

## Chapter - V

### *Sadhu* Organisation and The Way of Life

Having taken the path to dedicate your life towards gaining immortality, May you know that the path that leads to it is that of complete surrender and dedication . Remember you are the child of immortality.

----*Atharva-Veda* 15.17.10

*Rg - sanhita* utters *sadhu* as going to his aim, straight, right (ii. 27.6) *Pantha Sadhuh* and *Sadhuh - karman* i.e. *Rjukarma* and *Bhadrakarma* meaning acting well ( x.81:7) *Lityayana Srauta Sutra* regards *sadhu* as *Visvasanbhurvase Sadhukarma* i.e. righteous (i.1.7), *Taittiriya-sanhita* refers-*Sadhu-ya* i.e. rightly (v.2.12.2)<sup>1</sup> *Garuda purana* says - one who is unaffected by reverence and humiliation and if humiliated do not utter foul words is a *sadhu*. *Sadhu* is always reluctant to self aggraidism. And is compassionate who in other's grief forgets own joy. Like a tree saves others from heat and even partakes pain in dooing good for other. *Mahanirvana-tantra* says - who resides in *devayatan*, are *devakalpa*, determined and truthful are called *sadhus*. *Vishnu Purana* says - *Kalikala (Kaliyuga)*, women and *Sudra* are called *sadhus*.<sup>2</sup> According to *Sabda Kalpadraum- Sadhyati nishpadyati dharmadi karyam iti sadhuh* i.e. one who accomplishes *dharama* is a *sadhu*. *Amarkosha* refers *sadhu* as - *Arya, Sabhya, Sajjan*, i.e. cultured, civilized and gentleman.

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<sup>1</sup> Suryakant: *A Practical Vedic Dictionary*, Delhi:Oxford University Press,1981.Monier-Williams refers its use in the sense of anything directly reaching the goal unerringly, like an arrow or thunderbolt( *A Dictionary of Sanskrit*).

<sup>2</sup> *Hindi Visvakosha (Encyclopedia Indica)*. *Hindi visvakosha* refers *sadhu* as- high birth, *Jina, Muni*, qualified, competent- (*samartha*), adept, *sajjan*(gentleman), and *sannyasi*. Tripathi informs us that *Hemachandra* uses *sadhu* as one who has controlled his senses i.e. *Jin* or *Muni*.

Etymologically, *sadhu* is formed by the combination of two words, *sadh* + *u*. *Sadh* stands for - to perform and *u* for doer. Hence meaning - one who acts, performs. One who considers "I am the mine of all defects - why attribute merits to me ? Ignorance also is in me" is superior to all and is a *sadhu*. The gods do not attain a portion of his sixteenth part (*Sukraniti* : II. 616-618).

In the second chapter of this *prasthanā* we have discussed the categories like *Muni*, *Yati*, *Urdhvareta*, *Tapas*, *Arana*, *Sramana*, etc. which imply *sadhu*.

*Siddha*, *Bhikshu*<sup>3</sup>, *Parikansin*,<sup>4</sup> *Tapsi*, *Virakta*, *Vairangik*, *Santa*, *Aughara*, *Sadhaka*, *Atyasrami* *Avadhuta*, *Udasa*, *Sannyasta* etc. are some of the other categories of *sadhu*. *Sannyasi* is the most common name for *sadhus*, but as *sramana* and *bhikshu*<sup>5</sup> became the monopoly of *Bauddhas*, *sannyasi* became the monopoly of *Dasnamis*. Similarly *Vairagi* and *Yogi* became synonymous with *sadhus* following the *Vaishnava-achara* and *Natha-Pantha* respectively inspite of being common denotations for *sadhus* in general. Ascetic and renunciant are categories for those with almost the similar way of life in the west<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Panini in *Astadhyayi* (IV.3.110.111) refers to *Bhikshusutras*-codes of conduct for *sadhus* proclaimed by *Parasarya* and *Karmandin*. *Mahabhashya* (IV.2.66) of *Patanjali* refers to *parasarino bhikshvah* (*Parasarin sadhus*).

<sup>4</sup> *Parikansin* is a contemplative *brahamana* in the fourth stage of his life. He is the same as the *sannyasin*. The word also means a *sadhu* who devotes himself to abstract meditation or a contemplative saint (*Apte, Sanskrit-English Dictionary*).

<sup>5</sup> *Bhikshu* literally 'beggar'. The begging of the *brahmachari* is quite a different thing from the duties of *bhikshu* in the later system of the *Asramas* (religious stages of life), when the *brahmana* in the last stage of his life, after leaving his home and family, lives on alms alone. (*Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p.104, under entry *bhikshu*, see also Vol.I: *brahmana*)

<sup>6</sup> The word 'asceticism' is derived from the Greek word *askesis* which meant exercise and training for the purpose of strength, skill and mastery in the athletic games.

The Webster's dictionary (1962) defines an ascetic as 'one who lives a life of contemplation and rigorous self denial for religious purposes' or 'any one who lives with strict self discipline and abstinence'.

In the same dictionary we find asceticism as 'the practice or way that can reach a higher spiritual state by rigorous self discipline and self denial'.

The term also means in the *Gita*, to make, to deliver, entrust or commit to the care of : *mayi sarvani karmani sannyasadyatmaneeas*. As to the question what he renounces, apart from the world their are different answers. According to *Sannyasa Upanishad*, it is fire meaning the *Vedic*.

From the various explanations on the related categories of *sadhus* and the earlier explanation of the category *sadhu* itself, we now have some understanding of what *sadhu* is? During our *anvekshana* we observed that the category *sadhu* instead of the others, (*yati* being the strongest contender) is a common usage for all. The '*sannyasis*' of *Dasnami sampradayas*, *Vairages of chatuh-sampradyaa*, the *Yogis of Natha-sampradaya*, even *Jainis* and *Baudha bhikshus*, and others of various other *sampradayas* including *sants* and *udasa* of the *Udasina sampradaya* and also those who did not belong to any *sampradaya*, all called themselves as *sadhus*. *Sadhu* thus has an unique status of transcending the *sampradyic*, *panthic*, *margi* and *achara* barriers and becoming an universal epithet for those who possessed by *sadhurva* lived a life of *sadhana* and *tapsya*. *Sadhu* in general means a good human being and can be applied to anyone, but it has acquired a special meaning, for those who do not lead a family life, live in isolation or in the company of other likes in a secluded places preferably forests and mountains on the banks of pond or river. There are severe constraints in attempt to define *sadhu*.<sup>7</sup>

Tripathi (1978) defines *sadhu* :

"as a person who adopts ascetic way of life as prescribed by his ordaining sect and subjects and who is pledged at least in principal to the performance of the acts of individual and social good as part of his obligation. Following this definition, a person to be called a *sadhu* must : (a) lead an ascetic way of life (b) engage himself in different socio-religious duties prescribed by different ordaining sects" (p.13).

He further refines his definition :

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<sup>7</sup> In August 1957 in the *Lok Sabha* a *Sadhu Bill* urging the registration if nearly six lakh *sadhus* and *sannyasis* was moved. The intention of mover of the bill was "to urge the increasing number of imposters and blacksheep roped in saintly saffron guise from committing unsocial acts". After an animated discussion the Bill was defeated as the government found it difficult to implement it. The reasons were twofold. Firstly, the law could not drag the nuns, *Budhists*, *Jaina* and *Christians* who had renounced the world to line up with the *sadhus* (although this could have been solved by taking the meaning of *sadhu* to include them also, which at functional level exists) at a registration office. The very idea of registration was mundane to those who had left all social conventions. Secondly, the basic question was to define the terms '*sadhu*' and *sannyasis*, in terms of law. It was found an impossible task; for once taken to *sannyasa*, individual cases to have antecedents. vide Bhagat.

"to become a *sadhu*, one has to satisfy two primary criteria namely, initiation into a sect and ritual disaffiliation from one's household. Initiation involves three processes which are as follows: (1) application of a sectarian mark on the forehead (2) Wearing a sectarian garb (3) Recitation of sacred principle, called *Mantra* which is ritually communicated to the novice at the time of initiation by his perceptor. Such persons who do not satisfy the above two conditions but are founders of some sect may also be called *sadhus*. Anand Murti, Rajnesh, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi are *sadhus* of this category" (1990 : 2).

This definition which is to the best of our knowledge solitary systematic definition of *sadhu* lacks on several counts. It stands only for *sampradayi sadhus* undergoing "ritual disaffiliation" (i.e. *praisha mantra sanskara* or *virya* or *virja homa sanskara*) from "household" through initiation" (i.e. *disksha*) and following a particular *achara*. But we have come across *sadhus* who did not belong to any *sampradaya*, *achara*, *pantha* or *marga* leading a solitary life into intense *sadhana* and *tapsya*. Tripathi attempted to fill this lacuna through adding to his definition, "the founders of some sects". But we came across several *sadhus* at *kumbha mela* of Prayag and Haridwar as well as in the caves on the way to Badrinath, who did not recognize any *guru* and were yet in intense *sadhana* and are also not founder of any *sampradaya* or *pantha*.

On mentioning that, it is through *guru-diksha* that one should undertake *sadhana*, otherwise all *sadhna* is fruitless, i.e. *Sampradayahina nishphalah mantrah*, they said they are not doing this for any *phala*(fruit). They are not performing any *sadhana* but what they are doing is all due to because of they being filled with the thought of it and are unable to do anything else. One of them near Badrinath cited the example of Ramkrishna Paramhansa as a *sadhu* of their category. We further referred that Ramkrishna Paramahansa was given the *diksha* by Totapuri in the formal sense. To this the answer was that Totapuri on knowing the *siddhis* of Ramakrishna Paramhansa came to him and offered *diksha*, as he found in him the

true *sannyasi*. At that time the *sannyasis* were of such high standard that in order to keep the purity of the institution of *sannyasa* intact were always in search of the right *adhikari*. Totapuri found so in Ramakrishna Paramahansa. A few of them said that if someone approached them in the similar way they may consider to have *diksha*. A few of them said that they don't consider themselves to be *adhikari* for *diksha* until such situation arrived, till then they have no option but to pray and wait.

A very wide meaning is given to *sadhu* in *Matsya Purana* (144.23.24). It defines the four *asramas* as follows--The *Brahmachari* is one who tries to be useful to his preceptor by the devine means (learning) and in this he is called *sadhu* "one who attains"-*sadh*, "to attain". the *Grhastha* is *sadhu* due to *sadhana* and *karana* (means and purpose). Further, *Vaikhyanasa* is *sadhu* in the forest, due to the reason of penance; the *yati*, who strives (*yat* to strive), is *sadhu* due to practice of yoga; and *sannyasa* is the discarding of all rituals.

