

### **39. Shreddheya Shri Jinendra Varni**

Shri Jinendra Varniji is an exceptional personality of this century. His life was shining with the virtues of equal respect to all religious, friendship with all living beings, study in loneliness and meditation.

#### **Birth and Childhood:**

Shri Jinendra Varniji was born in 1921 at Panipat at the house of the famous advocate Shri Jay Bhagwan who was well studied in Jain, Vedic, Buddhist and other scriptures. Shri Jinendra got the leadership as an inheritance from his father. This was his great family-wealth. He got spiritual learning under Shri Roopchand Gargiya. His father loved literary activities much more than his profession of advocateship. And this came down to his son Jinendra who was much impressive. Shri Jinendra obtained the degree of engineer in Electrical and Radio science with his extra-ordinary ability to learn.

It was unusual as a result of his deeds of previous lives that his body was very weak, unhealthy and caught with various diseases right from his young age.

#### **Business and Service:**

After the death of his father, he had the responsibilities of his younger brothers and he established an Industrial Company at Panipat, which became very famous because of absolute integrity and honesty of Shri Jinendra. But Jinendra had least interest in business, wealth or fame. He made his younger brothers well efficient to carry on the company and then he retired from it by entrusting the company to them. His intuition drew him in another direction. He was not keeping well and was being attacked by typhoid of and on. He was caught by Tuberculosis at the age of only 16. He was religious minded that he declined to accept non-vegetarian food and medicines made by violence even though the doctors pressed for such a treatment. At last, one of his two lungs was taken out.

#### **Spiritual Study, Penance, Renunciation and Adoption of Vows:**

There was an important event in his life in 1950. Dash Laxan Paryushan was going on - a week of religious performances. He was so much attached to it that he went to temple even under heavy rains. His father Shri Jay Bhagwan was delivering a spiritual lecture there. He heard the word Brahmasmi-I am the eternal Lord and it came to be his life-long motto. He started deep study of scriptures from this moment. He made short notes as he studied scriptures and heard preachings and the great book "Jainendra Siddhanta Kosh" came out of these writings. He studied scriptures repeatedly to review and revise his notes. This was completed in 1960. He went to Songadh for special thinking and meditating in 1954-55. His tendency for renunciation and experience became stronger with the increase of his knowledge and as a result he accepted AnuVrata leaving his home-life in 1957 AD. He had absolute faith in religion, he had deep desire to study religious in depth and all this made his march on spiritual path very fast. He took advantage of the heart-felt experiences of Shri GaneshPrasadji Varni. He spent some time in 1958 AD at the abode in Isri.

He came to Benaras to have religious discourses with the men of Bharatiya Gnanpith on the subjects of Jainendra Siddhanta Kosh in 1968. Here, his arrangements were made at Maid again Inn by Shri JayKrishna Jain (MunniBabu) Shri MunniBabu desired to take Shri Jinendra for seeing several temples in Benaras but Shri Varniji told, "Brother, I do not see anything in these temples of stones. There is only exhibition of wealth. Please lead me to see the temples of living beings." Shri MunniBabu then took him to the greater than the greatest learned person Shri Gopinathji Kaviraj. Both these persons had discussions and company for about one month. Shri Gopinathji said for Shri Varniji, "His heart is totally pure. There is no pride; he is a mendicant who has left his home-life. He

had done me a great favor in coming here with me". Shri Varniji used to write down the summary of the preachings of Shri Gopinath. His power of memory was very sharp.

He came to Rohtak in 1970 and he was severely caught by the old disease of asthma. He was now thinking of death by meditation-Samadhi Maran. The doctors gave opinion that the root cause of the disease in shortage of water in your body. Taking water once in the evening can control the disease. Jainendra Siddhanta Kosh was not yet completed and Jinendra Varniji was worried for its completion. The devotees also pressed him to accept water but the code of conduct attached to the position of Varni was coming in the way because it denied taking water in the evening. Some devotees told him to take water without informing the Jain community and in a way that nobody would know about it. At this moment, Varniji told with painful heart that it would be a great blot for the mendicant engaged in search of truth. He considered pretence, attachment and greed to be the greatest sins. On one side there was acute asthma and weakness of body and on the other side, it was strong and resolute soul with determination and tolerance. After so much strain in his mind and heart, he was prepared to complete the service to the voice of Jainism. He went away to Calcutta. MunniBabu brought him to Varanasi from Calcutta and from there, he went to Sarnath. After seven to eight months he came to the temple of Chhedilal at Bhadani. This temple is famous as a birthplace of Lord Suparshvanath. It is near Anandmayi Ashram on the bank of Ganges. Varniji used to teach the devotees and preach the people. He was now much above a sect or religious compulsions. He did not hesitate accepting virtues from Vedant, Upanishad or Kooran. He was in search for something from all these great books but there was no solution. At last, he stopped thinking about it.

