

**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

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सुग्रीवश्चापि तत्सर्वं श्रुत्वा रामस्य वानरः ॥ १-१-६०

चकार सख्यं रामेण प्रीतश्चैवाग्निसाक्षिकम् । ततो वानरराजेन वैरानुकथनं प्रति ॥ १-१-६१

रामायावेदितं सर्वं प्रणयाद् दुःखितेन च । प्रतिज्ञातं च रामेण तदा वालिवधं प्रति ॥ १-१-६२

वालिनश्च बलं तत्र कथयामास वानरः । १-१-६३

*sugrīvaścāpi tatsarvaṁ śrutvā rāmasya vānaraḥ ॥ 1-1-60*

*cakāra sakhyam rāmeṇa prītaścaivāgnisākṣikam ।*

*tato vānararājena vairānukathanam prati ॥ 1-1-61*

*rāmāyāveditam sarvaṁ praṇayād duḥkhitena ca ।*

*pratijñātam ca rāmeṇa tadā vālivadham prati ॥ 1-1-62*

*vālinaśca balaṁ tatra kathayāmāsa vānaraḥ ॥ 1-1-63*

The *vānara* Sugriva, having listened to Rama's narration, immediately, in a ritual-like manner, sealed his friendship with the prince. Keeping the fire before him as witness, he swore his friendship. Lord Agni, lord of fire, will be brought into any relationship as a *sākṣī*, as a *devatā*, as is done for a marriage. In front of *agni*, one makes a vow. At first Sugriva might have doubted Rama, and he doubted him later, but here he said, "For any help you can count on me."

Freely, without hiding anything, Sugriva stated his enmity for and his problem with Vali. He explained how Vali misunderstood him and how he was thrown out of the kingdom and how he lost everything including his wife. Sugriva sought Rama's help, just as Rama sought his help. It looked as though Rama wanted to bless Sugriva. That is how this is interpreted. Rama promised that Vali would die for the actions he had done. Even though Rama had great respect for Vali, he knew that Vali would not listen to reason and that death should be punishment for his actions. Rama promised that Sugriva would get back the kingdom and his wife Tara.

This *vānara*, Sugriva, described the strength of his foe, Vali. There are entire stories extolling the strength of Vali. Narada is talking now. Narada traveled around and once went to Ravana's court. Without visa or passport, he was an inter-terrestrial traveler. Three *lokas* up and down he goes; he does not require a

plane or anything; he decides and goes. Ravana had come to great power. He had brought all kingdoms under him. Even gods were under his control. Ravana was not limited to human powers. He had earned all the supernatural powers. Ravana was a despot, self-conscious and proud. *Dharma* was not of concern to him. Narada, a saint, met Ravana at his court. Normally, when a saint came, even a great king would rise and wait before sitting again until his worthy guest had settled. This was the tradition. Ravana was on his throne when Narada came in, and the king asked the saint where he had been and what was up. He did not ask Narada to sit down. In fact he kicked a chair towards the saint. Narada thought, "My god, something has happened to this fellow. He is too much." He knew Ravana was a *rākṣasa*, but he never thought he would behave this way. He thought, "This fellow has to learn a few things."

Ravana pompously asked Narada, "What do the people think of me?"

Narada replied, "Oh, everybody is afraid of you. Even children stop crying once your name is mentioned. The three worlds are frightened of you. All talk about you and your strength. Your greatness is known all over." All ten heads nodded. Ravana had ten heads and twenty hands; he could stroke all his mustaches simultaneously. Ravana was very happy to hear Narada's report. But then Narada said, "Yet there is one monkey in Kishkinda who takes you lightly. When I talk of you to him, he says he does not fear such a small, ugly creature with all heads and hands. His name is Vali; he is just a monkey. But he is strong. Perhaps you should teach him a lesson."

Ravana swore, "Indeed I will teach him a lesson." Then Ravana climbed into the *puṣpaka*, his twin engine Cessna spaceship, and had Narada climb in next to him.

They landed in Kishkinda, right in front of Vali's house. Narada went to find out if Vali was there. Tara came out and said that Vali had gone to do *pūjā*. Vali would go everyday to the seashore, bathe, and shape a *śivaliṅga* out of the sand and do *pūjā* to it. Then he would come back. This was his daily routine. He would lift himself and leap across hundreds of miles. Tara suggested that if they wanted to see Vali they should go and meet him at the seashore. Narada came back and told what he had heard to Ravana.

Ravana said, "Let's go. I am ready." Again they took off. Landing near the seashore, Narada led Ravana to where Vali was sitting.

“Where is he?” asked Ravana.

“Right there,” said Narada. Ravana said he could not see a monkey or a person or anything. Narada pointed, “There, you see that hillock, that is Vali’s back. He is leaning forward in prostration to Lord Shiva.”

All Ravana’s ten heads shivered a little bit as the hill moved. Still, Ravana said, “I will go and fight with him.”

Ravana approached Vali and called to him, “Get up, monkey, and prepare to fight.” Vali, engaged in his *pūjā*, ignored the challenge. He was a great *bhaktā*, lost in his *pūjā*. Ravana continued to shout and he pulled Vali’s tail, which Vali did feel. In fact Vali thought it was a crab or some other beach creature that was pinching him. He did not even look behind to see what it was. Vali simply used his tail to thoroughly wrap up whatever sea creature might be there. Vali thought the twenty hands of the *rākṣasa* might be an octopus. He bound it with his tail and continued with his *pūjā*. After his *pūjā*, feeling hungry, having forgotten about the thing tied to him, he took off, moving from tree to tree. Ravana was dragged along through the forest screaming and being scratched and poked by thorns. Vali did not hear a thing; his mind was fixed on getting back to his hut for some food.

When he landed, his son, Angada, came out to greet him and, seeing the creature, asked, “Hey, Dad, what is this strange thing?”

Vali replied, “Oh, I remember, I was doing *pūjā* and some creature was doing something.” Then Vali untied the thing.

Ravana stood up before the truly massive monkey and said, “I have come to fight with you.”

“What?” said Vali. “You are going to fight with me? Get away from this place. Just go and eat for twenty-five years and maybe come back then. What can a puny thing like you do to me?” He was right.

Just then Narada appeared where Ravana had foolishly challenged Vali. Narada does not require a *puṣpaka*. The sage one asked, “Ravana, what happened, you are bleeding all over? You’d better leave.” Never mind, that is Vali. Please understand. Afterwards, Ravana did not like to be reminded of Vali; he was afraid. That was Vali’s strength.

*To be continued...*