

नमो वीतरागाय
Namo Vitaragaya
Jay Jinendra

सज्जन-चित्त-वल्लभ
SAJJANA-CITTA-VALLABHA
Beloved of the Virtuous

Composed by

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An English translation of the Original Sanskrit Text

English translation by Manish Modi

1. Bowing in obeisance to the Jina Mahavira,
Who is the preceptor of the three worlds,
Beloved of the goddess of liberation,
Has destroyed the arrow of desire,
Wields instead the arrow of moral conduct.
Has conquered the sorrows of worldly life,
I commence this concise text,
'Beloved of the Virtuous'
In order to awaken those capable of attaining liberation.
So listen, o virtuous ones.
2. Just as the night is incomplete without the Moon,
And a lake without lotuses,
Or a convention without scholars,
Or an elephant without tusks,
Or a flower without fragrance,
Or a wife without her husband,
A monk who lacks appropriate conduct,
Despite being learned, is not an ornament of the religion.
3. O wise one, can you become a monk merely by giving up your clothes?
Does a snake lose its poison by shedding its skin?
What is the essence of asceticism?
It is the attainment of the ten-fold dharma,
Mastering the senses, truthfulness and perfect conduct.
If you have attachment and aversion,
You are not a monk in reality,

Only in appearance.

4. Detachment from the body,
Reverence for the preceptor,
Constant study,
Luminous conduct,
Deep sense of peace,
Detachment from the world,
Giving up all worldly ties, both internal and external,
Profound knowledge of religion,
And asceticism.
These are the attributes of a saint
That led to doing away with transmigration.

5. Why take the vows of an ascetic if you yearn for money?
Did you find the role of a layman unattractive?
Wanting to earn wealth reveals a desire for the opposite sex.
Why else would a monk wish to attain wealth?

6. Always stay in a place free from women, eunuchs and animals.
How?

Seek food from the homes of others,
Without asking them to make food for you.
Remaining immersed in
the six essential activities prescribed for a Jain ascetic,
Full of devotion towards religion,
Stay with other contemplative saints.
Practise the three jewels of rational perception, rational knowledge and rational conduct
And remain in your true self.

NB Evidently, the writer is addressing male ascetics. Had he been addressing female ascetics, he would have probably written the first line as:

“Always stay in a place free from men, eunuchs and animals.”

A Jain ascetic is expected to only eat food that is not cooked specially for him. He must seek food from the homes of others.

7. Your mouth is odoriferous, body dirty,
You feed yourself on food offered by others,
The hard ground is your bed everyday,
There is not even a loin cloth around your waist!
You are tonsure headed
And to people, you appear like a half burnt corpse.
And yet,

You are still interested in conversing with women!

NB This text, written by a revered Digambara Jain ascetic and head of monks, is written for Digambara monks. It serves to inspire them and keep them free from carelessness, hubris and negligence. One should not read any verse or part of it out of context and think that the writer means any disrespect towards Jain monks. In this verse, the author, a Digambara monk himself, exhorts other Digambara monks to remain focused on the self and stay away from temptations. He exaggerates the unattractive appearance of a monk (who has taken a vow to never bathe, brush his teeth, sleep on a bed, etc.) in order to discourage him from succumbing to human failings. The teachings have worked, because Jain monks are known for practising very strict celibacy.

8. How can you not be detached from this body?
When you know that this house-like body
Is composed of blood, semen, bones, marrow
And is covered by skin, which is like the wings of a fly.
Else, it would have been devoured by crow, herons, etc.

9. The body constantly emits odour and
Releases waste products from nine different parts.
Despite observing this,
If you are still attached to it,
Then tell me what on earth could cause you
To attain detachment from this world?
The fact that you use perfumed substances,
Establishes the odiferous nature of the body.

Note

The following verse is specifically directed at Jain monks.

They are being admonished to stay away from the opposite gender, as any attraction towards the opposite sex will not let them attain Vitaraga {supreme detachment} which is their goal as ascetics. Had the verse been directed at Jain nuns, they would have been similarly admonished to stay away from men.

The problem lies not with any gender, but with desire itself. Hence, all Jain ascetics, be they monks or nuns, need to be constantly vigilant and not let their thoughts stray towards the opposite gender. Celibacy is one of the most difficult vows to maintain. It is relatively easy to fast, meditate and study scriptures but extremely difficult to give up the desire for sex. I bow in obeisance to all those who have truly conquered desire.

10. Looking at graceful and expressive women,
Do not let yourself be ensnared by longing for them.
They are like the ripe fruits of a poisonous tree,
Even the smallest bite will lead to death.
Hence, avoid them as you would

Avoid a snake that could poison you with just a glance.