased to gift Yayati a Divine Chariot with seven powerful horses with which he traversed the world and divided his Empire into seven divisions to distribute it among five of his sons. A Maharshi gave a boon that if any of his sons could agree to exchange their youth to his old age then he could secure a fresh lease of youth. His eldest son Yadu from Devayani refused and so did others excepting Sharmishtha's son Puru who readily agreed. Yayati took over Puru's youth and enabled him travel around to unravel earthly pleasures for long. But finally returned discovering that the ephemeral joys of the world were endless like Agni in a Homa kunda assuming larger and larger proportions as long as ghee is served and no human would be satisfied with food, gold, ornaments or women. By so realising, he returned his youth to Puru and took to Vanaprastha or retirement.]

As Rama and Sita returned to their palace, there were highly excited crowds of men and women with rapturous joy; in fact, all the streets, gardens, temples and market places of the city of Ayodhya were jam packed with overflowing crowds of unimaginable exhilaration and thrill. All the houses were decorated with tall and flying flags and decorations with an all pervading festive atmosphere of jubilation and unending excitement like the roaring sounds of ocean waves. Men, women and children, be they rich or otherwise were awake all through the dusk and night awaiting the hours of dawn. Ayodhya's greatest festival was thus most sought after as the citizens were in a state of frenzy and unprecedented anticipation. Even as the first rays of Surya Deva became visible on the horizon, Maharshi Vasishtha arrived at the Palace of King Dasharatha and both met as though Deva Guru Brihaspati and Lord Mahendra had. As the King stood up from his glittering and jewelled throne, he smilingly uttered to the Maharshi : is everything ready! And the Maharshi responded with suppressed glee: 'Yes!' Then like a Lion the King entering its massive den entered his Interior Hall while the steps were laced up with beautifully dressed up girls of mini-smiles like Apsaras were lined up on the steps of Indra Sabha!

Sarga Six

Ayodhya's public's joy and pre-celebrations

Gate purohite rāmaḥ snāto niyatamānasah, saha patnyā viśālākṣyā nārāyaṇam upāgamat/ pragr̥hya śirasā pātrīm haviṣo vidhivat tadā, mahate daivatāyājyam juhāva jvalite 'nale/ śeṣam ca haviṣas tasya prāśyāśyātmanah priyam, dhyāyan nārāyaṇam devaṁ svāstīrṇe kuśasamstare/ vāgyataḥ saha vaidehyā bhūtvā niyatamānasah, śrīmaty āyatane viṣṇoḥ śiṣye naravarātmajah/ ekayāmāvaśiṣṭāyām rātryām prativibudhya sah, alamkāravidhiṁ kṛtsnam kārayām āsa veśmanah/ tatra śṛṇvan sukhā vācaḥ sūtamāgadhabandinām, pūrvām saṁdhyām upāsīno jajāpa yatamānasah/ tuṣṭāva praṇataś caiva śirasā madhusūdanam, vimalakṣaumasamvīto vācayām āsa ca dvijān/ teṣām puṇyāhaghoṣo 'tha gambhīra madhuras tadā, ayodhyām pūrayām āsa tūryaghoṣānunāditaḥ/ kṛtopavāsam tu tadā vaidehyā saha rāghavam, ayodhyā nilayaḥ śrutvā sarvaḥ pramudito janah/ tataḥ pauraṇaḥ sarvaḥ śrutvā rāmābhiṣecanam, prabhātām rajanīm dṛṣtvā cakre śobhām parām punah/ sitābhraśikharābheṣu devatāyataneṣu ca, catuṣpatheṣu rathyāsu caityeṣu aṭṭālakeṣu ca/ nānāpaṇyasamṛddheṣu vaṇijām āpaṇeṣu ca, kuṭumbinām samṛddheṣu śrīmatṣu bhavaneṣu ca/ sabhāsu caiva sarvāsu vṛkṣeṣu ālakṣiteṣu ca, dhvajāḥ samucchritās citrāḥ patākās cābhavaṁ tadā/ naṭanartakasamghānām gāyakānām ca gāyatām, maṇḍhakarṇasukhā vācaḥ śuśruvuś ca tatas tataḥ/ rāmābhiṣekayuktās ca kathās cakrur mitho janāḥ, rāmābhiṣeke samprāpte catvareṣu gṛheṣu ca/ bālā api krīḍamānā gṛhadvāreṣu samghaśah,

rāmābhiṣekasaṃyuktās cakrur eva mithaḥ kathāḥ/ kṛtapuṣpopahāras ca dhūpagandhādhivāsitaḥ, rājamārgaḥ kṛtaḥ śrīmān paurai rāmābhiṣecane/ prakāśikaraṇārtham ca niśāgamanaśaṅkayā, dīpavṛkṣāms tathā cakrur anu rathyāsu sarvaśaḥ/ alamkāram purasyaivam kṛtvā tat puravāsinaḥ, ākāṅkṣamānā rāmasya yauvarājyābhiṣecanam/ sametya saṃghaśaḥ sarve catvareṣu sabhāsu ca, kathayanto mithas tatra praśaśaṃsur janādhipam/ aho mahātmā rājāyam ikṣvākukulanandanaḥ, jñātvā yo vṛddham ātmānam rāmaṃ rājye 'bhiṣekṣyati' sarve hy anugṛhītāḥ sma yan no rāmo mahīpatiḥ, cirāya bhavitā goptā dṛṣṭalokaparāvārah/ anuddhatamanā vidvān dharmātmā bhrātṛvatsalaḥ, yathā ca bhrātṛṣu snigdhas tathāsmāsv api rāghavaḥ/ ciraṃ jīvatu dharmātmā rājā daśaratho 'naghaḥ, yatprasādenā - bhiṣiktaṃ rāmaṃ drakṣyāmahe vayam/ evaṃvidhaṃ kathayatām paurāṇām śuśruvus tadā, digbhyo 'pi śrutavṛttāntāḥ prāptā jānapadā janāḥ/ te tu digbhyaḥ purīm prāptā draṣṭum rāmābhiṣecanam, rāmasya pūrayām āsuh purīm jānapadā janāḥ/ janaughais tair visarpadbhiḥ śuśruve tatra nisvanaḥ, parvasūdīrṇavegasya sāgarasyeva nisvanaḥ/ tatas tad indrakṣayasāmnibham puram; didṛkṣubhir jānapadair upāgataiḥ, samantataḥ sasvanam ākulam babhau; samudrayādobhir ivārṇavodakam/

Shri Rama had then taken bath and along with 'sadharna chaarini' initiated 'Shri Ranganadha Puja'. He kept the 'havishya patra' or the vessel of offering cooked rice on his head and with bent head and offered the same to 'Homaagni' to appease Sheshashaayi Narayana dutifully. [Padma Purana explains that this Idol of Sheshashaayi Ranganadha was worshipped by generations of Kings in Ayodhya and after the killing of Ravana when finally Shri Rama Pattabisheka was celebrated, Rama gifted this idol to Vibheeshana and that very idol subsequently travelled to Shri Ranganadha Kshetra] *Sheṣam ca haviṣas tasya praśyāśāsyaṭmanah priyam, dhyāyan nārāyaṇam devam svāstīrṇe kuśasaṃstare/ vāgyataḥ saha vaidehyā bhūtvā niyatamānasah, śrīmaty āyatane viṣṇoḥ śīṣye naravarātmajah/* The remainder of the 'havishanna' offered to Agni thus, Rama and Sita ate the 'praasada' and with observing complete silence and self control slept off in the Mandira on a mat with prayers to Maha Vishnu. Past three 'yaamas' of the night, the fourth part of the night got up from the mat and instructed the servants to initiate the decoration of the 'Sabha Mandapa'. On hearing the auspicious music of the soft instruments, Shri Rama then took his bath and performed 'Sandhya Vandana' Gayatri with extreme concentration. Thereafter he donned a shining dress and prayed to 'Madhusudana' while select groups of 'Brahmanottamas' initiated 'swasti vaachanaas'. The 'punyahvachana ghosha' of the raised resonance then got resounded whereafter the sounds of innumerable 'vaadyas' got reverberated the length and breadth of Ayodhya. The distant citizens of Ayodhya had thus come to realise that the celebrations of 'Sita Rama Upavaasa Vrata' had got initiated. Then the sky high lofty tower tops of temples, city squares, lanes and byelanes, tall tree tops, market places, individual shops and establishments, were all profusely decorated with flags in typically competitive spirit of exhibitions. Groups of street dancers, musical instrumentalists ranging from flutes to high sounded drums, exclusive singers of excellence to group singings were attracting the ready attractions of various audiences. All the individual houses were in competitive spirit in decorating their own houses, doors, windows with flags and multi-colour combinations. Fresh flowers, natural and artificial fragrances and odours readily ushered in celestial atmosphere all over. Detailed discussions among boys and girls, youth and elderly, men and women, the learned and the ignorant, the haves and have-nots, in groups or mutual had the singular topic of the 'Patthabisheka' only. Most of the citizens of Ayodhya having anticipated the night fall ahead had made elaborate arrangements of lighting the streets, roads, market places, temples, tree tops, and individual houses. There were extensive discussions in the street corners, market places, temples and gatherings about the magnificence and munificence of the King Dasharatha who had decided to name the successor who too was the real chip off the old timber of the outstanding Ikshvaaku Vamsha! The excerpts of the conversations of the public were as follows: *Aho*

mahātmā rājāyam ikṣvākukulanandanah, jñātvā yo vṛddham ātmānam rāmaṁ rājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ sarve hy anugrhitāḥ sma yan no rāmo mahīpatiḥ, cirāya bhavitā goptā dṛṣṭalokaparāvārah/ anuddhatamanā vidvān dharmātmā bhrātr̥vatsalah, yathā ca bhrātr̥ṣu snigdhas tathāsmāsv api rāghavaḥ/ ciram jīvatu dharmātmā rājā daśaratho 'naghaḥ, yatprasādenā -bhiṣiktaṁ rāmaṁ drakṣyāmahe vayam/ 'Aha! The great and popular most King Dasharatha had finally decided to retire after long innings of his gloried life in favor of an equally notable son of proven worth of bravery, virtue and assured safety and welfare to us all. Surely, Rama ought to shine as a person of integrity and wellbeing to us all most certainly. He had proven himself as a calm, composed, knowledgeable, practical, personality who would surely look after us as with his own brothers!' *Tatas tad indrakṣayasam̐nibhaṁ puram̐; didṛkṣubhir jānapadair upāgataiḥ, samantataḥ sasvanam ākulaṁ babhau; samudrayādobhir ivārṇavodakam/* Thus to have the unique opportunity of witnessing Ramaabhisheka would be comparable to what 'Indraabhisheka' to attend to which might be comparable to Maha Sagara's various species like gigantic whales, crocodiles, huge and small fishes!

Sarga Seven

Villianous Manthara gets upset on Rama's Yuvarajstva and reaches Kaikeya and provokes

Jñātidāsī yato jātā kaikeyyās tu sahoṣitā, prāsādam candrasam̐kāsam āruroha yadṛcchayā/ siktārājapathām kṛtsnām prakīrṇakamalotpalām, ayodhyām mantharā tasmāt prāsādād anvavaikṣata/ patākābhir varārhābhir dhvajaiś ca samalam̐kṛtām, siktām candanatoyaiś ca śiraḥsnātajanair vṛtām/ avidūre sthitām dṛṣṭvā dhātrīm papraccha mantharā, uttamenābhisam̐yuktā harsenārthaparā satī/ rāmamātā dhanam̐ kim nu janebhyah sam̐prayacchati, atimātram praharṣo 'yam̐ kim janasya ca śamsa me, kārayiṣyati kim vāpi sam̐prahṛṣṭo mahīpatiḥ/ vidīryamāṇā harsēna dhātrī paramayā mudā, ācacakṣe 'tha kubjāyai bhūyasīm rāghave śriyam/ śvaḥ puṣyeṇa jitakrodham̐ yauvarājyena rāghavam, rājā daśaratho rāmaṁ abhiṣecayitānagham/ dhātrīyās tu vacanam̐ śrutvā kubjā kṣipram amarṣitā, kailāsa śikharākārāt prāsādād avarohata/ sā dahyamānā kopena mantharā pāpadarśinī, śayānām etya kaikeyīm idam̐ vacanam̐ abravīt/ uttiṣṭha mūḍhe kim ṣeṣe bhayam̐ tvām abhivartate, upaplutamahaughena kim ātmānam̐ na budhyase/ aniṣṭe subhagākāre saubhāgyena vikatthase, calam̐ hi tava saubhāgyam̐ nadyah̐ srota ivoṣṇage/ evam̐ uktā tu kaikeyī ruṣṭayā parusaṁ vacaḥ, kubjayā pāpadarśinyā viṣādam̐ agamat param/ kaikeyī tv abravīt kubjām̐ kaccit̐ kṣemaṁ na manthare, viṣaṇṇavadanām̐ hi tvām̐ lakṣaye bhṛśaduḥkhitām/ mantharā tu vacaḥ śrutvā kaikeyyā madhurākṣaram, uvāca krodhasam̐yuktā vākyam̐ vākyaviśārādā/ sā viṣaṇṇatarā bhūtvā kubjā tasyā hitaiṣiṇī, viṣādayantī provāca bhedayantī ca rāghavam/ akṣemaṁ sumahad̐ devi pravṛttam̐ tvadvināsanam, rāmaṁ daśaratho rājā yauvarājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ sāsmy agādhe bhaye magnā duḥkhaśokasamanvitā, dahyamānānaleneva tvaddhitārtham̐ ihāgatā/ tava duḥkhena kaikeyi mama duḥkham̐ mahad̐ bhavet, tvadvṛddhau mama vṛddhiś ca bhaved atra na sam̐śayah/ narādhipakule jātā mahiṣī tvām̐ mahīpateḥ, ugratvam̐ rājadharmāṇām̐ katham̐ devi na budhyase/ dharmavādī śaṭho bhartā ślakṣṇavādī ca dāruṇah, śuddhabhāve na jānīṣe tenaivam̐ atisam̐dhitā/ upasthitam̐ payuñjānas tvayi sāntvam̐ anarthakam, rthenaivādya te bhartā kausalyām̐ yojayiṣyati/ apavāhya sa duṣṭātmā bharam̐ tava bandhuṣu, kālyam̐ sthāpayitā rāmaṁ rājye nihatakaṇṭake/ śatruḥ patipravādena mātrevā hitakāmyayā, āśīviṣa ivānkena bāle paridhṛtas tvayā/ yathā hi kuryāt sarpo vā śatrur vā pratyupekṣitaḥ, rājñā daśarathenādya saputrā tvām̐ tathā kṛtā/ pāpenāṅṛtasantvena bāle nityam̐ sukhocite, rāmaṁ sthāpayatā rājye sānubandhā hatā hy asi/ sā prāptakālām̐ kaikeyi kṣipram̐ kuru hitam̐ tava, trāyasva putram̐ ātmānam̐ mām̐ ca vismayadarśane/ mantharāyā vacaḥ śrutvā śayanāt sa śubhānanā, evam̐ ābharaṇam̐ tasyai kubjāyai pradadau śubham̐ dattvā tv ābharaṇam̐ tasyai kubjāyai pramadottamā, kaikeyī mantharām̐ hṛṣṭā punar evābravīd idam̐/ idam̐ tu manthare mahyam̐ ākhyāsi paramam̐ priyam, etan me priyam̐ ākhyātuḥ kim vā bhūyah̐ karomi te/ rāme vā bharate vāham̐ viṣeṣam̐ nopalakṣaye, tasmāt tuṣṭāsmi yad rājā rāmaṁ rājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ na me

param kim cid itas tvayā punaḥ; priyaṁ priyārhe suvacam vaco varam, tathā hy avocas tvam atah priyottaram; varam param te pradadāmi tam vṛnu/

Of the three queens of King Dasharatha, Devi Kaikeyi was the youngest. She had an old servant maid named Manthara whose antecedents were mysterious; she was used to always cling to the queen. None indeed ever aware about Manthara's birth, her parentage details, place of origin and her erstwhile whatabouts. The night before the Rama Rajyabhisheka, Devi Kaikeyi was enjoying moon shine on the palace top and noticed that there was lot of commotion on the streets which were all lit up and noisy with crowds of men-women-children. There were high flying flags, agog with sounds of music and dances; shouts and loud cheers all around; temple tops were decorated with colourful flags, veda pathanas too were heard again and again, and there appeared several crowds dancing away too. Then she turned her view to the top of Rama's residing palace and found that it was distinguished with garlands of lights atop with bright flags wavering away. She felt delighted and remarked to Mandhara: Mandhara! Tell me how happy I am that Shri Rama patthabhisheka is due now tomorrow morning. Devi Kousalya must now be busy distributing gifts to select ladies as the wives of ministers, heads of army and leading persons of the society. Tell me how joyous and blissful that my dear husband be feeling right now as the most auspicious task round the corner; indeed he ought to be the most excited and busy personality ever! Kubje! Are you aware that tomorrow early morning Maha Raja Dasharatha should be performing the most auspicious deed as the pushya nakshatra would arrive when Shri Rama the most endearing, flawless, fearless and singular person of virtue and fame should be the Yuva Raja of this glorious empire! Such was the extraordinary excitement expressed by Kaikeyi. *Dhātryās tu vacanam śrutvā kubjā kṣipram amarṣitā, kailāsa śikharākārāt prāsādād avarohata/ sā dahyamānā kopena mantharā pāpadarśinī, śayānām etya kaikeyīm idam vacanam abravīt/* As Kaikeyi's exciting expressions were thus heard, Mandhara's inner self was ignited so much as ghee was poured on dry wooden sticks and as though she was thrown down from the high Kailasa mountain top down with a steep fall on the ground. Kaikeyi understood Mandhara's disapproval and negative reaction. *Uttiṣṭha mūḍhe kim śeṣe bhayaṁ tvām abhivartate, upapluta - mahaughena kim ātmānam na budhyase/ aniṣṭe subhagākāre saubhāgyena vikatthase, calam hi tava saubhāgyam nadyaḥ srota ivoṣṇage/* Then Mandhara shouted on Kaikeyi with pent up anger! 'You foolish woman, get up from slumber to awakeness! I am shuddered of a heavy burden about to fall on you as a mountain is about to break against you and you do not realise the calamities ahead of you. Your beloved husband comes and makes you feel that he is paving to you a path of roses for you owing to your ignorance and taking advantage of your innocence and stupidity! You hardly realise the mischievous and back side motives and well planned negativities to be faced by you ahead! Just as running waters tend to thin down the flows in summer, your fortunes too would soon get dried up as the momentary opportunity on hand once lost would disappear for ever.' Kaikeyi was taken aback with the comments made by Mandhara. She reproached Mandhara for her inauspicious blabberings and shouted on her that she was not in her senses while expressings such ridiculous feelings of jealousy and uncalled for chatter of narrow mindedness. Kaikeyi further said that Mandhara had all along been a skilful thinker and talker but today she had betrayed her mischievous and harmfully hidden inner psyche. But Mandhara continued with her slow poisonous conversation and evil mindedness: *Akshemaṁ sumahad devi pravṛttam tvadvinaśanam, rāmaṁ daśaratho rājā yauvarājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ sāsmy agādhe bhaye magnā duḥkhaśokasamanvitā, dahyamānānaleneva tvaddhitārtham ihāgatā/ tava duḥkhena kaikeyi mama duḥkham mahad bhavet, tvadvṛddhau mama vṛddhiś ca bhaved atra na saṁśayaḥ/* Devi! the terminal point of your welfare is about to be reached and misfortune could never be reversed. Tomorrow King Dasharatha is poised to make Rama the Yuva Raja. Having realised this, I am totally depressed and disgusted with this development and am drowned in fathomless and fearful ocean of sorrow and hence have arrived in hurry to prevent this catastrophe and thwart the mischief being played on you. When you are about to face a calamity, I too would have to drown into it and have thus made a timely intervention possible. Devi! You were born and brought up in a royal family and absorbed queenly features but how are you ignoring the true characteristics and upbringing of a queen! *Dharmavādī saṅho bhartā ślakṣṇavādī ca dāruṇaḥ, śuddhabhāve na jānīṣe tenaivam atisaṁdhitā/ upasthitam payuñjānas tvayi sāntvam*

anarthakam, rthenaivādyā te bhartā kausalyām yojayisyati/ apavāhya sa duṣṭātmā bharatām tava bandhuṣu, kālyām sthāpayitā rāmaṁ rājye nihatakaṅṭhake/ Oh ignorant but lovable fool! Your husband looks innocent but is a schemy and calculated father with little consideration for your well being. He takes full advantage of your innocence and immaturity of mind and is openly favouring Koushalya and her everlasting benefit by making Rama as the next king. His vily mentality is such that he had very conveniently despatched Bharata to your brother's kingdom and is planning for the coronation of Rama peacefully! *Shatruḥ patipravādena mātrevā hitakāmyayā, āśīviṣa ivānkena bāle paridhṛtas tvayā/ yathā hi kuryāt sarpo vā śatrur vā pratyupekṣitaḥ, rājñā daśarathenādyā saputrā tvaṁ tathā kṛtā/ pāpenānṛtasantvena bāle nityam sukhocite, rāmaṁ sthāpayatā rājye sānubandhā hatā hy asi/* Oh innocent! As a mother brings up a son with care and spontaneous affection, you too have so far treated Dasharatha likewise; [the well known adage states : *Karyeshu dasi, Karaneshu manthri; Bhojeshu mata, Shayaneshu rambha; Kshamayeshu dharithri, Roopeshu lakshmi; Satkarma yukta, Kuladharmā patni/* An ideal wife should be like a loyal maid for service; an intelligent adviser; a mother like with affection while feeding food; a romantic- proactive and comforting woman like a damsel in bed; a woman of beauty, charm and richness like Goddess Lakshmi Herself with dedication and humility; and above all be ever forgiving with compassion and ready understanding like Bhudevi Herself!] But unfortunately your husband Dashatratha has actually turned out to be an ingratitude enemy of yours! This is like a situation of an innocent and well meaning person takes a vicious serpent on the lap and similarly you have invited your husband into bed but he would naturally bite you poisonously with least consideration! Innocent Kaikeyi you! You do deserve everlasting fortune as a queen now and Queen Mother as long as you long you survive! ***Sā prāptakālam kaikeyi kṣiprām kuru hitam tava, trāyasva putram ātmānam mām ca vismayadarśane/*** Kaikeya Raja Kumari! You are staring at me with shock and impulsiveness this harangue of mine but now come back to your senses and straighten your action plan at least now and save yourself and your dear son from perpetual slavery all through your life!' On hearing the wake up call of Manthara, Devi Kaikeyi left her bed with sudden spurt of energy and decisiveness of thought and action as though the full moon of sparkle smashed the black clouds on the starry night. With elevated self confidence and decisiveness, Devi Kaikeya gifted away to Manthara an invaluable gift of gold and stated: 'Manthare! You have now given me unusual strength of mind and purpose of resolve as I am ever grateful to you for awakening me from indifference and ignorance! *Rāme vā bharate vāham viśeṣam nopalakṣaye, tasmāt tuṣṭāsmi yad rājñā rāmaṁ rājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/* Indeed, I find little distinction between Rama or Bhartata! Those who appreciate this fundamental identity should perform Rajyabhisheka to Bharata himself! Kaikeyi then assured a magnificent gift to Manthara soon after 'Bharataabhisheka'!

Sarga Eight

Kaikeyi defends Rama for his mobility but seeks to poison Kaikeyi's mind set suggesting Rama's Vana Vaasa and Bharata's elevation as Yuva Raja

Mantharā tv abhyasūyyainām utsṛjyābharaṇam ca tat, uvācedam tato vākyaṁ kopaduḥkhasamanvitā/ harsam kim idam asthāne kṛtavaty asi bālīse, śokasāgaramadhyastham ātmānam nāvabudhyase/ subhagā khalu kausalyā yasyāḥ putro 'bhiṣekṣyate, yauvarājyena mahatā śvaḥ puṣyeṇa dvijottamaiḥ/ prāptām sumahatīm prītim pratītām tām hatadviṣam, upasthāsyasi kausalyām dāsīva tvaṁ kṛtāñjalih/ hṛṣṭāḥ khalu bhaviṣyanti rāmasya paramāḥ striyaḥ, aprahṛṣṭā bhaviṣyanti snuṣās te bharataḥ/ tām dṛṣtvā paramaprītām bruvantīm mantharām tataḥ, rāmasyaiva guṇān devī kaikeyī praśaśaṁsa ha/ dharmajño gurubhir dāntaḥ kṛtajñaḥ satyavāk śuciḥ, rāmo rājñāḥ suto jyeṣṭho yauvarājyam ato 'rhati/ bhrātṛn bhṛtyāms ca dīrghāyuh pitṛvat pālayisyati, samtapyase katham kubje śrutvā rāmābhiṣecanam/ bharataś cāpi rāmasya dhruvam varṣaśatāt param, pitṛpaitāmahaṁ rājyam avāpsyati nararṣabhaḥ/ sā tvam

abhyudaye prāpte vartamāne ca manthare, bhaviṣyati ca kalyāṇe kimarthaṃ paritapyase, kausalyāto 'tiriktaṃ ca sa tu śuśrūṣate hi mām/ kaikeyyā vacanam śrutvā mantharā bhṛṣaduhkhitā dīrgham uṣṇam viniḥśvasya kaikeyīm idam abravīt/ anarthadarśinī maurkhyān nātmānam avabudhyase, śokavyasana - vistīrṇe majjanī duḥkhasāgare/ bhavitā rāghavo rājā rāghavasya ca yaḥ sutaḥ, rājavamśāt tu bharataḥ kaikeyi parihāsyate/ na hi rājñāḥ sutāḥ sarve rājye tiṣṭhanti bhāmini, sthāpyamāneṣu sarveṣu sumahān anayo bhavet/ tasmāj jyeṣṭhe hi kaikeyi rājyatantrāṇi pārthivāḥ, sthāpayanty anavadyāṅgi guṇavatsv itareṣv api/ asāv atyantanirbhagnas tava putro bhaviṣyati, anāthavat sukhebhyaś ca rājavamśāc ca vatsale/ sāhaṃ tvadarthe samprāptā tvaṃ tu mām nāvabudhyase, sapatnivriddhau yā me tvaṃ pradeyaṃ dātum icchasi/ dhruvaṃ tu bharataṃ rāmaḥ prāpya rājyam akaṅṭakam, deśāntaram nāyayitvā lokāntaram athāpi vā/ bāla eva hi mātulyaṃ bharato nāyitas tvayā, samnikarṣāc ca sauhārdaṃ jāyate sthāvareṣv api/ goptā hi rāmaṃ saumitirir lakṣmaṇaṃ cāpi rāghavaḥ, aśvinor iva saubhrātraṃ tayor lokeṣu viśrutam/ tasmān na lakṣmaṇe rāmaḥ pāpaṃ kim cit kariṣyati, rāmas tu bharate pāpaṃ kuryād iti na samśayaḥ/ tasmād rājagrḥhād eva vanam gacchatu te sutaḥ, etad dhi rocate mahyam bhṛṣam cāpi hitam tava/ evaṃ te jñātipakṣasya śreyaś caiva bhaviṣyati, yadi ced bharato dharmāt pitryaṃ rājyam avāpsyati/ sa te sukhocito bālo rāmasya sahajo ripuḥ, samḍdhārthasya naṣṭārtho jīviṣyati kathaṃ vaśe/ abhidrutam ivāraṇye simhena gajayūthapam, pracchādyamānaṃ rāmeṇa bharataṃ trātum arhasi/ darpān nirākṛtā pūrvaṃ tvayā saubhāgyavattayā, rāmamātā sapatnī te kathaṃ vairam na yātayet/ yadā hi rāmaḥ pṛthivīm avāpsyati; dhruvaṃ pranaṣṭo bharato bhaviṣyati, ato hi samcintaya rājyam ātmaje; parasya cādyaiiva vivāsa kāraṇam/

Instead of gratefully accepting the golden gift that Devi Kaikeyi given to her, Manthara threw it away with extreme anger and broke into tears and exclaimed: Aho! How naïve and childlike immature are you, Kaikeyi! Instead of open anguish and furious rage, you are placid as if nothing untoward had happened. Don't you realise that you are in a deep ditch and mess right now and on a high point of a volcanic rupture! I am indeed aghast at your stupidity! *Arreh! Sapatni putrasya vriddhim mrityorivaagatam/* The son of a co wife is like 'saakshaat mrityu' or the open death itself! Don't you realise that both Rama and Bharata have the same and equal authority and that precisely why Rama is afraid of Bharata. This is why I am always sunk deep in sorrow and hence the plan of Rama to let Bharata to be out of this scenario now. Like Lakshmana is a follower of Rama, so is Shatrughna a true follower of Bharata. Bhamini! Therefore both Rama and Bharata have equal right over the kingship and that precisely how Rama cunningly planned everything accordingly. My deep fright and confirmed suspicion is that Rama being a clever 'pandita' of shastras, political acumen, and timely dutifulness to the King and Ministers had earned reputation and sidelined Bharata and thus worked himself towards the final objective of 'Yuvarajatva' by totally sidelining Bharata! Now once Rama upgrades himself as the prospective King, you will be totally subservient to Kousalya with folded hands for ever! However in the event of Bharata becomes the king, even the young and pretty lasses in the 'antahpura' or the innermost chamber of Sita Devi would cry away, let alone Devi Sita! Having heard all whatever Manthara sought to poison her mind, Kaikeyi still argued with Manthara: *Dharmajño gurubhir dāntaḥ kṛtajñāḥ satyavāk śuciḥ, rāmo rājñāḥ suto jyeṣṭho yauvarājyam ato 'rhati/ bhrātṛn bhṛtyāmś ca dīrghāyuh pitṛvat pālayiṣyati, samtapyase kathaṃ kubje śrutvā rāmābhiṣecanam/ bharataś cāpi rāmasya dhruvaṃ varṣaśatāt param, pitṛpaitāmaḥam rājyam avāpsyati nararṣabhaḥ/* Kubje! Shri Rama is a dharmajnata, gunavaan, jitendriya, even grateful, and ever truthful as the eldest son of King Dasharatha and is fully justified to become the Yuva Raja. He should indeed provide excellent administration to the kingdom and its subjects surely. After Rama, Bharata should indeed be the the next king anyway. Mandhare! At this auspicious time, why are you getting excited with jealousy! No doubt, Bharata as my dear son would be very precious and wish him very well ahead; but on balance Rama would be dearer to me for his outstanding qualities. In fact, Rama serves me even more than even to his own mother! You should feel that if Rama secures kingship, Bharata too would have secured it as well, since Rama never made any distinction among his brothers. As Kaikeya was exhorting likewise, Manthara took long and vexatious breathing out of sheer helplessness. She stated in extreme desperation as follows: *Anarthadarśinī maurkhyān nātmānam avabudhyase, śokavyasana - vistīrṇe majjanī duḥkhasāgare/ bhavitā rāghavo rājā rāghavasya ca yaḥ sutaḥ, rājavamśāt tu bharataḥ*

kaikeyi parihāsyate/ na hi rājñāḥ sutāḥ sarve rājye tiṣṭhanti bhāmini, sthāpyamāneṣu sarveṣu sumahān anayo bhavet/ tasmā jyeṣṭhe hi kaikeyi rājyatantrāṇi pārthivāḥ, sthāpayanty anavadyāṅgi guṇavatsv itareṣv api/ Rani! Foolishly and most ignorantly, you keep on explaining to me by wheels within wheels as ‘charvita charvanam’, but never realise the impending reality. You are not still not realising the catastrophic ocean is facing you despite my repeated warnings. As soon as Rama secures the kingship, his sons would be authorised to claim it, but never ever Rama’s brother! How foolish and ignorant are you that Bharata could ever claim the kingship! Eventually, Bharata would be eliminated from the lineage of Kingship. Bhamini Kaikeyi! This is my final warning not to slip the situation out of hands for ever! As per the established law of kingship, the eldest son should secure the subsequent kingship and only if the elder son proves his inability for any reason of, say, bad character or inability to administer, then only the second in the line would become eligible ! *Sāham tvadarthe samprāptā tvam tu mām nāvabudhyase, sapatnivṛddhau yā me tvam pradeyam dātum icchasi/ dhruvam tu bharatam rāmaḥ prāpya rājyam akaṅṭakam, deśāntaram nāyayitvā lokāntaram athāpi vā/* This indeed the reason why, stated Manthara that she had made the timely arrival to warn and bring forth the rules of kingship and the established concept of the lineage of kingship! She made a final warning that in the event of Rama securing the kingship, the latter would eventually banish Bharata on one excuse or another from the kingdom or even to ‘paraloka’! *Bāla eva hi mātulyam bharato nāyitas tvayā, saṁnikarṣac ca sauhārdaṁ jāyate sthāvareṣv api/* Even at this stage, did not Rama create convenient and innocuous situations to pack off Bharata Shatrughna to his maternal uncle’s kingdom as an excellent precautionary measure! This kind of mental framework is normally experienced and expected even in one’s childhood; after all would not a ‘lata’ or a plant climber and the tree embracing each other not betray similar features and qualities! If Bharat were to be here, he could have made a justified claim on one half of the Kingdom! Bharat was quietly packed off along with Shatrughna as though it would look like a normal pair like Rama and Lakshmana! *Tasmād rājagrḥhād eva vanam gacchatu te sutah, etad dhi rocate mahyam bhṛṣam cāpi hitam tava/ evam te jñātipakṣasya śreyaś caiva bhaviṣyati, yadi ced bharato dharmāt pitryam rājyam avāpsyati/ sa te sukhocito bālo rāmasya saḥajo ripuḥ, samṛdhārthasya naṣṭārtho jīviṣyati katham vaśe/* **Hence the golden advice to you Kaikeyi! is that instead of proceeding further from the Raja Bhavan for the Rajyaabhseka, let Rama proceed for ‘aranya vaasa’!** This is the single and inevitable way to exit from the ongoing mess. Mind you, being the co queen’s son, Rama be always and forever deemed as your hardest and natural enemy! How indeed could Bharata the most innocent be subservient to Rama all through his life! Therefore, save him from this impending danger and risk of his well being and his very life itself! This situation is similar to a lion occupying a forest and a deer like Bharata being chased until death; so save him. As Rama would keep on occupying oceans and mountains and earn worldwide glory, so then would Bharata become smaller and smaller in his stature to finally become a non entity, even if he could survive, if at all! *Yadā hi rāmaḥ pṛthivīm avāpsyati; dhruvam pranaṣṭo bharato bhaviṣyati, ato hi saṁcintaya rājyam ātmaje; parasya cādyāiva vivāsa kāraṇam/* Beware and watch out finally as an ultimatum, let not Rama become bigger and bigger while Bharata be insignificant and miniscule increasingly by the days; before this golden opportunity is lost for ever and ever, make sure that Rama be packed off for vana vaasa right now..

Sarga Nine

Fully poisoned by Mandhara, Kaikeyi enters ‘Kopa griha’ - the symbolic Anger Chamber

Evam uktā tu kaikeyī krodhena jvalitānanā, dīrgham uṣṇam viniḥśvasya mantharām idam abravīt/ adya rāmam itaḥ kṣipram vanam prasthāpayāmy aham, yauvarājyena bharatam kṣipram evābhiṣecaye/ idam tv idānīm saṁpaśya kenopāyena manthare, bharataḥ prāpnuyād rājyam na tu rāmaḥ katham cana/ evam uktā tayā devyā mantharā pāpadarśinī, rāmārtham upahimsantī kaikeyīm idam abravīt/ hantedānīm pravakṣyāmi kaikeyi śrūyatām ca me, yathā te bharato rājyam putraḥ prāpsyati kevalam/ śrutvaivam vacanam tasyā mantharāyās tu kaikayī, kim cid utthāya śayanāt svāstīrṇād idam abravīt/ kathaya tvam mamopāyam kenopāyena manthare, bharataḥ prāpnuyād rājyam na tu rāmaḥ katham cana/ evam uktā

*tayā devyā mantharā pāpadarśinī, rāmārtham upahimsantī kubjā vacanam abravīt/ tava devāsura
yuddhe saha rājarṣibhiḥ patiḥ, agacchat tvām upādāya devarājasya sāhyakṛt/ diśam āsthāya kaikeyi
dakṣiṇām daṇḍakān prati, vaijayantam iti khyātam puram yatra timidhvajaḥ/ sa śambara iti khyātaḥ
śatamāyo mahāsurah, dadau śakrasya saṁgrāmam devasaṁghair anirjitaḥ/ tasmin mahati saṁgrāme
rājā daśarathas tadā, apavāhya tvayā devi saṁgrāmān naśacetanaḥ/ tatrāpi vikṣataḥ śastraiḥ patis te
rakṣitas tvayā, tuṣṭena tena dattau te dvau varau śubhadarśane/ sa tvayoktaḥ patir devi yadeccheyam
tadā varau, grhṇīyām iti tat tena tathety uktaḥ mahātmanā, anabhijñā hy aham devi tvayaiva kathitam
purā/ tau varau yāca bhartāram bharatasyābhiṣecanam, pravrājanam ca rāmasya tvam varṣāni
caturdaśa/ krodhāgāram praviśyādya kruddehāvāpateḥ sute, śeṣvānantarhitāyām tvam bhūmau
malinavāsini, mā smainam pratyudīkṣethā mā cainam abhibhāṣathāḥ/ dayitā tvam sadā bhartur atra me
nāsti saṁśayaḥ, tvatkrte ca mahārājo viśed api hutāśanam/ na tvām krodhayitum śakto na kruddhām
pratyudīkṣitum, tava priyārtham rājā hi prāñān api parityajet/ na hy atikramitum śaktas tava vākyam
mahīpatiḥ, mandasvabhāve budhyasva saubhāgyabalam ātmanaḥ/ maṇimuktāsuvārṇāni ratnāni
vividhāni ca, dadyād daśaratho rājā mā sma teṣu manaḥ kṛthāḥ/ yau tau devāsura yuddhe varau
daśaratho 'dadāt, tau smārāya mahābhāge so 'rtho mā tvām atikramet/ yadā tu te varam dadyāt svayam
utthāpya rāghavaḥ, vyavasthāpya mahārājam tvam imam vṛṇuyā varam/ rāmam pravrājayāraṇye nava
varṣāni pañca ca, bhārataḥ kriyatām rājā pṛthivyām pārthivarṣabhaḥ/ evam pravrājitaś caiva rāmo
'rāmo bhaviṣyati, bhārataś ca hatāmitras tava rājā bhaviṣyati/ yena kālena rāmaś ca vanāt
pratyāgamiṣyati, tena kālena putras te kṛtamūlo bhaviṣyati, saṁgrhītamanuṣyaś ca suhṛdbhiḥ sārddham
ātmavān/ prāptakālam tu te manye rājānam vītasādhvasā, rāmābhiṣekasaṁkalpān nigṛhya vinivartaya/
anartham artharūpeṇa grāhitā sā tatas tayā, hṛṣṭā pratītā kaikeyī mantharām idam abravīt/ kubje tvām
nābhijānāmi śreṣṭhām śreṣṭhābhidhāyinīm, pṛthivyām asi kubjānam uttamā buddhiniścayē/ tvam eva tu
mamārtheṣu nityayuktā hitaiṣinī, nāham samavabudhyeyam kubje rājñas cikīrṣitam/ santi duḥsaṁsthitāḥ
kubjā vakrāḥ paramapāpikāḥ, tvam padmam iva vātena saṁnatā priyadarśanā/ uras te 'bhiniṣṭam vai
yāvat skandhāt samunnatam, adhastāc codaram śāntam sunābham iva lajjitam/ jaghanam tava
nirghuṣṭam raśanādāmasobhitam, jaṅghe bhṛśam upanyaste pādau cāpy āyatāv ubhau/ tvam
āyatābhyām sakthibhyām manthare kṣaumavāsini, agrato mama gacchantī rājahamsīva rājase/ tavedam
sthagu yad dīrgham rathaghoṇam ivāyatam, matayaḥ kṣatravidyāś ca māyāś cātra vasanti te/ atra te
pratimokṣyāmi mālām kubje hiraṇmayīm, abhiṣikte ca bhārata rāghave ca vanam gate/ jātyena ca
suvārṇena suniṣṭaptena sundari, labdhārthā ca pratītā ca lepaiṣyāmi te sthagu/ mukhe ca tilakam citram
jātarūpamayam śubham, kārayiṣyāmi te kubje śubhāny ābharaṇāni ca/ paridhāya śubhe vastre devadeva
cariṣyasi, candram āhvayamānena mukhenāpratimānānā, gamiṣyasi gatim mukhyām garvayanī
dviśajjanam/ tavāpi kubjāḥ kubjāyāḥ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitāḥ, pādau paricariṣyanti yathaiiva tvam sadā
mama/ iti praśasyamānā sā kaikeyīm idam abravīt, śayānām śayane śubhre vedyām agniśikhām iva/
gatodake setubandho na kalyāṇi vidhīyate, uttiṣṭha kuru kalyāṇam rājānam anudarśaya/ tathā protsāhitā
devī gatvā mantharayā saha, krodhāgāram viśālākṣī saubhāgyamadagarvitā/ anekāśatasāhasram
muktāhāram varāṅganā, avamucya varārḥāni śubhāny ābharaṇāni ca/ tato hemopamā tatra kubjā
vākyam vaśam gatā, saṁviśya bhūmau kaikeyī mantharām idam abravīt/ iha vā mām mṛtām kubje
ṅṛpāyāvedayīṣyasi, vanam tu rāghave prāpte bhārataḥ prāpsyati kṣitim/ athaitad uktvā vacanam
sudāruṇam; nidhāya sarvābharaṇāni bhāminī, asaṁvṛtām āstaraṇena medinīm; tadādhiśīṣye patiteva
kinnarī/ udīrṇasaṁrambhatamovṛtānā; tathāvamuktottamamālyabhūṣaṇā, narendrapatnī vimanā
babhūva sā; tamovṛtā dyaur iva magnatārakā/*

As thus Manthara gradually ignited her inner feelings, Kaikeyi started breathing heavily and agitated. She said with firmness: *Adya rāmam itaḥ kṣipram vanam prasthāpayāmy aham, yauvarājyena bhārataḥ kṣipram evābhiṣecaye/* Kubje! I will soon despatch Rama to the forests and arrange for Bharata to secure the Kingdom. But, how this ambition to be materialised! Manthara replied in low voice secretively: if only you really do not mind my saying so, listen to me carefully: do recall that in the remote past, when your husband in his youthful days and when you were perhaps just married, you accompanied him by his

royal chariot to attack an ‘asura’ named Shambara living in ‘dandakaranya’ far beyond the popular city named Vijayanta. Shambara was so cruel that villagers, cattle, and domestic beings were being killed mercilessly that he was a perpetual threat to them even in Dasharatha’s far precincts of his kingdom. Shambara used a chariot flag with a huge whale insignia and was a notorious ‘maayaavi’ of endless make beliefs who was the ill fame of even attacking Indra who himself was vexed attacking him several times. In the successive battles with the previous kings nearby, he was in the habit of eating off the hurt and wounded soldiers of those kings lying by the nights. In fact King Dasharatha too made several attempts to attack the Asura but out of frustration used to retreat several times. Dasharatha utilised all his skills of archery with ‘mantrik’ support but had to return without success. Having been equipped with new military and mantric skills, he returned back with unusual confidence of mantrik power, Dasharatha attacked the Asura when the newly wedded Kaikeyi assumed the role of a secondary chariotee, sitting pretty next to Dasharatha. The Mayavi Shambara proved not much of an opponent to the well toned up mantras of the skills of Dasharatha but made an all out attack which an unwary Dasharatha slipped up momentarily. It was at that split second, Kaikeyi as the copilot saved Dasharatha when he got swooned momentarily and saved the King who once again attacked the Asura with the newly acquired mantric skills and succeeded in finally exterminating him even as the co-rakshasas tried to run back but were all killed away. That was how, King Dasharatha was pleased and in fact saved his life by Kaikeyi. *tatrāpi vikṣataḥ śāstraiḥ patis te rakṣitas tvayā, tuṣṭena tena dattau te dvau varau śubhadarśana/ sa tvayoktaḥ patir devi yadeccheyam tadā varau, grhṇīyām iti tat tena tathety uktaṁ mahātmanā, anabhijñā hy aham devi tvayaiva kathitaṁ purā/ tau varau yāca bhartāraṁ bharatasyābhiṣecanam, pravrajānam ca rāmasya tvam varṣāṇi caturdaśa/* As Dasharatha was at his wit’s end and was almost collapsing away, it was at that nick of time, Kaikeyi rescued and having felt extremely delighted and even grateful to her stated : Shubha darshini! I am happy and delighted to bestow two boons from me . Then Kaikeyi replied: Prana Natha! I would avail of these two boons at my convenience and the King approvingly stated : ‘tathaasthu’! Mandhara thus reminded of this and stated: Devi! don’t you recall those two boons! I had always been reminding you but used to smile and ignore me. Now, this is indeed the most opportune time to utilise right now to receive these two boons and certainly reverse the exigency of Rama Pattabhishekha. The two boons be therefore demanded; one to perform Bharata’s Rajyabhisheka and another to instruct for Rama’s ‘aranya vaasa’ for fourteen years. *Krodhāgāraṁ praviśyādya krudhdhevāsvapateḥ sute, śeṣvānantar hitāyām tvam bhūmau malinavāsini, mā smainam pratyudīkṣethā mā cainam abhibhāṣathāḥ/* Mandhara then advised Kaikeyi to change to an ugly and uncouth dress with anger and short temper and enter the the distinct ‘chamber of extreme anger’ in her residence with disheveled hair with a grumpy manner, readily noticeable by the servant maids and security personnel. Then she might lie down on a mat on earth. As the word would get spread like lightning, the King would become aware and on his arrival, she should neither open her eyes nor utter one word even. The King could never ever see you upset and angry in that manner as he is most affectionate with you. He could never see you angry, much less tolerate you in this condition. He could never in his life sideline your wish. Therefore may your fortune and hope be sustained and fortified. He might offer you innumerable material enticements in exchange but never yield to them. Remind him of the boons that he gave you at the time of the battle with the asura and the boons bestowed to to you then and the demand of yours now: *yadā tu te varam dadyāt svayam utthāpya rāghavaḥ, vyavasthāpya mahārājaṁ tvam imam vṛṇuyā varam/ rāmaṁ pravrajayārāṇye nava varṣāṇi pañca ca, bhārataḥ kriyatām rājā pṛthivyām pāṛthivarṣabhaḥ/* In the event of Dasharatha of getting haughty and fiery when you ask him of the two boons, then you might remind him coolly about his ‘dharma pramaana vachana’ or the oath of his conscience and truthfulness. Then you should affirm to him

with firmness and decisiveness: *Rāmaṁ pravrajayāranyaṁ nava varṣāṇi pañca ca, bhārataḥ kriyatām rājā pṛthivyām pārvīvarṣabhaḥ*/ When you are asking for the two ‘varaas’, say it sternly and firmly: ‘ Send Rama to a far off forest for fourteen jungle life and let Bharata be made the King’. Kaikeyi! once Rama goes off for forest life far away for fourteen years, then Bharata should be well established and the Public too would get used to Bharata and the memory of Rama would be wiped out by that time. Devi! you must most certainly seek the boon of Rama’s ‘vana vaasa’ then your dear son’s life ambition of becoming a King would come true! Within that time frame, Rama too would lose his sheen and Bharata would be rid of opposing forces. More over Bharat’s sons would come of age and maturity. They too would increasingly have the desire for acquiring military skills and by the passage of time, the roots of hopes for kingship would get stronger by the day and ‘Ramaabhisheka’ would become a mirage in public eye. As Manthara concluded her poisonous counsellings, Kaikeyi admired her forecasting skills and said that this Kubja was indeed the very best and most articulated convincer of forecastings of events. She said: Kubje! How skilfully you had interpreted the ‘shadyantra’ or unravelling of the masterly plan of King Dasharatha! Being slim and petty in stature with bent down back holding a stick, you do possess a typical sinister mind to fathom the evils of powerful men like a fallen flower some how withstanding the sweeps of forceful winds. While continuing to shower praises of Mandhara’s slim and crooked body frame with the fathomlessness of her evil brain power, Kaikeyi exclaimed: Asuraraja Shambara was an adept with thousand ‘maayaavi’ skills, but Mandhara was by birth aware far many more of them as they are replete with her ‘mati-smriti-buddhi-and raaja neeti’! As Kaikeyi was not fatigued by complementing negative and anticipatory futuristics of Kubja, and declared: *atra te pratimokṣyāmi mālām kubje hiraṇmayīm, abhiṣikte ca bhārata rāghave ca vanam gate/ jātyena ca suvarṇena suniṣṭaptena sundari, labdhārthā ca pratītā ca lepaṣyāmi te sthagu*/ Kubje! In the eventuality of Bharata’s Rajabhisheka and Rama’s ‘aranya vaasa’, I shall present to you a very heavy golden necklace studded with precious jewellery and invaluable and celestial silk dresses and once you are adorned with them you should be elevated to a high pedestal with bright maidens serving you with delicacies to eat and body parts to be softly massaged. As Kaikeyi was flying high on the skies of imagination, a very practical Manthara reminded Kaikeyi to transform her mood to the immediate task ahead and lie down with uncouth hair and dress soon. Kaikeyi then asserted : *Aham hi naivaastaraani na srajo nachandanam naanjana paana bhojanam, na kinchidicchhaami na cheha jeevanam nachodito gacchhati Raagavo vanam*/ In the event of Rama not being despatched to the far off forests, then I shall never sleep in comfort, nor wear normal dresses, nor adorn flowers, chandana, anjana, bhojana, and in such a miserable life even end up. So saying she entered a dark room on a miserable mat on the ground.

Sarga Ten

King Dasharatha seeks to pacify her beloved queen Kaikeyi

Aajñāpya tu mahārājo rāghavasyābhiṣecanam, priyārham priyam ākhyātum viveśāntahpuram vaś/ tām tatra patitām bhūmau śayānām atathocitām, pratapta iva duḥkhena so ’paśyaj jagatīpatiḥ/ sa vṛddhas taruṇīm bhāryām prāṇebhyo ’pi garīyasīm, apāpaḥ pāpasamkalpām dadarśa dharaṇītale/ kareṇum iva digdhena viddhām mṛgayuṇā vane, mahāgaja ivāranya snehāt parimamarśa tām/ parimṛśya ca pāṇibhyām abhisamtrastacetaṇaḥ, kāmī kamalapatrākṣīm uvāca vanitām idam/ na te ’ham abhijānāmi krodham ātmani samśritam, devi kenābhīyuktāsi kena vāsi vimānitā/ yad idam mama duḥkhāya śeṣe kalyāṇi pāmsuṣu, bhūmau śeṣe kimarthaṁ tvam mayi kalyāṇa cetasi, bhūtopahatacittēva mama cittapramāthinī/ santi me kuśalā vaidyā abhīyuktā ca sarvaśaḥ, sukhitām tvām kariṣyanti vyādhim ācakṣva bhāmini/ kasya vā te priyam kāryam kena vā vipriyam kṛtam, kaḥ priyam labhatām adya ko vā

sumahad apriyam/ avadhyo vadhyatām ko vā vadhyaḥ ko vā vimucyatām, daridraḥ ko bhavaty ādhyo dravyavān vāpy akimcanaḥ/ aham caiva madīyās ca sarve tava vaśānugāḥ, na te kaṁ cid abhiprāyaṁ vyāhantum aham utsahe/ ātmano jīvitenāpi brūhi yan manasecchasi, yāvad āvartate cakram tāvatī me vasum̐dharā/ tathoktā sā samāśvastā vaktukāmā tad apriyam, paripīḍayitum bhūyo bhartāram upacakrame/

King Dasharatha being busy head over heels with multifarious responsibilities had just concluded a meeting of his ministers and close advisers took a long breath and felt that indeed, he had yet not met his queens and alert with latest reports that all the preparations were nicely falling in place. He had first entered the interiors of Devi Kaikeyi foremost. In that palace, one would normally witness even at the entry the groups chirrup of parrots, peacocks and swans, soft and lilting sounds of music instruments, busy groups of servant maids competing each others with their dresses and ornaments, clean and elevated platforms surrounded by a variety of green and clean plants and fruit bearing trees, and full of rich varieties of eats and sweets being carried from one chamber to another and such divinely atmosphere. But Dasharatha found the surroundings inactive, dark, with deadly calmness and surprisingly lonely, quiet like a burial ground. Normally the servant maids should have announced the entry of the King himself and amid lot of fanfare, the Queen should have come out to welcome him and usher him in. He could not see her either in waiting halls, nor living rooms and not even in her bed room. Dasharatha wondered as what would have happened and remarked within himself that this was all very strange and unreal. He raised his voice in a commanding tone and shouted as to where was the ‘pratihaari’ or the informer woman. The latter ran forward to the King and with a covered face and bent feet mumbled: The queen ran towards the ‘Kopa griha’ or the corner home of anger and anguish with crestfallen face and unkempt dress and loosely hanging hair! Dasharatha paced fast along towards the dark corner room and witnessed the queen lying lonely crying away with swollen cheeks and sleepy eyes with incessant tears in her eyes often jerking up with heavy breathing on a naked mat with crumpled dress and unkempt hair. The King was old and the wife was in charming youth and always treated as of his own ‘praana’ the vital energy. The King was indeed flawless and Kaikeyi appeared to be decisive. He saw her as if a celestial woman fell on the bare earth! The King then bent down and touched her with both of his hands and having emboldened himself with the trepidation as to what might she want touched smoothly all over her legs and feet. *na te 'ham abhijānāmi krodham ātmani samśritam, devi kenābhiyuktāsi kena vāsi vimānitā/ yad idam mama duḥkhāya śeṣe kalyāṇi pāmsuṣu, bhūmau śeṣe kimarthaṁ tvaṁ mayi kalyāṇa cetasi, bhūtopahatacittveva mama cittapramāthinī/* Devi! is you anger against me! had somebody offended you! What could indeed be the mysterious cause that had pulled you down to to this ugly state.! You are a symbol of joy and ever happy personality spreading happiness around you. I could only guess that some deep affront ought to have shaken up your sensitive psyche and feelings. Please indicate whether any illness had brought you down to this stage as we have top class physicians who could be commanded at once. Devi! kindly cry not, as I am ready to impose any punishment to the offender. *Aham caiva madīyās ca sarve tava vaśānugāḥ, na te kaṁ cid abhiprāyaṁ vyāhantum aham utsahe/ ātmano jīvitenāpi brūhi yan manasecchasi, yāvad āvartate cakram tāvatī me vasum̐dharā/* A person of my stature Devi! is your ready servant and even if my own life might be at stake your wish should be fulfilled, but tell me clearly what precisely is tormenting your mind!

Sarga Eleven

Kaikeyi seeks to remind of Dasharatha’s promise of granting her of two boons at a battle as she saved him and demands Rama’s fourteen year ‘vana vaasa’ and Bharata’s Rajyabhisheka in return

Nāsmi viprakṛtā deva kena cin na vimānitā, abhiprāyas tu me kaś cit tam icchāmi tvayā kṛtam/ pratijñām pratijānīṣva yadi tvaṁ kartum icchasi, atha tad vyāhariṣyāmi yad abhiprārthitaṁ mayā/ evam uktas tayā rājā priyayā strīvaśam gataḥ, tām uvāca mahātejāḥ kaikeyīm īśadutsmitaḥ/ avalipte na jānāsi tvattaḥ priyataro mama, manujo manujavyāghrād rāmād anyo na vidyate/ bhadre hṛdayam apy etad anumṛśśyoddharasva me, etat samīkṣya kaikeyi brūhi yat sādhu manyase/ balam ātmani paśyantī na mām śankitum arhasi, kariṣyāmi tava prītiṁ sukṛtenāpi te śape/ tena vākyena samhṛṣṭā tam abhiprāyam ātmanaḥ, vyājahāra mahāghoram abhyāgatam ivāntakam/ yathākrameṇa śapasi varam mama dadāsi ca, tac chṛṇvantu trayastrimśad devāḥ sendrapurogamāḥ/ candrādityau nabhaś caiva grahā rātryahanī diśaḥ, jagac ca pṛthivī caiva sagandharvā sarākṣasā/ niśācarāṇi bhūtāni gṛheṣu gṛhadevatāḥ, yāni cānyāni bhūtāni jānīyur bhāṣitaṁ tava/ satyasaṁdho mahātejā dharmajñāḥ susamāhitaḥ, varam mama dadāty eṣa tan me śṛṇvantu devatāḥ/ iti devī maheṣvāsam parigṛhyābhiśasya ca, tataḥ param uvācedaṁ varadaṁ kāmamohitam/ varau yau me tvayā deva tadā dattau mahīpate, tau tāvad aham adyaiva vakṣyāmi śṛṇu me vacaḥ/ abhiṣeka samārambho rāghavasyopakalpitaḥ, anenaivābhiṣekena bharato me 'bhiṣicyatām/ nava pañca ca varṣāni daṇḍakāraṇyam āśritaḥ, cīrājīnajaṭādhārī rāmo bhavatu tāpasah/ bharato bhajatām adya yauvarājyam akantakam, adya caiva hi paśyeyam prayāntam rāghavam vane/

As King Dasharatha was literally inebriated with the arrows of Kama Deva and became too impulsive with passion for his dearest life partner, Devi Kaikeyi coolly with equanimity and even coquettishly and flirtatiously replied with reciprocative affection displayed by Dasharatha: *Nāsmi viprakṛtā deva kena cin na vimānitā, abhiprāyas tu me kaś cit tam icchāmi tvayā kṛtam/ pratijñām pratijānīṣva yadi tvaṁ kartum icchasi, atha tad vyāhariṣyāmi yad abhiprārthitaṁ mayā/* Deva! Neither any body has harmed me nor any body has insulted me. I have a deep desire which could be fulfilled only by your dear self! If you could fulfil that wish then you make a ‘pratigjna’ or truthful and firm promise. The King was then got diluted from his erstwhile anxiety and anguish and then lifted her lying on earth on a miserable mat and taking her on his thighs and embrace, and said *avalipte na jānāsi tvattaḥ priyataro mama, manujo manujavyāghrād rāmād anyo na vidyate/ bhadre hṛdayam apy etad anumṛśśyoddharasva me, etat samīkṣya kaikeyi brūhi yat sādhu manyase/ balam ātmani paśyantī na mām śankitum arhasi, kariṣyāmi tava prītiṁ sukṛtenāpi te śape/* Devi! Kaikeyi! Very truthfully affirming that on the entire earth there is none whatsoever dearest to me as you, excepting for Rama! I swear on Shri Rama that your desire should be fulfilled. You ought indeed be aware that without Shri Rama, I cannot be alive without seeing Shri Rama for even an hour! And on such Shri Rama now, I swear that your wish be fulfilled! Then Kaikeyi turned her mind to selfishness and concentrated her thoughts in favour of Bharath. She said: Raja! May Indra and all the Devas too hear your swearing now. Let Chandra, Surya, Aakash, Planets, Directions, Universe, Earth, Gandharva, Rakshasaas too bear witness to what the King had just sworn about. Then she stated: Maharaja! Do you recall that at the time of your battle with Shambara in dandakaranya when I accompanied you by keeping awake up day and night and at a crucial moment you were saved by me and in turn you bestowed two valuable boons to me which I stated that I would avail of them at a time of my choice. In case you are not prepared to grant those two boons now, then I would have to perform my ‘praana tyaaga’. This was how the King was being ensnared cleverly from various angles. She thus said that she would now like to avail the two boons and finally expressed: Abhiṣeka .samārambho rāghavasyopakalpitaḥ, anenaivābhiṣekena bharato me 'bhiṣicyatām/ nava pañca ca varṣāni dandakāraṇyam āśritaḥ, cīrājīnajaṭādhārī rāmo bhavatu tāpasah/ bharato bhajatām adya yauvarājyam akantakam, adya caiva hi paśyeyam prayāntam rāghavam vane/ Deva! Prithvi natha! My first boon would be that what all preparations have been performed for Rama Pattabhishaka be turned to Bharata Pattabhisheka. The second boon should be : Nava pancha cha varshaani dandakaaranya - maashritah, cheeraajinadharo dheero Ramo bhavatu taapasah, Bharato bhajataamadya youvarajya - makantakam/ Eva me paramah kaamo dattameva varam vrine, adya chaivahi pashyantam Raghavam vave/ Dheera swabhava Shri Rama be donned in deer skin as a tapasvi and be despatched to

dandakaaranya for fourteen years and Bhrata be blessed as the next king. These are my two boons which may be kindly granted to me by you if you please!.

Sarga Twelve

Dasharatha's remorse at Kaikeyi's undue demands even having admitted the boons and pleads with Kaikeyi not to insist but in vain

Tataḥ śrutvā mahārāja kaikeyyā dāruṇam vacaḥ, vyathito vilavaś caiva vyāghrīm dṛṣṭvā yathā mṛgaḥ/ asaṁvṛtāyām āsīno jagatyām dīrgham ucchvasaṁ, aho dhig iti sāmarṣo vācam uktvā narādhipaḥ, moham āpedivān bhūyaḥ śokopahatacetaṇaḥ/ cireṇa tu nṛpaḥ saṁjñām pratilabhya suduḥkhiṭaḥ, kaikeyīm abravīt kruddhaḥ pradahaṁn iva cakṣuṣā/ nṛśaṁse duṣṭacāritre kulasyāsya vināśini, kim kṛtaṁ tava rāmeṇa pāpe pāpaṁ mayāpi vā/ sadā te janānī tulyām vṛttim vahati rāghavaḥ, tasyaiva tvam anarthāya kimnimitam ihodyatā/ tvam mayātmavināśāya bhavanaṁ svam praveśitā, avijñānān nṛpasutā vyālī tīkṣṇaviśā yathā/ jīvaloko yadā sarvo rāmasyeha guṇastavam, aparādhaṁ kam uddīśya tyakṣyāmīṣtam ahaṁ sutam/ kausalyām vā sumitrām vā tyajeyam api vā śriyam, jīvitam vātmano rāmaṁ na tv eva piṭṛvatsalam/parā bhavati me prītir dṛṣṭvā tanayam agrajam, apaśyatas tu me rāmaṁ naṣṭā bhavati cetanā/ tiṣṭhet loko vinā sūryaṁ sasyaṁ vā salilam vinā, na tu rāmaṁ vinā dehe tiṣṭhet tu mama jīvitam/ tad alaṁ tyajyatām eṣa niścayaḥ pāpaniścaye, api te caraṇau mūrdhnā spṛśāmy eṣa prasīda me/ bhūmipālo vilapann anāthavat; striyā gṛhīto dṛghaye 'timātratā papāta devyāś caraṇau prasāritāv; ubhāv asaṁspṛśya yathāturas tathā/

As Kaikeyi conveyed her frightful statement likewise, Dasharatha was stunned and shoked to the core as momentarily lost his balance of mind. He felt that he was visioning a bad dream or was it an illusion! Her words were piercing into his ears and right into his heart. He felt that a tiger was suddenly caged became helpless. He was merely able to state: ‘aho dhikkaar! what a sudden turn of evens and swooned with senselessness. After lapse of time he recovered somewhat and shouted loud with rage and feeble vulnerability : ‘ Oh heartless, malicious and vintictive woman! You were born to destroy and the outstanding tradition of this Kingdom. What wickedness and hatred that you have had for Shri Rama! He has had always worshipped you even more than his own mother! It looks that you had entered into this great family only like a coiled and poisoned serpent woman only to uproot and devastate it. The entire universe esteems Rama for his unimaginable qualities. I could disown Koushalya and even Sumitra, but never Rama Lakshmanas. If I do not find Rama even for a minute, I lose my mental balance. Even in the absence of Sun my universe might survive and agricultural fields might still yield crops without water but I could never survive without Rama! May I prostrate to you by falling my head at your feet, but oh! sinful female, do not very kindly be so spiteful and malicious in this manner! I am indeed prepared to let Bharat be adorned with Rajyabhisheka if that satisfies your ego and meanness ! Do you ever recall that you were never tired of declaring in the public that your eldest son was Rama but not Bharata! How come your mentality had transformed mean and vicious overnight! *Tasya dharmatmano Devi vane vaasam yashasvinah, katham rochase bheeru nava varshani pancha cha/ Atyanta sukumaarasya tasya dharme kritaatanah, katham rochayase vaasamaranya brhusa daarune!* Devi! How could you yourself being a kind woman could suggest and feel for yourself that Rama should be despatched for jungle life for fourteen long years! Is not your heart a stone! *Satyena lokaan jayati dvijan daanena Raghavah, gurucchshrushayaa veero dhanushaa yudhi shaatravaan/ Satyam daanam tapasyaago mitrataa shochamaarjavam, Vidyaa gurushushrushaa dhruvaanyetaani Ragave/* Shri Rama is a purusha simha who cleans up the hearts of every being who get readily attracted to him. Owing to his benign temper, he readily attracts the worlds, and his charitable disposition wins over dwijas, his ready service wins over the gurus, and his excellence in archery frightens his opponents. Satya-daana-tapa-tyaga-mitrata-pavitrata-saralata, vidya and guru shushrusha or truthfulness, charity, meditation, affability, purity of mind and action, softness, knowledge and service to Gurus are the hallmarks of his personality! Kaikeyi! Do realise that I am aged awaiting the termination of my life and my condition is terribly miserable. Please be kind

to me!’ Having heard all these entreaties by her husband, Kaikeyi replied: Raja! Having given the boons, you appear to be retracing steadfast promises and make belief lame excuses. Your ‘pratignas’ or assertive declarations do not become of your stature and family background. Do you not recall that your ancestor Emperor named **Shaibya** intervened in the fight of an innocent pigeon and an eagle by weighing that much of meat of the pigeon and offered it from his own body! Similarly, King **Alarka** donated his own eyes to a blind brahmana boy and deserved higher lokas!

[Vishleshanas about Kings Shiabya and Alarka:

King Shibya, the most illustrious the son Ushinara, of Bhoja King was the husband of Parishthana the daughter of King Yayati. King Shaibya conquered the entire world single handed and performed several Ashvamedha Yagnas and was an outstanding personality of charity. He was famed to have willingly offered his own flesh by weighing the equal quantity of his own flesh but an innocent pigeon caught by weighing that much quantity of its raw meat from his own flesh. At the conclusion of this kind of charity never heard of in the past or for all times to come, the pigeon and the hawk revealed themselves as Agni Deva and Devendra who were testing the extent to which the King could reach in his disposition of charity. They blessed the king to reach swarga with his own mutilated body. Yet another instance of Shibya’s earlier life was that he never hesitated to kill his own son to satisfy the demand of a brahmana of great virtue as the son committed a ‘maha pataka’ of stealing. Dharma Raja in the form of the Brahmana who actually tempted the boy for stealing restored the boy’s life once again. Yet in another context, the Chakravarti was stated to have encountered the ‘Atma’ of King Yayati after the latter’s death and facilitated it to restore it back to swarga!

King Alarka according to Markandeya Purana was the son of King Ritudhwaj crowned him early duu to ond age. At the time of crowning, queen Madalasa presented him a ring and said - 'O son! This ring contains a note which will teach you on how a king should administer the kingdom.' Saying this, Madalasa blessed Alarka and left the palace with her husband Ritudhwaj to spend their lives in the forest. After his accession to the throne, King Alarka ruled justly. In due course of time, he got many sons. He followed the dictates of Dharma, Arth and Kama while ruling his kingdom. In spite of enjoying all the luxuries, Alarka still could not experience bliss and felt as if he was missing something in his life. Very soon, Subahu came to learn about the royal luxuries of his brother Alarka and got tempted to enjoy the same luxuries. To attain his objective, Subahu took the help of the king of Kashi. The king of Kashi sent an envoy to Alarka with a message to give the kingdom to Subahu, which Alarka refused. Instead, he sent a reply that the request must be made by Subahu himself. 'I will not give him my kingdom out of fear of war,' said Alarka. But Subahu did not pay heed and with the help of the king of Kashi, launched a massive attack on his kingdom and conquered it. Now Alarka's days of sorrow had begun. He then remembered the ring presented by his mother Madalasa. He opened the ring and found a letter in it. The letter said- 'When you lose your everything, give up the company of your present advisors and join the company of learned sages.' This message made Alarka to pine for the company of the learned sages. Very soon, he went to the refuge of Dattatreya and requested him to remove his miseries. Dattatreya assured him of removing his miseries at once but before doing that, he wanted to know the reasons for his miseries. Alarka said- 'I do not long for pleasures but my elder brother wants to grab my kingdom.' Markandeya Purana further states: King Alarka approached Mahatma Dattatreya as a ‘Sharanardhi’ (refuge) and prayed to him to guide him and wipe out his distress. Dattatreya replied that the King was indeed truthful as he made a confession that he was suffering from anguish. He then asked Alarka to carry out an introspection as to who was he? What kind of grief did he suffer from? King Alarka tried to figure out the inter-relationship of the Soul and the three kinds of basic problems of humanity viz. Adhi-Bhoutika, Adhyatmika and Adhi Daivika, ie the troubles related to physical, internal and God-made categories. He reasoned that he was not a component of ‘Panchabhutas’-Prithivi (Earth), ‘Aapas’ (Water), ‘Tejas’(Fire), ‘Vayu’ (Wind) and ‘Aakash’ (Sky), but has the sensibilities related to these Entities. Even if he were not the ‘Sharir’ (Physique), he however had the independent feelings that led to the complexes of Inferiority

or Superior feelings. Indeed, it would be essential to discard those kinds of feelings by an enlightened Gyani. After all, when a person is aware that essentially a human body is not eternal, then why should there be the feelings of happiness or otherwise; especially when there was a realisation that these feelings were made by the mind but not the inner soul which was free from such illusive fears. Alarka thus analysed the current situation arising out of the state of his mind, since he was not the body, nor the mind, and not even his superficial consciousness. Thus analysed, the King Alarka convinced himself that there was no harm done if his elder brother Subahu desired to take over Kingship, then there was no need for resisting the idea! Also, desire and attachment propelled by ego and prestige are the root causes of happiness or grief. Mahatma Dattatreya stated: *Ahami tyam kurotpanno mameti skandhavaanmahaan, Gruhakshetroccha shakhaascha putradaaraadi pallavah/ Dhanadhanya maha patro naikakaala pravardhitah, Punyaapunyaagra pushpascha Sukha dukkha maaphalah* ('Ahamkaar' or sense of self is the seed which produces a huge tree of 'Agyaan' or Ignorance; 'Mamatva' or selfishness is the trunk of the tree; Gruha (Abode) and Kshetra (Farm lands) are the high and large branches; wife and children are the tender leaves; 'dhana dhanya' or money and foodgrains viz. wealth are the enormous leaves; 'Punyaapunya' (Fruits of noble deeds or sins) constitute the major flowers and 'Sukha Duhkkas' or delight and misery are the end results.) How could those human beings, who are tired of 'Samsar' (Life and Family matters) and seek shelter under the 'Agyan' Tree which is rooted in the lack of correct knowledge or awareness, ever consider to attain Salvation? Only those noble persons who possess a sharp axe named 'Vidya' (Knowledge) could pull down the mammoth tree of ignorance and egocentricity with the active help of the heavy rocks of 'Satsanga'! King Alarka expressed his gratitude to Mahatma Dattatreya that he gave him the solace in clearing his conscience about the eventuality of stepping down from his throne in favour of his brother Subahu. But his doubt in his mind continued to waver and was not able to detach from natural strings. He desired to learn the art of disconnecting human psyche from Paramatma, so that there would not be a recurrence of 'Punarjanma' (Rebirth). Dattatreya replied: *Yogecha shaktividusham yena shreyah param bhavet, Muktiyogaatatha yogah samyakjnaa mahipatheey /Sangaddoshod bhavah dukkha mamatwasakta chetasamam/* (Yogis are able to distinguish 'Gyan' from 'Agyan' and that is called 'Mukti'; manifestation of Parabrahma takes place despite the natural features of the illusory world. From Yoga emerges 'Moksha', 'Samyak Gyan' (detailed analysis) comes from Yoga, 'Dukkha' (Sorrow) springs from Gyan; 'Mamata' (Sense of Belonging) comes from 'Dukkha'. Further, Selflessness demolishes 'Mamata' and results in 'Viragya'; this is the state suitable for Yoga or configuration of the Self with the Super Force.]

Sarga Twelve continued:

Kaikeyi states *Aham hi vishamadyaiva peetvaa tavaagratah, pashyante marishyaami Ramo yadya abhishicyate/* If Rama's abhisheka were performed, I will instantly take to poison. King Dasaratha stated: Kaikeyi! Do you understand that in case Rama declines your own personal instruction of his having to leave for the forests, then too he would carry out your instruction and such is the magnanimity of Rama! But what indeed would follow be your widowhood and with none else to look for in my absence and of Rama, the treatment to be meted out to you as a tyrant is unimaginable! Kaikeyi! then be happy and greatly contented without me, Koushalya and Sumitra! Raja Kumati! It is my unimaginable misfortune that you had entered into our lives. How indeed could you ever horrible words of Bharata's rajyabhisheka and Rama's 'vana vaasa'! This gives me a repulsion on womanhood as you could be so extremely selfish, but the entirety of womanhood is distinctive but the mother of Bharata is exceptional. Here is an example of a son being drowned in miseries and a father being ready to rid of the son. Likewise the woman whom the husband is ravished about but the woman desires to kill the husband. Whenever Rama with bright clothing and masculine jewellery is visualised by me, I get restored my own days of youth. Let the universe be without Surya, let not Indra the vajradhari not bestow rains on earth, but if Rama were to be safe then my life gets fortified. Arre! Kaikeyi! You are my destroyer and the worst enemy, donning the form of my death; how indeed could I got ensnared to a 'nagin', a serpent woman! As

you are threatening me with death like this, how come your teeth be intact without breaking into thousand pieces ! I prostrate to you in disgust and desperation, Kaikeyi! be kind to me!

Sarga Thirteen

Dasharatha's intense cryings and persistent pleadings with Kaikeyi but she argued in the name of dharma citing the tradition of truthfulness of Ikshvaku ancestors

*Atadarham mahārājam śayānam atathocitam, yayātim iva puṇyānte devalokāt paricyutam/ anartharūpā
siddhārthā abhītā bhayadarśinī, punar ākārayām āsa tam eva varam aṅganā/ tvam katthase mahārāja
satyavādī dṛḍhavrataḥ, mama cemaṁ varam kasmād vidhārayitum icchasi/ evam uktas tu kaikeyyā rājā
daśarathas tadā, pratyuvāca tataḥ kruddho muhūrtaṁ vihvalann iva/ mṛte mayi gate rāme vanam
manujapumgave, hantānārye mamāmitre rāmaḥ pravrajīto vanam/ yadi satyam bravīmy etat tad asatyam
bhaviṣyati, akīrtir atulā loke dhruvam paribhavaś ca me/ tathā vilapatas tasya paribhramitacetasaḥ,
astam abhyagamat sūryo rajanī cābhavartata/ sa triyāmā tathārtasya candramaṇḍalamāṇḍitā/, rājño
vilapamānasya na vyabhāsata śarvarī/ tathaivoṣṇam viniḥśvasya vṛddho daśaratho nṛpaḥ
vilāpārtavad duḥkham gaganāsaktalocanaḥ/ na prabhātam tvayecchāmi mayāyam racito 'ñjalih, atha
vā gamyatām śīghram nāham icchāmi nirghṛṇām, nṛśamsām kaikeyīm draṣṭum yatkrte vyanam mahat
evam uktvā tato rājā kaikeyīm samyatāñjaliḥ, prasādayām āsa punaḥ kaikeyīm cedam abravīt/
sādhuvṛttasya dīnasya tvadgatasya gatāyusaḥ, prasādaḥ kriyatām devi bhadre rājño viśeṣataḥ/ sūnyena
khalu suśroṇi mayedaṁ samudāhṛtam, kuru sādhu prasādam me bāle saḥṛdayā hy asi/ viśuddhabhāvasya
hi duṣṭabhāvā; tāmrekaṣaṇasyāśrukalasya rājñah, śrutvā vicitraṁ karuṇam vilāpam; bhartur nṛśamsā na
cakāra vākyam/ tataḥ sa rājā punar eva mūrchitah; priyām atuṣṭām pratikūla -bhāṣiṇīm, samikṣya
putrasya vivāsanam prati; kṣītau viśamjño nipapāta duḥkhitah/*

Maharaja Dasharatha the greatest hero of the times was literally down to earth crawling in the most miserable condition crestfallen at the feet of Kaikeyi! He was in the same condition as his his ancestor Chakravarti Yayati of Ikshvaku lineage who was turned down from Deva Loka after his death since the positive balance of his virtue and viciousness was of enormous negativity due to his uncouth reliance on charming but vicious womanhood.

[Visleshana on Yayati:

Yayati, the son of Nahusha and his wife Viraja, was a famed Emperor who defeated all the Kings of the World and married Devayani the daughter of Asura Guru Shukracharya, besides Sharmishtha the daughter of Vishvaparya, a Rakshasa King. Indra was pleased to gift Yayati a Divine Chariot with seven powerful horses with which he traversed the world and divided his Empire into seven divisions to distribute it among five of his sons. A Maharshi gave a boon that if any of his sons could agree to exchange their youth to his old age then he could secure a fresh lease of youth. His eldest son **Yadu** from Devayani refused and so did others excepting Sharmishtha's son **Puru** who readily agreed. Yayati took over Puru's youth and enabled him travel around to unravel earthly pleasures for long. But finally returned discovering that the ephemeral joys of the world were endless like Agni in a Homa kunda assuming larger and larger proportions as long as ghee is served and no human would be satisfied with food, gold, ornaments or women. By so realising, he returned his youth to Puru and took to Vanaprastha or retirement. That was how he slipped down from the experiences of swarga but descended down into the company of 'Saadhu Pungavas' or of Groups of Virtue and Enlightenment!]

Kaikeyi too in her inner consciousness was concerned that her public support and even his own son Bharata's reaction were of lurking concerns , sought to prolong the conversation with Dasharata and said: Maha Raja! you had been all the time posing to me that you had been a 'satyavaadi' and 'dhriddha pratigjna'but at the opportune time seeking excuses of escapism! This jibe of Kaikeyi led Dasharatha

from the state of entreating and seeking to convince her made him suddenly flare up and shouted on her as follows: Oh, low class woman! You are my enemy! As Rama would leave for forests and I would die, then be happy forever! In the heaven too, Devas would be enquiring me of Rama's welfare and which reply could I give them! Should I answer that Rama was despatched by you to forests by threatening my life and hence could not hold myself and reached here! Or should I tell Devas that out of my infatuation for Kaikeyi I packed Rama for forest life! If I state like that then the earlier statement would be contradictory. How could indeed ask Rama the shuraveera-vidvan to get lost in the forests! How could Rama the blue lotus eyed hero with broad shouldered invincibility be punished to go suffer the forest life for no fault of his! Even with full awareness that a person who sacrifices anything for the happiness of fellow beings be made unhappy with a wretched life for fourteen long years and rejoice myself! Oh, sinful stone hearted woman named Kaikeyi! do you realise that on entire earth, your name would be blackened with disgrace and shamefulness forever! As Dasharatha was haughtily reprimanding Kaikeyi in disgust and desperation thus, sunset was closing in and stars on the sky commenced twinkling; he looked at the sky and addressed it: 'Raatri Deva with the starry sky! I prostrate to you not to speed up the next morning kindly with my folded hands! If you do not delay and prolong the night, then I should have to witness the deadly and sinful face of Kaikeyi in the day light! Then he addressed Kaikeyi again: 'Kalyanamayi Devi! I am the helpless, death nearing King of this Country named Dasharatha seeking your mercy! I made a public announcement about Rama's pattabhisheka early morning tomorrow; please make me not a butt of joke and of shame! Be kind to me! If you allow Rama to be the king, you should be happy for ever and ever. Maha Devi! Sumukhi! Sulochani! This proposal is doubtless rejoicing merriment to me, to Rama, to the public, to acharyas, and even to Bharata; as such let this be fulfilled!

Sarga Fourteen

Kaikeyi's stubbornness to relent - Vashishta Maharshis intervention fails and Charioteer Sumanra asked Rama's arrival at the King's Palace

Putrasokārditam pāpā visamjñam patitam bhuvī, viveṣṭamānam udīkṣya saikṣvākam idam abravīt/ pāpam kṛtveva kim idam mama saṁśrutya saṁśravam, śeṣe kṣititale sannah sthityām sthātum tvam arhasi/ āhuḥ satyam hi paramam dharmam dharmavido janāḥ, satyam āśritya hi mayā tvaṁ ca dharmam pracoditaḥ/ saṁśrutya śaibyāḥ śyenāya svām tanuṁ jagatīpatiḥ, pradāya pakṣiṇo rājañ jagāma gatim uttamām/ tatha hy alarkas tejasvī brāhmaṇe vedapārage, yācamāne svake netre uddhṛtyāvimanā dadau/ saritām tu patiḥ svalpām maryādām satyam anvitaḥ, satyānurodhāt samaye velām khām nātivartate/ samayam ca mamāryemaṁ yadi tvaṁ na kariṣyasi, agratas te parityaktā parityakṣyāmi jīvitam/ evam pracodito rājā kaikeyyā nirviśaṅkayā, nāsakat pāsam unmoktum balir indrakṛtam yathā/ udbhrāntaḥḥdayaś cāpi vivarṇavanado 'bhavat, sa dhuryo vai parispondan yugacakrāntaram yathā/ vihvalābhyām ca netrābhyām apaśyann iva bhūmipaḥ, kṛcchrad dhairyeṇa saṁstabhya kaikeyīm idam abravīt/ yas te mantrakṛtaḥ pāñir agnau pāpe mayā dhṛtaḥ, tam tyajāmi svajam caiva tava putram saha tvayā/ tataḥ pāpasamācārā kaikeyī pārthivam punaḥ, uvāca paruṣam vākyam vākyajñā roṣamūrchitā/ kim idam bhāṣase rājan vākyam gararujopamam, ānāyayitum akliṣṭam putram rāmam ihārhasi/ sthāpya rāje mama sutaṁ kṛtvā rāmam vanecaram, niḥsapatnām ca mām kṛtvā kṛtakṛtyo bhaviṣyasi/ sa nunna iva tīkṣṇa pratodena hayottamaḥ, rājā pradocito 'bhīkṣṇam kaikeyīm idam abravīt/ dharmabandhena baddho 'smi naṣṭā ca mama cetanā, jyeṣṭham putram priyam rāmam draṣṭum icchāmi dhārmikam/ iti rājño vacaḥ śrutvā kaikeyī tadanantaram, svayam evābravīt sūtam gaccha tvaṁ rāmam ānaya/ tataḥ sa rājā tam sūtam sannaharṣaḥ sutaṁ prati, śokāraktekṣaṇaḥ śrīmān udvīkṣyovāca dhārmikaḥ/ sumantraḥ karuṇam śrutvā dṛṣṭvā dīnam ca pārthivam, pragṛhītāñjaliḥ kim cū tasmād deśād apākraman/ yadā vaktum svayam dainyān na śasāka mahīpatiḥ, tadā sumantram mantrajñā kaikeyī pratyuvāca ha/ sumantra rāmam draṣṭyāmi śīghram ānaya sundaram, sa manyamānaḥ kalyāṇam ḥdayena nananda ca/ sumantraś cintayām āsa tvaritam coditas tayā, vyaktam rāmo 'bhīṣekārtham ihāyāsyati dharmavit, iti sūto matim kṛtvā harṣeṇa mahatā punaḥ, nirjagāma mahātejā rāghavasya didṛkṣayā/ tataḥ purastāt

sahasā vinirgato; mahīpatīn dvāragatān vilokayan, dadarśa paurān vividhān mahādhanān; upasthitān dvāram upetya viṣṭhitān/

As King was disheartened and lying on the ground with disillusionment, Kaikeyi resumed her tirading harangue: Maharaja! What all you had granted me as your two boons to me are now being socisited now and this would not behove of you to fall on ground like this as this is neither a gentleman’s way of conduct nor a truthful fulfillment of a promise. May I once again recall the golden examples of Shiblya and Alarka that I had given you and how they had finally achieved ‘sadgati’ subsequently. The Great Oceans of force and fury too never cross the boundaries prescribed on earth by vidhata. *Satyam sananuvartasva yadi dharme dhrutaa matih, sa varah saphalo mestu varado hyaasi sattama/* Truthfulness is of Pranava swarupa embedded into dharma; satya is indestructible and from that truthfulness one secures the Parabrahmatva! Arya! In case you are still unable to fulfil my justified desires as you promised than I would have no other option but to resort to ‘atma tyaga’. *Evam pracodito rājā kaikeyyā nirviśaṅkayā, nāśakat pāsam unmoktuṁ balir indrakṛtaṁ yathā/ udbhrāntahṛdayaś cāpi vivarṇavanado ’bhavat, sa dhuryo vai parispendan yugacakrāntaram yathā/* This was how Kaikeyi tied up underlining Dasharath’s appeal to truthfulness like Bali Chakravarti could not wriggle out from his promise of donating a mere three feet area for Vamana’s tapasya!

[Vishleshana on Vamanavatara was detailed in Essence of Vaalmiki Bala Ramayana but some excerpts are given for ready reference: Having been trained in all these disciplines of Dharma, Vamana Deva as a brahmachari had one fine morning left for the Yagna Shaala of Bali Chakravarti as the latter was executing a Sacred Yagna while carrying his mat, danda /stick, chhatra / umbrella and kamandulu / water vessel. Danava Guru Shukracharya was aware that Vishnu Deva in the form of Vamana Murti was arriving at the Yagna and briefed Bali Chakravarti to be extremely careful as Vishnu was a sauve and highly talented person to put words in the mouths of the opponents. The Guru reminded Chakravarti that the latter denied the age-old practice of rights to yagna’s shares to Devataas and that Vamana Murti might as well ask for the revival of the practice but those shares were now enjoying by Danava Chiefs. Bali replied to Danava Guru that in case Vishnu in the incarnation of Vamana Murti came and requested for any thing then how could a King say ‘no’ to it! Bali told the Danava Guru: *Brahman katha -maham bruyaamanyapi hi yachitah, Naastiti kim Devasya Samsaarasyaaghahaarinah/ Vratopa-vaasairvividhairyah Prabhurgrunhatey Harih, Sa mey vakshyati deheeti Govindah kimato -dhikam? Naasteeti yanmayanoktamanyeshaamapi yaachataam, Vakshyaami kathamaaya -tey tadadya chaamarechutey/Shlaagha eva hi veeraanam Daanaacchaapt samaagamah, Na badhaakaari yadyaanam tadanga Balavat smrutam/* (Brahmanaachaarya! How could I deny any body requesting me for a favour! And if that Supreme Deva asked me for a charity, then what else would be the alternative! While Parameswara received the fruits of Vrataas, Upavaasaas, and so on from one and all, and if that Parameswara himself asked a boon from me, could there be a greater fortune to me! When even an ordinary person approached me for a favour, then too that could not be denied by a King; then when Narayana himself asked for it, could such an opportunity presented itself, this chance could never indeed be missed. Even if there are difficulties in executing a charity, the value of charity would get multiplied and ‘Veera purushaas’ would never deter from performing the deed) Having said the above, Bali asked Shukraachaarya: *Yatagjnaatwaa Munisreshtha! Daanavighna karenamey, Naiva Bhavyam Jagannaathey Govidey samupastithey!* (By understanding the above, Munisreshtha! Please do not create ‘Daana Vighnaas’ or hurdles in the execution of the Charity!). As Vamana Deva arrived at the Yagna shaala, Bali welcomed him, offered ‘Arghya’, ‘Aasana’, Puja and offered him limitless gold, jewellery, elephants, horses, cows, women, clothes, bunches of villages or townships or whatever would be his wish! Vamana Deva replied smilingly: *Mamagnisharanaarthaaya dehi Rajan Padatrayam, Suvarnagraamaratnaadi tadarthibhyah pradeeyataam/* (Raja! Please provide to me three feet of land to enable me to set up an Agni- Shaala). Bali said that after all three feet would be nothing as he could ask for a lakh of feet which could be given away, but Vamana Deva replied that he was indeed satisfied with that much of Bhumi and

if the King were to offer more he might as well provide to the other needy! Bali Chakravarti readily agreed not understanding the implication and as the deed of Daana was being executed and Vamana Deva extended his hand to the King and expanded his Vamana Rupa gradually immediately: *Sarva Devamayam rupam darshayaamaasa tatksanaat/ Chandra Suryoutu nayaney dyouh shirascharanou Kshitih, Paadaangulyah Pishaachaastu Hastaangulya –scha Gruhakaah/ Vishvedevaascha jaanusthaa janghey Saadhyah Surottamaah, Yakshaa naksheshu sambhuta rekhaapsaraastathaa/ Drushtirrukshaanya seshaani keshaah Suryamshvah Prabhoh, Taaraka romakupaani romeshu cha Maharshayah/ Baahavo vidishatasya Dishaah Shrotrey Mahatmanah, Ashvinou Shraavaney tasya naasaa Vayurmahaatmanah/ Prasadey Chandramaa Devo Mano Dharmah samaashritah, Satyasyaabhavad Vaani Jihvaa Devi Saraswati/ Greevaarditirdeva mataa Vidyaastadvalayastathaa, Swargadwaaramabhunmaitrah twashtaa Pushaa cha vai bhruvow/ Mukhe Vaishvaanarschaascha vrushanou tu Prajaapatih, Hridayamcha Param Brahma Pumstvam vai Kashapo Munih/ Prushthesya Vasavo Devaa Marutah Sarva saandhishu, Vakshasthaley tathaa Rudro Dharryachaasya Mahaarnavah/ Udarey chaasya Gandharvaa Marutascha Mahaabalaah, Lakshmirmedhaa Dhritih Kaantih Sarv Vidyaascha vai Katih/ Sarvajyoteesham Yaaneeha Tapascha Paramam mahat, Tasya Devaadhi Devasya tejah prodbhutamuttamam/ Tanou Kukshishu Vedaascha jaanuni cha Mahaamakhaah, Ishtayah pashavaschaasya Dwujanaam cheshtitaanicha/ Tasya Devamayam rupam drushtaa Vishnormahaatmanah, Upasarpanti tey Daityaah patangaa iva paavaakam/ Chakshurastu Mahaa Daityaah Paadaangushtham gruheetavaan, Dantaabhyaam tasya vai greevaa mangushtheynaahana dharih/ Prathamya Sarvaansuraan Paadahastathalairvibhuh, Krutwaa Rupam Mahaakaayam Samjahaaraashu Modineem/ Tasya Vikramato Bhumim Chandraadityaou stanaantarey, Nabho Vikramamaanasya sakthidesho stitathaarvibhou/Param Vikramaanasya jaanumuley Prabhaakarou, Vishnoraastaam sthitasyaitow Devapaalana jkarmani/ Jitwaa Lokatrayam taamscha hatwaachaasura pungavaan, Purandaraaya Trailokyam dadou Vishnururukramah/*

(Instantly, Vamana Murti displayed his Virat Swarupa: Chandra and Surya were his two Eyes, Shy was his head, Prithvi his feet, Pishachaas were his foot-fingers, Gruhyakaas were his hand fingers, Vishwa Deva Ganaas were in his jaanus /knees, Sadhyas were his janghaas, Yakshaas were his nails, Apsarsaas were his palm lines, Nakshatras were his Eye sight, Surya kiranas were his hairs, Stars were his body hairs, Maharshiganaas were in the hair roots, Vidishas were his hands, Dishaas were his ears, Ashwini Kumars were his faculty of hearing, Vayu was his nose, Chandra Deva was his joking faculty, Dharma Deva was his thinking capacity, Satya was his voice and Saraswati was his tongue, Deva Mata Aditi was his neck, Vidya was his valiyaas or long poles; Pushas were his eye brows, Swarga dwar was his anus, Vaishvanara his face, Prajapati his vrushanaas, Param Brahma was his heart, Kashyapa Muni was his Pumstwa, Vasu Devata was his back, Marutganaas were his Sandhis, Rudra was his Vakshasthala, Mahaarnavaa was his Dhairyaa, Gangharvas were in his stomach; Lakshmi, Medha, Dhriti, Kaanti and all Vidyaas were in his ‘Kati Pradesha’; the luster and radiance in the total Universe as also the Tapo teja or the power of meditation was the reflection of the magnificence of Natayana; Vedas and Scriptures and the huge Yagnaas and the Sacred Deeds of the Virtuous like Maharshis and Brahmanas were all inside in his ‘kukshi’ or belly. On viewing the Paramatma’s ‘Virat Swarupa’, the so called ‘Mahaasuraas’ referred to earlier in ignorance by Chakravarti Bali before Prahlada’s curse to him got burnt off like flies before a gigantic out break of Fire! Having thus occupied the Universe in totality including the sub-terrain Sapta Paatalaas, Vamana Deva stated that since Bali took the water in his hand and donated the THREE FEET of Land, and blessed him to be the King of the Sapta Paatalaas and granted him long life till the end of Manvantara of the on-going Vaisawata Manu. He also blessed Bali that all the ‘Homa Phalas’ at the time of Shraddhas to be performed even by Brahmanas, besides incomplete and defective Vratas, Agni Kaaryaas without ghee, and Kusha grass roots as also the daanas without detachment would belong to Bali and his followers.]

The Sarga is continued: Dashratha’s face was like that of an ox irked and tightly tied between two strong wooden poles and his usual brightness of face got faded off pale and his heart beat got speeded up badly. With shaken up face as his usual kingly courage dimmed away, he had with tormented tone uttered

the vedic verse of homage to Agni with prostration stating : *Saashtaangam te grihnaami soubhagatvaaya hastam/* and so on and mumbled holding Kaikeyi's both hands: 'Paapini! I am hereby sacrificing my own son of glory!' Then he continued: the night is over and as soon as Surya Deva rises, I shall no doubt declare likewise, but kindly do me the favor of allowing Rama to 'offer jalanjali' after my death!

Recently I made the public announcement with pride about Rama's pattabhisheka but please not insist of a similar announcement openly with my head hanging down with shame. Kaikeyi then said haughtily: Raja! call for Rama now and initiate arrangements for Bharata to become the next King soon. King too desired to see Rama. Meanwhile as the early hours of the morning chimed, Ayodhya got extremely busy with the Rajyabhisheka, as flags were furled afresh, public got assembled gradually on high roads, street corners and market places, shops and temples got busy and a typical atmosphere of joviality and excitement got elated. Vasishta Maharshi in a great sense of fulfillment accompanied by other Rishis and groups of Vedic Panditas approached Sumanta and instructed him to convey to the King that he had arrived. All types of seeds, sugandhas, honey, ratnas, fresh curds, plentiful milk, kushas, fruits, eight beautiful kanyas, elephants, white horses of excellent nativity, khadga-dhanush-palkis- chhatra- chamara- well fed and huge bulls, simhasanas, vyaghra charmas, suvarna malas, white and coloured robes, herds of white cows, acharyas, brahmana panditas, and the cream citizens of Ayodhya were getting in place rapidly all awaiting the arrival of Pushya Nakshatra soon enough. As per Vasishta's instruction, Sumantu entered King Dasharatha's palace to hurry up the King as Vasishta was already awaiting his arrival. King's erstwhile evening instructions not to allow any visitor was ignored and Sumantu started forcing his way to the King's interior chamber and initiated his praises aloud from a distance just as Maathali the celestial charioteer would to Devendra! He eulogised Dasharatha and requested him to get ready soon as the entire Rajya Sabha pioneered by Vasishta was awaiting his most auspicious arrival. The more that Sumantu was showering praises on Dasharatha, the worse that Dasharatha was sinking in his spirits. As he was not responding at all, Sumantu heard the voice of Devi Kaikeyi in an angry and harsh tone: Sumanta! Fetch Rama here at once! As Sumantu peeped out there was a commotion of jubilation as of the noisy and uncontrollable waves of the ocean were about to cross its limits.

Sarga Fifteen

Sumanta arrives at Rama's palace

*Te tu tām rajanīm uṣya brāhmaṇā vedapāragāḥ, upatasthur upasthānaṁ saharājapurohitāḥ/ amātyā
balamukhyās ca mukhyā ye nigamasya ca, rāghavasyābhiṣekārthe prīyamāṇās tu saṁgatāḥ/ udite vimale
sūrye puṣye cābhyāgate 'hani, abhiṣekāya rāmasya dvijendrain upakalpitaṁ/ kāñcanā jalakumbhās ca
bhadrapīṭhaṁ svalaṁkṛtaṁ, rāmaś ca samyagāstīrṇo bhāsvarā vyāghracarmaṇā/ gaṅgāyamunayoḥ
punyāt saṁgamād āhṛtaṁ jalam, yās cānyāḥ saritaḥ punyā hradāḥ kūpāḥ sarāṁsi ca/ prāgvāhās
cordhvavāhās ca tiryagvāhāḥ samāhitāḥ, tābhyaś caivāhṛtaṁ toyaṁ samudrebhyaś ca sarvaśaḥ/
kṣaudraṁ dadhighṛtaṁ lājā dharbhāḥ sumanasāḥ payāḥ, salājāḥ kṣīribhīś channā ghaṭāḥ
kāñcanarājatāḥ, padmotpalayutā bhānti pūrṇāḥ paramavāriṇā/ candrāmśuvikacaprakhyāṁ pāṇḍuraṁ
ratnabhūṣitaṁ, sajjāṁ tiṣṭhati rāmasya vālvayajanam uttamam/ candramaṇḍalasaṁkāsam ātapatram ca
pāṇḍuram, sajjāṁ dyutikaram śrīmad abhiṣekapuraskṛtaṁ/ pāṇḍuraś ca vṛṣaḥ sajjāḥ pāṇḍurāśvaś ca
susthitaḥ, prasrutaś ca gajaḥ śrīmān aupavāhyāḥ pratikṣate/ aṣṭau kanyās ca maṅgalyāḥ
sarvābharaṇabhūṣitāḥ, vāditrāṇi ca sarvāṇi bandinaś ca tathāpare/ ikṣvākūṇām yathā rājye
sambhriyetābhiṣecanam, tathā jātyām ādāya rājaputrābhiṣecanam/ te rājavacanāt tatra samaveta
mahīpatim, apaśyanto 'bruvan ko nu rājño naḥ prativedayet/ na paśyāmaś ca rājānam uditaś ca
divākaraḥ, yauvarājyābhiṣekaś ca sajjō rāmasya dhīmataḥ/ iti teṣu bruvāṇeṣu sārvaḥaṁ mahīpatīn,
abravīt tān idaṁ sarvān sumantro rājasatḥ/ ayaṁ pṛcchāmi vacanāt sukham āyuṣmatām aham,*

*rājñāḥ saṁpratibuddhasya yac cāgamanakāraṇam/ ity uktvāntaḥpuradvāram ājagāma purāṇavit,
āśīrbhir guṇayuktābhir abhitsuṣṭāva rāghavam/ gatā bhagavatī rātrirahaḥ śivam upasthitam, budhyasva
ṅṛpaśārdūla kuru kāryam anantaram/ brāhmaṇā balamukhyās ca naigamās cāgatā ṅṛpa, darśanam
pratikāṅkṣante pratibudhyasva rāghava/ stuvantaṁ taṁ tadā sūtaṁ sumantraṁ mantrakovidam,
pratibudhya tato rājā idaṁ vacanam abravīt/ na caiva saṁprasuto 'ham ānayed āśu rāghavam, iti rājā
daśarathaḥ sūtaṁ tatrānvaśāt punaḥ/ sa rājavacanam śrutvā śirasā pratipūjya tam, nirjagāma ṅṛpāvāsān
manyamānaḥ priyaṁ mahat/ prapanno rājamārgaṁ ca patākā dhvajaśobhitam, sa sūtas tatra śuśrāva
rāmādhikaraṇāḥ kathāḥ/ tato dadarśa ruciraṁ kailāśasadyśaprabham, rāmaveśma sumantras tu
śakraveśmasamaprabham/ mahākapātapihitaṁ vitardīsataśobhitam, kāñcanapratimaikāgraṁ
mañividrumatorāṇam/ śāradābhraḥghanaprakhyāṁ dīptaṁ meruguhopamam, dāmabhir varamālyānām
sumahadbhir alamkṛtam/ sa vājīyuktena rathena sārathir; narākulaṁ rājakulaṁ vilokayan, tataḥ
samāsādyā mahādhanam mahat; prahṛṣṭaromā sa babhūva sārathiḥ/ tad adrikūṭācalameghasamñibham;
mahāvīmānottamaveśmasamghavat, avāryamāṇaḥ priveśa sārathiḥ; prabhūtaratnam makaro
yathārṇavam/*

Through out the previous night, the full strength of Brahmanas and co-Purohitas spent the entire time on the Vedika itself. The Ministers, Senadhipati and his top officials of army-cavalry-elephantry and so on too were in their best uniforms and dresses. The full strength of Brahmanas were busy on the vedika with their respective duties. The gorgeous robes for Shri Rama with moon shine bright pure white and yellow streaked colour stiched with precious stones and jewellery were readied too. Varied kinds of musical instruments and musicians in their striking dresses were readied for action. Meanwhile, Sumantu who had earlier addressed the 'sabha' addressing the audience to add to the excitement: ' I am now leaving for the palace of King Dasharatha to request him to grace here even before Shri Rama would make his grand appearance; are all ready to welcome the King with applauses; then came a reverberating reply with exuberance and applauses! Then Sumantu reached the palace of the King and forced his way into the interiors despite the protests that the King ordered that none ever should go inside. As Devi Kaikeyi had earlier ordered angrily to bring there at once, Dasharatha too in half sleepy and highly annoyed tone shouted at Sumanta: *Ramamaanaya Suteti yadasyabhihito, kimidam kaaranam yena mamaagjnaa prati-vaahyate, na chaiva samaprasuptohamaanayehashu Raghavam/* Have you not heard the loud instruction to bring Rama at once! Why are you not heeding that instruction at once! What is the reason for not complying the instruction forthwith! As the King heard the annoyance, Sumanta drove away the chariot at once and on way noticed the unprecedentedly surging crowds on the 'Raja Marga' and made headway to the Palace of Shri Rama which was looking like 'Indra Bhavana' with decorations of flags, huge flower garlands, decorated bye lanes, minarets with sky high banners and buntings, strings of most attractively chiselled 'Murtis' in marble stones as also silver and shining brass decoratives at the entrance 'praakaras'. Saaradhi Sumantra then made an entry by his multi- horse driven chariot into the long brass metal covered runway leading to the waiting reception hall. Indeed the Shri Rama's palace was like the elegantly decorated prototype of possibly imaginable Indra Bhavan with the surroundings of green grass of freshness with 'mriga pakshi ramaneeyata' or of the ambience of deers, peacocks and other birds like doves with water fountains.

Sarga Sixteen

Rama and Lakshmana on the way to King's Palace enjoying public's joy at Rama's elevation

*Sa tad antaḥpuradvāram samatītya janākulam, praviviktām tataḥ kakṣyām āśasāda purāṇavit/
prāsakārmukabibhradbhir yuvabhir mṛṣṭakuṇḍalaih, apramādibhir ekāgraiḥ svanuraktair adhiṣṭhitām/
tatra kāśāyīṇo vṛddhān vetrapāṇīn svalamkṛtān, dadarśa viṣṭhitān dvāri stryadhyakṣān susamāhitān/ te
samīkṣya samāyāntaṁ rāmapriyacikīrśavaḥ, sahabhāryāya rāmāya kṣipram evācacaḥṣire/ prateditam
ājñāya sūtaṁ abhyantaram pituḥ, tatraivānāyayām āsa rāghavaḥ priyakāmyayā/ taṁ vaiśravaṇa saṁkā -
śam upaviṣṭaṁ svalamkṛtam, dādarśa sūtaḥ paryaṅke sauvaṇo sottaracchade/ varāharudhirābheṇa*

*śucinā ca sugandhinā, anuliptam parārdhyena candanena paramtapam/ sthitayā pārśvataś cāpi
vālvayajanahastayā, upetaṁ sītayā bhūyaś citrayā śaśinaṁ yathā/ taṁ tapantam ivādityam upapannam
svatejasā, vavande varadam bandī niyamajño vinūtavat/ prāñjalis tu sukham pṛṣtvā vihāraśayanāsane,
rājaputram uvācedam sumantro rājasatkṛtaḥ/ kausalyā suprabhā deva pitā tvaṁ draṣṭum icchati,
mahīṣyā saha kaikeyyā gamyatām tatra māciram/ evam uktas tu saṁhṛṣṭo narasiṁho mahādutyiḥ, tataḥ
saṁmānayām āsa sītām idam uvāca ha/ devī devaś ca devī ca samāgamya madantare, mantreyete
dhruvam kim cid abhiṣecanasamhitam/ lakṣayitvā hy abhiprāyaṁ priyakāmā sudakṣiṇā, saṁcodayati
rājānaṁ madarthaṁ madirekṣaṇā/ yādṛśī pariṣat tatra tādṛśo dūta āgataḥ, dhruvam adyaiva mām rājā
yauvarājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ hanta śīghram ito gatvā drakṣyāmi ca mahīpatiḥ, saha tvaṁ parivāreṇa sukham
āssva ramasya ca/ patisamānitā sītā bhartāram asitekṣaṇā, ādvāram anuvavrāja maṅgalāny
abhidadhyuṣī/ sa sarvān arthino dṛṣtvā sametya pratīnandya ca, tataḥ pāvakasamkāśam āruroha
rathottamam/ muṣṇantam iva cakṣūṁṣi prabhayā hemavarcasam, kareṇuśīśukalpais ca yuktaṁ
paramavājibhiḥ/ hariyuktaṁ sahasrākṣo ratham indra ivāśugam, prayayau tūrṇam āsthāya rāghavo
jvalitaḥ śrīyā/ sa parjanya ivākāśe svanavān abhinādayan, nīketān niryayau śrīmān mahābhrād iva
candramāḥ/ chatracāmarapāṇis tu lakṣmaṇo rāghavanujah, jugopa bhrātaram bhrātā ratham āsthāya
pṛṣṭhataḥ/ tato halahalāśabdas tumulaḥ samajāyata, tasya niṣkramamāṇasya janaughasya samantataḥ/
sa rāghavas tatra kathāpralāpaṁ; śuśrāva lokasya samāgatasya, ātmādhikārā vividhāś ca vācaḥ;
prahṛṣṭarūpasya pure janasya/ eṣa śrīyaṁ gacchati rāghavo 'dya; rājaprasādād vipulāṁ gamiṣyan, ete
vayam sarvasamṛddhakāmā; yeṣāṁ ayaṁ no bhavitā praśāstā, lābho janasyāsya yad eṣa sarvaṁ;
prapatsyate rāṣṭram idam cirāya/ sa ghoṣavadbhiś ca hayaiḥ sanāgaiḥ; puraḥsaraiḥ svastika -
sūtamāgadhaiḥ, mahīyamānaḥ pravaraīś ca vādakair; abhiṣṭuto vaiśravaṇo yathā yayau/
kareṇumātāṅgarathāśvasamkulaṁ; mahājanaughaiḥ paripūrṇacatvaram, prabhūtaratnam
bahupanyasaṁcayam; dadarśa rāmo ruciraṁ mahāpatham/*

Sumantra reached the inner chamber of the Palace as being under the security of women headed by an old male and asked him to convey that Sumantra had arrived at the door step. On reaching this message Rama realised that the most trusted charioteer of the King Dasharatha had arrived at the door step of the inner chamber of his palace and despatched the personal attendants to usher Sumantra to see him. As Sumantra was let in after through the layers of the security rings, he saw Rama was being seated along with his dharmapatni Devi Sita as both were seated together with hand in hand like Chandra and Chitra Nakshatra both smeared with 'sugandhita chandana lepa'. The well-bred, civil, gracious symbol of politeness Sumantra involuntarily stated ' Shri Rama! How fortunate and blessed be the mother Koushalya to have begotten a son like ! Having thus exclaimed, Sumantra then conveyed the message that King Dasharatha as being seated with Queen Devi Kaikeyi had asked Rama to meet him at once without any delay whatever.. Then Rama told Devi Sita: *Devi devaś ca devī ca samāgamya madantare, mantreyete dhruvam kim cid abhiṣecanasamhitam/ lakṣayitvā hy abhiprāyaṁ priyakāmā sudakṣiṇā, saṁcodayati rājānaṁ madarthaṁ madirekṣaṇā/ yādṛśī pariṣat tatra tādṛśo dūta āgataḥ, dhruvam adyaiva mām rājā yayauvarājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ hanta śīghram ito gatvā drakṣyāmi ca mahīpatiḥ, saha tvaṁ parivāreṇa sukham āssva ramasya ca/Devi!* It appears that father Dasharatha and mother Kaikeyi together must have surely thought of something very special and auspicious being planned in connection with my impending Rajyabhisheka! It ought to be in respect of a detail that might have slipped away from their thought-horizons and Mother Kaikeyi therefore ought to have desired to know of my considered opinion for my compliance in that special context! Indeed my mother Kaikeyi must have planned something very very special and hence this message being conveyed only through their most trusted and intimate Sumantra the King's conscience keeper. As the 'antaranga parishad' or the most intimate one to one meeting of my parents must be in progress for my ready compliance, they ought to have commanded for me and hence this very special message! Let me therefore hasten to leave and Devi Sita! Meanwhile do enjoy with you group of your special and intimate mates meanwhile! As Rama got up ready to let Sumanta accompany him, Devi Sita accompanied Rama upto the door as a sign of auspiciousness. Then Sita reminded of her erstwhile suggestion by herself to request the King and the Queen to ascertain from the Vidvans that as a sequel to the Rajyabhisheka it should be a good idea to follow up soon with Rajasuya Yajna also. Indeed

that was how Indra asked Brahma , did he not! My best wishes to you dearest husband as you are then dressed up in deer skin in vrata diksha holding a deer horn and as I would be at service behind you then at the yajna! How indeed would that I would like to imagine that at such glorious occasion, the Vajra-dhaari Indra from the east, Yama Raja from the south, Varuna Deva from the west and Kubera from the north would protect and bless you! So surmising, Devi Sita came upto the door, as Lakshmana stood waiting for Rama with folded hands. Then Rama met some intimate friends in the middle hall and proceeded to the chariot and got seated comfortably as driven by Sumantra. As the chariot was proceeding as through on the high road as sounding with ‘megha garjana’ or the roars of clouds. Lakshman too was standing behind Rama as a body guard. The chariot then passed through the enthusiastic crowds while a group of mighty soldiers surrounded the chariot making way ahead and clearing behind. Then as the chariot was passing through sounds of orchestrated instruments of music were tuned and ‘Vandimaagadhas’ or well dressed men and women singing away in harmony showering flowers and praises. The onlooker women , all dressed up colourfully were expressing how fortunate was Devi Sita to secure the most deserving husband as Rama! Thus the citizens of Ayodhya were able to have a thrilling glimpses of Rama with surging crowds were being controlled with the Defence Forces lined up all along the route.

Sarga Seventeen

Excellent preparations in the city for the celebrations by the following day

Sa rāmo ratham āsthāya samprahṛṣṭasuhṛjjanaḥ, apaśyan nagaram śrīmān nānājanasamākulam/ sa gṛhair abhrasamkāsaiḥ pāṇdurair upaśobhitam, rājamārgam yayau rāmo madhyenāgarudhūpitam/ śobhamānam asaṁbādham taṁ rājapatham uttamam, saṁvṛtaṁ vividhaiḥ paṇyair bhakṣyair uccāvacaair api/ āśīrvādān bahūñ śṛṇvan suhṛdbhiḥ samudīritān, yathārham cāpi sampūjya sarvān eva narān yayau/ pitāmahair ācaritaṁ tathaiva prapitāmahaiḥ, adyopādāya taṁ mārgam abhiśikto ’nupālaya/ yathā sma lālītāḥ pitrā yathā pūrvaiḥ pitāmahaiḥ, tataḥ sukhataram sarve rāme vatsyāma rājani/ alam adya hi bhuktēna paramārthair alam ca naḥ, yathā paśyāma niryāntān rāmaṁ rājye pratiṣṭhitam/ ato hi na priyataram nānyat kim cid bhaviṣyati, yathābhiṣeko rāmasya rājyenāmitatejasah/ etās cānyās ca suhṛdām udāsīnaḥ kathāḥ śubhāḥ, ātmasampūjanīḥ śṛṇvan yayau rāmo mahāpatham/ na hi tasmān manaḥ kaś cic cakṣuṣī vā narottamāt, naraḥ śaknoty apākraṣṭum atikrānte ’pi rāghave/ sarveṣāṁ sa hi dharmātmā varṇānām kurute dayām, caturṇām hi vayahsthānām tena te tam anuvratāḥ/ sa rājakulam āsādyā mahendrabhavanopamam, rājaputraḥ pitur veśma praviveśa śriyā jvalan/ sa sarvāḥ samatikramya kakṣyā daśarathātmajaḥ, saṁnivartya janaṁ sarvaṁ śuddhāntahpuram abhyagāt/ tataḥ praviṣṭe pitur antikaṁ tadā; janaḥ sa sarvo mudito nṛpātmaje, pratīkṣate tasya punaḥ sma nirgamaṁ; yathodayaṁ candramasaḥ saritpatiḥ/

As Rama was thus riding the chariot on the ‘Raja Marga’ the Royal Highway, he witnessed by himself that the city was decorated to the brim with flags, banners, scented airs of freshness, showers of scented flowers, and surging crowds in lanes and bylanes. The select associates of Rama accompanying him noticed that several onlookers were in trances gazing lost and moved by his darshan with surging tears of joy and fulfillment. Some were stating: *āśīrvādān bahūñ śṛṇvan suhṛdbhiḥ samudīritān, yathārham cāpi sampūjya sarvān eva narān yayau/* Our sincere blessings to Rama as he was deserving the best! Others were stating in high tones: *pitāmahair ācaritaṁ tathaiva prapitāmahaiḥ, adyopādāya taṁ mārgam abhiśikto ’nupālaya/* Raghunandana! May you follow the tradition of enormous name and fame with which your great grand fathers, grand fathers and the father ruled and administered with virtue and justice. Some of the onlooking passers by were addressing the audience: *yathā sma lālītāḥ pitrā yathā pūrvaiḥ pitāmahaiḥ, tataḥ sukhataram sarve rāme vatsyāma rājani/* Friends and brothers! We should all be far more fortunate to have Rama as the King than how kind and concerned the present and the previous Kings have been! A few of other onlookers expressed: *alam adya hi bhuktēna paramārthair alam ca naḥ, yathā paśyāma niryāntān rāmaṁ rājye pratiṣṭhitam/* As we are about to vision Rama as the next King soon

after emerging from his father's climactic blessings, then we should be rejoicing with fulfillment now and the 'paramartha maarga' thereafter! *Etās cānyās ca suhrdām udāsīnaḥ kathāḥ śubhāḥ, ātmasampūjanīḥ śṛṅvan yayau rāmo mahāpatham/* While listening to the welcome praises and best wishes and compliments being showered on him and the ancestor, Rama had well gauged the samples of the public image, their personal affection and their innermost feelings. *Sarveśām sa hi dharmātmā varṇānām kurute dayām, caturṇām hi vayahsthānām tena te tam anuvratāḥ/* Dharmatma Shri Rama thus like a cynosure attracted the admiration of all the classes of the Ayodhya society as they were unquestionable loyalists to him surely. Thus Rama had entered the King Dasharatha's Grand Palace and walked in straight in the innermost chamber of the King Dasharatha who was waiting for Rama like the ocean was the Moon indeed!

Sarga Eighteen

Rama witnessing the heart broken Dasharatha and Kaikeyi's rude intervention demanding Rama's Vana Vaasa for fourteen years in proscribed dress code and of Bharat's Kingship

Sa dadarśāsane rāmo niṣaṅgaṁ pitaraṁ śubhe, kaikeyīśahitaṁ dīnaṁ mukhena pariśuśyatā/ sa pituś caraṇau pūrvam abhivādyā vinītavat,tato vavande caraṇau kaikeyyāḥ susamāhitaḥ/ rāmetry uktvā ca vacanaṁ vāṣparyākulekṣaṇaḥ, śaśāka nṛpatir dīno nekṣitum nābhibhāṣitum/ tad apūrvam narapater dṛṣṭvā rūpaṁ bhayāvaham, rāmo 'pi bhayam āpannaḥ padā sprṣṭveva pannagam/ indriyair aprahrṣṭais tam śokasamtāpakarśitam, niḥśvasantaṁ mahārājāṁ vyathitākulacetasaṁ/ ūrmi mālinam akṣobhyaṁ kṣubhyantam iva sāgaram, upaplutam ivādityam uktānṛtam ṛṣim yathā/ acintyakalpaṁ hi pitus tam śokam upadhārayan, babhūva saṁrabdhatarāḥ samudra iva parvaṇi/ cintayām āsa ca tadā rāmaḥ pitṛhite rataḥ, kimśvid adyaiva nṛpatir na mām pratyabhinandati/ anyadā mām pitā dṛṣṭvā kupito 'pi prasīdati, tasya mām adya saṁprekṣya kimāyāsaḥ pravartate/ sa dīna iva śokārto viṣaṅṇavadanadyutiḥ, kaikeyīm abhivādyāiva rāmo vacanam abravīt/ kaccin mayā nāparādham ajñānād yena me pitā, kupitas tan mamācakṣva tvaṁ caivainaṁ prasādāya/ vivarṇavadano dīno na hi mām abhibhāṣate, śārīro mānaso vāpi kaccid enaṁ na bādhatē, samtāpo vābhitāpo vā durlabhaṁ hi sadā sukham/ kaccin na kim cid bharate kumāre priyadarśane, śatrughne vā mahāsattve mātṛṇām vā mamāśubham/ atoṣayan mahārājāṁ akurvan vā pitur vacaḥ,muhūrtam api neccheyam jīvituṁ kupite nṛpe/ yatomūlam naraḥ paśyēt prādurbhāvam ihātmanaḥ,kathaṁ tasmin na varteta pratyakṣe sati daivate/ kaccit te paruṣam kim cid abhimānāt pitā mama, ukto bhavatyā kopena yatrāsyā lulitaṁ manaḥ/ etad ācakṣva me devi tattvena paripṛcchataḥ, kimnimittam apūrvo 'yaṁ vikāro manujādhipē/ ahaṁ hi vacanād rājñāḥ pateyam api pāvake, bhakṣayeyam viṣam tīkṣṇam majjeyam api cārṇave, niyukto guruṇā pitrā nṛpeṇa ca hitena ca/ tad brūhi vacanaṁ devi rājño yad abhikāṅkṣitam, kariṣye pratijāne ca rāmo dvir nābhibhāṣate/ tam ārjavasamāyuktam anāryā satyavādinam, uvāca rāmaṁ kaikeyī vacanaṁ bhṛśadāruṇam/ purā devāsure yuddhe pitrā te mama rāghava, rakṣitena varau dattau saśalyena mahāraṇe/ tatra me yācito rājā bharatasyābhiṣecanam, gamanaṁ daṇḍakāraṇye tava cādyāiva rāghava, yadi satyapratijñam tvaṁ pitaraṁ kartum icchasi, ātmānaṁ ca narareṣṭha mama vākyam idam śṛṇu/ sa nideśe pitus tiṣṭha yathā tena pratiśrutam, tvayāraṇyam praveṣṭavyam nava varṣāṇi pañca ca/ sapta sapta ca varṣāṇi daṇḍakāraṇyam āśritaḥ, abhiṣekam imaṁ tyaktvā jaṭācīradharo vasa/ bharataḥ kosalapure praśāstu vasudhām imām, nānāratnasamākīrṇām savājirathakuñjarām/

As Rama entered the interiors of the King's palace, he found both Dasharatha and Kaikeyi were seated in chairs and were looking drowned in distress and agitation with dried up, swollen faces and pitiable faces. He prostrated before them and touched their feet. Dasharatha in a feeble tone said: 'Rama!' and burst out and kept silent. There were tears in his eyes and could not look into the eyes of Rama. Rama was alarmed with fear as though he touched a serpent and jumped with shock. He realised that his father was crying away for a long time as though a tragedy attacked him from his senses. He was breathing heavily and broke into crying as if the ocean was distressed with high tides and as though Rahu grasped Surya tightly and with a firm grip. Rama wondered as to what could have been the root cause for this and got agitated

like the ocean waves which rose higher and higher on a full moon night! What indeed could have happened to day as his father was not even speaking to me eye to eye, whereas he would look at most fondly and break into endearing pep talk that each time he met him. *Anyadā mām pitā dr̥ṣṭvā kupito 'pi prasīdati, tasya mām adya sam̐prekṣya kimāyāsaḥ pravartate/* Normally on any occasion on any day whenever he was angry with me, he was always cool down on seeing me and become normal very soon and get back to his characteristic joviality. So thinking, Rama turning pale with sorrow and dullness then having greeted Kaikeyi once again and asked her: *Kaccin mayā nāparādham ajñānād yena me pitā, kupitas tan mamācakṣva tvaṁ caivainam̐ prasādaya/ vivarṇavadano dīno na hi mām abhibhāṣate, śārīro mānaso vāpi kaccid enam̐ na bād̐hate, sam̐tāpo vābhitāpo vā durlabham̐ hi sadā sukham/* Mother! Have I committed any blundering slip up mistake due to which my father is serious with me! Kindly ask him to forgive me and get him back to normalcy. I find that today, father is not even looking at me properly, let alone talk to me endearingly; what indeed could have been the cause of this unusual abnormality for this grievous situation! Is either physical ailment or mental disturbance tormenting him! Even one always seeks normalcy in health it is but natural that human body is at times susceptible some times. *kaccin na kim̐ cid bharate kumāre priyadarśane, śatrughne vā mahāsattve mātṛñām̐ vā mamāśubham/* Trust that beloved Bharata or Mahabali Shatrughna or any of mothers Koushalya and Sumitra are happy and safe! *yatomūlam̐ naraḥ paśyēt prādurbhāvam̐ ihātmanaḥ, katham̐ tasmin̐ na varteta pratyakṣe sati daivate/ kaccit te paruṣam̐ kim̐ cid abhimānāt pitā mama, ukto bhavatyā kopena yatrāsya lulitam̐ manaḥ/ etad ācakṣva me devi tattvena pariṣṛcchataḥ, kin̐nimittam̐ apūrvō 'yam̐ vikāro manujād̐hipe/* All the human beings realise that their very origin is initiated from the fathers and they are the 'pratyaksha devatas' or the readily visualizable Gods on earth and that is why his anger on me is deplorable. Devi! May I in all seriousness seek your kind reply as to why my father is disgusted with me! *Atoṣayan mahārājam̐ akurvan vā pitur vacaḥ, muhūrtam̐ api neccheyam̐ jīvitum̐ kupite nṛpe/* I am not prepared to live even for an hour or two as my father is unhappy with me out of his disgust! Then Kaikeyi replied to all the searching queries of Rama in sheer shamelessness as follows: *Na Raja kupito Rama vyanam̐ naasya kin̐china, kin̐chin̐ manogatam̐ tasya thadbhayaannanubhashate/* Rama! Maha Raja is neither angry nor faced with any physical nor mental difficulty; but he is unable to express himself out of fear from you! *Priyam tvaamapriyam vaktum vaanee naasya pravartate, tadavashyam̐ tvayā kaaryam̐ yadnenaashrutam̐ mama/* You are his darling son and as such he is disabled to open his mouth to utter what you might not like to hear from him and out of sheer fear of you that he is keeping silent! Once in the past, he was so happy with me as I saved him in a battle when I happened to accompany him in his chariot and he gave me two boons and now having realised the serious impact of those boons, he is repentful when I am demanding their fulfillment now. At that time when he assured to gift the boons to me but now is unable to wriggle out of those promises. Could one withstand the rushing force of a flood with the building of a barrier now! *Dharma moolamidam̐ Rama viditam̐ cha sataamapi, tat satyam̐ na tyajet Rajaa kupitastvatkrute yatha/* Rama! Truth is the root of Virtue; now you are the root cause of that Truthfulness and Virtue-fulness and that is why the King's two options are to lose you or the virtue! Now, you may decide yourself either to forego the value of virtue or to keep it up aloft! *Yadi tad vaksyate Rajaa shubham̐ vaa yadiyaashubham̐, kariyasi tatah sarvamaakhyaami punastavam/ Yadi tvabhihitam̐ raagjnaa twayi tatra vipatyate, tatomabhidhaasyaami na yosha twayi vakshyati/* In case if the King desires to declare something- be that auspicious or otherwise- then if you are readily and heartily follow it in letter and spirit, then only I could reveal it, but not otherwise! If only you are able to bear what is the factual then only I could declare it for you vividly and clearly! As Kaikeyi blasted as above, Rama was stunned like a stone totally shaken up to the roots and stated: 'Aho Devi! You ought not to utter such statements from your mouth and tongue! If only the King orders me, I could jump into ferocious flames, happily consume deadly poison, and jump into the depths of an ocean! Maharaja is my guru, father, well wisher! On receiving his instructions, what all could I not be done for him. I am hereby swearing that his instruction be fulfilled against by life! Be it known firmly that Rama is not used to double speak ever!' Then Kaikeyi replied: the foremost fact was that in the context of 'Devasura samgrāma' when you were badly hurt by the arrows of the daitya then I saved him and gave my two precious boons and in turn I am claiming two boons: *Tatra me yaachito Raja Bharatasyaabhishechanam̐, gamanam̐ dandakaaranyo tava chaadaiva*

Raghava! Raghava! The first boon that I have desired is that Bharata be gifted with Rajabhisheka and the second boon would be that Rama be despatched to Dandakaranya. If you are truly and unhesitatingly seek to prove that you are a ‘Satyavaadi’ then you have the choice of being of ‘Pitru vaakya paripalaka’ or otherwise! Further, you too just now firmed up your vow then you ought to take these promises of the King accordingly! *Sa nideśe pitus tiṣṭha yathā tena pratiśrutam, tvayāraṇyaṃ praveṣṭavyaṃ nava varṣāṇi pañca ca/ sapta sapta ca varṣāṇi daṇḍakāraṇyaṃ āśritaḥ, abhiṣekam imaṃ tyaktvā jaṭācīradharo vasa/ bharataḥ kosalapure praśāstu vasudhām imām, nānāratnasamākīrṇām savājjirathakuñjarām/* Thus you should proceed for Vana vaasa for fourteen years soon and allow Bharata’s rajyabhisheka! Raghunandana Rama! May you thus resolve the puzzle of your father the King of Ayodhya by upholding dharma and truthfulness and save your father’s longstanding reputation!’. As Kaikiyi had thus announced the ultimatum, Dasharatha with swollen eye lids and dried up face drooped his head in shame and could not attempt his face to be shown to Rama. Yet Rama kept his calm and mental equilibrium, while Dasharatha stood up totteringly crying away incessantly.

Sarga Nineteen

Rama agrees to her terms and proceeds to mother Kouashalya to break the news

Tad apriyam amitraghno vacanaṃ maraṇopamam, śrutvā na vivyathe rāmaḥ kaikeyīm cedam abravīt/ evam astu gamiṣyāmi vanam vastum aham tv atah, jaṭācīradharo rājñah pratijñām anupālayan/ idam tu jñātum icchāmi kimartham mām mahīpatiḥ, nābhinandati durdharṣo yathāpuram arimdamah/ manyur na ca tvayā kāryo devi brūhi tavāgrataḥ, yāsyāmi bhava supritā vanam cīrajaṭādharaḥ/ hitena guruṇā pitrā kṛtajñena nṛpeṇa ca, niyujyamāno viśrabdham kim na kuryād aham priyam/ alikam mānasam tv ekam hṛdayam dahatīva me, svayam yan nāha mām rājā bharatasyābhiṣecanam/ aham hi sītām rājyam ca prāṇān iṣṭān dhanāni ca, hṛṣṭo bhrātre svayam dadyām bharatāyāpracoditaḥ/ kim punar manujendreṇa svayam pitrā pracoditaḥ, tava ca priyakāmārtham pratijñām anupālayan/ tad āśvāsaya hīmam tvam kim nv idam yan mahīpatiḥ, vasudhāsaktanayano mandam āsrūṇi muñcati/ gacchantu caivānayitum dūtāḥ śīghrajavair hayaiḥ, bharataṃ mātulakulād adyaiva nṛpaśāsanāt/ daṇḍakāraṇyam eṣo ’ham ito gacchāmi satvaraḥ, avicārya pitur vākyaṃ samāvastum caturdaśa/ sā hṛṣṭā tasya tadvākyaṃ śrutvā rāmasya kaikayī, prasthānam śraddadhānā hi tvarayām āsa rāghavam/ evam bhavatu yāsyanti dūtāḥ śīghrajavair hayaiḥ, bharataṃ mātulakulād upāvartayitum narāḥ/ tava tv aham kṣamaṃ manye notsukasya vilambanam, rāma tasmād itaḥ śīghram vanam tvam gantum arhasi/ vrīḍānvitaḥ svayam yac ca nṛpas tvām nābhībhaṣate, naitat kim cin naraśreṣṭha manyur eṣo ’panīyatām/ yāvat tvam na vanam yātaḥ purād asmād abhitvaran, pitā tāvan na te rāma snāsyate bhokṣyate ’pi vā/ dhik kaṣṭam iti niḥśvasya rājā śokapariplutaḥ, mūrchito nyapatat tasmīn paryanke hemabhūṣite/ rāmo ’py utthāpya rājānam kaikeyyābhipracoditaḥ, kaśayevāhato vājī vanam gantum kṛtatvaraḥ/ tad apriyam anāryāyā vacanam dāruṇodaram, śrutvā gatavyatho rāmaḥ kaikeyīm vākyaṃ abravīt/ nāham arthaparo devi lokam āvastum utsahe, viddhi mām ṛṣibhis tulyam kevalam dharmam āsthitam/ yad atrabhavataḥ kim cic chakyaṃ kartum priyam mayā, prāṇān api parityajya sarvathā kṛtam eva ta/ na hy ato dharmacaraṇam kim cid asti mahattaram, yathā pitari śuśrūṣā tasya vā vacanakriyā/ anukto ’py atrabhavataḥ bhavatyā vacanād aham, vane vatsyāmi vijane varṣāṇiha caturdaśa/ na nūnam mayi kaikeyi kim cid āśamsase guṇam, yad rājānam avocas tvam mameśvaratarā satī/ yāvan mātaram āpṛcche sītām cānunayāmy aham, tato ’dyaiva gamiṣyāmi daṇḍakānām mahad vanam/ bharataḥ pālayeḍ rājyam śuśrūṣec ca pitur yathā, tathā bhavatyā kartavyam sa hi dharmah sanātanaḥ/ sa rāmasya vacaḥ śrutvā bhṛṣam duḥkhahataḥ pitā, śokād āsaknuvan bāṣpaṃ praruroda mahāsvanam/ vanditvā caraṇau rāmo viśamjñasya pitus tadā, kaikeyyās cāpy anāryāyā niṣpapāta mahādyutiḥ/ sa rāmaḥ pitaram kṛtvā kaikeyīm ca pradakṣiṇam, niṣkramyāntaḥ -purāt tasmāt svam dadarśa suhṛjjanam/ tam bāṣpapariṣṭāṅkaḥ pṛṣṭhato ’nujagāma ha, lakṣmaṇaḥ paramakruddhaḥ sumitrānandavardhanaḥ/ ābhiṣecanikam bhāṇḍam kṛtvā rāmaḥ pradakṣiṇam, śanair jagāma sāpekṣo dṛṣṭim tatrāvicālayan/ na cāsya mahatīm lakṣmīm rājyanāśo ’pakarṣati, lokakāntasya kāntatvam sītaraśmer iva kṣapā/ na vanam gantukāmasya tyajataś ca vasudharām, sarvalokātigasyeva lakṣyate cittavikriyā/ dhārayan manasā duḥkham indriyāṇi nigṛhya ca, praviveśātmavān veśma

māturapriyaśamsivān/ praviśya veśmātibhṛśam mudānvitam; samīkṣya tām cārthavipattim āgatām, na caiva rāmo 'tra jagāma vikriyān; suhrjjanasyātma vipattiśankayā'

Shri Rama replied to Kaikeyi with poise and dignity: ‘*Evam astu gamiṣyāmi vanam vastum aham tv atah, jaṭācīradharo rājñah pratijñām anupālayan/* Mother! What ever instruction that you have given to me would be most certainly carried out as per father’s wish and to uphold his decision. I will wear the ‘jataacheera’ while moving out of Ayodhya as per your wish most certainly! But, mother! why is my father who is an outstanding warrior with great strength of fortitude is remaining silent. He is my well wisher, mentor, and father and I am ever grateful to him all through my life. May I, if you do not mind, make this query! This doubt is arising as to why my father himself never expressed his desire to let Bharata be the next king! *Aham hi sītām rājyam ca prāñān iṣṭān dhanāni ca, hr̥ṣṭo bhrātre svayam dadyām bharatāyāpracoditah/ kim punar manujendrena svayam pitrā pracoditah, tava ca priyakāmārtham pratijñām anupālayan/* Even by your own instruction, I could have left this kingdom, discard Devi Sita, and even sacrifice my life without hesitation and even with joy! In case my father instructed me to keep up his word of his prestige and promise, would I hesitate to comply with it happily! From my own side, please give an assurance to the King that he need not keep crying away looking down on earth and without lifting his chin and upholding his head! *daṇḍakāraṇyam eṣo 'ham ito gacchāmi satvarah, avicārya pitur vākyaṁ samāvastum caturdaśa/* I am ready to leave for dandakaranya straight away!’ As Rama thus readily consented to comply with her desire rightaway, Kaikeyi was glad and said that she would send a message to Bharata to return forthwith from his maternal uncle’s kingdom since Rama would leave for the forests at once. She further commented that his departure be acted upon at once, lest Dashratha would not be able to take his bath and food. As she commented thus: Dashratha heaved with long breathing shouted: ‘dhhikkara! What kind of misfortune has fallen onto me!’ and having said thus swooned and fell on his golden bed. Then ShriRama lifted his swooned father, arranged him in a lying posture and even as leaving for his travel to dandakaranya reacted to Kaikeyi’s heinous jibe that Rama’s departure if further delayed, his father might not take his bath and food as follows: ‘Devi! I would never wish to anchor my life for the sake of wealth. Kindly be assured that like Rishis I would value Dharma far beyond the reaches of wealth. I could any day discard even by life but not the values of virtue! Kindly remember this as my parting assurance. ‘Pitru agjna paripalana’ of my father’s instruction happens to be my outstanding dharma and I esteem that far above my very life. *Anukto 'py atrabhavatā bhavatyā vacanād aham, vane vatsyāmi vijane varṣāñīha caturdaśa/ na nūnam mayi kaikeyi kim cid āśamsase guṇam, yad rājñam avocas tvaṁ mameśvaratarā satī/* Even if my father has not instructed me to proceed for ‘aranya vaasa’ by himself, I deem that you have an equal authority to instruct me yourself. Please never hesitate to do so as you have yet to assess me deeper. Now I shall seek my mother Devi Kousalya’s blessings too forthwith and explain the position to Sita too before proceeding for ‘dandakaranya’. Kindly also explain the position suitably as he should assume kingship forthwith as a great relief to the revered father and serve him in the old age as that is the traditional virtue and of responsibility’. So saying to Devi Kaikeyi, Rama prostrated to the swooned father, touched the feet of Devi Kaikeyi and having circumambulated them both made an exit from the ‘antahpura’ the interiormost chamber even as Lakshmana as also were suppressing their anger and anguish. Rama then was mentally prepared and decided to proceed for the travel forthwith. The select gathering of friends, associates, and prominent citizens who were already aware of the meteor like stunning news of Rama’s departure for ‘dandakaranya’ instead of Rajyabhisheka were nonplussed with disbelief and dismay. Then Rama proceeded to Queen Kousalya’s palace with his characteristic equanimity and poise. Lakshmana too was suppressing his mental turmoil and accompanied Rama.

