

## LESSON 16

## THREE WISHES OF HOUSEHOLDER

We all have wishes in our life. They are either for wealth, happiness, making friends and what not. These help us in worldly affairs but then there should be wishes to improve our spiritual life in this life and lives to come. There are three such wishes that we should consider in our life. They are: 1) to be Non-Possessive (Aparigraha), 2) to renounce the world (take Diksha and be sadhu/sadhvi, and 3) to have spiritual death (Sallekhana).

Let us learn a little bit of these three aims and see why they are important in our life and how we can reach them.

- 1. To Be Non-Possessive (Aparigraha):** As we grow we build ambitions and expectation to what we want to have or to be and how we want to live. We gear our training in this line. We spend most of our time to see that we achieve these goals. But what happens as we start earning and achieving those goals? We end up wanting to have more and more of both. For that we work even harder, do overtime and not realize that after all everything is going to stay here and not only that but we will always be the slaves of our desires. How can we overcome this process? Jainism teaches us that first thing we must do is take a realistic approach to what our needs are for now and also for future life. As we get closure to achieve those goals we should not get swayed by our success or desires and change them for more. That means we must control our desires and feel satisfied and be content with what we have. While we are earning, we should simultaneously learn to give and that will help us to loosen the grip of possessiveness. This way we will have a possessions but not so much attachment for it. Once we feel satisfied with what we have, it will help us to lessen our desires and possessions may not mean anything to us. This will also help us to see other side of life and that is spiritual life. We must realize that we are fortunate enough to be born as human being and have all the comfort we need in our life. We should also feel fortunate that we got the teachings of Jina. So we should spare some of our time toward spiritual uplift of our soul. Possessiveness is nothing but result of greed and once we control our greed automatically we can control our desires like deceit, anger and ego. As we control our desires or passions we will not accumulate as many new karma and we will have more time to get rid of whatever karmas we might have. So it becomes win win situation for us.
- 2. To renounce the worldly life (taking Diksha living ascetic life):** We are so busy doing our daily duty that we do not have a time to think of anything else. Everything else becomes less important. But, we must realize that materialistic pursuit should not be the only goal and we must take advantage of being born as human being, and being born as Jain because spiritual uplift happens much faster in human life. Therefore, our outlook should be to limit our desires and possessions and whatever free time we get we should read or listen to the teachings of Jina through the sermons of sadhus or sadhvis or scholars or religious books. This will help to improve our faith and knowledge about spirituality will trigger our desire to renounce these worldly ties completely at some point of time. We would, now, accept that by being sadhu we would accumulate whole lot less karmas and have more time to get rid of

whatever karmas we have and spiritual uplift of soul will be much faster. It is not easy for everybody to renounce but if we have that burning desire that I wish one of these days I can renounce this worldly ties then it would happen sometime if not in this life then may be in future lives.

3. **Spiritual death (Sallekhana):** We see people are born and gone from this world all the time. There is no end of it. We also have been born as human, animals, birds, fish, bug or even a plant, etc innumerable times. When spiritual awareness comes we start thinking how can we avoid being born again. There are various things we can do for these and two of them are mentioned above. Being in worldly life it may be very hard to accommodate all our wishes sometimes but as we grow older and can predict that death is coming closure we can make our death benefit us. Are you surprised that how can a death be beneficiary? Well, it is like this that even though we have spent whole life running after worldly goods, but when we know that our death is coming closure and there is nothing gainful we can do with our body but if have listened to the teachings of Jina then we will realize there is something like Sallekhana we can do. Sallekhana means accepting death in spiritual ways. Once we accept the thought of Sallekhana we will dissociate ourselves from worldly affairs and responsibilities and control our desires, be calm and in peace with ourselves and others, let go our attachment or hatred towards our family members, friends and every creature and even toward our body. This is what Sallekhana is about and it is not to escape life from depression, uneasy family, social and business situations. We also ask for forgiveness from everybody and we offer our forgiveness to others who might have caused pain and suffering to us. We may take some vows as per our capacity and slowly give up food and water. We listen to religious sermons or read religious books or carry out other religious activities like samayik. Sallekhana can last a few days to a few weeks depending on our health. During any of this time if we are not in peace or if we develop hate or rage, etc., then we have to let go Sallekhana. On the other side, if we are calm, and in peace and have no hatred towards anybody it helps us to reduce our karmas and our birth in next life could be better and spiritual process started like this will get better. In short it helps our soul to progress spiritually.

So these way even though every householder (shrawaka) may not be able to take any of twelve minor vows but if he/she can do this much then that will also go long way and that is why we should at least think of these three aims to improve this life and lives to come.