

ISSN: 2395-7852



International Journal of Advanced Research in Arts, Science, Engineering & Management

Volume 10, Issue 3, May 2023



INTERNATIONAL **STANDARD** SERIAL NUMBER INDIA

Impact Factor: 6.551



| ISSN: 2395-7852 | www.ijarasem.com | Impact Factor: 6.551 |Bimonthly, Peer Reviewed & Referred Journal|

| Volume 10, Issue 3, May 2023 |

Naga Sadhus and their Costume and Food

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ABSTRACT: The main Battles fought by the Naga Sadhus! The Naga sadhus are not afraid of death, because while they are alive, they performed their shradh and other last rites with their own hands. When the Naga sadhus descend on the battlefield, by merely seeing their maverick appearance, the Islamic invaders, and other robbers used to have a tough time. Let us know some of the main battles that the Naga sadhus have fought. When the Islamic invader Aurangzeb attacked the Kashi Vishwanath temple in 1664, the sadhus of the Mahanirvani Dashnami Akhara came forward to protect the Sanatan dharma. The struggle was so fierce that Aurangzeb's army had to retreat, giving up dream of destroying the temple. When Maharana Pratap was fighting with Akbar, the Naga sadhus cooperated with him. Seeing the valor of the Naga sadhus, the feet of the Mughal army was uprooted. We can still see the samadhis of the Naga sadhus who were sacrificed in the battle between Ranakada Ghat and Chapli Talab in the Panchmahua area of Rajasthan.

KEYWORDS: naga sadhus, kasha, temple, mughal army, samadhis, sacrificed, invaders, robbers, dharma, shradh

I.INTRODUCTION

The battle of the Naga sadhus against the Islamic invaders of Bengal is very famous. Renowned lyricist and writer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee has written about this war in his book 'Ananda Math'. The song 'Vande Mataram' from the same book is our national anthem today.~ The Naga sadhus had made a valuable sacrifice to protect the Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya from Islamic attackers. About 76 battles were fought for the Ram temple, in which Sant Balramacharya, Baba Vaishnavdas, Rajguru Pt.Many Naga warriors like Devidin Pandey and Swami Maheshanand sacrificed their lives. At the same time, Sant Balanand and Mandas fought a long war against the Islamic army for a long time and kept them away from Ayodhya.In 1666, when Aurangzeb's soldiers attacked the Hindus at the time of the Haridwar Kumbh Mela, it was the Naga sadhus who retaliated, and the Islamic army was beaten back. In 1751, when Islamic invader Ahmed Ali Bangas attacked the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, about 50,000 Naga sadhus led by Sant Rajendra Giri took a fierce fight and drove out the army of Banga. In 1757, when Ahmad Shah Abdali, the plunderer of Afghanistan, invaded Delhi, the then Mughal rulers could not stand and lost Delhi. Abdali's army was marching ahead to desecrate the holy city of Mathura after trampling Delhi. This is when the army of Naga sadhus countered them and forced them to flee back to Delhi. Naga Sadhus are the ultimate advertisement for living a life that is in sync with all of nature. The western world and the westernized sections of Indian media are obsessed with their nakedness and forget to see them for their amazing grace and powerful existence. At a time when majority of the society is stuck in a consumerist mode and has no control over the impact they create on themselves and the environment, the Naga Sadhus physically portray the possibility of living blissfully with the least number of physical accessories. ¹Their weapons and powers are never used for aggression and used only to defend. Their immense internal strength and powers makes them non violent. All violence is the expression of your inner feeling of weakness. Naga Sadhus are seen in large numbers during the Kumbh Mela. It is about time human beings took a second look at the majority world view versus the possibilities that Naga Sadhus represent.²

- It will remain a mystery forever though, how can they gather in such large numbers during Kumbh or Mahakumbh Mela (world's largest holy gathering or congregation of religious pilgrims) but right after the end of the event they just disappear and never seen again until the next time.
- Mostly they live in himalayas. You can call them "cave dwellers"
- Apart from Himalayas, they stay in their Akhadas in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh states.
- They intentionally stay away from normal people and everyday life because they have given up every materialistic thing in life and nothing fascinates them except for the devotion of Lord Shiva (one of the prime hindu deity)



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- Naga Sadhus remain clothless, which might be quite embarrassing for normal people to watch because of which they themselves prefer staying away from normal sight.
- High level of naga sadhus live quite longer than normal people.
- They Might age upto 200–300 years old too.
- Usually theyre busy in practising higher level of Yoga, Tantra and other spiritual practice to witness the supernatural divine.³

Naga in Sanskrit means mountain, people residing in and around mountains are known as Pahadi or Naga.

