

Equanimity (SAAMAAYIK) and Meditation (DHYAAN)

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SAAMAAYIK (SAAMAIYA in Prakrit) is the principal concept of Jainism. It is the first and foremost duty among six essential duties of a monk as well as of a householder. The Prakrit term 'SAAMAIYA' 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 behavior, integration of personality as well as righteousness of the activities of mind, body and speech.

Acharya Kundakund also used the term SAMAAHI (Prakrit, Sanskrit SAMAADHI) in the sense of SAAMAAYIK, where it means a tranquil and stress free state of consciousness or a state of self-absorption.

In its general sense the word SAAMAAYIK means a particular religious practice through which one can attain equanimity of mind. It is 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 flickering of alternative desires and wishes as well as excitements and emotional disorders. It is the state of self-absorption or reposing in one's own self. In Avashyaka Nirvyukti it is mentioned that SAAMAAYIK is nothing but one's own self in its pure form.

Thus from transcendental point of view SAAMAAYIK means realization 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, Arya Bhadra also mentions various synonyms of SAAMAAYIK. According to him equanimity, equality, righteousness, state of self-absorption, purity, peace, welfare and happiness are different names of SAAMAAYIK.

In Anuyogadvara-sutra, Avashyak Nirvyukti, and Kundakund's Niyamasar, SAAMAAYIK is explained in various ways. It is said that one who by giving up the movement of uttering words, realizes himself with non-attachment is said to have supreme equanimity. He, who detached from all injurious or undesirable actions, observes threefold control of body, mind and speech and restrains his senses, is said to have attained equanimity. One who behaves equally as one's own self towards all living

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beings, mobile and immobile, is said to have equanimity. 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 SAAMAAYIK.

This practice of equanimity is equated with religion itself. In Acharang Sutra, it is said that all worthy people preach that equanimity is religion. Thus, for Jains, 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. Gita defines yoga as equanimity. Similarly, in Bhaagvat, it is said that the observance of equanimity is the worship of Bhagvaan.

The whole framework of Jain religious pursuit (SAADHANA) has been built on the foundation of the practice of equanimity (SAAMAAYIK). All religious tenets promote it. Acharya Haribhadra maintains that one who observes equanimity (SAMABHAAV) will certainly attain emancipation, whether he belongs to Svetambar tradition or Digambar tradition, whether he is a Buddhist or the follower of any other religion. Jain religious texts maintain that it is only through the attainment of equanimity of mind that one can get emancipation or liberation. Even those who practice strict penance and austerities such as eating once in a month or two, and who make donations of millions of gold coins every day, can not attain emancipation unless they attain equanimity. It is only through the attainment of equanimity of mind that one gets emancipation or liberation. In Niyamsar, Acharya Kundakund states: What is the use of residing in a forest, mortification of body, observance of various fasts, study of scriptures, maintaining silence and so on and so forth if one is devoid of equanimity?

How can one attain this equanimity of mind? Mere verbal saying that I shall observe equanimity of mind and refrain from all types of injurious activities does not have any meaning unless we seriously practice it. It is easy to say that one should observe equanimity of mind, but in practice it is very difficult to attain it.

First we should understand the causes of our loss of equanimity of

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mind. Then we should try to eradicate them.

Our mental faculty is always in the grip of attachment and aversion. All our thoughts and actions are motivated by attachment and/or aversion. The vectors of attachment and aversion are solely responsible for the disruption of mental equanimity. As long as we have attachment and aversion, we are unable to attain equanimity. So we have to eradicate attachment and aversion to attain equanimity.

Now our attention turns to the eradication of attachment and aversion. How we can get rid of these two enemies of equanimity? Attachment involves the feelings of 'mineness' and such mindset can be overcome through the contemplations of solitariness (EKATVA) and distinctness (ANYATVA). The former implies that nothing is mine except my own self and the latter means that soul is distinct from all external entities.

To conquer the feelings of 'mineness' we should see things in their right perspective (SAMYAK DARSHAN). We should realize the transitory nature of worldly things including our own body. One who perceives the transient nature of one's own physical being and fleeting nature of things around him can never be attached to them. When 'mineness' vanishes, the external beings and objects lose their significance and one does not have aversion towards any individual or thing. Thus attachment and aversion disappear and equanimity dawns.

This implies that meditation upon the real nature of one's own self and external objects is the key to eradicate attachment and aversion, and to attain equanimity. Equanimity entails the understanding of the real nature of one's own self and of the external world. This involves self-awareness and self-absorption.

In Niyamasar, Acharya Kundakund states that one who meditates on one's real nature with thoughts of non-attachment, and realizes his self through righteous and pure concentration attains supreme equanimity. In other words, the practice of righteous meditation (DHARM DHYAAN) and spiritual meditation (SHUKLA DHYAAN) lead to equanimity. Thus, equanimity (SAAMAAYIK) is closely related to meditation. Acharya Kundakund states that one who is absorbed in righteous and spiritual meditation is introvert soul (ANTARAATMA) or aspirant (SAADHAK). One

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who is devoid of such an attitude is called extrovert soul (BAHIRAATMA). The realization of self is only possible through equanimity and equanimity is only possible through the meditation on one's own real nature.

In sum, the essence of equanimity has been beautifully presented by Acharya Amitagati in the following verse:

SATTVESHU MAITRI GUNISHU PRAMODAM
KLISHTESHU JEEVESHU KRIPAAPARATVAM
MAADHYASTHA BHAAVAM VIPAREET VRITTAU
SADA MAMAATMA VIDADHAATU DEVA.

O Bhagvan, I wish to have friendly feelings for all beings,
delightful respect for the virtuous ones,
utmost compassion for the afflicted beings, and
equanimity towards those whose views are contrary to mine.

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