Through our *anvekshana* and above analysis of other *pakshas* we came to regard *sadhu* as any person possessed by *Vairagya* and (a) leading a pious way of life (b) leading a pious way of life and is in process of *sadhana* (c) is in process of *sadhana* through *Guru* (d) is in process of *sadhana* through *Guru* in *guruparmpara* (e) has undergone the *praisha-mantra sanskara* (obviously through *Guru* may or may not be in *guruparampara*).<sup>8</sup> In this *prasthan* we are dealing only with the *sampradayi sadhus* of selected sampradayas viz. *Saivachari sadhus (sannyasis)* of *Dasnami sampradaya* and *Vaishnavachari sadhus (Vairagis)* of *Chatu -sampradaya* and to an extend *udasas* of *udasina sampradaya*.

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<sup>8</sup> We came across *sadhus* who believed in *Guru* but not in *guruparampara*, for them *guruparampara* was binding, while is against the notion of *sadhutva*, i.e. *vairagya* or *sannyasa*.

During our *anvekshana* we found that *sadhus* generally used the epithets, a sort of designation, like *Srotriya*, *Brahmanishtha*, *paramahansa*, *parivrajak*, *acharya*, *mahamandalesvara*, etc. *srotriya* means one who understands the meaning of *Veda*. *Brahmanishtha* is one who know *Nirguna* and *Saguna paramatma*. *Paramahansa* is one who knows permanent and non-permanent elements. *Parivrajak*-who is not attached to any form. These explanation was provided to us by Swami Vishnu Puri, *ardha-kumbha*, Prayag.

### ***Sampradayi sadhus***

*Sampradayi* sadhus are organised in various asramas, mathas, *amanayas*, *peethas*, *sangha samaja parishads* and *akharas* through their *marhis*. These institutions exist in continuity through *guruparampara* taking the shape of *sampradaya* over a period of time. The existence of asramas is oldest among them. These institutions alongwith family tradiions have kept alive the Sruti parampara and have acquired,preserved and transmitted the knowledge created over the milleniums since the time of the first utterances of the *vedic sanhitas*.

We discovered during our *anvekshana* that among the *Dasnamis* as well as *Chatu sampradaya*, *matha* is the most prevalent place for residence alongwith *akharas*. The *sadhus* who concentrated on scholarly pursuits alongwith *sadhana* are called *sastradharis* (holders of knowledge), wheras the other who are protectors of their *sampradaya*, *Pantha*, *achara* and *marga* concentrate on military aspect alongwith *sadhana* are *sastradharis* (holders of arms). The first *jati* of *sadhus* reside mainly in *mathas*. They also reside in *asrama*, *amanaya*, *peetha* etc.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Asrama***

*Asramas* have a history of unknown antiquity. The *Mahabharata* informs us of

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<sup>9</sup> Among *Chatuh sampradayas* it is generally called *sthala* , *sthana*, etc.

numerous *asramas*, where pupils from distant part gathered for instruction around some far-famed leader. A full fledged *asrama* is described as consisting of several departments which are enumerated as follows (1) *Agnisthana*, the place for fire worship and prayers; (2) *Brahma-sthana* the department of *Veda*; (3) *Vishnusthana*, the department of teaching *Raja-niti Arthaniti* and *Varta*; (4) *Mahendra sthana* (Military section) (5) *Vivasvata sthana* (Department of Astronomy) (6) *Somasthana* (Department of Botany) (7) *Garudsthana* section dealing with transport and conveyances. (8) *Kartikeya - sthana*, section teaching military organization, how to form patrols, battalions and army. *Naimishya, Kanva, Vyasa, Vasishtha, Visvamisra* and *Bhardvaja* are some of the famous *asramas* mentioned in *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. We visited the *Bhardvaja asrama* at Prayag (Allahabad), which now exists without its splendour mentioned in *Ramayana*. We encountered the *asramas* of various *rsis*, at Pushkar (Rajasthan) and at Rishikesh, Haridwar and Kashi (Varanasi). We had an opportunity to stay at *Kailash Ashram*, Rishikesh, which provided us with insights and details of the life of *sadhus*. Only *Naishthika brahmacharis* and *sannyasis* are the residents of the *asrama*. But it fits more into the explanation of *matha* rather than *asrama*, which is true for almost all the *asrama* existing in contemporary times.

*Asrama* forms through a and *srama*. *Srama* means, working hard, labour, toiling and stands for *maryada* (boundary of behaviour and act). Thus *asrama* means living within one's own *maryada*. *Asrama* is related to the stages of life as mentioned earlier. One needs to be within one's own *maryada* of *asramas*. We came across the category *purva asrama* during our *Anvekshana*, which stood for the previous stage of life, e.g. the *purvasrama* of a *grhastha* is *brahmacharya* and its welfare and responsibility for material sustenance lies upon it. In *mund. Up.* (ii, 1.7) the observances of *asramas* are referred to as *tapas, sraddha, satyam brahmacharya*, and *vidhi*.

## ***Matha***

*Matha* - means in *sanskrit* - a hut, cottage, the retreat, hut or cell of a *sadhu* 'Madhati' means to dwell. *Matha* stands for a place where the students are getting education. During the medieval period the most important educational agency of the time was the *matha*, which was really hostel or hall for students. *Mathas* were free feeding houses, where the poor and the infirm found board and lodging. (Venkataswara 1986 : 261). In *Panchatantra* direct reference to a *sadhu* institution called *matha* as a place where *sadhus* reside is made. Ghurye (1953 : 42) suggests that the term *mathayatana* appearing in the *Panchatantra* (1.4; 2:1) was a "monastic-centre" located either in some isolated place or in a town attached to a temple of *Mahadeva*, i.e. *Siva*.<sup>10</sup>

Even in contemporary times as revealed by our survey of several *mathas*, the free fooding and lodging is provided by many of them to elderly, poor, infirm and certainly to *sadhus*, who are travelling across the country on their *yatra*. In these *mathas*, the staying arrangement for a *sadhu* is a matter of right and *mathas* have to compulsorily provide their hospitality to them. Although, the *mathas* have different rules for the period of stay of a *sadhu*.

If the *matha* belongs to same *peetha*, then it is presided over by a *peethacharya*, e.g. *Kailash Ashram's peethacharya* is Swami Vidyananda Giri. The *mathas* are generally residence of the disciples of the *peethacharya* of a particular *sampradaya*. *Kailasa Ashram* belongs to *Dasnami sampradaya*. One peculiarity of this particular *matha* is that it only provides the *diksha* of *naisthika brahmacharya* and not of *brahmacharya*. Hence any *Antevasi*

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<sup>10</sup> Appadurai(1977:58), mentions the role of *mathas* in the power relations viz. the king and the general people in the medieval period in South India. For further historical details on *mathas* as "broadcasters of culture", refer" *Vekateswara*, 1986.

of the *matha* has to be *dikshit* by some other *Guru* as *brahmachari* and then with his permission, he can come to the *Kailasa Ashram* for *naisthika brahmacharya diksha*. This rule, we were informed was being made, to enable the *matha* to run for the higher learning open only to those with intention to be *sannyasis*. The *matha* has its own printing press and has published several works in Sanskrit. Swami Vidyananda Giri has a good reputation of being a scholar of high order in the Rishikesh Haridwar region and has himself authored works on *Vyakarana* and *Darsana*. In Haridwar the *Dasnami sannyasa asrama* runs on the similar pattern.

In the mathas where learning plays an important role (e.g. *Kailasha Ashram* Rishikesh), one important designation is that of *Acharya*. The sadhus who are called as *acharyas* in a *matha* are supposed to be masters of their *anusasana* (discipline) like *vyakarana*, *darsana*, etc. Another distinctive method adopted in the process of learning is that the *antevasis*, who themselves are in the process of learning teach the parts, which they have already learnt to other other *antevasis* who have not yet learnt them.

It is believed that a person establishing a residence for *sadhus* ascends to "highest" regions of heaven". *The Bhagvati Purana* mentions :

"having carefully built, a furnished *matha* with rooms for sleeping and sitting should at an auspicious day be dedicated to sadhus. The *matha* must not be built during the famine and in auspicious days."

The establishment of *matha* is one of the recognised modes of charity within the *Ishapurva dharma*. This paved the way for the establishment of large and affluent *mathas* in course of history. In contemporary times too the prosperous members of the sampradaya to which *matha* belongs influenced by the spiritual or intellectual power of the *Acharya* or *Mahant* of the *matha* donate huge amounts.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>. Sinha and Saraswati observe, "From the total number of *mathas* established after independence it is obvious that the trend is not altogether unsatisfactory. For, in the past two decades they are being opened at the rate of 2 per year. If this is compared with the building of temples in city or the opening of sanskrit *pathshalas* and such other traditional institutions, we may find that the monastic institutions do not lag behind. Comparing it with opening of schools and colleges, hospitals and such other welfare institutions of the secular kind, the monastic institution may outnumber them individually. At any rate this establishes that the religious institutions have not lost ground at this stage of modernization of Kashi". (p.58)

We observed that the respect a *sadhu* commands depends on the degree of *tapas* or *sadhana* performed by a *sadhu*, *siddhis* acquired in the process, the humility in nature, duration of *sadhu* period, age, etc. *The naishthka brahmacharis* command more respect than others. In the *matha* or *akhara* the administrative position of an individual *sadhu* never overrides the factors mentioned above.

### ***Mandalesvara***

During our *anvekshana* we discovered another dimension to this whole process. Any *sadhu*, particularly among *Dasnamis* when acquires reputation either due to his spiritual prowess or intellectual strength or both, the disciples starts flocking around him. When the popularity of such a *sadhu* acquires a certain level, the *mahanta* and *mandaleswaras* residing in *mathas* or *akharas* and being their *acharya* or *mahant* initiate the process to recognize such *sadhu* as *mandaleswara*. *Mandalesvara* literally means the king of a certain *Mandala* (can be either geographical space or group of people). To us it was explained as a *sadhu* who has a following among a *mandala* (group) of other *sadhus*. The *mandaleswaras* are formally recognized by *akharas* and other *mandaleswaras* by putting a shawl over the *sadhu* by them (*mahant* in case of *akhara*). The *mandaleswara* thus recognized then gives *samashti* (collective *cast* to the fellow *mandaleswaras* and the entire *akhara* to which they belong). This whole ceremony takes place during the *kumbha mela*, some of the ceremonies were attended by us. The prevalent name for such ceremonies is *bhandara* which in different form is prevalent among *Chetuh sampradayis*. There are two types of *bhandara*- 1) *vyashti* and 2) *samashti*. In the *vyashti* form only *sadhus* of a particular *akhara* participate. In *samashti* form the other *akharas* and their *sadhus* also participate.

