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Speak Up

TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN: A JAIN PERSPECTIVE

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The main component of a person's progress is time. Many principles of Jain philosophy are connected with time management. In Jain conduct, the word *apramatta* is used, which generally means making proper use of time and not wasting it. In the tenth chapter of the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, the last line of every verse is: *samayaṃ goyama! mā pamāyae*. means: 'O Gautam! Do not be negligent even for a single moment of time.' According to Lord Mahāvīra, the success of every action depends on the combination of four factors: *dravya* (substance), *kṣetra* (place), *kāla* (time), and *bhāva* (state). Even if all other factors are present, without the management of *kāla* (time), the desired result cannot be achieved.

Time management is the management of factors that waste time and those that save time. Exercising restraint over time-wasting factors and expanding time-saving factors is the precise way of managing time. Spending time on appropriate tasks is true time management; otherwise, it is mismanagement of time. The factors that waste time are of two types: (1) internal and (2) external. Internal causes include health, habits, mental state, laziness, etc., while external causes include family and professional situations, travel, games, and many other reasons that lead to the wastage of time. Proper use of time, by becoming progressive, is the path to attaining mental satisfaction.

In the seventh chapter (*vākya-śuddhi*) of *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, the three divisions of time are mentioned: 1. Past, 2. Present, and 3. Future. The past has already gone, the future is yet to come, and only the present is lived. Therefore, proper management of the present moment is true time management. Time is dynamic, and once it passes, it never returns. In the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* it is said:

jā jā vaccaī rayañī na sā paḍiniyattā |
dhammaṃ ca kuṇamāṇassa saphalā janti rāio || (14/25)

The nights that have passed do not return. The nights of one who practices Dharma become fruitful. Since management of the past is not possible, it is the management of the present that is essential.



The aphorism of the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (5/2/4) — '*kāle kālaṃ samāyare*' is an important principle of personality development. It means that performing a task at the appropriate time is beneficial; this maxim signifies holistic development. It also supports physical health, because if bodily functions are not carried out in accordance with time, the body can become a dwelling place for diseases. For example, sleeping at mealtime or eating late at night when it is time to sleep damages our digestive power, liver, and other organs. Thus, performing tasks at inappropriate times proves harmful to health.

Time management also affects the mind. It influences mental, emotional, and spiritual health; therefore, proper planning of time is the foundation of health. For a healthy life, time management is essential. In the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* it is said that one who wanders at the wrong time becomes more fatigued and engages in blame and reproach of others:

*akāle carasi bhikkho kālaṃ na paḍilehasi |
appāṇaṃ ca kilāmesi saṃnivesaṃ ca garahasi || (5/2/5)*

Thus, one who performs tasks at the right time remains free from physical and mental fatigue. For this reason, the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (8/41) advises remaining vigilant, stating: '*nindda ca na bahu mannejjā*'— do not give excessive importance to sleep. Sleeping beyond the prescribed time is harmful and leads to wastage of time. Even sleep must have a fixed time. For a healthy life, it is necessary to sleep in proper measure and at the proper time. To save time, oversleeping is strictly avoidable. Living life free from laziness is considered the best way.

For proper planning of time, it is necessary to create a timetable. During a monk's practice of alms-seeking, it is prescribed that after returning with food, the monk should begin self-study, then take a short rest, and afterwards distribute the food. By constructing a timetable, time is not misused. The true evaluation of time happens only when one reflects on its use. In the *Daśavaikālika Cūlikā* it is said:

*jo puvvarattāvarattakāle, saṃpehae appagamappaenaṃ |
kiṃ me kaḍaṃ? kiṃ ca me kiccasesaṃ? kiṃ sakkaṇijjaṃ na samāyarāmi.' (2/12)*

The practitioner should examine himself morning and evening: What have I done? And what could I do that I am neglecting due to carelessness? In this way, one who reflects accepts time management.

In this way, time management holds a very important place in a person's progress, because the completion of tasks and the attainment of success depend upon it. In Jain philosophy, the word '*samaya*' (time) has been used in many senses, such as *sampūrya* (completeness), *ātmā* (soul), *siddhānta* (principle), and *sūkṣma kālakhanda* (subtle units of time). Even with these multiple meanings, time has become most renowned in the sense of a temporal unit. Time is always passing; not a single part of life exists without it. Every change in life is relative to time— for example, arising, transformation, old and new, senior and junior—all are based on time. At the center of all stages of a single life—such as conception, birth, childhood, youth, adulthood,



old age, and death—time is the foundation. Time is the basis of life, and time management is the basis of a good life. In the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* it is said:

*annam annakāle, pāṇam pāṇakāle, vattham vatthakāle,
leṇam leṇakāle, sayanam sayanakāle (2/688)*

The essential goal of time management is to do what is necessary at the right time and to accomplish more work in less time. Useful factors should be employed, and unnecessary ones should be avoided. Proper time management becomes the foundational component of life management. Only those whose time management is good will have good life management. Time management influences life on many levels; therefore, it is necessary to perform the right task at the right time.

Finally, in this context, recalling Gosvāmī Tulsīdāsa:

kā baraṣā saba kṛṣī sukhānerṁ | samaya chūkerṁ puni kā pachitānerṁ ||

‘What use is rain after all the crops have dried up? What benefit is there in regretting once the time has already passed?’
