

A:pada:m apahartha:ram da:tha:ram sarva sampada:m
lo:kabhira:mam sri:ra:mam bhu:yo bhu:yo nama:myaham

mano:javam ma:rutha thulyave:gam
jithendriyam budhimatha:m varishtam
va:tha:thmajam va:narayu:dha mukhyam
sri:ra:ma du:tham sirasa nama:mi.

ve:dave:dye: pare: pumsi ja:the: dasara:thmaje:
ve:dah pra:che:thasa:da:si:th sa:ksha:d ra:ma:yana:thmana: ""

Sri:rama:yana is called as Itiha:sa. Itiha:sa is one of the vedo:pabrumhana:s.
upabrumhana means one which elaborates the meaning of Veda.

So Sri:rama:yana elaborates the meaning of the Veda .
It reveals the secrets of Veda and equivalent to the Veda.

Veda establishes the form and attributes of the Supreme one.

Our Lord is called as Ve:dave:dya. When that Ve:dave:dya incarnated Himself as
Srirama being the son of Dasaratha, Veda took the form of Sriramayana and came
into this world through the sage valmiki .

Veda contains two parts. The first part is called as pu:rvabha:ga which deals with the
Dharma:s to be practiced by the mankind. The second part of the Veda is called as
uththara bha:ga or upanishathbha:ga and reveals about the Para Brahman.

One has to practice one's dharma and has to do upa:sana by gaining knowledge
about Para Brahman. These two things are literally shown by Sri Rama.
Being the nara he showed how to practice one's dharma and got the credit to be
called as Ra:mo: vigrahava:n dharmaha. Being Para Brahman He was worshipped by
everyone .Even today we are worshipping him. One has to possess the inner
knowledge in order to practice one's dharma.

How? Let us come to Sriramayana.

Before entering into the grandha it is customary to do pranama to the author so that
we can get his blessings and understand the grandha well. Let us pray to sage
valmiki before entering into Sriramayana.

Ku:jantham ra:ma ra:me:thi madhuram madhura:ksharam
A:ruhya kavitha:sa:kha:m vande: va:lmi:ki ko:kilam.

In this poem sage Valmiki is compared with a nightingale. It sings sweetly by sitting
on the branch of a mango tree. Sage valmiki is singing the letters "Ra" and "ma"
which are sweet in nature by sitting on the branch of poetry.

I think all of you know about the sweet voice of a nightingale. Madhura means
sweetness.

He is taking the support of poetry to reveal the greatness of Rama.
To such Valmiki maharshi I am doing pranama.

If we take Sriramayana as a kavya it is a beautiful poetry with so many beautiful

words and chandas. And if we go deep into the meaning it can reveal about the inner self and Para Brahman. If we take the outer meaning only it will be like a simple cinema story.

There will be Hero (Rama), leading lady (Sitamma) and villain (Ravana).

As usual villain kidnapped Sitamma and hero saved her at last. If we see the story like this we need not study Sriramayana.

But our Ramayana is not a simple cinema story. It is a great kavya. It is a great dharmasasthra.

It is a great Neethi sasthra (morals). It is the incarnation of Veda for spiritual seekers.

It reveals so many things which are necessary for all levels of mankind or in other words we can say it is the story of the mankind.

Valmiki reveals so many dharmas through His characters of Sriramayana.

Through Rama, Valmiki wants to convey the message how to enjoy the purusharthas.

We are having four purusharthas. Dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

Among the four everybody knows artha and kama only.

Few more people will think about dharma and rarely some one will think about moksha.

So let us leave about the moksha at present and know about the other three purusharthas.

Among these three " Dharma" is the important one to be practiced by everyone.

But most of us like artha and kama (desire to get anything). While getting these two we don't care about the dharma. So we have to face so many obstacles.

Rama practiced and showed us how we have to earn artha(wealth) and kama according to dharma only. Then only we can enjoy them. According to puthra dharma he left kingdom to keep Dasaratha's words true and later he ruled His kingdom along with Sita without any obstacle.

So we need not crave for artha without dharma. Like this we can learn many things from Ramayana.

Before going into the Ramayana let us know how Ramayana came into the world?

In Brahma loka Ramayana has 100 crores of slokas and Chathurmukha Brahma wanted to introduce it to Bhooloka. He searched for a good narrator and He found Narada, a thriloka sanchari (one who roams all 3 worlds) an eligible candidate. It was Naradha who suggested Valmiki who was capable of composing Ramayana.

In flash back Valmiki Maharishi was a hunter and was called Ruksha his (original) name. Other than hunting He also used to rob people for his livelihood. Narada wanted Valmiki to become eligible to write sriramayana. So He did upadesa to Ruksha the "THARAKA MANTHRA" i.e. Rama nama.

It is a great manthra which can elevate a person to higher level. After chanting the Tharaka manthra the hunter Ruksha became a great sage.

FROM THIS WE HAVE TO REALIZE THE GRACE OF AN ACHARYA whose krupa can transform the lives of disciples amazingly. First of all an Acharya through their kataksha will removes the sins and obstacles of their disciple and makes them eligible for upadesa (initiation) by which one can attain keerthi and even mukthi.

Narada means one who removes ignorance and gives the knowledge. In

SriRamayanam Naradha acts as an Acharya who converts an ignorant hunter and

robber into a great sage and Adikavi (first and foremost poet of this world).

The first two sargas of Ramayana tells us about the birth of Ramayana into this world. After becoming a maharshi, Valmiki wanted to know about Purna Purusha (a complete man), a man having all good qualities. To clear His mind of any doubts, Narada immediately comes to the rescue of Valmiki and enlightens Him about the man with all the good qualities Valmiki is seeking for. The first sarga of Ramayana starts with the arrival of Narada to Valmiki's asramam. Then Valmiki enquired Narada about a person who is shodasa kalaparipurna on this earth.

[Those sixteen qualities He is looking for are:

1. principled one (Gunavan)
2. potential one (Veeryavan)
3. conscious one (Dharmajna)
4. redeemer (Kruthajna)
5. truth-teller (Satyavakyaha)
6. self-determined (Dhrudhavrataha)
7. one having good conduct (Charithravan)
8. one who is the well-wisher of all the beings (Sarvabhutha hitaha)
9. scholar of all scriptures (vidwan)
10. ablest-one (Samarthaha)
11. one who is always lovable and good to look (sadaika priyadarsanaha)
12. courageous-one (Atmavan)
13. one who controlled his anger (jithakrodhaha)
14. brilliant-one (dyuthiman)
15. one who is not having jealousy (Anasuyakaha)
16. For whom even devathas also will be afraid to stand before him in war, when he was angry (kasya bibhyati devascha jatha roshasya samyuge).]

Narada replied "SRIRAMA" the son of Dasaratha is having all these sixteen qualities on this earth. Then he told the whole story of Srirama in brief starting from his birth to returning to Ayodhya after killing Ravana. When Narada told the story to Valmiki, Rama was ruling His kingdom efficiently.

[We know the moon in the sky will have 16 phases and he will be purna on purnima day only. Our lord Srirama was always having 16 qualities (compared with 16 phases) and praised as Sriramachandra by devotees.]

Narada said that Srirama will rule his kingdom for 11,000 more years and will return to his abode. After giving all these information to Valmiki Narada went away. First sarga ends with the phalasaruthi of Sriramayana revealed by Narada. Because Narada said the whole Ramayana in brief (sankshepa) the first sarga is called as SANKSHEPA RAMAYANA. When we read Sankshepa Ramayana it is equivalent to reading the Whole Ramayana and by chanting this, one will get rid of all sorts of sins.

The Second sarga says how sage Valmiki got inspiration to write the story of Srirama. Valmiki went to a river called Thamasa to perform afternoon sandhyavanadanam. There happened an incident which inspires Valmiki to compose the first poetry (sloka).

Let us all try to remember all the qualities of Sri Rama and try to cultivate and practice atleast a few of them daily.

Valmiki maharshi went to Thamasa River for His anushtanams and He was mentally reviewing the Kalyanagunas of Srirama. He felt peaceful and could feel the beauty of nature surrounding Him. He saw two birds sitting on a tree playing with each other and enjoying themselves, which made the Maharishi happy. At that time a hunter came along and shot the male bird down, and the female bird cried out in sorrow. Though He was a hunter Himself before, after a great penance He became a Maharishi and the loss to the female bird made Him utter some words spontaneously. Though sage Valmiki uttered these words in grief they had a great rhythm and eloquence to it. They can be divided into four padams each padam has 8 letters. (Padam means one fourth of a sloka.). This is called as anushtup chandas.

ma nishada prathishtam thwam
agamaha sasawathis samaha
yath krauncha mithunath ekam
avadhihi kamamohitham

These words were the first poem on this earth and thus He became Adikavi. Only Vedamanthras had chandas and rhythm before this poem. Kavi means a poet, who can experience the feelings of the other persons and can describe it in words. Valmiki who was a sage until then became a poet now. It was Brahma's wish for Sage Valmiki to write Sri Ramayana and it was Saraswathi Devi who blessed Him to write it.

Now let us learn the meaning of the very first sloka uttered by Sage Valmiki out of "soka".

This is the first and foremost sloka on this earth though it appears as 15th sloka of 2nd sarga in Balakanda.

" Nishada-Oh hunter! Yath-by which reason ,thwam- you, krauncha mithunath-out of the kranucha pair, avadhihi-you killed, ekam kamamohitham-the one filled with love for the other, (because of that reason only) sasawathis samaha-for several years ,thwam prathishtam ma agamaha-you will not get life for several years(that means you will lose your life soon)"

Once Valmiki spoke these words He Himself wondered how He was able to compose a poem, and being a sage, how He could lose His self control and curse an ignorant hunter. With saddened heart He returned to His Ashram to finish His daily duties. Brahma wants to clear Sage Valmiki's doubts and give Him peace of mind. So He visits Valmiki's Ashram where He was received with the due respect of a great person. Valmiki got up and welcomed Chaturmuka Brahma with folded hands, bowed head, washed the Holy feet of Brahma, and water to wash His hands. He took Brahma into His kuteeram (hut) chanting Veda mantras and requested Him to be seated and did padapuja to the divine feet of Brahma. Then He enquired about the welfare of all and stood with folded hands until He was asked to take a seat.

HERE WE HAVE TO KNOW THE CUSTOMS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE PRESENCE OF GREAT PEOPLE LIKE AN ACHARYA. We have to get up when our Acharya comes, we have to wait until He takes His seat and gets comfortable. We must be humble while offering the upacharams. Then we can do aradhana to His

lotus feet. We have to prostrate before Him and unless he gives permission we shouldn't get up and not sit until He says so. We are not supposed to be sitting while He is standing, except with His permission, and also then only we can speak or ask questions. While in discussion also we are not supposed to speak in a loud voice in their presence. Like this there are so many dharmas to be practiced in the presence of great people. Sage Valmiki did everything to honor Brahma and again he is thinking about the prior incident and the poem (curse).

Brahma could read the great sage's mind and revealed the secret with a smile. Oh! My dear Valmiki don't feel sad. Everything happened according to my wish (sankalpam) only. So you need not worry about anything.

Now you became Adikavi and you are eligible to write SriRamayana. Valmiki was surprised and asked how I can become eligible for such a noble cause when I cursed someone today. Brahma replied to Valmiki, "No, it is not a curse, actually, if you think about the poem once again it will become a great mangalasanam to Ramachandra. The slokam came out of you with the help of Saraswathi. So it was not a curse, it is a blessing to Rama. Don't think otherwise, be happy and start the Sriramayana."

Let us learn the second meaning of the same sloka. Ma means Goddess Lakshmi; nishada means residence, so now we have to join manishada-Residence of Lakshmi (i.e. nothing but the heart of Lord Narayana). So Oh! Lakshmi! You will get keerthi for several years, because you killed the (krancha-kutilla) wicked one Ravana who became blind with Kama, out of the pair Mandodari and Ravana. Thus the slokam says mangalasanam to Lord Srirama. Thus Sriramayana was started with this mangalasanam sloka.

After Valmiki so many great poets wrote Sriramayana in several languages with different versions. Among them which Ramayana is the authentic one? How can we say this is the authentic one? Let's know in the next mail and enjoy the meaning of Sriramayana.

SriRamayana, the story of Sita Rama was first recorded by sage Valmiki with the blessings of Brahma. After Valmiki, Sriramayana was translated into quite a few languages and the work is still going on. Few examples are "Tulasi ramayana in Hindi, Kamba ramayana in Tamil, and the famous Molla Ramayana in Telugu". These are a few that more people are familiar with, and there are many other versions available. Vyakhyana Chakravarthi Swami Periavachan Pillai has taken phrases from 4000 Pasurams of Dravida Veda Divya Prabhandam and gave us an enchanting version of Ramayana called "Divya Prabhandam Pasurappadi Ramayana". One of Swami Desikan's works called "Raghu Veera Gadyam" (the valor of Raghu-Rama) is a very beautiful musical composition in Sanskrit.

On the whole, most Ramayanas deviate from Valmiki Ramayana if not always, at least once in a while. Because the other devotees narrated the story according to their devotion towards the characters. For example in one Ramayana we will read that Dasaratha didn't give payasam to Sumithra after puthrakameshti yagam. In another context we will read Lakshmana draw a line to Sita and said not to cross it at any cost, before going to help Rama, who was chasing the Golden deer (Maricha). One Ramayana says, that when Ravana kidnapped Sita along with the part of the earth She fainted. Another quotes saying that Rama worshipped Shiva on the shores of Rameshwaram.

To know this come to Valmiki Ramayana.

Because Valmiki Ramayana is the original and authentic one among all the Ramayanas, but how can we take it for granted that Valmiki's is the authentic one. In the second sarga, slokas 31-35 gives emphasis to the authenticity of Valmiki. Brahma Himself gave His ajna to Valmiki to record Ramacharitha and sage Valmiki got the knowledge from the Divine sage Narada. Again Brahma gave a boon to Valmiki to record the things as they happened originally. Oh! Valmiki! With my grace you can even know the things happened in privacy and also the things you didn't hear from Narada. I am promising you that while doing the work of SriRamayana your words will not go wrong. Goddess Saraswathi will help you to do it correctly. You will know the incidents happened between Srirama, Sita and Lakshmana and their experiences with rakshasa's. So, without any doubt you can do the sacred story of SriRama and Sita in a divine manner as it was meant to be.

Again Brahma showered His grace upon Valmiki and bestowed Him with many blessings. He said, Oh! Valmiki!, as long as there are mountains and rivers on this earth, your SriRamayana will be propagated in all the Lokas, and as long as Your SriRamayana will be chanted, you will get a chance to live in our Loka (BrahamaLoka). By giving this blessing Brahma Himself revealed the authenticity of sage Valmiki and his Sri Ramayana.

Our Azhwars and Acharyas who come in the lineage of Swami Ramanuja, but originated from Srimannarayana Himself will not lead us in the wrong path. They have taken all the deeper meanings only from original Ramayanam. Let us delve in the ocean of SRIRAMAYANA and come up with original gems of what Ramayana is trying to teach us.

Continuing on the authenticity of Valmiki's Ramayana, our Purvacharyas consider only selected texts as Pramanas, (most truthful and authentic) and along with Vedas and Puranas, the 2 itihisas that are considered Pramanas are SriRamayana and Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Whenever they teach us important things they take contexts only from Pramanas which makes it more important and valuable. Now let us move on to SriRamayana.

In the third sarga, sage Valmiki sat in meditation upon darbhasana after touching the water for purification (while doing sacred things we must keep ourselves pure physically, mentally and spiritually). Here sage

Valmiki did all these three things to start Sriramayana. (Udakasparsa)

1) Touching the water denotes physical purification, 2) sitting in a stable posture on darbhasana will give the mental concentration to meditate and give spiritual purification. In our daily aradhana also we shouldn't yawn, lean on the wall, get distracted etc. But being human beings we are, we may not be able to control sometimes. That's why our elders have upaya for quite a few apacharas. eg: We have to cover our mouth and nose while yawning etc. and immediately touch the water for purification. Coming to our story, Yogi He was, sitting on His dharpasana while meditating Valmiki saw the whole story in his mind with the grace of Brahma and He narrated Sriramayana. In this sarga, the synopsis of whole Valmiki Ramayana is given

He narrated Sriramayana in a beautiful manner, just like He is giving the running commentary of a live telecast. He narrated even the feelings, Cheshtas (reactions), and movements of the people, the conversations between them and he finished the whole story except Uththara kanda.

The 4th sarga starts, with sage Valmiki thinking, who would be qualified to propagate Sriramayana to the rest of the world. Meanwhile Lava and Kusa came to pay their respects to Valmiki. They were living near His Ashram, with their mother Sita at that time. They had already learned all the Vedas and to teach them the meaning of Vedas (vedartha), Valmiki maharshi decided to teach them SriRamayana. Kusalava learned Ramayana from their Guru Sage Valmiki and gave their first performance (arangetram) in the ashrama itself to the other Rushimandali. They sung Sriramayana sweetly and beautifully and the performance was very enchanting.

Actually Sriramayana itself is nectar to the ears either by singing, chanting or reciting, since it was composed by mixing all the navarasas like sringara, karunya, hasya, veera etc. Valmiki gave a message to mankind on how to deal with the thrigunas (sathvaic, rajas, and thamo) and acquire four purusharthas (dharma, artha, kama, moksha). Every Rishi felt elated, and elevated by hearing Ramakatha and by the children's performance. They wanted to bless the children and offer them something in return for their unlimited joy of hearing Ramacharithra for the first time. Being Sages who doesn't have any earthly possessions, they offered the Kamandalas, pavithrams, dharbas and new clothes to Kusalava.

Eventually Kusalava went to Ayodhya, to propagate Sriramayana and upon the invitation of the ruling King SriRama they went to the palace to perform in Rajasabha (court). In the beginning of the performance Srirama was seated in his simhasana (throne) where everybody can watch Him, and as the story and the singing continued He saw how much people were enjoying the sweet voice of the children. As a king if SriRama stood up, the rest of the crowd will also get up. To avoid the situation He sneaked out of His Simhasana and sat amongst His people, and thoroughly enjoyed Himself by clapping His hands, putting thalam on His thighs, and sometimes even on His neighbours' thighs. None were the wiser that the King was missing or that He was amongst them. This is the greatness of SriRama's story that entralls people, and makes them forget themselves and all the procedures and protocols.

Valmiki starts the 5th sarga by informing us, that, Srirama was a descendent of Ikshvaku dynasty, with a long lineage of great chkravarthies (rulers), thus letting the readers know, that from birth itself Sri Rama is not an ordinary man and His noble ancestors were endowed with great qualities which is hard to find among us. The tendency of mankind is to feel jealous of others if they find somebody who is better than them. That's why Sage Valmiki warns people in the beginning itself saying, "I will tell the story from the beginning, but you have to listen without any prejudice or ill will. All the characters in this kavya are real ones and they are not created by my own imagination". Thus he starts with the detailed description of the capital Ayodhya.

Once upon a time there was a Kingdom called Kosala, on the banks of Sarayu River. Ayodhya the capital of Kosala kingdom was built the Manu (from whom Ikshvaku dynasty started). It was a well laid out beautiful city with royal highways (Freeways). The streets were clean as they were regularly washed, and very nicely decorated with flowers and gems. From the capital there were roads to other Kingdoms, which was long and wide. All the buildings in that city were planned correctly and constructed in the shape of a Chessboard, (8 rows and 8 columns). All the houses were decorated with arches and gateways. The City was surrounded

by several compounds and moats-filled with water, so that no enemy could enter the city without the guards knowing about it.

That's why it was called by a suitable name Ayodhya which means can't be defeated by anyone (in Sanskrit -yoddhum na sakya). Coming to the people of that city, they were all good in nature and character. There were many professionals like artists, sculptures, dancers, musicians, teachers and Vedic Pundits etc. In those days people used to respect women, and they were given a chance to participate in dramas. KSHTRYIYAS OF AYODHYA WOULD NOT KILL WHEN THE ENEMY WAS IN HELPLESS CONDITION. THEY DIDN'T KILL AN ENEMY IF HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY PREDECESSOR OR A SUCCESSOR IN HIS FAMILY. THEY WON'T KILL ANY ONE RUNNIG AWAY TO PROTECT THEMSELF OR SHOOT AN ARROW IN THEIR BACK. THEY WOULD FIGHT ACCORDING TO THE DHARMA SASTRA ONLY. THE PEOPLE OF AYODHYA WERE VIRTUOUS AND THEY COULD CONTROL THEIR INDRIAS LIKE RISHIS. THEY WERE ALL HAPPY WITH WHAT THEY HAD AND THEY ALL HAD STERLING CONDUCT AND CHARACTER, (except one, Ghuni. but she wasn't born in Ayodhya).

Ayodhya, the whole kingdom was flourishing due to the fact that people followed their prescribed duties, Brahmins did the necessary daily rituals like Veda Parayanam, and Homas, Kshathriyas ruled the Kingdom according to Dharma sastra, and women conducted themselves properly. They had rain 3 times a month, (like Andal said "mum mari peidu", and cows had plenty of milk, and there was no poverty or lack of any riches both in health and wealth. The people were happy and felt that living in Ayodhya was like living in Swargaloka, being ruled by Indra. Sage Valmiki describes Ayodhya for its richness of character, justice, and peaceful way of living and for their wisdom. Under the rule of Dasaratha people lacked nothing and He ruled the Kingdom for a great number of years with His able and noble ministers. We will learn about them in our next mail.

Now that we have learnt about the beauty of Ayodhya, Sage Valmiki continues with the greatness of King Dasaratha and His Council (court-ministers).

Dasaratha, was a great Vedic scholar, and practiced His life according to dharma sastra only. He had great visions for His kingdom, being a mighty and noble King. He was considered as Rajarshi, (king as well as a sage) and all His subjects lived happily under His rule. He loved all His subjects equally, and conducted Yagna for the welfare of His people. Even the puthrakameshti Yagam was done to produce a future King for the Kingdom and for the people. He derived the name DASARATHA, because His chariot could roam in all 10 directions without the fear of an enemy stopping it. So He was also called "Athiratha."

His other attributes were, He was strong, (balawan), "nihathamithra", one who killed all his enemies, "mithravan" had ever lasting friends, and He could control all His Indrias. If the king leads righteous path, the people under His rule are happy. The people of Ayodhya had such a king and they were happy.

