

இவ்வகைச் சான்றிதழ்கள் – young or old – tend to get caught in the frivolity of emerging lifestyles. Books such as 'The Ideal Girl' help us to stay faithful to our traditions and follow simple and ethical lifestyles.

Our elders may have shared some of Amar Muniji's advice and suggestions with us. Due to our busy schedules, we may not think of these words of wisdom often. But it is always good to remind ourselves again. And 'The Ideal Girl' is written in such a way that one can read it in one go or read small sections at a convenient pace.

Though the discourses in 'The Ideal Girl' were primarily meant for women, each of us can pick up pearls of wisdom from them.

#### Excerpts from 'The Ideal Girl'

The dignity of women is quite equal to that of men.

Thoughts play an important role in defining a man's destiny.

The purpose of buying an object should be its utility and necessity and not its beauty.

If you keep your calm in conflicting situations, peace prevails.

The purpose of your actions should be others' wellbeing.

**VEERAYATAN**

RAJGIR, NALANDA, BIHAR

THE IDEAL GIRL

UPADHYAYA AMAR MUNI

# THE IDEAL GIRL

(ADARSH KANYA)

UPADHYAYA AMAR MUNI

# **THE IDEAL GIRL**

(Adarsh Kanya)

Discourses on leading a fulfilling, happy and fruitful life

**Upadhyaya Amarmuni**

©

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## FOREWORD

Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji was an enlightened intellectual and a social and spiritual reformer. He made it his mission to lead others to enlightenment. He simplified profound spiritual tenets during his discourses, so that the common man could understand them easily. As the essence of his discourses transcends time, they have been brought out as books.

His works are of high spiritual value, at the same time being of great literary merit. His clear thinking and lucid style of presentation enabled the listener to grasp difficult principles easily. His discourses covered every possible perspective, leaving no doubts in the minds of his audience. His speeches were complete and detailed that everyone concurred with the spiritual doctrines he presented.

The spiritual and social values that he taught during his lifetime are applicable today and always. Some of his discourses have been translated into English and brought out as Equanimity, Bliss and Ahimsa Dharshan. The latest book 'The Ideal Girl' is a collection of his discourses on the role of a young woman in holding her family together, in the present turbulent times. With values disintegrating so fast, Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji's teachings would help the young women in our families stay rooted to our values.

We feel blessed in bringing out this book. We decided to publish this in English so that Amar Muniji's words of wisdom reaches the maximum number of people.

Besides life's lessons on time management, cleanliness and the like, Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji has enunciated

beautifully how thoughts shape our lives. This book begins with his speeches on the same.

The insightful words of Amar Muniji presented in this book will surely guide our young girls and empower them to lead happy lives and to bring happiness to those around them.

We thank Mr. Sugalchand Jain of M/s Sugal & Damani for his efforts in getting 'Adarsh Kanya', the Hindi version of the book translated as 'The Ideal Girl' and getting it published.

**Acharya Chandanaji**

Veerayatan, Rajgir

December, 2014

## **Publisher's Note**

When we first decided to translate Upadhyaya Amar Muniji's discourses into English and publish them, we had only Jain readers in mind. So it was an exciting surprise to come across non-Jains reading Bliss, one of the books that we had published. It shows that Amar Muniji's teachings are relevant to all sections of society at all times.

So far we have published three of Amar Muniji's works namely, Bliss, Equanimity and Samayik Sutra. The overwhelming response we continue to receive for these books encouraged us to bring out more titles. We decided on 'The Ideal Girl' (Adarsh Kanya in Hindi), as it recognizes the role of women in bringing about peace and happiness in the family, which will have a ripple effect on society.

Our elders may have taught us some of Amar Muniji's advice and suggestions. Sometimes due to our busy everyday schedules, we may not think of these words of wisdom often. But it is always good to remind ourselves again. And 'The Ideal Girl' is written in such a way that one can read it in one go or read small sections at a convenient pace.

Times keep changing and our minds – young or old – tend to get caught in the frivolity of emerging lifestyles. Books such as these help us to stay faithful to our traditions and follow simple and ethical lifestyles.

Jainism lays a lot of stress on sustainable living. It is evident in the precautions we take in our everyday responsibilities. Amar Muniji says 'unclean ways of a person can result in the death of countless life forms.'

'No art compares with the art of speaking' says Amar Muniji on the importance of communicating pleasantly with others. Such advice applies to every human being. The book is full of similar quotes that would help us stay enlightened and positive.

Though the discourses in 'The Ideal Girl' were primarily meant for women, I am sure each of us can pick up pearls of wisdom from it, as I have.

I thank Veeryatan for all the support in publishing 'The Ideal Girl'. I thank Dr. Adarsh Saxena for translating the book into English. I thank my partners in Sugal & Damani for their unstinted support in my publishing endeavours.

I thank Ms. Jency Samuel for editing and rewriting the translated script. I profusely thank Revered Acharya Sri Chandanaji and Sri T R Dagaji for permitting us to get the book 'Adarsh Kanya' translated into English as 'The Ideal Girl'.

**Sugalchand Jain**  
December, 2014

### **Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji – A Brief Note**

Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji was a Jain monk who was equally well-versed in Indian religions and philosophy. He was highly knowledgeable about the Vedas, Agamas, Upanishads and Puranas, besides many other philosophical and religious texts.

Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji's scholarly speeches presented in a simple manner attracted people to his discourses, as did his kindness and compassion to fellow beings. His presence spread a positive aura and his speeches gave his audience a deep insight into religion, spirituality and life in general. All his discourses were backed by logic and reasoning.

He was a proponent of educating girls. He acknowledged the silent role of mothers in societal development. The books he has written on the subject stand proof to his beliefs. As a firm believer in practising what he preached, Amar Muniji bestowed the title 'Acharya' on Sadhvi Chandanaji. It was the first in Jaina history that a lady was made acharya.

Amar Muniji has written books not only on Jainism, but on Buddhism and Hinduism as well.

In 1970, commemorating the golden jubilee of Amar Muniji's renunciation, the then Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi, bestowed him with the title of 'Rashtrasant', meaning 'saint of the nation'.

Ably supported by Acharyasri Chandanaji, he founded Veerayatan, a non-profit organization to work towards spiritual and social development. His teachings and his work through Veerayatan continue to empower and uplift people.

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## 1. WEALTH OF THOUGHTS

Thoughts have the power to define and shape us. Whether man rises above the constraints of the mind or mires in it depends on his thoughts. Thoughts could upraise him or undo him. Thoughts determine whether a man swims against the currents or lets himself be swept away by them. If a man manages to keep himself away from a degenerative path, it is due to the supreme power of his thoughts.

Imagine a situation where a stranger arrives at a shop when the shopkeeper has gone out for a few moments on some urgent work. The stranger may be tempted to take some money from the cashbox. As soon as he extends his hand towards the cashbox, a thought is sure to strike his mind that tells him that what he intends to do is stealing and that it is immoral.

Another man who is on a vow to fast at night finds the eatables very inviting. His mind vacillates and he decides to eat something. But as he stretches his hand, his stream of thoughts gives him a jolt. Realizing that he has to keep his vow in all honesty and sincerity, he decides not to eat and withdraws his hand.

If our deeds depended on others watching us, it is falsity. It is not a vow at all, though it might appear to be one. It should be borne in mind that thoughts are the arsenal of life. The weapons stored in it can protect us if used properly; they can blow us up if used haphazardly. So it is with thoughts.

## **The power of thoughts**

The above illustrations lead us to the definite conclusion that thoughts play an important role in defining a man's destiny. The power and magnitude of thoughts are greater, stronger and more extensive than that of electric current. It is a known fact that nuclear power assumed great importance during the World War II. Even the power of atom bombs does not compare with the power of thoughts. After all, it was thoughts that led man to discovering the atom bomb.

This also shows that thoughts wield great power; hence one should exercise care on how thoughts develop. Just as with any idea and process, thoughts can also be put to good or bad use. Noble thoughts uplift a man whereas evil thoughts degrade him. It is my sincere advice to everyone, be it a man or a woman, who wishes to tread the sublime path, to harbour nothing but noble thoughts in the treasure house of his or her mind.



Thoughts  
play an  
important  
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defining  
a man's  
destiny



## **Noble thoughts**

“Let not the strong stream of thoughts be wasted in any manner” – this is what I wish to tell the daughters who read this book. Control your thoughts. Entertain only noble thoughts in your mind. If evil thoughts find a way into your mind, they stay there for long and it would be difficult to banish them. If evil thoughts are allowed into the soil of mind, they would keep on drawing water and their roots would develop a stronger hold over a period

of time. When the roots go deeper, the tree of evil thoughts becomes a permanent fixture. Uprooting it becomes difficult.

### **Firmness of thoughts**

Even before the war started, a cowardly warrior was plotting escape routes if he were to be surrounded by the enemy. A brave man does not think of escape as an option. His only resolve is to defeat the enemy. Life too is a battle field, where many a fight will take place. If your thoughts waver like that of the cowardly warrior, you would not be able to overcome any difficult situation in the battle of life. Your duty is to aim high and utilize your strength in achieving that goal.

You will face obstacles while carrying out good deeds; but if you remain firm in your resolve, even the mightiest power would not be able to stop you. Through your resolve, even the hardest of rocks could be shattered out of your way.

People might try to deter you. But firm decisions cannot be blown away like straws by a violent gust of wind. You would have read about Sita who was the epitome of virtues such as firmness, sacrifice, truth and relinquishment. She was firm in her decision to accompany her husband to the forest, and did not waver even when she was informed about the hardships she would face. She suffered many hardships in the forest and later in the prison of demon King Ravana. But she did not allow even a single speck of weakness creep into her thoughts as it might have led her to slip from the path of truth. Her firm thoughts helped her to hold on to

her decision even in the face of death.

You are the beloved daughters of this holy land that Sita hailed from. You should emulate her and remain firm in your noble thoughts. As you are pursuing your studies now, remain firm in your decision; do not give up on your goal of acquiring knowledge, even when you face obstacles. Strengthen yourself with firm thoughts so that you can achieve your goals in future too. Remain alert so that you never lose courage.

### **Effect of type of company**

People often wonder how one could entertain noble and benevolent thoughts. Noble thoughts emerge when you are in good company and when you read good books. The good company that shapes your thoughts could be books or people.

Be in the company of gentle girls so as to cultivate good and noble thoughts. Spend time with the elders in the family when you get an opportunity. You will gain a lot of wisdom from them. Attend the discourses of the gurudeva whenever he visits your town. When Sadhviji Maharaj visits your place, be in her company to gain knowledge. Keep away from girls who are ill-mannered and ill-natured. Keep quarrelsome and slandering women at arm's length.



Noble thoughts emerge when you are in good company



Be cautious of men who claim to be sadhus. No one can say how and when evil thoughts generated in the

company of bad men would corrupt the mind. But if they do, they become permanent fixtures in the mind, suppressing and defiling noble thoughts. You know how a small quantity of sour substance spoils an entire container of milk. Thoughts remain noble only if you keep yourself permanently in good company.

### **Effect of books**

Besides good company of people, good books generate noble thoughts. Good books illumine your life with knowledge. They are silent teachers that never scold or punish. Yet they continue to impart knowledge. Daughters, make good books your friends. Whenever you can, read biographies of great men or spiritual books. When you do so, the light of noble thoughts would illumine your life. Note down the noble suggestions and ideas from the books that you read and put them into practice. These would help you advance in life and keep you content.

Good  
books  
generate  
noble  
thoughts

### **Perpetual wealth**

A man's character cannot be assessed by his appearance, caste or complexion. It is his thoughts that reveal how noble and true he is. The dictum 'like thoughts like character' is the touchstone that can assess man.

Thoughts that you have accumulated from books are the real and permanent wealth. This wealth of thoughts comes to your aid in joyous occasions as well as dismal days.

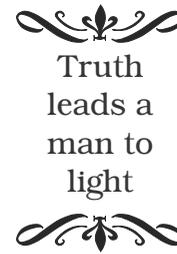


## 2. TRUTH IS GOD

Truth is a lamp. Truth is a force. It is the sun. It is God as well.