We came across several *mandaleswara* who did not reflect any spiritual or intellectual

power and have become so by the sole reason of their being able to organize *samishthi*, which requires huge amounts, during the *kumbha mela*. These *mandaleswaras* reflect the degeneration of an otherwise still a very effective, powerful, true to its vocation, and popular institution.

Our *anvekshana* revealed that each *akhara* has several *mandaleswaras* attached to it. *Akhara* thus plays a central role in the organisation of *sampradyi sadhus*. Among the *Dasnamis* there are more than a hundred *mandaleswara*, who are very influential and command respect and popularity (some of them even more than the *Sankracharyas*). The *mandaleswaras* are *paramhansa sadhus* which the *sankracharyas* are not hence this makes them spiritually of higher degree. But formally each of them accept the leadership and superiority in *Sankracharyas*. Each *akhara* has its *acharya mandaleswara*, who presides over the *diskha* of *sastradhari* (holders of *sastra*) *sadhus* apart from *sastradharis*, (holders of arms). The latter can also take *diksha* from any other *sadhu* of the same order. These *acharya mandaleswara* are highly respected and command almost equal status to that of *Sankracharyas*. We came across *mahamandaleswaras*, during our *anvekshana*. One of the explanations which was provided to us that regarding what *maha mandaleswara* means is *mahamandaleswara* is one, whose own *sisya* (disciple) in his own life time has acquired the status of *mandaleswara*. These *mandaleswara* and *mahamandaleswaras* run huge *mathas* and during the *kumbha mela* organize huge camps with splendour. They are known for their scholarly pursuit and learned discourses, which are quite popular. *Acharya mandaleswaras* lead *aksharas* during the *Shahi-snana at Kumbha-mela*. In many of the *mathas* *mandaleswaras* play the central figure in the "structuration" of the *mathas*. The internal organisation of *matha* largely depends on the personality of its head.

## **Struggling Transplantative Process**

Another striking feature, which we discovered was that many of the *mathas* have registered themselves as "Trusts" to avoid intrusions from the state through, various legal wranglings created through "secular constitution". Still several *mathas* which have not registered themselves as trusts run themselves as originally conceived. Many of them are succumbing under the pressure to get themselves registered as "Trust" in order to protect their property from "secular state". It becomes difficult for the *mathas* to protect themselves from the state intrusions and its subsequent control. *Sri Panchayati Akhara, Mahanirvani* in its 'registration of trust' has clearly defined, Sri-mahanta, Mahanta, Karobari (secretary) Kothari, *Thanapati, Ramta pancha* etc., *Sri pancha* and executive is organised through *panchayati* method, where their duties and rights are clearly defined. What was striking is that these institutions structured in the *panchayati* spirit had to made modifications to suit the transplanted "democratic structures" through the constitutional framework and law.

## **Identity of Sadhu**

We met many sadhus possessing ration cards and voter-identity cards as proof of their citizenship. The sadhus informed us that during the Ayodhya movement sadhus blame conscious of their voting rights and started participating in the electoral contests. Some of them even contested elections.

It was stated to us by various *Dasnami sadhus* that the identity of *sadhu* is of *Brahma* which is indefinable resting in 'Srutis through *neti-neti* that is, that which has no end. This conflict is resolved through the concept of two forms of behaviours, the first *paramartha* and the second *Vyavaharika*. *Paramartha* is dealing with spiritual aspects whereas *Vyavaharika* with *Loka* hence it is also called *Loka Vyavahara*. The *sadhu* in his *chitta* has stated firmly

the notion of his being *Brahma* and is doing the other activities of *loka-vyavahara*, which constitutes as *Vyavaharika dharma* i.e. *deha-dharma* and *sampradaya, marga* or *pantha dharma*. This *Vyavaharika dharma* leaves no *sanskaras* on his *chitta* which is stated in *Brahma - chaitanya* to universal or absolute consciousness). Hence, even though a *sadhu* is involved in *loka-vyavahara*, he remains untouched by it due to the rigidity of his *sadhana*. The structure of *matha* and the related other activities as mentioned above fall under the category of *loka-Vyavahara*<sup>12</sup>.

### Managing *matha*

The management of *matha* is of three kinds. (1) *Svayatana* or *Maurasi* in which the office of the Sri mahanta is given to the disciple of the existing mahanta who, moreover, usually nominates him as his successor; (2) *Panchachyatan* the office is elective, the presiding *mahanta* being elected by an assembly of *sadhus*; and (3) *Hakimi* - the appointment of presiding *mahanta* is rested in the ruling power of the party which has endowed the temple (Sinha and Saraswati 1978; 44-45).

*Mathas* are organized on heirachical pattern by *sadhu* office bearers. The apex authority rests in the *mahant*. All powers rest in him. Below him are the following office-bearers, (1) *Adhikari*; he is deputy *matha* - head, (2) *Kotwala* (provost) (3) *Mukhtiyara* : He looks after the legal affairs of the *matha* and keeps necessary documents. (4) *Kothari* : (quarter-master) (5) *Pujari* (priest) (6) *Parbhatiya* : He cleans *puja* utensils and helps the priest. Major areas of *matha* administration and management are : (1) Maintenance of *antevasi*

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<sup>12</sup> The use of equipments in running of the affairs of *matha* and *akhara* is quite prevalent e.g. watches, record players, electricity, telephone, public transport, etc.

Tridandi Swami, who we visited at the Prayag *ardha kumbha*, 1995, follows a very rigorous *sanmyasi* life. he always lives on the bank of a river, do not use electricity, washes his own clothes and sleeps on floor of *kusha* (type of grass) bed, even at the age of above ninety years.

register. In this the place of origin of the inmates are recorded. It include address, his pre-diksha name, his age, his *sadhu* name etc. (2) Arrangement of the boarding and lodging of the guest *sadhus* (3) Account maintenance of the asset and liability of the *matha*. (4) Maintenance of expenditure and purchase account, litigation and account maintenance of the offerings required (5) Resolution of intra-*matha* and inter-*matha* disputes (6) *Prakashan Vibhaga* publishing department (7) *Karyalaya* (office), which keeps all the records including that of the *grhasthas* attached to *matha*. We found almost similar pattern-among the *akharas* as well Tripathi (p.4) mentions the first five *Kailash Ashram* had *prachara vibhaga* also which dealt with the propagating of *Ashrams* ideals.

### **Organisation of *mathas***

*Sankracharya* established the four *mathas* at four corners of the country and laid down rules for their governance under *Mathamnayasetu*, a text prepared by *Sankracharya* for four *mathas*. These four *mathas* are also known as four *dhama* and are important *mathas*, to be visited compulsorily in one's life time. We are giving the details below as given in *Mathamnayasetu* of *Shankracharya* in the appendix of *Sri Sankara Digvijaya* of the four *amanayas* also known as *mathas*:

<i>Amnaya or matha or Puri</i>	<i>Paschimamnaya or Sarda matha or Dvarka Puri</i>	<i>Purvamnaya or Govardhan matha or Jagannatha Puri</i>	<i>Uttaramnaya or Jyotirmatha or Badrikasrama</i>	<i>Dakshinamnaya or Sringeri matha</i>
<i>Kshetra (Area)</i>	<i>Dvarka</i>	<i>Purushottama</i>	<i>Badrkasrama</i>	<i>Ramesvara</i>
<i>Adhithata deva or Presiding diety</i>	<i>Siddhesvara and Bhadrakati</i>	<i>Jagannatha and Vimla</i>	<i>Narayana and Purnagiri</i>	<i>Adivaraha and Kamakshi</i>
<i>Brahmachari</i>	<i>Svarupaka</i>	<i>Prakasaka</i>	<i>Ananda</i>	<i>Chaitanya</i>
<i>Vakta</i>	<i>Samaveda</i>	<i>Rgveda</i>	<i>Atharvaveda</i>	<i>Yajurveda</i>
<i>Mahavakya</i>	<i>Tat tvam asi (Ch. Up. 6.8.7)</i>	<i>Prajnanama Brahma (Ait. Up. 5)</i>	<i>Ayam atma Brahma (Man. Up)</i>	<i>Aham Brahmasmi (Br. Up. 1. 4. 10)</i>
<i>Area governed</i>	<i>Sindhu, Sauvira, Saurashtra, Maharashtra and other areas covered in the west.</i>	<i>Anga (Bhagalpur) Banga (Bengal), Kalinga (Area between Orissa and Madras) Magadha (Bihar) Utkala (Orissa), Varbara (Jungle area)</i>	<i>Kuru (Delhi and adjoining area) Kashmir, Kamboja (Punjab) Panchala etc.</i>	<i>Andhra, Dravida, Karnataka, Kerala, etc.</i>
<i>Ankita pada</i>	<i>Asrama and Tirtha</i>	<i>Vana and Aranya</i>	<i>Giri, Parvata and Sagara</i>	<i>Sarasvati, Bharti and Puri</i>
<i>Tirtha</i>	<i>Gomti</i>	<i>Mahodadhi (Sea)</i>	<i>Alkananda</i>	<i>Tungabhadra</i>
<i>Sampradaya</i>	<i>Kitvara</i>	<i>Bhogavara</i>	<i>Anandavara</i>	<i>Bhurivara</i>
<i>Gotra</i>	<i>Avigata</i>	<i>Kashyapa</i>	<i>Bhrigu</i>	<i>Bhur bhuvah</i>
<i>Acharya</i>	<i>Hastamalaka</i>	<i>Padmapada</i>	<i>Tortaka</i>	<i>Sureshvara</i>

Apart from this *Sankracharya* in *Seshamnayasetu* mentions some other *mathas* or *peethas*. The text is lost. Three *mathas* or *peethas* are mentioned in the appendix of *Srisankaradigvijaya* under the title *seshamanaya* as follows :

<i>Amanaya or matha or peetha</i>	<i>Urdhvamnaya or Sumeru matha</i>	<i>Atmamnaya or Mahan parmatma matha</i>	<i>Nishkala Amnaya or Sahasrakardiyati matha</i>
<i>Kshetra (area)</i>	<i>Kailasa</i>	<i>Nabah sarovara</i>	<i>Anubhuti</i>
<i>Adhithata deva (presiding diety)</i>	<i>Niranjana and Maya</i>	<i>Paramhansa and Manasi Maya</i>	<i>Visvarupa and Chichhakti</i>
<i>Vakta</i>	<i>Sukshmaveda</i>	-	-
<i>Pada</i>	<i>Satya and Jnana</i>	<i>Yoga</i>	The sandals of guru
<i>Tirtha</i>	<i>Manasa</i>	<i>Tripiti</i>	Listing of good sastras
<i>Sampradaya</i>	<i>Kashi</i>	<i>Satvatosha</i>	<i>Satsishya</i>
<i>Acharya</i>	<i>Isvara</i>	<i>Chetana</i>	<i>Sadguru</i>

Ghurye holds that *Dasnami sannyasis* fall under three categories viz. *Dandi*, *Paramnansa* and *Naga*. This classification is not correct and suffers from category-chaos as Ghurye himself puts it. We have attempted such a classification later in this chapter. Here we want to mention that *Dasnamis* are *sadhus* belonging to *Dasnami sampradaya*, whereas *brahmachari*, *dandi* and *paramhansa* are stages in the life of a *sadhu*. One important feature which we encountered during our stay with *Dasnamis* is that they greeted with the pronouncement of "Om Namō Narayana," *Narayana* is considered to be a *Vaishnava* diety. Ghurye(p.87) informs that *dandis* of the *padas Asrama*, *Bharti*, *Sarasvati* and *Tirtha* greet with 'Namah Sivaya' ( We could not verify this).

*Naradaparivrajakopnishad* enunciated the way of *sannyasa-diksha* followed by these *sadhus*. The main *sanskaras* are *sradha*, *savitri-mantra* and *Virja homa*. *Dandi sannyasis* hold *danda* (made of bamboo shaft on whose upper part is tied *Yajnopavita*) [sacred thread] and saffron cloth). The *danda* is covered by saffron cloth in most of the cases. *Dasnami sannyasis* of only *tirtha*, *asrama* and *saraswati pada* can be *dandis*.

*Brahmacharyasrama samipyā grhi bhavet, grhi bhutva vani bhavet, vani bhutva prabhajet* : *Sannyasa asrama* should be entered through the other *asramas*. The significance of *Sannyasa asrama* is enhanced as one can enter it directly from *brahmacharya asrama* (Tripathi 1988 : 98) Those who give away *danda* within seven days of *sarnnyasa-diksha* are called *tyakta dandis*. They are of two types viz. *paramahansa* and *naga*. As mentioned earlier, *mandalesvaras* are *paramhansa sadhus*, whereas *Sankracharyas* are *dandis*. *Paramhansa* are called *digambaras* also and are both *sastradhari*s (holders of sastra) and *sastradhari*s (holders of arms)

Among the *Chatuh sampradayis*, the abode of *sadhus* is known as *sthana* or *sthala*, *mutt* or *matha*, *astara*, *sangat* etc. But *matha* is the most prevalent form of their residence, and is run" on the pattern as explained earlier.

### ***Akhara***

The *akharas* are a special type of organisation of *sadhus* who are on the one hand are well versed in *sastras* and on the other hand they are well equipped and trained in arms (*Agratah chaturvedah drshtatah sasrama dhanech, dvabhyami adih samyasmi sapena cha khadagena cha*)<sup>13</sup>.

Sarkar considers *madhi* as the recruiting ground for *sadhus*, the *Dasnami sadhus*, excepting the *dandis*. admitted are divided into 52 *madhis* - also known as *dhunis*.<sup>14</sup> In an

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<sup>13</sup> The Sanskrit Verse is taken from *Kumbha mela* report, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> Ghurye(op.cit.,p.119) writes "Every *Akhara* is further divided into eight such units called '*davas*'. A *dava* according to best information we could sift appears to be a quarter. And as there were eight quarters in the universe the number of *davas* is said to be eight. In the formation of these '*davas*', we gather, the particular order of the *Dasnamis* into which a *sannyasi* is originally ordained plays an import part. What it is exactly we have been unable to ascertain. There are 52 *Marhis*, which were originally distributed as follows according to Sarkar 57: Under the *Giris* 27, Under the *Puris* 16, under the *Bhartis* 4, under the *Vanas* 4; under the *lamas* -1. For the detail list of this *marhis*, refer. sarkar,pp.57-58.

*akhara* all the 52 *Madhis* - also known as *dhunis* are grouped under 8 *davas* means claim. Thus through rotation each *dava* gets a chance to elect Sri Mahant of a particular *akhara* during *kumbha*. We found during our *anveksana* that all the *Dasnami sadhus* in some or the other form are related to *akhara*. The *sastradhari*s (armed) and *sastradhari*s except *Dandi*'s who generally belong to the tradition of four *peethas* forming direct *guru parampara* from *Sankracharya*. *Akhara* is derived from *Akhanda*, which means organised.

There are seven principal *akharas* of *Dasnamis* as recognized by the report of 1989 *Kubha - mela* administration. In 1995 *Kumbha mela* at Prayaga and 1998 *Kumbha-mela*, Haridwara, the same were given the status of principal *Akharas*.

<i>Akhara</i>	<i>Ishta-deva</i>	Head office
<i>Juna or Bhairava</i>	<i>Dattatreya (bhairava)</i>	<i>Kasi</i>
<i>Avahana</i>	<i>Ganapati Dattatreya</i>	<i>Kasi</i>
<i>Niranjani</i>	<i>Kartikeya</i>	<i>Prayaga</i>
<i>Mahanirvana</i>	<i>Kapila</i>	<i>Prayag</i>
<i>Agni (attached to Juna)</i>	-	-
<sup>Atal</sup> <i>Ananda (attached to Niranjani)</i>	<i>Surya</i>	<i>Kasi</i>
<i>Ananda (attached to Mahanirvani)</i>	<i>Ganesa</i>	<i>Kasi</i>

Above classification reveal that there are four independent *akharas* and three are attached. Apart from these there are *Alkhiya*, *Sukhada* and *Gudada akharas* attached to *Juna*. At the time of *kumbha mela* we encountered several *akharas* apart from those mentioned here. *Chatuh-sampradayas* have separate organisation of *akharas*. One striking feature which came to our notice was that the *sadhus* of *Nirvani akhara* fold their *jata* (bundle of hair) on

the right, *Niranjani* in the middle and the *Juna* on the left. The *sadhus* of the *Juna akhara* are very particular about their *dhunis*(holy fire). One of the *naga sadhu* of the *Akhara* informed us that *dhuni* is the symbol of *naga* existence. It teaches *svavalambana* (self-reliance). A *naga* with *dhuni* is not dependent on anybody else. We found that *naga* of *Juna* assert their individuality more than other *nagas*. They are more strict in following the *achara* and remain naked most of the time. On the other hand *nagas* of the *Udasina akhara* were more polite and humble.

### ***Panchayati Organisation of Akharas***

As explained earlier among the *sadhus*, the succession of *matha* or *akhara* is based on three principles (1) *Swayatana* or *Maurasi*, (2) *Panchayatana* and (3) *Hakimi*. The *Panchayati* form is accepted by *Akhara*. It is essential for *Akharas* to include *panchayati* in their name. During our *anvekshana*, we found that *akharas* in their full name include the epithet *Panchayati*. The complete name of *Muna Nirvani Akhara* is *Sri Panchayati Akhara Mahanirvani*. *Panchayati* means that the organisation is elected through consensus and unanimity. In this process, discussions over a prolonged period of time takes place and through discussions among the *sadhus*, the *pancha* is elected. This election actually takes place at the *dava* level and not at the level of *akhara* as a whole. *Dava* is claim by a group of *marhis* numbering 52 and divided in 6 or 4. It is at the level of *marhi* that the actual election takes place. The *marhis* are distributed all over the subcontinent and the *dava* method, hence provides representation, as per the region. *Dava* literally means 'claim'. The unit whereby *madhis* combine to assert their claim in the organization of the *akhara* is called *Dava*. Once the *davas* are organized they become important only for the purpose of elections. For, the *Sambhu pancha* elects *Sri mahanta* one from each *dava* and accordingly the number of *Sri*

*mahantas* depends upon the number of *davas* an *akhara* possesses. These eight or four *Sri mahantas* thus become the representative of all the 52 *Marhis*. *Sri mahantas* appoint *karobaris*, each from their respective *davas*; and alongwith the other members of different *marhis*, known as *dhunibala*, constituting a body known as *Sri Pancha* which is the administrative head of an *akhara*.

We observed that *sadhus* all the time are on *yatra*, mainly to various *tirthas*. The only period in which they stay at one place is *chatur-masa* the four months of rainy season. The period in which they cannot travel, the period is utilised in *svadhyaya* (self study) and *manana*. The entire moving population of an *akhara* is divided into a number of small units called *jhundi*. For each *jhundi* one senior *sadhu* is selected as a *mahanta* by the *Sri Pancha*. The *jhundi mahanta* is duty-bound to work under the instructions from *Sri-mahanta*. The *Sri Pancha* also appoints *thanapati*, one from each *dava*, to look after the properties of the *akhara*. Therefore, the number of *thanapati* also depends on the number of *davas* in an *akhara*. One may hold the office as the *thanapati* for the whole of his life. The decision regarding any matter can be taken only when all the four or eight *Thanapatis* assemble and reach an agreement among themselves. No single *thanapati* can take discision independently. The posts of *thanapati* is very important and responsible; and hence it is usually given to a senior trustworthy *sadhu* who have retired from the office of *Sri pancha*. Thus in his lifetime a *sadhu* of an *akhara* holding the highest post of *Sri pancha* has to come down to the post of *thanapati* to work under those who were once his subordinates. The organization of the *akhara* is such that there is no room for the pride of power. At every step the absolutism of an individual is curbed. No discision, whether big or small, can be taken by any individual at any level. Although the council of the *Sri pahcha*, distributed in *jhundis*, tours eight months

in a year (encamps at one place during *chatur-masa* i.e. the four months of rainy season) they remain in touch with their main centre or *akhara* where the *thanapati* manage offices. The *Sri pancha* has the authority of appointment and dismissal of the *thanapati* or any other authority in the centre or the branches of *akhara*. Finally, it is the larger council of the *nagas* known as *Sambhu Pancha* which is the supreme body to decide all matters of vital interest to the *akhara*.

During our *anvekshana* the *panchayati* spirit is quite visible in the working of *akharas*. The *akharas* have formed an all *akhara* organisation called *Akhara Parishad*, whose secretary is elected by *akharas* and then nominated to the *parishad*. It is *Akhara Parishad* which negotiates over various issue with government and other bodies. During the *ardha kumbha, mela*, Prayag the *Akhara Parishad* decided that the *Shahi-snana*, undertaken by *naga sadhus* by proceeding to *sangam*, the meeting point of *Ganga yamuna* and *Saraswati* (now disappeared) in huge procession (many of the *Sadhus* ride in elephants and horses and display their armoury) will not be undertaken as the arrangements at *mela* for the *sadhus* was not satisfactory. This boycott by *sadhus* of the *snana* (bath) on an auspicious day on the issue of negligence by administration created a furore. The public opinion turned against the administration as the *sahi-snana* is considered to be a holy and pious activity essential during the *Kumbha mela*. The largest gathering of humanity takes place at these days.<sup>15</sup> Later administration took cognizance of the complaints and *sadhus* got ready for the second *Sahi-snana*. The whole process of interaction for the cause of *sadhus* was done by the office-bearers of the *Akhara Parishad* on behalf of the *sadhus* alongwith some prominent *sadhus*.

What is called *madhi* among the *Dasnamis* is the *Dvara* for *Chatu-sampradayis*. The

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<sup>15</sup> More than one crore people had gathered at *ardha kumbha mela*, Prayag, on *mauni amavasya*, an auspicious day whose merit chanced for falling on Monday.

52 *dvaras* among the four so<sup>16</sup> *sampradayas* is distributed as follows : *Ramanandi*-36; *Nimbarka*-12; *Madhva*-2 and *Vishnusvami*-2

The organization which binds the *sadhus* of *dvaras* together at close interactional level is *akhara*. The *Vaishnava sadhus* are organized into three *anis* and 57 *dvaras*. The three *Anis* are further grouped under eight *akharas*, and divided into eighteen sections.

The *sadhus* in the *Akhara* are known as *akharamallas* or *Rakami*. They follow strictly the rules of *Akhara*. The rules and regulations of the *sampradaya* regulating *mathas* and *asramas* are not binding on them. The *Akharamallas* organisation is *panchayatana*. A *Vaishnava naga* passes through seven stages of *Yatri*, *Chhora* (in these two stages the *naga* is supposed to serve the *guru* and the *akhara* and pursue studies), *Bandagidara*, *Hurdanaga* (looks over the activities of *akhara* and receive and master training in arms), *Mudathiya* (is the advanced stage of the previous two and looks after accounts) *Naga* (The duties of a *naga* are related to administration and protection of *akhara*, and the seventh and final stage is that of *atita*. *Atita* is always absorbed in worship and look-after the spiritual well being of the *Akharamallas*. They are concerned only with the important issues of the *sampradaya*.

From the *nagas* and the *atitas*, the *Sadar* (Chief) *naga* is selected by *pancha*. He is offered *kanthi* (beads), a *Katori* (cup) and some other presents by *pancha*. *Kotavala* is accountable to *Sadar naga* who forms a *jamata* and wanders to various places for twelve years to propagate *Vaishnava dharma* and collects resources for the *Akhara*. A *Maha Atita* is the most respected person in the *Akhara* and is occasionally concerned on issues of utmost concern for the *Akhara*.

We observed that not as elaborate as *Dasnami akharas*, the *Chutu-sampradaya*

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<sup>16</sup> From *sri Sampradaya*, *Ramanandis* are represents while from *Rudra*, *Vishnuswamis*.

*akharas* too follow the *panchayatana* form of organisation. There is an executive body of *pancha* and *sar-pancha*, which helps *mahanta* in administration. The selection of *mahanta* is done by *Maha-Atita*. The *Mahanta* cannot disobey the *pancha*, if he does so he is removed. *Golaki* looks after the *akhara* accounts and his presence is must when *purohita* (priest) give charge of worship to another *purohit*.

### ***Khalsa***

One of the *mahantas* of *Chatuh-sampradaya khalsa* told us that *khalsa* is taken in the sense of unity and were formed to fight the muslim aggression. It is taken to mean armed front and were earlier moving armed force. It is believed that *Guru Nanak* used the term *khalsa* and it is prevalent among *sikhs*. On the similar pattern the *khalsas* are organised among *Vaishnava*, which is known as *Chatuh-sampradaya khalsa*. This *Chatuh-sampradaya khalsa* is build by bringing together *Ramanand*, *Nimbarka*, *Madhva-Gudiya* and *Vishhnuswami sampradayas*. Each *sampradaya* has its *mahant* in this organisation and *Sri mahanta* is from the *Ramanand sampradaya*.

During our *anvekshana* we found that the process of building a *khalsa* by a *sadhu* is similar to that of becoming a *mandaloesvara* among *Dasnamis*. The *sadhu* intending to build one's own *khalsa* has to approach the *mahants* of *Chatuh-sampradaya* and one *Ani*, and request for permission to build a *khalsa*. After being granted permission the *sadhu* invites *panchas* for *Bhandara* similar to that of *samishti* in *Dasnamis*. In the ceremony he is given shawl, rosary and *tilaka*. These *khalsas* are related to *dvaras*, the *mahanta* of a *khalsa* cannot give *diksha* to a *naga*. Among *Dasnamis* the *acharya mandaleswara* of concerned *akhara* does give *sannyasa diksha* to *nagas*. In case of *Dasnamis* the *sidhu* to become a *mandalesawara* is approached by *mandalaswaras* and *akharas*. Here it is other way round.

Some important *khalsas* apart from *Chatuh sampradaya khalsa* are:

***Dakor Khalsa*** : Exclusively of Ramanandis. The *sri-mahanta* and other assistants are from *Dakor gaddi* in Gujarat.

***Brahbhai Dandiyān Khalsa*** : Again exclusively of *Ramanandis*. It has one *Sri-mahanta* with eleven assistants and is a very big *Khalsa*. The *khalsa* was established by *Sri Driramadasa* and *Sri Jagnnatha* played an important role in its expansion.

***Tyagi Khalsa***--*Sri Siyarama Dasa* had build this *khalsa* and is also called *Terah bhai Tyagi khalsa*. This also belongs to Ramanandis with thirteen *mahantas*. The members are largely *Tapsis* (body besmeared with ashes) and is the biggest *Khalsa*.

***Mahatyagi khalsa***--*Sri Baldeva* had build this *khalsa* and is also known as *Chaudah Bhai Mahatyagi khalsa*.

***Nandrama Dasa khalsa***--This *khalsa* was established by the *Sishya of Dhirama Das, Nandrama Dasa*.

Some of the other *khalsa* are *Virakta mandala khalsa, Sri Saptarshi jamadagni khalsa, Sri Visvamitra khalsa, Vasishtha khalsa, Akhil Bhartiya Pancha Saptrshi Khalsa, Akhil Bharatiya Sri Kamdhenu Khalsa, etc.*<sup>17</sup>

There are small *khalsas* like *Nandarama dasa Dhiramadasa khalsa, Sarptrshi Khalsa, Raslama khalsa* and *Maha tyagi Khalsa* (1976 : 128-129) In the 1989 *Kumbha mela* the total number of *Khalsas* were 154.<sup>18</sup> Following is the chart of various *Anis* and *akharas* alongwith their *baithakas* in relation to each other:

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<sup>17</sup> Sinha and Saraswati have mentioned some of these *khalsas*.

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Mela Administration, 1989, *Kumbha-mela*, Prayag Dvivedi, J.N., p. 66. Elric Barlo Shivaji in *Ujjaina ka kumbha*, provides a list of 41 *khalsas* visiting the *Singhastha parva (kumbha-mela)*, 1980 at Ujjain, pp.31-33.

***Nirmohi Ani***

<i>Akhara</i>	Sub-section	<i>Baithakas</i>
<i>Nirmohi</i>	<i>Ramanandi Nirmohi</i>	Vrindavan, Ayodhya, Puri, Nasik, Chitrakoot, Ujjaina, Govardhan etc.
	<i>Vishnuswami Nirmohi</i>	Vrindavan, Bundi, Kota
	<i>Nirmohi Maladhari</i>	Vrindavana
	<i>Radhavallabhi Nirmohi</i>	Vrindavan, Neem ka Than (Jaipur)
	<i>Jhariya Nirmohi</i>	Vrindavan, Neem ka Than (Jaipur)
<i>Mahanirvani</i>	<i>Ramanandi Mahanirvani</i>	Vrindavana, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot etc.
	<i>Hariivyasi Mahanirvani</i>	Vrindavana
<i>Santoshi</i>	<i>Ramanandi Santoshi</i>	Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, etc.
	<i>Harivyasi Santoshi</i>	Puri

***Digambari Ani***

<i>Akhara</i>	Sub-section	<i>Baithakas</i>
<i>Ramji Digambara</i>	-	Vrindavana, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Ujjain, Puri
<i>Shyamji Digambara</i>	-	Vrindavana, Puri

*Nirvani Ani*

<i>Akhara</i>	Sub-section	<i>Baithakas</i>
<i>Nirvani</i>	<i>Ramanandi Nirvani</i>	Vrindavana, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Ujjain, Puri, Govardhan
	<i>Harivyasi Nirvani</i>	Vrindavana
	<i>Balbhadri Nirvani</i>	Vrindavana, Puri, etc.
<i>Khaki</i>	<i>Ramanandi Khaki</i>	Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Ujjain, Puri
	<i>Harivyasi Khaki</i>	Not known
<i>Niravalambi</i>	<i>Ramanandi Niravalambi</i>	Vrindavana, Puri
	<i>Ramanandi Tatambri</i>	Vrindavana

We have seen the four fold divisions among the *Saivas* organized as *Dasnamis* and *Chatu-sampradayas*. This four fold pattern is followed by *Udasina sampradaya* of *Sri Chandracharya* (son of Guru Nanak). It is called the four *paddhatis* based on region i.e. *purva* (eastern), *paschima* (western), *uttara* (northern) and *dakshina* (southern). *Virja havan* among *sadhus* of these is performed as *tyaga*. They are known as *nyasi Udasina*. They are also organized into their *akhara* named : *Sri 108 pujiyapada Advaita pancha pamesvara panchayati akhara Bada Udasina Nirvana*. Its head office is at Prayag. They follow the *panchayati* form of organisation. There is *Nirmal akhara* also which is similar to *Udasina*. The *Udasina akhara* is administered by the *Panchayati* or council of *sadhus* known as *pancha-pamesvara* constituting, 4 *Sri-mahantas*, 68 *Nirvanas* and 24 *Vastradharis*. In *Akhara* administration are involved one *pujari*, one *Bhandari*, one *Kothari*, one *Kotavala*, two

*Karobari* and four *Patels* with highest authority lying with *Sri mahantas*. The *Udasa* (*sadhus* of *Udasina sampradaya*) wear a *mudra* (ring) in the right ear and *bhasma* over body, "holy" wollen thread, *jata* and *janjira* (iron chain in the waist). The *nagas* of *Udasina akhara* were very friendly to us *and* were of great help during our *anvekshana*.

### **Attempts to Universal Organisation**

Earlier we have mentioned the organisation of *Dasnami* *sadhus* under four *mathas* and ten *padas*. Within these ten *padas* and four *mathas*, *Sankracharya* attempted to organize the all *sadhus*. *Sankracharya* never attempted to create a *sampradaya* of *Dasnamis*, although divided into four *sampradayas*, i.e. *Kitwara*, *Bhogavara*, *Anandvara*, and *Bhurivara*, itself took the shape of *sampradaya* with *Advaita darsana*, *Saiva achara* and *Advaita sadhana*. It was from these *Dasnamis*, that new *sampradayas* took shape. *Madhvacharya*, the initiator of *Brahma sampradaya* was a *Tirtha* and followed *Vaishnava achara*. His *sannyasi* name was *Ananda Tirtha*. Similarly, *Swami Dayananda Saraswati* and *Ram Krishna Pranhansa* (*Sannyasa diksha by Tota Puri*) too can be seen out of *Dasnami* fold. They created their own *samaja*. *Vivekananda* thus is a *Puri* and *Ramkrishna Mission* belongs to *Puri Dasnami sampradaya*. For though *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Sampradaya* is regarded as a branch of *Madhva sampradaya* his *sannyasa-diksha* was through *Isvara Puri*. Even at *Badrikashrama*, where we stayed for a week, the *Vaishnava* dietics were worshipped. *Dasnamis*, had always a penchant for universal acceptance.<sup>45</sup> But inspite of the biggest attempt of its kind in history to bring within a single fold the entire traditions known at that time failed to be so, newer such attempts emerged creating separate *sampradayas*, *panthas*, *margas*, *samaja* or *sangha*.

Another such attempt was made by *Gorakhnatha*, which led to the creation of *Natha - sampradaya*. The *sadhus* of the *sampradaya* are known as *Nathas*. *Nathas* lay claim that one

of the *Nathas*, even converted Sankracharya within their fold. Such was the reach of the *Natha* or *Yoga - sampradaya* that within its tradition of *siddhas* is covered the *Jainas* as well as *Baudhas*. *Nanaka - pantha* derives their origin from the *siddha* tradition of *Natha - sampradaya*.

In the *parampara* of *Natha - sampradaya*, it is held that formerly there were eighteen *panthas* following *saiva achara* and twelve of *Gorakhnatha*. These two groups fought each, other and as a result twelve of the former and six of the latter were destroyed. The remaining twelve *panthas* of the two constitute the *parampara* of *Kanphatas* or *Gorakhnathis*. Those derived from former are (1) *Kantharnatha* (2) *Pagalnathi* (3) *Raval* (4) *Panikha* (5) *Ban* (6) *Gopal*, or *Ramke*. Those of latter are (1) *Hethanatha* (2) *Kolinatha* of *Ai-pantha* (3) *Chandnatha*, *Kaplani* (4) *Bairaga* (5) *Paonath* - (6) *Dhajjnatha (mahabira)* whose members are all foreigners (Briggs 1989 [1938] : 63).

What is important to note here, is the fact that *Natha-sam,pradaya* traces its origin from *Adinatha* or *Siva* who is supposed to have taught the *Yoga* to *Parvati and Matsyendra natha* (*Guru* of *Gorakhanatha*) overheard it, who in turn taught it to *Gorakhnatha*, to whose credit goes the above twelve fold panthic, organisation. This way all the *panthas* mentioned earlier belonging to *Saiva achara* and *Gorakhnatha* seperately are in fact belong to various traditions re-organized by *Gorakhnatha*, which may have turned out to be a violent exercise. What is unique that similar to that of *Sankracharya* this attempt of *Gorakhnath* was to reorganize almost all the traditions.

It is interesting to note here that most of the *marhis* as discussed earlier under organization of *akhara* are named after some 'natha' like *Ridhnatha*, *Aparnatha*, etc. It is possible that at one time the *sadhus* of *naga akharas* belonged to the *natha sadhus*. The

*Dasnamis* and *Natha panthis* have similarities in *achara*. *The ishta deva* of *Juna akhara* and *Nathas* is *Bhairava* and they both worship *Dattatreya*. Both of them have the tradition of *siddha*, *kapalika*, *avadhuta* and *bhairivis*. Some of the *sadhus* belonging to *Juna akhara* wear ear-ring like the *nathas*. Not all *Nathas* are *Kanphata*. The *Nathas* can be seen to follow both *Saiva* and *Sakta achara*. They follow *Tantrika sadhana* in a varied form with emphasis on *Yoga sadhana* of *Hatha-Yoga*. It is not only the names of the *Dasnami marhis*, most of which have a *natha* epithet, but the *achara* (way of life) and *sadhana* bring *Dasnamis* and *Nathas* close to each other. Sinha and Saraswati inform that there are 64 *marhis* among the *Saiva sannyasis* of which *Dasnamis* have 52 *marhis* and the *Nathapanthis* have 12, *Barahpanthi*, as they call themselves<sup>19</sup> (1976 : 93)

On the basis of *anumana* from the above discussion that the tradition of *Sankracharya* and *Gorakhanaha* attempted to universal organization of *sadhus* trying to incorporate each, other culminated in the *marhi* form of organisation which constituted the *Akharas* among *Dasnamis* and *Panthis* among *Nathas* (i.e. *Barahpanthis*). It can be seen otherway also as 64 *marhis* of the *Saiva sadhus* getting organised as mentioend earlier.

The attempt of *Chatu - sampradaya* was on the similar pattern and according to *Vaishnava achara mata*, their are only four *sampradayas*. Even though these attempts were made no such attempt, succeeded. The *Dasnamis* could not cover, even the entire *Saivas* or *Chatu-sampradayas* the entire *Vaishnavas*.<sup>20</sup> It is only in contemporary times that organizations like *Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad*, *Bharat Sadhu Samaj* and *Dharma Sansad*

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<sup>19</sup> For *Natha sampradaya* refer Briggs, *Gorakhnath and Kanphata Yogis*. Divedi, Hazari prasad, *Natha sampradaya* (Hazari prasad Dvivedi Granthavali).

<sup>20</sup> The reach of *Nathas* is far larger than these two, but it also failed to reach the goal of universal organisation of *sadhus*. These attempts certainly led to efforts, which has produced extraordinary organisations.

which transcend the *achara sampradaya* and *mata* divisions to be representative of all *sadhus*. These organisations reflect collective force of *sadhus*. *Dharma Sangha* of Swami Karpatri ji led a massive agitation in the late sixties against cow-slaughter and the phenomenon of "*Hindutva* resurgence" in late eighties and early nineties was culmination of the use of this collective force of *sadhus* (Pushkar Misra 1994 :

### **Stages in the life of a *Sadhu***

We have attempted to explain the life of a *sadhu* in *matha* and *akhara* alongwith their orgnaistion earlier. We now attempt to explain the stages in the life of a *sadhu*.

*Narad-parivrajko-upanishad*<sup>21</sup> mention six stages in the life of a *sadhu* :

1. *Kutichaka* (*asrama* dweller) - This being the earliest stage, the *Sadhu* as an initiate lives with and serves the *guru*. Etymologically *kutichka* is one who lives in *Kuti* (hut). *Kutichaka* does not travel.
2. *Bahudaka* (supported by many) is a stage in a *sadhu* life, where he continuously travels, not staying more than three days at any single place. The *sadhu* collects his *bhiksha* from many sources and serves other people to the best of his ability. A *bahudaka* because he drinks water of many places (*bahudaka*) in the course of his vow of wandering life.
3. *Hansa* (swan) - is a *sadhu* versed in *Sruti* and *Sastra* and pursues the aim of attaining *Brahmajnana*, living at one place and undergoing *sadhana*. He gives his advice to people as they come to him when required. Living on *bhiksha*, *hansa* is a "swan floating in the holy lake of *manas*, the seat of *Brahma*, hence is a *Brahmajnani* by the *yoga* (communion) of *jiva-atma* with *paramatma*). *Hansa* (Swan) "has the ability to separate the essence of things from the surface appearance, the reality from non-reality, the truth from false". Thus *Hansa* has realised the essence behind all.
4. *Paramahansa* (great swan) is a *sadhu* who has firmly established oneself in the *hansa* stage and is absorbed in one's *atma*. *Paramhansa* is free from all rules and regulations and is a highly respected *sadhu* residing in the highest state of *sadhana*, where the *sadhya* and *sadhana* become one. They give up their *danda*.
5. *Turiyatita* (beyond the fetters of nature) - is a *sadhu* engrossed completely in the inner *vairagya* merging consciousness within oneself and hardly aware of *loka*.

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<sup>21</sup> Vide, *Indrachandra Sastri*, "*Vaidika sahitya men sannyasu ki parampara*", in *Nagri Pracharini Patrika*, Varanasi, p.11.

6. *Avadhuta* (one who has shaken of all *laukika* attachment and obligations) - is the stage of "complete liberation" where all the divinations are abolished in the vision of the *sadhu*.

During our *anvekshana*, we came across only *sadhus* of the first four stages.<sup>22</sup> It is these stages only which were known to many of the *sadhus*. The other two stages were seldom mentioned and seem to have merged in the *Paramhansa*, stage, which invariably was considered to be the highest stage. These four or six stages of *sadhu* begin only after he undergoes *sannyasa diksha*. But before undergoing *sannyasa-diksha*, he has to undertake *brahmacharaya* and *naishthika brahmacharaya-diksha*. This was even for those who in their *purva - asrama* were *grhasthas*. Ideally the stages of life and *asrama* are *brahmacharya*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyas*. In this when any *brahmachari* reluctant to enter the *grhastha asrama* devotes his life to *sadhana* or learning engrossed in *vairagya* was given the *diksha* of *naishthika brahmacharya* which qualified him for *sannyasa diksha*. The other *brahmacharis* who went in for *grhastha asrama* and were called *upakurvanas* attained this state by undertaking *sadhu* life through *vanaprastha asrama*.

Our *anvekshana* revealed that the stage of *Vanaprastha asrama* is almost missing, atleast we did not come across any such example. And those who opt for the *sadhu* way of life are prepared for *sannyasa* by beginning from the very beginning i.e. by taking the *brahmacharya diksha*. We came across *brahmachari* of over even seventy five years of age.<sup>23</sup>

In contemporary times even if a *grhastha* begins his *sadhu* life, the six stages of *sadhu* life

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<sup>22</sup> *Jabala-upanishad* mentions three types of *sannyasis* viz. 1) *Parivrata*, *Atura* and *Paramhansa*. *Atura-sannyasi* is one who opts for *sannyasa* only in speech and *manasa (chitta)*. Among the *Dasnamis* we found that a different *sannyasa-paddhati*(the way of undertaking *sannyasa*) is followed for *atura sannyasis*, which is of short duration and deals only with essentials. *Asramopnishad* and *Bhikshuka-upanishad* follow the four fold divisions of *Kutichaka*, *Bahudaka*, *Hansa* and *Paramhansa*. Former mentions the rules regarding *Bhiksha*, e.g. *Kutichaka* is supposed to take *bhiksha* from his offsprings only , etc. It also mentions rules of residence to be followed while travelling. The latter also accepts almost similar rules. *Narada-parivrajoka-upanishad*, *Asramopnishad* and *Bhikshuka upanishad* have only minor differences over the rules and regulations followed by the four stages in the life of a *sadhu*. *Parivrata* of *Jabala-upanishad* is same as *Kutichaka* and *Bahudaka*.