In the 7th sarga sage Valmiki described the names and qualities of the purohithas and ministers of Dasaratha. Along with Vasistha and Vamadeva a few more purohithas are there like Jabali and Kasyapa etc. Purohitha-means one who predicts the hitha(welfare) of the king and his kingdom, and gives advises in advance

according to the divine activities. In other sense we can say purohitha is a priest as well as a advisor and spiritual supporter to the king.

Coming to the (important) ministers they are eight in number and some more ministers are there to assist.

Dhrushti: one who can conduct any programme without a flaw.

Jayantha: One who is hard to defeat

Vijaya: One who is always victorious

Siddhartha: One who anticipates and fulfills the wishes of the King

Arthasadhaka: One who is persistent until His work is done

Asoka: who doesn't feel sorrow in fulfilling kings orders

Manthrapala: Who can keep all secrets of the kingdom

Sumanthra: The senior most and the oldest and wisest council for the king.

Sage Valmiki goes into great detail to explain the qualities and qualifications of people who hold posts as Kings' ministers, and King Dasaratha's ministers had all these fine qualities and more...

The 27 qualities are 1) abundant knowledge about Sasthras 2) if they make a mistake, they have to repent sincerely and not ever to repeat it 3) should have a deep sense of morals, and follow it, 4) not attracted to physical beauty and not succumb to physical pleasures, 5) they should be wealthy enough that they can't be bribed for favors, 6) evaluate present situations thoroughly, and predict future consequences before making decisions, 7) must know politics well to participate in ministry, (rajanithi), 8) they must be well qualified warriors, 9) must have experience (seniority) in politics, 10) must be aware of King's activities, 11) the promises made should be kept, 12) should have an appearance that gives confidence to believers, and should strike fear in criminals, 13) if someone makes a mistake innocently should be ready to forgive them, 14) must have a pleasant and smiling face while talking with people, 15) they should not tell lies either because of desire or angry, 16) maintain secret service in and out of their kingdom for protection, 17) they are able to collect the data necessary for the King, 18) advise to act on it if necessary, 19) Love the King and be loyal to the king and should be willing to make sacrifices for the king and country, 20) should not be partial while judging someone (whether he may be their relative or friend), 21) they have to plan to earn money according to the proposed budget (no deficit in the budget), 22) have a good control on military, pay salary to the soldiers on time, and earn their respect and loyalty, 23) they should be willing to go to war and participate if necessary, 24) only criminals should be punished and they have to take care at any cost a non-criminal shouldn't be punished, 25) should try to have a full treasury without taxing the Pundits and soldiers, 26) the punishment should fit the crime, 27) last but not least "SHOULD MAINTAIN A STERLING REPUTATION (character)."

The King and ministers of Ayodhya followed sastras, there were no natural disasters, there was no poverty, no draught, no ignorance which goes to prove that if the ruler of the country is honest and good, His council follows His example and everybody lives happily.

We read about the greatness of King Dasaratha, his purohithas and his ministry. Because of them Ayodhya people were happy and lead a prosperous life. But the king Dasaratha was unhappy because, with all the wealth and possessions he didn't have children to continue the lineage. He was worried that the great lineage of Manu was

going to end! Though the King was virtuous, loved by everyone, leads a blameless life, he was suffering with the sorrow of lacking children.

Though Dasaratha did not have any physical defect, he didn't have children. So, King Dasaratha thought only one's purushaprayathna will not be successful unless one will get God's blessings also. There were no blessings from God for me. Because I might have committed some mistakes either innocently or accidentally. The previous karmas always dictate one's life and one doesn't get what they think or they deserve. So I have to purify myself so that I can get God's blessings. Immediately he decided to perform the great ASWAMEDHA YAGA to destroy all his previous karmas.

He assembled His ministers and Prohithas, and with their full-hearted blessings and recommendation He decided to perform "Puthrakamesti Yaga" preceded by Aswamedha Yaga. Both were very difficult to perform, and if not conducted properly it will cause a lot of harm to the (Yajamani) King, and the people who are performing it.

The one who presides over the Yaga is called "Brahma" and He is expected to do prayaschittams immediately, for all sorts of (apacharams) mistakes while performing the Yaga. If the Yaga is performed perfectly according to sastrha then definitely the wish will be granted and fulfilled. So it is very important that the Brahma chosen to perform should be aware of all the vedas and sastrhas to know all the particulars and manthras of that yaga. He must be pure of heart and conduct.

At this point Sumanthra, the wise council for the King, because of the story He heard from Sanathkumara, advises Dasaratha, "Oh, great King, for this difficult Yagam, Rushyasruna, the son of Vibhandaka is the only eligible person." Right now He is in the kingdom of Angadesa, please go and invite Him personally to come to Ayodhya." He explains the greatness of Rushyasruna. A very long time ago Angadesa was caught in the grips of severe draught and the King Romapada was advised by his ministers, if a great person enters the city it will rain and He is living in the outskirts of our country. His name is Rushyasruna, son of Vibhandaka. But this sage will not enter cities, so we have to bring Him to our city at any cost. The ministers sent a few beautiful women, to the forest, and told them what to do, but these women were really worried that, if the rishi finds out about their play they will be punished.

They met the great Rishi in the forest, and Rushyasruna had never met a woman before. Still He treated them with great respect and invited them to His ashram, did padapuja and other upacharas. In turn the women sent by the king also offered Him some tasteful cooked foods, claiming that they were the fruits of their Ashram. The next day they came back and invited Him to their Ashram, and kept Him walking towards their city, and finally when He entered the city, it rained heavily.

Rushyasruna realized that He was tricked by the people of King of Angadesa. But the king was right there to welcome the Sage whose anger dissipated when the King apologized and gave reason for his actions. The King also offered marriage of His daughter Santha, (she was really the daughter of Dasaratha and she was given as a gift to His friend Romapada who didn't have any children.) The great sage married Santha and lived in the country. After that the country flourished without anymore hardships. After marriage also he remained a firm brahmachari (one who meditates upon the Brahman). Because he enjoyed his married life according to sastrha.

Sasthra says the one who leads garhastya according to sasthra for the sake of children will also be called as brahmachari. Thus He constantly meditated upon Brahman-the Supreme one (Srimannarayana) .

Also a practicing Brahmachari's presence improves everybody's life, and nature itself obeys all them, as it does great people like Rishis, Sages, and in the modern world an Acharya, who practices His dharma.

In the 11 the sarga on the advice, of Sumanthra, Dasaratha with His Prohithas and ministers went to Angadesa and invited Rushyasrunga to be head the yaga as Brahma. He was also well educated in the art of diplomacy, and He knew He had to obtain Romapada's permission to invite the sage for the Yaga. Romapada immediately complied with this great honor that was bestowed on him, and He sent Santha with her husband to Ayodhya.

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is - 9

In 12-15 sargas the details of Aswamedha yagam were given.

Rushyasrunga was chosen as Brahma for Aswametha Yaga. It can be performed only in vasantha ruthu, Chaithra masa, and the sankalpa had to be done during the early hours of purnima day, and they have to do 6-7 small yajnas to get qualified to perform Aswametha Yaga.

After "Brahma" had been chosen, He will select Ruthviks to perform the Homa, and once the Yajna starts the Horse will be released to go around the earth in one year's time. The people who are conducting the Yaga will also follow the horse with their soldiers, to protect the horse.

Prior to releasing the horse, it has to be sanctified with 4 types of water, namely 1) from direct rain, 2) from a well, 3) from a lake 4) from a river and it was tied with munja grass (dharba grass). After the horse had been sanctified it will have to be protected from harm during its course through the other countries. When these preparations are completed the horse is released to go around the world. While some people are involved in protecting the horse other participants of this Yaga starts collecting materials needed to complete it without any obstacles. The Yaga Bhumi (land where the yaga will take place), need to be selected, and vasthu santhi has to be performed to purify the land.

At the beginning of second Vasantha ruthu (spring season) the small yagna starts, with the King entering the yaga sala, and the karyakartha The King has to maintain some qualities like no harsh words, and to follow the orders of the chosen Brahma, etc. Now that the yaga started Dasaratha became dependent on Vasishta to make sure all goes well. The other participants also were doing their part with a lot of dedication and devotion for their king. A lot of dignitaries were invited and all were accommodated according to their status, and the Yaga went on well with a lot of other entertainments like music, dances for common people, and debates in various sasthras for the learned scholars etc.

Prior to starting of Aswametha yaga, Anga yaga was performed for 7days,which included 3 Homas per day totaling 21 Homas. The yaga was performed according to sasthras and all the Havis was offered to the

Devathas, and a special juice made from Somalatha plant (a creeper plant). There were also animal sacrifices done as prescribed by sasthanas, (Brahma sutra explains that because of the sacrifice, the animal will get a good birth in its next life). After the Anga Yaga was completed, Aswametha Yaga was performed for 3 days.

In these days Queen Kausalya has to play an important role. She has to sacrifice the Aswa(horse) in just three chances without any hesitation and she has to sleep along with it on that night. Here don't think otherwise. Let us know the significance of Aswamethayaga. Aswa in upanishads denotes the senses(Indriyas). "Indriyani hayani ahuhu". They always go around the mundane pleasures. Dasaratha (the soul) has to send his purohithas and soldiers to protect the horse. By the kataksha of Acharya and bhagavathas(devotees) one can be able to control one's indriyas (protect the horse, ie sadhana). So the jeeva(Dasaratha) has to do sadhana by releasing his Indriyas. If any one (pleasures) ties up(attracts) the horse(indriya) acharya and bhagavathas will protect. Like that jeeva has to do sadhana for one year. When the horse returns back then the yajna starts. That means when jeeva able to control his indriyas first, then he has to turn them towards the inner dweller(antharyami). For that Kausalya (the satvaguna) has to purify the indriyas, so that they cannot be attracted by the outer pleasures again. Then the parts of the horse will be offered in the homa i.e. offering to Lord. This is the Aswamethayaga for every soul has to perform in order to get the four purusharthas (sons). Dasaratha has to enjoy the Homadhuma. It will purify and give yugas and ayush to him.

Later santhi yaga for 6 more days. At the end of the yajna the King donated all His land to the rathviks (the land in East to Hotha, land in West to Adhvaryu, the land in South to Brahma, and the land in North to Udgatha) who accepted it from the King, and turned around and gave it back to Him with blessings, by receiving gold and silver coins equivalent to the cost of the land. Moreover the King offered sambhavanas to the priests and brahmanas who attended for the yajna. So He distributed vast amount of gold, silver, diamonds, cows etc. according to sasthanas.

After completion of Aswametha yaga Dasaratha requested Rushyasrunga to be continued as Brahma for the puthrakameshti and fulfill his wish.

In 16th sarga, during Aswametha and puthrakameshti Yagas, the devathas along with Chaturmukha Brahma came to Ayodhya, to accept their oblations. They were not visible to human eyes. But our sage Valmiki able to observe the discussion between the devathas and Chaturmukha Brahma.

After giving their respects to Him, the devathas were saying "Oh! Brahma!, Because of your boon to Ravana, he became very powerful and cruel. Not only he is creating chaos on earth, but also he is trying to dethrone Indra and takeover Indraloka. All demigods have to obey him, the fire, the wind, and other natural elements are all under his control. Please tell us an "UPAYA" (means), to destroy him. Because we have to respect your boon, we are bearing all this cruelty, otherwise we would kill him". Brahma kindly said "Do not fear, when Ravana asked for the boon, that he shouldn't be killed by anybody, he forgot to include Nara, Vanara, and Ruksha (bear). He was quite arrogant to think that, they were too insignificant to be included. Now we have a chance to kill Ravana, (because of the loop hole), by any one of them". Meanwhile Sri Mahavishnu appeared with all His glory (Sankhu, Chakra Gada Pani),

full of grace and karunyam. He is Jagathpathi and jadrakshaka(protector) . He is the only one, capable of killing Ravana with his whole clan, as Andal mentions in Thiruppavai "polla arakkanai killikkalaidhanai" (uprooted the bad rakshasa). On seeing Mahavishnu all the devathas surrendered onto Him and prayed Him to be born to Dasaratha.

Before going away He asked them innocently "How would you like me to be born?" Devathas immediately replied "please be born as Nara", and He accepted their request.

At the finishing point of all proceedings of Yaga, from the fire came a divine Purusha, emanating radiance. He was holding a golden vessel containing Divine Payasam, (milk desert), and offered it to Dasaratha. He accepted the prasadam, with humbleness and great reverence and did pradakshina to the DivinePurusha. On recommendation of Vasishta, he took the prasadam to his palace and gave his queen Kausalya one half, one half of the left over to Sumithra, with quarter of the payasam left, He gave half of it to Kaikeyi, and leftover to Sumithra, (Kausalya $\frac{1}{2}$, Sumithra $\frac{1}{4}$, Kaikeyi $\frac{1}{8}$ and Sumithra $\frac{1}{8}$) in that order. Some Ramayanas say that Sumithra didn't get payasam which is not true, as it contradicts Valmiki Ramayana.

According to the prayer of the devathas Lord Vishnu wants to come into the World in four forms i.e. four sons of Dasaratha to show us a righteous path.

1)Pithru vakya paripalana (obey father's words) and love towards brothers- Rama
2)Seshathvam- kainkaryam (the duty of the soul is to serve Lord)- Lakshmana
3)Parathanthryam (to obey and serve implicitly of perumal) - Bharatha 4)Bhagavatha kainkaryam, the higher level of seshathvam, (to obey and serve the Bhagavathas(devotees))-Sathrughna.

Going further, with the birth of 4 children, let us see what else our purvacharya's has taught us.

Dasaratha represents "Jeevathma", and the 3 queens represent 3 gunas, namely Sathvika, thamasam, and rajasa. Every soul possesses all these gunas. So, we have to see within us. Everyone of us are Dasarathas, having 3gunas. Now Dasaratha did a Mahayajnam to get children. They are nothing but the purusharthas. Purushartha- means one can have desire and get through his effort. The 4 children represent 4 purusharthas. They are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Like Dasaratha to get these purusharthas we have to lead our life like a Yajna, worshipping the Lord. Lord Vishnu wants to taught us how to practice all these things. So He came in four forms.

Dharma- by practicing it we can attain both physical and eternal welfare, as revealed by Rama Artha- means wealth, the real wealth is doing service to Lord, when we use our wealth for divine sake then only it will be called as a real wealth as Lakshmana did.

Moksha-eternal bliss and to be realized by all, Bharatha being the perfect example Kama- desire for Moksha only, as experienced by Sathrughna. (Andal in Thiruppavai quotes "mattraai num kamangal maatrelo" to rid of all other kamas).

Dharma and Artha go hand in hand like Rama and Lakshmana and Moksha and kama go hand in hand like Bharatha and Sathrughna.

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is – 11

Sriramayana is called as Deergha Saranagathi, because it proves the importance of Surrender to the Supreme one, through various characters. Ramayana starts with Devathas surrendering to Lord Vishnu who accepted their prayers and agreed to incarnate Himself as a Nara (man) into this world and chose King Dasaratha as His father and Kausalya as His mother.

In 17th sarga, Chaturmukha Brahma said to all the Devathas to create their sons in the form of vanaras (monkeys), to serve the supreme lord when He comes down to earth. Brahma also said, " I have already created Jambavan (the bear) and now all of you have to create your amsas (powers) on this earth." Immediately all the Devathas, siddhas, charanas etc. obeyed the order of Brahma and created their sons to serve Srirama.

Indra, the king of Devathas created VALI, who was the king of vanaras, Surya created SUGREEVA, Deva's Guru Bruhaspathi created THARA who was the advisor for Vali, Kubera created Gandhamadhana. Viswakarma the architect of Devathas created Nala, (to construct the bridge over the ocean to Lanka), Agni created Neela, who was equivalent to Agni in radiance, power, and fame, and Aswani Devathas, doctors of swarga loka, created twins Mainda and Dwivida, who were doctors for vanaras during the war.

Hanuman, who was created by Vayu, had the speed of Garuda ,that enabled him to cross the ocean during the search for Sita. Like this all the Devathas created thousands of vanaras to serve Rama.

All the vanaras had the capability to change their form according to their wish and they could travel anywhere they want. Only nails and claws were their weapons. But they had the capacity to blast mountains like missiles, they could control mad elephants, they could leap across the ocean, and they could even seize the clouds entering into Heaven. Among all the vanaras Vali was the mighty one, who became the king of vanaras and Sugreeva, the prince. With their strength and fearlessness they became the protectors of vanaras.

We have to recognize here, that before the birth of Lord Vishnu on earth, all the Devathas were endowed with their own powers (on earth) to serve Srirama. Any person who wants to lead a righteous and dharmic path, all the Devathas will support them to protect Dharma.

After all the preparations of Devathas were completed Lord Vishnu was ready to incarnate into this world in four forms.

The 18th sarga contains the details of the incarnation of Vishnu as a human on earth.

Dasaratha after finishing the puthrakameshti Yaga, waited for the queens to give birth. Six seasons went by, and in the month of Chaithra, (twelve months after finishing the yajna), on Navami thithi day, in karkataka lagna, Kausalya gave birth to a male baby and the star on that day was Punarvasu and all the important planets like sukra (Venus), guru (Jupiter), sun, sani (Saturn), kuja were well aligned. On that auspicious day, the Lord of the whole

universe, Vishnu was born as a baby to Kausalya with half of His amsa, (power) as per the share of the divine payasam (milk dessert).

Following His birth, 1/4th of the amsa of Vishnu Kaikeyi gave birth to a male child. He was born in Meena lagna and the star was Pushyami.

Then Sumithra delivered twins. Both were the amsas (part) of Vishnu only. Like that Lord Vishnu incarnated Himself in four forms through the queens and became the sons of Dasaratha. We may have heard that

Kausalya's son was the only true from Vishnu, and others were from Amsas of Adishesha, Conch and Chakra, which is not true according to Valmiki. Lord Vishnu wanted to teach the importance of humanity, and how a man should live. So, He Himself came in four forms and showed us the righteous way of living through diverse characters.

All the devathas showered flowers while Rama was incarnated on earth, devadundubhies (divine drums) made good sounds and apsaras did dance with the pleasure of Rama's arrival on earth. The people in Ayodhya also felt very happy and they celebrated in each and every house the birthday of Rama. Dasaratha and the people of Ayodhya were very happy at the birth of four princes. Dasaratha invited his guru sage Vasishtha to perform the rituals for the period of the birth.

Vasishtha performed the sanctifying activities, and on the twelfth day Vasishtha named all the off springs. Being a sage and thrikala darsi (knowing the future) He named all the children. He named Kausalya's

son as Rama, because he was going to please everybody with his presence and behavior and Rama means ramayathi (makes every one happy) who ever met Him. Sage Vasishtha already knew who Rama was, and He was none other than Lord Vishnu, to whom the Rishis and Yogis pray in their hearts and experience bliss i.e. ramthe asmin yo:ginaha ithi Rama , so he chose that name.

The letters RA and MA are having greater significance. RA is beejakshara of fire god (Agni) and MA beejakshara denotes the immortality. By chanting these letters all our sins will be smashed and we will get immortality (amruthathwa). By chanting this nama (name) only a hunter Ruksha became like a Maharshi Valmiki. Another way Ra is the 2nd letter in the sequence of last consonants and Ma is the 5th letter among pa-varga. Then RaMa=2X5=10. So if we say Sri Rama(2X5) Rama(2X5) Rama(2X5) ithi , then it will be equivalent to 1000. That's why in Vishnusahasranama Uththara peethika we will chant Sri Rama Rama Rame:thi Sahasranama thath thulyam. By this multiple power Valmiki get rid of all his previous sins.

Kaikeyi's son was named as Bharatha, because he was going to take the responsibility of the whole kingdom. Bharatha means one who is capable to fulfill his responsibilities without expecting anything in return. The twins of Sumithra were named Lakshmana and Sathrughna.

Lakshmana means the wealthiest one. Vasishtha knew that, HE is going to have the real wealth, i.e.constant service to (Lord) Rama (kainkarya Lakshmi), hence he was named Lakshmana. And the last one Sathrughna,

means,one who is capable of destroying (eliminate) all His enemies. But actually in the whole Ramayana we can see that Sathrughna fought with and killed only Lavanasura. Then why was HE called as Sathrughna? Yes, here we are going to know 2 kinds of enemies,(with which we live daily, but don't realize). one is outer enemy like lavanasura (outside beauty), and the second one, more dangerous enemies like desire, anger, jealousy, kama, moha etc. Sathrughna was able to serve

only Bharatha by destroying both outer and inner enemies. That's why he was named as Sathrughna.

Our purvacharyas say that the behaviour or personality of a human being will be described according to the birth time, star and composition of the planets etc. according to astrology. In the case of Rama he born in Chaithramasa which is the first month in the year according to the lunar calendar. So Rama became the first and best model to be a real human being having so many good qualities like the kalas of a moon and thus called as Ramachandra. Then he born in the star Punarvasu, for which Adithi(mother of devathas/satvik powers) is the adhidevatha. So Rama, being the satvikone use to treat everybody equally and with love. Sarvasamaha ramaha. He born on Navami(9) thithi. In spiritual way the number 9 is having a greater significance. It will not lose its existence eventhough multiplied and protects the existence of the number which is added to it. For example if we multiply 9 by 5 i.e. $45 \div 5 = 9$ again. Like that Rama won't lose his originality under any circumstances. Samudra iva ga:mbhi:rye: he is having deep heart like a ocean. If we add any number to nine i.e. $9+6=15 \div 5=6$ again. So, whoever surrenders or do friendship with Rama , he will protect their swaswarupa(originality). And 5 planets were in good position denoting Rama is going to be the ruler of the whole world.

After the namakarana mahotsava(naming ceremony) Dasaratha donated somany gold coins and cows to the Acharyas ,brahamanas and gave bonuses to all the subordinates. He did thadiyaradhana (surprise party) to everybody. All these things are described in 18th sarga and Valmiki maharshi didn't described the childhood activities of the four brothers. Immediately in the next verse he says all the four borthers are growing up and learning dhanurveda, horseriding and chariot driving etc. But he explains the correlation between Rama and Lakshmana as well as Bharatha and Sathrughna which was started in their childhood.

