

## PART VI.

### SALLEKHANĀ.

उपसर्गे दुर्भिक्षे जरसि रुजायां च निःप्रतीकारे ।

धर्माय तनुविमोचनमाहुः सल्लेखनामार्याः ॥ १२२ ॥'

The most excellent of men describe the giving up of the body (ghost) on the arrival of unavoidable calamity, distress, senescence and disease, with a view to increase of spiritual merit, as *sallekhanā*.

*Explanation.*—*Sallekhanā*-death must be distinguished from suicide. It is undertaken only when the body is no longer capable of serving its owner as an instrument of *dharma* and when the inevitability of death is a matter of undisputed certainty. In such cases, when life may be said to confess judgment to the claim of death, the adoption of the *sallekhanā* attitude is calculated to directly strengthen the soul and to prevent its future re-birth in any but the very best surroundings. Those who adopt the *sallekhanā* vow immediately become self-reliant, self-composed and self-centred; they cease to be agitated by personal considerations and suffering, and rise above the cravings and longings of the world. The effect of the terribly resolute

attitude of mind implied in this vow on the departing soul is simply wonderful, and immediately raises its rhythm, lifting it out of the slough of despond and negativity. The man who wanders or tosses about hither and thither, weeping and crying, in the closing moments of life, and spends the little time at his disposal in making vain endeavours to avoid the unavoidable, is nowhere compared with him who, realising the hopelessness of the endeavour to save his life, earnestly applies himself to control his destiny. The result is that, while the latter attains to *deva*-birth in the highest heavens, the former only finds himself in painful and unenviable circumstances and surroundings.

अन्तक्रियाधिकरणं तपःफलं सकलदर्शिनः स्तुवते ।

तस्माद्यावद्विभवं समाधिमरणे प्रयतितव्यं ॥ १२३ ॥

To be able to control one's conduct at the moment of death is the fruit (culmination) of asceticism ; all systems are at one as to this ; therefore, one should apply oneself to attain *sallekhandā* death to the extent of one's power.

*Explanation.*—As the mental attitude prevailing at the last moment of life considerably affects the future destiny of the soul, there can be no doubting the fact that those who give up the ghost according to the method of *sallekhandā* attain to the very best conditions of life in the hereafter.

स्नेहं वैरं सङ्गं परिग्रहं चापहाय शुद्धमनाः ।

स्वजनं परिजनमपि च क्षान्त्वा क्षमयेत्प्रियैर्वचनैः ॥१२४॥

Giving up love, hatred, attachment and possessions, with a pure mind, one should obtain, with sweet speech, forgiveness from one's kinsmen and attendants, and should also forgive them oneself.

आलोच्य सर्वमेनः कृतकारितमनुमतं च निर्व्याजं ।

आरोपयेन्महाव्रतमामरणस्थायि निःशेषं ॥ १२५ ॥

Renouncing duplicity and reflecting on the sins committed in any of the three ways, *krita*, *kārita* and *anumodanā*, one should take all the great vows of asceticism for the rest of one's days.

शोकं भयमवसादं क्लेदं कालुष्यमरतिमपि हित्वा ।

सत्त्वेत्साहमुदीर्य च मनः प्रसाद्यं श्रुतैरमृतैः ॥ १२६ ॥

Banishing grief, fear, anguish, attachment, wickedness and hatred, and bringing into manifestation energy and enthusiasm, one should extinguish the fire of passions with the nectar of the Word of God [*i.e.*, Scripture].

आहारं परिहाप्य क्रमशः स्निग्धं विवर्द्धयेत्पानम् ।

स्निग्धं च हापयित्वा खरपानं पूरयेत्क्रमशः ॥ १२७ ॥

Giving up solid food by degrees, one should take to milk and whey, then giving them up, to hot or spiced water.

खरपानहापनामपि कृत्वा कृत्वोपवासमपि शक्त्या ।

पञ्चनमस्कारमनास्तनुं त्यजेत्सर्वयत्नेन ॥ १२८ ॥

[Subsequently] giving up hot water also, and observing fasting with full determination, he should give up his body, trying in every possible way to keep in mind the five-fold obeisance *mantra* (holy formula).

*Explanation.*—The *pancha-namaskâra* (five-fold obeisance) *mantra* is as follows :—

*Namo Arhantânâṃ* (I bow to *Arhants*);<sup>\*</sup>

*Namo Siddhânâṃ* (I bow to *Siddhas*);<sup>†</sup>

*Namo Aiyaryânâṃ* (I bow to *Âchâryas*);<sup>‡</sup>

*Namo Uvajjhâyanâṃ* (I bow to *Upadhya's*);<sup>§</sup>

*Namo Loe sarva sahûṅâṃ* (I bow to all *Sâdhûs*)<sup>¶</sup>.

