

LESSONS 15

GHATI KARMA PART 01

If a soul has the inherent power to know and see everything, then why does our soul not know and see everything? If a soul is to be non-attached and has infinite power, then why do we have attachment and why we are so weak?

Karmas are responsible for such distortions of the soul. Karmas fall into two groups:

- 1) Ghati (Destructive) karmas
- 2) Aghati (Non- destructive) karmas

Ghati karmas obstruct the true nature of the soul while they are attached to it. When ghati karmas are destroyed, the soul exhibits its true nature of total knowledge and perception as well as non-attachment and infinite power. Arihants have destroyed these ghati karmas, and that is why their souls exhibit total knowledge and perception as well as non-attachment and infinite power. We should all strive for this stage of destroying ghati karmas.

Ghati karmas are:

- 1) Jnanavarniya (Knowledge obscuring) karma
- 2) Darshanavarniya (Perception obscuring) karma
- 3) Antraya (Obstructing) karma
- 4) Mohniya (Deluding) karma

- 1) Jnanavarniya (Knowledge obscuring) karma:

Knowledge is the very essence of the soul. Consciousness, knowledge, and soul are much about the same thing. Knowledge is a positive state of the living being. The instrumental cause of knowledge is the teacher, language, the things unknown, or a representation of it. The teacher does not literally impart knowledge; he is simply the instrumental cause or means whereby the person is enabled to develop his own knowledge. The substantial cause of knowledge is the soul. Knowledge cannot be put into a person from the outside; it must be self-developed. The words of an instructor will also not produce knowledge in the pupil unless the pupil is in the right state. There are five types of knowledges. They are:

- 1) Empirical-cognition knowledge obscuring (Mati-Jnanavarniya) karma
- 2) Articulating knowledge-scripture based knowledge obscuring (Shrut-Jnanavarniya) karma
- 3) Clairvoyance knowledge obscuring (Avadhi-Jnanavarniya) karma
- 4) Telepathy knowledge obscuring (Manah-Paryay-Jnanavarniya) karma
- 5) Omniscience knowledge obscuring (Keval-Jnanavarniya) karma

The first two kinds of the knowledge are acquired by the coordination of senses and the mind. They are called Proksha jnan. The last three kinds of the knowledge are acquired directly by the soul without the intervention of the senses and the mind. These are called Pratyaksha jnan.

Process of acquiring knowledge:

In gaining knowledge by the senses (Matijnan) the following process is gone through, namely, the sense organ, ear, hand, etc. is brought into contact with the vibrations from the external object, and an excitation in the sense organ is aroused (vyanjanaavagraha). Then follows an excitation in the mind (artha-avagraha) and the consciousness comes to be in the state where it asks the question: "What is this?" and the question refers to the object sensed, and not to the excitation in the sense organ. The mind may also pass through this stage when, when picturing something mentally to itself which was seen in the past, by the question: "What was that?" The mind itself does not come in contact with physical objects here. The next stage in the process is an analytic awareness of similarities and differences (iha); a sort of cogitation which goes on in the mind. This stage is followed by reaching a conclusion as to what the object is, or is not (avaya). Then the final stage in the process is that the thing can be remembered (dharana); or that the knowledge gained continues and may bring changes in the life as a consequence of the new knowledge.

These are the stages passed through in acquiring knowledge by the senses (Matijnan). The karma (energy) in us, which obscures the knowing power of the soul, is called knowledge-obscuring (Jnanavarniya) karma. When these unnatural (because pure soul is free of all karma) karma are stopped and removed, then the inherent qualities of the soul become active and actual or reality. Memory, judgment, perception, etc., are the results of the stopping of this unnatural knowledge-obscuring karma to the various degrees. Therefore, when there is less Jnanavarniya karma he/she is more intelligent and learns more easily, while those who have more of Jnanavarniya karma have problems retaining knowledge. The constitution of man is such that as soon as he removes moral vices, his intellectual processes flow into a pure channel. There are five sub-types of Jnanavarniya karma. They are:

- i) Empirical-cognition knowledge obscuring karma (Mati-Jnanavarniya) karma
- ii) Articulating knowledge-scripture based knowledge obscuring (Shrut-Jnanavarniya) karma
- iii) Clairvoyance knowledge obscuring (Avadhi-Jnanavarniya) karma
- iv) Telepathy knowledge obscuring (Manah-Paryay-Jnanavarniya) karma
- v) Omniscience knowledge obscuring (Keval-Jnanavarniya) karma

i) Empirical-cognition knowledge obscuring (Mati-Jnanavarniya) karma
The empirical-cognition knowledge is acquired through the use of the senses and mind. Karma that blocks this function of the mind and senses is known as empirical-cognition knowledge obscuring karma. Therefore, if someone has more empirical-cognition knowledge obscuring karma, then he/she would be less intelligent, while on the other hand, if someone has less empirical-cognition knowledge obscuring karma, then he/she would be more intelligent. Every creature (soul) with one to five senses has this knowledge in various degrees.

ii) Articulating knowledge or scripture based knowledge obscuring (Shrut-Jnanavarniya) karma:

The knowledge, which is acquired by understanding the words, writing or gestures, is known as Articulating knowledge-scripture based knowledge. The karma that obscures acquiring this type of knowledge is known as Articulating knowledge or scripture based knowledge obscuring karma. For this reason it is understood why some people can remember things after reading only once, while others cannot remember even after reading it for many times. Every creature (soul) with one to five senses has this knowledge in various degrees.

iii) Avadhi-Jnanavarniya (Far sight knowledge obscuring) karma:

The soul through Avadhi-Jnan can see the material things far beyond than the normal eyes can see without the help of the senses or mind. The karma that obscures this type of knowledge is known as "Avadhi-Jnanavarniya karma". Different people can attain Avadhi-Jnan of various ranges.

iv) Manah Paryay-Jnanavarniya (Thoughts reading knowledge obscuring) karma:

The soul through Manah Paryay-Jnan can know about the mental thoughts of others without the help of senses and mind. The karma that obscures this type of knowledge is known as Manah Paryay-Jnanavarniya karma. The soul who would be a Tirthankar in that life would attain Manah Paryay-Jnan at the time of renunciation of the worldly life.

v) Keval-Jnanavarniya (Perfect knowledge obscuring) karma

The soul has the power to know what is happening now, what happened in the past, and what will happen in the future in the whole universe at the same time. Such knowledge is known as Keval-Jnan and the karma that obscures this type of knowledge is known as Keval-Jnanavarniya karma. Arihants and Siddhas have destroyed Keval-Jnanavarniya karma and that is why they have attained Keval-Jnan.

Some of the effects of Jnanavarniya Karma are ignorance, inability to understand, inability to learn, illiteracy, and stammering.

Jnanavarniya Karma is accumulated if we condemn knowledge, scholars, or enlightened people, show laziness, contempt, or displeasure in studying and learning, or show any disrespect for knowledge and knowledge related things, e.g. tearing off the pages or throwing the books around.

Jnanavarniya Karma can be shed off by worshipping knowledge, paying reverence and respect to the teachers, showing respect for the books, and by studying religious books regularly with humility.

When we get rid of Jnanavarniya Karma completely, we will develop Keval-Jnan and become Anantjnani. Our soul will know everything from the past, present, and future all at the same time.