

JAINISM



Annie Besant



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ANNIE BESANT

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

A SERIES of four Convention Lectures — on Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity — was delivered by Mrs Annie Besant in 1896 at Adyar, Madras, on the twenty-first anniversary of the Theosophical Society, the President-Founder Colonel H.S. Olcott being in the Chair. A second series of four lectures — on Islam, Jainism, Sikhism and on Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, as the common source of all religions — was given in 1901 at the twenty-sixth anniversary, Colonel Olcott again presiding. Each of the lectures on the seven religions has been published as a separate booklet and the whole series as a single volume with the title *Seven Great Religions*.

T.P.H.

FOREWORD

THE following lectures¹ do not pretend to be anything more than popular expositions of four great faiths, and are intended for ordinary reader rather than for the student. Delivered to audiences composed almost entirely of Hindus, with only a sprinkling of Zoroastrians and Christians, they rather take for granted a knowledge of Sanskrit terms; so notes have been added where obscurity might arise from their use. They are intended to help members of each of the religions to recognize the value and beauty of faiths which are not their own, and demonstrate their underlying unity. In the lecture on Buddhism I had

¹ This refers to a series of lectures by Dr Besant on the great religions, each of which is published separately with a common foreword.

especially in mind the misconceptions which shut the Lord Buddha out from the hearts of his countrymen, and strove to remove them by quotations from the received scriptures containing the authoritative records of his own words. For indeed I know of no greater service that could be rendered to religion than to draw together again these sundered faiths, which almost divide between them the Eastern world. Mother and daughter they are, and family feuds are proverbially bitter; yet might the quarrel be healed, if the desire for amity reigned on both sides. Less deeply rooted, but more bitter, was the antagonism to Christianity, exasperated by the ignorant and often coarse and abusive attacks levelled by the lower class of missionaries against the venerable faith held by nearly all my hearers. Yet they listened respectfully and after a while sympathetically to the exposition of the faith so young in comparison with their own, and finally recognized that it also was a great religion, and was not really alien from Hinduism. I can wish these lectures no better fate than that they may act as a message of peace to the hearts of their readers, as they

evidently did to the hearts of their hearers.

The general principles underlying these lectures are the following: Each religion is looked at in the light of occult knowledge, both as regards its history and its teachings. While not despising the conclusions arrived at by the patient and admirable work of European scholars, I have unhesitatingly flung them aside where they conflict with important facts preserved in occult history, whether in those imperishable records where all the past is still to be found in living pictures, or in ancient documents carefully stored up by Initiates and not wholly inaccessible. Especially is this the case with regard to the ages of Hinduism and Zoroastrianism, touching which modern scholarship, is ludicrously astray. That scholarship however, will regard the occult view as being, in its turn, grotesquely wrong. Be it so. Occultism can wait to be justified by discoveries, as so many of its much-ridiculed statements as to antiquity have already been; the earth is a faithful guardian, and as the archaeologist uncovers the cities buried in her bosom many an unexpected witness will be found to justify the antiquity that is claimed.

Secondly, each religion is treated as coming from the one great Brotherhood, which is the steward and custodian of spiritual knowledge. Each is treated as an expression, by some member or messenger of that Brotherhood, of the eternal spiritual truths, an expression suited to the needs of the time at which it was made, and of the dawning civilization that it was intended to mould and to guide in its evolution. Each religion has its own mission in the world, is suited to the nations to whom it is given, and to the type of civilization it is to permeate, bringing it into line with the general evolution of the human family. The failure to see this leads to unjust criticism, for an ideally perfect religion would not be suitable to imperfect and partially evolved men, and environment must always be considered by the Wise when they plant a new slip of the ancient tree of wisdom.