Man always wishes to be away from darkness. Truth is the lamp that lights the path of man so that he can emerge from the darkness of falsehood. It is the force that leads a man to light.

Darkness starts vanishing even before the sun appears in the horizon. Similarly falsehood vanishes when truth as the sun appears on the firmament of the heart of the person who has taken a vow to speak the truth alone. Just as darkness flees the sun, falsity flees truth.



### **The importance of truth**

Jainism lays much emphasis on truth. Bhagwan Mahaveer did not wish to be addressed as God. Even as far back as 2500 years, he had said that truth is the real God. Every word of his is absolutely true. A man does become God or superhuman by treading the path of truth. Truth in itself is God that transforms devotees of truth into Gods. A God who does not elevate his devotees to his own level is not a God. Nowhere else does such a generosity lie, for the generosity of the superhuman needs to be greater than that of the common man. Bhagwan Mahaveer has said in Acharagasutra that those who obey the dictates of truth could even conquer death. Victory over death equates to acquiring godhood. This

shows how truth can ultimately lead one to godhood.

### **Meaning of truth**

Do you know what truth is? Truth is to convey exactly what one hears or sees. Nothing should be twisted or exaggerated. If you wish to be a worthy and respected girl, never resort to falsehood. One should never lie to cover up a mistake. Everyone commits a mistake at some point in life; but to own up to that mistake rather than covering it up shows great strength of character.

### **Cascading effect of truth and untruth**

	
One who adheres to truth would never experience sorrow or regret	A lie leads to more lies. What will you achieve if you cover up a fault by telling a lie? Nothing. On the other hand you might have to lie again to cover up that lie. Then it becomes a habit and you start lying more and more. If you implicate someone falsely also, the lie would be doubled. Then people start losing faith in you.
	

However, speaking the truth according to your conscience keeps you happy. One who adheres to truth would never experience sorrow or regret. One who speaks the truth always is dauntless whereas one who lies lives with the constant fear of his lies coming to light. One who speaks the truth has an extraordinary radiance about him; and the faith and confidence that others have in him keep abounding. We know that all the relations in this world – whether personal or business – depend on mutual trust. One who speaks the truth gains the confidence

and trust of everyone, gaining a lot more in the process. His truthfulness makes people respect him and none of his tasks is ever hindered.

### **Truth and its lesson**

Dear daughter, I entreat you to speak the truth always. No one believes girls who are in the habit of lying. Everyone views such girls with contempt. On the other hand parents and neighbours believe girls who speak the truth. Everyone praises them and they are an inspiration to young girls.

I am sure you know the story of the shepherd who lied. Sometimes he played a prank when he took his herd for grazing. For sheer fun, he would shout, "Help, help! A wolf is coming. Save me!" Peasants working in fields would run to his rescue, only to find out that he had been lying out of mischief. This happened many times. When a wolf did come, the shepherd raised an alarm, but no one came to his rescue, thinking it was his usual prank. They took his truth for a lie. The wolf struck the shepherd and he lost his life.



A lie and  
resultant  
pleasure  
are short-  
lived but  
truth is  
eternal



I think you would have understood the moral enshrined in this story – that a lie might serve a momentary purpose or temporary entertainment. But one does not gain anything out of a lie. A lie and pleasure born out of it are short-lived whereas truth is eternal. As I told you earlier, truth is God personified and one who adheres to truth is never afraid of anything.



### 3. POWER OF HUMILITY

Humility means being humble and modest and not being proud and arrogant. If we interpret humility in a broader sense, it implies gentleness. Gentleness is a great virtue bestowed on mankind. But where women are concerned, it is a greater and an essential virtue; because a woman can transform a hell of a house into a heaven of a home through her gentleness.

#### The power of gentleness



Gentle  
behaviour  
has the  
power to  
make a  
foe into a  
friend



Is there anyone who doesn't admire gentle behaviour and speech? For we know that gentle behaviour has the power to make a foe into a friend. A gentle woman keeps her entire family under her charge. The family listens to her willingly. Can you imagine gentle behaviour towards a cruel person changing him? There are instances in history of the most callous and contemptuous being transformed through gentleness. Such is the power of gentleness.

#### Pride vs power of love

As against humility, pride is not a desirable trait; in fact it is detestable. A person with pride considers himself or herself to be rich, good-looking, clever and virtuous. Pride comes in the way of the happiness of a family. Therefore the daughters of the family should be committed to keeping the family members safe from the

tentacles of pride. Conceited girls who are arrogant, rude and ill-mannered cannot sustain a loving relationship with anyone. It is a mistaken notion that one can get work done through an overbearing nature. It is not so. No one likes to associate with people who are overbearing. Even maids and helpers who offer their services to us do not like a dictatorial stance in their masters. In fact they would offer their services more willingly and happily if we directed them with affection and love. That is why love is believed to have magnetic power.



Pride  
comes in  
the way of  
a family's  
happiness



Many people are of the opinion that we should be strict with those in our employ. It is true that a bit of reticence is necessary. But being reserved does not equate with being rude. Wise women manage their homes better with affection than those who are ill-tempered. The power of love and not pride help us have our way.

### **Acceptable offensiveness**

One should know the difference between gentleness and timidity. I advocate gentleness and not cowardice through extremely gentle behavior. When a woman's life or honour is in danger, she has to adopt an offensive stance. In such an instance, she cannot remain gentle. If she is confronted by a characterless miscreant, she must become offensive to protect her honour. It is true that the Jain religion is a proponent of the great virtues of non-violence and mercy and attaches great importance to humility; but it does not preach that a

woman should be meek or cowardly when faced with uncultured perverts and adopt a suppliant stance. Such miscreants should be dealt with offensively so that they do not behave in an improper way with any woman again.

The glory of India is founded on her women. The wellbeing of the country would be assured when the daughters of this country display the characteristics of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. The perfume of modesty and humility of the daughters should pervade the house and beyond. Yet they should be bold and courageous that characterless criminals tremble at their sight. Such an assimilation of gentleness and boldness combined will ensure the wellbeing of the Indian women and our homeland for years to come.



## 4. TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is invaluable. While everything else in this universe can be assessed and assigned a value, time has never been assessed and never will be. Time could be assigned a value only if something is obtained in exchange for time.

### **The flow of time**

Time can be likened to a fast moving stream. The stream flows continuously, not stopping for even a single second. The great and powerful men who have walked this earth have never been able to make it stop or obstruct its path. When Bhagwan Mahaveer was about to attain nirvana at Pawapuri, Indra came down from heaven and pleaded with him to add moments and extend his own life. Lord Mahaveer replied, "O! king of gods, this is impossible. One cannot stop the flow of time. My life is about to end. I can neither pause it nor prolong it. To do so is an impossible task for anyone, however powerful he might be."

  
All the  
wealth in  
this world  
cannot  
stop time,  
slow it  
down or  
hasten it  
up  


Lord Mahaveer's reply to Indra is the absolute truth. All the wealth in this world cannot stop time, slow it down or hasten it up.

Now that it is obvious that time is precious and that it will not wait for you, reap all the benefits that you possibly can by utilising time wisely. Lord Mahaveer has

said, "Days and nights fleet and fade, never to return. One who indulges in impiety and in useless pursuits during his days and nights wastes time. On the other hand, one who practises religion makes his time worthwhile".

### **Wise use of time**

My daughters, you are young. So spend your time in acquiring knowledge, rather than indulging in fun and frolic. Time spent in studies now will stand you in good stead in future. Else, you will be repenting it your entire life. When you realize the importance of studies and wish to pursue the same, you wouldn't be able to, since the childhood you have left behind cannot be regained. There is no stage in life as suitable as childhood for studying. When unlettered elderly ladies see you enjoy reading religious books, they will regret their inability to read and difficulty in comprehending the scripture when others read it aloud to them.

My children, when you hear such laments from the ladies, be inspired to not waste a single moment of your lives. Emulate the hands of the clock that never rest and take a vow to work every single moment.

Women who do not know the value of time indulge in gossiping. Gossips spread, leading to hostilities between families that have been living peacefully. Such is the outcome of wasting time on unworthy pursuits.

Daughters, you are intelligent and understand that time is 'Chintamani ratna'. Through this ratna, you can achieve all that you wish for. Never be idle and waste time. Keep yourself engaged by studying, doing charitable work, attending to the sick, guiding younger children through moral stories and reading the scriptures to elderly ladies. When you are not engaged thus, take recourse to physical work such as stitching and sewing. For, an idle mind is the devil's workshop that sows the seeds of evil thoughts. He will keep his vices away from those who are alert and active.



Losing  
a single  
moment  
in time is  
worse than  
losing the  
Kohinoor  
diamond



One can achieve a lot by utilizing the time allotted to him in the best possible way. Losing a single moment in time is worse than losing the Kohinoor diamond. That should convey how wisely time is to be utilised.



## 5. THE SIN OF UNCLEANLINESS

Uncleanliness means lack of clean habits or being dirty. One who leads an unclean or dirty life is prone to committing many mistakes. He not only spoils his own health but endangers that of his fellowmen. Spoiling one's health because of uncleanliness is tantamount to straying from the path of religion. This is the reason why Jainism regards lack of cleanliness as a sin. How can a person who has fallen sick due to lack of hygiene practise religion?

### **Avoiding impurity**

There are two types of impurity, namely, mental and physical. Mental impurity means defiling the mind and the spirit. Physical impurity means keeping one's body and his environs dirty. Though one should avoid mental as well as physical impurities, shunning mental impurity should be given more importance.

  
Jainism  
regards  
lack of  
cleanliness  
as a sin  


The following should be borne in mind to keep mental impurities away:

- To refrain from anger
- To refrain from greed
- To refrain from deceit
- To refrain from pride
- To refrain from stealing
- To refrain from lying
- To refrain from evil thoughts
- To refrain from breach of trust

- To refrain from gossip
- To refrain from temporal pleasures

Cleanliness of body comes next, for which too a great deal of attention needs to be paid. Jainism places equal importance on mental and physical cleanliness. Only those who have not understood the concepts of Jainism claim that the religion approves of impure living. There is no religion as Jainism that lays emphasis on cleanliness.

The following should be borne in mind to keep physical impurities away:

- To keep one's face and the rest of the body clean
- To keep one's hair clean
- To keep one's clothes, houses and the living environs clean
- To keep one beddings clean
- Not to drink unstrained water
- To keep the strainer intact and clean
- Not to keep flour for many days
- Not to consume vegetables, etc. stored for many days
- Not to eat stale food
- Not to keep utensils soiled and dirty
- Not to consume food in excess and not to store left-over food
- To keep toilets always clean

### **Cleanliness compares to heaven**

You, my daughter, are the Goddess Lakshmi of the house. Like her you should maintain your purity and piety. Clever women who keep themselves and their

surroundings clean, cause divine favour to be showered on themselves, their families and those around them. On the other hand, those who do not give importance to cleanliness and live in dirty conditions bring ill-luck to themselves and their families. Their innocent neighbours are also affected by their uncleanliness. Sometimes even the entire village has to bear the consequences of their unclean ways of life as the same lead to contagious diseases such as cholera and plague. It should be borne in mind that the careless and unclean ways of a person can result in the death of countless other life forms. Women who adhere to clean ways of living are like the goddesses of heaven who shower grace on everyone.



## 6. THE VICE OF FEUDING

Indian families are not as strong as they used to be. The chains of love that serve as connecting links of the families are weakening by the day. Families are falling apart and familial feelings are disappearing. Flourishing, happy and contented families are hard to come by nowadays. To search for such a happy and heavenly family of old world charm seems to be a chase of mirage.

What is the malady that so weakens our family lives? The affliction appears to inhabit the very roots of our families, destroying the links of love that support them. This affliction is none other than the feuds between family members. We should understand that feuding is the biggest vice of mankind and that is what is causing familial discords.