### **Samansuttam:**

He came to Wardha in 1973. He had unshakable faith in Shree Vinobaji. He had once said that as there was the Dhammapal for Buddhists, the Geeta for Hindus and The Bible for Christians, so there should be one great book for Jainism which is acceptable to all its four sects because Jainism is also a world religion. This work was not only difficult but almost impossible for Shri Varniji, but with the grace of good deeds of previous lives, Samansuttam was created by calling upon all the prominent Acharyas, learned persons of all the conflicting sects of Jainism on the occasion of 2500<sup>th</sup> day of Lord Mahavir's Nirvan (i.e. Lord's passing away).

Varniji, then, went to Benaras from Wardha and stayed there for one month. He wanted to meet Acharya Samant Bhadra Maharaj at Kumbhoj and so he went there for seven eight days. He was unwell here because of severe cold but he was much satisfied with the meeting with Maharaj Shri Samant Bhadraj.

### **First Efforts for Sanlekhana-I.E. Fasting Unto Death:**

From Kumbhoj, he came to Kashi and from there to Benaras in 1977 and stayed in the temple of the birthplace of Lord Suparshwanathji. Here, the old disease of asthma again caught him. Taking this to be an appropriate time, he adopted fasting and non-speaking without informing anyone. The whole Jain community was at unrest when they came to know this. Many prominent persons and leaders of the community pressed him to put off fasting but he was not moved from his decision. At last, he was impressed by the words of Acharya Shri SamantBhadra and Vinobaji and he left fasting after 40 days. The surprising fact of this fasting came to be that due to fasting and non-speaking, his health was improved a lot. From Benaras, he came to Calcutta and from there to Isri. After about a year, he came back to Benaras.

### **Visits to Holy Places and Monsoons:**

He came to Rohtak to pass the monsoon of 1980. He, then, came to Benaras in 1981 and after passing three months there; he came to Bhopal, Kumbhoj, Karanja and Vaishali, and at last came

back to Bhopal. He passed a monsoon here. After moving to all these places he came again to Kashi and he felt that he has come to his original place. The root cause of attachment to Kashi was that it is the birthplace of Lord Parshvanath. Shri Varniji Maharaj was related to the whole world-the whole mankind, but how can he have the same relations with other cities and towns as it was with Kashi? For him Kashi was the place of his own being. At this time, he published new edition of Shanti Path Darshan and after completing this work within three-four months; he went towards Chhindwara-Bhopal in 1982. Where Pandit Rajmalji became his most dedicated devotee.

He came back to Benaras in May and began to work for preparing second edition of Jainendra Siddhanta Kosh. He was, however, not able to work so speedily as he desired according to his nature. He was, therefore, not happy. He was not well with the behavior of some people of the society. The greatest of his pains was I am not able to do anything to solve these problems. I have my own compulsions". His health did not help him. At this time Shri MunniBabu told him very clearly to stop his writing activities. He was, now, not able to sit for long hours. Maharaj Shri Varniji remained silent on this advice, but he did not take pen in hand after that date. His whole life was spent on pen and literature. He was getting life force and interest from them. But now his interest was waning. MunniBabu felt that he was at serious fault. He thought that Maharaj Shri Varniji would get loneliness, peace, rest and even physical health, but the decision of Shri Varniji was painful. The decision waited since long was not painful. The decision waited since long was not on. Maharaj Shri decided to go for Samadhi Maran-i.e. death in meditation.