Thirdly, an attempt is made to distinguish the essential from the non-essential in each religion, and to treat chiefly the former. For every religion in the course of time suffers from accretions due to ignorance not to wisdom, to blindness not to

vision. Within the brief compass of these lectures, it was not possible to distinguish in detail, nor to point out all the numerous non-essentials. But the following tests may be used by any one who desires to guide himself practically in discriminating between the permanent and the transitory elements in any religion. Is it ancient, to be found in the ancient scriptures? Has it the authority of the Founder of the religion, or of the sages to whom the formulation of the particular religion is due? Is it universal, found under some form in all religions? As regards spiritual truths, any one of these tests is sufficient. As to smaller matters, matters of rites and ceremonies, observances and customs, the use or disuse of any particular practice, we may ask as to each: Is it laid down or recommended in the ancient scriptures, by the Founder or his immediate disciples? Can its usefulness be explained or verified by those in whom occult training has developed the inner faculties which make the invisible world a region they know by their own experience? If a custom be of modern growth, with only a century, or two or three

centuries, behind it, if it be local, not found in any ancient scripture, not justified by occult knowledge, then — however helpful it may be found by any individual in his spiritual life — it should not be imposed on any member of a particular religion as binding on him as a part of that religion, nor should a man be looked at askance for non-compliance with it. This fact especially needs enforcement in India, where customs that are entirely local, or very modern, are apt to be identified with Hinduism in the minds of their followers, and any Hindus who do not accept them are looked upon as somewhat inferior, even as unorthodox. Such customs, even if much valued and found useful by their adherents, should not be considered as generally binding, and should fall into the class of non-essentials. It has been well said that while in things essential there should be unity, in things non-essential there should be liberty, and in all things there should be charity. Were that wise rule followed by each, we should hear less of the religious antagonisms and sectarian disputes that bring shame on the very word 'religion'. That which ought to unite has been

the everspringing source of division, until many have impatiently shaken off all religion as being man's worst enemy, the introducer everywhere of strife and hatred.

May this little book, sent out with reverence for all religions that purify man's life, elevate his emotions, and comfort him in sorrow, be a message of peace, and not a stirring-up of strife; for I have striven to sketch each religion in its best, its purest, and most occult form, and each as though I belonged to it and were preaching it as my own. To the Theosophist 'nothing that is human is foreign', and he has only reverent sympathy for every expression of man's longing after God. He seeks to understand all, to convert none, and in offering to share the knowledge with which he has been entrusted, he hopes to deepen every man's faith by adding to his faith knowledge, and by unveiling the common foundation which supports all religions.

Owing to pressure of time many quotations, supporting the positions taken, were either summarized or omitted in the spoken lectures. They have been inserted in

their proper places, together with a few points that were in the original notes but were also omitted for lack of time.

ADYAR

3 January 1897

ANNIE BESANT

JAINISM

BROTHERS:

We shall find ourselves now in a very different atmosphere. We shall not now have round us the atmosphere of romance, of chivalry, that we find both in the faith of Islam and in that of the Sikhs. On the contrary we shall be in a calm, philosophic, quiet atmosphere. We shall find ourselves considering the problems of human existence looked at with the eye of the philosopher, of the metaphysician, and on the other hand the question of conduct will take up a large part of our thought; how man should live; what is his relation to the lower creatures around him; how he should so guide his life; his actions, that he may not injure, that he may not destroy. One might almost sum up the atmosphere of Jainism in one

phrase, that we find in the *Sūtra Kṛitāṅga*¹, that man by injuring no living creature reaches the Nirvana which is peace. That is a phrase that seems to carry with it the whole thought of the Jaina: peace — peace between man and man, peace between man and animal, peace everywhere and in all things, a perfect brotherhood of all that lives. Such is the ideal of the Jaina, such is the thought that he endeavours to realize upon earth.

Now the Jainas are comparatively a small body; they only number between one and two million men; a community powerful not by its numbers, but by its purity of life, and also by the wealth of its members — merchants and traders for the most part. The four castes of the Hindus are recognized by the Jainas, but you will now find few Brahmanas among them; few also of the Kshatriyas, which caste seems wholly incompatible with the present ideas of the Jainas, though their Jinas are all Kshatriyas. The vast mass of them are Vaiśyas — traders,

¹ iii. 20.

merchants and manufacturers — and we find them mostly gathered in Rajputana,¹ in Gujarat, in Kathiawar;² scattered indeed also in other parts, but the great Jaina communities may be said to be confined to these regions of India. Truly it was not so in the past, for we shall find presently that they spread, especially at the time of the Christian Era, as well as before it and after it, through the whole of Southern India; but if we take them as they are today, the provinces that I mentioned may be said practically to include the mass of the Jainas.

