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**FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT  
JAIN SWETAMBER TERAPANTHI  
DIKSHA.**

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***Facts and Figures about***  
**JAIN SWETAMBER TERAPANTHI**  
**DIKSHA.**

1. Diksha according to the Jain Sastras is an important religious ceremony for those whose object is the uplift of the soul and emancipation from all worldly bondages, i.e., Mukti ( Liberation ). Every human being wants the greatest happiness and contentment and it is the development of character which alone can give the desired happiness but which no amount of earthly riches can give.

2. Jain Philosophy gives in detail the ways and means for the development of character. The stage of a Sadhu in human life is considered by Jains as the highest and noblest stage where utmost development of character is possible.

Diksha is nothing more than a vow to enter a school of Thought and Action which leads to development of High Morals and Spiritual Po-

wers, unfoldment of which, is considered to be the aim and object of mankind.

According to the Jain Sutras, an hour's status as a true Sadhu confers greater results than the life long pious acts of a House-holder.

3. According to Jain Sastras ( Vyavahar Sutra ) a person above the age of 8 can be initiated. Any and every boy above 8 is never initiated in our Community. It is only highly developed souls, who evince a keen desire for renouncing the world and are conversant with the general principles of Jainism and are otherwise considered to be fit, who are initiated after proper enquiry, and only when the parents and guardians have granted written permission for such initiation.

In our Community it is one of the fundamental rules prescribed by all the Acharyas or Heads of Sadhus that a person can be initiated only if the consent in writing of his guardian or head of the family or if there is none then that of the nearest relatives is obtained. Even a

grown up person, with high literary qualifications but not conversant with the general principles of our religion and unable to procure the necessary sanction (Anumati Patra) of the heads of his family or nearest relatives, will be refused initiation.

4. The initiation of minors may be objectionable on the following grounds :—

(a) Initiation, without the free consent of the boy, by fraudulent inducement, or forcible initiation.

(b) Initiation of boys of weak intellect, by getting their consent on false representations, but without the knowledge or consent of parents or lawful guardians, and in a secret manner.

(c) Initiation with the consent of the parents or guardians where such consent is given for some ulterior motive or for some monetary consideration, *i.e.*, where the boy is practically sold to a religious preacher.

Jain Sastras do not sanction such initiation and the Community never countenances such

initiation by fraud, coercion, or mis-representation. The Sravaks or laymen in our Community would not consider any Sadhu or Acharyya, as such and would not pay homage or regard him with veneration if they find that any one is initiated by such questionable means by any Sadhu or Acharyya.

5. In the Community the following rules are invariably observed before any one is initiated:—

(a) Written permission of parents or guardians or husband and wife as the case may be, has first to be obtained before the Acharyya would grant permission to a candidate to learn the particular mantras or Pratikraman Sutras of Sadhus.

(b) The applicant must show keen desire to renounce the world. Temporary fist of renunciation are absolutely of no use. The applicant is kept under observance for a length of time before being initiated. Sifting enquiries are also made about the character and conduct of the applicant before he is actually initiated.

(c) Initiation takes place in the public with due publicity and with great pomp and grandeur. The applicant is treated like a bridegroom and specially entertained by friends and admirers for some days prior to Diksha.

On the day of initiation the candidate is taken in procession, amidst great enthusiasm and eclat, on a horse back or on an elephant, just like a bridegroom. On reaching the place fixed for initiation he divests himself of his rich dresses and ornaments and is presented with the secret garb and wooden bowl by his relatives. The Acharya then initiates him in the presence of the entire populace and thereafter he remains with his Guru and follows his commands.

(d) The applicant must be conversant with the general principles of the sect. A person with high literary and academic qualifications but not conversant with the general principles of our religion is never initiated.

