

LESSON 19

ABC OF THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

While learning civic science we have heard a sentence which read “Man is a social animal”. Man (and women) proves this sentence by staying involved into the social and the worldly affairs whether they are of his direct concern or not. His ambitions and desires run as high as the sky. He spends more time in worldly enjoyments and a very little in spiritual activities. His decisions and actions are motivated by materialistic and scientific achievement rather than religious beliefs. He believes materialistic science as everything and overlooks spiritual science. There is nothing wrong in giving a science such a priority, but man forgets that science itself is expanding and has its own limitation. It can't explain every phenomenon happening around us and therefore we should not get stuck that if science can't explain, I don't believe in it.

We should respect spiritual science which developed far before present science did. There were Jina, Arihants, or Tirthankars who explained or answered if there were any doubts or unexplained phenomenon. Therefore men during that time accepted their words and put faith in them. It would be nice if they were around us but at least their teaching is with us in the form of scriptures. We should have faith in them and where we have doubts or questions we should seek answers from learned monks, nuns or scholars but should not be looking for answers only on scientific base. If science agrees in that line then it should be consolatory to us but we should not reject scriptural teaching just because it can not be explained in present time. This way, we would not be fighting every circumstance and we would be able to carry on our life with ease of mind. We should strive of ultimate happiness rather than transient or superficial one. The permanent happiness comes through spiritual progress only.

Let us consider the ABC of the spiritual progress. Lord Mahavira and other Tirthankars have shown the effectiveness of the ABC of the spiritual progress by putting it into the practice in their own life. Even then we have been ignoring it. The prominent Monk, Umasvati, around 4th or 5th century, reminded us again by putting this ABC in the very first verse of his Tattvarth Sutra. It reads:
"Samyagdarshanjancharitrani Mokshmarginah".

This means ABC are: A) Samyag Darshan (Right faith), B) Samyag Jnan (Right knowledge), and C) Samyag Charitra (Right practice) are required in togetherness to achieve the spiritual progress which would lead us to ultimate liberation (Moksha or Nirvana). Let us learn more about them so that our vision and actions can get better for our drive for spiritual path.

Samyag Darshan (Right faith)

Samyag Darshan (Right faith) means having faith in nine fundamentals (Tattvas) as explained by the Jina or Tirthankar. These Tattvas are 1) Jiva (Living being - Soul), 2) Ajiva (Non-Living things), 3) Punya (good deeds), 4) Pap (Bad deeds), 5) Asrav (Inflow of Karmas), 6) Bandh (Bondage of Karmas), 7) Samvar (Stoppage of Karmas), 8) Nirjara (Eradication of karmas), and 9) Moksha (Liberation or Nirvana). Some scripture describe 7 Tattvas in that case punya and pap are the part of Asrav. The soul is the living being

while our body itself is non-living thing. But because of the presence of the soul and its activities we mistakenly recognize body as living being. Therefore this should be clear to us as well as we shall have a faith in this fact that the soul and body are separate entity and this becomes the starting point of our spiritual journey. Knowing this, we shall do what is good for the soul rather than body and this in short is the Samyag Darshan and the nucleus of the beginning of the process of spiritual progress.

To fix the faith and changing the gears of life is not as easy so far we are under the influence of the . Mithyatva (wrong faith producing) Mohaniya karma and Anantanubandhi kashayas [very severe passions (like anger, ego, deceit, and greed) producing] karma. The mithyatva Mohaniya karma and anantanubandhi Mohaniya karmas are buddies. Mithyatva Mohaniya karma would attract you to enjoy the worldly life and push you to do the things for the comfort of your physical body while Anantanubandhi kashayas would give helping hand by developing an attachment towards the body and materialistic things. Our passions, anger, ego, deceit and greed play various roles in our life to keep us involved enjoying worldly life. This way time passes by and before we realize the truth our eyes may close or we may get crippled before we can do anything good for our soul. Therefore it is very critical that at some point we decide to pacify our passions and we take a stand that this is enough and now I would do something good for my soul. This kind of stand only will overcome Mithyatva Mohaniya karma and put the soul in the driving seat. Therefore right faith (Samyag darshan) comes first in the progress of spiritual pursuit.

Some people are fortunate enough from the imprints of previous good karmas and may automatically develop Samyag darshan from self intuition. While others may be motivated by the right preceptors and spiritual readings, etc.

Process of acquiring samyaktva

The soul had been wandering through various types of lives and experiencing various kinds of miseries as well as happiness from the beginning due to the effects of eight karmas. The influence of these eight karmas is so high that the soul can not exhibit its true nature. Therefore, instead of realizing and living in truth it may live in false believes. Now just as rugged stone when rocks down the stream and shapes itself into a nice round stone, the soul who is tinted with wrong believes comes across worthy activities like compassion, charity, and forgiveness and turns to be a good soul. This happens when the time period of all the karmas except Ayushya karma is reduced to less than a one kodakodi sagropam and at that time it will be closure to break the knot of severe attachment and severe hatred (Anantanubandhi Kashaya) which is suffocating it. This process is called Yathapravrutikaran (natural worthy activity). Many souls get to this point to break the knot of severe attachment and severe hatred, not one time but many times, but most of them fail to break this knot and fall back to the level they were before. Some souls just give up further efforts and hang around at this level and do not advance either. But, there are a few souls, who would develop indifferent feeling towards happiness and suffering, and would put all their efforts in unprecedented manner with still worthier activities and breaks the knot of severe attachment and severe hatred. This process lasts less than 48 minutes (antarmuhurt). This process of breaking the knot is

called Apurvakaran (unprecedented activity). Unless this is done the soul can not advance in spiritual uplift. Once the soul has broken this knot of severe attachment and severe hatred by unprecedented worthier activities, its activities becomes more and more pure which is called Anivrutikaran (quieting activities) which leads to samyaktva. With the help of these excessively purer activities, called Antarkaran, the soul removes the remaining mithyatva Mohniya karma.

