

LESSON 20

PRATIKRAMAN

Pratikraman means turning back to the Self. Question arises what are we turning back from? Though it is very simple we all forget that whatever we are doing almost every moment does not represent the true nature of our soul. How many times we might have done things which are not right in the sense that; we might have hurt someone, or might have said a lie. or might have picked up something small or big which does not belong to us, or we might have let our desires or passions turn loose, or we might be getting something which we might not need or might have got something which we might not have been needed, etc. While doing any of these we are going away from the true nature of our soul because true soul does not hurt, lie, steal, be controlled by passions or be possessive. So Jina taught us that before you go too far away in wilderness try to look back into your actions on daily basis so you can correct them soon enough before they become your habits. This coming back is what Pratikraman is about.

Therefore, Jina suggested performing Pratikraman, in which we repent for undesirable things we might have done. Since it would be very hard to remember everything we might have our activities are grouped in various categories in Pratikraman. This way Pratikraman reminds us to stay alert everyday and hopefully we will develop better habits where our impure activities will get less and less and our souls will get purer and purer everyday. Let us now discuss how often we must perform Pratikraman. Ideally, Pratikraman needs to be done as soon as we have hurt or harmed someone or we did something which should not have been done. Sooner we repent for our actions; minimal would be the bondage of the Karma. However, sometime we may not be vigilant enough to be aware of what we have done. Therefore, we must perform Pratikraman right around sunset and right before sunrise. Pratikraman done in the evening is called Evening (Dervish) Pratikraman in which we think on the actions happened during daytime. Pratikraman done in the morning is known as (Rai or Raishi) Pratikraman during this we think on the actions might have happened during the nighttime. The intention in laying down two Pratikramans a day is that a person can easily recollect the actions. For many people, who have can not perform daily pratikraman that every day should do Pratikraman at least once every fortnight. This is known as Fortnightly (Pakshik) Pratikraman. If Pratikraman is not done every two weeks then it should be done at least every four months, known as four monthly (Choumasi) Pratikraman. But if that has not been possible then we must do Pratikraman at least one every year. This Yearly Pratikraman is called Samvatsari Pratikraman and it is considered a must for every Jain including those who might be performing Pratikramans regularly.

There is a special significance for above mentioned “must”. If we perform Pratikraman at least once a year then bad Karmas can fall because bondage is still loose. But if we do not do Pratikraman within one year then those bondages get very tight and strong and might not be removed by repentance or atonement later on. That means we might end up

suffering from our deeds, which could have been avoided. Thus Samvatsari Pratikraman helps us in washing off the effect from our harmful actions done during a whole year.

In short Pratikraman reminds us every time that we should not engage into sinful activities and help us avoiding bad karmas.