In 18th sarga Sage Valmiki describes the activities of the four brothers only in a small scale, through which we can realize their affection towards each other. From childhood, Lakshmana loved Rama more than life itself, and Rama returned the same feelings towards Lakshmana. They were indivisible. Lakshmana used to follow Rama around like a shadow. He would do all kinds of services to Rama without considering his own needs and ego, right from childhood. Rama used to feel Lakshmana as His outer prana (life). Usually pranas are inside the body, but Lakshmana is like prana out side the body. Even Maricha in Aranyakanda witnessed the inseparability of Rama and Lakshmana and says to Ravana. "Lakshmana is not only the right hand to Rama but he is his prana." Without prana one can't sleep and with the right hand only one has to take food. So, Rama wouldn't take food and sleep without Lakshmana. He used to wait for Lakshmana though tasty foods used to be offered to him. He didn't find anything appreciable unless Lakshmana was there to share the experience.

In the same way Sathrughna used to follow Bharatha and both of them were very closely attached to each other. Here our purvacharyas says, one secret! Rama being the best model for a human being will teach us how the brotherly hood should be and show us the righteous path to lead our life fruitfully. Lakshmana being the follower of Rama will teach us how to dedicate one's life in the service of the Lord and devotees, for a divine cause.

Bharatha, being the servant of Rama will teach us how to obey one's orders and fulfill one's own responsibilities. Sathrugna, shows us doing service to the devotees (like Bharatha), which is most important to remove our ego and anger etc.

They were growing up as two pairs and learning everything from sage Vasishta. Meanwhile Dasaratha started thinking about their marriages (Now they are hardly 12). Srirama and his brothers were born in 18th sarga and in the same sarga they already grew up. The name of the first kanda in Ramayana is called Balakanda, but we can't find any childish activities of Srirama and his brothers in this kanda. Then why it was named as Balakanda? We will know later.

While Dasaratha was planning their marriages, the hero of the kanda, Brhamarshi Viswamithra entered Ayodhya, and from here onwards the future important events starts. The gatekeeper of Dasaratha informed him about the arrival of sage Viswamithra. Upon hearing this news Dasaratha along with His purohithas (priests) Vasishta and others approached Viswamithra and welcomed that was fit for a King. Then Dasaratha offered arghyam etc and did atthithi puja (worshipping the guest) according to sashtra. As protocols demanded Viswamithra initially asked about the welfare of Dasaratha and his kingdom. Then he asked Vasishta and other sages. About their well being every one was happy, and relaxed because sage Viswamithra was in an agreeable mood when He entered the place. Then Dasaratha conveyed his happiness of this unexpected blessings by the visit of Viswamithra and asked Him the reason for His visit to Ayodhya? Viswamithra was quite pleased with the reception extended by the king and ministers of Ayodhya and replied?????

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is – 14

Sage Vishvamithra replied to King Dasaratha, in 19th Sarga, "Oh! King Dasaratha! I was very pleased by your welcome (athithi puja shown to me), and Your promises. You who is trained by Vashishta will not make mistakes, when entertaining Sages. I will tell you why I came here. I wanted to perform a Maha yajna to attain siddhi and it is going to be completed in the near future, but there are two demons named Maricha and Subahu who are causing havoc, by pouring blood and flesh in the homakunda. Several times I tried to complete the yajna but repeatedly they are unsettling my yajna. Being in yajna deeksha (sankalpam) I am not supposed to curse or fight with them. So I need your elder son Rama to protect my yajna. Dasaratha! Don't think that Rama is a mere boy; I will protect him with my power of Tapas.

Vishvamithra promised Dasaratha saying ["sre: yascha asma prada: sya: mi bahuru: pam na samsayaha thraya: na: mapi lo: ka: na: m ye: na khyathim gamishyati"] Rama will benefit in many ways if He accompanies me, and he will get fame in all the three worlds. Here Valmiki used a Sanskrit word to convey many benefits, i.e. Bahuru: pam. In Sanskrit Bahuru: pa means wife, because she is the one who is going to give birth to children in many forms. So Vishvamithra denoted to Dasaratha that "I am going to get your Rama a suitable wife, with whom He will get fame in the universe." (Dasaratha is thinking about the marriage of his sons). Rama is the only one who is capable of killing Maricha and Subahu, so You may send Him with me".

Again Vishvamithra wants to convince Dasaratha, " Oh! King being the father you may think that Your son is not eligible to fight with Rakshasas (demons). But, please believe me, your son is not a mere mortal. I know who HE is! Valmiki wrote a

beautiful poem here??.

"Aham vedmi maha:tma:nam Ramam satya para:kramam Vasishto:pi Maha:the:jaha ye: che:me: thapasi sthitha:ha"

Oh! King Dasaratha! Aham-I, vedmi-know who Rama is, being a sage, and a practitioner of Ashtangayoga. But as a father, overflowing with love, You couldn't recognize who Rama is? Rama is none other than Mahatma-paramathma. That's why one will know him only through Yogic powers.

Here our Purvacharyas gave a beautiful commentary for Vishvamithra's words. The word Atma gives ten different meanings like soul, body, nature (swabhava), dhruthi, Paramathma, effort, sun, fire, buddhi (knowledge), vayu (wind). According to these meanings our Acharyas explains that Vishvamithra knows Rama in His true form. 1. Mahatma means one who is the soul for all the other souls. Rama is nothing but the antharyami and jagathkarana tatwa (root cause of the universe). 2. Mahatma means one who is having a divine body shining like a blue diamond denoting the quality of vatsalya, lotus like eyes denoting paratwa. Rama is nothing but the supreme one, though he came in human appearance. 3. Mahatma means one who protects the ones that has surrendered. That is his original nature (swabhava). So He doesn't desert anybody at the time of need. 4. Mahatma means one who is having dhruthi (dedication) in protecting the devotees. 5. Mahatma means one who has no one equivalent to him, or greater than Him, i.e. the supreme one. 6. Mahatma means one who is trying continuously to elevate others. 7. Mahatma means one who can dry up (soshayathi) the obstacles (enemies) like a Sun with His radiance. 8. Mahatma means one who can demolish the enemies like the Agni (fire) when His devotees are threatened. 9. Mahatma means one who has the knowledge of each and every object in this universe (sarvajnaha). 10. Mahatma means one who is the life force (pranasakthi) in everyone.

Oh! Dasaratha! To know the greatness of Rama, I did severe penance and many yajnas. You couldn't realize Him. He is the only one who can kill the Rakshasas and can help to complete my yajna. You did puthra kameshti Yaga (to get children), but I am doing moksheshti (to attain siddhi). You performed yajnas to fulfill your mundane desires; I am performing a Yajna to attain the ultimate purushartha (Moksha).

So, please ask your guru Vashishta, if you don't rely on my words. Being Brahmarishi he also knows the greatness of Rama. If You still have doubt in my words please enquire the other Rishis here, who are doing Tapas for several thousands of years. They also know the unique form of Rama. You can confirm my truth from them. Let Your Raja Guru guide You in Dharmic path and send Rama with me (Ramam me dathum arhasi) if you really want to get fame by practicing the dharma.

In 20th sarga, Dasaratha tried to convince sage Viswamithra that Rama was still a little kid and he could not fight with the demons. Here Valmiki wrote a beautiful poem. "U:na sho:dasa varsho: me: ramo: ra:ji:va lo:chanaha" . Our purvacharyas have given a beautiful explanation for this verse. Dasaratha did not want to send Rama away from him, so he explained somany reasons to convince Viswamithra.

Dasartaha said, "Oh! Sage Viswamithra! Please see my beloved Rama! He is still not even sixteen (u:na-under, sho:dasa-sixteen varshaha old). Being a little boy he is not capable to fight. Also because he is a minor, (according to sa:stra) he must be under my protection". According to Manudharma sa:stra we

have to treat the children up to sixteen as kids (balaha). Until that age they do not know how to deal with circumstances that occur in the outside world. They cannot behave independently, as they are not capable to take correct decisions on their own. Hence, they must be always under the guidance of the parents. Parents are responsible for taking care of them.

Dasaratha continued to say that " My Rama is such a small kid that even today he is drinking the milk at his mother Kousalya. You can see the milk in his neck (the love towards Rama was being exaggerated), as he has not even swallowed it completely to get strength (Kshi:ra kanttascha Ramabhadra)". Our Purvacharyas imagined themselves to be Dasaratha and explained this verse (unasho:dasa varshaha) in detail.

Oh!Viswamitra! Kids under sixteen are not eligible to drive the chariots or fight. I think you know the rules and sastras. How are you able to ask me for such a small kid to fight with the demons. He is such a tender one and is not able to take care of himself. Either myself or Kausalya need to help him for everything. Oh! Viswamithra! I would have sent him if he was above sixteen. But he is under sixteen and he must be under my protection. So instead of Ramachandra I will come with you, with my four fold army. (chathuranga sama:yuktham maya cha sahitham naya), or if you want Rama specifically then please allow me and my army to come along with Rama . Dasaratha continued to say, though my Rama is learning a few astra:s (which are to be used by chanting mantras) and sastra:s (physical weapons like bow and arrow, sword, spear etc.), he has not completed his education (of yuddha). He has only learnt a part of the theory of yuddha vidya (war field). He still needs to attend the practical classes.

Until now he has never had a chance to confront anyone even on a small battle field. After that he has to give the arangetram (starting performance) in the battle with human beings. Gradually as he improves his abilities and strength, he may be capable to fight with demons.

At present please do not ask me to send him to do his arangetram with Rakshasas (demons). He is not eligible for that. So, please accept my humble request and allow me to come along with you to protect your yajna.

Dasaratha continued to say "me:ramaha" - Rama belongs to me! (1) me:ramaha - I performed a big Aswametha yaga followed by a puthra kameshti yaga to get Rama as my beloved son. Now I do not want to put him through this trouble intentionally. Being without children for so many years, I do not want to loose them now. Being a sage you might not understand the pain of a father. My Rama is a satwik child and not cruel like Bhargavarama(parasurama). Please try to understand! (2) me:ramaha - He is mine! He is Dasaratha Rama and he is like a delicate flower garland. (One has to handle it with care to enjoy the fragrance). We are not supposed to crush it and now you want to crush my Rama in the fight with demons!

(3).me:ramaha-he belongs to me. You are a sage. I need not remind you of the rules pertaining to a sage. Sages need to enjoy things in the nature and not the things that belong to anyone." Kasyachana mamakara

adu:shitham anupa hatha:m vruththim chare:th". If somebody is taking ownership of an article then sages should not ask for it. I am saying Rama is mine. So you cannot ask me to give him to you. If you accept my request I will come. I am living only because I get chance to enjoy the darsan of Rama everyday. I feel young and energetic now. I cannot live without him. So please do not ask me to send him with

you!

Oh! Viswamithra! My Rama is also called "ra:ji:va lo:chanaha"(louts eyed one). Just as the lotus flower his eyes will automatically close after sunset. Demons are known to be more powerful at night time. They are nisa:chara:s(they will wake up during nights). By that time my Rama will be asleep. How can he fight with those cruel demons? He cannot protect himself because of sleep. Also he is tender like a lotus. Though the lotus flower blossoms because of the sun's rays, it will dry up by the same sun if it is taken out of the water. Similarly my Rama also cannot live away from me. He cannot walk and live in the heat and darkness without protection. He is not eligible to fight with demons. Please see Rama through my eyes and then you will not ask him to fight with demons.

As he is not trained in any miracles like demons, he cannot fight with them. So Viswamithra maharshe! "Na ramam ne:thumarhasi". Please do not take Rama into forests.

As Dasaratha argued a lot with Viswamithra, he enquires the where abouts of the demons who were disturbing his yajna. Viswamithra tells Dasaratha that there was a great demon called Ravana. He belonged to the lineage of Pulasthya prajapathi and was the son of Visravasu and brother of Kubera. This Ravana did a severe penance and got a boon from Brahma Deva that no one could kill him. This Ravana had been sending Mari:cha and Suba:hu to destroy his yajna.

After listening to their names Dasaratha was shocked and decided not to send Ramachandra along with Viswamithra. Dasaratha in reply to Viswamithra said "being a chakravarthi and having experienced wars, even I may not be able to face these demons. Oh! Dharmajna! (knower of the dharma) you know the law of friendship or enmity. Either friendship or enmity must be between equal (in all angles) people. So, I do not agree to send my innocent and tender Rama along with you. I am willing to come with you, but, I am not sending Rama with you at any cost. Mari:cha and Suba:hu are the sons of Sunda and Upasunda. I may be able to face Mari:cha only but I cannot face Subahu.

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is – 16

Upon hearing the broken promises from Dasaratha, the ire (anger) of sage Viswamithra is aimed at king Dasaratha. Viswamithra wrathfully replied to the king "You promised to fulfill my desire when I arrived, now you are changing your mind. This is not the behavior expected of Kings, who are descendents of Raghu Vamsa. Since you are not agreeable to your promise, I have nothing more to say to you, I will leave empty-handed, (the same way I came in). May you live happily here after with all your kith and kin?" When Sage Viswamithra unleashed His fury, the whole earth trembled and the devathas were worried.

Usually, Viswamithra has to curse Dasaratha for his mistake. But now he became Bramarshi, that's why he is trying to control his anger. So, instead of saying you will die along with your relatives, he said live happily with your sons and relatives in a anger mode. Viswamithra did thousands of years penance to become Brahmarshi. Now he became Brahmarshi and all Vedas and Pranava are revealed to him by the boon of Chaturmukha Brahma. Still he is getting angry. In olden days whenever he grew angry he use to curse the people always. But, somehow he managed and controlled his anger and didn't gave

any curse to Dasaratha. That is the improvement by sadhana. One will have indriya nigraha and peace only after getting the darsana of the supreme one.

Though Viswamithra became Brahmaarshi, still he has to do sadhana to attain sidhdhi(Bhagavat prapti). We will read about a peaceful Viswamithra after completion of his yaga under the protection of Srirama in coming sargas.

On witnessing the whole episode Brahmaarshi Vasishtha, to pacify sage Viswamithra, Raja Guru Vasishtha interfered and trying to convince king Dasaratha to send Rama with Viswamithra. Being the Raja Guru, he advised King Dasaratha "Oh King!, you born in Ikshwaku dynasty. You are nothing but the personification of Dharma(ethics). You are a staunch one with righteous principles and follower of dharma sastra in the true sense.

So, it is not good for you to take back your promise. Please go back on your words, otherwise all your punyas(earned by performing Aswmedha yaga etc) will be vanished.

"Whether Rama is trained in weaponry or not, demons cannot overwhelm Rama as long as Kushi's son Viswamithra protects him, as the firewall that protects divine nectar, in heaven. And Vasishtha goes onto enumerate the capabilities of Vishwamithra which includes weaponry, Sastras, and great wisdom. " He is an embodiment of virtues, matchless among the warriors, peerless in intellect, and flawless in His Tapas. He is an expert of various missiles, and He is unchallenged in all worlds. These weapons were given to Him by Lord Siva, during His tapas, and these weapons known to Viswamithra are the highly honorable children of Bhruhasaswa Prajapati, who was earliest ruler of mankind."

So, Oh, Dasaratha!, everything is known to this great-sage Viswamithra, and He himself can control the demons, but He has plans for Your son Rama, and only great things will happen to Rama in Vishwamithra's company. Thus he recommends that Viswamithra will be an appropriate teacher for further training and Rama will derive a lot of benefits from Viswamithra. So, do not have any doubts in mind, send Rama with Him and keep Your promise." On hearing these well spoken words of His chief advisor, finally King Dasaratha agreed to send Rama with Vishwamithra to the forest, to protect his Yajna and automatically Lakshmana accompanied Rama.

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is – 17

Once the decision was made to send Rama, King Dasaratha called Rama into the court, who was accompanied by Lakshmana. Rama was blessed for a triumphant travel by Dasaratha and Kousalya while the royal priest Vasishtha chanted Vedic Ashi:rvahcana Manthras. Dasaratha kissed his son Rama on His forehead and entrusted Him to Viswamithra along with Lakshmana.

Immediately all the devathas were pleased by the union of Rama with Viswamithra, so, they showered flowers rain and blown the devadundubhies(eternal drums). A pleasant wind without dirt touched all the people denoting it is a good time for everyone. The two children followed Sage Viswamithra.

The Rama and Lakshmana dressed appropriately for the journey, with two quivers tied on each shoulder, (the upper portions of the quivers with feathered shafts), gave a picture of two more heads, and Rama and Lakshmana appeared like three headed serpents. They also had bows and swords in their hands and they had leather covers (gloves) to protect their

hands. When they are following sage Visvamithra they looked like the (twin devathas) Aswani Devathas following the Brahma. They walked for about 12 miles along the south banks of River Sarayu before Visvamithra would utter His first word to Rama. Until then He didn't even turn around to see if the children were following Him. But they earnestly followed Sage Vishvamitra, because their father King Dasaratha told them to follow and obey the sage.

Thus his Pithruva:kya Paripalana started from here and they also passed the test given by Sage Visvamithra by following Him implicitly without questioning and complaining. We must remember here that Rama and Lakshmana were raised in the royal palace, being catered to every whim, and now they are walking 12 miles following the sage to obey their Guru. Also Lakshmana didn't have to go along, He could have stayed back enjoying the comforts of the palace, but as we discussed earlier "Artha has to follow Dharma".

When sage Vishvamithra turned around He addressed Rama thus "Oh Rama! Purify yourself by udakasparsa, and I will give You two manthras which will give You great benefits. Once You receive these manthras, You will no longer feel hungry or tired, you won't be hurt while You are asleep, nor can the demons harm You. * * By reciting these two manthras no one on this earth and in the three worlds will be Your equal in any skill.

Moreover these two manthras are the origin of all knowledge. These manthras came from Brahma and I want to impart these manthras to you, considering that you are the most eligible one, take these teachings that have been kept safe from the world". On hearing His Guru's words, Rama touched water(udakasparsa) to sanctify himself, and got ready to receive these manthras. 'udakasparsa' means sprinkling water on the head chanting "apavithrah pavithro:va: ... sa ba:hya:bhyantharas suchihi" and then doing 'a:chamanam'. (After yawning also touching ears is as compensation to do the achamanam only. As it is said that there will be ganga in the right ear.) Then Visvamithra did upadesa of Bala and Atibala to Rama and said you have to chant these manthras in your heart so that you will be benefited by them. After getting upadesa Rama shined like the sun with thousands of rays in the saradruthu (without any clouds).

Upon learning those teachings He performed all the duties of a student(according sishya dharma) like pada samvahanam etc. to His teacher, later that night all three rested on the riverbanks of Sarayu. Throughout this chapter Visvamithra addresses, Rama only, to teach or instruct on manthras. It shouldn't be misunderstood that Lakshmana was ignored or avoided, while Visvamithra considered that Lakshmana was part of Rama, when it comes to education and these manthras were imparted to Lakshmana also. Sage Visvamithra arranged a darbha (grass) bed on which Rama and Lakshmana slept. Being the sons of an Emperor it was difficult to sleep on grass-bed, but the children didn't complain. Being the guru Visvamithra told them some stories out of love like a mother until they fell into asleep. If one passes the test given by the Acharya, later he comforts you like a mother would. Acharya has the power to give anything and everything, due to the fact that God listens to their plea.

Rama starts his Sishya dharma paripalana in this 22nd chapter. In Acharyas' presence a disciple has to satisfy with the things that are available there. He is not supposed look after his own physical comforts though he is capable to get everything. Being the sons of a great chakravarthy and tender princes neither Rama nor Lakshmana didn't demand anything.

Just they followed their guru, thinking "Acharyo: mama daivatham". Because this whole universe is under the control of God (daivadhi:nam jagat sarvam), who is invoked by manthra (manthra:dhi:nam thu daivatham), i.e. He is under the control of Manthra which is taught by Acharya (thanmanthram brahmana:dhi:nam), thus, Acharya is our Prthyaksha daivam(Visible God). Believing this Rama and Lakshmana slept very well in a new open place in the forest under the protection of their Guru. Because they are still kids, they slept holding their hands on each other.

It is dawn and Vishvamithra woke up and completed his morning anushtanams (duties) like sandhyavandanam etc. The great Maharshi saw Rama sleeping on the grass bed, He felt happy and sad at the same time, happy-because Rama was so obedient and wasn't complaining, sad-because He was Man among Men, future King of Ayodhya now sleeping like an ordinary man. He came near Rama to wake Him up, and was attracted by Rama's Nidra soundaryam (sleeping beauty). He forgot that he is a Brahmarshi and he forgot his mission and enjoying the beauty of Rama who is in deepsleep. Immediately Rama's mother Kousalya came to His mind, and He started praising her fortune. How fortunate mother Kousalya is! What Tapas she did to gave birth to this soundarya Ra:si? What a lucky mother! She gave birth to Sa:ksha:th Parabrahma. Now Vishvamithra Maharshi is awakening Rama addressing Him thus,

Kousalya suprajaa raama, purvaa sandhyaa pravartate I utthish*t*a nara
*s*aardula, kartavyam daivamaahnikaam II**

"How fortunate is the Kousalya to beget you as her son? Rama, wake up oh! Tiger among men, sun is rising in the east, daytime tasks i.e. taking shower, offering sandhya: vandanam and doing Agni karyam towards gods are to be performed."

This is a very celebrated verse chanted daily in the early morning awakening Vishnu or His Avatars from divine trance which is a common practice in Srivaishnava tradition. We call it Suprabha:tha Se:va or Melukolupu.* *But how fortunate is Kousalya, She gave birth to Ramachandra in a palace and for 12 years She enjoyed the childhood and sleeping beauty of Ramachandra. Thus Visvamithra is praising Kousalya's soubhaagyam(luck) in this verse. Till now Rama was cared for in the palace, surrounded by King, His mothers, brothers and the whole of Ayodhya, who treated Him like He was their own. But here, Sage Visvamithra is daring to wake up Rama in asking him to 'get up' from divine trance to undertake the human duties to eradicate evil, like the dawn of sun gets rid of darkness.

Being a sadhaka here Viswamithra was pryaing Rama to wakeup in his heart and shower his grace upon him. Oh! Rama! my lord! This is the dawn in my heart also. By practicing the Gayathri manthra, to some extent the rajasic and tamasic qualities were decreased. If you shower your krupa drushti then all the tamas in my heart will be removed. Please wake up in my heart also so that I can get your divine experience.

On hearing the loving words of the sage Vishvamitra Rama and Lakshmana woke up, and performed their morning duties. Starting from this sarga Valmiki mentioned on each and every time that Rama performed his daily rituals during the

thrisandhyas.(morning, afternoon and in the evening).