The history of Naga Sadhus is very old, the traces of legacy are found in Mohenjo-daro coins and images where Naga Sadhus are shown worshiping Bhagwan Shiv in Pashupatinath form. Alexandar and his soldiers also met Naga Sadhus during their stay in India. Buddha and Mahavir were impressed to see the penance of Naga Sadhus, their devotion for the people and motherland. Jainese Digambar tradition has roots to Naga rituals. The order of Naga Sadhus was founded by Dattatreya. The time when the order was found in not known. Our tradition used to record aspects that are critical for human consciousness to evolve. Later, Shankaracharya organized the Nagas to protect Sanatana Dharma. 4

Sanatan Dharma is the lifestyle that expands our consciousness. In the modern day, Sanatan Dharma has been classified as Hinduism. The founders of this set of tenets saw this as applicable for all human beings and has no foundation in artificial divisions of human beings based on religion.

Modern society is stuck with creating name and fame for oneself and for their near and extended families. A glance at political and business families will reinforce this statement.

Naga Sadhus on the contrary have no need to reinforce their identity. They are dissolved in their Bhakti (devotion) for Mahadeva (Shiva). They smear their body with sacred ash or bhasma. Sacred ash denotes the fleeting nature of life. Smearing it on their body symbolizes that the body is ephemeral and is a reminder of the critical and immediate need for a human being to seek what is permanent and one's true Self.⁵

During invasion of mlecchas (mughals), there were series of attacks on the Sanatan Dharmis and Hindu structures, at that point of time, a massive exercise was carried over by Naga Sadhus to organize their strength and form Akhadas so that they all fight under one Saffron flag to protect Hindu culture and Vedic tradition of India.

The Rules and Rituals of Becoming Naga Sadhu

- 1) Strong Celibacy and Penance: A person who is interested in pursuing a life of Naga Sadhu, he should have complete control over his lust, s*xual feelings and er*tic libido. Practising Brahmacharya is not limited to only physical body but also on moral values. Mentally a person should renounce material wealth and desire for worldly things. First such person is tested rigorously on the norms of Brahmacharya ($\overline{\mathbf{A}}$) then it is ensured that he attained self-control, he is admitted in the group for training to become Naga. This permission to become Naga is known as Diksha but there are many other conditions which need to be fulfilled before the permission is given.
- 2) Service to Bhagwan, People and Country: A person who attained control over his senses is of no use if he does not have love for the Bhagwan, people and country. Ego-centered person is liability on society and country. He cannot be trusted to perform Rashtra Dharm.⁶

Servicing and following orders of his Guru help the person in removing self-ego. Selfless bhakti sows the seed of developing human loving nature to protect people and country. Youth (age:16 to 18) belonging to Varna system: Brahman, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Shudra come forward to serve the country as Naga Sadhus. There is no restriction for anyone provided he is ready to undergo immense penance offered in the process of achieving Naga position.

3) Last Rites: It is very important to perform last rites, considering himself dead for the family and society. It is like new birth of a person in a new world of Nagas. The last rites, Pind Daan (पिंडदान) and Shraddh (श्राद्ध) are performed by the individual himself, relinquishing his connection with the family members and friends. After this, Guru gives him new name and identity.⁷



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II.DISCUSSION

You might have come across some imposter here because real sadhus don't appreciate or smoke weed much. I've personally, had the fortune of chilling with a few sandhus myself in one of my trips to the mountains, here's what I got to know from them:

Naga Sadhus or popularly known as the Nagas, much like the other sects of sandhus are found all over the country but they are exclusively from The Himalayas, The Adobe of Lord Shiva.

Deep in the mountains of The Himalayas, these sandhus live in subzero temperatures, wearing nothing more than a single piece of cloth, consuming minimal food. They have a very extreme regime to be followed as there is the need to conserve energy for dhyaan(concentration) and meditation, as they are inn the search of enlightenment.⁸

These sandhus, living in extreme temperatures consume certain amount of charas or hash, which exclusively grows only in the Himalayan mountains. This specific kind of charas, when consumed produces immense amounts of heat in the body, so it helps them cope up with the extremely cold temperatures in the mountains.