### **The necessity for peace**

If you keep your calm in conflicting situations, peace prevails. For it is very important for mankind that peace prevails at all times. It should be borne in mind



If you  
keep your  
calm in  
conflicting  
situations,  
peace  
prevails



that if you let your cool down even slightly, feuds enter the household and destroy the peace; and the heavenly kalpavriksha of love would be burnt to ashes in a moment. The flame of a lamp cannot be kept covered for long. Even if you try to hide it, the light gets diffused. Similarly, ill feelings within one's heart cannot be suppressed for

long. Ill feelings arising out of different situations go on accumulating in one's heart and manifest as feuds, destroying the very fabric of happy families.

Do not let ill-will towards anyone defile your heart. If you keep your heart pure, you can be assured that there will be no feuds around you. A pure heart keeps feuds away; but it is essential that you keep your calm for your heart to remain clean. Have you noticed how surly and stressed the members of a feuding family are? This further drives a wedge within the family and the joyful atmosphere of the house disappears.

### **Woman as the queen of the house**

A house sans woman is no home at all. The house where she does not rule is a burial ground. Love, tenderness and grace permeate a house where she rules.

Do bear in mind that no one likes a woman who nags. Everyone avoids her. Her children too live in constant fear. She is seen as a spitfire. She behaves like a 'chandi' and roars like a lioness, terrorizing everyone.

Daughters, you have to grow up to be the queen of the house. When you are bid to do something at home by your parents or your siblings, do it immediately and with pleasure. Even when they go against your wishes, do not argue; but explain your point of view patiently so that they are convinced and accept your wishes. Maintain a cordial relationship with your friends always and never let any misunderstandings fester among yourselves.

To be the queen of the house and carry out the

responsibilities is not easy. A heaven of a home becomes a hell of a house when women keep on nagging. They go on nagging, quarreling and complaining throughout the day. They become sarcastic and abusive for small issues. Let grace and love alone radiate from you, when you as the queen rule the household.

### **Love begets love**

Now that you live with your parents, your role is limited to that of a daughter and a sister. You find a friend in your bhabhi, your brother's wife, when he gets married. Be affectionate to her. The relationship between a nanad – husband's sister – and her bhabhi is one of companionship and helpfulness. Many girls

 Love begets love and ill will begets ill will 	quarrel with their bhabhis, abuse and slight them. Calling one's bhabhi a pauper or an uncultured person is highly objectionable. Your bhabhi does not become an outsider just because she was not born in your family.
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Remember, before she entered your house as a bride, she too played her roles as a daughter and a sister just as you do now. Imagine how she would feel. The house is new. So are the atmosphere and the family. In such a circumstance, you must shower her with love and not scorn. Keep in mind that you too would get married, go to a new house; you will also take on the role of a bhabhi to someone. If your nanad insulted you, how aggrieved you would be. Please bear in mind that one reaps what one sows.

Girls, in general, develop animosity towards their

sisters-in-law. So the purpose of this discourse is to be aware from the beginning and not fall into the trap of developing a dislike to your bhabhi. It is the norm that love begets love and ill will begets ill will.

### **Recognising the adversary**

Women are generally gullible. They believe whatever they hear. Believing what they hear as the truth, they would quarrel even with the loving members of the family. You should remember that those who malign honourable people are not your friends. You should be alert when such malevolent women make false accusations. Their only intention is to make you angry with such falsity, create a rift in your family and enjoy the ensuing altercations. You should distinguish such women and pay no heed to their lies.

### **Altercations are untenable**

Many women resort to angry arguments or quarrels to hide their faults or to prove their innocence. They are of the wrong impression that if they argue, they would be considered innocent. They believe that they would safeguard their reputation and honour by arguing. But nothing can be further from the truth. People are not so inane that they are not able to judge the truth. If you have not committed a fault, what would you gain by quarreling? By arguing you cannot prove your innocence. On the other hand, it brings down your reputation. Arguing does not uphold one's prestige. Bear in mind that dignity is earned by keeping calm and not by any other means.



Dignity is  
earned by  
keeping  
calm



### **The fragrance of love**

I have said a lot about the merits of womanliness. The verity of womanliness must be realized with measured words. Suffering some kind of a loss is better than feuding. Feuds will destroy the home, the haven of love. By keeping calm you can win over feuds. It should be borne in mind that it is the calm and composed woman who earns repute in this world. It is the very reason why a woman is likened to Goddess Lakshmi. She should always spread the fragrance of love and peace wherever she goes, be it the house of her parents or parents-in-law or that of her relatives.

If your life abounds with the perfume of love, the fragrance would naturally permeate around and so would your fame. Love enhances fame. The more loving a person is, the more worthy she becomes of renown.



## 7. THE NECESSITY OF NON-POSSESSIVENESS

The principle of non-possessiveness is a deep and sublime subject that can only be understood through the study of scriptures and religious books. Young as you are, it is not expected of you. Yet the basics are explained here in the hope that you would follow them and find happiness.

It cannot be disputed that everyone wants to be happy. Hence it is necessary to find out where this happiness lies. If we define happiness by the measure of worldly possessions, it would not be satisfactory since people find happiness in different things. However, Lord Mahaveer has explained happiness thus: “Real happiness lies in curtailing one’s desires”. As we can control the desires by following the tenet of non-possessiveness, we have to understand the same.

Try to find out what people desire in general. If you observe carefully you will figure out that people desire happiness. Does anyone ever desire sorrow? No, none at all.

  
Real  
happiness  
lies in  
curtailing  
one’s desires  


### **Battle between greed and gain**

The more man desires, the more deprived he would be of happiness. Those who think that they would be happy if they had riches, mansions, cars, houses and other such worldly possessions are very mistaken. When man desires too much unreasonably, unmindful of the

moral limits, he earns disquiet not only for himself but for others as well. I am sure you have noticed how the fire rages when you keep adding leaves and hay. Does fire ever subside when you add firewood? It is the same with the human heart. When desires are fulfilled, there arise more desires. Our heart is an unbounded lake. The dream of seeing it filled could happen, only if it had a boundary. But how can that which has no bounds be filled? Lord Mahaveer said, “Millions of mountains of gold and silver cannot satisfy man’s heart. His desires are as limitless as the sky. His desires have never been fulfilled; they never will be”. Thus, the more one gains, the more his greed grows. Man loses happiness and peace in this battle between greed and gain.

### **Way to find real happiness**

The right path to happiness and peace lies in curtailing one’s wants and desires. The less the desires one has, the more content and happy would he be. This is the basic principle of non-possessiveness advocated by Lord Mahaveer. So, man should make his living simple. Therein lies the source of happiness and peace. ‘Simple living’ translates as having the bare minimum needs that can be met with the most ordinary means. Reducing one’s desires and needs leads to real happiness.

The first step in curtailing one’s needs is to have control over one’s need for food. Most people get accustomed to eating savory and spicy food. If their food is not seasoned with spices and



Reducing  
one’s  
desires  
and needs  
leads  
to real  
happiness



condiments, they find it difficult to eat the same. They do not eat to satiate their hunger but to satiate their tongue. On the home front, often altercations start over food. It is not a happy situation when people squabble over food that has not been cooked perfectly.

### **Exist for eating?**

Do remember that spicy and pungent food is not good for health. It weakens the liver. Food is meant to keep the body healthy and strong so as to enable a person to practise religion with devotion. But such spicy food makes the body disease-prone.

Though the chat items and sweets sold in the markets satiate the taste buds, they harm our well-being. Those who consume these spoil their health. Their entire life is spent on satisfying their craving for such food. They become laggard and incompetent for all the important works to be carried out. Have you seen how the Pandas of Mathura go on attending invitation feasts? They do nothing but eat and it shows in their incompetence in doing any work. Do understand that we eat to exist in this world and not exist to eat.

### **Traits of a noble woman**

You are likened to the goddess of India. You should evolve into Griha Lakshmi, the goddess of your house. If good food makes you stray, you will fail to attain the status of Griha Lakshmi. Food cooked at home is always the best. Partake of it with pleasure. Showing distaste over food that is not of your choice is not a good trait.

It is an insult to food. If you happen to visit someone at meal time, relish whatever simple food is served. Keep in mind that one who is critical and fussy about food can never attain spiritual heights. According to Lord Mahaveer 'bhakta-katha' is a sin. 'Bhakta katha' means discussing about food with the intention of passing judgment about its quality. This is also a bad trait. Following simplicity in all aspects of food is the first distinctive trait of a noble woman.



One who  
is critical  
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heights



### **The purpose of clothes**

While discussing happiness, food is followed by clothes. The simpler your clothes are, the happier you would be. In many households, women set aside a separate space for ornate and expensive clothes. They force their family members to buy bright-coloured silk clothes for them. Such women are not happy. Neither do they live in peace nor do they let others live in peace. In such circumstances, what can one expect except feuds?

My daughters, you are educated and learned. Do not get carried away by expensive and flashy clothes. Can one not live without a silk sari? Will only expensive clothes enhance your elegance? Do you think people will not have good regard for you if you do not wear silk clothes? Such thinking is not right. Give up such thoughts as soon as you can.

Man's traits are his real adornments. Even if you wear khadi, you will be respected if you have good attributes. But in the absence of good traits, even if you wear silk clothes, you will end up becoming an object of ridicule. Clothes are worn to protect oneself from the extremities of weather. They serve the basic purpose of offering us modesty. They are not objects of pomp and ostentation.

Man's traits  
are his real  
adornments

### **Symbol of dutiful life**

Our clothes should be clean and tidy even if they are coarse. Beauty lies in cleanliness and piety and not in expensive apparels. During our freedom struggle, thousands of women hailing from noble families took part in the satyagraha movement, wearing khadi clothes. You know they were held in high esteem. Jainism considers clothes made of ordinary cloth as a symbol of dutiful life.

### **Happiness in relinquishing**

Ideally, to practise non-possessiveness, one must limit his desires in all worldly possessions such as ornaments, house, car and clothes. Leading a life in all its simplicity is the highest ideal of the tenet of non-possessiveness. This ideal of Jainism will lay the foundation for permanent peace in the world. The lesser the desires are, the lesser would the demands be. The lesser the demands are, the lesser would the cunningness be, in fulfilling them. The lesser the cunningness, the more transparent and

simple the lifestyle would be. The simpler the lifestyle is, the better would the mutual confidence be. Where such a simple lifestyle evolves, human understanding also evolves and acquires a broader perspective. So the Jain slogan that says 'Happiness lies in relinquishing' will never prove wrong.

## 8. THE IDEAL WOMAN

Virtues that transform a woman's existence into that of an ideal life are given thus:

One who does not  
worship beauty  
but modesty;  
one who does not  
love artificial cosmetics  
but cleanliness;  
she is the ideal woman

One who wields  
strict control  
over her heart, her speech  
and over every cell of her body;  
on whom the brightness  
of eternal piety glitters;  
she is the ideal woman

One who is  
the embodiment  
of love and devotion;  
who brims with sweetness  
and the fire and instinct for service  
who kindles the same in others;  
she is the ideal woman

One whose heart  
is filled with kindness;

one whose mouth  
utters the sweet nectar of truth;  
from whose hands flow  
the eternal stream of chastity;  
she is the ideal woman

One who is harder than a diamond  
and softer than a flower  
who manifests as a diamond  
in times of trouble  
and a flower in affluence;  
who is brave yet tender;  
she is the ideal woman

One whose succinct speech  
showers sweet nectar;  
whose every word  
reveals an ocean of love and devotion;  
one who leaves an indelible impression  
on the young and the old alike;  
she is the ideal woman

One who is not ensnared  
by ostentations;  
one who does not worship inanimate objects  
whose sole deity is Shri Veetaraga Arihanta Deva;  
for whom truth is God  
who has faith in her good deeds and righteous living;  
she is the ideal woman

One for whom  
life and death are mere games;  
whom even God Indra cannot succeed

in deterring from the path of religion;  
who is ever ready to sacrifice herself  
for her country and religion;  
she is the ideal woman

One whose dignity  
lies in sobriety;  
one whose every word  
bears the stamp of her sagacity;  
one who needs only luster but not ornaments  
just as a lamp does not;  
she is the ideal woman.



