

## LESSON 08

## AIMUTTA MUNI

In the streets of Polaspur, a six year old child named Aimutta was playing with a few friends. He was the son of King Vijay and Queen Shrimati. While playing around, he saw a monk, Gautamswami, bare-foot and bald, who was out getting alms (food). Aimutta ran to him and invited him to come to his home to get food, which would make his mother and him happy. Gautamswami agreed and they left to go to the castle. Aimutta's mother, Queen Shrimati was standing in the balcony overlooking the garden. She saw Gautamswami and Aimutta coming to her place. She was very happy and came down to receive Gautamswami. She welcomed him with full devotion and uttered, "Mathen Vandami (my salutation to you)." She introduced Gautamswami as a staunch disciple of Lord Mahavira to Aimutta. She asked Aimutta to go and get his favorite food to offer to Gautamswami. Aimutta brought ladoos and started pouring them in a pot even though Gautamswami said he didn't need that many. Aimutta was so happy offering food to the monk.

As Gautamswami started leaving, Aimutta said, "Your bag is heavy, let me carry it for you."

Gautamswami said, "Aimutta, I can not give it to you, because it can only be carried by those who have taken diksha."

Aimutta asked, "What is diksha?"

Gautam Swami explained to him that when someone wants to take a spiritual path he must give up his house, family, and all other social and economical ties. Then he becomes a monk, and this process is called diksha. People take diksha to avoid the hinsa (violence) that occurs in householder's life. In that kind of living, people are involved in various activities every minute which cause to accumulate karmas. On the other hand, monks don't do those things. Thus monks and nuns can avoid most of the sinful activities of householders.

Aimutta became curious and asked, "Gurudev, you do not do sins! But don't you need to eat? Don't you need a place to live? All these cause sins."

Gautamswami was pleased with the child's interest to learn, so he explained, "We take food, but we do not accept food which is made especially for us. We stay in a place, but we do not own it, and we do not stay there for more than a few days. We do not keep money, and we do not take part in business or any organizations. This way as a monk, we do not have to do any activities which cause sins.

Aimutta said, "Gurudev, in that case, I want to take diksha."

In a short time, Aimutta and Gautamswami reached where Lord Mahavira was giving sermon. Aimutta joined others to listen to his teachings. In that sermon, Aimutta learned what the life is all about and what one can do if he or she wanted to be relieved of these

worldly sufferings. Aimutta once again expressed his desire to accept diksha to Lord Mahavira. Lord Mahavira said, "We can not give you diksha without your parents' permission". Aimutta replied, "That is easy, I will go home and get their permission and come back."

So Aimutta went home. He told his mother, "Mom, I want to take diksha. Remember you used to say that our social life is full of violence, and causes sins? Gautamswami and Lord Mahavira also said the same. I want to be free of sins. Therefore, please give me permission to take diksha."

Aimutta's mother was surprised by his words. She was happy in her mind for his fear of sins and desire to take diksha because she was also a religious woman. But she wanted to be sure that Aimutta understood what "taking diksha" meant. So she said, "My son, to take diksha is not a game. It is a very hard and disciplined life. There is no mother or father to take care of you. How will you be able to handle such suffering?"

Aimutta said, "Mother, this social life also has a lot of suffering. At least we know that as a monk the sufferings will help destroy the karmas and lead to salvation."

His mother was very happy to hear this. But she wanted to test Aimutta more. She said, "Son, why are you in such a hurry? Wait for sometime. You need to take care of us when we get old, and have your own family too."

Aimutta said, "Mother, I learned from Lord Mahavira that no one is young and no one is old. I also learned that no one knows what is going to happen tomorrow. No one knows who will die first or last. So why wait and miss this opportunity which has come my way."

His mother felt very happy that her son had fully understood what diksha meant, and what his goal was.

She said, "Congratulations my son. I am very proud of you. You will be a good monk. Do not forget that your goal is to attain salvation, and be sure to observe ahimsa (nonviolence) throughout your life. We will give you permission to take diksha."

Aimutta said, "Thank you, Mom. I will remember your advice."

Aimutta's mother blessed him and wished him success in his new life. She also helped get the permission from his father, King Vijay.

After a few days, he was given diksha, and became a monk called "Balmuni (young monk) Aimutta."

Some time later, one day while coming back from the bathroom, Balmuni Aimutta saw some children playing in a water puddle with a paper boat. He became excited about playing, and forgot that as a monk he can not play with water. So he ran towards the kids,

and asked if he could play with them. The kids also became excited for a monk to play with them, and said, "Yes." He took the lid off the utensil he had and started sailing it as a boat. He was saying, "Look, my boat is also sailing." Meanwhile other monks came there and saw him playing with water. They came to him and said, "Balmuni, what are you doing? Did you forget that as a monk you can not play with water? By playing with water, we caused harm to many water beings. We have taken a vow not to hurt any living beings. This is very bad. You have violated your vow and accumulated sins."

Balmuni Aimutta realized his mistake. He immediately started repenting, "Oh! What have I done? I promised my mother that I would not do any sinful activities. How sinful I am? How nice these monks are to remind me of my mistake! What would have happened if these monks had not come or seen me?" He was honestly regretful for what he did. He left with the other monks. Every monk has to recite the Iriyavahiya Sutra after they come back to their place from outside. So Balmuni also recited this sutra. When he came to the part, "Panakkamne, Beeyakkamne, Panag-daga-matti.... If I have hurt any living beings of water, green grass, clay, etc., then I am asking for forgiveness," his repentance had no bound. He was very sorry for what he had done. He began thinking, "What did I do? I have destroyed so many living beings. How can I be free of these sins? How can I show my face to Lord Mahavira? Oh living beings, I have harmed you. Please forgive me of my sins. I will never commit these sins again." This sincere repentance did well for him. All of his destructive karmas were destroyed and he attained Kevaljnan (omniscience or perfect knowledge). He became Kevali.

After this, Kevali Aimutta Muni went to Lord Mahavira's assembly, and started walking towards the other Kevalis who were sitting there. Some senior munis noticed this, and they started telling him, "Oh, Aimuttaji!! Where are you going? That is the place for Kevalis to sit. Come over here where the other monks are sitting."

Lord Mahavira interrupted them and said, "Monks, you should not insult a Kevali. Aimutta Muni is no ordinary monk now. While reciting Iriyavahiya Sutra, he destroyed all of his ghati (destructive) karmas, and became a Kevali."

The monks realized their mistake and thought, "There is no age barrier to be a Kevali."

After finishing the rest of his life, Balmuni Aimutta attained salvation.