(e) No one is initiated who has not made proper disposition of his property or who is so



much involved in worldly affairs that it is difficult for him to lead the life of a Sadhu with equanimity or perfect peace of mind; as for example a person who is heavily indebted and has not made arrangements with his creditors, or one who is suspected of being involved in any criminal case which may necessitate his being called upon any time to stand a trial or one who owned a large fortune and had made no arrangement for disposing off same and which may eventually compel him to appear in Court or who has been cited as a witness in a serious case or any other similar impediment entangling a person in worldly matters, would make him ineligible for being initiated. If the Acharyya after careful enquiry has the slightest suspicion that applicant for any of the causes enumerated above or for any other cogent reason would not be able to pass the life of a Sadhu without let or hindrance by any person or authority, then he would not initiate him.

(f) Fit candidates from respectable families

only are initiated and no one is initiated who is suspected of having been brought over for the purpose. It is a fact worth noting that the Sadhus of the sect are all from High class Mahajan families such as Oswal, Agrawal, Porewal, Maheswari etc.

(g) In this community only the Acharyya or supreme head of the institution of Sadhus, initiates the Applicant, only in special and rare instances, any other Sadhu may with the permissions of acharyya initiate a person but such initiated Sadhu becomes the disciple of the Acharyya and has to follow the directions of the Acharyya.

A person initiated has to follow the orders of the Acharyya all through his life and has to observe the vows of a Sadhu and strictly conform to the rules of conduct as laid down in Sastras and as formulated by different Acharyyas. *Any diviation from the vows and the strict rules of conduct would divest him of his position as a Sadhu.*

(h) The important vows or rules of conduct which a Jain Swetamber Terapanthi Sadhu has to strictly follow all his life time after initiation, are as follows :—

- i. Not to kill or injure any sentient being.
- ii. Not to speak falsehood.
- iii. Not to steal.
- iv. Not to lead an immoral life. A male Sadhu is not even to touch any female, and a female Sadvhi is not even to touch a male ( whether it be human being, bird or beast).
- v. Not to own or keep any property of value.
- vi. Not to take food or water at night and not even to keep the same at night.
- vii. Not to use any conveyance for himself or for his articles and books and he is to carry his own load.
- viii. Not to use any intoxicant.
- ix. Not to stay for more than a month at any one place except during rainy sea-

son when for four months they are not to stir about from place to place but are to remain at one place and except in case of physical incapacity.

- x. Not to partake of any food or article prepared or purchased for them and to beg their food and drink in such quantities as is sufficient for the day only and not more.
- xi. Not to hold any correspondence with lay people or contribute articles for newspapers.
- xii. Not to take part in any political or social matters.
- xiii. Not to appear in Law Courts and not to give evidence for or against anyone.

The Sadhus of our Community are not to violate the above vows and rules of conduct themselves nor cause others to violate them. The vows are to be followed in words, deeds and thoughts. The Acharanga, Vyavahar and Nishith Sutras give the details of the vows and conducts

and punishments or penances for breach of any rules. Besides the commandments of Sutras, the rules framed by the Acharyyas to enforce discipline and right conduct are implicitly obeyed by the Sadhus.

6. Our Community keeps a register of all persons initiated, with the names of their father and mother, their age, and place of residence. It is also noted in the said register as to whether they were married and whether the wife or husband is living, dates of birth, initiation and death are also noted in it. If any one unable to bear the hardships of the strict rules of the sect, joins any other sect of Jains or reverts to a householder's life, the said fact is also noted. During the course of nearly 175 years that our sect has been in existence, no complaint was ever made against any initiation in our community.

7. As our Sadhus are initiated mostly from well-to-do families and being members of trading class, there is not the slightest chance of their ever degenerating into begging mendicants or

idle loafers. On the other hand they are never considered as a burden on the society as they beg their daily food from the houses of several laymen. Such is their regard for others that when an ordinary beggar is at the door of layman, our Sadhus would not enter that house, as that may divert the attention of the donor from the street-beggar to the Sadhu and the beggar may have to go away disheartened and disappointed,

8. The Sadhus of our sect are not to remain at any place for more than one month and it is only during the rainy season that they are to stay for four months at a place. They go about from place to place, as directed by the Acharyya and their sole object is to preach the true principles of Jainism to the laymen and exhort them to follow the right path. Their peaceful and persuasive propaganda work has been the cause of converting to this sect about 2 lacs of people. Every rainy season a list is prepared of the places where different Sadhus are, to remain for

the four months. Travelling on foot and carrying their burden on their own shoulders, with what patience and hardihood they are fulfilling the mission of preaching the religion to laymen is a matter of great gratitude.