Sarga Twenty

Koushalya’s sudden and of tragic news leads to agony and standstill senselessness as Rama seeks to pacify

Rāmas tu bhṛśam āyasto niḥśvasann iva kuñjaraḥ, jagāma sahito bhrātrā mātur antaḥpuram vaśī/ so 'paśyat puruṣam tatra vṛddham paramapūjitam, upaviṣtam gṛhadvāri tiṣṭhataś cāparān bahū/ praviśya prathamām kaksyām dvitīyāyām dadarśa saḥ, brāhmaṇān vedasampannān vṛddhān rājñābhisatkṛtān/ praṇamya rāmas tān vṛddhāns tṛtīyāyām dadarśa saḥ, striyo vṛddhās ca bālās ca dvārarakṣaṇatatparāḥ/ vardhayitvā prahṛṣṭas tāḥ praviśya ca gṛham striyaḥ, nyavedayanta tvaritā rāma mātuh priyam tadā/ kausalyāpi tadā devī rātriṃ sthitvā samāhitā, prabhāte tv akarot pūjām viṣṇoḥ putrahitaiṣiṇī/ sā kṣaumavasanā hr̥ṣṭā nityam vrataparāyaṇā, agniṃ juhōti sma tadā mantravat kṛtamaṅgalā/ praviśya ca tadā rāmo mātur antaḥpuram śubham, dadarśa mātaram tatra hāvayantīm hutāsanam/ sā cirasyātmajam dṛṣṭvā mātrnandanam āgatam, abhicakrāma samhr̥ṣṭā kiśoram vaḍavā yathā/ tam uvāca durādharṣam rāghavam sutam ātmanaḥ, kausalyā putravātsalyād idam priyahitam vacaḥ/ vṛddhānām dharmāśīlānām rājarṣiṇām mahātmanām, prāpnuhy āyuś ca kīrtim ca dharmam copahitam kule/ satyapratijñam pitarām rājānam paśya rāghava, adyaiva hi tvām dharmātmā yauvarājye 'bhiṣekṣyati/ mātaram rāghavaḥ kim cit prasāryāñjalim abravīt, sa svabhāvavinūtaś ca gauravāc ca tadānataḥ/ devī nūnam na jāñiṣe mahad bhayam upasthitam, idam tava ca duḥkhāya vaidehyā lakṣmaṇasya ca/ caturdaśa hi varṣāni vatsyāmi vijane vane, madhumūlaphalair jīvan hitvā munivad āmiṣam/ bharatāya mahārājō yauvarājyam prayacchati, mām punar daṇḍakāraṇyam vivāsayati tāpasam/ tām aduḥkhocitām dṛṣṭvā patitām kadalīm iva, rāmas tūthāpayām āsa mātaram gatacetasam/ upāvṛtyotthitām dīnām vaḍavām iva vāhitām, pāmsugūṇḥhitasarvāgnīm vimamarśa ca pāṇinā/ sā rāghavam upāsīnam asukhārtā sukhocitā, uvāca puruṣavyāghram upaśṛṇvati lakṣmaṇe/ yadi putra na jāyethā mama śokāya rāghava, na sma duḥkham ato bhūyaḥ paśyeyam aham aprajā/ eka eva hi vandhyāyāḥ śoko bhavati mānavaḥ, aprajāsmīti samtāpo na hy anyaḥ putra vidyate/ na dṛṣṭapūrvam kalyāṇam sukham vā patipauruṣe, api putre vipaśyeyam iti rāmāsthitam mayā/ sā bahūny amanojñāni vākyāni hṛdayacchidām, aham śroṣye sapatnīnām avarāṇām varā satī, ato duḥkhatarām kim nu pramadānām bhaviṣyati/ tvayi samnihite 'py evam aham āsam nirākṛtā, kim punaḥ proṣite tāta dhruvam maraṇam eva me/ yo hi mām sevate kaś cid atha vāpy anuvartate, kaikeyyāḥ putram anvīkṣya sa jano nābhibhāṣate/ daśa sapta ca varṣāni tava jātasya rāghava, atītāni prakāṅkṣantyā mayā duḥkhariparikṣayam/ upavāsaiś ca yogaiś ca bahubhiś ca pariśramaiḥ, duḥkham samvardhito mogham tvam hi durgatayā mayā/ sthīram tu hṛdayam manye mamedam yan na dīryate, prāvṛṣṭva mahānadyāḥ sprṣṭam kūlam navāmbhasā/ mamaiva nūnam maraṇam na vidyate; na cāvakāśo 'sti yamakṣaye mama, yad antako 'dyaiva na mām jihīrṣati; prasahya simho rudatīm mṛgīm iva/sthīram hi nūnam hṛdayam mamāyasam; na bhidyate yad bhuvi nāvādīryate, anena duḥkhena ca deham arpitam; dhruvam hy akāle maraṇam na vidyate/ idam tu duḥkham yad anarthakāni me; vratāni dānāni ca samyamās ca hi, tapaś ca taptam yad apatyakāraṇāt; suniṣphalam bījam ivoptam ūṣare/ Yadi hy akāle maraṇam svayecchayā; labheta kaś cid guru duḥkha karṣitaḥ, gatāham adyaiva pareta saṃsadam; vinā tvayā dhenur ivātmajena vai/ bhṛśam asukham amarṣitā tadā; bahu vilalāpa samīkṣya rāghavam, vyananam upaniśāmya sā mahat; sutam iva baddham avekṣya kimnarī/

As the frightful news Rama's instantly proceeding to 'dandakaranya' and of Bharat's pattabhisheka subsequently was spread up like wild fire, there were talks that King Dasharatha had gone insensitive and even insane. From the queen's palaces there were loud and incessant 'aartanaadaas' or howls of cryings especially from the palaces of queens by their maids and male servants who had almost gone berserk like unruly herds of cows. Out of shame, King Dasharatha hid himself and so did the friends and relatives staying in the royal palaces from public interaction. Shri Rama then proceeded to his mother Devi Kaushalya's inner chambers accompanied by Lakshmana. While entering the queen's inner chamber, there were intimate servants and select visitors making 'Jaya jaya ninaadaas' or loud victory sounds and shouts of spontaneous sympathies. Select groups of elderly Vedagjna Pandithas raised their tones of 'vijayee bhava' or may Rama be ever victorius! The 'aantarangika' intimate and chosen women of the Prime Queen Devi Kausalya ran ahead to notify Shri Rama's arrival. The queen was awake through the previous night earnestly performing Vishnu Puja and was just concluding the 'aahutis' or offerings to Agni. Raghunandana Rama then realised that in that 'Deva Karya' she was surrounded by several 'puja dravyas' like curd, akshatas, ghee, modakas, havishya, dhaanya, white flower garlands, samidhas and

naivedyas and kalasha patras with sacred waters of rivers. She was wearing a bright and white saree and was looking extremely tired due to ‘raatri jagarana and upavaasa’ or keeping awake the night long and fasting. It was in that condition as she was offering ‘tarpana’ to Devas of her faith, Devi Koushalya was nearing Rama like a female horse was nearing its colt. Rama prostrated and touched her feet and she had atonce hugged him with mother’s love. She said: my darling son! May you be blessed with long life, glory and victory in what ever task you would handle. She said further: Maha Raja had decided to soon fulfill your rajyaabhisheka as the Yuva Raja ! Then she requested him to be seated comfortably first and take his food too. Thereafter having realised that he would have to at once proceed for ‘dandakaranya’ he initiated saying with folded hands: *devi nūnaṃ na jānīṣe mahad bhayam upasthitam, idaṃ tava ca duḥkhāya vaidehyā lakṣmaṇasya ca/ caturdaśa hi varṣāṇi vatsyāmi vijane vane, madhumūlaphalair jīvan hitvā munivad āmiṣam/ bharatāya mahārājo yauvarājyaṃ prayacchati, mām punar daṇḍakāranyaṃ vivāsayati tāpasam/* ‘Devi! You are indeed not aware that there is a huge danger awaiting you and on realising this, Sita too would be shaken up as you too. Now, I am destined to proceed to dandakaranya and now you are asking me be seated comfortably as I should be soon seated on a mat of ‘kusha grass’! I would have now to discard the kingly pleasures now and be contented with ‘kanda mula phala- pattas’, or leaves and roots for food for fourteen years in thick forests. King Dasharatha had decided that Bharata be the King and I be despatched as a tapasvi to dandakaranya. As I have to leave for the forests now, would it not be proper to wear kusha grass clothing and be content with the food of roots and leaves.’ On hearing the statement of Rama, Devi Kouslyya had collapsed with a shock like a massive ‘salva vriksha’ got smashed with a mighty axe, just as celestial woman was forced to fall down wilfully on earth! All through her life, she never was aware as to what the expression of misery had meant nor had ever experienced it all through her erstwhile life. She then sought Rama’s assistance to stand some how as the latter sought to brush out the dust from her body. She then attempted to speak to Rama while Lakshmana was present too: ‘ My son Raghu nandana! I am now faced with such a tragedy that I would have liked to have been a childless barren woman and that you were not born to me at all so that this pitiable condition would not have been encountered by me. A barren woman would perhaps been worried that a child were not born to her at all. Rama! I longed for and cherished the fulfillment of my ambition that even during my prime queenship, my husband would bestow the gift of my son’s Rajyabhishekha and that I would have the privilege of being the ‘Raja maata’ while I would have reaped the advantages thereby. Now I would have to listen and bear the taunts and sneers of the forthcoming Queen Mother. Then what would happen when you should be away for very long! Women could never tolerate such a situation excepting misery and abusive slurs! Being excessively obsessed with his pretty and youngext wife, my husband has been passive with me for long time now. Now the situation would be far the worse especially her son Bharata would be the king. How indeed could I pass my time without your being away and Devi Kaikeyi would soon become harsh, fault finding and abusive towards me now on! Now your child hood and bachelorship were over and you had entered married life and I have been longing for peaceful and contented life ahead, but with no support from cognizable sources, how do you presume my daily life would not be a deathlike misery! Do you not realise that with growing age and with no possible support, you mother would be left away to doom and death! My son! Do you not realise that I observed frequent fastings, Deva Pujas, bringing you up the extraordinary care, helping and guiding the helpless men and women, and countless deeds of virtue, but is there a return now when I am in dire need for myself. *sthiraṃ tu hṛdayaṃ manye mamedam yan na dīryate, prāvṛṣṭva mahānadyāḥ sprṣṭam kūlam navāmbhasā mamaiva nūnaṃ maraṇam na vidyate; na cāvakāśo ’sti yamakṣaye mama yad antako ’dyaiva na mām jihīṛṣati; prasahya simho rudatīm mṛgīm iva/* Rama! Indeed my heart is like a stone bearing what all has befallen to me; in fact, it is like a boulder withstanding the unusual force of heavy rains originated from high mountains! Most essentially learnt lesson of my life is that what all the outcome of lifelong vrata-daana-limb controls are a mere waste. The long and deep meditations that were made for good progeny proved to be like sowing seeds for reaping wasteful dry grass. I should be like a helpless old cow without the support of a male calf, ever waiting for Yama Raja to be kind and lift me up with death soon for relief from my bondage!

Sarga Twenty One

Lakshmana gets agitated at the turn of the events and so did Kousalya but Rama assuages their badly hurt psyche, but Rama explains that ‘pitru vaakya paripaalana’ ought to be his life’s motto and dharma.

tasya jyeṣṭho 'si dāyādo rāma ity abhiviśrutaḥ tad gṛhāṇa svakaṁ rājyam avekṣasva jagan
nṛpa/ikṣvākūṇām hi sarveṣāṁ rājā bhavati pūrvajāḥ, pūrvajenāvaraḥ putro jyeṣṭho rājye 'bhiṣicyate/
Tathā tu vilapanṭīm tām kausalyām rāmamātaram, uvāca lakṣmaṇo dīnas tat kālasadyśam vacaḥ/ na
rocate mamāpy etad ārye yad rāghavo vanam, tyaktvā rājyaśriyam gacchet striyā vākyavaśam gataḥ/
viparītaś ca vṛddhaś ca viṣayaiś ca pradharṣitaḥ nṛpaḥ kim iva na brūyāc codyamānaḥ samanmathaḥ/
nāsyāparādham paśyāmi nāpi doṣam tathā vidham, yena nirvāsyate rāṣṭrād vanavāsāya rāghavaḥ/ na
tam paśyāmy aham loke parokṣam api yo naraḥ, amitro 'pi nirasto 'pi yo 'sya doṣam udāharet/
devakalpam ṛjum dāntam ripūṇām api vatsalam, avekṣamānaḥ ko dharmam tyajet putram akāraṇāt/ tad
idaṁ vacanam rājñāḥ punar bālyam upeyuṣaḥ, putraḥ ko hṛdaye kuryād rājavyrttam anusmaran/ yāvad
eva na jānāti kaś cid artham imaṁ naraḥ, tāvad eva mayā sārddham ātmastham kuru śāsanam/ mayā
pārśve sadhanuṣā tava guptasya rāghava, kaḥ samartha 'dhikaṁ kartum kṛtāntasyeva tiṣṭhataḥ/
nirmanuṣyām imām sarvām ayodhyām manujarṣabha, kariṣyāmi śarais tīkṣṇair yadi sthāsyati vipriye/
bharatasyātha pakṣyo vā yo vāsya hitam icchati, sarvān etān vadhiṣyāmi mṛdur hi paribhūyate/ tvayā
caiva mayā caiva kṛtvā vairam anuttamam, kasya śaktiḥ śriyam dātum bharatāyāriśāsana/ anurakto 'smi
bhāvena bhrātaram devi tattvataḥ, satyena dhanuṣā caiva datteneṣṭena te śape/ dīptam agnim aranyam
vā yadi rāmaḥ pravekṣyate, praviṣṭam tatra mām devi tvaṁ pūrvam avadhāraya/ harāmi vīryād duḥkham
te tamaḥ sūrya ivoditaḥ, devī paśyatu me vīryam rāghavaś caiva paśyatu/ etat tu vacanam śrutvā
lakṣmaṇasya mahātmanaḥ, uvāca rāmam kausalyā rudantī śokalālasā/ bhrātus te vadataḥ putra
lakṣmaṇasya śrutam tvayā, yad atrānantaram tat tvaṁ kuruṣva yadi rocate/ na cādharmaṁ vacaḥ śrutvā
sapatnyā mama bhāṣitam, vihāya śokasāntaptām gantum arhasi mām itaḥ/dharmajña yadi dharmiṣṭho
dharmam caritum icchasi, śuśrūṣa mām ihasthas tvaṁ cara dharmam anuttamam/ śuśrūṣur janānīm
putra svagrhe niyato vasaṁ, pareṇa tapasā yuktaḥ kāśyapas tridivam gataḥ/ yathaiva rājā pūjyas te
gauraveṇa tathā hy aham, tvām nāham anujānāmi na gantavyam ito vanam/ tvadviyogān na me kāryam
jīvitena sukkena vā, tvayā saha mama śreyas tṛṇānām api bhakṣaṇam/ yadi tvaṁ yāsyasi vanam tyaktvā
mām śokalālasām, aham prāyam ihāsiṣye na hi śakṣyāmi jīvitum/ tatas tvaṁ prāpsyase putra nirayam
lokaviśrutam, brahmahatyām ivādharmāt samudraḥ saritām patih/ vilapanṭīm tathā dīnām kausalyām
janānīm tataḥ, uvāca rāmo dharmātmā vacanam dharmasamhitam/ nāsti śaktiḥ pitur vākyam
samatikramitum mama, prasādāye tvām śirasā gantum icchāmy aham vanam/ ṛṣiṇā ca pitur vākyam
kurvatā vratacāriṇā, gaur hatā jānataḥ dharmam kaṇḍunāpi vipaścitā/ asmākaṁ ca kule pūrvam
sagarasyājñāyā pituḥ, khanadbhiḥ sāgarair bhūtim avāptaḥ sumahān vadhaḥ/ jāmadagnyena rāmeṇa
reṇukā janānī svayam, kṛttā paraśunāranye pitur vacanakāriṇā/ na khalv etan mayaikena kriyate
pitṛśāsanam, pūrvair ayam abhipreto gato mārgo 'nugamyate/ tad etat tu mayā kāryam kriyate bhuvī
nānyathā, pitur hi vacanam kurvan na kaś cin nāma hīyate/ tām evam ukṭvā janānīm lakṣmaṇam punar
abravīt, tava lakṣmaṇa jānāmi mayi sneham anuttamam, abhiprāyam avijñāya satyasya ca śamasya ca/
dharmo hi paramo loke dharme satyam pratiṣṭhitam, dharmasamśritam etac ca pitur vacanam uttamam/
samśrutya ca pitur vākyam mātur vā brāhmaṇasya vā, na kartavyam vṛthā vīra dharmam āśritya tiṣṭhatā/
so 'ham na śakṣyāmi pitur niyogam ativartitum, pitur hi vacanād vīra kaikeyyāham pracoditaḥ/ tad enām
viṣjānāryām kṣatradharmāśritām matim, dharmam āśraya mā taikṣṇyam madbuddhir anugamyatām/
tam evam ukṭvā sauhārdād bhrātaram lakṣmaṇāgrajāḥ, uvāca bhūyaḥ kausalyām prāñjaliḥ śirasānataḥ/
anumanyasva mām devi gamiṣyantam ito vanam, śāpitāsi mama prāñaiḥ kuru svastyayanāni me,
tīrṇapratijñāś ca vanāt punar eṣyāmy aham purīm/ yaśo hy aham kevalarājyākāraṇān; na pṛṣṭhataḥ
kartum alaṁ mahodayam, adīrghakāle na tu devi jīvite; vṛṇe 'varām adya mahīm adharmataḥ/
prasādāyan naravṛṣabhaḥ sa mātaram; parākramāj jigamiṣur eva daṇḍakān, athānujam bhṛṣam
anuśāsya darśanam; cakāra tām hṛdi janānīm pradakṣiṇam/

As Devi Kousalya was describing of the fate of a helpless woman, Lakshmana sought to cut short her description of another type of a woman with a knife laced with honey edges. He explained that Shri Rama too was most unhappy with the ongoing happenings but the nature in another type of womanhood as of Kaikeyi had become overwhelming for the father. ‘ Elder mother! you must please understand that firstly father has become old and lost balance of mind along with his analytical power. Secondly, he is under the control of Kamadeva. I am totally convinced that Rama is above board and does not deserve to be humiliated and banished for fourteen hard years of jungle life by any stretch of imagination but is bound by the dictum of ‘pitru vaakya paripalana thus he having become a victim of circumstances being tied up tightly with principles. Now, as regards King Dashartha, you ought to be aware that as to which father who has the great reputation of being an outstanding reputation of courage, diplomacy and enormous love for Rama would have ever imagined of banishing his own son especially as the latter is a soft, clean minded, self controlled and even passive for his sworn enemies! All the same, how indeed such reputed King could have taken a childish decision is due to the huge pressure on his mind’. Thus Lakshmana sought to soften the troubled psyche of Devi Kousalya. Then Lakshmana addressed Shri Rama: ‘Raghu veera! When you hold and lift up your dhanush and stand straight up like Yama Raja with extreme concentration to destroy the enemy, who do you think that stands beside you for defence behind and who else do you realise that along with you would by complementing and multiplying your arrows and suffocate the opposing forces. In case either Bharata or his co defending champions fight against you or me, then the again the entire Ayodhya could be dismantled into splintered pieces. If an eventuality might arise that Kaikeyi encourages violence against you, then I am prepared to throw her into prison even against the will of the King Dasharatha! Raghunandana! How dare one could oppose me and that Bharata to be made the King. *Anurakto 'smi bhāvena bhrātaram devi tattvataḥ, satyena dhanuṣā caiva datteneṣṭena te śape/ dīptam agnim aranyaṁ vā yadi rāmaḥ pravekṣyate, praviṣṭam tatra mām devi tvam pūrvam avadhāraya/ harāmi vīryād duḥkhaṁ te tamaḥ sūrya ivoditaḥ, devī paśyatu me vīryam rāghavaś caiva paśyatu/My senior mother! I swear on my truthfulness, my dhanush, the charities that I have given away and so on, believe me that I admire and love Rama for ever! I could jump into flames for his sake even as we are about to enter into deep, thick and dingy jungles! Then the bravery and fortitude of Rama as supplemented by my own too should protect you from any eventuality of sorrow and helplessness like the brightness of Sun smashes darkness’. As Lakshmana assuaged Kousalya’s pitiable condition and fright, she stated: ‘My son Rama! As I am strengthened by Lakshmana’s assurances, I am being slowly getting somewhat relieved of my distress and dismay. As such, I leave you to abide by your own volition and may decide as per your considered judgment. Yet at the same time, you are no doubt aware that ‘seva’ to mother would be as per dharma. *yathaiva rājā pūjyas te gauraveṇa tathā hy aham, tvām nāham anujānāmi na gantavyam ito vanam/ tvadvīyogān na me kāryam jīvitena sukheṇa vā, tvayā saha mama śreyas tṛṇānām api bhakṣaṇam/ yadi tvam yāsyasi vanaṁ tyaktvā mām śokalālasām, aham prāyam ihāsiṣye na hi śakṣyāmi jīvitum/ Just as you are proud and respectful of your father, so ought to be of your mother. I might not be able to instruct you to get lost into the forests, but surely request you not go to the forests. In case you decide not to accede to my request, I find to reason to my carry on with my life. If you leave me behind like this, then I should keep on fasting for days or months and fall dead.’ Then Rama replied: ‘ Dear adored mother! May I place my head down at your feet. I have no capability and audacity to negate father’s instructions and have no option but to go to dandakaranya as that would tantamount to ‘go hatya’. There was the instance of Vidvan Kandu Muni on receiving the instruction of his father never hesitated to perform ‘go hatya’! *asmākaṁ ca kule pūrvam sagarasyājñayā pituḥ, khanadbhiḥ sāgarair bhūtim avāptaḥ sumahān vadhaḥ/ jāmadagnyena rāmeṇa reṇukā janatī svayam, kṛttā paraśunāraṇye pitur vacanakāriṇā/ Our heritage and ancestry has been such that by the instruction of Sagara Chakravarti, his son and even the latter lineage of King’s of Bhagiratha were never contented to dig up earth and secure Akasha Ganga to Patala to purify the souls of the ancestors. Also, Bhargava Rama the son of Maharshi followed the instruction and killed his own mother!***

[Vishleshanas on 1. Bhagiratha and 2. Parashu Rama . Bhagiratha: Emperor Sagara performed Asvamedha (Horse) Sacrifice and Indra hid the horse which was discovered by the unruly 60,000 sons of

Sagara, nearby the place where Sage Kapila was practising Sankhaya Yoga and when disturbed badly, the Sage burnt all of them into ashes by his power. Sagar's another son Ansuman pursued the search of the Sacrificial Horse and found the Horse where Kapila was in meditation. Ansuman begged of the Sage about the whereabouts of his cousins and was informed that the hooligans were burnt to death and could be brought back to life only when washed by the River of Ganges which could only be brought down to Earth from the Skies. The Sacrifice of Horse having been performed by Sagara, Ansuman began his devotion to Lord Siva to bring Ganges down to Earth. But neither he nor his father Dilipa could succeed in the mission. It was for **Bhagiradha** to pursue the operation further. His life's mission was to bring Ganges down to Earth from Heavens. Bhagiradha's prayers were indeed granted by Mother Ganges to the devotee but warned him that the force of the flow from the Heavens to Earth could be withstood by no less than Lord Siva Himself! Bhagiradha never stopped his grand endeavour and worshipped Lord Siva with austerity and purity who agreed, not only because of the sincerity with which the devotee desired to fulfill the long-standing family wish but also owing to the reason of Universal advantage. The Lord assumed a massive body and controlled the force of the River flowing from Lord Vishnu's feet and bore the brunt of the impact on His head in His 'Jatajut' or twisted hairs and released but a portion of the Holy River. Bhagiradha directed the fiery flow by riding a fast Chariot and brought it to the place where the ashes of his forefathers were purified and their souls liberated to Heavens. (Maha Bhagavata)

Parashu Raama was a paradigm of paternal devotion and destruction of Evil. In the lineage was born Jamadagni and his wife Renuka gave birth to their youngest son **Parasu Rama** or Rama with an axe. He destroyed the whole clan of contemporary Kings who were tyrants and cruel to their Subjects. Devi Renuka the mother of Parasurama reached a River for bathing and found a Gandharva King too bathing with his wives. She had a slight fascination of the Gandharva in her mind. This was noticed by Jamadagni and as she returned from the river-bed ordered her head to be chopped. Son Parasurama killed his mother with his axe instantly even as an evil-feeling of mind was felt by her. Sage Jamadagni appreciated the spontaneous action and asked for a boon to Parasurama and the latter requested that his mother be brought to life again. Such was the paternal devotion and fearlessness of Parasurama who re-established Dharma and valour. (Maha Bhagavata)

Shri Rama continued: 'There were many instances of 'Pitru Vakya Paripalana' down the ages being fully aware of the risks of blatant 'adharma' like digging the earth deep, 'go hatya' and even 'maatru hatya'! *Naaham dharmapurvam te pratikulam pravartaye, purvairabhipreto gato maargonugamyate/* Therefore, dear mother, I am not diverging from the established principles of dharma which my ancestors, or Rishis or Maha Panditas had traversed along in the past. *Tadetat tu mayaa kaaryam kriyate bhuvi naanyathaa, piturhi vachanam kurvan na kaschinnaama heeyate/* I am faithfully following the most appropriate path destined and prescribed for me and nothing contrary to it. Whosoever would follow the instructed path chosen for my father should be indestructible howsoever frightful and heinous that might be!' Having thus reiterating his decision of 'aranya vaasa', Rama addressed Lakshmana as follows: 'Brother Lakshmana! I am fully seized of your attachment for me and are your valour, bravery and indomitable energy. Mother Koushalya is highly agitated and is unable to overcome it. She is still not able to appreciate the values of dharma, satya, dama, and kshama or virtue-truthfulness- self restraint and forgiveness. You are aware of the value of dharma on earth in which truthfulness is embedded into. Father's directive to me is a component of dharma. Persons of faith and worthy significance have the duty of complying with and obeying the instructions of father, mother, guru and the learned. Veera Lakshmana! That is why father's considered instruction could not be transgressed as explained in his presence by no uncertain terms by Devi Kaikeyi. That is why those who abide by the 'kshaatra dharma' ought to discard the so called common sense, anchor to dharma and soften the resistance and attitudinal rigidity.' Having thus firming up his resolute action, he bent down at his mother's feet once again and said: *Anumanyasva maam Devi! gamishyaantamito vanam, shaapitaasi mama praanaih kuru svastyanaani me/Devi!* I will proceed to the forests and give me your permission with best your wishes for 'swasti' and farewell. Just as Rajarshi Yayati in the past had abandoned swarga and returned to earth, I too take a vow that I shall most certainly return to Ayodhya.! *Shokam sandhaaryataam maatarhridaye*

saadhu maa shuchah, vanavaasaadi haishyaami punah kritvaa piturvachah/ Dear mother! do very kindly suppress your anguish and do not cry away; after obeying the instructions of revered father, I will most certainly return back to Ayodhya! My sincere advice to you, to me, to Sita, to Lakshman, and Mother Sumitra too that we ought not to transgress the wishes of dear father and that indeed is the ‘sanaatana dharma’ the age old and time less principle! Mother! do not yet discard all items meant for the Rajyabhisheka but do please suppress your emotions, have the items required for my forest life to be offered to me and kindly allow me to exit for now. As Rama had thus unemotionally and convincingly assuaged the most disturbed psyche of his mother, the latter had somewhat recovered and said: ‘dear son! In the context of dharma I am also visualising the inevitable and sudden occurrences; but indeed could I survive in your absence. You should not have left me away in this way. How could I survive in your absence! Of which worth are all these fastings, pujas and jagaranas! What have I achieved now excepting of a ‘jeevan mrityu’ or of the form of a dead aliveness!’ Then Devi Kousalya addressed Lakshmana and said: ‘I am no doubt aware of your valour and deep attachment to Rama but you are also a party to this mess and are putting me and Sumitra too subjecting us to untold misery. I am fully seized of the outstanding significance of Dharma *per se*, but are ignoring the other aspects of dharma like bharya dharma-artha dharma-and kaama dharma and these three essential aspects of dharma. ‘Atthi satkara’ along with one’s wife is dharma; like wise, execution in the form of one’s beloved wife is kaama dharma; putra prapti and subsequent attainment post life is dharma. Dharma encompasses discharge of artha-kama-mokshas of the Purusharthas. Dharma against the rudimentary precepts of ‘purusharthas’ is that which is devoid of meaningful life and be worthy of being discarded. I am aware the a father figure is of uniqueness but the directives given by him out of infatuation, or mental disability, or prejudice, or anger are worthy of discarding; the carry outs of such mental aberrations of a father are not pro-dharma but its negations. Kumara Lakshmana! Remember, while following the instruction of a cruel father, then one should seek to the considered advises of the mother or a guru.’ As Kousalya was prompting Lakshmana like wise, Rama tried to somehow divert the attention of both of them; indeed, he felt her genuine expressions of agony at the misfortune befallen on her suddenly and over night, especially from the peaks of the erstwhile rejoicing. But since he had made up his mind with his firm decision he felt that he would have liked to somehow moved out prostrating and circumambulating thrice before his departure along with Lakshmana. He then addressed Lakshmana as a diversion.

Sarga Twenty Two

Rama asked Lakshmana to remove all the preparatory materials like the vessels etc. meant for his Rajyabhisheka since that would be unwanted then

Atha tam vyathayā dīnam saviśeṣam amarṣitam, śvasantam iva nāgendram roṣavisphāritekṣaṇam/ āsādyā rāmaḥ saumitriṁ suhṛdam bhrātaram priyam, uvācedam sa dhairyena dhārayan sattvam ātmavān/ saumitre yo ’bhiṣekārthe mama sambhārasambhramah, abhiṣekanivṛtyarthe so ’stu sambhāra sambhramah/ yasyā madabhiṣekārtham mānasam paritapyate, mātā naḥ sā yathā na syāt saviśāṅkā tathā kuru/ tasyāḥ śāṅkāmayam duḥkham muhūrtam api notsahe, manasi pratisamjātam saumitre ’ham upekṣitum/ na buddhipūrvam nābuddham smarāmīha kadā cana, mātṛṇām vā pitur vāham kṛtam alpam ca vipriyam/ satyaḥ satyābhisamdhāś ca nityam satyaparākramah, paralokabhayād bhīto nirbhayo ’stu pitā mama/ tasyāpi hi bhaved asmin karmany apratisamhṛte, satyam neti manastāpas tasya tāpas tape ca mām/ abhiṣekavidhānam tu tasmāt samhṛtya lakṣmaṇa, anvag evāham icchāmi vanam gantum itaḥ punah/ mama pravrajānād adya kṛtakṛtyā nṛpātmajā, sutam bharatam avyagram abhiṣecayitā tataḥ/ mayi cīrājīnadhare jātamaṅgaladhāriṇi, gate ’raṇyam ca kaikeyyā bhaviṣyati manaḥsukham/ buddhiḥ praṇṭā yeneyam manas ca susamāhitam, tat tu nārhami samkleṣṭum pravrajīṣyāmi mācīram/ kṛtāntas tv eva saumitre draṣṭavyo matpravāsane, rājyasya ca vitṛṇasya punar eva nivartane/ kaikeyyāḥ pratipattir hi katham syān mama pīḍane, yadi bhāvo na daivo ’yam kṛtāntavihito bhavet/ jānāsi hi yathā saumya na māṭṛṣu mamāntaram, bhūtapūrvam viśeṣo vā tasyā mayi sute ’pi vā/ so ’bhiṣekanivṛtyarthaiḥ

pravāsārthais ca durvacaiḥ, ugrair vākyair aham tasyā nānyad daivāt samarthaye/ katham prakṛtisampannā rājaputrī tathāguṇā, brūyāt sā prakṛteva strī matpīḍām bhartṛsamnidhau/ yad acintyam tu tad daivam bhūteṣv api na hanyate, vyaktam mayi ca tasyām ca patito hi viparyayaḥ/ kaś cid daivena saumitre yoddhum utsahate pumān, yasya na grahaṇam kim cit karmaṇo 'nyatra dṛśyate/ sukhaduhkhe bhayakrodhau lābhālābhau bhavābhavau, yasya kim cit tathābhūtam nanu daivasya karma tat/ vyāhate 'py abhiṣeke me paritāpo na vidyate, tasmād aparitāpaḥ saṁs tvam apy anuvidhāya mām, pratisamhāraya kṣipram ābhiṣecanikīm kriyām/ na lakṣmaṇāsmiṁ mama rājyavighne; mātā yavīyasy atisānkanīyā, daivābhipannā hi vadanty anīṣtam; jānāsi daivam ca tathāprabhāvam/

As the Rama Rajyabhisheka was cancelled, Lakshmana was utterly frustrated and disgusted psychologically and was looking like a fumingly mad elephant king with restless and roving eyes. But Shri Rama was cool and composed with self control as though nothing had gone amiss and addressed Lakshmana with no feeling of ill will: 'Lakshmana! Be normal and unflustered; what all the materials many of which were expensive and rare with studiousness and patience have been collected and acquired for the Rajyabhisheka be please disposed off and instead collect the simple paraphernalia for our journey for settlement into the forests. There should not be any remnants and traces of whatever material and arrangements had been collected and made which Kaikeyi would not have liked be please dismantled and disappeared. I would not like any delay in wiping away the traces of neither the material nor the memories even. She should not be disturbed with sad memories of men and women frantically collecting material and pre arrangements. Lakshmana! I might have offended my mothers or father in the past on some occasions unknowingly or unrealisingly for which I am regretful. Especially, father has been tormented by the fright of death! May that fear be kept far aloof! In case my 'rajyabhisheka' was not stalled and that I have not have proceeded to forests fothwith, then that feeling of death might have been doubled up. Lakshmana! *Abhiṣekavidhānam tu tasmāt samhr̥tya lakṣmaṇa, anvag evāham icchāmi vanam gantum itaḥ punaḥ/ mama pravrajānād adya kṛtakṛtyā nṛpātmajā, sutam bharatam avyagram abhiṣecayitā tataḥ/* It is due to these reasons that I wish to remove traces of my rajyabhisheka and proceed with no further loss of time to the forests. On my exit, may mother Kaikeyi be contented and with the least apprehensions commence Bharata's rajyabhisheka with comfort and peace of mind! As I am shortly dressed up in deer skin and with dishevelled hair with a 'jataajuta' on head, then she should me contented. I do not really disappoint her as she is merely following my fate which Brahma has destined for me. This eventuality must therefore be construed as an act of God only to be reconciled with and obeyed. Other wise how could Kaikeyi have thought of this occurrence! Soumya Lakshmana! Do not you recall the times when I had never realised any feeling of difference of my mother and the other mothers and vice versa too and similarly the sons were affectionate to all the mothers and brothers as a well knit family. But the act of God made the difference of Kaikeyi's mind and used such deplorable language as from a lowly woman while attacking the father. *Yad acintyam tu tad daivam bhūteṣv api na hanyate, vyaktam mayi ca tasyām ca patito hi viparyayaḥ/ kaś cid daivena saumitre yoddhum utsahate pumān, yasya na grahaṇam kim cit karmaṇo 'nyatra dṛśyate/ sukhaduhkhe bhayakrodhau lābhālābhau bhavābhavau, yasya kim cit tathābhūtam nanu daivasya karma tat/* As has now happened is what God has willed. None of the Beings on earth or even those in the upper lokas could neither foresee nor stall what has been willed by the directive of Vidhaata and thus prompted Kaikeyi to provoke and influence father. Indeed, when the time arrives for either joy or sorrow, the fruits of the erstwhile 'karma' of a Being beecome irresistible and no force on earth or the universe in totality. Sukha-duhkhas, bhaya-krodhas, utpatti vinaashas are inexplicable as one experiences and are thus the Acts of the Unknown.

[Bhagavad Gita Stanza 56 of Sankhya Yoga is quoted: *Duhkeshvanudvignamanaah sukheshu vigataspruhah, veetaraaga bhaya krodhah sthitadheer- muniruchyate/* Getting terribly agitated while facing insurmountable impediments and getting extremely overjoyed by very joyous experiences is the negation of an equanimous mind and the ability to neutralise the emotions. One's capacity to neutralise the inner emotions of pleasures and pains alike is the State of 'Sthitapagjnantva'! Sorrows and joys are the consequences of discontent and of success. The vicious circle of discontentment leads to

disappointment which itches on the fear of failure. This creates irritability, fear, anguish, anger, and back to dissatisfaction of life. Sadhakas realise that without Shiva's approval even an ant or insect would not do harm. And 'Shivaagjna' is on account of one's own doings of the previous births and of the ongoing one, besides the estimated future foretellings too. The Karma Sutra explains: *Avashyamanubhoktavyam sthitam karma shubhamashubham/* or our own 'karma phala' or the sweetness or sourness of the fruit is reciprocated. That firm belief of hope or disappointment as the case that may be, is the 'Atma Swarupa' which certainly not is the body but the Self Consciousness of the concerned body which is clean and transparent and indestructible and eternal.]

Shri Rama thus exhorted Lakshmana: May all the materials and arrangements made for my Rajyabhisheka be expunged and destroyed traceless and never even feel that the root cause of this confusion and chaos is Kaikeyi but an act of the Unknown.

Sarga Twenty Three

Reacting to remove the material for Rajyabhisheka, Lakshmana continued arguing whether the decision was correct, but Rama once again reiterated that his decision was irrevocable

Iti bruvati rāme tu lakṣmaṇo 'dhaḥśirā muhuḥ, śrutvā madhyam jagāmeva manasā duḥkhaḥarṣayoḥ/ tadā tu baddhvā bhrukuṭīm bhruvor madhye naraṣabha, niśāsvāsa mahāsarpo bilastha iva roṣitaḥ/ tasya duṣprativīkṣyam tad bhrukuṭīśahitam tadā, babhau kruddhasya simhasya mukhasya sadṛśam mukham/ agrahas tam vidhunvams tu hastī hastam ivātmanaḥ, tiryag ūrdhvam śarīre ca pātayitvā śirodharām/ agrākṣṇā vīkṣamāṇas tu tiryag bhrātaram abravīt, asthāne sambhramo yasya jāto vai sumahān ayam/ dharmadoṣaprasaṅgena lokasyānatiśaṅkayā, katham hy etad asaṁbhrāntas tvadvidho vaktum arhati/ yathā daivam aśauṇḍiraṁ sauṇḍīraḥ kṣatriyaṣabhaḥ, kim nāma kṛpaṇam daivam aśaktam abhiśamsasi/ pāpayos te katham nāma tayoḥ śaṅkā na vidyate, santi dharmopadhāḥ ślakṣṇā dharmātman kim na budhyase/ lokavidviṣṭam ārabdham tvadanyasyābhiṣecanam, yeneyam āgatā dvaidham tava buddhir mahīpate, sa hi dharmo mama dveṣyaḥ prasaṅgād yasya muhyasi/ yady api pratipattis te daivī cāpi tayor matam, tathāpy upekṣaṇīyam te na me tad api rocate/ viklavo vīryahīno yaḥ sa daivam anuvartate, vīrāḥ sambhāvītātmanō na daivam paryupāsate/ daivam puruṣakāreṇa yaḥ samarthaḥ prabādhitum, na daivena vipannārthaḥ puruṣaḥ so 'vasīdati/ drakṣyanti tv adya daivasya pauruṣam puruṣasya ca, daivamānuṣayor adya vyaktā vyaktir bhaviṣyati/ adya matpauruṣahataṁ daivam drakṣyanti vai janāḥ, yad daivād āhataṁ te 'dya dṛṣṭam rājyābhiṣecanam/ atyaṅkuṣam ivoddāmaṁ gajaṁ madabalodddhatam, pradhāvitam aham daivam pauraṣeṇa nivartaye/ lokapālāḥ samastās te nādya rāmābhiṣecanam, na ca kṛtsnās trayo lokā vihanyuḥ kim punaḥ pitā/ yair vivāsas tavāraṇye mitho rājan samarthitaḥ, araṇye te vivatsyanti caturdaśa samās tathā/ aham tadāśam chetsyāmi pitus tasyāś ca yā tava, abhiṣekaviḥātena putrarājyāya vartate/ madbalena viruddhāya na syād daivabalam tathā, prabhaviṣyati duḥkhāya yathograṁ pauraṣam mama/ ūrdhvam varṣasahasrānte prajāpālyam anantaram, āryaputrāḥ kariṣyanti vanavāsam gate tvayi/ pūrvarājaraṣivṛtṭyā hi vanavāso vidhīyate, prajā nikṣīpya putreṣu putravat paripālana/ sa ced rājany anekāgre rājyavibhramaśaṅkayā, naivam icchasi dharmātman rājyam rāma tvam ātmani/ pratijāne ca te vīra mā bhūvam vīralokabhāk, rājyam ca tava rakṣeyam aham veleva sāgarām/ maṅgalair abhiṣiṅcasva tatra tvam vyāpṛto bhava, aham eko mahīpālān alam vārayitum balāt/ na śobhārthāv imau bāhū na dhanur bhūṣaṇāya me, nāsirābandhanārthāya na śarāḥ stambhahetavaḥ/ amitradamanārtham me sarvam etac catuṣṭayam, na cāham kāmāye 'tyarthaṁ yaḥ syāc chatrur mato mama/ asinā tīkṣṇadhāreṇa vidyuccalitarvasā, pragrhītena vai śatrum vajriṇam vā na kalpaye/ khaḍganiṣeṣaṇiṣṭair gahanā duṣcarā ca me, hastyaśvanarahastoruśirobhir bhavitā mahī/ khaḍgadhārāhatā me 'dya dīpyamānā ivādrayaḥ, patiṣyanti dvipā bhūmau meghā iva savidyutaḥ/ baddhagodhāṅgulitrāṇe pragrhītaśarāsane, katham puruṣamānī syāt puruṣāṇām mayi sthite/ bahubhiś caikam atyasyann ekena ca bahūṅ janān.viniyokṣyāmy aham bāṇān ṅvājijagamarmas/ adya me 'straprabhāvasya prabhāvāḥ prabhaviṣyati, rājñās cāprabhutām kartum prabhutvam ca tava prabho/ adya candanasārasya keyūrāmokṣaṇasya ca, vasūnām ca vimokṣasya suhṛdām pālanaṣya ca/ anurūpāv

imau bāhū rāma karma kariṣyataḥ, abhiṣecanaviḡhnasya kartṛṇām te nivāraṇe/ bravīhi ko 'dyaiva mayā viyujyatām; tavāsuhṛt prāṇayaśaḥ suhṛjjanaiḥ, yathā taveyaṁ vasudhā vaśe bhavet; tathaiva mām śādhi tavāsmi kimkaraḥ/ vimṛjya bāṣpaṁ parisāntvya cāsakt; sa lakṣmaṇaṁ rāghavavaṁśavardhanaḥ, uvāca pitrye vacane vyavasthitām; nibodha mām eṣa hi saumya satpathaḥ/

As Rama instructed to remove all the materials and expunge all the traces of the erstwhile proposal of Rama Rajyabhisheka, Lakshmana took to long and heavy breathing with indescribable anguish and fury like a cobra pulled out of its deep outlet and like a lion raged from its cave. He shook his head like a reluctant king of elephants throwing its trunk up, down and sideways and saw Rama's face and said: 'My dear brother! You might be thinking that a section of the public might perhaps be feeling that how could you be a king of virtue in case you defy the instruction of the father. You might also be thinking that in case you might not be following the paternal instruction, others too might follow your example and that in this manner the principle of dharma might get degraded! You are also talking in terms of 'daivika nirṇaya' and taking umbrage under the garb of one's fate on the principle of 'as you sow, so you reap'! Does not this kind of psychology tantamount to escapism and even helplessness. This is another form of 'asamardhata' or lack of courage and assertiveness. Why are we concerned of the likely criticism of sinful sections of the society! Is 'dharma' the reversal of 'nyaya' or of mutual complimentarity! Raghunandana! Why are you of proven background of fame and valour taking umbrage of fate as after all such beginnings of fate might as well have taken the forms of non starters! Kindly pardon my inability to follow your unjustifiable instructions! Rama Prabhu! You are being carried away by the instruction of the father under the cover and clothing dress of dharma, and I am still not convinced. Surely you are yourself be of two-mindedness and as father himself too should not have been too, but got succumbed equally so as per the misleading interpretation of dharma of which Kaikeyi herself was neither a believer nor a follower. But she took advantage of father's weak mindedness which with equal weakness that you too are following up like a sheep following another! Indeed it is time to get out of this vicious circle. I am still not convinced that father and mother were standing in the way of your Rajyabhisheka owing to 'Daivika Prerana' or the celestial decision and even if you are so convinced, still that would be challenged by me. *viklavo vīryahīno yaḥ sa daivam anuvartate, vīrāḥ sambhāvitātmāno na daivam paryupāsate/* Only those who are timid, nervous and apprehensive take the coverage under lucklessness and misfortune but are unable to vindicate with desisive and resolute action. *yair vivāśas tavāraṇye mitho rājan samarthitaḥ, arāṇye te vivatsyanti caturdaśa samās tathā/ ahaṁ tadāśāṁ chetsyāmi pitus tasyāś ca yā tava, abhiṣekaviḡhātena putrarājyāya vartate/ madbalena viruddhāya na syād daivabalaṁ tathā, prabhaviṣyati duḡhkhāya yathograṁ pauraṣaṁ mama/* Rajan! All those who have tricked you away for the fourteen long years of forest life should indeed go and hide themselves likewise. I am prepared to turn Kaikeyi's ambitions to despatch Rama for forest life into ashes. To all those who seek to oppose me, should be subjected to frightful kind of 'pushaartha' and 'daiva bala' in reverse and would not be able to escape my grip! May you assume Kingship now for thousand years and your next generation too should assume further kingship lineage. *pratijāne ca te vīra mā bhūvaṁ vīralokabhāk, rājyaṁ ca tava rakṣeyam ahaṁ veleva sāgaram/ maṅgalair abhiṣiṅcasva tatra tvaṁ vyāpṛto bhava, aham eko mahīpālān alaṁ vārayitūṁ balāt/* Maha Vira Rama! I would take a 'pratigjna' or vow that just as the tides of an ocean would never cross the boundaries, your kingdom too would be saved by me for ever. Therefore, kindly do let me be allowed to retain the materials for your 'rajyabhisheka'. My hands are not merely meant as symbolic brightness nor my dhanush and sword but are truly and genuinely meant for destroy the enemy and once as I am convinced that a person is an enemy, I could never leave without destruction. Once I hold my sparkling sword is lifted up by my arms, it might be presumed as of Indra the 'vajra dhaari' himself. As its mighty punch gets hit, elephants and horses are torn to pieces like thunderous clouds on the sky. Rama! Why do you not insrtuct me here and now, to sift the two categories of your true followers and enemies and remove traces of the latter. Having heard the heated up emotions of Lakshmana as above, Shri Rama reiterated his forceful descisiveness and said: Soumya! Do please understand that I am firm in my resolve to truthfully follow the instructions of my parents as this is the singular path to be followed most assertively.

Sarga Twenty Four

Devi Kousalya, reacting sharply about Rama's decisiveness to undergo Vana Vasa, resolves to follow him, and Rama invoked the argument of her preserving Pativratya and should not desert her husband

*Tam samīkṣya tv avahitaṃ pitur nirdeśapālāne, kausalyā bāṣpasamruddhā vaco dharmiṣṭham abravīt/
adṛṣṭaduḥkḥo dharmātmā sarvabhūtapriyaṃvadaḥ, mayi jāto daśarathāt katham uñchena vartayet/ yasya
bhṛtyās ca dāsās ca mṛṣṭāny annāni bhuñjate, katham sa bhokṣyate nātho vane mūlaphalāny ayam/ ka
etac chraddadhec chrutvā kasya vā na bhaved bhayam, guṇavān dayito rājño rāghavo yad vivāsyate/
tvayā vihīnām iha mām śokāgnir atulo mahān, pradhakṣyati yathā kakṣam citrabhānur himātyaye/
katham hi dhenuḥ svam vatsam gacchantam nānugacchati, aham tvānugamiṣyāmi yatra putra gamiṣyasi/
tathā nigaditam mātrā tad vākyam puruṣarṣabhaḥ, śrutvā rāmo 'bravīd vākyam mātaram bhṛṣa -
duḥkhitam/ kaikeyā vañcito rājā mayi cāraṇyam āśrite, bhavatyā ca parityakto na nūnam vartayiṣyati/
bhartuḥ kila parityāgo nṛśaṃsaḥ kevalam striyāḥ, sa bhavatyā na kartavyo manasāpi vigarhitah/ yāvaj
jīvati kākutsthaḥ pitā me jagatīpatiḥ, śuśrūṣā kriyatām tāvat sa hi dharmah sanātanaḥ/ evam uktā tu
rāmeṇa kausalyā śubha darśanā, tathety uvāca supṛitā rāmam akliṣṭakāriṇam/ evam uktas tu vacanam
rāmo dharmabhṛtām varaḥ, bhūyas tām abravīd vākyam mātaram bhṛṣaduḥkhitam/ mayā caiva bhavatyā
ca kartavyam vacanam pituḥ, rājā bhartā guruḥ śreṣṭhaḥ sarveṣām īśvaraḥ prabhuḥ/ imāni tu mahāraṇye
vihṛtya nava pañca ca, varṣāni paramaprītaḥ sthāsyāmi vacane tava/ evam uktā priyam putram
bāṣpapūrṇānanā tadā, uvāca paramārtā tu kausalyā putravatsalā/ āsām rāma sapatnīnām vastum
madhye na me kṣamam, naya mām api kākutstha vanam vanyam mṛgīm yathā yadi te gamane buddhiḥ
kṛtā pitur apekṣayā/ tām tathā rudatīm rāmo rudan vacanam abravīt, jīvantyā hi striyā bhartā daivataṃ
prabhur eva ca, bhavatyā mama caivādyā rājā prabhavati prabhuḥ/ bhartuḥ kila parityāgo nṛśaṃsaḥ
kevalam striyāḥ, sa bhavatyā na kartavyo manasāpi vigarhitah/ yāvaj jīvati kākutsthaḥ pitā me
jagatīpatiḥ, śuśrūṣā kriyatām tāvat sa hi dharmah sanātanaḥ/ evam uktā tu rāmeṇa kausalyā śubha
darśanā, tathety uvāca supṛitā rāmam akliṣṭakāriṇam/ evam uktas tu vacanam rāmo dharmabhṛtām
varaḥ, bhūyas tām abravīd vākyam mātaram bhṛṣaduḥkhitam/ mayā caiva bhavatyā ca kartavyam
vacanam pituḥ, rājā bhartā guruḥ śreṣṭhaḥ sarveṣām īśvaraḥ prabhuḥ/ imāni tu mahāraṇye vihṛtya nava
pañca ca, varṣāni paramaprītaḥ sthāsyāmi vacane tava/ evam uktā priyam putram bāṣpapūrṇānanā tadā,
uvāca paramārtā tu kausalyā putravatsalā/ āsām rāma sapatnīnām vastum madhye na me kṣamam, naya
mām api kākutstha vanam vanyam mṛgīm yathā yadi te gamane buddhiḥ kṛtā pitur apekṣayā/ tām tathā
rudatīm rāmo rudan vacanam abravīt, jīvantyā hi striyā bhartā daivataṃ prabhur eva ca, bhavatyā
mama caivādyā rājā prabhavati prabhuḥ/ bhārataś cāpi dharmātmā sarvabhūtapriyaṃvadaḥ, bhavatīm
anuvarteta sa hi dharmarataḥ sadā/ yathā mayi tu niṣkrānte putrasokena pārthivaḥ, śramam nāvāpnuyāt
kim cid apramattā tathā kuru/ vratopavāsaniratā yā nārī paramottamā, bhartāram nānuvarteta sā ca
pāpagatir bhavet/ śuśrūṣam eva kurvīta bhartuḥ priyahite ratā, eṣa dharmah purā dṛṣṭo loke vede śrutah
smṛtaḥ/ pūjyās te matkṛte devi brāhmaṇās caiva suvratāḥ, evam kālāṃ pratīkṣasva mamāgamana
kāṅkṣiṇī/ prāpsyase paramam kāmam mayi pratyāgate sati, yadi dharmabhṛtām śreṣṭho dhārayiṣyati
jīvitam/ evam uktā tu rāmeṇa bāṣpaparyākulekṣaṇā, kausalyā putrasokārtā rāmam vacanam abravīt,
gaccha putra tvam ekāgro bhadrām te 'stu sadā vibho/ tathā hi rāmam vanavāsaniścitam; samīkṣya devī
parameṇa cetasā, uvāca rāmam śubhalakṣaṇam vaco; babhūva ca svastyayanābhikāṅkṣiṇī/*

Meanwhile, Devi Kousalya continued her expressions of frustration and anguish with interterminal weeping and unclear low voice said: how could I ever survive this shock of life by realising that Rama would have to survive by counting each morsel of uncooked rice, roots and fruits while even servants and maids would be eating well flavored and tasty food each day. Could Maharaja Dasharatha banish for forest life the cynosure of the Kakutstha heritage and shake up in the deep sleep of one and all of even the public! Undoubtedly the entire public would be ready to follow Rama to forests voluntarily and with gratitude for ensuring their life safe, happy and with dharma. His popularity comes from the depths of their thoughts and deeds as the ideal most human being. My unbearable anguish is like red hot fire fanned my forceful

winds of helplessness. It is due to my desperation that my heavy breathing too is like a furnace of an irrevocable disaster. *katham hi dhenuḥ svam vatsam gacchantam nānugacchati, aham tvānugamiṣyāmi yatra putra gamiṣyasi/* Beloved son! As normally a cow takes its steps forward and its calf follows the mother's tail; but in this case, as you proceed I shall follow you footsteps. As Kousalya was crying away her heart out, Rama said: dear mother! Kaikeyi has no doubt brought over this disaster by provoking my helpless father any way. Now, in this way if you too desert him, how indeed could he survive! *Bhartuḥ kila parityāgo nṛśamsaḥ kevalam striyāḥ, sa bhavatyā na kartavyo manasāpi vigarhitaḥ/ yāvaj jīvati kākutsthaḥ pitā me jagatīpatiḥ, śuśrūṣā kriyatām tāvat sa hi dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ/* Leaving behind a helpless and aged husband would doubtless be the most cruel and heartless act for a woman of virtue. Even a single flash of such thought should be most abhorable and the meanest since that would pave the way of his ruinous disaster! As long as he the the jewel of the Kakutsa Vamsha Maha Raja Dasharatha survives, it is your golden duty to serve that glorious husband of yours. Instantly, Devi acquiesced with compliance and got heart broken again. Then Rama exhorted his mother: 'Revered father's instruction is an equal duty; more so, he is the King, master of his subjects, peerless guide, our Ishvara and the unquestioned over lord. My dearest mother! As far as I am concerned, I should like to visit and tour the proverbial and massive 'dandakaranya' and return with fame and pride, even as your memories and thoughts are deep rooted in my innermost self always.' As Rama thus assuaged the tormented Devi Kousalya's psyche, he stated further: 'My dearmost mother! do you not realise that on her entire life long, a woman of 'Pativratya' esteem the husband as a Devata and Ishvara, just as I ought to consider both of you as my prized and priceless possessions! As long as the great and celebrated King Dasharatha is alive, never think you are an 'anaatha' or helpless. Further, *bharataś cāpi dharmātmā sarvabhūtapriyamvadaḥ, bhavatīm anuvarteta sa hi dharmarataḥ sadā/* Bharata too is a 'dharmaatma' or the symbol of dharma and nyaya, who is known for helping each and every individual and be assured of special 'seva' and considered service for you. Be therefore make all your endeavors to keep composed and serve the old father with your personalised service possibly alleviating his mindset too. *vratopavāsaniratā yā nārī paramottamā, bhartāram nānuvarteta sā ca pāpagatir bhavet/ śuśrūṣam eva kurvīta bhartuḥ priyahite ratā, eṣa dharmāḥ purā dṛṣṭo loke vede śrutaḥ smṛtaḥ/* Indeed you are fully aware mother! From the view point of outstanding stree dharma, maintain the 'vrata-upaasa' routine and attend to the service to husband which surely concretizes the path of heaven and to the contrary pulls down to the 'atho lokas'. Do follow this as a routine and await my return with patience and faith in Almighty. If only the Great King, my dear and most venerable father were to await my return, that should be deemed as my greatest gift of my life! As Rama sought to explain and convince his mother, she made great efforts to stop her incessant cryings and said: My heroic and peerless son of my unique pride! May your 'aranya vaasa' bestow supreme self confidence with epic like success, victory and safe return with such vindication that mankind and mother earth had never witnessed.

Sarga Twenty Five

With great difficulty, Rama finally convinces Kousalya to let him leave for 'vana vaasa' and she relented finally

Saa vineeya tam āyāsam upasprśya jalām śuci, cakāra mātā rāmasya maṅgalāni manasvinī/ svasti sādhyāś ca viśve ca marutaś ca maharṣayah, svasti dhātā vidhātā ca svasti pūṣā bhago 'ryamā/ ṛtavaś caiva pakṣāś ca māsāḥ saṁvatsarāḥ kṣapāḥ, dināni ca muhūrtāś ca svasti kurvantu te sadā/ smṛtir dhṛtiś ca dharmāś ca pāntu tvām putra sarvataḥ, skandaś ca bhagavān devaḥ somaś ca sabṛhaspatiḥ/ saptarṣayo nāradaś ca te tvām rakṣantu sarvataḥ, nakṣatrāṇi ca sarvāṇi grahāś ca sahadavatāḥ, mahāvanāni carato muniveśasya dhūmataḥ/ plavagā vṛścikā daṁṣā maśakāś caiva kānane, sarīṣpāś ca kīṭāś ca mā bhūvan gahane tava/ mahādvipāś ca simhāś ca vyāghrā ṛkṣāś ca daṁṣṭriṇaḥ, mahiṣāḥ śṅgiṇo raudrā na te druhyantu putraka/ nṛmāmsabhojanā raudrā ye cānye sattvajātayaḥ, mā ca tvām himsiṣuḥ putra mayā saṁpūjitāś tv iha/ āgamāś te śivāḥ santu sidhyantu ca parākramāḥ, sarvasaṁpattayo rāma svastimān gaccha putraka/ svasti te 'stv āntarikṣebhyaḥ pāṛthivebhyaḥ punaḥ

punaḥ, sarvebhyaś caiva devebhyo ye ca te paripanthinaḥ/ sarvalokaprabhur brahmā bhūtabhartā tatharṣayaḥ, ye ca śeṣāḥ surās te tvām rakṣantu vanavāsinam/ iti mālyaiḥ suragaṇān gandhaiś cāpi yaśasvinī, stutibhiś cānurūpābhir ānarcāyatalocanā/ yan maṅgalaṁ sahasrākṣe sarvadevanamaskṛte, vṛtranāśe samabhavat tat te bhavatu maṅgalam/ yan maṅgalaṁ suparṇasya vinatākalpayat purā, amṛtam prārthayānasya tat te bhavatu maṅgalam/ oṣadhīm cāpi siddhārthām viśalyakaraṇīm śubhām, cakāra rakṣām kausalyā mantrair abhijajāpa ca/ ānamya mūrdhni cāghrāya pariśvajya yaśasvinī, avadat putra siddhārtho gaccha rāma yathāsukham/ arogaṁ sarvasiddhārtham ayodhyām punar āgatam, paśyāmi tvām sukhaṁ vatsa susthitam rājaveśmani/ mayārcitā devagaṇāḥ śivādayo; maharṣayo bhūta mahāsuroragāḥ, abhiprayātasya vanaṁ cirāya te; hitāni kāṅkṣantu diśaś ca rāghava/ itīva cāśrupratipūrṇalocanā; samāpya ca svastyayanaṁ yathāvidhi, pradakṣiṇaṁ caiva cakāra rāghavaṁ; punaḥ punaś cāpi nipīḍya sasvaje/ tathā tu devyā sa kṛtapradakṣiṇo; nipīḍya mātus caraṇau punaḥ punaḥ, jagāma sītānilayaṁ mahāyāśāḥ; sa rāghavaḥ prajvalitaḥ svayā śrīyā/

Then having finally, albeit reluctantly, given permission to Rama to leave for ‘vana vaasa’, Devi Kousalya accorded ‘mangalacharana’ as a mark of sending him off with auspiciousness and best blessings and stated: Raghukula bhushana! Now nothing would prevent you from proceeding and keep on treading only on the path of dharma followed by men of high virtue. At the same time, you should always be vigilant and keep safe from risks and dangers. My son, you have all been visiting temples of Deva- Devis and ashramas of Maharshis; may all of them provide security at every moment. May all the ‘astrshastra vidyas’ so meticulously taught to you by Brahmarshi Vishvamitra provide constant protection to you. May your inborn traits of ‘pita-sushrysha’ - ‘maata seva’ - ‘satya paalana’ provide constant safety. Nara shreshtha! May samidhas-kusha grasaa-pavitris- yagjna vedis-puja mandiras-deva puja related places and temples - parvatas- trees- plants- water bodies- birds- serpents- and lions in the forests too extend protection. May Saandhyas-Vaishva Devas- Marud ganas - and Maharshis be vigilant to accord constant protection and so do Dhata- Vidhata-Pusha-Bhaga-Aryamas. May Indra-Ashta Loka Paalakaas- Shat Ritus- and Kala maana of years-months- days and nights- kshana kshanas provide you auspiciousness. May Shruti- Smriti-and Dharma ensure your well being. To Skanda Deva- Soma-Brihaspati- Saptarshis- and Brahmarshi Narada , may I seek Rama’s welfare at every minute. My son! May I make appeals to Siddha ganas, ashta dishas, and dik palakas for Rama’s protection constantly. My earnest submissions to all the mountains, oceans, Varuna Deva, Dyuloka, Antariksha, Prithivi, Vaayu, charaachara praanis, the entirety of nakshatras, nava grahas, dusks and dawns to grant safety to Rama. May the eternal Kala Devata bestow safety to my son constantly. May he not be concerned even for a minute of any fright or panic from the fearful Rakshasas- Pishachas-and cruel animals. May not the deep jungles infested with lions, tigers, wolves , cunning foxes, poisonous snakes, and even ants and mosquitos give any type of trepidation to my son Rama. Then having pleaded all possible sources of vigil and safety, Devi Koushaya blessed Rama thus: *āgamās te śivāḥ santu sidhyantu ca parākramāḥ, sarvasaṁpattayo rāma svastimān gaccha putraka/ svasti te ’stv āntarikṣebhyaḥ pārthivebhyaḥ punaḥ punaḥ, sarvebhyaś caiva devebhyo ye ca te paripanthinaḥ/* Dear son! May all the ways and means bestow auspiciousness to you; your intrepidity and treasures of virtue ensure your welfare! My best wishes and blessings to you for your travel and safe return. Swasti to you from the celestials, from earth and thereunder, and even from your enemies. Rama! The ‘dandakaranya’ that you are about to enter is governed by Shukra-Soma-Surya-Kubera and Yama; may I make sincere appeals to ensure safety, comfortable stay and safe return back to Ayodhya. Similarly, may Agni-Vayu- and Rishis enable Rama to steadfastly remember and recite during his worships, snaana-aachanas and so on’. So stating , Kousalya concluded her pujas, and formally performed the worship of Homagni for invoking various Devas in the presence of Ritviks and Veda Panditas and gave the ‘Prasaada’ to Rama Lakshmanas, while the latter gave away dakshinas and new clothes to the veda brahmanas. *Yan maṅgalaṁ sahasrākṣe sarvadevanamaskṛte, vṛtranāśe samabhavat tat te bhavatu maṅgalam/ yan maṅgalaṁ suparṇasya vinatākalpayat purā, amṛtam prārthayānasya tat te bhavatu maṅgalam/* The according of ‘Mangalacharana’ in that context was indeed memorable by Devi Koushalya along with the innumerable ritvikas and veda panditas was reminiscent of what Sahasra netra dhari Mahendra’s auspicious send off in the context of killing Vritrasura or that of Vinata Devi to her

son Garuda secure 'Amrita'! Subsequently, Devi Koushalya drew dear Rama near to her with love and deep attachment and blessed him again and again and stated to proceed with safe return with suppressed feelings and low-hoarse-shaky and murmuring tone, while Rama with stoic placidity made repeated 'pradakshinas' and 'paada namaskaaraas' repeatedly to mother and proceeded to Devi Sita's 'Mahal'.

[Vishleshanas: 1. on Vritrasura- Dadhiti-Indra - 2. Vinata - Garuda- Amrita: 1) Indra's Court is a masterpiece of the Universe, with Indra as a cynosure, surrounded by several semi-Gods and seated along with him by Sachi Devi. Guru Brihaspati, the Great Guide and Teacher of all the Subjects of the Court was among the Principal Advisor. In this ideal setting unfortunately, Brihaspati felt humiliated by Indra, as due respect to a Spiritual Master was not paid to him as Indra started cutting short and interrupting the Guru often. In course of time, Brihaspati stopped attending the Court. Indra no doubt apologised to the Guru, but the Guru did not relent. Lord Brahma called Indra and reprimanded him for his follies and had to look for an alternative. At the request of Demi-Gods, Brahma then appointed Visvarupa, the son of Diti's daughter Rachana and Prajapati Tvasta. In course of time, Indra got suspicious of the intentions of Visvarupa, the newly appointed Guru of Devatas; although Visvarupa was the son of Prajapati Tvastha, his mother Rachana was the daughter of Diti whose credentials were of Demons. While performing 'Homams' / 'Yagnas', he was in the habit of reciting the offerings to Fire God meant for Indra, Varuna and other Devatas loudly, but offered 'Ghee'(classified butter) secretly to demons as well. Also, Visvarupa who had three heads, used to consume 'Soma Ras'(Nectar) with one mouth, another with Wine and the third one with food. In a fit of rage, Indra killed Visvarupa, despite the knowledge that killing a Brahmin Priest would attract heavy penalty which was cleared by suitable means eventually..On learning what Indra did, Tvastha performed high-quality spiritual ceremonies with a view to avenge the death of his son. As a result, a huge, frightful figure emerged from the Fire-pit, who looked like capable of destroying the entire Universe. Tvasta named the giant demon as **Vritra**, as he was the product of enormous asceticism covering all the planetary systems. The entire army of Devas, headed by Indra, pulled out their collective strength pitted against the one man militia of Vritra to no avail. They had to, in fact, run in different directions in sheer self defence. Finally they made a group prayer to Lord Vishnu for a quick solution as Vritra was growing in power minute by minute. The divine response came that Sage Dadhichi could only help retrieve the ugly situation. The Sage assimilated spiritual knowledge and passed on the same to Asvini Devatas who attained the position of Jeevan Muktha (Liberation in life itself).The Mantras, including Narayana Kavacha was passed on to Prajapati Tvasta who in turn passed it on to his son Visvarupa too.The Narayana Kavacha fortified the body of **Sage Dhadhichi** and only the backbone of the Sage could help to put an end to Vritra. The Devas thus made a collective prayer to Dadhichi to spare his body for the noble cause of ending Vritrasura. Dadhichi consented and his back- bone was converted into a mighty Thunderbolt by the Divine Architect, Viswakarma. A ferocious battle followed then, when Satya Yuga was ending and Threta Yuga was being ushered in, as the entire force of powerful Demons headed by Vritrasura on one side and the mighty Demi Gods headed by Indra seated on 'Airavatha' - the Heavenly Elephant- fortified in his arms with the thunderbolt made out of Dhadhichi's back bone prepared by Viswakarma. Before using the Thunderbolt, Vritrasura became furious and fought Indra on one to one basis. He tormented and put Indra to shame.He taunted Indra to say that he made the heinous crime of killing a Holy Brahmin,Viswarupa and got away from the sin in a surreptitious manner. He cursed Indra and told that he was a coward and culpable.Without the Thunderbolt he would have been reprehensible. Vritrasura further said 'Almighty in His enormous Wisdom showed the way to kill me to stabilise order in the Universe and that the kind of death which has been awarded to me by Super Force Himself is my reward and not a punishment, as He is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer and His decision is ultimate.' By so saying Vritrasura invited the Thunderbolt to attain Salvation. Thus ended the memorable story of Vritrasura into the pages of the Great Puranas. When Vritrasura attained 'Moksha', all the Celestial Planets, Demi-Gods, Gandharvas and so on praised his valour, but Indra was the single being who was remorseful as he had the Guilt Complex to have killed two Brahmins,Visvarupa and Vritrasura. Indra's sinful reaction was chased by a feeling that a Chandala woman of old age suffering from untouchable diseases, till Indra ran away to Manas Sarovar, the abode of Goddess Lakshmi. When

Demi-Gods, and Sages advised Indra to attain freedom from the sin to perform the Yagna of Asvamedha or Sacrifice of Horse in Vedic Method then only Indra got absolved of the sin.(Sources: Maha Bhagavata and Devi Bhagavata Puranas)

2: Vinata-Garuda-Amrita: Vinata and Kadru were among the two wives of Kashyapa Muni. Kadru hatched thousands of eggs creating snakes while Vinata hatched only two. Vinata broke one egg and found a child named Aruna but was deformed. Eventually Aruna became the charioteer of Surya Deva. In a mutual bet, Vinata and Kadru out of playfulness; the bet was as to which colour was of Uchchaishrava the celestial horse born during ksheera saagara mathana; Vinata replied that the horse was white but the bet was lost since the horse's tail was black. Vinata lost the bet and became Kadru's servant and served her as also the progeny of snakes. The second son of Vinata named Garuda too was born weak with a beak and wings like an eagle but with the features of a human. As Garuda grew up he noticed that his mother was a slave and did all the domestic work including looking after the snake children. The latter used to tauntingly address Garuda as the son of Vinata and order him to give him rides on the sky. One day, Garuda was ordered by Kadru to take all her snake children to a near by island while Vinata should carry herself. In anger and disgust Garuda carried the snake children too high on the sky and the latter were half burnt by the heat of Surya Deva. Then as the snake kids screamed and Kadru prayed to Indra who instatantly saved them by rain showers. On landing back, Garuda told the serpent kids that he could keep on taking to many islands but on the condition that her mother be freed from the slavery. But Vinata disagreed and asked Garuda to strengthen his body by reaching Himalayas and lifting big tortoises and elephants to eat.Guruda did so and eventually made his body mighty and invincible. One day he found an elephant and tortoises and having lifted them, placed the preys on a strong branch of a huge tree to settle down and eat. But Vakalhilya Sages of miniature sizes hanging down the branch realised that the massive bird could fly them down to an island near by and befriended them by calling it as 'Garuda' or the one who could lift up massive loads. He helped them and they suggested to approach swarga on the high skies to secure amrit for longevity. As Garuda was nearing Swarga, Indra got concerened about the mighty sky and ran to Brihaspati. The latter, having realised the purpose of Garuda to lift amrita drops, alerted all the Devas including Vayu- Varuna- Agni-and so on and even the vajrayudha of Indra could not stop Garuda who finally did secure a pot of amrit and desired that his mother be freed from her slavery too. On way back, Vishnu appeared and smilingly offered that he could be his 'vaahana' for ever.!

Sarga Twenty Six

As Rama left Kousalya with mutual anguish, the Public too was unawere of the tragic developent, much less Devi Sita who was horrified

*Abhivādyā tu kausalyām rāmaḥ saṁprasthito vanam, kṛtasvastyayano mātrā dharmiṣṭhe vartmani
sthitaḥ/ virājayan rājasuto rājamārgam narair vṛtam, hṛdayāny āmamantheva janasya guṇavattayā
vaidehī cāpi tat sarvaṁ na śuśrāva tapasvinī, tad eva hṛdi tasyās ca yauvarājyābhiṣecanam/ devakāryam
sma sā kṛtvā kṛtajñā hṛṣṭacetanā, abhijñā rājadharmānām rājaputraṁ pratīkṣate/ praviveśātha rāmas tu
svaveśma suvibhūṣitam, prahṛṣṭajanasāmpūrṇam hriyā kim cid avānṁmukhaḥ/ atha sītā samutpatya
vepamānā ca taṁ patim, apaśyac chokasāntaptaṁ cintāvyākulilendriyam/ vivarṇavadanam dṛṣṭvā taṁ
prasvinnam amarṣanam, āha duḥkhābhisaṁtaptā kim idānīm idaṁ prabho/ adya bārhaspataḥ śrīmān
yuktaḥ puṣyo na rāghava, procyate brāhmaṇaiḥ prājñaiḥ kena tvam asi durmanāḥ/ na te sataśalākena
jalaphenanibhena ca, āvṛtaṁ vadanam valgu chatreṇābhivirājate/ vyajanābhyām ca mukhyābhyām
śatapatranibhekṣanam, candrahamsaprakāśābhyām vijyate na tavānanam/ vāgmīno bandināś cāpi
prahṛṣṭās tvam nararṣabha, stuvanto nādyā dṛṣyante maṅgalaiḥ sūtamāgadhāḥ/ na te kṣaudram ca dadhi
ca brāhmaṇā vedapāragāḥ, mūrdhni mūrdhāvāsiktasya dadhati sma vidhānataḥ/ na tvām prakṛtayaḥ
sarvā śreṇīmukhyās ca bhūṣitāḥ, anuvrajitum icchanti pauraḥpapadās tathā/ caturbhir vegasāmpannair
hayaiḥ kāñcanabhūṣanaiḥ, mukhyaḥ puṣyaratho yuktaḥ kim na gacchati te 'grataḥ/ na hastī cāgrataḥ
śrīmāms tava lakṣaṇapūjitaḥ, prayāne lakṣyate vīra kṛṣṇameghagiri prabhaḥ/ na ca kāñcanacitraṁ te*

paśyāmi priyadarśana, bhadrāsanaṃ puraskṛtya yāntaṃ vīrapuraḥsaram/ abhiṣeko yadā sajjah kim idānīm idaṃ tava, apūrvo mukhavarnaś ca na praharśaś ca lakṣyate/ itīva vilapantīm tām provāca raghunandanaḥ, sīte tatrabhavāṃs tāta pravrajayati mām vanam/ kule mahati sambhūte dharmajñe dharmacāriṇi, śṛṇu jānaki yenedaṃ kramenābhyāgataṃ mama/ rājñā satyapratijñena pitrā daśarathena me, kaikeyyai prītamanasā purā dattau mahāvarau/ tayādya mama sajjē 'sminn abhiṣeke nṛpodyate, pracoditaḥ sa samayo dharmeṇa pratinirjitaḥ/ caturdaśa hi varṣāni vastavyaṃ daṇḍake mayā, pitrā me bhārataś cāpi yauvarājye niyojitaḥ, so 'haṃ tvām āgato draṣṭuṃ prasthito vijanaṃ vanam/ bhāratasya samīpe te nāhaṃ kathyaḥ kadā cana, ṛddhiyuktā hi puruṣā na sahaṃte parastavam, tasmān na te guṇāḥ kathyā bhāratasyāgrato mama/ nāpi tvām tena bhartavyā viśeṣeṇa kadā cana, anukūlatayā śakyaṃ samīpe tasya vartitum/ ahaṃ cāpi pratijñāṃ tām guroḥ samanupālayan, vanam adyaiva yāsyāmi sthirā bhava manasvini/ yāte ca mayi kalyāṇi vanam muniniṣevitam, vratopavāsaratayā bhavitavyam tvayānaghe/ kālyam utthāya devānāṃ kṛtvā pūjāṃ yathāvidhi, vanditavyo daśarathaḥ pitā mama nareśvaraḥ/ mātā ca mama kausalyā vṛddhā saṃtāpakarśitā, dharmam evāgrataḥ kṛtvā tvattaḥ saṃmānam arhati/ vanditavyāś ca te nityaṃ yāḥ śeṣā mama mātaraḥ, snehapraṇayasambhogaiḥ samā hi mama mātaraḥ/ bhrātṛputrasamau cāpi draṣṭavyau ca viśeṣataḥ, tvayā lakṣmaṇasatruḥnau prāṇaiḥ priyatarau mama/ vipriyaṃ na ca kartavyaṃ bhāratasya kadā cana, sa hi rājā prabhuś caiva deśasya ca kulasya ca/ ārādhitā hi śīlena prayatnais copasevitāḥ, rājānaḥ saṃprasīdanti prakupyanti viparyaye/ aurasān api putrān hi tyajanty ahitakāriṇaḥ, samarthān saṃpragrḥṇanti janān api narādhipāḥ/ ahaṃ gamiṣyāmi mahāvanaṃ priye; tvayā hi vastavyam ihaiva bhāmini, yathā vyalīkaṃ kuruṣe na kasya cit; tathā tvayā kāryam idaṃ vaco mama/

As Rama departed Kouslaya's 'Rani Vaasa' and moved on to the Raja Marga, the public was yet not perhaps fully aware of the impending eventuality; even Devi Sita was not aware but just having completed her puja was planning to complete the finishing touches ahead. As he was entering the 'antahpura' or the inner chamber, Rama was looking profound and ruminating with his chin down. On noticing his entry, Devi Sita stood up and offered a seat. She noticed that his behavior and conduct were not normal. She became a little restless and asked him as to what has the matter. Dharmatma Shri Rama was fighting to control his emotions. She asked as to what could have occurred to disturb his balance. She said that at the arrival of Pushya nakshatra, veda panditas had decided as the muhurta was nearing, and he should be happy and jovial, but why was he feeling abnormal. How is it that the select crowd of 'Vandi magadhas' or professional praisers of Rama's great qualities are yet not around even after his arrival. Why the Ministers, Senapatis, renowned co kings and top officials and prominent citizens have yet not arrived! Why has not the well decorated King of Elephants arrived yet, to carry Rama on the Raja Marga with pomp and show to attract the admiration and celebration of the crowds while the well dressed soldiers lead the procession! Why this situation of quiet even worse than the normalcy, let alone a day or two just earlier! *Itīva vilapantīm tām provāca raghunandanaḥ, sīte tatrabhavāṃs tāta pravrajayati mām vanam/* As Sita was agitated likewise, Rama merely said: 'Sita! My revered father is banishing me to Dandakaranya. You belong to the family background of Dharma and as such could readily appreciate the ramifications and implications of Dharma. Rama then continued to explain briefly that his father has granted two boons to mother Kaikeyi long ago; as the preparations of his rajyabhisheka were in climatic swing, mother Kaikeyi reminded of the two boons and thus tied the King tight and could not be able to wriggle out. Rama then conveyed to Sita as follows: '*Caturdaśa hi varṣāni vastavyaṃ daṇḍake mayā, pitrā me bhārataś cāpi yauvarājye niyojitaḥ, so 'haṃ tvām āgato draṣṭuṃ prasthito vijanaṃ vanam/* As such, my father had to necessarily abide by the boons granted to Kaikeyi that I should immediately leave for dandakaranya for a stay of fourteen years and Bharata to be made the Yuva Raja. On my way to the forest life, I have come to convey this news. Please do not praise me before Bharata as he might not bear it. You may not even describe about my qualities even among your intimate friends even . *Ahaṃ cāpi pratijñāṃ tām guroḥ samanupālayan, vanam adyaiva yāsyāmi sthirā bhava manasvini/* I am now prepared to proceed to dandakaranya to obey my father's instructions and you should be brave and resolute to bear my absence. Indeed you're an ideal wife and hence continue your routine of timely pujas and abstinences being ever devoted to my father and mother Kousalya. To my other mothers too be

devoted equally with affection and intimacy. Bharat and Shatrughna are dear to me as of my own 'praana' and as such you should sustain continued consideration for them. Especially, you ought not to resort to any undesirable thought and action that might be undesirable to them. As I am leaving now, you should bear my absence for now and follow my instructions with faith and compliance dutifully.

Sarga Twenty Seven

Devi pleads her accompanying Rama for the forest life

*Evam uktā tu vaidehī priyārḥā priyavādinī, praṇayād eva saṁkruddhā bhartāram idam abravīt/
āryaputra pitā mātā bhrātā putras tathā snuṣā, svāni puṇyāni bhuñjānāḥ svam svam bhāgyam upāsate/
bhartur bhāgyam tu bhāryaikā prāpnoti puruṣarṣabha, ataś caivāham ādiṣṭā vane vastavyam ity api/ na
pitā nātmaḥ nātmā na mātā na sakhījanah, iha pretya ca nārīṇām patir eko gatiḥ sadā/ yadi tvam
prasthito durgam vanam adyaiva rāghava, agratas te gamiṣyāmi mṛdnanī kuśakaṇṭakāḥ/ īrṣyā roṣau
bahīṣṭya bhuktaśeṣam ivodakam, naya mām vīra viśrabdhah pāpaḥ mayi na vidyate/ prāsādāgrair
vimānair vā vaihāyasagatena vā, sarvāvasthāgatā bhartuḥ pādacchāyā viśiṣyate/ anuśiṣṭāsmi mātṛā ca
pitṛā ca vividhāśrayam, nāsmi samprati vaktavyā vartitavyam yathā mayā/ sukham vane nivatsyāmi
yathaiva bhavane pituḥ, acintayantī trīṁś lokāś cintayantī pativratam/ śuśrūṣamāṇā te nityam niyatā
brahmacārīṇī, saha raṁsye tvayā vīra vaneṣu madhugandhiṣu/ tvam hi kartum vane śakto rāma
saṁparipālanam, anyasya pai janasyeha kiṁ punar mama mānada/ phalamūlāsanā nityam bhaviṣyāmi
na saṁśayaḥ, na te duḥkham kariṣyāmi nivasantī saha tvayā/ icchāmi saritaḥ śailān palvalāni vanāni ca,
draṣṭum sarvatra nirbhītā tvayā nāthena dhīmatā/ hamsakāraṇḍavākīrṇāḥ padminīḥ sādhuṣpītāḥ,
iccheyam sukhinī draṣṭum tvayā vīreṇa saṁgatā/ saha tvayā viśālākṣa raṁsye paramanandinī, evam
varṣasahasrāṇām śatam vāham tvayā saha/ svarge 'pi ca vinā vāso bhavitā yadi rāghava, tvayā mama
naravyāghra nāham tam api rocaye/ aham gamiṣyāmi vanaḥ sudurgamaḥ; mṛgāyutam vānaravāraṇair
yutam, vane nivatsyāmi yathā pitur gṛhe; tavaiva pādāv upagr̥hya saṁmatā/ ananyabhāvām
anuraktacetasaḥ; tvayā viyuktām maraṇāya niścītām, nayasva mām sādhu kuruṣva yācanām; na te
mayāto gurutā bhaviṣyati/ tathā bruvāṇām api dharmavatsalo; na ca sma sītām nṛvaro ninīṣati, uvāca
cainām bahu saṁnivartane; vane nivāsasya ca duḥkhitām prati/*

As Rama had conveyed the news of his decision of his imminent departure to dandakaranya, Devi Sita reacted stating that she was rather amused with his decision of leaving her behind and counselling her about the 'do's and don't's' in his absence. She said: 'Arya putra! Each and every father, mother, brother, son, and daughter-in-law would have to reap and experience one's own fate of joy or otherwise. But, it is only the wife that her husband's destiny decides her destiny too. For every married woman it is only the husband that her life gets anchored to either in the ongoing life or there after too, but not her father, mother, son, friends or associates of the family and not even her own body.

[In this context, Manu Smṛiti is quoted: *Pitaarakshati Kaumare Bhartaa rakshati yuvane, Putrastu sthaavire bhaave na stree swaatantrya marhati/ Sookshmebhyopi prasangebhyah striyo rakshyaa visheshatah, Dvayorhikulayoh shokamaavahed arakshitaah/ Imam hi sarva varnaanaam pashyanto dharmamuttamam/* (During the 'Kaumara dasha' before wedding, the father takes the responsibility, whereafter the husband and in old age the sons, thus a female is always protected though not independent! Even minute expressions might not offend a female and be safeguarded lest there might be unhappiness in either of the families of father and husband, and indeed a female plays a significant yet sensitive role of both the families and hence the need for her balancing act! Manu Smṛiti also explains further: *Naasti streenaam pridhagyanona vratam naapyuposhanam, Patim shushrushate yattutena svarge maheeyate/ Kamavrittevaa gunairvaa parivarnitah, Nastriyah parivarjasyaat satatam daiva vatpatih/ Sadaa prahaashtayaa bhavyam grihakaaryech dakshayaa, Susamskrutopaskarayaa vyayechaamuktahastayaa/* (As women have no yagnas, vratas and such other acts of virtue, they are happy to share such acts along

with their husbands. Notwithstanding the shortcomings of their husbands the wives would do well to with faith to them and concentrate more on their domestic chores with expertise and run the family with wisdom and dedication and be the major force of maintaining peace and happiness home). Further is stated in general: *Karyeshu dasi, Karaneshu manthri; Bhojeshu mata, Shayaneshu rambha; Kshamayeshu dharithri, Roopeshu lakshmi; Satkarma yukta, Kuladharmā patni/* An ideal wife should be like a loyal maid for service; an intelligent adviser; a mother like with affection while feeding food; a romantic-proactive and comforting woman like a damsel; a woman of beauty, charm and richness like Goddess Lakshmi Herself with dedication and humility; and above all be ever forgiving with compassion and ready understanding like Bhudevi Herself!]

Devi Sita continued: *yadi tvam prasthito durgam vanam adyaiva rāghava, agratas te gamiṣyāmi mṛdnantī kuśakaṅṭakān/ īrṣyā roṣau bahiṣkṛtya bhuktaśeṣam ivodakam, naya mām vīra viśrabdhah pāpaṁ mayi na vidyate/* Raghu nandana! As you would be now passing through dense forests by hopping and jumping sharp thorns and rocks, then I too would be prepared to do so, in fact, by leading you the path. Therefore, never think jealous of my courage, nor of doubt, nor of ‘tyaga’ or sacrifice, resignation, desperation and of generosity but as my duty. Therefore, Maha Veera! I am too your Veera Patni! How can you abandon me and for which kind of my grievous blunder that you seek to abandon me! Whether the husband enjoys the fruitful pleasures of living in sky high residences, or travelling in pushpaka vimaanās, or the experiences of ‘Ashta Siddhis’, a Pati vrata ought to equally take part and share.

[Vishlesana of Ashta Siddhis: or Supernatural Powers are Anima or the ability of miniaturising oneself; Mahima is turning one self giant like; Laghima is the capacity to get oneself unusually light; Garima is to make the Self too gross and heavy; Prapti is to achieve any kind of mental desire; Prakamya or providing fulfillment of other’s wishes; Vashitwa or capacity to control any other Party; Ishitwa or fully dominating over others as wished. Among many other Siddhis include Para Kaaya Pravesha or totally entering other’s body and even Soul; Doora Shravana or distant hearing, Doora Darshana or Distant Vision or ability to see things or actions any where from other places; Manojavam or reaching a place as fast as a thought as also thought reading; Kamarupa or assuming the physical form of another Being-be it a moving species or an immobile like a mountain etc; Swachchanda Maranam or the gift to die at one’s own wish; Deva Saha Kreedā Anudarshanam or the gift to view Deva Devis playing among themselves; Yatha Sankalpa Siddhi or accomplishing any thing by a mere thought; and so on.]

Devi Sita continues: ‘ My parents had thoroughly trained me about the do’s and don’ts and none else to teach me in connection with the present exigency. *Aham durgam gamiṣyāmi vanam purushavarjitam, naanaa mriganaakeernam shardulaganasevitam/* Even if several cruel animals like tigers and lions I have determined to enter along with you! I would feel comfortable as though I would reside in my parents house. I would in fact spend my times as if I am experiencing the pleasures of three lokas in your company as which pativrata dharma exists but to reside with you! [Vyasa Maharshi states succinctly: *Pativrataatu naaree bhartru shushrushanotsukaa, Natasya vidyate paapam ihaloke paratracha, Pativrataadharmarataa Rudraanyeva na samshayah, Tasyaah paraabhavam kartum shaknoti najanah kashchit/* A pativrata who sincerely serves her husband shall qualify with attainment of her current and ensuing lives and eventually attain the status of a Rudrani or Devi Parvati.]

She continues further: ‘Veera! I should be able to practice celibacy and keep constant company with sweet conversation. *tvam hi kartum vane śakto rāma saṁparipālanam, anyasya pai janasyeha kiṁ punar mama mānada/ phalamūlāsanā nityam bhaviṣyāmi na saṁśayah, na te duḥkham kariṣyāmi nivasantī saha tvayā/* Rama! You have the unique capability to save and safeguard any or all the persons while why can

you not able to protect me! It is my firm decision to follow you, come what may! I am fully prepared and none could stop me. I will give you no trouble whatever; but on the other hand will be of sweet company while sharing the remnant food of roots and fruits. How I wish to fulfill my life long wish of freely visiting water streams and enjoy bathing in them in the company of white and lovely swans, while flying birds sing away and move about right above me! Arya Putra! My great desire is to bathe at your feet in a ‘sarovara’ and swim joyfully. May such tranquil lives be spent for thousands of years of heavenly times! Believe me if that type of celestial living in your company is available what else is the purport of bliss! *Ananyabhāvām anuraktacetasaṁ; tvayā viyuktām maraṇāya niścītām, nayasva mām sādhu kuruṣva yācanām; na te mayāto gurutā bhaviṣyati/* Swami! My heart is so much surfeit with your personality that without you , I would most certainly die of separation and hence my prostrations to you to let me accompany you most certainly’. As Devi Sita kept on insisting by invoking ‘pativrata dharma’- fulfillment of her life’s desires and offers of mutual adjustment, and finally the threat of her very life, Rama continued his utmost reluctance and disapproval to let Devi Sita to accompany him to the dandakaranya. Then he described the enormous tortures, sufferings, and critical predicaments even to strong willed men of heroism, let alone women even with rough and sturdy nature in one’s daily life for an unimaginable fourteen arduous years!

Sarga Twenty Eight

Rama dissuades Sita to accompany him for Vana Vaasa due to miseries there

Evaṁ bruvatīm sītām dharmajño dharmavatsalaḥ, nivartanārthe dharmātmā vākyam etad uvāca ha/ sīte mahākulīnāsi dharme ca niratā sadā, ihācara svadharmam tvam mā yathā manasaḥ sukham/ sīte yathā tvam vakṣyāmi tathā kāryam tvayābale, vane doṣā hi bahavo vadatas tān nibodha me/ sīte vimucyatām eṣā vanavāsakṛtā matiḥ, bahudoṣam hi kāntāram vanam ity abhidhīyate/ hitabuddhyā khalu vaco mayaitad abhidhīyate, sadā sukham na jānāmi duḥkham eva sadā vanam/ girinirjharasambhūtā girikandaravāsinām, simhānām ninadā duḥkhāḥ śrotum duḥkham ato vanam/ supyate parṇasāyāsu svayam bhagnāsu bhūtale, rātriṣu śramakhinnena tasmād duḥkhatarām vanam/ upavāsas ca kartavyā yathāprāṇena maithili, jaṭābhāras ca kartavyo valkalāmbaradhāriṇā/ atīva vātas timiram bubhukṣā cātra nityasaḥ, bhayāni ca mahānty atra tato duḥkhatarām vanam/ sarīṣpās ca bahavo baturūpās ca bhāmini, caranti pṛthivīm darpād ato dukhatarām vanam/ nadīnilayanāḥ sarpā nadikuṭilagāmināḥ, tiṣṭhanty āvṛtya panthānam ato duḥkhatarām vanam/ pataṅgā vṛścikāḥ kīṭā damśās ca maśakāiḥ saha, bādhanṭe nityam abale sarvaṁ duḥkham ato vanam/ drumāḥ kaṅṭakinaś caiva kuśakāśās ca bhāmini, vane vyākulaśākhāgrās tena duḥkhatarām vanam/ tad alaṁ te vanam gatvā kṣamam na hi vanam tava, vimṛśann iha paśyāmi bahudoṣatarām vanam/ vanam tu netum na kṛtā matis tadā; babhūva rāmeṇa yadā mahātmanā, na tasya sītā vacanam cakāra tat; tato ’bravīd rāmam idam suduḥkhitā/

Even being fully aware of the multi-faceted Dharma, Shri Rama had still not been convinced of Devi Sita following him to the dandakaranya, fully weighing carefully the pros and cons. Devi Sita was agitated with tears overflowing from her eyes. He addressed her saying that he having been born of an excellent family background firmly embedded to the principles of dharma should realise the mind of her husband and follow it in the spirit and context of the situation. She was an ‘abala’ and could never be able to yield to the pressures of the multiple complexities of men and situations. He reiterated that in her own interest she should please abandon the idea. Facing jungle men and equally terrorising cruel animals would pose minute to minute trepidation even to brave warriors in the battles. The walking paths are awfully muddy, hard and forest elephants in groups are prone to splash mud sideways and all over blinding the men and co animals like bears, monkeys and forest donkeys. The entire jungle, which has no path to tread and to follow on prescribed walkways, is full of creepers, bushy grass, and piercing thorns while wild animals keep squeaking heart rending sounds far and just near one’s ears. One has to sustain eating fruits fallen

on the ground besides roots, seeds and leaves many of which could be poisonous resulting in instant deaths. Mithilesha Raja Kumari! Keeping upavaasaas as per one's capacity, besides wearing 'jataabhara' hair-do, course 'valkala vastra' or deer skin dress would be your ornaments. Forest dweller humans of cities as normally required to take bath thrice a day would turn each day a nightmare. One needs to be contented by eating what comes a day as per luck. The forests are prone to frightening sweeps of heavy winds, severe cold and shattering rain pours, besides land slides and earthquakes. Most poisonous cobras with raised hoods, fearful hisses and fast swerling coils are of normal tree hanging eventuality, especially in dead nights of utter darkness, while mountainous reptiles normally crawl and hiss on crooked pathways if visible. Abala Sita! Bats, scorpions, swarms of bees and honey bees are but a component of a jungle. Moreover, one has to cut and pierce into thick and endless thorny bushes for entry to make the crooked lanes and byelanes. A few of forest dwellers who survive somehow are ever faced with death before-beside-behind and ahead of them, ever counting their minutes-hours and days ready for all types of eventualities and exigencies with sturdy bodies eating raw meat of animals, fishes, and of even passers by if need be. Dear Sita! You have to toughen your body and more so on total control of desires, anger, passion, irritability; most essentially the ability of overcoming situations of fright, terror and sudden horror. *Tad alam te vanam gatva ksamam na hi vanam tava vimṛśann iha paśyāmi bahudoṣataram vanam/* That precisely why Sita! I have thoroughly visualized any possibility of accompanying with me and you shall never be able to withstand the enormity of the untold travails of doing so. But the ever insistent and never relenting Devi Sita stated as follows.

Sarga Twenty Nine

Sita invokes her 'Paativratya Dharma' and insists

Etat tu vacanam śrutvā sītā rāmasya duḥkhitā, prasaktāśrumukhī mandam idam vacanam abravīt/ ye tvayā kīrtitā doṣā vane vastavyatām prati, guṇān ity eva tān viddhi tava snehapuraskṛtān/ tvayā ca saha gantavyam mayā gurujanāñjāyā, tvadviyogena me rāma tyaktavyam iha jīvitam/ na ca mām tvatsamīpasthanam api śaknoti rāghava, surāñām īśvaraḥ śakraḥ pradharṣayitum ojasā/ patihīnā tu yā nārī na sā śakṣyati jīvitum, kāmam evamvidham rāma tvayā mama vidarśitam/ atha cāpi mahāprājña brāhmaṇānām mayā śrutam, purā piṭṛgr̥he satyam vastavyam kila me vane lakṣaṇibhyo dvijātibhyaḥ śrutvāham vacanam gr̥he, vanavāsakṛtotsāhā nityam eva mahābala/ ādeśo vanavāsasya prāptavyaḥ sa mayā kila, sā tvayā saha tatrāham yāsyāmi priya nānyathā/ kṛtādeśā bhaviṣyāmi gamiṣyāmi saha tvayā, kālāś cāyam samutpannaḥ satyavāg bhavatu dvijaḥ/ vanavāse hi jānāmi duḥkhāni bahudhā kila/ prāpyante niyataḥ vīra puruṣair akṛtātmabhiḥ/ kanyayā ca pitur gehe vanavāsaḥ śruto mayā, bhikṣiṇyāḥ sādhuvr̥ttāyā mama mātur ihāgrataḥ/ prasāditaś ca vai pūrvaḥ tvaḥ vai bahavidham prabho, gamanam vanavāsasya kāṅkṣitam hi saha tvayā/ kṛtakṣaṇāham bhadrām te gamanam prati rāghava, vanavāsasya sūrasya caryā hi mama rocate/ śuddhātman premabhāvād dhi bhaviṣyāmi vikalmaṣā, bhartāram anugacchantī bhartā hi mama daivatam/ pretyabhāve 'pi kalyāṇaḥ saṅgamo me saha tvayā, śrutir hi śrūyate puṇyā brāhmaṇānām yaśasvinām/ iha loke ca piṭṛbhir yā strī yasya mahāmate, adbhira dattā svadharmeṇa pretyabhāve 'pi tasya sā/ evam asmāt svakām nārīm suvr̥ttām hi pativratām, nābhīrocayase netum tvaḥ mām keneha hetunā/ bhaktām pativratām dīnām mām samām sukhaduḥkhyoḥ, netum arhasi kākutstha samānasukhaduḥkhinīm/ yadi mām duḥkhitām evam vanam netum na cecchasi, viṣam agniḥ jalam vāham āsthāsyē mṛtyukāraṇāt/ evam bahavidham tam sā yācate gamanam prati, nānumene mahābāhus tām netum vijanam vanam/ evam uktā tu sā cintām maithilī samupāgatā, snāpayantīva gām uṣṇair āsrubhir nayanacyutaiḥ/ cintayantīm tathā tām tu nivartayitum ātmavān, krodhāviṣṭām tu vaidehīm kākutstho bahv asāntvayat/

Pranadha! What all the risks and sufferings that you have vividly described to me could be withstood by me in your company. In your magnificent company of nearness and dearness, what all difficulties are required to be faced would be melted away. When none could dare to look at you straight in your eyes,

then of which significance are animals and reptiles. *Tvayā ca saha gantavyam mayā gurujanāññayā, tvadviyogena me rāma tyaktavyam iha jīvitam/Shri Rama!* Carrying the blessings of my Gurus as I do, I have decided to accompany you as otherwise, I have decided finally to end up my very existence. Being along with you, even Devas and even Lord Indra would not be able to change my decisiveness. Shri Rama! No Pativrata could ever bear and suffer the ‘viyoga’ or prolonged separation from her husband and would rather end up her life. When I was not married earlier and was extremely mischievous, some of the Brahmanas who were fed up with my naughtiness used to say: ‘You will surely live in forests; indeed those casual and flippant remarks have now turned true!’ Veera! I am indeed aware that ‘vana vaasa’ entails all types of problems and endless ordeals and tortures, but that should not be so for those who lack decisiveness of body and mind. In fact, having arrived here after wedding I expressed my fanciful desire for forest life and you had conceded to my desire too, if you please recall. Now, this is the time that I am able to fulfill my desire to accompany you for your service. Shuddhamaana! You are my overlord and here is by opportunity to accompany you to purify all my lifelong blemishes and sins as womanhood after wedding is a boon to serve husband and the singular master and ‘pratyaksha devata’ or God in ready reality. To follow you even to ‘paraloka’ bestows auspiciousness and fulfillment. At the time of our wedding, my father took vows by leaving ‘pavitra jajaas’ or sacred waters on earth that I would belong to you for ever in this life and ever thereafter! *Pretyabhāve ’pi kalyāṇaḥ saṅgamo me saha tvayā, śrutir hi śrūyate punyā brāhmaṇānām yaśasvinām/* Famed Brahmana Vedic Panditas had quoted from Vedas that an auspicious wedding performed with affection and belief assures unity of the husband and wife on earth and in swarga too. Devi Sita continues further: ‘I am your ‘Dharmapatni’, ‘Vrata paalaka’ and ‘Pativrata’ and assuredly, I will most certainly follow your footsteps. Kakutsa kula bhushana Rama! I am your staunch devotee, the most ideal ‘Pativrata’, the forlorn-dejected and desperate Life Partner, the Equal Collaborator of Joys and Difficulties; do very kindly let me accompany you! *Yadi mām duḥkhitām evam vanaṁ netuṁ na cecchasi, viṣam agniṁ jalam vāham āsthāsyē mṛtyukāraṇāt/* This indeed is my ultimate determination that in case I would not be allowed to accompany you, I will commit suicide by drinking poison, or jump into flames or drown in deep waters. Thus despite innumerable warnings of impending dangers of forest life, Devi Sita kept on crying incessantly and kept on insisting Rama to allow her to accompany him.

Sarga Thirty

Sita sobs heavily and Rama had to finally to concede to accompany him

Sāntvyamānā tu rāmeṇa maithilī janakātmajā, vanavāsanimittāya bhartāram idam abravīt/ sā tam uttamasamvignā sītā vipulavakṣasaṁ, praṇayāc cābhimānāc ca paricikṣepa rāghavam/ kiṁ tvāmanyata vaidehaḥ pitā me mithilādhipaḥ, rāma jāmātaram prāpya striyaṁ puruṣavigraham/ aṅgtaṁ balaloko ’yam ajñānād yad dhi vakṣyati, tejo nāsti param rāme tapatīva divākare/ kiṁ hi kṛtvā viṣaṅgas tvaṁ kuto vā bhayam asti te, yat parityaktukāmas tvaṁ mām ananyaparāyaṇām/ dyumatsenasutaṁ vīra satyavantam anuvratām, sāvitṛīm iva mām viddhi tvaṁ ātmavaśavartinīm/ na tv ahaṁ manasāpy anyam draṣṭāsmi tvadrte ’nagha, tvayā rāghava gaccheyam yathānyā kulapāmsanī/ svayaṁ tu bhāryām kaumārīm ciram adhyuṣitām satīm, śailūṣa iva mām rāma parebhyo dātum icchasi/ sa mām anādāya vanaṁ na tvaṁ prasthātum arhasi, tapo vā yadi vāraṇyaṁ svargo vā syāt saha tvayā/ na ca me bhavitā tatra kaś cit pathi pariśramaḥ, pṛṣṭhatas tava gacchantyā vihāraśayaneṣv api/ kuśakāśaśareṣṭikā ye ca kaṅṭakino drumāḥ, tūlājinamasparśā mārge mama saha tvayā/ mahāvāta samuddhūtaṁ yan mām avakarīṣyati, rajo ramaṇa tan manye parārdhyam iva candanam/ sādvaṣeṣu yad āsiṣye vanānte vanagoracā, kuthāstaraṇatalpeṣu kiṁ syāt sukhataram tataḥ/ patraṁ mūlam phalam yat tvaṁ alpaṁ vā yadi vā bahu, dāsyasi svayaṁ āhṛtya tan me ’mṛtarasopamam/ na mātur na pitus tatra smarīṣyāmi na veśmanah, ārtavāny upabhuñjānā puṣpāṇi ca phalāni ca/ na ca tatra gataḥ kiṁ cid draṣṭum arhasi vipriyam, matkṛte na ca te śoko na bhaviṣyāmi durbharā/ yas tvayā saha sa svargo nirayo yas tvayā vinā, iti jānan parām pṛtīm gaccha rāma mayā saha/ atha mām evam avyagrām vanaṁ naiva nayiṣyasi, viṣam adyaiva pāsyāmi mā viṣam dviṣatām vaśam/ paścād api hi duḥkhena mama naivāsti jīvitam, ujñhitāyās

tvayā nātha tadaiva maraṇam varam/ idam hi sahitum śokam muhūrtam api notsahe, kim punar daśavarṣāṇi trīṇi caikam ca duḥkhitā/ iti sā śokasamtaptā vilapya karuṇam bahu, cukrośa patim āyastā bhṛṣam āliṅgya sasvaram/ sā viddhā bahubhir vākyair digdhair iva gajāṅganā, cira samniyatam bāṣpam mumocāgnim ivāraṇiḥ/ tasyāḥ sphaṭikasamkāśam vāri samtāpasambhavam, netrābhyām parisusrāva paṅkajābhyām ivodakam/ tāṃ pariṣvajya bāhubhyām viśamjñām iva duḥkhitām, uvāca vacanam rāmaḥ pariviśvāsayams tadā/ na devi tava duḥkhena svargam apy abhirocaye, na hi me 'sti bhayam kim cit svayambhor iva sarvataḥ/ tava sarvam abhiprāyam avijñāya śubhānane, vāsam na rocaye 'raṇye śaktimān api rakṣaṇe/ yat sṛṣṭāsi mayā sārḍham vanavāsāya maithili, na vihātum mayā śakyā kīrtir ātmavatā yathā/ dharmas tu gajanāśoru sadbhir ācaritaḥ purā, tam cāham anuvarte 'dya yathā sūryam suvarcalā/ eṣa dharmas tu suśroṇi pitur mātuś ca vaśyatā, ataś cājñām vyatikramya nāham jīvitum utsahe/ sa mām pitā yathā śāsti satyadharmapathe sthitaḥ, tathā vartitum icchāmi sa hi dharmah sanātanaḥ, anugacchasva mām bhīru sahadharmacarī bhava/ brāhmaṇebhyaś ca ratnāni bhikṣukebhyaś ca bhojanam, dehi cāśamsamānebhyaḥ samtvarasva ca māciram/ anukūlam tu sā bhartur jñātvā gamanam āmanaḥ, kṣipram pramuditā devī dātum evopacakrame/ tataḥ prahṛṣṭā paripūrṇamānasā; yaśasvinī bhartur avekṣya bhāṣitam, dhanāni ratnāni ca dātum aṅganā; pracakrame dharmabhṛtām manasvinī/

Devi Sita continued her sobbings with her determination and pressing close to Rama's broad chest continued her sobbings: Shri Rama! When my father got you married to me was it only for bodily sensuousness but not for sharing mental and psychological issues too. My Lord, when you seek to leave me behind, would not the public react that your mental agility and physical energy like that of Surya Deva himself was proved to be a falsehood into timidity! Then how depressed and shameful that I should feel deserted and dejected! *Kim hi kṛtvā viṣaṅgas tvam kuto vā bhayam asti te, yat parityaktukāmas tvam mām ananyaparāyanām/ dyumatsenasutam vīra satyavantam anuvratām, sāvitṛīm iva mām viddhi tvam ātmavaśavartinīm/* You are getting afraid of taking me along with you and for which specific, solid and fear of anybody or reason that you wish to abandon me! Just as Maha Pativrata Devi Savitri followed Dyumtsena Kumara Satyavaan's shadow as held by Yama Dharmaraja, I too would most certainly follow you Rama!

[Vishleshana on Devi Savitri- Satyavan- Yama Raja- and Satyavan's Lasting relief:

Sati Savitri an outstanding Pativrata who defied Yama Dharma Raja into conviction!

Matsya Purana describes that in the days of yore, there was a King named Ashwapati of Shaakala Vamsa in Madra Desha (the present Sialkot Territory) who did not secure a son. Being highly devoted to Devi Savitri (Gayatri), he intensified his worship to her and performed a daily 'havan'/ oblation to Agni with white 'Tilas' (Sesame seeds) in the presence of thousand Brahmanas for ten months and finally Devi Savitri appeared to Ashwapati on a Chaturthi day and granted an illustrious daughter to him and queen Malati; the baby was named as Savitri since she was born by the grace of Devi Savitri. The daughter grew into a charming and highly virtuous girl; a chance visit of Brahmarshi Narada to the King and the daughter indicated that her husband would die on a specified day after her wedding. They both indeed were terribly worried about Narada's prophesy but she was married in due course to the son of King Jhumnatsen called Satyavan who was a charismatic prince. But unfortunately the King lost his kingdom as also the eye sight of his and of the wife. Savitri emboldened herself and faced the situation with confidence and performed unreserved and steadfast service to the parents-in-law. At the sametime, she served her husband so much that Narada's prophesy was always ringing in her ears constantly and never allowed the husband even for a while. She also worshipped her Guru and followed each and every advice of his as a word of law. Thus she was worshipping her husband, her parents-in-law and her Guru as much as never in history had performed in the past. As the specific Chaturthi that Narada warned about her

husband's death within a year, she took permission of her blind parents-in-law and her Guru and entered a jungle along with Satyavan and decided to keep her husband the happiest man and spent every moment with him by showing and sharing with him the most memorable beauties of Nature, the waterfalls, the cool waters, the fragrant and colourful flowers and so on. She described that couples of hares, crows, lions, monkeys, and deers were all in a state of maddening infatuation and such wonderful experiences tended to extend lives forever! Meanwhile, Satyavan felt like cutting wood from some dry trees but Savitri cautioned that he should not be away from her. In great fun, he said that he would never ever dare to be away from her. Suddenly, Satyavan felt excruciating pain in his head and fell flat. Even while realising as to what was happening, she sensed that some thumb-long figures tied to Satyavan's soul and were ready to draw it towards the Southern direction and visioned that Yama Dharma Raja himself was present there. She screamed with astonishment and closely following Yamaraja sobbed away and said: Sacred Scriptures assured that sincere devotion to mother provided this loka, devotion to father would secure Swarga and devotion to Guru would fetch Brahma loka but of what avail was her sincerity if Scriptures made false promises? Dharma Raja replied: Do not interfere with my duty; indeed the Scriptures were right, the dead soul was a virtuous person and that she too was a real Pativrata, but there was a fixed procedure of terminating a human being as per one's life span which was pre-determined and judgment was given as per norms. Savitri counter argued that for a woman, husband was a Deity and the provider of safety; a father, brother or a son were no doubt the safeguarders but the husband was above all and if he were to be forcibly taken away then she had no other alternative but to immolate her life. Dharma Raja was indeed taken back at her firmness and smilingly said that such an incidence as this was rare and that he would be pleased to bestow *any boon* excepting her husband's life. As Savitri took up the opportunity, she requested him to restore the eyesight as also the Kingdom to her in-laws and Dharma Raja readily granted these boons and asked her to go back so that he could perform his duty. He also asked her not to follow further and tire out herself without any aim or useful purpose. Devi Savitri replied that she would never feel tired following great celebrities of the stature of Dharma Raja, even if they were annoyed because only such emblems of Dharma could sift persons of genuineness or other-wise; it was stated in the Scriptures that one should never be afraid of even Agni, poison, and snakes compared to evil persons where as 'Satpurushas' had an inner conscience and even if they were apparently rude and hurtlingly outspoken, their basic quality would be outstanding and subject to change of stance since such 'Mahatmas' test the authenticity of other persons being faced. Even normal and impartial Kings and Administrators would tend to examine the realities of those who make requests and a Deity par excellence like Dharma Raja would like to make sure whether her supplications were pure and straight from the heart or not. That was the reason why Savitri felt untired of following Dharma Raja! Apparently, Dharma Raja was pleased with the logic of Savitri and replied that without insisting on the life of Satyavaan, she might ask for another boon. She grabbed the opportunity and requested that her parents were not blessed with a son; despite performing countless Sacred deeds and their daily homas in favour of Gayatri / Savitri they succeeded on giving birth to a daughter but not a 'Vamsodhaarak'. Dharma Raja conceded the *second boon* too and firmly admonished Savitri to pester further but should return home at once to organise the obsequies of her departed husband. Having secured the second boon from Dharmaraja, Savitri still followed the former and stated that any human being would like to fulfil three essential steps of Dharma, Artha and Kama as the corner-stones of an ideal life. She affirmed: *Dharmaarjanam tathaa kaaryam purushena vijaanataa, Tallaabham Sarva laabhebhyo yadaa Daiva viseshatey/ Dharmascha arthascha kaamascha trivargo janmanah phalam, Dharma heenasya kaamaarthey vandhyaa sutasamou Prabho/ Dharmadarthastathaa kaamo Dharmallokadwayam tathaa, Dharma ekonuyaatyenam yatra*

kwachanagaaminam/ Shareerena samam naasham sarvamanya -ddhi gacchati, Ekohi jaayatey jantureka eva vipadyatey/ (Deva! Any Enlightened person seeks to earn Dharma since that secures the best of gains; the objective of life is to fulfil the means of Dharma viz. Artha and Kaama; conversely, wealth and fulfilment of desires alone without Dharma would be wasting one's life. Dharma would certainly fulfil the means to achieve it and could at the same time lead to Salvation too. In the final analysis, a dying person leaves every thing behind except Dharma and a person born does not bring any possessions nor takes anything at death). Dharma Raja was pleased with what Savitri said and asked her a *third boon* to that outstanding Pativrata who had been fighting for her husband's life. In turn, Savitri asked the boon: *Varayaami twayaa dattam putraanaam shatamourasam, Anapatyasya lokeshu gatih kila na vidyatey/* (Deva! I request you to give me the boon of securing hundred sons of my own, since without obtaining sons, there would be no 'Sadgati' to her and husband as parents). Yama Raja then granted this boon also and Savitri commended Dharma as follows: *Dharmaadharna vidhaanajna Sarva Dharma Pravartaka, Twameva Jagato naathaha Prajaa samyamany Yamah/ Karmanaaman -rupena Yasmaad Yamayasey Prajaah, Tasmaad vai proachyasey Deva Yama ityeva naamatah/ Dharmaneymaah Prajaah Sarvaa yasmaad ranjayasey Prabho, Tasmaat tey Dharma raageti naama Sadbhirnigadyatey/ Sukrutam dushkrutam chobhey Purodhaaya yadaa janaah/ Tatsavakaasham mrutaa yaanti tasmaat twam Mrutyu ruchyatey/* (Dharamaadharna Vidhaataa! You are the highest Administrator of Dharma; since you are the Chief Regulator of Dharma, you are called *Yama*. As you ensure that human beings do not indulge in Adharma and make them follow the Path of Truth, you are known as *Dharma Raja*. Since when human beings die, you confront them with a full account of their good and bad deeds, and hence you are known as *Mrityu*. As the dead persons are approached by you with the details of each action of theirs by each Kshana/ second, and measure of Kaala or Time, you are called as *Kaala*. Since you are the designated Authority to terminate the life of each and every 'charaachara' or mobile and immobile being, you are titled *Antak*. As you are the eldest son of Surya Deva who has the name of Viwasvaan, you carry the name of *Vaiwasvata*. As and when the life of any being is over, you catch him suddenly and that is why you have another name viz. *Sara praanahara*. Devesha! Thanks to you the Ruk-Yajur- Sama Vedas continue to popularise the Principles of Virtue and Justice eternally; you are the upkeeper of nobility and discipline the world over and I have come to the shield of safety from you; kindly give back my husband at once as my in-laws too are frantic now for his life. As Savitri concluded her desperate prayers, Dharma Raja asserted that he was giving away Satyavan's life back, that he would secure her hundred sons who would all become famous Kings, that her parents too would be blessed with hundred sons of virtue and that her brother would be popular as Malava, the King of Malva. Thus concludes the Sacred Legend of Maha Saadhvi Savitri: *Tasmaad Saadhwyaha Striyah Pujyaah Satatam, Taasaamtu vakyam bhavateeha midhya na jaatu lokeshu charachareshu/Tasmaat sadaa taah pari pujaneeyaah, Kaamaan Samagraanabhi kaamayaanaih/* (Hence women of High Virtue ought to be worshipped since the Three Lokas are preserved due to their grace. The voices of Pativratas should never be ignored as they are worthy of veneration and fulfill their desires].

Devi Sita continued to address Rama: ' Raghunandana! I am certainly not like a fallen woman of shame as I have never ever thought of any other male with even a trace of desire. I have not seen or felt likewise. I was married even as a teen aged Kumari and would wish to live in your exclusive company like a Pativrata for very very long like a 'Sati Saadhvi'. You cannot discard me like a cheap dancing girl who earns livelihood for herself and husband! Shri Rama! You seem to be advising me to stay back and be polite and get controlled by that younger brother of yours viz. Bharata; you might do so yourself but certainly not me , as he was the culprit to thwart your being the legitimate yuva raja! This is another

strong reason for accompanying you Rama! *Sa mām anādāya vanam na tvam prasthātum arhasi, tapo vā yadi vāraṇyam svargo vā syāt saha tvayā/* Hence my decisiveness to go along with you hand in hand, even if I were to perform tapasya like a yogini, or to enter the darkest forests or to attain swarga but together! As a feel luxurious golden swing mattresses under garden umbrellas or rest on your comfortable lap give me the same feeling as striding hard on the worst possible slush or rocks in you blissful company. As and when the gruelling and backbreaking ordeal of walking on thorny bushes and trees is encountered, your comforting company gets me the feeling of walking on cotton and smooth deerskin! If I am banged and even lifted up by sandstorms then I might feel experienced with sandalwood paste in your company. With your comfort again, as I would have sleep in huts under trees, then would feel that in I am rolling in bird- feather like soft cushions. I assure you that I shall not be a burden for you. But being with you I feel I am in heaven and without you, it would be a hell. I am not afraid of vana vaasa but without you it surely be so and then would die sooner than later. Without you I cannot spend even two hours, but how do you expect me to live for fourteen years!' By so saying, Devi broke down into loud and severe weeping by tightly embracing Rama. She then got up and moved about in circles crying away like a she - elephant attacked by poisonous arrows and seeking to jump into severe flames. Then Rama too got terribly agitated with the magnitude and severity of her action and with her both hands pressed her on his chest and said firmly: *Na devi tava duḥkhena svargam apy abhirocaye, na hi me 'sti bhayam kim cit svayambhor iva sarvataḥ/ tava sarvam abhiprāyam avijñāya śubhānane, vāsam na rocaye 'raṇye śaktimān api rakṣaṇe/* Devi! If you do so strongly feel that you would attain 'swarga sukha', that type of happiness too could be discarded by me, but trust me I am afraid of nothing like swayambhu Brahma himself. I am most certainly capable of defending you, but only advised you not to put yourself to difficulties. *yat sṛṣṭāsi mayā sārḍham vanavāsāya maithili, na vihātum mayā śakyā kīrtir ātmavatā yathā/ dharmas tu gajanāSORU sadbhir ācaritaḥ purā, taṁ cāham anuvarte 'dya yathā sūryam suvarcalā/* In case you are born and destined to suffer and stay with me, but do realise that 'atmajnani purushas' or self awakened men would not hesitate to discard their natural instincts and hence my warnings of impending perils. Several instances could be cited that even Celestials of high standards of virtue had allowed their spouses to follow them as their shadows. Did not Surya Deva allow Suvarchala - Sangjna Devi follow as her shadow! You too may perhaps follow me, even being the great hazards involved!

[Vishleshana on Surya Deva and Sangjna Devi:

Bhavishya Purana: It was on 'Saptami' Tithi that Bhagavan Surya made his initial manifestation to the Universe. His original Appearance inside a Holy Egg continued and from there itself, he grew and hence was called 'Martaanda'. He was wedded to the daughter of Daksha Prajapati, called Sanjna, and begot Dharma Raja, Vaivasvata and Yamuna Devi. But since Sanjna was unable to bear the heat and dazzle of Surya Deva, created from her shadow a similar substitute, called Chhaya Devi to proxy her and left for Uttarakuru Desha to perform Tapasya in the form of as a horse. Meanwhile, Chhaya Devi gave birth to Shaneswara and Devi Tapati, but aftersome time, Chhaya Devi's partial attitude to her own children and those of Sanjna came to be noticed; Yama Dharma pointed out to Chhaya Devi about the differential treatment and in course of the argument, Yama raised his right leg's ankle which was objected to by Chhaya and she gave a curse to Yama that if his feet ankles were placed on Earth they would be eaten by worms! As Dharma Raja complained to Surya Deva, the father assuaged the feelings of his son, who was in fact a specimen of virtue, saying that the 'shaap' of Sandhya Devi was not to be too harmful since, after all, worms might take away the flesh and blood of his ankle to Bhuloka but feet would be in tact any way. Sandhya was frightened and blurted the truth to Surya Deva that Sanjna materialised her to deputise her and the latter left to her father's place; Daksha told Surya Deva that Sanjna could not withstand his heat and had been performing Tapasya in the form of a horse at Uttarakuru. Surya requested Vishwakarma to reduce his heat and radiance and after assuming the forms of a horse approached Sanjna and by the mutual contact of the noses of Surya and Sanjana in horse forms were born Ashvini Kumars and Raivata. Since the Episode of Sanjna and Surya occurred on Sapta Tithi of Magha Shukla Paksha as above, the day is considered as most auspicious to signify the union the Couple.]

Rama continued to soften Devi Sita from her agitation and extreme anguish: He explained once again that he was having to go to dandakaranya only and exclusively due to the decision of the father and ‘the’ mother and indeed it was his bounden duty having to do so; only his ‘puja and aaradhana’ was compelling to do so as service to the father-mother-and guru would be the only means of fulfillment of the paramarthas of dharma-artha-kaama-mokshas evidently and that sanatana dharma was the inevitable path of mortal life for salvation. Yet when you are giving me the untimate warning : ‘ *Mama sannaa matih Site netum tvaam dandakaavanam, vaasishyaameeti saa tvam maamanuyaantum sunischitaa/ Saa hidrishtaavadyaangi vanaaya madirekshane,anugacchasva maam bheeru sahadharmachaaree bhava/* Keeping in view your such decisiveness as being even desperate with the threat of your sacrificing the life, my earlier decision appears to be getting diluted! There fore I am now perforce having to relent myself to reluctantly agree to accompany me.’ Then Rama asked Sita to initiate earliest action to get ready, by way of discarding her jewellery as donations to ‘brahmana strees’ and change the dress suitably for the ‘yatra’. Then finally having fought her way to make Rama agree as her desire was fulfilled, Devi Sita gave away ‘dhana’ of Brahmanas and ‘daana’ to Brahmanis, with joy and excitement!

Sarga Thirty One

Lakshmana too insists on accompanying Rama- latter agrees; Rama desires of offering charities

Tato 'bravīn mahātejā rāmo lakṣmaṇam agrataḥ, sthitam prāggāminam vīram yācamānam kṛtāñjalim/ mayādyā saha saumitre tvayi gacchati tad vanam, ko bhariṣyati kausalyām sumitrām vā yaśasvinīm/ abhivarṣati kāmair yaḥ parjanyaḥ pṛthivīm iva, sa kāmāpāśaparyasto mahātejā mahīpatiḥ/ sā hi rājyam idaṁ prāpya nṛpasyāśvapateḥ sutā, duḥkhitānām sapatnīnām na kariṣyati śobhanam/ evam uktas tu rāmeṇa lakṣmaṇaḥ ślakṣṇayā girā, pratyuvāca tadā rāmaṁ vākyajño vākyakovidam/ tavaiva tejasā vīra bhārataḥ pūjayiṣyati, kausalyām ca sumitrām ca prayato nātra samśayaḥ/ kausalyā bibhṛyād āryā sahasram api madvidhān, yasyāḥ sahasram grāmānām samprāptam upajīvanam/ dhanur ādāya saśaram khaṇitrapīṭakādharāḥ, agratas te gamiṣyāmi panthānam anudarśayan/ āhariṣyāmi te nityam mūlāni ca phalāni ca, vanyāni yāni cānyāni svāhārāṇi tapasvinām/ bhavāms tu saha vaidehyā girisānuṣu raṁsyate, aham sarvaṁ kariṣyāmi jāgrataḥ svapataś ca te/ rāmas tv anena vākyena supṛitāḥ pratyuvāca tam, vrajāpṛcchasva saumitre sarvam eva suhṛjjanam/ ye ca rājño dadau divye mahātmā varuṇaḥ svayam, janakasya mahāyajñe dhanuṣi raudradarśane/ abhedyakavace divye tūñī cākṣayasāyakau, ādityavimalau cobhau khaḍgau hemapariṣkṛtau/ satkṛtya nihitam sarvam etad ācāryasadmani, sa tvam āyudham ādāya kṣipram āvraja lakṣmaṇa/ sa suhṛjjanam āmantrya vanavāsāya niścitaḥ, ikṣvākugurum āmantrya jagrāhāyudham uttamam/ tad divyaṁ rājaśārdūlaḥ satkṛtam mālyabhūṣitam, rāmāya darśayām āsa saumitriḥ sarvam āyudham/ tam uvācātmavān rāmaḥ prītyā lakṣmaṇam āgatam, kāle tvam āgataḥ saumya kāṅkṣite mama lakṣmaṇa/ aham pradātum icchāmi yad idaṁ māmakaṁ dhanam, brāhmaṇebhyas tapasvibhyas tvayā saha paramtapa/ vasantīha dṛḍham bhaktyā guruṣu dvijasattamāḥ, teṣāṁ api ca me bhūyaḥ sarveṣāṁ copajīvinām/ vasiṣṭhaputraṁ tu suyajñam āryam; tvam ānayāśu pravaram dvijānām, abhiprayāsyāmi vanam samastān; abhyarcya śiṣṭān aparān dvijātīn/

As Devi Sita and Shri Rama had been seeking to mutually convince each other, finally the adamant Sita perforce made Rama to agree to let Sita to accompany him to dandakaranya. Even as they were arguing each other, Lakshmana had almost arrived. Then the latter bent down and pressed Rama’s tight and addressed Devi Sita that even if thousands of elephants and cruel animals of dandakaranya might chase Sita-Ramas, he would most certainly lead them ahead of the couple ever ready and vigilant up with his ‘dhanush’. Along with me, do both of you keep on enjoying the chirrupings of multi coloured birds and the continous buzzing sounds of honey bees. As Rama kept on listening to Lakshmana’s assurances, Rama negated the proposal of Lakshmana. The latter stated to Rama: Dear brother! *Anugnaata tastu bhavataa purvameva yadasyaham, kimidaaneem punarapi kriyate me nivaaranam/* You had already consented to my proposal to accompany you, but why are changing your mind now! Rama explained:

Dear Lakshmana! You are my true friend, dharma paraayana or the follower- cum - enforcer of dharma, true follower of moral values, and my very 'praana' or the life force undoubtedly. But in my absence, who would look after your mother Devi Sumitra and my mother Devi Kousalya! Maha Raja Dasharatha who had been fulfilling the wishes of each and every body like the rains of the sky on earth so far, but now unfortunately is caught badly in the mesmerising net of Devi Kaikeyi now. He might also be highly disturbed and perhaps guilty in his mind due to my absence. Bharata would in any case be under the total control of his mother Kaikeyi. This is why I am having to have second thoughts of you accompanying me. I am overwhelmed with your faith and devotion to me, no doubt. But once you too are absent, it would be to to difficult to imagine the condition of your mother and of mine and neither ; they will most certainly be disappointed , discouraged and become psychological wrecks in the course of months and years' . Lakshmana stated : My eldest brother Rama! Why are you presuming that Bharata could turn out as so mean and degraded; would he be so disrespectful and vengeful to the mothers. Rama replied: Most essentially, Bharata would be in the tight grip of Kaikeyi even so as she keeps King Dasharadha as the main force. Lakshmana retorts :Maha Veera Rama! Suppose once having become the King, if Bharata were to take to ill justified paths being self opinionated and arrogant and does not look after the mothers, then I should undoubtedly destroy sarva lokas without doubt. Further Devi Kousalya is capable of safeguarding herself and my mother Devi Sumitra too. They both have the solid backing of thousands of villages as their residents are indebted to them for the well being and ready support to them. Therefore, *Kurushva maamanucharam vaidharyam neha vidyate, kritaayoham bhavishyaami tava charthah prakalpyate*/ Therefore, Shri Rama! Let me kindly accompany you. I shall keep holding the dhanush day in and out keep vigil and as you would move forward should be the forward mover ever ensuring that the principles of virtue would never be tampered with. Each and every day, it should be responsibility to bring fruits, vegetables and roots besides 'havan samagri' for your agni karyas. Further, *bhavāms tu saha vaidehyā girisānuṣu raṁsyate, ahaṁ sarvaṁ kariṣyāmi jāgrataḥ svapataś ca te*/ Even as you and Devi Vaidehi gleefully seek to ascend the mountain tops, I should provide impregnable security cover and perform errands dutifully.' As Lakshmana thus asserted most earnestly and dutifully, Rama was pleased and finally said: ' Sumitranandana! Go now to mother Sumitra and wife besides close admirers and meet them of your decision to accompany Rama Sitas for vana vaasa. Lakshmana! Remember that at the maha yajna performed by King Janaka at Mithila , Varuna Deva himself appeared and gifted to you a fierce looking omni potent dhanush along a 'tuneera' with 'akshya baanaas' and an unbreakable 'kavacha' besides a sun like bright long sword as were kpt at the residence of 'aacharya'. Do please collect all these and after obtaining acharya's blessings bring them too'. Shri Rama further instructed Lakshmana to request 'Suyagjna' the son of Maharshi Vasishtha to meet Rama and return back to him at the earliest.

Sarga Thirty Two

Sita Rama's charity to Vasishtha Kamara Sujyagjna and wife- brahmanas, brahmacharis, servants

Tataḥ śāsanam ājñāya bhrātuh śubhataram priyam, gatvā sa praviveśāṣu suyajñasya niveśanam/ tam vipram agnyagārastham vanditvā lakṣmaṇo 'bravīt, sakhe 'bhyāgaccha paśya tvaṁ veśma duṣkarakāriṇaḥ/ tataḥ samdhyām upāsyāṣu gatvā saumitriṇā saha, juṣṭam tat prāviśal lakṣmī rāmyam rāmaniveśanam/ tam āgataṁ vedavidam prāñjaliḥ sītayā saha, suyajñam abhicakrāma rāghavo 'gnim ivārcitam/ jātārūpamayair mukhyair aṅgadariḥ kuṇḍalair śubhaiḥ, sahema sūtrair maṇibhiḥ keyūrain valayair api/ anyaiś ca ratnair bahubhiḥ kākutsthaḥ pratyapūjayat, suyajñam sa tadovāca rāmaḥ sītāpracoditah/ hāram ca hemasūtram ca bhāryāyai saumya hārāya, raśanām cādhunā sītā dātum icchati te sakhe/ paryānkam agryāstaraṇam nānāratnavibhūṣitam, tam apīcchati vaidehī pratiṣṭhāpayitum tvayi/ nāgaḥ śatruṁ jayo nāma mātulo yaṁ dadau mama, tam te gajasahasreṇa dadāmi dvijapuṅgava/ ity uktaḥ sa hi rāmeṇa suyajñah pratigṛhya tat, rāmalakṣmaṇasītānām prayujyāśiṣaḥ śivāḥ/ atha bhrātaram avyagram priyam rāmaḥ priyamvadaḥ, saumitriṁ tam uvācedam brahmeva tridaśeśvaram/ agastyam kauśikam caiva tāv ubhau brāhmaṇottamau, arcayāhūya saumitre ratnaiḥ sasyam ivāmbubhiḥ/ kausalyām ca ya āśīrbhir bhaktaḥ paryupatiṣṭhati, ācāryas taittirīyāṇām abhirūpaś ca vedavit/ tasya

yānam ca dāsīs ca saumitre sampradāpaya, kauśeyāni ca vastrāṇi yāvat tuṣyati sa dvijah/ sūtaś citrarathaś cāryaḥ sacivaḥ suciroṣitaḥ, toṣayainam mahārhaiś ca ratnair vastrair dhanais tathā/ śālivāhasahasram ca dve śate bhadrakāms tathā, vyañjanārtham ca saumitre gosahasram upākuru/ tataḥ sa puruṣavyāghras tad dhanam lakṣmaṇaḥ svayam, yathoktam brāhmaṇendrāṇām adadād dhanado yathā/ athābravīd bāṣpakalāms tiṣṭhataś copajīvinah, sampradāya bahu dravyam ekaikasyopajīvinah/ lakṣmaṇasya ca yad veśma gr̥ham ca yad idaṁ mama, aśūnyam kāryam ekaikaṁ yāvadāgamanam mama/ ity uktvā duḥkhitam sarvam janam tam upajīvinam, uvācedam dhanadhyakṣam dhanam ānīyatām iti, tato 'sya dhanam ājahruḥ sarvam evopajīvinah/ tataḥ sa puruṣavyāghras tad dhanam sahalakṣmaṇaḥ, dvijebhyo bālavṛddhebhyaḥ kṛpaṇebhyo 'bhyadāpaya/ tatrāsīt piṅgalo gārgyas trijaṭo nāma vai dvijah, ā pañcamāyāḥ kaksyāyā nainam kaś cid avārayat/ sa rājaputram āsādya trijaṭo vākyam abravīt, nirdhano bahuputro 'smi rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ, uñchavṛttir vane nityam pratyavekṣasva mām itī/ tam uvāca tato rāmaḥ pariḥāsasamanvitam, gavām sahasram apy ekaṁ na tu viśrāṇitam mayā, parikṣipasi daṇḍena yāvat tāvad avāpsyasi/ sa śāṭīm tvaritaḥ katyām sambhrāntaḥ pariveṣṭya tām, āvidhya daṇḍam cikṣepa sarvaprāṇena vegitaḥ/ uvāca ca tato rāmas tam gārgyam abhisāntvayan, manyur na khalu kartavyaḥ pariḥāso hy ayaṁ mama/ tataḥ sabhāryas trijaṭo mahāmunir; gavām anīkaṁ pratigrhya moditaḥ, yaśobalaprītisukhopabṛmhiṅṭs; tad āśiṣaḥ pratyavadan mahātmanaḥ/

As Lakshmana was thus instructed my Rama, Guruputra Suyagjna accompanied Lakshmana and while Rama seated with Sita made several 'daanas' to Suyagjna. He donated for Suyagjna's wife several golden earrings, necklaces, finger rings, bangles and shoulder ornaments. To Suyagjna he donated an elephant named Shatrujaya well decorated, as King Janaka gifted to Rama. The mightily pleased Suyagjna blessed Sita Ramas and Lakshmana profusely. Then Lakshmana asked the most revered Agastya and Vishvamitra Maharshis to be welcomed and offered thousand cows, swarna mudras, silverware, and invaluable Nava Ratnas of handful diamonds, pearls, sapphires, corals, rubies, gomedha and vaidurya . Later, Lakshmana directed all possible 'yajur veda taittireeya shakha panditaas' to be donated with horse carts, servants and service maids, silk clothes, thousands of cows, and cash from the royal treasury to their heart's contentment. Rama further said that some of the katha shakha and kalaapa shakha brahmacharis who had been in constant touch with him as he admired them for their constant 'swaadhyaya' or recitation of vedas be invited and gifted with eighty camels, handfuls of precious stones from the treasury, thousand bullock carts and several varieties of 'dhanyas'. Likewise, there are groups of 'mekhala dhari brahmacharis' from select 'guru kulaas' who were gifted by me at the instance of my mother as she was extraordinarily contented be also be invited for distribution of appropriate donations.' As per Rama's directives, the 'daanaas' of dhana-dhanya-vastu-vahanaas' were carried out by Lashmana like Kubera himself from the treasury. Then Rama called his personal attendant servants and distributed their wages for fourteen years in advance while stating to them, that they should never feel the absence of Rama Lakshmanas but be contented till their return. Then he commenced distributing ample cash to long winded queues of 'anaadhas' or helpless men-women-and children. Further there were some 'garga gotriya brahmanas' named 'trijatas' at the outskirts of Ayodhya who were truly helpless very elderly and decipits, just barged into the five boundary 'praakaaraas' of Rama's palace despite the resisting soldiers for some succor and livelihood. These were like Bhṛigu and Angeera Maharshis and shouted with shaky voices: *Nirdhano bahuputrosmi Rajaputra Mahabala, kshatavrittirvane nityam pratyavekshasva maamiti/* 'Maha bali Raja Kumara, I am hopelessly stricken by abject poverty with a number of children to support, roaming around the nearby forests for some kind of food. My prostrations to you to mercifully provide some food and clothing'. Rama replied: 'I possess countless herds of cows; you may please accept as many cows as my stick once thrown by me'; so saying Rama with his extended 'aajaanu baahu' or long hands upto his ankles threw away the stick ! He further said: I am stating this a remark of humor and do not be please get offended; what I am stating is that you would be very happy and contented from hereon! Then Rama readily donated in ample measure for the vidvans to be ever contented!' *Dvijah sahrud bhrityajenothavaa tadaa daridra bhikshaacharanascha yo bhavet, na tra kaschit babhuva tarpito yathaarha sammaanana daana sambhramaih/*This was how, Rama at that time made sure that none whosoever like brahmana-sahrida-sevaka-daridra- bhikshkaswere left unattended!