## 9. THE LAMP OF SAGACITY

Sagacity is the ability to make good judgements; and sagacity is the soul of religion. Hence Jaina religion places a lot of importance on the same. Where there is sagacity or wisdom there is religion; where there is no sagacity, there is no religion. According to scriptures, a man sans sagacity is like an animal. Such a man can neither practise non-violence nor worship truth. This is the reason why in Acharang Sutra Lord Mahaveer said, “Religion lies in sagacity”.

### **Sagacity as a guard against sin**

My daughters, you are destined to play active roles in your family. You must be of utmost wisdom and thoughtfulness. Be wise and thoughtful while carrying out every household work. Sagacity is what helps one



Sagacity  
or  
wisdom  
helps one  
stay away  
from sins



stay away from sins. Exhibiting lack of interest and caution is a sign of lack of sagacity. A wise woman can not only protect herself from the pitfalls of sin, but can discover a non-violent path even in agitated circumstances. On this Lord Mahaveer has said, “A wise devotee can transform paths of sin into paths of religion; and an unwise devotee can cause a reverse transformation.”

### **The practicalities of sagacity**

The first step to being wise is to keep an eye on the

parenda or the stand for the water pot. The pots meant for storing water should always be kept clean. If the pots are not cleaned regularly, harmful organisms might breed in them. Never fill the pots with unfiltered water. In Jainism, use of unfiltered water is forbidden as it contains organisms. If you use unfiltered water, you would be committing the sin of violence against these organisms. Organisms that might get filtered out should be released safely.

The parenda should also be kept clean always. You should not allow dust to accumulate near the stand as moss may grow there. Ensure that there are no cobwebs or spiders above the pot. Separate glasses should be used for drawing water from the pot and for drinking. It is unwise to use the same glass for both.

The cloth used as a filter should be clean and a bit thick. Very often it is observed that the filtering cloth is found to be too thin or dirty. Water should not be filtered just for the sake of filtering. The filtering cloth should be washed every day. A fixed place should be allocated for storing the cloth after it is washed and dried.

### **Life-sustaining water**

Water, an invaluable gift of nature, sustains our world. Each of us has faced the problem of water shortage during summer and we know how stressful it is. Thousands of life forms perish due to scarcity of water. Hence be prudent in the way you use water. Do not pour water down the drains unnecessarily. If you spill or pour water carelessly on the floor, not only would many

organisms die, but it would lead to dirt accumulating in the house.

### **The first step to sagacity**

Always keep the front yard of the house clean. Many people let leftover food, leaf litter, garbage and even excrement pile near the entrance gate of their house. It is not only a very bad and unhygienic habit but it stops friends and relatives from visiting the house. It becomes a breeding ground for harmful organisms, besides leading to foul smell. Ensure that garbage is disposed off in a place where there is no habitation.

### **The second step to sagacity**

It is essential to be sagacious in the kitchen too. If flour, rice and other food ingredients are stored for too long, it becomes infested with insects. It causes health problems to us; and when we destroy the insects, it is a practice of violence against those insects.

Keep containers of ghee, oil and the like covered. There is a possibility of insects falling in if left open.

Check the vegetables thoroughly for blemishes. Clean them properly before use since harmful organisms breed in rotten vegetables.

You have to be careful while cooking too. Even a small lapse can cause a fire accident, leading to extreme

physical damage besides other losses. In some instances, the entire house might be reduced to ashes. Such a situation causes a lot of violence.

Do not dispose of leftover food in the drain. The food stuff will clog the drain, leading to foul smell and breeding of harmful organisms.

### **Sagacity in consumption**

Resist the temptation to eat stale food. It can harm your health, besides having an adverse effect on your intellect. If the food had been prepared many days earlier and if you consume it, it will be a practice of violence against the organisms that might have grown in it. Same holds true for all types of eatables including sweets. Ideally, the food should be consumed as soon as it is prepared; if not, it can be distributed to the poor and the homeless.

Do not feed your family members with food that is of no nutritional value, but high in calories and unhealthful ingredients.

### **Sagacity in small tasks**

Women should perform every household task with tenderness. The broom used for sweeping the house is made of soft fibres. If you sweep the house in a perfunctory manner, it is obvious that you do not harbor any compassion towards other life forms. When it is the duty of man to be merciful towards all living beings, the

small tasks such as those mentioned above should also be handled with sagacity.

Perform each household chore with sagacity and thoughtfulness. Everyday tasks such as washing, bathing, dusting and sweeping should be carried out with care so that you do not commit any violence against small organisms. As Jain religion is a religion with an emphasis on sagacity, the more sagacious a person is, the closer he would be to Jainism. A woman needs to be sagacious in every step of her life. She makes a heaven out of her home. Through sagacity, she is assured of her path to salvation. The high ideals as propounded by Lord Mahaveer can be achieved only through sagacity.



## **10. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

It is a known fact that woman is the head of the household. Managing the affairs of the house is generally the woman's responsibility. One could squander or save money. Hence it is imperative that the woman spends wisely and saves too.

A woman judicious in her financial management would curtail unnecessary expenditures; she would be able to run the house even on a small income. She would be astute in using every grain of corn, every drop of water and every thread of cloth and waste nothing. Such discreet living is known as 'yatana' in Jainism.

Jainism considers even the unnecessary use of water as an offense. Therefore, as per Jain tenets, in an ideal family, a prudent woman is neither lavish by wasting money needlessly nor is too frugal when there is a necessity to spend.

### **Woman as the Griha Lakshmi**

Diligent, austere and intelligent women would never face destitution. They are happy even if they are not wealthy; financial difficulties never dishearten them. There are women who bail out their husbands when they suffer losses in their business. It is such strong traits in them that made Indian poets eulogise women as Griha Lakshmi or 'the goddess of the house'.

## **Financial administration**

There are girls who are spendthrifts; they can never be austere. They desire to buy whatever they set their eyes on. They spend on food, clothes and other accessories irrespective of whether they need them or not. They are impulsive and buy things, attracted by the aesthetic appeal. The purpose of buying an object should be its utility and necessity, not its beauty. Developing such a habit or not restraining it would prove to be troublesome at some point of time in future.



The  
purpose  
of buying  
an object  
should  
be its  
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necessity  
and not its  
beauty



The financial management practised by the shravaks and shravikas during the times of Lord Mahaveer was very rational. They were very prudent and did not spend lavishly. They set aside one fourth of their earnings as a contingency amount. Please follow the same method and save one fourth of your earnings for any emergency that may crop up. Do not use this amount for any day-to-day expenses. Since emergencies come unannounced, you need be prepared.

### **The prudent daughter-in-law**

Many women lack prudence and use things carelessly, leading to wastage. They are not careful even while using food items and ingredients in the kitchen. There is an instance of a business family, where the mother wasted a lot of ingredients since she worked in a hurry and lacked subtleness. She wasted even a basic ingredient



The storehouse of nature should not be depleted by careless use	such as salt. There happened a change when her daughter-in-law stepped into the house. The daughter-in-law was more refined and judicious than her mother-in-law. With her prudent ways, she saved a lot of ingredients from being wasted. By carefully using a basic element like salt, she could save a lot of money. It was only then that her mother-in-law and other family members realized how much they had been wasting earlier.
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Daughters, you should also follow the example of the prudent daughter-in-law. The storehouse of nature is not to be depleted by wasting, but to be utilized carefully.



## 11. A SENSE OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is, having a good and realistic opinion about oneself. We, as human beings, should always have self-esteem. Man should not consider himself to be inadequate or inferior to anyone. Daughters, never consider yourselves as insignificant or inferior. Never compromise with your sense of honour. You are the spirit; the soul endowed with enormous power. Believe that you are less to no one; for in you resides the power than can do good to yourself as well as others.

### Every woman is Sita

You are the descendants of Sita and Draupadi. Are you aware of their relevance to the present day world that you live in? Thousands of men intone the names of Sita and Draupadi while they meditate with the help of a rosary. Sita is venerated more than Rama, that her name is intoned before Rama's. Hence they say Sita-Ram, Sita-Ram and not Ram-Sita. She is revered because she did not lose her self-esteem, even when they were banished from their kingdom. Even though she was terrified of living in the forest, she accepted it gladly, saying, "If my husband can endure the forest life, why wouldn't I? I am not made of wax to melt down in the heat of the sun."



If  
nurtured,  
the courage  
in each  
person  
would  
manifest as  
self-esteem



Daughters, you too should have the same self-esteem. You are not inferior to anyone. You too should be able

to vanquish your doubts and fears. Could the lineage of Lakshmi and Durga ever be wrong? Every one of you has the courage and self-esteem of Sita. It just needs to be nurtured, so as to sprout and bring forth self-esteem.

### **Inferiority complex**

It is sad that women have forgotten their roots and their lineage. Society has been teaching them that they have limitations and cannot achieve anything. Daughters, you should remove this wrong notion from your minds.

 The dignity of women is quite equal to that of men  Jainism gives a lot of importance to womankind. According to religious texts, “The dignity of women is quite equal to that of men. Who can decide which of the two wheels of a cart of family life is important than the other? Acquiring ‘kevalya gyana’, a woman too can gain imminence and become ‘paramatma’ or the supreme soul.”

Daughters, you as Jains should never consider yourselves as inferior in any way. One who does not tread the path of victory with much enthusiasm is not a Jain at all. Harboring an inferiority complex in one’s heart and mind is a sin; for religion is not about a feeling of inferiority, but one of bravery.

A man who degrades himself and considers himself insignificant, believes that he cannot achieve anything and impairs his inherent power. It is a well-known fact

that a disheartened person cannot carry out an act of bravery or beneficence, despite his education and wealth.

### **Thoughts maketh a man**

You can remain standing only as long as your feet are firmly planted on the ground. Once your feet are off the ground, you fall. Similarly, one who considers herself inferior will effect small achievements. But a woman who considers herself as someone to reckon with will accomplish more. She will succeed in all her efforts. Since a man's progress is defined by his thoughts, he becomes what he thinks himself to be. So think and visualize as you wish to be.



As man's  
progress  
is defined  
by his  
thoughts,  
he becomes  
what he  
thinks  
himself to  
be



### **Importance of spiritual stature**

Daughters, there is no doubt that you are clever and competent. But your competency should not make you conceited. Just as you should not feel inferior to anyone, you should not think of yourselves as royalty. Instead consider yourselves as souls endowed with the strength to execute even the most difficult of tasks.

Your heart is like fertile land. Sow seeds that would bear fruits of glory. Focus on a high vision when you desire to acquire knowledge. You should have indomitable

spirit and courage to accomplish noble tasks, however difficult they are. You may be small in stature physically; but your courage and goal should never be. The great men whom we admire were ordinary men in their youth just like we are. They have achieved more and have acquired immortal fame solely due to their spiritual stature.

### **Having faith in oneself**

Dear daughters, you are endowed with many abilities and just need to use your spiritual strength. Do not think of yourself as an inferior person. Instead, have faith in yourself and your abilities. There is no task in this world that is too difficult for you to complete. All you need to do is to persist at the task with devotion. Do not waste your womanhood by doing petty household chores in your youth. Qualify yourselves to carry out religious and worldly duties, even through tough situations, without ever losing faith. Only then will you be able to accomplish noble feats.

## **12. MANAGEMENT SKILL**

Being restrained and systematic helps us manage our lives well. No task can be executed properly in a disorderly manner.

A woman's life revolves around her home and family. She manages many household chores. She has to step out of the house too, so that the small and big affairs of the house are managed well. The responsibility of running the household rests with the woman. A clever woman would manage the household efficiently. But an unwise woman could ruin a happy and prosperous home and wreck it into a disorderly house.

### **Who is clever?**

Daughters, fulfill your responsibilities systematically and with an aesthetic sense. You should be careful in maintaining order in the house.