Also, they don't really get stoned like normal people such as us on consuming these substances.

Why do you think they can consume such substances on an everyday basis without affecting their health much?

It's because of their Lifestyle. When you're a sadhu, your physical built is such that the body can easily consume these substances on a regular basis.

Normal people like you and me, our bodies simply cannot take such large quantities of charas frequently. It could erase our memory and cause serious health issues (As told to me by a Naga Baba himself.)

Nagas are some of the most extreme and mystical Sadhus alive. They are often known to possess supernatural abilities which are attained through years of tapp (practice).

Naga Sadhus or Naga Baba means 'Naked Yogis'.

They are followers of Lord Shiva and their physical appearance resembles Lord Shiva, ash-covered bodies and matted dreadlocks.

They take vows of celibacy (that they will never marry or engage in any sexual relation), and live in Himalayas.

They stay in extreme cold temperature without any cover.

- 1. They live around the cremation ground.
- 2. They wore black clothes to symbolize death.
- 3. They are devotees of Shiva.
- 4. Their meditation techniques are centered around death.
- 5. They watch cremation fire and then visualize as if they themselves are getting cremated.
- 6. They use death bodies and sit on top of them to experience death.
- 7. They sometime eat little death human flesh as a spiritual practice it also grant liberation to the dead body from its certain karmas in this birth. This also prove that they have stomach powerful enough to digest raw human flesh.
- 8. They are able to lift or drag heavy weigh using their genitals. During Kumbh they even drag vehicle using gentials proving the power of Brahmacharya.
- 9. They cover their bodies in basma(holy ash) reminding themselves that their own body will into ashes one day.
- 10. They always live in the extreme if they have to get rid of their laziness then they will not sleep at all.
- 11. Sadly this tradition is dying and anti-Hindu elements are representing them in bad light. They are the most integrated sampradaya(lineage) of Hindus who have literally fought to save Hinduism. ¹⁰



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III.RESULTS

Baba Rampuri, born William A. Gans (July 14, 1950), also known as Baba Ram Puri -ji is an American born Sadhu. He claims to be the first westerner to become a Naga Sadhu, having been initiated in 1970. He is the author of the 2010 Destiny Books published book Autobiography of a Sadhu: A Journey into Mystic India, originally published in 2005 by Harmony/Bell Tower as Baba: Autobiography of a Blue-Eyed Yogi, and now released by Amarpuri Wellness in 2016 as Autobiography of a Sadhu: An Angrez among Naga Babas which has also been translated into German, Russian, Czech, Croatian, and Serbian. He was initiated into the religious order the Naga Sannyasis after traveling to India on a spiritual quest from his native California in 1969, at the age of 18. Like many Sadhus, he has stopped using his birth name since his initiation, refuses to give it, and is unwilling to talk about his past. He is Shri Mahant at Shri Panch Dashnam Juna Akhara (The Sacred Juna Akhara of the Ten Names). In 1969, at the age of 18, after experimenting with psychedelics, and viewed as a dropout, Gans left his prosperous family and headed for India to find himself, and as a spiritual quest. Although he returned to the United States after this visit, he went back to India in 1971 and has not returned to his native country. He claims to be the first foreigner to be initiated into India's ancient order of yogis and shamans, the Naga Sannyasis, during the Allahabad Maha Kumbh Mela in 1971. His guru is Swami Hari Puri Ji, son of Pir Sandhya Puri Ji), also known as Hari Puri Baba Ji, and Guru Ji.

In 2004 he was admitted to the Council of Elders of Datt Akhara in Ujjain, Central India, and has become the special envoy of its Pir (usually the title of a Muslim Sufi leader, but it is also the title of the abbot of Datt Akhara in Ujjain.

He hosts an international camp at the Kumbh Mela (the most recent being the Ardh Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, 2007), as well as retreats, teachings, and initiations in India, and abroad.

In 2007 he was part of the documentary "India Trip" by film-director Lev Victorov (Moscow).

At the 2010 Kumbh Mela in Haridwar Rampuri was honored with a permanent seat in the Juna Akhara Council and given the title Antahrashtriya (trans. 'International') Mandal (trans. 'World Circle') ka Shri Mahant.