Sarga Thirty Three

Sita Rama Lakshmanas visit Kaikeyas's palace to meet Dasharatha as Nagara vaasis weep away

Dattvā tu saha vaidehyā brāhmaṇebhyo dhanam bahu, jagmatuḥ pitaram draṣṭum sītayā saha rāghavau/ tatto grhīte duṣprekṣye aśobhetām tadāyudhe, mālādāmabhir āsakte sītayā samalaṃkṛte/ tataḥ prāsādaharmyāṇi vimānaśikharāṇi ca, adhiruhyā janaḥ śrīmān udāsīno vyalokayat/ na hi rathyāḥ sma śakyante gantuḥ bahujanākulāḥ, āruhya tasmāt prāsādān dīnāḥ paśyanti rāghavam/ padātim varjitacchatram rāmaḥ dṛṣṭvā tadā janāḥ, ūcur bahuvidhā vācaḥ śokopahatacetasah/ yaṃ yāntam anuyāti sma caturaṅgabalaṃ mahat, tam ekaṃ sītayā sārddham anuyāti sma lakṣmaṇaḥ/ aiśvaryasya rasajñāḥ san kāmīnām caiva kāmadaḥ, necchaty evāṅṛtaṃ kartum pitaram dharmagauravāt/ yā na śakyā purā draṣṭum bhūtair ākāśagair api, tām adya sītām paśyanti rājamārgagatā janāḥ/ aṅgarāgocitām sītām raktacandana sevinīm, varṣam uṣṇam ca sītām ca neṣyaty āśu vivarṇatām/ adya nūnam daśarathaḥ sattvam āviśya bhāṣate, na hi rājā priyam putram vivāsayitum arhati/ nirguṇasyāpi putrasyā kātham syād vipravāsanam, kiṃ punar yasya loko 'yaṃ jito vṛttena kevalam/ āṅṣāmsyam anukrośaḥ śrutam śīlam damaḥ śamaḥ, rāghavam śobhayanty ete śadguṇāḥ puruṣottamam/ tasmāt tasyopaghātena prajāḥ paramapīḍitāḥ, audakānīva sattvāni grīṣme salilasamkṣayāt/ pīḍayā pīḍitam sarvaṃ jagad asya jagatpateḥ, mūlasyevopaghātena vṛkṣaḥ puṣpaphalopagaḥ/ te lakṣmaṇa iva kṣipraṃ sapatnyaḥ sahabāndhavāḥ, gacchantam anugacchāmo yena gacchati rāghavaḥ/ udyānāni parityajya kṣetrāṇi ca grhāṇi ca, ekaduḥkhasukhā rāmam anugacchāma dhārmikam/ samuddhṛtanidhānāni paridhvastājirāṇi ca, upāttadhanadhānyāni hṛtasārāṇi sarvaśaḥ/ rajasābhya vakīrṇāni parityaktāni daivataiḥ, asmattyaktāni veśmāni kaikeyī pratipadyatām/ vanam nagaram evāstu yena gacchati rāghavaḥ, asmābhiś ca parityaktaṃ puraṃ sampadyatām vanam/ bilāni daṃṣṭriṇaḥ sarve sānūni mṛgapakṣiṇaḥ, asmattyaktaṃ prapadyantām sevyamānaṃ tyajantu ca/ ity evaṃ vividhā vāco nānājanasamīritāḥ, śuśrāva rāmaḥ śrutvā ca na vicakre 'sya mānasaṃ/ pratīkṣamāṇo 'bhijanaṃ tadārtam; anārtarūpaḥ prahasann ivātha, jagāma rāmaḥ pitaram didṛkṣuḥ; pitur nideśam vidhivac cikīrṣuḥ/ tat pūrvam aikṣvākasuto mahātmā; rāmo gamiṣyan vanam ārtarūpam, vyatiṣṭhata prekṣya tadā sumantram; pitur mahātmā pratihāraṇārtham/ pitur nideśena tu dharmavatsalo; vanapraveśe kṛtabuddhiniścayaḥ, sa rāghavaḥ prekṣya sumantram abravān; nivedayasvāgamanam ṛpāya me/

Shri Rama along with Devi Sita besides Lakshmana had given away considerable charities and proceeded for King Dasharath's 'darshan'; before doing so, they witnessed the puja preparations made earlier by Sita like the variety of fresh and sweet odoured flowers, and climbed up the seven storied palace with a sense of disappointment and witnessed a sea of surging crowd waiting for Rama, while looking at each other with silence. On descending and entering the foreyard of the palace they encountered innumerable cryings and shouts : *Padātim varjitacchatram rāmaḥ dṛṣṭvā tadā janāḥ, ūcur bahuvidhā vācaḥ śokopahatacetasah/ yaṃ yāntam anuyāti sma caturaṅgabalaṃ mahat, tam ekaṃ sītayā sārddham anuyāti sma lakṣmaṇaḥ/ aiśvaryasya rasajñāḥ san kāmīnām caiva kāmadaḥ, necchaty evāṅṛtaṃ kartum pitaram dharmagauravāt/* As Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas commenced walking on the high road, the crowds got surging with heart rending and reverberating sobbings aloud remarking: 'what strange is the sudden twist of destiny that instead of heralding chaturana sena ahead, Rama is leading along with Sita as followed by Lakshmanas walking barefooted on the road! Even as the symbol of 'aishwarya' or opulence, Rama is being humiliated by fate just because he desires to vindicate the fulfillment of his father's prestige and promise! Alas, the celestials flying high on the skies are brought down to roads and bylanes: it is a shame that we are noticing the born princess Devi Sita at street corners. As damsel like Sita who is normally worshipped with luxurious lavishness with the service of sandal paste and such sweet fragrances is going to be exposed to mid day severity of Sun- ever pouring rains- lashing sand storms- and the severity of icy cold and soon enough an angel would dry up with patchy and dried up grimace! Surely, King Darsaratha of glory and magnanimity must have become a victim of a 'pishaacha' with an unstable mind; otherwise, how could he have banished a symbol of high virtue, especially as he was head over heels infatuated with

Rama! Moreover, even if a son be a worthless and characterless person, how could a father accord such a punishment to a son, and more surprisingly the son would faithfully accept the cruel father's instruction! *Aanṛśamsyam anukrośaḥ śrutam śīlam damaḥ śamaḥ, rāghavam śobhayanty ete śaḍguṇāḥ puruṣottamam/* Indeed Narashreshtha Shri Rama is an outstanding 'puruṣo'tthama' or a human being *par excellence* being an emblem of the six precepts of Dharma viz. soft nature-mercifulness-knowledge-character- and self control. It was bad enough to negate Rama Pattabhisheka but far worse to banish him forest life that too for fourteen life! This situation is akin to torture persons who are already out of a dried up water body! This context is reminiscent of the orderly nature of the respectable society that we live in, in the same manner that a huge tree with blooming flowers and well ripend fruits gets most suddenly downed and severed! *Mulam hyesha manushyaanaam dharmasaaro mahaadyutih, pushpam phalam cha patram cha shakhaaschaaryetare janaah/* This exemplary Shri Rama is the cornerstone of 'Jagat vyavstha' or the very order of the Society, and is like to severe the order is like demolishing a tree with branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. May we all not follow Rama to the forests, just as Sita and Lakshmana are doing! Let us leave behind our agricultural fields, gardens, houses and follow Rama the exemplary! I should accompany him to share his troubles and tribulations. Let us atonce, dig up what ever 'nidhis' or treasures and belongings that we possess, dhana-dhanyas as stored by us, discard even our pujas, bali vaishvadevas, mantra pathanas, yajna karyas, mantra pathanas and so on, and follow Rama with joy. May Kaikeyi reign that type of deserted kingdom with freedom and joy! By so doing, the forests would be converted as cities and vice versa. The cruel animals, poisonous serpents and hordes of elephants and several other wild animals and birds would then move away. Then the deserted houses with broken household vessels and discarded furniture by comfortably occupied with the well wishers of Devi Kaikeyi with glee. As several agitated voices from the public were heard, Rama was reactionless and proceeded to Kaikeyi's palace and at the entrance, he found Sumantra who was standing crying away. But Rama was as undisturbed as always and asked Sumantra to please inform King Dasharatha of his arrival at his door step.

Sarga Thirty Four

Sita Rama Lakshmanas approach Dasharatha with queens before vana vaasa; the latter swoons and recovers and embraces them and swoons again

Sa rāmapreṣitaḥ kṣipram saṁtāpakaluṣendriyaḥ, praviśya nṛpatiṁ sūto niḥśvasantaṁ dadarśa ha/ ālokyā tu mahāprāññāḥ paramākula cetasaṁ, rāmam evānuśocantaṁ sūtaḥ prāññalir āśadat/ ayaṁ sa puruṣavyāghra dvāri tiṣṭhati te sutaḥ, brāhmaṇebhyo dhanam dattvā sarvaṁ caivopajīvinām/ sa tvā paśyatu bhadram te rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ, sarvān suhṛda āpṛcchya tvām idānīm didṛkṣat/ gamiṣyati mahāranyaṁ taṁ paśya jagatīpate, vṛtaṁ rājaguṇaiḥ sarvair ādityam iva raśmibhiḥ/ sa satyavādī dharmātmā gāmbhīryāt sāgaropamaḥ, ākāśa iva niṣpaṅko narendrah pratyuvāca tam/ sumantrānaya me dārān ye ke cid iha māmakaḥ, dārāiḥ parivṛtaḥ sarvair draṣṭum icchāmi rāghavam/ so 'ntaḥpuram atītyaiva striyas tā vākyam abravīt, āryo hvayati vo rājā gamyatām tatra māciram/ sa evam uktāḥ striyaḥ sarvāḥ sumantreṇa nṛpājñāyā, pracakramus tad bhavanaṁ bhartur ājñāya śāsanam/ ardhāsaptasatās tās tu pramadās tāmrālocanāḥ, kausalyām parivāryātha śanair jagmur dhṛtavratāḥ/ āgateṣu ca dāreṣu samavekṣya mahīpatiḥ, uvāca rājā taṁ sūtaṁ sumantrānaya me sutam/ sa sūto rāmam ādāya lakṣmaṇam maithilīm tadā, jagāmābhimukhas tūrṇam sakāśam jagatīpateḥ/ sa rājā putram āyāntam dṛṣṭvā dūrāt kṛtāñjalim, utpapātāsanaṁ tūrṇam ārtāḥ strījanasamvṛtaḥ/ so 'bhidudrāva vegena rāmam dṛṣṭvā viśām patiḥ, tam asamprāpya duḥkḥartaḥ papāta bhuvi mūrchitaḥ/ taṁ rāmo 'bhyapātata kṣipram lakṣmaṇas ca mahārathaḥ, viśamjñam iva duḥkḥena saśokaṁ nṛpatiṁ tadā/ strīsaahasraninādas ca samjajñe rājaveśmani, hāhā rāmeti sahasā bhūṣaṇadhvanimūrchitaḥ/ taṁ pariṣvajya bāhubhyām tāv ubhau rāmalakṣmaṇau, paryānke sītayā sārdham rudantaḥ samaveśayan/ atha rāmo muhūrtena labdhasamjñam mahīpatim, uvāca prāññalir bhūtvā śokārṇavapariplutam/ āpṛcche tvām mahārāja sarveṣām īśvaro 'sinaḥ, prasthitaṁ daṇḍakāraṇyaṁ paśya tvam kuśalena mām/ lakṣmaṇam cānujānīhi sītā cānveti mām vanam, kāraṇair bahubhis tathyaḥ vāryamānau na cechataḥ/ anujānīhi sarvān naḥ śokam utsṛjya

mānada, lakṣmaṇam mām ca sītām ca prajāpatir iva prajāḥ/ pratīkṣamānam avyagram anujñām jagatīpateḥ, uvāca rarjā saṁprekṣya vanavāsāya rāghavam/ aham rāghava kaikeyyā varadānena mohitaḥ, ayodhyāyās tvam evādya bhava rājā nigṛhya mām/ evam ukto nṛpatinā rāmo dharmabhṛtām varaḥ, pratyuvācāñjalim kṛtvā pitaram vākyakovidaḥ/ bhavān varṣasahasrāya pṛthivyā nṛpate patiḥ, aham tv aranye vatsyāmi na me kāryam tvayānṛtam/ śreyase vṛddhaye tāta punarāgamanāya ca gacchasvāriṣṭam avyagraḥ panthānam akutobhayam/ adya tv idānīm rajanīm putra mā gaccha sarvathā, mātaram mām ca saṁpaśyan vasesmā adya śarvarīm, tarpitaḥ sarvakāmais tvam śvaḥkāle sādhaiṣyasi/ atha rāmas tathā śrutvā pitur ārtasya bhāṣitam, lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātrā dīno vacanam abravūt/ prāpsyāmi yān adya guṇān ko me śvastān pradāsyati, apakramaṇam evātaḥ sarvakāmair aham vṛṇe/ iyam sarāṣṭrā sajanā dhanadhānyasamākulā, mayā viśṣṭā vasudhā bharatāya pradīyatām/ apagacchatu te duḥkham mā bhūr bāṣpapariplutaḥ, na hi kṣubhyati durdharṣaḥ samudraḥ saritām patiḥ/ naivāham rājyam icchāmi na sukham na ca maithilīm, tvām aham satyam icchāmi nānṛtam puruṣarṣabha/ puram ca rāṣṭram ca mahī ca kevalā; mayā niśṣṭā bharatāya dīyatām, aham nideśam bhavato 'nupālayan; vanam gamiṣyāmi cirāya sevitur/ mayā niśṣṭām bharto mahīm imām; saśailakhaṇḍām sapurām sakānanām, śivām susīmām anuśāstu kevalam; tvayā yad uktaṁ nṛpate yathāstu tat/ na me tathā pāṛthiva dhīyate mano; mahatsu kāmeṣu na cātmanaḥ priye, yathā nideśe tava śiṣṭasaṁmate; vyapaitu duḥkham tava matkṛte 'nagha/ naivāham rājyam icchāmi na sukham na ca maithilīm, tvām aham satyam icchāmi nānṛtam puruṣarṣabha/ puram ca rāṣṭram ca mahī ca kevalā; mayā niśṣṭā bharatāya dīyatām, aham nideśam bhavato 'nupālayan; vanam gamiṣyāmi cirāya sevitur/ phalāni mūlāni ca bhakṣayan vane; girīmś ca paśyan saritaḥ sarāmsi ca, vanam praviśyaiva vicitrapādapaṁ; sukhī bhaviṣyāmi tavāstu nirvṛti/ Evam sa Rajaa vyasanaabhipannastaapena duḥkhena cha peedyamaanah/, aalingya putram suvinashtasangjno bhumim gato naiva chicheshta kinchit/ Devyah samastaa ruruduh sametaastaam varjijitvaa naradeva patneem, rudan Sumanthropi jagaama moorcchaam hahaakritam tatra babhuva sarvaam/

As Shri Rama asked Sumantra to intimate of his arrival, the latter had done so and found King Dasharatha was crestfallen on the ground as Surya Deva was subdued by Rahu Graha bit by bit only ruminating about Rama with deep intensity and anguish. The King was addressed by Sumantra: ‘ Prithvi naadha! Shri Rama had just concluded the distribution of all his wealth by donating it to Brahmanas, servants, and various persons as the poor, vulnerable and the old. Now, before departure for dandakaranya; if you do kindly consent, may I ask him to meet you. You may like to see him without any prejudice or inhibition. Dasharatha replied: Please ask my queens too to get together at once. As the queens were at attendance, then he asked his sons too. Then entered Rama-Lakshmanas besides Devi Sita. *sa rājā putram āyāntam dṛṣṭvā dūrāt kṛtāñjalim, utpapātāsanāt tūrṇam ātaḥ strījanasaṁvṛtaḥ/ so 'bhidudrāva vegena rāmam dṛṣṭvā viśām patiḥ, tam asaṁprāpya duḥkhārtāḥ papāta bhuvi mūrchitaḥ/* As Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas entered with greetingful folded hands with unease and nervousness, Dasharatha who was surrounded by his queens, stood up totteringly and cried loudly his heart out. Even as he was so desperately crying away, Rama ran up to him to console his father the latter fell down on the floor unconscious. Sita and Lakshmana too ran to the spot with their senses benumbed. As this sudden succession of events took place, there were thousands of maids along with the queens cried out loudly shouting ‘ Hey Rama! Hey Rama’. Rama -Sita-Lakshmanas together lifted the father on their shoulders and took him and placed on the mattressed cot. While Dashratha gained semi consciousness, Rama uttered with low tone with folded hands: *āpṛcche tvām mahārāja sarveṣām īśvaro 'si naḥ prasthitam daṇḍakāraṇyam paśya tvam kuśalena mām/ lakṣmaṇam cānujānīhi sītā cānveti mām vanam, kāraṇair bahubhis tathyair vāryamāṇau na cecchataḥ/ anujānīhi sarvān naḥ śokam utsṛjya mānada, lakṣmaṇam mām ca sītām ca prajāpatir iva prajāḥ/* Maha Raja! You are our Deva! I am now leaving for dandakaranya and soliciting you command to do so; do kindly allow us to do so now as Sita and Lakshmana too are accompanying me. I tried my very best to stop for accompanying me but are extremely adamant; just as Sanaka-Sanandana- Sanatana-Sanatkumaras were blessed by his sons by Brahma for their executing rigorous tapsya, do kindly allow us to depart now. King Dasharatha replied: *aham rāghava kaikeyyā varadānena mohitaḥ, ayodhyāyās tvam evādya bhava rājā nigṛhya mām/*

Raghunandana! It was due to the blunderous boon that I gave to Kaikeyi once upon a time that this most unfortunate exigency has occurred; do kindly kill me and become the King of Ayodhya . Rama replied: Maha Raja! you should most certainly reign the kingdom for thousand years, as I have the least desire to become the King and wish to live in the forests. On the completion of the destined fourteen years of forest life, I should most certainly return and fall at your feet. Then the King stated crying loudly: ‘Most unfortunately, I am tied of tightly to the shackles of Truthfulness and simultaneously Kaikeyi has been pressing me to hurry up for your leaving soon. Hence, my best wishes and blessings to you till you return safe with auspiciousness . May not any kind of hurdles or difficulties be faced on way and everthafter. But I have only one request to you to atleast for a day and night so that I could enjoy your company for a little more time till the morning next! But most unfortunetely, my wife Kaikeyi happens to be a covered up ash around fire. Then Dasharatha then stared at Rama Lakshmanas crying in fits and starts as Rama interrupted the weepings and stated: ‘ Maha Raja! I have by now given away my ‘dhana dhanyas’ already and even discarded the residents of the Kingdom and now this belongs to Bharata. *Vanavaasa kritaa buddhir na cha medya chalishyati, yastu yuddhai varo dattah Kaikeyyai varadatvaya, deeyataam nikhilenaiva satyastvam bhava paarthiva/ Aham nidesham bhavato yadhouttanu paalayan, chaturdasha samaa vatsye vane vanacharai saha, maa vimarsho vasumatee Bharataaya pradeeyataam/* Rama continued affirming: ‘ My decision to leave for ‘vana vaasa’ stands firmly. What ever promise that you gifted to mother Kaikeyi be never negated and vindicated your ‘pratigjna’ most certainly. I will truthfully obey to proceed for fourteen years of rigorous vana vaasa. Give away the kingdom to Bharata; this is the ultimate and resolute decision. Kindly be brave, wipe off your tears and never cry; you are like the deep ocean and should never get perturbed by the flows of lakes and streams! *naivāham rājyam icchāmi na sukham na ca maithilīm, tvām aham satyam icchāmi nāṅṛtaṁ puruṣarṣabha/ puram ca rāṣṭram ca mahī ca kevalā; mayā nisṛṣṭā bharatāya dīyatām, aham nideśam bhavato ’nupālayan; vanaṁ gamiṣyāmi cirāya sevitur/* I would not be ever enamored of Kingdoms, pleasures, married life and any such rejoicements including of swarga sukhka and least of all my very life. My singular objective of is Pitru seva and the vindication of my dearmost father’s ‘pratigjna’ only.’ As Shri Rama asserted, King Dasharatha embraced Rama tightly and fell down to the ground and Devis Koushalya and Sumitra cried out in high pitch and fell in unconsciousness, even as Devi Kaikeyi stood in a stoic manner. The entire Rana Vaasa got alarmed with unprecetented commotion with the loudest reverberations reaching to the high ceilings of the palace.

Sarga Thirty Five

Sumantra’s criticizes Kaikeyi as latter justifies

Tato nidhuya sahasaa shiro nihshvasya chaasakrut, paanim paanou vinishpashya dantaan katakataayya - cha/ Lochane kopasamrakte varnam purvochitam jahat, kopaabhibhutah sahasaa santaamashumbhaah gatah/ Manah sameekshamaanaascha suuto Dasharasyacha kampamaanniva Kaikeyyaa hridayan vaaksharaah shataih/ Yasyaastva patisyakto Raja Dashrathah svayam, bhartaa sarvasva jajatah sthaavasya charasyacha/ Nahyaakaaryatamam kinchittava deveeha vidyate, patighneem tvaamaham manye kulaghneemapi chaantatah/ Maavamamsthaa Dashratham bhartaaram varadam patim, bharturicchhaa hinaareenaa putrakotyaa visheshyate/ Yathaa vayo hiraajyaani praapnuvanti nripakshaye, Ikshvaakukula naathesmimstam lopayitumicchhaasi/ Rajaa bhavatu te putro Bharatah shaastu medineem, vayam tatra gamishyaamo yatra Ramo gamishyati/ Na cha te vishya kaschid braahmano vastumarhati, taadrusham tvayamaryaadimadya karma kaarishyasi, nuunam sarce gamishyaamo maargam raamanishevitam/ Aascharyaamiva pashyaami yaastate vrittameedrusham, aachaarantyyaa na vidrutaa sadyo bhavati medinee/ Iti saanveshcha teekshanaischa Kaikeeyem Raaja

samsadi, bhuyah sankshobhayaamaasa Sumantrastu kritaanjalih/ Naiva saa kshubhyate Dedvee na cha smapariduyate, na chaasyaa mukha varnasya lakshyate vikriyaa tadaa/

On recovery from his stupor, Sumantra stood up with extreme agitation and anger , took long and heavy breathing , displaying raised wrists, gnashing his teeth on his lips, commenced his lashing angry and livid remarks attacking Kaikeyi. Having prefaced his remarks stating that King Dashratha was her betrayed husband, her King and the boon bestower, he said: ‘how dare you that you have insinuated, insulted, and abused with low and mean mindedness! You have brought the Ikshvaku vamsha from glorious heights to deep and murky drenches. The entire public of the Kingdom would most certainly follow Rama to the forests and desert this place to a ‘smashana’ and then you and your Bharata could reign over the desert. No brahmana, and not even a self respecting human could be held back even by force. I wonder that as you have most consciously and wantonly perpetrated this type of heinous and inhuman act, how is it that there should not be repetitive earth quakes at once. How indeed that Maha Brahmarshis have not yet reacted with irrecoverable curses subjecting a demoness like you to turn into flames and ashes as you have dared to uproot the ‘maha vriksha’ of the symbol of virtue like Dasharatha and the Emblem of Sacrifice like the singular practioner of Pitru vaakya paalana like Rama!’ As Sumantra kept on grilling with such unbearable insults and insinuations as also hurling abuses, the shameless Kaikeyi was least perturbed betraying neither restlessness nor sense of shame, muchless of remorse!

Sarga Thirty Six

Dasaharatha asks Sumantra to carry some treasure for initial phase of vana vaasa

Tataḥ sumantram aikṣvākaḥ pīḍīto 'tra pratijñayā, sabāṣpam atiniḥśvasya jagādedaṁ punaḥ punaḥ/ sūta ratnasusampūrṇā caturvidhabalā camūḥ, rāgavasyānuyātrārtham kṣipram pratividhīyatām/ rūpājīvā ca śālīnyo vaṇijaś ca mahādhanāḥ , śobhayantu kumārasya vāhinīm suprasāritāḥ/ ye cainam upajīvanti ramate yaiś ca vīryataḥ, teṣāṁ bahuvīdham dattvā tān apy atra niyojaya/ nighnan mṛgān kuñjarāṁś ca pibāṁś cāraṇyakam madhu, nadīś ca vivīdhāḥ paśyan na rājyam saṁsmariṣyati/ dhānyakośaś ca yaḥ kaś cid dhanakośaś ca māmakaḥ, tau rāmam anugacchetām vasantaṁ nirjane vane/ yajan puṇyeṣu deṣeṣu viśṛjāṁś cāptadakṣiṇāḥ, ṛṣibhiś ca samāgamya pravatsyati sukham vane/ bhārataś ca mahābāhur ayodhyām pālayiṣyati, sarvakāmaiḥ punaḥ śrīmān rāmaḥ saṁsādhyatām iti/ evaṁ bruvati kākutsthe kaikeyyā bhayam āgatam, mukham cāpy agamāc cheṣam svaraś cāpi nyarudhyata/ sā viṣaṇṇā ca saṁtrastā kaikeyī vākyam abravīt, rājyam gatajanaṁ sādho pītamaṇḍām surām iva, nirāsvādyatamaṁ śūnyam bhārato nābhīpatsyate/ kaikeyyām muktalajjāyām vadantyām atidāruṇam, rājā daśaratho vākyam uvācāyatalocanām, vahantaṁ kim tudasi mām niyujya dhuri māhite/ kaikeyī dviguṇam kruddhā rājānam idam abravīt, tavaiva vaṁśe sagaro jyeṣṭham putram upārudhat, asamañja iti khyātam tathāyam gantum arhati/ evaṁ ukto dhig ity eva rājā daśaratho 'bravīt, vrīḍitaś ca janaḥ sarvaḥ sā ca tan nāvabudhyata/tatra vṛddho mahāmātraḥ siddhārtho nāma nāmataḥ, śucir bahumato rājñāḥ kaikeyīm idam abravīt/ asamañjo gṛhītvā tu krīḍitaḥ pathi dārakān, sarayvāḥ prakṣipann apsu ramate tena durmatih/ tam dṛṣṭvā nāgaraḥ sarve kruddhā rājānam abruvan, asamañjam vṛṣṭiṅvaikam asmān vā rāṣṭravardhana/ tān uvāca tato rājā kinnimittam idam bhayam, tāś cāpi rājñā saṁpṛṣṭā vākyam prakṛtayo 'bruvan/ krīḍitaś tv eṣa naḥ putrān bālān udbhrāntacetanaḥ, sarayvām prakṣipan maurkhyād atulām prītim aśnute/ sa tāsām vacanam śrutvā prakṛtīnām narādhipa, tam tatyājāhitam putram tāsām priyacikīrṣayā/ ity evam atyajad rājā sagaro vai sudhārmikaḥ, rāmaḥ kim akarot pāpam yenaivam uparudhyate/ śrutvā tu siddhārthavaco rājā śrāntatarasvanaḥ, śokopahatayā vācā kaikeyīm idam abravīt/

anuvrajiṣyāmy aham adya rāmaṁ; rājyaṁ parityajya sukhaṁ dhanam ca, sahaiva rājñā bharatena ca tvam; yathā sukhaṁ bhūṅkṣva cirāya rājyam/

Maha Raja Dasharatha was a passive witness of the uncontrollable anger and anguish of Sumantra so strongly expressed against Kaikeyi, and having breathed heavily asked Sumantra to instruct the ‘charuranga balas’ of foot soldiers, cavalry, elephantry and military to follow the departing trio of Sita-Rama-Lakshmanas. He further instructed that he should like to organise yajna karyaas in the forests and there should not be any deficiency of treasury and ‘anna bhandaar’ or plentiful food material! He emphasised that Shri Rama be appropriately sent off without any feeling of discontentment. As the King gave such instructions of liberalism by way of Rama’s comforting supplies to be sent, Kaiyeyi intervened saying that already a lot of liberalism was showered on the departing trio and on his return, Bharata might not like such undesirable charities to the ‘departing heros’! As Kaikeyi made such unfortunate and heinous remarks, King Dasharatha shouted at Kaikeyi: ‘Anarthe! Why are you persistently torturing me with your excruciating and ghastly remarks. Why did you not tell me even earlier that you get alarmed if I would like to send some sena to see off till the departure of the heros and some food and money for ‘deva karyaas’ of yajnas there after! In reply to what the King said, Kaikeyi replied equally haughtily: Maha Raja! I wish to follow the example of your ancestor Sagara Chakravarti had shut the doors of his empire to his eldest son Asamanjasa and sent him off without consideration and any backing!

[Vishleshana on Sagara Chakravarti and his son Asamanjasa:

Sagara Chakravarti of Ayodhya in the remote past whose Dharmapatni was Keshini of Vidarbha Desha who too was a Satyavaadini. His second wife was named Sumati, the daughter of Arishtanemi Kashyapa and the sister of Garuda Deva. Sagara Chakravarti performed tapasya in the Himalaya Range along with his wives atop on the Bhriguprastavana Shikhara. After a century long tapsya, Maharshi Bhrgu blessed the Chakravati that he would be famed in the entire universe till eternity and blessed him with several sons; he affirmed that one of the queens would beget a single son and another with sixty thousand sons. The King was overwhelmed with the boon of the Maharshi and politely enquired as to which of the Queens would beget only a single but famed ‘vamshodhaaraka’ son; in turn the Maharshi asked the spouses about their individual preferences..Then the highly enthusiastic younger wife Sumati the brother of Garuda replied that she would prefer strong sons of collective might and fame like Garuda himself, but Devi Keshini opted for a son like her Emperor husband, an outstanding example of virtue and justice with grit to sustain the Vamsha. Sagara and wives then prostrated and returned to the capital of the Empire. After a lapse of months, Devi Keshini gave birth to ‘Asamanjasa’ and Devi Sumati gave birth to a huge pot from which emerged sixty thousand sons of strength and brightness. Right from birth, this son turned out to be evil. The word Asamanjasa means imbalanced or improper. Since the son was full of evil nature, he came to be known as Asamanjasa. As years rolled on, the Charavarty became a renowned father of an army- like sons of supremacy and command. Asamanajasa used to collect youngsters of the empire to compete in swimming and enjoy himself vicariously and the parents kept on complaining to Sagara. At first, Sagara ignored the misdeeds of his sons. He tended to dismiss them as juvenile exuberance. But Asamanjasa and his brothers continued to do as they pleased. They disrupted the performances of yajnas and oppressed religious people. They appropriated for themselves the offerings that were made to gods at sacrifices. Apsaras were abducted by these evil princes. They also stole flower from the divine parijata tree. Drinking was their favourite pastime, together with robbery and theft. Finally Sagara Chakravarti banished Asamanjasa from the Empire. The forlorn Sagara decided to

perform Ashvamedha Yajna. But Indra and Devas began to plot so as to devise ways for bringing about the destruction of the evil sons of Sagara. There was a Sage named Kapila who was devoted to Vishnu and was so powerful that he was like the great Vishnu himself. Kapila had an ashrama in the Patala Lokas. Indra and Devas prayed to Kapila to deliver the world from Sagara's evil sons. The Sacrifice Horse was launched and released under the supervision of Maharathi Amshuman the renowned 'dhanurdhara' and the famed son of Asamanjasa. But the Sacrifice Horse disappeared suddenly as was robbed away by Mahendra Himself. Since the launched Horse was missing, the Ritviks felt that it was not a good omen and that somebody appeared to have stolen and the robber be chased fast to recover it. Then presiding over the Yajna, the Chakravarti commanded the sixty thousand mighty Sagara Putras to chase the thief at once. He further ordered that even if they would have to go round the earth, they ought not return empty handed without the Sacrificial Horse. The Chakravarti declared that he would stay put firmly along with the Ritviks and Amshuman. The mighty sixty thousand strong Sagara Putras divided the territories of earth and left in grand groups and pierced earth with their swords and trishulas so fiercely that bhudevi looked to have wept with excruciating pain. In the process, the entire earth all over 'jambu dwipa' was dug up deep upside down as there were alarms of humans, animals and birds attracting the attention of celestials too as though there were repetitive and alarming earthquakes. The rattled celestials like Gandharvaas, as also Asuras, and Maha Sarpas from the earth down under being alarmed approached Brahma Deva and complained: *Bhagavan pṛthivī sarvā khanyate sagarātmajaiḥ, bahavaś ca mahātmāno vadhyante jalacāriṇaḥ/ ayam yajñahano 'smākam anenāśvo 'panīyate, iti te sarvabhūtāni nighnanti sagarātmajāḥ/* Brahma Deva! Sagara Chakravarti's sixty thousand strong sons of extraordinary physical prowess have broken down hells on earth and are digging earth deep under on the plea of searching for 'Yagnaashva' of Sagara's 'maha yagjnya' and as a result earth had been dug up deep and entered the 'paatala lokas' too in a manner that the natives of earth and the nether lokas too are being decimated mercilessly and hence we are frightened being on the fringes of death! As the Sagara Kumaras continued the digging of Rasaatala for the missing Sacrificial Horse, Bhagavan Vishnu in the form of Kapila Maharshi reddened his eyes while the mighty Sagara Putras were engrossed in the unilateral task of digging again and again. They finally found the Sagara Chakravarti's Yagnaashva just near around the Maharshi. *asmākam tvaṁ hi turagaṁ yajñiyaṁ hṛtavān asi, durmedhas tvaṁ hi samprāptān viddhi naḥ sagarātmajān/ śrutvā tad vacanaṁ teṣāṁ kapilo raghunandana, roṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭo humkāram akarot tadā/ tatas tenāprameyena kapilena mahātmanā, bhasmarāśīkṛtāḥ sarve kākutstha sagarātmajāḥ/* As soon as hardworking Sagara Putras cited the 'Yagnaashva' grazing in the vicinity of a Maharshi, they started shouting with anger with pent up emotions of frustrations for several days and nights stating 'you the wicked Maharshi! how dare you had hidden the Sacrificial Horse here as it had been grazing grass coolly here; now we the mighty have arrived; be it well realised that we are the mighty sons of the almighty Chakravarti Sagara himself! The Maharshi on hearing the braggings of Sagara Kumaras made a 'humkaara' in raging fury and the totality of the sixty thousand valiant force were burnt to ashes. Meanwhile Sagara wondered as to what might have happened to the Sagara Putras and the Sacrificial Horse as it was a long time that they departed. Then Amshuman volunteered to depart and find out about the position of his uncles. Chakravarti alerted the grandson to be very vigilant as he might encounter potent and enemy elements all the way and hence should be well armed with swords and archery. He further alerted that some persons of cunningness and misleadings might also be faced and such persons would need to be killed mercilessly. Thus having accorded an auspicious farewell Amshuman entered Rasatala came across Diggaja Virupaksha and the former prostrated and the diggaja who blessingly indicated that he would return soon with the Yajnaashva. Amshuman no doubt secured the Yagnaashva

but was horrified to see the huge heaps of human ashes laid on the long stretches on land. Amshuman realised that the entire Sagara sena was no more and started crying away for long. Then he found the ‘Yagnyashva’ moving nearby. Amshuman then desired to greet the ashes and looked for any water reserves nearby and searched a lot. Looking up at the high skies, he being equipped with the ability to vision far and high, spotted the Pakshi Raja Garuda who was the uncle of Sagara Putras as Devi Vinata the wife of Kashyapa begot Garuda the Vishnu vahana and Aruna the charioteer of the eka chakra of Surya Deva. Garuda Deva flew down and consoled Amshuman not to cry much as what all had happened was all for Loka Kalyana in the times ahead. Garuda Deva further stated that Maharshi Kapila being Vishnu himself had turned Sagara Putras for a purpose and hence it was not proper to perform ‘jalaanjali’ for the departed ones. He further stated that ‘tarpanas’ to the departed ones might as well be performed with the sacred waters of Ganga; Garuda asserted to Amshuman: *Gaṅgā himavato jyeṣṭhā duhitā puruṣarṣabha, bhasmarāśīkṛtān etān pāvayel lokapāvanī/ tayā klinnam idaṁ bhasma gaṅgayā loka kāntayā, ṣaṣṭīm putrasahasrāṇi svargalokaṁ nayiṣyati/* Narashreshtha! Himavan’s elder daughter Devi Ganga be brought down to bhuloka from her celestial abode. Garuda further advised to return back to the Kingdom along with the Sacrificial Horse for the time being. On return King Sagara heard as to what all happened from Amshuman especially about the imperative of inviting the celestial lokas down to earth and relieve the Souls of the Sagara Kumaras. King Sagara then dutifully performed the Maha Ashva medha yajna and after ruling the kingdom for thirty thousand years passed away peacefully. Consequent upon the death of Sagara Chakravarti, the entire public of the Kingdom unanimously chose Amshuman as the King. Thereafter the illustrious Amshuman having ruled over the kingdom for ever thirty thousand years, departed for tapasya on the heights of Himalayas and thereafter reached swarja loka. Meanwhile King Amshuman’s son Dilip who subsequently became the King recalled that that Chakravarti Sagara’s famed sons who were his ancestors could not attain salvation yet due to the reason of Maha Garuda’s directive that only the flows of Sacred Ganga could redeem. King Dilip kept on wondering through out his life as to how to bring down from the skies; meanwhile he was blessed with a son as named **Bhagiratha** who even from childhood outstanding traits of Dharma and what was more interesting was of grit and determination. The King Dilip who too proved himself as a King of virtuosity lived for thirty thousand years having well sustained the traditional values of Kingship established by the immemorial Sagara Chakravarti himself, even as planning ambitiously as to how best to bring Devi Ganga down to earth and at the end was welcomed into Imndra Loka. As Bhagiratha assumed Kingship, it looked that all the celestials came down and witnessed the royal ceremonies. He ruled the Kingdom strictly on the basis of the well established precepts of Dharma and Nyaya for good number of years but as there was no further progeny forthcoming for long, the divine duty of bringing Ganga down to earth became intense day after day and having determined so entrusted the responsibility of Kingship to his Ministers and retired to severe tapasya at the Punya kshetra Gokarna. His life’s mission was to bring Ganges down to Earth from Heavens. Bhagiradha’s prayers were indeed granted by Mother Ganges to the devotee but warned him that the force of the flow from the Heavens to Earth could be withstood by no less than Lord Siva Himself! Bhagiradha never stopped his grand endeavour and worshipped Lord Siva with austerities and purity who agreed, not only because of the sincerity with which the devotee desired to fulfill the long-standing family wish but also owing to the reason of Universal advantage. The Lord assumed a massive body and controlled the force of the River flowing from Lord Vishnu’s feet and bore the brunt of the impact on His head in His ‘Jatajut’ or twisted hairs and released but a portion of the Holy River. Bhagiradha directed the fiery flow by riding a fast Chariot and brought it to the place where the ashes of his forefathers were purified and their souls liberated to Heavens. Till date, humanity continues to be

grateful to him for the ever lasting memory of his gigantic efforts in our reaping the fruits of his labour in the huge land-mass covering entire ‘Aryavarta’ (Northern India)!.]

Thus having most unfortunately comparing Shri Rama’s punishment to a fourteen year long living in ‘dandakaranya’ with Sagara Chakravarti’s banishing the evil son Asamanjasa, the blatantly unashamed Kaikeyi confronted King Dasharatha who got shocked and bewildered with this comparison as the on lookers in the Inner Palace were upset and dazed too. Dasharatha’s Prime Minister Siddhartha at once reacted agitatedly and explained the damaging comparison of Shri Rama and Asamanjasa! *Asamañjo gṛhītvā tu krīḍitaḥ pathi dārakān, sarayvāḥ prakṣipann apsu ramate tena durmatih/ tam dṛṣṭvā nāgaraḥ sarve kruddhā rājānam abruvan, asamañjam vṛṣṇivaikam asmān vā rāṣṭravardhana/ tān uvāca tato rājā kinmimittam idam bhayam, tās cāpi rājñā samprṣṭā vākyam prakṛtayo ’bruvan/ krīḍitas tv eṣa naḥ putrān bālān udbhrāntacetanaḥ, sarayvām prakṣipan maurkhyād atulām prītim aśnute/ sa tāsām vacanam śrutvā prakṛtīnām narādhipa, tam tatyājāhitam putram tāsām priyacikīrṣayā/ ity evam atyajad rājā sagaro vai sudhārmikaḥ, rāmaḥ kim akarot pāpam yenaivam uparudhyate/* He explained in detail to Kaikeyi : ‘Devi! Asamanja was an evil minded Raja Kumara who used to collect playful boys on streets and threw in to the Sayayu River for vicarious glee! The highly agitated heads of the public in the city were repeatedly requesting the Chakravarti to save them from the mischievous deeds and escapades of the Prince and his menacing followers. Then Sagara finally decided to get rid of the evil minded Asamanjasa and asked his soldiers to provide him adequate food and sustenance of money and pack him and followers banishing further entry into the empire. Then Asamanjasa and a few followers had to save themselves staying in mountain caves and sustain by eating roots, leaves and wild tree fruits. But, which evil path indeed that Rama had taken to and for which unimaginable deeds of mischief that he should deserve to be banned out of the Kingdom! *Nahi kinchana pashyaamo Raghavasyaagunam vayam, durlabho hyaasya nirayah Shassaankasyeva kalamasham!* One indeed could ever see critically even a spot of blemish in Rama like what one could see as of Shukla paksha dwiteeya chandra!’ The Prime Minister then challenged Kaikeyi and warned her form ‘Loka Ninda’ or Public Hatred!’ As Siddhardha thus reprimanded Kaikeyi, King Dashartha addressed her: ‘ Paapini the worst ever sinner!Do’nt you have that much of commonsense of comparing Asamanjasa and Shri Rama! You are surely on the way of stupidity and insanity! Now, I cannot tolerate any further and am leaving along with Rama the icon of perfection.

Sarga Thirty Seven

Rama Lakshmans dressed up in valkala vastras but Maharshi Vasishtha rejects Sita wearing that dress

Mahāmātravacaḥ śrutvā rāmo daśaratham tadā, anvabhāṣata vākyam tu vinayajño vinītavat/ tyaktabhogasya me rājan vane vanyena jīvataḥ kiṁ kāryam anuyātreṇa tyaktasaṅgasya sarvataḥ/ yo hi dattvā dvipaśreṣṭham kaksyāyām kurute manaḥ, rajjusnehena kiṁ tasya tyajataḥ kuñjarottamam/ tathā mama satām śreṣṭha kiṁ dhvajinyā jagatpate, sarvāṇy evānujānāmi cīrāṇy evānayantu me/ khanitrapīṭake chobhe mamānayata gacchataḥ, caturdaśa vane vāsam varṣāṇi vasato mama/ atha cīrāṇi kaikeyī svayam āhṛtya rāghavam, uvāca paridhatsveti janaughe nirapatrapā/ sa cīre puruṣavyāghraḥ kaikeyyāḥ pratigṛhya te, sūkṣmavastram avakṣipya munivastrāṇy avasta ha/ lakṣmaṇas cāpi tatraiva vihāya vasane śubhe, tāpasāc chādane caiva jagrāha pitur agrataḥ/ athātmaparidhānārtham sītā kauṣeyavāsini, samīksya cīram samtrastā pṛṣṭā vāgurām iva/ sā vyapatrapamāṇeva pratigṛhya ca durmanāḥ, gandharvarājapratimam bhartāram idam abravīt, katham nu cīram badhnanti munayo vanavāsinaḥ/ kṛtvā kaṅthe ca sā cīram ekam ādāya pāṇinā, tasthau hy akuṣalā tatra vrīḍitā janakātmaja/ tasyās tat kṣipram āgamyā rāmo dharmabhṛtām varaḥ, cīram babandha sītāyāḥ kauṣeyasyopari svayam/

Reacting what the Priminister of the Kingdom had explained to Kaikeyi, King Dasharatha stated that hereby he would be discarding the Kingship as he too should get readied to accompany Rama to the forest life. He remarked: ‘Of which avail to me of the army and its headship as now onward I too should sustain myself with roots and forest fruits. As an elephant king gets tied with iron shackles, I too would now be freed from them to move about freely now onward. Then the Prime Minister too sounded likewise and asked the servant maids of Kaikeyi to bring for him too ‘valkala vastras’. Then, surprisingly Kaikeyi herself brought several the deer skins to Shri Rama most insultingly and said with raised tone: alright! Wear them! Then the obedient Rama had accepted by stretching both of his hands and having changed his princely attire to that of hermit’s dress of deer skins in public gaze! Similarly, Lakshmana too discarded his princely dress and did what Rama did. Then Devi Sita readied herself to accept with shivering hands the ‘cheera vastras’ from Kaikeyi and having broken into unstoppable tears in her lotus eyes and with wet nose, looked at them staringly with sense of shame and timidity. With intermittent pauses, she extended both her hands even as Kaikeyi shoved the skins into Sita’s palms with a forceful push. Sita then discarded her soft and scented silk robes and asked Rama: Nadha! Do you know as to how do the forest women wear the deer skins! As Rama helped her, she made efforts to change over with shame, helplessness and frustration and stood beside her husband obediently. As she was doing so the servant maids cried away loudly wondering at the twists of fate from born princess to a jungle woman! Some of the elder servant maids who knew Rama as a boy, addressed him cryingly : Rama! How come the princess could transform as a forest lass! Maharshi Vasishtha too witnessed the ugliest scene with overflowing tears in his eyes especially as Devi Sita was proving herself as Maha Pativrata and shouted on Kaikeyi: *Na gantavyam vanam Devyaa Seetayaa sheela varjite, anushthaasyati Raamasya Sita prakritamaasanam/ Atmaa hi daaraah sarveshaam daara angrahavartinaam, aatmeyamiti Raamasya paalayishyati medineem/* ‘Durbuddhi Kaikeyi! Are you not the unique blunder of the Universe! Devi Sita should never be destined to experience forest life and instead be seated on a high throne of queenship. The entirety of womanhood is half of her physique and consciousness and as such the very Soul of Rama as the sigular queen of the universe!’ The Maharshi further shouted on Kaikeyi: *Ekasya Raamasya vane nivaasastvayaa vrittah kaikeya raaja putri! Vibhushitayam prati karmanitvayaa vasatvaranye saha Raghavena/* ‘Kaikeyi! you demanded Rama’s ‘vana vaasa’ only, but not for Sita. But Sita has to be the queen and that of course possible with Rama as the King!’

Sargas Thirty Eight

Dasharatha too rejects Sita wearing Valka vastras even as Kaikeyi was unhappy, but Rama approves

Tasyām cīram vasānāyām nāthavatyām anāthavat, pracukrośa janaḥ sarvo dhik tvām daśaratham tv iti/ sa niḥśvasyoṣṇam aikṣvākas tām bhāryām idam abravīt, kaikeyi kuśacīreṇa na sītā gantum arhati/ nanu paryāptam etat te pāpe rānavivāsanam, kim ebhiḥ kṛpaṇair bhūyaḥ pātakair api te kṛtaiḥ/ evaṁ bruvantaṁ pītaram rāmaḥ saṁprasthīto vanam, avāksīrasam āsīnam idam vacanam abravīt/ iyaṁ dhārmika kausalyā mama mātā yaśasvinī, vṛddhā cākṣudraśīlā ca na ca tvām devagarhitē mayā vihīnām varada prapannām śokasāgarāṁ, adṛṣṭapūrvavyasanām bhūyaḥ saṁmantum arhasi/ imām mahendropamajātagarbhīṇīm; tathā vidhātum janamīm mamārhasi, yathā vanasthe mayi śokakarśītā; na jīvitam nyasya yamakṣayam vrajet/

Maharshi Vasishtha had then very angrily shouted on King Dasharatha that Devi Sita had come to the state of assuming the ‘Cheera Vastras’ as an ‘anaadha’ or a desolate or rejected woman even being a Queen; He howled and wept stating : Shame on you as a King of Glory! You have sacrificed your entire

life as a valiant , brave and proud Maha Raja, upholding the supreme principles of Dharma and Fame. Then the angry Maharshi shouted on Kaikeyi: ‘ Is it appropriate that Devi Sita is forced to dress up as a forest woman’! *Iyam hi kasyaapi karoti kinchit tapasvini Raja vasasya putree,yaa cheeramaasadya janasya madhye sthitaa visanginaa shramaneeva kaachit!* As Vasishtha scolded the King, the latter in turn further addressed Kaikeyi: ‘In which unkindly manner that you handed over and forced this Dharma patni Sita to dare and to wear the ‘mriga charmas’!; which kind of vengeance is that which is justified by any stretch of imagination! *Cheeraanyapaasvaajjanakasya kanyaa neyam pratigjnaa mama dattapurvaa, yathaa sukham gacchhatu Rajaputree vanam samagraa saha sarvatratraih/* Kaikeyi! You seemed to have forced to remove her royal dress and commanded her to go to forests only this specific manner as you had taken a vow to do so! You had threatened that you would not be alive but did that have any impact of Devi Sita’s dress code! Which kind of heinous vengeance is this against an innocent Sita simply due to her bring the wife of Rama! *Raamena yadi te paape kinchitkritamashobhanam, apakaarah ka iha te Vaidehyaa darshitothame/* Oh miserable fallen woman! In case Rama had done any harm to you or your interest to you, then it might have behaved like as you had, but in which manner are you justified to have done what all you have had!’ As the King was blasting away Devi Kaikeyi, Shri Rama intervened: ‘Dharmatma! Dear father! My mother Devi Kousalya has too come of age; her mind set is quite virtuous and broad visioned and all through her life and she had never negated your instructions. Even as she is unable to withstand my absence for long, you ought to be sensitive enough to take care of your good health and longevity too. That is precisely why you should maintain calmness without excessive anger and frustration. This is my earnest request, before our departure for ‘dandakaranya’.

Sarga Thirty Nine

Dasharatha breaks into cryings, Sunantra arrives with the chariot, Sita receives ‘pati seva upadesha’ from Kousalya, Rama Sita Lakshmanas bid farewell to all.

Rāmasya tu vacaḥ śrutvā muniveśadharaṁ ca tam, samīkṣya saha bhāryābhī rājā vigatacetanāḥ/ nainam duḥkhena saṁtaptāḥ pratyavaiḥṣata rāghavam, na cainam abhisamprekṣya pratyabhāṣata durmanāḥ/ sa muhūrtam ivāsamjño duḥkhitaś ca mahīpatiḥ, vilālāpa mahābhū rāmam evānucintayan/ manye khalu mayā pūrvam vivatsā bahavaḥ kṛtāḥ, prāṇino himsītā vāpi tasmād idam upasthitam/ na tv evānāgate kāle dehāc cyavati jīvitam, kaikeyyā kliṣyamānasya mṛtyur mama na vidyate/ yo ’ham pāvakasamkāśam paśyāmi purataḥ sthitam, vihāya vasane sūkṣme tāpasācchādādam ātmajam/ ekasyāḥ khalu kaikeyyāḥ kṛte ’yam kliṣyate janaḥ, svārthe prayatamānāyāḥ samśritya nikṛtiṁ tv imām/ evam uktvā tu vacanam bāṣṇa pihitekṣṇaha, rāmeti sakṛd evoktvā vyāhartuṁ na śaśāka ha/ samjñām tu pratilabhyaiva muhūrtāt sa mahīpatiḥ, netrābhyām āsrupūrṇābhyām sumantram idam abravīt/ aupavāhyam ratham yuktvā tvam āyāhi hayottamaiḥ, prāpayainam mahābhāgam ito janapadāt param/ evam manye guṇavatām guṇānām phalam ucyate, pitrā mātṛā ca yat sādhu vīro nirvāsyate vanam/ rājño vacanam ājñāya sumantraḥ śīghravikramaḥ, yojayitvāyayau tatra ratham āsvair alamkṛtam/ tam ratham rājaputrāya sūtaḥ kanakabhūṣitam, ācacakṣe ’ñjalim kṛtvā yuktam paramavājibhiḥ/ rājā satvaram āhūya vyāpṛtam vittasamcaye, uvāca deśakālajño niścitam sarvataḥ śuci/vāsāmsi ca mahārḥṇi bhūṣaṇāni varāṇi ca, varṣāṇy etāni samkhyāya vaidehyāḥ kṣipram ānaya/ narendreṇaivam uktas tu gatvā kośagrham tataḥ, prāyacchat sarvam āhṛtya sītāyai kṣipram eva ta/ sā sujātā sujātāni vaidehī prasthitā vanam, bhūṣayām āsa gātrāṇi tair vicitrair vibhūṣaṇaiḥ/ vyarājayata vaidehī veśma tat suvibhūṣitā, udyato ’mśumataḥ kāle kham prabheva vivasvataḥ/ tām bhujābhyām pariṣvajya śvaśrūr vacanam abravīt, anācarantīm kṛpaṇam mūdhnī upāghrāya maithilīm/ asatyāḥ sarvaloke ’smin satatam satkṛtāḥ priyaiḥ bhartāram nānumanyante vinipātagataṁ striyaḥ/ sa tvayā nāvamantavyaḥ putraḥ pravrajīto mama, tava daivatam astv eṣa nirdhanaḥ sadhano ’pi vā/ vijñāya vacanam sītā tasyā dharmārthasamhitam, kṛtāñjalī uvācedam śvaśrūm abhimukhe sthitā/ kariṣye sarvam evāham āryā yad anuśāsti mām, abhijñāsmi yathā bhartur vartitavyam śrutam ca me/ na mām asajjanenāryā samānayitum arhati, dharmād vicalitum nāham alam candrād iva prabhā/ nātantrī vādyaṭe vīṇā nācakro vartate rathaḥ, nāpatiḥ sukham edhate yā syād api śatātmajā/ mitam dadāti hi pitā mitam mātā mitam sutāḥ, amitasya hi dātāram bhartāram kā

na pūjayet/ sāham evaṅgatā śreṣṭhā śrutadharmaparāvarā, ārye kim avamanyeyam strīṅām bhartā hi daivatam/ sītāyā vacanam śrutvā kausalyā hṛdayaṅgamam, śuddhasattvā mumocāśru sahasā duḥkhaharṣajam/ tām prāñjalir abhikramya mātṛmadhye 'tisatkr̥tām rāmaḥ paramadharmajño mātaram vākyam abravīt/ amba mā duḥkhitā bhūs tvam paśya tvam pitaram mama, kṣayo hi vanavāsasya kṣipram eva bhaviṣyati/ suptāyās te gamiṣyanti navavarṣāṇi pañca ca, sā samagram iha prāptam mām drakṣyasi suhṛdyṛtam/ etāvad abhinītārtham uktvā sa jananiṁ vacaḥ, trayah śataśatārdhā hi dadarśāveṣya mātaraḥ/ tāś cāpi sa tathaivārtā mātṛr daśarathātmajaḥ, dharmayuktam idaṁ vākyam nijagāda kr̥tāñjaliḥ/ samvāsāt paruṣam kiṁ cid ajñānād vāpi yat kr̥tam, tan me samanujānīta sarvāś cāmantrayāmi vah/ jajñe 'tha tāsām samnādaḥ krauñcīnām iva niḥsvanaḥ, mānavendrasya bhāryāṅām evam vadati rāghave/ murajapaṇavameghaghoṣavad; daśarathaveśma babhūva yat purā, vilapita paridevanākulam; vyasanagataṁ tad abhūt suduḥkhitam/

As Rama thus requested his father to take very special care of his mother and of his own health with least possible mental tension of his own too, Dasharatha could not even speak nor even see properly due to excessive tears flowing blurring his vision. For a while he looked lost of his memory but quickly enough recovered and mumbled: ‘ perhaps, in by previous life I might have killed countless ‘praanis’ and forcibly resorted to separation of cows from their calves. As my time of death had not taken place yet, I am having to suffer at the hands of Kaikeyi. Alas, even as my dear sons of Fire like purity are before me clad with deer skins instead of silk garments of dazzling brightness, my vital energy is still ticking.’ Then Dasharatha with his stilled senses could barely utter : ‘hey Ram’ and relapsed into a heavy swoon lost consciousness and could not utter a word. After a while however he was able to accost Sumantra instructing in a kind of sign-language to take Rama upto the boundaries of Ayodhya. In his mind however, Dasharatha was able to think on the memory screen: *Evaṁ manye guṇavatām guṇānām phalam ucyate, pitrā mātrā ca yat sādhuṛ vīro nirvāsyaṭe vanam/* As one’s own eldest son of outstanding virtue and character is forcibly sent away from one’s own house by the parents, then the same type of retribution of justice gets awarded, as per Shastras. Meanwhile, Sarathi Sumantra announced to the King that a prize chariot with top ranking white horses was readied up. Then the King called for the ‘Koshaadhaari’, or the Chief Treasurer and instructed that Devi Sita’s body wise precious jewellery be got ready in the chariot. Meanwhile Devi Kousalya hugged her daughter-in-law tightly and was hardly able to say in feeble tone: *asatyah sarvaloke 'smin satatam satkr̥tāḥ priyaiḥ bhartāram nānumanyante viniṣātagataṁ striyah/* My dearest daughter! Those women who having secured respect and pleasure from her husbands but discard them in difficult times are termed as ‘Asatis’ or of tainted family environment. Such women are multi faced and of multiple moods. *Saadhveenaam tu sthitaanaam tu sheele satye shrute sthite, streenaam pavitram paramam patireko visheshyate/ Sa tvayaa naavamantavyah purah pravraajito vanam, tava deva samastvesha nirdhanah sadhanopivaa/* But, women of high family background of upbringing, truthfulness, virtue, and the directives of Shastra tend to turn them as ‘pativratas’. Devi Sita readily absorbed the intent and connotation of what her mother-in-law counselled and replied: Mother! I will most certainly practise what you have counselled especially about the pattern of behavior towards my husband, as this indeed had been a counselling of the yore. Just as the ‘Prabha’ or the Shine and Coolness would never be away from Chandra, a Pativrata could never be distinct from her husband and that precisely is the essence of loyal wife in the timings of cool rains or thunders. *nātantrī vādyate vīṇā nācakro vartate rathaḥ, nāpatiḥ sukham edhate yā syād api śatātmaajā/* The musical instrument of Veena would not be sounded without ‘tantri’ nor a chariot could move without a charioteer; a woman might produce hundred children but might not yield true contentment to her husband. *Mitam dadāti hi pitā mitam mātā mitam sutaḥ, amitasya hi dātāram bhartāram kā na pūjayet/* A woman might reap happiness and solace from her father, brother, or children but no other male could gift her unlimited joy! Would there be woman whose sincere service with devotion and faith to her husband reap pleasure in ‘iha loka’ and ‘para loka’. As Devi Sita expressed her sentiments, Kousalya was overwhelmed with joy with bursting tears. In turn, Sita folded her hands and asked her that this passing instance of a fourteen year forest life be considered as only a passing phase and as such neither she herself should not take to heart nor nag the old King. Then Shri Rama folded his hands and bid farewell to all the three mothers.

Sarga Forty

Sita Rama Lakshmanas perform pradakshinas to Dasharatha and the mothers, Sita Rama Lakshmanas crowds alight the chariot and the crowds get terribly agitated

Atha rāmaś ca sītā ca lakṣmaṇaś ca kṛtāñjaliḥ, upasaṃgrhya rājānam cakrur dīnāḥ pradakṣiṇam/ taṃ cāpi samanujñāpya dharmajñāḥ sītayā saha, rāghavaḥ śokasaṃmūḍho jananīm abhyavādayat/ anvakṣam lakṣmaṇo bhrātuh kausalyām abhyavādayat, atha mātuh sumitrāyā jagrāha caraṇau punaḥ/ taṃ vandamānam rudatī mātā saumitrim abravīt, hitakāmā mahābāhum mūrdhny upāghrāya lakṣmaṇam/ sṣṣṭas tvaṃ vanavāsāya svanuraktaḥ suhṛjjane, rāme pramādam mā kārṣiḥ putra bhrātari gacchati/ vyasanī vā samṛddho vā gatir eṣa tavānagha, eṣa loka satām dharmo yaj jyeṣṭhavaśago bhavet/ idaṃ hi vṛttam ucitam kulasyāsyā sanātanam, dānam dīkṣā ca yajñeṣu tanutyāgo mṛdheṣu ca/ rāmam daśaratham viddhi mām viddhi janakātmajām, ayodhyām aṭavīm viddhi gaccha tāta yathāsukham/ tataḥ sumantraḥ kākutstham prāñjalir vākyam abravīt, vinīto vinayajñāś ca mātāvir vāsavam yathā/ ratham āroha bhadram te rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ, kṣipram tvām prāpayisyāmi yatra mām rāma vakṣyasi/ caturdaśa hi varṣāṇi vastavyāni vane tvayā, tāny upakramitavyāni yāni devyāsi coditaḥ/ taṃ ratham sūryasaṃkāśam sītā hṛṣṭena cetasā, āuroha varārohā kṛtvālakṣmānam ātmanah/ tathaiṅvāyudhajātāni bhrātṛbhyām kavacāni ca, rathopasthe pratinyasya sacarmakaṭhinam ca tat/ sītāṭṛṭyān ārūḍhān dṛṣṭvā dhṛṣṭam acodayat, sumantraḥ saṃmatān aśvān vāyuvegasamān jave/ prayāte tu mahāraṇyam cirarātrāya rāghave, babhūva nagare mūrcchā balamūrcchā janasya ca/ tat samākulasambhrāntam mattasaṃkūpita dvīpam, hayaśiñjitanirghoṣam puram āsīn mahāsvanam/ tataḥ sabālavṛddhā sā purī paramapīḍitā, rāmam evābhīdudrāva gharmāntaḥ salilam yathā/ pārśvataḥ pṛṣṭhataś cāpi lambamānās tadunmukhāḥ, bāṣpāpūrṇamukhāḥ sarve tam ūcur bhṛśaduḥkhitāḥ/ saṃyaccha vājinām raśmīn sūta yāhi śanaiḥ śanaiḥ, mukham drakṣyāmi rāmasya durdarśam no bhaviṣyati/ āyasaṃ hṛdayam nūnam rāmamātur asaṃśayam, yad devagarbhapratīme vanaṃ yāti na bhidyate/ kṛtakṛtyā hi vaidehī chāyevānugatā patim, na jahāti ratā dharme merum arkaprabhā yathā/ aho lakṣmaṇa siddhārthaḥ satatām priyavādinam, bhrātaram devasaṃkāśam yas tvaṃ paricariṣyasi/ mahaty eṣā hi te siddhir eṣa cābhyudayo mahān, eṣa svargasya mārgaś ca yad enam anugacchasi, evam vadantas te soḍhum na śekur bāṣpam āgatam/ atha rājā vṛtaḥ strībhir dīnābhir dīnacetaṇaḥ, nirjagāma priyam putram drakṣyāmīti bruvan grhāt/ śuśruve cāgrataḥ strīṇām rudantīnām mahāsvanaḥ, yathā nādaḥ kareṇūnām baddhe mahati kuñjare/ pitā ca rājā kākutsthaḥ śrīmān sannas tadā babhau, paripūrṇaḥ śaśī kāle graheṇopapluto yathā/ tato halahalāśabdo jajñe rāmasya pṛṣṭhataḥ, narāṇām prekṣya rājānam sīdantaṃ bhṛśaduḥkhitam/ hā rāmeti janāḥ ke cid rāmamātetī cāpare, antaḥpuraṃ samṛddham ca krośantaṃ paryadevayan/ anvīkṣamāṇo rāmas tu viṣaṇṇam bhrāntacetasaṃ, rājānam mātaram caiva dadarśānugatau pathi, dharmapāśena saṃkṣiptaḥ prakāśam nābhyudaikṣata/ padātināu ca yānārḥāv aduḥkhārḥau sukhocitau, dṛṣṭvā saṃcodayām āsa śīghram yāhīti sārathim/ na hi tat puruṣavyāghro duḥkhadaṃ darśanaṃ pituh, mātus ca sahitum śaktas totrārdita iva dvīpaḥ/ tathā rudantīm kausalyām ratham tam anudhāvātīm, krośantīm rāma rāmeti hā sīte lakṣmaṇeti ca, asaḥkṛt praikṣata tadā nṛtyantīm iva mātaram/ tiṣṭheti rājā cukroṣa yāhi yāhīti rāghavaḥ, sumantrasya babhūvātmā cakrayor iva cāntarā/ nāśrauṣam iti rājānam upālabdho 'pi vakṣyasi, ciram duḥkhasya pāpiṣṭham iti rāmas tam abravīt/ rāmasya sa vacaḥ kurvann anujñāpya ca taṃ janam, vrajato 'pi hayān śīghram codayām āsa sārathiḥ/ nyavartata jāno rājño rāmam kṛtvā pradakṣiṇam, manasāpy aśruvegaiś ca na nyavartata mānuṣam/ yam icchet punar āyāntam nainam dūram anuvrajat, ity amātyā mahārājānam ūcur daśaratham vacaḥ/ teṣāṃ vacaḥ sarvaguṇopapannaṃ; prasvinnagātraḥ praviṣaṇṇarūpaḥ, niśamya rājā kṛpaṇaḥ sabhāryo; vyavasthitas taṃ sutam īkṣamāṇaḥ/

Rama Lakshmanas and Devi Sita touched the feet of King Dasharatha and performed 'pradakshina' to King Dasharatha. Rama Sita's once again prostrated to Koushalya and so did Lakshmana to Devi Sumitra. Sumitra said endearingly that while performing dutiful devotion to Sita-Ramas, he should be ever vigilant as his bounden duty to the elder brother would be obligatory; she stressed that Lakshmana ought to consider that Rama should be considered on par with King Dasaratha himself and Devi Sita as his own mother. She then wished auspicious farewell while emphasising the ancient precepts of dharma:

Idam hi vṛttam ucitam kulasyāsya sanātanam, dānam dīkṣā ca yajñeṣu tanutyāgo mṛdheṣu ca/ Daana-deeksha- and tyaga or liberal charity- determined resolution- and sacrifice are the ancient precepts of dharma. Then Sumantra the ever dutiful charioteer with folded hands, like Matali to Indra, requested Sita-Rama-Lakshmanas to enter the chariot with auspiciousness and remarked that their eventful entry would mark the clicking of the clock of fourteen years as prescribed by Devi Kaikeyi! This remark of Sumantra would indeed smack of a jibe at the villain of Ramayana! Then Devi Sita was seated foremost along with Rama, while Lakshmana was standing behind, while Sumantra initiated the forward movement. *tataḥ sabālavṛddhā sā purī paramapīḍitā, rāmam evābhidudrāva gharmārtāḥ salilam yathā/ pārśvataḥ pṛṣṭhataḥ cāpi lambamānās tadunmukhāḥ, bāṣpapūrṇamukhāḥ sarve tam ūcur bhṛśaduḥkhitāḥ/ samyaccha vājinām raśmīn sūta yāhi śanaiḥ śanaiḥ, mukham drakṣyāmi rāmasya durdarśam no bhaviṣyati/* The crowds of Ayodhya then started running behind the chariot from a child to the old aged as though they were terribly thirsty running for drops of water on mid days. They started shouting at the charioteer to slow down the run stating that henceforth visualisation of Rama in person might occur for several years now! There were remarks from the crowd: *kṛtakṛtyā hi vaidehī chāyevānugatā patim, na jahāti ratā dharme merum arkaprabhā yathā/* Devi Sita has proved now as a true Pativrata being ever present with Rama like Surya Deva is ever anchored to Meru Mountain.

Vishleshana on Meru Mountain and Surya Deva:

Meru Parvata: *Meroh praachayaam dishaayaam tu Manasottara murdhani, vasvoka saaraa Mahendra puri hema parishkritaa/ Dakshinena punar meror Maanasasvaiva prishthatah, Vaivasvatonivasati Yamaasamyam -ana pure/ Prateechyaam cha punmero manassyaiva murdhani, Sukhaa naama puri ramyaa Varunasyaapi dheematah/ Disyuttarasyaam Merestu Manassyaiva murdhani, tulyaa Mahendra puraastu Somasyaapi Vibhaapuri/ Maanasassyottare prishthe Lokapaalaas -chaturdisham, sthitaa dharmā vyavastardham Dharma samrakshanaaya cha/ Loka paalo parishtha -atthu sarvato dakshinaayane, kaashthaa gatasya Suryasya gatim tasyanibodhata/ Dakshinopa- krame Suryah kshipteshuriva gacchati, jyotishaam chakramaadaaya satatam parigacchati/ Madhyata chamaraavatyaaam yadaa bhavati Bhaskarah, Vaivasvate Samyamane udyamstatra pradrishyate/ Sukhaayaa mardharaatryaaam tu Vibhaayaa mastameticha, Vaivasvate Samyamane madhyaahne tu Raviryadaa/ Sukhaayaa matha vaarunyaamuttishtthantu drishyate, vibhyaayaamardharaatram tu maahendryaa mastameticha/ Sukhaayaamatha vaarunyaam madyaahne cha aryamaa yadaa, vibhaayaam Somapuryaaam tu uttishthati Vibhaavasuh/ Raatyardhamamaraavartyaaam astameti Yamasya cha, Somapuryaaam Vibhaayaam tu maddhaahnechaaryamaa yadaa/ Maahendryaa mamaraavartyaaam mudgacchati ivaakarah, Ardha raatram Samyamane Vaarunyaamastameticha/* (To the east of Meru Parvata, atop the Manasarovara mountain, there exists Vasvaikasaara named Mahendra Nagara made of gold. Again to the south of Meru Parvata's back side, there is Manasaparvata and the Samyamani Pura where Lord Yama the illustrious son of Surya Deva resides. To the west of Meru parvata, on the west of Manasaparvata atop Sukha Pura where Varuna Deva resides. To the north of Meru Parvata atop the Mahendra parvata, Vibhahari Pura where Chandra Deva resides. Behind the Manasotara on the four sides, the Ashta Dik Loka Paalakas are placed to protect Dharma and in the dakshinaayana period, Surya Deva oversees the activities of the Ashta Palakas during his period. Now, about the dakshinayana the travel of Surya ; in the jyotishchakra in his pradakshina, He reaches Amaravati the capital of Indra Deva by the midday on earth; that would be when it coincides with Yama Raja's rising time, in Chandra's mid night time and so on. As Surya performs pradakshina or self-circumambulation, he also does the same to nakshatras too do likewise. Precisely at the 'udaya' and 'astama' timings he does exactly the same year in and year out. At the Sun Rise he gradually increases his radiance till the afternoon and gradually reduces his tejas till the dusk time. In this way, Surya Deva performs pradakshina or circubambulation of self and so do the nakshatra mandali too. These all travel southward and at the rise and setting timings are defined as also at the poorvaahna and aparaahna or pre noon and afternoon they pass through two each of Deva puris and at the noon time, one Devapuri. Thus Surya from the rise gains momentum of radiance till afternoon and gradually lessens the severity of the kiranans thereafter till Sun set. Surya has the constant

awareness of the 'udaya' and 'astamaya' at the east and west directions; while radiating the eastern side, spreading the heat and illumination on the sidewise north and south and decreasing the severity till disappearance. Meru Parvata is stated to be situated in the north of the highest of all the mountains; Lokaaloka is situated in the southern direction and since Prithvi's shadows are spread over, those Beings situated on the other side of the hemisphere are unable to see Surya in the nights. Thus Surya Deva with a lakh of kiranas reaches the mid portion of 'Pushkaradwipa' by that time, despite his speed of one 'muhurta' or two ghadis at the rate of one thirty lakh and fifty thousand yojanas plus! Thus Surya Deva as he traverses southward for six months turns to uttarayana or northbound. At the time of Dakshinayana, Surya would have reached the travel to the mid portion of Pushkara dwipa. This dwipa is as thrice as distant from Mru to Manasarovara! Now the distance on the southern course or Dakshinayana is of nine crore fifty lakh yojanas. After the dakshinayana, Surya reaches the Vishuva sthaana or the 'khagoleeya vishuvadrita bindu' at the north of Ksheera sagara. Vishvan mandala parinama is three cores twenty one lakh yojanas. As Surya's course gets north bound or uttarayana entering 'shravana nakshatra', then his course would be towards gomoda dwipa in between the south and north parts and in between are located jaradrava - Iravata to the north and Vaishvanara to the south. Towards north is named Naaga veedhi and to the south is the Ajaveedhi.]

The surging crowds were also making remarks on Lakshmana: *aho lakṣmaṇa siddhārthaḥ satatām priyavādinam, bhrātaram devasankāsam yas tvam paricariṣyasi*/ They appeared to have stated that when Maha Vishnu descended to earth as Rama, Adishesha accompanied him as Lakshmana, his services to Rama were exemplary; he had no thoughts of his own comfort but other than of Rama's as he would not sleep a wink, as a guard over his brother with ever lasting vigil. The public of Ayodhya was surging on the main high roads and the street corners connecting the Raja Marga for Rama darshana beating their chests and crying aloud ; the women folk were particularly agitated with hoarse and shrill throats as though the maha pralaya submerged the earth. Meanwhile, King Dasharadha too along with the queens and maids moved out of his palace with tottering steps and shaky physique wondering whether he could ever vision Rama once again in his life time. That particular scene was like Chandra Deva having been bitten off by Rahu at the 'grahana kaala'! Then Rama instructed Sumantra to speed up the chariot but the latter was just not able to do so as the rushing flow of men, women and children looked alarming. As the chariot was nearly approaching the terminal of the Raja Marga, the crowds, their gusty flows, and the high pitched sounds were alarming like of earth quakes. Meanwhile King Dasharatha was unable to stand and lost his balance while Rama having realised the extreme seriousness of the situation desperately shouted to let the chariot move faster and faster, even as there were to be the blatant hazards of casualty of a crushes of men-women-and children.

Sarga Forty One

As the unruly crowd was interrupting the Chariot several times, the citizens were crying away aloud shattering the skies, especially the women folk

Tasmims tu puruṣavyāghre niṣkrāmati kṛtāñjalau, ārtāśabdo hi samjajñe strīṇām antaḥpure mahān/ anāthasya janasyāsya durbalasya tapasvinaḥ, yo gatim śaraṇam cāsīt sa nāthaḥ kva nu gacchati/ na krudhyaty abhīśasto 'pi krodhanīyāni varjayan, kruddhān prasādayan sarvān samaduḥkhaḥ kva gacchati/ kausalyāyām mahātejā yathā mātari vartate, tathā yo vartate 'smāsu mahātmā kva nu gacchati/ kaikeyyā kliṣyamānena rājñā saṁcodito vanam, paritrātā janasyāsya jagataḥ kva nu gacchati/ aho niścetano rājā jīvalokasya sampriyam, dharmyam satyavratam rāmaṁ vanavāso pravatsyati/ iti sarvā mahiṣyas tā vivatsā iva dhenavaḥ, rurudus caiva duḥkhārtāḥ sasvaram ca vicukruṣuḥ/ sa tam antaḥpure ghoram ārtāśabdām mahīpatiḥ, putrasokābhisaṁtaptāḥ śrutvā cāsīt suduḥkhitaḥ/ nāgnihotrāṇy ahūyanta sūryas cāntaradhīyata, vyasṛjan kavalān nāgā gāvo vatsān na pāyayan/ trīśaṅkur lohitāṅgāś ca bṛhaspatibudhāv api, dāruṇāḥ somam abhyetya grahāḥ sarve vyavasthitāḥ/ nakṣatrāṇi gatārcīmṣi grahās ca gatatejasāḥ, viśākhās ca sadhūmās ca nabhasi pracakāṣire/ akasmān nāgaraḥ sarvo jano dainyam upāgamat, āhāre

vā vihāre vā na kaś cid akaron manaḥ/ bāspaparyākulamukho rājamārgagato janaḥ, na hṛṣṭo lakṣyate kaś cit sarvaḥ śokaparāyaṇaḥ/ na vāti pavanaḥ śīto na śaśī saumyadarśanaḥ/ na sūryas tapate lokam sarvaṁ paryākulam jagat/ anarthinaḥ sutāḥ strīṇām bhartāro bhrātaras tathā, sarve sarvaṁ parityajya rāmam evānvacintayan/ ye tu rāmasya suhṛdaḥ sarve te mūḍhacetasaḥ, śokabhāreṇa cākrāntāḥ śayanam na juhus tadā/ tatas tv ayodhyā rahitā mahātmanā; puraṁdareṇeva mahī saparvatā, cacāla ghoram bhayabhārapīḍitā; sanāgayodhāśvagaṇā nanāda ca/

As the Shri Rama- Sita- Lakshmana's chariot as conducted by Sumantra had literally penetrated forcibly through the thronging crowds crying away with agony from their hearts and souls, the 'Ranivasa Strees' too were agitated shouting with agony: 'Alas indeed: Rama is leaving all of us away! He is the source of our strength to defend us whenever we were blamed by the superiors, he would readily be available to mediate and defend us and vindicate justice and thus share our genuine sorrows! He had always been helpful to us and pro-active in our domestic problems and in our discharge of official duties. Rama had been always treating us the servant maids respectfully as in the case of his mothers! Where is Rama to have left us in the depths of distresse like this, for no fault or sinful deed of his, just because of the personal ambition and sinful desire of Kaikeyi and the helplessness of the forlorn King! Alas indeed, this is our fate too as the King has lost his balance of mind, even despite his glory and popularity for his herioc and 'dharmic' deeds, had despatched Rama to the deep forests, even he is a symbol of 'dharma parayana, satyavrata, and nyaaya sheela!' Are not we and so do the rest of the Queens like the aging cows having lost their unique calf, desperate with anguish and helplessness!' Having heard such high pitch distressed shoutings with heart beatings, King Dasharatha who had cried and cried was lost in blankness of thinking. *Naagnihotraani ahuyanta naapachan grihamedhinah, akruvan na prajaah kaaryam Sryaschaantara dheeyata/ Vyasrujan kavalaan naagaagaavo vatsaan na paayayan, putram prathamajam lahbdhwaa jananee naabhya nadata/* Through out that fateful day, fireplaces and the kitchens were shut down, the householders never ate any food, the public was unable to perform their routine chores and was a complete standstill; eventually there was Sunset, elephants discarded their food, cows did not feed their calves and most strangely enough no pregnant mother was delighted at the offspring delivered on that fateful day! All the planets like Trishanku, Mangala, Guru, Budha as also Shukra, Shani and so on followed 'vakra gati' or the distorted routes and got cruel around Chandra is the night time. The brightness and the twinkle of 'Nakshatra Mandalas' was blanc and blackened and the night was dismal and unusual. In fact, as Rama's chariot wheels gained momentum, there were tremors and quakes of earth. The 'ashta diks' or the eight directions got twisted disfigured and there was directionless gloom all around. *tatas tv ayodhyā rahitā mahātmanā; puraṁdareṇeva mahī saparvatā, cacāla ghoram bhayabhārapīḍitā; sanāgayodhāśvagaṇā nanāda ca/* Thus entire Ahodhyapuri fell silent, crestfallen, gloomy and forlorn but for frightening and pitched up shouts and cryings without Rama the epic hero!

Sarga Forty Two

King Dasharatha cries and swoons for Rama, distances from Kaikeyi and shifts to Kausalya's palace

Yāvat tu niryatas tasya rajorūpam adṛśyata, naivekṣvākuvaras tāvat saṁjahārātmacakṣuṣū/ yāvad rājā priyaṁ putraṁ paśyaty atyantadhārmikam, tāvad vyavardhatevāsya dharanyām putradarśane/ na paśyati rajo 'py asya yadā rāmasya bhūmipah, tadārtaś ca viṣaṇṇas ca papāta dharaṇītale/ tasya dakṣiṇam anvagāt kausalyā bāhum aṅganā, vāmaṁ cāsyānvagāt pārśvaṁ kaikeyī bharatapriyā/ tām nayena ca saṁpanno dharmeṇa nivayena ca, uvāca rājā kaikeyīm samīkṣya vyathitendriyaḥ/kaikeyi mā mamāṅgāni sprākṣīs tvam duṣṭacārīṇī, na hi tvām draṣṭum icchāmi na bhāryā na ca bāndhavī/ ye ca tvām upajīvanti nāhaṁ teṣāṁ na te mama, kevalārthaparām hi tvām tyaktadharmām tyajāmy aham/ agrhṇām yac ca te pāṇim agniṁ paryañayam ca yat, anujānāmi tat sarvam asmiṁl loke paratra ca/ bharataś cet pratītaḥ syād rājyam prāpyedam avyayam, yan me sa dadyāt pitrartham mā mā tad dattam āgamat/ atha reṇusamudhvastam tam utthāpya narādhipam, nyavartata tadā devī kausalyā śokakarśitā/ hatveva brāhmaṇam kāmāt sprṣṭvāgnim iva pāṇinā, anvatapyata dharmātmā putraṁ saṁcintya tāpasam/

nivṛtyaiva nivṛtyaiva sīdato rathavartmasu, rājño nātibabhau rūpaṃ grastasyāṃśumato yathā/ vilalāpa ca duḥkhārtah priyaṃ putram anusmaran, nagarāntam anuprāptam buddhvā putram athābravīt/ vāhanānām ca mukhyānām vahatām taṃ mamātmajam, padāni pathi dṛśyante sa mahātmā na dṛśyate/ sa nūnam kva cid evādyā vṛkṣamūlam upāsritah, kāṣṭham vā yadi vāśmānam upadhāya śayisyate/ utthāsyati ca medinyāḥ kṛpaṇaḥ pāśṣugunḥhitah, viniḥśvasan prasravaṇāt kareṇūnām ivarṣabhaḥ/ drakṣyanti nūnam puruṣā dīrghabāhuṃ vanecarāḥ, rāmam utthāya gacchantam lokanātham anāthavat/ sakāmā bhava kaikeyi vidhavā rājyam āvasa, na hi taṃ puruṣavyāghraṃ vinā jīvitum utsahe/ ity evaṃ vilapan rājā janaughenābhisaṃvṛtah, apasnāta ivāriṣṭam praviveśa purottamam/ śūnyacatvaraveśmāntām saṃvṛtāpaṇadevatām, klāntadurbaladuḥkhārtām nātyākīrṇamahāpathām/ tāṃ avekṣya purīm sarvām rāmam evānucintayan, vilapan prāviśad rājā gṛham sūrya ivāmbudam/ mahāhradam ivākṣobhyaṃ suparṇena hṛtoragam, rāmeṇa rahitam veśma vaidehyā lakṣmaṇena ca/ kausalyāyā gṛham śīghram rāma mātur nayantu mām, iti bruvantam rājānam anayan dvāradarśitah/ tatas tatra praviṣṭasya kausalyāyā niveśanam, adhiruhyāpi śayanam babhūva lulitam manaḥ/ tac ca dṛṣṭvā mahārājō bhujam udyamya vīryavān, uccaiḥ svareṇa cukrośa hā rāghava jahāsi mām/ sukhitā bata taṃ kālam jīviṣyanti narottamāḥ, pariṣvajanto ye rāmam drakṣyanti punar āgamat/ na tvām paśyāmi kausalye sādhu mām pāninā sprśa, rāmam me 'nugatā dṛṣṭir adyāpi na nivartate/ taṃ rāmam evānucintayantam; samīkṣya devī śayane narendram, upopaviśyādhikam ārtarūpā; viniḥśvasantī vilalāpa kṛcchram/

Even as the horse cart carrying Rama Lashmana Sitas disappeared far away from human vision and the dust raised and the sounds of horses got distant, King Dasharatha fell down unconscious once again, when Devi Kousalya was standing right to him and Kaikeyi to his left. As Kousalya lifted up Dasharatha slowly and sought to comfort him with care and concern, he saw the pretentious Kaikeyi as if she too shared the anxiety touched his body, the King who was even at the verge of relapse again pulled up his throat and yelled: *kaikeyi mā mamāṅgāni sprākṣīs tvam duṣṭacārīṇī, na hi tvām draṣṭum icchāmi na bhāryā na ca bāndhavī/* 'Paapapurni Kaikeyi! Don't you dare and touch my body as I hate to look at your face! You are neither my wife nor relative! You are merely interested in your welfare and wealth and hence I am discarding you as my wife. No doubt I had wedded you by 'agnipramana', but am hereby divorcing you in this life and next life too. *bharataś cet pratītaḥ syād rājyam prāpyedam avyayam, yan me sa dadyāt pitrartham mā mā tad dattam āgamat/* In case Bharata too gets overjoyed on assuming the kingship without any qualms of his conscience, if he cares to perform my 'shraaddha' after by death and offered 'pinda daana and jala tarpanaas', may those obsequies be invalidated by Pitru Devatas.' Thus King Dasharatha was spewing venomous and malicious fire addressing Kaikeyi, Devi Kausalya was concerned of the King's frenzy and having pacified him somewhat took him away to his mansion. By realising his own mistake of giving away the boons to Kaikeyi from which he could not wriggle out by the tight mess that he had jumped in and the most unfortunate consequences, he had to ruminate for life-taking consequences of disaster and irrecoverable agony. He kept on gazing behind for the chariot like Surya Deva devoured by Rahu. He commenced imagining that the footprints of the horses tied to the chariot were visible but Rama had disappeared! He got immersed in the thoughts of Rama as always enjoyed lying on cushioned beds with aromatic smells all around but now would have to perforce lie sleepless on bare and piercing mountain rocks! Then he would have to breathe heavily and wake up and stand by dusting his body with bare hands like an elephant king would use his trunk and seek to clean. He should clearly be like an 'anaadha' and with no help anywhere in the sight should take to his duties for himself and his wife too. Thus imagining the fateful days ahead of Rama then, involuntarily, Dasharatha flared up suddenly and shouted at Kaikeyi : oh wretched woman! Be a widow soon and reign the Kingdom without worries, as in the absence of Shri Rama my life is not worth prolonging. Having thus declared, he sought to enter his mansion; he noticed the roads were empty, the market places were closed and the city of Ayodhya looked lonely and blank, as though Surya Deva hid himself with dark clouds and as if Garuda lifted the ever bustling Ayodhya up to blank clouds. Then he asked the doormen to carry him away to Kousalya and having reached there stated in sinking tone: 'take me to Rama'. Then she broke into loud cryings and could not control herself.

Sarga Forty Three

Maha Rani Kousalya's agony

Tataḥ samīkṣya śayane sannam śokena pārthivam, kausalyā putrasokārtā tam uvāca mahīpatim/ rāghavo naraśārdūla viṣam uptyvā dvijihvavat, vicariṣyati kaikeyī nirmukteva hi pannagī/ vivāsyā rāmaṁ subhagā labdhakāmā samāhitā, trāsaiṣyati mām bhūyo duṣṭāhir iva veśmani/ atha sma nagare rāmaś caran bhaiḥṣam gr̥he vaset, kāmākāro varam dātum api dāsam mamātmajam/ pātayitvā tu kaikeyyā rāmaṁ sthānād yatheṣṭataḥ, pradiṣṭo rakṣasām bhāgaḥ parvaṇīvāhitāgninā/ gajarājagatir vīro mahābāhur dhanurdharaḥ, vanam āviśate nūnam sabhāryaḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ/ vane tv adṛṣṭaduḥkhānām kaikeyyānumate tvayā, tyaktānām vanavāsāya kā nv avasthā bhaviṣyati/ te ratnahīnās taruṇāḥ phalakāle vivāsītāḥ, katham vatsyanti kṛpaṇāḥ phalamūlaiḥ kṛtāsanāḥ/ apīdānīm sa kālaḥ syān mama śokakṣayaḥ śivaḥ, sabhāryam yat saha bhrātrā paśyeyam iha rāghavam/ śrutvaivopasthitau vīrau kadāyodhyā bhaviṣyati, yaśasvinī hr̥ṣṭajanā sūcchritadhvajamālinī/ kadā prekṣya naravyāghrāv aranyāt punarāgatau, nandiṣyati purī hr̥ṣṭā samudra iva parvaṇī/ kadāyodhyām mahābāhuḥ purīm vīraḥ pravekṣyati, puraskṛtya rathe sītām vṛṣabho govadhūm iva/ kadā prāṇisahasrāṇi rājamārge mamātmajau, lājair avakarīṣyanti praviśantāv arimdamau/ kadā sumanasah kanyā dvijātīnām phalāni ca, pradiśantyāḥ purīm hr̥ṣṭāḥ kariṣyanti pradakṣiṇam/ kadā pariṇato buddhyā vayasā cāmaraprabhaḥ, abhyupaiṣyati dharmajñāsa trivarṣa iva mām lalan/ niḥsamāsayam mayā manye purā vīra kadaryayā, pātu kāmēṣu vatseṣu mātṛṇām sātītāḥ stanāḥ/ sāham gaur iva simhena vivatsā vatsalā kṛtā, kaikeyyā puruṣavyāghra bālavatseva gaur balāt/ na hi tāvad guṇair juṣṭam sarvaśāstraviśāradam, ekaputrā vinā putram aham jīvitum utsahe/ na hi me jīvite kim cit sāmātham iha kalpyate, apaśyantyāḥ priyam putram mahābāhum mahābalam/ ayam hi mām dīpayate samutthitas; tanūjaśokaprabhavo hutāśanaḥ, mahīm imām raśmibhir uttamaprabho; yathā nidāghe bhagavān divākaraḥ/

A highly agitated Pattamahishi Kousalya then addressed her husband that now that Rama had finally left Ayodhya for 'aranya vaasa', Kaikeyi ought to be like a 'sarpini' or a female cobra having now acquired fresh skin with pison emitting from her throat and with unlimited freedom. As the hidrance of Rama having been crossed, she would now indulge in find faulting opportunities against me. If only Rama were to be a beggar on streets or be a slave to Kaikeyi, even then in such situations might be preferred by me as at least then I could have his daily darshan; perhaps I should have begged Kaikeyi for such alternatives, but now I could not even see him or be contented with his presence! But now, Kaikeyi has had the last and form resolve in despatching Rama to the dense jungles for a long duration of fourteen years and this would smack of a situation of Devas being denied of the taste of the 'havishaanna' by way of offerings to Agnihotra and instead of offering that to Rakshasaas! By now, Rama like an elephant king would have entered the deep forests along with his dear 'saadhvi' and trusted younger brother. Maha Raja! is this not a cruel twist of destiny that an exemplary human like Shri Rama has been instructed by his own father and was banished to unknown forests as accompanied by his faithful wife and ever trusted brother! Indeed, was this absolutely inevitable to have accorded approval to a vicious and extremely selfish woman! Such youthful persons especially in the wake of their auspicious weddings should have been granted by their parents of memorable wedded life instead of cruelly ordering them to suffer miseries of the dimension of this magnitude! When and whether in my life time might arrive a fortuitous time as I could see Rama in person but not in imagination ever and when could I meet Devi Sita and Lakshmanas the ever loyalists of ages! When again the citizens of Ayodhya could hear even hints of their return and get intoxicated in raptures with unending celebrations of houses, markets, temples, and Raja Margas let alone the sreet corners besides each and every house holds! Indeed the city of Ayodhya and the entire kingdom would be awaiting the most auspicious time as though of the great oceans wait on for the Purnima the Full Moon Day with faith and devotion. Like the cows are inevitably followed by bulls, the arrival of Rama Sita Lakshmanas should be a truly historic occasion that the citizens of Ayodhya should be patiently awaiting so that, that would be a cause for agitation of the internal and external enemies and outstanding relief for the Kingdom. When again the pretty brahmana kanyas of Ayodhya with shining

dresses and sparkling looks queue up for the memorable welcome of Rama Sita Lakshmanas at the entrance gates of Ayodhya with scented flower showers, musical dances and trays of delightful ‘aarties’! Maha Raja! It appears that in my previous life, I might have been a low class female who forced to feed a toddler with milk denied of calves as her mother’s breasts were mutilated! Indeed, Kaikeyi denied me of forcefully thrusting such milk instead of the joy of my breast milk! Indeed, how could I bear the sufferance of the absence of my dearest Rama. How the mother earth continue the oppressive heat of scorching mid day Sun as I have to bear the separation of Rama for long! Putra shoka is like the tyrannical fire burning me with hopelessness and desperation!

Sarga Forty Four

Devi Sumitra assuages Kousalya’s tormented psyche

Vilapanīm tathā tām tu kausalyām pramadottamām, idam dharme sthitā dharmyam sumitrā vākyam abravīt/ tavārye sadgunair yuktah putrah sa puruṣottamaḥ, kim te vilapitenaivam kṛpaṇam ruditena vā yas tavārye gataḥ putras tyaktvā rājyam mahābalaḥ, sādhu kurvan mahātmānam pitarām satyavādinām/ śiṣṭair ācarite samyak śāśvat pretya phalodaye, rāmo dharme sthitaḥ śreṣṭho na sa śocyah kadā cana/ vartate cottamām vṛttim lakṣmaṇo ’smin sadānaghaḥ dayāvān sarvabhūteṣu lābhas tasya mahātmanaḥ/ aranyavāse yad duḥkham jānatī vai sukhocitā, anugacchati vaidehī dharmātmānam tavātmajam/ kīrtibhūtām patākām yo loke bhrāmayati prabhu, damasatyavrataparah kim na prāptas tavātmajah/ vyaktam rāmasya vijñāya śaucam mahātmyam uttamam, na gātram amśubhiḥ sūryah samtāpayitum arhati/ śivah sarveṣu kāleṣu kānanebhyo viniṣṛtaḥ rāghavam yuktaśītoṣṇah seviṣyati sukho ’nilah/ śayānam anagham rātrau pitevābhipariṣvajan, rāsmibhiḥ samspṛṣaṇ śītais candramā hlādayiṣyati/ dadau cāstrāṇi divyāni yasmai brahmā mahaujase, dānavendraṁ hataṁ dṛṣṭvā timidhvajasutam raṇe/ pṛthivyā saha vaidehyā śriyā ca puruṣarṣabhaḥ, kṣipram tiṣṭbhir etābhiḥ saha rāmo ’bhiṣekṣyate/ duḥkhajam viṣṭjanty asram niṣkrāmantam udīkṣya yam, samutsrakṣyasi netrābhyām kṣipram ānandajam payah/ abhivādayamānam taṁ dṛṣṭvā sasuhṛdam sutam, mudāśru mokṣyase kṣipram meghalekeva vārṣikī/ putras te varadaḥ kṣipram ayodhyām punar āgataḥ, karābhyām mṛdupīnābhyām caraṇau pīḍayiṣyati/ niśamya tal lakṣmaṇamātṛvākyam; rāmasya mātur naradevapatnyāḥ, sadyah śarīre vinanāśa śokaḥ; śaradgato megha ivāpatoyah/

As Sumitra Devi the mother of Lakshmana then addressed Kousalya emphasising the futility of crying and heart renderings. She stated that Rama being a genuine ‘Satyavaadi’ would most certainly obey the instructions of his father, come what might! *śiṣṭair ācarite samyak śāśvat pretya phalodaye, rāmo dharme sthitaḥ śreṣṭho na sa śocyah kadā cana/* Dear sister! If Rama were to be shielded by Dharma and followed the unique path of truthfulness, such exemplary human beings sheltered and defended be admired but never cried for; this is definitely so as they should reap positive outcomes in their ‘iha-paraa’ on in the ongoing and subsequent lives, assuredly. Lakshmana is replete with helpfulness to each and every being on earth; most certainly for Rama especially. This is an assetful and most dependable trust of optimism. Now, Devi Sita of Maha Lakshmi swarupa as the incarnation of opulence and fortune has followed Rama like Lakshmi follows Maha Vishnu. Indeed, she is most certainly aware of the implications and the inherent complications. *kīrtibhūtām patākām yo loke bhrāmayati prabhu, damasatyavrataparah kim na prāptas tavātmajah/* If it were against this type of backing that Rama would be unfurling the banner of auspiciousness and success, then what else could be the pathway to worldwide fame for Rama the unique! As he were to hoist the flag of glory, then why ruminate but look ahead instead, without agitation and helplessness! By realising the purity and brilliance, could even mid-day Surya Rays scorch Rama’s body ever! In fact Rama would be immune from the shivers of freezing cold or burning chars of Sun and those respective blasts of winds should prove ineffective of their impact! Devi Kousalya! *Dadau cāstrāṇi divyāni yasmai brahmā mahaujase, dānavendraṁ hataṁ dṛṣṭvā timidhvajasutam raṇe/* Don’t you recall that Brahmarshi Vishvamitra had taught innumerable ‘divya astras’ to Rama to withstand the onslaughts of the most heinous rakshasaas like Subahu the son of Shambarashura!

[Vishleshama on Rama's killing Subahu Rakshasa: Refer Essence of Valmiki Baala Ramayana Sarga Thirty:

'Having rested in the Tataka vana itself overnight, Vishvamitra addressed Shri Rama smilingly and expressed his great satisfaction at the Tataki samhara and initiated his teachings of applied astra vidya/ He stated that initially he would teach the celestial missiles of danda chakra, dharma chakra, kaala chakra, vishnu chakra, and the most powerful Aindra chakra. Then the Sage instructed the arts of application and throwing away of Indra's Vajrastra, Shiva Deva's trishula praharana, and Brahma's granted Aishikastra and Shira -chedana astra. Then the Maharshi taught the boys of the magnificent vidya of 'gadaa praharana' or the art of battling with maces like 'modaki'- 'prahari'- shikhari of forcible applications of mace strokings, throwings and mace head rubbings. Then Vishvamitra taught the astras of 'dharma paasha-kaala paasha-and varuna paasha'. Subsequently they were taught two kinds of dry and wet rounded applications of astras viz. 'ashani- pinaka-narayanaastras'. Then Rama Lakshmanas were taught Agneyastra fond of Agni Deva resulting in fierce flames of fire renowned as Shikharaastra- Vayavyastra which sweeps away the opponent with virulent sweeps away. Then the Maharshi teaches the Kakutsa nandanaas of 'Hayashira Astra'- 'Krouchna Astra' and 'Shakti Dvayaastra' or of high potent twin astras attacking the opponent with doubled up potency. The Maharshi was pleased to instruct Rama Lakshmanas the astras named 'kankala'-the devastating 'musala'- and the destructive 'Kapaala' and 'Kinkini' and such astras which could lift up and throw the opponents forcefully. Then in the series were taught the famed 'Nandana Astra' of Vidyadharas as well as the associated mace of fame. The 'Gandharva Priya' astras of 'Sammohana' for relapsing into senselessness like 'Prastaavana- Prashamana-and Soumya' were taught too, besides the 'Mohanaastras' such as for varshana-shoshana-santaapana-vilaapana-maadana which was the beloved of Kama Deva Manmadha himself, and the Gandharvapriya 'Maanava astra', besides the Pishacha priya 'Mohanastra'. Brahmarsi Vishvamitra then instructed the Astras named 'Taamasa-Soumana-Samvarta-Durjaya- Mousala-Satya-and Mayamayaastras too. Then the Maharshi imparted to Rama Lakshmanas the glorious 'Surya prabha Astra' which when once released as an arrow would destroy the enemies to ashes. Simultaneously, the Maharshi conferred 'Shishira naamaka Chandraastra', 'Tvashta (Vishvakarma) naamaka 'Daarunaastra', Bhaga Deva namaka 'Bhayankaraastra' and 'Sheetoshna' naamaka Astra of Manu Deva. Thus with facing the able disciples of Rama Lakshmanas, the Maharshi Vishvamitra was pleased to bestow the 'astra vidya' of his entire learning.]

Brahmarsi Vishvamitra was then approached by Rama Lakshmanas to explain them vividly as to how and when the Rakshasas were in the habit of destroying the yajni karyas of the tapasvees in the ashrama. Then the ashramavaasi rishis near Vishvamitra replied that Maharshi Vishvamitra had already assumed 'mouna vrata' for six days, and thus Rama Lakshmanas would need to be extremely vigilant for six nights long and safeguard from the attacks of the 'nishaacharas'. Accordingly Rama Lakshmanas being alert 'dhanurdharaas' had been vigilant standing just by the side of the Maharshi. As 'agni jvalaas' came up initiated by 'Upaadhyaya' or of the role of Brahma- 'Purohita' of the role of Upadrashtha, the flames went up too high as a forewarning indicators of the entry of the rakshasas. Then Vishvamitra along with the Ritvijas initiated the 'aahananeeyaagni' [Panchaagnis being described as Garhapatya- Aahavaneeya- Dakshinaagni-Sabyha and Avasatya representing Heaven-Clouds-Earth- Man and Woman vide Kathopa -nishad]. *Mantravac ca yathānyāyam yajño 'sau sampravartate ākāśe ca mahān śabdah prādur āsīd bhayānakah/ āvārya gaganam megho yathā prāvṛṣi nirgatah, tathā māyām vikurvānu rākṣasāv abhyadhāvatām/ mārīcaś ca subāhuś ca tayor anucarās tathā, āgamyā bhīmasamkāśā rudhiraughān avāsyjan/* As the resonance of the mantras recited in a pitch increased, there came up the high sounds on the sky with reverberations and dark clouds reflected the massive figures of rakshasas named Maareecha and Subaahu and initiated pourings of blood from the high skies, even as groups of other rakshasas started yelling and joined the task of pouring blood. Rama then addressed Lakshmana and stated that the rakshasas had now arrived and both the Kumaras pitched up their arrows reciting the relevant mantras of 'Maanavaastra'. The arrow from Shri Rama was shot at and pierced Maricha's chest

and the latter was farflung by hundred yojanas into the depths of the Sea. Smilingly, Rama told Lakshmana that this Mantra of ‘Manavasatra’ had only helped to faint and farflung Maricha but now let ‘agneyastra’ be released so that the other mighty Subaahu be killed for good! So saying as Subahu was killed, the rest of the raakshasas fled away for good never ever to return. This was how Raghunandana Shri Rama got rid of all the rakshasa elements of evil energies wantonly spoiling the dharmic duties of yajna karyas by Munis for a very long time. The grateful indwellers of the Ashram praised Rama Lakshmanas under the supreme leadership of Brahmarshi Vishvamitra himself.]

Sarga Forty Four continued: Devi Sumitra further addressed Devi Kousalya that Rama the Purusha Simha was thus a hero of might by body, mind and enormous experience in withstanding the enemies of Rakshasas, let alone humans of evil and of fierce animals and reptiles. Further: *Suryasyapi bhavet Suryo hyaagneragni Pabhoh Prabhuh, Shriyaah shreescha bhavedagrayaa, keertyaah keertih, kshame kshamaah, Devatam Devataanaam cha bhutanaam bhutasattamah, tasya ke hyaagunaa Devi vaney vyaapyathavaa pure!* Devi! Rama in terms of radiance Surya Deva pales into insignificance while he excels Agni Deva in generating heat just as he is Lakshmi among Lakshmis, ‘kshama’ or forbearances excels kshamaas; not only this, He is ‘the’ Deva among Devas, and the Bhuta among Pancha bhutas. Be it in forests, cities or whereso ever, could there be a Supreme Being among the Beings in the entirety of Creation! Now, the Maha Purusha Shri Rama is atonce the Supreme Mix of Prithvi-Sita-and Lakshmi and thus be in worshipped all together!’ Thus having appeased Devi Kousalya’s excessive agitation, Devi Sumitra assured that he should emphatically assert that the ‘Kaala maana’ or the passage of time would pass sooner or later and Shri Rama accompanied by Devi Sita and brother Lakshmana should return and as such she should await their return with patience and trust; *putras te varadaḥ kṣipram ayodhyām punar āgataḥ, karābhyām mṛdupīnābhyām caraṇau pīḍayiṣyati!* Soon enough your auspicious son should arrive back and by uttering sweet bits of conversation should press your feet with their mighty hands with extreme softness; that situation should soon enough return as you should rain your hot tears of joy and excitement, like the present clouds of dejection should shower mountain tops of the present state of your dejection. Devi Kousalya thus got assuaged her dense feelings of agony and dejection.

Sarga Forty Five

Rama appeals to the Ayodhya public not to hurt Dasaratha or Bharata- elders insist on following Rama upto Tamasa river banks

Anuraktā mahātmānaṁ rāmaṁ satyaparākramam, anujagmuḥ prayāntaṁ taṁ vanavāsāya mānavāḥ/ nivartite 'pi ca balāt suhr̥dvarge ca rājini, naiva te saṁnyavartanta rāmasyānugatā ratham/ ayodhyānilayānām hi puruṣāṇām mahāyaśāḥ, babhūva guṇasampannaḥ pūrṇacandra iva priyaḥ/ sa yācyamānaḥ kākutsthaḥ svābhīḥ prakṛtibhis tadā, kurvāṇaḥ pitaraṁ satyaṁ vanam evānvapadyata/ avekṣamāṇaḥ sasnehaṁ cakṣuṣā prapibann iva, uvāca rāmaḥ snehena tāḥ prajāḥ svāḥ prajā iva/ yā prītir bahumānaś ca mayy ayodhyānivāsinām, matprijārthaṁ viśeṣeṇa bharate sā niveśyatām/ sa hi kalyāṇa cāritraḥ kaikeyānandavardhanaḥ, kariṣyati yathāvad vaḥ priyāni ca hitāni ca/ jñānavṛddho vayobālo mṛdur vīryaguṇānvitaḥ, anurūpaḥ sa vo bhartā bhaviṣyati bhayāpahaḥ/ sa hi rājaguṇair yukto yuvarājaḥ samīkṣitaḥ, api cāpi mayā śiṣṭaiḥ kāryaṁ vo bhartṛśāsanam/ na ca tapyed yathā cāsau vanavāsaṁ gate mayi, mahārājas tathā kāryo mama priyacikṛṣayā/ yathā yathā dāśarathir dharmam evāsthito 'bhavat, tathā tathā prakṛtayo rāmaṁ patim akāmayaṁ/ bāṣpeṇa pihitaṁ dīnaṁ rāmaḥ saumitriṇā saha, cakarṣeva guṇair baddhvā janaṁ punar ivāsanam/ dvijās trividhaṁ vṛddhā jñānena vayasaujasā vayahprakampāśiraso dūrād ūcur idaṁ vacaḥ/ vahanto javanā rāmaṁ bho bho jātyās turamgamāḥ, nivartadhvaṁ na gantavyaṁ hitā bhavata bhartari, upavāhyas tu vo bhartā nāpavāhyaḥ purād vanam/ evam ārtapralāpāms tān vṛddhān pralapato dvijān, avekṣya sahasā rāmo rathād avatatāra ha/ padbhyām eva jagāmātha sasitāḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ, saṁnikṛṣṭapadanyāso rāmo vanaparāyaṇaḥ/ dvijātīms tu padātīms tān rāmaś cāritravatsalaḥ, na śaśāka gṛhṇācakṣuḥ parimoktuṁ rathena saḥ/ gacchantam eva taṁ dṛṣṭvā rāmaṁ sambhrāntamānasāḥ, ūcuḥ paramasamtaptā rāmaṁ vākyam idaṁ dvijāḥ/

brāhmanyam kṛtsnam etat tvām brahmanyam anugacchati, dvijaskandhādhirūdhās tvām agnayo 'py anuyānty amī/ vājapeyasamutthāni chatrāṇy etāni paśya naḥ, pṛṣṭhato 'nuprayātāni haṁsān iva jalātyaye/ anavāptātapatrasya raśmisamāpitasya te, ebhiś chāyām kariṣyāmaḥ svaiś chatrair vājapeyikaih/ yā hi naḥ satataṁ buddhir vedamantrānusāriṇī, tvatkṛte sā kṛtā vatsa vanavāsānusāriṇī/ hṛdayeṣv avatiṣṭhante vedā ye naḥ param dhanam, vatsyanty api gṛheṣv eva dārās cāritrarakṣitāḥ/ na punar niścayaḥ kāryas tvadgatau sukṛtā matih, tvayi dharmavyapekṣe tu kim syād dharmam avekṣitum/ yācīto no nivartasva haṁsaśuklaśiroruhaih, śirobhir nibhṛtācāra mahīpatanapāmsulaiḥ/ bahūnām vitatā yajñā dvijānām ya ihāgatāḥ, teṣām samāptir āyattā tava vatsa nivartane/ bhaktimanti hi bhūtāni jaṁgamājāṁgamāni ca, yācamāneṣu teṣu tvām bhaktim bhakteṣu darśaya/ anugaṁtum aśaktās tvām mūlair uddhṛtavegibhiḥ, unnatā vāyuvegena vikrośantīva pādapāḥ/ niṣceṣṭāhārasamcārā vṛkṣaikasthānaviṣṭhitāḥ, pakṣiṇo 'pi prayācante sarvabhūtānukampinam/ evam vikrośatām teṣām dvijātīnām nivartane, dadṛṣe tamasā tatra vārayantīva rāghavam/

As the Maha Satya Vrata Shri Rama left Ayodhya and proceeded for assuming long stay in the forests, a large crowd of followers too joined in even as discarding their belongings behind out of agony and desperation. Then Rama addressed the crowds not to get agitated and disheartened for the time being and should meanwhile extend their hearty wishes to the new King Bharata and to his mother Devi Kaikeyi too. Then he complemented Bharata as an extremely learned and mature ‘jnaani’ and assuredly would extend his helpfulness, charitable disposition, fraternity and protective nature with sincerity and confidence. Rama further declared that King Dasharatha with outstanding wisdom and lifelong experience had thus preferred Bharata as the new King and as such the public must abide by the directives of King Dasharatha as he was longing for retired and peaceful life for now. As such, Rama appealed for refraining their mood of agitation to settlement to a new Kingship with innovative and initiative full of modern style of administration. Rama further stated that the followers had indeed displayed their loyalty to him no doubt for which he should express his gratitude but ought not to transgress the limits as after all even oceans were aware of their boundaries and never cross beyond. Having thus prevented the followers, especially the older generation of Brahmanas, Rama stopped the chariot and descended down to walk. The old Brahmanas affirmed: ‘Raghu nandana! You are the unique well wisher of Brahmanas and as such the entirety of ‘brahmana samaaja’ had decided to follow as we take Agni on our shoulders and follow you as we seek to always perform ‘vaaja peya yajna’ or the horse sacrifices. They continued stating: *hṛdayeṣv avatiṣṭhante vedā ye naḥ param dhanam, vatsyanty api gṛheṣv eva dārās cāritrarakṣitāḥ/ na punar niścayaḥ kāryas tvadgatau sukṛtā matih, tvayi dharmavyapekṣe tu kim syād dharmam avekṣitum/* Shri Rama! Our greatest gift and prosperity is our Veda Jnaana embedded in our hearts and that is why we have left behind our wives and children safe at our homes. Now we have dedicated to the cause of Dharma and hence there could not be any reconsideration to uphold the principles. Rama the epitome of ‘Sadaachaara’! We are like the swans with our head hairs totally white and even by falling on earth with our devotion to you, we do humbly entreat you either let us follow you or better still return to Ayodhya! Fortunately for Rama, the Vriddha Brahmanas had to halt since the powerful flows of Tamasa River were encountered. The River was of forceful return flows even as the horses of the chariot of Sumanta were bathed and refreshed for the return journey to take place.

Sarga Forty Six

Rama Sita Lakshmana’s over night stay at Tamasa banks- they leave earliest unnoticed- public felt bad

Tatas tu tamasā tīram ramyam āsṛitya rāghavaḥ, sītām udvīkṣya saumitrim idaṁ vacanam abravīt/ iyam adya niśā pūrvā saumitre prasthitā vanam, vanavāsasya bhadrām te sa notkaṅṭhitum arhasi/ paśya śūnyāny arāṇyāni rudantīva samantataḥ, yathānilayam āyadbhir nilīnāni mṛgadvijaiḥ/ adyāyodhyā tu nagarī rājadhānī pitur mama, sastrīpumsā gatān asmāñ śociṣyati na samśayaḥ/ bharataḥ khalu dharmātmā pitaram mātaram ca me, dharmārthakāmasahitair vākyair āśvāsaiṣyati/ bharatasyānṛṣam - satvam samcintyāham punaḥ punaḥ, nānuśocāmi pitaram mātaram cāpi lakṣmaṇa/ tvayā kāryam

naravyāghra mām anuvrajatā kṛtam, anveṣṭavyā hi vaidehyā rakṣaṅārthe sahāyatā/ adbhira eva tu saumitre vatsyāmy adya niśām imām, etad dhi rocate mahyaṁ vanye 'pi vividhe sati/ evam uktvā tu saumitraṁ sumantraṁ api rāghavaḥ, apramattas tvam aśveṣu bhava saumyety uvāca ha/ so 'śvān sumantraḥ saṁyamyā sūrye 'stam samupāgate, prabhūtayavasān kṛtvā babhūva pratyanantaraḥ/ upāsyatu śivām saṁdhyāṁ dṛṣṭvā rātrim upasthitām, rāmasya śayanaṁ cakre sūtaḥ saumitriṇā saha/ tām śayyām tamasātīre vīkṣya vṛkṣadalaiḥ kṛtām, rāmaḥ saumitriṇām sārtham sabhāryaḥ saṁviveśa ha/ sabhāryaṁ saṁprasuptam tam bhrātaraṁ vīkṣya lakṣmaṇaḥ, kathayām āsa sūtāya rāmasya vividhān guṇān/ jāgrato hy eva tām rātrim saumitrer udīto raviḥ, sūtasya tamasātīre rāmasya bruvato guṇān/ gokulākulatīrāyās tamasāyā vidūrataḥ, avasat tatra tām rātrim rāmaḥ prakṛtibhiḥ saha/ utthāya tu mahātejāḥ prakṛtīs tā niśāmya ca, abravīd bhrātaraṁ rāmo lakṣmaṇam puṇyalakṣaṇam/ asmadvyapekṣān saumitre nirapekṣān grheṣu api vṛkṣamūleṣu saṁsuptān paśya lakṣmaṇa saṁpratam/ yathaite niyamaṁ paurāḥ kurvanti asmānnavartane, api prāṇān asiṣyanti na tu tyakṣyanti niśayam/ Yaavad eva tu saṁsuptās tāvad eva vyaṁ laghu, ratham āruhya gacchāmaḥ panthānam akutobhayam/ ato bhūyo 'pi nedānim ikṣvākupuravāsinaḥ, svapeyur anuraktā mām vṛkṣamūlāni saṁsritāḥ/ paurā hy ātmakṛtād duḥkhād vipramocyā nṛpāmajaiḥ, na tu khalv ātmanā joyyā duḥkhena puravāsinaḥ/ abravīd lakṣmaṇo rāmaṁ sāksād dharmam iva sthitam, rocate me mahāprājña kṣipram āruhyatām iti/ sūtas tataḥ saṁtvaritāḥ syandanaṁ tair hayottamaiḥ, yojayitvātha rāmāya prāṇjaliḥ pratyavedayat/ mohanārtham tu paurāṇām sūtam rāmo 'bravīd vacaḥ, udānmukhaḥ prayāhi tvaṁ ratham āsthāya sārathē/ muhūrtaṁ tvaritaṁ gatvā nirgataya ratham punaḥ, yathā na vidyuh paurā mām tathā kuru saṁāhitaḥ/ rāmasya vacanaṁ śrutvā tathā cakre sa sārathiḥ, pratyāgamyā ca rāmasya syandanaṁ pratyavedayat/ tam syandanaṁ adhiṣṭhāya rāghavaḥ saparicchadaḥ, śīghragām ākulāvartām tamasām ataran nadīm/ sa saṁtīrya mahābāhuḥ śrīmāñ śivam akaṅtakam, prāpadyata mahāmārgam abhayaṁ bhayadarśinām/

Having crossed Tamasa River, Rama then looked at Sita and addressed Lakshmana that since they had the uproarious scenes of public agitations behind, that would be the very first evening and night of their forest life. Before settling down, let us enjoy the scenery of chirruping birds and the movements of forest animals. Then in retrospection, Rama continued: indeed all through the day, the public of Ayodhya should have been terribly agitated, especially King Dashradha had been taking care of them like his own sons and the latter too had been of outstanding virtues. Now as far as our parents they should have been crying away so bitterly that they could even turn blind. *Bharataḥ khalu dharmātmā pītaram mātaram ca me, dharmārthakāmasahitair vākyair āśvāsaiṣyati/ bharatasyāṅṣam -satvaṁ saṁcintyāham punaḥ punaḥ, nānuśocāmi pītaram mātaram cāpi lakṣmaṇa/* Bharata is a 'dharmatma' in his core and on his return to Ayodhya, he ought to be assuaging the King and the mothers, by way of dharma-ārtha-and kaama. As I keep recalling about the soft and unadulterated nature of Bharata, I feel quite confident of the parents and their agitative tendency. Having thus feeling confident about Bharata, Rama addressed Lakshmana: *tvayā kāryam naravyāghra mām anuvrajatā kṛtam, anveṣṭavyā hi vaidehyā rakṣaṅārthe sahāyatā/* 'Nara shrestha Lakshmana! As you have strongly affirmed to have accompanied me and Sita, I feel immensely relieved as the best possible protector to Devi Sita'. Then Rama informed Lakshmana to merely fetch some water as he was not feeling like eating fruits and roots, as no doubt were available in the forest aplenty. Then Rama in a somewhat relaxed mood addressed Sumantra and requested him to look after the horses with care and attention. There after, Lakshmana made appropriate arrangements of grass beds for Sita Ramas for resting through the night, and there away after entered into conversation with Sumantra about the ourstanding qualities of Shri Rama the Yuga Purusha all through the night. As the next dawn arrived, there were crowds of cows assembling on the banks of Tamasa river. Rama and Sita too woke up and found big crowds of Ayodhya citizens on the other side of the bank; most of them were resting having wept long into the early hours and many were determined to witness the further movement of Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas. Lakshmana suggested to let the chariot move ahead very soon - perhaps unnoticed by the crowds, and proceed further to the extent possible. Soon enough they got into the chariot and sought to move forward and commence their journey into the dense forests as far as the horses could carry the chariot. Thereafter Sumantra having waited for the arrival of the auspicious

timing kept the horses toward the northern side and wished Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas for a successful journey onward till their victorious return to Ayodhya.

Sarga Forty Seven

Ayodhya elders and women got disturbed inability to see off Ramas to the deeper forests crossing Tamasa

Prabhātāyām tu śarvayām paurās te rāghavo vinā, śokopahataniśceṣṭā babhūvur hatacetasah/ śokajāśruparidyūnā vīkṣamāṇās tatas tataḥ, ālokaṁ api rāmasya na paśyanti sma duḥkhitāḥ/ tato mārgānūsāreṇa gatvā kim cit kṣaṇam punaḥ, mārganāśād viśādena mahatā samabhiplutaḥ/ rathasya mārganāśena nyavartanta manasvinaḥ, kim idaṁ kim kariṣyāmo daivenopahatā iti/ tato yathāgatenaiva māreṇa klāntacetasah, ayodhyām agaman sarve purīm vyathitasajjanām/ anugamyā nivṛttānām rāmam nagaravāsīnām/, udgatānīva sattvāni babhūvur amanasvinām/

As the citizens who could not witness the departure of the chariot or Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas with Sumantra, they felt anguished as there was no sign of the departure. They got agitated by themselves: *Dhirastu khalu nidraam taam yayaapahata chetasah, naadya pashyaamahe Raamam prithuraskam maha bhujam/* Alas! It was a shame that we had slept off instead of keeping awaken in the night and we were unfortunate to have missed the scene of the departure of Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas. How has Rama departed away to forests without even a trace! Of which avail is our being still alive without the confidence of his personal presence now! Shall we not dare to walk on thorns and hard rocks which they too are going to encounter step after step. How can we live without Rama in Ayodhya as the 'living- dead' beings with no urge for life and its worth. We are now onward missing his sweet face, comforting tongue, and fortuitous personality. We had planned to leave Ayodhya for good along with Rama, but we curse our own fates ! In this way, the entirety of the crowds of Ayodhya were distressed, like groups of crying and braying away calves without their cows. This was how the crowds dispersed in groups of heart rendering cryings and slowly walked back with despair and self-disgust at their misfortune. *Aalokya nagareem taam cha kshayavyakula maanasaah, aavartyant teshruuni nayanaih shoka peeditaih/* On return to the city of Ayodhya, the returning crowds were full of heart rending cryings with dismay that neither followed Rama to the forests nor could even see him departing; on return to their houses, they were self defeated of their disgusting misfortune.

Sarga Forty Eight

Ayodhya woman folk cry away Rama Sita Lakshmanas for further 'vana vaasa'

Svam svam nilayam āgamyā putradāraiḥ samāvṛtāḥ, aśrūṇi mumucuḥ sarve bāṣpeṇa pihitānanāḥ/ na cāhṛṣyan na cāmodan vaṇijo na prasārayan, na cāśobhanta paṇyāni nāpacan gṛhamedhinaḥ/ naṣṭam dṛṣṭvā nābhyanandan vipulaṁ vā dhanāgamam, putram prathamajam labdhvā janāni nābhyanandata/ grhe grhe rudantyaś ca bhartāram gṛham āgatam, vyagarhayanto duḥkhārtā vāgbhis totir iva dvipān/ kim nu teṣām gṛhaiḥ kāryam kim dāraiḥ kim dhanena vā, putir vā kim sukhair vāpi ye na paśyanti rāghavam/ ekaḥ satpuruṣo loke lakṣmaṇaḥ saha sītayā, yo 'nugacchati kākutstham rāmam paricaran vane/ āpagāḥ kṛtapuṇyās tāḥ padmīnyās ca sarāmsi ca, yeṣu snāsyati kākutstho vigāhya salilam śuci/ śobhayiṣyanti kākutstham aṭavyo ramyakānanāḥ, āpagās ca mahānūpāḥ sānumantaś ca parvatāḥ/ kānanam vāpi śailam vā yaṁ rāmo 'bhigamiṣyati, priyātithim iva prāptam nainam śakṣyanty anarcitum/ vicitrakusumāpīdā bahumañjaridhāriṇaḥ, akāle cāpi mukhyāni puṣpāni ca phalāni ca, darśayiṣyanti anukrośād girayo rāmam āgatam/ vidarśayanto vividhān bhūyaś citrāms ca nirjharān, pādapāḥ parvatāgreṣu ramayiṣyanti rāghavam/ yatra rāmo bhayam nātra nāsti tatra parābhavaḥ, sa hi śūro mahābhūḥ putro daśarathasya ca/ purā bhavati no dūrād anugacchāma rāghavam, pādacchāyā sukhā bhartus tādṛṣasya mahātmanaḥ, sa hi nātho janasyāśya sa gatīḥ sa parāyaṇam/ vayam paricariṣyāmaḥ

sītām yūyam tu rāghavam, iti paurastriyo bhartṛn duḥkhārtās tat tad abruvan/ yuṣmākam rāghavo 'raṇye yogakṣemaṁ vidhāsyati, sītā nārījanasyāsya yogakṣemaṁ kariṣyati/ ko nv anenāpratūtena sotkaṅṭhita - janena ca, saṁpṛīyetāmanoḥṇena vāsenā hṛtacetasā/ kaikeyā yadi ced rājyaṁ syād adharmyam anāthavat, na hi no jīvitenārthaḥ kutaḥ putraiḥ kuto dhanaiḥ/ yayā putras ca bhartā ca tyaktāv aiśvaryaakāraṇāt, kam sā parihared anyam kaikeyī kulapāmsanī/ kaikeyā na vayam rājye bhṛtakā nivasemahi, jīvantyā jātu jīvantyah putrair api śapāmahe/ yā putram pāthivendrasya pravāsayati nirghṇā, kas tām prāpya sukham jīved adharmyām duṣṭacāriṇīm/ na hi pravrajite rāme jīviṣyati mahīpatiḥ, mṛte daśarathe vyaktam vilopas tadanantaram/ te viṣam pibatāloḍya kṣīṇapūṇyāḥ sudurgatāḥ, rāghavam vānugacchadhvam aśrutim vāpi gacchata/ mithyā pravrajito rāmaḥ sabhāryaḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ, bharate saṁniṣṭāḥ smaḥ saunike paśavo yathā/ tās tathā vilapantyas tu nagare nāgarastrīyaḥ, cukruśur bhṛśasamāptā mṛtyor iva bhayāgame/ tathā striyo rāmanimittam āturā; yathā sute bhrātari vā vivāsite, vivalya dīnā rurudur vicetasah; sutair hi tāsām adhiko hi so 'bhavat/

On return to their houses like fugitives from the warfront, they got surrounded by their wives and sons who too broke out with heart rending shoutings and cryings from their eyes to the ground. The trading community had not opened their shops and establishments for days. Markets were empty and respective citizens made no efforts to cook their food as their kitchens remained shut. The births in some homes were resented and no celebrations were observed. The returning husbands who entered their houses were resented as if they ran back from the warfront; in fact the wives at their homes made taunts as the piercing 'trishula' like hits to elephants. They jibed saying as to their inability even to see the final departure of Rama to the forests and that all the bravado that they left was a mere wasteful effort! *ekaḥ satpuruṣo loke lakṣmaṇaḥ saha sītayā, yo 'nugacchati kākutstham rāmam paricaran vane/* There is only one person of truthfulness like Lakshmana who is accompanying Rama Sitas and it is he and he alone who is worthy of uniqueness and the rest of the humanity was worthy of condemnation. It is only that outstanding and purposeful Being who joins Rama taking bath in a waterbody, or a pond or a river or ocean. It is again that forest that Rama would visit which is blessed, or that mountain that He would mount, or that river in which he would bathe! *pādacchāyā sukhā bhartus tādṛśasya mahātmanaḥ, sa hi nātho janasyāsya sa gatiḥ sa parāyaṇam/* It is that person of derervedness of praise who rests under the security and auspiciousness of Lord Rama's feet. He is our safety, path of comfort and final destination! The woman folk of Ayodhya then cried hoarse raspingly: may we even get an opportunity of serving Devi Sita while the menfolk secure a chance to serve Rama ever! Then the women of public diverted their attention: *kaikeyā yadi ced rājyaṁ syād adharmyam anāthavat, na hi no jīvitenārthaḥ kutaḥ putraiḥ kuto dhanaiḥ/ yayā putras ca bhartā ca tyaktāv aiśvaryaakāraṇāt, kam sā parihared anyam kaikeyī kulapāmsanī/* As Kaikeyi takes over the kingdom in her control, we swear that we continue to be 'anaadhaas' or helpless and forlorn, since the very concept of dharma gets deranged and distorted! If we have to live through our lives, then of what avail would be of existence, our family and of children! Alas, Kaikeyi is such a detestable woman who could sacrifice a son and her own husband out of her lust for power with least consideration of age old established principles to torned pieces.! *kaikeyā na vayam rājye bhṛtakā nivasemahi, jīvantyā jātu jīvantyah putrair api śapāmahe/* Then the womanhood of Ayodhya unanimously declared that they would all wish to swear by their sons that as long as Kaikeyi were to be alive, then would discord the Kingdom, even if we survive some how! It should all be due to Kaikeyi that this kingdom of glory should be doomed with neither yajna karyas nor of safety and progress but slip down as the center of 'upadravaas' or of 'Tapatrayas'.

[Vishleshana on Tapatrayas:

Adhi Bhoudika or Ailments of Physical Nature; Adhyatmika or of Mental-Psychological Nature; and Adhi Daivika or of Natural Calamities like Earth quakes, floods, lightnings etc. beyond human control. In Vishnu Purana: Maharshi Parashara described about Tapatrayas or the Three Kinds of Difficulties that all human beings are subjected to as also the means of realising the Paramartha Swarupa. The Tapatrayas originate due to Adhyatmika, Aadhi Daavika and Adhi Bhoutika reasons. Adhyatmika based

Tapaas are either due to ‘Shaaririka’(physical) ailments or ‘Manasika’ (psychological) imbalances. Shaaririka Tapaas include diseases related to head, digestive, heart, breathing, vision, limbs, skin, fevers and so on; related are the various physiological problems of blood-urinary-pelvic nature. Manasika Tapaas are related to Kama, Krodha, Bhaya, Dwesha, lobha, Moha, Vishada, Shoka, Asuya, Apamana, Irshya, Matsara etc. Adhi Bhoutika Tapaas are due to the difficulties attributed to animals, birds, Pishachaas, Serpents, Rakshasaas and poisonous related creatures like scorpions. The troubles on account of Adhidaivika nature are due to cold, heat, air, rains, drought, water, earthquakes, cyclones and so on. Additionally, the troubles are related to birth, childhood, youth, old age, ignorance, Avidya, loneliness, smell, lack of resources, poverty, immaturity, inexperience, lack of opportunity, fear of death, death itself and multiple kinds of experiences of Naraka. Maharshi Parashara emphasized that there are problems of excessive of opulence, excellent health, excessive youth, and such other excesses and some times ignorance is bliss. More so there could be Tapaas due to discriminations of sex, age, social status, experience, opportunity, family background; origin of birth viz. religion, Varnashrama and age. Disappoint -ments in life, more specifically relating to money and fame, including their earnings, perservation and its vinasha or destruction happen to be yet source of Tapatriya.]

The Sarga is continued:

‘ na hi pravrajite rāme jīviṣyati mahīpatiḥ, mṛte daśarathe vyaktam vilopas tadanantaram/ te viṣam pibatāloḍya kṣīṇapūnyāḥ sudurgatāḥ, rāghavam vānugacchadhvam aśrutim vāpi gacchata/ The Public Voice affirms: ‘As Rama had since left for ‘vana vaasa’, King Dashartha would die soon and simultaneously the Kingdom would get shattered. Thus may this be clear that the days of virtue and justice get terminated eventually. In such a dire situation, it would be preferable to gulp down poison, or follow Rama or leave this Kingdom to another and never take the name of Kaikeyi once again! mithyā pravrajito rāmaḥ sabhāryaḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ, bharate samniṣṛṣṭāḥ smaḥ saunike paśavo yathā/ The womanfolk of Ayodhya got agitated further that they were convinced of the villainess Kaikeyi trapping the King by strings of lies and threats in the name of ‘dharma and nyaaya’ managed to banish Rama and along with him Devi Sita and the ever faithful Lakshmana for as many years as fourteen tortuous years of life in dandakaranya so that they might not survive or get blurred on the mental screen of the public any way! We of the public thus get tied to Bharata; indeed our situation is of a sacrificial animal in the name of yajna thus being faced by a devil or the deep sea!’ Thus the ‘Nagara Strees’ of Ayodhya were crying away highly agitated with ‘mṛityu bhaya’ or of the fright of death soon!Meanwhile, the day was closed as Sunset occurred, the gloom of dark night was ushered in, as the sanatana grihas did not initiate the Agni karyas nor the vedaadhyayan of shrotriyas were heard, while markets were not even opened. The ever buzzing city of Ayodhya descended into darkness and of gloom.

