

LESSON 01

STOPPAGE OF KARMA PART 01 (SAMVAR)

Literally, Samvar means blocking. Samvar, in the theory of karma, means blockage or stoppage of the inflow of karmas to the soul. It is the opposite of asrav, which means the inflow of karmas. In the discussion of asrav, we gave the boating example which also explains how samvar works. Let us pretend as if we went boating. We were having a good time and suddenly noticed water rising on the floor of the boat. We immediately felt that the boat had a hole and if the leak was not fixed the boat would sink. So, the first thing we did was to find the hole and seal it so that new water would stop coming in. This stoppage of water coming in is called samvar. A similar situation is that of our soul which is wandering in worldly affairs. We have so many holes (activities) through which karmas are flowing in at all the times. We talked about these holes when discussing asrav: wrong beliefs, vowlessness, passions, indolence, and psychophysical activities. These activities allow karmas to become attached to the soul. Once we have realized the effects of such activities, we need to work towards overcoming them so that we can stop new karmas coming in before they further sink the soul.

Samvar can be described in two types:

- 1) Physical or Objective
- 2) Psychic or Subjective

The physical refers to the actual shutting of our activities which leads to stoppage of the inflow of karma particles. The psychic means consciously striving to stop our passions that way even though karmas may come to soul but would not get attached to it so new inflow would be halted or kept to minimal.

Samvar process is accumulative of many activities as described below:

- 1) Carefulness (Samiti)
- 2) Restraint (Gupti)
- 3) Ten Religious Practices (Yati-dharma)
- 4) Mental reflections (Bhavanas)
- 5) sufferings (Parishaha)
- 6) Conduct (Charitra)

These six types of Samvar will be effective and real only if they are carried out with a firm right faith (Samyaktva) in the teachings of the Jina. Therefore, Samyaktva is deeply and intimately connected with Samvar. Through Samyaktva, the asrav called wrong belief or mithyatva are completely blocked and stopped. By means of Samyak Charitra and yati-dharma, the asrav called vowlessness is blocked. By means of gupti, bhavanas, and yati-dharma the Asrav called Passions are blocked. By means of Samiti, Gupti, Parishaha, etc., physical, verbal and mental activities and Pramad are blocked. By means of Charitra, the Asrav called vowlessness, passions, and psychophysical activities can be blocked.

Carefulness (Samiti)

The carefulness could be observed in the simple terms by following the right objectives, spiritual awareness, the proper discipline, and spiritual vigilance and caution. There are five subtypes of samiti:

I. Irya Samiti (being careful in the movements):

This means when we walk or move around we will be cautious and careful, and look closely on the ground so that no jiva might be harmed or killed. A sadhu observes this more carefully and that is why he does not walk around unnecessarily. He walks on the path, which minimizes the violence to the least. Rather than walking on the grass a sadhu would take an alternate route in order to minimize the violence caused by him, even if the alternate route was longer. If there are insects on the way then they will walk around or remove them on the side by rajoharan or morpichhi. Sadhus do not wear shoes so that there is less injury to the organism on the ground. A householder should also keep this in mind and should be careful while walking.

II. Bhasha Samiti (being careful in the speech):

One should limit or completely avoid speaking anything which may provoke violence, flattery, condemnation, gossip, etc., or use words that may cause harm to others. One should not inflict pain by using words, which are filthy or abusive. One should also limit or put off uttering unpleasant and thoughtless ideas, which are contrary to the principles taught by the Jina. One should limit or completely avoid the speech that can provoke wrong belief. One's words or speech must be kind and gentle. If anyone has confessed to a sadhu about his wrong activities or sins, then the sadhu must not speak about this to others. This samiti also reminds us that one must not frighten anyone by speech or words, make a mockery of anyone, or preach a false doctrine. A householder should also observe this samiti within ones capacity and situation.

III. Eshana Samiti (being careful about taking food):

Caution must be taken in all matters related to the food. Sadhus should go for alms to various houses and should take a small portion of allowable food from each place so that the layman, from whom the food is taken, does not have to cook again. Also sadhus should not take any raw vegetables, raw seeds or any food that has been in contact with any living beings, including those taken from a burning stove, oven, or even a refrigerator. A sadhu should not go for alms if it is raining and should not accept any food brought to him. There are forty-two faults which sadhus must avoid while accepting alms. A layman should also refrain from committing a sin in the offering of food to sadhus. A sadhu, sadhvi or householder should not take any food or substance, which could lead to intoxication or is forbidden.

IV. Adan Nikshepna Samiti (being careful about handling of cloths and other things):

A sadhu should take the utmost care, before using clothes, to make sure that there are no insects in the folds which may be crushed, hurt, or killed. Same way the care must be taken before taking and putting away vessels, books, or sitting down, etc. Even householder should take similar precautions.

V. Parishtapanika Samiti (being careful about disposal of excreta):

A sadhu or sadhvi should be very careful about how and where one disposes of trash, refuse, or excretions so that no harm is done to even the minute insects or bugs. A sadhu or sadhvi must never keep food not for overnight use but even later on use for the same day. Same way a sadhu or sadhvi must never keep water for overnight use. Therefore they must dispose off these items with utmost care. Same way even householders should take precautions in these matters.