There is one point with regard to the castes which separates them from Hinduism. The Sannyasi of the Jaina may come from any caste. He is not restricted, as in ordinary orthodox Hinduism, to the Brahmana caste. The Yati may come from any of the castes, and of course as a rule comes from the Vaiśya, that being the enormously predominating caste among the Jainas.

We will consider their way of looking at the world for a moment; and then we will

¹ Now called Rajasthan.

² Now called Saurashtra.

consider the great Being, who is spoken of in Western orientalism, not by themselves, as the Founder.

They have the same enormous cycles of time that we are familiar within Hinduism; and it must be remembered that both the Jaina and the Buddhist are fundamentally offshoots from ancient Hinduism; and it would have been better had men not been so inclined to divide, and to lay stress on differences rather than similarities — if both these great offshoots had remained as Darshanas of Hinduism, rather than have separated off into different, and as it were rival, faiths. For a long time among the occidental scholars, Jainism was looked on as derived from Buddhism. That is now admitted to be a blunder and both alike derive from the more ancient Hindu faith; and in truth there are great differences between the Jaina and the Buddhist, although there be also similarities, likenesses of teaching. There is however no doubt at all, if you will permit me to speak positively, that Jainism in India is far older than Buddhism. The last of its great Prophets was contemporary with Sākya Muni, the Lord

Buddha; but He was the last of a great succession, and simply gave to Jainism its latest form. I said there were great cycles of time believed in by the Jaina as by the Hindu; and we find that in each vast cycle — which resembles the day and night of Brahma — twenty-four great Prophets come to the world, somewhat, though not entirely, of the nature of Avatāras. They always climb up from manhood. While, in some cases, the Hindu is loath to admit that an Avatāra is a perfected man, the Jaina has no doubt at all on this point. His twenty-four great Teachers, the Tirthamkaras, as they are called, these are perfected men. To them he gives the many names that you will find applied in Buddhism in somewhat different senses. He speaks of them as Arhats, as Buddhas, as Tathagatas, and so on, but above all as Jinas. The Jina is the conqueror, the man made perfect, who has conquered his lower nature, who has reached divinity, in whom the Jīva asserts his supreme and perfected powers: he is the Ishvara, from the Jaina point of view.

Twenty-four of these appear in each great cycle, and, if you take the *Kalpa Sūtra* of the

Jainas, you will find in that the lives of these Jinas. The life of the only one which is given there at all fully — and the fullness is of a very limited description — is that of the twenty-fourth and last, He who was called Mahāvira, the mighty Hero. He stands to the Jaina as the last representative of the Teachers of the world. As I said, He is contemporary with Sākhya Muni, and by some He is said to be His kinsman. His life was simple, with little incident apparently, but great teachings. Coming down from loftier regions to His latest incarnation, that in which He was to obtain illumination, He at first guided His course into a Brahmana family, where, it would seem from the account given, He had intended to take birth; but Indra, the King of the Devas, seeing the coming of the Jina, said that it was not right that He should be born among the Brahmanas, for ever the Jina was a Kshatriya and in a royal house must He be born. So Indra sent one of the Devas to guide the birth of the Jina to the family of King Siddhārtha, in which He was finally born. His birth was surrounded by those signs of joy and delight