Sarga Forty Nine

Public of Kosala Janapada throng at the Chariot carrying Ramas who also cross Veda shruti-Gomati-Skandika rivers

Rāmo ‘pi rātriseṣeṇa tenaiva mahad antaram, jagāma puruṣavyāghraḥ pitur ājñām anusmaran/ tathaiva gacchatas tasya vyapāyād rajanī śivā, upāsyā sa śivām samdhyām viṣayāntam vyagāhata/ grāmān vikṣṛtasīmāms tām puṣpitāni vanāni ca, paśyann atiyayau śīghram śarair iva hayottamaiḥ/ śṛṇvan vāco manuṣyāṇām grāmasamvāsavinām, rājānam dhig daśaratham kāmasya vaśam āgatam/ hā nṛśamsādyā kaikeyī pāpā pāpānubandhinī, tīkṣṇā sambhinnamaryādā tīkṣṇe karmaṇi vartate/ yā putram idṛśam rājñāḥ pravāsayati dhārmikam, vana vāse mahāprājñām sānukrośam atandritam/ etā vāco manuṣyāṇām grāmasamvāsavinām, śṛṇvan atiyayau vīraḥ kosalān kosaleśvaraḥ/ tato vedaśrutim nāma śivavāri - vahām nadīm, uttīryābhīmukhaḥ prāyād agastyādhyuṣitām diśam/ gatvā tu suciram kalam tataḥ śitajalām nadīm, gomatīm goyutānūpām atarat sāgaraṅgamām/ gomatīm cāpy atikramya rāghavaḥ śīghragair hayaiḥ, mayūrahamsābhirutām tatāra syandikām nadīm/ sa mahīm manunā rājñā dattām ikṣvākave

purā, sphītām rāṣṭrāvṛtām rāmo vaidehīm anvadarśayat/ sūta ity eva cābhāṣya sārathim tam abhikṣṇaśaḥ, hamsamattasvaraḥ śrīmān uvāca puruṣarṣabhaḥ/ kadāham punar āgamyā sarayvāḥ puṣpīte vane, mṛgayām paryāṣyāmi mātrā pitrā ca saṃgataḥ, nātyartham abhikāṅkṣāmi mṛgayām sarayūvane, ratir hy eṣātulā loke rājarṣigaṇasammatā/ sa tam adhvānam aikṣvākaḥ sūtam madhurayā girā, tam tam artham abhipretya yayauvākyam udīrayan/

Rama during the night before kept on thinking about the happenings of the just concluded days and the state of affairs in Ayodhya especially about the welfare of his father. As the morning arrived, he performed his bathing-sandhya vandana, and so on get ready again to proceed further. As the chariot was moving forward through scatterings of petty villages and hamlets, comments from villagers were overheard such as : ‘alas! the King ought not to have given weightage to the loose talks and empty threats of Queen Kaikeyi. Unfortunately, he was enticed by her and took most ill justified decisions. It was a great tragedy to have sent Rama for ‘aranya vaasa’ for no fault of his yet, he obeyed his most heinous instructions of Kaikeyi. That woman named Kaikeyi is a contemptible and despicable specimen of womanhood of cruelty and ingratitude who should never cross one’s memory screen as she forced the magnanimous King of virtue and maturity to banish and hound Rama the epic hero with long and unheard hardship of forest life! Devi Sita the born princess who was only a giver but never a taker but was thrust with untold miseries that even a poor and below-ordinary female could ever imagine. Alas, a King of Dasharatha’s stature had to perforce sacrifice a symbol of valour and virtue the unparalleled Shri Rama who was innocent of any misdeed in his lifetime even by slip of tongue, let alone of action.’ Rama was truly shaken up by the kind of comments made by the village folk as per their own spontaneous reactions. Then having crossed the Kosala village, the chariot moved forward towards the river named ‘Veda shruti’ and having crossed it proceeded towards the southern direction for many hours and reached the banks of river Gomati with several ups and downs, besides drenches out of which the chariot encountered countless tortoises crossing the zig zag by lanes. After crossing River Gomati, the chariot reached the banks of River Skandika and there beyond were small hamlets known for huge agricultural fields as in ancient ages King Manu donated to the Ikshvaku King.

[Padma Purana is quoted: By dint of relentless Tapasya, Vaivaswata secured the boon from Brahma of becoming the Supreme Administrator of Prithvi of high virtue and Fortune and thus he became the First Manu Ever! Vaiwasvata Manu had ten sons, viz. Ila, Ikshvaku, Kushanaabha, Arishta, Dhruvta, Arishyant, Karusha, Mahabali Sharyati, Purushagha, Naabhaga and Ambarisha.]

Then Shri Rama exclaimed to Saradhi Sumanta: Alas! when indeed could I return and joyfully meet my dear parents and experience a picnic to the flowered and green gardens on the banks of River Sarayu ever!

Sarga Fifty

Ramas arrive at Shringavera pura on the banks of Ganga- stay overnight-and Nishada Raja Guha welcomes them

Viśālān kosalān ramyān yātvā lakṣmaṇapūrvajāḥ, āsāda mahābāhuḥ śṛṅgaverapuram prati/ tatra tripathagām divyām śivatoyām āśaivalām, dadarśa rāghavo gaṅgām puṇyām ṛṣinisevitām/ Jalaaghgataa- ttuhasigram phena nirmalahaasineem, kvachid veneekritajalaam kvachidaavrita sevitaam/ hamsasāra sasamghuṣṭām cakravākopakūjitām, śimśumaraiś ca nakraiś ca bhujamgaiś ca niṣevitām/ tām ūrmikalilāvartām anvavekṣya mahārathaḥ, sumantram abravīt sūtam ihaivādya vasāmahe/ avidūrād ayaṃ nadyā bahupuṣpapravālavān, sumahān iṅgudīṛkṣo vasāmo ’traiva sārathé lakṣṇaś ca sumantraś ca bāḍham ity eva rāghavam, uktvā tam iṅgudīṛkṣam tadopayayatur hayaiḥ/ rāmo ’bhiyāya tam ramyam ṛkṣam ikṣvākunandanah, rathād avātarat tasmāt sabhāryaḥ sahalakṣmaṇah/ sumantro ’py avatīryaiva mocayitvā hayottamān, ṛkṣamūlagatam rāmam upatathe kṛtāñjaliḥ/ tatra rājā guho nāma rāmasyātmasamaḥ sakhā, niṣādajātyo balavān sthapatīś ceti viśrutah/ sa śrutvā puruṣavyāghram rāmam

viṣayam āgatam, vṛddhaiḥ parivṛto 'mātyair jñātibhiś cāpy upāgataḥ/ tato niṣādādhipatiṃ dṛṣṭvā dūrād avasthitam, saha saumitriṇā rāmaḥ samāgacchad guhena saḥ/ tam ārtaḥ sampariśvajya guho rāghavam abravīt, yathāyodhyā tathedaṃ te rāma kiṃ karavāṇi te/ tato guṇavadannādyam upādāya pṛthagvidham, arghyaṃ copānayat kṣipraṃ vākyaṃ cedam uvāca ha/ svāgataṃ te mahābāho taveyam akhilā mahī, vayaṃ preṣyā bhavān bhartā sādhu rājyaṃ praśādhi naḥ/ bhakṣyaṃ bhojyaṃ ca peyaṃ ca lehyaṃ cedam upasthitam/ śayanāni ca mukhyaṇi vājināṃ khādanāṃ ca te/ guham eva bruvāṇaṃ taṃ rāghavaḥ pratyuvāca ha, arcitāś caiva ḥṣṭāś ca bhavatā sarvathā vayaṃ padbhyāṃ abhigamāc caiva snehasaṃdarśanena ca, bhujābhyāṃ sādhuṣṛtābhyāṃ pīdayan vākyaṃ abravīt diṣṭyā tvāṃ guha paśyāmi arogaṃ saha bāndhavaiḥ, api te kūsalam rāṣṭre mitreṣu ca dhaneṣu ca/ yat tv idaṃ bhavatā kiṃ cit prītyā samupakalpitaṃ, sarvaṃ tad anujānāmi na hi varte pratigrahe/ kuśacīrājīnadharaṃ phalamūlāśanaṃ ca mām, viddhi praṇihitaṃ dharme tāpasam vanagocaram/ aśvānāṃ khādanenāham arthī nānyena kena cit, etāvātātrabhavatā bhaviṣyāmi supūjitaḥ/ ete hi dayitā rājñāḥ pitur daśarathasya me, etaiḥ suvhitair aśvair bhaviṣyāmy aham arcitaḥ/ aśvānāṃ pratipānaṃ ca khādanāṃ caiva so 'nvaśāt, guhas tatraiva puruṣāṃs tvaritaṃ dīyatām iti/ tataś cīrottaraśaṅgaḥ saṃdhyāṃ anvāsya paścimāṃ, jalam evādade bhojyaṃ lakṣmaṇenāḥṛtaṃ svayaṃ/ tasya bhūmau śayānasya pādaḥ prakṣālya lakṣmaṇaḥ, sabhāryasya tato 'bhyetya tathau vṛkṣam upāśritaḥ/ guho 'pi saha sūtena saumitrim anubhāṣayan, anvajāgrat tato rāmam apramatto dhanurdharaḥ/ tathā śayānasya tato 'sya dhīmato; yaśasvino dāśarather mahātmanaḥ, adṛṣṭaduhkhasya sukhocitasya sā; tadā vyatīyāya cireṇa śarvarī

Thus taking leave of crossing the border of Koshala Desha's border, Shri Rama exclaimed to Lakshmana and bid good-bye to Ayodhya; he stated that it was that glorious city which has had the distinction of being administered by Kakuthsa Kings and would return to it one day and repay his indebtedness to it as he should long to meet his dear parents. Then with tears flowing from his eyes, he addressed the residents of 'janapada' and said that it was rather late that they had been waiting for us to reach here and thanked them profusely for their patient waiting. He then got down from the chariot accompanied by Sita Lakshmanas and greeted the 'janapadas' after pradakshinas, just as at the 'pradosha kaala' the devotees perform the self-circumambulations around Surya Deva. There after Rama Sita Lakshmanas witnessed the picturesque view of 'Pavitra Ganga' and the cool breezes flowing across and noticed that groups of Sages were busy with their services. The Holy Ganga could be imagined that Apsaras were bathing in the far depths of the flows while Deva- Danava-Gandhrava- Kinnaras were enhancing the purity of their innerselves what with the uniqueness of Parama Shiva and his 'jataajutaas' with standing the force of its descent from the high skies thanks to Bhagiratha the grand forefather of Rama's ancestry. The earthshaking thuds and reverberations down the unimaginable mountain tops, the flows of Ganga appear to form a 'Shiva jataajuta'- or 'Veni samudaya', the 'warp and woof' or the weavings of yarn threads across and straight! The 'jataajuta' as was thus frmed was like an immortal string of honey bees!

[Vishleshana on Parama Shiva's 'Jataajuta' vide Sarga Forty Three of Valmiki Baala Ramayana is quoted: Maharshi Vishvamitra addressed Shri Rama that after Brahma Deva gave the boon to Bhagiratha who was literally standing with heightened foot fingers, the latter got busy as immersed in invoking Maha Deva. Subsequently Pashupati Shiva too appeared and confirmed: Prītas te 'ham naraśreṣṭha kariṣyāmi tava priyam, śirasā dhārayiṣyāmi śailarājasutām aham/ tato haimavatī jyeṣṭhā sarvalokanamaskṛtā, tadā sātimahad rūpaṃ kṛtvā vegaṃ ca duḥsaham, ākāśād apatad rāma śive śivaśirasy uta/ 'Narashreshtha! I am pleased with your inhuman determination and selfless dedication to some how usher Devi Ganga down to earth and provide salvation to your ancestors; indeed I shall be delighted to fulfil your ambition and help to hold the mighty flows of Ganga into my 'jataajuta' the twisted and coarse head hairs from 'akaasha'. Then Shri Rama! As Paramashiva sanctioned Bhagirath's life time ambition, Himalaya Deva's elder daughter and Devi Parvati's elder sister Devi Ganga readily consented but had only one reservation that as she jumps down to Shiva's jataajuta the flows might further flow down to Patala instead of being held on earth itself! Shiva realised Devi Gangas impertinent remark and decided that he would hide her flows right into his jataajutas. Then Devi Ganga jumped down on Shiva mastaka and he held the flows which got instantly absorbed in the jataajutas. The flows of Ganga lost their way in

the labyrinths of Shiva's jataajuta and the forceful flows could not even reach earth, let alone down to Patala as Ganga wondered. Bhagiratha who had wondered as to where the flows disappeared and once again resorted to deep meditation to Maha Shiva. The latter released one of the forceful flows of Ganga to fall down to Bindu Sarovara as they assumed seven flows of which Hladini-Paavani and Nalini turned east; while Suchakshu-Seeta and Mahanadi Sindhu flowed westward. *Saptamichanvgaat taasaam Bhageeradham tadaa, Bageerayopi Raajarshi divyam syandanamaasthitah/ Praayadagne mahatejaa gangaatam chaapyanuvrajat, gaganaacchhankara shirastato dharanimaagataa/* The seventh flow of Ganga followed the chariot of Bhagiratha, he had thus accomplished the unique task of bringing Ganga from Shiva's head down to the his following! As the flows of Ganga followed thus, the speed and ferocity of the waves attracted fishes, tortoises and various water borne species joined as earth appeared to have become far richer thereafter. This superb attraction happening on earth instantly raised the curiosity of the celestial beings as though thousand more Suryas got presented by themselves. As the flows of Ganga got stabilised with speed and thrust gradually near normalcy reached and got widened from bank to bank pushing houses and crop fields too. Gandharvas and several Devas gradually gathered themselves as the flows of Ganga rolled down from Shiva's head and his unimaginable hairs themselves and eventually crowds of angels took to heartily taking in the pure sweetness of the waters, bathing in them and swimming too thoroughly revelling in the irresistible flows. And so do humans and innumerable other species especially due to their firm and proven belief of the sacred flows and even drops of 'Ganjajala'. In this context, Brahmarshi Vishvamitra addressing Shri Rama affirmed that Deva-Rishi-Daitya-Danava, Rakshasa, Gandharva, Yaksha, Kinnara, Naaga, Sarpa, Apsaras, all the entirety of water species, besides men, women, and animals made fast inroads into the ever purifying flows of Sacred Ganga. *Ta to hi yajamaanasya Jahnordbhutakarmanah, gangaa saplaavayaamaasa yagjnavaatam mahatmanah/ Tasyaavalepanam jnaatvaa kruddhho Jahnuscha Ragahva, apibat tu jalam sarvam Gangaayaah paramadbhutam/* As the flows of Ganga are fierce and roaring with nasty sounds, Rajarshi Jahnu was performing a maha yajna, and the furious flows of Ganga entered right into the yajna vedika; the Rajarshi got terribly furious at the alleged arrogance of Ganga and thus drank up the River waters totally in a manner that not even a drop of the River remained on earth. Deva Gandharva Rishis were shocked and stunned at the crisis and prayed collectively to very kindly revive Ganga once again stating that he was a father figure and Devi Ganga his daughter. The Rajarshi was pleased with the prayers and finally released Ganga through his ears and the father daughter relationship got universal recognition ever since.]

Further Stanzas continued: As the high sounds of swan groups are reverberating, swarms of chakravaaka birds too were enhancing the exquisiteness of the scenery. The buzz of honey bees on the cool waves of Ganga and was clearly audible to the ears further adding to the striking charm, Rama was tempted and instructed Sumanta that they would all spend the night there on the banks of Ganga itself. He further stated that not far away he was informed that there should be a huge 'Ingudeeka Vriksha' with heavy and high branches with ripe and sweet fruits with mangificent setting of scenery of Ganga and that they would like to carry them upto that point for leaving the chariot. As they got down and were refreshing themselves with great contentment, the horses were freed too for the night. *Tatra rājā guho nāma rāmasyātmasamaḥ sakhā, niṣādajātyo balavān sthapatīś ceti viśrutah/ sa śrutvā puruṣavyāghraṁ rāmam viṣayam āgatam, vṛddhaiḥ parivṛto 'mātyair jñātibhiś cāpy upāgatah/* In the principality of Shringa - verapura on the banks of Ganga, there was a Chieftain of Fishermen and Boatmen named 'Guha', whose birth was a 'nishada' a hunter in forests, who was sturdy and hefty in physique but buttery of mind and of wit. Guha was informed by the villagers on his way that great hero of Ayodyha Shri Rama was on his way to the banks of Ganga. He came to realise the outlines of the background of Rama as recognisable not in royal dresses but in deer skins. Guha on reaching the presence of Rama, he had instantly recognised and embraced Rama the 'purushottama'. He broke into crying and begged Rama that he was totally at the command of what all service that could be extended. Guha declared that his entire local authority was at his disposal and offered the bhakshya-bhojya-lehya-choshya-paaneyas, comfortable beds and seats to the outstanding guests. Rama was truly overwhelmed with the hospitality arrangements and assured that he was extremely grateful for the services. He however stated: *kuśacīrājīnadharam phalamūlāsanaṁ ca*

mām, viddhi praṇihitam dharme tāpasam vanagocaram/ As our requirements are to abide and to follow the dress codes and food regulations that necessitate our ways of living ahead, hence the varieties of eats and drinks are forbidden and hence be returned with gratitude. We are to be dressed by mriga charmas and sustain by consuming kanda-moola-phalas. All the same, we would be happy by taking care of the horses of the chariot and what all you could do for them should be welcomed most. King Dasharatha was particularly concerned of the proper care of these horses of divine like attachment. Then having performed sandhya vandana and frugal eating, Rama and Sita rested on the well arranged ‘kusha graasa’ beds. But Lakshmana and Guha continued their conversation particularly about the recent developments at Ayodhya.

Sarga Fifty One

Lakshmana - Guha feel and exchange expressions of sadness

Tam jāgratam adambhena bhrātur arthāya lakṣmaṇam, guhaḥ saṁtāpasam tpto rāghavaṁ vākyam abravīt/ iyaṁ tāta sukhā śayyā tvadartham upakalpita, pratyāśvasiḥi sādhu asyām rājaputra yathāsukham/ ucito 'yaṁ janaḥ sarvaḥ kleśānām tvaṁ sukhocitaḥ, gupyarthaṁ jāgariṣyāmaḥ kākutstha - sya vyaṁ niśām/ na hi rāmāt priyataro mamāsti bhuvī kaś cana, bravīmy etad ahaṁ satyaṁ satyenaiva ca te śape/ asya prasādād āsamse loke 'smiṁ sumahad yaśaḥ, dharmāvāptim ca vipulām arthāvāptim ca kevalām/ so 'haṁ priyasakhaṁ rāmaṁ śayānaṁ saha sītayā, rakṣiṣyāmi dhanuṣpāṇiḥ sarvato jñātibhiḥ saha/ na hi me 'viditaṁ kiṁ cid vane 'smiṁś carataḥ sadā, caturaṅgaṁ hy api balaṁ sumahat prasahemahi/ lakṣmaṇas taṁ tadovāca rakṣyamānās tvayānagha, nātra bhītā vyaṁ sarve dharmam evānupaśyātā/ kathaṁ dāśarathau bhūmau śayāne saha sītayā, śakyā nidrā mayā labdhum jīvitam vā sukhāni vā/ yo na devāsuraiḥ sarvaiḥ śakyah prasahitum yudhi, taṁ paśya sukhasamviṣṭam ṛṇeṣu saha sītayā/ yo mantra tapasā labdho vividhaiś ca pariśramaiḥ, eko daśarathasyaiṣa putraḥ sadṛśalakṣaṇaḥ/ asmīn pravrajito rājā na ciraṁ vartayiṣyati, vidhavā medinī nūnaṁ kṣipram eva bhaviṣyati/ vinadya sumahānādam śrameṇoparatāḥ striyaḥ, nirghoṣoparataṁ tāta manye rājaniveśanam, kausalyā caiva rājā ca tathaiva janani mama, nāsamse yadi jīvanti sarve te śarvarīm imām/ jīved api hi me mātā śatrughnasyānvavekṣayā, tad duḥkham yat tu kausalyā vīrasūr vinaśiṣyati/ anuraktajanākīrṇā sukhālokapriyāvahā, rājavyasanasaṁsṛṣṭā sā purī vinaśiṣyati/ atikrāntam atikrāntam anavāpya manoratham, rājye rāmam anikṣipya pitā me vinaśiṣyati/ siddhārthāḥ pitaram vṛttam tasmiṁ kāle hy upasthite, pretakāryeṣu sarveṣu saṁskariṣyanti bhūmipam/ ramyatvarasamsthānām suvibhakta - mahāpathām, harmyaprasādasaṁpannām gaṇikāvaraśobhitām/ rathāśvagajasambādham tūryanādavināditām, sarvakalyāṇasaṁpūrṇām hṛṣṭapuṣṭajanākulām/ ārāmodyānasampannām samājotsavaśālīnīm, sukhitā vicariṣyanti rājadhānīm pitur mama/ api satyapratijñena sārtham kuśalinā vyaṁ, nivṛtte vanavāse 'smiṁ ayodhyāṁ praviśemahi paridevayamānasya duḥkhārtasya mahātmanaḥ, tiṣṭhato rājaputrasya śarvarī sātyavartata/ tathā hi satyaṁ bruvati prajāhite; narendraputre, guru - sauhṛdād guhaḥ, mumoca bāṣpaṁ vyasanābhīpīḍito; jvarāturo nāga iva vyathāturaḥ/

Nishada Raja Guha then initiated conversation with Lakshmana about the singularly fascinating topic of the outstanding cynosure Shri Rama. *na hi rāmāt priyataro mamāsti bhuvī kaś cana, bravīmy etad ahaṁ satyaṁ satyenaiva ca te śape/* Lakshmana declared : ‘ I am proud to declare unilaterally that in my life time there could be no other personality that fascinates me like Shri Rama on the face of earth and that it should be by his grace that one even like me could attain the fulfillment of the chaturvidha purushardhas of dharmartha- kaama-mokshas in one’s very life. I would ever keep vigilant to ensure the security of Sita Ramas even as they rest peacefully by keeping my ‘dhanur banaas’ ready. As I have the natural instinct of knowing each and every movement of the forests, even the ‘chaturanga sena’ of the enemies could be put to frustration and crumbling disappearance by total extinction. Lakshmana continued: ‘ Dharmapara Nishada King! Persons upholding the values of virtue are never defeated and are fearless. Rama along with Sita therefore experiences the same ease and comfort as on plush beds of luxury while lying on drygrass natural beds; similarly a ‘mahaanubhaava’ like Rama gets similar taste of ‘kanda moola phalaas’ and pancha bhakshyaas alike. Even all such other comforts and luxuries of human life are of no

consequence to the outstanding human in the garb of a top celestial like Rama! Indeed, King Dasharatha who had been all through his life practised the tenets of Dharma like upasana of Gayatri, 'krucchha chandraayana vrataas', yagnaanushtaana and so on and that was how, Rama was born as his son! Now, as Rama was uprooted to forest life 'willy nilly' under the shadow of dharma, King Dasharatha's life time has to get terminated sooner or later and Devi Kousalya like Mother Earth herself would get widowhood. The womanhood of the 'Rani vaasa' would soon scream and seek to break their hearts but would eventually reconcile to realities of existence. It might be an exclamatory mark whether the queen mothers of Kousalya and Sumitra might or might not absorb the shock of father's absence. Then Lakshmana poses the questions: *Api jeeved Dasharatho vanavaasaat punarvayam, pratyagamyā mahaat- maanapi pashyaama suvratam/ api satyapratijñena sārddham kuśalinā vāyam, nivṛtte vanavāse 'sminn ayodhyām praviśemahi/* Whether King Dasharatha would survive the return of three of us and obtain his personal blessings! Whether Rama as accompanied by us would re-enter Ayodhya happily and successfully!.' Thus Lakshmana kept on discussing the various issues raised by him to Guha the Nishada King through out the night!

Sarga Fifty Two

Guha navigates Sita Rama Lakshmanas across Ganga- Rama bids farewell to the reluctant Sumamtra- Sita's intense prayers to the Sacred Ganga- after crossing Ganga reach Vatsa desha for night halt.

Prabhātāyām tu śarvāyām pṛthu vṛkṣā mahāyāsāḥ, uvāca rāmaḥ saumitriṁ lakṣmaṇam śubhalakṣaṇam/ bhāskarodayakālo 'yam gatā bhagavati nīśā, asau sukṛṣṇo vihagaḥ kokilas tāta kūjati/ barhiṇānām ca nirghoṣaḥ śrūyate nadatām vane, tarāma jāhnavīm saumya śīghragām sāgarāṅgamām/ vijñāya rāmasya vacaḥ saumitriṁ mitranandanāḥ, guham āmantrya sūtam ca so 'tiṣṭhad bhrātur agrataḥ/ tataḥ kalāpān saṁnahya khaḍgau baddhvā ca dhanvināu, jagmatuḥ yena tau gaṅgām sītayā saha rāghavau/ rāmam eva tu dharmajñam upagamyā vinītavat, kim aham karavāñīti sūtaḥ prāñjalir abravīt/ nivartasvety uvācainam etāvad dhi kṛtam mama, yānam vihāya padbhūyām tu gamiṣyāmo mahāvanam/ ātmānam tv abhyanujñātam avekṣyārtaḥ sa sārathiḥ, sumantraḥ puruṣavyāghram aikṣvākam idam abravīt/ nātikrāntam idam loke puruṣeṇa kena cit, tava sabhrātr̥bhāryasya vāsāḥ prākṛtavat vane/ na manye brahmācārye 'sti svadhūte vā phalodayaḥ, mārḍavārjavayor vāpi tvām ced vyaśanam āgatam/ saha rāghava vaidehyā bhrātr̥ caiva vane vāsan, tvām gatiṁ prāpsyase vīra trīṁ lokāms tu jayann iva/ vāyam khalu hatā rāma ye tayāpy upavañcitāḥ, kaikeyā vāsam eṣyāmaḥ pāpāyā duḥkhabhāgināḥ/ iti bruvann ātma samam sumantraḥ sārathis tadā, dṛṣṭvā dura gataṁ rāmam duḥkharṭo rurude ciram/ tatas tu vigate bāṣpe sūtam sprṣṭodakam śucim, rāmas tu madhuraṁ vākyaṁ punaḥ punar uvāca tam/ ikṣvākūṇām tvayā tulyam suhrdam nopalakṣaye yathā daśaratho rājā mām na śocet tathā kuru/ śokopahata cetās ca vṛddhaś ca jagatīpatiḥ, kāma bhārāvāsannaś ca tasmād etad bravīmi te/ yad yad ājñāpayet kim cit sa mahātmā mahīpatiḥ, kaikeyāḥ priyakāmārtham kāryam tad avikāṅkṣayā/ etadartham hi rājyāni praśāsati nareśvarāḥ, yad eṣām sarvakṛtyeṣu mano na pratihanyate/ tad yathā sa mahārājō nālīkam adhigacchati, na ca tāmyati duḥkheṇa sumantra kuru tat tathā/ adṛṣṭaduḥkham rājānam vṛddham āryam jīvendriyam, brūyās tvam abhivādyaiva mama hetor idam vacaḥ/ naivāham anuśocāmi lakṣmaṇo na ca maithilī, ayodhyāyās cyutās ceti vane vatsyāmaheti vā/ caturdaśasu varṣeṣu nivṛtteṣu punaḥ punaḥ, lakṣmaṇam mām ca sītām ca drakṣyasi kṣipram āgatām/ evam uktvā tu rājānam mātaram ca sumantra me, anyās ca devīḥ sahitāḥ kaikeyīm ca punaḥ punaḥ/ ārogyam brūhi kausalyām atha pādābhivandanam, sītāyā mama cāryasya vacanāl lakṣmaṇasya ca/ brūyās ca hi mahārājām bhārataṁ kṣipram ānaya, āgataś cāpi bhārataḥ sthāpyo nṛpamate pade/ bhārataṁ ca pariśvajya yauvarājye 'bhiśicya ca, asmatsamātpajam duḥkham na tvām abhibhaviṣyati/ bhārataś cāpi vaktavyo yathā rājani vartase, tathā mātr̥ṣu vartethāḥ sarvāsv evāviśeṣataḥ/ yathā ca tava kaikeyī sumitrā cāviśeṣataḥ, tathāiva devī kausalyā mama mātā viśeṣataḥ/ nivartyamāno rāmeṇa sumantraḥ śokakarśitaḥ, tat sarvam vacanam śrutvā snehāt kākutstham abravīt/ yad aham nopacāreṇa brūyām snehād aviklavaḥ, bhaktimān iti tat tāvad vākyaṁ tvām kṣantum arhasi/ katham hi tvadvihīno 'ham

pratyāsyaṃ tām purīm, tava tāta viyogena putraśokākulām iva/ sarāmam api tāvan me ratham dṛṣṭvā
 tadā janaḥ, vinā rāmam ratham dṛṣṭvā vidūryetāpi sā purī dainyam hi nagarī gacched dṛṣṭvā śūnyam
 imam ratham, sūtāvaśeṣam svam sainyam hataṅgāṃ ivāhave/ dūre 'pi nivasantam tvām mānasenāgrataḥ
 sthitam, cintayantyo 'dya nūnam tvām nirāhārāḥ kṛtāḥ prajāḥ/ ārtanādo hi yaḥ pauraḥ muktas
 tadvipravāsane, rathastham mām niśāmyaiva kuryuḥ śatagaṇam tataḥ/ aham kim cāpi vakṣyāmi devīm
 tava suto mayā, nīto 'sau mātulakulam saṃtāpam mā kṛthā itī asatyam api naivāham brūyām vacanam
 īdṛśam, katham apriyam evāham brūyām satyam idam vacaḥ/ mama tāvan niyogasthās tvadbandhu -
 janavāhinaḥ, katham ratham tvayā hīnam pravakṣyanti hayottamāḥ/ yadi me yācamānasya tyāgam eva
 kariṣyasi, saratho 'gnim pravekṣyāmi tyakta mātra iha tvayā/ bhaviṣyanti vane yāni tapovighnakarāṇi te,
 rathena pratibādhiṣye tāni sattvāni rāghava/ tat kṛtena mayā prāptam ratha caryā kṛtam sukham, āśamse
 tvatkṛtenāham vanavāsakṛtam sukham/ prasīdecchāmi te 'raṇye bhavitum pratyantarah, prītyābhītam
 icchāmi bhava me pratyantarah/ tava śuśrūṣaṇam mūrhdhā kariṣyāmi vane vasan, ayodhyām
 devalokam vā sarvathā prajahāmy aham/ hi śakyā praveṣṭum sā mayāyodhyā tvayā vinā, rājadhānī
 mahendrasya yathā duṣkṛtakarmaṇā/ ime cāpi hayā vīra yadi te vanavāsinaḥ, paricaryām kariṣyanti
 prāpsyanti paramām gatim/ vanavāse kṣayam prāpte mamaiṣa hi manorathaḥ, yad anena rathenaiva
 tvām vaheyaṃ purīm punaḥ/ caturdaśa hi varṣāni sahitasya tvayā vane, kṣaṇabhūtāni yāsyanti śataśas tu
 tato 'nyathā/ bhṛtyavatsala tiṣṭhantam bhartṛputragate pathi, bhaktam bhṛtyam sthitam sthityām tvam na
 mām hātum arhasi/ evam bahuvidham dīnam yācamānam punaḥ punaḥ, rāmo bhṛtyānukampī tu
 sumantram idam abravīt/ jānāmi paramām bhaktim mayi te bhartṛvatsala, śṛṇu cāpi yadartham tvām
 preṣayāmi purīm itaḥ/ nagarīm tvām gataṃ dṛṣṭvā janani me yavīyasī, kaikeyī pratyayam gacched iti
 rāmo vanaṃ gataḥ/ parituṣṭā hi sā devi vanavāsam gate mayi, rājānam nātiśānketa mithyāvādīti
 dhārmikam/ eṣa me prathamāḥ kalpo yad ambā me yavīyasī, bhāratārakṣitam sphūtam putrarājyam
 avāpnuyāt/ mama priyārtham rājñāś ca sarathas tvam purīm vraja, saṃdiṣṭas cāsi yānarthāms tāms tām
 brūyās tathātathā/ ity uktvā vacanam sūtam sāntvayitvā punaḥ punaḥ, guham vacanam aklībam rāmo
 hetumad abravīt, jaṭāḥ kṛtvā gamiṣyāmi nyagrodhakṣīram ānaya/ tat kṣīram rājaputrāya guhaḥ kṣīpram
 upāharat, lakṣmaṇasyātmanas caiva rāmas tenākaroj jaṭāḥ/ tau tadā cīravasanau jaṭamaṇḍaladhāriṇau,
 āśobhetām ṛṣisamau bhrātarau rāmalakṣmaṇau/ tato vaikhānasam mārgam āsthitāḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ,
 vratam ādiṣṭavān rāmaḥ sahāyam guham abravīt/ apramatto bale kośe durge janapade tathā, bhavethā
 guha rājyam hi durārakṣatamaṃ matam/ tatas tam samanujñāya guham ikṣvākunandanāḥ, jagāma
 tūrṇam avyagraḥ sabhāryaḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ/ sa tu dṛṣṭvā nadītire nāvam ikṣvākunandanāḥ, titīrsuḥ
 śīghragām gaṅgām idam lakṣmaṇam abravīt/ āroha tvam nara vyāghra sthitām nāvam imām śanaiḥ,
 sītām cāropayānvakṣam pariṅghya manasvinīm/ sa bhrātuh śāsanam śrutvā sarvam apratikūlayan,
 āropya maithilīm pūrvam ārurohātmavāms tataḥ/ athāruroha tejasvī svayam lakṣmaṇapūrvajāḥ, tato
 niśādādhipatir guho jñātīn acodayat/ anujñāya sumantram ca sabalam caiva tam guham, āsthāya nāvam
 rāmas tu codayām āsa nāvikān/ tatas taiś coditā sā nauḥ karṇadhārasamāhitā, śubhasphyavegābhīhatā
 śīghram salilam atyagāt/ madhyam tu samanuprāpya bhāgīrathyās tv aninditā, vaidehī prāñjalir bhūtvā
 tām nadīm idam abravīt/ putro daśarathasyāyam mahārājasya dhīmataḥ, nideśam pālayatv enam gaṅge
 tvadabhirakṣitāḥ/ caturdaśa hi varṣāni samagrāny uṣya kānane, bhrātrā saha mayā caiva punaḥ
 pratyāgamiṣyati/ tatas tvām devi subhage kṣemeṇa punar āgatā, yakṣye pramuditā gaṅge
 sarvakāmasamṛddhaye/ tvam hi tripathagā devi brahma lokam samīkṣase, bhāryā codadhīrājasya loka
 'smin sampradṛśyase/ sā tvām devi namasyāmi praśamsāmi ca śobhane, prāpta rājye naravyāghra śivena
 punar āgate/ gavām śatasahasrāṇi vastrāny annam ca peśalam, brāhmaṇebhyaḥ pradāsyāmi tava
 priyacikīrṣayā/ tathā sambhāsamānā sā sītā gaṅgām aninditā, dakṣiṇā dakṣiṇam tīram kṣīpram
 evābhīyupāgamat/ tīram tu samanuprāpya nāvam hitvā nararṣabhaḥ, prātiṣṭhata saha bhrātrā vaidehyā
 ca paramtapaḥ/ athābravīn mahābāhuḥ sumitrānandavardhanam, agrato gaccha saumitre sītā tvām
 anugacchatu/ pṛṣṭhato 'ham gamiṣyāmi tvām ca sītām ca pālayan, adya duḥkham tu vaidehī vanavāsasya
 vetsyati/ gataṃ tu gaṅgāparapāram āśu; rāmam sumantraḥ pratatam nirīkṣya, adhvaprakarṣād
 vinivṛttadṛṣṭir; mumoca bāṣpam vyathitas tapasvī/ tau tatra hatvā caturo mahāmṛgān; varāham ṛṣyam
 pṛṣṭatam mahārurum, ādāya medhyam tvaritam bubhuḥṣitau; vāsāya kāle yayatur vanaspatim/

Rama addressed Lakshmana that as the dawn had arrived and the birds had begun their chirrupings, it should be time for departure and to gradually start crossing the vast and holy Ganga! Lakshmana alerted Sumantra and Nishada Raja Guha alike. The latter commanded to get a suitable boat ready and got the indication of its readiness too. Meanwhile Rama Lakshmanas too got ready with their respective body sheaths, arrows, swords etc. along with Devi Sita and arrived at the banks of the river. Sumantra was then instructed to return to King Dasharatha and seek his blessings even as the ‘sarathi’ broke into uninterrupted sobbings. He said: Raghunandana! This manner of your having to leave for ‘aranya vaasa’ along with your ‘paativratya sahadharmacharini’ wife and the ever obedient Lakshmana is not only unprecedented but also historic for all times to come. That this maha purusha who has been exemplary with Vedadhyayana-brahmacharyapalana- and phala siddhi standing unique in human form is being subjected to this cruelty is beyond comprehension. Shri Rama! This is truthfully fateful that along with the citizens of the kingdom we are having to bear this misfortune on one side and the further days of cruelty and disaster having to bear future times of hardship at the misfortune at the hands of the villionous Kaikeyi too.’ As Sumantra kept on pouring his heart out for long, Rama replied: My dear Sumantra! As per my reckoning there might not be any other loyal human to Ikshvaku vamsha like you. Now on return to Ayodhya, your prime responsibility to convince King Dasharatha to nomalcy as soon as possible. On the one hand King Dasharatha has since turned old and weak physically and additionally he is terribly agitated at the tragic and disastrous scenes mentanly too. This is precisely why whatever instructions that the King commands especially those which would please Devi Kaikeyi be assiduously followed at once. My personal request to you dear Sumantra by your swearing on me! Never ever utter one word that might not hurt the sentiment of the great King Dasharatha and possibly seek to assuage his agitated feelings to light hearted expressions of relief and hope. Sumantra! *naivāham anuśocāmi lakṣmaṇo na ca maithilī, ayodhyāyās cyutās ceti vane vatsyāmaheti vā/ caturdaśasu varṣeṣu nivṛtteṣu punaḥ punaḥ, lakṣmaṇam mām ca sītām ca drakṣyasi kṣipram āgatān/* May we viz. Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas are neither stating nor feeling bad about; this assurance be kindly conveyed to Maha Raja. On the other hand , we should surely return to Ayodhya and meet me, Sita and Lakshmana. Sumatra! You should also convey the pleasant news of our welfare to our mothers, especially to Devi Kaikeyi too. Further to mother Koushalya, may this be intimated that we especially from Devi Sita and Lakshmanas too are seeking to prostrate before her. Sumantra! Kindly do on our behalf request Maha Raja to forthwith ask Bharata to return soon and take over the responsibilities awaiting him so that the ‘yuvarajatva’ be bestowed on him at the earliest. On the arrival of Bharata do please convey to him as from me that he should treat all the mothers as his own. He may also conveyed that he should straight away take obey the instruction of the father to assume the yuvarajatva and that would be indeed the gateway to contentment of ‘iha’ and ‘paralokas’ As Shri Rama devoted considerable time to Sumantra conveying the do’s and don’t’s on his return to Ayodhya, Sumantra too made a few submissions to Shri Rama: ‘ Shri Rama! What ever is going to be submitted to you as your faithful devotee be kindly excused; how could I return to Ayodhya as though nothing amiss had ever happened. As soon as the public should become aware that I would return without Rama-Sita-Lalkshmanas, they should at once react agitatedly. They should feel that the chariot would be returning having been defeated and merely the charioteer was returning dejectedly. *dūre ’pi nivasantaṁ tvām mānasenāgrataḥ sthitam, cintayantyo ’dya nūnam tvām nirāhārāḥ kṛtāḥ prajāḥ/ ārtanādo hi yaḥ paurair muktaḥ tadvipravāsane, rathasthaṁ mām niśāmyaiva kuryuḥ śatagaṇam tataḥ/ ahaṁ kiṁ cāpi vakṣyāmi devīm tava suto mayā, nīto ’sau mātulakulaṁ saṁtāpaṁ mā kṛthā itī asatyam api naivāham brūyām vacanam īdṛśam, katham apriyam evāham brūyām satyam idaṁ vacaḥ/* Even as you are far away, the public should be feeling that you are very near to their hearts and most understandably worried awaiting my return without taking food and even water! Indeed, you had heard the agitated cryings and shoutings at high pitch of the public. Most certainly, on witnessing my return to the city would attract rebounding agitations once again. On meeting Devi Kousalya on my return to Ayodhya, should I inform her that you were safely despatched to his ‘sasuraal’ or your father in law’s residence and that should be why she might not worry at all! How could I hide this ugly untruth that I had to leave behind at the care of the unknown and unimaginable jungle living for very long time. Rama! How on earth you could wish me safe return to Ayodhya being fully aware that the recalcitrant and obstinate horses tied to the chariot would

seek to return to Rama by the reverse route. Raghu nandana! That is the precise reason why he should not ask me to return to Ayodhya but instead instruct me to accompany you; other wise I would like to jump in to fire along with the chariot. If only you allow me to stay back, I would ensure that no cruel animal could disturb your peace of mind and chase away by the chariot; That would be on the analogy of even an outstanding ‘dharma parayana’ could enter into Indra Loka but not a human who could enter Ayodhya without you! *Chaturdaśa hi varṣāṇi sahitasya tvayā vane, kṣaṇabhūtāni yāsyanti śataśas tu tato ’nyathā/* My ambition is to return to Ayodhya along with you after the fourteen year ‘vana vaasa’; indeed, the fourteen year period should be over like within fourteen minutes if I were to be with you!’ In this manner, Sumantra had sincerely begged of Rama to allow him during the vana vaasa period. Then Rama replied to say: ‘Sumantra! I am totally aware of your intense devotion for me but when you would return to Ayodhya, then only Devi Kaikeyi would be actually convinced that we had been despatched for the ‘vana vaasa’. Without convincing in this manner, even Dharmatma King Dasharatha might wonder as to why Sumantra had not returned yet! In fact, without your non- return might raise a doubt in the mind of Devi Kaikeyi whether there might not be any concern for Bharat’s free Rajyabhisheka!’ Rama thus convincingly replied to Sumantra and finally succeeded to despatch him. Then Rama addressed Nishada Raja Guha that it would not be proper for him and Sita- Lakshmana to attract further attention of the passers by and proceed at once to cross the River. Then Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas hurried up to change the dress of deer skins as of Munis by finally assuming the ‘vanaprastha dharma’.

[Vishleshana on Vaanaprastha Dharma as quoted from Manu Smriti -Aachaara Khanda:

Every snaataka Dwija pursuant to the Grihastaashrama into the Vaanaprastha stage of life should pursue the Vidhis or principles of dharma with determination and ‘indriya nigrah’, while aging with wrinkles and white hair as per the practice of generations after generation. He might even discard cultivation entrusting him to sons and retire into forests with his wife but retaining his duty of the daily ‘agni karyas’ along with the required implements being prepared for eating fruits and roots, and wearing old yet clean clothes and unshaven beards or hairs yet with bathings in mornings and evenings ensuring ‘baahyaantara shuchi’. He should offer ‘bali’ to share his food with creatures and insects, give away charities and perform ‘atithi seva’ as per his ability, as also daily vedaadhyayana. *Vaitaanikam cha juhuyaadagnihotram yathaavidhi, darshamaskandayan parva purnaa -maasam cha yogatah/Riksheshtyaagranyaam chaiva chaaturmaa -syaani chaaharet, turaayanam cha kramasho dakshasyaayanameva cha/* Vaitaanikaagni is called the merger of Aahavaneeya and Dakshinaagi and thus performing the Vaitaagni as prescribed is what is expected of dwija during the vaanaprastaashrama stage of life. At the same time, he should not slip away from the duty of ‘ishti karyas’ of agni on darsha pourami and amavasyas. The prescribed shrota karmas of Nakshatreshti and Aagraayaneshti be neglected nor those during Chaaturmasyas and at Uttaraayana-Dakshinaayana transition days of Surya Deva’s directional changes. The Vaanaprastha Prajas are also required to perform homa karyas with the purodasa cakes and boiled karus prepared by their own hands of fresh grains of Vasanta or Sharad ritu crops and the remains after the homa kriyas be eaten by themselves as tempered with salt. They should otherwise eat the vegetables, roots and fruits as also the dried fruits and oil extracts but avoiding madya-maamsas and banned fruits like bhurina-shighruka-sleshmaankas as also honey. During the month of Ashviyuja, one should discard stored food items or old clothes. The Vaanaprastha should only consume food cooked by fire or ripened as fruits duly emaciated by teeth or pulped or digestible or of grinding tools. *Naktam chaannam samashneeyadhivaa vaaahritya shaktitah, chaturthakaaliko vaa syaat syaad vaapyashtamakaalikah/ Chaandraayanavidhaanairvaa shuklakrisnecha vartayet, pakshaantayorvaapyashneeyaad yavaagum kvathitaam sakrit/* or food be consumed as nakta bhojana that is to refrain from eating as per one’s ability or take food either in the day or night, keep ‘upavaasa’ or fasting till the next night or the day there after till the fourth day.

Chaandraayana bhojana involves reducing the fistful food intakes from prathama to amaavasya and in the reverse way from prathama to purnima during krishna paksha and shukla paksha respectively. As an alternative, the Vaanaprasthas might always subsist on flowers, fruits and roots fallen on earth. Besides performing ‘trikaala snaanas’ or mornings-middays and evenings, a Vaanaprastha should practise ‘Panchagni saadhana’ or maintaining four fires around, besides Surya on the sky during greeshma

months; the rainy season under the open skies and in the hemannta ritu or of winter season wearing wet clothes to always sustain the rigours of austerities. At the time of ‘trikaala snaanas’ in mornings-middays and evenings, tarpanas to Devas and Pitru Devas be executed and possibly achieve higher levels of asceticism. In the quest for harshness and severity of one’s own body and psyche, the vaanaprastha might be seated in the midst of sacred fires around and within under open skies sans shelter, maintain silence and bare subsistence on meagre intakes of roots and fruits. *Etaashchaanyaashcha seveta deeksha viprovane vasan, vividhaashchau panishadeer aatmasansiddhaye shruteeh/ Rishibirbraahmanaishchaiva grihasthaireva sevitaah, vidyaatapo vivridhyartham shareerasya cha shuddhaye/* or even the aforementioned vannaprastha dharmas apart, Brahmanas who even otherwise practise accomplishment of ‘tadaatmya’ or union of Antaratma and Paramatma as was explained in the various Sacred Scriptures like Upanishads do constantly strive for and so do great Maharshis. Thus such exemplary Brahmanas are straight to walk in north easterly direction and always on the singular path of virtue, live on water and air, being totally self-controlled until the final body collapse but with total fulfillment with neither fear nor grief nor even attachment but of ‘sat plus nyaasa’ or of Interaction with Sanyasa literally at the final destination of bliss]

Sarga Fifty Two continued: *Tato vaikhaanasam margamaasthitah sahalakshmanah, vratamaadish-tavaan Raamah sahaayam gohamabraveet/* Then Rama along with Sita-Lakshmana assumed ‘Vaanaprastha marga’ and addressed Guha the Nishada King as the latter had meanwhile confirmed that the boat was ready right on the adjacent banks of the holy Ganga and that Rama along with Devi Sita and Lakshmana be ready for decent. Guha said: Purushasimha Rama! Do please hold the hand of Devi Sita and after her being seated then you could be seated comfortably. Rama then did so and asked Lakshmana to follow suit. Then Rama performed formal ‘Ganga Vandana’ and signalled that the boat be moved out.

[An interesting version about the boatsman as nominated by Nishada King Guha states he desired to be he be allowed to wash Rama’s feet as his limited income as a boatman he would not afford any more boats nor many wives to support. Rama smiled looking at Sita devi and remained silent. The boatsman continued: Sir! I have heard that the dust from your feet touched a stone and turned into a woman. My boat is made of several pieces of wood and if the dust of your feet fell on my boat, then the boat might not turn into several women. It would not be possible for me to maintain a huge family. That is why I am requesting to wash the feet and make it dust free before you step into the boat. Rama smiled at his pure and innocent faith recalling the incident of Ahalya having been cursed as a stone by Gautama Maharshi. After washing the feet the boatman placed his hands on earth and asked Rama to place the first step on his hand before stepping into the boat. As soon as they alighted from the boat, Devi Sita immediately withdrew a ring from her finger and handed it over to Rama, signaling to him to pass it on to the boatman. The latter refused as people of the same profession should not charge each other for their services; like a barber or washerman. A barber never takes payment, when he gives a haircut to another barber. Even a washer-man never charges a fellow washer-man. Similarly I ferry Ganges and you ferry ‘Bhava Sagara’!]

Sarga’s stanza 83 continued: As the boat had caught on momentum and speed, then Devi Sita made an appeal to Devi Ganga: *putro dasarathasyāyam mahārājasya dhīmataḥ, nideśam pālayatv enaṁ gaṅge tvadabhirakṣitaḥ/ caturdaśa hi varṣāṇi samagrāṇy uṣya kānane, bhrātrā saha mayā caiva punaḥ pratyāgamiṣyati/ tatas tvām devi subhage kṣemeṇa punar āgatā, yakṣye pramuditā gaṅge sarvakāma samṛddhaye/* Mother Ganga! Rama the son of King Dasharatha of Ikshvaku lineage is passing through your sacred river by obeying the instruction of his father for ‘vana vaasa’ for fourteen long years along with his younger brother. May we seek your blessings for our safe return. Mother! You have the distinctive glory of your forceful flows in Akasha-Bhu-Patalas as three loka gaamini, from Brahma Loka to finally merge into the Samudra Raja. As and when we conclude our ‘yatra’, we will once again invoke

your blessings, with heads and hands down with our prostrations. We seek your kindness for our safe return and as a gesture of our gratitude, we would like to perform ‘daana karyas’ at the famed temples at the tirthas on way back in praise of your glory!’. As Devi Sita had been making appeals to and promises for their safe return, the boat travel concluded successfully and she along with Rama Lakshmanas came out of the boat in the safe company of Rama Maha bhakta Guha the King of Nishadaas. Then Shri Rama addressed Lakshmana to be ready with alertness as they would have to enter the density of the forest ahead and that the safety of Sita should be paramount; he said that as Lakshmana would lead the way, he as accompanied by Sita be followed. He said: *Na hi taavadatikraantaasukaaraa kaachana kriyaa, adya dukkham tu vaidehee vanavaasasya pravekshyati/* We are now going to enter such a real forest where no human being could ever dare; this is such a dense forest with steep ups and downs requiring attention step by step. Then as they had carefully crossed that stretch of danger with steep ups and falls with vicious thorns and crawling poisonous reptiles with no sign of a pathway, reached ‘Vatsa desha’ and of ‘Prayaga’ its capital. This place was rich in crops and of well fed persons of strong physique and Rama Sita Lakshmanas reached a huge tree under which Rama duely performed his evening austerities even as Devi Sita was playing with deers, wild pigs and the like; Lakshmana got busy with the dinner arrangement of ‘kandamoola phalas’ for their dinner followed by night’s rest.

[Vishleshana on Prayaga: *Prayaga (Allhabad)*: Maha Padma Purana eulozises Prayaga in Uttara Khanda as follows: *Jahnavi Ravisutaa Parameshthiputri Sinndhutrayaabharana Tirthavara Prayaga, Sarvesha maamanugrahaana nayaswa chordhwamantastamo dashavidham dalaya swadhaamnaa/* (Prayaga Tirtha Raja which wears the ornament of three Unique Rivers of Ganga from Vishnu paada-Yamuna the daughter of Surya-Saraswati the daughter of Brahma! Sarveswara! Be very kind to me and lift my stature and demolish the ten folded ‘Avidyaandhakara’ or the Darkness of Ignorance and enlighten me into knowledge of brilliance!) *Vaageesha Vishnaveesha Purandaraadyaah Paapapranaashaaya Vidaam Vidopi, Bhajanti yatteerama neelam sa Tirtha raajo jayati prayaagah/* (Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! You are so illustrious that Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva- Indraadi Devas as also Rishi-Maharshis vie with each other to rejoice the Pure White and Blue waters of three Maha Nadis converging together!) *Kaalindajaa sangamavaapya yatra pratyagataa swargadhuni dhuneti, Adhyaatma taapatrayam janasya sa TeerthaRaajo jayati Prayagaha/* (Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! Manushyas on accomplishing the Sangama of Ganga- Kalindini-Yamuna witness themselves the complete destruction of ‘Tapatrayas’ viz. Adhyatmika or Issues of Psychological and Mental nature, Adhi daivika or God made problems and Adhibhoutika or of physical ailments !) Padma Purana further states: Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha! You assume bright blue colour and its varying shades which indeed do pacify human beings from the cyclical tribulations of deaths and births. Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! Brahma and all the Devatas do frequently take reprieve from their own duties only to enjoy your comforting diversion and even Yama dharma Raja too sometimes frees himself from wielding his ever whipping ‘danda’ just to refresh and rejuvenate himself with the tranquility of the Sangama Raja. Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! Those persons who dive and bathe in this Sangama of three illustrious Rivers viz. ‘Brahminaputri Tripatha-striveni’ would reap the ‘Akshata Yaga Phala’ and make way to Brahma Loka! *Lokaanaam akshamanaa –naam Makhakritushu Kalou Swargakaamair japastutyaaadi shtotrairvachobhiih kathamamarapada prapti chintaaturaanaam/ Agnishtomaashwamedha pramukhamara phalam samyagaalocchhya saanga Brahmaadyaisteertha rajobhimatada upadishtoyameva Prayagah/* (In Kaliyuga, human beings no doubt are desirous of attaining Swarga but are unable to execute Yajna-Yaagaas but could resort to Japa-Stuti-Stotra-Paatha and the like; at same time they are desirous of achieving Ashwamedhaadi Yajna phala too;

so Brahma and Devatas thought over and materialised Prayaga Tirtha Raja to achieve the similar phala by merely but sincerely observe the bathing regulations and secure Salvation). *Grahaanancha yathaa Suryo Nakshatraanaa yathaa Shashi, Tirthaanaamuttamam tirtham Prayagaasyamanuttamam/* (Just as among the Grahas Surya is the outstanding and among the Stars the Moon, Prayaga indeed the the Unique among the Tirthas) *Prayage tu Naro yastu Maagha snaanam karoti cha, Na tasya phala samkhyasti shrunu Devarshi sattama/* (Those who perform Maagha Snana at Prayaga, they have no measure of Phala sampatti!) To know about the further ‘mahima’ or Unique significance of Prayaga, one might refer to Matsya, Kurma, Agni Maha Puranas also! The very fact that there is a Sangam of three Maha Nadis lends the credential of Prayaga to be the King of Tirthas in Bharat. As there are three distinct river flows have their confluence, this Tirtha rightly designated as Triveni distinguishes itself as Agni Swarupa or of Yajna Vedi; the intermediate region of Ganga-Yamuna is of ‘Garhapatyagni’; where as the region beyond Ganga viz. Pratishtanpur-Jhansi is of ‘Ahavaniyaagni’ and the Region beyond Yamuna ie. Alarkapura and Araila is to be considered as ‘Dakshinaagni’. Hence those who decide to stay at Prayaga for three nights representing the Three Rivers signified as three types of Agni, would derive the benefit of three Sacred Rivers and three forms of Agni! There is a Magha month celebration at Prayaga and those visiting the Maha Tirtha are in this month are designated as Kalpa Vasis! Several such Kalpavasi Yatris residing at the Triveni Sangama make it a point to reside here during Soura Maasa Makara Samkranti upto Kumbha Sankranti and as per Chandramaana stay right up to the end of Maagha Month. Now every twelve years there is a Maha Kumbha at Prayaga when Brihaspati is in Vrishabha Raasi and Surya is in Makara Raasi; every such six years, Ardha Kumbha is observed and then again there is a srtong arrival of yatris and a big Mela is organised at Prayaga. Duties at Prayaga: Yatris to Prayaga Tirtha are expected to observe Upavasa or fasting, Japa, Daana, and worship. ‘Mundan’ is a normal duty for males and widows whereas for married women, ‘Veni daana’ or cutting of long head hair edges duly tied together smeared with Mangala Dravyas like turmeric powder and scented sindura powder are to be slashed with scissors and the hair pieces so cut along with recitation of Mantras blessing long marital life with longevity of husbands; there after ‘Mangala Snanas’ or Sacred and auspicious bathings are performed again with Mantra recitals while leaving the discarded pieces of their hair edges so slashed formally to the flows of Holy Triveni Sangam. The concerned husbands who would have already bathed earlier should once again perform three dips in the flow by holding the shoulders of their wives. There after at the designated Sangama Sthala where the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna waters of brightness and blueish hues and distinct temperatures of coldness and mild warmth-with Saraswati as the under current, puja is to be performed with three dips again possibly or if travelling by boat, by sprinkling of the Sacred Sangam flows on heads. Pinda Puja/ Tarpana and Pinda daana in favour of Pitru Devas would be the next duty to be observed on banks of Prayaga Sangam. Main Devasthaanas at Prayaga: *Trivenim Madhavam Somam Bharadwaajam cha Vaasukim, Vandekshaya vatam Shesham Prayagam Tirtha naamakam/* (Triveni, Bindumadhava, Someshwara, Vaasuki naaga, Akshya Vata, and Sesha Naaga or Baladeva are the principal Tirthas worthy of including in the Prayaga Yatra itinerary. Veni Madhava is a renowned Vaishnava Peetha nearby Triveni Sangama adjacent to Akshaya Vata. This Bindu Madha in water form comprises twelve Madhavas viz. Shankha Madhava, Chakra Madghava, Gada Madhava, Padma Madhava, Ananta Madhava, Bindu Madhava, Manohara Madhava, Asi Madhava, Sankashtahara Madhava, Adi Venu Mahava, Adi Madhava, Shri Veni Madhava; these Madhavas are either Murtis, or Sacred Rocks or of Jala Swarupa Sthanas. Akshaya Vata is near Patalapura Cave as a dry tree bush on Yamuna River bank where several Murtis are on display like Annapurna, Maha Lakshmi, Gauri Ganesha, Bala Mukund, Maha Deva, Saraswati, Vishnu, Nrisimha, Rama Sita Lakshmana Hanuman etc. Besides

these, the other Mandirs are Mankemeshwar Mandir of Shiva and Somanatha reachable by boat, Bindu Madhava already mentioned, Naga Vasuki and Bala Deva or Shesha Mandir, Shiva Kuti or Koti Tirtha, Bharadwaja Ashrama, all on Ganga Banks. Lalitha Devi Mandira as mentioned in ‘Tantra Chudamani’ is one of the Shakti Peethas at Prayaga where Devi Sati’s right hand finger fell following her mortal body parts slicing off by Vishnu Chakra and Devi’s name is called Alopi Devi. Prayag’s Antarvedi Parikrama is stated to take a couple of days commencing from Triveni sangama Snaana and Bindu Madhava worship followed by Yamuna bank’s Paapa vimochana Tirtha, Parashurama Tirtha, Govardhana Tirtha, Pischacha mochana Tirtha, Manah Kameshwara Tirtha, Kapila Tirtha, Indreshwara Shiva, Takshaka Kunda, Takshakeshwara Shiva, Kaaliya hrada, Chakra Tirtha, Sindhu Sagara Tirtha near Kakaraghaat, and on the road to Pandava Kupa, Varuna Kupa in Gadhayi Sarai, Kashyapa Tirtha, Dravyeshwara nadha Shiva, Surya Kunda and so on. There after, Hanumam darshana and Triveni Snaana would terminate the Antarvedi Parikrama. Bahir Vedi Parikrama is stated to be taken up about ten days but after this one has to undertake Antar vedi parikrama too. Kurma Purana details an account of Prayaga Mahatmya by narrating of Yudhishtara’s remorse and anguish on the conclusion of the Kurukshetra Battle where not only Kaurava cousins but even Bhishma, Karna his own elder brother, several uncles, Gurus and associates were killed; as he desired to perform ‘Prayaschitta’ or formal atonement/ expiation the Vedic way, Maharshi Markandeya suggested Prayaga Titha darshana and penance., since this Kshetra was protected against Evils by some sixty thousand bows and arrows in favour of Ganga and Sabita Deva riding seven horses protected River Yamuna, while Devi Saraswati flowing under ground has the protection of Brahma himself; Indra and Devas kept constant vigil, Vishnu is ever protective and Maha Deva resides on the Vata Vriksha / banyan tree on the banks of the Sangama. The Purana is quoted: *Prayaagaam smaranaamasya sarvamaayaati sankshamam, Darshanaat tasya Tirthasya mnaamasamkirtinaadapi, Mrittikaa labhanaad vaapi Narah paapaat pramuchyate/* (The very thought of Prayaga would suffice to destroy sins; Prayaga darshana and naama samkirtana or even the touch of Prayaga sand would evaporate all sins). Along with the banks of Yamuna and Ganga are countless Tirthas each of which has a description; Kurma Purana highlights Yamuna’s southern side two Maha Nagas Kambal and Ashwatara who were great devotees of Parama Shiva stayed at that Tirtha and Snaanas there would ward off ‘sarpa badha’ forever. Another Tirtha named ‘Hamsa prapatana’ near Pratishtaanapura and the belief is that Apsara landed there by Hamsa/ Swan and bathing there enriches beauty of body and heart; Koti Tirtha bathing and possibly death is stated to ensure Swarga nivasa for crores of years. On Ganga’s eastern side is Sarva Samudra Gahvara or Cave and stay there for three days and nights observing fast and celibacy and mental control performing meditation would fetch Ashwamedha Yagna phala. Sangama snaana in Maagha month for three days ensures enormous material fulfillment and at the termination of life the assured passage to higher Lokas. Those who could perform ‘karishagni seva’ or tapasya within a circles of flames of dried cow dung on the banks of the Sangama Place would bestow and preserve diseaseless body and physical fitness. Yet another Tirtha on the northern side of River Yamuna ensures Runa Vimochana or freedom from indebtedness.]

Sarga Fifty Three

As Rama asks Lakshmana to return back to Ayodhya at least now but Lakshmana protests

Sa tam vṛkṣaṁ samāsādyā saṁdhyāṁ anvāsya paścimāṁ, rāmo ramayatām śreṣṭha iti hovāca lakṣmaṇam/ adyeyaṁ prathamā rātrir yātā janapadād bahiḥ, yā sumantreṇa rahitā tām notkaṅṭhitum arhasi/ jāgartavyam atandribhyāṁ adya prabhṛti rātriṣu, yogakṣemo hi sītāyā vartate lakṣmaṇāvayoh/

rātrim katham cid evemām saumitre vartayāmahe, upāvartāmahe bhūmāv āstūrya svayam ārjitaiḥ/ sa tu samviśya medinyām mahārhaśayanocitaḥ, imāḥ saumitraye rāmo vyājahāra kathāḥ śubhāḥ/ dhruvam adya mahārājo duḥkham svapiti lakṣmaṇa, kṛtakāmā tu kaikeyī tuṣṭā bhavitum arhati/ sā hi devī mahārājam kaikeyī rājyakāraṇāt, api na cyāvayet prāṇān dṛṣṭvā bharatam āgatam/ anāthas caiva vṛddhas ca mayā caiva vinākṛtaḥ, kim kariṣyati kāmātmā kaikeyyā vaśam āgataḥ/ idaṁ vyasanam ālokyā rājñas ca mativibhramam, kāma evārdhadharmābhyām garīyān iti me matiḥ/ ko hy avidvān api pumān pramadāyāḥ kṛte tyajet, chandānuvartinam putram tāto mām iva lakṣmaṇa/ sukhī bata sabhāryas ca bharataḥ kekayīsutaḥ, muditān kosalān eko yo bhokṣyaty adhirājavat/ sa hi sarvasya rājyasya mukham ekaṁ bhaviṣyati, tāte ca vayasātīte mayi cāraṇyam āsrite/ arthadharmau parityajya yaḥ kāmam anuvartate, evam āpadyate kṣiprām rājā daśaratho yathā/ manye daśarathāntāya mama pravrajānāya ca, kaikeyī saumya samprāptā rājyāya bharatasya ca/ apīdānīm na kaikeyī saubhāgyamadamoḥitā, kausalyām ca sumitrām ca samprabādheta matkṛte/ mā sma matkāraṇād devī sumitrā duḥkham āvaset, ayodhyām ita eva tvam kāle praviśa lakṣmaṇa/ aham eko gamiṣyāmi sītayā saha daṇḍakān, anāthāyā hi nāthas tvam kausalyāyā bhaviṣyasi/ kṣudrakarmā hi kaikeyī dveṣād anyāyāyā ācāret, paridadyā hi dharmajñe bharate mama mātaram/ nūnaṁ jātyantare kasmim striyaḥ putrair viyojitāḥ, jananyā mama saumitre tad apy etad upasthitam/ mayā hi cirapuṣṭena duḥkhasamvardhiteṇa ca, viprāyujyata kausalyā phalakāle dhig astu mām/ mā sma sīmantiṇī kā cij janayet putram īdṛśam, saumitre yo 'ham ambāyā dadmi śokam anantakam/ manye prītivīśiṣṭā sā matto lakṣmaṇasārikā, yasyās tac chrūyate vākyam śuka pādama arer daśa/ śocantyās cālpabhāgyāyā na kim cid upakurvātā, purtreṇa kim aputrāyā mayā kāryam arimāda/ alpabhāgyā hi me mātā kausalyā rahitā mayā, śete paramaduḥkhārtā patitā śokasāgare/ eko hy aham ayodhyām ca pṛthivīm cāpi lakṣmaṇa, tareyam iṣubhiḥ krudhho nanu vīryam akāraṇam/ adharmabhaya bhūtas ca paralokasya cānagha, tena lakṣmaṇa nādyāham ātmānam abhiṣecaye/ etad anyac ca karuṇam vilapyā vijane bahu, āsrupūrnamukho rāmo niśi tūṣṇīm upāviśat/ vilapyoparataṁ rāmaṁ gatārciṣam ivānalam, samudram iva nirvegam āśvāsāyata lakṣmaṇaḥ/ dhruvam adya purī rāma ayodhyā yudhinām vara, niṣprabhā tvayi niṣkrānte gatacandrea śarvarī/ naitad aupayikaṁ rāma yad idaṁ paritapyase, viṣādayasi sītām ca mām caiva puruṣarṣabha/ na ca sītā tvayā hīnā na cāham api rāghava, muhūrtam api jīvāvo jalān matsyāv ivoddhṛtau/ na hi tātam na śatrughnam na sumitrām paramātpa, draṣṭum iccheyam adyāham svargaṁ vāpi tvayā vinā/ sa lakṣmaṇasyottama puṣkalaṁ vaco; niśāmya caivam vanavāsam ādarāt, samāḥ samastā vidadhe paramātpaḥ; prapadya dharmam sucirāya rāghavaḥ/

As the night had fallen, Rama alerted Lakshmana that this night even being on the outskirts of a city, especially as Sumantra also not being present, we ought to be careful of safeguarding Devi Sita. Hence they should sleep on a line with Rama in between. Then Rama further commenced conversation: Lakshmana! By now our father should be sleeping with heavy heart and Kaikeyi should be feeling happy and contented. But would the arrival of Bharata at Ayodhya not dishearten the father! Unfortunately, the King is helpless without support, is truly lonely, and is under the full control of Devi Kaikeyi. I should therefore feel that more than of 'dharma' and 'artha', the King is more obsessed with 'kaama' only. Lakshmana! I keep pondering about the manner in which I had been sacrificed as had been readily carried out by me, just for obliging a woman, is all due to him! Bharata is doubly fortunate as the son of an assertive mother of this kingdom as well as the proxy queen of Koshala desha too. Father is too old for administration and I have been driven away too, and as such Bharata is most fortunate. Be there a King ever in the books of history that by ignoring the other 'purusharthas', only 'kaama' being the most dominant one in which the old King has become a victim! Lakshmana! I am now getting more and more convinced that Devi Kaikeyi was born and ushered into the queenship of Ayodhya only to drive me away with 'vana vaasa' and usher in Bharata into kingship. Lakshmana! Instead of getting into this vortex of vana vaasa by me, I would sincerely urge that you should return to Ayodhya at the morning tomorrow and look after the mothers even now for their safeguard. My great concern now is that Devi Kaikeyi might harm our mothers or atleast not proactively treat them well. I can and should be able to safeguard Sita surely myself. Lakshmana! I am getting more and more concerned about the certainty of Kaikeyi acting against the interests of our mothers; she might poison the mothers or eliminate them out of hatred and

jealousy. I am unfortunately getting concerned that my mothers might have acted with impatience or even impertinence with other women in their earlier lives by forcing them to get deserted from their sons likewise.! It is shameful that all along our mothers had looked after us this far yet we are unable to repay their trust when they need it most in their older ages. Sumitra nandana! May not hereafter any unlucky mother like of mine give birth to men of hard luck as I provide no solace but heartbreaking sorrow to her! Lakshmana! I do admit that my mother is head over wheels concerned of my welfare by each of my steps, but at the same time would also nag me a lot by even saying: ‘ you fool! May you eat off the foot fingers of your enemies!’ Then I smile about her innocent and deep attachment for me!’ Lakshmana! It is my misfortune that I have given her deep sorrow and never of any solace; fie! On the uselessness of my life for her being my son! Imaginably now she should be lying down after endless and heart shattering cryings of helplessness for my sake! Lakshmana! Some times I feel that I should vindicate my right with assertion by taking over not only Ayodhya but the entire bhu loka even but then cool down my anger by realising that a human being’s physical might obviously water down by the celestial powers of ‘dharma’ and ‘praarabdha’! *Adharma bhayabheetascha paralokasya chaanagha, tena Lakshmana naadyaahamaamaat-maanabhishechate/* Lakshmana! I am obviously controlled my the shackles of ‘dharma’ and hence disabled to assume the Rajyaabhisheka!’ Likewise, Shri Rama let all his internal and humanlike emotions erupt over suddenly as in the case of pentup and controlled ‘agni jwaalaas’ flaring up. Ther after, Rama sat through long hours of the night due to restlessness and extraordinary self-control. Lakshmana having sensed the seriousness of the situation, remarked that the night by Ayodhya should be moon less on the sky at that time! Then Lakshmana remarked: ‘ This should not behove of a Purusha simha of Rama’s stature, especially by according resounds in the heart of Devi Sita! Further, without them I should be a fish out of water! Furthermore, I would feel shattered if Rama were not there, then I should wish to vision my father-mother-brothers-and all the rest only in Swarga Loka!’ Ther after, Rama Sitas lied down for the night on a grass bed made by Lakshmana.

Sarga Fifty Four

Ramas reach Bharadvaja ashram and the Maharshi advises them to settle at Chitrakoota mountain

Te tu tasmin mahāvṛkṣa uṣitvā rajanīm śivām, vimale ’bhyudite sūrye tasmād deśāt prasthire/ yatra bhāgīrathī gaṅgā yamunām abhivartate, jagmus tam deśam uddīśya vigāhya sumahad vanam/ te bhūmim āgān vividhān deśāms cāpi manoramān, adṛṣṭapūrvān paśyantat tatra tatra yaśasvinaḥ/ yathākṣemeṇa gacchan sa paśyaṃs ca vividhān drumān, nivṛttamātre divase rāmaḥ saumitrim abravīt/ prayāgam abhitaḥ paśya saumitre dhūmam unnatam, agner bhagavataḥ ketuḥ manye saṃnihito muniḥ/ nūnam prāptāḥ sma sambhedam gaṅgāyamunayor vayam, tathā hi śrūyate śambdo vāriṇā vāriḡhaṭṭitaḥ/ dārūṇi paribhinnāni vanaḡair upajīvbhīḡ, bharadvājāśrame caite dṛśyante vividhā drumāḡ/ dhanvinau tau sukham gatvā lambamāne divākare, gaṅgāyamunayoḡ saṃdhau prāpatur nilayaṃ muneḡ/ rāmas tv āśramam āsādya trāsayan mṛḡapakṣiṇaḡ, gatvā muhūrtam adhvānam bharadvājam upāgamat/ tatas tv āśramam āsādya muner darśanakāṅkṣiṇau, sītayānugatau vīrau dūrād evāvatasthatuḡ/ hutāḡnihotram dṛṣṭvaiva mahābhāgam kṛtāṅjalīḡ, rāmaḡ saumitriṇā sārđham sītayā cābhyavādayat/ Nyavedayata cātmānam tasmai lakṣmaṇapūrvajaḡ, putrau daśarathasyāvām bhagavan rāmalakṣmaṇau/ bhāryā mameyaṃ vaidehī kalyāṇī janakātmajā, mām cānuyātā vijanam tapovanam aninditā/ pitrā pravrajyamānam mām saumitriḡ anujaḡ priyaḡ, ayam anvagamad bhrātā vanam eva dṛḡdhavrataḡ/ pitrā niyuktā bhagavan praveśyāmas tapovanam, dharmam evācarīśyāmas tatra mūlaphalāśanāḡ/ tasya tadvacanam śrutvā rājaputrasya dhīmataḡ, upānayata dharmātmā gām arghyam udakam tataḡ/ mṛḡapakṣibhir āsīno munibhīś ca samantataḡ, rāmam āgatam abhyarcya svāgatenāha tam muniḡ/ pratigṛhya ca tām arcām upaviṣtam sarāḡhavam, bharadvājo ’bravīd vākyam dharmayuktam idam tadā/ cirasya khalu kākutstha paśyāmi tvām ihāgatam, śrutam tava mayā cedam vivāsanam akāraṇam/ avakāśo vivikto ’yam mahānadyoḡ samāgame, puṇyaś ca ramaṇīyaś ca vasatv iha bhagān sukham/ evam ukta tu vacanam bharadvājena rāḡhavaḡ, pratyuvāca śubham vākyam rāmaḡ sarvahite rataḡ/ bhagavann ita āsannaḡ pauraṇapado janaḡ, āgamiśyati vaidehīm mām cāpi prekṣako janaḡ, anena kāraṇenāham iha

vāsam na rocaye/ ekānte paśya bhagavann āsramasthānam uttamam, ramate yatra vaidehī sukhārhā janakātmajā/ etac chrutvā śubham vākyam bharadvājo mahāmuniḥ, rāghavasya tato vākyam artha grāhakaṃ abravīt/ daśakrośa itas tāta girir yasmin nivatsyasi, maharṣisevitaḥ puṇyaḥ sarvataḥ sukha darśanaḥ/ golāṅgūlānucarito vānararṣṇiṣevitaḥ, citrakūṭa iti khyāto gandhamādanasaṃnibhaḥ/ yāvatā citra kūṭasya naraḥ śṛṅgāṇy avekṣate, kalyāṇāni samādhatte na pāpe kurute manaḥ/ ṛṣayas tatra bahavo vihr̥tya śaradām śatam, tapasā divam ārūḍhāḥ kapālaśirasā saha/ praviviktam ahaṃ manye taṃ vāsam bhavataḥ sukham, iha vā vanavāsāya vasa rāma mayā saha/ sa rāmaṃ sarvakāmais taṃ bharadvājāḥ priyātithim, sabhāryaṃ saha ca bhrātrā pratijagrāha dharmavit/ tasya prayāge rāmasya taṃ maharṣim upeyuṣaḥ, prapannā rajanī puṇyā citrāḥ kathayataḥ kathāḥ/ prabhātāyām rajanyām tu bharadvājam upāgamat, uvāca naraśārdūlo munim jvalitatejasam/ śarvarīm bhavanann adya satyaśīla tavāśrame, uṣitāḥ smeha vasatim anujānātu no bhavan/ rātryām tu tasyām vyuṣṭāyām bharadvājo 'bravīd idam, madhumūlaphalopetaṃ citrakūṭam vrajeti ha/ tatra kuṅjarayūthāni mṛgayūthāni cābhitaḥ, vicaranti vanānteṣu tāni drakṣyasi rāghava/ prahr̥ṣṭakoyaṣṭikakokilasvanair; vināditam taṃ vasudhādharām śivam, mṛgaiś ca mattair bahubhiś ca kuṅjaraiḥ; suramyam āsādyā samāvasāśramam/

Having thus spent under the huge tree through the night , Sita Rama Lakshmanas proceeded from the banks of Triveni Sangama into the wild forests. Having gradually passed through the areas which are seldom accessible by witnessing the Nature's multi faceted manifestations, stopping over at times out of fatigue or for eating the fruits and roots, Rama addressed Lakshmana by sensing smokes of fire on the lower skies as the tree trunks and dried up leaves were burnt whether Bharadwaja Maharshi ashram was nearby. As it indeed was the Ashram and in its vicinity the disciples of the Maharshi who noted the dhanurdhara heros clad in deer skins along with a young woman too. On informing of their arrival, the 'sishtyas' informed the Maharshi who by his 'ashta siddhis' realised the background of Rama along with ita Lakshmanas.

[Brahmrshi Bharadwaja, the famed Pravara Rishi next only to Angeerasa-Barhaspatya-Bharadvaja as the initiators of Gotras. Born of Deva Brihaspati himself, his timeless Scriptures include Bharadvaja Samhita, Charaka Samhita]

Having been duly welcomed, Maharshi Bharadwaja blessed the 'atithis' who had prostrated to the Maharshi before being seated. Shri Rama explained that both of the were the sons of King Dasharatha and Devi Sita was his 'dharmapatni' being the daughter of King Janaka. Rama said further that as per his father's directive, the three some would enter the forests and on way had arrived at the ashram. Maharshi extended all possible 'atithi satkaraas' He then stated: *cirasya khalu kākutsṭha paśyāmi tvām ihāgatam, śrutam tava mayā cedam vivāsanam akāraṇam/ avakāśo vivikto 'yam mahānadyoḥ samāgame, puṇyaś ca ramaṇīyaś ca vasatv iha bhagān sukham/ 'Kakustha kula bhushana Shri Rama! I have been awaiting your arrival for long at this ashram and am happy. I was informed that you had been suddenly instructed to proceed for 'vana vaasa' without justification. This place is an ideal place as the 'sangama' of the most revered Rivers of Ganga and Yamuna. This ashram as an ideal place for your stay here most comfortably. I should heartily recommend for your peaceful stay'. Rama replied: Mahatma! This place is too near from the villages of this kingdom and there would be considerable flow of public to see and talk to us and as such would not be appropriate for our stay here. We request you to suggest another distant place which should not be easily accessible for visitors. daśakrośa itas tāta girir yasmin nivatsyasi, maharṣisevitaḥ puṇyaḥ sarvataḥ sukha darśanaḥ/ golāṅgūlānucarito vānararṣṇiṣevitaḥ, citrakūṭa iti khyāto gandhamādanasaṃnibhaḥ/ yāvatā citra kūṭasya naraḥ śṛṅgāṇy avekṣate, kalyāṇāni samādhatte na pāpe kurute manaḥ/ ṛṣayas tatra bahavo vihr̥tya śaradām śatam, tapasā divam ārūḍhāḥ kapālaśirasā saha/ praviviktam ahaṃ manye taṃ vāsam bhavataḥ sukham, iha vā vanavāsāya vasa rāma mayā saha/ Rama!* Some distance away [about an estimated 80 miles away] from Prayaga to Chitrakuta should be an ideal place as several Rishis too reside having made their ashramas there. No doubt there would be countless 'langura-vanaraas' or big sized apes and monkeys in the vicinity of the 'muni-ashramaas' and like the picturesque 'Gandhamaadana Mountains'. On reaching there and witnessing the 'shikharas' and the picturesque valley views one should secure spontaneous inside motivation never to part with and even

remote traces of sinfulness get extinct. That is the place for Rishis stay, congregate, and practice yajnas, swadhayas, and reverberations of veda pathanas in groups of Vidyarthi Muni Kumaras. Rama! I am most convinced that ought to be the most ideal place for your stay, lest you might stay back in my ashram itself!' Thus the Maharshi having described the most ideal place for Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas, the Maharshi extended hospitality of the night and asserted: *Naanaa naganopetah kinnarogara sevatah, mayura naadaabhirato gaja raaja nishevatah, gamyataam bhavataa shalschitrakutah sa vishrutah/ Rama!* I should strongly recommend the well famed Chitrakuta mountain range wild with greenery, kinnara-sarpas, peacock sounds galore, replete with elephant groups and in all the most picturesque ever! Maharshi further asserted: This view of the range of mountains is not only readily enchanting but also replete with purity of place-heart-and soul as you should readily feel the grandeur of Nature as never before by all of you three, with the murmurings of river Mandakni, mountain tops, caves, endless water streams. The variety of visual paradise with the music birds in the background be such as Devi Sita should most certainly enjoy as a life time experience when years get shortened as days and nights! Rama! Therefore, go and enjoy in the sweet company of Sita Devi and the fool-proof protection of Mahaveera Lakshmana!

Vishleshana on Chitra koota: Most significant fact is that Lord Shri Ram along with Devi Sita and brother Lakshman spent years together at this 'Tapobhumi' or Meditation Land of Sanctity- where Maharshi Atri and his illustrious follower Munis stayed too- during his forest life as per his father Dasharatha's wish. Chitrakoot means the 'Hill of many wonders'. Chitrakoot falls in the northern Vindhya Mountain range. Chitrakoot Parvat Mala includes Kamad Giri, Hanumaan Dhara, Janki Kund, Lakshman pahari, and Devangana famous Religious mountains. It was in these deep forests that Shri Rama-Devi Sita and Lakshmana spent a few months of their fourteen years of exile. Renowned Sages like Atri-Anasuya- and Vaalmiki did their tapasyas. Shri Rama was stated to have performed his father's obsequies during his exile period. Valmiki speaks of Chitrakoot as an eminently holy place inhabited by the great sages, abounding in monkeys, bears and various other kinds of fauna and flora. Both the Maharshis Bharadwaja and Vaalmiki paid outstanding tributes to Chitrakoota as one of the most picturesque places of dharma and satkarma. And so did Kalidasa and Tulasi Das in later times. its this bewitching impact of this place. At Chitrakut, the parikrama or circumambulation of Kamadagiri /mountain and Shri Rama Darshan are the significant tasks. The parikrama is to take some five days of some 30 km. Starting from Raghava Prayaga 'snana' at Sitapur- Koti Tirtha, Sita Devi's Kichen, Hanuman Dhara-Keshavaghar, Pramodavana, Janaki kund, Sirasa vana, Spkatika shila, Anasuya- Gupta Godavari snana, Kailasa Parvata darshana- and from Chabepura to Bharat kupa and Rama Shayya or Rama's bed. On way in the Parikrama occur Mukharavinda where snana is of importance followed by temples of Hanuma, Saakshi Gopala, Lakshmi Narayana, Shri Ramas sthaana, Tulasidasa nivasa, Kaikeyi and Bharata Mandirs, Charana Paduka Mandir. There are three most hallowed 'Charana Chinha' or foot prints of Lord Shri Rama viz. Charana Paduka or His footwear prints, Janaki kunda and 'Sphatika shaala'. The specific Spot where Bharata met Rama for the first time and the molten stone of Rama's footprint is visible still. Among other hallowed Places nearby Charana Paduka are Lakshman Hill and Lakshman Mandir, Janaki Kund, Anasuya-Atri Ashram, Gupta Godavari and so on. Nearby Chitra kut are Ganesha Kund, Valmiki Ashram, Viradha Kunda, Sharabhanga Ashram, Sutikshan Ashram and Rama Vana.

Sarga Fifty Five

Ramas cross Yamuna from Prayaga- Sita prays to Yamuna- their overnight stay at otherside of Yamuna

Uṣitvā rajanīm tatra rājaputrāv arimdamau, maharṣim abhivādyātha jagmatus taṁ girim prati/ Teshāam svasyayanam caiva Maharṣiḥ sa cha kaara ha, prasthitaan prekshya taamschaiva pitaa putraanivou - rasaan/ tataḥ pracakrame vaktum vacanaṁ sa mahāmuniḥ, Bharadwājō maha tejaa Raamam satya paraakraam/ athāsādyā tu kālindīm śīghrasrotasamāpagām, tatra yūyam plavam kṛtvā taratāmśumatīm nadīm/ tato nyagrodham āsādyā mahāntam haritacchadam, vivṛddham bahubhir vṛkṣaiḥ śyāmam

siddhopasevitam/ krośamātraṁ tato gatvā nīlaṁ drakṣyatha kānanam, palāsabadarīmiśraṁ rāma vaśīśaiś ca yāmunaiḥ/ sa panthāś citrakūṭasya gataḥ subahuśo mayā, rāmyo mārḍavayuktaś ca vanadāvair vivarjitaḥ, iti panthānam āvedya maharṣiḥ sa nyavartata/ upāvṛtte munau tasmin rāmo lakṣmaṇam abravīt, kṛtapuṇyāḥ sma saumitre munir yan no 'nukampate/ iti tau puruṣavyāghrau mantrayitvā manasvinau, sītām evāgrataḥ kṛtvā kālindīm jagmatur nadīm/ tau kāṣṭhasamghātam atho cakratuḥ sumahāplavam, cakāra lakṣmaṇaś chittvā sītāyāḥ sukhamānasaṁ/ tatra śriyam ivācintyām rāmo dāśarathiḥ priyām, īśatsaṁlajjamānām tām adhyāropayata plavam/ tataḥ plavenāmśumatīm śīghragām ūrmimālinīm, tīrajair bahubhir vṛkṣaiḥ saṁterur yamunām nadīm/ te tīrṇāḥ plavam utsṛjya prasthāya yamunāvanāt, śyāmaṁ nyagrodham āseduḥ sītalaṁ haritacchadam/ kausalyām caiva paśyeyām sumitrām ca yaśasvinīm, iti sītāñjalīm kṛtvā paryagachad vanaspatim/ krośamātraṁ tato gatvā bhrātarau rāmalakṣmaṇau, bahūn medhyān mṛgān hatvā ceratur yamunāvane/ vihrtya te barhiṇapūganādīte; śubhe vane vāraṇavānarāyute, samaṁ nadīvapram upetya saṁmataṁ; nivāsam ājagmur adīnadarśanaḥ/

Having rested night long, Rama Sita Lakshmanas got readied to leave for their journey onward for the Chitrakuta mountain range. Maharshi Bharadwaaja stated swasari vaachakaas r of auspicious statements and addressed Shri Rama: 'You all should reach the 'sangama' or the merger point of the Sacred Rivers of Ganga and Yamuna and proceed westward. As the swift currents of Ganga get reversed and as the flows of Yamuna gain speed you should follow the route from where Yamuna flows from and thus take to the northern direction forests where big sized trees normally fall down hit by the fast flows and that specific banks of the sangama is popularly called as 'Shyamavata'. In fact a number of Siddha Purushas are normally seated under the shades of trees on the banks. You either rest or proceed further for a distance of a few miles when you should find a place called Neela vana, with tall trees of Sallaki and Badari nomenclature. That precisely the way ahead to Chitrakuta mountains.' Maharshi Bharadwaaja stated that he had gone by that very route several times and that was soft for the eyes and the vision which despite being dense with tall and huge trees which were free from the forest fires. Then having sought to understand the instructions of the Maharshi, Rama Sita Lakshmanas touched the feet of the Maharshi repeatedly. On the way ahead, Rama exclaimed that the Maharshi had been extremely kind to them and that they had reaped ample 'punya' or fruits of some past deeds of virtue. So exchanging their words of good fortune, reached the banks of the 'sangama' of the holy rivers. Then the wondered as how to cross over the flows. Lakshman noticed several tree trunks fallen and dried up and scattered on the banks and created a kind of a wooden plank which floats in the water flows with bent and erected safety sides; he had also improvised a bench type of seating facility for Devi Sita . Further Lakshmana discovered some goat skin hangings having been found dried up further improvised as a floor covering and a seat cover for Deevi Sita to sit on. They first pulled up Devi Sita onto the floating wooden plank, while she was extremely self conscious and shyful of the onlookers on the banks but slowly got settled on the raised seat. Then she made prayers to the flows of the Sacred Yamuna River: '*Kaalimndiya madhyamaayataa Sita tvenaama vadati, swasti Devi taraani twaam paarayenme pativratam/ Yakshye twaam gosahasrena suraaghatashatena cha, swasti pratyaagate raame pureemikshvaaku paalitaam/* Devi Kaalindi! I am crossing your river by wooden platforms and we beseech you to safeguard and let us pass without any problem as my revered husband and brother in law are on a mission of prolonged vana vaasa. On our safe return after the vana vaasa to Ayodhya, I take a vow hereby to give away charities of thousand cows and several pujas to you and related devataas.' Meanwhile, the three some had safe journey across the Sacred Yamuna and were seated under the cool shadow of a 'maha vriksha'. She then prayed to the Maha Vriksha too while performing 'parikrama' around the tree to bless them to successfully complete the entire duration of their forest life and be able to receive the affectionate blessings from the parents-in-law. As Rama got ready to proceed, he asked Lakshmana to keep his arrows and bow ready ahead of them. Having passed considerable distance, they halted again for another night under another maha vriksha on yet another banks of the Sacred River with cool and breezy winds blew along.

Sarga Fifty Six

Ramas reach Chitrakoota-Maharshi Valmiki at ashram- latter teaches Lakshmana to build ‘Rama Kuteera’

Atha rātryām vyatītāyām avasuptam anantaram, prabodhayām āsa śanair lakṣmaṇam raghunandanam/ saumitre śṛṇu vanyānām valgu vyāharatām svanam, sampratiśhāmahe kālaḥ prasthānasya paramtapa/ a sa suptaḥ samaye bhrātrā lakṣmaṇaḥ pratibodhitaḥ, jahau nidrām ca tandrīm ca prasaktaḥ ca pathi śramam/ tata utthāya te sarve spr̥ṣṭvā nadyāḥ śivaḥ jalam, panthānam ṛṣinoddiṣṭam citrakūṭasya tam yayuḥ/ tataḥ samprasthitaḥ kāle rāmaḥ saumitriṇā saha, sītām kamalapatrākṣm idam vacanam abravīt/ ādīptān iva vaidehi sarvataḥ puspitān nagān, svaiḥ puṣpaiḥ kiṃśukān paśya mālinaḥ śīśirātyaye/ paśya bhallātākān phullān narair anupasevitān, phalapatirair avanatān nūnam śakṣyāmi jīvitum/ paśya dronapramāṇāni lambamānāni lakṣmaṇa, madhūni madhukārībhīḥ sambhṛtāni nage nage/ eṣa kroṣati natyūhas tam śikhī pratikūjati, ramaṇīye vanoddeṣe puṣpasamstarasamkaṭe/ mātāṃgayūthānusṛtam pakṣisamghānunādītam, citrakūṭam imam paśya pravṛddhaśikharam girim/tatas tau pādacāreṇa gacchantau saha sītayā, rāmyam āsedatuh śailam citrakūṭam manoramam/ tam tu parvatam āsādyā nānāpakṣigaṇāyutam, ayam vāso bhavet tāvad atra saumya ramemahi/ lakṣmaṇānaya dārūṇi dṛḍhāni ca varāṇi ca, kuruṣvāvasatham saumya vāse me 'bhiratam manaḥ/ tasya tadvacanam śrutvā saumitriḥ vividhān drumān, ājahāra tataś cakre parṇa śālām ariṃ dama/ śuśrūṣamāṇam ekāgram idam vacanam abravīt, aiṇeyam māmsam āhṛtya śālām yakṣyāmahe vayam/ sa lakṣmaṇaḥ kṛṣṇamṛgam hatvā medhyam patāpavān, atha cikṣepa saumitriḥ samiddhe jātavedasi/ tam tu pakvam samājñāya niṣṭaptam chinnaṣoṇitam, lakṣmaṇaḥ puruṣavyāghram atha rāghavam abravīt/ ayam kṛṣṇaḥ samāptāṅgaḥ śṛtaḥ kṛṣṇa mṛgo yathā, devatā devasamkāśa yajasva kuśalo hy asi/ rāmaḥ snātvā tu niyato guṇavān jāpyakovidāḥ, pāpasamśamanam rāmaś cakāra balim uttamam/ tām vṛkṣaparnac chadanām manojñām; yathāpradeśam sukṛtām nivātām, vāsāya sarve vivisuh sametāḥ; sabhām yathā deva gaṇāḥ sudharmām/ anekanānāmṛgapakṣisamkule; vicitrapuṣpastabalair drumair yute, vanottame vyālamṛgānunādite; tathā vijahruḥ susukham jīvendriyāḥ/ suramyam āsādyā tu citrakūṭam; nadīm ca tām mālyavatīm sutīrthām, nananda hr̥ṣṭo mṛgapakṣijustām; jahau ca duḥkham puravipravāsāt/

Having kept on guard till late hours well past midnight, Lakshmana was tired and as the early hours of the morning arrived, Rama woke up and softly told Lakshmana to wake up, take wash and pray as it was time to commence the journey. On the care free movement of the walk forwards, and with a view to fan out enthusiasm, Rama drew Devi Sita's attention to look at the palaasha vriksha and the fresh fruits of the ongoing Vasanta season. He said that since public could never reach these places, the trees were drooping with the heaviness of the fresh fruits. In his characteristic enthusiasm Rama addressed Lakshmana too to listen to the sweet singing of 'koels' and the hearty dances of peacocks with well spread wings of amazingly arresting uniformity of the colour patterns of brightness. All through the way, Rama was truly lost in the wilderness of nature, its colourful flowers, mind blowing singings of cuckoos, the hard collection of sweetness of flowers assiduously collected by the honey bees, and the repetitive sloganeerings of chataka birds. *Tatastou paada chaarena gacchatou saha Seetayaa, ranmymaasedattuh shailam Chitra kutam manoramam/* Along with Devi Sita, the Rama Lakshmana brothers hav had their extremely delightful 'pada yatra' and reached the chitrakoota . Rama was taken aback at scenic excellence of the surroundings and decided to stay back ther itself. He asked Lakshmana to settle there itself as the mounatains around were alluring with plenty of flowers and fruits and the persons settled there itself appear healthy and strong experiencing peaceful existence. *Munayascha mahatmaano vasantyasmin shilaaschaye, ayam vaaso bhavet taat vayamatra vasesahi/* Rama addressed Lakshmana that they should be settling there itself as this was the 'ashrama' of several Munis too. Thus having decided, Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas approached Maharshi Vaalmiki ashram and prostrated at his feet. Then Shri Rama introduced himself, Devi Sita and brother Lakshmana and provided a brief on the past events so far. Then in the course of conversation, Maharshi advised Lakshmana to cut and fetch tree trunks so that he could teach the methodology of constructing 'kuteeraas' or hutments for human living as per 'vaastu shanti and vaastu shastra'. Maharshi Vaalmiki suggested to uproot and pull up a Gajakanda, burn it half way,

perform puja to ‘adhishthaana vana devataas’, then at the ‘dhruva sangjna soumya muhurta’ initiate the installation of the ‘kuteera’, perform vaastu devata yajna. Maharshi further advised Rama as follows: *Ayam sarvah samastaangah shrutah krishnamrigo mayaa, Devataa Deva sankasha yajasva kushalohyasi/* Rama! This semi burnt gajakanda tree trunk is such as to set right all the physical parts; now perform the homa kaaryas to Vaastu Devatas, as you Rama! Are an expert in the ‘homa karyas’. Then Rama took his bath, followed the shoucha-santoshadi regulations, and after the mantra pathana -japas, then entered the ‘Parna Kuteera’ along with Devi Sita and brother Lakshmana formally right under the guidance of no less a Mahatma of Maharshi Valmiki’s stature! Then he executed Bali Vaishva Deva Karma, Rudra Yaaga and Vaishnava yaaga followed by ‘Vaastu Dosh Shanti’. Further, Shri Rama set up even in that miniature ‘kuteera’ the ‘vedi sthalas’ for ‘Ashta Dikpalakas’ viz: Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana; ‘Chaitya’ or Ganesha adi Devas in piled up form and ‘Aayatana’ or the resting places for eg. Vishnu-Shiva-Brahma. Thus this Sarga is concluded: *suramyam āsādyā tu citrakūṭam; nadīm ca tām mālyavatīm sutīrthām, nananda hr̥ṣṭo mṛgapakṣijūṣṭām; jahau ca duḥkham puravipravāsāt/* Chitrakoota mountain is a memorable place of unusual glory, what with ‘punya sthalas’ of tirtha sthaanas, ups and downs, river ghats, and Venerable River Mandakini replete with pashu-pashis of unimaginable variety. It is at that hallowed place that Shri Rama-Devi Sita-Lakshmanas spent their joyous life time experiences ever!

[Vishleshana on Vaastu Shastra from Matsya Purana:

Eighteen Rishis gave the Rules and Regulations of Vaastu Shastra to the posterity and these Rishis were: Bhrigu, Arti, Vasishtha, Vishwakarma, Maya, Nagnajit, Bhagavan Shankara, Indra, Kumara, Nandeswara, Shounaka, Garga, Vasudeva, Aniruddha, Shukra and Brihaspati. As regards, the knowledge of *Griha Nirmaana*, the results of initiating construction activity in various *MONTHS* are as follows: in Chaitra Month ‘Vyadhi’ or diseases are caused; in Vaisakha the Constructors gain cows and Ratnas; in Jeyshtha Month, death is indicated in the family; in Ashadha month construction helps gain of servants, Ratnas and ‘Pashus’ or domestic animals; in Shraavana Month there would be gain of servants; dangers and risks in Bhadrpada Month; construction in Aswin Month might lead to risk to wife; in Kartik Month there would be gain of Dhana- Dhanya or Money and Crops; in Margasirsha month there would be surplus of Bhojyas or Food Items; commencement of construction in the month of Pausha might lead to thefts and loss of materials; Construction in Magha Month there would be benefits but some fear or possibility of Fire and finally, activities of construction during Phalgun Month should yield gold, progeny and prosperity.

Initiating the Construction of Grihas / houses is considered the best in respect of the following *NAKSHATRAS OR STARS*: Ashvini, Rohini, Mula, the three Uttaraas, Mrigashira, Swati, Hasta, and Anuradha. As regards the *DAYS*, all the days of a week are good, *except Sundays and Tuesdays*. In regard to *YOGAS*, construction should not start on the following yogas viz. Vyaaghat, Shula, Vyatipaat, Atiganda, Vishkambha, Ganda, Parigha and Vajra. Following *MUHURTAS* are stated to be ideal for construction viz. Sweta, Maitra, Maahendra, Gaandhawa, Abhijit, Rouhini, Vairaja, and Savitri. To decide on the *SHUBHA LAGNA*, the activity of construction should be commenced when the Chandra bala as also Suryabala would be equally positive. The most important activities apart, ‘Stambharohana’ or the hoisting of the Pillar should be taken up first; similarly the procedures should be the same as in respect of the construction of Praasaads, wells and such mini water bodies.

SOIL TEST would be the foremost activity before the actual construction is taken up. Sweta (White), Lal (Red), Peeta (yellowish) and kaala (black) may be the ideal soils for the Four ‘Varnas’ of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra respectively. Taste-wise, the soil may be sweetish for Brahmanas, sour for Kshatriyas, ‘tiktha’ or bitter for Vaishyas and ‘Kasali’/ Kashaya / Pungent for Shudras. As a part of the soil quality test, saplings are to be planted and the best soil quality would yield the growth over three nights; medium growth over five nights and minimal growth over a week. The best soil obviously would give out the quickest yield.

By way of a diagram, the area meant for construction is drawn as a big square which is divided into nine squares while each square is further sub-divided into nine smaller squares, thus making a total of eighty one squares. Of these, thirty two Devatas are worshipped in as many sub-squares and thirteen Devatas from outside those sub squares, thus accounting for forty five squares. The names and the positioning of the respective Deities are: Shikhi, Parjanya, Jayant, Indra, Surya, Satya, Brusha, Antakisha, Vayu, Pusha, Vitatha, Brihatsakshatha, Yama, Gandharva, Bhring raaja, Mriga, Pitrugana, Daivarika, Sugreeva, Pushpadanta, Jalaadhusa, Asura, Sesa, Paapa, Roga, Ahi, Mukhya, Bhallata, Soma, Sarpa, Aditi and Diti; these thirty two Deities are Baahya Devatas. These Deities are to be worshipped in the four Dik-konas like Ishaana. Now, outside the Vaastu Chakra the following four Deities are to be worshipped viz. Aapa, Savitra, Jaya, and Rudra. In the middle nine squares, on the four sides of Brahma, eight Sadyha Devatas are to be positioned and these are Aryama, Savita, Viviswaan, Vibhudha -adhipa, Mitra, Raajayakshma, Prithvidhara, and Apavatsa. Apa, Apavatsa, Parjanya, Agni and Diti-these are of five Devataa varga to be worshipped in Agneya-kona. Further, twenty Devataas are positioned in two rows: Aryama, Viwaswaan, Mitra and Pritvidhara-these four are stationed on three sides of Brahma in three, three positions each. This is the Procedure of worship to all the relevant Deities.

The methodology of construction varies from one building to another such as Chatuhshaala, Trishaala; Dwishala etc. The Chatuh shaala is open from all four sides with gates /doors on all the sides, known as *Sarvatomukha* and is normally ideal for a Palace or a Temple. A building which has no door to the west is called *Nandyavarta*; without a door on the Southern side is called *Vardhamaana*; without a door on the Eastern side is called *Swastika*; and without an opening on the Northern side is *Ruchaka*. A King's Palace is ideally measured the hundred and eight hand-lengths, while that of a Prince has sixty six measures; a General's abode with sixty four measures; forty eight measures to forty eight measures; and thirty two for an ordinary citizen. As regards the 'Stambhas' (Pillar) in an ordinary house, its circumference is multiplied by nine times and the result must be the depth of the pillar underground; a four angled pillar is called 'Ruchak'; eight angled pillar is 'Vajra'; sixteen angled pillar is 'Dwi Vajra', thirty two angled pillar is 'Praleenak' and a pillar whose mid-region is round is called 'Vritra'. All the residential homes should be entered from the right side 'Pravesha Dwar'. Entry from the eastern side where Indra and Jayanta exist is the best; in the southern side 'dwara', it is said that Yamya and Vitatha are supposed to be ruling and is good too; on the western dwara, Varuna and Pushpadanta are prominent; Uttara dwar is governed by Bhallat and Sowmya and is quite propitious. But one should be careful of 'vedhas' or forced entries: for instance, such vedhas through side-lanes might result in 'Kulakshaya' or damage to the Vamsha; forced entry through trees might end up in mutual hatred of family members; vedha through mud would bring in sorrows; vedha through water ways would result in problems; vedha through pillars might end up through difficulties arising due to women. Entering from one house to another could end up in grief to the master of the house. A house which opens on its own might result in madness of a family member. Similarly, a house which gets closed on its own could end up in 'Kula naasha' / distress to the Kula. Entry through a very high door could lead to 'Raja bhaya' or difficulties on account of Authorities. If the door is too low, there could be 'Chora bhaya' or fear of thefts. A door just above another door could attract Yamaraja darshan. If a house with a main door of disproportionate size is built in the middle of a big road is made, the master of the house would not live for long. If the main door is smaller than the other doors of a house, that house might not have contentment and would be a constant abode of recurring predicaments. The rear portion of the house must be kept duly adorned with trees, foliage, pots and decoratives. The east of the house there should be 'Vata' vriksha; in the Southern side Udumbara tree and the western side Pippala Tree and Pluksha tree on the northern side. Nearby the house, trees with thorns and Ksheera Vrikshas or milk-yielding trees are not good. It would be propitious to grow trees like Pumnaga, Ashoka, Shami, Tilaka, Champa, Dadimi, Peepali, Draksha, Arjuna, Jambeera, Puga, Panasa, Ketaki, Malati, Kamala Chameli, Mallika, Coconut, Kela, Kadali and Patala as these Trees are signs of Lakshmi / prosperity. Houses are better not built in the extreme vicinity of temples, Dhurtas or mischievous elements, General Administration, Four-Lane Centers, since there might be causes for

irritation, fear and problems. Leaving ample space before, rear and sides of the building is a must. It would be advisable to have the southern part of the house elevated and such an abode is called a ‘Sampurna’ or complete from the Vaastu point of view and would thus bestow the best of advantages. To lay the ‘Adhara Shila’ (Foundation Stone) of a building, the Priest should determine the ‘Muhurat’, decorate the Stone with white cloth, lay ‘Nava Ratnas’ and Gold along with Nava Dhanyas or nine varieties of appropriate seeds and with the help of masons fix up the stone, and perform ‘puja’ to Ganapati, Vaastu Deva, Ishta Devata or the Family Deity with formal ‘Mantrocchaarana’, also perform ‘Havan’/ homa to Agni Deva with milk, ghee and honey: The relevant Havan Mantra is: *Vaastoshpatay Pratijaanee –hyasmaantswaavesho anameevo bhavaa nah, yat tvemahey prati tanno jupuswa sham no bhava dwipatdey sham chatushpadey/*

VAASTU YAGNA comprises: Sutrapath, Stambhaaropana or hoisting of the main Pillar, Dwara vamshocchraya, Griha Pravasha and Vaastu Shanti. Sutrapath takes place in the Ishana Disha and Stambhaaropana in Agneya kona. Vaastu Deva’s ‘Pada Chinhas’ or foot prints should be set up and the ‘Karta’ should do ‘pradakshinas’(circumambulation) around the foot-prints. It is stated that water with the powder of Munga, Ratna and Suvarna should be sprinkled while designing the ‘Pada-Chihnaas’. Incidentally, the signs of Vaastu should never be ash, lit up firesticks, nails, skins, horns, bones, and skull as some ill-informed persons tend to do so and such material would lead to distress, danger and difficulties. It is advisable that masons and other workers are present at the time of Griha Pravesh. *Ishaaney Devataagaaram tathaa Shaanti gruham bhavet, Mahaanasam thathaagney tatpaarswam chottarey jalam, Gruhasyopakaram sarvam Nairutye Sthaapaded Buddhah/ Bandhasthaanam bahih kuryaat snaana mandapameyvacha, Dhana Dhaanyam cha Vaayavye karmashaalaam tato bahih, Evam Vaastu viseshah syaad Ghruha bhatruh shubaavaham/* (To the Ishaana side of any house, the Devataagruha and Shantigriha must be set up; its kitchen must be in the Agneya kona; to the northern side the ‘Jala sthaan’ (Water reservoir); all the house materials be kept in the Nairuti kona; the place for keeping domestic animals like cows and buffalos as well as bathing rooms are better constructed outside the house; the storage place for Dhana-dhanya should be kept in the Vayavya kona; the ‘Karya shala’ or the Offices should be organised outside the residential place. This pattern of living would certainly assure excellent propitiousness and happiness to the entire family. At the ‘Griha Pravesh’ function (House Warming Time) approaches, Peace and Prosperity is ushered in as stated: *Krutwaagrato Dwija varaanatha Purnakumbham Dhadyakshataamala pushpa phalopa shobham/ Datwaa hiranyavasanaani tadaa Dwijebhyo, Maangalya Shaanti nilayaya gruham vishekthu/ Gruhoktahoma vidhaanaa Bali karma kuryat, Praasaada Vaastu shamaney cha vidharya uktah, Santarpayed vijavaraanatha bhakshya bhojyeh, Shuklaambarah Swabhavanam pravishet sa dhupam/*

(As the house is fully ready, the Head of the family should initiate the action of conducting ‘Mangala Shanti’ with a group of Brahmanas ahead along with a ‘Kalasha’/Vessel, full of Sweet Water, Curd, Akshatas, tender mango leaves, flowers, fruits and coconuts as also scented sandal water, agarbattis/ incense sticks and oil-wick lamps nicely lit and decorated, as Brahmanas recite Veda hymns and musical instruments are played, while entering the house at the appointed ‘Muhurta’. There after Griha praasaadas/ doors and other household items are purified for Vaastu Shaanti and Homa and Balidaana are performed. Brahmanas are treated with Bhojan and gifts of gold, vastras and dakshinas, where after relatives and friends are treated too with bhojan and gifts.)]

Sarga Fifty Seven

Sumantra reaches Ayodhya- ‘aarta naadaas’ by public and Dasharatha and queens

Kathayitvā suduhkhārtah sumantreṇa ciram saha, rāme dakṣiṇa kūlasthe jagāma svagṛham guhaḥ/ anujñātaḥ sumantro ’tha yojayitvā hayottamān, ayodhyām eva nagarīm prayayau gāḍhadurmanāḥ/ sa vanāni sugandhīni saritaś ca sarāmsi ca, paśyann atiyayau śīghram grāmāṇi nagarāṇi ca/ tataḥ sāyāhnasamaye ṛṭīye ’hani sārathiḥ, ayodhyām samanuprāpya nirānandām dadarśa ha/ sa sūnyām iva

niḥśabdām dṛṣṭvā paramadurmanāḥ, sumantraś cintayām āsa śokavegasamāhataḥ/ kaccin na sagajā sāsīvā sajanā sajanādhipā, rāma saṁtāpaduḥkhena dagdhā śokāgninā purī, iti cintāparaḥ sūtas tvaritaḥ praviveśa ha/ sumantram abhiyāntam tam śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ, kva rāma iti pṛcchantaḥ sūtam abhyadravan narāḥ/ teṣāṁ śaśaṁsa gaṅgāyām aham āpṛcchya rāghavam, anujñāto nivṛtto 'smi dhārmikeṇa mahātmanā/ te tīrṇā iti vijñāya bāṣpapurṇamukhā janāḥ, aho dhig iti niḥśvasya hā rāmeti ca cukruśuḥ/ śuśrāva ca vacas teṣāṁ vṛndaṁ vṛndaṁ ca tiṣṭhatām, hatāḥ sma khalu ye neha paśyāma iti rāghavam/ dānayaḥṅavivāheṣu samājeṣu mahatsu ca, na drakṣyāmaḥ punar jātu dhārmikaṁ rāmam antarā/ kiṁ samarthaṁ janasyāsyā kiṁ priyaṁ kiṁ sukhāvaham, iti rāmeṇa nagaram piṭṛvat paripālitaṁ vātāyanagatānām ca strīṇāṁ anvantarāpaṇam, rāmaśokābhīptānām śuśrāva paridevanam/ sa rājamārgamadhyena sumantraḥ pihitānanaḥ, yatra rājā daśarathas tad evopayayau gṛham/ so 'vatīrya rathāc chīghraṁ rājaveśma praviśya ca, kakṣyāḥ saptaḥbhīcākrāma mahājanasamākulāḥ/ tato daśarathastrīṇāṁ prāsādebhyas tatas tataḥ, rāmaśokābhīptānām mandaṁ śuśrāva jalpitaṁ/ saha rāmeṇa niryāto vinā rāmam ihāgataḥ, sūtaḥ kiṁ nāma kausalyām śocantīm prativakṣyati/ yathā ca manye durjīvam evaṁ na sukaram dhruvam, ācchidya putre niryāte kausalyā yatra jīvati/ satya rūpaṁ tu tadvākyam rājñāḥ strīṇāṁ niśāmayan, pradīptam iva śokena viveśa sahasā gṛham/ sa praviśyāṣṭamīm kakṣyām rājānam dīnam ātulam, putraśokaparidyūnam apaśyat pāṇḍare gṛhe/ abhigamya tam āśīnam narendram abhivādya ca, sumantro rāmavacanāṁ yathoktaṁ pratyavedayat/ sa tūṣṇīm eva tac chrutvā rājā vibhrānta cetanaḥ, mūrchito nyapatad bhūmau rāmaśokābhīpīḍitaḥ/ tato 'ntaḥpuram āviddham mūrchite pṛthivīpatau, uddhṛtya bāhū cukrośa ṅpatau patite kṣitau/ sumitrayā tu sahitā kausalyā patitam patim, utthāpayām āsa tadā vacanaṁ cedam abravīt/ imaṁ tasya mahābhāga dūtam duṣkarakārīnaḥ, vanavāsād anuprāptaṁ kasmān na pratibhāṣase/ adyemam anayaṁ kṛtvā vyapatrapasi rāghava, uttiṣṭha sukṛtaṁ te 'stu śoke na syāt sahāyatā deva yasyā bhayād rāmam nānupṛcchasi sārathim, neha tiṣṭhati kaikeyī viśrabdham pratibhāṣyatām/ sā tathokivā mahārājaṁ kausalyā śokalālasā, dharanyām nipapātāsu bāṣpaviplutabhāṣiṇī/ evaṁ vilapatīm dṛṣṭvā kausalyām patitām bhuvī, patim cāveksya tāḥ sarvāḥ sasvaram ruruduḥ striyaḥ/ tatas tam antaḥpuranādam utthitam; samīkṣya vṛddhās taruṇās ca mānavāḥ, striyaś ca sarvā ruruduḥ samantataḥ; puram tadāsīt punar eva saṁkulam/

As Sumantra who very much desired to stay back and accompany Rama-Sita- Lakshmanas too without returning to Ayodhya was some how reconciled as Rama had convincingly demanded him to return to Ayodhya. From Shringverapura on the second day evening on his return, he witnessd that the entire Ayodhya was lifeless and silent. He ruminated with melancholy and depression that no noise was heard, no activity on roads and markets, and along with men and women even cows, horses, and elephants were devoid of any presence; it appeared that right from the King to all the Beings in Ayodhya were apparently burnt off with silence as of a dead city! As Sumantra's chariot appeared at the outskirts, suddenly the news spread and thousands of the citizens ran towards the chariot shouting ' where is Rama now'! As the chariot slowed down somewhat, Sumantra replied: *teṣāṁ śaśaṁsa gaṅgāyām aham āpṛcchya rāghavam, anujñāto nivṛtto 'smi dhārmikeṇa mahātmanā te tīrṇā iti vijñāya bāṣpapurṇamukhā janāḥ, aho dhig iti niḥśvasya hā rāmeti ca cukruśuḥ/* 'Friends! I had gone upto the banks of Ganga along with Shri Raghunadha and the latter instructed me to return back to Ayodhya'. Then Sumantra broke out with loud cryings with gasping breathlessness shouting with his fists beating his chest: 'Ha Rama, Ha Rama' repeatedly.' Then having some what recovered, he murmured: 'Ha! We are all ruined and killed, we may not visualize him again! *dānayaḥṅavivāheṣu samājeṣu mahatsu ca, na drakṣyāmaḥ punar jātu dhārmikaṁ rāmam antarā/ kiṁ samarthaṁ janasyāsyā kiṁ priyaṁ kiṁ sukhāvaham, iti rāmeṇa nagaram piṭṛvat paripālitaṁ/* Have we to witness and perform all kinds of 'dharmaic' and social activities without Rama's presence ever! What kind of things and activities that we could perform hereafter without Rama's presence!' Thus Sumantra had haltingly let the horses move slowly having covered his face with dark cloth wrapped, drifted away towards the Raja Bhavan where King Dasharatha was lying like a 'living corpse'! Even as Sumantra descended the chariot, the womenfolk raised huge alarms and 'hahakaras' and chest beatings looking at each other; the noises became more and more thunderous with reverberations and King Dasharatha who had been thus far in semi-consciousness woke up agitatedly and having realised that Sumantra should have returned and thought as to which kind of explanation to offer to Devi

Kousalya! At the same time, Kousalya too having sensed the arrival of Sumantra felt within herself, that Sumantra should be thinking as to how Kousalya was still alive despite Rama having been pushed off to forests on the morning of his rajyabhisheka! It was at that moment of self appraisals of the King and the Prime Queen that Sumantra stepped in. He reported to the King about the details of his travel in great detail. Dasharadha heard what all Sumantra conveyed and at the end of the reportings, looked blank and fell down unconscious on earth even as the surrounding men and women raised huge alarms. . Then with the help of the co queen Devi Sumitra, Kousalya lifted the King to bed. Then as the King got slightly recovered, she addressed the King and said: ‘Maha Raja! Sumantra has returned now and why don’t you please ask him about Rama’s welfare! Are you feeling ashamed of what had happened! Are you not a Satyavaadi! If you cry, then do you not feel that your near and dears too would follow your example of ‘ yathaa Raja, tathaa praja’! Now , Devi Kaikeyi is not present; so you may fearlessly enquire about your son’s happenings.’ Having burst out with anguish, Devi Kousalya too fell unconscious and the entire womanhood screamed in high pitch and so did the totality of Ayodhya!

Sarga Fifty Eight

Sumantra conveys Shri Rama- Lakshmanas’s messages to the father and mothers

Pratyāśvasto yadā rājā mohāt pratyāgataḥ punaḥ, athājuhāva taṁ sūtaṁ rāmaṁvṛttāntakāraṇāḥ/ vṛddham paramasamtaptam navagraham iva dvipam, viniḥśvasantaṁ dhyāyantam asvastham iva kuñjaram/ rājā tu rajasā sūtaṁ dhvastāṅgam samupasthitam, āsru pūrṇamukhaṁ dīnam uvāca paramārtavat/ kva nu vatsyati dharmātmā vṛkṣamūlam upāśritaḥ, so ’tyantasukhitaḥ sūta kim aśiṣyati rāghavaḥ, bhūmi pālātmajo bhūmau śete katham anāthavat/ yaṁ yāntam anuyānti sma padāti rathakuñjarāḥ, sa vatsyati katham rāmo vijanaṁ vanam āśritaḥ/ vyālair mṛgair ācaritaṁ kṛṣṇasarpaniṣevitam, katham kumārau vaidēhyā sārḍham vanam upasthitau./ sukumāryā tapasvinyā sumantra saha sītayā, rājaputrau katham pādair avaruhya rathād gatau/ siddhārthaḥ khalu sūta tvaṁ yena dṛṣṭau mamātmajau, vanāntam praviśantau tāv āśvināv iva mandaram/ kim uvāca vaco rāmaḥ kim uvāca ca lakṣmaṇaḥ, sumantra vanam āśādyā kim uvāca ca maithilī, āsitaṁ śayitaṁ bhuktaṁ sūta rāmasya kīrtaya/ iti sūto narendreṇa coditaḥ sajjamānayā, uvāca vācā rājānaṁ sabāṣparirabdhyā/ abravīn mām mahārāja dharmam evānupālayan, aṅjalim rāghavaḥ kṛtvā śirasābhīprāṇamya ca/ sūta madvacanāt tasya tātasya viditātmanaḥ, śirasā vandaniyasya vandyau pādaḥ mahātmanaḥ/ sarvam antaḥpuraṁ vācyam sūta mad vacanāt tvayā, ārogyam aviśeṣeṇa yathārhaṁ cābhivādanam/ mātā ca mama kausalyā kuśalaṁ cābhivādanam, devī devasya pādaḥ ca devavat paripālaya/ bhārataḥ kuśalaṁ vācyo vācyo madvacanena ca, sarvāsv eva yathānyāyāṁ vṛttim vartasva mātṛṣu vaktavyāś ca mahābāhur ikṣvākukulanandanaḥ, pītarāṁ yauvarājyastho rājyastham anupālaya/ ity evam mām mahārāja bruvann eva mahāyāsāḥ, rāmo rājīvatāmrākṣo bhṛṣam āsrūṇy avartayat/ lakṣmaṇas tu susamkruddho niḥśvasan vākyam abravīt, kenāyam aparādhena rājaputro vivāsitaḥ/ yadi pravrajito rāmo lobhakāraṇakāritam, varadānanimittam vā sarvathā duṣkṛtaṁ kṛtam, rāmasya tu parityāge na hetum upalakṣaye/ asamīkṣya samārabdham viruddham buddhilāghavāt, janayiṣyati samkrośam rāghavasya vivāsanam/ aham tāvan mahārāje pītṛtvam nopalakṣaye, bhrātā bhartā ca bandhūś ca pitā ca mama rāghavaḥ/ sarvalokapriyam tyaktvā sarvalokahite ratam, sarvaloko ’nurajyeta katham tvānena karmaṇā/jānakī tu mahārāja niḥśvasantī tapasvinī, bhūtopahatacittēva viṣṭhitā vṛṣmṛtā sthitā/ adṛṣṭapūrvavyasanā rājaputrī yaśasvinī, tena duḥkhena rudatī naiva mām kim cid abravīt/ udvīkṣamāṇā bhartāraṁ mukhena pariśuṣyatā, mumoca sahasā bāṣpam mām prayāntam udīkṣya sā/ tathaiva rāmo ’śrumukhaḥ kṛtāñjaliḥ; sthito ’bhaval lakṣmaṇabāhupālitaḥ,tathaiva sītā rudatī tapasvinī; nirīkṣate rājarathaṁ tathaiva mām/

As King Dasharatha got fully recovered from his state of unconsciousness, he called for Sumantra and asked him as to what Rama gave as his parting message. At that time, the Suta Sumantra was full of dust and mud, with swollen eyes having cried all the way back and having prostrated to the King was unable to speak coherently. Then the King showered questions in a torrential manner asked: *kva nu vatsyati*

dharmātmā vṛkṣamūlam upāsṛitaḥ, so 'tyantasukhitaḥ sūta kim aśiṣyati rāghavaḥ, bhūmi pālātmajo bhūmau śete katham anāthavat/ yaṁ yāntam anuyānti sma padāti rathakuñjarāḥ, sa vatsyati katham rāmo vijanam vanam āsṛitaḥ/ Suta! How could Dharmatma Shri Rama could live under the shades of trees! He has been a pampered son all his life so far; what would be eating right now! Sumantra! He has never ever been subjected to any type of grief in his life, how is he able to bear this misery now! He is used to soft and princely cushions for sleep, how is he able to lie down on stoney and uneven bare earth! When ever he was to travel, soldiers were walking or riding by horses and elephants behind and ahead; now like an 'anaadha' walks on rocks and watery slushes in loneliness but for his wife and brother! vyālair mṛgair ācaritaṁ kṛṣṇasarpaniṣevitam, katham kumārau vaidehyā sāratham vanam upashitau,/ As poisonous cobras crawl and dangerous fierce lions and tigers move about freely, how could Rama survive along with Sita and Lakshmana walking barefooted. Sarathi! You are indeed fortunate to witness Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas entering and braving the fearful jungles as Ashvini Kumaras roam about Mandaraachala forests! kim uvāca vaco rāmaḥ kim uvāca ca lakṣmaṇaḥ, sumantra vanam āsāḍya kim uvāca ca maithilī, āsitaṁ śayitaṁ bhuktaṁ sūta rāmasya kīrtaya/ Sumantra! While parting from Rama and Sita, what was the message that the had given! Do please tell me the details of how Rama was seated, slept off, eaten and so on. If only you could provide me these finer details, I should feel like my ancestor King Yayati had slipped down from heaven into the company of 'satpurushas'; you would be like wise blessed to provide me the details of the daily-hourly-and even minute details of Rama. [Refer to Sarga Thirteen above] Subsequently, Sarathi Sumantra replied giving the parting messages of Rama to the King Dasharatha and his mother Devi Kousalya respectively. The message to the King first: 'Maha Raja! My earnest prostrations to you; on my behalf I am requesting Sumantra to stoop down and touch your feet. I seek your indulgence to very kindly convey our welfare to my respected mothers and to seek their blessings to us'. Further Maha Raja! Shri Rama addressed his dear mother Devi Kousalya as follows: ' Respected Mother! My sincere prostrations to you. I am safe and so are Sita-Lakshmanas who are also seeking to convey their respective 'paada abhivandanaas' to you. I am always fully conscious of 'dharma pari - paalana'. I request you to duly and dutifully perform agnihotra kaarya' and devata puja every day and faithfully serve Maharaja as your 'nitya devata' by performing his 'charana seva'. Futher by discarding your sense of superiority and seniority, I solicit your indulgence to treat my co-mothers especially Mother Kaikeyi. Do provide due recognition to Yuva Raja Bharata on his arrival back. Please appreciate the Raja Dharma and treat him accordingly. vaktavyaś ca mahābāhur ikṣvākukulanandanāḥ, pitaram yauvarājyastho rājyastham anupālaya/ Dear brother! I am sure that you would pay equal consideration for all the mothers. After your Yuva Rajaabhisheka, I am confident that you would uphold the outstanding reputation of Ikshvaku Vamsha as also take all precautions to ensure the good health of our dearest father. The King has become aged and of unsteady health and hence you may have to sincerely follow and abide by his administrative decisions without hurting his psyche. Yuva Raja Bharata! Kindly look after my dear mother well and accord proper treatment'. Having thus reported what all Shri Rama had stated, Sumantra stopped reporting. He said that at that time, Shri Rama who is well known for his self restraint broke down with tears rolling down his cheeks. Sumantra further continued the narration to the King: As Rama was crying away expressing Bharata's possible maltreatment to Devi Kousalya, brother Lakshmana took the offensive and shouted: ' Sumantra! Tell me as to which unpardonable sin that Rama had perpetrated to deserve banishment to dandakaranya for an excruciating fourteen years!! Raja Dashratha had got the instruction of Kaikeyi and at once without thinking even for a while the respected father took a far reaching and irrevocable decision to banish Rama. Lakshmana in his characteristic anger and anguish raised his tone: yadi pravrajito rāmo lobhakāraṇakāritam, varadānamittam vā sarvathā duṣkṛtam

kṛtam, rāmasya tu parityāge na hetum upalakṣaye/ asamīkṣya samārabdham viruddham buddhilāghavāt, janaiṣyati saṁkrośam rāghavasya vivāsanam/ Whether this act of highhandedness originated from Kaikeyi's avarice or the King's indecisive incompetence, I strongly feel with assertion that the act was a glaring sin! Whether this act of banishing Rama for jungle life was due to the King's incapacity or an act of God, but surely this is abhorable and disgusting. This action is a blatant violation of the established principles and having been perpetrated by a father is no father! As far as I am concerned, I do not have the truthful feeling of the King as a father, but indeed Rama is my brother, father figure, closest friend and my master!' While reporting to King Dasharatha in the presence of Devis Kousalya and Sumitra, Charioteer Sumantra also conveyed the reaction of Devi Sita too; Tapasvini and Maha Pativrata Janaka nandini at the time of his departure, she took long and elongated breathing and stood still; she was obviously moved by the physical and mental tortures of her husband as shared by her too, kept on weeping with her head down and suffering her fate. As Sumantra's chatiot moved on, she kept on staring into wilderness; Sumantra then out of desperation stated: 'May not this misfortune befall even to enemies and Rakshasaas'!

Sarga Fifty Nine

Condition of the Ayodhya public at the state of Ramas distresses Dashatratha extremely

Mama tv aśvā nivṛttasya na prāvartanta vartmani, uṣṇam aśru vimuñcanto rāme saṁprasthite vanam/ ubhābhyām rājaputrābhyām atha kṛtvāham ajñālim, prasthito ratham āsthāya tad duḥkham api dhārayan/ guheva sārddham tatraiva sthito 'smi divasān bahūn, āśayā yadi mām rāmaḥ punaḥ śabdāpayed iti/ viṣaye te mahārāja rāmayasanakarśitāḥ, api vṛkṣāḥ parimlānaḥ sapuṣpāṅkurakorakāḥ/ na ca sarpanti sattvāni vyālā na prasaranti ca, rāmasōkābhībhūtaṁ tan niṣkūjam abhavad vanam/ līnapuṣkarapatrās ca narendra kaluṣodakāḥ, saṁtaptapadmāḥ padminyō līnamīnavihaṁgamāḥ/ jalajāni ca puṣpāni mālyāni sthalajāni ca, nādyā bhānty alpaganadhīni phalāni ca yathā puram/ praviśantam ayodhyām mām na kaś cid abhinandati, narā rāmam apaśyanto niḥśvasanti muhur muhuḥ/ harmyair vimānaiḥ prāsādair avekṣya ratham āgatam, hāhākārakṛtā nāryo rāmādarśanakarśitāḥ/ āyatair vimalair netrair aśruvegapariplutaiḥ, anyonyam abhivīkṣante vyaktam ārtatarāḥ striyaḥ/ nāmītrāṇām na mītrāṇām udāsīnajanasya ca, aham ārtatayā kaṁ cid viśeṣam nopalakṣaye/ apraḥṣṭamanuṣyā ca dīnanāgaturāṁgamā, ārtasvaraparimlānā viniḥśvasitaniḥsvanā/ nirānandā mahārāja rāmapravṛjānātulā, kausalyā putra hīneva ayodhyā pratibhāti mā/ sūtasya vacanam śrutvā vācā paramadīnayā, bāṣpohatayā rājā taṁ sūtam idam abravīt/ kaikeyyā viniyuktena pāpābhijanabhāvayā, mayā na mantrakuśalair vṛddhaiḥ saha samarthitam/ na suhṛdbhir na cāmātyair mantrayitvā na naiḡamaiḥ mayāyam arthaḥ saṁmohāt strīthetoḥ sahasā kṛtaḥ/ bhavitavyatayā nūnam idam vā vyasanam mahat, kulasyāsyā vināśāya prāptam sūta yadṛcchayā/ sūta yady asti te kiṁ cin mayāpi sukṛtam kṛtam, tvaṁ prāpayāsu mām rāmam prāṇāḥ saṁtvarayanti mām/ yad yad yāpi mamaivājñā nivartayatu rāghavam, na śakṣyāmi vinā rāma muhūrtam api jīvitum/ atha vāpi mahābāhur gato dūram bhaviṣyati, mām eva ratham āropya śīghram rāmāya darśaya/ vṛttadamṣṭro maheṣvāsaḥ kvāsau lakṣmaṇapūrvajaḥ, yadi jīvāmi sādhy enam paśyeyam saha sītayā/ lohitaḥkṣam mahābāhum āmuktamaṇikuṇḍalam, rāmam yadi na paśyāmi gamiṣyāmi yamakṣayam/ ato nu kiṁ duḥkhataram yo 'ham ikṣvākunandanam, imām avasthām āpanno neha paśyāmi rāghavam/ hā rāma rāmānuja hā hā vaidehi tapasvinī, na mām jānīta duḥkhena mriyamānam anāthavat, dustaro jīvatā devi mayāyam śokasāgaraḥ/ aśobhanam yo 'ham ihādyā rāghavam; didṛkṣamāṇo na labhe salakṣmaṇam, itīva rājā vilapan mahāyaśāḥ; papāta tūrnam śayane sa mūrchitaḥ/ iti vilapati pārthive pranaṣṭe; karuṇataram dviguṇam ca rāmahetoḥ, vacanam anuṣītamā tasya devī; bhayam agamat punar eva rāmamātā/

Saaradhi Sumantra continued about his return from Sita-Rama-Lakshmanas as his eyes were overflowing with tears and the heart was aching with heaviness while he was greeting them with folded hands.. His concentration on the return path was weak replete with cryings aloud. He wondered whether without returning to Ayodhya, he could stay back with Guha Raja who guided Ramas in crossing Sacred Ganga by the boat. As perforce started the return journey, I witnessed that freshness of flowers was not noticed while the fruits on the trees were getting dried up. Waterbodies were looking dried up, animal groups were lying scattered without food and even snakes and other pisonous ceatures were lying on way without hissings and rapid runs. As rivers were not sparkling with fying fishes, the water birds were seated on dried up tree branches on the banks. Maha Raja!The green gardens of Ayodhya were looking dried up, as the chirruping birds were in hideouts. On the ever buzzing high roads with traffic snarls were empty and a few groups of men and women noticing Sumantra’s chariot empty were heaving long breathings with disppointment yet a few of them being inquisitive got surrounded. Even from distances, the load cryings and breast beatings of scattered groups of the public were audible. Sumantra continued his narration to King Dasharaatha: *aprahṛṣṭamanuṣyā ca dīnanāgaturamgamā, ārtasvaraparimlānā viniḥśvasitaniḥsvanā/ nirānandā mahārāja rāmapravṛāja- nātulā, kausalyā putra hīneva ayodhyā pratibhāti mā/* Maha Raja! The citizens of Ayodhya are totally listless and enervated. Even horses and elephants are inactive and lying in groups. They are just like Devi Kousalya looking blank and bleak.’ As Suta Sumantra concluded his narration, King Dasharatha raised his voice! *kaikeyyā viniyuktana pāpābhijanabhāvayā, mayā na mantrakuśalair vṛddhaiḥ saha samarthitam/ na suhṛdbhir na cāmātyair mantrayitvā na naigamaiḥ, mayāyam arthaḥ saṁmohāt strīhetoḥ sahasā kṛtaḥ/ bhavitavyatayā nūnam idam vā vyasanam mahat, kulasyāsya vināśāya prāptam sūta yadṛcchayā/* Suta Sumantra! I had myself brought about this tragedy at the evil advice of that evil woman Kaikeyi unilaterally, even without consulting the learned and experienced Gurus and well wishers.I am wholly responsible for this cruel act due to my infatuation for the heartless villainess ! Sumantra! This horrible and thoughtless decision of mine has happened irrevocably for the downfall and obliteration of this glorious empire! Can you now be kind enough to let me reach Rama at once as I donot think that I could survive without seeing him in person. May I entreat you to please do so at once as I might have to soon enough visit Yama loka without seeing him. Then Dasharadha cried out loudly: *hā rāma rāmānuja hā hā vaidehi tapasvinī, na mām jānīta duḥkhena mriyamānam anāthavat, dustaro jīvatā devi mayāyam śokasāgarah/* Ha Rama! Ha Lakshmana! Ha Videhararaja kumari tapasvini Sita! You have no idea as to how, I am dying for you as an ‘anaadha’ the truly helpless!’ As King Dasharatha was totally drowned with uninterrupted flood of grief likewise , he had once again got into unconsciousness as Devi Kousalya got terribly alarmed and started behaving rather wildly!

