

## **02. Tapodhan Shrimad Rajendrasuri**

### **Birth:**

Rajasthan is known for brave warriors. It also produced several saints. We can see many monuments of Jainism and Indian civilization in Jaipur, Jesalmer, Ajmer, Pushkar Ranakpur, Abu-Delwada, Mahavirji, Kotah, Padmapura, Chittore, Kesariyaji, Shreenathji, Nakoda etc. There is a famous town Bharatpur, where once great warriors and prominent persons lived. RatnaRaj was born to the couple Hrushabhdas Parakh and Kesribai on December 3, 1827. The couple had an elder son Manikchand and younger daughter Premabai.

### **Childhood and Trade:**

The child RatnaRaj had very high latency right from his birth. He respected his parents and elders deeply, his nature was peaceful, he kept himself away from quarrels and disturbances. He used to be with saints and teachers. At the age of twelve he went on pilgrimage to Kesariyaji and other places with his elder brother. He was more interested in religious study than ordinary learning of schools. He went to Sri Lanka at the age of 16 with his elder brother for business purposes. He went round Calcutta and other cities also while returning home. After the death of his parents, he tended to be detached from worldly affairs. He got more time for religious rites, study and meditation. He became more and more religious minded day by day.

### **Detachment and Yati-Dixa:**

In 1854 AD Shri Pramodsooriji happened to be in the town with his disciples. RatnaRaj thought to take Dixa-initiation. He expressed his desire to his elder brother and finally took Dixa in 1847 AD at the hands of Shri HemVijayaji. RatnaRaj was now named RatnaVijayaji. He passed his first monsoon in Akola and second in Indore. He was keen to study further. So, in the next three rainy seasons, he studied grammar, logic, poetry, and literary skills in the company of Shri Sagarchandraj. He was awarded the status of Panyas in 1852 AD. He went on studying further in the next four monsoons by himself and took the help of Shri DevendraSooriji. He was now well equipped with extensive knowledge in religion. Hence, with the consent of his teacher, he taught religion to the disciples of Shri DharanendraSoori from 1857 to 1862 AD living in the service of his Dixa-Guru Shri Pramodsooriji. He took part in the felicitations of Shri DharanendraVijayaji by the kings of Bikaner and Jodhpur 1864 AD where he was himself awarded the title 'Daftari'. In the rainy season of 1865-66 he relinquished the title of 'Daftari'. In conflicts with Shri DharanendraVijayaji about the laxity in behavior and norms of detachment for Yatis and Dixits (those who have been Yati and Dixit) and other problems did not end during this monsoon seasons spent at Jhalore and Ghanerav, he decided to leave them. In 1867 AD, he was awarded the traditional SooriMantra-a ritual-and also a title of Shri Poojya at Ahor by Dixa-Guru Shri PramodSoori. He, then, left this place for Javara and during his stay for the rainy season there, he compromised with the Nawab and his ministers on certain issues.

### **Total Revision of the Practice of Yati and Ordinance:**

During the four months of rainy season in 1867 AD, Yati Shri DharanendraSoori sent two Yatis, Siddhakushal and Motivijay to Shri Poojya RajendraSooriji. They discussed the issues in details. Shri Poojya RajendraSooriji decided to expose the blind faith in the traditional Yati-system, undeserving ways to impress upon the ignorant and simple people and the hidden lapses in various practices of Jainism. He made out a nine-point revision proposal, which was accepted and signed by Shri DharanendraVijayaji with the consent of all other Yatis. When this was completed, it was declared to the people. At this time Shri Poojya RajendraSooriji also relinquished all the titles, presents, chhadi, chamar Palkhi etc. (all these are religious symbols) in the temple of Shri Suparshvanath Bhagwan.

His two ardent disciples, PramodRuchiji and DhanVijayaji also joined with him. In this way he revised the Tristutik Sampraday (Three-prayer sect) and accepted the high position of Panch Maha Vrata Dharak (one who adopts five major vows) in public under huge celebration. By this revision, the religious study of Shravakas and Shrivikas (followers of Jainism) and their works of renovation and creation of places of pilgrimage were recognized and given foremost priority. The process took three years.