that ever herald the coming of one of the great prophets of the race — the songs of the Devas, the music of Gandharvas, the scattering of flowers from heaven — these are ever the accompaniments of the birth of the one of the Saviours of the world. And the Child was born amid these rejoicings, and since, after His conception in the family the family had increased in wealth, in power, in prosperity, they named Him Vardhamana — the Increaser of the prosperity of his family. He grew up as a boy, as a youth, loving and dutiful to His parents; but ever in His heart is the vow that He had taken, long lives before, to renounce all, to reach illumination, to become a Saviour of the world. He waits until father and mother are dead, so that He may not grieve their hearts by the leaving; and then, taking the permission of His elder brother and the royal councillors, He goes forth surrounded by crowds of people to adopt the ascetic life. He reaches the jungle; He pulls off his robes, the royal robes and royal ornaments; He tears out his hair; He puts on the garment of the ascetic; He sends away the royal procession that followed Him, and

plunges alone into the jungle. There for twelve years He practises great austerities, striving to realize Himself and to realize the nothingness of all things but the Self; and in the thirteenth year illumination breaks upon Him, and the light of the Self shines forth upon Him, and the knowledge of the Supreme becomes His own. He shakes off the bonds of Avidya and becomes the omniscient, the all-knowing; and then He comes forth as Teacher to the world, teaching for forty-two years of perfect life.

Of the teachings, we are here told practically nothing. The names of some disciples are given, but the life, the incidents, these are all omitted. It is as though the feeling that all this is illusion, it is nothing, had passed into the records of the Teacher, so as to make the outer teaching as nothing, the Teacher Himself as nothing. And then He dies after forty-two years of labour, at Pāpā 526 years before the birth of Christ. Not very much, you see, to say about the Lord Mahāvira; but His life and work are shown in the philosophy that He left, in that which He gave to the world,

though the personality is practically ignored.

Before him, 1,200 years, we are told, was the twenty-third of the Tirthamkaras, and then, 84,000 years before Him, the twenty-second and so on backwards and backwards in the long scroll of time, until at last we come to the first of These, Rishabhadeva, the father of King Bharata, who gave to India its name. There the two faiths, Jainism and Hinduism, join, and the Hindu and the Jaina together revere the Great One who, giving birth to a line of Kings, became the Rishi and the teacher.

When we come to look at the teaching from the outside—I will take the inside presently—we find certain canonical Scriptures, as we call them, analogous to the Pitakas of the Buddhists, fifty-five in number; they are the Siddhānta, and they were collected by Bhadrabāka, and reduced to writing, between the third and fourth centuries before Christ. Before that, as was common in India, they were handed down from mouth to mouth with that wonderful accuracy of memory which has ever been characteristic of the transmission of Indian

Scriptures. Three or four hundred years before the reputed birth of Christ, they were put into writing, reduced, the Western world would say, to a fixed form. But we know well enough it was not more fixed than in the faithful memories of the pupils who took them from the Teacher; and even now as Max Muller tells us, if every Veda were lost they could be textually reproduced by those who learn to repeat them. So the Scriptures, the Siddhanta, remained written, collected by Bhadrabaka, at this period before Christ. In A.D. 54 a council was held, the Council of Valabhi, where a recension of these Scriptures was made, under Devarddigamin, the Buddhaghosha of the Jainas. There are fifty-five books, as I said; 11 Angas, 22 Upāngas, 10 Pakinnakas, 6 Chedas, 4 Mūla-sūtras, and 2 other Sūtras. This makes the canon of the Jaina religion, the authoritative Scripture of the faith. There seem to have been older works than these, which have been entirely lost, which are spoken of as the Purvas, but of these, it is said, nothing is known. I do not think that is necessarily true. The Jainas are peculiarly secretive as to their sacred books, and there

are masterpieces of literature, among the sect of Digambaras, which are entirely withheld from publication; and I shall not be surprised if in the years to come many of these books, which are supposed to be entirely lost, should be brought out, when the Digambaras have learnt that, save in special cases, it is well to spread abroad truths, that men may have them. Secretiveness may be carried so far as to be a vice, beyond the bounds of discretion, beyond the bounds of wisdom.

Then outside the canonical Scriptures there is an enormous literature of Purānas and Itihāsas, resembling very much the Purānas and Itihāsas of the Hindus. They are said, I know not whether truly or not, to be more systematized than the Hindu versions. What is clear is that in many of the stories there are variations, and it would be an interesting task to compare these side by side, and to trace out these variations, and to try and find the reasons that have caused them.