9. That in pursuance of the doctrines of the Jain Faith no Sadhu can in any manner engage himself in any trade or business or other worldly pursuits and he is debarred from employing his disciple or any one for purposes of gain. That if a Sadhu engages himself or through any one else in any pursuit with the object of gain he ceases to be a Sadhu and is no longer regarded as such. The Sadhus of this community are totally different from those that train children to a life of mendicancy and crime. Amongst our community a person, either male or female, can become a Sadhu only if he has naturally an intense desire for spiritual Advancement. No person whose object is to lead the life of an idler or a mendicant in name can become a Sadhu in our community. Great Stress is laid in

the selections and initiations of suitable disciples and that is why no mal-practices, whatsoever, exist

The Sadhus of this community have never been accused or suspected of causing annoyance or being a source of nuisance to the public. On account of the spiritual eminence to which they attain by their training, devotion, life and conduct, the Jain Svetamber Terapanthi Sadhus are held in the highest esteem. To gain by begging or to engage habitually in begging, is not and cannot be the objects of the Sadhus of this sect as they all come from respectable families and are well-placed in society while house-holders. They beg such food and drink as are necessary for the day only and not more. The object, with which one becomes a Sadhu amongst this community, is a desire to devote one's self wholly to the practice of religion, to effect a complete renunciation of all worldly desires. The Sadhus of this community live on the willing and unstinted charity of the society, for the



uplift of which they preach the highest religion of Ahinsa, Truth, Non-stealing, Brahmacharya and Non-possession. They have all along kept alive the highest ideals of their religious and spiritual life by strictly adhering to the rules of conduct laid down by Lord Mahavira and all other previous Tirthankaras. They take to holy order only with the object of the enobling of their soul and imparting benefit to others and not with the object of outwardly show and of earning a livelihood or other earthly objects.

Jain Sadhus neither beg money nor do they earn money—they have no shrines or maths dedicated to them where to live. They stay in suitable houses of Jain lay people so long as householders allow them to stay there.

Terapanthi Sadhus devote their time in religious discourses and for the uplift of mankind in general, by exhorting them to lead a perfect life. They thus help to make society contented, and educate the people to become worthy citizens by teaching them to give up bad

habits. They are missionaries and spiritual teachers and having no worldly possession or even desire for worldly possessions, they are noble band of selfless workers for the uplift of humanity in general. To restrict persons from entering such an order is to put a ban on every thing that is noble and sublime in this world.

10. In the Baroda State a bill restricting initiation of all minors was proposed. Translation of the speech of the Legal Remembrancer who was in charge of the Bill, ( the original is published at page 23 of the *Baroda Agha Patrica* Dhara Sabha Department dated 1st June 1933 ) is given below.

The Law Member Mr. Dhurandhar stated : “It  
*“has been ascertained in the enquiry that*  
*“amongst Terapanthis due enquiries are*  
*“made, they initiate publicly with written*  
*“permission. If others had initiated in that*  
*“way then there would have been no nece-*  
*“ssity for any legislation, but such is not*  
*“the case.”*

11. The observations made by Dr. Hermann Jacobi of Bonn University ( Germany ), a great scholar who has made special study of Jain Sas-tras, are published in the Book on Jainism by Dr. Glasenopp. Dr. Hermann Jacobi had personally seen the initiation of a Sadhu and a Sadhwi of our sect and his remarks testify to the fact that initiation in our Community is a public ceremony and also to the strictness observed here.

“Both persons to be initiated were a married couple, not pupils or novices; the scene took place in front of a Dharamasala: in front of which was an open public place, steps of approximate human height led to the entrance of the Dharamsala; on both sides of the steps was a terrace; on the one to the right sat the Yatis: on the one to the left, the Nuns.

