

Ṣaṃskāra

(Rite of passage)

Part-7

Antyeṣṭi Ṣaṃskāra



Surya Nanda

Archarya, Arya Samaj Houston

By Archarya Suryanarayan Nanda
for Arya Samaj Greater Houston

2020-02-16

Prenatal ceremonies

1. **Garbhādhāna saṃskāra** (The rite of passage of conception)
2. **Puṃsavana** (Rite of passage of fetus protection)
3. **Sīmantonayana** (Rite of passage for the mental development)

After birth Ceremonies

4. **Jātakarma**: Rite of a new-born infant
5. **Nāma-karaṇa**: Ceremony of naming a child
6. **Niṣkrāmaṇa** :Baby's first outing
7. **Anna prāśana** :a baby's first intake of solid food
8. **Mundana** :Shaving the child's head for the first time
9. **Karṇa vedha** :Piercing the child's ear lobes

Educational Ceremonies

10. **Upanayana** or Yajñopavīta
11. **Vedārambha**: *(the beginning of formal learning.)*
12. **Samāvartana** *(The ceremony of completion of education)*

Life stages

13. **Vivāha Saṃskāra** *(Wedding Ceremony)*
14. **Vānaprastha**
15. **Sam-nyasa**

16. **Antyeṣṭi** : (*Last/funeral rites*)

- The final *Samṣkāra* is *Antyeṣṭi Samṣkāra* which is performed after death.
- It is sometimes referred to as *Antima Samṣkāra*, *Naramedha* or *Puruṣa yāga*.
- The word *antya* means *final* and *iṣṭi* means *Yajna*. Thus, ***Antyeṣṭi*** is the final *yajña* of our life (sacrifice), when the body itself is offered to the *Agni* (fire).
- This is the final purificatory rite for the gross body that reduces it to ashes.

16. Antyeṣṭi :

Last/funeral rites

- Death is the most certain thing for any living entity and yet we know so little about it.
- It may come early or later in life but the inevitable always happens.



16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last/funeral rites*)

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि॥

jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvam janma mṛtasya cha,
tasmādapariharye'rthe na tvam śochitum arhasi.

For one who has taken birth, death is certain and for one who has died, birth is certain. Therefore in an inevitable situation you should not lament.

Gītā.2.27

By Acharya Suryanarayan Nanda
for Arya Samaj Greater Houston

16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last/funeral rites*)

Yet we carry out our actions and behave as if we are immortal and death does not enter into our scheme of things.

However if we understand death then we will really understand life and this will help us to live it fruitfully and happily.



16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last/funeral rites*)

Yakṣa : What is the most wonderful thing ?

Yudhiṣṭhira : अहन्यहनि भूतानि प्रविशन्ति यमालयं ।
शेषास्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥

Even though every day one sees countless living entities dying, he still acts and thinks as if he will live forever. Is there any other wonder ?



2020-02-16

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16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last / funeral rites*)



All over the world people offer the dead body to one of the elements - **Earth, water, fire or air.**

Those who bury submit it to Earth, those who dispose in river submit it to water, those who perform the funeral offer it to fire and those who leave the body in the open submit it to Air.

16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last / funeral rites*)

In compliance with the Vedic tradition; the dead body is like a piece of cloth or dress which has been given up.

There is no particular Day of Judgement: there is no eternal Heaven and no eternal Hell, and the dead body is not going to be revived, Left to itself, the dead body will decompose and pollute the environment.

It has to be disposed of in a manner which has following ingredients: (a) Respect. (b) Hygienic principles of life. (c) Socially acceptable and beneficial system.

16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last / funeral rites*)

Cremation in fire is the only means that can quickly return all the elements of the dead body into the original form and all substances of body will get reduced and will escape in the air.



16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last/funeral rites*)

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।
ओम् क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥

O Mind ! Remember all that has been done.

O Mind ! Remember your acts.

Because the breath air returns to the immortal air and
this body will be burnt to ashes.