It is better to earmark space for every object and keep it in its place so that you can take it easily when you need it. Doing any work becomes easier if things are kept in their places. It also lends an aesthetic appeal. Where things are not kept in order, it becomes difficult to search for them in times of need. One who knows how to store things according to their time and frequency of use and convenience of access is a clever woman.

### **Disorderliness compounds problems**

To do things systematically, one should not work when in a disturbed state of mind.

When a small boy was stung by a bee, a pair of tweezers was needed to remove the stinger. Every member of the family searched through the entire house. But the tweezers could not be found. As the boy sat crying in pain, there was no one to attend to him. There was no one to console him and tell him that he would be alright soon; because all the family members were searching for that elusive pair of tweezers. When it still could not be found, the women started shouting, quarreling and blaming each other. Their quarrels served no purpose. Every member of the household had to go through this commotion due to a small lapse of not keeping the

Being  
unsystematic  
compounds  
problems

tweezers in a place where it belonged. And no one claimed responsibility for the missing pair of tweezers. If a place had been allocated for the tweezers and those who used it had taken care not to misplace it, there would not have been such a hassle. Not only was it a waste of time, but it could not be found when it was needed. Besides it caused arguments between family members. This shows you how disorderliness compounds problems.

### **Earmark places**

In an orderly house, things are kept in places earmarked for them. This enables the family members to access an object easily when they need it. Since they know where each object is, they know what is available at home and what needs to be purchased. In a house where there is no systematic planning, either necessary things will be

in short supply or unwanted things will be in excess. This shows that being unsystematic leads to misuse of money while the objective is also not achieved.

I advise you to earmark places for things and be careful in storing them. The same management principle should be applied to safekeeping clothes ornaments and the like.

### **Being systematic**

I need not mention that you have to be systematic in your other everyday activities such as eating and sleeping. A wayward mind leads to problems. So keep your mind calm.

Do not be slipshod in your work. Complete your duties in order and with finesse. Lack of orderliness may seem insignificant, but it can make or mar your life. If you are careful and methodical, you will never hear sarcastic comments such as 'searching for a lost plate in a pot'. You are the manifestation of Goddess Saraswati and so it does not bode well if you manage the household in a careless way. Hence you need to be omniscient as far as your household is concerned.



## **13. MODESTY**

Modesty can be defined as being courteous and being free from vanity. For a man, there is no better ornament than modesty. As the adage 'sheel param bhoosanam' goes, 'modesty is the greatest ornament'. Compassionate and serene countenance leaves a good impression on others. Even an arrogant man bows before a modest person. Modesty indicates the liberal instincts of a man.

### **A captivating charm**

Modesty is a potent charm, a vashikaran mantra. A modest person can befriend even unknown strangers. Family members as well as others love and respect him.

Have you ever wondered why the ignorant 'vanar sena' or monkey tribe helped Shri Rama during his exile in the forest? Why were lakhs of monkeys ready to fight against Ravana? For them, there was no personal interest. It was only the unassuming modesty of Shri Rama that charmed them into fighting by his side.

What special traits did Yudishtra and the Pandavas have, that made Bhishma tell them how he would meet his death in the Mahabharata war? Why did Krishna agree to drive the chariot of Arjuna? The unpretentious nature of the Pandavas was the reason.

### **Modest daughters**

Dear daughters, your modesty should spring from the

core of your hearts. Modest girls are loved not only by her parents and siblings but by others as well. They are compassionate, humble and amiable. They are devoid of pride and jealousy. You might have noticed in school how girls hailing from wealthy families are arrogant and how their classmates do not heed her. However, courteous and unassuming girls from ordinary families gain the love and respect of all. Others come to them for advice. Bear in mind that modesty is respected and not wealth.

Do not be ostentatious when you wear fine clothes and ornaments. If you wear them for festivals or functions, remain unassuming. Do not make fun of girls who are not as financially endowed as you are. If you meet them, greet them with an open heart and communicate properly with them. The more sympathetic you are with underprivileged girls, the more respect you would earn.

When an underprivileged girl visits you, greet her with respect and extend good hospitality. Do not talk about the expensive garments and ornaments you possess or that you intend to buy. Do not enquire about the clothes and accessories that she has. It will be hurtful to her.

### **The great gain**

Whenever you meet an elderly person, greet her, addressing her as bhua, dadi or tai, depending on her age. Always speak with respect by adding the suffix 'ji'. When you are in your grandmother's house, address girls who are of your age as behanji. Address women who are about the same age as your mother as mausiji

and that as your grandmother as naniji. Address the elder daughter-in-law of the house as mamiji and the younger one as bhabhiji.

Give respect to those who help in the house, such as the dhobi or washer woman, the nain or the barber and the maid and address them accordingly.

Address the male members of your family as babaji, chachaji, tauji, bhaiji, etc. In your maternal grandparents' house, address the elders as nanaji, mamaji, bhaiji, etc.

What do you stand to lose when you speak to elders with respect? Nothing. But your respectful words would please them to a great extent, and that is a great gain.

### **Be good and do good**

It is a bad habit to taunt and curse others for petty reasons. However angry you may be, do not abuse anyone. If any girl abuses others due to ignorance, you can win her over with love and make her realize her mistake. Any advice offered with love will calm a person and prompt her to give up her bad habit.

 Words spoken with compassion calms a person 	Though gentle in appearance, many girls are mischievous and malicious. They do not express their anger, but become morose and sullen. They do not communicate and do not respond when others speak to them. Such a bad trait will cause problems later on
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in life. Modesty and morosity do not go together. As you should remain modest, shun such bad traits.

You might have noticed girls taunting others. When boys get angry, they get rid of the anger by indulging in duels. But girls express their anger through bitter words which lead to grave consequences. A wound caused by an arrow heals; but a wound caused by harsh words remains forever. Mahabharata war began because of mutual taunts. When you maintain a cordial relationship with everyone, you become one with them. Hence you should cultivate good habits.

## 14. LAZINESS – MAN’S ENEMY

Man’s most formidable enemy is laziness. A lazy man cannot achieve anything. He cannot attend to chores in the house or elsewhere. A lazy man’s mind becomes the abode of worries and perennial stream of spite.

We know that we need to work to keep our body fit. When a person does not work, he loses his physical strength, becoming vulnerable to diseases. It is not in human nature generally, to keep idle all day and shirk work. There is nothing as sinful as a man who does not work, but is eager to have his meals. An acharya has said, “A man who toils neither for himself nor for the benefit of society, but who does not hesitate to partake of his meals, is a burden to his family. Such a man would take birth as a python in his next life”.

  
A lazy  
man’s mind  
becomes  
the abode  
of perennial  
stream of  
spite  


### **Avoiding laziness**

Daughters, you should never be lazy and never shun work. If you do not nip this bad habit early, you will face the consequences later. Then laziness will become second nature and you will not receive respect in your parents’ house as well as in your husband’s house. When you are asked to work, you would murmur and complain, which is a bad virtue.

You might be lucky to have been born in an affluent

family. There may be maids to do the household chores; yet pride must not make you shun work. The future is uncertain. The affluence that you have today might be lost in future. The atmosphere in your husband's house may not be conducive. Though you may have servants, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with household chores; for you do not know when you might have to work. Many women from wealthy families remain idle and while away their time. They become obese, pale and physically weak. They become incapable of doing any work. You should avoid laziness so that you do not reach such a stage.

### **Feeding the family with love**

Women are often referred to as 'annapurna', which means 'one who gives food and nourishment'. It is their responsibility to feed the family. Some girls who hail from well-to-do families shy away from cooking. They find the heat and the fumes of the kitchen an inconvenience, as they have servants to take care of the cooking. This is not the right attitude. It is the duty of every woman to cook and serve food. So the question of inconvenience and laziness does not arise. It is the Indian belief that a household is not perfect if the food is not prepared by the Griha Lakshmi, the goddess of the house. The lack of desire to cook for one's family and feed them is indicative of lack of love for the family. If the food is cooked by the Griha Lakshmi, the benefits are:

- The food would be tastier since it would be cooked with love.
- The food would be hygienic and wholesome.

- When the woman serves the food, the natural sweetness of her touch would enhance the taste.
- When the woman serves the food, she would do it with devotion.

As against the servants cooking the food, the woman does not cook for money. She cooks solely out of love for the family.

### **Working with pleasure**

Many girls shun work. They grumble when their parents ask them to do a chore. Some girls do a slipshod work in the hope that they would not be asked to do it in future. Such an attitude is wrong. Whatever the chore be, do it with pleasure. Do not consider petty household chores as demeaning works. There cannot be greater pleasure than the privilege of serving one's own family. Princesses such as Sita and Draupadi did their household duties by themselves. Follow their example. When elders in the family ask you to do a chore, do it with pleasure.



There is no greater pleasure than the privilege of serving one's family



### **Not losing humaneness**

I stress again that laziness is the most formidable enemy of man. Laziness is the cause of the ailments found in Indian families today. Mothers and daughters argue; bhabhis and nanads do not get along. Did you ever wonder what causes these arguments and quarrels? The cause is laziness, in my opinion. A man who does

not work and whiles away his time develops a sickly attitude. He grudges, seeing others at work; others grumble because he is not working. Such grudges are reason enough for the men to start quarrelling. This ill will between men snatches away humaneness from them. It is essential that one does not lose humaneness.

### **The two-armed God**

As against harbouring grudges against each other, mutual love and respect are seen in families where

  
Mutual love  
and respect  
are seen  
in families  
where  
women  
keep  
themselves  
busy  


women do not laze, but keep themselves busy. As they do not hesitate to do the chores, everyone would be willing to do his part of the work. In such families, there are no feuds and no cause for complaints. These families flourish and their members lead happy lives. In this connection, a learned acharya has said, “A man who has arms is considered a God (ie) a two-armed God.” In a house where there are many

two-armed goddesses like you, there will not be any problems, provided both the arms work.

## **15. DEMURENESS – THE GLORY OF WOMANHOOD**

Demureness or modesty is the first and foremost virtue of womanhood. There is no other virtue that is more desirable in a woman than demureness. It is said that demureness is the costliest ornament. It is demureness that protects the dignity of a woman. If a woman has every virtue except demureness, all other virtues become meaningless.

Fashion has become the order of the day. College education has played its role in popularising fashion. This has had its effect on the modest girls. They have developed a craze for fashion and ostentatious living. As a consequence, women are no longer demure.

### **Clothes and modesty**

Women wear very thin clothes in cities nowadays. These are so transparent that they do not serve the purpose of covering oneself. Wearing such transparent clothes and wearing make-up are not in our culture. Clothes could be of fine texture. They should be clean. But the functionality of the clothes is equally important.

### **Confidence and demureness**

Daughters, you should maintain decorum while talking to people. It is unbecoming of a woman to be talkative and indulge in gossip. Women should speak only when it is necessary. Girls who follow decorum would be good homemakers.

The respect that demure women receive, even if they are illiterate, is greater than the respect that educated yet immodest women receive. Extreme demureness also does not bode well for women. Some girls become extremely shy that they cannot perform their duties. They cannot converse with elderly relatives and visitors, given their reserved nature. You should be demure but not overly coy to confine yourself to a corner of the house.

### **Conduct in public**

Laughter is a special and unique aspect of human nature. It is not bad to laugh. But it is not honourable for women to burst into loud laughter. Loud laughter is indicative of lack of modesty. Girls should smile or laugh in a restrained manner. Smile enhances a woman's charm.

  
Smile  
enhances  
a person's  
charm  


Your conduct should be restrained in public, especially during boisterous occasions such as weddings. Many girls and women do not maintain a decorous conduct during such occasions. It is not right to tease members of the marriage party or sing suggestive songs. Women who indulge in such behavior would be labeled as uncultured and inane. Remember that upholding your honour rests solely with you. Indian women are graceful and their grace lies in their demure nature.

## Modesty as a veil

In many countries, wearing a veil is equated to modesty. But Indian culture does not dictate covering oneself from head to toe and hiding behind a veil. In India, using the veil came into practice during the Mughal rule.