## **Rigorous Penance, Extensive Travelling, Renovation of Pilgrimage-Places and Establishments of Idols Etc.:**

After accomplishing this great deed Shri RajendraSooriji passed his rainy season of 1870 AD in Ratlam and that of 1871 in Kukshi. He wrote the book "Shad DravyaVichar" and read 45 Agams here. He observed fasts and one-meal-day in the hills of Mang Tungi of Digambar Jain Atishaya Kshetra and also completed one and a quarter crore time repetition of the first stanza of MahaMantra. He passed about six months in deep thinking, meditation, penance and reciting Mantras. Kavivar Mooni Shri PramodRuchiji had given much service to Shri Poojya during his days of hard penance, meditation and reciting of Mantras. The following monsoons were passed in the regions of Malva and Mewar at Rajgadh, Ratlam, Javara, Ahor, Jhalore, Shivganj etc. During this time 31 Jain idols were installed in 1877 and 41 in 1884. He moved to Gujarat in 1885 AD and passed four months of rainy season at Ahmedabad, Dhoraji, Dhanera, Tharad etc. He preached Jainism during these days. He installed 951 Jain idols with his own hands in Ahor 1898 AD. About 35,000 people had taken part in this installation-ceremony. He wrote special code of conduct for multi-faced Jainism while staying at Shivganj to pass rainy season of 1899. There are thirty-five main rules in this code and his followers observe these rules since then. In 1901 AD, he again installed 201 idols in Ahor and did several religious deeds in Jhalore in 1902 AD. He, then, came to Gujarat. He stayed at Surat for the monsoon of 1903 and after spending next years he spent four months at Kukshi and Khacharod. He also spent his last monsoon of four months at Vadnagar (M.P.) in 1906 AD.

## **Last Years of Life:**

After monsoon in Vadnagar (M.P.), he went to Rajgadh as his health was not well. The whole Jain community was unhappy to hear that Shri RajendraSooriji was not keeping well. He called for Shri DeepVijayaji and YatindraVjayaji and entrusted them the responsibility of administration of the Sangh. They were also placed in charge of edition, review, research and printing of "Shri Abhidhan Rajendra Kosh". He stopped taking food from December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1906 and peacefully passed away after two days while reciting "Arhan Namah, Arhan Namah". He was cremated on the next day on the holy pilgrimage place of Shri Mohan Keda at about one mile away from Rajgadh (M.P.) and very large number of people, especially Jains, attended the ceremony.

## **Renovation of Five Important Places of Pilgrimage:**

Shri RajendraSooriji installed and renovated of pilgrim-places. The following five works were of special importance so he had gave the direction for development of these places.

- **Korta Tirth:** This place of pilgrimage is known by several names like Kanakapur, Korantpur, Koranti etc. It is about twelve miles away from Javai Bandh Railway Station on Ahmedabad-Delhi Railway line. There are four temples of Shri Mahavir, Shri Adinath, Shri Parshvanath and Shri Kesarianath. The idol of Kesarianath is five feet high made up in white marble. It was found in 1855 A.D. while digging a hill. The idol was instaled in the temple in 1895 with great celebration. The temple is a very beautiful piece of art.
- **Shree Mandva Tirth:** Mandavpur village is 22 miles away from Modra Railway station on Jodhpur-Ranikheda line. The original Jinalaya (Jain temple) is said to be of seventh and twelfth centuries. Shri RajendraSooriji came here in 1899 A.D. and inspired for renovation of

the temple. The present temple was been inaugurated in 1954 A.D. There is a big inn for the pilgrims to stay and dine.

