

Book I: Bāla Kāṇḍa - Book Of Youthful Majesties

Chapter [Sarga] 2

- 1 Vālmiki, being a Sage of Letters himself, listened to Sage Nārada's words of wisdom intently. Then that eminent sage along with his disciples worshipped the divine Sage Nārada.
- 2 Sage Nārada after being worshipped befittingly by Vālmiki and his disciples, took leave of Vālmiki, and flew heavenward.
- 3 A little later after the departure of Sage Nārada to heavens, Sage Vālmiki went to the banks of river Tamasā, not very far from Jāhnavī. (Jāhnavī is another name for river Gaṅga.)
- 4 Sage Vālmiki on reaching the banks of Tamasā River, observed its waters clear and without mud, looked toward his disciple Bharadvāja by his side and addressed him thus.
- 5 „Oh! Baradvāja, look at these pleasant, tranquil waters. Crystal-clear waters they are, like the pure heart of a virtuous man.“
- 6 „My dear Bharadvāja, take this Kalaśam [a handy vessel to carry back potable water] and give me my jute robe. Here alone I enter these Tamasā waters, that are the best.“
- 7 Bharadvāja thus told by Vālmiki, the great soul, placed the robe in the hands of his mentor dutifully.
- 8 Vālmiki, the sage who controlled his senses, took his robe from disciple's hands and walked towards the river. In the meanwhile he looked at the wide forest, appreciating the nature's beauty.
- 9 Walking thus towards the river while admiring the woods, that godly sage Vālmiki saw a couple of Krauñca birds. Those birds were moving thereabout together with no fear, chirping and cooing charmingly.
- 10 Then suddenly the male bird of that couple was killed by the arrow of a hunter, who by nature is an enemy of the forest fauna and always with an evil intent for his prey. Sage Vālmiki was disturbed a lot, seeing that with his own eyes.
- 11 That male Krauñca bird with its wings blood-wet, fell on the ground and swirled in pain. Its female partner witnessing this cruel act lamented loudly and its wailing outcries were very piteous indeed.
- 12 Affectionate couple they were, always moving together, but gone was the togetherness. With her husband slain, that lusty winged female bird with a crested red head, was left alone.
- 13 On seeing the wailing female Krauñcī bird, because of his compassion toward it, and with his knowledge that this action (killing of male bird) was unjust, the sage uttered these lines.
- 14 „Oh No! Hunter, you will get an ever lasting reputation for years to come, with your act of killing one bird of a couple in their mating game.“
- 15 Speaking those words in that fashion made him [Vālmiki] thoughtful. He pondered over and over as to „Why was I so annoyed by seeing the falling bird and uttered thus in anguish? „
- 16 Brooding thus in his thoughts, Sage Vālmiki, the erudite, eminent scholar and the thoughtful one, questioned himself and also spoke to his disciples the following words.
- 17 „The foot of this stanza is arranged very well with well-balanced letters that sound like the notes of a string instrument and with a rhythmical rhyme. But it came out involuntarily when I was immersed in agony and annoyance. So it shall be called śloka because it evolved out of śoka, sorrow.“
- 18 The disciple grasped that excellent stanza from the sage as he was saying it and recited it, thus enhancing the happiness of his mentor.
- 19 Then the Sage bathed in the waters of Tamasā River, on the banks of which all this happened. But he repeatedly thought about the purport of his utterance. Lost thus in those thoughts he started toward his hermitage.

- 20 Bharadvāja, the scholarly and humble disciple, drew a vessel full of water from the river and followed Vālmiki.
- 21 Vālmiki entered his hermitage along with disciples at his side and sat down meditating on the poem. That virtuoso, while talking to his students about other things, found his mind recurrently reflecting the incidents that happened.
- 22 Arrived then, Lord Brahmā, Creator of Worlds and who Lords them over. The four-faced deity, radiantly glowing, arrived there longing to see Vālmiki, the sage eminent.
- 23 Vālmiki on seeing Brahmā arriving at his hermitage, got up joining his palms together reverently in great astonishment.
- 24 Vālmiki worshipped Him [Lord Brahmā], washed His feet, offered him arghya [water to drink] and a seat for him to rest on, saluted Him ritually and inquired about His undisturbed well-being.
- 25 Brahmā, settled on a high seat and being worshipped well, beckoned Vālmiki the great sage, to take a seat. Vālmiki thus ordered by Lord Brahmā took a seat fit for his stature in the presence of Brahmā.
- 26 Though seated thus before Lord Brahmā, the Grandparent of all the worlds, gone elsewhere was the mind of that Vālmiki, recurrently contemplating those incidents that have happened, thus.
- 27 „That wicked hunter did a hurting deed by unnecessarily killing that Krauñca bird. Those birds were picturesque, cooing sweetly.“
- 28 Vālmiki thus saddened for that female Krauñcī bird, sang that verse without being conscious of outside world. His mood turned to a melancholic state by repeated uttering of the same verse.
- 29 Brahmā then spoke to Vālmiki the Sage eminent, smilingly „You need not ponder over that verse you composed...“
- 30 „It was produced by you as per my wish. You shall author the epic of Rāma in its entirety...“
- 31 „Of that Rāma, who is virtuous in mind, moralist in deed, upright in character and above all an intellectual. Hence you should tell the story of Rāma as heard by you from Sage Nārada...“
- 32-33 „You will know now Rāma’s history along with that of Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā, Bharata, Hanuman, Sugrīva and others and also that of the demons, and also that which you may not have been aware of earlier...“
- 34 „There will not be a single untruthful word in this epic. You shall therefore render verses about the story of Rāma in the meter and prosody of the verse you uttered just now. It shall be a heart appealing epic and a benedictive one too...“
- 35 „Rāmāyaṇa story will exist as long as the mountains and rivers flourish on the surface of earth...“
- 36 „As long as Rāmāyaṇa story authored by you will flourish in this world, you as its author, will flourish in all the three worlds namely netherworld, this human world and mine too [Brahmā’s abode, the highest heaven]“
- 37 Thus saying, Lord Brahmā disappeared from there, to the great astonishment of Sage poet Vālmiki and his students.
- 38 Then all the disciples of Vālmiki sang those verses again and again to one another being pleased at their hearts.
- 39 This correctly worded, four-footed verse rendered by Sage Vālmiki attained prominence through repetitive recitation.
- 40 Vālmiki decided to compose the epic of Rāmāyaṇa in its totality in similar verses.
- 41 With free flowing prosody that was meaningfully worded, sage Vālmiki composed reputed Rāma’s heart-pleasing story. Rāmāyaṇa, the repute-enriching epic was thus rendered by that omniscient sage with hundreds of well-formed auspicious verses.