

07. Param Tattvagna Shrimad Rajchandraji

Introduction:

Shrimad Rajchandraji is an exceptional personality of the 20th century (twentieth). He was a great philosopher and thinker. He was an incarnation of knowledge, a gentleman of the highest virtue and lamppost for many. He was extra-ordinary great not only for Jains but also for the whole of modern world. Mahatma Gandhi said for him: Shrimad Rajchandra held an astonishing personality. His writings came from his experience of life. One who read thought and followed his writings could easily reach the doors of salvation. One who wanted to be free from self-agony, wanted to know his duties and wanted to get real happiness in his life must read his books even if he was ardent Hindu or follower of any other religion. Kakasaheb Kalelkar said, "Shrimad Rajchandra was a great experimentalist. He has been a living example of experimentally proved achievements of ultimate position. He had attained total self-control and therefore, we can see exceptional strength and vigor in his creations.

Birth:

Shrimad Rajchandraji was born on the auspicious day of November 9th, 1867 the Diwali Day of Gods-of the month of Kartik, at Vavaniya village of Morbi states in Saurashtra of Gujarat. His grandfather was Panchabhai Mehta. He had come to Vavaniya from the nearby village Manekpara and started the business of shipping and money lending. Ravjibhai and Devaba were his parents. This was a devotional and serviceable couple and two events were known about them. One was of an old commission agent and the other was of a saint-Fakir. The couple had served these two persons with body, mind and money with total devotion and sincerely they had given blessings to this couple that they would have a great and victorious son. Shrimad Rajchandra was born after sometime of these incidents. In the Jain community of Gujarat the day of Gods' Diwali. The birthday of Shrimad Rajchandra was celebrated as the birthday of Shri Hemchandracharya who was said to know everything about Kalikal-Kali Kaal Sarvagna and as the day of beginning of the pilgrim-tour at Palitana. The child was named as Laxminandan at the time of his birth but at his age of four, it was changed as Raychand or Rajchandra. He was by this two name of Rajchandra.

Childhood:

Rajchandra got impressions of Vaishnav religion-a sect of Hindu religion from the birth because his grandfather was a devotee of Lord Krishna. On the other hand, his mother Devaba had come from Jain impressions. The child Rajchandra was, thus, brought up under combined impressions of Jainism and Vaishnavism. Rajchandra was deeply interested in reading and when he read hymns of Pratikraman in Jainism, he was drawn by the feelings of kindness to animals and the discipline coming out in begging for pardon in Paryushan days. He was drawn towards Jain hymns more and more. The Jain atmosphere gives more importance to knowledge, renunciation and detachment from worldly affairs. In these days of his childhood, one important incident took place: In 1875, Shri Aminchandbhai died of serpent-bite. At this time, young Rajchandra asked his grandfather as to what did it mean by death. The loving grandfather said, "The soul from his body has gone out and now he will not be able to speak or

move. His body will have to be burnt out near the pond outside the village." Hearing this, Rajchandra slipped into deep thinking and as a result the cover of ignorance vanished. He remembered his previous lives and when he went to Junagadh, he knew everything about the lives through which he had passed before. This knowledge affected his social life very deeply. He knew the pains of repeated births and death. He became more and more detached to his family life and decided to work to attain Moksha, absolute bliss or Salvation or Omniscience.

His Learning:

After seven years of age, Shrimad Rajchandra was put to a school. He remembered his readings only by one-time reading, (this is called Ekpathi) and he cited about this power in Samuchehaya Vayacharya. He completed his seven-year study in only two years. He was always eager for learning, reading new books and knowing more and more at all times.

Attachment of Magical Powers in Childhood:

He started composing poems at the age of eight. He sat at the father's shop and conducted the business honestly and sincerely. He could understand the proper meanings of Gujarati, Hindi, Sanskrit and Prakrit words and phrases in these books. The virtues of being kind to all living animate; sympathy and tolerance were developed in him from his young age.

Avadhan Shakti and Jyotish Knowledge:

He could do many works at a time without errors. He made an experiment of twelve Avdhans in Morbi at the age of only 16 and then did 16 and 52 deeds at one time in Jamnagar and Botad respectively. He made an experiment of performing 100 deeds at a time in Mumbai at the age of 19.

