

60. All this I did for the sake of the family, deluded that I was, not having associated with good people (before). But something has entered my heart today as though I have been reading the scriptural texts.

61. O excellent persons, if I had not met you all today, I would have continued to perform other sinful acts too. There is no doubt about it."

62. There was a good sage among them named Pulaha, one of a jovial nature. He said to the excellent Brāhmaṇa just to bewilder him:

63-65. "I shall tell you a splendid Mantra. By repeating it and meditating you will attain permanent Siddhi. This Mantra namely Jātaghoṭa is the bestower of all Siddhis. O Brāhmaṇa, repeat this Mantra day and night untiringly. Thereby you will attain perfection rare in the case of even Devas."

66. After saying thus those Brāhmaṇas went on their pilgrimage. The thief on his part stayed there completely engrossed in the Japa.

67. The Japa was begun by him in all earnestness with his mind not turning to anything else. He maintained the mental absorption. He reached the climax thereof.

68. As the Brāhmaṇa continued the recitation of the Mantra, his body remained motionless and he was steady in the Japa.

69. After a great deal of time had elapsed an anthill enveloped the noble-souled one engaged in meditation, O excellent Brāhmaṇas.

70. His parents and his wife of lofty mind made a fruitless search for him and ultimately they died themselves.

71. The man engaged in the great Vrata had renounced everything. He was liberated from all worldly feelings, thanks to the association with those sages. He could not be found out even as he was there itself.

72. After some time, those sages came the same way in the course of their pilgrimage.

73. They said thus, O Brāhmaṇas: "This is the place where you had come into contact with that terrible thief who was in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa."

74. They heard from within an anthill the sound of the Mantra *Jātaghoṭa* from the same noble soul.

75. They heard the vibrations on the ground from all sides. They saw the anthill all round and the thief seated in the midst.

76. They saw that he had been repeating the Mantra jocularly imparted to him by Pulaha. O excellent Brāhmaṇas, they found out the Siddhi yielded by that Mantra.

77. What the preceptors whose eye is the scripture, say is true. Very little indeed is enough for the achievement of perfection (Siddhi). Hence the Siddhi was attained by him.

78. The Siddhi in the case of Mantra, Tīrtha, Brāhmaṇa, deity, astrologer, medicine and preceptor is always in proportion to the mental fervour and faith one has.

79. They were surprised to observe that the thief had become a great Siddha even through an insignificant sham Mantra. The Brāhmaṇas were overcome with compassion too all the more.

80-81. They massaged his body with things specific for recovering from Samādhi, such as oils and medicines. O Brāhmaṇas, you know that he had been in meditation for a long time. After regaining consciousness he stared at them frequently and said to them in utter surprise:

*Lohajāṅgha said:*

82. O excellent Brāhmaṇas, why did you not go away? I will not take anything belonging to you. You were let off by me. Since I do not want anything for the sake of the family, you can go away as you please.

*The sages said:*

83. We have been wandering in the forest. We have come here after a long time. The long period of time that has elapsed has not been noticed by you because you were in meditation.

84. Your aged parents whom you left have all died. With our favour, you have achieved great Siddhi.

85. Since you achieved great Siddhi seated within a *Valmīka* (an anthill), you will become well-known in the world as Vālmīki.

86. O Brāhmaṇa, you stayed here and robbed (*muṣṭaḥ*)

the world earlier. Hence this will become famous as a Tīrtha named Mukhāra.<sup>1</sup>

87. Those who faithfully take their holy bath here on Śrāvaṇī day, O Brāhmaṇas, will wash off their sin due to thievery.

*Sūta said:*

88-91. After saying thus, those Brāhmaṇas took leave of the sage. They were duly bowed down to by him and they went in the direction they desired. Engaged in his penance he was later remembered as Vālmīki. He became a leading sage. Even today that leading sage is present there in the form of an idol. One who worships him with great faith and devotion especially on the eighth lunar day will certainly become a poet.