

SECTION 96

तस्यां रजन्यां व्युष्टायां यज्ञवाटं गतो नृपः।
 ऋषीन्सर्वान्महातेजाः शब्दापयति राघवः॥१॥
 वसिष्ठो वामदेवश्च जाबालिरथ काश्यप।
 विश्वामित्रो दीर्घतमा दुर्वासाश्च महातपाः॥२॥
 पुलस्त्योऽपि तथा शक्तिर्भार्गश्चैव वामनः।
 मार्कण्डेयश्च दीर्घायुर्मौद्गल्यश्च महायशाः॥३॥
 गर्गश्च च्यवनश्चैव शतानन्दश्च धर्मवित्।
 भवद्वाजश्च तेजस्वी अग्निपुत्रश्च सुप्रभः॥४॥
 नारदः पर्वतश्चैव गौतमश्च महायशाः।
 एते चान्ये च बहवो मुनयः संशितव्रताः॥५॥
 कौतूहलसमाविष्टाः सर्व एव समागताः।
 राक्षसाश्च महावीर्या वानराश्च महाबलाः॥६॥
 सर्व एव समाजग्मुर्महात्मानः कुतूहलात्।
 क्षत्रिया ये च शूद्राश्च वैश्याश्चैव सहस्रशः॥७॥

Next morning Rāma, being present in the sacrificial ground and having sent for the Ṛṣis, Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva Jābāli, Kaśyapa, Viśvāmitra, carrying on penances for a long time, Durvāsā, Pulastya of hard austerities, Śakti, Bhārgava, Mārkaṇḍeya living long, the highly illustrious Maudgalya, Gārgya, Cyavana, Śātānanda, conversant with religions, effulgent Bharadvāja, Agni's son Vasuprava, Nārada, Parvata, the great Gautama and other ascetics of firm vows, assembled with minds possessed by curiosity. The highly powerful Rākṣasas and monkeys also came there out of curiosity.

नानादेशगताश्चैव ब्राह्मणाः संशितव्रताः।
 सीताशपथवीक्षार्थं सर्व एव समागताः॥८॥
 तदा समागतं सर्वमश्मभूतमिवाचलम्।
 श्रुत्वा मुनिवरस्तूर्णं ससीतः समुपागमत्॥९॥

Besides thousands and thousands of Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras and Brāhmaṇas of firm tenancies, also hailed there from various parts to witness Sītā's trial. Having arrived there they all sat down motionless like mountains. There upon,

Vālmīki, the foremost of ascetics, speedily came there accompanied by Sītā.

तमृषिं पृष्ठतः सीता अन्वगच्छदवाङ्मुखी।
 कृताञ्जलिर्बाष्पकला कृत्वा रामं मनोगतम्॥१०॥
 तां दृष्ट्वा श्रुतिमायान्तीं ब्रह्माणमनुगामिनीम्।
 वाल्मीकेः पृष्ठतः सीतां साधुवादो महानभूत्॥११॥

With her face downwards, folded palms, eyes full of tears and meditating upon Rāma in her mind, Sītā, following the Ṛṣis, came before the assembly. There arose a great uproar of eulogy from the assembly when they saw Sītā following Vālmīki like to the Śruti following Brahmā.

ततो हलहलाशब्दः सर्वेषामेवमाबभौ।
 दुःखजन्मविशालेन शोकेनानुकुलितात्मनाम्॥१२॥
 साधु रामेति केचित्तु साधु सीतेति चापरे।
 उभावेव च तत्रान्ये प्रेक्षकाः संप्रचुक्रुशुः॥१३॥

There upon members, stricken with sorrow, made a tumultuous sound. Among the visitors some praised Rāma, some praised Sītā and others eulogised both of them.

ततो मध्ये जनौघस्य प्रविश्य मुनिपुङ्गवः।
 सीतासहायो वाल्मीकिरिति होवाच राघवम्॥१४॥
 इयं दाशरथे सीता सुव्रता धर्मचारिणी।
 अपवादात्परित्यक्ता ममाश्रमसमीपतः॥१५॥

There upon having entered that huge assemblage in company of Sītā, the great ascetic Vālmīki addressed Rāma, saying: O son of Daśaratha, in fear of calumny, you did renounce her near my hermitage, albeit Sītā is pure and follows the ways of morality.

लोकापवादभीतस्य तव राम महाव्रत।
 प्रत्ययं दास्यते सीता तामनुज्ञातुमर्हसि॥१६॥

O Rāma of firm vows, you are afraid of the censure of the people. Sītā has becoming willing to give testimony (of her purity) for removing the calumny of the public; do you mercifully give her permission in this.

इमौ तु जानकीपुत्रावुभौ च यमजातकौ।
 सुतौ तवैव दुर्धर्षौ सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते॥१७॥
 प्रचेतसोऽहं दशमः पुत्रो राघवनन्दन।
 न स्मराम्यनृतं वाक्यमिमौ तु तव पुत्रकौ॥१८॥

I tell you the truth, O Rāma, that these irrepressible twin brothers are your sons, O descendant of Raghu. I am the tenth son of Pracetā, so, far from speaking untruth it does not even spring up in my mind. I therefore know the truth that these twins are your sons.

बहुवर्षसहस्राणि तपश्चर्या मया कृता ।

नोपाशनीयां फलं तस्या दुष्टेयं यदि मैथिली ॥१९॥

I have performed austere penances for many thousand years; I now swear before you, that if this Maithilī is found touched by any sin I shall not reap the fruit of my ascetic observances extending over many thousand years.

मनसा कर्मणा वाचा भूतपूर्वं न किल्बिषम् ।

तस्याहं फलमश्नामि अपापा मैथिली यदि ॥२०॥

I have never perpetrated before a crime either, in my mind, body, or speech. If Maithilī is found divested of sin I may then partake of the fruits of piety.

अहं पञ्चसु भूतेषु मनःषष्ठेषु राघव ।

विचिन्त्य सीता शुद्धेति जग्राह वननिर्झरे ॥२१॥

O descendant of Raghu, finding Sītā pure in mind and five elements of body I took her near the spring in the forest.

इयं शुद्धसमाचारा अपापा पतिदेवता ।

लोकापवादभीतस्य प्रत्ययं तव दास्यति ॥२२॥

Besides this Sītā, of pure ways, divested of sins and ever considering her husband as deity, shall give testimony this day.

तस्मादियं नरवात्मज शुद्धभावा

दिव्येन दृष्टिविषयेण मया प्रदिष्टा ।

लोकापवादकलुषीकृतचेतसा या त्यक्ता

त्वया प्रियतमा विदितापि शुद्धा ॥२३॥

You have been afraid of the public calumny. O son of a king, your mind being possessed by the fear of public scandal regarding her husband as a god; I came to know this by virtue of my discriminative knowledge.