For Indian women, modesty is their veil. The eyes should reveal a woman's modesty. If not, even covering the face with a long veil is of no use. There are many women who draw the veils over their face in the presence of family members and refrain from talking to them; but they are free and feel comfortable talking to total strangers. This is a strange aspect of the parda pratha or veil system.

  
Jain  
religion  
regards  
modesty  
as a veil  
and not  
the veil as  
a symbol  
of modesty  


There are some educated women who equate modesty to timidity. But there is a vast difference between the two. Timidity means lack of courage and self-assurance and feeling inferior to others; whereas modesty means a person is free of vanity, he does not boast and is cultured. Daughters, always pay attention to your surroundings and remain demure. Never indulge in unbashful behavior. Jain religion regards modesty as a veil and not the veil as a symbol of modesty.



## 16. SIMPLICITY AND GENTLENESS

A trustworthy man is always highly respected. A man whom a society trusts can get great benefits and help from it. This trust is earned through simplicity and greatness. A person who wants to earn the trust of everyone must be gentle and simple; he should get rid of his cunning and crooked traits.

Simplicity is a good quality in the young and old alike. It is applicable especially to women as simplicity enhances their dignity. For women, it is an essential quality as trust helps her manage the household and keep the family happy. This trust is earned through simplicity and gentleness.

### **Being a mirror**

Dear daughters, you should always be simple and honest. Shun bad traits such as crookedness and dishonesty. The more crooked and scheming a person is, the more would be the quarrels in the family. Your heart should be as plain as a mirror so that no deformity can be found in it.

### **Illusion – The darkness of mind**

It is a sin to hide one's faults or to lie so as to hide them. It is the same as being crooked. It is indicative of a weak mind. A man with a weak mind becomes a burden to himself. It is for this reason that Lord Mahaveer laid much emphasis



Confessing  
mistakes  
cleanses  
mind and  
eliminates  
false pride



on pratikraman. During pratikraman, one confesses one's mistakes. Doing so, the mind is cleansed and false pride is eliminated. Maya or illusion is the darkness of mind. It is the radiant sun of pratikraman that dispels this darkness.

### **Do not hide faults**

There are girls who give false excuses to their parents and elders to hide their mistakes. They do not come out with the truth despite repeated inquiries. This is an undesirable trait as one who hides one's mistakes can never get rid of them. Mistakes can be rectified only if they are confessed with an open mind. One cannot have peace of mind since he is constantly under the fear of his fault coming to light. His mind will become the centre of misgivings and the agitation it causes will never subside.

It is human to err. Great men of this world too have committed mistakes. Daughters, do not try to hide your faults. It is a sin to hide your mistakes or denying that you committed it.

### **Think before you act**

Be gentle in conduct, kind in speech and pure in heart so that your inner and outer selves match. Harboring reservations in your mind would prove to be detrimental. Before you do something or meet someone, weigh the pros and cons. Ponder if you would feel bad or disturbed if your act comes to light. If you consider the positive and negative aspects of what you intend to do,

you would be able to judge the repercussions. It would help you do the right thing and you will never feel guilty of committing a mistake or deceiving others. Then you will also come to know how much people trust you and to what extent you have cleansed your heart. You will reach that point only if your mind is as clear as a mirror.

### **Simplicity and cleverness**

Being  
clever is  
not the  
same as  
being  
cunning.  
The latter  
is a sin

Being simple does not imply that you should become a simpleton or an ignorant person. Simplicity contends with cunningness and with deceit, but not with cleverness. Being clever can never be equated to being cunning. If you are clever, not gullible and strive to reach your goal, it is no sin at all. But deceit is a sin; hence guard yourself against it.

### **Confidentiality**

Being candid does not mean that you can make your private family affairs public. There are many matters in the family that need to be kept confidential. Revealing them to others might have undesirable repercussions. Be wise as to choose the time and opportunity to divulge confidential matters. There are moments when you need to be confidential and moments when you need to be candid.

The essence is that, being furtive now in your parents'

house or later in your husband's house will make people lose trust in you. It might even turn disastrous for your family life. Hence it is the duty of every woman to remain simple and guard herself against furtiveness.

## **17. THE IMMENSE POWER OF LOVE**

How sweet is the Hindi word 'prem' that means love! As soon as the word 'love' is uttered, the tongue of the speaker and the ears of the narrator feel tender and sweet. But it is the heart that turns emotional; and the tender feeling is etched in the heart for ever.

Love blossoms in the hearts of birds and animals too. Ferocious animals such as lions too love their offspring. Have you seen how lovingly a ferocious lioness feeds her cubs? I am sure you have seen a dog nursing her pups. Even when the pups rush at her from all sides and clamber on her to suckle, she lies down with closed eyes, enjoying the moment. It is the same love that shines forth when a cow feeds her calf. She keeps licking the calf as it nurses. How sweet and grand is the empire of love!

### **The worth of love**

Dear daughter, leave aside the references to animals. Behold your mother's eyes and see how much she loves you. When you were an infant and your crib was your little world, your mother cleaned your soiled clothes without a murmur. It is the mother who brings up her children with great love. But for your mother's love, you would not have turned out to be what you are.

Now even though you are capable of deciding what is good or bad for you, she loves you as much as she loved you when you were a child. The love of animals is based

on ignorance, whereas the love of human beings is based on knowledge. Among human beings also, there are those whose love is based on ignorance.

Love based on wisdom and knowledge is priceless. Learn not to underestimate the worth of love since it is precious.

  
Love  
based on  
wisdom  
and  
knowledge  
is  
priceless  


### **The light of love**

Love is a noble quality, unique to human beings. One who swears by love does not experience grief. Girls who are experiencing pain, yet readily help others in grief and try to assuage others' pain are respected by all. The light of love shines through this world. If we let love flow, the light shines on.

### **Love and be loved**

The world can be compared to a mirror. You know that the mirror reflects an object. You would be greeted or slapped depending on what you do in front of the mirror. It is the same as you listening to your voice echoing inside a dome. If you love others, they too would love you. If you scorn others, you too would be scorned. Be it love or hatred, people reciprocate what you show them. Integrity and deceit lie within ourselves, in our minds and not elsewhere. In this context, remember the divine message of Lord Mahaveer: "Look within yourself".

This world is a mirror the reflections of which are true.

When you shower love on an underprivileged girl, she reciprocates in multiples of what you showed her. If you dislike her because of her poverty, she too would dislike you and speak ill of you. It is human tendency to reciprocate love with love, hatred with hatred and jealousy with jealousy.

### **Create a heaven**

Dear daughters, you have surely understood the importance of love by now. Be affectionate with the girls in school and regard them as your sisters. At home too, be affectionate with your parents, siblings and other members of the family. Develop warm friendship with the girls of your neighbourhood. Treat the elders of your neighbourhood with respect. Let the fragrance of love flow from you. Remember, woman is love personified. Hatred and envy will make life hell, whereas love will make life heavenly. Transform your house, your neighbourhood, your town and your country into a real heaven with the power of your love.



Hatred and  
envy makes  
life hell,  
whereas  
love makes  
life heavenly





## 18. LAUGHTER AND GAIETY

Laughing is not a bad habit. It is a unique attribute bestowed on man. In our world, only man knows how to laugh. Birds and animals cannot laugh. Have you ever seen a cow or a buffalo laughing? Nature has gifted only man with laughter.

One who presents a sad and somber countenance always cannot be regarded as a man. One who grudges and grumbles for every petty issue is not a man at all. One whose face glows with laughter is a real man. He spreads cheer and love wherever he is.

### Laughter and its limits

Laughter has its limits. Common sense and sagacity should prevail when one laughs. Laughter that has crossed its limits is bound to create problems. Closer

scrutiny will reveal that Mahabharata war was caused by the frivolous scores between Duryodhan and Draupadi. Draupadi had scornfully said to Duryodhan, “A blind begets blinds only”. It became the cause of bloodshed. One should remember that though laughter is a desirable attribute in man, the limits should be adhered to.

Daughter, be discreet when you laugh. Your laughter should be free of any malicious intent. It should not hurt anyone’s feelings. Laughing and merrymaking are not bad traits as such. They indicate one’s happiness

and wellbeing. However, it should be borne in mind that any activity that crosses acceptable limits would be harmful.

### **Occasions for laughing**

One has to take time and reason into consideration while laughing and merrymaking. Someone may be offended if he is laughed at in public. Upset, he is likely to hold a grudge which may have dreadful consequences later. Laughter and merrymaking are enjoyable only as long as the friend is in a good mood. If he is in an unhappy or serious mood, the merrymaking might anger him; he might turn vindictive instead of reciprocating.

Girls are jovial in general. They take pleasure in teasing their friends, and targeting their physical attributes. It is an uncivil and unacceptable behavior. They do not realize that their behavior would hurt their friends' feelings.

### **Unrestrained laughter**

While merrymaking, never reveal anyone's confidential matters in the guise of a joke. When someone has committed a mistake, no one has any right to laugh at them or scorn them in public. Such laughter would be poisonous than nectarous. Never pass hurtful remarks, even in jest. Your laughter should be sweet and carry the fragrance of love. Make sure that your laughter is not defiled by the stench of envy or hatred. Many girls indulge in excessive laughter, unmindful of time, place, occasion or audience. Their sober nature is harmed

when they take pleasure in uncontrolled laughter. A girl who is exceedingly jovial is not respected in a civilized society.



## 19. SERVICE TO DESTITUTES

Service to mankind is the ultimate religion. There has never been, nor there will ever be a religion greater than service. One who serves the sick indirectly serves God.



One who  
serves  
the sick  
serves God  
indirectly

Gautam Swami once asked Lord Mahaveer, “A devotee attends to you; another man attends to a poor, grief-stricken man. Tell me who is blessed, my Lord?”



Lord Mahaveer replied, “He who attends to the poor grief-stricken man is blessed. To serve Jitendradeva is to obey his orders; Jitendradeva’s order is to render service to the destitute”.

### Whom to serve

Lord Mahaveer’s reply clearly indicates that serving the sick is nobler than serving God. Compassion sets human beings apart from animals. One who lacks compassion is not at all a human being. Serving a sick family member is not service; it is duty. One who does not perform his duty cannot be expected to serve others.

Jainism regards shirking of service as a sin. ‘Service’ is the ideal of Jainism. It advocates protection of not only of one’s neighbours, but of birds and animals as well. There are many girls who do not like serving the sick and the suffering. They shirk such responsibilities. These girls keep away even from family members who

have fallen sick. How can one expect a girl to care for birds and animals when she does not perform her duty to a family member? How can she practise compassion? One must remember that service to the sick is nobler than service to God.

### **Method of service**

Whenever you can, spend time with sick persons. If you do not get time, find time. Console the patient and assuage his fear if he feels restless. If he is disturbed, talk to him about religion or narrate inspiring religious stories. Listening to religious stories boosts the morale of the sick. It eases his mind, distracts his mind from his illness and diverts his thoughts.

Ensure that the hygiene of the sick person's surroundings is maintained. Dirty clothes and unventilated rooms aggravate his illness than mitigating it. His attendants as well as doctors and visitors find such ill-maintained surroundings highly objectionable.

### **Managing the medicines**

Medicines should be stored in a clean place and administered to the patient at the prescribed time without fail. Keep the details about the medicines, such as name, nature of ailment, besides the dose, time and method of administering safely in writing. Write down the names and dosage of medicines on the bottles too. Haphazard administering of medicines will lead to grievous consequences.

There is a real life incident that occurred in a village. A boy fell ill with fever and a boil in his neck. The doctor prescribed medicines to treat both the ailments. The illiterate mother applied the oral medicine meant for the fever on the boil and made the boy take the ointment. The ointment meant only for external application contained chemicals allergic to the body. Within an hour the boy died. A minor mistake led to a major tragedy. This incident shows how careful one should be in storing and administering medicines.