We have to remember this is nitya karma(daily activity). One has to perform ones daily rituals without interruption at any cost. Valmiki described even when Rama was separated from Sita and he is in search of Sita, then also he didn't gave up his daily rituals like sandhyavanadanam etc.

According to sashtra "sandhyahi:naha asuchihi anarhaha sarvakarmabhihi" that means those who are eligible to perform sandhyavandana has to perform regularly. Otherwise they will be treated as uncleanly persons and they didn't qualify themselves for any sacred activity. We may not see the result immediately after performing the daily rituals. But, they are having a great effect in our life. They are having the capacity to remove our previous sins. To teach us the importance and significance of nityakarma Rama performed throughout Rmayana. Let us try to follow him.

After completion of their rituals, they excitedly presented themselves before sage Visvamithra for further journey. On further traveling they saw the divine River Ganges merging with River Sarayu. Near there they saw an Asram of sages, who were performing tapas for many thousands of years. Rama enquired Sage Visvamithra about that Ashram, who started explaining the details of that Ashram.

"When Manmadha (the love god) was with his body sages used to call him Kama, the passion. At this place Manmadha roamed with his wicked intent, disturbed Siva who was practicing Tapas. Siva disapprovingly roared at Manmadha and burnt down the physical entity of Manmadha with his third eye at this place. Afterwards Manmadha was known as Ananga i.e. without body, and where he lost his body is called as Anga province. My dear Rama "This Ashram belongs to Siva and, these sages full of virtues are Siva's disciples. "Let us stay for this night in this hermitage situated in between two Rivers Ganges and Sarayu, tomorrow we will cross over the River Ganges.

While they were discussing the history of that province, the sages of that hermitage were highly elated to receive them and upon approaching them they offered ARGHYAM, PA: DYAM and then offered hospitality first to Sage Visvamitra, afterwards to Rama and Lakshmana. Those sages entertained Rama and Lakshmana with lots of stories, thus they spent the night.

Next day morning Rama and Lakshmana after completion of their daily rituals (sandhyavana etc.) arrived at the riverbank of Ganges along with Vishvamithra Maharshi. The sages of the Ashram offered a ferryboat to cross River Ganges, which they accepted willingly. In the middle of the river they heard a roaring sound, and Rama enquired His Acharya very obediently, the source of that sound.

Sage Vishvamitra narrated the significance of that sound, " Once upon a time on Mount Kailash Brahma created a great lake at His will. That is called Maanasa Sarovar or Brahma manasa sarovar, and the river which spontaneously flows out of that lake surrounds Ayodhya city, which is none other than but River Sarayu. Because the River originated from a lake, saras, it is known as Sarayu. Because it flows from Brahma's Lake it is a holy river. The incredible noise is that of Sarayu River coursing towards River Ganges, and the collision of their waters". They offered salutations to River Sarayu and Ganges, proceeded further to reach the southern riverbank.

There they came across a dense uninhibited forest, and forever curious to know, **Rama asked sage Visvamithra, "Oh Maharshi! What is this desolate forest? Sage

Visvamithra said to Rama, "These vast provinces were designed by Malada and Karuusha. Tainted by mortal impurities Indra, killed Vritra:sura, and he committed the sin of killing of a Brahman, (who was a demon at that time). The demigods and ascetically rich sages started to sprinkle Indra with holy water to rid Indra of his sin. Here on earth, filth and hunger emerged from the body of Indra (the manifestation of the washed out sins of Indra). Having gotten over his sins Indra gave a boon out of gratitude to this place. These provinces that bear the impurity of my body shall become resourceful and they will attain fame in world. For a long time the habitants of this place were wealthy and happy.

Sometime later, a yaksha female Thataka who can change herself at will (Ka:ma Rupini), prevailed here. While mentioning her name itself Sage Visvamithra felt very uncomfortable, He said to Rama "May you be safe (Bhadram the)". * *She is having strength equaling thousand elephants and she is the wife of Sunda, mother of demon Mareecha, who has having bravery equal to Indra. Demon Mareecha is round shouldered, huge headed, big and hollow mouthed, and a giant in true sense who derives pleasure in terrorizing people. And Rama! Thataka is always destroying the inhabitants of Malada and Karusha. She lives about one and half yojana (12 miles) distance from here and we have to go there. Your first duty is to eliminate this she devil, and relieve this province of her evil deeds.

Because of this she demon Thataka no one is able to enter this province and it has become desolate. You have to make these provinces habitable again.

Here in this 24th Sarga Sage Visvamithra is preparing Rama mentally, to kill the she demon Thataka. Rama was curious to know about the secret of her energy. What was it?....let us know.

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is - 20

In this 25th sarga, Sage Vishvamithra narrates the birth, marriage and curse upon Thataka. He also bids Rama to eliminate her without any hesitation of killing a female, for she is horrible towards the society.

On hearing the words of sage Vishvamithra about Thataka, Rama asks the Sage, "Oh Maharishi! Yaksha's strength is slight, and how can a female exert the strength of a thousand elephants?" Sage Vishvamitra replied. "This female became outstanding, because of the boon she received. Once there was a yaksha named Suketu, and he was infertile, so he performed a great Tapas. Pleased with his Tapas, Brahma* *gave him a gemlike daughter named Thataka. Brahma also gave her the strength of a thousand elephants. She grew up to be a real beauty, and her father Suketu gave her hand to Sunda as wife. After a while Thataka delivered a strong son, name Mareecha.

One day Sage Agasthya got rid of Sunda by a curse, who offended the great Rishi and Thataka wanted to take revenge on sage Agasthya. Accompanied by her son Mareecha she rushed towards the sage to kill him. Agasthya Maharshi saw her with her son, and He understood their intent. So He first cursed Mareecha saying 'you will attain demon-hood', and then he cursed Thataka saying 'you will become a man eater, you will loose your beauty, and you will roam these forests, because of your

monstrosity. That Thataka is now vandalizing this auspicious province, in which sage Agasthya once stayed.* *She is atrocious, with dreadful behavior and she has no fear of anybody or anything.

My Dear Rama you shall eliminate this yakshini for the welfare of Brahmans and cows. Except you there is none to eliminate her in the three worlds as no one equals her in brevity. Do not feel compassionate, since it is the duty of the prince to protect the people. For this reason the protector always has to execute such deeds and this is the Sana:than Dharma.

Eliminate her now and don't hesitate. We have heard that Indra once eliminated Manthara, the daughter of Virochana, when she wished to annihilate earth. I am sure, you know that. And many others have eliminated females who departed themselves from the righteous path. My dear Rama, by my decree you let go of compassion and eliminate her."

Thus, sage Vishvamitra commanded Rama to terminate Thataka's existence. This is a much discussed topic in Ramayana. Rama's adventures start with the killing of a female. Scriptures says that killing a female is sinful; here killing of a female, right or wrong is the topic for discussion. Vishnu Purana says that eliminating one evildoer for the sake of many innocent is neither sin nor a crime to the kings and rulers.

Other than the story of Thataka what we have to learn here, that both Rama and Krishna, they first killed a female. So what the female represent here? IGNORANCE: for one to proceed any further in life one has to extinguish the darkness of ignorance and light the lamp of knowledge. Without the knowledge we will never know the righteous path or right way of living. So it is one's Acharya who leads them in the path of light, by giving them wisdom and eliminating the darkness of ignorance. Rama was a devoted pupil, and Sage Vishvamithra was the apt teacher

By that echo the inhabitants of the forest were afraid, even Thataka was stunned by that sound and she wondered who would dare to make such a noise in her forest. She turned to the direction of that sound and with animosity she rushed towards that echo.

Rama, on seeing that monstrous-looking Thataka, Rama turned to His brother and thus spoke, "Lakshmana! See this Thataka's disgusting and frightening physique. While seeing her shape yogi's heart will quiver. She is unstoppable and she has magical powers. Lakshmana, you may see now, how I will make her retreat by cutting off her ears and the tip of nose.

Because she is a woman, I don't want to slay her, but I intend to end her wickedness and mobility". While Rama is still speaking, Thataka convulsed in anger, and making a roaring sound, she rushed towards Rama, swinging her arms. But Sage Visvamithra undaunted said to Rama and Lakshmana,(swasthi Raghavayorasthu) "May you be safe, and be victorious".

Thataka threw fistful of dust on Rama and Lakshmana and she baffled them with a massive cloud of dust (with her size a fistful is equivalent to a mountain). Then by witchcraft she showered both of them, with torrential stone storm, by which Rama became indignant and He efficiently blocked it with His arrows. This angered Thataka

so much, that she made a mad rush towards Rama and Lakshmana. Rama tried to stop her advance by mutilating her arms with arrows. With her arms severed and fatigued she dashed towards Lakshmana and He caused some more damage to her face, and now the guise changer (shape shifter) vanished, but continued to shower stones. Upon seeing both Rama and Lakshmana being overpowered by storms of stones from all-over, Sage Visvamithra spoke to Rama. "Enough of your compassion Rama, she is a menacing, malicious, a hinderer of rituals, and this yakshini will get a grasp on her powers in a short time.

Sun is going to set in a short time, and before that time she should be destroyed, You know! Demons become more active and indestructible at dusk and after dark". Rama displaying his capability in archery stopped her with his arrows and He struck an arrow in her chest which threw her down like a thunderbolt and she fell to earth with a roaring sound and died.

On seeing her lifeless body, Indra and other demigods were extremely pleased and praised Rama for His courage. Then Indra spoke with approval to Visvamithra. "Oh Vishvamithra! You are blessed. Rama is steadfast in following your assignments. Now You may offer the asthras at Your disposal to Rama, since He has proven to be a worthy recipient. Rama has a lot more accomplish." Visvamithra was satisfied with Rama for eradicating Thataka, He hugged and kissed the forehead of Rama and said. "Rama we stay here for the night, and tomorrow morning we will go to my Ashram." Now the forest was rid of Thataka and her terror filled reign, and it was shining like the Chaitra Ratha Gardens . {Chaitra Ratha garden is the luxurious heavenly garden of Kubera}. The celestial beings and liberated Souls (the Rishis and Yogis) eulogized Rama for His bravery.

In this Sarga Rama follows His Acharya's instructions implicitly. With that satisfaction Visvamithra wants to give many weapons to Rama as suggested by Devathas.

The next day morning Sage Visvamithra, being satisfied with the behavior of Rama in fulfilling the orders of elders and performing the act that is assigned to him, gives many weapons, especially so many divine asthras to Rama. The weaponry is categorized mainly into two types. One is sashtra - a handheld weapon like bow and arrow, sword, and lance or mace. The other is asthra - a projectile missile invoked by reciting particular manthras. While killing Thataka Visvamithra came to know the efficiency of Rama in using sastras. Now he wants to do upadesa of all divine asthras to Rama, which will be useful to protect his yajna as well as in future, while facing all the demons in Dandakaranaya.

This 27th sarga lists out those missiles (like skuds) that are given to Rama and in next chapter(28 th) an account of some counter-attack missiles (like patriots), called upasamhaara asthra-s that can be used to nullify the enemy's missiles. Visvamithra spoke to Rama with utmost love, "I am highly pleased with you Rama! Now I will give you all the divine asthras. "I am going to pass on all these divine missiles by which scores of devathas, demons, gandharvas, uragaas, and earthlings are dominated, humbled and conquered in war. I am going to give You the highly divine discs, 1) Danda Chakra [Punisher disc] 2) Dharma Chakra [Virtue-disc], 3) kaala Chakra [Time-disc] 4) Vishnu Chakra.

Then divine asthras like 5) Indra asthra (Thunderbolt missile) 6) the best trident pertaining to Siva; 7) Brahma-sira [Brahma-crest] 8) Aishiikaasthra [Grass-Blade

missile] and Oh, Rama, I am going to give You the unexcelled and highly formidable asthras called 9)Brahmasthanam (which was used to kill Ravana)

Then two divine maces that are brilliant by their radiance called, 10)Modaki [the Beater], and 11)Shikhari [the Tower of Protection], were given.

Along with these, sage Viswamithra gave, three nooses called 12)Dharma paasa and 13)kaala-paasa and 14)Varuna paasa, [Virtue noose and Time noose, Rain god's noose] as well as an unequalled missile called 15)Varuna asthra(Rain-god's missile) to Rama. Then two projectile bolts, one called 16)sushka, [The Drier] and the other 17)aardra [The Drencher], 18)the Pinaakaasthra(which belongs to siva), 19)Narayanaasthra(belongs to Narayana) 20)Aagneyasthra(wich belongs to Firegod, and used to kill Subahu), 21)Vayavya asthra(a missile of Air-god), 22)the well-known missile sikhari [The Tower], 23)prathana [The Blower], two missiles named 24)Haya-sira [The Horse-head] and 25)Krouncha [The Wrestler].

Again two Impellers, 26)one presided over by Vishnu, and 27)the other by Rudra. Then the weapons that are wielded by demons, namely 28)the deadly Pounder named Kankaalam,29)musalam,30) Kapaalam and 40)Kankanam which are used for the elimination of those demons to protect sages, Viswamithra gave to Rama. Then he is saying again, Oh! mighty armed son of the Great king, I am willing to give You a great missile named 41)Vaidyadhara, 42)sword named Nandana.

Here after we can observe the names of some chemical weapons in those days also. 43)Gandharva asthra [The Stupefier], 44)Manavasthra(which is used to throw away Maricha upto 800miles), 43)Prasvapanaasthra [The Inducer of Sleep, probably something madeup of chloroform], 44)the Prashamanaasthra [The Pacifier of enemy's anger, something like laughing gas], 45)Souraasthra, 46)Darpanaasthra, 47)soshanaasthra [the Drier], 48)santaapanaasthra [probably which will make to feel depression], 48)vilaapanaasthra [tear-inducer, tear gas], 49)an unassailable intoxicator and a dear missile of Manmadha, named Mohana [The Intoxicator,] 50)maanava [The Human missile]

Then a missile dear one to pishaaca-s, (monsters),51)namely paisachaasthra [The Monster missile],52)Thamasa asthra, 53)saumanaasthra, 54) Mausalasthra, 55)Satyasthra, 56)Mayadharasthra, 57)Tejahprabha asthra(which will squeeze the energy of the enemies), 58)the sisiraasthra (The Cooler, probably belongs to moon and makes enemies frozen), and a very deadly asthras of thvashta called sudaamanaasthra, and a dangerous missile *s*itaashu, these and the maanava missile of Manu all these were given by Sage Viswamithra to Rama in the form of Manthras. And Viswsamithra said to Rama, "Oh! Rama! these missiles are, most powerful, be cautious while using them". Then Vishvamitra transferred the powers of all those weapons to Rama by chanting the appropriate manthras (facing east), at which time the owner of each weapon came in front of Rama in their original form.

All of those highly obliging missiles in astral bodies were glad to come under the protection of Rama, spoke to him with folded palms, "we are here to obey You". Rama received them with due respect and replied please be within my heart. Then Rama was curious to know some more asthras which are called as upasamhara asthras.

In 28th sarga, Rama addressed Sage Visvamithra with a pleasing face, Oh Maharishi! I have been blessed with the weapons received from You. I am curious to know about the upasamhara asthras. Upasamhara asthras are useful to pacify(nullify) the power of the asthras used by the enemies. So, they are also important to know for defence sake. Now will You teach me how to call off those asthras? Sage Visvamithra, felt very happy about his disciple.

Because though he did upadesa continuously upto 50plus asthras at a stretch, Rama was able to grasp everything without confusion. Moreover he is asking to learn some more asthras. Visvamithra imparted the knowledge of withdrawal of those asthras. Then He went on saying another list. At last he said, "Rama, take these radiant asthras from me and given. "

Those asthras are Satyavanta, Satyakeerti, Dhrishta, Rabhasa, Pratihaarita, Paraanmukha, Avaanmukha, Lakshya, Alakshya, Dridhanaabha, Sunaabha, Dashaaksha, Satavakthra, Dasaseersha, Sathodara, Padmanaabha, Mahaanaabha, Dundunaabha, Svanaabha, Jyotisha, Krusana, Nairaashya, Vimala, Yungandhara, Haridra, Daitya, Prasamana, Suchibaahu, Mahaabaahu, Nishkali, Virucha, Saarchirmaali, Dhritimaali, Vrittiman, Ruchira, Pitrya, Saumansa, Vidhoota, Makara, Karaveerakara, Dhana, Dhaanya, Kaamaroopa, Kaamaruchira, Moha, Aavarana, Jrimbhaka, Sarvanaabha, Varana.etc.

"Some of these are guise changing wizards and you are the only one eligible one to handle these asthras. Let all these asthras be safe with You."

Thus Visvamithra imparted asthras to Rama who received these annulment weapons with a cheerful heart (upasamhara asthras). These missiles were radiantly divine bodies, appealing and endowing bliss. Some were fire-like, some smoke-like, some moon-like, some sun-like, some of them holding out their hollowed palms, and some with palms adjoined melodiously spoke to Rama saying, "We are here to do Your bidding, what can we do for you?"

Rama replied to them "While you remain in my memory, you may assist me as and when needed, until then you may rest". Immediately, those Asthras also took leave off Rama and retired. Thus Rama was gifted by so many asthras by his guru. At first our mahaveera Rama started his dushta sikshana by killing Thataka. At that time he knows only the operation of sasthras (instrumental weapons). After killing Thataka Visvamithra was pleased very much by his sincerity in following Guru's order without hesitation and efficiency in the operation of sasthras. In olden days Guru used to do so many tests to the disciples and then reveal the secrets of next level in their education."pari:ksham kruthavidabhimathaha thatwathaha sikshani:yaha" .

If one disciple was selected through the exams, he will be gifted by the grace of Guru. He was able to learn all the Brahmavidya or any other sashtra very quickly at the moment the Guru was pleased by his susrusha. Our Rama was also passed the exam given by his guru and Visvamithra was pleased by his services. So, as a gift sage Visvamithra revealed all the prayoga as well as upasamhara asthras which he got from Bhrusaswa and lord Siva as a result of thousands of years penance.

That was the great effect of gurususrusha. Visvamithra and His disciples were proceeding on their journey when they saw an unusual sight. Rama asked His Acharya "What is this cloudlike picturesque grove shining on this side of the

mountain, with animals spread all over, and filled with a variety of birds that sing beautifully, I am getting very inquisitive about this place. By the nature of this happy environment, I understand that we have come out of the extremely dangerous forest of Thataka, and to whom does this place belong to? Kindly tell me. Oh, great saint, where are those demons that have hindered your ceremonious rituals? I am ready to guard your further proceedings, by demolishing all the demons" thus spoke Rama to Sage Vishvamithra.* *Now Rama was curious to do practicles with the new knowledge he gained from sage Viswamithra. Ofcourse, he revealed all the theory part of the asthras to his beloved brother Lakshmana. Viswamithra felt happy for the sraddha of Rama and started aonther story about that place.

In this 29th sarga, Rama asks the details about the forest. Sage Visvamithra starts to narrate about that forest. "Oh! Rama!, Lord Vishnu resided here for practicing yoga and Thapas for thousands of years. This is called the hermitage of Vaamana. It is also renowned as Hermitage of Accomplishment (siddha:srama), because, the sage Kasyapa became an accomplished Thapasvi by doing Thapas here. This was first the hermitage of Lord Vishnu before his Vaamana incarnation.

Later, during His Vaamana incarnation He again practiced Thapas here. Thus, this hermitage belongs to both Lord Vishnu and Vaamana. When Vishnu was doing Thapas in this hermitage, Bali, the son of king Virochana had completely conquered Indra and all the devathas, and was ruling the swargaloka. Bali became renowned in all the three worlds for his magnanimity. He then performed a very grand Vedic ritual.

When Bali was performing the ritual, all the devathas approached Lord Vishnu here in this hermitage with Fire-god leading them and they said to him ? 'Oh! all-pervading Lord Vishnu! Bali the son of Virochana is conducting an unsurpassed Vedic ritual. Before the completion of that yajnam, our own mission must be achieved. The supplicants might be anyone and from anywhere, if they just approach him he is donating anything the supplicant is asking for. Oh Lord Vishnu! You may effectuate the most suitable merited deed for the welfare of devathas by resorting to your illusory power Vishnu Maya and assume the form of a dwarf (Vaamana) to deal with emperor Bali.' Thus gods appealed to Lord Vishnu.

In the meantime, sage Kasyapa completed his thapas and along with his wife Adithi started to praise Lord Vishnu." - said Visvamithra to Rama.

The ascetic practices conducted by a man together with wife are said to yield best results in the case of a desired object of that couple's interest. Therefore Dasaratha conducted the ritual along with his wives to get children. Here sage Kasyapa conducted his austerities along with his wife Adithi. Lord Vishnu was pleased with their devotion, and told Kasyapa to seek a boon.

Then sage Kasyapa said. "Oh Lord! It will be apt of you to bestow the boon that Adithi and the devathas want. I too wish the same. Please make us pure by being our son. By becoming the younger brother of Indra, kindly help the devathas who are suffering owing to Emperor Bali's domination. Oh! Lord of devathas! as my austerity has born fruit here by your grace this hermitage will be renowned by the name Siddha Asramam - Hermitage of Accomplishment. Hence, arise from here to become my son. Then Lord Vishnu adopting a semblance of a dwarf born to Adithi and approached Emperor Bali.

He (Vaamana) begged and received a space that can be covered in three steps, but strode all the three worlds in those three steps to save the worlds. Lord Vishnu gave the swargaloka back to Indra, restraining Emperor Bali with his vitality. Thus that great resplendent Lord Vishnu made the three worlds to come under his feet and get the blessings. The story was that Vaamana the dwarfish ascetic boy approached Emperor Bali and begged him for a space enough to place his three small foot-steps. Everybody in that ritual hall of Bali laughed at this boy's request. Bali accepted his request, later he came to know who this Vamana was, by his guru Sukracharya.

Though he knew that He is Lord Vishnu in disguise, without deviating from his pledge of charity, Bali agreed to give that space to the boy. Immediately, Vaamana became Thrivikrama and placed one foot on this globe and the entire globe was covered. Then He asked Bali where to put the second foot. Bali showed heavens, which were conquered by Bali and were under his control at that time. Thrivikrama placed his second foot on the heavenly worlds covering all of them. Then again He asked Bali to show space for the third step. Bali showed his head. Thrivikrama placed his foot on Bali's head and trampled him to *paataala loka* (netherworlds).