Esha-upanishad-17



Have a retrospective look ;Learn from your experience of yesterday, and withdraw all this value you place on the things you do now.

Remember, the thing which you value today will be worthless tomorrow, so do not give it much importance today.

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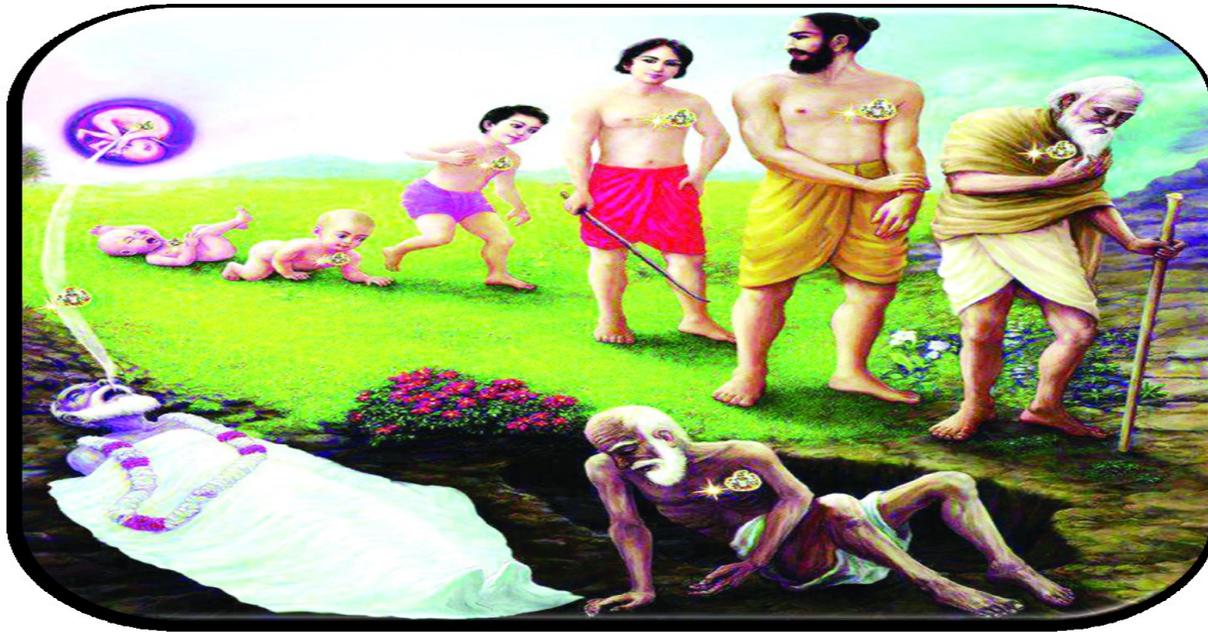
16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last/funeral rites*)

धनानि भूमौ पशवश्च गोष्ठे नारी गृहद्वारि सखा श्मशाने।
देहश्चितायां परलोक मार्गे धर्मानुगो गच्छति जीव एकः ॥

Wealth will remain buried, cattle will remain in the pen, (his) wife will accompany (him) to the doorway, friends will accompany him to the crematorium, the body will come till the funeral pyre, but on the path to the next world, the jiva goes alone (with his karmas).

श्मशान ऐसे लोगों की
साख से भरा पड़ा है
जो समझते थे
कि दुनिया उनके बिना
चल नहीं सकती।

16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last / funeral rites*)



Each soul makes the journey towards its own true nature, slowly but surely.

Leaving one body only to be reborn in another is considered like a change of clothes I.e. only external changes while the internal ātmā continues on it's journey to get the supreme goal.

In death, The body falls here. The physical body disintegrates but the mind continues its journey with the soul.

16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last / funeral rites*)

- Mind leaves the body and catches hold of a new body. It travels on with the soul with our desires, ego and memory of past actions.
- This mind that has already caught hold of countless bodies in the past and will go on doing so.
- The age of your body may be fifty years but that of your mind can be five million.