### **Tread the path of service**

Patience is the test that assesses man's endurance. Do not feel discouraged or disgusted if you have to

 continuously attend to a sick person. If  
|| Service is || you lose patience with a long-suffering  
|| the mantra || patient and avoid attending to his  
|| for a woman || needs, you forego your chance to do  
|| to succeed || the precious duty of serving humanity.  
|| in life || Your heart then becomes devoid of  
 emotions and incapable of other good  
sentiments. With such a heart lacking spirit, you will  
not be able to live as Griha Lakshmi.

Service is the mantra for a woman to succeed in life. So in serving the sick, you should involve yourself with patience and perseverance. How calmly, patiently and serenely flows the Ganga. You should be like the Ganga and move steadily with a tranquil mind on the path of service.



## 20. THE SWEET VOICE OF THE CUCKOO

The art of speaking is the finest and most important of all the arts in this world. History tells us about those who were gifted with the art. They earned respect throughout the world and had millions follow their footsteps. In this context, the art of speaking does not mean lecturing in public, but communicating warmly with everyone. The way one speaks can make even his family members seem like strangers. The way he communicates would be so bad and rough that people would resent even a good advice that he gives.

No art  
compares  
with the  
art of  
speaking

Why are people fond of the cuckoo? Does she offer anything to people? And why do people dislike the crow? Does she snatch anything from people? Neither. A poet has written about the secret of this truth in a couplet:

Whose wealth does the crow steal?  
Who gets gifts from the cuckoo?  
The sweet voice is the reason  
That one makes the world one's own.

### **Sweet speech**

The illustration about the cuckoo and the crow is meant to give you a message. You are the daughters of Bharat

Mata, counted among the noble daughters of our nation. Speaking sweetly is essential for you to be called the daughter of this nation. Love is the priceless gift to mankind and this love can be expressed only by communicating sweetly. Work that cannot be accomplished by spending money can be achieved by communicating in a warm manner. No art compares with the art of speaking.

### **The wide expanse of love**

A girl who speaks with warmth becomes a favourite in her family and in her neighbourhood. Girls from the neighbourhood stand by her in times of joy and sorrow. A person who meets such a girl even once, will never forget her. She is respected everywhere, by everyone. Men and women love and commend her and wish her well. She continues to widen her circle of love.

### **Speak with warmth**

Peace prevails in a house where the sweet-tongued woman resides. Even if disquiet enters the household by chance, it disappears as soon as it hears the woman's voice that sounds like the sweet music that emanates from the strings of a veena. Peace then enters as the waves of the ocean. How warmly did Lord Mahaveer's mother speak! How much of warmth did Lord Mahaveer's disciple Chandanbala had that she could rule over the vast sangh comprising of 36000 sadhwis successfully. Her voice, filled with warmth, ameliorated even those who opposed her.

## Transforming a house to a nandavana

Women who speak harshly are opposite to those who speak with warmth. Women who speak harshly go about with a fierce face like that of a hungry lioness. They speak disrespectfully to everyone including the elders. As a consequence, they alienate even their loved ones. Everyone dreads speaking to her. Her harsh speech earns her the enmity of everyone. People start comparing her to Shurpanakha because of her harsh voice.

The difference between a woman who speaks harshly and one who speaks warmly is that while the former turns the house into a place of misery, the latter transforms the house into a nandavana or a beautiful garden. Dear daughters, tell me which one of them would you want to be? Does your heart want to stay in a nandavana or a miserable place? If you wish to live in a nandavana, always speak warmly to everyone.



A woman  
speaking  
warmly  
transforms  
a house  
into a  
nandavana



Whatever you utter should not be false or bitter but should be true and benevolent. It should taste as sweet as mishri or rock sugar.

The three gems on the earth be  
Water, grain and sweet speech  
Pieces of stones are gems  
Temporal creatures say



## **21. THE BRILLIANCE OF CELIBACY**

A solemn and sublime subject is presented before you. As the very ideal of life rests on this, if you understand and translate the recommendations into practice, you would be able to safeguard the ideal of womanhood.

You have been born as a human because of the unparalleled good deeds of your earlier lives. Being born a human is a gateway to salvation. On this world's stage, one who makes his life meaningful is regarded as a successful actor. To lead a life of spirituality, benevolence and celibacy is the aim of this life.

As you are students now, you are brahmacharinis or celibates. Remaining celibate is essential to reap the benefits of education. Goddess Saraswati dwells in the minds of pious bramacharinis and illuminates their lives with wisdom. The vow of celibacy expels all ailments, develops intellect and strength and illumines your faces with a celestial glow.

### **The importance of celibacy**

Lord Mahaveer has asserted the importance and integrity of celibacy thus: "Being celibate is very difficult. Demons, devils and deities alike fall at the feet of those who observe celibacy."

Celibacy is the fourth of the five vows prescribed for Jain sages. It also finds a place in the twelve vows of grihastha jeevan or family life. Not being celibate is the fourth of the five evils.

You must have read about Sita turning the burning pyre into a pool of water. Celibacy has the power to transform poison into nectar and cool down raging fires.

### **Observing celibacy**

Celibacy is observed in two ways, namely purna or total celibacy and desh or khand brahmacharya, meaning limited celibacy. Complete celibacy is total detachment from subjects of mind, speech and action throughout a person's life. Jain sadhus and sadhwis observe total celibacy. A Jain monk does not touch a girl, even though she is a day-old infant. Similarly a Jain nun does not touch a male even if he is a baby. Continued observance of total celibacy is known as brahmacharya mahavrata.

Those who lead a family life observe limited celibacy. Since complete celibacy is not possible for someone leading a family life, khand brahmacharya has been prescribed for them. In limited celibacy, the girl and the boy observe complete celibacy till they get married. After they get married, they remain monogamous.

Having two types of celibacy is based on psychological principles as all Jaina vows are.

### **Rules for observing celibacy**

Daughters, you have an invaluable opportunity to observe complete celibacy till your parents find you a groom and get you married.

Do not let evil thoughts or desires corrupt your mind. Giving up the following would enable you to observe complete celibacy:

- Viewing obscene films
- Reading obscene literature
- Being lewd in your activities
- Moving among men without a purpose
- Singing loudly
- Enhancing physical appearance through make-up and beauty treatments
- Looking at a particular man again and again

Remember demureness is the ornament of womanhood. A pearl that loses its luster can never regain it. Similarly, for a girl who discards her demureness at youth, it is difficult to become virtuous later.

The second stage of celibacy comes after marriage. It is the duty of a virtuous girl to honour the instructions of her husband, love him and be devoted to him. If your husband has some faults unfortunately, you should not lose heart. You can rectify your husband's faults through serious and intelligent efforts. Regard all men except your husband as father, brother or son depending on their age. After you get married, follow the ideals of Sita, Draupadi and Anjana.

### **Good traits of a wife**

Quotes by renowned people leave a lasting impression on our minds and guides us through the various phases

of our lives. Pondering about some quotations helps understand how a woman should lead married life.

The following characteristics are what distinguish a wife:

- One who assists her husband
- One who resides with her husband
- One who keeps her husband happy
- One who elevates the life of her husband
- One who corrects her husband's faults gently
- One who shares her husband's joys and sorrows
- One who wishes for her husband's happiness
- One who dedicates herself to her husband's progress

On the other hand, one who expects ornaments and luxury and one who expects fulfillment of carnal desires is not considered as a noble wife.

## 22. FEAR – THE WEEVIL OF THE MIND

A man who fears the known and the unknown cannot achieve great things in life. Fear is the weevil of the mind. Just as the weevil bores into grains, fear eats into a person's fervor. It renders him weak in the body and spirit, besides making him incompetent.

Women are more fearful than men. Women lose patience and start trembling at the slightest disturbance. When a boy is afraid, the immediate response of people is, "Are you a boy or a girl! You are so frightened. You have



Fear  
renders  
a person  
weak in  
body and  
spirit



surpassed even girls in being afraid". What is implied is girls are timid by nature. Dear daughter you have to clear such a blemish on womanhood. As long as the daughters of Bharat Mata are not courageous, her honour cannot be upheld. Hence you need to be fearless.

There are some girls who are extremely timid. They are afraid of even going from one room to another at night. They are afraid of sleeping alone. They are frightened when there is a power cut and the house is plunged into darkness. They tremble at the sight of a mouse and at the bark of a dog. How can such timid girls accomplish works that need to be dealt with courage? Girls who are afraid of everything and weep for all reasons will never be able to protect their families when in danger.

Daughters, get rid of your timidity as soon as possible. If you do not gain courage, you would become

incompetent. Living within the confines of your house like a wet cat is not a nice way of existence.

What is there to be afraid of? Who is bigger – the mouse or you? Do insects possess more power than you? Are dogs and cats wiser than you? What is there to fear if the lamp goes out? Darkness will not swallow you! What is it that you fear then? The truth is that, darkness will not harm you. It is your mind which makes you think that darkness will harm you and hence makes you jittery.

### **Being fearful and fearless**

Indian women have always been brave and fearless. Queen Durgawati drove out Muslim invaders. The queen of Jhansi fought hard against the British. Sita and Draupadi chose to live with their husbands in dreaded forests. Sita remained bold even when the demon king Ravana abducted her. Though he tried to intimidate and instill fear in her, she remained bold and reprimanded him fearlessly. Indian women have sacrificed themselves to defend their honour. The brave women of Chittor burnt themselves in fire to guard their honour from invaders.

Do you know that in Jainism fear is considered a bad attribute? Lord Mahaveer has said: "As long as you are destined to live, no one can harm you in anyway". One who is fearful of everything is not to be regarded as a Jain. The very word 'Jain' means victor. A true Jain does not fear anything except sins and vices.

  
A true  
Jain fears  
nothing  
except sins  
and vices  


You will not be a young girl for long. When you grow up, you will have responsibilities. There might arise circumstances when you will have to be alone in the house or travel alone to distant places. You may face dangers. However, if you remain courageous, you will be able to overcome the troubles and tribulations. Timidity and tears will not help you accomplish anything.

### **Be of courage**

Remain calm and composed when you are in the presence of elders; but be a fierce lioness when accosted by a miscreant.

Mischievous boys tease girls who are timid and feel inferior. On the other hand, even miscreants will keep away from girls who are courageous. If a miscreant misbehaves with a bold girl, she would not only retaliate but teach him a lesson so that he will never tease a girl again. Be brave and emulate Durga, queen of Jhansi, Sita and Draupadi.



## 23. BACKBITING – DARKNESS OF THE HEART

Backbiting is one of the lowest sins. A person who indulges in backbiting speaks ill of others for no reason. It wastes his precious time and taints his mind.

Lord Mahaveer has said, “Backbiting is a very bad habit. Backbiting compares to paring flesh from a man’s back and making a meal of it”. This analogy should show you what a ghastly sin backbiting is!

An acharya has condemned backbiting in the strongest terms. He has said: “One who slanders a person in his absence is like a pig. Just as a pig eats human waste and rejects delicious sweets and eatables, a backbiter talks only of the bad quality of a person, leaving thousands of his other good qualities aside. The words of great men indicate that backbiting is a darkness of the heart.

Backbiting  
is a sin  
that wastes  
precious  
time

The evil of backbiting is highly prevalent among women nowadays. Be it a city or a village, be it a house or a temple, wherever women assemble, there is no discussion on any good topic. Not a single thought of doing a good deed or helping someone or considering whom to emulate or doing something beneficial crosses their mind.

Nowadays women focus on the undesirable traits of others than on their good traits. They look for trash even in a pile of pure gold. They criticize others but do not commend them. For hours at a stretch, they talk meaninglessly about other women, commenting thus: 'She is uncultured', 'She is quarrelsome', 'That one is of bad character', 'She has a flat nose', 'That one keeps herself busy applying make-up, but she cannot even make bread'. They do not gain anything through such futile conversations.

### **Backbiting and a chain of feuds**

 Backbiting creates mutual dislike and distrust among people  Women are getting more and more narrow-minded. They cannot digest hearsay. When a woman criticizes another, the listener conveys this to the person discussed about. This creates mutual dislike and distrust and gives rise to a chain of feuds and mudslinging in public that the entire neighbourhood comes to know of the women's qualities and private affairs.