So much for what we may call their special literature; but when we have run over that, we find that we are still faced by a vast mass of books, which, although originating in

the Jaina community, have become the common property of all India — grammars, lexicons, books on rhetoric and on medicine — these are to be found in immense numbers and have been adopted wholesale in India. The well-known *Amarakośa*, for instance, is a Jaina work that every student of Sanskrit learns from beginning to end.

I said the Jainas came to Southern India — spreading downwards through the whole of the southern part of the peninsula. We find them giving kings to Madurai, to Trichinopoly¹ and to many another city in Southern India. We find not only that they thus give rulers; but we find they are the founders of Tamil literature. The Tamil grammar, said to be the most scientific grammar that exists, is a Jaina production. The popular grammar, *Namal*, by Pavanandi, is Jaina, as is *Naladiyar*. The famous poet Tiruvalluvar's *Kural*, known I suppose to every Southerner, is said to be a Jaina work, for this reason, that the terms he uses are Jaina terms. He speaks of the Arhats; he uses the technical terms of the Jaina religion, and

¹ Now called Tiruchirapalli.

so he is regarded as belonging to the Jaina faith.

The same is true of the Kanarese literature; and it is said that from the first century of the Christian Era to the twelfth, the whole literature of Kanara¹ is dominated by the Jainas. So great were they in those days.

Then there came a great movement throughout Southern India, in which the followers of Mahādeva, Siva, came preaching and singing through the country, appealing to that deep emotion of the human heart, Bhakti, which the Jaina had too much ignored. Singing stotras to Mahadeva they came, chanting His praises, especially working cures of diseases in His name, and before these wonderful cures and the rush of the devotion which was aroused by their singing and preaching, many of the Jainas were themselves converted; the remainder of them were driven away, so that in Southern India they became practically non-existent. Such is their story in the South; such the fashion of their vanishing.

¹ Now called Karnataka

In Rajputana, however, they remained, and so highly were they respected that Akbar, the magnanimous Muslim emperor, issued an edict that no animals should be killed in the neighbourhood of Jaina temples.

The Jainas are divided, we may add, into two great sects — the Digambaras, known in the fourth century B.C., and mentioned in one of Asoka's edicts; and the Shvetambaras, apparently more modern. The latter are now by far the more numerous, but it is said that the Digambaras possess far vaster libraries of ancient literature than does the rival sect.

Leaving that historical side, let us now turn to their philosophic teaching. They assert two fundamental existences, the root, the origin, of all that is, of Samsāra; these are uncreated, eternal. One is Jiva or Ātmā, pure consciousness, knowledge, the Knower, and when the Jiva has transcended Avidyā, ignorance, then he realizes himself as the pure knowledge that he is by nature, and is manifested as the Knower of all that is. On the other hand Dravya, substance, that which is knowable; the Knower and the Knowable opposed one to the other, Jiva and Dravya.

But the Dravya is to be thought of as always connected with Guna, quality. With Dravya is not only Guna, quality, but Paryāya, modification.

‘Substance is the substrate of qualities; the qualities are inherent in one substance; but the characteristic of developments is that they inhere in either.

‘Dharma, Adharma, space, time, matter and souls (are the six kinds of substances), they make up this world, as has been taught by the Jinas who possess the best knowledge.’¹

Here you have the basis of all Samsara; the Knower and the Knowable, Jiva and Dravya with its qualities and its modifications. This makes up all. Out of these principles came many deductions, I may give you, perhaps, one, taken from a Gatha of Kundāchārya, which will show you a line of thought not unfamiliar to the Hindu. Of everything, they say, you can declare that it is, that it is not, that it is and is not. I take their own example, the familiar jar. If you think of the jar as Paryāya, modification, then

¹ *Uttarādhyayana*, xxviii, 6, 7. Translated from the Prakrit, by Hermann Jacobi.

before that jar is produced, you will say: *Syānnāsti*, it is not. But if you think of it as substance, as *Dravya*, then it is always existing, and you will say of it: *Syādasti*, it is; but you can say of it as *Dravya* and *Paryaya*, it is not and it is, and sum up the whole of it in a single phrase: *Syādasti nāsti*; it is and it is not¹. Familiar line of reasoning enough. We can find dozens, scores and hundreds of illustrations of this way of looking at the universe, wearisome, perhaps, to the ordinary man, but illuminative and necessary to the metaphysician and the philosopher.