At the time of donating the land, while Bali was pouring water of oblation into the hands of Vaamana, Sage Sukrachaarya, the demon's guru, entered the nozzle of the water pot so that the donation water may not fall into the hands of the boy, thus failing the donation. Knowing that the sage is in the nozzle of the water-pot, Vaamana pierced the nozzle with a straw of darbha, sacred grass-blade, thus piercing one eye of Sage Sukrachaarya. From then on, this sage had become one-eyed sage, symbolically meaning that his eyes look one side only, i.e., the side of demon's welfare. Vaamana thus banished Emperor Bali to netherworlds, freeing the other worlds from his rule. However, Lord Vishnu blessed Bali to be deathless and to become Indra in the coming manvantharas, eras.

From then Lord Vishnu is praised as Trivikrama, meaning one who surpassed all the three worlds in three strides. "This hermitage which is purified by Vishnu, offers salvation from the stress and strain caused by the evil on earth, and the stress of going through the cycle of birth and death. I am entrusted to look after this hermitage owing to my devotion to Vaamana. Demons causing obstacles will be arriving at this hermitage and they must be eliminated there only. Rama, we now go to the unparalleled hermitage of Accomplishment ? Siddhaasramam. As this hermitage belongs to me, this also belongs to you", said sage Visvamithra and lead Rama and Lakshmana to the hermitage. On seeing the arrival of Visvamithra the resident sages of Siddhaasramam quickly approached him.

They did welcome to Visvamithra along with arghya and padya etc. and offered hospitality to both the princes. Rama and Lakshmana briefly took rest and with folded hands and palms together they said to sage Visvamithra. "Oh! Sage! Today itself you may start the ritual formalities like ankukraropanam etc. which are undertaken prior to the main ritual. Be safe and let this Siddhaasramam become once again an accomplished one true to its name by eradicating the demons. Let your words to my father, while bringing me to this place, come true", said Rama to Visvamithra. Then sage Visvamithra undertook the vow of ritual controlling his senses. Both Rama and Lakshmana spent that night vigilantly and got up themselves before the sunrise next day. They finished bathing, Sandhyavandanam, and other daily rituals perfectly. Then they approached Visvamithra and enquired about the demons. What Visvamithra replied?

In this 30th Sarga Rama and Lakshmana said to Visvamithra. "Maharshe! we want to know at what time those demons come to disturb the ritual and at what time we have to safeguard the ritual from them. Please tell us. Let not that moment pass away." All the sages praised Rama and Lakshmana, who were eager to fight with the demons.

"Oh! Rama and Lakshmana! You have to safeguard this ritual for six days and six nights" said Visvamithra to Rama and Lakshmana, and started his yajna deeksha. From today, sage Visvamithra who is under the yajna deeksha (vow of ritual) will observe silence, until the yajnam was finished", the other sages said. Rama and Lakshmana stayed awake and safeguarded the place of ritual for five nights and five days. Staying alert and patrolling closely the Altar of Fire, Rama and Lakshmana have protected the sage Visvamithra and the yajnam.

On the sixth day, just as Rama was telling Lakshmana to be alert and prepared, the demons appeared to spoil the ritual. While the Vedic ritual was proceeding well towards its conclusion, a frightening blare was heard in the sky. Maareecha and Subaahu, the monstrous demons came along with their followers and started pouring blood and floush into the yajna-kunda. Rama swiftly ran in that direction and saw the demons in the sky. He said to Lakshmana, "I want to eliminate these ill-behaved and raw flesh eating demons, but I'm reluctant to kill. They will be blown by this Maanava asthra like thick clouds are blown by a gust, you may see." Then Rama fitted the highly radiant Maanava asthra on his bow, and darted it on the chest of Maareecha.

Maareecha was pitched for a hundred yojanam length (800 miles) in full, and flung down into an ocean rocking with tidewaters. Rama said to Lakshmana, "Lakshmana, see the cold arrow of Maanavaasthra expounded by Manu stopping the demon without taking away his life. I now wish to kill these demons for they are ruthless, wicked, brutal, ritual-hinderers and blood-drinkers."

Speaking so, Rama took up a very powerful fire missile called Aagneya asthra, and darted it on the chest of Subaahu. Demon Subaahu was struck and fell on ground. To the bliss of the sages, Rama used the Air missile called Vaayavya asthra and hit down the remaining demons. All the demons were eliminated and the sages of Siddhaasramam praised Rama. The ritual was completed and sage Visvamithra said to Rama. "Oh! Rama! My purpose in conducting this ritual is fulfilled.

You kept my honour and the honour of your father's word. The glory of this Accomplished Hermitage ? Siddhaasramam is augmented by your deeds." What was the purpose of sage Visvamithra in performing the shadrathra yajna(six nights yajna) and how it was fulfilled through Rama by killing Thataka, Subaahu and throwing away Maareecha???

Rama and Lakshmana felt happy about accomplishing the task of protecting the vedic ritual. After they spent the night in Visvamitra's hermitage, the next morning, they completed their morning anushtanams and approached Visvamitra who was sitting in the company of the other sages and He looked radiant like a ritual fire. The two brothers bowed to him and spoke to him respectfully- "O great and knowledgeable rishi, we are at your service. Please command us and let me how we can serve You?" The rishis surrounding Visvamitra said to them - "Janaka, the king of Mithila is performing a yajnam. We are all going there and You must accompany us. In Mithila, there is an awe-inspiring wonderful bow and Rama, you must see that

bow. Devathas gave that bow to the dynasty of Mithila rulers. Nobody can assess the bow's power. Neither devathas, gandharvas, rakshasas or mortals could lift and string the bow. Many mighty kings and princes wanted to test their own valor by lifting the bow, but none ever succeeded. Rama, you should accompany us and witness king Janaka's yajnam and the powerful bow. Paramasiva gave that bow to king Janaka on devathas' request as the fruit of a yajnam performed by him. In the king's palace they worship that bow everyday with flowers, incense and other fragrances." Visvamitra felt very happy that the sages convinced Rama and Lakshmana to accompany them and they all started their journey towards Mithila. Let us pause here to look at the tattvartham as written by Sri Sribhashyam Appalacharya Swamy.

Tattvaartham :

In the story so far, Rama had proved one "samanya dharma" or "general duty" - a disciple who learns from an Acharya may sometimes achieve greater things than Acharya, but a disciple must always be obedient to the Acharya. Visvamitra taught Rama all the astras and using those, Rama vanquished the demons. Here Rama showed obedience and humbleness in front of His Acharya even though He was mightier than His Guru was the dharma that Rama demonstrated. We also learn one "vishesha dharma" or "special duty" in this story. Soul should make use of the body to reach the Lord. Visvamitra performing the yajnam is compared to the soul utilizing the body for reaching the Lord. The way karma hinders soul from reaching God, demons were the obstacles to the yajnam. These obstacles must be removed by the Lord Himself, and not by self-effort. So, Visvamitra didn't want to use his power against the demons, but requested for Rama's help. Astras are the tools to remove obstacles. Visvamitra gave all his astras to Rama instead of using them Himself. The demoness "Thataka" is compared to "Avidya" or ignorance in us because Thataka has strength equal to thousand elephants and ignorance is equally strong in shutting out all the knowledge. "Avidya" or ignorance causes "kaamam" or desire. Desire leads to more karma, which is an obstacle in the path to reach God. Karma is two types - "aagaami karma" (the karma in future births) and "sanchita karma" (karma accumulated from past births). Thataka's sons Subaahu and Maareecha are compared to these two kinds of karma. With the Supreme God's intervention, "sanchita karma" is burnt without trace like Subaahu, and "aagaami karma" won't affect us the way, as Maareecha was sent far away. Visvamitra doesn't leave Rama after the completion of the yajnam. He unites Him with Sita Devi and goes to Himalayas instead of coming back to Siddhasramam. Similarly, after removing both kinds of karma, soul stays in the body for the body's lifespan, worships Lakshmi Narayana together and goes to moksham without returning. Visvamitra's yajnam lasted for 6 nights and days. It denotes the six "dosha"s or vices in us. First vice is attachment to the body and thinking that body and soul are same. Second vice is independence, thinking that soul is not dependant on God. Third vice is forgetting the subservience of soul to God. Fourth vice is thinking that one can try and protect himself. Fifth vice is thinking that relations that come with the body are real and permanent relatives. Sixth vice is, wanting to experience the pleasures for the body. Only Lord can remove these doshas from us. If the bhagawanmantram (ashtaakshari) is chanted continuously, these vices will be removed. This concept is proved in upanishats and brahma sutrams.

Now, let us get back to the story.

Visvamitra started on the journey to Mithila along with the other rishis and Rama-

Lakshmanas and bade farewell to the vanadevataas - "O Vanadevataas ! I achieved siddhi in this Siddhasramam. Let auspiciousness be with you. I'm now heading north to Himalayas on the banks of Ganga river". He then did a pradakshinam (going around) to Siddhasramam. The sages collected all the things and articles required for the homam in hundred carts and followed Visvamitra. The animals and birds in Siddhasramam also wanted to follow Visvamitra but he stopped them. They all walked for a long distance and reached the banks of SONA river by sunset time. After sunset they all bathed, performed agnihotram (anushtanams by ritual-fire) and sat around Visvamitra. Rama and Lakshmana bowed to all the sages and sat in front of visvamitra. Rama then said to Visvamitra - "Swami! This place is beautiful with green trees and enchanting. What kingdom is this? Please tell us about this place." Visvamitra started answering.

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is – 27

<http://www.chinnajeeyar.org/Teleupanyasam/Sri-Ramayanam/Sri-Ramayana-27.html>

SrImatE rAmAnujAya namaha! Visvamitra started narrating - "There was a great rishi called kuSa who was the son of chaturmukha brahma. He was entrusted by his father with ruling the people on earth justly. He performed many vratas without any obstacles and he ruled honorably and advantaged good people. He married the princess of vidarbha kingdom and had four sons who were equal to their father in virtue and valor. Their names were kuSAmba, kuSanAbha, aadhoortarajasa, and vasuvu. They always used to speak truth, very enthusiastic and radiated brightly with a glow. kuSa directed them to rule the kingdom and keep dharma (righteous rule) intact in their rule. They chose four different cities as their capitals and started ruling different regions of the kingdom. kuSAmba's capital was called kauSAmbi, kuSanAbha's capital was called mahOdayam, aadhoortarajasa's capital was dharmaraNyam and Vasuvu's capital was called girivrajam. The place we are in now is ruled by Vasuvu. Since this place is surrounded by five mountains around, it is called girivrajam. This SONA River that flows from east to west like a garland amidst these hills is also called as maagadhi. The land around this river is rich and very fertile. kuSanAbha married an apsarasa (divine being) called "Ghrutaachi" and had hundred daughters. They grew up to be very beautiful. One day, they adorned themselves beautifully and went into the gardens for a stroll. They were all decorated in exquisite ornaments and were shining like lightening.

While they were engaged in singing and dancing and having a good time like a bunch of divine children that accidentally come down to earth from heavens, the air-god (vaayudEva) saw them and fell in love with them. He appeared before them and said to them - "I am in love with you all. Because you are mortals, you can't stay young and beautiful for a very long time. If you all marry me, you will become divine beings (deva kaanthaas) and will stay young and beautiful forever." kuSanAbha's daughters said to him - "You travel everywhere and are spread in all the living beings. We know your power. Why do you insult us and invite trouble? We can make you lose all your power and position, using the strength of our thapam. But we don't want to do it. Our father is the person who always speaks the truth (satyavaadi). We will never marry without his consent. May we never befall the misfortune of ignoring our father's commands and marry at our wish. We will get our husbands in swayamvaram that is lawful and right. Our father is our ruler and our god. Whoever he brings for us will be our husband." When vaayudEva heard these words, he got very angry. Because they refused him, he removed all the air from their body and

rendered them short and ugly with crooked limbs. They all went to their father and wept out with humiliation and fear. The king saw his beloved daughters and their plight. He got very disturbed and asked them - "Who did this to you ? Who is the one who insulted righteousness (dharma) ?" The king spoke thus and waited for their response.

Kusanabha's daughters fell at his feet and said, "O father, the all-pervading air god Vayudeva tried to insult us. He tried to marry us against dharma and we didn't agree to it. We told him that we abide by our father's decision, and to ask you for our hands in marriage, but he didn't like it, and he did this to us in retaliation." The king who was very pleased with their behaviour thus spoke to them, "My dear daughters, you did what people with tolerance do and defended our family's good name. Having self-control is very important for both men and women. The kind of restraint you have shown in this situation is very rarely seen in humans or in devathas. kshamAdAnam kshamA yajna: kshamA satyamhi putrikaa: kshamAya Sa: kshamA dharma: kshamaya vishThitam jagat Theresults of good deeds like charity, digging wells, ponds and laying orchards for the benefit of people can be obtained by the simple act of forgiveness. Forgiveness is equated to performing Vedic rituals, forgiveness is like practicing truth and forgiveness is fame. The whole world revolves around the single great quality called kshama." The king thus praised and consoled his daughters and went onto consult with his ministers how to find suitable grooms for his daughters.

During that time period, there was a great Rishi called `Chooli' who was following strict brahmacharyam and doing thapas for attaining Brahmlokam. A gandharva kaantha (divine being) called 'Urmila' had a daughter by name 'Somada' who came to Chooli and was doing all household work and was serving him with devotion. After some time, Chooli asked Somada - "I am pleased with your service and dedication, you may ask for anything you like".

Somada was ecstatic with His words and she replied thus, "I am a single woman and not a wife to anyone. You seem to be equal to Chathurmukha Brahma in your radiance and have great power due to Your Tapas. Please bless me a son, with your power, who will be as radiant as Brahma and I don't want to go through any physical contacts." Chooli granted her the boon and she had a son called brahmadatta who is also called Chooli's 'maanasa putra' because he was not born from Chooli physically, but was born from His power of thought. Brahmadata was ruling his kingdom from his capital city 'Kampilya', and the noble King Kusanabha who had heard of him decided to give his hundred daughters in marriage to him. Kusanabha invited him to his kingdom and performed the wedding. Ceremony, and when Brahmadata did the paanigrahanam (holding the hand of the bride) for each one of the hundred girls, their deformity was instantly removed and they regained their previous beauty. Brahmadata returned to his kingdom with his hundred wives making both their parents very happy with the turn of events.

Balakanda sarga 34

Srimathe Ramanujaya Namaha After Kusanabha married off his hundred daughters, since he didn't have any sons, he wanted to perform a Vedic ritual called `Puthra kameshti Yaga' to be blessed with a son. As the ritual was going on, Kusanabha's

father Kusa told him, "You will be blessed with a son called 'Gadhi' who will be very virtuous and match you in greatness." Kusa thus spoke and rose to heavens and reached parama padam (the ultimate abode of Lord). After some time, Kusanabha had a son called Gadhi who is none other than the father of the sage Vishvamitra who was narrating this story to SriRama. Vishvamitra went on narrating - "I had an elder sister called Satyavati who married a Rishi named 'Ruchika'. She was a pure of mind and body and she followed her husband in the honorable path and reached heavens with her mortal body. Because of her staunch adherence to dharma, she was blessed as a river called Kausiki' which flows on this earth forever. That great river is very sacred, divine and beautiful. It flows from Himalayas for the welfare of the world. Since my sister is flowing in the form of a river, I established my dwellings on the banks of this river out of my love for her. After some time, I took up austerities and wanted to become an ascetic and I reached Siddhasramam. As I was narrating the story of this kingdom, I told you my story too. I got my other name 'Kausika' as I was born in the family of Kusa.

Since I strive for the welfare of the universe and well-wisher of the universe, people call me 'Vishvamitra'." "Rama it is past mid night now, also we spent a lot of time with these stories, go to sleep now. The trees are still. Animals and birds are fast asleep in their dwellings. Darkness has spread in all directions. The shining stars are looking like the eyes of the sky. Moon is rising to dispel the darkness. He is giving happiness to all the beings with his light. The nocturnal birds like owl and animals are awake and active. The meat-eating Rakshasas and yakshas are active and going around. Let auspiciousness be with you. Let no obstacles be there in your sleep. Sleep well." - Vishvamitra spoke thus gently to Rama and retired. All the Rishis praised Vishvamitra saying - "Kusa's dynasty is very great and virtuous. Every king in that dynasty is equal to Chaturmukha Brahma in their greatness - especially Vishvamitra. The river Kausiki brought more fame and radiance to this dynasty." Rama was talking to Lakshmana and was praising Vishvamitra till he fell asleep. Like the lotus petals, Rama's eyes closed and He fell asleep.

Balakanda Sarga 35 Srimate Ramanujaya Namaha! After spending a peaceful night on the banks of Sona river, the next morning Vishwamitra woke up Rama and Lakshmana, and after they all performed their morning anushtaanams they got ready to continue their journey. Rama asked Vishwamitra, "Maharshi, there is not much water in Sona river, the riverbed is dry and the sand dunes are visible. Which way should we cross the river now - by boat because there is little water or by foot as there is sand?". Vishwamitra replied, "We must follow the same path as the great sages took. We should cross the river by foot as there is very little water in the river." After crossing Sona river they travelled a long distance till noon, and they were delighted to come across Jahnavi (Ganga) River whose sacred waters were adorned with swans(hamsa) and saarasa (water)birds. They all bathed in that holy river and worshipped devathas and pithru devathas as prescribed by sastras. They performed fire oblations (agnihotram) and partook the homasesham, which was considered equivalent to ambrosia. In that sacred land on the banks of river Ganga, all the rishis, and Rama-Lakshmanas sat around Vishwamitra and Rama asked Vishwamitra - "Great one! I heard that Ganga is called 'tripatha' because she flowed in three worlds. How did she cross the three worlds and reach the ocean?"

Vishwamitra began to narrate the birth and progression of river Ganga.

"There was a famous king of mountains called 'Himavanta' and he married 'Manorama', the daughter of mount 'Meru'. He had two beautiful daughters, 'Ganga' and 'Uma'. The devathas begged Himavanta to spare Ganga for fulfilling a divine purpose, and took her to their world. Ganga has the power of flowing without obstacles. So Himavanta, wanting the welfare of all three worlds gave Ganga to devathas. This river flows in the heavens as 'Mandaakini', on the earth as 'Bagirathi' and in the nether worlds (pathalam) as 'Bhogavati'. The second daughter Uma wanted to marry Rudra and did a very devout and rigorous tapam. Rudra was pleased with her tapas and Himavanta offered Uma to the powerful god Gudra. O Rama!, this Ganga river went to heavens on the request of devathas. This river is very sacred and sanctifies the worlds and this is how she came to be known as tripatha."

Balakanda Sarga 36

Hearing the story narrated by Vishvamitra, Rama asked, "Oh tapodhana! Ganga's story is very great and virtuous. I request you to tell us in detail how Ganga came to flow in the path of heaven and earth after leaving her father's abode. What is the reason for her to flow in three paths" Then the great sage Vishvamitra started narrating the story in details to all the Rishis and Rama-Lakshmana. "The blue-throated Rudra married Uma and they were in conjugal bliss for many divine years. Devathas who were worried about the welfare of the worlds approached Rudra and said to him, 'Oh Paramasiva, nothing in the world can embrace your power. If you have progeny the worlds cannot continue. Please you and devi Uma should do Tapas for the welfare of the worlds. Please retain your power within yourself and don't unite with Parvati.' Siva agreed to the request of Devathas, but since they were together for a long time, Siva's retas (seed) was about to come out and He said to the Devathas, 'The retas is about to be free and if Parvati can't receive it, who else in the world is powerful enough to receive it?' Devathas said that the earth will embrace it. Paramasiva released it on to the earth and the intensity of it had spread all over the earth. It invaded the forests and the mountains and earth was getting ready to explode. Devathas prayed to the fire god (agni) to seize it.

The air god (vayu) helped the fire god to hold the seed. Agni sustained it within him and it took the form of a white mountain inside him. After some time, a bush of reeds shining like sun and fire emerged there. The seed united with the reed bush and a very powerful child was born. The radiant boy was called 'Saravana bhava' as he was born in the reed bush. (The details of this baby's birth will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters). Devathas along with the Rishis continue to worship Paramasiva and Parvati after Siva released His seed. Parvati was displeased with the Devathas for their inference which resulted in her not having a child. So she cursed Devathas saying, 'Oh Devathas, since you were the reason for me not having a child, may all your wives be barren too'. She was also angry with the earth and she went ahead and cursed the earth saying, 'I curse you to be infertile in different forms like desert, salty land, and barren land. May you be ruled by many thus becoming a wife to many? May you never get any happiness from your children?' All Devathas were very sad and humiliated by Parvati's curse and went away along with Indra to the west. Rudra decided to continue his Tapas on the northern summit of the Himalaya mountains along with Parvati. This is the detailed story of Parvati (also known as Uma). Now, let me tell you how Ganga came to this world", Vishvamitra continued the narration.

Vishvamitra said to Rama, "I told you the story of Kartikeya. I will now tell you how Ganga comes in this story. After Paramasiva released his retas and went into meditation, a Rakshasa called 'Tarakasura' was tormenting Devathas who needed an able army chief to fight with Tarakasura. All Devathas along with Indra and Agni went to Chaturmukha Brahma and said to him 'We are in need of a commander-in-chief. Now that Siva is in meditation with Parvati, we can't approach him. Please advise us.' Chaturmukha Brahma said to Devathas in gentle words - 'Don't worry. Since None of you can have a child who is capable of being an army chief due to Parvathi's curse, go pray to Akasa Ganga and request her to bear the potency of Paramasiva and bring forth the child. Agni can transfer the seed to Ganga and make her bear the child. Parvati will also accept this because Ganga is her own sister. When Agni took Rudra's seed, part of it was burnt and became Kailasam. The remaining part can be transferred by Agni to Ganga.' Devathas were thus consoled and went to Kailasam where they met Agni and said to him, 'Oh radiant one! Please unite the power of Rudra with Ganga.'" And Agni agreed to it. They went to Ganga and requested her to bear the seeds preserved by Agni to help the world who then took the form of a beautiful lady.

god! I cannot bear this power; this is getting very intense and is disturbing my life-force. Then Agni said to Ganga, 'O Ganga, the white mountain you see near the Himalaya mountains is Rudra Tejam that was burnt when I took it onto myself. There is a forest of reeds called 'Saravanam' near that Kailash mountain. You may leave the Tejam (potency) that's inside you there.' Ganga agreed and released the embryo through her flows in the region of Kailasam. The embryo released by her shone like molten gold. Gold, silver, copper and lead emerged from that radiant embryo. The impurities in it have taken the form of iron, tin and lead. The embryo thus involved into different metals and elements on reaching earth. The trees, plants and bushes around Kailash mountain started shining like gold. Gold was there on earth before this event but was never this brilliant. Since gold got its fire-like shine from this embryo, it is called 'jata rupam'. The embryo released by Ganga then took the form of a boy. Devathas requested Krithikas (the stars) to take care of the boy. Krithikas agreed to feed the boy under the condition that the baby be called their son in the world. Devathas agreed to it. Thus the boy was known as 'Kartikeya' in the world. Devathas blessed the boy to become famous in all three worlds. krithikas then gave the boy a bath and the baby shone radiantly like fire. He got the name 'Skanda' because he was born from the aborted embryo. This boy became the army chief of Devathas and defeated all the Rakshasas at a very tender age. Oh Rama, so far, I told you the story of the river Ganga, and the story of kumara sambhavam (the birth of Kartikeya). This story is divine and pious.

