

## LESSON 06

## SHRI HIRVIJAY SURI

In A. D. 1582, The Emperor Akbar was looking towards the main road from the balcony of his royal palace in Fatehpur Sikri. While there he saw a huge procession passing by. In the centre of a procession, a Jain laywoman named Champa sat in splendor and attired in expensive clothes. On inquiry, the emperor came to know that the procession was to celebrate the completion of fast for 6 months by her. He was also told that during this fasting she only took boiled water from sun-rise to sun-set and no other food. The Emperor was amazed by this and wanted to know how this was possible. He sent out his people to find out more about it. They came back and told him that Champa said that it was possible because of the blessings of her religious guru (saint) Guru Shri Hirvijaysuri. Akbar expressed his desire to meet Shri Hirvijaysuri. He was told that he is in Gujarat state. He said invite him. The message was sent to officer (subedar) in Ahmadabad to invite him on his behalf to Fatehpur Sikri.

The subedar of Ahmadabad and other Jain laymen (shrawaks) went to request Shri Hirvijaysuri to pay a visit to Akbar. He informed subedar that he would go there but he would go by walking as Jain sadhus do. It would take some time to reach there. Shri Hirvijaysuri left the Gandhar port. On his way he came across an outlaw named Arjun Thakor. Shri Hirvijaysuri explained him what will happen for he was doing. He showed him religious path and explained to give up his work. He did give up his outlaw activities.

On the 13th day of Jyeshtha month of A. D. 1583, Shri Hirvijaysuri reached Fatehpur. When Akbar was informed of the Suriiji arrival, he descended from the throne and went to the gate to receive him. He bowed to him. His three princes also bowed and paid their respects. Suriiji noticed the carpet on which he would have to walk to go inside the royal palace. He explained that he could not walk on the carpet. He was asked why he would not walk on rug. He explained that usually there would be lots of minute bugs underneath the rug and if he walked on it they would be crushed and either hurt or killed. He explained that Jain sadhus do not kill or hurt any living beings directly or indirectly. He asked Akbar to lift the carpet and look at it. Akbar was surprised to see many ants and bugs under the carpet and he felt so high about Suriiji. He asked to remove all carpets. He was more astounded when he was told that he did not ride on royal elephant, horse or use horse or men carriage to get here but walked bare feet all the way from Gujarat.

Akbar and Suriiji had some discussion and during it Akbar asked him to tell his horoscope and about future life. Suriiji explained that only householders would read horoscopes and make predictions as they were required to earn a livelihood. Saints like him simply aspired for spiritual knowledge and ultimate bliss. Akbar admired Suriiji so much that he requested him to accept some gold and silver. Suriiji explained that as a Jain sadhu he had given up all these and worldly things, so, he could not accept anything. Akbar told him that he admired him for taking so much labor to come here and he would like to express his appreciation for it. Suriiji said if he was keen to offer anything, he should order to set free the birds and animals kept in the cages. Suriiji also added that he should prohibit large-scale fishing in the huge pond named Dabar and should also issue a mandate to stop violence of any kind by anybody during the festivals of Paryushana. Akbar issued orders

as was desired by Suriji. On top of that Akbar added 4 days on his own to the 8 days of Paryushana festival and ordered to stop the killing of animals for a total of 12 days. The mandate was also conveyed throughout his empire including Gujarat, Malwa, Ajmer, Delhi, Fatehpur, and Lahore and far up to Multan. The Emperor also issued a mandate not to indulge in any sort of animal-killing in the vicinity of pilgrim places like Girnar, Taranga, Satrunjaya, Kesariyaji, Abu, Rajgruhi and Sametshikharji. At that time there was a practice of charging toll-tax from every pilgrim at the Satrunjaya Mahatirth. Emperor Akbar also issued orders to abolish the tax. Subsequently, Suriji was honored with the title of Jagadguru (universal preceptor). Suriji went around (vihar) Agra, Gwalior and other areas and gave sermons about Jain religion. As a result of his efforts, thousands of Hindus and Muslims gave up non-vegetarianism and alcoholism.

Shri Hirvijaysuriji was born in A. D. 1527 in Oshwal family in Palanpur. He became Acharya in A. D. 1554. Suriji passed away in village Una (Saurashtra) in A. D. 1596. Akbar provided about 40 acres land for his funeral rites.