

Discourse # 5. KARMA BANDHAN and MUKTI (Bondage of karma and its destruction)

May 7, 2006 – Day 5 (10 am to 1 pm)

- *Vandami Namam Sami* – greeting *Swamiji Ji*
- Yoga and meditation with *Aumkar Dhwani*
- Navkar Mantra
- **KARMA BANDHAN and MUKTI (Bondage of karma and its destruction)**
 - Whether or not one believes in karma, it DOES exist. Why are some children born healthy, while others are born with illnesses and/or deformities? Why do some children have very high IQs, while others have low IQs? This is all due to karma.
 - Every Jain should attempt/have a goal to minimize the bandhan (bondage) of karma.
 - It is also necessary to destroy the previously bonded karma.
 - Hence, we must prevent/minimize the new karma, and remove/destroy the old.
 - **SAMVAR** – stopping the influx of new karma
 - **NEERJARA** – removing the existing karma
 - Example – if there is a boat with a hole in it and water is flowing through the hole and filling up the boat, the first thing that needs to be done is to plug the hole (stop the influx). Next, the water which has filled the boat must be removed.

- There are five paths (gates) through which karma enters and bonds to the soul:

1. **Mithyatva** (wrong outlook or belief).

Which is more important in life, money or shanti (peace)? Most of us would reply 'peace'. However, which is the one we are more focused on? Usually, the answer is 'money'. No matter how much money we have, we cannot buy 'peace'. It is the wrong outlook to go after money while our lives become disrupted. For example, many parents ask spiritual leaders (like Samanji) how they can handle their children (children do not study, children have developed bad habits/vices, children have started hanging out with "the wrong crowd"). Usually the answer is simple, "Spend more time with your children." However, most parents would rather work to earn more money. The priority becomes money rather than spending time raising the kids.

Another example is physical strength vs. mental strength. We spend a great deal of time working out, walking on the treadmill, etc. to care for our physical health, but we do nothing for our mental health. We don't worry about strengthening our mind. A healthy body is important, but just as important (or perhaps more so), is having a healthy mind.

Yet another example is relationships vs. money. While we often say that our relationships are most important to us, we have seen time and again that relationships are ruined because of money.

We don't have our priorities straight. These are just a few examples of wrong outlook/belief. There are many others with regards to our religion or way of life.

2. **Avrat** (uncontrolled desire; vowlessness; having no rules or no commitment).

While freedom to do what one likes/enjoys is good, lack of discipline is not acceptable. We should all set some rules/personal boundaries for our daily lives. For example, we often say, “I will do one mala (rosary) day.” But, we are reluctant to commit to it. A commitment does not mean a lifetime vow, but rather a mental promise. It should come from within us, rather than because someone made us or pressured us into doing it. Another example is that we often say we will walk for a ½ hour every day. But, then when it is a little cool or rainy, we postpone it. Do we postpone eating or bathing or going to work/school when it is cool or rainy? Then we do we not have the same discipline in other aspects of our lives?

If a man is too busy to eat all day, does he get the karma for upvas (fasting)? Not at all. He did not make a conscious commitment to fast. If no one is at home with you and you do not have the opportunity to speak, does that mean you observed maun (a vow of silence)? No. You did not consciously take a vow to not speak for a few hours.

We should make conscious limits for ourselves – vow to take a bath for no more than 10 minutes; vow to eat no more than 15 different food items per day; vow to do spiritual reading for 5-10 minutes a day. **Karma does not bond when we maintain limits.**

3. Pramaad (lack of spiritual interest/spiritual postponement).

Basically, this is putting off spiritual activities. For example, we often decide to fast during the week. Then, we put it off until the weekend because of work/school responsibilities. When the weekend comes around, we have other things going on, parties to go to, etc. So, we decide to wait until paryushana. We have now put it off almost indefinitely.

4. Kashay (passions) – anger, ego, deceit, greed.

These passions are channels through which karma often binds to our soul.

5. Yog (chanchalata; uncontrolled mind, body, speech).

This includes wavering thoughts, uncontrolled speech, etc.; lack of discipline/carefulness in our thoughts, speech, and activities.