<http://www.chinnajeeyar.org/Teleupanyasam/Sri-Ramayanam/Sri-Ramayana-37.html>

Bala Kanda – 42 Sarga
Om Asmadgurubhyo Namaha Srimathe Ramanujaya Namaha

After the death of Sagara, people elected diligent Asumanta as their King who ruled the kingdom justly and wisely and became vary famous. He was blessed with a son named Dilipan. After handing over the kingdom to his son Dilipan, Asumanta went to Himalayas and started penance which he continued for 32,000 years and eventually he reached swargaloka. King Dilipan came to know how his forefathers died and started wondering how to bring Ganga to earth. He had a son named

Bhageeratha and after ruling the kingdom for 32,000 years, Dilipan died with great grief of not being able to complete his grandfathers' last rites by bringing Ganga to earth. Bhageeratha became king following the death of Dilipan, and he was kind hearted in nature. His one grief was not having any children, with that sorrow; he decided to hand over his kingdom to his ministers and went to do penance to bring Ganga to earth. First he reached Gokarna Kshetra and performed penance. His penance was very severe; he stood in the middle of a fire that surrounded him completely, and by lifting his hands up in the air, looking directly at the sun. He ate only once in a month and he continued his penance for a few thousand years.

Lord Brahma was pleased with Bhageeratha's Tapas and along with other Devathas Brahma appeared before Bhageeratha and said, "Oh! Great Bhageeratha, I am pleased with your meditation, ask me a boon." Bhageeratha, with folded hands said, "Oh! Brahma, to complete the last rites of Sagara's sons, (my grand fathers), I need Ganga, and without her waters they will not get Moksha. Also, I have no sons to carry on with my dynasty, and it may fail to continue". Brahma was pleased with his words and said "Your desire will be fulfilled. Ganga is coming to earth. But, when she drops to earth no body can stop her except Lord Shiva. Request Shiva to receive Ganga on His head."

After Chaturmukha Brahma left, Bhageeratha continued his penance one more year just by standing on tip of his big-toe. Pleased with his penance, Lord Siva appeared before Bhageeratha and said, "I am pleased with your penance and I can hold Himavan's daughter Ganga on my head". At this time Ganga started flowing from the sky towards earth with great pride, and thought that Lord Siva may not be able to bear her force. She also decided to bring along with her pathalaloka. All wise, Siva could feel Ganga's arrogant intension, and he was displeased with her purpose and decided to hold her in his matted hair and hold her there until she was rid of her pride. Ganga fell in to Shiva's heavy matted hair and couldn't escape from it to reach earth. For a few years Ganga was trying to escape from Siva's matted hair. Learning that Ganga was held captive in Siva's matted hair, Bhageeratha started Tapas once again towards Siva, who was pleased with Bhageeratha and let out Ganga into Bindu Lake located in Himalayas, which was created by Brahma. Ganga came out Siva's matted hair and started flowing in the east side with 3 rivulets namely `Hladini', `Padini' and `Nalini'. On west side she flowed in 3 rivulets named `Suchakshuvu', `Sitha', and `Sindhuvu'. The seventh branch came along with Bhageeratha to earth, which is called `Bhageerathi".

While Bhageeratha was going in a chariot Ganga followed him in the same direction keeping pace with him. From the sky Ganga fell on head of Siva and from there reached earth. Before all this, in answer to Devatha's prayer Ganga went to swargaloka and flowed in the sky. Later because of Bhageeratha's penance, Ganga fell on Siva's head and came to earth. Ganga is also called Thripathaga, the reason being that originally she flowed in the sky, then the head of Shiva and finally to earth. Another reason for the name is that she ran in three directions. Ganga was following Bhageeratha with a loud noise, and one could see fishes and tortoises jumping in the river water. Sitting on pushpakavimana, Devatha's were witnessing this astonishing Ganga avatharana (Ganga creation). Water of Ganga River was shining like precious ornaments, and she looked glowing with hundreds of sun shining in the sky. Ganga was flowing in various styles on earth, sometimes with slow speed, other times with fast speed, flowing in sinuous graceful curves, and

occasionally straight, and also upwards and downwards. Devarshris and Gandharvas who were living on earth were touching auspicious Ganga water since the water was flowing from Siva's head. People, who were born on earth due to curses, went back to heaven after taking a dip in Ganga water as she was capable of removing sins. Whole world was taking a dip in Ganga water with a delight and she followed Bhageeratha who was on a chariot joyfully. During her course accidentally she disturbed Jahnu Maharishi's Yagna vatika which angered the great Maharishi, and to punish her, He drank the whole River. Again Bhageeratha lost Ganga whom he brought to earth with great difficulty and he couldn't accomplish his goal due to so many obstacles along the way. With pleadings and humble prayers from Bhageeratha, Devathas and Rishis, Jahnu Maharishi agreed to release Ganga, again humbling her. He let her out slowly through his ears, so that she won't run wild anymore and because Ganga was once again released by Jahnu Maharishi, she is believed to be his daughter and is named as `Jahnavi". Finally, to perform her duty she was brought onto earth for, Ganga followed Bhageeratha and reached rasatalam and purified the place where Bhageeratha's ancestor's ashes were laying. Once Ganga's waters touched the ashes of Sagara's sons all their sins melted and they went to heaven.

After Bhageeratha completed his mission of bringing Ganga to earth, and purifying his elder's ashes, Brahma came to him and said "Oh King, because of you Sagara's 60,000 sons attained utthama gathi. They reached swargaloka. As long as this Ganga flows on the earth, Sagara's sons will remain at swargaloka. Ganga shall remain in this earth as your daughter and she will be called as "Bhageerathi". Because this river is flowing in three directions it is also called as "Thripathaga. Please perform the last rites to your forefathers with Ganga water. Your ancestors were diligent, but they couldn't complete this undertaking. Their desire couldn't be fulfilled. Amsumanta also tried to bring Ganga on to this earth, but he wasn't successful. Your father Dilipan, who was equal to a Maharishi in brilliance, equal to me in Tapas, who was a Kshathriya and also a renowned one couldn't bring Ganga on to this earth. Today you achieved recognition and fame by bringing Ganga onto this earth. You also take bath in this holy Ganga River, become pious and get fruits of good deed. Complete the last rites to your forefathers. Best wishes to you. I will leave for my abode now and you can also go back to your kingdom." After saying these few words, Brahma, left to his adobe. Bhageeratha after completing the last rites to his grandparents went back to his kingdom.

Without any needs or requirements Bhageeratha, ruled his country and people were happy under his leadership. "Ramachandra, I have told in detail everything about how Ganga came on to earth. My blessings to you! It is evening time and it is time for sandhyavandanam. We should stop here." Thus Vishvamithra explained in detail about Ganga avatharana. Whoever repeats this story to Brahmans, Kshathriyas, Vysyas or Sudras will get wealth, fame and long life. They will be blessed with children and will attain Moksha. Ramachandra! Who ever listen to this story, their desires will be fulfilled and all sins will be vanished and will have a long life with fame.

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Bala Kanda Sarga-45

The next day early morning Ramachandra went to sage Vishvamithra and said, "Last night I heard what I wanted to learn. The entire night passed in a few seconds. Throughout the night we have been recollecting the entire episode. Now we get a chance to cross "Thripathaga" (River Ganga). I also came to know that by the news of your arrival, all sages have arranged for ships for us to cross Ganga River. Now we can cross the river." After hearing Rama's words, Sage Vishvamithra along with the other sages, Rama and Lakshmana reached the shores of Ganga River. Upon crossing River Ganga, they stayed in a camp and Vishvamithra along with Ramachandra and Lakshmana reached a town named Visala. Rama enquired Vishvamithra, about the name of the king who is ruling Visala. Vishvamithra started narrating the history of Visala who created that broad city and also a story connected to Indra. In Kruthayuga the sons of Dhithi were brave, courageous and generous. They had a rare wish for no death, to stay young and no diseases. They decided to churn the milky ocean and get nectar from it. Once they consume the nectar they will live eternally and fit.

To churn the ocean they decided to use Mandhara Mountain for churning-stick and serpent Vasuki for rope. After churning the ocean for 1000 years, an extremely toxic poison (halahalam) came out of it. Because of this Devathas, asuras and human-beings started dying which worried Devathas. They prayed to lord Siva to come to their rescue. At that point in time Lord Vishnu with his sanku (conch) and charka (discus) appeared in front of Devathas and Rudra who possess Trisula, and said "Rudra, you are the head of Devathas and whatever comes out in the beginning should be offered to you. For that reason you should consume this halahala as an offering". Thus spoken, Lord Vishnu disappeared. Rudra, seeing the fear of Devathas, drank the poison as if it was amrutham (nectar). By his action Rudra removed the fear of Devathas. Now that the fear of the poison is gone, Devathas and asuras started churning the milky ocean again, and Mandhara Mountain started sinking to the bottom. Then Devathas prayed to Lord Madhusudhana. "Oh! God, you are our only savior, and you are the only one who is capable of protecting us. Please help us to keep the mountain afloat. Upon hearing the Devathas' prayers, Srimannarayana came as Kurma Avathara (tortoise incarnation) and lifted the mountain on his back by resting at the bottom of the ocean and by holding the mountain edges with His hands controlled the movements of the mountain. Standing along with the Devathas He also helped them to churn the ocean. Like that, in various forms he helped in churning the milky ocean. After churning for over 1000 years, He brought out the Sastras (knowledge) and medicine to cure human diseases, and by consuming this medicine the Devathas didn't feel tired after churning so long. Later on apsaras came out of the ocean. They were called apsaras because they came out of water (AP=water, rasa pure). They were six crores in number, dazzling in beauty with astounding radiance. With them, came along countless number of sevakas (assistants). Devathas, Asuras or human beings can't wed them and they had to remain single. After that, Varuna's daughter Vaaruni came out of the Ocean. She is the principal one for all the Devathas. Vaaruni asked sons of Dithi, to accept her. They didn't accept her proposal, but Adhithi's sons accepted her. Because, they didn't accept sura (Vaaruni), Dhithi's sons called asura's and Adhithi's sons called suras. Vaaruni was not to be blamed for this. This was because of noxious/liqueur (madyam) named Sura. Devathas accepted Vaaruni as she was the daughter of Varuna. Artificial excitement giving liqueur named Sura was to be blamed for this though Devathas didn't agree to this explanation. Because they accepted Vaaruni, they were happy. After continuous churning, honorable horse named Uchchaisravam and a diamond Kausthubham came out of the ocean. Indra received the horse and Sri Maha Vishnu accepted the diamond. Later Nectar (amrutham) appeared and a

major battle started between suras and asuras for the nectar. Adhithi's sons killed Dhithi's sons. Asuras and Rakshasas on one side and Devas on the other side joined the battle. That massive battle continued while all three lokas watched the disaster. While this clash is going on, Sri Maha Vishnu took the form of Mohini to put an end to the war. Powerful Adhithi's sons, Devas after consuming nectar became powerful and defeated Dhithi's sons. This massive battle between suras and asuras continued. Finally after defeating Dhithi's sons, Indra ruled all three worlds.

After the death of all her sons, Dithi with great grief approached her Husband, Kasyapa (who was the son of Mareecha) and said, "Oh Bhagavan! All my sons were killed by most powerful sons of Athithi. If you can bless me with one powerful child who can kill Indra, I can feel avenged. Please accept my request". To her sorrow filled request, Kasyapa said, As per your wish, you will have a son. Until he is born you have to be pure and lead a good life. If you lead such a life for 1000 years, you will be blessed with a son, who can kill Indra and will have the ability to rule three worlds. Thus he consoled her and after wishing her well he left for penance. Dithi, with great happiness reached the place of Kusaplava which was the eastern side of the Visala kingdom, and started severe penance. While she continued her penance, sahasraksha (1000 eyed) Indra came there to assist her. The items that were required for the penance including fire, darbha, samidhas, water, fruits and roots, were collected by Indra and they were offered to her. He took good care of her in a way that she never felt tired during her penance period. Dithi became pregnant, and she was very pleased.

She told Indra, I had requested your father Kasyapa, that I wanted a child. He blessed me with one, and when he is born, you will see your brother. I am able to get my wish granted all because of your faithful service. I will make sure that he is friendly with you and he will be brave to win the three lokas. During her pregnancy one day at midday time Dithi dozed off and her hair got loose and fell to the floor and touched her feet. She became impure by this event. Sleeping in the middle of the afternoon, letting hair loose, sleeping the wrong way (like keeping the head where the foot is supposed to be) are unacceptable qualities and that was the reason she became tainted and became vulnerable for Indra's attack on the unborn child. With his vajrayudha he divided her womb in to seven pieces. While he was doing that, the unborn child in the womb started crying. Indra got worried that the might disturb Dithi and consoled the child thus "maarudhah maarudhah" (don't cry don't cry). By with all this commotion Dithi woke up and requested Indra, "please don't kill the baby". Indra came out of her body and with folding hands said to Dithi, "mother, you became contaminated with your act and since I was waiting for a chance to kill the baby who was going to kill me I had to act first. Once born nobody could stop him. Please forgive me".

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is - 42

Dithi with great sorrow spoke to Indra, "Due to my fault my pregnancy had been split into seven pieces, which is your great mistake. Please make sure my children who are in my womb should get are salvaged. Make them rulers of seven places. Grace them to become chief of seven lokas equivalent to Vayu. Obliginglly Indra allotted seven types of Vayu's at seven places. When Indra was in the body of Dithi, he uttered 'marudah,' therefore seven vayu's were called Maaruthah. Out of seven,

one went to Bhrahmaloka, one went to Indraloka. In the galaxy one spread out and rest of the four ruled four directions. Like that Dithi's request of her sons to rule every where, was granted, with every one accepting them. While spread out every where, vayu (air) is called with different names in different places. Vayu himself, at particular points will be called by different names as Gaganamu, Sparshanamu, Vayuvu, Anilamu, Praanamamu, Praanaeshwarudu, and Jeevudu.

In Vishnu Purana, it was mentioned that, Vayuvu is called with seven names as Aavhamu, Pravhamu, Somvahamu, Udhvahamu, Vivahamu, Parivahamu, and Paraavahamu. This is the place where Indra assisted Dithi, told Vishvamitra by narrating Indra's story and the relation to that place. Ikshwaku got a very industrious son named Visala with Almbusa who built a city named Visala, whose son was Hemachandhrudu. His son was suchandhrudu, and his son was Dhuamraashvarudu, his son was Srunjayudu, his son was Sahadevudu, his son was Kushaashvudu, his son was SomadhaThudu, his son was Kaakuthyudu whose son Sumathi is ruling this city now. With the grace of Ikshwaku, all the rulers of this Visala lived long life with great accomplishments and were very powerful. We will rest here for the night. Early in the morning we will go and see Janaka at Mithila, said Vishvamithra. Sumathi the ruler of Vishala came to know that, Vishvamithra was staying in the outskirts of his city, and along with his guru he came to offer his salutation to Vishvamithra. He offered prayers to Vishvamithra and asked about their Wellbeing!

Sumati asked Vishvamitra, "These two young men appear to be equal to Devathas by their valor. Their walking resembles a combination of animals, like an elephant, lion, bull and a tiger. By their walk, they are imitating an elephant's triumphant nature, lion with pride; tiger's conceit, and bull's arrogance. But their eyes are like lotus petals. They are prepared with sword, bow and arrows. These things appear to be ornaments on them instead of weapons. They are attracting everyone with their striking eyes. In beauty they resemble Aswani Devathas and their youthfulness is charming. It looks like they descended from Devaloka to Bhooloka. They may possibly look like mortals but they give the impression of immortals. How are they walking in the forest with their fragile foot? Whose sons are they? Just like Moon and Sun, they make sky brighter and these two are making our city shine. They seem to be equal to each other in their looks, height, movement and pose. Why did they come to this dense forest? I am curious to know and please clarify me."

On Sumathis' request, Vishvamithra explained what had had happened so far and He went on to say that, "They came to Siddhasrama to protect the yajna, furthermore they killed demons called Thataka and Subahu who tried to ruin the yajna." Upon knowing that, these two are the brave sons of Dasaratha, Sumati welcomed Them with all the honors owed to them. After resting that night, Ramachandra and Lakshmana, along with the other Rishis left for Janakapuri the next morning. Near Mithila, they saw a hermitage which was very old and abandoned but agreeable. Looking at that, Ramachandra said, "Oh Maharishi! This looks like a hermitage where no one is in residence. Can you please explain to me who used to live here"? To Rama's request, Vishvamithra gave the history of the hermitage. "Many many years, this hermitage belonged to a great Maharishi named Gouthama. Devathas used to pray here.

Gouthama with his wife Ahalya performed several years of Tapas here. One day,

when Gouthama went to do His anushtanams, taking that opportunity, Indra came in the form of Gouthama and asked Ahalya, "I am enchanted with you, and let us do our duties later." Brahma created Ahalya (one without ugliness). Indra knew that, she was totally pure and that's why he called her "susamahitha". He also had a desire to wed her during her swayamvara time. But he couldn't fulfill Brahma's conditions and he couldn't win her hand in marriage, instead Gouthama married her. Along with his lust for Ahalya, Indra also wanted to prevent Gouthama from finishing His Tapas. Though Ahalya knew that it was Indra who came to her hermitage in the form of Gouthama, as "Pride goes before fall", she was flattered by Indra's attention who was the king of Devathas and with a weak mind set she agreed to bond with Indra. While Indra was leaving the hermitage, Gouthama entered the ashram and saw Indra. Gouthama Maharishi was very powerful and even Devathas cannot conquer Him. He had the power of His Tapas. He was in his wet cloths as he was coming from taking a dip in the river and He was astounding in His great power. He was holding samidhas and darbha in His hand. Frightened Indra with his pale face just stood there shaking with fear and remorse.

Gouthama, who was virtuous, cursed Indra with faulted words, "Oh! Sinful Indra, you have done an unsolicited act by taking my form due to Kama (lust). You will be punished for this, and may you never have this kind of desire anymore. He also cursed Ahalya and said, "You will live in this hermitage for thousands of years without food and only living on air. No one can see you, and you will live as part of ashes on the ground doing penance." It was not written in Ramayana, that Ahalya became a statue or a stone. Ahalya knowingly performed an unwelcome act, which was influenced by the food she consumed. That was the reason; Gouthama cursed her to live without food. Not to have any desires or create any desires he cursed her to be invisible as ashes on the ground. For that curse, Gouthama also gave a way out. "When Dasarathas' son Rama comes to this dense forest, you will be released from this curse and become pure. With the touch of Rama's Holy feet all your sins will be washed away. Then you will get your original form and you will live contentedly with me again". Thus said Gouthama and left errant Ahalya at this hermitage and left for Himalayas. Even good people, committing immoral acts with desire, have to suffer bad consequences from it. But with the blessings of Acharya and Divine Grace bad deeds get burnt to ashes. With Sri Rama's Thiruvadi (Holy Feet) Ahalya was released from her curse.

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After a while, Indra gathered all the devathas and addressed them fearfully, "If Gouthama's penance would have been completed, and all the devathas would have lost their respective posts. To prevent this from happening I did an immoral act, which made Gouthama incensed. Devathas work has been completed and I am useless to devathas. Ahalya also fell to Gouthama's curse. For the sacrifice I made, all the Rishis and charanas should restore me back to my powerful (potent) self." Upon hearing this, Agni and the other devathas went to pithru devathas and thus pleaded, "Please restore Indra's potency, at least from the goat that is tied to the yupa sthambha. Those goat organs will make him potent," Listening to Agni's words, pithru devathas, granted their wish for Indra. From that day on, offerings of goat without its gonads to pithru devathas became a practice. Pithru devathas bless for fertility and all the reproductive organs, are under their control. "Because of pithru devathas blessings, Indra became potent again. Due to Gouthama's curse, Ahalya is still waiting in the dust at this hermitage. Vishvamithra told Ramachandra.

Oh Ramachandra! Come and enter this hermitage. Restore Ahalya to her true self". Rama and Lakshmana along with Vishvamithra entered the hermitage and immediately, Ahalya's curse was burnt to ashes, and she stood in front of them respectfully. Rama looked at Ahalya who was shining very brightly, but Devathas and rakshasas were not able to bear that radiance. It was Chaturmukha Brahma who created Ahalya who was flawless in beauty. Up to now, she was hidden in the dust, like a full moon covered with mist and clouds. Now She looks like sun light reflected in water. Because of Goutham's curse, she was invisible to 3 worlds. Today, because of Rama's blessings, her curse ended and she was restored back to her original pure form. Looking at that Rishi pathni (wife of great Gouthama) Rama and Lakshmana prostrated at her feet. Rama was told, that because of His Holy Feet touched the dust that was Ahalya, she became visible. But He didn't become proud or arrogant, instead He fell at her feet to get her blessings, because she is the wife of a great Maharishi, older in age and is equal to His mother. Rama was learning not to be conceited with His powers, but be courteous. He is showing that trait here, though he was physically powerful, He was taught by His Guru to respect elders. This is Ramas' good manners and humility. Before long, after Ahalya's curse was removed, flower rain showered on all of them and Devatha's drums started beating. Gandharvas, apsaras started singing and dancing. Devathas welcomed Ahalya and prayed to her. With the power of penance, her body became pure and she shined like purified gold after joining Gouthama who also joined them for this happy event. Along with Ahalya, he did upacharam to Rama and went back to Tapas and Rama after receiving Gouthama's' hospitality, entered the kingdom of Mithila.