Sarga Sixty

Anguish and sufferance of Devi Kouasalya sought to be assuaged by Sumantra

Tato bhūtopasṛṣṭeva vepamānā punaḥ punaḥ, dharanyām gatasattveva kausalyā sūtam abravīt/ naya mām yatra kākutsthaḥ sītā yatra ca lakṣmaṇaḥ, tān vinā kṣaṇam apy atra jīvitum notsahe hy aham/ nivartaya ratham śīghram daṇḍakān naya mām api, atha tān nānugacchāmi gamiṣyāmi yamakṣayam/ bāṣpavegaupahatayā sa vācā sajjamānayā, idam āśvāsayan devīm sūtaḥ prāñjalir abravīt/ tyaja śokam ca moham ca sambhramam duḥkhajam tathā, vyavadhūya ca saṁtāpam vane vatsyati rāghavaḥ/ lakṣmaṇas cāpi rāmasya pādaḥ paricaran vane, ārādhayati dharmajñāḥ paralokam jitendriyaḥ/ vijane ’pi vane sītā vāsam prāpya grheṣv iva, visrambham labhate ’bhītā rāme saṁnyasta mānasā/ nāsyā dainyam kṛtam kim cit susūkṣmam api lakṣaye, uciteva pravāsānām vaidehī pratibhāti mā/ nagaropavanam gatvā yathā sma ramate purā, tathaiva ramate sītā nirjaneṣu vaneṣv api/ bāleva ramate sītā bālacandranibhānanā, rāmā rāme hy adīnātmā vijane ’pi vane satī/ tadgataḥ hṛdayam hy asyās tad adhīnam ca jīvitam, ayodhyāpi bhavet tasyā rāma hīnā tathā vanam/ pathi pṛcchati vaidehī grāmāmś ca nagarāni ca, gatim dṛṣtvā nadīnām ca pādapān vividhān api/ adhvanā vāta vegena sambhramenātapena ca, na hi gacchati vaidehyāś candrāmśusadrṣī prabhā/ sadṛśam śatapatrasya pūrṇacandropama -

prabham, vadanam tadvadānyāyā vaidehyā na vikampate/ alaktarasaraktābhāv alaktarasavarjītau, adyāpi caraṇau tasyāḥ padmakośasamaprabhau/ nūpurodghuṣṭahaheleva khelaṁ gacchati bhāminī, idānīm api vaidehī tadrāgā nyastabhūṣaṇā/ gajaṁ vā vīkṣya siṁhaṁ vā vyāghraṁ vā vanam āśritā, nāhārayati samrāsam bāhū rāmasya samśritā/ na śocyās te na cātmā te śocyo nāpi janādhipaḥ, idaṁ hi caritaṁ loke pratiṣṭhāsyati śāśvatam/ vidhūya śokaṁ pariḥṣṭamānasā; maharṣiyāte pathi suvyavasthitāḥ, vane ratā vanyaphalāśanāḥ pituḥ; śubhām pratijñām paripālayanti te/ tathāpi sūtena suyuktavādinā; nivāryamāṇā sutaśokakarśitā, na caiva devī virarāma kūjītāt; priyetei putretei ca rāghavetei ca/

Devi Kousalya became shaking severely as though with ‘bhuta aavesha’ or as if a devil entered into her psyche, and loudly instructed Sumantra: *naya mām yatra kākutsthaḥ sītā yatra ca lakṣmaṇaḥ, tān vinā kṣaṇam apy atra jīvitum notsahe hy aham/ nivartaya rathaṁ śīghraṁ daṇḍakān naya mām api, atha tān nānugacchāmi gamiṣyāmi yamakṣayam/* ‘Where ever Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas are, reach me atonce; if not, I should make my travel to Yama Loka!’ Sumantra got alarmed as Devi Kousalya was shouting, he replied in low voice: Maha Rani! Please do not get rattled up with shoka-moha-and dukkha ; Shri Rama would have comfortably settled down while Lakashmana and Devi Sita should be at his tranquil feet. Devi Sita should be performing puja to Rama by now with devotion and unshaken faith and that should why she must have been fearless. To my reckoning, she must have already got reconciled and even accustomed to the present situation. Do you not recall her frequent visits to nearby forests for fun, often all by herself! She must be by now playful with Rama like a carefree lass in that celestial company of hers! *tadgataṁ hṛdayaṁ hy asyās tad adhīnam ca jīvitam, ayodhyāpi bhavet tasyā rāma hīnā tathā vanam/* Devi Sita’s heart is replete with Rama and her very life is tied up firmly with him; be it Ayodhya or dense forests, it is just the same for her with Rama. I recall that on way to the forests, she was curious about each kind of tree, or flower of fruit as she is a true nature lover. She used to some times convey to Rama Lakshmanas that she liked to go alone in the garden -like- wildernesses with vegetation, wild fruits and roots nearby! I recall that Devi Sita had never commented about Kaikeyi’s highhandedness. On the other hand she was always expressing Devi Kousalya’s magnificence, her spontaneous reactions even against oddities and her generosity. Even her tiresomeness of long chariot rides with ups and downs on the way, the attacks of speedy currents of winds, the views of loathsome or frightening scenes on way, or the blazing severity of Sun, had not disturbed her as though she was always in the care of cool rays of Chandra! After all, she is under the constant care and vigil of Shri Rama, then why should be concerned of wild elephants, cruel tigers and lions! *na śocyās te na cātmā te śocyo nāpi janādhipaḥ, idaṁ hi caritaṁ loke pratiṣṭhāsyati śāśvatam/ vidhūya śokaṁ pariḥṣṭamānasā; maharṣiyāte pathi suvyavasthitāḥ, vane ratā vanyaphalāśanāḥ pituḥ; śubhām pratijñām paripālayanti te/* Therefore Maha Rani! Never ever cry for Rama Lakshmanas and least of all for me but do kindly concentrate on Maha Raja’s health and your well being. Be this known that Shri Rama divya charitra should be ever popular till mankind lasts.’ So saying Sumantra assuaged the shaken up self confidence of Devi Kousalya.

Sarga Sixty One

Kousalya’s crying protests against Dasharatha

Vanam gate dharmapare rāme ramayatām vare, kausalyā rudatī svārtā bhartāram idam abravīt/ yady apitriṣu lokeṣu prathitaṁ te mayad yaśaḥ, sānukrośo vadānyaś ca priyavādī ca rāghavaḥ/ katham naravaraśreṣṭha putrau tau saha sītayā, duḥkhitau sukhasamvṛddhau vane duḥkham sahiṣyataḥ/ sā nūnam taruṇī śyāmā sukumārī sukhocitā, katham uṣṇam ca śītam ca maithilī prasahiṣyate/ bhuktvāśanam viśālākṣī sūpadaṁśānvitam śubham, vanyam naivāram āhāram katham sītopabhokṣyate/ gītavādītranirghoṣam śrutvā śubham aninditā, katham kravyādasiṁhānām śabdaṁ śroṣyaty aśobhanam/ mahendradhvajasamkāśaḥ kva nu śete mahābhujāḥ, bhujam parighasamkāśam upadhāya mahābalaḥ/ padmavarṇam sukeśāntam padmaniḥśvāsam uttamam, kadā drakṣyāmi rāmasya vadanam puṣkarekṣaṇam/ vajrasāramayam nūnam hṛdayam me na samśayaḥ, apaśyantyā na tam yad vai phalaṭīdam sahasradhā/ yadi pañcadaśe varṣe rāghavaḥ punar eṣyati, jalyād rājyam ca kośam ca

bharatenopabhokṣyate/ evaṁ kanīyasā bhrātrā bhuktaṁ rājyaṁ viśāṁ pate, bhrātā jyeṣṭhā variṣṭhās ca kimarthaṁ nāvamaṁsyate/ na pareṇāhṛtaṁ bhakṣyaṁ vyāghraḥ khādītum icchati, evam eva naravyāghraḥ paralīdhaṁ na maṁsyate/ havir ājyaṁ purodāśāḥ kuśā yūpās ca khādirāḥ, naitāni yātayāmāni kurvanti punar adhware/ tathā hy āttam idaṁ rājyaṁ hṛtasārāṁ surāṁ iva, nābhimantum alāṁ rāmo naṣṭasomam ivādhvaram/ naivaṁvidham asatkāraṁ rāghavo marṣayiṣyati, balavān iva śārdūlo bāladher abhimaṛśanam/ sa tādrśaḥ śimhabalo vṛṣabhākṣo nararṣabhaḥ, svayam eva hataḥ pitrā jalajenātmaḥ yathā/ dvijāti carito dharmāḥ sāstradr̥ṣṭaḥ sanātanaḥ, yadi te dharmanirate tvayā putre vivāsite/ gatir evāk patir nāryā dvitīyā gatir ātmajaḥ, tṛtīyā jñātayo rājāś caturthī neha vidyate/ tatra tvaṁ caiva me nāsti rāmaś ca vanam āśritaḥ, na vanam gantum icchāmi sarvathā hi hatā tvayā/ hataṁ tvayā rājyaṁ idaṁ sarāṣṭraṁ; hataḥ tathātmā saha mantribhiś ca, hatā saputrāsmi hatās ca pauraḥ; sutaś ca bhāryā ca tava prahr̥ṣṭau/ imāṁ girāṁ dāruṇaśabdasaṁśritāṁ; niśamya rājāpi mumoha duḥkhiṭaḥ, tataḥ sa śokaṁ praviveśa pārthivaḥ; svaduṣkṛtaṁ cāpi punas tadāsmarat/

Having heard Saarathi Sumantra's detailed account on return from the entry point of the Deep forests and the ever hard life ahead of Sita Rama Lakshmanas, Devi Kousalya addressed King Dasharatha as follows: 'Maha Raja! As is well realised by Tri Lokas, you are the kindest, broad minded, soft spoken Dharmatma! But, you have not realised that your sons and daughter-in-law brought up with luxurious background would encounter unusual and unheard of difficulties of deep forest living. How had you ever imagined that a just married princess of some sixteen-eighteen years of Devi Sita could bear the extremities of scorching heat and freezing cold under the open skies! Devi Sita being of royal bakground is used to taste and leave away 'pancha bhaksha paramaannas' but now would have to bite dried up and semi cooked food out of sheer necessity! She is used to auspiciousness and objects of lavishness listening to soft and soothing musical notes around, but now would have to ear breaking roars of lions right before her! Maha Bali-Maha baahu Shri Rama was used to rest his broad shoulders, strong and tall hands on cushioned and well raised head rest but now sleep of like a wooden log due to extreme tiresomeness on bare earth full of dust. When indeed in my life time that I could vision his readily arresting countenance like an open lotus of freshness with his soft breathing of scented flowers and ever sparkling eyes and cool looks! My heart is made of steel and even without seeing him may it not break into smithereens and splintered pieces. I must have in my past life been apparently a cruel monster without mercy and that is why my consciousness keeps running to the deep forests! I am not convinced that even after the end of the prescribed 'vana vaasa', Bharata would not leave the treasury. Maha Raja! It is said that in the 'shraddha karmas', some house holders of selfishness tend to serve food to the near and dears of the family of the karta and then later on to the prescribed Brahmana atithis! But, the truly virtuous and learned vidvans refrain from consuming even drops of 'amrita' before serving to the 'athithi brahmanas'. At the same time, those brahmanas who finish off their bhojanas first do get up and walk away, the learned vidvans being unable to finish off soon seek to some how gulp out of shyness. The golden rule of 'panti bhojana' is to keep pace with the co-eaters. Further, an ox is not ready to part with the stick firmed up into the earth! *Evam kaneeyasaa bhraatraa bhuktaṁ raajyam vishaampate, bhraataa jyeshtho varishthascha kimarthaṁ naavamanyate/* Maha Raja! On this very analogy, how could the elder and most suitable brother is disallowed in favour of the younger, and how could the elder brother accept the 'ucchhistha'! Just as havishya, ghrita, purodasha, and kusha grass once utilised in one yagjna are never utilised in another yagjna, how indeed a kingdom ruled by the younger brother be accepted by the elder brother! Like wise again, is it possible to consume 'soma rasa' in one yagjna be consumed once again in another yagjna! Just as a powerful tiger's tail is not possible to hold by some one, then would the tiger not bear that insult! Could a person of Ramas's stature bear that insult either! *Naitasya sahita lokaa bhayam kuryur - mahaamrudhe, adharma tvahi dharmatmaa lokam dharmena yojayet/* Even if all the lokaas are united and wage a battle unitedly, Rama is unnerved facing them all; but in this way that the kingdom is taken away in grave injustice, then even he did not transgress the precincts of dharmas; after all, could a dharmatma

like Rama himself resort to adharma! Moreover, Maha parakrami Maha baahu Rama with his golden arrows could burn off maha samudra , like Samvartaka Agni Deva in the pralaya time could devastate the praana koti! Unfortunately however, Maha Veera Rama was devoured by his own father like a big fish devours its own small fish! Maha Raja! *Gatirekaa patirnaaryaa dviteeyaa gatiraatmajah, triteeyaa jnaatayo Raajanchaturthaa naiva vidyate/* It is said that the support for a woman is her husband, later her son, further the father’s brother or other relatives, and there beyond none at all.[Manu Smriti is quoted in this context: *Pitaarakshati Kaumare Bhartaa rakshati yuvane, Putrastu sthaavire bhaave na stree swaantrya marhati/ Sookshmebhyopi prasangebhyah striyo rakshyaa visheshatah, Dvayorhikulayoh shokamaavahed arakshitaah/ Imam hi sarva varnaanaam pashyanto dharmamuttamam/ Paanam durjana samsargah patyaacha virahotanam, Svapnonyageha vaasascha naaree sandushanaani shat/*(During the ‘Kaumara dasha’ before wedding, the father takes the responsibility, whereafter the husband and in old age the sons, thus a female is always protected though not independent! Even minute expressions might not offend a female and be safeguarded lest there might be unhappiness in either of the families of father and husband, and indeed a female plays a significant yet sensitive role of both the families and hence the need for her balancing act!) But unfortunately Maha Raja! *tatra tvam caiva me nāsti rāmas ca vanam āśritah, na vanam gantum icchāmi sarvathā hi hatā tvayā/ hataṁ tvayā rājyam idaṁ sarāṣṭraṁ; hataṁ tathātmā saha mantribhiṣ ca, hatā saputrāsmi hatāś ca paurāḥ; sutaś ca bhāryā ca tava prahr̥ṣṭav/* Among these supporting sources, you would not be counted since you are under the spell of Kaikeyi; now the second support line too is unavailable as you had already despatched him away to the forests and my other supports of ‘bandhu-bandhavas’ are too far off and thus am helpless and lonely; yet I can not go to forests, since stree dharma prescribes ‘pati seva’ and thus I am having to stay back without reaching my son, any way! My dear husband! Having sent off Rama to forests, you have not only ruined me, but also the high reputation of the Kingdom including the innocent ministers and the public too!’ Thus having attacked the King with sword like sharp words out of desperation, disgust and distress, Devi Kousalya fell down to earth unconsciously!

Sarga Sixty Two

Regretful Dasharatha with folded hands and prostrations seeks pardon from Kousalya

Evaṁ tu kruddhayā rājā rāmamātrā saśokayā, śrāvitaḥ parusaṁ vākyaṁ cintayām āsa duḥkhitah/ tasya cintayamānasya pratyabhāt karma duṣkṛtam, yad anena kṛtaṁ pūrvam ajñānāc chabdavedhinā/ amanās tena śokena rāmasokena ca prabhuḥ, dahyamānas tu śokābhyāṁ kausalyām āha bhūpatiḥ/ prasādaye tvām kausalye racito ’yam mayāñjalih, vatsalā cāṅśamsā ca tvam hi nityam pareṣv api/ bhartā tu khalu nārīṇām guṇavān nirguṇo ’pi vā, dharmam vimṣamānānām pratyakṣam devi daivatam/ sā tvam dharmaparā nityam dṛṣṭalokaparāvāra, nārhas vipriyam vaktum duḥkhitāpi suduḥkhitam/ tad vākyaṁ karuṇam rājñah śrutvā dīnasya bhāṣitam, kausalyā vyasṛjad bāṣpaṁ prañālīva navodakam/ sa mūdrhṇi baddhvā rudatī rājñah padmam ivāñjalim, sambhramād abravīt trastā tvaramāṅkṣaram vacaḥ/ prasīda śirasā yāce bhūmau nitatitāsmi te, yācitāsmi hatā deva hantavyāham na hi tvayā/ naisā hi sā strī bhavati ślāghanīyena dhīmatā, ubhayor lokayor vīra patyā yā samprasādyate/ jānāmi dharmam dharmajña tvam jāne satyavādinam, putraśokārtayā tat tu mayā kim api bhāṣitam/ śoko nāśayate dhairyam śoko nāśayate śrutam, śoko nāśayate sarvaṁ nāsti śokasamo ripuḥ/ śayam āpatitaḥ soḍhum praharo ripuhastataḥ, soḍhum āpatitaḥ śokaḥ susūkṣmo ’pi na śakyate/ vanavāsāya rāmasya pañcarātro ’dya gaṇyate, yaḥ śokahataharṣāyāḥ pañcavarṣopamo mama/ tam hi cintayamānāyāḥ śoko ’yam hṛdi vardhate adīnām iva vegena samudrasalilam mahat/ evam hi kathayantyās tu kausalyāyāḥ śubham vacaḥ, mandaraśmir abhūt

suryo rajanī cābhyavartata/ atha prahlādīto vākyair devyā kausalyayā nṛpaḥ, śokena ca samākrānto nidrāyā vaśam eyivān/

As Devi Kousalya spoke most harshly and fell unconsciously, King Dasharatha was stunned and shocked. He took long sighs and drew heavy breathings. Kousalya was lying beside him and he was afraid of even touching her to bring her back to senses. He started recalling and recounting the blunders that he committed. As Kousalya too regained senses, both of them kept on crying. He started shivering with shame and fear. Then with trembling tone he begged her with folded hands to become normal; he said that she had always excused the lapses of others and similarly she might pardon his blunders too with kindness as he being her husband. *Bhartā tu khalu nārīṇām guṇavān nirguṇo 'pi vā, dharmam vimṛśamānānām pratyakṣam devi daivatam/* Whether a husband is a characterless, hatred worthy and despicable human being, he is still deemed as a 'pratyaksha devata'. [A Sati Savitri defied Yama Dharma Raja into conviction and revived her husband's life from death! A **Sumati** who was an outstanding Pativrata adored a Leper husband and even prostrated before a woman whom her husband desired to sleep with!] 'Devi! You too are a 'dharma patni' and well versed with the ways of the world, and of human beings- to err is human and to forgive is divine!' As her husband had literally begged her pardon, Devi Kousalya had apparently reconciled with tears rained down without stop and stated: 'Deva! I am now lying down on earth and fallen at your feet; I beg you to please calm down; if you also ask for my pardon, then I am as good as dead. *Naiśā hi sā strī bhavati ślāghanīyena dhūmatā, ubhayor lokayor vīra patyā yā samprasādyate/ jānāmi dharmam dharmajña tvām jāne satyavādinam, putraśokārtayā tat tu mayā kim api bhāṣitam/* A husband is always a 'pratyaksha devata' indeed both in this world and elsewhere. He as a 'buddhimaan' of virtue tends to guide and convince his wife; lest the wife be found fault with. Maha Raja! I am aware of 'stree dharmas', especially in the context of being truthful. What all I have burst out was actually in the context of my 'putra shoka' or the extreme concern of my unique son; indeed I regret having expressed likewise. *Shoko nāśayate dhairyam śoko nāśayate śrutam, śoko nāśayate sarvaṁ nāsti śokasamo ripuḥ/* One's mental agony tends to kill its stability; that distress leads to black out 'shastra jnaana' or awareness of traditional values; indeed that grief of the worst enemy of the self! [Bhagavad Gita is quoted: *Dhaayato Vishayaan Pumsah sangasteshoopajaayate, sangaatsanjaayate kaamah kaamaat krodhobhi jaayate, sangaatsanjaayate kaamah kaamaat krodhobhijaayate/ krodhaadbhavati sammohah sammohat smriti vibhramah, smriti bhramshaah buddhi naashah buddhi naashaat pranashyati/* Every human being is subject to desires; if the desires are not fulfilled, there would be disappointment and eventual frustration; this further shapes up as anger which results in lack of the mental poise and imbalance.] *śayam āpatitaḥ soḍhum praharo ripuhastataḥ, soḍhum āpatitaḥ śokaḥ susūkṣmo 'pi na śakyate/* The sufferings of physical attacks by enemies are perhaps bearable, but what one's own destiny would have to be endured merely! As Shri Rama has left for 'vana vaasa' since five days by now, I have only able to keep counting; alas these five nights seem to be five long years! The intense thoughts of Rama's absence keep stepped up day by day as the force of the river flows is intensified before merging into the Great Oceans!'

As Devi Kousalya had cooled down somewhat against the background of attacking King Dashratha mercilessly. Indeed both Dasharatha and Kousalya were grievously agitated retrospectively and having been terribly tired slept off cryingly.

Sarga Sixty Three

Dasaratha's confession to Kousalya about his youthful blunder of killing a Muni Kumara

Pratibuddho muhur tena śokopahatacetanah, atha rājā daśarathaḥ sa cintām abhyapadyata/
rāmalakṣmaṇayoś caiva vivāsād vāsavopamam, āviveśopasargas taṁ tamaḥ sūryam ivāsuram/ sa rājā
rajanīm śaṣṭhīm rāme pravrajite vanam, ardharātre daśarathaḥ saṁsmaran duṣkṛtaṁ kṛtam, kausalyām
putraśokārtām idaṁ vacanam abravīt/ yad ācarati kalyāṇi śubham vā yadi vāsubham, tad eva labhate
bhadre kartā karmajam ātmanaḥ/ guru lāghavam arthānām ārambhe karmaṇām phalam, doṣam vā yo na jānāti
sa bāla iti hocyate/ kaś cid āmravaṇam chittvā palāśāṁś ca niṣiñcati, puṣpaṁ dṛṣṭvā phale
gṛdhnuḥ sa śocati phalāgame/ so 'ham āmravaṇam chittvā palāśāṁś ca nyaṣecayam, rāmaṁ phalāgame
tyaktvā paścāc chocāmi durmatih/ labdhaśabdena kausalye kumāreṇa dhanuṣmatā, kumārah
śabdavedhīti mayā pāpam idaṁ kṛtam/ tad idaṁ me 'nusaṁprāptaṁ devi duḥkham svayam kṛtam,
saṁmohād iha bālena yathā syād bhakṣitaṁ viṣam, evaṁ mamāpy avijñātaṁ śabdavedhyamayam
phalam/ devy anūdhā tvam abhavo yuvarājo bhavāmy aham, tataḥ prāvṛd anuprāptā madakāma -
vivardhinī/ upāsyahi rasān bhaumāṁś taptvā ca jagad aṁśubhiḥ, paretācaritām bhīmām ravir āviśate
diśam/ uṣṇam antardadhe sadyaḥ snigdhaḥ dadṛṣire ghanāḥ, tato jahṛṣire sarve bhekasāraṅgarhiṇaḥ/
patitenāmbhasā channaḥ patamānena cāsakṛt, ābabhau mattasāraṅgas toyarāśir ivācalaḥ/ tasminn
atisukhe kāle dhanuṣmān iṣumān rathī, vyāyāma kṛtasaṁkalpaḥ sarayūm anvagām nadīm/ nipāne
mahīṣam rātrau gajaṁ vābhyāgataṁ nadīm, anyam vā śvāpadaṁ kaṁ cij jighāmsur ajitendriyaḥ/
athāndhakāre tv aśrausaṁ jale kumbhasya paryataḥ, acakṣur viṣaye ghoṣam vāraṇasyeva nardataḥ/ tato
'ham śaram uddhṛtya dīptam āśviṣopamam, amuñcaṁ niṣitaṁ bāṇam aham āśviṣopamam/ tatra vāg
uṣasi vyaktā prādurāsīd vanaukasaḥ, hā heti patatas toye vāg abhūt tatra mānuṣī, katham asmavidhe
śastraṁ nipatet tu tapasvini/ praviviktām nadīm rātrāv udāhāro 'ham āgataḥ, iṣuṇābhihataḥ kena kasya
vā kim kṛtaṁ mayā/ ṛṣer hi nyasta daṇḍasya vane vanyena jīvataḥ, katham nu śastreṇa vadho
madvidhasya vidhīyate/ jaṭābhāradharasyaiva valkalājīnavāsasaḥ, ko vadhena mamārthī syāt kim
vāsyāpakṛtaṁ mayā/ evaṁ niṣphalam ārabdham kevalānarthasamhitam, na kaś cit sādhu manyeta
yathaiva gurortalpagam/ nemaṁ tathānuśocāmi jīvitakṣayam ātmanaḥ, mātaram pitarām cobhāv
anuśocāmi madvidhe/ tad etān mithunaṁ vṛddham cirakālabhṛtaṁ mayā, mayi pañcatvam āpanne kām
vṛttim vartayīṣyati/ vṛddhau ca mātāpitarāv aham caikeṣuṇā hataḥ, kena sma nihataḥ sarve
ubālenākṛtātmanā/ taṁ giram karuṇām śrutvā mama dharmānukāṅkṣiṇaḥ, karābhyām saśaram cāpaṁ
vyathitasyāpatad bhuvi/ taṁ deśam aham āgamya dīnasattvaḥ sudurmanāḥ, apaśyam iṣuṇā tīre sarayvās
tāpasaṁ hatam/ sa mām udvīkṣya netrābhyām trastam asvathacetasaṁ, ity uvāca vacaḥ krūrām
didhakṣann iva tejasā/ kim tavāpakṛtaṁ rājan vane nivasatā mayā, jihīṣur ambho gurvarthaṁ yad aham
tādītas tvayā/ ekena khalu bāṇena marmam abhigate mayi, dvāv andhau nihatau vṛddhau mātā janayitā
ca me/ tau nūnam durbalāv andhau matpratīkṣau pipāsitau, ciram āśākṛtām tṛṣṇām kaṣṭhām saṁdhārāyī -
ṣyataḥ/ na nūnam tapaso vāsti phalayogaḥ śrutasya vā, pitā yan mām na jānāti śayānam patitaṁ bhuvi/
jānann api ca kim kuryād aśaktir aparikramaḥ, bhidyamānam ivāśaktas trātum anyo nago nagam/ pitus
tvam eva me gatvā śīghram ācakṣva rāghava, na tvām anudahet kruddho vanaṁ vahnir ivaidhitaḥ/ iyam
ekapadī rājan yato me pitur āśramaḥ, taṁ prasādaya gatvā tvām na tvām sa kupitaḥ śapet/ viśalyam kuru
mām rājan marma me niṣitaḥ śaraḥ, ruṇaddhi mṛdu sotsedham tūram amburayo yathā/ na dvijātir aham
rājan mā bhūt te manaso vyathā, sūdrāyām asmi vaiśyena jāto janapadādhipa/ itīva vadataḥ kṛcchrad
bāṇābhihatamarmaṇaḥ, tasya tv ānamyamānasya taṁ bāṇam aham uddharam/ jalādragātraṁ tu vilapyā
kṛcchān; marmavraṇam saṁtatam ucchasantam, tataḥ sarayvām tam aham śayānam; samīkṣya bhadre
subhṛśam viṣaṇṇaḥ/

Raja Dasharatha who slept off after intense mutual grief along with Devi Koushalya, suddenly woke up
midnight with subdued thoughts of Rama who was just like Surya Deva got darkened by Rahu. Then he
initiated his thoughts of his erstwhile sins committed by him in the past. As Koushalya too woke up, then
he shared his memories and said: *yad ācarati kalyāṇi śubham vā yadi vāsubham, tad eva labhate bhadre
kartā karmajam ātmanaḥ/ guru lāghavam arthānām ārambhe karmaṇām phalam, doṣam vā yo na jānāti
sa bāla iti hocyate/* ‘Kalyani! Human beings are subjected to good and bad deeds in their respective lives.
The results of the ‘Sukha Dhukhaas’ are naturally recorded in what is named as ‘prarabdha’. As a deed
is initiated and its end results of pluses and minuses are not pondered about is a ‘murkha’ or an ignorant

person. In case a person having noticed in a garden the charming red flowers of Palaasha tree, imagining that its fruits must also be very tasty and thus plants in his garden, then he would be sadly disappointed since the fruits are full of gum the adhesive. *Avigjnyaya phalam yo hi karma tyevaanudhaavati, sa shochet phalavelaayaam yathaa kimshukasechakah/ so 'ham āmravaṇam chittvā palāśāmś ca nyasecayam, rāmaṁ phalāgame tyaktvā paścāc chocāmi durmatih/* Those who do not realise the repercussions of a deed get anxious to perform at once and reap the consequences like cut a mango tree and anticipate 'palaasha' flowers! Once upon a time in my youthfuldays as I was reputed as an excellent 'arrows man', I had committed a sinful blunder! Now, I am reaping the resultant act of viciousness. *tad idam me 'nusaṁprāptam devi duḥkham svayam kṛtam, saṁmohād iha bālena yathā syād bhakṣitam viṣam, evaṁ mamāpy avijñātam śabdavedhyamayam phalam/* Devi! My heinous deed of killing a 'muni kumara' by poisoned arrows due to sheer arrogant nonchalance is now rebounding me . I fact I had the self pride of learning 'shabdavedhi baana vidya' or the knowledge of releasing arrows on the basis of knowing distant sounds and that immaturity has now recoiled in Rama's aloofness from me.' King Dasharatha further continued his confessional recall of yet another tragic episode of his past life: 'Devi! When I was not wedded to you and was a Yuva Raja, I picked up my articles of archery and commenced riding my chariot for hunting animals even like lions or tigers. On entering a forest on the banks of River Sarayu, I was moving around a lot in search of animals till almost the dusk time. I felt thirsty and had a further ride till the river bed by which time it was dark; as I came up almost up to the river, there was the sound of a pot being filled in by the river water. But later realised that it perhaps was of an elephant drinking water by lifting its trunk up and down to reach its mouth. I desired to test my penchant for 'shabda vedhi vidya' again. I aimed at the precise place where the sound waves originated from and released a poisonous arrow. Almost simultaneously, there were the sounds of dropping big pots full of water and 'haahaakaras' of a humam being: *Iṣuṅābhihataḥ kena kasya vā kim kṛtam mayā/ ṛṣer hi nyasta daṇḍasya vane vanyena jīvataḥ, katham nu śastreṇa vadho madvidhasya vidhīyate/ jaṭābhāradharasyaiva valkalājīnavāsasaḥ, ko vadhena mamārthī syāt kim vāsyāpakṛtam mayā/ evaṁ niṣphalam ārabdham kevalānarthasamhītam, na kaś cit sādhu manyeta yathaiva gurutalpagam/* Who has hit me with an arrow, what wrong have I committed! I have already discarded my evil profession of harrasing various beings and have since assumed the life of a sage by merely eking my livelihood with 'kanda moola phalaas' or roots and wild tree fruits by wearing 'mriga charmas' as a 'tapasvi'. Of which avail of killing me like this! You have no use or purpose served by killing me like this; may your murder of an innocent person like me recoil on you! May this murderer be advised that he should reap 'pancha pahapatakas'

[Stree hatya, Bhruna / Shishu hathya, Brahmana hatya, Go hatya and Guru hatya / Guru Bharya Gamaṇa].

I am not regretful of being killed but my aged parents become solaceless and sourceless. Indeed more than me , you have literally killed my aged parents!' King Dasharatha continued the description of his state of mind to Devi Kousalya further: ' I was bewildered for a while as the dying person's sinking tone halted. I felt moved with ready sympathy and ran to the spot from where voice ringing in my ears. The tapasvi was irrevocably hurt and lying with the broken pot in his hands as he was pierced through the poisonous arrows. He saw me approaching him and fixed his eyes on me as though they would convert me into ash and shouted : Raja! you have not only killed me but my aged parents too. They are weak, old and blind too. They are waiting for me for long as they are badly thirsty. They are obviously unaware that I am dying myself. Can a dying tree due to heavy storm possibly help another tree! Go atonce to my hut at this side of the hill nearby and convey them of my dying condition and hopefully they might not curse you to turn into ashes. Now, as I have excruciating pain and please remove the poisonous arrow from my back. Please do not hesitate to do so as poison is sinking into my veins. You may be alarmed that you have perpertrated 'Brahma hatya'. As I am nearing death, may I declare that I am not a Brahmana by birth; I was born to a vaishya husband and a low caste woman. On hearing his confession and as the poison had entered into his vitals, then I removed the poisonous arrow in one stroke and closed his eyes.

Sarga Sixty Four

Having revealed details of the Muni hatya, the helpless cryings of his blind parents , Vriddha Muni's curse that Dasaratha's death would occur in son's absence, Dasharatha collapsed to death!

Tad ajñānān mahat pāpam kṛtvā saṅkulitendriyaḥ, ekas tv acintayam buddhyā katham nu sukṛtam bhavet/ tatas tam ghaṭam ādaya pūrṇam paramavāriṇā, āśramam tam aham prāpya yathākhyātāpatham gataḥ/ tatrāham durbalāv andhau vṛddhāv aparīṇāyakau, apaśyam tasya pitarau lūnapakṣāv iva dvijau/ tannimittābhir āsīnau kathābhir aparikramau, tām āśām matkṛte hīnāv udāsīnāv anāthavāt/ padaśabdām tu me śrutvā munir vākyam abhāṣata, kim cirāyasi me putra pānīyam kṣipram ānaya/ yannimittam idam tāta salile krīḍitam tvayā, utkaṅthitā te mātēyam praviśa kṣipram āśramam/ yad vyalīkam kṛtam putra mātrā te yadi vā mayā, na tan manasi kartavyam tvayā tāta tapasvinā/ tvam gatis tv agatīnām ca cakṣus tvam hīnacakṣuṣām, samāsaktās tvayi prāṇāḥ kim cin nau nābhibhāṣase/ munim avyaktayā vācā tam aham sajjamānayā, hīnavyañjanayā prekṣya bhīto bhīta ivābruvam/ manasaḥ karma ceṣṭābhir abhisamstabhya vāgbalam, ācacakṣe tv aham tasmai putravasyanajam bhayam/ kṣatriyo 'ham daśaratho nāham putro mahātmanaḥ, sajjanāvamataḥ duḥkham idam prāptam svakarmajam/ bhagavaṁś cāpahasto 'ham sarayūtīram āgataḥ, jighāmsuḥ śvāpadaḥ kim cin nipāne vāgataḥ gajam/ tatra śruto mayā śabda jale kumbhasya pūryataḥ, dvipo 'yam iti matvā hi bāṇenābhīhato mayā/ gatvā nadyās tatas tīram apaśyam iṣunā hṛdī, vinirbhinnam gataprāṇam śayānam bhuvī tāpasam/ bhagavañ śabdām ālakṣya mayā gajajighāmsunā, viśṛṣṭo 'mbhasi nārācas tena te nihataḥ sutaḥ/ sa coddhṛtena bāṇena tatraiva svargam āsthitaḥ, bhagavantāv ubhau śocann andhāv iti vilapya ca/ ajñānād bhavataḥ putraḥ sahasābhīhato mayā, ṣeṣam evaṁgate yat syāt tat prasādatu me muniḥ/ sa tac chrutvā vacāḥ krūrām niḥśvasāñ śokakarśitaḥ, mām uvāca mahātejāḥ kṛtāñjalim upasthitam/ yady etad aśubham karma na sma me kathayeh svayam, phalen mūrdhā sma te rājan sadyaḥ śatasahasradhā/ kṣatriyeṇa vadho rājan vānaprasthe viśeṣataḥ, jñānapūrvaṁ kṛtaḥ sthānāc cyāvayed api vajriṇam/ ajñānād dhi kṛtam yasmād idam tenaiva jīvasi, api hy adya kulam nasyād rāghavañām kuto bhavān/ naya nau ṛpa tam deśam iti mām cābhyabhāṣata, adya tam draṣṭum icchāvaḥ putram paścimadarśanam/ rudhireṇāvasitāṅgam prakīrṇājinavāsasam, śayānam bhuvī niḥsamjñam dharmarājavaśam gamat/ athāham ekas tam deśam nītvā tau bhṛṣaduḥkhitau, asparśayam aham putram tam munim saha bhāryayā/ tau putram ātmanaḥ sprṣtvā tam āsādyā tapasvinau, nipetatuh śārīre 'sya pitā cāsyedam abravīt/ na nv aham te priyaḥ putra mātaram paśya dhārmika, kim nu nālīngase putra sukumāra vaco vada/ kasya vāpararātre 'ham śrośyāmi hṛdayaṅgamam, adhīyānasya madhuraḥ śāstram vānyad viśeṣataḥ/ ko mām samdhyām upāśyaiva snātvā hutahutāśanaḥ, ślāghaviśyaty upāśinaḥ putrasōkabhayārditam/ kandamūlaphalam hṛtvā ko mām priyam ivātithim, bhōjayiśyaty akarmanyam apragraham anāyakam/ imām andhām ca vṛddhām ca mātaram te tapasvinīm, katham putra bhariśyāmi kṛpaṇām putragardhinīm/ tiṣṭha mā mā gamaḥ putra yamasya sadanam prati, śvo mayā saha gantāsi jananyā ca samedhitaḥ/ ubhāv api ca śokārtāv anāthau kṛpaṇau vane, kṣipram eva gamiśyāvas tvayā hīnau yamakṣayam/ tato vaivasvataḥ dṛṣtvā tam pravakṣyāmi bhāratīm, kṣamatām dharmarājō me bibhṛyāt pitarāv ayam/ apāpo 'si yathā putra nihataḥ pāpakarmaṇā, tena satyena gacchāsu ye lokāḥ śastrayodhinām/ yānti śūrā gatim yām ca samgrāmeṣv anivartinaḥ, hatās tv abhimukhāḥ putra gatim tām paramām vraja/ yām gatim sagaraḥ śaibyō dilīpo janamejayaḥ, nahuṣo dhundhumārās ca prāptās tām gaccha putraka/ yā gatih sarvasādḥūnām svādhyāyāt patasās ca yā, bhūmidasyāhitāgneś ca ekapatnīvratasya ca/ gosahasrapradātīṇām yā yā gurubhṛtām api, dehanyāsa - kṛtām yā ca tām gatim gaccha putraka, na hi tv asmin kule jāto gacchaty akuśalām gatim/ evam sa kṛpaṇam tatra paryadevayatāśakṛt, tato 'smai kartum udakam pravṛttaḥ saha bhāryayā sa tu divyena rūpeṇa muniputraḥ svakarmabhiḥ, āśvāsya ca muhūrtaḥ tu pitarau vākyam abravīt/ sthānam asmi mahat prāpto bhavatoḥ paricāraṇāt, bhavantāv api ca kṣipram mama mūlam upaiśyataḥ/ evam uktvā tu divyena vimānena vapuṣmatā, āruroha divam kṣipram muniputro jitendriyaḥ/ sa kṛtvā tūdakam tūrṇam tāpasāḥ saha bhāryayā, mām uvāca mahātejāḥ kṛtāñjalim upasthitam/ adyaiva jahi mām rājan maraṇe nāsti me vyathā, yac chareṇaikaputraḥ mām tvam akārṣir aputrakam/ tvayā tu yad avijñānān nihato me sutaḥ śuciḥ, tena tvām abhiśapsyāmi suduḥkham atidāruṇam/ putravasyanajam duḥkham yad etan mama

sāmpratam, evaṁ tvaṁ putraśokena rājan kālāṁ kariṣyasi/ tasmān mām āgataṁ bhadre tasyodārasya tadvacah, yad ahaṁ putraśokena samtyakṣyāmy adya jīvitam/ yadi mām saṁspṛśed rāmaḥ sakṛd adyālabheta vā, na tan me sadṛśaṁ devi yan mayā rāghave kṛtam/ cakṣuṣā tvām na paśyāmi smṛtir mama vilupyate, dūtā vaivasvatasyaite kausalye tvarayanti mām/ atas tu kiṁ duḥkhataraṁ yad ahaṁ jīvitakṣaye, na hi paśyāmi dharmajñāṁ rāmaṁ satyaparākyamam/ na te manuṣyā devās te ye cāruśubhakuṇḍalam, mukhaṁ drakṣyanti rāmasya varṣe pañcadaśe punaḥ/ padmapatrekṣaṇaṁ subhru sudamṣṭraṁ cārunāsikam, dhanyā drakṣyanti rāmasya tārādhipanibhaṁ mukham/ sadṛśaṁ śāradasyendoḥ phullasya kamalasya ca, sugandhi mama nāthasya dhanyā drakṣyanti tanmukham/ nivṛttavanavāsam tam ayodhyāṁ punar āgataṁ, drakṣyanti sukhino rāmaṁ śukraṁ mārgagataṁ yathā/ ayam ātmabhavaḥ śoko mām anātham acetanam, saṁsādayati vegena yathā kūlāṁ nadīrayaḥ/ hā rāghava mahābāho hā mamāyāsa nāsana, rājā daśarathaḥ śocaṅ jīvitāntam upāgamat/ tathā tu dīnaṁ kathayan narādhipaḥ; priyasya putrasya vivāsanāturaḥ, gate 'rdharātre bhṛśaduḥkhaḥpīḍitas; tadā jahau prāṇam udāradarśanaḥ/

King Dasharatha thus described the most unintentional death of the Munikumara and followed the way by which the latter's parents were to live in the banks of the river Sarayu. He found the parents in a pathetic condition of old, weak, blind, and helpless state. As he reached there he started shivering with fear and tried to say in a low and trembling tone; he said : 'Mahatmas! I am not your son here but am a kshatriya named Dasharatha and most unfortunately committed a blunder. I had come down to the banks of Sarayu with the intention of killing wild and cruel animals like tigers and lions and felt that such animals would normally arrive at the banks of the river. At the time of dusk, I could not see properly and felt that a wild elephant arrived at the river banks and was drinking water by the help of its trunk into its mouth. Then I lifted by dhanush and released a poisonous arrow. But most unfortunately, it was not an elephant but a tapasvi who was targeted and fell down with loud cries of pain almost dying. On reaching the spot, he was writhing in excruciating pain and informed that his blind, old, weak, and helpless parents were nearby and were badly thirsty. As I prostrated at his feet and confessed that the accident had taken place out of the terribly mistaken notion of a wild elephant most unknowingly, he revealed details about you, cried out loudly for the parents but asked to take away the poisonous arrow at once due to terrible pain. *ajñānād bhavataḥ putraḥ sahasābhihato mayā, śeṣam evaṁgate yat syāt tat prasīdatu me muniḥ/* In this manner, most unrealisingly and most unfortunately your dear son has reached heaven; as I have confessed truthfully, I beg of your pardon and very kindly resist your anger and anguish not to give me a 'shaap'. Dasharatha continued the narration of the accident and stated that in view of my truthful confession, the aged parents did not give me an instant curse to turn me into ashes! They were dazed with blankness, cried out silently, took long and heavy breathings, and fainted. On recovery gradually, the old parent said: *yady etad aśubhaṁ karma na sma me kathayeh svayam, phalen mūrdhā sma te rājan sadyaḥ śatasahasradhā/ kṣatriyeṇa vadho rājan vānaprasthe viśeṣataḥ, jñānapūrvam kṛtaḥ sthānāc cyāvayed api vajriṇam/ ajñānād dhi kṛtam yasmād idam tenaiva jīvasi, api hy adya kulāṁ nasyād rāghavāñām kuto bhavān/* Raja! If you have not immediately informed us and confessed about your irrtreivable sin, then your head would have broken into hundreds and thousands of smithereens. If a kshatriya would have wantonly committed and escaped the most heinous sin of this nature, even Vajradhari Indra ought to have been dethroned and thrown out. If a Brahmavaadi Muni engaged in deep tapasya were to have been killed with 'shastra astras' knowingly and consciously, then his head would have broken into seven parts. But since this tragedy occurred most accidentally and as you have truthfully confessed at once, you are alive and the entire Raghu Vamsha would have been wiped out! Now, Nareshwara, you take both of us to the spot where the dear son is lying dead.' As both the parents were conducted to the spot, they said softly: 'Dear son! Why are you not greeting us nor speaking to us; why are you lying here; are you annoyed with me! Dear son! If you are annoyed with me, why don't you atleast speak to your mother! Why do you not embrace her; son! Say some thing. Only last evening, you were performing 'swaadhyaya' of scriptures in your musical voice and the explained their analysis. Now, after your bath, sandhyavandana, agnihotra, how would you appease us with our 'putra shoka' now. Who should now bring kanda-moola-phalas and provide us 'athithi satkaaraas'! Dear son! Your 'tapasvini' mother is blind, aged, helpless and is crying

with ‘putra shoka’; how could I being in similar features and situations look after her! Son! Do not enter Yama Loka now; please let us also accompany you. On personally meeting Yama Dharm Raja, I shall make an appeal to padon our son, as he could not maintain his parents! Dear son, you are totally sinless but a sinful kshatriya hah killed you, and on account of my truthfulness do reach quickly those lokaas where astra yodhi shura veeraas; but son, never ever show your back but face the enemies with courage and confidence and reach ‘veera swarga’. Son! When you reach there you shall encounter veera purushas like Sagara, Shaibya, Dileep, Janamejaya, Nahusha and Dundhumaara. Those who take to Swaadhyaaya and Tapasya are presumably accomplish ‘Para Brahma Prapti’. Bhumi daata, Agnihotri, Ekapatnivrati, and giver of charity of thousand cows, and Guru sevakas are stated to attain ‘maha prasthaana’; be blessed to reach there most certainly.’ In this manner the aged father performed ‘jalaanjali’ or tarpanas to the departed son. Having thus performed the obsequies to the departed Soul, the old man addressed King Dasharatha and stated that he would like to give him a shaap: *putravasyanajam duhkham yad etan mama sampratam, evam tvam putrasokena rajan kalam kariṣyasi/* Raja! Your death would occur when you would suffer the distress of ‘putra viyoga’ which I am presently suffering. However, I may not curse you with ‘brahma hatya pataka’ as you are a kshatriya and you have killed a Vaishya Muni’. Thus concluding the curse to me, Kousalya! the old couple both offered their bodies to dense flames even as I was staring stunned. Devi! This was how that out of youthful carelessness that I killed a Great Muni Kumara and in return secured the curse.’

Having concluded the sad killing of Muni Kumara and the details there after about the curse received by the parents of the victim besides the climaxing their self immolations to ‘agni jwaalas’, King Dasharatha addressed Devi Kousalya: *Tadetacchintayaanena smritam paapam mayaa swayam, tadaa baalyaat kritam devi shabdavedhyanukarshinaa/ Tasyaayam karmano devi vipaakah samupasthitah, apayyaih saha saambhukte vyaadhirannarase yathaa, tasmaanmayaagatam Bhadre tasyodaarasya tad vachah/* Devi! In this manner due to the youthful ebullience, I had utilised the ‘shabda vedhi astra’ as the poisonous arrow pushed the Muni to death, and now I am vividly recalling the details of that involuntary tragedy and the consequences; that accident resulted me into this curse of ‘putra viyoga’ at the time of my death. As the entire taste of excellent food spoils a speck of poison is bound to react, is it not! Now this is the time when the Mahatma’s curse is nearing me! Kousalye! Now I am facing mrityu devata! I can clearly vision her approaching me and I can not sess any thing else! Touch me to decide whether I am conscious. Those getting ready for yama loka yatra would not recognise even close relatives. Only Shri Rama’s personal touch could perhaps revive me. *Na tanme sadrusham Devi yanmayaa Raghava kritam, sadrusham tatthu tasyaiva yadanena kritam mayi/* Dedvi! The manner in which I had behaved and treated Shri Rama was such that I am totally unworthy of me. Who is that monster on earth who could reject a son of high virtue and fame! He had made his quitting quietly despite his awareness of his elevation on that very morning! Kousalye! Now my vision is blurred, memory power is sinking, and lo, behold! Yama dootaas have stood up to take me and I am only seeing Rama on my memory screen! He is not a human being but Devata himself! *Padma patrekshanam subhru sudamshtram chaarunaasikam, dhanyaa drakshyanti Ramasya taraadhipasamam mukham/* Blessed be that human who could vision that countenance with lotus eyes, prettiest eye brows, sparkling teeth and alluring nose and Purna Chandra samana face! Kousalye! My consciousness is hazy, heart beat is sinking and the sensations of vision, hearing, smell, taste, and breathing are getting terminated. *Ha Raghava Maha Baaho haa mama asanaashana, ha pitru priya me naatha haa mamaasi gatah suta/* Ha Mahabaahu Raghu nandana! Ha my overcomer of difficulties, ha Pitru priya, ha my Nadha, ha my dearest son! Having shouted thus Dasharatha finally stated: Saadhvi Kousalya, Tapaswini Sumitra, Cruel Shatru Kaikeyi, and Mahtma Rama! And collapsed finally!

[Vishlesanas : i) on the process of death- ii) departed jeevatma-iii: Yama- iv: Mrityu Sukta

[Prashnopanishad vide III.6-7 explains the **process of death**: *Hridi hyesha Atmaa, atraitad ekashatam naadeenaam taasaam shatam shatam ekaikaashyam dvaasaptatir dvaasaptatih pratishakhaa naadee*

sahasraani bhavanti, aasu vyaanascharati// Athaika -yordhya udaanah, punyena punyalokam nayati, paapena paapam, ubdhaabhyaam eva manushya lokam//(The heart in the subtle Self is connected to some hundred and one nerves of importance each one of these is described as with hundred divisions and each of such divisions is stated to be of 72000 sub- branches or arteries, among which permeates ‘Vyana’ of the Pancha Pranaas, activating the various directions of the heart spreading all over the joints, shoulders and vital parts. It is this Vyana of the Pancha Pranaas that demands of the body parts of deeds that require strength to perform. Chhandogya Upanishad vide VIII.vi.6 explains: *Shatam chaikaa cha hridayasya naadyah taasaam murdhaanaam abhinh abhinishtraika tayordhvam ayann amritatvam eti vishvavam anya utkrामane bhavanti/* In the context of the process of death, the status of the physical nerves and how Sun influences these is described: the veins of the body issuing out of the fleshy bulge called lotus shaped heart is charged with juices of varied colours akin to human desires. The heat of the Sun causes bile which when comes into contact with phlegm in the nerves assuming different colours as accentuated by wind contacts. As life departs, the Self goes upwards through the Sun rays and the praani reaches the Sun within the time that mind travels. The nerves connected to the heart are hundred and one. At the time of departure, one of the nerves-Brahma Nadi- of the blessed ones reaches the crown of the head . While the opening of that nerve enables Immortality, vyana through other exit points totalling nine indicates definite return to the cycle of rebirths. Now the reference to Udaana; this vital force moves everywhere in the body from top to toe. When it takes an upward trend it leads to Deva Lokas and as it takes a downward trend it leads to ‘manushya loka if it is ‘ubdhaabhyaameva’; or as a result of paapa- punyaas or sins and virtues) III.8-9) *Adityo ha vai baahya praana udayati, esha hyenam chaakshusham praanam anugrahnaanaah prithivyaam ya Devataa saishaa purushasyaapaanam avashtabhyaantaraah yad aakaakashas sa samaano vaayur vyaanaah// Tejo ha vai udaanah tasmaad upashaanta tejaah punarbhavam indriyair manasi sampadyamaanaih//*(Surya indeed is the external praana which ascends in favour of Praana that is present in the eye. The Deity of Earth favours attracting the ‘apaana’ in a human being. The Antariksha as signified by Vayu Deva is ‘Samaana’ and Vyana is Air in the common parlance. The interpretation is that while Surya-Bhumi-Antariksha are stated as of the divine context, Praana-Apaana-Samaana are stated as eyes, exiting wind of human beings and common Air respectively. As regards Udaana, Tejas and common light are the divine and human forms respectively. As explained above,Udaana is the cause of death too, besides all the deeds requiring force in the normal course of life.) III.10-12) *Yatchistastenaisha praanam aayaati, praanaastejasaa yuktah sahaatmaanaa yathaa samkalpitam lokam nayati// Ya evam vidvaan praanamveda na haasya prajaa heeyate, amrito bhavati, tadesha shloka: // Utpattim aayatim shtaanam vibhutvam chaiva panchadhaa,adhyaatmam chaiva praanasya vijnaayaamritam ashnute, vijnaayaamritam ashnute, iti//*(Whatever frame of mind and thoughts occur to a human being at the time of the end of life, indeed those very thoughts and feelings along with the functioning of the organs similarly attuned do surface then. Then the prime Praana of the dying person along with Udaana , the Consciousness tapers off and ‘ praana yuktah tejasaa nayati lokam yathaasankalpitam’ or the Life Force along with the light within leads to the lokas as felt and deserved! Any person of knowledge who understands of what praana as all about certainly knows that the Departed Soul or the Antaratma then merges in its own origin. In this context, there is a relevant verse: A person of knowledge of Praana would thus be sensitised with its origin, entry, place of residence and the process of exit by achieving its next destination as per one’s own actions of a mix of virtues and vices; very few attain Immortality and the majority return back to Life again; this is the Truth of Life and that indeed again is the Truth of Life!)]

The departed 'jeevatma' discarding life behind is accompanied by Lord Yama:

Yama: *Pareyivaasam pravato maheeranu, bahubhyah panthaam anupaspashaanam, Vaivasvatam sangamanam janaanaam, Yamam Rajanam havishaa duvasya/* May King Yama the son of Surya Deva/ Vivasvaan, be worshipped as he is followed by His relatives and admirers of the departed; Yama has travelled far from the heights beyond and taken to the perfect destination without disturbing any one else. The Stanza is from Rig Veda 10-14.1. ii-iv)

The departed jeeva: *Idam tvaa vastram prathama nvaagan/ Apaitaduuha yadihaabibhah puraa, ishthaapurtamanusampashya dakshinaam yathaa te dattam bahudhaa vi bandhushu/ Imoau yunajmi te vahnee asuneeyaaya odhave, yaabhyaam Yamasya saadanam, sukrutaam chaapi gacchataat/* May the departed one arrive here with new ideas and forget the erstwhile impulses and memories, recalling however the erstwhile actions some of which might have satisfied the conscience such as the acts of dakshinas to brahmanas vis a vis the wealth given by the kinsmen. May the departed one be yoked by two oxen to carry the body dear so far as the life and these oxen reach the abode of Lord Yama or alternatively to other abodes in case that It had done 'satkarmas' earning virtue outweighing the deeds of vice.v-viii) *Pushaa tvetah chyaavayantu pra vidvaan, anashthapashuh bhuvanasya gopaah, sa tvaitebhyah pari dadat pitrubhyo, agnirdevebhyah suvidanniyebyah/ Pushemaa aashaa anu veda sarvaah, so asmam abhiyatamena neshat, svastidaa aaghrunih sarvaveero, aprayucchan pura etu prajaanan/ Aayuh vishvaayuh pari pasati tvaa pusha, tvaa paatu prapathe purastaat, yatraaste sukruto, yatra te yayuh, tatravvaa devah Savitaa dadhaatu/ Bhuvanasya pat idam havih, agnaye rayimate svaaha/* May Pushan the omniscient escort the departed Soul to another world as His rays never fail to protect all the Beings and reach them to Pitru Loka and may Agni Deva reach the concerned Devas further on. Indeed Pushan is totally conversant with all the Lokas successively as He is aware the ways and means of leading the jeevaatma to safety free from perils. The post life of departed mortals is well realised by Pushan and hence lead them upto the halts en route. As the Souls which may have done well with the earnings of 'punya', the celestial Savitur would place them well in advance and accordingly lead these with care. Hence, Paramatma! may this offering of the body remains engulf by Agni Deva ultimately! The stanzas v-vii are repeats of Rigveda Mantras of 10.17.3-5-4 respectively.]

iv: Mrityu Sukta: Taittireeya Aranyaka 3.15.1-6 : Mrityu Sukta

Hariam harantamanuyanti Devaah, Vishvasyeshaanaam vrishabham mateenaam, Brahma swarupamanu medamaagaat, ayanam maa vividheervikramasva/ Ma cchido mrityo maa vadheeh maa me balam vivruho maa pramosheeh, prajaam maa me reerisha aayurugna, nrichakshasam tvaa havishaa vidhema/ Sadyas - chkamaanaaya pravepaanaaya mrityave paarasmaa aashaa ashrunvan, kaamenaajanayanpunah/ Kaamena me kaama aagaat, hridayaadhbhudayam mrityoh, yadameeshaamadah priyam tadaituup maamabhi/ Pare mrityo anuparehi panthaam, yaste sva itaro Devayaanaat, chakshushmate shrunvate te braveemi, maa nah prajaam reerusho mot veeraan/ Pra poorve manasaa vandamaanah naadhamano vrishabham charshaneenaam, yah prajaanaam eka karanamaanusheenaam mrityum yaje prathamaja - amritasya/ These verses are stated to be recited in the rites of cremation.

Samasta Devas are stated to accompany the Mrityu Devata- *harim harantam*; the latter is the Lord of all the worlds and thoughts of the departed. As Mrityu Devata approaches the yajamaana or the victim, the latter assumes an appropriate form. May the Devata be contented with the stanzas recited and destroy the obstacles faced in the journey post life. Mrityu! At the time of departure of the victim, do kindly spare

him from severing his body parts causing pain and tolerant energy. Kindly also do not harm my progeny, much less the victim's life span as we are prepared to serve you with suitable offerings. Mrityu Deva! You are source and form of terror and panic to all the Beings with 'Praana'; all the 'ashta dishas' receive the 'aarthā naadaas' or the signals of frightening cries. May the children of the departed one be equipped to face moment of departure and spared from the distress that pursues. May the heart of Mrityu be kind and beneficial to the victim and family members. Mrityu Deva! may all paths except Devayana be blocked as that is the only path that the victim desires and surely deserves! May Mrityu be endowed with kind thoughts and actions as the victim seeks mercy and forgiveness after the departure to realise the Truth of Life!

Sarga Sixty Five

Pursuant to Dasharatha's death, his queens cried out, deathly praises and music followed

Atha rātryām vyatītāyām prātar evāpare 'hani, bandinaḥ paryupātiṣṭhams tat pārthivaniveśanam/ tataḥ śucisamācārāḥ paryupasthāna kovidaḥ, strīvarṣavarabhūyiṣṭhā upatasthur yathāpuram/ haricandana samprkṭam udakam kāñcanair ghaṭaiḥ, āninyuḥ snānaśikṣājñā yathākālam yathāvidhi/ maṅgalālam - bhānīyāni prāśanīyān upaskarān, upaninyus tathāpy anyāḥ kumārī bahulāḥ striyaḥ/ atha yāḥ kosalendrasya śayanam pratyantarāḥ, tāḥ striyas tu samāgamyā bhartāram pratyabodhayan/ tā vepathuparītās ca rājñāḥ prāṇesu śaṅkitāḥ, pratisrotas tṛṇāgrāṇām sadṛśam saṁcakampire/ atha saṁvepamanānām strīṇām dṛṣṭvā ca pārthivam, yat tad āśaṅkitam pāpam tasya jajñe viniścayah/ tataḥ pracukruśur dīnāḥ sasvarām tā varāṅganāḥ, kareṇava ivāraṇye sthānapracyutayūthapāḥ/ tāsām ākranda śabdena sahasodgatacetane, kausalyā ca sumitrāca tyaktandire babhūvatuḥ/ kausalyā ca sumitrā ca dṛṣṭvā sprṣṭvā ca pārthivam, hā nātheti parikruśya petatur dharaṅitale/ sā kosalendraduhitā veṣṭamānā mahītale, na babhrāja rajodhvastā tāreva gaganacyutā/ tat samuttrastasaṁbhrāntam paryutsuka - janākulam, sarvatas tumulākrandaṁ paritāpārtabāndhavam/ sadyo nipatitānandaṁ dīnaviklava - darśanam, babhūva naradevasya sadma diṣṭāntam īyuṣaḥ/ atītam ājñāya tu pārthivarṣabham; yaśasvinam samparivārya patnayaḥ, bhṛśam rudantyaḥ karuṇam suduḥkhitāḥ; pragṛhya bhū vyalapann anāthavat/

Following the death of King Dasharatha on the previous night, next morning the 'Vandeejana' or the professional prayer- cum-praisers of the departed assembled in the 'Raja Mahal'. Vyakarana- Mantra- Panditas of the Royal Establishment, as also professional singers assumed their turns in praise of the departed King. Svara yukta shloka reciters too assembled in large numbers outside the Raja Mahal blessing the departed Soul. Stuti ganas with modulated clappings and singing the glories of King Dasharatha! Meanwhile, several royal servants initiated the fetching various material in bulk like chandana-karpura-darpana-aabhushana-vastra- gangaajala- vessels of varying sizes. The 'antahpura strees' or the womanfolk of the interiors of the queens queued up to perform 'parikramas' or circumambulations of the body. Some of the select women had even touched the body and got bewildered that the body was still warm and sprang up in surprises. Devis Kousalya and Sumitra were in half sleep as they were awoken till the small hours of the day break. Some of the antahpura strees had even thought that as the queens Kousalya and Sumitra were sleeping as the King had departed! Suddenly they seemed to have recovered from slumber and screamed and shouted 'hey praana naadha'! *Tataḥ sarvaa Narendrasya Kaikeyee pramukhaḥ striyaḥ, rudasyaḥ shokasantapta nīpeturgata chatanaaḥ/* Then as Queen Kaikeyi too having arrived, all the queens became benumbed and fell down unconscious crying away.

Sarga Sixty Six

Queens, Ministers and staff- and public vision the body as retained in oil vessels

Tam agnim iva samśāntam ambuhīnam ivārṇavam, hataprabham ivādītyam svargatham prekṣya bhūmipam/ kausalyā bāṣpapurṇākṣī vividham śokakarśītā, upagṛhya śiro rājñāḥ kaikeyīm pratyabhāṣata/ sakāmā bhava kaikeyi bhūṅkṣva rājyam akaṅṭakam, tyaktvā rājānam ekāgrā ṅṣamse duṣṭacāriṇi/ vihāya mām gato rāmo bhartā ca svargato mama, vipathe sārthahīneva nāham jīvitum utsahe/ bhartāram tam parityajya kā strī daivatam ātmanaḥ, icchej jīvitum anyatra kaikeyyās tyaktadharmaṇaḥ/ na lubdho budhyate doṣān kim pākam iva bhakṣayan, kubjānimittam kaikeyyā rāghavāṅān kulaṁ hatam/ aniyoge niyuktena rājñā rāmaṁ vivāsitam, sabhāryam janakaḥ śrutvā patitapsyaty aham yathā/ rāmaḥ kamalapatrākṣo jīvanāśam ito gataḥ, videharājasya sutā tahā sītā tapasvinī, duḥkhasyānucitā duḥkham vane paryudvijīsyati/ nadatām bhīmaghoṣāṅām niśāsu mṛgapakṣiṅām, niśamya nūnam samstrastā rāghavam samśrayīsyati/ vṛddhaś caivālpaputras ca vaidehīm anicintayan, so 'pi śokasamāviṣṭo nanu tyakṣyati jīvitam/ tām tataḥ sampariṣvajya vilapantīm tapasvinīm, vyapaninyuḥ suduḥkhārtām kausalyām vyāvahārikāḥ/ tailadroṇyām athāmātyāḥ samveśya jagatīpatim, rājñāḥ sarvāṅy athādiṣṭās cakruḥ karmāny anantaram/ na tu saṅkalanam rājño vinā putreṇa mantriṇaḥ, sarvajñāḥ kartum īṣus te tato rakṣanti bhūmipam/ tailadroṇyām tu sacivaiḥ śāyitam tam narādhipam, hā mṛto 'yam iti jñātvā striyas tāḥ paryadevayan/ bāhūn udyamya kṛpaṇā netraprasravaṇair mukhaiḥ, rudantyaḥ śokasamtaptāḥ kṛpaṇam paryadevayan/ niśānakṣatrahīneva strīva bhartṛvivarjitā, purī nārājatāyodhyā hīnā rājñā mahātmanā/ bāṣparyākulajanā hāhābhūtakuḷāṅganā, śūnyacatvaraveśmāntā na babhrāja yathāpuram/ gataprabhā dyaur iva bhāskaram vinā; vyapetanakṣatragaṇeva śarvarī, purī babhāse rahitā mahātmanā; na cāsrakaṅṭhākulamārgacatvarā/ narāś ca nāryās ca sametya saṅghaśo; vigarhamāṅā bhāratasya mātaram, tadā nagaryām naradevasamkṣaye; babhūvur ārtā na ca śarma lebhire/

Devi Kousalya with over wept and swollen face looking at the body of her husband was looking like a dried up ocean, shinelss Surya, and burnt off dry ash . Then as Devi Kaikeyi lifted up the dead head of the King on her lap, Koushlaya stated in a low voice: Kaikeyi, your wish is fulfilled now. Now that the hurdle of the King having been removed, now enjoy the ‘Saamrajya’ all by your self! Rama had gone away and the King has been eliminated; of what avail my life now! *bhartāram tam parityajya kā strī daivatam ātmanaḥ, icchej jīvitum anyatra kaikeyyās tyaktadharmaṇaḥ/ na lubdho budhyate doṣān kim pākam iva bhakṣayan, kubjānimittam kaikeyyā rāghavāṅān kulaṁ hatam/* Could there be any body in the womanhood in the universe who kills her venaration worthy of husand and live with luxury and joy! Victimised and getting poisoned by Mandhara, you are squarely responsible for the death of the husband and getting rid of Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas in one masterly stroke to ruin the Raghu Vamsha just for vicarious joy! That Kaikeyi is squarely responsible for pushing Rama forcefully out is once known to King Janaka , how much of appreciative he would be! What a shame that my son would not even know that I was cursed with widowhood! Is Devi Sita the born princess of Mithila worthy of this type of unimaginable hardship. Even whenever there harsh sounds of pashu pakshis heard, she used to hide on my lap! If only the aged Janaka Maha Raja who had only the daughters as his offspring were to know that Devi Sita too accompanied Rama for the ever long forced ‘vana vaasa’, he would surely not be alive. *Saahamadyaiva dishtaantam gamishyaami pativrataa, idam shareeramaamaalingya pravekshyaamo hutaashanam/* I am also ready to follow the parivrataa’s duty of ‘sahagamana’ by jumping into the fire along with the body of my husband!’ As such relentless address made by Kousalya to Kaikeyi and simultaneously embracing the departed body, the Ministers gradually took away the queens and the surrounding ladies from the body to initiate the task of soaking the body in oil in large and flat plated vessels, as per the instructions of Maharshi Vasishtha. This has been done so to preseve the body till ‘dahana samskaara’. As the body was lifted there were uproars and shouts by the queens and all the onlookers. *niśānakṣatrahīneva strīva bhartṛvivarjitā, purī nārājatāyodhyā hīnā rājñā mahātmanā/ bāṣparyākulajanā hāhābhūtakuḷāṅganā, śūnyacatvaraveśmāntā na babhrāja yathāpuram/* In the absence of the departed King, Ayodhya puri was barren like a starless sky and like a king with his widows! *Rutetu putraad dahanam Mahipate naarochayamste suhrudah samaagataah, iteiva tasnim- sc haayane nyaveshayan vichintya Raajaanamichyantya darshanam/* Veda Panditah who had assembled there had unanimously decided not to initiate the daaha-samskaara and as such the body was retained in

oilful vessel. Meanwhile the entirety of the citizens of Ayodhya were queued up for the final view of the body of the King.

[Vishleshana on widowhood:

Departed person's widow: *Iyam naareem patilokam vrinaanaa ni padyat upa tvaa, martya pretam,dharma puraanaanupaalayantee, tasyai prajaam dravinam cheha dhehi/ Udeerdhva naaryabhi jeevalokam gataasum etamupa shesha ehi, hastaagraabhasya deedhishoh, tavedam patyurjanitvamabhi sam babhutha/ Suvarnaam hastaadadaanaa mritasya, shriyai brahmane tejase balaaya, atraiva tvam, ihavayam sushevaa, vishvaah sprudho abhimaateerjeyam/ Dhanurhastaat aadadaano mritasya, shriyai kshatraayoujase balaaya, atraiva tvam iha vayam sushevaa, vishvaay sprudho abhimaateerjayem/ Maniam hastadaadanaa mritasya, shriyai visho pushthyai balaaya, atraiva tvam, ida vayam sushevaa, vishvaah sprudho abhimaaraarjeeyem/* The widow of the departed husband who chose her husband and lived along with him has to continue her duty as a widow now and assign the properties of the husband to the progeny. Atharva Veda 18.3.1. The widow is then advised to get back normalcy as she would be under a shock and realise the reality that her husband was no more; indeed the person who took your hand on wedlock had left her now. After all, she would have to continue to remain in existence and recover her normalcy since she should fight back the evils of the world and fortify herself. One has to reconcile to the absence of the husband and realise that he was not there. Yet, she would have to take a vow that he was there and get readied for a lonely fight. The stanza 6.1.15 viz. *Dhanurhastaat* explains that since the upbringing of the progeny has to be the wife's prime need of the hour, the widow should take over the bow from the hands of the departed husband's hands and be prepared for a battle to protect the children and stay there itself and face the situations. Thus she takes the challenge of life ahead. Vyasa Maharshi explains of some features of widows: *Patyaomritepi yo yoshivaidhavyam paalayet kvachit, Saapunah praapya bhartaaram svarga bhogaan sameeshnute/ Vidhavaa kabari baddhah bhartru bandhaaya chaayate, Shirasovasanam tasmaat kaaryam vidhavaatathaa, Ekaahaarah Sadaa kaaryah nadviteeyah kadaachana/ Gandhadra –vyasya sambhogonaiva kaaryastathaa kvachit, Tarpanam pratyaham kaaryam bhartuh kushatilodakaih/ Vishnostu pujanam kaaryam patibudhaana chaanyadhaa, Patimeva sadaa dhyaayedvishnu rupa dharam param, Evam dharma paraanityam vidhavaap shubhaamataa/(* As a husband passes away and the widow observes the regulations of widowhood, since a widow is distinguished as being one, it is preferred that her head hair is removed forever, takes a single meal a day and refrain from a second meal that day! She should not use fragrances and not utilise flowers; every day she should perform tarpana with 'tilodakas' or black Tilas with water using 'darbhas'. Those women who are widowed should consider as the diseased husband as Vishnu himself and then her remaining life would be spent peacefully without problems and even though as of a woman of auspiciousness.]

Sarga Sixty Seven

Maharshis assemble with Purohita Vasishtha to urgently decide on the successor King

Vyatitāyām tu śarvāyām ādityasyodaye tataḥ, sametya rājakartāraḥ sabhām īyur dvijātayah/ mārkandēyo 'tha maudgalyo vāmadevaś ca kāśyapaḥ, kātyayano gautamaś ca jābālīś ca mahāyaśāḥ/ ete dvijāḥ sahāmātyaiḥ pṛthag vācam udīrayan, vasiṣṭham evābhimukhāḥ śreṣṭho rājapurohitam/ atītā śarvarī duḥkham yā no varṣaśatopamā, asmin pañcatvam āpanne putraśokena pārthive/ svargataś ca mahārājo rāmaś cāraṇyam āsritaḥ, lakṣmaṇaś cāpi tejasvī rāmeṇaiva gataḥ saha/ ubhau bhārataśatrughnau kkekayeṣu paramtapau, pure rājagṛhe ramye mātāmahaniveśane/ ikṣvākūṅām

ihādyaiṅva kaś cid rājā vidhīyatām, arājakaṃ hi no rāṣṭraṃ na vināśam avāpnuyāt/ nārājale janapade vidyunmālī mahāsvanaḥ, abhivarṣati parjanya mahīm divyena vāriṇā/ nārājake janapade bījamaṣṭīḥ prakīryate, nārākake pituḥ putro bhāryā vā vartate vaśe/ arājake dhanam nāsti nāsti bhāryāpy arājake, idam atyāhitam cānyat kutaḥ satyam arājake/ nārājake janapade kārayanti sabhām narāḥ, udyānāni ca ramyāni hṛṣṭāḥ puṅyagrāhāni ca/ nārājake janapade yajñāśīlā dvijātayaḥ, satrāṅy anvāsate dāntā brāhmaṇāḥ samśītavratāḥ/ nārājake janapade prabhūtanāṭanartakāḥ, utsavās ca samājās ca vardhante rāṣṭravardhanāḥ/ nārājake janapade siddhārthā vyavahāriṇaḥ, kathābhir anurajyante kathāśīlāḥ kathāpriyaiḥ/ nārājake janapade vāhanaiḥ śīghragāmibhiḥ, narā niryānty arāṅyāni nārībhiḥ saha kāmīnaḥ/ nārākake janapade dhanavantāḥ surakṣitāḥ, śerate vivṛta dvārāḥ kṛṣṭigorakṣajīvīnaḥ/ nārājake janapade vaṅijo dūragāmiṇaḥ, gacchanti kṣemam adhvānam bahupuṅyasamācītāḥ/ nārājake janapade caraty ekacaro vaśī, bhāvayann ātmanātmānam yatraśāyamgrho munīḥ/ nārājake janapade yogakṣemaṃ pravartate, na cāpy arājake senā śatrūn viśahate yudhi/ yathā hy anudakā nadyo yathā vāpy atṛṇam vanam, agopālā yathā gāvas tathā rāṣṭram arājakaṃ/ nārājake janapade svakaṃ bhavati kasya cit, matsyā iva narā nityam bhakṣayanti parasparam/ yehi sambhinnamaryādā nāstikāś chinnasamśayāḥ, te 'pi bhāvāya kalpante rājadaṇḍanipīḍitāḥ/ aho tama ivedam syān na prajñāyeta kim cana, rājā cen na bhaveml loke vibhajan sādvasādhunī/ jīvaty api mahārāje tavaiva vacanam vayam, nātikramāmahe sarve velām prāpyeva sāgaraḥ/ sa naḥ samīkṣya dvijavaryavṛttam; nṛpaṃ vinā rājyam arāṅyabhūtam, kumāram ikṣvākusutam vadānyam; tvam eva rājānam ihābhiṣīcaya/

As all through the night the public Ayodhya thronged for the darshan of the departed King of far reaching reputation, the early morning thereafter, the Kingdom's vidwan Brahmanas collected at the royal court. The Brahmana shreshthas like Markadeya, Moudralya, Vaama Deva, Kashyapa, Gautama and Jaabaali sat before Maharshi Vasishtha and gave their opinions. The substance of what they expressed as follows: 'The passing away of great King Dasharatha to heavens is indeed unfortunate. More unfortunate would be when Rama accompanied by Devi Sita and Lakshmana Kumara had left on a long Aranya Vaasa. Bharata Shatrughnas had been on a pleasure holiday to Devi Kaikeyi's father's kingdom. *ikṣvākūṅām ihādyaiṅva kaś cid rājā vidhīyatām, arājakaṃ hi no rāṣṭraṃ na vināśam avāpnuyāt/ nārājale janapade vidyunmālī mahāsvanaḥ, abhivarṣati parjanya mahīm divyena vāriṇā/ nārājake janapade bījamaṣṭīḥ prakīryate, nārākake pituḥ putro bhāryā vā vartate vaśe/ arājake dhanam nāsti nāsti bhāryāpy arājake, idam atyāhitam cānyat kutaḥ satyam arājake/* Now this is a serious situation when there is no King of this glorious Ikshvaaku Vamsha in position and in the absence of a King, the Kingdom would be at heavy stake and there is an immediate urgency to declare a King. In a Kingdom where there is no King, it is asserted that in the villages and townships- let alone in Ayodhya- neither lightnings on the sky nor clouds would yield timely rains and the mother earth could yield good crops. Without a King, neither the children nor the wives would be under the regulation of a husband and the entire family life would be at stake. Then where would be order of the society, the central- township- village level administration, the public gardens, dharma shalaas, temples, chatur varnas, yagjnaadi dharma karyas, group meetings, music-dances; and above all internal security and external safety! *Yathaa drishtiḥ shareerasya nityameva pravartate, tathaa narendro rashrtasya prabhavaḥ satyadharmayoh/* Just as one's concentration is anchored on one's own body parts [like eyes, nose, ears, skin, tongue, and entries and exits] Raja like the mind or brain is the nucleus, and the supreme controller of all the aspects of the Kingdom, both internal and external. *Rajaa satyam cha dharmascha Rajaa kulavataam kulam, Raja maataa pitaa chaiva Rajaa hita karo nrinam/* A King is the representation of truthfulness and virtue; he is stated to be the foremost of all classes of the Kingdom. He is the father -mother- and the chief adviser of one and all in the kingdom. *Yamo Vaishnavanah Shakro Varunascha Maha Balah, vishishyante Narendrana vrittina mahataa tatah/* A King by the virtue of his own background and sensitivities might be a Yama, Kubera, Indra, or Varuna and many more features and characteristics. Yama Raja punishes, Kubera bestows wealth, Indra is an outstanding administrator, and Varuna enforces good conduct; but a King is all rolled in one! *Sa naḥ samīkṣya dvijavaryavṛttam; nṛpaṃ vinā rājyam arāṅyabhūtam, kumāram ikṣvākusutam vadānyam; tvam eva rājānam ihābhiṣīcaya/* Hence Maharshi! Do nominate an Ideal King at once!

[Vishleshana on an Ideal Kingship vide Manu Smriti-Achaara Khanda

Ideal Kingship: Manu Deva then describes the ways of conduct and dharmas of a King about his origin and keys to his success as a popular and famed head of a nation. On attaining kingship to a deserving and select kshatriya origin, the King is coronated by the prescribed Vedic Principles to assume the duties expected as from a Head of the Kingdom. This is so when a Leader of the Society has to establish an authoratative Institution based essentially on Dharma and Nyaya and above all to ensure safety and security as an Integrated Identity among the comity of co-kingdoms. Hence the group of Devas like Indra, Surya, Vaayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Chandra and Kubera confer Kingship to the most suitable Kshatriya as per Vedic Verses hence as the unique representative of the lusters and magnificenes of the combinations of the representative Devas; indeed like a Sun God the King becomes too radiant to gaze and provides the great source of authority and power sourced from the respective Devas of warmth yet heat of Agni, sweep and speed of Vaayu, placidity and coolness of Chandra, sternness and demand of justice/ virtue of Yama, ample food and sustenance of Varuna, and the auspiciousness and prosperity of Kubera! Even a King as an infant is worthy of respect and awe as there is a worthy King in him and ought to be so venerated. Indeed, careless approach and casual treatment paid to an infant king, who is no doubt, backed up the strong foundations of Kingship as from Vedic Principles, as Agni could provide warmth as also burn the whole family and property as of 'lock-stock- and barrel'! A King with his 'kaarya siddhi' or the success of his purpose as per the prevalent circumstances of 'Desha Kaala Tatwa' seeks to attain 'dharma siddhi' as he assumes varied features of kshama, krodha, mitrata, or even pratikaara or revenge! A King indeed is 'sarva tejomaya' or all powerful as he could usher in Devi Lakshmi or around prosperity, or his anger might invite mrityu or death. If a King is annoyed even by default, the victim's misfortune kicks off and his indignation is certain to mritu! *Tasmaad dharmam yamishteshu sa vyavasyennaraadhipah, anishtam chaapyanishteshu tam dharmam na vichaalayet/ Tasyaartho sarvabhutaanaam goptaaram dharmama -atmajam, brahmatejomayam dandam- asrijat purvameeshvarah/* or that is why the dharmas originally created by the institution of Kingship are such as never to be infringed upon and hence the age old principles are such as shaped by the conscience of any King either of mercy or of punishments. This why any of the 'sthaavara-jangamaas' or of moving-immovable nature in Srishti are driven by the impulses of their own consciences too and the interpretations of respective Kingships as per 'desha -kaala- paristhitis' or of contemporary situations need necessarily to be upheld and observed. Hence punishments truly represent the King, his Purushtva of assertion and of unquestionable Leadership ; punishment only governs, protects, and sustains vigilance even in sleep or casualness as the constant guard and caution. *Sameekshya sa dhritah samyak sarvaa ranjayati prajaah, asameekshya praneetastu vinaashayati sarvatah/* Once punishment is made applicable and enforced, it uproots the evil but once gets lax then attracts further evil. In the case of a King's negligence of punishment, the defaulted person once saved perpetuates the evil as a fried fish about to be pitch-forked spared or soft cotton piece turns into an iron rod! In case a King spares a criminal from punishment, a crow would steal a pitru pinda or a dog sniff or lick a sacrificial food just as a person of illfame forcefully occupies another's lawful house in possession since *dandasya hi bhayaat sarvam jagad bhogaaya kalpate/* or the entire world loses the grip of fear and becomes all kinds of illegal perversions. Once a rod is spared then even a child is spoilt; Deva, Daanava, Gandharva, Raakshasa, Pakshi, Sarpas too once spared would be victimised with evil; being devoid of 'daanda', the conduct of all the beings in Srishti gets sullied and in respect of human beings varnaashrama dharmas are severely broken irretrievably paving way for vices and engendering evil forces *Yatra shyaamo lohitaaksho dandashcharati paapahaa, prajaastatra na muhyanti netaa chet saadhu pashyati/ Tasyaahuh sampranetaaram raajaanam satyavaadinam, sameekshya kaarinam praaajnam dharma kaamaartha kovidam/* That exactly why the concept of Kingship or Leadership is stated as the hinge and hold of the sensitive balance of virtue and vice; where punishment is due it ought to stalk around assuming black color and of red eyes demolish blemishes and sins. Moreso it is in the context of fulfilling the four human aspirations of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha in a measured manner; indeed hence is the presence of Leadership as assumed by a King. Kingship is defined as who is aware and conscious of the are of punishing and sparing the stick ; *tam raajaa pranayansamyak trivargena*

abhivardhate or He is the ideal King who is truthfully wedded to the principles of virtue and nyaaya, modest and ideal earnings for the Self and dependents besides spare for charity, and controlled and regulated by moderate and just desires; but certainly not to fulfill sensual pleasures, deceitful ways of flippant lives and of selfish motivations. When punishment is prescribed it may not be palatable to unrelenting minds, but when the king concerned does not proclaim it in a non commensurate manner without adequately examining or hiding facts of the case, then the King if partial in judgment is not spared too and might affect his family even. Once the King and his family is ruined, then the store of 'adharmas' so collected might affect not only his possessions of castles, his territories and his 'praja' and their fortunes also. Contrarily a champion of Dharma and Nyaya would carve a niche not merely among the co-kings but as in respect of Maharshis and even Devas might secure a qualification for Brahmatva! A continuous series of undue punishments out of hiding facts or ignoring them and issued by an unjust King would have repercussions on the disgrace and ruin of his deputies down the line in the Vamsha and might adversely affect those concerned like Ministers, Army Commanders and so on as involved in the declarations of judgments. Further on, even the Sages would feel the guilt and the thought processes of Devas receiving 'havyas' at the Agni Karyas in the Kingdom might be disturbed! Hence: *Shuchinaa satyasandhena yathaa shaastanusaarinaa, pranetum shakyaate dandah susahaayena dheemataa/ Svaraashtre nyaaya vrittah syaad bhrishadashcha shatrushu, suhritsvajihmah snigdheshu braahmaneshu kshamaanvitah/* The ideal most King is such sagacious, truthful and intelligent kind of unique followers of Dharma and Nyaya, ably assisted by equally professional deputies, and indeed his judgments for or against punishments or rewards are stated to be one among the countless ones of his worthy race. The fame of such rarity are like drops of oil spreading fast in running flows of water. However the ill fame of a King unworthy of his title and seat tends to act like butter on the water flows steadily till the day of doom. The idealism of Kingship upholds the dignities of the Chatur Varnas and ensures their continuity.. Such Kings of rarity are stated to possess their daily routine as follows: in the early mornings itself, they attend the congregations of the learned and the aged vidwans of Rig-Yajur-Saama Vedas and discuss the specifics of Dharmas and of Administrative Principles involved. They worship and honour such vidwans appropriately and abide by their teachings as discussed. Such exemplary Kings are never harmed but enjoy longevity and prosperity. They are modest and that modesty makes them imperishable. For want of modesty, several Kings in history had perished along with their belongings and on the other hand hermits in forests had turned to be Kings. *Veno vinashtovinyaatnahushashchaiva paarthivah/Sudaah pajja vanashchaiva sumukho nimoreva cha/ Prithustu vinayaad raajyam praaptavaan manureva cha, Kuberaashcha dhanaishvaryam brahmanyam chaiva Gaadhijah/* In the historical introspective, illustrious Chakravartis or Emperors like Vena, Nahusha, Sudaasa, Yavana, Sumukha, and Nimi perished out of their questionable and evil conduct. On the other hand Prithu and Manu flourished as Chakravatis out their outstanding modesty and impeccable character and Kubera gained the position of Dhanaadyaksha and one of the Ashtapalakas of the Universe. Vishwamitra the illustrious son of Gaadhi a Kshatriya by birth attained the status of an elevated Brahmana by the dint of perseverance, tapsya and conduct. The King should perfectly understand the aspirations of the common persons of the day especially in avoiding the pitfalls of co-Kings and most unhesitatingly try to initiate steps in constructing such a Capital City and never even seek to his own personal comfort but ensure his deputies and staff as well as the public of the Kingdom to live with comfort and safety. Towards this end, he needs to construct a fortress protected by vagaries of seasons and possible eventualities of diseases or natural disasters. Such a fortress of distinction and status be suitably equipped with defence forces to ensure safety from attacks of beasts, robbers, internal forces of revolution, external foes and such elements and fortified with weapons, grains, cattle and fodder, ample water and tools, as also Vidwans, artisans, and representatives of chatur varnas, and above all Purohitaas or Priests and Ritvigs to duly perform various smarta karmas of auspicious nature besides the shroutha karmas of daily agni karyas and Sacrifices. *Yajeta raajaa kratubhirvi vidhairaapta dakshinaih, dharmartham chaiva viprebhyo dadyaad bhogaan dhanaani cha/ Saanvatsarikamaaptaishcha raashtraadaahaarayad balim, syaachchaamnaayaparo loke varteta pitrivatnrishu/* The King has to be such as always engaged in Ashwamedhaadi yajnas attracting learned Brahmins to receive gifts and charities of golden ornaments, precious clothes and so on besides providing

employment to workers as also the participating crowds of public with feasts. Indeed the King is stated more than a father and protector of the interests of one and all. As the citizens of the Kingdom are responsive of the noble activities of the King and the band of his officials of commitment ensuring peace and safety, the taxes are paid on time and general business climate is salutary and hence the economy is sound and attracts investments from the public and from foreign kingdoms too. Besides plugging in loopholes of business transactions, the King too motivate the officials down the line with incentives, moral persuasion and punishments against inefficiency or corruption. As Brahmana Vidyathis emerge out of Guru Kula after Vedaadhyayana are suitably gifted and trained for more and more tough assignments to preserve and promote dharmacharana since *nidhir braahmanobhi dheeyate* or indeed Brahmanas are the treasures installed by the Kings that could neither be lost nor robbed; such treasures could also not be split, nor perish as they are ever-sustained by the purity and blaze of Agni itself. *Samamabraahmane daanam dvigunam braahmanabrue, praadheete shataaahasramanantam veda -paarage/ Paatrasya hi visheshena shraddadhaanatayaiva cha, alpam vaa bahu vaa pretya daanasya phalamashnute/* While charity is offered to any of Varnas then there would be good returns of ‘sukrita phala’, but once that daana is given to a Brahmana the returns get doubled; once that daanas are executed to a well read and knowledgeable Brahmana, the fruits get further intensified hundred thousand fold, while the recipient is a Veda Vedanga paaranga, then he demands ‘anantha phala’! Even if a ‘daana’ were given as per one’s own ability, then undoubtedly a deserving status is accomplished in the higher worlds.]

Sarga Sixty Eight

Vashishtha despaches messengers to Kaikeya kingdom to bring Bharata along with Shatrughna

Teṣāṃ tadvacanāṃ śrutvā vasiṣṭhaḥ pratyuvāca ha, mitrāmātyagaṇān sarvān brāhmaṇāṃs tān idaṃ vacaḥ/ yad asau mātulakule pure rājagrhe sukhī, bharato vasati bhrātrā śatrughnena samanvitaḥ/ tac chīghraṃ javanā dūtā gacchantu tvaritair hayaiḥ, ānetuṃ bhrātarau vīrau kiṃ samīkṣāmahe vayam/ gacchantv iti tataḥ sarve vasiṣṭhaṃ vākyam abruvan, teṣāṃ tadvacanāṃ śrutvā vasiṣṭho vākyam abravīt/ ehi siddhārtha vijaya jayantāsokanandana, śrūyatām itikartavyaṃ sarvān eva bravīmi vaḥ, puram rājagrham gatvā śīghraṃ śīghrajavair hayaiḥ, tyaktaśokair idaṃ vācyāḥ śāsanād bharato mama/ Purohitas tvām kuśalam prāha sarve ca mantriṇaḥ, tvaramāṇas ca niryāhi kṛtyam ātyayikaṃ tvayā/ mā cāsmāi proṣitam rāmaṃ mā cāsmāi pitarāṃ mṛtam, bhavantaḥ śamsiṣur gatvā rāghavaṇām imāṃ kṣayam/ kauṣeyāni ca vastrāṇi bhūṣaṇāni varāṇi ca, kṣipram ādāya rājñas ca bharatasya ca gacchata, vasiṣṭhenābhyanujñātā dūtāḥ saṃtvaritā yayuḥ/ te hastina pure gaṅgām tīrtvā pratyānmukhā yayuḥ, pāñcāladesam āsādy madhyena kurujāṅgalam/ te prasannodakām divyām nānāvihagasevitām, upātijagmur vegena śaradaṇḍām janākulām/ nikūlavṛkṣam āsādy divyām satyopayācanam, abhigamyābhivādyāṃ tam kuliṅgām prāviśan purīm/ abhikālam tataḥ prāpya tejo’bhībhavanāc cyutāḥ, yayur madhyena bāhlikān sudāmānam ca parvatam, viṣṇoḥ padaṃ prekṣamānā vipāsām cāpi śālmālīm/ te śrāntavāhanā dūtā vikṣṭena satā pathā, giri vrajam pura varam śīghram āsedur añjasā/ bhartuḥ priyārtham kularakṣaṇārtham; bhartuś ca vaṃśasya parigrahārtham, aheḍamānās tvarayā sma dūtā; rātryām tu te tat puram eva yātāḥ/

As Maharshis like Markandeya exhorted Maharshi Vasishtha about the urgency of appointing a King in place of the deceased King Dasharatha, the latter replied that Bharata was already nominated as the King of Ayodhya but as of then Bharata along with his younger brother had gone to his maternal uncle’s Kingdom on a holiday. Then as the Maharshis suggested, Maharshi Vasishtha had then instructed five horsemen named Siddhardha-Vijaya-Ashoka - and Nandana to race up their horses to Rajagriha Nagara and bring Bharata and Shatrughnas as quickly. The Maharshi briefed that they ought not to mention even one inkling about the developments at Ayodhya about the King’s passing away, or Rama-Sita-Lakshmana’s going for long time vana vaasa and so on. They should only convey : *Purohitas tvām kuśalam prāha sarve ca mantriṇaḥ, tvaramāṇas ca niryāhi kṛtyam ātyayikaṃ tvayā/* Bharata Shatrughna Kumaras! Purohita Vasishtha Maharshi and all the Ministers have the pleasure of sending their best

wishes and enquiries of your welfare. The Purohita has requested both of you to return at once as he informed that there was a very urgent matter concerning you. *mā cāsmāi proṣitam rāmaṁ mā cāsmāi pītarāṁ mṛtam, bhavantaḥ śaṁsiṣur gatvā rāghavāṅām imāṁ kṣayam/* Even by mistake or slip of tongue you ought not mention that Rama had proceeded for vana vaasa and thus King Dasharatha had passed away. Then to Bharata Shatrughnas were sent gifts and silk clothes. As per instructions the horsemen proceeded forth with and on way rested for a while and further crossed the Aparnaal Mountain and towards the south having reached Pralamba giri crossed River Maalini. Then they further crossed Hastinapura's Ganga, reached Panchala Desha, Sharadanda, Kulinga, River Ikshumati as was worshipped by King Dasharatha, Bahmaaka Desha, Sudama Parvata, venerated Vishnu Paada on the mountain top, then moved o towards Pipaasha River. By did desire to halt for the night as they were dead tired at the township of Girivraja but having indeed recalled the instructions of the Maharshi and hence had to hurry up by the exhausted horses to reach the Royal Palace.

Sarga Sixty Nine

As messengers arrive at Bharata's place, the latter felt 'dussvapnas' early morning

Yām eva rātriṁ te dūtāḥ praviśanti sma tām purīm, bharatenāpi tām rātriṁ svapno dṛṣṭo 'yam apriyaḥ vyuṣṭām eva tu tām rātriṁ dṛṣṭvā tam svapnam apriyam, putro rājādhirājasya subhṛṣam paryatapyata/ tapyamānam samājñāya vayasyāḥ priyavādināḥ, āyāsam hi vineṣyantaḥ sabhāyām cakrire kathāḥ/ vādayanti tathā śāntim lāsayanty api cāpare, nātakāny apare prāhur hāsyāni vividhāni ca/ sa tair mahātmā bharataḥ sakhibhiḥ priya vādibhiḥ, goṣṭhīhāsyāni kurvadbhir na prāhṛṣyata rāghavaḥ/ tam abravīt priyasakho bharataḥ sakhibhir vṛtam, suhṛdbhiḥ paryupāsīnaḥ kim sakhe nānumodase/ evaṁ bruvāṇam suhṛdam bharataḥ pratyuvāca ha, śṛṇu tvam yan nimittam me dainyam etad upāgatam/ svapne pītarāṁ adrākṣam malināṁ muktamūrdhajam, patantam adriśikharāt kaluṣe gomaye hrade/ plavamānaś ca me dṛṣṭaḥ sa tasmin gomayahrade, pibann añjalīnā tailam hasann iva muhur muhuḥ/tatas tilodanam bhuktvā punaḥ punar adhaḥśirāḥ, tailenābhyaktasarvāṅgas tailam evāvagāhata/ svapne 'pi sāgaram śuṣkām candram ca patitam bhuvi, sahasā cāpi saṁsantam jvalitam jātavedasam/ avadīrṇām ca pṛthivīm śuṣkāmś ca vividhān drumān, aham paśyāmi vidhvastān sadhūmāmś caiva pārvatān/ pīṭhe kārṣṇāyase cainam niṣaṇṇam kṛṣṇavāsasam, prahasanti sma rājānam pramadāḥ kṛṣṇapiṅgalāḥ/ tvaramānaś ca dharmātmā raktamālyānulepanaḥ, rathena kharayuktena prayāto dakṣiṇāmukhaḥ/ evam etan mayā dṛṣṭam imām rātriṁ bhayāvahām, aham rāmo 'tha vā rājā lakṣmaṇo vā mariṣyati/ naro yānena yaḥ svapne kharayuktena yāti hi, acirāt tasya dhūmāgram citāyām saṁpradṛṣyate, etanimittam dīno 'ham tan na vaḥ pratipūjaye/śuṣyatīva ca me kaṇṭho na svastham iva me manaḥ, jugupsann iva cātmānam na ca paśyāmi kāraṇam/ imām hi duḥsvapnagatiṁ niśāmya tām; anekarūpām avitarkitām purā, bhayaṁ mahat tad dhr̥dayān na yāti me; vicintya rājānam acintyadarśanam/

Even at the arrival of the Nagar, in the small hours of that morning , Bharata has had a very inauspicious dream and having called a few close friends , expressed his anxiety about it . The dear friends rejected the dream and sought by diverting his anxiety; some took to instrumental music, some soothened by dances and hilarious jokes, but Bharata was the least amused. Then he described about the bad dream; he said that in the dream he saw his father; his face was dirty, his hairs were uncouth, and he appeared to have fallen into a mass of mud from a mountain top. That mud was of excretion of a cow. Then he was applying oil, consuming flows of it and was swimming in it. His face was pale and dry as of a dried up ocean, as Moon fell down on earth. The entire earth was shaking in swings as though there were repetitive quakes. Mountains were breaking down with their sides falling down with thunderous thuds emitting heavy smokes all around. King Dasharatha was seated on a black boulder wearing black clothes as black women were abusing and beating him. Dharmatma Dashratha was wearing a blood red garland with red sanders wood powder besmeared all over his body seated on a donkey which was braying away towards the southern direction. One raakshasi female was forcibly drawing the donkey cart. This type of a horrifying dream in the early hours of the day break is indeed alarming prognosting the death of a person,

be it a father, or a brother! *naro yānena yaḥ svapne kharayuktena yāti hi, acirāt tasya dhūmāgraṁ citāyām sampradrśyate, etannimittam dīno 'haṁ tan na vaḥ pratipūjaye/śuśyatīva ca me kaṅṭho na svastham iva me manaḥ, jugupsann iva cātmānam na ca paśyāmi kāraṇam/* This type of horrible and frightening dream is badly impacting me with with terror, as my voice is sinking, my vision is fading, my faculties of smell and hearing are thinning too ! *Imām hi duḥsvapnagatim niśāmya tām; anekarūpām avitarkitām purā, bhayaṁ mahat tad dhṛdayān na yāti me; vicintya rājānam acintyadarśanam/* Friends!What all I have never even thought of or imagined, but I have had the most frightening and lurking feeling of Maha Raja Dasharatha appeared in my unforgettable dream of nerve shattering kind!

Sarga Seventy

Ayodhya's messengers arrive at Bharat's maternal uncle's palace, bring gifts and message to return

Bharate bruvati svapnam dūtās te klāntavāhanāḥ, praviśyāsahyaparikham ramaṁ rājagṛham puram/ samāgama tu rājñā ca rājanputreṇa cārcitāḥ, rājñāḥ pādau gṛhītvā tu tam ūcur bharataṁ vacaḥ/ Purohitastwaam kushalam praaha sarvecha Mantrinah, tvaramaanascha nirhyaahikrityakrityamaatyayikam tvayaa/ atra viṁśatikoṭyas tu nṛpater mātulasya te, daśakoṭyas tu sampūrṇās tathaiva ca nṛpātmaja/ pratigṛhya ca tat sarvaṁ svanuraktaḥ suhṛjjanē, dūtān uvāca bharataḥ kāmāiḥ sampratipūjya tām/ kaccit sukuśalī rājā pitā daśaratho mama, kaccic cārāgatā rāme lakṣmaṇe vā mahātmani/ āryā ca dharmaniratā dharmajñā dharmadarśinī, arogā cāpi kausalyā mātā rāmasya dhīmataḥ/ kaccit sumitrā dharmajñā janānī lakṣmaṇasya yā, śatrughnasya ca vīrasya sārōgā cāpi madhyamā/ ātmakāmā sadā caṇḍī krodhanā prājñamāninī, arogā cāpi kaikeyī mātā me kim uvāca ha/ evam uktās tu te dūtā bharatena mahātmanā, ūcuḥ sampraśritam vākyam idam tam bharataṁ tadā, kuśalās te naravyāghra yeṣāṁ kuśalam icchasi/ bharataḥ cāpi tām dūtān evam ukto 'bhyabhāṣata, āpṛcche 'haṁ mahārājāṁ dūtāḥ samtvarayanti mām/ evam uktvā tu tām dūtān bharataḥ pārthivātmajaḥ, dūtāiḥ samcodito vākyam mātāmaham uvāca ha/ rājan pitur gamiśyāmi sakāśam dūtacoditaḥ, punar apy aham eśyāmi yadā me tvaṁ smarīsyasi/ bharatenaivam uktas tu nṛpo mātāmahas tadā, tam uvāca śubham vākyam śīrasy āghrāya rāghavam/ gaccha tātānujāne tvām kaikeyī suprajās tvayā, mātaram kuśalam brūyāḥ pitaram ca paramtapa/ purohitam ca kuśalam ye cānye dvijasattamāḥ, tau ca tāta maheśvāsau bhrātaru rāmalakṣmaṇau/ tasmai hastyuttamāṁś citrān kambalān ajināni ca, abhisatṛtya kaikeyo bharatāya dhanam dadau/ rukma niṣkasahasre dve ṣoḍaśāśvaśatāni ca, satṛtya kaikeyī putram kekayo dhanam ādiśat/ tathāmātyān abhipretān viśvāsyāṁś ca guṇān vitān, dadāv aśvapatiḥ śīghram bharatāyānujāyinaḥ/ airāvatān aindraśīrān nāgān vai priyadarśanān, kharāñ śīghrān samyuktān mātulo 'smai dhanam dadau/ antaḥpure 'tisamvṛddhān vyāghravīryabalān vitān damṣṭrāyudhān mahākāyāñ śunāś copāyanam dadau/ sa mātāmaham āpṛcchya mātulam ca yudhājitam, ratham āruhya bharataḥ śatrughnasahito yayau/ rathān maṇḍalacakrāmś ca yojayitvā paraśsatam, uśtrago 'śvakharair bhṛtyā bharataṁ yāntam anvayuh/ balena gupto bharato mahātmā; sahāryakasyātmasamair amātyaiḥ, ādāya śatrughnam apetaśatrur; gṛhād yayau siddha ivendralokāt/

As Bharata was detailing the early morning dream of distress to his friends and gradually recovered by its impact, the messengers from Ayodhya arrived and having touched the feet of the Raja Kumara stated: *Purohitastwaam kushalam praaha sarvecha Mantrinah, tvaramaanascha nirhyaahi krityakrityamaatyayikam tvayaa/* Kumara! Purohita Vashishtha and all the Ministers would like to convey their blessings to you. They would like you to return to Ayodhya urgently on some official business. Then the messengers offered him valuable clothes and gifts, of which twenty crores were meant for the King of Kaikeya and ten crores meant for the Kumara's maternal uncle. Accordingly all the gifts were distributed by Bharata personally. Thereafter Bharata enquired of the welfare of each and everybody at Ayodhya: *kaccit sukuśalī rājā pitā daśaratho mama, kaccic cārāgatā rāme lakṣmaṇe vā mahātmani/ āryā ca dharmaniratā dharmajñā dharmadarśinī, arogā cāpi kausalyā mātā rāmasya dhīmataḥ/ kaccit sumitrā dharmajñā janānī lakṣmaṇasya yā, śatrughnasya ca vīrasya sārōgā cāpi madhyamā/ ātmakāmā sadā caṇḍī krodhanā prājñamāninī, arogā cāpi kaikeyī mātā me kim uvāca ha/* I hope my dear father the King Dashradha is

happy and so do my famed elder brother Shri Rama. Trust the ever ‘dharma paraayana’ mother Devi Koshaulya contented and safe as ever. Also I hope brother Lakshmana and the ‘dharmagjna’ co-mother Devi Sumitra are happy. Further more, how is my own mother who is ever selfish for her reasons of self pride and superiority Devi Kaikayi!’ As Bharata enquired of all the family members at Ayodhya, the messengers conveyed the welfare of them all and most respectfully reminded him to be ready for the return travel at once. Then Bharata approached the maternal grand father and having respectfully prostrated to him stated that he was urgently required at Ayodhya for some official duty. The King then touched Bharata’s head as a gesture of blessing . Similarly Bharata reached the maternal uncle with affection and was sent off with several elephants, tiger skins, valuable gifts of two thousand gold coins and jewellery, hundreds of well trained and faithful dogs, horses and elephants, and groups of body built and ever loyal personal attendant soldiers. Thus having recieved a ceremonial send off, Bharata along with the younger brother Shatrughna sat comfortably in the chariot with hundreds of soldiers, elephants, horses and innumerable and invaluable gifts behind and ahead.

Sarga Seventy One

Bharata Shatrughnas arrive at Ayodhya and found the city as silent and listless!

*Sa prānmukho rājagṛhād abhiniryāya vīryavān, hrādinīm dūrapārām ca pratyaksrotas taraṅgiṇīm,
śatadrūm atarac chrīmān nadīm ikṣvākunandanah/ eladhāne nadīm tīrtvā prāpya cāparaparpatān, śilām
ākurvātīm tīrtvā āgneyam śalyakartanam/ satyasaṁdhaḥ śuciḥ śrīmān prekṣamāṇaḥ śilāvahām, atyayāt
sa mahāśailān vanam caitraratham prati/ veginīm ca kuliṅgākhyām hrādinīm parvatāvṛtām, yamunām
prāpya samtūrno balam āśvāsayat tadā/ śītīkṛtya tu gātrāṇi klāntān āśvāsya vājinaḥ, tatra snātvā ca pītvā
ca prāyād ādāya codakam/ rājaputro mahāranyam anabhīkṣnopasevitam, bhadro bhadreṇa yānena
mārutaḥ kham ivātyayāt/ toraṇam dakṣiṇārdhena jambūprastham upāgamat, varūtham ca yayau ramyam
grāmaṁ daśarathātmajaḥ/ tatra ranye vane vāsam kṛtvāsau prānmukho yayau, udyānam ujjihānāyāḥ
priyakā yatra pādapāḥ/ sālāms tu priyakān prāpya śīghrān āsthāya vājinaḥ, anujñāpyātha bharato
vāhinīm tvarito yayau/ vāsam kṛtvā sarvatīrthe tīrtvā cottānakām nadīm, anyā nadīs ca vividhāḥ
pārvatīyais turaṅgamaiḥ/ hastipṛṣṭhakam āśādya kuṭikām atyavartata, tatāra ca naravyāghro lauhitye sa
kapīvatīm, ekasāle sthāṇumatīm vinate gomatīm nadīm/ kaliṅga nagare cāpi prāpya sālavanam tadā,
bharataḥ kṣipram āgacchat supariśrāntavāhanaḥ/ vanam ca samatīyāsu śarvayām aruṇodaye,
ayodhyām manunā rājñā nirmītām sa dadarśa ha/ tām purīm puruṣavyāghraḥ saptarātroṣiṭaḥ pathi,
ayodhyām agrato dṛṣtvā rathe sārathim abravīt/ eṣā nātipratītā me puṇyodyānā yaśasvinī, ayodhyā
dṛṣyate dūrāt sārathē pāṇḍumṛttikā/ yajvabhīr guṇasaṁpannair brāhmaṇair vedapāragaiḥ, bhūyiṣṭham
ṛṣhair ākīrṇā rājarṣivarapālītā/ ayodhyāyām purāśabdah śrūyate tumulo mahān, samantān naranārīṇām
tam adya na śṛṇomy aham/ udyānāni hi sāyāhne krīḍitvoparatair naraiḥ, samantād vipradhāvadbhiḥ
prakāśante mamānyadā/ tāny adyānurudantīva parityaktāni kāmibhiḥ, araṇyabhūteva purī sārathē
pratibhātī me/ na hy atra yānair dṛṣyante na gajair na ca vājibhiḥ, niryānto vābhīyānto vā naramukhyā
yathāpuram/ aniṣṭāni ca pāpāni paśyāmi vividhāni ca, nimittāny amanojñāni tena sīdati te manaḥ/
dvāreṇa vaijayantena prāviśac chrāntavāhanaḥ, dvāḥsthair utthāya vijayam pṛṣṭas taiḥ sahito yayau/ sa
tv anekāgrahḍayo dvāḥstham pratyarcya tam janame sūtam āśvapateḥ klāntam abravīt tatra rāghavaḥ
śrutā no yādṛśāḥ pūrvaṁ nṛpatīnām vināśane, ākārās tām aham sarvān iha paśyāmi sārathē/ malinam
cāśrupūrṇākṣam dīnam dhyānaparam kṛśam, sastrī puṁsam ca paśyāmi janam utkaṇṭhitam pure/ ity
evam uktvā bhārataḥ sūtam tam dīnamānasah, tāny aniṣṭāny ayodhyāyām prekṣya rājagṛham yayau/ tām
śūnyaśṛṅgātakaveśmarathyām; rajo ruṇadvārakapāṭayantrām, dṛṣtvā purīm indrapurī prakāśām;
duḥkhena saṁpūrṇataro babhūva/ bahūni paśyan manaso ’priyāni; yāny annyadā nāsyā pure babhūvuḥ,
avākṣirā dīnāmanā nahṛṣṭaḥ; pitur mahātmā praviveśa veśma/*

From Raja Griha , Bharata Shatrughnas proceeded towards rivers Sudama and further to Hladini and Shatadru (Satlej) and reached Aparaparvat named village and further to Shila River where ‘shilpis’ were famed for their ‘shilpa vidya’ or rock carvings. Then they reached the sangama place of Sarasvati and

Ganga, and having crossed River Kulinga and reached the banks of Punya Nadi Yamuna. As the horses and the entourage were tired, Bharata-Shatrughna Kumaras had refreshing baths. Proceeding further, they reached Amshudhana village near Bhagirathi Ganga and on to the renowned Pragvat Nagara. Having crossed Ganga, they reached Kutikoshthi rivulet, Torana graama, Jambuprastha, and Varuthaka village. They spent the night in a garden with tall trees and scented flowers. The next halt was at Kadamba Gardens. There after, he hurried up to be able to cross the villages of Sarva Tirtha- Hasti prishthak-Rivers Kutika-Kapeevati-village Ekasaala-Vinata graama-and having crossed Gomati river banks and Saala vana near Kalinga nagara. As the horses and the soldiers were all dead tired they spent the next night too at Saala Vana. By the next day break, Bharata witnessed the ancient Ayodhya which was built by Manu. On the eighth day of their departure from Raja Griha, the entourage of Bharata was able to see Ayodhya from a distance. *eṣā nātipratītā me puṇyodyānā yaśasvinī, ayodhyā dṛśyate dūrāt sārathē pāṇḍumṛttikā/ yajvahir guṇasaṃpannair brāhmaṇair vedapāragaiḥ, bhūyiṣṭham ṛṣhair ākīrṇā rājarṣivarapālītā/ ayodhyāyām purāśabdāḥ śrūyate tumulo mahān, samantān naranārīṇām tam adya na śṛṇomy aham/* Having seen the famed city of Ayodhya Bharata felt rather surprised and addressed the ‘saraathi’ who had arrived from Ayodhya, he stated: how come that this ever active and bristling city with rushing up citizens on the principal roads of approach were almost empty; this city is famed for alluring gardens, yajna karyas, veda brahmanas, traders, business men, market places, and the high pitched noises of crowds! *Drishyante vaanijopyadya na yathaapurvamatra vai, dhyana samvignahridaya nashtavyaapaarayantritaah/* Worship of Deva Pratimas appears has stopped; flowers and garlands on sale in the markets are non existent; traders and shops are absent, what indeed is the reason for all this! *tāny adyānurudantīva parityaktāni kāmibhiḥ, aranyabhūteva purī sārathē pratibhāti me/ na hy atra yānair dṛśyante na gajair na ca vājibhiḥ, niryānto vābhīyānto vā naramukhyā yathāpuram/ aniṣṭāni ca pāpāni paśyāmi vividhāni ca, nimittāny amanojñāni tena sīdati te manaḥ/* Very normally as a daily routine, the evenings are crowded in the pulic gardens but they are all empty and these places are not only empty and the pavements are lying uncleaned and dirty as of several weeks! Sarathe! The City appears to be dead with no crowds, filthy and foul smellings like a forest! *ity evam uktvā bharataḥ sūtam tam dīnamānasāḥ, tāny aniṣṭāny ayodhyāyām prekṣya rājagrhaṃ yayau/* Bharata having expressed his utter shock of the state of Ayodhya proceeded to Raja Mahal . On the way a few onlookers were heard saying that the sheen of Ayodhya would never return again, Bharata stooped his head in shame!

Sarga Seventy Two

Bharata reaches Kaikeyi palace and hears the news of his father’s demise- Rama Sita Lakshmana ‘vana vaasa’ and Bharata’s rajyaabhisheka!

Apasyams tu tatas tatra pitaram pitur ālaye, jagāma bharato draṣṭum mātaram mātur ālaye/ anuprāptam tu tam dṛṣṭvā kaikeyī proṣitam sutam, utpapāta tadā hrṣṭā tyaktvā sauvarṇamānasam/ sa praviśyaiva dharmātmā svagrhaṃ śrīvivarjitam, bharataḥ prekṣya jagrāha jananyās caraṇau śubhau/ tam mūrdhni samupāghrāya pariśvajya yaśasvinam, anke bharatam āropya praṣṭum samupacakrame/ adya te kati cid rātryās cyutasyāryakaveśmanaḥ, api nādharmaḥ śīghram rathenāpatatas tava/ āryakas te sukuśalo yudhājīn mātulas tava, pravāsāc ca sukham putra sarvam me vaktum arhasi/ evam pṛṣṭhas tu kaikeyyā priyam pārthivanandanaḥ, ācaṣṭa bharataḥ sarvam mātṛe rājīvalocanaḥ/ adya me saptamī rātris cyutasyāryakaveśmanaḥ, ambāyāḥ kuśalī tāto yudhājīn mātulaś ca me/ yan me dhanam ca ratnam ca dadau rājā paramtapah, pariśrāntam pathy abhavat tato ’ham pūrvam āgataḥ/ rājāvākyaharair dūtais tvaryamāṇo ’ham āgataḥ, yad aham praṣṭum icchāmi tad ambā vaktum arhasi/ sūnyo ’yam śayanīyas te paryāṅko hemabhūṣitaḥ, na cāyam ikṣvākujanaḥ prahrṣṭaḥ pratibhāti me/ rājā bhavati bhūyiṣṭham ihāmbāyā niveśane, tam aham nādyā paśyāmi draṣṭum icchann ihāgataḥ/ pitur grahīṣye caraṇau tam mamākhyāhi pṛcchataḥ, āhosvid amba jyeṣṭhāyāḥ kausalyāyā niveśane/ tam pratyuvāca kaikeyī priyavad ghoram apriyam, ajānantam prajānantī rājyalobhena mohitā, yā gatiḥ sarvabhūtānām tām gatiṃ te pitā gataḥ/ tac chrutvā bharato vākyam dharmābhijanavāñ śuciḥ, papāta sahasā bhūmau piṭṛśokabalarīditaḥ/ tataḥ śokena samvītaḥ pitur maraṇaduhkhitaḥ, vilalāpa mahātejā bhrāntākulitacetanaḥ/ etat suruciram

bhāti pitur me śayanam purā, tad idam na vibhāty adya vihīnam tena dhīmatā/ tam ārtam devasamkāsam samīkṣya patitam bhūvi, utthāpayitvā śokārtam vacanam cedam abravīt/ uttiṣṭhottīṣṭha kim śeṣe rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ, tvadvidhā na hi śocanti santaḥ sadasi sammatāḥ/ sa rudatyā ciram kālam bhūmau viparivṛtya ca, janānīm pratyuvācedam śokair bahubhir āvṛtaḥ/ abhiṣekṣyati rāmam tu rājā yajñam nu yakṣyati, ity aham kṛtasamkalpo hṛṣṭo yātrām ayāśisam/ tad idam hy anyathā bhūtam vyavadīrṇam mano mama, pitaram yo na paśyāmi nityam priyahite ratam/ amba kenātyagād rājā vyādhinā mayy anāgate, dhanyā rāmādayaḥ sarve yaiḥ pitā saṁskṛtaḥ svayam/ na nūnam mām mahārājaḥ prāptam jānāti kīrtimān, upajighred dhi mām mūrdhni tātaḥ samnamya satvaram/ kva sa pāṇiḥ sukhasparśas tātasayākliṣṭakarmanāḥ, yena mām rajasā dhvastam abhīkṣṇam parimārjati/ yo me bhrātā pitā bandhur yasya dāso 'smi dhīmataḥ, tasya mām śīghram ākhyāhi rāmasyākliṣṭa karmanāḥ/ pitā hi bhavati jyeṣṭho dharmam āryasya jānataḥ, tasya pādau grahīṣyāmi sa hīdānīm gatir mama/ ārye kim abravīd rājā pitā me satyavikramaḥ, paścimam sādhusamdeśam icchāmi śrotum ātmanāḥ/ iti pṛṣṭā yathātattvam kaikeyī vākyam abravīt, rāmeti rājā vilapan hā sīte lakṣmaṇeti ca, sa mahātmā param lokam gato gatimatām varaḥ/ imām tu paścimām vācam vyājahāra pitā tava, kāla dharmaparīkṣiptaḥ pāśair iva mahāgajaḥ/ siddhārthās tu narā rāmam āgataḥ sītayā saha, lakṣmaṇam ca mahābāhum drakṣyanti punar āgatam/ tac chrutvā viśasādaiva dvitīyā priyaśamsanāt, viśaṅṅavadano bhūtvā bhūyaḥ papraccha mātaram/ kva cedānīm sa dharmātmā kausalyānandavardhanaḥ, lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātrā sītayā ca samam gataḥ/ tathā pṛṣṭā yathātattvam ākhyātum upacakrame, mātāsya yugapad vākyam vipriyam priyaśankayā/ sa hi rājasutaḥ putra cīravāsā mahāvanam, daṇḍakān saha vaidehyā lakṣmaṇānucaro gataḥ/ tac chrutvā bharatas trasto bhrātus cāritraśankayā, svasya vaṁśasya mātmyāt praṣṭum samupacakrame/ kaccin na brāhmaṇavadham hṛtam rāmeṇa kasya cit, kaccin nāḍhyo daridro vā tenāpāpo vihimsitaḥ/ kaccin na paradārān vā rājaputro 'bhimanyate, kasmāt sa daṇḍakārāṇye bhrūṇaheva vivāsitaḥ/ athāsya capalā mātā tat svakarma yathātatham, tenaiva strīsvabhāvena vyāhartum upacakrame/ na brāhmaṇa dhanam kimcid dhṛtam rāmeṇa kasya cit, kaś cin nāḍhyo daridro vā tenāpāpo vihimsitaḥ, na rāmaḥ paradārāmś ca cakṣurbhyām api paśyati/ mayā tu putra śrutvaiva rāmasyaivābhiṣecanam, yācitas te pitā rājyam rāmasya ca vivāsanam/ sa svavṛttim samāsthāya pitā te tat tathākarot, rāmas ca sahasaumitriḥ preṣitaḥ saha sītayā/ tam apaśyan priyam putram mahīpālo mahāyaśaḥ, putrasokaparidyūnaḥ pañcatvam upapedivān/ tvayā tv idānīm dharmajña rājatvam avalambyatām, tvatkr̥te hi mayā sarvam idam evamvidham kṛtam/ tat putra śīghram vidhinā vidhijñair; vasiṣṭhamukhyaiḥ sahito dvijendraiḥ, samkālya rājānam adīnasattvam; ātmānam urvyām abhiṣecayasva/

Presuming that he would visit the King's palace later, Bharata foremost visited his mother's palace and on seeing the appearance of Bharata, Kaikeyi sprang up from her golden chair with excitement. He found his palace was looking unbecoming inside out, he touched his mother's feet. She embraced the sons and as they were seated, she initiated the conversation: my sons, I have missed you for long as you had gone to the maternal uncle's kingdom; how was the journey; hope all is well there; are you tired! Having nodded his head positively, he said that it was a week or so that he left his maternal grand father's place and all were safe and happy there and we were sent off with numberless gifts and memories. But tell me mother, why are you looking pale and lonely! Is the father not here; I have actually felt that father would be here itself, and that is why I preferred coming here itself first! Tell me where and how is dear father! Is he with mother Kousalya! Then Kaikeyi kept silent for a moment and thought that as Bharata was totally unaware of the factual situation that it was out of her self avarice which brought about her husbands's death, she responded slowly: *yā gatīḥ sarvabhūtānām tām gatim te pitā gataḥ/ tac chrutvā bharato vākyam dharmābhijanavāñ śuciḥ, papāta sahasā bhūmau piṭṛśokabalārditaḥ/* 'Son! Your dear father King Dasharadha, a great Mahatma, Tejasvi, Yajna sheela, satpurusha's ashaya, one night had reached where all the human beings finally should reach!' On hearing this stunning news suddenly, Bharata shouted loudly, cried broken down instantly and swooned down. On recovering senses gradually, he crawled up to the father's bed and cried that the bed was like a moon less sky and like dried up 'maha samudra'! Having burst out like wise, he crawled and rolled in rounds under the raised bed symbolically. Having gradually pacifying Bharata for good time, Kaikeyi addressed Bharata: *uttiṣṭhottīṣṭha kim śeṣe rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ, tvadvidhā na hi śocanti santaḥ sadasi sammatāḥ/ sa rudatyā ciram kālam bhūmau*

viparivṛtya ca, jananīm pratyuvācedam śokair bahubhir āvṛtaḥ abhiṣekṣyati rāmam tu rājā yajñam nu yakṣyati, ity aham kṛtasamkalpo hr̥ṣṭo yātrām ayāsiṣam/ tad idam hy anyathā bhūtam vyavadīrṇam mano mama, pitaram yo na paśyāmi nityam priyahite ratam/ ‘Raja! please get up as you are fallen on earth in this manner. You are worthy of being honoured in Royal Courts and your responsibility is of a King in the making. Dear son! Your mental sharpness at this juncture as the King of Ayodhya ought to be akin to the supreme brightness of Surya Deva; you should now on be the figure of top authority of daana-dharamas- vedic karyas and all such responsibilities of a King.’ Then Bharata was further stunned and said: I had rightfully imagined that I was being called back from my maternal grandfather to join the celebrations of Shri Rama’s ‘yuva rajatva’! But on the contrary King Dasharatha is no more! What had happened to him! Did he take ill suddenly. Rama has to now take over the entire responsibility of ‘antyeshti!’ Now: *yo me bhrātā pitā bandhur yasya dāso ’smi dhīmataḥ, tasya mām śīghram ākhyāhi rāmasyākliṣṭa karmaṇaḥ/ pitā hi bhavati jyeṣṭho dharmam āryasya jānataḥ, tasya pādau grahīṣyāmi sa hīdānīm gatir mama/* Rama is my brother, father, relative and my dearest; please urgently send intimation Rama of my arrival. Those who are aware of the nuances of dharma are indeed aware that the elder brother is as good as one’s father himself and as such I seek his asylum!’ *Iti prushthaa yathaatvatvam Kaikeyi vaakyababaveet, Rameti Rajaa vilapan haa Seete Lakshmaneti cha, sa mahatmaa param lokam gato matimataam varah/siddhārthās tu narā rāmam āgataṁ sītayā saha, lakṣmaṇam ca mahābhūm drakṣyanti punar āgatam/* As Bharata was insisting on Rama’s presence there, Kaikeyi cleverly and indirectly worded that the King Dasharatha took his last breathing crying: ‘Alas Rama, alas Sita, alas Lakshmana. While dying, he also expressed that those could witness Rama accompanied by Devi Sita and Lakshmana would be blessed.’ Innocently inquisitive Bharata asked as to where Rama Sita Lakshmanas had gone! Kaikeyi replied craftily that they were dressed in ‘mriga charma’ and departed for ‘dandakaranya’! Bharata kept on wondering as to why they had left likewise! Had Rama’s ‘dharma paraayanata’ which had been the hallmark of the Vamsha got degenerated! He interrogated Kaikeyi: Had Rama looted some body or killed an innocent! Hope Rama was not involved with another woman! *Kasmaat sa dandakaaranye bhrataa Raamo vivaasitah/* Why indeed Rama was punished and banished for ‘vana vaasa’? Then having seized of the seriousness of the situation, Kaikeyi revealed: ‘neither Rama looted and killed a brahmana, nor he had illicit love affair; but: *mayā tu putra śrutvaiva rāmasyaivābhiṣecanam, yācitas te pitā rājyam rāmasya ca vivāsanam/ sa svavṛttiṁ samāsthāya pitā te tat tathākarot, rāmaś ca sahasaumitriḥ preṣitaḥ saha sītayā/ tam apaśyan priyam putram mahīpālo mahāyaśāḥ, putraśokaparidyūnaḥ pañcatvam upapedivān/* Dear son! Let me now tell you the truthful reality: I had realised that King Dasharatha decided to celebrate the Yuva Raja Abhisheka to Rama and I requested that this opportunity be afforded in your favour and suggested that Rama be banished for ‘vana vaasa’. King Dasharatha recalling the two boons granted to me in the past and being a basic follower of Truthfulness, he conceded to my requests. As Sita and Lakshmana also decided to accompany Rama, they too accompanied Rama. As they proceeded to ‘vana vaasa’, the outstanding follower of ‘dharma and nyaya’, your father died of ‘putra shoka’. This indeed is the truthful reality. *tvayā tv idānīm dharmajña rājatvam avalambyatām, tvatkṛte hi mayā sarvam idam evamvidham kṛtam/ tat putra śīghram vidhinā vidhijñair; vasiṣṭhamukhyaiḥ sahito dvijendraiḥ, samkālya rājānam adīnasattvam; ātmānam urvyām abhiṣecayasva/* Now, My son of virtue, do assume the honour of Kingship as I have nicely crafted every detail; do not cry now and face the situation with firmness and as per dharma. Now, Kingship is right at your feet. So brace up the opportunity on hand with bravery, firmness and commitment! As all the arrangements have been tied up by no less than Maharshi Vasishtha himself, get ready of the Rajyabhisheka!’

Sarga Seventy Three

The rattled up Bharata protests violently and detests Kaikeyi’s evil mindedness

Shrivā tu pitaram vṛttam bhrātaru ca vivāsitau, bharato duḥkhasamtapta idam vacanam abravīt/ kim nunākāryam hatasyeha mama rājyena śocataḥ, vihīnasyātha pitrā ca bhrātrā piṭṛsamena ca/ duḥkhe me

duḥkham akaror vraṇe kṣāram ivādadhāḥ, rājānam pretabhāvastham kṛtvā rāman ca tāpasam/ kulasya tvam abhāvāya kālarātrir ivāgatā, aṅgāram upagūhya sma pitā me nāvabuddhavān/ kausalyā ca sumitrā ca putraśokābhīpīḍite, duṣkaram yadi jīvetām prāpya tvām jananiṁ mama/ nanu tv āryo 'pi dharmātmā tvayi vṛttim anuttamām, vartate guruvṛttijño yathā mātari vartate/ tathā jyeṣṭhā hi me mātā kausalyā dīrghadarśinī, tvayi dharmam samāsthāya bhaginyām iva vartate/ tasyāḥ putram kṛtātmānam cīravalkalavāsasam, prasthāpya vanavāsāya katham pāpe na śocasi/ apāpadarśinam śūram kṛtātmānam yaśasvinam, pravrajya cīravasanam kim nu paśyasi kāraṇam/ lubdhāyā vidito manye na te 'ham rāghavam prati, tathā hy anartha rājyārtham tvayā nīto mahān ayam/ aham hi puruṣavyāghrāv apaśyan rāmalakṣmaṇau, kena śaktiprabhāvena rājyam rakṣitum utsahe/ tam hi nityam mahārājo balavantam mahābalaḥ, apāśrito 'bhūd dharmātmā merur meruvanam yathā/ so 'ham katham imam bhāram mahādhuryasamudyatam, damyo dhuram ivāsādyā saheyam kena caujaśā/ atha vā me bhavec chaktir yogair buddhibalena vā, sakāmām na kariṣyāmi tvām aham putragardhinīm, nivartayiṣyāmi vanād bhrātaram svajanapriyam/ ity evam uktvā bharato mahātmā; priyetarair vākyagaṇais tudams tām, śokāturaś cāpi nanāda bhūyah; siṁho yathā parvatagahvarasthaḥ/

Having heard the double edged horrifying developments at Ayodhya of the King's agitated death and the vana vaasa of Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas, Bharata was shocked and wept non-stop, shouting away: 'what use now is my Kingship; is it a boon or curse! The double horror is the sudden death of the father and the vana vaasa of the father like elder brother! This is like applying a thick layer of salt on a blistering wound! Now I am sunk! *Kulasya tvam abhāvāya kālarātrir ivāgatā, aṅgāram upagūhya sma pitā me nāvabuddhavān/* Mother! You have literally killed me as you murdered my father and seperated me from my father- like elder brother! Having tortured me this way you have applied two heavy fire bricks on my heart and even now you are blind of the poisonous events and their evil consequences! You are a 'paapi' and 'kalankini'! You have ruined our lives! Tell me why you had tortured and harassed my exemplary father! Explain to me why you had turned off Rama out of his place of living! He is such outstanding example of virtue and modesty without one word in protest! You have also tortured Param Saadhvis Devis Kousalya and Sumitra with double horrors of father's death and vana vasa for their sons of fame and of untold modesty! Do you not recall that these two mothers have been treating me and Sharughna as her own sons training us in virtue and dutifulness. *apāpadarśinam śūram kṛtātmānam yaśasvinam, pravrajya cīravasanam kim nu paśyasi kāraṇam/ lubdhāyā vidito manye na te 'ham rāghavam prati, tathā hy anartha rājyārtham tvayā nīto mahān ayam/* No body on earth could point out even one blemish or indiscretion of Shri Rama; he used teach and train the younger brothers as to how to behave with gurus, co- mothers, co-brothers, and co human beings and even other beings providing as the mottos of 'treat others as treat one's own self'. Do you not recall how tenderly your co mothers have been treating you even when you never reciprocated! How dare you you insisted Rama Sita Lakshmanas to be attired in 'mriga charma'! Papini! Even a you could never discover even a single blemish in Rama! Now I cannot imagine as to what would be the outcome of this Kingdom as you have ruined it from its high pedestal of fame and name! Now without the support and confidence of 'Purusha Simhas' like Rama and Lakshmana, how indeed could I ensure the safety of this glorious kindim! Even Maha Rathi Dasharatha had been in the manner with which he had been banking on the outstanding bravery and confidence of Rama Lakshmanas! [Sarga six of the Essence of Vaalmiki Baala Ramayana is recalled about the warrior like King Dasharatha: 'the glorious 'Atiratha' who could face a battle of ten thousand 'Maha Rathaas' or great charioteers was an outstanding administrator with incredible far sight.] But now how indeed I could carry out this 'Rajya bhaara' or the heavy responsibility of Kingship! *Utpannaa tu katham buddhitaveyam paapadarshini, saadhu chaaritravibhrasththe purveshaam no vigarhitaah/Asmin kule hi sarveshaam jyeshtho Raajyebhishichyate, apare bhraatara -stasmin pravartane samaahitaah/* Durmati Kaikeyi! Even though you were an offspring of an outstanding heritage, some of my ancestors might have given a curse and that must have caused your ill famed birth. In this vamsha, the eldest son is only eligible to take over Kingship.[In fact, all over the universe, only 'primo geniture' or the first born, becomes the subsequent King!] *Na tu kaamam karishyaami tavaaham paapa nishchaye, yayaa vyanamaarabdam jeevitaanta -karam mama/* Sinful woman! The crooked and disgusting plan that you have devised shall most certainly

be a hopeless failure and I am not a party to this horrible sin; wretched woman! You have brought me to the brink of this most dangerous turn to my very life!’ So saying Bharata kept on crying aloud, but Kaikeyi roared like a hurt lioness in her cave!

Sarga Seventy Four

Bharata’s open protests against Kaikeyi

Tām tathā garhayitvā tu mātaram bharatas tadā, roṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭaḥ punar evābravīd vacaḥ/ rājyād bhramśasva kaikeyi nṛśamse duṣṭacāriṇi, parityaktā ca dharmeṇa mā mṛtaṁ rudatī bhava/ kiṁ nu te ’dūṣayad rājā rāmo vā bhṛṣadhārmikah, yayor mṛtyur vivāsaś ca tvatkṛte tulyam āgatau/ bhrūnahatyām asi prāptā kulasyāsyā vināśanāt, kaikeyi narakam gaccha mā ca bhartuḥ salokatām/ yat tvayā hīdṛśam pāpam kṛtam ghoreṇa karmanā, sarvalokapriyam hitvā mamāpy āpāditaṁ bhayam/ tvatkṛte me pitā vṛtto rāmaś cāraṇyam āśritaḥ, ayaśo jīvaloke ca tvayāham pratipāditaḥ / mātṛrūpe mamāmitre nṛśamse rājyakāmuke, na te ’ham abhibhāṣyo ’smi durvṛtte patighātiniṁ kausalyā ca sumitrā ca yāś cānyā mama mātaraḥ, duḥkhena mahatāviṣṭāś tvām prāpya kuladūṣiṇīm/ na tvam aśvapateḥ kanyā dharmarājasya dhīmataḥ, rākṣasī tatra jātasi kulapradhvamsinī pituḥ/ yat tvayā dhārmiko rāmo nityam satyaparāyaṇaḥ, vanam prasthāpito duḥkhāt pitā ca tridivam gataḥ/ yat pradhānāsi tat pāpam mayi pitrā vinākṛte, bhrātṛbhyaṁ ca parityakte sarvalokasya cāpriye/ kausalyām dharmasamnyuktām viyuktām pāpaniścaye, kṛtvā kam prāpsyase tv adya lokam nirayagāminī/ kiṁ nāvabudhyase krūre niyataṁ bandhusamśrayam, jyeṣṭham pitṛsamam rāmam kausalyāyātmasambhavam/ aṅgapratyaṅgajaḥ putro hṛdayāc cāpi jāyate, tasmāt priyataro mātuh priyatvān na tu bāndhavaḥ/ anyadā kila dharmajñā surabhiḥ surasammatā, vahamānau dadarśorvyām putrau vigatacetasau/ tāv ardhadivase śrāntau dṛṣṭvā putrau mahitale, ruroda putra śokena bāṣpaparyākulekṣaṇā/ adhastād vrajatas tasyāḥ surarājño mahātmanaḥ, bindavaḥ patitā gātre sūkṣmāḥ surabhigandhinaḥ/ tām dṛṣṭvā śokasamtaptām vajrapāṇir yaśasvinīm, indraḥ prāñjalir udvignaḥ surarājo ’bravīd vacaḥ/ bhayam kaccin na cāsmāsu kutaś cid vidyate mahat, kuto nimittaḥ śokas te brūhi sarvahitaiṣiṇi/ evam uktā tu surabhiḥ surarājena dhīmatā, patyuvāca tato dhīrā vākyam vākyaviśārādā/ śāntam pātam na vaḥ kiṁ cit kutaś cid amarādhipa, aham tu magnau śocāmi svaputrau viṣame sthitau/ etau dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇau dīnau sūryaraśmipratāpinau, vadhyamānau balīvardau karṣakeṇa surādhipa/ mama kāyāt prasūtau hi duḥkhitau bhāra pīḍitau, yau dṛṣṭvā paritapye ’ham nāsti putrasamaḥ priyaḥ/ yasyāḥ putra sahasrāṇi sāpi śocati kāmadhuk, kiṁ punar yā vinā rāmam kausalyā vartayiṣyati/ ekaputrā ca sādhvī ca vivatseyam tvayā kṛtā, tasmāt tvam satataṁ duḥkham pretya ceha ca lapsyase/ aham hy apacitīm bhrātuh pituś ca sakalām imām, vardhanam yaśasaś cāpi kariṣyāmi na samśayaḥ/ ānāyayitvā tanayam kausalyāyā mahādyutim, svayam eva pravekṣyāmi vanam muniniṣevitam/ iti nāga ivāraṇye tomarāṅkuśacoditaḥ, papāta bhuvī samkruddho niḥśvasann iva pannagaḥ/ samrakta netraḥ śithilāmbaras tadā; vidhūtasarvābharaṇaḥ paramtapaḥ, babhūva bhūmau patito nṛpātmajaḥ; śacīpateḥ keturivotsavakṣaye/

Bharata continued lashing his anger and hatred for his mother Kaikeyi! He said that she should be banished from the Kingdom as she had rolled down from the ‘Dharma shikharas’ or the mountain tops of dharma. Kaikeyi! as you have done the sin of ‘Kula vinashana’ you be deemed to have assumed the ‘bhruna hatya maha paapa’ killing a fertility egg and as such be cursed with ‘naraka yatana’ or the unimaginable experiences of hell.[Pancha Maha Patakas are stated as Stree hatya, Bhruna / Shishu hathya, Brahmana hatya, Go hatya and Guru hatya / Guru Bharya Gamana.] In other words, she should seek to cry for a still born child like me. Give me one justification as to why you have hastened dear father’s death, Rama Sita Lakshmana vana vaasa and as a corollary of ‘loka ninda’ or universal slander and denigration for me! *mātṛrūpe mamāmitre nṛśamse rājyakāmuke, na te ’ham abhibhāṣyo ’smi durvṛtte patighātini/* Owing to the avarice of becoming a King’s Mother you have now turned out as ‘dushta charini’ and ‘pati ghatini’ or cruel demoness and a killer of husband! You will go down in human history as an evil mother of an innocent son! Devis Kousalya and Sumitraas well as the mothers of the Kingdom have all been crushed in their thoughts just because of your arrogance and high - handedness.Indeed you

are not to be deemed as the ‘kanya’ of Dharmaraja King Ashvapati but ‘kula dhvamsi raakshasi!’ The double edged sins that you had committed are are now resulting in viscious circles of sending off Dharmatma Rama to vanavasa, Pativrata Sita Devi accompanying him, dear Lakshmana following them , this led to father’s death, and now your anxiety and ambition to reign the Kingdom by makinbg me a puppet King and pulling down the high prestige of the Kingdom and the worst of all making the public of the Kingdom harassed and exposing it to internal rebellion and external attacks! Normally, mothers give birth to sons from the purity of their hearts, but not as toys to play with. *Anyadaa kila dharmagjnaa Surabhih sura sammataa, vahamaanou dadashrovyaa putrou vigata chetasou/* In the remote past, Surabhi Kama dhenu saw its sons as they had become senseless; like wise, a dharmatma stree too became unconscious like me. The two sons were commanded by the masters of the sons to keep on tilling the land even during the mid day blaze of the Sun. The kind mother Surabhi kept on crying about the fate and misfortune of the oxen. Lord Indra realised that the divine cow Kamadhenu was in distress. *Taam drishtvaa shoka samtaptaam varjapaaniryashasvineem, Indrah praanjilirudignah Sura raajobraveed vachah/* As Indra Deva noticed that the Divine Cow Surabhi was crying away on the high skies incessantly, he prayed to her with folded hands ; he asked hear about her great grief. Kama dhenu replied: *Aham tu magnou shochoanmi swa putrou vishame sthitou, yetou drishtaa krushou deenou Surya rashmi prataapitou, vadyamaanou balewevardou karshakena duraatmanaa/ Mama kaayaat prasootou hi duhkhitou bhaara peeditou, you drishtvaa paritapyeham naasti sutaan manyate param/Deveshwara!* I have no complaints from swarga; but my two sons in the form of oxen are being treated mercilessly by the farmers on earth even in heat of the mid Surya. These are my own children and like wise a number less oxen are born on earth! *Yasyaah putra sahasraani saapi shochati Kaamadruk, kim punaryaa vinaa Raamam Koushalyaa vartayishyati /* Just as Kamadhenu too keeps crying for her sons, Devis Koushalya and Sumitra too keep crying and how could they survive such hapless situation as their sons are be harassed for no fault of theirs! *aham hy apacitim bhrātuḥ pituś ca sakalām imām, vardhanam yaśasaś cāpi kariṣyāmi na samśayah/ ānāyayitvā tanayam kausalyāyā mahādyutim, svayam eva pravekṣyāmi vanam muniniṣevitam/* I have no decided that having renounced this type of very temporary Kingship as decided by Maharshis , I will most certainly go to Shri Rama and prostrated him to kindly return and accept his lasting Kingship! Having thus shouted at Kaikeyi, Bharata fell down on earth like an elephant and dragged himself like a serpent with heavy breathings.