During the first part of Antarkaran activities, the soul still enjoys the effect of mithyatva Mohniya karma but there after there is suppression of mithyatva Mohniya karma in the last half. Since mithyatva Mohniya karma is suppressed, the soul acquires Upasham samyaktva. After this just when the minimum time of one samay or maximum time of six avlikas is left before Antarkaran time is getting over while experiencing of aupsham samyaktva, if the suppressed anantanubandhi kashayas surface then they will drag the soul back to mithyatva. But, fortunately for some souls, anantanubandhi kashayas do not surface and they get a chance to clean up more Mohniya karma by purer activities, while others clean up Mohniya karma only half way down, or don't clean any mithyatva karmas. This process is called tripunjikaran (cleaning in three ways). So depending upon which one of the above three actions, the soul would progress towards 1) kshyopshmic samyaktva due to maturation of samyaktva Mohniya karma and lead the soul to the fourth gunasthanak, 2) Mishra samyaktva due to maturity of Mishra Mohniya karma and lead the soul to the third gunasthanak, or back to 3) Mithyatva stage due to maturity of mithyatva Mohniya karma and stay back in the first gunasthanak respectively.

There are five types of samyaktva.

- 1) Aupshamik (Suppressive): This is due to suppression of passions (kashayas).
- 2) Kshayik (Destructive): This is due to destruction of passions.
- 3) Kshayopshamik (Suppressive and Destructive mix): This is due to partial suppressive and partial destruction of passions.
- 4) Vedak (Destruction of Aupshamik samyaktva to Kshayik samyaktva). This is due to destruction of suppressed Samyag mithyatva and happens in 8, 9 and 10 Gunasthanaks.
- 5) Sasvadan (Falling of from Aupshamik or Kshayopshamik samyaktva and before reaching to mithyatva level. This is due to loss of samyaktva in second Gunasthanak.

When someone has developed the Samyag darshan, he/she is said to be in a samyaktva (righteousness). The samyaktva has following five qualities:

- 1) Sham (pacification),
- 2) Samveg (desire for Moksha),
- 3) Nirved (disliking towards worldly activities),
- 4) Anukampa (selfless compassion), and
- 5) Astikya (having total faith in the words of the Jina).

Samyak Jnan (Right Knowledge)

Samyakjnan means right knowledge about above mentioned nine fundamentals as described by the Jina or Tirthankars. This samyakjnan help us to maintain the basic

precept that the soul and body are the separate entities and it also molds our life in such a way that our activities lead us to the ultimate goal of liberation.

Knowledge (Jnan) is derived either by senses and mind together or directly by the soul. In Jain philosophy the knowledge derived straight by the soul is considered the direct knowledge (Pratyaksha) while that through the senses and mind is called indirect (Paroksha) knowledge. The knowledge is divided into five types. They are:

1) Mati Jnan

Mati jnan is obtained by the help of senses and mind.

2) Shrut Jnan

Shrut Jnan is obtained by listening to the scriptures.

3) Avadhi Jnan

The soul by its own inherent power to know without the help of senses or mind can see the objects to some distance. This is known as Avadhi-Jnan.

4) Manahparyay Jnan

The soul by its own inherent power to know without the help of senses or mind can read the mental thoughts of others. This is known as Manahparyay-Jnan.

5) Keval Jnan (Total Knowledge)

The soul by its own inherent power to know everything without the help of senses or mind knows what is going on throughout the whole universe at all the time (present, past and future). It know about everything that exists now, existed in past and would exist in the future. This is known as Keval-Jnan.

Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct)

Samyakcharitra means right conduct which is built on the basis of right faith and right knowledge. If we did not know what is right and wrong then it would be difficult to practice what is good for our soul and in turn to stop new karmas coming in (samvar) and getting rid of accumulated karmas (nirjara). In short if these are done in the right way then our target of salvation would be easily within our reach. The right conduct is the combination of many behaviors starting from controlling our desires to performing activities in right perspective of Ahimsa. They have been described in different manners. In short they would involve observing; 1) five samitis (carefulness), 2) three guptis (restrain), 3) sadhudharma, 4) Mahavrats (five major vows of monks and nuns) and Anuvrats (twelve minor vows of house-holders), and 5) other austerities, etc.

We should not forget that knowing about samyaktarshan, samyaktjan, and samyakcharitra itself is not going to take us anywhere because that would become of academic knowledge only but we would have to put them in real practice to their full capacities. It should also be remembered that we would have to follow all three, samyaktarshan, samyaktjan and samyakcharitra, at the same time because if we follow one or two of them then that will also not take us too far on spiritual pursuit.

In conclusion, we must observe A) samyaktarshan, B) samyaktjan and C) samyakcharitra in togetherness then liberation, Moksha or nirvana is definite.