

Pratikramana : An austerity for self purification

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Introduction

Windows and Ventilators act as instruments, which provide air, light and ventilation. They help in exhausting impure air or smell from the house and also allow fresh air and light to enter. Without air and light, the house will be darkend, damp and make it difficult to live inside.

In short, it gives peace, happiness and comfort for the dwellers. Similarly Pratikramana, make the soul to cleanse itself from the impurities which have entered the soul and also restrict the impurities that enter. They act as expiation of sins, stop the inflow of karmas, preserve pure conduct, enable one to get rid of past and present transgressions and inappropriate austerities and also promotes repentance of humiliations, rewards good conduct and peace. The meaning, its nature and benefits are explained in brief and how they help in spiritual progression and liberation are noteworthy.

We clean our house everyday. We remove the dust, dirt and mud from the house regularly. On special occasions like Diwali, New year etc., we also white wash the house, wash the floors etc., similarly the dirt, which makes the soul impure, can be removed or cleansed by fivefold sadhanas. The five fold sadhana includes (1) Ālocanā (2) Nindanā (3) Garhanā (4) Pratikramana and (5) Prāyaścitta.

Ālocana, Nindanā and Garhanā are the three processes for the purification of soul. We have to first analyze the impurities inside our soul and should list them, repent for the mistakes and confess them in front of the spiritual master. Pratikramana is the process of coming back to original place or form and Prāyaścitta is to do repair work when any component or part of vrata- building is damaged.

Ālocanā etc is noting but introspection and confession. Uttaradhyayana sūtra in its 29th chapter has expressed the benefits of Ālocanā, Nindanā and Garhanā. By confession of sins the soul gets rid of thorns, as it were, of deccit and wrong belief, which obstruct the path of liberation and cause endless migration of the soul; he obtains simplicity.¹ By Nindanā or repenting of ones sins to oneself the soul obtains repentance, and becoming indifferent by repentance he prepares to ascend the ladder of virtues, by which he destroys the karmas resulting from delusion.² By repenting

for ones. sins before the Guru or by Garhaṇā, the person will renounce all mundane occupations and apply himself to praise worthy occupations.

Pratikramana

Jainism and its philosophy stand on the check of Jaina Agamas. The 32nd Āgama is Avasyaka sutra. Āvaśyaka means that which is to be done necessarily. In this āgama there are six āvaśyakas and the fourth one is pratikramna. This āvaśyaka forms the major content of this scripture. Pratikramana means repentance. Self-analysis or self-introspection is essential for equanimity of mind and also for right conduct. He who practises Pratikramaṇā avoids all wrong paths and walks on the path shown by the conquerors. In short, he recounts his lapses and transgressions of the rules of righteous conduct and thoughts committed during he past and direct him towards concentration and realization of the pure self.³

Meaning

It is formed by combination of two words namely 'prati' and 'kramana'. 'Prati' means back and 'kramana' means to move. Thus it means coming back to the original place. In this context it means, "To comeback within oneself whenever the soul crosses the boundaries of vrata or control is known as pratikramana".

Pratikramana as mentioned earlier is repentance. It is a method of self analysis and self-introspection. It is essential for the equanimity of mind. A man who observes Pratikramana, meditates upon the nature of his own soul- in silence, after abstaining from the activities of speech and getting rid of his impure thought activities such as anger, attachments etc. This helps him to avoid repetition of impure thought activities and transgressions of rules of conduct. Tattvārtha sūtra defines Pratikramana as, "To repent for the mistake that has been committed and to refrain from it, and also to remain alert so that no new mistakes are committed". Tattvārtha sūtra considers Pratikramana as a subtype of Prāyaścitta. The main objective of doing Pratikramana is to understand that sinful and impure activities had taken place: they are transgressions of rules of conduct. By determination and regular practice, the violations that have been taking place will come down. It is indeed a soul-bath. As a result the soul feels lighter from the karmic bondages, which were attached previously.

In the period of the first and the last Tīrthankaras is said that the monks should do pratikramana everyday at the time of sunrise and sunset. Whereas those in the period of the middle twenty-two Tīrthankaras are supposed to do Pratikramana whenever there is a transgression.

Classifications

Pratikramana can be classified in many ways. Few of them are:

(A) Five types). a) Mithyātva b) Avrata c). Pramāda d). Kasāya e). Aśubha yoga.. Sthananaga sutra has also classified it into five types viz., Āsrava dvāra, Mithyātva, Kasāya. Yoga and Bhāva pratikramana.⁵ To return from Mithyātva to samyaktva, from avrati to vrati, from pramāda to apramāda, from kasāya to samabhāva, and from aśubha yoga to śubha yoga is the purpose of Pratikramana.

(B) The second classification is based on time. Devasiya; repentance related to activities and transgressions that have taken place in the day and done at the time of sunset. Raiya, repentance related to activities and transgressions that have taken place in the night, done just before sunrise. Pākṣika; repentance related to past fortnight, done on the last day of the fort-night. Caumāsiya or Cāturmāsika; repentance related to past four months. Sāmvatsariya or Sānvatsarika; repentance related to past one year.⁶

(C) Another classification is of two types Dravya Pratikramana and Bhāva Pratikramana.

a) Dravya pratikramana: It is more of a ritual and is unaccompanied by repentance and the aspirant is not determined to give up the sins and continues to do them in the future. This kind of Pratikramana is called Dravya Pratikramana.

b) Bhāva Pratikramana: This is the real and pure type of Pratikramana. The objective of the doer is to cleanse his soul from transgressions, so he applies his mind without any material expectations and with the objective to reduce the karmic matters and is determined not to repeat in future by being alert in every activity of mind, speech and body. Pramada is the main cause for most of the violations and transgressions. The soul has to be alert and exert in righteous activities. The best way to success is exertion in righteousness i.e. Samyaktva Parākrama.