Then we come to the growth, or rather the unfolding, of the *Jiva*. The *Jiva* evolves, it is taught, by Reincarnation and by Karma; still, as you see, we are on very familiar ground. "The universe is peopled by manifold creatures who are in this *Samsāra*, born in different families and castes for having done various actions. Sometimes they go to the worlds of the Gods, sometimes to the hells, sometimes they become *Asuras*, in accordance with their actions. Thus living beings of sinful

¹ *Report of the Search for Sanskrit MSS.*, by Dr Bhandarkar, p. 95.

actions who are born again and again in ever-recurring births, are not disgusted with Samsara.’¹ And it teaches exactly as you read in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the human being goes downwards by evil action; by mixed good and evil he will be born as a man; or if purified, will be born as a Deva. Exactly on these lines the Jaina teaches. It is by many births, by innumerable experiences, the Jiva begins to liberate himself from the bonds of action. We are told that there are three jewels, like the three ratnas that we so often hear of among the Buddhists; and these are said to be right knowledge, right faith, right conduct, a fourth being added for ascetics: ‘Learn the true road leading to final deliverance, which the Jinas have taught; it depends on four causes, and is characterized by right knowledge and faith. I. Right knowledge; II. Faith; III. Conduct; IV. Austerities. This is the road taught by the Jinas who possess the best knowledge.’² By right knowledge and right faith and right conduct the Jiva evolves, and in the later stages, to these are added

¹ *Uttaradhyayana*, iii, 2,3,5.

² *Ibid.*, xxviii, 1,2.

austerities, by which he finally frees himself from the bonds of rebirth. Right knowledge is defined as being that which I have just said to you with regard to Samsāra; and the difference of Jiva and Dravya, and the six kinds of substances, Dharma, Adharma, space, time, matter, soul. He must also know the nine truths; Jiva, soul; Ajiva, the inanimate things; Bandha, the binding of the soul by karma; Punya, merit; Pāpa, demerit; Asrāva, that which causes the soul to be affected by sins; Samvara, the prevention of Asrava by watchfulness; the annihilation of Karma; final deliverance; these are the nine truths.¹

Then we find a definition as to right conduct. Right conduct, which is Sarāga, with desire, leads to Svarga — or it leads to becoming a Deva, or it leads to the sovereignty of the Devas, Asuras and men, but not to liberation. But the right conduct which is Vitarāga, free from desire, that, and that alone, will lead to final liberation. As we still follow the course of the Jiva, we find him throwing aside Moha, delusion, Raga, desire, Dvesha, hatred, and of course their opposites,

¹ *Uttaradhyayana*, xxviii, 14.

for the one cannot be thrown off without the other; until at last he becomes the Jiva complete and perfect, purified from all evil, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, the whole universe reflected in himself as in a mirror, pure consciousness, 'with the powers of the senses, though without the senses'; pure consciousness, the knower, the Supreme.

Such then is a brief outline of the views, the philosophic views, of the Jainas, acceptable surely to every Hindu, for on almost every point you will find practically the same idea, though put sometimes in a somewhat different form.