He was interviewed in the 2013 National Geographic documentary on the Kumbh Mela.

He now runs, along with his children, the Baba Rampuri Cultural Foundation Inc. located in Brooklyn, New York, created in January 2013.

On August 11, 2017 Rampuri featured in an episode titled Dear India from the Chelsea late-night talk show. [23]

The proliferation of pornography in whichever medium human beings have invented shows the unabated nature of lust in human society. Internet is the latest on this list of mediums.

Naga Sadhus know that lust is a powerful energy which, when transformed, can be channelized to achieve the peak possibility of awakening the latent kundalini energy and merging with pure consciousness. The naga sadhus practice strict celibacy to achieve the highest states of consciousness. The per-capita carbon footprint is an indication of the extent of material comfort that human beings seek. The so-called developed countries are those that have the maximum consumption. If the world population were to live with the per-capita energy utilisation as that of USA, we will need nine earths to satisfy that demand – completely unsustainable.

Naga sadhus are like Mahadeva. Mahadeva is the emodiment of non-possessiveness. He keeps all the useless things for himself and gives away the best things to the society. During the churning of the Milky Ocean, the best fragrant flower treeswere given to the Devathas; Shyamantaka jewellery was given to Lord Vishnu, Devi Lakshmi was given to Lord Vishnu as well.⁸

Mahadeva kept only one thing for himself – poison! The Halahala poison that came out of the ocean was swallowed by Mahadeva. His ornaments are the snakes which drink that poison. Same way, Naga sadhus keep all the useless things of the society with themselves. They do not even wear a dress. They did not keep the best things with themselves. But all the best things they gave to society. They don't bother about the materialistic world. Because they do not want anything that someone has, the Nagas are the most peaceful of humans. They have no enemies since they do not value even their lives. They leave the least destructive impact on the mother earth. At the same time they do not fear anyone. Society portrays them as fearful because society controls us by fear and greed. The Nagas – who are not bound by either – strike terror at the hearts of the system that is based on command and control. But in reality there is no group of people who are as non violent as the Nagas. Their weapon and powers are only used for self defense. Their inner strength makes them non violent. Since violence always comes from the inner feeling of weakness. The strong are never violent. The Nagas



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are known to perform great acts of penance that would seem impossible to normal human beings. Many do things like spend years with one hand raised into the air, standing on one leg or lying on a bed of thorns. Some sadhus bury themselves neck-deep in sand, mediate for hours while suspended from a rope or have been silent for years.⁶

Sadhus sometimes even bury their head, a feat of breath control that requires mastery of yoga techniques. In 1837, a yogi named Hari Das war buried alive without air, food, liquid or any attention, After being excavated he was easily revived and went on to live a long life. One sadhu at the Pushkar Fair became famous for lifting a 35-kilogram brick with his penis. Some sadhus are said to have the ability to talk with monkeys. Sometimes they are sought out by people for help keeping monkeys from raiding their gardens.

According to the Guinness Book of Records, the silent Indian fakir Mastram Bapu stayed in the same spot by a road in the village of Chitra for 22 years, from 1960 to 1982. Swami Maujgiri Maharaja stood for 17 years (from 1955 to November 1973) performing Tapasya(penance) in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. When sleeping, he leaned against a plank

According to the Guinness Book of Records, Radhey Shyam Prajapati stood motionless for world record of 18 hours, 5 minutes and 5 seconds in January 1996. Rajikumar Chakraborty did the static wall sit (Samson'c chair) for 11 hours and 5 minutes at the Panposh Sports Hostel in April 1994. Modern society deals with all sorts of lifestyle induced diseases like diabetes, hypertension etc. Au contraire, naga sadhus train on yogic practices to maintain highest physical fitness that can withstand extreme weather conditions even when naked. A member of a Naga Akhara is expected to be ready for a wrestling match at any time.⁴

Naga sadhus epitomize transcending everything that the modern society suffers with. Their very lives are shining examples of how all of human suffering is self-created by falling out of sync with the universal cosmic truths. They don't even need to speak, just looking at them leading their lives is enough reminder to other human beings to introspect on their life choices, and what ideas their life choices are based on. Kumbh Mela is a unique festival on the planet where human beings get to see the Naga Sadhus live their simple yet extraordinary lives, and be blessed by being in the same breathing space as them. Kumbh Mela is an opportunity to experience the complete surrender of the unabashedly naked, fierce and fearless Nagas whose vows to a life of severe austerity, celibacy and monasticism is legendary.