Sathananda, the chief priest of King Janaka was very much delighted after hearing that Vishvamithra and Rama visited Ahalya and Gouthama Maharishi. Sathananda was Gouthama's eldest son. He looked radiant due to His Tapas. Sathananda asked Vishvamithra, "Oh muni pungava! This prince Rama had seen my mother who was cursed and invisible for a very long time. Did my mother perform services to Rama? Does Rama know the story of my mother's past? Did my father also offer his prayers to Rama? With too many questions of Sathananda, Vishvamithra understood His anxiety and said, 'Oh great muni, I have done everything which is required. Gouthama did meet his wife Ahalya (your mother) and after blessing her He left for Himalayas again. Sathananda said to Rama, 'oh Purushothama! I welcome you. It's our fortune that, you have come here. This Brahmarishi Vishvamithra is a great scholar with none equal. He is accomplished to provide all good things for you. Oh Ramachandra! No one is more blessed than you in this world. Kausika's son Vishvamithra is protecting you.

He is a great thapasvi. I will narrate you his story from the beginning. It is very auspicious to learn one's Acharya's history, and that will enhance their respect for their Acharya. 'Vishvamithra originally was a king and ruled His kingdom with great diligence. He was a great scholar and He had the welfare of His people at heart. His father was Gadhi who was the son of Kusanabha and he was a great king. His father was Kusa who was Prajapathi's son. This is how, Vishvamithra belongs to a great (heritage) ancestors. With vast power he ruled the kingdom for thousands of years. At one time, after gathering chaturanga power with akshouhini strength (with his whole army) he wanted to circle around the earth. After visiting various cities, states, rivers, mountains and ashrams, he reached Vashishta's ashram, where they had various types of trees, different variety of animals including deer, Siddhas,

Chaaranas, Devathas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. Numerous Brahmarishis used to live there. That ashram was also filled with people who attained siddhi from Tapas. They performed homas regularly and only ate fruits and roots of vegetables. They had the ability to control anger and emotions. Vishvamithra visited Vashishta's ashram which resembled Brahmaloaka

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Bala Kanda Sarga-52

Vishvamithra politely saluted Vashishta and asked about all their well beings, after He was received with all the upacharams (like offering water, seat etc). He was also offered fruits and roots and Vishvamithra accepted all those humble offerings. Vashishta enquired Vishvamithra about his Kingdom, and whether he is following Dharmic way of ruling the country, and whether his sub-ordinates are obedient, whether enemies are under control. Vishvamithra answered Vashishta that every thing is fine and good. After lengthy conversation, Vashishta told Vishvamithra "Oh King, we want to offer you, the guest of honor and your soldiers a feast. You are the king of this country. You came here as our guest. So, please allow us to offer you something that is fit for a king and his army". Vishvamithra replied, "You already provided us your precious time, which is an honor to us. With your ashram's fruits and roots as arghyam, your words as paadyam and aachamaniyam, you have satisfied us. We will leave now. Please accept our salutations and always bless us with your love and affection". Vashishta again requested Vishvamithra to stay back and accept his hospitality. Vishvamithra couldn't disregard Vashishta's appeal, and He decided to accept their kindness

(The reason Vishvamithra didn't accept His host's offerings was, He thought that place being an ashram, they couldn't have enough food for all His soldiers in such a short time). Pleased with the king's decision to stay Vashishta called 'Sabala' a cow, with amazing colors and capabilities. That cow had the power to obtain anything needed just like kaamadhenu. Vashishta ordered Sabala to get all the food needed to feed Vishvamithra and his soldiers.

As soon as Vashishta ordered, Sabala brought forth items to full fill The visitors' needs, including different varieties of food and drinking items like fruit juices, and alcohol. Piles of hot rice appeared like mountains, along with various puddings, spicy items, and yogurt which flowed like streams. Sabala also arranged food items with six tastes. All soldiers ate the lavish food provided by Sabala and felt happy. Vashishta also honored Brahmans, Prohithas and ministers accordingly. Vishvamithra was extremely pleased with their hospitality. "Vashishta Maharishi! You were supposed to accept serves from us, instead you have honored us. You did an extraordinary service to us. We are very pleased. But, I ask you one more thing. You present me with this Sabala (sacred cow), and in return I will give you thousands of cows. Sabala is an extraordinary cow only fit for a king. Just like the saying, "rathna haaree cha paarthivah" all best things in the country should belong to the king" said Vishvamithra. In reply, Vashishta said, "Oh king! Even if you offer me all the wealth in your kingdom, I can't give you Sabala. I am leading my life here with the support of this cow. Agnihothras, sacrifices, homas, swahas, vashatkarams, and the upasanas which I do, all are depended on this cow. She is everything to me. Because of these reasons, I can not give you Sabala.

Vishvamithra was adamant to own that cow with whatever means possible. He tried to tempt Vashishta again by saying, "I will offer you fourteen thousand elephants with gold chains, gold waist band and gold ankushams, I will also give you eight hundred white horses with gold chariots, and quality horses like kambhoja, bahluka. I

will also present you with various colored cows, diamonds, and gold to your hearts content. In return you give me this Sabala". In spite of Visvamithra's coaxing and cajoling words, Vashishta did not agree, and said firmly, "Vishvamithra, what ever you are offering me she can provide me and more. She means more to me than life itself. I will not part with her. As a king you should not demand your subjects to part with their possessions unwillingly. Now take leave and continue with your journey."

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Vishvamithra was livid with Vashishta's decision of not parting with Sabala. While everybody watched, Vishvamithra tried to walk away with the cow by pulling on her rope. Sabala started crying and said to Vashishta "You are like a father to me, and I had served You well, why are You letting them take me away from You and my place of residence?" Then she shook herself free from the king and ran back to Vashishta. The king now ordered his soldiers to take her by force, at which time Sabala, crying and roaring like a thunder, said, "Oh, son of Brahma! Oh Brahmarishi! Why are these solders taking me away? Did you discard me? "For those words, Vashishta looking at the cow sorrowfully said, "Sabala, I am not abandoning you. You didn't displease me in any way. But, this king is behaving arrogantly, with his power. I am a Rishi. I don't have enough strength to stop them from dragging you away. He is powerful Kshathriya king. He is the ruler of this kingdom. He is having akshouhini of soldiers. This is the reason; I am unable to help you. "Understanding Vashishta's words Sabala said, "Oh Brahmarishi! Kshathriya's power is only physical, which is not real strength.

A Brahman, who has knowledge of supreme (Brahmajnaana) is more powerful than that person. No one can measure up to your strength. In this world, You are unparalleled in strength and knowledge. If you permit me, I will defeat his arrogance. Vashishta replied, "In that case, create a powerful army which can overcome the enemy". Soon Sabala created a mighty army by screaming out once and from that scream, hundreds of soldiers called "Paplavas" were created. While Vishvamithra watched, his soldiers were destroyed by just a scream from the cow. Now angered Vishvamithra, with his powerful weapons killed Paplavas. Sabala now, created another army which consisted of Shakus, Yavanas who were powerful and energetic. They were holding long sword and wearing yellow colored cloths. They appeared like a fire ball and killed more of Visvamithra's soldiers. On the other hand, Vishvamithra also continued to kill Paplavas with his weapons.

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With the war unrelenting, Vashishta encouraged Sabala to create more soldiers and she created many kinds of soldiers from different parts of her body. They started destroying Visvamithra's foot soldiers, elephants, horses and chariots. Watching their father's army being destroyed, Visvamithra's sons ran towards Vashishta with anger, and the Brahmarishi with a mighty sigh burned them all. Loosing his whole army and his sons, Vishvamithra was both ashamed and angered. He felt helpless like an ocean without tides and a snake without fangs. Loosing his sons, he was distressed and sad. Eventually Vishvamithra nominated his last surviving son to be the king to rule over his kingdom, and he himself left to Himalaya Mountains to start Tapas. After continuing Tapas for long time, Siva appeared before Vishvamithra and said, "Oh king! Why are you doing Taps? I am pleased with your Tapas; I will grant you what you ask;" Vishvamithra, prayed to Siva and said, "Mahadeva! Please bless me with the entire Dhanurveda secrets and also give me all the weapons which Devathas, yakshus, Rakshasas possess. Siva blessed him all those wishes and disappeared.

Vishvamithra went to Vashishta's ashram, and with His new weaponry, He started using them against the innocent residents of that Ashram. Because of the power, of the weapons the ashram started burning. Frightened with the power of those weapons, the inmates of the ashram, animals and birds started running out in different directions creating chaos and confusion. Vashishta's ashram now became empty and silent. Vashishta warned Vishvamithra saying "Oh Foolish king! You have destroyed my long standing Ashram. With terrible intentions you did a dreadful thing. You should be punished." Then Vashishta raised his Brahma-dhanda to kill him.

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Vishvamithra released an astra (weapon) to counter act Vashishta's Brahma dhanda. Vashishta lifted his Brahma-dhanda and cooled down Aagneya astra and said, "Wait, even with your new powers, you are not equal to me, I possess the power of Brahmagyana (power of knowledge). Try to destroy me if you can." Thus spoken Vashishta sat in meditation holding His Brahma dhanda in front of Him as a guard. Vishvamithra released all the weapons he acquired from Siva, which included Varuna-asthras, Rudra-asthras, Indra-asthras, Pashupatha-astra on Vashishta. He also used multitudes of other asthras which were absorbed by Vashishta's Brahma-dhanda while He sat in meditation. After using all those powerful weapons, till Vishvamithra couldn't destroy Vashishta. Finally He sent Brahma-astra with anger. But Vashishta being Brahmajnaana, He diluted the Brahma-astra with his Brahma Thejas. The sight of Vashishta not being affected by Brahma-astra was a sight to behold. With his Brahma Thejas, His body glowed like a fire ball. The Brahma-dhanda which he was holding appeared like a lightning rod. Looking at him, all the Rishis said, "Oh Brahmarishi;

Please control your Brahma Thejas within you. Vishvamithra is defeated". Now Vishvamithra who has been defeated said with all reverence.... Dhik balam kshathriya balam, brahmathejo balam I ekena brahma dandena, sarvaasthraani hathaanime II "Kshathriya power is very abhorrent. The power of Brahmavidya is real power. With just one Brahma-dhanda all my asthras were vanquished. I am going to aim high for Brahmavidya and start doing Tapas to achieve it leaving all my anger and jealousy behind".

Sri Valmiki Ramayana As It is - 52

Since all His weapons were incapacitated and destroyed, disappointed Vishvamithra decided to acquire equal powers of Vashishta. He left for Tapas and performed very severe Tapas. The reason for Vishvamithra's downgrade was his hostility and jealousy towards Vashishta. Animosity with Mahatmas (virtuous people) is better than friendship with evil people. To become equal to Mahatmas, one should possess identical powers, so Vishvamithra's only goal was to become Brahmarishi like Vashishta. So Vishvamithra accompanied by His wife did Tapas, and had four more children. Upon completion of 1000 years of great Tapas, Brahma appeared before him and said, "Vishvamithra! With your Tapas, you became a Rajarishi and you will be recognized as one in all lokas." Vishvamithra was ashamed, because even after doing severe Tapas, he became only a Rajarishi, not a Brahmarishi. He started doing more intense and severe Tapas. At that same period, there was king named Thrisanku in Ikshwaku Dynasty. He was an honest and wonderful person. He had a desire to go to swargaloka with his body intact. To accomplish his desire he needed to do perform a yajna.

He mentioned his longing to Vashishta who was his Royal priest. Brahmarishi Vashishta said it was not possible and it should not be done. When Vashishta denied his request, disappointed Thrisanku started looking for another Rishi to fulfill his

request. He went to Vashishta's sons and asked them to perform the yajna. They were 100 of them and they had performed Tapas for many years. Thrisanku saluted them and said, "I am surrendering to you. Your father, our royal priest refused to grant my wishes. You are all as powerful as He is. I am pleading with you to conduct that yajna so I can reach swargaloka along with my body. Since the Royal priest abandoned me, please give me salvation, by performing that Yagna."

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Upon hearing Thrisanku's request, Vashishta's sons became irritated. "Oh King, you are dishonorable! Your righteous guru, our father refused your yearning, now you want to disobey Him, and come to us to supersede His advise. For the whole of Ikshwaku dynasty, only their priest is their ultimate mentor and leader. It is not good quality to cross dishonor Vashishta's words. When the Royal Priest Vashishta refused, to comply with your wishes, how can we fulfill your desire? You have no knowledge of the consequences of that Yagna. Go back to Ayodhya and beg Vashishta to forgive you. Not paying heed to the warnings of his Royal Priest or His sons, Thrisanku went in search another guru to perform the Yagna. Vashishta's sons became angrier when they found out that Thrisanku is still not convinced to abide by his Acharya. They addressed him saying "born of noble Ikshwaku dynasty you are doing a wrong deed by not paying heed to Your Guru's counsel, and you are seeking help from others. With these actions you have dishonored yourself and you will obtain a form to match your character", thus they cursed him and left to their ashram.

The following morning when the king looked at himself in the mirror, he was shocked. He lost all his Kshathriya glory and became a chandala. He was not recognizable by anybody and he was asked to leave the palace. Even at this juncture Thrisanku did not learn his lesson. He lost his kingdom; he lost his family and was cursed by His Acharya's sons towards the apacharam (not being obedient) he committed. Being unaided Thrisanku didn't despair. He still had the same impetus to go to Swargaloka with his own body. He was obsessed with that thought, and day and night he was only thinking about it- how to attain his hearts desire. Having heard of Vishvamithra, he arrived at his Ashram and after paying respects to Vishvamithra he repeated his story, "Oh great Thapasvi! My guru and His sons abandoned me and cursed me. Now I am asking you, who are equivalent to Vashishta to do this Yagna for me."

Vishvamithra was glowing with the power of His Tapas and he felt pity looking at Thrisanku who looked miserable without his identity, and scorned by his people. Thapasvi Vishvamithra addressed Thrisanku compassionately and said, "OH king! You have a horrifying figure. You! The king of Ayodhya has been changed to this awful form by a curse. What you are asking of me is not proper." Ikshwaku replied saying "I got this strange body due to a curse. In the past I had performed hundreds of yajnas and I had always been truthful and honest in the past, and will remain so in future. Great gurus were always pleased with my conduct. Daivam eva param manye, pourusham thu nirarthhakam I Daivena aakramathe sarvam, daivam hi paramaagathihi II Deficient in the blessings of God, I am tormented like this. God is absolute; men's efforts before him are ineffective. Only God can provide realization. With God's rejection I have become despondent, downcast and I came to you for help. I don't have any one to liberate me. You are the only powerful one to turn god's grace on me. I am requesting you to save me from this disgrace, and complete my wishes." Thus Thrisanku requested Sage Vishvamithra.

Upon hearing Thrisanku's words Vishvamithra felt anguish. Because of His pride Vishvamithra wasn't able to accomplish His goals, i.e. to become a Brahmarishi like Vashishta. But, psychologically he felt equivalent to Vashishta, and also he felt pity for Thrisanku who came to Him with no other refuge. He felt that He was capable of

performing the Yagna to send Thrisanku to swargaloka. Because of His of compassion towards Thrisanku, he didn't think of the consequences of His action. Vishvamithra with conceit, said "Oh king of Ikshwaku dynasty! I know you are diligent and you are justified to achieve your desires. I will offer you deliverance. Not to worry, I will invite all the Maharishis and with them I will conduct the yajna. Though your body has been cursed, you will go to swargaloka with this body. Consider that swargaloka is in your hands. Kausika will be your protector." He was showing clearly his egotism by His actions and words. A person and their power are not self made, they are dependent on God's blessings. Disobeying Acharya's words is transgression. Leaving one's own Acharya and seeking some one else for salvage, is self destruction. Defying the words of Brahmarishi Vashishta, his own Acharya is an impediment to his wellbeing.

Not having faith in his own Acharya; a knowledgeable person like Vashishta, was Thrisanku's own way of self-destruction. One can have desires and there are many ways to achieve them. But, that person doesn't know if he deserves those needs. If he doesn't deserve them, Guru doesn't fulfill them. It is Acharya's responsibility to guide His followers. Vashishta had those qualities. Mother never feeds her child the food which is not suitable. If she doesn't follow this, she is not a good mother. Like that, when a teacher prevents a student from doing an erroneous thing, and if the student ignores this and goes some where for the help is not correct thing to do. That is the reason; one must listen and follow mother's, father's and teacher's words. Thrisanku crossed his teacher's words which were well meant for him. Vishvamithra, had not performed absolute Tapas, and His Overconfidence had not completely vanished. He showed pity towards an undeserving person (who was discarded by his Acharya), and agreed to perform the Yajna, he started making preparations for the Yagna, and ordered His sons to start bringing in things needed. He sent his Sishyas (students) to go to various ashrams to invite the Rishis along with their shishyas, friends and pundits (masters) for participation. Upon Vishvamithra's orders, his shishyas went in various directions to extend the invitation. Becoming aware of these proceedings, Vashishta's sons declined the invitation by saying that "one who is conducting the Yagna is a Kshathriya and for who He is doing this is a chandala. Then how can Devathas and Rishis accept to attend?." Vishvamithra became aware of their disapproval through his sons. He became enraged and cursed Vashishta's sons thus, "Because they accused me for my kind action, they will be burnt to ashes. For the next seven births they will be born as beggars and wander on earth eating unacceptable food and roam around aimlessly."

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After cursing Vashishta's sons, Vishvamithra said to the Rishis gathered, "Here is Thrisanku, who belongs to Ikshwaku dynasty. He is an honorable man and a goodhearted person. With a desire to go to swargaloka along with his own body, he came to me for help." Listening to his words and knowing that was he was making a mistake, but in fear of Vishvamithra's anger they maintained silence and started the yajna. By following proper ritual, hymns and procedures they concluded the yajna and Vishvamithra invited Devathas to accept yajna Offerings, but no Devathas came. Angered Vishvamithra, holding Homa sruva (ghee offering stick) said, "Thrisanku! Reap the benefit of my Tapas. Using all the benefits of my Tapas you will go to swargaloka with your body". With all the Yajna participants watching, Thrisanku rose to swargaloka. Looking at Thrisanku, Indra said, "Thrisanku, you don't have place in swargaloka. You lost all your virtues with your Guru's curse. You will leave from here and fall to ground upside down." With Indra words, Thrisanku started falling down and cried out for help. Vishvamithra stopped his fall at the south side of the galaxy

and glowing with his powers, like Brahma; he started creating a new Loka with 7 Rishis.

He also created stars, and proceeded to create New Indra and Devathas. At this juncture Devathas got worried, and spoke to him, "Oh great Vishvamithra! This king was suffering with his guru's curse. Reaching swargaloka with one's body is not an acceptable practice." Vishvamithra replied, "I promised to send him to swargaloka with his own body. My promise should not go to waste. Thrisanku should stay with his body in a permanent loka and he will be in the galaxy I created. Devas, you should be agreeable to this". Devathas accepted this proposal and they said, "He will stay in this loka which you have created outside the jyothirmandala, with his head down, among the stars." Upon completion of the yajna all Rishis left for their Ashrams. Vishvamithra was performing Tapas at south side and forgetting his real aim; he got involved in unnecessary dealings and wasted all the power of his Tapas so far!

Vishvamithra looked around the other Sages and addressed them saying, "My Tapas which was performed on the southern side, had failed miserably and I have decided to leave towards western side for continuing my Tapas". Then sage Vishvamithra left towards western direction and decided to settle in a wide forest named Pushkarakshethra, where He started doing severe Tapas without any disturbances, and no outside influences. He survived by consuming only roots and fruits. In the meanwhile the king of Ayodhya, Ambharisha started performing a Yagna and Indra stole Ambharisha's ritual-animal (Yajna Pasu). Ambharisha's chief priest said to him, "Because of our misfortune we lost our yajna Pasu and you will be cursed if the Yagna doesn't get completed. You must replace that animal with a Nara (human being) for Yagna. We still have sometime left to complete the yajna; meanwhile you must find a Nara and fasten him like an animal." Listening to his Prohithas' words, Ambharisha wanted to offer Thousands of cows to find a Nara, and left in search of finding a Nara and visited various countries, cities, forests, sacred ashrams etc. While he was on his quest, he saw a Ruchika Maharishi sitting with his family at Bhruguthunga mountain range.

Ambharisha prayed to that Rishi and pleaded with these words, "Oh Great Rishi! I lost my yajna Pasu and I am in need of a Nara for replacement. I searched all over and I couldn't find the ritual-animal. I will give you one hundred thousand cows; can you please sell your son to me? Please help me to complete the yajna by giving away your son." Ruchika had three sons and upon listening to Ambharisha, Ruchika said that he couldn't accept giving away his eldest son and his wife said she couldn't live without her youngest son. Praanaye:na hi nara sre:shtha, jye:shthah pithrushu vallabhaaha I Maathru:na:m thu kani:ya:msaha, thasma:th rakshe:th kaneeyasam II In general, father has utmost affection for the eldest child, and mother is very attached to the youngest one. Listening to his father's words, Ruchika's middle son Shunasepa spoke up "my father is not ready to give away eldest one and my mother can't give away her youngest child, which means that they don't have any objection, to sell me. Oh King! Take me with you" and I can serve some purpose in life. After providing the cows promised to Ruchika in exchange for Shunasepa, Ambharisha left towards his capital.

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On the way to Ayodhya they stopped near Pushkarakshethra to take rest. While the king was resting, Shunasepa saw Vishvamithra doing Tapas who was his maternal uncle (mother's brother), and when his uncle saw him looking tired, he asked Shunasepa, "what in the reason for your visit?", and he replied "Oh kind hearted uncle! I have no one to save me. My parents and my brothers have forsaken me. You can save me and protect me," he pleaded. "To complete his yajna, king Ambharisha

is taking me as a Yajna sacrifice. Please make sure his yajna gets completed without me being sacrificed and ensure that I will have a long life. You can protect me like a father," he continued his pleading. Listening to his sorrowful words, Vishvamithra called his hundred sons and told them, "It is every son's responsibility to help their parents to attain eternal bliss. All of you should assist me and this helpless boy who came to us for protection. You all are very diligent and keen in following dharma. One of you can volunteer to be sacrificed to complete Ambharisha's yajna instead of this little boy. If you follow my wish, Shunasepa's life will be saved, and Ambharisha's yajna will be completed without any obstruction and Devathas will be satisfied".