### **The fire of slander**

Daughters, bear in mind the consequences of these attributes and keep away from them. Rise above such low concerns. A girl mired in such concerns, cannot rise above them and cannot see the good attributes even of her loved ones. She looks for faults in her own family members, besides friends. This habit continues

when she gets married and moves to her husband's house. The weakness of finding faults does not abate after marriage; she continues to find fault with her parents-in-law and other family members. This leads to the family getting frustrated. Do not speak ill of anyone and do not harbour hatred towards anyone. Slander is a weak attribute that inflames the heart, setting fire in its wake. Indian families are being engulfed in this fire of slander these days.

### **The principle of admonishment**

If you come to know that someone is making a mistake, do not take recourse to slandering. Instead, if you are of high moral caliber, take him or her aside and talk to the person in private. Your action should not disgrace the person but help him or her get rid of the fault. This would not only broaden your outlook, but gain you more repute in society. The purpose of your actions should always be the wellbeing of everyone.



The  
purpose  
of your  
actions  
should  
be others'  
wellbeing



A person who can analyse his own actions will ponder over your advice, accept it and vow not to repeat it. The principle behind admonishing a person is that, you should never speak ill of anyone, but guide him to correct himself.



## 24. THE BANE OF LUXURY

Cultural heritage of India is changing with time. Penance and relinquishment that were India's pride have slowly disappeared. The spirituality and simplicity of earlier days are hard to come by.

Simplicity has given way to luxurious living. Wherever you look, you see the naked dance of luxury. Young and the old alike are going with the flow of a luxurious lifestyle.

It is the Indian woman who has faced the strongest impact of luxury. Active lifestyle of the times of Sita and Draupadi has become a thing of the past. Wherever you

look, you see lipstick smiles. The natural charm of Indian woman is being spoilt by artificial cosmetics. But she finds the artificiality attractive and holds on to it. She seems to have lost faith in her inherent beauty. She no longer wishes to be regarded as a devi or goddess. After observing the lifestyle of the Indian woman in cities, it is hard to regard her as Griha Lakshmi.

Daughters, you should divert the attention of women from this ruinous path as soon as possible. The ideal of simplicity can be preserved by keeping luxury out of your active life. The ideal of Jainism is not about your physical appearance, your complexion, bright-coloured clothes and not about expensive jewelry. The ideal of Jainism is about penance and relinquishment. A simple and active life is the ideal of a woman. A woman who

swears by humility, piety and cleanliness would not give importance to fashion that does nothing but increases desires.

### **Work speaks for you**

Do you think women following a simple lifestyle will be impressed by your bright-coloured clothes? It would be unwise of you to think so. Adorning the body with cosmetics in an unrestrained manner does not enhance a woman's importance. Do not think that a person would not be held in esteem if he does not wear expensive clothes and scented oil. Good attributes and not clothes are necessary for a person to be respected.

Good  
attributes  
and not  
clothes  
earn a  
person  
respect

Bear in mind that simple and noble living has been held in high regard; for people admire good work and not good looks alone.

Luxurious lifestyle in itself is undesirable. It brings in its wake a string of many other bad habits. One starts craving for more. Luxurious lifestyle weakens the instincts of celibacy and fidelity. Women who lead such a life become sluggish. Their concern is to keep up their countenance and clothes in order. Their pride hinders them from involving themselves in service.

These proud women always try to beautify themselves with cosmetics, arousing envy and jealousy in simple women. They become arrogant due to their luxurious lifestyle.

### **Enhancing your charm**

A man becomes what he practises. If you practise penance and relinquishment and follow an active lifestyle, you will become adept at them. If you lead a decadent life, you tend to become corrupt and immoral. It should be borne in mind that luxury is not permanent. If you were to face hard times, will you be able to attend to your duties? When you get used to a luxurious lifestyle, you will not be able to withstand hardships. To desire for more material possessions and being ostentatious are proof of a person's indulgent nature. If you desire the wellbeing of your family, society and country, banish the demon of luxury from your mind. Then your unblemished nature manifests itself and enhances your charms manifold.



## **25. ANNAPURNA – THE ROLE OF WOMEN**

A woman is love personified. Throughout history she has been portrayed by one and all as annapurna, as one who feeds and nourishes the family. Only a woman whose heart brims with love can enunciate the great feeling of feeding and satiating the members of her family. But not all women can do so as it takes a sensitive woman with an intuitive mind to express herself.

### **The sin of eating by oneself**

If you want to be good and lead an honourable life, distribute the food among your siblings first and partake of what remains.

Lord Mahaveer has said, “One who does not share food with friends but eats by oneself can never attain salvation.”

The famed karmayogi Shri Krishna has said, “The food that you share with those around you tastes like nectar. A man who does not share food and eats by himself is committing a sin. On the other hand, the sins of the man who shares his food are nullified and he attains godhood.”

You know that the scriptures refer to a woman as the Griha Lakshmi. Lakshmi is meant to be generous. The ungenerous nature of a woman would be disastrous as she is the mistress of the kitchen who has to nourish and feed the family.

A woman should cook and feed her family members with her own hands without bias. While serving, she should not wonder if any food would remain for her. A woman who serves with kind intentions is a Griha Lakshmi. Hence cultivate the habit of being generous and sharing with others whatever is available. Feeding and nourishing the family will magnify your love for the family.

### **Opening the door for Lakshmi**

A family would be ensured of the treasures of health and wealth and Goddess Lakshmi's presence, only if the daughters and the daughters-in-law are generous. When they lose their benevolence, the desire to eat secretly increases. Lakshmi deserts the house, resulting in poverty and hunger holding a sway over the family. Open hands open the door for Lakshmi and closed fists close the door on her. Hence cultivate the habit of being generous.

Many girls are given to gluttony. Whenever a family member or a relative brings eatables, the girls just gorge on them. Demanding to be given their share first, demanding for more than their share, quarreling and weeping over their unmet demands are bad attributes. You should have patience, request for more only after everyone has had his or her share and partake of it by sharing with others.

Whenever you buy eatables, be it at home or at school, do not ignore the presence of others. Do not consume everything by yourself, but share with the other girls. There are girls who wonder why they should share when others do not. You should do what is right and not think about what the others do. Do not be narrow-minded even if the others are. Whenever you wish to share, do so with respect and politeness. There are girls who deliberately eat in front of the poor girls to tease them. Imagine how sad you would feel, if you were in their place? If you are blessed with wealth, it is to share with others and not to tease. Bear in mind that you as annapurna should be generous.



You should  
do what is  
right and  
not imitate  
what the  
others do





## 26. THE NECTAR OF HUMANITY

### **The nectar of humanity**

He who broadens his heart and mind is a deity  
He who is a slave to desires is a demon  
He who has no practical wisdom is a beast  
He who sympathises with the grieving is a human

He who has no self-respect is not a man  
He who has no faith in self is no man  
He who takes not the advice of well-wishers is no man

Increase in food intake causes illnesses  
Increase in duration of sleep impairs intellect  
Increase in fear diminishes vigour  
Increase in libido destroys manliness

Desire for respect repels respect  
Giving respect begets respect  
Knowledge begets respect  
Gentle nature begets respect  
Steadfastness begets respect and  
Intellect begets respect

Recognise the joys and sorrows of family members  
Recognise the needs of family members  
Consider rightful ways of reforming the family

Pondering over  
religious matters is religious awakening  
spiritual matters is spiritual awakening  
one's action and thoughts is inner awakening

To be enamoured by luxury is sluggishness  
To be enamoured by gentry is blindness  
To be enamoured by virtues is humanity

**Three things that enhance fame**

Not being boastful  
Not slandering the enemy  
and alleviating others' sorrows

**Tears that reveal piety**

Tears of love  
Tears of mercy  
Tears of sympathy

**Three attributes to be avoided**

Self-praise  
Censuring others  
Seeing others' faults

**Tears that reveal impiety**

Tears of grief  
Tears of anger  
Tears of vanity

**Three types of words to be spoken**

Truthful words  
Beneficial words  
Sweet words

**Four attributes of the truthful**

Not talking too much  
Speaking after due consideration  
Fulfilling one's promise  
Keeping one's transactions clear

**Four attributes of a liar**

Giving false evidence  
Taking false oath  
Not fulfilling assurances  
Not respecting saints

**Four attributes of an animal**

Speaking base words  
Quarreling without a reason  
Consuming more  
Not respecting elders

**Four good habits**

Not being shameless  
Being generous  
Not making demands on others  
Sharing one's food with others

**Four attributes of the humble**

Having compassion for the destitute  
Having respect for gentlemen  
Having respect for humanity  
Keeping company of the wise



## 27. UNDERSTANDING PENANCE

Where there is non-violence, restraint and penance,  
there is religion

Not hurting others by thoughts, words and deeds is  
non-violence

Burning down the desires of mind is penance

Spiritual fire that curtails cravings is penance

Spiritual fire halting previous birth deeds is penance

Fasting, eating less and after work is penance

Shunning luxury and living simply is penance

Humility, devotion and service to elders is penance

Disciplined to speak less is penance

Disciplined to speak after contemplation is penance

Service to grief-stricken, poor and destitute is penance

Accepting one's failings is penance

Learning and enhancing knowledge is penance

Reflecting on God is penance

Do not fast beyond what you can endure

An expectant mother should not fast

A nursing mother should not fast

The weak and the sick should not fast

Do not fast after quarrels and feuds

Do not get angry while fasting

Do not behave proudly while fasting

Do not slander while fasting

Observe celibacy while fasting

Contemplate while fasting

Reflect on the self while fasting

Condemn sins while fasting

Do not apply cosmetics on the day of the fast  
Do not watch movies on the day of the fast  
Do not read obscene novels on the day of the fast  
Do not eat spicy food before the day of the fast  
Do not eat much before the day of the fast  
Do not eat delicious food before the day of the fast

Do not fast with a desire to go to heaven  
Do not fast to gain name and fame  
Eat light while breaking the fast  
Carry on partial fast while breaking the fast

Penance should be done for purification of life  
Penance should be done to make the soul radiant  
Penance is wholesome food for the soul  
Penance purifies body and mind

## 28. IDEAL CIVILITIES

- Pay a person according to what you agreed upon. Do not ever pay less than that.
- Seek permission before entering a house.
- Do not violate rules and regulations at public places such as railway stations, post offices, assemblies and libraries.
- If your feet accidentally brush against a person, seek his or her pardon immediately with folded hands.
- Do not defile public places with body waste.
- If you come across an object left behind by someone, return it to the owner. If you are unable to find him, hand it over at the police station or any recognized organization.
- If a book or an object that you had borrowed is lost or spoilt, replace it with a new one. If you are not in a position to buy a new one, tender heartfelt apologies to the person from whom you had borrowed.
- If someone stumbles and falls, do not laugh at him. Express your sympathy and help him recover.
- When you borrow a book from someone, do not write your name or any personal details and do not scribble anything. Ensure that the corners of the pages do not become dog-eared. Return the book in the same condition in which you borrowed.
- Do not throw any garbage, especially waste such as banana peels on the road. People may slip on the peel, sometimes causing even permanent injury.

- If you go for a meeting or a discourse, do not leave in the middle of a speech. If you have to leave early, leave in the time gap between two speeches.
- Never make fun of differently-abled people. Do not pass comments on them, but treat them gently.
- While talking to someone, do not blindly say, 'Yes' or 'No'. Instead you can say, 'Yes, please' or 'No, please' or use any appropriate polite word.
- Whenever religious or other respectable people visit you, immediately get up and honour them and bow low before him or her with respect.
- Make sure your clothes are clean, even if they are of coarse and inexpensive cloth.
- When you return something that you had taken from someone, do not throw it at him, even in jest. Return it with the same goodwill with which you borrowed it.
- Do not interfere when two people are engaged in a conversation. It is a grave misconduct to do so.
- Do not talk or laugh loudly near someone who is asleep. Do not drag your feet near him so as not to disturb him.
- Return on time whatever you have borrowed from someone. Returning it after repeated reminders is a breach of trust.