<sup>23</sup> *Br. Up* (VI.1.6) mentions the stories of an old man Aruni becoming a *brahmachari*. *Jabala upanishad* recommends *sannyasa*, whenever the urge arrives.

are as followed, viz. (1) *Brahmachari*, (2) *Naishthika brahmachari* (these two are prior to *sannyasa diksha*) (3) *Kutichaka* (4) *Bahudaka* (5) *Hansa* and (6) *Paramhansa* (these are the stages after the *sannyasa diksha*). We came across mainly brahmachari, naishthika brahmachari and paramhansa stages.

### ***Sannyasa and Vairagya : The Concept and Notion of Sadhutva***

On our query that why one takes up sannyasa, the most of the answers, were that it is due to the *Karma* of the past which embodies one with *sannysa*, when possessed by the feeling of *Vairagya*. *Vairagya*, a state of mind, which is a stage of detachment, where the *karmas* of the world no more remain interesting for the individual. When an individual reaches this stages it is institutionalised through *praisha mantra sanskara* as *sannyasa*.<sup>24</sup> Literally *vairagya* means change or loss of colour. When there is cessation of all *karma*, then there is *vairagya*.

*Vairagya* in *Yoga sutra* (1.15) is the state of possession of *chitta* of non-craving in the subjects seen or heard. Through the knowledge of *Purusha* (as in *sankhya*), the absence of craving for *prakriti* and its *guna* is called *para-vairagya* (1.16).

*Vidyaranya's Jivanmuktivivekah* deals with the conception and notion of *Vairagya* and *sannyasa*. The text is in five *prakaranas* (chapters). The first , deals with the *pramana* of

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<sup>24</sup> Some examples of *Vairagya* are given below, although experienced in indifferent contexts. Krishnamurty, *Commentaries on Living*, observes:

To give up in order to gain is no renunciation at all. To see the false as false, to see the true as true-it is this that sets the mind free...self deception exists when there is any form of craving or attachment: attachment to a prejudice, to an experience, to a system of thought. Consciously or unconsciously, the experiencer is always seeking greater, deeper, wider experience; and as long as experiencer exists, there must be delusion in one form or the other. (p.4 & p.8).

Keyserling in *A Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, observes:

Today no fact as such troubles me anymore, I am not fond of reading, I hardly need my fellowmen, and I am leading more and more towards the life of a hermit, in which shape I can doubtless fulfill my destiny... the impulse which drives me into the wide world is precisely the same as that which drives so many into monasteries: the desire for self-realisation. (p.13 & p.14).

*jivanmukti* i.e. *moksha*, the second *prakarana* deals with *vasanachhaya* (the loss of cravings), the third *prakarana* deals with *manonasha* (the destruction of *mana* i.e. *chitta* and its *vrittis*) the fourth *prakarana* deals with *svaroopsidhiprayojana* i.e. the reasons for knowing the true self. where *Vidyaranya* quotes from `Sukadeva. Janaka, Vasishthas Rama and Gita, to justify it and finally in the fifth *prakarana* explains *Vidvutsannyasa*. The text is based on *paramahansa upanishadas*, *Vidvat sannyasa* can be referred as *Jnana sannyasa* (to be explained later).

The stage of *Vairagya* is mentioned as *jivan-mukta* in *Yoga-vasishtha. Muktika upanishad*, which seems to have drawn its inspiration from the *Yoga-vasistha*, mentions the word *jivan-mukta*, meaning those *sadhus*, who live till their "fruit-yielding actions" i.e. *prarabdha karma* are exhausted (Dasgupta 1975 [1922 : 246-247]). When the *prarabdha karma* is exhausted the stage of *vairagya* arrives culminating through *adrshita*. *Adrshita* is "unperceived law" (Chatterjee and Datta 1984 : 61) which may or may not be regulated by the *prarabdha karma*. which actually means the deeds done by an individual in its previous births.

The *Pravachana-bhashya* on *Sankhya sutra* raises the threefold conception of *viveka* (the discriminating faculty of an individual) which determines its actions on the basis of good and bad), viz. (1) *manda-viveka* (feeble one), (2) *madhya-viveka* (middle one), and (3) *viveka - nishpatti* (*viveka* - transcended). In the first stage individual has not attained the desired "discriminatory" capacity of the difference between *prakrti* and *purusha*, but is endeavoring to attain it, the second stage is the state of *jivan - mukta*, i.e. where the desired discriminatory capacity has been attained but still the subject - object distinction remains alongwith the consciousness of the *viveka*. The last stage is called the *asamprajnata* state, where, there is

no subject - object distinction therefore there cannot be in this stage be any "reflection of pleasure or sorrow" (due to the fructifying of *karma* i.e. *prarabdha*) (Dasgupta 1975 [1922] : 250). *Yoga-vasishta* says that *daiva* (*prarabhda*, i.e. *karmas* of the previous birth) and *purushastha* (the individual will) decide the course of action of an individual. It says that in order to attain the state of *vairagya*, the *daiva* (if hindrance) can be annulled by *purushartha*.

During our *anvekshana*, we found on the basis of the *karma siddhanta* it is believed by majority of *sadhus* that the culmination of *vairagya* and its subsequent *sannyasa* is due to the role of *prarabhda*. This *prarabhda* can be read through planetary charts on the basis of *Jyotisha* (one of the *vedangas*): Hence it is possible to determine whether an individual is made for *sannyasa* or not. This plays a crucial role in deciding the persons who ought to be the *acharyas* of ancient and larger *mathas*. We tried to study the planetary charts. The entire process is determined by the time of birth and the position of various planets and *rasis* (cosmological bodies) at that time. Their combined effect is said to determine the course of the individual life. It is not so that everyone who has a favourable chart for *sannyasa* will be given *diksha*.

Generally speaking there are three kinds of *karmas* viz., *Nitya*, *Kamyas* and *Nishiddha*. *Nitya - naimittika karmas* are the one which are to be performed on regular basis e.g. cleaning oneself, *sandhya*. ("worshiping"), other performed at regular intervals during festivals, etc. The daily *Yajna* falls under this i.e. *agnihotra*. *Kamyas karmas* are those which are performed to attain some particular thing, e.g. kingdom, prosperity, offsprings, etc. *Nishiddha karmas* are those which are prohibited from performing, e.g. violence, theft, non-truthfulness, etc. (Shastri 1965 : 8).

There is another classification of *karmas*, viz. (1) *Srauta* and (2) *Smarta*. *Srauta karmas* are those which are performed on the basis of *Sruti* and *Smarta karmas* are on the basis of *smritis*.<sup>25</sup> These two pertain to the performance of *yajna* and *agnihotra* (daily abultation to the holy fire) and can be taken as *nitya - naimittika karmas*. *Karmas* can be also taken as *pravrtti karma* and *Nivrtti karma*.<sup>26</sup> *Pravrtti karma* can be the *kamya karma*, whereas *Nivrtti karma* is performed to attain the state of *Nivrtti* that is *Mukti* or *Moksha*, cessation of all cravings.

*Karma* which simply means action has a broader meaning which includes moral, physical and mental activities. *Karma* is used in various contexts to mean action, deeds, destiny, causality, effects, products, result, etc. It is rooted in the idea of *rta* which is the foundation of *dharma*. The different contexts of *karma* are *niyati* or *prarabdha* the (*karmas* of previous birth determining the future course of individual's life), *nitya-naimittika*, *kamya*, *nishidha*, etc.

*Sannyasa* is defined in *Srimadbhagvadgita* (18.2) as giving up of *kamya karma*. *Sannyasopanishad* calls it the giving up of fire (in the sense of *agnihotra*) *Sannyasa* is institutionalisation of *vairagya*, through *presha-mantra -sanskara* also known as *virya homa* or *Virja homa sanskara*. The word *sannyasa* is derived from *sam +ni +as*, to place or put down, deposit, give up, abandon or quit : *Kamyanam karmanam nyasam sannyasam* (*Gita* : 18.2) It also means *sam + nyasa*, *sam - perfect*; *nyasa*-setting aside, abandoning, surrender.

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<sup>25</sup> This has been explained while explaining *dharma* in the previous chapter.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*.

shaved. In this whole process the *sadhu* has to continuously mutter *savitri mantra*. The *sadhu* undertaking *sannyasa* is said he have five *acharyas*--1) saffron robe, 2) shaven head, 3) *vibhuti* (holy ashes), 4) *Rudraksha* rosary and 5) *mantra*. The *sanskara* is completed by minimum of four *sannyasis*. First is the *guru*, who in the ears utters the *mantra*, second gives him name out of seven, third besmears his body with *vibhuti* and fourth breaks his *Janaiu* (sacred thread). During the *diskha* the *sadhu* has to move seven steps naked.

After initiation in *sannyasa* or *sannyasa diksha* new name is given to the person concerned. The best time and place for *diksha* is at *kumbha-mela*. For *nagas*, this the only occassion with a few exceptions. Before the actual *diksha*, all the *sanskaras* (*karmakanda* i.e. ritual) have to be undertaken. These *sanskaras* are performed by the *purohit* (priest) of the *akhara*, who is not a *sadhu*. The main *sanskara* performed is that of self *sradha*. *Sradha* is a *sanskara* performed by one's own progeny, after one's death, so that the person can attain *mukti* or *moksha*, the release from *karma*, i.e. from getting born again. The *Sradha* is performed by the person himself before the *sannyasa diksha* via the *purohit* of *akhara*. It is performed partly inside the river. After *Sradha sanskara* is performed, the person takes bath and goes to the *guru* for *sannyasa diksha* naked signifying that he has left everything behind including his body and is prepared for the *praisha mantra sanskara*. The *guru* gives him new clothes (ochre coloured in case of *Dasnamis* and white or yellow in case of *Vaishnavas*) and *danda* (where relevant) alongwith *kamandala* and *mala* (rosary). He also gives him the *mantra* of *sannsayya*, i.e. *praisha-mantra*. Here the *sadhu* looses the *adhikara* (qualification) for *gayatri-mantra* and his *mantra* becomes the *praisha mantra*. Among the *Dasnamis* the

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discarding of *shikha* (tuft of hair on head) and *sutra* (sacred thread also called *janai*) are to be given up to be a *sannyasi*. This is not so in case of *Chatuh-sampradayas* and other *sampradayas* of *vaishnava achara*.<sup>29</sup>

## Various forms of *Sannyasa*

In *Narad-parivarajaka-upanishad Brahma* enunciates four forms of *sannyasa*.

