

## LESSON 02          JAINISM, THE COMPASSIONATE RELIGION

How do you feel when someone hurts you?

Do you like it? Of course, you don't.

Now, think about how others would feel if we hurt them.

Would they feel good? No, like us they too would feel bad.

Tirthankara Mahavira said, "You should not say or do anything to others that you would not like others do to you. Everybody in this world wants to be happy. No one likes to be hurt."

The message of Tirthankara Mahavira is that we should love and take care of everybody and should not hurt anybody. We should try to help others and make them happier. The understanding of the pain and unhappiness that other's experience and desiring to do something for them is called compassion. So to practice Ahimsa (non-violence) in our life is nothing but first step towards being compassionate. In Jainism we carry compassion not only to human beings but also to all living beings including small insects, bugs and even plants. Compassion is one of the main pillars of the Jain Religion, and that is why Jainism is sometimes called a compassionate religion.

Ahimsa is one of the most important teachings and beliefs of Jainism. Tirthankara Mahavira adopted the supreme compassion in his life. Many tortured him but he never showed anger or hatred towards them. He forgave them. He felt compassionate towards them for their ignorance. His compassion reached its height during his encounter with the poisonous snake, Chandkaushik. Even when snake bit him he awakened him. He showed him a path of spiritual uplift.

Jainism is based on compassion to all the living beings. Jainism emphasizes observance of verbal and mental compassion also. This means we must be kind in our speech as well as our thoughts. We should be compassionate and friendly towards all and should have no enmity for any one.

How are we going to put this principle of compassion in practice in our life? Many a times we get hurt or angered by others. Most of time, we feel like getting even with them by taking some kind of revenge. But now knowing about compassion as shown and practiced by Mahavira Bhagwan we would be more tolerant towards those people and will forgive them. We will not get angry towards them and even if we did by mistake then the thought of compassion will melt that anger down. The thought of compassion will make us kinder and tolerant and outlook of life will change.

Questions:

- 1) Do you like suffering?

- 2) What do you understand by suffering?
  - 3) What did Tirthankara Mahavira teach us?
  - 4) What is one of the main pillars of Jainism?
  - 5) What did Tirthankara Mahavira do when Chandkaushika bit him?
- What resolution about compassion should we make today?