

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from August 2021 newsletter.
(continuation of the dialogue between the robber and Sage Naradha:)

“What is improper action? I have never heard about that.” queries the robber.

Narada replies, “Improper action is that which catches you if not now, later. It is always credited to your account. You are the one who performs the wrong action, and every action produces a result. The result of good action is *punya*. Wrong actions produce *pāpa*. For all the wrong actions you have done, you have definitely piled up a big bundle of *pāpa*. I tell you. You are going to pay for it.”

Narada convinced the robber. Narada was a great fellow. He showed the robber that either in this life or in another he would have to pay for his wrong actions. He would not get away with it.

The robber pondered a bit and said, “I might have piled up this *pāpa*, but it isn't just me. There are three others at home who share in this. They have been getting what they need from this money. They have been living with bad *karma* too. They should share the bad *karma*. I alone should not incur this bad *karma*. I think I will end up with only one fourth of this *pāpa*.”

“You will not end up with a fourth, sir.” says Narada, “You will have the whole bundle. According to the law, they will not share it. Neither will they share this bad *karma* by their choice.”

“Oh, no, my parents are very loving, and my wife gives everything to me. They will definitely share.” says the robber.

“Okay,” says Narada, “I will be here. You take my bag. That way you can be sure I will stay here, and you go and talk to them. See what they say about sharing this bad *karma*.”

Innocent as he was, this robber fellow goes and asks his father, “Dad, you know that I have been bringing money to our home.”

“I know.”

“Well, I’ve met this old man on the road, a *sādhu*, and he says that I have been incurring bad *karma*.” says the robber.

“I told you that as well.” says his father.

The robber asks, “Okay, I’ve been incurring bad *karma*, won’t you share this bad *karma* with me?”

The father knew the laws of *karma*, and he believed in them. “Why should I share in it? I am an old man; you are supposed to take care of me. You should do that by earning an honest living. You should follow legitimate means. If you follow improper means to protect me and prolong my life, it is your responsibility and your bad *karma*. I have enough of a load myself. Why should I add to the bad *karma* I have already incurred? Each one carries his own bad *karma* and his own virtues.”

The robber went to his mother and asked her what she thought about this. She said, “Well, son, that is true. Of course I would like to share everything with you, but this one thing, you know... . If I could take on this bad *karma*, I would be too old to do anything to neutralize it. This is not the time to gather new bad *karma*. This is time to repeat the Lord’s name and wait for what is to come. You know the problems I have here at the tag end of my life. How can I carry more bad *karma*? Son, you have to change your ways. I will tell you how to neutralize these wrong actions that you have done. There are ways to do it.” She was very affectionate, but at the same time she did not take a bit of it.

The robber went to his wife and asked her, “What is your share? Will you go fifty-fifty with me? My parents say they are too old, but you are young enough. We can figure this out.”

His wife, like his parents, was very religious. She was religious enough to not accept it, to say nothing of being afraid. She said, “Why should I accept that - it is yours? I am your wife; whatever you bring home I do not question. How you produce them I do not question. Even if I did question, you would not listen to

me. You bring it home, and then I cook the food. I feed your parents and I feed you, and afterwards I take whatever is left over. That is what I do every day. I am a faithful wife, and I have not done any action which your parents would say is wrong. Neither can you say that I escaped from my duties at any time. This is my life. I am doing my job. How you earn your food, the means you adopt to support us is your concern. I have heard about what you do. Once or twice I have told you what I think. But you would not listen. Now I just keep quiet. Why should I share this bad *karma*? I cannot share this. I have my own bad *karma*. I want to make my own life.”

The robber was really beaten. He felt, “My God, I thought they were dear to me. But none of them will share this bad *karma*. Why should I work for them?” He became very dejected, even dispassionate, and he went back to Narada waiting on the road. Narada knew he would come back.

“Hey, what happened?”

The robber was sad and furious, “I asked these people, and what you said was correct. None of them will share. Now, please tell me, is there a way to get rid of this bad *karma*? I have gathered it, how can I get rid of it? What is the method to get rid of it?”

Narada told him to sit, and he gave him *upadeśa* of a *mantra*. He gave him this name *rāma* and asked him to repeat it. But he put it the other way. He told the robber to say *ma rā, ma rā*. It became *rāma, rāma* as it was repeated. It is called *tara-kamantra: marāmarāmarāmarāmarā*. He had him repeat this *tarakamantra*, a *mantra* which helps you cross - cross all the bad *karma*. He told him to go on repeating it.

“How long should I go on repeating it?”

“Don’t bother about that. Just go on repeating. You will find that some help will come to you. Everything will come to you.” said Narada.

The robber sat under a tree and began the repetition. He closed his eyes and forgot about everything. That is what the story says. He went on for days, without even eating. There were ants where he sat. In time, an ant hill grew up around

him, all around him. You could not even see him; all that was there was the anthill with the *mantra* from within.

Sage Narada came back and heard the sound - *marāmarāmarā*. There was no person there. An anthill is called *valmika*. Narada looked around and wondered aloud, "Where is this fellow?" He searched and discovered that the sound emanated from the holes in the anthill. He cleared away the soil of the anthill and found the fellow sitting there - *marāmarāmarāmarā*... . Narada woke him up and told him, "Everything is okay. You are blessed now." The fellow became a *sādhu*. He went and studied and became an informed person. He became known as Valmiki.

Then, after some time, Valmiki again happens to meet Narada. He asks him a question, and this is how the Ramayana begins.

To be continued...

"The vision of *Vēdānta* is not so much in presenting a cause-effect relationship between Brahman and the world (*jagat*) as it is in unfolding the *jagat* as non-separate from Brahman. This *sarvātma -bhāva*, a recognition of oneself as the whole, is the vision, *tātparya*, of *Vēdānta*."

"The word *ānanda* is meant to draw the attention of the seeker to oneself as the source of all *ānanda*. That means the seeker is limitlessness, fullness, which is experienced as happiness in a conducive state of mind. The recognition of this fact removes the error of seeing oneself as unhappy, ignorant and mortal."

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati