

7.229

THE NUDITY OF JAINA SAINTS



C. R. JAIN
Bar-at-Law.

2252

46512

1. R. B. CHHOTAE LALL JAIN RAIS
Moradabad, Rs. 40/-
2. L. SANT LALL JAIN RAIS JEWELLERS
Delhi, Rs. 25/-

The above mentioned gentlemen deserve
our gratitude for helping us in the
publication of this tract.

Secretary.
Jain Mittra Mandal.

THE JAIN MITTRA MANDAL TRACT NO. 80

THE NUDITY OF JAIN SAINTS.

By

Vidya Varidhi Jain Darshan Divakar

C. R. JAIN BAR-AT-LAW.

PUBLISHED BY

THE JAIN MITTRA MANDAL

DHARAMPURA

DELHI.

++

1931

SRI VIR NIR VANA 2457.

RRICE -/2/-

INTRODUCTION

The nudity is the garb of nature for man. Adam & Eve lived naked and were not ashamed of it, so long they ate not the forbidden fruit of the Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. So the nudity in itself is not a thing of abhorrance, rather it is a Virtue, which has been much prized in every important religion of the world.

Mr. Champat Rai Jain vidya-Varidhi, Bar-at-Law has emphatically established this fact in the present valuable booklet. Nudity is the primitive practice of simplicity and its value for morality and health could not be overlooked. "Having Given some study to the subject," writes a learned contributor in the "London Daily News" (of 1st April 1913) "I may say that Rev: J. F. Wilkinson's remarks upon the superior morality of the races that do not wear clothes is fully borne out by the testimony of the travellers.

(2)

It is true that wearing of clothes goes with a higher state of the arts and to that extent with civilisation, but it is on the other-hand attended by a lower state of health and morality, so that no clothed civilisation can expect to attain to a high rank ”,

The Greek philosopher Diogenes, Contemporaneous with Alexander the great lived naked, and the ancient Greeks made nude images as well. In India nudity has been highly prized since hoary antiquity. It stands as a symbol for the ‘highest pitch of Renunciation and the Divinity of man’.

Lord Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of the Jainas preached it long ago and He was imitated in this respect by the Brahmana Paramhansas and the non-Brahmana Sramanas*. Nagas of the Kapālīka School of Hinduism survive to this day in South India ; but the naked Sramanas-Ajivikas had long been sub.

(3)

merged in the fold of naked Jainas ;* who follow the scientific path even now in the same manner, as chalked out by the Great Tirthankara,

Thanks of all the Pious Jainas, of course, are due to the learned author and the enthusiastic publishers for bringing out this valuable and interesting booklet, which we hope, will dispell the darkness of ignorance in respect to Jaina Saints,

Aliganj (Etah)

KAMTA PRASAD

August 1931.

JAIN. M. R. A. S.

*The Jaina as well as Hindu Shastras bear testimony to this view. [See my forthcoming book on the Digambara Saints] MAKKHALI GOSHAL, Puran Kassapa and other non orthodox Sramanas were adherents of Ajivika Sect and went about naked. [See Paramatthajotika, II P. P. 372-373 and Jatakattthavannana, 1, P. 590]. The Hindu Paribrajakas of the Turiyatita and the Avadhuta type were also naked. [Samnyasopanisad 13].

*The Ajivikas Pt. 1 & Indian Antiquary XXI 363 F. N.

THE NUDITY OF JAINA SAINTS.

The householders in the Jaina Community put on clothes which they discard gradually as they approach the *vanprastha* stage, finally retaining only a *langoti* on the 11th stage of the householder's path. But santhood is constituted on the higher path. The saints of the Digambar community must discard even the *langoti*. They cannot retain the *langoti* and become saints. But they do not discard clothes with a view to assail virtue or to excite sexual passion or immorality in any one's heart. Decency is not affected by the nudity of saints. As said in the Householder's Dharma, so far as decency is concerned, we must not forget that the point does not

arise in connection with Religion and Art, and cannot, most certainly, be allowed to interfere with the attainment of the great ideal of the soul. It is well known that most of the Scriptures of the world contain matter which would be regarded as highly indecent if met with outside the Sacred Literature; and no one will be found bold enough to deny that nude pictures and statues of both sexes are not only exhibited publicly, as works of art, in museums and show-rooms, but also find conspicuous places in the drawing-rooms and parlours of the most respected and virtuous families in all grades of society. In respect also of the inadmissability of the point where the ideal of the soul is concerned, it is sufficient argument to say that all worldly traffic would come to a standstill should ultra-prudish notions be permitted to supplant or usurp the place of practical healthy virtue. What harm, for instance, would not the frail little infant in arms

suffer should its parents refuse to attend to its comforts and cleanliness on the ground of its nudity? What, likewise, might not happen to the sick imbecile whose nurse declined to attend on him from considerations of a similar nature? Even the marital relations between husband and wife would be rendered infelicitous, should the doctrine of nudity being tantamount to indecency be extended to the privacy of their retiring apartments. I have myself seen young European girls of 20-25 years of age drawing entire nude male statues in the British Museum in London, publicly, without any body being shocked thereby.

It will be thus evident that there is nothing indecent in nudity itself, which becomes objectionable only when it is intended to assail virtue and modesty. This point is well illustrated by the story of certain heavenly damsels in the Hindu Puranas. These celes-

tial ladies were once sporting in water in a tank when a young man (Shukrāchārya), stark naked, passed close by them. They were naked also, but took no notice of him and remained engaged in fun and frolic as before. A little while later they saw the young man's aged father (Vyāsji) walking towards them, when they immediately rushed out of the water and hurriedly resumed their apparel. The explanation of this extraordinary conduct given in the Purānas is that the younger man had no eyes for their beauty, though he passed by looking at them, while the extreme old age of the older one did not prevent his feasting his eyes on their charms.

It would be disastrous if a misplaced sense of decency were allowed to mar the progress of the soul, condemning it to continually undergo re-births in different conditions of life, the best of which can hardly be said to afford any

real moments of joy. The Jaina Saint, whose vow of chastity is of the most rigid and unbending type, goes about naked, not because he wishes to seduce any one from the path of virtue, *but because Nirvana cannot possibly be attained without the renunciation of the very last article of apparel and worldly goods, according to the Jain belief.*

Nudity was certainly the mark of saintsship in the ages gone by. In the Bible we read : " And he stripped his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they said, is Saul also among the Prophets?" (Samuel XIX. 24)

" At the same time spake the Lord, by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sack-clth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walk-

ing naked and bare-foot. " (Isaiah XX. 2.) In the Jewish work known as the 'Ascension of Isaiah' (p. 32) it is said : " (Those) who believe in the ascension into heaven withdrew and settled on the mountain They were all Prophets [saints] and they had nothing with them and were naked."

Certain of the Christian saints including St. Mary of Egypt, who was a beautiful woman discarded all clothes and went about naked (see Lecky's History of European Morals, chapter 4).

In the Clementine Homilies, the Apostle Peter is shown to explain the point in the following striking language :—

" For we, who have chosen the future things, in so far as we possess more goods than these whether they be clothing, or . . . any other thing, possess sins, because we

ought not to have anything To all of us possessions are sins . . . The deprivation of these, in whatever way it may take place is the removal of sins. " (Ante Nicene Christian Library, xvii. 240).

It is difficult to explain the idea of *nirvana* in the space available at present ; but it may be said briefly that that supremely happy State cannot be attained without achievement of perfection in *vairagya* (renunciation) ; for the possession of all that is foreign to the soul-nature is sin, as explained in the above passage quoted from the Anti Nicene Christian Library. Ancient records show that naked Saints were found not only in India, but as far away from India, as Caspia and Abyssinia.

Nudity was a sign of world-renunciation amongst the ancient Arabs, too. Washington Irving says about their religious practices that " the *tawaf* or a procession round the Caaba

was an ancient ceremony observed before the time of Muhammad, and performed by both sexes *entirely naked*". (The life of Mahamet)

As regards the Muhammadan belief, the following verses from Jalal-ul-din Rumi, one of the greatest of the philosopher saints of Islam and the author of the world famous Mathnavi, constitute clear recognition of the sanctity of saintly nudity from Islam itself.

- 1—گفت مست اے مستسب بگذار رو - از برهنه کے تو ان بردن گرد
جلد 2 صفحہ 262
- 2—جامہ پوشان را نظر براند. است جامہ عربیان را تجلی بیور است
جلد 2 صفحہ 382
- 3—یاز عربیانان بیک سو بازرو - یا چون ایشان فارغ وہ جامہ شو
- 4—روزعی تا نمی کہ کل عربیان شوی - جامہ کم کن تارہ اوسط روی
جلد 2 صفحہ 383

The references are to pages 262 and 384 of the 2nd. Volume of the Urdu Translation of the Mathnavi, entitled *الہام منظر* (Ilham i-Manzum) The Urdu Translation of the above verses is thus given in the Ilham-i-Manzum.

- 1—مست بولا مستسب کر کام جا - ہوگا کیا ندگے سے تو عہدہ برآ
- 2—ہے نظر دھو بی پہ جامہ پوش کی - ہی تجلی زیور عربیان تلی
- 3—یابرو ہنوں سے ہو یکسو واقعہ - یا ہو اونکی طرح بے جامہ اخی
- 4—مطلقاً عربیان جو ہو سکتا نہیں - کہڑے کم کرکہ ہے اوسطا کے ترین

The English rendering of the above is as follows:—

1. The intoxicated one [the saint] said: Go, critic : attend to thine own business :
Thou shalt not prevail against the naked one:
2. The eyes of the robed one are turned to the washerman :
Light Divine is the adornment of the nude body :
3. Thou shouldst either leave alone the Naked Ones altogether,
Or become free and robe-less like them :
4. If thou be not able to discard all clothes (at once) Reduce their number and thus follow the middle course :

देवतिः सङ्गताङ्गीकरण परिणतिः स्वात्मसन्नोदणस्तै ।
धन्याः सन्धस्तदैत्यव्यतिकरितिकराः कर्मनिम्बु लयति ॥

Tr. " They alone are praiseworthy (among saints), they alone are to be adored, they alone have destroyed the root of their *karmanas* who do not need any vessel for holding food other than their own hands, who eat only what is offered when they go out for food, whose clothing consists of space, who have no associates or companions, who do not stoop to begging, and who are content to seek joy in the inner Self alone!"

This is surely only the description of a Jaina Saint in the language of a learned saintly Hindu author !

In ancient days kings gave up their kingdoms and became naked Saints. Many famous names of kings can be given in this connection. Chandragupta of the Mauriyan Empire, who defeated the 'unconquerable' Greek army in

the B. C. days and who married a Greek Princess, the daughter of Silencus Nicator, was one of the eminent kings who renounced a vast empire and became a wandering Digambara Saint. (Vincent Smith's History of India p. 154). Amoghvarsha was another famous king, in historical times, who valued the Eternal Peace in Nirvana more than a worldly kingship. Nirgrantha (naked) Saints were seen all over the country, and were respected by all classes of Indians in the remote past. The Buddhist books are full of references to such Saints (see the Sacred Books of the East, vols. xiii. 223 and xvii. 116 ; Dhammapadatalkatha, vol 1, part ii. 434-447). They had access to the private quarters of the most respectable of families. Alexander the Great invited some of these Saints to his country, and took one of them with him. This Saint

was known as *kalyana*, and is mentioned in the Greek literature as Kalanus, by which name also he was known to Philo Judaeus (see Yonge's Philo Judaeus, vol. iii. page 526). Digambara Jainas were known to the Greeks of the B.C. days as Gymnosophists, and it is significant that the term has been used by the unrobed nature-lovers of Germany of to-day as a distinctive designation for themselves. The Greeks say about the Gymnosophist Saints :—

“ These men went about naked, inured themselves to hardships and were held in highest honour.... Every wealthy house is open to them, even to the apartments of the women.” (McCrindle's Ancient India, pages 70-71 ; Asiatic Researches, iii. 6).

The Chinese traveller Hieuse Tsang, who visited India in the seventh Century A. D.,

and who calls Naked Saints Li-his, says about them :— “ The Li-hi distinguish themselves by leaving their bodies naked and pulling out their hair ”. (St. Julien, Vienna, p. 224).

Marco Polo tells us : “ Some Yogis went stark naked, because, as they said, they had come naked into the world and desired nothing that was of this world. Moreover, they declared, “ we have no sin of the flesh to be conscious of, and, therefore, we are not ashamed of our nakedness, any more than you are to show your hand or your face. You, who are conscious of the sins of the flesh, do well to have shame and to cover your nakedness.” . . . (Yule's Marco Polo, ii, 366).

Malik Muhammad Jaishi, an official of the king Shershah (16 Century A. D.) mentions naked Saints.

कोई ब्रह्म-चारज पन्थ लागे ।

कोई सुदिगम्बर अच्छा लागे ॥

The Padmavat ii 60

Emperor Aurazeb and King Allauddin, too, are known to have honoured Digambara Saints. (Studies in South Indian Jainism, part ii. p. 134)

So far as the legal aspect of the question is concerned, the British Government is pledged, and should remain pledged, to non-interference with the religion of any community living in the Empire. In the Proclamation of 1858 this intention has been very definitely and clearly affirmed, and has been repeated on every important occasion ever since. As a point of law, too, every community has a right to observe its religion unhampered by any other community or by the Government. The adoption of nudity by Jain Saints is no innovation, There are old documents-books

to show that the practice is at least thousands of years old. The Greek visitors to India of B. C. days noticed it. Mohammanan chroniclers noticed it and the Jains have been practising it, according to their Sacred Literature from times so remote as to be absolutely beyond computation and calculation.

No ancient religious practice can be put a stop to by any administration or Government in the world. It is a right of the Jain Saints to discard all clothes, and it is the right of the Jain laity to insist on their Saints being allowed to observe this practice without which they believe Salvation cannot be attained.

Jaina Saints cannot accept food or an invitation to dinner from any one by appointment; nor do they eat if food be taken to where they are staying. They do not ride or drive in vehicles or conveyances of any kind whatso-

ever. They just move out in the morning in the householder's quarters, and will accept food from any pious house-holder's hand, if given with due reverence and respect. They will eat it on the spot, and cannot carry it away anywhere else. Every day a Jaina Saint must cover a certain distance ; and should not spend more than five days in an ordinary town, except in the rainy season when he is not allowed to go from town to town, but enjoined to remain in one locality for four months continuously.

The householder looks upon the Saint's visit as a piece of great good luck, and longs for it. If he is deprived of it, he is thrown into irreparable grief which nothing can allay.

To come to the case law, the Privy Council have held that persons of all sects " are entitled to conduct religious processions through public streets so that they do not in-

terfere with the ordinary use of such streets by the public and subject to such directions as the magistrate may lawfully give to prevent obstructions of the thoroughfare or breaches of the public peace : and the worshippers in a mosque or temple, which abutted on a high road could not compel processionists to intermit their worship while passing the mosque or temple on the ground that there was a continuous worship there."

Manzur Hasan versus Muhammad Zaman, 23 All L. J. 179). See also Parthasaradi Ayyangar v Chinnakrishna Ayyangar (I. L. R. 5 Mad 309). In Sudram Chetti v. The Queen (I.L. R. 6 Mad. 203) the same principal had already been laid down in clear language. At page 219 of the last mentioned case (6. Mad. 209) it is said :—

" With regard to processions, if they are

of a religious character, and the religious sentiment is to be considered, it is not less a hardship on the adherents of a creed that they should be compelled to intermit their worship at a particular point, than it is on the adherents of another creed, that they should be compelled to allow the passage of such a procession past the temple they revere."

A similar view was taken in *Sadagopachariar v. A. Rama Rao* (I. L. R. 26 Mad. 376).

At page 180 (23 All. L. J.) their lordships say :—

The case seems to their lordships to raise for authoritative decision the question as to the right of religious processions to proceed along the roads in India, practising their religious observances, and the decided authorities in India are certainly conflicting. The

first question is, is there a right to conduct a religious procession with its appropriate observances along a highway? Their lordships think the answer is in the affirmative."

In *Shankar Singh versus King-Emperor*, All. Law Journal Report for 1929, pages 180-2, which was a case under the Police Act, Section 30, (Act v of 1861), it was held that to 'regulate' does not mean to 'forbid'. " The District Magistrate was of opinion that the prohibition of music was covered by the authority given to the District Superintendent of Police under section 30 of the Police Act to regulate the extent to which music may be used in the street on the occasion of festivals and ceremonies. I do not agree with the District Magistrate that a prohibition of every kind of music would be covered by the word 'regulate'. The power to regulate is given as regards some matter which is in

existence, and it would be a misnomer to direct the regulation of a thing that does not exist. Regulation of Traffic, for instance, assumes the existence of traffic. That would not empower the police to confine every citizen to his house and prohibit all traffic. Under section 31 of the Police Act the Police are empowered to keep order on public roads and in public streets, thoroughfares, ghats, and landing places and at all other places of public resort. In Benares, in pursuance of this authority an order was issued that a certain class of people, the *Jatrawalas*, that is, the people who take charge of the pilgrims to the sacred city were prohibited from visiting the Railway station. In that case a learned Judge of this Court held that it was not competent to the superintendent of Police to issue a general order forbidding persons of a certain class to frequent certain specified places on

the strength of his authority to keep order in a certain place. The reasoning was the same as here. Emperor versus Kishan Lal (I. L. R. 39. All. 131.) The keeping of order does not imply the confining of people to their own houses, so that no need may arise for the keeping of the order."

These observations apply fully to the case of the Jaina Saints when walking about individually or in processions. The function of the authorities is not to forbid such rights, but to enforce them. The Jaina Saints have been freely moving about all over India, including the Native States. There has no obstruction, nor complaint. It is clearly the duty of the authorities to help them observe their religion, as they have been doing all along, and as men at one time observed all over the world in the past.

*We and our publications in the
eyes of others.*

**Government Census Report
1921:—**

THE JAIN MITTRA MANDAL IS "THE
CHIEF LITERARY AGENCY AT
DELHI."

F. E. PARGETER Esq., writes, from Oxford:—

"You have indeed made a Collection of
Very fine thoughts."

ROBERT, E. HUME Esq. writes from
New York (AMERICA).

I would appreciate very much being kept
in touch with you and your activities.

List of our English Publications.

- (1) Jains of India and Dr. Gour's Hindu Code.
- (2) Jainism and Dr. H. S. Gour's Hindu Code.
- (3) Pure thoughts by *Pandit Ajit Prasad Jain* M. A., LL. B.
- (4) Jain Conceptions by *Vidya Varidhi Champat Rai*, Jain, Bar-at-Law.
- (5) What is Jainism by *Vidya Varidhi Champat Rai* Jain Bar-at-Law.
- (6) Lord Mahavir by *Harisatya Bhattacharya*
- (7) Lord Mahavir and some other Teachers by *Kumta Prasad*,
- (8) Lord Parsva by *H. S. Bhattacharya*.
- (9) Lord Aristnemi by *H.S. Bhattacharya*
- (10) Proceedings of the 2525th Vir Birthday Celebrations together with A Summary Report of The Jain Mittra Mandal
- (11) The Real Nature of Parmatma by *N. S. Agarker*.