

SOSYANTI HOMA

(Purificatory rites for a woman about to give birth)

A few days before the birth of the child, the wife should be moved to the confinement room which may be located in the south west part of the house, facing east or in the so call modern times like these before she leaves to the hospital.

When the wife is about to bear the child the priest or husband should perform this rite for the safe delivery of the child and the wife's good health. This prayer is generally left out due to time, place and circumstances... But very simply one should pray to the Lord for the safe delivery of the child and the welfare of the mother...

Jaata Karma Samskara (The Ceremony at birth)

This ceremony is performed immediately after the birth of the child. The father welcomes his newborn child and prays for his baby's long life, intelligence and well-being. The father places a touch of ghee on the tongue of his newborn baby, while reciting some auspicious mantras. The reason ghee is used is, according to Ayurveda it produces beauty, memory, intellect, talent, lustre, strong semen/ovum and long life. This ceremony is also called medha janana, a ceremony to produce intelligence in the child. Thereafter the child is fed milk. It is of utmost importance that the correct time of the birth is noted meaning the moment the umbilical cord is cut that's the time that should be noted. In this rite there is no havan to be performed.

In the Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana 1.12.14 purport states, "When a child is born Jatakarma Samskara is performed. The Devis and Devas and the forefathers come to see the child."

Thereafter the husband or one of the members of the family should go to an astrologer or a priest who is familiar with astrology to see if a child is born in an auspicious or inauspicious time. By inauspicious time I mean when a child is born in an evil nakshatra (star), for example if a child is born in the 1st pada (quarter) of Ashwini, the child may not survive, or if the child is born in the 4th pada of Ashlesha the lives of the parents may be danger and so forth. Not only "evil" stars are noted but "evil" yogas, Amavasya birth, Krishna Chaturdasi, unusual delivery and so forth. A child born in an inauspicious time can wipe out an entire family depending on the time born. It is very important also to consult an astrologer or priest to choose a suitable name for the child and the 3rd day, 6th day, and the 11th day bath times and so forth. Please understand these are not mere rituals rather they are very essentials for the child's benefit.

References:- Sat Kriya Sara Dipika, Srimad Bhagavatam, Brihat Parashara Hora Sastra

JATA KARMA SAMSKARA (PRAYER AT BIRTH)

Please perform this prayers according to time, place and circumstance... If you cannot perform certain rituals below then omit it...

Time:- This samskara is performed upon the birth of the child. It's also a ceremony to produce intelligence in the child. Ghee is used because according to Ayurveda it produces beauty, memory, intellect, talent, lustre, strong semen and long life. If possible try to play the Maha Mantra softly so that when the child emerges the child hears the holy name of Lord Krsna.

Procedure:- When the child emerges from the womb the covering should be removed and the child should be cleansed. Try to show a picture of Radha-Krsna or Sita-Raam to the child so that the first visuals the child sees of this material world is of the Divine Couple.

Then the father should say:

maa naa-bhing krin-tata stan-yan cha maa datta.

A day before a young girl should on a washed stone slab, grind rice and barley into powder using an unused stone. The father should take the powder using the thumb and ring finger of his right hand saying:

om iyang aaj-naa idang annang idang aayuhar idang ghritam

He should place a little of the mixture and very little ghee on the tongue of the new-born child using a spoon saying:

Om me-dhaang te maa-dhava vaama-nau
Me-dhaang hariher dadhaatu
Me-dhaang te acyutaa-nantau
Aadhat-taang pushkara sra-jau swaahaa

Father should then give a little ghee again saying:

Om sadasi ati priyang krishnasya kaamyang saning
medhaang ayaasi-sham swaahaa

Chant the Maha mantra to nullify any mistakes for the ceremony.

Feed milk to the new-born.

The mother and child should stay in the confinement room for ten days.

The father and all other close relatives after bath can continue with their daily duties...

The Chatti Ceremony.



This very important ceremony is performed to appease Mother Shashti. Many people feel that this is an unnecessary prayer but I beg to differ.

Shashti Devi is the sixth expansion of Mother Durga which gives Mata her name Shashti, which means sixth. Mother Shashti is also one of the sixteen matrikas (little mother). Being a Matri shakti (The force of the Divine Mother), Mata protects all children with a mother's affectionate heart. Mata is the bestower of children and grandchildren in all three worlds and the godmother of all. Mata remains near every child in the form of an aged yogini. Her worship is prevalent everywhere and is conducted throughout the twelve months of the year. After the birth of a child Mata's auspicious worship is performed on the sixth day. The munis also bow down to Mata with reverence and visit Mata's temples regularly.