Vishleshana on Surabhi: In the *Ramayana*, Surabhi is described to be distressed by the manner of public’s treatment of her sons, the oxen, in the fields. Her tears are considered a bad omen for the Devas and Indra. *Raghu vamsha* of Kaalidaasa mentions that the King Dilip,an ancestor of Shri Rama once passed by Kamadhenu-Surabhi, but failed to pay respects to her, thus incurring the wrath of the divine cow, who cursed the king to go childless. So, since Kamadhenu had gone to Patala, Maharshi Vasistha advised the King to serve Nandini, Kamadhenu's daughter as the latter was in Vasishta’s ashram. Accompanied by his wife, the King propitiated Nandini, who neutralized her mother's curse and blessed the King to have a son, who was named Raghu.The Vana Parva of the *Maha Bharata* also narrates a similar instance: Surabhi cries about the plight of her son, a bullock, who is overworked and beaten by his peasant-master. Indra, moved by Surabhi's tears, stopped rains to stop the ploughing of the tormented bullock!

Sarga Seventy Five

Bharata’s ‘shapatha’ / swearing in the presence of Devi Kousalya

Tathaiva krośatas tasya bharatasya mahātmanah, kausalyā śabdām ājñāya sumitrām idam abravīt/ āgataḥ krūrakāryāyāḥ kaikeyyā bharataḥ sutaḥ, tam aham draṣṭum icchāmi bharataḥ dīrghadarśinam/ evam uktvā sumitrām sā vivarṇā malināambarā, pratathe bharato yatra vepamānā vicetanā/ sa tu rāmānujaś cāpi śatrughnasahitas tadā, pratathe bharato yatra kausalyāyā niveśanam/ tataḥ śatrughna bharatau kausalyām prekṣya duḥkhitau, paryaṣvajatām duḥkhārtām patitām naṣṭacetanām/ bharataḥ pratyuvācedam kausalyā bhr̥śaduḥkhitā, idam te rājyakāmasya rājyam prāptam akaṅṭakam, samprāptam

bata kaikeyyā śīghraṁ krūreṇa karmaṇā/prasthāpya cīravasanaṁ putraṁ me vanavāsinaṁ, kaikeyī kaṁ guṇaṁ tatra paśyati krūradarśinī/ kṣipraṁ mām api kaikeyī prasthāpayitum arhati, hiraṇyanābho yatrāste suto me sumahāyaśāh/ atha vā svayam evāhaṁ sumitrānucarā sukham, agnihotraṁ puraskṛtya prasthāsye yatra rāghavaḥ/ kāmaṁ vā svayam evādyā tatra mām netum arhasi, yatrāsau puruṣavyāghras tapyate me tapaḥ sutaḥ/ idaṁ hi tava vistūrṇaṁ dhanadhānyasamācitam, hastyaśvarathasampūrṇaṁ rājyaṁ niryātitaṁ tayā/ evaṁ vilapamānām tām bhārataḥ prāñjalīś tadā, kausalyāṁ pratyuvācedaṁ śokair bahubhir āvṛtām/ ārye kasmād ajānantaṁ garhase mām akilbiṣam, vipulām ca mama prītiṁ sthirām jānāsi rāghave/ kṛtā śāstrānugā buddhir mā bhūt tasya kadā cana, satyasamdhah satām śreṣṭho yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ praiśyaṁ pāpīyasām yātu sūryaṁ ca prati mehatu, hantu pādena gām suptām yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ kārayitvā mahat karma bhartā bhṛtyam anarthakam, adharmo yo 'sya so 'syās tu yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ paripālayamānasya rājño bhūtāni putravat, tatas tu druhyatām pāpaṁ yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ baliṣaḍbhāgam uddhṛtya nṛpasyārakṣataḥ prajāḥ, adharmo yo 'sya so 'syāstu yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ samśrutya ca tapasvibhyaḥ satre vai yajñadakṣiṇām, tām vipralapatām pāpaṁ yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ hastyaśvarathasambādhe yuddhe śastrasamākule, mā sma kārṣīt satām dharmāṁ yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ upadiṣṭaṁ susūksmārthaṁ śāstraṁ yatnena dhīmatā, sa nāśayatu duṣṭātmā yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ pāyasam kṣsaram chāgaṁ vṛthā so 'śnātu nirghṛṇaḥ, gurūṁś cāpy avajānātu yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ putrair dāraiś ca bhṛtyaiś ca svagrhe parivāritaḥ, sa eko mṛṣṭam aśnātu yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ rājastribālavṛddhānām vadhe yat pāpam ucyate, bhṛtyatyāge ca yat pāpaṁ tat pāpaṁ pratipadyatām/ ubhe samdhye śayānasya yat pāpaṁ parikalpyate, tac ca pāpaṁ bhavet tasya yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ yad agnidāyake pāpaṁ yat pāpaṁ gurutaḥpage, mitradrohe ca yat pāpaṁ tat pāpaṁ pratipadyatām/ devatānām piṭṛṇām ca mātā pitroś tathaiṣa ca, mā sma kārṣīt sa śuśrūṣām yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ satām lokāt satām kīrtiyāḥ sajjūṣṭāḥ karmaṇas tathā, bhraśyatu kṣipram adyaiva yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ vihīnām patiputrābhyaṁ kausalyāṁ pārvivātmajaḥ/ evaṁ āśvasayann eva duḥkhārto nipapāta ha/ tathā tu śapathaiḥ kaṣṭaiḥ śapamānam acetanam, bhārataṁ śokasamṭaptam kausalyā vākyam abravīt/ mama duḥkham idaṁ putra bhūyaḥ samupajāyate, śapathaiḥ śapamāno hi prāñān uparuṇatsi me/ diṣṭyā na calito dharmād ātmā te sahalakṣmaṇaḥ, vatsa satyapratijñō me satām lokān avāpsyasi/ evaṁ vilapamānasya duḥkhārtasya mahātmanaḥ, mohāc ca śokasamrodhād babhūva lulitām manaḥ/ lālapyamānasya vicetanasya; pranaṣṭabuddheḥ patitasya bhūmau, muhur muhur niḥśvasataś ca dīrgham; sā tasya śokena jagāma rātriḥ/

Having recovered his senses still persisting with distress, Bharata having mercilessly shouted at his mother, he approached the Ministers and addressed them: Hon'ble Ministers! I should most emphatically assert that I am not interested in Kingship and I was never informed of this status before my arrival. I was totally blank about what my father conceded of my kingship, as I was away along with brother Shatrughna well before his sad demise.. I was also blank about when and why Rama Sita Lakshmanas were forced to leave for vana vaasa. As Devis Kousalya and Sumitras came to realise that they were conferring with the Ministers, Devi Sumitra was informed and conveyed to Devi Koushalya that the cruel Kaikeyis son Bharata had arrived. After addressing the Ministers, Bharata Shatrughnas approached Koushalya. Even from a distance, Koushalya felt unease and fell unconscious, Bharata ran and kept her on his lap; on recovery, she kept on crying and said: *idaṁ te rājyakāmasya rājyaṁ prāptam akaṅṭakam, samprāptam bata kaikeyyā śīghraṁ krūreṇa karmaṇā/prasthāpya cīravasanaṁ putraṁ me vanavāsinaṁ, kaikeyī kaṁ guṇaṁ tatra paśyati krūradarśinī/* 'Dear son! You want the Kingdom only, is it not! Do have it by all means! Now, I fail to understand why Rama was banished for vana vaasa only wearing deer skins! May be Devi Kaikeyi is desirous of despatching me too after him. Or does she desire that along with Sumitra, I should surrender to flames so that she should be totally free from concerns!' Then Bharata repeatedly fell at Devi Kausalya's feet again and again weepingly and held her hands entreatingly: *ārye kasmād ajānantaṁ garhase mām akilbiṣam, vipulām ca mama prītiṁ sthirām jānāsi rāghave/ kṛtā śāstrānugā buddhir mā bhūt tasya kadā cana, satyasamdhah satām śreṣṭho yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/ praiśyaṁ pāpīyasām yātu sūryaṁ ca prati mehatu, hantu pādena gām suptām yasyāryo 'numate gataḥ/* Revered mother! kindly trust me as to what all had happened on our return here. I am truly blameless and you ought to realise how supreme Rama is and how much I admire and love him with pride. May those

responsible for subjecting this misery be made it known all over the world that they are sinners of the lowest levels as per established precepts of virtue and justice! May such degraded sinners at whose behest Rama was banished for vana vaasa be reborn as chandalas in the next birth as the lowest servants of the worst of chaturvarnas, like those who face Surya and resort to ‘mala muutras’ or kick off the sleeping cows. May that heinous person responsible for tormenting Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas be reborn as slaves of those cruel masters who refuse to pay wages and even deprive of their daily bread. *Akartaa chaakritag- t nascha tyaktaatmaa nirapannapah, loke bhavatu vidvashto yasyaaryonumate gatah/* That heinous human being responsible for despatching Rama for vana vaasa is despicable, ungrateful, rejected by the virtuous, shameless and worthy of public hatred. That desolate and wretched person would be such as should enjoy ‘mishtaanna’ or highly tasty and rich food all alone without sharing with one’s own children, servants, and let alone beggars! May such disgraceful and wicked person who has instructed Rama to be forcefully thrown out along with Dharmapatni and brother to wilderness with an early, lonely and distressed death. The monstrous and wicked sin in one’s human life is stated as the killing of a glorious king, an outstanding woman of virtue, an aged and helpless woman and an honest servant of trust; may that miserable sin be applicable to that fallen person responsible for Rama’s vana vasa. That loathsome villian responsible for Rama’s vana vaasa be soon a beggar with torn and detestable clothes to hide the body - shame, loaf around the universe with shoutings of hunger and thirst!’ As innumerable such curses were showered on ‘THAT WOMAN HIS OWN MOTHER’, Devi Koushalya was stilled and stunned and stated: *mama duḥkham idam̐ putra bhūyaḥ samupajāyate, śapathaiḥ śapamāno hi prāñān uparuṇatsi me/ diṣṭyā na calito dharmād ātmā te sahalakṣmaṇaḥ, vatsa satyapratijñō me satām lokān avāpsyasi/* Dear son! Do kindly stop any more curses as each of those have had sinking feelings in me and my disgust for further living is ever palpitating in my sub-consciousness. I am however contented that son Lakshmana was never shaken from the precincts of Dharma . You too Kumara is of Satya Pratigjna and should most certainly be rewarded all along your future life now and ‘parama mukti’ there after. Having stated likewise, Kousalya drew Bharata on her and embraced him. [Padma Purana is quoted: Shri Rama at the end of his ‘avatara’ or incarnation finally walked into the Sacred Sarayu River. Bharat, Shatrughna, and all the citizens of Ayodhya along with their wives, Mantris, Servants, Vedikas, Brahmanas, the nearby animals, birds, and so on accompanied Shri Rama who never looked back. As Shri Rama went deep into the River, Lord Brahma, Devas, Rishis and all Celestial Beings extolled Raghunatha even as He took the Huge Form of Maha Vishnu with his four hands along with Bharata as Shankha, Shatrughna as Chakra, and Lakshmana as Gada with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi beside Him.]

Sarga Seventy Six

Raja Dasharatha’s ‘antyeshti’ / ‘dahana samskaara’

Tam evam̐ śokasamtaptam̐ bharatam̐ kekayīsutam, uvāca vadatām̐ śreṣṭho vasiṣṭhaḥ śreṣṭhavāg̐ ṛṣiḥ/ alam̐ śokena bhadam̐ te rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ, prāptakālam̐ narapateḥ kuru samyānam̐ uttaram/ vasiṣṭhasya vacaḥ śrutvā bharato dhāraṇām̐ gataḥ, pretakāryāṇi sarvāṇi kārayām̐ āsa dharmavit/ uddhṛtam̐ tailasam̐kledāt sa tu bhūmau niveśitam, āpītavarṇavadanam̐ prasuptam̐ iva bhūmipam/ niveśya śayane cāgrye nānāratnapariṣṭe, tato daśaratham̐ putro vilalāpa suduḥkhitah/ kim̐ te vyavasitam̐ rājan proṣite mayy anāgate, vivāsyā rāmaṁ dharmajñam̐ lakṣmaṇam̐ ca mahābalam/ kva yāsyasi mahārāja hitvemam̐ duḥkhitam̐ janam, hīnam̐ puruṣasim̐hena rāmenākliṣṭakarmanā/ yogakṣemam̐ tu te rājan ko ’smin kalpayitā pure, tvayi prayāte svas tāta rāme ca vanam̐ āsrite/ vidhavā pṛthivī rājams̐ tvayā hīnā na rājate, hīnacandrea rajanī nagarī pratibhāti mām/ Vidhava prithvi rajasatvayaa heena na raajate, heena chandrea rajani nagaree pratibhati maam/ evam̐ vilapamānam̐ tam̐ bharatam̐ dīnamānasam̐, abravīd vacanam̐ bhūyo vasiṣṭhas tu mahān ṛṣiḥ/ pretakāryāṇi yāny asya kartavyāni viśāmpateḥ, tāny avyagram̐ mahābāho kriyatām̐ avicāritam/ tatheti bharato vākyam̐ vasiṣṭhasyābhipūjya tat, ṛtvikpurohitācāryām̐ tvarayām̐ āsa sarvaśaḥ/ ye tv agrato narendrasya agny agārād bahiṣṭāḥ ṛtvigbhir yājakaiś caiva te hriyante yathāvidhi/ śibilāyām̐ athāropya rājānam̐ gatacetanam, bāṣpakaṇṭhā vimanasas tam̐ ūhuḥ paricārakāḥ/ hiraṇyam̐ ca suvarṇam̐ ca vāsāmsi vividhāni ca, prakiranto janā mārgam̐ nṛpater agrato

yayuh/ candanāguruniryāsān saralam padmakam tathā, devadārūni cāhṛtya citām cakrus tathāpare/ gandhān uccāvacāmś cānyāmś tatra dattvātha bhūmipam, tataḥ samveśayām āsuś citāmadhye tam ṛtvijaḥ/ tathā hutāśanam hutvā jepus tasya tadartvijah, jaguś ca te yathāśāstram tatra sāmāni sāmagāḥ/ śibikābhiś ca yānaiś ca yathārham tasya yoṣitaḥ, nagarān niryayus tatra vṛddhaiḥ parivṛtās tadā/ prasavyam cāpi tam cakrur ṛtvijo 'gnicitam nṛpam, striyaś ca śokasamtaptāḥ kausalyā pramukhās tadā/ krauñcīnām iva nārīnām ninādas tatra śuśruve, ārtānām karuṇam kāle krośantīnām sahasraśah/ tato rudantyo vivaśā vilapya ca punaḥ punaḥ, yānebhyaḥ sarayūtīram avaterur varāṅganāḥ/ kṛtodakam te bharatena sārđham; nṛpāṅganā mantripurohitās ca, puram praviśyāśruparītanetrā; bhūmau daśāham vyanayanta duḥkham/

As Bharata was in grievous distress, Maharshi Vasishtha approached Bharata to face the situation with fortitude as he should now perform his duty of 'Pitru Antyoshti Karma' and the 'Dahana Samskara' of the King Dasharatha. Then the Ministers also initiated the task, Bharata approached the body preserved in oil, prostrated dutifully thrice and initiated the task. As the body was lifted from the oil the face of the body looked very pale; then the body was washed and was placed on a bed decorated with precious stones. Bharata got heart broken and cried stating: Maha Raja! you could not even wait for my arrival as I was away for a while, but having sent off Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas for vana vaasa, you hurried up to attain swarga! As you had left off peacefully, what did you think that in the absence of Rama about the fate of this kingdom! Maha Raja! *Vidhava prithvi rajasatvayaa heenaa na raajate, heena chandrea rajani nagaree pratibhati maam/* Without you the kingdom is widowed and your sons are paled off like the moonless night of their lives. As Bharata was crying away thus, Maharshi Vasishtha mildly alerted Bharata that he should recover himself at once and take up the duty faithfully with resilience, courage and with absolute peace of mind dutifully. Even as the Ritviks, Acharyas and Maharshis were hurrying up, the body was shifted to a 'palki' accordingly and taken to the crematorium as accompanied by Ministers, officials, renowned public figures, and servants, was placed on earth facing 'Agni Jwalaas' and the 'havan' was initiated. Some were decorating the body with chandana and sugandhas, guggulaas and while the high volume recitations of the 'vedic mantras' the body was dedicated to the high flames emerging from the wooden sticks of devadaaru-sarala- padmaka tree branches. Then the Ritvikas were rendering Saama Veda Shritis. It was at that time Queens Koushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi followed Bharata the main Karta made pradakshinas weepingly and finally fell down to earth with 'saashtaanga pranaamaas'. Ritvijas with Masishtha Muni in the lead too recited the relevant Mantras. Consequent on the 'Daaha Karma', Bharata, the Queens, Ministers, Purohitas, and the entire Public carried the 'savaaris' or the ashes to the banks of the Sacred River Sarayu for 'jalaanjali' tarpanas.

[Vishleshanas from Taittiriya Aranyaka : The departed 'jeevatma' discarding life behind is accompanied by Lord Yama- departed Soul-Pushan- Sayavari / cow- widow-and Agni

i) Yama: *Pareyivaasam pravato maheeranu, bahubhyah panthaam anupaspashaanam, Vaivasvatam sangamanam janaanaam, Yamam Rajanam havishaa duvasya/* May King Yama the son of Surya Deva/ Vivasvaan, be worshipped as he is followed by His relatives and admirers of the departed; Yama has travelled far from the heights beyond and taken to the perfect destination without disturbing any one else. The Stanza is from Rig Veda 10-14.1.)

The departed jeeva: *Idam tvaa vastram prathama nvaagan/ Apaitaduuha yadihaabibhah puraa, ishtaapurtamanusampashya dakshinaam yathaa te dattam bahudhaa vi bandhushu/ Imou yunajmi te vahnee asuneeyaaya odhave, yaabhyaam Yamasya saadanam, sukrutaam chaapi gacchataat/* May the departed one arrive here with new ideas and forget the erstwhile impulses and memories, recalling however the erstwhile actions some of which might have satisfied the conscience such as the acts of dakshinas to brahmanas vis a vis the wealth given by the kinsmen. May the departed one be yoked by

two oxen to carry the body dear so far as the life and these oxen reach the abode of Lord Yama or alternatively to other abodes in case that It had done ‘satkarmas’ earning virtue outweighing the deeds of vice. *Pushaa tvetah chyaavayantu pra vidvaan, anashthapashuh bhuvanasya gopaah, sa tvaitebhyah pari dadat pitrubhyo, agnirdevebhyah suvidanniyebhyah/ Pushemaa aashaa anu veda sarvaah, so asmam abhiyatamena neshat, svastidaa aaghrunih sarvaveero, aprayucchan pura etu prajaanan/ Aayuh vishvaayuh pari pasati tvaa pusha, tvaa paatu prapathe purastaat, yatraaste sukruto, yatra te yayuh, tatratvaa devah Savitaa dadhaatu/ Bhuvanasya pat idam havih, agnaye rayimate svaaha/* May Pushan the omniscient escort the departed Soul to another world as His rays never fail to protect all the Beings and reach them to Pitru Loka and may Agni Deva reach the concerned Devas further on. Indeed Pushan is totally conversant with all the Lokas successively as He is aware the ways and means of leading the jeevaatma to safety free from perils. The post life of departed mortals is well realised by Pushan and hence lead them upto the halts en route. As the Souls which may have done well with the earnings of ‘punya’, the celestial Savitur would place them well in advance and accordingly lead these with care. Hence, Paramatma! may this offering of the body remains engulf by Agni Deva ultimately! The stanzas v-vii are repeats of Rigveda Mantras of 10.17.3-5-4 respectively.

Sayaavari / Cow to cleanse the sins of the departed: *Purushasya sayaavarayapedaanim mujahhe, yadhaam no atra naaparah puraa jarasa aayaati/ Purushasya sayaavari vi te simnaam praanaam, shareerena maheemahim, svadahyehi pitrunup, prajayaasmaanivavaha/ Maivam maamstaa priyeham Devee satee pitrulokam yadaishi, Vishvavaaraa nabhasaa samvayantgee, tasyah porajaam dravinam cheha dhehi/* Sayavari is the cow which was stated dear to the departed person brought to the place of cremation as the symbol of all Devas. Thus, the Sayavari the symbol of Devas! Kindly remove the sins of the departed. As the departed one has loosened all his / her energies, may the Savavari enter the planes of the firmament and lead the way to Pitru Loka. May you also provide your milk to the departed one en route and at the destination as you have access to all the lokas.(Garuda Purana vide Chapter 30: 41-42 and 52-53 are quoted: ‘Tarkshya Deva! Any Being on Earth or Pancha Bhutas or the entirety of Creation is Vishnu. Hence whosoever performs a ‘ karma’ or action, the fruit of that action is Vishnu too; thus a person when performs an act, good or otherwise, Vishnu decides the fruit of that action. At the end of the journey of a human- as in other cases too-River Vaitarani is commended as its waters would purify the sins made by the departed one- during the ‘kaumara-youvana-vaardhakya- janma janmaantara’ as also during ‘raatri- praatah- madhyaahna-aparaahna’ and both the sandhyas too. The singular solution is hence the charity of a ‘kapila gomaata’ to a well deserved Brahmana. The following is the verse to be recited at the time of Godaana: *Gaavo mamaagratah santu gavaam madhye vahaamyaham/ Yaa Lakshmeeh sarvabhutaanaam yaa cha Deve vyavasthita, dhenu rupenasya Devee mama paapam vyapohatu/* Cow alone is ahead of me- the departed Soul, behind me as my support, my sides too; cow is in my heart and I am on the midst of cows. May the Lakshmi Svarupa-Sarva Bhuta Svarupa-Sarva Deva Svarupa- as the symbol of a Cow, destroy my sins instatly wih this Go- Mata! Guruda Purana sums up : those who are destined to go to heaven are supposed to grab the tail of a cow that appears on the banks of the river Vaitarna to be led safely across to the ethereal shores of Vaikuntha)

Tributes to Agni Deva for the final offer of the dead body : *Imamagne chamasam vaa vi jighvarah, priyo devaanaamuta soumyaanaam, esha yashchaamaso deva paanah, tasmin Devaa amritaam maadayante/ Agnervama pari gobhirvyayasva, sam prornushva medasaa peevasaacha, net tvaa, ghrushnurharasaa jarshyashaano, dadhat vidhakkshyan, paryangyaate/ Mainamagne vi daho, maabhi shoucho maasya tvacham chikshipo maa shareeram, yadaa shrutam karavi Jaatavedo,athemainam prahinutaan*

*pitrubhyah/ Shrutam yadaa karasi Jaatavedo athemenam pari dattaat pitrubhyah, yadaa gacchantaasuneetimetam, athaam Devaanaam vashaneerbhavaati/ Suryam chakshurgacchatu vaatamaatmaa, dyocha gaccha prithiveem cha dharmanaa, apo vaa gaccha yaditram te hitam, oushadheeshu pratrim tishthaa shareerereh/ Ajobhaagastapasaa tam tapasva, tam te shochishpatu tam te archih, yaaste shavaastanuvo jaatavedah, taabhirvahemam sukrutaam yatram lokaah/ Ayam vai tamasmaadadhi, tvametadayam vai tadasya yonirasi Vaishvaanarah, putrah pitre loka krut, Jaatavedo vahemam sukrutaam yatram lokaah/ Agni Deva! please do not hurl or shake this dead body; it is dear to Devas as wells as to mortals; the former seek to enjoy the pleasure of the Soma juice and this vessel is the drink of Devas and the latter who are immortal take pleasure in the Soma; this stanza is a repeat of Rig Veda 10-16-8. The next stanza is a repeat of Rig Veda's previous stanza 10-16-7 addresses the dead body: you are enclosed with the 'kavacha' or the shield of Agni Deva who is merely turning only your body parts to ashes but not your true self which indeed is everlasting. Hence Agni is merely clearing the mess of your body! Agni Deva! you may consume the deadbody along with his heart, pancha koshas or Five Sheaths of the body called Annamaya (Physical Energy), Praanamaya (Vital Energy), Manomaya (Mental Faculty), Vigyanamaya (Buddhi or Sharpness of Discrimination) and Ananda maya (Bliss) only but thereafter kindly despatch the 'Jeevatma'- Inner Being- safely to the Loka of His forefathers the Pitru Loka. Agni Deva, when you render the jeevatma fully rid of the memories of the erstwhile life, then That becomes rendered fit with a fresh form subject to the will of Devas. Preta swarupa! Let your vision see Surya Deva, your breath to Vayu Deva! As per your destiny and the fund of your 'sukrita phala', you may reach swarga, or back to earth or waters. In case you are destined to return as vegetation, then you shall do precisely the same swarupa once again.- Rig Veda 10-16-3. Referring to the stanza : *Suryam chakshurgacchatu vaatamaatmaa, dyocha gaccha prithiveem cha dharmanaa, apo vaa gaccha yaditram te hitam, oushadheeshu pratrim tishthaa shareerereh/* as explained , Chhandogya Upanishad 5.10.6 explains: *Abhram bhutwaa meghe bhavati meghe bhutwaa pravarshti taiha veehiyavaa oshadhivanaspatyah tila-maasha iti jaayant, ato vai khalu durnispra pataram, yo yohyanam atti yo retaah sinchati, tad bhuya eva bhavati/*(In the further travel of the Soul from white clouds to thick black clouds to rains, the same is born as paddy, barley, herbs, sesmum, black pulses and so on. Now, the release of the concerned paddy or pulse is also destined as per the time of its release from the shell to kernel; similarly the cycle of food intake from an insect to a bird or to a reptile to an animal or human being is destined likewise). The next stanzas 6.1.22 -23: *Ajobhaaga stapasa tam tapasva-- and Ayam vai tvamsmaadabhi/* are as addressed to Jaataveda: ' Agni Deva! having burnt off the body totally, may the physical aspects of the human being been burnt off totally, may the subtle body as the Jeevatma be carried to the wide world of the Devas of virtue; then there is hardly any difference of Vaishvanara and Jeevatma, especially after passing through the layers that the latter passes through! 6.2.1-3: On the path above after death, the jeeva is protected by three kinds of Devas besides Agni Deva; Ya etasya patho goptaarastebhyah svaaha, ya etasya patho rakshitaarah; tebhyrarasvaahaa, ya etasya pathorakshitaarastebhyah svaaha, Khyatre svaaha Apakhyaatre svaahaa, Abhilaalapate svaahaa Abhilaalapate svaahaa, Apalaalapate svaahaagnaye karmakrite svaaha Yamatra naadheemastasmai svaah/ Yasta idmam jabharat, slshvidaano muurdhaanam vaa tatpate tvaayaa, Divo vishvasmaat seemaghaayata uruushyah/ Asmaatvamadhi jaatosi, tvadayam jaayataam punah, Agnaye Vishvaanaraaya suvargaaya lokaaya svaaha/ May the jeeva on the ascent to high skies be protected by this Agni karma three Devas viz. Goptarah, Rashitaarah and Abhirakshitaata. May also this offering be received to Khyata who disclosed this secret as also to Apakhyaata who refrains from disclosing the information. May also this offering to Deva Abhilaalapat who commends the deeds of virtue of the Jeevatma that performed in the just*

concluded mortal life and what is more , may Apalaapad Deva not to divulge the deeds of vice with great refrain. Above all, this offering be made to Agni Deva Himself in case any other Deities of help have not been addressed by default. Agni Deva! you are indeed the unique help in reaching our oblations to all the concerned deities including those who have not been addressed! May the passage of the ‘pretaatma’ to the respective destinations be free from all types of visissitudes. Agni Deva, you have had the background of birth of the antaratma of the departed person irrespective of the dead person’s pluses and minuses of concluded life. That is the supplication to you to assist the pretatma to a helpful rebirth. May the offering be received by Vaishvanara Agni in the upper worlds! The journey of the departed from Agni to the dogs of Yama to Pitru Loka to Surya: *Pra ketunaam brihataa yatyaagnih, aarodasee vrishabho roraveeti, divaaschidantaam upamaam udaanat, apaamapasthek mahisho vavardha/ Idam ta ekam, para vuu ta ekam, truteeyena jyotishaa sam vishasva, samveshane tanvaschaarudhi priyo, Devaanaam parame sadhasthe/ Naake suparnamupa yat patantam, hridaa venanto abhyachakshat tva, hiranyapaksham varunasyadootam, yamasya yonou shakunam bhuranyanyum/ Ati drava saarameyou shvaanou, chaturakshou shabaliu, saadhunaa pathaa, athaam pitruun suvidatraam upehi, Yamena ye sadhamaadam madanti/ You te shvaanou Yama rakshitaarou, chaturakshou pathirakshee nruchakshasou taabhyaam raajan paridehi enam, svasti chaasmaa anmeevam cha dhehi/ Urunasou asutrupaa udumbalou Yamasya dootao charato janaam anu, taavasmabhyam drishaye suryaaya, punardaataam asum adyaha bhadram/ Soma aikabhayah pavate, dhurutameka upaasate yebhyo madhi pradhaavati, taan chit evaapim gacchhataat/ Ye yudhyante pradhaneshu shuuraamso ye tanuutyajah, ye vaa sahasra dakshinaah, taan chit evaapim gacchataat/ Tapasaa ye anaadrushyaah, tapasaa ye svaryayuh, tapo ye chakrire mahah, taamschadevaapi gacchataat/ Ashmanvatee Revati, sam rabhadvam, uttishthath pra tarataa sakhaayah, atraam jahaama ye asannashevaah, Shivaan vayam urtteeram abhi vaajaan/ Yadvai Devasya Savituh pavitram, sahasra -dhaaram vitatamantarikshe, yenaapunaat Indram anaatar maartyah, tenaaham maamsarvatanum punaami/ Yaa raashtraatpannaadapayanti shaakhaam abhimrutaa nrupatimicchamaanaah, dhaatustaaya sarvaah pavanena puutaah, prajamaasmaantrayyaa varchasaa saamsrujaaya/ Utvayam tamasah pari, jyotih pashyant uta taram, Devam devatraa, Suryam agamna jyotih ut tamam/ Dhataa punaatu Savitaa punaatu agnestejasaa Suryasya varchasaa / Agni Deva in the form of thick smoke flies high from bhumi to dyuloka with his flag assumed the form of a bull with roar; even as He enters the dyuloka with the assistance of Jala Deva assumes the form of lightnings This stanza is the same as Rig Veda vide 10-8-1. Rig Veda 10.56.1 denotes that this Praani is the food of Mrityu; Its basic form was of Agni, then that of Vayu the Deity of Wind and finally of Jyoti Tatva or of Atma Tatva. ‘Meet this Soul and provide him ‘tejasvi rupa’ or of effulgence and get It divinity! The Third stanza is taken from Rigveda 10.121.6 meaning : This scene would be visible as that of a high flying bird Varuna in svarga loka and it is this bird which gets nourished in Yama Loka. But the departed Atma, if saved from Yama’s dogs called Shaarameya which are four eyed and could change their appearance in multi colours, could then proceed to join the virtuous Pitru Loka. These Sharameya dogs both are actually are the dogs of intuition and are the gaurdians protecting the Atma on the way up towards the Deva Yaana the divine path with their divine vision. Thus the departed human beings are hunted or helped too by the ‘Yama dootas’; Rig Veda vide 10.14.12 the messengers of Lord Yama are broad nosed and of extraordinary physical strength and mental energy. Once satisfied by the swing of balance of the departed soul’s karma, the fierce dogs sober down and save from any evil forces on the right path. May these divine dogs guide the ‘pretaatma’ to reach the Land of Bliss and grant him relief from the sorrowful earth of ‘arishdvargas’ or the six principal evils of existence so that the Soul could look upon the Surya Deva with contentment and Joy! The seventh stanza referring to the Pitru Loka where Soma Juice flows is a*

repeat of Rig Veda 10.154.1; the meaning is ‘ Pretatma! Pitru Loka is the celestial place where Pitru Devas rejoice flows of Soma Juice and ‘ghritaahutis’ or the offerings of ghee while meditating on Surya Deva and that is why there is a rush for the honey of delight who are in the know and practice of Madhu Vidya. Rig Veda 1.90.6-8 explains about Madhu Vidya: *Madhu vaataa rutaayate madhu ksharanti sindhavah maadhveernah snatoshadheeh/ Madhunaktamutoshaso madhumatpaarthivam rajah, madhu dyourastu nah pitaa/ Madhumaanno vanaspatirmadhumaam astu Suryah maadhveergaavo bhavantu nah/ Sham no Mitrah sham Varunah sham no bhavatvaryamaa, sham na Indro Brihaspatih,sham no Vishnu-rurukramah/* May the practitioners of Yajna Karyaas be endowed with Vaayu pravaaha rivers of sweetness as also all types of heathy herbals of pleasures. May like pitru devataas bestow divine juices of sweetness while the Maatru Varga Devatas too bless us with earthly juices of outstanding taste thus reaping the sweetness of ‘Iham and Param’ or on earth and thereafter! May all kinds of Vanaspatis grant us pleasures while Surya Deva with His ‘tejasvi kiranās’ or radiant rays shower happiness while the nights and ‘usha kaala’ ensure our joys always thus so that the herds of cows too yield sweet milk to us. May Mitra Deva, Varuna Deva, ‘Nyaaya Pradaata’ Aryama Deva, ‘Aishvaryavaan’ Indra Deva, ‘Vaani Swaami’ Brihaspati, and the Singular Universal Vishnu Bhagavan bless us all round auspiciousness!]

Sarga Seventy Seven

Bharatha performs Dashartha’s ‘shraaddha karma’ and ‘maha daanaas’- collection of ashes and ‘nimajjana’- ‘daaha samskaara’

Tato dasāhe ’tigate kṛtaśauco nṛpātmajaḥ dvādaśe ’hani samprāpte śrāddhakarmāṇy akārayat/ brāhmaṇebhyo dadau ratnaṁ dhanam annaṁ ca puṣkalam, bāstikaṁ bahuśuklaṁ ca gās cāpi śataśas tathā/ dāsīdāsaṁ ca yānaṁ ca veśmāni sumahānti ca, brāhmaṇebhyo dadau putro rājñas tasyaurdhvadaiḥikam/ tataḥ prabhātasamaye divase ’tha trayodaśe, vilalāpa mahābāhur bhārataḥ śokamūrchitaḥ/ śabdāpihitakaṅṭhaś ca śodhanārtham upāgataḥ, citāmūle pitur vākyam idam āha suduḥkhitaḥ/ tāta yasmin niṣṛṣṭo ’ham tvayā bhrātari rāghave, tasmin vanam pravrajite śūnye tyakto ’smy aham tvayā/ yathāgatir anāthāyāḥ putraḥ pravrajito vanam, tām ambām tāta kausalyām tyaktvā tvam kva gato nṛpa/ dṛṣṭvā bhasmāruṇam tac ca dagdhāsthithānamāṇḍalam, pituḥ śārīra nirvāṇam niṣṭanan viśasāda ha/ sa tu dṛṣṭvā rudan dīnaḥ papāta dharaṇītale, utthāpyamānaḥ śakrasya yantra dhvaja iva cyutaḥ/ abhipetus tataḥ sarve tasyāmātyāḥ śucivratam, antakāle nipatitaṁ yayātim ṛṣayo yathā/ śatrughnaś cāpi bhārataṁ dṛṣṭvā śokapariplutam, viśamjño nyapatad bhūmau bhūmipālam anusmaran/ unmatta iva niścetā vilalāpa suduḥkhitaḥ, smṛtvā pitur guṇāṅgāni tāni tāni tadā tadā/ mantharā prabhavas tīvraḥ kaikeyīgrāhasamkulaḥ, varadānamayo ’kṣobhyo ’majjayac chokasāgarah/ sukumāraṁ ca bālam ca satataṁ lālitaṁ tvayā, kva tāta bhārataṁ hitvā vilapantaṁ gato bhavān/ nanu bhojyeṣu pāneṣu vastreṣv ābharaṇeṣu ca, pravārayasi naḥ sarvāms tan naḥ ko ’dya kariṣyati/ avadāraṇa kāle tu pṛthivī nāvadīryate, vihīnā yā tvayā rājñā dharmajñena mahātmanā/ pitari svargam āpanne rāme cāraṇyam āśrite, kim me jīvita sāmārthyaṁ pravekṣyāmi hutāśanam/ hīno bhrātrā ca pitrā ca śūnyām ikṣvākupālitaṁ, ayodhyāṁ na pravekṣyāmi pravekṣyāmi tapovanam/ tayor vilapitaṁ śrutvā vyasanam cānvavekṣya tat, bhṛṣam ārtatarā bhūyaḥ sarva evānugāminaḥ/ tato viśaṇṇau śrāntau ca śatrughna bhārataṁ ubhau, dharaṇyām samvyaceṣṭetām bhagnaśṛṅgāv ivarṣabhau/ tataḥ prakṛtimān vaidyaḥ pitur eṣām purohitaḥ, vasiṣṭho bhārataṁ vākyam utthāpya tam uvāca ha/trīni dvandvāni bhūteṣu pravṛttāny aviṣeṣataḥ, teṣu cāparihāryeṣu naivaṁ bhavitum arhati/ sumantraś cāpi śatrughnam utthāpyā bhi prasādyā ca, śrāvayām āsa tattvajñāḥ sarvabhūtabhavābhavau/ utthitau tau naravyāghrau prakāsete yaśasvinau, varṣātapapariklinnau pṛthag indradhvajāv iva/ āsrūṇi parimṛdnantau raktākṣau dīnabhāṣiṇau, amātyās tvarayanti sma tanayau cāparāḥ kriyāḥ/

After performing ‘dashaaha’, on the eleventh day Braratha after ‘atmashudhi’ performed ekaadashaah shraaddha followed by ‘prathama maasika sapindeekarana shraaddha’. The Pitru and Deva Brahmanas

were amply rewarded after ‘bhोजना tripti’, several danaas of dhana-ratna-vastra- suvarna-dhenus to the full contentment of the brahmanas.

[Visleshana on Shraddhas: The Brahmanas to be appointed as ‘bhoktas’ are to be well versed in Veda Vedangas, well behaved, healthy with no physical disabilities, coming of good family background, infallible, and trained well in performing Parvana shraddha and /or ekoddishtha as well. Such ideal bhoktas be invited in advance by the Karta or his brother or son or disciple. The ‘nimantrana’ or invitation should be done with ‘Apasavya’ of ‘yagnopaveeta’ in respect of ‘Pitru sthaana bhokta’ and ‘savya’ position to Vaishwanara bhokta. The prescribed number of Pitru Sthana and Vaishwadeva Sthaana is three and four but as per Desha-Kaala-Parishithis or convenience and availability a minimum of one each would be a must. Vaishwa Deva Brahmanas are to be seated Purva Mukha or east facing and Pitru Deva brahmanas are Uttara mukha or facing north. The respective Brahmanas of Pitru and Vaishwadevas are not mingled nor even touch each others. Vishwedevas are stated to be ten in number: *Kraturdaksho Vasuh Satyah Kaalah Kaamasthaivacha, Dhunischa Rochanaiva tathaa chaiva Pururavaah/ Ardraascha darshete tu Vishwadavaah prakourtitah/* (Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaala, Kaama, Dhuri, Vilochana, Pururava and Ardrava are the Vaishwadevas). In the present context, two ‘Arghya patras’ or water vessel with ‘gandha-akshata-darbhas’ are placed at the seat of of the Vishwa Devas and are to be handed over with reverence to the representative Brahmanas and perform a pradakshibna around him. The arghya paatras / vessels could be of bronze or copper or palaasha leaves. Similarly at the Pitru sthaana Brahmana too has to be circubambulated but in an ‘apradikshina’ manner or the reverse manner changing the yajgnopaveeta in the ‘praachhenaaveeti’ manner. All the tasks concerning the puja of the Brahmamana representing Pitru Devatas need to be done including that of his puja with black tila to be ornamented on his head downward to his feet, while puja to similarly be done to the Vaishwe deva with akshata white rice grains from head to feet. After puja to both the Viashwanara and Pitru Devata representative- Brahmanas with gandha-pushpa-dhupa- deepas, the next task would be Agnoukarana with the concurrence of the Brahmanas. This task is to make two homas after keeping Agni in the homa kunda twice reciting: *Saannidhyamupaasa Somaaya pitru matey Sadhaanamah/ Agnaye kavyavaahanaaya swahaananamah/* These homa kriyas need to be performed as of Pitru yagna vidhaana homa and since Pindapitru yagna is of two fold nature of Daivikatwa and Paitrukatwa the yagopaveeta might either be in Savya or Apasavya manners as per one’s own shakha manner. In any case, the remaining ‘anna’ needs to be disposed off in Agni itself and no remainder of it be retained. The next step is Pariveshana or purification of the cooked bhोजना or bhakshya-bhojya-shaaka-soopanaadi padarthas with right hand wearing darbha followed by ‘ghritaabhikarana, then holding the right hand thumbs of the Brahmanas representing the Vaishwa Deva and Pitru Devas of three generations with naama-gotras , taking care of savya-praacheenaaveeti precautions, showing them around the padarhas placed in circles – in savya or apasavya manner respectively- and request them to commence the bhोजना after performing ‘Aaposhana’ making the bhoktas feel completely comfortable discarding what ever they do not like. The karta would address the bhokas saying: *Anna heenam kriyaheenam mantra heenam yadbhavet, Sarvamacchidramiyutkaa tato yatnena bhojayet/* Even as the bhोजना starts, there should be Swaadhyaaya: *Swaadhyayam shraavayet Pitrye Dharma shastraani chaiva hi/* Anna Suktaadi Shravana is to be taken up during the Bhojana kaala. Also before the bhोजना itself, the remainder of anna at Agnoukarana is to be placed as three small pindas along with ghee and tilas. After the bhोजना follow the tasks of Sapindeekarana and Pinda pradana- puja karmas. As regards, ‘Madhyama Pinda viniyoga Vidhana’ or the matter related to be disposal of the middle pinda of the three pindas, it is customary that the wife of the Kartha if childless receives it with reverence in her hold with both palms from her husband as the Mantra is recited: *Apaamtvoushashadho -*

naagum rasam praashayaami bhutakrutam garbham dhatswa/ As the house wife eats the Madhya Pinda, the Mantra is to be recited: Adhatta Pitaro garbhamanta santaana vardhanam/ Manu states: *Pativrataa dharmā patnou pitrupujamnatparaa, Madhumantu tatah pindamadhyaatsamyak sutaarthinou/ Ayushmantam sutam vindet yasho medhaa samanvitam, Dhanavantam prajaavantam dhaarmikam saatwikam tathaa, iti/* In the event of wife not consuming the Madhyama Pinda, or even otherwise, the Tri Pindas be eaten by a Brahmana, or Agnihotra or cow or running water. In case a Karta cannot perform Parvana Shraddha for any reason of inability due to any reason he could perform the same as *Sankalpa Shraddha* .Source: Parashara Smriti]

There after on the thirteenth day of the agni samskaara, *śabdāpihita kañṭhaś ca śodhanārtham upāgataḥ, citāmūle pitur vākyam idam āha suduḥkhiṭaḥ/ tāta yasmin niṣṛṣṭo 'haṁ tvayā bhrātari rāghave, tasmin vanam pravrajite sūnye tyakto 'smy ahaṁ tvayā/* Bharata broke down and cried aloud stating: ‘My dear father! You have entrusted this hard task of king ship to me after sending off my elder of incamparable virtue and capability. Why had you decided and despatched Rama the only source of strength to Devi Kousalya!’ On seeing the place of where the father’s body ashes was visualised, he recalled his memories and wept again: you had put mother Kuashalya with such heavy load of distress on her and me!’ As Bharata kept on crying again and again, Shatrughna followed suit. Then they kept on recalling their memories and suddenly went in rage and said: *mantharā prabhavas tīvraḥ kaikeyīgrāhasamkulah, varadānamayo 'kṣobhyo 'majjayac chokasāgarah/* How indeed this vily and wretched woman Mandhara had entered the scene and ruined the psyche of Kaikeyi which led to all these diasters in a chain and threw us all midstream in the irrevocaable ocean of misery! Father! You are unforgettable as you had always ensured our comforts of food-drink-dress-and jewellery; now who would replace you! *pitari svargam āpanne rāme cāraṇyam āsrite, kiṁ me jīvita sāmārthyam pravekṣyāmi hutāśanam/ hīno bhrātrā ca pitrā ca sūnyām ikṣvākupālītām, ayodhyām na pravekṣyāmi pravekṣyāmi tapovanam/* Dear father had gone to heaven and Shri Rama had left us too without support; where is our stamina now and help ; our recourse is to jump into fire ; or else the other alternative is to enter tapovanas like ‘taapasis’. And our considered resolve is now to leave the glorious Ayodhya which was the cynosure kingdom ruled by the generation of Ikshvaaku.’ As Bharata Shatrughnas were swept away by the forceful tides of the ovean of sorrow, Maharshi Vishvamitra intervened: *trīṇi dvandvāni bhūteṣu pravṛttāny aviśeṣataḥ, teṣu cāparihāryeṣu naivam bhavitum arhati/* Bharata! There are three inevitable characteristics of mankind viz. hunger and thirst- sorrow and infatuation and old age and death. Being fully aware of these it is unnatural that bursting out wastefully to a person of self restraint is rather childish of immaturity’. As Maharshi Visishtha mildly reproached Bharata Shatrughnas wiped off their tears and got engaged with other urgent actions to be attended to.

Sarga Seventy Eight

Shatrugna attacks the villainess Kubja, the servant maid of Kaikeyi, to senselessness and spares her death!

Atra yātrām samāhantam śatrughno lakṣmaṇānujaḥ, bharatam śokasamtaptam idam vacanam abravīt/ gatir yaḥ sarvabhūtānām duḥkhe kiṁ punar ātmana, sa rāmaḥ sattva sampannaḥ striyā pravrajito vanam/ balavān vīrya sampanno lakṣmaṇo nāma yo 'py asau, kiṁ na mocayate rāmam kṛtvāpi piṭṛnigraham/ pūrvam eva tu nigrāhyaḥ samavekṣya nayānayau, utpatham yaḥ samārūḍho nāryā rājā vaśam gataḥ/ iti sambhāṣamāṇe tu śatrughne lakṣmaṇānuje, prāgdvāre 'bhūt tadā kubjā sarvābharaṇa - bhūṣitā/ liptā candanasāreṇa rājavastrāṇi bibhratī, mekhalā dāmabhiś citrai rajjubaddheva vānarī/ tām samīkṣya tadā dvāḥstho bhṛśam pāpasya kāriṇīm, grhītvākaruṇam kubjām śatrughnāya nyavedayaḥ/

yasyāḥ kṛte vane rāmo nyastadehaś ca vaḥ pitā seyaṁ pāpā nṛśamsā ca tasyāḥ kuru yathāmati/ śatrughnaś ca tad ājñāya vacanam bhṛśaduḥkhitāḥ, antaḥpuracarān sarvān ity uvāca dhṛtavrataḥ/ tīvram utpāditam duḥkham bhrātṛñām me tathā pituḥ, yayā seyaṁ nṛśamsasya karmaṇaḥ phalam aśnutām/ evam uktā ca tenāsu sakhī janasamāvṛtā, gṛhītā balavat kubjā sā tadgṛham anādayat/ tataḥ subhṛśa saṁtaptas tasyāḥ sarvaḥ sakhījanaḥ, kruddham ājñāya śatrughnam vyapalāyata sarvaśaḥ/ amantrayata kṛtsnaś ca tasyāḥ sarvasakhījanaḥ, yathāyaṁ samupakrānto niḥśeṣaṁ naḥ kariṣyati/ sānukrośāṁ vadānyām ca dharmajñām ca yaśasvinīm, kausalyām śaraṇam yāmaḥ sā hi no 'stu dhruvā gatiḥ/ sa ca roṣeṇa tāmrākṣaḥ śatrughnaḥ śatrutāpanaḥ, vicakarṣa tadā kubjām krośantīm pṛthivītale/ tasyā hy ākrṣyamāṇyā mantharāyās tatas tataḥ, citram bahuvīdham bhāṇḍam pṛthivyām tad vyaśṛyata/ tena bhāṇḍena saṁkīrṇam śrīmadrājāniveśanam, aśobhata tadā bhūyaḥ śāradam gaganam yathā/ sa balī balavat krodhād gṛhītvā puruṣarṣabhaḥ, kaikeyīm abhinirbhartsya babhāṣe paruṣam vacaḥ/ tair vākyaiḥ paruṣair duḥkhaiḥ kaikeyī bhṛśaduḥkhitā, śatrughna bhayasamtrastā putram śaraṇam āgatā/ tām prekṣya bhārataḥ kruddham śatrughnam idam abravīt, avadhyāḥ sarvabhūtānām pramadāḥ kṣamyatām iti/ hanyām aham imām pāpām kaikeyīm duṣṭacāriṇīm, yadi mām dhārmiko rāmo nāsūyen mātṛghātakam/ imām api hatām kubjām yadi jānāti rāghavaḥ, tvām ca mām caiva dharmātmā nābhībhāṣīsyate dhruvam/ bhāratasya vacaḥ śrutvā śatrughno lakṣmaṇānujaḥ, nyavartata tato roṣāt tām mumoca ca mantharām/ sā pādāmūle kaikeyyā mantharā nīpapāta ha, niḥśvasantī suduḥkḥartā kṛpaṇam vilalāpa ca/ śatrughna vikṣepavimūḍhasamjñām; samīkṣya kubjām bhāratasya mātā, śanaiḥ samāśvāsyaḍ ārtarūpām; krauñcīm vilagnām iva vīkṣamāṇām/

As the duties of the thirteenth day were concluded, Shatrughna approached Bharata cryingly and said: How horrible was this that Rama who was not only in respect of family persons but to entire society was equally considerate and that ideal most person was humiliated and thrown out for long forest life! And this tragedy had happened due to one woman; ‘ is this not a slander of the Society!’ Even then , that person of unique bravery and repute viz. Rama did not say one word in protest: how magnaanimous he had been! *pūrvam eva tu nigrāhyaḥ samavekṣya nayānayaḥ, utpatham yaḥ samārūḍho nāryā rājā vaśam gataḥ/*As King Dasharatha was drowned in the evil influence of a woman, then itself having examined as to what was justice and what was not , that evil woman ought to have been imprisoned at the beginning itself! While this conversation was going on, Devi Kubja entered the eastern gate of the palace and stood having been decorated with bright precious jewellery , expensive silk clothing and with sweet scented body perfumes like an old female monkey. Even when she was entering, the doorman noticed her entry, he dragged her by her neck and addressed Shatrughna: *yasyāḥ kṛte vane rāmo nyastadehaś ca vaḥ pitā seyaṁ pāpā nṛśamsā ca tasyāḥ kuru yathāmati/ śatrughnaś ca tad ājñāya vacanam bhṛśaduḥkhitāḥ, antaḥpuracarān sarvān ity uvāca dhṛtavrataḥ/ tīvram utpāditam duḥkham bhrātṛñām me tathā pituḥ, yayā seyaṁ nṛśamsasya karmaṇaḥ phalam aśnutām/* Rajakumara! It was this dirty woman who was responsible for Shri Rama’s departure for ‘aranya vaasa’ and dear father’s sad demise. Now she is being handed over to you and you may treat her suitably!’ Then Shatrughna had at once grabbed her both wrists and head hair , shouted loudly as the entire interiors of the palace got resounded: ‘This hateworthy wretched devil who made my father’s life miserable leading to his sad demise and responsible for the degraded sin of advising Kaikeyi to banish the Godly eldest brother ought to deserve apt punishment!’ As Shatrughna screamed with disgust and hatred, the onlookers especially the womanhood of the palace felt that he would surely kill her mercilessly. As Mandhara was dragged by her neck, her jewellery cracked up to bits, Kaikeyi rushed to rescue her and shouted at Shatrughna. But Shatrughna retaliated and she had to withdraw from his anger. Then Shatrughna addressed Bharata with extreme anger : *avadhyāḥ sarvabhūtānām pramadāḥ kṣamyatām iti/ hanyām aham imām pāpām kaikeyīm duṣṭacāriṇīm, yadi mām dhārmiko rāmo nāsūyen mātṛghātakam/ imām api hatām kubjām yadi jānāti rāghavaḥ, tvām ca mām caiva dharmātmā nābhībhāṣīsyate dhruvam/*Pardon me! Women are not worthy of being killed by anybody. But for this fear of even Rama not excusing me for ‘stree hatya’, this nasty woman Mandhara is being spared! If Rama were to be aware of my indiscretion, he would never even speak to me. Then Bharata having seen this ugly scene, asked Shatrughna to leave Manthara to her own fate!

Sarga Seventy Nine

Ministers propose Bharata's 'rajyabhisheka' - but the latter proposes only temporary authority as Shri Rama ought to be the real King .

Tataḥ prabhātasamaye divase 'tha caturdaśe, sametya rājakartāro bharataṁ vākyam abruvan/ gato daśarathaḥ svargaṁ yo no gurutaro guruḥ, rāmaṁ pravrajya vai jyeṣṭhaṁ lakṣmaṇaṁ ca mahābalaṁ/ tvam adya bhava no rājā rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ, saṁgatya nāparādhnoti rājyam etad anāyakam/ ābhiṣecanikaṁ sarvaṁ idam ādāya rāghava, pratīkṣate tvāṁ svajanaḥ śreṇayaś ca nṛpātmaja/ rājyam grhāṇa bharata pitypaitāmahaṁ mahat, abhiṣecaya cātmānaṁ pāhi cāsmān nararṣabha/ ābhiṣecanikaṁ bhāṇḍaṁ kṛtvā sarvaṁ pradakṣiṇam, bharatas taṁ janaṁ sarvaṁ pratyuvāca dhṛtavrataḥ/ jyeṣṭhasya rājatā nityam ucitā hi kulasya naḥ, naivaṁ bhavanto mām vaktum arhanti kuśalā janāḥ/ rāmaḥ pūrvo hi no bhrātā bhaviṣyati mahīpatiḥ, ahaṁ tv arāṇye vatsyāmi varṣāṇi nava pañca ca/ yujyatām mahatī senā caturaṅgamahābalā, ānayaṣyāmy ahaṁ jyeṣṭhaṁ bhrātaraṁ rāghavaṁ vanāt/ ābhiṣecanikaṁ caiva sarvaṁ etad upaskṛtam, puraskṛtya gamiṣyāmi rāmahetor vanaṁ prati, tatraiva taṁ naravyāghram abhiṣicya puraskṛtam, āneṣyāmi tu vai rāmaṁ havyaavāham ivādhvarāt/ na sakāmā kariṣyāmi svam imām māṛgandhinīm, vane vatsyāmy ahaṁ durge rāmo rājā bhaviṣyati/ kriyatām śilpibhiḥ panthāḥ samāni viṣamāni ca, rakṣiṇaś cānusaṁyāntu pathi durgavicārakāḥ/ evaṁ sambhāṣamāṇaṁ taṁ rāmahetor nṛpātmajam, pratyuvāca janaḥ sarvaḥ śrīmadvākyam anuttamam/ evaṁ te bhāṣamāṇasya padmā śrīr upatiṣṭhatām, yas tvam jyeṣṭhe nṛpasute pṛthivīm dātum icchasi/ anuttamaṁ tad vacanaṁ nṛpātmaja; prabhāṣitaṁ samśravaṇe niśamya ca, praharṣajās taṁ prati bāṣpabindavo; nipetur āryānananetra - sambhavāḥ/ ūcus te vacanam idam niśamya hṛṣṭāḥ; sāmātyāḥ sapariṣado viyātaśokāḥ, panthānaṁ naravarabhaktimāñ janaś ca; vyādiṣṭas tava vacanāc ca śilpivargaḥ/

Precisely fourteen days subsequently, the Mantris and the senior officials of the Kingdom called on Bharata Kumara and stated that since King Dasharatha had passed away and Shri Rama had already left for vana vaasa, you are the King now and formally should take over as the mourning period had formally concluded as meanwhile all the required arrangements had since been ready for your Rajyabhisheka. Then Bharata made a parikrama of the Abhisheka Kalasha, and addressed the officials as follows: *jyeṣṭhasya rājatā nityam ucitā hi kulasya naḥ, naivaṁ bhavanto mām vaktum arhanti kuśalā janāḥ/ rāmaḥ pūrvo hi no bhrātā bhaviṣyati mahīpatiḥ, ahaṁ tv arāṇye vatsyāmi varṣāṇi nava pañca ca/ yujyatām mahatī senā caturaṅgamahābalā, ānayaṣyāmy ahaṁ jyeṣṭhaṁ bhrātaraṁ rāghavaṁ vanāt/* Dear friends, you should not ask me to do so as Rama is the eldest of the family and in our vamsha, it has been our convention that the eldest son is only eligible for Kingship and that ought to be so. In place of Ramachandra I am prepared to undergo the prescribed vana vaasa in place of my elder brother. Therefore get ready with chaturanga sena so that my elder brother would return and assume the kingship. I desire that all the material ready for the Rajyabhisheka be also taken along so that he could return with Sita Lakshmanas as the perfect King with the purity of Agni and the Yajna Karyas there itself. *na sakāmā kariṣyāmi svam imām māṛgandhinīm, vane vatsyāmy ahaṁ durge rāmo rājā bhaviṣyati/* In this very context, I should like to emphasize and reemphasize that my mother Kaikeyi's life ambition be rejected at any cost! There fore let the labour force be also ensure that the ups and downs of earth be rectified as much as possible so that the entire party could reach the place where Rama had reached with Devi Sita and Lakshmana. As the Mantris and senior officials who requested Bharata earlier were totally taken aback at Bharat's decisiveness to reject their proposal of his kingship; they stated: *evaṁ te bhāṣamāṇasya padmā śrīr upatiṣṭhatām, yas tvam jyeṣṭhe nṛpasute pṛthivīm dātum icchasi/* Mahatma! By your decisiveness like this , may you be blessed again and again and may the lotus eyed Maha Vishnu along with Devi Lakshmi be with you ever, as you desire to decline the kingship as that actually rests with Shri Rama the truly eligible eldest son! Later on the Mantris made a public announcement to one and all of the most exhilarating news of Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas return to Ayodhya as Rama being the fullfledged King, soon! The Public was overcome with unparalleled joy at the divine-like determination of Bharata rejecting the erstwhile misdoing of Kaikeyi!

Sarga Eighty

Bharata initiates the constuction of comfortable ‘Raja Marga’ from Riveres Sarayu to banks of Ganga

Atha bhūmipradeśajñāḥ sūtrakarmaviśārādāḥ, svakarmābhiratāḥ śūrāḥ khanakā yantrakās tathā/ karmāntikāḥ sthapatayaḥ puruṣā yantrakovidāḥ, tathā vardhakayaś caiva mārgiṇo vṛkṣataksakāḥ/ kūpakārāḥ sudhākārā vaṁśakarmakṛtas tathā, samarthā ye ca draṣṭāraḥ puratas te pratasthire/ sa tu harṣāt tam uddeśam janaughō vipulaḥ prayān, aśobhata mahāvegah sāgarasyeva parvaṇi/ te svavāram samāsthāya vartmakarmāṇi kovidāḥ, karaṇair vividhopetaiḥ purastāt sampratasthire/ latāvallīś ca gulmāmś ca sthāñūn aśmana eva ca, janās te cakrire mārgam chindanto vividhān drumān/ avṛkṣeṣu ca deśeṣu ke cid vṛkṣān aropayan, ke cit kuṭhāraiś ṭaṅkaiś ca dātraiś chindan kva cit kva cit/ apare vīraṇastambān balino balavattarāḥ, vidhamanti sma durgāni sthālāni ca tatas tataḥ/ apare ‘pūrayan kūpān pāmsubhiḥ śvabhram āyatam, nimnabhāgāms tathā ke cit samāmś cakruḥ samantataḥ/ babandhur bandhanīyāmś ca kṣodyān samcukṣudus tadā, bibhidur bhedanīyāmś ca tāms tān deśān narās tadā/ acireṇaiva kālena parivāhān bahūdakān, cakrur bahuvīdhākārān sāgarapratimān bahūn, udapānān bahuvīdhān vedikā parimaṇḍitān/ sasudhākūṭṭimatalaḥ prapuspitamahīruhaḥ, mattodghuṣṭadvijagaṇaḥ patākābhīr alaṁkṛtaḥ/ candanodakasaṁsikto nānākusumabhūṣitaḥ, bahv aśobhata senāyāḥ panthāḥ svargapathopamaḥ/ ājñāpyātha yathājñāpti yuktās te ‘dhikṛtā narāḥ, ramaṇīyeṣu deśeṣu bahusvāduphaleṣu ca/ yo niveśas tv abhipreto bharatasya mahātmanaḥ, bhūyas taṁ śobhayām āsur bhūṣābhīr bhūṣaṇopamam/ nakṣatreṣu praśasteṣu muhūrteṣu ca tadvidaḥ, niveśam sthāpayām āsur bharatasya mahātmanaḥ/ bahupāmsucayās cāpi parikhāparivāritāḥ, tatrendrakīlapratimāḥ pratolīvaraśobhitāḥ/ prāsādamālāsamyuktāḥ saudhaprākārasamvṛtāḥ, patākā śobhitāḥ sarve sunirmitamahāpathāḥ/ visarpatbhīr ivākāṣe viṭaṅkāgravimānakaiḥ, samucchritair niveśas te babhuḥ śakrapuropamāḥ/ jāhnavīm tu samāsādyā vividhadruma kānanām, śītalāmalapānīyām mahāmīnasamākulām/ sacandratārāgaṇamaṇḍitaṁ yathā; nabhaḥkṣapāyām amalām virājate, narendramārgaḥ sa tathā vyarājata; krameṇa ramaṇā śubhaśilpinirmitaḥ/

As instructed by Bharata, innumerable labour forces were arranged, to even out the pathway across mountains by way of diggings and clearing off forests, crossing water bodies and rives by several boats, diverting flows of rivers as possible, charioteers and machines for digging and road rollings, tree cutters, food, kichen and cooking arrangements, mats and animal skins for seating and resting, bullock-horse elephant-camel carts, wood cutters and furniture makers and so on. *sasudhākūṭṭimatalaḥ prapuspita - mahīruhaḥ, mattodghuṣṭadvijagaṇaḥ patākābhīr alaṁkṛtaḥ/ candanodakasaṁsikto nānākusumabhūṣitaḥ, bahv aśobhata senāyāḥ panthāḥ svargapathopamaḥ/*In this manner, as the pathyway through jungles, mountains and water bodies was laid out like ‘Deva Margas’ with stone pebbles wide spread and evened out all along the route. Further the road ways were decorated with victory flags and huge banners with flowers and hangings at key and select points especially the road turnings. *ājñāpyātha yathājñāpti yuktās te ‘dhikṛtā narāḥ, ramaṇīyeṣu deśeṣu bahusvāduphaleṣu ca/ yo niveśas tv abhipreto bharatasya mahātmanaḥ, bhūyas taṁ śobhayām āsur bhūṣābhīr bhūṣaṇopamam/* As per the instructions of Bharata, horded of halting places with tasteful restful resorts where tasty and sweet fruits plucked from the plentiful trees around be made available for the asking of the passers by. *nakṣatreṣu praśasteṣu muhūrteṣu ca tadvidaḥ, niveśam sthāpayām āsur bharatasya mahātmanaḥ/* Experts in Vaastu Shastra and of Nakshatra-Muhurta vidwans were engaged too to decide on the halting points of Bharata either for rest, or taking food , or for ablutions or night halts and accordingly the rest joints, kitchens , and food servive facilities to one and all got placed too. *jāhnavīm tu samāsādyā vividhadruma kānanām, śītalāmala pānīyām mahāmīnasamākulām/ sacandratārāgaṇamaṇḍitaṁ yathā; nabhaḥkṣapāyām amalām virājate, narendramārgaḥ sa tathā vyarājata; krameṇa ramaṇā śubhaśilpinirmitaḥ/* All along the banks of Ganga enroute, a well laid ‘raja maarga’ got into excellent shape thanks to the industry and the short possible time frame of the royal work force and their supervising engineers and experts of architects.

Sarga Eighty One

As ‘mangala vaadyas’ were heard on a morning, Bharata felt uneasy and asked Vasishtha to come to Rajya sabha with Ministers and officials

*Tato nāndīmukhīm rātrim bharatam sūtamāgadhāḥ, tuṣṭuvur vāgviśeṣajñāḥ stavair maṅgalasamhitaiḥ/
suvarṇakoṇābhihataḥ prānadad yāmadundubhiḥ, dadhmuḥ śaṅkhāms ca śataśo vādyāms choccāvaca -
svarān/ sa tūrya ghoṣaḥ sumahān divam āpūrayann iva, bharatam śokasamtaptaḥ bhūyaḥ śokair
arandhrayat/ tato prabuddho bharatas tam ghoṣam samnivartya ca, nāham rājeti cāpy uktvā śatrughnam
idam abravīt/ paśya śatrughna kaikeyā lokasyāpakṛtam mahat, viśṛjya mayi duḥkhāni rājā daśaratho
gataḥ/ tasyaiśā dharmarājasya dharmamūlā mahātmanaḥ, paribhramati rājaśrīr naur ivākarnikā jale/ ity
evam bharatam prekṣya vilapantam vicetanam, kṛpaṇam ruruduḥ sarvāḥ sasvaram yoṣitas tadā/ tathā
tasmin vilapati vasiṣṭho rājadharmavit, sabhām ikṣvākunāthasya praviveśa mahāyaśāḥ/ śāta kumbha -
mayīm ramyām maṅiratnasamākulām, sudharmām iva dharmātmā sagaṇaḥ pratyapadyata/ sa kāñcana -
mayam pīṭham parārthyāstaraṇāvṛtam, adhyāsta sarvavedajño dūtān anuśaśāsa ca/brāhmaṇān kṣatriyān
yodhān amātyān gaṇaballabhān, kṣipram ānayatāvyaagrāḥ kṛtyam ātyayikam hi naḥ/ tato halahalāśabdo
mahān samudapadyata, rathair aśvair gajaiś cāpi janānām upagacchatām/ tato bharatam āyāntam
śatakratum ivāmarāḥ, pratyandandan prakṛtayo yathā daśaratham tathā/ hrada iva timināgasamvṛtaḥ;
stimitajalo maṅiśaṅkhaśarkaraḥ, daśarathasutaśobhitā sabhā; sadaśaratheva babhau yathā p/ā*

As the preparations of laying the Raja Marga through the forests along and upto the Sacred Ganges were in full swing as per Bharata’s instructions, there at Ayodhya on a prescribed early morning, Bharata was woken up by the ‘vandimagadhas’ or the troupe of praising awakeners. Subsequently, the morning drums and instrumental musician groups alerted Bharata who had been crying away besides thinking all through the night. Then he flared up at the groups of drummers and musicians and shouted: I am not the King! and stopped the sounds forthwith. Then he addressed Shatrughna: ‘See! What type of damage that Kaikeyi had done; Maha Raja Dasharatha was despatched to Swarga and immersed us in deep distress! Now thanks to King Dasharatha now Rajya Lakshmi is floating like a boat which way to go by! *Yo hi nah smahaan naathah sopi pravrajito vane, anaya dharmamutrujya maatraa me Ragvah swayam/* That maha swami and dharmagjna being the universal protector Raghunadha had already been sent off by my own mother and despatched away dharma with ‘tilaanjali’ !’ As Bharata said so, the Rani vaasa women broke out in sobbings aloud. At that juncture, Maharshi Vasishtha entered the sabha bhavana of the ex. King Dasharatha. He then instructed Bharata Shatrughna to please attend. Then the Ministers, Sena patis, Public Leaders gradually occupied their seats.

Sarga Eighty Two

Bharata disagrees with Vasishtha that kingship was Rama’s right and only a passing solution now

*Tām āryagaṇasampūrṇām bharataḥ pragrahām sabhām, dadarśa buddhisampannaḥ pūrṇacandrām
niśām iva/ āsanāni yathānyāyam āryānām viśatām tadā/ adṛśyata ghanāpāye pūrṇacandrevā śarvarī/
rājñas tu prakṛtīḥ sarvāḥ samagrāḥ prekṣya dharmavit, idam purohito vākyam bharatam mṛdu cābravīt/
tāta rājā daśarathaḥ svargato dharmam ācaran, dhana dhānyavatīm sphītām pradāya pṛthivīm tava/
rāmas tathā satyadhṛtiḥ satām dharmam anusmaran, nājahāt pitur ādeśam śaśī jyotsnām ivoditaḥ/ pitrā
bhrātrā ca te dattam rājyam nihatakaṅṭakam, tad bhukṣva muditāmātyaḥ kṣipram evābhiśecaya/ udīcyās
ca pratīcyās ca dākṣiṇātyās ca kevalāḥ, koṭyāparāntāḥ sāmudrā ratnāny abhiharantu te/ tac chrutvā
bharato vākyam śokenābhipariplutaḥ, jagāma manasā rāmam dharmajño dharmakāṅkṣayā/ sa
bāspakalayā vācā kalahaṁsasvaro yuvā, vilalāpa sabhāmadhye jagarhe ca purohitam/ carita brahma -
caryasya vidyā snātasya dhīmataḥ, dharme prayatamānasya ko rājyam madvidho haret/ katham
daśarathāj jāto bhaved rājyāpahārakah, rājyam cāham ca rāmasya dharmam vaktum ihārhasi/ jyeṣṭhaḥ
śreṣṭhaś ca dharmātmā dilīpanahuṣopamaḥ, labdhum arhati kākutstho rājyam daśaratho yathā/*

anāryajuṣṭam asvargyaṃ kuryāṃ pāpam ahaṃ yadi, ikṣvākūṇām ahaṃ loke bhaveyaṃ kulapāmsanaḥ/ yad dhi mātrā kṛtaṃ pāpam nāhaṃ tad abhirocaye, ihastho vanadurgasthaṃ namasyāmi kṛtāñjaliḥ/ rāmam evānugacchāmi sa rājā dvipadām varaḥ, trayāṇām api lokānām rāghavo rājyam arhati/ tad vākyam dharmasamyuktaṃ śrutvā sarve sabhāsadaḥ, harṣān mumucur aśrūṇi rāme nihitacetasaḥ/ yadi tv āryam na śakṣyāmi vinivartayituṃ vanāt, vane tatraiva vatsyāmi yathāryo lakṣmaṇas tathā/ sarvopāyam tu vartiṣye vinivartayituṃ balāt, samakṣam ārya miśrāṇām sādḥūnām guṇavartinām/ evam uktvā tu dharmātmā bharato bhrātrvatsalaḥ, samīpastham uvācedaṃ sumantraṃ mantrakovidam/ tūrṇam utthāya gaccha tvaṃ sumantra mama śāsanāt, yātrām ājñāpaya kṣipraṃ balaṃ caiva samānaya/ evam uktaḥ sumantras tu bharatena mahātmanā, prahr̥ṣṭaḥ so 'diśat sarvaṃ yathā samdiṣṭam iṣṭavat/ tāḥ prahr̥ṣṭāḥ prakṛtayo balādhyakṣā balasya ca, śrutvā yātrām samājñaptām rāghavasya nivartane/ tato yodhāṅganāḥ sarvā bhartṛṇ sarvān gr̥hegr̥he, yātrā gamanam ājñāya tvarayanti sma harṣitāḥ/ te hayair gorathaiḥ śīghraiḥ syandanaiś ca manojavaiḥ, saha yodhair balādhyakṣā balaṃ sarvaṃ acodayan/ sajjaṃ tu tad balaṃ dṛṣṭvā bharato gurusāmnidhau, rathaṃ me tvarayasveti sumantraṃ pārśvato 'bravīt/ bharatasya tu tasyājñām pratigr̥hya prahr̥ṣitaḥ, rathaṃ gr̥hītvā prayayau yuktaṃ paramavājibhiḥ/ sa rāghavaḥ satyadhṛtiḥ pratāpavān; bruvan suyuktaṃ dṛḍhasatyavikramaḥ, guruṃ mahāranyagataṃ yaśasvinam; prasādayiṣyan bharato 'bravīt tadā/ tūṇa samutthāya sumantra gaccha; balasya yogāya balapradhānān, ānetum icchāmi hi tam vanasthaṃ; prasādyā rāmam jagato hitāya/ sa sūtaputro bharatena samyag; ājñāpitaḥ samparipūrṇakāmaḥ, śāsāsa sarvān prakṛtipradhānān; balasya mukhyāms ca suhṛjjanam ca/ tataḥ samutthāya kule kule te; rājanyavaiśyā vṛṣalāś ca viprāḥ, ayūyujann uṣṭrarathān kharāms ca; nāgān hayāms caiva kulaprasūtān/

As Bharata graced the full Rajya Sabha like the post monsoon Sharad Ritu Purnima Chandra along with the sparkling Stars all around like vidwans, ministers, and the public figures of far reaching fame. Then Maharshi Vasistha addressed Bharata! ‘ Esteemed Bharata! Dharmagjna King Dasharatha has since left for heavens and Satyavaadi Shri Rama had left for forest life. Now on behalf all of us at this Grand Meet, may I request you to take over the reins of Kingdom. Once you agree, the huge fraternity of the co- Kings and the reputed businessmen from all over the globe are ready to dedicate their dhana-dhanya-vastu-vaahanas by way of their unanimity and great good will for you as the new King. Bharata then broke into tears in the open conference and in low voice addressed the Maharshi: ‘ Gurudeva! How could I a normal human like me steal away the Kingdom of the outstanding Shri Rama. He has the radiance of King Nahusha or King Dilip of this dazzling ancestry and of the just deceased Maharaja Dasharatha! *anāryajuṣṭam asvargyaṃ kuryāṃ pāpam ahaṃ yadi, ikṣvākūṇām ahaṃ loke bhaveyaṃ kulapāmsanaḥ/* It is only the mean and undeserving persons who could resort to such sinfulness who would most certainly reach the lowest kind of narakas. If I assume the kingship that rightfully belongs to Rama, would that be not a grave slur to the most reputed Ikshvaaku Vamsha! *Yad dhi mātrā kṛtaṃ pāpam nāhaṃ tad abhirocaye, ihastho vanadurgasthaṃ namasyāmi kṛtāñjaliḥ/* As I have sincerely abhorred what my mother had planned and sinned grievously, I am hereby prostrating my elder brother Shri Rama living in deep forests from here itself. *Rāmam evānugacchāmi sa rājā dvipadām varaḥ, trayāṇām api lokānām rāghavo rājyam arhati/* I ought to therefore follow Shri Rama alone and he is the assuredly unquestionable King of Ayodhya. In fact, he is worthy of administering three lokas!’ As Bharata replied likewise to what Vasistha Maharshi proposed, the entire conference hall resounded with clappings and appreciative cryings with tears. Then Bharata further asserted: ‘ *yadi tv āryam na śakṣyāmi vinivartayituṃ vanāt, vane tatraiva vatsyāmi yathāryo lakṣmaṇas tathā/ sarvopāyam tu vartiṣye vinivartayituṃ balāt, samakṣam ārya miśrāṇām sādḥūnām guṇavartinām/* In case I fail to have Rama returned back to Ayodhya, then I too should follow the example of Lakshmana and stay back along with them all! I shall endeavour my utmost to return by using all my capabilities. I have already made elaborate preparations by way of making suitable road laying through the forests and crossing water bodies and rivers to facilitate Rama’s return and am strongly convinced of his approval for return to Ayodhya.’ Having thus concluding the Maha Sabha, he then addressed Sumantra to send his command to move the army. The entire audience in the Maha Sabha roared in raptures with applauses. As a ripple effect of the proceedings, the city of Ayodhya which had thus far crestfallen thus far and the public came alive. From

each household, the woman folk egged on their husbands and the able bodied to join the procession along with the thousands of soldiers , apart from the workforce who had already positioned themselves. Then Bharata instructed Sumantra: *tūṇa samutthāya sumantra gaccha; balasya yogāya balapradhānān, ānetum icchāmi hi taṁ vanasthaṁ; prasādyā rāmaṁ jagato hitāya/* Sumantra! Have you not already readied the Senapati to line up the army as we are about to launch the glorious fulfillment of our program of return with Shri Rama- Devi Sita-brother Lakshmana. Then the house holds Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya and Lower classes of Ayodhya were pleasantly activated and got readied with unusual excitement and the anticipated fulfillment of their ambitions.

Sarga Eighty Three

Bharata's vana yatra and night halt at Shringaverapura

Tataḥ samutthitaḥ kālyam āsthāya syandanottamam, prayayau bharataḥ śighraṁ rāmadarśanakāṅkṣayā/ agrataḥ prayayus tasya sarve mantripurodhasaḥ, adhiruhya hayair yuktān rathān sūryarathopamān/ navanāgasahasrāṇi kalpitāni yathāvidhi, anvayur bharataṁ yāntam ikṣvāku kulanandanam/ śaṣṭhī rathasahasrāṇi dhanvino vividhāyudhāḥ, anvayur bharataṁ yāntam rājaputraṁ yaśasvinam/ śataṁ sahasrāṇy aśvānāṁ samārūdhāni rāghavam, anvayur bharataṁ yāntam rājaputraṁ yaśasvinam/ kaikeyī ca sumitrā ca kausalyā ca yaśasvinī, rāmānyanasamhṛṣṭā yayur yānena bhāsvatā/ prayātās cārya saṁghātā rāmaṁ draṣṭuṁ salakṣmaṇam, tasyaiva ca kathāś citrāḥ kurvāṇā hṛṣṭamānasāḥ/ megha śyāmaṁ mahābāhuṁ sthiraśattvaṁ dṛḍhavrataṁ, kadā draṣṭyāmahe rāmaṁ jagataḥ śokanāśanam/ Drishta eva hi nah shokamapanashyati Ragavah, tama sarvasya lokasy samudyinniva Bhaskarah// ity evam kathayantas te samprahṛṣṭāḥ kathāḥ śubhāḥ, pariṣvajānās cānyonyam yayur nāgarikās tadā/ ye ca tatrāpare sarve sammatā ye ca naiḡamāḥ, rāmaṁ prati yayur hṛṣṭāḥ sarvāḥ prakṛtayas tadā/ maṇi kārās ca ye ke cit kumbhakārās ca śobhanāḥ, sūtrakarmakṛtās caiva ye ca śastropajīvināḥ/ māyūrakāḥ krākacikā rocakā vedhakās tathā, dantakārāḥ sudhākārās tathā gandhopajīvināḥ/ suvarṇakārāḥ prakhyātās tathā kambaladhāvakāḥ, snāpakācchādakā vaidyā dhūpakāḥ śauṇḍikās tathā/ rajakās tunnavāyās ca grāmaghoṣamahattarāḥ, śailūṣās ca saha strībhīr yānti kaivartakās tathā/ samāhitā vedavido brāhmaṇā vṛttasammatāḥ, gorathair bharataṁ yāntam anujagmuḥ sahasraśaḥ/ suveṣāḥ śuddhavasanaś tāmramṛṣṭānulepanāḥ, sarve te vividhair yānaiḥ śanair bharatam anvayuh/ prahṛṣṭamuditā senā sānvayāt kaikayīsutam, vyavatiṣṭhata sā senā bharatasyānyāyini/ nirīkṣyānugatām senām tām ca gaṅgām śivodakām, bharataḥ sacivān sarvān abravīd vākyakovidaḥ/ niveśayata me sainyam abhiprāyeṇa sarvaśaḥ, viśrāntaḥ pratarīṣyāmaḥ śva idānīm mahānadīm/ dātum ca tāvad icchāmi svar gatasya mahīpateḥ, aurdhvadeha nimittārtham avatīryodakam nadīm/ tasyaivam bruvato 'mātyās tathety uktvā samāhitāḥ, nyaveśayams tāmś chandena svena svena pṛthakpṛthak/ niveśya gaṅgām anu tām mahānadīm; camūm vidhānaiḥ paribarha śobhinīm, uvāsa rāmasya tadā mahātmano; vicintayāno bharato nivartanam/

Bharata with unprecedented excitement for ‘Shri Rama darshana’ got readied in the morning on into an ideal chariot like that of Surya Ratha itself! The chariot was followed by a thousand elephants., six thousand chariots in which several ‘dhanurdhara’s too were present. Behind them were a lakh of horse men. Countless ‘dwijas’ of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaisya communities joining the procession. They were excited to the core as if they were all in ‘Vrataanushthaana’ or the supreme dedicated mindedness to meet and see for themselves Shri Rama Devi Sita Lakshmanas conversing in animated discussions especially Rama the Sthitapragjna-Samsara dukkha nivaraka- shyaama varna- aajaana bahu. They were all in trance like excitement embracing of camaraderie and solidarity. They are assuring mutually: *Drishta eva hi nah shokamapanashyati Ragavah, tama sarvasya lokasy samudyinniva Bhaskarah//* Just as Surya Deva at the ‘ushakkaala’ or early morning smahes darkness, the vision of Shri Rama should terminate the ‘shoka-santaapa’ or the agitated cryings of ‘samsara’. The crowds in the procession were in multifarious body presentation- some wearing glittering clothes of variety with studded artificial semi and precious stones; some peacock wear dresses; some with besmeared sandal pastes, some with ivory made jewellery, some

with bedspreads with variety of motifs, some with display of their skilled artistries of carpentry, metal works of copper, silver, gold, bronze and steel; some of the ‘veda vettas’ reciting stanzas on auspiciousness, safety, and good health and some displaying varieties of group dances, or ‘vaadya brindaas’ and so on. *Prahṛṣṭamuditā senā sāvayāt kaikayīsutam, vyavatiṣṭhata sā senā bharatasyānuvāyini/* The entire army of Ayodhya of ‘chaturanga sena’ was on the move the followed Bharata Shatrughnas with unprecedented exhilaration and animation. The unending procession had thus Shringaverapura on the banks of Ganga. *Dātuṃ ca tāvad icchāmi svar gatasya mahīpateḥ, aurdhvadeha nimittārtham avatīryodakam nadīm/ tasyaivam bruvato ’mātyās tathety uktvā samāhitāḥ, nyaveśayams tāmś chandena svena svena pṛthakpṛthak/* As the huge procession stopped over, the men and women of Ayodhya performed their respective tarpanas to King Dasharatha and rested there after for the night.

Sarga Eighty Four

Nishada Raja hosts Bharata’s overnight stay before crossing Ganga the next day

Tato niviṣṭām dhvajinīm gaṅgām anvāsritām nadīm, niṣādarājo dṛṣṭvaiva jñātīn samtvārīto ’bravīt mahatīyam ataḥ senā sāgarābhā pradṛśyate, nāsyāntam avagacchāmi manasāpi vicintayan/ eṣa hi mahākāyaḥ kovidāradhvajo rathe, bandhayiṣyati vā dāsān atha vāsmān vadhiṣyati/ atha dāsārathīm rāmam pitrā rājyād vivāsitam, bharataḥ kaikeyīputro hantum samadhigacchati/ bhartā caiva sakhā caiva rāmo dāsārathir mama, tasyārthakāmāḥ samnaddhā gaṅgānūpe ’tra tiṣṭhata/ tiṣṭhantu sarvadāsās ca gaṅgām anvāsritā nadīm, balayuktā nadīrakṣā māmsamūlaphalāśanāḥ/ nāvām śatānām pañcānām kaivartānām śatam śatam, samnaddhānām tathā yūnām tiṣṭhantv atyabhyacodayat/ yadā tuṣṭas tu bharato rāmasyeha bhaviṣyati, seyam svastimayī senā gaṅgām adya tariṣyati/ ity uktvopāyanam gṛhya matsyamāmsamadhūni ca, abhicakrāma bharatam niṣādādhipatir guhaḥ/ tam āyāntam tu samprekṣya sūtaputraḥ pratāpavān, bharatāyācacakṣe ’tha vinayajño vinītavat/ eṣa jñātisahasreṇa sthapatih parivāritah, kuśalo daṇḍakāraṇye vṛddho bhrātus ca te sakhā/ tasmāt paśyatu kākustha tvām niṣādādhipo guhaḥ, asaṃśayam vijānīte yatra tau rāmalakṣmaṇau/ etat tu vacanam śrutvā sumantrād bharataḥ śubham, uvāca vacanam śīghram guhaḥ paśyatu mām iti/ labdhvābhyanujñām samhṛṣṭo jñātibhiḥ parivāritah, āgamyā bharatam prahvo guho vacanam abravīt/ niṣkuṭas caiva deśo ’yam vañcitās cāpi te vāyam, nivedayāmas te sarve svake dāsakule vasa/ asti mūlam phalam caiva niṣādaiḥ samupāhṛtam, ārdram ca māmsam śuṣkam ca vanyam coccāvacaṃ mahat/ āsamse svāsītā senā vatsyātīmām vibhāvarīm, arcito vividhaiḥ kāmāiḥ śvaḥ sasainyo gamiṣyasi/

Nishada Raja Guha having seen the huge Sena and Public of Ayodhya, addressed his men that the ocean like army of Ayodhya had arrived headed by Bharata as indicated by his chariot’s flag; I am not sure of the intentions of Bharata and therefore by ready for any eventuality. We have five hundred boats and having stored a back up of food and drinks. *yadā tuṣṭas tu bharato rāmasyeha bhaviṣyati, seyam svastimayī senā gaṅgām adya tariṣyati/ ity uktvopāyanam gṛhya matsyamāmsamadhūni ca, abhicakrāma bharatam niṣādādhipatir guhaḥ/ yadā tuṣṭas tu bharato rāmasyeha bhaviṣyati, seyam svastimayī senā gaṅgām adya tariṣyati/ ity uktvopāyanam gṛhya matsyamāmsamadhūni ca, abhicakrāma bharatam niṣādādhipatir guhaḥ/* In case Bharata’s intention is pro Rama, then we can certainly help them and ferry across to the other side of Ganga, otherwise not! So saying Guha alerted his well built boatsmen. Having decided thus Nishada Raja Guha alerted them and ferried near to Bharata and addressed Bharata: *eṣa jñātisahasreṇa sthapatih parivāritah, kuśalo daṇḍakāraṇye vṛddho bhrātus ca te sakhā/ tasmāt paśyatu kākustha tvām niṣādādhipo guhaḥ, asaṃśayam vijānīte yatra tau rāmalakṣmaṇau/* ‘Kakusthakula - bhushana! I am the chief of Nishadas named Guha and I have my followers of boatsmen with thousands of strong men. I am the admirer of friend Shri Rama and am possessive of the whatwith all of the information of this adjacent dandakaranya. Decidedly, Rama Lakshmanas are of the features of your as a brother. And I could be of assistance to you and your followers. *niṣkuṭas caiva deśo ’yam vañcitās cāpi te vāyam, nivedayāmas te sarve svake dāsakule vasa/ asti mūlam phalam caiva niṣādaiḥ samupāhṛtam, ārdram ca māmsam śuṣkam ca vanyam coccāvacaṃ mahat/* Nishada Raja then assured Bharata that the

‘vana pradeshas’ around would be like gardens for you and your followers and he and his men would be at the disposal for any type of service, so saying he asked his men to distribute flowers and fresh fruits. He further assured that he would initiate the service of him and his followers from the next early morning onward.

Sarga Eighty Five

Bharata and Nishada Raja exchange vies of Rama’s magnanimity and valour

Evam uktas tu bharato niṣādādhipatiṃ guham, pratyuvāca mahāprājño vākyam hetvarthasamhitam/ ūrjitaḥ khalu te kāmahaḥ kṛto mama guroḥ sakhe, yo me tvam īdṛśīm senām eko 'bhyarcitum icchasi' ity uktvā tu mahātejā guham vacanam uttamam, abravīd bharataḥ śrīmān niṣādādhipatiṃ punaḥ/ katarena gamiṣyāmi bharadvājāśramam guha, gahano 'yam bhṛṣam deśo gaṅgānūpo duratyayaḥ/ tasya tadvacanam śrutvā rājaputrasya dhīmataḥ, abravīt prāñjalir vākyam guho gahanagocaraḥ/ dāsās tv anugamiṣyanti dhanvinaḥ susamāhitāḥ, aham cānugamiṣyāmi rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ/ kaccin na duṣṭo vrajasi rāmasyākliṣṭakarmanāḥ, iyam te mahatī senā śaṅkām janayatīva me/ tam evam abhibhāṣantam ākāśa iva nirmalaḥ, bharataḥ ślakṣṇayā vācā guham vacanam abravīt/ mā bhūt sa kālo yat kaṣṭam na mām śaṅkitum arhasi, rāghavaḥ sa hi me bhrātā jyeṣṭhaḥ piṭṛsamo mama/ tam nivartayitum yāmi kākutstham vanavāsinam, buddhir anyā na te kāryā guha satyam bravīmi te/ sa tu samhṛṣṭavadanaḥ śrutvā bharatabhāṣitam, punar evābravīd vākyam bharataṃ prati harṣitaḥ/ dhanyas tvam na tvayā tulyam paśyāmi jagatītale, ayatnād āgataṃ rājyam yas tvam tyaktum ihecchasi/ śāsvatī khalu te kīrtir lokān anucariṣyati, yas tvam kṛcchragataṃ rāmam pratyānayitum icchasi/ evam sambhāṣamāṇasya guhasya bharataṃ tadā, babhau naṣṭaprabhaḥ sūryo rajanī cābhyavartata/ samniveśya sa tām senām guhena paritoṣitaḥ, śatrughnena saha śrīmān śayanam punar āgamat/ rāmacintāmayāḥ śoko bharatasya mahātmanaḥ, upasthito hy anarhasya dharmaprekṣasya tādr̥śaḥ/ antardāhena dahanaḥ samtāpayati rāghavam, vanadāhābhisaṃtaptaṃ gūḍho 'gnir iva pādapam/ prasrutaḥ sarvagātrebhyaḥ svedaḥ śokāgnisambhavaḥ, yathā sūryāmsusaṃtpto himavān prasruto himam/ dhyānanirdaraśailena viniḥṣvasitadhātunā, dainyapādapasamghena śokāyāsādhiṣṅgiṇā/ pramohānantasattvena samtāpauṣadhiveṇunā, ākrānto duḥkhaśailena mahatā kaikayīsutaḥ/ guhena sārddham bharataḥ samāgato; mahānubhāvaḥ sajanaḥ samāhitaḥ, sudurmanās tam bharataṃ tadā punar; guhaḥ samāśvāsayaḥ agrajam prati/

Bharata replied to Nishada king Guha: ‘ dear brother! I am beholden to you for your gesture and the distribution of fresh fruits to my army and followers.’ Then he requested Guha to reach that specific direction where the ashram of Maharshi Bharadvaja. Guha assured that he would arrange to accompany him quite a few ‘mallas’ or very strong built men along with him. But , *kaccin na duṣṭo vrajasi rāmasyākliṣṭakarmanāḥ, iyam te mahatī senā śaṅkām janayatīva me/ tam evam abhibhāṣantam ākāśa iva nirmalaḥ, bharataḥ ślakṣṇayā vācā guham vacanam abravīt/* Guha expressed a doubt! Mahabali Rajakumara! I have only a doubt about your intention of your trying to meet Rama, since you are carrying such huge ‘sena’ along with you! Then Bharata replied in all seriousness: *mā bhūt sa kālo yat kaṣṭam na mām śaṅkitum arhasi, rāghavaḥ sa hi me bhrātā jyeṣṭhaḥ piṭṛsamo mama/ tam nivartayitum yāmi kākutstham vanavāsinam, buddhir anyā na te kāryā guha satyam bravīmi te/* Nishada Raja! May that type of inauspicious occasion should never occur in my lifetime! I feel badly hurt by your expression of doubtfulness and you should never ever suspect my sincerity: Shri Raghu natha is not only my elder brother, but like my father. Kakutsanandana Shri Rama had left for long forest like, but believe me! I am going there near him only to prostrate to him with the express request to return home ! ‘ Guha too felt relieved of his doubt and said: *dhanyas tvam na tvayā tulyam paśyāmi jagatītale, ayatnād āgataṃ rājyam yas tvam tyaktum ihecchasi/ śāsvatī khalu te kīrtir lokān anucariṣyati, yas tvam kṛcchragataṃ rāmam pratyānayitum icchasi/* Bharata! You are truly great as you are of this firm decision and to ignore and discard the status of Kingship! I have yet to imagine a person of this ‘dharmatva’ of sacrifice, virtuousness and purity of supreme thought like you! Your decisiveness to request Shri Rama to discard forest life and

grace Kingship should spread your glory globally in a unique manner!' Guha was overwhelmed and requested that the Ayodhya Sena be requested for overnight sleep. But, Bharta was unable to rest as he could not wipe off the bad memories of his return from his maternal grandfather's kingdom and the most unfortunate and unforgettable experiences from his father's death, the evil mindedness of his mother, the most harrowing experience of Rama Sita Lakshmana vana vaasa and so on. *antardāhena dahanah saṁtāpayati rāghavam, vanadāhābhisāmtaptaṁ gūḍho 'gnir iva pādapam/ prasrutaḥ sarvagātrebhyaḥ svedaḥ śokāgnisāmbhavaḥ, yathā sūryāmsūsāmtapto himavān prasruto himam/* The internal anguish and untold distress of Bharata was like the ever engulfing flames of forest, from the dismaying news of the King's demise and Shri Rama viyoga. Bharata then had sweatings flowing all over his body like for inexplicable reasons, mid day blazing Sun meleted off himalaya muntain peaks. Then Bharata was drowned in fear and mourning as thought his nervous system had got shaken up and was giving away! It was at that peak of mourning of Bharata, Guha met him in the morning next and gave him peace of mind and preparedness for the onward journey.

Sarga Eighty Six

Nishada Raja extols about the nobility and devotion to Rama by Lakshmana

Aacacakṣe 'tha sadbhāvaṁ lakṣmaṇasya mahātmanaḥ, bharatāyāprameyāya guho gahanagocaraḥ/ taṁ jāgrataṁ guṇair yuktaṁ varacāpeṣudhāriṇam, bhṛātṛ guptyartham atyantam ahaṁ lakṣmaṇam abravam/ iyaṁ tāta sukhā śayyā tvadartham upakalpita, pratyāśvasiḥi śeṣvāsyāṁ sukhaṁ rāghavanandana/ ucito 'yaṁ janaḥ sarve duḥkhānāṁ tvaṁ sukhocitaḥ, dharmātmaṁs tasya guptyartham jāgariṣyāmahe vayam/ na hi rāmāt priyataro mamāsti bhuvi kaś cana, motsuko bhūr bravīmy etad apy asatyam tavāgrataḥ/ asya prasādād āśaṁse loke 'smin sumahad yaśaḥ, dharmāvāptiṁ ca vipulāṁ arthāvāptiṁ ca kevalāṁ/ so 'haṁ priyasakhaṁ rāmaṁ śayānaṁ saha sītayā, rakṣiṣyāmi dhanuṣpāṇiḥ sarvaiḥ svair jñātibhiḥ saha/ na hi me 'viditaṁ kiṁ cid vane 'smiṁś carataḥ sadā, caturaṅgaṁ hy api balaṁ prasahema vayam yudhi/ evam asmābhir uktena lakṣmaṇena mahātmanā, anuñtā vayam sarve dharmam evānupaśyatā/ kathaṁ dāśarathau bhūmau śayāne saha sītayā, śakyā nidrāmāyā labdhuṁ jīvitam vā sukhāni vā/ yo na devāsuraiḥ sarvaiḥ śakyāḥ prasahituṁ yudhi, taṁ paśya guha saṁviṣṭam tṛṇeṣu saha sītayā/ mahatā tapasā labdho vividhaiś ca pariśramaiḥ, eko daśarathasyaiśa putraḥ sadṛśalakṣaṇaḥ/ asmin pravrajite rājā na ciraṁ vartayiṣyati, vidhavā medinī nūnam kṣipram eva bhaviṣyati/ vinadya sumahānādam śrameṇoparatāḥ striyaḥ, nirghoṣoparataṁ nūnam adya rājaniveśanam/ kausalyā caiva rājā ca tathaiva janānī mama, nāśaṁse yadi te sarve jīveyuḥ śarvarīm imāṁ/ jīved api hi me mātā śatruḥnasyānvave - kṣayā, duḥkhitā yā tu kausalyā vīrasūr vinaśiṣyati/ atikrāntam atikrāntam anavāpya manoratham, rājye rāmam anikṣipyā pitā me vinaśiṣyati/ siddhārthāḥ pītarāṁ vṛttaṁ tasmin kāle hy upasthite, pretakāryeṣu sarveṣu saṁskariṣyanti bhūmipam/ ramyacatvarasāsthānāṁ suvibhaktamahāpathāṁ, harmyaprāsāda - saṁpannāṁ sarvaratnavibhūṣitāṁ/ gajāśvarathasāmbādham tūryanādavināditāṁ, sarvakalyāṇa - saṁpūrṇāṁ hṣṭapūṣṭajanākulāṁ/ ārāmodyānasāmpūrṇāṁ samājotsavaśālinīm, sukhitā vicariṣyanti rājadhānīm pitur mama/ api satyapratijñena sārddham kuśalinā vayam, nivṛtte samaye hy asmin sukhitāḥ praviśemahi/ paridevayamānasya tasyaivaṁ sumahātmanaḥ, tiṣṭhato rājaputrasya śarvarī sātyavartata/ prabhāte vimale sūrye kārayitvā jaṭā ubhau, asmin bhāgīrathī tīre sukhaṁ saṁtāritau mayā/ jaṭādharaḥ tau drumacīravāśasau; mahābalau kuñjarayūthapopamau, vareṣucāpāsīdharau paramtapau; vyavekṣa - māṇau saha sītayā gatau/

Nishada King Guha, then described about the outstanding qualities of Lakshmana to Bharata. As Shri Rama was resting for a night sleep, Lakshmana was in the habit of addressing Shri Rama while desirous having the nihnt sleep, then Lakshmana would say: Raghunandana! I have prepared a comfortable bed for you and you may please rest well. Guha said that he and Lakshmana were talking and exchanging views almost through the small hours of the morning. *Na hi rāmāt priyataro mamāsti bhuvi kaś cana, motsuko bhūr bravīmy etad apy asatyam tavāgrataḥ/ asya prasādād āśaṁse loke 'smin sumahad yaśaḥ, dharmāvāptiṁ ca vipulāṁ arthāvāptiṁ ca kevalāṁ/* Lakshmana assured Guha that there was none like

Rama on the face of earth and that he would provide raksha all through the night! Thanks to Rama, I could certainly beget dharma laabha, great fame, and luxuries of life; but there could be no other like ambition of mine right now to keep my arrows in readiness and ensure safety to Sita Ramas through out the night. Lakshmana further used to state Guha that there could never be a secret unknown to him in the forest, and even an attack by ‘chaturana sena’ even could be faced instantaneously!’ Thus the Nishada informed about Lakshmana’s dedication to Rama, Bharata addressed Guha:’ Nishada Raja! Indeed it is so as Lakshmana would be not able to neglect his duty any way. Moreover, Lakshmana is capable to handle singlehandedly even when sura-asuras combine in a mutual battle with him; that is how, Sita Ramas are sleeping without any problem at all!’ Having thus affirmed the complementary heroism of Rama Lakshmanas, Bharata then realised another context of Rani vaasa strees in Ayodhya too should be now peaceful as all along the unfortunate developments of Ayodhya swept them off their feet so far! Guha then continued his naration to Bharata about what Lakshmana felt when the latter told Guha: ‘Maha Ranis Kousalya, King Dasharatha and my mother Sumitra might or might not survive till now. My mother might survive perhaps due to the hope of Shatrughna who had left along with Bharata, but since Rama had left away, Devi Kousalya’s life could be risky! As far as King Dasharatha would be concerned, it appears certain that since Rama had left, he might not survive the shock’. Then Lakshmana could not further control his emotions and broke down: *api satyapratijñena sārđham kuśalinā vāyam, nivṛtte samaye hy asmin sukhitāḥ praviśemahi/* ‘Can we three after the termination of the fourteen vana vaasa return back to Ayodhya!’ Thus Guha conveyed what all Lakshmana expressed keeping awake through out the night. He then concluded his recall to Bharata that at the next early morning Rama Sita Lakshmanas proceeded further looking somewhat lost in thoughts into the forest even as were dressed with ‘mriga charma’ dresses.

Sarga Eighty Seven

On hearing details of Rama Sita Lakshmanas, Bharata swooned down, Shatrugna and the mothers cried away, and persisted on the details of the threesome regardin their food and sleeping patterns.

Guhasya vacanam śrutvā bharato bhṛśam apriyam, dhyānam jagāma tatraiva yatra tac chrutam apriyam/ sukumāro mahāsattvaḥ siṃhaskandho mahābhujah, puṇḍarīka viśālākṣas taruṇah priyadarśanaḥ/ pratyāśvasya muhūrtaṁ tu kālam paramadurmanāḥ, papāta sahasā totirair hṛdi viddha iva dvipaḥ/ tadavasthaṁ tu bharataṁ śatrughno ’nantara sthitaḥ, pariṣvajya rurodocair visamjñah śokakarśitaḥ/ tataḥ sarvāḥ samāpetur mātaro bharatasya tāḥ, upavāsa kṛśā dīnā bhartṛvyasanakarśitaḥ/ tās ca tam patitaṁ bhūmau rudantyaḥ paryavārayan, kausalyā tv anusṛtyainam durmanāḥ pariṣasvaje/ vatsalā svam yathā vatsam upagūhya tapasvīnī, paripapraccha bharataṁ rudantī śokalālasā/ putravayādhir na te kaccic charīram paribādḥate, asya rājakulasyāsyadya tvavadheenam hi jeevitam/Twaam drushtvaa putra jeevaami Raame sabhraatruke gate, vṛtte Dasharathe raagjni naatha ekas tvam adya naḥ/ kaccin na lakṣmaṇe putra śrutam te kim cid apriyam, putra vā hy ekaputrāyāḥ sahabhārye vanam gate/ sa muhūrtaṁ samāśvasya rudann eva mahāyaśāḥ, kausalyām parisāntvyedaṁ guhaṁ vacanam abravīt/ bhrātā me kvāvasad rātrim kva sītā kva ca lakṣmaṇah, asvapac chayane kasmin kim bhuktvā guha śamsa me/ so ’bravīd bharataṁ pṛṣṭo niśādādhipatir guhaḥ, yad vidham pratipede ca rāme priyahite ’tithau/ annam uccāvacaṁ bhakṣyāḥ phalāni vividhāni ca, rāmāyābhyavahārārtham bahu copahṛtam mayā/ tat sarvam pratyannujñāsīd rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ, na hi tat pratyagḥṇāt sa kṣatradharmam anusmaran/ na hy asmābhiḥ pratigrāhyaṁ sakhe deyaṁ tu sarvadā, iti tena vayam rājann anunītā mahātmanā/ lakṣmaṇena samānītam pītvā vāri mahāyaśāḥ, aupavāsyam tadākārṣīd rāghavaḥ saha sītayā/ tatas tu jalaśeṣeṇa lakṣmaṇo ’py akarot tadā, vāg yatās te trayah samdhyam upāsata samāhitāḥ/ saumitris tu tataḥ paścād akarot svāstaram śubham, svayam ānīya barhīṁṣi kṣipram rāghava kāraṇāt/ tasmin samāviśad rāmaḥ svāstare saha sītayā, prakṣālyā ca tayoh pādāv apacakrāma lakṣmaṇah/ etat tad iṅgudīmūlam idam eva ca tat tṛṇam, yasmin rāmaś ca sītā ca rātrim tām śayitāv ubhau/ niyamy pṛṣṭhe tu talāṅgulitravāñ; śaraiḥ supūrṇāv iṣudhī paramatapah, mahad dhanuḥ sajjam upohya lakṣmaṇo; niśam

atiṣṭhat parito 'sya kevalam/ tatas tv ahaṁ cottamabānacāpadhṛk; sthito 'bhavaṁ tatra sa yatra lakṣmaṇaḥ, atandribhir jñātibhir āttakārmukair; mahendrakalpaṁ paripālayaṁs tadā/

Having heard the narration of what Nishada King and the latter's reactions expressed by Lakshmana before proceeding to dandakaranya, Bharata was shaken off his senses and had a vague feeling whether Rama would or would not agree to return to Ayodhya now! Bharata then lost his balance of mind and swooned down as though a huge tree was uprooted by an earth quake! Shatrughna was nearby and broke down. The mothers Kausalya-Sumitra-and Kaikeyi too surrounded and since they were on fast, they too were looking pale and helpless. As a mother cow caresses her calf in a similar situation, Devi Kousalya drew the sons on her lap and wept stating: ' *putravyādhir na te kaccic charīraṁ paribādhat, asya rājakulaśyāsyadya tvavadheenam hi jeevitam/Twaam drushtvaa putra jeevaami Raame sabhraatruke gate, vritte Dasharathe raagjni naatha ekas tvam adya naḥ/* Dear son Bharata!! Have you been affected by a body injury or mental shock that you are in this state! Now you are the single hope for this vamsha. I am surviving only due to you as my shelter Rama Lakshmanas had already gone away and King Dasharatha had left me too anyway.!' . Then as Devi Kaushalya was feeling distressed, Bharata gradually recovered slowly and addressed Kousalya that he had since recovered. Then he addressed Guha to explain vividly as to where Rama Sitas, where was Lakshmana then, whether or what did they eat and sleep! Guha replied that his followers brought plentiful food which they were satisfied with. But when Guha offered several gifts, he had politely declined stating that Kshatriyas in general and Kings in particular would never accept gifts to others and should only offer. In the following night, Rama and Sita were on fast while Lakshmana accepted water only. Then Lakshmana himself made a comfortable bed for Rama Sitas and kept a vigil through out the night except the small hours of the day break. *niyamyā pṛṣṭhe tu talāṅgulitravāñ; śaraiḥ supūrṇāv iṣudhī paramtapaḥ, mahad dhanuḥ sajam upohya lakṣmaṇo; niśām atiṣṭhat parito 'sya kevalam' tatas tv ahaṁ cottamabānacāpadhṛk; sthito 'bhavaṁ tatra sa yatra lakṣmaṇaḥ, atandribhir jñātibhir āttakārmukair; mahendrakalpaṁ paripālayaṁs tadā/* Lakshmana then lifted his arrows drawn carryirn on his back the arrows retainer on his back and by walking up and around the place of Rama Sita's resing bed, kept awake like Lord Indra being protected by various Devas.

Sarga Eighty Eight

Guha showed the bed of 'kusha grass' by which Sita Ramas slept on that night and the 'valkala vastras' left behind.

Tac chrutvā nipuṇaṁ sarvaṁ bharataḥ saha mantribhiḥ, iṅgudīmūlam āgamyā rāmaśayyāṁ avekṣya tām/ abravīj jananiḥ sarvā iha tena mahātmanā, śarvarī śayitā bhūmāv idam asya vimarditam/ mahābhāga - kulīnena mahābhāgena dhīmatā, jāto daśarathenorvyām na rāmaḥ svaptum arhati/ ajinottarasamstūrṇe varāstarāṇasamcaye, śayitvā puruṣavyāghraḥ katham śete mahītale/ prāsādāgra vimāneṣu valabhīṣu ca sarvadā, haimarājatabhaumeṣu varāstarāṇaśāliṣu/ puspasaṁcayacitreṣu candanāgarugandhiṣu, pāṅḍurābhraprakāṣeṣu śukasamgharuteṣu ca/ gītavāditanirghoṣair varābharaṇaniḥsvanaiḥ, mṛdaṅga varaśabdaiś ca satataṁ pratibodhitāḥ/ bandibhir vanditāḥ kāle bahubhiḥ sūtamāgadhaiḥ, gāthābhir anurūpābhiḥ stutibhiś ca paramtapaḥ/ āsraddheyam idam loke na satyaṁ pratibhāti mā, muhyate khalu me bhāvaḥ svapno 'yam iti me matiḥ/ na nūnaṁ daivataṁ kiṁ cit kālena balavattaram, yatra dāśarathī rāmo bhūmāv evaṁ śayita saḥ/ videharājasya sutā sītā ca priyadarśanā, dayitā śayitā bhūmau snuṣā daśarathasya ca/ iyaṁ śayyā mama bhrātur idam hi parivartitam, sthaṅḍile kaṭhine sarvaṁ gātrair vimṛditam tṛṇam/ manye sābharaṇā suptā sītāsmiṁ śayane tadā, tatra tatra hi dṛśyante saktāḥ kanakabindavaḥ/ uttarīyam ihāsaktāṁ suvyaktāṁ sītayā tadā, tathā hy ete prakāśante saktāḥ kauśeyatantavaḥ/ manye bhartuḥ sukhā śayyā yena bālā tapasvinī, sukumārī satī duḥkhaṁ na vijānāti maithilī/ sārvaḥkama kule jātaḥ sarvalokasukhāvahaḥ, sarvalokapriyas tyaktvā rājyaṁ priyam anuttamam/ katham indīvaraśyāmo raktākṣaḥ priyadarśanaḥ, sukhabhāgī ca duḥkhārhaḥ śayito bhuvi rāghavaḥ/ siddhārthā khalu vaidehī patim yānugatā vanam, vayaṁ saṁśayitāḥ sarve hīnās tena mahātmanā/ akarṇadhārā pṛthivī sūnyeva pratibhāti mā, gate daśarathe svarge rāme cāraṇyam āśrite/

na ca prārthayate kaś cin manasāpi vasuṁdharām, vane 'pi vasatas tasya bāhuvīryābhirakṣitām/ śūnyasaṁvaranārakṣām ayantritahayadvipām, apāvṛtapuradvārām rājadhānīm arakṣitām/ aprahrṣṭa balām nyūnām viṣamasthām anāvṛtām, śatravo nābhimanyante bhakṣyān viśakṛtān iva/ adya prabhṛti bhūmau tu śaiṣye 'haṁ tṛṇeṣu vā, phalamūlāsāno nityaṁ jaṭācīrāṇi dhārayan/ tasyārtham uttaram kālām nivatsyāmi sukhaṁ vane, taṁ pratiśravam āmucya nāsya mithyā bhaviṣyati/ vasantaṁ bhrātur arthāya śatrughno mānuvatsyati, lakṣmaṇena saha tv āryo ayodhyām pālayiṣyati/ abhiṣekṣyanti kākutstham ayodhyāyām dvijātayaḥ, api me devatāḥ kuryur imaṁ satyaṁ manoratham/ prasādyamānaḥ śirasā mayā svayaṁ; bahuprakāram yadi na prapatsyate, tato 'nuvatsyāmi cirāya rāghavaṁ; vane vasan nārhati mām upekṣitum/

As Nishada Raja explained to Bharata, the latter visioned that very grass made bed on which Rama slept and showed it to his mothers also. *mahābhāga -kulīnena mahābhāgena dhīmatā, jāto daśarathenoryyām na rāmaḥ svaptum arhati/ ajinottarasamstūrṇe varāstaranasaṁcaye, śayitvā puruṣavyāghraḥ katham śete mahītale/* Mothers! Look at this dry grass bed made by Lakshmana on which King Dashratha's eldest son Rajakumara on earth! He had always lived in 'maha bhavanas' with 'pushpaka vimana' like exteriors with high walls studded with gold and silver ornamentation of lavishness with readily invigorating 'sugandhas' and mild sounds of parrot chirpings and of inbuilt conditions of climate; such Shri Rama had now slept on grass beds! That Raja Kumara who was used to listening mild music of sonorous instruments, 'Vandee ganas' to praise his bravery and skills of archery, groups of Panditas never tired of showering blessings at every palace joints by which he would pass through had slept on earth! *āsraddheyam idaṁ loke na satyaṁ pratibhāti mā, muhyate khalu me bhāvaḥ svapno 'yam iti me matiḥ/ na nūnam daivataṁ kiṁ cit kālena balavattaram, yatra dāśarathī rāmo bhūmāv evaṁ śayīta saḥ/ videharājasya sutā sītā ca priyadarśanā, dayitā śayitā bhūmau snuṣā daśarathasya ca/* Is this type of state of affairs ever imaginable; is this a fib of imagination or a bad dream! Look at the 'Kaala prabhava' or the impact of time that is affecting Devi Sita; this looks that she had slept as indicative of her golden bracelet imprinted on the dry grass on which she slept off due to continuous strain of hard, weary and long walks in the forests 'in cognito'! *manye bhartuḥ sukhā śayyā yena bālā tapasvinī, sukumārī satī duḥkham na vijānāti maithilī/* Bharata continued his address to his mothers: 'I feel that wives normally feel that her husbands expect the bed by which they sleep should be hard or soft as per the husband's choice; that must have been the reason why Devi Sita the frail female of royal family background had apparently never felt excepting by her husband's convenience and hence adjusted accordingly'. Having said so, Bharata had suddenly shouted with grief: *Haa hatosmi nrishamshosmi yat sabharyah krite mama, eedrisheem raghavah shayyaamadhisetaa hyaanaathavat/* Haa! I am as good as dead, and my life is useless. I am so cruel and malicious as I am responsible of this mess; my life is a curse, as am squarely responsible of this treachery and betrayal! I am havin to see the kind of bed that Rama as a helpless human of extreme vulnerability! *sārvabhauma kule jātaḥ sarvalokasukhāvahaḥ, sarvalokapriyas tyaktvā rājyaṁ priyam anuttamam/ katham indīvaraśyāmo raktākṣaḥ priyadarśanaḥ, sukhabhāgī ca duḥkhārhaḥ śayīto bhuvi rāghavaḥ/* He being born of the background of a Chakravarti, who readily bestows relief to one and all, the outstanding blue lotus like body shine and with red lily like readily arresting looks, had discarded Kingship of glory! Behold him lying on this bed of dry grass! *siddhārthā khalu vaidehī patim yānugatā vanam, vayaṁ saṁśayitāḥ sarve hīnās tena mahātmanā/* Most undoubtedly, Videha nandini Devi Sita has proved herself as an outstanding pativrata of great renown and lasting memory to have never faltered in following Rama's footsteps! Bharata further continued his musings: 'Maha Raja Dasharatha had become 'swarga vaasi'; Shri Rama had become 'aranya vaasi'. Now, I feel in this situation, I seem to be wandering directionless as sailor lost in the deep ocean of self pity! *adya prabhṛti bhūmau tu śaiṣye 'haṁ tṛṇeṣu vā, phalamūlāsāno nityaṁ jaṭācīrāṇi dhārayan/ tasyārtham uttaram kālām nivatsyāmi sukhaṁ vane, taṁ pratiśravam āmucya nāsya mithyā bhaviṣyati/* From now onwards my resolution should be to sleep on bare earth, consume roots and fruits as food, and wear the deer skins as my apparel. The remainder time of forest life, I should also be contented with life. The 'pratigjna' as per King Dasharatha's directive would then not be belied. *vasantaṁ bhrātur arthāya śatrughno mānuvatsyati, lakṣmaṇena saha tv āryo ayodhyām pālayiṣyati/ abhiṣekṣyanti kākutstham ayodhyāyām dvijātayaḥ, api*

me devatāḥ kuryur imāṃ satyaṃ manoratham/ The required time of ‘vana vaasa’ would then be exchanged by me and Shatrugna in place of Rama Lakshmanas who should proceed to Ayodhya forthwith. Then in Ayodhya, Shri Rama should take over the reins of ‘Rama Rajya’. *prasādyamānaḥ śirasā mayā svayaṃ; bahuprakāraṃ yadi na prapatsyate, tato ’nuvatsyāmi cirāya rāghavaṃ; vane vasan nārhati mām upekṣitum/* Bharata now makes the ultimate resolve: ‘ I will most certainly keep my head at Shri Rama’s feet and endeavour my very best to grant me the wish to return to Ayodhya and take over the Kingship which is deserved as per tradition and exchange with my forest life as per the late King’s wish!

Sarga Eighty Nine

Bharata accompanied by sena, mothers, Munis and public arrives at Bharadvaaja ashram

V yuṣya rātriṃ tu tatraiva gaṅgākūle sa rāghavaḥ, bhārataḥ kālyam utthāya śatrughnam idam abravīt/ śatrughnottīṣṭha kiṃ śeṣe niṣādādhipatiṃ guham, śīghram ānaya bhadrāṃ te tārayiṣyati vāhinīm/ jāgarmi nāhaṃ svapimi tathaivāryaṃ vicintayan, ity evam abravīd bhrātrā śatrughno ’pi pracoditaḥ/ iti saṃvadator evam anyonyaṃ narasiṃhayoḥ, āgamyā prāñjaliḥ kāle guho bhāratam abravīt/ kaccit sukhaṃ nadītīre ’vātsīḥ kākutstha śarvarīm, kaccic ca saha sainyasya tava sarvam anāmayaṃ/ guhasya tat tu vacanaṃ śrutvā snehād udīritam, rāmasyānuvaśo vākyam bhārato ’pīdam abravīt/ sukhā naḥ śarvarī rājan pūjitās cāpi te vayam, gaṅgām tu naubhir bahvībhir dāsāḥ saṃtārayantu naḥ/ tato guhaḥ saṃtvaritaḥ śrutvā bhārataśāsanam, pratipraviṣya nagaram taṃ jñātījanam abravīt/ uttiṣṭhata prabudhyadhvaṃ bhadrāṃ astu hi vaḥ sadā, nāvāḥ samanukarṣadhvaṃ tārayiṣyāma vāhinīm/ te tathoktāḥ samutthāya tvaritā rājaśāsanāt, pañca nāvām śatāny eva samāninyuḥ samantataḥ/ anyāḥ svastikavijñeyā mahāghaṇḍā dharā varāḥ, śobhamānāḥ patākinyo yuktavātāḥ susaṃhatāḥ/ tataḥ svastikavijñeyām pāṇḍukambalasaṃvṛtām, sanandighoṣām kalyāṇīm guho nāvam upāharat/ tām āruroha bhārataḥ śatrughnaś ca mahābalaḥ, kausalyā ca sumitrā ca yās cānyā rājayoṣitaḥ/ purohitaś ca tat pūrvaṃ gurave brāhmaṇās ca ye, anantaram rājadārās tathaiva śakāṭapaṇāḥ/ āvāsam ādīpayatām tīrtham cāpy avagāhatām, bhāṇḍāni cādadanānām ghoṣas tridivam asprśat/ patākinyas tu tā nāvāḥ svayaṃ dāsair adhiṣṭhitāḥ, vahantyo janam ārūḍham tadā saṃpetur āsugāḥ/ nārīṇām abhipūrṇās tu kās cit kās cit tu vājinām, kaś cit tatra vahanti sma yānayugyaṃ mahādhanam/ tāḥ sma gatvā paraṃ tīram avaropya ca taṃ janam, nivṛttāḥ kāṇḍacitrāṇi kriyante dāsabandhubhiḥ/ savaijyantās tu gajā gajārohaiḥ pracoditāḥ, tarantaḥ sma prakāśante sadhvajā iva parvatāḥ/ nāvāś cāruruhuḥ tv anye plavais terus tathāpare, anye kumbhaghāṭais terur anye terus ca bāhubhiḥ/ sā puṇyā dhvajinī gaṅgām dāsaiḥ saṃtāritā svayaṃ, maitre muhūrte prayayau prayāgavanam uttamam/ āśvāsaitvā ca camūm mahātmā; niveśaitvā ca yathopajoṣam, draṣṭuṃ bhāradvājam ṛṣipravaryam; ṛtvig vṛtaḥ san bhārataḥ pratasthe/

At the Shringaverapura on the banks of the Sacred Ganga, the morning next Bharata woke up and addressed Shatrughna and asked him to ask Nishada King Guha soon to cross the river by his boat. Shatrughna replied that he too was not asleep like Bharata through the night thinking of Rama on the lines of Bharata. Meanwhile, Nishada Raja arrived and with folded hands and enquired whether their stay over night was satisfactory enough. Bharata thanked Guha profusely and requested him to arrange the sacred Ganga as soon as possible. Then Guha alerted his boatmen and got five hundred boats in position to ferry the army men too. Besides a special house boat named ‘Swastika’ too was arranged with well decorated carpets and soft cushions to lean back; this was able to navigate Purohitas, Gurus, Brahmana Panditas, Bharata Shatrughnas, Devis Kousalya- Sumitra- Kaikeyis, and select Raja Parivaara, and chosen women too. As the massive number of boats were flooded with soldiers there were inevitable sky high shouts, noises and confusion. Some of the boats were exclusively meant for women only. Likewise, they were earmarked for horses, cattle, donkeys and oxen. The sturdy boatmen raced up and soon enough reached the other banks. The public and the heavy influx of soldiers were asked to rest in the Prayaga vana. Then Bharata Shatrughnas along with select Deva Purohitas and Veda Brahmanas proceeded to the ashram of Maharshi Bharadvaaja.

Sarga Ninety

Bharata visits Bharadwaja 'ashram'

*Bharadvājāsramam dṛṣṭvā krośād eva nararṣabhaḥ, balaṁ sarvaṁ avasthāpya jagāma saha mantribhiḥ/
padbhyām eva hi dharmajñō nyastaśastraparicchadaḥ, vasāno vāsasī kṣaume purodhāya purohitam/
tataḥ saṁdarśane tasya bharadvājasya rāghavaḥ, mantriṇas tān avasthāpya jagāmānu purohitam/
vasiṣṭham atha dṛṣṭvaiva bharadvājo mahātapāḥ, saṁcacālāsanāt tūrṇam śiṣyān arghyam iti bruvan/
samāgamya vasiṣṭhena bharatenābhivāditaḥ, abudhyata mahātejāḥ sutam daśarathasya tam/ tābhyām
arghyam ca pādyaṁ ca dattvā paścāt phalāni ca, ānupūrvyāc ca dharmajñāḥ papraccha kuśalam kule/
ayodhyāyām bale koṣe mitreṣv api ca mantriṣu, jānan daśaratham vṛttam na rājānam udāharat/ vasiṣṭho
bharataś cainam papracchatur anāmayaṁ, śārīre 'gniṣu vṛkṣeṣu śiṣyeṣu mṛgapakṣiṣu tatheti ca
pratijñāya bharadvājo mahātapāḥ, bharatam pratyuvācedam rāghavasnehabandhanāt/ kim ihāgamane
kāryam tava rājyam praśāsataḥ, etad ācakṣva me sarvaṁ na hi me śudhyate manaḥ/ suṣuve yama
mitraghnam kausalyānandavardhanam, bhrātrā saha sabhāryo yaś ciraṁ pravrajīto vanam/ niyuktaḥ
strīniyuktena pitrā yo 'sau mahāyaśāḥ, vanavāsī bhavetīha samāḥ kila caturdaśa/ kaccin na
tasyāpāpasya pāpam kartum ihecchasi, akaṅṭakam bhoktumanā rājyam tasyānujasya ca/ evam ukto
bharadvājam bharataḥ pratyuvāca ha, paryaśru nayano duḥkhād vācā saṁsajjamānaya/ hato 'smi yadi
mām evam bhagavān api manyate, matto na doṣam āśaṅker naivam mām anuśādhi hi/ na caitad iṣṭam
mātā me yad avocan madantare, nāham etena tuṣṭaś ca na tad vacanam ādade/ aham tu tam
naravyāghram upayātaḥ prasādakaḥ, pratinetum ayodhyām ca pādaḥ tasyābhivanditum/ tvam mām evam
gataṁ matvā prasādam kartum arhasi, śaṁsa me bhagavan rāmaḥ kva saṁprati mahīpatiḥ/ uvāca tam
bharadvājaḥ prasādād bharatam vacaḥ, tvayy etat puruṣavyāghram yuktaṁ rāghavavamaśaje, guruvṛttir
damaś caiva sādḥnām cānuyāyitā/ jāne caitan manaḥstham te dṛḍhīkaraṇam astv iti, aprccham tvām
tavātyarthaṁ kīrtim samabhivardhayan/ asau vasati te bhrātā citrakūṭe mahāgirau, śvas tu gantāsi tam
deśam vasādya saha mantribhiḥ, etaṁ me kuru suprājña kāmam kāmārthakovidā/ tatas tathety evam
udāradarśanaḥ; pratītarūpo bharato 'bravīd vacaḥ, cakāra buddhim ca tadā mahāśrame; niśānivāsāya
narādhipātmajaḥ/*

Bharata having retained back the visitors from Ayodhya some good distance, approached the ashram of Maha Muni Bharadwaja. He discarded his astra-shastras and royal robes but wearing only the silk clothes and keeping Maharshi Vasishtha the Purohita and senior disciples ahead and proceeded along with the ministers. As he entered the ashram, he had the 'darshan' of Bharadwaja. As Maharshi Vasishtha was in the lead, Bharadwaja welcomed him and asked his sishyas to fetch 'arghya' to him and the followers. As Bharata touched the Maha Munis feet, instantly he recognised Bharata as the son of King Dasharatha. Bharadwaja was well aware of King Dasharatha's death and hence he did not mention of the same. Vasishtha enquired of Muni Bharadwaja of his welfare, agnihotraadi shubha kaaryas, about his disciples, and so on. Then the Muni asked Bharata: '*kim ihāgamane kāryam tava rājyam praśāsataḥ, etad ācakṣva me sarvaṁ na hi me śudhyate manaḥ/ suṣuve yama mitraghnam kausalyānandavardhanam, bhrātrā saha sabhāryo yaś ciraṁ pravrajīto vanam/ niyuktaḥ strīniyuktena pitrā yo 'sau mahāyaśāḥ, vanavāsī bhavetīha samāḥ kila caturdaśa/* Are you not the King of Ayodhya now! What has brought you here! I am not able to believe this! I am aware that your father instructed Shri Rama the symbol of dharma and glory was banished for Vana Vaasa for fourteen years due to the ill justified advice of one of his wives and accordingly Rama's his wife and brother too accompanied him. Indeed this was most improper and blameworthy!' As Bharadwaja admonished Bharata, the latter started crying away and replied the Maha Muni in the most pathetic and low tone as follows: *hato 'smi yadi mām evam bhagavān api manyate, matto na doṣam āśaṅker naivam mām anuśādhi hi/ na caitad iṣṭam mātā me yad avocan madantare, nāham etena tuṣṭaś ca na tad vacanam ādade/* Mahatma! It is most unfortunate that You as a Maha Muni too has a feeling against me and my traditional values of 'dharma'. May I assure you as I have no role or even the remote inkling of Rama's vana vaasa and very kindly do not ever reiterate that hard hit on my psyche! What ever had been viciously planned and executed by my evil mother was

indeed my fate for which I regret most and am prepared to reverse the misdeed on myself! *aham tu tam naravyāghram upayātaḥ prasādakaḥ, pratinetum ayodhyām ca pādau tasyābhivanditum/ tvam mām evam gataṁ matvā prasādam kartum arhasi, śamsa me bhagavan rāmaḥ kva samprati mahīpatiḥ/* I have essentially come here only to prostrate and plead Shri Rama to kindly return to Ayodhya and take over the kingship. Bhagavan! I should most humbly request you to let me know as to the whereabouts of Shri Rama!’ Subsequently, Maharshi Vasishtha and other Maha Munis too commended the sincerity of Bharata Kumara. Then Bharadwaaja Maha Muni addressed Bharata: ‘ I am indeed aware that you are the progeny of Raghu Vamsha and the traits of Gurujana seva, self control, dharmika chintana, are transparent in you! Yet, *jāne caitan manaḥstham te dṛḍhīkaraṇam astv iti, apṛccham tvām tavātyarthaṁ kīrtim samabhiwardhayan/* Purusha simha Bharata! I am totally aware of your pure heartedness and your strong desire to request Shri Rama to return, but I had actually wished your desisiveness to get further sharper and more effective and hence my erstwhile reprimand to you. May you be blessed to have your wish fulfilled. *Jaanena Ramam dharmagjnam sa Seetam saha Lakshmanam, ayam vasati te bhraataa Chitrakute Maha girou/* I am indeed aware of the where abouts of Rama Sita Lakshmanas; they are comfortably settled at Chitrakoota Mountain.’ Having thus informed Bharata, Maha Muni Bharadwaaja instructed Bharata to rest at the ashram along the Maharshi Vasishtha and others besides his ministers over night and move forward the next morning.