(D) Sthānānga Sutra has classified it into six types.

(i). Uccara Pratikramana, (ii) Prasravana Pratikramana, (iii) Itvarika Pratikramana, (iv) Yavatkathika Pratikramana, (v) Yatkincit mithyāduskṛta Pratikramana, (vi) Svapnantika Pratikramana.⁷

Thus an aspirant repents i.e. does Pratikramana by meditating upon the nature of his own self. He recounts his lapses, and transgressions of the rules of righteous conduct and thoughts. These lapses, flaws and transgressions are of four types. viz.

1. Atikrama: It is the mental resolution to violate any vrata or vow. Here the vow is neither broken nor violated. But mentally it has been resolved to do an activity, which will result in violation, is also known as transgression.
2. Vyatikrama: the process of collection of articles and requisites for an action, which will result in violation, is called as vyatikrama. It is a step ahead of atikrama. and here the process of collection takes place with an objective to break the vow.
3. Aticāra: It means partial violation of a vow already taken.
4. Anācāra: the complete violation and lapses of vow. The first three lapses are reviewed by self-analysis in Pratikramana and repented so that they are not repeated in future. But the fourth and the last flaw being complete violation and the only remedy is Prāyaścitta i.e. expiation.

There are six chapters in Pratikramana sūtra. They are, Sāmāyika, Caturvimśatistava, Vandanā, Pratikramana, Kāyotsarga, and Pratyākhyāna. In Pratikramana ninety-nine types of aticāras are explained. The aspirant reflects on the possible transgressions through self-analysis and repents for them. He also does introspection, which is essential for equanimity and right conduct. The ninety-nine types of transgressions are as follows: fourteen related to right knowledge, five related to right faith, sixty related to twelve vows of sravaka, fifteen related to karmā dānas, and five with respect to samlelkhanā.

Significance

Lord Mahavira in the Uttarādhyayana sutra has explained that expiation of sins is the benefit of Pratikramana. It is explained that by pratikramana the sins are expiated and he obviates transgression of vows, thereby he stops influx, preserves a pure conduct, practises eight exercises i.e. pravacana mātās does not neglect the practice of control and pays great attention to it.⁸

Thus, there are three great benefits of pratikramana. There are eight spiritual exercises that prepare a monk for advanced meditational states. They consist of five samitis (or vigilance) and three guptis (restraints). These eight are known as pravacanamatās. They are practised and kept under check by Pratikramana. As explained earlier there are five great vows for sadhus or monks and twelve vows for sravakas. In these vows there may take place some transgressions due to negligence. These transgressions are compared to holes in a boat that may allow the water to enter inside and the boat may sink. Similarly the soul may be subject to influx of karmic particles by partial violation of vratas. Repentance and self-analysis by Pratikramana removes these transgressions. The next benefit is that influx is checked and pure conduct is acquired. The major five gates due to which influx of

karmas takes place are closed. Due to this the influx of new karmas is averted. Pratikramaṇa results in returning back from perverted attitude etc., to right attitude etc.

Pratikramaṇa is a type of austerity. Prāyaścitta is also a type of austerity, moreover one type of Prāyaścitta is Pratikramaṇa. It is a great medicine for karmic diseases and further develops resistance in preventing the disease and also acts as an energizer, which gives strength and power. Thus in short, those transgressions that have taken place in the past have to be analyzed through Ālocanā, the possibilities of transgression taking place in the present have to be carefully checked through samvara and through Pratyākhayāna the future influx is prevented. Pratikramaṇa is helpful in removing pramāda or negligence, which is the biggest foe of an aspirant.

Prāyaścitta is a kind of internal penance through which it is possible to clean the defects born of negligence in connection with a vrata that has been accepted.⁹ Real expiation or atonement however consists in the contemplation of the soul by destruction of all kinds of impurities of mind and meditating on the attributes of the soul.¹⁰ A faultless observance of the austerities is a part of expiation. A saint should conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility, deceit by straight forwardness and greed by contentment.¹¹

Conclusion

Thus Ālocanā, Nindanā, Garhanā, Pratikramaṇa, and Prāyaścitta, all of them purify the soul from the transgressions and mistakes. They act as removing the defects in charitra or conduct. All kinds of impurities of the soul are removed through the above spiritual windows and ventilators.

REFERENCES

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- 2 -Ibid.29.7
- 3- Niyamasāra, 83
- 4- Tattvārtha Sūtra. VI.9.22(2)-Pg.341
- 5- Sthānāṅga Sūtra. 5.3.222 and Āvaśyaka Sūtra, Antim pātha.
- 6- Āvaśyaka Vrtti by Acarya Haribhadra, 1250
- 7- Sthānāṅga Sūtra, 6.3.125
- 8- Uttarādhyayana Sūtra 29.12 & SBE vol.45 pg.163
- 9- Tattvārtha Sūtra 9.20 pg.340 of commentary by pandit sukhla.
- 10- Niyamsāra.113,114,&115
- 11- Daśavaikālika sūtra.8.39

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