

Equanimity and Meditation (Sāmāyika and Dhyāna)

Sāmāyika is the principal concept of Jainism. It is the first and foremost among six essential duties of a monk as well as of a house-holder. Prakṛta term Sāmāyika is translated into English in various ways such as observance of equanimity, viewing all the living beings as one's own self, conception of equality, harmonious state of one's behaviour, integration of personality as well as righteousness of the activities of mind, body and speech. Ācārya Kundakunda also used the term samāhi (samādhi), in the sense of sāmāyika where it means a tensionless state of consciousness or a state of self-absorption¹. In its general sense the word sāmāyika means a particular religious practice through which one can attain equanimity of mind. It is an end as well as means in itself. As a means it is a practice for attaining equanimity while as an end it is the state in which self is completely free from the flickerings of alternative desires and wishes, excitements and emotional disorders. It is the state of self-absorption or resting in one's own self. In Āvaśyakaniryukti, it is mentioned that the sāmāyika is nothing but one's own self in its pure form². Thus, from transcendental point of view, sāmāyika means realisation of our own self in its real nature. It is the state in which one is completely free from attachment and aversion. In the same work Ārya Bhadra also mentions various synonyms of sāmāyika³. According to him equanimity, equality, righteousness, state of self-absorption, purity, peace, welfare and happiness are the different names of sāmāyika. In *Anūyogadvārasūtra*⁴, *Āvaśyakaniryukti*⁵ and *Kundakunda's Niyamasāra*⁶, sāmāyika is explained in various ways. It is said that one who by giving up the movement of uttering words, realised himself with non-attachment, is said to have supreme equanimity⁷. He, who detached from all injurious or unpious actions, observes three-fold control of body, mind and speech and restrains his senses, is said to have attained equanimity⁸. One who behaves equally as one's own self towards all living beings mobile and immobile, is said to have equanimity⁹. Further, it is said that one who observes self-control, vows and austerities, one in whom attachment and aversion do not cause any disturbance or tension and one who always refrains from indulgence, sorrow and ennui, is said to have attained equanimity or sāmāyika¹⁰.

This practice of equanimity is equated with religion itself. In *Ācārāṅga*, it is said that all the worthy people

preach religion as equanimity¹¹. Thus, for Jainas, the observance of religious life is nothing but the practice for the attainment of equanimity. According to them, it is the essence of all types of religious activities and they all, are prescribed only to attain it. Not only in Jainism but in Hinduism also, we find various references in support of equanimity. *Gītā* defines yoga as equanimity¹². Similarly, in *Bhagvatī* it is said that the observance of equanimity is the worship of lord¹³.

The whole frame-work of Jaina *sādhana* has been built on the foundation of sāmāyika i.e. the practice for equanimity. All the religious tenets are made for it. Ācārya Haribhadra maintains that one who observes the equanimity or samabhāva will surely attain the emancipation, whether he belongs to Śvetāmbara sect or Digambara sect, whether he is Buddha or the follower of any other religion. It is said in Jaina religious texts that one who observes hard penances and austerities such as eating once in a month or two as well as one who makes the donations of crores of golden coins every day, can not attain emancipation unless he attains equanimity. It is only through the attainment of equanimity of mind that one can get emancipation or liberation. Ācārya Kundakunda says "what is the use of residing in forest, mortification of body, observance of various fasts, study of scriptures and keeping silence etc. to a saint, who is devoid of equanimity" (*Niyamasāra*, 124).

Now we come to the next question how one can attain this equanimity of mind. Mere verbal saying that I shall observe the equanimity of mind and refrain from all types of injurious activities does not have any meaning unless we seriously practise it in our own life.

For this, first of all, one should know what are the causes which disturb our equanimity of mind and then make an endeavour to eradicate them.

It is very easy to say that one should observe the equanimity of mind, but in practice it is very difficult to attain it. As our mental faculty is always in grip of attachment and aversion, what so ever we think or do, is always motivated by either attachment or aversion. Because the vectors of attachment and aversion are solely responsible for the disturbance of mental equanimity so the practice to attain equanimity depends on the eradication of attachment and aversion. So long as we do not eradicate the attachment and aversion, we are unable to attain equanimity.

Now, our attention turns to the eradication or attachment and aversion. How we can get rid of these two enemies of equanimity. Attachment is another name of mineness and this mineness can only be uprooted through the contemplation of *ekta bhāvanā* and *anyatva bhāvanā* i.e. nothing is mine except my own self. In *Āurapaccakhāna*, it is clearly mentioned that if we want to conquer the mineness we must have to contemplate on the transitory nature of worldly things as well as of our own body. Only he who perceives that the death is coming nearer and nearer every moment, can see the things in their right perspective. *samyagdarśana* is nothing but to have a proper understanding of the worldly things. One, who perceives one's own death and transitory nature of things, can never be attached to them. When mineness disappears, otherness also disappears. For these two are the relative terms and without one, other also loses its meaning and when the idea of mineness as well as otherness dissolves, attachment and aversion disappears and equanimity dawns.

There is only one way to attain the equanimity of mind and that is through the contemplation of real nature of one's own self as well as of worldly things. One can eradicate the vectors of attachment and aversion and thus attain equanimity. And it is through self-awareness that one can be steady and firm in the state of equanimity or self-absorption. Equanimity needs proper understanding of

real nature of one's own self as well as of others. In *Niyamasāra*, it is said that one, who meditates in one's own real nature with non-attached thought, activity and realises his self through righteous and pure concentration, can attain the supreme equanimity. One, who always practises the *dharma dhyāna* (righteous meditation) and *śukla dhyāna* (meditation of pure-form or real nature) can attain the equanimity. Thus, sāmāyika is closely related to meditation, without meditation and self-awareness no one can attain the equanimity of mind. *Kundakunda* further maintains that one who is absorbed in righteous and pure meditation is the *antarātmā* or *sādhaka* and one who is devoid of such contemplation or meditation is called *bahirātmā*. The realisation of self is only possible through equanimity and equanimity is possible only through the meditation of one's own real nature (*Niyamasāra*, 15, 147).

At last, I would like to conclude my paper by quoting a beautiful verse of Sāmāyika-pāṭha of Ācārya Amitagati-

*Sattveṣu maitrīm guṇiṣu pramodaṁ
kliṣṭesu jiveṣu kṛpāparatvaṁ.
Mādhyasthyabhāvaṁ Viparīta vṛttau
Sadā mamātmā vidadātudeva.*

Oh Lord! I should be friendly to all the creatures of world and feel delight in meeting the virtuous people. I should always be helpful to those who are in miserable conditions and tolerant to my opponents."

References

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