

LESSON 05

INTRODUCTION TO SAMAYSAR

Shri Samaysar text was written by Acharya Shri Kundkunda Swami around 100 A.D. This text mainly explains the Jain philosophical doctrine of soul. It explains all the nine realms in an absolute point of view. It insists that the soul's bondages are not due to karma but to its own weaknesses in effort making (parushartha) to stay in its true nature (sambhav). Liberation of soul will occur once it makes its own efforts. The scriptures and the enlightened preceptors are only to guide (nimit) to the soul in the right direction. Shri Kundkunda Swami said that for time immortal the soul has forgotten its true nature. Acharya Shri exposed this fact and shown the real path of salvation by understanding the philosophy of soul. He showed uniqueness of soul from other substances and their modes. Importance of right faith is stressed in greater detail. The text maintains that the right faith is the first step towards salvation. The vows, penances, worship, prayer, etc. of the right conduct follows the right faith. It stresses that one must forgo wrong belief first to start religious progress. From an absolute point of view, the soul is pure, but only from the practical point of view, karma are attached to the soul by principal cause-auxiliary cause relationship. The main attribute of the soul is knowledge, which can be experienced by any living being, and that is given great importance in this book.

About 1100 years back, in the 10th century, Shri Amarut Chandra Acharya Dev wrote critics on Samaysar. It is called Atmakhyati. Shri Jaysen Acharya also wrote critiques in Sanskrit language. In this century, Shri Kanji Swami gave detailed analysis on Samaysar in a lecture series in Gujarati. Nowadays Samaysar is translated into many languages including Sanskrit, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannad, English, etc.

This book has 415 aphorisms and it is divided into 9 chapters. They are as follows:

1. Living and non-living
2. Agent and his action
3. Good deeds and bad deeds
4. Inflow of karma
5. Stoppage of karma
6. Shedding of karma
7. Bondage
8. Liberation
9. Total and pure knowledge

If one can understand this text, which is mainly written from an absolute point of view, then his understanding of soul's true nature widens. He will thereafter believe that ultimately the good deeds and bad deeds both are to be given up to obtain right faith and ultimately the salvation. The ultimate goal is the purification of the soul and to remain in its own pure form. To achieve this goal, one has to use these instruments such as penances, vows, prayers, etc, which are not to be considered as total fulfillment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF SAMAYASAR

ACHARYA SHRI KUNDKUND SWAMI

Acharya Shri Kundkunda Swami is an unquestioned authority of Jain dogmatic. His position is unique, as he is said to be the first person to put Jain scriptures in writing, marking the transition from Shrut Kevali tradition to the tradition of the transfer of Tirthankara's vani or preaching through memory from generation to generation.

According to the inscriptions on stones found in southern India, Acharya Kundkunda Swami was in born in a small village in South India called Kurumari in district of Guntoor in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Exact details of his life are not certain; most inscriptions describe him in either the first century B.C. or the first century A.D.

By the Indian calendar he was born on Magh shukla 5th, 108 B.C. His father was Karmaunda and his mother was Shrimati. He renounced the word and the age of 11 under Acharya Shri Jinachandra. After 33 years of extensive meditation and penance, at the age of 44 he was bestowed the honor of Acharya. He lived to be the age of 95 years.

He wrote in the Magadhi and Prakrit languages, which were popular at his time. His most known scriptures are:

- 1) SAMAYSAR - The details of Samaysar are described above.
- 2) ASTA PAHUD - (Eight Presentations) Eight different topics are described in this collection. The word pahud means to bestow. He bestowed us a path to understand the soul and its liberation to Moksha.
- 3) NIYAMSAR-- Niyamsar describes the twelve Bhavanas – the twelve themes of contemplation.
- 4) PANCHASTIKAYA-- Describes five out of the six universal substances.
- 5) PRAVACHANSAR-- Describes the basic nine fundamentals. Pravachansar is used in many universities for studies of philosophy.

Acharya Shri Kundkunda Swami is said to have written total of 43 pahuds. Most of his well-known scriptures are translated into many Indian languages.

One-story that is most famous about him is that from deep meditation at the top of Nilgiri mountain he developed significant powers (riddhi and siddhi), and was able to walk in the air. He also developed a very strong desire to learn from Simandhar Swami who is a Kevali in Maha Videha Kshetra (a place of human existence away from earth). With special power he reached there to acquire knowledge.

Acharya Shri Kundkunda swami's contribution of written Jain scriptures stopped the further loss of the Tirthankara's vani, and was start of a great tradition.