Sarga Ninety One

Bharadvaja bestows Bharata and entire entourage including vast army a heavenly hospitality

Kṛtabuddhiṁ nivāsāya tathaiva sa munis tadā, bharataṁ kaikayī putram ātithyena nyamantrayat/ abravīd bharatas tv enam nanv idam bhavatā kṛtam, pādyaṁ arghyaṁ tathātithyaṁ vane yad ūpapadyate/ athovāca bharadvājo bharataṁ prahasann iva, jāne tvām prīti samyuktaṁ tuṣyes tvam yena kena cit/ senāyās tu tavaitasyāḥ kartum icchāmi bhōjanam, mama prītir yathā rūpā tvam arho manujarṣabha/ kimarthaṁ cāpi nikṣīpya dūre balam ihāgataḥ, kasmān nehōpayāto ’si sabalaḥ puruṣar - ṣabha/ bharataḥ pratyuvācedaṁ prāñjalis tam tapodhanam, sasainyo nopayāto ’smi bhagavan bhagavad bhayāt/ vāji mukhyā manuṣyās ca mattās ca vara vāraṇāḥ, pracchādya mahatīm bhūmiṁ bhagavann anuyānti mām/ te vṛkṣān udakaṁ bhūmim āśrameṣūtajāms tathā, na hiṁsyur iti tenāham eka evāgatas tataḥ/ ānīyatām itaḥ senety ājñaptaḥ paramarṣiṇā, tathā tu cakre bharataḥ senāyāḥ samupāgamam/ agniśālām praviśyātha pītvāpaḥ parimṛjya ca, ātithyasya kriyāhetor viśvakarmāṇam āhvayat/ āhvaye viśvakarmāṇam aham tvaṣṭāram eva ca, ātithyaṁ kartum icchāmi tatra me samvidhīyatām/ prāk srotasā ca yā nadyaḥ pratyak srotasa eva ca, pṛthivyām antarikṣe ca samāyāntv adya sarvaśaḥ/ anyāḥ sravantu maireyaṁ surām anyāḥ suniṣṭhitām, aparās codakaṁ śītam iksukāṇḍarasopamam/ āhvaye devagandharvān viśvāvāsuhahāhuhūn, tathaivāpsaraso devīr gandharvīs cāpi sarvaśaḥ/ ghṛtācīm atha viśvācīm miśrakeśīm alambusām, śakraṁ yās copatiṣṭhanti brahmāṇam yās ca bhāminīḥ, sarvās tumburuṇā sārddham āhvaye saparicchadāḥ/ vanam kuruṣu yad divyaṁ vāso bhūṣaṇapatratvat, divyanārīphalam śāsvat tat kauberam ihaiva tu/ iha me bhagavān somo vidhattām annam uttamam, bhakṣyaṁ bhojyaṁ ca coṣyaṁ ca lehyaṁ ca vividham bahu/ vicitrāṇi ca mālyāni pādapapracutyāni ca, surādāni ca peyāni māmsāni vividhāni ca/ evam samādhinā yuktas tejasāpratimena ca, śikṣāsvarasamā - yuktaṁ tapasā cābravīn munīḥ/ manasā dhyāyatas tasya prānī mukhasya kṛtāñjaleḥ, ājagmus tāni sarvāṇi daivatāni pṛthakpṛthak/ malayaṁ durduraṁ caiva tataḥ svedanudo ’nilaḥ, upasprīṣya vavau yuktyā supriyātmā sukhaḥ śivaḥ/ tato ’bhyavartanta ghanā divyāḥ kusumavṛṣṭayaḥ, devadundubhigoṣās ca dikṣu sarvāsu śūsruve/ pravavus cottamā vātā nanṛtuṣ cāpsarogaṇāḥ, prajagur devagandharvā vīṇā pramumucuh svarān/ sa śabdo dyām ca bhūmiṁ ca prānīnām śravaṇāni ca, viveśocāritāḥ ślakṣṇaḥ samo layaguṇānvitāḥ/ tasminn uparate śabde divye śrotrasukhe nṛṇām, dadarśa bhārataṁ sainyaṁ vidhānam viśvakarmaṇaḥ/ babhūva hi samā bhūmiḥ samantāt pañcayojanam, śādvalair bahubhiḥ channā nīlavaidūryasam nibhaiḥ/ tasminn bilvāḥ kapitthās ca panasā bījapūrakāḥ, āmalakyo babhūvus ca cūtās ca phalabhūṣaṇāḥ/ uttarebhyaḥ kurubhyaḥ ca vanam divyopabhogavat, ājagāma nadī divyā tīrajair bahubhir vṛtā/ catuḥśālāni śubhrāṇi śālās ca gajavājīnām, harmyaprāsādasamghātās toraṇāni śubhāni

*ca/ sitameghanibham cāpi rājaveśma sutoranam, śuklamālyakṛtākāram divyagandhasamukṣitam/
caturasram asambādham śayanāsanayānavat, divyāiḥ sarvarasair yuktam divyabhōjanavastravat/
upakalpita sarvānām dhautanirmalabhājanam, kṛtasarvāsanaṁ śrīmat svāstīrṇaśayanottamam/
praviveśa mahābāhur anujñāto maharṣiṇā, veśma tad ratnasampūrṇam bhārataḥ kaikayīsutaḥ/
anujagmuś ca tam sarve mantriṇaḥ sapurohitāḥ, babhūvuś ca mudā yuktā tam dṛṣṭvā veśma samvidhim/
tatra rājāsanaṁ divyaṁ vyajanaṁ chatram eva ca, bhārato mantribhiḥ sārddham abhyavartata rājavat/
āsanam pūjayām āsa rāmāyābhipraṇamya ca, vālavyajanaṁ ādāya nyaśīdat sacivāsane/ ānupūrvyān
niśeduś ca sarve mantrapurohitāḥ, tataḥ senāpatiḥ paścāt praśāstā ca niśedatuḥ/ tatas tatra muhūrtena
nadyaḥ pāyasakardamāḥ, upātiṣṭhanta bhārataṁ bhāradvājasya śāsanat/ tāsām ubhayataḥ kūlam
pāṇḍumṛttikalepanāḥ, ramyās cāvasathā divyā brahmaṇas tu prasādajāḥ/ tenaiva ca muhūrtena
divyābharaṇabhūṣitāḥ, āgur vimśatisāhasrā brāhmaṇā prahitāḥ striyaḥ/ suvarṇamaṇimuktena pravālena
ca śobhitāḥ, āgur vimśatisāhasrāḥ kuberaprahitāḥ striyaḥ/ yābhir gṛhītaḥ puruṣaḥ sonmāda iva lakṣyate,
āgur vimśatisāhasrā nandanād apsarogaṇāḥ/ nāradas tumburur gopaḥ parvataḥ sūryavarcaśaḥ, ete
gandharvarājāno bhāratasyāgrato jaguḥ/ alambusā miśrakeśī puṇḍarikātha vāmanā, upānṛtyāms tu
bhārataṁ bhāradvājasya śāsanāt/ yāni mālyāni deveṣu yāni caitrarathe vane, prayāge tāny adṛśyanta
bhāradvājasya śāsanāt/ bilvā mārdaṅgikā āsaṁ śamyā grāhā bibhītakāḥ, aśvatthā nartakās cāsan
bhāradvājasya tejasā/ tataḥ saralatālās ca tilakā naktamalakāḥ, prahrṣṭās tatra sampetuḥ kubjābhūtātha
vāmanāḥ/ śimśapāmalakī jambūr yās cānyāḥ kānane latāḥ, pramadā vigrahaṁ kṛtvā bhāradvājāśrame
'vasan/ surām surāpāḥ pibata pāyasam ca bubhukṣitāḥ, māmsani ca sumedhyāni bhakṣyantām yāvad
icchatha/ utsādyā snāpayanti sma nadītīreṣu valguṣu, apy ekam ekam puruṣam pramadāḥ satpa cāṣṭa ca/
samvahantyaḥ samāpetur nāryo ruciralocanāḥ, parimṛjya tathā nyāyam pāyayanti varāṅganāḥ/ hayān
gajān kharān uṣṭrāms tathaiva surabheḥ sutān, ikṣūms ca madhujālāmś ca bhōjayanti sma vāhanān,
ikṣvākuvarayodhānām codayanto mahābalāḥ/ nāśvabandho 'śvam ājānān na gajaṁ kuñjaragrahaḥ,
mattapramattamuditā camūḥ sā tatra sambabhau/ tarpitā sarvakāmais te raktacandanarūṣitāḥ,
apsarogaṇasamyuktāḥ sainyā vācam udairayan/ naivāyodhyām gamiṣyāmo na gamiṣyāma daṇḍakān,
kuśalam bhāratasyāstu rāmasyāstu tathā sukham/ iti pādātayodhās ca hastyāśvārohabandhakāḥ, anāthās
tam vidhim labdhvā vācam etām udairayan/ samprahrṣṭā vinedus te narās tatra sahasraśaḥ,
bhāratasyānuyātāraḥ svarge 'yam iti cābruvan/ tato bhuktavatām teṣām tad annam amṛtopamam, divyān
udvikṣya bhakṣyāms tām abhavad bhakṣaṇe matiḥ/ preṣyās ceṭyās ca vadhvās ca balasthās cāpi sarvaśaḥ,
babhūvuś te bhṛśam tṛptāḥ sarve cāhatavāsasaḥ/ kuñjarās ca kharoṣṭraś ca go 'śvās ca mṛgapaḥṣiṇaḥ
babhūvuḥ subhṛtās tatra nānyo hy anyam akalpayat/ nāśuklavāsās tatrāsīt kṣudhito malino 'pi vā, rajasā
dhvastakeśo vā naraḥ kaś cid adṛśyata/ ājaiś cāpi ca vārāhair niṣṭhānavarasamcayaiḥ, phalanir yūha
saṁsiddhaiḥ sūpair gandharasānvitaiḥ/ puṣpadhvajavatīḥ pūrṇāḥ śuklasyānnasya cābhitāḥ, dadṛśur
vismitās tatra narā lauhīḥ sahasraśaḥ/ babhūvur vanapārśveṣu kūpāḥ pāyasakardamāḥ, tās ca
kāmadughā gāvo drumās cāsan madhuścyutaḥ/ vāpyo maireya pūrṇās ca mṛṣṭamāmsacayair vṛtāḥ,
pratapta piṭharaiś cāpi mārgamāyūrakaukkuṭaiḥ/ pātrīṇām ca sahasrāṇi śātakumbhamayāni ca, sthālyāḥ
kumbhyaḥ karambhyās ca dadhipūrṇāḥ susamskṛtāḥ, yauvanasthasya gaurasya kapitthasya sugandhinaḥ/
hradāḥ pūrṇā rasālasya dadhnaḥ śvetasya cāpare, babhūvuḥ pāyasasyānte śarkarāyās ca samcayāḥ/
kalkāmś cūrṇakaṣāyāmś ca snānāni vividhāni ca, dadṛśur bhājanasthāni tīrtheṣu saritām narāḥ/ śuklān
amśumataś cāpi dantadhāvanasamcayān, śuklāmś candanakalkāmś ca samudgeṣv avatiṣṭhataḥ/darpaṇān
parimṛṣṭāmś ca vāsasām cāpi samcayān, pādukopānahām caiva yugmān yatra sahasraśaḥ/ āñjanīḥ
kaṅkatān kūrcāmś chatrāni ca dhanūmsi ca, marmatrāṇāni citrāni śayanāny āsanāni ca/ pratipānahra -
dān pūrṇān kharoṣṭragajavājinām, avagāhya sutīrthāmś ca hradān sotpala puṣkarān/ nīlavaidūrya
varṇāmś ca mṛdūn yavasasamcayān, nirvāpārtham paśūnām te dadṛśus tatra sarvaśaḥ/ vyasmayanta
manuṣyās te svapnakalpaṁ tad adbhutam, dṛṣṭvātithyam kṛtam tādṛg bhāratasya maharṣiṇā ity evam
ramamāñānām devānām iva nandane, bhāradvājāśrame ramye sā rātrir vyatyavartata/ pratijagmuś ca tā
nadyo gandharvās ca yathāgatam, bhāradvājam anujñāpya tās ca sarvā varāṅganāḥ/ tathaiva mattā
madirotkatā narās; tathaiva divyāgurucandanakṣitāḥ, tathaiva divyā vividhāḥ sraguttamāḥ;
pṛthakprakīrṇā manujaiḥ pramarditāḥ/*

As Bharata expressed his doubt whether the Muni Ashram was equipped enough to provide hospitality overnight including food and night long rest, Maha Muni Bharadwaja smiled and said as to why did he not bring the entire Sena also! Bharata replied that the ‘sena’ was huge and had been equipped with elephants, horses, oxen, cows and so on too. At the express instruction of the Maha Muni, Bharata had somewhat hesitantly gave a comman to let the army too to arrive at the ‘ashram’. Then Bharadwaja entered the ‘Agni shaala’ or the Fire Abode of the ashram and invoked Vishvakarma and the related devatas. Further, he invoked Indraadi Lokapalakas including Yama-Varuna-Kubera and prayed to them to arrange for the hospitality of Bharata along with his army and public. He then invoked Prithvi, Aakaasha, Rivers flowing westward so as to sweet and cold waters. Maha Muni further invoked Vishva vasu, Haahaa-Hoohu Deva-Gandharvas, Apsaras like Ghrithachi-Vishvaachi- Mishrakeshi-Alambusha Nagadatta-Hema- Soma-Adrikritasthali-Indra sabha’s devanganas- Tumbura-Nritya Geeta ukta vanitas- and so on. Maha Muni further invoked Chaitra Ratha Gardens of north placed Kuruvvarsha with divine robed women supplying clothing, sweet fruits, ornaments, and bhakshya-bhojya- lehya - chokshya- paaneeyaas besides enormous supply of celestial scented flowers. Maha Muni further invoked being seated eastward with extreme concentration invoked one by one of mountains named Malaya-Durdura and so on to forward cool and fragrant winds- the celestial clouds to shower scented flowers and distant lightnings and thunder sounds. Vayu Deva was invoked to provide visions of Apsara nrityaas, and experiences of sweet ‘Deva Gandharva Gaana’. As a result, the nearby earth of five yojanas of rectangle got soft, even and squatable with comfort. All around that even land had sprung up tall and solid trees like Bilva-Kapittha-Panasa- Beejapooraa-Aamakaka/ mango-with ripe fruits and colourful scented flowers/ *preṣyās ceṭyaś ca vadhvaś ca balasthāś cāpi sarvaśaḥ, babhūvus te bhṛśam tṛptāḥ sarve cāhatavāsasaḥ/* Thus as per the instruction of the Maha Muni, Bharata entered a huge hall with decorated walls with golden pillars, as followed by Purohitas, Veda Brahmanas, Ministers, Senapatis, and others. *āsanam pūjayām āsa rāmāyābhīpraṇāmya ca, vālavayajanam ādāya nyaśīdat sacivāsane/* On being directed to a special throne, Bharata then visualised Shri Rama was worthy of occupying it and greeted it in the name of Rama, perambulated it with veneration as followed by the ministers and then occupied the same. Thereafter, Vasishta Maharshi and co- purohitas, Ministers, Senapati and others took to their seats as per protocol. Thereafter, celestial dancers and singers including apsaras, Narada Tumburaadi Gandharvas rendered their respective fine arts. The thousands of Ayodhya soldiers who were in raptures shouting with the surfiet of entertainment of wine, dance, music asserted: *naivāyodhyām gamiṣyāmo na gamiṣyāma daṇḍakān, kuśalam bharatasyāstu rāmasyāstu tathā sukham/ iti pādātayodhāś ca hastyāśvāroha bandhakāḥ, anāthāś taṁ vidhiṁ labdhvā vācam etām udairayan/* We would not like to return to Ayodhya nor further to ‘dandakaranya’ as we are blissful here at this ‘bhutalala swarga’. Long live Bharata and long live Shri Rama! *tato bhuktavatām teṣām tad annam amṛtopamam, divyān udvīkṣya bhakṣyāms tān abhavad bhakṣaṇe matiḥ/ preṣyās ceṭyaś ca vadhvaś ca balasthāś cāpi sarvaśaḥ, babhūvus te bhṛśam tṛptāḥ sarve cāhatavāsasaḥ/* They further declared that the heavenly food in variety and taste was so fantastic that despite their bellies were saturated would still like to eat again and again! Servants and servant maids, soldiers and their wives were all glittering with a fantastic range of dresses and jewellery. *nāśuklavāsās tatrāsīt kṣudhito malino ’pi vā, rajasā dhvastakeśo vā naraḥ kaś cid adṛśyata/* Man-woman-Child, be it a soldier or family, a pandita or an official or a servant and maid were all dressed in purity, with stomachs saturated, their hairstyles trimmed and clean; the picturesque surroundings were truly celestial. *vyasmayanta manuṣyās te svapnakalpaṁ tad adbhutam, dṛṣṭvātithyaṁ kṛtaṁ tādṛg bharatasya maharṣiṇā/ ity evaṁ ramamānānām devānām iva nandane, bharadvājāśrame ramye sā rātrir vyatyavartata/* The heavenly hospitality thus extended by Maha Muni Bharadwaja was like an unimaginable experience of a dream *par excellence!* The ashram seemed to be a replica of swarga and one and all from Bharata-to- any being who accompanied him was a celestial dream come true in one’s own lifetime!

Sarga Ninety Two

Bharata introduces his three mothers and Bharadwaja blesses them and indicates the way to Chitrakoota

Tatas tām rajanīm usya bharataḥ saparicchadaḥ, kṛtātithyo bharadvājam kāmād abhijagāma ha/ tam ṛṣiḥ puruṣavyāghram prekṣya prāñjalim āgatam, hutāgnihotro bharataḥ bharadvājo 'bhyabhāṣata/ kaccid atra sukḥā rātris tavāsmadviṣaye gatā, samagras te janaḥ kaccid ātithye śamsa me 'nagha/ tam uvācāñjalim kṛtvā bharato 'bhīpraṇamya ca, āśramād abhiniṣkrantam ṛṣim uttama tejasam/ sukhoṣito 'smi bhagavan samagrabalavāhanaḥ, tarpitaḥ sarvakāmais ca sāmātyo balavat tvayā/ apetaklama saṁtāpāḥ subhaksyāḥ supraśrayāḥ, api preṣyān upādāya sarve sma susukhoṣitāḥ/ āmantraye 'ham bhagavan kāmam tvām ṛṣisattama, saṁtāpāḥ prasthitaḥ bhrātur maireṇekṣasva cakṣuṣā/ āśramam tasya dharmajña dhārmikasya mahātmanaḥ, ācakṣva katamo mārgaḥ kiyān iti ca śamsa me/ iti pṛṣṭas tu bharataḥ bhrātrdarśanalālasam, pratyuvāca mahātejā bharadvājo mahātapāḥ/ bharatārdhatṛtīyeṣu yojaneṣu ajane vane, citrakūṭo giris tatra ramyanirdarakānanaḥ/ uttaram pāśvam āsādyā tasya mandakiniḥ nadī, puṣpitadrumasamchannā ramyapuspitakānanā/ anantaram tat saritaś citrakūṭas ca parvataḥ, tato parṇakuṭī tāta tatra tau vasato dhruvam/ dakṣiṇenaiva mārgeṇa savyadakṣiṇam eva ca, gajavājirathākīrṇām vāhinīm vāhinīpate, vāhayasva mahābhāga tato drakṣyasi rāghavam/ prayānam iti ca śrutvā rājārājasya yoṣitaḥ, hitvā yānāni yānārhā brāhmaṇam paryavārayan/ vepamānā kṛṣā dīnā saha devyā sumantriya, kausalyā tatra jagrāha karābhyaḥ caraṇau muneḥ/ asamṛddhena kāmena sarvalokasya garhitā, kaikeyī tasya jagrāha caraṇau savyapatrapā/ tam pradakṣiṇam āgamya bhagavantaḥ mahāmuniḥ, adūrād bharatasyaiva tasthau dīnamanās tadā/ tataḥ papraccha bharataḥ bharadvājo dṛḍhavrataḥ, viśeṣam jñātum icchāmi mātṛjñām tava rāghava/ evam uktas tu bharato bharadvājena dhārmikaḥ, uvāca prāñjalir bhūtvā vākyam vacanakovidāḥ/ yām imām bhagavan dīnām śokān aśanakarśitām, pitur hi mahiṣīm devīm devatām iva paśyasi/ eṣā tam puruṣavyāghram simhavikrāntagāminam, kausalyā suśuve rāmam dhātāram aditir yathā/ asyā vāmabhujam śliṣṭā yaiśā tiṣṭhati durmanāḥ, karṇikārasya śākhya sīrṇapuspā vanāntare/ etasyās tau sutau devyāḥ kumārau devavarṇinau, ubhau lakṣmaṇaśatrughnau vīrau satyaparākramau/ yasyāḥ kṛte narayāghrau jīvanāśam ito gatau, rājā putravihīnās ca svargaḥ daśaratho gataḥ/ aiśvaryakāmam kaikeyīm anāryām āryarūpiṇīm, mamaitām mātaram viddhi ṛṣāmsām pāpaniścayām, yatomūlam hi paśyāmi vyasanam mahad ātmanaḥ/ ity uktvā naraśārdūlo bāṣpagadgadāyā girā, sa niśāsvāsa tāmrākṣo kruddho nāga ivāsakṛt/ bharadvājo maharṣis tam bruvantaḥ bharataḥ tadā, pratyuvāca mahābuddhir idam vacanam arthavat/ na doṣeṇāvagantavyā kaikeyī bharata tvayā, rāmapravrajānam hy etat sukhodarkam bhaviṣyati/ abhivādya tu saṁsiddhaḥ kṛtvā cainam pradakṣiṇam, āmantrya bharataḥ sainyam yujyatām ity acodayat/ tato vājirathān yuktvā divyān hemapariṣkritān, adhyārohat prayānārthī bahūn bahuvīdho janaḥ/ gajakanyāgajās caiva hemakaksyāḥ patākinaḥ, jīmūtā iva gharmānte saghoṣāḥ saṁpratāsthire/ vivīdhāny api yānāni mahāni ca laghūni ca, prayayuh sumahārḥaṇi pādair eva padātayaḥ/ atha yānapravekaiś tu kausalyāpramukhāḥ striyaḥ, rāmadarśanakāṅkṣiṇyaḥ prayayur muditās tadā/ sa cārkatāruṇābhāsām niyuktām śibikām śubhām, āsthāya prayayau śrīmān bharataḥ saparicchadaḥ/ sā prayātā mahāsenā gajavājirathākulā, dakṣiṇām dīśam āvṛtya mahāmegha ivotthitaḥ, vanāni tu vyatikramya juṣṭāni mṛgapakṣibhiḥ/ sā saṁprahṛṣṭadvipavājiyodhā; vitrāsayantī mṛgapakṣisamghān mahad vanam tat pravigāhamānā; rarāja senā bharatasya tatra/

Next morning when Bharata decided to take leave of Maha Muni Bharadwaja, he expressed his heartfelt gratitude stating: *sukhoṣito 'smi bhagavan samagrabalavāhanaḥ, tarpitaḥ sarvakāmais ca sāmātyo balavat tvayā/* Mahatma! We all including the entire army, the retinue, and even the animals brought by us have been thoroughly contented. Now, we beseech you to very kindly inform as to how to reach Shri Rama ashrama, how much of distance and time involved! Bharadwaja replied that the distance should be approximately two and half yojanas - [see Sarga 54 above] and the place is named Chitrakoota Mountain; (as per today's reckoning the distance from Prayaga to Chitrakoota is approx.80 miles). The north of Chitrakoota flows River Mandakini and the intervening place is full of Beauty of Nature with plentiful flowers, fruits and of outstanding tranquility. The mid part of the river and the mountain is Shri Rama Ashrama situated in which the three famed personalities of Rama-Sita-Lakshmanas stay with peace. Then Bhardwaja Muni asked the Senapati to foremost follow the southern path along River Yamuna and should

be able to reach Chitrakoota for Shri Rama darshana! As the entourage moved on slowly, the men and woman folk initiated their movement, Devi Kousalya was tired due to fastings and disturbed sleep pattern and was shivering as assisted by Devi Sumitra and touched the feet of Bharadwaaja. Then Devi Kaikeyi too performed a ‘pradakshina’ and stood besides Bharata. Maha Muni then enquired about the Devis and Bharata replied: ‘Bhagavan! That Maha Devi Kousalya who was looking blank, sorrowful and weak due to fastings is still mourning the death of King Dashratha and is the Prime Queen of Ayodhya. *Eshaam tam purushavyaaghrām simhavikraanta gaaminam, Kousalyaa sushuve Raamam dhaataaramaditiryathaa/* Just as Aditi gave birth to ‘dwaadasha adityas’ like Dhata, Kousalya Devi gave birth to Parakrama Purushasimha Shri Rama.

[**Vishleshana on Dwadasha Adityas:** Surya / Aditya Deva assumes twelve other Murti / Forms viz. Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Pusha, Twashta, Aryama, Bhaga, Vivishwan, Amshu, Vishnu, Varuna and Mitra. Among these twelve Murthis, Indra was Chief of Devas ruling Amaravati and destroying Daityas and Danavas from time to time. **Dhata** being in the Status of Prajapati took up the task of Creation; Parjanya in the Form of Sun rays rained all over the Universe; Pusha is in the form of Mantras engaged for Prajaaposhana; Twashta is present in the form of ‘Vanaspati’ and ‘Aushadhi’ (Vegetable Oils and Herbal Medicines); Aryama who provides protection and relief to humanity; Bhaga is in the form of Earth and Mountains; Vivishwan in the form of Agni / Fire and is the cooking facilitator of food as also of the destroying power; the ninth name of Surya Deva is Amshu or of the form of Chandra Deva who provides coolness and pleasure of existence; Vishnu is the tenth name of Surya who constantly checks the evil forces in the World and slays Danavaas and establishes virtue from time to time by assuming Incarnations; Varuna is the eleventh appearance present in water as the source of life and fertility staying in Oceans, Rivers and various water profiles; and finally, Mitra or form of propitiousness and help to humanity. In whatever form he might be, Surya Deva is indeed the ‘Karanam, Kaaranam and Karta’ or the Act, Action and the Supreme Actor in the drama of Life! Bhakti (Devotion), Shraddha (fortitude) and Puja (Worship) sum up the meanings of human life! Indeed Shri Rama is the composite Swarupa of Dwadasha Aadityas!]

Sarga Ninety Two continued:

Standing next to Devi Kousalya is Sumitra Devi who too looks pale, sorrowful and jewellery discarded the mother of Lakshmana Shatrughnas. Then is Devi Kaikeyi: *yasyāḥ kṛte narayāghrau jīvanāśam ito gatau, rājā putravihīnāś ca svargam daśaratho gataḥ/ aiśvaryakāmām kaikeyīm anāryām āryarūpiṇīm, mamaitām mātaram viddhi nṛśamsām pāpaniścayām, yatomūlam hi paśyāmi vyananam mahad ātmanah/* And then you Maha Muni! You see Kaikeyi Devi owing to whom Purusha Simha Shri Rama-Devi Sita and Lakshmana had to undergo the frightful and fourteen long ‘vana vaasa’ and the killer of Maha Raja Dashratha; she indeed is the symbol of cruelty, devilish, thoughtless, arrogant, selfish and schemy and suffers from inferiority complex of being bodily beautiful. I am indeed ashamed of calling her as my mother!’ Having said that Bharata broke down with unstoppable cryings yet like hissings of a raised cobra. Then, Maha Muni Bharadwaaja stated: *na doṣeṇāvagantavyā kaikeyī bharata tvayā, rāmapravṛjā -nam hy etat sukhodarkam bhaviṣyati/ abhivādya tu saṁsiddhaḥ kṛtvā cainam pradakṣiṇam, āmantrya bharataḥ sainyaṁ yujyatām ity acodayat/* Bharata! Please do not see Devi Kaikeyi- your own mother- in this manner. Shri Rama’s ‘vana vaasa’ would pass off peacefully. What is more significant is what Devas- Danavas- and Maharshis who are always anchored to Parameshwara do strongly feel that these vicissitudes are for ‘Loka Kalyana’ in the near future! As the Maha Muni visualized the auguries of the auspicious future, he gave a warm send off to the highly motivated Bharata and his entourage.

Sarga Ninety Three

Bharata’s Chitrakoota yatra described

Tayā mahatyā yāyinyā dhvajinyā vanavāsinaḥ, arditā yūthapā mattāḥ sayūthāḥ sampradudruvuh/ ṛkṣāḥ pṛṣatasamghās ca ruravaś ca samantataḥ, dṛśyante vanarājīṣu giriṣv api nadīṣu ca/ sa sampratathe dharmātmā pṛto daśarathātmajaḥ, vṛto mahatyā nādinīyā senayā caturaṅgayā/ sāgaraughanibhā senā bharatasya mahātmanaḥ, mahīm samchādayām āsa prāvṛṣi dyām ivāmbudaḥ/ turaṅgaughair avatata vāraṇaiś ca mahājavaiḥ, anālakṣyā ciraṁ kālam tasmin kāle babhūva bhūḥ/ sa yātvā dūram adhvānam supariśrānta vāhanaḥ, uvāca bhārataḥ śrīmān vasiṣṭhaṁ mantriṇām varam/ yādṛśam lakṣyate rūpam yathā caiva śrutam mayā, vyaktam prāptāḥ sma tam deśam bharadvājo yam abravīt/ ayaṁ giriś citrakūṭas tathā mandākinī nadī, etat prakāśate dūrān nīlameghanibham vanam/ gireḥ sānūni ramyāni citrakūṭasya samprati, vāraṇair avamṛdyante māmakaiḥ parvatopamaiḥ/ muñcanti kusumānye ete nagāḥ parvatasānuṣu, nīlā ivātapāpāye toyam toyadharā ghanāḥ/ kinnarācaritoddeśam paśya śatrughna parvatam, hayaiḥ samantād ākīrṇam makarair iva sāgaram/ ete mṛgagaṇā bhānti śīghravegāḥ pracoditāḥ, vāyupraviddhāḥ śaradi megharājya ivāmbare/ kurvanti kusumāpīḍāñ śiraḥsu surabhīn amī, meghaparakāśaiḥ phalakair dākṣiṇātyā yathā narāḥa/ niṣkūjam iva bhūtvedaṁ vanam ghorapradarśanam, ayodhyeva janākīrṇā samprati pratibhāti mā/ khurair udīrito reṇur divam pracchādya tiṣṭhati, tam vahaty anilaḥ śīghram kurvann iva mama priyam/ syandanāms turagopetān sūtamukhyair adhiṣṭhitān, etān sampatataḥ śīghram paśya śatrughna kānane/ etān vitrāsītān paśya barhiṇaḥ priyadarśanān, etam āviśataḥ śailam adhivāsam patatriṇām/ atimātram ayaṁ deśo manojñāḥ pratibhāti mā, tāpasānām nivāso 'yam vyaktam svargapatho yathā/ mṛgā mṛgībhiḥ sahitā bahavaḥ pṛṣatā vane, manojña rūpā lakṣyante kusumair iva citritāḥ/ sādhu sainyāḥ pratiṣṭhantām vicinvantu ca kānanam, yathā tau puruṣavyāghrau dṛśyete rāmalakṣmaṇau/ bharatasya vacaḥ śrutvā puruṣāḥ śastrapāṇayaḥ, viviśus tad vanam śūrā dhūmam ca dadṛśus tataḥ/ te samālokya dhūmāgram ūcur bhāratam āgatāḥ, nāmanuṣye bhavaty agnir vyaktam atraiva rāghavau/ atha nātra naravyāghrau rājaputrau paramtapau, anye rāmopamāḥ santi vyaktam atra tapasvinaḥ/ tac chrutvā bhāratas teṣāṁ vacanam sādhu sammatam, sainyān uvāca sarvāms tān amitrabalamardanaḥ/ yat tā bhavantas tiṣṭhantu neto gantavyam agrataḥ, aham eva gamiṣyāmi sumantro gurur eva ca/ evam uktās tataḥ sarve tatra tasthuḥ samantataḥ, bhārato yatra dhūmāgram tatra dṛṣṭim samādadhāt/ vyavasthitā yā bhāratena sā camūr; nirīkṣamāñāpi ca dhūmam agrataḥ, babhūva hṛṣṭā nacireṇa jānatī; priyasya rāmasya samāgamam tadā/

As Bharara headed the Maha Sena with pomp and glory, on the arduous route one would vision a wide range of deers, semi- cruel animals, boars, and monkeys. The vast army of Bharata was akin to clouded sky of rainy season spread out a very long distance. The elephants, horses, chariots were lined up long. Considerable distance later, Bharata addressed Maharshi Vasishtha that it would appear as though the tops of Chitrukuta Mountain range were visible along side the River Mandakini. Then Bharata addressed Shatrughna: have you noticed that from the elevated range of mountains, one could see the long lines of horses there beneath and the dust raised by them was truly alarming. Dear brother! These surroundings are truly exhilarating to me as being picturesque just like the way ahead of swarga!' Totally awestruck then he passed down the instructions to the authorities of the army to get vigilant saying: *sādhu sainyāḥ pratiṣṭhantām vicinvantu ca kānanam, yathā tau puruṣavyāghrau dṛśyete rāmalakṣmaṇau/* Let my army move ahead and make all out efforts to some how locate the Ashram of Rama-Sita- Lakshmanas. *bharatasya vacaḥ śrutvā puruṣāḥ śastrapāṇayaḥ, viviśus tad vanam śūrā dhūmam ca dadṛśus tataḥ/ te samālokya dhūmāgram ūcur bhāratam āgatāḥ, nāmanuṣye bhavaty agnir vyaktam atraiva rāghavau/* On receiving Bharata's instructions, some of the very courageous and core group of soldiers got spread out themselves in various directions with long swords and 'trishuulas' by their mighty hands. After long search by the dedicated men one of them discovered smoke on the sky; they realised that when human beings were not there then there would not be a smoke and when smoke would be visible there ought be fire and as fire were there there could be Rama Sita Lakshmanas. Otherwise a 'maha tapasvi' is possibly present. *yat tā bhavantas tiṣṭhantu neto gantavyam agrataḥ, aham eva gamiṣyāmi sumantro gurur eva ca/* In any case, be attentive and wait but do not rush in as I would go in slowly towards that specific place from where the smoke emerges. *vyavasthitā yā bhāratena sā camūr; nirīkṣamāñāpi ca dhūmam agrataḥ, babhūva hṛṣṭā nacireṇa jānatī; priyasya rāmasya samāgamam tadā/* The entire army and the

entourage stood still praying , holding their breath and hoping against hope that the time has arrived for the darshan of Shri Rama!

Sarga Ninety Four

Shri Rama shows the beauty and grandeur of Chitrakoota to Devi Sita

Dīrghakāloṣitas tasmin girau girivanapriyaḥ, videhyāḥ priyamākāṅkṣan svam ca cittam vilobhayan/ atha dāśarathīś citraṁ citrakūṭam adarśayat, bhāryām amarasaṁkāśaḥ śacīm iva purāṁdaraḥ/ na rājyād bhraṁśanaṁ bhadre na suhr̥dbhir vinābhavaḥ, mano me bād̥hate dṛṣṭvā ramaṅtīyam imaṁ girim/ paśyemam acalaṁ bhadre nānādvijagaṅāyutam, śikharaiḥ kham ivodvidhair dhātumadbhir vibhūṣitam/ ke cid rajatasamkāśāḥ ke cit kṣatajasam̄nibhāḥ, pītamaññiṣṭhavarṇās ca ke cin maṇivaraprabhāḥ/ puṣyārkaṅketukābhās ca ke cij jyotī rasaprabhāḥ, virājante 'calendrasya deśā dhātuvibhūṣitāḥ/ nānāmṛgaganadvīparakṣvṛkṣagaṅair vṛtaḥ, aduṣṭair bhāty ayaṁ śailo bahupakṣisamākulaḥ/ āmrajambvasanair lodhrāiḥ priyālaiḥ panasair dhavaiḥ, aṅkolair bhavyatiniśair bilvatindukaveṅubhiḥ/ kāśmaryariṣṭavaraṅair madhūkaiś tilakaiś tathā, badaryāmalakair nīpair vetradhanvanabījakaiḥ/ puṣpavadbhiḥ phalopetaiś chāyāvadbhir manoramaiḥ, evamādibhir ākīrṇaḥ śriyam puṣyaty ayaṁ giriḥ/ śailaprastheṣu ramyeṣu paśyemān kāmaharṣaṅān, kinnarān dvaṁdvaśo bhadre ramamaññān manasvinaḥ/ śākhāvasaktān khaḍgāmīś ca pravarāṅy ambarāṅi ca, paśya vidyādharastrīṅām krīḍed deśān mano - ramān/ jalaprapātair udbhedair niṣyandaiś ca kva cit kva cit, sravadbhir bhāty ayaṁ śailaḥ sravan mada iva dvipaḥ/ guhāsamīraṅo gandhān nānāpuṣpabhavān vahan, ghrāṅatarpaṅam abhyetya kaṁ naram na praharṣayet/ yadītha śarado 'nekās tvayā sārddham anindite, lakṣmaṅena ca vatsyāmi na mām śokāḥ pradhakṣyati/ bahupuṣpaphale ramye nānādvijagaṅāyute, vicitraśikhare hy asmin ratavān asmi bhāmini/ anena vanavāseṅa mayā prāptam phaladvayam, pituś cāṅṅatā dharme bharatasya priyam tathā/ vaidehi ramase kaccic citrakūṭe mayā saha, paśyantī vividhān bhāvān manovākkāyasam̄yatān/ idam evāmṛtam prāhū rājñām rājarṣayaḥ pare, vanavāsam bhavārthāya pretya me prapitāmahāḥ/ śilāḥ śailasya śobhante viśālāḥ śataśo 'bhitaḥ, bahulā bahulair varṅair nīlapītasitāruṅaiḥ/ niśi bhānti acalendrasya hutāśanaśikhā iva, oṣadhyāḥ svaprabhā lakṣmyā bhrājamānāḥ sahasraśaḥ/ ke cit kṣayanibhā deśāḥ ke cid udyānasam̄nibhāḥ, ke cid ekaśilā bhānti parvatasyāśya bhāmini/ bhittveva vasudhām bhāti citrakūṭaḥ samutthitaḥ, citrakūṭasya kūṭo 'sau dṛṣyate sarvataḥ śivaḥ/ kuṣṭhapuṁnāgata -garabhūrjapatrottacchadān, kāminām svāstarān paśya kuśeśayadalāyutān/ mṛditās cāpaviddhās ca dṛṣyante kamalasrajaḥ, kāmibhir vanite paśya phalāni vividhāni ca/ vasvaukasārām nalinīm atyetīvottarān kurūn, parvataś citrakūṭo 'sau bahumūlaphalodakaḥ/ imaṁ tu kālam vanite vijahrivāms; tvayā ca sīte saha lakṣmaṅena ca, ratīm prapatsye kuladharmavardhinīm; satām pathi svair niyamaiḥ paraiḥ sthitaḥ/

Shri Rama has had considerable fascination and charming attraction for settling at Chitrakoota mountain. That indeed had been his life ambition thus fulfilled! He asked Devi Sita, like Indra would to his wife Shachi Devi , to move and wander freely all over the sprawling mountain places and get thrills of joy! He confided in Sita Devi stating : *na rājyād bhraṁśanaṁ bhadre na suhr̥dbhir vinābhavaḥ, mano me bād̥hate dṛṣṭvā ramaṅtīyam imaṁ girim/* I have been pushed out from the Kingdom and parted my relatives and close friends, but all the same, I am truly rejoicing here at the mountain top and have ceased feeling the abandonment and a sense of dejection. Devi! look at this memorable mountain life as birds of countless colour combinations are flying right before you; look at the sky scraping mountain tops replete with unimaginable 'dhaatus' or mineral resources, as though they are kissing the high skies! All such 'dhaatus' are sparkling like silver moulds or like metal balls in varied colours of crystal white or yellow. Besides these, Devi! do you not vision the glitter and twinkles of the 'nakshatra mandalis' spread all over the length and breadth of the blue skies! Some of the Stars are like diamonds or pearls, or sapphires, or corals, or rubies, or gomedha or vaiduryas! The variety of birds and animals is unimaginable ranging from sparrows or vultures to animals like antelopes to huge sized lions and tigers. So is the splendour of fresh flowers of hues of violet-blue- red- orange-indigo or just plain white or of varied permutations and

combinations. Now, the surprising range of trees: Neem, Fig, Saal, Banyan, Coconut, Deodaa, Chinar, Sandalwood, Mango, Teak, Iron wood, Rosewood, Khejri, Palmeera, Jammi, Agar, Ashoka, Jakranda, Bael and finally the blessed Ashvattha. Devi Sita! *śailaprasatheṣu ramyeṣu paśyemān kāmahaṣaṇān, kinnarān dvamdvaśo bhadre ramamānān manasvinaḥ/ śākhāvasaktān khaḍgāmś ca pravarāṇy ambarāṇi ca, paśya vidyādharastrīṇām krīḍed deśān mano -ramān/* Look at this range of mountain tops which seek to usher in strong feelings of love among the amorous couples of youth as also suggestive of kinnara strees holding hand in hand in a striking awe! The gushing streams of water down the mountain minarets to earth are simply amazing! The mountain caves are like human noses inhaling and exhaling the scented and fresh airs of Nature. *Anena vanavāsena mayā prāptam phaladvayam, pituś cānṛṇatā dharme bharatasya priyam tathā/* Beloved Sita! I am experiencing two essential fallout fruits of this ‘Vana Vaasa’: one is that I have the fulfillment of my dear father’s desire and another is of Bharata’s desire too. *Idam evāmṛtam prāhū rājñām rājarṣayaḥ pare, vanavāsam bhavārthāya pretya me prapitāmahaḥ/* Dear Sita! My forefathers like Vaivasvata Manu and other famed Rajarshis had dutifully undergone Vana Vaasa and attained bliss post life; may I too follow their golden footsteps! The surrounding mountain range assumes varied colours of blue, pale yellow, white and red looking magnificent especially in the nights. *vasvaukasārām nalinīm atyetivottarān kurūn, parvataś citrakūṭo ’sau bahumūlaphalodakah/ imam tu kālam vanite vijahrivāmś; tvayā ca sīte saha lakṣmaṇena ca, ratim prapatsye kuladharmavardhinīm; satām pathi svair niyamaiḥ paraiḥ sthitaḥ/* Beloved Sita! This Chitrakoota mountain range with rich fruits, flowers, water flows, vegetable roots, and such multi-splendoured fantasy is like the Aklapuri of Kubera or the Amaravati of Devendra! I hope to spend the entire duration of the fourteen years of my Vana Vaasa within the precincts of ‘dharma nishtha’ along with Lakshmana!

Sarga Ninety Five

Shri Rama displays the exquisiteness of River Mandakini to Sita

Atha śailād viniṣkramya maithilīm kosaleśvaraḥ, adarśayac chubhajalām ramyām mandākinīm nadīm/ abravīc ca varārohām cārucandranibhānanām, videharājasya sutām rāmo rājivalocanaḥ/ vicitrapulinām ramyām hamsasārasasevitām, kusumair upasampannām paśya mandākinīm nadīm/ nānāvidhais tīraruhair vṛtām puṣpaphaladrumaiḥ, rājanīm rājarājasya nalinīm iva sarvataḥ/ mṛgayūthanipītāni kaluṣāmbhāmsi sāmpratam, tīrthāni ramaṇīyāni ratim samjanayanti me/ jaṭājīnadharāḥ kāle valkalottaravāsasaḥ, ṛṣayas tv avagāhante nadīm mandākinīm priye/ ādityam upatiṣṭhante niyamād ūrdhvaśāhavaḥ, ete ’pare viśālākṣi munayaḥ samśitavratāḥ/ mārutoddhūta śikharaiḥ pranṛta iva parvataḥ, pādapaiḥ patrapuṣpāni syjadbhir abhito nadīm/ kaccin maṇinikāśodām kaccit pulinaśālinīm, kaccit siddhajanākīrṇām paśya mandākinīm nadīm/ nirdhūtān vāyunā paśya vitatān puṣpasaṁcayān, poplūyamānān aparān paśya tvaṁ jalamadhyagān/ tāms cātivalgu vacaso rathāṅgāhvayanā dvijāḥ, adhirohanti kalyāṇi niṣkūjantaḥ śubhā girāḥ/ darśanam citrakūṭasya mandākinyās ca śobhane, adhi kam puravāsāc ca manye ca tava darśanāt/ vidhūtakaluṣaiḥ siddhais tapodamaśamānvitaiḥ, nityavikṣobhita jalām vihāhasva mayā saha/ sakhīvac ca vigāhasva sīte mandākinīm imām, kamalāny avamajjantī puṣkarāṇi ca bhāmini/ tvaṁ pauraṇavad vyālān ayodhyām iva parvatam, manyasva vanite nityam sarayūvad imām nadīm/ lakṣmaṇaś caiva dharmātmā mannideśe vyavasthitaḥ, tvaṁ cānukūlā vaidehi prītim janayatho mama/ upasprśams triṣavaṇam madhumūlaphalāśanaḥ, nāyodhyāyai na rājyāya sprhaye ’dya tvayā saha/ imām hi ramyām gajayūthalolitām; nipītatoyām gajasimhavānaraiḥ, supuṣpitaiḥ puṣpadharair alamkṛtām; na so ’sti yaḥ syān na gatakramaḥ sukhī/ itīva rāmo bahusamgataḥ vacaḥ; priyā sahāyaḥ saritam prati bruvan, cacāra ramyam nayanāñjanaprabham; sa citrakūṭam raghuvaṁśavardhanaḥ/

Having exited from the mountain, Shri Rama then climbed down and desired to show Devi Sita about the Sacred River of Mandakini. Devi Sita! Now look at the beauty and glory of this river with groups swans floating and the greenery and trees on the banks looking like Kubera’s scented Sarovara! As herds of deers got down into the banks and enjoy the drinking of the sweet water flows, one should a feeling of

sensation and thrill. Further, groups of hermits clad in deer skins and with their shoulder hangings remove their apparel and with koupeena coverings get into the waters for bathing and perform oblations to Surya Deva. Some of the Munis are observing ‘kathora vratas’ or hard penances of ‘nitya-naimittika’ nature, lift up their folded hands above their shoulders to Parama Devas. Some other adventure lovers are floating on waters for fun and frolic while professional swimmers race up from one bank across another! *vidhūtakaluṣaiḥ siddhais tapodamaśamānvitaiḥ, nityavikṣobhita jalām vihāhasva mayā saha/* In this holy river, Maha Sidhha Purushas practise their ‘mano nigraha’ or mind control standing erect and stable for long duration of time in the flows of water. Devi, let us also bathe in these holy waters! Just as you along with your female friends tend to chase the red lotuses on the banks with gay abandon while drowning, swimming, and lying flat on the flows and so on, let us do so similarly! *tvam pauraṇavadv vyālān ayodhyām iva parvatam, manyasva vanite nityam sarayūvad imām nadīm/* Do imagine that you are swimming and frolicking like the local residents here or in the famed ponds of Ayodhya feeling comfortable and homely. *lakṣmaṇas caiva dharmātmā mannideśe vyavasthitaḥ, tvam cānukūlā vaidehi prītiṁ janayatho mama/* Videha nandini! As long as dharmatma Lakshmana is as per my instructions and as you are always as you are, what other ambition of my life is yet to be fulfilled! *upasṛṣāms triṣavaṇam madhumūlaphalāśanaḥ, nāyodhyāyai na rājyāya sprhaye ’dya tvayā saha/* Dearest Sita! As I enjoy my life with bathings along with you thrice a day and contentedly eat the pleasurable food of roots and fruits, I would neither like to return to Ayodhya nor desire to become a King! *Imām hi ramyām gajayūtha lolitām; nipītatoyām gajasimhavanaraiḥ, supuṣpitaiḥ puṣpadharair alamkṛtām; na so ’sti yaḥ syān na gatakramaḥ sukhī/* Just as large groups of elephants, or lions or monkeys bathe and drink the waters of Mandakini, or experience the fragrances of fresh flowers on the trees on the banks, is there any other fulfillment of human beings on earth! Thus enjoying life thoroughly, Shri Rama has had the memorable visit of Mandakini with Sita and Lakshmanas!

Sarga Ninety Six

As the wild beasts and birds running astray of Chitrakoota, Lakshmana went up atop a shaala tree as an army was nearing and Lakshmana was angered

Tathā tatrāsatas tasya bharatasypayāyinaḥ, sainya reṇuś ca śabdaś ca prādurāstām nabhaḥ spṛśau/ etasminn antare trastāḥ śabdena mahatā tataḥ, arditā yūthapā mattāḥ sayūthā dudruvur diśaḥ/ sa tam sainyasamudbhūtam śabdam śuśrava rāghavaḥ, tāmś ca vipradrutān sarvān yūthapān anvavaikṣata/ tāmś ca vidravato dṛṣṭvā tam ca śrutvā sa niḥsvanam, uvāca rāmaḥ saumitriṁ lakṣmaṇam dīptatejasam/ hanta lakṣmaṇa paśyeha sumitrā suprajās tvayā, bhīmastanitagambhīras tumulaḥ śrūyate svanaḥ/ rājā vā rājamātro vā mṛgayām aṭate vane, anyad vā śvāpadam kim cit saumitre jñātum arhasi, sarvam etad yathātattvam acirāj jñātum arhasi/ sa lakṣmaṇaḥ saṁtvaritaḥ sālām āruhya puṣpitaṁ, prekṣamāṇo diśaḥ sarvāḥ pūrvām diśam avaiḥṣata/ udamukhaḥ prekṣamāṇo dadarśa mahatīm camūm, rathāśvagaja sambādhām yattair yuktām padātibhiḥ/ tām aśvagajasampūrṇām rathadhvajavibhūṣitām, śaśamsa senām rāmāya vacanam cedam abravīt/ agniṁ samśamayativ āryaḥ sītā ca bhajatām guhām, sajyam kuruṣva cāpam ca śarāmś ca kavacam tathā/ tam rāmaḥ puruṣavyāghro lakṣmaṇam pratyuvāca ha, aṅgāvekṣasva saumitre kasyaitām manyase camūm/ evam uktaś tu rāmeṇa lakṣmāṇo vākyaṁ abravīt, didhakṣann iva tām senām ruṣitaḥ pāvako yathā/ sampannaṁ rājyam icchāms tu vyaktam prāpyābhiṣecanam, āvām hantum samabhyeti kaikeyyā bharataḥ sutāḥ/ eṣa vai sumahān śrīmān viṭapī saṁprakāśate, virājaty udgataskandhaḥ kovidāra dhvajo rathe/ bhajanty ete yathākāmam aśvān āruhya śīghragān, ete bhrājanti saṁhṛṣṭā jagān āruhya sādinaḥ/ grhītadhanuṣau cāvām giriṁ vīra śrayāvaḥ, api nau vaśam āgacchet kovidāradhvajo raṇe/ api drakṣyāmi bharatam yatkr̥te vyasanam mahat, tvayā rāghava saṁprāptam sītayā ca mayā tathā/ yannimittam bhavān rājyāc cyuto rāghava śāśvatīm, saṁprāpto ’yam arir vīra bharato vadhya eva me/ bharatasya vadhe doṣam nāham paśyāmi rāghava, pūrvāpakariṇām tyāge na hy adharmo vidhīyate, etasmin nihate kṛtsnām anuśādhi vasumdharām/ adya putram hatam saṁkhye kaikeyī rājyakāmukā, mayā paśyet suduhkhartā hastibhagnam iva drumam/ kaikeyīm ca vadhiṣyāmi sānu - bandhām sabāndhavām, kaluṣeṇādya mahatā medinī parimucyatām/ adyemaṁ saṁyataṁ krodham

asatkāram ca mānada, mokṣyāmi śatrusainyeṣu kakṣeṣv iva hutāśanam/ adyaitac citrakūṭasya kānanam niśitaiḥ śaraiḥ, bhindañ śatruśarīrāṇi kariṣye śoṇitokṣitam/ śarair nirbhinnahṛdayān kuñjarāms turagāms tathā, śvāpadāḥ parikaṣantu narāś ca nihatān mayā/ śarāṇām dhanuṣāś cāham anṛṇo 'smi mahāvane sasainyam bharatam hatvā bhaviṣyāmi na samśayaḥ/

As Shri Rama in one of his romantic moods offering a sweet fruit to share with Devi Sita as seated on the Chitrakoolta mountain, he saw the dust raised and approaching noises of crowds and the screamings of elephants and horses. He asked Lakshmana to ascertain what was the high pitched sounds about! Are they attacks of wild and cruel animals or what! Lakshmana had at once climbed up a tall tree top and found a huge army with elephants, horses and chariots. Lakshmana immediately asked Rama whether to put off the fire, erect his dhanush and arrows ready and alert Devi Sita who was seated resting. He further opined: *sampannam rājyam icchāms tu vyaktam prāpyābhiṣecanam, āvām hantum samabhyeti kaikeyā bhārataḥ sutāḥ/* Dear brother! I suspect and in fact assert that this should be the army of Bharata and as had by now assumed the kingship could be approaching us to get rid all of us. I can now clearly see from this tree top that a chariot is approaching with a flagpost of kovidāra tree unfurled with a flying flag, even as some horsemen and elephant riders are looking at all the directions presumably to locate us. *grhītadhanuṣau cāvām girim vīra śrayāvahe, api nau vaśam āgacchet kovidāradhvajo raṇe/* Maha Veera Rama! It is time that both of us pick up the dhanush and reach the mountain top well guarded by body shields and 'dhanush baanaas'! Then I should face Bharata and teach him an unforgettable lesson as a fitting retribution of your loss of kingship and our hardships especially of the tender bodied Devi Sita! *yannimittam bhavān rājyāc cyuto rāghava śāśvatīm, samprāpto 'yam arir vīra bhārato vadhya eva me/ bhāratasya vadhe doṣam nāham paśyāmi rāghava, pūrāvapakariṇām tyāge na hy adharmo vidhīyate, etasmin nihate kṛtsnām anuśādhi vasumdhārām/* It is Bharata who is the root cause of this undue hardship and your denial of kingship and as such he is our enemy now facing us and deserves punishment by killing him. That should only be a vindication of virtue and natural justice. In fact, excusing him with life should be considered as 'Adharma' and 'Anyāya'! By killing Bharata, you should be the natural and legal vindication of justice, even as Kaikeyi should cry hoarse that Lakshmana had killed her son. *kaikeyīm ca vadhiṣyāmi sānu -bandhām sabāndhavām, kaluṣeṇādyā mahatā medinī parimucyātām/* In fact, Kaikeyi and her provocators including their relatives even would deserve being killed and Bhu Devi should eventually be lightened by the weight of evil and sinfulness!

Sarga Ninety Seven

As Lakshmana saw Bharata approaching, he got angry but Rama cooled him down

Susamrabdham tu saumitriṁ lakṣmaṇam krodhamūrchitam, rāmas tu parisāntvyātha vacanam cedam abravīt/ kim atra dhanuṣā kāryam asinā vā sacarmanā, maheṣvāse mahāprājñe bhārate svayam āgate/ prāptakālām yad eṣo 'smān bhārato draṣṭum icchati, asmāsu manasāpy eṣa nāhitam kim cid ācaret/ vipriyam kṛtapūrvam te bhāratena kadā na kim, īdṛśam vā bhayam te 'dya bhārataṁ yo 'tra śaṅkase/ na hi te niṣṭhuraṁ vācyo bhārato nāpriyam vacaḥ, aham hy apriyam uktaḥ syām bhāratasyāpriye kṛte/ katham nu putrāḥ pītaram hanyuḥ kasyām cid āpadi, bhrātā vā bhrātaram hanyāt saumitre prāṇam ātmanaḥ/ yadi rājyasya hetos tvam imām vācam prabhāṣase, vakṣyāmi bhārataṁ dṛṣṭvā rājyam asmai pradīyatām/ ucyamāno hi bhārato mayā lakṣmaṇa tattvataḥ, rājyam asmai prayacchati bādham ity eva vakṣyati/ tathokto dharmāśīlena bhrātrā tasya hite rataḥ, lakṣmaṇaḥ praviveśeva svāni gātrāṇi lajjayā/ vrīḍitam lakṣmaṇam dṛṣṭvā rāghavaḥ pratyuvāca ha, eṣa manye mahābāhur ihāsmān draṣṭum āgataḥ/ vanavāsam anudhyāya grhāya pratineṣyati, imām vāpy eṣa vaidehīm atyantasukhasevinīm/ etau tau samprakāṣete gotravantau manoramau, vāyuvegasamau vīra javanau turagottamau/ sa eṣa sumahākāyaḥ kampate vāhinīmukhe, nāgaḥ śatruṁjayo nāma vṛddhas tātasya dhīmataḥ/ avatūrya tu sālāgrāt tasmāt sa samitiṁjayaḥ, lakṣmaṇaḥ prāñjalir bhūtvā tashau rāmasya pārśvataḥ/ bhāratenātha samdiṣṭā sammardo na bhaved iti, samantāt tasya śailasya senāvāsam akalpayat/ adhyardham ikṣvākucamūr yojanam

parvatasya sã, pãrśve nyaviśad āvṛtya gajavājjirathākulā/ sã citrakūṭe bharatena senā; dharmam puraskṛtya vidhūya darpam, prasādanārtham raghunandanasya; virocate nītimatā praṇītā/

As Lakshmana was fuming against Bharata even threatening him to Bharata, Shri Rama sought to pacify and cool Lakshmana. Rama said that the very fact of searching for us arrived here all the way denotes that we would have to need to draw our ‘dhanush baanaas’ out and get ready for a fight. Lakshma! If I had arrived here to respect the father’s word of honour, does it make sense that we should kill Bharata and seize the Kingship! The whole world would then disrespect us, is it not so! Then of what avail would be my kingship out of shamelessness! *Yadya dravyam baandhavaanaam vaa mitraanaam vaa kshaye bhavet, naaham tat pratigruheenaam bhakshyaan vishakritaaniva/* In case one earns prosperity by killing relatives or friends, that food is considered by me as poison. Lakshmana! I am hereby swearing that even the Universal Emperorship is disgusting for me which is not in accordance of the noble human’s aspirations of Dharma-Artha-Kama-Mokshas. Sumitra Kumara! I would swear by my ‘dhanush’ that for the sake of Bharata’s happiness is far more significant for me than the kingdom. Let me assure you that the whole earth as surrounded by the sapta samudras is not out of my reach, but by viciously accomplished Swarga Puri of Indra too is unacceptable to me. Whatever is opted for or liked by Bharata Shatrughnas is dear to me and the rest be thrown into open fire to turn into ash! Lakshmana! Be it known that Bharata is a ‘bhatru bhakta’ or intensely attached and devoted to his brothers. He considers me as his very ‘praana’ and getting the sudden news on his return from his maternal grandfather’s place that we had left for the arduous ‘vana vaasa’ wearing ‘jataa valkalas’, he having followed the ‘kula dharma’ of temporary kingship, took the earliest opportunity to meet us. *prāptakālam yad eṣo ‘smān bharato draṣṭum icchati, asmāsu manasāpy eṣa nāhitam kim cid ācaret/* Bharata’s arrival here and meet us is in perfect order and justified. After all, in which manner he ever had hurt you that your thinking pattern should get so disturbing! Beware, Lakshmana! You should never even utter a hard word or display any kind of resentment and that would be as bad as your hurting me. Do you not realise the magnitude of killing one’s own brother or father figure! In case he would offer the Kingdom to me, should I recommend your name! Suppose I suggest so, would you accept the offer! *tathokto dharmasīlena bhrātrā tasya hite rataḥ, lakṣmaṇaḥ praviveśeva svāni gātrāṇi lajjayā/ vrīḍitam lakṣmaṇam dṛṣṭvā rāghavaḥ pratyuvāca ha, eṣa manye mahābhūrah ihāsmān draṣṭum āgataḥ/* Lakshmana has then realised his folly, rashness out of immaturity and the misbehavior that was caused and stood besides Rama with his head down in shame and said: I am ashamed of myself brother! I could as well imagine as though in a similar situation, even my father too might have visited us likewise! I am sure that Bharata is visiting us and might return after pleading with you to return!’ Then Rama instructed Lakshmana to get down from the tall tree. Meanwhile, Bharata instructed that there ought not be any problem created by the huge sena as they were approaching and thus halted the vast ‘sena’ some three yojanas away.

Sarga Ninety Eight

Bharata and advance party located Rama’s ‘kuteera’ and visited the details inside

Niveśya senām tu vibhuh padbhyām pādavatām varaḥ, abhigantum sa kākutstham iyeṣa guruvartakam/ niviṣṭa mātṛe sainye tu yathoddeśam vinītavat, bharato bhrātaram vākyam śatrughnam idam abravīt/ kṣipram vanam idam saumya narasaṅghaiḥ samantataḥ, lubdhaiś ca sahitair ebhis tvam anveṣitum arhasi/ yāvan na rāmaṁ drakṣyāmi lakṣmaṇam vā mahābalaṁ, vaidehīm vā mahābhāgām na me śāntir bhaviṣyati/ yāvan na candrasamkāśam drakṣyāmi śubham ānanam, bhrātuḥ padmapalāsākṣam na me śāntir bhaviṣyati/ yāvan na caraṇau bhrātuḥ pārthiva vyañjanānvitau, śirasā dhārayiṣyāmi na me śāntir bhaviṣyati/ yāvan na rājye rājjyārhaḥ piṭṛpaitāmahe sthitaḥ, abhiṣekajalaklinno na me śāntir bhaviṣyati/ kṛtakṛtyā mahābhāgā vaidehī janakātmajā, bhartāram sāgarāntāyāḥ pṛthivyā yānugacchati/ subhagaś citrakūṭo ‘sau girirājopamo giriḥ, yasmin vasati kākutsthaḥ kubera ivanandane/ kṛtakāryam idam durgam vanam vyālaniṣevitam, yad adhyāste mahātejā rāmaḥ śastrabhṛtām varaḥ/ evam uktvā mahātejā bharataḥ puruṣarṣabhāḥ, padbhyām eva mahātejāḥ praviveśa mahad vanam/ sa tāni drumajālāni jātāni

girisānuṣu, puṣpitāgrāni madhyena jagāma vadatām varaḥ/ sa gireś citrakūṭasya sālam āsādyā puṣpitam, rāmāśramagatasyāgner dadarśa dhvajam ucchritam/ taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā bhārataḥ śrīmān sumoda sahabāndhavaḥ, atra rāma iti jñātvā gataḥ pāram ivāmbhasaḥ/ sa citrakūṭe tu girau niśāmya; rāmāśramam puṇyajanopapannam, guhena sārḍham tvarito jagāma; punar niveśyaiva camūm mahātmā/

Thus having kept away the sena and the entourage at a distance, Bharata decided to spot the specific place of Shri Rama's place of stay and addressed brother Shatrughna to locate by intensive search in all the directions with the help of a handful of soldiers. Nishad Raja Guha too with his dhanush-baanaas and sword initiated the search. Bharata decided tha he himself would initiate the search along with the Ministers, renowned citizens of Ayodhya, Guru Brahmanas and so on. He declared: *yāvan na rāmam drakṣyāmi lakṣmaṇam vā mahābalam, vaidehīm vā mahābhāgām na me śāntir bhaviṣyati/* I cannot get balance of mind till I could locate Shri Ramas-Maha Bali Lakshmana-and Maha bhaaga Videha Rajakumari Devi Sita. Decidedly indeed, Sumitra kumara Lakshmana is a fulfilled human who is always along with the lotus eyed Shri Rama with his placid countenance of cool and comforting Moon shine! I could not indeed rest till I place my head at the lotus feet of Shri Rama! *yāvan na rājye rājyārhaḥ piṭypaitāmahe sthitaḥ, abhiṣekajalaklinno na me śāntir bhaviṣyati/ kṛtakṛtyā mahābhāgā vaidehī janakātmajā, bhartāram sāgarāntāyāḥ pṛthivyā yānugacchati/* I cannot ever be peaceful with equanimity till I place the Kingdom of Ayodhya on his shoulders and duly celebrate his 'rajaabhisheka'. Indeed again, till the Janaka Kishori- Videha Raja Nandini Maha Bhaga Sita is decorated with her singular queenship I could not be peaceful. Just as Lord Kubera is adorned in 'Nandana Vana', this 'Kakustha Kula Bhushana' Shri Rama is blessing this Chitrakoota Mangala Giri which is akin to Himalaya Giri or Venkataachala. This inaccessible forest infested by cobras and cruel animals is fortunate as the high mountains of chitrakoota! *sa gireś citrakūṭasya sālam āsādyā puṣpitam, rāmāśramagatasyāgner dadarśa dhvajam ucchritam/ taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā bhārataḥ śrīmān sumoda sahabāndhavaḥ, atra rāma iti jñātvā gataḥ pāram ivāmbhasaḥ/* Then Bharata ascended atop a 'shaala vrikaksha' and cited Shri Rama Chandra Ashram as evidenced by the smoke emerging thererom and shouted with great excitement: This ought to be of Shri Rama!

Sarga Ninety Nine

As Bharata Shatrughnas located Rama, they prostrated and kept on crying

Niviṣṭāyām tu senāyām utsuko bhāratas tadā, jagāma bhrātaram draṣṭum śatruḥnam anudarśayan/ ṛṣim vasiṣṭham saṁdiśya mātṛ me śīghram ānaya, iti taritam agre sa jāgama guruvatsalaḥ/ sumantras tv api śatruḥnam adūrād anvapadyata, rāmadārśanajas tarṣo bhāratasyeva tasya ca/ gacchann evātha bhāratas tāpasālayasaṁsthitām, bhrātuh paṇakuṭīm śrīmān uṭajam ca dadarśa ha/ śālāyās tv agratas tasyā dadarśa bhāratas tadā, kāṣṭhāni cāvabhagnāni puṣpāny avacitāni ca/ dadarśa ca vane tasmin mahataḥ saṁcayān kṛtān, mṛgāṇām mahiṣāṇām ca karīṣaiḥ sītākāraṇāt/ gacchan eva mahābāhur dyutimān bhāratas tadā, śatruḥnam cābravīd dhṛṣṭas tān amātyāms ca sarvaśaḥ/ manye prāptāḥ sma taṁ deśam bhāradvājo yam abravīt, nātidūre hi manye 'ham nadīm mandākinīm itaḥ/ uccair baddhāni cīrāṇi lakṣmaṇena bhaved ayam, abhijñānakṛtaḥ panthā vikāle gantum icchatā/ idam codāttadantānām kuñjarāṇām tarasvinām, śailapārśve parikrāntam anyonyam abhigarjatām/ yam evādhātum icchanti tāpasāḥ satatām vane, tasyāsau dr̥ṣyate dhūmaḥ saṁkulaḥ kṛṣṭavartmanaḥ/ atrāham puruṣavyāghram gurusatkāraṇīnam, āryam drakṣyāmi saṁhṛṣṭo maharṣim iva rāghavam/ atha gatvā muhūrtaṁ tu citrakūṭam sa rāghavaḥ, mandākinīm anuprāptas taṁ janam cedam abravīt/ jagatyām puruṣavyāghra āste vīrāsane rataḥ, janendro nirjanam prāpya dhin me janma sajīvitam/ matkṛte vyasanam prāpto lokanātho mahādyutih, sarān kāmān parityajya vane vasati rāghavaḥ/ iti lokasamākrūṣṭaḥ pādeṣv adya prasādayan, rāmasya nipatiṣyāmi sītāyās ca punaḥ punaḥ/ evam sa vilapaṁs tasmin vane daśarathāt - majah, dadarśa mahatīm puṇyām paṇāśālām manoramām/ sālātālāśvakarṇānām paṇair bahubhir āvṛtām, viśālām mṛdubhis tīrṇām kuśair vedim ivādhvarē śakrāyudha nikāśaiś ca kāmukair bhārasādhanaiḥ, rukmapṛṣṭhair mahāsāraiḥ śobhitām śatrubādhakaiḥ/ arkaśmipratīkāśair ghorais

tūṅgataiḥ śaraiḥ, śobhitām dīptavadanaiḥ sarpaḥ bhogavatīm iva/ mahārajatavāsobhyām asibhyām ca virājītām, rukmabindu vicitrābhyām carmabhyām cāpi śobhitām/ godhāṅgulitair āsāktaiś citraiḥ kāñcanabhūsitaiḥ, arisaṅghair anādhr̥syām mṛgair simhaguhām iva/ prāgudakṣravaṇām vedīm viśālām dīptapāvākām, dadarśa bhāratas tatra puṇyām rāmaniveśane/ nirīkṣya sa muhūrtaṁ tu dadarśa bhārato gurum, uṭaje rāmam āsīnām jaṭāmaṅḍaladhāriṇam/ taṁ tu kṛṣṇājīnadharam cīravalkalavāsasam, dadarśa rāmam āsīnam abhitaḥ pāvakopamam/ simhaskandham mahābāhuṁ puṇḍarīkanibhekṣaṇam, pṛthivyāḥ sagarāntāyā bhartāram dharmacāriṇam/ upaviṣṭam mahābāhuṁ brahmāṇam iva śāśvatam, sthaṅḍile darbhāsmatīrṇe sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca/ taṁ dṛṣṭvā bhārataḥ śrīmān duḥkhamohapariplutaḥ, abhyadhāvata dharmātmā bhārataḥ kaikayīsutaḥ/ dṛṣṭvā ca vilalāpārto bāṣpasamdigdhayā girā, āsaknuvan dhārayitum dhairyād vacanam abravīt/ yaḥ sāmsadi prakṛtibhir bhaved yukta upāsitum, vanyair mṛgair upāsīnaḥ so 'yam āste mamāgrajāḥ vāsobhir bahusāhasair yo mahātmā purocitāḥ, mṛgājine so 'yam iha pravaste dharmam ācaran/ adhārayad yo vividhāś citrāḥ sumanasas tadā, so 'yam jaṭābhāram imam sahate rāghavaḥ katham/ yasya yajñair yathādiṣṭair yukto dharmasya saṁcayaḥ, śārīra kleśasambhūtam sa dharmam parimārgate/ candanena mahārheṇa yasyāṅgam upasevitam, malena tasyāṅgam idam katham āryasya sevyate/ manmītam idam duḥkham prāpto rāmaḥ sukhocitāḥ, dhig jīvitaṁ nṛśaṁsasya mama lokavigarhitam/ ity evam vilapan dīnaḥ prasvinnamukhapaṅkajāḥ, pādāv aprāpya rāmasya papāta bhārato rudan/ duḥkhabhitapto bhārato rājaputro mahābalaḥ, ukṭvāryeti sakṛd dīnam punar novāca kim cana/ bāṣpāpīhita kaṅṭhāś ca prekṣya rāmaṁ yaśasvinam, āryety evābhi samīkruśya vyāhartum nāśakat tataḥ/ śatrughnaś cāpi rāmasya vavande caraṇau rudan, tāv ubhau sa samāliṅgya rāmo 'py aśrūṇy avartayat/ tataḥ sumantreṇa guhena caiva; samīyatū rājasutāv araṇye, divākaraś caiva niśākaraś ca; yathāmbare śukrabṛhaspatibhyām/ tān pārthivān vāraṇayūthapābhān; samāgatāms tatra mahaty araṇye, vanaukasas te 'pi samīkṣya sarve 'py; aśrūṇy amuñcan pravahāya harsam/

With extraordinary excitement and thrill, Bharata shouted at Shatrughna and identified the direction of the Ashram. He then alerted Guru Vasishtha and the mothers and as accompanied by them proceeded to the spot. He then he located a 'parna kuti' made of tree trunk wood pieces covered by dried tree leaves and a hut to enable 'homaagni' and nitya pujas by flowers. The entrance of the ashram land was laid by a pathway leading to-and-fro the main ashram as indicated by trees planted by Lakshmana. To keep the living rooms of ashram cool, heaps of 'the gobar' of cattle and deer were arranged around. Then Bharata stated that what Bharadwaja Maha Muni had described in detail was visible then and the Sacred Ricer Mandakini would not be far from this ashram. Then suddenly Bharata bursted out with anguish: jagatyām puruṣavyāghra āste vīrāsane rataḥ, janendro nirjanam prāpya dhin me janma sajīvitam/ matkṛte vyasanam prāpto lokanātho mahādyutiḥ, sarān kāmān parityajya vane vasati rāghavaḥ/ iti lokasamā - kruṣṭaḥ pādeṣv adya prasādayan, rāmasya nipatiśyāmi sītayāś ca punaḥ punaḥ/ Aho! What a shame that Loka nadha Raghunadha is having to discard the world and is settled here in this lonely and God forsaken forest all due to me, my fate and hard luck. I am shamed by the public and the world and my life is worthless and aimless. I have to instantly fall at the glorious feet of Shri Rama and those of Maha Pativrata Devi Sita and the ever blessed Lakshmana to possibly pardon me and my ill fated life!' Then the over agitated and anguished Bharata led the way to the Yajna shaala covered with the dried leaves of Shaala-Taala-Ashvakarna tree leaves and spotted the sizeable Yajna Vedika. In the 'parna shaala' itself, were arranged 'dhunush baanas', long swords covered in golden sheaths, and tiger and deerskins hung on the walls. nirīkṣya sa muhūrtaṁ tu dadarśa bhārato gurum, uṭaje rāmam āsīnām jaṭāmaṅḍaladhāriṇam/ taṁ tu kṛṣṇājīnadharam cīravalkalavāsasam, dadarśa rāmam āsīnam abhitaḥ pāvakopamam/ simhaskandham mahābāhuṁ puṇḍarīkanibhekṣaṇam, pṛthivyāḥ sagarāntāyā bhartāram dharmacāriṇam/ upaviṣṭam mahābāhuṁ brahmāṇam iva śāśvatam, sthaṅḍile darbhāsmatīrṇe sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca/ Then in the 'Kuteera', Bharata saw Shri Rama with 'jataamandala' on his head and dressed in 'krishna mriga charma and valkala' seated on 'kusha grass' by the side of 'homaagni' vedika like Brahma himself. His shoulders were high like those of a lion with broad chest and strong hands and his sparkling eyes were like the fully opened up lotuses. He could not but run up to him with excitement and mixed feelings of intense anguish and remorse. Along with him were seated Devi Sita and Lakshmana too similarly

wearing ‘mriga charma’ attires! He had broken down and fell straight at Rama’s feet with suppressed and burst out cryings and hushed tones: *yaḥ samsadi prakṛtibhir bhaved yukta upāsītum, vanyair mṛgair upāsīnaḥ so ’yam āste mamāgrajaḥ/ vāsobhir bahusāhasrair yo mahātmā purocitaḥ, mṛgājine so ’yam iha pravaste dharmam ācaran/ adhārayad yo vividhās citrāḥ sumanasas tadā, so ’yam jaṭābhāram imam saḥate rāghavaḥ katham/ yasya yajñair yathādiṣṭair yukto dharmasya samcayaḥ, śarīra kleśasambhūtam sa dharmam parimārgate/* ‘What a twist of destiny that you worthy of veneration in the Rajya Sabhas by ministers and senior officialdom is now surrounded by jungle animals! That supreme Maha Raja was always robed in thousand varieties of dresses of silk bordered with silver and gold is now undergoing ‘dharmaacharana’ is wearing two pieces of ‘mriga charmas’! That extraordinary Raghu Veera whose heargear studded with priceless ‘nava ratnas’ and with uncommon flowers of far spreading celestial smells is now carrying a ‘jataabhaara’! That Dharmatma who had all along been engaged maha yajna kaaryas assisted by hundreds of ‘shastra vetta ritviks’ rendering ‘Shruti Smritis’ is now practising the same kind of ‘dharma anusandhana’ with physical strain. *Mannimittam idaṁ duḥkham prāpto rāmaḥ sukhocitaḥ, dhig jīvitaṁ nṛśamsasya mama lokavigarhitam/* Alas! How disgraceful am I to have placed that supreme devata in human form in this situation because of my misfortune as I am disgraced with wide spread ‘loka ninda’ and public shame.’ Bharata thus collapsed down with extreme distress and fell at Rama’s feet, as he could utter hardly two words: ‘Arya! Ha Arya!’ Shatrughna too likewise cried relentlessly and fell at Rama’s feet. Then Shri Rama hugged both Bharata Shatrughnas as a gesture of kindness even as they were crying away relentlessly. Later on Rama and Lakshmana met Sumantra and Nishada Raja and as they moved forward there were implicit cryings of joy and relief by the forest trees and animals as well.

Sarga One Hundred

Shri Rama having enquired Bharata’s welfare gave elaborate lessons of Kshatra Dharmas on his own

Aaghrāya rāmas taṁ mūrdhni pariṣvajya ca rāghavaḥ, aṅke bharatam āropya paryapṛcchat samāhitaḥ/ kva nu te ’bhūt pitā tāta yad aranyaṁ tvam āgataḥ, na hi tvam jīvatas tasya vanam āgantum arhasi/ cirsasya bata paśyāmi dūrād bharatam āgatam, duṣpratīkam araṇye ’smin kiṁ tāta vanam āgataḥ/ kaccid daśaratho rājā kuśalī satyasamgarah, rājasūyāśvamedhānām āhartā dharmaniścayaḥ/ sa kaccid brāhmaṇo vidvān dharmanityo mahādyutih, ikṣvākūṇām upādhyāyo yathāvat tāta pūjyate/ tāta kaccid ca kausalyā sumitrā ca prajāvatī, sukhinī kaccid āryā ca devī nandati kaikayī/ kaccid vinaya sampannaḥ kulaputro bahuśrutaḥ, anasūyur anudraṣṭā satkṛtas te purohitaḥ/ kaccid agniṣu te yukto vidhijño matimān rjuḥ, hutam ca hoṣyamāṇam ca kāle vedayate sadā/ iṣvastravarasampannam arthaśāstraviśāradam, sudhanvānam upādhyāyam kaccit tvam tāta manyase/ kaccid ātma samāḥ śūrāḥ śrutavanto jitendriyāḥ, kulīnās ceṅgitajñās ca kṛtās te tāta mantriṇaḥ/ mantrō vijayamūlam hi rājñām bhavati rāghava, susamvṛto mantradharair amātyaiḥ śāstrakovidaiḥ/ kaccin nidrāvaśam naiṣi kaccit kāle vibudhyase, kac cimś cāpararātriṣu cintayasy arthanaipuṇam/ kaccin mantrayase naikaḥ kaccin na bahubhiḥ saha, kaccit te mantrito mantrō rāṣṭram na paridhāvati/ kaccid artham viniścitya laghumūlam mahodayam, kṣipram ārabhase kartum na dīrghayasi rāghava/ kaccit tu sukṛtāny eva kṛtarūpāṇi vāpunaḥ, vidus te sarvakāryāṇi na kartavyāni pārthivāḥ/ kaccin na tarkair yuktvā vā ye cāpy aparikīrtitāḥ, tvayā vā tava vāmātyair budhyate tāta mantritam/ kaccit sahasrān mūrkhāṇām ekam icchasi paṇḍitam, paṇḍito hy arthakṛcchreṣu kuryān niḥśreyasaṁ mahat’ sahasrāṇy api mūrkhāṇām yady upāste mahīpatiḥ, atha vāpy ayutāny eva nāsti teṣu saḥāyatā/ eko ’py amātyo medhāvī śūro dakṣo vicakṣanaḥ, rājānam rājamātram vā prāpayen mahatīm śriyam/ kaccin mukhyā mahatsv eva madhyameṣu ca madhyamāḥ , jaghanyās ca jaghanyeṣu bhṛtyāḥ karmasu yojitāḥ/ amātyān upadhātītān piṭṛpaitāmahān śucīn, śreṣṭhān śreṣṭheṣu kaccit tvam niyojayasi karmasu/ kaccit tvām nāvajānanti yājakāḥ patitaṁ yathā, ugrapratigrahītāram kāmāyānam iva striyaḥ/ upāyakuśalam vaidyaṁ bhṛtyasamūdūṣaṇe ratam, sūram aiśvaryakāmam ca yo na hanti sa vadhyate/ kaccid dhṛṣṭas ca sūras ca dhṛtimān matimān śuciḥ, kulīnās cānuraktaś ca dakṣaḥ senāpatiḥ kṛtaḥ/balavantaś ca kaccit te mukhyā yuddhaviśāradāḥ, dhṛṣṭāpadānā vikrāntās tvayā satkṛtya mānitāḥ/ ka cid balasya bhaktaṁ ca vetanam ca yathocitam, samprāptakālam dātavyam dadāsi na vilambase/ kālātikramaṇe hy eva bhakta vetanayor bhṛtāḥ, bhartuḥ kupyanti duṣyanti so ’narthāḥ

sumahān smṛtaḥ/ kaccit sarve 'nuraktās tvām kulaputrāḥ pradhānataḥ, kaccit prāṇāms tavārtheṣu samīyajanti samāhitāḥ/ kaccij jānapado vidvān dakṣiṇaḥ pratibhānavān, yathoktavādī dūtas te kṛto bhārata paṇḍitaḥ/ kaccid aṣṭādaśāny eṣu svapakṣe daśa pañca ca, tribhis tribhir avijñātaiḥ vetsi tīrthāni cārakaiḥ/ kaccid vyapāstān ahitān pratiyātāms ca sarvadā, durbalān anavajñāya vartase ripusūdana/ kaccin na lokāyatikān brāhmaṇāms tāta sevase, anartha kuśalā hy ete bālāḥ paṇḍitamāninaḥ/ dharma śāstreṣu mukhyeṣu vidyamāneṣu durbudhāḥ, buddhimān vīkṣikīm prāpya nirarthaṃ pravādanti te/ vīraiḥ adhyuṣitāms pūrvam asmākaṃ tāta pūrvakaiḥ, satyanāmāms dṛḍhadvārāms hastyaśvarathasamkulāms/ brāhmaṇaiḥ kṣatriyaiḥ vaiśyaiḥ svakarmanirataiḥ sadā, jitendriyaiḥ mahotsāhaiḥ vṛtāmātyaiḥ sahasraśaḥ/ prāsādair vividhākārair vṛtāms vaidyajanākulāms, kaccit samuditāms sphītāms ayodhyāms parirakṣasi/ kaccic caityaśatair juṣṭaḥ suniṣṭajanākulaḥ, devasthānaiḥ prapābhiś ca taḍāgaiś copaśobhitaḥ/ prahṛṣṭanaranārīkaḥ samājotsavaśobhitaḥ, sukṣṛṣṭasīmā paśumān himsābhir abhivarjitaḥ/ adevamātrko ramyaḥ śvāpadaiḥ parivarjitaḥ, kaccij janapadaḥ sphītaḥ sukhaṃ vasati rāghava/ kaccit te dayitāḥ sarve kṛṣṇigorakṣajīvinaḥ, vārtāyāms samśritas tāta loko hi sukhaṃ edhate/ teṣāms guptiparīhāraiḥ kaccit te bharaṇaṃ kṛtam, rakṣyā hi rājñā dharmeṇa sarve viśayavāsiṇaḥ/ kaccit striyaḥ sāntvayasi kaccit tās ca surakṣitāḥ, kaccin na śraddadhāsyāsāms kaccid guhyaṃ na bhāṣase/ kaccin nāga vanāms guptaṃ kuñjarāṇaṃ ca tṛpyasi, kaccid darśayase nityāms manuṣyāṇāms vibhūṣitam, utthāyothhāya pūrvāhṇe rājaputro mahāpathe/ kaccit sarvāni durgāni dhanadhānyāyudhodakaiḥ, yantrais ca paripūrṇāni tathā śilpidhanurdharaiḥ/ āyas te vipulaḥ kaccit kaccid alpataro vyayaḥ, apātreṣu na te kaccit kośo gacchati rāghava/ devatārthe ca pitrarthe brāhmaṇābhyāgeṣu ca, yodheṣu mitravargeṣu kaccid gacchati te vyayaḥ/ kaccid āryo viśuddhātmā kṣāritaś corakarmanā, aprṣṭaḥ śāstrakuśalair na lobhād badhyate śuciḥ/ grhītaś caiva prṣṭaś ca kāle dṛṣṭaḥ sakāraṇaḥ, kaccin na mucyate coro dhanalobhān naraśabha/ vyasane kaccid āḍhyasya dugatasya ca rāghava, arthaṃ virāgāḥ paśyanti tavāmātyā bahuśrutāḥ/ yāni mithyābhisāstānāms patanty asrāni rāghava, tāni putrapaśūn ghnanti prītyarthaṃ anuśāsataḥ/ kaccid vṛdhāms ca bālāms ca vaidyamukhyāms ca rāghava, dānena manasā vācā tribhir etair bubhūṣase/ kaccid gurūms ca vṛddhāms ca tāpasān devatātithīn, caityāms ca sarvān siddhārthān brāhmaṇāms ca namasyasi/ kaccid arthena vā dharmāms dharmāms dharmeṇa vā punaḥ, ubhau vā prītilobhena kāmena na vibādhase/ kaccid arthaṃ ca dharmāms ca kāmaṃ ca jayatāms vara, vibhajya kāle kālajña sarvān bhārata sevase/ kaccit te brāhmaṇāḥ śarma sarvaśāstrārthakovi, āśāmsante mahāprājña pauraḥjanapadaiḥ saha/ nāstikyam anṛtaṃ krodhaṃ pramādam dīrghasūtratāms, adarśanaṃ jñānavatāms ālasyāms pañcavṛttitāms/ ekacintanam arthānāms anarthajñaiś ca mantraṇaṃ, niścitānāms anārambhaṃ mantrasyāparilakṣaṇaṃ/ maṅgalasyāprayogaṃ ca pratyutthānaṃ ca sarvaśaḥ, kaccit tvāms varjayasy etān rājadoṣāms caturdaśa/ kaccit svāduḥkṛtaṃ bhojyam eko nāśnāsi rāghava, kaccid āśāmsamānebhyaḥ mitrebhyaḥ samprayacchasi/

The ever kind Shri Rama held Bharata in his hands, touched his head softly, embraced him and said softly: Where is father! How could you reach here! It is a very long time that I am seeing you as you might have returned from your uncle's kingdom, but you seem to have become thinned and weak. Why have you reached here! Hope dear father is alive and why are you crying away. Bharata you are still a lad and hope you are taking care of father properly! Hope, Dharmānīshthaapara Maha Raja Dasharatha who had successfully performed Rajasuya and Ashwamedha yagnas is in good health. Trust you are constantly engaged in pujas to Ikshvaku Acharya Maharshi Vasishtha properly! Hope my mother Devi Kousalya is in good health. I hope you are ever respectful to the Purohita of the famed Ayodhya Kingdom! He is ever engaged in agnihotra karyas as per prescribed timings each day. Trust you are ever respectful to Deva-Pitru-bhrutya-gurujana-pita samana vriddha jana-vaidya-brahmanas. Hope you esteem and admire the teacher of Arthashastra- Raja neeti Visharada Acharya Sudhanva who knows the minute details of 'mantra rahita' and 'mantra yukta' dhanur vidya. I believe you must have appointed a Mantri who is a shura veera-shastragjna-jitendriya and of excellent family background who could sense the body movements as per one's inner thoughts *Mantra vijayamulam hi rajnam bhavati rāghava, samavṛto mantradharair amātyaiḥ śāstrakovidaiḥ/ Raghu nandana!* Excellent ministerial support is the key to success of 'Rajyaanga' of Kingship. The back up good Ruler is indeed the neeti shastra nipuna- manri amaitya needed to be kept unknown to the public. Bharata! Hope you are not tired and feeling sleepy; tell

me you are normally active with proper sleep in the nights! When ever spies convey the type of news which disturbs the mind, you ought to keep it to digest within as once you convey to one, it gets spread to dozens and eventually to the enemies. Bharata! When a particular task is easy to perform and has far reaching results, then procrastination becomes the thief and delay dilutes the end result. Hence never delay the essential tasks of importance. More over: *kaccit sahasrān mūrkhāṇām ekam icchasi paṇḍitam, paṇḍito hy arthakṛcchreṣu kuryān niḥśreyasaṁ mahat/ sahasrāny api mūrkhāṇām yady upāste mahīpatiḥ, atha vāpy ayutāny eva nāsti teṣu sahāyatā/ eko 'py amātyo medhāvī sūro dakṣo vicakṣaṇaḥ, rājānaṁ rājamātraṁ vā prāpayen mahatīm śriyam/* You should realise that instead of keeping a thousand stupid as your advisers, you must retain even one experienced vidvan who could uplift collapsing situations in the art of 'Rajyaanga' or diplomacy as also success and prosperity. Yet the same time, the Maha Medhavi Mantri need not and should not be burdened with small, medium and even semi difficult problems as there should be a three tiered levels of advisers and action groups. Bharata here is another important alert in the art of Rajyaanga or diplomacy: *amātyān upadhātītān piṭṛpaitāmahāñ śucīn, śreṣṭhāñ śreṣṭheṣu kaccit tvaṁ niyojayasi karmasu/* This relates to the issue of corruption and tht is why the need for appointing officials who are reputed for generations ; Bharata! Hopefully you are appointing such generation wise clean officials only! Another aspect of Ideal Kingship is to follow the art of 'chaturpaayas' or the four tier Saama-daana- bheda-danda means of counselling-gifting-rifting two parties who agree or disagree and proposal of kingship- or finally punishing by the kingship.

[Vishlesiona on King's adminitrative skill from Manu Smriti:

An ideal King is expected to learn of the naunces of Vyavahara Vidya. He should strain himself day-and-night and practise 'indiya nigrah' or the self control of body limbs and senses An exemplary King requires to abstain from ten evil habits generated from kaama or worldly desire and eight from krodha or anger. Indeed all the habits end up in evil and human misery. To any King the ten vices resulting from Kaama or human obsessions would gradually diminish wealth and vitue while the eight vices springing from Krodha or excessive wrath could terminate in his doom and death! The set of ten vices from desires and pleasures are stated to be hunting, gambling, sleeping by the day, repetitive statements of other's failures and vanity, obsession of feminity, drunkenness, excessive involvement of dance and music, and purposeless travel. The eight vices are carrying and encouraging tales, uncalled for violence, droham or treachery, jealousy, dushanam or abusive language, dravya haranam or unjust seizure of material and property, condemnation and censuring and physical beating. Lobha or avarice is stated as the root cause of all the evils and broadmindedness is the spring of hope. Intoxication, betting, women, and hunting are the four shortlisted banes led by human desires subjected to excesses while the worst possible offshoots of anger are abusive language, manhandling, and seizure of materials and property. Those persons who are not only prime movers of the excesses viz. the Kings in this context but the associates of these sins either from desire or anger are duly involved in the sins of humanity. Indeed Vyasana or vice and Mrityu or death are equally tough but death is easier since Mrityu has a possibility of reaching swarga but the one dragged into vyasana is sure to end up in naraka for sure! That is the reason why an iedal King needs to appoint an ideal Minister too as the latter should have the ancestry of ideal Ministers who are well versed in Shastra- Shaastra jnaana, and of proven nobility. It might sometimes be possible to bless a Kingdom even with unproven Kingship but is unimaginable to secure a Minister of trined background , inherent ability, knowledge and wisdom, be it in the matters of revenue incese and management, domestic governance and foreign relations. It is the Minister who has to daily interact with his deputies individually and collectively in all the matters relating punishments and rewards. This is the reason why a well read , experienced and trust worthy person- say a Brahmana with experice and wisdom, even as the King is ably assited and motivated with the larger issues and equally about the minor ones 'pro bono publico'! In turn,

the Minister might appoint his deputies down the line of officialdom as in charge of duties. Thus when fully equipped with the task of governance, the King should take off the heavy responsibility of governance ably conducting the two horsed chariot of Virtue and Justice. The officials at the field level, be it for collection of revenues and of disbursements, or for internal security and and external relations too be appointed on the principles of integrity, incorruptibility and impartiality.]

Sarga Hundred continued: *kaccid dhṛṣṭas ca śūras ca dhṛtimān matimāñ śuciḥ, kulīnas cānuraktas ca dakṣaḥ senāpatiḥ kṛtaḥ/balavantaś ca kaccit te mukhyā yuddhaviśārādāḥ, dṛṣṭāpadānā vikrāntās tvayā satkṛtya mānitāḥ/* Bharata! I hope you have appointed a trustworthy, loyal, well contented, brave and ever courageous, Senapati of traditional background. If not yet, please do so atonce. Further, you might have appointed a Prime Minister who is honest, industrious and public welfare minded who would be ready to kill himself for you! Then *kaccij jānapado vidvān dakṣiṇaḥ pratibhānavān, yathoktavādī dūtas te kṛto bhārata paṇḍitaḥ/* Have you appointed ‘Raja dootaaś’ of our kingdom in other friendly kingdoms who should be well read vidwans, diplomatic, and of sharp skills of forien affairs!

[Vishleshana on Videsha Neeti as per Manu Smriti:

A King of idealism should appoint an Ambassador who is well versed in the art of diplomacy with a countenance of placidity and of expression backedup by proficiency in the subjects of science, commerce and international affairs. More importantly the person has to be honest, skilful and of noble family background. In the context of diplomacy, he has to be an expert in the matters of Sandhi and Vighra, give and take, intelligent enough of moves and counter-moves, possessive of good memory, fearless and eloquent, as also action oriented with timely and vigilant moves, but essentially upright and reliable. He has to be of military tactness, treasury and financial management, recogniser of allies and opponents, and most significantly has the trust and faith of the King, his allies and the passive. In fact, he should also be able to convince the King about the realities of the Kings and Kingdoms of the countries of his posting but of what his or her King decides to convey in word or deed to the other King however harsh it may be yet couched in a polite yet firm manner. The role of an Ambassador is like a dance on a razor’s edge, yet unhurting and yet with hardness. Just as a Minister possesses the wherewith all to punish or reward, save or ruin, run the treasury to get filled up or exhausted, drive the Kingdom’s Economy to prosper or take it to doom, an Ambassador too can perform similar tasks to place the Kingdom to brush it up with the colours representative worthiness of safety for foreign trade, investment, economic collaboration. *Sa vidyadasya kṛtyeshu nirgudhengita cheshtitaiḥ, aakaaramingitam cheshtaam bhṛitye shu cha chikeershitam/* A successful Ambassador has to necessarily train himself with the face, gestures and actions of the counterpart King and so should his deputies too. This is in respect of the designs of the counter part King, his designs and plans of action and most importatly that might adversely affect his Kingdom.]

Bharata! Referring to Secret Agencies, are you aware that there are as many as eighteen positions in the Rajyanga or Kingship viz. Mantri-Purohita- Yuva raja-Senapati-Dwaarapaala-Antahpuraadhyaksha-Karagaaraadhyaksha-Dhanadhyasha- Specialists directly appointed by the King himself- Expert Lawyers who argue for and against on behalf oh the Kingship-Prosecutor and a three-tier Intelligence officials. Dear brother! Beware of Naastika Siddhantis in the kingdom and spies for outside kingdoms who seek to create unrest in the Ayodyha Kingdom; they all seek to preach our citizens and distort their thinking of the medium of Tarka or logic towards ‘nastikata’ or Atheism!. Brother! The Kingdom of Ayodhya has had an incredible glory with prosperity, dharma and nyaaya, chaturvarnas, vidwans and maha panditas of higher learning! Trust you are seeking to sustain and preserve its status in Bharata Desha. This Kingdom has been known for Ashvamedha and such maha yagjnas, renowned devalayas, dharma tirtha pradeshas,

samaajika utsavas, periodical social meets, ever busy trading and marketing establishments, public parks, fertile and evergreen pastures, excellent agricultural yields, timely rains, and the public of men and women have been disciplined and well contented without social evils of thefts, robberies, etc.; hopefully the same prosperity and all round contentment prevails in the Kingdom. *kaccit striyaḥ sāntvayasi kaccit tās ca surakṣitāḥ, kaccin na śraddadhāsyāsām kaccid guhyaṁ na bhāṣase/* The contentment and safety of women folk of the kingdom invariably decides the definite mark of the fulfillment of a kingdom; Bharata! I am confident that you are making special endeavors to this end. Further make sure of excellent pashu sampada- fearlessness - dhana-dhanya-astra shastra-yantra-shilpa-vaidya disciplines.

Bharata! Make a special note of the proverbial fourteen pitfalls of Kingship:

Nastikata-Asatya bhashana-krodha-pramaada-jnaani purusha nishkramana- aalasya-panchendriya anarogya- raja nirnaya asahita-vipareeta raja nirnaya- apaarambha of nischita kaarya- gupta nirnaya dushprachara- mangalika kaarya anushthana aalasata- akasmaat shatru yudhha niraacharana. Maharaja Bharata! A successful King should always beware of dashta varga-pancha varga-chatur varja-sapta varga-ashta varga- and three varga vishayas.

(Lapses of ten categories are hunting animals and birds-play of ‘chadaranga’ - day sleeping- criticism of others- interest and involvement of illegal sex- madya paana- dancing-singing-instrumental music-and wasteful travels. Now, the five types of durgas or avoidable places: Jala durga or desert areas- Parvata durga or unscaled mountains; Vriksha durga or thick jungles with complex and unknown trees; Eerana durga or salted lands or saline places; and dhanva durga or desert lands. Chatur varga: Saama- Daana- Bheda- Danda. Sapta varga: Raja-Mantri-Rashtra-Forts- Khazana or treasury-Sena-and Mitra varga; Pancha varga: Blaming others behind, Saahasa or taking risks, droha or cheating, jealousy, dosha darshana or pointing mistakes, half baked blaming others, raised tones, and danda kathorata or undue punishment. Ashta varga denotes: agricultural development, business promotion, erection of forts, bridge construction, planning to secure forest elephants, occupying mountain caves, gaining monetary interest from occupied kingdoms, and populating unoccupied areas of the kingdom. Three Vidyas refer to mastering three vedas and neeti sastra-- Krishi- and go raksha. Six gunas are Sandhi or mutual with drawyal of war, Vighraha or total abandonment of opening a war, yaana or travel, aasana or being seated with self control, dwaidhi bhava or the feature of duality or vacillation or of wavering indecision and Samaashraya or total surrender. Then the Five Daivi bhavas or fire breaks, floods, spread of diseases, kshaama, and maha maari or out break of incurable vyadhis. The Ten Rajaaritya Neetipurna kaaryas are refusing emoluments to the sevakas of the defeated king, punish who ever has insulted among the public, punish the masters who frightened the servants, open corruption practices of getting official tasks done and the related. Twenty wrongs are engaging the services of children, aged, long time sufferers of diseases, varna saksra humans, timids, the frightened ones, those who are lobbis , their helpers, those who distatisfy ministers, senapatis and dharmatmas, vishaya laalasaas, chanchala manasas and their supporters, those who resort of Deva- Brahmana dushanas, arrogant due to superiority feeling, persons who misbehave those afflicted by hunger, those who disregard soldiers, swadesha tyagis, persons with countless enemies, untruthful and unreliable persons! Then Prakriti Mandala includes Kings and Royalties, Ministers, Respected Public Figures, and those of treasury, provincial officials, Sena and of Forts.)

Thus Shri Rama enumerated the various duties of a King refreshing Bharata about some of the basic duties of Kingship and then asserted that the duty of a King should be to share tasty food with his followers and the entire public of the kingdom too!

Sarga One Hundred One

Rama asks Bharata the reason of his arrival- Bharata requests him to return and accept Kingship; but Rama refuses

Tam tu Ramah samaagjnyaaya bhrataram guruvatsalam, Lakshmanena saha bhraataa prushtham samuopachakrame/ Kemetadicchheyamaham shrotam praapyahritam tvayaa, yasmaan tvamaagato deshminam cheerajataajini/ Yannimittamimam desham krishnaajina jataadharah, hitvaa raajyam pravishtasvam tat sarvam vaktumarhasi/ Ityuktah Kekayee putrah Kaakusthena mahaatmanaa, pragruhya balavad bhuyah praanjalirvaakyamabraveet/ Arya taatah parityajya kritvaa karma sudhushkaram, gatah sarvam mahabahuh putrashokabhi peeditah/ Striyaa niyuktah Kaikeyyaa mama maatraa paramtapa, chakaara saamahat paapamidamaatmyayashoharam/ Saa Raajyaphalamapraapya vidhavaa shoka karshitaa, patishyati mahaa ghore narake jananee mama/ Tasya me daasabhutasya prasaadam kartumarhasi, abhishichasva chaadyaiva raajyena maghavaaniva/ Imaam prakritayah sarvaa vidhavaa maatarascha yaah, twatsakaashamanu praaptaah prasaadam kartumarhasi/ Tathaanu purvayaa bhumiham samagraa patinaa tvayaa, shashinaa vimaleneva shaaradee rahanee tathaa/ Ebhischa sachivaih saartham sharsaa yaachito mayaa, bhraatruh shishyasya daasasya prasaadam kartumarhasi/ Tadidam shaasvatam pitryam sarvam sachiva mandalam, pujitam Purusha vyaaghra naatikramitumarhasi/ Evamuktvaa ahabahuh sabaashpah Kaikayee sutah, Raamasyas shirasaa paadou jagraah Bharatah punah./ Tam mattamiva maatangam nishvasantah punah punah, bhraataram Bhraataram Raamah parishjyedamabraveet/ Kuleenah satva sampannastejasvi charitavratah, raajyahetih katham paapamaacharenmadvidho janah/ Na doham tvayi pashyaami suukshmamapyarisudana, na chaapi jananeem baalyaat tvam vigarhitumarhasi/ Kaama kaaro mahaa praagjna guruunaam sarvada - anagha, upapateshu dareshu putreshucha vidheeyate/ Vayamasya yathaa loke samkhyataah soumya saadhubhih, bhaaryaaah putraascha shishyaascha tvamapi jnaatumarhasi/ Vane vaacheera vasanam soumya krishnaajinaambaram, raajye vaapi maharaajo maam vaasuyatumeeshvarah/ Yaavat pitari dharmagjna gouravam lokasatkrite, taavad dharma kritaam shreshtha jananyaamapi gouravam/ Etaabhyaam dharma sheelaabhyaam vaam gacchheti Raghava, maataa pitrubhyaamuktoham kathamanyat samaachare/ Tvayaa raajyamayodhyaayaam praaptavyam loka satkritam, vastavyam dandakaaranye mayaa valkakaasasaa/ Evamuktaa maharajo vibhaagam lokasannidhou, vyaadishya cha maha raajo divam asharatho garah/ Sa cha pramaanam dharmaatmaa rajaa lokagurustava, pitraa dattham yathaabhaagamapubhoktum tvamarhasi/ Chaturdasha samaah soumya dandakaaranyam - aashritah, upabhokshye tvaham dattam bhaagam pitraa mahaatmanaa/ Yadabraveenmaam nara loka samskritah, pitaa mahaatmaa vibhudhaadhiyopamah, tadeva manye paramatmano hitam na sarva lokeshvarabhaavamavyayam/

As Rama along with Lakashmana having properly understood the inner feelings of Bharata, asked Bharata as to why precisely he had arrived at Chitrakoota and Bharata should clearly explain the reason. Bharata with suppressed anguish lamentingly replied: Arya taatah parityajya kritvaa karma sudhushkaram, gatah sarvam mahabahuh putrashokabhi peeditah/ Striyaa niyuktah Kaikeyyaa mama maatraa paramtapa, chakaara saamahat paapamidamaatmyayashoharam/ ‘Arya! Our respected father having perpetrated an evil decision was overtaken by ‘Putra shoka’ had left us all and reached the heaven. Ragjunandana! The dear father fell into the trap of his wife-my mother Kaikeyi- and did this heinous task and as having known about this had realised that a grave sin had been committed. On account of this, my mother had become a widow and due to continued distress should be heading to ‘naraka’ hereafter. Mahatma! Now be compassionate to me and very kindly accept this Kingship as the majestic Indra himself. The entire public of the Kingdom accompanied by widowed mothers have arrived here with this

singular prayer for your kind acceptance. Being an outstanding embodiment of Dharma and Nyaya, you are fully aware that the eldest son ought to be the King and as per dharma paripaalana, you should be the King definitely. Your kind acceptance of our unanimous request would avert the catastrophe of Bhumaata assuming widowhood and the Moon on the sky would glitter as on the Sharat kaala night thenceforth. *Ebhischa sachivaih saartham sharsaa yaachito mayaa, bhraatruh shishyasya daasasya prasaadam kartumarhasi/ Tadidam shaasvatam pitryam sarvam sachiva mandalam, pujitam Purusha vyaaghra naatikramitumarhasi/ Shri Rama!* Very kindly do accept the Kingship as we all including the Ministers touch down our heads at your feet; I am your brother, follower and a servant. Please be kind to me personally. Purusha Simha! This entire Mantri Mandali was in position at the lifetime of the glorious King Dasharatha as well. Please give consideration to their submission and not reject it.' Having requested Rama again and again, Bharata placed his head at Rama's feet and kept on crying away! Then Shri Rama hugged Bharata and said: dear brother! Having been born in a family of unique tradition of virtue, how could I blunder in upkeeping the Pitru Vaakya and disgrace myself! The Gurus, mothers and wellwishers are all respectable no doubt and they are indeed ever blessing to me, but defying the instruction of father is a serious blot and a grave sin of my life. Bharata! I can never find a speck of your conscience and you too should never blame your mother at all any further. Mothers as well as the father have the same kind of authority as motivated by their own convictions and are thus respectable always. What all the father would command me either to assume kingship or to wear mrigacharma and live in forests are equally same to me and are neither questioned about or disagreed with. *Etaabhyaam dharma sheelaabhyaam vaam gacchheti Raghava, maataa pitrubhyaamuktam kathamanyat samaachare/* As the revered father and mother had instructed me to be and live in forests, how indeed infringe upon their Instructions/. Therefore, my dear Bharata! Please try to understand the serious consequences on me and my self-consciousness. *Yadabraveenmaam nara loka samskritah, pitaa mahaatmaa vibhudhaadhi-popamah, tadeva manye paramatmano hitam na sarva lokeshvarabhaavamavyayam/* I have the strong conviction of what my father of the glory comparable to Indra himself had instructed me ought to be most helpful to me and even if Lord Brahma would instruct me to the contrary, I should not obey!

Sarga One Hundred and Two

Bharata requests Rama to reconsider Kingship and informs King Dasharath's sad demise

Rāmasya vacanam śrutvā bhārataḥ pratyuvāca ha, kiṃ me dharmād vihīnasya rājadharmāḥ kariṣyati/ śāśvato 'yaṃ sadā dharmāḥ sthito 'smāsu nararṣabha, jyeṣṭha putre sthite rājan na kanīyān bhaven nṛpaḥ/ sa samṛddhāṃ mayā sārddham ayodhyāṃ gaccha rāghava, abhiṣecaya cātmanāṃ kulasyāsya bhavāya naḥ/ rājānam mānuṣāṃ prāhur devatve saṃmato, mama yasya dharmārthasahitaṃ vṛttam āhur amānuṣam/ kekayasthe ca mayi tu tvayi cāraṇyam āśrite, divam ārya gato rājā yāyajūkaḥ satāṃ mataḥ/ uttiṣṭha puruṣavyāghra kriyatāṃ udakāṃ pituḥ, ahaṃ cāyaṃ ca śatrughnaḥ pūrvam eva kṛtodakau/ priyeṇa kila dattaṃ hi pitṛlokeṣu rāghava, akṣayam bhavātīty āhur bhavāṃś caiva pituḥ priyaḥ/

As Shri Rama detailed a King's duties in brief, Bharata replied that he was not eligible to kingship and of which avail the duties of Kingship were elaborated to him by Rama! Bharata then explained to Rama: 'The authority of kingship would squarely be eligible to the eldest son only and hence my earnest supplication should be to take over the authority for the sustained progress of the tradition. Even if stated even otherwise by the public that a King is a human being, my firm conviction would be that a king is a divine being as a Deva. This is so because that to maintain the balance of Dharma and Tradition along with Artha and Kaama is possible only by a divinity but not a human being. When I was in Kaikeya desha, you had already left for the forest life and that glorious King who performed Ashmvamedha and other such Maha Yagnas had left for swarga. Father Dasharatha was unable to resist swarga as he was unable to withstand your absence along with Devi Sita and Lakshmana. Purusha Simha Shri Rama! Now please get

ready to perform ‘Jalaanjali Daana Tarpana’ in the memory of the departed Soul of the dear father. Dear brother! Be it known that father departed away while he was distressed for you, thinking deep about you, seeking even a glimpse of you and taking your name repeatedly and collapsed!

Sarga One Hundred and Three

Rama-Sita-Lakshmana cry away at father’s death- offerings of tarpana and pinda daana

*Tām śrutvā karuṇām vācam pitur maraṇasamhitām, rāghavo bharatenoktām babhūva gatacetanah/
vāgvajram bharatenoktam amanojñam paramtapaḥ, pragṛhya bāhū rāmo vai puṣpitāgro yathā drumah,
vane paraśunā kṛttas tathā bhuvi papāta ha/ tathā hi patitam rāmam jagatyām jagatīpatim, kūlaghāta
parīśrāntam prasuptam iva kuñjaram/ bhrātaras te maheśvāsam sarvataḥ śokakarśitam, rudantaḥ saha
vaidehyā siṣicuḥ salilena vai/ sa tu samjñām punar labdhvā netrābhyām āsram utsrjan, upākrāmata
kākutsthaḥ kṛpaṇam bahubhāṣitum/ kim nu tasya mayā kāryam durjātena mahātmanā, yo mṛto mama
śokena na mayā cāpi saṁskṛtaḥ/ aho bhārata siddhārtho yena rājā tvayānagha, śatrugheṇa ca sarveṣu
pretakṛtyeṣu satkṛtaḥ/ niṣpradhānām anekāgram narendreṇa vinākṛtām, nivṛttavanavāso ‘pi nāyodhyām
gantum utsahe/ samāptavanavāsam mām ayodhyāyām paramtapa, ko nu śāsiṣyati punas tate lokāntaram
gate/ purā prekṣya suvṛttam mām pitā yāny āha sāntvayan, vākyāni tāni śroṣyāmi kutaḥ karṇasukhāny
aham/ evam uktvā sa bhārataḥ bhāryām abhyetya rāghavaḥ uvāca śokasamāptataḥ pūrṇacandra nibhā -
nanām/ sīte mṛtas te śvaśuraḥ pitrā hīno ‘si lakṣmaṇa bhārato duḥkham ācaṣṭe svargataḥ pṛthivīpatim/
sāntvayitvā tu tām rāmo rudantīm janakātmajām, uvāca lakṣmaṇam tatra duḥkhitō duḥkhitam vacaḥ/
ānayeṅgudipiṇyākam cīram āhara cottaram, jalakriyārtham tātasya gamiṣyāmi mahātmanaḥ/ sītā
purastād vrajatu tvam enām abhito vraja, aham paścād gamiṣyāmi gatir hy eṣā sudāruṇā/ tato
nityānugas teṣām viditātmā mahāmatih, mṛdur dāntas ca śāntas ca rāme ca dṛḍha bhaktimān/ sumantras
tair nṛpasutaiḥ sārddham āśvāsya rāghavam, avātārayad ālambya nadīm mandākinīm śivām/ te suīrthām
tataḥ kṛcchrād upāgamya yaśasvinaḥ, nadīm mandākinīm ramyām sadā puṣpitakānanām/ śīghrasrotasam
āsādyā tīrtham śivam akardamam, siṣicus tūdakam rājñe tata etad bhavatu iti/ pragṛhya ca mahīpālo
jalapūritam añjalim, diśam yāmyām abhimukho rudan vacanam abravīt/ etat te rājaśārdūla vimalam
toyam akṣayam, piṭṛlokatasyādyā maddattam upatiṣṭhatu/ tato mandākinī tīrāt pratyuttīrya sa
rāghavaḥ, pituś cakāra tejasvī nivāpam bhrātṛbhiḥ saha/ aiṅgudam badarīmīśram piṇyākam
darbhasamstare, nyasya rāmaḥ suduḥkhārto rudan vacanam abravīt/ idam bhuñkṣva mahārājaprīto yad
āsanā vayam, yadannaḥ puruṣo bhavati tadannās tasya devatāḥ/ tatas tenaiva mārgena pratyuttīrya
nadītātāt, āruroha naravyāghro ramyasānuḥ mahīdharam/ tataḥ parṇakuṭīdvāram āśādyā jagatīpatih,
parijagrāha pāñibhyām ubhau bhāratalakṣmaṇau/ teṣām tu rudatām śabdāt pratiśrutkābhavad girau,
bhrātṛñām saha vaidehyā simhānām nardatām iva/ vijñāya tumulam śabdaḥ trastā bhāratasainikāḥ,
abruvamś cāpi rāmeṇa bhārataḥ saṁgato dhruvam, teṣām eva mahāñ śabdaḥ śocatām pitaram mṛtam/
atha vāsān parityajya tam sarve ‘bhīmukhāḥ svanam, apy eka manaso jagmur yathāsthānam
pradhāvitāḥ/ hayair anye gajair anye rathair anye svalamkṛtaiḥ sukumārās tathāivānye padbhir eva
narā yayuḥ/ acirapṛṣitam rāmam ciravipṛṣitam yathā, draṣṭukāmo janaḥ sarvo jagāma sahasāśramam/
bhrātṛñām tvaritās te tu draṣṭukāmāḥ samāgamam, yayur bahuvīdhair yānaiḥ khuranemisamākulaiḥ/ sā
bhūmir bahubhir yānaiḥ khuranemisamāhatā, mumoca tumulam śabdaḥ dyaur ivābhrasamāgame/ tena
vitrāsitā nāgāḥ kareṇuparivāritāḥ, āvāsayanto gandhena jagmur anyad vanaḥ tataḥ/ varāhamrgasimhās
ca mahiṣāḥ sarkṣavānarāḥ, vyāghra gokarṇagavayā vitreṣuḥ pṛṣṭataiḥ saha/ rathāṅgasāhvā natyūhā
hamsāḥ kāraṇḍavāḥ plavāḥ, tathā puṁskokilāḥ krauñcā visamjñā bhejire diśaḥ/ tena śabdena vitrastair
ākāśam pakṣibhir vṛtam, manuṣyair āvṛtā bhūmir ubhayaḥ prababhau tadā/ tān narān bāspapūrṇākṣān
samikṣyātha suduḥkhitān, paryasvajata dharmajñāḥ piṭṛvan mātṛvac ca saḥ/ sa tatra kāmś cit pariśasvaje
narān; narās ca ke cit tu tam abhyavādayan, cakāra sarvān savayasyabāndhavān; yathārham āśādyā
tadā nṛpātmajaḥ/ tataḥ sa teṣām rudatām mahātmanām; bhuvan ca kham cānuvinādayan svanaḥ, guhā
girīñām ca diśas ca samtataḥ; mṛdaṅgaghoṣapratimo viśuśruve/*

As Bharata described about the departing scene of his father as the latter kept on remembering Rama, his memories, his name and face, Rama too was upset and collapsed like an uprooted tall tree fallen suddenly. There was an uproar by Devi Sita, Lakshmanama, Bharata and Shatrughna as though in a chorus line. A person of Rama's standing was truly shaken up and addressed Bharata: 'As father had passed away, what indeed be the meaning of my returning to Ayodhya ever! It not a shame that I could not perform the 'dahana samskaara' despite being the eldest son: *kim nu tasya mayā kāryam durjātena mahātmanā, yo mṛto mama śokena na mayā cāpi saṁskṛtaḥ/ aho bharata siddhārtho yena rājā tvayānagha, śatrugheṇa ca sarveṣu pretakṛtyeṣu satkṛtaḥ/* Ha! Even as the immortal father departed taking my name and memories, I failed to attend the funeral rights and what could be the purpose of my being the eldest son. Bharata and Shatrughna! How fortunate were you to have performed the last rites! Of which purpose that even after the stipulated duration of my 'vana vaasa' that I should visit Ayodhya again!' Then Rama shouted hoarse and addressed Devi Sita that her father in law passed away and also addressed Lakshmana that his father of glory was no more! Then with suppressed emotions, Rama asked his brothers to initiate the 'jalaanjali karya krama'. Devi Sita recalling her memories of the inimitable father in law cried silently and could not even face Ramachandra straight suppressing her passionate emotions. Then Rama asked Lakshman to fetch appropriate deer skins smeared with 'hing' powder as body covers around the waist and as 'uttareeya' or as back covers and thereafter asked Devi Sita to lead; Rama explained that at the tragic situations, wives should lead the husbands unlike all the other sorrowful contexts. Then all of them proceeded to the banks of the Sacred River Mandakini bare footed. Then Rama addressed the departed Soul of his father: *pragṛhya ca mahīpālo jalapūritam añjalim, diśam yāmyām abhimukho rudan vacanam abravīt/ etat te rājaśārdūla vimalam toyam akṣayam, pitṛlokaगतasyādyā maddattam upatiṣṭhatu/ tato mandākinī tūrāt pratyuttūrya sa rāghavaḥ, pituś cakāra tejasvī nivāpam bhrātṛbhiḥ saha/ aiṅgudaṁ badarīmīśram piṇyākam darbhasamstare, nyasya rāmaḥ suduḥkhārto rudan vacanam abravīt/* Then Rama as followed by his brothers had invoked the respective Pitru Devas and then addressed the Soul of the father facing the southern direction uttering: 'Respected father named Dasharatha of the famed Ikshvaku Vamsha! Today the 'jalaanjali' from my both the palms are being offered to the Soul that reached the Pitru Loka as of 'akshaya rupa' or of endless forms.' There after, the brothers performed 'pinda daana' addressing the departed Soul of Dasharatha reciting: *idam bhukṣva mahārājapṛto yad aśanā vayam, yadannaḥ puruṣo bhavati tadannās tasya devatāḥ/* Departed dear father! Here with the offerings of food in the form of 'pindas' of cooked cereals, as humans and the celestials do too.

Vishleshana on Tapana Vidhana

Tarpana Vidhana: *Ruk Saamaadrthvaa Vedoktaan Japyā mantraan yajushim cha, Japitwaivam tatah kuryaaddevarshi pitru tarpanam/ Tava Vashishtah/* (Vashishtha Maharshi affirmed that even after studying Ruk-Saamaadharvana Vedas, it is essential to recite Pranava and perform tarpana to fructify the knowledge of Vedas. Vishnu Purana emphasized: *Shuchi Vastradharah snaato Devarshi Pitru tarpanam, Tessaameva hi tirthena kurveet susamaahitah/* (Only on wearing clean clothes after bathing and poised with unperturbed conscience, Tarpana is to be undertaken thereafter). To Devas only one tarpana/ Jalaanjali each be executed, while to Rishis twice and to Pitru Devas thrice respectively for their satisfaction. *Praaggeshu Suranstarpenmanushyaanchaiva madhyatah, Pitramstu dakshinareshu chaika dwi trijalaanjaleen/* (As prescribed for example in Agni Purana: Tarpana Karya needs to be performed facing East in the Savya Yagnopaveeta position to Devas; to Rishis facing the East again with yagnopaveeta as a garland but to Pitru Devas the tarpana should be performed facing south with the yagnopaveeta worn as 'apa savya' or 'Praacheena veeti' or in the reverse position reciting 'Swadhaanama tarpayaami'. Pitru Devas would not be contented of tarpana is performed from a higher plane position into water flows nor with wet clothes. In fact, Pitru tarpana needs to be performed with dry clothes only preferably seated on spread over darbhas. Also tarpana be done with water drawn from one

vessel and transferred to a smaller vessel into a lower plane but due to the apprehension that a lower plane on the ground might be sullied with hair, ash, coal particles, thorns, and even bones on the ground and hence the tarpana is preferably done on a clean place with darbhas are spread over. Alternatively, tarpana may be done in a large flat plate or container. For performing tarpana only vessels of gold, silver, copper, brass, bronze or any metal vessels may be used but not earthen pots; however neither metal vessels nor hands without darbhas be used for the tarpana. Deva tarpana and Rishi Tarpana needs to be performed along with water mixed with plain rice grains or white tilas. Pitru tarpana needs to be necessarily done with water mixed with black tilas.

Deva Tarpana: This tarpana is to satiate Devas and the Devatva or the Divinity that is microcosmically present in all Beings in the Universe. Seated facing the east direction with the right knee kept in contact with the ground, placing the left leg over the right leg so that the knee is above the ground, keeping Akshatas in the water pot, holding the water pot on the right hand palm, covering it with left left hand palm reciting *Brahmaadaya Suraah Sarvey Rishayah Kashyapaadayah, Aagacchantu Mahaa Bhaagaa Brahmaandodaravartinah/* Now pour water with the left hand into the open right palm releasing water from the tips of four fingers; three darbhas need to be placed on the right palm with the tips of darbhas aligned with finger tips while reciting the following in favour of each Devata: *Om Brahmaa tripyataam, Om Vishnum tripyataam, Om Rudrah tripyataam, Om Prajapatih tripyataam, Om Devaah tripyantaam, Om Devyah tripyantaam, Om Vasavah Tripyantaam, Om Rudraah tripyantaam, Om Adityaag tripyantaam, Om Chhandaamsi tripyantaam, Om Vedaah tripyantaam, Om Rishayah tripyantaam, Om Gandharvaah tripyantaam, Om Apsaraah tripyantaam, Om Devaanugah tripyantaam, Om Naagaah tripyantaam, Om Saagaraah tripyantaam, Om Parvataah tripyantaam, Om Saritah tripyantaam, Om Manushyaah tripyantaam, Om Yakshaah tripyantaam, Om Rakshaamsi tripyantaam, Om Pishcaachaah tripyantaam, Om Suparnaah tripyantaam, Om Bhutaani tripyantaam, Om Pashavah tripyantaam, Om Vanaspatayah tripyantaam, Om Oshadhayah tripyantaam/*

Divya Pitri Tarpana: The revised procedure for tarpana to the Divine Devas and Manes requires change of sitting position to face the Southern direction and wearing the yagnolpaveeta in reverse position as ‘praacheena veeti’, with left knee to be in contact with the ground while the right knee to be above the ground yet not touching it with left leg on the ground and the right leg on top of left leg; pour some black tilas (sesame seeds) in the water pot; now the offerings would be made thrice each time to Agni-Soma-Yama and Aryama ie. Agni the Divine Fire God who carries the soul of the burnt body, Soma the Water God who carries the soul of the drowned body, Yama the Maintainer of Dharma and the Judge of Karmas of the deceased and Aryama the Ruler of the Domain of Souls : *Om Agnih tripyataam idam salilam jalam tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah/ Om Somah tripyataam idam salilam jalam tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah/ Om Yamah tripyataam idam salilam jalam tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah/ Om Aryamaah tripyataam idam salilam jalam, tasmai swadhaa namah, tasmai swadhaa namah/* The next three mantras are for the three Divine Manes-as were associated with the souls who were burnt or drowned and carried to the Skies till the latter are tendered to their destinations: *Om Agnishu aatthaah Pitarah idam salilam jalam tebhyah swadhaa namah, tebhyah swadhaa namah, tebhyah swadhha namah/ Om Somapaah Pitarah tripyantaam idam salilam jalam tebhyah swadhaa namah, tebhyah swadhaa namah, tebhyah swadhaa namah/ Om Barhishadah Pitarah tripyantaam idam salilam jalam tebhyah swadhaa namah, tebhyah swadhaa namah, tebhyah swadhaa namah/* Now in reference to the Karta’s own Pitru ganas: *Aadou Pitaa tathaa aataa saapatni janani tathaa, Maataa mahi ssapatnikaa Atma Patnyastwanantaram / Sutabhraatru Pitruvyaascha Maatulaascha Sabharyakaah, Duhitaa Bhagini chaiva Douhitro bhaagineyakah/ Pirushvasaa Maatrushvasaa Jaamaataa Bhaukah Snushaa, Shwashurah*

Syalakaschiva Shwashrushascha Guru rikthinah/ (Following is the line in which Pitru Tarpana is to be performed: Foremost to father, grand father, Great grand father, mother, father's mother, father's grand mother, Co mother if any, datta / adopted putra's parents if any, mother's father, mother's grandfather, mother's mother and the latter's mother in law, wife, sons, self's brothers, father's brothers, mother's brothers and their wives, daughters, sisters, grand sons, father's sisters, mother's sisters, son-in-law, brother's-in-law, and their wives, daughter-in-law, mother's brothers, wife's brothers, mother-in-law, Guru and the Trader, the Supplier of household goods) Tarpana prayoga: Achamya; *Mamopaattha durita kshaya dwaaraa Parameshwara preetyartham evam guna Pituh Pitrunaam akshayya punyaloka phalaavaapyartham darsha prayukta maha punya kale tila tarpanam karishye/ --Iti sankalpya, praacheenaaveeti dakshinaabhimukhah savyam jaanvaachya/* (After achamana and sankalpa, assume praacheenaaveeti, face Southern direction and bend the left knee being seated and commence the tila tarpana). Brahmanas should address the Pitru Devatas as *sharmaanam*, Kshatriyas as *Varmaanam* and Vaishyas as *Guptam/* Following is the order in which the tarpana is made: *Pitaram-gotram-sharmanam-Swadhaanamah tarpayaami-Swadhaanamah tarpayami Swadhaanamah tarpayaami/ Pitaamaham----- Prapitaamaham--- /Maataram-gotraam-daam-Swadhaanamah tarpayami (three times)/ Pitaamaheem-gotraamdaam-Swadhaanamahtarpayami (three times); Prapitaamahim-gotramdaam-Swadhaanamah tarpayaami(3 times)* At the end of the Tarpana Kriya as described above, the remaining water meant for tila tarpana be thrown away, fill up the vessel with fresh water, sit in eastward and perform Deva Tarpana by looking at Surya Deva and recite: Om Suryaya namah, Om Agnaye namah, Om Prithivya namah, Om Varunaaya namah, Om Shivaaya namah, Om Vishnave namah/ *Anena yathaa shakti kritena Devarshi Pitru tarpanaakhyena karmanaa Bhagavan Pitru swarupi Janaardana Vaasu deva Parameshwara preetaam na mama/ Om tat sat/ Om Lokaah samastaa sukhino bhavantu/ Om Sarve Janaah sukhino bhavantu/ Om Shaantih Shantih Shantih/*

Sarga One hundred three continued:

After the Jalaanjali and Pinda daana, the brothers and Devi Sita were returning from the banks of the Sacred River, they were breaking the silence with their loud cryings were resoundings which attracted groups of lions which roared and the other wild beasts and birds too. The soldiers of the Kingdom reacted stating that Bharata Shatrughnas should have met Rama Sita Lakshmanas and hence the distant sounds. Then the army moved on with elephants, chariots, horses and all the rest of the entourage. As the noises were sky rattling, the Ayodhya crowd surged and moved forward and then: *Tatastham Pususha vyaghram yashasvinakalmasham, aaseenam thandile Raamam sahasaa janam/* The public reached an Ashram and the most popular, blemishless, Maha Purusha Shri Rama was visioned seated on a 'vedi', a raised platform. As the crowds queued up and wept involuntarily in high pitch, blaming Kaikeyi as the villiainess the root cause. Glimpses of Shri Rama resulted in distressful scenes all around and kept on prostrating to parents and God. Ar that time, it seemed that the earth sky, mountains, caves and all the directions got distorted and resounded!

Sarga Hundred and Four

With Vasishtha ahead the three Devis arrive, all the sons prostrate the mothers and Vasishtha too

Vasiṣṭhaḥ purataḥ kṛtvā dārān daśarathasya ca, abhicakrāma taṁ deśam rāmadarśanatarṣitaḥ/ rājapatnyaś ca gacchantyō mandam mandākinīm prati, dadṛśus tatra tat tīrtham rāmalakṣmaṇasevitam/ kausalyā bāṣpapūrṇena mukhena pariśuśyatā, sumitrām abravīd dīnā yāś cānyā rājayoṣitaḥ/ idaṁ teṣām anāthānām kliṣṭam akliṣṭa karmanām, vane prāk kevalam tīrtham ye te nirviṣayī kṛtāḥ/ itaḥ sumitre

putras te sadā jalam atandritaḥ, svayaṁ harati saumitir mama putrasya kāraṇāt/ dakṣiṇāgreṣu darbheṣu sā dadarśa mahītale, pitur ṅgudipiṇyākam nyastam āyatalocanā/ taṁ bhūmau pitur ārtena nyastam rāmeṇa vikṣya sā, uvāca devī kausalyā sarvā daśarathastriyaḥ/ idam ikṣvākunāthasya rāghavasya mahātmanah, rāghaveṇa pitur dattaṁ paśyataitad yathāvidhi/ tasya devasamānasya pārthivasya mahātmanah, naitad aupayikam manye bhuktabhogasya bhojanam/ caturantām mahīm bhuktvā mahendra sadṛśo bhuvī, katham ṅgudipiṇyākam sa bhūkte vasudhādhipaḥ/ ato duḥkhataram loke na kim cit pratibhāti mā, yatra rāmaḥ pitur dadyād ṅgudīkṣodam ṛddhimān/ rāmeṇṅgudipiṇyākam pitur dattaṁ samīkṣya me, katham duḥkhena hṛdayam na sphoṭati sahasradhā/ evam ārtām sapatnyas tā jagmur āśvāsya tām tadā, dadṛśuś cāśrame rāmaṁ svargāc cyutam ivāmaram/ sarvabhogaiḥ parityaktaṁ rāma samprekṣya mātaraḥ, ārtā mumucur āśrūṇi sasvaram śokakarśitāḥ/ tāsām rāmaḥ samutthāya jagrāha caraṇāṇ śubhān, mātṛṇām manujavyāghraḥ sarvāsām satyasamgarah/ tāḥ pāṇibhiḥ sukhasparsair mṛdvaṅgulitalaiḥ śubhaiḥ, pramamārjū rajaḥ pṛṣṭhād rāmasyāyatalocanāḥ/ saumitir api tāḥ sarvā mātṛḥ samprekṣya duḥkhitāḥ, abhyavādayatāsaktam śanai rāmād anantaram/ yathā rāme tathā tasmin sarvā vavṛtite striyaḥ, vṛttim daśarathāj jāte lakṣmaṇe śubhalakṣaṇe/ sītāpi caraṇāms tāsām upasamgrhya duḥkhitā, śvaśrūṇām āsrupūrṇākṣī sā babhūvāgrataḥ sthitā/ tām pariśvajya duḥkhārtām mātā duhitaram yathā, vanavāsakṣām dīnām kausalyā vākyam abravīt/ videharājasya sutā snuṣā daśarathasya ca, rāmapatnī katham duḥkham samprāptā nirjane vane/ padmam ātapasamtaptaṁ parikliṣṭam ivotpalam, kāñcanaṁ rajasā dhvastam kliṣṭam candram ivāmbudaiḥ/ mukham te prekṣya mām śoko dahaty agnir ivāśrayam, bhṛśam manasi vaidehi vyasanāraṇisambhavaḥ/ bruvantyām evam ārtāyām jananyām bharatāgrajaḥ, pādāv āśādy jagrāha vasiṣṭhasya sa rāghava / purohitasyā - gnisamasya tasya vai; bṛhaspater indra ivāmarādhipaḥ, pragṛhya pādau susamṛddhatejasah; sahaiva tenopaviveśa rāghavaḥ/ tato jaghanyam sahitaiḥ sa mantribhiḥ; purapradhānaiś ca sahaiva sainikaiḥ, janena dharmajñatamena dharmavān; upopaviṣṭo bharatas tadāgrajam/ upopaviṣṭas tu tadā sa vīryavāms; tapasviveṣeṇa samīkṣya rāghavam, śriyā jvalantam bharataḥ kṛtāñjalir; yathā mahendraḥ prayataḥ prajāpatim/ kim eṣa vākyam bhārato 'dya rāghavam; praṇamya satkṛtya ca sādhu vakṣyati, itīva tasyāryajanasya tattvato; babhūva kautūhalam uttamam tadā/ sa rāghavaḥ satyadhṛtiś ca lakṣmano; mahānubhāvo bhārataś ca dhārmikah, vṛtāḥ suhṛdbhiś ca virejur adhvare; yathā sadasyaiḥ sahitās trayo 'gnayah/

Maharshi Vasishtha then keeping the Ahodhya queens ahead moved forward towards Shri Rama. The mothers slowly covered the distance and reached the banks of River Mandakini and witnessed the 'ghaats' where Rama and Lakshmana were habitual taking their baths. Devi Koushalaya was moved in her heart and addressed the co queens: sisters! See the none too easy rough banks of the holy river where Rama who always refreshed himself with palace comforts of bathing and now is at the disposal of these deeply trenched up rough banks of the river. Sumitre! Your son Lakshmana would be carrying heavy loads of the water to the ashram. He is not intended to do so but does it for the sake of his elder brother. Having moved forward Devi Kousalya noticed the 'pindas' that Rama would have just offered to the 'swargeeya pita' and her dear husband. As she got outburst, she addressed the co queens and said: sisters! are you noticing the 'pinda pradana' to the ever memorable Maha Raja that Shri Rama brothers had just performed dutifully! why and how is my heart intact instead of breaking into thousand pieces! She cried quoting the adage that what humans eat for themselves is what they offer to Gods! Then she moved forward and saw for herself her dear son Shri Rama who was seated as of a devata descended to earth from the heaven. As soon as he saw the mothers Rama got up suddenly and touched their respective feet. Then they had cleaned off the dust on Rama's stomach affectionately since he bent down prostratingly. Lakshmaa too did so as Rama had done. Then seeking to control her tears, the extremely thinned down Devi Sita too did similarly. Kousalya drew Sita nearby and embraced her as though she would have to a daughter. She exclaimed: *videharājasya sutā snuṣā daśarathasya ca, rāmapatnī katham duḥkham samprāptā nirjane vane/ padmam ātapasamtaptaṁ parikliṣṭam ivotpalam, kāñcanaṁ rajasā dhvastam kliṣṭam candram ivāmbudaiḥ/ mukham te prekṣya mām śoko dahaty agnir ivāśrayam, bhṛśam manasi vaidehi vyasanāraṇisambhavaḥ/* Videha Raja Janaka Putri! Dasharatha Raja Vadhu! How are you withstanding the tribulations of this forest life! You are looking pale and weak like dusted gold and

clouded Chandama! As Devi Kousalya was endearing Sitha thus, Rama and Lakshmana by turns touched the feet of Maharshi Vasishtha just as Indra Deva would touch the feet of Deva Guru Brihaspati. As they all were seated, Bharata Shatrughnas and the Ministers, Senaadhpati and senior citizens of Ayodhya were seated too. The then situation was like Bharata being seated just facing Shri Rama just as Indra would before Prajapati Brahma.