All the best things you see in life, whether it is intelligence, or art and architecture, or language, or music and poetry, or lifestyle knowledge, anything best, please understand, anything best you see is the gift of Sannyasis. It is contribution of Sannyasis.

Recently, I am spending a lot of time with the history of Naga Sannyasis. I had the opportunity to see the original documents and records belongs to Mahanirvani Akhada, our akhada and many of the historical references about our Mahants; during the Moghul period, British period, the achievements of these great sadhus; and pre-history, 5,000 years before, the contribution of these sadhus. I tell you, please understand, these sadhus are literally like Mahadeva, Shiva. If you see Shiva's story, all the useless things he keeps with himself, but all the best things he gives to society. See when the churning of the Milky Ocean happened, the best fragrant flower trees, he gave to devatha's; Shyamantaka jewelry he gave it to Vishnu; the Miss Universe – Lakshmi – he gave it to Narayana. Everything he gave away. What finally he kept with himself? Poison! What is his ornaments? The snakes which drinks that poison. Same way, Naga sadhus, all the useless things of the society they kept with themselves. They did not even wear dress. They did not keep the best things with themselves. All the useless things they kept with themselves. But all the best things they gave to society. All the best things they gave to society.

When I was studying, please understand, the first flight is not done by the Wright Brothers. It is done by a person in Mumbai; you need to know this fact, financed by Nagas of Mumbai Mahanirvani Akhada. Sannyas ashram of Mumbai. Swami Maheshwarananda Puri has financed this venture. There are records. Swami Maheshwarananda Puri of Mumbai Sannyas ashram has financed the first aircraft building forty years before the Wright Brothers flew into the air. So, the first aircraft was not created by the Wright Brothers. It was created by a pundit, Vedic pundit in Mumbai. The pundit did not have any money. It was financed by the Mahanirvani Akhada.

When I dig out the history of the Naga sadhus, the amount of contribution they have done in the Science, Art, in every field education in every field. Unimaginable contribution, what they have done then and what they are doing even now. It is unimaginable, amazing contribution. They protected the Dharma. Dharma protected them. Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitaha! They protected Dharma and Dharma protected them. It the contribution of the Sannyasis still this country's culture, knowledge is alive. The contribution of Sannyasis is unimaginable, unique, amazing. I can give you tons and tons of references how all the ancient best things are preserved, protected, enriched and expounded by the great



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Sannyasis. Not just in the spiritual field, even in the field of agriculture, in the field of clothes, in the field of architecture, how the intelligence of Sannyasis played such a major role and efficiency of the Sannyasis played such an amazing role in the whole field. It's unimaginable.

Please understand, it is time for us to revive that same tradition. I am committing with Mahanirvani Peeta, in this lifetime, in this body, in this lifetime, I will create ten lakh sadhus. It is my commitment to Mahanirvani Peeta, revive this Sannyas Sampradaya. India has 6,40,000 villages. I'll see to it that each village has installed at least one Sannyasi.²

Today one of our Naga sadhu from JunaAkhada came. Through his male organ he pulled the car. How many of you saw? Understand, it is a power actually. It is a big possibility. He has mastered it, the yogic power. Actually, a very strict, very powerful, physical, mental, psychological, emotional brahmacharya is required to master that power. He mastered that. He has mastered his whole system. Naturally now he can go to the next level and manifest other powers.

I have seen Naga Sadhus doing powerful, difficult practices like keeping one hand raised up for twelve years, and not sleeping for twenty-one years; not lying down and sleeping at all, just standing, and sleeping standing, holding a pillar or something!

Early morning when you wake up, jump out of bed. The moment you are aware, your legs should be on the ground. Sadhu who rolls in the bed will never be able to live brahmacharya life. Feel bed is like a fire. You will be there on it only when you are unconscious. You will lie down on it only when you are unconscious. Never when you are conscious. Same way, when sadhus when they sleep, sometimes all male sadhus have to sleep in one place, female sadhus have to sleep in another one place.

