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Mr. Kishan Sharma Interviews Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji at Mumbai on behalf of Ahimsa Foundation



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In the present era, lakhs of soldiers all over the world are busy practising the modern warfare. New arms and ammunitions of destruction are being tried everyday. Enormous financial resources are being drained on military forces by the most civilized ones. The terrorism is flourishing all over. Under these circumstances the relevance of ahimsa and the need for training in ahimsa has increased manifold.

According to Anuvrat Anushasta Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji "The philosophy of ahimsa has no meaning without the application of self discipline. If everyone believes in self-discipline, concurrence and philosophy of co-existence, then only the glorious form of ahimsa will be revealed and the real meaning of ahimsa will be understood by us".

Frequently, we talk about teaching ahimsa but how to make the people understand the relevance of Ahimsa is a big problem. Acharya Shri Mahapragya ji has presented a four point formula to explain ahimsa.

1. Self-control and change of heart
2. Change of thoughts and
3. Change in lifestyle
4. Purification of livelihood and training in livelihood.

Anuvrat Movement propounded by Acharya Shri Tulsi has played a very special role during his time. Shri Mahapragyaji ji has further shown through the concept of "Ahimsa Samvay" the way to develop individuals as well as the to bring reforms in the social system.

In a special session for Ahimsa Foundation, Acharya Shri Mahapragya has explained the relevance of his new concept of "Ahimsa Samvay" and many of his other valuable thoughts. Translated excerpts of the interview are given below.

Kishan Sharma : Acharya Shri Tulsi started Anuvrat movement and spread this to the entire world. What is the status of this movement today?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : "Anuvrat" is definitely a good programme. Through ahimsa yatra we are trying to send the message of non-violence to everyone. Anuvrat is a movement to develop moral standard and apply them in our day to day life. Ahimsa yatra is also undertaken with the same objectives.

Kishan Sharma : What is Ahimsa Samvay? Why it had to be started?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : We gave deep thought to it. We realised that people involved in violence are highly organised and crimes are committed with great planning. But people who profess ahimsa and believe in it are scattered and spread. If we are unorganised we cannot stop the violence. So it became essential to organise the Ahimsa loving- people before we could face the violent groups and stop them. With this objective, the efforts are being made to collect people of diverse thinking but who all believe in Ahimsa. This is called Ahimsa Samvay.

Kishan Sharma : According to you, Anuvrat and Ahimsa Samvay are two different movements?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : These are complimentary to each other.

Kishan Sharma : What are your efforts towards and peace and ahimsa? What message you have for the world?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : For peace we have to keep on making our efforts all over the world. This is our experience that without training and development, the message of peace and non-violence cannot be applied. In principle, we accept that some progress is being made but when it comes to practice even the teachers of ahimsa also become non-violent. That is why, to train individuals a four point programme has been chalked out. All persons who believe in non-violence should first accept a training in ahimsa and also convince others to undergo similar training. If we can apply these four points in our life then lot of problems will automatically get resolved.

Kishan Sharma : Do you have any definite programme to bring unity in Jain religion?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji - Not yet. At the moment it is important to create harmonious feelings of co-existence amongst different sects. It is important for all sects to first agree on the principles of ahimsa. It is their individual right to maintain their convictions but on the question of ahimsa they should all come together. Unity should not come out of compulsions but should be accepted as a way of life.

Kishan Sharma : Himsa is aggressive. According to you, can ahimsa also take an aggressive form?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : No, otherwise this will also be called himsa. Ahimsa should have a resistance within itself. If ahimsa will become aggressive it will get converted into himsa.

Kishan Sharma : How terrorism can be stopped with ahimsa?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : If some riots occur somewhere, the effect of this may last for two to three years. This creates instability in the entire affected society. Terrorism is the peak of non-violence. Violence can not give any desired results. Murders only destabilize the social setups. People have to understand that through violence we cannot achieve our goals even in hundred years. Wars have no solutions. We have to live within the norms of the society and fight for our objectives. Then only we will be able to achieve what we desire. Violence increases poverty and instability. Terrorism is much more frightening. To stop there is no other way but ahimsa.

Kishan Sharma : Are there different groups of ahimsa which are unable to unite.

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : Ahimsa has the same meaning for everyone. A lot of people are working on the principles of ahimsa but in different ways. It is regrettable that people with similar objectives are not able to unite and work together. The biggest problem is "individual egos and politics". The entire energy is spent on proving individual supremacy. Even the saints are not able to give up their egos. However, everyone is working for ahimsa.

Kishan Sharma : Everyday new sects and sub-sects are developing. What are your view?

Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji : There is nothing to think. Its all result of individual egos. Moral values and disciplined life is important for all and not the position of Acharya or any other position. All this is politics, ego, confusion and nothing else.

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