Let us look more closely at right conduct, for here the Jaina practice becomes specially interesting; and wise are many of his ways, in dealing especially with the life of the layman. Jainas are divided into two great bodies: the layman, who is called Shrāvaka, and the ascetic, the Yati. These have different rules of conduct in this sense only, that the Yati carries to perfection that for which the layman is only preparing himself in future births. The five vows of the Yati which I will deal with in a moment, are also binding on the layman to a

limited extent. To take a single instance: the vow of Brahmacharya, that on the Yati imposes of course absolute celibacy, in the layman means only temperance and proper chastity in the life of a Grihastha. In this way the vows, we may say, run side by side, of Ahimsā, harmlessness, Sūnriti, truthfulness, Asteya, not taking that which is not one's own, uprightness, honesty, Brahmacharya, and finally Aparigraha, not grasping at anything, absence of greed — in the case of the layman meaning that he is not to be covetous, or full of desire; in the case of the Yati meaning of course that he renounces everything and knows nothing as 'mine,' 'my own'. These five vows, rule the life of the Jaina. Very, very marked is his translation of the word Ahimsa, harmlessness: 'thou shalt not kill'. So far does he carry it in his life, to such an extreme, that it passes sometimes almost beyond the bounds of virtue; passes, a harsh critic might say, into absurdity; but I am not willing so to say, but rather to see in it the protest against the carelessness towards animal life and animal suffering, which is but too widely spread among men; a protest, I

admit, carried to excess, all sense of proportion being lost, the life of the insect, the gnat, sometimes being treated as though it were higher than the life of a human being. But still, perhaps, that may be pardoned, when we think of the extremes of the cruelty to which so many permit themselves to go; and although a smile may sometimes come when we hear of breathing only through a cloth, as the Yati does, as he breathes continually touching the lips that nothing living may go into the lungs; straining all water and most unscientifically boiling it — which really kills creatures, which if water remained unboiled would remain alive — the smile will be a loving one, for the tenderness is beautiful. Listen for a moment to what was said by a Jina, and would to God that all men would take it as a rule of life: "The venerable One has declared...As is my pain when I am knocked or struck with a stick, bow, fist, clod, or potsherd; or menaced, beaten, burned, tormented, or deprived of life; and as I feel every pain and agony, from death down to the pulling out of a hair; in the same way, be sure of this, all kinds of beings feel the same pain

and agony, etc., as I, when living they are ill-treated in the same way. For this reason all sorts of living beings should not be beaten, nor treated with violence, nor abused, or tormented, nor deprived of life. I say the Arhats and Bhagavats of the past, present and future, all say thus, speak thus, declare thus, explain thus; all sorts of living beings should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away. This constant, permanent, eternal, true law has been taught by wise men who comprehend all things.¹

If that were the rule for every one, how different would India be; no beaten and abused animal; no struggling, suffering creature; and for my part, I can look almost with sympathy even on the Jaina exaggeration, that has a basis so noble, so compassionate; and I would that the feeling of love, though not the exaggeration, should rule in all Indian hearts of every faith today.

Then we have the strict rule that no intoxicating drug or drink may be touched; nothing like bhang, opium, alcohol; nothing of

¹ *Uttaradhyayana*, Bk. II, i, 48, 49.

this kind is allowed; even so far as honey and butter does the law of forbidden food go, because in the gaining of honey the lives of bees are too often sacrificed. Then we find in the daily life of the Jaina rules laid down for the layman as to how he is to begin and end every day:

‘He must rise very early in the morning and then he must repeat silently his mantras, counting its repetition on his fingers; and then he has to ask himself, "what am I, who is my Ishtadeva, who is my Gurudeva, what is my religion, what should I do, what should I not do?" This is the beginning of each day, the reckoning up of life as it were; careful, self-conscious recognition of life. Then he is to think of the Tirthamkaras, and then he is to make certain vows. Now these vows are peculiar, as far as I know, peculiar to the Jinas, and they have an object which is praiseworthy and most useful. A man at his own discretion makes some small vow on a thing absolutely unimportant. He will say in the morning: ‘During this day’ — I will take an extreme case given to me by a Jaina — ‘during this day I will not sit down more than