जीवितमरणाशंसे भयमित्रस्मृतिनिदाननामानः ।

सल्लेखनातिचाराः पञ्च जिनेन्द्रैः समादिष्टाः ॥ १२९ ॥

Entertaining a desire to live, wishing for [speedy] death, displaying fear, desiring to see or to be remembered to friends, looking forward to future sense-enjoyment [in the life to come]—these have been described as the transgressions of *sallekhanâ* by the Jinendra (Lord of Conquerors).

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\* *Arhanta* means a Perfect Being while still living in the world of men.

† *Siddha* is a Perfect Soul in *Nirvâṇa*.

‡ *Âchârya* signifies the Head of an order of holy Ascetics.

§ *Upâdhyâ* is the Preceptor of less advanced Ascetics.

¶ *Sâdhû* means an ascetic.

निःश्रेयसमभ्युदयं निस्तीरं दुस्तरं सुखाम्बुनिधिम् ।  
निःपिबति पीतधर्मा सर्वैर्दुःखैरनालीढः ॥ १३० ॥

He who has quaffed the nectar of *dharma* [such as an observer of the *sallekhanâ* vow] becomes freed from all kinds of pain, and drinks from the endless, unsurpassed and exalted 'ocean' of blissfulness of *moksha*.

*Explanation.*—The soul who successfully observes the *sallekhanâ* vow escapes from the pain and misery of *samsâra* and speedily attains to *moksha* than which no status is more exalted in the three worlds. He then enjoys, for all time to come, unabating, unending and unsurpassed happiness which is the very nature of his soul.

जन्मजरामयमरणैः शौकैर्दुःखैर्भयैश्च परिमुक्तम् ।  
निर्वाणं शुद्धसुखं निःश्रेयसमिष्यते नित्यम् ॥ १३१ ॥

That which is free from birth, old age, disease, death, grief, pain and fear, [which is] eternal, blissful, [and of the nature of] pure delight is called *nirvâna*.

विद्यादर्शनशक्तिस्वास्थ्यप्रहादृप्तिशुद्धियुजः ।  
निरतिशया निरवधयो निःश्रेयसमावसन्ति सुखं ॥ १३२ ॥

[Those who perform *sallekhanâ*] dwell unexcelled for all eternity, in the joy of final beatitude, endowed with [infinite] wisdom, faith, energy, renunciation, bliss, satisfaction and purity.

काले कल्पशतेऽपि च गते शिवानां न विक्रिया  
लक्ष्या । उत्पातोऽपि यदि स्यात् त्रिलोकसम्भ्रा-  
न्तिकरणपटुः ॥ १३३ ॥

And even if there be a cosmic disturbance, violent enough to destroy the three worlds, still no change is observable in the condition of the Perfect Souls even after the lapse of hundreds of *kālas* (cycles of Time).

*Explanation.*—One can think of a cosmic disturbance capable of destroying the three worlds, but it is absolutely inconceivable that there can be any change in the divine attributes of the Perfect Ones.

निःश्रेयसमधिपन्नास्त्रैलोक्यशिखामणिश्रियं दधते ।

निष्कट्टिकालिकाच्छविचामीकरभासुरात्मानः ॥ १३४ ॥

They who attain *nirvāna* possess the lustre of pure unalloyed gold ; they shine with effulgence [which is] the crest jewel of the three worlds.

*Explanation.*—The glory of the *siddhātman* is unsurpassed in the three worlds.

पूजार्थास्त्रैश्वर्यैर्वलपरिजनकामभोगभूयिष्ठैः ।

अतिशयितभुवनमद्भुतमभ्युदयं फलति सद्धर्मः ॥१३५ ॥

The merit acquired by the practising of *dharma* (religion or virtue) enables one to obtain high status, wealth, dominion, authority, power, attendants and the objects of enjoyment in abundance, [also] unsurpassed and prodigious good fortune.

*Explanation.*—This verse describes the effects of adopting the vows, *sallekhanā* and others, from the point of view of material prosperity, and shows that those who practise self-control, in the true sense of the word, rise to the most enviable positions in the world and become heir to unexcelled good fortune.

Thus ends the sixth part, descriptive of *sallekhanā*, of the Ratna Karanda Śrāvakāchāra, composed by Śrī Samantabhadra Swāmi.