

## LESSON 03

## CONCEPT OF HINSA

Hinsa means injury or inflicting pain to any living beings. Ahinsa means no injury or inflicting no pain to any living beings. Since Ahinsa is the most important principle of Jainism we need to understand what hinsa is and how we can avoid it and practice Ahinsa in a better way. The vow of Ahinsa has been given first and very important position in Jainism. Therefore, it is be very important that we understand the concept of Hinsa as described by Jainism.

### **Hinsa:**

In Jainism hinsa is divided into two groups:

- 1) Sthool Hinsa and
- 2) Suksham Hinsa.

The Sthool hinsa involves the injury to or taking life away of the higher forms of life starting from two-sensed to five-sensed living beings. The Suksham hinsa means injury to or taking of life away of one-sensed living beings. The sadhus and sādhis are supposed to observe Sthool and Suksham hinsa to full extent. For householders it is easier to observe Sthool hinsa but very hard to observe Suksham hinsa to the fullest extent because of family and social and other responsibilities. This does not mean that householders are allowed to carry out Suksham hinsa but they need to be careful to keep it to the minimal for good of their own soul because that way there will be minimal load of karmas to the soul.

Hinsa we discussed so far are obvious by our physical and verbal means and it is called dravya hinsa. Then there is bhav hinsa. In this many a time physical or verbal actions may or may not be there but our mental thoughts or inclination are to carry out the physical or verbal activities. Mental thought are in the form of our passions like anger, ego, deceit or greed. So such thoughts are called bhav hinsa. The dravya hinsa is sometime called bahya or external hinsa because it can be seen while bhav hinsa is called antargata or internal hinsa because others can not see it.

### **Classification of Hinsa:**

Acharya Amitagati in this book "Sravakachara" has divided hinsa into the following two groups.

- 1) Occupational Injury (Arambhaja or Arambhi Hinsa)
- 2) Non-occupational or Intentional Injury (Anarambhaja or Anarambhi or Samkalpi Hinsa)

- 1) **Occupational injury** is the one, which happens while carrying out our job or business. For the householders who have families and social obligations it will be difficult to stop occupational hinsa but he/she can be careful in selecting occupation. He should select a job or business where there will be a minimal hinsa or once it is realized that he has earned enough to meet his/her obligations he/she should retire from occupation to avoid then unnecessary hinsa. The Occupational Injury (Arambhi Hinsa) is further divided into the three types:

- A. Industrial injury (Udyami Hinsa)
- B. Domestic injury (Grharambhi Hinsa)
- C. Defensive injury (Virodhi Hinsa)

**A. Industrial injury:**

Industrial injury is unavoidably committed in the exercise of one's job or business. Some of the common jobs or businesses are related to:

- I. Asi - the job of a soldier,
- II. Masi - the job of a writer,
- III. Krshi - the job of an agriculturist,
- IV. Vanijya - the job of a trader,
- V. Silpa - the job of an artisan, and
- VI. Vidya - the job of an intellectual.

**B. Domestic injury**

Domestic injury is invariably committed in the carrying out the domestic acts, such as preparation of food, and keeping the house, body, clothes and other things clean, plus construction of buildings, wells, gardens, and other structures, and keeping cattle at home, etc.

**C. Defensive injury**

Defensive injury is committed in self-defense or the defense of family members, or the defense of the property, against thieves, robbers, dacoits, assailants and enemies, and meeting the aggression. Here householders are again advised that one must cause minimal injury while carrying out these kinds of defensive injury and keep the passions to the minimum. Do not brag or feel proud of your action otherwise damage to the soul will be much higher.

- 2) **Non-occupational injury** is one, which is not necessary for our livelihood. The householder usually out of his passions and carelessness carries out this injury. Activities like hunting, offering animal sacrifices, killing for food, amusement or decoration or animal confinements, etc., fall into this category and must be avoided even by the householders. This kind of injury can be easily avoided if we are serious about stopping it.

To recapture sadhus and sādhis who have renounced all household connection and has adopted the discipline of a spiritual uplift should avoid both occupational injury and intentional injury hinsa.

While householders who is still fulfilling his family and social and community obligations should abstain from intentional injury and should try his best to keep the other three kind of occupational injury to the minimal since he can completely abstain from them.

**Practicability OF Alms**

Since Jainism has prescribed the doctrine of Ahimsa as its cardinal principle, the entire Jaina ethical codes have been laid down with a view to integrate this principle into actual

practice. As a result maximum importance has been attached to the observance of Ahimsa as a basis of right conduct leading to the attainment of salvation. Further, taking into account the comprehensive nature of the doctrine of Ahimsa and the necessity of carefulness required in putting this doctrine into practice, the Jaina scriptures have specifically prescribed the rules of conduct to the minutest details to make it as faultless as possible. But realizing extremely wide theoretical dimensions of these rules of conduct and the minute implications involved, a question is sometimes raised about the practicability of the vow of Ahimsa. It is feared that it would be difficult to put the vow of Ahimsa into practice. But from a close examination of the rules laid down by Jaina scriptures for the actual observance of the vow of Ahimsa it can be seen that the fear is quite unfounded.

**Categorization of Vow of Ahimsa:**

It is true that the rules of conduct laid down by Jainism for the attainment of salvation the highest goal in life, are the same for all people. But at the same time it is a fact that these rules have been divided into two categories, viz., 'Sakala Charitra', i.e., full conduct, and 'Vikala Charitra', i. e., partial conduct, and that while the first category is meant for the observance by the ascetics, the second category is allowed for the observance by the householders or the common people. It means that 'Vikala Charitra' is a prelude to 'Sakala Charitra'. In other words, 'Vikala Charitra' involves 'Ekadesa-virati', i.e., partial renunciation, and 'Sakala Charitra', involves 'Samasta-virati', i.e., total or absolute renunciation. Hence in the sacred text 'Purusharthasiddhi-upaya' it is recommended that those who are not prepared to adopt the order of ascetics should follow for the time being the stage of 'Ekadesa-virati', i.e., partial renunciation.

It is, therefore, quite evident that even though the rules of the conduct are the same for all people, they are to be followed stage by stage. Accordingly all vows, including the vow of Ahimsa, have been divided into two categories, viz., 'Anu Vratas', i.e. small vows, and 'Maha Vratas', great vows. The householders have to practice the former and ascetics the later. Moderation is the key-note of householder's life and severity in saintly discipline.

**Observance of Ahimsa according to capacity**

Further, it is not enjoined upon a person to observe thoroughly all rules of conduct pertaining to a particular stage in life. It has been specifically mentioned in the sacred text of 'Purusharthasiddhi-upaya' that:

"The three-fold path of liberation, consisting of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct, is to be constantly followed by a person according to his capacity." It is clear that the emphasis has been laid on the term "Yathasakti", i.e., according to one's own capacity.