

**Saṃskāra**  
(Rite of passage)  
*The act of refinement*

*Part-2*

*Surya Nanda*  
*Acharya, Arya Samaj Houston*

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By Acharya Suryanarayan Nanda  
for Arya Samaj Greater Houston

## *Prenatal ceremonies*

### **3.Sīmantonnayana**

*(Rite of passage for the mental development of fetus)*

A rite of passage in which the mother focuses her attention to brain development of the child.

This ceremony is performed in the fourth or **sixth or eighth month** of pregnancy, when the brain-cells of the fetus start forming.

In the fifth month, the mind is quite awake, in the sixth the intellect and in the seventh there is manifestation of organs. *Shushruta*

## *Prenatal ceremonies*

### **3. Sīmantonnayana**

*(The ritual for the mental development of fetus)*

The **fourth** suits because during this month, the formation of brain cells begins.

The **sixth** suits as during this, the first origin of intelligence can be traced and **eighth** is suitable because by that time, the body, mind, brain and heart of the fetus are all ready.

**This is the time when the woman is called 'twin-hearted' as two hearts work simultaneously.**

## *Prenatal ceremonies*

### **3. Sīmantonayana**

**(The ritual for the mental development of fetus)**

Here the husband should himself oil the wife's hair and comb it and take her to the temple or Place of Yajna .

## *Prenatal ceremonies*

### **3. Sīmantonnayana**

**(The ritual for the mental development of fetus)**

- Sushrut enjoined the pregnant mother to avoid exertion of all kinds:
- After the Simantonnayana ceremony the woman is expected to not overexert herself, her husband is expected to be by her and not to travel to distant lands.
- The desires of the pregnant woman should be satisfied for healthy development of the baby, to prevent miscarriage and her health.

*Yājñavalkya Smṛiti.3.79*

## *Prenatal ceremonies*

### **3.Simantonnayana**

*(The rite of passage for the mental development of fetus)*

She will have a child reflecting the same kind of thoughts she had during pregnancy.

So, for an excellent offspring equipped with supreme impressions, the woman should be kept in a conducive environment. *Manusmriti.9. 9*

## *Prenatal ceremonies*

### **3.Sīmantonnayana**

*(The rite of passage of mental development of fetus)*

- The ceremony has more commonly evolved into a ritual that shares characteristics of a **baby shower**.
- This rite of passage is regionally called by various names, such as Seemant, God bharaī, Seemantham or Valaikaapu.

## *After birth Ceremonies*

The child retains impressions corresponding to the environment provided by the parents.

Psychologists believe that whatever a child learns during the first five years acts as a deposit for the whole of his life. During those five years, the child remains in the atmosphere maintained by the parents.



## *After birth Ceremonies*

### **4. Jātakarma:**

#### *Rite of a new-born infant*

It is a sacrament that celebrates the birth of the baby. It is also for the purification of the house.

- Placing a ghee-immersed wad of cotton on the head:
- Making the child lick ghee and honey.
- Writing of the word **OM** on the child's tongue using the thin gold rod.
- Speaking '**Ved-o-asi**' in the ear of the child.

## *After birth Ceremonies*

# **5. Nāma-karaṇa**

*(Ceremony of naming a child)*

In this ceremony the child is officially assigned a name on the 11th day after birth.

Some Dharma shastras list Jātakarma and Nāma-karaṇa into one.

## **5. Nāma-karaṇa**

*(Ceremony of naming a child)*

The Dharma shastras provide numerous and divergent guidelines to the parents for choosing names.

Most recommend that the boy's name be two or four syllables, and a girl's name is recommended to be an odd number of syllables, ending in a long ā or ī, resonant and easy to pronounce.

Unpleasant, inauspicious, or words that easily transform into bad or evil words must be avoided while the preferred names are those affiliated with a deity, virtues, good qualities, stars, constellation, derivatives of the name of the father, or mother, or the place of birth, or beautiful elements of nature (trees, flowers, birds).

## *After birth Ceremonies*

# 6. Niṣkrāmaṇa

*((Baby's first outing) :*

Niṣkrāmaṇa is the rite of passage where the parents take the baby outside the home and the baby formally meets the world for the first time.

It is usually observed during the **fourth month** after birth.

On this ritual occasion the newborn is taken out and shown the sun at sunrise or sunset, or the moon, or both.

Alternatively, some families take the baby to a temple for the first time.

## *After birth Ceremonies*

# **7. Anna prāśana**

*(a baby's first intake of solid food):*

This rite of passage marks a baby eats solid food first time.

It takes place when a child is six months old or when the child shows the first teeth.

## **8. Mundana**

**(Shaving the child's head for the first time)**

It is also called **Choula** or **Chūdā-karma** or **Keśa vapana**,  
**Kṣaura** etc. .

- The ceremony is to be performed between the ages of 1-3 years old.
- After one year, the bones of the skull is getting joined, so the hairs of the time of pregnancy should be removed.

## **8. Mundana**

**(Shaving the child's head for the first time)**

These hair that had been protecting the skull till this point, have to be removed for the following reasons.

- **Removal of dirty hair:** While in the womb, the baby's hairs remain in a foul fluid. These hairs have utility until the conjugated bones of the skull get properly joined; after that it is useless to keep these hairs.
- **Safeguarding from itchiness, ringworm etc :**
- **Protection against heaviness etc:**
- **Facilitates growing new hair:**

## **9. Karṇa vedha**

*(Piercing the child's ear lobes)*

The child's ear lobes are pierced either on 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th or 9th year.

The purpose of this ritual is primarily an ornamentation of the body, and is part of the baby's socialization process and culture emersion.

*Sushrut reasoned, "The ears of a child should be pierced for protection (from diseases such as hydrocoele and hernia) and decoration (Sharirasthan Ch.16.1, Chikitsasthan Ch.19.21).*