- **Shri Swarn giri Tirth:** This is a very old place of pilgrimage and it is on a small mountain called Swarn giri near Jhalore Railway station. There are 13 other temples at the root of the mountain in the town while on the top there are three old and two new temples in the fort. The temples were used to keep war-weapons before Shri RajendraSoori came here but the king was impressed by rigorous penance, firm determination and continuous efforts of Shri RajendraSooriji and he handed over these temples to Jain community in 1877. The idols were then installed in these temples with great respect, and the temples were renovated.
- **Palanpur Tirth:** This Tirth is called Tungia Pattan also. It is on the side of highway from Alirajpur to Dhar in Madhya Pradesh. One tribal man once got 25 idols from his field and they are said to be as old as 1000 years. There are two temples here and Shri RajendraSooriji installed the idol of Godi Parshvanath temple in 1894.
- **Shri Mohankheda Tirth:** This pilgrim place is at a distance of one mile in the west of Rajgadh (M.P.) The idol of Lord Shri Adinath was installed in 1884. There is also a shrine of Shri RajendraSooriji here. Shri Vijaya Chandra Soori laid foundation stone in 1975 AD for the development and renovation of this pilgrim-place.

## Service to Literature:

Our ancient teachers cited two ways to make our life a success: to pray for the true knowledge and observation of restraint with all possible efforts and devotion. We have already seen how Shri RajendraSooriji maintained restraint and performed rigorous penance. We shall now see the way he worshiped and prayed for knowledge.

We have 61 books written by him. They include language grammar, worship, Agam (religious rite), spirituality, prayers, lectures, management, yoga, questions-answers, Mantra-Tantra (recital of religious phrases and thereby get some advantage) and many other subjects. In all 25 books have already been printed before 1957 AD while others are ready for publication.

- Abhidhan Rajendra Kosh:

This book in seven parts contains 9200 pages. Totally 60000 words of Prakrit language are arranged in alphabetical order with their exhaustive meanings and explanation. The book provides very great reference on Jainism and includes almost all subjects. The work of this book started in the monsoon of 1890, and was completed in 1903 with the help of several disciples and learned friends. The printing of the book was taken up in 1913 and its last part was published in 1934 from Ratlam. The total expenditure for the task was of Rs. 4,00,000 in those days and Jain community greatly contributed towards this expenditure. Many learned persons not only of India but abroad welcomed this book.

- His other notable books are:

1. Prakrut Vyakaran, i.e. Grammar of Prakrut language
2. Kalp Sootrath Prabodhini,
3. Jinopadesh Manjari
4. Prashnottar PushpaVatika
5. Shri TattvaVivek
6. Shri Siddhachakra Pooja
7. Shri Mahavir Panch Kalyanak Pooja.
8. Prabhu Stavan Sudhakar

9. Holika-Akhyan
10. Akshya Trutiya Katha
11. Swarodaya Yantravali
12. Shadavashyak-Akshararth
13. Shad Dravya Vichar.

### **Institutions for the Uplift of Society:**

The following institutions came into existence with the inspiration of Shri RajendraSooriji for religion and social works:

- Ranejdrodaya Yuvak Mandal, Jaora (M.P.)
- Shri Rajendra Jain Vidyalaya, Ahor (Rajasthan)
- Shri Rajendra Sooryabhyudayavali, Ratlam. This institution publishes small books on worshipping and relative Stotras-i.e. Religious hymns.
- Shri Rajendra Jain Granthmala.
- Shri Rajendra Pravachan Karyalaya, Khudala (Falna)

Shri Rajendra Jain schools were established: Mandsaur (Falna), Tanda, Khacharod, Siyana, Dhundhakada, Tharad and so on.

The following are some important names of his disciples and students:

- Shri Vijay Yatindra Soori (presently chief disciple)
- Shri Vijay Bhupendra Soori.
- Shri Vijay Dhanchandra Soori.
- Upadhyaya Shri Mohan Vijayaji.
- Upadhyaya Shri Gulab Vijayaji.
- Mooni Shri DeepVijayaji.
- Mooni Shri SagarNand Vijayaji.
- Mooni Shri Jayant Vijayaji.

There are many nuns, Shravaks and Shravikas in addition to this group who followed the preachings of Shri RajendraSooriji according to their ability and devotion and thereby secured great development in their life.

### **Rajendra-Sookti-Sangrah:**

Shri RajendraSooriji has given preached on various subjects at various occasions and since many of his sermons are extremely useful for the up-lift of our life, they are produced hereunder in brief.