a certain number of times'; or he will say: 'for a week I will not eat such and such a vegetable'; or he will say: 'for a week, or ten days, or a month, I will keep an hour's silence during the day.' You may say: Why? In order that the man may always be self-conscious, and never lose his control over the body. That is the reason that was given me by my Jaina friend, and I thought it an extremely sensible one. From young boyhood a boy is taught to make such promises, and the result is that it checks thoughtlessness, it checks excitement, it checks that continual carelessness, which is one of the great banes of human life. A boy thus educated is not careless. He always thinks before he speaks or acts; his body is taught to follow the mind and not to go before the mind, as it does too often. How often do people say: 'If I had thought, I would not have done it; if I had considered, I would never have acted thus; if I had thought for a moment that foolish word would not have been spoken, and that harsh speech would never have been uttered, that discourteous action would never have been done.' If you train yourself from childhood never to speak

without thinking, never to act without thinking, see how unconsciously the body would learn to follow the mind, and without struggle and effort, carelessness would be destroyed. Of course there are far more serious vows than these taken by the layman as to fasting, strict and severe, every detail carefully laid down in the rules, in the books. But this is a point that you would not so readily find in the books, so far as I know and it seems to me to be characteristic and useful. Let me add that when you meet Jainas you will find them, as a rule, what you might expect from this training — quiet, self-controlled, dignified, rather silent, rather reserved.¹

Pass from the layman to the ascetic, the Yati. Their rules are very strict. Much of fasting, carried to an extraordinary extent, just like the fasting of the great ascetics of the Hindu. There are both men and women ascetics among the sect known as the Shvetambaras; among the Digambaras there

¹ The details here given are mostly from the *Jainatattvādarsha*, by Muni Atmārāmji, and were translated from the Prakrit for me by my friend Govind Das.

are no female asecetics and their views of women are perhaps not on the whole very complimentary. Among the Shvetambaras, however, there are female ascetics as well as male, under the same strict rules of begging, of renouncing of property; but one very wise rule is that the ascetic must not renounce things without which progress cannot be made. Therefore he must not renounce the body; he must beg food enough to support it, because only in the human body can he gain liberation. He must not renounce the Guru, because without the teaching of the Guru he cannot tread the narrow razor path; nor discipline, for if he renounces that, progress would be impossible; nor the study of the Sūtras, for that also is needed for his evolution. But outside these four things — the body, the Guru, discipline, study — there must be nothing of which he can say: 'It is mine'. Says a teacher: 'He should not speak unasked, and asked he should not tell a lie; he should not give way to his anger, and should bear with indifference, pleasant and unpleasant occurrences. Subdue your self, for the self is difficult to subdue; if your self is

subdued, you will be happy in this world and in the next.¹

The female ascetics, living under the same strict rule of conduct, have one duty which it seems to me is of the very wisest provision; it is the duty of female ascetics to visit all the Jaina households, and to see that the Jaina women, the wives and the daughters, are properly educated, properly instructed. They lay great stress on the education of the women, and one great work of the female ascetic is to give that education and to see that it is carried out. There is a point that I think the Hindu might well borrow from the Jaina, so that the Hindu women might be taught without the chance of losing their ancestral faith, or suffering interference with their own religion, taught by ascetics of their own creed. Surely no vocation can be nobler, surely it would be an advantage to Hinduism.

And then how is the ascetic to die? By starvation. He is not to wait until death touches him; but when he has reached that point where in that body he can make no

¹ *Uttarādhyayana*, i, 14, 15.

further progress, when he has reached that limit of the body, he is to put it aside and pass out of the world by death by voluntary starvation.

Such is a brief and most imperfect account of a noble religion, of a great faith which is practically, we may say, on almost all points, at one with the Hindu.

Let every man in his own faith teach the ignorant to love and not to hate. Let him lay stress on the points that unite us, and not on the points that separate us. Let every man in his daily life speak never a word of harshness for any faith, but words of love to all. For in thus doing we are not only serving God, but also serving man. Then let us, my brothers, strive to do our part in the building, if it be but by bringing one small brick of love to the mighty edifice of Brotherhood; and let no man who takes the name of a Theosophist, a lover of the Divine Wisdom, ever dare to say one word of harshness as regards any faith that God has given to man, for they all come from Him, to Him they all return, and what have we to do with quarrelling by the way?

