

39. Śaṅkara who stood in front of him with satisfaction made Rāma take up the four types of miraculous weapons along with the modes of their discharge as well as their withdrawal.

40. Śaṅkara gave Rāma an excellent chariot of unobstructed speed and velocity, with white horses and beautiful banner. He gave him two inexhaustible quivers of arrows.

41. He gave him an unaging (ever-new) unbreakable divine bow (named) Vijaya, with firm bowstring. He gave him a costly wonderful coat of mail that can withstand all types of weapons.

42. O king, he granted him invincibility in battle, heroism without a parallel on the earth and the ability to hold his vital airs as long as he wished.

43. By means of a *Bijamantra* (incantation) in his name, he granted him renown all over the worlds. He granted Bhārgava great potentiality for his austerities.

44-47. He granted Rāma proper and relevant devotion towards himself. Thereafter, the moon-crested lord Śambhu, Hara, soon vanished with the selfsame body accompanied by all the goblins and the Devas. After obtaining everything that he desired, Rāma became satisfied. When Śarva (Śiva) became invisible he spoke to Mahodara :—"O Mahodara, it behoves you to preserve all these things, the chariot, the bow etc. for my sake when I have some task to be performed through these, you will be remembered, by me. On being remembered by me you will send them to me".

*Vasiṣṭha said :*

48. Saying "So be it", Mahodara departed. The most excellent one among the descendants of Bhṛgu felt satisfied (in having fulfilled his duty) and desired to go to see his elders.

49. As he proceeded ahead, Rāma who was induced by his previous actions controlling his future, entered a cave in the Himalaya mountains in a dense forest.

50. There he saw a boy, the son of a Brāhmaṇa, crying like one who was extremely frightened as he was chased by a tiger. He was (as if) holding his vital airs (with great difficulty).

51. On seeing him, Rāma had his heart overwhelmed with sympathy and he became excited due to his eagerness to save him. Saying "Stop, stop" loudly, he pursued that tiger.

52. Chasing him with great speed, the scion of the family of Bhṛgu, caught up the extremely terrible tiger in the forest after a long time.

53. That Brāhmaṇa boy who was pursued by the tiger, fled with great fright for his life. He fell down near a cave in the forest.

54. Rāma had his eyes turned red due to anger. With a desire to redeem the Brāhmaṇa boy he took up a small blade of grass and chanted mantras over it as though it were a missile of Kuśa grass.

55. In the meantime the hyaena (tiger) of great power ran after the Brāhmaṇa boy. On seeing him fallen, he roared loudly making the heaven and earth tremble.

56. With the fire of his missile, he burned the tiger who was striking with the tips of his claws. He thus released the Brāhmaṇa boy who was not at all wounded.

57. That sinful (hyaena) whose body had been burned completely due to the Brahminical fire, assumed the body of a Gandharva. Rising on to the sky, he spoke thus to Rāma with great respect.

58. "O sage, formerly, as I had been cursed by a Brāhmaṇa I attained the state of a tiger. Redeemed now from the effects of that curse, I am going to heaven".

59. When he went away hastily after saying thus, Rāma who was wonderstruck sympathetically lifted up the fallen Brāhmaṇa boy.

60. Sitting near the Brāhmaṇa boy he said the following words—"Do not be afraid", O king. Slowly he stroked his limbs, reviving his life (and spirits).

61. Lifted up thus by Rāma, he opened his eyes and looked around. He saw the most excellent one among the members of the family of Bhṛgu in front of him.

62. He became surprised on seeing the tiger reduced to ashes. With his fear dispelled he said thus—"Who are you, please ? How did you come here ?

63. By whom was this tiger reduced to ashes, the hyena of terrifying shape and size, who almost appeared like another god of death and attempted to kill me ?

64. My mind is highly deluded and excited due to fear, O sage of great intellect. Although it has been killed, all the quarters appear to be filled with the tiger even now.

65. I consider you to be everyone—my father, mother, friend and preceptor since you brought me back to life when I had met with the greatest of mishaps.

66. There was a certain excellent sage of great penance called Śānta. I am his son. Desirous of visiting holy centres, I went to the village of Śālagrāma.<sup>1</sup>

67. From there I proceeded to the mountain Gandhamādana, desirous of visiting the holy penance grove of Badarikā resorted to by many groups of sages.

68. Desirous of going further, I lost my way on the Himālaya mountain. Entering a fascinating forest, I got confused while viewing the different regions.

69. I went a distance of a Krośa (three Kms) towards the east. As ill luck would have it, I was afflicted with fear and I had to run.

70. When I had fallen down I have been lifted up now from the ground with great love and mercifulness by you like a son, by his father. Thus my story has been wholly narrated to you”.

*Vasiṣṭha said :*

71. On being asked thus by him, O leading king, Rāma narrated his story entirely to him in due order.

72. Mutually conversing thus they were delighted very much. He did not stay there for a long time thereafter. Then he desired to proceed ahead.

73. Followed by him, Rāma came out of that cave with great joy and started towards the residence of his parents.

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1. A place near the source of the Gaṇḍaka where Bharata and sage Pulaha performed penance (De. 174). The place abounds in sacred stones called Śālagrāma.

74-75. Since he was not wounded although he was caused to fall on the ground by the tiger and since he was saved by Rāma who killed the tiger, the name of that Brāhmaṇa boy became well known on the Earth as *Akṛtavraṇa* (not wounded), O leading king.

76. Ever since then, he became a great friend and follower of Rāma in every situation like a shadow on the ground when there is sunlight.

77. Followed by him, O king, Rāma came to the presence of Bhṛgu. He saw Khyāti, approached her and bowed down to her humbly.

78. He was blessed and congratulated by those two delighted persons. In order to please them, he stayed there for a few days.

79-80. After that, with their permission, he went to the hermitage of the great sage Cyavana. The sage Rāma of noble mind saluted sage Cyavana who was surrounded by the groups of his disciples, whose mind was quiescent and who had controlled the internal sense-organs, as well as bowed to Sukanyā, Cyavana's wife.

81. Congratulated by both of them who were delighted he went to the hermitage of Aurva desirous of seeing the sage.

82. The highly intelligent Rāma paid his respects to him and was congratulated and blessed by him, O king. Due to Aurva's affection, he remained there for a few days.

83. After being permitted to go by him very slowly, Bhārgava of great glory, accompanied by Akṛtavraṇa, joyously started towards the abode of Ṛcika.

84. After bowing down at the feet of the parents of his father, separately he saluted them. They two, O king, blessed him with their good wishes, due to his delight.

85. On being asked by them, O leading king, the liberal-minded sage Rāma narrated his entire story in due order in the manner it had taken place.

86. After staying there for a few days he went to the abode of his parents with their permission. He was delighted extremely.