After this success, Shrimad Rajchandra turned to astrology. He had also the power of knowing books by touch only keeping eyes closed and knowing the taste of food-item without taking it on tongue. The intelligent part of the society expressed their sharp reaction on these extraordinary powers and newspapers like Mumbai Samachar, Jame Jamshed, Gujarati, Times of India, The India Spectator, Bombay Gazette etc. quoted these powers not only as a news-item but they wrote editorial articles also. The Jain Samaj in the assembly on Shatavadhan awarded him gold medal and he was titled as Sakshat Saraswati-i.e. Goddess of Learning in person.

Shrimad Rajchandra stopped these activities respectively at the age 20 and 24 because he was afraid of excessive public contacts because of his Avadhan experiments and only worldly progress was expected by the knowledge of astrology. He placed both these powers in the category of simple imaginations and turned towards restraint, detachment, study, thinking and loneliness for attaining real strength of soul.

Business and Conduct:

Shrimad Rajchandra had the business of jewellery and he did it only for the maintenance of his family. As a measure of social revolution, he wrote poems and articles for female education, unparalleled marriages, reason for the down fall of Aryans, protest against heavy expenses for dinner parties at marriages and many other subjects.

Family Life:

Shrimad Rajchandra was married to Zabakben, the daughter of Shri Popatlalbhair, elder brother of Shri Revashankarbhair Jagjivandasbhair at the age of 20. It can be said that the family-life of Shrimad was not for any other reasons but to wipe out the deeds of previous lives and it is a challenge to those who say that family life is an obstacle for the one who is out to search for the ultimate position of his soul, i.e. salvation. This is clear from the several letters written by Shrimad Rajchandra in those days:

- I do not desire to maintain any love or hatred, affection or aversion regarding relations with woman but I have stopped in promulgating my desires only because of impressions of my previous lives.
- Let both of us jointly tries to be godly idols and that too with great pleasure. You stress much on cleanliness or holiness and look to my devotion with even, equal and sympathetic feelings.
- The world expands as a result of residing in the black hall of family-group. You cannot destroy even a hundredth part of evils of remaining in family life by whatever changes you make in the ways of your living but you can destroy them to a great extent by adopting to stay in loneliness. Family life is the cause of passion. It is a mountain since the beginning of this universe on which attachments, affections and aversions reside.

Thinking, Convalescence and Revelation of Soul:

The personality of Shrimad Rajchandra was fully engaged in serious thinking and reflection of being with religion. He loved every living animate on earth and we can see this from his outward and inward behavior.

His desire to live highest quality of life right from his childhood, his revelation of previous lives, deep study of various scriptures, increasing document, constant muttering of Saat-Truth and the Ultimate, deep longing for right experiences, continuous efforts to increase and develop virtues, meaningful understanding of elements and principles studied in scriptures etc. brought him to be omniscient in V.S. 1947. He experienced Absolute Bliss and it was the most remarkable day of hi life. He says, "There is no doubt that I attained absolute knowledge and it is true at all times that I was then free from all the bondages around my soul. Jain thinking considers this to be Samyak Darshan and Vedant says it to be KevalGnan.

Shrimad Rajchandra wrote for poems at Ralaj Village in 1891 as an expression of his attaining Absolute Bliss and those who want to do good of their soul should know and study these poems for their salvation: These are:

- O Lord! O Lord! What shall I say?
- You gave me restraint, regularity and good feelings....
- Dull or stupid feelings give dull results....
- What is call the Absolute Knowledge...

(The Original word language are missing)

Earnest Desire to Be in Loneliness:

Shrimad Rajchandra, though, attained the Absolute Bliss but he was interested to be on the unending path to the eternal truth. It was necessary for him to be detached from this world and family for peaceful treading on this path and he started to stay in lonely places out-side Mumbai for more and more time. By loneliness, he could increase and strengthen his detachment with worldly affairs; he could study scriptures deeply and could think of the Absolute in more meaningful ways. His efforts can be divided in two parts.

In the first stage, there were many obstacles on his way and hence his progress was also very slow. Even then he continued his activities as vigorously as possible. He stayed in loneliness in the following places with a view to strengthen virtues, restraint and detachment with worldly affairs:

Last Efforts and Demise: (V.S. 1952 to 1957):

These were the years of his rigorous prayers. Attachment with outward and inward longings became weaker and he could be free from almost all bondages to a great extent. He continued his studies, thinking and reminiscing and started avoiding food, clothes, circumstances, contacts, bodily feelings so that total restraint can be adopted later on. In the forests of Uttarsanda, at Idar and at Kavitha he stayed in loneliness. His devotees have said much about this. He never allowed anybody to stay with him at night, he did not use mattress, and he used only one cloth and took only one type of food. He did not use footwear, he suffered bites of mosquitoes etc peacefully and stayed in lonely forests for meditation and silence.