Listening to their father's words, Madhushynda and other sons of Vishvamithra said, "Is it right to sacrifice your own children to save another child? To save another child scarifying your own children is also forbidden". Upon listening to his sons' words, Vishvamithra said with anger, "You are all very brave to talk to me like this? Don't you know refusing your father's request with your persuasive words is not good conduct? For your transgression, you will all become chandala just like Vashishta's sons, live in this world for thousands of years by eating shunaka (dog) meat", thus he cursed them and took Shunasepa close to him and removed his fear by providing protection with these words. Vishvamithra said, "Shunasepa! You will be tied to the yupasthambha (wooden ritual pole), which is smeared with red chandhanam (sandalwood) and also placing red roots in to the yajna. That yupasthambha signifies Lord Vishnu. You will pray to Indra and Upendra with two stories (Hymns), that I am going to instruct you. You pray to Agni (Fire god) with the hymns from Rig-Veda. You will get protection from this. Yajna will also be concluded," and then Vishvamithra narrated him the two stories (Hymns). Afterwards Shunasepa went to Ambharisha and asked him to proceed to complete the yajna which made the king very happy and he was also surprised that the child was not afraid to be sacrificed anymore and eventually they reached his kingdom to continue the Yagna. Ruthviks dressed Shunasepa in red cloths and tied him to yupasthambha with a rope made of darbha grass. Soon Shunasepa started chanting mantras for Agni. Indra was to be offered an animal, instead Shunasepa prayed to Indra with the story that Vishvamithra taught him. Yupasthamba's prime deity is Vishnu, so he prayed to Vishnu with another story (hymn), but the Ruthviks were not aware that he was chanting prayers. Indra was happy with that secret prayer and blessed him with a long life. King Ambharisha was also satisfied by Indra's acceptance of the prayers; he concluded the yajna and attained salvation. Shunasepa was the reason to distract Vishvamithra's western side Tapas. Saving his life was a prime duty; but for that reason his Tapas would have gone to waste but he couldn't control his anger, and he cursed his sons which caused major disruption to his Tapas on the western side. Now Vishvamithra decided to continue His Tapas at Pushkarakshethra.

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Vishvamithra continued with severe Tapas in Pushkarakshethra on the western side for 1000 more years. Pleased with his penance, Chathurmukha Brahma along with other Devathas appeared before him and blessed him as "Rishi"(sage). Vishvamithra was doing Tapas to become Brahmarishi, but he has become just a "Rishi". Not satisfied with this, he continued his Tapas with a lot more intensity, and one day he saw an apsara named Menaka bathing at Pushkarakshethra, who was renowned for her beauty. Looking at her exquisiteness, Vishvamithra's focus got lost in lust, and he fell in love with her. He said to her, "Oh Beautiful apsara! Well come. I fell in love with you the moment my eyes set on you. This is my ashram, please stay here with me." Listening to his words, Menaka accepted to live with him in his ashram. They lived happily for many thousands of years, and one day Vishvamithra came to realize

his reason for doing Tapas. Filled with shame and remorse for wasted time, he grew angry at Menaka. But when he saw her shaking with fear he was able to control his anger and didn't curse her, realizing this was the plan of Devathas to prevent him from attaining his goal.

He left her and went towards the northern direction with strong determination to complete his Tapas. On the riverbanks of Kausiki, Vishvamithra with full determination to complete his objective, continued his Tapas for 1000 years by controlling his senses. Devathas got worried by his intensity. Upon the request of Devathas, Brahma again appeared in front of Vishvamithra and called him, "Maharishi! I am pleased with your concentrated Tapas. I bless you to be superior and prime among the rest of the Rishis." Listening to Brahma's words, Vishvamithra neither felt happy nor sad. Now he was able to reach a higher level in controlling his emotions. He replied to Brahma, "now that I became Maharishi due to the severe atonement and I hope, I am able to overcome all the sensual attractions. Have I become a Jithendriya (one who is able to control His senses)?" Brahma replied, "No, you have not become a Jithendriya. You should aim for it". Now existing only on air as nourishment, with fire around him and looking at the sun he continued his Tapas. In rainy season without a shelter, standing in the rain he carried out his Tapas. During fall, standing in water up to his neck he concentrated on his Tapas, day and night without reacting to the cold. He was dedicated to practicing his Tapas during various seasons for over 1000 years. Now Indra was concerned again with the intensity of the Tapas and he called Rambha who was a beautiful Apsara and said..

Visvamithra's severe Tapas made Indra uncomfortable and he called Rambha and said "Rambha! This is a request from all the Devathas. You should go and disturb Kausika (Vishvamithra) from his Tapas by drawing him away from his goal towards you, with your beauty." Rambha with both fear and concern said, "Devaraja! Vishvamithra is a very dominant perceptive person with his powers due to his Tapas and I am frightened to be cursed". Indra replied, "Rambha! Don't worry. You follow my order. Vasantha (Manmadha) will be with you, and I will also follow you. With your beauty, you must distract Sage Vishvamithra". Obeying Indra's orders, Rambha tried to disturb Vishvamithra from his concentrated Tapas. With her engaging voice, Visvamithra's mind started to wander and he saw Rambha but this time he realized that, this is all Indra's plan and with anger he cursed her, "Rambha! While I am trying to triumph over Kama (lust), and krodha (anger), you are trying to stimulate me. For your deceitful act, you will be in a stone form (sila rupa) for 10,000 years and then you will get released from your curse." It was a curse to be in stone form, but in reality it is like living in a snake form and accepted by a thapasvi/ Brahman, to be a wife and then she will be liberated from the curse.

In Sanskrit snake got a name "Brahmani", wife of Brahman. Unable to control his anger Vishvamithra cursed Rambha to become shaili (to be in stone form) and his Tapas was ruined once more. Vishvamithra was sad, that he couldn't control his indriyas (senses) and again he was determined to do even more severe Tapas for many years until he becomes a Brahmarishi. He decided to do Tapas without food, water and air. Because of Rambha, the northern side Tapas got ruined, and he left towards eastern direction and continued to do Tapas for thousands of years.

<http://www.chinnajeeyar.org/Teleupanyasam/Sri-Ramayanam/Sri-Ramayana-60.html>

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Vishvamithra once more undertook very severe Tapas by controlling his senses and self determination. After completing his Tapas for 1000 years, on that last day when

he was ready to take his Prasad and Indra arrived there disguising himself as a Brahman and begged for the readily available meal. Vishvamithra willingly gave up his meal to Indra without hesitation or protest, as he was abided by his pledge of silence. Again he started Tapas for 1000 more years with the same determination, which included silence, control over his body functions of breathing sleeping etc. and starvation. His Tapas was relentless, and by the intensity of it, fumes emanated from his head and all three lokas watched in wonder. Devas, Gandharvas, and asuras were puzzled by his intensity of Tapas and they thought if it wasn't stopped, it may lead to a greater destruction. They tried various means to distract him but, Vishvamithra held firm, so they approached Brahma and said, "Chathurmukha Brahma! There was no way to agitate Vishvamithra's Tapas. If you don't fulfill his desire he will demolish all three worlds with his power. All three lokas are already feeling the turbulence, all the oceans are stormy, and sun's rays are getting weakened.

Vishvamithra is appearing to be an embodiment of fire-god. If you don't bless him now, this world will burn down with the power of his Tapas. Due to all these reasons, it's your duty to grant his wish." Brahma with other Devathas appeared before Vishvamithra and said, "Brahmarishi! Welcome. I am pleased with your Tapas. With your relentless Tapas you achieved Brahmanya. I bless you with long life and now that you have attained your desire you may take leave." Upon hearing Brahma's words, the newly appointed Brahmarishi prostrated to Brahma and other Devathas and said, "Devadeva! I am delighted that you blessed me with Brahmanya and long life, but please bless me with Omkara (AUM), vashatkaara (vaSat) syllables, Adharva Veda and also all Vedas. Brahma's son Vashishta with other Devathas should come here and acknowledge me as Brahmarishi. I am asking you to accept my request." Upon Vishvamithra's request, Vashishta came there and accepted Vishvamithra as Brahmarishi and they became friends. Devathas also blessed him as Brahmarishi and left to their abode. "Ramachandra, this is how Vishvamithra became a Brahmarishi." "Esha Raama munisreshthaha, Esha vighrahaan thapaha | Esha dharmapara nithyam, veerya syaisha paraayanam || "Ramachandra, This Sage; king among Rishis is the embodiment of Tapas," Sathananda thus explained Vishvamithra's prominence. "Time for evening ritual is fast approaching as the sun is setting now. Oh, great sage, please permit us to leave now." Thus Janaka took leave from Vishvamithra and left for his city. Vishvamithra also along with Ramachandra and Lakshmana left to their allotted camp.

Until now we have heard the story of Vishvamithra from Sathananda, who was Ahalya's son, and he was happy. Because of Vishvamithra, his mother Ahalya's curse was removed. After explaining Vishvamithra's greatness to Rama and Lakshmana, he said that SriRamachandra was indeed very fortunate to have Vishvamithra as his Guru and Rama as his Sishya. Sathananda explained the greatness of this guru-Sishya (teacher-student) relationship to the world. From Vishvamithra's story, it is revealed that to get siddhi (salvation), a person should work very hard for it. In Bhagavad-Gita it said that, who ever are born with lobha (greediness), will get Kama (lust) and krodha (anger). These three are doors to destruction. "Thrividham narakasyedam, dvaaram naasanam aathmanah" Lobha, Kama, krodha these three are doors to naraka (hell). In Isavasya Upanishad it is said that everyone should understand, that this universe is created, occupied and administered by God only. By realizing this, a person should know that all his possessions are not his but, God's gifts and should live a contented life, which will eventually lead to Moksha (salvation). If one is not aware of this simple, but profound truth, it will lead to greediness and from that comes attachment

Lobha gets attachments, but sacrifice gets Moksha. Vishvamithra after doing thousand's of years of Tapas became a Brahmarishi and what ever he considered his own, including knowledge, control of vast array of weapons, fruits of his Tapas, he surrendered them to Sri Ramachandra. With the help of Sri Ramachandra he destroyed his enemies and attained Moksha. Vishvamithra's life is a good example for living, and thus he became Vishvamithra- friend to universe (Vishva - universe, mithra - friend).

He also had visions of Gayathri mantra which cleanses buddhi (mind). To achieve this, a person should work diligently work-for it, and at it. Let us review the life of Vishvamithra. He was a king with great pride and arrogance, and in spite of his vast army, he couldn't defeat Vashishta and obtain the cow Sabala. That obsession was the beginning of his downfall as a king and towards greatness as a Brahmarishi. Because of the yearn (loba) for possess the best, krodha (anger) surfaced, and made him disagree with Vashishta and then to become Brahmarishi. Fighting for dreadful things with dreadful people will lead to awful results where as Vishvamithra's journey was to become Brahmarishi.

A person should have that kind of ambition; achieving Brahmajnaana (knowledge of supreme) is the sole purpose of this life and that desire is a stepping stone for progress. To know Brahman, Tapas is a vehicle and Vishvamithra did that. But that doesn't come easily in short time and also Kama, krodha are the road blocks for higher achievements. In Bhagavad-Gita it was named as "mahasana, mahapapma". Mahasana- unlimited desire, which is Kama (lust). So Kama is mahasana. Krodha (anger) makes people commit terrible sins, so krodha is mahaapapma (major sin). To overcome these two, Vishvamithra did thousand's of years of Tapas traveling all four directions and at the end became a Brahmarishi. Vishvamithra, after attaining powers with his Tapas at southern side became proud and lost the benefits of Tapas. If one's "EGO" - "self" is not destroyed; there will be no benefits of Tapas. With that pride-ego, by not paying heed to Vashishta's words, Vishvamithra decided to do yajna to send Thiranku to Swarga loka with his own body. Pride goes before fall, and also clouds judgment which eventually makes one make wrong decisions, (like Vishvamithra cursing all the sons of Vashishta).

Then, to save his maternal nephew, Shunasepa he cursed his own sons. With the power of his Tapas he saved Shunasepa but due to lack of control over his emotions, his Tapas were ruined. Thus failing two times to control his feelings he had to try again to become Brahmarishi. This time, with Menaka's appearance he was distracted with Kama (lust). After spending time with Menaka for many years, he realized his mistake. Because of Kama his Tapas was ruined again and he went towards northern side where he met Rambha. With western side Tapas he became Rishi, with southern side Tapas he became Rajarishi but he didn't attain Brahmarishi-hood. When he saw Rambha, he again felt Kama, and by controlling it, he moved from there. One should overcome Kama, but showing krodha which is the out come of Kama, leads to destruction.

Again he continued severe Tapas for thousand's of years and conquered Maharishi level. That was not his goal, but Brahmarishi-hood was and from that to possess all the knowledge of Vedas. Lobha, Kama, krodha were three things which became obstacle to his accomplishment of his objective, in three directions. He realized that food was the main reason for those failures, so he started strict Tapas in northern side without consuming food. Soon after he finished his Tapas, while attempting to

consume food Indra came in the form of a Brahmin and asked for that food. Without any greed or hesitation he offered that food and started his Tapas again without pride, lust and anger but only with one aspiration.

At the end, Devathas, Brahma and Vashishta came and blessed him as Brahmarishi. With so many obstacles he became a Brahmarishi, but that was not enough, one should climb one more step to attain siddhi (Moksha). To get that, he performed moksheshti yajna. With that he destroyed avidya (ignorance), Kama, krodha etc. and reached The Supreme one). We have seen this narration in Balakanda while Sathananda explained to SriRamachandra Visvamithra's past life, but this is not part of Balakanda. Brahmarishi Vishvamithra came to Dasaratha to ask SriRamachandra to protect his yajna. This tells us that, after becoming Brahmarishi there are more things to do. Accepting SriRamachandra as a protector he bequeathed all his weaponry to him. He told Dasaratha, that he can't use his anger in the yajna to kill Maricha and Subahu otherwise he could have killed them. Vishvamithra asked SriRamachandra to kill them by using his weapons, but he didn't use his own weapons. This is a real sacrifice. Giving up ego and getting protection by accepting SriRamachandra as his protector is a kind of act only selflessly mature people will do and this leads to Moksha. He had shown that age, training, knowledge is not the only criteria to surrender to someone.

Look at what Vishvamithra had to go through to accomplish the status of Brahmarishi and here he is accepting Sri Rama who is a mere boy to be his protector. He was seeing Rama through his inner wisdom and not merely through his vision. He became a true "Brahmarishi". Through SriRamachandra, he killed Thataka whom represented avidya (ignorance), and her sons Maricha, Subahu represents sanchitha and agami karmas. Along with SriRamachandra, he went to Mithila and witnessed Sitha Rama Kalyana (wedding), and then Vishvamithra left to Northern direction for forever.

In Janakapuri, Sathananda narrated Visvamithra's story to young SriRamachandra and Lakshmana along with king Janaka while Vishvamithra listened in. But, this is not the old Vishvamithra with pomp and ego; but he is able to control his senses and that was the reason when Sathananda was explaining his drawbacks in character he didn't get angry. One who reaches that level will attain siddhi. Vishvamithra heard his own story with no emotions attached, and participated in this event as if he was a stranger. One should learn sacrifice and surrender to attain Moksha and by following yajna, giving for good causes (charity), and Tapas to overcome ego. When one realizes that, "I am not my own protector or creator but the one who created me is the one who protects me" is called thyagam sanyasam. This is the path to siddhi. Moksha means witnessing Lord Srimannarayana. This is what Vishvamithra did in Mithila, witnessing SriRamachandra and Sitha together. To illustrate Visvamithra's way to Moksha, Janaka's yajna continued for twelve days. In the past we learned that Visvamithra's yajna continued for six nights.

This tells us, the journey to get to Almighty is twelve days. After eliminating prarabdha Karmas, Jeevathma will travel twelve places and then reaches Paramapatham to serve Lord Srimannarayana and never comes back. To illustrate this, at the end of twelve days of Janaka's yajna, Sita-Rama marriage happened and Vishvamithra exits. After removing prarabdha karma and leaving the body, at first Agnyabhimana Devathas accepts the jeeva. On the next 11 days following Devathas accept the Jeevathma. 2) Dinabhimana Devathas- 3) Shukla Paksha Abhimana

Devathas- 4) Uttharayana Bahaman Devathas- 5) Samvathsara Abhimana Devathas- 6) Vayavya Abhimana Devathas- 7) Suryamandala Abhimana Devathas- 8) Chandra Mandala Abhimana Devathas- 9) Vidhyuth Abhimana Devathas- 10) Indra Lokas Abhimana Devathas- 11) Varuna Loka Abhimana Devathas- 12) Brahma Loka Abhimana Devathas. After being accepted by 12 Devathas at 12 different places Jeevathma reaches to Paramapatham.

In Mithila, "Dvadasa yajna" and, then kalyana was performed. At this point Sage Vishvamithra leaves the scene never to return. In Ramayana, first kanda is called "Bala Kanda" not because it deals with Rama's childhood. Actually it didn't say much about Rama's childhood. In Bala Kanda, birth of SriRamachandra, His father's thoughts on crowning Him as a prince, Visvamithra's arrival and Rama's trip to the forest with Vishvamithra are described. We also see Rama getting married. So, in Balakanda rather than discussing Rama's youth, Visvamithra's story was explained and the main character in this kanda was Vishvamithra and that was the reason Valmiki called Vishvamithra as a child in this Kanda. In Upanishad it is said, "Paandithym nirvidya baalyena thishTaaseeth, adh munih:" (After attaining Brahmajnaana, he will become like a child, then later he becomes muni).

After attaining Brahmajnaana, Vishvamithra came to Rama and surrendered to him without showing his strength; that was early days. Like a child who depends on someone for the protection, Vishvamithra depended on Ramachandra for protection. Then he was doing Mananam (repeatedly reciting God in mind, meditating on SriRamachandra) while Sathananda was narrating his own story, that was when he became a muni. Because Vishvamithra appeared as a child in this Kanda, this Kanda was named as Balakanda. Next morning, Janaka invited Ramachandra and Lakshmana along with Vishvamithra to his palace and after offering performing appropriate services to his guests, he said "Please command me what I need to do for you. I am at your service". Knowing the meaning of these words, Vishvamithra said, "King Janaka! These are Dasaratha's sons and very famous Kshathriyas. They came to see the Dhanus (divine bow) you own. It is good for you to show them the Dhanus and after viewing that Dhanus we will leave happily from here'. Janaka said, "Maharishi! I will narrate to them the story of this great Dhanus, which once belonged to Siva who was kept it, with my ancestors. During Daksha Yajna, Parama Siva used this Dhanus to punish Devathas who came to take part in the yajna. The despaired Devathas prayed to Siva, who withdrew the Dhanus and preserved it with my ancestors. Later, when I had to plough the ritual field to do the yajna, a baby girl came out from that Kshetra (place). Since she was found while sanctifying the ritual-field, she was named Sitha and was raised as my daughter.

Due to the circumstances of her birth, I have to find her a groom who is valuable of her in marriage, one who is bold and strong, one who can string the Dhanus of Parama Siva will be worthy of her. Hearing my declaration many kings came and tried to string that Siva Dhanus, but they all failed. With hostility, they assaulted and smothered the city of Mithila for many years. After a while the wealth of this great city went into a decline. Then I prayed to gods for their help and delighted gods gave me fourfold force. With the help of their forces I have defeated all those kings. Sage! This is that supremely radiant bow, and oh, saint of sacred vows, I will show that matchlessly glowing bow to Ramachandra and Lakshmana. If Rama strings the bow, I will offer my daughter, whose birth is divine; to Dasaratha's son Ramachandra", so said Janaka to Vishvamitra.

Upon hearing words of Janaka, eminent-saint Vishvamithra requested King Janaka, to display the bow to Sri Ramachandra. On king Janaka's orders his ministers left the palace-chambers to bring the divine bow which was decorated with sandalwood paste and garlands. Later those ministers came out of the palace, followed by five thousand tall men with endless energy. They were pulling an eight-wheeled casket with great difficulty in which the Dhanus was enclosed and they presented it to King Janaka. Showing that iron casket, King Janaka said, "Here is the exquisite bow which was a treasure of Mithila kings. In the past, highly skilled kings failed to pick up this bow. Even demigods, demons, Gandharvas-s, yaksha-s, kinnaras were incapable of lifting this bow. Then it will not be possible for humans to elevate this bow, nor string it and aim with it. Still let this be displayed to these two princes Ramachandra and Lakshmana." Upon hearing Janaka's words Vishvamithra told Ramachandra to look at the bow. When, Ramachandra saw that enclosed bow and He said, "Gurudeva! Brahmarishi! May I get a feel of this supreme bow and if possible may I try to raise it and take aim with it."

With King Janaka's and Visvamithra's blessing, Sri Rama with ease lifted the bow from the box as if He was picking up a flower garland and grasped it in the middle. While thousands of people were witnessing that, Sri Rama fastened the bow strings effortlessly. Making the bow stand on the floor vertically He skillfully stringed that bow-string and when He started to stretch, that bow broke in the middle with an explosion like a thunder. Earth trembled at that sound. Hearing that thunderous sound, every one fell unconscious for a while except Vishvamithra, king Janaka, Ramachandra and Lakshmana. Later king Janaka said, "Oh great sage, we have just seen Dasaratha's son Ramachandra exhibiting his magnificent strength which was not to my imagination. My daughter Sitha after marrying Dasaratha's son Ramachandra, she will bring recognition to my lineage. Until now our lineage is known for their selflessness. "Mithilaayaam pradeepthaa yaa name kinchith pradayathe." Being raised in our lineage, my daughter possesses great qualities and by birth she is ayonija (not from mother's womb), so she is supreme by birth. With the gift of beauty and becoming the wife of Ramachandra, son of Dasaratha who belongs to Ikshwaku lineage, she will be well known. Today by fulfilling my promise she became bravery's reward. I am giving my beloved Sitha to Ramachandra. If you give permission, Brahmarishi, my ministers will go to Ayodhya very swiftly, and will inform Dasaratha all these happenings. They will narrate in detail about Sitha, and also they will inform about Ramachandra and Lakshmana who are under the protection of sage Vishvamithra. Then they will invite King Dasaratha with all honors to Mithila. With Visvamithra's blessing, king Janaka sent his ministers to Ayodhya.