

Sanatana Dharma

Lesson 13: The Samskāras – Part II



Śānti Mantras



- ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
- Om saha nāvavatu |
sa ha nau bhunaktu |
sa ha vīryam karavāvahai |
tejasvināvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai |
Om shāntiḥ shāntiḥ shāntiḥ ||

Śānti Mantras



- Meaning:
 - 1: Om, May God Protect us Both (the Teacher and the Student),
 - 2: May God Nourish us Both,
 - 3: May we Work Together with Energy and Vigour,
 - 4: May our Study be Enlightening, not giving rise to Hostility,
 - 5: Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

Review: The Saṃskāras



- In the Vedic vision, all aspects of one's life are considered sacred
- If saṃskāras are performed with care and devotion, they help an individual become aware of the Iṣwara in him/her and help the individual understand his role in society at various stages of his/her life

Review: The Saṃskāras: Purpose



- Saṃskāras have a two-fold purpose
 - Removal of inappropriate tendencies
 - Creation of an inner disposition so that an individual can cultivate the eight virtues of the self (atmagunas)
 - Compassion
 - Accommodation
 - Absence of jealousy
 - Purity of body & mind
 - Inner leisure
 - Pleasant disposition
 - Absence of miserliness
 - Absence of attachment

Review: The Origin of Samskaras



- Human beings have no choice but to act
- These actions (Karma) are organized into three categories
 - Nitya karma (daily)
 - Naimittaka karma (occasionally)
 - Kāmya karma (to gain some desired end-result)
- Karmas can be performed
 - for society (śrauta-karma) or
 - for oneself or one's family etc. (gr̥hya-karma)

Review: The Origin of Samskaras



- Karma should be performed according to the kalpa-śāstra or the dharma śāstra, which are again based on the Vedas
- There are also “niśiddha karma” or “actions that should be avoided” – the principles of Dharma and Ahimsa should be followed because they are universal

The Forty Samskaras



- 1-26 Smārta Karmas
 - 1-14: Ceremonial saṃskaras
 - 15-19: Pañca Maha yajñas
 - 20-26: Paka yajñas
- 27-40 Śrauta saṃskaras
 - 27-33 Havir yajñas
 - 33-40 Soma yajñas
- Note: Antyeṣṭi, the last rite, is not considered as one of the forty saṃskaras

The Forty Samskaras



- The Six Nitya Karmas
 - 5 Pañca Maha yajñas
 - Veda yajñas (ritual pertaining to the Vedas)
 - Pitr yajñas (ritual pertaining to ancestors)
 - Deva yajñas (ritual pertaining to deities)
 - Bhuta yajñas (offering to living beings)
 - Nṛ yajñas (hospitality to guests)
 - 1 Agnihotra

The five basic elements



- What are the five basic elements?
 - Pṛthvi - earth
 - Apaḥ - water
 - Agni (Tejah) - fire
 - Vayu - air
 - Akasa - ether

Lord Agni in the Stages of Life



- Agni or Fire is also known as pāvāka – a purifier
- Fire is considered worshipful
- Fire is believed to act as a messenger in carrying the “havis” or offerings of the people to the devas
- At each of the four stages of life, one guards the household fire and performs rituals

Lord Agni in the Stages of Life



- Brahmachari – **samidādhāna** ritual
- Gṛhasti – **agnihotra** and **aupāsana** rituals
- Vanaprasthi - **kakṣāgni** ritual
- Sannyasi – does not actually perform any ritual but is committed to **jñānāgni** (life dedicated to pursuit of self-knowledge)

Lord Agni in the Stages of Life



- Pre-natal saṃskaras – performed by parents
- Post-natal saṃskaras – performed by parents
- Brahmacharya stage
 - Upanayana – 1st saṃskara where child actively participates; three nitya karmas asked of child at this stage
 - **Brahma yajña** (to sages)
 - **Samidādhāna** (to Agni for fame, longevity & prosperity)
 - **Sandhyavandana** (to Sun God for brilliance & knowledge)

Lord Agni in the Stages of Life



- Gr̥hastā stage
 - **Vivaha:** fire is carried into the home and divided into two parts; these fires are never extinguished
 - **Gārpatayāgni** (for śrauta karmas)
 - **Aupāsanāgni** (for smārta karmas)
- Vānaprastā stage
 - **Kakṣāgni** (upasana stage)
- sannnyāsa stage
 - **jñānāgni** (pursuit of self-knowledge)

Meditation



Concluding Śānti Mantra



- ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम पूर्णात् पूर्णमदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमीदाय पूर्णमैवावशिष्यते ॥
Om Pūrṇamadah Pūrṇamidam Pūrṇāt-Purṇam-
Udacyate
Pūrṇasya Pūrṇamādāya Pūrṇamévāvaśiśyate ||
Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ ||

Meaning:

That (God) is infinite; this (world) is whole;
from the infinite the world becomes manifest.

From the infinite, even if the whole is taken away,
what remains again is the infinite.