Thereafter, the pair beautifully clothed were brought in. She stood quite covered alongside the Nuns, he on level earth in front of Acharyya. A prodakhina ( circumvolution ) was out of the question by the nature of the place. The older

brother of the one to be initiated stood behind him and handed over to the Acharyya, a document which confirmed the consent of the family. Then quite was established. In the close surrounding, the Acharyya cited with great ability of the tongue a long formula. Thereafter the monk lowered his head which was shaved up to a small bunch and the Acharyya pulled it out in five pulls without causing the monk to show any expression in the face. The monk bowed to the monks and sat among them as the last in their line. The nun was led to the nuns. She only had to make a few bows in front of the Acharyya during his address before the initiation of the monk took place”.

In the year 1914, the Late Lala Sukhbirsingh of Muzaffarnagar moved a bill for the Registration of minor chelas in the U. P. Council. The Mover of the Bill personally went to see our the then Acharyya Maharaj and his report was published in the U. P, Gazette. His impressions are given below :—

“After that I had an occasion to see the ceremony of Diksha of a husband and wife from which I found that in this sect of the Jains, Diksha is given in the presence of a large gathering after giving it full publicity and their Guru Maharaj does not initiate any person into a Sadhu without the written consent of the parents or guardians. At this Diksha about 4,000 ladies and gentlemen were present and the Agya-patra from the relatives of the husband and wife was presented to the Guru Maharaj after which he initiated them. The whole ceremony was most impressive to my mind.”

The very fact that initiation takes place before a large gathering and after such lengthy formalities is at once a guarantee against initiation of an unfit person by fraud, misrepresentation, or inducements.

12. For the guidance of the Sadhus and in order to enable them to lead a life strictly in accordance with the sastric injunctions, the founder of this sect, Swami Bhikhanji Maharaj, laid

down several rules of conduct to be followed by them. As experience grew he made stricter rules or Maryyadas. The several Maryyadas condensed in one are read every day by every Sadhu. The Maryyadas are also read in public and this reading is known as Hajri or public Examination of Sadhus. Those only who are determined to follow the Maryyada or strict rules of conduct can continue in this sect. There cannot be thus any deviation from the rules of conduct elaborately laid down by the reverend Acharyyas.

When Swami Bhikhanji was about to pass away from this world some of his disciples naturally asked for his final instructions, which are contained in the following stanzas :—

सघला रे सघला साधु ने साधवी,  
 राखजो हेत विशेष ।  
 जिण तिणने रे जिण तिणने मत मुंडजो,  
 दीक्षा दीजो देख देख ।  
 कोई दोषज रे, दोष लगावे गणमधे रे,  
 वली कर्म वशे बोले कूड़ रे ।

काणज रे काण मत राखजो केहनी,

प्रायश्चित न लिये तो करज्यो दूर रे ॥

शुद्ध रे शुद्ध साधाने सेवजो रे,

अनाचारीसु रहज्यो दूर रे ।

आ छेली रे छेली सिखामण धारज्यो रे,

ज्यूं करम करो चक- चूर रे ॥

*Which translated means :—*

Let all the Sadhus and Sadhwis be most friendly towards each other. Let not anyone and every one be initiated. Initiate after careful enquiry.

If anyone is guilty of any offence, in the group of Sadhus or Sadhwis and on account of **Karma**, tells a lie, then do not in any way favour him and if he does not do penance, turn him out of the fold. Always respect and follow the true Sadhus. Keep yourself away from those who have gone astray.

Keep this last instruction in mind and break all your Karma Bondages.

13. Out of the first 8 Acharyyas or supreme religious heads of our Sect 7 were initiated during

minority. The present Acharyya His Holiness Sri Sri 1008 Sri Tulsiramji Maharaj was also initiated at the age of 10. There are instances of Sadhus initiated during minority at all times and it is rather regrettable that for the unjustifiable acts of some unscrupulous persons calling themselves Sadhus, really deserving minors should be deprived of their valued religious right to enter the Holy Order.

