

## **Naama Karana Samskara** **(The name giving ceremony)**

The child should be named on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, or the 101<sup>st</sup> day. Here the parents name the child during the havan for the first time to the family and public in the presence of the Supreme Lord who is the ultimate and most important witness.

It is very essential to consult an astrologer or a priest who knows astrology to check if the child was born in an auspicious time and to choose a suitable name for the child. If a child is born in an “inauspicious” time it can cause the death of the child and can even wipe out an entire family. From experience I know many people cast aside astrology and say it’s not necessary and its just nonsense. But when something happens to them or their family then they want to blame God, when certain events could have been avoided.

Shastras again and again stresses the importance of astrology. Srimad Bhagavatam 10.5 states, “after the birth of baby Krsna, Nanda Maharaja called for learned astrologers and Brahmins to perform the birth ceremony. After the birth of the child the astrologers thereafter calculated the moment of the birth and made a horoscope of the child’s future life”

In the Caitanya Caritamrita Adi Lila 14.18 states “Giving a child a particular name is among the purificatory processes and on the day of such a ceremony one should worship Narayana and distribute prashad.”

**References:-** Sat Kriya Sara Dipika, Srimad Bhagavatam, Caitanya Caritamrita

## **Anna Praashana Samskara** **(Feeding of the first grains)**

In the case of a male child this rite should be performed in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> month on an auspicious day. In the case of a female child, this rite should be performed in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> month on an auspicious day. This ceremony should not be performed before the 4<sup>th</sup> month and not later than a year for the sake of the child’s health. After six or seven months, the child’s body develops and requires a greater amount of different types of food, while the mother’s breast milk diminishes. Therefore, for the benefit of the child and the mother, it is necessary to wean the child away from the mother and substitute milk for something else. Signs of teeth are the indication that the child is now ready for solid foods. The child should be fed light foodstuffs like for example rice boiled in milk (kheer). This is an ideal preparation. In this ceremony a havan is performed. The father should then feed sadhus after the ceremony. By feeding sadhus one receives unlimited blessings from the Supreme Lord and from the sadhu as well.

Now-a-days people generally just start feeding the baby grains without performing this ceremony. This is not proper because during this ceremony the Supreme Lord is invited to preside over and witness this very auspicious occasion. The priest chants certain mantras glorifying the Supreme Lord and thereafter the grains are first

offered to the Supreme Lord which then becomes prasada (mercy from the Lord) and then the grains are offered to the five life airs in the body. Then only the child is fed the prasada.

After the Anna Praashana Ceremony is performed the parents place scriptures and money in front of the child so that the child's future tendencies may be indicated. Here to whichever the child crawls to first will be what he or she may be interested in the future.

**References:-** Sat Kriya Sara Dipika

## **Karna Vedha Samskara** **(Boring the Ears)**

According to Sushruta, this ceremony should be performed in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> month after birth, though it may be performed along with the Munda Karana (hair cutting) ceremony or at the Jeneo (Sacred thread) ceremony.

The child is held on the lap of the mother. Using a gold, silver or iron needle the ear is pierced. The right ear of the boy or the left ear of a girl is first pierced accordingly.

Sushruta says: "The ears of a child should be pierced for protection from diseases and for decoration." Other Ayurvedic texts describe how when the nerves in the ears are pierced at this time of the child's life; lust is decrease in the later years.

Veeramitrodaya Samskara Prakaasha states: "A gold needle gives elegance, but one can use silver or even iron needles according to ones means."

**References:-** Sat Kriya Sara Dipika, Srimad Bhagavatam, Veeramitrodaya Samskara Prakaasha

## **UPANAYANAM SAMSKARA** **(The Janeo Ceremony)**

**Goal of Upanayanam:** Generally, a man is born as an ordinary being, and by the purificatory processes (samskaras) he is born for the second time. When he sees a new light and seeks direction for spiritual progress he approaches a spiritual master for instruction in the Vedas. The spiritual master accepts only the sincere inquirer as his disciple and gives him the sacred thread. In this way a man becomes twice-born, or a dvija. After qualifying as a dvija one may study the Vedas, and after becoming well versed in the Vedas one becomes a vipra. A vipra, or a qualified brahmana, thus realized the absolute and makes further progress in spiritual life until he reaches the Vaishnava stage. - Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana 1.2.2

**Time:** This ceremony should be conducted counting eight years from conception or eight years from birth of the son, on an auspicious day. Otherwise, the ceremony should take place at least before the sixteenth year of the child has passed. According to the original rules, if there is more delay, the child is not entitled to undergo the ceremony and receive the sacred thread.

The ceremony is performed by the father or the Guru (Acharya).

**Additional notes:-** Janeo is a consecrated thread that is worn by each and every Brahmin of India. This holy thread of 'Janeo' suggests the development of a male, from a young boy to a man. A boy cannot be surmised as "Dvija" (twice born) until he wears the janeo. Besides the Brahmins, Janeo thread is also worn by the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The Brahmin thread represents Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

**My personal opinion:-** Now these days I have stopped giving brahmin thread to young boys because to wear a brahmin thread one has to give up a lot of things like meat, drinking alcohol and smoking. How sure are we that the boy will not eat meat, drink alcohol or smoke in the future. Its a very big step to entrust this to a little child and I think its unfair to him as well... there is too much pressure on him as well...

Remember its not a status thing that your child had a brahmin thread cos after that he has to continue with the tradition... keeping the thread for a few years and then giving it up is indeed a great sin...

He has to never take out his brahmin thread as well.... he changes it but the process the guru will show him what to do... Also a true brahmin or a priest for that matter **SHOULD NEVER** eat meat, drink alcohol and smoke. If a brahmin or priest does this then its maha paap – a great sin...

**References:-** Sat Kriya Sara Dipika, Srimad Bhagavatam.

\*\*\* After the Sacred thread (Janeo) ceremony the next most important Samskara is the Vivah (wedding) ceremony and then the final Samskara is called Antyesthi (Death) ceremony... Thus ends the main Purificatory rites for a human....

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