He used to stay out of Mumbai continuously for more than six months for the company of saints and to be more and more detached with the world. He did not even correspond with others except for doing well of others and that too very briefly. He left his business in 1899 and asked for the consent of his mother to adopt Dixa-life, but in the next year only his body did not co-operate with him and he died in 1901. During his life of loneliness he stayed mainly at:

- Charotar region: Kavitha, Anand, Nadiad, Uttarsanda, Vaso, Kheda, Ralaj, Vadva and Khambhat.
- Saurashtra region: Sayla, Morbi, Vavaniya, Rajkot, Wadhwan, Viramgam
- Other regions: Idar, Ahmedabad, Naroda, Dharampur etc.

Even after attaining omniscience in 1891, he continued to be in efforts to gain power of self until he died in 1901.

His Group of Disciples:

As many bees come to flowers because of their sweet smell, in the same way many persons were attracted to him because of his power of soul. They respected him with honors, devotion and dedication: -

Shri Sobhagbhai:

Almost one-fourth part of Shrimad Rajchandra's correspondence is written about this gentleman. He was simple in behavior and serious in devotion. He was ardent devotee of Shrimad Rajchandra.

Shri LaghuRaj Swamy:

He was an exceptional devotee of Shrimad Rajchandra. He attained good of himself. Even though Shri LaghuRaj Swami had originally taken Dixa as Sthanakvasi mendicant, he dedicated his life to Shrimad Rajchandra and remained in his service even by suffering acute pains and hardships.

Shri Ambalalbai:

He was native of Khambhat. His power of memory was unusual and Shrimad Rajchandra entrusted him the work of copying out scriptures and letters. His contribution in collecting the literature about Shrimad Rajchandra after his death was very great. He himself passed away in 1905.

Shri Jothabhai:

He was with Shrimad Rajchandra for a very short time and yet he was fully devoted to him. He died at the young age of only 23 in 1890.

Shri Mansukhbhai:

Native of Morbi, Shri Mansukhbhai Kiratchand Mehta realized Shrimad Rajchandra as a great soul even with short stay in his company. He was sincerely devoted to the service of Shrimad Rajchandra.

Mahatma Gandhi:

Mahatma accepted three persons as his guide and he frequently took their advice and inspiration from them. Shrimad Rajchandra was foremost of these three personalities and Gandhiji obtained spiritual instructions from him. Many writers have taken Gandhiji as Mahatma (a great soul) and Shrimad Rajchandra as Dharmatma (A Spiritual personality)

In addition to these prominent persons, Shrimad Rajchandra had the great influence over Shri Popatlal Mahokambhai Shah of Ahmedabad, Shri Dharshihai Sanghvi, magistrate of Morbi, Shri Maneklal Ghelabhai, Shri Revashankar Jagjivandas Zaveri, Shri Mansukhbhai Ravjibhai Mehta, Shri Tribhuvan Manekchand, Shri Zaverbhai Sheth, Shri Jeshingbhai Ujamshi, Shri Laherchandbhai, Shri Dungarshibhai, Shri Khimji Devja, Shri Motichand Girdharlal Kapadia, Shri Chhotalal Manekchand, Shri Vinaychand Popatbhai Daftari, Shri Anupchand Malukchand and many others.

Some Inspiring Events

Sympathy without-Reason:

Shrimad Rajchandra was once going to Vavaniya from Morbi and Shri Mansukhbhai Mehta with other devotees had been with him for sendoff. The train was about to arrive and all were busy in discussion of spirituality. At this moment someone came to call Shri Mansukhbhai and he had to go, Shri Mansukhbhai was sorry for losing this chance of being in this discussion. Shri Mansukhbhai did not express this pain in words but Shrimad Rajchandra did see from his face

that Shri Mansukhbhai was really very unhappy to hear the spiritual discussion. Shrimad Rajchandra did not get into the train to go to Vavaniya but returned home to Morbi with the group of devotees. He granted advantage of spiritual discussion to Shri Mansukhbhai on the other day. This is the uncalled for kindness of a learned man Shrimad Rajchandra!