Chitragupta: Hidden Picture

- Mind - the storehouse of experiences and memories.
- Like a compressed audio-visual recordings of events on a microchip of the computer or compact disc, all good and evil deeds are being recorded in the secret chambers of the sub-conscious mind.
- This record, like a C.D., remains in storage till it is required to be played at a desired moment through an appropriate mechanism.

Paurāṇika Mythology refers this as the Chitragupta.

16. Antyeṣṭi : (*Last / funeral rites*)

Please remember; you are not the mind !

- You are that which knows the mind, which sees it and which is fully conversant with it.
- To realize this you will have to raise yourself a little above it.

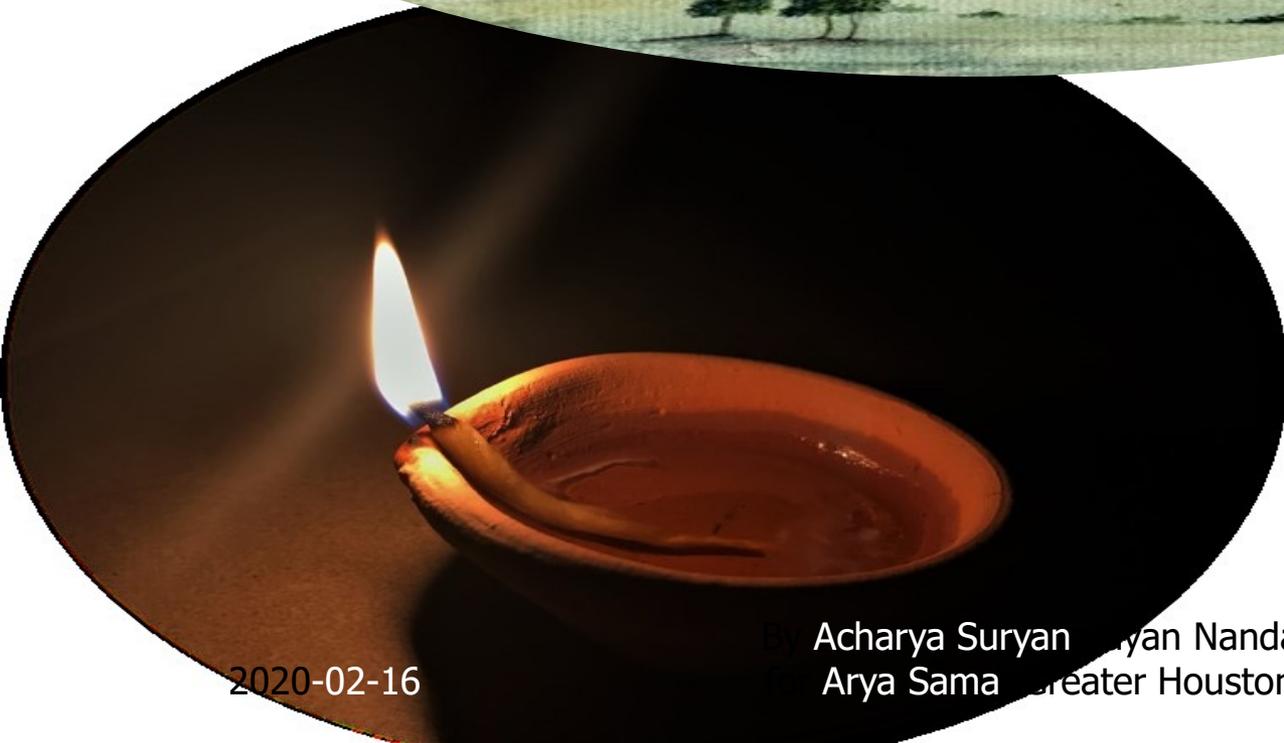
उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

A man should lift himself and
should not degrade himself.

Because one's own self is
one's friend, and one's own
self is one's enemy.

Gita.6.5.





2020-02-16

Acharya Suryan Nandan Nanda
Arya Samaj Greater Houston