Brahma says :

Actually there is only one form of *sannyasa*. But due to *ajnana* (false knowledge), *asakti* (loss of will) and *Karmalopa* (loss of karma, in this context *yajna karma*), *sannyasa* took four forms successively - *Vairagya-sannyasa*, *Jnana-sannyasa*, *Jnana-vairagya-sannyasa* and *Karma sannyasa*. The individual free from all cravings due to *karmas* previously performed when undertakes *sannyasa*, it is called *vairagya sannyasa*. The individual with *sadhana-chatushtaya* realising the momentariness and the non-permanent character of the world leaves the comforts of the world, when undertakes *sannyasa*, it is called *Jnana sannyasa*. The individual after observing willfully all the *asramas* (*bramacharya*, *grhastha* and *vanprastha* i.e. *asramas* prior to *sannyasa* undertakes *sannyasa*, then it is called *Jnana vairagya sannyasa*. Due to *jnana* and *vairagya* the cravings are lost. The individual who observes *asramas* and without having *vairagya*, when undertakes *sannyasa*, it is *karma sannyasa*.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Swami Chandrasekharendra Saraswati observes in *Guru Tradition* quoting from *Sruti* and *Sastric paksha* : *Vyasa* composed the *Brahmasutra* and *Shankaracharya* wrote a commentary on it. *Vachaspati Misra* wrote an explanatory commentary on this commentary--he called *Bhamti* after his wife. As a commentary on the commentary called *Bhamti*, *Amlananda* wrote the *Kalpataru*. Now *Abhoga* is commentary by *Lakshminrsinha* on the *Kalpataru*.

The reference was in the explanation of the 24th *sutra* fourth *pada*, third chapter of *Brahmasutra*. It is the passage in which the *sutrakara* or author, *vyasa*, expresses the opinion that there is 'such a thing as *sannyasasram*. *Jamini* in his *Purvamimamsa* contends that man attains *Moksha* directly by performing *Vedic Karma* as a *grhastha* or householder and that there should be no *sannyasa* in which *vedic karma* is eschewed. *Vyasa* rebuts this view and establishes that there is a *turiya* or fourth *asram* (that is *Sannyasa*).

The qualification of a *sannyasin* are given by *Amlananda* in his *Kalpataru*. The *sannyasin* must remove his *sikha* (tuft of hair) and must have a shaven head. He must also cut off his sacred thread. Such is the custom among followers of *Ramanuja sidhanta* (*Visistadvaita*). The author of the *Kalpataru* gives opinion which is the right view:

"*Ye tu sikha-yajnopavita-tyaga-rupa-paramchamisya na manyante te na na pasanti pratyaksa ghatikasthaneshu pathyamana Atharvanim srutim-sasikham vapanam krtva bahis-sutram tyajet budhah*"

(They say that the man who goes to the highest level among *sannyasins*, the *paramahansa* state, need not shave his head and cut off his sacred thread. Those who speak thus do not seem to have heard the words of the *Atharvaveda* spoken by those who study the *Vedas* in *ghatikasthanas*: "The wise man who takes to *sannyasa* must remove his *sikha* and discard his sacred thread").(p.15).

<sup>30</sup> Vide *Indrachandra Shastri*, "Vaidika sahitya men *sannyasa ki parampara*," *Nagri Pracharini Patrika*, *Nagri pracharini sabha*, Varanasi, p.13.

*Vairagya-sannyasa* generally is undertaken from the *brahmacharya* stage. Conceptually speaking, when an individual due to the experience of profound *vairagya* loses all interest and craving due to the fructification of all *karmas* is given *sannyasa diksha* by a guru, it is *vairagya-sannyasa*. *Jnana-sannyasa* dawns upon an individual due to realisation culminating through *jnana* generated by *viveka*. *Karma sannyasa* is undertaken to attain *janana*. *Karma sannyasa* has two forms *nimitta sannyasa* and *animitta sannyasa*.<sup>31</sup> The former is undertaken due to special events in the individual's life and the latter is undertaken due to natural inclination. Another *justification* calls *nimitta-sannyasa* as *atura-sannyasa* and *animitta sannyasa* as *karma-sannyasa*, hence enumerating *vairagya-sannyasa jnana sannyasa*, *atur sannyasa* and *Karma sannyasa*. *Atur sannyasa* is undertaken during (i.e. just before death) or when an individual due to physical infirmity or disease is unable to perform *karma*. *Animitta-sannyasa* means that an individual undertakes *sannyasa* by the realisation that all objects are impermanent and gets detached by them with faith in *atma*.<sup>32</sup>

The above *sastric paksha* enumerates four forms of *sannyasa* i.e. *Vairagya*, *Janana-vairagya*, *Jnana*, *Karma (nimitta [atura])* and *animitta*). In our *anvekshana*, we encountered all the forms of *sannyasa* mentioned in the *sastric paksha*. *Sadhus* undertaking *animitta* or *karma sannyasa* were maximum and those undertaking *Jnana- vairagya sannyasa* were least. Apart from the above mentioned form of *sannyasa* as mentioned in *sastric paksha*, we came across several other forms of *sannyasa* during our *anvekshana*.

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<sup>31</sup> There is mention of *Vividisha sannyasa*, which is a stage and not form of *sannyasa* similar to *karma sannyasa*. At certain stage in course of *jnana sadhana*, the retirement from active life is prescribed and recommended for *sadhana*. This is known as the stage of *vividisha sannyasa*. When the *sadhaka* has reached the stage of *dhyana* and *niddhyasana* i.e. when he finds that meditation has become spontaneous. Abstention from all *karma*, except *dhyana* and *Vichara* is *Vividisha sannyasa*. *Brahma*. p. 91 p. 104, p. 105.

<sup>32</sup> Vide Shastri, p. 13.

The first form of *sannyasa* was of *sadhus* who undertook *sannyasa* for social service. *Bharat Sevashrama Sangha, Ramkrishna Mission, Divine Life Society*, and numerous others are working for social welfare. Even *sadhus* from *Dasnami and Chatu sampradaya* are taking up social service. *Sampradayi* *sadhus* generally refrained from such activities as it was considered not to be true to the spirit of *sannyasa*, but now the trend in this direction is increasing.

Second type of *sadhus* which encountered apart from the above mentioned ones in considerable numbers were those undertaking *sannyasa* due to extra ordinary events in their life e.g. death of someone very close and dear, financial loss, loss of prestige or status, etc.

The third kind of *sadhus* which we encountered undertook *sannyasa*, just to get free boarding and lodging and a comfortable life without much labour attracted by the respect commanded by *sadhus*.

Fourth, were *sadhus* who undertook *sannyasa* to get an easy earning by displaying fake *siddhis* by fooling people.

A few *sadhus* of the fifth kind we come across undertook *sannyasa* to escape criminal charges against them to avoid subsequent arrest.

We were informed by local intelligence unit at Rishikesh that there were some secret agents of foreign intelligence agencies doing the job of spying in the garb of *sadhus*. *Kautilya* in his *Artha sastra* mentions the use of *sadhus* for the purpose of spying. This was the sixth kind of *sadhu* undertaking *sannyasa*.

At the *Purna kumbha-mela* Haridwara, 1998, we approached some learned *sadhus* and requested them to explain the category of *sadhus* who do not fall within the categories of *sastric paksha*. What form of *sannyasa* is their's. To this some of the forms were explained to us as *virakta*, *vimukha* and *chhadma sannyasa*. The other forms were categorised by us as *loka-sangraha*, *pravartana* and *manishika sannyasa*.

On the basis of our *anvekshana* we enumerate the following forms of *sannyasa*<sup>33</sup> other than the *sastric paksha*.

***Virakta saninyasa*** - the *sannyasa* undertaken by an individual due to loss of interest in life and world because of some special event in life e.g. death of someone close and dear, financial loss, loss of prestige or status, etc. *Virakta* means loss of interest, *Virakti* i.e. loss of interest in life and world is cause of this *sannyasa*. *Virakti*, subsequently can lead to *Jnana sannyasa* as well. As *virakti* due to personal loss may culminate into the realisation of the impermanent nature of the world and its objects.

***Loka-sangraha sannyasa*** - the *sannyasa* undertaken for the welfare of people. Gita (3.25) (*saktah karmanyavidvanso yatha kurvanti Bharata, Kuryadvidvanstathasaktaschikirshur lokasangraham*) mentions the concept of *loksangraha* i.e. welfare of the people. Hence *loka-sangraha sannyasa* is undertaken by an individual for *loka-sangraha*.

*Sadhu* organisation are actively engaged in different social services. Divine life

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society, Rishikesh; Ram Krishna Mission, Calcutta; Bharat Sevashram Sangh, Varanasi; Radhasvami Sangh, Agra, Anand Moyee Ma Sangh; Swami Narayan, Gujarat; Vedantic School of Swami Chinmayananda, etc. are some.

From running orphanages, old age homes, hospitals to rural upliftment, reformation of holy places, publishing literature, education to masses and building pilgrimage shelters are the prominent areas covered by them.

***Pravartana Sannyasa*** - *Sannyasa* undertaken to propagate one's own *sampradaya*, *pantha*, *mata*, *achara*, etc. The *Akharas* played crucial role in fighting the foreign invasion and rule. Its requirement arrives from the necessity of *kshatra dharma* and *rajadharma*. This necessity was at the root of the creation and organisation of *Akharas*, which undertook as much inter-*sampradaya* battles if not more than those against the foreign invasion and rule specially *Dasnamis* and *Chatu-sampradaya khalsas*. The *diksha* for this specific purpose comes under *pravartana sannyas*.

It is important to note that a *vairagya-sannyasta sadhu* may also do the work of *pravartana sannyasta sadhu*. Difference lies in the specific reasons for undertaking *sannyasa* at the time of *sannyasa-diksha* *sannyasa* undertaken with specific purpose to learn, preserve and spread one's *mata* is *pravartana. Sannyasa*. *Christian* monasticism fall under this kind of *sannyasa*.

***Manishika Sannyasa*** - the *sannyasa* undertaken to change the existing social order and/or to activate a new social order according one's *mata*. The *sadhus* of *Ananda Marga* fall under this category.

***Vimukha sannyasa*** - the *sannyasa* undertaken to lead a comfortable life without labour. *Vimukha* means turning around. Here it means turning around *sannyasa*, just opposite of what it actually stands for. It is considered to be *akrtabhagyam dosha* i.e. enjoying fruits without performing action.

***Chhadma Sannyasa*** - the *sannyasa* undertaken to deceive. *Chhadma* means deceit. This *sannyasa* is undertaken just to know the rudiments of *sadhu* life, for deceit, so that one can, befool others, e.g. thugs or one can hide e.g. criminals or one can take the garb to spy, etc.