Do Not Allow Your Mind to Be Idle:

Once Mooni Shri Mohanlalji put a question to Shrimad Rajchandra: Mind does not remain steady. What are the ways to achieve steadiness of mind?

Shrimad Rajchandra said, "Do not allow---even a minute of time to go in waste. You must read a book, which will strengthen your detachment with world and think on it. If this is not possible you should matter religious phrases on rosary. If your mind is idle even for a moment, it will cause serious harm and spoil all your achievements. Go on giving him food of good thoughts. Just as cattle goes on eating grass put up to it, so is the mind. It needs some food at all moments. Thus, you must continuously go on pouring good thoughts into your mind. Do not submit to the directions of your mind. We must lead it on the right path instead of being drawn to do undeserving acts as desired by the mind."

Conclusion:

The personality of Shrimad Rajchandra was been mainly spiritual. Since he did not live long, his message did not reached to the vast society during his lifetime. We must not forget that he was not only a saint. He was an outstanding educationist, a born poet, having extraordinary power of remember, a reformer of society, ardent experimentalist of non-violence and brilliant torch bearer of secularism-i.e. equal respect for all religions.

He has given us AtmaSiddhi Shastra, Mokshamala, Apurva Avasar and many other letters and poems. These are the essence of Shad Darshan. He has granted directions to the seekers of spiritual strength and worked to bring up the high ideal of religion as well as of society. We have not been able to understand this great man in true perspective. This is not enough. We have not taken adequate of his preachings and teachings.

We must be without feelings and leave away our tendency to see any lapses on his part if we want to understand him in his real form. He has given us all-time principles; he has uncovered the religious facts while giving the message of peace, love, non-violence and truth. By following the guidelines given by him we can do well of not only ourselves but of the society as a whole.

Preachings of Shrimad Rajchandra:

He lived only for 33 years, but in this short life he has delivered preachings of eternal importance. It is not possible here to give everything he has said and written but some important and useful gems of his preachings are given hereunder:

Normal Good Behavior, honesty and Justice:

- All living beings are seen as equal, do not cause pain to any soul, do not exert work from any soul beyond its ability and capacity.

- Life is short but engagements are enormous. Cut down your engagements and attachments so that you will feel happiness in life and you will take your life to be sufficiently long.
- The activities, which happen to be the cause of happiness in this life as well as in future lives, are good activities and good behavior.
- Good manners and good behavior are the root of holiness.

Human life:

- We have had this human life many times in the past but we have not been able to do much for ourselves. Now know well the learned men, follow their directions and you will fulfill the purpose of human life.
- All living animates long for happiness and there is no exception to it. This desire can be fulfilled in human life only. Yet the soul goes to be unhappy instead of stepping towards total bliss-Salvation. This happens only because unhappy attachments with the world.

Detachment from worldly affairs (Vairagya)

- To be disinterested in family and worldly affairs is called Detachment (Vairagya)
- Only the Vairagya can lead you to eternal happiness.
- Detachment of devotees must be much more than that of a saint. Devotees must awake and withdraw their attachments with family life and worldly affairs. Hear the saint carefully and realize your vices. Then only you can be free from vices and evil thoughts; then only virtues will enlighten your life.
- Detachment is successful only if it is followed by the knowledge of the self. If there is no renunciation and detachment in mind, there will be no knowledge of soul. One, who stops at these stages of renunciation and detachment, loses his life in vain.

Knowledge:

- That is knowledge with which we are able to know the form of things.
- Knowledge is like a thread in the needle. This is said in Uttaradhyayan Sootra. Just as a needle with thread in it is not lost so if you have the knowledge, you will not lose your right path in this world.
- That is knowledge with which (a) external feelings can be controlled, (b) love for life, family and worldly pleasures decreases and (c) reveals truth by truth.
- Only the knowledge of soul can make you free from all miseries. The knowledge of self is not possible without thoughts. The soul does not gain thinking power if it keeps itself in the company of evil-minded persons and evil-circumstances. This is undoubtedly true. The purpose of knowing the true form of every thing is to attain self-knowledge. If there is no self-knowledge, the knowledge of worldly thing is in vain. The more the self-knowledge, the more intense is the self-meditation.
- If you know yourself, you know the whole world, If you do not know yourself, your knowledge is worthless.