Sarga One Hundred and Five

Bharata once again broaches Rama's return & kingship as Rama finally asserts in the negative

Tataḥ puruṣasimhānām vṛtānām taiḥ suhṛdgaṇaiḥ, śocatām eva rajanī duḥkhena vyatyavartata/ rajanyām suprabhātāyām bhrātaras te suhṛdvṛtāḥ, mandākinyām hutam jāpyam kṛtvā rāmam upāgaman/ tūṣṇīm te samupāsīnā na kaś cit kim cid abravīt, bharatas tu suhṛṇmadhye rāmavacanam abravīt/ sāntvitā māmikā mātā dattam rājyam idam mama, tad dadāmi tavaivāham bhuṅkṣva rājyam akaṅṭakam/ mahatevāmbu vegena bhinnāḥ setur jalāgame, durāvāram tvadanyena rājyakhaṇḍam idam mahat/ gatim khara ivāśvasya tārṅsyasyeva patatrīṇaḥ, anugantum na śaktir me gatim tava mahīpate/ sujīvam nityaśas tasya yaḥ parair upajīvyate, rāma tena tu durjīvam yaḥ parān upajīvati/ yathā tu ropito vṛkṣaḥ puruṣeṇa vivardhitaḥ, hrasvakena durāroho rūḍhaskandho mahādrumaḥ/ sa yadā puspito bhūtvā phalāni na vidarśayet, sa tām nānubhavet prītim yasya hetoḥ prabhāvitaḥ/ eṣopamā mahābāho tvam artham vettum arhasi, yadi tvam asmān ṛṣabho bhartā bhṛtyān na śādhi hi/ śreṇayas tvām mahārāja paśyantv agryāś ca sarvaśaḥ, pratapantam ivādityam rājye sthitam arimdamam/ tavānuyāne kākutṣṭha mattā nardantu kuñjarāḥ, antahpura gatā nāryo nandantu susamāhitāḥ/ tasya sādhu ity amanyanta nāgarā vividhā janāḥ, bharatasya vacaḥ śrutvā rāmam pratyanuyācataḥ/ tam evam duḥkhitam prekṣya vilapantam yaśasvinam, rāmaḥ kṛtātmā bharatam samāśvāsadayat ātmavān/ nātmanāḥ kāmākāro 'sti puruṣo 'yam anīśvaraḥ, itaś cetarataś cainam kṛtāntaḥ parikarṣati/ sarve kṣayāntā nicayāḥ patanāntāḥ samucchrayāḥ, saṁyogā viprayogāntā maraṇāntam ca jīvitam/ yathā phalānam pakvānām nānyatra patanād bhayam, evam narasya jātasya nānyatra maraṇād bhayam/ yathāgāram dṛḍhasthūnam jīrṇam bhūtvāvasīdati, tathāvasīdanti narā jarāmṛtyuvaśam gatāḥ/ ahorātrāṇi gacchanti sarveśam prāṇinām iha, āyūṁṣi kṣapayanty āśu grīṣme jalam ivāśavaḥ/ ātmānam anuśoca tvam kim anyam anuśocasi, āyus te hīyate yasya sthitasya ca gatasya ca/ sahaiva mṛtyur vrajati saha mṛtyur niṣīdati, gatvā sudīrgham adhvānam saha mṛtyur nivartate/ gātreṣu valayaḥ prāptāḥ śvetāś caiva śiroruhāḥ, jarayā puruṣo jīrṇaḥ kim hi kṛtvā prabhāvayet/ nandanty udita āditye nandanty astam ite ravau, ātmano nāvabudhyante manuṣyā jīvitakṣayam/ hṛṣyanty ṛtumukham dṛṣtvā navam navam ihāgatam, ṛtūnām parivartena prāṇinām prāṇasamkṣayaḥ/ yathā kāṣṭham ca kāṣṭham ca sameyātām mahārṇave, sametya ca vyapeyātām kālam āśādyā kam cana/ evam bhāryāś ca putrāś ca jñātayaś ca vasūni ca, sametya vyavadhāvanti dhruvo hy eṣām vinābhavaḥ/ nātra kaś cid yathā bhāvam prāṇī samabhivartate, tena tasmin na sāmārthyam pretasyāsty anuśocataḥ/ yathā hi sārtham gacchantam brūyāt kaś cit pathi sthitaḥ, aham apy āgamiṣyāmi pṛṣṭhato bhavatām iti/ evam pūrvair gato mārgaḥ piṭṛpaitāmaho dhruvaḥ, tam āpannaḥ katham śocet yasya nāsti vyatikramaḥ/ vayasāḥ patamānasya srotaso vānivartinaḥ, ātmā sukhe niyuktavyaḥ sukhabhājāḥ prajāḥ smṛtāḥ/ dharmātmā sa śubhaiḥ kṛtsnāiḥ kratubhiś cāptadakṣiṇaiḥ, dhūtapāpo gataḥ svargaḥ pitā naḥ pṛthivīpatiḥ/ bhṛtyānām bharaṇāt samyak prajānām paripālanāt, arthādānāc ca dhārmeṇa pitā nas tridivam gataḥ/ iṣṭvā bahuvīdhair yajñair bhogāṁś cāvāpya puṣkalān, uttamam cāyur āśādyā svar gataḥ pṛthivīpatiḥ/ sa jīrṇam mānuṣam deham parityajya pitā hi naḥ, daivīm ṛddhim anuprāpto brahmalokavihāriṇīm/ Tam tu ete bahuvīdhāḥ śokā vilāpa rudite tathā, varjanīyā hi dhīreṇa sarvāvasthāsu dhīmatā/ sa svastho bhava mā śoco yātvā cāvāsa tām purīm, tathā piṭrā niyukto 'si vaśinā vadatāmv vara/ yatrāham api tenaiva niyuktaḥ punyakarmaṇā, tatraivāham kariṣyāmi pitur āryasya śāsanam/ na mayā śāsanam tasya tyaktum nyāyyam arimdamā, tat tvayāpi sadā mānyam sa vai bandhuḥ sa naḥ pitā/

The night long session had thus concluded with exchange of mourning memories of the great Dasharadha and the next morning on the banks of the River Mandakini, there was a reassembly of all after the snaana-

homa-japa and other schedule. Then Bharata addressed Shri Rama as follows: ‘Rama! Our revered Father was pleased with boons to my mother and my mother entrusted the kingdom to me. Now, I am placing the kingdom at your disposal and this be very kindly acceded to. The upkeep of this vast kingdom and its glory is far beyond my ability; the force of the torrential rains in the high rainy season is not possible like a weak barrier! Where is the comparison of a donkey and a horse or of an ordinary kite and Garuda Deva! I am simply unable to emulate your administrative skills and capabilities. The glory of a Kingdom over centuries of administrative finesse is akin to an ever growing tall and strong tree with ever yielding instantly scented flowers and of ripening fruits of sweetness; now preserving that famed tree is simply impossible for a person of my calibre and the risk of its gradual sinking into the established memories should never be hastened into mere myths. Kindly try to see the seriousness and urgency of this critical situation yourself. Our great father has had the forevision of begetting an illustrious senior son- (pursuant to the Putra kaamekshi yajna). *śreṇayas tvām mahārāja paśyantv agryās ca sarvaśaḥ, pratapantam ivādityam rājye sthitam arimdamam/ tavānuyāne kākutṣṭha mattā nardantu kuñjarāḥ, antahpura gatā nāryo nardantu susamāhitāḥ/* Now, may such an outstanding King who could maintain a kingdom of multifarious castes, creeds, thoughts and opinions of leaders of the society, as also face with resolve, conviction and courage against internal struggles and external dangers be seen in position. In this convincing manner Bharata begged of Shri Rama to return to Ayodhya for the thrill of the citizens and the dancing joy of the ladies of the ‘antahpura’ like the return of a haughtily superior elephant and a roaring chieftain of Lions. As Bharata had most convincingly requested Rama as those present too shared similar anxieties of Bharata’s inability and Rama’s unique fame, Shri Rama then replied as follows:

‘ Dear brother! I am not a free man like God nor act as I please. The wheels of time and fate keep pulling me in different directions. *sarve kṣayāntā nicayāḥ patanāntāḥ samucchrayāḥ, samyogā viprayogāntā maraṇāntam ca jīvitam/ yathā phalānam pakvānām nānyatra patanād bhayam, evam narasya jātasya nānyatra maraṇād bhayam/ yathāgāram dṛḍhashūnam jīrṇam bhūtvāvasīdati, tathāvasīdanti narā jarāmṛtyuvaśam gatāḥ/* In all the kinds of permutations and combinations, at the finality is ‘vinaasha’ or destruction. All types of natural consequences of Prakriti or Nature and ups and downs of Life get terminated at the end. Samyoga-Viyogas or the Positive and Negative Impulses of Life end up in death. Like the fresh fruits of a garden, the end result is decay and likewise, birth inevitably follows death. A very strong rooted high building of magnificence eventually tends to wither down and so do the humans end up in death. As a night fall never returns again, like the flows of River Yamuna submerging into the ocean never return. Days and Nights in one’s lifetime never return again too like the rays of extreme summer season dry of water reserves. Bharata! You should always think of your own self and let others be governed by their own destiny.. Why are you repeatedly crying away for others, as all of them in their own life’s journey, their age of days, years, decades are suitably registered. Each Sun Rise and Sunset are thus accounted for. In each life seperation of parents, children, wives or husbands is inevitable in each and every family and the feeling of seperation no doubt occurs but that again becomes a passing phase and the only certainty is death and could that be reversed ever! Bharata! Indeed our father was deeply virtuous and has had countless dharma karyas like yajnas, charities, and so on yet has had to travel to swarga. But would it not be futile to keep on regretting as his life time was over as in our cases too it should be so sooner or later! *sa svastho bhava mā śoco yātvā cāvāsa tām purīm, tathā pitrā niyukto ‘si vaśinā vadatāmv vara/ yatrāham api tenaiva niyuktaḥ puṇyakarmaṇā, tatraivāham kariṣyāmi pitur āryasya śāsanam/ na mayā śāsanam tasya tyaktum nyāyyam arimdamā, tat tvayāpi sadā mānyam sa vai bandhuḥ sa naḥ pitā/* ‘Therefore brother Bharata, do not cry, keep calm without agitation and loss of mental equilibrium; you are no doubt an effective speaker and convincer. Therefore, do return to Ayodhya and that precisely the instruction of the ever respectable father. As he had directed me, I should continue my forest life as stipulated. It would not behove us to disrespect his instructions as he is not only our friend-philosopher-guide but indeed he was our beloved father. Do honour his feelings and uphold his view point. Then as Shri Rama made his thinking crystal clear and sought Bharata to return back, there was mutual silence.

Sarga One Hundred and Six

Bharata once again requests Rama to assume kingship

Evam uktvā tu virate rāme vacanam arthavat, uvāca bharataś citram dhārmiko dhārmikaṁ vacaḥ/ ko hi syād tdr̥śo loke yādr̥śas tvam arim̄dama, na tvām pravayathayed duḥkham p̄ritir vā na praharṣayet/ saṁmataś cāsi v̄ddhānām tāmś ca p̄cchasi saṁśayāṅ yathā m̄rtas tathā jīvan yathāsati tathā sati/ yasyaiśa buddhilābhah syāt paritapyeta kena sah, sa evam vyasanam p̄rāpya na viśīditum arhati/ amaropamasattvas tvam mahātmā satyasam̄garah, sarvajñah sarvadarśī ca buddhimāmś cāsi rāghava/ na tvām evam guṇair yuktam prabhavābhavakovidam, aviśahyatamaṁ duḥkham āsādayitum arhati/ proṣite mayi yat pāpam mātṛā matkāraṇāt k̄rtamc k̄sudrayā tad aniṣtam me prasīdatu bhavān mamā dharmabandhena baddho 'smi tenemām neha mātaram, hanmi tīvreṇa daṇḍena daṇḍārham pāpakāriṇīm/ katham daśarathāj jātaḥ śuddhābhijanakarmanah, jānan dharmam adharmiṣṭham kuryām karma jugupsitam/ guruḥ kriyāvān v̄ddhaś ca rājā pretah piteti ca tātām na parigarheyam daivataṁ ceti saṁsadi/ ko hi dharmārthayor hīnam tdr̥śam karma kilbiṣam, striyāḥ priyacik̄r̄suḥ san kuryād dharmajña dharmavit/ antakāle hi bhūtāni muhyantīti purāśrutih, rājñaiṣam kurvatā loke pratyakṣā sā śrutih k̄rtā/ sādhv artham abhisam̄dhāya krodhān mohāc ca sāhasāt, tātasya yad atikrāntam pratyāharatu tad bhavān/ pitur hi samatikrāntam putro yaḥ sādhu manyate, tad apatyam mataṁ loke viparītam ato 'nyathā/ tad apatyam bhavān astu mā bhavān duṣk̄rtam pituḥ, abhipat tat k̄rtam karma loke dhīravigarhitam/ kaikeyīm mām ca tātām ca suh̄do bāndhavāmś ca naḥ, pauraajānapadān sarvāmś trātu sarvam idam bhavān/ kva cāraṇyam kva ca kṣātram kva jaṭāḥ kva ca pālanam, tdr̥śam vyāhataṁ karma na bhavān kartum arhati/ atha kleśajam eva tvam dharmam caritum icchasi, dharmeṇa caturō varṇān pālayan kleśam āpnuhi/ caturṇām āśramāṇām hi gārhashtyam śreṣṭham āśramam, āhur dharmajña dharmajñās tam katham tyaktum arhasi/ śrutena bālāḥ sthānena janmanā bhavato hy aham, sa katham pālayiṣyāmi bhūmiṁ bhavati tiṣṭhati/ hīnabuddhiguṇo bālo hīnaḥ sthānena cāpy aham, bhavatā ca vinā bhūto na vartayitum utsahe/ idam nikhilam avyagram pitryam rājyam akaṅṭakam, anuśādhi svadharmeṇa dharmajña saha bāndhavaiḥ/ ihaiva tvābhiṣiṅcantu dharmajña saha bāndhavaiḥ, ṛtvijaḥ savasiṣṭhāś ca mantravan mantrakovidāḥ/ abhiṣiktas tvam asmābhir ayodhyām pālana vraja, vijitya tarasā lokān marudbhir iva vāsavaḥ/ ṛṇāni trīṇy apākurvan durh̄daḥ sādhu nirdahan, suh̄das tarpayan kāmāis tvam evātrānuśādhi mām/ adyārya muditāḥ santu suh̄das te 'bhiṣecane, adya bhītāḥ pālayantām durh̄das te diśo daśa/ ākrośam mama mātuś ca pram̄jya puruṣarṣabha, adya tatra bhavantaṁ ca pitaram rakṣa kilbiṣāt/ śirasā tvābhīyāce 'ham kuruṣva karuṇām mayi, bāndhaveṣu ca sarveṣu bhūteṣv iva maheśvaraḥ/ atha vā p̄ṣṭhataḥ k̄rtvā vanam eva bhavān itaḥ, gamiṣyati gamiṣyāmi bhavatā sārddham apy aham/ tathāpi rāmo bharatena tāmyata; prasādyamānaḥ śirasā mahīpatiḥ, na caiva cakre gamanāya sattvavān; matim pitus tadvacane pratiṣṭhitah/ tad adbhutam sthairyam avekṣya rāghave; samam jano harsam avāpa duḥkhitah, na yāty ayodhyām iti duḥkhitō 'bhavat; sthirapratijñatvam avekṣya harsitah/ tam ṛtvijo naigamayūthavallabhās; tathā visam̄jñāsrukalās ca mātarah, tathā bruvāṇam bharatam pratuṣṭuvuḥ; praṇamya rāmam ca yayācire sah/

Bharata having patiently heard all the tenets of dharma- one's own karma prarabdha- impact of 'kaala maana'- its transcendent nature- and all the vedantic bhashana. Apparently these precepts are required to be stressed again and again. Raghu Veera, is there one in this world who could excel in this mental restraint. Yet, a I have a small comment to make: Indeed one's own psyche would be such that even while realising the realities of existence, one does succumb to the on going situations! *Yatha mritastathaa jeevan yathaasati tathaasati, yasyaisha buddhi laabhah syaat, yasyaisha buddhi laabhah paritapyet kena sah/* Just as one's life is sustained and goes on, bodily ups and downs should not matter really; likewise the victories and defeats . But how could rule out the likings and dislikings of normal humans. If that strong mindedness is possible, one becomes a 'sthita pragjna' and not an ordinary human. In other words, it is only 'viveka buddhi prapti' that should be the negation of 'santaapa'. Nareshwara! It is only he who could distinguish 'atma and anatma' that one realises 'sankata and vishada' or disastres and sorrows. Raghu nandana! *Amaropamasatvastvam mahatmaa satyasamgarah, Sarvagjnah Sarva darsheem cha*

buddhimaaschaasi Raghava/ You are an exception with satva gunaas like Devatas, Mahatma, Satya pratigjna, Sarvagjna! It is only such ‘mahaanubhaavaas’ that are beyond irresistible to lamentations! proṣite mayi yat pāpam mātrā matkāraṇāt kṛtamc kṣudrayā tad aniṣtam me prasīdatu bhavān mama dharmabandhena baddho ’smi tenemām neha mātaram, hanmi tivreṇa daṇḍena daṇḍārḥām pāpakāriṇīm/ katham daśarathāj jātaḥ śuddhābhijanakarmanah, jānan dharmam adharmiṣṭham kuryām karma jugupsitam/ As I was away at my maternal grandfather’s kingdom, my mother acted with evil thoughts and deeds, but as she happens to be my mother, I cannot punish her physically and hence my sincere appeal to you. I am shackled with the principles of dharma and can not resort to violence. Moreover, my own father who surely understands the distinction of virtue and justice had resorted to this kind of a blatantly unjust decision and as such am having to reap the contemptible consequences as I could not openly admit in public. After all, the King Dasharatha was my father, mentor, and the maha yajna karta and knowing fully well got victimised by a low woman took this far reaching vicious decision. It appears that at the close of one’s life, a human being loses balance and tends to take blatantly abhorable verdicts. But for this indiscretion, the glory of Mahatma Dasharatha would be permanent in the annals of human history. Indeed, we have to upkeep that tradition of Ikshvakus and what ever lapses had occurred should not be highlighted. Most dear and revered brother Shri Rama: kaikeyīm mām ca tātam ca suhṛdo bāndhavāms ca nah, pauraṅgāpadān sarvāms trātu sarvam idaṁ bhavān/ kva cāraṇyam kva ca kṣātram kva jātaḥ kva ca pālanam, idṛśam vyāhataṁ karma na bhavān kartum arhati/ Do very kindly accept our request to safeguard the interests of my mother, me, the great late father, relatives and friends, the citizens of Ayodhya and the Kingdom. Where is ‘vana vaasa’ and where is the ‘kshaatriya dharma’ and ‘prajaa paalana’! These mutual contradictions are glaring and blatant. atha kleśajam eva tvam dharmam caritum icchasi, dharmeṇa caturo varṇān pālayan kleśam āpnuhi/ caturṇām āśramāṇām hi gārhashtyam śreṣṭham āśramam, āhur dharmajña dharmajñās taṁ katham tyaktum arhasi/ Which kind of Kshaatra dharma is this excepting prajaa paalana by disregarding which you are following a futuristic vision instead of practising it rightaway! More over the underlining significance of ‘chaturashramas’ is emphasised as ‘grihastaashrama’ but not so much of brahmacharya-vaanaprastha-and of sanyasa. Why are you seeking to infringe the well established and univerally followed dharma. Moreover, the viewpoints of ‘shastra and dharma jnaana’ disable me to the status of kingship due to immaturity of thought and deed. Hīnabuddhi guṇo bālo hīnaḥ sthānena cāpy aham, bhavatā ca vinā bhūto na vartayitum utsahe/ idaṁ nikhilam avyagram pitryam rājyam akaṅṭakam, anuśādhi svadharmeṇa dharmajña saha bāndhavaiḥ/ ihaiva tvābhiṣīcantu dharmajña saha bāndhavaiḥ, ṛtvijaḥ savasiṣṭhāś ca mantravan mantrakovidāḥ/ I am still a learner and not an administrator and an inexperienced youth who could not even self conduct, let alone ‘Rajyaadhikaara! Dharmajna Raghu nandana! Here is the kingdom of a renowned King, do add further lustre to it as per your ‘svdharma’ and as per your right and ‘vamsha paaramparya kartavya.’ Maharshi Vasishtha, the Mantri Mandali and the whole Public are anxiously awaiting your positive nod of head. The instant consequences of your ‘rajyabhishaka’ are the high alert to enemy kingdoms, wiping off the departed father’s indiscretion, my mother’s folly, my personal relief, mental peace of the mothers, blessings of the Maharshi Vasishtha and the vedic panditas, and above all the public relief and rejoicings. śirasā tvābhiyāce ’ham kuruṣva karuṇām mayi, bāndhaveṣu ca sarveṣu bhūteṣv iva maheśvaraḥ/ atha vā pṛṣṭhataḥ kṛtvā vanam eva bhavān itaḥ, gamiṣyati gamiṣyāmi bhavatā sārddham apy aham/ Shri Rama! I am once again begging you to kindly oblige my heartfelt prayers, like Maheshwara yields to the beggings of all the affected parties finally for ‘Loka Kalyaana’. But still if you do not relent, then I should accompany you too’. Rama was truly moved by Bharta’s heartfelt resolve, even as the accompanying Ritvijās the army, and all groups of the citizenship were moved and kept on crying in high pitch as a gesture of begging Rama to oblige returning to Ayodhya.

Sarga One Hundred and Seven

Shri Rama instructs Bharata to return to Ayodhya at once

Punar evam bruvānam tu bharataṁ lakṣmaṇāgrajaḥ, pratyuvaca tataḥ śrīmāñ jñātimadhye 'tisatḥkṛtaḥ upapannam idaṁ vākyam yat tvam evam abhāṣathāḥ, jātaḥ putro daśarathāt kaikeyyāṁ rājasattamāt/ purā bhrātaḥ pitā naḥ sa mātaram te samudvahan, mātāmahe samāśrauṣid rājyaśulkam anuttamam/ devāsura ca saṁgrāme jananyai tava pārthivaḥ, saṁprahṛṣṭo dadau rājā varam ārādhitaḥ prabhuḥ/ tataḥ sā saṁpratiśrāvya tava mātā yaśasvinī, ayācata naraśreṣṭham dvau varau varavarṇinī/ tava rājyam naravyāghra mama pravrajanaṁ tathā, tac ca rājā tathā tasyai niyuktaḥ pradadau varam/ tena pitrāham apy atra niyuktaḥ puruṣarṣabha, caturdaśa vane vāsam varṣāṇi varadānikam/ so 'ham vanam idaṁ prāpto nirjanaṁ lakṣmaṇānvitaḥ, śītayā cāpratidvandvaḥ satyavāde sthitaḥ pituḥ/ bhavān api tathety eva pitaram satyavādinam, kartum arhati rājendraṁ kṣipram evābhiṣecanāt/ ṛṇān mocaya rājānaṁ matkṛte bharata prabhum, pitaram trāhi dharmajña mātaram cābhinandaya/ śrūyate hi purā tāta śrutir gītā yaśasvinī, gayena yajamānena gayeṣv eva pitṛṇ prati/ puṁ nāmnā narakād yasmāt pitaram trāyate sutaḥ, tasmāt putra iti proktaḥ pitṛṇ yat pāti vā sutaḥ/ eṣṭavyā bahavaḥ putrā guṇavanto bahuśrutāḥ, teṣāṁ vai samavetānām api kaś cid gayāṁ vrajet/ evaṁ rājarṣayaḥ sarve pratītā rājanandana, tasmāt trāhi naraśreṣṭha pitaram narakāt prabho/ ayodhyāṁ gaccha bharata prakṛtīr anurañjaya, śatrughna sahito vīra saha sarvair dvijātibhiḥ/ pravekṣye daṇḍakāraṇyam aham apy avilambayan, ābhyāṁ tu sahito rājan vaidehyā lakṣmaṇena ca/ tvam rājā bhava bharata svayaṁ narāṇām; vanyānām aham api rājarāṇ mṛgāṇām, gaccha tvam puravaram adya saṁprahṛṣṭaḥ; saṁhṛṣṭas tv aham api daṇḍakān pravekṣye/ chāyām te dinakarabhāḥ prabādhamānam; varṣatram bharata karotu mūrdhni śītām, eteṣāṁ aham api kānanadrumāṇām; chāyām tām atīśayinīm sukham śrayiṣye/ śatrughnaḥ kuśalamatis tu te sahāyaḥ; saumitir mama viditaḥ pradhānamitram, catvāras tanayavarā vayaṁ narendram; satyastham bharata carāma mā viṣādam/

Shri Rama who had thus visualised the state of agitation of Bharata literally begging him to return to Ayodhyas as endorsed by one and all, replied Bharata: Dear brother! You might not be aware that at the time of dear father's wedding with Devi Kaikeyi, then father promised your grandfather that the son of Kaikeyi would be the next king of Ayodhya. After the wedding your mother performed unparalleled service to father. He was mightily pleased and he obliged her to accompany father at the time of Devaasura Battle in which father participated and Devas subdued Asuras and the father was pleased to give a boon to Devi Kaikeyi. The latter out with a mischievous casualness she asked father for two boons and father replied: 'alright two boons'! Now, your mother cashed on those two boons of Bharata's kingship and Rama's vana vassa. Now, Bharata, this was the backdrop as you now know the boons of the father. *so 'ham vanam idaṁ prāpto nirjanaṁ lakṣmaṇānvitaḥ, śītayā cāpratidvandvaḥ satyavāde sthitaḥ pituḥ/ bhavān api tathety eva pitaram satyavādinam, kartum arhati rājendraṁ kṣipram evābhiṣecanāt/* This was also the consequence your kingship and my 'vana vaasa' which Sita-Lakshmanas joined too. Indeed, there is question of another competitor of any sort; as such it is just and proper that I ought to follow dear respected father's directive and of your kingship. Dharmajna Bharata! For my sake, please relieve respected father's indebtedness to mother Kaikeyi and save his Soul from 'narakas' and at the same time enhance your mother's fulfillment of her inner pleasure to become the Prime Queen too. *śrūyate hi purā tāta śrutir gītā yaśasvinī, gayena yajamānena gayeṣv eva pitṛṇ prati/ puṁ nāmnā narakād yasmāt pitaram trāyate sutaḥ, tasmāt putra iti proktaḥ pitṛṇ yat pāti vā sutaḥ/* Bharata! It is well known that Raja Gaya performed Pitru Yajna and redeemed the indebtedness of his fore fathers and Putha too redeemed his father and forefathers too.

Vishleshanas in reference to a) Gayaasura and b) Puta / Prithu Chakravarti

Gayasura:

The legend of Gaya Tirtha is recalled in Agni Purana in the Tirtha Mahatmya: Gayasura, the King of Rakshasaas did fierce Tapasya to Maha Vishnu as the latter granted him the boon of materialising a Maha Tirtha by Gayasura's name. All the human beings and Asura-Daityaadi had the darshan of Gauasura and reached Vaikuntha as who ever had his darshan did not have to visit none else to achieve Vaikuntha.

Devas and Bahma Deva approached Vishnu as the latter advised to approach Gayasura to let Brahma and Devas perform yagna over Gayasura's huge head. Gaya was in deep sleep and did not respond but still Brahma and Devas were in the process of executing the Yagna and could not perform 'Purnaahuti' the grand finale of the Yagna was still pending. Meanwhile when Gayasura woke up and wished to get up but could not. The Asura became shaky and tried hard to wriggle out from the fire pit, Vishnu advised Yama dharma Raja to keep a heavy boulder on Gaya's head and occupy the Asura's entire body of some eight km. of length till the purnahuti was over. The heavy boulder itself had a background connection: Maharshi Marichi the son of Brahma Deva was once resting in sleep and instructed his wife called Dharmavata to press his legs and not disturb his sleep otherwise she would turn as a boulder. Meanwhile Brahma arrived and the wife faced a dilemma whether she should obey her husband's instruction not to disturb or announce the arrival of Brahma himself. She set aside Marichi's curse even as she faced the eventuality of her turning as a boulder. She gave a return curse to Marichi to have created an awkward situation for her that Marichi would have to face Maha Deva's wrath in some another connection and entered Agni and purified herself performing tapsya for thousand years. Lord Vishnu thus took advantage of the boulder which was blessed with the foot prints of Devas and utilised for Yama Dharma Raja to place it on Gayaasura's head which eventually became famed as Deva Shila-Sarva Deva Swarupa- Sarva Tirtha mayi-and the unique Pujnya Shila. Even after the Shila was placed on his head the Asura was still breathing and hence Vishnu had to place on his 'Gada' or Mace to fully sniff him out by adding his own presence to this Gaya Tirtha. This 'Adi Gada' was the backbone of Gajasura which was eventually turned by Deva's Architect Vishwa karma. The most outstanding Pitru Tirtha in the Universe, to which the Pitru Loka keeps close attention to look forward to the sons of mankind looks forward to Shraddha karmas and Pinda daanas. These Karmas not only redeem the souls of the ancestors by their performance but equally to collect bags of fulfillment to the Shraddha Kartas as far higher proportions manifold.

Putra / Prithu :

Prajapati Anga of Atri Vamsha, a defender of Dharma (Virtue) and an erudite scholar of Shastras was married to Sunitha who also was a follower of virtue and tradition. They were blessed with a son of high virtue called Vena, who on becoming a King, came under the evil influence of an evil muni who followed a Devata called 'Arhan' followed a vicious and immoral way of life and used to preach his 'Praja' (Subjects) not to perform Homas and Yagnas, nor indulge in charities, Vratas and Tirtha Yatras. In fact, he declared that he was Vishnu, Rudra, Brahma, Indra and Devas. The Rishis and Brahmanas were highly upset and undertook a huge procession to the King saying that a King was expected to guide and enforce Dharma, Nyaya (Justice) and discipline but instead Vena was getting self-opinionated by the day. The King shouted angrily that he was Dharma, Nyaya and Punya himself and that he could destroy Earth, throw it under water and break open the skies, if need be! The Rishis and Common men of the Kingdom forced their way to the King, surrounded him, forcibly overpowered and battered him. They screamed and asked him: 'Nishida' or 'sit down' and since then called him 'Nishida!' They rubbed his left thigh with force and out emerged streams of evil Beings like Nishadas, Kirathas, Bheels, Nahalakas, Bhramars, Pulinds and Mlecchas and Rishis were relieved that the King was relieved of sinners from his body. Then they rubbed the King's right hand forcibly and initially came out profuse sweat but later on materialised a 'Maha Purush'-a Unique Personality- and the congregation of Rishis named him King Pruthu and blessed him to herald a Golden Era where the Kingdom was full of propitiousness and Virtue but devoid of 'Akals' (Famines), diseases, untimely deaths, robberies and discontentment anywhere: *na durbhiksham na cha Vyadhirnakaala maranam Nrinaam, Sarvey sukhena jeevanti lokaa Dharma paraayanaah!* But Chakravarti Prithu decided to redeem his father King Vena from hells. He performed the duty of a son who delivers his father from hellish conditions. The word putra means one who delivers from hell, called 'Put', a worthy son who could save from a hell which is called *puṁ-nāma-naraka* and 'tra' means *trāyate*, or deliver. Hence putra means *puṁ-nāma-narakāt trāyate iti putra* or that is the son is expected to deliver the forefathers from the hellish condition of life. (Padma Purana)]

Sarga One hundred seven continued: *ayodhyām gaccha bharata prakṛtīr anurañjaya, śatrughna sahito vīra saha sarvair dvijātibhiḥ/--- śatrughnaḥ kuśalamatis tu te sahāyaḥ; saumitir mama vidītaḥ pradhānamitram, catvāras tanayavarā vyaṁ narendram; satyasthaṁ bharata carāma mā viśādam/* Shri Rama had thus instructed Bharata ultimately: My dear Bharata! You ought to be therefore return to Ayodhya to administer human beings as the King and I should remain as the King of beasts and forests. Brother Shatrughna would assist you and Lakshmana should assist me too. The four sons of King Dasharatha should be totally dedicated to preserve Dharma; Never ever feel hurt or sorry for this ultimate decision.

Sarga One hundred and eight

Muni Jaabali supports Bharata and his arguments sounded spread of ‘nastikata’

Aaśvāsayantam bharatam jābālir brāhmaṇottamaḥ, uvāca rāmaṁ dharmajñam dharmāpetam idam vacaḥ/ sādhu rāghava mā bhūt te buddhir evam nirarthakā/ prakṛtasya narasyeva ārya buddhes tapasvinaḥ/ śatrughnaḥ kuśalamatis tu te sahāyaḥ; saumitir mama vidītaḥ pradhānamitram, catvāras tanayavarā vyaṁ narendram; satyasthaṁ bharata carāma mā viśādam/Kah kasya pususho bandhuh kimaapyam kasya kenachit, eko hi jaayate jantureka eva vinashyati/ Tasmaan maataa pitaacheti Rama sajjjet yo narah, unmatta iva sa jneyo naasti kaschidvi kasyachit/ Yathaa graamaantaram gacchan narah kaś cit kva cid vaset, utsṛjya ca tam āvāsam pratiṣṭhetāpare 'hani' evam eva manuṣyāñām pitā mātā grham vasu, āvāsamātram kākutstha sajjante nātra sajjanāḥ/ pitryam rājyam samutsṛjya sa nārhati narottama, āsthātum kāpatham duḥkham viśamam bahukaṇṭakam/ samṛddhāyām ayodhyāyām ātmānam abhiśecaya, ekavenīdharā hi tvām nagarī sampratīkṣate/ rājabhogān anubhavan mahārhan pārvivātmaja, vihara tvam ayodhyāyām yathā śakras triviṣṭape/ na te kaś cid daśarataḥ tvam ca tasya na kaś cana, anyo rājā tvam anyaś ca tasmāt kuru yad ucyate/ gataḥ sa nṛpatis tatra gantavyam yatra tena vai, pravṛttir eṣā martyānām tvam tu mithyā vihanyase/ artha dharmā parā ye ye tāms tāñ śocāmi netarān, te hi duḥkham iha prāpya vināśam pretya bhejire/ aṣṭakā piṭṛdaivat -yam ity ayaṁ prasṛto janaḥ, annasyopadravam paśya mṛto hi kim aśiṣyati/ yadi bhuktam ihānyena deham anyasya gacchati, dadyāt pravasataḥ śrāddham na tat pathy aśanam bhavet/ dānasamvananā hy ete granthā medhāvibhiḥ kṛtāḥ, yajasva dehi dīkṣasva tapas tapyasva samtyaja/ sa nāsti param ity eva kuru buddhim mahāmate, pratyakṣam yat tad ātiṣṭha parokṣam pṛṣṭhataḥ kurv/ satām buddhim puraskṛtya sarvalokanidarśinīm, rājyam tvam pratigṛhṇiṣva bharatena prasāditaḥ/

As Shri Rama thus persuaded Bharata to return the Kingdom, Viprottama Jaabaali made a comment stating that what all was stated by Shri Rama addressing Bharata was followed by him but unfortunately Rama’s statements were perhaps not endorsed by him. *Kah kasya pususho bandhuh kimaapyam kasya kenachit, eko hi jaayate jantureka eva vinashyati/ Tasmaan maataa pitaacheti Rama sajjjet yo narah, unmatta iva sa jneyo naasti kaschidvi kasyachit/* In this ‘samsaara’, who indeed are relatives and who are not as the Human Beings are born or die alone! Is it not foolish to feel that this person is a father or that person is a mother! Are they not travellers from places to places and how do you think and identify others as a father, mother or a relative or to assert that his money, property, or building are distinct. Therefore Shri Rama, that kind of a ‘vedanta’ or mind set of aloofness and of ‘vairagya’ is certainly neither acceptable nor practical. Hence my suggestion should be that you better return to Ayodhya and accept kingship. Theoretically stated that Dasharatha should be none for you but in practical terms he was your own father born out of his union with your mother. *gataḥ sa nṛpatis tatra gantavyam yatra tena vai, pravṛttir eṣā martyānām tvam tu mithyā vihanyase/ artha dharmā parā ye ye tāms tāñ śocāmi netarān, te hi duḥkham iha prāpya vināśam pretya bhejire/* As a King needs to go to his kingdom and as such you should return to Ayodhya; why are you not do your duty of kingship and seek to suffer hardships for no justifiable reasons. *dānasamvananā hy ete granthā medhāvibhiḥ kṛtāḥ, yajasva dehi dīkṣasva tapas tapyasva samtyaja/* Being a King, you may please Devas by yajna karyas, perform many charities and such noble tasks worthy of kingship. Do your duties in this birth and worry the least of Para Loka!

Sarga One Hundred and Nine

Rama asserts that karma and rebirth are corner stones of ‘Astikata’

*Jābāles tu vacaḥ śrutvā rāmaḥ satyātmanām varaḥ, uvāca parayā yuktyā svabuddhyā cāvipannayā/
bhavān me priyakāmārthaṁ vacanam yad ihoktavān, akāryam kāryasaṁkāśam apathyam pathya
saṁmitam/ nirmaryādas tu puruṣaḥ pāpācārasamanvitaḥ, mānam na labhate satsu bhinna cāritra -
darśanaḥ/ kulīnam akulīnam vā vīram puruṣamāninam, cāritram eva vyākhyāti śucim vā yadi vāsucim/
anāryas tv ārya saṁkāśaḥ śaucād dhīnas tathā śuciḥ, lakṣaṇyavad alakṣaṇyo duḥśīlaḥ śīlavān iva/
adharmam dharmaveṣeṇa yadīmam lokasaṁkaram, abhipatsye śubham hitvā kriyāvidhivivarjitam/ kaś
cetayānaḥ puruṣaḥ kāryākāryavicakṣaṇaḥ, bahu māmsyati mām loke durvṛtām lokadūṣaṇam/ kasya
yāsyāmy aham vṛtām kena vā svargam āpnuyām, anayā vartamāno 'ham vṛttyā hīnapratijñayā/
kāmavṛttas tv ayam lokāḥ kṛtsnaḥ samupavartate, yadvṛttāḥ santi rājānas tadvṛttāḥ santi hi prajāḥ/
satyam evāṅśamsyam ca rājāvṛtām sanātanam, tasmāt satyātmakeṣu rājyaṁ satye lokāḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ/
ṛṣayaś caiva devāś ca satyam eva hi menire, satyavādī hi loke 'smin paramam gacchati kṣayam/
udvijante yathā sarpān narād anṛtavādīnaḥ, dharmāḥ satyam paro loke mūlam svargasya cocyate/
satyam eveśvaro loke satyam padmā samāsritā, satyamūlāni sarvāṇi satyān nāsti param padam/ dattam
iṣṭam hutaṁ caiva taptāni ca tapāmsi ca, vedāḥ satyapratīṣṭhānās tasmāt satyaparo bhavet/ ekaḥ
pālayate lokam ekaḥ pālayate kulam, majjaty eko hi niraya ekaḥ svarge mahīyate/ so 'ham pitur nideśam
tu kimarthaṁ nānupālaye, satyapratīśravaḥ satyam satyena samayīkṛtaḥ/ naiva lobhān na mohād vā na
cājñānāt tamo 'nvitaḥ, setum satyasya bhetsyāmi guroḥ satyapratīśravaḥ/ asatyasaṁdhasya sataś
calasyāsthiraacetasaḥ, naiva devā na pitarāḥ pratīcchantīti naḥ śrutam/ pratyagātmanam imam dharmam
satyam paśyāmy aham svayam, bhāraḥ satpuruṣācīrṇas tad artham abhinandyate/ kṣātram dharmam
aham tyakṣye hy adharmam dharmasaṁhitam, kṣudraur ṅśamsair lubdhaiś ca sevitaṁ pāpakarmabhiḥ/
kāyena kurute pāpam manasā saṁpradhārya ca, anṛtaṁ jihvayā cāha trividham karma pātakam/ bhūmiḥ
kīrtir yaśo lakṣmīḥ puruṣam prārthayanti hi, svargastham cānubadhanti satyam eva bhajeta tat/
śreṣṭham hy anāryam eva syād yad bhavān avadhārya mām, āha yuktikarair vākyair idam bhadram
kuruṣva ha/ katham hy aham pratijñāya vanavāsam imam guroḥ, bhāratasya kariṣyāmi vaco hitvā guror
vacāḥ/ sthīrā mayā pratijñātā pratijñā gurusamnidhau, prahṛṣṭamānasā devī kaikeyī cābhavat tadā/
vanavāsam vasann evam śucir niyatabhojanaḥ, mūlaiḥ puṣpaiḥ phalaiḥ puṣyaiḥ piṭṛn devāś ca
tarpayan/ saṁtuṣṭapañcavargo 'ham lokayātrām pravartaye, akuhaḥ śraddadhānaḥ san kāryākārya -
vicakṣaṇaḥ/ karmabhūmim imām prāpya kartavyam karma yac chubham, agnir vāyus ca somaś ca
karmanām phalabhāgināḥ/ śataṁ kratūnām āhṛtya devarāṭ tridivam gataḥ, tapāmsy ugrāṇi cāsthāya
divam yāt maharṣayaḥ/ satyam ca dharmam ca parākramam ca; bhūtānukampām priyavādītām ca,
dvijātidevātithipūjanaṁ ca; panthānam āhus tridivasya santaḥ/ dharme ratāḥ satpuruṣaiḥ sametās;
tejasvino dānaguṇapradhānāḥ, ahimsakā vītamalāś ca loke; bhavanti pūjyā munayaḥ pradhānāḥ/*

As Maha Pandita Jaabala raised somewhat none too realistic questions smacking of ‘nastikata’, Shri Rama stated quietly yet decisively as per the lines of Shritis. He said: ‘Vipravara! Whatever you have described as if it should be my duty to return to Ayodhya even much against my father’s instructions; indeed they appear palatable but are not so. As a human being discards the ‘Veda Maryada’ and acts as per one’s own wishful thinking and resorts to the infringement of approved principles, then he distances from both ‘aachaara and vichara’ or the tradition and self analysis. That is why ‘satpuruṣas’ would not approve of such end results. It is the tradition of a kula or varna that decides as to who is virtuous or not. The pattern of thinking that you have expressed is truly speaking the ‘anaarya’ or non traditional . That kind of mind set appears to be appealing on the face of it but is impure on closer examination. For instance the eventuality of my return to Ayodhya even disregard of ‘Pitru agjna’ looks attractive but actually that becomes void from the standpoint of tradition and the approved principles of virtue and justice. As per your advice the path to be treaded on apparently appears justifiable but indeed that would not be so as per the traditional values and norms. You stated that once my father had gone away, he would not be any body to me and vice versa. Then why one should perform ‘tarpanas and pinda pradaanaas’!

You stated that we are all travellers and need to remember them again! Does Dharma approve this ‘nastikata’! You affirmed that by the path that you have recommended would free me from my inhibitions, since what ever a King does is that which that his public would follow. Pray! What type of kingdom that is with neither scruples nor principles! Be it known for good: *satyam evāṅṛśamsyaṃ ca rājavyṛttam sanātanam, tasmāt satyātmakam rājyaṃ satye lokaḥ pratiṣṭhitah/ ṛṣayaś caiva devāś ca satyam eva hi menire, satyavādī hi loka ’smīn paramam gacchati kṣayam/ udvijante yathā sarpān narād anṛtavādīnaḥ, dharmah satyaṃ paro loka mūlam svargasya cocyate/ satyam eveśvaro loka satyaṃ padmā samāśritā, satyamūlāni sarvāṇi satyān nāsti param padam/* ‘Satya paalana’ or Obedience to Truthfulness is the prime most dharma. That is the age old tradition; if a kingdom is of ‘Satya swarupa’ or of the form of Truth and Virtue, that becomes the approved tradition. Rishis and Devas always seek to uphold truthfulness and those ‘satyavaadi’ humans do invariably accomplish higher lokas. Persons who resort to untruthfulness are timid and are afraid of everything such as serpents. The heights of truthful nature are thus considered as the roots of human excellence . *satyam eveśvaro loka satyaṃ padmā samāśritā, satyamūlāni sarvāṇi satyān nāsti param padam/ dattam iṣṭam hutam caiva taptāni ca tapāmsi ca, vedāḥ satyapraṭiṣṭhānās tasmāt satyaparo bhavet/* Truthfulness is Paramatma and dharma is anchored to it. That indeed is the very root of existence and there is no ‘paramapada’ or Salvation therebeyond. That human who administers the world and represents a clan tends to either sinks into narakas or achieves swarga on the basis of truthfulness or its negation. *so ’ham pitur nideśam tu kimartham nānupālaye, satyapraṭiśravaḥ satyaṃ satyena samayīkṛtaḥ/ naiva lobhān na mohād vā na cājñānāt tamo ’nvitaḥ, setum satyasya bhetsyāmi guroḥ satyapraṭiśravaḥ/* I have had already taken the oath of following my father’s decision in the name of truthfulness, and am not foolish to reverse the instructions of my father under any circumstances, either by temptations or avarice or misguidances. It is learnt that those who crumble under temptations having sworn by truth become ineligible to ‘havya kavyas’ as accepted from pitru devatas and Devas post life. As a hold ‘ Satya Swarupi Dharma’ in high esteem as applicable to humanity, I should continue to be dressed in ‘jataa valkas’ and practise ‘taapasa dharma’. *kṣātram dharmam aham tyakṣye hy adharmam dharmasamhitam, kṣudraur ṛśamsair lubdhaiś ca sevitaṃ pāpakarmabhiḥ/* What all had been prescribed as ‘kshaatra dharma’ but gets negated by lowly, cruel, avaricious and sinful villians, would most certainly be rejected by me. *kāyena kurute pāpaṃ manasā sampradhārya ca, anṛtam jihvayā cāha trividham karma pātakam/* What all sins that humans do by their body are the consequences of their mental aberrations Then with the help of their tongues and voices convey to others with the help of others perform with their bodies. Thus all human deeds mainly of sinful deeds are executed and committed by three channels viz. kaayika- vaachaka-maanasika or body-voice-and mind based. Earth, fame, glory and prosperity are all ever anxious to get hinged on to truthful human beings and thus there is the necessity of serving only truthfulness. Brahmanottama Jaabaali! Your suggestion, argument, and considered instruction that I should take over the kingship is therefore sir! never worthy of acceptance as it would shatter the precepts of ‘satya and nyaaya’ or truth and justice. How indeed could then redeem father’s decision either by Bharara’s supplications or your way of mind set! The sworn decision before the my preceptors is irrevocable and unalterable and that had also comforted Devi Kaikeyi’s mindset. I should therefore reiterate my decisiveness to be dressed up, consume ‘phala-moola-patra- pushpaas’ and have the Pitru Devas and Devata’s comforted, as instructed. I have already decided a to what should be done and how to conduct myself; I will carry on by contenting my panchendriyas with kanda-moola- phaalas and carry on by observig my father’s directiveness. I will abide by the features of the ‘karma bhumi’ aided by natural air, fire, water, light, and sky and their alterations as per the Seasonality. Deva Raja Indra should have succssfully performed a series of yagjnas to attain that status and so should have Maharshis done severe tapasyas and reached higher lokas. *satyaṃ ca dharmam ca parākramam ca; bhūtānukampām priyavādītām ca, dvijātidevātithipūjanam ca; panthānam āhus tridivasya santaḥ/ dharme ratāḥ satpuruṣaiḥ sametās; tejasvino dānaguṇapradhānāḥ, ahimsakā vītamalās ca loka; bhavanti pūjyā munayaḥ pradhānāḥ/* The vedic assertion states that ‘Satya- Dharma-Paraakrama- Samsasta Praani Daya- and Priya Vaachana, besides Deva-Atithi-Brahmana Puja are the essential features of Noble Humans leading to swarga loka and bliss. *Dharme ratāḥ satpuruṣaiḥ sametās; tejasvino dānaguṇapradhānāḥ, ahimsakā vītamalās ca loka; bhavanti pūjyā munayaḥ pradhānāḥ/* Finally, Vipravarya! It is only such

Shreshtha Munis who practise dharma, satpurusha sangata, tejo sampanna, daana pradhaana, and asimhaa-charanaas that are worthy of prostrations!’ As Shri Rama explained in some detail about the tenets of Aastikata- Dharma- Nishchaya- and Indriya Nigraha, Pandita Jaabali replied : Shri Rama! I am neither a ‘Naastika’ nor of ‘Nastikata’ but unfortunately uttered such statements which were from the ‘vyavahaarika sambandhaaalochanas’ which do indeed sound of traces of ‘nastikata’. My thinking pattern was only oriented to Bharata’s earnestness that you might return to assume kingship due to his inability to maintain the dignity of the kingdom vis-à-vis your own glory and capability. The ‘loukika vyavahaara’ got blurred unfortunately and dimmed up the radiance of Dharma and Kartavya; I am indeed ashamed of myself as I was momentarily entering into the labyrinths of social customs and mindsets!

Sarga One Hundred and Ten

Maharshi Vasishtha traces the geneology of Ikshvaku Vamsha and asks to uphold its fame and assume Kinghip as the eldest son of Dasharatha

Kruddham ājñāya rāma tu vasiṣṭhaḥ pratyuvāca ha, jābālir api jānīte lokasyāsyā gatāgatim, nivartayitu kāmā tu tvām etad vākyam abravīt/ imām lokasamutpattim lokanātha nibodha me, sarvaṁ salilam evāsīt pṛthivī yatra nirmītā, tataḥ samabhadra brahmā svayambhūr daivataih saha/ sa varāhas tato bhūtvā projjahāra vasuṁdharām, asṛjac ca jagat sarvaṁ saha putraih kṛtātmabhiḥ/ ākāśaprabhavo brahmā śāśvato nitya avyayaḥ, tasmān marīciḥ sanjajñe marīceḥ kaśyapaḥ sutaḥ/ vivasvān kaśyapāj jajñe manur vaivasvataḥ smṛtaḥ, sa tu prajāpatiḥ pūrvam ikṣvākus tu manoḥ sutaḥ/ yasyeyam prathamam dattā samṛddhā manunā mahī, tam ikṣvākum ayodhyāyām rājānam viddhi pūrvakam/ ikṣvākos tu sutaḥ śrīmān kukṣir eveti viśrutaḥ, kukṣer athātmaḥ vīro vikukṣir udapadyata/ vikukṣes tu mahātejā bāṇaḥ putraḥ pratāpavān, bāṇasya tu mahābhūr anaraṇyo mahāyaśāḥ/ nānā vṛṣṭir babhūvāsmīn na durbhikṣam satām vare, anaraṇye mahārāje taskaro vāpi kaś cana/ anaraṇyān mahābhūḥ pṛthū rājā babhūva ha, tasmāt pṛthor mahārājas triśaṅkur udapadyata, sa satyavacanād vīraḥ saśarīro divam gataḥ/ triśaṅkor abhavat sūnur dhundhumāro mahāyaśāḥ, dhundhumārān mahātejā yuvanāśvo vyajāyata/ yuvanāśva sutaḥ śrīmān māndhātā samapadyata, māndhātus tu mahātejāḥ susāmdhir udapadyata/ susāmdher api putrau dvau dhruvasāmdhiḥ prasenajit, yaśasvī dhruvasāmdhes tu bhārato ripusūdanaḥ/ bhārātāt tu mahābhūr asito nāma jāyata, yasyaite pratirājāna udapadyanta śatravaḥ, haihayās tālajāṅghās ca sūrās ca śaśabindavaḥ/ tāms tu sarvān prativyūhya yuddhe rājā pravāsitaḥ, sa ca śailavare ramye babhūvābhīrato munīḥ, dve cāsya bhārye garbhīnyau babhūvatur iti śrutiḥ/ bhārgavaś cyavano nāma himavantam upāśritaḥ, tam ṛṣim samupāgamya kālīndī tv abhyavādayat/ sa tām abhyavadad vipro varepsuṁ putrajanmani, tataḥ sā gṛham āgamyā devī putram vyajāyata/ sapatnyā tu garas tasyai datto garbhajighāmsayā, gareṇa saha tenaiva jātaḥ sa sagaro ’bhavat/ sa rājā sagaro nāma yaḥ samudram akhānayat, iṣṭvā parvaṇi vegena trāsayantam imāḥ prajāḥ/ asamañjas tu putro ’bhūt sagarasyeti naḥ śrutam, jīvann eva sa pitrā tu nirastaḥ pāpakarmakṛt/ amśumān iti putro ’bhūd asamañjasya vīryavān, dilīpo ’mśumataḥ putro dilīpasya bhāgīrathaḥ/ bhāgīrathāt kakutsthas tu kākutsthā yena tu smṛtāḥ, kakutsthasya tu putro ’bhūd raghur yena tu rāghavaḥ/ raghos tu putras tejasvī pravṛddhaḥ puruṣādakaḥ, kalmāṣapādaḥ saudāsa ity evam prathito bhūvi/ kalmāṣapādaputro ’bhūc chaṅkhaṇas tv iti viśrutaḥ, yas tu tad vīryam āsādyā sahaseno vyanīnaśat/ śaṅkhaṇasya tu putro ’bhūc chūraḥ śrīmān sudarśanaḥ, sudarśanasyāgnivarṇa agnivarṣasya śīghragahaḥ/ śīghragasya maruḥ putro maroḥ putraḥ praśuśrukaḥ, praśuśrukasya putro ’bhūd ambarīṣo mahādīpī/ ambarīṣasya putro ’bhūn nahuṣaḥ satyavikramaḥ, nahuṣasya ca nābhāgaḥ putraḥ paramadhārmikaḥ/ ajaś ca suvrataś caiva nābhāgasya sutāv ubhau, ajasya caiva dharmātmā rājā daśarathaḥ sutaḥ/ tasya jyeṣṭho ’si dāyādo rāma ity abhiviśrutaḥ, tad gṛhāṇa svakam rājyam avekṣasva jagan nṛpa/ ikṣvākūṅām hi sarveṣāṁ rājā bhavati pūrvajaḥ, pūrvajenāvaraḥ putro jyeṣṭho rājye ’bhiśicyate/ sa rāghavaṅgām kuladharmam ātmanaḥ; sanātanaṁ nādyā vihātum arhasi, prabhūtaratnām anuśādhi medinīm; prabhūtarāṣṭrām piṭṛvan mahāyaśāḥ/

Maharshi Vasishtha then endorsed the view point of Jabaali Maharshi in a way as the beings on earth do come and go by way of births and deaths and that would not imply ‘naastikata’ or the science of

Godlessness. Rama! The incoming and outgoing traffic of the universe was what Jabali Maharshi had talked of. Now, let me explain to you about the basics of Srishti. Before Srishti, the Universe was 'jala maya' ; then Swayambhu Para Brahma got manifested. Then Bhagavan Vishnuswarupa Brahma evidenced floating on the sheets of water.. *Sa varāhas tato bhūtvā projjahāra vasum̄dharām, asṛjac ca jagat sarvaṁ saha putraiḥ kṛtātmabhiḥ/* Subsequently, Vishnuswarupa Parabrahma appeared as Varaha Swarupa and pulled up Prithvi and initiated srishti of Beings.

[Vishleshana of Varaha: Brahmanda Purana is quoted: At the Kalpantara Pralaya or the Great Extermination of the Universe, the whole World got submerged in deep water as 'Ekarnava' or a single sheet of Water and the 'Sthaavara Jangamaas' or the Mobile and Immobile Beings were all submerged, then Para Brahma called **Narayana**, who was of 'Sahasraaksha, Sahasrapaat, Sahasra Shirsha' or of thousand eyes, feet and heads, was resting on the huge surface of water: *Apo Naara iti proktaa Apo vai Nara Sunavah, Ayanam tasya taah proktaastena Narayanah smritah/* ('Apah' denotes 'Nara' or water; 'Naaraas' or the children or waves of 'Nara'; and Nara is a Being or Entity ; Nara plus Ayana is Narayana as he who rests on Samsara or water) . Narayana sought to locate Prithvi (Earth) deep down in water and assumed **Varaahaavatara** or the Incarnation of a Huge Boar like a mountain with ten yojanas of girth and hundred yojanas of height (one Yojana being 12 km), with a body of cloud-like complexion and extreme radiance of many Lightnings, Fire and Sun; making thunderous and high-pitched sounds and having broad shoulders, sharp fangs, white teeth and pointed nails. The **YajnaVaraha** is described as follows: *Diksha Samaapteeshtim damshtretah kratu danto Juhuumukhah, Agni jihvo darbha romaa Brahma seersho Mahatapaah/ Veda skandho havirgandhirhavyakavyaadi vegavaan, Praagvamsha kaayo Dyutimaan naanaa Dikshaabhiranvitah/ Dakshinaa hridayo Yogi Shraddhaa satwa -mayo Vibhuh, Upakarma ruchischaiva pravagyaavarta bhushanah/ Naanaachhandogati patho guhyopanishad - aasanah, Maayaapatnisahaayo vai Giri shringamivocchrayah/ Aho raatrekshana dharo Vedanga shriti bhushanah, Aajya gandhah struvastundah Samaghosa swano Mahaan/ Satyadharmā mayah Shrimaan Karma vikrama saskrutah, Prayaschitta nakho ghorah Pashujaanurmahaamakhaḥ/ Udgaadaantro Homa Lingah Phala beeja mahoushadheeh, Vaadyantaraatmasatrasya naasmikaasomashonitah/* (The Yagna Varaha took up the diksha or Initiation of the Kratu or the Sacrifice with his 'damshtretas' or curved fangs and teeth holding the 'Juhu' or the crescent shaped wooden ladle with which to make the offerings of ghee; Agni was his tongue to lap up the Sacrifice; Darbha grasses were the Varaha's hairs; Brahma one of the Chief of 'Ritviks' or the Brahmanas performing the Sacrifice was comparable to Varaha Murti's Head; Vedaas were his shoulders; his body-aroma was his 'havis' or the Sacrificial Offering; the Havya and Kavya or the offerings to Devas and Pitru Devas respectively constituted his body-speed with which the Sacrificial Offerings were made; the 'Praagvamsha' or the East-bound Chamber in which the guests at the Sacrifice were seated was Varaha's kaaya or the spacious physique; He was highly radiant and capable of accepting several Dikshas like the one being performed; He was the Master of Yoga full of Shraddha and Satwa or Sincerity and Resolve; he had Upakarma or extra study of Vedas and an expert in 'Pragvargya' or the Introductory Ceremony to the long-duration Soma Sacrifice; his 'Avarta Bhushana' or the ornamental and circular curls of the boar chest; the representation of various 'Chaandas' or Poetic Meters as his pathway; Upanishads as his seat; his able assistance is Maya as his spouse; his height was that of a mountain peak; his eyes representing Sun and moon and day and night; Vedangas and Shritis were his ear-ornaments; his body smell was that of 'Ajya' or the Ghee offering; Sruva or the sacrificial ladle is like his snout or muzzle; his voice was like the high pitch of the chanting of Sama Veda hymns; 'Udgata' or the elongated Sama Veda hymn was like his entrail or intestines; homa was his Linga or Symbol; fruits and seeds are his testicles; the altar of sacrifice was his heart; He was an Epitome of Satya Dharma and Soma Rasa was his own blood.) Thus Yajna Varaha Deva, as Nasika Soma sonita, dived deep into waters and lifted up Earth, allocated waters into Oceans and Rivers on Earth, materialised Mountains to stabilise the waters thus allocated, broadly created Sapta Dwipas on Earth, materialised Bhurbhuva ssuraadi Lokas and their inhabitants on the same pattern as in the previous Kalpas before the Great Pralaya.]

Sarga hundred ten continues: *ākāśaprabhavo brahmā śāśvato nitya avyayaḥ, tasmān marīciḥ samjajñe marīceḥ kaśyapaḥ sutaḥ/ vivasvān kaśyapāj jajñe manur vaivasvataḥ smṛtaḥ, sa tu prajāpatiḥ pūrvam ikṣvākuḥ tu manoḥ sutaḥ/* Aakaasha Swarupa Parabrahma once manifested as the indestructible and permanent, he created Marichi and from the latter was born Kashyapa Muni. From Kashyapa was born Visavaan and from the latter Vivasvanta Manu the foremost Prajapati whose son was Ikshvaaku. (Ref. Vishleshana of Sarga One of Essence of Vaalmiki Baala Ramayana). King Ikshvaaku's lineage was Kukshi-Vivukshi-Baan- Anaranya a famed King a maha tapasvi, in whose kingship there no anavrishti- akaala-chora bhaya. Anarnya's further lineage were the well known Kings Prithu- Trishanku for whom Brahmaarshi Vishvamitra created a mid sky Trishanku Svarga- Dundhumaara-Yuvanaashva-Maandhata-Susumndhi- Dhruvasundhi-Shatrusudana-Asita who surrendered himself to enemy king. Maharshi Vasishtha then described about King Asita and his two wives and both of them became garbhavatis. One of the wives named Kalindi venerated Chyavana Muni of the vamsha of Maharshi Bhrigu and having prostrated to the Muni requested for an excellent son who would be a Chakravarti. Then Chyavana Muni blessed Kalindi to give birth to a glorious son. But the second wife got the news of the Muni's boon to Kalindi and got jealous and surreptitiously poisoned Kalindi but the Muni's blessing was still intact and a boy was born with 'gara' or poison and was thus named Sa-gara who eventually became Sagara Chakravarti. Then in that lineage was born 'Asamanjasa' who turned out to be a villain and was turned out of the Kingdom. In the further lineage of Kings were Ashumaan-Dileep- and the renowned Bhagiratha who brought 'akaasha ganga' by sheer perseverance and tapasya to redeem the Souls of his forefathers. Bhagirath's son was 'Kakuthsa' as Shri Rama is known as of Kakutsa Vamsha. Kakutsa's son was Raghu and hence Rama is famed as Raghava. Raghava son was Kalmaashapaada who unfortunately became a victim of a Muni 'shaapa' and turned as a rakshasa for some years and after the prescribed time lag, he became known as King Saudasa. Kalmashapaada's son was Maha Veera Shankhana who was no doubt a 'veera parakrami' but on one his battles attained 'veera swaraga'. The further lineage included Sudarshana-Agnivarna-Sheeghraghna-Maru-Prashushrava and the famed Ambareesha- Nahusha and Naabhaga. Aja and Suvrara- and Aja's son was Dasharatha. Rama! You are the eldest son and thus in the lineage, Kingship of Ayodhya belongs to you as the eldest son and you ought to assume its kingship as your bounded duty; *tasya jyeṣṭho 'si dāyādo rāma ity abhiviśrutaḥ tad gṛhāṇa svakaṁ rājyam avekṣasva jagan nṛpa/ikṣvākūṇām hi sarveṣāṁ rājā bhavati pūrvajaḥ, pūrvajenāvaraḥ putro jyeṣṭho rājye 'bhiṣicyate/* Indeed as per the lineage detailed as above, it is your bounden responsibility to assume the Kingship without a question. Shri Rama! Kindly do not infringe the hereditary's dharma of Raghuvamsha now and take up the administration of the Kingdom straightaway.

Sarga One Hundred and Eleven

Shri Rama reiterates that 'Pitru Agina' was paramount yet doubled edged that he should undergo vana vaasa and Bharata should rule for that period only!

Vasiṣṭhas tu tadā rāmam uktvā rājapurohitaḥ, abravīd dharmasamyuktaṁ punar evāparaṁ vacaḥ/ puruṣasyeha jātasya bhavanti guravas trayāḥ, ācāryaś caiva kākutstha pitā mātā ca rāghava/ pitā hy enaṁ janayati puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha, prajñāṁ dadāti cācāryas tasmāt sa gurur ucyate/ sa te 'haṁ pitur ācāryas tava caiva paraṁtapa, mama tvaṁ vacanaṁ kurvan nātivarteḥ satāṁ gatim/ imā hi te pariśadaḥ śreṇayaś ca samāgatāḥ, eṣu tāta caran dharmāṁ nātivarteḥ satāṁ gatim/ vṛddhāyā dharmasīlāyā mātur nārhasy avaritum, asyās tu vacanaṁ kurvan nātivarteḥ satāṁ gatim/ bharatasya vacaḥ kurvan yācamānasya rāghava, ātmānaṁ nātivartes tvaṁ satyadharmaparākrama/ evaṁ madhuram uktas tu guruṇā rāghavaḥ svayam, pratyuvāca samāsīnaṁ vasiṣṭhaṁ puruṣarṣabhaḥ/ yan mātāpitarau vṛttaṁ tanaye kurutaḥ sadā, na supratikaraṁ tat tu mātṛā pitṛā ca yat kṛtam/ yathāśakti pradānena snāpanāc chādanena ca, nityaṁ ca priyavādena tathā samvardhanena ca/ sa hi rājā janayitā pitā daśaratho mama, ājñātaṁ yan mayā tasya na tan mithyā bhaviṣyati/ evam uktas tu rāmeṇa bhārataḥ pratyantaram, uvāca paramodāraḥ sūtaṁ paramadurmanāḥ/ iha me sthaṇḍile śīghraṁ kuśān āstara sārathē, āryaṁ

pratyupavekṣyāmi yāvan me na prasīdati/ anāhāro nirāloko dhanahīno yathā dvijaḥ, śeṣye purastāc chālāyā yāvan na pratiyāsyati/ sa tu rāmam avekṣantaṁ sumantraṁ prekṣya durmanāḥ, kuśottaram upasthāpya bhūmāv evāstarat svayam/ tam uvāca mahātejā rāmo rājarṣisattamāḥ, kim mām bharata kurvāṇaṁ tāta pratyupavekṣyasi/ brāhmaṇo hy ekapārśvena narān roddhum ihārhati, na tu mūrdhāva - siktānām vidhiḥ pratyupaveśane/ uttiṣṭha naraśārdūla hitvaitad dāruṇaṁ vratam, puravaryām itaḥ kṣipram ayodhyām yāhi rāghava/ āsīnas tv eva bharataḥ paurajānapadam janam, uvāca sarvataḥ prekṣya kim āryaṁ nānuśāsatha/ te tam ūcur mahātmānaṁ paurajānapadā janāḥ, kākutstham abhijānīmaḥ samyag vadati rāghavaḥ/ eṣo 'pi hi mahābhāgaḥ pitur vacasi tiṣṭhati, ata eva na śaktāḥ smo vyāvartayitum añjasā/ teṣāṁ ājñāya vacanaṁ rāmo vacanam abravīt, evaṁ nibodha vacanaṁ suhr̥dām dharmacakṣuṣām/ etac caivobhayaṁ śrutvā samyak saṁpaśya rāghava, uttiṣṭha tvaṁ mahābāho mām ca spr̥śa tathodakam/ athothāya jalaṁ spr̥ṣṭvā bharato vākyam abravīt, śṛṇvantu me pariśado mantriṇaḥ śreṇayas tathā/ na yāce pitaraṁ rājyaṁ nānuśāsāmi mātaram, āryaṁ paramadharmajñam abhijānāmi rāghavam/ yadi tv avaśyaṁ vastavyaṁ kartavyaṁ ca pitur vacaḥ, aham eva nivatsyāmi caturdaśa vane samāḥ/ dharmātmā tasya tathyena bhrātur vākyena vismitaḥ, uvāca rāmaḥ saṁprekṣya paurajānapadam janam/ vikrītam āhitaṁ krītaṁ yat pitrā jīvatā mama, na tal lopayitum śakyaṁ mayā vā bharatena vā/ upadhīr na mayā kāryo vanavāse jugupsitaḥ, yuktam uktaṁ ca kaikeyyā pitrā me sukṛtaṁ kṛtam/ jānāmi bharataṁ kṣāntaṁ gurusatkāra-kāriṇam, sarvam evātra kalyāṇaṁ satyasaṁdhe mahātmani/ anena dharmāśīlena vanāt pratyāgataḥ punaḥ, bhrātrā saha bhaviṣyāmi pṛthivyāḥ patir uttamaḥ/ vṛto rājā hi kaikeyyā mayā tad vacanaṁ kṛtam, anṛtān mocayānena pitaraṁ taṁ mahīpatim/

Maharshi Vasishtha while seeking to persuade Rama to return to Ayodhya and assume the Kingship further advises Rama that in the context of men of virtue, three preceptors were stated as significant- Acharya-Pita- and Maata. Fathers are the roots of birth and Acharyas provide 'Jnaana'. Now, the Maharshi was the Guru of both Dasharatha and Rama too and hence the former's directive be taken as supreme. Moreover, the entire public, relatives, guides, co- kings, were unanimous in wishing Rama to Ayodhya and assume kingship. Further, Devi Kousalya as the own mother precedes priority as Scripts prescribe highest primacy as 'Maatru Devo bhava- Pitru Devo bhava- Achaarya Devo bhava'! Raghu nandana Rama! You are the emblem and store-house of Satya-Dharma-Parakrama. Bharata has been earnestly supplicating you to return to Ayodhya and assume Kingship and that would certainly not be an infringement of dharma. Then Shri Rama replied respectfully to Maharshi Vasishtha: *yan mātāpitarau vṛttam tanaye kurutaḥ sadā, na supratikaram tat tu mātrā pitrā ca yat kṛtam/ yathāśakti pradānena snāpanāc chādanena ca, nityaṁ ca priyavādena tathā saṁvardhanena ca/ sa hi rājā janayitā pitā daśaratho mama, ājñātaṁ yan mayā tasya na tan mithyā bhaviṣyati/* In the context of a mother-father-son there always exists a bond of togetherness-affection and closeness. The parents as per their financial and societal limitations afford to their children the best possible physical comforts of food- bed- seating and play by the least possible hurt of the sentiments, good health and mind set. No child in their respective life spans could never ever repay the care and the anxiety of the parents. Now, when my 'janma daata' Maha Raja Dasharatha had given me an instruction and how indeed that could be disobeyed and made futile! As Maharshi and Raja Guru Vasishtha too exhorted Shri Rama and of now avail, Bharata finally addressed Sarathi Sumantra: 'Sumantra! Please spread out 'Kushaagrass' as a mat on this 'vedi' of a rock block and till such time these persuasions, arguments, and Rama's counter replies continue about my return to Ayodhya for kingship, I should follow 'aamarana deeksha' with neither water nor food, - just like a pauper brahmana would perform a 'niraahara deeksha' at the threshold of a 'dhanvaan vaishya' - right opposite Rama's kuteera'. Bharata himself spread out a 'kaushaasana' and got seated. Then Rama addressed Bharata in a vexed up tone: 'Which awful deed have I done for you Bharata as you have been harrasing me in this way! Yes; a Brahmana might do likewise but never a kshatriya!' *uttiṣṭha naraśārdūla hitvaitad dāruṇaṁ vratam, puravaryām itaḥ kṣipram ayodhyām yāhi rāghava/* Raghu nandana Bharata! Do not please take over this 'kathora vrata'; get up and go back to Ayodhya instantly!' Bharata then addressed the public seeing the happenings and asked them to express their views and their representative replied: *te tam ūcur mahātmānaṁ paurajānapadā janāḥ, kākutstham abhijānīmaḥ samyag vadati rāghavaḥ/ eṣo 'pi hi mahābhāgaḥ pitur vacasi tiṣṭhati, ata eva na śaktāḥ smo vyāvartayitum*

añjasā/ ‘Sirs, what Sri Bharata has been pleading for most certainly is justified; yet, Shri Rama has been consistently and most sincerely emphasizing the truth of ‘pitru agjna’ and hence his inability to return’. As the public too expressed their balanced view, Rama addressed Bharata to heed the public opinion of dharma and thus withdraw his ‘kathora vrata’. Bharata stood up and declared having touched water as mark of the pratigjna and asserted: ‘May this be clearly understood by the public, the Ministers and all: Neither I had solicited my father or my mother about the kingdom and at the same time I am not agreeable that Rama should leave for vana vaasa. Yet, as Rama insists for ‘pitru vaakya paripaalata’, I too should follow suit and perform ‘vana vaasa’! ‘ Shri Rama was taken aback at Bharata’s decisiveness and addressed Bharata that late father’s instruction was double edged that Rama should leave for fourteen years and Bharata should rule during that period. *anena dharmasīlena vanāt pratyāgataḥ punaḥ, bhrātrā saha bhaviṣyāmi pṛthivyāḥ patir uttamaḥ/ vṛto rājā hi kaikeyyā mayā tad vacanam kṛtam, anṛtān mocayānena pitaram taṁ mahīpatim/* ‘Therefore, I will most certainly return after fourteen years and assume the kingship; as Devi Kaikeyi sought the two boons, please do accept the kingship for fourteen years and ensure that late father’s directive be not infringed upon!’

Sarga One Hundred and Twelve

As Bharata was not ready yet to return to Ayodhya, Shri Rama grants his ‘charana paadukaas’ and finally bid farewell to Bharata and the entourage

Tam apratimate jobhyām bhrātr̥bhyām romaharṣaṇam, vismitāḥ saṁgamam prekṣya samavetā maharṣayaḥ/ antarhitās tv ṛṣigaṇāḥ siddhās ca paramarṣayaḥ, tau bhrātarau mahātmānau kākutsthau praśaśamsire/ sa dhanyo yasya putrau dvau dharmajñau dharmavikramau, śrutvā vayam hi sambhāṣām ubhayoḥ spr̥hayāmahe/ tatas tv ṛṣigaṇāḥ kṣipram daśagr̥vavadhaisiṇaḥ, bharataṁ rājasārdūlam ity ūcuḥ saṁgatā vacaḥ/ kule jāta mahāprājña mahāvṛtta mahāyaśaḥ, gr̥hyaṁ rāmasya vākyam te pitaram yady avekṣase/ sadānṛnam imam rāmam vayam icchāmahe pituḥ, anṛnatvāc ca kaikeyyāḥ svargam daśaratho gataḥ/ etāvad uktvā vacanam gandharvāḥ samaharṣayaḥ, rājarṣayaś caiva tathā sarve svām svām gatim gatāḥ/ hlāditas tena vākyena śubhena śubhadarśanaḥ, rāmaḥ saṁhṛṣṭavadanas tān ṛṣiṇ abhyapūjayat/ srastagātras tu bharataḥ sa vācā sajjamānayā, kṛtāñjalir idam vākyam rāghavam punar abravīt/ rājadharmam anuprekṣya kuladharmānusaṁtatim, kartum arhasi kākutstha mama mātuś ca yācanām/ rakṣitum sumahad rājyam aham ekas tu notsahe, pauraṅjanapadāmś cāpi raktān rañjayitum tathā/ jñātayaś ca hi yodhāś ca mitrāṇi suhṛdaś ca naḥ, tvām eva pratikāṅkṣante parjanyaṁ iva karṣakāḥ/ idam rājyam mahāprājña sthāpaya pratipadya hi, śaktimān asi kākutstha lokasya paripālana/ ity uktvā nyapatad bhrātuh pādāyor bharatas tadā, bhṛṣam saṁprārthayām āsa rāmam evam priyam vadaḥ/ tam aṅke bhrātaram kṛtvā rāmo vacanam abravīt, śyāmaṁ nalinapatrākṣam mattahaṁsasvaraḥ svayam/ āgatā tvām iyam buddhiḥ svajā vainayikī ca yā, bhṛṣam utsahase tāta rakṣitum pṛthivīm apī amātyaiś ca suhṛdbhiś ca buddhimadbhiś ca mantribhiḥ, sarvakāryāṇi saṁmantrya sumahānty api kāraya/ lakṣmīś candrād apeyād vā himavān vā himam tyajet, atīyāt sāgaro velām na pratijñam aham pituḥ/ kāmād vā tāta lobhād vā mātrā tubhyam idam kṛtam, na tan manasi kartavyam vartitavyam ca mātṛvat/ evam bruvāṇam bharataḥ kausalyāsutam abravīt, tejasādityasamkāśam pratipaccandradarśanam/ adhirohārya pādābhyām pādūke hemabhūṣite, ete hi sarvalokasya yogakṣemaṁ vidhāsyataḥ/ so ’dhiruhya naravyāghraḥ pādūke hy avaruhya ca, prāyacchat sumahātejā bharatāya mahātmāne/ sa pādūke te bharataḥ pratāpavān; svalamkṛte saṁparigr̥hya dharmavit, pradakṣiṇam caiva cakāra rāghavam; cakāra caivottamanāgamūrdhani/ athānupūrvyāt pratipūjya taṁ janaṁ; gurūmś ca mantriprakṛtīś tathānujau, vyasarjayad rāghavavamaśavardhanaḥ; sthitaḥ svadharme himavān ivācalaḥ/ taṁ mātaro bāṣpaḡhīta - kaṅtho; duḥkhena nāmantrayitum hi śekuḥ, sa tv eva mātṛr̥ abhivādya sarvā; rudan kuṭim svām praviveśa rāmah/

As Shri Rama thus has almost got convinced Bharata that after all, he should return back to Ayodhya after the interregnum of fourteen years of vana vaasa any way, the Rishis tried to clinch Bharata’s wavering mind especially as they possess the futuristic vision of Ravana’s killing by Shri Rama and

therefore made the conclusive persuasion of Bharata. As the group of Maharshis thus supported his assurance of returning back thereafter, Rama complemented the Maharshis. Bharata too was somewhat softened his outlook and stated: ‘As you surely are aware the ‘kula dharma’ emphasizes that the eldest son only is eligible to Kingship and only to please my mother I might perhaps be constrained to agree to a mere and purely temporary dispensation of maintaining the name of the kingdom which might please only my mother; however, surely I would not be able to meet the expectations of the public of the kingdom. *jñātayaś ca hi yodhāś ca mitrāṇi suhṛdaś ca naḥ, tvām eva pratikāṅkṣante parjanyaṃ iva karṣakāḥ/ idam rājyaṃ mahāprājña sthāpaya pratipadya hi, śaktimān asi kākutstha lokasya paripālana/* Just as a farmer keeps on waiting for the close of your vana vaasa, the kingdom’s public, sena, friends, relatives should certainly be awaiting your return. So saying, Bharata collapsed and touched Ramas’ ‘paadukaas’ the wooden foot wear. Rama lifed up and said: Bharata! You are by nature very modest but surely you possess the in- built in capability of administering the universe. Besides, you have the masterly ability of maneuvering and tactical treatment from the ministers and and wellwishers. As you realise, respected father’s ought be preserved, even if Moon might lose its shine, Himalayas be bereft of ice, or oceans might transgress their boundaries. What mother Kaikeyi might have acted out of selfish interest in your own favour be not entered in your mind keep normalcy for what had happened. Then Bharata replied with great devotion: *adhirohārya pādābhyām pādūke hemabhūṣite, ete hi sarvalokasya yogakṣemaṃ vidhāsyataḥ/ so ’dhiruhya naravyāghraḥ pādūke hy avaruhya ca, prāyacchat sumahātejā bharatāya mahātmane/ Arya! The pair of your ‘paadukas’ be kindly rested on me as a symbol of ‘loka raksha’ and universal peace and security!* Then Shri Rama obliged accordindjly. Then Bharata asserted: *sa pādūke te bharataḥ pratāpavān; svalamkṛte saṃparigr̥hya dharmavit, pradakṣiṇaṃ caiva cakāra rāghavaṃ; cakāra caivottamanāgamūrdhani/ athānupūrvyāt pratipūjya taṃ janaṃ; gurūṃś ca mantriprakṛtīs tathānujau, vyasarjayad rāghavavaṃśavardhanaḥ; sthitaḥ svadharme himavān ivācalaḥ/* ‘Raghu nandana! I swear by these Rama Padukas that for the next fourteen years wear jataa-cheeras and consume only roots nd fruits awiting your arrival outside Ayodhya and by retaining your padukas on a throne and carry on my Raja Dharmas.’ Shri Rama was mightily pleased. He further stated that on his behalf as also from Sita, Bharata should safeguard Devi Kaikeyi and never get annoyed with her. Thereafter *sa pādūke te bharataḥ pratāpavān; svalamkṛte saṃparigr̥hya dharmavit, pradakṣiṇaṃ caiva cakāra rāghavaṃ; cakāra caivottamanāgamūrdhani/ athānupūrvyāt pratipūjya taṃ janaṃ; gurūṃś ca mantriprakṛtīs tathānujau, vyasarjayad rāghavavaṃśavardhanaḥ; sthitaḥ svadharme himavān ivācalaḥ/* Bharata then performed a parikrama around the ‘padukas’ and kept on his head as a king on an elephant head. Further, Shri Rama having thanked the public that arrived from the Kingdom, Gurus, Mantris and both Bharata and Shatrughnas. At that time Devis Koushalya and other mothers kept on crying away as Rama- Sita- Lakshmanas returned to their ‘Kuteera’.

Sarga On Hundred and Thirteen

Bharata and the entourage reach back to Maharshi Bharadwaja’s ashram and return to Ayodhya

Tataḥ śirasi kṛtvā tu pādūke bharatas tadā, āruroha rathaṃ hṛṣṭaḥ śatrughnena samanvitaḥ/ vasiṣṭho vāmadevaś ca jābālīś ca dṛḍhavrataḥ, agrataḥ prayayuh sarve mantriṇo mantrapūjitāḥ/ mandākinīm nadīm ramyām prāṇmukhās te yayus tadā, pradakṣiṇaṃ ca kurvāṇāś citrakūtaṃ mahāgirim/ paśyan dhātusahasrāṇi ramyāṇi vividhāni ca, prayayau tasya pārśvena sasainyo bharatas tadā/ adūrāc citrakūtasya dadarśa bharatas tadā, āśramaṃ yatra sa munir bharadvājaḥ kṛtālayaḥ/ sa taṃ āśramam āgamyā bharadvājasya buddhimān, avatīrya rathāt pādau vavande kulanandanāḥ/ tato hṛṣṭo bharadvājo bharataṃ vākyam abravīt, api kṛtyaṃ kṛtaṃ tāta rāmeṇa ca samāgatam/ evam uktas tu bharato bharadvājena dhīmatā, pratyuvāca bharadvājaṃ bharato dharmavatsalaḥ/ sa yācyamāno guruṇā mayā ca dṛḍhavikramaḥ, rāghavaḥ paramaprīto vasiṣṭhaṃ vākyam abravīt/ pituḥ pratijñāṃ tām eva pālayiṣyāmi tattvataḥ, caturdaśa hi varṣāṇi ya pratijñā pitur mama/ evam ukto mahāprājño vasiṣṭhaḥ pratyuvāca ha, vākyajño vākyakuśalaṃ rāghavaṃ vacanaṃ mahat/ ete prayaccha saṃhṛṣṭaḥ pādūke hemabhūṣite, ayodhyāyām mahāprājña yogakṣemakare tava/ evam ukto vasiṣṭhena rāghavaḥ

prānmukhaḥ sthitaḥ, pādūke hemavikṛte mama rājyāya te dadau/ nivṛtto 'ham anujñāto rāmeṇa sumahātmanā, ayodhyām eva gacchāmi gṛhītvā pādūke śubhe/ etac chrutvā śubham vākyam bharatasya mahātmanaḥ, bharadvājaḥ śubhatarām munir vākyam udāharat/ naitac citram naravyāghra śīlavṛttavatām vara, yad āryam tvayi tiṣṭhet tu nimne vṛṣṭim ivodakam/ amṛtaḥ sa mahābāhuḥ pitā daśarathas tava, yasya tvam īdṛśaḥ putro dharmātmā dharmavatsalaḥ/ tam ṛṣim tu mahātmānam uktavākyam kṛtāñjaliḥ, āmantrayitum ārebhe caraṇāv upagṛhya ca/ tataḥ pradakṣiṇam kṛtvā bharadvājam punaḥ punaḥ, bharatas tu yayau śrīmān ayodhyām saha mantribhiḥ/ yānaiś ca śakataiś caiva hayaiś nāgaiś ca sā camūḥ, punar nivṛttā vistīrṇā bharatasyānuyāyini/ tatas te yamunām divyām nadīm tīrtvormimālinīm, dadṛśus tāṁ punaḥ sarve gaṅgām śivajalām nadīm/ tāṁ ramyajalasaṁpūrṇām samtūrya saha bāndhavaḥ, śṛṅgaverapuraṁ ramyam praviveśa sasainikaḥ/ śṛṅgaverapurād bhūya ayodhyām saṁdadarśa ha, bharato duḥkhasaṁtaptaḥ sārathim cedam abravīt/ sārathe paśya vidhvastā ayodhyā na prakāśate, nirākārā nirānandā dīnā pratihatasvanā/

Carrying on his head the ‘Shri Rama Paada Paadukaas’ and seated on the chariot driven by Sumantra, Bharata along with Shatrughna proceeded back to Ayodhya, even as Maharshis Vasishtha, Vaama Deva, Jaabaali, and Minsters ahead and the entourage followed. The procession having circumambulated the Chirtakura mountain range and crossing the Sacred Mandakini River proceeded eastward. On the way was the Maharshi Bharadwaja ashram and Bharata stopped over, greeted the Maharshi who asked about his Shri Rama darsahana as Bharata replied that he requested Rama to return in several manners. But Vashishta Maharshi intervenened and said Rama was firm to follow Pitru vakyas and observe vana vaasa as prescribed. *Ete prayaccha samhr̥ṣṭaḥ pādūke hemabhūṣite, ayodhyāyām mahāprājña yogakṣemakare tava/* Yet Rama obliged Bharara by bestowing his ‘swarna paadukas’ as his representative so that Bharata could carry on administrative duties till his return back. .Bharadwaja Maharshi then blessed Bharata: *naitac citram naravyāghra śīlavṛttavatām vara, yad āryam tvayi tiṣṭhet tu nimne vṛṣṭim ivodakam/ amṛtaḥ sa mahābāhuḥ pitā daśarathas tava, yasya tvam īdṛśaḥ putro dharmātmā dharmavatsalaḥ/* Bharata! You are an outstanding human being who is not only intrepid warrior but an exemplary ‘sheela vritta vida’ or of excellent tradition of ‘sadaachaara’. Indeed it is not surprising that waterflows are well aware of their directions and you too are of features of great virtue as well. You are right within the footprints of your great father King Dasharatha who too was a dharma premi and dharmatma!’ Then Bharata and all others thanked the Maharshi Bharadwaja and returned Ayodhya. Bharata then realised and adressed Sumantra as to in which pitiable state that Ayodhya was lying!

Sarga One Hundred and Fourteen

On return to Ayodhyam Bharata realises the sad state of the city of Ayodhya

Snigdha gambhīraghoṣeṇa syandanenopayān prabhuḥ, ayodhyām bharataḥ kṣipram praviveśa mahāyaśāḥ/ biḍālolūkacaritām ālīnanaravāraṇām, timirābhyāhatām kālīm aprakāśām niśām iva/ rāhuśatroḥ priyām patnīm śriyā prajvalitaprabhām, graheṇābhyutthitenaikām rohiṇīm iva pīḍitām/ alpoṣṇakṣubdhasalilām gharmottaptavihaṁgamām, līnamīnajaḥsagrāhām kṛśām girinadīm iva/ vidhūmām iva hemābhām adhvarāgnisamutthitām, havirabhyukṣitām paścāc chikhām vipralayam gatām/ vidhvastakavacām rugṇagajavājirathadhvajām hatapravīrām āpannām camūm iva mahāhave/ saphenām sasvanām bhūtvā sāgarasya samutthitām praśāntamārutoddhūtām jalormim iva niḥsvanām/ tyaktām yajñāyudhaiḥ sarvair abhirūpaiś ca yājakaiḥ, sutyākāle vinirvṛtte vediṁ gataravām iva/ goṣṭhamadhye sthitām ārtām acarantīm navam tṛṇam, govṛṣeṇa parityaktām gavām patnīm ivotsukām/ prabhākarālaiḥ susnigdhaiḥ prajvaladbhir ivottamaiḥ, viyuktām mañibhir jātyair navām muktāvalīm iva/ sahasā calitām sthānān mahīm puṇyakṣayād gatām, samhṛtadyutivistārām tārām iva divaś cyutām/a puspanaddhām vasantānte mattabhramarāsālinīm, drutadāvāgnivipluṣṭām klāntām vanalatām iva/ saṁmūḍhanigamām sarvām saṁkṣiptavipaṇāpaṇām, pracchannaśāśinakṣatrām dyām ivāmbudharair vṛtām/ kṣiṇapānottamair bhinnaiḥ śarāvair abhisamvṛtām, hataśauṇḍām ivākāse pānabhūmim asaṁskṛtām/ vṛkṇabhūmitalām nimnām vṛkṇapātraiḥ samāvṛtām, upayuktodakām bhagnām prapām nipatitām iva/ vipulām vitatām caiva

yuktapāsām tarasvinām, bhūmau bānair viniṣkṛttām patitām jyām ivāyudhāt/ sahasā yuddhaśaundena hayāroheṇa vāhitām, nikṣiptabhāṇḍām utsṛṣṭām kiśorīm iva durbalām/ prāvṛṣi pravigāḍhāyām praviṣṭasyābhra maṇḍalam, pracchannām nīlajīmūtair bhāskarasya prabhām iva/ bharatas tu rathasthaḥ sañ śrīmān daśarathātmajaḥ, vāhayantaṁ rathasreṣṭhaṁ sārathim vākyam abravīt/ kiṁ nu khalv adya gambhīro mūrchito na niśamyate, yathāpuram ayodhyāyām gītavāditraniḥsvanaḥ/ vāruṇīmadagandhās ca mālyagandhaś ca mūrchitaḥ, dhūpitāgarugandhaś ca na pravāti samantataḥ/ yānapravaraghoṣaś ca snigdhaś ca hayaniḥsvanaḥ, pramattagajanādaś ca mahāms ca rathaniḥsvanaḥ, nedānīm śrūyate puryām asyām rāme vivāsīte/ taruṇaiś cāru veśaiś ca narair unnatagāmibhiḥ, saṁpatadbhir ayodhyāyām na vibhānti mahāpathāḥ/ evaṁ bahuvīdhaṁ jalpan viveśa vasatiṁ pituḥ, tena hīnām narendreṇa simhahīnām guhām iva/

As Bharata entered Ayodhya, it was early evening when streets were empty, none was on the roads, all the doors were shut, and the night was of 'krishna paksha' with moon in the wane. The city was in mourning as neither veda ghoshanas by brahmanas, normal business in the markets, nor groups of public in the public gardens. Bharata asked Saarthi Sumantra: *kiṁ nu khalv adya gambhīro mūrchito na niśamyate, yathāpuram ayodhyāyām gītavāditraniḥsvanaḥ/ vāruṇīmadagandhās ca mālyagandhaś ca mūrchitaḥ, dhūpitāgarugandhaś ca na pravāti samantataḥ/ yānapravaraghoṣaś ca snigdhaś ca hayaniḥsvanaḥ, pramattagajanādaś ca mahāms ca rathaniḥsvanaḥ, nedānīm śrūyate puryām asyām rāme vivāsīte/* How is it that there is neither music-nor dance heard or visible and how horrible is the situation now! There are no widespread flavors of scents, nor smells of sweet drinks, sounds of horse carriages, elephant and chariot rides? As Shri Rama left, the city has gone lonely, silent, lifeless and totally inactive. What is worse, the inhabitants are dull, vexed up, ever cursing the fate and with no desire and hope of recovery!

Sarga One Hundred and Fifteen

Bharata instals Shri Rama 'Paadukaas' at Nandigram and administers Ayodhya from there

Tato nikṣipyā mātṛḥ sa ayodhyāyām dṛḍhavrataḥ, bharataḥ śokasāmtapto gurūn idam athābravīt/ nandigrāmaṁ gamiṣyāmi sarvān āmantraye 'dya vaḥ, tatra duḥkham idaṁ sarvaṁ sahiṣye rāghavaṁ vinā/ gataś ca hi divaṁ rājā vanasthaś ca gurur mama, rāmaṁ pratikṣe rājyāya sa hi rājā mahāyāsāḥ/ etac chrutvā śubhaṁ vākyam bharatasya mahātmanaḥ, abruvan mantriṇaḥ sarve vasiṣṭhaś ca purohitaḥ/ sadṛśaṁ ślāghanīyam ca yad uktaṁ bharata tvayā, vacanaṁ bhrātrvātsalyād anurūpaṁ tavaiva tat/ nityaṁ te bandhulubdhasya tiṣṭhato bhrātrṣauḥḍe āryamārgaṁ prapannasya nānumanyeta kaḥ pumān/ mantriṇām vacanaṁ śrutvā yathābhilaṣitaṁ priyam, abravīt sārathim vākyam ratho me yujyatām iti/ prahṛṣṭavadaṇaḥ sarvā mātṛḥ samabhivādya saḥ, āruroha rathaṁ śrīmāñ śatrughnena samanvitaḥ/ āruhya tu rathaṁ śīghraṁ śatrughnabharatāv ubhau, yayatuḥ paramaprītau vṛtau mantripurohitaiḥ/ agrato puravas tatra vasiṣṭha pramukhā dvijāḥ, prayayuh prānmukhāḥ sarve nandigrāmo yato 'bhavat/ balaṁ ca tad anāhūtaṁ gajāsvarathasaṁkulam, prayayau bharate yāte sarve ca puravāsinaḥ/ rathasthaḥ sa tu dharmātmā bharato bhrātrvatsalaḥ, nandigrāmaṁ yayau tūrṇaṁ śirasy ādhāya pādūke/ tatas tu bharataḥ kṣipraṁ nandigrāmaṁ praviśya saḥ, avatīrya rathāt tūrṇaṁ gurūn idam uvāca ha/ etad rājyam mama bhrātrā dattaṁ saṁnyāsavat svayam, yogakṣemavahe ceme pādūke hemabhūṣite, tam imaṁ pālayiṣyāmi rāghavāgamaṇaṁ prati/ kṣipraṁ saṁyojayitvā tu rāghavasya punaḥ svayam, caraṇau tau tu rāmasya drakṣyāmi sahapādūkau/ tato nikṣiptabhāro 'haṁ rāghaveṇa samāgataḥ. nivedya gurave rājyam bhajiṣye guruvṛttitām/ rāghavāya ca saṁnyāsaṁ dattveme varapādūke, rājyam cedam ayodhyām ca dhūtapāpo bhavāmi ca/ abhiṣikte tu kākutsthe prahṛṣṭamudite jane, prītir mama yaśaś caiva bhaved rājyāc caturguṇam/ evaṁ tu vilapan dīno bharataḥ sa mahāyāsāḥ, nandigrāme 'karod rājyam duḥkhito mantribhiḥ saha/ sa valkalaḥjādhārī muniveśadharaḥ prabhūḥ, nandigrāme 'vasad vīraḥ sasainyo bharatas tadā/ rāmāgamaṇaṁ ākāṅkṣan bharato bhrātrvatsalaḥ, bhrātur vacanakārī ca pratijñāpāragas tadā/ pādūke tv abhiṣicyātha nandigrāme 'vasat tadā, bharataḥ śāsanam sarvaṁ pādūkābhyām nyavedayat/

Bharata then having left the mothers at Ayodhya sought the permission of the Gurus to proceed to Nandigraama as he stated that he was unable to stay and administer from Ayodhya with the unending memories of his father and in the absence of Shri Rama the genuine king of Ayodhya. Maharshi Vasishtha appreciated Bharat's decision: *sadyśam ślāghaniyam ca yad uktam bharata tvayā, vacanam bhrātrvātsalyād anurūpam tavaiva tat/ nityam te bandhulubdhasya tiṣṭhato bhrātr̥sauhr̥de āryamārgam prapannasya nānumanyeta kaḥ pumān/* Bharata! I am appreciative of your 'Bhraatru bhakti' the elder brother's devotion and that is truly reflective of your genuineness. All along the way your great concern for and demand on Rama to return was genuine but that was not to be and now your decisiveness to move out to Nandigrama to install Rama paadukas on a throne is laudable indeed'. Then Bharata having received the blessings of the mothers asked Sumantra to proceed to Nandigraama with the Gurus ahead of him with the Rama Padukas on his hear along with Shatrughnaa. Even without his command, the sena and the significant citizens accompanied. On reaching Nandigrama, Bharata declared to the public as follows: *etad rājyam mama bhrātrā dattam samnyāsavat svayam, yogakṣemavahe ceme pāduke hemabhūṣite, tam imam pālayiṣyāmi rāghavāgamanam prati/* 'My elder brother has asked me to preserve the Kingdom on his behalf and as such I am placing his golden footwear on the throne as his representative for the time being for the welfare of you all.' Then Bharata addressed the ministers, senapati and the officials as follows: *kṣipram samyojayitvā tu rāghavasya punaḥ svayam, caraṇau tau tu rāmasya drakṣyāmi sahapādukaḥ/ tato nikṣiptabhāro 'ham rāghaveṇa samāgataḥ. nivedya gurave rājyam bhajiṣye guruvṛttitām/* Having administered the kingdom accordingly till Rama's arrival, the same would be returned safely and rededicate the 'paadukaas' back at his feet and be relieved of the responsibility thenceforth. *abhiṣikte tu kākutshe prahr̥ṣtamudite jane, prītir mama yaśas caiva bhaved rājyāc caturguṇam/* Only when Kaakutstha kubabhushana Shri Rama is once made the King of Ayodhya and the public were to be contented with unbelievable pleasure that I could feel thrilled four times over that my attaining kingship in purely shortest duration.

Stanza One Hundred Sixteen

All the Rishis of Chitra koota commenced leaving the place due to problems of Rakshasas

_Pratiprayāte bharate vasan rāmas tapovane, lakṣayām āsa sodvegam athautsukyām tapasvinām/ ye tatra citrakūṭasya purastāt tāpasāsrame, rāmam āsṛitya niratās tām alakṣayad utsukān/ nayanair bhṛkuṭibhīś ca rāmam nirdīṣya śaṅkitāḥ, anyonyam upajalpantaḥ śanaś cakrur mithaḥ kathāḥ/ teṣām autsukyām ālakṣya rāmas tv ātmani śaṅkitāḥ, kṛtāñjalir uvācedam ṛṣim kulapatiḥ tataḥ/ na kaccid bhagavan kim cit pūrvavṛttam idam mayi, dṛśyate vikṛtam yena vikriyante tapasvinaḥ/ pramādāc caritam kaccit kim cin nāvarajasya me, lakṣmaṇasyarṣibhir dṛṣtam nānurūpam ivātmanaḥ./ kaccic chuśrūsamāṇā vaḥ śuśrūṣaṇa parā mayi, pramadābhyucitām vṛttim sītā yuktam na vartate/ atharṣir jarayā vṛddhas tapasā ca jarām gataḥ, vepamāna ivovāca rāmam bhūtadayāparam/ kutaḥ kalyāṇasattvāyāḥ kalyāṇābhirates tathā, calanam tāta vaidehyās tapasviṣu viśeṣataḥ/ tvannimittam idam tāvat tāpasān prati vartate, rakṣobhyas tena samvignāḥ kathayanti mithaḥ kathāḥ/ rāvaṇāvarajaḥ kaś cit kharo nāmeha rākṣasaḥ, utpātya tāpasān sarvāṅ janasthānaniketanān/ dhṛṣṭas ca jitakāśī ca nṛśamsaḥ puruṣādakaḥ, avaliptas ca pāpas ca tvām ca tāta na mṛśyate/ tvām yadā prabhṛti hy asminn āsrame tāta vartase, tadā prabhṛti rakṣāmsi viprakurvanti tāpasā/ darśayanti hi bībhatsaiḥ krūrair bhīṣaṇakair api, nānā rūpair virūpais ca rūpair asukhadarśanaīḥ/ aprasastair aśucibhiḥ samprayojya ca tāpasān, pratighnanty aparān kṣipram anāryāḥ purataḥ sthitaḥ/ teṣu teṣv āśramasthāneṣv abuddham avalīya ca, ramante tāpasāms tatra nāśayanto 'lpacetasāḥ./ apakṣipanti srugbhāṇḍān agnīn siṅcanti vāriṇā, kalaśāms ca pramṛdnanti havane samupa sthite/ tair durātmbhir āviṣṭān āśramān prajihāsavaḥ, gamanāyānyadeśasya codayanty ṛṣayo 'dya mām/ tat purā rāma sārīrām upahimsām tapasviṣu, darśayati hi duṣṭās te tyakṣyāma imam āśramam/ bahumūlaphalam citram avidūrād ito vānam, purāṇāśramam evāham śrayiṣye saganāḥ punaḥ/ kharas tvayy api cāyuktam purā tāta pravartate, sahāsmābhir ito gaccha yadi buddhiḥ pravartate/ sakalatrasya samdeho nityam yat tasya rāghava, samarthasyāpi hi sato vāso duḥkha ihādyā te/ ity uktavantam rāmas

taṁ rājaputras tapasvinam, na śaśāḱottarair vākyair avarodduṁ samutsukam/ abhinandya samāpṛcchya samādhāya ca rāghavam, sa jagāmāśramam tyaktvā kulaiḥ kulapatiḥ saha/ rāmaḥ saṁsādhya tv ṛṣigaṇam anugamanād; deśāt tasmāccit kulapatim abhivādyarṣim, samyakpṛitais tair anumata upadiṣṭārthaḥ; puṇyam vāsāya svanilayam upasāmpede/ āśramam tv ṛṣivirahitam prabhuḥ; kṣaṇam api na jahau sa rāghavaḥ, rāghavam hi satatam anugatās; tāpasās carṣicaritadhṛtaguṇāḥ/

As various Maharshis and tapasvis settled at Chitrakoota commenced moving away from there, even after Ramas settled there, the latter doubted whether they were doing so because of the arrival of Bharata with sena, the public and the havoc thus created. Rama asked a senior of the tapasvis whether there was the havoc, or any indiscretion of him or Lakshmana or of Sita. He replied that this was not due to neither the havoc nor an indiscretion. But: *rāvaṇāvarajaḥ kaś cit kharo nāmeha rākṣasaḥ, utpāṭya tāpasān sarvāñ janasthānaniketanān/ dhṛṣṭas ca jitakāśi ca ṛṣāmsaḥ puruṣādakaḥ, avaliptas ca pāpas ca tvām ca tāta na mṛṣyate/* In these forest areas, Ravana's younger brother Khara and his evil associates are responsible for several evil, heinous, cruel deeds even of 'nara bhakshana'. *darśayanti hi bībhatsaiḥ krūrair bhīṣaṇakair api, nānā rūpair virūpaiś ca rūpair asukhadarśanaiḥ/ apraśastair aśucibhiḥ saṁprayojya ca tāpasān, pratighnanty aparān kṣipram anāryāḥ purataḥ sthitaḥ/* These Rakshasas are creating mahem and devastation, and all cruel acts. They tend to harm the body parts of the tapasvis and regale the atrocities. *apakṣipanti srugbhāṇḍān agnīn siñcanti vāriṇā, kalasāms ca pramṛḍnanti havane samupa sthite/* They throw the ladles of ghee helter skelter, and destroy homa karyas and heckle 'mantra uchhaaranas' and so on. That is why the reaction to the cruel acts. Shri Rama, there is a much safer place not too far where there is stated as of ample availability of fruits and roots and free from disturbances. We shall request you to please accompany us so that Khara rakshasa's associates are not troubled and facilitate us without any harassment. Rama then immediately let the departing tapasvis travel safely without any hitch.

Sarga One Hundred Seventeen

Sita Rama Lakshmanas too decided to leave Chitrakoota and proceeded to Maharashi Ashram of Atri and Maha Pativrata Anasuya

Rāghavas tv apayāteṣu tapasviṣu vicintayan, na tatrārocayad vāsam kāraṇair bahubhis tadā/ iha me bharato dṛṣṭo mātaraś ca sanāgarāḥ, sā ca me smṛtir anveti tān nityam anuśocataḥ/skandhāvāraniveśena tena tasya mahātmanaḥ, hayahastikarīṣaiś ca upamardaḥ kṛto bhṛṣam/ tasmād anyatra gacchāma iti saṁcintya rāghavaḥ, prātiṣṭhata sa vaidehyā lakṣmaṇena ca saṁgataḥ/ so 'trer āśramam āsādyā taṁ vavande mahāyāsāḥ, taṁ cāpi bhagavān atriḥ putravat pratyapadyata/ svayam ātiithyam ādiśya sarvam asya susatkr̥tam, saumitriṁ ca mahābhāgām sītām ca samasāntvayat/ patnīm ca tam anuprāptām vṛddhām āmantrya satkr̥tām, sāntvayām āsa dharmajñāḥ sarvabhūtahite rataḥ/ anasūyām mahābhāgām tāpasīm dharmacāriṇīm, pratigr̥hṇīṣva vaidehīm abravīd ṛṣisattamaḥ/ rāmāya cācacakṣe tām tāpasīm dharmacāriṇīm, daśa varṣāṇy anāvṛṣṭyā dagdhe loke nirantaram/ yayā mūlaphale sṛṣṭe jāhnavī ca pravartitā, ugreṇa tapasā yuktā niyamaiś cāpy alamkr̥tā/ daśavarṣasahasrāṇi yayā taptam mahat tapaḥ, anasūyāvṛatais tāta pratyūhās ca nibarhitāḥ/ devakāryanimittam ca yayā saṁtvaramāṇayā/ daśarātram kṛtvā rātriḥ seyam māteva te 'nagha, tām imām sarvabhūtānām namaskāryām yaśasvinīm, abhigacchatu vaidehī vṛddhām akrodhanām sadā/ evam bruvāṇam tam ṛṣim tathety uktvā sa rāghavaḥ, sītām uvāca dharmajñām idam vacanam uttamam, rājaputri śrutam tv etan muner asya samīritam, śreyo 'rtham ātmanaḥ śīghram abhigaccha tapasvinīm, anasūyeti yā loke karmabhiḥ kyātim āgatā, tām śīghram abhigaccha tvam abhigamyām tapasvinīm/ sītā tv etad vacaḥ śrutvā rāghavasya hitaiṣiṇī, tām atripatnīm dharmajñām abhicakrāma maithilī/ sīthilām valitām vṛddhām jarāpāṇḍuramūrdhajām, satatam vepamānāṅgīm pravāte kadālī yathā/ tām tu sītā mahābhāgām anasūyām pativratām, abhyavādayad avyagrā svam nāma samudāhara/ abhivādyā ca vaidehī tāpasīm tām aninditām, baddhāñjalipuṭā hr̥ṣṭā paryapṛcchad anāmayaṁ/ tataḥ sītām mahābhāgām dṛṣṭvā tām dharmacāriṇīm, sāntvayanty abravīd dhṛṣṭā diṣṭyā dharmam avekṣase/ tyaktvā jñātijaṇam sīte mānam ṛddhiṁ ca māniṇi, avaruddham vane

rāmam diṣṭyā tvam anugacchasi/ nagarastho vanastho vā pāpo vā yadi vāśubhaḥ, yāsām strīṇām priyo bhartā tāsām lokā mahodayāḥ/ duḥśīlaḥ kāmavṛtto vā dhanair vā parivarjitaḥ, strīṇām ārya svabhāvānām paramam daivatam patih/ nāto viśiṣṭam paśyāmi bāndhavam vimṛśanty aham, sarvatra yogyam vaidehi tapaḥ kṛtam ivāvyayam/ na tv evam avagacchanti guṇa doṣam asat striyaḥ, kāmavaktavyahṛdayā bhartṛnāthās caranti yāḥ/ prāpnuvanty ayaśās caiva dharmabhraṁśam ca maithili, akārya vaśam āpannāḥ striyo yāḥ khalu tad vidhāḥ/ tvadvidhās tu guṇair yuktā dṛṣṭalokaparāvarāḥ, striyaḥ svarge cariṣyanti yathā puṇyakṛtas tathā

Having decided to leave Chitrakoota, Sita Rama Lakshmanas proceeded to Maharshi Atri-Maha Pativrata Anasuya's ashram. Maharshi Atri warmly welcomed them and he specially introduced Sita Devi to the illustrious Anasuya. Then Maharshi described the magnanimity and excellence of his wife and narrated an ancient situation when there was 'anaavrishti' or several years of rainlessness and the world was dry, cropless and total dryness. Then Devi Anasuya observed severe most tapasya on the banks of River Mandakinis feeble flows for innumerable years and the situation changed gradually. Rama! This outstanding Devi is therefore worthy of prostration, especially by Devi Sita. Then the Maharshi suggested a private meeting with each other. Anasuya was then extremely old and skinned up while her body shivered seriously. Devi Anasuya then addressed Devi Sita that she was happy as the latter had always followed the path of dharma. *tyaktvā jñātijanam sīte mānam ṛddhim ca mānini, avaruddham vane rāmam diṣṭyā tvam anugacchasi/ nagarastho vanastho vā pāpo vā yadi vāśubhaḥ, yāsām strīṇām priyo bhartā tāsām lokā mahodayāḥ/* Whether your husband lived in a city or a forest, in times of good or bad, a woman is worthy of following him with esteem. Only such progressive minded women attain higher lokas. *duḥśīlaḥ kāmavṛtto vā dhanair vā parivarjitaḥ, strīṇām ārya svabhāvānām paramam daivatam patih/ nāto viśiṣṭam paśyāmi bāndhavam vimṛśanty aham, sarvatra yogyam vaidehi tapaḥ kṛtam ivāvyayam/ na tv evam avagacchanti guṇa doṣam asat striyaḥ, kāmavaktavyahṛdayā bhartṛnāthās caranti yāḥ/* Whether a husband be of good conduct or not, be he rich or poor, whether he likes the wife or not, the husband is like a God! There could be no other closer relative than him but is the singular instrument to reach heavens after death. *na tv evam avagacchanti guṇa doṣam asat striyaḥ, kāmavaktavyahṛdayā bhartṛnāthās caranti yāḥ/ prāpnuvanty ayaśās caiva dharmabhraṁśam ca maithili, akārya vaśam āpannāḥ striyo yāḥ khalu tad vidhāḥ/* A wife who seeks to rule over and control the husband would hardly realise her own weaknesses and thus is timid and a confirmed sinner. Such sinners invariably get entangled in the prison of their misdoings without salvation. Mithileshvari! Such branded women lose their way out of the vicious circles and at the end regret but to no avail. Therefore, Devi Sita, follow the sati dharma always, hold Shri Ramain the highest esteem all through your whole life. That is the singular path of fame and success, come what may!

Vishleshana on Maha Parivrata Anasuya: Brahmashi Narada eulogised Pativrata severally in his hymns and Devis Sarasavati-Lakshmi-Parvati sought to test her chastity and requested the Tri Murtis who approached Anasuya in the absence of husband Maharshi Atri. They as the 'atithis' asked Anasuya for bhojana but desired to serve it in nude state. Anasuya agreed but splashed them with mantric waters and made them as toddlers. The Tri Devis on knowing about this repented and requested the kids back to normalcy. One version of the incident shows that the Tri Murtis merged into the three headed Dattatreya. Markandeya Purana also describes the Maha Paativratya of Anasuya. Markandeya Purana states: The exemplary Parivratya of Devi Anasuya: There was a Brahmana named Kaushika who was a leper by virtue of his fate but he had Kaushiki as the 'Pativrata' devoted to her husband. She would perform all physical services to the husband of cleaning, washing and all other ablutions to this extent of removing body rejects and the blood oozing from his wounds. The disabled husband was short tempered and nagging but she considered him as her Deva and worshipped him, fulfilling each and every desire of his. Once he longed for an attractive prostitute in bed as he saw her in the morning and insisted for her by the night. The wife searched for her all over with a view to beg her to sleep with him despite his contagious disease; she would try to locate her some how, offer her lot of money and also try to convince her in the name of mercy! The wife carried the husband on her shoulders at the night time but unfortunately due to

darkness, she tripped on the road side and his legs hit a Sage Mandya in deep meditation. The angry Sage gave a curse that whosoever disturbed his meditation would die before the Sun rise by the next morning. Having heard the curse of the Sage, the 'Pativrata' made the return 'Pratigya' (challenging vow) that Sun would not appear on the Sky and the night would never be terminated. All the Devas were frightened at the Challenge of the Pativrata and wondered what would happen to the entire Universe in the absence of Swadhyaya, Vashatkaara, Swadha and Swaaha viz. Sun God, as a result of this unfortunate development! In the absence of days and nights, there would not be months and Seasons, no 'Ayanaas' (Uttarayana and Dakshinaayana), no count of Years, and no concept of 'Kaala Gyana' or of Time. If there were no Sun Rise, there would not be 'Snaanaas' nor daily Rituals, no Yagnas, no offerings to Devas through Agni (Fire), no crops to generate food due to drought and thus Universal Balance would be shaken up. Devas prayed to Brahma who advised them to approach the 'Maha Pativrata' Devi Anasuya, the wife of Sage Atri and daughter of Kardama Muni. Anasuya advised Kaushiki about the enormous loss to the World as a result of her Pratigna. Women have the unique task of performing service to husbands while men have other duties like Rituals and that she was proud of Kaushiki as a Pativrata. Even Gods descended to request her and that itself was a proof of her achievement. But the most essential task at that hour would be to facilitate Sun to rise and hence should withdraw her Pratigya. Finally Anasuya declared: *Yatha Bhatru Samamna anyamaham pashyami Devatam, thena satyaena viproyam punarjeevatvanamah.* (If I had never known any Deity as important as my husband, then the Brahmana Kaushik would be reborn afresh devoid of any disease!). Thanks to Anasuya's intervention, the crisis was averted and the Devas blessed her that Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara would be born with Rajasika Guna as Soma (Moon), Vishnu as Dattatreya with Satvika Guna and Siva as Durvasa with Tamasika Guna.

Sarga One hundred and Eighteen

Devis Anasuya and Sita exchange views- Anasuya gives gifts to Sita- Sita describes her 'swayamvara'

Sā tv evam uktā vaidehī anasūyān asūyayā , pratipūjya vaco mandam pravaktum upacakrame/ naitad āścaryam āryāyā yan mām tvam anubhāṣase, viditam tu mamāpy etad yathā nāryāḥ patir guruḥ/ yady apy eṣa bhaved bhartā mamārye vṛttavarjitaḥ, advaidham upavartavyas tathāpy eṣa mayā bhavet/ kim punar yo guṇaślāghyaḥ sānukroṣo jitendriyaḥ sthirānurāgo dharmātmā māṭṛvartī piṭṛ priyaḥ/ yām vṛttim vartate rāmaḥ kausalyāyām mahābalaḥ, tām eva nṛpanārīṇām anyāsām api vartate/ sakṛd dṛṣṭāsv api strīṣu nṛpeṇa nṛpavatsalaḥ, māṭṛvad vartate vīro mānam utsṛjya dharmaviḥ/ āgacchantyās ca vijanaṁ vanam evaṁ bhayāvaham, samāhitam hi me śvaśrvā hṛdaye yat sthitam mama/ prāṇipradānakāle ca yat purā tv agnisamnidhau, anuśiṣṭā jananyāsmi vākyam tad api me dhṛtam/ navikṛtam tu tat sarvaṁ vākyais te dharmacāriṇi, patiśuśrūṣaṇān nāryās tapo nānyad vidhīyate/ sāvitṛī patiśuśrūṣām kṛtvā svarge mahīyate, tathā vṛttis ca yātā tvaṁ patiśuśrūṣayā divam/ variṣṭhā sarvanārīṇām eṣā ca divi devatā, rohiṇī ca vinā candram muhūrtam api dṛṣyate/ evaṁvidhās ca pravarāḥ striyo bhartṛdṛḍhavrataḥ, devaloke mahīyante puṇyena svena karmaṇā/ tato 'nasūyā samhṛṣṭā śrutvoktam sītayā vacaḥ, śirasya āghrāya covāca maithilīm harṣayanty uta/ niyamair vividhair āptam tapo hi mahad asti me, tat samśritya balaṁ sīte chandaye tvām śucivrate/ upapannaṁ ca yuktaṁ ca vacanaṁ tava maithili, prītā cāsmi ucitam kim te karavāni bravīhi me, kṛtam ity abravīt sītā tapobalasanvitām/ sā tv evam uktā dharmajñā tayā prītatarābhavat, saphalam ca praharsam te hanta sīte karomy aham/ idam divyam varam mālyam vastram ābharaṇāni ca, aṅgarāgam ca vaidehi mahārham anulepanam/ mayā dattam idam sīte tava gātrāṇi śobhayet, anurūpam asaṁkliṣṭam nityam eva bhaviṣyati/ aṅgarāgeṇa divyena liptāṅgī janakātmaje, śobhayiṣyāmi bhartāram yathā śrīr viṣṇum avyayam/ sā vastram aṅgarāgam ca bhūṣaṇāni srajas tathā, maithilī pratijagrāha prītīdānam anuttamam/ pratigrhya ca tat sītā prītīdānam yaśasvinī, śliṣṭāñjalipuṭā dhīrā samupāsta tapodhanām/ tathā sītām upāsīnām anasūyā dṛḍhavrata, vacanaṁ praṣṭum ārebhe kathām kām cid anupriyām/ svayaṁvare kila prāptā tvam anena yaśasvinā, rāghaveṇeti me sīte kathā śrutim upāgatā/ tām kathām śrotum icchāmi vistareṇa ca maithili, yathānubhūtam kārtsnyena tan me tvaṁ vaktum arhasi/ evam uktā tu sā sītā tām tato dharmacāriṇīm, śrūyatām iti coktvā vai kathayām āsa tām kathām/ mithilādhipatir vīro janako nāma dharmaviḥ, kṣatradharmany abhirato

nyāyataḥ śāsti medinīm/ tasya lāṅgalahastasya karṣataḥ kṣetramanḍalam, ahaṁ kilothhitā bhittvā jagatīm nṛpateḥ sutā/ sa mām dṛṣtvā narapatir muṣṭivikṣepataparāḥ, pāmśu guṇḥita sarvāṅgīm vismito janako 'bhavat/ anapatyena ca snehād aṅkam āropya ca svayam, mameyaṁ tanayety uktvā sneho mayi nipātitaḥ/ antarikṣe ca vāg uktāpratimā mānuṣī kila, evam etan narapate dharmeṇa tanayā tava/ tataḥ prahṛṣṭo dharmātmā pitā me mithilādhipaḥ, avāpto vipulām ṛddhiṁ mām avāpya narādhipaḥ/ dattvā cāsmiṣṭavad devyai jyeṣṭhāyai puṇyakarmaṇā, tayā sambhāvitā cāsmi snigdhayā māṛṣausuhrdāḥ/ patisaṁyogasulabham vayo dṛṣtvā tu me pitā, cintām abhyagamad dīno vittanāśād ivādhanah/ sadṛśāc cāpakṣṣṭāc ca loke kanyāpitā janāt, pradharṣaṇām avāpnoti śakreṇāpi samo bhuvī tām dharsaṇām adūrasthām saṁdṛśyātmani pārthivaḥ, cinntārṇavagataḥ pāraṁ nāsasādāplavo yatha/ ayonijām hi mām jñātvā nādhyagacchat sa cintayan, sadṛśām cānurūpaṁ ca mahīpālāḥ patiṁ mama/ tasya buddhir iyam jātā cintayānasya saṁtatam, svayam varam tanūjīyāḥ kariṣyāmīti dhīmataḥ/ mahāyajñe tadā tasya varuṇena mahātmanā, dattam dhanurvaram prītyā tūñī cākṣayya sāyakau/ asaṁcālyam manuṣyaḥ ca yatnenāpi ca gauravāt, tan na śaktā namayitum svapneṣv api narādhipāḥ/ tad dhanuḥ prāpya me pitrā vyāhṛtam satyavādīnā, samavāye narendrāṇām pūrvam āmantrya pārthivān/ idaṁ ca dhanur udyamya sajyam yah kurute naraḥ, tasya me duhitā bhāryā bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ/ tac ca dṛṣtvā dhanuḥśreṣṭham gauravād girisaṁnibham, abhivādya nṛpā jagmur aśaktās tasya tolane/ sudīrghasya tu kālasya rāghavo 'yam mahādyutiḥ, viśvāmitreṇa sahito yajñam draṣṭum saṁgataḥ/ lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātrā rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ, viśvāmitras tu dharmātmā mama pitrā supūjitaḥ/ provāca pitaram tatra rāghavo rāmalakṣmaṇau, sutau daśarathasyemau dhanurdarśanakāṅkṣiṇau, ity uktas tena vipreṇa tad dhanuḥ samupānayat/ nimeṣāntaramātreṇa tad ānamya sa vīryavān, jyām samāropya jhaṭiti pūrayām āsa vīryavān/ tena pūrayatā vegān madhye bhagnaṁ dvidhā dhanuḥ, tasya śabdo 'bhavad bhīmāḥ patitasyāśaner iva/ tato 'haṁ tatra rāmāya pitrā satyābhisaṁdhinā, udyatā dātum udyamya jalabhājanam uttamam/ dīyamānām na tu tadā pratijagrāha rāghavaḥ, avijñāya pituḥ chandam ayodhyādhipateḥ prabhoḥ/ tataḥ śvaśuram āmantrya vṛddham daśaratham nṛpam, mama pitrā ahaṁ dattā rāmāya viditātmane/ mama caivānujā sādhvī ūrmilā priyadarśanā, bhāryārthe lakṣmaṇasyāpi dattā pitrā mama svayam/ evaṁ dattāsmi rāmāya tadā tasmīn svayam vare, anuraktā ca dharmeṇa patiṁ vīryavatām varam/

Counselling Devi Sita further about the Pativrata Dharmas, Maha Pativrata Anasuya complemented the former that Sita herself was an outstanding woman; Sita apparently stressed a woman's teacher should be a husband essentially. She further said that even if husband were a pauper, or insignificant in the society, even then she would still be engaged in his service. Sita further asserted that happily her husband Rama being an outstanding being was also extremely kind, self controlled, and deeply attached to her as in his esteem like his own father or mother. Also, Rama treats his other mothers on par with his own too. Once Devi Kousalya took me to a lonely garden and taught me the basic precepts of a pativrata; and indeed those principles are deeply imprinted in my heart. *sāvitrī patīsuśrūṣām kṛtvā sarge mahīyate, tathā vṛttīś ca yātā tvam patīsuśrūṣayā divam/ variṣṭhā sarvanārīṇām eṣā ca divi devatā, rohiṇī ca vinā candram muhūrtam api dṛśyate/ evaṁvidhās ca pravarāḥ striyo bhartṛdḍhavrataḥ, devaloke mahīyante puṇyena svena karmaṇā/* Sati Savitri who dedicated herself with her husband Satyavan as well as You Devi are trully exemplary! Devi Rohini too would not suffer her husband Chandra Deva,s seperation even for a minute. Like wise other Pativrataas too dedicate themselves to their husbands and are hence honoured in the swarga loka.

Vishleshana on Savitri and Rohini Devi Pativrataas: 1. Sati Savitri: (Refer Sarga Thirty above.)

2: Devi Rohini: As Prajapati Daksha married off all his twenty seven daughters to Soma, the latter was ignoring all the daughters, excepting Devi Rohini. The 27 daughters married to Chandra are Kṛttika, Rohinī, Mrigasheersha, Aardra, Punarvasu, Purbabhadrapada, Pushya, Aslesha, Magha, Svaati , Chitra, Purvaphalguni, Hasta, Dhanishtha, Vishaakha, Anuraadha, Jyeshtha, Moola, Purvaashaadha, Uttaraashaadha, Shravana, Uttaraphalguni, Shatabhisha, Uttarabhadrapada, Revati, Ashwini, Bharani.

These 27 wives of Chandra are 27 Nakshatras (the constellations) which are on the moon's orbit. The rest of them complained to their father Daksha who reprimanded Soma to behave but Soma ignored the repeated warnings of Daksha. Out of exasperation, Daksha cursed Soma to gradually decline and finally disappear. In the absence of Soma, there were far reaching adverse effects in the Universe. Devas including Vanaspati felt Soma's absence and so did human beings, trees, animals and worst of all medicinal plants, herbs and so on. The Sky was dark and the Stars too lost the shine. Chandra prayed to Lord Shiva for long at Prabhasa Tirtha and since Daksha's cures was irreversible a compromise was made that during Krishna paksha Chandra would wane and wax during Shukla Paksha. However, this formula proved defective as Chandra was sinking in the Ocean causing natural sufferings by way of non availability of herbs and so on and at the request of Devas to Shiva again, Chandra left only with one of the 'Kala', the Lord gracefully wore the Crescent Moon on His 'jataajuta mastaka' for good, enabling Chandra to wane and wax every month ever since! As Devas approached Vishnu, He advised the solution of Churning the Ocean by both Devas and Danavas and latter too agreed to the proposal for the lure of securing 'Amrit'. In the process of churning, Moon was given birth again. This had brought great relief to Devas, human beings whose 'Ekadasha Indriyas' (Eleven Body parts), 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements), Solah Kshetra Devatas, Trees and Medicines. Even Rudra's head was without Soma and so did water. Lord Brahma blessed Pournima thithi and selected the day for worship to Chandra Deva when fast is viewed propitious along with token amount of money and material as charity. That specific day 'Yava' Bhojan (Barley food) or barley made material is considered to blessed a person with Gyan (Knowledge), radiance, health, prosperity, foodgrains and salvation.]

Stanza13 continued: Maha Pativrata Anasuya then caressed Sita and stated: Sita! Why do you not ask me for a boon! Devi Sita was a taken aback and said that the counselling would be more useful than any boons! Anasuya was further appesiative of the reply and gave her a celestial necklace, valuable clothes, ornaments, and an 'Anga Raaga Anulepana' or a body lotion. Anasuya exclaimed that when she would approach Shri Rama with affection, she would be like Lakshmi to Maha Vishnu! Having thus accepted the gifts, Sita touched the feet of Anasuya and sat endearingly. Anasuya then cajoled and asked Sita carassingly: ' I learn that you married Rama in a 'swayamvara'; why don't you give me some details! Then Sita narrated: ' There was a King named Janaka a symbol of dharma, satya, and yajna kaaryas. In a bhu yajna, he tilled land for good progeny. And he hit a box underneath the tilled land and he found a female child full of earth and dust; as he was issueless other wise she adopted me as his daughter. At that very moment there was a voice from the high sky resounding ' Yes, King Janaka;! You indeed are the Janaka of this baby! Then he handed me to his prime queen. As I grew up and came of marragiable age, Janaka started getting concerned that it was time to have the daughter wedded. *Ayonijaam hi maam jnaatvaa naathyagacchhat sa chintayan, sadrusham chaabhirupam cha Mahipaalaha patim mama/* Knowing well that I was not born to a human, the King was doubly worried. Then he got an idea to announce a 'swayam vara'. *Maha yagjne tadaa tasya Varunena mahaatmanaa, dattam dhanurvaram preetyaa tuuni chaakshusya saayakou/ Asanchaalyam manushyaischa yatnenaapi cha gouravaat, tatra shaktaa namayitum svapneshstvapi Naraadhipaah/* Coincidentally, in one Maha Yajna, Varuna Deva bestowed a celestial dhanus with arrows of countlessness . Normally, that kind of a celestial 'dhanush baanaas' might not even move about, let alone lift it and much less aim at by even in dreams. Having described thereabout, King Janaka made an announcement among all the Kings of fame the world over. Several Kings of name, fame, and physical -mental grit had come and gone failing away. *Sudeerdhasya tu kaalasya Ragavoyam mahaadyutih, Vishvaamitrena sahito yajnam drashtam samaagatahh/Lakshmanena saha bhraatraa Raamah satyaparaakramah, Vishvaamitrastu dharmaatmaa mam pitraa supujitah/* Thereafter a very long gap of time, Maha Tjasvee Raghukula nandana Satya paraakrami Shri Rama accompanied by his younger brother Lakshmana was brought by Vishvamitra Maharshi to attend Janaka Yajna to Mithila. King Janaka paid all respects to the Maharshi and introduced Rama Lakshmanaas who

desired to look at the Shiva dhanush gifted by Varuna Deva, while Janaka showed the dhanush. Then: *Nimeshaantara maatrena tadaanamyaMaha balah, jyaam samaaroya jjatiti poorayaamaasa veeryavaan/ Tenaapurayitaa vegaammadhye bhagnam dvidhaa dhanuh, tasya shabdobhasvad bheemah poorayaa maasa veeryavaan/* Maha bala Shri Rama lifted the dhanush, sounded it and straightened it at ease. As he pulled the dhanush fast and firm, it was broken into two pieces. Then there was such roaring and earth shaking sound as though of the breaking of Indra Dhanush reverberating again and again. Thereafter, King Janaka requested and welcomed King Dasharatha to please consent for the auspicious wedding. On arrival at Videha Kingdom, father in law and mothers in law arrived and my Kanyadaana was performed with pomp and glory. Thereafter my sister Urmila was wedded too with the consent of all concerned too. Devi Anasuya, this was how my swayamvara was concluded auspiciously!

Sarga One Hundred and Nineteen

Thus Devi Sita having accepted the gifts from Devi Anasuya has reaches Shri Rama for overnight stay at Atri Maharshi Ashram for further journey

Anasūyā tu dharmajñā śrutvā tām mahatīm kathām, paryaṣvajata bāhubhyām śirasya āghrāya maithilīm/ vyaktākṣarapadaṁ citraṁ bhāṣitaṁ madhuraṁ tvayā, yathā svayamvaraṁ vṛttaṁ tat sarvaṁ hi śrutam mayā/ rame 'ham kathayā te tu dṛṣḍham madhurabhāṣiṇi, ravir astam gataḥ śrīmān upohya rajanīm śivām/ divasaṁ prati kīrṇānām āhārārtham patatrinām, saṁdhyākāle nilīnānām nidrārtham śrūyate dhvaniḥ/ ete cāpy abhiṣekārdrā munayaḥ phalaśodhanāḥ, sahitā upavartante salilāplutavalkalāḥ/ ṛṣiṇām agnihotreṣu huteṣu vidhipurvakam, kapotāṅgaruṇo dhūmo dṛṣyate pavanoddhataḥ/ alpaparṇā hi taravo ghanībhūtāḥ samantataḥ, viprakṛṣṭe 'pi ye deśe na prakāśanti vai diśaḥ/ rajanī rasasattvāni pracaranti samantataḥ, tapovanamṛgā hy ete vedītṛtheṣu śerate/ sampravṛttā niśā sīte nakṣatrasamalaṁkṛtā, jyotsnā prāvaraṇaś candro dṛṣyate 'bhyudito 'mbare/ gamyatām anujānāmi rāmasyānucarī bhava, kathayantya hi madhuraṁ tvayāham paritoṣitā/ alaṁkuru ca tāvat tvaṁ pratyakṣam mama maithilī, prītiṁ janaya me vatsa divyālaṁkāraśobhinī/ sā tadā samalaṁkṛtya sītā surasutopamā, praṇamya śirasā tasyai rāmaṁ tv abhimukhī yayau/ tathā tu bhūṣitām sītām dadarśa vadatām varaḥ, rāghavaḥ prītidānena tapasvinyā jaharṣa ca/ nyavedayat tataḥ sarvaṁ sītā rāmāya maithilī, prītidānaṁ tapasvinyā vasanābharanasrajām/ prahṛṣṭas tv abhavad rāmo lakṣmaṇaś ca mahārathaḥ, maithilyāḥ satkriyām dṛṣṭvā mānuṣeṣu sudurlabhām/ tatas tām sarvarīm prītaḥ puṇyām śaśinibhānanaḥ, arcitas tāpasaiḥ siddhair uvāsa raghunandanaḥ/ tasyām rātryām vyatītāyām abhiṣicya hutāgnikān, āpṛcchetām naravyāghrau tāpasān vanagocarān/ tāv ūcus te vanacarās tāpasā dharmacāriṇaḥ, vanasya tasya saṁcāraṁ rākṣasaiḥ samabhiplutam/ eṣa panthā maharṣiṇām phalāny āharatām vane, anena tu vanam durgam gantum rāghava te kṣamam/ itīva taiḥ prāñjalibhis tapasvibhir; dvijaiḥ kṛtasvastayanaḥ paramtapaḥ, vanam sabhāryaḥ praviveśa rāghavaḥ; salakṣmaṇaḥ sūrya ivābhramaṇḍalam/

Dharmajnaani Anasuya having heard about 'Sita Svayamvara' touched Sita's head affectionately replied the crisp and thought provoking narration: Madhura bhashini Sita! The Sun set time is nearing, the groups of busy birds are now returning back to their nests, Munis dressed up in 'valkalas' after bathings are returnig to their 'ashramas', Mahasrhi Atri has just concluded his evening agnihotra karyakrama too even as the smokes like the grey necks of doves are gradually flying up and up; the distant lines of high trees are visible with their branches and leaves hiding away the views of directions; even animals like deers are gradually falling on the grounds of the 'tapovanas'. Sita! The spell of darkness on earth ushers in the twinkling of Stars on the sky while the brightness of Moon provides an ideal cap of the well spread carpet. Dear daughter Mithileshvari Kumari! You may now leave me as it is time for you to serve Ramachandra as you have indeed expressed for me your sweet words and statements. Do please wear these pieces of jewellery and clothes for my satisfaction and enhancement of your body grace further to

please Shri Rama.’ So saying, Devi Anasuya bid farewell to Sita who like a Deva Kanya stepped forward to Shri Rama. Next morning, both Maharshi Atri and Pativrata shiromani Anasuya granted them leave as Sita Rama Lakshmanas prostrated to the famed Maharshi couple. *Taavoochuste vanacharaastaapasaa dharmacharinah, vanasya tasya sanchaaram raakshasaih samabhiputam/ Rakshaamsi purushudaadaani naanaa rupaani Raghava, vasantyasmin mahaaranye taan nivaaraya Raghava/ Taavoochuste vanacharaastaapasaa dharmacharinah, vanasya tasya sanchaaram raakshasaih samabhiputam/ Rakshaamsi purushudaadaani naanaa rupaani Raghava, vasantyasmin mahaaranye taan nivaaraya Raghava/* Then the Maharshi couple addressed Rama Lakshmanas: ‘Raghu nandanaas! All the ways of these jungles are infested with Raakshasaas and we are always faced with some grave troubles and tribulations or the others. In these dense forests nara bhaksha rakshasas and human blood favorites are always encountered. Raghavendra! Do very kindly try to kill them or kick them out for the sake of peace and our dharmic duties of japa-homa- nirantara karya kramas!’ Having thus requested the kshatriya veera kumaras, the Maharshi couple bid farewell to continue on to the Aranya Khanda of Ramaayana!

Om Shri Ramo Ramachandrascha Rama Bhadrasha Shashwatah/ Rajivalochanah Shriman Rajendro Raghupungavah// Janakivallabho Jaitro Jitamitro Janaardanah/ Vishwamitra Priyo Daantah Sharanaagatataparah// Baali pramathano Vaagmi Satyavak Satya Vikramah/ Satyavrato Vrataphalah Sadaa Hanumadaashraya// Kausaleya Kharadhwamsi Viraadha vadha Panditah/ Vibhishana paritraataa Dashagriva shiroharah//Saptataala prabhetaacha Harakodandakhandanah/ Jamadagnya Mahadarpa dalanastaada –kantakrit// Vedantaparo Vedaatmaa Bhavabandhaika bheshajah/ Dushana Trishirorisha Trimurtistrigunastraayi// Trivikramastrilokatmaa Punya chaaritra kirtanah/Triloka rakshako Dhanvi Dandakaaranyavaasa krit// Ahalyaa paavanaschaiva Pitru Bhato Varapradah/ Jitendriyo Jitakrodho Jitilaabho Jagat Guruh//Ruksha Vaanara Sanghaati Chitrakuta Samaashrayah/ Jayantatraana varadah Sumitra Putra Sevitaah// Sarva Devaadhi Devascha Mrita Vaanarajeevanah/ Mayaa Maaricha hanta cha Maha Bhaho Maha Bhujah// Sarva deva stutah Soumyo Brahmany Munisattamah/ Maha Yogi Mahodaarah Sugriva Sthitar Raajatah// Sampurnadhika phalah Smruta Sarvaaghanaashanah/ Adi Purusho Maha Purushah Paramah Purushastatha//Punyadayo Mahasarah Purana Purushotthamah/ Smita Vaktro Mitabhaashi Purvabhaashi cha Raghavah// Anantaguna gambhiro Dhirodatta gunottarah/ Mayamanusha chaarित्रो Maha Devaabhi pujitah// Setu krujjita vaarishah Sarva Tirthamayo Harih/ Shyamaanga Sundarah Shurah Peetavaasaa Dhanurdharah// Sarva Yagnaadhipo Yagno Jaraamarana varjitah/ Shivalinga Pratishthaata Sarvaagha ganavarjitah//Paramaatma Param Brahma Sacchhidaananda vigrahaah/ Param Jyotih Param Dhama Paraakaashah Paraatparh// Pareshaha Paaragah Paarah Sarvabhutaatmakah Shivah/ Iti Shri Rama chandrashya Naamaamashtotthatam Shatam/ Guhya Guhyantaram Devi tava snehat prakeertitam//

Ramaya Ramabhadraya Ramachandraya Vedhasey

Raghunathaaya nathaaya Sitaayah Pataye Namah/

(Padma Purana-Uttara Khanda)