

## LESSON 09

## INFLOW OF KARMA PART 01 (ASRAV)

Asrav means inflow and according to Jain philosophy defined as the inflow of karmas to the soul. The influx of karmas occurs at every second in life. It is this process that keeps our souls wandering in this universe and prevents it from being free. Let us say that you went boating and were having a good time. Suddenly, you noticed water spurting from the floor of the boat. What would go through your mind? What would you do? The first thing that would go through your mind is that there is a hole; let me fix it before the boat sinks. You may be lucky if it was just one hole, but there could be more than one. In the same way, we know that karmas are accumulating to our souls through one or more of our activities and unless we stop them they are going to choke our souls.

Asrav can be described as two types.

Physical or Objective

Psychic or Subjective

The physical type refers to actual activities which lead to the inflow of karmas. The psychic refers to mental engrossment in such activities.

There are forty-two ways through which the soul is exposed to the inflow of karmas. Of the forty-two, five are senses, four are passions, five are avratas, three are yogas, and twenty-five are activities. The first seventeen of these are regarded as the major ones, while the other rest twenty-five are the minor asrava.

These asrav can also be named in eighteen different forms (sins), such as; violence, falsehood, stealing, sexual activity, possessiveness, anger, ego, deceit, greed, attachment, hatred, quarrelsomeness, false accusations, divulging someone's secrets, backbiting, taking delight in committing sins, being unhappy with religious acts, lying maliciously, trusting false belief, religious teachers, and religions.

In Jainism, karmas enter due to following five reasons:

- 1) Wrong Belief (Mithyatva)
- 2) Vowlessness (Avirati)
- 3) Passions (Kashayas)
- 4) Negligence (Pramad)
- 5) Psychophysical activities (Yoga)

Mithyatva (False Belief):

Mithyatva means wrong attitude, wrong taste, wrong activities, and lack of faith in the nine fundamentals (tattvas) explained by the Jinas. Mithyatva also means not having interest and faith in the path of Moksha shown by the Jina, but having interest and faith in a so called path of Moksha expounded by ignorant and unenlightened people. In other words, instead of having faith in the Arihantas, great spiritual heads, and a great dharma, those with mithyatva believe in short cuts shown by people or religions without true deep knowledge of fundamentals.

The false preceptor is one who does not act according to the great vows such as non-violence (Ahimsa), Truth (Satya), Non-stealing (Asteya), Celibacy (Brahmacharya), and Non-possessiveness (Aparigraha). He keeps wealth and woman, and approves of such actions. He does not abide by the code of conduct of monks. Such a person is a false spiritual head.

The false religion, is that which is devoid of samyaktarshan (the right faith), samyaktjan (the right knowledge), and samyakcharitra (the right character). A false religion does not explain the true nature of jiva and ajiva. A false religion deems it right to enjoy sensual pleasures, to have passions, and to commit sins.

Having faith in such a false spiritual head and dharma; having partiality for them and interest in them constitute false belief or mithyatva.

The five kinds of mithyatva:

The Anabhogik Mithyatva (Total ignorance):

This is a state of ignorance in which one cannot distinguish between good and bad, or true and false doctrines. This state is also present in all the jivas that do not have a mind. Such jivas range from the Ekendriya up to the Asamjni Panchendriya (do not possess a mind).

The Abhigrahik Mithyatva (Fanatic false faith):

This refers to those having a fanatic faith and interest in a false dharma (religion). In such a state one believes that their dharma is the only right one, even though its propagator may have derogation like attachments, hatred, and violence, etc.

The Anabhigrahik Mithyatva (Accepting other faiths without comparing their qualities):

In this state people are simple; they are not extremists. People in this state believe that all religions are equal even though other religions may not be observing principles like Ahimsa and truthfulness. They do not completely accept celibacy, non-possessiveness, or anything which is not offered, etc. How can we consider them equal when they do not follow these principles to the full extent?

The Abhiniveshik Mithyatva (Insistence in false faith):

In this state one knows that his or her religion is not right, but continues to live in accord with that faith.

The Samshayik Mithyatva (Skepticism):

State in which there is doubt or skepticism about the dharma expounded by the Jina.

False belief is the greatest enemy of the soul. Because of mithyatva, one can not have faith in the fundamentals (tattvas), the path of Moksha, Tirthankars, Arihants, spiritual heads and dharma. One will have a strong interest in the sinful activities like violence and sensual pleasures. As a result of this, man moves farther away from a noble dharma. All the devotion and austerities carried out through various previous lives become wasted on account of the excitement caused by sins and sensual enjoyments. We should discard

mithyatva which is the basic cause of our distraction from true religion.

#### Avirati (Vowlessness)

Avirati means the stage of vowlessness during which one has no restraint from doing or contemplating upon bad things. Unless we take a vow to restrain or cut our association with any undesirable activities, all such activities will bring bad karmas to our soul. By taking a vow, we are saying that we will not have anything to do with these activities. In this way, we will not accumulate any bad karma related to such activities.

#### Passions (Kashayas)

Kash means Samsar and Aya means gain. Therefore, kashayas means that which helps to gain or keep the jiva in samsar. In other words, kashayas are those things which keep Jivas in the cycle of births and deaths. Kashayas are also called passions and refer specially to anger, ego, deception, and greed. These passions have many forms such as attachments, hatred, enmity, hostility, arrogance, craftiness, trickery, lust, greed, and possessive propensity, etc. While fun, sorrow, delight, excitement, fear, disgust, abhorrence and sexual craving, etc., provoke kashayas. They themselves are not kashayas, but are rather referred to as nokashayas.

Anger, greed, deception, and ego are further subdivided into four types depending upon their severity: The four types are:

Severe (Anantanubandhi Kashaya),  
Moderate (Apratyakhyan Kashaya),  
Mild (Pratyakhyan Kashaya),  
Slight (Samjwalan Kashaya).

1. Anantanubandhi (extremely severe): This obstructs the right belief and conduct and until it is destroyed, we cannot attain the right belief or conduct. Its effects pursue through a long long time and always operate with Darshan Mohaniya Karma.
2. Apratyakhyan (severe): This obstructs the partial renunciation but does not affect the true belief. While it is active, we cannot take the vows even in a limited form.
3. Pratyakhyan (moderate): This obstructs the total renunciation, but does not affect the right belief and partial renunciation. While it is active the partial renunciation is possible by us, but the total renunciation (becoming a monk or nun) is not.
4. Samjwalan (slight): This obstructs the attainment of total right conduct, but does not affect the right belief and total renunciation. While it is active, initiation into monkhood or nun hood and spiritual progress are possible, but becoming Vitragi is not possible.