The Divine Mother, in her form as Shashti Devi, is worshipped and glorified and her blessings are invoked so that the child will follow a spiritual path and be blessed with divine qualities, good health, good character and freedom from disease. Also Shashti Devi is responsible for the development of the child. Women worship Shashti Devi to receive offspring or for the well-being of their children.

Chatti means 6th, thus this prayer is observed on the 6th day from the child's birthday. Why pray to Mother Shashti or Mother Earth??? Well Mata is the ruler/presiding deity of this planet thus she is know by many names like Bhudevi, Dharti-devi, Bhumi-devi and so forth. She is no ordinary personality. She is the Wife of Lord Varaha Himself. Who is Lord Varaha??? Well He is the boar incarnation of Lord Krsna, thus non-different from Lord Krsna. Thus Mother Earth or Bhudevi is actually Lakshmi-devi and thus Srimati Radharani. Let me give an example. If I visit your home and I enter your home without permission, will you be happy with

that? Well I hope not. You will only allow me to enter your home if you know me. In the same way without asking permission from Mother Earth (this is her domain, her place) for any prayer how can that prayer be accepted? You must receive her blessings and permission to perform any prayer. Otherwise that prayer would not yield the desired results.

By performing the Chatti ceremony one is acknowledging to Shashti Devi/Mother Earth of Her elevated position and seeking Her blessings for the new born, that this child will grow up to be a Putra/Putri (a spiritual child) with divine qualities.

What happens when a baby is born and what are the procedures with regards to prayers etc??? One should remember that Lord Vishnu prayers are never stopped. So yes the family can still perform their prayers. Only the mother cannot perform any puja for a period of 10 days. But she need not worry as whatever her husband does half of his spiritual merits goes to her. But remember excluding the mother, the father and the family still continue with the daily prayers like lighting of the lamp, offering Surya Jal etc... This is verified by the Lord himself in the Garuda Purana, Preta Kanda, Chapter 29 verses 9, 11& 12 "In impurity accruing from birth, the rules are less strict. The mother is purified after 10 days and the father just after taking a bath. In birth the relatives incur no impurity. Impurity attaches to parents alone. Primarily, it is the mother who becomes impure. The Father is purified by the touch of water alone. In birth or death O' Garuda, impurity lasts only for 10 days." According to the Yajnavalkya Smriti, the mother is untouchable for ten days on the birth of a child, but the father and family when they take a bath are cleansed.

I have heard from many that many traditional rites are followed but are not supported by our shastras... Please my fellow Hindus if a person can't prove via shastras what he/she is saying then what is said should humbly be discarded.

I have also heard from many that they seen many Hindu families offer meat in this auspicious prayers... This is a misconception and thus incorrect and not followed... All the preparations for the Puja must be strictly vegetarian, because this contributes positively to the physical, emotional, hygienic and clean conditions to be offered as Prasad. The environment for the newly born child must be totally satwic (clean) and free from any un-satwic elements like alcohol and all non-vegetarian food. We are inviting our most honoured Mother to the prayers hence utmost cleanliness and respect should be observed...

Mother Shashti's Puja is generally held on the sixth (6th) day after birth, preferably in the evening approximately 18h00...

The Puja Proper:- Print the picture of Mata at the beginning of this article and laminate/frame it...

At the place of the prayer, place a Lord Ganesh murti and the picture above of Mother Shashti. Firstly offer an agarbatti, lamp or flower (or all three) to Shree Ganeshji (turn seven times clockwise around the murti), and pray to Shree Ganeshji to remove all obstacles in the path of this most auspicious prayer.

Shashti Devi is now offered worship. Pray to the picture of Mother Shashti asking

Mata to please accept your prayers.

Now chant the following:-

1) Om swagatam su swagatam – Om Shashti devi yai namah aavaahayaamee sthapayamee... (Swagatam means O Mother Shashti I welcome you.)

Then offer flower or flower petals. (Pushpam = flowers)

2) Om idam pushpam – Om Shashti devi yai namah.

Then offer incense (Dhoopam = incense)

3) Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami – Om Shashti devi yai namah.

Then offer lamp (Deepam = lamp)

4) Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami – Om Shashti devi yai namah.

You offer the above items by turning the items seven times around the coconut.

5) Om naivedyam samar-payaami – Om Shashti devi yai namah

Offer cut fruit or sweets like gulab jamum, jalebi, and so forth)

(Naivedyam = food)

You can also place a small lota (cup/chumbu) of milk next to the picture of Ma Shashti...

6) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha paa-paani janmaan-tara kritaa-nee cha, taani sar-vaani vinash-yanti pra-dak-shinaa pade pade //

Then offer your personal prayers to Mother Shashti. Pray to Mata for the child's good health, good character and freedom from disease and Ma being so merciful will grant what you desire.

NEXT... Fill sand in a wide dish. Smoothen and make a well in the middle. If possible sprinkle some Gobar (Cow-dung) on the sand. Place 9 betel leaves around the well. Then mother sits down with baby on the lap. The mother fills the centre with milk and then she dots the Betel leaves with Sindoor. Thereafter she places a little of the satwic prepared food in the center of the thari (plate). Everyone should pray to Mother Shashti/ Earth to protect the child and request Mata for good health, good character and freedom from disease for the newborn. SEE NEXT PAGE FOR THE CHATTI SET ON A TRAY.

The following is traditional and if you want to perform this its left to you I am just covering all my angles for this prayer... The Mother then covers baby with blanket making sure the baby's eyes are not exposed. The bua (aunt) burns a lamp three times and the mother has to put off the lamp each time with her archara. The fourth time the lamp is burnt it is left on. (Now uncover the baby) A spoon is placed over it to make kajal. The kajal is then applied on the mother and child eyes...



After this the mother has to eat a little food with her baby on the lap. Then the mother hands over her baby to a family member while she completes eating her food.

Final Question:- Can one perform the Chatti Puja on Ekadashi?

Yes you can as long as Non-grain foods are prepared... You should remember that Mother Shashti/ Mother Dharti also fasts on this day from grains... and the prashad offered to the guests has to be also Ekadashi prashad...

Nish-kraamanam Samskara **(The first outing)**

For the protection of both mother and child there is a period of time when it is recommended that they remain indoors. During this period the mother and child regain their health and build their immune system to counteract any infections.

The mother and child generally stays indoors for the period of impurity which lasts for 10 days. The father and other close relatives after a bath is cleansed.

When the period of impurity is over the husband, wife and child should at sundown visit a temple or their family Deity/prayer place. They should stand facing the Deity, and the child should be wrapped in a clean cloth. The husband recites auspicious mantras, while the child is shown to the Supreme Lord. Here the parents offer the child to the Lord who is the Owner of everything. By offering the child to the Supreme Lord the child becomes prashad (mercy). Also by doing so the child now belongs to the Lord and the parents will now take care of the child on the Lord's behalf. Thereafter the family returns home. It would be beneficial to perform Brahmin Bhojan i.e. feeding of Brahmins because by performing this sacred act one receive lots of punya sukriti (meritorious benefits) and blessings which goes to the child. For this samskara there is no havan to be performed.

References:- Sat Kriya Sara Dipika, Srimad Bhagavatam, Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra

NISKRAMANA SAMSKARA **(FIRST OUTING TO THE TEMPLE)**

Time: The asauca (defilement period) is 10 days. On the 11th day the parents should take the baby to the temple/ family Deity/prayer place for the first outing.

Procedure: The child should be bathed in the morning, and at sundown the husband and wife should go with the child to the temple/ family Deity/prayer place. They should stand facing the Deities the wife on the husband's left side. The child wrapped in a clean cloth.

The wife should hand over the child to her husband and then proceed behind the husband and stand on his right side facing the Deities.

The husband should say:

om ekah purastat ya idam ba-bhoova
yato ba-bhoova bhava-nasya gopta
yang apyeti bhava-nam saam-paraaye
namaami tam aham sarvato mukham
tat prabho sarvato mukham
naaham pau-trang aham nigaam

om ya atma-daa baladaa yasay vishve
upaasate pra-shishang yasya devaah
yasya chaayaa amri-tang yo mrityu mrityuh
kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema
tasmat prabho mrityu mrityo
naaham pau-trang aham ri-sham

om nara naara-yanau sharma yaccha-tang
Prajaa-yai me prajaa-patee
Yatha-ayang na pramee-yate
putro jani-triya adhi

Saying this he should point out the Deities to his child and offer rose water...

om krishna maadhavo govinda punda-reek-aaksha
vaamana griheeta-arghyam hrishikesha raamaaya sahito mama

He should then give the child to the mother and chant:

om bhoor bhuvah svah
Abhee shunah sakhee-naam
Avitaa jari-tri-naam
Shatang bhavaas-yootaye

Thereafter the parents offer the child to Lord Krsna who is the Owner of everything. By offering the child to the Supreme Lord the child now becomes prasad (mercy). By doing so the child now belongs to Lord Krsna and you will now be looking after the child on Lord Krsna's behalf. It would be beneficial to feed

Brahmin's as this is very auspicious.

The parents and child should then return home.

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