### **Humanity:**

Every human being must maintain some virtues. This includes equal respect for every religion, duty towards fellow beings, good deeds etc. This can be achieved by keeping oneself in good company, good reading and good circumstances of life. When we are human beings, we must become true humane and even by this, we can achieve religion, money and purposes, desires and freedom-i.e. Moksha-Salvation.

### **How to Earn Good Norms in Life?**

Every one should have a disciplined behavior. (i) Adopt truthfulness in dealing with others (ii) Beg pardon for lapses immediately for faults (iii) Do not act against the social rules or directions of religious books. (iv) Keep in the company of good persons (v) Save yourself from bad company (vi) Take advantage from the preachings of saints and always think of Almighty (vii) Maintain good reading and hear good talks, (viii) Do not cast evil sight on another's wife or husband.

### **Property Gained By Undeserving Methods:**

You can earn and enjoy so much by black-marketing, theft, cheating, corruption etc., but this will be with you only upto your good deeds of previous lives are forceful. As soon as this force expires, you will have to surrender to Yamraj (God of death) leaving your wealth, relatives etc., down unearh. None of your relatives or friends can save you at that time. You will have to suffer severe pains for all your misdeeds. It is, therefore, necessary that you should do good deeds with your wealth and other means so that they may help you in your next lives.

### **Service of Saints and Colleagues:**

The Lord has cited four aspects of the Sangh-i.e. Jain community: mendicants, Shravaks and Shrivikas (Shravaks and Shrivikas are family-holders). They must be taught, they must be respected by giving them clothes and other necessities, to propagate religion for the development of society, to ask others to do so, to be in service of such persons whole-heartedly, to spend money for their service because by such acts you create piety. The men doing such deeds develop themselves and go to their desired place. This piety brings an end.

### **Always Follow Discipline:**

Always respect the words of teachers and elders. Do not doubt upon their advice. This is discipline. You get knowledge, prestige and advantage of heard knowledge through discipline and your credit expands like oil poured on water. He gets respect from all. A man without discipline is rejected and abused wherever he goes. He becomes unhappy. Therefore, adopt total discipline so that you can earn happiness in this life as well as in coming lives.

Discipline takes man to the top of human life. Even if a man is highly learned, efficient, honest and with good wealth, he cannot get respect from others if he does not maintain discipline. A man without discipline can not have other virtues like love, patience, sympathy, and deep thinking etc. because he remains constantly worried about his failures in life. It is the direction of great teachers that you maintain absolute discipline except in the following eight types of circumstances: 1. At the time of singing 2. At the time of dancing, 3. When pleading and discussing matters with others, 4. When studying, 5. In battlefield, 6. When fighting with enemy, 7. When taking dinner and 8. When deciding upon family relations.

### **Development of Virtues:**

One is human in the light o truth, bravery, charity and restraint. A man without these virtues is without humanity. He wanders in darkness. A man must, therefore, develop patience, sympathy, simplicity, virtuousness, truthfulness, justice, self-confidence and detachment if he wants to be great among men.

### **True Learning and Scholarship:**

That is only true learning and scholarship, in which they're sincere efforts for self-correction, love for the world and development towards subjective pleasures. A learned man will see every living being with equal sympathy and love. He will follow religion with devotion. He will not be selfish or deceitful. Then only he can attain total bliss for himself and for others. These are the views of policy-makers. It

is no learning where there is jealousy, pride and quarrel. This is a great foolishness. If you cannot attain salvation by your learning, it is no learning at all. Moreover you must make best use of your learning by keeping yourself engaged for the good of all living beings on earth.

### **An Evil-Minded Man Is Always Unhappy:**

Adultery never brings happiness. It brings several difficulties and diseases. That is why it is said, "Bhoge Rog Bhagyam". Evil-minded people do not think in advance. They repent for their misdeeds only at the time of their death. He is afraid of pains he will have to suffer in his coming lives. But nobody can rescue him. There is no escape from suffering the results of evil deeds. He has to leave this world with flood of tears. Knowing this eternal fact, one should adopt religious path right from the beginning and make the best use of his human life.