IV.CONCLUSIONS

Usually the sadhus should reside alone. Not only he should not stay in a same place with opposite gender he should not stay in the same place even with his own gender. Understand very clearly, sadhus should not sleep in a same room or a same space not only with opposite gender even with his own gender, same gender. But sometime no place. So all men have to stay in one place. That time, even when you sleep next, next, next your legs should be in the side of the other person's head. It should not be parallel. These are the precise detailed instructions from the Naga Sampradayas. Even now, when Nagas travel, if they sleep, you will see very clearly, one sadhu's head is in the east side, the other sadhu will put his leg on the east. They will not sleep parallel, next to each other. Even men. Forget about opposite gender, you can't stay even closer. Even the same gender.

Just the other day I was sitting with Atal Acharya and discussing. We got a very old book a reference notes about Akhada which says, when Aurangazeb attacked Varanasi – the Jnanavyapi War – two lakh Atal Naga sannyasis conquered the Aurangazeb's army,won the war and protected the Varanasi Vishwanatha Temple but, unfortunately, during a festival after two months, during a festival when the Nagas were without weapon, when they were celebrating, doing rituals, they attacked, they did a guerilla attack, and killed the top leaders. So we were discussing all these points. I told him, 'Swamiji, it is my commitment to Atal Peetha, it is my commitment to Akhada, it is my commitment to the Sarvajna Peetha, we will revive it, bring at least ten lakh sadhus. We will become at least ten lakh sadhus' akhada.' See, now our need is different; we don't need to now take a weapon and wage war. No, we don't need that, but we need shaastra dhaaris who learn and teach, who learn and preach. We need shaastra dhaaris. We don't need shastra dhaaris, studying and teaching.³

So much, has been done to humanity by this Sannyas tradition. Sannyas tradition has given to the humanity million times more than what the marriage, the organization; the institution marriage has given to the world. Especially, the whole India, whole India has been built by the Sannyasis. Everything best has been contributed to the Indic tradition by the Sannyasis. Whether it is our architecture, art, culture, language; everything, everything, everything. All the best things we have is from Sanyasis. When I read the history of akhadas, ten lakh sadhus, please understand, ten lakh sadhus used to be Shaastra Dhaari sannyasis; means, mastering the spiritual knowledge, the Science of Enlightenment, Jeevan Mukthi and teaching all over the world... Ten lakh Sannyasis going all over the world and teaching, Shaastra Dhaari sannyasis and one crore Shastra Dhaari Sannyasis means one crore Sannyasis who were protecting the borders, who were protecting the people from invasions. Please understand all invasions happened only after killing Naga sadhus. When Hindus stopped sending their children to become sadhus, the whole system collapsed because there is nobody to defend. All our knowledge, all our tradition, all our amazing divine values, the spiritual lifestyle, everything is lost. Be very clear, you are dying in depression, if you are suffering with discontentment with the life, you deeply hate life; be very clear, you are responsible. Your forefathers did not spare one child from the family to become a Sannyasi; that is why you are suffering. It is time; spare at least one child from a family to become a Sannyas. Plan your family in this way: at least one



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child and one share to monastery. One child for a Sannyas, one share to a monastery. Let the Peethas happen everywhere in the world... In the modern day, we don't need Shastra Dhaaris, means weapon Sannyasis. We don't need them. But we need Shaastra Dhaaris, the intellectual teachers, preachers, who will go around all over the world to teach the Science of Completion, who will teach the Science of Enlightenment. I alone, sitting in one corner of the world, how much I can contribute? How much I can do? We need at least million Sannyasis, ten lakh Sannyasis. Please understand, Sannyas is you living in the space of Completion and go on enriching everyone to be in the space of Completion. You living in the space of Completion go on enriching everyone to be in the space of Completion. Our whole Sangha should be Sannyas-based Sangha. Either you are a Sannyas, or you are very clear you missed Sannyas this time, but you enrich the world to take Sannyas.⁵

Understand, no way, nowhere any one of our incarnations converted based on sword or force! Ramanuja never took sword and went and converted people. No! Shankara never took a sword and converted people. No! Buddha never took a sword and converted people. No! None of them converted anybody with sword. No! Swaminarayan did not convert people with sword. Even Naga sadhus, our Mahanirvani Peetha, we never went and killed anybody or attacked anybody for converting. We used our weapons only to defend ourselves, protect ourselves, protecting our knowledge, our libraries, our manuscripts. Mahanirvani Peetha's library was robbed, burnt for months together continuously! 6

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