14. The total number of Sadhus and Sadhwis initiated in this sect since its foundation in Sambat year 1817 to the 31st day of May 1944 is 1739. A chart is attached herewith to give the readers an idea about the number of Sadhus and Sadhwis initiated during the life time of each of our Acharyyas. The chart is also interesting as it gives valuable information regarding the age and state in life of the persons initiated.



Name of Acharyyas	SADHUS INITIATED										Total Sadhus initiated
	Those between 9 and 16 years					Those above 16 years.					
	Bachelor	Leaving wife	With wife	Widower	Total	Bachelor	Leaving wife	With wife	Widower	Total	
Swami Bhikhanji Maharaj	2	0	0	0	2	6	2	0	39	47	49
" Bharimalji	5	0	0	0	5	2	6	3	22	33	38
" Raichandji	5	0	0	0	5	13	7	5	47	72	77
" Jitmalji	15	0	0	0	15	33	5	7	45	90	105
" Maghrajji	7	0	0	0	7	12	3	3	11	29	36
" Manickchandji,,	2	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	9	14	16
" Dalchandji	3	0	0	0	3	14	1	3	15	33	36
" Kaluramji	56	0	0	0	56	49	5	21	24	99	155
" Tulsiramji	33	0	0	0	33	33	1	7	6	47	80
Total	128	0	0	0	128	167	30	49	218	464	592

Name of Acharyyas	SADHWIS INITIATED											Total Sadhwis initiated
	Those between 9 and 16 years						Those above 16 years					
	Maid	Leaving husband	With husband	Widow	Total	Maid	Leaving husband	With husband	Widow	Total		
Swami Bhikhanji Maharaj	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	49	56	56	
" Bharimalji "	1	0	0	0	1	0	4	3	36	43	44	
" Raichandji "	9	0	0	0	9	1	5	5	148	159	168	
" Jitmalji "	26	0	0	2	28	3	14	7	172	196	224	
" Maghrajji "	8	0	0	1	9	0	3	4	67	74	83	
" Manickchandji "	1	0	0	3	4	0	1	0	19	20	24	
" Dalchandji "	7	0	0	3	10	1	3	3	108	115	125	
" Kaluramji "	84	1	1	3	89	0	23	18	125	166	255	
" Tulasiramji "	93	1	0	0	94	9	16	7	42	74	168	
Total	229	2	1	12	244	14	76	47	766	903	1147	

15. Regarding the question of the status and civil rights of a person unable to lead the life of a Sadhu and returning to a Householder's life, we have to point out that most of the Sadhus who unfortunately left the Terapanthi fold, entered the fold of the Sadhus of the other Sect of Jains. Only rare instances of our Sadhus coming back to lead the life of a householder occurred. In those cases where a Sadhu of our Sect returned to the householder's life, our society never despised or looked down upon him. As regards the share in the family Estate of such a person we have never heard of any dispute regarding their claim to same. There are instances where a Sadhu through misfortune left our Sect, was offered large fortunes by his family if he wanted to enter the householder's life but which offer was rejected and the Sadhu subsequently led the life of a true Sadhu.

Where a minor out of his own keen desire and with the consent of his parents and after due examination and publicity is initiated, he

does so for his moral and spiritual benefit. The religious training he gets, the hardships he has to endure, and the strict discipline which he has to observe make him strong both physically and mentally. If through some misfortune he is unable to lead the life of a Sadhu in our sect or in any other sect and is obliged to leave the fold of Sadhus generally and wants to become householder, he does not thereby become a pest of the society. As our Sadhus are recruited only from high class Mahajans, the lofty ideals they follow, the high character they possess and the strict discipline they undergo, make them fit on account of their training and birth, for any sort of secular work also, if they give up the Sadhu life. Non-injury to others, speaking the truth, non-stealing, celibacy and refraining from sexual intercourse and contentment with the barest necessities of life, are qualities which are by themselves worthy to be acquired by every one in the society and initiation is but a promise to observe these rules completely.