Maharaj Shri Varniji was a sea of virtues. He was flexible, truth seeking, simple-natured, appreciating virtues and secular. This was reflected in his personality. He was not great only because he was learned. He was not great only because he was learned. He worked hard to serve the Jainism. He was great because he sincerely tried to lead life according his knowledge acquired by his extraordinary ability in studying scriptures. His penances and mendicantship is even greater than his leaning. His simplicity, natural goodness and liberal outlook to co-ordinate among different views and beliefs are the shining sides of his life. As he was going deeper and deeper into the sea of knowledge, he went on acquiring more and more virtues. It there is any test for saintly life; it is simplicity and eagerness for service to others. It is difficult to get another illustration of his life. He never longed for fame, popularity or happy life. Varniji was, thus, a cent percent great personality. He was as holy as the Ganges, he was respectable and worth to be remembered in the morning.

The work of service of Jainism, which would be done by a large group of learned personalities at a cost of lacs of rupees, was done by a lone, empty-handed unattached man like Varniji at no cost. This was almost a magic task so easily fulfilled.

The Jains and non-Jains of Kashi believed him to be an ideal teacher-Guru. His behavior was not different from his words. He had some special virtues. He used to speak much less; he saw the world as a "Seer". He could understand complicated things very easily. His thinking was unprejudiced, original and natural. It was to the point and very effective.

He was an unattached lovable mendicant. There was meeting of the three rivers in the form of truth, love and renunciation. He acted for truth, he saw for truth, he thought for truth. This was his ideal of life. It there is no love for mankind in your life, it is not a life at all-this was his clear and touching belief.

His lectures were wholly philosophical based on the description of atomic elements in scientific way. His arguments were justful, arising out of own experience, reasonable and easy to understand. He gave more importance to individual preaching rather than group preaching by lectures. He was not willing to waste valuable time in worthless pleadings. He considered every moment of time to be of great value and favored to use it for the good of self and soul. He used to say, "if we can bring our

thoughts to rest by our knowledge-meditation, we will be able to experience our internal light which is powerful and also peaceful in this condition of absolute detachment-absolute Inertia.

He was an idol of peace, love and renunciation. He was a sea of discipline and good behavior. His eyes were always overflowing with the feelings of love. He always spoke which was absolutely necessary in the interest of the hearing persons. He always maintained peace of mind. He was never angry with anyone. He loved to live in loneliness. He believed that it is necessary for achieving salvation. He used to cover his body with a small cloth. He took food only to keep his body active in necessary activities. One could get peace of mind only by seeing him. Many doubts were cleared of by discussion with him and by living with him. His heart was the abode of internal peace, love and attachment. He was not a leader of only Jain community but the whole mankind. Indian culture, literary world, humanity and especially the religion of Jainism will remain obliged of him forever.

### **Last Days:**

Shri Varniji Maharaj had stopped his writing activities and avoidable movements. He had decided for meditation-death (Samadhi Maran) and with this decision, he reached Nainagiri in November 1982 to be with respected Shri VidyaSagarji Maharaj. Varniji prayed him saying, "Oh, Sir, all the deeds of my life have been completed. Only the last great deed of Sannllekhana now remains-i.e. fast unto death. Kindly give me your shelter so that my Sannllekhana can be fulfilled at your feet". Acharya did not consent immediately but asked him to go to Isri, i.e. SametShikhar. Here he adopted the final holy vow of Sannllekhana on April 12, 1983 at the feet of Acharya Shri VidyaSagarji and stopped taking food till the end of life. In the beginning, he was accepting a little of liquids to drink but from April 15, 1983 he stopped taking ghee or milk and took only vegetable-soup and water. This was reduced by and by finally stopped accepting even water from April 18, 1983. He used to observe total fasts in between. From May 23, 1983, he declined even water. An absolute devotee of Jainism used to hear scriptures from Acharya Shree and exchanged thoughts also. The mendicants and renunciates of the Sangh though he was physically weak, his internal awakening continued. He was awakened at every moment and did not miss to perform daily rites even in his last days.

It was 24 May of 1983. Acharya Shree had already taken his meals. At this time, Varniji called a mendicant and asked him to inform Maharaj Shree that he was now losing his awareness. Acharya Shree soon came by his side. Varniji expressed respects to him by folding his hands three times. Acharya Shree asked him to speak Namaskar Mantra and Varniji spoke "Oom" twice. When he was to speak "Oom" for the third time his head turned down to the feet of Acharya Shree. Shri Jinendra Varni thus, passed away at 11-00 hours forenoon on May 24, 1983 quite peacefully. He had adopted Samadhi Maran-death in meditation and this reveals his faith in Jainism. His renunciation, his penance, his detachment with worldly affairs and finally his intuitive greatness leads as to realize the purpose of our life.