- Samvar is stopping the influx of karma through these five channels.
- Neerjara is to destroy karma which has already bound to our soul. There are 12 ways:

1. Upvas (fasting for 1 day)

Fasting is the best remedy (healing process) for illness. Foreign elements/impurities in the body are destroyed by long upvas. However, upvas should be undertaken with the intention of reducing karma, not health benefits or weight control. Those may be side benefits, but the main goal and purpose should be for the destruction of karma.

2. Unodari (limited eating)

Eating less than one’s normal diet (or hunger) is called unodari.

3. Ras pari tyaag (limiting tasty foods)

Examples can include limiting milk, yogurt, ghee, sweets, fried food, etc.

4. Bhikshachari (making some resolution)

This is often undertaken by monks. For example, Mahavir Swami had certain conditions which must be met before he would end his fast. All his conditions were met by Chandanbala. In our case, we can also make resolutions. For example, Harivansh Rai Bachan (Amitabh Bachan's father) used to drink a lot. When his son was injured, he resolved never to drink alcohol again if his son was saved. Amitabh Bachan was saved, and Harivansh Rai never drank alcohol again. We can resolve to eat only certain foods or a certain number of foods or eat only at a certain time.

5. Kaaya Klesh (tolerating physical pain)

6. Pratisalinta (controlling 5 senses)

We can attempt to control our senses. For example, we can limit the amount of TV we watch. We can decide not to listen to music for the next two hours. If we want to drink some juice, we can decide to wait until ½ hour later.

7. Prayaschit (repentance)

Asking forgiveness for wrongdoings from our Gurujī or from those we have hurt.

8. Namrata/Vinay (humility)

We should always remain humble and show our respect to others. When we want to request something from others, we should always join our hands in front of our heart and request with courtesy and respect. It is our culture to bow to others to show respect.

Also, we should always greet others with the greeting in our own culture/sanskriti. For example, if we are Jain, we should always say 'Jai Jinendra'. Other would reply with their culture. If they are Vaishnav, they would reply 'Jai Shri Krishna'. This is so that we respectfully say what our own belief-system is, while knowing what the belief-system of the other person is.

9. Seva (service to others)

There are two main categories of seva: service to worldly persons and service to spiritual persons. The first category includes our parents, elders, and other upkaari persons (those who have supported us during our lifetime). The second category includes spiritual persons such as monks, religious teachers, and other knowledgeable people.

One key point: seva of our mother-father is essential. They have sacrificed much for us, and thus, we must serve and care for them. In addition, this seva should come from within and be done whole-heartedly, not just as a task we must perform. Without this basic seva, all else is meaningless.

10. Swadhyay (spiritual reading; self-study)

Every day before bed, we should devote a minimum of 10 minutes to spiritual, motivational, or inspirational reading. This is one of the best habits for self-development. It helps us to control negative emotions and helps us to convert negative attitudes into positive attitudes. In addition, we are able to gain a great deal of useful knowledge.

11. Dhyān (meditation)

For beginners who want to improve their concentration, breathing exercises are the best. They not only help in concentration, but are also important for self-purification. Every day before beginning our regular routine, we should spend 10-15 minutes on meditation/breathing. By starting the day with meditation, and ending the day with reading, we are on the road to a healthy and happy life.

12. **Kayotsarg** (detachment from the body)

Method for doing kayotsarg:

- Stretch the body 3 times.
 - Lie down, feet spread apart, arms away from the body, palms open
 - Keep eyes closed
 - Through auto-suggestion, relax each part of the body, starting from the right toe and ending with the head. (One by one, give each part of the body a polite suggestion to relax.)
 - After the entire body is relaxed, you should experience that the body and soul are two separate entities.
 - When this is experienced, then you have achieved the stage of detachment from the body.
-
- Hence, our goal should be to first stop the influx of new karma, and then to eliminate the existing karma which has already bonded to our soul. End of discussion and Manglik

©2006 Shrutpragyaji Swamiji

Reproduce freely but maintain © notice
